



GENDERHOPES
WORKING TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Interview of the Month
Judy Churchill
Founder of New Women Networking
December 2015**

- 1. GenderHopes: You are the founder of the New Women Networking organisation. Can you tell us more about how New Women Networking works, its main objectives and where it is active?**

Judy Churchill: We exist as a platform to support ALL women regardless of creed or colour, working or not. NWN supports women in their personal and professional lives, giving them advice on setting up, improving their businesses or circumstances. We give women a platform for promoting their skills and practice at giving presentations and meeting people. NWN runs cultural, artistic, and business workshops throughout the year using the talents of its members to instruct the others in a multitude of themes. You name it and we probably do it! We are a non-threatening, all inclusive group where women can seek friendship or professional contacts with members of their own sex who understand where they're coming from. NWN is multi-national/lingual and cultural. At any one of our gatherings (typically 12-15 ladies) there may be a dozen different nationalities.

We are essentially active in Monaco and the French Riviera and meet up once or twice a month at either a member's home or at a local business premises. Members bring food and drink to share and we have either a topic based workshop or a networking evening with a speaker from amongst our members. There is no inscription or membership fee. We operate on a free and informal basis but our work is serious. For smaller professional workshops, there is a modest charge to remunerate the expert running the workshop.

- 2. How does New Women Networking connect with the women it seeks to reach? What do the women bring to each other?**

We communicate our news and events via Facebook, as it's the quickest and most convenient way of reaching the widest audience. We also operate by word of mouth as not all our members are on Facebook. Our women help and support each other, bringing friendship, stimulating ideas and their experience to each other. Everyone says they feel uplifted and inspired after one of our gatherings and in some cases the experience can be life changing.

3. From equal pay to share of household chores, what do you consider the main challenge for women today?

In my opinion the biggest challenge for women is knowing how to realise their full potential, particularly in a professional environment. They need to challenge the fact that they are often short-changed and passed over for promotion once they marry and start a family. We really need to get beyond being 'mummy tracked'. This is a huge issue and until it is fully addressed by society as a whole, women cannot move forward in the knowledge that they have the same opportunities as their male counterparts. Education has a huge part to play and is the starting point but society has to then lobby for changes on a greater scale worldwide.

4. You write and give advice about how to raise children and teenagers in the South of France. What advice would you give to a young teenage girl?

I would tell her to take action today to make her future hopes and dreams a reality. Devise a serious action plan to challenge yourself now and gain self-confidence. Doing an Outward Bound course is a perfect example of this and as General Secretary of the Monaco branch I have been able to direct several of our members' daughters into doing this life-changing course. Know that you can be anything you want to be but above all go beyond the 'dream' phase. Be proactive and show people what you can 'do'. Challenge the 'just a pretty face' attitude. Get advice from older girls and women and LISTEN! Go beyond the superficiality of make-up and fashion and know that if you have enough self-belief and push hard enough, you can achieve whatever goals you set for yourself.

5. The media and society puts increasing pressure on girls and women to look good, instead of focusing on their achievements. How can parents and teachers work to build confidence in girls and teach them to focus on their brains instead of their looks?

Parents and teachers should work together to stop reinforcing this attitude by encouraging girls to 'do' more and praising their achievements and not just complimenting them on their looks and appearance. Teachers can encourage girls (not just boys) to go on adventure courses such as the Outward Bound course I mentioned previously, and parents should of course support this. Parents should refrain from posting 'my beautiful daughter' pictures on social media and focus on spending more time supporting their daughters' accomplishments. They should encourage them to go for their chosen career and guide their actions so that they do not feel trapped into conforming to stereotypical 'female' career tracks. By inviting great female role models into mentorship programmes in schools and as inspirational speakers at events, girls will be inspired to achieve more and gain in self-belief.

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Judy Churchill's career has spanned many years and many continents. As teacher, trainer and coach, she has worked with multinational corporations, VIPs, royalty and sports and entertainment celebrities the world over. Her areas of expertise in Emotional Intelligence, Intercultural Intelligence, Transactional Analysis and NLP have placed her in high demand with a wide variety of professionals including medical consultants and physicians whom she has coached in improved doctor-patient relationship skills.

*Judy speaks five languages, three of which she teaches and translates, and is an acclaimed conference keynote speaker and writer. She also coaches private clients in public speaking, communication and life skills. As a former competitive track and field athlete she understands the benefits of **physical and mental fitness** and is a firm believer that girls and women can do anything they set their mind to with the right guidance, support and skills set.*

She has two grown-up children and currently lives in Monaco where she runs her own business and is a monthly feature writer for www.rivierawoman.com. She can be reached on judy.churchill@orange.fr and www.judychurchill.com