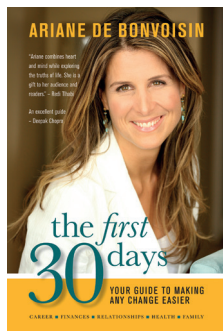




OUT with the Old

Club chats to
Ariane de Bonvoisin
– writer, speaker
and change optimist
– about how she
navigated her own
life change



I had a nomadic childhood – my father was a banker and my mother was a lifestyle journalist so we lived in six countries: the USA, France, Hong Kong, China, Belgium and the UK.

The energy of competition, of power, of money and of doing something big in the world was around me all the time. So I didn't really see an alternative choice to a corporate career.

"My mother is very positive, resilient and excited about life – she always said I should spend time in nature, travel, marry who I want. She is French after all! My father was born during the Second World War – so when I was growing up he was always of the scarcity, fear, bad-things-happen school of thought. The two of them together gave me a balanced view, but a daughter always wants recognition from her father, which is why I did go the safe route. "I graduated from university at the age of 19, then spent 12 years in the corporate world climbing the ranks. That felt like the way to

success and to happiness. I was in my early 30s when I realised I had climbed to the top of the ladder but it was the wrong ladder leaning up against the wrong wall, and that maybe I had followed a path because it was what the world, and my father, expected me to do.

"When I started putting on a lot of weight I knew something was off. It awakened in me a more questioning approach to life. I thought: Is this really it? Does it *have* to be this way? Do I *have* to live in a big city in a tiny apartment? Do I *have* to be busy and running all the time? Do I *have* to see a sunset only once a year? It was hard to talk about these doubts because people had an impression of me and I had to burst that bubble. The hardest shift to make is a change in how you come across to the world; your identity. So I started reading books about pursuing your dream by people who'd left jobs they hated. I surrounded myself with those who'd done it. It took a lot of courage but about two years after the initial doubts set in, I left the corporate world and



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went travelling. I also broke off an engagement. That was the most difficult thing I've done. It's such an alone decision.

"As a woman, you're taught that when a man proposes you say 'yes'. Every part of my body was telling me it was a no. When your heart is on the line and you have to face fears – like maybe you'll never meet someone – those thoughts are so horrifying and you're in such a vulnerable place that you actually believe that stuff. That's why we make bad decisions, because we go into scarcity mode.

"At the time it appeared to others like I was crazy. It was terrifying. In the end, you just need to come back to your choices and beliefs to support your decision. I'm a huge believer that life takes care of you. If you're bold and strong and courageous, and if you believe that something good is out there for you, then eventually doors open. They may not all open at once (life's going to test your endurance a little!), but your belief in the world being a good and positive place has an impact on that trajectory. Asking those hard questions about the world does lead you to the right job and to be in a relationship with the right man.

That's how I wound up here, living in Cape Town. Deep down I always knew I was going to marry a South African. I was walking around ancient temples in Cambodia and I heard his accent and I thought to myself, 'Man, now I'm in trouble'. Today I wake up next to someone with whom I have a soul connection. It was a painful process to get here, but so worth it.

"Professionally, I'm doing what I love too, which is primarily to inspire others to learn and grow. I've written four books and recently created the app, *Mindful 365*, which sends daily content to users wishing to initiate and implement more conscious living. I'm also a keynote speaker and life coach.

"I'm a new parent and a big believer in teaching children to be okay with change. We don't help our kids when we keep everything the same; they go out in the world as young adults and experience that everything is changing. They go 'Uh-oh, my world is unstable'. I think living in six countries like I did growing up was a bit much, but we were taught that our roots were inside of us. It has given me the ability to not be too dependent on something external. It's the external environment that is guaranteed to change, but you're going to hang around with you for a very long time. The more you can come back to your centre for the answers, the better." 

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT ARIANE WITH HER SOUTH AFRICAN HUSBAND, ALFIE AND TWO-YEAR-OLD SON, EVEREST; ARIANE TRADED THE FAST PACE OF NEW YORK CITY FOR THE BEACHES AND MOUNTAINS OF CAPE TOWN; ENJOYING THE VIEW FROM THE TOP OF TABLE MOUNTAIN



WIN

THE FIRST 30 DAYS: YOUR GUIDE TO MAKING ANY CHANGE EASIER (JONATHAN BALL) IS ON SALE NOW. TO STAND A CHANCE TO WIN ONE OF THREE COPIES, SEND AN EMAIL TO COMPETITIONS@CONTACTEDEDGARSCLUB.CO.ZA BY 19 SEPTEMBER 2015.