

Emma Fry interviewed by The Telegraph UK

I was motivated by the simple fact that I couldn't find what I was looking for - so I created it. I'd spent ten years living on the road, in Latin America and North Africa, working as a tour leader. My job saw me plan around 100 trips for 1500 people across 20 countries. I explored the Peruvian jungle, travelled across the Chilean Atacama desert and witnessed volcanoes erupting in Ecuador. But when I decided to come back for a holiday in Europe, I couldn't find any vegan friendly accommodation and travel services. I realised they didn't exist - and the seed was planted.

In 2012, I started the Veganbnb, a small vegan bed and breakfast in Malaga, southern Spain.

### **Tell us about your business**

Veganbnb Travel offers four to ten day vegan friendly holidays in Guatemala and Spain. They're open to everyone and are totally family friendly - I have many clients who are neither vegan or vegetarian, but are interested in having a happier and healthier lifestyle.

Each experience is unique as I research, plan and run all of my own trips. They generally combine outdoor activities with foodie experiences. Think vegan paella and fresh mountain air. I am also dedicated to sustainable tourism - my years on the road and people I have met on along the way have been invaluable in my entrepreneurial journey.

### **What were the first few steps you took to get your business up and running?**

Lots and lots of motorbike adventures in Guatemala (where I formulated my idea, drank loads of coffee and ate too many avocados). Then I had to create a website. Unfortunately it quickly became clear that while motorbike adventures came easily to me, I was no web designer.

Very important questions to ask yourself at the beginning of any entrepreneurial journey are: what are your skills, what do you do well and what needs to be done by someone else?

### **How have you raised awareness?**

Through social media, predominantly Twitter and Facebook. They enabled me to connect up with others in the travel industry and feel incredibly supported - so much so that I've dedicated a section of my

newsletter to 'Giving back and Moving Forward' in order to raise awareness of other businesses. I have also learnt to value good old fashioned communication. There's nothing like actually talking to someone either on the phone, via Skype or face- to-face. It's priceless.

### **What has been your biggest challenge so far?**

Time management and having the desire to start at least another five new businesses every day. One of the biggest impediments to the entrepreneurial spirit is bureaucracy, red tape and the rules and regulations.

### **How do you overcome challenges?**

Challenge is the catalyst for change. I think that most entrepreneurs consciously or subconsciously seek out challenges. They're at the very core of my being. I am dedicated to creating change and this requires absolute commitment.

In order to overcome challenges I write monthly, weekly and daily timetables and goals. Breaking things down into achievable chunks is incredibly helpful.

### **What do you love about running your own business?**

Creative freedom, having a platform to challenge the status quo.

### **How do you stay motivated through difficult times?**

By connecting with people. This is so important. Being an entrepreneur is wonderful and there are many benefits - but it can also be a lonely journey. Its absolutely crucial to recognise that you'll need to maintain those connections in order to remain motivated. Stay close to friends and family and seek out business resources and groups. I try to surround myself by people that inspire me.

### **Do you have a business philosophy?**

To inspire change in the way we do business. We all have the ability to create our own economies, while offering great service and remaining loyal to our clients and their values.

### **What advice would you give to other budding entrepreneurs?**

Entrepreneurship is a career choice, there are many brilliant tools and resources out there to support that. Don't forget to ask for help when you need it. And have fun!

### **How I did it**

**When I face a big challenge I...**

I create space, both internally and externally. When I'm feeling challenged I immediately shake everything up and change my routine, which allows for clarity. I also get myself, literally, into the great outdoors. This helps to process the challenge, so that I can really focus on finding solutions.

**My greatest fear is...**

Having to live in one place and losing the freedom of movement.

**The most courageous thing I've ever done is...**

Made the commitment to myself to create my own economy.

**If I could go back in time to when I was 20 I would tell myself...**

You won't be a rebel without a cause forever. And change your taste in men!

**I believe...**

As long as you are alive, it's possible.

**The biggest lesson I have ever learned is...**

There are no limits.

**My favourite business tool or resource is...**

Google for the mechanics of business and I'm addicted to TED Talks, and Do Lectures. Observing and listening to other entrepreneurs and passionate people doing things and creating change is an invaluable resource.

**My favourite quote is...**

Put your money where your morals are.