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Rebekah Prince: How I became a strong woman

REBEKAH PRINCE HOW I BECAME A STRONG WOMAN

Rebekah Prince is the Founder and Director of Prince's. Her drive and tenacity has enabled hundreds of clients to achieve phenomenal results. Rebekah is a vibrant, reliable and soulful character that mixes with the team and is always smiling. She brings positivity and fun into all she does. A serial entrepreneur, her passion is to travel the globe and experience different cultures. Where possible Rebekah combines her travels with charity events and has trekked up Macchu Picchu and the Himalayas, for Fair Havens Hospices and Bowel Cancer UK in gratitude for saving her father from the disease. She painted the 'End of Life' room in an Indian hospice, and continues to participate in many fun runs and events.

A very powerful story that will make you reflect, learn and unlock your potential to achieve everything you want in life – Rebekah Prince, a woman who was born to be a princess of her empire: www.princesconsultancy.com

How do you remember your childhood and how do you think this has impacted on who you are today?

I remember my parents working extremely hard to offer my sister and I all we could have wished for. We were never spoiled, but I don't remember wanting for anything significant. My father taught me the value of money at a very young age. I remember polishing his shoes (ten pairs) for 2p each pair (my price) at maybe the age of six. Then realising that I could charge 10p per pair. The entrepreneur was born! Both my parents had very tough upbringings and they worked hard for everything they had. My dad was born in 1941 and lived through the war years; as a result he experienced rationing, and learnt through his parents sacrifice and hardship that hard work was rewarded and you could build yourself a better life and open doors. Similarly, after the death of her parents at a very young age, my mum was bought a one way ticket to the UK from Serbia. She had to learn fast how to be independent and provide for herself in a foreign country with nothing.



Therefore my families' work ethic to survive and be independent was strong. My parents never had time off work needlessly or for being ill and as a child I remember trying to fake being ill to get time off school and being told I had to stay in bed with no games or TV. This was worse than a punishment so we always went to school, my mum would say "If you are too ill for school you are too ill for fun" always makes me laugh now, as my sister and I tried to stay home like our friends many times. As a young adult my parents gave my sister and I pocket money; it was 50p a week. My best friend was getting £2 pocket money and £10 clothing allowance per week. This was not because my parents could not afford it but instead to teach us the value of money. As a teenager I noticed the differences e.g. when my button came off my blouse I was taught to sew mine back on whereas my friend would buy another blouse. Of course at the time I thought this was extremely unfair but now I understand it was not about the money but about being respectful for what we have as so many others are not as fortunate and we can be such a 'throw away' society!

As a young teenager my motives were different than they are today; I wanted to work so I could have what my friend could afford and buy new clothes. I wanted to be independent and buy what I wanted without having to ask or justify it. I started asking my parents to pay me to complete tasks such as washing the car, cleaning the fish tanks or clearing out the sheds. This independence meant I could go to the cinema and out with friends and I got 'the work bug'. Whilst my upbringing was strict, it has made me the strong independent female I am today. I now know I am in control of what happens next, what doors I can open and what opportunities I can enjoy.

What was your dream to become in life and how far you are from that dream?

As a child my dream was to become a pop star or a television news reader, I would spend hours practising my singing to Kylie Minogue (with my hairbrush and record player); unfortunately I was incredibly shy, lacking self-confidence and missed many opportunities to put myself forward, preferring to hide and go unnoticed. In my teenage years I just knew I wanted to be successful. I didn't know what this involved back then, I think I just thought having money meant you were successful. I remember my new boss asking me aged 21 'what being successful meant to me and how I would know I was a success?' I used to say 'when I have time to do lunch and get my nails done'. If only life was that simple!

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Even so, this was my driver; I wanted to earn and earn big so I could buy and do whatever I wanted. Initially this meant working every hour possible at a number of jobs to be able to survive and just pay bills. I wanted to pass this survival stage and have surplus monies; to be free. In my early twenties, having invested in two career opportunities and being made redundant both times, I swore it would not happen a third time and in 2003 I set up my own business. I remember the advice relentlessly being 'why don't you go and get a proper job, you will never succeed, this is another of your crazy ideas...'.

My father had been extremely strict regarding education and his methods of telling me I was a failure and a disappointment worked well to motivate me for many years; as I wanted to prove him wrong and excelled in whatever I chose to do. Whilst I now realise he always had my best interests at heart and never ever believed I was a failure or disappointment, the seed was sown. In adulthood I continued to attract people that carried on this critique telling me I would never succeed... to which my response was always the same, "Watch me". The business was no different, failure was not an option. I had to do this! Thirteen years on and counting (having lost everything twice and rebuilt it) Prince's Consultancy Services is a huge success with a wait list of clients. Failure made me the strong woman I am today, I now know there is nothing I cannot achieve with the right mindset. I love the Japanese proverb 'fall 7 times, stand up 8!'



Now I measure my success by the independence it gives me, the freedom I have to do as I want but most importantly the ability to help others. I love to do charity work and educate others how giving back and putting love into all you do is not only rewarding on a personal level but also on a soul level. I believe the universe will look after you and reward all that you do and for this I feel my dream of being successful is almost complete, the final jigsaw piece being to have a family of my own in the future. I am grateful for all I have, I have amazing friends and family, my beautiful animals and a wonderful home.

What motivates you to wake up in the morning and be inspired?

I feel so lucky to have my health, and the love of others. I have always worked really hard and as a result I am lucky enough to have many material things that others may not have. I always wanted to have the independence my parents taught me to have. I used to see friends struggle to bring their children up and/or having to ask their husbands for £10 for the baby or money for shoes and having to justify their actions. I swore this would never happen to me and I would create my own independence. For years I struggled and worked with what felt like no life, sacrificing my youth; at times it felt like groundhog day. The goal remained to be independent, to be the best I could be and to be successful and I forced myself to get up every day and carry on until the goal was achieved. The problem was I kept moving the goal posts! I feel so grateful for all that I have and love the rewards that life gives me. I feel it is important to share my knowledge and success with others and for this reason I get up no matter how tired I am or what I am going through; as it gives me immense pleasure to see others succeed and to enjoy my life. I always do what I say I will do and try my best to never let others down.

I BELIEVE OUR MINDS ARE NOT CAPABLE OF IMAGING THE LIMITLESS OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE OPEN TO US SO WE MUST SEE WHERE LIFE CAN TAKE US.

You get one life, and in my opinion life is about the choices we make. I choose to live every minute I have and never miss an opportunity. I say yes to all (safe) offers and see where life takes me. I believe our minds are not capable of imaging the limitless opportunities that are open to us so we must see where life can take us.

Life is not about what happened in the past or what will happen in the future it's about the ride.. it is this ride and the limitless possibilities that life has to offer that makes me get up every morning. I want to be surrounded by happiness and that includes my clients; therefore I rise every morning to do my best and achieve greatness. Most days this means preparing for an audit or attending an audit. The thrill my clients get from passing is a key driver for me. The adrenaline to succeed becomes addictive.

What are the best values that you can recognise in yourself?

I ASKED MY FRIENDS THIS QUESTION AND THIS IS THE FEEDBACK I RECEIVED:

**INTEGRITY,
HONESTY, ALWAYS
FUN TO BE AROUND
AND ALWAYS LEARN
SOMETHING NEW
FROM ME,
KIND/CARING,
INCREDIBLY WISE.
INTERESTING AND
DETERMINED.HARD
WORKING,
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ALWAYS WILLING
TO HELP AND GIVE**

Has been through so much and she uses all the experiences to help others. I agree with all of the above; I believe by putting love into all I do and a bit of crazy means I live life to the full and show others how to do it. I was a timid, insecure, shy child that would forever be left in the shadows, I hid my talents because I was bullied for excelling at school. I trained myself to forget everything I knew as a child and to start fresh. As an adult I strive to show others what they can achieve and give them the confidence and tools how to do whatever they want, without being arrogant and always being grateful. I am now a leader and show others what success means and that it is not about the money!

I try not to judge and always try to remember to put myself in the shoes of others. I can regularly be heard saying 'put love into all you do!' This bit of crazy extends to my soft animal loving side too and I am affectionately known as the crazy cat lady as over the past 18 years I have rescued nine cats from ages 1-18 years that I adore. I love that saying 'I tried to be normal once. Worst two minutes of my life' and so true!

This was a message from a girl I met on a mini-break:

"Just wanted to say thank you for the wisdom that you shared with me about asking for help/manifesting abundance/positivity/thanks with ease and grace. You gave me a very powerful message that I heard completely and for the very first time in my life I was in a place to hear it and take it on board. Since getting home everything has shifted ... the world is brighter and the abundance is flowing daily. You are one talented earth angel....."

My success comes from listening to my true self and calling upon my feminine wisdom, and being honest and true to one's self. A woman does not need to step into an assertive role or act like a man in order to be effective, she simply needs to get in touch with her insight and sense of compassion to truly demonstrate the depth of her strength. Once I learned to integrate this strength into my daily tasks and decision making. I was more flexible and receptive to new ideas and my client's needs.

Also being resilient, I had the choice to go ahead and make decisions to make sure I had

TO HELP AND GIVE ADVICE, FULL OF LIFE. A BIT CRAZY.

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Also being resilient, I had the choice to go ahead and make decisions to make sure I had an illusion of security, or to dive into the unknown. Being effective in difficult circumstances and setbacks is what enacted change and propelled me and my business forward. What are the actions that you take every day to show the love for yourself? I have learnt to be true to myself, to listen to my body, to say no. If it doesn't feel right in my gut, I do not do it. I am honest in a loving way with everyone. If someone is mean or their actions/words are hurtful, I educate them on why they have hurt me or others, and this way I hold no contempt or bitterness. I only spend time with people that I enjoy being with. I always send those that wrong or hurt me love, as ultimately I believe any revenge will only hurt me. Karma, we get back what we put out; therefore my strength comes from trying every day to be a better person than I was yesterday. I am still human; I still make mistakes, only now I try to make everything better and the world a better place.



I block and delete negativity from my life; I do not watch horror movies, the news, or fear making television. I do not read newspapers. Instead I listen to audio self-help books; making my car journeys a classroom. I regularly have massages, spend time with my fur-babies, try to eat clean, exercise, get my hair and nails done and socialise. Laughter is good for the soul as is relaxing! I travel whenever I can, soaking up the vitamin D and remaining grateful. I thank my angels daily for all the help and guidance they give me. For years I hid my spiritual side, due to being mocked and ridiculed. The irony is that once I embraced it, the most wonderful people and opportunities came into my life; I had found an inner strength.

LAUGHTER IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL AS IS RELAXING!

The people I considered to be friends were suddenly highlighted for their narcissism and I no longer wanted to associate myself with them. You are who you hang around with and I am now loved and one lucky lady. Success is about being able to share what you have with others and I get this pleasure daily, whether it be sharing my lunch with a client or buying food/clothes for a homeless person. I am ultimately true to myself; of course I still have challenges in my life but it is how I react to them that makes the difference. I acknowledge the lesson that I need to learn and move forward. Growing with every challenge I experience, without pain, how do we know love? This knowledge is what gives me strength and encourages me to love myself. We attract what we are so if I do not show love to myself, how will I attract love? In addition, when helping others we ultimately always help ourselves!

Who are the most important people that had an influence in your life?

My parents, who moulded me to be who I am. To spread my wings like an eagle and not a sparrow. To enjoy greatness and always give back.

My first boss, Trevor Webb, who I would mimic. He taught me to always walk like I was going somewhere, with strength and to always acknowledge every person I saw from the cleaners to the directors as they were all very important. This has stood me in good stead as I still continue this advice daily with huge impact. All those that wronged me – as I never ever wanted to be so cruel. I always wanted to spread love and happiness. Which led me to find

Louise Hay – she is the founder of Hay House publishing...her books changed my life and I have continued to change my vibrations and my outlook. Through affirmations I have become strong and limitless. Every-time someone says you can't do that 'I prove them wrong...with grace'. The universe has infinite abundance for us all whether that be money, love, travel, etc... there is enough for all of us.

You have achieved a lot in life, especially trying to walk in a path that is more dominated by men – what encouraged you toward this path?

Being a female – females were not valued or accepted in the motor industry and to some extent still are not. It is a cut throat industry; you have to be incredibly strong to survive. I would regularly be asked "Get me a man to talk to". The men were dominant and intense so I had to learn how to be like them and not be intimidated. I learnt how to be approachable and let my success do the talking. I differed to my female peers as there was nothing work related that I wouldn't do. Most females would cry if spoken to harshly, they wouldn't lift boxes or work late. My parent's work ethic carried through and I did what was needed to get the job done successfully. Now I am the authority in my field and respected. Most of my clients introduce me as 'the guru', and tell the staff to 'do whatever I tell them'. My instruction is

actioned and success is consistent. I do not advertise, all my work is by word of mouth and reputation.

Overcoming the consultant stereotype of a rigid boring person with a clipboard was initially a challenge. In the beginning I tried to change my appearance but once I embraced the real me, my clients welcomed me. They could sense I wasn't being real which made them distrust me slightly. Only when I was true to myself would I receive comments like "Wow you are normal... like us". They loved that I wore high heels, lipstick and spoke their language. I also answered back and held people accountable for their actions in a constructive manner; I am certainly no longer the shy insecure girl I was. My clients embraced and welcomed me and word soon travelled that I was proactive, fun and got the job done in super quick-time. Once I found my winning formula, which was to just be me...the rest was easy. I now continue this path. Over the past decade my knowledge has grown and I am the expert in my field. I am able to get results where others repeatedly fail. I bring out the best in people and empower whole departments to embrace change and think more positively. I am informed my competitors try to copy me but I really don't feel like they have the same objective. I treat all my clients like friends, I enjoy going to work and become part of the team.



I GREW UP VERY FAST

In my early twenties I just wanted to be a success. At the age of 17, my boyfriend had a serious motorbike accident, which put him in intensive care for a long time. He had recently bought a flat and had not paid any bills. Therefore I grew up very fast and whilst attending university I worked at three jobs to save his home and buy furniture and food for him to return and rehabilitate. I was like a zombie as I worked so many hours with very little sleep. This led me to have huge successes in each role (shop assistant, care assistant in nursing home and restaurant/bar manageress of Chicago's) as I had such a strong and professional work ethic at such a young age. At the age of 21 I was offered to run my own Chicago Rock Café unit in Southend but my father advised me to return to university, saying that whilst it was a fantastic opportunity at my age "Did I always want to work such anti-social hours!?" I finished university and was accepted onto a graduate scheme in the motor trade for the Sidlow Group; which comprised of 14 multi branded dealerships. Due to a betrayal from my boyfriend, with most of the people I knew I relocated my whole life to West Sussex (70 miles from home) and started life again. This was a lot harder than I ever imagined and I felt so alone. I purchased a house which combined with a shopping addiction stretched me to the limit financially. Within two years I had excelled in each of the departments and at each appraisal I broke all the rules and asked for a pay rise and to be promoted or developed. Everyone advised me never to ask for a pay rise or promotion, but in short my father told me 'don't ask, don't get' so I asked and I got.

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Initially it was a necessity to succeed, failure was not an option. I had nothing apart from this house and I certainly was not going to lose face and lose it. I endlessly read self-help books and asked my managers/directors for advice. In time, I was promoted to Quality Manager for the group. I had transformed myself from this feeble girl intimidated by customers and the managers; to a force to be reckoned with. My Director would describe me as his 'Rottweiler that was hard as nails'. Every appraisal I had I was told how poor my interpersonal skills were as I dealt in anger and frustration. Again more self-help books, I booked myself on courses and transformed myself again.

The path was so hard in the beginning, in the service department, as no one would listen to me because I was a female in the motor trade. Customers would actually ask to talk to a man – the irony was I would dictate to the 'man' what to say to the customer. As my confidence improved I would stand up to the customers and tell them they could talk directly to me as I was running the department. Having turned the department around in six months we had no debtors, no WIP and it was the first time for a long while that the department was making money. I was ambitious and again wanted a challenge.

So I was moved to the sales department. In my first week I loved it; staff were waving at me at work constantly; I had done 5 deals at a time when sales execs were selling 5 vehicles a month; not a week. This 'newby' was then bullied by the sales execs – they would steal my deals, move me to the rear of the showroom and give me all the tasks to do to prevent me having time to sell. I would cry in the toilets but never ever show vulnerability to them. I would try to speak to my manager but he would belittle me and take the sides of the Sales Execs ignoring me as being a winey girl. I asked successful friends for help and learnt to fake it till you make it.

A friend in recruitment gave me advice that 'people buy from people'. From that moment I was myself and continued to be one of the top Sales Execs. After another six months; having defeated my demons, I again asked for another challenge. Six months later I was achieving consistent passes at all our manufacturing audits where they had previously failed and I was promoted to the Directors PA and Quality Manager for the Sidlow Group. This was a huge achievement; the peers I had started with on the same graduate programme were still in the roles they started in. My father's advice of 'don't ask don't get' combined with hard work, had paid off. I consistently asked for new challenges and promotions and got them; every-time.

MY FATHER'S ADVICE OF 'DON'T ASK DON'T GET' COMBINED WITH HARD WORK, HAD PAID OFF.

This time in my life was hard, every day was a struggle, both mentally and financially as I was forever learning new things. I was intimidated by other staff that were threatened by me. I was so young all I wanted to do was work and succeed I had no idea why they would see me as a threat. Worst of all I had no support as I had left it all behind in Essex; due to the betrayal. I completed a degree in health and safety and thought I would diversify into this.

However, in 2002 the company hit hard times and I was made redundant. I worked with Ford the manufacturer and again had to relearn everything, it was incredibly intimidating as the engineers had been there for up to 30 years and I was supposed to be training them. My self-esteem was so low. I had to learn fast. I either sank or swam, so again I turned to the self-help books, I made friends with key people and asked them to train me (the nature of the business is they make the contractors redundant at each holiday period). I decided I would not be made redundant again so in 2003 I set up my own business. In the coming months, Sidlow made many redundancies and the staff went to many dealerships. My phone did not stop ringing asking me to come and help with their quality management systems. I had become a mini expert in this field.

Over time I strived to become the best. I vowed to never be like the majority of consultants that come into your business, consume a day, make you feel inadequate and then leave you a huge action plan that you don't really understand. The subjects are notoriously boring and consultants have the stigma of being 'boring time saps with clipboards'. My clients loved the fact that I rocked up with the latest fashions, (I am famous for my crazy shoes as I have over 500 pairs!) I made the subjects fun and always made a point of completing huge tasks for the client so I gave value. I work fast and am extremely knowledgeable – what would take them three days I would do in a few hours to the highest standards.

You seem to be a very strong character, a person who opens doors for yourself and not waiting for the doors to be open – what made you such a strong personality?

Tough question: I genuinely think I was wronged by so many, taken advantage of, and lied to and betrayed repeatedly. I made the decision to go alone and be in control of my own destiny. I will not let another person hurt me so much. No more tears will be cried. No more will I fear the future – I now take control and strive for my own excellence.



Initially I became very guarded and cold to achieve it as I didn't know how to be strong and robust. Now in my thirties I understand vulnerability is not weakness. I am honest with my clients; we talk as friends and look out for each other whether that be an isolated visit or repeated over the past thirteen years. I break the rules.... I hug my clients and genuinely care about them. Even the hardest of characters needs a hug!

Once I realised I could be myself and I was respected in my own right my whole world changed. I continued to study hard and work long hours. I invest in every client and treat their business as if it is my own and they respect this. I specialise in removing the burden from the managers/staff and get fantastic results. I have combined my spirituality and journey as a healer (my other business) with my consultancy (despite constantly being advised not to). This has given me a strength and a confidence that is infallible. Networking also helped me immensely. I believe successful people learn from those around them. Combined with a shared passion. I used to lack confidence in marketing myself but soon learnt that without clients, I could not pursue my passion and grow the business, therefore I adapted and put myself in uncomfortable situations - 'fake it until you make it'. I attended many networking events and made some life-long friends.

I BELIEVE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE LEARN FROM THOSE AROUND THEM.

Lastly I believe once you know what you want and you focus, you can go and get it. Nothing will stop me from my goal. I wanted the business to be a success. Which it is. My next objective is to take the company global. I had a vision back in 2003 which has continued to be exceeded. I have changed with every turn and adapted to situations that have arisen which has changed me as a person for the better.

Sometimes, behind a strong personality there is a very soft human – how do you manage your strengths and weakness?

I describe myself as a Ferrero Rocher chocolate. Hard shell when required and soft centre. In order to get results at times I have to be a strong leader and discipline people; I take no BS. I work in very high pressure, stressful environments at times and have to be hard to get results. Many people in high positions try to intimidate me or my clients and I will always face these situations square on. However, I am never volatile or mean. The protective Rottweiler from my younger days is still in me, however most of the time I am a sappy pup that loves to be playful. One of my spiritual gifts is that I am incredibly intuitive and I feel others people's emotions and this is when my true softness comes out. I feel people's pain and instantly feel the need to heal them, which is wonderfully rewarding. I can do reiki, theta, EFT, life coaching, whatever they need which I combine daily sometimes without my clients even knowing. My biggest weakness is animals, I cannot abide animal cruelty and hence have ended up with crazy cat lady status; rescuing currently 7 cats. All have had such traumatic lives and I am grateful that I am able to show them the love they deserve.

What is a dream that makes you feel scared and you are still waiting for it?

To have a partner that loves me and my animals so much. To have a family and live happily ever after – one love for life. I feel I have achieved so much but cannot believe I am single at 38. I am asked often asked why am I single. This is partly because I made bad choices when younger and stayed in the relationships too long but also because I am waiting for the one! I sometimes feel scared that I will be alone and a crazy cat lady but I trust that he will find me when the time is right to complete my jigsaw. I am also learning Latin and ballroom dancing and my dream is win a Blackpool competition and be the best!

Tell us about your work at Prince's?

Prince's does what it takes to get our clients a successful pass, whether that be a health and safety audit, ISO standard or manufacturer brand standards audit. We proactively improve the processes within each organisation and utilise all available resources. We provide practical, friendly hands on assistance to enable organisations to meet the rigorous demands placed upon them. Our competitively priced services have been exceptionally well received by the dealer network in the motor and construction trades, due to the outstanding results consistently achieved in minimal time periods. We can tailor what we do to all industries; we have clients in precious metals, exhibitions, under floor heating and stationery! We differ to other consultants in that we do the work for our clients (where necessary) and do not tell them what they haven't done! By using Prince's, organisations remove the associated burdens with achieving standards from their productive managers and are able to take pride in the results achieved. Failure is not an option and we will do all we can to achieve a successful pass. Whether organisations require gentle implementation or fire fighting assistance we support their needs both directly and indirectly.

Our consultants train staff, streamline and execute robust processes in their simplest forms for ease of implementation. We attend the site in preparation for the audits so clients and their staff are confident and prepared for all eventualities.

The future is exciting; my aspirations for Prince's are to continue to successfully grow and to take the company global. I want to continue to spread my message further and help more people. I love passing on my knowledge, skills and expertise and making people's lives easier with guidance.