water matters

FOR MERCHANTS, CONTRACTORS AND DEVELOPERS WHO EXPECT THE BEST FROM THEIR SUPPLIERS



Take ownership

Success Principle #1: Take 100% responsibility

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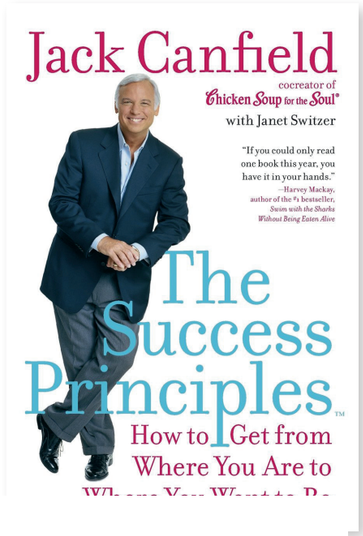
The first ever personal development book I read, was ***The Success Principles*** by Jack Canfield. In it, Jack Canfield shares 64 success principles. The first of which, is Success Principle #1: Take 100% responsibility.

I read this book back in 2007, 14 years ago, yet I still remember some of the success principles off by heart. Including this one, to take 100% responsibility, as well as Success Principle #17: Ask, Ask, Ask and Success Principle #56: Be a Class Act. If you've not read the book, I'd highly recommend it.

14 years on from reading about taking 100% responsibility, one of our 5 Company Values within Graf UK is to... **'Take Ownership'**.

In essence, it means to take 100% responsibility. It's the starting point to all success.





To take ownership of something means it's yours. Your idea, your problem to solve, your plan to deliver, your team to lead, your customer to help.

Own it. Take responsibility for it.

> If it's to be, it's up to me.

There's power in taking ownership.

Can you think of something you've taken ownership for?

The minute you've taken ownership, it's yours to sort out. You're now responsible. It's up to you to deliver.

The great benefit of living up to this value, day in, day out, is it nullifies blame.

Once you've taken ownership, you can no longer blame someone else (well, not without looking foolish). And blame never helps anyone, so it's incredibly important to remove its existence.

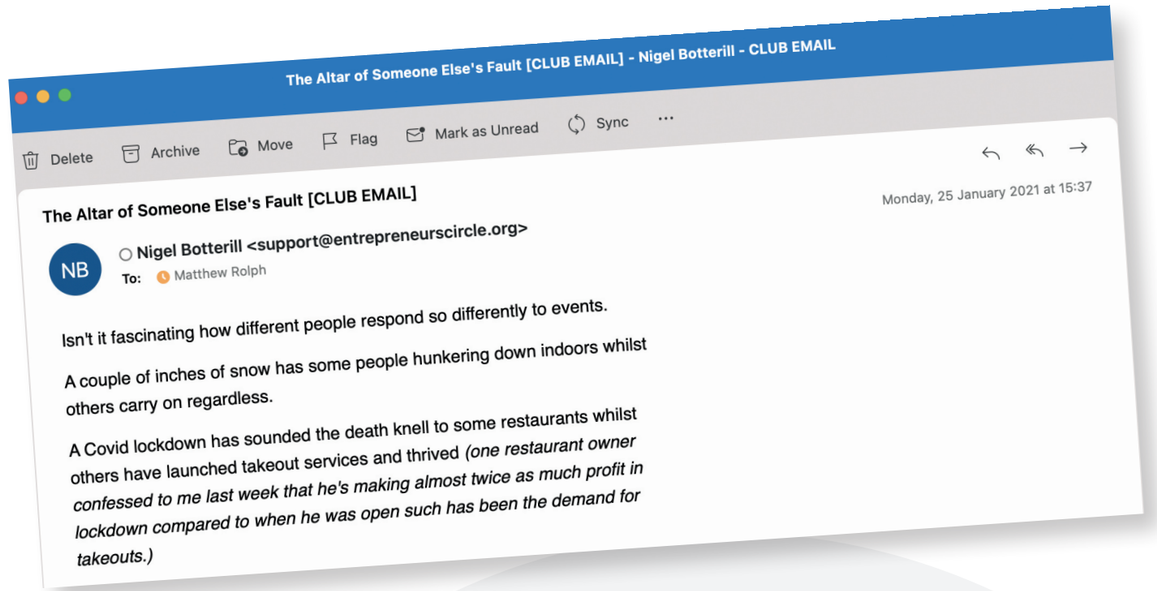
I received a great email from Nigel Botterill of the Entrepreneurs Circle a month or so ago, which sums up the importance of taking ownership so succinctly that I'd like to share it with you here. I'm sure you can relate to it in someway.

From: **Nigel Botterill**
To: **Matthew Rolph**
Subject: **The Alter of Someone Else's Fault**

Isn't it fascinating how different people respond so differently to events.

A couple of inches of snow has some people hunkering down indoors whilst others carry on regardless.

A Covid lockdown has sounded the death knell to some restaurants whilst others have launched takeout services and thrived (one restaurant owner confessed to me last week that he's making almost twice as much profit in lockdown compared to when he was open such has been the demand for takeouts.)



*Lockdown is sh*t - and I'm not pretending otherwise.*

But there's always something you can do.

Always.

And whatever happens to your business, you're 100% responsible.

Which means it's all your fault.

Not Covid. Not Boris. Yours.

"Ooh, that's a bit harsh Nige" some will say. "We're in the middle of a pandemic"

Yep. I know.

But too many folk are martyrs at the altar of 'Someone Else's Fault' and their mindset guarantees that they'll never be wealthy.

In truth, things for them will always be hard.

Because there's a B-I-G price to pay for absolving yourself of blame: a rubbish life.

And the truth is lots and lots of people blame everyone and everything but themselves.

But in business there's no such thing as victims - only volunteers.

Even in 2021.

It's not that I'm devoid of sympathy - I'm not.

But there's always something you can do.

Opportunities to be found. Things that will make it better.

And it's your job to find 'em.

The EC - and in particular the EC Facebook Group - has hundreds of smart, switched-on entrepreneurs who are very, very supportive and very giving.

But you've got to ask.

Have a great week,

Nigel

Whether you like Nigel's direct, no-nonsense Yorkshire tone or not, his words hold some power.

> In business there's no such thing as victims - only volunteers,

Wow! What a reminder!

The minute you take ownership, you realise he's right you know.

If you're not completely happy with your lot right now, it's you who must do something about it. If you're not smiling every day and looking forward to jumping out of bed in the morning, then only you can do something about that. If you're not satisfied with your results from your work so far this year, it's you who must take ownership and do something about it.

As you'll read about over the next few pages, there is always something you can do. Something new you can learn. New ideas you can implement. Opportunities really are out there to be found. Things that will make it better.

If you give this value of ours a try - Take Ownership - you're so much more likely to find 'em.

Have a great month - and thanks for reading *Water Matters*.

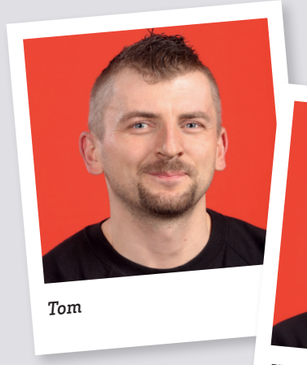
Matthew ■

Sharing Our Values – Take ownership

Take ownership

If you've ever wondered who takes ownership to get your orders out to sites on time and in full, here are a few shout-outs to our team members who make it all happen...

You order a 7PE One2Clean wastewater treatment plant for delivery to the south of England. We've always got several built-up and ready to be sent out to site. Each of our domestic One2Clean sewage treatment plants take anywhere from 20-40 minutes to assemble and quality check, before they're ready to be dispatched. The 2 team members who take ownership for making sure we've always got systems assembled and ready to go from our Banbury warehouse, are Tom & Kam. Often building 3 or 4 systems before 8am every morning, they take full responsibility for making sure we're prepared and ready for more and more orders.

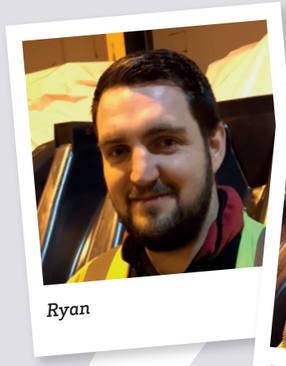


Tom



Kam

You show up to our Glasgow branch and want to collect a septic tank to take away with you. Chances are, there's more than one ready to be dispatched for you to take away there and then, but occasionally we may have to quickly assemble one for you. Our 2 team members who jump to this task whenever required and own it from start to finish, are Ryan & Tony. They take responsibility for getting it done as quickly as possible, whilst also taking ownership for the quality of the job.



Ryan

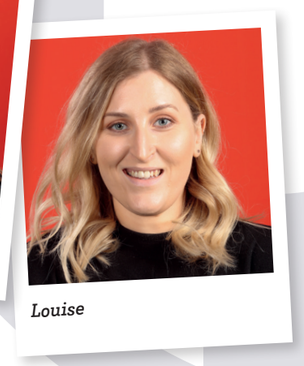


Tony

You order anything with us, be it EcoBloc crates for a stormwater tank or a rainwater harvesting system, and of course you expect to receive the goods exactly as per your order. On time, in full, on the right site, with all the right bits. Well, taking ownership of all order processing for you is Alicia, Louise, Emily & Charlie. All 4 of them are held accountable for the all important attention to detail in this area of our business. Ultimately it's a big responsibility and they own it, everyday of the week.



Alicia



Louise



Emily



Charlie





Thanks to these few examples and to all our team members who show up everyday and live up to this value of ours.

Everything improves when you **Take Ownership**. Give it a go & see for yourself.



Why Moana is My Favourite Disney Movie



Callum Vallance-Poole

During the 3rd and latest instalment of national lockdown I decided to sign up to Disney+, as I had run out of decent movies to watch on Netflix and Amazon Prime.



Now you may be thinking, "out of all the Disney classics that have been made, how on earth is Moana his favourite?!". Well simply put, I haven't watched 99% of the Disney classics/I can't remember what happened in any of them. For example, apparently as a child I used to love watching the Lion King but I have no idea how the movie goes as I haven't watched it in so long. The same could be said for the Jungle Book. And I haven't watched other Disney classics like Frozen because they never really appealed to me.

So when it came down to choosing which movie I wanted to watch on Disney+, the main reason I chose to watch Moana is because Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson is the voice of 'Maui', a Polynesian Demi-God.



If you have read any of my articles before, you know I have a lot of admiration for The Rock, as I grew up watching him wrestle for WWE in the early 2000s. And we have a lot in common, in the fact we are two big dudes who like lifting weights and sipping tequila. 🤙🥃

For those of you that haven't seen the movie, I'm about to spoil what happens whilst explaining why it's my favourite Disney film. So, you may want to skip this next part and carry on laughing at my previous statement.

The movie is about a young girl who wants to travel the open seas in search of adventure and fulfilment, however she is the daughter of the Village Chief, so she is expected by her parents and her fellow villagers to stay on the island and look after the village. However, this is not what she wants to do with her life. She wants to live her own life, travel, experience the world and create her own story and not live the life other people expect her to live.

Throughout her childhood she is fascinated by the sea, it calls out to her, mainly because she has been chosen by the gods to reunite a mystical relic with the goddess Te Fiti.

As Moana starts to reach adolescence she keeps wanting to set sail and voyage across the open seas, yet her father always tries to stop her from setting sail as he sees it as too risky and dangerous and would rather Moana stays on the island, to look after the village and one day takeover the role of village chief.

Soon after, one of Moana's closest family members dies. It is her Grandmother, who constantly tries to encourage her to set sail and go on her own adventure. This is the catalyst that pushes Moana out of her comfort zone and is the reason she starts her voyage. Moana then begins her quest to find Maui and return the ancient relic to Te Fiti.

And this is why it is my favourite Disney movie! It is about an individual who wants to create her own story, her own legacy and become the person she wants to be, rather than becoming the person that her family, her friends and her community wants her to be.

Depending on what you believe, it is my belief that we all have one life. We all have one go at it. So we owe it to ourselves to become the person that we want to be and not the person other people want us to be.

As you know this month's *Water Matters* is all about, **Taking Ownership**. Which ties-in very nicely to the message I took from the movie.

We all have one life to live and we all have goals, targets and aspirations that we want to accomplish. And in order to do so, we need to take ownership of our lives.

If you want to start your own civils and drainage online shop, take ownership and do it. If you want to learn a new language, take ownership and do it. If you want to learn a new skill that will result in a pay rise or an added work benefit, **take ownership and do it**.

You should live your life in accordance with your own expectations and aspirations. You shouldn't let the expectations of your parents, partner or friends dictate how you live your life.

You are in total control of your own life and how you live it. It's down to you, to take ownership and live it! ■

If your product is good enough, it can make up for your lack of ownership



Have you noticed that some companies – and people for that matter – always find someone else to blame?

It's rarely their fault. There's always something else or someone else, responsible for their poor performance.

I've written in Water Matters before about Dollar Shave Club. The subscription service where I get super-sharp razor blades from every month. They've been great, ever since I signed-up and started using their products.

That was, until January 2021.

You see, the beauty of their service is that you don't have to think about or remember to buy new blades. They just turn up in the post, every month. 4 new blades, which you then use for 1 week each. Meaning you have a brand new blade every week, so don't have to use a blunt razor!

They are the best I've ever used, challenging Gillette's claim that their razors are in fact *"the best a man can get"*. That said, they're only the best I've ever used when they continue to be posted through my door every month.

That's a pretty major requirement of a subscription service like this, they have to consistently get delivered.

So, when I got email after email throughout January, blaming their shipping partner for delays, which of course were blamed on Brexit, I was left without new blades for week after week.

When the most significant part of your service is the consistency and reliability of supplying your product to your customers every month - so that your customers don't have to think about buying them - you'd have thought more effort would go into making sure this can happen without fail, especially when you know there are likely to be delays and hold-ups caused by changes to getting products in and out of the UK.

Was Brexit a surprise to them?! Were they not aware that some of their cross-border deliveries may be affected?! Did they check if their shipping partner was ready to adapt to the changes?

I couldn't believe it. I expected more of them. I'm absolutely certain they could have done more to make sure their supplies to their UK customers in January were not disrupted. Of course they could have, but they chose not to. They chose to be under-prepared and take the risk and fall-back on lazy emails to their customers, in which they didn't even take responsibility themselves, they blamed their shipping partner!

So, what would you do? I did what I think most disappointed customers would do, I went elsewhere. It's not like there is a shortage of options when it comes to shaving equipment suppliers, so I tried a competitor of theirs.

But, to my disappointment, the alternative supplier's product was not even close to as good as what I was used to from Dollar Shave Club. When I was writing a draft of this article in my head one morning - yes, you guessed it, whilst shaving - I thought that I'd be saying Dollar Shave Club lost a good customer because they didn't bother to take ownership and prepare their business for Brexit. Their lack of effort - which really would have been extremely easy to prevent - meant that they'd lost a long-time subscriber who would now share the story of their incompetence and point other people in the direction of their competitors instead.

However, their product is actually going to save them.

Yes, the ending of this article had to take a turn. It's now not about a customer choosing to go elsewhere because of a lack of ownership on the companies behalf, it's actually about the fact that, if your product is good enough, it can make up for all sorts of shortfalls.

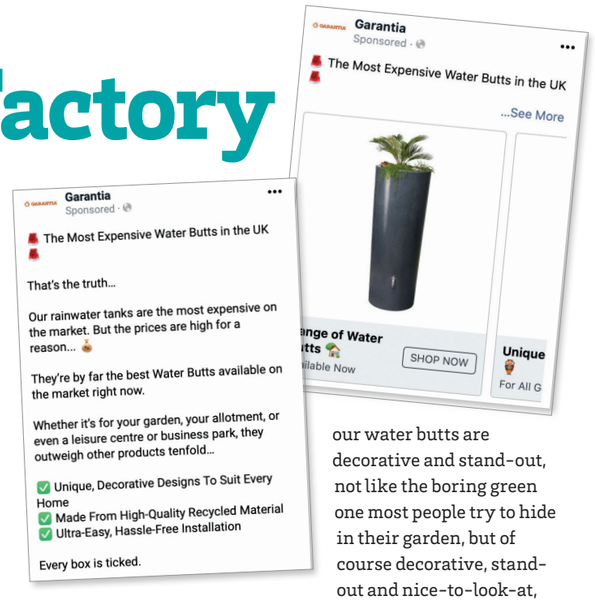
You still wouldn't want to rely on this of course - you'd like every company to just be better and not have to fall-back on their product quality to make up for their incompetence in other areas - but, it's an important lesson all the same.

It's proof that your product really matters. So, just how good are yours? ■

DOLLAR SHAVE CLUB

The Choice Factory

by Richard Shotton



My selection for this month's 'Book of the Month' was a tricky one, because unlike most months prior to February 2021, I read more than one book this past month!

Actually, as an example of how I chose to 'take ownership' during Feb, I decided to make every weekend a learning opportunity by reading (or listening to, thanks to Audible!) a book a weekend, in each of the 4 weekends in February.

At the time of writing this article, I've read...

The Choice Factory by Richard Shotton
Influence – The psychology of persuasion by Robert B. Cialdini
The Nuclear Effect by Scott Oldfield
Predictably Irrational by Dan Ariely

All of them have been good, although I'd question whether I would recommend The Nuclear Effect – that was my least favourite – but the other 3 are well worth a read.

The top one though, to recommend to you and share a few best bits from, is without doubt The Choice Factory.

I rather like how Rory Sutherland describes this book, so to give you a first idea of what this book is all about, let's use his words...

"This book is a Haynes Manual for understanding consumer behaviour. You should buy a copy – and then buy another copy to give to one of the 97% of people in marketing who are too young to remember what a bloody Haynes Manual is."
Rory Sutherland, columnist for The Spectator and Executive Creative Director, Ogilvy One

Another marketing great, Seth Godin, said this of it too...

"Actionable, memorable and powerful... Shotton has taken the jewels of behavioral economics and made them practical."
Seth Godin, author of All Marketers are Liars

Seth Godin makes the point that I believe is most relevant to you. This is why I got so much from the book and believe you could too. He sums it up in his first word...

Actionable

If you choose to read The Choice Factory, I'd be amazed – shocked in fact – if you didn't have a list written down at the end of it, of all the good ideas you're going to implement in your marketing.

You can make notes as you read the book and these notes literally become your to-do list of ways to improve your marketing!

To give you an example to prove my point, one of my notes that I scribbled down when reading it was, "The most expensive water butt. Stand out among all others."

As you may know, our Garantia brand sells water butts, compost bins and other garden products, to help people make the most of their garden. Almost all of our water butts are decorative and stand-out, not like the boring green one most people try to hide in their garden, but of course decorative, stand-out and nice-to-look-at, comes at a price. Sometimes a hefty price! So, I decided we should try using this to our advantage. It's true, so why not use it to help us stand out amongst the crowded market? See if some people want

> "the UK's most expensive water butt."

Long story short, we ran an ad on Facebook – using this idea that I got from this book – and in the first week of running the ad it had generated us a sale. This advert cost us 3 pence and the sale we secured from it was for a water butt for which the customer paid £99. They didn't actually buy our most expensive water butt, but they bought one – thanks to this advert. Which was thanks to Richard Shotton, the author of this book.

This, amongst other reasons, is why The Choice Factory is your book of the month. If you choose to read it, you'll get at least 1 idea that, if acted on, will improve your marketing and probably lead to more sales for your business, just like it did for me.

Plus, if you choose to listen to it on Audible, you can learn all the lessons it has in store for you, in less than 5 hours start to finish!

If you're even slightly interested in learning more about behavioural economics and why people do the things that they do, you'll love this book. If you read it, please remember to let us know what you thought to it! ■

Emily in Graf UK? (month #3)


Emily

4 weeks complete, 4 weeks to go... I'm already halfway through my time in the Garden team and it has been great!

I don't know about you but it's difficult to comprehend how fast time is flying by, but that hasn't stopped me from learning a huge amount about our Garden products.

Over the last few weeks I have been spending a lot of time with our Key Accounts Manager Patrick (socially distanced of course), who has been teaching me all about our Garden products. From decorative water butts to Urban raised beds, I like to think I know all about them now and I can assist you with any of your gardening needs.

I have really enjoyed being in the sales team as it has given me the opportunity to listen to you, take your feedback on board and act on it.

So, as with last month, if you have any enquiries whatsoever please pick up the phone and either call our mainline and ask for Emily, or please feel free to call my direct dial, 01295 675484.

I have already had so many calls from our fantastic customers and I can't wait to assist more of you! The weather is already starting to improve here in Oxfordshire (I hope you're as lucky) and it's almost time for spring, which is the perfect opportunity to tidy up your garden and make it look wonderful with our decorative products. For any information, please give me a call.

Ring 01608 675484 and ask for Emily!😀 ■



Garden

GARANTIA®

You're the leader everyone around you needs

Do you know how much positive influence you can have on people around you?
Do you think of yourself as a leader?
Do you ever find yourself lacking inspiration?
Are you ever short of ideas?

I'm always surprised when new ideas - especially really good ideas! - pop into my head, as if from out of nowhere.

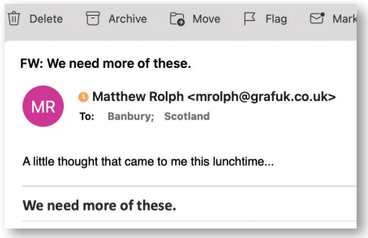
It happens almost always when I'm not trying to think of them. I guess it's a little like when you're in a hurry and you're looking for your keys. The more you think about where you left them, the harder it is to find them. Then, at the point of giving up, when you let your mind drift away to other thoughts and stop thinking about where you put your keys - **BANG! it hits you!** - you remember exactly where they are.

Why is it that our brain works like this?!

Why do you have to almost purposely switch off from something you're thinking about, some problem you're trying to solve, just so that your mind can come up with the answer you're looking for whilst you're doing something completely different?!

I'm not about to share the inner workings of your cognitive activities, that's not what this is about! This is just a little reminder to you that it works this way and a little story about how ideas can come to you in the strangest of times, probably when you're least expecting them, and the more you recognise this and free-up your mind for it to happen, the more really good ideas you're likely to have.

When eating lunch in my office a few weeks back, I was suddenly inspired to write about the daffodils that were slowly coming to life on my desk. Somehow, in my head, they represented a powerful reminder about leadership that I emailed to all of our team. A reminder that you might benefit from too, so here it is, just in case you need it...



Look at this little one...



See it?

Need a closer look?...



There it is.

A leader.

Boldly, bravely, being the first to open up and share their talents.

Whilst the others are still tucked-up in their comfort zone, meekly hiding behind their protective shields, the leader is the first to act.

The first to step up and be noticed.

The first to show others what they're capable of, what they're made of, what they've been put on earth to do.

The first to stand-out.

We need more of them.

More people who are willing to lead from the front.

More people who are confident to be the first. To remove their protective shield. To get outside of their comfort zone and stand-out.

Leaders make stuff happen.

Leaders get noticed.

Leaders influence others.

Just wait, within a few days this one will be surrounded by all those closest to them. They'll have copied, they'll have mimicked, they'll have opened up to share their talents to the world, you'll see.

But they'll have done it because of this one. Because of the one who led the way. Because of the inspiration they provided.

You could be like this one. You could lead the way. You could be the first.

Those closest to you will thank you for it.

Be like this little one.

Be a leader.

Taking Ownership in your 80's

We're closing out this month's newsletter with something a little bit different.

It's a poem that one of my aunties wrote about her Mum, my Grandmother.

A poem that wouldn't normally find its way onto the pages of *Water Matters*, but it fits so well with this month's 'Take Ownership' theme, not to mention also highlighting one's opportunity to 'constantly improve' which is another of our Company Values. So, it just had to be shared & I hope you enjoy it.

Perhaps you've experienced something similar within your family during lockdown?

Perhaps you think you're too old to learn something new?

Perhaps you wish you'd learnt something when you were younger, because it would have been so much easier if you'd done it as a child?!

Well, **take ownership** and do it now!

Realise that you're never too old. It's never too late.

Opportunities really are out there to be found. Things that will make life better.

Here's the final word from my Auntie Nell. Enjoy this poem & have a super month!...

Matthew

Never Too Old!

Covid meant we were all stuck at home
Our family couldn't visit each other,
We had to think of alternative ways
Of keeping in touch with our mother.

So after some gentle persuasion,
Mum agreed she would go online,
We understood this was quite a task
For a lady of 89!

Her youngest grandson set it all up
On a laptop she chose in rose gold,
She hoped she'd soon get the hang of it
But worried she might be too old.

At times she sat with her head in her hands
Saying "Mike help, what do I do?"
"Don't worry, Nan, I'll be right there
Keep calm & we'll talk it all through."

It wasn't always easy
With the restrictions put in place,
Mike staying socially distanced
Wearing gloves & a mask on his face!

"The screen's gone blank!" she cried one day
"I haven't a clue what I did!"
"YouTube was there & then it just went
So I decided I'd just close the lid!"

As time went by she began to see
That online brought new things her way,
With funny emails & FaceTime calls
Which certainly brightened her day.

I decided I'd write this poem today
As a positive thing to do,
That even when you're 89
You can always learn something new!



Graf UK team Q&A

Your chance to get to know our team a little bit better – this issue, Lisa Rossi.

What's your nickname people call you?
Don't really have a nickname any more, but when I was at school and in my twenties I used to get called Shiny. I will let you all come up with your own guesses as to why!

What is your favourite food?
I love pasta, I could eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I also really enjoy Mexican food.



What is your favourite TV show?
Boardwalk Empire – I think it's the best show that has ever been on TV. It finished a few years ago now though. As for what's on currently, nothing really stands out but I love a good American drama.

Who is your idol?
Rafael Nadal, I think his sporting achievements are amazing, and he has done it all while staying humble.

What is your best achievement?
This is a hard one! I am proud of what I have achieved in my time at Graf, but I really cant think of any huge standout achievements in my life – hopefully these are still to come!

Who is your favourite singer/band?
David Bowie, he was just a genius. Also really love The Smiths, Oasis, The Black Keys and bands like that.

What is your favourite holiday destination?
Of all the places I have been already its probably Barbados. My dream destination though is Japan, its on my bucket list.



What is your favourite animal?
I love cats. We even have our own office cat here at Graf Glasgow called Klaro.

What was your dream job when you were younger?
I always wanted to be a doctor or a vet

What is your biggest pet hate?
Mansplaining! And anyone who is condescending really. Never make assumptions about what experience or knowledge people may have just by looking at them. Oh and middle lane drivers. It's an overtaking lane!

Coming up in next month's issue of:

water matters

HOW YOU CAN 'FIND A WAY' TO DO ANYTHING YOU WANT / RESOURCES VS RESOURCEFULNESS / JOIN OUR SPRING-TIME GARDEN LOCKDOWN CHALLENGE / WHY YOU SHOULD 'BE CURIOUS, NOT JUDGEMENTAL' & OTHER LESSONS FROM TED LASSO AND MUCH MORE...

Contact us:

We'd love to hear your feedback on this issue of *Water Matters*, and the sort of things you'd like to see in future issues, so drop **Callum** a note at *callum@grafuk.co.uk*.
We look forward to hearing from you soon.

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