

A New Life

Once Ann Kelly took the first steps, leaving her job after 22 years to become a life coach was an easy move, she tells
Fiona Tyrrell

Shaping destinies



'What I have done anybody can do', says Ann Kelly, who now works as a life coach, advising others about making difficult, life-changing decisions.
Photograph: Daragh Mac Sweeney/Pro vision

Life changes are difficult but if you trust yourself to take the first few steps the "magic will happen". That's according to Ann Kelly who, having mapped her career as a buyer for a multi-national pharmaceutical company to become a life coach, makes it her business to understand a process of life changes. Three years ago Ann (50) left her job in the pharmaceutical industry where she had worked for 22 years. Now, working as a personal and business coach, the Cork native helps people to learn to "trust themselves, to honour who they are and create a life in which they thrive".

After experiencing two mergers at the company she worked for, she found that her job just didn't "fit" anymore.

"I was uncomfortable and I actually didn't know what to do out of it. Everything I had believed had been turned upside down and I was in a culture that was foreign to me. I didn't take well to it, I fought it and I kept hitting my head off a stone wall," she says. A friend recommended a life coach who was based in Israel. Working with this coach for two years, she learned how to be

Israel that led to her decision to leave her job and become a coach, which she did a year later.

The transition from multinational buyer to life coach was "very easy", according to Ann. "I had gone through my paces with my coach. What was most important to me was my attitude and how I was going to be in this world that I was moving into and what I believed about myself."

The process of changing your life involves "finding your gifts". For her, that involved discovering an ability to help people "shape their destinies".

"I didn't realise how much I could help people move on. I was always giving people advice and I knew I was a good listener but what I didn't realise was that I could help people change.

"There are a lot of people who don't know who they are and they don't know what is inside them bursting to get out. If you can just take the lid off for them it's amazing. They shine."

Ann officially started business in January 2001 and hasn't looked back. With this dramatic change in career came an even more dramatic change in lifestyle.

Now, operating from her home in

coaches two to three days a week, three weeks a month. She also does some business development work.

Having this level of flexibility and to be earning her own money are the main advantages, she adds. Because she works on her own, however, she says she has to be careful not to become too isolated.

"The idea is to create a business that is flexible enough to give you a life. I'm not saying that I have it perfect yet, it's an ongoing process. My whole life and view has shifted

potential and your own capabilities."

A lot of her clients are in their 40s. Men and women, who have "become aware that there is more to life than what they have experienced". Ann works with her clients to determine "what they don't have now but want to have in the future".

It is not, however, counselling, she insists, but rather an empowering process that people go through to "close the gap between

people were to be seen and not heard, that there was only one way to do things, that you took what you got and that you accepted your lot. But now people are conscious that that is not quite right. It's a whole way of living differently. You don't have to obey the rules, you can make your own as long as you respect other people.

"We have been bound to the feeling that we have to conform. Whereas the reality is that we can create a life in which we thrive

me. And I have done it myself. It is quite powerful."

She has advice for anyone considering a life change: "What I have done anybody can do. There is a wonderful world out there. Trust yourself enough to take a few steps forward and the magic will happen, which sounds a bit cuckoo but it is true."

◆ Ann is holding a workshop on de-stressing and creating white space from September 12th to 17th