IAO

MARCH, 2025

ACCREDITOR



EXCLUSIVE

THE WOMEN WHO BUILT EMPIRES

RISING AGAINST ALL ODDS

UNLEARNING
PERFECTIONISM
WHY WOMEN MUST
DARE TO RISK

IN CONVERSATION WITH DR. NASSER A. AL-FUREIH

LEADING INNOVATION IN PSYCHOLOGY, COACHING AND EDUCATION

FEATURED
ACCREDITATION
FOR FEBRUARY 2025

We Rise, We Reign to infinity and beyond

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EDITOR'S NOTE

March is a celebration of strength, ambition, and resilience—a time to recognize the extraordinary women who have defied expectations, shattered barriers, and built legacies that inspire generations. This edition is dedicated to those fearless visionaries who started with little but dared to dream big, proving that success is not about where you begin, but how boldly you rise.

Through stories of business moguls, leaders in innovation, and changemakers redefining industries, we explore the power of resilience, risk-taking, and the unbreakable spirit of women who refuse to settle. Their journeys remind us that the world doesn't reward perfection—it rewards action, courage, and the relentless pursuit of one's vision.

As we honor **International Women's Day**, let's not only celebrate the achievements of women but also advocate for a future where opportunity, recognition, and success know no gender. Whether in boardrooms, classrooms, or at the helm of billion-dollar enterprises, women are proving every day that their voices, ideas, and leadership have the power to shape the world.

This edition is an invitation to be inspired, to challenge limitations, and to take that leap of faith—because every empire starts with a single bold step.

We rise. We reign. To infinity and beyond.

Happy reading!





Some people are born into privilege, their paths to success paved with resources, connections, and inherited wealth. But others? They build their empires from the ground up, brick by brick, with nothing but determination, resilience, and a vision. In a world where entrepreneurship has long been dominated by men, these women defied the odds, overcame unimaginable struggles, and carved out their own place at the top.

Their journeys aren't just about financial success; they're about breaking barriers,

THEIR
PATHS TO
SUCCESS
PAVED
WITH
RESOURCES

shattering glass ceilings, and proving that no obstacle is too great for a woman with ambition. Let's dive into the powerful, inspiring, and heart-touching stories of eight incredible women who started with nothing and built multi-million and billion-dollar businesses.





Born into extreme poverty in rural Mississippi, Oprah Winfrey faced an uphill battle from the start. Raised by a single mother, she experienced a turbulent childhood marked by hardship, instability, and even abuse. But Oprah refused to let her circumstances define her future. Through education, relentless hard work, and an undeniable talent for storytelling, she found her way into local news broadcasting.

Oprah's big break came when she was offered her own talk show. Instead of following the traditional format, she brought authenticity, vulnerability, and emotional depth to television. This connection with audiences catapulted The Oprah Winfrey Show to the highest-rated talk show in history. From there, she built Harpo Productions, OWN Network, and a media empire that made her the world's first Black female billionaire.

What Set Oprah Apart

- ✓ Authenticity: She shared her struggles openly, making her relatable to millions.
- ✓ Emotional Intelligence: She understood people's emotions and used that to build deep connections.
- ✓ Ownership: She took control of her brand early, ensuring she had creative and financial power.





Before becoming one of the youngest self-made female billionaires, Sara Blakely spent seven years selling fax machines door-to-door. She had no background in fashion or business, just an idea: women needed better shapewear. With only \$5,000 in savings, she created Spanx and started cold-calling manufacturers to bring her vision to life.

After persistent rejections, one factory finally agreed to produce her product. Her big break came when Oprah named Spanx her favorite product, sending sales skyrocketing. Today,

Spanx is a global brand, and Sara remains an inspiring example of perseverance and innovation.

What Set Sara Apart?

- ✓ Grit & Persistence: She never took no for an answer.
- ✓ Problem-Solving: She created a product woman didn't even know they needed.
- ✓ Smart Business Decisions: She bootstrapped the company and retained full ownership.





Most know Rihanna for her music, but her real empire is in business. She saw a glaring gap in the beauty industry, there were not enough products for darker skin tones. So, in 2017, she launched Fenty Beauty with 40 foundation shades, revolutionizing the industry.

Her inclusivity-focused brand became an instant success, forcing major beauty companies to follow suit. Today, Rihanna's empire extends beyond beauty into skincare, lingerie (Savage X Fenty), and luxury fashion, making her one of the wealthiest self-made women in the world.

What Set Rihanna Apart?

- ✓ Spotting a Market Gap: She saw an overlooked audience and catered to them.
- ✓ **Authenticity:** She built a brand that reflected her identity and values.
- ✓ Business Expansion: She successfully diversified into multiple industries.



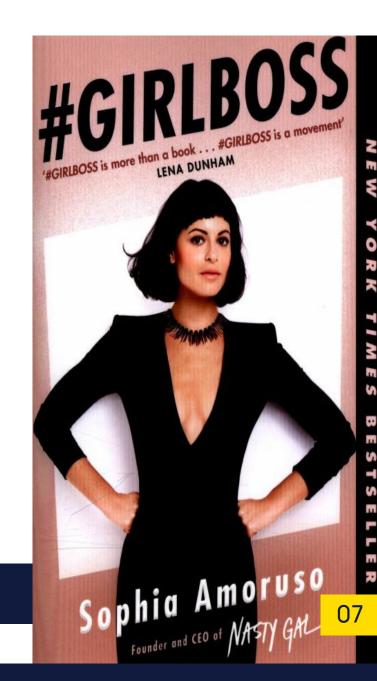


With no degree and a history of odd jobs, Sophia Amoruso started selling vintage clothes on eBay. She had an eye for trends and a talent for marketing, which helped her turn Nasty Gal into a multi-million-dollar e-commerce brand.

Though the company faced bankruptcy, Sophia bounced back by launching Girlboss, a media company aimed at empowering women in business. Her resilience proves that even setbacks can be stepping stones to success.

What Set Rihanna Apart?

- ✓ **Digital Savvy:** She understood online marketing before most brands did.
- ✓ Resilience: She turned failure into a new opportunity.
- ✓ Community Building: She created a movement, not just a business.



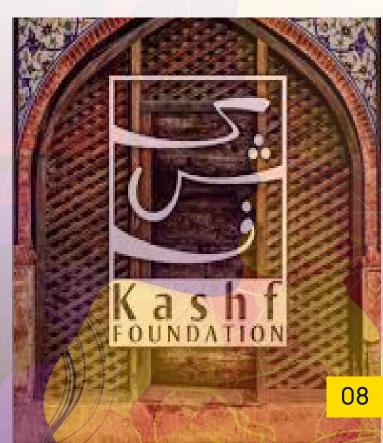


Roshaneh Zafar saw a problem: traditional banks weren't lending to women entrepreneurs in Pakistan. Instead of accepting the status quo, she took action. She founded Kashf Foundation, the country's first microfinance institution designed specifically for women.

Through small loans and financial literacy training, Roshaneh helped thousands of women build businesses, achieve financial independence, and uplift entire communities. She didn't just offer money; she offered a path to empowerment. Today, Kashf is a model for microfinance and a beacon of hope for women across South Asia.

What Set Roshaneh Apart?

- ✓ **Impact**: She built a financial institution that changed lives.
- ✓ Empowerment: She gave women economic freedom.
- ✓ Long-Term Vision: She reshaped financial inclusion in Pakistan.





Indra Nooyi's rise to the top is a story of bold leadership and strategic vision. Born into a middle-class family in India, she pursued higher education with determination, earning degrees from prestigious institutions before joining PepsiCo. With her relentless drive, she rose through the ranks to become CEO, where she reshaped the company by championing healthier products and sustainability.

Under her leadership, PepsiCo didn't just grow financially, it evolved into a responsible and forward-thinking global brand. She proved that long-term vision is just as crucial as short-term wins.

What Set Indra Apart?

- ✓ Visionary Leadership: She focused on long-term growth rather than quick profits.
- ✓ Resilience: She thrived in a male-dominated corporate world.
- ✓ Innovation: She modernized a global brand and made it future-readyRoshaneh Zafar Banking on Women's Success



PEPSICO



Huda Kattan turned a passion for beauty into a billion-dollar business. She started as a makeup artist and beauty blogger, using social media to share tips and reviews. With just a few hundred dollars, she launched Huda Beauty, a brand that took the world by storm through influencer marketing and digital engagement.

By leveraging Instagram, YouTube, and the power of personal branding, she created a loyal following. Today, her beauty empire spans global markets, proving that innovation

and authenticity can turn a simple idea into a powerhouse business.

What Set Huda Apart?

- ✓ **Digital Marketing Mastery**: She built her brand through social media.
- ✓ Personal Branding: She earned trust through authenticity.
- ✓ Innovation: She launched trendsetting products customers loved.





Janice Bryant Howroyd started her company, ActOne Group, with just \$1,500. As a Black woman in business, she faced discrimination but refused to let it define her journey. She remained laser-focused on her mission, helping companies find top talent.

Through relentless determination, her small staffing agency grew into a billion-dollar global business. Today, ActOne Group serves clients worldwide, proving that success isn't about where you start, it's about where you're willing to go.

What Set Janice Apart?

- ✓ Unstoppable Drive: She refused to let discrimination stop her.
- ✓ Industry Expertise: She mastered recruitment and staffing.
- ✓ Commitment to Service: She built a business that genuinely helps others succeed.





The Power of Resilience and Bold Vision

These women didn't wait for permission. They didn't let setbacks, biases, or obstacles define them. They saw challenges as stepping stones and turned roadblocks into opportunities.

They were told 'no' but they kept going. They weren't handed success; they built it from the ground up.

Their stories prove that success isn't just for the privileged, it's for those who dare to dream big, work hard, and never stop pushing forward.

So, what's stopping you?

The next empire builder could be you...

Interview

In conversation with

Dr. Nasser A. Al-Fureih

Clinical Psychologist, Coach, Consultant, Trainer & Educational Leader



Academic Life

Q: Could you please walk us through your academic background and achievements?

A: Certainly! My academic journey began as a Clinical Psychologist, Counsellor, Consultant, and Coach, working with various aspects of human behavior and mental processes. My passion for understanding and helping individuals led me to specialize in evidence-based therapeutic approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and psychodynamic therapy, shaping my clinical practice.

I further expanded my expertise by incorporating coaching, allowing me to contribute through peer-reviewed publications and international presentations. Professionally, I have worked in diverse settings, including private practice, schools, and community work. One of the most rewarding aspects has been mentoring young professionals, conducting training, and leading workshops.

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to receive recognition for my work and become a member of prestigious international associations, which continue to motivate me toward excellence in clinical practice and research.

Experience

Q: Currently heading the institute, what are some of your long-term and short-term goals for the education system?

A: My vision for the institute is rooted in creating a dynamic, inclusive, and forward-thinking educational system that equips individuals with essential skills and mindsets.



Short-term goals:

- Integrated Learning Programs: Introducing interdisciplinary courses blending psychology, coaching, and training.
- **Empowering Faculty and Staff:** Conducting regular workshops for effective academic and emotional guidance.
- Trainee/Client-Centered Development: Implementing mentorship programs, skill development workshops, and mental health resources.
- Immediate Community Impact: Organizing short-term programs on stress management, leadership, and resilience-building.

Short-term goals:

- Future Leaders Development: Establishing the institute as a center of excellence.
- Expanding Outreach: Developing global collaborations for international exposure.
- Innovative Research: Integrating psychology, coaching, and training to address real-world challenges.
- Accessibility and Inclusion: Ensuring education and training reach underserved communities.
- Building a Legacy: Creating a sustainable framework for long-term impact.

Q: What do you think your biggest challenge is working in the education industry at such a key position?

A: The biggest challenge is driving meaningful change while maintaining stability and inclusivity.

Key Challenges:

- **Balancing Tradition with Innovation**: Respecting academic traditions while incorporating experiential learning and technology.
- **Mental Health and Well-Being**: Addressing academic pressures and burnout through dedicated resources.
- Catering to Diverse Needs: Designing an inclusive system for varied backgrounds and aspirations. Technological Adaptation: Ensuring digital integration enhances rather than overwhelms
- learning.
 Sustaining Quality During Growth: Expanding without compromising excellence.

My Approach:

- Collaborative Leadership: Engaging faculty, stakeholders, and students in decision-making.
- Prioritizing Mental Health: Promoting awareness, safe spaces, and counseling resources.
- Investing in Professional Development: Continuous upskilling for faculty and staff.
- Future-Focused Vision: Staying attuned to global trends and leadership integration.

 Maintaining Human Connection: Ensuring education remains personal and meaningful.

Milestone Achievement:

Q: During your career, which milestone felt most accomplished and why?

A: One of my most significant milestones was launching psychology, coaching, and training programs focused on holistic development.

Why This Milestone Stands Out:

- Bridging Multiple Disciplines: Combining psychology, coaching, and training into a multi-dimensional approach.
- Transforming Lives: Witnessing students and professionals enhance their resilience and career success.
- Sustainable Impact: Programs continue to evolve and benefit individuals globally.
- Personal Growth: Developing and refining these programs deepened my expertise and leadership.

Interest & Opinions

Q: What method of information-dissemination do you find most effective?

- A: Effective methods include:
- Interactive Workshops: Hands-on, engaging experiences with case studies and discussions.
- Mentorship and Coaching: One-on-one guidance for deeper understanding.
- Online Platforms: Webinars and recorded content for accessibility.
- Storytelling: Personal experiences make lessons relatable and impactful.
- Peer-to-Peer Learning: Collaborative discussions in communities of practice.
- Action Research: Engaging in real-world projects with other educators.
- Written Content: Blogs, articles, and books for structured knowledge-sharing.

Q: What is your view on the rise of alternative education methods?

- A: Alternative education methods like distance learning and short courses are a positive evolution in education.
- Personalized Learning Journeys: Tailored paths based on interests and career goals.
- Flexibility and Accessibility: Breaking geographical and financial barriers.
- Emphasis on Skill Development: Practical training aligned with job market needs.
- Global Learning Communities: Exposure to diverse perspectives and collaborations.
- Cost-Effectiveness: More affordable alternatives to traditional degrees.
- Lifelong Learning Culture: Encouraging continuous skill-building and adaptation.

Q: How can the education system in your region be improved?

A: While the system has strengths, it requires key improvements:

- Holistic Development: Balancing academic achievement with emotional intelligence.
- Curriculum Flexibility: Offering electives and experiential learning.
- Technology Integration: Enhancing digital infrastructure and training.
- Critical Thinking: Encouraging problem-solving over rote memorization.
- Teacher Training: Investing in professional development.
- Lifelong Learning: Adapting to evolving career landscapes.
- Collaborative Learning: Emphasizing real-world projects and teamwork.

Philosophy of Education:

Q: What is your philosophy on the ideal education?

A: The best education is about personal empowerment and lifelong growth. It goes beyond knowledge accumulation to self-awareness, resilience, adaptability, and meaningful contributions to society.

Key Elements:

- Self-Awareness: Understanding strengths, weaknesses, and values.
- Critical Thinking: Encouraging curiosity and independent thought.
- Resilience: Learning through adversity.
- Connection with Others: Building empathy and meaningful relationships.
- Adaptability: Embracing lifelong learning.
- Finding Purpose: Discovering meaningful career and life paths.
- Holistic Well-being: Balancing mind, body, and spirit.

Final Thoughts:

Q: Any parting words of wisdom for educationists and students?

A: For Educationists:

- Be a Lifelong Learner: Continuously evolve and stay curious.
- Foster Growth Mindsets: Teach resilience and adaptability.
- Cultivate Emotional Intelligence: Balance intellectual and emotional development.
- Nurture Individuality: Recognize and support each student's unique potential.

For Students:

- Embrace Lifelong Learning: Education is a continuous journey.
- Don't Fear Failure: Use setbacks as growth opportunities.
- Stay Open to Change: Adapt and explore different perspectives.
- Prioritize Well-being: Maintain balance in life.
- Follow Your Passion with Purpose: Pursue meaningful goals with determination.

Education is not just about knowledge acquisition—it's about becoming the best version of yourself. Keep learning, stay curious, and embrace every challenge as an opportunity for growth.

Third Quarterly

Accreditation visits

Indira Gandhi Institute of Management & Technology (India)

UZ

Creators Arab Platform for Innovators (Middle East)

03

The Trove Nails (India)

04

DMX – Dubai Municipality Academy (UAE)

05

Crest Technologies (Nepal)

06

Goldy Hunjan Makeup studio (India)



IAO Grants Full Accreditation to Indira Gandhi Institute of Management & Technology

The IAO team recently visited the Indira Gandhi Institute of Management & Technology in India, an institution known for its strong academic programs in management and technology. During the visit, the team engaged with faculty and students, witnessing firsthand the institute's dedication to academic excellence and innovation. The discussions highlighted the institution's role in shaping future leaders and professionals through a dynamic learning environment and forward-thinking curriculum.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation to Creators Arab Platform for Innovators

During their visit to the **Creators Arab Platform for Innovators**, the IAO team explored this exciting initiative focused on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship among Arab youth. They observed various programs designed to empower aspiring innovators with mentorship, training, and networking opportunities. The platform's dedication to creating a collaborative and supportive ecosystem for emerging talents stood out as a key highlight of the visit.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation to The Trove Nails

The IAO team had the opportunity to visit **The Trove Nails** in India, a leading name in the nail art and beauty industry. Known for its top-tier services and professional training programs, the studio impressed the team with its commitment to quality, hygiene, and artistry. The visit provided insight into how the studio is raising industry standards and helping aspiring nail technicians develop their skills through expert-led training programs.



DMX - Dubai Municipality Academy (UAE)

At DMX – Dubai Municipality Academy, the IAO team explored the institution's cutting-edge approach to talent development within the municipal sector. The visit included discussions on innovative learning methodologies, training programs, and the use of advanced technology to equip municipal employees with future-ready skills. The academy's commitment to fostering continuous learning and excellence in governance was a key takeaway from the visit.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation to Crest Technologies

During their visit to **Crest Technologies** in Nepal, the IAO team engaged with professionals driving technological innovation in the region. They observed the company's dedication to providing high-quality solutions in software development, IT services, and emerging technologies. The discussions highlighted Crest Technologies' role in advancing digital transformation and contributing to the growth of Nepal's technology sector.



IAO Grants Full Accreditation to Goldy Hunjan Makeup Studio

The IAO team also visited Goldy Hunjan Makeup Studio in India, where they explored the artistry and expertise behind its widely recognized bridal and fashion makeup services. Led by internationally certified artist Goldy Hunjan, the studio has built a reputation for excellence in beauty services. The visit showcased the studio's commitment to enhancing client confidence through high-quality artistry and professional training programs for aspiring makeup artists.



Introduction: The Silent Barrier to Success

Perfectionism, a word that sounds like a badge of honor but often acts as a heavy chain, restricting the potential of many talented women. Studies show that while men apply for jobs when they meet only 60% of the qualifications, women often wait until they meet 100%. This hesitation extends beyond job applications to business decisions, leadership opportunities, and investments. While striving for excellence is admirable, the relentless pursuit of perfection can become a self-imposed obstacle, preventing many women from taking the risks necessary to succeed in business.

The reality is success favors action, not just preparation. The most accomplished entrepreneurs, CEOs, and industry leaders didn't have every answer when they started, they learned along the way. This article explores why unlearning perfectionism is essential for women in business, how it holds women back, and practical ways to take more calculated risks to achieve breakthroughs.





THE PERFECTIONISM TRAP: WHY WOMEN WAIT TOO LONG

From childhood, girls are often socialized to be careful, play it safe, and follow the rules, while boys are encouraged to be bold and take risks. This ingrained mindset continues into adulthood, where women frequently feel the need to be overqualified before pursuing opportunities.

How Perfectionism Holds Women Back:

- Delayed Decision-Making: Women may hesitate before launching a business, applying for promotions, or seeking funding, waiting until everything is "perfect."
- Fear of Failure: A reluctance to make mistakes keeps women from experimenting with new ideas and strategies.
- Overworking Instead of Delegating:
 Perfectionists often struggle to delegate,
 believing they must do everything
 themselves to ensure it's done "right."

 Missed Opportunities: While women refine their skills, their male counterparts are already in the game, gaining experience and climbing the ladder.





Some of the world's most successful women entrepreneurs and leaders didn't wait for the perfect moment, they took action despite uncertainty.

Lessons from Women Who Took Risks:

- Sara Blakely (Founder of Spanx): Had no experience in fashion or business but still launched a billion-dollar brand.
- Oprah Winfrey: Faced multiple rejections and setbacks before becoming a media mogul.
- Sophia Amoruso (Founder of Nasty Gal):
 Started selling vintage clothing on eBay
 without a formal business plan, her risk-taking turned into a multi-million-dollar company.
- Each of these women embraced trial and error, learning as they went rather than waiting for perfect conditions.

Practical Steps to Overcome Perfectionism:

- ✓ Adopt a Growth Mindset: See every failure as a learning opportunity rather than a personal shortcoming.
- ✓ Take Small Risks Regularly: Apply for the role you're not 100% qualified for. Launch your business before it's "ready."
- ✓ Celebrate Imperfect Wins: Recognize progress, even when things aren't flawless.
- ✓ Learn to Delegate: Trust that others can handle responsibilities, even if their approach is different from yours.



The Business Benefits of Risk-Taking

Taking risks in business isn't about recklessness, it's about strategic confidence. Studies show that women-led companies generate higher returns than male-led businesses, yet female entrepreneurs secure less than 3% of venture capital funding. Why? Because many don't put themselves out there boldly enough.

How Taking More Risks Helps Women Succeed:

- More Opportunities: Those who take chances get noticed and are offered more leadership roles.
- Financial Growth: Entrepreneurs who take risks attract investors and scale faster.
- Innovative Thinking: Businesses that embrace calculated risks disrupt industries and stand out.



Shifting the Mindset: How to Take the Leap

If perfectionism has been a lifelong habit, breaking free isn't easy, but it's possible. Here's how:

1. Reframe Failure as Progress

Every mistake is a lesson. The best leaders in the world have failed more times than they have succeeded.

2. Set "Action Goals" Instead of "Perfect Goals"

Instead of aiming for "a flawless business plan," aim for "launching the business and refining along the way."

3. Surround Yourself with Risk-Takers

Being in a network of bold entrepreneurs and mentors can rewire your mindset towards calculated action.

4. Practice "Failing Small"

Start small, send that application, make that investment, start that project. The more you take action, the easier it becomes.

5. Real-Life Stories: Women Who Overcame Perfectionism and Took the Leap

1. Whitney Wolfe Herd (Founder of Bumble) After leaving Tinder, Whitney Wolfe Herd took the huge risk of starting a competing dating

app where women make the first move.

Despite skepticism, she led Bumble to a billion-dollar valuation and became the

youngest self-made female billionaire.

2. Indra Nooyi (Former CEO of PepsiCo)

Indra Nooyi didn't let her unconventional background stop her from pursuing leadership roles. She took bold risks, pushed for innovation at PepsiCo, and became one of the most successful female CEOs in history

3. Reshma Saujani (Founder of Girls Who Code)

Reshma Saujani ran for office with no political experience and lost. Instead of seeing it as failure, she used it as motivation to start Girls Who Code, helping thousands of young women enter the tech industry.

Conclusion: Take the First Step Today

Perfectionism might feel like a safe strategy, but in reality, it's a hidden form of self-sabotage. The world doesn't need more perfect plans, it needs more bold action from women willing to step up, take risks, and build businesses that shape industries.

So, apply for that job, pitch your business idea, take that first step, even if it's messy, even if it's uncertain. Success doesn't come from being perfect; it comes from being brave enough to start.

What risk will you take today?