

women IN BUSINESS



**RUTH
SWENSON**

Hillcrest Inn

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR LINE OF WORK AND WHAT GOT *you* STARTED?

"I have been a hotelier for over 30 years. I was a United States Marine and part of my service required me to stay in hotels and not in bases all the time. So, I got a lot of experience staying in temporary lodging and thought 'I know how I can make this work and how it would be good'. The Hillcrest was sort of my retirement job. I had already worked for a lot of larger hotels, some chains I had even worked for a few small bed & breakfasts'. and when I came to Seaside to help out at the Hostel and the Hillcrest came right along and then I was here.

The funny thing about moving to Seaside, I hadn't intended on actually working at all! I was volunteering and kind of hanging out because I had retired. I served my military service and when I got out, I had started working for other hotels and other businesses and thought ya know... I've had two careers and I'm ready to retire. And then when I got here Hillcrest almost just fell in my lap. It was just the right time at the right place, and I've been here ever since. It's been over 10 years."

WHAT WOULD YOU TELL *your* YOUNGER SELF?

"I would tell my younger self to not forget the things you've learned along the way. Somebody once said to me that you learn more from the bosses that you didn't appreciate than the ones that you did appreciate. Because it taught you things on how your behavior or whatever is going to be. I would say to my younger self to remember that and not be so quickly fired up and temperamental of 'I quit' and not to be so quick to respond. It's much easier to respond quickly when you're a Marine, let me tell you."

WHAT PIECE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE HAS HELPED YOU IN *your* CAREER?

"Oh, there's so many pieces of professional advice that have helped me in my career... But I'm going to talk about the ones that I have got from being in Seaside because I think those are very unique. One of my first jobs here someone told me:

“It’s who you provide the service for that signs your check so remember that.”

It's not always about your boss or supervisor. It's are you providing the service that this person expects? So, for hoteliers of course it's the guests, merchants it's the buyer. Even in the Corp when you're defending a Country it's the people you defend. Don't lose sight of that. Who is it that you are actually doing it for? And to do what you love. Because if you do what you love it's never a job.

One person once told me that a job is just over bills. That's what it is, it's just over bills. You're not committed to it, you're not there. Careers though are what you're committed to, and you should love what you do as a career. I think that would be one of the best pieces of advice I've got."

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE FUTURE women LEADERS?

"I would say as a future women leader one piece of advice I would give would be; to be you. To accept what you do as what YOU want to do. Don't let other people make the decision of who you are.

Like Eleanor Roosevelt once said: Don't let someone else make the decision of who you are. You are YOU and be proud to be you. Sometimes it's really hard when you're a woman to say 'I know I'm right and I'm doing the right thing but along the career path everyone else has done something. Some of the best entrepreneurs and people in business have done what they know what to do and not follow the lead of others."

WHO IN SEASIDE THAT IS A WOMAN IN BUSINESS INSPIRES *you?*

"That's so easy. That is **Sadie Mercer**. She has a plan, she sticks to the plan, she makes the plan happen. And she knows who she is. I mean whether it's something like running MULTI hotels and a restaurant or raising her three boys. She knows the plans. She sticks to the plan. She makes it happen. And conceptually that's what most people want to be able to say in their lives. I know she probably says,

“'when I go to bed, I'm exhausted'”

But she sets the example for everyone else because it's not just business for her. It's 'this is where I live, this is where I love, this is where I want to be'. And I'm sure everybody has their doubts and transitions, but she just makes it happen whether it's a business thing or a city thing or even a family thing. She puts it together, she makes the plan, she makes it work. So, it's easy to see that and go 'I know I can do this' because I watch her do it every day."