

Dr Marie Macklin
CBE


Women of Scotland Lunch | Speech

Friday 26th April 2024 | Radisson Blu, Glasgow.

1.

Women of Scotland Lunch, Your Royal Highness - the Duchess of Edinburgh, Madam Chair, Women of Scotland.

When We Collide, We Come Together. If We Don't, We Will Always Be Apart. I will take a bruise I know you're worth it but when you hit me, hit me hard.

Today I speak from my heart about Collisions Past & Present that had an impact on my life but shaped who I am and in turn lead me to become a rebel with a cause.

That cause is to create positive social and economic change through Urban Regeneration Development in some of the most deprived communities in Scotland, the UK and beyond.

I champion pioneering community driven solutions, and my lyrics sing about bottom-up economic growth, believing we should 'Let The People Sing Again' within their communities - driving opportunity for all. I was brought up to believe in hard work delivered through ...

Determination, Inspiration, Aspiration, Perseverance and Belief.

2.

But before that I'd like to turn to four chapters of my journey and what brings me here today.

I am humbled and proud to stand here thanks to Julie Burns, of Ayrshire Endometriosis Support Group, for recommending me as a speaker.

Endometriosis is a cause close to my heart and is one of the collisions I will speak about today.

I met Julie through my beloved GCU university when she asked for our HALO building in Kilmarnock to be lit up Yellow for the Endometriosis month.

Julie is a fine example of how one individual can touch a life and support women with her act of kindness.

You see Endometriosis is a moral issue: - at its root are not just the details of a government health policy, but fundamental principles of social justice and the character of our country in how it supports us women.

1. Deliberating
2. Life Threatening
3. Economic Output affected being off work and Women's career prospects.
4. Population reproduction

3.

Chapter One: - Guys and Dolls

I once knew a girl who grew up in a council estate in a town built by the hands of men and women of greatness the makers and doers of things driving the economy.

Entrepreneurs in the town created global brands like Johnnie Walker Whisky, Saxe Shoes, Stoddard Carpets to name a few. But in the 1980s the town like many across the UK lost its way but retained - through their people - a Beating Heart of HOPE.

Now this girl grew up with a fascination for motion pictures from Hollywood.

This was through her mother's love of glam films with the likes of Doris Day; she thought all women had Doris Day goddess glow.

But Que Sera Sera how disappointed she was to find that the only glow she would ever have would be through a good filter photo on Instagram.

Then turning to her dad, she lived through every war since the Charge of the Light Brigade to The Dam Busters and in fact she thought someday her prince would arrive with the John Wayne Swagger, singing She Wore a Yellow Ribbon. How wrong she was.

4.

The nearest she came to John Wayne was 1986 Blackpool Beach when she met a hat seller with the motto Kiss Me Quick on his Stetson riding a donkey.

Now this girl was not the most articulate at school being kept back 2 years as she was a bit slow. That girl later found out in her mid-30s she had dyslexia. You see she was not good at the reading and writing; it was music and lyrics that were her poetry - and still are.

She did however have the belief she could work in the City of London in financial services, and she did.

With a promising career she was off in 1991 to RBS where few women in the day who wanted to be hedge funders or cashflow finance restructure experts. It was a Man's World.

She would travel up and down to London every week but was constantly plagued by pain in her body.

She grew tired of being told by her GP it was all in her head. But she began to think it was.

5.

Chapter 2: - Last Christmas

One quiet Sunday just before Christmas the biggest Collision of her life happened.

On returning to Glasgow, she collapsed in pain while Christmas shopping at the St Enoch Centre. She was rushed into hospital left in a corridor for hours. She believed she was dying, then 11 hours later after much surgery internal bleeding and a cardiac arrest on the operating theatre she woke up to the devastating news.

The medical teams thought it was appendicitis ...

Wrong it was ovarian chocolate cysts the size of oranges bursting, accompanied by a severe case of Endometriosis resulting in full abdominal Hysterectomy and just to be sure the removal of appendix and gallbladder.

But the worse was to come.

Hospitalised for 14 days in a world of oblivion, then put on a male hormonal drug Danazol which had devastating effects. There was no counselling, there was no explanation.

She lost all her confidence confined herself to home and would not go out. She saw herself as a failure. But She "Never Gave Up"

6.

Chapter 3 – The Show Must Go On

It took 24 months to get her confidence back and it was then she went into the family construction business working one day week, then became their financial director.

In 2004 she purchased her father's construction business; her aim was to drive social and economic change in her hometown of Kilmarnock and beyond.

With a great team she introduced WM Morrison Supermarkets to Scotland to their first store in Kilmarnock in 2004 set in a 30-acre former industrial site creating 500 new jobs and driving the brand into every town in Scotland.

In 2009 Diageo owners of Johnnie Walker Whisky decided to exit the 28-acre bottling plant in Kilmarnock losing 700 jobs.

20,000 locals marched to save those jobs – but to no avail. However, with her amazing team and community over a period of 15 years of red tape they finally built out the 28 acres site now named The HALO Enterprise Cyber and Innovation Park which opened in 2022 and sits in the same postcode area she grew up in.

Creating up to 1,500 jobs and driving SME business growth through Net Zero Solutions.

7.

But more importantly giving young people, the opportunity to create a New Tomorrow's World for Our Children's Children through enterprise and education.

You see out of that Last Christmas Collision was the rebirth of her and her community.

That girl stands here today sharing her story of Hope, Belief and Opportunity and thanks all who supported her dreams on that journey.

My inner strength with the support of my family and medical team was all I had; I had been laid bare through that Endometriosis crisis.

It broke me and healed me at the same time.

Inspiration is my love of music; my poetry is lyrics that got me through.

Aspiration our past industrial history got me through, and we can create new Net Zero projects at the forefront of Digital, Cyber and Technology creating new investable businesses in the hearts of once forgotten communities across Scotland and beyond.

8.

Perseverance you can make change, people make change together not one individual, government, or company. I often say "Let the People Sing" our projects are only possible through partnerships and communities working with us to deliver for all.

Perseverance and partnerships are driving forward change in the form of research and development for Endometriosis.

This is very evident when you speak to Professor Andrew Horne at Edinburgh University who leads on the ENDO 1000 UK research project. "Their mission is to reduce diagnostic delay and develop personalised treatment approaches for individuals with endometriosis by studying data and biological samples collected from patients over an extended period of time."

And I am proud to be supporting this project.

Belief, my parents gave me the 'Belief' and the torch that no matter where you come from you can change the world – just like Johnnie Walker.

Andrew Horne and his amazing team are carrying that torch of Hope and Belief.

9.

Our ability here today to Keep Walking, Keep Dreaming and a recognising that we are all in this together, and when fortune turns against us, others are there to lend a helping hand.

As I look around this room at the amazing women who make huge contributions to our society and in particular the Women of Scotland's Committee past and present who have been carrying that 'Torch of Hope for 65 years, I leave here today with their torch and their song in my head and heart...

"Never Give Up".

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