

*The
Jewellers'
Story*



REAL STORIES

MC

METAL CONCENTRATORS

In Conversation with *Kirsten Goss*

Words by
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on behalf of
Metal Concentrators

She is audacious, animated and authentic. Her dialogue is rapid-fire, peppered with colourful and sometimes unusual adjectives – her spoken grammar is close to flawless. Her vibrant and infectious personality pulsates through the telephone connection, all the way from Cape Town to my study in Sandton.

During the fifteen years since doing her Fine Arts degree in Jewellery design at Stellenbosch, she admits to ‘working herself stupid’. She has an online retail outlet serving customers worldwide, three shops in SA and a fourth opening at the V&A Waterfront in April. She confesses to be ‘incredibly involved’ in the business, as a Mom with two active children and in the midst of a major home renovation.

“Kirsten, you have done this many times before, so will you allow me to ask you some really different questions that give us a glimpse behind the media façade that is portrayed?”

“Sure ... love it! Bombs away!”

“When you read articles that describe you as ... ‘one of SA’s most adored jewellery designers and businesswomen’ ... what goes through your mind?”

“Clearly the writer doesn’t know me very well – they give me too much credit. I have 27 people in my amazing team. They find comments like this exciting because it gives them a sense of worth. And we have an incredible MD who helps us steer this ship – we call her Captain Kirk!”

“Tell me about the people who influenced you in your early life. I have read about your very different grandmothers ...”

“Oh gosh, yes. My Dad’s Mom, Erika, was minute – four foot nine inches – but extremely flamboyant and fun. She was well-travelled and collected art and objets d’art. She was light-hearted but gutsy in business ... didn’t take no for an answer. She was in a family business

with her father and at times was a troublemaker. Peggy was my Mom's Mom ... refined, elegant – an artist ... creative. She was a concert pianist and lived a Scandinavian life. The two were great role models for me. They were unafraid of taking risks – they made their own way. I was also blessed to have a father like Patrick with his great leadership acumen ... artists have a tendency to go off on tangents!"

"I have to ask about your jewellery styles because they are so varied and different ..."

"I prefer the road less travelled. Jewellery and jewellery design are ambiguous terms and I veer towards the philosophical and considered. Our world is a frustrating, stressful crazy, crazy, place and I am particularly interested in light-hearted, fun designs but sophisticated ... and manufactured with luscious materials. When people buy, they are looking for consideration, provenance and resonance in terms of design. I believe there is enough serious stuff so my jewellery must be light and bright – a sense of fun – 'al vacance'. It is influenced by my childish sense of humour ... I enjoy being left of centre ... I want to turn the notion of classical jewellery on its head!"

"Kirsten, what's your idea of perfect happiness?"

"I thought perfection was happiness."

"What is your greatest fear?"

"Fear itself. This human weakness with a four-letter name, hovers over us all. You can't make creative decisions based on fear."

"Which living person do you most admire?"

"Any and every living person deserves admiration."

"What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?"

"If at any time I find myself in the mainstream I start thrusting back. I hate to be robbed of my individuality. I can also be exhausting for some people!"

"What is the trait you most deplore in others?"

"Arrogance."

"What is your greatest extravagance?"

"White truffle ... and sexy bedroom attire ..."

"When and where are you the most productive?"

"I hope my previous answer doesn't give anything away. I am a bit of a workaholic. It's not uncommon to find me in my PJ's vacuuming the house on a Sunday morning"

"What is your favourite journey?"

"Driving to work along De Waal drive on Monday – a perfect day with the top down on my Mini."

"And your favourite holiday destination?"

“To date, La Digue Seychelles. But I do love to travel.”

“What do you consider the most overrated virtue?”

“Patience. I want everything done right now. I hate waiting, and I hate being told, ‘be patient’. Patience is laziness disguised as a virtue.”

“On what occasion, do you lie?”

“I may lie about who finished the dried mango the day it was bought.”

“What do you dislike most about your appearance?”

“OMG, that is just not a question that anyone should ask. Let me just tell you I am not naturally blond.”

“Which living person do you most despise?”

“Anyone who is filled with hatred. I think hatred of others all starts with self-loathing. I only have hatred for hatred!”

“Which words or phrases do you most overuse?”

“I told you I hate being mainstream. At the end of the day, what more can I say? Words that are a little too fashionable and I have been guilty of over using, beard, hipster, provenance, precinct, animate, curate, clarks, craft!”

“What is your greatest regret?”

“I’ll let you know when it happens. Oscar Wilde said on his death bed, “I hate this wallpaper, one of us has to go”. That’s the kind of life I am aiming for. One where regret does not even have a chance to get a foot in the door.”

“What or who is the greatest love of your life?”

“My two children and my partner, Clive Michael Sutcliffe Will!”

When were you happiest?

“I am a very happy person. Some say ignorance is bliss, I must be the most ignorant person I know. Think that’s why I voluntarily chose blond.”

“How would your closest friend describe you?”

“If she is truly a close friend she would use this list of words: Amazing, Gorgeous, Funny, Smart, Sexy ... and then she would throw her head back and say there is just too many words to list.”

“Which talent would you most like to have?”

“I would have loved to have had a voice. I would have hands-down gone for Gwen Stefani’s job if I could sing”

“What is your favourite leisure activity?”

“I am glad you used the word leisure and activity together. I don’t believe leisure can be achieved if one is not active. I am always on the move. I avoid extreme sports but for the rest I am game.”

“What is your current state of mind?”

“Occupied. I think we should all have those signs on our foreheads, like the ones on the toilet door. Vacant or Occupied, you just choose and flip it up. But right now, I can firmly say I am occupied, no room for much else.”

“If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?”

“I’d be left handed. I just like the thought that it’s already less mainstream.”

“What do you consider your greatest achievement?”

“Successfully negotiating Buckingham Palace, twice, and not being asked to leave on either occasion.”

“What is your most treasured possession?”

“My health. It may sound a bit trite, but truly you do need it.”

“What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?”

“Being swamped in the mainstream and not even knowing that you are in it.”

“Where would you like to live?”

“In my home that is being renovated, with my darlings. That includes 2 rabbits, two guinea pigs and my 5 chickens 6, 7, 8, Lillian, Polly and George. George is not a rooster, long story.”

“What is your favourite occupation/pastime?”

“I would love to be a professional sports woman in my next life. If I get the chance to choose I will be the captain of the Norwegian Ladies curling team.”

“What is your most marked characteristic?”

“Skew bottom teeth.”

“What do you most value in your friends?”

“Honesty and loyalty. I am very spoilt; I have a close group of friends. The kind that are loyally honest. They will tell me when my bum looks big in a pair of jeans.”

“Who are your favourite writers?”

“JD Salinger.”

“What is it that you most dislike?”

“Peanut butter. I don’t know why because I used to love it.”

“What is your motto?”

“Bombs away!”

“If you had your time again, turn the clock back, what would you do differently?”

“Wow, I think hindsight is one of the most dangerous things of all time. Hindsight and regret live in the same scary box. The box that Pandora keeps under her bed. The very box that should just be left there for Pandora. I keep my eye of the road ahead. There are so many things I still need to get done.”

“For what would you most like to be remembered?”

“Audacity.”

The Jewellers' Story.

An initiative from Metal Concentrators.

Neville Crosse, his wife Charlotte and son Grant purchased Metal Concentrators (Pty) Ltd (Metcon) in late 2015 and rapidly became aware of the issues and difficulties faced by retail jewellers and manufacturing jewellers on a day to day basis. This led to a lot of thought and discussions as to whether Metcon could play a role in improving the sustainability of the industry.

To that end, Metcon created The Jewellers' Story. An initiative intended to provide a platform for dialogue and debate within the industry.

The first phase was a series of published caricatures presenting the compelling case to the public that purchasing South African manufactured goods has a number of benefits for the jewellery purchaser as well as developing the industry to be more inclusive of all the talented people in the country.

The second phase seeks not only to highlight the most apparent issues, but as a space to share knowledge and wisdom from the most senior and innovative participants, and to nurture emerging talented jewellery makers, as well as to help established businesses struggling to compete at the global industry level. To tell important stories. To share lessons learned. To establish a sense of community within the industry.

There are many challenges ahead for the industry, from both direct and indirect forces. Only by working together to confront them as a community can we triumph over them and provide a new hope for all South African jewellery retailers and manufacturers.

This hope we place in The Jewellers' Story.

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