

Insights from Billie Jean



Picture credit Getty Images/Dennis Oulds

This weekend, I listened to the recent [Desert Island Discs](#) episode featuring the tennis champion **Billie Jean King**. Not only did Billie Jean King win 39 Grand Slam tennis titles (12 in singles, 16 in women's doubles, and 11 in mixed doubles), but also has been and remains a powerful advocate for gender equality and social justice. In 2009, President Obama awarded her the Medal of Freedom. Now 74 years old, she continues to mentor younger people and support her charitable endeavours. I found it a

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particularly inspiring episode.

In her public speaking, she has found a way to encapsulate her message in three tenets:

- Relationships are everything
- Keep learning and keep learning how to learn
- Be a problem solver

This resonated with me in a striking way; a few days before, our business had just conducted our semi-annual meeting, where all the team meet to review our goals and ambitions, our successes in the past and our plans for the future. We reiterate and underscore our vision, purpose, and values to make sure we do not lose sight of these crucial fundamentals, especially when we have our noses to the grindstone and are getting on with daily objectives. My colleagues delivered some fantastic presentations. Billie Jean's directions dovetail beautifully with what we discussed at the meeting.

Relationship are everything

We absolutely agree. The ultimate stated purpose of our business is to build enduring and mutually beneficial customer relationships. We build strong partnerships and relationships with our customers, suppliers and stakeholders (including each other), because it is embedded in our set of values.

Keep learning and keep learning how to learn

Yes! We believe in personal growth, and the constant pursuit of expertise and knowledge, driving our own learning. One of the prerequisites we have when looking for new colleagues is incurable curiosity.

Be a problem solver

We derive enormous satisfaction from assisting our customers solve their assembly challenges, working with them to help deliver improvement in their production. Every day we receive many

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enquiries: *How do I bond this to that? How do I improve material application consistency? How do I speed up this process?* Like an amalgam of Miss Marple, Inspector Morse and Jonathan Creek, our technical sales team asks lots of questions in return, finding the keys to unlock your productivity puzzles.

Billie Jean King is not just one of the greatest tennis players of all time, she offers great insight too.

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