



### Case study: Words from the wise

**It wasn't career success that taught photographer Marti Friedlander she was special – that was something she'd always known**

Now one of New Zealand's leading photographers, Marti's early years were spent in an English orphanage. But she's a glass half-full kind of gal, and while she might not have had typical family connections, she was always at home with herself.

"I was very fortunate. For some reason, everybody loved me, and I liked who I was because I knew who I was," she says. "I knew very strongly when I was young."

When asked to describe herself, Marti's quick to respond. "I'm a very straightforward, honest, warm and loving person with a strong sense of social justice. That's who I am and who I've always been."

She doesn't know where her self-belief comes from. It's just a fact. "At 17, I lived in a hostel for women," she says. "One day a woman in the hostel said, 'I don't like you.' And I said, 'What? Everybody likes me!' I remember that clearly because I honestly couldn't believe that somebody didn't like me. You see, I liked myself."

The anti-Semitism she faced was troubling too. Marti muses, "Perhaps I learned at an early age that not everyone would like me, so I'd better like myself."

Now in her 70s, Marti was introduced to photography at 14 and worked in London for several years. "Life was hard, I was poor," she recalls, "but every morning I woke up feeling absolute joy that I was going to work. I was never envious; I've never been a materialist. When I was younger my sister said, 'No man will look at you because you don't wear makeup or jewellery.' I replied, 'That's fine, I like my own company. And if somebody does love me it'll be because I don't wear makeup or jewellery.'"

In 1958, with Kiwi husband Gerrard, Marti immigrated to New Zealand. The early years were tough. It was a time of strong social conformity – and Marti's never

been one of the crowd. "I couldn't have conformed if I'd tried. There was a lot of withdrawal because people felt I was a bit over the top. Actually, I was just being me."

Despite the initial difficulties, Marti stayed true to herself, her passion for her work a powerful motivator. "You can't take people's opinions and beliefs personally. People hide themselves but you actually have to confront the world. Open doors, even if it's terrifying."

It seems Marti has life sussed, but she says knowing and liking herself doesn't mean it's all fun and games. "Don't think that just because I feel good about myself I don't have my moments. But life is not about extreme happiness, it's about feeling good about yourself and enjoying simple things. I'm lucky, I have my career, but I don't require a great deal to make me happy. I know who I am and that's the secret. Don't compare yourself to others. People have this notion that you've got to be extra special. We're all extraordinary. Be yourself!" ■

### Additional resources

- Visit [www.sarahlaurielifestyles.com](http://www.sarahlaurielifestyles.com)
- *The Simple Abundance Companion – Following your Authentic Path to Something More* by Sarah Ban Breathnach (Hachette Livre, \$49.99)
- *What Type am I? The Myers-Brigg Type Indication Made Easy* by Renée Baron (Pearson NZ, \$29.99)

## NEXT MONTH

### PRINCIPLE TWO: ORDER...

"Think of order not as a straitjacket of 'should' but as a shape, the foundation, for the beautiful new life you are creating." – Sarah Ban Breathnach.

Next month, we'll explore the principle of Order. We'll work on creating a life with order as one of its foundations, and we're not just talking about the kitchen cupboards! To be organised, have clarity and be of purposeful mind provides a sense of control and calm. With that comes a sense of possibility and success.

*Sarah runs a coaching business in Auckland. The BEAUTIFUL: LIFE programme is one of several that she works with. Visit [www.sarahlaurielifestyles.com](http://www.sarahlaurielifestyles.com).*

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