

"It's never too late to make a change. I'm still taking chances every day." **DAN BUNNAG**

BELOW

Warattada, or Meow, Pattarodom founds a hot temper was a symptom of her much-too-stressed life

OPPOSITE

For Jenjira Van der Linden, downsizing her temporal life expanded opportunities for personal growth

normal Thai stuff and aren't ready to pay high prices for them. We have to find new ways to move forward with our culture," he laments.

For people who are considering a huge career change he advises, "It's not easy to break out of your established role. There are always good reasons for people staying in a job, like responsibilities that they can't neglect and they can't afford to take that risk. I've been lucky to be able to afford that risk. Another reason is that people think that it's too late to change. It's never too late. I'm in my 40s and I'm still taking chances every day," he says.

Warattada Pattarodom

A relaxed, seemingly carefree woman, Warattada,

or Meow, Pattarodom, chats easily about her past. She was a young and successful, highly paid advertising executive with her own company of 200 employees, a condominium and a car and was well known in the advertising industry for her expertise in customer relationship management. She had it all, yet she was not happy. "I wasn't aware of how stressed out I was; I just thought this is my life and that everyone else felt the same way," she recalls.

It was a shopping trip that made her realise how much she needed a change. She went to buy a watch and when the sales people repeatedly ignored her she exploded. Looking back she admits that although the sales people were initially wrong for not doing their job, it wasn't necessary for her to react that way. That night, Meow went home and thought about how she became such an angry person and how she could change. "I cried that day; I didn't know what to do. I wasn't this person and I asked myself how I got this way. Fame, money, success, being a boss, owning a company, being on television, all of these things made me into this person so I had to remove all of those things," Meow declares.

She consulted with her business partner and the two decided to close the company after making sure that their employees got new jobs. Meow backpacked alone around the world for two years and loved her time on the road. Upon her return to Bangkok she knew that she needed to start working again. Being back in the same environment, she found herself returning to her old ways, although not to the same extreme level. Meow wanted to figure out the equation to happiness. "I wondered what I was meant to do on this earth. I had a good education, a great job that I loved doing, money, position, success – all these things people said would make anyone happy. But I wasn't. I wanted to find out what was missing," she says. A friend asked her if she wanted to go on a meditation retreat. Meow decided to give it a go and got all the answers she was looking for there. "I knew what I was missing. In religious terms, panya, or perspective is the opposite of the word ignorant. I was ignorant of the truth that was within me. Money makes me comfortable, but it doesn't make me happy. I lacked self awareness and lacked concentration and perspective," she reveals.

Meow says that she tries to balance her life more now. She does something she loves, marketing, but doesn't neglect her other passions, such as scuba diving, animals, travelling and photography. She also says her focus in life has changed. "Being born as a human being is such an advantage;

people forget that sometimes. I now make money so I can use it for a good cause, such as helping out the dolphins, abandoned or abused dogs and cats, or donating to UNICEF. I'm motivated to generate money for these reasons. It's not just for me anymore," she asserts.

