

# She-Entrepreneurs-Mtl (SEM) - Dr. Mirella De Civita

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| by [Iris Fisher](#)



I am pleased to share the profile of Dr. Mirella De Civita, a Psychologist and Professional Certified Coach (PCC), as the latest *She-Entrepreneurs*. As you will soon see, her career-path is quite unique, ambitious, and inspiring. Along with her two companies (more details in a bit), she is also the author of “[The Courage to Fall into Life: The Tao of Purposeful Existence](#)” published in 2011.

In 2010, she launched [Papillon MDC Inc.](#), a management consulting firm specializing in leadership development worldwide. And in 2015, [Grand Heron International](#) (GHI) followed; an online service provider in the area of individual coaching, coaching assessments, and webinars focused on masterful coaching. (Please see below the divider more details provided by Dr. De Civita about these two companies.)

## **Why the entrepreneurship path?**

I never saw myself as an entrepreneur in the way we consider it in the business world. Frankly, I spent my entire 20s, and into my 30s preparing for an academic career. I realize that my time in academia served as the perfect training ground for entrepreneurship. I learned how to persevere against all odds, how to be resourceful with what I had, how to negotiate for what I needed, how

to flex my communication style to be understood by different audiences, as well as how to prepare keynote addresses that would have a lasting impact on people. More importantly, I learned the value of patience and the power of words. Today, I am able to pace my creativity and to wait for the right opportunity to share my views and/or opinions. I am more patient with people, and I mind my words. At least I notice when I'm NOT at my best as it relates to this way of being.

As a business woman, I don't hide my nurturing, caring side. I notice how it allows my clients to be more accepting of themselves; more open with their concerns; and more willing to share their inner fears about their careers, their position or even their organizations. I also don't excuse myself for being assertive, decisive, and unrelenting. We often attribute these qualities to men entrepreneurs. Not true. At least not for me; and not for many women entrepreneurs I have had the pleasure to meet and to work with.

### **Lesson(s) learned?**

#### Two valuable lessons:

Lesson 1: I learned the importance of driving profits. When your company is doing well, it buys you time. Time allows you to make good decisions. And, making better decisions benefits everyone around you. I came into the business world with a utopian mindset; at first not realizing how quickly funds run out, and how pressure mounts when you have so much to do in so little time. I have come to appreciate that doing good in this world does not have to come at the expense of profits. In fact, two years into Papillon MDC Inc., I found a way to give back to society while also driving profits by starting the Take Flight Competition targeting Non-profit organizations. Such organizations were invited to submit their request for pro bono services, totaling \$15,000 and more. Through this initiative, we supported a number of leadership development mandates here in Canada and overseas. In fact, just this past summer, we implemented a customized mentorship program in Senegal, targeting women entrepreneurs who operate a soap and hygiene business. It took 17 months to see our work come to life, and over 100 hours of team collaboration.

Lesson 2: I learned not to look at what my competitors are doing, but to think "blue ocean". I did not see myself as competing in overcrowded markets as a way to grow. I wanted to be free to create new, untapped needs in the market. I wanted to drive the "new need"; and not the other way around. I strongly felt that paying attention to my competitors implied I was behind them. And, I learned in academia to always be ahead of the curve. Therefore, I educated myself in 'blue ocean' strategy, and began creating services that would push the boundaries of different industries like coaching, leadership program design, or structured learning. A good example of this is our e-learning programs where we marry research in humor with structured learning. Another example is CoachingOnSite® where we take what is commonly done in the field of customer services and bring this into the traditional coaching space.

### **Advice?**

#### Three pieces of advice:

Advice 1: Be kind. No matter what comes your way, you always have the choice to be kind. Kindness is not a soft skill nor is it a ‘nice to have’. It is essential. In business, people will cross you; customers will drop you; and employees will take from you. Be kind.

Advice 2: Give your business a sense of purpose. Purpose is about the ‘why’ of your business. Why do you engage in the work you do? You are in business because something matters to you deeply. Articulate what that is, and build your entire business around it. To define and cultivate “Purpose”, you must be willing to make the space necessary to engage in a dialogue that aims to answer: “Why does the work we do matter? AND How do we do the work that matters?” I do believe that the future of any business will be predicated on the strength of its purpose.

Advice 3: Be the beautiful woman you are. You may feel that building your business is harder for you than it is for your male counterparts. So what? You are enough. You may want to give up because you are judged more harshly than your male counterparts when you take a stand on issues, assert your views passionately, and even walk away from a deal. So what? You are enough. You may even be ridiculed and dismissed by others (men and women alike) for being nurturing, caring or dare I say “emotional”. So what? Keep reminding yourself that you are enough. These moments all pass, and before long people change, circumstances shift, and society evolves. Just remember: You are enough.

### **Fun/interesting fact about you within your industry/career?**

If I consider the entire landscape of my life, I would have to admit that my entrepreneurial way of being began even before my academic days. Being raised in a working poor immigrant family meant we didn’t have much even though there was plenty of love, hugs, and kisses. I began working at 14 (yes, I lied about my age), and by age 15, I had a hairdresser kit tucked away in my high school locker. Before heading home from a long day at school, I would do house calls. Everyone from parents, to grandparents, to kids would line up for me to cut their hair. I was great at it, and I enjoyed the freedom to create new haircuts and styles. And, I reveled in the trust they bestowed upon me. It nurtured confidence in my abilities, and it made me happy to see others satisfied with the end result. Years later, I did graduate from hairdressing school and was on my way to pursue a career in theatre and cinema. But, my plans were halted when tragedy struck my family. I decided to stay in Montreal and to go back to school. In 2002, I earned a PhD. in Psychology, graduating on the Dean’s List and my thesis, which dealt with poverty, was ranked among the top 5% of the Arts & Science Faculty. I then went on to complete a 3-year Postdoctoral Fellowship in Behavioral Medicine at McGill University in the Dept. of Medicine, with my research funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research. Today, I bring all of this knowledge and experience in how I lead and serve people as well as engage in the creative process that results in new business lines.

I look back on those years with fond memories. I feel a sense of gratitude to the people who believed in the 15 year old girl. Some have long departed.... I guess if they could see me now, they would notice that I continue to be of service with the same set of eyes that still recognizes beauty in people.

In 2010, I launched [Papillon MDC Inc.](#), a management consulting firm specializing in leadership development worldwide. Our core purpose is to transform lives by helping leaders improve their relationships with self, others, and the larger social context. We accomplish this purpose by leveraging our services in: (1) Executive & career coaching; (2) Leadership training; (3) Distant learning; (4) Mentoring; and (5) Knowledge transfer. We exist because we believe in the goodness of people and in their ability to change how they perceive themselves by transforming the way they relate to their experiences. This then leads to a more flexible, fulfilling life. We aim for this outcome in every single mandate we do.

In 2015, I launched [Grand Heron International](#) (GHI), which is an online service provider in the area of individual coaching, coaching assessments, and webinars focused on masterful coaching. GHI was conceived with the intent of bringing together coaches from around the globe to share their expertise and knowledge, and to partner with one another in creating a community of learners that respect and adhere to the ethics and coaching competencies that make the coaching experience for people one of transformation. The idea of GHI was born in 2011 out of a sheer desire to create blue ocean space where everyone, anywhere in the world, and at any time could have access to a trusted and professional coach to help them through a crisis or a critical turning point in their lives. Moreover, I wanted coaches to recognize the power of working together as part of a community in addition to running their own businesses. GHI offers three services: (1) Coach2Coach®, a webinar-based learning site for established coaches and coaches-in-training; (2) Coaching Inventory Library®, which offers coaches and professionals working in leadership with an array of innovative and comprehensive tools to meet the needs of their clients; and (3) CoachingOnSite®, an on-demand coaching service designed to give individuals access to a trained and credentialed coach 24/7 who will help them reach a decision, gain clarity on tough issues, or simply help shift their perspective so that they can take actions that move them closer to their goal(s).

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This interview was shared on [www.The-She-Ecosystem.com](http://www.The-She-Ecosystem.com), a platform to promote diversity, empower women, and advocate and endorse Gender Equality in the workplace and in society.

Iris Fisher is the Founder and Curator of *The She-Ecosystem*.



Passionate about seeing entrepreneurs and industry leaders striving to make the world a better place through their genius and unique innovative creations; solving thorny global issues requires us all to participate. Iris' niche interest is seeing more women – half the world's population – get involved in all aspects of society, with

a focus on women in: Entrepreneurship, STEM, and in Politics. Hence, that is where *The She-Ecosystem* puts its emphasis on, through societal role models, and through advocacy of these issues. Iris has over a decade background in international accounting with engineering-consulting firms and a multinational trading house. Canadian for 30+ years, Iris is bilingual (French and English) and understands Hebrew and Romanian from her mother tongue. She lives in Montreal.