

LEADERS IN THEIR FIELD

- Journalism

Kathy Kaler

King David High School Victory Park 1988



What did you study?

Marketing and PR

What work do you do and why did you choose this path?

The path chose me! I am the founder and CEO of 101.9 ChaiFM and a radio presenter so really, my job is about serving people. My mother had a dream that she heard me on the radio (in 2005) and in that moment, I received a view of my life from a bird's eye view. I knew that starting a Jewish radio station was something I was born to do.

How has this been impacted by Coronavirus?

ChaiFM had been noting the effect of the Coronavirus overseas and we saw it coming. We knew it would be unlikely that SA would escape the Coronavirus. Our community demographic is one that travels often, networks daily and was going to be a high-risk category for transmission and infection. I started a process of lockdown at the station from the 12th of March. My team and I began converting 51 home studios for broadcast. By the time the national lockdown was announced, we had already been in 'lockdown mode' for 2 weeks.

How have you innovated to overcome life challenges?

It's the nature of life to have challenges and one must do the best we know how at the time. I meet challenges head-on because it's the only way to deal with them. It's also important to listen, empathise and see the situation from the 'other' side

What challenges have you faced as a woman?

Being a single working mom wasn't a conscious choice but rather one of necessity. There were times where

work- life balance was a challenge. Other than balancing motherhood with work life, I don't think my gender has ever been a challenge.

What King David experiences or Jewish values motivate you?

Certainly Tikkun Olam (fixing the world) is just one Jewish value that motivates me. Honesty, Integrity, Trustworthiness, Community, Kindness, Positivity, Fairness, Justice, Education, and using all those values to uplift the people around us.

What drives you to make an impact?

I am motivated and driven by the thought that I would like to leave the world in a better state than when I arrived. One thing that I would like to change about humanity is the idea that we should look after ourselves before we consider others. They are both equally important. We live in a world where the idea seems to be "If I'm okay, the world's ok."

What do you do to relax?

To relax I read. I read a lot.

Tell us about your family

I have 2 children, both of whom made Aliya and live in Israel. My daughter is married and my son has just finished his national service.

Words to live by:

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has". Margaret Meade,
"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others"
 Gandhi

"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why"

Mark Twain