Positive Entrepreneurship

2025

The True Cost of Female Entrepreneurship

Emmie Faust,
Founder, Female Founders Rise

"This report speaks directly to what we see at Female Founders Rise - female entrepreneurs demonstrating extraordinary resilience while navigating unique challenges. These insights perfectly align with our mission to build a mega network of incredible women. We know that entrepreneurship can be a lonely journey and we all need to support each other. It's great to have the data from this report to show the importance of mental and physical wellbeing for founders so that we can ensure more can thrive."

Joshua Haynes,
Co-Founding Partner, Masawa, the Nurture Capital Fund

"This report sheds long-overdue light on the hidden toll of entrepreneurship - especially for women navigating systemic barriers with limited support. At Masawa, we've seen that poor founder wellbeing is not just a human cost, it's a business risk. The data in this report reinforces what we've built our investment thesis around: wellbeing is a strategic asset, not a side note. If we want more resilient, high-performing ventures, the ecosystem must stop treating mental health as optional - and start backing founders with the tools, networks, and capital they need to thrive."

Christine Hsieh, PhD
Entrepreneur in Residence, Martin Trust Center for Entrepreneurship at MIT

"This report brilliantly captures the complex interplay between entrepreneurship and wellbeing for female founders. Having founded two startups while raising young children, I've personally experienced the unspoken tax on women who juggle building companies with caregiving. The research confirms what I've observed at MIT's Martin Trust Center: sustained stress without adequate support fundamentally alters decision-making and creative problem-solving - essential entrepreneurial skills. This valuable research recognizes that wellbeing isn't peripheral to success but its foundation."

Dina H Sherif,
Senior Lecturer, MIT Sloan and Executive Director, Kuo Sharper Center for Development and Entrepreneurship

"This report highlights critical insights into the often-overlooked psychological and emotional costs endured by female entrepreneurs. At the Kuo Sharper Center at MIT, we have seen firsthand how resilient and innovative women founders are, across global growth markets, despite navigating systemic barriers. The identification of actionable, evidence-based strategies to enhance wellbeing and performance is especially powerful. These findings should be closely reviewed by investors, accelerators, and ecosystem builders, to encourage them to move beyond funding to the provision of more holistic support required for female entrepreneurs to thrive. By addressing these hidden costs, we unlock not just individual potential but a massive opportunity for female founders to continue to contribute to national, regional and global prosperity in a way that is sustainable. I look forward to seeing how the results of this report lead to the kinds of conversations we should all be having."

Contents

What's Happening to Founders Behind Closed Doors 4
- Key Insights 5
- Methodology 5

The Female Entrepreneur Paradox: Thriving Under Pressure 6
- Portrait of a female entrepreneur 6
- The Paradox: Stress and Life Satisfaction Co-exist 6

The True Cost: Behind Closed Doors 8
- The Physical and Mental Toll 8
- The Stress Burden: Critical Challenges Facing Female Entrepreneurs 8
- Financial Anxiety: The Most Severe Stressor 9
- Entrepreneurial Stress Variations: Industry and Neurodiversity Factors 10
- The Performance Connection: Stress as a Business Liability 10

Breaking Barriers: Impediments to Female Entrepreneurial Success 12
- 1. Financial Barriers 12
- 2. Juggling Multiple Roles: The "Second Shift" 13
- 3. Resource Poverty 14
- 4. Lack of Support: The Loneliness Epidemic 15

The Impact on Physical and Mental Wellbeing 16
- Sleep, Mood, and Cognitive Function 16
- Exercise and Physical Health 17
- Hormones and Menopause 18
- Burnout Risk 19

The Best Practice Blueprint: Learning from Positive Deviants 20
- 1. Seeking Support: The Power of Connection 20
- 2. Health and Fitness: Building Physical Resilience 22
- 3. Nature as Medicine: The Environmental Connection 22
- 4. Making Time for Joy: The Importance of Fun 23
- 5. Mindfulness and Spirituality: Building Mental Resources 23
- 6. Managing Negative Thinking: The Psychology of Resilience 24

Call to Action: Creating a Better Ecosystem for Female Entrepreneurs 25
- Female Entrepreneurs 25
- Other players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem 27

Limitations and Future Research Directions 28
- Methodological Limitations 28
- Future Research Directions 29

Conclusion 30

Technical Appendix 31
- Detailed Methodology 31
- Authors 32

References 33

What's Happening to Founders Behind Closed Doors

...and how some are finding ways to thrive despite the odds

March 2025
By Nonie White and Yvonne Biggins

It is well reported that female entrepreneurs are less well-represented within the UK economy and significantly disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts, in terms of funds and resources (Rose, 2019, 2021, 2023; HM Government, 2024).

Despite research showing that female entrepreneurs are more innovative, investable, and create greater positive social and environmental impact than their male counterparts (Kelly et al., 2017; Abouzahr et al., 2018; DBIS, 2011; Hart et al., 2017), they continue to receive disproportionately little support. The Rose Review discovered that up to £250 billion of new value could be added to the UK economy if women started and scaled businesses at the same rate as men (Rose, 2019). **Yet in 2023, all-female-founded businesses received just 1.8% (£145 million) of the total equity investment value - a decrease from 2.5% in 2022 (Department for Business and Trade, 2024).**

While the barriers facing female entrepreneurs are well-documented, less understood is how the extreme pressure of entrepreneurship, combined with the unique challenges facing women, impact their daily experience, wellbeing and business outcomes. **This report reveals the lived experience of female entrepreneurs in the UK today, bringing to light both the struggles they face behind closed doors, and the strategies employed by those who thrive despite formidable odds.**

To capture this complex picture, between March to July 2024 we employed a mixed-methods research approach, that combined breadth and depth: semi-structured interviews with 25 participants offering rich, contextual understanding of their experiences, with an online survey of 213 female entrepreneurs which provided quantitative insights. This blend allowed us to capture both the hard data that reflects broader trends and the real stories and voices of founders themselves, delivering a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on female entrepreneurship today.

Our findings reveal a striking paradox:

83%
of female founders experience high stress,

78%
report constant worry and anxiety, and over

50%
are experiencing burnout.

Yet simultaneously,

97%
enjoy their entrepreneurial journey, and

66%
report high life satisfaction.

Behind the "girl boss" headlines and cherry-picked success stories, lies a complex reality of both struggle and fulfilment.

This report seeks to understand this paradox by identifying stress sources and their impact on founders' lives and work. It also reveals the surprising patterns among founders who've found ways to not just survive but thrive despite these challenges. By connecting these insights with evidence from Positive Psychology, we offer practical recommendations for both individual founders and the wider entrepreneurial ecosystem. Positive Psychology is defined as 'The scientific study of optimal human functioning to allow individuals, communities, and societies to thrive and flourish' (Keyes & Haidt, 2003).

Key Insights

1. The Female Entrepreneurial Paradox:
Perhaps the most striking finding is the paradox that **97%** of female entrepreneurs enjoy their journey and **66%** report high life satisfaction, despite **83%** experiencing high stress and **54%** experiencing burnout. This challenges conventional wisdom about the relationship between stress and satisfaction.

2. The "Best Practice Blueprint":
Success is not about working harder, it's about working differently. Entrepreneurs who flourish personally and professionally share specific behaviours and strategies that can be learned and replicated.

3. Hormonal Impacts:
The report highlights how hormonal changes during perimenopause and menopause (affecting **21%** of respondents) significantly impact entrepreneurial performance - an often overlooked factor in entrepreneurship research. Women who identified hormonal changes as a barrier reported higher stress, lower performance, and lower life satisfaction.

4. Neurodiversity and Stress:
The finding that entrepreneurs with ADHD (**18%** of respondents) experience amplified stress patterns (**81.6%** reporting persistent anxiety) suggests neurodiversity is an important but underexplored factor in entrepreneurial wellbeing.

5. Industry-Specific Stress Patterns:
The finding that stress varies significantly by industry type, with **39%** of tech entrepreneurs reporting high/very high stress compared to **27%** of service providers, provides new granularity to our understanding of entrepreneurial stress.

6. Entrepreneurial loneliness is a business risk:
With **66%** of female founders experiencing extreme isolation and **44%** reporting stress and emotional strain, the report reveals a clear link between lower loneliness and higher business performance.

Methodology

This report is based on both quantitative and qualitative research, combining an online survey of 213 female entrepreneurs with 25 semi-structured interviews 30-45 minutes each. The entrepreneurs represented a diverse spectrum of businesses, with annual revenues ranging from under £50,000 to over £5 million.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Survey data was analysed by Parth Trivedi, a Data Analyst specialising in data product management and advanced analytics. The analysis followed a structured, data-driven approach:

- **Data Preparation:** Cleansing and preprocessing to remove inconsistencies and outliers.
- **Categorisation:** One-hot encoding was applied to structure key variables for better interpretability.
- **Pattern Identification:** Association rule mining uncovered high-confidence patterns and behavioural trends.

This process ensured a robust, insights-driven analysis, translating raw data into actionable recommendations.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Qualitative data including the semi-structured interviews and the responses to the free text question, ***"Is there anything else you would like to share about your life as a female entrepreneur?"*** was analysed by WholeSum. WholeSum is a world-leading data science research organisation that specialises in text analytics. They processed qualitative data using a blend of large language models, statistical analysis, and machine learning. The analysis focused on:

- **Theme Extraction:** Identifying key topics and their frequency across responses.
- **Nuance Analysis:** Uncovering underlying patterns and unique perspectives.
- **Illustrative Insights:** Selecting representative quotes to contextualise findings.

WholeSum's methodology ensures accuracy, consistency, and data security, leveraging local algorithms and encrypted enterprise AI tools to maintain confidentiality.

In this report we combined these advanced analytics with human-centered insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities female entrepreneurs face today.

The Female Entrepreneur Paradox

Thriving Under Pressure

Portrait of a female entrepreneur

Our research presents a clear profile of female entrepreneurs today:

75% **are aged between 35 and 54, bringing mid-career experience and wisdom**

25% **identify as neurodiverse**

60% **are mothers**

This profile challenges the assertion in the Rose Review that entrepreneurialism falls sharply for women after age 35 (Rose, 2023), suggesting that many women are launching businesses in their prime professional years.

The Paradox: Stress and Life Satisfaction Co-exist

Our research revealed a striking paradox: female entrepreneurs simultaneously experience high levels of stress and high levels of life satisfaction:

- **83%** of respondents reported they were stressed
- **75%** reported being stressed about the future of their venture
- **78%** reported suffering anxiety and worry from being an entrepreneur
- **66%** reported being highly or extremely lonely
- **41%** reported exhaustion
- **54%** experienced burnout

YET DESPITE THESE CHALLENGES:

of respondents reported enjoying the entrepreneurial journey

reported being highly or extremely satisfied with their lives (see Figure 1).

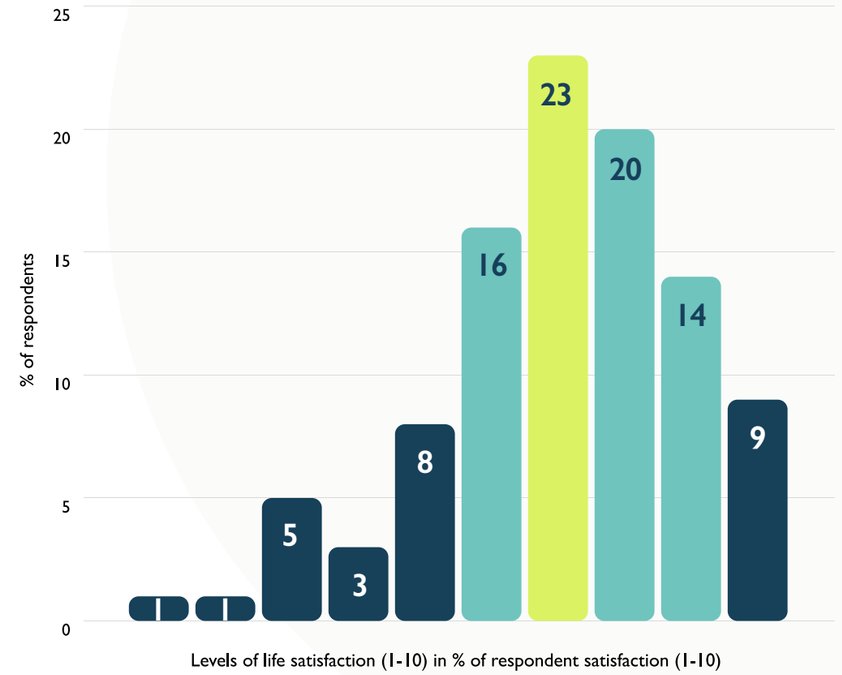

***Figure 1:** Levels of life satisfaction (1-10) in % [1].*

This paradox reflects wider research demonstrating entrepreneurship's dual and contradictory nature: while boosting wellbeing by offering greater meaning, autonomy, and personal fulfilment than traditional employment, it simultaneously imposes unique stressors and pressures that deplete wellbeing (Stephan et al., 2023).

It also reflects the possibility that for many women, the entrepreneurial path initially appeals as a solution to work-life integration challenges, particularly around caregiving responsibilities. However, they soon discover that the flexibility and autonomy of entrepreneurship comes at a cost. Entrepreneurship is deemed an 'extreme' profession, with entrepreneurs working the longest hours of any occupation and scoring higher than employees on workaholism and work addiction. Entrepreneurs experience intense uncertainty, stress, and pressure (Williamson et al., 2021; Stephan et al., 2023).

"It is the hardest I have ever worked, but it all feels more worth it because I am co-creating my own venture that I truly believe in."

[1] *The Satisfaction with Life question is typically scored on a scale from 0 to 10; however, in the survey, we used a scale ranging from 1 to 10.*

The True Cost: Behind Closed Doors

The Physical and Mental Toll

The entrepreneurial journey takes a significant physical and mental toll on female entrepreneurs:

- **59%** experience sleeplessness
- **45%** experience low mood
- **46%** do less exercise than before
- **43%** experience negative thinking
- **42%** feel overwhelmed
- **40%** don't consider themselves to be functioning optimally
- **40%** experience emotional reactivity
- **19%** experience depression
- **15%** experience panic attacks

The Stress Burden: Critical Challenges Facing Female Entrepreneurs

Female entrepreneurs face disproportionate stress burdens that directly impact their performance and wellbeing.
As illustrated by Figure 2, our research identifies three primary stress drivers as:

1. Operational Overload:
61% cite "having too much to do and too little time" as their primary stressor.

2. Financial Insecurity:
48% report cash flow concerns as a major stress driver.

3. Work-Life Balance:
32% struggle with balancing their business and personal responsibilities.

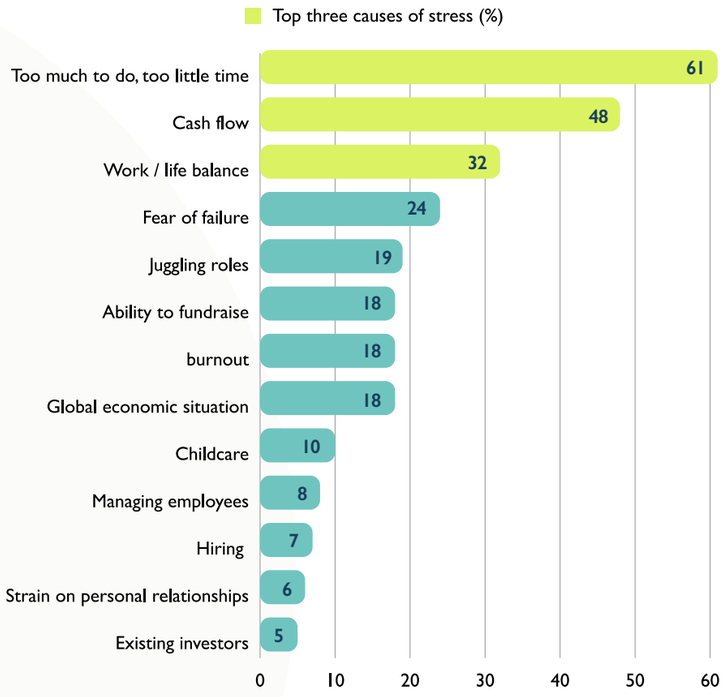

Figure 2: Key sources of stress[2].

Despite operational overload being most frequently cited, our stress intensity analysis revealed that financial concerns generate the highest levels of acute stress.
Nearly half of respondents identifying cash flow as a major stressor reported either "quite stressed" (level 3) or "extremely stressed" (level 4) reactions (See Figure 3). Similarly, respondents who cited fundraising and existing investors as their top stressors also reported the highest stress levels, demonstrating how the financial aspects of entrepreneurship contribute to stress, which negatively impacts on wellbeing.

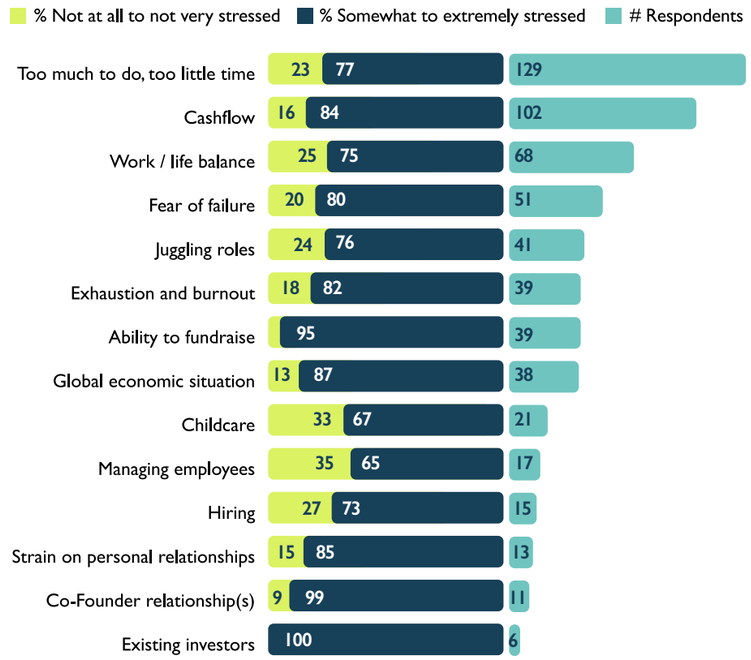

Figure 3: Top 3 sources of stress and levels of stress.

Financial Anxiety: The Most Severe Stressor

Financial aspects of entrepreneurship emerged as the most emotionally taxing dimension of business ownership. **Respondents who identified fundraising challenges and investor management as primary stressors reported the highest overall stress intensity scores, establishing a clear relationship between financial pressure and wellbeing degradation.**

> ***"The funding gap is a joke, and all the stories you hear about bias are true. It's SO frustrating to see white men get funded (mostly by other white men) with less experience and an idea that's not as good as yours!"***

Other significant sources of stress included fear of failure and the challenge of juggling multiple roles. **This further highlights how female entrepreneurs must simultaneously navigate business uncertainty while managing disproportionate personal responsibilities - a dual pressure that compounds entrepreneurial risk.**

[2] *The above distribution is based on one or more sources of stress reported by all respondents.*

Entrepreneurial Stress Variations: Industry and Neurodiversity Factors

Stress intensity shows significant variation across business types and entrepreneur characteristics:

Industry Variation:

High to very high stress scores were reported by:

39% **of tech entrepreneurs**

32% **of product-based business owners**

27% **of service providers**

Neurodiversity Impact:

Entrepreneurs with ADHD (18% of respondents) experience amplified stress patterns:

- **81.6%** report persistent anxiety or worry.
- **79%** experience significantly higher overall stress levels compared to the general entrepreneur population.

These findings highlight how certain entrepreneur segments face compounded stress challenges requiring targeted support interventions.

The Performance Connection: Stress as a Business Liability

Our analysis establishes a strong negative correlation (-0.51) between stress levels and life satisfaction among entrepreneurs (See Figure 4).

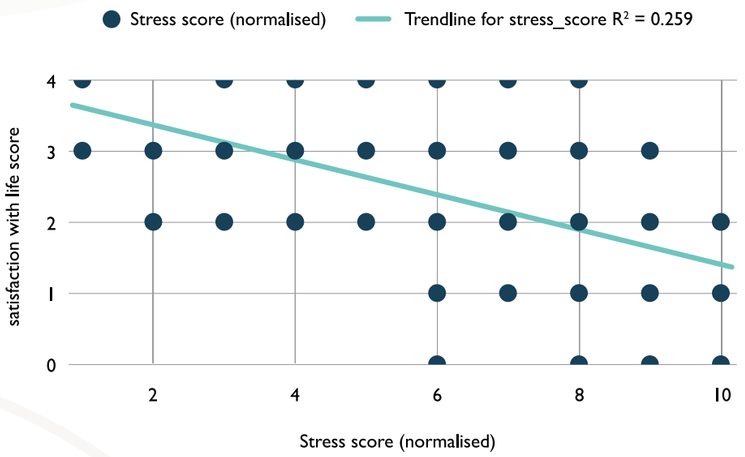

Figure 4: Correlation between life satisfaction and stress scores.

Understanding the relationship between stress and overall wellbeing is crucial for entrepreneurs. These findings highlight the importance of managing stress effectively, as it not only impacts wellbeing but also shapes how entrepreneurs experience their daily lives.

While moderate stress can enhance performance (McGonigal, 2013), excessive stress without adequate recovery periods leads to diminished cognitive function and increased burnout risk. Without structured recovery practices, entrepreneurs face deteriorating performance over time similar to athletes training without rest periods (Ben-Shahar & Ridgway, 2017). **This relationship creates a critical business implication: excessive stress doesn't just impact personal wellbeing and reduce life satisfaction, it undermines entrepreneurial performance and decision-making capacity.**

Stress was a key theme that emerged from responses to our free-text question, **'Is there anything you would like to share about your life as a female entrepreneur?'** A significant 44% of respondents mentioned the challenges and stresses they face as female entrepreneurs. These challenges included balancing work and personal life, coping with imposter syndrome, managing financial pressures, and dealing with the overall mental and emotional toll of entrepreneurship.

Below are some quotes from the respondents:

"It's so hard I am looking for a corporate job."

"I have experienced both a relationship breakdown and had problems with my teenage daughter since starting my business. This has really impacted on the progress that my business has made (lack of). I think as a woman it is difficult to separate home and work life."

Breaking Barriers: Impediments to Female Entrepreneurial Success

1. Financial Barriers

The key barrier to success for female entrepreneurs is funding, with cash flow and raising capital ranking as the first and third most significant barrier (See Figure 5). Among our respondents, raising funds is a particularly significant external challenge for tech (45%) and product (37%) businesses, compared to service businesses (18%).

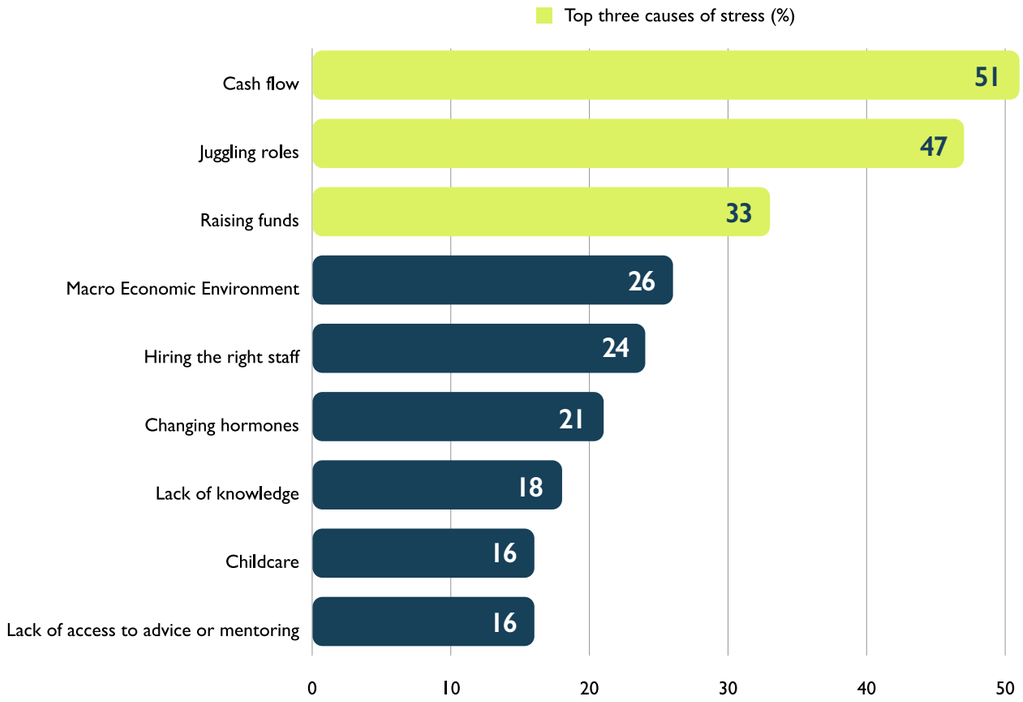

Figure 5: Key external barriers to success[3].

Recent research on female entrepreneurship, from the first Alison Rose Review of 2019, through to the UK's Women-led High-growth Enterprise Taskforce report of 2024, concludes that funding is a primary barrier for female entrepreneurs at every stage of their business journey. On average UK women launch businesses with 53% less capital than men on average, are less aware of different funding options and less willing to take on debt (Rose, 2019).

[3] *Percentages are not mutually exclusive as respondents were able to select their top three barriers to success.*

Our analysis of responses to the free-text question, **'Is there anything you would like to share about your life as a female entrepreneur?'** revealed that one in five respondents highlighted the gender biases and inequalities they face, particularly in areas such as funding and societal expectations.

"It's tough, and I don't feel we are treated the same or have the same benefits or freedom as men, and what is expected of us, in the workplace, at home and in life or as entrepreneurs!"

"Challenging - wish I were younger to really go for it! Age is a barrier to funding etc."

"I'm so tired of men nodding and saying how they can see how it might be hard for women and how things should change - yet never actually taking action."

2. Juggling Multiple Roles: The "Second Shift".

The second most selected barrier to success was juggling roles, with 47% of respondents identifying it as a challenge. **Women continue to take responsibility for 75% of unpaid care, domestic, and emotional work globally (Power, 2020).** This "second shift" creates a significant additional burden for female entrepreneurs.

This issue is particularly pronounced among those aged 35-44, where childcare responsibilities were cited as a major concern. Childcare plays a complex role in entrepreneurship and caring responsibilities disproportionately impact female entrepreneurs at every step of the entrepreneurial journey. Although getting flexibility around caring for family is the number one reason to start a business for women with children, women are also twice as likely to mention caring responsibilities as a barrier to starting up than men (Rose, 2019). Women are 17% more likely to struggle with balancing business and family demands than their male counterparts (Rose, 2019). **23% of survey respondents felt they were held back by guilt as a mother / as a business owner.**

Women aged 35-44 are also likely to be part of the 'sandwich generation' - responsible for caring for both children and elderly relatives. 68% of sandwich carers are women (Age UK, 2019). As the UK's population continues to age, this will become an increasingly significant challenge.

Recent research showed that women are more inclined to build socially responsible businesses, however, the significant challenges of financial constraints, child and eldercare, that impact women during the prime years of entrepreneurship, impede their ability to launch and sustain ventures (Hoogendoorn et al., 2024).

Among the entrepreneurs we surveyed, 80% of those with a partner/spouse and children reported experiencing anxiety or worry and high stress levels. When analysing responses to the free text question about life as a female entrepreneur, a quarter of respondents highlighted the challenges of balancing work and life:

"So when I've been asked to speak to startups, I say, 'it's gonna affect your family life, it's gonna affect your marriage, it's gonna affect your self confidence. It's gonna affect everything. But just be prepared to have a network, have support and understand that you need to have self care and all the rest that comes with it."

On the flipside, many also highlighted the benefits of flexibility and autonomy, illustrating the paradox of entrepreneurial life for women: it can be both a source of strain and a means of greater personal freedom.

"My biggest concerns are where I'm spending my time. You live once right? I'm building this incredible business that I adore doing... Equally I want to spend more time with my family and make sure I've got quality time with them. The worry would be that I'm failing people, that I'm failing my family by not being there enough, or failing my work team that I'm not being there enough."

"I really enjoy it. I love the time it has given me with my children as they've grown up. I love the flexibility of how I spend my days."

3. Resource Poverty

The implications of doing more with less are that female entrepreneurs frequently feel like they have too much to do and that they have too few resources to help them do it. **61% of entrepreneurs cited "having too much to do and too little time" as a top source of stress**

They are more likely to overwork, juggle multiple roles that may not align with their strengths, and struggle with exhaustion and burnout. **42% cited overwhelm, exhaustion, and burnout as their key internal barriers to success** (See Figure 6).

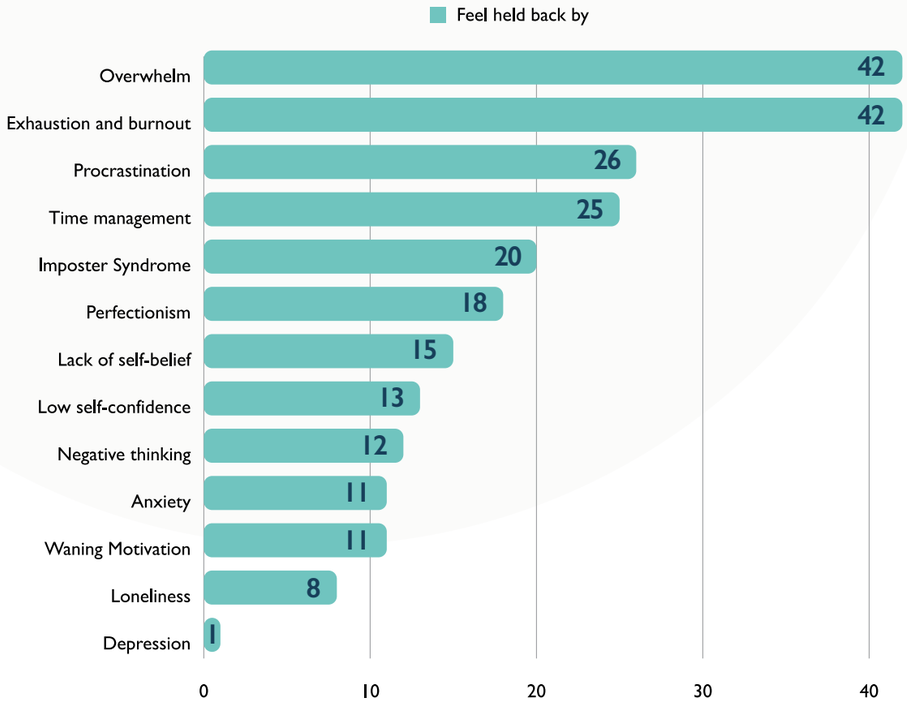

Figure 6: Key internal barriers to success[4].

Interviewees explained that overwhelm often preceded a pattern of procrastination, self-criticism and self-doubt. This can create and perpetuate self-reinforcing cycles of more overwhelm.

"But it's, you know, just when you're in the middle of it, or sometimes it can just be really overwhelming, and you just can't see the wood for the trees, and you just go into panic mode, and then you don't end up being effective anyway."

"People say, keep going, keep going, keep going. But I'm just like, 'F**k! Can't somebody just give me a big load of money, or can't somebody come and do all my social media, or somebody f**king organise my bloody laptop, because it looks like my brain. Because honestly, it affects every part of your life, no matter what anybody tells you."

"There are just nowhere near enough hours in the day to do all of the things that I need to do. And context switching is really hard, because one minute I can be in a meeting, talking about strategy. And the next minute, I'm helping my intern, dive into the detail of how the apps built and put together and how, you know, we're gonna solve this tech issue that she's looking at. And I can literally sometimes feel the gears grinding in my head."

[4] *Responses are not mutually exclusive. Respondents were able to select their top three internal barriers to success.*

From a psychological perspective, overwhelm is closely linked to cognitive overload; where the brain struggles to process excessive information and competing demands (Sweller, 1988; Young et al., 2014). This can lead to chronic stress fueling prolonged cortisol spikes, leaving individuals mentally and physically depleted (McEwen, 1998).

The constant juggling of roles often leads to an ongoing recovery deficit, where inadequate rest prevents the nervous system from recalibrating (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Over time, this can contribute to adrenal fatigue and emotional dysregulation (Sapolsky, 2004). Without adequate support systems, the weight of these challenges can feel even heavier, exacerbating feelings of isolation and loneliness.

4. Lack of Support: The Loneliness Epidemic

A significant majority of respondents (66%) reported feeling highly or extremely lonely. Women are less likely than men to know any other entrepreneurs, and often struggle to find female role models and mentors to whom they can relate (Rose, 2021). 84% of respondents believed their lives would improve if they were less lonely.

These findings are particularly alarming given the growing evidence of loneliness's detrimental effects. According to U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy, a leading expert on loneliness and wellbeing, loneliness profoundly affects both physical and mental health. It increases the risk of conditions such as heart disease, depression, and dementia, disrupts our biological systems by weakening the immune response while heightening stress, and undermines social cohesion and productivity. Fostering connection is critical for both individual and societal wellbeing (Murthy, 2020).

The Impact on Physical and Mental Wellbeing

Entrepreneurs are less innovative, persistent and productive when their wellbeing suffers (Stephan, 2018). The key stressors that impact female entrepreneurs take a measurable toll on their physical and mental wellbeing, which in turn affects their cognitive function, decision-making, and business performance.

Sleep, Mood, and Cognitive Function

Lack of sleep also has a profound impact on wellbeing and performance. Poor sleep directly impacts mood, cognitive function, physical health and quality of life (Medic et al., 2017).

Among our respondents, 59% reported experiencing sleeplessness due to entrepreneurship.

As shown in Figure 7, respondents with severely affected sleep report significantly lower life satisfaction, optimal performance, and higher loneliness than those with better sleep quality.

***Figure 7:** Impact of sleep reduction on performance, life satisfaction and loneliness[5].*

The impact of sleep on performance aligns with broader sleep research. William Dement, an American sleep researcher and founder of the Sleep Research Center at Stanford University, explains: "People who get less than a full night's sleep are prone to feel less happy, more stressed, more physically frail, and more mentally and physically exhausted as a result. Sufficient sleep makes us feel better, happier, more vigorous and vital" (Dement & Vaughan, 1999).

[5] *Percentages are averaged across all entrepreneurs.*

Exercise and Physical Health

Physical activity is another key factor in maintaining wellbeing and performance. **46% of our respondents reported doing less exercise since becoming entrepreneurs.**

This reduction in physical activity has measurable negative effects on wellbeing and performance. As shown in Figure 8, entrepreneurs who experienced a significant reduction in exercise reported:

- Lower life satisfaction (0.74 points lower)
- Lower enjoyment of entrepreneurial journey (0.38 points lower)
- Decreased optimal performance (0.35 points lower)
- Higher stress levels (0.24 points higher)

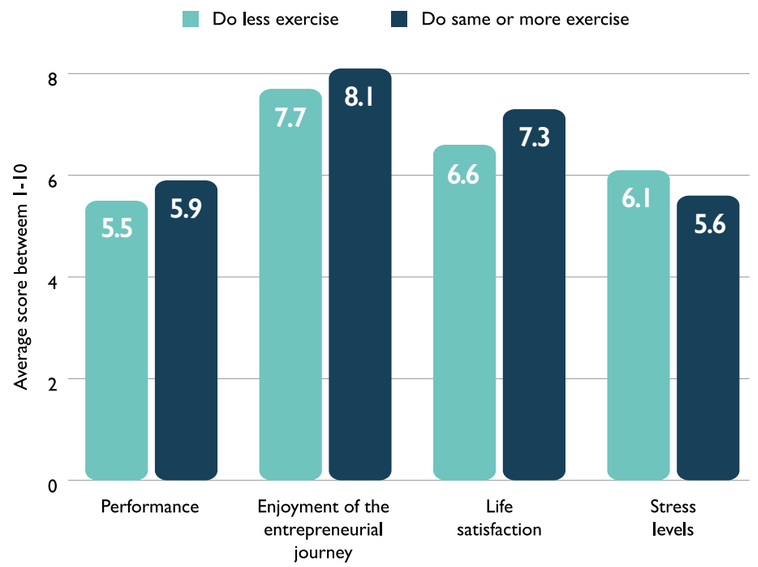

***Figure 8:** Impact of exercise reduction on stress, performance, enjoyment and life satisfaction[6].*

This connection between exercise and wellbeing aligns with the insights of energy expert Robert Thayer, who suggests that mood is influenced not only by external events and thoughts but also by key physiological factors such as sleep, diet, and physical activity.

Regular exercise reduces stress, boosts self-esteem, and enhances psychological wellbeing, all of which contribute to better performance. However, paradoxically, the more stressed entrepreneurs become, the less likely they are to engage in these beneficial activities (Thayer, 2003).

[6] *Percentages are averaged across all entrepreneurs.*

Hormones and Menopause

A significant but often overlooked factor affecting female entrepreneurs in mid-life is the impact of hormonal changes associated with perimenopause and menopause. **Our research found that 21% of respondents identified changing hormones as a barrier to success, aligning with national statistics that estimate around 60,000 women in the UK are out of employment due to menopause-related symptoms.**[7]

Menopause and perimenopause can cause symptoms like low mood, anxiety, mood swings and low self-esteem. It can cause problems with memory or concentration (brain fog), hot flushes, difficulty sleeping, headaches, muscle and joint aches and irregular periods.[8] When our wellbeing is low (for example through bad sleep, low mood or an achy body), our mood is impacted. With greater negative emotions, our cognitive capabilities are reduced, our perspective and attention narrow and our performance and productivity are negatively impacted (Fredrickson, 2001).

Interestingly, the 21% of entrepreneurs who identified changing hormones as a barrier to success also reported higher stress levels, lower optimum performance scores, and significantly lower life satisfaction compared to other founders.

Given that 75% of our respondents were aged between 34 and 55 - prime years for perimenopause and menopause, hormones and menopause represent a significant challenge. The physiological impacts of hormonal changes create an additional challenge unique to female entrepreneurs that is rarely acknowledged in entrepreneurship research or support programs.

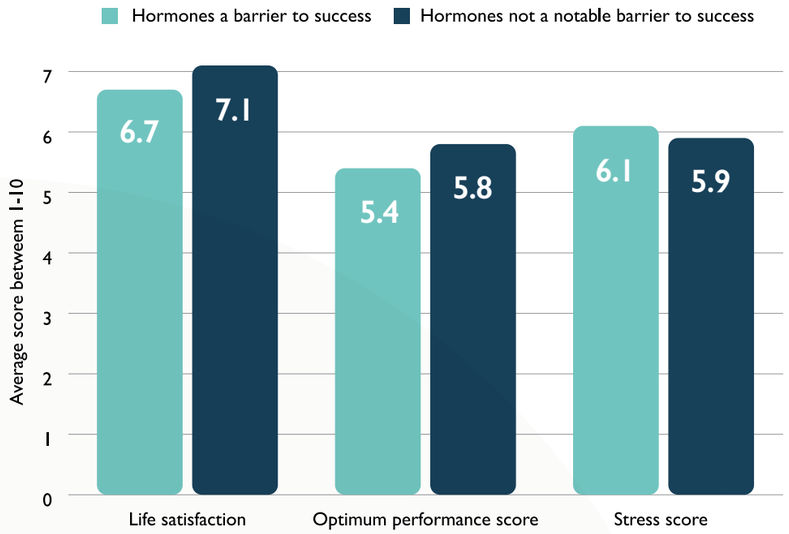

Figure 9: Impact of changing hormone levels on life satisfaction, performance and stress.

Interviewees shared:

"Going through perimenopause definitely had a big effect (negative) until I started HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy) a year ago. For about 2 years before that it felt almost impossible and very stressful in every aspect of my life."

"Being a woman in midlife, navigating business, financial health, physical health, while dealing with perimenopause is hell on wheels. I've never felt less like myself."

[7] https://www.nhsconfed.org/publications/womens-health-economics
[8] https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/

Burnout Risk

Our data highlights that 42% of female entrepreneurs identify overwhelm and burnout as key barriers to success, demonstrating the urgent need for intervention. Addressing this challenge requires both systemic change and proactive self-care strategies.

The World Health Organization (2019) classifies burnout as an occupational phenomenon, describing it as a state of exhaustion, mental detachment, and reduced professional efficacy caused by chronic workplace stress. Other definitions highlight emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

Our research found that 54% of respondents have experienced burnout as a direct result of running their business. The risk is particularly high due to:

- Role overload (Eddleston & Powell, 2012)
- Limited structural support
- Restricted access to funding
- Societal expectations to "do it all" (Jennings & McDougald, 2007)

Additionally, hyper-awareness and mental overdrive which is common among those juggling high-stress entrepreneurship with family life, can create a state of chronic vigilance, further depleting cognitive and emotional resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Dopamine dips, caused by sustained effort without sufficient reward, reinforce burnout wiring, making it harder to engage in restorative behaviours (Dolan, 2002; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

As burnout escalates, it not only impacts personal wellbeing but also reduces innovation, resilience, and the ability to seize new opportunities (Cardon & Patel, 2015). **When entrepreneurs' wellbeing suffers, they are less persistent and productive, leading to lower economic output and fewer jobs (Stephan et al., 2023).**

Without prioritising wellbeing, the sustainability and long-term success of female-led businesses remain at serious risk. However, not all entrepreneurs experience burnout. Many have found ways to thrive despite the challenges, demonstrating that success and wellbeing are not mutually exclusive. The next section of this report explores the strategies and set thriving entrepreneurs apart, offering valuable insights into best practice.

The Best Practice Blueprint: Learning from Positive Deviants

"Positive deviants" are individuals who successfully navigate challenging circumstances by implementing uncommon but beneficial practices that enable them to achieve better outcomes than their peers, despite facing similar constraints and resources (Pascale & Monique, 2010). In the context of female entrepreneurship, positive deviants are those who maintain high levels of wellbeing, resilience, and business performance despite encountering the same stressors and barriers as other female entrepreneurs. Despite the challenges, some female entrepreneurs don't just survive, they thrive. Our research identified six key practices that differentiate these entrepreneurs from their peers:

1. Seeking Support: The Power of Connection

Entrepreneurs with higher "openness scores" - defined as willingness to share challenges and stresses with others, experience better performance, lower stress levels, greater life satisfaction, and reduced feelings of loneliness. (See Figure 10.) Having positive relationships is a fundamental element of wellbeing (Seligman, 2011) and one of the most powerful potential sources of emotional renewal (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003). Humans need to belong, to feel accepted and seen, and this need increases during times of instability or perceived danger (Kaufman, 2021).

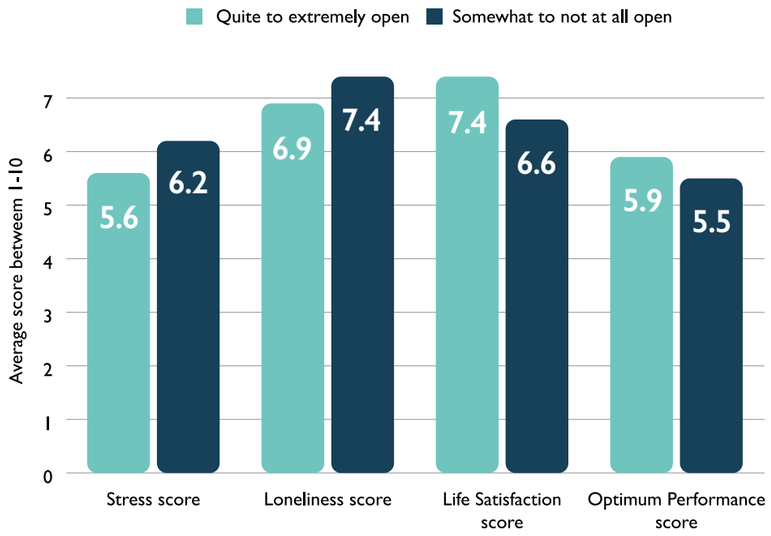

Figure 10: Levels of openness and impact on stress, performance, loneliness and life satisfaction.

High-openness entrepreneurs are more likely to incorporate activities such as running, walking, spending time in nature (+15.6%), and engage in solo or group exercise (+10.3%). They are also more engaged in mindfulness practices (+14.6%), spiritual practices (+11.9%), and seeking professional and personal support (+10.2%).

The entrepreneurs identified in our research fostered support in different domains, including:

A. PROFESSIONAL COACHING

Support from a coach significantly enhances wellbeing and reduces stress among entrepreneurs. Our data shows that 88% of respondents who engage with a coach report a positive impact on their wellbeing. Regular coaching discussions about stress are also linked to lower stress levels (correlation: 0.23).

The ICF Global Coaching Client Study found that 99% of coaching clients reported feeling satisfied, with 96% stating they would repeat the process (ICF, 2009). Coaching also offers financial benefits, with studies showing a median return on investment (ROI) of seven times the initial investment, and some companies reporting returns as high as 50 times their investment (ICF, 2009; Phillips, 2007).

B. PEER SUPPORT

Peer support from fellow founders appears to have a significant impact on wellbeing. Our data indicates that 85% of those who regularly engage with other founders report a positive impact on their wellbeing.

"It's tough - but if you're connected to other female founders it can make all the difference as they're a super supportive bunch, and there's a lot of comfort in knowing there are other people going through exactly the same as you are."

Additionally, founders who participate in WhatsApp or chat groups with other entrepreneurs report slightly lower levels of loneliness (difference of 0.17), suggesting that even online peer support networks may provide emotional connection and help alleviate feelings of isolation.

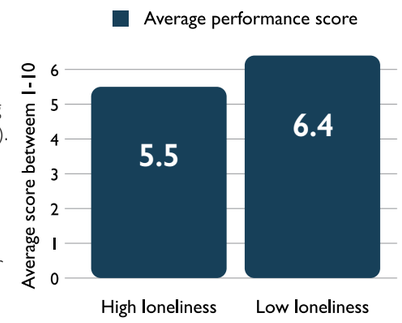

Figure 11: Levels of loneliness and impact on performance.

As shown in Figure 11, lower loneliness is associated with higher performance, meaning that founders who seek support from peers not only experience reduced loneliness but also tend to perform at a higher level as a result.

A recent study of 300 female entrepreneurs found that peer support serves as a buffer against the emotional strains of entrepreneurship while also supporting business growth (Neneh, 2024).

C. MENTORSHIP AND ADVISORY SUPPORT

Those who talk to advisors or a mentor about their stress are 83% likely to say that entrepreneurship has a positive impact on their wellbeing. Mentors provide valuable guidance based on their own experiences, helping entrepreneurs navigate challenges and avoid common pitfalls.

D. FRIENDS AND FAMILY

85% of respondents turn to friends and family for support, however, those who rely solely on friends and family still report a 7/10 loneliness score and experience high stress levels (5.9/10), suggesting that personal connections alone may not be the strongest support mechanism.

"Imposter syndrome is real, but the peer-to-peer support within female founder communities is amazing. I've loved making so many connections, having honest conversations, and being motivated by others".

2. Health and Fitness: Building Physical Resilience

Our findings reveal that entrepreneurs who prioritise health and fitness goals tend to experience lower stress levels and report higher performance, compared to those who primarily prioritise financial independence, as shown in Figure 12.

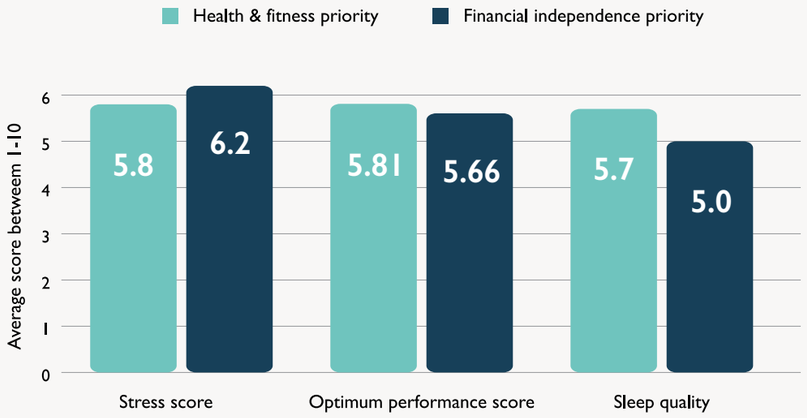

Figure 12: *Impact of health and fitness over financial independence as a priority, on stress, performance and sleep.*

Exercise is one of the most effective ways to boost mood and wellbeing (Babyak et al., 2000; Watson, 2002). Even moderate physical activity increases energy, promotes relaxation, and reduces stress. A systemic study showed that after only 10 minutes of moderate walking, energy is increased for 60 to 120 minutes afterwards (Thayer, 2003)

For entrepreneurs, regular exercise helps sustain motivation and achieve goals (Goldsby, Kuratko, & Bishop, 2005).

Additionally, the data indicates a positive correlation (0.11) between regular exercise and maintaining healthy sleep patterns. A meta-analysis of interventions aimed at improving sleep quality found that better sleep led to significant positive effects on mental health, including reductions in depression, anxiety, and stress (Scott et al., 2021). Studies have demonstrated that better sleep quality is associated with improved job performance (Sleep Foundation, 2021).

3. Nature as Medicine: The Environmental Connection

As shown in Figure 13, individuals who engage in activities such as running, walking, or spending time in nature tend to experience lower levels of loneliness compared to others. Additionally, higher levels of optimal performance are strongly associated with reduced loneliness, showing a difference of 0.85.

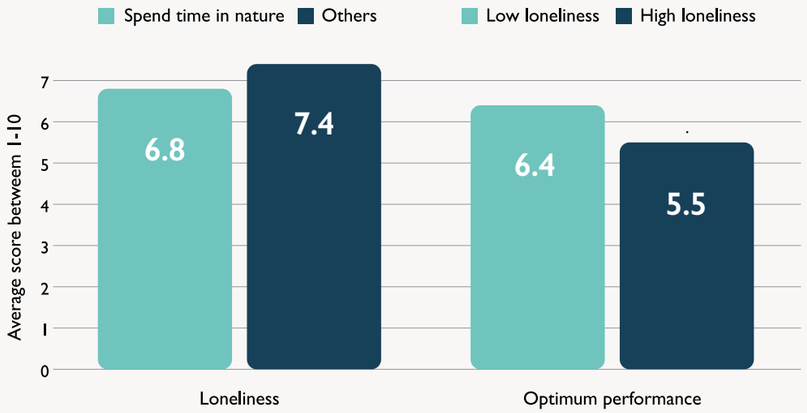

Figure 13: *The impact of time spent in nature on loneliness and the effect of loneliness on performance.*

Even brief contact with natural environments is proven to be beneficial to health and wellbeing, increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions, including stress and depression (Neill et al., 2019).

Time spent in nature has also been linked to increased feelings related to self-transcendence and elevation, satisfying a universal human need to connect to the natural world and something bigger than oneself, as well as fostering a greater prosocial orientation (Passmore & Holder, 2016; Neill et al., 2019).

Additionally, combining best practices #2 and #3, exercising in nature, offers amplified benefits. Psychiatrist and Harvard Medical School professor John Ratey, known for his research on the connection between exercise and brain health, describes this as 'exercise squared', combining the benefits of physical activity with the restorative effects of natural environments (Ratey, 2008).

4. Making Time for Joy: The Importance of Fun

Entrepreneurs who prioritise fun in their life goals report higher performance levels, with a positive correlation of 0.17, as illustrated in Figure 14.

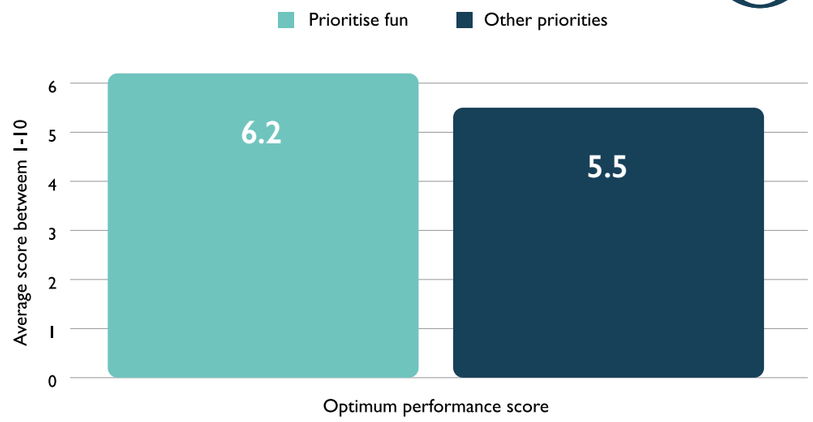

Figure 14: *The impact prioritising fun has on performance.*

The data reveals a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.20) between entrepreneurs who integrate hobbies into their routines and those who maintain healthy sleep patterns, suggesting that engaging in enjoyable activities may contribute to better sleep quality.

Our research shows that entrepreneurs who focus on experiencing fun in their lives perform better in their work. This aligns with existing research indicating that entrepreneurs who deliberately psychologically disengage from work, to rest and recover from stress, exhibit greater resilience in the face of challenges.

As Williamson et al. state, to make entrepreneurship a career path in which individuals can thrive, we need to support entrepreneurs to appreciate the important role of recovery as an investment in their future wellbeing, health and productivity. **The most resilient entrepreneurs find recovery in relaxation, in taking control of their leisure time, and in pursuing personal growth and mastery in hobbies outside of work (Williamson et al., 2021).**

5. Mindfulness and Spirituality: Building Mental Resources

Entrepreneurs who integrate spiritual practices, meditation or mindfulness into their daily routines (28%) tend to experience lower stress levels, with a correlation of 0.14, as shown in Figure 15. Entrepreneurs with high openness are significantly more likely to engage in meditation (14.6% more) and participate in religious or spiritual practices (11.9% more) as part of their wellbeing strategies.

Figure 15: *The relationship between engaging in mindfulness or a spiritual practice and stress.*

Mindfulness is linked to

- Lower emotional distress (e.g., depression, anxiety, and stress),
- Higher subjective wellbeing (fewer negative emotions, greater life satisfaction), and
- Greater eudaimonic wellbeing (e.g., vitality, self-actualisation) (Brown et al., 2007).
- Improved working memory and resistance to distraction (Jha, Krompinger & Baime, 2007; Mrazek et al., 2013).

6. Managing Negative Thinking: The Psychology of Resilience

Entrepreneurs who actively manage low mood and negative thinking tend to experience lower stress levels, as illustrated in Figure 16.

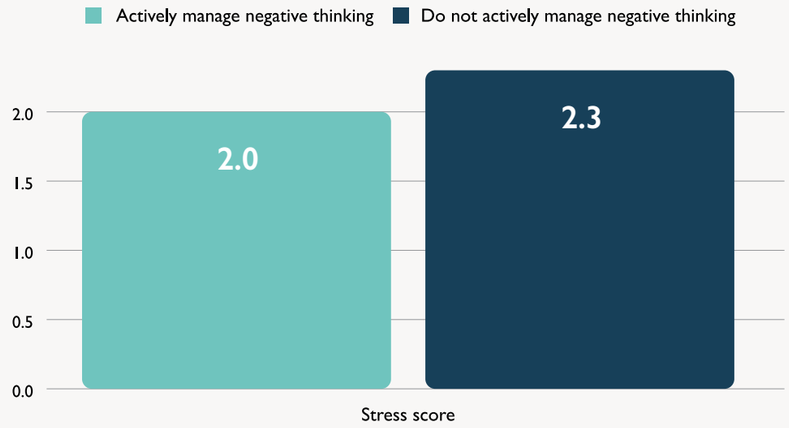

Figure 16: The relationship between managing negative thinking and stress.

These findings are reflected in research on resilience. How we analyse the events that befall us - our thinking style - has a profound effect on how we respond to them and determines our level of resilience, our ability to overcome, steer through, and bounce back when adversity strikes (Reivich & Shatté, 2002). Individuals who can realise their mood is low and seek to change it, or notice their thinking patterns and seek to change them, will be more resilient to stress and happier and more productive in the face of it (Reivich & Shatté, 2002).

The brain performs significantly better when in a 'positive' state of mind, as opposed to negative, neutral or stressed (Achor, 2011). What we know from Positive Psychology is that our mood and the emotions we're experiencing have a direct impact on our behaviour, cognitive capabilities and performance at work. Our brain is hardwired for negativity, meaning we naturally focus more on negative events and experiences than positive ones (Hanson, 2013). If we analyse a situation and decide it is terrible, our mood lowers and negative emotions kick off a downward spiral, creating more, compounding negative emotions. On this downward trajectory, our attention and perspective narrow, and we focus even more on what's not going well. Our cognitive capacities are diminished, limiting our creativity, our flexibility of thought and the number of opportunities we can see (Fredrickson, 2010).

For entrepreneurs, the ability to positively reframe and reappraise challenges builds resilience - it reduces the impact of stress, low wellbeing and self-blame, whilst enabling recovery, learning and progress (Williamson et al, 2021).

Call to Action: Creating a Better Ecosystem for Female Entrepreneurs

There is significant economic, social and environmental potential in both value and job creation in the female founder ecosystem. To realise this value, all stakeholders, not just the entrepreneurs themselves, must take practical and systemic steps to support female founders to thrive.

That said, in this paper, we've revealed some ways in which female entrepreneurs can take control of their own experience, to support themselves to flourish despite the evident challenges they face.

Female Entrepreneurs

Female entrepreneurs can take immediate action to improve their wellbeing, performance and resilience:

Implement 'The Best Practice Blueprint' outlined in this report, namely:

1. Seeking support, from a coach, peers or a mentor/advisor.
2. Prioritising health, physical and mental fitness.
3. Getting into nature.
4. Making time to detach from work, to pursue fun and interests outside of work.
5. Building mental resources through mindfulness and/or spirituality.
6. Intentionally managing negative thinking patterns and reframing/ reappraising as appropriate.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this research we did not test hypotheses about specific practices that female entrepreneurs might adopt to thrive, we only asked open questions to encourage the sharing of everyday experiences across life and work. That said, in awareness of both current research and our lived experience of working with female entrepreneurs, plus the fact that all entrepreneurs are different, with varied sub-groups and attributes, we further recommend that female entrepreneurs consider a Positive Psychology framework that builds on the best practices already illuminated in this piece of research.

It is our belief that the broad framework of PERMA-V[9], Martin Seligman's comprehensive 'wellbeing theory' (2011) is a useful lens through which individuals might craft their own ideal best practices for wellbeing, performance and resilience.

The PERMA-V model identifies six key elements that contribute to wellbeing and optimal performance:

- Positive Emotions,
- Engagement,
- Positive Relationships,
- Meaning & Purpose
- Accomplishment, and
- Vitality (Seligman, 2011)

All of us need each element of PERMA-V to have good wellbeing, but how much of each element we need, is unique to us. We recommend that female entrepreneurs rate themselves out of ten for each element of wellbeing. From there, they can establish which areas require the most immediate attention and craft a practical strategy from the list below to intentionally increase their levels of wellbeing in those specific areas.

[9] *MAPP Graduate Emiliya Zhivotovskaya added the 'V' to Seligman's PERMA framework and has proliferated its addition through her organisation's training programmes. We adopt PERMA-V, as the V resonates with entrepreneurs for whom vitality often proves challenging.*

A Framework for Flourishing: The PERMA-V Model

Practical strategies to increase the six elements of wellbeing for improved performance and resilience

Implementing these evidence-based practices across six dimensions can significantly enhance wellbeing and performance

1. Positive Emotions

Cultivating Optimism

✓ **Practise Gratitude**
Daily gratitude journaling increases happiness.
Evidence: Emmons and McCullough, 2003

✓ **Savour Small Wins**
Acknowledge and celebrate achievements to build momentum and maintain motivation.
Evidence: Sheldon and Lyubomirsky, 2006

✓ **Practise Mindfulness**
This helps regulate emotions and reduce stress.
Evidence: Kabat-Zinn, 1990

2. Engagement

Finding Focus and Flow

✓ **Leverage Strengths**
Align work with core character strengths.
Evidence: Seligman, 2011

✓ **Create Flow Conditions**
Have clear goals, feedback and balance challenge with skill level
Evidence: Csikszentmihalyi, 1990

✓ **Time-Blocking Techniques**
Block deep work sessions into your calendar and remove distractions.
Evidence: Newport, 2016

3 Relationships

Building Support Networks

✓ **Peer Support Networks**
Join communities to reduce isolation.
Evidence: Neneh, 2024

✓ **Mentorship and Coaching**
Seek guidance and accountability.
Evidence: Theeboom et al., 2014

✓ **Quality Over Quantity**
Cultivate meaningful connections.
Evidence: Dutton, 2003

4. Meaning

Aligning Work with Purpose

✓ **Clarify Values**
Regularly reflect on your core values and align work accordingly.
Evidence: Schwartz, 2012

✓ **Engage in Purpose-Driven Work**
Identify how work contributes to greater purpose.
Evidence: Wrzesniewski et al., 1997

✓ **Give Back Through Mentorship**
Dedicate time to charitable projects or community.
Evidence: Post, 2005

5. Accomplishment

Setting and Achieving Goals

✓ **SMART or WOOP**
Goals Use structured goal frameworks.
Evidence: Locke and Latham, 2002

✓ **Track Progress**
Monitor goals and celebrate achievements.
Evidence: Duhigg, 2016

✓ **Build Resilience**
Learn from setbacks.
Evidence: Duckworth, 2016

6. Vitality

Prioritising Health and Energy

✓ **Exercise Regularly**
30-45 minutes daily activity.
Evidence: Ratey and Loehr, 2011

✓ **Optimise Sleep**
Aim for 7-9 hours consistently.
Evidence: Walker, 2017

✓ **Healthy Nutrition**
Prioritise whole foods and hydration.
Evidence: Benton and Young, 2019

✓ **Practise Relaxation Techniques**
Incorporate breathing techniques, meditation, or muscle relaxation.
Evidence: Brown and Gerbarg, 2005

Other players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem

Investors, educational institutions, accelerators and incubators all play a crucial role in shaping and supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem. In light of the results of this report, we recommend that other players in the ecosystem share the responsibility of supporting female founders to flourish, by:

- **Educating founders on the evidence connecting wellbeing, performance and resilience**
- **Be role models for working and living in a way that supports optimum wellbeing, performance and resilience**
- **Encouraging and supporting founders to work in a way that supports their wellbeing**
- **Offering founders access to peer networks, coaching and mental health support as necessary to support their wellbeing, performance and resilience**
- **Providing advice, connections and mentorship alongside capital**
- **Creating supportive conditions for all founders, particularly around work-life balance**

Additionally, we urge VCs and other key players within the entrepreneurial ecosystem to sign the Founder Mental Health Pledge, which seeks to empower entrepreneurs to prioritise their mental health and wellbeing. Healthy founders create healthy teams, which in turn build healthy, high-performing businesses.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The results reported in this study are limited by several factors that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Methodological Limitations

Reliance on self-report measures:
Perhaps the most important limitation is the reliance on self-report measures of wellbeing, which may be subjective and limited by respondents' understanding of wellbeing as a concept and willingness to share potentially vulnerable information. We introduced semi-structured interviews to mitigate this limitation.

Shared method variance:
The reliance on self-report for both wellbeing measures and entrepreneurship dimensions increases vulnerability to inaccuracies caused by shared method variance, which may have amplified the reported correlations. That is, people who tend to answer yes to most questions would perhaps skew findings.

Cognitive bias:
Some questions offered positive, neutral, and negative impact options. The human tendency to take the middle ground and reply neutrally was addressed by assigning one to both positive and negative impact to counter this cognitive bias.

Data processing challenges:
Although the data was primarily categorical, the inclusion of an open-ended question and "Other" response options introduced variability, requiring additional effort in data cleansing and standardisation.

Survey design limitations:
A couple of questions were added at a later stage in the survey process, meaning not all respondents had the opportunity to answer them, for instance exploring whether respondents were solo or co-founders.

A limitation of the survey is the lack of detailed ethnicity data. Future research would benefit from collecting more comprehensive information on how participants self-identify their ethnicity. This would provide more nuanced insights into the entrepreneurial experiences across diverse ethnic backgrounds and enable more culturally responsive analysis and support strategies.

Selection Bias:
The recruitment process may have added selection bias. The survey was distributed by researchers affiliated with an organisation that supports over 8,000 female founders, and recruitment included community outreach through LinkedIn and personal networks. Both authors are associated with the world of entrepreneurship and wellbeing, so this may have produced a higher response rate from entrepreneurs with an interest in wellbeing. Additionally, there is age group bias, as the study excluded responses from the under-25 and over-64 age groups due to insufficient representation.

Lack of Comparison Group:
This study did not have a comparison group. Future research would benefit from including a demographically matched comparison group of male entrepreneurs, which may yield more nuanced results about gender-specific challenges and solutions.

Preliminary Nature of Findings:
While these findings provide valuable insights, they should be interpreted as preliminary due to the study's sample size and potential selection biases. As with many studies on entrepreneurship and wellbeing, our results reflect the experiences of those who chose to participate and may not be fully representative of the broader entrepreneurial population. Future research should aim to replicate these findings with a larger, more diverse sample to strengthen the generalisability of the conclusions.

Future Research Directions

Expanding the study to a larger and more diverse population would help ensure broader representation. Incorporating voice-based surveys may improve accessibility and capture nuanced responses. Additionally, refining survey design to limit biases and planning data pipelines earlier in the process would enhance the quality of insights. Multi-branching questionnaires could also improve how "Other" responses and free-text inputs are handled, leading to richer and more structured data.

FUTURE RESEARCH COULD EXPLORE SEVERAL PROMISING DIRECTIONS:

Longitudinal impacts:
Track female entrepreneurs over time to understand how wellbeing and business performance interact and evolve over the lifecycle of their businesses.

Demographic comparisons:
Compare experiences across diverse demographics and geographic contexts.

Ecosystem analysis:
Examine how different support ecosystems impact female entrepreneurial success.

Intervention testing:
Evaluate the effectiveness of specific wellbeing interventions for female entrepreneurs

Hormonal influences:
Further explore the impact of hormonal changes on female entrepreneurial performance and wellbeing

Scaling models:
Research different approaches to scaling that might better support female founders' wellbeing

Conclusion

Female entrepreneurs represent a massive underserved and untapped economic opportunity for the UK. **Until structural and systemic changes are made to better support female entrepreneurs to launch and sustainably grow businesses in the UK, the stresses and pressures of entrepreneurship will continue to affect them and the likely success of their ventures, more than their male counterparts.**

This report reveals the real-life impact of the significant external and internal challenges female entrepreneurs face today, including resource constraints of time, money and energy, stress management and work-life balance struggles. These findings collectively offer a more nuanced understanding of female entrepreneurship that goes beyond the typical focus on funding gaps and structural barriers to examine the lived psychological experience.

This report also identifies a powerful narrative of grit, adaptability and resilience. Successful female entrepreneurs are redefining success against all odds. Women in our study demonstrate ways in which it is possible to not only survive the challenging environment in which they find themselves, but to take control of their experience so that they thrive in spite of it. The six key best practices identified - leveraging support systems such as coaching and peer networks, prioritising health and fitness, spending time in nature, making time for fun outside of work, practicing mindfulness, and managing negative thinking - provide a blueprint for resilience and sustainable success. This report also offers further recommendations for other female entrepreneurs to adopt, to design their personalised strategies for best performance and resilience.

By learning from and disseminating the best practices revealed in this report, we can build an ecosystem in which more female entrepreneurs succeed and thrive. **That said, this report raises the question - if women can succeed despite an entrepreneurial ecosystem that is 98% skewed in favour of their male counterparts, what greater financial, social, and environmental impact could they achieve with equitable access to resources and support?**

Technical Appendix

Detailed Methodology

This report is based on both qualitative and quantitative research:

- **An online survey of 213 female entrepreneurs**
- **25 semi-structured interviews (each lasting 25-45 minutes)**

The survey data was analysed by Parth Trivedi, a Data Analyst with expertise in data product management and advanced analytics. The survey analysis followed a structured approach to ensure data-driven insights.

The process began with data ingestion and thorough cleansing to remove inconsistencies and outliers. Key variables were encoded using one-hot encoding, categorising the data for model interpretability. Association rule-mining was employed to uncover patterns and relationships with high support and confidence, enabling a deeper understanding of the respondents' behaviour.

The analysis also employed specific data transformation techniques to enhance accuracy. This included applying weighted scoring mechanisms to categorical variables based on predefined impact levels, and implementing bias reduction strategies for mixed responses where "A bit of both" answers were mapped to both positive and negative impacts to preserve data balance.

Min-max normalisation was utilised to standardise various scoring scales to a consistent 0-10 range for clearer comparison. The team measured relationship strength using three key metrics: support (pattern prevalence), confidence (predictive reliability), and lift (relationship significance above random chance), ensuring all insights were backed by strong statistical evidence rather than coincidental correlations.

The qualitative interviews used open-ended questions about the interviewees' daily lives. The interviews were analysed by WholeSum, an organisation that analyses free text using a pipeline that combines large language models with statistical analysis and machine learning.

The analytical process includes the identification of common themes and calculation of their frequency among participants, extraction of nuances of contributions within themes, and selection of representative illustrative quotes, alongside language models and algorithmic natural language processing to ensure consistency, accuracy, and readability.

SCORING MECHANISM

Various scoring mechanisms were used to quantify respondents' experiences:

Stress Levels:
Extremely stressed → 4
Quite stressed → 3
Somewhat stressed → 2
Not very stressed → 1
Not at all stressed → 0

Openness About Stress:
Extremely open → 0
Quite open → 1
Somewhat open → 2
Not very open → 3
Not at all open → 4

Impact of Entrepreneurship on Sleep:
Improved → 0
Stayed the same → 1
Declined → 2

Change in Exercise Since Starting the Venture:
I do more → 0
It's the same → 1
I do less → 2

Entrepreneur Journey Enjoyment:
Scale: 1 to 10

Current Performance at Optimum Level:
Scale: 1 to 10

Life Satisfaction Score:
Scale: 1 to 10

Perception of Entrepreneurship as a Lonely Job:
Scale: 1 to 10

Impact of Loneliness on Life:
Scale: 1 to 10

Authors

About Nonie

Nonie White FRSA is a leading authority on female entrepreneurship and Positive Psychology, blending rigorous research with practical business experience to transform how women build sustainable ventures.

As founder of a coaching practice for ambitious female entrepreneurs, Nonie integrates evidence-based methodologies to help clients scale businesses while preventing burnout, building psychological capital that fosters authentic leadership and sustainable businesses.

Previously, Nonie founded several businesses including a tech platform and community that empowered hundreds of women to build businesses around family commitments - addressing the "second shift" burden identified in her research.

A certified Positive Psychology Practitioner (The Guild of Positive Psychology) and Associate Certified Coach (ICF), Nonie serves as an Advisory Member to Female Founders Rise, a growing collective of over 8000 female entrepreneurs across the UK. She holds a Masters degree from the University of Cambridge and a Masters in Social Entrepreneurship from the University of London.

About Yvonne

Yvonne Biggins is a serial entrepreneur who has founded three successful start-ups, one of which raised over £1 million in investment. Her diverse 20-year career spans senior roles at multinational companies including Apple. The first decade of Yvonne's professional journey focused on marketing for technology companies following a brief teaching career, while the last decade has been dedicated to the wellbeing sector, where she co-founded two wellbeing-focused ventures. She developed an innovative wellbeing product that was later acquired by Babylon Health and has published several research papers in the field.

Yvonne holds a Master's in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, an MBA from Cranfield School of Management, and is a graduate of the THNK School of Leadership. An ICF certified coach and MBSR Mindfulness teacher, she also actively mentors emerging entrepreneurs through the GoLondon Young Entrepreneurs Start Up Programme.

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CONTACT

www.positiveentrepreneurship.co

hello@positiveentrepreneurship.co

Nonie

Yvonne