

# PASSION In Action

By Alison Pothier

## A FOOT IN BOTH WORLDS



I have worked in banking for fourteen unexpected years. A humanitarian at heart, I've spent most of that time trying to reconcile the 'me I knew' with 'what I do'. A brief exit from the industry showed me the value in making this connection.

I left to pursue my childhood dream to build retreat centres for self-discovery, wellness, creative and personal development. Like a child set free to play, I searched for locations while indulging in the creative endeavours I always dreamed to explore.

But the dream didn't quite unfold to my plan. Rather the opposite, as one synchronistic meeting after another pointed me back to the world I was certain I had left behind. An insightful call from mum challenged me to look a little closer at what was unfolding, "Alison, I believe in your dreams, but you and I know it doesn't work this way. If you remain open to what presents itself to you, you may discover that your dreams fall neatly into your lap." Reluctantly, I accepted her advice and the interviews that would reveal deep wisdom in her words.

When asked what made me leave, I explained, "We are taught in school to do the best we can, to get the best grades we can, to get the best job we can, to make as much as we can, so our kids get the best chance they can to do it all again. Until one inevitable morning, when we wake a little lost, a little empty, unable to recognise the 'who' we really knew we were once inside. In that moment for me, when I didn't recognise the person I knew myself to be inside, I discovered I had somehow in all my achieving, achieved mastery of mediocrity. I hadn't necessarily achieved the mastery of me. When that morning came, I left the city with a promise to be the best I can be for me."

A confused but intrigued interviewer then asked why I would ever return. My answer surprised even me, "I enjoyed every ounce of rekindling my creativity and passion for life, but I learned that to be the best I can be for me, I need the whole of me. One trade-off took on the form of another as part of me was lost in pursuit of a different happiness. I still strained to fully recognise the person staring back at me in the mirror. If, by chance, the real dream cleverly integrates all facets of my life, one side not precluding the other from existing, then I welcome the opportunity to return to create that wholeness."

On the day I accepted the job, I was approached to buy a small holistic centre in Richmond-Upon-Thames. Today, I am a managing director in banking while also developing my first centre, a seedling of my vision to come. Never did I imagine that the path to my dreams lay in the integration of all of my gifts and experience. [www.insideoutretreats.com](http://www.insideoutretreats.com)