

renegade

game changers | thought leaders | rule breakers | style makers

COLLECTIVE

ISSUE 11

**REINVENT
OR DIE**

MADONNA
CONVERSE
NINTENDO
KYLIE MINOGUE
STEVE MARTIN
H&M

WHAT IF
YOUR LIFE WAS
CODED?

+

**THE
BOUNCE
BACK**

from rock bottom

Blondie

ROCK'N'ROLL'S
DEBBIE HARRY

on life as a grown-up

FASHION / DESIGN / FILM / FOOD / TECH / ART / SOCIAL CHANGE / TRAVEL

When Pat Mesiti looks back at the past 55 years, he often feels like his life is split into two different periods – life B.S (“before scandal”) and the new reality he’s had to forge ever since.

Until 2001, Pat was one of the most high-profile church pastors in Australia, travelling the world, preaching to crowds of 80,000 people. He was hailed as a superstar speaker, had his own television show and lived a lavish life in Sydney as a result.

Then it all fell apart when his manager discovered that Pat had been visiting a brothel, despite being married.

His wife was the first to be told, followed by the church. The backlash was immediate and intense, not only from Pat’s congregation, but also the press and the church, who called it a “moral collapse” and a “terrible tumble”. Pat was placed on a three-year disciplinary recovery program (or “restoration”) and stepped down from any leadership involvement.

And while it resulted in a breaking point, it wasn’t the end of his career – in fact it was the beginning of a re-creation. Now a business guru and sought-after public speaker, Pat has shared a stage with Donald Trump and Sir Richard Branson and sold more than 2 million copies of his books, *Pathway to Prosperity* and *The \$1 Million Reason to Change Your Mind*. He has also remarried and had another daughter.

Yet the comeback hasn’t been easy for the disgraced pastor. Only Pat’s closest friends and family know that, when he went missing for three months following the scandal, he was actually at a rehabilitation centre in Ohio.

The father-of-two had tried to kill himself three times, first by attempting to walk in front of a speeding truck and then overdosing on sleeping pills. He was saved by friends, who watched over him on a roster.

“In a matter of months I lost my marriage, my income, my credibility, my assets... and my mind,” says Pat. “I couldn’t even remember what car I drove. I remember being in a shopping centre car park, having to call my friend Tom to describe it to me. That’s when I realised I needed help.”

These days, one of Pat’s favourite mottos is, “If



BOUNCING BACK

FROM CHURCH PASTOR, to *public outcast*, to *MILLIONAIRE business guru*, PAT MESITI has *bounced back from SCANDAL and made a FORTUNE from being flawed.*

WORDS: AMY MOLLOY

you’re going to fall then fall forward”. As such, he prefers to look to the future than regret the past.

Yet he also feels it’s important to talk about the events that led him to seek solace in prostitutes.

“I’m not looking for sympathy because I’m an adult and need to take responsibility but there’s always a story behind the story,” says Pat. “I was in an unhappy marriage, addicted to approval and didn’t realise at the time that I was suffering from depression and anxiety. I was also very lonely. My career was growing beyond my capacity and I was away from my family 30 weeks of the year.”

He remembers on one occasion driving across the country to get to a speaking gig when his youngest daughter called him while she was having an asthma attack.

I WAS in an UNHAPPY marriage, ADDICTED to approval and didn’t realise at the time that I was SUFFERING from depression and anxiety. I was also very LONELY.

“She couldn’t breathe,” remembers Pat.

“She was crying down the phone, ‘Please, Daddy, come home’. I was eight hours’ drive away and felt utterly helpless. I learned that you can have wads of money in your pocket but be broke in the mind.”

Money has been a constant theme in Pat’s career. Even as a pastor, he preached about the “principles of prosperity” and ways that his followers could have abundance in their life, whether it was financially or emotionally.

However, he found himself without any source of income when no longer employed by the church. For someone whose entire career had been in this space, it was financial desperation that would ultimately change his career path.

“I had to sell my house to pay for my daughter to go to school,” Pat remembers.

“The real-estate agent who came to value the house recognised me as a motivation speaker. He told me his company were holding a business conference and that I should apply to talk.”

The conference’s decision-makers weren’t convinced that

Pat was the right choice and so he made them an offer they couldn’t refuse – if after the conference they weren’t happy with his performance, they didn’t have to pay him a cent.

“I’ve spoken at countless events to tens of thousands of people,” Pat recalls, “but I’ve never been this nervous. I was scheduled to speak at 9am the morning after the conference’s party. We were expecting 120 people to attend but only 17 showed up. I thought it was going to be a disaster.”

In the past, his message was geared towards faith but on this occasion he decided to also share his own story.

“I was amazed when they gave me a standing ovation,” says Pat. “I realised that my vulnerability and life lessons made me far more relatable and human.” From there, he decided to develop a mindset program based on how to break through emotional barriers.

“When I found myself unable to work for the church I felt like I was an artist who’d had his paintbrushes and canvas taken away,” says Pat.

“Then I realised that maybe I’m not meant to be the artist; I’m meant to inspire others to make art. I don’t need to be the star, I can be the support crew.”

He now runs seminars teaching public speaking techniques, where he instructs entrepreneurs how to command up to AU\$60,000 for speaking gigs.

“On the final afternoon I get off the stage and instead put all of my students up there together,” he says.

“I’ve served my time as a superstar speaker. Now I want to help others reach their full potential.”

That’s not to say his own bank balance is unimportant. “I might be criticised for saying this but I’ve learned that with pain comes profit,” says Pat.

“As a nation, we need to conquer our fear of money. If you’re solving someone else’s spiritual, emotional or financial problems, why shouldn’t you be rewarded?”

And in that vein he has created an online community called the Millionaire Mindset Club where “like-minded people” can share tips and strategies.

The 55-year-old, who calls himself an “income acceleration coach”, also lives by the motto, ‘What you want most you must give away’. This could apply to love, friendship or wealth. >

IMAGE COURTESY OF PAT MESITI

face disgrace with grace

firstly, take out a blank piece of paper. write on it a list of seven things from your past that have caused you pain. now take that piece of paper and do one of two things with it. put it up on a wall and look at it every day and see what your life gravitates towards... or tear up the piece of paper and flush it down the toilet and get on with your future. if you choose the second option, write up a new list of positive images of what you can become and post this on a wall, which you will be able to look at every day. it's your choice what your life becomes.



In the past five years Pat has raised more than AU\$1 million for charities across the world. He recently ran 600 kilometres from Coffs Harbour to Sydney with a team of 20 young men recovering from drug and alcohol addictions.

He has no regrets or hard feelings about the church's response to the scandal and says it hasn't wavered his faith.

"I think the church acted fairly in its response," says Pat.

"They were trying to protect the people I hurt, and also protect the damaged person in me."

Just as with his career, he is happy to sit in the pews rather than standing in the spotlight. "I'm still an active member of the church, but these days I'm just a regular parishioner, not a staff member," he adds.

Pat admits that not a day goes by when he doesn't think about the darkest period in his life.

"I used to feel very guilty, especially when it came to my children," he says.

"I'll never forget the look on their faces that day and for a while I felt I owed them. But then I realised all I could do was continue to love them, and try to love myself again."

As part of this process, he tries to keep his mistakes in perspective. "I never painted myself as a perfect figure. I think it's important to differentiate between weakness and wickedness. I think my actions fell into the former, which simply makes me human.

"I hope that my misfortune can be fortunate for others, and in talking about my life lessons and how I recovered, other people can benefit. You need to use your past mistakes, hurts, fears and failures as a springboard to your future success." ■