

CONVERSATION & AFTERNOON TEA WITH SAMINA AZAM

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AFTERNOON TEA

Those of you who know me, will know one of my favourite past times is enjoying afternoon tea.

The artistry, tradition, venue and food but most of all the company. This is my virtual version of having a catch up with a friend over tea & cake.

Enjoy my conversation with

Gilly Mulford - FEPA
Virtual Assistant/Private
Household PA



WELCOME TO OUR ELEVENTH EDITION FEATURING - GILLY MULFORD

What are you up to at the moment?

Thank you Sam for inviting me to 'Afternoon Tea', it is a real honour.

So what aren't I up to?

I became self employed at the beginning of 2021. A bizarre time some may think, given the Covid-19 pandemic but my mission was quite simple; to create a happier lifestyle balance because time is precious. This is the objective of Your Household PA to do exactly the same for my clients.

Working as a Virtual Assistant & Household PA I am kept on my toes by my fabulous clients - I am so lucky.



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In between juggling the workload, I give time to the RVS/NHS as a Responder & Covid Steward and am waiting to be enlisted as a cardiac volunteer responder. I also support The Abingdon Bridge, a local charity for 13-25 year olds, raising much needed funds, in memory of my son whom I lost through mental health. He was only 23 and his passing is the reason I decided to give up a fulltime EA position and go it alone. Time is precious.

I participate in Covid and medical research studies. Giving back fulfils me and if I could I would volunteer all the time. When I find a spare hour I jump on my motorbike and blow the cobwebs away.

How did I feel before and after stepping out of my comfort zone recently?

That feeling of imposter syndrome, am I good enough, will it be perfect actually hit me the moment I accepted the invitation to deliver my first stand alone session at the PA Show, London this year. I have presented online but 'live in the flesh' public speaking terrifies me. As you say, though, Samina...If not now, when?

Just before delivering my session 'Authenticity & Being Brave' I felt quite calm. I was there and ready, it would be great or a disaster...if a disaster no one would have to see me again.

It was anything but that.

I came out beaming, full of energy and so exhilarated by it and the comments I received were empowering in themselves. Stepping out of my comfort zone I find easier if I just



MY BEST LOVED CAKE, TEA, COFFEE OR VENUE?

I may have to be a little controversial here as I do not have a sweet tooth. I am the perfect afternoon tea guest who would leave all the cake for you! I would therefore have to substitute the cake for cheese scones and a coffee; I don't like tea either. Although ultimately - cheese and biscuits and a glass of wine? As afternoon tea is not something I have often participated in if I could set a location, it would be on a hillside, with stunning countryside views, watching the sunset over the countryside.



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commit and then worry after. So much so I have just recorded a podcast with Lindsay Taylor of Your Excellency and signed up to do a charity Fire Walk. Now that is definitely not a zone I would be comfortable in!

What are you watching/listening to?

Although I do not watch much TV I do like a good series. Loved Unforgotten (waiting for Annike to be released with Nicola Walker), Luther (got to love Alice) and I have just watched Lie with Me which I really enjoyed. Apart from that I tend to use the TV for re-runs of Mock the Week, Have I Got News for You and QI. It is brain switch off time for me. Listening wise I love music and have Radio 1 on most of the time. I wish I could get into podcasts, but I find it quite difficult. I prefer to watch someone speak. For me it feels a bit like the difference between reading a book and having an audio book.

Your favourite tool/app?

Technology is progressing at such a fast rate and there is so much out there. I have to admit that I love LinkedIn. Interacting with so many interesting and amazing people is great and

A LETTER TO YOUR YOUNGER SELF

Dear Gill (or Gilly as you will later be known),

Say yes to every opportunity that comes your way and decide after if it is right for you at the time. These opportunities may never cross your path again.

Step outside your comfort zone, it's fabulous out there!

There are going to be some tough times ahead, but you will be strong enough to get through each one and prove to be more resilient and stronger than you ever knew. It may take time, but you will get to a place where you are happy and content with the simpler things in life.

There will be no wrong or right course to take, just a journey full of experience. Take a different direction if you do not enjoy the path you are on.

Judge yourself by the friends you keep and see what they see in you; the qualities that you share. Love yourself because you are a good, kind and devoted person, just don't leave it too long before you realise it.

Spend time with those you love and those who are important to you, as you will discover that time is all too precious.

Let perfection go, your best is good enough, you have nothing to prove. Be free, be grateful, be loved.

Your older and wiser self,

Gilly



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once was completely out of my comfort zone. Now I could get lost in it for hours.

There are also some cool financial apps too. I use Curve and it makes my banking so much easier, as does Calendly with diary management and WhatsApp for instant communication.

What are you reading?

I am currently reading 'Traces: The memoir of a forensic scientist and criminal investigator'. Having worked in forensics I have a real interest in the subject, especially forensic pathology and entomology. Dead bodies don't lie, live ones do!

I read Lee Child, Michael Connelly and Jeffrey Deaver, nothing like a good crime story to lose yourself in.

A favourite quote...

"Why do people treat you like they do, because you allow them to".

This took a while to sink in as you must take responsibility for accepting other people's actions. Once it took hold though...Oh boy!

Connect with Gilly:

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#TeaWithSamina



A COUNTRY I WOULD LIKE TO VISIT

I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel to many different countries. I think at the last count it was 36, but one place I would love to go is Borneo to see Orangutan in what is left of their natural habitat.

IN THIS MOMENT I FEEL...

Grateful. For the life and friends I have, and the opportunity to support others to work towards their happiness.

Thank you Gilly for your words, your passion and your honesty. We are connected and our lives entwined in many ways. Having someone like you in my personal and business life gives me time back and brings me joy. Knowing you is simply a unique treasure.