

## Our most successful author, JK Rowling

Author Joanne Rowling, 45, has sold more than 400 million copies of her Harry Potter book series. She devotes a great deal of her time to charitable causes, including Lumos, which works to end the institutionalisation of children in Europe.

**I was not the most secure person.** I was someone with not much self belief and yet I felt, "I can tell a story". I remember writing *Philosopher's Stone* and suddenly thought, "The difficult thing is going to be getting published. If it gets published, it will be huge."

**Success happened so fast for me and it shouldn't have happened.** This was a children's book that I'd been told repeatedly wasn't very commercial. I went from utter obscurity and then it was like being a Beatle!

**I was a single mother and it really was hard to mouth at one point.** If you've ever been there, you'll never take for granted that you don't need to worry about money.

**I think failure is so important.** I've been fortunate to meet extraordinary people and not one of them didn't have their failure.

**It's the ability to resist failure or use it that often leads to success.** Rock bottom wasn't fun at all, but it was liberating. What did I have to lose?



## Britain's best-loved actress, Judi Dench

**Dame Judi Dench, 76, has been lighting up our stage and screen for more than 50 years, and her roles have earned her endless critical acclaim and awards. She was married to actor Michael Williams until his death in 2001.**

**I can't believe it's been more than half a century since** I first stepped on to the stage of The Old Vic theatre, and into a way of life that has brought me the most rewarding relationships and friendships.

**I'm still doing what I love, so I don't want to retire.** I like the company of other people, and love being around other actors. As an actor, you don't need to retire – there are all those parts you can play sitting in bed or in a wheelchair.

**I learn a great deal from people who are much younger than me** and find it flattering if a young director wants to cast me. It's also lovely to be asked advice and to pass something on.

**Michael used to say that we should live each day as if it's the last** and I have shared that view for as long as I can remember.

**I'd like to be a tad more daring and play an unlikely role.** If I'm putting my energy into a part, it's rewarding when it's something I haven't tackled before.

**There is still so much I want to do,** and I pray that I will be given the chance, and the time, to do it.

*Judi's autobiography And Furthermore (Phoenix, £7.99) is out this month.*

## Inspirational WOMEN

Women who make it happen

## Top businesswoman Karren Brady

**Karren, 42, was appointed managing director of Birmingham City FC at the age of 23. She is now vice chairman of West Ham United FC and appears on BBC TV's *The Apprentice*. See page 44 for her behind-the-scenes story.**

**The people who inspire me are the ones who rise up against the odds.** Katie Piper had acid thrown in her face and now helps others with scars, and Shanna Wilson is raising awareness about knife crime after her brother was murdered. Jane Tomlinson cycled and ran marathons while battling breast cancer. These women used their personal tragedies to motivate themselves and others.

**I never had any female role models because I've always worked in a very male-dominated environment.** I've never stopped being aware of that, so I made it a priority to employ women. When I left Birmingham City FC, 75 per cent of my management team were women. That makes me very proud.

**I don't need to achieve big deals to feel proud** – sometimes it's enough to work hard then come home and look at my family.

**My grandmother said, "Never look down on people unless you're helping them up."** Her words still inspire me. **w&h**

