

Tribute to Anita Roddick

1942–2007

Anita changed our image of feminine beauty, both through her business and her very being. After experiencing Anita, how could anyone think that women have to be demure and helpless to be attractive? She was brave and audacious, yet charming and beautiful all in one. She was ferocious like a mother bear, passionately protecting what she cared about, and what was vulnerable, whether rabbits in cosmetic labs, prisoners behind bars or indigenous people endangered by exploitation. Anita brought true feminine values to the business world, showing how one can be caring and loving and still be profitable, kind and giving and still compete with the best of them.

When I met Anita 15 years ago at a Social Venture Network conference, I was feeling insignificant as a small business person among the larger companies like the Body Shop, but Anita won't allow that. She loved to say, "If you think you're too small to have real impact, try going to bed with a mosquito." Her extraordinary energy and boldness could have made other women feel inferior, but Anita did just the opposite. She empowered others and cheered us on. She made a point to reach out and connect as a true friend and expose her own vulnerability.

Anita gave me courage. She gave us all courage, men and women, to do the right thing in our businesses and throughout our lives. Perhaps most importantly, she showed us how to live with an open heart, no matter what the consequences – to allow ourselves to feel the pain and suffering in the world. And to do something to correct those injustices – not to waste time crying in your “bloody” hanky!

Anita put love into action. She had true passion. She spoke out, she challenged the powerful, she laughed loudly, and she didn't give a damn if it was unlady-like. She was a truly beautiful person in every way. I loved her. She loved the world, and the world loved her back.

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