

Nurture your talent and you'll realise your full potential – because every day should be show-time

We're saturated by it – we've just finished Britain's Got Talent and X-Factor is about to begin and here, on our home turf, is our annual treat, The Cumberland Show. It's July and, with a big fanfare, it is show-time.

The excitement is building in our household. Mischa is a 'show' dog, Truly Scrumptious (pictured) is not. TS couldn't leave with the title of 'dog with the waggiest tail' category even if there was one – which there isn't – as hers doesn't wag; it is more of a swish. At best, 'the dog the judge would most like to take home' would be hers for the taking – at least, if I were the judge.

In my opinion there is nothing wrong with a bit of good-natured competition. Competition, I believe, is just doing your best at something you have found you are good at and enjoy.

So, what is your talent? It doesn't have to be against the clock, or hinge on looks alone. It could be your secret recipe that produces the most mouthwatering delight, or your ability to keep a cool head under pressure.

Think Helen Skelton walking the tightrope for Comic Relief. Those with the gongs have achieved their recognition because they stepped up to the plate.

Realising your full potential is important. You will inspire those that follow in your footsteps. Think back to childhood. Were you a bit of a show-off? Were you always chosen first for the rounders team? Could you skim over the vault with ease or maybe you were a natural on the track?

I believe it is often the case that we naturally gravitate towards our strengths before outside influence changes our direction. We are much more free-spirited

in our school days.

They say the world's best cyclist hasn't yet sat on a bike and it is true. Talents shouldn't stay hidden when all it could take is a small boost in confidence and that is when organised events come in.

On visits back home in the mid-Nineties I entered a charity cycle ride around Durdar with father – borrowing all his kit. It was something my grandfather had taken part in for a few years.

I absolutely loved it and as first female home got a big cheer and an announcement as I entered the Race Course. It gave me the confidence to time trial when I moved back to Cumbria.

I loved reading about Lorraine Pascale, a former top model, who is now a classically trained chef and patissier with her own television show and bestselling book.

She admits to being laughed at while she tried to discover her niche – to find something that clicked. She didn't rest until she found it.

Allow yourself to be drawn into an environment that energises you. Some of the best partnerships are good fortune, but some are orchestrated by those who take an interest in you. When two or more people feed off each other they can become formidable.

You see, competition is healthy. It keeps us humans on our toes. It is about being brave enough to have expectations, and high ones at that. It is also about quietly believing in yourself and doing your best. Everyday should be show-time. Life, they say, is just one big stage.

We are understandably drawn to those who have an inner self-belief. We don't hear them shout about it but we can 'see' it.

A word of caution – beware of the ones that shout the loudest. 



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