

BUILDING SELF ESTEEM

by Clare Agius



I have met Mrs Gonzi on several occasions, but only had the chance to speak to her at length when I invited her as a guest on one of my TV programmes MHUX GHAL KULHADD. This was a few years ago. The interview was held at her house, where we spoke at length both in relation to the interview, as well as several other aspects including life in general, family and work.

Mrs Gonzi came across as being a person who is very interested in the human experience, her warm ways and the manner in which she comes across so pleasantly, always ready to help or contribute in any way she can.

Her honest and welcoming smile, her communication skills and love for others are sides of her that always strike me. I noticed how she met and greeted everyone with such warmth irrespective of who they are, and where they come from.

Even when times were hard, Mrs Gonzi kept her poise and self respect. It is remarkable how she managed to carry on and continue to give people her undivided attention. In this regard, I consider her to be an inspirational woman. Her commitment to her country and her support of her husband are as inspiring as is her serenity.

I always appreciated how Mrs Gonzi supported our performances. She attended two of them that were put up in connection with dyslexia and self-esteem. She was always very eager to attend and discuss the topic with me after each performance. The performances were about using Drama and Performance Ethnography to raise awareness and understanding in children with dyslexia, and amongst peers, educators and policy makers. We discussed the literature on the issue that self-esteem affects learning and performance, and that dyslexia, or rather how dyslexic students are supported or not supported, both at school and in general, affects learning, performance, self-esteem and quality of life.

Personally, I particularly appreciated the fact that, at a time when I know she was extremely busy and challenged by the difficult environment that was surrounding her husband's government, she still made the effort to attend a performance held especially in honour of a group of children who really wanted her to be there.

Last but not least, I remember attending a business breakfast hosted by Mrs Gonzi in 2009, with Mrs Cherie Blair as key-note speaker. The topic was related to balancing family and career. I can still recall the talks which the two highly involved women, who are also mothers themselves, and very present in their children's and husband's lives, delivered. I always wondered how mothers actually do manage to juggle family and career.

The challenges faced by Cherie Blair and Kate Gonzi were particularly enlightening, they being so committed to such busy schedules.

Now that I am a mother myself, I can appreciate even more the value of working mothers and the balancing of family and career. That seminar definitely made a lot of sense, even more for me today. I still carry one of Mrs Gonzi's statements with me: "I always focus my energy on what happens to be the priority at that particular time". That philosophy seems to have helped Mrs Gonzi to manage family and work splendidly. It's an approach that I certainly admire..

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