

TAKING THE LEAP

AARHUS AND EASTERN JUTLAND IS HOME TO MANY INTERNATIONALLY-MINDED COMPANIES AND ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THIS AREA'S INTERNATIONALISATION. THIS MONTH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY GIVES THE FLOOR TO CEO AND FOUNDER OF LIGHTNING ENGLISH, KRISIA JUSTESEN.

PHOTOGRAPHS **JUDY WANJIKU JØRGENSEN** TEXT **KRISIA JUSTESEN**

ALL THE QUALIFICATIONS and experience that I had from before meant nothing when I came to Denmark! It was 2010, and I had built up the foundations for a successful career teaching English as a second language to adults. I lived in 7 different countries, had training and experience, and was doing well as the head teacher and teacher trainer at a boutique immersion English course in Istanbul, Turkey. I met and married my Danish husband, and I was excited about moving to Denmark. I assumed that my experience and credentials as an effective English teacher would help me get a job teaching English in Denmark. I thought it would be easy....

REALITY CHECK

There were no teaching jobs except unreliable freelance gigs working for language teaching agencies.

Over the next ten years, I took whatever jobs I could get. I love cooking, so I got jobs in cafes, a cafeteria, and a fast-food chain. Meanwhile, I was always trying to pull together teaching jobs on the side so that I could quit, but it was never enough. I was completely frustrated and demoralised.

I had spent years developing and refining my own techniques for learning English, and they worked. I knew that if I could actually find the people I was looking for, the people I wanted to teach, I could build something very different from what's being offered here in Denmark. Instead, I was making salad or serving another order of fried chicken.

So why did it take ten years for me to get started?

MINDSET AND TAKING ACTION

My biggest hurdle was my mindset. In 2017, I visited Startvækst Aarhus and took part in the Iværksætter Accelerator programme. I had a business plan, but I didn't get a CVR number and start my business until September 2019.

Why not?

I was scared to death! I was afraid of failing, of putting myself out there and being



rejected. I was afraid that I couldn't compete with all these big agencies owned by Danes, who already have a corporate world network.

So what changed? Not much. I'm still scared!

DO IT ANYWAY!

In the words of Michael Hyatt, "More often than not, being brave means doing it SCARED."

I realise now that imposter syndrome is something that most entrepreneurs face - especially women and people of colour. I've joined a small group of international women who are starting their own businesses here in Denmark, and we encourage each other, lift each other up, and push each other forward through the fear.

Now, I've started my online company, Lightning English, where I teach people how to improve their English through daily practice instead of studying grammar and vocabulary.

It's still very early in the game, but I'm happier than I've ever been - working for

myself and building something real from dreams and ideas.

So far, my biggest takeaways have been: Use the resources you have available, find your tribe, and take action even if you're afraid!

I am looking forward to seeing what Lightning English becomes in the years ahead. Meanwhile, I'm going to keep doing it, scared! **THE-INTL**

Krisia is originally from Bermuda and is now living in Jutland with her husband and two sons. She uses her extensive English teaching experience to offer online courses, in-company workshops, and coaching sessions to people who feel stuck at the same English level. She also offers weekly free live lessons online: www.lightningenglish.com



"In 2017, I visited Startvækst Aarhus and took part in the Iværksætter Accelerator programme."

- Krisia Justesen



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF AARHUS

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