

Mrs. Restrepo

Mrs. Restrepo is the owner of Creative Soul Gallery. She has learned a lot and continues to learn more about running a successful business daily.

Mrs. Restrepo received a bachelor's degree in advertising and a minor in photojournalism from Bradley University. She says, however, that she has learned more from the school of life than from her degrees. Before starting her business, she had various jobs, including working at Caterpillar for most of her career and being the communications manager at a local insurance company. The idea for her business was born during a job interview activity in which she had to come up with a business idea and tell how she would promote the business. She realized she knew many artists and could use her communication skills to promote their work.

One day Mrs. Restrepo awoke and saw spinning colors; she later discovered she had a brain tumor. Her situation caused her perspective to shift, and she knew she wanted to leave the corporate world and take the leap to open Creative Soul Gallery. She said this decision was one of the best she's ever made.

The gallery opened in 2019 and features the work of nearly 30 local artists including many with ties to Dunlap. The gallery holds classes taught by the artists and has regular community events like monarch educational days. It also offers special small events like birthday parties for all ages including children, teens, and adults.

Mrs. Restrepo is a native Peorian. She has loved the nearby village of Dunlap since her two sons attended Dunlap schools and she spent much time as a parent volunteer and leader within the district. This is why, she chose to open Creative Soul here and sells a line of eagle spirit wear jewelry made by a Dunlap mom. As she began to build the business, she kept receiving signs that it was the right decision. Things kept falling into her lap; for example, another local company closed, and Mrs. Restrepo was able to buy the merchandise fixtures for a fraction of the cost she would've had to pay usually.

While she may miss the pace of work and her co-workers at Caterpillar, she has never regretted owning her own business.. However, if she could, Mrs. Restrepo would tell her younger self not to be afraid to leave the corporate world and be an entrepreneur, and it's essential to ask for advice from other business owners instead of being shy.

The sacrifices Mrs. Restrepo has made to make her business succeed are plentiful. There is a lot of courage required as there are no assurances of what is coming next when owning a business, whereas being an employee brings more steadiness and financial security like a guaranteed paycheck and benefits. That is not always the case when owning a business, but there is much freedom and opportunity for personal growth. While there are many sacrifices, being able to follow her dream is so much more rewarding. In conclusion, Celeste Restrepo is an incredible woman who followed a dream and found great success and happiness in being a gallery owner.

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