

# 'Divine energy guides me'

Former PR guru **Lynne Franks**, the inspiration behind sitcom *Absolutely Fabulous*, on her spiritual calling to empower women

**When do you think your first spiritual epiphany came?**

Although I was brought up as a Jew in north London and made to go to Jewish Sunday school until I was 13, for me the biggest spiritual change in my life happened when I was introduced to Buddhism in my early thirties.

I was running a fashion PR business, had two small children and was going crazy trying to be the perfect businesswoman, mother and wife. Good friends in the fashion industry in America got me into chanting. Then Jeff Banks, the Welsh designer, introduced me to his former wife and singer, Sandie Shaw, and she invited me to Buddhist meetings where I learned about prayer, karma and the importance of taking personal responsibility for events in my life.

I'd chant the Buddhist prayer *Nam Myoho Renge Kyo*, where the vibrational sounds are said to awaken your Buddhist nature and tap into the deepest level of existence. I'd do it every day, first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening, and sometimes if I was driving around in the day.

On the surface I was very successful, but I wasn't happy. As I chanted I realised that to have self-respect I needed to be responsible for all my actions. So, if people upset me in business, instead of saying how horrible they were, I'd chant for their happiness and my attitude changed towards them. On an energetic level, it dissolved the antagonism or anger between us – it was magical.

**You started your own PR agency, aged 21, and it quickly became one of the leading agencies in the UK. What do you put its success down to?**

Manifestation. I've always been able to manifest my visions into reality. I knew what I wanted to do in business and manifested it. When I wanted



Lynne visited Ecuador as part of her spiritual journey

to write a book about working with women in 2000 (*The SEED Handbook: The Feminine Way to Create Business*), I needed certain people to help get my work out there, so I put it out to the universe and they appeared.

I've attracted stuff to me like that all my adult life. If I have an idea for a new business I visualise it, cut out pictures of my vision, then trust it will happen and let it go to the universe. Chanting increases the intensity of manifesting, accelerating my intention into reality.

And if I have a vision I believe to be right, I don't question it, and it always takes me in a direction that's better for everyone.

**Do you believe your visions come from a higher source?**

Yes. I always had an amazing gift of intuitively knowing what people were thinking, of dictating trends and society shifts before they happened. When I worked in PR I used that gift commercially and now I use it to help women, because we're living in a time when we need to find a new way of doing things and, like the Dalai Lama

said recently, 'the world will be saved by the Western woman'.

After I started chanting, I did goddess workshops and when I welcomed in the sacred feminine I realised it's that energy I intuitively tap into to guide me, and from where I channel my books. I think all women have that ability to intuitively tap into it and it guides us to find a new way of doing things.

**What other spiritual practices are you interested in?**

I do open eye meditation, yoga and body movement – dance – as deep spiritual practices.

In 1991, when I got divorced and sold my business, I went on

**PROFILE...**

**Name**

Lynne Franks

**Career** Lynne founded one of the UK's best known public relations consultancies in the 1970s, positioning the UK as a leader in fashion by initiating London Fashion Week and the British Fashion Awards.

In 2004 she published **Grow: The Modern Woman's Handbook**, a guide aimed at helping women get in touch with their feminine power. This was followed in 2007 by **Bloom: A Woman's Journal For Inspired Living**, an accompaniment to a set of affirmation cards.

**Did you know?** In her youth, Lynne was a dancer on the popular music programme **Ready Steady Go!**

In the sitcom **Absolutely Fabulous**, the comedian Jennifer Saunders is said to have based her character, Edina, on Lynne.

'We need to find a new way of doing things'







Campaigning for women's rights in London



'Absolutely Fabulous' Edina (left) is said to be based on Lynne'

a journey of spiritual exploration. I visited Ecuador and took Ayahuasca – a spiritual medicine that can induce spiritual experiences and which is used in ceremonies among indigenous people in the Amazon. I connected with Mother Earth and it was a truly wonderful experience.

I spent a lot of time in India too, at the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University in Rajasthan, learning to be still and present, and not stressed with a busy mind.

At that time in my life it was like I'd jumped out of an aeroplane without a parachute, but if I'd stayed on board the plane it would have gone up in flames.

I trusted my inner voice, though, went with the flow, and listened to my intuition to make a change in my life. I wasn't always happy but I needed struggles to grow and change aspects of myself that needed changing.

**Do you believe in life after death?**

I believe our souls continue on and each of us on earth is in some kind of soul tribe and we meet other members in different lives. I believe in past lives, souls moving from one body to another. I've experienced past life regressions with my spiritual teacher and healer Denise Linn. In one I was talking to Mary Magdalene, who represents the sacred feminine. I saw her in my mind's eye and she gave me messages about my purpose to work with women and awaken their true spiritual potential. I believe I chose to be born in a woman's body in this life.

**What drives your calling to connect women to the sacred feminine?**

Women have allowed themselves to be influenced by a patriarchal society and the superficial, and have forgotten how amazing we actually are.

Women are capable of doing anything, it's not a competition with men. The only future that makes sense is women and men doing things together. And yet worldwide we're still badly treated. The old patriarchal system is still using power over women and it's a broken system.

Prime Minister Theresa May may have the best intentions, but she's working within a corrupt system and we have to change that system. We're seeing a complete world collapse at the moment, it's a mess. We need a different way of living, coming from a place of love, not

fear. We need to work with young people to build something from the ashes that's healthier and has long term sustainability, with communities loving each other based on spiritual values, living lives of joy and purpose as opposed to depressed people on pills living like sick zombies. My job is about working with women to wake up their spirituality and connect them to Mother Earth.

**How can our readers connect to this feminine energy?**

Ceremony and ritual are very important to connect to this energy, as well as celebrating the different shifts in a woman's life – a young woman coming into menstruation, changing from the girl to maiden then to the mother and crone.

When I lived in Spain in 2004 I ran retreats for women, and we'd do rituals at different moon phases to work with nature, dance around fires to the beat of a drum, light candles, meditate together, make beautiful fabrics and give each other gifts. It's all about self-nurture to plug women of all ages into the sacred feminine.

**A born and bred city girl, how did you end up living in rural Somerset?**

I'd no intention of coming here! I was happy in my London flat in Notting Hill, had a cottage in Sussex and a home in Mallorca. But a former partner had an obsession to climb Glastonbury Tor (a hill thought in the past to have been the site for goddess worship) and so in 2017 we travelled here, climbed Glastonbury Tor, and within 24 hours I thought this is where I should be.

I discovered a good Buddhist friend of mine was living in a small town 20 miles away called Wincanton and I ended up buying a house and pub there that I've turned into the Well-being Hub, where I teach workshops for women.

I've also since discovered a group of local Buddhists my age and started practising with them. It feels like I'm meant to be here in this little town. It's built on a ley line, halfway between Stonehenge and Glastonbury Tor, where a lot of witches were persecuted in the 15th and 16th centuries. It's got a history of

misunderstood women and now most of the high street shops are run by women, it's a women's town.



**Can you tell us more about the workshops you run?**

The workshops grew out of a need to empower women, with spiritual components. We meditate, show each other how to make vision posters, how to put our intentions out there to the universe, how to look after our bodies, how to love and respect ourselves, understand how powerful we are and grow into who we want to be.

I run the *Power of Seven* women's leadership and business retreats based on seven archetypes that I've been channelling for the past few years. They are the storyteller, the medicine woman, the vision keeper, the seed sower, the alchemist, the space weaver and the sky dancer. They all represent an aspect of us and when they're in harmonious balance we can do major things, from creating a social enterprise or community project to simply supporting each other.

I am also writing a book about it that will be out later this year. From March, I will be interviewing cutting edge spiritual leaders about everything from business to creativity and modern life – anyone with important things to say – for inclusion in the book.

**You have had so many amazing spiritual experiences, have you ever seen a ghost?**

No, but when I bought this house in Somerset, it really had a very strange and angry energy, like unhappy souls were clinging onto the place. I didn't feel comfortable there and had the energy cleared by a spiritual space clearer. Now, when I walk in here, it feels lighter, completely different.

**Looking at your life now, are you finally in a place where you're happy?**

Yes, I have a wonderful new partner, a shaman. We love walking up Glastonbury Tor and feel amazing shifts in energy there. I intend to commit the rest of my life to spending one third of my time being paid to do the work I love, one third in service to a better world and one third to enjoying my life with the people I love – I'm a grandmother of six – and in the places I enjoy. I still make mistakes but I like to think, at this stage in my life, that I'm a wise woman.

I was lucky enough in my thirties to get the best spiritual guidance from the best teachers, like Denise Linn, and I've met the Dalai Lama a few times. Everything had to collapse at that stage in my life to get me to the point where I could build myself up again and start my spiritual journey.



Every phase of your life is an adventure

**The four stages of womanhood**

Lynne believes we should celebrate these important phases to connect with the divine feminine energy

**MAIDEN**

This the first stage, before a girl begins her menstrual cycle and is yet to awaken and blossom into womanhood. At this time in her life she is about new beginnings, youthful ideas and enthusiasm. She is full of innocence, potential and energy and symbolised by the waxing moon and spring.

**MOTHER**

The second phase in a woman's life is when she's fertile and has the ability to nurture new life. She's about abundance and growth, the gaining of knowledge. A woman doesn't have to have

biological children to embrace the role of mother though. She's loving and enjoys giving, either as a mother or in her work and creativity. She is represented by the full moon and summer.

**WISE WOMAN**

This woman dances a magical path between huge bouts of creativity and emotional storms, mirrored by the change in her hormones, which can lead to dynamic mood

swings. She must learn how to harnesses this powerful energy and understand when to express herself and when to go within and reflect. She is represented by the waning moon and autumn.

**CRONE**

This final stage in a woman's life takes hold with the end of her menstrual cycle. Quieter and more reflective, she's in touch with her inner self. This is the time when she draws on knowledge from the other stages of her life to heal herself, guided by visions from within. She is symbolised by the dark moon and winter.

*'Harness this powerful energy'*

