



## Women We Love: The Cupcake Girls

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Best friends Lori Joyce and Heather White founded their cupcake empire in 2002, with the goal of creating fresh-baked, preservative-free desserts in a shop with a whimsical, retro-styled aesthetic. The Vancouver-based duo united with Force Four Entertainment to turn their growing business into a popular docu-soup that follows their personal and professional trials. And we've been tuning in to watch ever since.

We had a chance to meet with the dynamic cupcake duo last week during their visit to Toronto (where they hope to expand their franchise!). We sampled their delicious cupcakes, swapped stories and knew we had to feature them on iVillage Canada.

### **iV: If you could start your business all over again, what are three things you'd do differently?**

**Lori:** Nothing. I love where we are today and wouldn't change a thing. Having a stronger skill or perhaps more money to start would or could have changed the direction or focus of our business and lead us in a different way. Being an entrepreneur you never look back...you work moving forward always towards your vision.

**Heather:** 1. know the business I was getting into. 2. Have a well written business plan. 3. Set obtainable yearly goals.

### **iV: How is your experience with the show different now that you both have kids?**

**Lori:** The show experience hasn't really changed, it's the work business that has definitely changed. Having children and running a business means you have to delegate more often and work far more efficiently. Heather and I were both raised with tradition and strong family support so it's important to both of us to continue raising your children with the same values.

**Heather:** I put 100% into everything I do, whether I am filming the show or running the day-to-day at Cupcakes, but with kids your schedule can change in a instant. Things are not always as predictable as they used to be.

### **iV: What advice do you have for other women entrepreneurs, looking to kick-start their new career?**

**Lori:** Timing was very important to us and I think that made a big impact on our success. When we started, we were both were single, no kids, little responsibility. That is why we had a 'no personal distractions' pact for the first 5 years. We give every ounce of energy and attention to our business.



So my piece of advice would be 'evaluate your life at the moment and ask yourself, can you give 110% of your life and yourself to the business for at least the first couple of years?'

**Heather:** If you're going to start a business give it your all, if you put 100% into something you will get 100% in return.

**iV: How does someone starting a new business go about securing mentorship from women like you?**

**Lori:** Actually, F.W.E. (Forum of Women Entrepreneurs) has local chapters in different cities and was the first women's group that Heather and I joined 9 years ago. We are still members today and we contribute and participate whenever we can. They have a Mentorship program that is incredibly successful. I highly recommend it.

**Heather:** All they have to do is ask, we did! In our first 5 years in business we would ask questions to all types of business owners/entrepreneurs that would have experience in what we were going through.

**iV: What's your favourite cupcake recipe of the moment?**

**Lori:** The classic Koo Koo, coconut cake with cream cheese icing topped with coconut shavings.

**Heather:** I like to use recipes that include real fruit to sweeten the cake and to keep it moist. At home, I normally bake with bananas, apple sauce and whole grain flour, especially if I am baking something that the baby can eat.

**iV: Is Heather's dad still the delivery guy on the show? If so does he still take long lunch breaks? And does he still play pranks on people in the shop?**

**Lori:** Heather's dad will always be around to help us in whatever way we need so if that's deliveries or maintenance, we can always count on him. Does he take long lunch breaks... sometimes, but don't we all? Sometimes I feel like we need to cut him some slack. Brian always plays pranks on me, but I will admit, I am an easy target!

**Heather:** Brian will always be a prankster who takes long lunch breaks, people don't change, just the environment does.

**iV: Next big dessert trend: Hand pies, whoopie pies or designer donuts?**

**Lori:** It appears that in New York the trend at the moment is the 'Baked Donut'. They're saying they are a cross between a cupcake and a doughnut.

**Heather:** Desserts will always be trendy as long as there are bakeries out there willing to try new things.

**iV: What is your take on the rainbow cake trend?**

**Lori:** As long as it is in moderation...there is A LOT of unorganic food colouring to make the colors so strong. Other than that, I think it's very creative and fun for kids!

**Heather:** It's great if you have a lot of time on your hands and no overhead to worry about.

**iV: What's your next big project?**

**Lori:** Franchising Cupcakes across Canada, and eventually beyond. We believe the brand has international appeal and we can't wait to open in markets like Japan or Dubai!

**Heather:** At Cupcakes we are always working on the "next big project". Right now we are working on our product line for Mothers Day (cakes, cupcakes, cookies and cake pops are in the works).



**Contest Alert!** Win lunch and a mentoring session with Lori and Heather for you and your best friend or business partner, in Vancouver or Toronto this May! Go to their [contest page](#) and tell us why it should be you, in 150 words or less.