

# Retiring from

by Chelsea (from Georgie's Place)

Guess what! I'm retiring! 43 yo, does seem cheeky, as I am talking 'never have to work again' type retirement. Still, it has been 10 years of fairly solid work. That is the type of wonderful result this industry can give you if you make it work for you. How that is achieved is both the challenge and the joy of being self-employed. Each woman is a separate and individual business, designing it according to her own needs and desires. The industry's flexibility is, of course, one of the main attractions. The other is the money, which is good enough, even with 'the times they are a-changin'. Enough to make a serious difference to our lifestyle if we choose and to enable us to plan our futures with confidence.

The first thing I had to learn coming into the business was self-discipline. Well, actually the first thing I had to learn was how to put on a condom! Necessity developed a work ethic. The threat of losing my kids was a great motivator. I was desperate and determined to succeed. But I was a late bloomer and a slow learner; it took ages to develop the knack for selling myself through 'intros'.

When I first knocked on the door of the only brothel I knew of, I expected to be sent off to 'geisha school' for 6 weeks or so for training. Huh! We can all say 'huh!' And 'thank you' to the kindness of women who do bother to help new workers on their way. It was analysing each booking and consciously

using this bit or discarding that bit that gradually developed a

repertoire. Suspending my pre-conceived ideas and judgements of men, women and sexuality helped. Now, I can't remember what I used to consider 'normal'! The whole process was tremendously exciting, a major learning curve and one of personal growth and empowerment. I think of myself as a career hooker. I studied it as best I could, through constantly analysing and comparing each booking, working out the differences and similarities between people. And by asking questions of the women I worked with and comparing their experiences with my own. This really helped.

So, the first year or two was spent intensively learning and intensively spending money! After years of poverty and limited choices, this was heaven. Ah, the joys of 'shoppers', that unusual breed of person so welcomed in our workplace. The next thing that needed developing was how to shop wisely and stop wasting that hard-earned cash (this lesson still in progress!). It is too easy to let the lifestyle increase along with the income, so in effect you are not any further ahead. I noticed too, that women who came into work with a strong edge of desperation did not perform as well as when they were more relaxed. I found this to be true. A savings plan was needed so it would no longer be necessary to live from shift to shift. When you live in poverty, everything gets spent immediately. There are rarely chances to save, let alone learn saving as a habit. When you come into money, it is such a delightful feeling to spend it, that saving is the last thing on your mind. But eventually, the thought occurred to me, or perhaps a wiser woman gently placed the thought there.

Initially, I tried to save too much and would run short and 'dip' into the 'fund'. Bad move. Once dipped, it is too easy to dip again, and again. I had to instil the idea