

## Citation

Pro-Chancellor,

Alison Edgar, MBE, is a business strategist, author, speaker and expert in improving performance. She champions that nothing should hold you back from achieving your goals, be it age, race, gender or disability.

Born to working-class parents, Alison grew up in a high-rise council flat in Clydebank near Glasgow, where her father worked in the shipyards and her mother cleaned the local schools. She recalls struggling with her own education – particularly with reading and writing – and regularly being told by teachers that she wasn't working hard enough. It wasn't until her mid-30s that Alison was diagnosed with dyslexia and this experience has now made her a powerful advocate for neurodiversity.

Despite leaving school with no qualifications, Alison was spurred on by her parents to make the most of what she was good at, and she went on to lead a successful early career in hospitality. Starting out as a hotel receptionist in Scotland, she travelled around the world working for major hotels in Australia and South Africa.

On returning to the UK in the early 1990s, Alison drew on her strong people and communication skills to move into corporate sales – first for BT, then coffee company Douwe Egberts and finally at Yellow Pages. At a time when Yellow Pages had been the go-to source of company information for decades, Alison recalls her frustration when the business's leaders failed to see how new online search engines were changing the way people accessed information.

She left Yellow Pages to launch her own company providing sales, customer service and leadership training. As 'The Entrepreneurs Godmother' she has mentored leading entrepreneurs, and advised government on small business issues. Since then, she has since delivered a viral TEDx speech and published two best-selling books on personal and professional development. In 2020 she was made an MBE for her services to entrepreneurship and business.

Alison is passionate about helping people to discover their strengths, celebrate their achievements and to communicate more effectively. Her own experiences of dyslexia means that she now encourages others to concentrate on what they can do, rather than to be held back by what they can't.

On a personal note, Alison takes great pride in her 27-year marriage with her husband Neil, and their two sons, Connor and Kieran. Kieran graduated with first-class honours in Business Management, and Connor is set to graduate this week with a Bachelor of Science in Design Engineering after four rewarding years at Bournemouth University.

Pro-Chancellor, I have the honour to present Alison Edgar and I ask you to confer upon her an Honorary Doctorate of Education.