



ALIGNED AND ALIKE

Regenesys' Dr Penny Law favours alignment in all spheres, both in guiding her graduates in their own holistic development, and in collaborating with other business schools for the benefit of the sector.

Dr Penny Law is the dean of Regenesys Business School, as well as having co-founded the school in 1998 with Dr Marko Saravanja. At the time, she explains, they were both "young idealists wanting to change the world". After leaving their jobs (both at the University of Witwatersrand), Regenesys began life with just the two of them. After a year, William Vivian – also a founding director – joined the small, close-knit group that currently employs over 150 staff, and has educated and trained over 200 000 people across 150 countries since its inception.

"We had a synergy of minds, values and vision," Law says. "The vision in particular was important, because what makes Regenesys unique is that we don't just focus on developing mental intelligence but also on developing leaders holistically with emotional, physical and spiritual intelligence."

A whole new approach

That vision has informed so much of what Regenesys has done from start to present. “The ability to think critically and analytically, to problem-solve, are important factors, but so are emotional intelligence and physical intelligence,” says Law.

Unique to Regenesys, is their focus on spiritual intelligence, which Law explains is about understanding your highest purpose, “Why we are here”, and living your core positive values.

“When there is alignment between your purpose and profession, work no longer is a chore, but becomes a joy and a pleasure; so we have tried to inculcate that into everything that we do.”

Holistic development is the golden thread that runs throughout all our programmes as, “we are committed to personal and organisational transformation.”

Forward facing, and digitally driven

What’s next for Law in the coming few years? As a natural introvert, who prefers not to talk about herself, Law shared that “Regenesys is my first baby; it’s hard to separate my personal goals from my organisational ones.”

So, her aspirations focus on the path that will see the school becoming a leader in online education. “We set up Digital Regenesys. We just launched it this year. Through this we want to provide online education that is meaningful to people and also transforms them, not only cognitively but also attitudinally and behaviourally.

She continues: “I’m intrigued by the notion of triple loop learning [including learning how to learn]. That is what I was intrigued by when I was doing my PhD on developing spiritual intelligence in leaders. For me, the greatest challenge for an educator or a school pertains to how people learn,

and how we are able to change our paradigms and ways of thinking. Encouraging people to think differently is a challenge for facilitators face-to-face, and especially online where it is even more difficult. So, we are exploring and experimenting with different teaching and learning methodologies to see how we can achieve the triple loop learning online, and contribute

to developing conscious leaders with EQ and SQ.”

“And we want to make education accessible.” Education, Law argues, is one of the key equalisers in society, breaking all racial, gender, and class barriers. “We are committed to education, but education that is transformative. That’s what we stand for.”



The 2020 experience

With this online focus in place and having distance learning accreditation, Regenesys was able to make the shifts demanded by 2020 and the Covid-19 pandemic. “We had some challenges, particularly with student internet and device access,” she says, “but we were fortunate and blessed to be able to transition almost seamlessly.”

At a staff level too, there have been wins and challenges – and adaptations to make. “The expected deliverables need to be articulated much more clearly, to ensure that people are focused on achieving their outputs. And although staying in touch was easy, we found we had to do so



more often.”

But on a personal level, this introvert admits she loved it “a little” – “having my own sacred space, the silence you need to tackle ‘thinking’ projects. I’ve also saved three hours of my time daily by not commuting, and I use this gain productively to work on strategic issues.”

There are elements of this that Law believes are here to stay as attitudes about flexible time and remote work shift but then also settle. “I don’t think we’ll ever go back completely to how it was. We are still trying to figure out that ‘new normal’”



Peer-to-peer

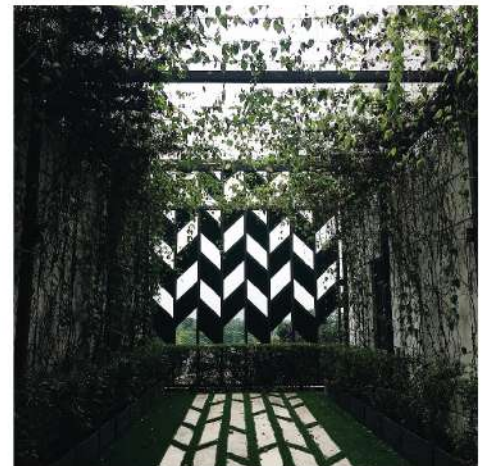
Thankfully, they haven't felt alone in this. As part of the South African Business Schools Association (SABSA), Law says she has appreciated being able to talk to other deans and directors of business schools, to be able to discuss approaches to the current crisis, but also to broader challenges.

"SABSA has been very good at helping us to network and connect with others, either through inviting us to different events, both each other's events or external events, and exposing us to specialists. They identified certain themes that business



schools might be interested in learning about further, and they've created opportunities to help us to deepen our thinking around particular issues."

"In the years that I've been involved, this has been something that SABSA has improved significantly. They've also focused on unifying the different business schools. It used to be quite competitive in the past, but now we are operating in a space where people are collaborating, wanting to learn from each other, sharing ideas, sharing lessons, sharing experiences."



Quick-fire questions

Q. What are you reading at the moment?

A. *Originals: How Non-Conformists Move the World* by Adam Grant.

Q. What book (fiction, non-fiction, or business) had the greatest impact on you?

A. One of them is probably *Quantum Warrior: The Future of the Mind* by John Kehoe. It was able to articulate and encapsulate everything that I believe in a scientific way.

Q. Who is your personal hero?

A. I don't have one in particular. There are people who

have shaped me, but I don't have a personal hero.

Q. Where will I find you on a typical Saturday morning?

A. I wake up really early, do yoga and meditation, then I usually get in two hours of work before I get on with my day.

Q. And where would you like to travel to next?

A. I have two bucket list destinations that I'd love to see: Firstly, Japan, and then Petra in Jordan. I've been blessed to see all the other new wonders of the world, so I'd really like to go there.