

Ferozah flies with 'study buddy' daughter



When **Ferozah Said** went back to school to finish matric, she never imagined she would graduate from university with her daughter.

BALANCING FAMILY, WORK AND STUDIES

1. Set attainable goals – even if it means tackling only one subject a year.
2. Draw up a study timetable and give your colleagues and family a copy.
3. Designate a place in your home just for studying.
4. Keep healthy in body and mind – take the occasional weekend off and exercise regularly.
5. Focus on the task at hand. Don't fret about work or studies during family time, and vice versa.

Ferozah Said, Broker Consultant: BD Peninsula, left school at the end of Grade 11 to start working. Soon afterwards she married and started a family. 'I always wanted to go back and do my matric, but I just couldn't imagine a married mother at high school ... to be honest, I was petrified. It was actually my husband who persuaded me to take night classes and he has been my biggest supporter ever since.'

Ferozah says although she first enrolled when her eldest daughter, Dalaal, was a year old, holding down a full-time job and raising four children hampered her studies. She eventually finished her matric in 2004, a year after her daughter. 'It was a fantastic feeling, but it was only the beginning. In 2005 I registered for a BCom at the University of the Western Cape as a part-time student. I went to class every evening after work.'

Ferozah (right) with her eldest daughter, **Dalaal**.



The next seven years were life-changing for Ferozah. On 16 September 2009, a day before Dalaal received her BA degree, Ferozah graduated. The following year she registered for her honours degree. As luck would have it, her daughter changed degrees and they ended up 'becoming study buddies and doing a joint thesis'. 'Our honours graduation was the proudest day of my life, especially because my daughter got better marks than me,' says Ferozah.

Support structure

There were tough times, but Ferozah says if you have a clear goal and know it's worth working towards, you 'make a plan'. She wouldn't have made it without the support of her husband – who took over the cooking and domestic duties – and her mom, who was always on hand if needed. 'Sanlam was very supportive too, and the encouragement of my managers and colleagues meant a lot to me,' she says.

Studying has opened doors she didn't even know were there. 'It has helped me hugely in my career but not always in ways I imagined. At university I met so many different people – of different races, religions, socio-economic backgrounds and ages – and they all inspired me to give of myself. Now I do whatever I can to support colleagues, friends, family and clients to achieve their dreams.'

And her plans for the future? 'In the next couple of years I'm hoping to do my Certified Financial Planner's exam, and after that maybe my master's ... my youngest daughter says she also wants to be my study buddy someday!' ■

Ferozah Said proudly displays her graduation certificates from the University of the Western Cape.