

hope we

Christopher Hitchens' new memoir, Hitch-22, provides an insight into how he keeps producing books and articles while maintaining a lifestyle that would make Keith Richards wince



we release



Our inner artist now that The Jam Jar studio have introduced their summer rates. They offer a range of packages – from a 12x12in canvas from Dh55 (including paints) to a rather more ambitious 3x4ft number for Dh195. Call 04 341 7303 to make a booking

Summer projects

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Summer presents new challenges

One week on from the start of our Summer Diaries series, in which four game volunteers are taking on life-changing challenges, we see how they're getting on. This week, we introduce their mentors, experts in their field who will be providing a helping hand along the way

Writing a screenplay



Magy Saeed says when writing a screenplay it is important to have fun. Pawan Singh / The National

Magy Saeed is the director of talent development at Katarat Ebdia's, a production company in Dubai that produces corporate videos and runs production workshops for young people.

Steve needs to start by being passionate about a certain subject, then find a clear message that he wants to get through. After determining that, he needs to elaborate on it by writing a one-page synopsis with a beginning, middle and end. Then it's time to work on the characters; thinking about how old they are, their gender, their hobbies, how they will interact with people.

He should write a summary of each person before putting them together. If he wants themes from here, he will need to interact with people from here and discover what the issues are. Preparing the screenplay should take about 75 to 80 per cent of his time, while actually writing it should take around 20 to 25 per cent. If he does that the writing part will come naturally. If he describes his characters really well and gets them interacting in his mind, then after a while he will know easily how they will react to his theme. And lastly, he should have fun. If he's not having fun with it, it's not going to work.



Steve Watson is drawing on his Abu Dhabi experiences to write his screenplay. Pawan Singh / The National

Steve Watson used to work in media but has been a househusband since arriving in Abu Dhabi. For his summer project he is writing his first screenplay.

Magy sent me through some documentation to read, which was a good starting point – about how to structure your characters and plot. I'm actually catching up with her tomorrow with my main character and supporting character synopsis. I am using some of my neighbours as source material. The inspiration has very much come from being a househusband in the community and getting to meet people

from all sorts of places. I've got to know these women, who, in the majority of cases have had to create a life here while their husband is off earning the money. They're either trying to establish themselves or otherwise spending their husband's money in the day spas. So we've got the central character and the supporting characters. Now it's a case of sitting down with Magy tomorrow and making sure the structure of my characters and the plot lines will string together. There's a death involved and a near-divorce. I've taken the mundane and am trying to turn it into something entertaining.

Getting fit



Philip Perrin says he discourages people from focusing too much on weight loss. Delores Johnson / The National

Philip Perrin is the boot camp group fitness co-ordinator at the Original Fitness Company

For Jeanne it's all about turning up. We'll do everything for her; all she has to do is give us the time. There's one running session a week, as well as a lower body session and an upper body session, so she will get an all-over body workout. In terms of diet, as long

as you have a healthy balanced diet and you moderate what you eat, you can pretty much eat whatever you want. As long as you don't eat too much of it, it's not a problem. We ask people not to focus too much on weight loss and what the scales say. If they're jumping on and off the scales and not seeing a massive change they'll get demoralised. I therefore discourage people from weighing themselves for the first month.



Jeanne LeSage says beach boot camp is hard work but she is already feeling the benefits. Sammy Dallal / The National

Jeanne LeSage is the managing producer of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival. She is doing the Original Fitness' beach boot camp over the summer.

I thought it was going to be really hard – and it's really hard. Getting up that early three times a week is pretty crazy. I've learned that it's really important not to eat a full meal late the night before, or you're at risk or chucking it up on the beach. I try to go to bed by 10pm the night before but I have a lot of trouble getting to sleep. I've talked to a couple of others in the group and they've

found the same – that they can't get to sleep because they're anxious about getting up early. I'm not anxious about boot camp. I don't dread it. It's just getting out of bed. Once you're there it's really hard and the heat is crazy. It's just relentless. But for the rest of the day you feel fantastic. Week one is the easy week and it gets you introduced to how they do it. They pretend to do this army recruit thing, but that's them pushing you. They're also really supportive and encouraging. But if they see that you are not pushing yourself they are all over you. I'm already noticing increased energy levels.

Learning Arabic



Yasser al Delli encourages his students to practise Arabic with native speakers. Rich-Joseph Facun / The National

Yasser al Delli is an Arabic instructor at the Berlitz Language School in Abu Dhabi.

I strongly encourage Murtaza to practise what he is learning in the classroom with his co-workers who are native Arabic speakers. Many learners feel hesitant about talking to strangers in the target language to avoid embarrassment; therefore, I usually advise my students to practise with people they feel comfortable with. Setting weekly targets is essential. Let's say we have focused on conjugating verbs from

the regular form to the past tense in our last session; the best way for Murtaza to practise is by forming sentences using such conjugations through his communication with his colleagues. Having someone to correct him will help avoid the formation of bad habits. His next task can be watching an Arabic film over the weekend to become more familiar with different Arabic dialects. Also reading labels on food containers and street signs rejuvenates his previous knowledge and challenges him to think in the target language.



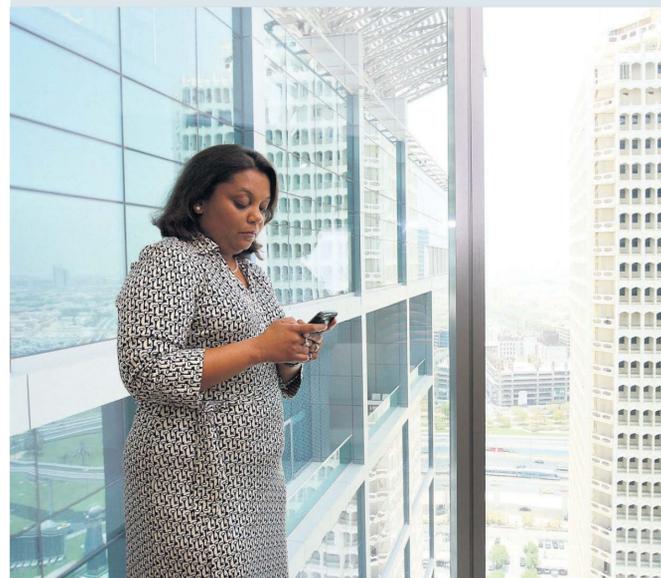
Murtaza Kaizar attends an Arabic class at the Berlitz Language School in Abu Dhabi. Andrew Henderson/The National

Murtaza Kaizar is the branch manager of Hafele, a German company that supplies the construction industry with door hardware. He is studying level three Arabic at the Berlitz Language School in Abu Dhabi.

This week I started learning the past tense. The first and second levels were all about the present tense. The third level is all about the past and the future. It's not like English – I look and I looked – the Arabic

version sounds like two completely different words. You have to know your basics really well and how to conjugate the verbs. And you need a minimum of an hour back home practising what you've learnt in the class. I do it every day, otherwise I'm not prepared for the next class I'm attending. I'm also practising what I've learnt with my colleague. His understanding of me is now much better and he's starting to appreciate me much more than when I started off.

Starting a business



Shimi Shah says the key points of a new company are set-up and structure. Pawan Singh / The National

Shimi Shah is a venture capitalist and the director of Carousel Solutions, a consultancy service catering for small and medium-sized businesses.

The key points are company set-up and structure: is it a freezone or LLC company? Does she have any other shareholders? What's the relationship like with her business partner? There needs to be an agreement in place between them in case anything goes wrong, and a shareholders agreement dictating what will happen if one wants to buy the other out. Next, equipment and suppliers: she needs to have a proper business plan, including a financial plan and

a budget. Also, financial forecasting, so she knows what to expect in terms of revenue. Putting a plan together helps to clarify your own thought process. Once that's done, there needs to be a launch strategy, a plan for getting customers and a sales and marketing plan. It might also be good to think about strategic partnerships with, for example, a juice bar or a healthy meal company. What makes her unique over her competitors? This is a great time of year to set up a business if you don't need to earn revenue straight away. It gives you a few quiet months to iron out the creases, to get the documentation sorted and soft launch.



Julie Meer discusses the logo she has chosen for her business. Paulo Vecina / The National

Julie Meer is spending the summer starting up Body Balancers, a wellness, sports and physiotherapy centre in Jumeirah Lake Towers, Dubai.

This week I was working with the lawyer to finalise the partnership agreement. Even though Caryl (my business partner) and I have been friends for many years, these types of things can sometimes tear people apart, whether they're friends or even family. And I've seen it many times. This way, if everything's clear and precise it protects both people. We have also been thinking about logo ideas, colours and concepts; about what the brand will

look like. We came up with about 15 ideas and eliminated down to three. I then bumped into a friend of mine who is into branding and although he was too expensive for our budget, he offered to take a look at them. He said exactly what I was thinking – your product is unique, so your brand should be too. I then had another friend of mine who does logo design and branding, help out. She started out with a couple of ideas and we played around with them a bit. And then boom. It was perfect. We just knew it was right. It was really exciting because now it's something that I can be really proud of it.