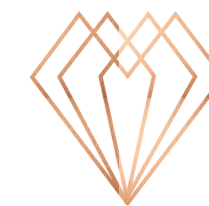


SORAYA JEWELRY

A LEGACY CONTINUED BY A ONE-WOMAN ARMY

Director of Soraya Jewelry, power woman and super mum, Soraya Cader, was exposed to the intricacies of the gem and jewellery trade from childhood and grew up to take forward the legacy of being born into one of Sri Lanka's most successful families operating in the gem and jewellery trade. A realtor by profession and a jeweller by passion, Soraya put her own unique twist on gems and jewellery, with the launch of Soraya Jewelry to make women feel bold, beautiful, and empowered.



SORAYA

By Aanisha Cuttilan

1. Tell us a little about yourself and how your career has grown over the years

I received my education at C. M. S. Ladies' College and graduated from the Chartered Governance Institute in the UK, formerly known as the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA). I also received my accreditation as a jewellery professional from the Gemological Institute of America. Today, I am a realtor by profession, a mother to two beautiful daughters, and I own a jewellery brand called Soraya Jewelry.

Over my career, I have worked in many different industries, locally and overseas, ranging from International Sales and Investment Promotions to Banking and Real Estate. But I always had a passion for gems that stemmed from being exposed to the gem trade and the art of jewellery from a very young age, thanks to my beloved father.

2. Tell us about the inception of Soraya Jewelry – where did you find your passion for jewellery, and how did you turn it into a business venture?

From a young age, I always wanted to work in the gem and jewellery industry, given that it is my family business. My father, Shah Cader, was a successful businessman and wholesaler of gems who exported the finest sapphires and gems from Sri Lanka to the world. His family before him has been in the gem and jewellery trade for five generations, so I felt like jewellery was a legacy I was carrying forward.

I first started my jewellery business after my eldest daughter, Isabelle, was born. After I completed the Applied Jewellery Professional Programme from the Gemological Institute of

America through online means, I qualified as an AJP – GIA.

Jewellery has always had a special place in my heart because I believe jewellery is a form of expression, a way to showcase one's feelings and moods. In my experience, I have found that people's tastes and preferences when it comes to jewellery are so varied, and it always excites me to see what each customer would want their jewellery to look like. When I entered the industry, I had no experience with jewellery – only my late father's good reputation in the trade. I was also not the most creative person out there, but with time, experience, and a lot of practice, my skills and creativity evolved and flourished into a business venture. The more I created, the more I fell in love with jewellery – I like to call this my "jewellery journey"!

Soraya Jewelry came about when I started buying gemstones, playing around with designs, and making jewellery for friends and family.

Later, I started an online jewellery store through my website www.sorayajewelry.com and was one of the first online jewellery businesses to operate in Colombo, exclusively selling jewellery online.



3. What is your process for making your pieces? Where do you draw inspiration from for the design and how do you make an idea a reality?

I love designing and making timeless, classic, fun, exciting and fashionable jewellery, and I love to see it gifted! I enjoy the whole process of designing jewellery and take inspiration from anything and everything, from travelling to rummaging through a magazine. I also draw inspiration from flowers and things in nature and top designers from around the world. For my process, I design my jewellery, source the stones, and give it to a trusted workshop to be handcrafted using 925 sterling silver. All jewellery is finely handcrafted locally, using intricate

techniques and gold plated. I then quality check the piece and promote it online. Although my business is a small company, I single-handedly deal with design, finance, and marketing operations. I even photograph and model the jewellery myself – a real end-to-end procedure!

4. Tell us more about the pearls and exotic gems you use when making your jewellery

Sri Lanka has a rich heritage of 2,000 years in the gem industry and has earned a reputation as a gem island, boasting a beautiful array of sapphires, star sapphires, garnets, moonstones, topazes, tourmalines, peridots, amethysts, aquamarines, and citrines. I use all these gemstones in my jewellery, along with pearls and opals. My great great grandfather, Prince Mum Salie, a maverick and legend in the industry, started the gem business in Sri Lanka, travelling to Australia and bringing back opals for cutting at the centre he had established in Galle.

I love pearls and always try to incorporate them into my pieces to give them a vintage vibe and delicate look. Some people think pearls are old fashioned, but today, many cutting edge modern designers use pearls. Vintage estate jewellery is something timeless, and I upcycle a lot of pieces. I buy the piece, add a new element to it, and give it a new life. I also like classic designs like pearl drops and hoops which are now a part of my signature collection.

Soraya Jewelry is a brand that creates precious, trendy jewellery to make women feel great, and they don't have to break the bank to own a piece of Soraya Jewelry either! Quality and customer satisfaction are very important to me and I strive to provide my clients with the best products in the industry.

5. You are the embodiment of a power-woman – what is a piece of advice you can offer to girls

and women about furthering their careers and pursuing their dreams?

Never give up, even if things are hard. It's not easy doing a business or pursuing your



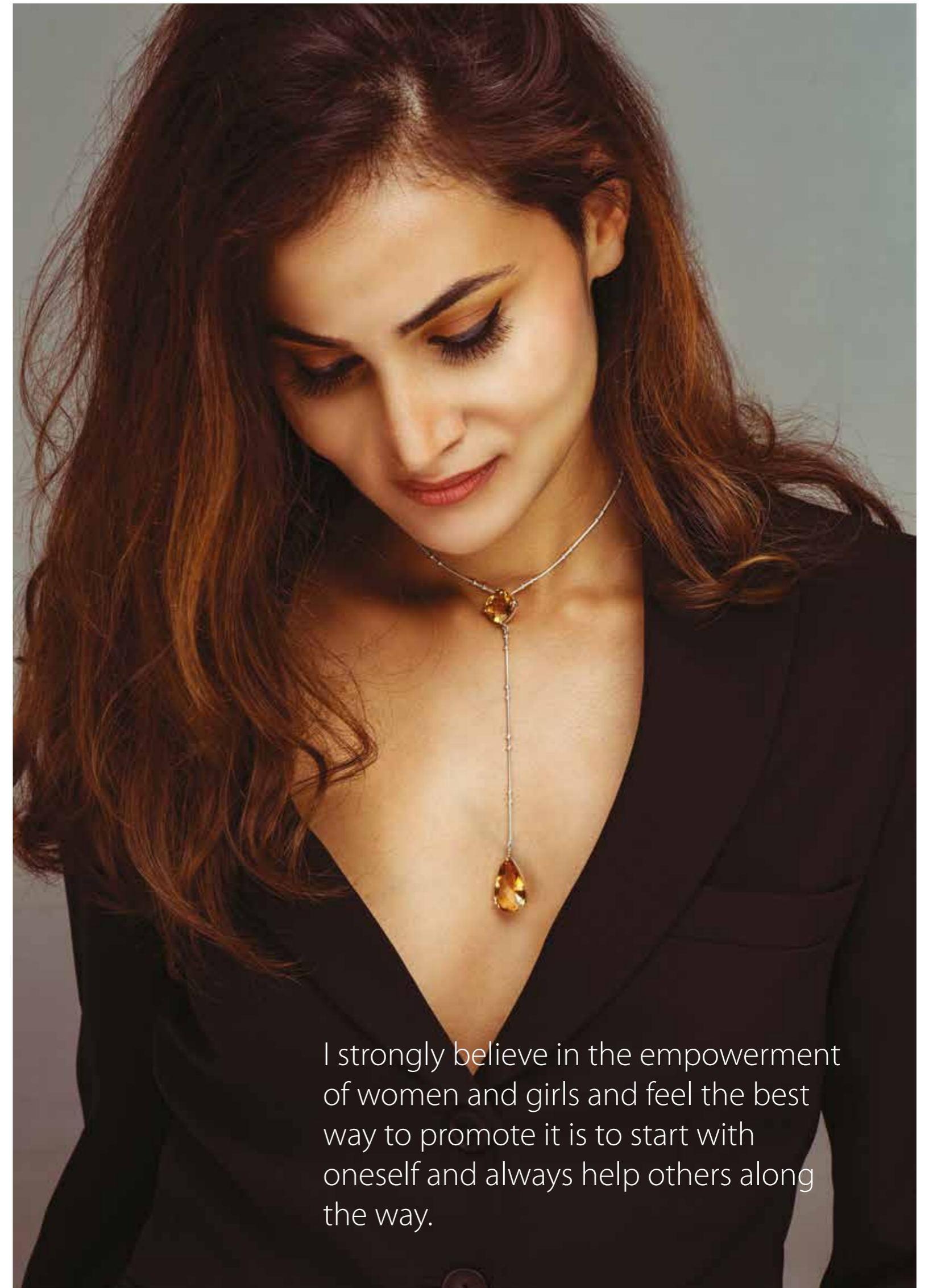
goals, especially when you are mostly on your own. I have a few friends and family who also share my interest in empowering women to succeed and who believe in me, love my designs, and help promote my business. I have had the privilege of designing jewellery for many formidable women, both locally and overseas. It's wonderful to design jewellery for fabulous women!

I strongly believe in the empowerment of women and girls and feel the best way to promote it is to start with oneself and always help others along the way. This sets the best example to girls with big dreams and even to one's children. I am a mother, and I want to teach my daughters to be independent and strong, no matter what obstacles they face.

To empower women, I also support a cottage industry by having all the interior packaging of my boxes made by women who need a second source of income.

6. What does the future hold for Soraya Cader?

I am proud to be a part of this industry and hope to help promote the already existing Sri Lankan gem and jewellery industry to the world. I also want to help establish Sri Lanka not just as a beautiful island to visit, but as a hub not just for gems and luxury jewellery - which we take pride in - but also for "beautiful designs and exotic cost-effective jewellery for all"!



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