

VALERIE McDOWELL



LITTLE RED'S FILTRATION - SURREY, BC

Valerie McDowell is the founder and owner of Little Red's Filtration, which supplies water filtration systems for commercial and industrial clients as an alternative to bottled water. Little Red's Filtration sells and installs the required water equipment, which includes regular maintenance of the coolers and units for a wide range of companies such as manufacturers of industrial doors, lawyer's offices, and lumber mills. It also offers products such as water coolers, coffee equipment for lunchrooms, and air conditioners for IT rooms.

Little Red's Filtration was inspired by Just One Drop, a company that Valerie previously co-owned that offered both bottled water and water filtration. When returning to the water business, Valerie focused on the water filtration side. "I knew I didn't want to get back into the bottled water because - fifty-pound bottles - carrying those suckers around. I'm sorry, those are heavy. I'm just a little woman. I'm not a six-foot-two man carrying fifty-pound bottles around." So, eventually Little Red's Filtration was created to eliminate the bottled water.

Valerie's inspiration to be an entrepreneur came from a very good friend who was also a businesswoman and entrepreneur. In addition, her daughter Amy, who had also been working in the company, provided tremendous support to Valerie.

Valerie needed to build new skills to meet the challenges of the new role. Key amongst these was developing an

understanding of plumbing. "I had to learn plumbing. Really! What were the odds of that ever happening?"

Valerie is most proud of her personal growth. "...and [I] realize that the strength that I have in being able to take something from nothing and make it into something that makes me proud, makes my family proud, and makes my children proud. It makes my children understand that 'you know what?' they don't have to worry about me."

While recognizing that everyone faces individual challenges, Valerie's advice for others is to have confidence in their skill sets and to find power from within. "Validation is powerful. It is really essential in building your confidence. It begins with yourself and understanding your own worth, power, and acceptance." She also highlights the importance of learning to delegate tasks, such as web development, and trusting that the results will be great.

Valerie is very appreciative of the support of Métis Nation, British Columbia. "My financial institution for Little Red's Filtration was able to fund me in a grant and a loan in order to help me buy product to continue to grow the company because at some points I could only purchase a little bit here and a little bit there. But when you're able to buy in quantity, you're able to get better pricing."

"Reflecting upon this journey, I realize it has taken me in so many directions. No matter where you go, accept it, and feel confident about where you are going. And if it takes you in another direction at another time embrace it.

There are so many paths in my own life that I could never have expected or imagined. For my life to be here, in British Columbia, to be doing what I do today, and truly enjoying the freedom it allows and the happiness I have found for myself."

"Up, up, up. The business just continues to grow. And now, with added security of financial support, I'm able to take it a little further than I was before and really know that with the funds, I can take it to the next level. I'm ready!"



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