

## CATHERINE REINECKE

We all dream of following in the footsteps of our loved ones at one point or another as we grow up. Whether it's our mother, father, siblings, grandparents and/or aunts and uncles, our loved ones have the power to inspire us to be just like them when we grow up and reach adulthood.

While not all of us manage or choose to follow in our loved ones' footsteps, Catherine Reinecke has managed to do so many times over.

Catherine's desire to follow in her grandfather's, father's, brother's and uncles' footsteps started to show itself when she was a child growing up in South Africa watching them hard at work in the RAC industry.

"From the age of seven, I use to see my father and brother work in big banana plants. This type of specialised work intrigued me, however being a girl in South Africa it was beyond my reach."

While her prospects of working in the South African RAC industry were limited, she would later discover that the sky would be the limit for her and her family when they were given the chance to move to Australia. However the increased opportunities weren't given to Catherine on a silver platter, moving to Australia presented her and her family with several challenges that would have led to lesser people giving up.

"In 2006, my father, Theo, was given the chance to come to Australia through the help of my uncle Reymond. We were separated for a year until dad got enough money to bring the family over.

"Finishing school was difficult due to not being able to speak and write in English. I had to overcome this hurdle of learning a new language in Australia."

Seven years after her father was given the chance by her uncle to come to Australia, they gave her the chance to kick off her career in the RAC industry.

"In 2013, my dad and uncle gave me the opportunity to try out the trade to see if I would enjoy working with tools. I did end up enjoying the work and I told my dad I wanted to start working in the trade."

While Catherine says that her grandfather, father, brothers and two uncles were her biggest influences and continuing the family trade is important to her, especially as she is the first female in her family to work in the RAC industry, she emphasises that her father is by far her biggest supporter.

"My father has been my biggest motivator. He's supported me and has been there for me throughout all the difficult challenges I have faced and without him I don't know where I would be. We have our ups and downs but I wouldn't trade working with him for the world."

Despite the large amount of support from her male family members, not every man has been kind. Catherine says that some male customers find it hard to accept her working in the RAC industry, but she hasn't let them or anyone else hinder her career. While she doesn't know what the future holds for her, she is determined to perfect her skills and continue learning every day. Hard work and determination are traits she advises that anyone, let alone women, who have their own ambitions and desires to work in the RAC industry need to have.

“This trade can be very rewarding, male or female you have to have a strong personality and the will to succeed under all circumstances.”

“To all the young girls and women out there willing to do the hard work, give it a go and never stop trying. Keep moving forward.”