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Michele Bolton
Then and Now

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE ON PERSONAL HEALTH

Michele Bolton Shares Her Journey of Self-actualization and Empowerment

BY **APRIL WALL**
Photos by Image Design

The strongest steel is forged in fire… repeated hammering and intense heat eventually make it not only strong, but flexible, bright and reflective. It is the image of such a strong metal that may come to mind when getting to know Michele Bolton. Her steely resolve and bright flexible personality are very reflective of her own difficult experiences. Michele underwent a series of emergency surgeries in her 20s. Just as her life began to feel normal… it all changed again.

At the age of 30, Michele was up-close with her own mortality. However, like the strongest steel, life's repeated hammering forged a strong, adaptable woman. She is no less cautious of change, but has come to terms with the consequences and feels empowered. Her optimistic personality flies in the face of her lived experiences where she is thrilled by every new day, considering each a gift.

After riding a rollercoaster of surgeries and life-threatening diagnoses of teratoma, it was not easy to find her path forward (or through), but she did, with the love and support of family and friends. She looked hard at her life and reprioritized. Admitting that her journey was difficult and painful, she also knew it was necessary to make the best decisions for herself. This meant having more control over her health and who she shares it with. Seeing doctors and specialists at hospitals and clinics and constantly having to supply the same details at each visit, and left with terrifying realization that others had been left to make

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decisions on her behalf, left Michele adamant to find a better way for her (and others) to manage health information. A way that would maintain dignity and trust, and address the empathy and respect that patients need—especially those in vulnerable situations.

Today Michele is the founder and CEO of MY911 Inc., an innovative mobile healthcare technology company that she began in 2018. Placing the management of vital personal health information in the hands of individuals who sign up for the service, allows them to share, block or deactivate online anytime, while presenting their MY911® card with QR code to care providers to speed through the patient registration process. The user has full control over what health information they choose to set up and what will be visible (or shared) when their file is accessed. Medical registry information, vaccination summaries, health history, extended benefits, allergies and more can be set up and/or shared with healthcare providers. Additional cards may be given to primary care-givers, or a person with power-of-attorney. In the event of an emergency, this can be invaluable and potentially life-saving.

Customer data for MY911 Inc. is backed up on secure servers in Canada that are compliant with applicable digital security requirements. "I have always felt accountable, and this project is no different... while the idea came to me naturally, I still draw upon my own experiences," she shares, noting that in bringing her passion-project into reality, she has learned to be flexible and even comfortable with the risks she is taking. "I really love the creative process, and then seeing the results as things come together."

Michele is truly moved to empower others with their healthcare journey. She is excited to continue the process of incorporating new ideas and options into the service for members, while keeping the patients' needs at the forefront. Returning recently from a conference in the United States, she and other innovators exchanged ideas like this and shared their visions for the future.

Michele is a mother (and happy that her daughter lives nearby), and a grandmother (with 2 charming grandchildren, now 15 and 11 years of age respectively, that she sees often in person and in beautiful photos of them taken by Amanda Kopcic Photography and Videography, her daughter and son-in-law's family business). She is a daughter (who enjoyed Christmas in NYC with her mother in 2014) and a life-long learner (who takes every chance she is given to grow). She is an explorer (who loves the magic of Christmas in New York, but also loves Italy or Florida anytime). She is a warrior (who as the mother of a young child began to fight for her life and her health), and she is a passionate innovator.

Michele is energized by the bustle of being in a city, although she still loves the country and nature. She is content living in her quiet London community, and as much as she enjoys taking exciting trips that have built rich, lasting memories and friendships—like her solo trek to Italy and the island of Sardinia for 3 weeks several years ago—she also loves coming home to recharge and balance her life.

It may seem surprising that Michele once worked in the farming sector for almost 30 years. Perhaps less surprising is that after a career in corporate finance, she finds maintaining these skills useful in her current ventures. Like many innovators, her diverse interests, knowledge and experiences have shaped who she is today. If Michele has anything to do with it... she's not done yet. ∎