



**“SUCCESS** is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose.” — Bill Gates, right, founder of Microsoft

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**WHEN DOING** performance reviews, decide on a standard review schedule and adhere to it. Consider holding more frequent meetings for new or less experienced employees.

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# Diversify is actress' advice

By TIA ABELL  
for Metro Vancouver

Vancouver actress Nicole Oliver's career strategy sounds like sensible financial advice: diversify, diversify.

A 30-something mom and host of Life Network's *Crash Test Mommy*, Oliver balances TV, movie and voice-over roles — and thrives.

"There's no stigma anymore," she says of her multimedia work. "It's about convergence."

She's appeared on TV's *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*, *Beggars And Choosers* and *The Outer Limits* while playing lead roles in feature films such as *The Falling* and the upcoming Christmas release, *The Foursome*.

Oliver's promoted products from tampons to toothpaste and she's the voice of cartoon characters such as the sorceress Queen Marlena from *He-Man And The Masters Of The Universe*. Last month she narrated a Greenpeace documentary.

As host of the reality show, *Crash Test Mommy*, she takes a harried mom to a spa while a know-it-all friend or relative takes on the household.

For Oliver, it means three full days of work on alternate weekends during taping.

"The ironic thing for me is since I've had children (William, 3, and Grady, 15 months), I've never been busier," she says with a grin. "My husband is my *Crash Test Mommy*."

Oliver's love of performance was sparked at age three when she started ballet lessons in her hometown, Ottawa.

"I spoke in an English accent for most of my 6th year — it drove my mother crazy."

Still, her gift of gab had her planning a law career.

Then a role as Sandy in a high school play, *The Prime Of Miss Jean Brodie*, turned her on to acting.

She got her bachelor of fine arts degree from York University and studied in London and Oxford at the British American Dramatic

Academy.

She credits her training for her flexible skills, especially for her voice work.

"Voice-overs are really based on your talent, not what your image can bring," she explains.

"It's about your ability to create from nothing. Kelsey Grammer will always be

Frasier but I can play a little boy, girl, her mother — the sky's the limit and I can do it in my sweatpants with no makeup on and baby spit-up on my shoulder."

While she admits self-doubt is an occupational hazard, Oliver says she's learned not to take criticism personally. She credits her father with encouraging her to seek opportunities and take chances — such as hosting *Crash Test Mommy*.

"It was a little out of my comfort zone, but I thought I'll try. Now here we are, shooting season three."

**“It's about your ability to create from nothing. Kelsey Grammer will always be Frasier but I can play a little boy, girl, her mother — the sky's the limit.”**

NICOLE OLIVER, ACTRESS



TV, movie and voice-over actress Nicole Oliver, at the Metropolitan Hotel's putting green, admits she did not learn how to play golf during filming of *The Foursome* — instead she danced naked on the 14th green.