

OVERDOSED ON POSITIVITY

Staying in a positive mind-set and making positive actions is important to live a life that will reflect positive occurrences and opportunities to you. What you give out is surely what you get back. Sometimes it's difficult to maintain a positive mood and positive thoughts. Sometimes we all lack motivation in life. What I have always found is that even when you fall, you make sure that you get back up and prove to yourself and to the world that you're worthy of living your dream and capable of attracting the right people and opportunities into your life. You will then realise that you have the potential to make it to where you want to be and pursue your dreams. Keep working toward positivity, no matter how much negativity may capture you and your thoughts. Never give up on fighting for your dreams; remember the journey is the

destination. For every negative thought be aware to change it to a positive, as positive thoughts are ten times more powerful than the negative ones. Don't allow self-doubt to take you over otherwise this doubt will keep you trapped in the same place. Try to keep it moving. A steady flow in thought is more productive. Remember to believe in yourself, as the closer you become to being a master in self-belief, actions and thoughts, the closer you are at becoming a master of your own destiny. You hold your destiny in your own hands. If you can stay consistent with positive thoughts and keep planting positive seeds out into the world, of course it will reflect back to you. Your seeds will grow. I know this from personal experience.

TURN TO PAGE 8 >>>



Hello there... before we start, we have something we want to tell you

What you hold in your hand is a powerful thing. What you're holding holds unlimited possibilities; the possibility to change, to grow, to laugh, to smile and much much more. This is not just another newspaper. This is the paper that has the potential to change your life. By this point I can imagine you asking,

"How?" or "Why?"

If that is the case I will be more than happy to answer those questions.

Contact

Youth Elements on:

Phone: 0161 286 1566 / 07912 868 260

Email: info@youthelements.org.uk

Twitter: [youthelements22](https://twitter.com/youthelements22)

www.youthelements.org.uk

In this publication you will read real stories, fictional stories, life tips and most importantly tips and tools to attain happiness. This is a negativity free zone. This is a tribute to the fortitude people have developed through adversity. This is a testament of true strength that young people have attained through growing up in modern society.

In our present society, young people are not viewed in a positive light; they should be nurtured and

developed. Unfortunately this is not the case. They find themselves tarred with the same brush and limited in almost every single way. This is what needs to change, I'm sure most would agree. Personally I think this is as good a place to start as any.



So read on! I hope people can take something from reading this, whether it is knowledge or half an hour of entertainment. It has been an honour to have the opportunity to produce something like this. So here is the first issue. Here's hoping for many more.

Youth Elements has been running for three years making a positive difference by social action in the community. We celebrate the differences of people. No matter where you're from or who you are you have a

right to be happy, you have a right to grow. We offer training, peer mentoring workshops and conferences all youth led and delivered.

Youth Elements



Opportunities to aspire

Designed By
Design5
07768 756 586

TALENT WANTED

Rise & Inspire

Have you got what it takes to shine? Are you 19 or over?

We are on the lookout for the next big thing signers, MC's, dancers, bands, comedians... or anybody with a gift. We want to hear from you.

Amazing Prizes & Opportunities to be won
Deadline to apply Friday 31st October

Got what it takes, or want more information

email: riseandinspire@youthelements.org.uk

10 finalists will be invited to perform LIVE at the Inspire Launch Party on Thursday 18th December 2014 Kiki's Bar Manchester. Parsonage Gardens, Manchester, M3 2NH

Simon's Story

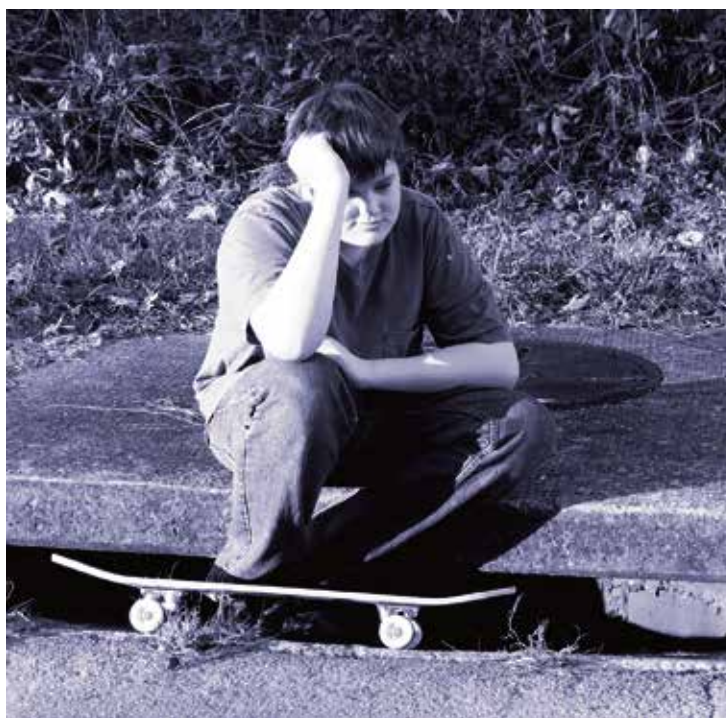
Part 1

As many young people these days, I had a lot of difficulties growing up. At the age of six my parents got divorced and I guess from there on in the problems started. I was very angry as a child and found myself breaking a lot of my toys and being disruptive in class. Also during the divorce I was moved about a lot from house to house which didn't help anything but it wasn't until my teens when my issues started having a significant impact on my life.

It's well documented that teenagers are always a nightmare to deal with and I was no exception. I once blamed it on falling into the "wrong crowd" when I was actually the reason all

my friends were doing stupid things. I guess what I wanted was a group of friends I could control and take my anger out on. It started with pathetic things in the community like spray painting walls and disturbing people in their houses by banging on windows or doors. This was an adrenalin rush but it just wasn't enough! So we'd step it up and start fighting with other lads in the area, other lads at school and if I'm honest after a while we got a bit of a reputation and people were actually scared of us which in my mind meant more control!

Eventually I got kicked out of school before I could do my GCSEs and I refused to go to another



"don't be a prisoner of your past, kidnap your future."

school for almost a year. A specialist school called E.O.T.A.S (Education Otherwise Than At School) decided to take me. In the end I got three GCSEs but school just wasn't for me. I hated it. I hated authority and the way teachers thought they were so special but looking back on it they were just trying to help me! I was the fool, not them!

As we got older we started to drink a lot more and that led to us thinking up even more

stupid plans. We started breaking into cars. I personally stole my mum's car on a number of occasions in the early hours of the morning and picked up friends to go and steal from other cars! I mean, we were out of control on a number of levels but we just didn't care. We thought we were invincible.

This obviously led to lots of problems at home and at the age of 17 I got a phone call from my mum telling me that she couldn't take me living with her any more and that she'd packed my bags and I wasn't allowed to come back. I'd never been so angry in my



whole LIFE! Where was I meant to go? How was I meant to eat? I had no money, so this led to a huge fall out and things were said that I still regret to this day and my mum and I lost contact.

Simon's Story continues on page 12

The Samaritans

Tel: 08457 90 90 90

This is a 24hour service 365 days a year

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Website: www.samaritans.org

42nd Street Manchester

Tel: 0161 228 1888 helpline

Email: theteam@42ndstreet.org.uk

Website: www.42ndstreet.org.uk



Keep company with positive, supportive and loving people

Live Life to the Fullest

When I was at school I was like any other teenager, I bunked off, got detentions, made supply teachers lives hard, got internal executions and saw myself in the head teacher's office too many times.

However, I was lucky enough to go to the best youth club in my area. Every week everyone would make their way down to South Reading. This was the hot spot but also where I had the opportunities to take

part in a youth exchange project in South Africa.

To be able to go, we all had to spend a certain amount of hours doing voluntary work and I did mine in a church cafe where I helped out each weekend. When the day came that a group of us from Whitley, Reading flew to South Africa, it was great. For some it was the first time they had been on a plane. Once we got there the different daytime activities and the school we

"Life begins at the end of your comfort zone"



"It's always good to have some direction in your life"

Rashid Waldron - 1986

Competition Time

£75 of high street vouchers to be won

All you have to do is.....

Tell us in no more than 75 word's what your number one goal is, why and how you plan to achieve it.....simple

This competition is for young adults aged 18 -30

To enter the competition submit your words, with your name, age, contacts to:

info@youthelements.org.uk

Closing Date

Friday 31st October 2014

So Hurry!!



LOTTERY FUNDED



Youth Elements



Opportunities to aspire

worked with was amazing. The children were just so happy to be able to go to school even though they lived in townships which had deaths, rapes and murders in their own area. It made all of us realise that we took school for granted. When you saw a child's eyes light up over a text book or new pens it was unreal. So many of us still look back at all the

great memories we had with the Leap school and the children. Having guest speakers, going to townships, going to the slave museums, visiting Robin Island where Nelson Mandela was held in

prison for eighteen years, the whole experience was emotional, touching and a massive eye opener. As a young black girl it was great to get a better understanding of what black people went through as well as having better knowledge of black history. I owe a massive thank you to South Reading's Youth Centre for putting on such a great experience for myself and our group who were lucky enough to go on the youth project.



From that I knew certain things needed to change, I needed to have a goal in life and achieve it. While I was at the Bulmershe School in year 10/11 they had a thing called Aim Higher, where



less privileged kids got to do different workshops and go on college and university visits. From this I knew I wanted to go to university to study tourism. I've always gone on different holidays with my mum while growing up. From going to New York, America, Barbados, St, Vincent and many more. But when my mum fostered my little sister, Renee, I wanted her to see that she could do anything she wanted to do with her life, no matter what her background was or where she came from. She was now part of our family and no one could change that.

When I received my GCSEs I didn't get the grades I needed to be able to study all the subjects I wanted at 6th form. For two years I did focus and studied hard to be able to get the grades/points I needed for university. I was accepted to do a HND course at the university I wanted which was Swansea Met. I smashed the two year course and my main tutor told me I

would be able to study international travel and tourism management as a degree and it made me so happy. I had help as I am dyslexic, so the free laptop and all the services that my university offered was great as it really helped. I

graduated in July 2013 with a 2:2 and to be the first in my family to have a degree was a great feeling. I don't think I've never seen my mum so emotional with happiness before. It just felt great that I made her proud. I had graduated in a course I had always wanted to and to top it off I had proved many people wrong. That was an even better feeling.

Since 2011 I've done six months in Ibiza doing my Dive Master qualification, and two years working with Thomas Cook as a 18-30's and Escapades rep. My first year in Ayia Napa, Cyprus, and my second in Malia. However from 2015 I want to go to Dubai and do a hospitality internship as that's where I really want to put my degree to good use.

I believe every single person should set themselves goals, have a bucket list and do the things that make them happy. Of course, I've had my ups and downs, questioned myself about certain things. I'm only

human but I know I will get where I want to be with hard work and determination. I'm not a quitter as that gets you nowhere fast. Just keep going. Yes, everyone is different, had hard times, done things we shouldn't have but we all have one life. Yes You Only Live Once but it's true. Don't dwell on stupidity; live for yourself, your family and friends. If they don't support you then drop them. Trust me unneeded people in your life will bring you down. No- one likes a hater. Yeah not everyone will go to South Africa and do a youth project but look what's happening on your own doorstep. Deaths, robbery, prison, gun and gang culture, do you really want that to be you?! I really hope not.



Make today, tomorrow and the future about achieving the goals you set yourself, being happy and living each day as it comes. God gave us one life, don't make him regret it.

Words By
Mica Headly

*I'm walking
down a
crowded
street, where
nobody knows
my name*

*I'm walking
along with my
head held
high, I don't
feel any
shame*

*For I am
happy for who
I am, a free
person I'll
always be*

*I live my life to
my own rules
and my own
destiny*

“Identify Your Talents and Nurture Them”

REAL LIFE

Some real truths you don't hear



This is me and my son Malachi. I am the proudest Mum going.

When I found out I was pregnant it was a shock to say the least. I knew immediately that I wanted my little miracle. His dad, however, had other ideas. He was not supportive of Mal or me and throughout the whole pregnancy I felt very alone. He came to a couple of scans and just complained that he had to take time off work. I think he was scared too as he wasn't ready to be a dad. Luckily we both had full time jobs and warented a property together.

Any pregnancy is scary. You have all sorts of feelings; your excited, nervous, scared. Of course, you're scared about your abilities to be a mother.

During my pregnancy my mother died and in the last year of her life I had forgiven her and we had built a relationship. Her dying set me back as I didn't know how to grieve for her. This put a lot of added stress into my pregnancy.

I also developed SPD (symphysis pubis dysfunction) which is pelvic pain in pregnancy, and gestational diabetes. The SPD made working really hard as every so often my hip would dislocate and walking was excruciating but I couldn't afford not to work.

When Malachi was born his dad was incredible I could not have asked for anything more. He was attentive, caring and supportive. When he went back to work this all changed; he didn't help, he didn't care, and he didn't provide. I was so depressed. I was scared as I had this new born baby and I had

no idea how to look after him. I was insecure as I had just had a baby. I was poorly. I haemorrhaged and ended up in hospital. I was so lonely and exhausted.

My partner left me when Mal was eight weeks old as he didn't want the responsibility. This deva- stated me. I was diagnosed with post natal depression, and it got to the point that I didn't want my son; not for the fact that I didn't love him - he is my world but I believed I wasn't good enough for him.



Looking back now I know I am a cracking mum and I am single-handedly bringing him up and providing for him. He is utter perfection. We are inseparable. Whenever I get the feeling I am not good enough, I do something to actively make my life better and make a better life for Malachi.

I still find it very lonely as all day I look after Malachi, which I love, but I have insomnia so all night I'm worrying and mentally torturing myself. Having my son has made me be a better



person in every way. I live for him. I am determined to make a good life for him. I have started back at work part time. I have started my level 5 Diploma in health and social care, and I do my self-employed work helping kids in care or the professionals involved.

There is no better feeling then when Malachi learns something new. Whenever I am feeling down, seeing him smile takes everything away. I know he is never going to want or need for anything. I have finally got a family with unconditional love and yes it's hard but it is way worth all the hard work.

Words By
Kirsty Glover

Gingerbread

We provide expert advice, practical support and campaign for single parents

They can give advice on:

- Child maintenance
- Contact
- Employment
- Education
- Welfare benefits and tax credits
- Housing
- Debt.

Free Phone Helpline:
0808 802 0925

The Gingerbread Single Parent Helpline is open as follows:

- Mon: 10am to 6pm
- Tues/Thur/Fri 10am to 4pm
- Wed 10am-1pm and 5pm-7pm.

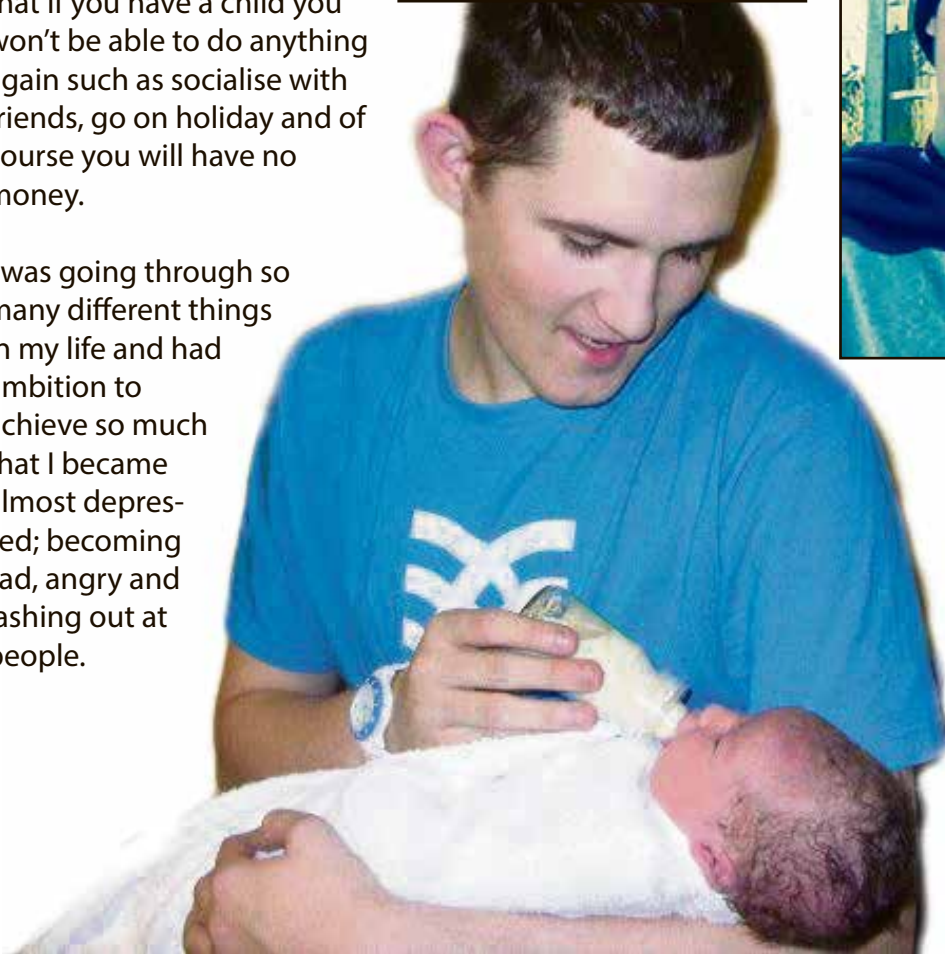
Website:
www.gingerbread.org.uk

**"Be
Proud
of Who
You Are"**

about Parenting

When I first found out I was going to become a father I was 19 years old. I had just started to develop my career and felt like things were good. In all honesty I thought my life was over when I found out because of what I had been told in school and at home, that if you have a child you won't be able to do anything again such as socialise with friends, go on holiday and of course you will have no money.

I was going through so many different things in my life and had ambition to achieve so much that I became almost depressed; becoming sad, angry and lashing out at people.



But through all this I was blessed to be surrounded by people that wanted nothing but the best for me. All the way through the pregnancy I was scared didn't know what to expect but I accepted what was happening.

After my son was born a lot changed in me. Beforehand I was still immature and only had to think for and about myself. Having become a father, I suddenly had more to think about; I had a child

that depended on me. Becoming a father in all things made me the person I am today, giving me bigger ambition to provide an amazing life for my son to make sure he does not go without. It has made me want to become a role model for my son and I would not change all that has happened simply because having a child has made me a better person, made me value what I have and makes me strive to be a

better person in the hope that he becomes a good person and learns the values of hard work.

Even though having a child quite young made me more of an adult in a sense it shouldn't be something taken lightly because it can be hard as the mother and I are no longer together. It has made situations difficult in some cases, but I would not change what has happened for the world as I am now a proud father.

Words By
Jamie Whitehead

"What do I mean by loving ourselves properly?
I mean first of all, desiring to live, accepting life as a very great gift and a great good, not because of what it gives us, but because of what it enables us to give others."

Thomas Merton

Volunteer Recruitment Opportunity

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We are looking for 3 individuals who have the ability to think creatively and can be flexible and dynamic in their approach to support our launch party and showcase event in Manchester on Thursday 18th December 2014.

To request an application form and more information please

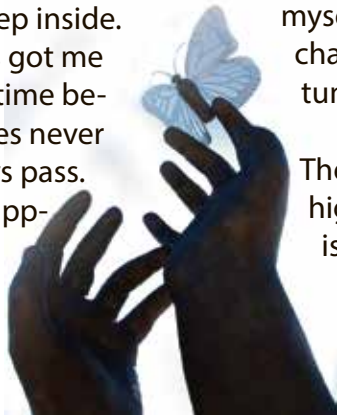
email: recruitment@youthelements.org.uk
Application deadline: Friday 17th October 2014

"Experience is the best teacher"



POSITIVITY IS GOOD

In the most difficult times in my life, I've made an effort to hold as many healthy thoughts as possible and held faith somewhere deep inside. That's what has got me through every time because hard times never stay they always pass. It's not what happens to you it is how you deal with the difficulties that counts. If you can learn to change yourself from within, the world around you will change. You will see it happen and will start to recognise how the law of attraction works. Work on changing the weaknesses and flaws in yourself. Work on always changing yourself into a better person. Be your true self, tap into who you really are. Come out of your shell and break free from all the external conditioning. Explore the real you so that others will then recognise your character and gifts. With this recognition



opportunities naturally come along hand in hand with such a transition in motion. That's what I worked on, changing myself then my whole world changed and endless opportunities arrived.

There is always something higher than giving up. Love is powerful, especially self-love, from within. The more you explore your true self, the more you will start to gain understanding and direction on what it is that you want from life. When you begin to know yourself and understand what you want from life then it will manifest physically. You will gain focus, if you can have some focus and direction from your own choices & decisions you start to feel comfortable with yourself and begin to find a deeper happiness from life. This will feed your soul and once you get into the rhythm of this positive flow,

you will never turn back. No matter what negative or difficult events you are faced with you will always know what to do to get back on your positive vibe again.

Do the things that make you happy, keep your dreams alive and attract your dream into your life.

There is a quote by an old spiritual master called Lao Tzu that I would like to share in this article, it goes like this –

"Watch your thoughts, they become words, watch your words they become actions; watch your actions they become habits, watch your habits they become character; watch your character they become your destiny."

You are somebody and you deserve to achieve and attract everything you want in life, but



remember it's down to your thoughts and your actions. Nobody can do it for you, only you can do it for yourself. The first step is the most difficult step but once you have taken that first step of change and determination, once you start to live in your passions, everything becomes a natural smooth flow. You will learn how to work with life and learn the techniques how to get life to work with you through practicing how to generate positive energy from within.

Going for Goals

12 steps to goal setting

1. Have a desire: Allow yourself to desire whatever you want. You know the saying think big, dream big?..... Well, desire big, too!
2. Believe: You have to absolutely believe you can achieve your goal.
3. Write it down: We become more committed to what we write down. So write down your goals.

4. Analyze your starting point: You know where you want to get to. By knowing your where you are now allows you to understand what you will need to do.
5. Ask yourself why? Knowing why you want to achieve a particular goal will help you stay focused.
6. Set a deadline: They allow you to plan and it adds healthy pressure.

It is true to say our thoughts are creative and powerful. It's always good to think about what you want in life and how to get it. This is the first stage in developing our goals. Here are the 12 steps to goal setting...Good Luck

7. Identify the obstacles: Knowing what the worst case scenario can be, allows you to be prepared.
 8. Know the knowledge and skills you need: Understand what new skills you need to pick to become an expert in the field and to help you get where you want.
 9. Identify the people you'll need: Who can teach you what you need to know? Who can help you stay focused and motivated?
 10. Make a plan: Having a plan for achieving your goal is essential to your success.
 11. Visualize: Visualization is a great tool to help you get where you want to get.
 12. Never give up: The key to achieving your goal is persistence. Keep on going....
- Taken from Brian Tracey:
<http://sourcesofinsight.com>

FOR YOU

1) What is the best advice you have been given and by whom?

The best advice I have been given was from my teacher in Bulgaria - a very inspirational lady called Mary. I am training with her to become a naturopathic doctor. She is a naturopathic doctor with a lot of experience and wisdom. She gave me advice on many different aspects of life. She told me to love myself, that's where it all begins then everything else will fall into place. Have confidence because having confidence and courage will open many doors in life. Take hold of opportunities with both hands and never let anything hold you back from taking life changing opportunities. Travel and be free for a time in your life, experiencing what it's like not to be tied down. Explore the world, see it and find yourself. Let go of all the people who stunt your growth, move onto new people, people with ambition and positive mind-sets.

Become comfortable with yourself and then you will never need to search so much in others for what you need. Everything you're searching for, you have inside yourself. All you need to do is realise your greatness. Never neglect your natural gifts. Whatever you're gifted in, naturally enhance these gifts and share them in the right places, making a career out of what you're gifted in. This is the most profound advice I've ever been given from anybody and I will never forget it.

2) Why is positive living and thinking important?

It is important to keep things flowing accordingly in life, if one

finds a balance with this then everything one desires and dreams of can manifest physically. The main reason why it is important is because life is a reflection of who you are and how you choose to live, therefore if you can maintain positivity, positive things will happen for you.

3) Is it best to make yourself happy or put other people's happiness before yours?

It is best to put your happiness first the reason is because we all must build a strong foundation for ourselves. Friends come and go, relationships sometimes end, jobs end, family make their own choices, therefore your happiness must be number one. It is important to create happiness within yourself and keep that maintained as a number one priority. I can say first hand that it can be difficult if you naturally have a giving nature but just remember if you don't have anything left for yourself that's

when you will become imbalanced and your positive rhythm will slow down or even stop. I've made this mistake many many times before and it has affected my health and flow before. I have left myself drained when I have neglected myself as number one. When you put yourself first that then naturally shines out to others, you will lead by example. You can't help others successfully until you have truly experienced helping yourself. Growth starts with self.

4) Why is it good to have some direction in your life?

It is good so that life will keep moving positively, so that you can keep growing and achieving. It's good to see where it is you want to be and where you want to go so that you can work toward that. If you have some direction of where you want to be this will keep you focused and motivated. With no direction you could just end up anywhere or even nowhere, with no real happiness. Try to contemplate what you want and create a direction in the best way toward getting there, this will help you to achieve your goals and follow your dreams. Remember life is what you make it.

5) Where do you see yourself in five years?

In five years I see myself as a successful Naturopathic Doctor and spiritual life coach. I see myself as somebody who has massively grown in my gifts and ability to help others on every level. I see myself as somebody who is strong enough and experienced enough to help others through difficult transitions in their life. I see myself as somebody who can help the sick to come back into health again, somebody who can help those yearning for more, to help people who have totally given up on life.

But first I must take the journey myself and experience this very transition in its highest potential. The more I work on myself, the more my potential will materialise.

6) If you could see yourself at age ten years, what would you tell you?

I would say that you can be anything you want to be in life and do anything you dream of. I would say be confident and be yourself around others because you are unique, beautiful and have a bright future ahead of you. If others don't respect you for who you are they are not worth your company or not friends worth having. I would say believe in yourself and smile because if you smile at the world, the world

smiles back. Anything you can't change now you will be able to change as you get older. Nothing or no-one is perfect but life can be as wonderful as you want it to be. Hold your head high and shine bright because the world will soon be your oyster.

7) Is having a dream, ambition/aspirations important for us and why?

Yes having a dream, ambitions and aspirations is important for us because then we have a purpose in life, something to hope for, something to look forward to. Having dreams and ambitions keeps you in control of yourself and your life. Nobody can ever take your dreams away from you, you will always have something to fall back on and work towards. This will also be the main source of your happiness. No-one or nothing can ever hold you back once you have established and started to work towards your dreams. This is yours for keeps and will always keep you motivated in life.

Words by
Zara Fredericks

4 in 10 young people become homeless because their parents are no longer willing to house them

Young and Homeless 2013

**END
YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS**

www.eyh.org.uk



A prevention to homelessness guide

1 First of all don't lose motivation. It's very easy to get comfortable after a while in a particular situation, don't. You need to be looking for accommodation everyday whether sheltered or actual housing as if you don't look you won't get anywhere. Only you can help yourself get opportunities.

2 Don't get into any bad habits. I understand it's easy to get into a routine and adopt some bad habits like alcohol or

drug use. Steer well away from anyone who could drag you down further. You want to pick yourself up and get yourself back out there.

3 I wouldn't recommend begging. There are plenty of places such as drop in centres where you can get a free meal and a bit of shelter for a couple of hours. Begging may be money, however, lack of money isn't the issue in hand. Time that you spend begging is



wasted as that time could be spent working on sorting your housing situation out, chasing things up etc. Mustard Tree, Booth Centre,

"It always seems impossible until it's done"
Nelson Mandela

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Youth Elements



Opportunities to aspire

You Don't know me



Don't judge me because you have never lived in my shoes. You've never felt my pain, you don't know the responsibilities I have, just like I've never lived in your shoes and I've never felt your pain. You have never known my struggles and I have never known yours and that's exactly why I don't hold any judgements on you or make opinions on your choice. Don't make your mind up on why I take the actions I take and make the choices I make. I'm a human being growing and I don't need your approval or opinion. I expect to be judged if I harm anyone or if I'm

deceitful. If I form an opinion or judge someone else who is harmful to others or deceitful, it's because of the stage I'm at now, of having lack of empathy for outward harmfulness and deceit in others but I'm on a journey to try and even have understanding for that but the journey takes time and wisdom. I understand that if you do judge me for what I do to deal with my stuff and better my life and self as a person it's because of the level you are at.

Words by
Zara Fredericks

plus other places like that are good places to get food, drink and some shelter. General activities are provided by some of these organisations. This can fill up your time for the better and keep you motivated.

4 If there is any possibility of sofa surfing, temporary accommodation etc., take the opportunity as this cuts one of the hardest parts out of homelessness. You are now able to sign onto Job Seekers Allowance. Start applying for jobs or looking for training, as this will increase your prospects for the future and allow you to be able to afford some sort of housing of your own. Also, in order not to get down in the dumps, keep

yourself doing things and don't just lounge about. The sooner you get out of that situation the better.

5 Keep positive and don't get too hung up. You can get yourself out of the situation and you will if you put in the effort because no one is going to do it for you. You've got to do the chasing yourself.



6 And last but not least, learn from the situation, realise what you could have done before the situation got to that point so you know how to avoid it in the future and you don't get yourself down to that point again.



Record amounts of food parcels have been given out in this First World country



Nearly one million food parcels were given out. Of this number, 330,000 were given to children. To me this is an outrage when we live in a country with the sixth richest economy in the

world. I don't know about anyone else, but if you ask me it's just ridiculous. There are families out there who work two jobs whilst looking after their kids and are still finding it hard to make ends meet, having to resort to food banks and loans just to get by. There should be more done to help people get out of their situations instead of just giving them a food parcel that's only going to tide them over for a little bit. What about once it has ran out? There should be more help and support provided from our government to get people out of this atrocious mess. With the economy being as it is prices and taxes are shooting through the roof, yet wages are staying the same with no financial help from the government. Can I just say a tax freeze won't work because what about after the freeze? There should be something more stable, effective and concrete to help out people in need.

Words by Tom B

A positive mentality is essential



It's very true, not just with homelessness or bad situations. This goes for just about every situation whether work, family or problems, always look to the good side of it, but don't forget there is a problem.

Instead of dwelling upon it, find a way to resolve the situation and move forward from there. Always believe you can do it, if you don't believe you can then you have already lost. If you can't believe in yourself then who can believe in you?

Homeless Services

Foyer Federation
Website: www.foyer.net

Homeless UK
Email: www.homelessuk.org

Liverpool
Website: www.liverpool.gov.uk/homeless
Freephone: 0800 731 6844



Simon's Story Part 2

Now you're probably wondering why I didn't go and stay with my dad but funnily enough, he was a teacher and he'd moved out to Malaysia to teach so he was out of the picture. The only people I had left were my friends and at the time I had a girlfriend so between them I sofa surfed for around eight months. During this time I was breaking into more cars than ever, drinking as much as I could, moving dodgy £20 notes. One night my friends and I went to a house party and ended up stealing and crashing a tractor. As it was our first "big" offence we all got a twelve month youth offending order. Lucky really, I was only a month away from being eighteen but again, out of control! I finally got back in touch with my mum



and she agreed to set me up in a shared house and looking back on it I think that was possibly the worst thing for me at the time because I ended up having parties and friends over 24/7.

Eventually all good things come to an end and as you can imagine I was finally evicted from my shared accommodation. I was faced with sofa surfing or living on the street. I'd done no

favours for my relationship with my mum especially when she had to pick up the bill for the damages caused on the property. I wanted money! I wanted to live and not have to worry about where I was staying at night. On that note I'd decided to escalate from robbing cars to robbing houses, it seemed like a good idea at the time and I'd managed to convince one of my best friends it was a

good idea too and being constantly on the move, or as the police call it "no fixed abode". I thought the chances of getting caught would be slim, so within a week we'd burgled two houses. If I'm honest, I'm probably the worst burglar known to man; For one burglary I didn't even wear my shoes! I mean, how stupid can you get?! Especially after I was known to the police and they had my DNA and finger prints all on record. A week and a half later and the police finally caught up with us and me and my friend were arrested and charged.

Now it doesn't matter how "hard" or "big" you are, when you're in the back of a blacked out van



in a mini cell on your way to prison you can't help but feel a little scared. When you have seen all these films and documentaries about prisons and hear some of these horrible stories, it would be weird not to be scared.

Time inside prison becomes strange. It's living everyday on repeat while the rest of the world moves on outside. All you can do is try and forget about it and press on. When you've got a girlfriend it makes things harder and more complicated and when you have too much time on your hands to think and



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"Each day is a new opportunity"

“Going to prison saved me in some ways.”

come up with ideas of what she could be doing while you're sitting there wasting away, its hard not to start believing these ideas. I won't bore you with every little detail of my experience in prison but what I will say is, I saw things happening in there I wish I hadn't seen and it was the most mentally challenging experience of my life so far. I now take a positive look on what happened. Going to prison saved me in some ways. Up until that point I thought I was invincible and that I'd never get caught, let alone go to

prison. It probably saved me from committing even more burglaries or a bigger offence altogether. It showed me where I didn't want my life to end up and

made me appreciate having my freedom.

Although prison is tough, the real challenge is coming back into society. If you want to start afresh and turn over a new leaf, you have to work twice as hard to prove yourself worthy of people's trust, whether it be your family, friends, an employer, anyone you really meet because the harsh reality of it is, no one really wants to be associated with "criminals." Yeah, that's the label you fall under and second chances are hard to come by these days so if you're

lucky enough to get one, take it and hold on to it. I understand it's going to be difficult for a while. You just have to stick with it. That's the hard part. Eventually you'll earn back your trust and gain respect.

Once I came out of prison, I was lucky enough to have great support from a few close friends. I was even able to go back and live with my mum but let me tell you the things I lost from going to prison. I lost a bunch of friends who I thought were close mates. I tried to get a job but no one wanted to employ me. For a long time I'd wanted to be in the RAF and again because of my record I couldn't apply to join them. One of my dreams is to go to America and the chances of getting a visa to even go on holiday there is now very slim.



So, I decided to move to Manchester to truly make a fresh start. I enrolled at a college to do an accountancy course and two weeks into the course it turned out I couldn't get registered to the accounting body because of my damn record! So even to this day it still follows me around like a bad smell. I constantly have to work around it. The real question is, was it all worth it? The answer is - No.

I'm pleased to say though that I have managed to turn my life around after a lot of hard work. I'm now on a path which is leading me somewhere. I

want other people to know that even though you've made bad choices in the past, it's never too late to make a better future. A great man once said: "don't be a prisoner of your past, kidnap your future." I try and live by that expression. I was also lucky enough to be introduced to Youth Elements. They have offered me so much support and a chance for me to tell my story. I hope that my experience can help others realise that the crime is not worth the time because the time doesn't end as soon as you walk out of the gates.

Words by Simon

“You are as strong and effective as the people you surround yourself with”

A promotional poster for the 'My Manifesto Film Project Central Manchester'. The background is a black and white photograph of a group of young people in an urban setting. Overlaid on the image is text in various colors and fonts. At the top, it says 'YOUR CHANCE TO PRODUCE YOUR OWN FILM' in white. Below that, 'MY MANIFESTO' is written in large, bold, blue letters, followed by 'FILM PROJECT' in white and 'CENTRAL MANCHESTER' in blue. At the bottom, there is a paragraph of white text: 'A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO DEVELOP YOUR DIGITAL SKILLS WITH A PROFESSIONAL MEDIA AGENCY WHO HAS PRODUCED BROADCAST QUALITY CONTENT FOR CHANNEL 4, SKY & SONY. SEE YOUR FILM TAKEN TO A NATIONAL LEVEL AND GET YOUR VOICE HEARD.' At the very bottom, contact information is provided: 'CONTACT: AMINA.WALDRON@YOUTHELEMENTS.ORG.UK | #MYMANIFESTO' and the 'LATIMER' logo is visible in the bottom right corner.

Please, i have something to say

"I only adopted you to save my marriage and you couldn't even do that."

This line will stick with me for the rest of my life. The breakdown of any relationship is hard and the break down of my adoption very nearly broke me. I was placed with my adopted parents at the age of seven and was officially adopted when I was eight. For the next three years to any outsider, we had the "perfect" nuclear happy family. The mother was the homemaker; the father was the bread winner. I loved these two people more than anything in the world they had saved me from a living hell.

I was adopted with my biological younger sister. It's hard to explain the feelings you have. The reason we were picked by the adoptive parents was down to my younger sister, however, with us it was get one get one free. Through out the whole adoption I was the black sheep. My parents were quite middle class and proper. My younger sister was at an age where she was mouldable so she fitted in perfectly; however, I was a little scouse kid who had baggage and an opinion so stood out like a sore thumb. Don't get me wrong, in the adoption we never wanted for anything and had a very nice lifestyle. No amount of

toys could mask the feeling of not belonging though and at every opportunity my mother would take the chance to tell me how worthless I was, how much of a failure I was and how ashamed she was of me. I was already a troubled kid with what had happened before the adoption so this really didn't help my confidence. I was such a people pleaser I was always trying to change her opinion. I tried my hardest at school, always helped around the house, always showed and I guess begged for her love. Looking back now I hate that I degraded myself for a women who didn't deserve my efforts.



Another aspect of the adoption that was very hard for me was changing my relationship with my younger sister. I had developed very maternal instincts towards her as it had always been me protecting her and I was now

being made to back off and become a sister. This I struggled with as she was mine. She had been my only bit of innocence in my life and my safe place. And now in my childish head this woman was taking that away from me.

When I was eleven, 'the mother' had an affair with a much younger man which led to the divorce of my parents. I was made to live with my dad whilst my sister stayed with my mum. This was difficult and tore me as on one hand I hated leaving my sister and on the other I was glad to not have to live with the mother. I had

always wanted a mother and to this day still do but the relationship with her was so painful. With the divorce came the ultimate end of the adoption as it was messy and actions and words were said that could not be taken back. I felt like a piece of rubbish just discarded as the mother could not get rid of me fast enough. This brought back all the feelings of when I was a little kid; that feeling of loneliness and worthlessness. I don't

know how to describe how I felt.

I had a number of ways to cope, one being self harm to try and overcome the feeling of failure. I felt like I was punishing myself and that it in some way rectified the breakdown. I have always been one of those people who no matter what's happening at home or in my head, I put on a smile and in effect stick two fingers up to the world. I always acted like it didn't bother me and that it was just one of those things when inside my head was completely mashed.

My other way of coping was to just completely detach myself from the situation and to now not let anyone get close enough to hurt me. Of course, this didn't work as I do care and I did love and I did feel hurt, but in my head no one else knew that and that's all that mattered.

When I lived with my dad he couldn't cope and to be honest I went off the rails a bit. I was never malicious but I used to stay out, get drunk, had older friends; mainly typical teenage stuff but I took it to the next level. In my head it was like, well I'm always in trouble so I may as well have the fun to go with it. This, along with the fact my dad had met a lady in London, led to me being put in care.

Care Leavers' Association

We are an ever growing union of care leavers

if you are a care leaver who would like more advice on any aspect of leaving care then you can get in touch via any of the following methods:

Telephone: 0161 236 1980 or 0845 308 2755

Email: info@careleavers.com

write to: The Care Leavers Association,
5th Floor, Clarendon House, 81 Mosley
Street, Manchester M2 3LQ



www.careleavers.com





whilst in care I got with an older boyfriend who I got pregnant by, however, the pregnancy didn't work out. Although I was in care this worried my dad to no end and he made the decision to report the boyfriend to the police. This resulted in him being sent to prison for a year, of which he served six months. Of course I rebelled even more then. I was moved from placement to placement. I always loved my dad and he was an excellent dad. My dad always did what he thought was best, even if those decisions hurt him. Back then I thought he didn't care but now that I have matured, I can see that wasn't the case.

Now I know that the end of the adoption was by far the best thing to happen as it enabled me to get stronger. I detached myself from the situation. I decided that I was going to go far to prove the mother wrong. No matter how the adoption ended and as sad as it is, the life I had before was horrific and I will be forever grateful for being taken out of that life. Presently I have an amazing relationship with my dad. He is the most important person in my life. I cherish him and even though at the time it was hard I wouldn't change it as it has made our relationship solid.

Yours sincerely - Holly

The Care leavers Foundation

The Care Leavers' Foundation provides much needed help to care leavers. They exists primarily to make small grants scheme to care leavers aged up to 29. There grant-making is primarily targeted at care leavers aged 21+

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*I was a child, away from home, 'out of borough'
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*I will make my own future, my own decisions
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I can take control of my life*

I can be myself.

Words by Callum

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