

inspire

Struggle, Strive,
Motivate & Inspire



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Youth Elements



Opportunities to aspire

FREE

Issue No. 2

Motivation
Dedication
Education
Realisation
Determination



A Quick Word on Motivation

Motivation, motivation, motivation!!! I'm sure you've all heard of this word before, but I will start off by giving a quick definition of what it is! Motivation is "a reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way" according to the Oxford dictionary. However, in my opinion motivation is feeling inspired

enough to perform a certain action or develop a thought process. This can be triggered in many different ways, e.g. watching a video that you found to be inspirational or conversing with someone on any particular topic.

That is how motivation can be triggered. I will

continue reading on page 4 >>>

give you an example of motivation, e.g. today I went for a jog and tomorrow I will have a 'smoothie' for breakfast. This is an action of motivation and your reason for the actions could be to stay or become healthy or even lose weight.

The reason will be your goal - your motivation.

The Power of Music



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Welcome

Editors note

Inspire newspaper is produced by Manchester based organisation Youth Elements. Our aim for the publication is to INSPIRE, MOTIVATE and EMPOWER our readers to reach your best potential!! This is our second edition of our quarterly paper. I would like to thank all our contributors for making this possible.

I've been through my share of feeling unmotivated and fed up. It can be really simple to get ourselves feeling upbeat and

motivated again check out (p4) to read and learn more.

Throughout the paper you will find motivational quotes, articles, poems and real life stories. In this issue we explore the power of music, the value of volunteering, eating disorders and the tricks and treats of life.

I believe that everyone has the potential to do and be something amazing. However, everyone has a different perception of what is great, the best thing

about it is that everything is different, just like art...there is no right or wrong, there is only individual meaning and no two paintings are the same....Do enjoy reading this paper, I'm sure it'll light up your day and offer some helpful tips.



Best Wishes Cheyenne Simms

PS: I'd love to hear what you think of this issue. Email: info@youthelements.org.uk

Youth Elements



Opportunities to aspire



design5manchester@gmail.com

Getting to know Amina

Amina Waldron is the Director and Founder of Youth Elements, a youth-led organisation that holds true to clear youth work principles. She set up the company in February 2011 and has had the pleasure to work with some fantastic people and organisations along the way.

How does Youth Elements deal with social action issues?

I set up Youth Elements as a social enterprise due to the high youth unemployment rate at the time. The young adults I spoke to told me that potential employers were telling them they didn't have the right knowledge and if they had the knowledge it was a lack experience for the positions they applied for. To me it sounded like a catch 22, not having enough experience, but not being able to get a job to gain the experience. So for me that was one of the driving forces, to create opportunities and projects to allow people to gain that experience and knowledge. At Youth Elements we recruit, train and pay sessional workers to deliver our programmes and training and at the same time develop their own plan and gain the experience they desire.



What is the most important lesson you've learned as a Director?

Surround yourself with positive, influential and supportive people. It is always good and important to support others too, it's a two way process. I've been blessed to have experienced negative and positive experiences all of them have taught me something and has allowed me to grow as a person.

What have been your greatest achievements so far?

I suppose over coming the challenges I have faced over the last few years including losing a job and having a traumatic back

operation. The fact I am still here and doing my up most to solidier on. In a way I could have just given up and taken the easy option but being true to me is an achievement in my eyes.

What's the best advice you've been given?

There's no point wasting valuable energy hating and being negative. Instead put that energy into some more positive and meaningful instead.

What challenges have you faced setting up the organisation?

I suppose I've learnt through trial and error. I am a true believer that experience is the best teacher. Finances and numbers especially excel spread sheets have been challenging for me. That's why it's important to find people who are good at doing the things you're not so good at. It's a sign of strength asking for support.

What is your vision for the future?

To become a national recognised organisation. One day Youth



Elements will have its own headquarters, which will be led and managed by trained young adults, who will manage smaller teams in their departments.

How can people access Youth Elements?

People can look at our website or contact us by telephone or email. All our contacts details are on the site and likely to be within the pages of this paper.

Apprenticeships

Who do they Benefit?



If you have any questions contact

the National Apprenticeship Helpdesk.

Telephone: 0800 015 0400

Email: nationalhelpdesk@apprenticeships.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk>

 @apprenticeships

 /apprenticeships

Apprenticeships have been on the rise over the last few years, both through public and private organisations. Anyone can be an apprentice but the main focus is towards young people so they can earn as they learn. Apprenticeships are a great way to earn a wage as you work towards qualifications, but are they beneficial for everyone? Some people are not as lucky as others, not every young person is in the right circumstance to take one on. When living at home the scheme is ideal when you pay rent to your parents compared to claiming benefits. As a young person that lived in a hostel I found being an apprentice very difficult, having to pay for rent, food, electricity and council tax left me in constant arrears and eventually debt. Furthermore if you work full time while also studying to complete an NVQ do you deserve more than £2.73 an hour? We spoke to a number of people who had first hand experience for their views, this is what Jerome Dias had to say.

1. What made you pick an apprenticeship?

I never really worked in the mainstream education environment. In fact I was excluded from school at the age of

fourteen and just focused on making music. I started attending a pupil referral unit for the final six months of school so I could secure my GCSEs. I always had a desire to work so naturally an apprenticeship seemed like the right route for me.

2. Why didn't you follow higher education?

I didn't choose to follow higher education as I was unsure what I wanted to do. I always loved the idea of the working environment and the opportunity to work and demonstrate what I'm capable of so an apprenticeship was a more suitable route based on my long term aims.

3. Who do you think apprenticeships appeal to?

I think apprenticeships appeal to individuals of all ages. There is a stigma attached that apprenticeships are only for young people/ school leavers. However, personally I believe apprenticeships are ideal for anybody who wants to upskill, earn whilst they are learning and have the support of an employer.

4. Do apprentices get paid enough?

Pay scales for apprenticeships vary depending on the company you are doing it with. I believe



apprenticeships are paid at a reasonable amount and the experience you gain is far more valuable than an increased hourly rate. Apprenticeships really open the doors for progression and in time you will end up earning more than somebody who didn't undertake an apprenticeship.

5. What are your plans after you complete your apprenticeship?

I was lucky enough to get promoted to my current role as an Employment & Training Co-ordinator after just eight months as an apprentice. My current role gives me the opportunity to provide support to a case load of up to fifty-five residents and manage several projects. I am also an apprenticeship ambassador, which allows me to go into schools or attend careers

events and talk about my experiences as an apprentice and my journey to date. My future plans are to continue doing what I'm doing and hopefully raise the aspirations/ help inspire the most hard to reach/ vulnerable individuals. In terms of a long term plan/ goal I would like to start my own company focussing on tackling social injustice.

6. Why didn't you follow full time employment?

At the time of my promotion full time wasn't an option due to a lack of resources. However I still

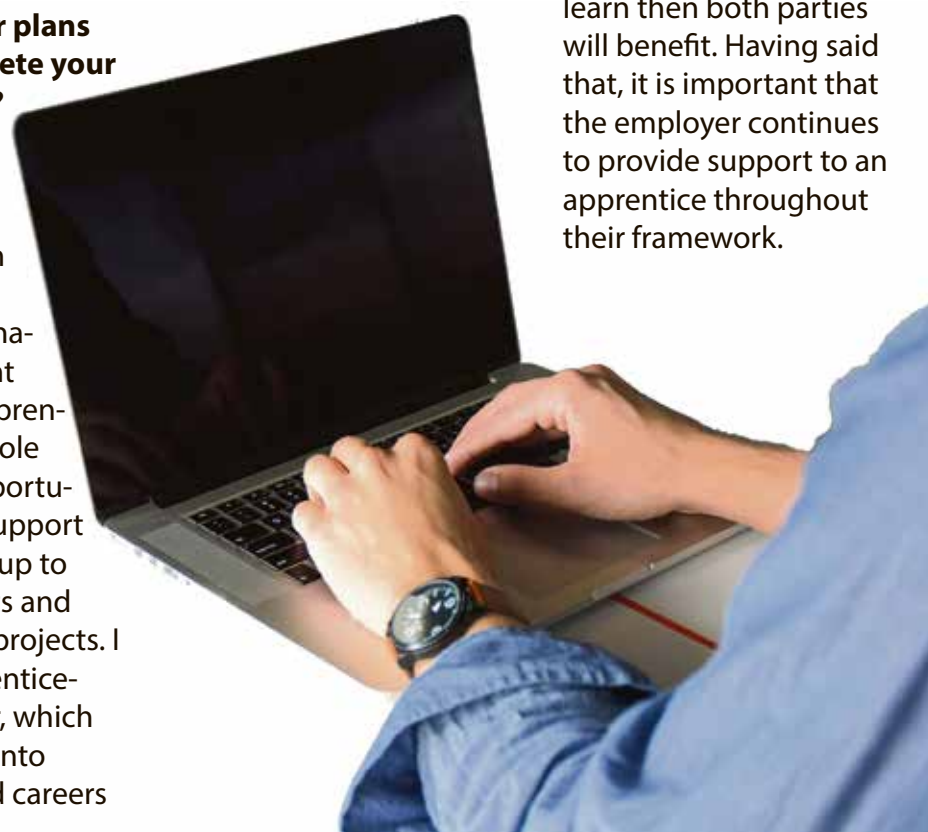
saw the Employment & Training Co-ordinator role on a part-time basis as a positive progression.

7. What advice would you give to other apprentices?

My one piece of advice for apprentices is to stay hungry, keep showing your employer willingness and a desire to learn more and progress.

8. Who benefits more, Employers or apprentices?

I think as long as the apprentice has the right attitude and a desire to learn then both parties will benefit. Having said that, it is important that the employer continues to provide support to an apprentice throughout their framework.



A Quick Word on Motivation

Continued from front page

Another example of motivation is me writing this article. What motivated me to write this? I was motivated by the subject matter. I feel that young people don't have enough motivation to do the things that they want to do in life...that is the reason for writing this article and my goal is to inspire others.

Now that we all know what motivation is, I'm more than sure that you want to know how to acquire it, if you haven't already! Well, not so long ago, I made a list of all the things that motivate me and they are:



“Good things come for those who wait, but not for those who wait to late”

Bill Wither

- **Drinking Mountain Dew. (Believe me, if you've seen my window sill you'd know this to be a fact).**
- **Write in colourful pens.**
- **Get enough sleep (eight hours).**
- **Remind myself of this woman that had to take six buses to her dream job EVERYDAY.**
- **Listening to 'Hollywood Undead' and 'Bring Me The Horizon' (two of my favourite bands that have inspired me to keep going and to not give up)**
- **Writing poetry.**

These are just a few things that help me to stay motivated. Make a list of five things that motivate you and look at it whenever you feel

like you can't do something or that you're not good enough.

Other ways of acquiring motivation are meditat-

By creating a positive atmosphere in your mind you will then release that into your world. As you feel happier you will be more motivated to do things.

ing or praying, listening to music or music/sounds such as nature, watching inspirational videos on the internet and thinking positively.

This is very important as we NEED motivation to do all things in life. For example, if you want to pass your driving test. We need to be motivated to learn how to drive, and then we have to be motivated to buy the provisional licence. As you can see motivation is like a globe;

it's never ending and you can't stop it from spinning.

As well as this, as a young adult, I believe it is quite

important for young people to stay motivated and do things that they want to do that is beneficial to them and others. Your motivation should be something that is positive and will be rewarding to yourself. It should be for yourself because you have to do the action and find the motivation.

Motivated By
Cheyenne Simms



“It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.”

Confucius

Learning to be the real me

“Have you eaten anything today?”

There was no need to respond, no answer was required, and the consultant already knew the answer.

I hadn't eaten that day. I hadn't eaten that week. I hadn't eaten much of anything for years. I was 17 years old. And I was dying.

The Eating Disorder hospital was to become my home whilst I worked towards being let loose in the real world once more. I'd say work towards recovery, but in all honesty, I didn't want that – there was nothing wrong with me; I had no reason to be in hospital at all. I was adamant to get out as quickly as possible, especially as they seemed to think I needed a wheelchair to go about my daily life. A completely inflated reaction to somebody convinced there was nothing wrong with

them. Days, weeks and months went by; enduring test after test, struggling through meal after meal and crying tears and more tears.

Eventually, many months later, I was free to go. Free to go, free to go back to my old ways. I completed my A Levels, catching up on the work I'd missed whilst in hospital, achieving top grades allowing me to go to university – proving I didn't need food. I loved university life, the friends, the studying, the place and the freedom. However, I hated me. A hatred which came to a almighty climax after a trying few months of heartbreak, loss and despair.

Once again I was sat in that chair, “have you eaten today” – again no answer was required. I didn't eat, I didn't know what a normal diet was, and I didn't deserve food. My destructive patterns of years gone by hadn't stopped, yet this time I knew this was wrong and something had to give.

My flirtation with anorexia that I had cultivated for the majority of my childhood had almost instantaneously turned into a full on love affair. My eating disorder became everything. It was my best friend, my confident, my harshest critic, yet my most loyal companion. I ruined actual human relationships in favour of anorexia. I pushed people away. I lied. My eating disorder was an abusive, controlling liar. And I loved her. Why, after all the years, did I volunteer to go to the one place I had gone to such extreme lengths to avoid? Because if there is one universal truth about eating disorders (and there aren't many) it is that they are exhausting. And I was tired. I was tired of starving. I was tired of being cold all the time. I was tired of putting on a happy face. I was tired of life.



Hospital felt like a better option than dying. I was slowly killing myself, quite literally starving myself to death. Picking up that cutlery for the first mealtime was almost an out of body experience – I painted on my smile as I studied the fork. The many months I spent as an inpatient were the best, and worst, of my life. The mental torture of feeling like a prisoner both in your own body, and being inside the hospital ward walls, was draining. But I did laugh, and I did learn what it was to live a life where food isn't the dictator. I did start finding me.

I didn't walk out of those doors, for the last time, completely cured. I am more aware of my difficulties, conscious of my struggles, stronger in my faith and more than ever, grateful for my friends and family, who I owe so much too in my continuing battle. I am learning to be me, finding my feet in a world that feels brand new. Anorexia nearly took me out of this world, and I hate it for that. I used to have so much respect for anorexia, now I couldn't hate it more. The soul always knows what to do to heal itself. The challenge is to silence the mind.

Words by
Kate, Beat Young
Ambassador

www.b-eat.co.uk
beat
beating eating disorders

The Beat Youthline is open to anyone under 25.

Youthline: 0845 634 7650

Email: fyp@b-eat.co.uk

Text: 07786 20 18 20.

If you would like a call back, send us the text message 'call back'. We aim to get back to you within 24 hours and during Youthline open hours.

Help for adults

The Beat Adult Helpline is open to anyone over 18. Parents, teachers or any concerned adults should call the adult helpline.

Helpline: 0845 634 1414 - Email: help@b-eat.co.uk



@beatED



facebook.com/beating.eating.disorders

Your ad here

We distribute 5000 to 10000 inspire papers each issue.

Our target audience is young adults aged 17 to 30. However, we welcome everyone and anyone who stumble across us.

If you are interested in advertising your organisation, project or business with us please contact us on 07912 868 260 or email

info@youthelements.org.uk



Life's Trick

Nowadays, it's extremely hard to find a job or to just live the life of your dreams and this can somehow put you down. You will probably come to the conclusion to give up on your ambitions and to accept or submit to the surroundings. There is no blame when a person comes to such a conclusion.

Nevertheless, you will end up doing what's not favourable to yourself. Leading to depression, anxiety and stress as well as building up bad habits such as drinking and drugs, etc. Most importantly, you will lead yourself to live a life you don't enjoy or admire.

On the other hand, you will ask a frequent question - are there any alternatives? Yes! There are many answers to your question.

Technically, time will pass anyway; either you are trying to accomplish your goal or doing something you don't like because simply you just

gave up. We have to take into consideration personal matters and tribulations that we face on a daily basis in our lives, which will impact our behaviours and mood. Regardless of such factors, you **SHOULDN'T GIVE UP.**

Time will pass anyway. "No pain, no gain." In other words, go for the trick to receive the treat at the end. You may say life is tough - yes it is. Besides, there is no point in denying its existence. Life is like science,



you have to come up with the hypotheses and test them to prove a point. However, you will never have the right or predicted outcomes from the first try. You have to continuously keep trying different theories and different methods

to prove or to achieve a point. Life is similar!

The main key to life is to stop your brain from feeding on excuses, which will prevent you from achieving your goals. There are a variety of ways to help yourself. YES, you are the only one who can help yourself, no one else.



Your space, Your story

This is your space, this paper aims to give you a platform to share your story or experiences.

If you think you could write 200-300 words that could inspire, educate, or motivate, Youth Elements would be interested to hear from you for our next issue.

This opportunity is open for young adults aged 18 -30

To submit your original story please email your words, with your name, age, contact details to:

info@youthelements.org.uk

For more information about opportunities at Inspire also email: info@youthelements.org.uk



or Treat

Firstly, you have to keep a positive mind, even if your plan starts to drift away. It will be hard but remember nothing is impossible. You can even read the word impossible as 'I'm possible'.

Once you decide to make this decision, you have already started your journey of achieving your goals.

Secondly, you need to develop a very firm self-belief. In other words, you need to understand and outline your strengths, in order to identify parts in your development.

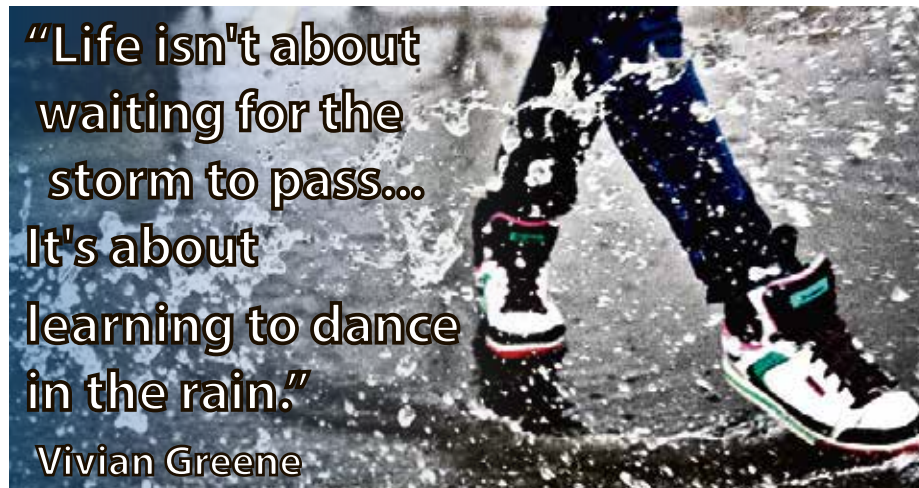


Further to that, once you achieve such an accomplishment, then you can kindly allow others to help you to achieve further progress. However, self-belief is the main foundation and the structure of any achievements. On the other hand, at this point you will already be starting to draw the pathway to your goals.

Furthermore, self-esteem is an essential key point you have to come towards motivation. This comes from discovering and exploring the inner strengths of your personality.

Likewise, when setting your goals you cannot adhere yourself to work according to one plan.

You have to take into consideration that not all of our plans may work one hundred percent. This leads back to the elements of setting a scientific theory. Respectively, when setting your target plans, you need to consider certain elements: identifying strengths and weaknesses (in order to develop your strengths and weaknesses), opportunities



(take all opportunities that are available to you, or opportunities you could create for yourself), consider tribulations that you may face (consider solutions to overcome them) and lastly set a time for each target.

The word 'dream' has its own beauty and glory, however if you draw it in your life map it will remain as a dream. While if you constantly use the word 'goal' it will psychologically make your brain adapt to the reality of its achievement.

Conversely, you have to permanently work hard in order to achieve you goals. You can draw a little check list and recheck it on a weekly/ monthly basis to ensure the maintenance of your progress:

- 1 - Work hard
- 2 - Focus
- 3 - Motivation
- 4 - Create new ideas,
- 5 - Improve it,
- 6 - Achieve your goal (receive your treat).

Additionally, patience is the key to success. Therefore, remember everything takes time, so let everything take its time and don't rush especially when it comes to decision making.

Most importantly, enjoy life in all its different forms, never give up and, ease your path by drawing a smile on your face.

Words by
Mariam Khater



Sessional Staff Recruitment Training & Programme Facilitator

Are you between 18- 30 yrs old?

Do you have good communications skills and enjoy working with people?

Are you self-motivated, creative and confident?

We are looking for facilitators to join the Youth Elements Team to deliver our successful training courses and programmes. We are looking for individuals who have the ability to think creatively and can be flexible and dynamic in their approach when engaging with people.

DBS checks will be required

To request a job description and application form please email: info@youthelements.org.uk



"Experience is the best teacher and teaching is a great experience"



WHAT MUSIC MEANS



When I was asked to write this, I jumped on the chance to do so because for most people on the planet music of any kind or genre is embedded deeply in their hearts. I am no different in this respect. From the hymns in a church to the whine of a guitar or the kicks and snares in Hip Hop, every sound hits each person's heart in a different way. Just like a smile, laughter or even tears, music is universal, but with every person the definition of what it means to them is varied.

I've loved music from a young age. It's hard to find someone that doesn't. I loved to sing even if I never knew the lyrics. As time went on and my taste in music expanded to anything from Nina Simone to Akala, I found so many messages in the music that I

wished I could have thought of without assistance. Sometimes you need to see things from another perspective.

As life got hard I needed to rely on something to give me strength. Music was by far the best option to go with. It helped me minute after minute, day after day to find something internally that I needed to find. If I hadn't had the words and melodies of people that most likely will never know I even exist I wouldn't be here now. It's safe to say that music saved my life, from belting out The Fairytale Of New York, when I was on the streets to writing my own songs alone in the dark.

I feel that music is so embedded in my soul I can't help but sing in the shower, or whistle in



the street or want to make it a career. I've never known something that can elevate the spirit like music can; not money or nice cars or good fortune. You could offer me every material thing in exchange for never hearing music again, I would refuse. How could I give away something that has tied my soul together?

The shame is that I've only had the ability to truly listen for a few years. I used to play music when I was bored and I kind of feel guilty for that. I think it's because I had the wrong things

Youth Elements



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www.youthelements.org.uk



Request for New Trustees

Youth Elements is a Manchester based not for profit youth-led organisation aiming to transform the lives of children, young people and young adults through an organic youth and community approach.

We are currently recruiting with the expertise, time and enthusiasm to become a Youth Elements Trustee. We are especially interested in hearing from applicants with experience, skills and expertise in any of the following areas;

- Fundraising/Commissioning
- Business Management/Development
- Financial Planning/ Accountancy
- Legal & Policy Development Trustee
- Strategic Planning & Development
- Risk Management
- CIC/CIO law/legislation

Time commitment will be about 3hrs per month variable
Please note: This is a volunteer/unpaid position

If you think you can help us, please contact Amina Waldron (Company Director)

Phone: 07912 686 260 Email: amina.waldron@youthelements.org.uk

TO ME



in my mind at the time but when I hit rock bottom, I had no person that I could speak or listen to or from whom I could seek wisdom. I realised that all I needed to do was to put my headphones in, no matter how cold or poor or alone I felt. My body was cold not my heart. I'm poor in pocket but not spirit and I've not been alone for a long time. I'm so grateful for that realisation and I'm much more grateful to those that don't even know I exist. It's odd to feel that gratitude but I do believe many feel it though.

I think my main reason for gratitude is that those people have shown me what is possible. They didn't do it for fame or money

but had a message to share. Music is such a powerful tool that some people abuse it and that's not said from a point of jealousy. I just feel it's a shame that people use such a powerful outlet to make themselves look good when they could be spreading a message and making a difference. I do have to recognise at this point that everyone's pen hits the page in a different way

and that their thoughts and feelings differ to mine.

I see people in towns busking and I feel happy for them, mainly because they are following a dream and sharing their own message. It's a clear view of their character and the commitment they show. It also shows the love that they have for music and that is a love we all share.

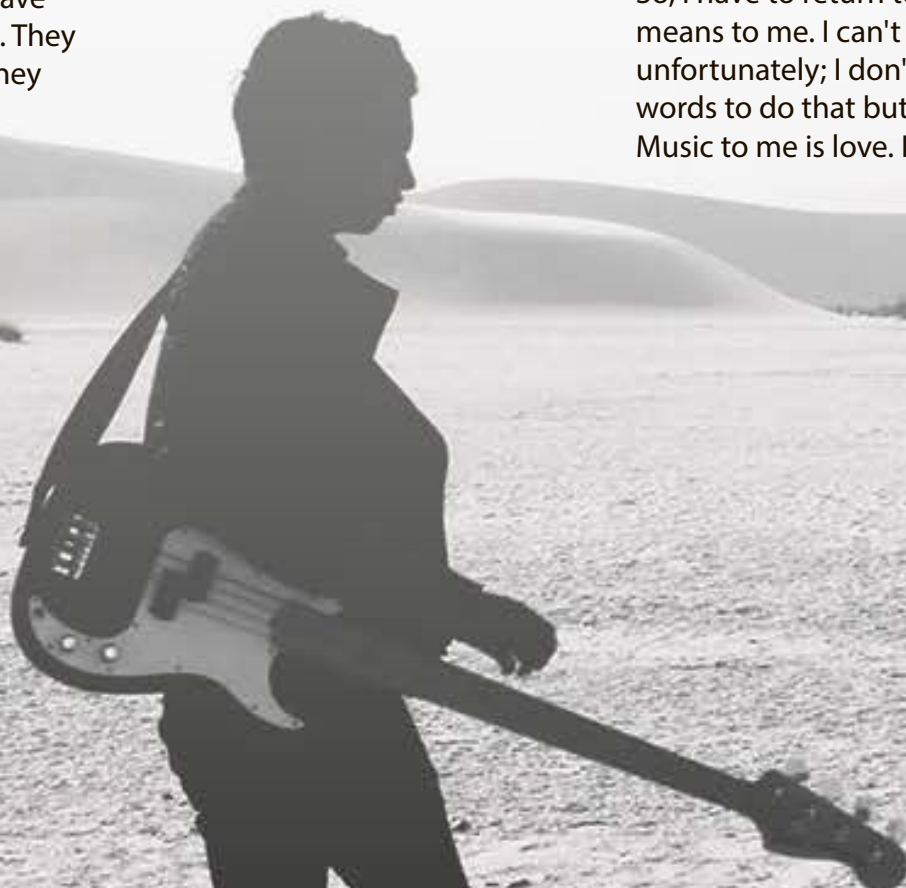
So, I have to return to what music means to me. I can't define that unfortunately; I don't have the words to do that but I can try. Music to me is love. It's passion.

It's a friend that knows every right word to say. It's a tool that can explain your heart when words fall short. It's a common ground any person can find with another. It's a magnifying glass into the hearts of others. It's beauty that the eyes just can't see.

Many times in my life music saved me. Those were the times when Ben E. King 'stood by me' or I'm feeling good' with Nina Simone; the times I addressed the 'masters of war' with Bob Dylan or sang about 'one love' with Bob Marley. When The Eagles flew me to 'Hotel California' or when I told Johnny 'I hardly knew him' with the Irish Rovers; when Elvis told me about 'suspicious minds' or Akala taught me about 'absolute power'. I feel that when I look back those moments are what define me.

Words By
Tom Byrne

Words by
Zara Fredericks



Continued from back page

John Smith didn't have his usual bag with him today. He had quickly taken off his jacket, revealing a Ben Sherman t-shirt. He had then replaced his baseball cap with a woollen hat pulled from his pocket. "You never know when someone's watching you," he said seriously, in explanation. "Babylon have CCTV cameras everywhere you turn." "See you same time next week?" I asked. He nodded but the momentary flicker of his eyes told me his business here was done and he would not be back. "Take care, okay?" I said. He opened the front door and hesitated for a moment as if he wanted to say something but thought better of it. "Thanks, Mummy... for everything, you hear." He pressed a piece of paper into my hand. "If you ever want

anything, the man on the end of this number will know where to find me, okay." The door creaked on its rusty hinges and like a flitting shadow, John Smith was gone.

I cast my mind back to the young man's first appointment. I had looked at the name on the referral form – John Smith, no fixed abode, no contact details. The admin officer had suggested I go and make myself a cup of coffee while she found me another client because she was sure he wouldn't show up. The bell had rung at exactly 11.00am. After looking warily up and down the street, the young man had sauntered in with attitude, sporting dark shades even though it was raining outside. He had grunted a reply as to whether he was John Smith and had scrawled

an illegible signature in the register and followed me into the counselling room. His walk was like a dance, swaying from side to side, silent and catlike in trainers as if ready to spring into action.

Over the four weeks he attended his hour long appointments, we got used to his trademark pulled up collar, pulled down baseball cap and shades. He usually carried a spare jumper and hat in his bag which he changed into before leaving the building. He even pulled another bag out of his bag and swapped those around too.

Most of his childhood had been spent in the Foster Care System. He had lived with twenty different foster carers by the time he was ten years old. He had vague memories of his father being abusive to his mother before being sent to prison for armed robbery. He told me of his fifteen siblings

for almost as many baby mothers that he had met over the years. Then he showed me a photo of a mixed race girl with a smiling baby on her knees. He had planned to marry her, he said, but the last time he'd been



sent to prison, her parents had paid for her and the baby to go and live with an aunt in Australia.

He had avoided talking about

So, what are you waiting for?

The Benefits of Volunteering



Volunteering is a great way to discover something you are good at doing. It helps you to develop new skills and prepares you for the job market. You don't have to stop learning just because you have finished school or are working.

Volunteering is not just about giving your time and energy to the community or the organisation of which you are volunteering. It is about learning and gaining valuable skills that are useful in any employment field.

There are many organisations out there willing to take on anybody wishing to volunteer as long as you satisfy the company's mission statement.

What are the benefits?

Well, by volunteering, you can gain skills such as: Communication skills, planning and organising, interpersonal skills, computer skills, budgeting, managing people, team leader, facilitator, team working, administration and many more.

In addition, you gain more confidence in your chosen field and increase your motivation as a result. So, what are you waiting for?

Get Volunteering!!!!



Volunteer Centre Manchester

Information, support and training for Manchester residents who want to volunteer and Manchester based organisations who want to recruit volunteers or need advice.

www.volunteercentremanchester.co.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @McrCommCentral

Manchester Community Central

Web portal for finding support services, information and everything you need to know about the voluntary and community sector in Manchester.

www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

 @VolunteeringMcr

 www.facebook.com/VCMOfficial

Managed by Macc

his mother except for our final session. She had committed suicide after having a nervous breakdown. She had been rehoused locally under the Care In The Community system and had stopped taking her medication but no-one had noticed. He had been in prison at the time. It was after telling me this that he had broken down and cried. I allowed him to cry, feeling helpless as if I was sticking a flimsy plaster over a septic knife wound. Throwing the wad of soggy tissues into the bin angrily, John Smith had sniffed, wiped his nose and looked up at me with the flashing smile, attempting to mask the pain in his red eyes that could only be seen if you really looked. It was my job to really look but most of the time I didn't like what I saw.

When I asked him what had made him come for counselling, he had sighed heavily and said he was tired... just tired. I asked what exactly he was tired of and he said, "Everything... life... I don't know." Then he had picked up the leaflet on the table about the youth project. "Good this – my little brother comes to it." "Really... what's his name?" He had smiled without answering. He didn't need to for the young man with the carbon copy dimples immediately came to mind.

"He's been going to school since he started coming here. His foster carers were going to kick him out but they've decided to give him another chance. They're nice people. I've told him I'll slap him round the head if he messes up." I smiled. "That's what we're here for... to give people another chance." He folded the leaflet and put it into his pocket. "I've got a sister," he said. "I'm going to give this to her." "Good. Would you like to talk about some of the things you are tired of?" I asked. He shook his head. "It's too much to tell... maybe next time."

About a week after my last counselling session with John Smith, the admin officer came into the Project to find a wad of rolled up £20 notes, totalling £500 in the letter box with the mail. It had the specific instructions that it was to be used for the Youth Counselling Group. I'd like to think it was from John Smith. The Project manager after getting advice from the local police, said as it had been donated anonymously and we had no way of knowing if it had been earned from illegal activities, we could pay it into the Project's bank account.

The donation paid for a trip to the Liverpool Slavery Museum which the young people had asked to go to and a meal afterwards. Most of the young people had never been outside Manchester and only one of them had ever eaten in a restaurant. We toasted our anonymous benefactor in Coke and lemonade.

John Smith talked about wanting to be a pilot as a child. His mother, before she had become ill, had given him a photograph of her grandfather who had been a pilot in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War. He kept the photograph in his wallet next to the picture of his ex-girlfriend and baby.

The young man told me that after seeing that photograph

of his great grandfather, he too had wanted to be a pilot. His teacher had laughed and told him not to be so stupid because boys like him couldn't be pilots. She added that she would definitely not board any aeroplane piloted by him. She had given him a football and told him to go and play outside because she wanted to drink her tea in peace. He told me that was the day he had first met the big lads from the estate with the tablets in an envelope. They had been hanging about on the other side of the school fence, smoking weed.

The first time he had been sent to prison for selling drugs it had been to get enough money to take his mother to see a private doctor because he had felt the medication her G.P. had prescribed for her was actually causing her depression instead of curing it. While in prison he had decided that he would prove his primary school teacher wrong. He had first studied for his GCSEs, then his 'A' levels during another sentence. During his last spell in prison, he had got a First Class Honours Degree in Civil Engineering but he had still been unable to get a job on his release.

I gasped as I stood in the newsagents and looked at the photograph of the serious dark skinned young man. Memories came flooding back. For years I

had wondered what had become of the young man I had counselled. He looked younger in the picture than I remembered but it was unmistakably John Smith. Confidentiality had prevented me from making any enquiries from people who might have known him. The last I heard his brother had got a place at Manchester University. The teenager whom I assumed was his sister still attends the Youth Group at the B All U can B Project

A cold chill ran down my spine. "Did you know him?" The newsagent asked.

"Er... not really. I just met him a few times."

"These kids eh. We never had it this easy in my days. They have everything laid out on a plate for them and they just waste it. They all think they're bad men carrying their guns and their knives," he continued but I wasn't listening as I picked up the paper and read the head-lines: "Local Gang leader Shot Dead."

"What a waste of a young life. Do you want that paper, love?" I went home and with tears in my eyes searched in the pocket of my old handbag for the piece of paper John Smith had given to me with the number of the person he said could reach him anytime. The least I could do was to attend his funeral and put some flowers on his grave.



Words by
Deanne Heron

Born an Addict

This article is very personal to me and is about my life before care.

My name is Francesca. I was put on the child protection register when I was born as my mum and dad were heroin addicts. As my mum took heroin when she was pregnant I was born addicted too. I spent the first six months of my life in an intensive care unit (ICU) and shouldn't have really survived. I think if I were to describe my childhood in three words it would be painful, scary and unsettled.

Now all through my childhood I loved my parents I wanted to be loved by them. I didn't understand a lot of what had happened and for the main I thought it was the norm. I thought this must be what every kid



goes through. It was only when I went to school, which wasn't very often, that I realised I was different and that something wasn't right.

Right from my earliest memories I remember the beatings; mainly because they really hurt and to this day I have scars from them. It could be anything from a few slaps to the worse two being stabbed and injected with heroin, resulting in me being in

ICU. I remember crying from the utter pain going through my body but the more I cried the worse the beatings got. I started to learn to disassociate myself, meaning I would go into my happy place, completely zone out, but as this was seen as me ignoring them and they were not getting a reaction, again the beatings got worse. The older I got I knew it was a 'lose lose' situation so I stuck with the disassociation way of coping and it

became instantly automatic. I didn't want to let them know they were hurting me because they told me they felt bad and I couldn't tell anyone about it.

To this day I do not understand how I was left in their care for as long as I was, and I feel like it was a massive let down by social services. I don't remember the exact ages, it's only asking questions since I have been older that I got answers, but from the age of three my "Dad" prostituted me out to get money for his addiction. He use to say to me that I would make him proud and that if I didn't he would use my younger sister. I don't remember faces I would always be blindfolded.

I remember the way they smelt, their voice and their touch. At first it wasn't so bad as it wasn't painful it was just disgusting but the older I got the more the abuse got. The pain was unbearable and every time I started recovering physically it would happen again. This went on for two years. I used to pray for someone to make it stop. I couldn't understand why this was happening, why it was a good thing to be put through this. I thought that my whole life would be like this and I honestly didn't want to live anymore. The only thing that kept me going was my little sister. Having the thoughts of not wanting to live and



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"Each day is a new opportunity"

“I used to pray for someone to make it stop”

ending your life at five years old is so hard to deal with, but I knew that if I did my sister would suffer.

During the six years of living with my biological parents, we were put into respite when they went in and out of prison, usually for theft, possession or assault. These were again what made me realise that my life wasn't normal. I remember my dad use to parade me about when we were

out like I was a trophy. He used to take me to the pub and whenever he got into a fight, I would clean him up. I also remember getting jobs that didn't involve men. One would be going to the

phone box and collecting his drugs. I would put them in my mouth and carry them home to him and for being good I would get half a can of beer. I loved the beer because even just that little bit helped take the edge off.

When I went into care I was alcohol dependent as before each visit by his friend he would give me some to “help make it nice”. When I went into care obviously I wasn't

allowed any alcohol and instead of weaning me off or supporting me I went cold turkey and at that age it was awful. Not only did I have uncontrollable cravings, I had withdrawal symptoms but I was confused as to why I wasn't allowed any.

When we were first taken into care we were allowed contact, however, they would never turn up. This caused me to have really conflicting feelings. I wanted them to turn up that meant they cared and were sorry but I also didn't want to go back to that life. I didn't start school properly until I was in year three so when I was seven/eight, this obviously had a detrimental effect on my education.

However, at the end of primary school I was achieving the highest grades possibly. This of course was not because I am a genius, far from it. It was because I worked my socks off, because if I was doing work I wasn't thinking about my past. It was an amazing distraction. I also think that I felt the more education I got the more different I would be from my parents.



Photographer - Iosiek

All these events had a massive impact on my life and when I was younger I always thought it was my fault. Now, although I know it's not, I see myself as damaged goods. I have had a councillor since I was fourteen but it's only since the birth of my daughter that I have started to discuss what happened. I never told anyone as I was scared of the repercussions. Then after a while, it was a case of, why say anything which would only hurt those I love, finally knowing and understanding that I had gone through all of it. I hated the first bit of my life. I would never wish it on anyone and that has given me the passion to help stop this occurring and to help those who have gone through the same

or similar, to support them to gain some sort of control back in their lives. I am a big believer that the start of your life does not have to determine the rest of your life. I currently have a dream job where I am helping kids in care and helping them find their own identity. Although I still have a lot of issues, as in I find it hard to trust people and my self-esteem still feels non-existent, I do not want the people who actively tried to ruin my life to win. I am a mother myself now and the bond I have with my child is unbreakable. I want her to have everything I didn't. I want her to be proud of me, and each day she inspires me and motivates me to do that.



#HomesForBritain

Young People from Blackburn and Manchester Foyer were vocal and visible in the Homes For Britain Rally in March 2015.

Residents from Blackburn Foyer walked from Burnley to Bacup (10 miles) to raise the profile of the campaign with representatives from other local housing associations and wore pink hi-visibility vests to be seen!

The Rally baton was passed between, walkers, runners and bike riders across the width and breadth of the UK in a week long hike to the final event at Methodist Hall in Westminster. Representatives from all the political parties, housing associations and celebrities debated the housing crisis and made their pledges for action leading up to the General Election in May to “end the housing crisis in the UK in a generation”.



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From the Bottom of My Heart

This is not an easy piece to write. This is a subject that is very close to home for me. I have to mention that I write this with complete honesty and transparency. Last time I attempted to write this it almost destroyed me; that was July 2014 and I was still in a vulnerable state. I'm ashamed to say that I ran from the issues that I couldn't bear to face.

I want to start when I was diagnosed at the age of fourteen, too young to understand what was going through my head. I didn't think at first it was a problem to be so critical of my looks or my status in society. I thought everyone felt alone in the company of others. I thought every person on this planet hated themselves in one way or another. So when a doctor was shoving pills into my hand saying they'd 'fix' me I thought to myself, 'fix what? Isn't this what it is like to be human?'

When I was sixteen, I had severe weaknesses. Firstly, I felt the need to look strong. This was either to impress or intimidate people that I didn't care about. Secondly, I tried to listen to the problems of other people to suppress my own morbid thoughts. Thirdly, I was either numb or next to suicidal and I didn't want any of this to change. I just dug a hole that I

was content with and I didn't care about popularity in school or looking good. I just didn't or couldn't care in general.

Over the next few years I battled homelessness, addiction and also the greatest enemy that I had - myself. I felt like I was the issue; like I was in the spot light for the entire world to watch but no one could recognise my face or my pain. Insomnia took a major toll and it came to a point where I couldn't differentiate reality from fantasy. Staying awake for days on end out of fear of your nightmares will do that to you. It came to a point where I felt applying myself was fruitless, that no matter what I'd try nothing was going to get better. I couldn't take it anymore

so I decided that suicide was my only answer and option. Funnily enough a twist of fate saved me. I feel some dread now knowing that fate can't save everyone.

There is a brief overview of my experience. Please don't get me wrong, I still fight depression on a daily basis. As I've grown, I found ways for myself to cope. In our society there is a rise of

depression in young people. I'm not completely sure why this is though. Maybe it's to do with the fake idea of beauty shoved down our throats by the media. Maybe it is because every advantage

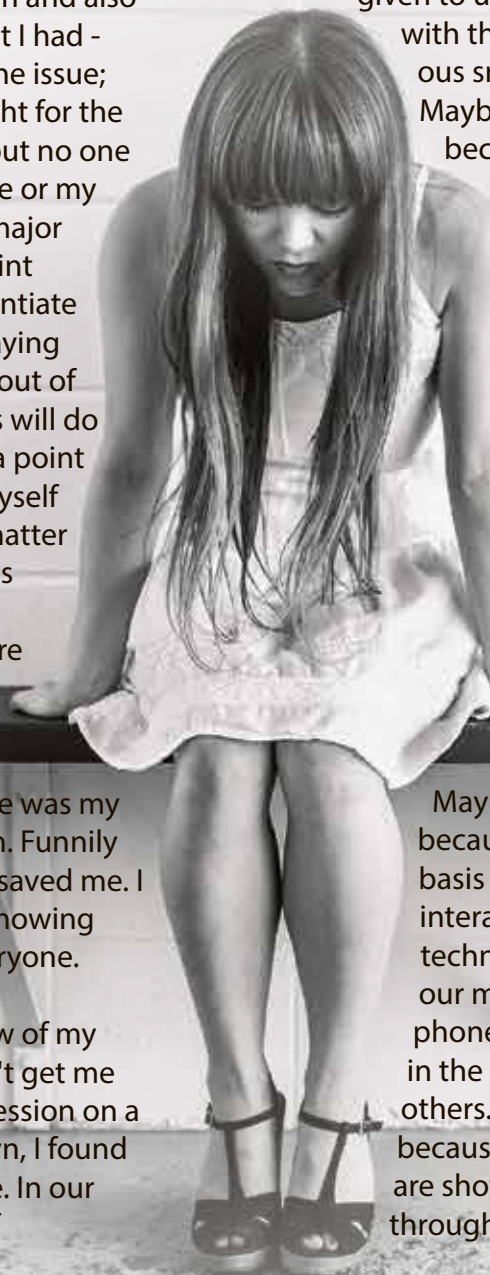
given to us comes with that treacherous small print. Maybe it's because we have lost ourselves in the constant pursuit of money.

media outlet and we can't afford them, they sit just out of our reach and when we progress further towards them they move further away from our grasp. Or maybe it's because unlike hundreds of years ago, it's not about living or dying, it's about living so others recognise our lives and applaud us for living them. Maybe it's because we all believe that we are a special exception to an unwritten rule and forget that we are all privileged to breathe.

I'm not an expert on this subject. If I'm completely honest I know next to nothing. I have found that certain things and choices have directly affected my path and I hope that they can be of use to someone in a similar situation. First is to be careful of the people that

Maybe it's because the basis of human interaction is via technology and our mobile phones define us in the eyes of others. Maybe it's because luxuries are shown to us through every

you hold in your company. Try to find people that elevate and motivate you to improve yourself and the situation that you've found yourself in. Second, is to try and find context about life itself when you feel low. I have quotes from authors and musicians that remind me where I am between the Earth and sky. For example, 'Cats and dogs in America and Britain eat better food than most of humanity.'



Doing my thing

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.

A, Waldron 1995





Mentoring

Be the helping hand

It's an amazing achievement and skill being a mentor, nothing can be so rewarding in life. Being a mentor is so fulfilling, having the ability to listen, to be empathic and non judgemental are key elements in mentoring.

Youth Elements deliver a self sustainable mentoring programme where participants are fully equipped to support and induct new residents, into their new living environment. The vision is that these accredited residents are now



Youth Elements have also delivered this accredited programme to Youth Offending Teams and Young People's Supported Accommodation. Alongside the mentoring training Youth

Elements provide a wide range of other training and services. Our trained young adults who have real experience and knowledge deliver our training courses with a fresh and inclusive approach.

Also, 'Wherever you go, the sky is the sky and people are people' and 'you need to be able at any time to sacrifice who you are for who you will become'. Third is to enjoy the little things. The little things build together to create the bigger things in life. Four is no matter how hard it is, look yourself in the eyes in the mirror and find things that you love about yourself. Five is to live. There's a major difference between living and existing. Take a step back from time to time from the rush of society and just do nothing. Sit down on the grass and watch the wind dance in the trees, go to a train station and watch loved ones reunite with each other. Smile at a stranger in the street. Sing when you're on your own and in the company of others. Finally, try to see that true happiness and peace can be found internally.

Before I finish I want you to know that no matter how you look, you're beautiful. No matter what your wage, you're rich in spirit. No matter how far the journey, you will get there. No matter how long the night is, the sun will always rise. No matter who you are, where you're from; no matter what race or religion or creed, I love you eternally from the bottom of my heart.

This June Youth Elements delivered their successful national accredited Peer Mentoring programme to a group of residents from Great Places Housing Group. All 7 residents successfully completed the units and where awarded level 1 in Mentoring. The group are fully committed, motivated and empowered to complete the next level this summer.



an active and professional team who meet independently and discuss case loads, while encouraging and supporting one another.

Youth Elements

 Opportunities to aspire

Keira Burns, the Employment & Training Manager for Great Places said "The partnership with Youth Elements has been brilliant, they have provided a excellent peer mentoring training programme and engaged with some of our hardest to reach tenants within Support Housing. We will be making sure the skills they have learnt are utilised within the scheme they live in by providing mentorship support to new and existing tenants as well as pushing themselves to progress further."

"I initially attended the staff taster day for the peer mentoring project so I was in a better position to promote the training to my residents. I was blown away by the enthusiasm that Youth Elements had shown and simply wanted more. Not only did I encourage residents to attend but I actually joined in with the project. Working with Youth Elements on a personal and professional level has been a dream and I can't wait to see what further projects we can link up on and deliver."



Why not establish a motivated and committed national accredited peer mentoring team within your organisation.

Book before Friday 30th October 2015 and receive your 10% discount for your organisation Programmes & Training will take place from March 2016 - November 2016

For more information please contact Amina on 0161 286 1566 or email: amina.wal-dron@youthlements.org.uk website: www.youthlements.org.uk



level has been a dream and I can't wait to see what further projects we can link up on and deliver."
 (Roman Dibden, Employment & Training Co-ordinator, Great Places Housing Group)

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BAD MAN

A short story

"Tell me what you want, Mummy – anything... it's yours. Have you finished paying for your house yet? You want to go on a holiday – a cruise? I paid for my mother to go on a cruise once. She loved it. What kind of car do you drive? Do you want a new car?" I smiled in disbelief as I looked at the wiry, dark skinned young man in front of me who searched my face eagerly for an answer.

His eyes still red from crying with a little tell-tale sign of wetness on his long lashes, had seen things that I knew I would never see if I lived three life times. They had the depth of the eyes of a weary old

soldier. "I don't want anything," I answered gently, hoping I wouldn't offend him. "I can't take anything from you even if I wanted to." His eyes narrowed slightly as if he couldn't believe his ears. Then his cheeks creased into dimples as the broad lop-sided grin which I'd come to know over the few weeks I had known him displayed sparkling white teeth. One front tooth with its gold cap shone as it caught the light. "Yeah... yeah... you said that already. I understand. Cool... cool... sorry."

I reminded him that as we were a charity and always struggling for funds, he could make a small donation to us,

whatever he could comfortably afford. "Yeah, I'll do that." He straightened the collar of my green sweatshirt which was about three sizes too big for him as he stood self-consciously in front of me. His slender brown fingers were crowded with sovereigns and assorted gold rings. "A bit too big eh Mummy but that's cool. You've got good taste, man." I held out his designer soft leather and suede jacket. He shook his head and told me to keep it in exchange for my sweatshirt or give it to one of the youths in the project. As he had got up to leave the counselling room, he had looked at me thoughtfully after slightly pulling back the vertical blinds at the window

and looking up and down the street. "Have you got anything on under that sweat shirt, Mummy?" he had asked. I had hoped my raised eyebrows conveyed the question, "Do you want a slap?" I was old enough to be his mother and some and about six inches taller and broader than him to boot. He had looked at me with a slightly embarrassed grin. "No, no man. I just want to borrow your shirt and you can't take it off if you haven't got anything on underneath it." I relaxed and decided not to ask what he wanted my sweat-shirt for. I just prayed I wouldn't see it featured on the TV later on Crime Watch.

Continue on page 10 >>>

"In my experience, there is only one motivation, and that is desire. No reasons or principle can contain it or stand against it." Jane Smiley
