

Big Choices & Decisions

“Decisions decisions”, we’ve all heard the term. This is usually heard when someone is confronted with difficult or numerous decisions to make. As human beings we are blessed with choice; the ability to make decisions every day and we sometimes take it for granted.

My role as Youth Elements Ambassador is to set examples and be a supportive link that people from a similar background to me can relate to. My primary focus is to help such people be more decisive and balance the risk and reward in these choices. It is also important to remind ourselves of the implications of our daily decisions before we make them. My second focus is to bridge the gap between different demographics in society and help build a clear understanding of what’s really going on in the today’s world, the issues young people are facing and ways to overcome them.

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My Life with Anxiety

I've always been one of the quiet ones in a group. It's like being in a classroom when you know the answer to a question, but when the class is asked, you don't put your hand up. For me, I kind of had an inferiority complex and always felt I was a burden to people. I didn't think my contribution would be enough

and I held myself back from a lot of things. This obviously comes down to confidence and the fact that speaking up is way out of my comfort zone.

My anxiety definitely began in school. On my first day, I cried, and this was just the inset day. I lasted around 3 hours, didn't speak to a soul,

and I segregated myself from everyone. This obviously wasn't the best move due to the fact that when I started 'big school' for real, I knew I was gonna retain that character and be 'that guy'. This happened, but like everything, time is a great healer.

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The Value of Travelling



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Welcome

Editors note

Inspired by 'Inspire!' INSPIRE, MOTIVATE and EMPOWER, this is our aim at Youth Elements. We would like to thank each and every one of our contributors, simply because without you, the great people that you are, this paper wouldn't be possible. It has been a success and as a result you are now reading the 3rd edition of this quarterly newspaper.

There are a range of different articles to read, from fashion, to dealing with health problems such as anxiety and ADHD, to entrepreneurship, travelling and money saving ideas, everyone likes a little extra money.

I enjoy reading articles and I find stories from people about their journey to be extremely motivating and inspiring, some

times you think things could be worse, yet they could also be better. Reading the personal journeys of the young people who've made written contributions to this issue, make you realise the latter, that things can and always will be better, as long as there is a tomorrow for you.

Smile 😊



words By Cheyenne Simms

PS: We would love to hear what you think of this issue. Email: info@youthelements.org.uk

What's Going On...

Hello Inspire reader, thank you for picking up our third issue.

Over the months we've had great outcomes from individuals we have worked with. This includes feeling less anxious, happier and having a sense of direction. It just goes to show good choices, motivation, great support, belief and hard work does pay off. Our accredited personal development and wellbeing programmes went down a storm at Halifax Academy. The 15 students from years 9 -11 engaged well and are feeling more empowered and confident about their futures.



It's really great to see that our training courses and services are becoming more popular with organisations. We are providing a social value to our clients supporting them in achieving their aims and objectives also our youth facilitators are gaining rewarding outcomes too.



few. We are looking for new members to join our friendly team. To express your interest please email to the address below.

Youth Elements



Opportunities to aspire

Due to the increase and amazing demands for our accredited mentoring and well being programs delivered to the education sector, housing associations and Youth Offending Teams (YOT's) to name a


We have been keeping busy at the Youth Elements headquarters. Our team are putting together our 2016/17 training calendar aimed at all professionals/individuals working in the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. Training courses and bookings can be made on our website: youthelements.org.uk We are in the early stages for planning our Youth Achievement Awards event that will take place in Manchester, May 2017.



Please do take the opportunity to follow us on social media:

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Entrepreneurship

an interview with a successful entrepreneur

4Lunch was established to increase the confidence and employability of people using the power of food. We caught up with Amy, founder and director of 4Lunch to have a chat about running her business and to learn more about what it really takes to be a success in business

1: What inspired you to start your own business?

I was inspired to start 4Lunch through my volunteering experiences working with young people in Manchester. There was a lack of meaningful work experience opportunities for young people, with many left unsatisfied being out of work. At the same time, street food markets were popping up everywhere, and I knew there had to be a way of combining the two. I've always loved food and cooking, so I thought this business concept would be well suited to my interests.

2: What is the most important lesson you've learned as a director?

The most important lesson I've learned is to take time to reflect on your business, and not rush forward. There is an expectation to achieve a lot in a short time, but overnight success simply is not possible. If you want to build a sustainable, well-thought out business, you need to sit, reflect, scribble, sleep on things, take a break, and ask for advice.

The role of a director is to determine the path of the business, and this takes a lot more time than you might think.

3: Where do you see yourself in five years time?

I am aiming to set up my own 4Lunch cafe, which would also be a workshop space, serving food in central Manchester. I am working on the business plan for it now, and it is just early days.

Hopefully, in five years time I will have a fully operational cafe, plus plans to take it to other major cities through a franchise format.

I also hope to have travelled a lot by that time, with those experiences enriching my business. I aim to travel once a year for one month - I've just come back from Thailand, and now have new recipes to share with my learners. It's not all about business for me, but living a happy and balanced life full of discovery and exploration.

4: What advice would you give to a young adult who is interested in starting their own business?

Start small and try out little projects without putting too much money on the line. You will learn a lot about yourself, your potential capabilities as a business-owner, and the feasibility of the business idea. Many people would like to start a business,

but not everyone is set out to actually follow it through. But you will only figure this out if you try. Take your time, and experience other working roles too.

5: Can you tell us more about your business?

4Lunch currently runs two workshop programmes: 'Food For Thought' (independent living skills around food) and 'Ready Set Sell' (employability skills around food), as well as street food market stalls, held around Manchester. The success of 'Ready Set Sell' has been the real work experience offered on the market stall, which no employability programme seems to have offered learners before. I developed 'Food For Thought' in response to issues around food poverty and skills young people need when they leave home for the first time.

6: How do you feel when you have achieved something that you have planned for?

I feel great, for a little while, but often move straight to the next thing on my 'to



do' list! I like the feeling of getting things done and immersing myself in work. When I have achieved one of my major milestones, I usually treat myself to a good meal out with friends! Even then, I would call it 'market research'! I truly love my job, and couldn't imagine doing anything else right now.

7: What is your worst habit?

I used to overstretch myself quite a lot. Markets and workshops are physically demanding, and I would tend to overwork myself. But since I've come back from holiday, I've noticed when I should give it a bit more of a rest.

8: What is your motto in life?

Eat well, sleep well, and everything else will fall into place.



for more info about Amy or 4lunch go to www.4lunch.co.uk or follow us on



4lunch



@4lunchmcr

Do you have a business you want to share or tell us about? Then get in touch with us at:

info@youthelements.org.uk

You Only Live Once

Fashion and Wellbeing

I will start off by saying that I love fashion; my favourite style is grunge and preppy. I like them because grunge is quite dark but experimental, with the ripped burgundy or black tights and an oversized hoody! Preppy is the style that I've been wearing a lot lately. It's quite modern, girly and current.

I like to follow fashion icons on social media. Some of my favourites are Kim Kardashian, Nicki Minaj, Gigi Hadid and Dina Tokio. They all have different styles and are unique. I enjoy fashion so much that I had started a fashion blog, called DulceCristiana.com. I enjoyed taking photos to post on there even though I haven't done in a while due to various reasons. I do post on other social networks though.

I believe we all have our own unique fashion sense and our style can often be a depiction of our personality or mood.

Over the years, I have found it to be quite important to make sure that we dress up and show up, as the phrase goes. This doesn't have to mean literally go to a place



we don't want to go, e.g. if you're unemployed or a stay at home parent. What the phrase does mean to me is that we must always get up at a reasonable time, preferably in the morning as opposed to the afternoon and to shower/bathe and get dressed, instead of staying in your pyjamas all day, even if you have nowhere to go. This can have a negative effect on our mental health. It can make us feel low in mood and overall not very good. If we shower, get dressed in

our casual/everyday clothes, do our hair and look tidy, we will feel better about ourselves and feel ready to begin the day.

I find that for myself, once it's been a few days since I've washed my hair, I tend to find my mood becomes really low and I feel like I look a mess. This is because my hair and scalp need to be cleaned, as I think my hair looks best on wash day, so I feel a lot better about myself and I will wear my casual clothes, instead of

lounge-wear

I believe a healthy but light breakfast to start off your day, is good for your mood too! For breakfast, I will usually have cornmeal porridge or a cup of black Ceylon tea with a croissant. It may seem quite strange, but my eating habits can be affected by my fashion sense! It is quite odd, when I really think about it...but if I'm dressed in something light and girly such as a dress, then I'd eat a pastry or cake slice with tea

I believe we all have our own unique fashion sense and our style can often be a depiction of our personality or mood.

throughout the day. However, if I am still in my pyjamas at breakfast time, I'll have something quite heavy such as an omelette or a pot of porridge. (Yikes! Maybe, it should be a bowl). This can leave me feeling quite full and sluggish for an hour or so after, perhaps because I ate too much or the eggs were too heavy, feeling sluggish affects most people negatively, especially me. I need to feel rearing and ready to go, so I suggest eating a small – medium bowl of porridge or having a cup of tea with a pastry or even wholemeal toast and fruit. Not only is this healthy, but it also gives you the right amount of energy needed for the beginning of your day.

Words by
Cheyenne Simms

"What you think of yourself is much more important than what others think of you."

Seneca



Learning to be me



Body Image

When you look in the mirror how do you feel about the image that you see looking back at you?

For many years I struggled with how I viewed my body. My main apprehension was about the size of my bust. I come from a family of big boned women who all have curvaceous figures and a generous cup sizes, however, I had no such luck.

My family and I have the kind of relationship where we joke about everything, even our "disfigurements" or hang

ups we have about ourselves, which meant that I was at the butt of the 'ironing board' and 'chest on backwards' jokes. I found solace in this, funny enough, because I knew my family loved me despite the jokes and that brought me to accept my body and love my small bust. This gave me the confidence to pursue modelling which is a career that is filled with DD cup size women, who fed the perception I once had that bigger was better.

It may sound like a cliché but we are all different for

a reason. I've gained weight and have a fuller bust than I once had and I'm just as happy as I was before I had this extra weight and curves. Who is it that tells us that we are inadequate? We do! Who tells us that the image in the mirror is imperfect? We do! Who tells us that the media's perpetuation of perfect is acceptable? We do!

If we look at the women of the media at present suddenly bigger is better; bigger bum and big breasts. However, not so long ago being skinny was the trend; thin to the point that our cheek bones were outlined.

If we were to size up to the media's perception of current perfection we'd be ill. Ask yourself what will be the new weight trend? And should you succumb to the brain numbing new "approved" correct body image? Throughout the years women such as Monique self-acclaimed "Phat Girl" gave comfort to the women who were told they weren't perfect. Her words, "I'm not fat hunny, I'm fly", echoed throughout the 90's and the 2000's giving solace to women of all sizes, giving a response to hurtful comments many came under fire from about their weight.

Body image is not an issue that is gender specific, nor is it age specific. The fact is we all face apprehensions about our body but the key thing to remember is that we should choose to change because we would like to not because someone else tells us that we are not perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect person; we live in a perfectly imperfect world so live perfectly imperfect in it!

Words by
Estenetia



The Beat Youthline is open to anyone under 25.

Youthline: 0845 634 7650

Email: fyp@b-eat.co.uk

Text: 07786 20 18 20.

send us the text message and get a 'call back'.

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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



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REAL LIFE

Decision Making

continued from front page

From my own personal experiences in life, it's easier to make good decisions when you are in a positive environment. It all comes down to mentality and I find that I make my best judgements when I am in a good place physically and emotionally.

There are plenty of people in the world, especially in the "millennial" generation who have the ability to achieve anything but struggle to realise their potential purely because they don't adopt the right mentality. As someone who has experienced this first hand, I can say that we are surrounded by negativity in society; the media for many, also in their own households. Therefore, it becomes extremely difficult to make decisions that can genuinely improve your life.

I see myself as living proof that with a slight shift in mindset and a lot of perseverance, almost anything is possible.

Jamaar Stewart, YE Ambassador

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Travelling

Travelling has been one of the most valuable experiences in my whole life. Everything I've learned from travelling will always be knowledge that can be used in my life, to better my life and keep things moving. The things you learn from travelling about yourself, others and the world is knowledge that can never be found anywhere else. Up to now I have been to India, Dubai, Peru, Spain, Cyprus, Portugal, Ireland, Scotland, Brazil, Bulgaria and Croatia. Travelling has improved my qualities as a person, giving me confidence to always believe in myself.

I decided to go travelling because I wanted to take a risk in life. I had nothing to lose and knew I would only gain. I decided I wanted to leave to remove myself from negative environments; environments that were not getting me anywhere. Something in my heart told me that there was more to life than what I was around; that there was more to life than Manchester. I decided to go and clear my mind and make a fresh start. I wanted

to fully focus on myself and my needs. I

wanted to get to know myself more and see what was out there in the world. I

wanted to improve my health and gain help with that from knowledgeable cultural people. I wanted to experience culture and natural beauty. I yearned to feel free and spread my wings. So I took the risk and went for it and this turned out to be the best risk of my life.

Since I left Manchester to travel, things only ever went upwards.



I met new ambitious people out there in the world. I attracted the right people into my life who gave me a helping hand up. When others can see that you have taken a risk in life and they can feel that you are willing to help yourself, they then naturally feel an urge to help you along, give opportunities and share their knowledge with you. I now have a world network of people

from all over who I can contact at anytime. Opportunities often arise and I'm always invited to visit and work with people in different countries which is always a positive thing to have access to.

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



Abroad with Zara

Travelling is motivating and I've met so many inspirational people along the journeys. I was inspired to try out so many new things and that was when I started to get to know myself and what I enjoyed best. Going away taught me about my potential in life and how to attract everything I needed to move forward a level. It taught me how to positively engage and interact with new people. I really enhance my networking skills. It taught me how to survive as a free spirit, showing me my good qualities and weaknesses and provided me with the environment, space and time to work on these things.

Seeing people who were less fortunate in the third world countries that I travelled to opened my eyes totally. I gained a deeper gratitude every time I came back home to all the things we have here. It made me count my blessings. It showed me the things that were most important in life and that materialism isn't everything. The things it brought to my attention were that health

is wealth, experience is valuable. Travel taught me how to choose wisely, who to have in my life and how it's good to have people who have my best interest in my life only. It showed me that drama is consuming and a total waste of energy. It gave me a deeper feeling of peace and love and how to create that in all areas of my life. It helped me to realise my gifts and then that gave me direction career wise.



I started to understand what kind of partner I would like to attract and started to realise that the more I respect myself and love myself then I will attract people who are on that same vibe and who will show me the right respect and love because they have reached a certain level of understanding themselves. Travelling has opened my horizons and opened my mind to

levels and understandings that I never knew were possible before. I now know what I want to do in life and what I want from life and what I want to give to life. I have realised my dreams because it helped me to respect myself, love myself more and know my self-worth. My future has

become so much brighter because of the people I have met and the endless opportunities that arise. I've now been put in a position to inspire others

just by shining my own light and following my own dreams.

The first life changing place I went to was India, which changed me forever. It has given me a foundation to always fall back on especially in times of need. Seeing how other cultures live and incorporating that into my own life has improved me as a person and enriched my life in a deeper way. I gained my health back on every level and gained



much knowledge on how to maintain my health. Travelling is adventurous; we must all keep that adventurous side alive in us. Life should never become dull for too long, it should be a beautiful, inspirational, interesting, fun journey to keep us excited and stimulated. Travelling is the university of life and the world is your oyster. Don't hesitate, just go and get it! The world is there to be explored and the world is yours.



My Life with Anxiety

continued from front page

After a week of starting school, I found a small group of people that were also similar to me, which funnily enough, suited me perfectly. Gradually, as time passes by, you adapt to the schedule, get used to seeing the same faces and eventually feel comfortable. Once you feel content, opportunities arise that you couldn't see before (mainly due to the fact that I was too busy being paranoid and living in my head, so I didn't notice what was really happening around me). So, this opportunity (that I'd previously missed), was to start playing the drums and having one lesson per week. I was given a key to the drum room, so I could practice in between lessons, which suited me to a T because I was still very shy. The lure of playing the drums on my lunches and breaks was like music to my ears, pun intended. This led me to meet new people, which was easier, as we already had something in common. This enabled us to compete, inspire and learn more.

What I didn't realise was that throwing yourself at something creates opportunities, which in turn, presents situations that you

are fine tuning into your personality and becoming the person you are today. I don't believe there is any right or wrong path, I just believe in experiences and doing for the most part what you want to do. For me, I wanted to make music. I was into hip hop, the more commercial based music. (My taste has drastically changed since then). However, in those days, I used to sit in my room and write verses to common instrumental beats and rap them in an American accent. From that, I wanted to hear myself rapping, so I used to rap into headphones as my microphone and record onto cassette tapes, which I still have today. It was my release, even though I was writing about garbage and trying to imitate what I was influenced by.

I got that fixated on music so much that I would stay in for days on end and listen, write, freestyle and generally talk rubbish. This had a negative effect on my social life, as I was so set in my ways that anything other than my room or house was out of my comfort zone. I didn't have a job either which didn't help with morale. So, in the mix of it, I felt like a lost soul and didn't really have any identity. I realised I was at a crossroads in my life and needed to take a path

that was gonna push me out of my comfort zone, whilst at the same time allow me to still be in some sort of control. I was introduced to more new people due to the rapping and these guys had the full set up. I remember seeing a pop stopper (that round thing you see in front of a microphone that you could probably make with a pair of tights) for the first time and felt like I'd walked into a record company, as if I was signing on the dotted line. This excited me as I had an opportunity to be part of something. Obviously, I was completely out of my comfort zone, but I had to rap, and make some impression. The first line of a verse I had written was 'I'm making moves with my life, and I'm going the length'. I didn't see it then, but now looking back, I see that it was some sort of affirmation, in the sense that, if you strongly believe in something, there is a good chance that it can happen. Looking back, reciting this verse and pushing myself, got the reward! I was accepted in this group and it was a massive deal to me. Gradually, we started to work together, however, I still didn't have the confidence needed to collaborate aloud with these guys.

My anxiety and depression reached a point where I was holding myself back again, and I knew further steps needed to be taken. I went to the doctors, saw therapists and got offered all the usual anti-depressants under the sun. I refused the tablets as I wanted to set out my



own targets to strengthen my life. I set myself bite sized tasks to complete. The first would seem simple enough to an outsider, but to me, it was terrifying. I encouraged myself to ask a random person on the street, the time. As silly as it sounds, it was harder than I thought, because anxiety completely blows situations out of proportion and creates scenarios in your mind. Either way, I somehow managed to do it. This, as daft as it sounds, made me feel good. I remember actually getting goose bumps every time I did it, and I knew it was a confidence boost. Eventually, after months of setting mini targets, (raising my voice in meetings, or just consciously

making an effort in a group), I found myself talking to people,

without even questioning my anxiety. The 'old me' would never have done this as the easier option, for me, was to be an introvert. But, somehow, I was doing these things on autopilot. Don't get me wrong, I know these are super small baby steps, but if it felt good, it felt good! I was still far from being the 'residual self-image' like the Matrix suggests. So, I went about things in another way. As the anxiety and depression still remained, I thought; what could make me attack my fears and make me feel good at the same time? It took a bit of research, but I decided that on Christmas morning, I would feed the homeless. I signed up to the Tree Of Life, a business that actively helps the homeless, got the ball rolling with my CRB checks and got the green light. This helped in a multitude of ways. First, I was feeling good by helping others less fortunate. It enabled me to see that my life wasn't so bad, and it enabled me to be at the forefront of a room full of people. This was the first time I felt comfortable in a situation like this!! I was over the moon. As far as I was concerned, it was the best Christmas ever, as I gave gifts that made a difference. This changed me, for the better. By this point in my life, I realised that the anxiety was always gonna be there, in one form or another, however, its how I dealt with it that would make a difference to my life. So, my next move was to move out of my parents' house. This truly scared the life out of me as I still wasn't 100% confident. I began looking for a place to live. I was single and

couldn't really afford an apartment of my own, but I found out the hard way, as that's the option I decided to take. This basically backfired and turned me into a reclusive character. After 6 months, I decided I'd had enough and asked my landlord if I could move into one of his house shares. He agreed and this was one of those times when I was scared to death.

Moving in with 5 strangers was a massive deal. But, throwing myself into the deep end like that, forced me to interact with others. After the first week living there, I shrank one of the house-mates clothes in the dryer. I had destroyed a £200 suit. The girl confronted me, and I just apologised and apologised, thinking I've made a mistake moving in here. Saying she was very annoyed, was a massive understatement. Later, she apologised and as a result of her apology, she invited myself and the other housemates for some food and a possible night out (which definitely wasn't my scene) but I still felt bad and thought going would help build bridges and squash any ill feelings. I got myself dressed up and looking stylish, and boom, off we went. It turned out to be one of the best nights of my life, as I remember thinking; I'm out here with some of the most amazing people ever. Despite being drunk and it not being my scene, I had a great night. The next morning, I made all my housemates some food and it brought us together. I remember

sitting back thinking "yesssss" I was amazed at what I'd achieved!! Goose bumps galore!! It was great.

After 6 months of living like I was in Uni, myself, and two of the housemates grew closer. They were both girls and both amazing. We decided to find a smaller place together and it was perfect. Never did I think that I'd move to an area that was full of nightlife, let alone with 2 girls! In the past, this would have been my worst nightmare, but, now it just gave me confidence. It changed me as far as my dress sense and how I approached situations. From this new found confidence, I started dating... a lot! I was having fun! A lot of it! I learnt so much from each encounter. It made me stronger. And, it made me realise that I was absolutely awesome. I used to say this to myself as some sort of affirmation and it kind of worked. However, after an amazing year, one of the girls moved out with her boyfriend and the other finally got to be based in Italy with her work as she was an air hostess. So, it was time to find somewhere new to live and to start again. My friend kept telling me that change was good, but I wasn't too convinced as I was scared to death that I would become my former insecure self again. So, due to my credit rating not being in great shape, I had limited options. I decided to move into my sisters for 3 months.



Read the final part on page 12

Words by Gareth Foster

The High Cost of ADHD Pseudoscience - *continued from back page*

Luckily, Alex's paediatrician was sharp and told the parents about ADHD as far back as the first grade. But Alex's uncle George was living with the family at the time, and he was horrified. He explained that ADHD was not real, that Big Pharma was conspiring with doctors to turn high-spirited kids into zombified conformists, and teachers were in on it because they were too lazy to handle creative types that don't follow rules.

Uncle George sounded like a kook, but he provided evidence to back up his claim, and it looked convincing. Prominent scientists were debating whether the diagnostic criteria were accurate and whether medicine was over prescribed. Articles



The long term cost of ADHD are well understood and include low self-esteem, poor social skills, and increased risk of depression and anxiety.

with shocking headlines about the controversy were appearing in mainstream magazines and even in papers like the New York Times. Dozens of books touted ADHD as scheme. Soon the parents were shopping around for a new paediatrician and were dead set against ADHD. "We thought it was a scam" his mother explained.

An Industry of Denial

Alex's family is not alone. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder has been a big topic in the popular press, and it seems as though most of the press about it is geared to do one thing: scare the hell out of parents.

There are good reasons for

journalists and authors to do this. If you are a trying to sell copy, scary headlines draw eyes to your story. And, when it comes to readers, no one scares quite as easily, and buys as many books, as parents. A recent book illustrates this point perfectly. With the provoking title ADHD is Not Real, and written by a medical doctor, it achieves the dumbfounding feat of both denying the existence of ADHD while inventing an entirely new syndrome that looks exactly like it. It very conveniently sets the audience up for potential new treatments and cures. And this speaks to another problem. In the long shadow cast by the scare journalism, a cottage industry of snake-oil cures has flourished. This intersection of scare journalism and pseudoscience should

rightly be called an "industry" because while no one that I know of has added up the financial take of those who deny ADHD while providing alternative cures to it, I would suspect it is in the many millions.

Take Alex and his parents as an example. They discovered the alternative medicine side of the denial industry shortly after uncle George moved out. They tried special diets, mega-vitamins, magnet therapy, special mattresses, dolphin-assisted therapy (a particularly Hawaiian luxury), chiropractors who claimed they could treat it with spine alignments, aromatherapy, herbal supplements, biofeedback machines, and a host of other pseudoscientific products that claimed, like Uncle George, that Big Pharma was a scam and they had the real answer.

Alex's dad explained that

Staying Positive Throughout

Words by Melissa Duncan

A wise man once said if life is possible then anything is possible (Les Brown). Life is a tough lesson, especially for young people today, increasingly vulnerable to homelessness, unemployment, mis-education and mental health issues. I believe it is written in the stars that people considered to be at the bottom of society will see a better future, the harder the start the sweeter the finish. It is the universal law of opposition.

Through my hardship growing up in the care system, keeping a positive mind in a battle of negativity was what helped me to achieve my social work degree at university. This was also where I found out I had dyslexia and dyspraxia, although I see this as a valuable gift now and not a curricular disadvantage.

More importantly I have gained my independence and freedom, in a transition out of care into adulthood, standing in charge of my own destiny, embracing fear and turning my disadvantage into my advantage, because that gives me the drive, passion and hunger for success. Therefore my philosophy of life is to live, love and laugh... and listen. Take any and every opportunity with both hands and to find and fulfil your life purpose, your dreams and walk into your destiny.

like gamblers who have lost too much to quit, parents who go down this road often wake up years later having sunk many thousands into ineffective treatments

he once did the math on how much they had spent on alternative treatments for ADHD. "I won't tell you how much it was. Let's just say it could have paid for a big chunk of his college." Years rolled by, with failing grades, constant punishments, and bullying from peers, Alex's self-esteem crashed.

There is a pattern to a family's journey into alternative treatments that is illustrated by what happened to Alex's family. At first the "cure" seems to work and everyone is convinced and exuberant about the effects, but it mysteriously wears off, so something else is tried, and it seems to work wonderfully for a little while, but also wears off. Chasing the relief and joy of the first discovery, the family tries something else. It is a potent combination of placebo effect and confirmation bias rolled together. And like gamblers who have lost too much to quit, parents who go down this road often wake up years later having sunk many thousands into ineffective treatments. Meanwhile, the child has been through difficulties that are hard to imagine for those without ADHD.

Don't Believe the Hype

The best way to not fall for the scare journalism and pseudoscience is to study the research and learn the facts. Here are some of the key facts about ADHD: It is

real. It is not willful. It is not just being a boy, being eccentric, being bad, being creative, or being free spirit. It is a disorder with a biological basis, just like asthma or diabetes, but rather than disrupting breathing or metabolism it disrupts the brain's ability to pay effortful attention and prioritize activities.

First, here is what we know does not work to effectively treat ADHD:

- **special diets (the research is still ongoing but well controlled studies have not supported them)**
- **aromatherapy or therapy with magnets**
- **"talk therapy" or psychoanalysis**
- **chiropractic treatment**
- **hypnosis**
- **sensory integration training**
- **social skills training (done alone)**
- **self-control training**
- **most forms of biofeedback (the research is ongoing for neuro feedback and looks very interesting)**
- **strict punishments for inattention and forgetfulness**

Here is what we know actually works:

- **education for parents and teachers about ADHD**
- **parent praise for effortful, attentive and organized behaviors.**
- **parent training for general behavior management**
- **clear and consistent limit-setting**
- **tangible rewards and response-cost for specific behaviors that the child can name**
- **ignoring inappropriate behavior (within reason)**
- **differential reinforcement**
- **and... medication (yes it is often over prescribed, and no it should not be the first treatment choice, but for many kids it does work when prescribed correctly)**



Research also suggests that the best approach is to create a tailor-made combination of evidence-based treatments (a "treatment plan") that address the specific needs of that child rather than relying on one type alone or a cookie-cutter approach. It is also better if the treatment is integrated across environments (a single behavior management system for both home and school).

Conclusion

There is a lot of hype about ADHD, but fortunately there is also a lot of solid science. Sifting through the two is not easy, but there are reputable places to go

to avoid the pseudoscience and scare journalism. I recommend starting with the National Institute of Mental Health's website on ADHD and with the websites for CHADD and ADHD Aware, non-profit advocacy groups for people with ADHD. But most of all, please don't listen to the Uncle Georges of the world. Instead, give your precious time and attention to those who have made it their life's work to actually study and understand ADHD.

Words by
Dr. Ronald Crouch
www.ronaldcrouch.com

Do you agree or disagree? Do you have a issue or topic you would like to write about? Do you have a story you would like to share?

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Continued from back page

A good starting point or stance to take when trying to nurture dignity is to remember that, generally speaking, young people are (in most cases, but not all of the time) doing the best they can with the skills and abilities they have already developed and within the situations and circumstances they have already experienced and have an understanding of. If we accept this reality and embrace it, we place ourselves in a position that is genuinely unbiased. This will help the individual to do better, recognize their own talents and gifts, and improve their efforts toward achieving their goals.

There are numerous ways to develop and show respect for young people. Ultimately, our primary aim should be to:

1. experience and express the respect we have for the challenges and issues we all inherently go through as we develop into adulthood;
2. Take proactive steps to understand and decipher the function and purpose of a particular behaviour or action, in order to maintain respect, and value the individuals, regardless of the mistake or shortfall on the young person's part;
3. understand that lack of experience or understanding and skill gaps are inevitable, resulting in possible impacts on a young person's behaviours;
4. Understand and respect the differences we all have, and that the things that motivate us, (more

often than not) will not motivate the young people we work with;

5. Finally, find the unique abilities and strengths we all possess, along with the hidden and less obvious learning within a task.

First things first, it is a fact, one that we would be wise to accept, that at times a young person will be disrespectful (regardless of their intelligence or perceived ability). You don't have to agree with it or like it, however, accepting it will help you depersonalise it and reduce the pain and feeling of being let down. Being prepared and understanding that at times accepting it will help you depersonalize it and reduce the pain and feeling of being let down. Being prepared and understanding that at times young people will display disrespectful behaviours as part of

young people will display disrespectful behaviours as part of their learning and development places us in a much better position to reinforce these developments. Recognize that in most cases, we (humans) are wired to defend



ourselves when we feel vulnerable or under attack. For a young person, these defensives can sometimes be interpreted as a

My Life with Anxiety continued from page 9

Living at my sisters meant I was away from all my friends and it was hard work to function and keep in contact with them. It brought the worst out in me and I started to get depressed with life again and not value myself. I then moved into my friends' house with his wife, which was amazing. I enjoyed it there, because it was my kind of surrounding, with my kind of people (those kind of friends that get classed as family). I tried to get back into the music, as it was my passion and had previously helped me to socialise. Again, I just wanted to be part of something, but because I had been away from the music scene for so long, the inevitable was that I was rusty. In a way, it reduced my sense of self-worth. I felt almost bipolar. One minute I'd be feeling good, and the next, I'd be really fed up and depressed, even

though nothing had changed. By this point, I was having regular panic attacks and seriously ridiculous thoughts. I'd see things like a curtain rail and wonder if it would hold my weight etc.... need I say more. I was falling and almost wanted to fall. The panic attacks, which I'd suffered with in the past, took hold and it felt like I was having a heart attack. I'd panic, and wouldn't be able to catch my breath; I had phantom symptoms like shooting pains down my arms, even coming out of my tongue. This became a regular occurrence, and I learnt (with some research) how to calm myself down. However, it didn't take any kind of strenuous situation to trigger an attack. I could just be relaxing on the sofa and out of the blue, boom..your body heats up and you start to experience anxiousness.

Anxiety never really goes away. It exists in all of us, in a variety of different forms. It's how you deal with it that counts and if you're not coping too well at present, trust me it gets better!! You're stronger than you know, so give yourself credit!

This time around, I took steps to get to the doctor and she advised tablets again (which I'd previously refused) but at this point, I didn't see any other option, as I just wanted to break free from the reigns of being held back by this anxiety disorder. I was prescribed the tablets Citalopram, but they didn't have the positive effect I was hoping for. I had to issue a sick note to work, which didn't make me feel any better, but, I was really down and needed to escape everything, even my friends. I found myself searching for words, just to make conversation with people. This goes for people I'd known for years. I had no control. However,

with the help of friends and guidance from them and from my girlfriend, my life is in gear once more. I'm not saying I couldn't do this on my own, but, I realise that life really isn't that bad. Yes, I'm currently living at home with my mum at 33, but, I'm around the people who care most. Plus, I have a big network of friends. I'm rich in this respect and I don't need material things to define myself as a person.

I'm talking to you as the person I am today. I'm absolutely awesome and so are you!! If you're reading this with similar issues, just know that you are not alone and you never will be. I say, throw yourself in the deep end occasionally,

as you'll have gap days where you do feel fine. These are the moments where you need to act and not allow foreign thoughts to dictate your actions and movements!! I understand that it is easier said than done, but, just one person can make a difference and I believe that you can too. Believe in yourself, make moves and do not live in the past. Keep creating memories, and embrace life. It's fight or flight.

Words by
Gareth Foster



threat or danger, and they can fall back onto their evolutionary instinct, fight or flight. If they choose to fly they may become withdrawn, use avoidance tools, refuse to communicate or actually leave the situation. The fight in most cases results in a verbal assault, rude or inappropriate faces or gestures, making threats and in the worst cases physical violence. Whichever action they choose, the results are often the same - an endless revolving cycle that has no positive outcomes. However, if we stay unfazed, and keep our standing point of young people in a positive place, understanding that their developing brain, emotion management system and problem-solving ability is still in the development stage, we can easily find a more rewarding and respectful approach, regardless of the displayed or perceived behaviour.

An important part of developing and building empathy, and eventually respect, is to find the root cause of the action of behaviour, why that young person performs the way they do. Understanding why disrespectful behaviour occurs is about seeing what purpose that behaviour serves for the adolescent, which in turn allows us to develop empathy,



respond effectively, and model the respectful behaviour adolescents need to experience firsthand in order to learn. When we respond with understanding (or attempts at understanding, even if we're not quite there), the adolescent begins to see value in our efforts, and that we hold value in theirs too.

Always try to look for and assess the things that happen both before and after the behaviour. This is best done collaboratively with the young person, for several reasons: it shows a desire to learn (on your part); it communicates that we don't always know the answers but that there is a way to figure them out; and, above all, it is the respectful thing to do.

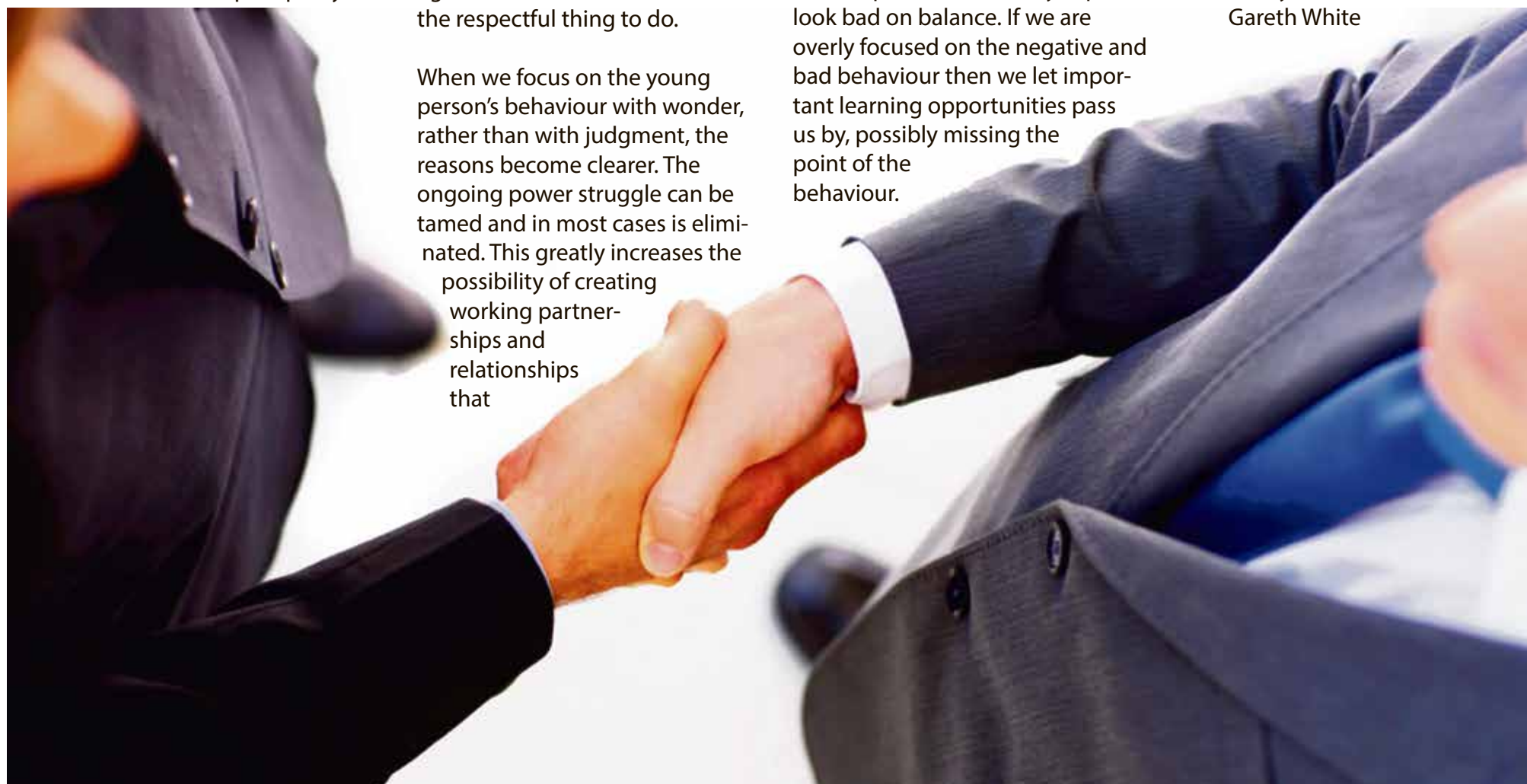
When we focus on the young person's behaviour with wonder, rather than with judgment, the reasons become clearer. The ongoing power struggle can be tamed and in most cases is eliminated. This greatly increases the possibility of creating working partnerships and relationships that

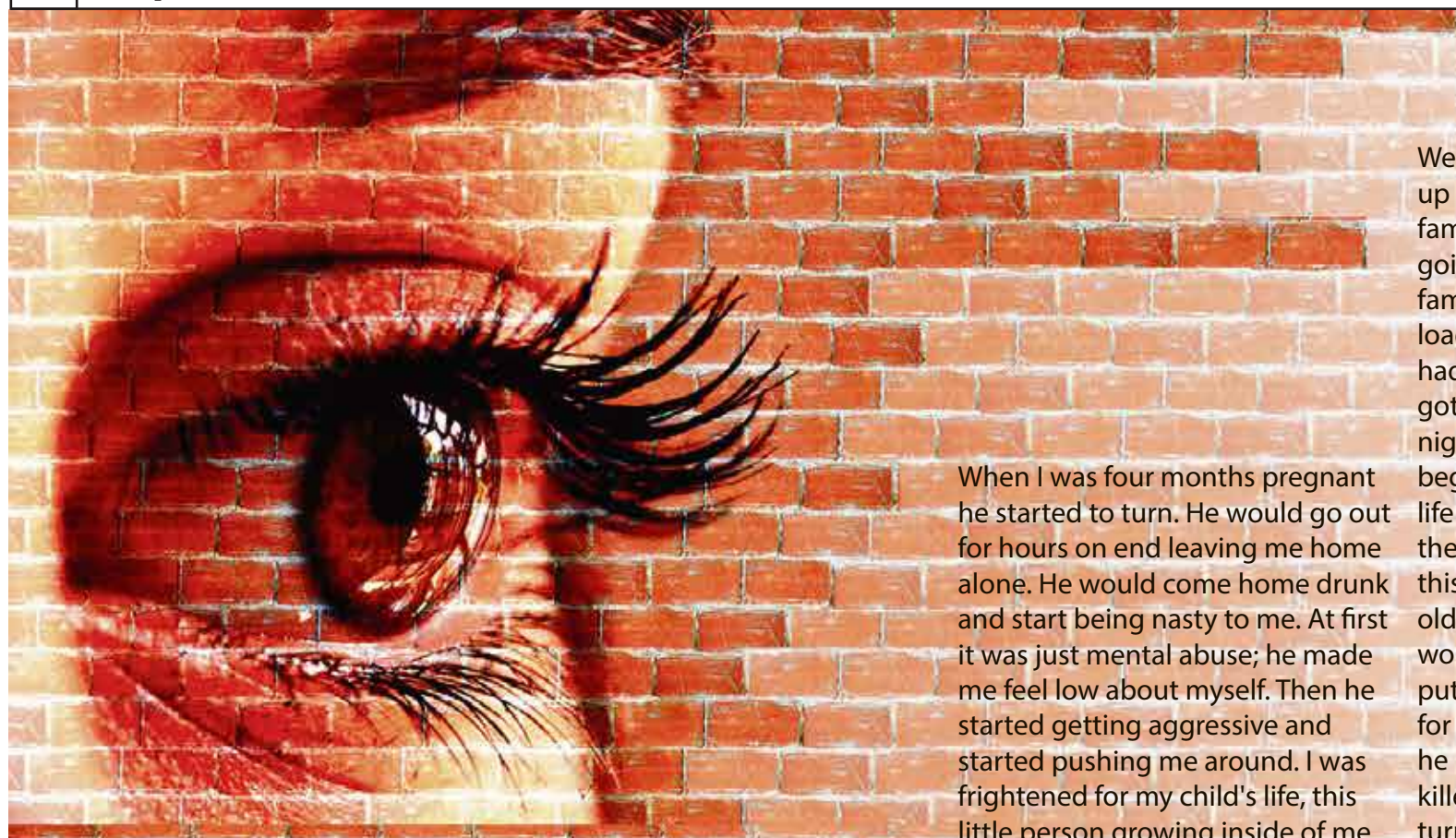
have an increased impact, and a genuine chance to make a difference and support young people's growth and development.

One other thing to consider when thinking about disrespectful behaviour and young people is the concept that young people don't always possess the skills to behave in the way we wish them to. We always assume that young people are choosing not to follow our instructions rather than not understanding them of having the capacity to follow them. I feel that most people (more specifically young people) would avoid situations and times when they feel or look stupid, and will always opt to look bad on balance. If we are overly focused on the negative and bad behaviour then we let important learning opportunities pass us by, possibly missing the point of the behaviour.

Almost all people make assumptions and judgments based on how we see things, and how they look from the outside. However, when this process happens with young people it often leads us down the wrong road and away from the facts. Young people with their physically maturing bodies, faces, and voices mask the immaturity and uneven social, emotional, and cognitive development bubbling under the surface. As the disrespectful behaviour escalates and impacts on our own emotions, things get more difficult which can inhibit thinking processes and in turn prevent us from responding effectively. In these situations, we often inadvertently make things worse. Remember that young people are frequently not as sophisticated as we give them credit for. In most cases the behaviour of a young person is based on impulse and lacks any skilled response. Understanding this gives us an improved opportunity to deconstruct the behaviour and see it from a different perspective, and tease out the skill gaps, so we can (ultimately) teach them the behaviours needed to progress and grow.

Words by
Gareth White





Hurtful Love

My name is Larissa and I'm 25 years of age. I'm also a mum to a beautiful six year old little girl. I would like to share a story with you all, hoping it could help others in the same situation giving them the strength to carry on and look forward.

It all started eight years ago on 22nd of September 2007, I was on a night out and bumped into my high school crush. I had butterflies in my belly and felt amazing about

seeing him. I was living in Newcastle at the time working and studying. I found it hard to be away after seeing him again, so I moved back to Reading to give it a shot.

The first three months were amazing (honeymoon period) then in January 2008, I found out I was pregnant; I felt scared to tell him because I didn't want him to leave me. I had fallen madly in love with the boy. I rang him to tell him and he said everything was going to be ok and that he was going stand by me. That's when things changed. I had given everything up to be with him; friends, family, work, study, my whole life.

When I was four months pregnant he started to turn. He would go out for hours on end leaving me home alone. He would come home drunk and start being nasty to me. At first it was just mental abuse; he made me feel low about myself. Then he started getting aggressive and started pushing me around. I was frightened for my child's life, this little person growing inside of me, so small and fragile and not knowing what was going on in the world. After that I said I was leaving that I couldn't live like this. He promised he would change. I believed him and stayed. He was great throughout the rest of my pregnancy. I got rushed into hospital at seven months pregnant with a serious condition called preeclampsia. I was fighting for mine and my child's life. I was frightened, depressed and very confused. My partner was great and stayed by my side all the way through. I believed he had changed.

We went home a week later and set up home and had a perfect little family. At least what I thought was going to be a happy, perfect little family. My partner started drinking loads and coming home in states I had never seen. That's when things got really bad. He came home one night and punched me all over. I begged him to stop, crying for my life telling him my daughter was there and didn't need to hear all this. She was only a couple of weeks old. Once again he promised he would change. Shock he never!! I put up with his abuse and violence for six and half years until one day he battered me so bad he nearly killed me. He strangled me till I turned blue, threw me down the stairs damaging my nerves in my back and left leg.

That's when I knew I couldn't take no more and hit him back; wasn't the best move I made because that's when things got bad. It just never ended. He would go on holidays without me and our daughter. He was always out with



"Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently."

Maya Angelou



his mates and going on weekends away. The last time I took this was this June. He had gone to Magaluf with all his mates and knew he was up to no good.

The day he got back I knew I had to pick up the courage and tell him it was over and that I wasn't taking it anymore. So with that, the day he came back and walked through the door I told him straight away that it was over and I'd never go back and that it was over for good. I felt a whole weight lift off my shoulders and felt I was free. I let him live in my house because I knew he had nowhere else to go. He took the Mick out of me too many times so I told him it was time to move out. I knew it was going to be hard for my daughter, but I needed to be happy and free.

Now I'm in a relationship with a man who treats me and my daughter like queens and I laugh and smile every day and don't feel stressed in anyway. People who say it's impossible to leave a violent man, that's not true. Nothing is impossible you just need to believe in yourself and pick up the courage and make yourself believe you are better than that. Leaving him was the best thing I ever did and now me and my little precious princess have a happy life and fresh start. Love, laugh, smile and always be happy and remember anything is possible you just have to believe in yourselves. Love to all xx

Words by Larrissa

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Six Ways To Save Money

Have you always wondered how to save money as a young person? If so continue reading this article and hopefully, I will give you some ideas on how you can do just that.



My best ways of saving money that I've found to be most useful are:

1

If you read books you should invest in an e-reader. A Kindle, Nook, or Kobo are amongst the most popular. The benefits of having an e-reader are many. A few of them are:



discounted and free books as opposed to buying a wad of books at a higher price and having to carry them around. An e-reader is much more efficient as you can have thousands of books on one electrical device. They can be bought for as little as £65 (Nook Glowlight).

2

Set a steady budget and stick to it!!!! This means you have to write down all your expenses, keeping a weekly log of how much you're spending. This is so that you know what to set your budget to.

For example, I earn £800 per month. I could set my budget to be £600 per month, leaving me with £200 to save each month. By the end of the year I would have £2,400 in savings! Enough to pay for a holiday to a warm country while it is winter here.



3

Everyone has to eat. Most of us eat and enjoy food, so instead of ordering take out for dinner, cook your own meals! Better yet, meal prep', and no, this isn't just a gym enthusiast idea either. It's a great money saving tip. If you know what you're going to eat and already have it prepared from home, you will save money buying unnecessary food items. As well as this, food and drink should be bought in bulk, and then you can freeze it or store it away to keep it fresh.



4

Brew your own coffee and tea!!!! This is a must. Think about it. If you buy a tall coffee from Starbucks, you are spending between £1.95 for a tall Americano and £2.25 for a tall Cappuccino. Tall is the smallest sized drink at Starbucks...so $£2.25 \times 5 = £11.25$ PER WORKING WEEK, on coffee alone, which works out to be £45 a month!! You could buy a small Tassimo coffee maker for £45 on Amazon. This will give you coffee house style beverages in your own home, saving you a bunch in money!



5

If you have a gym membership, CANCEL it! This is an unnecessary expense. It's approximately £200 a year that you could use for a rainy day. Exercise is a necessity, going to the gym isn't. There are many cheaper ways to exercise. A free one is to jog/run. This is completely free if not very low cost as you just need jogging bottoms/shorts, which I can bet you own and a pair of trainers. You could even buy a good pair of running trainers which you can pick up a pair of for £25 from 'Sports Direct' online. Even if running isn't your thing, you could buy some weights cheap, a yoga mat, fitness ball and a home workout DVD for under £50! You then don't have to worry about paying any additional costs for classes or much else, seeing as it's a one off payment and if you want to take a break from exercise, you don't have to go through the hassle of cancelling a gym membership.



6

Shop online! Most deals are only online as opposed to in the shops. Online you have many websites where you can buy the same item but cheaper, from websites such as 'eBay' and 'Amazon'. Shopping online for groceries is also good as it stops you from picking up extra, unnecessary items at the check-out till. Yes... those chocolate bars and sweets! Clothes are often cheaper online too, if you know your size and you shouldn't have any problems, as websites generally use the standard measurements for each country. With more and more bargain websites that are legit such as 'Everything5pounds.com' and 'Sammydress.com' there's even more reason to shop online.



inspire

RESPECT

Over my ten years working with young people, gaining insight into their developments, carrying out research and consulting with them, along with managing complex behaviours and situations I have recognized how important respect is to them. Results always show that the best way to learn and develop respect for teens is by receiving respect. However, developing the abilities and skills needed to show respect towards the adolescents we work with, alongside displaying that respect in effective ways does not always come easily, or naturally.

In most cases there are young people who we naturally develop a fondness for, and on the opposite, there are also many who we may find infuriating, rude, or in some

cases downright nauseating. Working on the ways we cultivate a respectful attitude toward those young people, who are naturally tougher to like, will often lead to genuine displays of respect in return.

Teenagers today are more than capable of provoking frustration, anger, and upset. It is in these emotional moments that maintaining dignity, both theirs and ours, is most challenging and critical. Dignity, in essence, is self-respect; the process of recognizing that we are worth something and have value. To nurture this in our young people, we must always aim to surround our responses in the protective arms of respect, regardless of the mistakes, shortfalls, or attitude. When the young people

understand that regardless of what they say, or what they do, they are still worthy of respect, we greatly increase our chances of supporting their developments in a genuine and meaningful way.

When we (the adults in the situation) show respect to young people, we are demonstrating to them that they are worth something and have value. A good example of how self-respect can be either maintained or destroyed is the concept and process that some adults “play favourites” (which young people spot very easily, and as an adult it is not that hard to fall into). Ask yourself honestly if you ever do this. While it is natural to be drawn to some young people over others for our own personal reasons, the way we express those feelings can make

a monumental difference in the experience of young people who are still developing their sense of self-worth.

Young people can easily recognise when an adult is treating them as if they matter less than someone else. As a result, the young person’s dignity is being jeopardized. Speaking to young people about this kind of experience they say that even when they feel favoured it creates enormous conflict or discomfort from being “chosen” over their friends or peers. It’s very easy to pick up signs and signals when an adult is playing favourites, either through the expectations we have, rewards we give, or just tone of voice we use.

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The High Cost of ADHD Pseudoscience

We’re in my office, which like any child psychologist’s office, is stuffed with toys, books, and more than a little unfinished paperwork. I’m meeting with Alex and his parents for their first session. Alex is fifteen and already taller than his father, but his problems, they explain, began in preschool. The problem was, there was always a problem.

Every kid gets in trouble now and then, but Alex was always in trouble. Always. In primary school he would daydream so much and so intensely that he would get up in the middle of class and makerobot noises while walking around his desk. He was found climbing on a dinosaur fossil during a field trip in the third grade and was banned from

field trips for the rest of the year. He was great about doing his homework, but would always forget it at home. He still does.

For more than a decade he was constantly on the receiving end of scoldings, “don’t go there” looks from adults, and teasing and bullying from his classmates. His parents thought that everyone was too hard on him.

His teacher thought that his parents were too easy on him. And secretly, Alex thought he was just a “bad kid.”

But they are all wrong. Alex has ADHD.

continues on page 12 >>>

