

Single parent fathers get a self-esteem boost

By Janelle Oswald

Moved by the struggles faced by single parent fathers, founder of H R Training Professionals, Margaret Thorli, was motivated to launch a bespoke training course to help single parent fathers back into the workforce. Determined to make a difference encouraging all lone parents to believe in themselves, here the single parent of two tells *The Voice* how she can get hundreds of single fathers marching back through the doors becoming proud businessmen of the future.

What inspired you to design courses for lone parent fathers?

I had a simply 'divine intervention' by God that gave me the grace, wisdom and the gifts to start the Lone Parent Fathers Project.

In life, we are always on a

journey even though we do not know where it will lead to. I find this very exciting and at the same time scary because the future as we know in regards to employment/business is no longer guaranteed. I followed my desire to start my own business running workshops for lone parents to overcome their issues and to become a part of the work market, after being out of employment bringing up their children.

Also as an Employment Liaison Officer / Mentor Co-ordinator and a Life Coaching Trainer, I find the majority of lone parents want to go back to work or start their own business and come off benefits. My research has also found working with lone parents especially fathers, the most

challenging of my caseloads because the difficulties these clients experience in finding sustainable employment, childcare, and dealing with any emotional issues relating to the school issues and child minding. To successfully put all lone parents back to work they need extra support and encouragement to overcome some of the barriers that hold them back from returning to the work market.

What do fathers learn on the course?

Single parent father courses offer a plethora of skills such as Financial Management, Calculating the Benefits of Moving from Welfare to Work, Debt-Counselling, Effective money-management and Day to Day Budget-planning. But I also do courses in Enterprise 1 New Business Start Up, Coaching 1 Personal Development and Employability Skills

How can lone-fathers join your courses?

Just come on down! I welcome all men to join, which will be a new start to their lives. Anybody can join. We have people from various Job Centres and we also have private clients. Please don't hesitate to contact me by logging onto: www.hrtrainingprofessionals.co.uk



THORLI: Committed to helping fathers



What are the common challenges that lone-parent fathers face?

The common challenges that lone parent fathers face are loneliness and not feeling recognised by the official authorities in the same way that single

mothers are and the lack of family support.

Men find it difficult to work because of childcare constraints, their relationships with friends can suffer and personal concerns around whether or not potential women

partners will be able to accept them and their children. Men also often go through periods of low self-esteem and lack of confidence, not forgetting housing issues when raising a daughter during puberty.

Single Parent Fathers

JOHN'S STORY

Before becoming a single Dad, John worked full time and was married with three children. He came home one day and his wife told him she was leaving him. He responded 'You are not taking my kids'. His wife replied 'I was not going to, you can have the kids, I want my life back'. He was devastated. I met him at his lowest, lowest point. I worked closely with this man and gave him the right support and encouragement and referred him to different agencies. Within months he had found a part-time job, which fitted in around the school journeys.

GERALD'S STORY

I recently worked with Gerald after he completed one of our Business Start-Up courses and mentoring programmes. I worked with him and his family and after two months we helped him to secure part time working as a producer on a London based community TV station and he went on to start his own business in Community Youth work.

What are the three main tips you would give to lone parent fathers?

Start to look at ways to develop a wide and varied personal skills set through self help books and workshops. Get yourself into a group of other like minded men with similar issues like yours, and build yourself a network of friends that can support one another. Finally, develop and prepare yourself for stages of your children's growth by working with other single fathers as volunteers. Also consider additional skills development in yourself through professional training and or volunteer work. For example, giving time to disadvantaged and troubled young adult fathers. The benefits are priceless because by engaging with young lone fathers to be, you empower

them to overcome their barriers and help them to have a better relationship with their children and a greater understanding of what the role of a father should be.

What can parents do to beat the recession and maintain a happy, fulfilled household?

Up-skill yourself through training and volunteering work. Keep expenditure within income levels where possible and most importantly re-programme and manage the growing demands from kids for non-essential purchases.

What are the main things a person should do to stay employable in the recession?

No job is a guaranteed job for life – the world market for jobs only recognises those people that are skilled and ready for work immediately. So, make sure you are ready for work in your chosen area or be ready to start and maintain a small business in order that you and your family can eat.

Many parents find it challenging to keep a full-time job while caring for their family. What advice would you give parents who are thinking of becoming self-employed?

Being a parent is a full-time job already; I will say go for it - follow your dreams and passion become the businessman/woman that you want to be. Take control of your destiny and start your own business. Reflect on what you want in life and take this recession as an opportunity for you to try something new and challenging.

What advice would you give to single parents in learning how to juggle their finances and keep their jobs?

Be highly conscious of your finances and make sure you learn about financial management. Do a monthly budget set out day-to-day, reassess your finances, set up different bank accounts for your bills, go food shopping once per month if you can, leave debit/credit cards at home and avoid temptation. Don't go shopping!

Calling London

How a city's dispossessed found a voice



David Cohen

The story of the Evening Standard's award-winning campaign

London Evening Standard

Hope & Restoration Ltd (£4,950)

Helps unemployed adults by providing workshops on personal development, employability skills and business start-up awareness. Of the 107 people they helped in their first year of operating, 15 began their own business, 23 got jobs, and 25 are in further training. The grant will be used to deliver accredited courses in employability skills and mentoring up to Level 2 (their courses have hitherto been unaccredited). The courses will run over ten weeks. A Level 2 course can be a path out of poverty and into work and can rebuild lives.



1st Floor, 39 Market Square
Edmonton Green
London N9 0TZ
Mob: 07415 86 7215

www.hrtrainingprofessional.co.uk
Email: mtinfohrtraining@googlemail.com