

MUM'S The word!

Mother's day is fast approaching and for many women it's a celebration of all that is good in their lives. But for some, the slopped cups of tea in bed and sticky fingers who helped make them are another reminder that nothing will ever be the same again... including their Egyptian Cotton bed-sheets.

Whitstable mum Sam Skull felt she lost her own identity after the birth of her son Josh, now two, but skills she had learned as a life coach helped her to turn things around. She now helps other mums find that lost sparkle, through her own business, Motivated Mums, and is passionate about teaching them to enjoy life again.

"When I became a mum everything changed," she said. "Now I can see that it changed me for the better. Time and family are so precious and what is important to you is what matters. It's as simple as that, but some mums lose sight of that because everything else takes over."

Sam's mission has seen her feature on the pages of a host of parenting magazines, and her email newsletter is read by mothers across the globe; but it's not the thought of her ever-increasing profile that motivates her. "I don't want to be famous," she explained. "I just want to make a difference. I want to make everyone know there is another way and I love it when I can help them find it. I am human and I have wobbly moments but I get through them, and so can everyone else. If you believe you can, and work hard, then you can really make changes that will make you happy."

As well as professional training in life coaching and personal development, Sam uses skills from her own life to help other parents. After training as a legal secretary and experiencing corporate life, she became a business consultant but found her career was not providing the fulfilment she wanted. "So I emptied everything in my life and started again," she said. "Then I wondered if I

could help others to be happy with their lives, and that is how I found life coaching."

She works by helping people to think differently, replacing negative beliefs with positive ones via a process known as neuro-linguistic programming. But she found herself needing to take her own advice again after becoming so involved with her work that she was hospitalised with exhaustion and stress. "It made me realise that everything has to be balanced otherwise you will burn out," she said. "I have been through some phenomenal changes and, looking back, it's amazing to think I now enjoy meditation and growing vegetables - I never would have believed that a few years ago! I have let go of control and can help others to do the same, by working out what is important to them."

Her infectious positivity is reflected in the popular workshops she holds to help mums increase their confidence, motivation and inner peace. She also set up a Motivated Mums network group that meets for a night out each month to provide valuable me-time away from home.

And as well as finding time for golf, belly-dancing and potting, Sam is also writing a book to help spread the message. "Part of me finds it very daunting because I don't like seeking out the spotlight," she said. "But I felt it was what I was meant to be doing next and it's a very exciting time..."

Liz Crudgington

EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNT FOR IMP READERS

The next series of Motivated Mums workshops starts at the Horsebridge Centre in Whitstable in March. Sessions cost £20 a week but IMP readers who book for the six-week course in advance can save 10% on the cost by using the reference MMIMP10 when booking. For more information, or to receive Sam's free motivational newsletter, email motivatedmums@yahoo.co.uk or call 01227 261345.

Toptips

REFLECT – What did you enjoy doing last year and what would you like to change or enhance this year?

SET A GOAL – When choosing your goal/resolution, be clear and specific. For example, if you would like to lose weight, specify much you would like to lose.

BE MOTIVATED – Most people don't achieve their goals, because they haven't worked out what their motivation is. What is your motivation to lose weight - to feel fit and healthy?

PLAN ACTIONS – Unless you create specific actions to complete the goal, how can you achieve it? What actions do you need to put into place to lose weight - stop snacking, exercise, and eat more healthily?

SET A TIME-FRAME – but be realistic!

BELIEVE! – It's easy to set goals - and it's even easier to allow your internal negative chatter to tell you that you can't. Believe in yourself, concentrate on what you do well and what you have achieved, focussing on the positive, not the negative.

ENJOY YOURSELF – How do you think you will achieve your goal, if you don't enjoy the process of getting there? What do you enjoy doing? If you are not sure, why don't you try something new?

REWARD YOURSELF – You've been dedicated and achieved what you desired, now give yourself a well-deserved reward!

