

Better Your Best Essay

Born in Wolverhampton to an African couple - immigrants who despite considerable hardship back in Africa, had been sent here to find a better life. I lived with a foster family for the first 5 years of my life as my father worked and my mother studied hard and long to build a name for themselves and to have enough money to send home to Africa to take care of their family left behind. Finally, my dad chose to return to Africa permanently and my sister, mother and I went with him.

It was a shock to the system as year after year, our home was attacked by armed robbers. To start with, it all seemed amusing to my five year old mind but as I got older, I learnt what it was to live with fear, never knowing when our home would once again be broken into by men with guns seeking to take away my parents livelihood. Over the years we lost several members of the household in these events. It was very traumatic and as a result I became a fearful person.

In 1986 on a car journey back from a relative's house, the whole family was involved in a car crash that changed the course of our lives forever. The car somersaulted with my father, pregnant mother, sister, baby brother (only 1 at the time) and I in it. I was thrown out of the car and miraculously avoided all injury. My father however was not so lucky and never walked again. He was paralysed from his neck down. A promising career in Accountancy, almost the managing director of his company, all the potential was wiped away on that fateful day. My father was asked to retire and he lost hope and lost his will to fight. As his child, I watched as he withdrew into himself and gave in to despair. I learnt what it looked like to be hopeless.

My mother had to step up to the challenge and keep the family afloat. We were asked to move out of our home as it was part of the employment package my Dad had with his employer. Quickly, a house was erected on a plot of land in the middle of nowhere with the help of family and friends but there was not enough time or money to complete the building. It was a dangerous place and the armed robbers returned. Now with no male protector, my mother was beaten up and I still remember the feel of a gun against my head and the hard, searing pain of slaps across my face as I tried to protect my siblings.

We had no bread for years; My mum tried to make sure we had food to eat but there was little money left over for frills or luxuries. I promised myself that as soon as I could I would make enough money to help my brothers live better than I had and that is where my desire for independence started. I learnt that as a woman, I must be able to stand on my own two feet financially as life could change in an instant.

For various reasons, my mother snuck us out of the country in 2006 and we came back to the UK. My sister and I were young, alone and had £5 every fortnight to live on as my mum could only send enough to pay our rent. I felt so out of place but was determined to make something of myself and resolved never to be dependent. With some effort I finally found a job to supplement the meagre income I was receiving.

After several years of full time work and study, I finally registered as a Pharmacist and thought life would be easier. Alas, No. Instead I found myself supporting my two younger brothers, my husband who had recently started a full time degree, and to further complicate matters another young girl I had met in my local church who needed somewhere to stay until she found her feet. I was working all day every day trying to keep my household not too deeply in the red. It seemed this would be my lot forever. A hamster trapped on a treadmill expending all my time and energy but never making any progress, financially at least.

My sister sent me a copy of 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad' and a thought was placed in my head: Maybe there *is* another way? I started to look into business ideas, tried an ill-advised network marketing business, failed dismally and found myself further into the red. I heard briefly about Parmdeep Vadesha and even though I had read about investing in the Kiyosaki book, I thought I could not buy property yet as I was too much in debt (Oh! how silly I was - with hindsight, I know now that the period was a great time to get finance!). I kept banging my head against the wrong walls. And then I got pregnant.

I was in despair about my debt and was unable to maintain my punishing work schedule. As a result of inaccurate information and financial mis-education, I thought our only way out of debt was to sell our house. So, we sold our house (a stupid move, I know now!) to pay off most of our debt and I came to an agreement about the rest. So now my credit was shot. I buried all my dreams. However, somewhere deep inside - despite the fear and hopelessness, I knew there had to be another way. I knew this could not be where it all ended.

During my life journey, I have seen many girls and women give up on themselves and, having always sought to be an encouragement and role model to them, I knew I had to step-up and face down my issues. I bided my time and completed my family - my third daughter was born in September 2010. I decided that things had to change on a more permanent basis. While having children, the family finances were very much 'touch and go' as my husband set up his new career and we both knew we could sustain a *too much month at the end of the money* lifestyle in the long term.

So I read "Rich Dad, Poor Dad" again and determined to get a financial education. I had to work around my children and therefore looked briefly at forex. Property seemed a bit more tangible however and so I returned to Parmdeep Vadesha. I had been receiving his emails since 2006 and he still seemed to be in business, despite the house price crash. I knew I needed education and the TMA seemed to be suited to my purpose.

The TMA Year

So I ventured in, scared and slightly uncertain but determined to take whatever I was given and run with it. If it did not work it certainly wouldn't be for lack of trying. And yes, I am proud of what I have accomplished this year.

- I bought a house at 18% below market value as a direct result of applying the tools and strategies provided to us during the course.

- I manage property for other people, again as a result of applying the TMA teaching.
- I have learnt to negotiate and secure the best deal in any given buying situation - houses, cars, fruit and vegetables! Something I never thought I would do is sit in an investor's car and refuse to leave until we had negotiated a finder's fee. When I walked out of that car, I felt empowered.
- I have spoken to numerous estate agents and developed relationships that enable me to take property leads and sell them on the open market.
- I have pounded the streets delivering leaflets with my three children aged 4, 2 and 1. That was a novel experience! If you have ever done this you may identify with my terror that for each letterbox there is the distinct possibility that someone is going to walk out of the house and insult you for delivering the leaflets to their house. In some cases they actually did! Despite this I kept going and learnt that delivery is much faster if you get someone without children to do it!
- I was pleased to note that my personally designed leaflets generated 10 leads for every 5000 delivered.
- I have also built websites to generate leads. Before this year I knew absolutely nothing about such things but I can now set up a website and have it online in a matter of hours. In the process of learning how to do this for property, I also learnt that there is a whole field of business called Internet Marketing that anyone can do from home. I decided to add this to the streams of income that would ultimately be used to increase my property portfolio.
- I am building a team of people around me to support me in my endeavors like handymen, mortgage advisors, solicitors, electricians so there is always someone to turn to in various situations.

I must mention the people who have helped me on this journey - People like Maksoom Hussain who helped me stay strong when I felt like giving up. She gave me so much of her time, I cannot thank her enough.

Hanif Khan - who has taken the time to guide me through this challenging year.

Sue Elkington - who has encouraged and helped me on this journey.

My fellow TMA members who have proved a great source of encouragement and practical information.

Needless to say, I am overwhelmingly grateful to Parmdeep and his team for helping me on this journey.

This year on the TMA has proved what I have always known - If you are willing to take action, dreams can come true.

Contest Diary

This year, I have met some amazing, open, helpful people like Maksoom, Sue, AKhtar, Hanif and of course Deep. Each one of them have given their time and knowledge so freely. I have done things the fearful, hopeless person I used to be would never have thought possible.

I have negotiated with vendors, been laughed at and doubted by agents, pounded the streets with my leaflets and three very young children, refused to leave cars until a deal was done, built websites, cried my heart out as fear and fatigue threatened to overwhelm me, juggled childcare and business and work and hospital visits like a pro juggler. I have done things I never ever thought I could do. And it is all thanks to the TMA.

Here are the notes I made at the end of each month as part of the contest.

August and September 2011

5000 leaflets delivered in the areas surrounding Birmingham.

My daughters and I try to deliver them for 2 days and this proves, how can I say it? Interesting so I have to leave it to a family friend on summer holiday.

This results in 11 leads in total. The problems I was having at this point was bringing things to a close. Lots of experience negotiating, viewing houses and making offers.

Also, learning to ask the questions about their mortgage amounts and how much the vendors pay each month and more. Asking these questions was pretty nerve-wracking to start but the more I did it, the better I got at it. Getting the answers to these questions was essential in helping me structure an appropriate deal.

I did manage to get a couple to agree to a lease option. The problem being that the figures did not add up.

Also, I went to see houses through estate agents. Attempted to make low offers on all the items. So far no takers.

Made new friends on the TMA course.

Started Mum-in-business.com.

Also set up Anyhousebought.com

Books Read

Rich Dad Poor Dad (For the millionth Time!)

One Minute Millionaire

Screw it Let's Do it

October 2011

Had an offer of £77000 accepted on a property on the market at £85000. I then managed to

bring the price down further to £70000 using a range of newly learnt negotiation tactics such as *the third party* and *being willing to walk away*.

This tactics were learnt by viewing a great many properties and speaking with a lot of vendors and agents. One of the books I read this month included 'The secrets of power negotiating' by Roger Dawson. I found this book to be a great help when learning to negotiate.

As part of the TMA, I joined with another investor and we printed and delivered 10000 leaflets. Ten leads were obtained from the leaflets.

On average, I am viewing 8 - 10 properties a week. This may seem low but with three young children (one of whom is still young enough to be breastfed), home educating and working part time as a pharmacist at the weekends, fitting in these viewings was based on sheer force of will.

I attend A Robert Allen Seminar (Thanks to a fellow TMA member!) - A great, great experience. I broke a wooden plank with my bare hands! I am made even more aware of the possibilities of the internet, writing and property.

Books Read

Secrets of Power Negotiating
Psycho Cybernetics
Rich Woman
How to get Rich

November 2011

Same thing continues. My life is a mixture of taking the children places, viewing properties, negotiating with vendors and estate agents, making offers and learning, learning, learning.

I am in talks with two investors about a potential purchase of a property which I have made a low offer on (54k for a 3 bed property, needs about 3k work) and it was accepted (surprisingly!). Estate agent chasing me for confirmation of offer details, proof of funds sent through for one investor as the other started to drag their feet.

One of the leads from my leaflet campaign is considering a lease option as their circumstances do not allow them to sell without considerable loss. This was a family breakdown situation with a house they had bought at an inflated price only a few months ago. Unfortunately, the mortgage is too high again so this time I offer to find him a tenant and manage it on his behalf. The vendor agrees. Contracts are signed and I am in property management! Tenants found and housed within 3 weeks.

Also, I am in talks with another investor and a vendor concerning a block of flats. Finder's fee agreement signed on that.

Books Read

Think like a Tycoon
Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion
Influence: Science and Practice

December 2011

The investor pulls out of the deal and I am left looking like a fool with the estate agent. Oh well, Better dust myself off and try again!

The house purchase is completed - time to look for a tenant, preferably before Christmas. There is work to be done on the property, mainly decorative. I decide to find a tenant for a reduced deposit who will do the painting and decoration themselves. I manage to do this so house is let for £550 (more than I thought I would get!) and the tenant moves in the week before christmas.

Following tips given by Maksoom and Parmdeep, I am starting to build a list of investors. I am getting pretty excited for the new year as there are so many good deals on the market at present.

Towards the end of the last month, I had been called by a vendor with some land and derelict buildings and a few houses that she wants help with selling. I am pretty excited about this as it could be a really big deal. I arrange to meet with her and she seems to be quite motivated to sell. As I am unable to immediately value the place, we agree to a deal that says I get a percentage of the sale price.

I immediately get to work contacting builders in the area, housing associations to see if anyone is interested. A few bites but have to wait until after christmas to hear back definitively - Most people are on holiday. We also decide to contact a few architects familiar with the area and consider getting outline planning.

A great year so far. Surely it can only get better.

Books Read

Intelligent Investor

The E-myth

Four Hour Work Week

Unfair advantage

Unleash the Giant Within

January 2012

A new Year!

I build a few more websites and start to write articles extensively and place them in various locations on the web. I have decided to build up real estate both online and offline.

On the offline front - The land and buildings are starting to become a lot more complicated than I initially anticipate and I realise that the vendor is motivated but unwilling to sell at a price that the market will endure due to complications with the planning department in the local council. We have instructed a planning consultant and I attended a planning meeting at the council with representatives from the various departments - Historic Environments, Building Regs, Road and Traffic etc Very enlightening!

At this point, I realise that this may not go the way it would need to, in order to be successful. We considered auctions but I realised that the problem was actually the vendor as she was unwilling to accept the market value as she had over-capitalised. I decided to walk away from this. Two months wasted!

Lessons Learnt - Do not waste time with deals that are unlikely to complete, no matter how much sympathy you may feel towards the vendor. Help as much as you can but ultimately I need to leave them to follow up on advice given. Great experience learning some of the detail of obtaining outline planning. It will be so much easier next time.

Books Read

Small Giants: Companies that choose to be great instead of Big
Conspiracy of the Rich
Its Rising Time

*You will be what you will to be;
Let failure find its false content
In that poor word "environment,"
But spirit scorns it, and is free.*

*It masters time, it conquers space,
It cowers that boastful trickster Chance,
And bids the tyrant Circumstance
Uncrown and fill a servant's place.*

*The human Will, that force unseen,
The offspring of a deathless Soul,
Can hew the way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene.*

*Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.*

*The river seeking for the sea
Confronts the dam and precipice,
Yet knows it cannot fail or miss;
YOU WILL BE WHAT YOU WILL TO BE!*

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