



COACH & MENTOR

Elizabeth Hammond
is a leading UK individual 1:1 Life and Executive Coach and Mentor

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Elizabeth Hammond believes that through life evaluation and coaching, we can create the best life for ourselves. So does that explain who she is today? Life Coach Elizabeth Hammond talks to Holly Candlish about her turbulent upbringing, her stellar city career and Action for Children, a charity close to her heart

Elizabeth Hammond is smart, successful and stunning: with two beautiful children and a husband with whom she recently celebrated her 25th wedding anniversary. Sitting cross-legged in her tasteful Oxshott home, immaculately dressed and practically flawless, Elizabeth is the first to admit that she has a wonderful life. But proving the old adage true, that you can't judge a book by its cover, she reveals the challenges she faced growing up.

"My story's not dull. I was the youngest of four from a deeply Catholic family, and sadly my mother died in a flu pandemic in 1969. Within a year, my father married his

second wife and I inherited a step-brother, Mark, who became my 'twin'. We enjoyed an idyllic childhood running free, chasing rabbits in Shropshire. However, the rural nirvana was shattered in 1979 when Teresa, my elder sister, joined the army and mysteriously disappeared on a private jet bound for Jeddah. The family was left reeling and we all dealt with her death in different ways: my father embarked on an all-consuming mission to find out what happened using our military connections to discover the truth and my brother sadly took a darker path and died after a lifetime of drug abuse. I went off the rails only pulling it back after university when I started work." As for what had happened to her sister,

she concludes, "My father's investigations revealed that Teresa was actually working for MI6 and was tortured, and probably killed, because of that."

It's a shocking account of a family living through a trauma and goes a long way to explain why Elizabeth is so successful as a coach and counsellor; but how Elizabeth has ended up so strong, resilient and happy is harder to fathom. She admits her father had a positive influence, "He was a grafter and a very successful business man. He ensured we never lost our family sense of optimism and fun and told me that you have to take responsibility for your life."

Armed with a degree



from Newcastle University, Elizabeth heeded her father's words to take responsibility and 'blagged' her way onto the derivatives desk at Goldman Sachs, and from a job with this leading investment bank her career took off. She moved into headhunting and says, "This is where I really found myself. I was working at a senior level, understanding complex products but more importantly working out who people were and where they would fit, and I loved it."

She forged a long and successful career in high level search as Head of Global Financial Services Practice at Heidrick & Struggles and in 2002 founded her own firm, Hammond Partners, which her husband, Paul, now runs. Alongside this successful company, she established

TXG Ltd, a leading provider of corporate coaching and worked with an impressive list of female business leaders for the Princes Trust Leadership Group. She freely admits, "I was a workaholic and hugely successful. I went back to work three weeks after the birth of my daughter and, looking back, I don't think I'd do anything different."

These days Elizabeth adopts a healthier work/home balance but is no less impressive, adapting her corporate skills for her personal 1:1 coaching, seeing clients in London and in Oxshott. "I usually see people when they are in a period of transition, moving from one role to another or starting a new business. But it's not just executives who are looking to develop new skills and management techniques, it is often men

and women transitioning into retirement or women who would like to go back to work after the kids have left. The first thing I'd say of the last group is that they've been working throughout this period: they've probably raised children, run houses, and managed the whole family. They're doing a lot but they're not fulfilled and lost track of who they are."

But be warned, you have to do your homework. "The starting point is keeping a diary where you mark down when you feel good, feel bad, and feeling in the flow. We work out a map of who you are: What are your true values? How would people describe you and what is your story? I show you the map of and how to change. Life evaluation and transformation work sit at

the core of what I do and it requires a level of honesty and hard work." We should all try coaching: it sounds fun.

Fun and a whole lot of hard work goes into Elizabeth's other major occupation: the hugely successful 'Action for Children' fundraising lunch at the Jumeirah Carlton Tower in London. It's quite simply the ultimate ladies' lunch and features a fashion show sponsored by Harvey Nichols. Tickets for the yearly event sell out within days and Elizabeth, along with her committee, is responsible for every aspect of the event. "It's equivalent to having a full-time job but is a marvellous opportunity to shine a light on the work of Action for Children, the charity founded on the belief that every child should have the opportunity to get a head

start in life regardless of their backgrounds."

First impressions really can be deceiving. Elizabeth looks like someone who attends charity lunches rather than gets stuck in and organises them. Like her father, she's a grafter and she has undergone personal

challenges in her life and it is these characteristics, just as much as her 16 years in the city, that have made her the inspiring woman she is today.

For information on Life & Executive Coaching contact elizabeth-hammond.co.uk



Elizabeth with Prince Charles