



**CASE STUDY**  
**COHORT ONE - JULY 2014**  
**INTERVIEW WITH 'T'**

*T' at Speed Dating Event*

## **LIFELINE MENTEE Q + A**

### **TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF**

I'm 19, I come originally from Maypole. I live about 2 minutes away from there now. I live on my own, I moved out when I was about 14, in St Basils when I was 16. I went to college. 3 years now, I've got 3 diplomas, I've got a Level 2 Travel and Tourism, a Level 2 Mechanics and then a BTEC in Fashion, which I'm pursuing as my business now.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR INTERESTS OR WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX?**

That's hard, I don't even know what I do to relax. Sometimes I'll get in the bath, but even when I'm in the bath I'll think to myself 'ahhh I've got to get out and do this..'. I like being outside, I'm a very outdoorsy lady, but when I say that I don't mean going hiking and everything I mean literally sitting outside. It can be in the sun, it can be in the rain, I just like being outside. And that's about it, that's my relaxation, and just silence.

### **WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS IDEA – HOW FAR HAVE YOU GOT WITH THIS?**

It's still, to be honest, an idea at the moment. Because I need to find...I'm just waiting on grant information and funders and stuff so I can start it up because with this little guy [her 2 year old son], it's not that easy to just buy clothes and a sewing machine. So, I'm just waiting to start it up. I'm meeting with my mentor 'G' tomorrow, we're going to have a talk about it, we just need to start setting up where my starting points going to be really, and just like generating money before.

## **WHAT INTERESTS YOU MOST ABOUT STARTING A BUSINESS – WHY SET UP YOUR OWN BUSINESS RATHER THAN WORK FOR SOMEONE ELSE?**

To be honest me and authority...moving out when I was like 14 it was like 'my mum doesn't tell me what to do' kind of 'I'm the big teenager I can do what I want' and it kind of started from there really but since then I've just gradually got more independent as I go along and then I had my son, so really I just like relying on myself, I don't really like relying on other people, it's a lot easier for me to just deal with things I have to do on my own, that's just my way of thinking anyway. It's just a lot easier for me to be independent. Yeah, so I like that just the aspect of being able to pull money out of your pocket and know it's yours and it's going to go back into yours. And obviously I want this little guy to have everything!

## **WHAT KIND OF HELP DO YOU MOST NEED TO GET STARTED?**

It's just the financial side really, and that's about it, once I've got my money sorted then I can start the ball kind of rolling really, I can't make clothes without the industrial overlock on a sewing machine and everything. And I wanted to start a ready to wear range first, which is just buying clothes in and then doing something to them and then selling them on.

It's just the financial side of it and a bit of the business know how as well, because I haven't done business at all, like the only bit I know it the bit that Cheryl's taught us, so I just need a bit of guidance in that aspect because when I hear all the jargon my mind just shuts down. All I know is profit \*laughs\*. Yeah, that's about it, just a bit of help, and a bit of a kick up the bum, just to be on time and more organised. Because I think I'm organised, and then I'm thinking I'm on time and then I look at the clock and I'm half an hour late and I could have sworn I was on time. So I just need a little bit of help there, with the business side of it.

## **WHAT ARE YOUR AMBITIONS FOR YOUR LIFE AND/OR BUSINESS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?**

Over the next 5 years I just want to make sure that my business is stable because while I'm setting up the business I'm going to try and start working as well, and then just get my house sorted, so I'm kind of like using that for my house, and then as soon as my house is sorted and I've got my car and everything then hopefully I'll start going in to doing more intricate designs and stuff. So, it's going to take a while but in 5 years I'd be happy with just a couple of ranges out, probably start doing my handmade, from scratch things.

## **WHAT DO YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY THINK OF YOUR PLANS?**

They're happy, the people I've told have been very supportive, but my friends are anyway because they just want clothes. Yeah my friends are very supportive, all the ladies in my family are as well because they're just excited to see the clothes. And a lot of people...I think, because I left home and I had a baby young as well I think everyone just kind of just thought 'that's it now, Tam's not really going to do much else now' so I think everyone's just proud that I'm actually set out to do something.

## **IF YOU WERE ABLE TO GIVE SOMEONE IN SCHOOL ADVICE ABOUT THE FUTURE WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

Not to be quite set on your goal, as you're so young, because I've changed mine so many different times, like I've got my mechanics diploma, I've got my travel and tourism diploma, and fashion, I wanted to be a mechanic, an air hostess and a pilot all at the same time, like I just didn't have a clue. And I thought let me just do this now, and I was pushing myself, and I just stopped enjoying it. Just go with the flow really, just see what happens. Just go with the flow, let life lead you instead of trying to turn it because it's not going to work.

## **DO YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT SETTING UP YOUR OWN BUSINESS?**

With me it's the poor self-confidence, I'm just really scared of failing, I really just don't want it to all just come crashing down, I think that's my biggest fear, is just failure. I need to build up my self-belief because if I did believe then I know it's not going to fail, but I'm just not sure yet, I've never done anything like this. I haven't really worked that much, I've worked for about 6 months, but then obviously I was in college and then I had him [her son] (but I went straight back to college after that), I've never really been in the working world, so I'm just a bit unsure on that aspect as well. I'm just a little bit scared of the unknown, because I don't really have a clue what I'm doing, I'm just going to throw myself in and see what happens. But yeah, that's about it, just scared of the unknown.

## WHAT DO YOU THINK OF LIFELINE SO FAR?

I think it's wicked, I honestly think it is really good because, like, networking with other entrepreneurs, I met with a photographer, 'P' (you might have met him?), and I might be linking up with him to see I can get some of his pictures on my t-shirts, and that was an easy contact to make because he's right there. And 'D', he said when my business is running he'll whack it on the site that he's starting. It's just real good, I'm just happy to meet people with motivation, because my friends, most of them are just like in one job, they're not going anywhere and they haven't really got any other plan except that, except 'what am I doing on the weekend?', and when you're around that all the time, it's something that you get used to, but I never wanted to get used to that, I didn't like it, I didn't want a 9 to 5 job that I'm going to have until I'm 50, I just didn't want it.

And Cheryl and Diane, they're really good as well because I just like their honesty, like if I say to Cheryl 'have you got this?' or 'do you know this?' if she doesn't know the answer she'll just say 'you know what I don't know but I can find it out and come back to you', instead of feeding you the wrong information just to feel like 'yeah, I am still the one that's teaching you'. I like it, because she teaches me, I've never been good at just listening to someone, just sitting there and taking it all in but Cheryl will talk to you and get you involved.

## HAVE YOU WORKED MUCH WITH YOUR MENTOR YET?

No I haven't because he was on holiday or something, and because I had a different mentor lined up. I don't know if it was me that changed things, but I did ask Diane 'would I be able to have 'G'?' because I liked him. He's into fashion as well, and he's a business analyst (? , I think he is, once again the jargon, I don't have a clue). So he's got the business side but then the fashion side, and he was dressed wicked at the event. So I was kind of just like 'yeah, I would like to have 'G' as my mentor'. So, we haven't worked together much but I was texting him yesterday and he put me at ease because I was saying 'what am I bringing, do I need anything?' and he just said 'no, we're just going to talk'.

## DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TO BE DISADVANTAGED, DEPRIVED OR VULNERABLE? WHO ARE PEOPLE REFERRING TO WHEN THEY DESCRIBE PEOPLE LIKE THIS?

Do you know what, I understand it, but those words to me make me feel a bit like...I don't know, I feel a bit uncomfortable, like even though I am with a homeless team, I'm in St Basils and it's a homeless organisation, I'm put down as I'm homeless and I haven't got this and I haven't got that, but I'm fine, I'm absolutely fine. But I understand that people use those words, because some people in St Basils are completely different to me, like money management skills, stuff like that will make it dependent on whether you're deprived of things or you're not living comfortably. I'm not deprived of anything, I'm about to get a McDonalds after this \*laughs\*. Yeah, for me those words are uncomfortable, I've never said anything, like I don't think they're derogatory towards me, I just think they're the words that you're going to hear because we are in a homeless organisation, if I had somewhere else I would stay there, but people are going to use those words.

