

## INTRODUCTION

If you think that I'm writing this book from a place of perfect serenity, and that my life must be absolute perfection, you are wrong. As I sit here typing this introduction, I've actually got quite a lot on my plate.

I'm in the middle of selling my house, and it's taken almost ten months so far to get where I am now. I haven't got anywhere to move to. I'm being turfed out of my job in the civil service, and made to apply for another one, for the second time in six months.

When I went to the cash machine today it spat my card out. I hope my mother never finds out how much money I owe. She'd slap my legs, and I'm 35.

But I am really happy. Honestly. The house has at least been sold, and I just have to wait for the paperwork to go through. I call the estate agents occasionally but then forget about it. I still have a job, and I'm still getting paid. In time there will be an offer of redundancy payouts on the table...and I'm hoping to take the cash and emigrate with my lovely husband. Of course, this book will become a best seller.

I get paid in a few days. And at least I can fiddle my finances until payday so that my train fares are covered.

I just made all the negatives into positives. This didn't involve deluding myself, sitting in front of a mirror and affirming how much I love myself, or imagining I'm on a desert island - but just putting a positive spin on the not so great things that are happening. It didn't make the problems go away...but it did change how I feel about them. When I have bad days, I sulk, bitch and rant like anyone else. I've just come to realise that being positive actually works. So after I've sulked, bitched and ranted for a bit, I just change my frame of mind, and move on.

I started my website Relentlessly Positive because I was sick to death of the constant negativity that surrounds us. Everything is bad for us, and we can't do right for doing wrong. If you're as fed up as I am of hearing about how we're all doomed, how debt, divorce, obesity and working mums are bringing about the end of the world as we know it, and how we never measure up...you should read this book. It'll cheer you up no end.

I'm going to prove to you that there is a positive side to everything. I'm going to give you techniques that you can use every day to help you deal with life's little curveballs - and ways to approach problems that make them seem more manageable. I'll share my own experiences and pass on the information I've learned that's helped me get to where I am now.

What qualifies me to write a book like this? Well, I was a shy swot who was bullied at school, then had to leave at 16 after failing some of my O levels. I've had some rotten jobs, was bullied again by a particularly nasty manager, and

have been made redundant three times. I'm in debt up to my eyeballs, and was divorced by 25. Oh, and I had to go on long term sick leave in 2003, which led me to attempt to sue my employer and fail. I've also failed my driving test three times.

But then – although I've had my share of traumas and problems, and things haven't always gone according to plan, on the whole I can't really complain. I had a stable, happy, two-parent upbringing (so this isn't going to be yet another 'I had a miserable childhood and nobody loves me' tale) and a good education. I went on to pass two A levels and several diplomas in my spare time. I've worked full time since leaving school 20 years ago, had a wide variety of jobs, met some great people, managed to work in my dream job for a while, been married twice, moved house several times, and never been seriously ill.

It's all about perspective. And I'm about to change yours...