

Helping the Next Generation

Bringing Happiness Home

Sonya Shellard and Kim Morgan started Next Generation Coaching to help good families become better. Through their workshops, participants learn advanced coaching skills so they can be the best parents possible. Next Generation Coaching's mission statement is "bringing happiness home." by Eve Menezes Cunningham



Sonya is an experienced coach with both personal and business coaching experience. Kim is one of the UK's leading providers of University Masters Level Coach Training. Her own children are 23 and 21 and she has 20 years' experience of training and development, psychotherapy, personal and business coaching and mentoring.

When she and Sonya started Next Generation Coaching, Kim had been running Post Graduate training in Personal and Business Coaching for 6 years. Sonya was one

of Kim's graduates. With two children herself, she says, "When I had my training, the impact of taking these skills home to my family was huge."

Kim noticed that more and more delegates, like Sonya, were commenting on the massive impact of using coaching skills within their family. She was particularly aware of delegates who'd already raised children. They said they wished they had known about the power of language and positive attention when their children were young.

Sonya came from an organisational development, Learning and Development background. She found that limiting beliefs from childhood were holding her adult clients back. She says, "It wasn't that they'd had bad parents but their parents were not aware of the impact they had." Deciding to work with

parents meant Sonya could bring all she'd learned through her training and experience as a coach to family life.

In creating Next Generation Coaching, Sonya and Kim designed a comprehensive programme for parents. Their three one-day workshops, Coaching Skills for Parents, deliver coaching skills for family life.

Much of their work as adults' coaches involved overcoming the obstacles that well meaning parents had created for their children. They were motivated by the potential to provide a better base for future generations. For Kim, it boils down to looking "at that little person and not labelling them with anything other than wonderful things."

Each course starts with reading *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran. Kim says, "A big part of programme is about 'the bow that is stable'.

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ARE YOU TAKING TIME TO RECOGNISE YOUR OWN NEEDS?

Sonya says, "Make a list of all the roles you play as a parent." They might include as diverse jobs as driver, homework tutor, nutritionist, cleaner and personal clothes shopper...

Once you've done this, make a list of all your needs as an adult. Use these headings to help you get started:

- Physical...
- Intellectual...
- Social...
- Emotional...

What actions can you start taking right now to give yourself more time to meet your own needs?

The emphasis is on the parent being able to offer their child both roots and wings – stability and boundaries together with freedom and new experiences."

According to Kim, understanding that children need different "core factors" (praise and recognition, love and security, responsibility and new experiences) in adequate proportions is key to this.

On the programme, parents spend time reflecting on how they felt when they were children and thereby put themselves in their children's shoes. They also look at their own parenting style with detachment and objectivity.

Sonya's delighted with the progress they've made with Next Generation Coaching. She says, "It's fantastic. We have to keep reminding ourselves that we only started our organisation two years ago. We wanted to do a lot of testing before going out with a franchising concept."

A number of organisations including Egg, FMG Support, HML (part of Skipton Building Society) and Oracle have brought Next Generation Coaching into their organisations.

Sonya says their reasons range from wanting to attract employees and retaining talent, to recognising the importance of taking corporate social responsibility. She says, "It's all happening and is very exciting. We've had phenomenal feedback from the courses we've run so far."

According to Kim, one of the nicest things about their courses is the level of support that delegates give to one another. When they go into organisations, role hierarchy is flattened. Senior managers work alongside junior members of staff. They are all united by the fact that they are parents who want to do the best for their children.

On Next Generation Coaching programmes, over-parenting is considered and discussed with delegates. Kim says, "Parents not letting their children have responsibility comes from

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME A NEXT GENERATION COACH?

The majority of people who've started going through the franchising process are parents themselves and many are already self employed. Sonya says, "They want a product, guidance and the element of support. They want a niche that's tighter than just 'coaching services'."

Kim says, "We're looking for people with an understanding and knowledge of coaching and a complete passion for developing people and children. You don't necessarily have to be a parent although you do need significant experience of family life and parenting skills."

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the positive intention of wanting to protect, but if all the other children of their age are out on their bikes, and your child is not, he/she learns that he/she is not to be trusted. This can lead to low levels of confidence. Children as young as 6 years old can make their own packed lunch in the morning. It makes them feel very important and valued. And they make good choices. Set them tasks they can take responsibility for like emptying the dishwasher or setting the table."

While Kim and Sonya don't have any contact with the children themselves, parents report that their children find it exciting. They notice changes like having more fun and being more empowered.

AGNES BAMFORD – HELPING PARENTS BE THE KIND OF PARENT THEY DREAM OF BEING

Having trained to become a coach with Kim's organisation, Barefoot Coaching, Agnes heard about "Coaching skills for Parents". She says, "I was immediately drawn to this course. At the time (August 2007) I was thinking of how to use my coaching skills to communicate more effectively with my children and create the best possible relationship I could with them. I also realised I wanted to use my coaching skills and my experience as a parent to help other parents get the knowledge and understanding they need to be the kind of parent they dream of being. Knowing how at times, we parents can feel alone, I wanted to get parents involved. Communicating with each other is a way to gain more confidence. The group can inspire and support each other in a way not experienced in individual coaching sessions."

London based Agnes says she's as inspired

by the people involved with Next Generation Coaching as she is by the concept. She is currently promoting it to local schools and nurseries as well as to large corporations. With her own family, Agnes says, "I have become much more aware of how I am as a parent. I have become much calmer."

She has also learned how to make giving her own three children responsibility in a way that feels like fun. And she's gained a lot of reassurance about what she's been doing. Agnes says, "I am achieving the results I want for myself and my family. I have a greater understanding of how my role as a parent affects my children's well-being and performance, and how I can bring about the changes I would like to make." She also feels that she's learned more about the way children learn and develop than she did when studying

developmental psychology.

Her children appreciate the changes. 10 year old Embla likes being allowed to take on more responsibility for what she wants to do and says her mother is calmer. 6 year old Freya and 4 year old Markus enjoy playing games where they are "in charge" of making their own sandwiches and tidying up. Agnes says, "They enjoy using timers as a fun way to get things done within a short time limit. In family meetings, they have expressed what they like and don't like about the way we do things."

In the future, Agnes looks forward to empowering more parents and their children. She says, "I feel passionately about corporations taking on the course as part of corporate social responsibility. I strongly believe that they will end up with happier employees as a result of running the course."