

BEST BUYS

It's that time of years again when the strawberries are out and we hope for British glory. To get you in the mood were selected some top-seeded treats ahead of the Wimbledon Championships.



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SPEND A LOT: Along with a luxury handbag collection, Alison Van Der Lande also designs sports pieces like this pink tennis case for making that crowd-pleasing entrance. The soft Italian pink leather case has a baby blue lining and silver fittings for the finishing touch. **£495, from www.gift-library.com**

How Sue harnessed the power of the positive to bounce back

INTERVIEW

Sue Stone has been dubbed Britain's most positive person. But it hasn't always been that way.

Catherine Scott meets the millionaire who knows all too well what it's like to have nothing.

SUE Stone had it all. Managing director of a manufacturing company in her 20s, married with three great children, a beautiful house and a flash car.

But within two years she had lost it all and was left with just £10 in her purse and the prospect of losing the roof over her and her children's heads.

Now, however, Sue Stone is a millionaire, has been dubbed the happiest person in Britain, and is helping to turn around the lives and fortunes of other people. She has even appeared on Channel 4's *Secret Millionaire*.

"I'd started up a business with someone who I ended up marrying," recalls Sue.

"I had all the normal things, a successful business, a husband, children but then things started to go wrong.

"The marriage and the business were up and down. I kept thinking, 'I've forgotten what it's like to be happy,'" recalls Sue.

"There were a lot of stresses and strains. I was running a business and had three young children and my marriage wasn't working."

Then in 1997 Sue decided that she couldn't continue to live a lie. She left her husband, but rather than solving the problem, things went from bad to worse, especially as the couple continued to work together.

She was also left with a £250,000 debt following her marriage breakdown.

"I did all the wrong things. I would push my credit card to the limit to pay off my loans just to keep everything going, but all that did was make things worse. The bank had had enough and were threatening to repossess my home, because I was behind on my mortgage and everything was up to its limit. I was desperately unhappy and full of fear."

The turning point came two years after she left her husband, when Sue's children, Natalie, was 14, and twin boys Rich and Nick were 12.

"I became a really snappy mummy. I know I was doing everything wrong but I was in a downward spiral. My life had hit rock bottom emotionally and financially. The turning point came when I looked in my purse and had just £10 left with no idea where the next penny was coming from.

"I spent five pounds on petrol to get her kids to school, a couple of pounds on sausages and potatoes for the kids tea and the last few pounds went on a cheap

bottle of wine for me - that was how bad things had got. I just couldn't understand how my life had worked out the way it had. It was then I realised I had to do something; it was out of desperation really."

The first thing she did was come clean to family and friends about her financial predicament. Although she lives down south Sue's family are from Yorkshire. Her father came from Sutton-Under-Whitstonecliffe and then moved to Northgaleton where they had a baker's shop and Sue's mother was of the Enoch family from Whitby.

"My sister lent me some money to buy a £250 car so I could get rid of the expensive finance on my car, but I realised that I personally had to make some radical changes."

She turned to self help books and started to realise how critical positive thinking was.

"I started to work on myself to retrain her brain to be more positive and find the solutions,

Changing the way I thought was like a magnet. People were drawn to me and my positivity.

rather than focus on the problems. I started to realise that I had to concentrate on where I wanted to be not where I was worried I might end up. There was a point when all I could think was that me and the children would end up homeless and on the streets and that terrified me, but it wasn't helpful.

"The more I read the more I realised how powerful our thoughts are."

Sue says that as soon as she started to think differently, so she started to behave differently and her fortunes quite quickly started to change.

"I put my house on the market before the bank repossessed it and it took a year to sell, but it kept the bank off my back. During that time I came up with a solution for the business."

"I started to remind myself everyday how grateful I was for all the good things in my life. Changing the way I thought was like a magnet.



PASSING ON THE MESSAGE: Sue Stone has turned her way of approaching life into a business and now gives talks and helps firms and individuals with turning their fortunes around.

"People were drawn to me and my positivity."

She has totally turned her life around and for several years now has lived a very happy and abundant life in a large house, with a swimming pool and horses in the grounds.

"It has been the most incredible

journey. Friends would say to me that they felt so much better once they'd been around me and so I decided to give motivational coaching a go. I bought the domain name suestone.com and then thought 'what now?' I was out on my own.

"I wanted people to know that

anything is possible. My story speaks for itself."

That was in 2005 and Sue's positive thinking paid off and she now runs a successful business touring the country giving talks, helping businesses and individuals. She has written a book *Love Life, Live Life* published

GOALS CRUCIAL FOR 'VICTORY'

SUE'S top tips on creating positive life.
 ■ Make sure you are focused on where you want to be.
 ■ Visualise your end goal - don't worry how you are going to get there.
 ■ Focus on being grateful for all the things that are right in your life.
 ■ Set yourself goals.
 ■ Positive affirmation is important - keep telling yourself that you can achieve what you want to achieve.
 ■ Sue Stone has arranged to come to Leeds to share her work on Sunday from 2.30pm to 5.30pm at the Chevin Country Park Hotel, Yorkgate, Leeds, LS21 3NU.
 ■ For more information visit www.suestone.com or call 01202 593929.

by Little Brown and a DVD *Unlock Your Inner Millionaire*.

She set up the Sue Stone Foundation which now has more than 44 coaches, including two from Yorkshire who will be joining her at an event in Leeds on Sunday, where she will be sharing her experience and advice. She also has coaches in America, Australia and Dubai.

She says her children, Nat who is now 27 and works with the boys 24, who are entrepreneurs, and happy and rounded individuals as a result of living and breathing her mantra.

Sue now dedicates her time to helping others from all walks of life turn their lives round, she is well known in the field of personal development and boasts celebrities among her clientele.

"I work with all levels and issues, but I can only give people the tools. They have to choose to use them and when they do the results are amazing. It is sometimes hard to believe myself. If someone had said I would be doing this today I would have said they'd lost the plot. I never believed it was possible."

Sue has been labelled in the media as the UK's happiest and most positive person. Something she is proud of.

"I am always positive," she says. "I don't allow myself to have negative thoughts. It does take a lot of work to retrain your brain but it is worth it."

Three years ago she was asked to take part in Channel 4's *Secret Millionaire* which involved her going under cover and working with the homeless in Coventry.

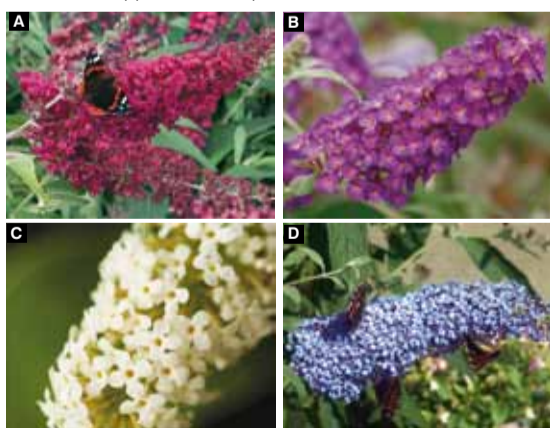
"It gave new meaning to the words rock bottom," says Sue. "But I met some amazing people. One of them is now one of my coaches and a good friend. She says it changed her life."

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YORKSHIRE POST READER OFFER

Wise up! Key steps when taking on office smart Alec

MODERN DILEMMAS

Dear Alex, Someone at work is trying my nerves and contradicting me in meetings and generally causing trouble. I'm about to take a stand and nip this silly behaviour in the bud, but am slightly fearful that I might make it worse. What do you suggest?

Expect setbacks when you stand up against someone playing power games with you at work. Here are six interesting characters to be on the lookout for and how you can "respond".

The Minimizer: This person immediately attempts to diminish your actions by down playing them. Essentially, they want to marginalise you, which can immediately feel disrespectful, hurtful, and frustrating. Don't fall for it! Don't get into a conversation about why you believe your opinions are important. Restate them with a bit more resolve and redirect the conversation towards a constructive solution.

The Caretaker: Someone may decide to be your Caretaker and express such concerns as, "You haven't been yourself lately. Are you all right? You've been pretty edgy and people have been wondering if there is maybe something wrong at home." The Caretaker may be a true friend

who is sincerely concerned with your welfare or the Caretaker might be a false friend who is just gathering data to somehow leverage against you. Proceed with caution.

The Distracter: This person tries to get you off track from your main point by saying things that are seemingly valid. Statements may come in the form of criticising your overall worthiness and emotional stability, with comments such as, "Don't you think you're over-reacting?" or "What you should really care about is..."

These kinds of questions and comments are designed to escalate tension and rattle you. Stay calm and stay focused on your message.

The Fidgeter: Another person who engages in rattling manoeuvres. You're tense. You're uncertain. You're trying to express your concerns clearly and unemotionally. But the person you're talking to keeps looking at his or her watch, shuffling and reorganising papers and glancing out the door. Stay focused and take your time. They'll just have to wait until you're finished.

The Threatener: This person threatens consequences that are out of proportion to merely speaking your mind. When someone overreacts to your message in a threatening way, try not to take the warnings personally, but do take note. Write down what was said, word for word. You never know when you'll need that information.



QUOTE



I must be the only person of my age who doesn't have a gong. They are so common in show business

- Janet Street-Porter

BRIEFLY

Bands of hope after the flood

THIS Sunday sees the launch of a gallery exhibition of wedding jewellery, called "I Do", in Hebden Bridge, a year on from the clear-up operation following the devastating floods that hit the town. Heart Gallery, in a former chapel at The Arts Centre, Market Street, will showcase inspirational, contemporary jewellery for bride and groom, plus ideas for best men, ushers and bridesmaids. The launch begins at noon this Sunday at the gallery. See www.heartgallery.co.uk for details. Meanwhile, the Hebden Bridge Arts Festival runs June 22-30, featuring John Cooper Clarke, Tracey Thorn and Simon Armitage. See www.hbaf.co.uk for details.

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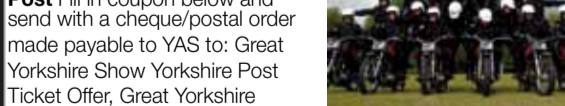
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