

Aspiring Leaders Programme



Jo is a current participant on the Aspiring Leaders Programme. She recently attended a Brathay event to tell people about her story. This is what she said;

When I came to Brathay, I was confused about who I was, what I wanted in life and I just felt lost.

I had a great job and was happily married with three children, but I was just not happy in myself.

I was highly defensive and super sensitive. I just didn't get the way I was..

Like many others, transition to adulthood didn't go well, I was a troubled teen, pregnant at 15 and life had been far from easy growing up.

Brathay and the Francis C Scott Trust offered something that I'd never had before, they offered me an opportunity, an opportunity that I could not turn down.

I was a Trustee on the board at Cumbria Youth Alliance. I wanted to help young people like me, after years of working in mental health care, helping others and being their voice, without opening up about my own troubles and problems. I knew it was time I had to help myself.

As we know, not all childhoods are great, 1 in 4 children live in Poverty. 1 in 5 are subject to domestic abuse. And in March 2016 a recorded **70,440 children** were in the care of local authorities. I was not in care but sometimes I wished I had been.

I want to read you a poem.

This is a poem my sister wrote, it's about our Mum.

Unfortunately some mums are not good mums.....

My mother is a headworker and a liar.

I fear her more than any other.

She works on my weaknesses and plays on my fears.

She takes away my happiness and turns them to tears

I cry myself to sleep and I keep my head down, I'm the victim of bullying at school and at home.

I hate shouting, I retract inside, I cower and do what is required.

She gives you presents and then takes them away, I want for nothing to save me the pain.

She manipulates you to get what she wants.

She's selfish, vindictive and it's our family she taunts.

I've put the phone down and fled away.
I want her no more while she's this way.
I don't deserve happiness, love and affection. I no longer seek her attention.
Now I'm a mother, I protest I'm not like my mum.
I become the opposite and smile at my son.
I've suffered in silence for too long. I'll speak up and right the wrong.

Brathay have given me my voice, they've helped me understand who I am,
Understand what my values are, what I believe in and given me a range of tools to help myself.

It's like I'm starting again.....

I understand my emotions much more, I understand what I need, I've moved from a fixed mind set to a growth mind set and realise now that my failures are not a reflection of me, they are simply experiences to be learnt from.

I suppose when I first came to Brathay I did know what was wrong with me, but my secrets were hidden. I have worked hard over the last two years to unpick my past and put myself right and Brathay have helped me to do this.

I am now more confident, relationships are much improved, I love being part of a team and I can lead....

Brathay help many many people, many younger than me. They inspire, they empower and they believe.

In turn you believe.

