

AFTER REDUNDANCY

“Losing my job turned out to be the best thing

When Ursula James, 38, was made redundant from her job as an IT manager, it forced her to question what she wanted from work and she eventually retrained as a hypnotherapist. Ursula lives in central London with her partner.

“When I was ‘let go’ from my job at an oil and gas company, it was actually a huge relief. I used to work writing computer manuals all day and hardly speaking to anyone, which was very dull.

While I was working there, I’d been to see a hypnotherapist to quit smoking. I was staggered at the results (I never smoked again) and very

interested in how it worked. Now, with some time on my hands, I decided to investigate. I got in touch with the London College of Clinical Hypnosis (LCCH) and signed up for a four-month course costing £400. It was

only part-time, so I could support myself by temping. I never intended for it to be my career, just a part-time interest, but the course was so brilliant, I knew it was something I could do for a living.

It taught you everything from how to relax a patient to therapeutic suggestion, which is tackling smoking, weight loss, blushing phobias and even pain-free childbirth. Anyone can practise hypnotherapy – there isn’t a regulatory body yet – but most

trained practitioners are registered with the British Society of Clinical Hypnosis and you shouldn’t go to anyone who isn’t.

Once I’d qualified with my basic certificate, I started to look for clients. I gave a talk to doctors at my local GP surgery about what hypnotherapy could do for patients. I also held talks (free of charge) at library coffee mornings and even

“You need good people skills for hypnotherapy”

that has ever happened to me”

at the WI. I’m very evangelical about it and my passion clearly caught other people’s imaginations because within a month I had about 30 clients. I carried on my training in between treating people and did advanced hypnotherapy theory and practice, again at the LCCH, for 18 months. During this time, I’d built up a huge client base.

I had practice rooms at a couple of GP surgeries and I rented rooms in central London. GPs would let me use a room rent-free in exchange for treating a few of their patients for nothing. Because I’m now in such demand, I charge between £180 and £300 an hour, which sounds a lot, but usually clients only need one session and I have a 99 per cent success rate.

Anyone can learn hypnotherapy, but you need good communication and people skills to do it really well. I realised that one of the things I enjoyed most about hypnotherapy was explaining the theory behind it and how

it works. After completing an 18-month lecturer training course with the Academy of Higher Learning I decided to teach it and now I’m a Visiting Teaching Fellow at Oxford University Medical School, where I teach theory and technique once a week.

I’ve also written a book (*The Clinical Hypnosis Text Book* published by Radcliffe Medical Press, £24.95) and made nine CDs, treating everything from smoking to arachnophobia. You don’t have to have something wrong with you to benefit from hypnotherapy, as you can use it to be better at your job or just to enjoy life more, which is exactly what I’ve done.”

To find out more, visit www.ursulajames.com.

Top tip Break huge tasks into small bits and do something tiny towards your dream job every day. Before you know it, you will be where you want to be. w&h



Ursula is now an expert hypnotherapist and lecturer