

Join the club and change your life

NEW SELF-HELP CONCEPT HAS TAKEN AMERICA BY STORM AND NOW SCOTS ARE SIGNING UP

By Ellen Arnison

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LIFE CLUB has been described as a cross between life coaching and a slimming club and was inspired by one woman's experience of hitchhiking across America.

And now this phenomenon, which has been taking the States by storm, has arrived in Scotland.

Self-help guru and author Nina Grunfeld founded Life Clubs because she wanted more people to be able to use life coaching to make them happier.

Basing the concept on her hitchhiking travels in the 1970s she said: "You'd just get in the car with people you didn't know and tell them things. There's a certain comfort in talking to strangers."

She created a model where for a weekly 90-minute session like-minded people get together to work on a particular topic and then set a goal for themselves for the week.

The aim is for everyone to get to a 'lightbulb' moment of understanding about what's important to them.



PICTURE: DOMINIC COZZA

CONVERT: Carol Faculjak is passionate about Life Club

CAROL FACULJAK

CAROL FACULJAK started Scotland's first Life Club in Glasgow last autumn and she loves it - she's the living example of everything Life Club stand for.

American Carol was in a job she hated when she turned to a life coach to help point her in the direction she needed to go.

She said: "It's funny when I look back. It was like a light bulb went off over my head. I thought, oh my God, what I'm doing with my coach is what I want to do."

"I'm a little bit of the proof's in the pudding. You know, move country, change career, married the man of my dreams after trying my own personal development work."

Carol trained to be a life coach five years ago after she moved to the UK with her new British husband.

She added: "Life Club is pretty cutting-edge stuff. There are a lot of groups like Slimming World and others with different, specific goals, but this takes your whole darn life. And you can really look at any aspect and work on it. It's brilliant."

Carol, 41, has a real passion for what she does and clearly enjoys what happens during the meetings.

Each session starts with a look at the positive things that have happened during the previous week.

She said: "Even if they've had a really rubbish day, it might be 'I love my porch'. It's really fun to see people reach for what was good. They could be celebrating a terrific review at work or even finding a fantastic parking spot outside."

The professional life coach feels that traditionally reserved Scottish men have the most to benefit from Life Club

She said: "Men tend to get more from it because they don't have those outlets in their world. If they have a woman in their life, that's who they turn to, but if they don't, they don't."

"Men often get more because it's brilliantly new to them. It's 'wow, I can talk about this'."

"Women talk about stuff with their friends or sisters. Sometimes women are more attracted to Life Club but they are a little slipperier in avoiding the big issues."

"People have the idea that the Scots are reluctant to open up, but don't think that's right. People may be reluctant, but that's just human. If anything, the guys are almost hungrier for it because they're not getting it in other parts of their lives."

"British folk are just as likely to cry and have huge epiphanies. Once you get past any kind of cultural thing holding you back, everyone has a lot of the same hopes, dreams and wishes inside."

For Carol, running a Life Club is about helping people make the best of themselves. She said: "I'd encourage almost anyone to give it a go. It's a really relaxed environment where people can come and be themselves."

"It's my job to make sure the mood is right and the tone is right for people to feel safe. What I'm keen to do is make sure people are getting the most of it."

DAVID GRAY

DAVID GRAY turned to Life Club when he moved to the area and wanted a way of meeting people and learning something at the same time.

He said: "Life Club appealed to me because there was an element of self development. I'm always keen to learn more about subjects I'm interested in and other people."

"Light bulb moments are an interesting concept and most people attending get them."

"Usually, these are personal insights which help people under-

stand an aspect of maybe their motivation or behaviour.

"Two of my light bulb moments were understanding that I lit up when I talked about a friend at work and when I talked about dancing."

"They are things that are really important to me and unconsciously I demonstrate this in my behaviour - shiny eyes and animated behaviour."

David, an accountant in the Government's Department of International Development, believes

the success of a Life Club is down to how willing the members are to really dig deep and explore what's going on inside their minds.

And some of that, he explained, depends on the chemistry between the people you are working with at a meeting.

The 61-year-old said: "Not everyone has been willing to share, really get out of the box and reveal their real selves. The benefit really comes when they are comfortable and secure."

"To get there it takes a while you

have to be friends and really feel like you're getting to know each other so you can share that."

"I think openness is important as are sharing and being willing to put yourself out there. It's how you're going to learn expose yourself. People are mixed in their ability to do that."

David's main motivation for joining Life Club was when he moved to East Kilbride from Sheffield and wanted to meet people. He

LIFE CLUB FAN: David

