

# The birth of the CAM Coach

NLP CAM Coach **Mark Shields**, director of the Life Practice Group, explains how he got where he is today – and introduces a new book to inspire and inform you.

**M**any people would have said I had it all. A house on the hill, sea view, boat in the harbour, great job, a wonderful wife and family and to top it all I lived on the Channel Islands. Oh, and I had a six figure salary: riches beyond my wildest dreams, or so I thought.

I was the head of a well known bank and we were achieving great results; I had a great team of people I worked with and life was good, how much better does it get than that?

I just had one big problem. I was bored.

No, really bored. I had somebody on my team who did everything for me, even writing the bank's cheques for me to sign and updating the sales results boards on my office wall while I sat there and watched.

What was there left for me to do? I was 38 years old and had achieved everything I had set out to achieve, I needed a change, a challenge something that would in some bizarre way allow me to once again face the challenge and excitement I had got in the past when climbing that corporate ladder. I cast my mind back to the beginning.

There I was at 16 with my mother in British Home Stores buying my first business suit. It was grey and there was a maroon stripy tie to go with it. My mother loved; it I hated it, especially that maroon tie, I hoped none of my friends could see me.

It was my first job interview with one of the major five high street banks. I felt confident, I had my five 'O' levels, had been told I was good at admin so what could go wrong?

Somewhere along the way the new grey suit let me down. I was rejected and a young lady in a very smart red jacket got the job. She certainly didn't get her jacket from BHS. They thought she had more to offer. I was devastated, but always remembered not getting that job. It wouldn't happen again, and I was relentless about one day putting the record straight. That bank remained in my sights for years to come.

I ended up running that same bank 22 years later, still with the same five 'O' levels, but they didn't seem to matter anymore.



## Miracle cures

Back to near present day. I was in the kitchen when my wife Karen appeared around the fridge door in a state of both panic and delight. "It's him again, that guy on TV who can do everything, the life guru!"

I cautiously entered the lounge and there he was, film star looks and all. He was in full flow, helping a very frightened looking groom get over his wedding nerves.

The more I watched the more intrigued I became. My earliest memory of the world of complementary and alternative medicine is watching Alistair Horscroft that day talking on TV about another patient he had cured, another challenge he had overcome. Here was a man who was incredibly successful; often someone's last resort, he seemed to produce the miracle cure time and time again. He had his own TV show to prove it. The Life Guru was on every week, curing people from every kind of problem and phobia.

That was it. I had to find out how he did the wonderful things he did. He lived in Sydney, but just happened to be flying to London to run an NLP, Hypnosis and Coaching course at the end of that same year. Seven years later and the rest is history. The Life Practice was born. Alistair and I remain firm friends to this day.

Our business has enjoyed unprecedented success during those seven years, with us opening a nutritional arm to our practice as well as offering business coaching and mentoring hundreds of CAM practitioners all

over the world.

As a business we have always featured heavily in the media and it was in this way I met Simon Martin. You all know Simon as editor of *CAM* magazine, but fewer of you know he is a world champion athlete and also trained as an NLP practitioner and coach.

Both Simon and I shared a concern: how difficult it appears to run a successful CAM practice. We agreed I would write a monthly column for *CAM*, the theme of which would be helping fellow practitioners achieve success. That was the start of this ongoing series on Practitioner Proficiencies.

As we got deeper into this, we found out that around 65% of CAM students – even those on degree courses – didn't make it into private practice, and of those who did, many failed in the first 12 months. We decided to do more; we pooled our resources and wrote a book – *The CAM Coach: Reveals the proficiencies, practical steps and the inspiration you need to set up and enjoy an Outstanding Practice* – will be launched at camexpo this month.

I've held nothing back: it shares all of my secrets on how to set up and run a successful alternative medicine business. These secrets, strategies and key principles have actually been used successfully in the field over the last seven years with thousands of clients, practitioners and students and have proved to work. Not only work, but work well and deliver outstanding results.

It's not only practice that ensures good performance but it's that perfect practice ensures perfect performance, or "the difference that makes the difference". © 2011

\* *The CAM Coach* will be launched at camexpo and will be available from *CAM/Target Publishing*.



## About the author

**Mark Shields**, CAM practitioner coach, life coach, author, media expert and motivational speaker, is managing director of Life Practice UK, specialists in Personal and Business Coaching. Contact: 01462 451473, [info@lifepractice.co.uk](mailto:info@lifepractice.co.uk), [www.lifepractice.co.uk](http://www.lifepractice.co.uk)