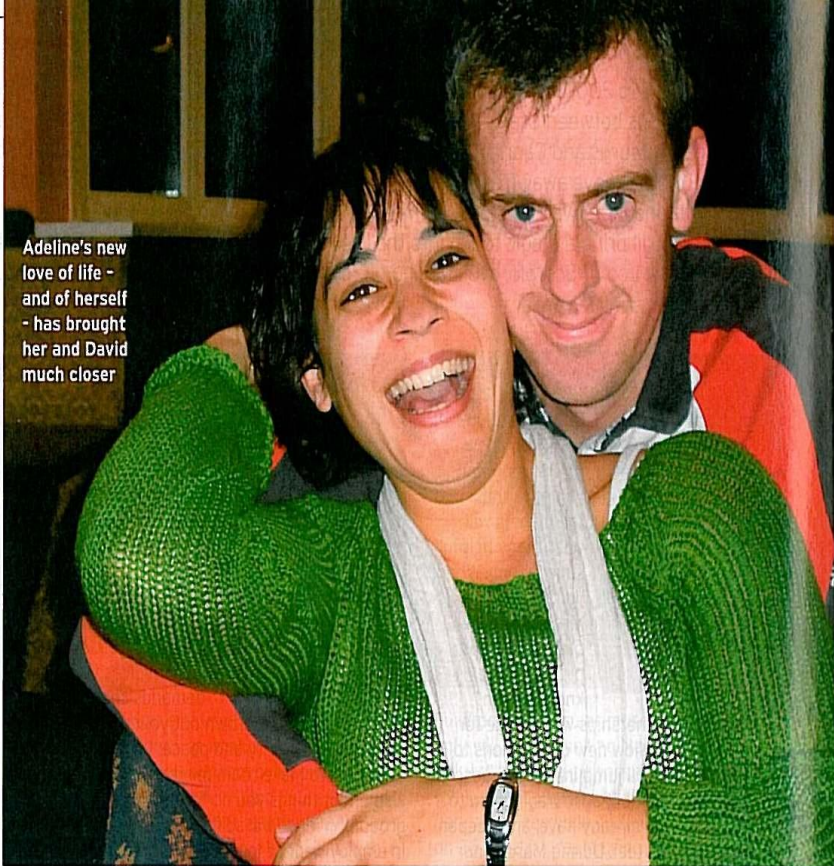


Mind, body & soul

Adeline's new
love of life -
and of herself
- has brought
her and David
much closer

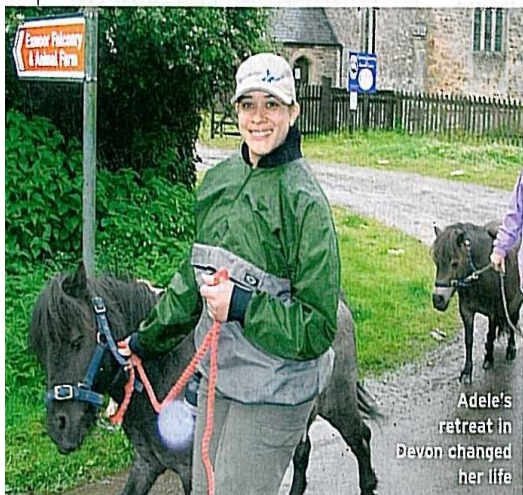


That well-worn mantra 'new year, new you' can sound like a cliché, but as these inspiring women show, January resolutions truly can turn your life around

OUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS WORKED

WHAT I VOWED: *To learn to like myself*

Boosting her self-esteem helped
ADELINE ALEXANDER, 30,
from Newcastle upon Tyne, learn
how to love and be loved.



'At the end of 2007, I began a busy job working as a marketing manager. I should have been elated because I'd been looking for a new job all year. But all the applications and interviews along the way had taken their toll on my self-esteem and, when I finally landed the role, I had so little confidence that I wondered how I'd ever manage.

'I was so down on myself that I started to think I was unattractive and out of place among my new colleagues. I felt lazy and sluggish and in the evenings all I wanted to do was veg out on the sofa. I turned down invitations to go out with my friends, thinking I'd ruin their night because I wasn't fun any more - this, from someone who once took pole-dancing classes for a laugh!

'I now realise it was stress that was affecting my self-esteem, but at the time I couldn't see that. My husband David, 33, didn't know what to say. I was nothing like the upbeat girl he'd

married only two years earlier - though he kept trying to reassure me that he found me as lovely as ever. The problem was that I didn't feel lovely, or lovable. I knew I was grumpy and short-tempered and I had a gnawing feeling that I wanted to run away for a week or two - but I was actually trying to escape from myself. So I made a New Year's resolution to find a residential course that would make me feel better about myself again.

'When I learnt about a boutique retreat in a beautiful big house in Devon that offered hypnosis as well as luxurious facilities and exercise, I knew it was for me. I needed to turn the negative messages in my mind into positive ones.

'As it was going to cost a small fortune, I started saving straight away. We stopped eating out and I banned the pizza takeaways that had been making me such a couch potato. For my thirtieth birthday in

June, I asked David not to buy me any gifts, but instead to put money towards my break.

'By July I was packing to go to Devon, feeling very anxious that the other women might be there just for the fun of it, and I'd be the wet blanket - the only one who really needed help.

As it turned out, there were only four of us, and we all got on well. As we pounded through everything from belly dancing to hiking, I started to feel more and more confident.

'The hypnotherapy and neuro-linguistic programming sessions

helped me look at myself objectively, seeing what other people saw - which was, in fact, an attractive and confident woman. I also came to realise that I'm nice to my friends, always giving them a hug if they need one and telling them they look great. But, for some reason, I was unable to do the same to myself. So I adopted a new rule that when I looked in the mirror I would always tell myself I was wonderful!

'At the end of the seven days, I came home smiling from ear to ear. David couldn't believe how chilled out I was, and I could feel his love and attraction to me in a way I'd been unable to when I was being so down on myself. Now, when he tells me I'm gorgeous, I say, "I know!"

'I've discovered that once you learn to love yourself on the inside you can also love what you see in the mirror. And, because I now like myself again, I'm no longer afraid to assert myself at work. That's made my job a whole lot easier - and more enjoyable, too.'

● For more information, visit
www.nubeginnings.co.uk or
call 01271 862792.

*NuBeginnings
Boutique Retreat*

HOW LONG? **One week**
HOW MUCH? **£1695**