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## WHAT IS A CORPORATE PARENT

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LOOKING AFTER AND PROTECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE, ON OF THE MOST IMPORTANT JOBS THE COUNCIL DO. WHEN A CHILD FOR WHAT EVER REASON, CANT SAFELY STAY AT HOME, IT IS UP TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO STEP IN AND GIVE THAT CARE, SUPPORT AND STABILITY THAT THEY DESERVE.

BEING A PARENT IS TO LOOK AFTER, TAKE CARE, RAISE, REAR, NURTURE, LOVE, DISCIPLINE, GIVE DIRECTION, STRICTNESS, BE THERE GOOD AND BAD, FOR THE WHOLE OF THEIR LIVES. SO BIRMINGHAM CORPORATE PARENT, WHERE WERE YOU WHEN

AT 17, I HAD MY FIRST HOME (YES HOME OWNER) BUT SUFFERED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SINCE I MOVED IN. DAILY BEATINGS BECAUSE I HAD LOOKED MASH AND HE WANTED BOILED. WHERE WAS YOU WHEN I CALLED EVERYONE

BECAUSE I WAS IN SO MUCH PAIN FROM THE VIOLENCE. I GOT PREGNANT BY HIM AND IN ONE OF HIS RAGES HE PUSHED ME DOWN THE STAIRS AND KICKED ME SO MANY TIMES I LOST MY CHILD. A PARENT WOULD OFF TOLD ME TO GET OUT IT WAS UNHEALTHY AND NO GOOD FOR ME. YES I WENT BACK, BECAUSE I HAD NO WHERE ELSE TO GO, NO ONE TO TURN TO. AFTER ANOTHER BEATING I WALKED OUT, I WALKED TO THE ONLY HOME I HAD EVER KNOWN (SOUTHAVES) I KNOCKED ON THE DOOR ASKING FOR HELP. ONLY TO BE TOLD FOR INSURABLE REASONS THEY COULD NOT HELP. I WAS 17 YRS OLD AND MY CORPORATE PARENTS TURNED ME AWAY TO BE

② BEATEN AGAIN BY THAT MAN. I WENT TO CASSON HILL PARK AND SLEPT THERE FOR THE WEEKEND. I WENT TO WORK, JENT SWEET AND UNSLEPT. A LADY THERE ASKED ME ABOUT IT. I TOLD HER ABOUT ME AND MY LIFE. SHE TOOK ME TO HER HOME THAT NIGHT A FOR A SHORT WHILE AFTER TILL I WAS BACK ON MY FEET AND SO I COULD HEAL.

WHERE WERE YOU MY <sup>CORPORATE</sup> PARENTS

I GOT MADE REDUNDANT, HOW WAS I GOING TO FEED MYSELF, PAY MY RENT, SEARCHING FOR JOBS. I WAS LUCKY YET AGAIN TO MET A GOOD LADY, WHO SAID I COULD WORK HIS JOB AS PATIENT UNTIL I FOUND SOMETHING. I DID FIND SOMETHING BUT NOW MY LADY WAS SELLING HIS HOUSE. YET AGAIN ALONE, SCARED, WORRIED. ONCE MORE LOOKING FOR A ROOF OVER MY HEAD, AND NO ONE TO TURN TO FOR HELP OR SUPPORT. MY PARENT SHOULD OFF BEEN THERE.

I FOUND ANOTHER SHARED HOUSE WITH SOME GIRLS, BUT WAS STILL ALONE, THEY VISITED FAMILY + FRIENDS. I HAD NONE. I DID NOT TRUST PEOPLE, DID NOT MAKE FRIENDS EASILY. ALWAYS ON YOUR GUARD. NOT LETTING PEOPLE IN TO MUCH. YOU WAS A CARE KID, PEOPLE STILL THOUGHT YOU WAS TROUBLE, THATS WHY YOU HAD BEEN IN CARE. BUT AT S WHAT HAD I DONE TO DESERVE IT. AND THE TREATMENT I HAD RECEIVED.

WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENT

I HELD DOWN TWO JOBS ONE IN FISABLE AND ONE AT A PETROL STATION, JUST TO MAKE ENDS MET. I MADE A FRIEND, WHO INVITED ME TO HER HOME IN IRELAND I HAD NOTHING TO LOOSE NO ONE TO CARE WHAT I WAS DOING.

WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENT

③ I STARTED MY LIFE OVER IN IRELAND. I WAS THERE FOR 8 YRS. DURING THAT TIME I BROUGHT A 2<sup>ND</sup> HOME AND MARRIED. I SUFFERED 4 MISCARRIAGES, FERTILITY TREATMENT (PAID FOR MYSELF)

WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENT

I FINALLY HAD A CHILD AFTER SO MUCH HEARTACHE. SO HAPPY, SO PROUD, SO EXCITED, BUT I WAS ALSO SO SCARED, HOW COULD I BE A MOM, A GOOD MOM. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT THAT WAS, I HAD NEVER SEEN A NORMAL FAMILY HOME. I HAD ONLY SEEN CHILDREN, DEGRADED, BAD MOUTHED, HUMILIATED, BEATEN, ABUSED. MADE TO SLEEP IN THE HALLWAY BECAUSE WE DARED TO SPEAK UP. IF WE CARRIED ON WE WOULD HAVE TO STAY IN THE MATRON'S BEDROOM FOR THE NIGHT. I HAD TO MAKE MY BED EVERY MORNING, AS DID THE OTHER KIDS, BECAUSE WE WOULD NOT GET BREAKFAST OTHERWISE, IF YOU DID NOT FINISH A MEAL, YOU GOT IT AT THE NEXT MEAL TIME AND DID NOT GET ANYTHING NEW UNTIL YOUR PLATE WAS CLEAR. YOU DID NOT MAKE FRIENDS IN THE HOME, AS IT WAS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS AND WOULD BE USED AGAINST YOU AT ANY POINT. HOW WAS THAT A NORMAL FAMILY LIFE? HOW WAS THAT TEACHING ABOUT HOW A FAMILY FUNCTIONS.

WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENT

I LOVED MY SON SO MUCH, I FEEL HIM, I KEPT HIM CLEAN, HE WASTED FOR NOTHING, BUT I HAD NO FAMILY TO SHARE THIS MOMENT WITH, NO FAMILY OF MY OWN. I FINALLY REALISED ONE DAY THERE WAS SOMETHING MISSING, LOVE, CUDDLES, KISSES. EVERYTHING I HAD NEVER HAD.

④ EVERY DAY THERE AFTER I LEANT TO HUG AND HOLD HIM. BUT NOT BEFORE GOING TO COUNCILOR, (PAID FOR MYSELF)

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

I THOUGHT NOTHING COULD SPLIT ME AND MY HUSBAND UP AFTER ALL WE HAD GONE THROUGH. MENTAL COUNSEL/MISCELLANIES (FERTILITY/MONEY DOLLARS/NO FAMILY/INT BREAKDOWN) BUT WE DID. SO ONCE MORE I WAS ALONE NO HOME. I WANTED TO COME BACK TO UK. I HAD ENOUGH STRENGTH TO START AGAIN FOR ME AND MY SON. AS HE BORN IN SOUTHERN IRELAND HE HAD TO GIVE PERMISSION FOR ME TO TAKE HIM. HE WOULD ONLY DO THAT IF I SIGNED OVER ALL WE HAD TOGETHER. I WANTED AWAY WITH MY SON.

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

I WENT TO THE LOCAL HOUSING OFFICE READY TO START OVER. ONLY TO BE TOLD I HAD BEEN OUT THE COUNTRY FOR MORE THAN 5 YRS I SHOULD GO BACK.

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

I TOLD THEM I WAS NOT LEAVING UNTIL I HAD A BED FOR THE NIGHT. THE JOYS OF A B+B ON HAGLEY ROAD, NOT IDEAL, BUT Beggars CANT BE PICKY. LUCKS LATER WITH THE HELP OF LOCAL MP (GISEDAL STEWART) WE WERE OFFERED A 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR FLAT, 6 FLIGHTS OF STAIRS, NO LIFT. SIGNED PAPER WORK, GOT KEYS. A ROOF OVER OUR HEADS. NO BED, NO LOCKER, NO FOOD. I HAD BECOME AT 33 EVERYTHING YOU SAID I WOULD BE. ON THE DOLE, SINGLE, COUNCIL TENANT, UNWANTED YET AGAIN

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

SLIGHTLY ME AND MY SON GOT UP ON OUR FEET. CHARITY SHOPS, FOOD NEAR SELL BY DATES. I DID NOT

⑤ REALISE AT THE TIME, WHEN I LEFT MY HUSBAND I WAS PREGNANT. HOW THE HELL WAS I GOING TO DO THIS. I HAD MY BABY A LITTLE GIRL, I WAS OVERWHELMED YET AGAIN WITH EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

MY LOWEST NIGHT I LAY IN THE BATH, AS TOLD MYSELF I COULD NOT DO THIS ANYMORE I HAD NO FIGHT LEFT. I WORKED OUT HOW TO END IT ALL. BUT NOT JUST FOR ME BUT MY CHILDREN. BECAUSE THERE WAS NO WAY I WAS LEADING THEM TO THE SYSTEM. TO BE NEGLECTED, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR SEXUAL.

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

I LAY THERE FOR HOURS IN THE COLD WATER, CRYING, SCARED AND ALONE. I DON'T KNOW WHAT BROUGHT ME BACK, BUT I DID NOT GO THROUGH WITH IT. BUT KNEW MY CHILDREN HAD NOT ASKED FOR THIS AND I HAD TO DO BETTER THAN THE LIFE I HAD HAD. FROM HERE ON WE TOOK EACH DAY HOUR BY HOUR, EACH NIGHT I WENT BED, WAS ANOTHER DAY WE HAD SURVIVED.

### WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

I LIED TO THE HEALTH VISITOR, I SAID ALL WAS OK AND ON THE SURFACE IT WAS. I COULD NOT REACH OUT FOR HELP. I WAS A CARE KID AND YOU THE SYSTEM WOULD TAKE MY CHILDREN AWAY. I WAS ALREADY 3<sup>RD</sup> GENERATION CARE KID. I COULD NOT LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN. EVENTUALLY I TOOK A BREATH, GOT UP. AND DID IT. SO TIRED, SO WORKWORN, SO LONELY, SO SCARED. NO ONE

⑥ THERE FOR ME. BUT 2 CHILDREN DEPEND ON ME TO MAKE THINGS GOOD.

WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY MANY TIMES IVE ASKED

"WHERE WERE YOU"

BUT YOU NEVER CAME, YOU NEVER ONCE FILLED YOUR OBLIGATION TO ME AND TURNED UP TO OFFER UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT. YOU WERE NEVER THERE TO REPLACE MY BIOLOGICAL PARENTS YOU HAD REMOVED ME FROM. SAD REALLY AS AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE YOU ARE MY CORPORATE PARENTS. I NEVER LEFT CARE YOU LEFT ME

EVEN MORE RECENTLY WHERE WERE YOU IN THE GOOD TIMES AND BAD, FOR EXAMPLE MY CONDEMNED PARENTS WHEN

- MY SON HAD A CADLER SCARE
- BOTH MY CHILDREN BUT WITH CANCER OUTRIGHT
- MY SON PASSION A LEVELS, HIS APPRENTICESHIP + GRADUATION FROM NATIONAL CAD (CADEST) AS AN ENGINEER
- MY DAUGHTERS CADLER SCARE AND SEXUAL ASSULT AT SCHOOL
- MY DAUGHTER PASSION HER GCSE'S, PROM AND GETTING JOB OFFER ON SAME DAY.
- MY 22YR OLD SON BUT WITH HIS OWN HOUSE

WHERE WERE YOU MY CORPORATE PARENTS

THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY MORE, GOOD, HAPPY, SAD, EMOTIONAL DAYS THAT NEEDED SHARING, SUPPORTING, CARING. YOU WEREN'T THERE

① AND YET BECAUSE OF THIS LACK OF PARENTING ALL THOSE YEARS AND YOU DEEMED IT RIGHT TO BECOME MY CORPORATE PARENTS AND YET NOTHING HAD CHANGED. YOU TOO WERE NOT THERE.

I WOULD LIKE TO CHALLENGE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU. YOU CANT CHANGE THE PAST BUT YOU CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON SO MANY OF YOUR CHILDREN FOR NOW AND THE FUTURE.

ARE YOU SERIOUS ABOUT YOUR PARENTING ROLE FOR EITHER YOUR OWN BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN OR

~~THESE~~ WONDERFUL CHILDREN THAT NEED YOU TO SHOW HOW MUCH YOU REALLY AND TRULY CARE SO THAT THEIR DAILY LIVES AND THEIR FUTURES ARE HAPPY, CAREFREE AND SUPPORTED AND THEY ARE ABLE TO GROW INTO STRONG AND CONFIDENT ADULTS BECAUSE OF YOUR LOVE, ENCOURAGEMENT BY HAVING A SYSTEM THAT ACTUALLY DOES CARE.