

CASE STUDY

Rachael McNiven made a resolution to change her life on January 1 2016, enlisted lifecoach Martin Bennett to help her and by summer she had set up a business and opened an online shop.

“It took six counselling sessions to help me find my direction and give me the confidence and motivation to get to where I had wanted to be for six years, says Rachael.

The 39 year-old, of Meersbrook, mum to Maya, aged two, with a stepson of 12, Joe, had always planned to be a graphic designer. She got her HND, but seized a chance to go to Spain for a few months.

“I loved it and a decade passed in Spain,” she says. “I taught English, the easy option, but eventually got a job as an in-house designer.”

Back to Sheffield she found she couldn't get her career on track as her skills didn't meet UK demands. So she enrolled at Sheffield Hallam and determinedly rattled through a graphic design degree in just a year.

Then she bottled it. When faced with the choice of searching for a graphic design career or a full-time job with the grounds maintenance company she had worked for part-time around her studies, she took the easy option.

“My anxiety and lack of confidence kicked in. I decided not to step into the unknown,” she says.

Five years on, although enjoying her job, she regretted her decision. To express her creative side, she began making personalised gift boxes for friends' celebrations and painting children's story stones, which encourage youngsters to read. And as January dawned, she resolved to do more.

Feeling she couldn't make the leap on her own, she signed up for coaching with Martin Bennett.

She says: “His HR background in helping people with their careers made him the perfect lifecoach for me. Our weekly evening Skype sessions didn't impact on work or family and he got me to focus on what it was I really wanted.

“He also asked me to write a list of things I thought I was good at. That was really positive; it made me question my lack of confidence.

“At a catch-up session last summer I proudly told him I had an online shop at [Etsy.co.uk](https://www.etsy.co.uk), a website (www.seventysevencreations.co.uk) and set up my business, Seventy Seven Creations. My services range from graphic design to hand-crafted keepsakes and celebration cakes.

“Without Martin I would still be at the stage of wanting to do all of this. I changed my life in months. As a New Year starts my life is jam-packed, but I'm 100 per cent happier.

“One day I'd like to make Seventy Seven Creations my full-time job. But I haven't had time to think of a New Year Resolution for 2017!”