

Fearless Leaders – Opening doors

I read an article once that really inspired me, captured my imagination and resonated with me on a number of levels in both my personal and professional life. I did some research on the man in the article and approached him in June 2019. I was reliably informed by my children that this was considered to be stalking and that I should stop it immediately!

[From east London to the City: How door knocking changed this boy's life - BBC News](#)

Meeting Reggie Nelson and the prospect of hearing his version of events made me nervous and raised many more questions. Was this going to be a disappointment, was it true, would I respect him or even like him and, did the latter really matter?

I shouldn't have worried. Hearing his own words and having now read his book *Opening Doors* was evidence enough that this was and is truly remarkable and authentic.

“sitting in front of Theresa May at Westminster, at her request, and asking her if he could take a video of her doing “that dance”.

Here is a young man that broke through the poverty cycle with limited resources but a whole lot of resourcefulness, character, tenacity and resilience....and he's really likeable too.

This is a man that within two years of leaving school with very little prospects, a lost ambition to make it big in football and

grieving from the loss of his father to alcohol addiction whilst living in a deprived estate in South London had found himself sitting in front of Theresa May at Westminster, at her request, and asking her if he could take a video of her doing “that dance”.

We've kept in touch, shared ideas and made mutual connections along the way. I am very glad that I met him as there have been some very practical and demonstrable things that he has continued to inspire me to do since.

In partnership with [Progress Together](#), a membership body focussed on senior level, socio-economic diversity progression and retention for those in the Financial Services sector, he very kindly agreed to talk at a dinner event recently and here are the highlights of what he shared:

- There is nothing to be lost and everything to be gained by **asking people for help and advice.**
- Stopping complete strangers on the affluent streets of Kensington to ask them for career advice was scary but having experienced the first few rejections, found that it wasn't so bad and besides, if he failed, he would be **no worse off than when he started.**
- **Don't judge** people by appearances.
- When eventually he happened upon a man that offered to mentor him, he truly began to understand **the value of mentorship.**

I will watch with interest as Reggie's career and activities develop. Having observed the city's skyscrapers from afar, he now looks out from them to a world of possibilities. His fearlessness has a perpetual motion about it and it is infectious.

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