



DIG deep

You've got to be someone pretty special to keep smiling while your marriage crumbles and you're dealing with an invasion of rats or insects. Vicki Sims is that person, with an infectious personality and a confident manner, which is very reassuring in times of trouble.

Even more amazing, is that Vicki was nominated as a finalist for the Best Business Women's Award in October, even though it

had only been operational for six months. She was not new to pest control though, having worked with her ex-husband in his business.

"When I was made redundant six years ago it seemed only natural to step in and help. I learnt on the job and streamlined the business," she says.

But it hasn't all been plain sailing, she hit rock bottom in March, when after 23 years her marriage ended and she attempted suicide several times. "I still don't know how, but I picked myself up, I thought I'm better than this, I love what I do and I shouldn't allow one person to take my life from me."

She worked hard "putting on a mask" and juggling a family and a new business. "Working at the Slug and Lettuce in Beckenham really helped speed up my recovery. It distracted me, was a great confidence booster and by June my business was going from strength to strength. I promoted myself on social media and networking groups, some were free, others inexpensive. I'm not easily intimidated so I just got out there and got on with it."

She's passionate about her business and customers and her determination was again put to the test in November when her 19-year-old cousin, Dane Chinnery, was killed in the Croydon tram crash and her son, who has learning difficulties, was involved in a major accident. "I couldn't have kept going without the strength and encouragement of my new friends in the business," she says.

"I'm a great believer that things happen for a reason," she adds. "The breakdown of my marriage has enabled me to be true to myself and I'd advise others to never give up and always believe in themselves. There is a light at the end of the tunnel, even if you can't see it and you don't know how you are going to get there. Dane's death made me realise that tomorrow is not a given – live your life to the full today." Spoken like the trouser she is.

Vicki can provide a rapid response to pest problems including rats, cockroaches, wasps, pigeons, fleas, moths, bedbugs, mice and squirrels in South East London.

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HOMES AND INTERIORS