

# Michelle's passion

BY STEPHEN PENN

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FEELING lost and without hope, for whatever reason, can be a lonely place.

This was a problem Michelle Crook noticed during her 16 years in teaching and, in 2011, she set up Reactiv8 as a hobby to give support to those written off by the education system.

She did not expect that five years later the organisation would be supported by local authorities, schools and most recently the Beds, Northants, Cambs and Herts (BeNCH) Probation Service to help people of all ages.

Michelle said: "I wanted to offer those in society who find themselves in a space where they don't feel valued to address their problems."

Her team of self-employed professionals bring expertise from industries including teaching, recruitment, and customer service to help bring people back into society.

"We use British Military Coaching techniques to help develop skills that employers are looking for such as team-working and leadership all the while helping them sort their emotional and physical selves," Michelle added.

One man who saw the benefit of Michelle's programme,



based in Kempston, is Paul Johnston. After suffering a brain aneurism and mental health problems while at university, he found himself in a dark place.

He told *BoS*: "I reached a point where it was either sign up to Reactiv8 or go into a psychiatric facility

"Michelle and the team changed my life, got me back on track, and I am already on my way to recovery."

Paul now volunteers for

Reactiv8, helping others who find themselves in need.

Michelle said: "So many of our former clients keep in touch and tell me that Reactiv8 has got them out of the dark places in their lives.

"We work with a wide array of people and help to change their outlook on life and make things better."

Now the former teacher is looking to expand the business even further and is hoping to get employers on



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board, to ensure that clients find their way into steady work that is suited to their skills. She also needs people to help by volunteering their time to Reactiv8.

Michelle said: "Anyone out there who is driven to make a difference, get in touch with us as we need mentors, coaches, admin staff, everything to help us reach more and more people."

For more visit [reactiv8.org.uk](http://reactiv8.org.uk)



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE:**  
Michelle Crook who runs the business alongside volunteer Paul Johnston and admin assistant Ramona McCormack (left)