

## PENNY LANCASTER PROVOKES A RANT !

The Mail on Sunday for 21<sup>st</sup> January 2018 featured model Penny Lancaster, who is their new "Family Life" correspondent.

Most of the article related to her happy marriage to rock idol Rod Stewart, their two sons, and the good relationships she has forged with her step-children.



Penny Lancaster is a high-achieving woman in her own right. She has been a successful fashion model, subsequently becoming a professional photographer.

She is regular panellist on TV's "Loose Women" and was a contestant on "Strictly Come Dancing."

Now she is about to launch into a new venture, as a columnist in "The Mail on Sunday".

What a glittering, glamorous life she enjoys!

Then suddenly, towards the end of the article, she reveals a secret she has kept for years – that she is dyslexic. She always knew there was something wrong but was never diagnosed, until now, at the age of 46 and with her husband's encouragement.

How could such a high-flying, beautiful, successful woman, who seems to carry all before her, have self-doubts because of dyslexia?

She gives us the reason with scalding honesty.

When she was a schoolgirl her father was concerned about her lack of progress with reading and writing and suggested extra English lessons, to be told by her teacher: "Why bother? She'll never amount to anything."

I would bet Penny Lancaster can hear those words in her head as clearly today as the day they were uttered. They have stayed with her since childhood. What a wicked, cruel thing for anybody to say, and of all people, the child's teacher.

No wonder dyslexia became a shameful thing for her, to be kept a secret, never mentioned, and – worse still – never addressed.

### AND THIS IS WHERE I START TO RANT !

NO CHILD EVER WANTS TO FAIL. I am absolutely convinced of that.

And **NOBODY**, particularly a teacher, ever has the right to tell a child they are worthless.

The biggest problem that dyslexic people suffer from is low self-esteem. Too often, that has been brought about by the very person who was employed to guide and nurture them as a child.

A good teacher is worth their weight in pure gold – and many of us have known at least one much-loved and treasured teacher who gave us so much of themselves, they were an inspiration.

But the other sort of teacher must not be tolerated. Stand tall, fight back, don't let them put you down!

If any teacher **EVER** tries to belittle you, or any dyslexic child you know, – especially in front of other people – challenge them. Tell them they must not say such a thing.

**DON'T** be polite with people who treat you badly. Answer back – even if it is a teacher! They are in the wrong. You must **NEVER** let them crush you or convince you that you are not as good as the next person.

**NEVER** accept being told by a teacher that you are worthless. Listen to my voice ranting in your head and raise the roof! Get angry! Make a scene! Make a complaint about it! Insist they are in the wrong to say such a thing! Insist they apologise.

Think of Penny Lancaster and those dreadful words she heard from a teacher – “She will never amount to anything . . .”

We all know Penny Lancaster's name. Do we know the name of the terrible teacher who wrote off the future prospects of that clever little girl just because she was dyslexic?

If you, or anybody you know, has been put down, dismissed, called lazy or stupid or thick, or told they will never make anything of themselves because of dyslexia – **DON'T BELIEVE THEM**. Put a picture of Penny Lancaster up on your wall and follow her shining example, and make YOURSELF magnificent too.



Penny Lancaster's professional partner on Strictly was Ian Waite.

A number of people involved with Strictly over the years have been dyslexic.

It hasn't stopped them being sensational.

Can you find out the names of any of them?

Click the link below to listen to me being interviewed by Alan Clifford on BBC Radio Nottingham on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018:

[https://youtu.be/95q\\_ghQy51k](https://youtu.be/95q_ghQy51k)