

PRESS RELEASE

The Little Black Book – the Gap Year Bible

Are you part of the runaway generation? A rebel with a hunger to travel whether it's searching for paradise or to get out of a work rut? If so, the Little Black Book will guide you through the nuts and bolts of how to do it and will be there for you from start to finish. With additional empty pages, so that you can write your sizzling memoirs you might find yourself like Alex Garland writing a book and becoming the next big thing.

The Little Black Book is invaluable, take it with you on your career break or gap year and it'll stand by you through the ups and downs, giving you important tips and information along the way. In fact it's just like squashing your best mate into your rucksack, but it won't take up so much space, sulk, nor moan about having Delhi Belly on an 18 hour bus journey. We can't guarantee you'll come back with your boyfriend, girlfriend, best mate, travel buddy or work mates, but we can ensure The Little Black Book won't let you down.

Remember those days when a 'gap year' got parents tut-tuting and flustered as they tried to justify to friends why their lovely Emma has disappeared to Thailand seemingly to 'drop out'? Up until a few years ago, a gap year was perceived as the route directionless university students or lazy post A-Levelers took in order to prolong the inevitable – **WORK!**

But these days the 'gap year' or career break is big business and is viewed positively by employers. A gap year is fast becoming the smart way to boost your CV with an exotic change of direction and new worldly skills, make universities and employers sit up and take notice rather than fall asleep when the only thing on your CV are your academic qualifications and not much else.

Variety is the spice of life so why not take advantage of all those amazing countries out there and simply travel – actually taking the time to see all those places you drooled over for so long in *National Geographic* as a child and wow your friends and family by uploading album after album of amazing photos to Facebook. Juliet Coombe however, was quick to move on from this and capitalise – she actually published her holiday photos in books – so now her friends and family have to buy them and through that income they continue to support her jet-set lifestyle abroad!

A wealth of opportunities have opened up for the Generation G – that's gappers to you guys - to take advantage of and with so many different options out there, a gap year can also give you the opportunity to redefine yourself. Taking a break from the rat race to simply get your head above water will give you the chance to rediscover what you're really good at and you never know you might even find your own gap in the market.

Take Daisy Perry for example, she discovered exactly what she was good at when she arrived in Sri Lanka post-tsunami and in her university gap year mapped the coastline - a very important and key role, so water companies could locate villages that required aid. In the process she learnt how to put

information together and met a publisher in a coffee shop who she asked if she could work with on an idea for a book, which a year later became a reality and a bestseller. This book *Around the Fort in 80 Lives* is now one of the books Daisy and her co-partner Juliet have written and produced from their new publishing house based in Galle Fort.

The 'traditional' and therefore most accepted age for a gap year is before or after university, but things are changing and people are now career-breaking whatever their age. In particular, there's an increasing number of people in their 30s and even 40s who've decided to get out of the game. These are usually the ones who did it by the book in their 20s – university degree, worked their way up the corporate ladder, dabbled in the property market and now are stuck (possibly banging their head against a brick wall at the same time) thinking "What next? I can't do this anymore – there's gotta be more to life than this!"

These days it's a classic conundrum and if you've reached that stage, then usually it's a no brainer - to live to just pay those bills, and maybe aim towards a bit of travel after you've saved enough for your pension seems like living in the dark ages, it's so depressingly last century! You're sat at your desk, gazing at the unchanging grey sky or the screensaver of your last package holiday, so make use of that downtime and get out your Little Black Book and let it help you plan how you're going to escape and finally live out your dream.

How about a spot of WOOFING after university? (working on an organic farm) or challenging yourself with something physical: scuba diving on a tropical island anyone? six months of yoga in a peaceful ashram, what about trekking to Everest base camp or bungy jumping off a cliff? You could use your time out to hone an existing skill – pursuing that travel photography or film making hobby, taking time to write the plot to the bestselling novel or screen play that's been going round and round in your head every day on the commute to work. Or perhaps now is the time to make a difference and help others like Winchester Head Boy, Charlie Risuis who volunteered for three months at Neth Savan Sarana, a hostel in Sri Lanka for deaf and blind children, supported by the charity Children's Hope. The hostel houses 60 children, from age 8 to 19, who live there during term-time, attending a special school just across the road in the mornings. Charlie says the months he spent there were both the most challenging (playing cricket to a local standard!) but the most rewarding of his life and he can't think of a better way to spend a gap year.

You never know what a gap year might lead to either - once you've found something you like you may find your gap year or career break extends. You could end up studying yoga but becoming a teacher, getting your dive instructor's certificate, or finding a niche in the market for a skill you've always had, but never used at home. Remember working abroad can often be more informal so if someone you meet discovers you've got a particular talent for something you could end up making a career out of it in another country. Back to Juliet, she was one of those gap year girls trying hard to do nothing, working on her tan on the beach drinking cocktails, but her time relaxing was cut short, when a Lonely Planet writer needed some photographs taken and she has been shooting images for them ever since and as a result launched a

successful travel magazine called Get Lost! Her gap year has now lasted over 13 years and her family struggle to explain where she is and how she got there, sometimes they think that perhaps she is incarcerated in the Bangkok Hilton! If anybody comes across her hanging off a palm tree to get that unique angle or swimming with sharks, write a note to yourself in your Little Black Book, why do you have to go back and settle down? Juliet won't settle for anything less than the freedom to be free and so why should you?