

# Not so super rich kids

The children of the very wealthy have a unique set of problems and a unique set of professionals to help to overcome them. By *Jessie Hewitson*

**R**AISING A HAPPY, confident and kind child is hard work; it requires rigour and thought, love and rules, instinct and an awareness of the latest thinking. In this era of over-parenting it feels all too easy to de-skill a child by being too cautious, or to spoil a child by being too lavish. These issues are even more acute for the parents (and children) of the super-rich. Although it might seem like their gilded lives are carefree, young “inheritors” have a unique and complex set of issues including feelings of inadequacy, isolation and lack of motivation. If these feelings are unchecked they can result in deep psychological problems and (well-funded) wayward behaviour that can derail a life. However, there are now numerous specialists who make it their business to help the children of the super-rich who have lost their way.

## THE ADVENTURE GURU



FORMER ROYAL MARINES officer Calum Morrison runs the Extraordinary Adventure Club, which can organise a six-month personal development course that culminates in a tailor-made expedition to a remote part of the world, and might include living with an Amazonian tribe, or camel trekking with nomads across Sudan and navigating by the stars. One of the more extraordinary elements is the price: it starts at £50,000.

Clients include Silicon Valley billionaires, US models and young British adults who are going to inherit a lot of money and need to cope with security threats and social media scrutiny. One actress was flown north of Greenland, where she was met by her team, which included six huskies. She spent seven hours a day for the next two weeks sledding in temperatures as low as -30C.

“A typical young client, if there is one, is a man who is unmotivated, overweight, spent too much



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time playing computer games, smoking weed and his family find him hard to reach,” Morrison says. “If you read about your father or mother in the press and recognise that when they were your age they had started their second business, it can be tough finding your own place in your world. Also, relative levels of wealth and comfort can remove the shaping effects of hardship. Often my clients feel a sense of guilt or embarrassment that can come with wealth; that they shouldn’t be feeling like this because they are from a wealthy background.”

The initial stage of any trip is a four-day stay in a cottage in the Scottish Highlands surrounded by 36,000 acres of land owned by a Danish billionaire. Phones, laptops, iPads and watches are banned. A small team is on hand, including therapists, a chef, fitness instructor and survival specialist. Within two months, the adventure happens. The client finds out where they are going when they get to the airport – they have received only a packing list.

“I think confidence comes from picking a suitable campsite, pitching a tent,” says Morrison. “And resilience comes from doing things you didn’t think were possible with a degree of hardship, like living in a place that is -30C. In that weather your cup of coffee freezes very quickly.” *From £50,000 to £175,000; extraordinaryadventureclub.com*

## THE SUPER MENTOR



TWO MONTHS AFTER Topes Calland graduated from Oxford in modern history and French literature he went for a pint with Malachy Guinness, a friend who owns the Bright Young Things tutoring agency.

While at the pub, Guinness received a call from the frazzled assistant of a celebrity who urgently needed someone to work with his employer’s child. The wayward 16-year-old had dropped out of school (again).

Calland, who was at a loose end and who had been doing some tutoring, was signed up on the spot. At first the tutoring was of the more traditional type, but as the boy’s parents got to know Calland they hatched an unconventional idea – Topes and his charge would explore the French Alps and Morocco for two weeks, then continue travelling, on and off for a year, visiting Cuba, California, New York and Asia, learning the curriculum along the way. “I was there to support but a lot of the responsibility for organising and budgeting was left

to him, which helped him take responsibility,” Calland says.

This was ten years ago, and it was the start of Calland’s career as the man to whom the rich, royal and famous turn when their child goes off the rails. He usually works with young men between the ages of 15 and 28. More therapist than tutor, he used to live with clients 24/7, but does this less now that he’s studying child and adolescent psychotherapeutic counselling at Cambridge. He is also working on plans to set up a residential centre in Scotland.

On average he works with two to three clients at any time on a one-to-one basis, also spending time with the client’s friends and family. Impeccably mannered and easy-going, his approach is individualised. He starts by forming a relationship with his clients, focusing on activities that give them enjoyment or confidence, and building on that.

The children of successful parents are often crushed by feelings of inadequacy, he says. “They question why people like them: is it because of who they are or because of a reflected status from their parents?” Money plays a role too. “On the one hand, the young people feel like they have been denied the motivation to earn their place in the world, and, on the other, being given money sends an implied message that they are incapable of earning for themselves. They are trapped in a humiliating, infantilised state. This can sometimes result in complicated relationships with others – they feel shame and inadequacy regarding their state of dependency, but having money is the only source of power they feel they have.”

One client, whom he calls Sam (not his real name), was 17 and had a drug problem, as well as dyslexia and dyscalculia (difficulties with maths). He had attended a boarding school for children with special educational needs from the age of nine.

*“Those with successful parents are often crushed by feelings of inadequacy”*

His self-esteem was low, he was obstructive and he was excluded from school. “When we met Sam could not imagine a meaningful future for himself. But while we talked, it became apparent that he was articulate, engaging and curious.”

Calland set him tasks that he could achieve, which saw his confidence grow, and taught him how to write an essay and the basics of effective communication. “This gave Sam the language to communicate troubling feelings and thoughts. Sam would struggle to write his exams, so I organised for him to dictate them. The lesson is: ‘Look! You have overcome, and you will continue to overcome! You just need enough purpose and confidence to

motivate you to find the solutions.” Sam has now completed his A levels and received university offers from Edinburgh, Glasgow and Goldsmiths. “Since I started working with him more than two years ago, he has maintained his sobriety and is thriving at university.” *£200 an hour; £1,200 a day; topescalland.com*

## THE MONEY SHRINK



JAMIE TRAEGER-MUNEY is a money psychologist working with “inheritors” – children who are going to inherit a great deal of money one day.

Her family owned a chain of roller-skating rinks in Ohio in the US, and she felt embarrassed as a child when friends commented on the size of their house. Traeger-Muney is now based in Israel and conducts Skype sessions with clients. She sees children as young as five when working with families, or young people individually from the age of 20. She also works with parents who worry their child has lost the sense of the value of money and those who feel isolated by their parents’ wealth.

“Inheritors feel confused. They think, ‘My parents are so good at making money and keeping it, how come I don’t have that skill?’” she says. “I reply that, if your parents can speak French, unless they speak French to you, you’re not going to learn the language. It’s the same with money. Parents don’t want to overwhelm their children or take their motivation away, but if they are going to grow up and inherit £40 million, they need to be given opportunities to make mistakes, work out what they want versus what they need.”

Commonly, the problems really begin when her clients go to university. “They are living in dorms, eating ramen, they want to be like everyone else who is struggling to make ends meet, and they are mortified they’re not.”

She recommends talking about money in a way that goes beyond spending. “When my son was eight he wanted to buy a toy that we knew wouldn’t work. It cost \$16. At this point he got a dollar a week, so this represented four months of savings, which was a lifetime for him. My son buys it and, of course, it didn’t work. We asked him, ‘What do you think about this purchase?’ He said, ‘It was a rip-off.’ I’m working with a family where each kid stands to inherit \$30 million. Think about what that \$16 teaches a child.” *POA; wealthlegacygroup.org*