



HELEN PARKER

Head of Wimbledon Foundation

60 SECOND INTERVIEW

**INNER STRENGTH NETWORK INTERVIEW
HELEN PARKER, HEAD OF WIMBLEDON
FOUNDATION, ALL ENGLAND TENNIS CLUB
(June 2019)**

The Girls Empowered to lead team were excited to interview Helen Parker about leadership. Here is what they found out.

CHRIS: WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO WORK FOR THE WIMBLEDON FOUNDATION?

I have worked here for 5 years now and I wanted to do this job, which provides the chance to help other people. I was a big tennis fan and thought the Foundation was a good match for what I had to offer. Thankfully they told me I did not have to play any tennis as part of being recruited into the job!

CHERISE: HOW DOES THE WIMBLEDON FOUNDATION WORK TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA?

Our Junior Tennis Initiative allows our Tennis coaching team to go out into primary schools every week running tennis sessions for key stage 1 students and young people are invited to come and learn. They obtain a lot of life skills by in taking part in sport which includes learning how to lose, which is not always easy; how to turn up on time and wear the right clothes; communications skills, and to provide them with confidence in themselves.

NICOLE: WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO US GIRLS TO SUCCEED IN LIFE?

Once you have worked out what you want to do in life then you can make it happen. Spend time looking at different opportunities that are out there and then make steps towards that. Whatever it is, be enthusiastic about it and then you can make it happen, then you can do everything in your power.

Don't think people have all the answers. Sometimes you look at people in jobs and think that they have something magical behind them. I don't think they do. There is the phrase "Feel the fear and do it anyway- take the plunge and give something a go. That is what everyone else is doing.

JEN: WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE BARRIERS IN BUSINESS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS?

I think role models are a bit of a barrier and often we look around to see men in senior roles. Sometimes it's really amazing to see female leaders doing a great job (like some of the charities we support) and then you feel like you can aspire to that. I personally still find that really inspiring. I think there are other barriers and sometimes when people recruit into jobs, they recruit people like themselves subconsciously.

MIMI: DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT FOR WOMEN TO WORK TOGETHER IN BUSINESS?

Yes definitely, if there are women in business then it will give more opportunities to help other women in business. It's also nice to compare notes and get together with other women to support you and have a chat. It's good to talk.

SELIMA: WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

Somebody that empowers their own team. Somebody who helps other people in their own team to be the best they can be because, in the end, that is what is going to help you as a leader to achieve what you want to achieve. Someone who is respectful and someone who is open, so they are not trying to be anything they are not, Just being themselves.

MAUREEN: WHAT DOES INNER STRENGTH MEAN TO YOU?

I think it means believing in yourself and your own abilities and acknowledging that everybody is different, and everyone has different strengths; it's working out what your strength is and what is important to you. I also think it's about being kind to yourself as well.

The girls would like to thank the Wimbledon Foundation for this interview and for supporting Inner Strength Network CIC

Girls who interviewed Helen are;

- ❖ Chris, Cherise, Nicole, Mimi, Selima, Jennifer
- ❖ Lead by Maureen Bailey (CEO Inner Strength)

“Take the plunge and give it a go”

