

# One in a MILLION!



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**This week, we're praising the empowering work of Lisa Seymour, 44, from Deptford. She said...**



**Women can do it, too!**

**J**umping into the black taxi, I couldn't wait to get home from school. My dad Vernon was a black taxi driver in London and was devoted to his career.

Growing up, I watched him study for the Knowledge Exam every evening at the kitchen table, memorising transport routes, landmarks and popular destinations, too.

'Don't touch anything!' Dad would say, pointing at his maps hung up on the walls.

I spent my childhood tip-toeing around them, but I was always secretly impressed.

Although I was intrigued, I pursued a different career.

Working in primary schools instead, I managed their breakfast, summer and after

school clubs.

But I always found myself struggling for money, especially when raising my daughter Le Sian, then seven.

'I'm tight on money. Can I borrow some?' I asked Dad.

'Why don't you do the Knowledge?' he proposed. 'You can be your own boss, work around Le Sian and you'll always have money in your pocket.'

It was like a lightbulb moment for me, but I knew how hard it would be.

So, I put it off until 2009, when I kickstarted the process. Dad took me to the carriage office to apply and bought me a moped to learn the routes.

'There's no other way!' he insisted despite my protests.

But with Dad falling terminally ill in 2010 and

passing away, the grief was overwhelming and I delayed my exam until 2015.

Passing it first time – I knew Dad would be proud.

But during my weekly revision classes, I had noticed that there were barely any women there.

After signing up to FREENOW in 2019, a taxi-ordering app, I started balancing my work around my two daughters, Le Sian, now 24, and Je-Nae, now 10.

It brought me so much ease and I wanted to encourage other women to get involved, too.

'Why don't you help run some of the ladies' classes, Lisa?' my old mentor asked me. And here was my chance!

In 2020, I ran women-only Zoom classes to help them prepare for the Knowledge, sharing my best revision tips.

It was so rewarding helping one woman pass who had five children, of which two had additional needs.

Now, in between my taxi trips, I teach classes in-person once a month and seeing all the women's hard work pay off makes my all my work worth it.

But without Dad's encouragement, I would never have taken the wheel and seized control of my own life.

And keeping his legacy alive makes it all the sweeter.

● For more, visit: [free-now.com](http://free-now.com)

**His maps were hung up on the walls**

WORDS BY FLOSSIE PALMER. PHOTOS: SWNS

## Bitesize!

1	2	3	4
5			
6			
7			

### ACROSS

- 1 Linen colour (4)
- 5 Sadly (4)
- 6 Soap froth (4)
- 7 Sprint (4)

### DOWN

- 1 Sunrise direction (4)
- 2 Hint (4)
- 3 London drama school (inits) (4)
- 4 Soviet Union (inits) (4)

Read down the shaded squares for the answer.

Answer on page 44.

**JUST FOR FUN**

## Sneaky peek at this week!



**P40 Scrummy snacks**



**P26 Tempting fashion for all**

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