



**Inspirational**  
**Episode 25**

# Martin Roberts

*Keynote Mental Health  
Speaker, Founder of  
Keep in Mind Ltd.,  
Mental Health Lead –  
Group Transformation  
at Lloyds Bank*

*This episode of **INSPIRATIONAL** features a “True Story” from the life of **Mr. Martin Roberts** (Keynote Mental Health Speaker, Founder of Keep in Mind Ltd., Mental Health Lead – Group Transformation at Lloyds Bank)*

*“Thirty two years after the devastating events that changed my life, I am harnessing my experiences to help people in the workplace look after their mental health.*

*When I visit firms to speak about mental health, I still wear the same pair of brown shoes I wore the morning I planned to kill myself in 2017. Had my wife not stopped me, it would have been the tragic culmination of years of emotional anguish that started on 15th April 1989 at 15:06, at Hillsborough Stadium, Sheffield, UK.*

*They're the most important possession I have. To me they're a constant reminder of the path I was going to walk that morning, but more importantly the path I now walk, day in, day out.*

*When I was admitted to a mental health hospital, my wife threw out everything that reminded her of that morning, except that pair of shoes, and we'll never know why. I wear the shoes whenever I go and do a presentation. They're a reminder of where I've been.*

## “INSPIRATIONAL”: EPISODE 25

*I was 20 years old in 1989 and a Liverpool season ticket holder expecting to see a great game of football and of course a Liverpool win in the FA Cup Semi Final match against Nottingham Forest. Nobody however was prepared for the events that subsequently unfolded.*

*I survived the crush of fans in the Leppings Lane end of the stadium by climbing over men, women and children and to which the guilt still haunts me to this very day.*

*In the months and years that followed I went to pursue a career in Banking, working for the Halifax Building Society, as it was then and finally for Lloyds Banking Group.*

*I got married to Belinda and have 2 boys, Oliver (23years old) and Louis (16 years old) and led an ostensibly normal life. But underneath, the Hillsborough Disaster had become part of my DNA. I went to that game one person but came away a totally different person. The mental health stigma was there years ago and certainly I wasn't as a 20 year old person and male going to tell people that I was depressed or that I was struggling. I just hid it and got on with life. That's probably the biggest regret I have.*

*Untreated, the emotional wounds festered coming to a head 28 years later after the disaster.*

*My wife was diagnosed with a bone tumour, my dad cancer and 5 years prior my mom had passed away with dementia and coupled with the ongoing Hillsborough inquiries, everything came crumbling down around me and I got so bad I wanted to take my own life.*

*The evening before and I know how this may sound to anyone reading my story, but that evening I imagined myself at my own funeral. I was looking from the outside to see people's reaction and what was being said. I was mentally and physically exhausted.*

*I knew where I was going to go and how I was going to kill myself.*

*Thankfully my wife's intervention prevented me from putting into reality what I wanted. I was admitted to a mental health hospital, where my long journey of rediscovery began. Through various physiological and medicated treatments and being diagnosed with Post Traumatic*

## “INSPIRATIONAL”: EPISODE 25

*Stress Disorder or PTSD, I was able to start being kind to myself and accept that I was unable to change the past but could possibly change part of my future.*

*I now find myself on a mission to inform, educate and enlighten people about mental health issues, drawing heavily on my own experiences.*

*I am the Mental Health Lead for Group Transformation, Lloyds Banking Group and just recently have set up my own company, **Keep In Mind Ltd.** ([www.keepin-mind.co.uk](http://www.keepin-mind.co.uk)). Through this new venture I speak to employees in client organisations, offering strategies to stay mentally healthy and promoting wellbeing within and beyond the workplace.*

*I have not read textbooks, I've got no qualifications - I suppose the only qualification I've got is my own personal life experience.*

*Take depression as an example, this wasn't in my vocabulary. I was brought up in the 80's and mental illness was something you didn't even talk about, so I didn't really know what depression was until I found myself at that stage of my life.*

*I ignored the signs that I was struggling at the time. It was something I continued to hide, but I knew eventually it would all come to the surface.*

*Educating people in business about mental health issues and encouraging those in need to ask for help has never been as important given the extraordinary stresses exerted by coronavirus.*

*Personally, I don't think we've even reached the tip of the iceberg during this pandemic when it comes to people's mental health and wellbeing.*

*We know that like Hillsborough a lot of people have lost their lives during the pandemic, but Hillsborough was a specific moment in time - six minutes past three and within an hour a number of people had died. But the pandemic's been a long, elongated process.*

*Yet with crisis comes opportunity and this is one I say we should all seize as the mental health and wellbeing agenda has never had such a bright light placed upon it. We hear about*

## “INSPIRATIONAL”: EPISODE 25

*returning a 'new normal' but do we really want to return back shouldn't we be looking forward and try and "embrace the change" the pandemic has forced upon all of us..difficult as that may be for us?*

*This was just one of the reasons why I decided to establish my own venture, so I can go talk, present and support other organisations to embrace this change. I never would have imagined that through my experiences I would have ended up in the role I have within Lloyds Banking Group nor the opportunity via my new company to hopefully make a difference to others.*

*I may never know who through the work and talks I do, it does actually help but to be able to go to bed at night and think I might have just made a small difference...there can be no greater reward.*

*If anyone would like to see / hear more about the services I offer, you can find details on my website including my contact details.”*

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