

'Your mind can create reality'

Journalist and political activist **Lauren Booth** reveals how her father's beliefs shape her life today

You're the daughter of the late famous actor Tony Booth. Was it a happy childhood?

I'm one of eight of his children and I had a great childhood. Dad was a beautiful 70s icon. He was very charismatic and laid-back. We lived in a flat in Hampstead, in London, and I remember he'd watch racing with a beer in front of the TV. We were poor – washed our hair in fairy liquid and used newspaper as loo paper. Dad used to say if we used *The Sun* newspaper we'd be poor but we used *The Guardian* so we were rich because it was a paper of aspiration!

Was he spiritual?

We had a strong spiritual connection all my life, he poured more of his spirituality into me because I lived with him for 11 years, the longest of any of his children. Like Mum, Suzie (80), who still lives in London, he never went to church – I was christened under the kitchen tap! – but he always believed in a greater power, a creator.

Dad was also a believer in the power of the mind. He'd say, 'You can turn a light off with your mind' and he'd get me to concentrate on the light and sometimes it would flicker.

I inherited his belief in the power of your mind creating your reality. We'd sit on the beer stained carpet and he'd do mind reading exercises with me in the evenings. Dad would say, 'I see something special in you, kid.' He'd hold up a playing card and ask, 'What number and colour is it?' And I'd have to guess.

'Concentrate,' he'd say. And he'd run through the pack and sometimes I'd get a run of right numbers and colours. And he'd say he was communicating them to me through the power of his mind.

There was also a certain amount of witchcraft going on at home. We had a book on witchcraft and Mum believed in the power of spells and Dad in manifestation. They were also into



With my daughters, Alex and Holly, in 2009

transcendental meditation. In 1973 Dad said to me, 'Listen kid, mankind has got it wrong, we're looking to technology for our future instead of looking to the power of the mind. There's much more we can't see and your mind can do more than you think it can.'

Your Dad sounds like quite the spiritual visionary...

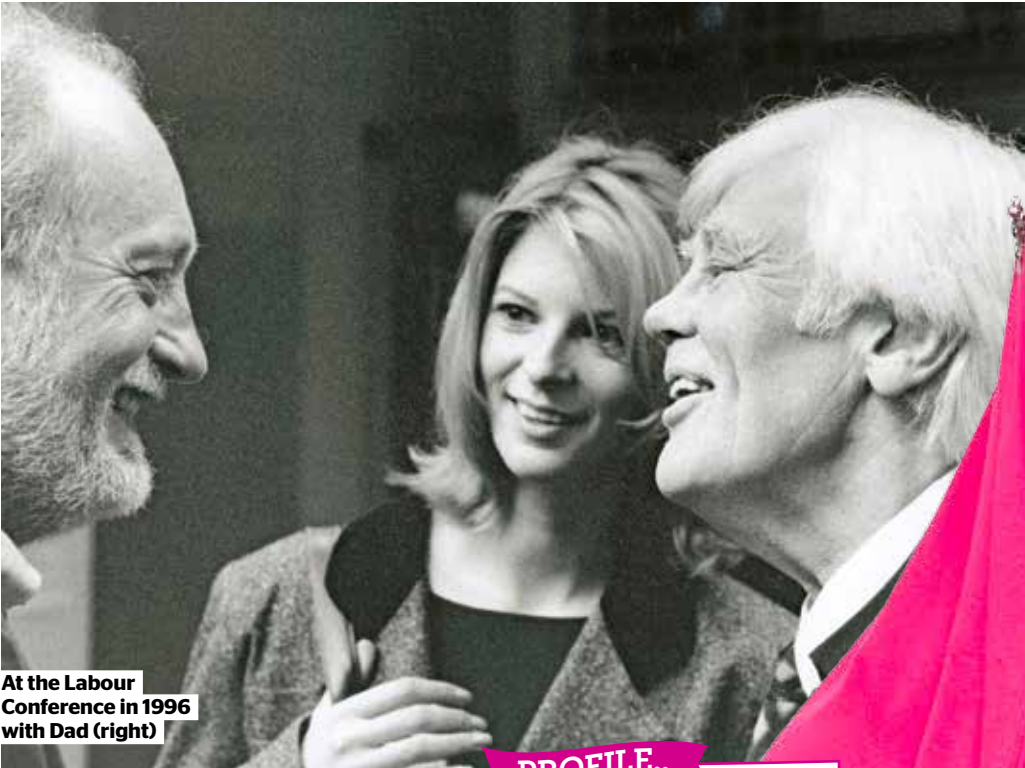
Definitely. He believed in a higher power, not in institutional religions. He gave me a book when I was five years old called *Mister God This Is Anna* by Sydney Hopkins about a child and her conversations with God. That got me into the power of prayer. If something upset me as a kid I'd pray about it. Silly things like 'Please take away my younger sister, Emma, who is always tagging along after me!'

Mum said to me recently, 'You were weird as a child. You were always praying!' Mum's mum, Frances Riley, had a more traditional faith and also taught me the Lord's Prayer. Dad was into 70s experimentalism. But they both spoke to me about the existence of the soul that's linked to something greater than yourself.

I always knew there was something out there, I just felt it in my bones. Children are natural spiritual beings, they know about 'God' and 'The One'. You have to teach people about atheism. I always had a sense everything was going to be okay, that I was cared for.

Any other spiritual experiences your dad introduced to you?

He taught me about spiritual projection (a technique where you project your spirit out of your body to travel to another location in seconds). Without TV and any other distractions, I'd go to bed and lie there and project myself out of my body. We couldn't afford to put on the light with our 50p metre so I'd lie thinking big thoughts about what's at the



At the Labour Conference in 1996 with Dad (right)

PROFILE...

Name
Lauren Booth

Career Lauren trained as an actress at the London Academy of Performing Arts spending several years touring Europe with theatre companies.

In 2014 she presented her own series on British Muslim TV called **Talking Booth**. The same year she became a senior producer at Al Jazeera in Doha.

Did you know? Lauren is the half-sister of Cherie Blair, wife of former Prime Minister Tony Blair.

end of the universe and I'd reach out there in my mind. Then next minute I'd be out of the bedroom window and past the moon and right out into the galaxy then I'd hit a brick wall and never get over the other side and next minute I'd be back in bed. I did it many times as a child but never got past the wall.

Ever had any psychic experiences?

Nan, Mum's mum, was into the ouija board (a board marked with letters of the alphabet used to communicate with Spirit). She also spoke to Spirit and would predict the future. People would come to her for readings, asking things like if they should make this move, or what would happen at work.

When I was 21 and in Alice Springs, in Australia, I lost a contact lens and one day rang my nan who said, 'How are you going to see without a contact lens?!' She just knew!

When I was 32, a couple of years after she died, she appeared to me in a dream, sitting on a gold throne and I said, 'I'm glad to see you!' Then Nan said, 'I'm so disgusted and angry with you. I've spoken to the angels and their message is if you keep messing up – I was drinking and smoking a lot then – you won't have a baby and this is your last chance to sort out your life.' I'd had three miscarriages. She said, 'There's a baby in you now.' Six weeks later I discovered I was indeed pregnant with Alexandra, now 17! It was a message I needed to sort my life out.

Do you think motherhood was a spiritual turning point for you?

Giving birth was one of the most spiritual experiences I've ever had. I went through a very blank spiritual period driven by my

'There was a certain amount of witchcraft going on'





Out with my dad, the actor Tony Booth



selfish ego from the ages of 18 to 40. I'd drunk and smoked marijuana from the age of 13 and that was a barrier to connecting to a higher power, 'the one' we seek. Giving birth at 33 was a big spiritual awakening for me. The moment I felt my baby kick inside me I realised a miracle was happening and it wasn't me controlling it. I was speaking to something (my baby) inside me that I couldn't see and had a connection with it and it triggered a spirituality in me again, believing in something I couldn't see or control. When I gave birth it was joyful, I had amazing visions of waves crashing on a beach in my mind's eye. I'd never felt anything like it – it wasn't an experience about me or my ego or my career or my looks or immediate wants. I had

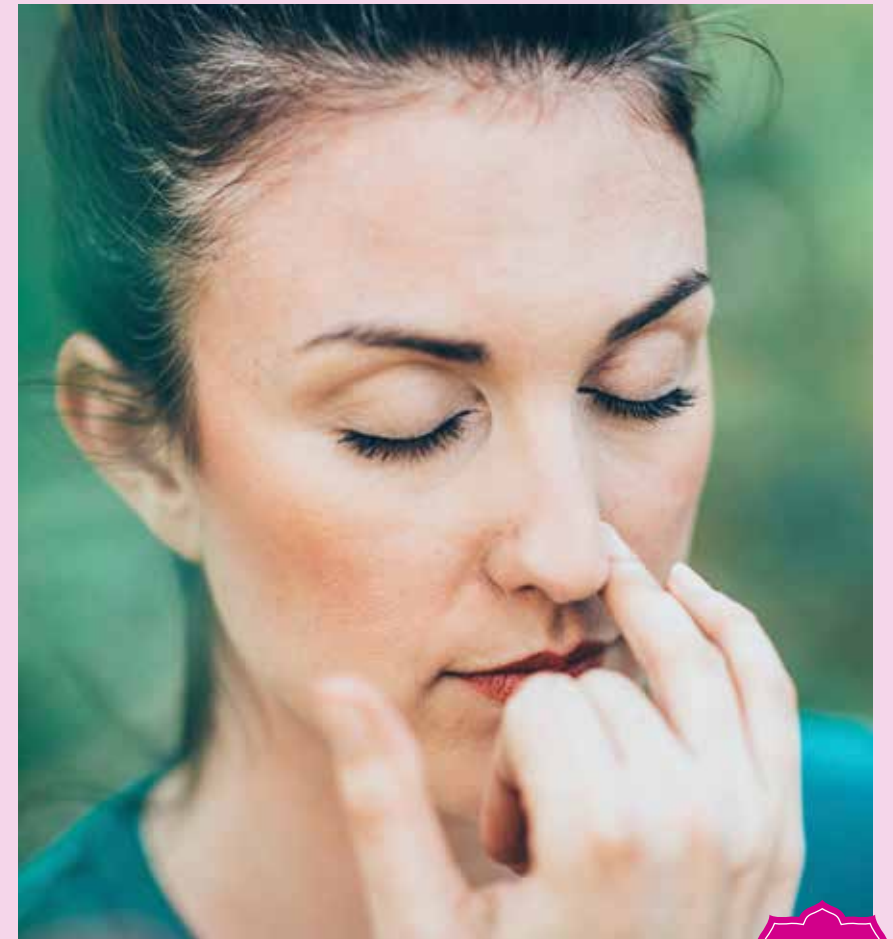
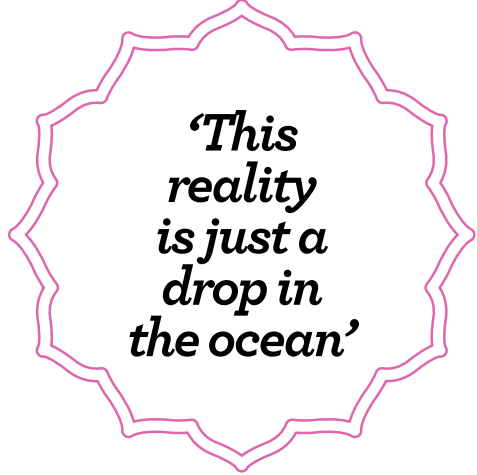
a selfless spiritual awakening. They offered me drugs to ease the pain of birth and I said, 'No'. My first husband said, 'That's the first time you've turned down free drugs!' I said, 'I am going to do it for my daughter, I am going to do this properly.' And I meant it. I believe when you give birth a woman slips between this world and the spiritual realm. **Your Dad died last year, aged 85, after a battle with heart problems and dementia. Did you get time to say goodbye?** When Dad was on his deathbed I hadn't seen him for two years. I don't know the reasons behind why he didn't want to see me, it could

have been his dementia. When I went to see him at his home in the village of Todmorden (on the Yorkshire border), I didn't think he'd recognise me. I reminded myself I wasn't there to right wrongs of the past or make up, that was about things that had happened in this life and he was going somewhere different. My job was to make him feel loved and at peace. I went with the intention that I was there to serve him. I recited some holy scriptures and stroked his hand while he was asleep. Then he opened his eyes and they were as blue as the sea, and he looked straight into my soul and said, 'You're so full of light, beautiful and honest.' Dad always used to quote to me growing up that our eyes are the mirrors of our souls. He'd look into my eyes to find out what state I was in. 'It's not what you tell me that tells me how you are, it's what I see in your eyes,' he'd say. When he was dying, a look of love passed between us as we looked into each other's eyes that was so deep and beautiful. It was like I was looking at my Dad at the age of 30 and I was a little girl again. I knew at that moment that we were in the same place as each other. What passed between us was the same look of pure love that we had had at our strongest time of connection. The night he died I dreamt he was being washed by three men in white in a big palace. I don't know where he is now but I know he's happy wherever he is.

Do you believe in guardian angels? They may not be visible but I believe they're around us all the time. I'm aware they're making notes of the good and harm we do. They protect us and are behind, in front and beside us. When I pray I bring their protection to me. I always pray five times a day.

In 2010 your conversion to Islam sparked a media furore and a lot of negativity. How did it change you? It changed me as a mum because I became a lot more peaceful and calm after stopping drinking. Of course, I had always looked after my children and got them to school on time, but there was an atmosphere sometimes of tetchiness, materialism and tension that my children felt physically from time to time, and day to day. Not drinking changed my way of being for the better. But there was also no change in that I was brought up in a spiritual household and Islam is all about the unseen, the boundaries between this reality and everything else. This reality is just a drop in the ocean.

Do you have a daily spiritual practice? I try every day when I open my eyes to say praise and thanks. Every morning I open my eyes and the first thing that passes my lips, before I reach for my iPhone, is a chant that 'I get to do it better today'. I'm grateful I have been allowed to make it through the night and I make the intention I'm going to be better today. At night when I go to bed I try and find 10 things to say I'm sorry for and ask for forgiveness. Then 10 things to be grateful for. It doesn't have to be big things, it could be something as small as being grateful for your eyelashes that prevent dust being blown into your eyes. You can keep track of what you're grateful for by writing them in a diary and then look back and see how you've moved on from being grateful for your eyelashes to giving thanks for having an amazing husband! **More info** *Finding Peace in the Holy Land* by Lauren Booth (£19.99, Kube Publishing).



Create your own destiny!



Take a leaf out of Lauren's dad's book and use the power of your mind to manifest your dreams

- 1** Sit somewhere comfortable and quiet where you won't be disturbed.
- 2** Close your eyes and concentrate on your third eye, between your eyebrows in the middle of your forehead, that expands your intuition and awareness.
- 3** Relax your body by resting your hands on your legs.
- 4** Take a couple of deep breaths to calm your mind and connect to the universe. Block your right nostril with your right thumb and inhale slowly and deeply through your left nostril. After the count of three, release your right nostril and block your left nostril with your index or little finger. Exhale slowly and deeply through your right nostril.
- 5** Stretch your arms up and shake every part of your body for a few seconds so that the energy of the universe can circulate through you.
- 6** Be aware of your thoughts. Replace any negative ones with happy ones instead. Every time a critical thought pops up in your mind, immediately replace it with a compliment to yourself.
- 7** Imagine your heart's desire, whether that's something to do with love, health, wealth, or work.
- 8** Visualise yourself as already having received or achieved it. For example, if you want a new house, imagine yourself unlocking the door to your ideal property. Acknowledge how that feels in your body. Do you feel a warmth anywhere? Focus on that feeling for a few minutes.
- 9** Open your eyes and trust that the universe will bring you what you need when the time is right. 🌟