



Having been made redundant, career breaker Sarah Young decided to do something different and fulfilling with her time between jobs, becoming a trek leader on Raleigh's expedition in Borneo.

Having been made redundant from a Senior Facilities Management role in the banking sector, I was put on gardening leave for 3 months. During this time, while job hunting, I questioned whether replacing one rather stressful and not particularly fulfilling job simply with another was really the right thing to do.

The idea of changing career into the outward bound, personal development arena was born, the combination and interaction of the two having always been of particular interest to me. I went home and that night printed off the Raleigh application form, having heard of Raleigh many years before and feeling keen to explore Borneo.

At the start of the second phase, the Country Program Manager called me with a proposal: the offer to return as Trek Project Manager for the next expedition, and to get more involved with a lot of the training. I didn't need much time to reflect, it was a great opportunity for me to gain more outdoor experience and give me more time to think about how I could make this career move really work in the future. I said yes.

All in all, I spent a whole magical year in Borneo, working for 3 expeditions, a year that has changed my life beyond recognition.

I was a Trek Project Manager for my first two expeditions, leading groups of around 12 venturers trekking in the primary rainforest of southern Sabah, and overseeing the dive training. For the third expedition I was the Adventure Challenge Co-ordinator.

Initially what I wanted was just a break, to get away from the habits and pressures of London life, a bit of space and time to think about the future, and what was actually important to me. By the second expedition I realised it was much more than just a break, it was an opportunity for total refocusing and rebalancing my life. I got time to reflect, and the space to create and think about a future that I really wanted, and to regain a real passion and enthusiasm for that.

Having gone through the Raleigh experience, I know that I have found my path now, and I will see where it leads. It has confirmed many things for me: I don't want to go back to working inside an office for 50+ hours a week like I used to, that I need to work with people, that I love the outdoors and what it does to people, and as Raleigh says, actually do something worthwhile and *Make A Difference*.

I also know now that I need a lot less in my life that I thought and that I will now choose to spend more time with people who are also positive energetic individuals. I know I also have the strength and ability to do whatever I really want to do, and that I do dare to be different.

Hard skills I have learnt: Particularly river crossings, these have been fantastic. I have learnt a lot as how these change with heavy rains etc. I have also learnt lots of top tips and have gained good experience putting up bashas and jungle camps, fires and fire starting,



finding the right dry wood, and parang use. These were new to me when I joined Raleigh, but have been fantastic to learn about, and I have loved it. They probably provided some of the best Raleigh moments, and I'm now pretty proud of my parang wielding skills!

Soft skills I have learnt: A lot of facilitation, some counselling, change management and conflict resolution. I used these in my previous corporate background, just in a bit of a different environment. It was great having the one-to-ones, and breakthrough moments with the venturers as they realised they could achieve more than they thought.

To sum up my Raleigh experience I would say it was an amazing year of personal change and growth, and I know I am a much happier person for it.

