



**"I want to
be known for
something
amazing"**

**Alex Reid –
Jordan's other half
– comes out fighting**

By POLLY VERNON

Plus

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to breakdown: how
depression destroyed
one woman's career**

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SCHOOL OF LIFE

IDEAS FOR MODERN LIVING

#9 DETERMINATION

"It was this long," gestured my friend Tony, recalling both his shock and satisfaction in having uprooted a foot-long dandelion root from his garden and saved his newly turfed lawn from infestation. They are far from weedy. Dandelions are determination incarnate. "Be brave as a lion." Fine. But: "Be determined like a dandelion." It's not an ancient Chinese proverb, but it should be.

It's the nature of a dandelion's determination that is so infuriating to the lawn layer but of value as a guide to modern life. It puts down deep roots. Determination requires the confidence that comes from being grounded. This way you'll be more resistant to the bluster above ground and able to grow and spread. The determined dandelion sees no barriers and you'll find them everywhere – these days they are even thriving indoors, in teas and on menus as a trendy alternative to conventional greens.

Their determination is not expressed with aggressive thorns, drab foliage or poisonous flowers. A dandelion is determined with cheerfulness. Cuteness is their modus operandi. They flower with a little shaggy yellow mop head and when it comes to setting seed the dandelion does so with such delicacy and playfulness that it's become a vision of ecological contentment. Just do a web search for "child blowing dandelion" – yes, the dandelion's determination has enticed our children into inadvertently supporting their mission to thrive anywhere.

Goodness, there's even the suggestion that dandelions can tell the time. Well, of course the determined know how to take an opportunity. Watch out, Swatch: the punctual of a post-industrial world will use dandelion clocks. It's time to do as a dandelion does. ■ RICHARD REYNOLDS
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WORDS FROM THE WISE

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for."

Barack Obama