

MAKE ANXIETY YOUR SUPERPOWER! TAP INTO YOUR INNER WISDOM

CREATE A LIFE YOU LOVE

UK edition

# psychologies

## SLEEP WELL!

Say farewell to your fears and enjoy a good night's sleep

**8** easy ways to stand up for yourself with loved ones

*Kate Humble*

on why it's people, not possessions, that make you happy

Using colour to **BOOST YOUR MOOD**

Get in touch with your local community and **BEAT LONELINESS**

16-page DOSSIER

## Reduce your stress today

- How to let go of perfectionism
- Why asking for help is so powerful
- Take control of your emotions

PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK

SPRING 2022 • £4.90



9 771746 734177 23

# BECOME A HEALTH COACH

IMAGINE IN 9 MONTHS  
BEING ABLE TO BE YOUR  
OWN BOSS, START A WHOLE  
NEW LIFE AND CAREER, AND  
MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE  
TO PEOPLE'S HEALTH.



*Zenale Roux*

“

I finally have a job that truly fulfils and excites me. I love coaching my clients to transform their health and live their lives to the full again. I loved everything about the course and I became a better version of myself. I was given everything I needed to build a successful practice too ”



Health Coaching is a fast growing, specialist form of coaching and a powerful way to help people to improve the quality of their lives. On our Diploma course you will be trained in how to effectively support people to transform their health by some of the top Health Coaching and Nutrition Experts worldwide.

Health Coaches work with clients to create a brand new vision of health and wellbeing, invent a personalised health strategy and overcome barriers and challenges.

Learn the Person-Centred Nutrition approach that promotes optimum health and wellness, and help people transform their lives with your skills as a professional Health Coach.

**The world needs more health coaches**

## Health Coaching Diploma Course

**Duration:** 9 - 12 months

**Study Format:** part-time, live and online training

**Course Content:** Health transformation coaching, person-centred nutrition, lifestyle coaching & the Winning Business Formula

scan our QR code below



Find out how you can  
change your life and  
the lives of others  
Book a one to one call  
or join a free event

FIND OUT  
MORE  
TODAY

DOWNLOAD OUR PROSPECTUS  
& BOOK YOUR FREE CALL TODAY

[www.healthcoachesacademy.com](http://www.healthcoachesacademy.com)



# Welcome...

'Every experience I have is perfect for my own growth,' explains the legendary Louise Hay in our inspirational Good Thoughts, on page 48. It's a feeling that can be hard to hold on to sometimes, but I love it when life does feel like this, particularly when things land just at the right moment. I've had that myself a few times this month: a sweet message from a friend when I was feeling a bit glum; a helpful email offering a great solution when I was lacking inspiration; something as simple as sunshine through the window when I needed to see it. I hope that if you ever feel like you need a little bit of extra help, this magazine is just the right thing for you, at just the right time.

This month, we're thinking a bit about stress and anxiety, from a couple of different angles. Our dossier (page 51) is looking at the ways stress can affect us, and how to reduce its influence on our lives, with practical ideas about how to go about rebalancing everything on your plate so you can manage things more easily. It might be a case of asking for help, overcoming perfectionism or understanding you just need to let go of things sometimes – whatever it is, I hope that our dossier hits just the right note for you. And, offering a different take, we have a brilliant insight into how reducing the stress in your life can be as simple as listening to that quiet little voice inside you (page 22). It's easy for it to get drowned out, but it's amazing what you can uncover when you turn the volume down on everything else and really tune into that whisper. It was listening to this intuition and inner wisdom that led TV presenter Kate Humble to leave London for the Welsh countryside 14-and-a-half years ago. Discover more about her inspiring story on page 14.

We're also learning how to strengthen our boundaries with our loved ones (another possible cause of stress) on page 74, and if it's connection you're looking for, find out why getting involved in your local community could be one of the most fulfilling things you could do (page 80). We're inspired to get moving this month, too, finding out about the power of Chakradance to heal (page 92), plus, we're changing the way we think about sleep (page 100), discovering the power of colour to boost our mood (page 106), and learning how to celebrate ourselves (page 34).

I hope this issue gives you the inspiration you need to have a wonderful month. Enjoy!

Sally x

Sally Saunders, Editor

***We hope you love 'Psychologies'.  
Subscribe today and save!***

Go to [shop.kelsey.co.uk/PY422](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/PY422)  
or call 01959 543747\*

\*FOR FULL DETAILS, SEE PAGE 40



**SPRING**

# *In this issue...*

## *Regulars*

### **7 In the mood**

Enlightening, happy-making facts, fascinating news stories and more

### **12 Viewpoint**

What's caught your eye in *Psychologies*? We want to hear from you!

### **14 \* Kate Humble**

The TV presenter, author and farmer on finding fulfilment and following her heart home to the countryside

### **20 Life as I know it**

Harriet Minter's playing detective and is on the hunt for hope

## *Mind*

### **22 \* Anxiety is your superpower**

Tap into anxious feelings and unearth your powerful intuition

### **26 Coaching in action**

The award-winning coach Kim Morgan helps a client examine her bold new life plans from every angle

### **29 Lightbulb moments**

Anger is not a dirty word, it's a sign of self-worth, says Kimberley Wilson

### **30 Your dilemmas addressed**

Our agony aunt, Mary Fenwick, offers a fresh perspective on your troubles

### **34 Celebrate your success**

Silence your inner critic and learn to give a cheer to your achievements

### **42 Your mental wellbeing toolkit**

Recognise and understand post-traumatic stress disorder



Encourage  
community spirit

# 80

### **45 A moment of calm**

Calm your nerves with skullcap

### **47 Stop and smell the ink**

There's freedom to be found in putting pen to paper, says Jackee Holder

## *Heart*

### **74 \* 8 things you need to know about boundaries**

How to set out expectations with kindness and compassion

### **80 \* Better together**

Seek out community engagement and find your sense of connection

## *Body*

### **86 Mindful wellness**

Conscious ways to live well

### **92 Dance with me**

Could movement help heal your emotional pain?

## *Join us today!*



## *Pay just £5 for three issues!*

Subscribe to 'Psychologies' or give a gift subscription and commit to a happier life. You'll benefit from life-changing tools and advice to help you live your best life, plus receive free membership to our Subscriber Club. See page 40.

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH HUDSON VERNON. HAIR WASHED IN HUMBLE BEAUTY SHAMPOO





**96 Taste of the season**

Lay on a spring feast, fresh from nature's harvest

**100 \* Stop sabotaging your sleep!**

Reframe your thoughts and reclaim peaceful nights

*Soul*

**106 \* The power of colour**

Turn up the dial and spread positivity

**110 Work in progress**

Our agony aunt, Mary Fenwick, resolves your difficulties in the workplace

**114 How to be happier**

With psychologist Emma Hepburn

ORDER  
OUR NEXT  
ISSUE NOW AND  
GET FREE DELIVERY  
DIRECTLY TO  
YOUR DOOR

Order online at [shop.kelsey.co.uk/PY422](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/PY422)

psychologies  
**DOSSIER**

*With you  
in mind*



51

## Stress less

**54 Learn to ask for help**

Identify the stressors in your life, and minimise the damaging effects

**56 Is it stress – or trauma?**

Spot the signs of something more significant at play

**57 Let go of the stress of perfection**

Reduce sky-high expectations and cut yourself some slack

**58 Your best is good enough**

It's time to delegate and drop some balls!

**60 Take 5**

Simple steps to help you recalibrate

**62 How can you make stress work for you?**

Take our psychological test

**66 Concentrate on what you can control**

Turn away from worry and focus on factors within your influence

**68 Dossier extra: Stress-buster heroes**

Brilliant buys to help you keep calm and carry on

Kelsey Publishing Ltd, The Granary, Downs Court,  
Yalding Hill, Yalding, Kent ME18 6AL  
(01959 541444, email letters@psychologies.co.uk)

## OUR TEAM

Editor Sally Saunders  
Art Editor Jennifer Ratcliff  
Chief Sub-Editor and Production Editor Karen Warren  
Features Editor Heidi Scrimgeour  
Acting Wellness Director Elizabeth Bennett  
Online Writer Women's Wellbeing Lily Smith  
Social Media and Digital Content Producer Amy Mica Marsden  
In The Mood Editor Alex Lloyd

## ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION

Senior Commercial Manager Amy McBride  
01959 543514; amy.mcbride@kelsey.co.uk  
Commercial Executive Hannah Lees  
01959 543518; hannah.lees@kelsey.co.uk  
Production and Design Manager Neil Hepden  
01233 220245; psychologies@tandemmedia.co.uk

## MANAGEMENT

Chief Executive Steve Wright  
Managing Director (Lifestyle) Kevin McCormick  
Retail Director Steve Brown  
Subscription Marketing Director Gill Lambert  
Subscription Marketing Manager Nick McIntosh  
Print Production Manager Georgina Harris  
Print Production Controller Hayley Brown

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

13 issues of *Psychologies* are published per annum

- UK annual subscription price: £63.70
- Europe annual subscription price: £77
- USA annual subscription price: £77
- Rest of World annual subscription price: £83
- UK subscription and back issue orderline: 01959 543747
- Overseas subscription orderline: 0044 (0) 1959 543747
- Toll-free USA subscription orderline: 1 888 777 0275
- UK customer service team: 01959 543747; subs@kelsey.co.uk

Find subscription offers on our website: [shop.kelsey.co.uk/psy](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/psy)  
Manage your subscription online [shop.kelsey.co.uk/site/loginForm](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/site/loginForm)

## DISTRIBUTION & PRINTING

- William Gibbons & Sons Limited, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall WV13 3XA; 01902 730011; [williamgibbons.co.uk](http://williamgibbons.co.uk)
- Distribution in Great Britain: Marketforce, 3rd Floor, 161 Marsh Wall, London, E14 9AP; 0330 3906 5551

Distribution in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland:  
Newsread: 353 23 886 3850

● The information in 'Psychologies' is provided for entertainment and should not supersede the advice of medical experts. You must not rely on this magazine as an alternative to advice from your doctor or other professional healthcare provider. If you think you may be suffering from any medical condition, seek expert attention.

## GLOBAL EDITIONS

Groupe Psychologies, 2-8 rue Gaston-Rébuffat, 75019 Paris, France. Tel: 01 44 65 58 00

**PSYCHOLOGIES FRANCE**  
Editor-in-Chief: Laurence Folléa

**PSYCHOLOGIES ROMANIA** Ringier Magazines, 6 Dimitri Pompeiu Street, Bucharest. Tel: +40 212 03 08 00. Managing Director: Mihnea Vasiliu ([mihnea.vasiliu@ringier.ro](mailto:mihnea.vasiliu@ringier.ro)) Editor-in-Chief: Iuliana Alexa ([iuliana.alexa@ringier.ro](mailto:iuliana.alexa@ringier.ro)) Advertising Manager: Monica Pop ([monica.pop@ringier.ro](mailto:monica.pop@ringier.ro))

**PSYCHOLOGIES BELGIUM** Edition Ventures, Chaussée de Louvain 431D, 1830 Lasne. Tel: +32 2 379 29 90 Editorial Director: Marie-Christine De Wasseige ([mc.dewasseige@ventures.be](mailto:mc.dewasseige@ventures.be)) Chief Editor (French): Christiane Thiry ([christiane.thiry@ventures.be](mailto:christiane.thiry@ventures.be)) Chief Editor (Flemish): Barbara Van den Abeele ([b.vandenabeele@ventures.be](mailto:b.vandenabeele@ventures.be)) Advertising Manager: Manonelle Sepulchre ([manonelle.sepulchre@ventures.be](mailto:manonelle.sepulchre@ventures.be))

**PSYCHOLOGIES RUSSIA** Hearst Shkulev Media, Psychologies Russia, 31 b Shabolovkaya Street, Moscow 115162. Tel: +7 495 981 39 10 President: Viktor Shkulev ([vshkulev@hsmmedia.ru](mailto:vshkulev@hsmmedia.ru)) Editor-in-Chief: Xenia Kiseleva ([xkiseleva@hsmmedia.ru](mailto:xkiseleva@hsmmedia.ru)) Publisher and Advertising Manager: Ekatarina Kerova ([ekerova@hsmmedia.ru](mailto:ekerova@hsmmedia.ru))

# The advice starts RIGHT HERE!



## OLIVIA JAMES

*'An inability to embrace success can lead to low mood, burnout and low self-worth,' says confidence coach Olivia James, 'but the benefits of recognising it are profound, creating a sense of innate self-esteem.' Learn how to celebrate your successes on page 34.*

## NIC GRATTON

*'There's something really important in connecting with communities and feeling like you're part of a bigger picture,' says Nic Gratton, a professor at Staffordshire University. Discover how tapping into the history and culture of the place in which you live can help build compassion and connection, on page 80.*



## STEPHANIE ROMISZEWSKI

*'Having periods of not sleeping well is normal, and not something to worry about,' says sleep expert Stephanie Romiszewski. 'Learning to accept this and alter your thought process is the best way to get your desired quota.' Find out how to re-frame your thinking and sleep soundly on page 100.*



## Our mission

*Psychologies' mission is to provide you with inspiration and advice to support you to improve your emotional wellbeing. We aim to help you boost your happiness and resilience and lower your stress and anxiety. We do this by providing simple, achievable steps to make small changes that can add up to a real difference.*

Embracing the four pillars of your life, from mind and body to heart and soul, *Psychologies* engages with the world around us as well as the world within to help you discover inspiring ways to make every day better and create a life you love.

*Psychologies Magazine* is a registered trademark. Copyright ©2002

*Psychologies Magazine* is a registered trademark and is published monthly by Kelsey Media 2022© all rights reserved. Kelsey Media is a trading name of Kelsey Publishing Ltd. Reproduction in whole or in part is forbidden except with permission in writing from the publishers.

**Note to contributors:** Articles submitted for consideration by the editor must be the original work of the author and not previously published. Where photographs are included, which are not the property of the contributor, permission to reproduce them must have been obtained from the owner of the copyright. The Editor cannot guarantee a personal response to all letters and emails received. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor or the Publisher. Kelsey Publishing Ltd accepts no liability for products and services offered by third parties.

**PRIVACY NOTICE:** Kelsey Publishing Ltd uses a multilayered privacy notice, giving you brief details about how we would like to use your personal information. For full details, visit [kelsey.co.uk](http://kelsey.co.uk), or call 01959 543524. If you have any questions, please ask, as submitting your details indicates your consent, until you choose otherwise, that we and our partners may contact you about products and services that will be of relevance to you via direct mail, phone, email or SMS. You can opt out at ANY time via email: [data.controller@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:data.controller@kelsey.co.uk) or 01959 543524.





# *In the mood*

Thought-provoking culture, insightful science and inspirational snippets to bring you up to date on all things uplifting, hopeful and happy-making

COMPILED BY ALEX LLOYD

## *Give it a grow!*

Grow your own and you'll reap the rewards – new research reveals that city veg patches can be as productive as farms! Volunteer growers participating in a two-year study harvested 1kg of insect-pollinated fruit and vegetables per square metre per season – yields comparable to a commercial farm, and with fewer pesticides.

The 30 green-fingered citizen scientists grew their produce in allotments, gardens and balconies in Brighton, each cultivating an average of £550 worth of goods per year. They also recorded more than 2,000 pollinating insects visiting their crops.

Study leader Dr Beth Nicholls says, 'The UK imports approximately £8 billion of fruit and vegetables each year. But our results show that green spaces in cities could play an important role in meeting that demand at a local scale.'

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES; SHUTTERSTOCK





## After effects

Black comedy-drama *After Life* has been a surprise TV hit, with the poignant scenes of widowed Tony and Anne chatting together on a graveyard bench, as they navigate their grief, going viral.

Now, streaming service Netflix has donated 25 Benches of Hope to councils around Britain, to remind people they are not alone, and of how sharing your feelings can help.

The seats are inscribed with a quote from series three – ‘Hope is everything’ – and contain a QR code plaque linking to resources from suicide prevention charity the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM).

Show writer Ricky Gervais, who plays Tony, says, ‘We hope the benches will create a lasting legacy for *After Life*, as well as become a place for people to visit. We are thrilled to be associated with CALM and the great work it does.’



PHOTOGRAPH: NETFLIX

***Brits eat an average of 12 hot cross buns each year – with Londoners enjoying 17 of the Easter treats annually!***



## BLOOMING LOVELY

Appreciating the fleeting beauty of blossom as spring arrives is an ancient tradition in Japan, known as Hanami. Now, the National Trust is encouraging Brits to share this joy by posting pictures of flowering trees and hedgerows with the hashtag #BlossomWatch.

The official Blossom Watch Day is on 23 April, but you can share images of fruit trees blooming from March, with hawthorn flowering in May. [nationaltrust.org.uk](https://nationaltrust.org.uk)



## Spring has sprung and hope is on the horizon

By Katie Piper

With the cold months firmly behind us and spring 2022 well on the way, there is a lot to be grateful for. Longer days have arrived, and gone are the mornings of waking up before the sun.

With spring comes an explosion of colour, which is guaranteed to put a smile on your face. Indeed, studies show that we are happier in spring; moderate temperatures encourage us to fill our lungs with fresh air, and exposure to sunlight increases the levels of feelgood serotonin in the brain.

Walking or getting outside for as little as ten minutes each day can improve mental

health, and spring is the perfect time for it. So, this is a reminder to switch off every now and then and enjoy everything that springtime has to offer.

If you're looking for something to listen to on those spring strolls, look no further than my podcast *Extraordinary People*. I've spoken with some incredibly inspirational people, all of whom have turned adversity into powerful positivity. With guests such as Matt Haig, Lauren Mahon and Dr Alex George, you'll laugh, cry and feel inspired. Available to listen to on Spotify and Apple Podcasts now.





## WATCH, LOOK, LISTEN



**WATCH** – The long-awaited racy Regency period drama *Bridgerton* returns for series two, with new character Kate Sharma as the roguish Anthony's new love interest. Netflix, from 25 March.



**LOOK** – Organised every five years, the British Art Show takes the UK's best contemporary work on tour. Currently in Wolverhampton, it will also visit Manchester and Plymouth. [Britishartshow9.co.uk](http://Britishartshow9.co.uk)



**LISTEN** – Podcast *Comfort Eating with Grace Dent* sees the restaurant critic quiz celebs, including Jo Brand and Craig David, about their lives, and the foods that have sustained them through them.



### DON'T FAKE IT TO MAKE IT

*Forcing a smile to hide emotional pain won't lessen your feelings, and might even make you feel worse. Scientists tested whether putting on a front to counter distressing moments helped control negative feelings, and found that participants – particularly women – fared better when relying on spontaneous emotion, instead of hiding behind a poker face.*

### Feta accompli?

Forget dusty old cookery books – the modern method of discovering the latest food trends is TikTok. Millions of home cooks have turned to the video-sharing app for meal inspiration, with dishes such as baked oats and salmon rice bowl going viral.

The biggest hit is baked feta pasta, shared by Finnish blogger Jenni Häyrynen. The simple combination of tomato, cheese and herbs has had 1.1 billion views to date and even saw feta sales increase by 300 per cent in her home country!

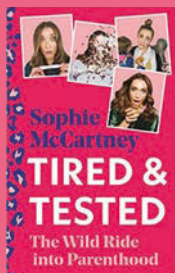


## 3 holiday reads... MUM MANUALS



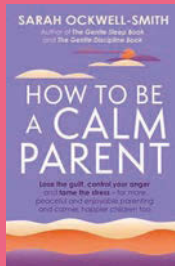
**1** *Tired & Tested* by  
Sophie McCartney  
(HarperCollins, £16.99)

is a laugh-  
out-loud  
look at  
motherhood,  
by the  
comedienne  
behind the  
hit viral  
videos of the  
same name.



**2** *How To Be A Calm  
Parent* by Sarah  
Ockwell-Smith

(Little, Brown,  
£14.99)  
offers  
support  
and tools to  
improve your  
own mindset,  
so that your  
child will be  
happier too.



**3** *Five Minute Mum  
On The Go* by  
Daisy Upton

(Penguin,  
£12.99) is a  
magic bible  
of brilliant  
games to  
ensure your  
kids are  
never again  
bored when  
you travel.



### Fixing the future

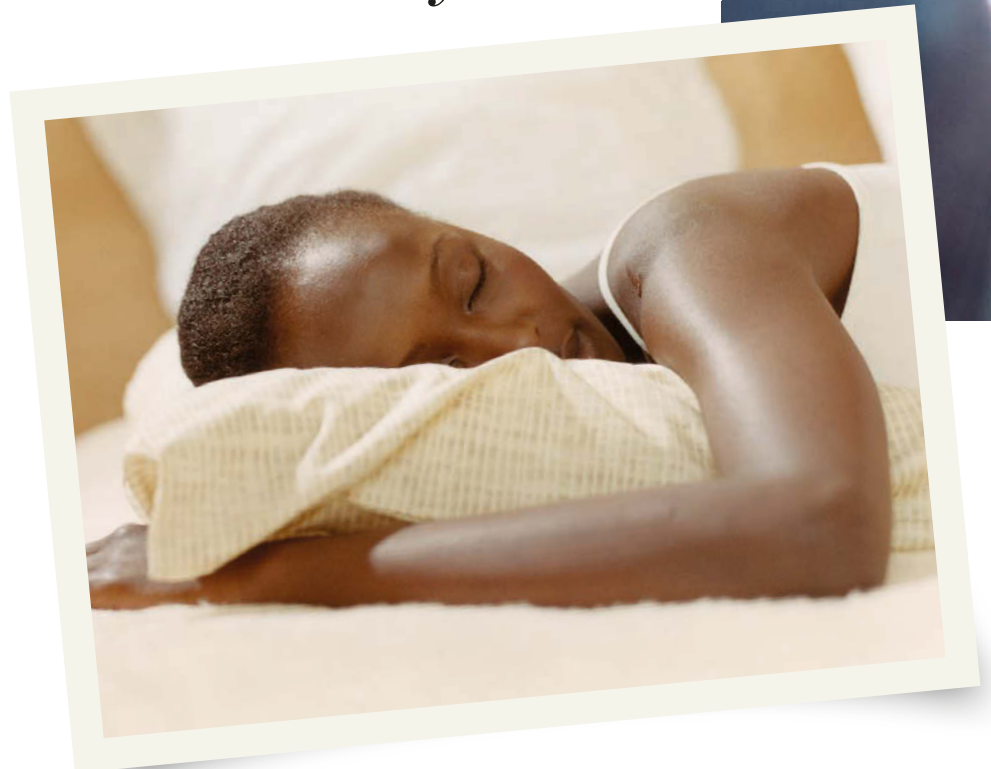
Fixing Factories could become a fixture on our high streets in a drive to cut e-waste.

The Restart Project has opened two trial hubs in London where customers can get their small household appliances and electronics repaired on a pay-as-you-feel basis.

The charity hopes it will cut the volume of goods sent to landfill, give low-income families the chance to save money, and provide jobs for young people.

A Restart and YouGov poll found that 30 per cent of people who threw away or replaced a broken electronic device only did so after being unable to repair it or because the cost was too expensive. Find out more at [therestartproject.org](http://therestartproject.org)

*Online searches for sleep  
advice have increased by*  
**800%**  
*in the past year, according  
to bed brand Sealy.*





## ***Feel the rhythm***

*Music has the power to move people, and now a study has shown how humans can represent their emotions by changing a tune.*

*Participants in the experiment were given software to adjust the characteristics of a song, such as tempo, key and dynamics, to convey seven key feelings.*

*Most chose similar musical cues, such as a slower speed for sadness.*

*Scientists say the findings could help develop an emotional communication medium using music for clinical purposes.*

## **Adjusting the balance**

A four-day working week is being trialled by 30 UK companies to discover whether a longer weekend actually improves productivity, not just wellbeing. Participating employees continue receiving their full-time salary while doing 20 per cent fewer hours and trying to maintain 100 per cent output. The trial is being run by the 4 Day Week Campaign and think-tank Autonomy. It will last six months, with results monitored by three universities. Ireland, Spain, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the US are also running four-day week trials this year. Find out more at [4dayweek.co.uk](http://4dayweek.co.uk)

*"No one else can do me like me. I am perfect at me. And you are perfect at you"*

*TV presenter Holly Willoughby*

# Viewpoint

Send your letters of gratitude and tell us what you loved reading in the magazine to [letters@psychologies.co.uk](mailto:letters@psychologies.co.uk)

Star  
letter

## Let it go

'Choose your battles' (March edition) made so much sense to me, and forced me to consider my own life.

I always find myself tiptoeing around people, trying not to upset them – but it's often at the cost of my own happiness.

Your feature made me see that I should learn to choose my battles. Battles not fought are not lost; simply battles not worth fighting for. And true strength is being able to walk away from the nonsense with your head held high. Sometimes, keeping the peace is better than being right. For instance, my son and daughter-in-law go to her parents every Christmas. We're allowed one hour with them in the morning and then off they go. This upsets me but, at the end of day, I have to realise that this is what they want to do. It hurts that they don't want to be with us for dinner and the games we used to play before they were married. But I don't want to cause waves and I'm not going to let something that doesn't matter, cause me to lose something that does. I know they still love me.

I feel a lot wiser since reading your article. Growth is realising that not every situation deserves my anger or my full attention.

Name supplied

## Running is meditation

I agreed with 'Race for (mid) life' (March edition). As someone who has taken up running again in my 50s, I gain so much from the activity. And it is not about running fast – I barely shuffle! However, my shuffling is getting faster without me focusing on it. My motto is that the best exercise is the one you are willing to do.

I never listen to music while running – predominantly to save myself from being run over while boogieing maniacally to 70s disco music. But also because I prefer to focus on relaxing – I like to imagine energy flowing where it needs to go. Any thoughts dissolve away, which gives me a surge of renewed energy. Running is meditation. Once upon a time, I may have used music to run further and faster, but this is now redundant. Thanks for the reminder.

Claire Bulman

## The sound of silence

Yesterday morning, I thought I'd treat myself to the March edition of *Psychologies*. I wanted to save it to enjoy after work, so left it in the car. Because of this, I had only glanced at the cover, which accounts for my misreading the 'Improve your resilience' cover story as 'Improve your silence'.

The misread lurked in my thoughts all morning, niggling away, and I realised it's because I fill silence with sound. My headphones are usually playing something, whether I'm at work or at home. So, at break time (I work in a school), instead of playing a podcast while making a PowerPoint, I made a cup of tea, I closed my classroom door, turned the world to mute, and enjoyed the most peaceful break.

Thank you for inspiring in me to create a little moment of mindfulness, however inadvertently!

Laura Williams





## PHOTO COMPETITION

I'm always inspired by the amazing scenes that nature can produce. Views like this one can uplift me, calm me or help me gain some perspective on a problem I may be facing. I have taken many walks and runs along this nature trail in Fife, Scotland, and this photograph is one of my favourites.

**Sue Davina Watt**

**Would you like** to showcase your photographic talent in 'Psychologies'? What moment has made you feel inspired, grateful or moved this month? Capture it and tell us why. We'll print the winner, plus you'll receive a free copy of our bookazine, 'Find Your Calm', worth £6.99. Share your photograph with us and explain its inspiration on Instagram @psychologiesmagazine with the hashtag #PsychologiesPhoto, or email it to [letters@psychologies.co.uk](mailto:letters@psychologies.co.uk)

## LETTER OF GRATITUDE

*I'd like to thank...*

My mother,

Mum, you went to bed one night and decided not to get up the next day... perhaps you had a feeling that your time was coming. My sister was your main carer at home for a number of years and called the doctor, who confirmed the family might like 'to gather around.' I joined you both that day and we were together for the next week. Every day, you weakened, yet you were in good spirits and appeared lucid, despite the dementia. Our brother called in from Taiwan on FaceTime each day at 1 o'clock, and reminisced about our childhood, always thanking you for all you did for us. His children came to the camera, my daughter called in from Paris, and all five of your other grandchildren visited in person. You smiled at each of them as they told you how much they loved you; you couldn't talk, but were still clearly communicating through facial expressions.

When you looked at me, I felt an overwhelming sense of unconditional love; it was an understanding between us that, whatever happened, and wherever we were, you would be loving us. We gave you the options of dying alone, with just me present, just my sister, or with both of us by your side, which is what you chose as you exhaled for the last time. We reached over your bed and held hands tightly. There was a serenity in that calm space and we knew we were in a bubble of love.

It was what I would call a 'good death' and we are both so grateful to you for the wonderful experience, the last act of your unending love for us. Thank you for being our mum.

*Becka*



## Life lessons

I am an avid reader of your magazine and always find something that resonates with me, just at the time in which I need to hear it. Your March issue was one of the best yet, because it touches on much of what is so relevant today.

As a self-employed carer, I have lived in the UK since 2018, and have met a few challenges over the years – but none have set me back as much as the spinal cord injury I sustained in June 2021, which brought my life to a dramatic halt in many respects. But, now, heading towards my

61st birthday, I refuse to accept that I have to stop doing the things that make me happy and bring me joy – because, while I work hard, I like to play even harder!

I use my life experiences, a connection to nature, and outdoor adventures as vehicles for personal growth and empowerment. Rock climbing is one way I face and overcome my fears, whatever they are. And I would like to believe that perhaps my story can inspire others not to give up or give in when the road ahead is unclear.

**Cesaltina da Cunha**




# *Shoes can only make you so happy*

TV presenter Kate Humble kicked off her heels in favour of wellies and rolling Welsh hills. Here, she talks to *Psychologies*' Sally Saunders about finding the courage to go with your gut, and why it's experiences, not 'stuff', that matters most

**W**hen people talk about needing to mend some fences, they're usually speaking metaphorically. But not Kate Humble. The TV-presenter-turned-farmer-turned-cookery book writer is halfway through our interview when she (briefly) turns her focus to the walls of her 118-acre rented farm. It's not your usual celebrity interview chat, but then Humble's not your usual celebrity. More than a decade before the rest of us starting longing for a post-pandemic escape to the country, Humble was ahead of the curve, fleeing London for a better life.

'People say "Oh, isn't it really difficult moving to the countryside when you've lived in the city? Don't your Jimmy Choos get dirty?"' she laughs. 'But I was like a fish out of water in the city. I had a creeping realisation that I was just in the wrong habitat. I was like a squirrel in a meadow without a tree. So I went back to my roots. They just weren't my geographical roots – they were my psychological roots.'

It's not surprising her conversation is peppered with nature analogies. Since Humble burst onto our screens presenting everything from *Lifeline* to *Holiday* in the late 90s, she has hardly been off them. 





*Humble followed  
her heart to set up  
home on the farm*





*At home in nature,  
Humble eschewed  
city living*

But it is her work in her beloved countryside that really won her a place in our hearts. She was a fixture on series after series of *Springwatch* and *Autumnwatch*, before turning her hand more recently to the likes of *Back to the Land*, *A Country Life for Half the Price*, and *Escape to the Farm*. There's clearly a theme emerging here.

So what led the up-and-coming 20-something who lived in a Camden squat ('a real Camden squat: in the winter, the walls were black with mildew') to make such a life change a few years later?

'It was all good fun, but after about 10 years of being in London, I started getting this sort of feeling of like, I don't really belong here. I'm just not a city person,' recalls Humble. 'You know when you notice something really annoying? Like if you're in an office and there's a person who sniffs all the time – once you've heard it, you can't not hear it.'

'I counteracted it by trying to get away every weekend to the countryside. I'd go anywhere. We had some friends who rented a cottage in Oxfordshire, and when they went away on business for six months, they said we could use it. So it was brilliant, we used the cottage all the time – anything, just to be in the countryside.'

'And it just got to a point where I thought "I can't live in London anymore". And we started asking

questions of ourselves: Could we do the kind of weekend place? Could we rent a bolthole for us to use permanently? And so we went to look at some places. But then we'd sit in soul-destroying traffic on a Sunday night and we realised: This is not the answer,' she says, with absolute certainty. 'This temporary thing isn't the solution. It's got to be for real. And, and I just developed this weird hankering to go live in Wales, which I didn't know at all – I'd never really been there. It was just that I'd look at the map of Britain and when you got out to Wales, it was all so brown – and brown meant fields,' Humble adds, wistfully.

So when her husband, Ludo, was then offered a year-long contract in Cardiff, her mind was made up. 'I said "It's a sign!" like Meg Ryan in *Sleepless in Seattle*. And we were going to rent. But then I said, if we go over that bridge, I'm never coming back. Really. And that was 14-and-a-half years ago.'

It's clearly a decision that suits. When asked how Humble would have coped in London, it's clear that really wasn't an option: 'I would have disappeared completely, that's the bottom line. One of the magnificent things about being older is that you're much more sure in your mind of what you need to do. You have instincts that perhaps you're more aware of, and you listen to them more

***"One of the best things about being older is that you're much more sure in your mind of what you need"***





*It's memories not  
objects that matter  
most to Humble*

now you're older, because... because you've had that experience of *not* doing what your heart tells you to do, and things not working out, you know – either because you're miserable, or you realise that your gut instinct was right; you shouldn't have done it, for all sorts of reasons,' Humble reflects. 'And as you get older, you build up those little libraries of experience. But hopefully you learn from it, and then you go, "Oh, I remember being in this situation before and I didn't follow my heart".

'I'm not a wise person,' claims Humble, 'but I do think you gain wisdom as you get older. You gain experience, and from that you gain wisdom. You become more aware of yourself – it's as simple as that.'

And this awareness is expanding, not just for Humble, but for the world around us, she believes. 'I think most people would agree that probably for the past 30 years, things have got really out of whack as far as the Western world has been concerned. And, you know, our priorities – general society's priorities – have been all about materialism, about accruing wealth, about having *stuff*. It's been about keeping up with the Joneses. And, and I think there's been a realisation just lately – and the pandemic, perhaps, has helped shape that realisation. But I think it's been creeping up through various strands of society. And, now, it's starting to kind of join up – it's like lots of little spiders, who all have their threads of silk, are now starting to weave them together,' says Humble. 'It's the growing realisation that stuff doesn't actually make you happy. And that working to the detriment of your family, your friends, your health, is simply not worth it. Why are we doing it? And, actually, a lot of the time, we're working for what? Very little benefit for ourselves and lot of benefits for probably rather nasty people. There are people who spend so much energy, and so much of their lives, flogging their guts out for very little advantage to themselves and lots of advantage to people who perhaps don't deserve it. And I think people are starting to think, "Why are we doing this?", if they're not seeing tangible benefits or benefits that actually really make them happy. Because a pair of shoes can only make you so happy.'

So what does make Humble happy? 'It's experiences that count. Those are the things that really are going to matter. These are the things that I'm going to remember, things that are going to cheer me at times when I'm not feeling very cheerful. Not the fact that I've just bought a pair of new jeans or, you know, a dress that I might wear once. But I am going to remember doing something extraordinary or just going to the beach and running barefoot on the sand.

'Unadulterated materialism doesn't make you happy. It doesn't give your children a good childhood. It doesn't make you a good, happy parent or a good friend or, you know, all the things that





*“I know I’m astonishingly lucky, but I also know you don’t need to be on a six-figure salary to be able to live a good and fulfilling life”*

actually count. What makes you a good person is if you’re not tired, overwrought, overstretched. If you have time to pick up the phone and talk to your friends, or write them a letter, or do something lovely for somebody who is exhausted or ill and make them a shepherd’s pie and take it round to the house. That sort of stuff that my parents’ generation used to do. I used to do it, too, and those are the things that really matter. I’m sorry, but a Deliveroo is not a gesture of looking after somebody in my book.’

On the subject of books, the TV presenter is showing the breadth of her skills by adding cookery book writer to her already-bulging CV. This month, Humble is releasing *Home Cooked*, a selection of recipes inspired by her life on the farm.

‘I’m not what you call a proper cook, I’m not a trained chef or anything, but I do enjoy cooking – and eating! These are some of my favourite recipes. Some I’ve made up myself, others I’ve taken inspiration from my mum or Ludo; they’re all things I eat all the time. They’re all easy – I don’t have hours to mess around in the kitchen or loads of equipment – they’re simple, and hopefully satisfying.’

It’s the only approach you can imagine her taking. Humble’s longing for simplicity stems from memories of a happy childhood in the Berkshire countryside in the 1970s, where she was given access to all the freedom and mud she could muster. It’s a life she’s never let go of, despite regularly appearing on the TV and enjoying all its accompanying fame.

‘People think if you’re on the telly, you are on millions of pounds a year. If only they knew! It’s nothing to do with money,’ she says. ‘Sure, it would be very disingenuous for me to say that you can have a great life when every minute of every day you’re worrying about paying your bills. I’m not in that situation, though I have been before. I know I’m astonishingly lucky, but I also know you don’t need to be on a six-figure salary to be able to live a good and fulfilling life.’

Humble’s was, however, a life that insulated her from the upheaval many of us faced during the pandemic. ‘When you have livestock and a routine that has to happen, whether it’s a pandemic or Christmas Day, you still have to get up and feed your pigs,’ she laughs.

‘And because we don’t live in a wildly populated area, we were very shielded from a lot of the true horror of it. And so, yeah, we were lucky. But I think other things contributed to us being able to deal with

it – having been self-employed, both me and my husband, you get very used to no fixed routine, no fixed income. So you do tend to be a bit lighter on your feet and more adaptable.

‘But I think a lot of people really struggled with their routine either being completely taken away, or turned upside down. We are all essentially creatures of habit – we take great comfort in predictability. So, I think what made a lot of people feel so discombobulated during the pandemic was that feeling of, what’s next? Where’s this going? What’s happening? All the usual kinds of markers – you know, your signposts – were gone. But because my life has always been slightly unsignposted, it didn’t feel as panic inducing as it might have for others. I think a lot of people felt like flotsam and jetsam, just being kind of pushed by a tide that they had no control over. I managed to escape that feeling because I’ve always had to sort of create my own little boat,’ says Humble.

After working in television for the best part of three decades, does she ever fear that her time might be running out? ‘I work in an industry where fashions change all the time. It’s not just about age, it’s not about what gender you are. It’s just about whether your face fits at the time. I’ve been particularly lucky in these past few years because people have derived a lot of comfort from the types of programmes I do, involving animals and rural loveliness. It all makes for quite uplifting telly.

‘Who knows, next year, they might not want any of that stuff. And I might be out of work. It won’t be anything to do with my age, it will just be because I’m not the right person for the sorts of telly that people want to watch. It can be hard to accept that – it’s always lovely to be able to blame somebody or something else when your career comes to an end. But, you know, you have to be pragmatic about these things. It’s just the way of the world.’

There’s a refreshing frankness about Humble’s conversation that belies her wholesome TV image, as her life-learning, wisdom and occasional swearing shines through. While she might appear frequently on our TV screens, and now our bookshelves too, there is no sugar-coating the facts here, or running from the truth. It’s an admirable quality.

‘You have to remember, we’re all getting older,’ she declares. ‘I mean, however much you run, your tits are still going south!’







Humble's wholesome qualities have made her a TV favourite

"I work in an industry where fashions change. It's not just about age or gender. It's about whether your face fits. You have to be pragmatic about it"



LIFE AS I KNOW IT

# On the case

*Harriet Minter is playing armchair detective, searching for goodness and her long-lost hope in humanity*



I was at an event the other day, chatting to a woman I'd just met, when we got onto the subject of our childhood obsessions. We'd both been pony-mad, and dissected our love of horses at length. Then she told me that, aged ten, she and two of her friends had started their own 'detective agency', where they attempted to unpick unsolved crimes. It reminded me that I'd once had a similar obsession. Each weekend, I'd head off to the newsagents, with my £1 pocket money burning a hole in my jeans, desperate for a new 'true crime' book; those flimsy paperbacks with black-and-white crime-scene photos on the front, usually written by someone else obsessed with a long-forgotten event. Looking back, I'm pretty sure that, at nine years old, I shouldn't have been reading them – but this was the 80s, and parenting was somewhat different.

I'd rush my purchase home and pore over it, quite convinced that if I just gave these unsolved mysteries the full power of my attention, the answer would reveal itself to me.

Eventually, I outgrew this rather morbid phase but, in the past few years, it has been reignited – yes, the Harriet Minter Detective Agency is back! The recent boom in true crime podcasts, articles and Netflix documentaries has me gripped. I'm not entirely sure what the lure is. Logically, I know that if a crime has been investigated by the police, Netflix and every conspiracy theorist on Reddit, it's unlikely I'm going to be able to unravel it. And, yet... what if I could? As I listen intently to the voiceover outline the case, I'm convinced that any second now a key detail will pop into my mind that solves the case. So there I sit, pen and notepad in hand, devouring every detail.

When I ask myself why this passion has reappeared now,

I do think it has some relation to my age. Back when I was a nine-year-old wannabe private investigator, I think I was trying to make sense of the world, trying to prove to myself that there were no mysteries out there which couldn't be solved; nothing bad could happen without retribution for it. Now, 31 years later, I know that's not the case. In my 20s and 30s, I hoped that perhaps we could change things on a systemic level, so even if we couldn't solve every crime, perhaps the crimes would be fewer. But 20 years of being a justice warrior takes its toll.

So now, I find myself wanting just one bad thing to come good. For one senseless crime to make sense. I'm looking for the little sprig of hope that my younger-self had, her belief in the intrinsic goodness of humanity and the rightness of the world. And if I have to find it in a Netflix binge, then so be it.

**Follow Harriet Minter's writing journey by signing up for her newsletter at [harrietminter.com](https://harrietminter.com)**



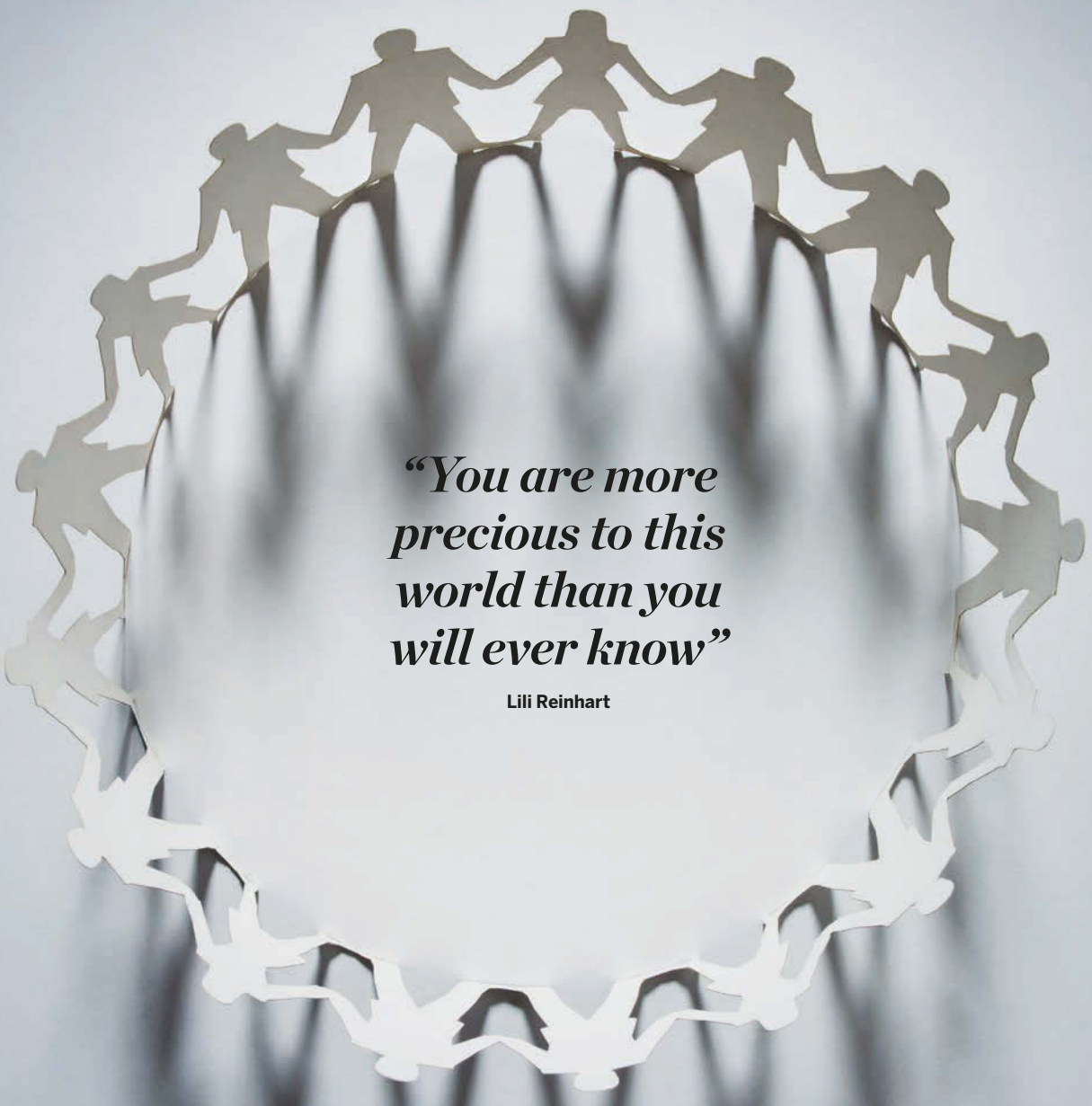
PHOTOGRAPH: MARK HARRISON. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: CAROLINE PIASECKI. STYLIST: KATE ANYA BARBOUR





# Mind

Inspiration to boost your happiness and confidence,  
plus simple steps to overcome anxiety and stress



***“You are more  
precious to this  
world than you  
will ever know”***

**Lili Reinhart**

# Anxiety is your SUPERPOWER


Rather than something to be suppressed and 'solved', anxious feelings can be a critical indicator of powerful intuition, pushing you towards action and nudging your life back into balance, says Dr Ellen Vora

**E**ven when we cut out the coffee and prioritise sleep, we will still be left with a certain amount of anxiety. This anxiety rises from the inherent fragility of life, but it also offers us the strength of our convictions. That is, when our lives don't align with our values or capabilities, we can feel anxious – but this feeling can also serve as a critical indicator that we need a course correction. Perhaps you are glossing over inequities in your partnership; maybe you are working in a job that fitted your life when you were younger but now feels as if you took a wrong turn along the way; or you might feel unable to sit idly by as the planet continues to heat up and sea levels precipitously rise. Whatever the issue, this is your body's way of telling you, 'Please look at this'. When you listen closely, this anxiety can point you in the direction of actions you need to take, as well as the unique contribution you are here to make; ultimately, this feeling of unease can be transformed into a feeling of purpose. This is what I call true anxiety.

I tell my patients that they should embrace these feelings rather than try to suppress or avoid them. Instead of asking, 'How can I stop feeling so anxious?', we should be asking, 'What is my anxiety telling me?'. It is natural to reflexively resist this uncomfortable feeling. Culturally, we've also been taught to view anxiety as a nuisance, something to be suppressed into submission – but when we do this, we can miss out on critical guidance. What if you could learn to tolerate your anxiety long enough to hear what change is necessary? What if you could change the







***“What if instead of fearing  
and fighting anxiety,  
you invite it in and hear  
what it has to say?”***

situation provoking your anxiety? What if instead of fearing and fighting true anxiety, you invite it in and hear what it has to say? Maybe you’ve been blocking something painful from your awareness, or maybe you just haven’t slowed down enough to allow it to rise to the surface – but there is a part of you that has always known your essential truth. The ‘essential truth’ of who we are has, as of late, become a bit of a cliché, spouted so often it can sound hollow.

But for my purposes, I mean this as a buried instinct that, when too long ignored, can make itself known as mental discomfort – and that discomfort is trying to tell you something crucial.

The best way to hear the whisper of your intuition is by becoming still and quiet – it will eventually interrupt the nagging anxieties and chatter that play through your head on repeat. As you become familiar with this more resonant anxiety, you will come to feel it in your body, too. When you experience warmth or a sense of expansion, that is often your body’s way of saying ‘yes’, of nodding in agreement with your gut feeling. When your body contracts, feeling tight or uneasy, that can be your true anxiety’s way of tapping on your shoulder to indicate it still has not been fully heard.

True anxiety and intuition also generally register as a more substantial feeling. ‘My anxiety is high, it’s like a shaky hovering, it’s a high frequency... it’s buzzing,’ the *New York Times* best-selling author and activist Glennon Doyle once said, describing the difference between her own fear and intuition. ‘But... there is something below it that is heavier, that is more grounded, that is not shaking, that is solid, that is the Knowing. And I actually now am at a time in



my life – at 45 years old – where I can tell the difference.’ In other words, even as true anxiety and intuition might be communicating to you that something is not right, they feel different from false anxiety. Instead of feeling like a threat, they come from a place of clarity and compassion.

If you choose to listen to true anxiety and let it steer you, it can be a golden compass, helping you navigate the vagaries of life. It allows for more growth, learning, and love. Transforming your true anxiety into something more purposeful does not, however, mean that things will necessarily get easier. For many of my patients, just as things start to get easier, they up-level to a more advanced set of challenges. They arrive at yet another growth stage, where they feel out of place in familiar surroundings. Often, as you become more adept at using your true anxiety as a guide, life becomes more demanding and can even sometimes feel excruciating.

‘It’s like peeling away defences that helped alleviate one layer of anxiety,’ my patient Ethan once said, ‘and I’m losing weapons as I go to face the monster.’ The monster in Ethan’s case was childhood trauma, which he was ultimately able to face and release. Trauma, in particular, occupies an unusual place in the true and false anxiety paradigm in that it exists at the intersection of the two. That is, traumatic experiences are often stored in the body, which then also reprogrammes the brain. When this occurs, the amygdala – that part of the limbic system responsible for our fear response – is left in a state of hyper arousal, creating disproportionate anxiety throughout life.

Trauma – which can occur from a range of experiences, from sexual assault to combat, to emotional deprivation from a parent – leaves the brain on high alert, even if the threat is no longer present. As such, it has a false-anxiety aspect in that the brain can misinterpret danger where there is none. And yet trauma should be treated as true anxiety, as the changes in the body were an adaptation to an unsafe world, and the hypervigilant amygdala is asking that the person reconnect with the trauma in order to arrive at a place of relative resolution.

The feeling of true anxiety, as is the case with trauma, almost always has a larger historical context; that is, one episode of anxiety can hold decades of past life experiences within it, sometimes even longer. I have, indeed, worked with many patients who are unravelling the traumas of past generations that continue to leave an imprint on their lives – as well as unearthing the true anxiety still reverberating from the past. The truth can be a lot to hold; it can be difficult and destabilising. This is our burden, as humans who dare to feel it all. But it is also how we expand as individuals, get in alignment with our purpose, and show each other the way forward.

Studies of primates show that some members of the tribe are more anxious than others – these are



*“True anxiety does  
not just guide us on  
our own path, it  
assigns us to a  
larger mission... and  
the collective voice  
of true anxiety  
shepherds us in  
the right direction  
as a society”*

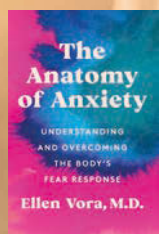


***“We need to listen to those with their ears to the ground, who sense the dangers on the horizon”***

the ones that tend to hang back, gathering at the peripheries of the main group. In the 1980s, the late zoologist Dian Fossey decided to remove these more sensitive members of one group of chimps to see how it would affect the rest of the community. Six months later, all the chimps were dead. ‘It was suggested that the anxious chimps were pivotal for survival,’ Sarah Wilson writes compellingly of this experiment in her book *First, We Make the Beast Beautiful* (Transworld, £12.99). ‘Outsiders, they were the ones who were sleeping in the trees on the edge, on the border, on the boundary of the community. Hypersensitive and vigilant, the smallest noise freaked them out and disturbed them, so they were awake much of the night anyway. We label such symptoms anxiety, but back when we were in trees, they were the early warning system for the troop. They were the first to scream, “Look out! Look out!”’

Similarly, if you are one of the more attuned, anxious members of the human race – if your nervous system is dialled a little higher than others – the tribe owes you support and gratitude, because in important ways, your anxiety exists to protect us all. Instead of telling the anxious among us to ‘stop being so sensitive,’ we should honour what they have to say. The more every one of us embraces our true anxiety, the more valuable we are to our world. True anxiety does not just guide us on our own path, it assigns us to a larger mission. Our true anxiety can place us on the frontlines, alerting others to threats that may be just out of view. And the collective voice of true anxiety shepherds us in the right direction as a society.


And, objectively, the world needs to change. We are in the midst of a necessary reckoning. We have seen the Me Too movement pull back the curtain on sexual harassment and assault; the Black Lives Matter movement has opened up new and long overdue dialogues about centuries of injustice and harm; and climate-change activists are shouting from the mountaintops in an effort to be heard before it’s too late. It is critical that we shift from pathologising and suppressing this anxiety to heeding its urgent messages. We need to listen to those with their ears to the ground, who sense the subtle – and not so subtle – dangers on the horizon. They are our prophets, and they may just wake us all up in time.



***‘The Anatomy Of Anxiety: Understanding And Overcoming The Body’s Fear Response’ by Ellen Vora MD (Orion Spring, £14.99) is out on 17 March, also available on eBook (£7.99) and audio download***

Coaching in action

# Uncomfortable truths

An illustration of a coaching session. A person's hands are shown writing in a spiral-bound notebook. The notebook is open to a page with text. To the left of the notebook is a cup of tea on a saucer. A pen and a pencil are also visible. The background is a warm, textured orange-red color with faint horizontal lines and small white specks. A pair of glasses is visible in the top right corner.

In their second session together, the award-winning coach Kim Morgan encourages her client Jackie\* to question motive and emotion before dramatically changing the course of her life



## Session two...

Jackie arrived for her second session carrying a giant sketchbook, which she couldn't wait to show me. It was filled with drawings and pictures cut out from magazines. Jackie had written in bright colours all the values that were important to her: courage, being outdoors, a sense of purpose, helping others, a sense of achievement, being part of a community, and fun and laughter. She was brimming with excitement as she talked me through the contents of the sketchbook.

'I can't believe how much has happened since our last coaching session! I know I joked then about off-grid living, but I've now realised that's exactly what I want. My life is already starting to take a new direction. We're planning to sell our house, move to the countryside and start a glamping business. We may even set up a charity or a community gardening project for people with mental health issues, and my husband and I are both thinking of training to teach mindfulness.'

Jackie was smiling and looking at me with anticipation and... for approval? My thoughts were racing. I was stunned by her progress. On the one hand, it was flattering to think that just one coaching session with me had had such a powerful impact. But, on the other, I was worried I might have unknowingly encouraged Jackie to make impulsive decisions. I reminded myself that a coach's role is to provide a safe space for clients to be able to think for themselves, and to ask them great questions. Had I done that last time with Jackie? Could I be sure that I had not given her any direction? Maybe Jackie was just a very decisive person?

I was also concerned Jackie's plan was too ambitious – mindfulness, a glamping business, community gardening *and* a charity – was all that even possible? But who was I to make that judgement? I reminded myself how often I had been surprised by my clients' abilities to achieve goals beyond my wildest dreams.

Jackie jolted me out of my critical self-talk. 'Well? What do you think?' The great news is that my husband is keen

to change our lifestyle, too. It makes it so much easier, knowing I'm not about to twist his arm to do something he doesn't want to do.' I wanted to avoid giving any opinion, and so I simply asked Jackie a question: 'What would be most helpful for you during today's session?'

'Could you present me with a challenge, please? I want to be sure that we are not getting carried away, or just jumping on the "great resignation" bandwagon, which has gathered momentum recently.'

Over the next hour, I asked Jackie questions to help her examine her plan from every angle, and to explore the potential wider effects of the changes. Together, we explored Jackie's answers to the following questions:

- Does the outcome keep the good things about your current situation?
- How will this affect the wider system you are in: friends, family; how you feel about yourself?
- Are there any good reasons not to do it?
- What will this change give you?
- Why do you want it?
- Is this desire for change coming from wisdom and courage – or fear and doubt?
- By saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?

When we got to the end of the session, Jackie's mood had changed. 'I don't feel like you've burst my bubble exactly,' she said, 'but you've certainly made me realise how easily it *could* burst. I didn't like those questions, but I can see why you asked them. I'm going to go home and talk them through with my husband.'

Jackie left the session clutching her sketchbook and looking deflated. For the second time that day, I wrestled with self-doubt, worrying I had now rained on Jackie's parade. I decided to book a session with my supervisor for support and insight into why I was suddenly doubting myself with this client.

**Find out how Kim helped Jackie find firmer footing on the path to fulfilment in the next issue.**

*Does this sound like you?  
Turn the page for Kim's  
coaching exercises*



# Work it out

*We all have conflicting voices in our heads and, sometimes, the critical ones are the ones that shout the loudest. This is a great exercise for helping you to manage reproving dialogue.*

The exercise takes a little leap of faith, but please give it a go, as it is so helpful in changing negative self-talk and unhelpful behaviours.

Take some time to imagine the board of directors who are in your head running your life. (It might help to think about the Disney film *Inside Out* to get the idea!) Now bring these characters to life – you might want to name them, draw them, or find images to represent them. Imagine the different characters at play in your mind when you are facing a challenge, a decision or a difficult situation. Ask yourself:

- **What do all the characters say? Who is in charge? Who is the loudest? Which characters needs to be heard more – or less?**
- **Who is holding back your progress? What is their intention?**
- **Who needs to stay, and who needs to leave the team, or be given a new role?**
- **Is it time to have a restructure of your characters and appoint a new team leader who will support and champion you, and manage the other characters?**

Next time you have a demanding situation to deal with, think about your inner cast of characters and decide which character you want to listen to.



## 8 great questions to help you discover your life purpose

Take some time to answer these questions, but don't overthink your responses – your intuitive answers will be important. When you've answered them, see if you can find some common themes in your answers that give you new insight into what your life and work purpose might be. When you review your answers, you may decide to make some small changes to your life, which will take you a step closer to feeling more fulfilled. Keep adding more answers to these questions when they occur to you and, in time, you will build up a bigger and better picture of what would give you a greater sense of meaning in your life.

1. What do you love doing?
2. What are you good at?
3. What can you get paid for doing?
4. Which people do you most admire – and why?
5. What world issues do you care about?
6. What makes you feel proud?
7. What did you always want to be when you grew up?
8. At the end of your life, how would you like to be remembered?

## THE BIG QUESTION

*'What one change could you make right now towards a more fulfilled life?'*



## Lightbulb moments

# The anger issue

*Speak up and speak out with righteous fury and celebrate your self-worth, says Kimberley Wilson, a psychologist and author of 'How To Build A Healthy Brain'*

If anger were a sports team, I'd be its biggest fan. I'd have the season ticket, the home and away kits, the sticker album. That may sound strange, but I think anger suffers from a huge amount of misunderstanding and bad PR.

Firstly, it's considered a 'negative' emotion and, subsequently, it feels uncomfortable – we try to escape or suppress it as quickly as possible. People often tell me that anger is a sign of being 'childish' or 'out of control'. Sometimes they have had negative experiences with 'angry' people, which has tainted both the emotion and their ability to express it.

But I prefer to think of anger as 'the emotion of self-esteem'. Let's start by sorting fact from fiction...

**Fiction:** Anger equals violence. Nope. Anger and violence are not the same thing. Anger is the emotion, an internal experience of bodily sensations and associated thoughts. Violence is a behaviour. Sure, they often turn up together, but they are completely different.

**Fact:** A degree of anger or aggression is natural and necessary, with some neuroscientists suggesting that aggression is hard-wired into the brain. In fact, there seems to be an interaction between aggression brain circuits and dopamine, the neurotransmitter associated with motivation and goal-directed behaviour. That is, there seems to be something rewarding about



aggression. It sounds unlikely, but this makes sense from an evolutionary perspective; an individual who could mount an aggressive response would be more effective at defending themselves from attack and protecting their territory (or family) than someone who could not.

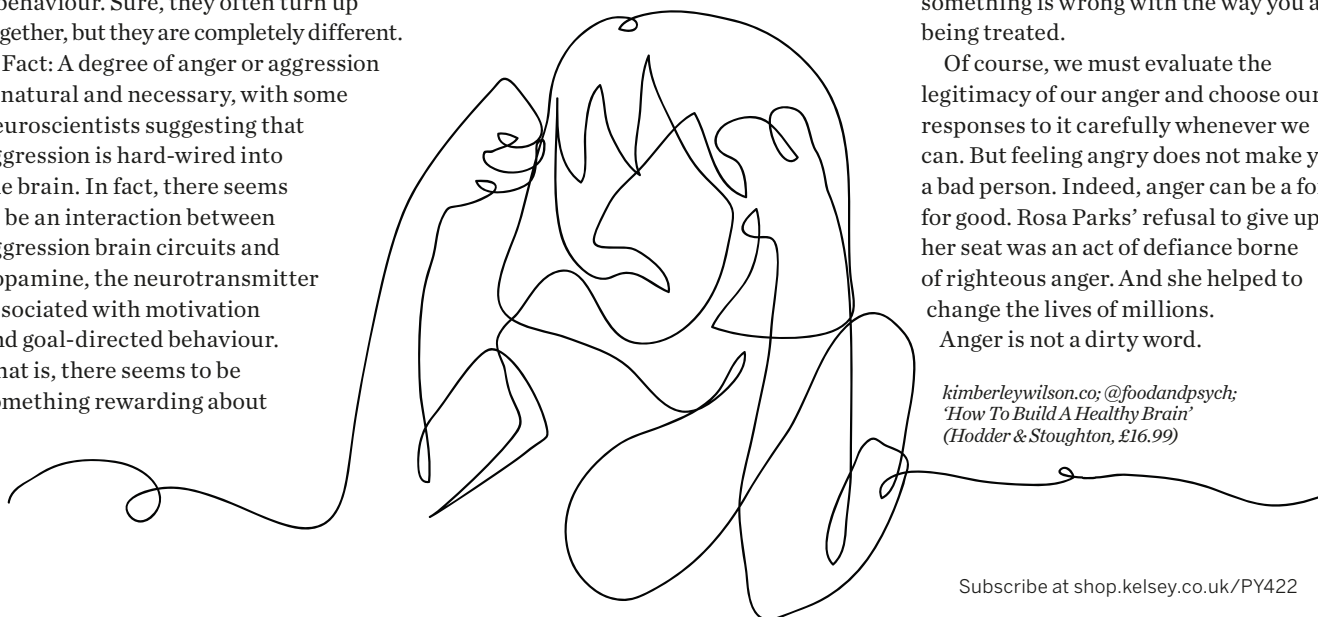
So how should we understand anger? I think anger is a signal that you may be experiencing unfairness or witnessing injustice. If someone cuts in front of you in a queue, your friend consistently turns up late, or you see someone being attacked in the street you may feel angry. Why? Because a) it feels unfair that these people are breaking the agreed social rules, or b) you have identified potential danger.

So, anger signals injustice or threat, and I believe that this function of anger is absolutely crucial for healthy self-esteem. Because if you can muster an anger response in the face of legitimate unfairness, what you are saying to yourself is, 'I don't deserve this'. The flip side of that statement is, 'I deserve more than this'. To get to a point where you can say 'I deserve more than this' is to have some sense of your own self-worth. Conversely, if you habitually suppress your legitimate anger you may be missing the big clues that something is wrong with the way you are being treated.

Of course, we must evaluate the legitimacy of our anger and choose our responses to it carefully whenever we can. But feeling angry does not make you a bad person. Indeed, anger can be a force for good. Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat was an act of defiance borne of righteous anger. And she helped to change the lives of millions.

Anger is not a dirty word.

*kimberleywilson.co; @foodandpsych;  
'How To Build A Healthy Brain'  
(Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99)*



# Q&A

Our agony aunt, Mary Fenwick, offers a new perspective on whatever is troubling you



**MARY FENWICK** is a writer, speaker and executive coach. She is also a mother, divorcee and widow.

**GOT A QUESTION FOR MARY?** Email [letters@psychologies.co.uk](mailto:letters@psychologies.co.uk), with 'Mary life' in the subject line.

**FOR MORE** about Mary's work in leadership and team coaching, her 'Writing back to happiness' programme and free resources, go to [maryfenwick.com](http://maryfenwick.com)

## “How can I help guide her through her grief?”

**Q** My best friend's mother died early on in the pandemic and I know it's still affecting her very badly – but she refuses to even consider going to grief counselling. She says that she doesn't want to have a stranger digging around and making things worse. It's affecting our friendship because so many topics seem to be off-limits, such as me talking about my own mother. What can I do to help her?

Like all stories about grief, this one has love at its heart: your friend's love for her mother, and your love for your friend. It's natural to feel an overwhelming urge to do something, but the structure of counselling is not always the answer. Sometimes, the most useful thing is to have a friend who is willing to accept all the messiness and lack of resolution. In the words of one of my favourite poems, *The Invitation* by Oriah Mountain Dreamer, can you sit with pain 'without moving to hide it, or fade it, or fix it?'

I talked to Sandra Elmer, a volunteer at the bereavement charity Cruse, who says: 'You can't grieve until you're ready. There's a uniqueness about grief that isn't always comfortable.' This sense has been heightened by the pandemic as, for many, it's only as the world has started to open up that their loss has really hit them.

While accepting the sadness, could you talk to your friend about memories of her mum? This might work well if you've known each other a while. Ask: 'Do you remember that time your mum...?' Or encourage her to create a memory box. One of the scary things about grief can be the fear that items

of meaning that may seem unimportant to anyone else, are misplaced. Be guided by your friend, though, and don't take it personally if you get it wrong. She will have days when the whole world feels wrong.

Grief Kind, by the Sue Ryder charity, aims to help build confidence around supporting loved ones. You'll find a podcast and free resources, including gift cards with thoughtful messages such as 'You never need to lie when I ask how you're doing'. Its research found that nearly half of us felt that friends and family stopped asking how they were too soon when they were grieving. Just hanging on in there and listening will help more than you know.

[cruse.org.uk](http://cruse.org.uk); [sueyder.org](http://sueyder.org)



*“There's a uniqueness about grief that isn't always comfortable”*





## “Are feelings the issue – or is it finding the words to express them?”

**Q** After more than 10 years on my own, six months ago I met a man who now seems totally devoted to me. He makes me feel great, and we have a lot of fun together. The problem is that he keeps telling me that he loves and adores me, but all I can say in response is ‘I really like you, too’. With friends, I have no problem expressing my love for them – but this seems different. He’s being very patient and doesn’t put pressure on me at all. But I just don’t understand why I’m finding it so hard to reciprocate his expression of love.

While mulling over your question, I stumbled upon a radio programme about language. On the subject of love, the speaker revealed that, whereas in the English language we use the phrase ‘fall in love’, the Czech translation is to ‘become enamoured of you’. The speaker expanded: ‘In English, it’s like you accidentally got covered in love, while in Czech, there’s a sense of choice’.

Does that touch on one of your concerns? In your longer letter, you describe an abusive first marriage, which has made you wary of love as a form of control. Perhaps the idea of being fully ‘in’ love feels too immersive for you.

A question I often ask my coaching clients is, ‘What makes this a problem now?’ I wonder if the six-month mark is

weighing on your mind, in which case I’d ask you to consider the length of your marriage and subsequent time alone.

Since you feel playful and relaxed with your partner, could you invite some of that into your conversation about what love might mean? A useful read is the book *The 5 Love Languages* by the American baptist pastor Gary Chapman (Moody Publishers, £13.99), which explores the different ways you can give love or feel loved in return. According to Chapman, the possible ways are: physical touch, words of affirmation, spending quality time together, giving gifts, and acts of service (doing something practical). The biggest realisation is often that a partner doesn’t want to be loved in the same way as you might want

to be loved. Perhaps your partner’s love language is words, while you feel cared for when he fixes a dripping tap.

From a more academic stance, you could also look at ‘the 36 questions to fall in love’ developed by psychologist Dr Arthur Aron, as part of his study at Stony Brook University in New York. Aron’s questionnaire claims to speed up the creation of intimacy between strangers, beginning with general questions – such as who would you want as a dinner guest – and finishing with ones about crying, death, and embarrassment. The idea is that being vulnerable with each other brings you closer. Perhaps you feel safe enough with this man to show your vulnerability and give the questions a go?

**36questionsinlove.com**





psychologies inspiration

*“The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God”*

Anne Frank







# CELEBRATE YOUR OWN success

It's time we reframed our perceptions of what it means to be successful and brought our inner dialogues in line with our external achievements, writes Anna Bartter

It's fair to say I am not a natural athlete. The only thing my PE teacher ever asked me to do was babysit for her children, so when I started running as an adult, it was a big deal. After five years of jogging around the park, I began to dream of running a marathon. For years I had watched, breathless with admiration and vicarious nervous energy, as thousands of runners pounded the streets of London each spring. So, as I entered my 40th year, I decided I would start to say yes to things I had previously considered beyond my reach, and entered myself for the Brighton Marathon.

I'd been lucky enough to make some great friends through running and one of them, a seasoned marathon-runner, drew up my training schedule. It was realistic but demanding. He forced me out on cold, dark mornings to run 20 miles in the biting wind along the seafront, and pushed me to carry on when I felt I couldn't take another step. The training was gruelling, but I felt proud each time I laced up my trainers. I was so excited for the day itself, and for months beforehand I had an image of myself triumphantly crossing the finish line.

When the day came, it was tough, but I was prepared for that. What I hadn't prepared myself for was how I would feel as I finished. Rather than the tearful elation I had pictured as I crossed the line, I felt an immediate, crushing sense of failure. I'd missed my target time by seven minutes, and felt I had failed. Tired and alone, I just couldn't see past missing my time. What should have felt like an

enormous achievement left me feeling flat, listless and depressed. And it wasn't a fleeting feeling that passed as I recovered my breath – it stayed with me. Friends visited and congratulated me, my parents, husband and children were proud, yet I felt utterly demoralised. More than that, I was angry with myself. Why wasn't it enough?

It turns out, I'm not alone in feeling this way. Clinical psychologist and author Dr Emma Hepburn believes women in particular have a biological predisposition to overlooking success. 'This may be partly because our brain is designed to notice and remember the negative more. Self-doubt is normal, but we can interpret this feeling as failure – and then it becomes crippling and unhelpful.'

The disconnect between external achievements and our internal dialogue can pervade all aspects of our lives, from physical achievements such as a marathon, through to our careers. This constant, negative narrative is incredibly damaging to self-esteem and mental health, something freelance writer and author of *Out Of Office: Ditch The 9-5 And Be Your Own Boss* (Welbeck, £9.99), Fiona Thomas, knows all too well. 'As a writer, it had been a long-held dream of mine to have a book published. I've always struggled with feeling good enough in my chosen profession and felt like having my own book out would boost my confidence. But, the truth is, when it was published, I suffered from feelings of failure. Even though people were buying the book, respected people in my

## Expert advice



Dr Emma Hepburn is a clinical psychologist and author of 'A Toolkit For Happiness' (Quercus, £14.99). @thepsychologymum

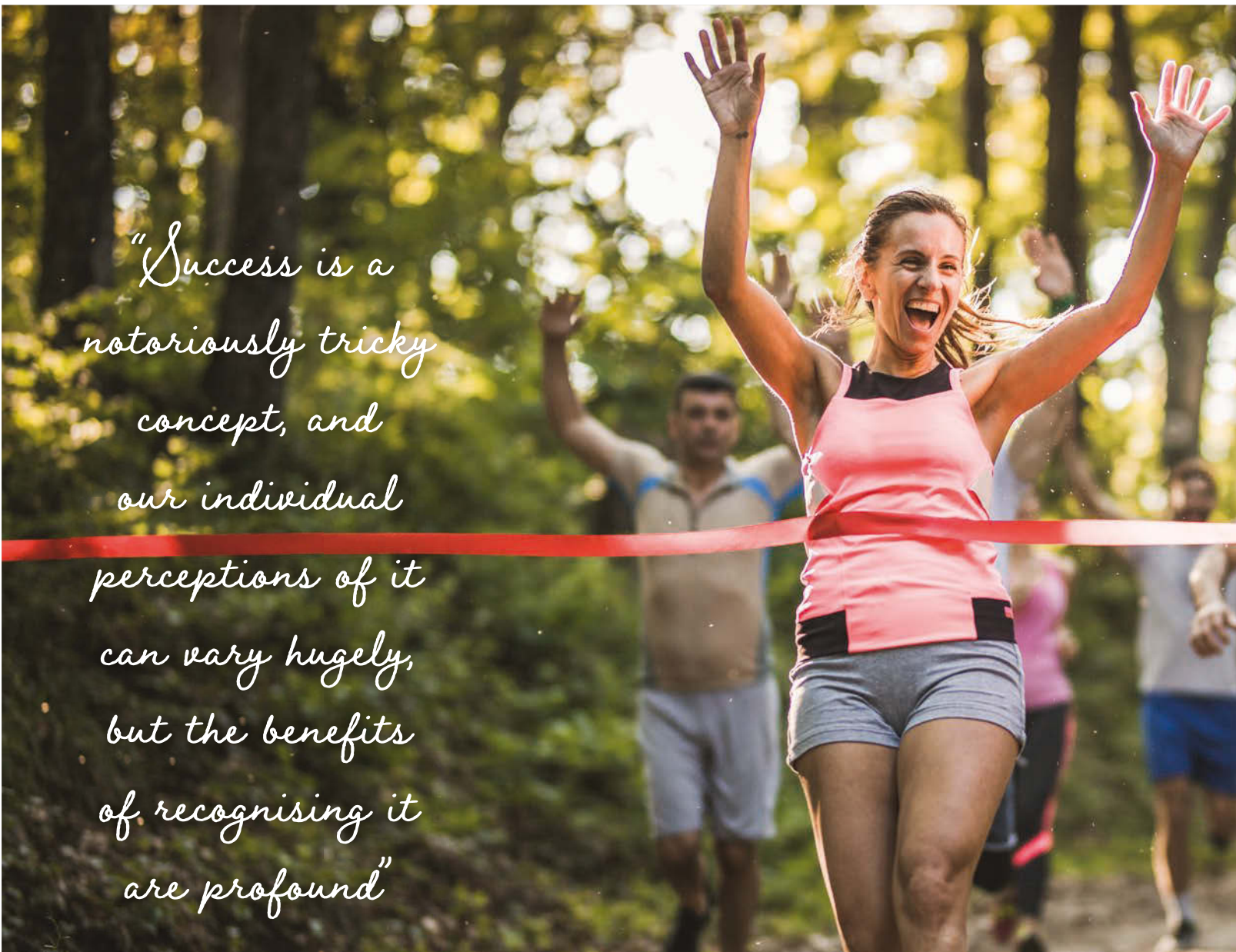


Olivia James is a performance and confidence coach, based in Harley Street, London. harleystreetcoach.com





IMAGES: GETTY IMAGES



*"Success is a notoriously tricky concept, and our individual perceptions of it can vary hugely, but the benefits of recognising it are profound"*

industry were endorsing it, and I was asked to do lots of speaking events, I still felt like it wasn't enough. My mental health took a huge dip.' This manifested in binge drinking and suicidal thoughts. Thankfully Fiona sought help and now has a fresh perspective, saying 'therapy allowed me to see that one failure doesn't negate all my other brilliant successes'.

Even radically life-changing successes can be difficult to accept. Ex-banker Irini Tzortzoglou won BBC's prestigious *MasterChef* in 2019, but despite the praise, struggled to believe that she was worthy of the prize. 'Each time the judges liked a dish of mine, it took me by surprise,' she says. 'I was more willing to believe that their judgment wasn't great, than my cooking was! I've rationalised my success with every possible explanation but for my own ability and skill.'

Harley Street confidence coach Olivia James believes 'an inability to embrace success can lead to low mood, burnout and low self-worth. Life can become meaningless; nothing is ever enough.' So, how do we overcome this? Success is a notoriously tricky concept, and our individual perceptions of it

***"Savour success! When you achieve a goal, let that feeling in. Enjoy it. Revel in it"***

can vary hugely, but the benefits of recognising it are profound. James says a well-adjusted approach to success creates a sense of innate self-esteem, where achievements provide an extra boost.

First, Dr Hepburn explains, it's vital to re-examine our definition of success: 'Our view of what success means can sometimes be unhelpful. Is success getting things done perfectly? Or is success being able to manage difficulties and problems? Is success about promotion, or is it being able to work or live according to your values? Is success about making your idea succeed, or is it taking other people alongside you successfully? Our beliefs often develop based on societal conditioning, but breaking this down to think what success means to *you* can help you redefine it and see that you're already successful.'

'There's so much unlearning we need to be doing about success,' says jewellery designer Claire Hill ([clairehilldesigns.co.uk](http://clairehilldesigns.co.uk)). 'I was previously a journalist and a TV director but there was always a sense of "next" with each success. Constantly striving for achievement without taking time to celebrate the





## Recognise your achievements

**Dr Emma Hepburn and coach Dannielle Haig share their top tips to help you feel, enjoy and celebrate your success!**

Savour success! When you achieve a goal, congratulate yourself. Enjoy it, allow that feeling in, revel in it. Learn to pat yourself on the back.

Keep a 'Success CV' of successes and positive feedback. What have you achieved and how did it make you feel? This can serve as a useful reminder when self-doubt starts to creep in.

Alongside your to-do list, create a 'ta-da!' list – a daily reminder of all the small things you've achieved.

Surround yourself with cheerleaders! Positivity is catching – choose to spend your time with people who are willing and able to champion you and your achievements, and be sure to reciprocate.

work it took to get there can mean that, ultimately, when you reach those goals they don't mean much.' Forever chasing the next milestone is draining and reinforces the vicious cycle of self-doubt, leaving us feeling like we're never good enough. 'I think it's why I burnt out previously – it's exhausting,' says Hill.

It's a thought echoed by Fiona Thomas. 'My idea of success is always changing. I'm always reaching one goal and then berating myself for not being closer to the next.' To counteract this negative mind-trap, Dr Hepburn suggests a regular check-in with yourself: 'It's important to take time to notice what has gone well, perhaps at the end of the day with a "ta da!" list, or at the end of each week. Write it down, talk it through with someone. This will help you focus, notice and remember what went well.'

Experts agree that it's vital that success is meaningful; it must align with your own personal belief system in order to be accepted. Women in particular value integrity and the importance of what they are doing. Being in tune with our emotions can be beneficial here, as Dr Hepburn explains: 'Difficult emotions don't mean you are unsuccessful – use your stressors as signs. What is your stress trying to tell you? Is there something happening that goes against your values?'

Women rate success more highly when it has also contributed to the achievements of others. During the past two years, a sense of community has become crucial, so if you're struggling to celebrate success for your own sake, you could try doing it for those around you. This will breed positivity and cultivate an environment where we all feel valued.

Tzortzoglou agrees: 'I realised that rejecting my success meant I was not acknowledging the work of others who played a role in my performance. These days, instead of rushing to push it away, I embrace praise on behalf of myself and of everyone who has been part of my journey. Success is a great privilege that can make a positive difference to so many.'

So when you achieve your next goal, be it a marathon, writing that elusive book, or simply attempting a new recipe, be sure to remind yourself that the capacity for success is within all of us – we just have to let it in. When we do, we all win, and surely that's something worth striving for.

## ▶▶ NEXT STEPS

**Read** *The Meaning Of Success: Insights From Women At Cambridge* by Jo Bostock (Cambridge University Press, £11.95)

**Watch** Alain de Botton's Ted talk *A Kinder, Gentler Philosophy of Success*

**Read** *A Toolkit For Happiness* by Dr Emma Hepburn (Quercus, £14.99)

# Follow the path to your passion

Do you crave purpose and fulfilment at work? Training to be a coach could bring the change you seek – and allow you to transform the lives of others. But where do you begin, and what does it entail?



*After 25 years at the forefront of coaching and coach*

*training in the UK, I remain fascinated by the psychology of human experience and behaviour.*

*As pioneers of coaching to the highest standards, our focus is to inspire personal growth and make the world a brighter place through exceptional coaching. More than 4,000 people have completed our International Coach Federation (ICF) ACTP-accredited training, and students leave as confident coaches, ready to make a difference.*

*Kim*

Kim Morgan MCC, CEO  
Barefoot Coaching Ltd

## HOW COACHING CHANGED MY LIFE

**When Mialy Dermish took time off work to have her daughter, she found herself feeling fatigued and low on energy, and not her usual self. On a mission to revive her health and wellbeing, Mialy embarked on a wellness journey with her coach, Jayne.**

**1** In 2019, I was preparing to return to work after having my daughter 18 months earlier, when I realised I didn't feel quite like myself. My health wasn't great, and I began to think more about the bigger picture, questioning my role and purpose in life. Keen to get myself well again, I set out on a health and wellness quest.

**2** I'd met Jayne, my coach, previously and she was someone I trusted completely. She suggested I join one of her women's group sessions, which was a great opportunity to meet like-minded professionals who, like me, felt they were in need of guidance.

**3** After a few group sessions, I began some one-to-ones with Jayne and she started to ask me deeper questions in a bid to find out more about my needs and desires. I realised I'd become a little lost in my current position at the UN; I wanted to create a better world for my child to grow up in. Soon after, I gave up my job to run an NGO, providing advocacy on education issues. I left a bigger place of work to do something on a smaller scale. I have much more ownership of what I do now, and feel I'm making a genuine difference, which is fantastic. I'm also much more in control of my own schedule, which is essential.

***“I have much more ownership of what I do now, and feel I'm making a genuine difference”***



## HOW I BECAME A COACH

### JAYNE MORRIS

My first experience of coaching came in 2007, while I was working in a marketing role. The company ran an in-house coaching programme, during which they asked questions such as 'Why do you do what you do?'. It inspired me to consider my career in a way I hadn't done before. When I contemplated doing something I felt more passionate about, I realised I was ready for change.

Soon after, I attended a career-change event in London and had the opportunity to speak with the Barefoot team face to face. I was impressed by the quality of the course, and the fact it was university accredited. I enrolled straightaway.

It was during my training that I realised how difficult things had become in my marketing role. Barefoot helped me to navigate my own situation and I was able to apply the principles to help me restore balance and move forward in an energised way.

This sparked an interest in understanding burnout, which continues to be the focus of my coaching work today. Since then, I haven't looked back; my first book, *Burnout To Brilliance: Strategies For Sustainable Success* (John Hunt, £10.99), was published in 2015.

I can't recommend Barefoot highly enough. Even if you don't become a coach at the end of it, I guarantee you will learn so much – skills which can be transferred into so many other areas of your life.

***jaynemorris.com; 'Balanceology: The Art of Balance' podcast***



## FIND A COACH OR TRAIN TO BE ONE

*Do you want to hire a coach, or help transform someone else's life by becoming a coach? Barefoot Coaching is here to help...*

### FIND

Psychologies' partnership with Barefoot Coaching gives you the tools to find a coach who meets your needs. Barefoot Coaching has been at the forefront of coaching and coach training for 25 years. It has a proven track record as a provider of high-level coaching and coach training to organisations and senior executives, both nationally and internationally.

### TRAIN

The Barefoot Coaching ICF ACTP-accredited PG Certificate in Business and Personal Coaching is one of the most well-established coach training courses in the UK. Barefoot Coaching runs regular, free introductions to coach training throughout the year. Book now for a taster morning.



**BAREFOOT  
COACHING**

**BOOK  
NOW!**

VISIT  
[Barefootcoaching.co.uk/  
taster-mornings](http://Barefootcoaching.co.uk/taster-mornings)

# 3 issues for just £5

*Try a subscription to 'Psychologies' magazine today and pay just £5 for your first three issues*

**MAKE ANXIETY YOUR SUPERPOWER! TAP INTO YOUR INNER WISDOM**

**CREATE A LIFE YOU LOVE**

**psychologies** UK edition

**SLEEP WELL!**  
Say farewell to your fears and enjoy a good night's sleep

**BOOST YOUR MOOD**  
Using colour to  
Get in touch with your local community and **BEAT LONELINESS**

**16-page DOSSIER**

**Reduce your stress today**

**Kate Humble**  
on why it's people, not possessions, that make you happy

**IMPROVE YOUR RESILIENCE**  
with positivity expert Paul McKenna

**4** smart ways to help loved ones cope with tough times

**THE SECRETS TO GETTING ON WITH YOUR GROWN-UP CHILDREN**

Why running is the perfect exercise if you're over 40

**HOW TO LET GO OF YOUR JOB AND MOVE ON**

**Instant Calm: Discover the secrets to feeling calm and relaxed**

**CREATE A LIFE YOU LOVE**

**psychologies**

**16-page DOSSIER**

**Boost your happy hormones**

- Simple habits to help you feel in control
- The perfect routine to get in sync with your body
- How to ask for the support you need

**Relationship expert Anna Williamson**  
Why fighting with your partner is the key to lasting love

**GABRIELLE BERNSTEIN**  
on her journey to find peace

**Only £1.67 per issue**





# Hello!

As we head towards spring, it's the perfect time to start thinking about what you want next. If the past couple

of years have been hard for you, and you want to start prioritising taking good care of yourself, consider subscribing to 'Psychologies'. It's packed full of inspiring yet simple ideas to create small changes in your life that make a big difference to how you feel, each and every day.

Featuring cutting-edge authors, experts and therapists, as well as real-life readers like you, it's sure to become your new best friend. Costing little more than a latte a month, a subscription could be one of the best investments you ever make. Begin to make time for you, and learn how to feel calmer, happier and more relaxed.

A subscription also makes an amazing Mother's Day gift for someone you love, to show them how much they mean to you. Plus, sign up now and you'll receive three issues for just £5. What a bargain! Enjoy!

Sally x

Editor,  
Psychologies

## BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR SUBSCRIBER CLUB!

When you subscribe, you automatically become a member of the *Psychologies* subscriber club and receive the following exclusive benefits:

- Free online coaching programmes
- Opportunities to talk to the experts
- Access to our subscriber-only Facebook group
- Special subscriber only weekly e-newsletter\*
- Discounts on *Psychologies* products
- Free delivery to your door in 100 per cent plastic-free packaging

**PLUS!** You will receive life-improving content in every issue to give you the strength and confidence to live your best life

*Feel fulfilled in every aspect of your life...*



**Terms & conditions:** UK offer only. You will pay £5 for your first three issues. Your subscription will then continue at a rate of £22 every six months. Savings are based on the standard cover price of £4.90. Offer ends 31 May 2022. Your subscription will start with the next available issue, and you will receive 13 issues in a year. Prices correct at time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions, visit [shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms).

**Data protection:** We take great care in handling your personal details and these will only ever be used as set out in our privacy policy, which can be viewed at [shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy).

\* You may unsubscribe at any time

## Don't miss out – order today!

Order online at [SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/PY422](http://SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/PY422)

Call now on 01959 543747\* Quote ref: PY422

\*HOTLINE OPEN: MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8.30AM-5.30PM. CALLS ARE CHARGED AT YOUR STANDARD NETWORK RATE

# Navigate post-traumatic stress disorder

We're debunking the myths, challenging the taboos and offering the tools we need to deal with some of the most misunderstood mental health issues affecting us, our families and friends

Life is full of ups and downs and, thankfully – for most of us – these events pass without too much cause for concern. But, for some, traumatic life events can leave a lasting impression. Post-traumatic stress disorder often occurs when a person experiences distressing events and continues to relive them. They might harbour feelings of depression, anxiety and even guilt. Better understanding of this will allow us to spot the signs when we, or someone we love, needs help.

This month, Dr Radha Modgil, a medical doctor, and experts from the Mental Health Foundation, are shining a light on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), to offer reassurance, expose potential causes and symptoms, and share advice on where to seek help.

## Understanding PTSD

'PTSD is a form of anxiety brought on by traumatic, frightening or distressing life events,' says Dr Modgil. 'These events might include – but are not limited to – a serious accident, an assault, health problems or childbirth experiences. When a person experiences PTSD, they may relive the traumatic event either through bad dreams or flashbacks. They often experience feelings of isolation, irritability and guilt. For people with PTSD, their symptoms are so severe they have a profound impact on their everyday life, often affecting sleep, concentration,

overall happiness and the ability to function.'

## Reasons and causes

'PTSD is estimated to impact around one in every three people who experience a traumatic life event,' explains Dr Modgil, 'but it's complex, and there is no clear reason why it affects some people and not others. There's also the issue around timing, which can make it even more difficult to recognise. Some people develop PTSD very quickly after a traumatic experience whereas, for others, it can take weeks, months or even years to come to the fore. For those who have experienced multiple traumatic experiences over time, such as emergency services workers, or for those who have suffered abuse and long-standing trauma from an early age, it may take years for the condition to appear – this is often referred to as complex PTSD. The symptoms are much the same, but the condition may also have an impact on a young person's development.'

## REACH OUT

**'It's completely normal to experience upsetting and confusing thoughts following trauma,' says Dr Modgil, 'and, fortunately, for most people the effects will subside in a matter of weeks. If your symptoms are a cause for concern, however, or have been going on for longer than four weeks, speak to your GP. Treatment depends on the severity of symptoms and how soon they occur, but there are a number of options, including:**

- Prescription drugs, such as antidepressants, if necessary.
  - Psychological therapies, such as trauma-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR).
- It's worth noting that you can refer yourself directly to a psychological therapy service.**



*“Post-traumatic stress disorder is estimated to impact around one in every three people who experience a traumatic life event”*

## IDENTIFY THE SIGNS

- People with PTSD may have trouble sleeping and may suffer from night terrors or flashbacks.
- Sufferers of PTSD may feel depressed or experience low mood.
- Many feel anxious, irritable and even harbour feelings of guilt or shame.
- People with PTSD can often find it difficult to concentrate, to express themselves, and live their everyday life.
  - People who suffer from traumatic life experiences early on may also have difficulty handling and expressing their emotions, and may struggle to build positive relationships.

## HOW TO HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS

**‘More advice and guidance from the NHS can be found online by simply typing PTSD into your search engine,’ says Dr Modgil. ‘Remember, you are not alone and should never feel ashamed about anything that has happened to you, or for the way you are feeling in the aftermath of a trauma.’ The good news is that PTSD can be successfully treated, even when it develops many years after a distressing event.**



## Feel inspired every day wear a mantra

Each piece symbolises a specific mantra, intended to make a positive impact on the way that you feel.

Choose the mantra you need most in your life right now, to help change your mood or your mindset.

Mantra Jewellery. Here to inspire you.



READER  
OFFER

15% discount  
to Psychologies  
readers\*



*I trust life to help me  
find what I need*



*I create balance  
in my life*



*"A piece of jewellery can't change the world. But it can change the way you feel. And that can change your world."*

Jo Stroud, Mantra Founder

\*Use code PSYCH15 at checkout. Offer valid until 31st July 2022.

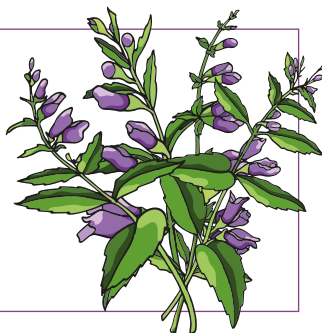
Discover the world of mantra at:  
**mantrajewellery.co.uk**  
**01926 335800**



# A moment of calm

## SKULLCAP

*With its vivid blue flowers and health and wellbeing benefits, it's time to give this plucky plant a go*



**T**here are many species of skullcap, but it's the Virginian variety that is most commonly used in Western herbal medicine. Hailed as a tonic for the nervous system – and boasting talents including the ability to lower anxiety levels and offer natural pain relief – skullcap has been a staple in herbal medicine for centuries. With all these benefits, it's no surprise this one-herb wonder has many people turning to its powers for a much-needed wellbeing boost, says medical herbalist and chair of the British Herbal Medicine Association, Chris Etheridge.

### Just the tonic

'Skullcap is hailed as a tonic for the whole nervous system, not only easing symptoms of anxiety but also relieving nervous tension, fatigue and low-level pain,' says Etheridge. 'It's believed skullcap stimulates the production of a chemical in our brains known as gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA). GABA is a type of neurotransmitter, which helps to calm nerves, lower anxiety levels and relieve pain caused by anxiety and nervous tension.'

### Sleep soundly

'It's these calming, sedative effects that many people swear by for helping

with conditions such as insomnia and poor sleep,' adds Etheridge. 'Research in this area is limited, but anecdotal evidence suggests that skullcap could be a bit of a sleep saviour, and this is down to its calming properties and its impact on the nervous system. Getting good quality sleep really is key when it comes to keeping our mental health and wellbeing in check.' *bhma.info*

*From the Latin word 'scutella', meaning 'little dish', skullcap's name refers to the shape of its flowers.*

## PICK OF THE PRODUCTS

'On the whole, skullcap is super-safe and has very few side effects,' says Etheridge. 'However, it's always a good idea to consult with your GP before embarking on a regular course, to make sure you're taking the correct amount. It's also worth noting that it may not be suitable during pregnancy.'

Skullcap is best taken in dried herb form as an infusion (3–6g daily). Traditionally, it would be used as a tea and tonic by indigenous American people, such as the Cherokee and Iroquois. Alternatively, it can be taken in tincture form. Try...

### The infusion

Skullcap Dried Herb, £9

[nealsyardremedies.co.uk](http://nealsyardremedies.co.uk)



### The tincture

Baldwins Skullcap Herbal Tincture, from £9.65

[baldwins.co.uk](http://baldwins.co.uk)



NEW FROM **KATIE PIPER**

# *A Little Bit of Faith*

CAN TAKE YOU A LONG WAY

'A must read to brighten up your days.'

*Laura Whitmore*

'Katie's zest for life is a tonic for the soul.'

*Susanna Reid*

'Faith, positivity and spirituality can be such a powerful tool in life. No one epitomizes this more than Katie Piper does.'

*Nadia Sawalha*

'If you're in need of something to lift you up and fill you with confidence, then this book is for you.'

*Alice Living*

'A gift of a book that every one of us can learn and grow from.'

*Julia Samuel*

'A wonderful, uplifting book for those who need daily guidance and light in their lives.'

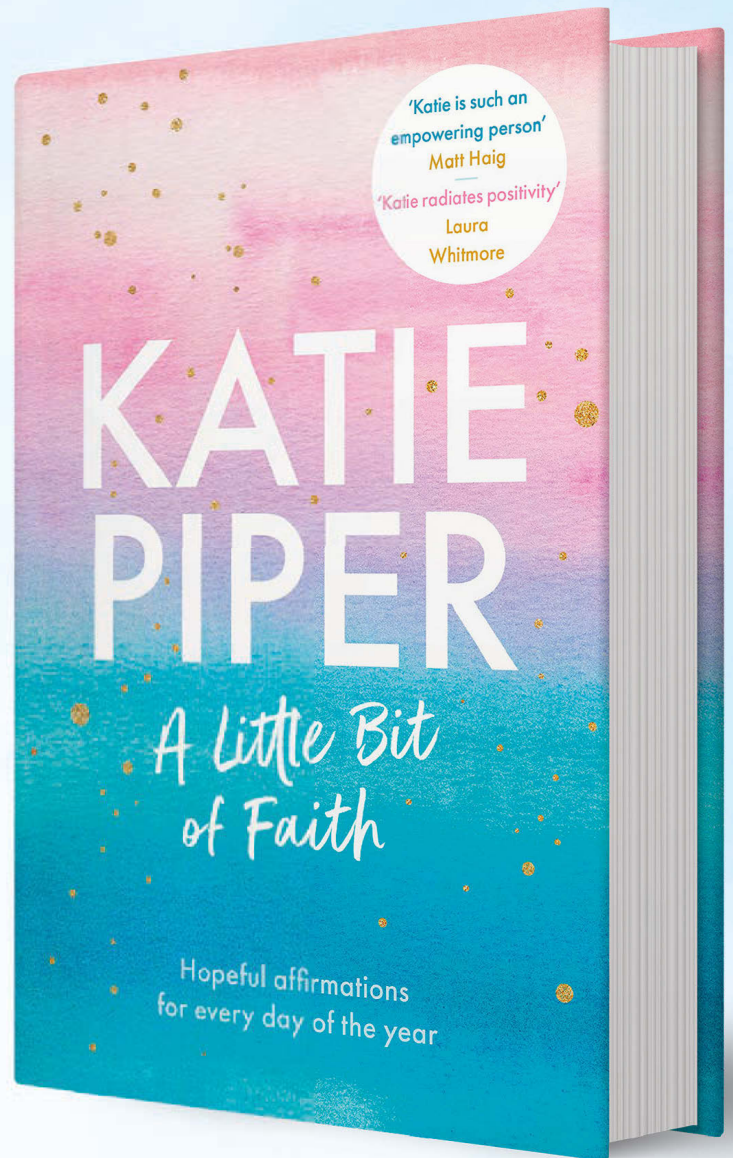
*Louise Pentland*

*Out now*

Order your copy



 @katiepiper\_  
 @katiepiper\_



[spck.org.uk](http://spck.org.uk)

[f/SPCKpublishing](https://www.facebook.com/SPCKpublishing)

[@SPCKpublishing](https://twitter.com/SPCKpublishing)

[@SPCK\\_publishing](https://www.instagram.com/SPCK_publishing)



# Slow down and smell the ink

*Dive into the page and lose yourself in the meditative joy of writing by hand, says Jackee Holder*



We know from research that putting pen to paper hosts many benefits that can support wellness in this time of digital overload. Research by Pam Mueller and Daniel Oppenheimer found that when

students took notes on their laptops, they performed worse than students who wrote by hand when it came to responding to conceptual questions.

Taking a break from your screens and going analogue with pen and paper has been scientifically proven to reduce anxiety, elevate your mood and strengthen your immune system. The act of journaling puts many people into a meditative space and, as Jeannie Wright, reminds us, 'Writing spaces, no matter how short, are like a meditation.'

Why not give writing by hand a try? Close your laptop, grab some paper or a notebook and pen, open to a blank page, and write down whatever comes to mind for five minutes straight.

I've been journaling for more than 25 years and have found that when I write by hand I release feelings and emotions that tumble through the tip of the pen and onto the page. Turns out that the art of formatting each letter on the page helps you better retain the information you are recording. Going analogue and taking yourself offline when writing by hand can be a refreshing way of organising your thoughts and capturing fresh thinking.

Personally, I love the immediacy of putting pen to paper and being with my own thoughts. There's no need to worry about the device I am working on being charged up, or being distracted away from the very thing I am working on with the incessant noise of notifications from incoming messages or unsolicited adverts, or getting the required signal from the internet. Even better, you give your overworked eyes a welcome rest from the hard incessant shimmering glare of the computer or mobile phone screen.

One weekend, after a long walk along the River Thames in South West London, I sat for over an hour in the large reading room of a library and hand wrote three birthday cards. I found



myself lost in the writing space and totally engrossed in the hand-lettering design that I created on the front of each of the envelopes. The power of focus in that moment was intoxicating and a stark contrast to the fleeting concentration of multitasking. Research by Dr Virginia Berninger further supports the idea that writing by hand lubricates your creative muscles, which don't get stimulated in the same impactful way when working on a keyboard.

I'll leave you this month in the safe hands of Nancy Olson, whose wise words bring home the wellness benefits of writing by hand: 'This is perhaps the true magic of the pen: It transports us to unexpected places, on wings that require no more than a timely shot of ink to keep them aloft, destination unknown. And in the process, the mindfulness that writing engenders encourages calm and creativity.'

**[jackeeholder.com](http://jackeeholder.com); @jackeeholderinspires**

A person is lying on their back on a sandy beach, looking up towards the sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects. The person's arms are raised above their head, and their legs are slightly bent. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

psychologies inspiration

*“Every  
experience  
I have is  
perfect for my  
own growth”*

*Louise Hay*







# The Inca Trail Trek



Immerse yourself in the ancient kingdom of the Incas on this once-in-a-lifetime trek to Machu Picchu. Hiking through rainforests, mountains and high desert plateau, you'll discover sacred ruins and an amazing mix of cultures.

**5-15 May 2023**

For more information and to register online:

**[www.dream-challenges.com](http://www.dream-challenges.com)**

Tel: 01590 646410

Email: [events@dream-challenges.com](mailto:events@dream-challenges.com)



ABTOT   
Member 5370



# STRESS LESS

It ages us, increases our chances of serious illness and can wreak havoc with our working life and relationships. But you don't have to succumb to its ill-effects. As we mark Stress Awareness Month this April, Heidi Scrimgeour discovers how to achieve a life less stressful

**T**he discovery that I was suffering from stress – news delivered by a doctor after a medical emergency – was a wake-up call that changed my relationship with myself for good. One moment, I was sitting at my desk, quietly absorbed in writing an article. The next, a vice-like grip was squeezing my chest with terrifying intensity. But before I could reach my phone to dial 999, the sensation stopped – just as abruptly as it had begun.

Later, wired up to various monitors, I braced myself for the verdict. When the news came, I was disbelieving. It wasn't a heart attack; I was suffering from stress. I laughed at the doctor. Me? Stressed? No chance.

Stress – especially the kind that gives you palpitations and lands you in hospital – was for wimps. Yes, my dad had just died suddenly, and both mine and my husband's careers and our kids' lives had been derailed by a global pandemic, but I'm strong; a coper. I don't *do* stress. Or so I thought. The tests and experts told me otherwise; I am officially a card-carrying stress sufferer. (And I now understand that panic attacks can happen – and often do – when you feel relaxed.)

I've learned to think of panic attacks as my body's preferred method of stress release if I forget to pay close attention to it. There are lots of stressful elements in my life, as there are for most people, but my tendency to 'tough it out' and pile more and more things upon my plate means that, every now and then, my body simply pulls rank. Palpitations were my cue to change my ways and to deal more effectively with the things that had been causing mounting stress.

Stress is the one thing we don't like to admit we're suffering from. Discussing minor ailments is totally socially acceptable and, these days, going into graphic detail of menopause symptoms is positively encouraged among my friends. But announce that you're suffering from stress, and you sound like Moaning Myrtle. It's ridiculous; we're more comfortable divulging details of a flagging libido and hot flushes than we are admitting that stress has us doom-scrolling at 3am or reaching for the wine bottle more often than we should. And, yet, stress is a universal human experience; everyone encounters it.

Feeling stressed is nothing to do with not coping, of course. It's simply the natural response of your brain and body to an event or situation that poses a threat or challenge. In itself, stress isn't harmful. It can even be positive; the stress response helps you to flee from danger, perform in an exam, and cope in a

crisis. But our health can suffer from the effects of stress if we encounter sustained periods of it.

And that's exactly what happened that day at my desk. I was calm and relaxed at the time, but a combination of difficult situations had converged – a close encounter with grief, the complex changes in family dynamics that happen after a sudden loss, and the endless piles of admin that require your attention when someone dies.

By not adjusting my routine to account for the extra stress those things were causing, I had laid a trap for myself. Trying to soldier on without acknowledging the stress I was under meant that my body simply took the wheel. It ran me off the road that day; a damage limitation exercise to ensure that I started resourcing myself more adequately.

We all know the things that help to relieve symptoms of stress: gentle exercise, good nutrition, less alcohol and counselling all helped to recalibrate my emotional and physical 'engine' and get it running smoothly once again. Since then, I haven't had a single palpitation. But stress hasn't gone away. If anything, life got more stressful as the allowances that people make when someone dies fell away and people began to expect more from me again.

You can't eliminate stress as if it was sugar in your diet. But you can learn to recognise how stress affects your body, mind and behaviour. It shows up differently for different people – I had a panic attack in a moment of calm, but for others stress can manifest as anything from insomnia, irritability and physical pain, to difficulty concentrating, tearfulness or worry. Once you learn to identify the stressors in your life and recognise how those things uniquely affect you, you're armed with all you need to dial down the stress level and minimise its damaging effects in your life.

## Expert advice



*Hilary Sims is a counsellor, cognitive behavioural therapist and founder of Life Balance Counselling. [lifebalancecounselling.net](http://lifebalancecounselling.net)*



*Dr Marianne Trent is a clinical psychologist, founder of Good Thinking Psychological Services and the author of 'The Clinical Psychologist Collective' (£12.99). [goodthinkingpsychology.co.uk](http://goodthinkingpsychology.co.uk)*

## Stress Awareness Month

**Stress Awareness Month has been held every April since 1992 to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic.**





# Learn to ask for help

*One sure-fire way to reduce stress quickly is to ask for help, but many of us balk at the idea, whether delegating tasks at work or asking family to pull their weight*

Remember the mental load? You've probably seen a brilliant illustration of the concept by the French comic artist Emma, which was all over social media recently. Mental load – or cognitive labour – is a term used to describe the web of invisible tasks involved in running a household. Most of which, in heterosexual households, falls to women. From scheduling playdates and replenishing toothpaste to remembering family birthdays and organising

holidays, studies show that women do more of these tasks than men, along with the bulk of housework and childcare, too.

But a heavy mental load creates more stress. If you feel under constant pressure from all the things you're trying to remember to do, that's the mental load taking its toll. The antidote is obvious – ask for help. And yet that's far from easy. Here are some reasons why we resist asking for help – and how to overcome them...



*You feel you should be able to cope*

If you've ever avoided asking someone for help because of a sense that you 'ought' to be able to cope, it's likely that your 'be perfect' drivers are at play. 'Women often see asking for help as a sign of weakness, because they believe they should be able to deal with everything life throws at them,' explains counsellor and cognitive behavioural therapist Hilary Sims. 'It's easy to assume that everyone else is managing better, because people generally don't like to admit they're struggling, but we all have times when we find it hard to cope. Needing help just means you are human.'

To get past discomfort around asking for help when you need it, Sims recommends dwelling less on what other people might think of you. 'Would you judge a friend who asked for help? No, you'd gladly offer it,' she says. 'So why judge yourself for doing so?'







## 2

### ***You don't believe you're worthy of someone's help***

Hesitation around asking for help can also stem from a lack of self-belief. If you don't think you're deserving of someone's time or attention, or think your needs are secondary to theirs, it can hold you back from accepting help.

Try to reframe seeking help as a strength, not a weakness. Admitting that you need support of any kind is a brave thing to do.

It's braver still to ask for help, so recognise those as the achievements they are, suggests Sims.

Think about how much we praise children for asking for help. If asking someone to help you with a task or take it off your plate would reduce stress, try channelling your inner child and trust that the people around you will be only too happy to help.

## 3

### **YOU'RE ASSUMING PEOPLE WILL BE INCONVENIENCED**

Remember that people generally love being asked for help. It's flattering to know that someone trusts and relies upon you enough to seek your support. Being asked for help can make us feel trusted, validated and capable. Asking for help at work might make someone feel their skills are recognised, rather than overlooked. And far from creating resentment, as you might fear, leaning on friends and family can actually strengthen bonds. ➤

## IS IT STRESS – OR TRAUMA?

Sometimes stress is about much more than 'just stress'. Anxiety, stress and low mood can all be caused by undiagnosed trauma, according to author and clinical psychologist Dr Marianne Trent. 'It's actually easy to have experienced trauma – issues with parental mental health, family separation or parental substance misuse, for example – without necessarily knowing that you have,' says Dr Trent. 'A sense that your family didn't seem "together" or "normal" like other families in the first 18 years of life could contribute to a developmental trauma presentation and, post-18, trauma can crop up more easily than people imagine. When left unprocessed, it can leave people feeling very stressed and at risk of burnout.'

There are different types of trauma – acute, chronic or developmental – and each type has a different cause, different symptoms and different treatment options.

'Sometimes when humans have experienced trauma they just carry on, because there's a sense that there wasn't a chance to "come undone" at the time,' explains Dr Trent. It might be months or even years later when the symptoms of trauma make their presence known, and it doesn't always show up as a mental health difficulty. 'Due to the way that trauma affects the human body, trauma can also lead to migraines, IBS and even back problems. People who have experienced trauma are more likely to be obese and to drink more units of alcohol per week, too.'

Far from opening a can of worms, realising that you have been through trauma and, thus, may be experiencing something more than stress, is incredibly validating. 'When people feel invalidated and abnormal, they are more prone to burnout and symptoms of stress, because of the high pressure they have previously put upon themselves just to keep going,' explains Dr Trent.

'If reading about trauma in this way makes you consider your own history, then it's vital to reach out to a trauma specialist, such as a psychologist, to process your experiences. By doing so, clients are able to learn the skills they need to stabilise themselves, to better tolerate their distressing thoughts, to stay more present in the moment, and to get more joy and satisfaction from life with reduced shame and guilt, reduced anxiety, and brighter mood,' advises Dr Trent.





# Let go of the stress of perfection

A major source of stress for many women is the quest to achieve perfection – though you might not realise you're succumbing to it. 'Despite juggling many plates, you might tell yourself that you have to do everything perfectly and, thus, can end up feeling that you never do anything well enough,' explains Sims. The antidote is learning to accept that your best *is* good enough.

How? Dismantling the 'be perfect' drivers that many of us have internalised is key. 'This is one of the drivers that we learn from our parents at a very young age,' Sims explains. 'Doing your best should be good enough, but sometimes the messages you've absorbed can lead you to think that if you don't perform perfectly, you're not doing well enough.'

She recommends these steps for dealing with a 'be perfect' driver:

- 1 Practise giving self-gratification, instead of always relying on others to tell you that you've done a good job.**
- 2 Learn to champion what you have achieved, rather than focusing on what you haven't ticked off your to-do list.**
- 3 Recognise when you've done your best and don't need to do any more. It's about learning to be proud of yourself for the person you are, not the person you are trying to become.**

Think back to a time when you took home a school test result. Maybe you got a great grade but your parent might

have pointed out that you'd have got a better mark if you'd revised more. 'The parent is focusing on what you haven't achieved, rather than what you have,' says Sims. 'This can lead us to believe that what we've done is not good enough and, in our next test, we might put more pressure on ourselves to achieve more. When, in fact, we can only ever do our best.'

Those 'be perfect' drivers can show up in adulthood, too. If you're juggling domestic commitments with work, you might feel that you're not doing any of your 'jobs' properly. That can lead to feeling guilty if you take time for yourself, even though looking after yourself boosts your capacity to handle stress, says Sims.





A woman with dark curly hair, wearing an orange t-shirt, is lying on her back on a patterned rug. She is smiling and has her arms crossed over her head. The rug is placed on a wooden deck. To the left of the woman, there are several potted plants in various containers. The text "Your best is good enough" is written in a white, cursive font in the upper right corner of the image.

*Your best  
is good  
enough*



Stress can escalate quickly for women in the sandwich generation years, caring for kids and ageing parents simultaneously. How can we navigate these busy years without succumbing to the extra stresses they can bring?

'No one is expecting you to be Wonder Woman,' says Sims. And yet we often expect that of ourselves. She recommends learning to recognise when things have got too much. If your plate feels full, acknowledge it. 'Make a list of things you need to do and see what support you can get to do them differently. Tell the family which bits are causing you more stress and ask for help. If you don't manage to clean everything or complete all your tasks in one week,

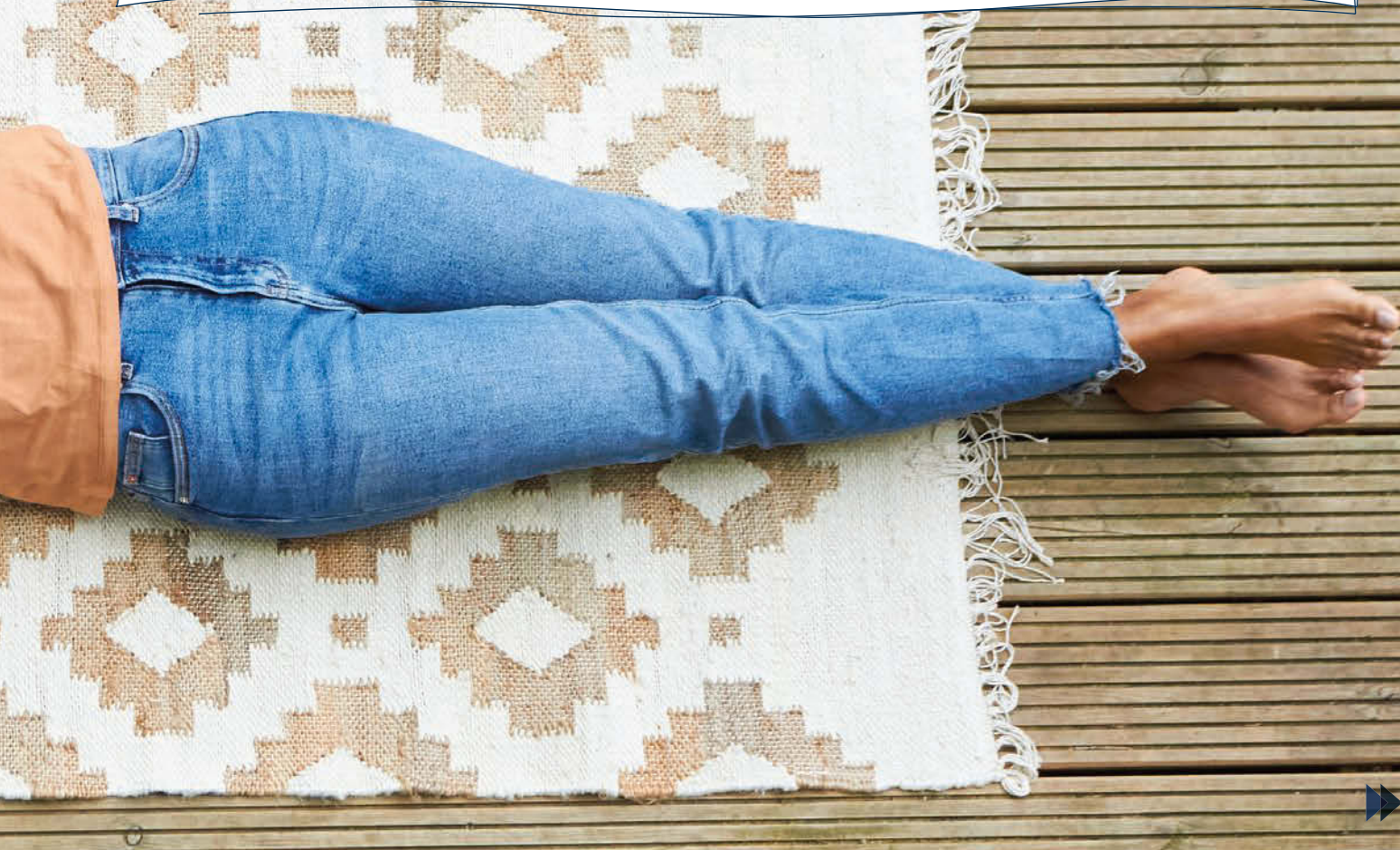
spread them out over a number of weeks. And, remember, if people come to visit your home, they come to see you, not which jobs you have or haven't done.'

Accepting that your best is good enough is vital. For me, this meant lowering my expectations of myself. In this season of grief and readjustment, I can't achieve as much as I once could. So I've chosen to let go of some things in order to cultivate a less stressful life. I've outsourced the things I can. I've swapped the gym for a slow daily lunchtime stroll and I listen to an audio book while walking, since I'm too knackered for a book at bedtime but miss the stress-relief of reading. Above all, I rest before I feel

worn out. I sometimes de-prioritise folding laundry and put my feet up instead. It takes practice to continually spend time on things that reduce stress or which increase your capacity to handle it – especially if you've grown up feeling pressure to prove that you can have it all. But dropping balls, I've learned, is the secret to a less stressful life. It turns out they don't all smash – the trick is to work out which balls are the ones that bounce.

**To get £50 off 'The Feel Better Academy', a trauma stabilisation programme including live webinar access, with Dr Marianne Trent, use code 'PSYCHOLOGIES' at [goodthinkingpsychology.co.uk/fba](https://goodthinkingpsychology.co.uk/fba)**

***"Dropping balls, I've learned, is the secret to a less stressful life. The trick is to work out which ones will bounce"***





*Practice yoga. For me, yoga is a really important way to get in touch with my real self. And I'm able to think about what I want, and ask myself 'Is this is how I want the day to proceed?' It's one of the most important things I do.*

*Write in a journal. Lots of people think they don't have time to journal, but it's a way of starting from a solid basis. When you sit down and write, your truth keeps showing itself, and you can really tune in to what's going on in your mind.*

*Say affirmations. Your unconscious mind believes whatever you tell it, and one of the most powerful ways to influence it is by saying affirmations. If you're not saying anything good to yourself, you're only going to hear the old stuff that's in there, so change the record and give yourself an uplifting soundtrack.*

# TAKE 5

Stressed out? Then it's time to tune in to what you really need by spending a few minutes with yourself

**'T**here are some simple ways to lower your stress levels: it's about getting back in touch with who you are and what you want,' explains Susan D Smith, a psychotherapist and life coach, also known as The Stresshacker. 'And you have to keep coming back to base to work out if this is still OK with you. Because if you don't have some form of tuning in to yourself, then after a while

something else will happen. You might find you'll be really suffering from anxiety, or you might find you're suffering from aches and pains. You need to check in with yourself – and keep doing it. If you were potty training your child, or house training a puppy or a kitten, you wouldn't do it once and expect them to be perfect. You don't expect to go to the gym once and then be covered in muscles. Repetition is the mother of all skills.'



*Relax.*

*Every so often, park up in a quiet road with a coffee and have five minutes to yourself. It can be hard to get time to yourself in the modern world, so seize the chance. And keep checking in with yourself and asking, 'Is this going the way I want it to go?'*

*Walk*

*your way. You don't need to climb a mountain, but spending time walking is going to help you find your thoughts. It might just be getting off the bus a stop early, and spending that time quietly.*

# HOW CAN YOU MAKE STRESS WORK FOR YOU?

Too much stress is undermining, but life without challenge is not the answer – take our test to find what will help you find your stress sweet spot

Circle the answers that most closely apply to you, then add up the symbols. Read the section, or sections, you circled most, to find out how to balance your stress thermostat

## 1 Feeling stretched feels good when

- ♥ There's a sense of achievement.....☐
- ♦ It gives you a confidence boost .....☐
- Someone you care about will benefit.....☐
- It avoids bigger problems later on .....☐

## 2 Friends often tell you to

- ♥ Give yourself a break.....☐
- Stop worrying.....☐
- Learn to say no .....☐
- ♦ Believe in yourself .....☐

## 3 Reaching a goal involves

- ♥ Going over and above what's expected.....☐
- Far too much procrastination .....☐
- ♦ Asking for second opinions from everyone .....☐
- Making sure other people are involved.....☐

## 4 You can handle stress best when you know you're

- ♦ Doing a good job.....☐
- Doing OK .....☐
- ♥ Doing your best .....☐
- Doing the right thing .....☐

## 5 You get frustrated when people seem to

- Not care what others think.....☐
- ♦ Never doubt themselves .....☐
- ♥ Get by on good luck .....☐
- Never worry .....☐

## 6 You wish it was easier to

- ♥ Relax .....☐
- Say what you think .....☐
- ♦ Be yourself .....☐
- Leave the past behind.....☐

## 7 Your stress levels rise when you

- ♦ Are dealing with new situations .....☐
- Are facing a lot of uncertainty.....☐
- Feel used or taken advantage of.....☐
- ♥ Don't have time to do things properly.....☐

## 8 Stress can make you lose sight of

- What realistically might happen .....☐
- ♥ What matters in life .....☐
- ♦ What you're capable of .....☐
- What you want from life .....☐

## 9 Comparing yourself to others makes you

- ♥ Motivated to raise your game.....☐
- Question why you made certain life choices .....☐
- ♦ Generally feel bad about yourself...☐
- Wonder what people think about you .....☐

## 10 You're at your best when you feel

- Focused.....☐
- ♥ Productive.....☐
- ♦ Understood.....☐
- Useful.....☐

Turn the page to find out how to turn stress into your superpower





*"If you don't  
tune in to  
yourself, then  
after a while  
you'll find your  
mind or body  
will rebel. You  
need to check in  
— and keep  
checking in"*



# What will help you find your stress balance?



IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♥

## *Perspective*

Staying in your comfort zone to reduce stress isn't an option if you thrive on feeling like you're growing and learning. Pushing yourself to succeed can be energising, but do you push yourself hard in *everything* you do? Even minor tasks can start to feel stressful if the attention they demand from you is disproportionate to their importance, with a knock-on effect on your emotional resilience and capacity to be there for others.

The irony is that devoting your energy to always doing your best may have started out as a way to avoid stressful situations, such as letting people down. But when being seen to 'be good' becomes your main driver, you can feel like there's an invisible judge constantly rating you. Even admitting that you are struggling can feel stressful, as you feel you should be able to cope, and you can always find someone 'more successful' to compare yourself to.

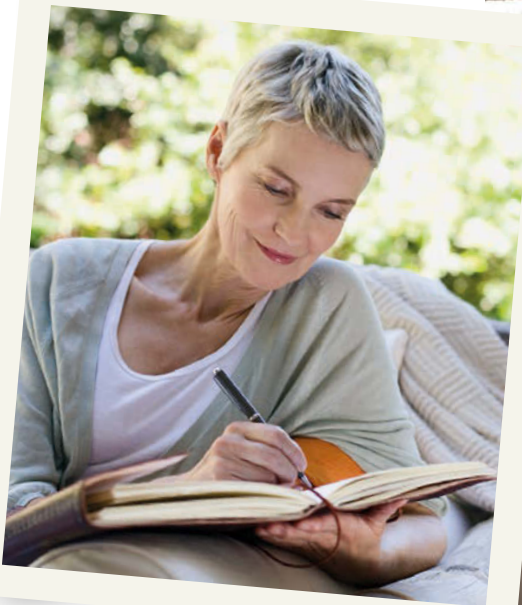
Your drive to always be your best has probably got you far, but do the rewards really make up for spending much of your waking hours in a state of stress? It's time to try experimenting with 'good enough' for a while – chances are, the only person who will notice the drop in standards is you.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♦

## *Self-belief*

Long-term lack of self-belief can mean you live with a constant underlying sense of stress, fuelled by doubts that you can't cope, or that you'll make a mess of things. Self-doubt is insidious – you may seem outwardly confident but when self-doubt sets in, even simple tasks can feel overwhelming, and you can question your ability to do things you've done a million times before. Few people have an unshakeable belief that they are good at everything, but when self-doubt robs your peace of mind and takes away your day-to-day enjoyment in life, it's time to tackle it. Remember, the voice we hear the most is our own, and if you're always telling yourself that you 'can't cope', is it any wonder you can't seem to stay in your stress sweet spot? At times, you may feel like the solution is to stay in your comfort zone or just do less. But it's your internal rather than your external world that's at the root of your stress, and until you change that, you will never find the equilibrium you crave. You can't change the past or what other people think of you, but you can change your relationship with yourself. Start by asking, how different would my life be if I decided today to accept and love myself for who I am?





IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ●

## *Mind management*

Planning may be your strength but, left unchecked, analytical thinking can become overthinking, tipping you out of that stress sweet spot. You may be so used to constantly turning over upcoming challenges in your mind that you don't even notice it anymore. But when your resilience is low, you can feel overwhelmed by detailed worst-case scenarios.

As well as triggering stress, even low-level worry and overthinking is undermining to mental wellbeing. A sign that you're out of the stress sweet spot is getting stuck in 'preparation' mode, over-researching, asking for advice, or simply taking too long over minor decisions. It's good to plan and a bit of apprehension can help focus the mind, but when stress becomes toxic, it can be unhelpful.

The irony is that your overthinking may have started as a defence against anxiety – are you convinced that if you can think through every eventuality, you can prepare for it? – but it's now become the cause. Try limiting your worry time to 15 minutes at a specific time of day. When you slip into overthinking, mentally park it until 'worry time'.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ■

## *Boundaries*

Just being busy in itself doesn't always equal stress if you feel in control and are doing something useful that aligns with your values. But if your pattern is to say yes to tasks because saying no would upset or inconvenience someone else, it's no surprise you find it hard to stay in your stress sweet spot.

Resentment and stress tend to go hand in hand – just add a sprinkling of guilt and you will struggle to maintain peace of mind. Ask yourself, how much of what you take on is driven by a fear that, if you say no, someone will be upset? The irony is that by agreeing to commitments that you don't have a hope of sticking to, you could be frustrating people anyway. Making a difference and doing the right thing is clearly important to you and gives you a sense of purpose. But it's hard to find your stress sweet spot if you never pause and reflect before you jump in and say yes. If saying no feels too uncomfortable, experiment with a 'soft no': 'I'd really love to come/get involved/help you with that, but I'm very busy at the moment, so can I think about it and let you know?' Remember, if you can cope with disappointment or inconvenience, then so can other people.

# Concentrate on what you can control

**S**ometimes it seems that every day you are confronted with more and more things that stress you out. This new stage in the pandemic, when we are 'learning to live with the virus' and all restrictions are eased, will be an exciting development for many. But issues around wearing masks, who has been vaccinated and who hasn't, and perhaps a return to a more 'normal' way of life, which includes travel and a return to old ways of working, will make this a very stressful time for some people.

If this is how you feel, instead of focusing on all the things that are stressing you, psychotherapist Susan D Smith draws on the idea of the circle of influence and circle of concern to get to grips with your feelings.

'So to start with, picture a circle – this is your circle of influence,' she explains. 'Then, around that, draw a larger circle: this is your circle of concern. The circle of influence relates to the things you have control over – the things you eat or drink, the way you behave, the things you put into your body, the places you go.'

'The circle of concern sits outside that. This is our place of worry, where our anxieties are. Every time we go into the circle of concern, we are going to feel a little impotent.'

'These are things going on that we can't change. So there's nothing we can do about the fact that there are 80 mile per hour winds as I write. That's in our circle of concern, and I can't change it. I can't control the weather. But it's in my circle of influence to change my plans so I don't risk getting stuck for hours.'

***"Focus on what you can control, and put your energy into that"***



'The other day, I went on the train. I was wearing a mask – that was in my circle of influence. The people around me were wearing masks, too, then a young girl came and sat next to me who wasn't. That was in my circle of concern. My choice wasn't to tell her what to do, instead it was to get up and walk to another part of the train where everybody was wearing masks.'

'I expanded my circle of influence and looked at what I could do. I didn't keep wasting my time and my valuable energy on what I couldn't do.'

'I don't have control over other people. I don't have control over the environment, nine times out of 10. And so let's look at what I can do. I will focus on what I can change, and put my energy into that.'

## Expert advice



*Susan D Smith, aka The Stresshacker, is a psychotherapist and life coach with more than 30 years of experience treating stress in the mind and body.  
[thestresshacker.co.uk](http://thestresshacker.co.uk)*





# Walk, roll or stroll to stop MS

Join our family friendly  
and accessible walks.

May 2022

Bristol 7, Cardiff 14, Manchester 21

September 2022

Belfast 10, London 17, Glasgow 24



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

Multiple Sclerosis Society.  
Registered charity nos 1139257/SC041990.

► Sign up or find out more  
[mssociety.org.uk/ms-walk](https://mssociety.org.uk/ms-walk)

## coast SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

The only publication to *exclusively* cover the coastline of the

# BRITISH ISLES



3 ISSUES  
FOR £5

## GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE

Save 66% on your first  
3 issues

Never miss an issue

Continue to save 30%  
after your trial

Free delivery to your door  
Complete control – manage  
your account online

Sent out in plastic-free,  
recyclable, biodegradable,  
carbon-balanced paper  
envelopes

## 2 EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

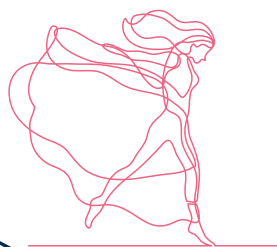
Visit [Shop.kelsey.co.uk/COAHA22](https://Shop.kelsey.co.uk/COAHA22) or call 01959 543747 & quote code COAHA22

HOTLINE OPEN: MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8.30AM-5.30PM. CALLS ARE CHARGED AT YOUR STANDARD NETWORK RATE

Terms and conditions. UK Direct Debit offer only. You will pay £5.00 for your first 3 issues. Your subscription will continue at a rate of £21.00 every 6 months. Savings are based on the standard cover price of £4.99. Offer ends 31 December 2022. Your subscription will start with the next available issue, and you will receive 12 issues in a year. Prices correct at time of print and subject to change. For full terms and conditions visit [shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms](https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms). Data protection: We take great care in handling your personal details and these will only ever be used as set out in our privacy policy which can be viewed at [shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy](https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/privacy-policy). You may unsubscribe at any time.

psychologies

# STRESS-BUSTER HEROES



Keep calm and carry on with relaxing remedies, pampering pick-me-ups and innovative gadgets to help you feel back in control



## SWITCH ON TO SWITCH OFF Smart tech, for Zen in the palm of your hand

### **Beurer ST100 Stress Relief, Anxiety and Relaxation Device, £109.99, [stressnomore.co.uk](http://stressnomore.co.uk)**

Engaging with all of your senses, this little device uses sounds, heat, light, vibrational therapy and guided breathing programmes to relax and calm you – it even claims to help prevent anxiety attacks. It features three different breathing rhythms and the soothing sounds of the forest, jungle or ocean. And relax...



### **Hyperice Core meditation trainer, available spring 2022, [hyperice.com](http://hyperice.com)**

Meditation is a wonderful way to tackle stress, but if you find it difficult, try this clever little ball. It vibrates to guide your focus, using feedback from integrated sensors that track your heart rate.



### **Sensate 2, £199, [getsensate.com](http://getsensate.com)**

If scents and supplements aren't your thing, how about a little stimulation? Place Sensate 2 on your breastbone and feel its soothing vibrations resonate out into your body, helping to banish stress and put body and mind back in balance.





# Relax and reboot

Unwind and let your worries melt away, with some soothing self-care



## Scentered Home Spa De-Stress Relaxation Set, £29.50, [scentered.me](https://scentered.me)

If you're feeling in need of a shoulder massage after a long day, this relaxation set might be the next best thing. Use the Lavender Wheat Bag to ease those aches and pains, and take a moment to stop, inhale and reset. Then layer on the De-Stress and Sleep-Well aromatherapy balms for relaxation and recovery.

## REN Atlantic Kelp and Magnesium Anti-Fatigue Body Cream, £25, [renskincare.com](https://renskincare.com)

Relax body and mind with this rich cream, which contains Atlantic kelp and sustainably sourced magnesium – plus essential minerals and oils – to nourish skin. It's infused with REN's unique anti-fatigue natural fragrance blend, to awaken the senses and ease stress.



## Neom Refresh and De-Stress Wellbeing Pod Collection, £95, [neomorganics.com](https://neomorganics.com)

Neom's clever Wellbeing Pod delivers the perfect amount of scent to fill your home with calm, using a blend of 24 essential oils, including lavender to help you relax and unwind. It also features a low-energy LED light, a timer, and works to humidify the air around you.



## 3 of the best for GUT HEALTH

Ease those stress-induced tummy troubles

### 1 Bio&Me Apple and Cinnamon Gut-Loving Granola, £3.99, [bioandme.co.uk](https://bioandme.co.uk)

This tasty cereal is a great way to get more probiotics into your diet. Featuring 15 different types of plants, including oils, roots and seeds, it's an instant stress buster in a bowl.



### 2 Kalla For Repair, £49, [kalla.com](https://kalla.com)

We're understanding more about the link between the gut and the brain all the time; clinically proven to lower inflammation in the gut, this supplement works to reduce the impact that stress has on your body. Mix this vegan-friendly powder with water or in a smoothie.



### 3 Optibac Every Day, £12.99, [optibacprobiotics.com](https://optibacprobiotics.com)

This probiotic contains two of the strains identified as being beneficial to your body's stress response, plus four other live cultures, which together have been shown to support digestive and mood health.



# Help on the go

**When stress creeps up on you unexpectedly, save the day with these pocket-sized heroes**

## **This Works Stress Check Mood Manager, £15, [thisworks.com](https://thisworks.com)**

If you're always rushing around, this motion-activated, functional fragrance, featuring ylang ylang, neroli and patchouli, could make all the difference. It was created using fMRI brain-imaging technology to help modify mood, reduce stress and restore calm to an agitated mind.



## **Saskia's Flower Essences Strength and Support, £12, [saskiafloweressences.com](https://saskiafloweressences.com)**

For days you need extra support, this award-winning combination contains a mixture of essences – from bluebell, to bring courage, and white chestnut, to free you from unwanted thoughts, to borage, to help you feel you can cope with life.

## **Tisserand Little Wellbeing Wonders, £15, [tisserand.com](https://tisserand.com)**

We love this pack, which contains handy, pocket-sized mood boosters, featuring Happy Vibes, Total De-Stress, Real Calm and Sleep Better, all with blends of 100 per cent natural pure essential oils to help you feel your best all day.



# HERE'S THE SCIENCE BIT...

**Reduce feelings of overwhelm from the outside in, with restorative remedies created by experts**

## **Dr.Vegan Stay Calm, £14.99, [drvegan.com](https://drvegan.com)**

With clinically studied ingredients including ashwagandha, rhodiola, cordyceps and schisandra, this clever blend supports your mood, helping you overcome stress, pressure and anxiety, to bring back some natural balance.



## **Mission C Day + CBD Oil, £35.99, [missionc.com](https://missionc.com)**

For a real pick-me-up, try this energising CBD oil. It's infused with natural ginkgo biloba and ginseng to increase energy and focus, reduce anxiety, and return you to a state of calm – whatever life throws at you.



## **Wild Nutrition Stress Collection, £54.90, [wildnutrition.com](https://wildnutrition.com)**

If you find yourself struggling with a busy and demanding lifestyle, this collection includes award-winning KSM-66 ashwagandha plus, as well as magnesium and B vitamins, to support mood and mental performance.







## SNOOZE AWAY STRESS

The more stressed you are the more you need sleep – and the more elusive it can feel. Break the vicious cycle with these clever products

### Kally Sleep Weighted Blanket, £79.99, marksandspencer.com

The secret of a weighted blanket is in the pockets of fibreglass beads, which gently push down and help release serotonin, increase melatonin levels and lower cortisol, helping you relax. Perfect for calming restless legs – and thoughts!



### Soundasleep Speaker Pillow, £30, soundasleeppillow.co.uk

Whether it's listening to your favourite podcast or enjoying waves crashing on a beach, there's nothing like peaceful sounds to help you tune out and drift off. This pillow has the speaker built in, so there are no wires to contend with.



### Bach Rescue Peaceful Night Capsules, £14.99, rescueremedy.com

A helpful mix of passionflower, ashwagandha, chamomile, magnesium and more, plus some of the brand's famous flower essences, take the stress out of dropping off.

## TIME FOR TEA

Brew up, sit down, and save your busy mind

### Pukka Calm Collection, £11.45, pukka herbs.com

This selection of Pukka's most-loved calming teas includes the Chamomile, Vanilla & Manuka Honey and the Joy varieties, with Night Time Berry to soothe you to sleep. Add the Peace and Relax blends to bring about a sense of tranquillity and help you switch off naturally.



### Vivo Life Raw Hot Chocolate, £12.95, vivolife.co.uk

Mushrooms and ashwagandha are big news when it comes to relaxation, and when you put them together with calming cinnamon and everybody's favourite, cocoa, you've got a heady combination. Just add some hot (plant) milk, and enjoy!



### Waterdrop Relax, £6.99, en.waterdrop.com

Upping your water intake is always going to ease stress – boost it further with these botanical blends of hibiscus, acerola and aronia, to help mellow your mood.





# Join Ollie's army

**NOW ONLINE!**

**Ever wanted to make a difference and train to become a coach?  
With the Ollie School, you could be changing lives before you know it**

**D**espite the very best efforts of our education system, it is struggling to cope with fully supporting the emotional wellbeing of our children within the curriculum. Have you ever felt that you would love to help, but were powerless to act? Well, here's your opportunity to do something positive.

The Ollie School plans to build an army of coaches who can make the world a better place, one child at a time. Ollie Coaching is a holistic approach that leads all our youngsters to a place where they can thrive in the chaos of modern living.

So many schools are battling to provide an appropriate mental health environment and busy parents are up against it in our fast-paced lives ruled by social media. That's why Alison Knowles, who was challenged throughout her life with undiagnosed dyslexia, decided to set up the Ollie

School. The Ollie methodology is all about empowering children to seek solutions and take control of their emotions, rather than be controlled by them. The Ollie School trains coaches in a blend of methodologies that brings together NLP, CBT, EFT and play therapy to make sure they cover all the bases. The Ollie methodology is all about personalisation and identifying which technique will work with each individual child – no one-size-fits-all approach here.

## ***Licence to help***

The Ollie School graduates are awarded a certified qualification in NLP and a licence to work as an Ollie coach. If helping children and their families to be more emotionally resilient appeals to you, contact us for a prospectus and let's talk about getting you with the programme.



## ***Get in touch***

To train to become an Ollie coach, find a coach in your area or book an event, visit [ollieandhissuperpowers.com](http://ollieandhissuperpowers.com), or contact us via email at [info@ollieandhissuperpowers.com](mailto:info@ollieandhissuperpowers.com). We would love to hear from you!

***Courses are now online and in the classroom, combining the best of both worlds with a limited number of trainees, maximising learning potential. See [ollieandhissuperpowers.com](http://ollieandhissuperpowers.com)***





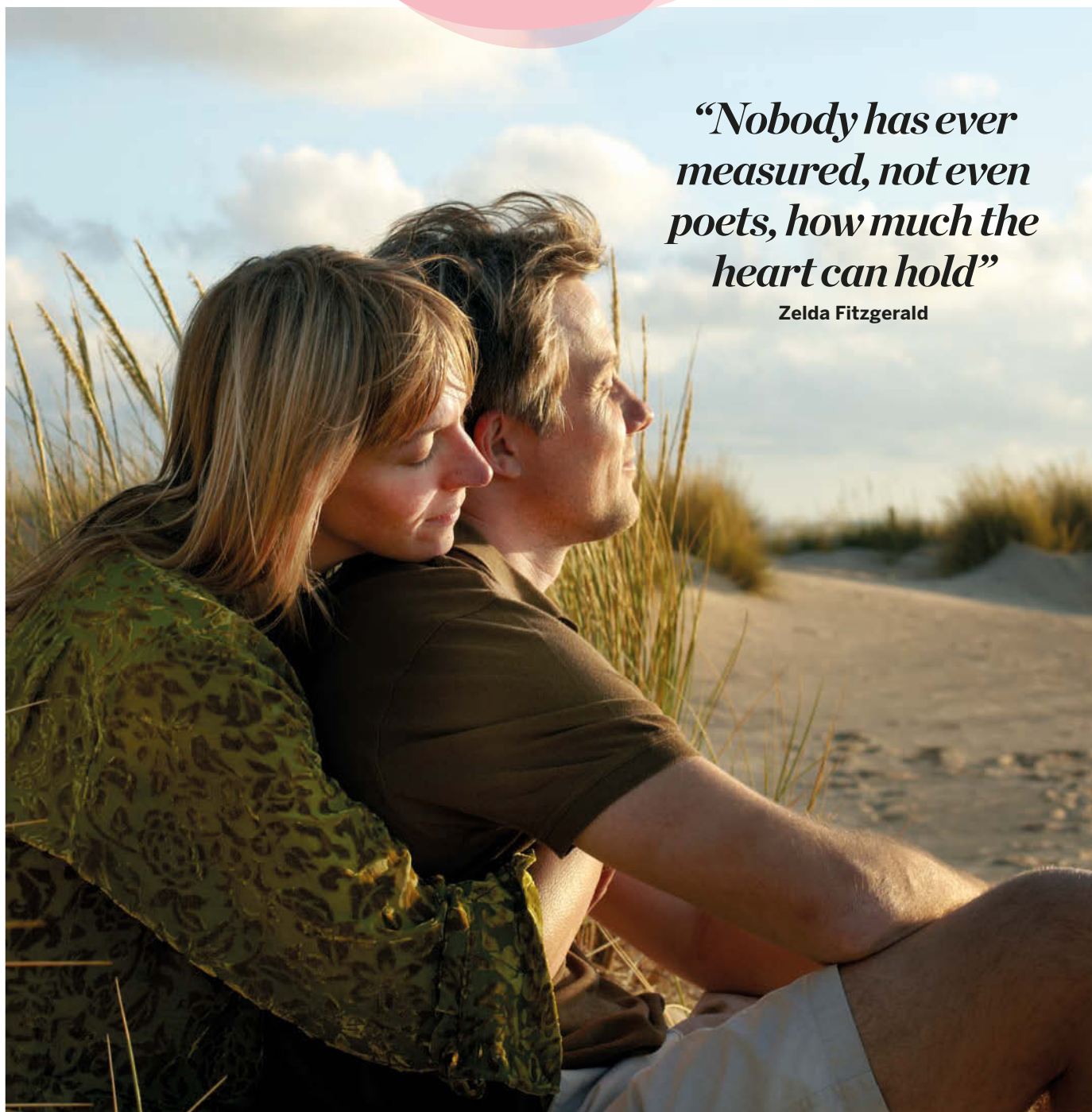
# I Heart



How to connect more meaningfully and enjoy loving relationships with our partners, children, parents and friends

***“Nobody has ever  
measured, not even  
poets, how much the  
heart can hold”***

**Zelda Fitzgerald**



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

# 8 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT *boundaries*

Refusing to accept certain behaviours is an act of self-love, but it's also perfectly possible to communicate your needs with kindness and compassion, discovers Heidi Scrimgeour

**L**ately, my Instagram feed is awash with assertive reminders that it's OK to set firm boundaries with people, or even to unapologetically walk away from anyone who disrespects those boundaries. But, in practice, it can be hard to know what it really means to set and maintain a boundary with a friend, family member or colleague. After all, do you need to verbalise a boundary, or do unspoken ones count? How do you let someone know that they've breached a boundary without sounding like a dictator? And what about when someone breezily claims they're setting a boundary but it looks more like they're justifying unkind behaviour?

'The word "boundary" almost implies putting up a protective barrier between yourself and others,' agrees women's empowerment coach Katie Phillips. 'It has a defensive energy, and I think a lot of people misuse boundaries as a way to push others away. In fact, setting a boundary is less about shutting others out and more about knowing what you need – and loving yourself enough to ask for support in receiving that.'

Recently, I found myself having to become an expert on the topic and spelling out boundaries in two different sets of close relationships. Other people's actions had disrupted my wellbeing in profound ways, and I realised I had to communicate that I was not willing to accept certain behaviours. I was surprised by how uncomfortable I felt about speaking up for myself, but also relieved at how smoothly the conversations went. My needs were acknowledged, both people were apologetic about the damage done, and we moved forward with bonds duly restored. But it's not always so straightforward. Here are eight things it helps to know about setting – and maintaining – boundaries...



## BOUNDARIES REQUIRE KNOWING WHAT IT IS YOU NEED

The first step towards setting a boundary is usually reconnecting with yourself. 'The invitation to put a boundary in place implies you know what you need and want; the boundary ring-fences the time and space for you to receive that,' says Phillips. 'But so many women are in the habit of taking care of others to the extent that they are disconnected from their own requirements. Often, just the thought of connecting with their own desires sparks guilt. "Who am I to have what I want" and "It's selfish to put myself first" are common thoughts I hear from the women I work with.'

Phillips recommends a daily practice to begin building the muscle of knowing yourself. Every morning, check in with how you feel and what it is you need from the day ahead. 'The answer could be very practical – such as hiring an accountant to help with your taxes to reduce your worry and overwhelm – or it could be a self-care practice – such as an early night or a massage to combat exhaustion,' Phillips explains. Acknowledging this can clear the path for action: 'If an early night is required, the boundary might be letting your family know that you would like their help with clearing up after dinner so that you can take a bath and get into bed earlier.'





## Expert advice



*Katie Phillips is a coach, and author of 'The Self Love Affair: A Woman's Guide To A Daring And Mighty Life' (CreateSpace, £12.95) [theschoolofself.love](http://theschoolofself.love)*



*Catrin MacDonnell is a business coach with 15 years experience. She has founded her own businesses and worked in the media, education and marketing, [catrinmacdonnell.co.uk](http://catrinmacdonnell.co.uk)*



*Somia Zaman is a psychotherapist in a private practice, working in Greater Manchester. She specialises in CBT and EMDR therapies. [cbttherapyuk.com](http://cbttherapyuk.com)*



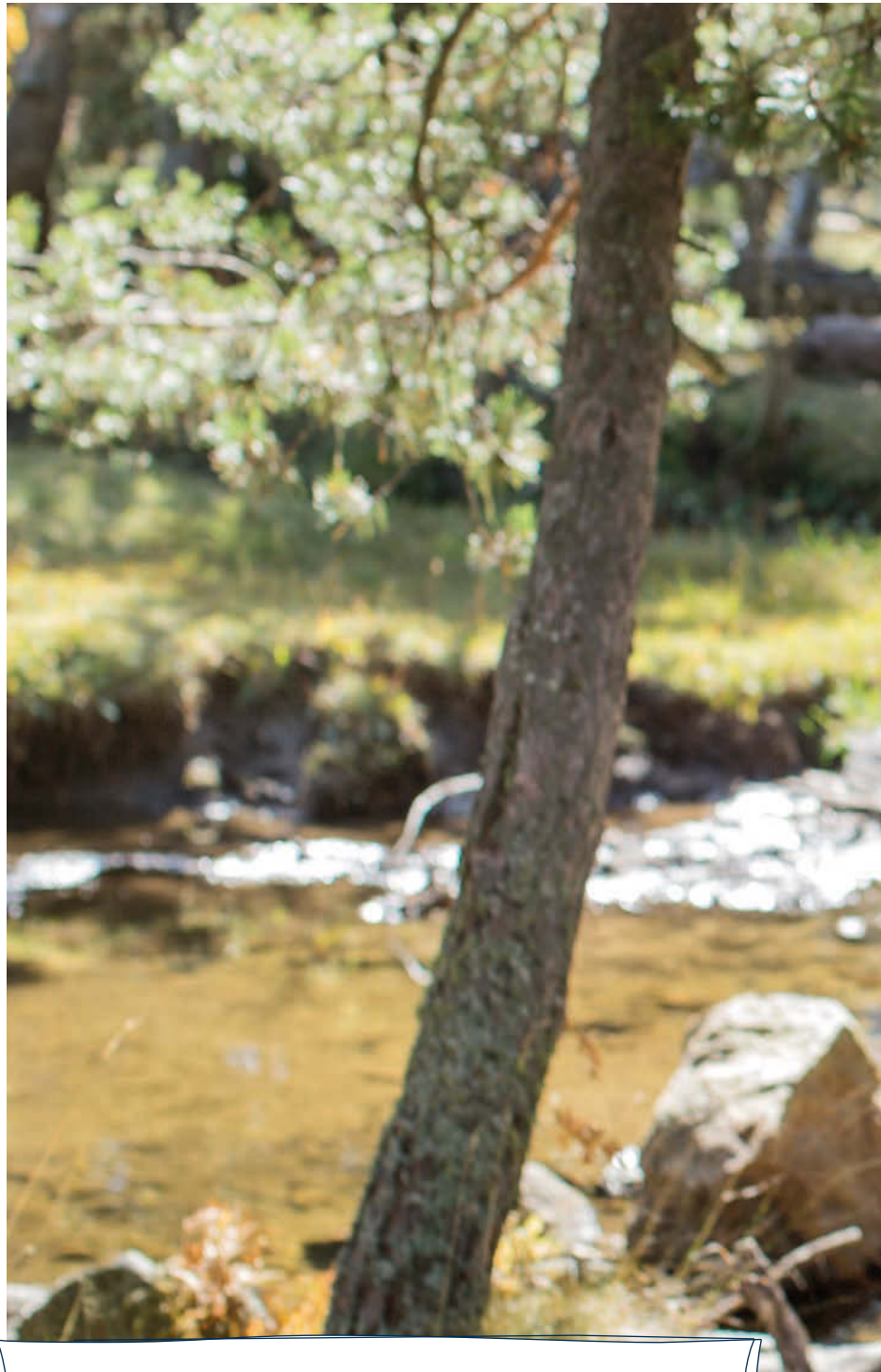


## BOUNDARIES CAN START SMALL

Business coach Catrin MacDonnell recommends starting small if you're new to setting boundaries, since making big changes isn't easy. 'Think about aspects of your work and home life where you feel "put upon" or as though others might take advantage of you,' she says. 'If there are times when people speak to you disrespectfully, or situations where you're always the one who picks up jobs no one else wants to do, work through each scenario and ask yourself what boundary you could put in place to stop it from happening.'

Perhaps you're always the one who organises birthday gifts. Ask yourself why this is and whether you could suggest that people take it in turns. 'Try suggesting alternatives in a positive and constructive way,' adds MacDonnell. 'You may think this is the least of your problems, but by asserting yourself here, you're starting the ball rolling for bigger things. Little by little, you will be putting firm boundaries in place.'

***"Work through each scenario and ask yourself what boundary you could put in place to stop it from happening"***



## BOUNDARIES ARE LOVING, NOT PUNITIVE

Another way to look at the word 'boundary' is to consider it as a 'fiercely loving' way to ring-fence what you need, according to Phillips. 'For example, a boundary could be blocking time in your diary every morning from 8–8.15am to stretch, or from 12–1pm for a walk at lunchtime, so that meetings cannot be added to that time slot. I have clients who put "Meeting with myself" in the diary to ensure me-time cannot be taken over by other people's needs.'





## 4

## SAYING NO IS INTEGRAL TO SETTING BOUNDARIES

What makes many people uncomfortable about setting boundaries is the fact that they require us to say no. But being able to say you won't do something is essential if you want to have a balanced life and avoid overwhelm, according to MacDonnell.

She recommends identifying a scenario where you could say no more often. It might be something that happens frequently, such as people constantly interrupting you to ask questions. 'Think of a phrase that

you feel comfortable saying by way of reply, such as "I have a lot on – I'd like to arrange a catch-up to work on these questions at another time",' she says. 'Then, when you have the catch-up, you can explain that you'd like people to save their questions for the agreed times. This is not always possible, of course, but when it works well, those involved will start to work out some of the answers themselves and reduce the amount of questions they have for you.'





*"Boundaries are there to protect you and allow you to live a balanced lifestyle"*



## BOUNDARIES AREN'T ABOUT SHUTTING PEOPLE OUT

It can help to think about boundaries as 'personal lines' that you draw around yourself. But they're not about excluding people or shutting them out of your life. 'Healthy boundary setting is more about paying attention to what you need, rather than issuing a blanket "no" to the needs of other people,' explains Somia Zaman, a psychotherapist specialising in EMDR and CBT. 'Boundaries are there to protect you and allow you to live a balanced lifestyle.'

They may be physical ("Don't stand so close"), emotional (the right to not always share your feelings), sexual ("I'm not comfortable with that"), intellectual (showing respect for different views) or financial (a couple having separate bank accounts). Common examples of boundaries include not answering work emails out of hours, asking housemates not to go into your room when you are not there, or telling a partner not to raise their voice at you.'







## PEOPLE NEED TO BE REMINDED OF BOUNDARIES

The key to maintaining your boundaries is to keep reminding other people of them. If you have recently set some new boundaries, it will take time and some repetition for them to stick in others' minds.

'Continuing to stick to your own boundaries is important in other people respecting them, and if you consistently enforce your own rules then others are more likely to start to respect them,' explains Zaman. 'Be very clear about what your boundaries mean specifically. Rather than saying "I need more space", try "I don't always like to hold hands when we are walking down the street".'

Of course, the nature of boundaries is such that they will more than likely be tested and even breached from time to time. When this happens, gently remind others of exactly what your boundaries are and how they have overstepped them, advises Zaman. 'Tell them how this has affected you and politely remind them that you'd like them to respect your boundaries in future.'

***"When they're tested, gently remind others of your boundaries, and how they have overstepped them"***



## BOUNDARIES REQUIRE DETERMINATION

Having healthy boundaries in place can transform your work and home life. You'll feel clearer, more in control and probably less stressed or overwhelmed. But you'll need to be assertive and determined, and willing to communicate your boundaries clearly to others – something they may need time to get used to. 'You'll also need to be pretty determined, as the role you've been playing as helper or people-pleaser is how you're likely to be known,' adds MacDonnell. 'People don't like change, generally, but if you stick with it, they'll soon get used to the new you.'



## SETTING BOUNDARIES ISN'T EASY

'When people find it difficult to set and communicate their boundaries, it's very often because they come hand in hand with

feelings of guilt or even selfishness,' says Zaman.

'You may be concerned that you might hurt someone's feelings when you set a line, or even that you may be rejected. But these difficult feelings are only coming up because you are doing something new. Once you start setting boundaries, it will get easier with time.'

Zaman recommends reflecting on the rules or boundaries that would benefit you in your life. 'Try writing down your rules and even rehearse telling them to people – or at least imagine yourself telling people about them,' she says.



# *Better together*

So many of us live in a disconnected world, stuck in our own homes and our own heads. Caroline Butterwick discovers the power of community as she gets her hands dirty exploring her adopted hometown

**M**y fingers coated in rich, wet clay, I'm trying to tease something resembling a pot from a lump of warm terracotta. After living in and around Stoke-on-Trent for 11 years, I've finally decided it's time to have a go at making pottery, so I've enrolled on a course with a local ceramic artist. It's a step that has helped me feel much more connected to the heritage of the place in which I live, celebrating Stoke as the UK city of ceramics. And on a more personal level, it's been a great chance to meet new people, as well as try something different.

'There's something really important in connecting with communities and feeling like you're part of a bigger picture,' says Nic Gratton, associate professor of community and civic engagement at Staffordshire University. She explains that it can be valuable to feel connected to a physical place, as many of us are detached from where we live, and tapping into the history and culture of our homes can be an important part of remedying this. It's not just about looking at the past, but appreciating the place as it is now – and thinking about its future. Community engagement can sometimes be a way for

us to influence this, working collectively to bring about positive change.

Psychologist Tara Quinn-Cirillo agrees, telling me how engaging with our communities through activities such as this can also help support our sense of stability and security, which are both good for our baseline mental health. With so many of us working from home during the pandemic and feeling disconnected, reaching out is particularly powerful.

## **Making a difference**

For some, being part of our community is about making a difference. 'Most





## Expert advice



Nic Gratton is associate professor of community and civic engagement at Staffordshire University



Dr Tara Quinn-Cirillo is a psychologist specialising in mental health and human behaviour. horsham psychology.com

people, when they're doing anything in their community – whether that's influenced by the arts or wellbeing or charity – find it can make them feel good, as well as help other people,' says Quinn-Cirillo. This, she explains, can lead to our brains producing mood-enhancing chemicals. Showing how she's really 'walking the walk', she tells me how she recently set up a Walk and Talk group in her community. Motivated to help people come together after such a long period of disconnection, the group has offered valuable companionship and conversation for local people. It's a great example of how a simple idea – bringing people together in nature to walk and talk – can have meaningful impact.

Having a sense of civic pride, Gratton says, is also important to our sense of self-worth, an emotion we can use to create change. 'There are lots of ways that having civic pride can have a knock-on effect in terms of communities

and how people feel about a place,' she explains. 'It's essentially far more powerful and impactful for a group of people to come together around a collective issue than it is for individuals to sit there and try to campaign or do things independently,' Gratton says.

### Finding opportunities

Thinking about why you want to get involved in your community can help you decide what to do. 'Rather than just goals, which might be something like "I want to do some volunteering", or "I want to get to know my neighbours more", it's also good for our wellbeing to know what the

value is that underpins it, because it makes us more likely to stick to that thing,' explains Quinn-Cirillo. Jotting this down can be useful. Do you want to meet new people, learn something, or make a difference? Is there an issue you're passionate about? What skills do you have, or would like to develop?

I take time to reflect on what motivates me to connect with my community: The arts are my passion, and I enjoy sharing my skills with others, as well as improving my own. I've run community writing workshops before, and realise that this is something I'd love to do again. I decide to reach out and get something organised.

Getting involved, Gratton says, doesn't have to mean joining something formal. She recommends looking on social media or searching online to find out what's happening locally. Maybe you have a friend who's involved in a project or attends a course who you could buddy up with. And, of course, old-school

***"There's something important in feeling like you're part of a bigger picture"***





methods such as looking at notice boards in local shops or a community centre are helpful, too.

### Baby steps

Many of us feel anxious or unsure about reaching out to our communities. Quinn-Cirillo suggests that we try to notice and name what we're feeling. So, if you're anxious, what is it specifically that's making you feel that way?

She stresses that getting involved doesn't have to be a big, bold move. Small actions, such as taking the time to hold the door open to someone in a shop, or asking a neighbour how their day is, can help us build that sense of belonging.

The day after speaking to Quinn-Cirillo, I take a morning walk down to my local coffee shop. I'm quite a shy person, but today, I say 'Hello' to a man walking his dog, and feel a flutter of joy when he smiles back and wishes me good morning. He even lets me stroke his friendly Labrador, which is definitely a nice way to start the day. When I reach the café and order my latte, I ask the barista how her

***“Getting involved in our communities is a means of nurturing compassion”***

day's going. For a moment, I worry it'll be awkward, but thankfully she replies. It's not a long conversation, but I feel warmth and comfort, and sense that she is happy to have had a pleasant conversation in between blending drinks.

Quinn-Cirillo talks about the 'ripple effect' of little actions like these – how people will pass on these simple friendly kindnesses. Compassion for others, she says, can boost our wellbeing, reducing levels of anxiety, increasing resilience, and helping us deal with uncertainty or overwhelm. Getting involved in our communities is a perfect way of nurturing this compassion and all the benefits that come with it.

Exploring where we live can also enhance our sense of belonging and civic pride. I put a post on my Facebook profile asking friends to recommend places to visit locally. Soon, I have a long list of locations, from peaceful lakes to hilly hikes. As I trek through the first of these, a local woodland, the sun dappled through the canopy, I feel more connected to where I live; the beauty that exists just beyond my front door.

I'm growing this appreciation. The ceramics course not only left me with new skills and friendships, and a slightly wonky but lovely looking pot that now sits on my mantelpiece, it also helped stoke my curiosity in the cultures of my Staffordshire home. I've started going to events such as the British Ceramics Biennial that's held in Stoke-on-Trent every two years. Wandering around the festival with friends, there was a strong feeling that we were celebrating where we live, realising the positives of the place. It imbued me with a warmth for my adopted hometown, and the passion to get more involved. I'm excited to keep exploring.



## FIVE WAYS TO CONNECT WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

*Volunteering is a wonderful way to make a difference. Find an opportunity that matches your values – if you're passionate about nature, is there a park that has volunteers who help maintain it?*

*Get to know your neighbours. Start by smiling and saying 'Hello' next time you see them. If you're nervous about striking up conversation, you could drop a note through their letterbox, introducing yourself.*

*Share your skills with others. Skills swaps are a way of passing on your knowledge to others in your community while gaining new skills for yourself. Visit [timebanking.org](http://timebanking.org)*

*Attend a class, workshop or talk that relates to your interests and where you live. The WEA runs lots of courses, or a local university may have expert talks that are open to the public. [wea.org.uk](http://wea.org.uk)*

*Be a tourist in your own town. Is there a museum you've kept meaning to visit, or a nature reserve that would make a lovely walk? Be curious and explore where you live.*

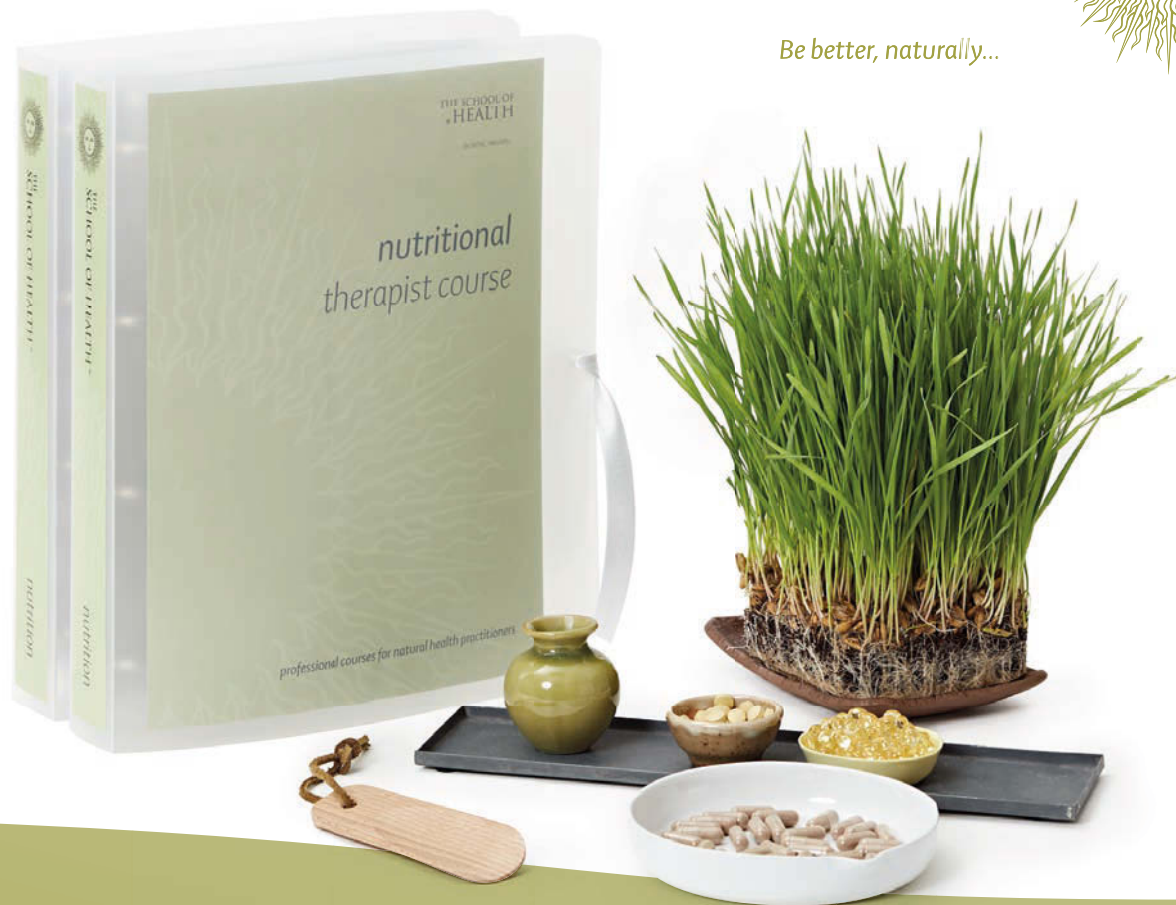
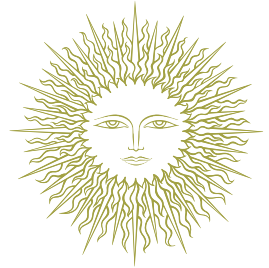


## ▶▶ NEXT STEPS

**VISIT** The Creative Lives website allows you to search for creative community arts groups from across the UK. [creative-lives.org/creativity-map](http://creative-lives.org/creativity-map)

**LISTEN** The Community Development Podcast is dedicated to sharing learning around community development practice and promoting its value. [thecommunitydevelopmentpodcast.co.uk](http://thecommunitydevelopmentpodcast.co.uk)

**DISCOVER** Find out about volunteering opportunities on the Volunteering Matters website. [volunteermatters.org.uk](http://volunteermatters.org.uk)



## Discover new inspiration, change career, work in healthcare

**Homeopathy First Aid Courses**  
**Homeopathy Taster Course**  
**Homeopathy Foundation Course**  
**Homeopathy Advanced Practitioner Course**  
**Herbal Medicine Foundation Course**  
**Yoga Foundation Course**

**Nutrition for Beginners**  
**Nutrition Advisor Course**  
**Nutritional Therapist Course**  
**Naturopathy Course\***  
**Anatomy & Physiology Courses**  
**Pathology & Disease Courses**

- Online (e-learning) or correspondence (paper & post)
- Starting when you like, work at a pace that suits you
- Courses from beginner to practitioner level
- Movie lectures, clinical events, webinars, tutorials
- Recognised & accredited courses
- No prior training required, Indepth continual assessment (no exams)
- Homeopathy courses provided with The School of Homeopathy (attendance options available).
- \* Naturopathy subjects inc: Ayurveda, Chinese Medicine, Homotoxicology, Psychosocial, Iridology, Hydrotherapy etc.

01453 765 956 or freephone 0800 0439 349  
[info@soh.uk](mailto:info@soh.uk)  
[www.schoolofhealth.uk](http://www.schoolofhealth.uk)  
[www.schoolofhomeopathy.uk](http://www.schoolofhomeopathy.uk)





# Body

Improve your physical wellbeing with gentle activity, better sleep, optimum nutrition and natural beauty

***“The less you move on the ground,  
the more the world moves around”***

**Ana Claudia Antunes**





# MINDFUL WELLNESS



Our Acting Wellness Director, Elizabeth Bennett, shares new research, strategies and wisdom on all aspects of wellbeing, from activity and nourishment to meditation and conscious beauty

## Eat well

### Brain boost

While we may not have many chances to reap the vitamin D benefits of the Mediterranean sunshine, we can still take a leaf out of its book when it comes to diet. Rich in whole grains, fruits, veg, fish and healthy fats, much has been said of the life-lengthening advantages of the Med menu.

Now, new research from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel, confirms it. The 18-month trial found that a green Med diet, high in polyphenols and low in red and processed meat, appears to slow age-related brain atrophy, a cause of cognitive decline.



*Just the tonic!*

***Founded by nutritionist Dani Clarke, The Bath Alchemist crafts small batches of apple cider vinegar tonics. Containing gut-loving fermented live bacteria culture and other natural ingredients, Clarke recommends starting the day with No.3, infused with turmeric, black peppercorns and honey. Mix with water, lemon and cinnamon for an energising and cleansing morning pick-me-up.***

The Bath Alchemist No.3 Apple Cider Vinegar Wellness Tonic, £12.95, [thebathalchemist.com](http://thebathalchemist.com)







## Roasted beetroot and lentil salad

As the seasons change, a warm salad makes an ideal working lunch or midweek dinner. This beetroot, spinach and lentil option is nutritious and filling, and with the balsamic maple dressing, supremely tasty too!

### SERVES 2

- 4 baby golden beetroot
- 100g Swiss brown mushrooms, halved
- 1 tsp cold-pressed extra-virgin coconut oil
- 200g French-style fine green lentils
- 50g baby spinach leaves
- ½ cup loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves

### For the dressing:

- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp cold-pressed extra-virgin coconut oil
- 1 tbsp pure maple syrup
- 1 tbsp coarsely chopped fresh chives

**1** Preheat the oven to 200°C, 180°C fan, gas mark 6. Trim the beetroot, leaving 5cm of the stems attached. Reserve half the trimmed beetroot leaves for the salad. Wash and drain well. Wrap the beetroot individually in aluminium foil and place in a small baking dish. Roast for about 30 minutes, or until tender.

**2** Combine the mushrooms and oil in a small bowl. Add to a baking dish

for the last 5 minutes of the beetroot's cooking time.

**3** Meanwhile, cook the lentils in a medium saucepan of boiling filtered water for about 25 minutes, or until tender. Drain.

**4** When the beetroot are cool enough to handle, peel them and cut into quarters.

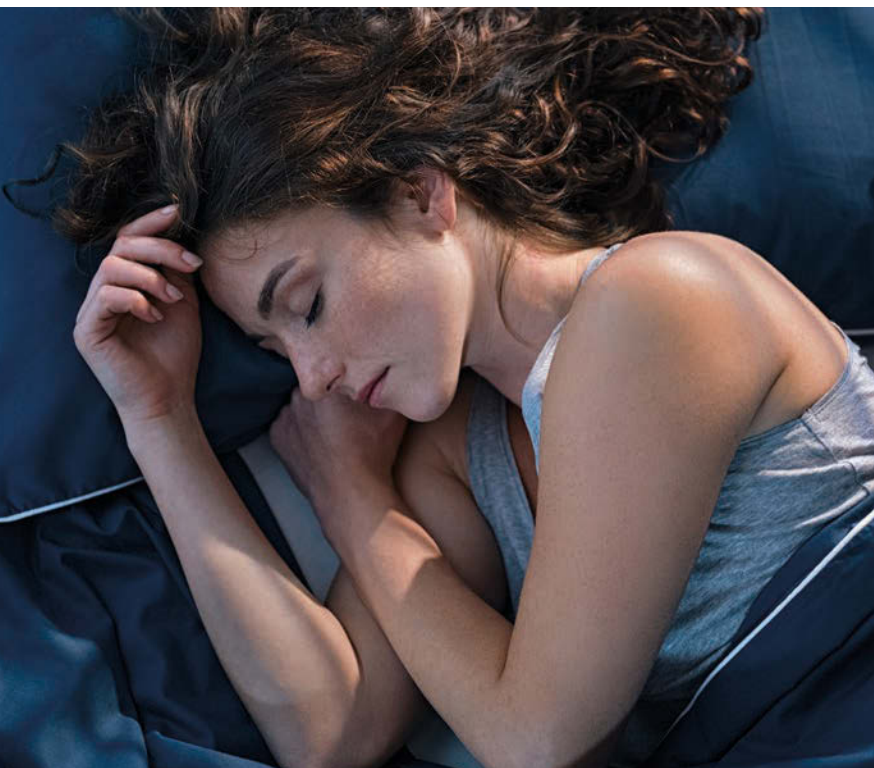
**5** To make the salad dressing, place the ingredients in a screw-top jar, season to taste and shake well.

**6** Combine the beetroot, mushrooms, lentils, reserved beetroot leaves, spinach and parsley with the dressing in a large bowl. Toss to combine.

*Extract taken from 'Nourish: The Fit Woman's Cookbook' by Lorna Jane Clarkson (£28 at [lornajane.co.uk](http://lornajane.co.uk))*



# Sleep well



## Bedtime affirmations

'Just like physical exercise, affirmations are a workout for your brain,' explains life coach and happiness evangelist Julie Leonard. 'Used consistently and properly, they can support you to overcome obstacles, such as increasing productivity and improving your confidence. And if you are struggling to get a good night's sleep, then repeating positive affirmations before bedtime can be very helpful.'

Affirmations are actually a neuroscience technique that reshapes your brain by creating and strengthening strong neural pathways of positive thinking. By developing these strong neural pathways, you begin to change your inner dialogue, too. Instead of stressing and worrying about not sleeping, you can set positive intentions about having a restorative night's rest.

Try these six affirmations for a good night's sleep – repeat them to yourself a few times before going to bed:

- I will sleep peacefully through the night.
- I am worthy of resting, relaxing and sleeping.
- I am safe, calm and peaceful.
- As I lie in bed, I let go of my worries. My to-do list can wait until tomorrow.
- I breathe in peace. I exhale all my tension.
- Everything is in order and the only thing I have to focus on is sleep.

[julieleonardcoaching.com](http://julieleonardcoaching.com)

Find out  
more about  
having a positive  
sleep mindset on  
page 100

## Soothing soak

Sometimes you try a product and immediately want to shout about it – and Moi + Me's Soothe Bath Melt is one of those. I found myself crawling into bed after using it, feeling so relaxed I fell asleep as my head hit the pillow! This is down to the winning combination of lavender, primrose oil and, all-importantly, 100mg of CBD, the active compound found in the cannabis sativa plant, known to impart a feeling of calm.

**Moi + Me Soothe Bath Melt, £10, [moiandme.com](http://moiandme.com)**



## Healing herbs

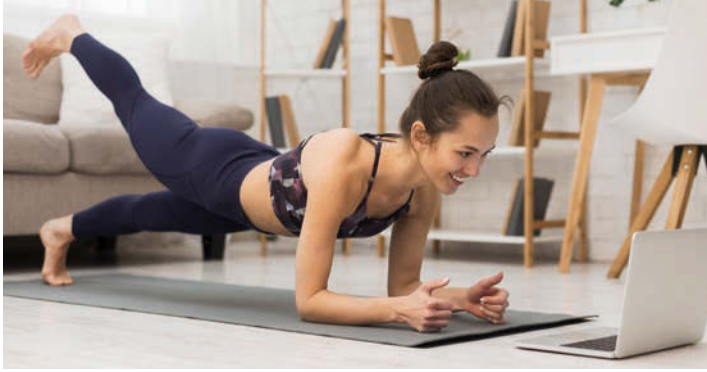
Pukka harvests the finest herbs to create products that bolster wellbeing and don't harm the planet. And now, following the success of its Night Time tea, it's launched a new Night Time supplement. The daily nighttime capsule includes valerian, known as nature's valium, and Ashwagandha, a stress-busting evergreen shrub.

**Pukka Night Time Capsules, £19.99 for 60, [pukkaherbs.com](http://pukkaherbs.com)**





# Move well



## 3 online workout platforms to try

**The pandemic introduced us to the wealth of online workouts available and, for many, the time and money saved means they'll never go back to the real-life gym. Here's our round-up of ones worth trying:**

**1 P.Volve** The ultimate antidote to a day spent hunched over a desk, P.Volve's workout classes are always low-impact and based on functional movement. Ideal for managing everyday pain and building total-body strength. [pvolve.com](https://pvolve.com)

**2 Ponzu** Ponzu solely offers live and interactive real-time classes. Specialising in offering the personal touch, it provides one-to-one personalised training plans and workouts. You choose what works for you, from yoga and dance to strength and cardio. [ponzu.fit](https://ponzu.fit)

**3 Freeletics** Based on AI and data from sports scientists, Freeletics creates personalised training plans and adapts workouts to your specific needs and goals. [freeletics.com](https://freeletics.com)

## PROVEN! STAYING ACTIVE PROTECTS YOUR BRAIN

*A new UC San Francisco study has found that when elderly people stay active, their brains work better. The research shows that regular exercise increases proteins in the brain that enhance the connections between neurons that maintain healthy cognition.*

## 3 Pilates moves for: Core strength

**Pilates exercises will help you gently work and build the core, while creating calm through controlled breath. Here, Pilates instructor Samantha O'Brien shares her three favourites...**

**1 Leg hovers**  
Come to an all-fours position, stacking shoulders over elbows and lining up the knees beneath the hips. Take an inhale and, on the exhale, engage the core and lift the knees 5cm off the mat. On the inhale, lower the knees and tap the mat, lifting the knees on the next exhale. Repeat 5-8 times.

**2 Plank**  
Begin on the forearms and knees. Take an inhale to prepare and on the exhale, lengthen one leg, pressing the heel away from the body. When you're ready, lengthen the other leg. Ensure there is a straight line running from the shoulders through the hips to the heels. Hold for 10-20 seconds.

**3 Abdominal crunch**  
Lie on your back with knees bent. Lift the fingertips towards the ceiling, stacking elbows over shoulders. Keep a neutral spine. Take an inhale and on the exhale begin to press the tail bone into the mat, nodding the chin towards the chest and lifting the head, neck and shoulders off the mat. Crunch through the abdominals. At the same time the arms move down by the side of the ribcage, parallel to the mat. On the inhale, gently press the spine into the mat coming back into your starting position.



# Look well, naturally

## WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH... CBD BEAUTY?

Big buzzwords in wellness tend to find themselves stepping over to skincare. Case in point: CBD. Found in the marijuana and hemp plants, CBD is a non psycho-tropic active that won't get you high. As well as helping with stress and anxiety, sleep and even muscle aches, CBD is a worthy skincare ingredient. This is due to its anti-inflammatory properties and antioxidant-rich complex. CBD beauty oil (much like the one you can ingest) is included in topical skincare products such as serums and moisturisers, and can help with skin conditions including acne and eczema, as well as skin concerns such as dryness or hormonal breakouts.

**Left: BYBI Balance Booster, £12, [bybi.com](http://bybi.com)**

**Right: Kloris CBD Superboost Face Oil, £30, [kloriscbd.com](http://kloriscbd.com)**



## NEW BRAND ALERT

### Naturopathica

With a loyal legion of stateside fans, skincare brand Naturopathica's fusion of herbalism, holistic wellness and cutting-edge science is now available in the UK. Take the winter skin hero Calendula Essential Hydrating Cream (£60), a deeply moisturising balm that contains anti-inflammatory calendula extract and conditioning borage seed oil. Or, for a treatment that's packed with plant power, try the Manuka Honey Hydrating Gel Mask (£19).

**[uk.naturopathica.com](http://uk.naturopathica.com)**



## Hats off!

*Frizzy hat hair is right up there with the worst of all winter beauty woes. So thank goodness for Only Curls – the beauty brand, dedicated to those with wavy manes, has launched a range of cosy winter hats that won't mess up your hair. Each of the knitted beanies comes with a smooth satin lining to help protect curls, reduce tangling and calm frizz.*

**Satin Lined Beanie Hat, £22, [onlycurls.com](http://onlycurls.com)**



# Meditation + mindfulness

## You know best

We all have days when we're not at our best. Maybe you got out of the wrong side of the bed – or maybe you couldn't face getting out of it at all. New research suggests the best way to feel better is to lean into skills that you know you'll succeed at. The study, from Ohio State University, found that people who were in a sad mood improved more quickly when they used a mood-improving method that they were told was their strongest skill, as opposed to those who used a skill that they were told was a relative weakness.

## Candles with intention

*Created by Semra Haksever – who calls herself an eclectic witch, intuitive, healer and empath – Mama Moon is a candle brand with a difference. Each candle comes with an intention – from focus and healing to courage – and Semra encourages you to create a ritual around burning it, to call in what you need at that moment.*

Candles, £38,  
[mamamooncandles.com](http://mamamooncandles.com)



## BOOK CLUB

### ***Mindful Walking: The Secret Language Of Nature* by Alice Peck**

This fascinating read takes a look at the physical and mental health benefits of walking, alongside a deep dive into an array of adjacent topics, such as forest bathing, foraging and pilgrimages. Peppered with practical tips and guided exercises, it's full of inspiration to get you outdoors and to get those legs moving.

*'Mindful Walking: The Secret Nature Of Walking' by Alice Peck (CICO Books, £7.99)*



A woman is seen from behind, her arms raised, holding long, flowing red fabric that billows out around her. She is standing on a grassy field. The background is a vibrant sunset sky with a gradient from orange at the horizon to blue at the top. The sky is overlaid with large, ethereal watercolor-style clouds in shades of purple, pink, and blue. The overall mood is spiritual and uplifting.

# *Dance with me*

Dancing, 'the hidden language of the soul', is uplifting and health-giving, but can you engage with spiritual forces to heal psychological pain?

Lilian Kannemeyer, a Chakradance virgin, discovers...



**W**ide-legged, rooted on the edge of a cliff in billowing robes, a wise woman stands with her arms outstretched to full aching capacity, as she fearlessly challenges an unknown future, represented by the night sky, stars, moon, infinity... She howls savagely with pent-up rage at the injustice that she has witnessed. Her tribespeople chant with heartrending melancholy, purest joy and empowering furious energy, while booming drums vibrate through her heart, essence and bones. She is me, transported to another existence, perhaps prehistoric, another life and embodiment, or maybe it's a dream...

I am actually standing on a yoga mat in threadbare leggings and a T-shirt. The resonant music is all-consuming, deep, tribal and emotive, and I have danced myself into a sweaty frenzy with my eyes closed, except for moments that I am peeking at the other dancers, who inspire me to lose myself and give it unadulterated welly, because no one seems to give a fig about appearances here. The stars are soft electric lightbulbs, punctuating the blackness of the hall, and the moon is a dangling glitter ball. I catch a glimpse of my gyrating self in a mirror, arms akimbo, but turn away because I don't want misplaced embarrassment to intrude on my inner journey. I need to be alone with my raw and neglected self.

Jan Coulson, a flower essence therapist and Chakradance facilitator, surreptitiously squirts a halo of blue iris to balance the energies in my throat chakra, a pleasant mist that lands coolly on my skin as I roar into the room, as do others – the emotions are nakedly real. Coulson's daughter and fellow facilitator, Leanne Bracey, is a clinical aromatherapist and holistic therapist with a reassuring voice and unmistakable cool. Passionate about music and DJing, she guides the group through the powerful movement therapy and accompanying meditations and visualisations of the dances. Mother and daughter dance with us, creating and then holding our pulsating haven and encouraging us towards physical and emotional liberation.

Now, I'm not one to get down and boogie, and the reported joy of lockdown Kitchen Discos passed me by entirely. I have not danced with any enthusiasm since the



***“I am inspired  
to lose myself  
and give it  
unadulterated  
welly, because  
no one seems to  
give a fig about  
appearances here”***

wee hours of a house party I would rather forget, a decade ago, and stilted ballet classes as a girl were the last time I moved to music with any intention. My inhibited nature does not allow me to express myself through dance, although I love music and have always found release through it. (When I weep at films, it's usually because the soundtrack, as well as the story, has touched my soul.) I embrace it all – from the searing poignancy of opera to the edginess of funk – while firmly stationary. But Chakradance dispels my self-consciousness as it brings *greater* consciousness, and now I am dancing like there is no tomorrow.

During the course of the three-hour workshop, we move through the seven chakras: base, sacral, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye, and crown. We take time on each chakra, dancing as frenetically or languidly as we choose, feeling into each one deeply through movement and freely expressed rhythm – or not. Occasionally, I settle into child's pose for a break as I run out of puff and before the beat calls me again. It is demanding going full throttle for the whole session, and we rest at junctures to create art and journal around the release we might have experienced in each chakra. It is during this exercise, after focusing on the throat chakra, that I sketch my ferociously vocal sage on the cliffside in crayon. I have a vivid image of her and I can feel her rage at being muzzled. Bracey warns that such visions might arise and my mind opens when I see that this is indeed the case.

As we concentrate on the sacral chakra, I hip-sway into my feminine energy, a sensual, oscillating movement, and I embrace the sensuality that retreats with my untended fertile goddess amid the banality of everyday life. I can't help but smile as I wonder if the lone man in the room is embracing his feminine power, but I understand more fully as the solar plexus dance unleashes my masculine energy and the indomitable warrior inside. We are not gender, we are beings.

The aim of Chakradance is to free energetic blockages in the system that can bring obstructions in your life, physical and emotional. Everything we block can cause an imbalance in the system, says Bracey, and physical pain can be a sign of a feeling being held.

“Chakradance is a way to de-stress



and rebalance your inner energies,' she adds. 'And anyone can do it.' She explains that the practice has helped people free themselves from addiction and heal relationships that are hampered by forgiveness or intimacy issues. It helps indecisive and meek people find the bravery and strength to leave toxic situations, and it can alleviate depression and anxiety. I am to prepare for energetic shifts, meaningful insights and moments of pure freedom. The physical liberation as a starter is real and immediate.

The word chakra means 'wheel' in Sanskrit, and in yoga, acupuncture, meditation and Ayurvedic medicine the chakras are identified as areas of the body through which energy flows along the spine. The psychiatrist Carl Jung, who founded analytical psychology, examined the symbolism of the chakra system and compared it with the stages of psychological and spiritual development in his work. The practice of Chakradance has been well received by seminars all over the world, including at the former Chopra Center in California. Deepak Chopra, of course, is a medical doctor and pioneer in integrated medicine and personal transformation. And transformation is the name of the game.

Bracey explains that transformation can take place even in one session. 'Little shifts can happen throughout the practice but the more you do it the deeper you go,' she says. The theory is that when you do the inner work there is a reconnection with the outer world and you may find that change appears. Chakradance, she tells me, brings energetic health, and we can attract new and diverse people, opportunities and chance encounters, as well as see a beautiful synchronicity that we may have missed before.

Unbeknown to me, Kerry Hales, a transformational life coach and author, is dancing opposite me. We have never met before and she is also a first-timer. I feel drawn to her warmth and remember Bracey's 'chance encounters' comment as we decide to share our thoughts about our session on a video call later.

'I didn't know what to expect,' says Hales, 'but I loved it! I am the girl who dances in her kitchen to music so loud my boys ask if I can turn it down. It was so cathartic. The only disappointment was

*"The anger  
that has dogged  
my spirit is  
no longer an  
unfairly  
silenced  
creature  
hell-bent on  
shrieking from  
a mountain top"*

my lack of ability to dance for three hours straight – gone are the days!' she laughs.

'It very much reminded me of the trance-like dancing of my yesteryears and dancing until the early hours. I also enjoyed letting go of the illusion of what I might look like... The only person I was there to serve was myself. It has been a long time since I felt so free in my body. I am bringing my old dance buddy with me next time!' Hales intends to recommend Chakradance to clients who feel stuck in their lives and seek change, as a wonderful source of transformation.

I feel elated after the session and the first thing I do when I get home is perform a dance to show the curious family what I have been doing. As wholly practical and science-driven souls, they chuckle at my passion for the spiritual and my quest for creative expression, but we share music we think lends itself to releasing energies from our chakras. In the evening, my tired body needs rest and I feel quiet – not withdrawn, but pensive. The anger that has dogged my spirit is no longer an unfairly silenced creature hell-bent on shrieking from a mountain top. It has been expressed through movement, rousing sound and visual art, and the punishing intensity of the emotion has subsided. I believe they call it healing.

Bracey advises us to take it easy for a few days, if possible, focus on self-care, and notice any fluctuations that occur emotionally. 'When we do healing work and deal with our issues and wounding, we become the person we are meant to be, live the life we love and the one we are meant to live – which is with passion, purpose and authenticity,' she says. 'And as we begin to heal, it trickles out to those around us.'

A few days later I am watching the TV programme *Vikings*, the theme tune of which, *If I Had A Heart* by Fever Ray, has always stirred something primal in me, right there in the pulsing centre of my chest as I sit docile, curled in on myself on the sofa. But I, I am the mother, the maiden, the queen, the huntress, the sage, the mystic and the lover, and I will not be subdued. I stand up, my blanket falls to my feet and I begin to dance...

*Leanne Bracey and Jan Coulson operate as The Alchemists in Herne Bay, Kent. For upcoming classes and retreats, follow them @thealchemisthb; kerryhales.com*



## NEXT STEPS

**LISTEN** *The 7 Keys to Freedom* is a 35-minute audio of seven downloadable tracks to take you on a dance journey through your chakras. The music is ancestral, sensual, pulsing and exhilarating, then ethereal, trance and spiritual, with voice-over guidance from the creator of Chakradance, Natalie Southgate. [chakradance.com](http://chakradance.com)

**READ** *Chakradance: Move Your Chakras, Change Your Life* by Natalie Southgate (Hay House, £12.99) is an experiential guide to learning more about your chakras and how to work with them to retune and rebalance yourself. It includes links to Chakradance music and guided meditation audio tracks.







# Taste of the season

Herald the start of spring with these fuss-free dishes, packed full of nature's freshest flavours, from Kate Humble's new book, *Home Cooked*

## Labneh with Radishes, Mint, Flatbreads & Za'atar

I delight in food that is designed to be eaten with your fingers, or scooped up with bread or rice, and mezze – the small dishes associated with Middle Eastern cuisine (which I love) – is just that sort of food. This breakfast is a homage to Mohammed and Marguerite, the wonderfully kind and hospitable friends of a friend, with whom we stayed when travelling in Jordan. Our days with them always started with a breakfast like this, usually outside, accompanied by small, thick glasses of mint tea.

You can recreate this breakfast by assembling various elements that you

can buy ready-made. Labneh is just thick Greek yoghurt that has been drained of all its liquid over 24 hours or so until it becomes like a cream or curd cheese. Regular cream cheese or quark will be a perfect substitute, drizzled with olive oil and sprinkled with za'atar, which is readily available in the spice aisles of supermarkets. Add pitta bread, radishes, mint – or cucumber, tomatoes, parsley – or all of those things. Walnut halves are a nice addition on the side. Turn it into lunch by adding a bowl of hummus, too. And olives (if you are really that way inclined). But if you're in the mood, and you want to make all or some of these elements yourself, here's how:

### Labneh

- 500g thick Greek yoghurt
- 1 tsp salt

Serves 4

*A quick note: Labneh will keep in your fridge for two weeks if you form it into balls and store in an airtight jar covered with extra-virgin olive oil. So choose the amount of yoghurt to start with depending on what you want to do with it.*

**I** Put the yoghurt in a bowl. Add the salt and stir. Spoon the salted yoghurt into a muslin-lined sieve, or a muslin bag, and suspend over a bowl in your fridge for 24–48 hours. That's all you have to do. Store as suggested, or put in a bowl, drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with za'atar.





## Za'atar

- 1 tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 2 tbsp sesame seeds
- 2 tbsp dried oregano or thyme (or a mixture)
- 2 tbsp sumac
- ½ tsp sea salt flakes
- ½ tsp chilli flakes (if you like a bit of kick – but entirely optional)

Makes 1 small jar

**1** Dry-roast the cumin and coriander seeds in a small saucepan until they start to become fragrant. Tip them into a pestle and mortar and grind them to a powder. Dry-roast the sesame seeds in the same pan until they just start to colour. Mix the ground cumin, coriander and the toasted sesame seeds with all the other ingredients and, once cool, store in an airtight jar for up to a month.

## Flatbreads

- 250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling and greasing
- 150ml water
- sea salt flakes and pepper

Makes 4

**1** Preheat your oven to 200°C, 180°C fan, gas mark 6. Sift the flour into a bowl, add the salt and mix in well, then add the oil. Pour two-thirds of the water into the flour, mixing all the time. Continue to add water until you have a dough that holds together and doesn't stick to the sides of the bowl. It shouldn't be sloppy or wet.

**2** Sprinkle a board or your worktop with flour and tip out the dough. Roughly knead it for a couple of minutes until the dough becomes stretchy and elastic. You can either divide it into 4 portions and roll each out until about 3mm thick, or roll out the whole lot and cook it whole (to share, ripping off bits as you need them). Or you could cut the dough into strips, or whatever shape you like.

**3** Drizzle the dough with a bit of olive oil, scatter with sea salt flakes, a grind of pepper or any seasoning you like (chilli flakes, dried herbs...) and put on a lightly oiled baking tray. Cook for 5–7 minutes until just starting to turn pale golden brown.







## Mr Brock & His Ice Creams



Mr Brock – AKA Freddie – lives in a house on the opposite side of the River Wye

from me. He is a connoisseur of ice cream and how to make it, which, given that he is 12 years old, is no small achievement. I spent a very happy afternoon in his kitchen getting a master class in ice-cream making and came away with some of his favourite seasonal recipes, like this one, which he has given me permission to share. His ethos is to make ice cream with as local ingredients as possible. He uses milk and cream from the local dairy farm down the road and seasonal flavours that can be picked or scrumped from his garden or those of his neighbours. Apart from chocolate. This comes from the village shop.

A couple of things to note before you start. Freddie advocates that you make your ice-cream base on one day, chill it overnight and then churn it the next – so you might want to plan ahead (the base of all Mr Brock's ice creams is the custard, described right). The recipe requires an ice-cream maker and a thermometer. If you don't keep the bowl of your ice-cream maker in the freezer all the time, make sure you don't forget to put it in well before you plan to make your ice cream.



## Rhubarb, Honey & Ginger Ice Cream

### FOR THE CUSTARD BASE

- 6 egg yolks (save the whites to make meringues)
- 200g caster sugar
- 3 tbsp skimmed milk powder
- 1l whole milk
- 150ml double cream

Serves 8–10

1 Whisk the egg yolks, sugar and skimmed milk powder in a bowl until smooth and pale. Put the milk and the cream in a pan and heat until bubbles form at the side but it doesn't actually boil.

2 Take the pan off the heat and pour it into the egg mixture. Have your pot-washer thoroughly clean the pan while you stir. Then pour the mixture back into the pan and warm over a gentle heat until it reaches 75°C. Take it off the heat and let it cool. In the meantime, make your rhubarb purée.

### FOR THE RHUBARB PURÉE

- 1.2kg rhubarb
- 2 thumb-sized pieces of ginger, peeled and grated
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 8 tbsp honey
- juice of ½ orange
- ginger wine (optional)

3 Preheat the oven to 200°C, 180°C fan, gas mark 6. Trim the rhubarb and cut into chunks. Put it in a roasting tin with all the other ingredients (except the ginger wine, if using) and cook for 40 minutes, until the rhubarb is soft. Let it cool and then blend to a smooth, thick purée. Freddie uses a Nutribullet for this and it does make amazingly smooth purées (and is easy to wash up, which is a bonus if you are Freddie's pot-washer).

4 If you like ginger wine and happen to have a bottle, stir a glug into your custard base once it is cool, then add the rhubarb purée and transfer it all to the fridge overnight, or at least for a few hours. This, Freddie tells me, is to allow the flavours to properly develop and for the custard to continue to thicken. The next day, pour your lovely, rhubarby, gingery custard into the bowl of your ice-cream maker and churn until it has become softly frozen. Scoop out with a spatula into a tub and store in the freezer.



You will have to wait until late spring to make this. Elderflowers bloom from late May until mid-June and their delicate and distinct flavour is synonymous with long, lazy days, lying on sun-warmed grass, listening to the hum of bees. The cordial is made with the

flowerheads, which are best picked on a warm, sunny day when the buds are freshly opened. Give them a little shake to remove any insects and a brief dunk in cool, clean water, then drain on a clean tea towel before using.

Use white or pink elderflowers, or a mixture of both. If you want pink cordial, use pink flowers! The flowers infuse in their liquid overnight, but the cordial will be ready to drink immediately.

## Elderflower Cordial

- 1.5kg sugar
- 2l water
- 2 large oranges
- 3 lemons
- 60g citric acid
- 20–25 heads of elderflower

Makes about 3l

1 Put the sugar and water into a large pan. Bring to the boil, stirring until all the sugar has dissolved. Remove from the heat.

2 Slice the oranges and lemons and place in a large plastic bucket or stainless-steel bowl along with the citric acid. Add the elderflower heads, pour the warm sugar syrup over and stir well. Cover with a lid

or tea towel and leave somewhere cool overnight.

3 Strain the syrup through muslin to remove all the bits, then pour into sterilised bottles. Store somewhere cool, and in the fridge once opened. The citric acid will help it keep for 3–4 months in the fridge. Or it can be frozen in plastic containers. You can also freeze the flowerheads and add them to the hot syrup straight from the freezer.



**'Home Cooked: Recipes From The Farm' by Kate Humble is published by Gaia (£25). Photography by Andrew Montgomery**

# *Stop sabotaging your sleep!*

It's easy to let negative thoughts turn one bad night into a problem. To mark World Sleep Day on 18 March, our expert shares her secrets for reframing worries around sleep, so you can get back to enjoying peaceful slumber

**S**leep... it's such a simple, natural process. Much like eating and breathing, it seems innate and should be so easy to achieve. But, despite this, many of us struggle with it. Whether it's not being able to drift

off, or being unable to stay asleep for the whole night, our sleep habits can have a profound impact on our mental wellbeing and trigger negative thoughts, which can be hard to ignore.

These negative thoughts can have an even bigger impact on our health than the sleep issues themselves, and then, guess what? That causes even more

problems when it comes to setting sail for the land of nod.

We've enlisted the help of sleep expert Stephanie Romiszewski to talk us through some of the most common negative thoughts around sleep, and to show us how, by simply switching up our mindset, we can achieve great things for our health and our sleep.

*Expert  
advice*



*Stephanie Romiszewski is an expert sleep physiologist and the director of the Sleepyhead Clinic and Program.  
@stephsleepyhead;  
sleepyhead  
program.com*





**Negative thought:** 'I won't be able to get to sleep until the early hours'

**Reframe it:** 'I'm going to stay up and enjoy my evening until I feel sleepy enough to drop off'

'The reality is you won't always be able to get to sleep at the time you expect to,' says Romiszewski. 'This isn't something to worry about; it simply means you don't have a strong drive to sleep at this time. The best way to physically solve your sleep problem is to build a strong, consistent sleep drive, which is done by spending more time awake during the day and avoiding naps and lie-ins.'

'One of the best ways to help alleviate this particular negative thought around sleep is to give yourself permission to go to bed later, and change your mindset to: "I'm going to stay up and enjoy my evening until I feel sleepy enough to drop off". There's no point going to bed too early and lying anxiously in a dark room. The more time you spend awake, the more chance you will have of falling asleep when you do go to bed.'



**Negative thought:** 'I'm bound to wake in the night, then I won't be able to get back to sleep'

**Reframe it:** 'If I wake in the night and can't get back to sleep, I'm going to embrace having some time to myself'

'This is a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy,' says Romiszewski. 'When you wake in the night – perhaps for a drink or to go to the loo – if you're already preempting that you won't be able to get back to sleep, your heart rate will increase and your temperature will rise, meaning you're physiologically not in the right place for sleep. Instead, say to yourself: "If I wake in the night and can't get back to sleep, I'm going to embrace having some time to myself". This might be reading a book or catching up on that TV series you started.'

'Don't be afraid of losing sleep. We call this "sleep debt" – your body will use this "debt" to help you build a strong sleep drive and eventually work into a solid pattern of good quality sleep. This simple mindset shift can set you on the sleepy straight and narrow.'





**Negative thought:** 'If I don't get eight hours of sleep I'm going to be no use to anyone tomorrow'

**Reframe it:** 'I'm going to give my body eight hours of comfort and rest. If it wants to use that time to sleep, it will do'

'Sleep and how much we need will vary from person to person, and no matter how much you need, it's not always possible to get it,' says Romiszewski. 'It's important to let go of the idea of clean sleeping and realise we can't force our bodies to sleep. Thinking this way only causes anxiety and stress.'

'The amount and quality of your sleep depends on so many variables throughout the day, such as what you eat and drink and how active you are. As long as you give yourself the opportunity to go to sleep for the time you desire, your body will take what it needs from that time.'

'Having periods of not sleeping well is normal, and not something that you need to worry about; you just need the ratio between the good and the bad nights to be in your favour. Learning to accept this and alter your thought process so you're not as obsessed with time and statistics is the best way to get your desired sleep quota.'



**Negative thought:** 'I need to get to sleep; I have such a busy day ahead of me'

**Reframe it:** 'I'm going to do my morning yoga, have a delicious breakfast and face the day as I would any other, regardless of how much sleep I get'

'This negative thought is born out of the idea that one bad night's sleep will cause all these terrible things to happen,' says Romiszewski. 'It is true that sleep deprivation – which is different to our bodies choosing not to sleep – can impact our cognitive ability. However, I see thousands of insomnia patients in my clinic every year who hold down jobs and live an otherwise healthy life. Their sleep problems, although frustrating, do not ruin every aspect of their lives. This often comes down to mindset; you can decide how you go into a day. Even after a bad night's sleep, you can still choose to do some yoga, eat a healthy breakfast, put on your best outfit and walk down the street with your shoulders back and your head up. One or two poor nights are very unlikely to affect you, but the worry and anxiety around it may do. This will also keep you up longer when trying to sleep, so it's vital you switch those negative thoughts around.'



**Clipper Snore & Peace, £2.49, shop. clipper-teas.com**  
*Chamomile and lavender plus zesty, refreshing lemon balm.*

**Teapigs Snooze, £3.99, teapigs.co.uk**  
*Apple provides a soothing note alongside chamomile and lavender.*

**Dragonfly Tea Night Sky Calm, £2.49, dragonflytea.com**  
*More chamomile, lemon balm and lavender, with additional valerian.*





**Negative thought:** ‘My lack of sleep is going to cause health problems’

**Reframe it:** ‘My anxiety around sleep is more likely to cause health problems; best to relax’

‘Remember, being unable to get to or stay asleep is different to actively restricting your sleep and not giving your body the opportunity to sleep if it wants it. The reality is, poor sleep is probably not going to pose a serious health problem – not in the short term. It’s often our worries and fears that cause us the most harm, not the physical act of not getting sleep.’

*“It’s often our worries and fears that cause us the most harm, not the physical act of not getting enough sleep”*



**Negative thought:** ‘There’s clearly something wrong with me – I must be the only person who can’t sleep’

**Reframe it:** ‘I’m perfectly normal – I just need to find the right solution to my sleep situation’

‘This is a really normal worry and one which I hear often,’ says Romiszewski. ‘As humans, we’re very proactive creatures and we start looking at how we can overcome an issue. Logic tells us to spend more time in bed, whether that’s having a lie-in or taking time to nap during the day in order to try catch up on our missed sleep. We might even visit our GP or go online to look for solutions and consider taking medication. However, it’s important to recognise that there’s a habitual nature underneath it all and it can’t simply be solved with tablets. It’s not that there’s something wrong with you, it’s often that you’ve been given the wrong advice or techniques to deal with your situation.’

‘Different things work for different people, but one way to help tackle sleep issues, including insomnia, is to undergo cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for insomnia, which is very different to CBT for anxiety and should always be delivered by a sleep professional.’

## Products to give you a positive attitude about hitting the hay

**While reframing negative thoughts and addressing them head-on might be the best way to approach your sleep issues, there are also a number of products on the market designed to help you on your journey to better sleep. Here are some of our favourites...**

### **Bose Sleepbuds II, £229.95, [bose.co.uk](https://www.bose.co.uk)**

These earphones aren’t all singing or dancing – they aren’t active noise cancelling headphones and they don’t stream music or let you take and make calls. Instead, the tiny, ultra-comfortable buds block noises from loud partners, neighbours, dogs and traffic — and reduce the mental distractions that stop you from sleeping.



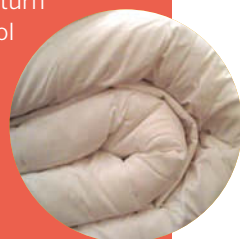
### **Instant Air Purifier, £99.99, [instantbrands.co.uk](https://www.instantbrands.co.uk)**

Two thirds of us believe that the quality of air in the bedroom can help us sleep better. So, when it’s too nippy to throw the windows open and sleep al fresco, we like the Instant Air Purifier, which can capture 99.97 per cent of dust, dander, pollen and other allergens, plus 99.9 per cent of bacteria, viruses and mould. It also has a night mode, which detects room lighting and automatically dims the display and reduces noise to help you sleep easy.



### **Southdown Duvet, from £145, [southdownduvets.com](https://www.southdownduvets.com)**

Finding the right temperature in bed can be tough at this time of year. If you frequently go to bed cold, then wake up in a sweat and struggle to return to sleep, it might be time to consider a wool duvet. Wool creates a microclimate around you, helping you stay at the right temperature, and if you do break a sweat, it draws moisture away from you. We especially love Southdown duvets, which are made from 100 per cent Southdown wool, grown in Devon.



# 4 ways to avoid the heating price hike

With the price of heating and electricity soaring, you can feel snug *and* smug with these smart solutions

There's no avoiding what's happening to our heating and electricity bills, and with the general cost of living on the rise too, it's time to think of savvy ways to help ease the effects. But who knew sheep could hold the key to keeping household costs down?

**1 Jump to it!** Do you remember your Nan saying that, in her day, when you were cold you simply pulled on another jumper? She was right! That's because she was probably wearing pure wool. Today, most jumpers are made from synthetic fabrics – and therein lies the difference. Wool is warm, and while synthetics might feel snuggly soft, they just don't insulate in the same way as wool. To protect yourself from rising heating prices, invest in some decent knitwear.

**2 All about the base** It wasn't all good in your Nan's day, however – for one thing, they didn't have genius inventions such as the base layer. Today, one of the best ways to keep warm without feeling like an overly stuffed sausage is to have a paper-thin layer against your skin. There's nothing better than Merino wool for this. It might feel a little scratchy to start with, but give it a wash according to the supplier's instructions and it will soon soften up. The combination of a Merino base and a woolly jumper will ensure you stay snug, so you can turn your thermostat down.

**3 Best foot forward** The same goes for woollen socks and, yes, they are machine washable – just never tumble dry (which gobbles electricity, in any case!).

**4 Sweet dreams** Last, but certainly not least, think seriously about investing in a wool duvet. In terms of warmth and comfort, they're head and shoulders above synthetics. But, more importantly, they're cost effective, too. Unlike synthetics, a wool duvet will last you for years to come. Southdown offers you a wide choice of weights for ultimate warmth – anything from its All Year (7.4 tog) and the marvellous Woolly Mammoth (10 tog), to its amazing Yeti, at 10–13 tog.

**Looking for some woolly inspiration?** Visit [southdownduvets.com/woketowool](https://southdownduvets.com/woketowool) for all things woolly, from cosy designer knitwear and snuggly blankets and bedding, to beautiful yarn for home knitting.

*“Who knew sheep could hold the key to keeping household costs down?”*

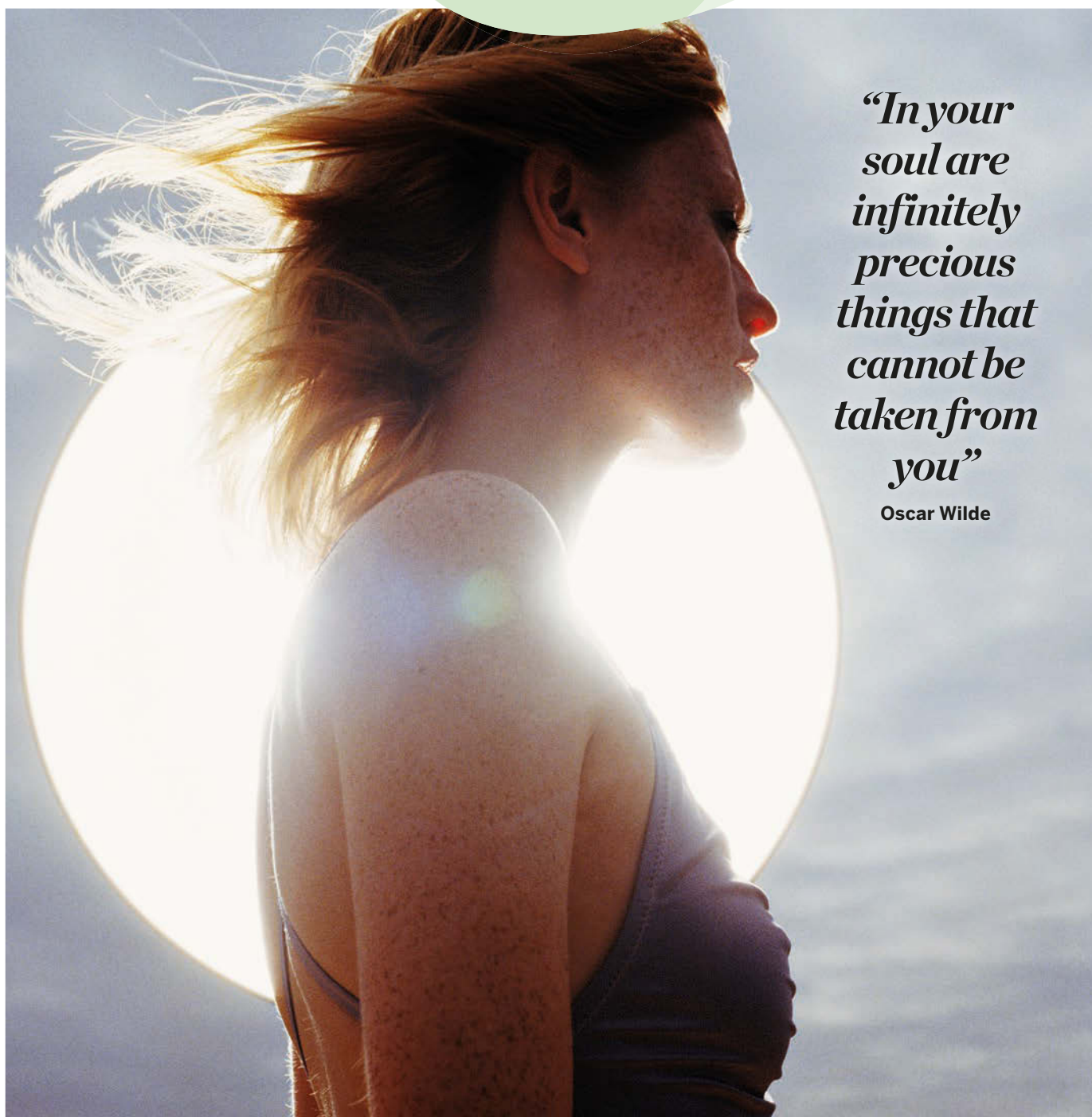
**20% OFF**

Claim 20 per cent off any Southdown duvet until 30 April, using the code 'HEATING22' at checkout





Discover ways to make your soul sing... with creativity, nature, finding your purpose in life and at work, travel and spirituality



***“In your  
soul are  
infinitely  
precious  
things that  
cannot be  
taken from  
you”***

**Oscar Wilde**



# The power of **COLOUR**

It can influence our emotions, decisions and behaviours – and represent our beliefs, values and traditions. Rebecca Frank explores life in full technicolour...



## Expert advice



**Momtaz Begum-Hossain** is a colour therapist, theorist, crafter and the author of 'Hello Rainbow' (Leaping Hare, £14.99). [hellohue.co.uk](http://hellohue.co.uk)



**Angie Parker** is a textile artist specialising in handweaving. Her use of colour brings a contemporary edge to the time-honoured techniques of weaving. [angieparkertextiles.com](http://angieparkertextiles.com)

If you've ever felt uplifted by the sight of a daffodil, been stopped in your tracks by some street art, or energised by a slick of lipstick, then you've experienced the impact colour can have on your emotions. With the ability to stir up feelings from joy and hope to calm and nostalgia, colour is a powerful energy source that's all around us. And increasing our awareness of how different hues affect us can help influence our decisions and how we choose to use colour in everyday life.

Colour therapy expert Momtaz Begum-Hossain is passionate about the power of colour and the way it affects our feelings, mood and actions. 'Colour is light, and light is energy, which speaks to us in vibrations,' says Begum-Hossain, referring to how we see colour as a reflection of light through cells in the retina, known as cones. As well as communicating with the area of the brain that forms a visual image, research has shown that when we see light and colour it sends signals to another part of the brain that causes the release of hormones that affect many of the body's functions, from sleep to appetite. This explains how certain colours can induce different mental states – the colour red has been shown to raise heart rate and blue to calm us, for example.

With her bright clothing, colourful hair and warm smile, Begum-Hossain is a walking example of how colour can affect you and those around you in a positive way. 'There's not a day passes when somebody doesn't comment on how the bright colours I'm wearing have made them feel happier,' she says. 'It's evidence that seeing colour does something to people – it's

reduced their inhibitions for a start, by prompting them to talk to a stranger!'

Aside from the clothes we wear or how we decorate our homes, colour is constantly influencing our decisions and behaviours, often without us noticing. From religious festivals and carnivals to politics and activism, different colours have been used to make a statement around the world and throughout history, firing up energy and arousing emotion. It's no coincidence that the rainbow was adopted in support of the NHS during the pandemic and has long been used as a symbol for the LGBTQ+ community – the spectrum of colours symbolising hope, positivity, equality and togetherness.

### Colour stereotypes

While we tend to associate certain colours with different moods, our reactions to colour are very personal and often come from early experiences. Maybe you were once told that orange didn't suit you, or you associate a certain shade of blue with a school uniform you didn't like. You might subconsciously favour red or blue depending on your political leanings or the football team you support. Research shows that colour influences 85 per cent of product choices. Begum-Hossain describes how, for a long time, she strongly disliked the colour yellow because of nightmares she had as a child that took place in a yellow bedroom. 'I stayed away from yellow for a long time, but then I started to need its positivity and vibrancy, so I opened up to it again. Now I really like the colour and have a bold yellow bookcase and bedspread.'



There are many ways to consciously explore how you feel about different colours. You could start with colour swatches, fabrics or yarn, or by looking around your home or stepping outside and noticing colours and how they make you feel. 'It's all there in front of us and yet we often don't notice it because we're preoccupied,' says Begum-Hossain, who calls this practice of seeking out colour 'rainbow hunting' and likes to treat it as an opportunity to switch off from other distractions.

'When you notice a colour, think about how it affects you – does it make you feel confident, creative, carefree?' If you feel drawn to a colour, notice whether you have any of it around you. You might find yourself enjoying the calming effects of a pink flower, for example, only to realise that you don't have any pink in your life – in your home or in your wardrobe. 'Just because you like a colour doesn't mean you then have to buy an outfit in that colour, however,' she explains. 'But if you introduce a pop of that colour, maybe with a pair of socks, a watch strap or nail varnish, it can change how you feel. It might affect how you walk, make you sit up a bit straighter, come across that little bit more confident.'

When you're working, think about how you want to feel and add some colour to your environment to help. If you have a meeting at 9am and you're tired, you could maybe choose a red notebook to lift your energy levels. You might find a screensaver image of bluebells or the ocean helps focus your mind if you've got a piece of writing to finish, or a bunch of yellow tulips makes you feel more positive. 'Bring in colours and feel what's right – but don't overdo it,' says Begum-Hossain. 'A red mug might be good, whereas red walls would be overwhelming.' At the end of the working day, changing into different colour clothes can help you make that transition from day to evening, and into a different energy space. Make your meals as colourful as possible and you'll not only get more nutrients, but have a better appetite, too. 'The more colours you're exposed to, the more emotions you'll be able to feel,' says Begum-Hossain.

### Playing with colour

Using colour in creative activities enables you to enjoy the ritual of making something while also benefiting from the joy of experimenting with different palettes. Angie Parker is an artist who weaves stunning, brightly coloured rugs, blankets, and other textiles, mostly by hand, from her studio in Bristol. Angie has always been drawn to colour and was inspired while living in India by all the different shades in the markets and sari shops, along with the incredible light and flowers. When she moved to Bristol, she found herself craving colour and surrounded herself with yarns in every shade, which she uses to make her signature vibrant textiles and in her popular workshops. The painted



houses she passed each day on lockdown walks with her children inspired her to weave a colourful blanket to 'wrap around the people who were having a hard time during the pandemic'. She donates 10 per cent of the profit from her Bristol Blanket to the mental health charity Mind.

Gathering your own collection of colourful objects can provide you with an instant source of colour therapy when you need it. You could try picking a colour for the day or week and record anything you see in that colour – outdoors and around the house. Arrange the things you've collected or take a picture, draw or write about them.

In her new book, *The Year I Stopped To Notice* (Icon, £12.99), Miranda Keeling describes something she sees every day, with many of her evocative observations including colour. 'A cat at the window of the house watches the rain fall outside – its large mustard-yellow eyes bright against grey fur'; 'A woman wearing a headscarf the colour of freshwater pearls.'

### Breaking the rules

When it comes to the colours you wear, Begum-Hossain says we should forget what we think suits us, what colours are meant to go or not, and what other people might think. Basically, if a colour makes you feel good, more confident, calmer or happier, then wear it. 'If a colour rule doesn't work for you, break it. By doing this you'll step out of your comfort zone and experience a sense of freedom, which you can carry over into every aspect of your life,' she says. It's worth remembering that the colours you choose can bring positivity and joy to others, too – and what could be more enjoyable or empowering than that?

*"Introducing a pop of colour  
can change how you feel.  
It might affect how you  
walk, make you sit up a  
bit straighter, come across  
that little bit more confident"*



## ▶▶ NEXT STEPS

**READ** *Hello Rainbow* by Momtaz Begum-Hossain (Leaping Hare, £14.99) takes you on a vibrant journey into a technicolour world, where you can discover more about why it's important and how you can include more of it in your everyday life.

**TRY** Surround yourself with colour and enjoy the satisfaction of creating something beautiful on one of Angie Parker's weaving workshops. She is running a three-day Weaving with Colour course at Clayhill Arts, Somerset, 15–17 July. [clayhillarts.co.uk](http://clayhillarts.co.uk)

**VISIT** A carpet of bluebells must be one of the most beautiful natural displays of colour. You'll find bluebells in woodland from mid-April and throughout May. Visit [nationaltrust.org.uk](http://nationaltrust.org.uk) to find a bluebell wood near you.



*"Either life  
entails courage,  
or it ceases  
to be life"*

**E M Forster**

WORK IN PROGRESS

# *“Why can’t I contain my emotions?”*

Our brilliant agony aunt, Mary Fenwick, turns her gaze to the world of work, helping sort out the problems you are struggling with day to day



**Q** I started my dream job three months ago. I'd been in my old role for 15 years and was ready move on – at nearly 50, and working in a field where jobs don't come up often, I jumped at this new opportunity. But, now, I can't seem to stop crying. I've discovered my new boss is leaving soon, and the place is so chaotic they haven't even allocated me a desk. I fear I've made a terrible mistake, and don't know where to start with unpicking it.

Congratulations on making that first big leap. There is no doubt that you are going through a difficult transition, but discomfort doesn't always mean a wrong decision.

Coaching clients often feel embarrassed if they cry. But think about the last time someone cried in front of you: did you lose respect for them? Most of us would say we simply felt greater empathy. I remind clients that these strong emotions are a sign that something important is at stake. Sometimes they alert us to protect our core values, but tears can also be a necessary part of acknowledging that change means letting go of the person you were.

Having said that, if the overwhelm continues, it might be a good idea to check in with your GP, since in your longer letter you mention not sleeping, hormonal changes, and feeling anxious outside of work, too.

In terms of this being your dream job, it's possible that you had become so comfortable in your old role that this discomfort has come as a greater shock. These hard feelings don't have to mean you are wrong (see box, right). You have proved that you can create new opportunities for yourself, and even walk away when necessary.

In the meantime, I like the metaphor which Professor Jim

Dedert writes about in *Choosing Courage: The Everyday Guide To Being Brave At Work* (Harvard Business Review Press, £22). He talks about creating your own personal courage ladder – 'a visual depiction of four to five things you know are important but currently find too scary or difficult to do' – then start on the lowest rung. Here's the thing, though: 'To change your own path, you also have to give up the illusion that you'll someday magically be less afraid or more ready.'

Courage always requires risk – which you've already taken. Your next step doesn't need to be huge. Can you identify something which would make your day one per cent better tomorrow? Maybe coffee with whichever colleague has been most supportive so far? Or book an appointment with the person who allocates desk space, to understand the process. Perhaps build up to candidly sharing your concerns with your current boss – it's not only expensive to lose good people, but it impacts on a firm's reputation.

Author Pearl Cleage says: 'Discomfort is always a necessary part of enlightenment.' Get your safety net in place – a good friend, an exercise plan, medical checks – and let us know how you get on.

[ideas.darden.virginia.edu/practice-of-courage](http://ideas.darden.virginia.edu/practice-of-courage)

Mary Fenwick is a writer and director of coaching at [teamsandleadership.com](http://teamsandleadership.com). She's also a mother, divorcee and widow. Connect with her on LinkedIn or Twitter @MJFenwick

**Got a question for Mary? Email [letters@psychologies.co.uk](mailto:letters@psychologies.co.uk) with 'Mary life' or 'Mary work' in the subject line.**



## Using emotions to succeed at work

How do we harness the things that make us most human, to feel happier at work? I love the book *No Hard Feelings* by Liz Fosslien and Mollie West Duffy (Penguin, £14.99), because it treats these heavy subjects with lightness. Here are some of the takeaways:

### HEALTH

- 1 Make time to be 'unproductive' – see friends and family, and step away from your emails.
- 2 Prevent rumination by seeing your thoughts as simply thoughts, not inevitable truths.

### MOTIVATION

- 1 Push yourself to acquire new skills. Motivation tends to follow action, not the other way around.
- 2 Invest in workplace friendships to give yourself a reason to look forward to work.

### TEAMS

- 1 Encourage open discussion – make it okay to take risks and admit mistakes.
- 2 Get rid of bad apples (or if you can't, contain them), as they will affect everyone else.

### LEADERSHIP

- 1 Prioritise yourself, and seek support from other leaders to prevent emotional leaks.
- 2 Become a student of the people you manage. Avoid telling people what to feel, and listen carefully.

### CULTURE

- 1 Emotions are contagious, which means your actions can have a positive influence.
- 2 Don't ignore the emotional burdens your colleagues might carry.

### TEARS FOR FEARS

Research shows we feel better if we cry alone or around one other person who can provide emotional support. When women report crying at work, it's usually out of frustration.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

- *That's What She Said: What Men Need To Know (And Women Need To Tell Them) About Working Together* by Joanne Lipman (John Murray, £10.99).
- Instagram @lizandmollie

# PSYCHOLOGIES *essentials*

## BECOME A WINGWAVE® COACH!

wingwave® is an effective, yet gentle coaching method which combines EMDR and Muscle testing to dissolve emotional and subconscious stress with uplifting results.

Scientifically researched at the University of Hamburg, wingwave® is a big success internationally and used by VW, Bosch and Colegate.

The technique is very new to the UK, so if you would love to make a bigger difference in your practice, now is a great time to become a wingwave® coach!

wingwave® Trainer and NLP Coach Caroline Rushforth is holding trainings during January and March 2022. Check website for further dates and info.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- [www.carolinerushforth.com](http://www.carolinerushforth.com)
- [caroline@carolinerushforth.com](mailto:caroline@carolinerushforth.com)
- 01273 583 987
- 07881 99 88 16



## CAREER SOS?

### Help to find a solution to a difficult situation now!

- Workload Overwhelm
- Dealing with unwelcome change
- A difficult boss or colleague
- CV not getting you an interview

### Help to kickstart your career:

- Find your purpose and know your worth
- Create your future
- Develop your professional skills
- Get the job you want



**Career SOS Help**  
Achieve More, Live More  
make your career work for you

These are just some examples of the situations the 100's of UK managers and professionals I have worked with, have found themselves in.

Say goodbye to that "this is just how it is" mentality. Get clear on what to do, build your confidence and develop the skills and know-how you need to make the changes you want, happen. I'd love to help you.

### Free Let's Talk consultation:

[www.careersoshelp.com/book-online](http://www.careersoshelp.com/book-online)

E-mail: [michelle@careersoshelp.com](mailto:michelle@careersoshelp.com)

Tel: 07789 922842

**Life Changing Career Coaching with Michelle Tranter**

[www.careersoshelp.com](http://www.careersoshelp.com)

\*Using Zoom/Teams, appointments: weekdays, evenings & Saturday mornings\*



## RECONNECT WITH YOUR PURPOSE

Experience a unique way of working with horses to reveal your next steps in life.

**WORKSHOPS & TRAINING  
QUALIFICATIONS**

IFEEL METHOD™

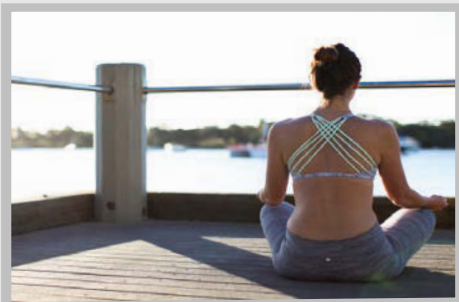
Open up a world of opportunities in your career and life.

**LEADERS  
IN THE FIELD**  
Learn more & book at:  
[www.ifeelmethod.com](http://www.ifeelmethod.com)



**IFEEL  
METHOD**  
QUALIFICATIONS LTD.

## DO YOUR MIND AND BODY NEED NOURISHMENT?



- FIND MOVEMENT THAT REVITALISES YOUR BODY
- FIND STILLNESS THAT CALMS YOUR MIND
- FIND IT ON YOUR TERMS, AND IN YOUR WORLD

JOIN...



A wonderful community of women giving themselves the time they need at a private members health club for mind & body nourishment.

SCAN ME...



TO FIND OUT MORE  
or go to  
<https://boon.tv/nurture>



# PSYCHOLOGIES

psychologies promotion

## *Your Questions in Mind... to help and inspire*

**Q** My friend is going through a really difficult time, how can I show her that I really care even though I am far away?

**A)** Friendinabox offers thoughtfully curated gifts for both difficult and happy occasions. The gifts are carefully packaged in an eye-catching blue box which fits through most letterboxes. You can write a letter of unlimited length to show care and support rather than being limited to a short message. They are ideal gifts to send for bereavement,

illness, hospital stays but also for birthdays, thank yous and friendship appreciation. Popular boxes include Be Kind to Yourself, Sleep & Sympathy, Pick-Me-Up, Friendship, Pamper, Gin & Chocolate, Happy Birthday, and A Nice Cup of Tea. We offer vegan options for most of our boxes. If you don't find what you are looking for, owner Jane will help you to create a bespoke box. Prices start from just £12.

[friendinabox.co.uk](http://friendinabox.co.uk) [jane@friendinabox.co.uk](mailto:jane@friendinabox.co.uk)



**Q** Why do bed socks help you sleep:

**A)** It is a fact that if your feet are warm your kidneys work more efficiently, and you sleep more peacefully. Perilla's 90% luxury alpaca bed socks are as soft as cashmere to wear but far more long lasting. Alpaca is not itchy, repels odour and bacteria as the fibre self-cleans and also boasts better insulating qualities

than any other wool fibre; this keeps feet at a perfect temperature even when the weather gets warmer.

There are non-elasticated soft topped bed socks too in a great palette of colours.

[www.perilla.co.uk](http://www.perilla.co.uk)

**t:01886 853 615**

**e: [info@perilla.co.uk](mailto:info@perilla.co.uk)**



**Q** I am looking for a unique birthday present for my best friend. Any ideas?

**A)** Potter and Mooch is a small, family run business offering a range of beautifully handmade gifts, jewellery and homeware. If you are looking for something special and a little different from the 'norm' then look no further. Delivery is just £2.95 and arrives within

1-2 days in the UK. Head over to their website where you can browse the stock, order online or even over the phone.

[www.potterandmooch.co.uk](http://www.potterandmooch.co.uk)

**01903 331744**

**Use code PSYCHOLOGIES for 10% off your first order**

Featured product is 925 sterling silver with Cream pearls £24



**Q** More and more I am struggling with a feeling of impending doom, of not being able to cope with everything I have to deal with, and am finding it hard to get out of bed in the morning. Do you know of anything natural I can take to help me get through?

**A)** So very sorry that you are having such a hard time. It sounds like you might find Saskia's Flower Essences Strength and Support combination helpful until things improve for you. Flower essences are

completely safe to use if you are on any other medication and are very effective in cases like this. They help change how you think and feel about things and this blend brings hope and encouragement when things are really tough as well when you are stressed and feeling blue.

Available from:

[www.saskiasfloweressences.com](http://www.saskiasfloweressences.com) for £12 + £3.70 P&P



OR EMAIL [HANNAH.LEES@KELSEY.CO.UK](mailto:HANNAH.LEES@KELSEY.CO.UK)

# How to be happier

Emma Hepburn, aka The Psychology Mum, shares how to bring more bliss into your life

**I**'m so busy!' we chant in unison, buying into the push for productivity, feeling the need to do more, more, more. Feeling we are not achieving if we take a break, filling our diaries until they are overflowing, tying our worth into what we have (and haven't) done, failing to prioritise our needs and seeing stopping as a fundamental flaw.

Woaaah! STOP. Slow down, take a breath. Perpetual productivity is counterproductive. We need to recognise that pausing and stopping are productive in themselves. I'm as guilty as the next person of powering through a lunch break to get a task done, but I'm neglecting to realise that this is actually impacting on my health, happiness and productivity. Not only does taking a break make us more efficient long term, it helps our body manage stress by restoring its equilibrium. Let's give downtime the respect it deserves. Rest is not a waste of time; it is so important for health and happiness it needs to have priority status. It's an activity to be planned and appreciated in its own right.

How often do you miss your breaks (like me) or only schedule in downtime as a reward? Planning downtime means it is more likely to happen. Here are some ideas for how to do this:

- **Plan** Ensure you take all your annual leave. Schedule this in, so you have planned rest periods throughout the year.
- **Schedule** Write your lunch breaks and tea breaks into your calendar – block them off as protected time. Plan what you will do in these pockets that will help you relax.
- **'To-do'n't' time** Schedule in protected periods at work or in your personal life when nothing else can be added to your calendar (call them catch-up/admin slots, if you must).
- **Mini breaks** Get up from your desk every hour. Schedule in time at the end of the day to reflect and plan for tomorrow.
- **Breathing breaks** Help calm body and mind: stop, take three slow breaths and gather your thoughts. Then think about what you will do next.

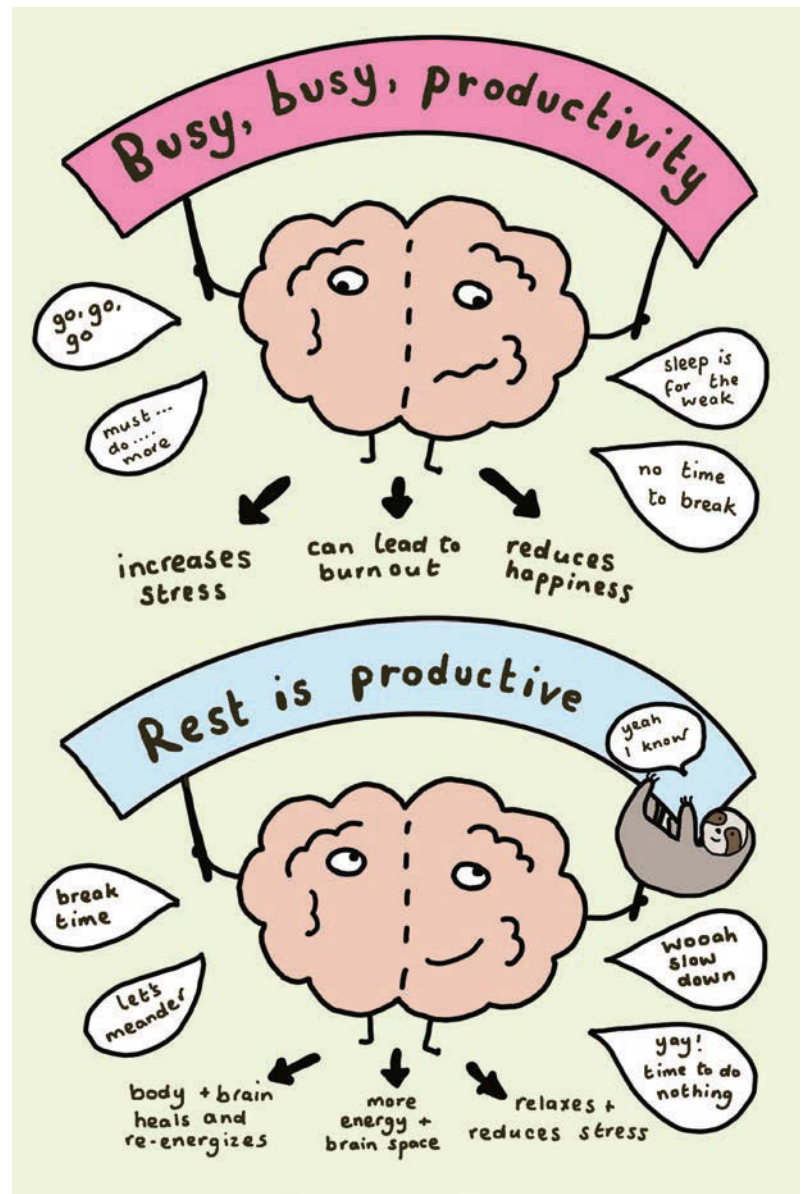


ILLUSTRATION: EMMA HEPBURN, FROM 'A TOOLKIT FOR HAPPINESS'

This helps regulate your body and manage stress.

● **Breaks between tasks** Allow yourself pauses between work meetings, perhaps go for a walk before you start the next task. Try not to over-schedule your day. Give yourself the gift of space, time and opportunity to pause.

● **Look up and out** This is a very simple way to pause and give your brain a break. Look up and out of a window at the horizon, the trees, the buildings around you.



'A Toolkit for Happiness' by Emma Hepburn (Quercus, £14.99)



# Perfectil®

SCIENCE OF BEAUTY®



Pioneering beauty  
from within  
**over 25 years**

## Advanced nutrition for skin, hair & nails

Advance your daily regime with Perfectil® Original, the UK's No.1 Triple-Active™ formula to support normal skin, hair and nails¹.

The Perfectil® Plus range provides the benefits of the original, plus more.

Perfectil® Platinum Collagen is a great tasting liquid beauty supplement available for Hair or Skin.

*Perfectil® - because true radiance starts within.*



[PERFECTIL.COM](http://PERFECTIL.COM)

Available from *Boots*, Holland&Barrett,  
Superdrug ☆, supermarkets,  
health stores and pharmacies

¹With biotin to help maintain normal skin, and  
selenium and zinc to help maintain normal hair and nails.

**\*Nielsen GB ScanTrack** Total Coverage Value and Unit Retail Sales 52 w/e 29/01/2022. UK's No.1 beauty supplement brand for skin, hair and nails. To verify contact Vitabiotics Ltd, 1 Apsley Way, London, NW2 7HF. †Vitabiotics has received the Queen's Award for Innovation on two occasions, in addition to twice for International Trade.

PERFECTIL IS THE ONLY  
BEAUTY SUPPLEMENT TO  
RECEIVE THE QUEEN'S  
AWARD FOR INNOVATION†



**VITABIOTICS**

# ST. EVAL



## Celebrate the beauty of spring

Inspired by our love of nature and desire to protect the natural world around us, this collection pays tribute to bees, butterflies, and dragonflies and is home to three aromatic delights.

Bring the scents of spring into your home with these uplifting garden aromas for a truly special gift.

Bee | Geranium

Dragonfly | Garden Greens *New!*

Butterfly | Sweet Pea *New!*

Nestled on a farm in North Cornwall, St. Eval use a blend of traditional and innovative methods and sustainable production to craft high quality candles, perfecting the art and science of candle making for over 28 years.

01841 540850

[info@st-eval.com](mailto:info@st-eval.com)

[www.st-eval.co/psychologiesmag](http://www.st-eval.co/psychologiesmag)



The art of beautiful candles