

NEW
LOOK!

BOOST YOUR ENERGY: Enjoy the great outdoors and feel amazing!

UK edition

CREATE A LIFE YOU LOVE

psychologies

LESS STRESS, MORE SLEEP

Discover a new way to
unwind and sleep better

Improve your
relationship
by laughing
together

16-page DOSSIER

Feel great this winter

- Embrace this season
to rest and relax
- Simple ideas to
boost your mood
- Tips to bring joy

Rekindle a friendship

How to get over your
fears and reach out

*Dannii
Minogue*

Making hard decisions
helped me find
happiness

9

ways to
move on
from bad
memories

PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK

DECEMBER 2021 • £4.80



KELSEYmedia

9 771746 734160 12

A SKIN BOOST FROM WITHIN



Healthy-looking skin from a beauty supplement drink

Boost your skin ready for the festive season by making this tasty nutritious strawberry and lemon flavoured food supplement drink part of your daily skin care routine. It's made from bioactive collagen peptides, scientifically proven to reduce eye wrinkles, improve skin elasticity and reduce visible signs of cellulite*. And with the added benefit of key vitamins and minerals, this is expert nutrition for your skin**.

*Results shown on eye wrinkles and skin elasticity after 4 weeks, first results of reduction in visible signs of cellulite after 3 months.

**Biotin, Iodine, Vitamin A and Zinc contribute to the maintenance of normal skin.



Find out more and order online at herbalife.co.uk

Welcome...

Can you feel it in the air? No, not that (we're generally steering clear of Christmas until next month, so keep your eyes peeled). I'm referring to the first stirrings of winter. Yes, autumn's been and is on its way out, so now, with snow on the horizon, for some of us at least, it's time to dig out your favourite coat and best snuggly boots and get ready for the prettiest season of all.

There are times when it's easy to let the world overtake **you** – when you might struggle to see the rainbow for the rain – and, for many of us, winter is one of those times. But if we've learned anything recently, it's that we need to cherish all the special things we do have, that too often we take for granted. So, if this really isn't your favourite time of year, and the colder weather and shorter days can bring on a darker mood, turn to our brilliant, in-depth Dossier on page 51 and discover ways to make this season merry and bright – before Christmas even arrives!

That's not the only celebrating we're doing this month. Our Heart section is full of ideas on how to get the most out of your relationships. If some of your friendships have fallen by the wayside over the past few months, or you've lost touch with loved ones, turn to page 74 to discover how to breathe life into those relationships – and overcome any panic that you've left it too late – because it never is. And discover the healing power of laughter on page 80, perfect for injecting new life into your romantic relationships, or even just strengthening your bond with your family – my children love nothing more than to hear me belly laugh at their silly jokes, so I'm definitely going to try a few of the ideas at home!

We've also got practical ways to move on from past sadness, a cry from the heart to embrace your inner self, a clever technique to help you let go of stress and get some much-needed shut-eye, plus inspiration to get out and enjoy the glory nature has to offer. It's a packed issue, and I hope it encourages you to make the most of this month with a joyful heart and a peaceful mind. Happy reading!

Sally x

Sally Saunders, Editor

***We hope you love your new-look
'Psychologies'. Subscribe today!***

Go to shop.kelsey.co.uk/PY1221
or call 01959 543747*



DECEMBER

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 * Dannii Minogue

The singer, songwriter and mother of one on stepping out of the limelight, taking control and finding calm

21 Life as I know it

Harriet Minter has a plan – and it's perfectly impractical

Mind

24 * Time to let go?

How addressing past traumas can pave the way to a more fulfilling future

28 Coaching in action

Award-winning coach Kim Morgan delves deeper into procrastination

31 A moment of calm

Uncover the benefits of laid-back lavender

32 What my mother never told me

There's comfort to be found in the customs of our kinfolk, says Vee Sey

36 Me, myself and I

Embrace your unique self – no apologies necessary!

40 Be the change you want to see

Could training to be a coach be the transformation you need?

44 Your mental wellbeing toolkit

Understand obsessive thoughts



Could this be the key to guaranteed good sleep?

46 Lightbulb moments

You are never alone in your experience, says psychologist Kimberley Wilson

48 Your dilemmas addressed

Mary Fenwick offers a new perspective

Heart

74 * How to rekindle a friendship

Reach out, reconnect and rebuild a neglected relationship that you value

80 * Live, love, laugh

Why a good giggle is the emotional glue that binds a relationship

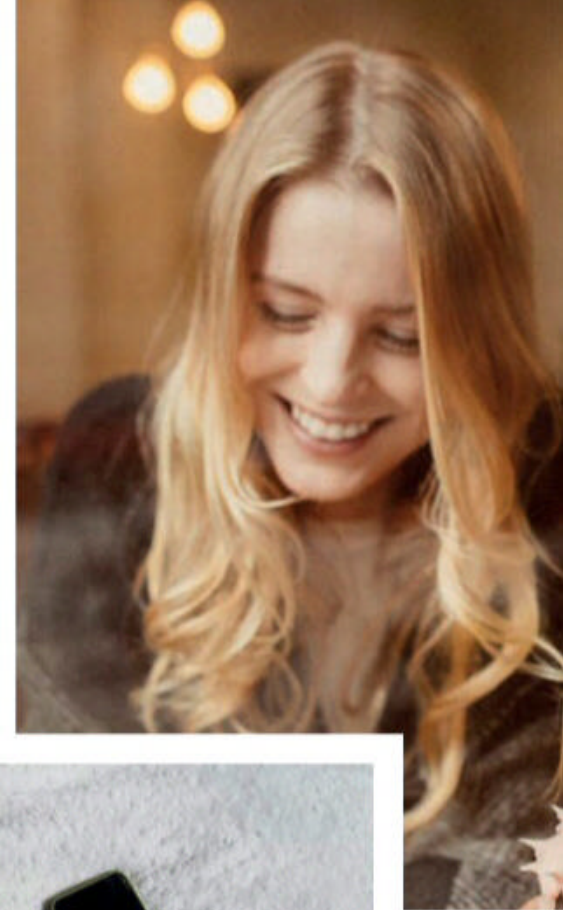
Body

86 Mindful wellness

Conscious and accessible ways to eat, move and look well

92 Soul food

Heart-warming recipes from chef and cookery school teacher Rachel Allen



Join us today!



Pay just £39.99 for a whole year!

Subscribe to 'Psychologies' or give a gift subscription and commit to a happier life. Benefit from life-changing tools and advice AND free membership of our Life Leap Club. Plus, we'll send you a Scented candle, worth £16.95! See page 42



74

Take the first steps to reigniting a friendship

96 Good mood food

Warm up with wintry ginger spice

98 * Too stressed to sleep?

Boost your wellbeing with a new technique

106 Make time to meditate

Feel peaceful, even on your busiest days

Soul

108 Work in progress

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

110 * Embrace the big chill

Immerse yourself in winter walking

116 The words

This month's captivating new fiction

117 Come home to the page...

Let your inner voice flow from pen to paper, writes coach Jackee Holder

122 The last word...

With psychologist Emma Hepburn

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

Order online at shop.kelsey.co.uk/PY1221

psychologies
DOSSIER

With you
in mind



Have a wonderful and reinvigorating winter

51 Rest, retreat, rejuvenate

Slow down and make this quiet season a time to treasure

58 How to turn seasonal SADness around

Embrace winter with positivity, and send your happiness levels soaring

60 Brighten your days

Create a colour first-kid kit to transform your mood on dull days

62 How can you create a winter of content?

Take our psychological test and discover the seasonal sustenance you need

66 Warm up from within

Try these energising yoga poses to kickstart cold days

68 Dossier extra: Winter heroes

All the kit you need to stay cosy

OUR TEAM

Editor Sally Saunders
Art Editor Jennifer Ratcliff
Production Editor Vee Sey
Chief Sub-Editor Karen Warren
Features Editor Heidi Scrimgeour
Associate Editor Anita Chaudhuri
Wellness Director Ali Roff Farrar
Digital Editor Alexandra Thompson
In The Mood Editor Alex Lloyd
Retreats Editor Caroline Sylger Jones

ADVERTISING & PRODUCTION

Head of Commercial – Wellbeing and Travel Adam Mazenko
01959 543539; adam.mazenko@kelsey.co.uk
Senior Commercial Manager Amy McBride
01959 543514; amy.mcbride@kelsey.co.uk
Classified Sales Executive Michelina Neath
01959 543516; michelina.neath@kelsey.co.uk

MANAGEMENT

Chief Operating Officer Phil Weeden
Chief Executive Steve Wright
Managing Director (Lifestyle Brands and Circulation) Kevin McCormick
Retail Director Steve Brown
Subscription Marketing Director Gill Lambert
Subscription Marketing Manager Nick McIntosh
Events Manager Kat Chappell
Print Production Manager Georgina Harris
Print Production Controller Hayley Brown

SUBSCRIPTIONS

13 issues of Psychologies are published per annum

- UK annual subscription price: £62.40
- Europe annual subscription price: £74
- USA annual subscription price: £74
- Rest of World annual subscription price: £79
- 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
Manage your subscription online shop.kelsey.co.uk/site/loginForm

DISTRIBUTION & PRINTING

- **William Gibbons & Sons Limited**, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall WV13 3XA; 01902 730011; 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) **Editor-in-Chief:** Iuliana Alexa (iuliana.alex@ringier.ro) **Advertising Manager:** Monica Pop (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) **Chief Editor (French):** Christiane Thiry (christiane.thiry@ventures.be) **Chief Editor (Flemish):** Barbara Van den Abeele (b.vandenabeele@ventures.be) **Advertising Manager:** Manon Sepulchre (manon.sepulchre@ventures.be)

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

The advice starts RIGHT HERE!



DANNY GREEVES

'There is increasing research that shows how difficult and painful events can lead to personal growth,' explains coach and hypnotherapist Danny Greeves. Uncover the nine simple ways you can train your brain to let go of the past and embrace a happier future on page 24.

TARA QUINN-CIRILLO

Feel as if you've let a good friendship fade? 'The aftermath of the pandemic gives us permission and a renewed sense of purpose in reacquainting ourselves with our friends,' says psychologist Tara Quinn-Cirillo. Discover how to reconnect, and revive a neglected relationship on page 74.



CLAIRE AND JAMES DAVIS



Take lockdown walking to the next level and get a winter wellbeing boost: 'Mixing things up is one of the best ways to retain interest and enthusiasm,' say fitness, nutrition and lifestyle experts Claire and James Davis. Be motivated to embrace the season with their expert advice on page 110.

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 2021© 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, 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 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

Have a hygge celebration

Fireworks bring colour and light to the winter months, thanks to Bonfire Night and Diwali celebrations.

But the tradition of letting off rockets and Roman candles isn't fun for everyone: animals and people with autism can be distressed by the noise, while some PTSD sufferers find that they trigger flashbacks.

There's an environmental cost too, due to the debris and smoke. When fireworks explode, they release carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and nitrogen – three of the gases responsible for climate change.

Luckily, there are alternative ways to create sparkle on a dark, cold night. Hang fairy lights outside, stock up on eco-friendly sparklers, glow sticks and lanterns, and have a gathering in the garden with mulled wine, hot dogs and jacket potatoes. Cosier, calmer and far less costly to us all.



You may have heard that our much-loved columnist, Katie Piper, has been in hospital after being rushed to A&E when she choked on food due to long-term health issues and problems with her oesophagus. We send her love, and look forward to her return to our pages next month.

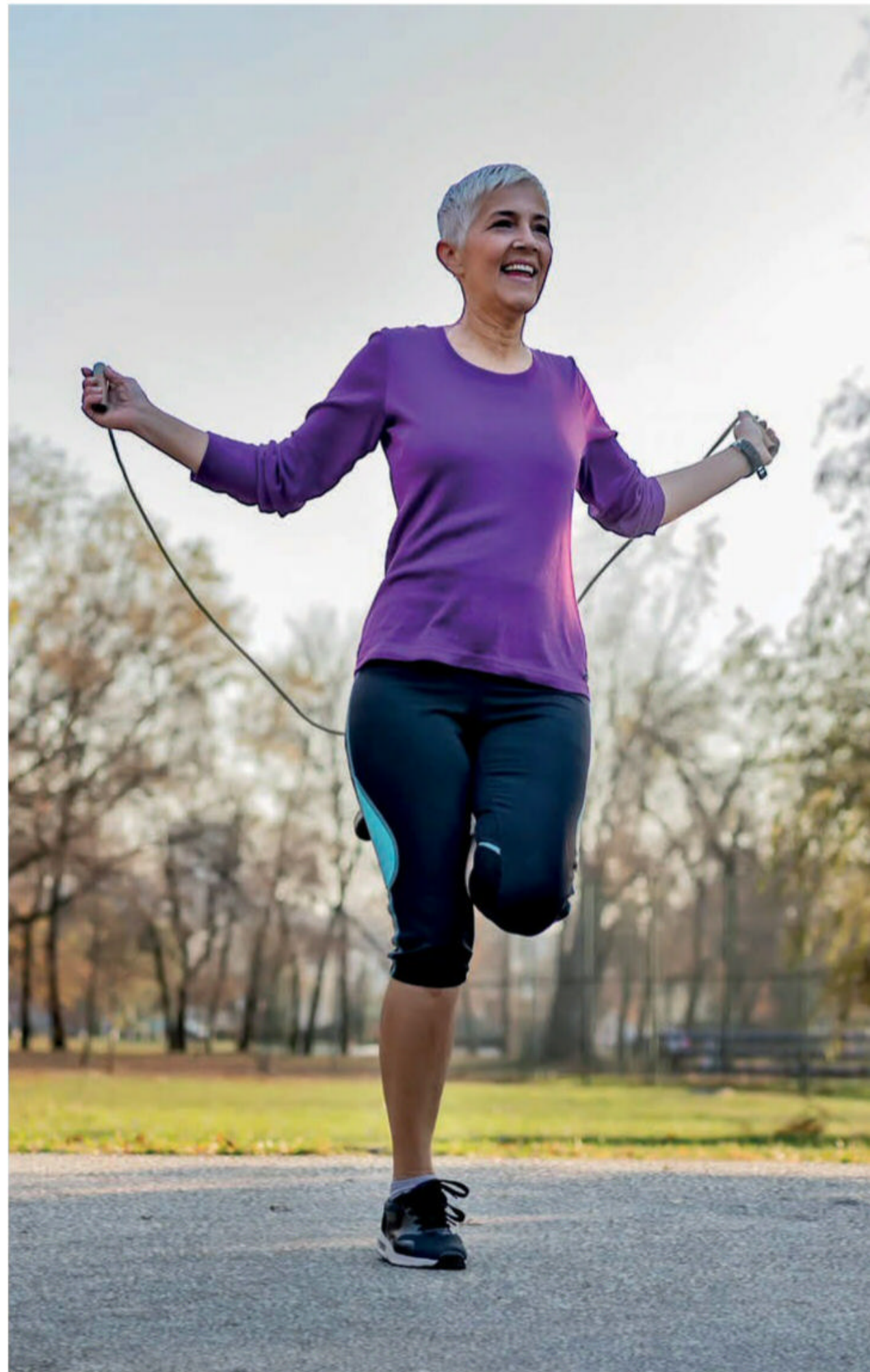


Smell of success?

Doses of vitamin A could help sufferers of long Covid regain their sense of smell, according to scientists.

This unpleasant side effect of the virus – known as parosmia – has left some people unable to detect smells, or experience unpleasantly distorted ones.

Participants in a 12-week trial by the University of East Anglia will be given nasal drops and undergo brain scans to see if the vitamin, commonly known as retinol, improves the olfactory pathways or ‘smell nerves’.



*Evidence of clothes-making found in a Moroccan cave suggests that dressing our bodies has been part of human behaviour for 120,000 years.**

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES.
*"SCIENCE", 2021

Jump to it!

If you haven't skipped for the past 30 years or more, it might be time to pick up a rope again because the word is it's no longer the preserve of schoolgirls and boxers!

People of all ages and from all walks of life rediscovered this cheap and effective exercise during lockdown, and now videos featuring the hashtag #jumprope have hit 1.2 billion views on TikTok.

The British Rope Skipping Association says this humble activity benefits your cardiovascular system, calf muscles and bones, as well as boosting your immune system, improving alertness and, of course, fitness.

The TV presenter Miquita Oliver runs #skipschool on Instagram, and calls it 'active meditation'. She says it offers a way to return to a childhood joy that is freeing. 'You stop jumping,' Oliver says of growing up. 'I'm encouraging people to start again.'

10%
of men have an understanding of the perimenopause and when it starts, and 60% of women say they don't feel comfortable talking to their partner about the changes.**

**HORMONE TESTING COMPANY, FORTH

FLOWER POWER

One hundred years ago, French academic Anna Guérin lobbied countries to adopt the poppy as a symbol of remembrance after the First World War. Today, its meaning is recognised worldwide, and Guerin's influence has finally been honoured; 'We Are The Legion: The Royal British Legion at 100' by Julie Summers (Profile Books, £18.99) marks the charity's centenary, and that of the Poppy Appeal.

WE ARE THE LEGION

WATCH, LOOK, LISTEN



WATCH – Lady Gaga is dressed to kill as Patrizia Reggiani in Ridley Scott's

biopic *House Of Gucci*. Reggiani, the ex-wife of the fashion house heir, Maurizio Gucci, was convicted of orchestrating his 1995 assassination. Out 26 November.



LOOK – Soccer's first female superstar, Lily Parr, who played for Preston's the

Dick, Kerr Ladies in the 1920s, now has a much-deserved permanent display to honour her 1,000-goal career at the National Football Museum in Manchester.



LISTEN – *The Divorce Social* is a lighthearted but penetrating

podcast in which the divorcee, author, actor and broadcaster Samantha Bains interviews people about their break-ups, or childhoods with separated parents.

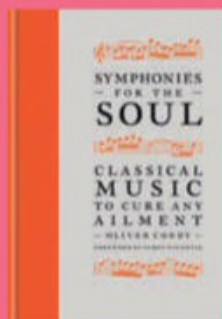
3 reads to **UPLIFT YOUR SOUL**



1 *Glittering A Turd* by Kris Hallenga (Unbound, £12.99) is an honest and inspiring memoir and manual about embracing what life deals you by the founder of CoppafFeel, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 23.



2 *Symphonies For The Soul* by Oliver Condy (Octopus, £15) is filled with classical music prescriptions to ease any physical or mental ailment, whether you are suffering from loneliness, fatigue or a hangover.



3 *Into Green* by Rose Ray and Caro Langton (Frances Lincoln, £14) is filled with projects and ideas on how to connect with nature and gain a better headspace, whether you live in the countryside or the city.



Flexitime for new starters

Staff will be able to request flexible-working options, such as job-sharing and compressed hours, from day one of starting a new job, under government plans for an employment-law overhaul. But the right to ask will not mean the right to have, say experts.

The shake-up follows an employment tribunal win by Alice Thompson, an estate agent who was denied a request to end her day at 5pm in order to collect her daughter before her nursery closed.



25% of people in the UK claim to be 'good friends' with their neighbours, and 29% would trust them with a spare key, according to a survey by Co-op Insurance and Neighbourhood Watch.



“In a world that entices us to browse through the lives of others to help us better determine how we feel about ourselves and to, in turn, feel the need to be constantly visible... For visibility, these days, seems to somehow equate to success. Do not be afraid to disappear from it, from us, for a while, and see what comes to you in the silence”

Writer and actor Michaela Coel, accepting her Emmy for *I May Destroy You*



ALL-SINGING, ALL-DANCING

London's vibrant West End is lit up once again after lockdown and restrictions, with the arrival of two much-anticipated musicals.

The dazzling *Moulin Rouge!* opens at the Piccadilly Theatre on 12 November, after winning multiple awards on Broadway, while the 1966 classic *Cabaret*, with Oscar-winner Eddie Redmayne as Emcee and Jessie Buckley as Sally Bowles, is revived at the Playhouse Theatre from 15 November.

After months of missing the joy of live, collective entertainment, the lyrics 'What good is sitting alone in your room? Come hear the music play' will never sound sweeter.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The old saying 'never judge a book by its cover', has been brought poignantly to life by the Danish charity Human Library. It invites users to lend a real person labels such as 'bipolar', 'unemployed' or 'refugee' and listen to their life story for 30 minutes as a way to develop compassion and understanding of others.

*Find out more at
humanlibrary.org*



PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES

Viewpoint

Send your letters of gratitude and tell us what you loved reading in the magazine to letters@psychologies.co.uk



*Star
letter*

Equine healing

Thank you so much for your powerful article on the amazing bond between horses and people. It was as if it was written just for me – and at just the right time. I had been in pain for a while with an injury and was feeling sorry for myself, so when I opened your magazine, I was instinctively drawn to the ‘Horse power’ feature (October edition).

As a child, I suffered from a lack of confidence, but once I started spending time with ponies, that feeling vanished. At various points in my life, when I’ve needed a pick-me-up or a confidence boost, or just some time to relax away from everyday life, I have gravitated towards horses.

Your article confirmed that what I need in my life at this present moment is a little non-judgmental, non-pressured time with horses. Thank you, *Psychologies*, for making me realise that.

Silvana Stratford

Nothing to fear but fear itself

I wish I had read your helpful and reassuring article ‘The truth about panic attacks’ (October edition) when I started experiencing them 15 years ago. When I had my first one, I thought I was having a heart attack and was going to die. The episode of intense fear that triggered it was frightening because there was no real danger or apparent cause.

For a month, my life was on hold as I suffered one after another. But psychotherapy helped me deal with them. My therapist and I would practise having panic attacks together, which definitely lightened my mood. By doing this, he showed me that it is the fear of having one that makes it so much worse.

Now, if I feel as if I may have one, I say to myself, ‘Come on, panic attack, I do not fear you’ – and it always goes away.

When I think back, I probably had my first panic attack when I lost my two-year-daughter for three minutes on our farm. Then, the panic was real. But most times it hasn’t been. I’ve found I’ve been able to help a lot of other people who experience panic attacks by telling them not to fear them because it’s the fear that keeps the adrenaline going.

Your advice was sound and would have definitely helped me all those years ago if I’d read it.

Name and address supplied



PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK
LETTERS ARE EDITED FOR STYLE AND LENGTH

Solidarity in shyness

Your Dossier on overcoming social anxiety (September edition) was perfectly timed for me. Since the world has started opening up again, I have been cancelling or avoiding plans due to my fear of socialising. Having spent so many months at home, I feared I would have nothing to contribute to conversations.

As I started to see more and more people via social media at bars and nightclubs, seemingly having the time of their lives, these fears only got worse. Reading your magazine has helped me realise I am not alone in these feelings, and also offered practical solutions on how to overcome them. Thank you for allowing me to be kinder to myself.

Jenni Warrior

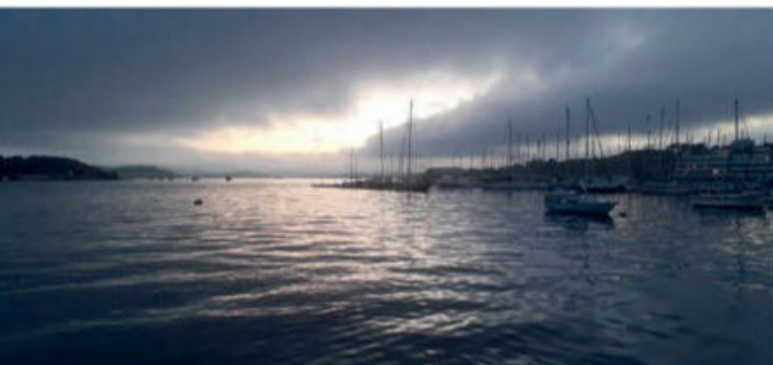


PHOTO COMPETITION

I love taking photos of nature or scenes that inspire awe, and recently read about skyology, the theory that looking at the sky can affect us emotionally and spiritually.

On my birthday in 2020 – during the break between lockdowns – I met some friends for dinner at a restaurant in Royal William Yard, Plymouth, and captured this awesome skyscape. To this day, the photo and memory of the sight amazes me, despite only being taken on my mobile phone!

Kerri-anne Hibberd

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

LETTER OF GRATITUDE

I'd like to thank...

My darling niece,

We met when you were two, and you have brought enormous joy into my life.

Your early passion for reading made my heart sing as you followed in our family tradition.

You spread your wings and left home to go to university, where you excelled and made friends for life. In June 2018, we waved you farewell as you jetted off to London to see more of the world.

Thank you for taking the time to meet us in Bologna, Italy, and Arosa, Switzerland, in 2018 and 2019. We treasure the magical memories and photos of our fun times together!

When the world shut down, you showed your resilience through the trials of coronavirus and lockdown.

And, then, just a few weeks ago, you married your handsome, kind and clever Englishman, and we watched your magnificent wedding from afar, our hearts bursting with happiness as you were surrounded by your overseas family and friends.

One day, we'll all be together again... I have the utmost gratitude that you're in my life. Please stay safe and healthy.

Your loving aunt, Rhoda

Support network

I started reading your magazine about 10 years ago. Buying *Psychologies* was then a luxury I indulged in while at the airport, awaiting my yearly trip abroad. It started off as being just a 'holiday treat'. However, my husband saw how much I enjoyed reading it – devouring it from cover to cover – and after a couple of years he bought me a year's subscription for my birthday.

I'm pleased to say that year's subscription has become many years of subscription! I still look forward to the magazine arriving on the doormat.

I relish the themes that you cover, on wellness and being kind to ourselves, and love the products that are quietly advertised too.

I have had some challenging years raising two teenage, now young adult, girls and the pages in this magazine have kept me going, giving me hope when things became very difficult, particularly with one of my daughters, who has suffered mental health issues.

The pages in this magazine were a constant reminder of the importance of 'self' as, without it, we are useless to anyone around us.

When times are tough, it can be difficult to remember to look after the most important person of all.

Thank you, *Psychologies*, for helping me through these times and giving me gentle reminders when I needed them most – you've kept me going.

Clare Child



*Power
comes from
within... you close
one door and
another opens*

Dannii Minogue turned her back on *The X Factor*, Britain's biggest TV show, and left the UK after becoming overwhelmed by life in the public eye. A decade later, the singer and songwriter is happier, healthier and stronger. She opens up about taking control, mental health and motherhood

WORDS: BETH NEIL

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES





Dannii Minogue loves her TV work, but a life out of the limelight brought her peace

It's a hazard of life in Australia, says Dannii Minogue, that at any given moment, possums might chew through the wifi cable and cut you off mid-Zoom. She's laughing, but insists it's a risk with every call she makes. 'I think I'll shoot into the air like a rocket if that happens,' she says. 'These little things are really cute, unless they're in your house – and if they're in your roof, they sound like a herd of elephants!'

Minogue is speaking from her home in Melbourne, currently in the grip of its sixth lockdown since Covid hit. At the time of writing, everything is in limbo and she isn't hopeful that her 11-year-old son, Ethan, will return to school at all this year. 'I'm *definitely* not a teacher,' she says with a grimace when the subject of homeschooling crops up. 'That is not my field. I call it the corona coaster; learning how to deal with it as a parent, as a person and as a partner. I've definitely felt a loss of energy, and some days it's been hard to just get out of bed.'

Minogue, who turned 50 in October, returned permanently to her native Australia at the end of 2010, after two decades in the UK, partly to be nearer family after having Ethan. But there were deeper, more complex reasons too – by the time she moved back, she was at breaking point, pushed to the brink by a level of fame that had become intolerable.

Her four seasons on *The X Factor* had grown increasingly stressful (tensions during the 2007

series with fellow judge Sharon Osbourne, who Minogue likened to a 'school bully' in her autobiography, have been well-documented) and she was also dealing with the impact of phone hacking, for which she would later be awarded damages. It took courage to walk away from a career that she had worked so hard for, but with her mental health at stake, something had to give. 'Talk about a different world...' she says, comparing her life back then to the quieter existence she enjoys today.

'It felt like a pressure cooker and [by the end] I didn't know if it was worth it any more. The phone hacking had been going on for years before it was apparent to anyone. And, at the time, *X Factor* was on the front pages every day; as "out there" as you could possibly be. My work was supposed to be fun – it was TV and singing, and I thought "it shouldn't be this hard", you know? I was ready to give up, but TV was all I'd ever done and so that added an extra layer of stress, not knowing what I would do [instead].'

She vividly remembers her last *X Factor* show in December 2010. Watched by nearly 18 million TV viewers, the atmosphere in the studio was 'electric' as Matt Cardle was crowned the winner, but Minogue knew she'd had enough. Shortly after, she headed back to Australia with five-month-old Ethan and her then-partner, Manchester-born model Kris Smith.

'It was the biggest show in the country and here I was saying to Simon [Cowell] and Melissa [Le Gear], my manager, that I was done and I wasn't coming back. No one walks away from a show like that, but I felt really, really fine about it. Power comes from making those decisions within yourself – you decide to close one door, but then other doors open and, slowly, things started to change for me.

'*The X Factor* was the wildest ride and one of the greatest things that ever happened to me, but it was time for me to step off the train. And, when I did, I kind of went: "Thank God I survived that."

She says the announcement earlier this year that ITV had no plans to bring back the show post-Covid brought 'mixed emotions', although she hasn't watched it since she quit. Her trusted inner circle, plus therapy, helped her recover and regain the balance and control she felt she'd lost – but it took time to heal completely. Minogue says she wonders whether things might have turned



*Dannii Minogue has found
balance and serenity*



*“I’ve been
working with
a psychologist
on how to
strengthen my
responses,
process stuff and
move forward”*

*Fashion design has
been Minogue’s ‘escape’
during lockdown*

out differently had there been more mental health awareness at the time. ‘None of that was spoken about,’ she says. ‘There was this feeling that if you were in the public eye, you’d brought it on yourself, and so I didn’t feel there was anybody thinking that it wasn’t OK, apart from me.’

‘My publicist in London and my manager have been through everything with me, and they’re amazing people – very grounded. I’ve leaned on my family too. And, just recently, I’ve been working with a psychologist on how to strengthen my responses, process stuff and move forward. These are all great skills to have and to be able to pass on as a parent.’

Minogue adds: ‘I try to keep very private about my family and to have a really normal life now – this is how it has to be, otherwise I can’t do it.’ She is careful about the jobs she takes and channels her energy only into projects that spark joy – which is why she’s filmed three fun-packed seasons as a judge on *The Masked Singer Australia*.

A lifelong love of fashion and design has also led to her own label, Dannii Minogue Petites, which has sold in Australia since 2014 and launched in the UK earlier this year, thanks to a partnership with shopping channel QVC. The autumn/winter 2021 collection is available now and features vibrant shades, sequins and animal prints. ‘Colour brings me happiness, so I hope there’s something there that people can really embrace. It’s been so much fun and has been my complete escapism during lockdown – anything other than doing times tables!’

‘It’s amazing to read all the positive feedback from customers, especially people on the petite side – it’s very emotional for me. Like, *finally*, there’s something that fits. I’ve struggled my whole life [Minogue is 5ft 2in] and there’s still so little out there.’

It’s 30 years since Minogue’s debut album, *Love And Kisses*, hit the UK charts, making her a star in her own right. Until then, she’d mostly been known in Britain as Kylie’s little sister (although she’d been a household name in Australia since childhood) and a solid pop career throughout the 1990s and early 2000s followed, before *X Factor* sent her fame stratospheric.

But comparisons to her older sister were inevitable, especially in the early days, and Minogue admits they had a lasting effect on the way that she saw herself. ‘I have a different body shape to my sister and the things written about me were horrendous – but I look at the pictures now and I was just a teenager.’

‘It was exhausting constantly having to brush that off. I always say to friends, particularly younger people, just because someone says something about you does not mean it’s true. It’s an opinion.’

Even in the early noughties, at her ‘slimmest’, her body image remained distorted. ‘I didn’t have to go to the gym, I had a washboard stomach, I was wearing



Minogue chooses projects that bring her happiness

“There was this feeling that if you were in the public eye, you’d brought it on yourself”

crop tops. But in my head, I was always that person who’d had those negative comments. For anybody who gets bullied, it stays with you and it’s hard not to incorporate that into your image of yourself. But the greatest love of my body came from being pregnant. It made me in awe of what the body can do.’

Motherhood was a revelation to Minogue. Before pregnancy, she’d never felt maternal and assumed she wouldn’t have children of her own. ‘I just never saw it happening. Friends would say “I’m getting married and I’m having three kids” when they didn’t even have a boyfriend! They always knew what they

"If I'm on a magazine cover or TV show, that's good for all women. I get a buzz out of that"

were doing, and I just didn't have that plan. But it's fantastic and I love it, and Ethan's amazing.'

Minogue separated from Smith in 2012, shortly before Ethan's second birthday. Despite the split, they have a good co-parenting relationship, and have navigated the twists and turns admirably. 'It's not easy, but you make it work,' she says. 'Communication is key. It's funny because Kris has two daughters now, and it's gone from Ethan pleading with me for a baby brother or sister to going: "I'm not actually sure about this!" Now that he's not the focus of attention, he's changed his mind a bit! But as they get older, he'll have two little buddies.' She adds: 'Kris's parents are still in Manchester and they adore Ethan, so hopefully I'll be able to bring him with me when I eventually get back to the UK.'

Minogue has found romantic fulfilment too, with music producer Adrian Newman. They've been together for years, but have managed to keep their relationship low-profile and it suits them both that way. 'We're in our ninth year now, so it's serious and lovely. I think it's much easier if you keep it out of the public eye – I've tried both! Sometimes you don't have that choice. When I was married [to actor Julian McMahon, from 1994-95], or when I had a son with Kris, it was in the public eye whether we liked it or not.'

Minogue sees getting older as empowering, rather than something to fear: 'I'm just really happy to still be working. When I was growing up, I didn't see older women in music and on TV, and so I always thought this was going to be a very short career. But times have changed.' She recalls Cher releasing the song *Believe* in 1998 and everyone being 'in disbelief' that a 52-year-old woman could still be a popstar. 'Thankfully, we're in a different place now and you see Jennifer Lopez doing amazing performances, and it's incredible. If I'm on a magazine cover or a TV show, then that's good for *all* women; I get a buzz out of that.'

She looks after herself but says she isn't obsessive. With happiness has come self-acceptance and it's cheering to see Minogue in such a good headspace after years of struggling. 'I'm never going to have a JLo body – and that's fine,' she says. 'I couldn't think of anything worse than having a trainer come to my house every day. That's not how I want my life to be. I'll go for a bit more squishiness in my body and being in a really good place with accepting who I am.'

Dannii Minogue Petites is available exclusively at qvcuk.com



Family first: The Minogue sisters, Kylie and Dannii



**READER
OFFER**
15% discount
to Psychologies
readers*

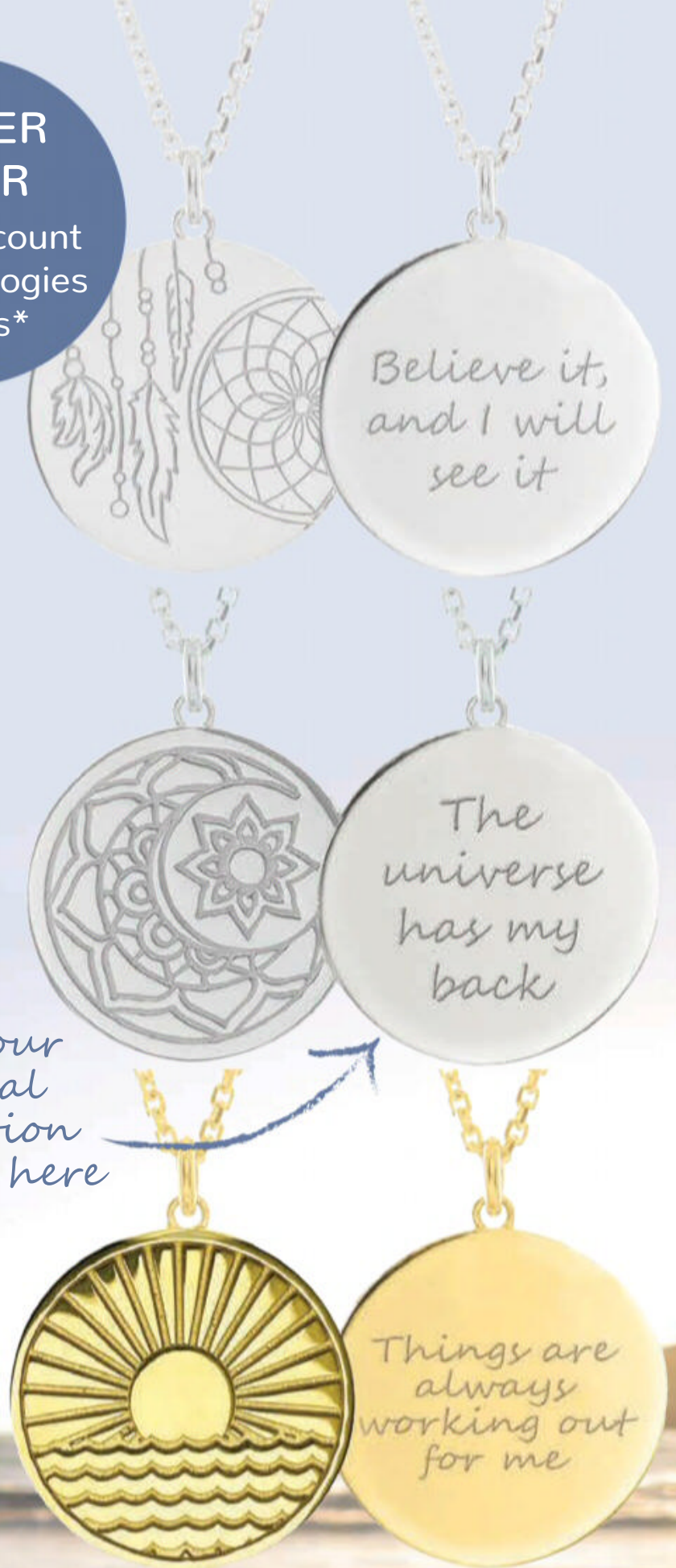
Feel inspired every day
wear a mantra

Choose one of our larger myMantra necklaces, and have your own powerful affirmation engraved on the back, to create a piece of truly personal jewellery.

Use your affirmation to set your intention for the year; overcome a limiting belief; or manifest what you want in life.

Mantra Jewellery. Here to inspire you.

*Have your
personal
affirmation
engraved here*



"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 24th December 2021.

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

LIFE AS I KNOW IT

Works like a dream

An unpractical plan that lights you up is one worth having, reasons Harriet Minter



Does your life ever feel as if you're pushing a very heavy car – one on which you've spent lots of money that has now conked out and will cost you even more – up a very steep hill? You've done everything right: you haven't invested your savings in an untested product or quit your job to pursue your childhood fantasy of becoming a pro ice skater. You have been a sensible, moderate adult getting on with your sensible, moderate life. So why does it feel like such hard work?

This has been me for the past few months. Earlier this year, exhausted as we all were from lockdown and determined to make the next 12 months simpler, I took a long hard look at my sources of income and decided to focus on the ones that provided the most money. A sensible, practical and adult plan. And, in a way, it worked, I'm lucky enough to have had a good financial year and am in a positive place for the next one. But despite doing the right thing, it's sucked the energy out of me and I've worked out why.

Years ago, I realised that I had an aversion to hard work. Don't get me wrong, I don't mind working hard, but hard work isn't for me. What's the difference? For a start, hard work feels as if it never really gets going. You can push and push hard work and it might move a little but there's no celebratory moment when it gets easier and gains momentum. Most importantly, hard work is lacking in joy. Working hard on a project you feel excited

and moved by can be tiring and difficult, but it's ultimately joyful and that is what I've been missing.

So I asked myself what would feel scary but joyful and this is the answer: I'm going to write chick lit and then I'm going to publish it. I know, it's not exactly 'jump out of a helicopter into the Atlantic ocean' territory, but I've got a dodgy back. Yes, being a middle-aged journalist who suddenly decides she wants to write a book about a heroine who will probably be a middle-aged journalist is a cliché but, here's the thing, I don't care. For me, it hits the sweet spot between being joyful enough to make me want to do it and scary enough to make me feel it's worthwhile. So I'm doing it and, while I'm working hard, it doesn't feel remotely like hard work.

As with all good midlife crises, this one hasn't really been thought through. I know very little about writing fiction and even less about what makes a good book. I have the thinnest of ideas for a plot and no plan for how I'm going to fit writing it around the rest of my life but, for the first time in a while, I'm excited. I'm having grand visions of going on a writer's retreat, stomping across moors and having deep thoughts about character development before coming back to my den for crumpets in front of a roaring fire. I've gone full-on Jane Austen with my fantasies and it's giving me life. So now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go and sharpen my quill.

Follow Harriet Minter's writing journey by signing up for her newsletter at harrietminter.com



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

Normal prostate function

Prosta Vital™ is a new all-natural tablet with flower bark and pumpkin seeds. Pumpkin seeds are good for a normal prostate function.



Model Image

New Nordic is a leading manufacturer of herbal supplements. The company, which has 28 years of experience in examining the effect of nature's

beneficial substances, has just created a completely new formulation of herbs that help to preserve normal prostate function and cell division.



Pumpkin Seeds

Cucurbita Pepo also known as pumpkin has its origin in North America. Pumpkin seeds have traditionally been used to support the prostate function. Pumpkin kernels are edible and nutritious. In this tablet, the seeds are carefully selected, dried and extracted to preserve the beneficial herbs. This guarantees a consistent and high quality.



Normal Prostate Function

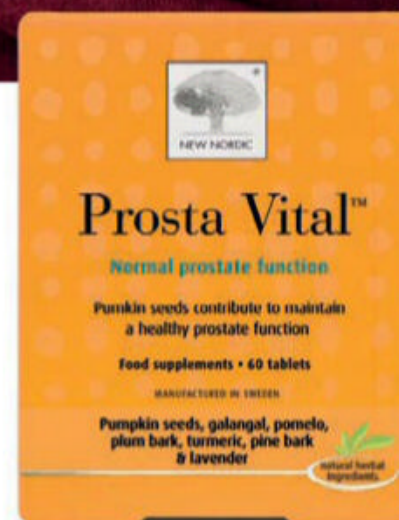
Prostate is also called the bladder neck gland, and is of chestnut size. A normal prostate is approx. 2 cm in diameter and consists of many small glands that produce sperm fluid which, upon release, transports the sperm cells from the urethra to the woman's uterus. The vast majority of organs decrease with age, but the prostate tends

to grow with age. Many men over 50 experience that their prostate is larger than when they were young and that it effects urination.

Prostate and men's health

Prosta Vital™ is a special formulation to help men's health and vitality with specific nutrients. The tablet contains the pumpkin extract, which helps maintain a normal prostate function and folic acid as well as vitamin D, which plays a role in normal cell division.

Prosta Vital is a special formulation containing Pumpkin seeds and a unique herb combination based of French maritime pine bark, pomelo, turmeric, galangal, long and black pepper, lavender and vitamins.



Where to buy Prosta Vital™

Prosta Vital™ is available from Holland & Barrett and leading independent health food stores, or you can purchase online at www.newnordic.co.uk

HOME DELIVERY

Order Prosta Vital™ today and get it delivered straight to your door.

Go to newnordic.co.uk, hollandandbarrett.com or online health stores

OR CALL NOW
0800 389 1255

Holland & Barrett

~ INDEPENDENT ~
Health Food Stores



Mind

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

“Be courageous. Challenge orthodoxy. Stand up for what you believe in. When you are in your rocking chair talking to your grandchildren many years from now, be sure you have a good story to tell”

Amal Clooney



Time to

LET GO?

Does the past haunt you?
Debbi Marco discovers
how to use difficult
events as a springboard
to a happier future

ILLUSTRATIONS: GETTY IMAGES

Do you find yourself fixating on fears brought on by things that happened to your younger self? Maybe you worry that you'll be laughed at during a work presentation because of the time you stood up and spoke in school and wanted the ground to swallow you whole? Or perhaps you're afraid to ask someone out on a date due to all those unrequited crushes you endured as a teenager? Maybe you're scared to visit a supermarket or restaurant because of the fear of coronavirus that has ruled your life in recent months?

The good news is that if you've answered yes to any of the above, you're normal – and, better still, there's plenty you can do today to stop past emotional pain, and even trauma, dictating your tomorrow.

Your brain is actually doing its very best to protect you. The primitive part of it is working hard (possibly a little too hard) to keep you safe and stop you getting hurt as you may have been in the past. But, in order to stop yourself being held back from a life of fulfilment and happiness, sometimes you need to control this part of your brain and apply some intellectual thinking to your reactions.

'The past is where our memory system is designed to work,' explains Dipti Tait, a clinical psychotherapist, hypnotherapist and author of *Planet Grief: Redefining Grief For The Real World*. 'While we have evolved from this primitive system, there's still a part of our mind that is designed to keep us safe and away from threat. If something bad happens, our brain has to hold on to that so we'll remember what to do to get out of similar harmful situations in the future.'

But while your safety-first brain is a useful tool to stop you walking into a busy road or putting your hand into a flame, it could also be holding you back from getting the most out of life. Read on to discover how you can train your brain to let go of negative experiences and grow from them – rather than letting them defeat and define you...

What's the theme?

In order to let go of the past and grow stronger, you need to learn how to recognise what your brain is holding on to – and why. One technique is to find a common thread, explains Danny Greeves, a coach who specialises in confidence.

'When you are in a problem state, such as feeling overwhelmed at work, after a painful break-up or while you're experiencing family struggles, it can be difficult to take a step back and find out what the true causes are,' Greeves explains. 'Try narrowing it down and finding the thread.'

Start by drawing a timeline across a piece of paper and dividing it into five-year segments.

Work backwards and mark on your timeline all the painful and challenging events you have experienced that involved the same or similar problems. For example, when you went blank doing a work presentation two years ago and when you went through your painful divorce seven years ago. Keep working backwards through your timeline, all the way back to include things from your school days – for example, if you were bullied.

Mapping out these seemingly unconnected events on a single timeline will help you to make sense of your life, rather than leaving you uncertain or confused about why you are feeling a particular way. That can lead to one of the most common mistakes we make: to blame ourselves for not being good enough or strong enough.

By using your timeline to combat this thinking, you will understand how a situation or feeling was created, and you can begin to formulate a plan to overcome it. This way, your current problem will begin to make sense and you will feel more able to work through it with confidence.

Release out-of-date ideas

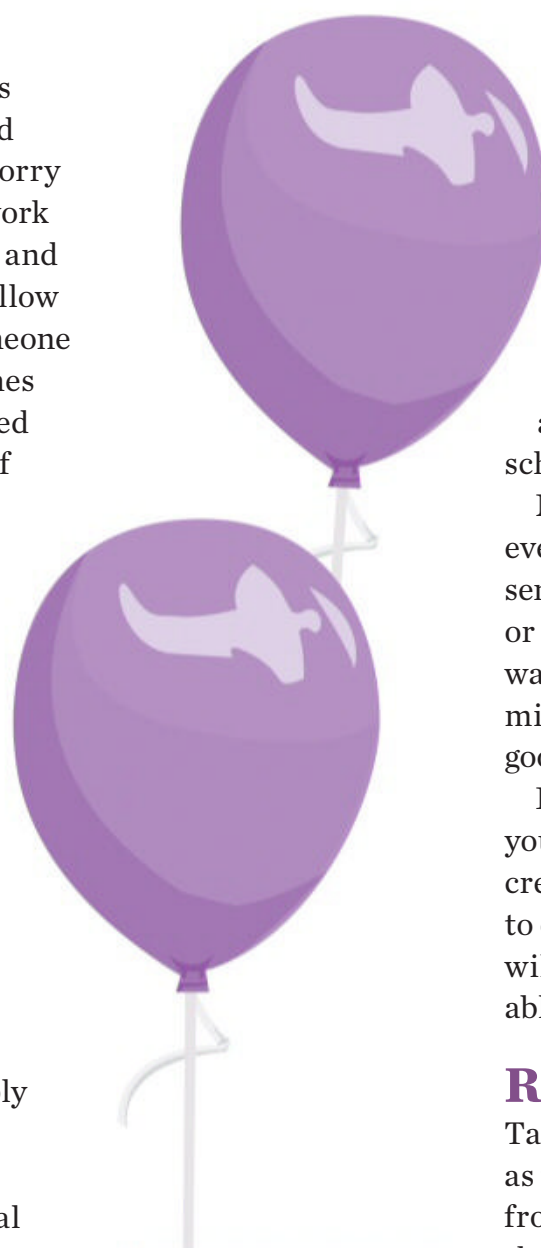
Tait recommends looking at negative thoughts as though they are Post-it notes stuck to the front of your brain. 'It's our job to regularly go through those sticky notes and reference whether they are still relevant, or whether there is an obsolete note that is no longer needed,' she says. 'Some are useful and keep us safe, such as looking both ways before crossing the road. If we can audit these Post-it notes regularly, our past can give us information so we can stay safe for our future – but ensure it doesn't dictate it.'

She explains further: 'When our primitive mind and our intellectual mind are both switched on, we have intellectual control. We have the ability to look at the facts and find evidence, and we have a way of planning properly – we're able to look at our current reality and make a proper assessment of the situation. This is our left prefrontal cortex working.'

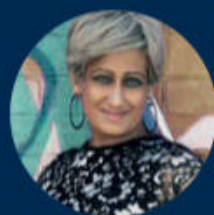
Plan for bravery

Another technique to help you move forward with your new way of thinking is thought stacking. This can halt negative emotions from past events that may skew your thinking and lead you to run away from amazing opportunities, such as starting a business you've always dreamed of or asking someone out on a date.

'Negative emotions cloud your thinking and make you play it safe rather than going all out,' says Greeves. 'To make sure past events aren't blocking your future success, make a list of all of the benefits and advantages taking this opportunity will give



Expert advice



Dipti Tait is a clinical psychotherapist and author of *'Planet Grief: Redefining Grief For The Real World'* (The History Press, £18.99)



Danny Greeves is a life coach and hypnotherapist. dannygreevescoaching.com

you. More than likely, you will be conscious of around five benefits the opportunity may provide you – but these probably pale in comparison to the fears you have about doing it.’

Write clear, specific benefits, and continue to stack them up. Slowly your perception of the opportunity will change and you will tip the balance from fear to excitement. When you have enough reasons, the pull from those past events will be released and you become motivated to take action.

Empty the stress container

It can be helpful to imagine your brain as having a wastepaper basket that gets filled up with stress, says Tait. When you go to sleep at night, rapid eye movement (REM) sleep occurs, which is a little like being in a trance. It is thought that when you enter this state, your brain empties the stress basket, so you’re able to start fresh the next day. If you don’t empty the basket efficiently, you stay a bit stressed. The next day, stress fills the basket faster and it overflows.

‘If this happens, you can easily go into emotional overwhelm,’ explains Tait, ‘which kicks you out of your intellectual mind and keeps you trapped in your primitive, high-alert mind. Techniques such as hypnotherapy force you to go into REM or a trance, which will empty that stress basket. This way, you’re able to appropriately deal with events, rather than edging back into a danger zone.’


Other ways you can reduce anxiety or empty your stress container are to take part in activities that bring you gentle relaxation, such as going for a walk, having a bath, practising yoga or doing repetitive exercise, such as running or swimming. Repetition will relax your mind and body and calm your nervous system.

Re-examine the past

While it can be a struggle, there is increasing research that shows how painful and difficult events, such as being fired from your job, being involved in an accident or the break-up of key relationships, can lead to personal growth, says Greeves.

This can take a long time, so it’s easy to lose the connection between the event and the growth, making you resentful of the trauma rather than recognising that it was, in fact, a learning experience. ‘Try re-examining those events from where you are now and ask yourself what you learned, how you grew and what the benefits and advantages of going through that experience were,’ advises Greeves.

He recalls once working with a woman who had broken up with her husband, following an affair, after many years together. At first, the woman became depressed and struggled with anxiety. Her initial view of these events was that the situation was completely negative. However, after re-examining her relationship, she realised it was far from perfect.



“Letting go of the past may feel scary at first; be kind to yourself and don’t rush it”

While married, she always had to ask her husband for money, so she made a point of learning about finances, became empowered by her own money and created freedom for herself that she hadn’t enjoyed in years. Her husband mainly wanted to stay in and watch TV, while she loved music, dancing and socialising. After the divorce, she started going to dance classes and live events, where she met wonderful new friends. It was only after re-examining these events and the changes they allowed her to make that she realised the improvements she had been able to experience, and how wonderful that felt. By turning trauma into growth, you can release negative emotions.

Take it slowly

Letting go of the past may feel scary at first, so be kind to yourself and don’t rush it. Think about what you personally need to do to feel comfortable. Ask yourself what’s true or real about your situation, then think about what you could do to get more information or education about it.

‘Our emotional mind can easily take over and muddle things very quickly,’ says Tait. ‘But if we can find a way to stay factual and intellectual, we can still use our emotions to guide us. Our thoughts have an effect on our feelings, our feelings have an effect on our behaviour, our behaviour has an effect on our experience and our experience has an effect on our reality.’

Try incorporating some of these techniques to create better thoughts, have better feelings and better experiences, which will all result in a better reality. Let go of the past and embrace your future.

3 ways to free yourself from painful experiences

1

Write down the event on paper so it's out of your head. Say it out loud and how long ago it happened.

2

Try two minutes of deep breathing to bring you into the present and out of the past.

3

Identify the most upsetting aspect of the moment, focusing on only one event to make it manageable.

An illustration of a stage with a dark blue brick wall background. In the foreground, three stylized human figures are seen from behind: a man in a blue sweater, a woman in an orange sweater, and a man in a light blue sweater. To the left, a large, faint, stylized number '6' is visible. Above the figures, there are silhouettes of stage lights and a spotlight beam shining down. On the right, a small table holds a water bottle.

Coaching in action

Make change happen

Award-winning coach Kim Morgan helps a client find strategies to reboot her life after years of procrastination and self-sabotage

Session three...

Naomi* initially came to coaching because she was failing at work, then laughing it off in her customary way as if she didn't care. But she was desperate to change her self-defeating behaviour.

She arrived for our third session in a subdued mood and immediately started talking about a friend who had married

into a wealthy family and had changed 'beyond all recognition'. This friend didn't see her old friends any more, Naomi told me, and now spoke and behaved differently.

I take notice of the first thing someone says when they arrive for a session – these words can often give an insight into what's really going on for the client. What they say may be random, but it can be a way of the client communicating an unconscious concern of their own by telling a story about someone else. It's a bit like the old

joke: 'Doctor, my friend has this problem...' – it's easier to express difficult thoughts and feelings about someone else.

I asked Naomi, 'Are you worried about changing "beyond all recognition"?''

She looked at me for while, then said: 'I think maybe I am. I'm scared of fulfilling my potential, losing my friends and not knowing who I am. I got used to telling myself and others that I was a failure and a procrastinator. I had loads of funny tales to tell and even wore a T-shirt with the slogan "Underachiever and proud of it".'



I asked her what price she had paid for making a joke of her failures. She pointed at herself and said, 'The tears of a clown.'

My heart went out to Naomi. It can be hard to change, and the process needs to be carefully managed. Naomi had developed behaviour and habits in her childhood to help her cope with difficult situations. She was now having to let go of what was familiar, and she needed strategies and support to create change.

I remembered a story about bears being released into the wild after being

kept in cages for years. When first set free, although they had space to wander, the animals paced backwards and forwards in a small area as if they were still in cages. Naomi and I talked about her moving from a comfort zone into a stretch zone, but not making too many drastic changes too quickly, which could take her into a panic zone.

We agreed that she would also find a group of people who could act as cheerleaders to support and challenge her to make the changes she wanted to make.

I also reassured Naomi that our coaching was not about expecting her to change 'beyond all recognition' but about her gaining increased self-awareness and the confidence to make small alterations to help her live life in a fulfilled way.

I asked Naomi: 'If you learn to value yourself, allow yourself to shine, stop putting yourself down and procrastinating, what could be the best possible outcome for you?'

Naomi grinned. 'I do have a dream, actually. I want to do stand-up, write comedy and have a podcast. I've got loads of gags – I've been working on them all my life. I know I can make people laugh and this is something I would *love* to do! And, it wouldn't mean that I was going to become a different person. I now know I am not interested in work qualifications – but I am passionately interested in getting good at stand-up.'

I thought this was a fantastic idea. It would combine something Naomi loved, something that played to her strengths, something that would give her meaning *and* something that may even make her money – a great checklist!

barefootcoaching.co.uk; @BarefootCoaches

Further sessions

By the time our coaching came to an end, Naomi had a clear strategy, a support network and had booked stand-up courses and comedy-writing classes that she was excited about.

She was confident she would not put these off or skip them because they had meaning for her in a way that her nine-to-five work did not.

As we parted company, Naomi warned me with a smile that I may appear as a 'woo-woo coach' character in her stand-up routine. I can't wait to see her in action!

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



Work it out!

Follow these five simple steps and pave the way for long-term change and lasting rewards

Create new habits

Challenging unhelpful behaviour can bring great benefits. Here are some key strategies for successful change:

- **Take it slowly.** Small changes every day can lead to bigger, long-term changes. Identify little wins for yourself. If you want to exercise more, begin by walking for 15 minutes and gradually increase the time.

- **Remind yourself of the benefits of your new behaviour and how the changes will affect your future.**

Also acknowledge what will happen if you don't make the changes.

- **Make it easy for yourself to change your habits.** Plan your diary, set reminders for yourself and have all the necessary kit or equipment to hand.

- **Tell other people (who you trust and respect) about the changes you are making.** Ask them to support you in your new behaviour and challenge you (kindly) to help you stay on track.

- **Remind yourself that it is normal to have setbacks and that one slip-up won't undo your hard work.** Be kind to yourself and remember that tomorrow is another day.



Seek feedback from those who matter

Choose five people whose opinions you trust and respect to answer the following questions about you. Send them the questions by email so you will receive written responses that you can keep. When you have received all the responses, notice if there are common themes; if one person says you are great, it is easy to shrug it off, thinking they are just being kind, but it's harder to argue with five people whose opinions really matter to you. Reread the responses to support you through times of change.

What do you value most about me?

What do you consider to be my greatest strength?

What do you think is my most significant achievement?

What one thing could I change for my own benefit?

If you could give me any gift, what would it be?

CHALLENGE YOUR INNER CRITIC

The way we talk to ourselves can diminish our confidence and ability to change. Examples of negative self-talk are putting yourself down, beating yourself up for making a mistake, focusing on the negatives and discounting the positives, overgeneralising, using lots of shoulds and oughts and blaming yourself for just about everything!

Notice when your inner critic is at work and question: 'Would I say this to a friend?' or 'Would I let someone else say this to me?'

Challenge your inner critic and change your self-talk to something more accurate and balanced: 'I may not have done that perfectly, but I tried my best and next time I will be even better at it... I am growing and changing.'

A moment of calm



LAIID-BACK LAVENDER

Silence anxious thoughts, say hello to a peaceful mind and enjoy a restful night's sleep, thanks to this most soothing and aromatic of flowers... behold, the wonder of lavender!

Hailing from the mint family with its delicate, sweet, floral scent and vibrant purple flowers, lavender has been used for generations to help combat symptoms of stress and anxiety, as well as promote relaxation. But gone are the days when we associated it with the bowl of potpourri gathering dust, or sachets nestling in the sock drawer at Grandma's house.

Lavender has so much more to offer than its delicate fragrance: 'Lavender is often used as an essential oil in aromatherapy and has been considered a wellbeing hero for hundreds of years,' says Chris Etheridge, a medical herbalist and chair of the British Herbal Medicine Association.

Calming companion

'Lavender has been shown to work on our parasympathetic nervous system, which controls all bodily processes associated with anxiety, such as breathing, heart rate and hormones,' says Etheridge. 'Studies have proven it to be effective at reducing stress levels and even

shown it to be efficient at combatting depression and other mental health issues, such as low mood. It can also aid digestion and calm an irritable tummy.'

A sleep saviour

Etheridge adds: 'Studies reveal that lavender has a positive impact on sleep and improves our chances of enjoying good-quality kip. This is because it contains compounds that inhibit certain neurotransmitters, creating a sedative effect. There's nothing more important for wellbeing than a good night's sleep.'

Harness lavender

Lavender can also be taken as a tincture and in tablet form. 'It is generally well tolerated with few side effects when used correctly,' says Etheridge. 'But care should be used when using the essential oil undiluted on the skin, as rare allergic reactions can occur.' bhma.info

PICK OF THE PRODUCTS

For a simple and natural way to ease daily stress and anxiety, try Kalms one-a-day lavender capsules, £6.49 for 14.

boots.com



At bedtime, apply a little Puressestiel Rest & Relax organic massage oil, £14.99, containing lavender and neroli, and drift off into a restful slumber.

uk.puressestiel.com



Spritz your pillow with Boots Sleeppeaze lavender pillow mist, £6, to help you float off to dreamland with a relaxed smile. boots.com



For a scent of lavender while out and about, try enriching Cotswold Lavender hand cream, £6.80, to soothe your skin and your senses.

cotswoldlavender.co.uk



The name lavender comes from the Latin verb 'lavare', which means to wash, so it's no surprise this purple herb is found in many cleaning and skincare products.

Let tradition be your guide



When you ache for those loved and lost, or feel something is missing in your life, centuries-old habits can root you to your past and bring you comfort, writes Vee Sey



In my recurring nightmare, I am not being chased by murderous thugs or standing nude as a Rubens in front of strangers... rather, I develop knobbly-jointed arthritis

in my oversized 'man hands' (thanks to the friend who made that observation) and cannot knit.

I am not a creator of intricate cables, nor do I do it for mindful meditation (which it is), or to induce a state of psychological flow (which it does). When I clack my needles together, I can feel my mother beside me, like when I was a little girl. I do it because, even after all these years, I yearn for her, and knitting delivers her to me instantly, emotionally and sensuously: The reassuring warmth of her, the mothering scent of her, the familiar image of her skilful fingers laced through her wool.

I have been knitting with more passion than talent since the age of five, wedged between Mum and Granny on the sofa, three generations of women in a production line of tradition. We drank tea that I slopped on my multicoloured blanket squares and dunked copious sugary biscuits that made for squeaky needles – and I felt a primal sense of belonging as I eavesdropped on the secret women's talk of the knitting circle. These were my women. I am from them and of them, and we knit.

When I dropped a stitch mid-row, or the needles fell clean out of my work because my tension was so slack, Mum would patiently pick them up for me while Granny tut-tutted because my scarf was more hole than fabric. Granny's wartime patterns caused much embarrassment to us as children. She insisted on winter *helmets* – just shy of a balaclava, I tell you – to banish both cold and dignity. But what I would give to have those garments now, family artefacts richly imbued with memories and care.

I have foisted similar sartorial shame on my children, drawers full of heat rash-inducing jerseys overflowing with love but short on cool while they were young and powerless over what they would wear. I miss the days before they had such strong opinions...

The customs of our tribe bring a sense of identity and remind us of our heritage, which has become more important to me as I have matured – for now I am the matriarch, a role I have yet to grow into in my head.

Many of us have left our extended families, communities and cultural practices behind us. Nowadays, my ancestors call to me and ask when I am coming home... But, of course, I *am* home. Many of us cannot visit graves or meaningful places from our childhood, but we can keep our traditions alive and create new ones for this lifetime and beyond. We can knit, we can cook family recipes and sing the songs of our kinfolk. I know I sound like an advert for a hippy-dippy festival in a waterlogged field, but there's a reason they are popular. History. Affinity. Roots. We must remember our roots, even if we cannot deepen our connection with the soil of our origin in person.

I am protective of my knitter's identity, mocked as she is for being a singleton or a hausfrau with no interest in the sophisticated world of, dare I say it, men. Historically, they were the knitters, first of fishing nets and then clothing for trade. But when knitting frames were invented and men could not compete with their speed, the chaps cast off; my guess is they did not like a contest they could not win – but they missed the point.

While my daughter prefers to cross-stitch *The Simpsons* characters, and we sit nattering as she does so, my heart nearly burst with joy when my son declared that he was taking up knitting. He was not inspired by his nostalgic mother's adoration of the craft, it was Tom Daley during the Olympics, but I'll take it, because it's a family tradition – and he's excellent at secret women's talk. @veejanesey





psychologies inspiration

*“Winter is
a season of
recovery and
preparation”*

Paul Theroux

A young woman with long, wavy red hair and black-rimmed glasses is smiling broadly, her eyes closed. She is wearing a white, textured knit sweater and dark blue pants. Her right hand is raised to her head, and her left hand is resting on her shoulder. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

**ME,
MYSELF**

It's a cliché of many a film: the young protagonist, about to embark on some socially terrifying adventure, is sent on their way by a well-meaning relative or friend with a 'just be yourself' farewell, a magical panacea for achieving charisma and success. But experience tells us these coming-of-age movies usually end up landing in a far more ambiguous place when it comes to the truth of this statement – something more akin to 'be yourself... with a makeover', 'be yourself... only cooler' or 'be yourself... but *better*.'

And yet, these films resonate for a reason. I can't be alone in having spent my schooldays reluctantly trying to fit in – swapping my real and unique identity for something safe, 'normal' and conformist, and constantly cursing myself for never managing to fake it convincingly enough.

In fact, when I finally made it to university, every small, daring step towards myself was revelatory. It was the 1990s, when everyone was dressed in jeans, T-shirt and hoodie. But I decided now was the time to stop trying to figure out what I liked and disliked based on other people's preferences and instead, in a conscious effort to be myself, I started wearing skirts and dresses every damn day.

It might sound rather frivolous, but making my outside appearance match more closely with the kind of person I felt I was on the inside felt thrillingly subversive. It's amazing how eloquent a floofy skirt can be when it comes to saying, 'I am a romantic and a bit of a dreamer, if a little impractical!' Far from being some externally enforced makeover designed to make me more palatable to other people, this was about becoming more palatable to myself.

To the small group of friends in my student halls at least, I started admitting that I liked poetry

more than nightclubs – and that I didn't, in fact, find politics boring. And, as if by magic, having admitted these truths, I found myself doing and talking about more of the things that I cared about. In this safe little space, the stress of keeping up a facade slowly faded away.

Yet, despite these steps in the right direction, and my sure sense that hiding or dampening down aspects of my personality was no recipe for happiness, it's a habit that's been surprisingly hard to shake as an adult. Being yourself is a pretty alarming prospect when you've spent years thinking your true self is too quirky, emotional or demanding to be allowed to wander the world without some sort of mask of social acceptability. And this feeling is magnified when being female often means absorbing subtle messages about being flexible and accommodating, putting



AND

Kate Townshend reflects on why 'be yourself' is the best advice you'll ever receive

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES

other people's choices and preferences head and shoulders above your own.

In social situations, even now, especially those with people I probably won't see again, the temptation is still there – to make my accent sharper or softer depending on the company; to dumb down aspects of my intellect in case I seem snobby or arrogant.

Even when I can resist the urge to conform to what people might expect of me, I sometimes simply replace this with a kind of shyness. Post-teenage me is less willing to pretend to be someone else long term – but *is* sometimes willing to keep my identity hidden when I'm not sure if people will like or accept me.

And let's face it, as with those teen movies, there are plenty of mixed messages that we're all still assailed with in daily life that can make it tricky to step outside these paradigms in any meaningful way. From workplace dress codes to externally constructed visions of what it means to be the perfect mother, friend or partner to childhood 'lessons' we might struggle to disregard (don't make a fuss, get on with it, don't show off), there are constant, veiled pressures exerted on our identity.

Navit Schechter, a CBT therapist, coach and writer, acknowledges that it can be tough to embrace ourselves 'quirks and all'. 'Many of us were brought up with a firm focus on our physical health and getting a good education, but with less concern for our emotional health and wellbeing,' she says.

'When we aren't helped to embrace all parts of ourselves, we might learn to believe that we're not quite acceptable the way we are. As an adult, you might hide who you are as a result, or give yourself a hard time for those qualities in yourself that you don't quite like. But this will only serve to reinforce the unhelpful beliefs about your acceptability throughout your life.'

This is certainly an experience that feels familiar. In the past, the harder I've tried to fit the mould that other people expect, the more insecure I've felt. Performing a role that isn't really you or, even worse, allowing other people's view about who you should

be to become more important than your own can be exhausting and demoralising.

It isn't easy to overcome this conditioning. For me, it's been a process of baby steps – from those first outfit rebellions at university to slowly revealing more of my inner passions, not just in those 'safe' spaces, but as an unapologetic default. After all, I like and enjoy the things I do because I feel they have value. Hiding them, or acting as if I'm ashamed of them, saps their value and, in turn, makes me think less of myself.

It's not about forcing strangers to listen to the minutiae of your life story, of course. But on those occasions that I've been brave and opened up to people, there have been moments of meaning and real connection between us that I know I wouldn't have experienced otherwise. And when someone's eyes light up as you show them something you find funny, terrifying or important – when they engage with enthusiasm – you're inspired to keep on being brave and honest and the whole experience becomes a rewarding feedback loop.

Even on those rare occasions when people are baffled and unable to relate to the inner you (I recall a couple of workplaces and friendships where I felt like this – an anecdote or suggestion falling flat, or being the only one to cry my way through the final scenes of a movie everyone else declared 'dull'), you realise this isn't quite the terrifying rejection you may have imagined. There can even be a certain satisfaction in continuing to be who you are in direct defiance of expectations. I don't actually need anyone else to approve of my love of fantasy fiction, obsession with the sea or inability to make small talk. When I set their worth, nobody else is able to take that away.

So, while it's taken me a long time to get here, I've learned a secret about identity: embracing who we really are on the inside – without adopting apology or compromise as a default position – can be incredibly powerful. And I've found this to be the case particularly during times of hardship or struggle.

"Leaning into your identity is great for your relationships... If we hide ourselves too well, we miss finding our soulmates, our tribe"



When mental health troubles have eroded my sense of self in the past (it's hard to feel like 'you' when you've spent six days straight in your pyjamas weeping), simple things such as reading a favourite book or putting on an outfit that reminds me of the non-poorly version of myself can be a real boon, as well as providing tiny increments of healing.

I've also found that leaning into your identity is great for your relationships. Shel Silverstein's poem *Every Thing On It* reads: 'She had blue skin, and so did he. He kept it hid and so did she. They searched for blue their whole life through. Then passed right by – and never knew.' The obvious poignancy here is that if we hide ourselves too well, we miss finding our soulmates, our tribe. We can't be accepted if we don't show anyone the things for which we feel we need to be accepted. Conversely, being honest about who you are means knowing the people who turn up are really there for you, flaws and all. It means that you know the people who love you love *all* of you. What could be more wonderful than that?

As Schechter explains: 'Unapologetically being you, and seeing others accepting you for it, can feel daunting at first. But discovering that, whoever you are, there will be people who resonate with you, can feel freeing, and incredibly exhilarating.'

The final piece of this identity puzzle is that being yourself, once you've silenced the voices in your head saying otherwise, is fun! Dolly Parton (and in the interests of owning my identity, I admit to being a fan) famously said: 'Find out who you are and do it on purpose.' It is exciting to give yourself permission to indulge in this journey of self-discovery.

I've even come to believe that, like Dolly, the people who are truly being and embracing themselves, without trying to compete with or compare themselves with others, are the shiniest, loveliest, most magnetic people to be around. I'm not pretending to be there just yet, but I'm trying. Importantly, this is also a reminder that 'being yourself' doesn't mean having to be loud or flashy, unless that's who you really are, in which case, go for it. I've found it's a way to make peace with my own introvert nature – my need for quiet, green spaces sometimes and my desire to listen and understand before I speak.

It does, however, mean banishing impostor syndrome, because you're allowing yourself to acknowledge the things you are good at and value your unique qualities, regardless of how the world weighs them. It means a core sense of certainty and rootedness, regardless of the slings and arrows of good and bad fortune life chooses to throw at you.

So, yes, maybe it is courageous to be yourself, but the reward for that bravery is the knowledge that being yourself is OK after all. No movie makeovers required.

consciousandcalm.com

Be the change you want to see...

Do you care about people and want a fresh start in your life and career? Training to be a coach could be the exciting transformation you need. But where do you begin, and what does it involve?



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

After experiencing the overwhelm of balancing a full-time leadership role with three university courses, Hannah Turner turned to Barefoot-trained coach Pam Cottman. She now enjoys living her passion every day, helping groups and individuals thrive through team and executive coaching.

1 Coaching helped me identify what was important to me, going beyond the things I thought I 'should' care about. Pam encouraged me to work creatively – something that helps me get out of my usual patterns of thinking – and I created a picture that acts as a daily reminder of what really matters.

2 I learned that I had options. Overwhelmed by my former set-up, I felt hopeless, as if my only option was to fail – fail my courses and fail at my job. Using my picture as a guide for where I wanted to be, Pam helped me see that I had several choices. Granted, some were

more appealing than others, but they were choices nonetheless.

3 I took the leap – and I haven't looked back. The options I chose to progress involved me changing how I worked. Given that my job provided financial stability for my home and interests, I was scared to change. Pam helped me find courage and enough self-support to step forward through my choices to the boldest one of all: I left my job to follow my ultimate passions. Pam helped me find confidence in my skills, experience and the support around me.

findyourwayltd.com

“Coaching helped me identify what was important to me, going beyond the things I thought I ‘should’ care about”

HOW I BECAME A COACH

Pam Cottman

When I left my assistant head teacher role, I had no idea what to do next. Working with a career coach reminded me of what I loved most about my work: supporting others to reach their potential. Finding Barefoot felt like coming home. I'm now an accredited coach, working with schools, organisations and individuals.



Carolyn Hawley

I studied psychology at university, then went into HR, so I always had a fascination for people. After hearing about coaching, I wanted to understand it, so did some research and was drawn to Barefoot Coaching. It sounded exciting and I had a feeling they were my kind of people... and I was right! It is a never-ending journey of discovery. I love it!



Amanda Cookson

I chose to train with Barefoot because they had the most person-centred approach, plus I'd gain a qualification and ICF credentials. I learned early on that coaching is a practice – the more you do it, the better you become. My practice began with volunteers for free coaching and working with them built my confidence, network and referrals.



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.

**BOOK
NOW!**
VISIT

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



**BAREFOOT
COACHING**

Give the perfect gift this Christmas!

Treat a loved one to a 'Psychologies' magazine subscription and save up to 35%





Hello!

We all know that finding something special for those you love can be a challenge. You'll find some

great ideas in our gift guide on page 118, but if you're after something even more unique, what could be better than joy, wisdom and inspiration delivered to their doorstep each month?

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the flood of ideas in shops and online, but if you want to give something truly special, sharing this magazine could be the perfect gift. Plus, your loved one will also receive a beautiful scented candle, worth £16.95, from Scentered, to bring a little light and joy during the winter months – just like 'Psychologies'!

So share the best gift this Christmas and help your loved ones discover how to take some small steps to make a big difference in their lives.

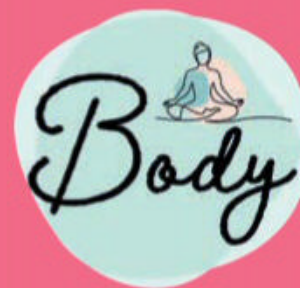
Sally x

Editor,
Psychologies

GREAT REASONS TO GIVE A SUBSCRIPTION

- Pay from just £39.99 for a year's subscription
- SAVE up to 35% on the cover price
- Receive a Scentered candle, worth £16.95
- Every issue will be delivered to the recipient's door
- Plus, they'll get FREE membership to the *Psychologies* subscriber club, receiving exclusive benefits including FREE coaching programmes

Feel fulfilled in every aspect of your life...



Terms & conditions: Subscription offer available for UK customers only. Savings are based on the standard cover price of £4.80. Offer ends 31 December 2021. 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. Gift subject to availability.

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

- You may unsubscribe at any time

Don't miss out – order today!

Order online at SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/PY1221

Call now on 01959 543747* Quote ref: PY1221

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

Understand obsessive thoughts

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

How often have you heard a friend describe themselves as 'a bit OCD' about loading the dishwasher or never wearing odd socks? It's a common and throwaway phrase these days, which we often use to describe a desire to do something to a particular standard.

There's no doubt that many of us have experienced this feeling in certain areas of our lives – we all like things to be done a certain way... However, the psychological condition that is obsessive-compulsive disorder is a very different beast.

Radha Modgil, a medical doctor, and experts from the Mental Health Foundation shed a light on OCD and other forms of obsessive behaviour to help you spot the signs and identify when you, or someone you love, might need support. They offer reassurance, highlight potential causes and symptoms, and share tips on how to get help.

What is OCD?

'OCD is one of the most common mental illnesses,' explains Dr Radha. 'It can start in childhood, but may come to the fore in early adulthood. People with OCD often have obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviour that they have to carry out in order to reduce anxiety centred around their obsession. We may think their behaviour is "quirky" and make light of it, but OCD can be distressing for those it affects and can greatly interfere with that

person's life because they are unable to complete tasks without obsessive thoughts and compulsions taking over.'

Why does it happen?

Dr Radha says it's not clear what causes OCD. 'There are a number of factors that may be at play – from a life event to family history, personality type or genetics. Whatever the cause, the aim is to recognise the symptoms and learn how to manage them, so you can live life to the full.

'It can be hard to spot if a friend or family member has OCD because many people feel ashamed of their condition and hide their symptoms and behaviour. It is therefore more important than ever that we understand more about OCD.'

The pandemic effect

Sadly, for many people living with OCD, coronavirus may have worsened symptoms and patterns of behaviour, particularly obsessive cleaning, handwashing and intrusive thoughts about germs and contamination. Disruption to treatment or support may also have had an impact, leaving sufferers feeling isolated.

'If you've been affected, please don't delay in seeking help,' says Dr Radha.

REACH OUT

'Firstly, you should never feel ashamed or embarrassed about OCD,' urges Dr Radha. 'It is a health condition like any other and there are many people and organisations that can help you manage your symptoms, so you can live the life you deserve.

'If you feel you need help, start with a visit to your GP, who can offer advice and refer you to the right support,' she says. 'There are also a number of charities that can put you in touch with the right support groups in your area, where you can chat to others living with OCD.'

Try one of the following:

- OCD Action; ocdaction.org.uk
- OCD-UK; ocduk.org
- TOP UK; topuk.org
- HealthUnlocked OCD forum; healthunlocked.com

"People feel ashamed of their condition and hide their symptoms and behaviour"



“Compulsions are repetitive acts that a person feels driven to perform as a result of distress caused by their obsession”

Identify the signs

‘OCD affects everyone differently,’ explains Dr Radha, ‘but it usually involves certain thoughts and behaviour, and there are three main elements of which to be aware:

Obsessions. This is when an unwanted, intrusive and often distressing thought, image or urge repeatedly enters a person’s mind. These thoughts can range from worrying that they forgot to lock the door to thinking that an object or place is contaminated with germs.

Emotions. Understandably, for many people, their obsessions cause a feeling of intense anxiety or distress – until they carry out the behaviour that alleviates their acute discomfort.

Compulsions. This is repetitive physical behaviour or mental acts that a person with OCD feels driven to perform as a result of the anxiety and distress caused by their obsession. This behaviour might include ordering or rearranging items, repeatedly checking something, such as that the gas is off or the window is closed, or cleaning and washing their hands multiple times.’

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS

● **Be brave and attempt to take action.** ‘Research shows that one of the most successful ways to tackle OCD is exposure therapy with response prevention (ERP),’ explains Dr Radha. ‘This is where you gradually face or expose yourself to the things or situations that trigger the obsessions or anxiety, while at the same time trying not to perform your usual compulsive behaviour (checking, cleaning and so on). This is often directed or supported by clinicians, but there are NHS guides to help you develop

your own exposure routine once you are able.’

For more, see [nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/overview](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder-ocd/overview)

● **Try not to feel pigeonholed because everyone is unique.** ‘Remember that OCD has an impact on individuals in different ways in terms of their thoughts and behaviour. This behaviour takes varied forms and is not limited to the acts mentioned in this article,’ stresses Dr Radha.

Lightbulb moments

Some things never change

Take comfort in our shared human experience, and our shared humanity, says psychologist Kimberley Wilson, author of *How To Build A Healthy Brain*. Someone, somewhere knows just how you feel...

I would like to share a translated extract of a letter written by a woman named Safra to her unfaithful husband:

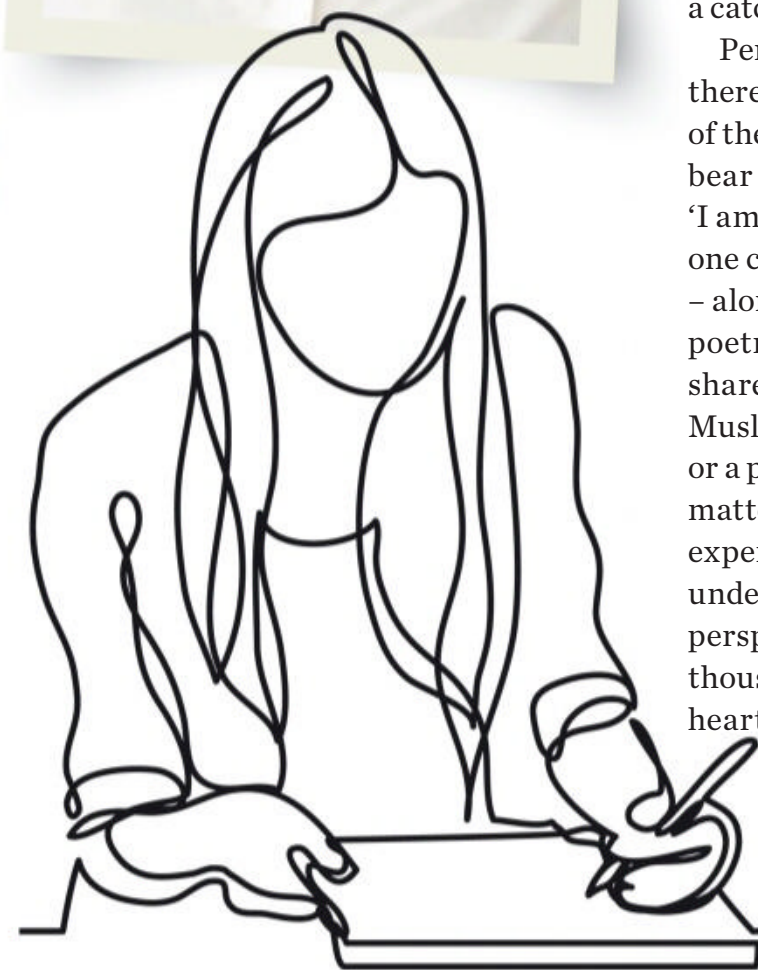
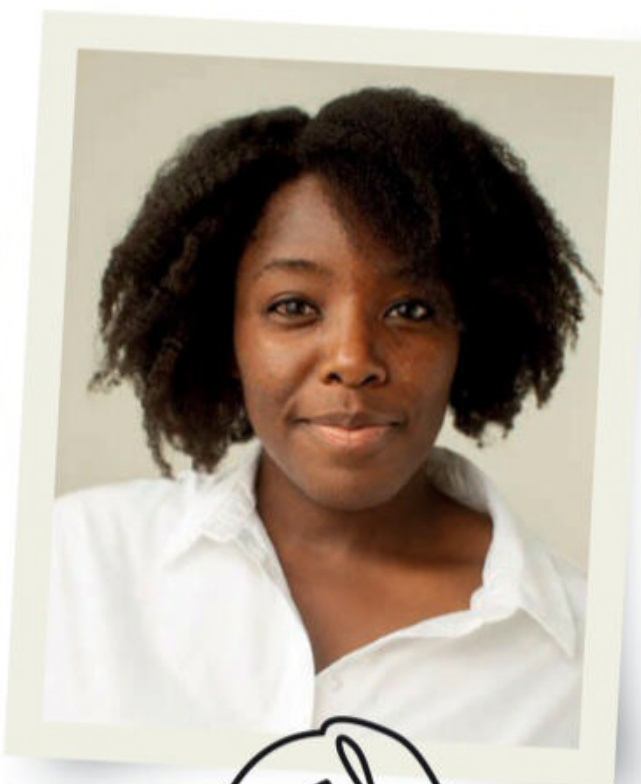
'I have learned what you have secretly told your beauty [your lover], and that you say to her, "I have no pleasure in her [Safra's] appearance," even that you have divulged our secrets.

Are these the qualities of people of a good house and decent upbringing? If I were not Muslim, I would curse you proudly day and night, secretly and publicly.

However, there is no reason for this disgusting, angry talk. Never has anyone who has been unfaithful to the spouse talked before like you. I did not do anything to you that could cause this talk. I treasured you despite your wanderings. But you did not honour me and did not honour yourself either.'

Safra's husband has been having an affair for two years and, on top of this, he has disparaged her appearance to the other woman. In understandable fury, she reproaches him for disgracing her, himself and his upbringing.

Full disclosure: I can't say Safra's letter was shared with her permission – it was written on papyrus in 12th-century Egypt and I read it in the Museum of the Austrian National Library. What struck me was how



such a letter could just as easily have been written the day before. In spite of our technological advances, much of human nature – and therefore human experience – has remained unchanged in the centuries since Safra put pen to papyrus. (In the note, she also chastises her husband for spending too much time in the pub!)

Humans have been struggling with the same challenges for millennia. Four-thousand years before Safra wrote her letter, the ancient Egyptians codified the punishment for adultery: death by fire. And 800 years after her, Justin Timberlake co-wrote *Cry Me A River*, a catchy take on the story of infidelity.

Perhaps, rather unexpectedly, I think there is a lot of consolation here. One of the features of pain that is hardest to bear is the sense of existential isolation: 'I am the only one who feels like this. No one could understand.' But Safra's story – along with much of popular music, poetry and literature – illuminates our shared humanity. Whether you are a Muslim woman in 12th-century Egypt or a pop star in modern America, no matter how alone you feel with your experience, someone, somewhere understands. There is solace in the perspective gained from knowing that thousands have survived this kind of heartache – and you can too.

Here's to you, Safra.

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



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**

Despite 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, or contact us via email at 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

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 mary@psychologies.co.uk, with 'Mary' 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

“Life's back to normal but I still feel on edge

Q After 18 months of having my three children at home much of the time, I feel as if life should be getting back to normal now that they have returned to school. But I'm still jumpy and have problems thinking ahead or making any plans. I wake up at 4am, and the clearest thought in my head is that I want to run away. My husband had been working from home, and has also gone back to the office. On the outside everything looks fine, but in my head I'm screaming. Why do I feel this way?

Thank you for taking the first step and writing this down. I'm sure nearly everyone reading your letter will have experienced these feelings at some point in their lives – and there are a great many living with them right now. What you describe sounds like anxiety, the reported rates of which have spiked over the past year and a half. Some of us are now having what I think of as an anxiety hangover.

That intellectual knowledge is of little help – what is useful, however, is feeling connected and understood by a real-life human being.

I'm going to give you several suggestions, but it's wise to make speaking to your GP your starting point. He or she will probably use a tool called the generalised anxiety disorder assessment (which you can find online, see example, below right) to explore how you are feeling. It focuses on the past two weeks and asks how often you have felt on edge, unable to stop worrying or as if something awful is about to happen. Anxiety is assessed as mild, moderate or severe. At the milder end, you can try

self-help resources from the charity Anxiety UK. For instance, it has useful information about the role of nutrition. It may be that your doctor suggests medication, however, until you can get other support structures in place in your life that make you feel better.

Ask for information about local anxiety groups – sometimes it can be easier to share feelings with relative strangers. Of course, if a friend pops into your head, give them a call or, better still, ask to meet them for a walk or a coffee.

I imagine you have focused on getting your children back into clubs and activities. What is your equivalent? You might find that a shared activity helps you reset, even if it feels too hard to open up about your feelings straight away. I'm a firm believer that motherhood is not all about sacrifice and being a saint. You set the tone of your household, so whatever small thing might bring you joy, embrace it. That's not being selfish, it's regaining your strength.

patient.info/doctor/generalised-anxiety-disorder-assessment-gad-7; anxietyuk.org.uk





I feel suffocated by my flatmate's reliance on me

Q I share a flat with a friend I've known since college. Gradually, her world seems to have shrunk – she's still working exclusively from home and I'm her only friend. Lockdown and a restricted social life didn't seem to bother her – in fact, I think she liked it! She says she feels lonely when I'm out in the evenings with my other friends, at the gym or seeing my boyfriend. I know this isn't my problem to solve, but she makes me feel guilty for having a social life. How can I prevent this situation from spoiling our friendship?

I talked to Relate about this because, even though it's not romantic, this is a relationship. Therapist Ammanda Major highlights that you seem to have taken on the problem, even though you know it's

not yours: 'It's really easy to do this without realising,' says Major, 'and it sounds as if you're not only worried, but also slightly irritated.'

The first thing she suggests is to think hard about what exactly is bothering you. Is it that you've felt lonely at times, and worry about getting sucked back down? Perhaps it's concern about her becoming dependent on you, or even anger, which might be making you lose respect for her? 'Try to focus in on the core of your worry, the bit where you really care,' says Major. 'Could you find ways to hold on to the caring bit, while letting go of the other aspects?'

It may be that the friendship has run its course, and your lives are so different that you wouldn't become friends if you met now. Without seeking confrontation, the next time she says she's lonely, ask exactly what it is that she wants from

you – it might just be the sense that you care. We are all part of the same human experience, but none of us can control another person's feelings (she is not responsible for you feeling guilty either).

In our culture, there's a lot of pressure on women to be 'a good friend'. Sometimes, that's less about doing, and more about allowing things to be as they are.

relate.org.uk

“Try to focus on the core of your worry, the bit where you really care”

Find your Balance

Floradix

Neuro Balance with Ashwagandha

Vitamin C and vitamin B12 contribute to the normal function of the nervous system, whilst Ashwagandha root improves the body's resistance to stress.

- ✓ No preservatives, colourings or flavourings
- ✓ Pleasant tasting liquid formula



ENJOY A *wonderful* WINTER

It might be cold outside, but if we learn to rest and retreat, this season of dormancy and renewal can be a gift to cherish, discovers Anita Chaudhuri ►►

Maybe it's because I am Scottish, but I have always loved winter – glowering skies, a pot of something delicious bubbling on the stove, a sparkly walk at twilight... I realise, however, that there are many who don't share my cosy-toed view, who dread winter's arrival and see it as something to be endured, or escaped altogether.

At its most visceral, winter can trigger seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a condition linked to reduced exposure to sunlight that inhibits the production of mood-boosting hormones, including melatonin and serotonin. One in 30 adults in the UK will suffer significantly with SAD at some point in their life, according to the Royal College of Psychiatrists, but one in three of us experience some symptoms, and more than half of us report having lower mood in winter than in summer, a YouGov study reveals.

But even for those without a clinical condition, it can feel like an ambitious goal to flourish when it's cold, wet and dark outside. How do we even begin to bring a sense of wonder into our lives during this time of year?

In her bestselling book, *Wintering* (Ebury, £9.99), Katherine May celebrates the magic of wintertime: 'A surprising cluster of novels and fairy tales are set in the snow,' May reflects. 'Our knowledge of winter is a fragment of childhood, almost innate. The changes that take place in winter are a kind of alchemy, an enchantment performed by ordinary creatures to survive.'

This is true. Stories from *The Snow Queen* to Narnia informed my feelings about winter growing up. But how might we go about recapturing that in adulthood?

'Once we stop wishing that it was summer, winter can be a glorious season in which the world takes on a sparse beauty and even the pavements sparkle,' May says. 'It's a time for reflection and recuperation, for slow replenishment

and for putting your house in order.'

Acceptance is key, she believes, which means giving yourself full permission to do those 'deeply unfashionable' things, such as slowing down, letting your spare time expand and resting.

'You're not going to avoid winter, so you might as well embrace it,' she tells me from her home in Whitstable, Kent, which is no doubt atmospheric at this time of year. 'I know people who hate it so much they try not to do anything for the whole season! We can invest so much energy in flinching away from things we find unpleasant or don't want to happen, but acceptance and stepping towards them lessens the pain.'

May starts psyching herself up for winter as early as August. 'By then, I can already feel the change in the seasons. I start itching to get out my cardigans. I retrieve all my woollens and wash them, and then I get my clothes drawers ready. I take an inventory to see what I need to stock up on or repair,' she explains.


'And I love making pickles. The man across the street from me has a plum tree and I noticed he never picks the fruit, so I asked if I could have them this year.'

For May, these small, homely acts are much needed to mentally prepare for what's ahead. 'It's about stocking up on what will be scarce. There's great comfort in having a well-packed cupboard that you can also share with others,' she says.

'I celebrate the winter solstice and pay close attention to where the sun goes down on the beach, and how the days are shortening. And, on New Year's Day, I join others in a cold-water swim in the sea.'

"The changes that take place in winter are a kind of alchemy"





*"Once we stop wishing it was
summer, winter can be a
glorious season in which the
world takes on a sparse beauty"*

FIND YOUR zen

One strategy that can help retain equanimity is learning how to adopt a calm mindset. 'The benefits of doing so are that you can take a wider perspective and you can be intentional rather than reactive,' says Gabrielle Treanor, a coach and founder of The Calm Mind Club. 'So, instead of stomping around saying "I hate winter", ask yourself how you can best use your time. What is going to help you get through this period?'

Treanor notes that, for some people, it's tempting to fall into a frenzy of activity in order to distract yourself from what's going on outside. This reminds me of a friend who launches into complicated DIY projects as soon as the clocks go back. Invariably, I feel stressed out just listening to the details. 'Rather than getting caught up in doing, slow down. There is this myth that rest is passive but you have to make an active decision to do it,' says Treanor. 'When you slow down and adopt a calm mindset, you can make wiser choices and listen to your intuition about what actions would serve you best. It also helps you tune into your mood and feelings. When you do this, sometimes you might notice for the first time that

you are actually struggling and need help. Often, we don't notice that simple truth because we force ourselves to press on with the to-do list.'

Treanor admits that she never liked winter, even as a child, but that she has trained herself to make the best of it. 'As an introvert, I do like the permission to hibernate. I can say, "Oh, look, it's horrible weather. Hooray! We're allowed to stay home,"' she says. 'Slowing down is natural. Imagine if the natural world kept growing and producing? Rather, we need that period when everything dies back. Things are being restored, even if we can't see it. Without winter, we don't get the lovely green trees and flowers. We need to take root in the dark, the cold, the fallow.'

Another way to look at it, suggests Treanor, is to consider that by resting in winter, we will have more energy to do the things we want to do come spring. 'We are not Duracell bunnies – we can't be "on" all the time. So take things down a few notches, schedule downtime and go to bed earlier. Often, we see resting as lazy – reframe it as a time of germination and of new seeds taking root.'

gabrielletreanor.com



Are you suffering from seasonal affective disorder?

If you have SAD, you may experience some of the symptoms below, says Mind, the mental health charity, but be aware that SAD is different for different people, and can vary from year to year. You may also have other feelings that aren't listed here:

- Lack of energy
- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Not wanting to see people

- Sleep problems, such as sleeping more or less than usual, difficulty waking up or falling and staying asleep
- Feeling sad, low, tearful, guilty or hopeless about life
- Changes in your appetite – for example, feeling hungrier or wanting more snacks
- Being more prone to physical

health problems, such as colds, infections and other illnesses

- Losing interest in sex or physical contact with loved ones
- Suicidal feelings
- Other symptoms of depression

If you have other mental health problems, you might find those symptoms get worse when you're affected by SAD.* mind.org.uk



Keep intrinsic goals in mind

The key to making the most of winter is all about understanding motivation, believes Sharath Jeevan, author of *Intrinsic: A Manifesto To Reignite Our Inner Drive* (Octopus, £14.99). 'Many countries have far worse winters than us, yet do well on happiness index ratings – Scandinavian countries and Canada, for example.'

Rather than focusing on external goals – money, fame and impressing our social media followers – Jeevan suggests we prioritise those inner goals that will increase our happiness, self-esteem and wellbeing. 'Think about your life purpose, and the type of person you want to be in the world. Are you living a life that serves and helps others – at work, in relationships, with your friends, as a parent and in the community? How are you making a positive difference?'

What this boils down to in practice is being mindful of bringing your best self to any given situation, no matter the weather. It doesn't have to be grandiose either. 'Say you're meeting a friend in a cafe... You might be feeling grumpy and thinking of cancelling because there's a freezing-cold walk once you get off the train. But if you reframe your thinking to focus on showing up for your friend, really being present and listening to them when you get there, it will transform the experience for both of you.'

If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is how to connect with others virtually. This is another tool we can deploy to help and support others during the less social months of winter. 'Make a commitment to yourself to be there for your friends and loved ones – a quick WhatsApp or family video call can make a difference to someone's day,' says Jeevan. 'The other day, I received a surprise call from someone who lives abroad who I hadn't heard from in ages. He said he had just read an article about my new book online and wanted to congratulate me. The conversation only lasted three minutes, but it made my week.'

Developing a sense of autonomy, instead of feeling that you are a victim of inclement weather, can also help, adds Jeevan. 'Rather than dragging your family out for a walk and telling them they need to get fresh air on a cold day, why not plan a nice big Sunday roast in the pub together at the end, and perhaps invite others to join you? It's a way of being more intentional and feeling in control of your life for the benefit of all.'

EMBRACE THE *light*

Although winter days are shorter, it is worth making the effort to get outside into daylight whenever you can. Not only will this reset your body clock to the rhythm of winter, but the gentle light at this time of year can be incredibly beautiful.

Momtaz Begum-Hossain, author of *Hello Rainbow: Finding Happiness In Colour* (The Ivy Press, £14.99), has some unexpected advice. 'I'm known for being a lover of bright hues, but in the winter one of my favourite things to do is to go for a walk along a beach. There will be grey as far as the eye can see – grey sky, grey sea, grey horizon. Yet, if you pay attention, there's beauty in that.'

Begum-Hossain believes that we can use colour to boost our mood, and should go on colour-hunting walks, even on the gloomiest of days. 'If you start to pay attention, you will develop an appreciation of the tiniest details – an iridescent dewdrop on a blade of grass, icicles on a windowsill, a brightly coloured front door...' But her favourite mood booster is to watch the sunrise and the sunset in winter – the only time of year when this is possible without getting up in the middle of the night. 'Watching a winter sunrise is the best possible way to start your day. If you can watch a sunset on the same day, so much the better. Even if you're working in an office, you can set your alarm to get up and look out of the window for five minutes. The colours in winter are so vivid, particularly on a cloudy day when you can see the sky turning pink, purple, orange and yellow. It's wonderful.'

By embracing a more positive and creative approach to winter, you may even find yourself yearning for those woolly jumpers and roaring fires when the birds are singing and the trees are blooming once again.

*“Watching a winter sunrise
is the best possible way
to start your day”*



Turn seasonal SADness around

WORDS: GABRIELLE TREANOR

1. ACCEPT WHAT'S COMING

No one can stop winter, or the fact that it is going to be darker, colder and wetter, so complaining isn't going to help. Ruminating on what you can't control keeps you stuck in misery. Instead, recognise what it is about the situation that you dislike, for example: 'It makes me feel gloomy and fed up, and all the feelings I don't want to feel.'

2. MAKE A PLAN

What can you do about it? You can decide how to respond. For example, you might say, 'OK, today I am going to focus on making a delicious and different soup for dinner.' The TV schedules are usually brilliant at this time of year, so plan your viewing so you have something to look forward to in the evenings.

3. FOCUS ON PAST SUCCESSES

If you have struggled with this time of year before, the thought of winter can be scary. Make a list of everything that helped you get through it – for example, getting professional support, scheduling treats or buying a light box. Post the list somewhere prominent and schedule time for helpful activities.

4. CHANGE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Getting up on a dark morning can be grim. Create an environment that feels cosy and uplifting, such as stringing fairy lights around the kitchen or listening to a playlist of upbeat music while you eat your breakfast.

5. BE PATIENT

In this era of life hacks, our brains rush ahead, thinking we should be able to find a quick fix for the winter blues. Accept that it will take time to adjust to the new, and beneficial, season, and that it is normal to feel a little glum until you settle into it.

A photograph of a snowy winter scene. In the foreground, there is a snow-covered ground with some fallen leaves. In the middle ground, there are several trees with dark trunks and branches, some of which are covered in snow. In the background, there is a snow-covered bench. The overall scene is a peaceful winter landscape.

Brighten your days

WORDS: MOMTAZ BEGUM-HOSSAIN

1 Colour meditation
On a dark winter day, you can use colour breathing to boost your mood and harness the energy of a particular hue.

In colour psychology, different colours have a different impact on your mood. For example, I like to work with yellow, which is incredibly positive. When you get up in the morning, try a simple breathing exercise where you visualise the colour as you inhale and, as you exhale, imagine sending it out into the world. Focus on the colour and imagine it filling your entire body.

Other great colours to use are orange to enhance creativity and green to restore balance and calm. You can wear the colour to keep you connected to it throughout the day, or use an object in that shade, such as a mug or plate.

2 Colour mood tracker
This exercise is best done first thing in the morning. You will need a 30cm canvas or sheet of paper and a box of paints or crayons in as many

colours as possible. The idea is that, every day, you pick the colour that best represents your mood and paint or draw a line with it. After a month, you should have a fairly good idea of how you are coping with winter and your dominant themes. Five days of red in a row, for example, might indicate anger – although it could also signify passion. Everyone's relationship with colour is different, so it can help to mark on the back of the page a keyword for each colour line when you start out.

3 Colour survival kit
Assemble a colour 'first-aid kit' for when days feel overwhelming and dark. You can fill it with anything that you know will boost your mood. In mine, I keep a bottle of nail varnish, a packet of Rainbow Drops sweets, emergency chocolates, some colourful pens and colouring-in sheets, a rainbow bracelet, a pot of glitter and a precious photograph. You could also try dried flower petals, confetti and make-up.



HOW CAN YOU CREATE A WINTER OF CONTENT?

If you're yearning to thrive and not just survive this season,
take our test to find out what you need to feel your best

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 you can make this winter a time to treasure

1 The hardest challenge for you over winter is:

- ♥ Keeping going without your usual energy reserves to call on
- ◆ Resisting sliding into self-destructive habits
- How negative other people can get around you
- The feeling of just passing time until summer

2 When your mind wanders, you tend to think about:

- An exciting new plan that you're hatching
- ♥ What you can do to sort out a challenge or problem
- ◆ Whether you're hungry and what you'd like to eat
- Whatever's most important in your life right now

3 As you feel the seasons changing, it's vital that you:

- ♥ Focus on something positive
- Stay connected to a sense of purpose
- ◆ Keep up the habits that support you
- Concentrate on making the most of the months ahead

4 You find it hardest to cope with feeling:

- Bored or unchallenged
- Like you're not being your best self
- ◆ Out of control
- ♥ There's nothing to look forward to

5 Your best winters involve:

- ♥ Quality time with people who matter to you
- ◆ Sticking to a healthy routine
- Feeling you've stayed true to your values
- Some kind of adventure

6 When spring comes around, you're often amazed at how you:

- Seem more affected than other people
- ♥ Didn't realise you were struggling
- ◆ Neglected your physical self
- Felt good things came out of the darker months

7 When you're low, you tend to:

- ♥ Give yourself a pep talk about staying positive
- ◆ Mentally run through your personal failings

- Seek inspiration from spiritual mentors
- Make impulsive decisions

8 You're at your best when:

- You feel calm and grounded
- You're planning new adventures
- ♥ You feel useful
- ◆ You are physically full of energy

9 The best thing about Christmas time for you is:

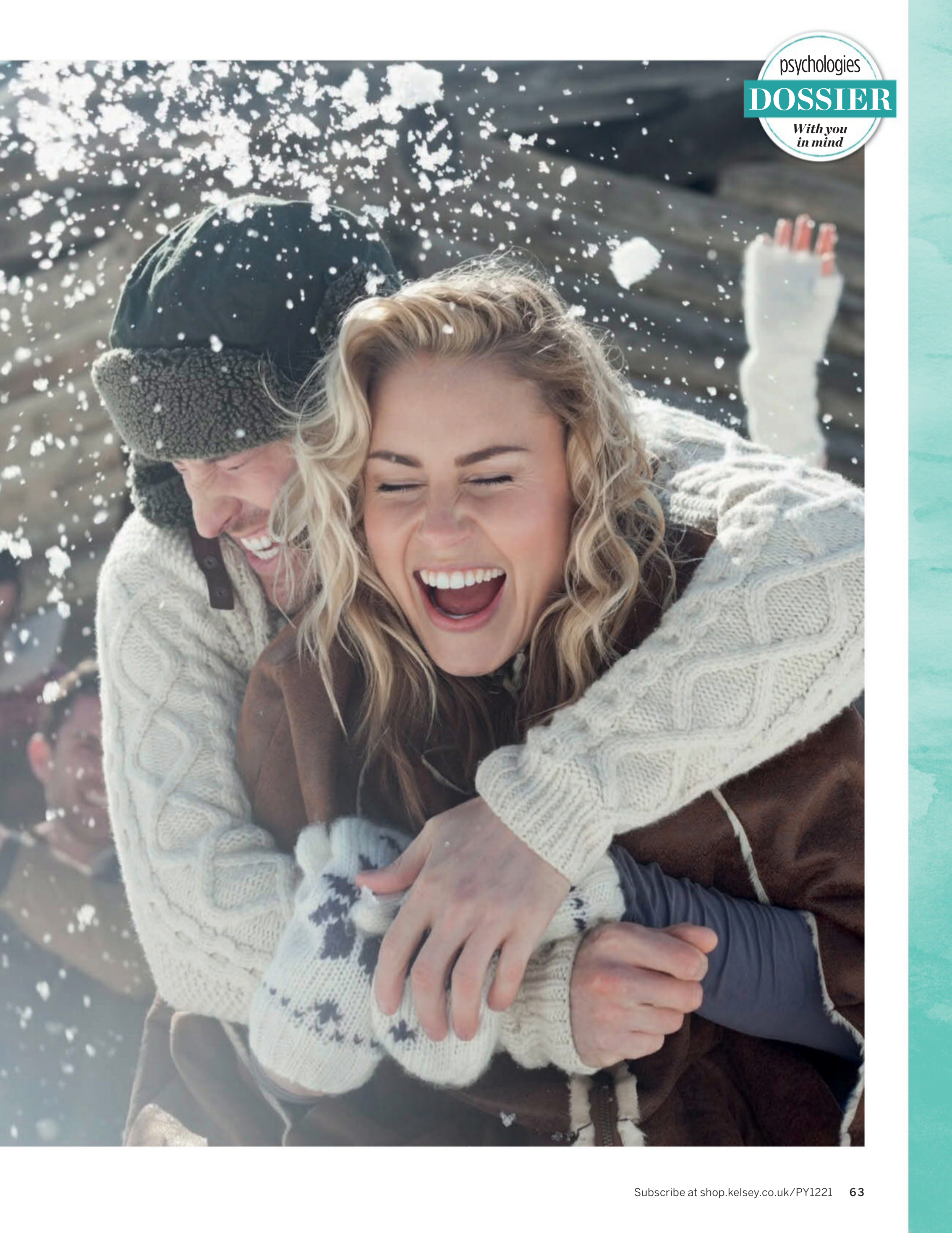
- ♥ People making an effort to get together
- ◆ Not worrying about what you eat and drink
- The rituals and the meanings behind them
- Feeling busy and like there's lots going on

10 When spring comes, you would like to feel:

- ◆ Strong, healthy and balanced
- Connected to your life's meaning
- Like you've lived life to the full
- ♥ Positive and upbeat

Turn the page to discover
how to inject wonder
into your winter





What seasonal sustenance do you need?



IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♥

Support

Sometimes, the impact of winter on your emotional wellbeing can be such a gradual process that it goes unnoticed at first. If you do realise that you feel low, you may distract yourself by focusing on what you've got to look forward to, such as spending time with family and friends at Christmas.

If you're a self-sufficient type or put everyone's feelings ahead of your own, it's no doubt second nature to treat low periods as temporary dips, convincing yourself that you'll be OK if you just keep going. Others may admire your strength and appreciate that you're always there for them. But if, deep down, you know that positive self-talk isn't enough to keep you feeling well this winter, then it's time to seek support from others – and yourself.

Think about how you can show yourself love by adding tiny moments of joy into every day. It may mean letting go of the idea that you can cope with whatever is thrown at you. Yes, you could get through winter without anyone knowing that you're struggling, but if you're aiming to thrive rather than just survive, take time to think about how others can support you. Being open about how you feel is the first step in getting the bolstering you require.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♦

Structure

One of the challenges of wintertime is to hold on to those summertime habits that you know help you thrive emotionally and physically. Of course, it's a lot easier to get up and do morning yoga or meditation when it's light and warm outside, or to get out into nature and be physically active when the sun is shining. But even if you're determined not to rely on comfort eating and binge watching TV shows to get you through to spring, it's easy for destructive habits to creep in unnoticed.

If your mood and motivation take a knock when you skip an exercise or meditation session, you can get into a place of knowing you're not helping yourself, but also feeling helpless to change the situation. Berating yourself won't help, but you do need to be honest about past patterns. Simply wanting this year to be different is not enough unless you also put a structure in place to stop you sliding into self-sabotage mode.

If you know your motivation for sticking to healthy lifestyle habits wanes as winter progresses, then factor in some accountability to yourself, such as making a commitment to exercise with friends. It's so easy to let things slide and then go into overdrive in spring to undo the damage, but imagine what a different winter experience you could have if you keep the structure in place that you know will help you feel your best.



IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ●

Soul

The key to thriving this winter is to allow time and space to focus on your spiritual growth. The shift of the seasons can bring with it a more introspective balance, which is the ideal background for fostering calm and connecting with a sense of inner peace. Nurturing your spiritual curiosity can also serve as a counterbalance to the challenges of dark days.

Spiritual nourishment comes in many forms and you may be instinctively seeking it out without realising it – in the places you walk, the conversations you have and the connections you make, or the creativity you explore. Winter is also the ideal time to commit to or deepen a meditation practice, and to explore new ways to relate to the world after you have turned down the volume on your internal noise and reacquainted yourself with inner calm.

When life feels even mildly challenging, it's human nature to detach and go into autopilot, or seek out ways to numb or change a mood. But it's also a chance to hold fast to a more conscious way of living, and to see what happens when you stay grounded in the present, and let yourself truly experience the feelings – good and bad – that winter can bring.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ■

Stimulation

It's natural to shift your routine with the changing season, and that might mean feeling as if you want to hunker down indoors, snuggle up and do less. But it's one thing to respond to a gut instinct and another to find yourself putting your life on hold until spring returns.

There is a lot of appeal in taking a break from challenge and uncertainty for a while, especially if you're feeling somewhat vulnerable, or if dark days have had an impact on your mood and energy levels – but retreating to your comfort zone and drifting along in a 'holding pattern' can be particularly undermining for those who thrive on new experiences.

If you know that you get a mood and energy boost by feeling stretched in some way, don't wait for the new year to set fresh goals for yourself, or to take some time to think about what projects or new direction would inspire your professional and personal life. That means creating opportunities to expand your social life and tap into that vital energy that you experience from new ideas, people and places. It may mean branching out on your own if others don't get your need for 'new'.

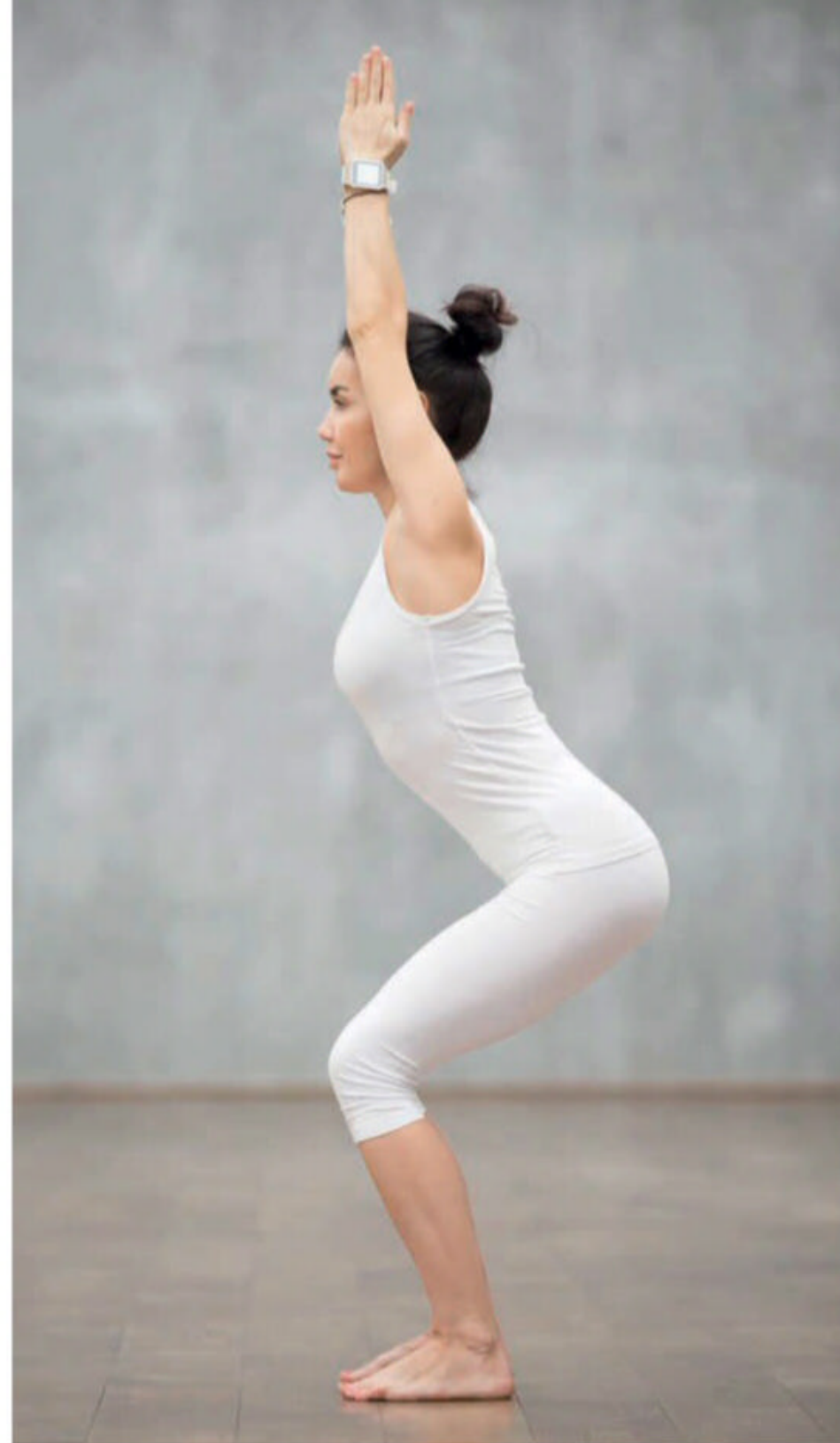
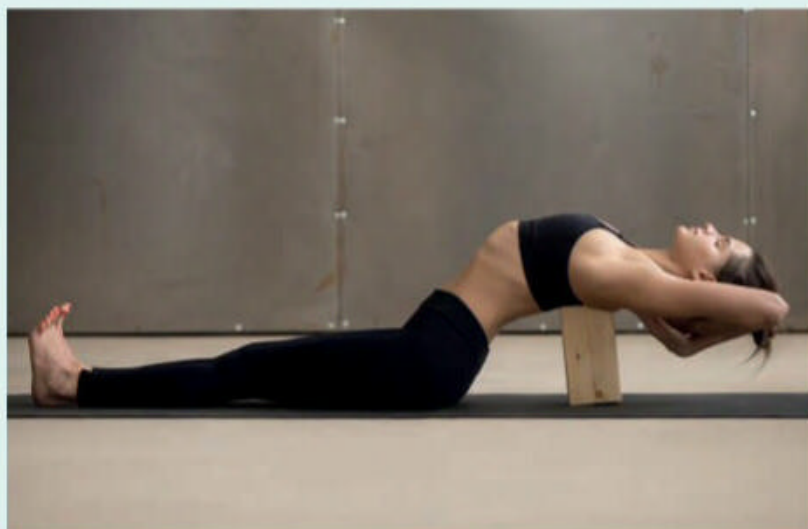
Take some time to visualise the first day of spring and think about how you want to feel when it arrives. Then consider: what can I put in place now to make that happen for myself? Now take a step towards making it possible.

Warm up from within

Our Wellness Director, yoga teacher Ali Roff Farrar, shares three energising yoga poses to help you get more out of winter days

1 Supported fish pose (*matsyasana*):

A little strengthening for those winter blues. This restorative pose will hold and cradle you, while opening up your heart to receive positive energy. Lie on your back and use a yoga brick, bolster, pillows or a rolled-up blanket centred under your middle and upper back. Allow your shoulders to drop down so your heart space lifts, creating an uplifting back bend.



2 Chair pose (*utkatasana*):

Unfortunately, it's nothing like sitting in a chair, but this pose will ignite a fire in your body to warm you up with an invigorating energy in the winter months – by getting your blood pumping! Start from a standing position, sink your hips down, tuck your tailbone under and reach your arms up to the sun (it's there somewhere!).

3 Ragdoll pose (*uttanasana*):

This is a lovely way to start a dark morning – with an energising rush of blood to the head. Reach your hands up and bend forward from your waist. As your head falls lower than your heart, grab hold of each elbow with your hands and simply hang out for a while. Try nodding your head 'yes', then shaking 'no', and gently sway from side to side, tuning into what feels good in your body.



**Bombay Duck
Rangoli round
bolster, £85,
bombayduck.com**

The West Highland Way Trek 2022



Discover the incredible natural beauty of the Scottish Highlands, taste whisky fresh from a local distillery and enjoy an optional first-class ride on the world-famous Jacobite Steam Train, on this unbeatable Scottish walking adventure.

12-20 September 2022

For more information and to register online:

www.dream-challenges.com/scottish-west-highland-way-trek



01590 646410 or
email: events@dream-challenges.com



psychologies

WINTER HEROES



It may be cold outside, but there's no need to worry about a thing. This slower, restful period is when nature intends for us to cosy up and indulge in some necessary TLC, so who are we to argue?

WORDS: HEIDI SCRIMGEOUR



FOR GADGET LOVERS

Me time for modern living

Lumie Halo, £199, lumie.com

Whether you suffer from symptoms of seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or just miss the natural mood-boosting properties of sunlight during the darker months of the year, a bright light-therapy lamp can help. This one uses both warm-white and cool-white LEDs and the results are undeniable – we noticed an immediate improvement.

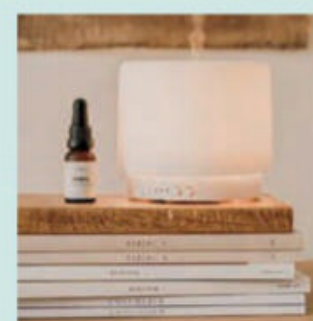


S8 Pegasi II light therapy glasses, £349, sleep8.uk

Do you find yourself flagging as the nights draw in? These glasses use technology developed by NASA to generate wavelengths of light that stimulate the hypothalamus and regulate cortisol and melatonin levels – great for a daily energy boost.

Cedar Aroma diffuser lamp, from £80, cedarlifestyle.co.uk

An air purifier and soothing mood lamp in one, this ceramic diffuser releases a fine mist of essential oils into your home for up to 12 hours – just the thing to lift your spirits on long winter nights. Choose from one bespoke 15ml essential oil or a selection of three.





Retreat into the warmth and enjoy a little luxury

Dr Bronner's organic lavender hand hygiene spray, £5.25, shop.drbronner.co.uk

Whatever this winter brings, hand sanitiser is sure to be a permanent feature. This one kills germs without any of the chemical nasties found in conventional sanitisers – it's just water and organic ethanol, lavender oil and glycerin.



Chloe Haywood cashmere mini hot-water bottle, £25, chloehaywoodlondon.com

Warm your heart as well as your extremities with one of these cute hot-water bottles, handmade using materials saved from landfill. Each one is adorned with pretty appliqué in repurposed leather.

Wild Planet Aromatherapy Forest Bathing candle, £29, wildplanetaromatherapy.co.uk

Bring the benefits of the outdoors in, no matter the weather. This candle is inspired by the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku, or forest bathing – a natural healing method of immersing yourself among trees. Wild Planet Aromatherapy products



are sourced and made ethically, sustainably and with pure essential oils. And the scent is enchanting!

FOR FANS OF CANNABIDIOL

Shake off your worries with gentle CBD relief

George & Mae CBD oils, from £34.99, georgeandmae.com

Hailed as helpful for reducing symptoms of anxiety and easing aches and pains, CBD is available in a wide range of products, from body salves to gummies. These ingestible CBD oils are flavoured with essential oils and are completely THC free. The mint one is quite delicious!



Immunity drops, £59, cannabotech.com

Cannabotech's products are a blend of high-quality functional mushrooms and premium pharmaceutical-grade CBD. The drops also contain zinc to support your immune system. Use whenever you need a boost.



CBD bath bombs, £9.99, mindfulextracts.co.uk

These CBD bath bombs by Mindful Extracts are natural and vegan-friendly. Containing full-spectrum CBD, they add something special to a hot bath – we definitely felt the tingly 'body buzz' we were promised!



FOR THOSE IN NEED OF ESCAPE

Restorative winter wonderlands you won't want to leave

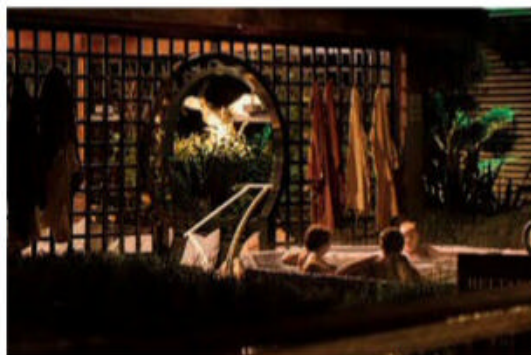
Bethnal & Bec Luxury Rural Retreats, from £225 per night, bethnalandbec.com

Don't dread winter – welcome its arrival with a reviving getaway. With a hot tub and a fire pit to huddle around outside, plus a roll-top bath at the end of your bed with views of the surrounding countryside, this is the perfect place to chase away the winter blues.



The Spa at Galgorm Nightfall Experience, from £99 per person, galgorm.com

This remarkable outdoor experience at Northern Ireland's premier luxury hotel begins with a two-course dinner, followed by leisurely access to the Thermal Spa Village, situated across three beautiful settings. The day ends with cocktails in the hot tub under the stars.



Bien Etre Retreats, &TBC, wearebienetre.com/events

Bien Etre was founded as a retreat company six months before the pandemic, prompting the company to relaunch as a digital retreat platform – a free-membership space incorporating motivational content and events, knowledgeable experts and a community of people who want to get the most out of their lives. Its live retreats will relaunch in 2022.

FOR SKINCARE AND INNER GLOW

Protection from the elements, inside and out

Digital Defence Day & Night Protection Serum, £40, digital-defence.co.uk

Exposure to blue light disrupts the circadian rhythm, which stops the body going into repair mode. Fight back with this triple-action serum, part of a new skincare range designed to help repair the skin from blue-light damage. It's clinically proven to block 100 per cent of harmful HEV blue light.



Madara SOS Lip Hydra Rescue Balm, £10.50, madara.cosmetics.com

Beat chapped lips this winter with this soothing balm designed to intensely hydrate the skin and relieve discomfort. Gentle enough for daily lip care, it's also ideal for tackling serious seasonal moisture loss.



Life Armour Drops of Vitamin D & Bone Health, £22, lifearmour.com

Essential for healthy bones, supporting the immune system and for keeping winter bugs at bay, vitamin D is a must-have in your winter arsenal. Each 1ml serving of these drops contains 1000iu vitamin D3 and 75mcg vitamin K, combined with a prebiotic to aid absorption, plus adaptogenic mushrooms for overall wellbeing.



For
staying
snug
and dry

**Ward off the chills
and keep comfortable
all season with these
winter warmers**



Nepalese slippers, £55, nauseni.org

Treat your feet to Nauseni slippers made by female artisans in Nepal. These distinctive shoes are hand-felted into one seamless piece. Thanks to the unique qualities of natural wool, they'll keep your feet toasty in cold weather and cool in the summertime, so you can wear them all year round.



**Sorel Explorer II
Joan snow boots, £135,
sorelfootwear.co.uk**

The secret to surviving winter with a spring in your step is investing in a durable but stylish winter boot. Available in waterproof leather or suede with microfleece lining, these boots are definitely made for winter walking.



**Tilney beanie by
Valentina Karellas,
£50, valentina-karellas.com**

Made from wonderfully soft 100 per cent cashmere, with loose strands of yarn to showcase the rawness of these zero-waste knits, these delightful hats are handmade using a vintage knitting machine. You won't want to take it off – we've been wearing ours constantly since the chill arrived, including at our desks!

3 of the best
**WINTER
SUPPLEMENTS**

**Magic minerals to boost
your wellbeing**

**1 PhD Reset Night Time
Support, £7.50 for six
drinks, phd.com**

Fancy a soothing but healthy bedtime beverage to give you all the feels? This hot chocolate drink contains L-tryptophan, 5-HTP and L-theanine to encourage deep sleep, along with 18g of protein to aid muscle recovery.



**2 Nutrilite Balance
Within, £47.60 for 30
pouches, amway.co.uk**

Fend off coughs and colds and fight fatigue with a dietary food supplement. This one contains vitamins B6 and B9, which support the immune system and are known as 'mood vitamins' because of their impact on brain function.



**3 Gusto Super DC
Immune Support,
£1.50, sainsburys.co.uk**

Ditch the standard fizzy pop and go for a vitamin-packed revitalising soft drink instead. With fewer than 60 calories per can, this one contains high-strength vitamins D, C, A and K, zinc and folic acid, all-natural ingredients and no added sugar. We love the Blood Orange one.



HARTLEY  BOTANIC
HANDMADE WITH PRIDE SINCE 1938

THE HARTLEY COLLECTION



THE MODERN HARTLEY 6 PLANTHOUSE
Kent



Discover the secret of Hartley Botanic by calling 0800 783 8083 or visit www.hartley-botanic.co.uk



NOTHING ELSE IS A HARTLEY

The only aluminium Glasshouses and Greenhouses endorsed by the RHS

® The Royal Horticultural Society. The Royal Horticultural Society, and its logo, are trade marks of The Royal Horticultural Society (Registered Charity No 222879/SC038262) and used under licence from RHS Enterprises Limited.

I Heart



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

“As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others”

Audrey Hepburn



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

When my friend, Jessica, texted out of the blue, I was hit by a mix of emotions: happiness, relief and guilt. After weeks of no contact between us turned into months and then a year and a half, the longer we went without speaking, the harder it was to pick up the phone. I felt increasingly embarrassed and ashamed for not reaching out to her.

We arranged to meet for coffee. I was nervous beforehand, worrying it would be awkward and that the gap had caused irrevocable damage. We had chatted over text about why it had been so long. I had apologised for not being there for her, and was honest about how the length of time had made it more difficult to reconnect. I told her that I'd missed spending time with her and hoped we could rebuild our friendship. It seemed to help. Still, fiddling with my bag as I waited in the cafe, I fretted about how it would go.

The sight of Jessica instantly made me smile. There was a warm sense of familiarity, a reminder of all the lovely times we had spent together. I needn't have worried about things being difficult. We talked easily over our cappuccinos,



HOW TO REKINDLE A *friendship*

We've all been there – a friend we've not spoken to for ages and miss, but the longer we leave it, the tougher it is to reconnect. Caroline Butterwick explores reviving our neglected relationships

catching up on events we had seen snippets of on Facebook and were now filling in the details about in the way that only a real conversation can. By the end of our time together, I was so pleased that she had approached me – and only wished I'd had the courage to contact her months ago. How could I have better dealt with my awkwardness and guilt and got in touch with my dear friend earlier?

Why we drift

Tara Quinn-Cirillo, a chartered psychologist, explains that feelings such as embarrassment in situations like this are a protective emotion if we're concerned about being judged or rejected. It can stop us reconnecting with someone. That all-too-familiar word, procrastination, comes up too. We can, Quinn-Cirillo says, find ourselves waiting for the magical solution, telling ourselves we'll know when it's the right time to contact someone. But, as we wait for the perfect moment that might never come, those worries about rejection and our avoidance tendencies creep in further.

I think about other friendships that have slipped and my sense of 'I'd love to speak to so-and-so, but the timing isn't right'. When is the timing right, exactly? I worry too that texting randomly will seem strange. Then I imagine it the other way around: how do I feel when a friend gets in touch after a long time? It's always nice to hear from them, and I've never found the timing odd in the slightest.

Our anxieties around rekindling our friendships can stem from how we feel about ourselves, including worries that we aren't worth their time. 'If you have a history of low self-worth or self-esteem, or if you've had other relationships in which you've suffered rejection, you will, unfortunately, carry that with you,' says Quinn-Cirillo. 'That can sometimes be reactivated, and links into our threat response, as our brain is scanning for potential rejection and things that can go wrong, which can lead us to back off and worry. And sometimes that worry will have an impact on how we behave.'

Realising this can help you see what's stopping you from reaching out. Quinn-Cirillo recommends writing down what you value in your friendship, what you miss and any reasons you think it might have fizzled out. This can help you



Expert advice



Psychologist Tara Quinn-Cirillo is passionate about helping people develop strategies to achieve their wellbeing goals. horshampsychology.com



Carole Ann Rice is a coach, author, columnist and MD of Pure Coaching Academy. realcoachingco.com

remember why that person mattered to you and figure out why you might not be approaching them after time has passed. There are many reasons you may lose touch, such as busy careers, family commitments or moving to a different area. But there might also be reasons around that friendship specifically that mean contact has stopped. Quinn-Cirillo suggests that you think of possible negatives associated with the relationship, if that is the case.

She says it's also worth identifying boundaries that are important to you, and consider what that friendship provided. This can help you identify whether you actually *want* to get back in touch with the person, or what changes are needed to make the friendship work this time around.

Make the first move

I ask Carole Ann Rice, a life coach, why we should reconnect with old friends. 'If you really value a friendship,' she says, 'it's worth overcoming yourself and your issues to reach out because we only live once and one of the saddest things in life is regret. So try to think: "Will I regret not contacting that person?"'

But what if we don't hear back from them? 'There are a million reasons you might not get a response,' says Rice. 'At least you've done all you can, so that feeling of regret, of wondering "what if", has been dealt with,' she explains.

The aftermath of the pandemic, Quinn-Cirillo adds, can help reconnect us with others. 'When people have been through adversity, many will re-evaluate things on multiple levels – the things that are important to them,' she says. The pandemic almost gives us permission and a renewed sense of purpose in reacquainting ourselves with our friends.

Rice shares that she uses a method called the 'spreadsheet of love'. This is when you open a document and write down all your friends' names, from besties and colleagues to important acquaintances. Then, take time every couple of weeks to look through the list and ask yourself when you last spoke to those people.

It's a strange feeling as I type up a list of my friends. I realise there are people I cared about enough to invite to my wedding but who, bar the odd bit of interaction online, I haven't had a proper

"It's worth overcoming your issues to reach out... we only live once and one of the saddest things in life is regret"

conversation with for a long time – too long a time. Of course, the pandemic put socialising on hold for a while, but our friendships still matter. Rice and Quinn-Cirillo both talk about the importance of friendship. Our wellbeing benefits from connecting with people who share our values or, simply, with whom we enjoy spending time.

I'm wistful as I think of the memories bound in every name I write: the friend I'd duet with at karaoke as students, or the colleague I looked forward to chatting to every day. Seeing their names on my screen, I wonder how they are doing...

Social media can be a tricky way of reaching out to people, but can, Rice



tells me, be used as way of initiating conversations. Scrolling through my newsfeed, I notice a friend has posted photos from a holiday. I hesitate, then text her: 'Just seen your photos from the Lake District, I love it there! I hope you're having a nice time.' After I press send, those familiar worries about rejection or seeming strange crop up. Soon these emotions are replaced with joy as she replies and we find ourselves texting for hours, with a promise of meeting up soon.

When I told my friend, Jessica, how I'd felt awkward about speaking to her after so long, her response was: 'It's never too late to get in touch.' These words become my mantra as I start tentatively contacting

more people on my 'spreadsheet of love'. I don't contact too many in one go, as I want to be able to enjoy my reconnections, rather than risk feeling overwhelmed by too many conversations or social arrangements. Soon, there are coffees, walks and a dinner out on my calendar, and I'm excited about catching up with people who matter to me.

I text Jessica to see how she's doing and arrange another coffee. Our friendship is important to me, and I've realised how easy it is to unintentionally let it slip. Now I'm making sure I give our relationship the attention it deserves, taking time to see someone I care about, and who I'm lucky to call a friend.



FIVE WAYS TO RECONNECT

Coach Carole Ann Rice shares her tips:

1 Make the most of the season of goodwill by using Christmas as a reason to speak to someone. Suggest a festive drink or add them to your Christmas card list – post landing on the mat lets someone know you're thinking about them.

2 Dare to be vulnerable: tell them you're sorry it's so long since you've been in touch. Being genuine gives you the opportunity to reconnect in a positive and honest way.

3 Use events and activities as a conversation starter, for example: 'How's the building work going?' or, 'Are you enjoying your new job?'

4 If you see a funny video or meme while scrolling through social media, send it to them, saying, 'I saw this and it reminded me of you.'

5 If you meet, go for a walk. Being side by side is less confrontational and the things you observe give you something to talk about.

▶▶ NEXT STEPS

Learn *Happy Relationships: 7 Simple Rules To Create Harmony And Growth* by coach Sam Owen (Orion, £14.99) looks at how to build better friendships.

Listen Gemma Scopes' *How To Make Friends* podcast covers everything from forming friendships to dealing with friendship burnout.

Read *The Friendship Cure* by Kate Leaver (Prelude, £9.99) explores modern friendships and how to maintain them.



PHOTOGRAPH: SHUTTERSTOCK

psychologies inspiration

“To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold”

Aristotle

LIVE, LAUGH, LOVE

Discover why laughter is the emotional glue that binds couples – and find ways to bring more lightness and connection into your relationship

WORDS: EVE MENEZES CUNNINGHAM

Whether you're in the first flush of love, have been coupled up for years or are thinking about what you want in a mate, you'll have figured out that a sense of humour matters in a romantic relationship. You might be stuck in traffic or climbing a mountain together, literally or figuratively, but the ability to laugh as you deal with life's challenges is essential. We don't mean forced cheerfulness, but simple joy – private, silly jokes and the odd belly laugh.

There is nothing like the sparkle in your partner's eye when you make them laugh to remind you why you fell for them. When it comes to attraction, laughter is one of the main prerequisites, according to Enda Junkins, a psychotherapist and author of *Belly Laughter In Relationships* (Laughter Therapy Enterprises, £15.86). 'Laughter is bonding because it brings us closer. Like a type of emotional glue, it allows us to positively interact and joyfully show that we are on the same page,' she says.

'We are naturally more attracted to our partner when we have positive interactions,' agrees Lizandra Leigertwood, a therapist. 'Laughter, flirting and being considerate of the

needs of our partner allow for healthier communication and a stronger bond.'

Of course, life can get in the way of fun. The more seriously we take life, and ourselves, the harder it is to connect through the joy that laughter offers. But relationships need playfulness to stay healthy, and laughter offers a way to reset the conversation in tough times.

'The ability to laugh helps couples cope when issues crop up,' says Junkins. 'We can laugh at important things without diminishing their importance. Laughter eases communication by helping us focus and listen to each other. It creates safety that allows openness, so issues can be discussed without hostility.'

It also allows us to gain perspective. 'Laughter shrinks problems from overwhelming proportions to a manageable size,' adds Junkins. 'It changes how we relate to an issue and eases conflict, making it simpler to figure things out. The more couples laugh, the better able they are to work out differences. Laughter is also a vital tool for alleviating anger and sadness.'

Now we know laughter counts, how can we bring more of it into our relationship? newframetherapy.co.uk; laughtertherapy.com

Let it go!

It's hard to laugh if you are preoccupied with what people think of you. Try relinquishing that so laughter can flow. 'It takes willingness to put yourself out there and forget about your worries regarding how others see you,' says Lotte Mikkelsen, the UK's only laughter yoga master trainer. 'People will always judge others, but if we can release that way of being, there is room for lots of joy and laughter.'

lottemikkelsen.com

OPEN THE FLOODGATES

'Practise laughing,' says Junkins. And if it doesn't come naturally, fake it. 'The body doesn't know the difference! Practising helps you loosen the controls on your laughter. The more you laugh, the more you will laugh. Pay attention to things that are funny and laugh. Share them and laugh some more!'



Relive your best bits

'Remember a moment when laughter was flowing naturally,' says Mikkelsen. 'Talk about these moments and laugh about them.

When you allow your partner to laugh at you, they will be more open to sharing their own stories and then you can laugh together.'



RELEASE THE CHILD INSIDE

'Make your relationship part of your self-care routine so you're always nurturing your connection,' advises therapist Lizandra Leigertwood. 'However, learn to laugh again by remembering who you are outside of your adult responsibilities.'

She recommends reconnecting with the carefree spirit you had in childhood or during the early stages of your relationship. 'Having your own identity will strengthen your bond – the happier you are within yourself, the more joy you can bring into the relationship. Take care of your needs and do the things you enjoy to deliver a more lighthearted and fulfilled version of yourself to your relationship.'

Off-screen romance

'Watch a funny film together if you share a comedic humour, but the best laughter is spontaneous, silly and special', says psychotherapist Hilda Burke. 'Time spent together without phones or other distractions can create more of those opportunities.'

hildaburke.co.uk

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Practices such as laughter yoga and laughter therapy are beneficial because they trigger the body and mind to return to laughter. 'They connect with physical laughter that feels good in our whole body,' explains yogi Lotte Mikklesen. 'With the release of old issues, our mind and emotions can be freed up for joy.'

Open your eyes to the positives

'Notice the things about each other that make you smile and laugh,' recommends Leigertwood. 'List them as part of your gratitude practice in your journal. The more you invite these moments, the easier and more frequent they will become. Liking your partner as a person, finding them funny and wanting to share your special moments with them can cultivate fondness in your relationship. Spend time working on this every day and you'll see a dramatic improvement.'

Just the two of you

'Couples who laugh together are in the moment without distractions,' says Samantha Adams, a relationship counsellor. 'Emotional intimacy is fuel for a relationship. It's the feeling of being connected and accepted, warts and all.'

counsellingyourwayuk.com

...And the world laughs with you

If you're struggling to reconnect with joy, a laughter club might help. You can join online, in person or on the phone. 'Learning to laugh again is easy, because we all have laughter inside us, we just forget to bring it out when life deals us challenging hands,' says Mikklesen.



DO AS THEY DO

'Observe couples you think have a good relationship,' suggests Adams. 'They can be celebrities or couples you know. How do you imagine they spend their time? How playful are they? How else do they communicate their playful selves? Do they use eye contact, smiling or touch? What can you take from them to try in your own relationship?'

Have a boogie

'Exercise your chuckle muscles daily,' urges Genny Jones, a happiness consultant. To help you get started, she recommends this exercise: Find a clear space and stand up. Breathe in positivity. Breathe out negativity. As you breathe out negativity, make a growling noise. Smile to the left, smile to the right, smile in front of you. Recall happy moments while dancing and smiling together.

confidentqueengenny.com



**The new fragrance range
by Katie Piper,
on sale at
Superdrug now.**



**"My fragrances, Confidence by Day and Confidence by Night,
beautifully complement each other.**

**I created these inspiring scents to reflect the qualities that are within all of us.
My products have been designed to ensure those who use the collection are reminded
of the strengths, ability and power we all possess and must harness in the most challenging times.**

**It is my hope that whilst the range focuses on treating yourself,
you will also gift it to the people who matter in your life, those who need it most.**

This range was developed to give the gift of confidence so embrace it!"

**2% of the net wholesale price will be donated
to the Katie Piper Foundation.**

**The
Katie
Piper
Foundation**

Superdrug ☆

Body



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



***“You have been
criticising
yourself for years
and it hasn’t
worked. Try
approving of
yourself and see
what happens”***

Louise Hay

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES



MINDFUL WELLNESS



Our Wellness Director, yoga teacher and mindfulness expert Ali Roff Farrar, shares new research, strategies and wisdom on all aspects of wellbeing, from activity and nourishment to meditation and conscious beauty

Eat well

1.5%

This is the rate at which collagen loss accelerates after the age of 30. However, marine collagen can come to our rescue. Not only does it improve skin elasticity and reduce the visible signs of ageing, it provides support for joint repair, bones and cartilage, as well as improving gut health and digestion. It's a fabulous all-rounder that helps us look and feel good! But make sure you take a high-quality and ethically sourced supplement. Correxiko is our go-to – simply mix into water, soups or smoothies.

Correxiko marine collagen powder, £19.95, [correxiko.com](https://www.correxiko.com)



Three pillars of wellbeing

Sometimes the sheer number of wellness practices we think we should be following can get a little overwhelming. If you don't have the time, money or energy for intermittent fasting, weekly acupuncture or monthly gong baths, research examining a huge cross-section of participants from different countries has found that if our goal is better mental health and wellbeing, it pays to focus on exercise, good-quality sleep and eating raw fruits and vegetables.* Easy as one, two, three!



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES. *S. WICKHAM ET AL. 'THE BIG THREE HEALTH BEHAVIOURS AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS'. 'FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY'. 2020

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH... *polyphenols?*

'Polyphenols are plant compounds that are thought to be involved in the gut-brain axis,' explains Jo Travers, a dietitian at Love Your Gut.

'Polyphenols help gut health by encouraging the growth of useful bacteria, such as bifidobacterium strains, and inhibiting the growth of "bad" bacteria, such as C. difficile.

'Eating foods that are high in polyphenols has also been shown to improve mental cognition,' she adds.

loveyourgut.com



BHUTEKO BHAT (Nepalese fried rice)

Bhuteko bhat is a quick recipe to which you can add seasonal vegetables, such as peas, carrots, peppers, baby corn, shredded broccoli and cauliflower. Every region has a different style of fried rice dish – bhuteko bhat is generally eaten with pickles and can be served with a curry.

- 1 tbsp ghee
- Pinch of asafoetida
- 5g cumin seeds
- 2-3 dried red chillies
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 250g cooked rice
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 tbsp chopped spring onions

- 1 tbsp crispy fried onions (if not using shop-bought, the Fried Onions recipe is on page 21 of *Tarkari* by Rohit Ghai)
- Salt

- 1 Heat the ghee in a heavy-based pan, then add the asafoetida and cumin seeds, followed by the red chillies.
- 2 Add the garlic and onions and cook for a few minutes until golden brown. Add the rice, mix well, then stir in the cinnamon, spring onions and fried onions, and season with salt. Serve hot.

Recipe from 'Tarkari: Vegetarian And Vegan Indian Dishes With Heart And Soul' by Rohit Ghai, (Octopus, £25); octopusbooks.co.uk

DID YOU KNOW...
*Are you plagued by migraines? In a recent controlled study, researchers found that sufferers who consumed more fish oil than vegetable oil had shorter and less intense migraines.**

PHOTOGRAPH: FROM 'TARKARI: VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN INDIAN DISHES WITH HEART AND SOUL' BY ROHIT GHAI. *CRAMSDEN ET AL. DIETARY ALTERATION OF N-3 AND N-6 FATTY ACIDS FOR HEADACHE REDUCTION IN ADULTS WITH MIGRAINE. 'BMJ'. 2021

"To feel safe and warm on a cold, wet night, all you really need is soup" Laurie Colwin



Move well

Patch perfect!

Period pains put a dampener on being active – but taking a hot-water bottle to the gym isn't going to work either. Biodegradable and vegan BeYou monthly patches, £7.99 for five patches that last for 12 hours each, are a genius

invention for cramps and are discreet enough to wear under your running tights, or jeans! The patches deliver soothing anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving properties through eucalyptus oil and menthol from peppermint leaves.



4/5

of us exercise specifically to boost our mood. In fact, a survey* found that more of us choose our workout based on our desired psychological outcome, rather than physical gains.



Red Candy 'Happy' doormat, £24, redcandy.co.uk

DID YOU KNOW...
*Exercise 'snacking' throughout the day has the power to improve our cardiorespiratory fitness, heart health and strength, without the bigger effort of an 'all-or-nothing' workout.***
Try taking the stairs three times a day, or a few brisk 5-10 minute walks around the block, morning, afternoon and evening. Short can be sweet!

*SURVEY BY APEX RIDES; **EMADISON JENKINS ET AL, DO STAIR CLIMBING EXERCISE "SNACKS" IMPROVE CARDIORESPIRATORY FITNESS? APPLIED PHYSIOLOGY, NUTRITION, AND METABOLISM, 2019

It's all in your head

You may not think you have a marathon in you, but the right mindset and practising motivational techniques could give you the edge. In a study by the University of Plymouth, seven out of 15 non-runners were given Functional Imaging Training (FIT), which taught them how to highlight and verbalise the need for change and their desire to get fit. Six of the seven completed a 50km ultramarathon. In the group that only got motivational encouragement, only two finished the run, making the FIT group five times as effective! Find out more about FIT in upcoming issues of *Psychologies*.

Dress for success with Allbirds natural run apparel, from £48, allbirds.co.uk



Meditation + mindfulness

SPIRITUAL CYCLES

We like the idea of a modern amulet – an object that offers meaning such as luck or positivity, or serves as a reminder to maintain a wellness practice. These beautiful Moon Cycle mala beads, £99, were designed to create a positive connection with our menstrual cycle. The crystals have been chosen with healing intentions to soothe PMS, and the guru bead (the largest stone) is labradorite, which connects the wearer to their innate wisdom, to guide them through stormy points in their cycle.
enchantedmalas.com



Ritual

Scientists have revealed that just 10 minutes of aromatherapy a week can balance the nervous system and reduce heart rate and blood pressure.* Try using your favourite pulse point oil or pop a couple of essential oil drops on your pillow or in a warm bath. Breathe deeply and focus on the scents around you for a few minutes as you rest.
Skin Alchemists Equilibrium pulse point oil, £32, skinalchemists.com



MINI MEDITATION

Take a moment to pause and reset

Try this brief meditation for mental balance. It's a simple yet powerful practice that is both uplifting and relaxing, and promotes a sense of harmony using a mantra of just four words: 'Sa, ta, na, ma' – which translates roughly as 'my true self'.

- The meditation works by linking the four words of the mantra to hand gestures. Sit quietly with your hands resting on your knees, palms up.
- Say the mantra out loud. With each syllable, make the following hand movements: Say 'sa' and touch index fingers to your thumbs.
- Say 'ta' and touch middle fingers to your thumbs.
- Say 'na' and touch ring fingers to your thumbs.
- Say 'ma' and touch little fingers to your thumbs.
- Repeat six times. Then do this another six times, but this time whisper the mantra.
- Now do it another six times with the hand movements, but say the mantra in your head.
- Now come full circle, whispering the mantra again six times, and finally another six times out loud. You can find many 'sa, ta, na, ma' guided meditations to beautiful music on YouTube.

*AROMATHERAPY BENEFITS AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM REGULATION FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACULTY IN TAIWAN, 'EVIDENCE-BASED COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE' VOLUME 2011, 2021

L That's how many mindfulness sessions you need to reduce anxiety!** A study shows that just one practice has the power to bring calm within an hour, and the effect lasts for a week!

Look well, naturally

WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH... *squalane*?

'Squalane is a natural antioxidant and emollient that locks moisture into the skin, preventing fine lines while evening out skin tone, scarring and pigmentation. It's great for blemish-prone skin because, while hydrating, it isn't oily,' says Charlie Fowler, founder of Magic Organic Apothecary. The squalane in MOA Queen of the Night treatment, £35, is derived from olives. moa.co.uk



51 This is the average age that women reach the menopause, but about 1 in 100 experience symptoms in their 30s.* That means thousands of women in the UK may be experiencing meno symptoms before they hit the big 4-0!



FAACE Meno Pause face mask to support perimenopausal and menopausal skincare symptoms, £29, wearface.com



THIS IS WHY...

your skin is harder to manage during menopause

"The decline of hormones in menopause results in less oil production, thinner skin and a decrease in collagen synthesis. Although the slowing down of the skin's vital processes are unavoidable, you can take action to avoid unnecessary skin sluggishness by stimulating the vital activity in the skin. Keep your skin's circulation healthy! Along with activating preparations, stimulate microcirculation with facial massages, alternating warm and cool facial rinses and facial exercises" – Elizabeth King, Weleda skincare expert



Weleda Evening Primrose Age Revitalising skincare range, from £30.50, weleda.co.uk

Create the life you really want...



ORDER YOUR
COPY TODAY!

only
£4.99

SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/CYL

CALL 01959 543 747

LINES OPEN MON-FRI 8.30AM - 5.30PM

Calls are charged at your standard network rate. For full terms and conditions visit shop.kelsey.co.uk/terms



Soul food

A humble bowl of soup is always a comfort, whether nursing a cold or a broken heart. Rachel Allen, a food writer and teacher at Ballymaloe Cookery School, shares her gratifying recipes

Cauliflower, Cashew and Coriander Soup

Serves 6

This smooth and creamy golden bowl of goodness gets its silky texture from cashew nuts and its soothing anti-inflammatory qualities from the yellow turmeric. Serve on its own, or with toasted cashews scattered over the top.

- 1 cauliflower head
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 4 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 100g cashews
- 1 tbsp ground turmeric
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- A few good pinches salt
- 1.1l vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 4 tbsp chopped coriander (leaves and fine stalks)

To serve:

- 20g cashews

1 First, prepare the cauliflower. Remove and discard the outer green leaves, reserving any smaller ones close to the cauliflower, and cut off and discard the base of the stem. Cut the cauliflower into slices, then chop it all: florets, stalks and any remaining leaves.

2 Place the olive oil in a saucepan over a medium heat and add the cauliflower, the chopped onion and garlic, the cashews and the turmeric. Season with the pepper and a few good pinches of salt (this soup needs careful seasoning, otherwise it can be bland).

3 Cover the vegetables with the saucepan lid, then turn the heat down to low and cook, stirring from time to time, for 15-20 minutes, until the veggies are tender.

4 While the vegetables are cooking, toast the cashews. Place them in a dry frying pan over a medium heat and toss them regularly for about 4 minutes, until golden. Roughly chop and set aside.

5 Add the stock to the vegetables and bring to the boil, then blend well. Add the lemon juice, chopped coriander and more salt and pepper, if necessary. The soup should be smooth like velvet.

6 Serve straight away or reheat, and scatter the toasted cashews on top.





Pumpkin, Cheese and Rosemary Scones

Makes 9

Deliciously savoury and gorgeously light in texture, these scones are great served with a hearty bowl of soup. You can use any squash instead of pumpkin and, if you fancy, add lardons of crispy bacon or diced chorizo to the mix.

- 175g peeled and deseeded pumpkin (weight when peeled and deseeded)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 200g plain flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 2 tsp finely chopped rosemary
- ½ tsp salt
- 50g finely grated cheese (Cheddar or a hard cheese such as Parmesan)
- 1 egg

- 100ml milk, plus 1 tbsp extra for brushing over the top

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C, 180°C fan, gas mark 6. Cut the pumpkin into 1-2cm chunks and place on a roasting tray. Drizzle with the olive oil and roast in the oven for about 20 minutes, until tender. Tip the pumpkin into a bowl (leaving the oven on) and mash very well with a fork, or blend in a food processor, then allow to cool. If using canned pumpkin puree, you'll need 125g.

2 Sift the flour, baking powder and cayenne pepper into a bowl and add the rosemary, salt and all but 2 tbsp of the grated cheese, reserving the remaining cheese for scattering over the scones before they go into the oven.

3 Whisk the egg and mix with the pumpkin puree and milk. Make a well in the centre of the dry ingredients and add the wet ingredients then, with your hand in a claw shape, mix the two, making sure you don't knead but simply mix until it comes together.

4 Tip the mixture out on to a floured surface and tidy the sides, working it into a rough square and patting the dough out to 2cm thick. Brush a little milk over the top and scatter with the remaining cheese, then cut the dough into 3 x 3 portions to make 9 scones.

5 Place the scones on a baking tray and bake in the preheated oven for about 15 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. They should sound hollow when tapped on the base. Cool on a wire rack.

Roasted Parsnip, Garlic and Haricot Bean Soup with Sage

This is a supremely smooth and silky soup, topped with deliciously crisp fried sage leaves. The garlic cloves, when roasted in their skins, deliver a sweet but rounded depth of flavour that I adore. This is the perfect soup for a cold and blustery day.

Serves 6

- 3 medium or 2 large parsnips, peeled and cut into 2cm chunks
- 1 large onion, peeled and cut into 2cm chunks
- 6 very large, whole unpeeled garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

- 1 x 400g tin haricot beans
- 1l vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 tbsp chopped sage

To serve:

- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Handful sage leaves

1 Preheat the oven to 200°C, 180°C fan, gas mark 6. Place the parsnip and onion chunks in a roasting tray with the whole unpeeled cloves of garlic. Drizzle over the olive oil and toss the vegetables, seasoning with salt and pepper. Spread them out to cover the base of the roasting tray and place in the preheated oven for 35-45 minutes, until the vegetables are tender and a little golden around the edges.

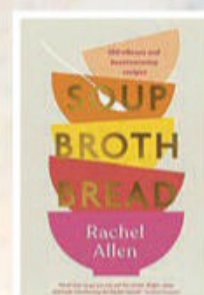
2 Drain the tin of beans and tip all but a generous tablespoon of beans into the vegetables. Return to the oven for 5 minutes more.

3 Take the tray out of the oven and tip the beans and vegetables and any juices into a saucepan with the hot stock. Add the chopped sage and blend until smooth. Season to taste.

4 To serve, pour the hot soup into warm bowls. Put the olive oil into a small frying pan and allow to get hot. Add the sage leaves and fry for 10-15 seconds, until they turn a couple of shades darker and become fragrant. Spoon the sage-flavoured oil and the crispy sage leaves over the soup with the reserved beans, and enjoy.



'Soup Broth Bread'
by Rachel Allen
(Penguin Michael
Joseph, £22)



If using dried beans, use 125g haricot or cannellini beans. Soak in water for at least 5 hours, then drain, cover with water and boil for 30-40 minutes, until tender.

Good mood food

GINGER SPICE

Wintry spices warm the soul, and none more so than ginger – synonymous with chilly weather and scrummy baked goods, now is the time to make the most of its health-boosting, cold-fighting goodness

With its rich, warming flavour, ginger is a storecupboard saviour at any time of year, but particularly during the festive season, says nutritionist Alison Cullen: ‘Think gingerbread and lightly spiced drinks...’ One of its main benefits is improved circulation and increased blood flow which, coupled with ginger’s zingy taste, is fantastic for sharpening your senses and bolstering brainpower. Boosting blood flow around your body, ginger helps keep your extremities – hands, feet and head – toasty on chilly days.

Inflammation evasion

‘As with many wonderful herbs and spices, ginger’s anti-inflammatory powers are a huge boon and work in harmony with its antibacterial and antioxidant properties,’ says Cullen. ‘Between them, they make this knobbly root a real health powerhouse; fighting inflammation and boosting antioxidant levels is vital for keeping our minds and bodies in balance,’ she says.

Nature’s cure-all

‘And there’s a good reason ginger is a spice hero during winter in particular,’ adds Cullen. ‘Its high antioxidant levels and antibacterial properties not only help fight off cold-causing bacteria, they also soothe some of the most irritating symptoms, including a sore throat and congestion.’



GRATE STUFF!

You’ll be surprised at the number of dishes that can be elevated with a sprinkle of ginger, and it works beautifully in some unexpected places. Try ginger grated...

- In marinades and dressings
- On salads
- Mixed into yoghurt
- On toast under the grill with a dab of coconut oil
- Sliced into water (hot or cold)*



The gnarly ginger root is what we’re most familiar with, but ginger also grows a beautiful flower on top of its strange, rolled-up stem.

WORDS: LARISSA CHAPMAN. PHOTOGRAPHS: SHUTTERSTOCK
*WARNING: CONSULT YOUR GP BEFORE EATING GINGER DURING PREGNANCY

BROOK + WILDE

Award winning luxury mattresses + beds



Exclusive **40% off** mattresses and beds

For a limited time only, Psychologies readers can save 40% on all Brook + Wilde mattresses and beds.

Every Brook + Wilde mattress embodies the best of British craftsmanship and unapologetic luxury. Choose **SOFT**, **MEDIUM** or **FIRM**, then lie back for the deepest, most restful sleep of your life.

Visit www.brookandwilde.com and use the code **PSY40** at checkout. T+Cs apply. Offer ends 31/12/21.



Free Premium
Delivery



100 Night Mattress
Comfort Trial



Made in the
United Kingdom



10 Year Mattress
Guarantee

Call **0808 169 9070**
or visit www.brookandwilde.com

Too stressed to sleep?



Do you watch the hours tick by while thinking about tomorrow's to-do list? Charlie Morley, a sleep and dream expert and author of *Wake Up To Sleep*, explains what's getting in the way of a good night's rest and introduces a revolutionary new technique for drifting off – and he's not talking about fewer lattes!

My Buddhist teacher once told me that insomnia was 'the process of trying to fall asleep'. He said that falling asleep isn't something you *try* to do – instead, sleep is, in many ways, the culmination of doing nothing at all. Science agrees with him, stating that sleep is an automatic biological process that will occur naturally in the absence of obstacles preventing it.

Sounds right, but what does that mean for those of us who continually come across these obstacles? Those of us who find ourselves in bed counting the things we need to do the next day, rather than sheep; or, instead of feeling heavy eyelids, feel only the heavy burden of tomorrow's schedule and yesterday's untouched chores?

A wakefulness loop

Being too stressed to sleep affects every area of life, from cognitive ability to immune function and social wellbeing. A sleepless night leads to 40 per cent less memory storage, a massive 70 per cent drop in immune cell activity and an increase of up to 60 per cent in emotional irritability. All this creates more stress, which leads to worse sleep, which leads to more stress – and so the cycle continues.

Most of the popular sleep-hygiene hacks we come across focus on removing the external obstacles that interfere with our sleep, such as blue-frequency light and caffeine intake, for example. These hacks can be helpful, but if you are too stressed to sleep, they aren't long-term solutions. You can use all the blue-light filters in the world, but until you filter out the internal obstacles that prevent sleep from occurring, you may find yourself staring at the ceiling until morning.

Sleep is our birthright. But we must focus less on creating the perfect external conditions and more on cultivating an internal environment within our bodies that allows sleep to occur. And what is the main internal obstacle? An overactivated nervous system.

Gatekeeper of sleep

There is a system in the body that controls more than 90 per cent of our biological functions, and it holds the keys to naturally nourishing sleep. The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is the part of the nervous system that controls any bodily functions that aren't

consciously directed – which turns out to be the vast majority of them; things such as breathing, heart rate, brain function, digestion and, of course, sleep are all controlled by it.

The ANS is made up of two parts: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. You may have heard of them – the sympathetic nervous system, often called the fight or flight response, activates our ability to fight or flee in the face of perceived dangers. It's a bit like the accelerator pedal in a car: it leads to speed and action. The fight or flight system creates hormonal changes too: our adrenal glands start pumping adrenaline into our bloodstream, closely followed by cortisol. These stress hormones put our body into a state of high alert. Cortisol is our built-in coffee pot, so although it's great for waking us up, until our brain stops pumping it out, quite simply, cortisol keeps us far too alert to be able to fall asleep.

The parasympathetic rest and digest system is very different, however: it's like the brake pedal in a car. It calms down our body and mind, allowing us to relax and revive. When the parasympathetic system is engaged, our heart rate drops and our cells begin to repair themselves. Our energy reserves are restored and our digestive system switches on – hence, rest and digest.

So how does all this relate to sleep? As you might imagine, sleep requires a state of parasympathetic activation. To fall asleep and stay asleep, we need to balance the ANS by turning off fight or flight and turning on rest and digest.

Usually, this would happen naturally, but for those of us who are working with high levels of stress (and after what we've been through globally recently, who isn't?) we get stuck in a state of 'sympathetic dominance': a condition in which a person's brain is simply too activated to sleep.

The body knows

So how can we counteract this constant activation of our fight or flight system and allow sleep to occur naturally? The answer is literally right under our noses. As shamans, mystics and yogis have known for thousands of years, we can radically transform



our psychophysical state through the rhythm of our breath. Changing the way we breathe can change the state of our ANS almost instantaneously. Want to be relaxed and ready for sleep? Then simply breathe as if you already are.

As you read these words, you're probably breathing at about 15 breaths per minute. This might seem normal, but it's actually so fast that it activates the sympathetic nervous system. This means that, right now, simply because of the way you're breathing, your body is in low-level fight or flight mode – and that's before you add the stresses of everyday life into the mix, alongside a global pandemic! This breath-led and stress-exacerbated state of affairs plays havoc with our ability to sleep well, as it activates the release of the cortisol, adrenaline and excitatory neurotransmitters that keep us awake.

One of the most effective but little known insomnia treatments is not some new app or brain training headband, but simply to breathe much, much slower than usual.

How slow can you go?

So how can we stressed-out sleepers breathe our way to better sleep? There is a powerful breathwork technique called 'coherent breathing' that has a profound effect on the ANS – and it might just change your life. It's easy to learn, there are no side effects and the impact on our sleep is huge.

Coherent breathing involves breathing at a relaxed rhythm of five breaths per minute, around 70 per cent slower than we usually breathe. Scientific research has found that for most adults, breathing at around five breaths per minute is the optimal human breath rate and leads to a near-perfect balance in the nervous system.

Patricia Gerbarg, a New York Medical College professor in psychiatry, explains how it works: 'Within a very short time, breathing at five breaths a minute will synchronise the electrical rhythms of the heart, lungs and brain, which is very beneficial.' She continues: 'Most of the medicines that are used to treat anxiety or stress will dampen down the overactivity of the fight or flight system, but none of them strengthen the rest and digest response. Coherent breathing does, however. In fact, it creates a visceral and scientifically verifiable relaxation response within just a few minutes.'

As the 'roaring twenties' of this new millennium offer unprecedented challenges, as well as brave new

opportunities, one thing is for sure: our ability to cope with them will be written in the lines under our eyes. Will we thrive or merely survive? Sleep will play a large part in the answer to that question and sleep-hygiene hacks simply don't cut it any more. We need a stronger medicine in the search for good sleep and its one that has been with us all along: slow, deep, coherent breathing.

A formerly sleep-deprived woman who came to one of my workshops because she was dealing with high levels of stress due to her work situation, told me with relief: 'When I wake up in the night, I do the coherent breathing and my mind comes right down and stops racing. I do coherent breathing all the time now – before bed and in the middle of the night. It's brilliant.'

It's free, it's easy to do and, if you make it part of your night-time routine, it might just transform the third of your life that you spend asleep – allowing you to wake up and live the other two thirds feeling happier and healthier.

'Wake Up To Sleep' by Charlie Morley (Hay House, £10.99)

EXERCISE *Coherent breathing*

Coherent breathing can be practised by simply counting the length of your breaths (six seconds in and six seconds out) but, usually, and this is even better for relaxation, you follow an audio track to keep the specific rhythm. You can stream or download coherent breathing audio tracks at charliemorley.com/wakeuptosleep

- Sit comfortably – or lie down if you prefer – with your eyes closed or slightly open. Take three deep relaxing breaths and soften your face, neck and shoulders.
- Start your chosen coherent breathing audio track and simply synchronise your breathing with the track, gently and steadily, with no breath-holding.
- Breathe in through your nose if possible and don't use any force or pressure. Feel free to slow down your breathing gently by dipping in

and out of the rhythm for the first couple of minutes, until you feel comfortable with the longer breaths.

- Simply continue to breathe mindfully and gently at the same pace in a relaxed way. If your mind drifts, just bring it back to the sensation of your breathing and the sound of the chimes or bells on audio. Allow yourself to relax deeply into the out breath.
- Once you are at home with the rhythm, focus on relaxing deeply and releasing tension in your body as you exhale.
- After your chosen length of time (five, 10 or 20 minutes), gently release your breathing pattern and turn off the audio track.
- For the first week, aim for 10 or 20 minutes before bed in sessions of five or 10 minutes. From the second week, aim for 20 minutes per day, or more if you like – there's no such thing as too much; the more you do it, the better!

"This powerful breathwork technique might just change your life"





CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING PROMOTION

As Southdown Duvets celebrates a decade of helping resolve sleep issues, happy clients share the benefits of its incredible bedding

Don't just take our word for it...



My new bedding arrived first thing yesterday: a duvet, mattress cover and two pillows – an excellent, speedy service! I've had my first night using them and I wasn't disappointed. The bedding exceeded my expectations, even after reading the glowing testimonials online.

I was so comfortable that I fell asleep quickly with my book still in my hand – I don't think I could have stayed awake if I had wanted to! For the first time in ages, I slept right through the night without waking, and got a full eight hours of sleep, waking refreshed and feeling so cosy that I didn't want to get out of bed. And, for the first time in ages, I wasn't wheezing when I woke up. Despite it being a muggy night, I didn't get hot and toss and turn like I usually do – and the duvet was still neatly on the bed when I awoke. I know it's only been one night, but I already feel my Southdown Duvets bedding is making such a difference to the way I feel.

Well done to everyone in the company for producing such wonderful products, and a big thank you for all your help. I shall recommend the products to friends and family. Superb!

Karen, September 2021



What a pleasure it was to shop with Southdown Duvets! A really personal service, with a great peace-of-mind returns guarantee. Not that I'll be using it – there's no way I'd give up my Woolly Mammoth duvet. Light yet cosy, if you haven't experienced sleeping under a wool duvet before, you are really missing out. There are cheaper options out there, but none will aid you in an ultimate sleep experience like a Southdown duvet.

M Cox, March 2021



Our new duvet is a delight to sleep under – it's firmer and less fluffy than a down duvet, but this feels rather good once it settles around you. We also bought pillows, choosing a 650g and 800g each, and the combination seems to work perfectly for both of us.

A significant factor in buying from Southdown Duvets was a helpful conversation on the phone; the reassurance that we could return our purchase, having tested them to our satisfaction, really swayed our decision to buy.

K Hare, October 2020

**10%
OFF**

Use the voucher code 'KEEPCOOL' for 10% off all products until 30 November. southdownduvets.com

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

In these challenging times, how might you develop yourself & inspire others?

Learn how to train virtually as a **life coach** and make a profound difference to your own life and the lives of others.

Discover our Accredited Diploma in Transformational Coaching at a **free, no-commitment, virtual introduction event.**

Go to www.animascoaching.com/intro ☎ 0330 900 5555



Quote **Psychologies** when enrolling on the full course for additional **£50 discount**

*BECOME A RELAXATION TEACHER
Or just learn to relax yourself*

*THE GENTLE WAY OF
RETURNING TO SILENCE
Inner peace and relaxation Workshop*

•
*A unique one day certificated teachers
Workshop with Buddhist monk
Lama Shri Sadhu Dharmavira
(Teaching since 1969)*

*Practices for finding inner peace and calm
in a world of chaos, for all those who now want to
run their own lives. and not have life run them!
Simple down to earth daily exercises that can change your life.*

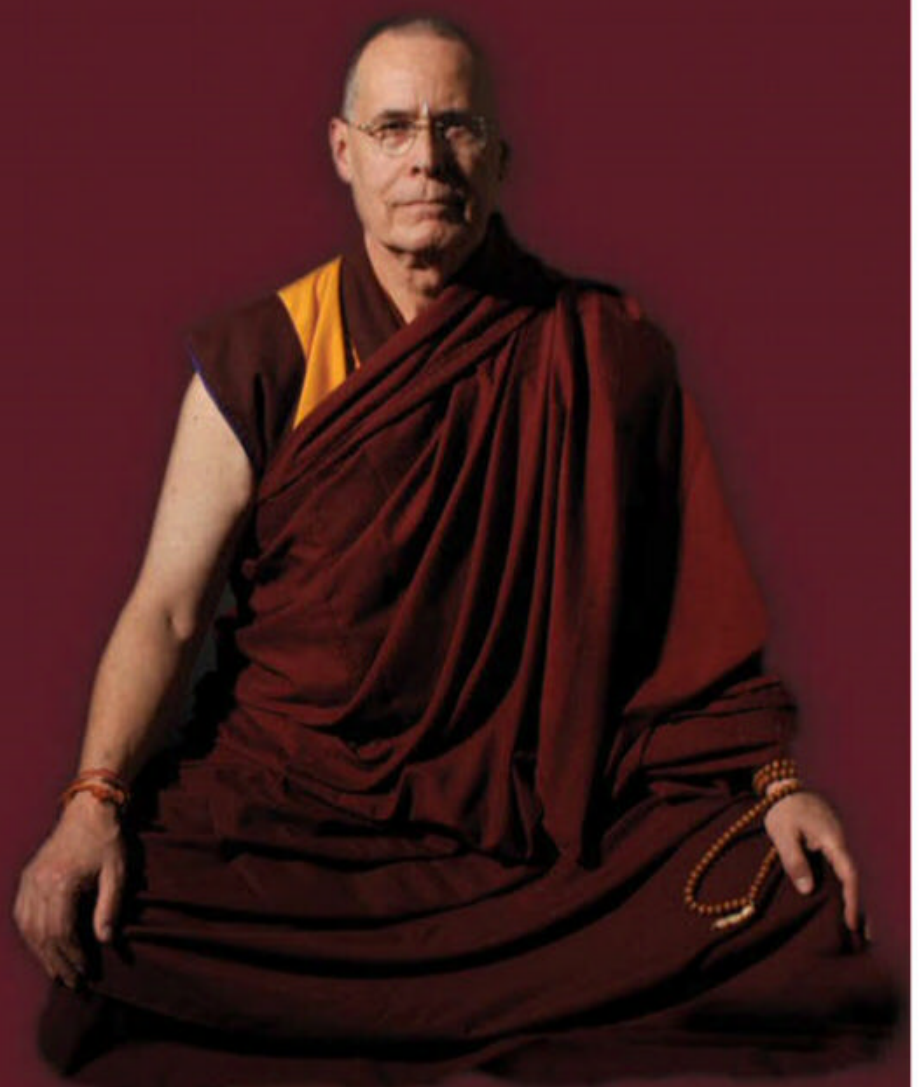
*This unique workshop was developed by Sadhu after over 50
years of training as both a Zen and Tibetan Buddhist monk
and is taught exclusively by him.*

*This workshop is taught for health and wellbeing
and is open to everyone.*

•
Booking now for workshops in London.

*To ensure quality teaching, workshops
are limited to a maximum of 8 participants.*

*To receive full details about the workshop and its benefits,
please telephone: 01723 862 496
(calls taken between 8am - 6pm, 7 days a week)*



LAMA SHRI SADHU DHARMAVIRA

STUCK FOR FRESH IDEAS OF WHAT TO BUY FOR YOUR LOVED ONES THIS YEAR?

Active living



The ultimate Christmas treat

Why not give your loved one a real boost this year? Psychologies is the UK's No.1 emotional well-being magazine that focuses on the mind, heart, body and soul. Every issue will be wrapped in a little hug from you! Our Christmas offer also includes a candle from Scentered worth £16.95.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/PSYGIFT



Explore our beautiful coastline

A subscription to Coast magazine is like sending your loved one on a journey of discovery that lasts the whole year. Plus, we've included a Travel Candle from Coast Candle Co. to remind them of somewhere special.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/COAGIFT



Every horse rider needs a little boost in winter

Dark winter days can challenge even the most dedicated rider. Why not give your favourite rider a boost this Christmas with a pair of warm winter riding socks and a subscription to Your Horse, the magazine that inspires its readers to enjoy every single second that they spend in the saddle.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/YHGIFT



Everyone needs a little me-time

We all know how important it is to live a healthy lifestyle, so why not gift your loved one a helping hand? Top Santé is packed full of life-enhancing tips and advice on health, fitness, food and beauty. Plus our Christmas offer also includes a candle from Scentered worth £16.95.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/TSGIFT



Got a fisherman friend?

Sea Angler is the perfect companion for every sea fishing enthusiast. As well as receiving 13 issues of the UK's best-selling fishing mag, we've thrown in Shore Fishing Special Edition and a Sea Angler beanie hat to complete the gift – what a catch!

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/SAGIFT



Celebrate the joy of the land this Christmas

If you want to support your loved one in their lifestyle choice, then what better way than with practical help and advice from The Smallholder magazine. Our gift pack includes eight issues packed with practical advice for growing food, rearing livestock, and country crafts, plus a pair of cosy Alpaca socks.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/SHGIFT

VIEW ALL OFFERS AT: SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/GIFT21

WORRY NO MORE, WE HAVE IT COVERED!

Hobbies



Hot Stuff – the perfect gift for gadget fans

Stuff magazine is packed full of news, reviews, and all the best deals on the hottest new gadgets. Treat a friend to 13 issues of Stuff and receive a Nacon PS4 stereo gaming headset, worth £25.50.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/STUGIFT



Get your footy-mad youngsters reading with Match!

A Match! subscription is the perfect gift to help your kids and keep them up to speed with their favourite teams and players. With a new issue to look forward to every two weeks, plus the new 2022 Football Skills Annual, they can impress their mates with their reading, along with their footwork!

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/MATGIFT



The perfect subscription for photography lovers.

Amateur Photographer Premium is the perfect gift for photography lovers. Gift a subscription today and they will receive 13 issues across the year, that's 13 deliveries of tips and tutorials, all from you! We'll also include three Special Editions as an extra gift that will get them off to a flying start.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/APGIFT



The perfect gift for the next Top Potter

If you know a Pottery fan, then why not help them to take up the challenge this Christmas! ClayCraft is the perfect gift for all ceramic enthusiasts, it's packed with inspiration and practical tips. Our gift pack includes 12 issues of ClayCraft, Throwing for Beginners Special Edition plus a unique, heavy-duty ClayCraft apron.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/CLAYGIFT



Stocking filler idea

Boxing News Presents Special Editions

Pack of three (get 3 editions for the price of 2)

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/BNPGIFT



Give the ultimate football companion this Christmas

World Soccer is the unrivalled authority on the game of soccer around the world, delivering the inside-track on the domestic scene and on the beautiful game. Our Christmas offer includes 13 issues of World Soccer plus three World Soccer Presents Special Editions.

Visit Shop.kelsey.co.uk/WSGIFT

TEL: 01959 543747

– CALLS ARE CHARGED AT YOUR STANDARD NETWORK RATE. FOR FULL T&CS VISIT SHOP.KELSEY.CO.UK/TERMS

How to make time for meditation on your busiest days

The beauty of meditation is that it is free and always accessible, we just need to show up for ourselves. Try these five simple ways to make time for your practice from Joey Hulin, author of *Your Spiritual Almanac*

1 Keep it simple

As the saying goes, 'one conscious breath is a meditation'. Simply take a mindful, slow breath down into your belly. Repeat as many times as possible throughout your day.

2 Try to stop scrolling

Can you replace five minutes of screen time with a short meditation? Put your phone to one side, close your eyes, breathe and be still.

3 Have a morning check-in

Before you get out of bed, swing your legs over the side of the bed and take three long, slow, conscious breaths. Place your hands over your heart and ask yourself: How am I doing today? What do I need?

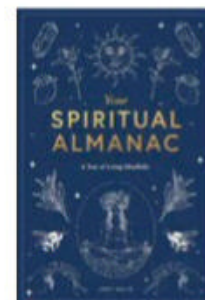
4 Create a soothing night-time ritual

Dim the lights, turn off all screens and listen to a short, guided meditation before you get into bed at night. This can be done with a partner, children or on your own.

5 Be present

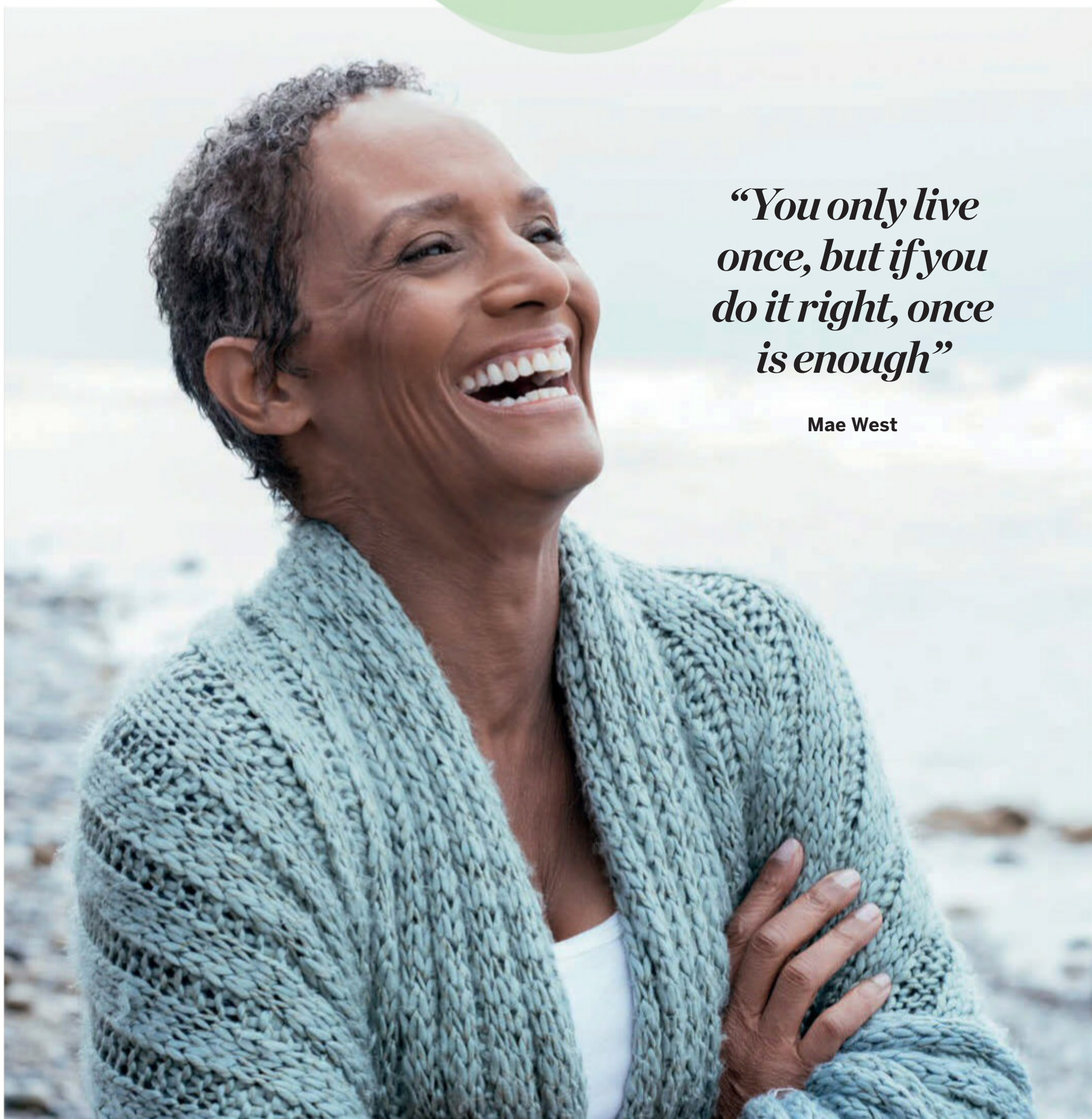
Meditation is a living practice that can be woven through all aspects of daily life. Bring your awareness to the sounds around you, what you can see and how you feel in your body at any given moment. Every moment of awareness is a new beginning.

**'Your Spiritual Almanac:
A Year Of Living Mindfully'
by Joey Hulin (Laurence
King, £14.99)**





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



***“You only live
once, but if you
do it right, once
is enough”***

Mae West



WORK IN PROGRESS

I have itchy feet but don't know what I want

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

*"We shall
not cease from
exploration
And the end of all
our exploring
Will be to arrive
where we started
And know the place
for the first time"*

TS Eliot

Q I've been in my job for 10 years and my employers have been wonderfully flexible while I had younger children. Now my kids are at secondary school and I'm restless, but I don't know what direction to take. Part of me feels fortunate to have stability, so is it foolish to give that up? I'm not unhappy at work, but I can't say I'm happy either. Am I expecting too much?

You may not realise it, but you have already embarked on a process of change. The psychologist James Prochaska says we often focus on visible actions, but thinking and planning are essential. He'd call this stage 'contemplation'. Ambivalence is uncomfortable, but necessary: you need to be clear about your reasons to either stay where you are or make a move. This will help you get others on board and, more crucially, sustain your motivation.

In terms of motivation, I often ask myself what I want my children to learn from my behaviour. Do I want them to see a mum dragging herself through the days, or someone who actively tries to make things better, even if she gets it wrong sometimes?

I see three possible directions for you: stay where you are but develop the role, find an exciting goal outside work or start looking for a different job. To take those in order: would your role be more appealing if you took on new responsibilities, or did some professional learning? Could you create a project where you investigate best practice in other organisations and bring that back to your own? Could you mentor others and share your experience? Or might it suit you to keep ticking over while you plan something personal outside work, perhaps to mark this new stage in your life with older

children? Is there something you've wanted to do but could not until now – a fundraising trek, art class or voluntary work? The sense that your day job makes these things possible could shift the balance.

The third way is to consider a new job or a career change. It's possible that you have the flexibility to take a day or two every month to explore possibilities. Herminia Ibarra, a professor of organisational behaviour, says we have a lot of our identity invested in work and can overidentify with our employer, almost like a parent we can't leave.

In her book, *Working Identity*, she suggests letting go of the notion of the one true self. We all have many possible selves, and it's about testing whether you really want what you think you want. Could you spend a day shadowing someone who has a job you find interesting? Or ask a friend who loves their work what their day is like? How about a coffee with any professional contacts – customers, suppliers or advisers – who enjoy what they do?

In summary, take some small steps along different roads because new information will soon appear. If you decide to stay where you are, chances are that the knowledge you've acquired will help you to be happier in that conscious choice.

jprochaska.com

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

Got a question for Mary?
Email mary@psychologies.co.uk with 'Mary life' or 'Mary work' in the subject line



How to reinvent your career

If you have reached a crossroads in your working life or feel something is missing, ponder the following advice to find clarity and confidence about your way forward:

THE MAP

- Try to act your way into a new way of thinking and being. You cannot discover yourself by introspection alone. Start by changing what you do in small, experimental ways.
- If the final decision seems simple, it's because you've put in the work and explored different paths – the planning stage is as important as the actions towards change.
- Expect some false starts. Celebrate every minor triumph and use it to keep pointing you in the direction that seems most interesting.

PEOPLE

- Be aware that the people closest to you might be invested in you – and your circumstances – staying the same.
- Bear in mind that people often find new jobs through contacts who are distant connections or acquaintances, having interacted only once or twice with them.
- During your exploration, every time you meet a new contact, ask: Do I want to be like this person? Can I be like this person?

LEARNING

Learning happens in cycles. The early cycles focus on the most immediate or surface problems. Later cycles lead to the bigger questions, including the underlying and unconscious level of assumptions. Start small and slowly. Small wins give us the confidence to examine the bigger questions.

- Taken from the work of Herminia Ibarra, an authority on leadership and career development and a professor at London Business School. Find out more in her book, *Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies For Reinventing Your Career* (Harvard Business Review Press, £21); herminiaibarra.com

EMBRACE THE *big chill*

Don your hiking boots, grab your gloves and take lockdown walking to the next level – it's time for a winter wellbeing boost

WORDS: LARISSA CHAPMAN

You might think summer is the best time to enjoy the glory and uplift of nature, but there's something uniquely magical about winter. The crunch of frosted leaves underfoot, the chill on your cheeks as you venture out wrapped in your cold-weather togs... It's a special and strangely life-affirming experience to feel the sharp intake of icy air as you breathe in, and whimsically watch it waft out as you exhale.

There's a sense of calm acceptance in winter: we roll with the weather, prepared for any eventuality... We expect little, but get so much in return. Nature is stark and striking at this time of year and being close to its beauty works wonders for our wellbeing.

One of the best ways to enjoy winter is to immerse yourself in it while walking and enjoy the many benefits that being close to nature brings.

Thankfully, for many of us, walking has become something of a habit over the past 18 months or so. When Boris announced the closure of life as we knew it, we took to the streets where we lived to take

advantage of our one hour of allotted daily exercise (usually a walk around the block).

And many of us became hooked. With pluses including weight management, lower stress levels and boosted immunity – regular walkers have, on average, 43 per cent fewer sick days – it's no surprise we were taken with our newfound accessible and free fitness regime.

However, with life getting back to normal and wintertime upon us, it's challenging to keep the momentum going. Luckily, we have expert help to keep you motivated and guide you on a journey from evening meander to weekend hike, so you can enjoy all that this beautiful season has to offer – on foot.



Play with pace

If you want to add variety to your walks, a great way to mix things up a bit, and prepare your mind and body for more challenging walks and routes, is to add fartlek training to your routine. It's a Swedish term meaning 'speed play' and is a form of interval training that can drastically improve speed and stamina.

Try 10 minutes of normal walking and three minutes of power walking to begin with and build up from there. 'You can time your fast and slow intervals based on how

you feel, and experiment with changes of pace,' says James. 'Fartlek training is perfect for beginners because you can tailor speeds to suit your level and it helps take some of the stress out of workouts, as you learn not to obsess about distance and mileage and focus on building stamina.

'The bursts of speed help get the blood pumping, which improves blood flow to your whole body, including your brain. And it gives you a boost of feelgood endorphins.'

Spark your interest

If there's one thing we all did during lockdown, it was walk the same routes over and over again. 'In order to keep up the momentum and increase your fitness in the process so you can tackle weekend adventures, try mixing up your midweek routes to keep you inspired,' says James.

'For example, walk your most common route in reverse or add a lap of the park to your shortest route – take the kids and find some icy puddles to stamp on and crack! Variety is the spice of life, so mixing things up is one of the best ways to retain interest and enthusiasm.'



Expert advice



Claire and James Davis are owners of fitness retreat 38 Degrees North and creators of the 'The Midlife Mentors' podcast. They are huge advocates of walking. thirtyeightdegreesnorth.com; themidlifementors.com

Take it seriously

Many people don't see walking as 'proper' exercise, but it definitely is and taking it seriously and preparing appropriately will make it a whole lot more enjoyable, starting with some stretching.

'Walking can put a big strain on your glutes and lower back and this can be particularly telling if you have a weak core,' says Claire. 'Working on your core and maintaining good posture, as well as stretching before and after each session, is key to keeping your body happy and healthy on your walks.'

If you go into the woods...

One way to pimp up your walks is to incorporate a wooded area. 'Forest bathing is huge in Japan and it is as simple as it sounds – it's when people spend time walking among trees,' says James. If you don't have a woodland path nearby then it really is worth a short drive or bus journey to your nearest one.

Studies have found that just 15 minutes immersed beneath the leafy canopies is enough to lower cortisol levels (the stress hormone), blood pressure and heart rate. A further study has found that people who spend more time in nature have a happier and more positive outlook on life, and are even kinder and more creative – all the more reason to swap the streets and housing estates for forests and fields.

DRESS THE PART

It's prudent to do more than dig out your old trainers to give your adventures the best chance of becoming a habit. 'You don't need to spend a fortune, but investing in some decent kit – most notably walking boots and a rain jacket – is vital for making your walk an enjoyable experience that you think positively about and want to repeat,' says Claire. Check out our favourite cold-weather gear overleaf.



Do you want to make memories you'll remember forever? Walking could be the key.

A study conducted by researchers at the University of California found that those who walk regularly have better memory function than those who are more sedentary.

GO OLD SCHOOL

‘Another great way to up your walking game is to take yourself off the beaten track with a spot of map reading,’ says Claire. ‘Ditch the apps and fancy gadgets, dust off the old paper map and plan a weekend adventure away from the streets where you live. When you set out on your hike, see if you can manage without using your phone to give your mind a digital detox. The act of map reading will sharpen your brain as you challenge it with new skills,’ she says. ‘We’ve become reliant on technology for so many aspects of our lives, it’s important to master new or forgotten skills from time to time as a workout for your brain. And getting away from urban areas and out among the energising winter vista can be a real mood booster.’

Join the gang

‘One of the best ways to turn your lockdown meanders around the village into something more adventurous is to join a walking group,’ says James. ‘There are thousands of groups across the country, catering for all fitness levels. Not only is it sociable and fun to walk with others, it also means you are more accountable and less likely to skip a session,’ he says.

‘Walking with a group gives an added layer of safety, which many women find reassuring, and takes the burden of route planning off your shoulders, which can be rather appealing if you’re short on time. What’s more, walking – and, perhaps even more importantly, talking – with others can have great benefits for your mental health and happiness levels.’

Get kitted out

Whether you're just starting out or have a mountain to conquer, we've rounded up all the best gear to achieve your hiking goals

For all your essentials

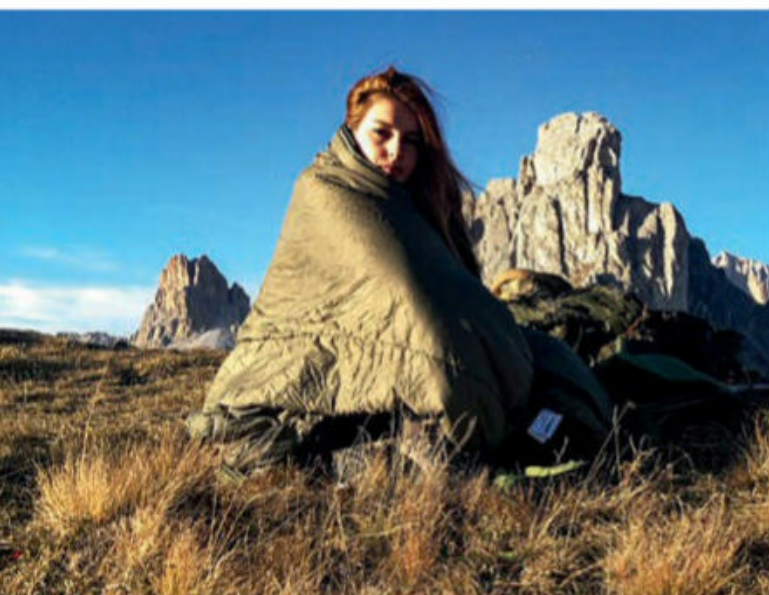
The REFLECT360 Explorer backpack, £64.99, is highly reflective and has a 30-litre capacity, so you can take everything you need for a day's hiking in the countryside.

provizsports.com



For peace of mind

Tile's Bluetooth trackers, from £19.99, can be attached to your rucksack or slotted into your wallet so you can track them down if you misplace them. Ideal if you tend to misplace things while out on an adventure. **uk.tile.com**



For keeping you toasty

Snugpak's insulated Jungle blanket, from £35, is lightweight, versatile and easily packed into a rucksack. It's designed to keep you warm on winter adventures and is a must when stopping for lunch al fresco – simply wrap it around you for extra warmth.

snugpak.com



For all-day freshness

Incognito's natural Crystal deodorant, £5.99, helps keep you fresh throughout the day, whatever your activity levels, and has the added benefit of significantly reducing your attractiveness to insects! It's also free from any harsh chemicals.

lessmosquito.com



For squat-proof confidence

Pocket Sport's Morisot leggings, £68, are breathable, sweat-proof and squat-proof, for ultimate comfort and confidence on those long hikes across more challenging terrain. They include internal pockets and a trademark waistband, which won't slip.

pocket-sport.com

For conserving body heat

The House of Bruar's Alpine beanie, £49.95, is made from pure wool to keep you cosy on even the chilliest of walks, and comes in an array of Fair Isle knitting designs.

houseofbruar.com



For a handy spritz

FrogBand's Active Series wristbands, £14.99 each, are a convenient way to store liquids, including sun cream, hand gel or even water, ready to dispense whenever you need and perfect when out and about on long walks.

frogband.com



For style and substance

This ladies' Schoffel Ghillie coat, £349.95, by The House of Bruar is well worth the investment for a quality product that lasts. Designed for all kinds of outdoor pursuits, this stylish jacket is lightweight, windproof, waterproof and breathable.

houseofbruar.com



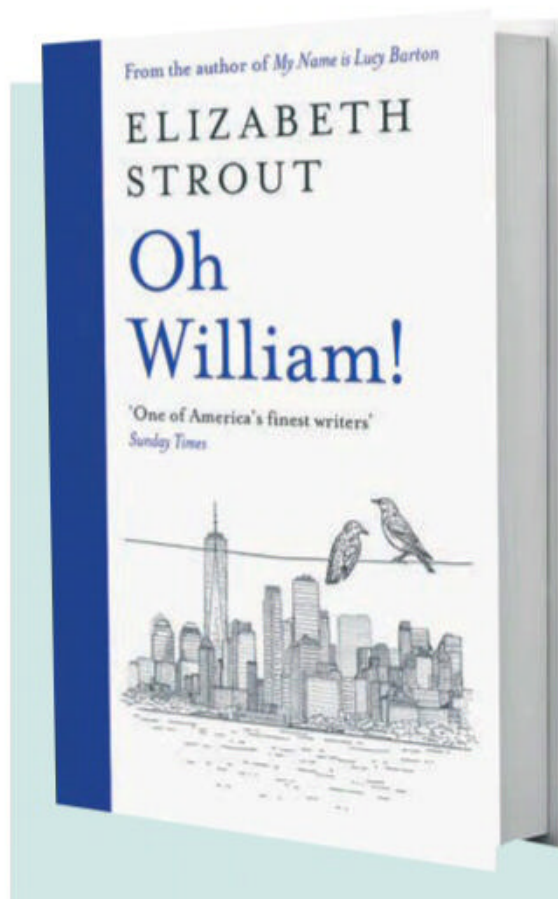
For happy feet

KYMIRA Sport's infrared compression socks, £35, aren't your average sports socks. Made with infrared technology, the fabric is designed to increase the flow of oxygenated blood and slow the rate of lactic acid build-up, helping you walk quicker and further, and speeding up recovery time.

kymira sport.com

The words

Are you sitting comfortably? Then let me begin, writes Eithne Farry, whose monthly pick of the best fiction features love, laughter and losing your way



*Book
of the
month*

Oh William!

By Elizabeth Strout, Penguin, £14.99

There's an abundance of exasperated tenderness in the author's latest instalment of novelist Lucy Barton's life. In *Oh William!*, Lucy is recently bereaved following the death of her beloved husband, David, while maintaining her long-standing, brutally honest friendship with her ex-husband, William. William is still emotionally unavailable, still checking out when he should be checking in and still a bit cold and aloof, despite their shared history.

When a new and shocking revelation about his mother forces William to reimagine his family history, it is Lucy in whom he confides, knowing that her gentle wit and kindly wisdom will provide comfort. This is a gorgeous novel – delicate and conversational, and fully alive to the way that childhood trauma, bad marriages and solid friendships can have an impact on a person's tender heart.

Manifesto On Never Giving Up

By Bernardine Evaristo
Penguin, £14.99

When Bernardine Evaristo won the Booker Prize in 2019 for *Girl, Woman, Other*, she was the first black woman to win such acclaim in multiple awards. In this bold memoir, she meditates on her 40 years in the arts, and explains how she became the person she is – resilient, rebellious and, above all, true to herself in her work and her life.

Prepare to be inspired as she ruminates on the heritage, family and rooms she's lived in, and the friendships and relationships – good and bad – that have taught her vital life lessons.



Small Things Like These

By Claire Keegan
Faber & Faber, £10

Exquisite and enraging in equal measure, Claire Keegan's slender, haunting novella packs an emotional punch. Set in the icy winter of 1985, it tells the story of the harsh Magdalene Laundries convent in Ireland, and its inhumane treatment of the women in its supposed care.

There's warmth, courage and compassion too, in the shape of a coal merchant, Bill Furlong, the son of an unmarried 16-year-old and the father of five girls, who cannot, in all good conscience, forget what he learns on his deliveries to the institution – despite the potential trouble it will bring to him and his family.

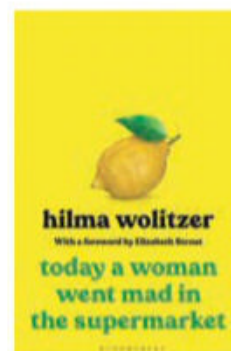


Today A Woman Went Mad In The Supermarket

By Hilma Wolitzer
Bloomsbury, £14.99

Witty and wonderful, these insightful stories by Hilma Wolitzer, aged 91, are about the imperfections of everyday life and how, occasionally, the world gets so overwhelming that the only solution is to lose it on a shopping trip – as in the title story.

Depression, insomnia, infidelity and forgiveness jostle in the characters' lives as they struggle under the burdens of emotional labour, battling in-laws, Covid and old age, while still finding the sunny, funny moments that transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.



Come home to the page... and yourself

Put down your phone and welcome the creative, problem-solving voices – including your own – that inform your inner world, writes Jackee Holder



The average person spends a whopping two hours and three minutes a day on social media. When I sat enjoying breakfast at a cafe in London's King's Cross the other day, instead of scrolling through my Instagram account, I read a chapter of a book. When I finished reading, instead of posting, 'Hey, look what I'm reading!' on social media, I chose to stare into space, musing over what I had read, staying with the words and the images they conjured up for a while after I had rested the book on the table. That decision led to several minutes of free writing in my journal about what I had read, capturing thoughts that arose. Instead of clocking up time on my phone, I made time for the page, reading and writing, and felt so much better as a result.

We know from research that journalling brings a number of health and wellbeing benefits. It boosts the immune system, improves blood counts and enhances the quality of your sleep, which has to be a bonus in a world of vaccines, double jabs, PCR tests and lockdowns. A simple practice of writing one sentence daily to note observations and thoughts can be surprisingly cathartic. A concise list can be just as revealing as a longer form of writing, three pages of what the author Julia Cameron calls morning pages. These are a download of three pages of unfiltered thoughts, written by hand first thing before you even reach for your phone. It's a paper detox for the mind.

Another simple rule is what I call my '3 x 3 x 3' prescription. Dedicate a time slot of three minutes of writing daily, for a minimum of three days a week. This is your bottom line, but feel free to write for longer or more days. During the three minutes, answer three questions: What's going well for you right now? What needs your attention? What three things do you appreciate at the moment?

When you write, you use the muscles of the left brain, which frees up your right brain to become an inner oracle, coming up with ideas, solving problems and allowing you to move into a more creative and resourceful space. It's a practice known as active meditation, or mindfulness on the page. But don't



just take my word for it – explore it for yourself. Read over your writing. What jumps out at you? How do you feel now compared with before you started writing? Are there any surprises? What's calling for your attention?

Whatever the journal practice, whether it's free writing, morning pages or tailored prompts, journalling is its own kind of homecoming, guiding you away from the thoughts of others and pulling you towards examining your inner world. The teacher and writer Pat Schneider describes this as returning to what she calls your 'original voice'. 'The one you have known all your life, the voice that knows you better than anyone else.' Now that's worth your time and investment.

jackeeholder.com; [@jackeeholderinspires](https://www.instagram.com/jackeeholderinspires)

Books

I recommend the enlightening *Digital Minimalism: Choosing A Focused Life In A Noisy World* by Cal Newport (Penguin, £9.99), which offers ways to reduce distractions and live a more meaningful life.



Gorgeous gifts you'll love to give



Unique adornment

These stylish climber earrings make the perfect gift, and you only need one piercing. They are sold in pairs in your choice of metals and styles and cost from £24. Beautiful and unusual!

01903 331744; potterandmooch.co.uk



V&A membership

Help your loved ones find some creative inspiration with membership to the world's leading museum of art, design and performance. Prices from £70.

vam.ac.uk/shop



Relaxing and beautifying

Microcurrent and T-Sonic™ pulsations in the Foreo face-toning device, £279, stimulate the muscles of the face and neck to tighten and firm the skin for a lifted complexion, while smoothing the appearance of fine lines. **foreo.com**



A present of me time

A Top Santé subscription costs just £39.99 for 13 issues – a saving of 26 per cent. **shop.kelsey.co.uk/TSGIFT**



Natural skincare

The Anti-Ox Face beauty set, £11.99, from Natura Siberica contains organic volcanic wild blueberry hydrolate for all skin types. Blueberries are rich in beta carotene and B vitamins, which add radiance, leaving skin hydrated and smooth. Certified vegan by The Vegan Society. **naturasiberica.co.uk**



Art at your fingertips

Made in the UK using vegetable tanned Italian leather, this exclusive clutch bag, £35, features an art deco pattern from the V&A archive.

vam.ac.uk/shop



Daily mantra

'Always, I rise' – remind someone of their resilience and grit with this sterling silver Phoenix necklace from Mantra Jewellery, £25. mantrajewellery.co.uk



Warm wishes

They'll be sure to turn heads and feel cosy in these eye-catching Eribe Scotland wool berets, £40, knitted in Scotland in 100 per cent merino wool. vam.ac.uk/shop



And so to bed...

Keep toes cosy in 90 per cent alpaca bed socks, £18, from Perilla. They come in gorgeous pastel shades and are made in the UK. perilla.co.uk



Wise and wonderful

Charlie the Owl by Donna Wilson, £55, is sure to be a hit with the young and young at heart. He's knitted in 100 per cent lambswool and is exclusive to the V&A. vam.ac.uk/shop



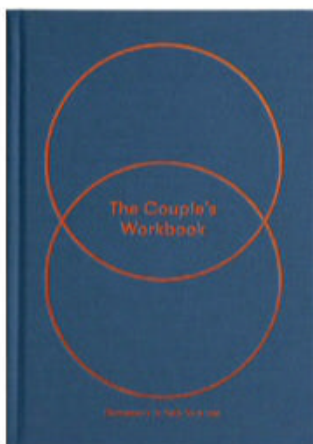
Vitamin sea

Explore our lovely shores with Coast magazine, £42.99 for 12 issues, saving 28 per cent. shop.kelsey.co.uk/COAGIFT



Your soul's desire

Give your loved ones the gift of an uplifting message with Soul Analyse affirmation jewellery. Get 20 per cent off using the code 'XMAS20'. Prices from £15. soulanalyse.com



'The Couple's Workbook'

With therapeutic exercises to help couples nurture patience, forgiveness and humour, this book from The School of Life, £15, contains lessons that will help couples improve their relationship. theschooloflife.com



Say it with feeling

These hand-patinated, brass, natural disc earrings, £75, from the V&A are a unique gift for anyone who loves art and design. Statement-making and stylish, they're the perfect addition to any outfit. vam.ac.uk/shop

Ceramics made with love

If you're looking for gorgeous animal-friendly ceramics, such as this St Clements dragonfly vase, £36, Oxford Clay is a great option. No animal-based tools or ingredients are used to make its pottery, all are certified by The Vegan Society and handmade with clay from South West England.

oxfordclay.co.uk/shop



PSYCHOLOGIES *essentials*

CAREER SOS?

Help is at hand so you can stop accepting:

- Workload Overwhelm
- Loss of work-life balance
- Feeling unheard
- Being stuck in a job you hate
- Thinking you're not good enough
- A difficult boss or colleague
- Imposter Syndrome



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.achievemorelivemore.com/book-online

E-mail: michelle@achievemorelivemore.com

Tel: 07789 922842

Life Changing Career Coaching with Michelle Tranter

www.achievemorelivemore.com

Using Zoom/Teams, appointments: weekdays, evenings & Saturday mornings



COACHING FOR ALL AGES

**FATIGUE
MANAGING CHANGE
DEALING WITH DIFFICULTY
DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS
MOOD SWINGS
SELF ESTEEM
RESILIENCE
AND MORE...**

**FAMILY
MINDFULNESS**

**Let Me Help You Create
Your Own Reset Button**

MINDFULMESCHOOL

**2022
COACHING
PACKAGE**

**5
1:1 BESPOKE
SESSIONS**

**£199
(ADULTS & CHILDREN)**

**BOOK YOUR PLACE
ONLINE TODAY!**

**www.mindfulmeschool.co.uk
info@mindfulmeschool.co.uk**

Mindfulmeschool is a place to notice the self more.

Jenny is an emotional coach and mindfulness specialist working with children and adults helping clients to unblock unhelpful behaviours and alleviate self doubt.

Jenny works with all ages on all topics... Self Esteem/Dealing with difficulty/Managing change.

The Mindfulmeschool coaching sessions are a place to find the root of the problem, notice the triggers and develop a better response.

You will learn to:

Know the self - Understand needs and wants - Implement boundaries - Find your voice
Join the conversation today

THE ACADEMY OF PLAY AND CHILD PSYCHOTHERAPY

COVID-19 has had a profound effect on the mental well-being of children across the UK. As one of the most effective ways of supporting children struggling with their mental health, Play Therapy will be instrumental in helping them negotiate 'post pandemic' life.

The Academy of Play and Child Psychotherapy is the world's most experienced Play Therapy training provider, qualifying successful students to safely support children living with emotional, behavioural and mental health challenges. Our Post-Graduate Training Programmes, accredited by Leeds Beckett University, are the only courses meeting the requirements of Play Therapy UK's Register of Play and Creative Arts Therapists.

If you hold a Level 6 Honours Degree and at least two years' experience of working professionally with children, training with APAC could be your perfect next career step! Contact us today to find out more...

- www.apac.org.uk
- www.playtherapyregister.org.uk
- contact@apac.org.uk
- 01825 761 143



BECOME A

One Source Personal Development Consultant

We currently require a number of individuals to join our team as Personal Development Consultants. If you have a desire to help people increase the quality of their lives, create lasting change & eliminate negative behaviours; we want to talk to you.

- Work from home
- No experience necessary
- First month completely free

This is a genuine opportunity to join a group of like minded people who all use a proven system of personal development to enrich the lives of the clients they work with.

If you would be interested in learning more about this exciting opportunity and to be considered to become part of our network, please contact us via email or phone as detailed below:

Email: shaun@onesourceict.com

Tel: 0845 338 7047

<https://www.onesourceict.com>

TO ADVERTISE, CALL MICHELINA ON 01233 225357

PSYCHOLOGIES

psychologies promotion

Your Questions in Mind... to help and inspire

Q I have constant negative thoughts about myself, what can I do to change this??

A) Negative thoughts are a result of an untrained mind with untrained thoughts, I call this the "puppy mind" as it needs taming and guidance. The mind works like a programme and will repeat what you tell it, so if you're constantly criticising yourself, these same thoughts act like magnets to each other. To change your thinking, start to notice what your inner self talk is saying, slow it

down, acknowledge it and then reframe it. Switch it into something more helpful, even if you can get to neutral. E.g "I feel unattractive" switch to "I'm ok with how I look today" and repeat this several times a day. Allowing the mind silence is pivotal to taming your puppy mind; find time to allow space and silence in your day so you can recharge and connect within.

Web: www.carolinerushforth.com

Email: caroline@carolinerushforth.com



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 jane@friendinabox.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

01903 331744

Use code PSYCHOLOGIES for 10% off your first order

Featured product is 925 sterling silver with Swarovski cream pearls £24



Q Lately I've spent far too much time feeling completely overwhelmed, tearful and panicking that things will never get better. Is there anything you can recommend that I take to help?

A) Flower Essences can be extremely effective in cases like this and are being used by more and more people. They are completely safe to take if you are using medication and they help shift negative emotions and thought patterns to help you

feel like life is manageable again.

Saskia's Flower Essences Strength and Support combination essence is the one to use to help you feel more hopeful, less out of control and supported on all levels. Taking just a few drops under the tongue several times a day can bring you back to feeling like you can cope with life again.

You can find Saskia's award winning essences at www.saskiasfloweressences.com
They cost £12 + £3.70 P&P



OR EMAIL MICHELINA.NEATH@KELSEY.CO.UK

How to be happier

We've teamed up with the wonderful clinical psychologist Emma Hepburn, aka The Psychology Mum, to help you bring more joy into your life

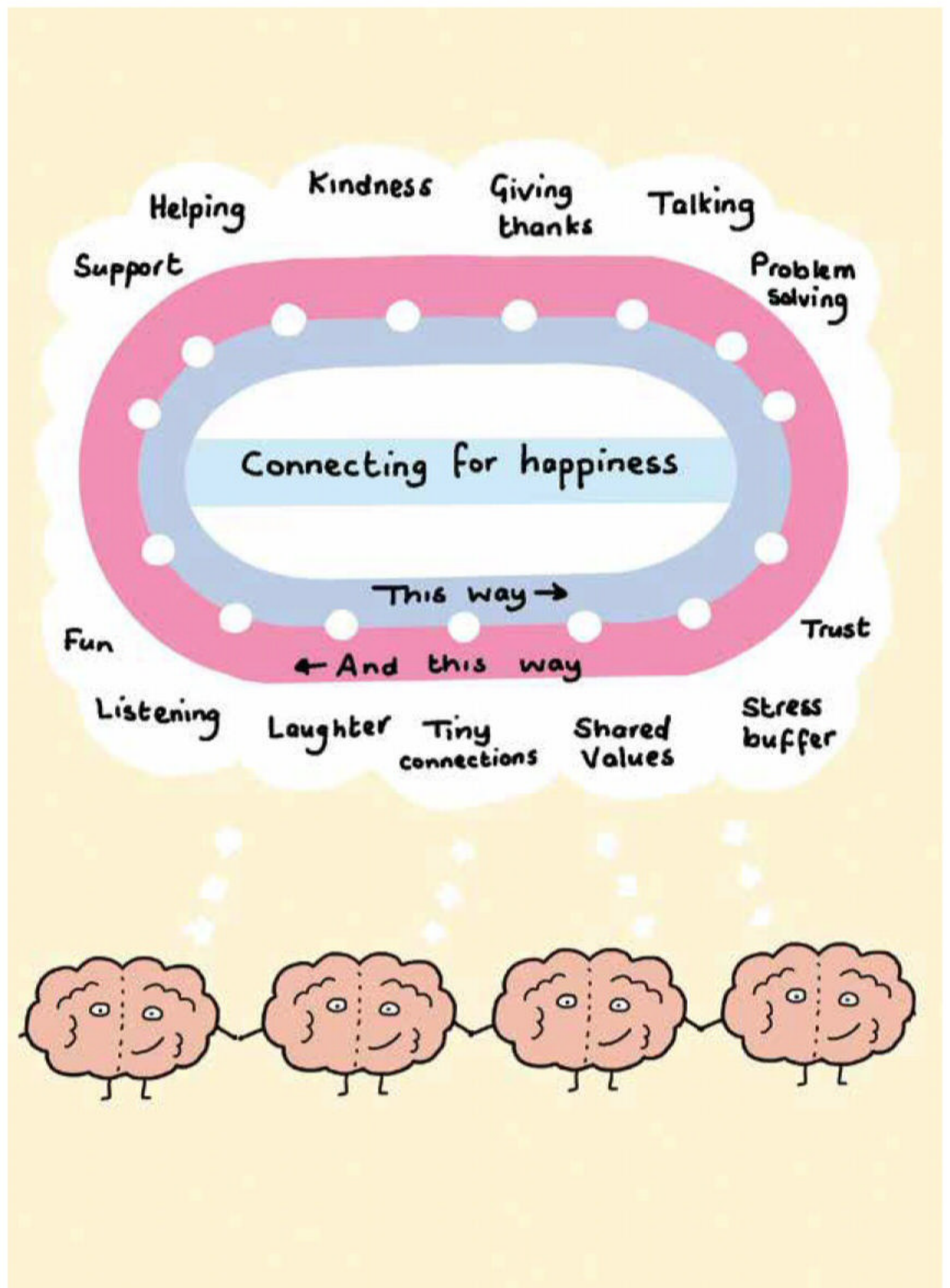
Whereas money, possessions and career success are not strong predictors of wellbeing, there's one thing that is a far stronger indicator of long-term happiness than anything else on Earth. In fact, it's so important that our brain is specifically designed to do it. So, what is this amazing thing? It's what you do when you share a silly cat meme, have a good old moan about your boss at work, or when you read your kids a bedtime story. Yes, it's social connections.

The jury is unanimous when it comes to this one: study after study shows that having positive social connections in our life improves how we feel, our mental and physical health, and even how long we live for. The evidence is so strong that Robert Waldinger, the lead researcher of the long-term Harvard Adult Development Study, which has been looking at wellbeing in students from Harvard University and their children for more than 70 years, concluded that, 'The good life is good relationships.' That's a powerful conclusion!

Follow Emma Hepburn on Instagram @thepsychologymum for more inspiration



'A Toolkit For Happiness' by Emma Hepburn (Quercus, £14.99)



The POWER of
PISTACHIOS

THE SNACK FOR THOSE WHO DON'T SNACK

© 2021 American Pistachio Growers

AMERICAN QUALITY
PISTACHIOS
California Grown
AmericanPistachios.co.uk

The perfect

Christmas

— gift —



The world's first wireless mobile phone charger that blocks radiation.

Designed and manufactured in the UK, SleepHalo™ allows users to wirelessly charge their mobile devices whilst enjoying a new found peace of mind.

SleepHalo™ works with any mobile phone that has wireless charging capability.



Visit www.sleephalo.com



Follow us on Social Media: [f](#) [@](#) [t](#) [in](#)