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LOGAN**

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Onwards and upwards

Don't miss our April issue! We focus on letting go of the past and rising stronger than ever. Our in-depth Dossier explores making every moment count for a productive and happy life, and the irrepressible Lorraine Kelly shares her wit and wisdom

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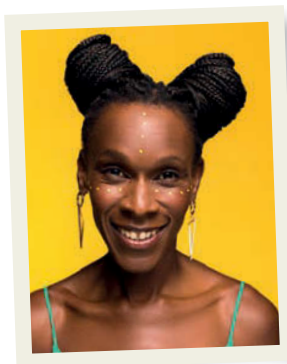
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Meet three of the people who have taken part in the creation of *Psychologies*



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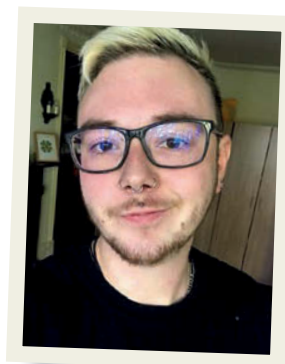
Entrepreneur, author and coach

Suzy is a mother of three, entrepreneur, author, keynote speaker and quantum transformation and embodiment coach. She loves to help entrepreneurs create business breakthroughs and make a positive difference. Go to psychologiestv.co.uk to watch her talking to *Psychologies* about the secret to dealing with disappointment and becoming empowered. She will be chatting to us live once a month, sharing her business and life experience and wisdom.

Graysen Hall

LGBTQIA+ coordinator and writer

Graysen works with LGBTQIA+ youth and uses their experience as transgender and queer to give support. They have a master's in literature and have given a TEDx talk on being non-binary in a binary world. On page 34, Graysen writes about the journey to finding their fiancé. 'I want to show young people that being LGBTQIA+ doesn't mean that you can't be happy and have a thriving life and relationship. If I can do it, so can they,' they say.



Dav Piper

Gardener and 'Psychologies' ambassador

Dav left her lucrative career as an IT consultant in London to retrain as gardener. Her ambition was to help others find joy and solace in their outdoor spaces, which her own garden had always provided. She now runs a small company in Surrey with the help of her rescue dog, Ted. She says: 'I wanted to write for *Psychologies* as it is the perfect place to share the message that gardening and nature can work miracles for your mental and physical wellbeing.' Read Dav's monthly column on page 88.

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Light, dark and inner peace

'The days are dark but they are getting lighter,' writes Anita Chaudhuri in our Dossier, which is all about finding the best, healthiest strategies for comfort and self-care as we wait for the brighter days to come. Find out more on page 44.

A sense of balance will surely help... 'My resolution is no longer to climb a mountain or anything else that requires supreme focus, but to adopt a more balanced approach to all areas of my life,' says Lizzie Enfield on page 22, as she discovers an imaginative way to bring herself back to centre.

Two writers take month-long trips and return transformed (page 72). Planning our getaways with a renewed sense of gratitude gives us something to look forward to and hopefully we can all commit to a more conscious kind of travel going forward.

Kim Morgan asks us to commit to ourselves (page 32). Let's stop people pleasing, set strong boundaries and build a life we want, not the one others think we should lead. 'Inner peace begins the moment you choose not to allow another person or event to control your emotions,' says Pema Chödrön on page 98. Yes! Here's to a future of light, balance, adventure and peace.



Suzy Walker
Editor-in-Chief

Suzy



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Viewpoint

Send your letters to letters@psychologies.co.uk and tell us what you love about our magazine. You could win a copy of our special edition bookazine *Find Your Calm*



Star
letter

JOYFUL JUGGLING


Thank you for the Ruby Wax interview


(December 2020), in which she spoke about


being proud of her son, who is into lots of different things just to experience and love them for what they are. Reading that made me emotional. I have spent my whole life feeling a little inferior that I've never focused on one thing and excelled. Instead, I have tried all sorts of hobbies, from learning to play different instruments, climbing, hiking, running, kayaking, languages, woodwork, painting, pottery and gardening.

After reading this feature, I am going to celebrate my ability to grasp everything with enthusiasm and childlike pleasure, instead of being embarrassed by it. **Corinne**

Share with us... Share your photos and comments on Instagram @psychologiesmagazine, or tweet us @PsychologiesMag, both using #PsychologiesMagazine


 **@greta_solomon:** I have always wanted to be in @PsychologiesMag, and this month I am! Thank you @heidiscrim for including me and my book Heart, Sass & Soul in your beautifully written article about life in limbo and what to do when we find ourselves in the spaces between.

 **@csmony:** Just finished a busy working week. Now reading the Dossier on virtual work in the latest edition of @PsychologiesMag

 **@GillH1973:** 'Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So...get on your way!' Love this Dr. Seuss quote in this month's @PsychologiesMag


 **@DrRadhaModgil:** Happy to have joined my friend @KatieThistleton on @PsychologiesMag Instagram chatting about her loneliness column.



 **ABOVE @stacieswift:** At the start of each year, I create a vision board of things I'd love to achieve. Safe to say, 2020 didn't go entirely to plan, but this dream feature in @PsychologiesMagazine snuck in at the 11th hour! I'm so proud to see my work on the pages of one of my favourite magazines.

 **RIGHT @lj.jj.harrison21:** Reading my uni notes, and Psychologies magazine!



 **LEFT @spillaneconsult:** This has been on my to-do list since the beginning of lockdown. Today, I finally got going on a new vision board with the help of a lovely pile of old copies of @PsychologiesMagazine

Read all about it! DO ANY OF THESE LETTERS SPEAK TO YOU? IF YOU MISSED A COPY OF 'PSYCHOLOGIES', WANT

NEW NINE-TO-FIVE

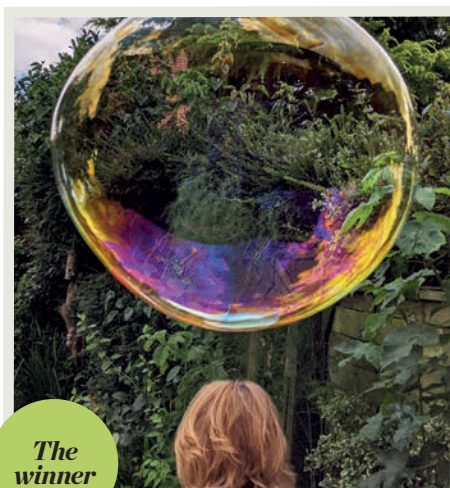
THE DOSSIER ABOUT HOMEWORKING (January) was so helpful. I've been working at home during the pandemic, and my bosses have said that we can continue to do so. I've missed an office routine and my productivity did not come naturally – but, after reading *Psychologies*, I am confident I can learn.

You have to create boundaries in a work-life world in which they don't exist. Putting the cue for action into your environment is a way to structure the unstructured. Thanks for the help. **Ginette**

PHOTO COMPETITION

IT WAS WITH MUCH DELIGHT that I discovered my nephew's big bubbles kit this afternoon. I felt a bit naughty using it, but the payoff was worth it. What fun! Auntie Maz casually managed to create a giant bubble.

*I dashed to grab my phone and, as if by magic, captured this beauty floating over my mum's head. It's amazing how a 99p toy can make your day. Sometimes, the small things really are the big things. **Marrianne***



The winner

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...

Annie, Danny and Tracy,

My mum has been living with ill health for years and my father died young, when I was just a child. Mum lives up north, I live down south. With the challenges of life, work, children at school and pets, I haven't been able to be there for her even half as much as I would have liked.

My heaven-sent angels, Annie, Danny and Tracy, you three wonderful people have stepped in and taken care of her every need. Annie goes round to change her bed every Saturday. Danny and Tracy call in, run errands and do anything she needs, week in week out.

I would like you to know that my appreciation is indescribable. I don't know how I can possibly thank you. Sometimes, I feel embarrassed and guilty that you do so much for us. I could never repay you for your kindness and dedication to my mum.

I know my dad is looking down and feeling the same. I will continue to pay it forward with hope that I can help others, like you do for my mum and me. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Love Alex



This month's gratitude letter, star letter and chosen photo win a free copy of our enlightening bookazine, 'Find Your Calm', worth £6.99! Go to shop.kelsey.co.uk/product/BZPSYFYIC to order a copy.

Send your letters to letters@psychologies.co.uk



The new fragrance and selfcare range by Katie Piper, exclusively 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!"

5% of the profits will be donated to the Katie Piper Foundation.

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Foundation**

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The Fix

News • Reviews • Books • Film • Art • Ideas

EDITED BY ELLEN TOUT

*“People fight the elements, the weather, but
when it’s touched you, when you let it be,
you’re never the same again ”*

RAYNOR WINN



PHOTOGRAPH © MARCLINS. MOUNTAIN CABIN.
LATERNS: AUSTRIA. FROM SNOWBOUND.
DWELLING IN WINTER BY WILLIAM MORGAN

Do you instinctively embrace winter, drawn to frosty early morning walks and snowy vistas? Or perhaps it's your time to hibernate, wrapping up indoors with candles and hot drinks? From the slopes of Utah to Arctic Russia, in the new book, *Snowbound*, architectural historian William Morgan shares the sustainable dwellings of those who thrive in cold climates. He says: 'These homes must coexist with the elements. Beauty depends upon design that is based on respect for a harsh climate.'

• ***'Snowbound: Dwelling In Winter'*** by William Morgan (Princeton Architectural Press, £40)

The Fix

Thought-provoking culture, creative ideas, insightful science and inspiring gifts



KIND CHOICES

Self-kindness promotes healthy eating, explains 'Psychologies' kindness tsar David Hamilton



IT'S BEEN SAID that yo-yo dieting occurs because we start from a place of not liking our bodies. So what if we were to think compassionately of our bodies instead?

A recent study* at Birmingham City University addressed this and found that when we think kindly of our bodies, we're more likely to make healthy food choices. In the study, 90 volunteers either practised self-kindness to the mind, which involves thinking kindly about yourself, or self-kindness to the mind *and* body, which includes thinking kindly about your body. They were also offered a choice of healthy or unhealthy snacks.

The researchers found that when people practised self-kindness to their mind and body, they were more likely to select the healthier snack. In other words, if we make a conscious choice to think kindly of our bodies, regardless of our shape or size, we're more likely to pick healthy options.

Join David Hamilton live on Facebook @Psychologiesmagazine for his free 30-day kindness challenge and monthly broadcasts. Catch up on 'Psychologies' TV at tinyurl.com/psykind. For more, join the 'Psychologies' Life Leap Club, free when you subscribe to the magazine. 'The Little Book Of Kindness' (Octopus, £6.99) and 'The Five Side Effects Of Kindness' (Hay House, £12.99) by David Hamilton are out now

2in3

WALKERS CHOOSE WATERSIDE PATHS AS THEIR PREFERRED HIKES, TESTAMENT TO THE CALMING EFFECTS OF WATER**

OPEN MIND

Samaritans provides non-judgmental emotional support. The new 'How To Listen' book shares tools to open up conversations and demonstrates the power of listening.

Learn to listen, empathise and reflect, rather than problem-solve, as well as how to use gentle encouragement to help others.

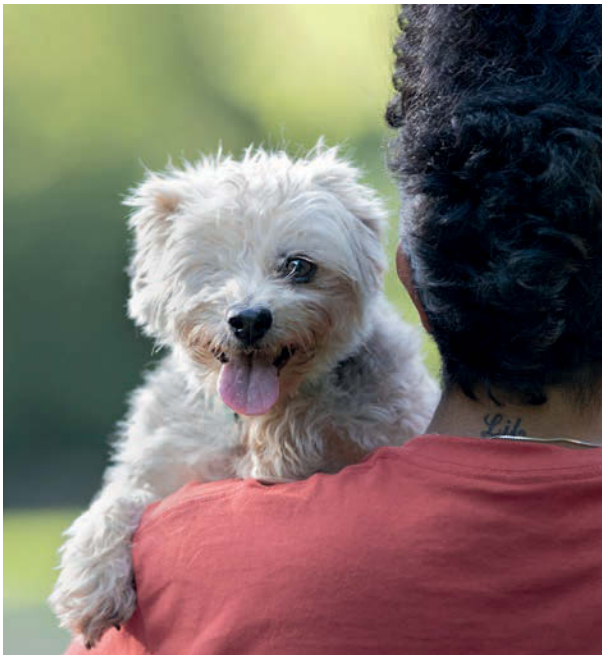
'How To Listen: Tools For Opening Up Conversations When It Matters Most' by Katie Columbus and Samaritans (Octopus, £12.99; octopusbooks.co.uk)

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Culture

The magic of canine comfort: Who rescued whom?

Our love of dogs is universal. They provide us with unconditional affection and companionship, boost our wellbeing and spark the release of the calming hormone oxytocin when we stroke them. These photos are part of the 'Don't You Want Me' series, a global social impact photography project showcasing the beauty and resilience of LGBTQIA+ people, who are pictured with their rescue dogs. The campaign also works to pair someone from the community with a rescue dog. Nikki Tibbles, founder of Wild at Heart Foundation, explains: 'Far more than basic financial aid, we aim to provide a complete practical and emotional toolkit to help transform the life of the individual, including ongoing mental health support, donated dog food, veterinary aid, training, day care and more, as well as strength, friendship and healing.'

• To read more about the grant, support the project and view all the images, go to dontyouwantme.com; wildatheartfoundation.org

PHOTOGRAPHS: JACK JACKSON; DEB KLEIN. 'M. HUSSAIN ET AL. EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SELF-KINDNESS IN MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES: A PRELIMINARY STUDY.' INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BEHAVIOURAL MEDICINE, 2020. "OUTDOORACTIVE.COM, 2020

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GREEN IDEAS



ACTS OF WILDERNESS

Remember to put the 30 Days Wild event in your diaries, badgers Eco Living Editor Ellen Tout



Experience the joys of nature with The Wildlife Trusts

EVERY YEAR, THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS run the brilliant 30 Days Wild, encouraging us all to embrace more time outdoors. Last year's project saw participants feel up to 56 per cent* more connected with nature, as well as happier and healthier.

This year, remember to look out for International Dawn Chorus Day on 2 May and, from 1 June, the annual nature challenge inviting everyone to create a 'random act of wildness' every day – such as eating your breakfast outdoors and seeing what you can spot. I'll be sharing my wild moments on social media, and you can register to take part and receive free activities and resources at wildlifetrust.org/30dayswild

Fellow eco worrier? Read Ellen's column on page 67, in which she shines a light on our throwaway culture and explores the idea of planned obsolescence.

For more, follow @ellen_tout on Twitter and Instagram and go to psychologies.co.uk/real-eco

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

*Do you want to be greener this year? Research indicates that 88 per cent of us feel companies use too much packaging, despite evidence showing a slight reduction. Household appliances and toys were our biggest bugbears, followed by fruit and veg. Thirty-five per cent of consumers say they judge the ethics of a company based on its packaging, with 13 per cent complaining to the business and 20 per cent simply talking to their friends about it. However, just three in 10 are willing to spend more on a product if it's sustainable.** See our eco shopping picks on page 68.*



Kind bags, made from 100 per cent recycled plastic, from £8 each, kindbag.co



58%

OF PEOPLE SURVEYED SAY THEY FEEL MORE CAUTIOUS ABOUT THEIR SPENDING HABITS, COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR†



**Film
of the
month**

Baby Done

Directed by Curtis Vowell

Available in cinemas

and on digital platforms from 22 January

'Married, house, baby, done,' says Zoe (Rose Matafeo). She's in a position many of us find ourselves – surrounded by people who have a baby, are expecting a baby or are a baby! Zoe dreams of winning the World Tree Climbing Championships in Canada. Her plan to travel, however, reaches a stumbling block when she receives the unexpected news that she is pregnant. While her boyfriend, Tim (Matthew Lewis), welcomes the prospect of fatherhood, Zoe panics about her loss of independence and creates a rushed bucket list.

Inspired by writer Sophie Henderson's personal journey into motherhood, the film reflects on the changes and adjustment of values that being a parent brings, and Henderson's experiences inject a wry wit into the scenarios. The story is refreshing and Matafeo and Lewis are superbly cast. They share a grounded on-screen chemistry, navigating the dramas and nuances of a relationship in an accessible way. The film is endearing, funny and well-meaning, thanks to Matafeo's comedic timing and skills from the stand-up circuit. **MB**

FILM REVIEW: MANDEEP RACHU. PHOTOGRAPHS: NICK UPTON/ION HAWKINS, SURREY HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY, PENNY DIXIE. 'THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS' AND UNIVERSITY OF DERBY, 2020. 'CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING', NECTAR, 2020.

HACK INTO HAPPINESS

DAYDREAM BELIEVER

Here's how to pursue your passion, says our happiness expert, coach Kia Cannons



WHY DO YOU want what you want? Be clear about your desires.



'Make it happen' mug, £5.75, thecooks cupboard.co.uk

Journal around these prompts:

- ***The things I daydream about experiencing...***
- ***I want these things because they will make me feel...***
- ***I want to feel like this because...***

Look for the recurring themes in your answers. If you long for something that is impossible right now, such as an expensive art studio, by revealing the essence of what you want – to enjoy more creativity – you are more likely to reveal your next attainable step.

***Join Kia Cannons** for our 'Do What You Love' video series and more happy hacks at tinyurl.com/psychhappyhack; psychologiststv.co.uk is a platform where world-class experts are interviewed about productivity, work-life balance and relationships; happyhacks.libsyn.com*



Your goals are achievable

Our resilience champion, Katie Piper, knows all about overcoming hardship. She offers her advice on facing obstacles and thriving



By Katie Piper

WHATEVER YOUR INTENTIONS at the beginning of this year, whether they were

health-related, spiritual or professional, they are still very much within you and your reach.

Through writing my books and producing my podcast, I'm fortunate to have spoken to a range of successful people – but, more often than not, their success stems from hardship. They all have one thing in common – determination.

I know from my own experience that setbacks and disappointment are what motivated and allowed me to become more robust, which helped me never give up. So, how can we have this drive in abundance? My top tips are:

1 Be prepared

This may be getting ready for the day ahead the night before, fuelling your body correctly with healthy food and enough sleep, or simply doing your research before entering a situation.

2 Remove distractions

This could be as straightforward as switching off your mobile, silencing notifications on your laptop or ignoring the doorbell! Or it might be about eliminating toxic energy from your life; those people who don't support you or doubt you.

3 Challenge yourself

This, for me, is about starting the most dreaded thing on that to-do list first. It can also be pushing yourself a bit further regularly and getting comfortable with being uncomfortable – proactive not reactive.

Emote with an inspiring quote

I've always been a visual person and, every month, I write down some of my favourite quotes relating to what I need support with at the time. Some I love are:

- *You didn't come this far to give up now*
- *You are always bigger than the problem*

Good luck, and remember, you CAN do it!



Celebrate strength: save the date

International Women's Day is on 8 March. It's about us all coming together for the celebration and empowerment of the women in our life.

'Here's to strong women, may we know them, may we be them, may we raise them.'

We can all play our part.

Go to psychologies.co.uk for more words of wisdom and strength from our monthly columnist, the indomitable Katie Piper

71%

OF HOLIDAYMAKERS SAY THEY PLAN TO TAKE TO THE OPEN ROAD AND CHOOSE A BREAK ON FOUR WHEELS. SO MUCH SO THAT SEARCHES FOR MOTORHOMES AND CARAVANS HAVE RISEN BY 156 PER CENT YEAR ON YEAR. CAMP ON!*



Campervan plant pot, £16, (plant not included), redcandy.co.uk

LESSONS IN ADULTHOOD

Loud and proud in leopard print

If last year taught us anything, it's to make the most of every day, writes Harriet Minter, who's breaking free in her Sunday best

My friend, Angelika, started a business as a personal stylist and offered to give my wardrobe an overhaul. The thought of someone culling my clothes sounded good to me. She went through my cupboards with a warm but brutal efficiency that saw at least 50 per cent redirected to the nearest charity shop and another 20 per cent put into storage until the weather was warmer. The free space was joyful, and I realised that every item she had left me was something I truly adored.

We played around with different ways to style them and wrote lists of what I could add for a little va-va-voom, then she went on her merry way, leaving me restyled and hopeful. Until the next day...

I stood in front of my wardrobe, dismissing item upon item as too much for a Monday. I was looking at an array of party outfits. What was I supposed to wear when the highlight of my day was a quick trip to the post office, then back to my desk at home?

I called Angelika in a panic. 'I only have clothes for special occasions! What am I meant to do?'

Her reply was perfect: 'Dress as though every occasion is a special occasion – *obviously!*'

After a year that felt devoid of

special occasions, her suggestion struck a chord. So, I donned a sequinned dress with a pair of trainers and trotted off to run my errands. I was in heaven. The experience reminded me of when I was a little girl, flouncing around the house in whatever I had managed to raid from my mother's wardrobe, simply enjoying the effect that wearing something extravagant had on me.

Simultaneously, I felt as if I was breaking the rules and resetting them for my life. When do we decide what is and isn't appropriate to wear? And when do we give up on the sheer delight that comes with dressing up? Is there some point in adulthood when we start to aim for practical rather than fabulous with our wardrobe?

The rule that we must 'save it for best' tells us that we are not good enough, that some outside influence might be 'best' and that, on a regular day, we simply aren't worthy of it.

Well, I can't agree with that. Put on that bright lipstick when it's a grey day. Wear that leopard print coat. We can't wait for a special occasion, we have to make it special. And, yes, I am writing this wearing a dress more suited to a nightclub than my sofa, and I'm loving every minute of it.



For weekly wisdom from Harriet, sign up for her newsletter at tinyletter.com/harrietminter
Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @harrietminter

“Charity and justice are important. They open your mind to kindness and those less fortunate than you”

Sports presenter Gabby Logan isn't afraid to take risks and works tirelessly to improve herself. She chats to Rachel Dobson about values, adaptability, mental fortitude and looking after others

She's had a run with her dogs, the children are at school and Gabby Logan arrives at her desk ready to throw her boundless energy and passion into the day. The former international rhythmic gymnast and BBC Sport presenter is bursting with ideas for projects that give her meaning and feed her creativity, and she's endlessly positive about her family and colleagues.

Mother of 15-year-old twins, Lois and Reuben, wife of rugby player Kenny Logan and daughter of footballer Terry Yorath, Gabby's life and career have been immersed in sport. As a youngster, she had ambitions to be a human rights lawyer and gained a law degree, but Gabby was sidetracked into broadcasting after landing a job at a radio station as a student. Her talent and enthusiasm shone through and the rest is history. Aside from striving to be her best self, Gabby has designs on building an eco house and writing a book. In the meantime, she's hosting a podcast about navigating change at midlife. When we said boundless, we meant it...

Q You represented Wales at the Commonwealth Games, then carved out a career as a sports presenter. How has sport helped you in your life?

A I think sport probably saved me. I lost my brother at a young age [Daniel Yorath was 15 when he died from an undetected heart problem while playing football], my parents divorced and my dad is an alcoholic. Sport has been woven through my life and given me the mental strength and positivity to get through.

Q What have you learned from the sportspeople you have worked with?

A They're excellent at being coached. To get to their level, they take in information all the time to improve. It's a competitive environment. I've tried to explain this to my children: If I'm telling them something about their sporting performance, I'm not being mean, judgmental, rude or cruel – I have their best interests at heart. Sportspeople are less sensitive and take the ability to be

coached into their work to get better at new careers after sport.

Q Have you learned to take criticism well?

A I have a few people I trust to give me honest feedback. I used to have a performance coach and whatever he said came from a good place. He died three years ago and I miss him. I realised how much I relied on him and I struggled without him.

I now work with a producer who is brilliant at giving me a professional critique, telling me what I nailed and where I could do better. I feel I've been able to keep growing thanks to his input. I don't want to stagnate and it's given me a bit of a kick up the backside to reach the level I want to get to.

Q In the lockdowns, we were trialling banana bread recipes, while you launched a podcast, *Midpoint*, about the joys and challenges of middle age...

A It was a passion project to find out how other people feel about being middle-aged like



me. I want to know how they feel about themselves, about their achievements and what directs them going forward. Are they where they want to be? Are they content? Are they worried about ageing? Do they have regrets? At this age [Gabby is 47], there are many life-changing events, from empty nests to caring for parents and divorce, and I'm interested in different takes on those.

Q On the subject of ageing, how do you feel about being on camera as a middle-aged woman?

A Getting older is a privilege because I haven't died! I don't want to look older than I need to, but I'm not seeking ways to look 22.

Q Are you content with life, and are you still ambitious?

A After the first lockdown, I felt wobbly and unsure, asking myself if I truly liked what I do. But, once I was back in the studio, I felt relief that I enjoy my job. Stepping off the treadmill when I spend my life racing from one thing to the next made me more mindful of the decisions I make.

I really missed the Olympics in 2020 – they're such an injection of positivity. I love them. It was my ambition to be an Olympian but I never achieved that [Gabby had to retire from gymnastics at the age of 17 due to sciatica], so to work on them as a presenter has been exciting and challenging. I think when you have a year without the big, sexy events like the Olympics and the European Football Championships, you question why you do your job.

Q We know you like to keep busy. What projects are you considering for the future?

A Kenny has a business helping start-ups and I'm excited about some of those. I think I'd like to run a business, especially in health or the creative arts. I'd love to build an eco house and, during the first lockdown, I wrote 45,000 words of my first book, which is looking at my life through the prism of sport. Even if no one ever reads it, it's been a cathartic experience and I've loved having the time to write.

Q You're the mother of non-identical twins. How do your son and daughter differ as people?

A A sociologist would know about the nature and nurture debate. I brought up two children with largely the same diet, discipline and morals, and yet they

have such different takes on many topics and different ways of looking at the world.

My daughter is strident about her opportunities and what she does and doesn't want to do. She seeks out positive role models, has a great sense of justice and doesn't feel limited or defined by her gender. My son definitely has a more positive attitude towards women

and what they can do than a child of his age 30 years ago, which might be due to growing up in this household! There was a point a few years ago when I was concerned that boys his age were feeling almost ostracised. I think it's important that we don't alienate boys, and that men and women are allies and work together. I think it's the same for race relations. When we work together, there's no sense of my success being at your expense.

Q What values did you inherit from your family?

A My mother, Christine, has an incredible work ethic. As a child, you adopt practices you see, absorbing your parents' behaviour. Somebody once said to me that no matter what you say to your children, it's how they see you treat other people that they will remember and take with them.

My mum is fair and worked hard. We were brought up as Roman Catholics and went to church schools, although we stopped going to church when I was 11. When I was five or six, I didn't understand the importance of donating food at harvest festival, but now those principles of Christianity – fairness, charity and justice – are important to me. They open your mind to kindness and make you think of those less fortunate than yourself, and that comes from my mum.

My mum would never put it in these terms, but she taught us never to be scared to fail. She wouldn't wait for something to be 100 per cent guaranteed, she'd give it go, try something and take a risk.

Q Do you ever regret not working as a human rights lawyer and helping people that way?

A I think it's important that if you have a platform, you use it, although not everyone will do so. Look at footballer Marcus Rashford's fight against child food poverty – he's so brave because his actions may not have been received in the right way. I'm so impressed with him as a human being; he's measured and chooses his words

“It's important we don't alienate boys and that men and women are allies. It's the same for race relations. If we work together, there's no sense of my success being at your expense”



ABOVE Gabby Logan with London 2012 dignitaries Anthony Edgar and Sebastian Coe



BELOW Gabby and husband Kenny Logan



carefully. I could imagine him as a monk in a cassock – there's something almost evangelical about him! He's focused on the kids and does his work without judgment. I've always felt that if I have the opportunity to get involved with something I feel strongly about, I'm lucky to be able to do so because of my job.

Q You're an ardent advocate of fitness and we know you love to run. How else do you keep fit?

A I've joined a HITT class called Farm Fitness which is outside exercise at a local farm, where we use battle ropes, lift logs and run around! I absolutely love it and come home to Kenny covered in mud. In the winter, we turn up in the dark and it's raining but it doesn't matter. We're all different fitness levels and shapes and sizes and no one cares if you can do 15 burpees or 400, we just get on with it. At classes like that no one is judging anyone, we're all just doing our own thing. I think being outdoors is the best.

Q Considering your high profile in sport, do you feel self-conscious at your exercise classes?

A Nobody's bothered! One woman came up to me after six weeks to say hi. She told me she is a musician on the orchestra that performs at *Sports Personality Of The Year*, which I present. It was lovely! Another guy asked if I was presenting the football that weekend. No one cares – it's great!

Q The past year has been challenging for us all. What were your highlights?

A We have a WhatsApp group for our road, which has been wonderful, and I've appreciated our community. I hadn't realised how sociable I am until last summer. When we were allowed to meet people, Kenny built a kind of den in the woods with fairy lights and a fire. We all got together there and one of Reuben's friends, a jazz guitarist, played for us. It was like a mini festival and one of the most idyllic nights ever.



Balance training

When Lizzie Enfield signed up with a triathlon group, she discovered the magical rule of three



Last year, I joined a triathlon training group – with absolutely no intention of doing a triathlon. I am a sea swimmer and wanted to swim with a group. That's it. But, over the year, I began to take part in the cycling and, even though I thought I hated it, the occasional running session.

A lot of the participants were full-blown triathletes and there was something about them that was different to other sportspeople – marathon runners, for example. I know a few of the latter and they are focused, single-minded endurance athletes. Triathletes seemed to have a more balanced approach to sport – and life. Their psychology began to interest me, as much as my regular swim and occasional run.

Coach Kurt Charnock was a font of aphorisms: 'prepare for a mini adventure,' 'don't suffer paralysis by analysis' and 'squeeze another day out of the day' – referring to the dawn and dusk training sessions that stopped us going straight from bed to work, or work to slumping on the sofa. In the evenings, when we swam around buoys as the sun set over the sea, I felt as if I'd packed a mini holiday into the end of my day.

On the days when training involved all three sports, Charnock would encourage everyone with the phrase 'the triangle is the strongest shape. If one corner buckles, the others will hold it up'. For me, this was an aha moment – could I begin to apply this tripartite approach to other areas of my life?

The trinity

The number three is significant in many areas. According to Pythagoras, it is the noblest of all digits, the only number equal to the sum of the terms below it. In many cultures, it's considered lucky. Christianity has a trio in the father, the son and the holy ghost and, in rhetoric, there are clusters of three – friends, Romans, countrymen – used together for maximum impact. As I spent more time with the triathletes, I began to develop my own 'tri psychology'.

It's the beginning of the year and we're all thinking about resolutions that tend to focus on one thing: get fit, lose weight, write a book. Mine is to achieve more balance in my life by thinking about aspects of it in three different ways. So, rather than focus on getting physically fit, to pay >>>

attention to my mental and emotional wellbeing too and, rather than trying to simply achieve my career goals, to make sure I get enough rest and inject some fun into my day.

Plan A, B and C

‘There is always more than one version of what life looks like,’ said Charnock, who is the founder, organiser and chief motivator for Brighton Triathlon Race Series. ‘It’s enabling to bear in mind that if something is particularly challenging, you can default to the next. For triathletes, this means that if sea conditions are not right, you can get on your bike or, if you have a puncture, you can put on your trainers and run. If your career is not going well, you can give yourself a pat on the back for your sporting or social life and, if your relationship is not going well, consider friends and family.’

This last one struck a chord with me. Last year, my marriage ended. My husband and I are still friends but, at times, the situation has overwhelmed me. My relationship focus was on ‘partner’ – the one I had lost, the absence of one and whether I would ever find another.

But once I started applying my new ‘rule of three’ to relationships, I began to focus more on friends and family, and my stress levels went down. To use Charnock’s triangular analogy, while the partnership side of my life had buckled, I had good friends and a loving family to hold me up. I started to invest more thought, time and energy in those relationships.

My teenage son had a different relationship focus. He spent almost all his time exclusively with his school friends in person or online. He discovered that there are stresses to being part of a tight-knit group 24/7 – a certain amount of bitchiness and backstabbing but also repetitive chats and group rumination.



“ My relationship focus was on ‘partner’ – the one I had lost and whether I would ever find another. Once I started applying my new ‘rule of three’ to relationships, I began to focus on friends and family ”

Then, during lockdown, he spent a lot of time with me, and taking supplies to my 89-year-old mother. ‘It’s interesting talking to Granny, she has such a different perspective on the world,’ he said, echoing my thoughts about the time I had spent with him! Forgoing the self-reflective ease of our peers in favour of tri-generational company helped us both make sense of life at a difficult time.

Three strings to my bow

For a long time, I have applied tri psychology to work. Since I left my full-time job as a broadcast journalist many moons ago, I have been a freelance journalist, novelist and creative writing tutor. The past year has made even the most stable of jobs seem precarious but, because all my eggs were not in one basket, I survived.

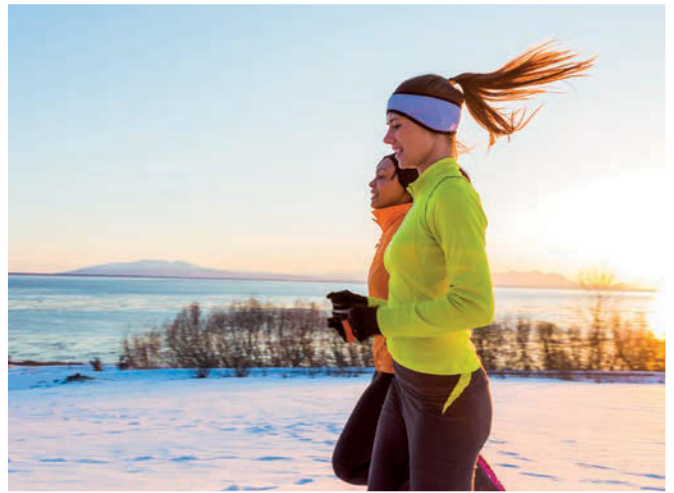
‘Imagine your life as a three circle Venn diagram,’ says clinical and sports psychologist Phil Johnson.

‘If you have three circles representing family, work and recreation, you are the person in the middle where those circles overlap. Once the circles begin to shift out of position, the person in the middle feels the squeeze.’

One of the areas of my life that gives me the most stress is money. Even when I have work, I worry that I won’t have any in the future. My attitude to money is that it’s a necessary evil. I must earn enough to pay the bills and put some aside for a rainy day. But there’s another aspect to money – it allows you to travel, learn and go out with friends and enjoy yourself.

Sometimes, my freelance mindset makes me forget this. But, since I’ve been trying to think outside the spend and save boxes, I’ve realised that splashing out now and again is OK.

‘The other thing the three circles diagram illustrates is that to achieve balance, you need boundaries,’ Johnson tells me. ‘A lot of stress arises



“The other side of the coin is to remember that, in fact, there are *three* sides to a coin – heads, tails and its circumference”

from people’s boundaries being breached by others, which causes them to lose their sense of personal space or identity. Maintaining balance in your relationships and life is about having a feeling of demarcation.’

Draw your Venn in ink

If one thing has blurred our boundaries, it’s technology. Once, work ended when we left the office – now, we’re always on call, contactable by email or phone. With Zoom, we have our colleagues sitting in our living rooms too!

I am aiming for a balance of work, rest and play, which might seem impossible to achieve, but scientific research points to common elements that help us thrive in all areas of our lives.

‘Take attention and awareness,’ says Cortland Dahl, a research scientist at the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. ‘Research shows that being fully present and avoiding distraction is critical to

being focused and productive at work. It’s also important for friendships, passions and other pursuits. It even has an impact on our ability to relax and rest.’

So, when life appears to be a jumble of competing interests, by recognising each as separate, we can train our minds and even rewire our brains to become more calm and focused – to be present, connected and aware, whether you are in a business meeting, out with friends or trying to get to sleep. It can be as easy as not answering that work call on your lunch break, or consciously trying not to worry about that friend facing eviction when you are trying to get to sleep. The other side of the coin is to remember that, in fact, there are *three* sides to a coin – heads, tails and its circumference.

My resolution is no longer to climb a mountain, give up alcohol or anything else that requires supreme focus, but to adopt a more balanced approach to all areas of my life. I call it tri living.

sportandperformancepsychology.co.uk

Three tips for tri living

1 Try to create boundaries between the various parts of your life and don’t let them become blurred. Don’t let work eat up your leisure time or demanding friends encroach on your family life.

2 Make a conscious effort to think about work, relationships and leisure as areas with more than one side to them. For example, don’t write off your job as boring, but think about the bits you enjoy and the opportunities to learn.

3 The triangle is the strongest shape. If one side collapses, the other two hold it up. If one aspect of your life is going badly, think about the things that are going well.

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

“My ‘flexible’ job is like being an employee without the perks”



MARY FENWICK is a writer, speaker and executive coach; she's 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 one-to-one work and speaking, go to maryfenwick.com. See the 'freebies' tab on Mary's website for her free guides on resilience, stress and more.

Q I love my job and the immediate team I work with. I am a contractor, so the benefits to me are that I can fit my work around childcare, I plan my diary and choose when to go on holiday, and I do the work my way. The cons are no sick pay or holiday pay, no guaranteed salary at the end of the month nor any other additional benefits that come with being an employee.

However, I feel as if I am being treated very much like a staff member, expected to be available and at my desk all day, yet without any of the benefits. I know it would do me well to shift my perspective but I am struggling to do this. Can you help me? **Name supplied**

A Although you might feel alone in solving this issue, you are part of a new way of working. At least one in 10 adults in the UK works on freelance contracts or gigs. You are living both the upside (flexibility) and the downside (what are the rules?).

I talked to Jamie Woodcock, an academic and the author of *The Gig Economy* (HarperCollins, £18.99). He says it's easy to forget that work is always a negotiation: 'Most of us feel we have to take what's offered but, historically, work has changed, and whole industries have transformed.'

A good place to start is checking what's in your contract, and how that

might compare with standard conditions in similar roles. The ACAS helpline (0300 123 1100), an independent body for workplace relationships, is a useful source. The name stands for 'advisory, conciliation and arbitration services' which means they don't take sides, but will help you to understand your position.

What are the existing networks in your field? What is the union that covers your type of work? Do you have friends or former colleagues who might share their experience of working like this? For example, I'm a member of a Facebook group specifically for freelance women journalists,

and I might ask: 'How are other people dealing with this?'

With a bit more knowledge, you could open up the conversation with your workmates or boss. A team discussion about working hours and expectations might help everyone, or perhaps a standard sign-off on emails, such as: 'I'm a contract worker, I check my messages here at X times on Y days.'

If you work in a niche area, I suggest contacting the Independent Workers' Union, which has a general member's branch for people who don't fit another category yet. Don't hold this worry on your own: this is something a lot of people are figuring out together. iwgb.org.uk

PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA BIRKINSHAW

“I resent my idle son who has no plans for his future”

Q I am a single mother and my son, who is 17, has dropped out of school. He spends his days in his room, talking to friends and gaming. He says he's not depressed but he is achieving nothing and is hostile if I try to talk to him about his plans.

I feel quite desperate that he will be dependent on me forever, and full of resentment, as well as concern. What should I do? **Name supplied**

A I recognise the loneliness of being a single parent to a teenager: there's a human in your house who is nearly an adult, but is just as draining as a toddler.

I wonder when you last had a chance to think about your own goals, apart from raising your son. In particular, I'm thinking about process goals, which are daily milestones that can start really small. It's useful to make them specific, such as: 'This week, I will go for a 15-minute walk outside at 12pm every day.'

Committing to something like this is a reminder that your actions make a difference. Another possible way is to set yourself a learning goal; what would you like to explore as new knowledge, a skill or just for fun?

This will be even more powerful if you share it with someone – is there a friend who might take on a small

challenge with you? If that feels too much, or in parallel, speak to your GP and agree a baseline, and a back-up plan in case anything gets worse in terms of your wellbeing.

The Young Minds website has a parent's helpline which I have found helpful for ideas about communicating. Try messaging your son, or even pushing a handwritten note under his door (everyone appreciates an 'I still care about you'). You might direct him to the website Kooth, designed for young people to help each other. I believe you'll gain strength if you have faith in your son, and expand your view of yourself above and beyond being a mother. *kooth.com*

“Everyone I relied on has deserted me and I feel so alone”

Q I've been working with a counsellor for anxiety after a bad divorce, and he has been a lifeline, but now he has told me he is giving up his practice. At the same time, my neighbour and best friend has moved hundreds of miles away, and she and her children are like family to me. With Covid-19, all I do is work and come home.

How do I come to terms with my feelings of abandonment and sadness? **Name supplied**

A In the general discussions about the impact of the pandemic on mental health, anxiety is what most people mean. Research from Denmark found that for every case of Covid, there are 72 people feeling anxious.

This means that you're part of a much bigger group of people than you

might realise, and the feeling of being connected and understood is the best antidote. No matter how you do it, share your thoughts and feelings with someone. Even if technology is not a substitute for a hug, it will be possible to stay in touch with your neighbour. Perhaps you could give her children the pleasure of postcards and small presents in the mail? Giving has its own benefits – I imagine that a new counsellor will help you work through some of the feelings, and you probably have some advice to pass on to someone else from your experience.

I recommend the website Anxiety UK. If you become a member, you get a free subscription to the Headspace app for guided meditations and access to therapists at discounted rates. It's also worth searching for meditations by psychiatrist Judson Brewer. He says the one thing everyone has in common

is the desire for anxious feelings to go away, but taking an approach of kind curiosity is more effective: where in my body do I feel the anxiety?

No one wants to join the anxious club, but there is comfort in staying open to both giving and receiving help. *anxietyuk.org.uk*

Be part of our tribe

Join the Life Leap Club and receive free coaching from our experts. All you have to do is subscribe to access free coaching videos, inspirational resources and masterclasses. Go to psychologies.co.uk/life-leap-club-new-subscribers. View video content with Mary at psychologies.co.uk



Are you looking for a new adventure?

Do you want to redirect your life or tackle a fresh challenge? Perhaps you feel the pull towards a career change or being your own boss? Training to be a coach may be just what you're looking for, but where should you start, and what path should you follow?



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 3,500 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

Tara Mei, 33: *I came to my coach, Polly Downes, as an exhausted, burned out female entrepreneur. The flip side of being a successful self-starter is that you are good at holding it together, even when you need to take care of yourself. I'd tried other forms of talking therapy, but nothing helped me move forward. Through coaching, I learned:*

1 How to believe in myself.
Having a problem does not make you a failure. I had previously attended psychotherapy sessions, searching for a 'cure' for the relentless anxiety and high-functioning depression that I felt. I left therapy more enlightened but with little idea how to grow and progress in my life.

Polly was accepting of my fears and concerns and wholly non-judgmental. Additionally and crucially, she was pragmatic and calm. With her expert guidance, I gained the insight and understanding to resolve my setbacks in practical and powerful ways.

2 How to hone my leadership skills. Polly gave me a safe space in which to be frank about the challenges I faced as a leader. She led me to reflect on the impact I had on my team and enabled me to focus on empowering them.

3 How to challenge my assumptions. I learned how to open up, understand my emotions and identify when my assumptions were leading me astray. Polly helped me see how I could gain perspective by stepping back and asking questions instead.



“Polly helped me learn how to open up, understand my emotions and identify when my assumptions were leading me astray”

FIND A COACH AND 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, nationally and internationally.

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How I became a Barefoot coach

Three top coaches share how and why they decided to train



Polly Downes

AFTER 20 YEARS in the corporate world, I decided to retrain. After

some initial experience holding group coaching for children, I recognised that adults would benefit too. I contacted Barefoot and the founder, Kim Morgan, answered. She was inspirational! I had no doubt Barefoot was the course for me, especially their 'Coaching skills for families' workshops, which gave me the knowledge to create a programme for parents returning to work. I've since worked with exciting businesses, including the National Theatre.



Jackee Holder

IN 1985, I was in my early 20s and had just started my role as a

full-time youth and community worker. I was young and inexperienced but, in my first one-to-one session with a coach (then called a non-managerial supervisor), I felt seen and heard. Her questions literally made me sit up and pay attention. In that moment, I knew I could and would make more of my life. That day was the start of my journey to train and become a coach.



Nikki Peterson

AS A MEMBER of the Psychologies team, it was difficult not to

immerse myself in the coaching world and see the powerful results that coaching offers. I had only ever worked in publishing, was nearing 40 and wanted an additional revenue stream that complemented my existing business. In November 2018, I made up my mind about becoming a life coach. Fast forward to January 2021 and it's now my full-time career.

good thoughts

*“Every day is a chance to begin again.
Don’t focus on the failures of
yesterday, start today with positive
thoughts and expectations”*

CATHERINE PULSIFER



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

Healing in our hands

Try this technique for a fresh perspective on your life and troubles, advises our writing columnist, author and coach Jackee Holder

WHEN I NEED TO FIND new ways of looking at something or I feel stuck, I switch my pen to my other hand and write with my non-dominant writing hand, which is my left.

Art therapist Lucia Capacchione's longitudinal work confirms that writing with your non-dominant hand helps stress and anxiety, and is a great way to access the voice of your inner child. It can be used to gain insight into relationship dynamics and can go as far as alleviating some physical pain.

Latent insight

The practice of writing with the hand you don't normally use is straightforward but don't be fooled by its simplicity. Anita* arrived at a coaching session stressing about her partner and the impact of them both being forced to work from home in a small flat. I invited her to write this out as the question she wanted answers to using her dominant hand.

Switching her pen over to her non-dominant writing hand, I guided Anita to write a response to her question. I reminded her to keep going even if it felt awkward and slow, and to take her time and trust what might emerge. Seconds later, there were tears streaming down her face. The large, childlike writing that filled two pages of her notebook as her answer told a different story from the one her dominant writing hand was familiar with writing and asking.

Capacchione believes that the non-dominant writing hand is connected to the right hemisphere of the brain. By writing with your non-dominant hand, you are accessing territory beyond your rational and linear thoughts. If you are right-handed, you are using your left hand to be in right mind, and vice versa if you are left-handed. When you use both hands, you are boosting both hemispheres of the brain. More becomes available to you when you bring both hemispheres together through writing with both hands.

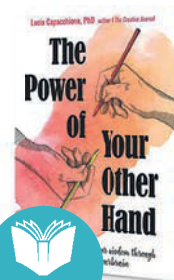
The power of writing with the other hand is symbolic to working with a tuning fork on the page: a reminder that the mind that holds the problem also holds the solution.

Jackee is a writer, coach and creative: jackeeholder.com; @jackeeholderglobal



“I hate to write, but I love having written”

DOROTHY PARKER



Left from right

Unlock your creativity and tap into your inner wisdom with this book from a pioneer in the field of journaling.

● **'The Power Of Your Other Hand: Unlock Creativity And Inner Wisdom Through The Right Side Of Your Brain'** by Lucia Capacchione (Conari Press, £13.88)

A head start

What does the year hold for you? Journal around your goals, ideas and reflections for clarity.

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“The strong characters in my life walk all over me”

Our award-winning coach, Kim Morgan, mentors a woman who wants to please her friend and her husband, avoids conflict and finds it difficult to assert herself

ILLUSTRATION ANDREA DE SANTIS

Session one

“My husband thinks I am easily influenced by my ‘powerful’ buddy”

I first saw Caz* prior to the pandemic. I had a diary mix-up and arrived an hour late. I was mortified and apologised profusely. Caz was not only understanding, but began taking the blame for my mistake. I wondered if this was a pattern in her life.

Caz’s husband had urged her to have coaching because he believed she was being manipulated by a friend. ‘What do you think?’ I asked. She said she didn’t really know but I pressed her: ‘Why do you think your husband thinks you are being manipulated?’

‘He says I am easily influenced and my friend is pushy and powerful. He thinks she has persuaded me to do things I wouldn’t usually do. She just got divorced and wants to have a good time. I want to support her, so I have been going to

parties and drinking with her. We’re going to Ibiza this year.’

‘Did you want to do all those things?’ I asked.

I expected Caz’s reply: ‘I don’t mind – she’s my friend.’

It was clear Caz did not have a strong sense of her rights or needs. I remarked that her husband seemed to feel strongly about the situation. Caz suddenly became animated: ‘I don’t know which one of them is pushing me around. I feel torn. I try to keep everyone happy but they both want me to be a certain way. Maybe they are *both* pushing me around?’

The session came to an end at this point. In coaching, we sometimes call this the ‘door handle moment’ – when something significant is said in the last minute. I gave Caz some material to read about spotting the signs of manipulative behaviour before our next session.

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Session two

First comes awareness

Caz was visibly shaken. 'I read the list you gave me and I recognised every sign of manipulative behaviour: being hurried and hassled; not having my boundaries respected; not considering my needs – only theirs; taking advantage of my good nature, my time, my money and my possessions; preying on my inability to say no; rewarding me if I do what they want and making me suffer if I don't,' she said woefully.

'Who are you talking about?' I asked gently.

'Both of them – my friend and my husband. And there is a long list of others. I think I must walk around with a sign on my head reading "push me around – I won't complain".'

We talked about Caz's lack of assertiveness and low self-confidence and how she always put her needs below the needs of others. It became clear that she hoped that if she kept being nice, people would eventually reciprocate. She diffused herself with other people – she became what they wanted her to be and had no clear boundaries or sense of self. 'Manipulative and controlling people spot me as an easy target. I am really unhappy, actually,' said Caz.

It was another 'door handle moment' and a sign of progress. For the first time, Caz expressed how she felt.

“People who are easily pushed around struggle to feel angry about how they're being treated”

More sessions

Reset behaviour and grow

We had many sessions because Caz had to unlearn a lifetime of people pleasing, fear of conflict and putting other people's happiness before her own. She started to see that it was not only OK to get angry, but that anger serves a purpose – it signals to us that we are not being treated fairly and enables us to respond accordingly. Caz had never been allowed to express negative emotions in childhood, which resulted in her having extreme anxiety about confrontation of any kind.

In the safety of our sessions, we rehearsed showing anger. I asked Caz what she had really wanted to say to me in our first session when I was late. It took a while but, eventually, Caz let me have it: 'I couldn't believe it! You kept me waiting for an hour. I was disappointed and you made me feel unimportant.'

We both laughed in celebration of this breakthrough. Caz was starting to take control of her choices and her life.

For more from Kim, see barefootcoaching.co.uk; @BarefootCoaches

Coaching exercises

GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

If you are easily influenced, pushed around or manipulated by others, consider this question: 'When am I most true to myself?' Take a pen and paper and think about the question in the following ways:

- Which people in my life allow me to just be me and do not pressurise me to change?
- When I am being true to myself, how do I choose to spend my time?
- What do I like to eat and drink? How do I like to dress?
- What causes or issues really matter to me?
- What are my opinions about films, books and politics?
- How would I choose to spend my time if I was a castaway on a desert island?

Consider how many of these things you currently do, and what you agree to do that you don't want to do. What or who is stopping you from asserting your own needs, wants and rights?

WRITE YOUR OWN FAIRY STORY

- People who are easily manipulated tend to take the blame for being manipulated. They wonder how they can change to make things better and struggle to feel angry about how they are being treated.
- By stepping outside your situation and acting as an observer, you may be able to see more clearly the parts that everyone is playing in your story, and you may be able find your anger and sense of injustice about how you are being manipulated.
- If you are ever being treated badly by someone, try turning your situation into a fairy story. Include villains, victims, heroes, a happy ending and just deserts for the characters.
- Take time to write about what you are going through as if you were writing a classic tale with all the usual elements: villains and victims, knights on chargers, fairy godmothers, castles, dragons, battles and, of course, a conclusion with good triumphing over evil.
- Don't stop to edit your story. Keep writing whatever pops into your head. Don't feel bad about killing off villains – it's only a story! After you have reread your story a couple of times, ask yourself:
 - How close is my story to the truth?
 - How similar are the characters to the real people?
 - What did I learn from my character in the story?
 - What have I learned from this story?
 - What do I need to do now?



Love stories

To celebrate Valentine's Day, three couples talk about finding love, and how they support each other on their life journeys

'We share our worries and our joy'

Graysen Hall, 27, is a non-binary trans person engaged to be married this year to Gwyn Morris, 34, who is also transgender. The couple met in 2015 and both work with young LGBTQIA+ people

I MET GWYN AT A ROLLER DERBY six years ago. I wanted an excuse to talk to him, so offered to share my 'magic powder', which helps diminish the stench of the elbow and knee pads we wear. I nervously sprinkled on so much that his black pads turned white!

We arranged to meet for coffee. I was so nervous, I went to the wrong coffee shop by mistake and was late. Meeting up with someone who was transgender, just like me, was amazing. It helped that I had a big crush on him. But, beyond that initial spark, there was the knowledge that this person could relate to me in a way that no one else had. I'm non-binary trans, which means I don't identify as a man or a woman and see myself outside of the gender binary, while Gwyn is a trans man – assigned female at birth and transitioning to male.

Our first year of dating didn't go so well

because we weren't communicating properly about how we felt. We would break up, be 'just friends', then sleep together. This happened repeatedly, until we decided we were either going to 'do this properly' or we weren't. For things to change, we had to share things and ask questions, even if they were scary. If he upset me, instead of falling into a negative state, I would say 'what you just did bothered me, can we talk about it please?' This made such a difference to our relationship because we were being honest, even when it was difficult.

We share our worries, our joy, our hopes and everything else. The fact that we have made it this far has been because of the honesty and transparency that we practise. For example, I can be a jealous person so, if I feel that pang of jealousy, I say so. I tell him what's going on, even if I'm embarrassed.

“There was a time I didn't think it was possible for me to have my family. I worried about finding someone who would care for me in a way that I couldn't really care for myself”

There are experiences we have in common because we're both trans and we both decided that a medical transition was necessary. Transitioning medically is not a straight line from A to B, but a process. Gwyn and I have supported each other through hormone replacement therapy, waiting lists and surgeries, which have come with big challenges, alongside amazing results.

Us, but better

Our medical journeys have changed us physically, but the bigger changes have been to our emotional selves. We've grown together and transformed in ways we couldn't have predicted. I've matured; I'm a calmer, more selfless person now and Gwyn has helped me become that improved version of myself. I've seen people break up because their partner changed and the other person wants their old partner back. Gwyn and I accept that we're new people and we've learned new things, so the person we were yesterday is not the person we are today.

There was a time when I didn't think it was possible for me to have my little family. I worried about love and finding someone who would care for me in a way that I couldn't really care for myself. But with Gwyn and our two cats, our little family feels like home; safe, secure and loving. I can't imagine anyone else I would want to share the rest of my life with.

'My world fell apart and he stayed to support me'

Emma Bullimore, 33, met Doug, 31, at work in 2019, and they went on a couple of dates. Then heartbreak struck

I HAD WAITED A LONG TIME to meet Doug. After years of dating apps and sulking at weddings, I couldn't believe it when I finally found a man I knew could be special. After some office flirtation and tentative texting, we went out for lunch.

On date three, sitting in the corner of a wine bar tipsy on red wine and the heady sense of possibility, my phone rang. It was my uncle, telling me he was coming to pick me up. We were going to the hospital, where my dad had been admitted for emergency treatment. My mum was already there. I had to hurry.

My head swirled. Doug was ordering more rioja at the bar, and I frantically gestured at him to settle the bill. 'What a way to start a relationship,' I said, desperately reaching for a joke, not really knowing if it was too early to use that word. We hugged awkwardly.

Quiet comfort

My beloved dad died a few days later. The initial numbness gave way to a physical, all-consuming pain as I experienced the sharp end of grief for the first time. The days rolled into one and the colour drained out of the world. Doug gave me space, but he didn't go far.

The weeks that followed were a bizarre blur. I remember repeatedly telling Doug it was

OK to walk away, but knowing I would fall apart if he did; wondering if it was appropriate for him to attend the funeral when he hadn't met my mum; and introducing him to my friends when they visited to help me process my loss. He never asked for more than I could give, and he gave me so much more than was fair to expect.

Hope in my heart

Whether it was sitting up all night with me when I was anxious, grabbing my hand when people asked me about my dad or staying in on Saturday night because I couldn't face the world, Doug was always there.

He moved in when the first lockdown came, six months into our relationship. He cooked amazing dinners, and made me smile again. There's no quick fix for bereavement and at times I have felt crushing guilt that I should feel any happiness at all when my family's lives have been shattered, let alone the euphoria that comes with falling in love. But when snuggling up with Doug and our puppy, Charlie, life feels bright again.

Just before he died, I told my dad 'I think I've met someone' and I know it made him happy to hear that. I wish he could have met Doug properly of course – they would have got on so well. @emmabullimore



“Honesty feeds our love”

Suzanne Scott, 45, has been with her husband, James, for 20 years. Together, they have sexual experiences with other people, and describe their relationship as ‘monogamish’*

JAMES AND I ARE IN A BAR. The atmosphere is electric. Some people are dancing uninhibitedly in weird and wonderful outfits, others are naked. The sense of elation is tangible.

I lock eyes with a woman. I’m captivated by her. My husband is excited for me: ‘She fancies you!’ He urges me to say hello. She touches my arm and starts talking. I wonder what her skin would feel like against mine. Soon, in a private room, I find out.

Yes, we’re at a swinger’s resort. I know the word conjures up images

of seedy perversion. It used to for me, but it’s been a journey and it no longer does. Now, it’s about a delicious liberation, which is why I prefer the French word for it: ‘libertine’.

I’m not who I was

It started a decade ago after the birth of my first child. I’d gone off sex, so I went to a workshop called ‘Spice up your sex life’. It was the first time I had been introduced to the idea of sexual fluidity, of women in particular. I realised that my sexuality had shifted.

Nervous, I told James, wondering what it meant for us if I was a lesbian. He laughed and suggested, rather than jump to conclusions or labels, I explore this side of me and see it as an adventure.

This is why I choose you

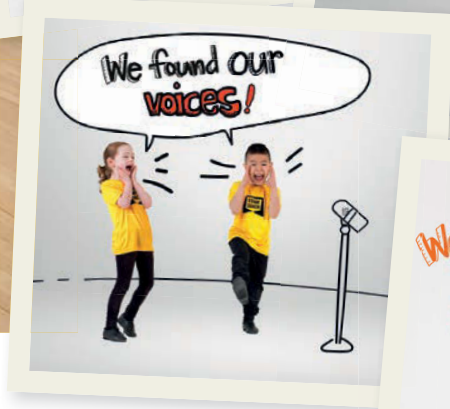
The next thing I knew, I was at a Skirt Club party, an all-female community for sexual discovery. The experience ignited something in me and things evolved. We began meeting people online. Just women at first, but then we progressed to couples, parties, clubs and holidays abroad.

It’s been gradual, but our sex life is the best it’s ever been. I’m more confident, knowing sexiness is about more than gender or the size of your waist. It’s injected playfulness into our relationship. It’s about reminding each other who you fell in love with by seeing your lover through another’s eyes. Many of my friends are bored with their partners and having affairs. We didn’t want that to be us, so we talked about it and were proactive.

It’s not all been plain sailing. I’m more jealous than James, thinking ‘what if he falls in love with her?’ But we’ve learned so much about ourselves and each other. With the freedom to be honest about who we are, we’ve grown closer.

“We’re at a swinger’s resort. I know the word conjures up images of seedy perversion. It used to for me, but now it’s about liberation, and I prefer the French word ‘libertine’”

in partnership with Stagecoach



A passion for performing arts

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JOSH BRADLEY BECAME a Stagecoach franchisee when he began to dread his job as a sixth form drama teacher. He wanted

to pursue a venture that fulfilled him, rather than restricted or undervalued him.

‘As much as I love my subject, I craved a better work-life balance,’ he says. ‘As a teacher, my social life was pushed aside, and I was frustrated by the low value the education system puts on the arts. I wanted to combine my passion for education with my desire to do something rewarding with my life. The opportunity to become a Stagecoach franchisee and be my own boss intrigued me. And Stagecoach is a household name, which is a huge advantage!’

Franchisees undertake an expert induction and receive ongoing training and support in marketing, customer service, IT and business development. Their tried-and-tested structure allows franchisees to play to their strengths and provides the best possible environment for success.

In his first term, Josh’s intake of students

exceeded his business model. Incredibly, during an economically challenging year, he finally attained the work-life balance he desired.

Flourish together

‘I make my own decisions and have time for myself,’ says Josh. ‘But the biggest change has been the improvement in my mental and physical health. And, within 18 months, I’ll be taking home the same salary as before – but with freedom!’

Josh is passionate about Stagecoach Performing Arts, not only for producing the stars of tomorrow, but for supporting children in other ways, including their mental health. When building his team, he was determined to find people who felt the same.

‘If you are thinking about joining Stagecoach, just go for it!’ urges Josh. ‘If you’ve always wanted your own business but worry about doing it alone, becoming a Stagecoach franchisee is perfect for you because we’re so well supported. Combining my passion and my business is utterly rewarding.’

Stagecoach in numbers:

30 years: Stagecoach Performing Arts is one of the UK’s leading performing arts opportunities.

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One million students have unlocked their potential with Stagecoach since 1988.



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Zooming with confidence

Video meeting angst? Let's slip into a more comfortable approach and make them work for us. Born introvert and coach Lucy Griffiths sets the agenda

Forget owning the room, we now have to own the Zoom, but that can present fresh challenges. As an introvert, I love how I can work from home in my PJs and slippers, network from my spare room and have a peek into other people's lives during a video call.

But group calls can be challenging – especially when the wifi is misbehaving or the house is a tip. There's an added level of stress if you think people are judging your space. I make it a rule to ensure that the corner behind my desk is always presentable.

Zoom calls can be exhausting, particularly for introverts. No matter your disposition, your brain has to work harder to process facial expressions and tone and pitch of

voice because you're not used to having so many conversations on video. As an introvert, I find three a day is enough, otherwise my energy levels are significantly depleted, but I know other introverts who try to reduce it even further.

When on video, you may feel you need to be more animated to stand out, and that can be draining. You may feel as if you have to perform because you're on show with a panel of people watching... What's more, technology can have an impact on the conversation and you have to learn a new set of non-verbal cues, even with loved ones. Often, there's a time lag, and this can affect how others perceive sarcasm, humour or feedback.

I have a few tips to turn even the shiest soul into a Zoom master.

Learn to love Zoom

- **Manage the meeting** and mute those who aren't speaking because background noise is distracting.
- **When you want to speak**, take a deep breath into your diaphragm. Oxygen enables you to project rather than mumble nervously, and it will also help you think more clearly.
- **Sip water** and ask for loo breaks – a good excuse for a breather.
- **Be open to other technology.** You don't always have to have a Zoom meeting. Check out the software Loom to share your screen on video without the need for a meeting, or use Voxer for voice notes. Often, an old-fashioned phone call will suffice.

Lucy has co-created our series of 'Create the life you want' courses. Sign up at courses.psychologies.co.uk/loveyourlife; lucygriffiths.com



Balance the power in your relationship

Does your romantic partnership feel out of balance? Professor Sarah Niblock, CEO of the UK Council for Psychotherapy, and psychotherapist Nicholas Rose discuss power dynamics in love, and how to find greater harmony with the aid of an expert



Relationships have their ups and downs, and power can play a role in

couple dynamics. Maybe you have noticed your partner raising their voice during disagreements or highlighting things they do for both of you. In this month's podcast, I chat to therapist Nicholas Rose to find out how to recognise when power dynamics are unhealthy, and the role therapy plays in helping you redress the balance.

Sarah

CEO of the UK Council for Psychotherapy

UKCP psychotherapist Nicholas Rose discusses how power struggles develop between partners, and how they can be dealt with effectively

Problems with power in a relationship often stem from small issues that go unaddressed. Even though they seem insignificant, little niggles are often connected to important underlying differences with regard values and beliefs, and can escalate into something bigger – and that's when power struggles can ensue.

Awareness of the health of your relationship is a positive step, so ask 'is the relationship working for both of us?' If one partner feels it isn't, something needs to be addressed.

It's important to know the difference between problems in a



relationship and abusive relationships – please get support from a domestic violence helpline if that is the case.

Begin the healing process

Broaching the subject of couples therapy with a partner can be daunting. Maybe you want to find better ways of discussing your issues, work through a crisis or end your relationship amicably. Starting with how you feel is a good way to introduce the idea. For example: 'I am uncomfortable in our relationship and I think we could benefit from outside help.'

Try not to attribute blame – the issue simply exists because the relationship exists. If one party is not interested in therapy, that may suggest something about the potential of the relationship.

The attitude to couples therapy is somewhat behind the attitude to therapy in general. Many who seek

About the UKCP and how to find a therapist

• **The UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)** is the leading research, innovation, educational and



regulatory body working to advance psychotherapy for the benefit of all. We have a register of more than 8,000 individual members, who offer a range of therapy approaches for couples, individuals, families and groups. We also have more than 70 training

and accrediting organisations for those who wish to become psychotherapists.

• **To find the right therapist for you,** or learn how to become a therapist, visit psychotherapy.org.uk



HOW I BECAME A THERAPIST

Nicholas Rose says a need to connect with others put him on the path to psychotherapy

MY FIRST EXPERIENCE of psychotherapy came in my early 30s at an introductory workshop. Until then, the most connected and engrossing experiences of my life had taken place when talking to other people about their lives, hopes, fears and problems. Of course, such conversations are rare in everyday situations.

Disillusioned with my life and feeling a void as if I was starved of something, my experience of sitting in the therapist's chair was one that solidified my future in psychotherapy, satisfying my desire to be there for others.

Psychotherapy continues to give me a sense of purpose and meaning. I have been working as a psychotherapist for more than 17 years and find fulfilment every day that I practise. I feel honoured and humbled to have this opportunity. nicholas-rose.co.uk

couples therapy often do so as a last resort, when there's too much hurt to face alone, instead of getting help before things get unmanageable. This is perhaps why there is a stigma, as it's perceived that the relationship must be at breaking point before therapy. Therapy affords you an outside point of view in a space you control. If one thing changes in your relationship as a result, then therapy is worth pursuing. If not, a therapist can help you understand your options.



The podcast

The complexities of power in a relationship can feel like a minefield. In this episode,

Sarah Niblock and psychotherapist Nicholas Rose outline how to recognise when power issues are arising in a partnership, and the ways in which psychotherapeutic support can help a couple. Listen at psychologies.co.uk/your-relationship-balance-podcast-ukcp

ILLUSTRATION: GETTY IMAGES

What will couples therapy be like?

You may be worried about booking therapy for you and your partner and not know what to expect. Therapist Nicholas Rose explains how sessions work to remove any concerns you may have

1 *In the first session with a couple, I always ask what brings them here, so I can develop an understanding of what is happening in their relationship. I look at both sides and seek to understand the dynamics they have created as a couple.*

2 *A therapist plays one of three roles in a couples session – mediator, facilitator or referee. I will figure out which role I perform the most throughout the sessions and explicitly state it with the hope that the couple can reintegrate*

this skill into their relationship on their own in the future.

3 *Throughout the sessions, I also look at what isn't being said by either party because sometimes that is what needs to be said the most. For example, if a couple hasn't discussed sex, I raise the subject to see if either partner wants to share something.*

4 *My aim as a therapist is to make it so I am no longer needed – that way, we know when our psychotherapeutic time together has run its course.*



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Find comfort in tough times

IN THE DEPTHS OF WINTER, it can be hard to remember that brighter times lie around the corner. The days are dark but they are getting lighter... Yet how do we give ourselves a sense of optimism and ease while dealing with the fallout from the global pandemic? This Dossier offers a road map to help you find solace and build strength right now.

Anita Chaudhuri consults experts in the field of self-care for their best strategies to find comfort. It may be tempting to binge on cake or box sets, but the pleasurable techniques in this Dossier will nurture the future you and soothe your soul, including a guide to attaining balance with tips that will last a lifetime. Take our test by therapist Sally Brown to discover where you could use more comfort – in the physical, emotional or spiritual realm – and the best way to achieve it.

ILLUSTRATIONS ADA DASILVA/GETTY IMAGES

HOW TO SOOTHE YOURSELF COURSE

In times of worry and uncertainty, such as redundancy, break-ups, lockdown or conflict, we sometimes reach for unhealthy comforts to make us feel better. But what if we didn't choose food, alcohol or even loved ones to comfort us, and could find solace within? Our four-week programme, 'How to comfort yourself', led by coach Gemma Brown, will help you discover positive ways to soothe yourself when you feel triggered and anxious.

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PSYCHOLOGIES
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Intelligent self-care for today and beyond

It's gloomy out there – which makes it even more important to nurture your spirit and pursue hope and joy. Anita Chaudhuri compiles a complete self-care plan that will change your outlook

Let's face it, most of us could do with cheering up right now. But, by the time I've reached the end of my working day and listened to the latest round of bleak news, the last thing I feel like doing is anything self-improving.

Yes, I know there is free yoga all over YouTube, not to mention a freezer full of healthy meals I made in a frenzy of optimism – but, most days, all I really crave are a couple of glasses of Merlot, a family-sized bag of posh crisps and all the episodes of *The Crown*.

Rocky patch-ready

'What's happening right now is a bit like when you're on a long-haul flight and hit major turbulence,' says Owen O'Kane, psychotherapist and author of *Ten To Zen: Ten Minutes A Day To A Calmer, Happier You* (Pan Macmillan, £10.99).

'In order to get through it, the pilot has to make changes, such as switching altitude or adjusting speed. You have to remain buckled up and probably can't move around safely like you normally would. My point is that you actually have to plan for how to get through the turbulence in order to deal with it.'

Rather than constantly reaching for treats, which ultimately aren't going to sustain us for long, he suggests that the best route to finding comfort is to consider what small changes and tweaks we might need to make during challenging times. 'If you're going through a tough time,

there's no point in pretending that you can somehow make it great and love the experience. It's more useful to ask yourself: "How can I make this time more comfortable and enjoyable, trusting in the knowledge that eventually this phase will end."

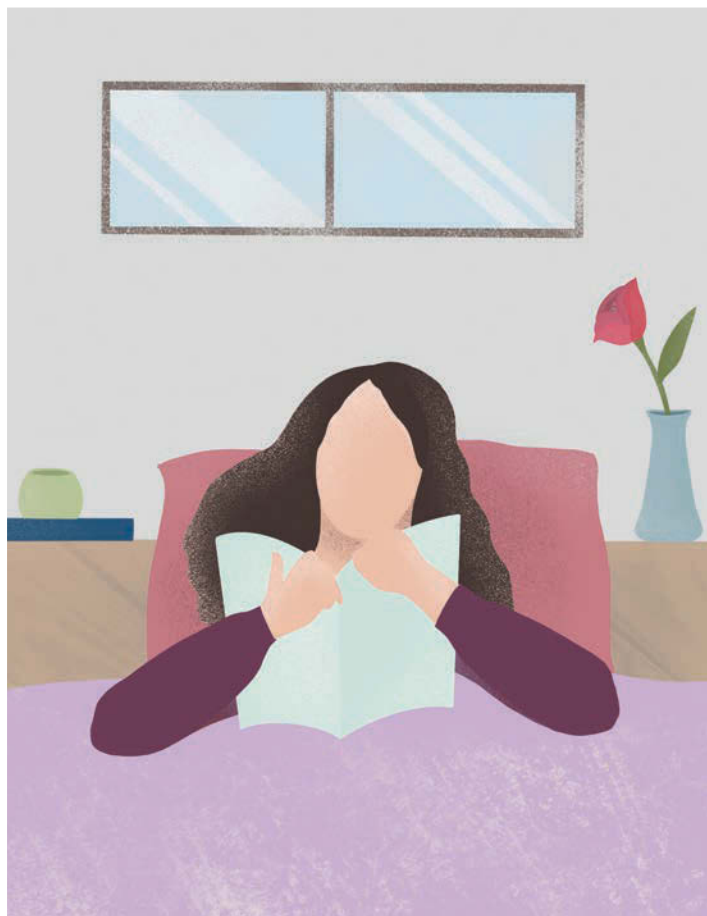
“What we know about human distress is that the more you fight against what is happening, the more you suffer”

O'Kane grew up during the Troubles in Northern Ireland and was badly bullied at school, so he has lived through some extremely difficult times himself. 'What we know about human distress is that the more you fight against what is happening, the more you will suffer. What can help is to lean in to what you're experiencing and develop more patience and acceptance of the situation,' he says.

As a starting point, he advises: 'Tell yourself: "This isn't what I would choose right now but I am going to hold onto hope. It's all about perspective and how you choose to view what's happening.' O'Kane believes that the route to comfort starts with hope because when you have a hopeful perspective, anxiety levels drop. 'Hope boosts your mood and you actually change your brain chemistry, so you feel lighter and more optimistic.'

Hit the positivity switch

The best way to do this is to focus on the future and plan things to look forward to in the short and medium term. 'From the day-to-day functioning point of view, it just means that you become less entrenched in the negative,' says O'Kane. 'You're in a much more >>>



high-functioning state because you're anticipating something good.'

Of course, treats are not off the agenda, but people often misunderstand self-care as indulgence, says Suzy Reading, author of *Self-Care For Tough Times: How To Heal In Times Of Anxiety, Loss And Change* (Octopus, £12.99) 'There's a difference between self-care and unhealthy crutches,' she says. 'A true act of self-care nurtures you in the moment but also nourishes the person that you are becoming. It helps you cope now but also protects the health of your future self.'

Even seemingly benign activities, such as watching copious amounts of TV or late-night Instagram scrolling might not be as soothing as they seem. 'Bright screens at night could be depleting your sleep,' says Reading. 'Without our health, what do we have? That is one of the biggest lessons of the pandemic. Habitually indulging in unhealthy things just to get us through the day – too much caffeine, for example – are actions that will potentially make our tomorrows tougher.'

During challenging times, the things that would normally sustain us may be unavailable due to lack of funds, difficult family circumstances or, indeed, a pandemic. When holidays and nights out are off limits, we need to be extra resourceful to come up with a new self-care toolkit. Try these simple, attainable methods:

“When we're in the thick of it, overthinking and being in our heads too much are enemies of feeling good”

1

Make a cocoon

One thing we can all do is learn from the Danish art of cosy living, hygge, to create a comforting corner in our living space. 'No matter what your circumstances, take a look around and see where you could create a little more beauty and harmony,' suggests Reading. 'Put up fairy lights in a relaxed corner with cushions and blankets. Set mood-boosting focal points around your home using objects such as a piece of driftwood or shells from a special beach. Such objects can provide anchors in stormy times. Instead of seeing a big mess of papers or your children's Lego, you train your eyes to switch to beauty. Let yourself rest there for a moment.' Reading also

suggests bringing nature into your home by listening to recordings of birdsong, watching a video of cloudscapes or simply allowing a breeze to whisper through your window.

2

Stabilise your core

When we're in the thick of it, overthinking is the enemy of feeling good. 'When you observe a tree during a storm, you will notice that the branches at the top are battered from all directions,' says O'Kane. 'I think that's what it's like for human beings when we're in our heads too much. We are pushed and

Permission to potter

Doing your own thing in your own time has emotional value, says expert Anna McGovern

AUTHOR ANNA MCGOVERN defines pottering as: 'To occupy oneself in a pleasant way but without a definite plan or purpose. "Pleasant" implies comfort. "Without a definite plan or purpose" implies freedom.'

After a traumatic period caring for her father and family while working full-time, McGovern decided to make a few life changes. 'When things got calmer, I decided to take a day a week for myself. I started to say no to other people. I didn't say

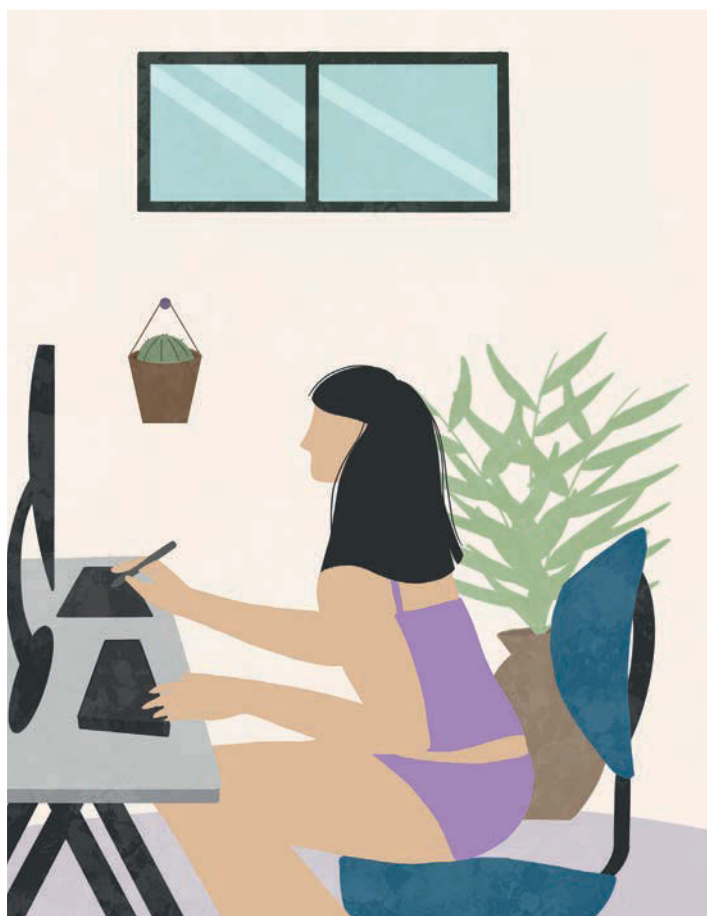
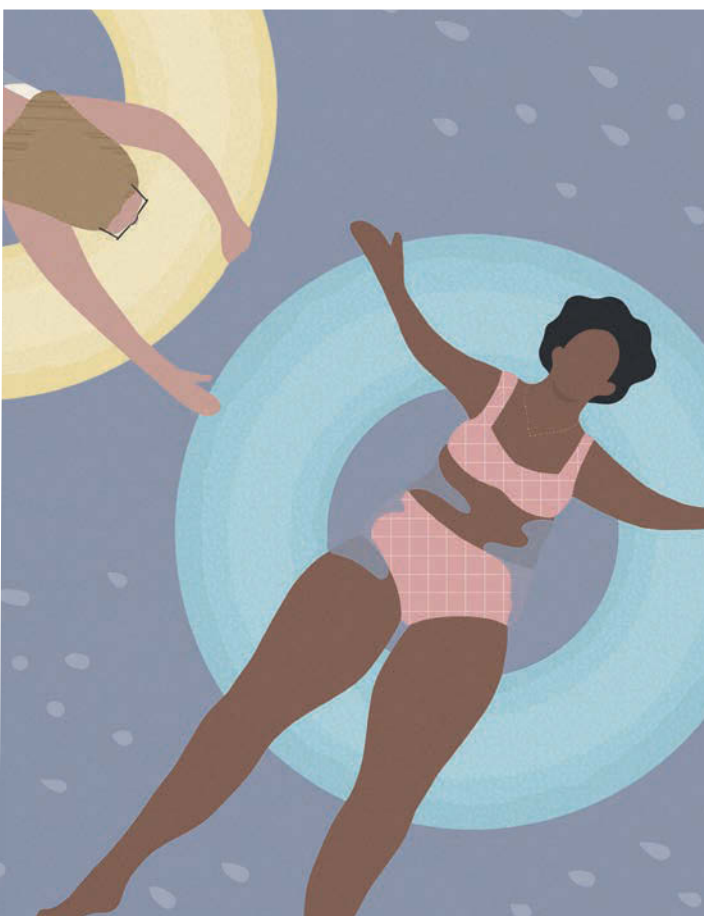
it forcefully, I simply withdrew my effort from some things. It gave me such solace, having no one to interfere with my time.'

McGovern didn't know it but she was creating a manifesto for pottering, which resulted in her book, *Pottering: A Cure For Modern Life* (Laurence King, £12.99). 'I sorted out the cupboards, I wandered to the shops, I fuffed around in my kitchen listening to the radio. In the book, I have tried to deconstruct the

characteristics of pottering, but there aren't many rules. One is that watching a box set isn't pottering.'

Pottering, she explains, requires some form of gentle movement. 'You are choosing to do something satisfying and useful, though sometimes the activity is slightly unnecessary. It's satisfying because it gives you the illusion of control.'

Ideal pottering includes rummaging in drawers, rearranging ornaments and clearing out your pantry.



pulled in all directions by external forces. But if you look at the base of a tree in a storm, it remains rooted and grounded. It isn't affected by the storm in the same way. As human beings, it's part of our responsibility to find our individual sense of inner stability, no matter what storms are going on around us. Whatever is in our mind, whatever other people are doing or saying, we don't necessarily have to react to them.'

3

Worry window

It sounds counterintuitive but it is helpful to schedule time for anxious thoughts. 'The key is to give yourself full permission to wallow in worry, but make sure you give yourself a container for those feelings,' advises Reading. 'We don't want to immerse ourselves in anxiety all day, every day. But, on the other hand, toxic positivity is dangerous too. We are living through genuinely difficult times and that needs to be acknowledged.'

She suggests making a daily anxiety appointment. 'You might decide: at 4pm every day I am going to give myself 20 minutes to sit with my concerns, give them a good airing and let myself feel them. Then I will go on with my day. Outside of that time, you can remind yourself that it's not 'worry time' till 4pm. Sometimes, you will get to the appointed time and find that you don't need it.'

4

Rescript your self-talk

Self-compassion is a buzz word but understanding how to apply it isn't always obvious. O'Kane says that one constant he has observed is that people give themselves a terribly hard time. 'When I hear people talking about their lives, they tend to beat themselves up and are super critical of themselves. Learn to talk to yourself with kindness. I ask my clients: "Would you talk to another human being the way you talk to yourself?" Every one of them says no, because their internal tone is so harsh and judgmental.'

By becoming conscious of your inner dialogue, you will automatically be comforted. 'Everything feels easier because you no longer have this enemy inside criticising you. Instead, you've got an ally. Start by paying attention to your inner talk for an hour. What are you saying? How do you value and prioritise yourself? It's not a luxury item, it's essential maintenance and a true foundation to keep you functioning well.'

5

Curate happy memories

'Simple things can be so powerful,' says Reading. 'If we associate self-care with extravagant spa trips and luxury products, we will only do it once in a while – but if we put photos of happy times around the house, they foster a feeling of tenderness towards ourselves, awakening our capacity for self-soothing, giving us permission to feel.'

Reading has a trio of photos in her kitchen that are reminders of her beloved Australian landscape and upbringing. 'The beauty is that these memories can have cumulative power. You might well think "what good is that going to do?" but if you dot moments of feeling and connection throughout your day, they will help release tension and cultivate a more constructive mindset.'

“It's our responsibility to find our inner stability, no matter what storms are going on around us”

6

Give yourself 10

If you want to feel better, start by learning to take time out of your day just for you, suggests O'Kane. 'The human brain is an organ and, like every other organ, it needs time to rest and recharge, and it needs time to process. If we're on the go constantly, it will start to deplete and not function as well.'

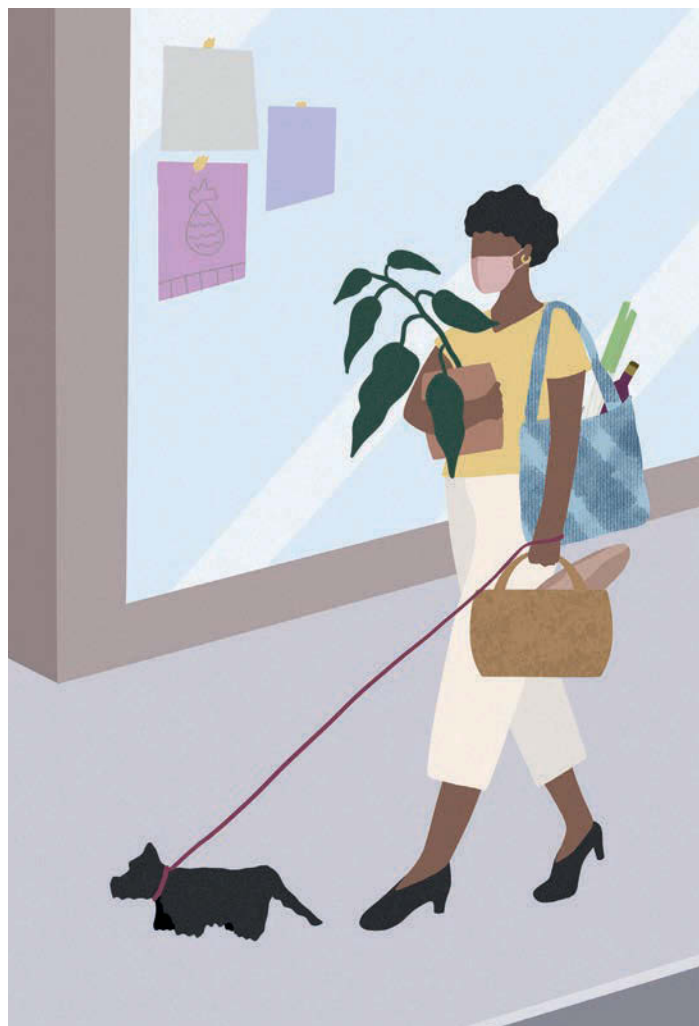
He advocates taking 10 minutes a day to create time and space to simply be with yourself in whatever way works best for you. Finding this space will be different for everyone, depending on your preferences and where you are based. If you're in a busy office, the only place might be a quiet toilet cubicle or in your car at lunchtime!

'If many things are bothering you, pick one. Make it an issue that is within your control and let it be your focus. It will give you a greater sense of control than if you're trying to micromanage the future of the global economy!'

7

Remember why it matters

Self-care often gets overlooked because we deem it selfish or self-indulgent. 'Spend time reflecting on what self-nourishment facilitates in your life,' says Reading. 'What does it allow you to do and be? What does it cost you not to do it? How does that affect the quality of your choices and the health of your relationships? The answers to those questions will form the basis of your personal why. It's a useful reminder that we're not actually transgressing our moral code when we choose to take care of ourselves.'



Regain balance when it all gets too much

Psychotherapist and author of 'Ten To Zen' Owen O'Kane outlines the essentials for finding peace and comfort when you feel despondent or overwhelmed by difficult circumstances

● **NURTURE PERSPECTIVE.**

Start by reminding yourself that when we go through tough times, there's a real danger that we start to see it as a forever state. Remind yourself that whatever you're going through is a temporary period of time. It can help to read or watch narratives from history to put what you're going through into perspective.

● **AVOID FALLING INTO**

VICTIMHOOD. Every human being has choices about how they can move their life forward. Remember that you can choose to take responsibility for your own happiness. One of the most

important things you can do is focus on your wellbeing and make it a priority. There's no point in waiting for someone else to make you feel better, sometimes you have to make it happen for yourself.

● **LEARN TO TOLERATE DIFFICULT EMOTIONS.**

I know I don't respond well when I feel that someone is undermining me. For example, I have to be really conscious when I'm in a meeting and I feel as if someone is talking down to me – so I don't over-react. Most people struggle with how they deal with unpleasant feelings, such as anger, dread or

anxiety, whatever the context. The tendency is to run from the situation that triggered the emotions or try and block them out. Instead, let the emotion be a guide. What is the feeling trying to tell you? Once you get in tune with the feelings, they can lead you back to your point of stability.

● **GET MOVING.** Walk, run or swim. Participate in any form of movement that's possible for you. Make the most of the nature that's available to you. Go for a walk in the park. Getting fresh air increases dopamine and oxytocin and these are essential for effective self-care.

Test

What kind of comfort do you need?

In trying periods, it's natural to seek solace – but take our test to find out if you're looking in the right place

1 In low moments, you can feel:

- ♥ A bit lost
- ◆ Weak and vulnerable
- Unsettled
- Misunderstood

2 You feel out of sorts when you've spent too long:

- Overthinking
- ♥ Doing routine tasks
- ◆ Sitting at a screen
- In the same room

3 Your go-to comfort is often:

- ♥ Reading a self-help book
- Having a declutter
- ◆ Food or drink based
- A good conversation

4 You know you're out of balance when you:

- Feel no one's really listening to you
- Daydream about escaping
- ◆ Seem to be constantly fighting cravings
- ♥ Feel convinced you need a big change

5 You love feeling like you're:

- ♥ Learning and growing

- ◆ Alive and strong
- Safe, calm and grounded
- Truly connected with others

6 Your ultimate trip away would be:

- An adventure with people you love
- ♥ A transformative personal development retreat
- ◆ A head-to-toe restorative retreat
- Returning somewhere you know and love

7 You're most likely to find comfort from:

- ♥ An inspirational podcast
- ◆ A massage or energy treatment
- Spending time somewhere green
- Sharing laughter with a friend

8 Life will feel easier when you've:

- Got on top of what needs doing
- Got more time to socialise
- ♥ Found your true purpose
- ◆ Found the right balance

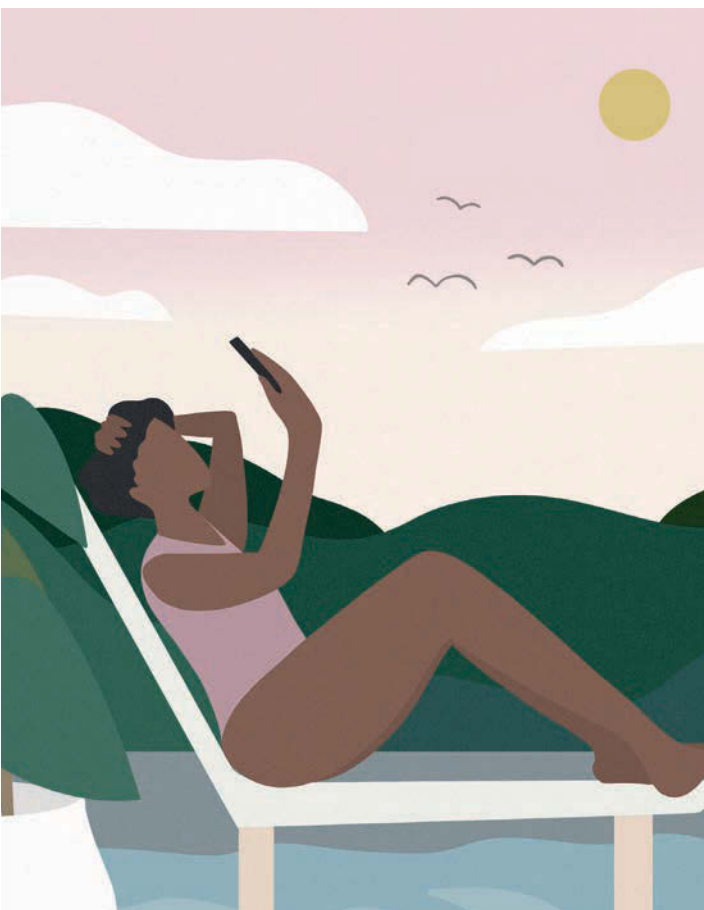
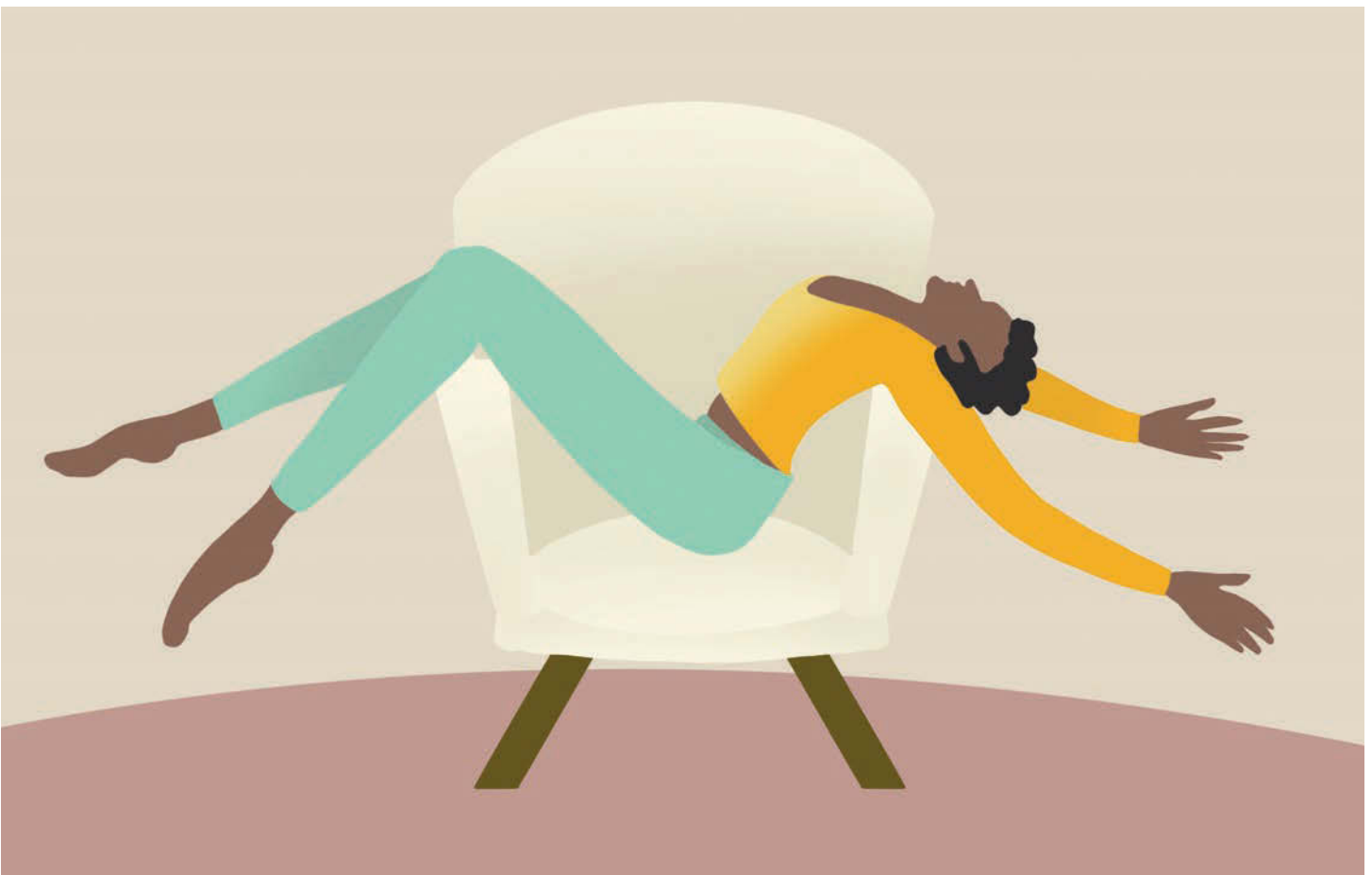
9 You feel at your best when you know you're:

- ♥ Making a difference
- ◆ Looking after yourself
- Grounded and coping
- Loved and approved of

10 You often crave comfort when you've lost:

- ◆ Touch with what you really need
- Your sense of safety and security
- A connection with someone who matters
- ♥ Your sense of purpose

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 where to find the comfort you crave.



Which part of your life requires care?

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♥

Spiritual

When events make you question life's meaning and purpose, it's not surprising you crave spiritual comfort. It's easy to misinterpret an existential crisis as simply dissatisfaction with your work, home life or relationships. Focusing on what you want to change might help, but if the deeper existential need is not addressed, superficial changes will serve as only a temporary distraction. When choice is taken away and routines are restricted, it can feel more challenging if you're not certain that you're on the right path. Spiritual comfort comes in all guises. For some, it's about rituals that allow time for reflection. It's also important to connect with others who share your spiritual interests. But there are small shifts everyone can make, such as reconnecting with your core values and bringing your mindset and behaviour in line with them.

Simple changes, such as aiming to treat everyone with kindness, respect and lack of judgment, increasing the deep listening you do and filtering out gossip from your conversations can be a surprisingly deep source of spiritual comfort.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♦

Physical

In a busy life, especially one with a lot of screen time, you can lose touch with what your body needs. When your choices for physical activity are restricted, sitting-based, passive activities often take their place. It's not surprising your body's physiology reacts against this imbalance, manifesting in acheyness, illness or lack of energy. Movement is the body's ultimate comfort, even if your head is saying it's the last thing you need. The body is designed to move, so think of physical activity as your comfort prescription.

The effects are accumulative, so think little and often. Physical comfort is especially important if you're missing touch, and mindful movement such as yoga can be an effective way to soothe you from the inside out. It can also quieten the mental noise, helping you decipher messages and reveal other comfort you may need. When you don't have time to exercise, change your physiology and soothe your nervous system through breathing exercises.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ●

Environmental

The comfort you crave seems to revolve around feeling safe and calm in your environment. It's not always possible to choose where we live, but consider what changes you could bring to your environment – decluttering if necessary or introducing more light and greenery. Environmental comfort comes through all our senses, so rather than just focusing on the visual, think about your soundscape, such as how often you allow silence or when you might need uplifting music. Aroma is another comfort – burning essential oils at the end of the day not only helps calm the nervous system, it's a way of showing yourself that you are worth taking care of.

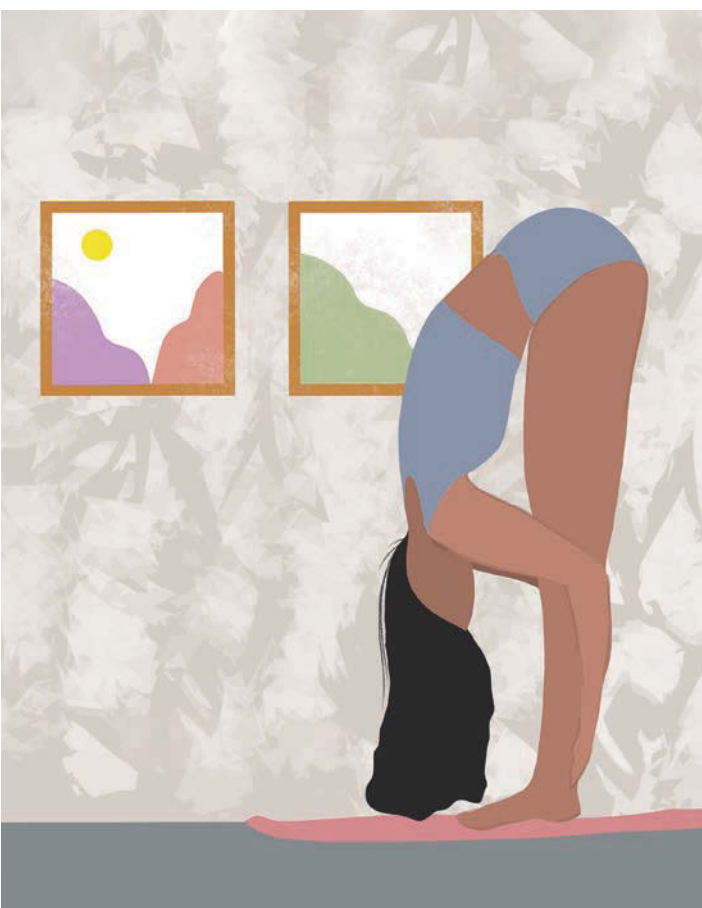
Time outdoors in a green space is the ultimate environmental comfort. The brain responds well to nature and even walking among trees can calm the nervous system. Witnessing the beauty and resilience of an outdoor environment can be deeply comforting, as well as a chance to think big picture and get a new perspective on stress and worries.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ■

Relational

Meaningful connection with people who understand you will bring you comfort. When life is uncertain, a connected conversation or shared laughter can feel like an oasis. You don't have to be isolated to experience a relational deficit. You may be surrounded by people you love, but circumstances have reduced your interactions to transactional exchanges. Conflict of needs can trigger a want for relational comfort from others. Making new connections with like-minded individuals will bring you comfort – but you could be soothed by existing relationships if you invest time and attention in them.

Sometimes, the relational comfort you crave can only come from changing your relationship with yourself. Developing a compassionate relationship with yourself will help you get the comfort you need from others – it's hard to feel connected to anyone else when you have an attacking inner voice. Consider how self-compassionate you are and whether you hang onto a critical inner narrative because there is part of you that wonders if, without it, you'd get nothing done?



in partnership with Ollie School



**NOW
ONLINE!**

Join Ollie's army

**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.

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



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!



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

Real Wellness

Wellbeing • Movement • Connection • Health • Nutrition

EDITED BY ALI ROFF FARRAR

*“I am not afraid... I was
born to do this”*

JOAN OF ARC

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

Mindful wellness

As we move towards longer days and the promise of warmer, sunnier weather, Ali Roff Farrar urges us all to nurture our beliefs, allow them to blossom and let hope spring eternal



BLOOM WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

The early buds of spring will soon be on their way – little declarations of hope sprouting from Mother Nature herself, reminding us that brighter, warmer days are not too far away after the austerity of winter. Hope is a courageous thing; it takes belief – just like we believe the trees will blossom again every year. So, what do you believe in? And do those beliefs help create your hope and allow it to blossom? Or do they keep it in the dark winter of ‘impossible’?

This month's Mindful Health practice helps us take a step back to observe our thoughts and see them for what they really are...

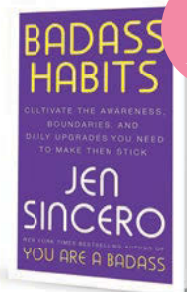
Ali

Psychologies Wellness
Director, mindfulness
expert and yoga teacher

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• **'Badass Habits'** by
Jen Sincero
(Hodder &
Stoughton,
£14.99)

Routine thinking

Cultivate and stick to your goals with these brilliant habit hacks. 'Contrary to popular belief, habits are more about who you're being than what you're doing,' author Jen Sincero notes. This book is for anyone looking to create new habits to live in greater alignment with not only who you want to be, but who you are.

QUOTES TO LIVE BY

“No winter lasts forever: no spring skips its turn”

HAL
BORLAND



Skin drink

In Sankrit, ksoni means 'earth'.

Fitting, seeing as this range has been designed to love our planet (and bodies). Sulphate, paraben and SLS-free, vegan and 100 per cent free of single-use plastic, the range comes in fun 'drink can' packaging, so there isn't even a nasty plastic bottle top to contend with.

Just don't make the mistake my husband did and take a swig!

Bodycare range,
from £12, ksoni.co



PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES; CAMBRIDGE SLEEP SCIENCES; "ONEPOLL



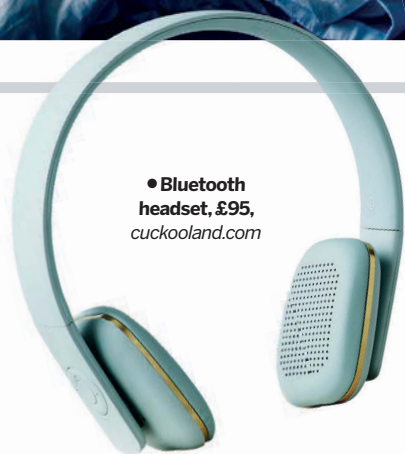
IN YOUR DREAMS

BAD DAY? Dreaming helps us get over it. Dreams occurring during REM sleep help remove the emotional part of an experience, or memory. When it comes to PTSD however, the memories and emotions are still connected, which is why people have recurring nightmares. These may be the mind trying to remove the emotions from the memories attached to the experience.



WELCOME WELLNESS

Keep your physical and mental self-care a priority and download my free 'One-day wellness plan', including morning and evening meditations, a nutrition guide and an energising workout. Download it free at mywellfulness.com



• Bluetooth headset, £95, cuckooland.com

SOUNDS OF SLEEP

A whopping 52 per cent* of people in the UK struggle to get to sleep. I enjoy the soothing voice of clinical hypnotherapist Christopher Fitton on his top 30 UK podcast, *Sleep Cove*, which includes guided meditations, bedtime stories and sleep hypnosis. Just make sure you have a pair of wireless headphones to avoid waking up in a tangled mess!

6/10

*This is the number of women ditching make-up for a natural look and to focus on their skincare, following fewer social events and less face-to-face socialising last year***

real wellness



Mindful Health Club

There's a book by author Deepak Chopra called 'You Are Not Your Brain'. I recall thinking, 'That's silly – of course I am my brain!' But years of study in yoga and mindfulness later, I know the truth. Thoughts are just mental processes, but problems arise when we believe them...

1 **The heart beats, the lungs breathe,** the mind thinks thoughts.

Try to stop breathing. It's impossible – after a minute or two, your body will take that breath; just as we can't stop our hearts beating, we can't simply stop the mind thinking. The mind is a thought factory. But it's what we do with those thoughts that matters.

2 We have different types of thoughts, helpful ones such as reminders, positive ones like 'I'm grateful for X, Y, Z!'. But we also have untrue thoughts, including 'I'm not good enough for that'.

3 So, what happens when we have an untrue thought, and believe it? We cause ourselves suffering.

4 What can we do? The first trick is to notice thoughts that have no real evidence, and observe them; perhaps after we've thought them or, with practice, as we're thinking them.

5 The second trick is to relabel them as a 'mental event'; the mind simply doing its job, another thought created, just like another inhalation or heartbeat.

6 The third trick is to allow yourself to let that mental event go. It takes practice, just like any skill. But, once you master even the first trick, you'll be surprised how much shifts.



NATURE'S SECRET IS OUT

WE OFTEN LOOK FOR MEANING in our external world; for signs, patterns, even divination. Believing in something greater than ourselves can be reassuring and, for me, there's no place where that exists more than in nature. Learn how to interpret all that nature has to share with us; from finding greater meaning to wonderful tools to help us connect deeply with the outside world, this is a beautiful book for any lover of Mother Earth.



• **'Nature's Hidden Oracles: From Flowers To Feathers & Shells To Stones - A Practical Guide To Natural Divination'** by Liz Dean (Octopus, £10)



Say eye to the jigsaw

Too much screen time? Why not trade an hour of TV every night to work on a jigsaw puzzle? Research* found that spending 60 minutes a day on a jigsaw puzzle has the potential to improve our visual health – our ability to view movement, depth and distance perception. It's the perfect companion for your favourite podcast – speaking of which, have you listened to the *Psychologies* podcast channel yet?



Hand sanitiser sprays in Relax, Elevate and Refresh, £14.95 each, purevidanaturals.com

Scentsible sanitising

Two things I don't love about hand sanitisers: dry hands and the chemical smell. Pure Vida sanitisers are not only made with natural ingredients while killing up to 99.9 per cent of bacteria, they are infused with organic essential oils; lavender to relax, bergamot to uplift and peppermint to refresh. The bottle is recyclable and dispenses with a spray to make sharing safer.



LISTEN TO THE PODCAST!

Don't miss the 'Psychologies' podcast channel – packed with fascinating psychological explorations into meaningful subjects and interviews with wise people, such as Carrie Green, author of 'She Means Business' (Hay House, £12.99). Listen on iTunes, TuneIn, AudioBoom or at psychologies.co.uk

8hrs

and 41 minutes is the amount of time UK adults spend on media devices, compared with an average night's sleep of eight hours and 21 minutes. How do you fare?*



AVO READ OF THIS

Country: Central & South America

Native to Central and South America, avocados weren't eaten or used in the UK until the mid-1900s. Their healthy fats have many benefits, including keeping the skin hydrated and the muscles and joints agile. Dating back to 10,000BC Mexico, the domestication of the avo tree by humans is as old as the invention of the wheel. In Aztec culture, avocados were symbolic of love and fertility due to their shape, and the fact that they grow in pairs.†



Faith in Nature nourishing avocado hair and body care range, from £5.79, faithinnature.co.uk





PEAR AND CHEESE MUFFINS

Ever saved chickpea water and watched it go gloopy in the fridge, or hate the idea of throwing away perfectly good yolks? I love this sustainable swap for egg whites – OGGS aquafaba

• 1 pear, chopped • Few thyme sprigs • ½ tsp each salt and black pepper • Pinch smoked paprika, optional • 75ml olive oil, plus extra for roasting and brushing • 275g self-raising flour, sifted • 125g grated vegan cheese • 125ml oat milk • 100ml OGGS aquafaba • 1 tbsp caster sugar

Preheat the oven to 200°C, gas mark 6. Line a muffin tin with six paper muffin cases. Put the pear and thyme into a roasting tin, season, scatter with smoked paprika and drizzle with 1 tsp oil.

Roast for 10 mins, then cool for 5. Add the flour, 100g of the cheese and ½ tsp each salt and pepper. Stir in the pear, discarding any thyme stalks. Mix, then make a well in the centre. Whisk the milk, aquafaba, 75ml oil and the sugar in a jug, until frothy. Pour into the flour mix and fold together.

Spoon evenly into the cases and scatter over the rest of the cheese. Bake for 25 mins, remove and brush with more olive oil, then bake for 10 mins more until golden. Cool until just warm and serve.



• OGGS aquafaba egg alternative, £2.25 for 200ml, loveoggs.com



CONFIDENT, POWERFUL YOU

Kick off your spring with a 'Psychologies' subscription. You'll get our inspiring magazine delivered to your door each month, plus free access to our monthly online coaching courses, including the favourite 'Ultimate declutter'! Find out more on page 42

QUOTES TO LIVE BY

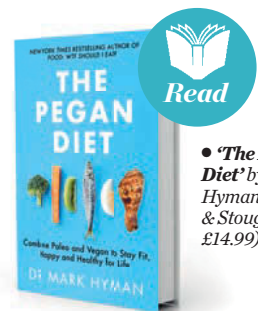
“One of the very nicest things about life is the way we must regularly stop whatever it is we are doing and devote our attention to eating”

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

The truth behind your sweet tooth

An expert in eating disorder recovery, psychologist Rachel Evans explains why we crave sugar in emotional times

The best way to recognise emotional cravings is to notice the feelings that cause you to reach for unhealthy foods instead of vegetables, for example. 'Emotions are processed in the limbic system, whereas labelling (our feelings), activates our prefrontal cortex, which is involved in cognitive processing. It helps to trigger the rational part of the brain, which remembers that bingeing on sugar isn't a long-term solution,' says Evans.



• 'The Pegan Diet' by Mark Hyman (Hodder & Stoughton, £14.99)

Paleo + vegan = pegan

Traditionally, the approaches of paleo and plant-based diets contradict each other, but in 'The Pegan Diet', 'New York Times' bestselling author Mark Hyman combines the best of paleo (good fats; limited refined carbs and sugar) with plant-based (fresh veggies). He explains his ethos with fascinating science and a nutritional guide for optimal body, brain and planet health.



♥ WE LOVE YOGA

Discover the unique holistic health benefits of each asana



RESTORATIVE SUPPORTED TWIST *Salamba bharadvajasana*

Resting in a supported, restorative yoga pose for a lengthy period of time can be deeply healing for body and mind. This twist stretches the spine, massages the digestive organs and, importantly, slows the breath and helps balance the nervous system.

- Grab three to four pillows or cushions and a blanket. Put on a jumper, socks and get cosy on a mat or carpet.
- Pile up your pillows vertically at the top of your mat, saving one pillow or folded blanket.
- Sit down on your right-side hip with your knees bent to the left. Place the spare pillow or folded blanket between your knees for support.
- Now, draw your right shoulder back to twist your torso down facing the pile of pillows. Lower your chest down directly onto them, with one arm resting on either side.
- Lower your right cheek down onto the pillows, close your eyes and focus on your breath. If you fall asleep, all the better! Stay for at least five minutes, then slowly switch to the other side.

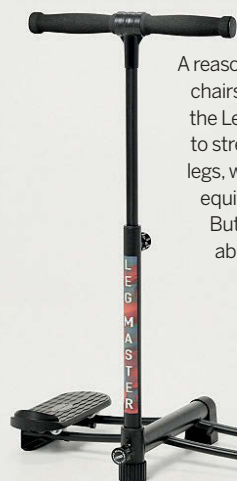


ONE-HIIT WONDER

Physical inactivity is one of the leading causes of disease and disability in the UK.* Want to start a new active habit? Try a HIIT (high intensity interval training) workout. It's the most popular form of exercise** and helps to raise the metabolism by expending calories both during and after your workout. Try a free HIIT workout download in my one-day wellness guide at mywellfulness.com/freebies



● Skipping rope, made from 100 per cent cotton and recycled plastic, £12, shop.nationaltrust.org.uk



Pelvictory!

A reason to get up out of our chairs with a dual purpose, the Leg Master is designed to strengthen and tone the legs, with metabolic effects equivalent to fast jogging. But the star feature is its ability to strengthen the pelvic floor. Use for 60 seconds a day to feel improvements.



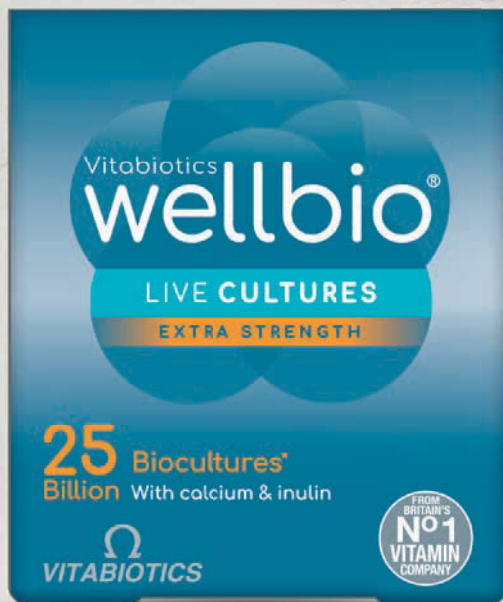
● Leg Master Slim pelvic floor trainer, £89.95, legmaster.co.uk

1 in 4

adults in the UK are inactive, which means they don't increase their heart rate above resting levels for at least 30 minutes a week. Remember, being active can lower the risk of heart disease by 35 per cent†

Make a great gut decision

...because health begins on the inside*



Live Culture capsules

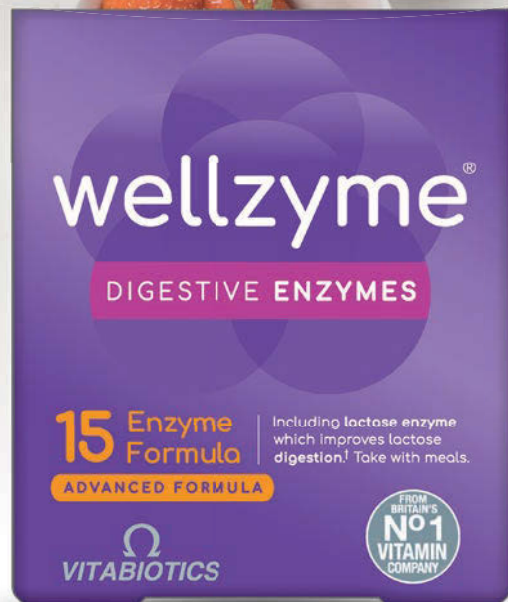
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Strains of broad spectrum live biocultures



With Lab4® the UK's most studied microbiotic cultures†



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Includes lactase enzyme which improves lactose digestion†

From *Boots*, chemists, health stores & www.vitabiotics.com

‡Lactobacillus acidophilus (2 strains), Bifidobacterium bifidum, Bifidobacterium animalis subsp. lactis

†In individuals who have difficulty digesting lactose. Tolerance to lactose is variable. Seek advice as to the role of this substance in your diet.

**Source: Nielsen GB ScanTrack Total Coverage Value and Unit Retail Sales 52 w/e 31 October 2020.
To verify contact Vitabiotics Ltd, 1 Apsley Way, London NW2 7HF.

A meal fit for microbes

Nourishing the microorganisms in our gut relies on consuming sufficient amounts of dietary fibre – most notably, prebiotics. Nutrition Editor Eve Kalinik explains



FIBRE IS A TYPE of carbohydrate found in plant-based foods (veggies, fruits, whole grains, nuts and seeds) that we can't digest but provide food for our microbes so they can support us in

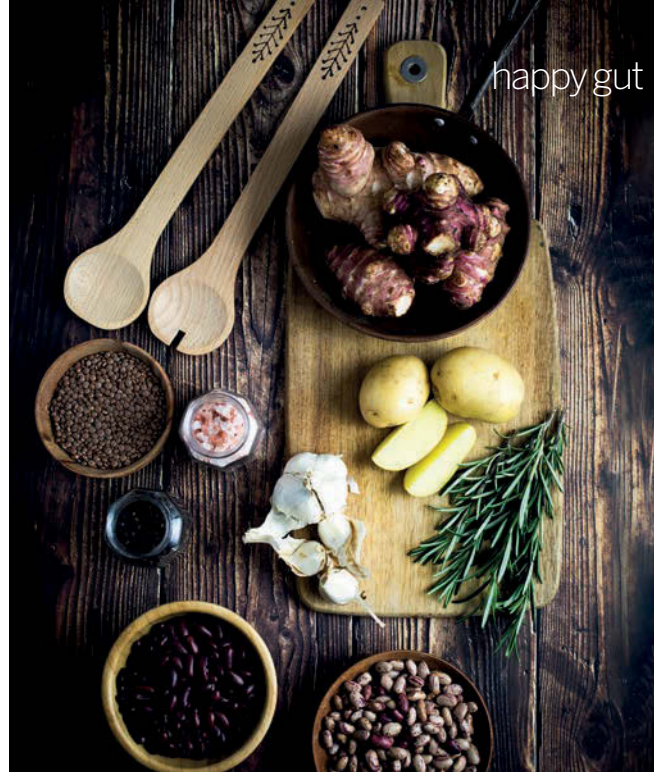
all their myriad and marvellous ways. Special types of fibre that have an enhanced feeding effect on our beneficial gut microbes are called prebiotics. I like to think of them as fertiliser for the gut. There is evidence that three main prebiotics can have a marked positive effect on our gut microbiota: fructooligosaccharide (FOS), galactooligosaccharide (GOS) and inulin. These can be found in thousands of foods, including top hitters such as garlic, onions, leeks, Jerusalem artichokes, asparagus, almonds, cashews, pistachios, mushrooms and whole grains, such as oats.

When raw is a better deal

Most of these foods will start to lose their prebiotic benefits the more you cook them, which might have you wondering how you can incorporate them into your diet but, if you consider adding garlic at the end, rather than the beginning of cooking, or using raw in dips, spreads and pesto, you can easily achieve this. Try adding raw asparagus and Jerusalem artichokes to salads, and ground chicory root is a rich source of inulin that is often used as a tasty coffee substitute for those who choose not to drink coffee or have caffeine.

Another substance that acts like a prebiotic fibre but isn't referred to as such is something called resistant starch. You can find this in foods such as cooked and cooled white potatoes (yes, potato salad!), legumes such as lentils and chickpeas, under-ripe bananas and plantains. A word of warning though, particularly for those who suffer from gas and bloating, it is very important to be mindful around eating high amounts of prebiotics if you are not used to them as you may end up with a trumpeting circus that won't be pleasant for you or your gut. So, think little and often and introduce gradually if you are new to some of them. @evekalinik

Next month, we explore fermented foods: what they are, how are they made and where we can find them



“Add raw asparagus and Jerusalem artichokes to salads. Ground chicory root, a tasty coffee substitute, is also a rich source of inulin”

Stir

Try this pesto recipe from my book, *Happy Gut, Happy Mind*. Mix through cooked veggies or spaghetti.



- 50g pine nuts • 100ml extra virgin olive oil • 1 garlic clove, finely chopped or crushed
- Handful of parsley • 50g grated Parmesan • Squeeze fresh lemon juice • Sea salt • Black pepper

Toast the pine nuts in a dry pan over a gentle heat until golden. Transfer to a food processor and add the garlic, parsley, lemon juice, Parmesan and salt and pepper. Pulse for a minute or so, then gradually add the olive oil until blended. Transfer to a sealable container and store in the fridge for up to 1 week.

• *'Happy Gut, Happy Mind: How To Feel Good From Within'* by Eve Kalinik (Piatkus, £25)

Sip

Enjoy this barley and chicory coffee alternative for a hit of inulin.

• Whole Earth Organic No Caf, £2.99, hollandandbarrett.com



Snack

Think savoury banana loaded with resistant starch and tastes utterly yummy!

• Purely plantain sea salt flavour chips, £1.99 for 75g, ocado.com

good thoughts

*“You must find the place inside yourself
where nothing is impossible”*

DEEPAK CHOPRA

PHOTOGRAPH: PEXELS



“What is planned obsolescence and how can I find products that last?”

Ellen Tout challenges our throwaway culture to shine a light on the industries that produce items designed to break so we will buy new ones



“THEY DON’T MAKE THINGS LIKE THEY USED TO!’ We’ve all said it – but the truth is that they

really don’t, and it’s not by accident. Planned obsolescence is when manufacturers plan for products to break or become useless, and they end up in landfill. That phone that stopped working when an update came out... That vacuum they no longer sell spares for... Sound familiar? There is also the concept of psychological obsolescence – when we are made to feel that we are less if we do not replace working items with newer, ‘better’ alternatives.

Tara Button, the founder of BuyMeOnce, is an expert on this topic and describes one of the first proven cases in her book (right). In 1924, lightbulbs lasted an average of 2,500 hours but companies were not satisfied. Manufacturers met and agreed to ensure that all bulbs broke within 1,000 hours – and firms were fined if they did not comply. Customers were told that the new bulbs were brighter and therefore more expensive. This created the blueprint for planned obsolescence – intentionally inferior items and products built to break. For example,

in 1980, the average boiler lasted 23 years, but the average is now 12 years.*

Demand more of companies by leaving a review, emailing feedback, asking questions and signing petitions, such as the BuyMeOnce Make It Last campaign. Invest in products designed for longevity and read reviews before buying. It’s also worth checking whether firms sell spares and if there is a warranty. Support craftspeople and skilled makers, rather than buy mass-produced. And why shop when you could borrow? Do you have a tool or product library near you? Check Facebook groups or try the Library of Things website. If items break, find out if you have repairers nearby or a community repair cafe. If these services don’t exist, could you set one up? Shop wisely, choose mindfully and repair, not replace, when possible.

Ellen

Psychologies
Eco Living Editor

For green advice, follow @Ellen_Tout on Instagram and Twitter; psychologies.co.uk/real-eco/; uk.buymeonce.com/; libraryofthings.co.uk

Can I answer your questions? Got a sustainability query or worry? Email our Eco Living Editor ellen.tout@psychologies.co.uk with ‘Eco worrier’ in the subject line



Consume this

Learn to mindfully curate your homeware and read about the history and marketing of products in Tara Button’s great book.

● **A Life Less Throwaway: The Lost Art Of Buying For Life** by Tara Button (HarperCollins, £12.99)



About-face

With a bio-based case, these facial rounds are washable and can be used time and time again. They are made from cotton and are compostable at the end of their life cycle.

● **LastRound reusable make-up remover pads**, £11, lastobject.com

Beauty from within

While we all value the importance of self-care in our lives, we want to make mindful choices that are kind to the environment *and* our bodies. These green finds tick both boxes



Planet-friendly products for conscious consumers

These sustainable brands make it their mission to look after your body and mind, while passionately protecting the environment. Our top picks this month are...



PSYCHOLOGIES
**REAL
ECO**
READERS'
CHOICE

A little bird told me

Supporting the RSPB, this rich coffee blend is vegan, organic and shade-grown to protect the rainforest. Bird & Wild seasonal blend, £4.99, birdandwild.co.uk



Care with a conscience

EcoFemme cloth pads are made in India and provide a livelihood for the women who stitch them. EcoFemme day pad, £7.50, shop.ecofemme.org



Leading the way

Natracare make organic pads and tampons that are biodegradable and compostable. Natracare pads and tampons, from £2.16 a pack, natracare.com



Taste good, do good

Raw Halo is vegan, free from palm oil, plastic-free and dreamily, creamily luscious. Mylk & vanilla vegan bar, from £1.10, rawhalo.com



Tea and intention

Noble Leaf, 'the mindful tea company', encourages us to see our tea break as a meditative experience. Loose-leaf white tea, from £9.95, nobleleaf.co.uk



For you and the planet...

Say goodbye to plastic, disposable sanitary products for good. DAME. reusable period pads set, £32.99, wearedame.co

CAMPAIGNER FOCUS



Ella Daish, an environmental activist who campaigns to end period plastic, tells Ellen Tout about her work

1 What spurred you into action? I was a postal worker and saw more waste on the streets. I thought about my consumption and began to make switches. I felt positive, but then my period started. I noticed the amount of plastic waste from one cycle. Conventional tampons and pads contain up to 90 per cent plastic.

2 How can we reduce period plastic? Manufacturers put the blame on consumers but plastic in tampons and pads is unnecessary. There are alternatives, such as eco-friendly tampons and pads, and reusables like menstrual cups, tampon applicators, cloth pads and period pants.

3 How do you stay motivated? I focus on what I can do and the positive changes I can make. Starting conversations has far-reaching effects. A flow of conversation creates a wave of awareness, action and change. It is powerful!

• For the #EndPeriodPlastic petition and more, see elladaish.com. Read the full interview at psychologies.co.uk/real-eco



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of being

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*“Love yourself like your life
depends on it, because it does”*

ANITA MOORJANI



PHOTOGRAPH: DARIA SHEVTSOVA/PEXELS



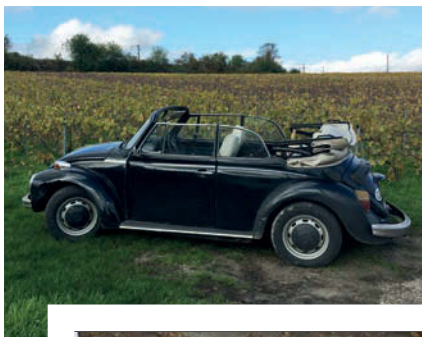
The time travellers

Many of us fantasise about a mini sabbatical – a long and contemplative adventure. Two women did just that, and were transformed by their experiences

We are in the middle of a global event that has curtailed our travel plans and changed our outlook. Here at *Psychologies*, we want to support the travel industry and keep our dreams of adventure alive. Planning our getaways with a renewed sense of gratitude gives us something to look forward to and focus on, hopefully with a more conscious perspective on the kind of travel we

want to commit to in the future. It feels as if this is a moment of pause to re-evaluate our lives, what we want, what gives us meaning and what we want to create next – inner and outer adventures!

Many of us dream of that once-in-a-lifetime opportunity; taking off for a month or longer for a more in-depth journey. Two writers took a leap that revolutionised their lives. We hope their stories inspire you... >>>



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Writer Louise Tucker – without her jumper; classic Beetles need a break when you keep their motor running for nearly two months;

the picturesque Champagne region of eastern France; Louise loved pootling through the pretty French countryside, taking in the vineyards and orange sunset

‘My road trip of self-discovery was a gift of time’

Louise Tucker set off for seven weeks on a solo trip around Europe in her 1973 convertible Beetle

ON THE DAY I WAS LEAVING on my adventure, it was brilliant 25°C sunshine in London. I was trying to keep my luggage down to one bag then, at the last minute, my partner suggested that I take a jumper. But it didn’t fit in my bag. I had a waterproof with a warm lining, surely that would be enough? In the end, I threw it on the back seat. It might come in useful at some point, I thought, though in that heat it seemed excessive. I took a deep breath, got in the car and headed off. It was me, the car and seven weeks on the open road.

I have always loved driving, especially in my classic 1973 convertible Beetle. When the Brexit deadline was extended and the UK was going to be in Europe for another six months, it seemed like the ideal time to get behind the wheel and head to all the places I had never been, before it got trickier. When I realised that the car was the same age as the UK membership of the EU, I knew it was a perfect way to say goodbye, both to the EU and the car, which I was sure was on its last legs. Part

“Plenty could go wrong and I wasn’t sure if it would be my back or the Beetle’s brakes”

of me was scared – after all, we had 98 years on the clock between us. Plenty could go wrong and I wasn’t sure if it would be my back or the Beetle’s brakes... But another part of me was filled with the spirit of adventure. I had settled into a relatively steady freelance life as an editor but, when I was younger, I lived abroad and travelled a lot. I knew I was still hankering after that part of myself.

All roads lead to Romania

My partner couldn’t take the time off, but he helped me plan the route and the time it would take. The month before I left, I did everything I could to cover all possible disasters. I bought travel and breakdown insurance, a spare pair of glasses, and checked all the rules for driving in the countries I was going to visit. In case you are wondering, you need chocks to drive in Estonia, you have to get damaged bodywork certified when you enter Slovakia and it is illegal to drive a dirty car in Romania... I was driving to France first, followed by Luxembourg,



CLOCKWISE
FROM LEFT
Time and space
for mindful – and
careful – driving,
deep in the forests
of Poland; the
Dragon Bridge over

the Ljubljanica
River in Ljubljana,
the capital of
Slovenia; the
fearsome beast
that guards
the bridge into the
old city centre

“In case you’re wondering, you need chocks to drive in Estonia, you have to get damaged bodywork certified when you enter Slovakia and it’s illegal to drive a dirty car in Romania”

Finland and the Baltics. From there, I was heading south to Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Croatia, then on to Romania, Bulgaria and Greece before making my way home.

What I expected was to break down: the car was 46 and I was 52; the Beetle hadn’t driven more than 200 miles in a year for the 18 years I had owned it, and I hadn’t spent more than a few days alone, without my partner or friends, for years. What I got was something unexpected: a real sense of joy from travelling alone again, a clear head and a sense of both what was important and where to go next, plus a determination, of all things, to learn another language!

Let’s start with that joy. When I was younger, travelling alone felt adventurous but somewhat lonely. Nowadays, having time to myself is a luxury. Though I don’t have children, I have a partner, work commitments and friends, and loving them all doesn’t mean that I don’t also love spending time without them. But who doesn’t feel guilty about taking time for themselves, about saying ‘actually, I don’t want to see you right now’? Don’t we all feel guilty? And aren’t we often misunderstood? Asking to be alone does not mean I don’t like someone, or spending time

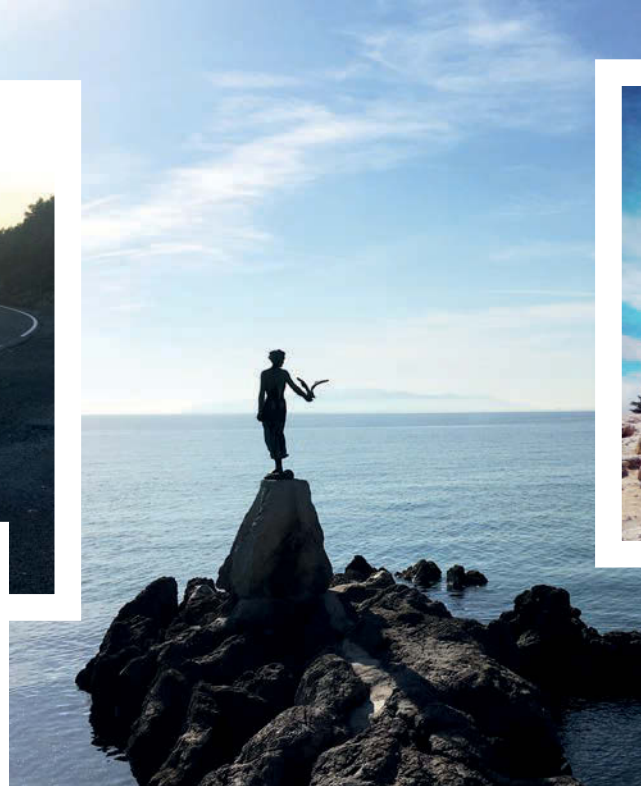
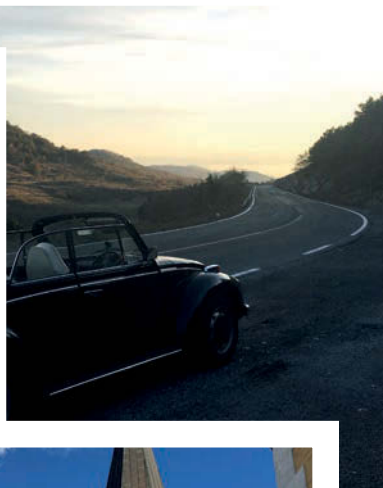
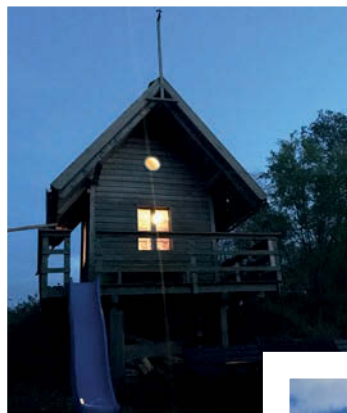
with others, it means that I also enjoy spending time with just me. As I get older, that has become something I like more and more. So whereas, at 26, the adventure of travel made up for being on my own, which was sometimes a bit dull, at 52, being on my own *was* the adventure. It was a thrill to drive where I wanted, walk where I wanted, eat and drink, or not, when I wanted. The places I went were wonderful and

miraculous; the places my thoughts went were even more interesting. I found enormous peace in the repetition of the same, simple things: driving, stopping for a coffee, sharing photos and stories with my partner and friends, drinking black tea when I arrived, visiting what I felt like visiting and not trying to see everything. I took 10 books; I only read one in seven weeks because I didn’t need to put anything into my head. I loved the space.

“Being on my own was the adventure... I found peace and loved the space”

The small picture emerges

It did wonders for my sense of relationships, as being alone often does. I sat back from my relationship with my partner, considered it from a distance, and realised that any issues that existed when I was at home were not insurmountable. >>>



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
A German B&B on stilts, plus slide – with Louise's room under the eaves; heading into the dawn; the famed Maiden with the Seagull statue in Opatija, Croatia; a brick clocktower in rural Denmark

"It is people who make the place what it is, conversation that makes travel an immersive experience, not just a slide show. And home is the same. What I longed for were those I loved, not where I lived"

Or even important. What mattered was our love and the pleasure of each other's company. It was as if the travel acted like a magnifying glass. I could see everything close up and most of the stuff I usually worried about wasn't even in the picture. I didn't need to focus or even see much, just the magnified parts.

In terms of work, I was at a crossroads when I left the UK. I had several professional things going on: a relatively new stationery business that wasn't flourishing; two part-time teaching contracts that I couldn't live on and some part-time editing work that also paid pennies. I'd been submitting my first attempt at a novel to prizes, and was getting somewhere but, having worked in publishing for years, I was definitely not under any illusion that it would pay the bills.

Then comes clarity

The trip was, in some ways, my last hurrah before, I realised, I was to settle into something a little steadier, a little better paid. I was borrowing to take my trip and I would need to pay

it back on my return. Seven weeks alone taught me that the most important thing in my panoply of skills; the thing I had always dreamed of, was writing a novel, and that I needed to prioritise two things: finding work that paid enough to leave me at least a day a week to write; and writing.

It was time to do the work that mattered to me most, while my dreams were still alive.

And, finally, travelling through 18 countries reminded me how much I love languages. And how much they transform your experience of another country. I speak fluent French and basic Spanish, but I was heading east and, from Denmark to Greece, I had to rely on English and scraps of O-level German. As someone who loves feeling at

home in a place, and being able to converse, I found this shameful, especially when everyone else could speak my language. I learned the basics for each country (hello, goodbye, please, thank you, yes, no) but, in truth, they allow politeness and courtesy, not communication. I not only missed that, I also realised that, without conversation, without the ability to talk to the people of a country, you cannot really find out much about it. You can see it, but you

"Being alone is a joy that we should all experience, if only to know ourselves"



LEFT One of the most significant structures in the world, the Acropolis in Athens

BELOW The fashionable Adriatic resort of Opatija, Croatia



cannot know the people who live in it. As soon as I reached France, where I am fluent in the language, the difference in my interactions, whether talking to someone serving me in a petrol station or a friend, was glaring. Here, I could engage and discover so much more than the things I could see or translate. Here, I could make connections.

Love, and a jumper, is all you need

It is people who make the place what it is, conversation that makes travel an immersive experience, not just a slide show. And home is the same. What I longed for were those I loved, not where I lived. I came back determined to relearn Spanish, and then German.

After seven weeks of travel, I come out with three clear gifts or lessons: that what makes a relationship is the love, nothing else; that being alone is a joy that we should all experience, if only to know ourselves and what we want better; that travel is as much about the people we meet and those we leave behind, as the places. Oh, and two other things: the confidence I gained from so much time with my ideas helped me secure a literary agent for my novel. And my partner was right about that jumper...

LOUISE'S ROAD TRIP SURVIVAL PLAN

'There is nothing to fear – really!'

1 Cover all the practicalities. Get breakdown, travel and health insurance... and make sure you have enough funds on your credit card for emergencies. Get a loved one to track you via your phone, then go and enjoy it. I didn't experience one moment of fear from people or being alone, only from those driving more dangerously than me.

2 Don't pack too much. Carry as little as possible, especially clothes. I was determined that if the car broke down, I could walk somewhere for help, *with my stuff*. Many B&Bs and Airbnbs have washing machines, so take the minimum, wash and reuse. I took walking shoes, sandals, a dress, jeans, walking trousers, shorts, five T-shirts, five pairs of socks, five pairs of knickers, two bras, a swimsuit and a waterproof coat. And that jumper! I didn't need 10 books, a FitBit, a bag of make-up or a hairdryer.

3 Get a phone with a data plan and learn how to use it. We gripe about over-reliance on phones but, on a road trip, a smartphone will save you space, time and energy. I think a phone (and a good

external battery) is the only essential, other than your vehicle and its keys, finance and your passport.

4 Make sure you can be found. Get someone you trust to track your journey and be aware of your location throughout. Every time I stopped, it was reassuring to receive a two-word text from my partner asking: 'All OK?'. If I had broken down, he would have been able to get assistance to me.

5 Don't be afraid to take some risks. Just after I started using Airbnb, I found the most extraordinary place to stay in Germany. It was a tiny house on stilts in a farmyard. There was no lock, the shared bathroom and kitchen were in the yard and there was no heating.

I was scared of sleeping alone in a wooden hut in the middle of nowhere with no lock. But I got into the comfortable bed, put my bag over the trapdoor and slept well. The sunrise woke me through the window, the shower was excellent and I was greeted by several hens as I packed the car. Fear could have made me leave; bravery meant I found one of my favourite spots.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Teacher Avani Gilbert; cycle to the beautiful beach at Puerto Viejo de Talamanca between lessons; Ali and her sister, Connie Roff, did their training together



"Having a month to take this journey felt so luxurious; there was no need to rush or push through to the aha moments – instead, they came to me"



'I learned that I was my own greatest teacher'

Ali Roff Farrar took a month off to join a yoga teacher training retreat in Costa Rica

THE FIRST TIME I TOOK A YOGA CLASS, I was that person I'm sure you'll relate to; arms shaking in downward dog, rushing through the five breaths for which I'd been told to hold the torturous pose, then collapsing to my knees and feeling cheated – yoga was meant to be relaxing! I remember clumsily copying the teacher, singing an awkward 'om' at the end of class. However, after a few weeks of perseverance, I found my body asking to be stretched and wrung out, craving that savasana bliss. Yoga became a place of solace for me – it never failed to bring me a sense of serenity and contentedness – no matter how much my arms shook in downward dog. And, over time, my arms quivered a little less, my body grew stronger and I was hooked.

Transformation comes slowly

I heard snippets of yogic philosophy and gobbled them up. As I moved into my 30s and craved a better understanding of myself – to get rid of beliefs that had been holding me back and start living, *really* living, without fear – I decided to take a sabbatical and drop myself completely into the yogic

"My soul was nurtured; I got to know myself deeply during the hours of silence"

lifestyle by signing up for an immersive yoga teacher training course in the Costa Rican jungle with Caribe Yoga Academy at Om Cashew Hill. The crashing of Caribbean waves was my lullaby and howler monkeys woke me at dawn for morning sadhana practice. I yearned to create a mental

and emotional shift in my life. On my first day, I was given a bag to carry my textbooks, which had the slogan 'Shift happens' – a sign!

We worked hard – morning yoga followed by lectures from 9.30am until 9.30pm on the history of yoga, philosophy and mythology, Sanskrit, anatomy, cueing and structuring a class and practical asana. Wonderful teachers wove spells through their teachings, bringing ancient yogic concepts to life, and showing us

daily, through their own lives, how to open ourselves, stop living small and embrace life fully, without attachment, fear or ego. I fell into bed every night exhausted, yet filled with ideas, realisations and excitement, as life and its meaning began to move into place.

Having a month for this journey felt luxurious; there was no need to rush or push through to aha moments – instead, they came to me. One huge realisation for me was that



CLOCKWISE FROM
LEFT The charming
fishing village of
Puerto Viejo
de Talamanca;
graduation day for

the students – and
writer Ali begins a
new phase in her life;
Avani Gilbert instructs
apprentice yogis
at the academy

unconditional love was the only real love. Conditional love in friendships or romantic relationships was not authentic love and, therefore, I could let go without pain or guilt; it was just a matter of what was true and what was false.

A spiritual sisterhood

Aside from the learning, my soul was nurtured and strengthened; I got to know myself deeply during the hours of silence over morning practice and breakfast each day. The food, all grown organically, fed my tired body, helped it grow stronger and provided comfort during the tougher moments.

The women on this journey with me were all there for their own reasons but we all sought the spiritual growth that exists outside of physical yoga poses. Not one of them acted like an Instagram yogi and their company was soul-affirming. Many of them reflected my own fears or irritations with life and, as we spent so much time together, at points I got impatient with them as you might a sibling. But even this was a gift: to deal with that emotion, I had to realise that, in my judgment of others, I was really only judging my own flaws.

My time in Costa Rica felt like slowly cracking into a box, breaking it open to see what tricks and treats lay inside. Not everything I found inside myself was glorious, and not every issue I have was able to be resolved during the retreat but, in

**“It felt like
slowly cracking
open a box to
see what tricks
and treats
lay inside”**

following and learning to guide others along a yogic path, I found the tools to help me grow long after I left that jungle.

On graduation day, as I stood waiting next to my new sisters – there was a sense that only we knew how that moment felt. Friends and family took their seats, music played, candles burned, birds sang and the sun shone through the jungle. I had a flashback to being in the car park of my secondary school before receiving my A-level results; all that work, the tree now finally bearing fruit and, with it, the anticipation of a new chapter of my life.

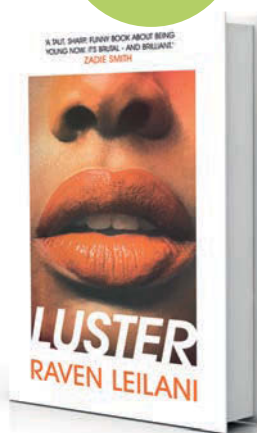
I realised that I hadn't felt that feeling since then – and I'd missed it. Pride, hard work, accomplishment – but it's more than that... It's transformation – the shedding of a chrysalis in order for a new era to take shape. I was about to graduate as a yoga teacher – but I didn't go there to learn to teach, I went for me.

Our head teacher, Avani Gilbert, one of the most incredible storytellers I've met, smiled a wide smile at me. She'd been in on the secret all along; sharing yoga with others, if we want to, is a bonus, but we learn how to guide others and teach yoga so that we can guide and teach ourselves. Shift happens, and the biggest shift I made is the realisation that I am my own greatest teacher.

• **The next Caribe Yoga Academy** 250-hour Yoga Alliance Teacher Training Immersion takes place from 1-26 July 2021. Prices start from £2,500 pp, all-inclusive; caribeyogaacademy.com

The Words

Ease your passage through the last dark months of winter with a meaningful read or three, and remember, the dawn cometh



LUSTER

By Raven Leilani
(Pan Macmillan, £14.99)

Mischievous, melancholy and with the kind of dark humour that shines a light on the uncomfortable truths about being a young black woman in this world, this debut deals with loneliness, the search for intimacy and the ever-shifting dynamics of sexual and racial politics.

Smart, self-sabotaging Edie is 23, directionless, in a dead-end job, and involved with 40-something Eric, who's in an open marriage with Rebecca. Edie lands in the middle of their mess, while dealing with her own losses and longings; a raw and awkward situation that Leilani describes in the most graceful, ravishing prose, as Edie attempts to navigate her path in life. A sharp yet tender read.

“Creation is everything you do. Make something”

NTOZAKE SHANGE



LOST IN TRANSLATION

Philotimo (n)

Language: Greek

A modern word attributed to those special people who are both hard-working and kind, yet have no expectation of reward for their help. It's more than altruism though – philotimo emphasises the diligent characteristic of these impressive and exceptional people.



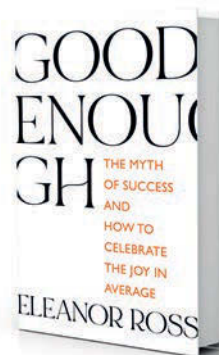
Discover...

THE JOYS OF THE ORDINARY JOE

For anyone feeling exhausted or struggling with goal setbacks, *Good Enough* is an antidote to the pressures of perfectionism.

From the bump on your head after hitting the glass ceiling too many times to those tired eyes from working late on your side hustle, more and more, success means being superhuman. This book asks us to embrace being average, with fascinating facts and Ross's own account of burnout.

• *'Good Enough: The Myth Of Success And How to Celebrate The Joy In Average'* by Eleanor Ross (Hodder & Stoughton, £9.99)





Paper therapy

A BEAUTIFUL SOUL

Do you trust that beauty resides inside and out? Explore your feelings on this subject in your journal by answering: What are your favourite parts of yourself, inside and out? How can you ensure that you enjoy and appreciate them more?



Planter bookends (plants not included), £15, redcandy.co.uk

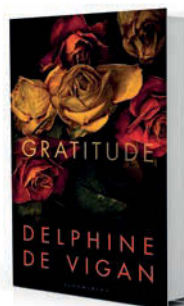
Jackee Holder is author of '49 Ways To Write Yourself Well' (Step Beach Press, £12.95); jackeeholder.com. Read Jackee's column on page 31

“The only place I went wrong, he writes, was expecting things to be perfect”

ANNE TYLER, *REDHEAD BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD*

THOUGHTFUL STORIES

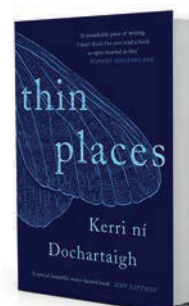
Unhappy motherhood, addiction and old age... Difficult subjects, skilfully handled



1 **Gratitude** By Delphine De Vigan (Bloomsbury, £14.99)

This slender volume packs an emotional punch. Eloquent Michka's age is catching up with her. A move to the retirement home is unsettling, reigniting memories of a long-standing debt she longs to repay. But, as her grasp of language slips away, Michka struggles to explain her wish.

With the help of neighbour Maria and Jerome, a speech therapist, Michka finally finds quietude in this novel that celebrates communication and connection.



2 **Thin Places** By Kerri ni Dochartaigh (Canongate, £14.99)

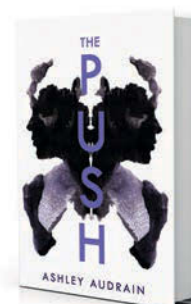
The author grew up in the divided city of Derry. Marked by trauma – a bomb was thrown into her bedroom, and haunted by her country's losses, she wanders 'rootless, lonely, and never quite knowing how to ask for help'.

But, alongside grief, there is grace in this vulnerable memoir as she finds solace in the beauty of nature, which offers hope of recovery from addiction.

3 **The Push** By Ashley Audrain (Penguin, £12.99)

With her traumatic past, Blythe never wanted to be a mother, convinced that the line between madness and motherhood is a thin one. But when she meets Fox Connor, he convinces her that her fears are unfounded.

When Violet arrives, Blythe struggles with her new role, worsened by her suspicions about her daughter, who seems to be turning from a troubled soul into someone more menacing. Taut and gripping, this is a provocative look at motherhood.



A taste of Persia

Bring the intoxicating spices of the Middle East into your home with easy, everyday dishes that are all flavour and no fuss

EDITED BY EMMA COXON PHOTOGRAPHS KRIS KIRKHAM

One of the world's great gastronomies, Persian cuisine is not just about food, it's at the heart of a rich and diverse culture. It showcases fragrant dishes filled with herbs, spices, fruits and nuts, including cumin, coriander, saffron, sumac, pomegranate and pistachio. Freshen up your repertoire with a culinary adventure into a land of heady aromas and tantalising flavours that will transport you to the souks of Tehran. In her book, *Simply* (Mitchell Beazley, £26), British-Iranian cook and author Sabrina Ghayour shares her secrets for authentic Middle Eastern cooking. Divided into sections including 'Effortless eating' and 'Traditions with a twist', you'll find authentic Persian recipes that are easy to recreate, alongside dishes with Western variations. From delicately spiced fish and hearty vegetarian stews to finger-licking street food, Persian cooking is exciting and enticing.

YOGHURT AND SPICE ROASTED SALMON

These oven-baked salmon bites are roasted quickly for slight charring on the outside and delicate flesh on the inside. Pop leftovers into your lunch box for the following day.

SERVES 4

- 500g skinless salmon fillet, cut into 4cm cubes

FOR THE MARINADE

- 4 tbsp Greek yoghurt
- 1 tbsp garlic granules
- 1 heaped tbsp rose harissa
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp paprika
- Grated zest of 1 lime and its juice
- 1 tsp olive oil
- Maldon sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

TO SERVE

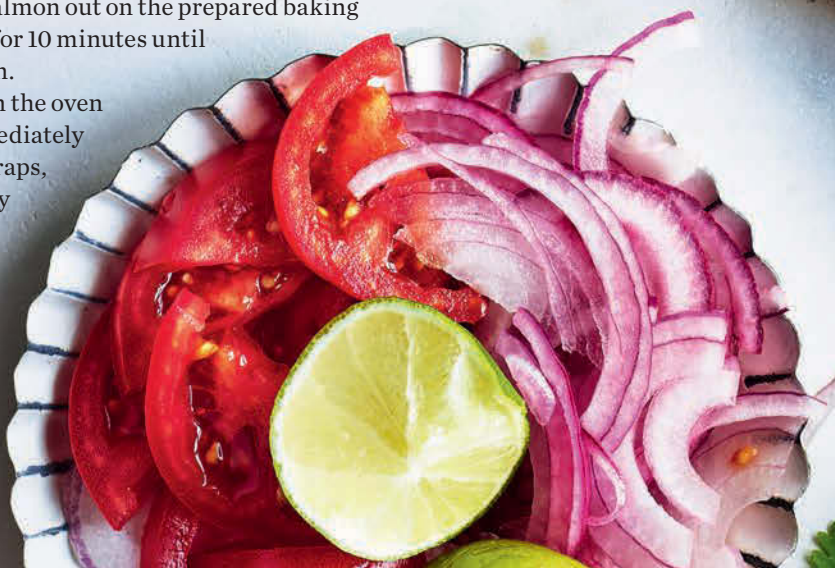
- Tortilla wraps
- Sliced tomatoes
- Finely sliced onion
- Coriander leaves
- Greek yoghurt

1 Preheat your oven to its highest setting (with fan if it has one). Line a baking tray with baking paper.

2 Mix all the marinade ingredients together in a bowl. Add the salmon and turn until well coated in the marinade.

3 Spread the salmon out on the prepared baking tray and roast for 10 minutes until cooked through.

4 Remove from the oven and serve immediately with tortilla wraps, tomatoes, finely sliced onion, coriander leaves and Greek yoghurt.







KIDNEY BEAN AND SWEET POTATO STEW

The yoghurt in this veggie stew cools the heat of the mint oil, a traditional addition called nana daagh. Serve with rice or bread.

SERVES 4-6

- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 fat garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp chilli flakes
- 690g (1 large jar) passata
- 500g sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1cm chunks
- 400g can kidney beans, drained
- 1 small packet (about 30g) flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp dried mint
- 150g Greek yoghurt
- Maldon sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

1 Place a large saucepan over a medium heat and pour in enough oil to coat the base of the pan. Add the onion and cook for a few minutes until the onion is translucent, then add the garlic, stirring to ensure it doesn't burn. Continue cooking until both have softened without browning.

2 Add the spices to coat the onion and cook, stirring, for a minute. Season with salt and pepper, then stir in the passata. Reduce the heat and simmer gently, uncovered, for 25 minutes.

3 Stir in the sweet potato and cook for a further 20 minutes or until the potato is tender. Add the beans and most of the parsley to heat through.

4 Place a separate pan over a medium heat, add the dried mint and 1 tablespoon of oil. Heat the mint for a few minutes, without letting it burn.

5 Transfer the stew to bowls, add dollops of yoghurt and scatter over the remaining parsley, then pour over the hot mint oil and serve at once.

KABAB KOOBIDEH

A signature Persian dish, the word kebab – or kabab, as the Persians call it – means 'to grill', usually over fire. Serve street food-style with flatbreads or as a satisfying dinner accompanied by grilled vegetables and flavourful saffron rice.

MAKES 5-6 LARGE KEBABS OR 10-12 SMALL PATTIES

- 1kg minced lamb (30 per cent fat is essential)
- 2 large onions, minced in a food processor and drained of any liquid, or very

finely chopped

- 2 level tbsp ground turmeric
- 2 level tsp bicarbonate of soda
- Maldon sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 tomatoes
- Flatbreads, to serve

1 Put all the main ingredients into a large mixing bowl and, using your hands, work them together well, pummeling the meat mixture for several minutes into a smooth paste.

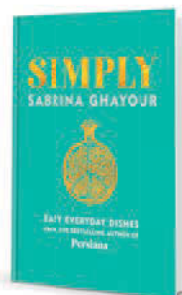
2 To make large kebabs, divide the mixture into 5-6 portions and form each portion around a flat sword skewer about 25cm long. Using your thumb and forefinger, pinch the meat widthways from one end of the kebab to the other to create the classic ridges.

3 Cook the kebabs over a charcoal barbecue that has been burning for about 30 minutes, alongside the whole tomatoes. The trick is to cook

them for about 10-15 minutes in total, until the meat is browned and cooked through, while turning them every 2 minutes to help the fat render and prevent the kebabs from burning.

4 To make small kebabs, preheat your oven to its highest setting (with fan if it has one). Line a large baking tray with baking paper. Divide the mixture into 10-12 portions, form into sausages, then flatten and pinch to create ridges. Place on the baking tray with the tomatoes and bake for 10-12 minutes.

5 Serve the kebabs and tomatoes immediately on the flatbreads so the bread absorbs the juices.



Reader offer

'Psychologies' readers can buy a copy of *Simply: Easy Everyday Dishes* by Sabrina Ghayour for the special price of £17 (RRP £26) including free UK P&P. To order, call 01235 759 555 and quote code '9952100047'. Offer valid until 31 March 2021.

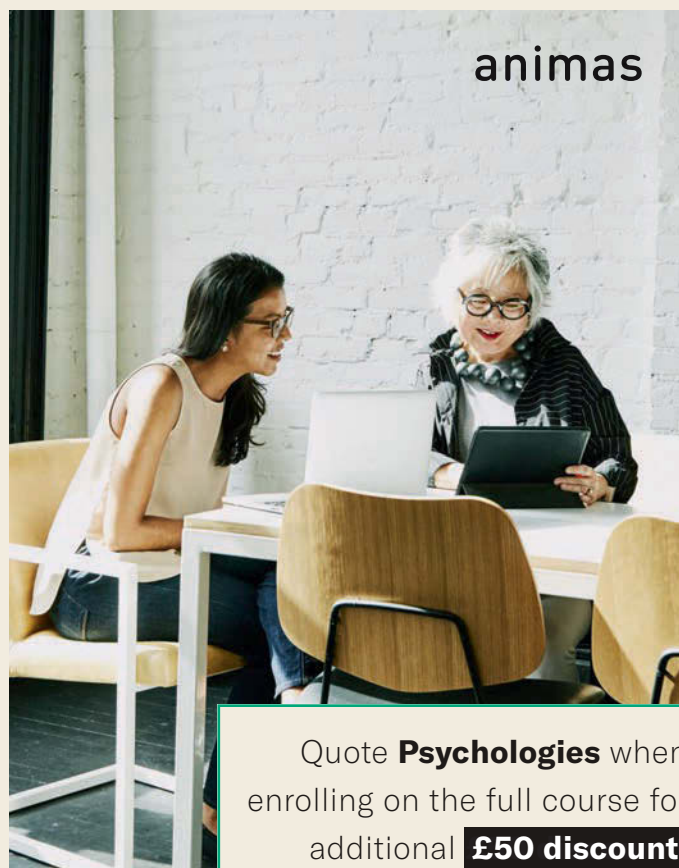


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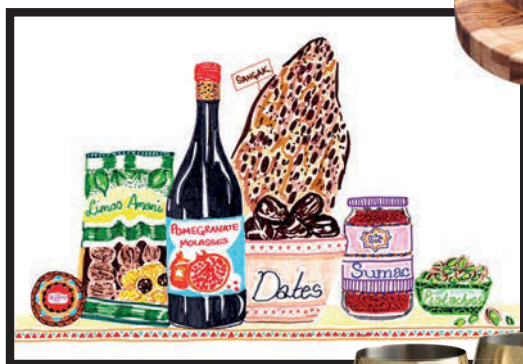
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com/uk/shop/ReenaMakwana



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heavenlyhomesand
gardens.co.uk; carafe,
£32, abodeliving.co.uk



Eastern promise

Taste Persia. Chocolate, £1.79, consciouschocolate.com; tumeric and paprika cricket flour crackers £14.99 (eight packs), eatsmallgiants.com; Zaytoun za'atar, £3.75, medjoul dates, £4.95, and freekeh, £4.50, all traidecraftshop.co.uk; Tanya's JustReal mint sauce, £3, waitrose.com; Everleaf Forest non-alcoholic spirit, £18, marksandspencer.com; sumac, £3.80, ottolenghi.co.uk

Iranian nights

IT'S ONE OF LIFE'S pleasures to gather around a heaving table for a convivial feast. In Iran, loved ones come together for a 'mehmoon', or party, to eat, laugh and enjoy life.

Create a selection of Middle Eastern meze with small plates, dips and salads: Bowls of hummus and baba ganoush, platters of meats and veggies and homemade pitta, grilled with za'atar, a spice blend of wild thyme, tangy sumac and sesame seeds. Nooshe jan! (Bon appétit!)

Blogger spotlight



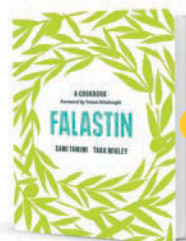
Rebekah Jones is a cook and Persian food enthusiast. Born to a Persian father and an English mother in Coventry, she loves to share her knowledge of Middle Eastern food.

You'll find easy and fragrant dishes at mylittlepersiankitchen.com, influenced by her love of Eastern flavour and spice. Her cookbook 'My Little Persian Kitchen' (left) is filled with recipes, anecdotes and tips, plus a little about the history of the spices used in the book.

SUGAR & SPICE Prepare a feast for the senses with these cookbooks



1



2



3



4

1 *New Feast: Modern Middle Eastern Vegetarian* by Greg and Lucy Malouf (Hardie Grant, £20) **2** *Falastin: A Cookbook* by Sami Tamimi and Tara Wigley (Ebury, £28) **3** *The Essential Middle Eastern Cookbook* by Michelle Anderson (Rockridge Press, £12.78) **4** *My Little Persian Kitchen* by Rebekah Jones (Vanguard Press, £19.99)

Nurture love

Relationships and gardening have more in common than you might think – they both start from a seed, says Dav Piper



TRY A LITTLE TENDERNESS

'THERE'S something growing in your compost heap?' I questioned. His eyes lit up, like a child who'd just found a shiny penny. 'Yes, it's an avocado, I want you to have it.' He was beaming, but then looked bashful. 'But only if you want it.'

And so I did, lovingly transported home in a doggy poo bag, then potted up and watered. Essentially, a gift of trash but, in my view, the gift of a small miracle. We haven't always seen eye to eye, me and Mr M, but gardening has made me a worthier person. I'm more open and connected. In my previous life, I may have missed these small acts of kindness. These are the foundations on which relationships are built.

Working in the city made me hardened. Bitter. Fighting for a seat on the train or pushing to get to the front of a queue; dealing with the career ladder climbers and swerving the office gossips. Head down and don't make eye contact. It felt cold and aggressive.

Gardening is a job that is as much about the people as the plants. I am allowed into people's homes, their most private spaces. They trust me to

do the correct things. I am privy to the story of their lives unfolding. Oftentimes, they confide in me as if I were an old friend. I worry about the elderly slipping on leaf-covered paths or feeling isolated. I listen to the soap operas of their lives. I accept the kindness of a hot drink on a freezing day. I share in their delights, and, at other times, I make planters for the graves of their loved ones.

I have to earn a living, yet giving people the gift of a beautiful garden is the true reward. So, if you want to start having better relationships, start by nurturing something. A houseplant or an avocado pip, it doesn't matter. Once you have tapped into that feeling of giving your time and love, you can find it more and more. Love doesn't have to be about romance. It can be as simple as offering to help someone. Nurture your relationships as if they were a tiny seed and watch them grow into something splendid.

Dav

Psychologies ambassador
and gardening columnist

Our conscious gardening writer, Dav Piper, is the founder of Piper Gardens. Find out more at pipergardens.co.uk



• **Bamboo pots**, £7.69 for five; **saucers**, £5.49 for five, haxnicks.co.uk

Plastic-free potting

If you don't have pots around that you can reuse, opting for terracotta or bamboo over plastic ones are more sustainable options. They are also prettier and blend in with nature.

28%

*A survey found that just over a quarter of adults in the UK were eating the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. This year, why not work to change that by growing more of your own healthy produce, including herbs? Start planning now, it's the perfect time**

EDITED BY ELLEN TOUT. PHOTOGRAPHS: LAURA RICHARDSON; GETTY IMAGES. *HEALTH SURVEY, NHS, 2018



PARSLEY, SAGE, ROSEMARY & THYME

Dav celebrates versatile herbs, and urges us to get growing



MY KITCHEN WINDOWSILL usually boasts an array of herbs. Sweet basil for Italian dishes, chives for new potatoes, maybe some coriander for when the mood strikes! Outside, you'll find rosemary for Sunday roasts and mint for mojitos or tea.

Herbs are a wonderful addition to any garden. Recent years have seen a surge in popularity of planting schemes of purple sage and lively oregano with its striking flowers. Others, such as rosemary, have a sumptuous scent to enliven your senses. The good news is that herbs are relatively easy to grow – requiring, for the most part, only a good sunny spot in the garden or warm window ledge.

Aside from my new hanging herb pots in the kitchen, this year I've decided to grow some herbs from seed in small, individual terracotta pots. I will use these as gifts throughout the year to take to dinner parties. How much better to give something that you nurtured with love?

Basil, chives and parsley are a good place to start for beginners. Fill your pots with peat-free compost, sprinkle some seeds on top and cover with compost. Keep on a warm windowsill, water regularly and you should see some action within a week or two! Harvest them gently, a little at a time, and you'll have extra flavour all year long.



PSYCHOLOGIES TV

Get your hands dirty and cleanse your spirit... Watch Dav Piper's step-by-step gardening videos and find green-fingered inspiration at tinyurl.com/psygarden



• *'A Nature Poem For Every Night Of The Year'*
edited by Jane McMoreland Hunter
(Batsford, £20)



If nature could speak

Whether sitting in front of a fire, in your garden or gazing out of the window on a frosty winter's evening, enjoy this calming collection of nature poems for relaxing and unwinding at the end of the day. It's bound to make you appreciate the abundance and joy of the natural world.

QUOTES TO LIVE BY

“Let us be grateful to those who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls bloom”

MARCEL PROUST

“WHAT IS PLANTED
IN EACH PERSON'S
SOUL WILL SPROUT”

RUMI



NEW! from PSYCHOLOGIES

MAGAZINE

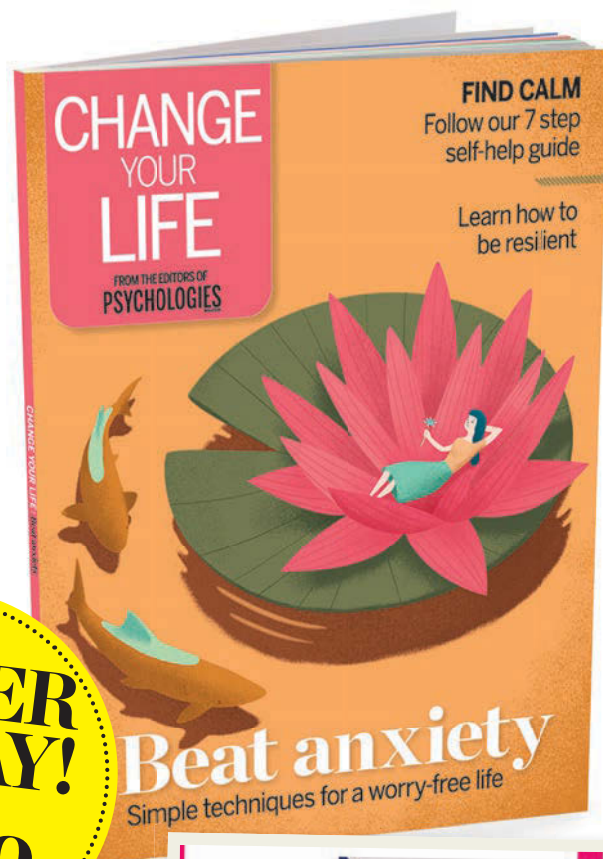
CHANGE YOUR LIFE BEAT ANXIETY

IT'S NATURAL to worry in unsettled times, but what if worry starts to dominate your life? This bookazine will give you great strategies to help you tackle anxiety. We've asked top writers and brilliant experts to offer their best advice, so you can create a self-help plan to manage the way you feel on a daily basis.

DISCOVER HOW TO:

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- Focus on what you can control
- Feel calm

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Lorraine Kelly

On flourishing, kindness and swearing a lot...

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Let's dance

The spoken word can make us laugh, cry, wonder – and dance, when it's the right tempo, says Rachel Dobson. And, let's face it, we could all do with a boogie round about now



THE SOUND OF MUSIC

THANKS TO the staggered start to the school day, I have a mini dance-off with my nine-year-old daughter every morning after her older brother has left the house. Martha makes me switch over from the endless news on BBC 4 and 5, and tune into the brilliant broadcaster Greg James on Radio 1. We have a wiggle and a laugh, Martha and I, sadly not Greg, although he's welcome to join us any time, then a quick shower as we rush to get out the door.

I sometimes find music irritating, but this blast of tunes has reminded me how music can change my mood for the better.

It's led me to explore the podcast 'The Open Ears Project', in which everyone from

celebrities to teachers and firefighters talk to Clemency Burton-Hill about a classical track that has created a musical memory in their life. As Clemency says, extraordinary things can happen when we simply stop and listen.

At the other end of the dial is the Radio 5-produced 'Ecstasy: The Battle Of The Rave'.

Typically, I was slightly off the right time, right place – I grew up in the 1980s, and the wrong side of the Pennines for weekly trips to Manchester's Hacienda. Rave music, but not the drugs brilliantly described in this drama documentary, did reach suburban North Leeds, as did the dance moves. Luckily for Martha, she's now learning how to wave her hands in the air and throw some shapes.

Email Podcast Editor Rachel Dobson at rachel@racheldobson.co.uk



“I want feeding your creativity to be as routine as brushing your teeth”

SUZY BASHFORD
ON BIG JUICY CREATIVE

DON'T MISS!

Balance the power in your romantic relationship

UKCP talking therapies podcast

Power can have a big role in couple dynamics. Sarah Niblock, CEO of the UK Council for Psychotherapy, chats to therapist Nicholas Rose about how to recognise when power dynamics are unhealthy, and how therapy can redress the balance. Listen at psychologies.co.uk/your-relationship-balance-podcast-ukcp

PSYCHOLOGIES
Podcast Channel

PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

Listen to the Psychologies podcast channel on iTunes, TuneIn and AudioBoom or at



SPINNING PLATES

With Sophie Ellis-Bextor

The legend that is Sophie Ellis-Bextor, whose Insta Kitchen Discos were the only reason I knew it was Friday night during lockdown, interviews other working mums. She's a mother of five boys, massively successful and finding out that we all break plates.

I love hearing her talking honestly about sleepless nights and shoeorning work into family life. Listen out for a revealing chat with her mum, Janet, and the heartbreaking addition at the end.



Audible podcast of the month

French & Saunders: Titting About

What's not to like about listening to mates Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders being funny. The comedy duo bring us themed episodes – 'Passions and hobbies'; 'Holidays'; 'School'; 'The seven deadly sins'; 'Food' and a final episode, 'If we were alive now', in which they look back at their careers.

But, really, it's like overhearing a couple of old friends (they've been working together for more than 30 years) having a chat and a laugh.

Silly, irreverent and just what we need at this time of year.

'French & Saunders: Titting About', £12.99, or free with a 30-day Audible trial; audible.co.uk



READER PODCAST

BIG JUICY CREATIVE

with 'Psychologies' writer and reader Suzy Bashford

Suzy Bashford, a journalist and now podcaster, has written about her move to Scotland, and is truly interested in the who, what, where and why of creativity. Her journalism background and ability to listen makes her interviews with everyday creatives a joy to hear. Plus, her enthusiasm gives you permission to just have a go at something new, make a call, start a project and simply *do* something. Inspiring!

MAKING WORK WORK FOR YOU

Rachel's top three podcasts on having a fulfilling career



1 Ctrl Alt Delete With Emma Gannon

Writer and speaker Emma Gannon's been

podcasting for yonks and she's so cool! This is kind of a careers podcast, but it's also about wellbeing and creativity. Walking her talk, Emma's books include *The Multi-Hyphen Method* (Hodder & Stoughton, £9.99) and her first fiction, *Olive* (HarperCollins, £12.99). She even set up a virtual book club during lockdown. It's a cracker!

2 Squiggly Careers



Apparently the UK's No 1 careers podcast, this show is so practical and understated, it's the place to go for real, straight professional advice. Career development experts Helen Tupper and Sarah Ellis never let a podcast go by without a gem of a practical tip, which will stay in your brain and give you the option of putting change into action.



3 The Slick Pivot Sessions

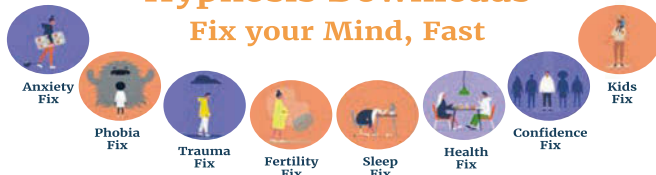
Coach Liz Ward's *Slick Pivot* is about getting

entrepreneurs to become good at change. She interviews guests who've managed to transform their business or career to suit the lifestyle they want. She has practical advice and real stories around career change, running a business and varying successful lifestyles. I like how she pins down her guests about the specifics of their processes to make things work.

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