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Velcome...

'Are we nearly there yet?' It's a refrain we've all heard once

too many times, and perhaps said once or twice too. But this year it takes on an added meaning, not just grumpy kids being bored in the back of cars on a long journey, but all of us asking: maybe, just maybe, is the end in sight to the madness of the past few years? Certainly, life is happily now looking and feeling much more back to normal for most of us. Of course, if you're struggling with long Covid, or still feel the need to guard yourself because of other vulnerabilities, you will disagree with me – and I have every sympathy for you. But, for most of us, the wheel seems to have turned. However, I think the real proof of the pudding is coming up in the next few weeks: holiday season. Speaking from my own experience, last year we had two out of three holidays postponed because of one or other of us coming down with Covid. I know it was pretty much inevitable we'd get it at some stage with two kids in school, but we really timed it badly! This year, like so many people, we are daring to dream that we might finally have turned that corner, and holidays might really, properly, be back on the menu. So, in our dossier this month, we're looking at how to really get the most out of this special time. Because if you've missed out for the past few years, or played it super safe, and are now looking to rediscover a taste for adventure, the chance to get your suitcase out and dust off your passport seems like quite a big deal, and might be accompanied by a few more worries than usual. So we've packed our dossier full to the brim with everything you need to tackle your anxieties, really get in the holiday spirit, be mindful when you're away, and even keep the holiday feeling going once you return, starting on page 43. Bon voyage!

This month, we're also talking to the inspiring Katie Piper, who shares how she has had her eyes opened to a whole new world by visiting mothers in prison in America – and how it has made her want to be more present with her own children (page 14). Plus, we explore whether it's time for us all to stop keeping things 'for best' and start enjoying life's little luxuries now (page 24); learn how to begin our day with a more positive inner script (page 32); examine the power of letting things go and embracing forgiveness (page 64), and discover how our character is written in our hands (mine was eerily accurate!) on page 88. Finally, find out how I'm getting on on my journey to becoming a qualified coach (page 92) – and

thanks for all your kind words of support; I hope it helps you find the confidence to start something that challenges and inspires

you, too. As ever, it's another packed issue – enjoy!

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Sally Saunders.

Editor-in-Chief

AUGUST

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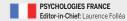
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The advice starts **RIGHT HERE!**



DR ALISON MCCLYMONT

'Our time on earth is finite, so denying ourselves pleasure and life's little luxuries, or saving them for the future, can feel wasteful,' says psychologist Dr Alison McClymont. Turn to page 24 to discover why it's vital for us to renew our worth and deservedness with small acts that promote joy or self-care.

SUZY READING

Forget the destination – there's solid science behind why we experience a shift in mindset from the journey itself, says psychologist Suzy Reading. 'Set the intention to see with fresh eyes,' she adds, 'this will help open you up to new sensory experiences and insights, even in familiar places.' Learn more on page 38.





ALICE BROOKS

'Without forgiveness, the negative emotions you hold towards a person who has harmed you can stay with you, festering away,' says psychotherapeutic counsellor Alice Brooks. Find out how to replace negativity with empathy and understanding, while still holding them accountable, on page 64.

Our mission

Psychologies' mission is to provide you with inspiration and advice to We do this by providing simple, achievable steps to make small changes

world within to help you discover inspiring ways to make every day better

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In the mood

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

COMPILED BY ALEX LLOYD

Back with a splash!

Nearly a century after they first brought the pleasures of swimming to workingclass communities, some community lidos are coming back to life for summer.

Cleveland Pools in Bath, and Albert Avenue in Hull, will be operating for the first time in decades, while the newly built Sea Lanes in Brighton is the UK's first open-water swimming centre of excellence.

Outdoor pools fell out of favour in the 1960s as holidays abroad became affordable for the masses, but their modern comeback has been fuelled by people power and the popularity of cold-water swimming.

There are now more than 100 around the country, with more reopenings and new facilities in the pipeline for 2024 and beyond.







Save your skin!

We've all been enjoying the long, warmer days after the cool spring, but dermatologists are calling for us all to remember to look after our skin in the sun.

Forty per cent of us admitted to at least one case of sunburn last year, say the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD), with a third of people sunbathing with the intention of getting a tan.

And nearly six in ten of us rarely look at the UV Index.

'A mentality shift amongst the British public in terms of our behaviour in the sun is sorely needed,' says Professor Mabs Chowdhury, president of BAD.

He advises checking UV levels daily, particularly between April and September, and taking precautions if it is three or higher.

'That means making use of shade, wearing clothing that will protect your skin, and using a sunscreen that is at least SPF 30.'

of adults admit to being procrastinators, with making a cup of tea the top distraction tactic, according to a poll by Extra chewing gum.

WATCH, LOOK, LISTEN



WATCH Barbie gets a 21st-century makeover thanks to cult director Greta

Gerwig and an all-star cast, led by Margot Robbie and Ryan Gosling. *Barbie* is out 21 July.



LOOK Afra Eisma: Splashdown Tender sees the Dutch artist transform The Tetley

in Leeds with her interactive textile works and soft sculptures. Until 22 Oct.



LISTEN In The Great Indoors podcast, design experts Sophie Robinson

and Kate Watson-Smyth discuss interiors topics, answer listeners' questions, and debate new trends.



Shaping your thoughts

The shape of your brain influences how we think, feel and behave, it has been discovered.

Experts examined more than 10,000 different maps of human brain activity, and found that the overall shape exerts a far greater influence than its intricate nerve connections.

Monash University's Turner Institute for Brain and Mental Health say the findings could help to better understand the effects of dementia and stroke.



The Honeymoon by Kate Gray (Welbeck, £12.99). Two newlywed

couples discover a body rather than paradise when they head to Bali, in this page-turning whodunnit.





16%

of us have made an online purchase while drunk that we would not have made sober, a YouGov survey has found.



Letting your child get dirty is good for their gut, with those allowed to play outdoors in the muck less likely to suffer bowel problems in later life.

Analysis of 36 studies covering 6.4 million kids found that those exposed to antibiotics before the age of five, and those with more than one household toilet, were more prone to inflammatory bowel diseases.

But having pets and siblings reduced the risk, discovered researchers from The University of Newcastle in Australia.

"I am, and will always be, very proud not to be a skinny Minnie. It's just not how I'm built. And I'm a mother, so I'm not a big gym bunny. Women need to celebrate women as much as possible, which is why I always say, yep, I'm more than happy to say I wear Spanx on a red carpet"

Ted Lasso actress Hannah Waddingham



advertising of

unhealthy food to

kids on TV and

online, says the

Obesity Health

Alliance.

The fairer sex?

Sexual double standards between the genders are a perception not a reality, psychologists say.

A survey of 900 heterosexual people found it was a myth that males with numerous sexual partners are admired while their female counterparts are condemned. And blokes were actually judged more strictly when it came to short-term encounters.

'People are far more liberal themselves than they assume society is,' says Professor Mons Bendixen of Norwegian University of Science and Technology's department of psychology.



The buzz about soap

Using soap to stay squeaky clean in summer could be making you a mosquito magnet.

Scientists used fabric samples from volunteers who had washed in one of four soaps, and discovered in most cases the insects were attracted to three of them. The brand they avoided was scented with coconut oil.

Experts from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University think the combination of certain body scents and floral fragrances proves doubly irresistible for the blood-sucking bugs.

Viewpoint

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



A plea for help

A wonderful friend bought a subscription to *Psychologies* for me for Christmas, after sharing articles from her copies for years. Reading the magazine more regularly has helped me in so many ways. Now, as a single mum struggling with an out-of-nowhere anxious teen, I wish to share a universal plea, and of course invite comment...

I fear we are in the midst of a new epidemic – the aftermath of locking down a nation – in which the next generation has been changed. We are all aware, whether we choose to see it and accept it or not, of the tidal wave of mental health problems in the young in Britain today. We are also aware that there are not enough resources, and that the resources we do have are stretched too far to be effective.

When the pandemic hit our shores, the threat to human life and physical

suffering saw immediate and drastic action. Why, then, is the same level of protection not being applied now? Is it because the threat now is unseen and misunderstood? Is it because we are British, with our stiff upper lips, taking what is thrown at us in our stride – or are we just being left to suffer in silence?

As adults during the pandemic, we felt a continual fear – at times terror – and an encompassing grief and sadness. At the same time, we tried to shield our children – but the air was solemn, the world scared.

Child and teenage anxiety and depression and, worst of all suicide rates, are continually reported as increasing. Teachers and school support staff are ill-equipped for the levels and behaviours of children in schools, the effects of mental illness scarring not just those suffering, but parents, family and friends, teachers, and mental health workers.

A generation has been stripped of the basics of joy, of healthy relationships, of curiosity and of learning, of the desire to experience all that is new, replaced with a fear that leaves little choice but to hide away, left exhausted by the contents of their own minds. The words of parents are not enough to reassure.

How long must they and we in turn suffer before action is taken? Change is needed and needed now to combat this epidemic, this real threat to human life. Daily, we give our attentions to the survival of the planet, which of course is crucial to existence – but who will achieve long-term change? It is the next generation. With the capabilities and timelines to make significant impact in saving the world, let us first support them. They are in silent crisis.

Also, much praise to David Stead's poem 'I fell down the stairs' (July). Briony Davies I wanted to share this little poem with your readers, about the simple pleasures of childhood...

Picnic

A sunny day in summer, simple days of beautiful weather, we couldn't afford big days out, in crowded centres of supposed leisure.

We climbed the garden steps with tartan blanket spread wide, and ate our picnic tea in our own place outside.

The grass was long and tickled our toes, the fragrant roses tickled our nose. the daisies and dandelions amongst the green, were right there, the most beautiful I'd seen.

The sandwiches Mum had made, jam and silver foiled triangles, the birds chirped around us like a chorus of sweet singing angels.

The sun warm on my back and breeze lifting my hair, and I felt happy and content just being right there.

We didn't need expensive outings to centres of leisure, all we needed was our garden and our perfect picnic pleasure.

April Austen
@moonstonebrightpoetry

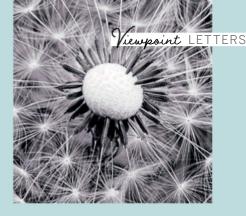
PHOTO FAVOURITES

Picture perfect

I recently attended the webinar you had organised, 'Mindfulness and photography'. Although it was meant to be three speakers, unfortunately only one speaker, Paul Sanders, was available to make it on the day. But what a joy it was for him to humbly share his own vast knowledge, experience, and time with us all.

Paul explained how mindfulness and photography are closely linked, and the benefits of photography as a form of meditation. It was so useful to hear his various tips and tricks to help get more out of photography.

Paul's preference is to photograph in black and white. Inspired by his tips on this, I took the above photo on a mindful walk in some farm fields. The macro details of the inner parts of a



dandelion seem to be enhanced by looking at it in such a mindful way.

Another tip provided by Paul was to choose a colour and then look around you and spot as many things as you can in that shade. I mentioned this to my partner in a cafe and we chose the colour green. We were surprised at how many green things we saw, and that we noticed things we would otherwise have missed. Most importantly, it made us smile and have fun!

Thank you to Paul for his willingness to share, and to the *Psychologies* team for organising the free webinar.

Delfina Dos Santos



Curtain call

I would like to share this photo with you. We were in Greenock watching my niece's dance recital, and we came out to the most beautiful sunset. I stood in awe for a while and, luckily, was able to capture a picture that did it justice. Georgina McGhie

Shipshape

Here's a photo of me on a cruise with my favourite magazine – what a fabulous combination! Denise Davey



We'd love to know what you think

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that rings true? Have something
on your mind or a poem or a
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Story story of survival and sisterhood

Spending time in a female prison has helped presenter and activist Katie Piper put aside her preconceptions, and acknowledge the trauma that leads women to commit crime

WORDS: SALLY SAUNDERS

atie Piper is counting her lucky stars today, and when someone who has suffered as she has tells you they're feeling fortunate, you can't help but listen. The TV presenter, writer, activist and model has spent the past few months jetting back and forth to America, spending weeks at a time in female prisons, to explore how women parent behind bars.

And it is an experience that has made her very grateful for her own upbringing. 'We weren't wealthy – we didn't have a lot of money – but we had our parents' time, and we had consistency and stability. I now realise we were really privileged. It was a really rich childhood,' she says.

It's the polar opposite of what she has been witnessing, meeting women incarcerated in the US who are desperately trying to raise their children within a prison environment.

But it wasn't an experience she had planned. 'It isn't necessarily a place I would have naturally been drawn to; it wasn't something I put myself up for. But I was contacted by a group at a women's prison in the UK. They were looking at women

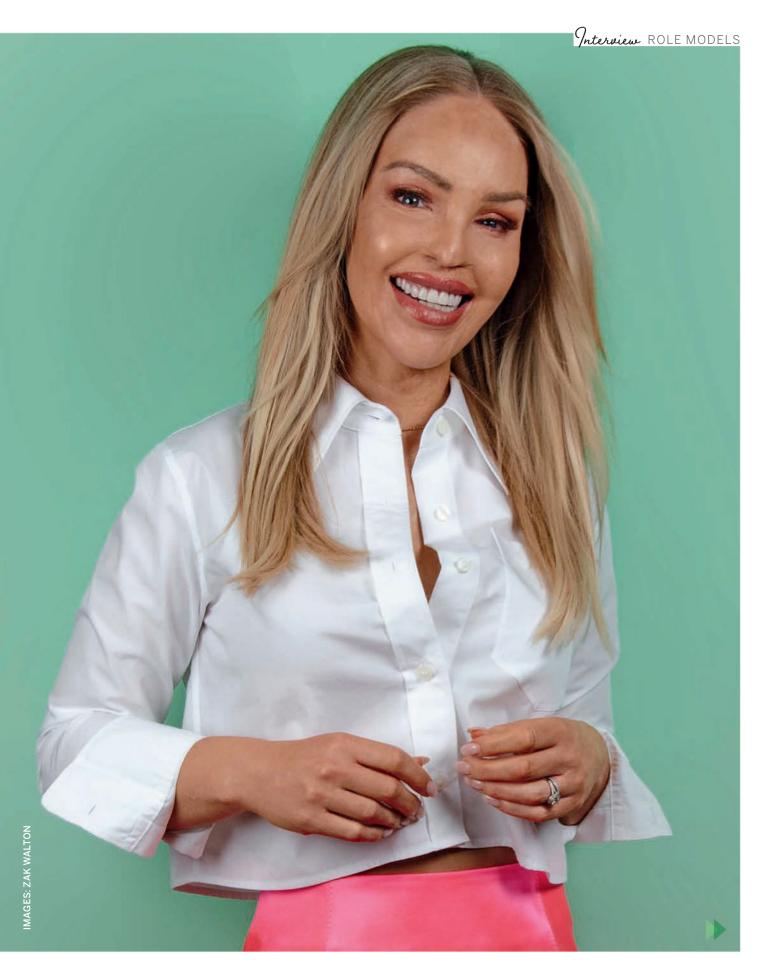
who had inspired them, and they'd done this project on me. They'd even named part of the prison after me!

'They asked if I would come in and meet the women, and I felt like I couldn't really say no, they'd put so much time in. It wasn't something that I would have volunteered myself for without prompting, but I hold my hands up now and say that my prejudgment was completely wrong: it wasn't as black and white as I thought.'

Piper says that working with the women, both in the UK and later in America, 'opened her eyes' to the realities they have faced in their lives.

'Over 80 per cent of the population are locked up for drug-related crimes. And most drug-related crimes are either because men have used them as mules, or because the women themselves were addicts. And, frequently, that addiction was brought about by childhood trauma, or trauma in their adult years.

'Some people will say, "Those women made a choice, why are you giving them airtime?" But you have to remember, male and female crime is very different. A very small percentage of the female





"Life has been difficult, life has been unfair, and as a result, they have unravelled"

prison population are locked up for violent crimes. You're not going to go into jail and meet multiple Rose Wests and Myra Hindleys; the reason those women became so prolific is precisely because it's so rare in a female prisoner.

'Some of the women I met were serving life sentences because they had murdered people – but frequently the people they had murdered had been abusing them for 20 or 30 years, and they had snapped and acted in self defence.

'For a lot of these women, life has been difficult, life has been unfair, and as a result, they have unravelled, and their mental health has suffered. That's something I've experienced too, that



unravelling, but the difference is that I've been really lucky to have the support of friends and family – these women haven't had that.

'For me, it was a harsh reminder that anyone can end up in prison – and that goes for you and I.'

Piper's own 'unravelling' came as a result of her well-documented attack in 2008, when an ex-boyfriend and his accomplice targeted her with acid, causing damage to her face and blindness in one eye, the consequences of which she is still suffering from, 15 years on.

'It's hard to get eyedrops into prison – it's contraband – so that was another hurdle,' she laughs.

'But the production company and the TV channel I worked with were really supportive about my treatment. Years ago, my needs might have meant that I would lose my job, or not get picked for a job in the first place. So it's great that employers are now starting to accommodate and understand these needs. As a society, we've become much better with checking in with people and recognising more invisible scars and mental health.

'But for anyone with a visible difference of disability and chronic pain, who's on lifelong medication, it's hard – you have to adapt. For burns survivors, it's not a case that you get burnt, you get fixed, and it's all over. It's a never-ending injury. That's why my charity exists: for the rehabilitation of survivors, because it's costly. It's difficult to maintain a job when you have to have so much treatment all the time. If anything positive has come out of what I had to go through, it's been bringing awareness to the fact that charities are very much needed to support survivors in the acute stages, but also for the rest of their lives.'

The lifelong impact of Piper's own attack, and recognising that many of the women she met in prison were themselves victims of terrible violence and abuse, gave her huge empathy for them.

'They would tell me that they didn't know how to do their hair or make-up, they didn't know how to dress, and they didn't understand femininity. They had never experienced just being a young teenager, or they were sexually abused by their mother's drug dealer from the age of three, and became a woman then.

'Many of the women I met had never had that carefree, frivolous time. They had never dated, or had healthy relationships. They had pimps that were their boyfriends. And, then, they became



pregnant by 14. They had skipped a whole section of life. Being a teenager is tough but, usually, it's a time that's also full of fun. It's where we find out who we really are, and when we build our characteristics. But there's just this big, black hole for a lot of people that are incarcerated, where they just didn't get to enjoy that transition.'

And, sadly, it's a pattern Piper can see being repeated time and again.

'The biggest victims are the children of these women. Statistics show that if you're disconnected from your mother in the first few years of your life, you are more likely to end up in prison yourself. And then you just repeat this generational cycle. And that's what I saw firsthand; I met women who said, "Oh, my mom's in the other wing, and my grandma's in the detox wing. And my kid's in the county jail, due to be sentenced to prison next month." And you just think, "This isn't working. This isn't the solution."

But she also takes pains to point out that it's not all doom and gloom. 'When people get locked up, it's not like a scene in a movie where everyone there is a bad person, and the prisoners stay in a dank cell with bread and water.

'These women were taking part in courses, therapy, education, practical development, and they were trying to better themselves. And I think when you see that, it's quite inspiring, actually – somebody who has come from so little, trying to reinvent themselves. That's the kind of energy I'm attracted to.

'There are lots of reasons for people to give up on life. To just say, it's not fair, so I'm not going to participate in society. So when I see people trying like that, I really do admire them. And I develop a soft spot for them.

'They're so resourceful, so resilient. There are some lighter moments in the programme, like where they showed me how they cook. There's this woman literally chopping up chicken with her nails! And they showed me how they thread their moustaches and chin hair with a bit of cotton from their trousers. It's actually a story of

survival and how women come together. They make this artificial family, taking on different roles, and there's a real sisterhood.'

So how did this 'artificial family' and spending so much time with mothers in hugely challenging circumstances affect her own parenting?

'It was really hard, because every day people would say, "I miss my kids. I want to hug my kids. I want to be there for my kids." And I was away from home for weeks at a time, missing things such as assemblies and bits at school, and I admit, I was feeling that same longing more than I normally would during a work project. But then I also felt this conflict of "Come on, pull yourself together. You'll be home in two weeks, and then be with your children, and you can parent them and nurture them. These women are going to have to mother their child over a payphone for seven years. Who am I to even feel like I miss my kids; I don't know the half of it."

'I'm not perfect, I'm just a regular mum: sometimes I'm winning, and feel like I'm doing really well, like when I have time to go to sports day and remember the swimming kit. And other times, I drop the ball. My kids go in uniform and it's non-uniform day, and I make the wrong sandwich. I don't think anyone gets it right all of the time. You just need to find your tribe and support one another when you're struggling.

'I think the programme is an important reminder of how childhood goes in the blink of an eye, and you only get one chance. I'm as guilty as the next person of not being present, and being on my phone and rushing bedtime and needing to get downstairs to fold up the washing. But making this programme made me realise I want to slow down a bit, because there's only one shot at this.'

Katie Piper's Jailhouse Mums airs on Wednesdays at 10pm on W, catch up on UKTV Play; Katie Piper's Breakfast Show is on every Sunday morning on ITV1

"It's inspiring to see somebody who has come from so little trying to reinvent themselves"



And the rest is history...

Harriet Minter practises some self-care and embraces a fully sanctioned slower pace of life

What is your preferred form of rest? My whole life. I have thought rest equalled lying down and sleeping. Sometimes you might lie down, try to sleep, and not be able to - but this was just failed rest. I didn't realise until very recently that there are, in fact, numerous sorts of rest, and we need a bit of all of them if we want to have a balanced lifestyle. There is creative rest, where you play at something creative with no end goal or desire to achieve a masterpiece. There is physical rest, where you move your body in a way that allows your mind to switch off. And there is intellectual rest, where you turn your attention to a project that will engage your brain but has little at stake.

Basically, anything which gives you a break from your key responsibilities counts as rest. And we need to schedule it into our daily lives in the same way we would taking a shower or checking our emails. So often we take rest to mean the thing we do at the end of our tether – so either

when we hit the end of the day and are so tired we can't fit anything else in. Or when we've finished a gruelling period of work and book a week in the sun so we can flop on a sunlounger and bake ourselves to a crisp, only to go back to work and start the whole process over again.

But rest should be something we build into every hour of every day, even if it's just getting up from our desk and stretching. Or, as my optician wearily reminds me, allowing our eyes to gaze off into the distance.

So, in a two-birds, one-stone manner, I've been creatively resting by coming up with new forms of rest. Spending five minutes imagining I run a beach bar in Barbados: entrepreneurial rest. Reorganising Post-it notes: colour rest. Playing music loud enough that my neighbours can hear it: courtesy rest.

What I particularly like about this game is that it allows me to turn some of the things I fear might be laziness (Netflix, audiobooks, swimming

as slowly as possible) into a form of self-care that isn't just good for me but a necessity. So, next time you're wondering whether it's okay to take a nap in the middle of the day, just remember that, somewhere, I am only five minutes away from my last period of rest and already planning the next one.

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



IMAGE: MARK HARRISON. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: CAROLINE PIASECK STYLIST: KATE ANYA RARROLIR

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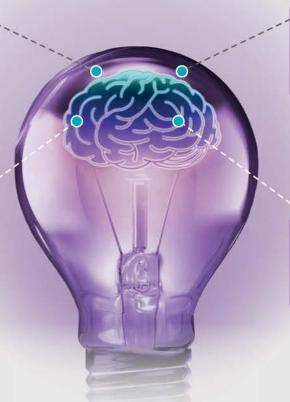
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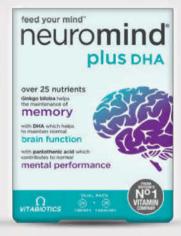


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Inspiration to boost your happiness and confidence, plus simple steps to overcome anxiety and stress



MAGES: SHITTERSTOCK

DON'T SAVE YOUR BEST FOR LATER!

Tomorrow never comes, or so the saying goes, so isn't it time we all started to celebrate today, instead, with small acts of self-care and life's little luxuries, asks Yasmina Floyer

he other week, a friend commended my 'courage' for wearing nice summer dresses on the school run. I was a little confused; I wasn't exactly dressed for the Met Gala. She confided, she would never be brave enough to wear pretty frocks to school – it was too mundane an event for bright colours, she told me. I was dumbfounded. For one, I told her, they are just my clothes; two, it's the summer, and who knows how many days of sunshine we'll get; and three, who cares what you're wearing anyway?

But, on reflection, I started to understand. I completely get that feeling of something being 'too nice' or 'too special' to have for every day – like birthday cake, or afternoon tea. And I know that having something good to look forward to can be a great motivator when we are trying to reach a particular goal, or complete a task we may not be too keen on. But when it comes to almost everything else, I must admit, I no longer

"I no longer see much point in holding back on the good things in life"

see much point in holding back on the good things in life. So, here I am, making a case for why we should embrace more of the good things now, rather than waiting to enjoy them at some distant time in the future that – let's face it – may never come.

I think the change in my perspective is mainly down to the pandemic. Weddings, holidays, and other plans both big and small that we had been saving up for and looking forward to for months, even years, suddenly evaporated in the face of multiple lockdowns. The drastic disruption to our

lives had many of us re-evaluating things, and it got me to thinking: what is the point of denying ourselves joy when something out of our control may take the decision away from us?

I caught up with leading psychologist Dr Alison McClymont to discuss whether we should give ourselves permission to make use of and experience some of the things we consider 'special' or 'for best' now, instead of leaving them for an unspecified moment in the future.



How to change your mindset so you use your best right now!

Look at what it is that stops you enjoying these things. Is it shame? Is it a sense of unworthiness? Working through these ideas can be very helpful, but – most importantly – do the opposite thing than the negative schema tells you...

If you find yourself
berating yourself for
eating that cake, enjoy the
cake! If you find yourself telling
your exhausted body you need to
exercise, sit down and watch a film!
By encouraging an opposite
reaction to your negative
schema, we break
its power.

Find sources of
joy in everyday
interactions. A recent study
showed that happiness is
actually increased by daily
pleasant encounters with others.
Take time to chat with the
barista, smile at the person
sitting next to you on the
train, or text a friend.

Encourage the belief
in yourself that you
deserve happiness. Celebrate
your achievements in the way
you would a friend's; be a
shameless self-promoter in the
same way you would for someone
else. Tell the most favourable
narrative of you, without
fear of reprisal.





"Using your favourite things randomly can be an act of self-love"

'The danger with denying ourselves small moments of joy is firstly an existential one: we literally may not get that moment again,' says Dr McClymont. 'Our time on earth is finite, so denying ourselves pleasure, or saving it for the future, may be futile. This may actually be the *only* place and time that we can take pleasure in this act,' she warns.

But, she explains, it's normal to feel like we need to 'save things for best': 'Perhaps our parents suffered generational traumas of poverty or fear of reprisal if they stood out too much or displayed vanity or frivolousness. We may carry this in ourselves as a message to not overindulge in things that are "worldly-pursuits". These messages can be hard to fight against, and we may find ourselves tortured by the idea that we are in different circumstances to generations before us, and may even feel guilty for this,' Dr McClymont adds.

Multi-award-winning teacher and author of *Energy Secret* (Hodder & Stoughton, £16.99), Antonia Harman, explains more how these cultural and generational factors can affect us. 'It's quintessentially British to save our crockery or clothes for "special" occasions, though not all cultures work in this way. It may have stemmed from a time when food was scarce, the mindset passed down through generations. Conversely, growing up, you may have been urged to finish your food even beyond the point of satiety, as there were children starving in the world.

'Interestingly, both mentalities come from a place of lack. When you feel abundant, you are more willing to use fancy glasses, stop eating when you are full, or wear that gorgeous outfit and feel more comfortable celebrating the day just because. Using your favourite things randomly can be an act of self-love, and you can maintain your reverence of an item even if you use it regularly,' she adds. 'Surrounding yourself and using things you adore daily will make you smile, boosting your joy and happiness. You could even donate the items you are less enamoured with, forcing you to use the "good" and under-used items.'

I couldn't agree with this more, but it may be easier said than done. In the past, my perfectionist tendencies have led me to feel I can only have a 'treat' if I have earned it, and, sadly, some of these ideas are not only embedded but normalised in the diet and hustle culture we see all around us.

Dr McCylmont speaks to the psychological drama that we play out with ourselves when we might tell ourselves we haven't 'done enough' today to deserve rest, or that we need to do more exercise or have a better diet before we eat that cake: 'When we give in to these messages, we are persecuting ourselves and feeding ourselves negative thoughts that we are not worthy, and we are not deserving. This can have a huge effect on our self-esteem. In order to combat unhealthy schemas that seek to subjugate us, we have to find ways to renew our worth and our deservedness – small acts that promote joy or self-care can do just this.'

A few weeks ago, I made a small but meaningful change. I swapped out my regular, plain dinner plates for my beautiful Spode ones, which usually only make an appearance during 'special' meals. This was initially prompted out of necessity (I hadn't done the washing up yet, and had run out of plates). My easy lunch of beans on toast was instantly elevated to Instagram-worthy status when framed by Spode's intricate inky-blue design. The contrast of orange against blue felt joyful, a way to honour myself rather than mindlessly wolfing something down while at the laptop, cramming in precious minutes of work before leaving to collect my son from school. I reflected on the fact that I'm only using these plates on average three times a year. That's hardly anything. Suddenly, not using the fancy plates felt wasteful. Why had I been hiding them away when they could have been enhancing my every mealtime?

On the rare occasion I do now find myself thinking, 'I mustn't have this/wear this/ do this' because the occasion isn't special enough, or because I haven't earned it, I catch myself. We deserve to feel good because we are only here once. Joy as an act of resistance. Beans on toast on Spode, because, why not?

Coaching in action Down to business

In their first session together, award-winning coach Kim Morgan helps her client Shelley* find purpose in an unexpected proposition



Dession one...

aving just settled down to an 'admin day' in my office, I received an email enquiry via my website. It read: 'Urgent. I have found myself "accidentally" owning a business and managing a small team of people. I have no experience of either and I desperately need help. Would you be able to coach me and my team? Shelley.'

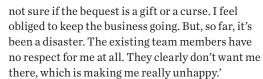
I was intrigued and replied immediately to ask if Shelley was free for a video call. It would be a welcome distraction from office admin!

Within 30 minutes, we were on a 'discovery' call. Discovery calls are complimentary calls for prospective clients and coaches to get to know one another, and to find out together whether the coach is the right person to support the client with their current situation or challenge.

I asked Shelley how she had 'accidentally' found herself owning a business.

'My aunt died recently. She was single and had no children, so she left her business to me. It's an

> pulled a face. I didn't respond because I wanted to offer Shelley my condolences for her loss before anything else. Shelley thanked me.



I felt for Shelley. Her aunt's gift had changed the direction of her life, and it didn't appear to be the direction Shelley would have chosen.

I asked, 'Where are you on the scale of "must do, should do, want to or love to" for this business?'

'Somewhere between must and should,' she said.

I checked if Shelley had considered other options, for example, employing someone to run the business for her, or selling it and using the money for her own new enterprise.

'Yes, but I don't want to do that. I should give it my best shot first,' said Shelley.

'What is the driving force behind that decision? What's in it for you?' I asked.

'I've been drifting without direction. Perhaps Auntie thought this would give me a purpose. I do believe everything happens for a reason, which is why I need help. And, yes, by the way, I would like you to coach me and my team! You've asked me questions nobody else has dared to ask.'

I knew I had challenged Shelley enough at this point and I needed to give her something positive.

'Let's think about your team and what you can do before our next session, when I meet you all together. Imagine you were one of the team; you've just lost your boss and her niece comes in as the new owner. How might you be feeling?'

Shelley looked taken aback. 'I'd be feeling worried that the new owner would change things and I'd lose my job. I'd never thought of it from their perspective.'

Before our call ended, I gave Shelley a coaching exercise she could do with the whole team, which would ensure everyone was acknowledged for the contributions they had made. Shelley was enthusiastic about going back to the team with a feelgood, energising exercise to mark a new start.

She would let her team know that I would be working with them as a team coach for the next few months and that, before we all met in person, I would arrange one-to-one calls with each member to get to know them and to let them get to know me.

I asked Shelley what had shifted for her in this session. 'That's easy,' she said, 'I've moved from "should" to "want to"!"

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



Work it out

Decisions, decisions!

Whenever you have big decisions to make, find a quiet time and space to journal your answers to these coaching questions:

- 1 Is this idea initiated by me (intrinsic) or initiated by someone else (extrinsic)?
- 2 What could be the costs of this decision (financial or otherwise)? Am I prepared to pay these costs?
- 3 How would this decision affect other people in my life?
- 4 What are some good reasons to do this?
- 5 What are some good reasons not to do this?
- 6 How far does this decision align with my values?
- 7 What do my head, heart and gut say?
- 8 By saying 'Yes' to this, what am I saying 'No' to? By saying 'No' to this, what am I saying 'Yes' to?
- 9 What would my best friend say to me about making this decision?
- 10 Where would I place myself on this continuum: must do, should do, want to, love to, just try stopping me?

WORDS OF WISDOM

"Every significant vital sign-body temperature, heart rate, oxygen consumption, hormone level, brain activity, and so on - alters the moment you decide to do anything... decisions are signals telling your body, mind, and environment to move in a certain direction"

Deepak Chopra

Team time travel

This is a wonderful exercise for teams to do whenever there are new members or when there have been changes in the team. Gather all team members together and invite them to stand on an imaginary clock face. Ask team members to position themselves around the clock face, in order of who arrived first in the team. The longest serving member will stand just past the 12 o'clock point, and the most recent person will be just before the 12 o'clock point. Others will position themselves around the clock face according to the order in which they arrived.

Then, when everyone is in position, each person takes a turn in telling their story of being in the team:

- When they arrived
- What was different then from how it is today
- What changes they have seen
- Who else was there when they arrived
- Who has been and gone
- What they have learned and experienced in the team – high and low points
- How they feel about this team

This lovely exercise tells the story of the team and acknowledges everyone's part and place in its history to date.



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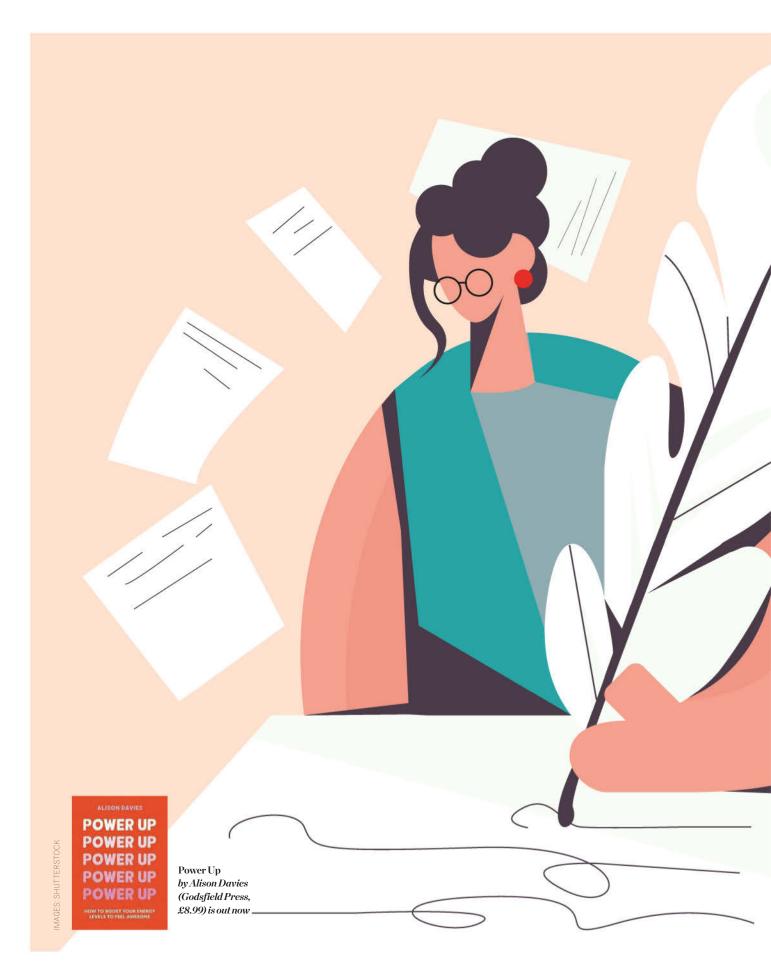
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Change VOUIT SCIUDT change your life!

Rewrite your story, reframe your mindset, and create the future you've always dreamed of, writes Alison Davies

cript work is a manifestation technique that uses stories to create reality as you'd like it to be. Scripting gives you the power to create anything you want by switching up the narrative, and the key is to bring it into the present. This means that when you write your script, you write as if it's happening now, rather than in the future.

Scripts don't have to be epic – they can be short paragraphs or tales, as long as they embody what you'd like to happen and bring it to life with words. You are the only person that needs to read what you have written, but you need to really connect

with the words on the page. Picture the scene as you read it, engage your emotions, then your script will be even more powerful and likely to filter into your subconscious mind, which is the ultimate goal. The script helps to reframe your mindset, and establish beliefs and qualities that will help you achieve your goal. All you have to do is dream it, read it, and believe it.

You can create scripts for anything. They can be geared to a specific aim – for example, the holiday of a lifetime – or they can be more general, and can encompass a theme, such as generating positive energy, or feeling more powerful.





Once you get into the habit of scripting, you'll find mini narratives pop into your head all the time, and it will become natural to talk yourself into a positive frame of mind. You can encourage this even more by giving each script a theme tune. So, you might choose your favourite upbeat track to create positive energy. To feel powerful, you might go for something more dramatic, perhaps a dancefloor tune that makes you want to take centre stage and throw some shapes. To feel centred, you might go for a soothing melody from your childhood. As you get into the habit of bringing your scripts to life in this way, you'll find that you can conjure the feeling you want by bringing the theme tune to your mind. This then becomes a quick-fix that you call upon at any time during the day.

If words aren't really your thing, visualisation works with the potent power of images. It's about creating a series of pictures in your mind of what you'd like to happen. It's like watching a movie unfold, but instead of doing it on the big screen, you're doing it in your head. Again, the idea is that everything happens in the present and you experience all of the associated emotions at the same time. Visualisation works well for people who like to think visually, and for those who might struggle with writing. It's a simple process, and once you get the hang of it, a lot of fun. Basically, you're giving yourself permission to daydream, but with the added bonus that you're shaping reality.

Do this:

When you need a boost. This visualisation is the perfect pick-me-up and can be particularly effective at the beginning of a busy day.

You'll need:

Space and time to sit and relax. If you can, find a spot to sit outside and feel the sun on your face; this will enhance the visualisation.

The visualisation:

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths to calm your mind. Imagine you are sitting on the brow of the hill. It's the start of a new day, and the air is filled with promise. You take a deep breath in and enjoy the peace this brings. In the distance you can see the horizon. It shimmers as the first rays of sun dance into view. Down below, the fern-green valley stretches out before you; it's a landscape of peaks and troughs, as the earth curves and ripples. Slowly, steadily, the sun emerges, and the soft blue of the vista is tinged rose gold. The sky is alight with colours that blend into each other in waves. The land, too, is changing as dark becomes light, and the grass transforms into a sparkling emerald plateau. You drink it all in from your vantage point. You feel the breeze wrap around you, lifting you to your feet. As you stand, stretch your arms wide open and embrace the scene before you. The sun wraps you up in a vibrant blanket of light and you feel alive, awakened, and full of hope.







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Phillip Addison

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The art of going NOVHERE

When you make the journey the destination, you can end up exactly where you need to be, writes Greta Solomon

hen I was little, as Sunday evening began to draw in and me and my siblings grew restless, someone would invariably suggest going for a drive. We'd all pile into the car; Mum, Dad, and the four of us, and just drive around. We wouldn't actually go anywhere; there were no pit stops, and no destination (other than returning right back to where we started). Yet, we loved it. We'd emerge refreshed from what we'd seen on the way - and never more so than when we left the suburbs and ventured into central London, a world in itself for someone always on the outskirts. There, we'd find skyscrapers, and black cabs, and hop-on-and-off buses with ticket collectors. I knew there was potential and possibility for something more.

When I was 11, and tired of taming my afro hair into Medusa-style plaits, I wrote to the now defunct *Hi!* magazine to ask for a makeover. I got a yes, and an invitation to a central London photographic studio. And, finally, I got to travel in one of those cabs – excitedly saving the receipt so

the magazine could expense it. By going nowhere, I'd ended up somewhere. A decade later, I was a magazine journalist working in London every day.

Seeing with fresh eyes

There's solid science behind why we experience a shift in mindset from taking journeys. 'Being on the move gives us access to fractal patterns,' explains chartered psychologist and author Suzy Reading. 'These are patterns that occur on a progressively finer scale. They're prevalent in natural landscapes, such as those seen in mountains, coastlines, fields, and even the moving cloudscape. Fractal patterns bring the mind into a relaxed but alert state – perfect for creativity.'

This relaxed but alert state is also known as the alpha brainwave state, and is the sweet spot for getting in the flow. In our day-to-day lives, where we're putting out fires, dealing with deadlines and the politics of life, we operate in a beta brain state. We're alert and focused, but can often feel frazzled. By contrast, studies have shown that the alpha zone can trigger a surge in creativity.







Achieving awe

While journeys are powerful for instigating creativity and thinking through problems, they can also help us tap into awe. 'This is a state of wonder and an awareness of our connection with all living things,' says Reading. 'It's characterised by a sense of deep joy, inspiration, and feeling vibrant and alive. Even a 15-second experience of this mood state can be enlivening, clarifying, and galvanising.'

'Don't go out with any specific expectations about what will happen,' advises Smith. 'Just be with yourself without listening to music or audiobooks. Ask yourself: What am I being called to do? What are the next steps I need to take? What is it I need to know right now? Surrender to the fact that you'll be guided to receive whatever you need at that moment. That's where the magic happens.'

Creativity on the move

To get the most out of your journey, first choose the right mode of transport for what you want to achieve. If you have a tricky piece of work you need to get done, or some writing, drawing, or knitting, book a train journey. If you need to calm a frazzled mind, take a walk, making sure you turn off any notifications on your smartphone, so that you're not distracted. If there's a problem you need to solve, a drive in a quiet area can be just the ticket. If you don't drive, take the bus instead! You don't need an entire day – 30 minutes will do. You can save up longer trips for holidays or weekends, or turn a work-fromhome day into a day on the train.

Before you set out, prime yourself to tap out of autopilot and into the creative zone. 'Set the intention to see with fresh eyes,' says Reading. 'This will help open you up to new sensory experiences and insights, even in familiar places.'

If you're travelling by train, bring all the supplies you need with you – notebooks, pens, pencils, highlighters, art supplies – whatever will help you to transmute your thoughts and feelings into something concrete. Don't be afraid to journal or create in public. Take a leaf out of Sharon Walters' book, an artist who creates paper-cut pieces. On Instagram, she captions one of her most recent pieces of work with the comment: 'I got lots of strange looks as I cut this piece on a train. Creating it, like so many others, gave me a sense of focus and calm. When I started filming [as she worked], those furtive eyes appeared even more confused. Despite them, I continued to do what felt right for me.'

GOING BY CAR?

All you need is a smartphone, and easy access to the voice-recording button. You might feel self-conscious at first, but practice just speaking whatever thoughts come to you. There is gold to be found when we listen and speak.

INSPIRED TO TAKE A TRAIN TRIP?

Budget: To get the cheapest fare, book in advance. In fact, the earlier the better. Google random places from your home station and see what comes up. You may just be surprised, and going somewhere new will awaken your sense of adventure.

Spend: If you have a little more time and money on your hands, you can't beat the Eurostar to Paris. Check out kayak.com to nab the cheapest fares.

Splurge: Fancy combining a creative journey with a city break? Try The Bergen Railway. This is a stunning, seven-hour scenic trip from Oslo to Bergen. Visit raileurope.com to book your ticket.

Heaven scent

Breathe in and savour the smells all around you, and commit them to the page – you may gain a new perspective, says Jackee Holder

Whenever I wear my signature perfume, strangers – both male and female – feel compelled to follow me off trains and down streets to comment or enquire about the scent I am wearing. I finally looked up what the floral notes of the

perfume were, and discovered it includes the fragrances of mandarin, orange blossom, jasmine and vanilla. But what does all that have to do with therapeutic writing?

Well, it turns out that the nose is home to more than 400 olfactory receptors. Smell is ancient, and more evolved in the human body than sight and hearing. Smell takes a direct route to our emotions. When we connect to our past through the portal of scents, smell becomes a powerful time traveller and conduit for writing about childhood memories and experiences of people.

The quickest way to change someone's mood is with smell, rather than with any other of our senses, says Dr Alan Hirsch, founder of the Smell & Taste Treatment and Research Foundation in Chicago. On a recent morning walk, I held a plump pink rose up against the entrance to both my nostrils. Immediately, I was transported back to the smell of the thicket of roses that filled the air of our neighbourhood streets growing up. The memory stimulated happier times from childhood, as my body flooded with a rush of good feelings. It's the same when I smell honeysuckle. The sweet pungent smell of this pretty shrub can still change my mood in an instant.

The headiness of summer can knock us off our feet with its sensual feast of sights. Sight is quick and instant. Much can be seen and unseen – but not necessarily absorbed. Smells, on the other hand, pull you into a deeper remembering that is primal and visceral. Smell is much more of an embodied writing practice.

Smells and aromas that evoke positive memories are personal and unique. What smells good to me may not to you. According to Tim Jacob, a biosciences professor at Cardiff University, specialising in smell, we all have a set of



what he calls, 'autobiographical smells.' Growing up, my favourite uncle, Uncle Keith, smelled of stale cigarette smoke and the spiced scent of whisky. He wore striped Ben Sherman shirts that smelt of Tide washing powder and the crisp, clean scent of Robin spray starch. He was the safest man I could be around; someone I trusted one hundred per cent. My uncle's smells reminded me of a safe harbour. His smells soothed my hyper vigilant sympathetic nervous system at a tender young age.

When I get stuck with my writing, taking a fragrance walk often unblocks me. So, for this month, let's practice a dose of what essayist Diane Ackerman describes as 'aromatic memories on the page'. Use the prompts below to explore your memories and lived experiences through scent. Play with writing a sentence or a paragraph and see what comes...

- What smells trigger past memories that are comforting?
- What aromas can't you stand, or avoid ever smelling?
- What trees or plant aromas do you associate with childhood that evoke strong, positive memories?
- Free write about one of the above memories.
- What scents do you associate with the current season?
- Describe the scent of your house or a room in your home?
- What would a stranger learn about you from your scent?
- Write about the scent of a favourite fruit.
- Go outside. List five smells you connect with.
- Go for a walk and smell five different flowers.
- Describe one physical or emotional reaction you have to a smell or aroma you come into daily contact with.
 Scent may be silent but it packs a punch on the page.
 It can be a good way of gaining a new perspective on recent or past experiences. I urge you to give it a try.

jackeeholder.com; @jackeeholderinspires



A break from the routine can prove wonderfully beneficial for your wellbeing. Caroline Butterwick learns how to side-step the stress of travel anxiety, and gets set to make some magical new memories...







'm on a plane for a much-anticipated trip to Italy, and my heart is racing: is my passport still in my bag after my last check 10 minutes ago? What if I've messed up the hotel booking? Will we be able to get a taxi from the airport? What if I get sick while we're away?

As much as I love it, travel can be stressful. Being 36,000 feet in the air is part of it, of course, but each stage of planning this holiday has also made me nervous.

Whether you're jetting off for a trip of a lifetime, enjoying a European city break, or making the most of what we have here in the UK, for many of us, holidays are something we love. And after the disruption of the pandemic, making the most of our precious time away seems all the more important.

Most of us know firsthand how much joy holidays can bring. And there's science to back up why travel is good for our health and wellbeing. Travel often means trying new things, from learning phrases in another language to experiencing a new place or trying different foods.

'All of this increases neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ability to form new synaptic connections,' explains Dr Noreen Nguru, a wellness travel consultant. 'And when you're in these situations in which you push yourself out of your comfort zone, you're increasing confidence in your own problem-solving skills, and enhancing your general feeling of personal accomplishment.'

It also gives us a welcome break from our daily routine. 'Getting outside of your current environment helps you to understand yourself and the world around you a lot better,' says Chloe Gosiewski, a coach with the Life Coach Directory. 'When you go on holiday, and you see something for the first time, smell something for the first

time, and hear something for the first time, something shifts within your awareness and perception of your own life. It's changing up your current understanding of the way you live your life – it's almost like a factory reset.'

It can be empowering, too: you realise you're able to navigate the trains in a different country, or that you have the strength to do a hike. And if your perfect holiday is lounging by the pool for a week, instead, chances are you find this calming and a welcome chance to focus on yourself.

Likewise, if you're travelling with others, you can find your bonds grow, and you create new memories together that you will share afterwards.

'There can be more spontaneity and adventure,' explains psychotherapist and coach Karin Peeters. 'There are parts of our personality that come out in us and the people we're with.'

She tells me how travel can often lead to meaningful conversations, like the way you can talk more easily as you walk together along the beachfront, or sit admiring the sunset as you sip sangria. This rings true for me – a recent hiking holiday in the Lake District led to me and my husband talking with a depth that isn't as easy to reach when you are catching up about your days in the evening at home. You're making quality time for those you're with, and making memories that can help bring you closer.

So, the jury's in: travel is good for us. But what can we do to deal with any anxiety we feel, and really make the most of our holidays?

Build your excitement

Preparing for your holiday isn't all just checking your passport is in date and printing off booking information – there are things you can do to make it even more enjoyable

t's about making every day on the build up to the holiday special as well,' says Chloe Gosiewski. 'You're not just waiting for something - you're actually starting to build up the momentum for the holiday. It's healthy, as any positive emotion that you can have is good for your mental health and wellbeing. So why not take advantage of that build up and start getting those high-energy emotions - those positive feelings before you even go? You often find that people who book last-minute tend to have a lot more stress than those who have done more research, because they're already in that positive space. They're excited, they've started early, they feel more confident.'

For me, watching vlogs on YouTube helps build my anticipation for a holiday. I'm a big fan of videos where someone takes you on a tour of a place and gives a first-person account of what they love about it, and their tips for the best things to do. As well as being helpful for

gaining these details, research like this can also help you feel more prepared.

'When you have time to prepare for something and get familiar with it, it takes away the anxiety,' says Gosiewski. 'The more you start seeing it, the more your subconscious is familiar with it. I've watched so many travel vlogs, and they really do help, because you start to visualise. Someone will be walking down a particular road, and when you get there, it's recognisable to you.'

Of course, some people prefer to come along and be totally surprised. It's about figuring out what works for you. But if you tend to get anxious about travel, this research can really help ease those nerves – and you'll still get to appreciate new experiences while you're there.

Websites such as TripAdvisor and other review sites are great for finding out what to do – or flick through travel magazines or guidebooks. I always spend some time exploring the area on Google Street View beforehand, to get a sense of what it's like.

"Take advantage of the build up and all those positive feelings"







With this in mind, is it a good idea to put together an itinerary? It's personal preference: some of us thrive from a busy schedule, whereas others want to completely go with the flow. For Gosiewski, it's a balance. 'If you have this really strict, rigid pre-booked itinerary, it can feel quite regimental, and then that takes the enjoyment out of it,' she says. 'So I always say to people, write a list of what it is you want to do, but keep it open to flexibility.'

If you pre-book lots of activities, says Gosiewski, you may find you can't cancel them, even if you change your mind or the weather means you'd prefer not to go to certain places. It can end up either costing you more money, or making you feel trapped into doing activities you'd rather not. Sometimes there are activities that it makes sense to book in advance; some attractions require pre-booked tickets, and you risk not being able to go if you haven't done this, which can be disappointing. But package holidays often let you book excursions when you're already there, which takes some of the pressure off. Again, research is your friend here, for getting a sense of what you would like to do, and if and what the booking process is.

If you're going abroad, it can be great to learn a bit of the language to help build your excitement, too. I always try to learn how to say things such as 'Good morning' and 'Thank you', and the names for different foods – helpful when you find yourself studying menus trying to find the best place to eat! It's good for your neuroplasticity, and I always find that people appreciate it when you make an effort to speak to them in their own language.

Karin Peeters also suggests doing things like trying the food from the place you're going to visit, to build your anticipation, which sounds like a great excuse to head to my local Italian restaurant for dinner!

7 ways to deal with travel anxiety

Whether it's feeling stressed in the weeks running up to going away, airport anxiety, or dealing with hitches while you're on holiday, travel can bring emotional challenges. So what can help ease the strain?









When we're not present, we risk missing out on those little moments of magic, and a holiday can quickly become a tick-list exercise. Here's how to turn your focus back to what really matters...

ike Chloe Gosiewski, Karin Peeters extols the virtues of planning for a holiday. 'But I also make sure that there is a lot of completely unstructured space,' she adds. 'Usually, when you ask people about their favourite moments of a holiday, it's not about seeing a specific landmark – it's about a feeling that they had when they were somewhere, perhaps an encounter with a local, or a sense of peace when swimming in the ocean. It's those little sacred moments that we take away with us.

'Focusing on the breath really helps. Then use your five senses to bring you back into the moment – so taste the food, smell the ocean, see all the beautiful colours around you.'

There are other practical tips, too.

Peeters raises the point about trying to limit screen time while on holiday. It's easy to find ourselves checking work emails, or doomscrolling through the news several times a day. If you're taking your phone out and about to use as a camera, she recommends putting it on Airplane Mode so you're

not tempted to check

notifications as you snap away. If you feel you do need some time to use your phone, Peeters recommends doing this at a set time, such as for twenty minutes before dinner. You can let others know this is your plan, giving them the contact number for the hotel in case of emergencies outside this.

Dr Noreen Nguru recommends journalling as another way to be present and mindful on holiday. 'Putting pen to paper is a really good way of stepping away from digital devices, and setting intentions,' she says. 'Think about what the day ahead is going to bring, and write down how you want to feel about the experiences. What do you want to get out of the day? And then be mindful throughout it, touching base with yourself. For

example, you might think, "Oh, I did say today that I wanted to push myself out of my comfort zone – but I haven't interacted with many people. So I'm going to talk to two people today."

Gosiewski tells me how she sets an intention each time she goes away, asking herself what she would like to gain from the trip as a whole. 'Express an idea of something that you want to get out of it,' she says. This could be around how you feel, or a goal of trying something new, or connecting with other people. When you close your eyes and picture yourself on holiday, what are you doing? What are you seeing? What do you feel? What do you need in your life right now?

If your intention is to relax, you can then ask yourself what it is that you



"It's important to allow room for unexpected discoveries"

need in order to do this. Is it a gentle walk through nature, a spa day, or some quality time alone?

If your holiday is about relaxing on the beach, there are still ways to gently incorporate new activities, giving you a confidence boost while still being true to what matters to you. 'What else can you do on the beach?' asks Dr Nguru. 'Could you join in a sunrise yoga session that the resort is offering?'

It can also be worth considering what your travel personality is, says Dr Nguru. Are you an experience collector, whose idea of a perfect holiday is trying new activities? Reflecting on this can help you choose the activities you do and to make sure your holiday is hitting the right notes. It can also help with gently pushing yourself out of your comfort zone in a way that's meaningful to you. So, if engaging with local culture and cuisine is important, Dr Nguru says things such as going on a street-food tour that lets you interact with other people and try something unique to that destination could be worthwhile.

She also suggests speaking with locals. 'You can gain great insights into the culture and traditions,' Dr Nguru says. 'Local people can really offer a lot of valuable recommendations and unique perspectives. There might be a hidden gem just around the corner.' This can help you get to know a place beyond what you'd read in a travel guide. One tip I've picked up is that, when visiting touristy places abroad and you're looking for somewhere to eat, it's often best to go a street or two back beyond the obvious places. Here, you're more likely to find the restaurants where locals eat.

Making time for spontaneity can also help you really experience the place you're in. 'I think it's very important to allow room for unexpected discoveries,' says Dr Nguru.

When we step a little outside what we're used to, we can often stumble upon the best moments. I think back to a holiday to the seaside town of Rimini on Italy's Adriatic coast. By chance, I happened to be there during a festival, with live music and lots of local people

out having a good time. I was a bit unsure about venturing out, but in the end it was one of the highlights of my holiday. It's moments like this, where we open ourselves up to exploring, that can bring so much joy.

Of course, not everything always goes to plan on holiday. 'Developing a flexible growth mindset and anticipating change is a great way of managing emotional responses,' says Dr Nguru. 'You're going to get through it because you have gotten through things in the past. Another tip I give to clients is to practise self-compassion, and not to try to run from very ordinary, human feelings, because it's normal to feel disappointed and frustrated when things don't go to plan. Be kind to yourself, acknowledge your emotions, and know that those emotions aren't facts. So, if you're blaming yourself for something going wrong, feel the emotion but don't allow it to control you. It's cognitive restructuring to reframe challenges as opportunities - the silver linings in unexpected situations can be a catalyst for personal growth and resilience.'

If you're holidaying with other people, Gosiewski recommends setting expectations about what you all want from the holiday, to help ease any tensions. This can also help with details such as working out what activities you're all going to do together, and when you'd appreciate time to yourself.

'You have to be aware that there are other people and they are looking to get their needs met, as are you,' she says. Communication is key here.

Peeters agrees: 'Create little pockets of time for yourself, so that you can reconnect with yourself, and set boundaries with other people.' This is great for helping us be present and mindful, and to look after ourselves. Peeters also talks about how holidays give us the chance 'to be together in silence', and that we can appreciate the company of others while having our own space. Think about sitting by the pool with someone, both contentedly reading – you're spending time together, but still doing something that is nourishing for you as an individual.





Keep the holiday feeling going

Getting home after a holiday, aware of all the laundry that's in your suitcase, can feel anti-climactic after a great time – but there are ways to make this easier and to keep that holiday spirit alive

cientists have found that the feelgood feelings from your holiday start to dissipate around four to five weeks after returning home,' says Dr Nguru. 'In my coaching, I try to support individuals in maintaining the positive effects when they return home. A lot of this surrounds embracing work-life balance and carrying forwards the self-care practices from your holiday.' This can be finding time each day or each week to look after yourself, from meditation to going for a walk. 'You're being intentional, having pockets of time regularly, rather than saving all your energy up for a trip,' Dr Nguru says.

You can also, Dr Nguru says, try to incorporate elements of the holiday

into your daily life. What did you value about your holiday that you can keep going? Did you love how it brought your family together to eat meals around the table? Or that you made time each evening to read a chapter of a book?

Gosiewski tells me how there's a taco recipe she picked up in Mexico that she loves cooking at home now, and feels like she's brought something tangible back with her. For me, it's realising how I'm always the first one into the pool on holiday, but only seem to make time for swimming when I'm away. So I sign myself up to my local leisure centre.

'Coming back from a trip away is the perfect time for you to put in a new habit, because you've already broken the cycle of day-to-day life,' says Gosiewski. Think back to the intentions you set before your holiday. What did the holiday give you? What have you discovered about yourself? What would you like to take forward? You may find that you're surprised when you realise how confident you managed to be, and this can be an empowering feeling that you can carry forward.

You can also reflect on what you'd like your next holiday to bring. Do you want to experience more of a certain country? Would you like to try a new activity, or would you relish some more relaxation? Travel can be wonderful and restorative – it can help us see ourselves and the world in brilliant new ways. Reflect on what you loved about this holiday – and then start planning your next escape!

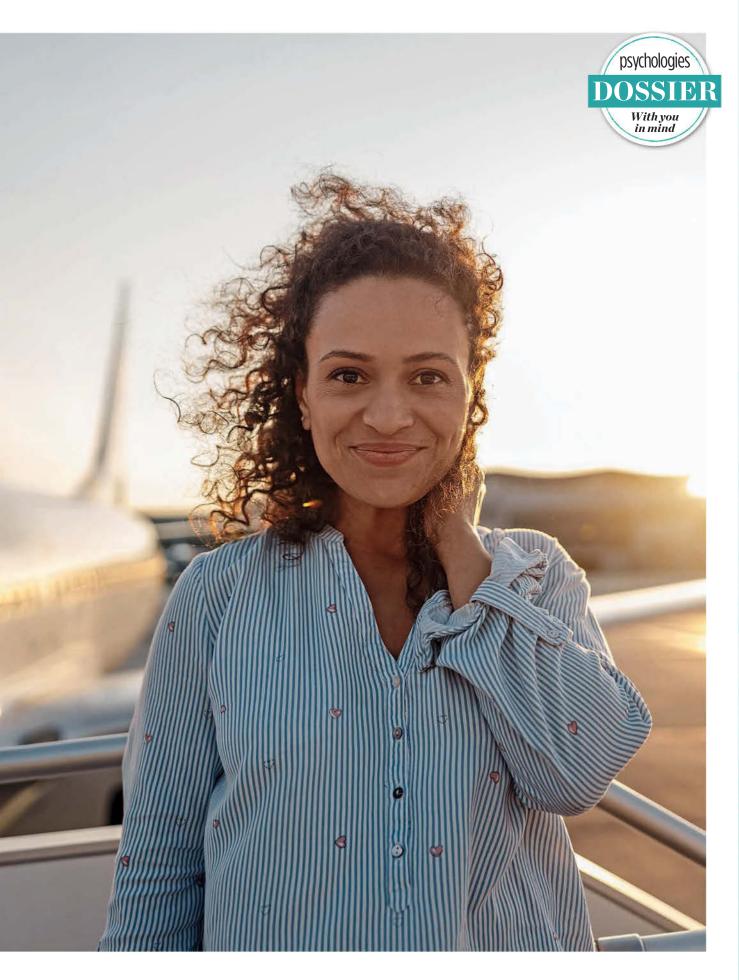
psychologies.co.uk test

WHAT'S YOUR MOST-NEEDED HOLIDAY BENEFIT?

Take our test to find out what you should prioritise to make the most of your time away

Tick the answers that most closely apply to you, then add up the symbols. Read the section, or sections, you ticked most, to find out your personal most-needed holiday benefit this year

		0.4
1 A good break for you means	Your current list of worries	8 You prefer holidays with people
◆ Showing yourself some TLC■ Making the most of every	♥ Finding time to see everyone before you go□	who offer you Validation
opportunity	◆ Feeling exhausted and stressed□	Inspiration
■ Feeling like you can let go	T celling exhausted and stressed	◆ Motivation
▼ Quality time with loved ones	5 Your most common holiday	▼ Connection
v quanty time maniered encomming	worry is	
2 Your fantasy weekend away	♥ Is everyone having a good time?□	9 Having more breaks would allow
would be	♦ Will I be ill when I get there?	you to
■ A guided tour somewhere quirky □	● Did I make the right choice?	Do more of the things you enjoy
▼ A special trip with a loved one□	■ Should I really be going away?□	Explore new possibilities
◆ A luxury health retreat		◆ Take better care of yourself
An inspiring self-development	6 You'd revisit somewhere if you	■ Allow yourself to enjoy life
course	■ Had fun there	
	Found meaningful connections	10 When you get back, you'd like
3 Post-holiday, you usually try to	there	to feel more
■ Make more time for fun or	◆ Felt relaxed there	◆ Centred
creativity	• Found it inspiring	• Content
*Keep up connections with people		Carefree
◆ Look after yourself better	7 On a group holiday, you're the	♥ Cared for
● Hold onto new perspectives	one who	
4 Deference and an enter way offers	Plans for all contingencies	Town the ways to find
4 Before you go away, you often	Wants to try everything	Turn the page to find
feel overwhelmed by	◆ Needs time to yourself	out what you need



How can you maximise your holiday benefits?



IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ♥

Reconnecting

If time away for you is an opportunity to focus on people and connections, whether old or new, you may find it hard to decide who to go away with, and you can find it frustrating if others don't share your enthusiasm for including as many people as possible in your plans. But when relationships are the heart of your life, it makes sense to prioritise your holiday as time to properly reconnect with people you love, spend time with people you don't see very often, or meet new people. The downside is that your plans can get complicated by trying to include everyone, and making sure everyone else is happy may mean you lose sight of what you want or need from your break. And if you take time to pause and think about what you really want this year, you may be surprised to find that what you're craving is a break from being everyone's unofficial social secretary.

Perhaps it's time to widen your horizons and meet new people who can see you afresh rather than in roles that have become expected of you. It may be time to consider taking a break from giving to others, and to spend some time doing something you love. After all, the quality of all your relationships is directly linked to the relationship you have with yourself.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY ◆

Recharging

It's often not until you stop that you realise just how tired you are, especially if you have a tendency to buzz through busy days on adrenaline. If your best intentions to get back to a better work-life balance or make healthier habits part of your daily routine never quite materialise, then holidays can be a lifeline for recharging and resetting. You know it's not ideal to arrive on holiday feeling stressed and exhausted, but it may be the one time of the year when you give yourself permission to really prioritise your physical and mental wellbeing.

There's nothing wrong with relying on a break to give you a boost, both mentally and physically, and you often go home with renewed energy and resilience to face challenges. But if you need holidays to recover from your daily life, and that dictates your choice of holiday, something needs to change – even the most relaxing holiday won't make up for a year of self-neglect. If, deep down, you know you need more than just a temporary recharge from your holiday this year, think of it as a reset, and the start of a priority shift to focus on taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing that you'll commit to continuing when you get back to normal life.



IF YOU SCORED MAINLY

Refocusing

If you're energised by personal development and lifelong learning, your natural instinct may be to use at least part of your break to think about your next focus. And if you're with like-minded people, it makes sense to make the most of the opportunity to think through ideas, explore possibilities, and be inspired by other people. But sometimes what gets lost is an appreciation of what you already have, and which of your previous goals have made a lasting difference to how you feel today. You may think of your holiday as a reset, but sometimes a true reset only happens when you give your mind a break from planning, and just experience what is unfolding around you.

It's worth thinking about how you can get the balance right, as feeling under-stimulated can feel frustrating and, more than anything, you hate to feel you are wasting precious time. You don't have to do nothing to get a new perspective on life, but it helps to do something different, so if you usually take responsibility for planning an itinerary to maximise every moment, could you take a step back and let someone else take charge this year? Free up some headspace, and chances are you'll arrive home with the clarity you need to decide your next focus.

IF YOU SCORED MAINLY

Releasing

Holidays are a time to step out of our usual roles and responsibilities for a short time, and to let go. For you, holidays are a chance to have fun, feel relaxed, laugh, talk and rediscover the playful side of you that can often get lost in the daily treadmill of a busy life.

If what you do and where you go is far less important to you than how you feel during your time away, then take some time to think about where you'll really feel at ease and relaxed without feeling bored, and stimulated without feeling stressed. For some, that might mean thinking about an organised break that allows you to explore your creative side, try a new hobby or to just let go of being responsible for a while.

Although 'doing nothing' might feel like the best way to relax, it can be a tricky transition from a busy life, and you might find it easier to let go of your to-do list or worries with some kind of structured activity or focus, at least for the first few days. If you know you're increasingly relying on holidays to act as a pressure valve or a chance to 'enjoy life', it's also worth thinking about what changes you need to make when you get home to make 'feeling differently' last longer this year.

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TIME TO REFRESH

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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

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

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

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

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

Licence to help

The Ollie School graduates are awarded a certified qualification in NLP and a licence to work as an Ollie coach. If helping children and their families to be more emotionally resilient appeals to you, contact Ollie School for a prospectus and to talk about getting 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 email info@ollieandhis superpowers.com. The Ollie School is waiting to hear from you!





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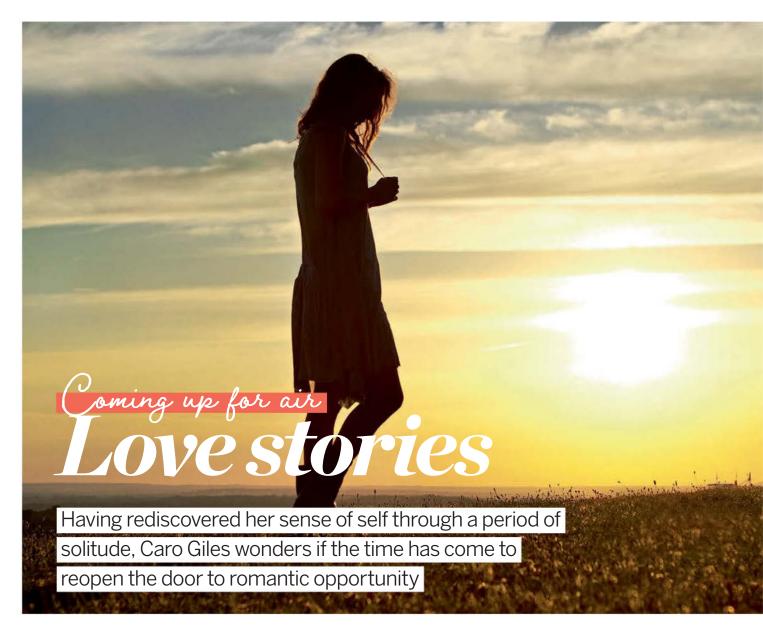
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How to connect more meaningfully and enjoy loving relationships with our partners, children, parents and friends





I'm well into my sixth year of being single now, and depending on who I speak to or what I read, that makes me feel

either shrivelled and lonely, or proudly independent. I usually tend towards the latter, but being alone in my 40s certainly presents challenges.

The sun is beating hard, coaxing all the lovers out of the shadows and into the light for everyone to see. Couples drift along the beach, share coffees outside cafes, and hold hands in the supermarket – constant summery reminders of how single I am.

It's hard to know if I'm single by choice, or if I'm subconsciously holding love at a distance. I know I'll find it hard to trust again and to allow someone into my precariously balanced life. I tell myself that I have no time to navigate the world of online dating, that I have almost no childcare, and that I live miles from the nearest city. All of this is true but, despite that, I know that I am gently trying to create opportunities in my world to meet new people.

When I wrote my memoir, *Twelve Moons*, my intention was not only to share the story of a hidden life, but also to connect with others. And I'd be lying if I didn't occasionally dream of speaking about my work in a bookshop and glancing up into the kind eyes of a handsome stranger. It hasn't happened yet because, apparently, I don't live inside a romance novel. But I remain hopeful.

This week, I had to turn down an invitation to a glamorous publishing event in London. When it came to childcare, trains, the rushing back to pick up a daughter after school, it just

"It's hard to know if I'm single by choice, or subconsciously holding love at a distance"



didn't come together. If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a city to enable me to get away for the night. Perhaps that invitation will prove to be a sliding doors moment, and the man I should have met will glance over at a doorway I will never walk through.

That's the thing about life – we can never know what it will throw at us. I was saying to one of my oldest friends at the weekend that I try not to imagine amazing things happening in the future, because that might prevent them from taking place. This friend is a realist, not a dreamer like me, and she scoffed and asked how I could even believe that was a thing, that my thoughts could influence the future. I do believe it though – however many times I go over a possible scenario in my head, it never actually turns out the way I imagined.

Yesterday, I strolled with two of my daughters up a lane that runs adjacent to the beach. We have walked there many times, past the farm, alongside fields scattered with meadow pipits and skylarks, with the North Sea stretching past us like a ribbon. There has been a lot of talk lately about how silent our world is becoming, and the decline in insects and birds, and it worries me—but here the air is always filled with sound. A swift drops out of the sky and swoops so close to me that I imagine I hear its wings, as quiet as breath.

We arrive at the beach, and the girls shed shoes and run towards the rocks to explore. The air is close and cloudy but mild, and the sand is warm to lie on. I play a tune on my phone, close my eyes, and lay my head down on my daughter's clothes. The singer weaves a

song about life being uncertain, but feeling at home with the person you love. I resist the temptation to daydream, to tempt fate by imagining what might be, and let the melody and the swoosh of the waves lull me. It almost feels enough to be here on this beach with my children and my own thoughts, safe from the possibility of losing myself in, and to, someone else.

But I also believe that it is important to take risks, because playing it safe is rarely enough for me. I wonder if now I am discovering who I really am, I should be brave and try that identity out on other people. I haven't met anyone new for 25 years, and the world of dating terrifies me, but I am more terrified of not being brave. Being alone has been important for me, but maybe there's fun to be had with someone else, too.

The power of forgiveness

Letting go of past resentments can throw open the door to emotional freedom, discovers Kellie Gillespie-Wright

orgiveness is an essential tool for our mental and physical health, our relationships, and our overall wellbeing. It's an act of strength and self-care that allows us to move on from painful experiences, and find peace within ourselves.

'Forgiveness is the act of letting go of the negative thoughts and feelings you hold towards a person who has harmed you,' says psychotherapeutic counsellor Alice Brooks. 'Without the ability to forgive, those negative emotions can stay with you, festering away and making you ill. By giving those malignant feelings an outlet, and breaking free from the negativity, you can replace it with a level of understanding – or, ideally, empathy – for the wounding party, whilst still holding them accountable for the harm.'



"We can choose how much we allow a harmful act to affect our future"

To better understand the benefits of forgiveness, it helps to understand what happens when you don't forgive.

'When treated unjustly by others, people tend to get angry,' explains "forgiveness trailblazer" Dr Robert Enright. 'There is nothing wrong with initially becoming angry – anger, at first, is good. Yet, if that anger does not dissipate, and takes up residence in the person's heart, it becomes an unwelcome guest that doesn't know when it's time to leave. The initial anger can turn into toxic, unhealthy anger and can last for decades. It is this deep, long-lasting anger that causes harm by creating fatigue, restlessness, high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, and mistrust of others.'

'By not forgiving and holding on to resentment, we are keeping those bad feelings within ourselves, and allowing the "persecutor" to continue to hurt us,' adds Brooks. 'We can only control ourselves and, so, to empower ourselves, we have to take action. We have to hang on to the steering wheel and decide where we want to go in the future. The harmful act may have harmed our past, but we can choose how much we allow it to harm our future.'

And your grievances could be seeping into other aspects of your life, too. Relationships can suffer because, when we hold onto resentment, it can damage our connections with others. 'In relationships, forgiveness can take you from a place of conflict, alienation and isolation – from a "me versus you" mindset – to being in a shared place that can generate feelings of closeness and connection, and promote feelings of trust,' says Brooks.

So why is it so hard to forgive? One reason may be that forgiveness is often misunderstood. Some people see it as a sign of weakness or a way of condoning bad behaviour but, in reality, when you hold on to hurt, you are emotionally and cognitively incapacitated, your relationships are affected, and you might be the one suffering the most at the end of the day.

Forgiveness can also be difficult because sometimes the wound is very deep, such as when a loved one betrays your trust, or when you are







the victim of crime or bullying. Anyone who has been there knows that when your inner world is badly disrupted, it's difficult to concentrate on anything other than your turmoil or pain.

You may even fantasise about getting even, but that only prepares the ground for a new set of resentments, and so the wheel of anger and pain just keeps on spinning. Embracing forgiveness could offer a way out and a path to physical and emotional wellbeing. By letting go of negative emotions, you can reduce your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, and even strengthen your immune system and enable healthier sleep patterns.

But, still, the thought of forgiving someone who has harmed us can be frightening, and there is no doubt that forgiveness is hard. It requires effort and can take time. A good place to start is by acknowledging that ignoring or coping with the injustice as you have been hasn't worked for you so far. Recognise that your distress is coming from the pain you are suffering in the here and now, not what offended you years ago, and accept that the act of forgiveness might provide a way forward.

In Dr Enright's seminal work 'Process Model of Forgiveness', he breaks the journey down into four phases: The Uncovering Phase, The Decision Phase, The Work Phase and The Deepening Phase. Because while forgiveness can begin as a process of letting go or moving on, there's more to it than that, says Dr Enright. 'True forgiveness goes a step further, offering something positive: empathy, compassion, and understanding towards the person who hurt you.'

The first step is to uncover your anger by exploring your feelings and the reasons behind your suffering. 'The Uncovering Phase gives you time to reflect on the effects of the injustice. Don't dwell on the injustice itself at this stage, but instead focus solely on the effects,' says Dr Enright.

Try asking yourself questions such as 'Have you avoided dealing with anger?', 'Has your anger affected your health?', 'Have you been obsessing about the injury or the offender?', 'Has the injury caused a permanent change in your life?', and 'Has the injury changed your world view?'

'This process could include strategies such as journalling, or writing a letter to the person who wronged you to get all of your thoughts down on paper and out of your head,' adds Brooks.

'For some people, releasing the anger through some physical exertion can help aid this expression. Try beating your anger out on pillows,' she suggests, 'or go out into the middle of nature and scream until you can't scream any more.'

The second part is consciously making the decision to forgive. 'Once you truly understand what forgiveness is (and is not) you need to make a cognitive decision to forgive. It is only a beginning, but it is an important beginning because now you are motivated to start the forgiveness journey,' says Dr Enright.

Thirdly, cultivate for giveness by working towards understanding and compassion. Reflect on whether the act was due to malicious intent or circumstances in the offender's life, and try to see it from their point of view.

'Practising empathy, or "walking in someone else's shoes", is the best way of improving your capacity for forgiveness. Becoming more attuned to other people's frames of reference, perspectives, and motivations makes it easier to understand their actions,' says Brooks.

The final stage, and the point at which you're finally ready to forgive, allows you to release all the harmful, pent-up emotions you've been harbouring and create space for positive emotions such as love, joy, and gratitude. 'You can also expect lower anxiety, lower anger, lower depression, a greater sense of self-esteem and hopefulness, and healthier relationships, because you are not bringing those wounds into your relationships with others,' says Dr Enright.

And, remember, deciding whether to forgive can be a complex process; you should never feel rushed, and you do not have to forgive everything. 'Forgiveness can and should be on your terms,' says Brooks, 'and if you can forgive someone even a little bit for something, it is better than nothing. If you are struggling, try to take small steps each day; ask yourself, "What can I do to take some action today towards forgiveness?" And just do that one thing.' It will take you one step further along the path to a happier future.

M NEXT STEPS

LISTEN to episode 86 of *Slo Mo: A Podcast With Mo Gawdat*, with Dr Fred Luskin

READ On Forgiveness by Richard Holloway (Canongate, £8.99)

MEDITATE with a guided practice: mindful.org/10-minute-guided-mindfulness-meditation-foster-forgiveness

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tello!

Now that summer's well and truly arrived, why not take the time to stop worrying about all the

rush and busyness, and put the focus back onto you? And what better way to do this than with a subscription to your favourite magazine! It's the perfect tool to help you prioritise looking after yourself, packed full of inspiring yet simple ways to bring about small changes in your life that make a big difference to how you feel each and every day. Featuring cuttingedge authors, experts and therapists, as well as real-life readers like you, it's sure to become your new best friend and help you learn how to feel calmer, happier and more relaxed. A subscription takes all the hassle out of tracking it down, meaning that you can spend more of your time relaxing and enjoying the uplifting features and exciting new ideas. Happy reading!

Lally x Editor-in-Chief, Psychologies

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Streets ahead

The stage is set for interest and intrigue in the urban environments that surround you, says Anita Chaudhuri

treet photography has always been my favourite genre. You know, those gorgeous, atmospheric shots one sees on Instagram of an intriguing woman hailing a yellow taxi in New York, or a besuited gent standing outside a shiny office building, sulking and probably smoking. But plucking up the courage to go out there and start snapping perfect strangers can feel stressful and daunting at first.

Once you get used to being out of your camera comfort zone, however, it can be a fantastic tool for confidencebuilding and connection. The trick is in the way you approach it. For years,

I would wander the streets, aimlessly hoping to stumble upon a pictureperfect scene. Inwardly, I was cringing. What if someone caught me in the act of sneaking a photo? Also, photographing in public is so, well, public. I didn't enjoy feeling so conspicuous. My breakthrough came when I went on a photography workshop with French street photographer Valérie Jardin. I was inspired to sign up because her images are stunning, and also because she believes street photography offers a great opportunity to seek out positivity and beauty wherever you go.

Jardin is still something of a rarity: a female professional street photographer. Unlike the 'gotcha' mentality of many male artists in the field, Jardin's sole purpose is bringing out the best in her subjects. 'I would never want to humiliate anyone by taking and sharing a photo of them looking bad,' she says. Although she doesn't always ask her subject's permission before taking their photo, she'll sometimes show them an image after she's taken it. 'I might say, "I hope you don't mind, but your hair looked so lovely in that shaft of light. Get in touch with me and I'll email a copy."

It's an approach that feels much more doable to me. To start with, she suggests positioning yourself at a cafe table with your camera in full sight. A map or guidebook can come in handy, even if you're in your home town,





"The longer 7 spend watching, the more connected 7 feel"

because people are generally less suspicious of tourists with cameras. Avoid wearing bright colours – Jardin dresses all in black, and usually wears sunglasses. It helps if you choose a cafe overlooking an interesting background. Then, you can bide your time and see who walks onto this impromptu 'stage'.

Set a time limit of, say, an hour, and aim to do nothing but people watch, only photographing subjects that make you smile or intrigue you in some way. Pay particular attention to gesture, style of dress, and the way they walk. I like to play a guessing game: what kind of mood is this person in? What does their expression reveal? The longer I spend watching other people, the less lonely and more connected I feel.

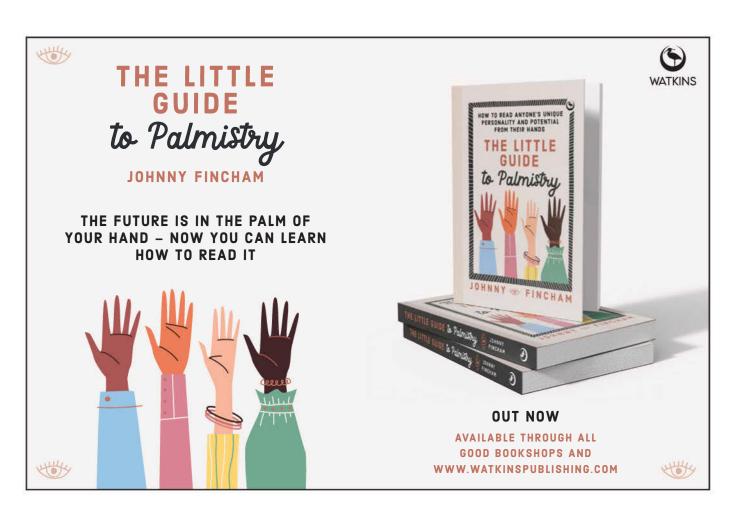
It's also worth noting that you don't need to include people at all in your pictures; street photography can be anything that attracts your attention. It was Robert Doisneau who observed, 'The marvels of daily life are exciting; no movie director can arrange the unexpected that you find in the street.' The more I practise, the more I realise the truth in his words.

TRY THIS:

Set yourself a mini-project and a time limit. For example, today I'm only going to photograph people with dogs. Other ideas might be only photographing people wearing hats, or primary colours. There's a child-like spirit of play to such whimsical assignments, which invariably spark joy.

- There are two types of street photography: hunting and fishing. The latter is where you take up a fixed position. Hunting is where you spot someone interesting and follow them until they reach a photogenic spot. This only starts being creepy if you're furtive about it. Be transparent and, if they notice you, smile and interact with them. You're not doing anything wrong. Try both to discover which you like best.
- Find a friendly-looking person and ask to take their photo. Tell them you're doing an assignment for *Psychologies* if you need to! Most people are delighted to be asked, but if they say no, move on to someone else. The point about this is to boost confidence and also feel that you've both benefited from the encounter. (I'd avoid doing this abroad, because it could lead to cultural or linguistic misunderstandings.)

Share your favourite images with us on Instagram with the hashtag #psychologiesgratitude and your post may get featured on @PsychologiesMagazine!











MINDFUL WELLNESS



Our Wellness Director, yoga teacher and mindfulness expert Ali Roff Farrar, shares new research, hacks and wisdom on all aspects of your physical wellbeing, from nutrition to natural beauty



BREATH IN, DRIFT OFF

Racing thoughts keeping you awake at night? To help you relax before bedtime, try this diaphragmatic breathing technique (also known as belly breathing) from Dr Walt Pickut, a sleep disorder specialist and sleep consultant at easysleepguide.com:

'Lie on your back with your knees bent.
Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Take a deep breath in through your nose for about two seconds. You should experience the air moving through your nostrils into your abdomen, making

your stomach expand. During this type of breathing, make sure your stomach is moving outward, while your chest remains relatively still. Exhale slowly for about two seconds.'

The Orchard Ruffled Pear Quilt & Pillow Set in 100% organic cotton, £160, evieandskye.com

Pillow pal

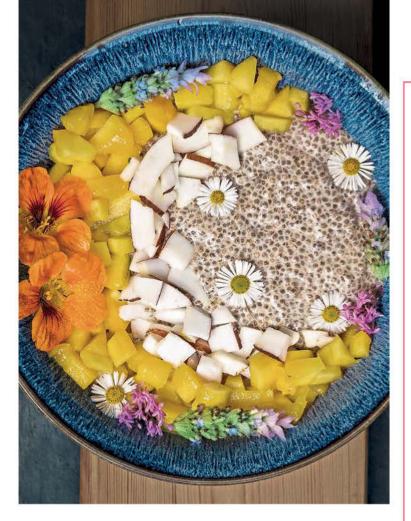
For a good night's sleep, slip this dreamy organic herb sachet into your pillow case. It combines chamomile, hops and lavender with frankincense, clary sage and bergamot pure essential oils, all known for their calming properties.

Yellow Gorse Herbal Sleep Sachet, £4.80, topdrawer.co.uk (not suitable for use in pregnancy)



17 minutes

...spent outdoors each day is all it takes to have a positive impact on your sleep. It's been found that immersing yourself in nature – sometimes referred to as 'forest bathing' – has the power to decrease cortisol levels, which in turn can promote better sleep*.



Sunshine chia

'Chia seeds are ancient seeds that date back to the Aztec era. They can be found at most health stores, or in the health section at your local supermarket. Add them to smoothies or sprinkle them over your oats. Chia is one of nature's richest antioxidants. It can prevent premature skin aging and is also very high in fibre, which promotes digestive health'

- 87.5g chia seeds
- 250ml almond milk
- 250ml coconut milk
- 1 tbsp plant-based protein powder
- 1 tsp honey
- 165g diced fresh mango
- 25g raw coconut flakes
- Edible flowers (optional)

I In a medium-sized saucepan over a medium heat, add the chia seeds and almond milk, and cook for about 10 minutes. The chia seeds will soak up the liquid. Slowly add the coconut milk to the mixture when it starts to look a little dry.

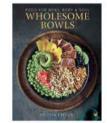
2 Add the protein powder and

honey and mix well. Once all the liquid has been added and the consistency is like porridge, remove from the heat.

3 Divide the chia seed porridge between your bowls and decorate with mango and coconut flakes. If you find some edible flowers, use these to make the bowl beautiful; beautiful food brings joy, and joyous food is

good energy!

Extract from Wholesome Bowls by Melissa Delport (Watkins Media, £20)



Beauty **140%**

- that's the increase in Google searches since 2021 for 'What to do for hair loss after Covid'. I love Ayurvedic brand Champo's Pitta Growth Serum for boosting overall hair health.



Sustainable sunburn support

'No one plans to get sunburn, and experts are united that the best way to avoid skin damage is by limiting your exposure and ideally staying out of the sun altogether. But if you do get caught out unexpectedly and find yourself suffering, natural help is at hand. There are many remedies to try, including aloe vera to soothe, coconut oil to moisturise the skin, or oatmeal baths to relieve itching. Homeopathy remedies can help to reduce the intensity of redness, burning, itching and maybe even blistering from over-exposure: you might like to try Sol, Belladonna, Cantharis, Apis or Urtica. Note that medications like some oral contraceptives and certain antibiotics may put you at increased risk of sunburn as well! Remember, drink



Meditation



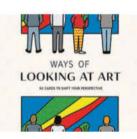


Art and soul

It's well known that looking at artwork can improve mood and wellbeing, but you don't necessarily need to head out to your nearest gallery or museum to gain the benefits on offer. A recent study has found that viewing art online can also improve our wellbeing*, and is an untapped 'source of support' for those of us who may not be able to view art in person, through consuming 'bite-sized bits of meaning-making and pleasure,' says first author of the study MacKenzie Trupp. The research found that viewing art online for just a few minutes had the power to improve mood and anxiety significantly. Want to give it a go? Take a virtual tour of the National

Gallery – visit national gallery.org.uk/visiting/virtual-tours

Ways Of Looking At Art: 50 Cards To Shift Your Perspective by Martin Jackson (Orion, £12.99)



SUMMER'S MORNING MINDFULNESS

Mornings are a magical time in summer; each one a feast for the senses, providing the perfect daily mindfulness ritual to embrace, for a less stressful season. Try this every day for three to five minutes...

Find a fresh-air spot. This might be outside in your garden, on your balcony, on your favourite park bench, or just by an open window in your home. Set a gentle timer, if you like, for your desired meditation length.

Take a moment to settle into your space – breathe in, breath out. Notice how your breath feels today.

Now turn your awareness to your senses, gently moving through them one by one. What do you smell? Is it the fresh morning air? What does that smell like? What else is there? What do you hear? What do you see? What can you taste? What can you feel? Be curious and inquisitive.

Once you have gone through each one of your senses, sit and soak it all in for a moment longer. Maybe express a silent note of gratitude for anything that you particularly enjoyed, before moving on with the rest of your day.

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the

sky, is by no means a waste of time"

JOHN LUBBOCK

Mat finish

Long warm evenings open up novel opportunities to reap the mindful benefits of outdoor yoga. This lightweight travel mat has a furry lining made to absorb sweat and create extra grip when wet – perfect for yoga or mindful movement, at home or on holiday!

Teddy Tropical Lightweight Travel Yoga Mat, £45, yogi-bare.co.uk





Bit of a stretch

MAKE THE CONNECTION

Hollywood child actress Rachel Hurd-Wood swapped the red carpet for a yoga mat in her new life as a Pilates teacher and mum of two



I spend too much time on my phone, according to the pre-set alerts that I invariably dismiss when deep into a scroll-sesh. It's a habit flimsily justified by convincing myself that researching celebrity dating timelines, judging gender-reveal parties, and

mesmerising myself with slo-mo videos of sea horses firing their offspring into the dark terror of the ocean, is somehow 'self-soothing me-time'. But, after a while, it makes me feel a bit grey. Or meh. Or eh. Take your pick.

After children have consumed every fibre of my being, please send help a hiatus from teaching Pilates, I'm back at it. And I'd forgotten how connective it is. There's the mind-body element, of course. But the human-to-human interaction can be more profound and essential for our wellbeing than anything being hawked around your socials.

Often, the physical closeness and personal focus gives people a space to open up. Classes can veer into the informally therapeutic, in the way going to the hairdressers' might. Speaking of which, are you going anywhere nice this year? We're off to Wales.

Aside from the primary focus of guiding people through a series of movements to improve strength and flexibility, being present with someone and holding space for them is a key part of my sessions. It has to be, or AI will steal my job.

Teaching a class offers an opportunity for me to get out of my own head, too.

Clients rightly expect that their Pilates teacher will turn up with a good attitude, ready to motivate and encourage. That requires me to park all



I consider myself very lucky to be able to work in that way. You can sit with yourself and your feelings. You can do all the self-work under the sun. I'm prone to incessant navel gazing, if I don't catch myself. *But* the symbiosis of teacher and student is a mutually therapeutic endeavour, and there's some inarticulate natural healing that can take place.

Invariably, I leave a class feeling better than when I went in. And a little less inclined to scroll myself into oblivion.









magine having a 30lb steel tank strapped to your back, a skin-tight wetsuit clinging to your body, and only being able to breathe through a pressurised tube. You plunge yourself into indigo water and start to sink, the weight around your waist pulling you beneath the surface and into the abyss. It's not an obvious place to seek inner peace, and scuba diving certainly isn't for everyone; it's a sport that should only be undertaken after the right training, in safe conditions, and with a qualified instructor. But once you're comfortable, it can yield huge and surprising benefits for the mind as well as the body.

Personally, I've never felt more at one with the world than I do when I'm diving. It's a safe space for me, a happy place, where worries and stresses are left behind. I started diving four years ago and have racked up over 80 dives in that time. It's addictive, but not in the way people think: I do get an adrenaline rush, but it's accompanied by a peacefulness I never expected. Diving makes me feel like myself, able to appreciate the world around me and where I fit within it.

As a confident diver, I often travel specifically to dive – my last trip was to the Azores. I hadn't been diving for eight months, so I was a bit out of practice. Even so, I was bursting with excitement as I strapped on my inflatable jacket used to regulate buoyancy – known as a BCD – and flung myself off the boat backwards, flippers flailing in the air.

But as I let the air out of my BCD and tried to descend, I couldn't sink. My breath began to quicken as I stuck my face in the water, only to see my diving companions falling into the blue beneath. My buddy, a qualified instructor, waited patiently with me at the surface. But I panicked, my lungs filled with air, and my chances of sinking and completing a dive began to diminish.

After a couple of minutes of careful breathing, each time elongating my exhale a little bit longer and looking at my buddy for reassurance, I could feel the water begin to slowly engulf me. Before I knew it, I looked up to see the ripples of the surface and the hull of the boat.

It's the perfect illustration of why breathing is so important to diving: a successful trip is reliant "The adrenaline rush is accompanied by a peacefulness ?"

never expected"

on the diver feeling relaxed and calm enough to regulate their breath. Fortunately, after that first dive in the Azores, I was in my element. Floating among stingrays, barracudas and groupers, I flew under stone arches, formed by thousands of years of volcanic activity. Streams of bubbles escaped from gaps in the rock, each one heading in single file to the surface. It was magical.

Feeling in control whilst scuba diving often only comes with a lot of practice. Diving can be dangerous, but the secret to a calm dive is closely aligned with well-known mindfulness techniques. So how can something so adrenaline inducing go hand in hand with finding peace of mind?

Dr Laura Walton is a scuba diving instructor, clinical psychologist, and founder of Fit To Dive, a micro-organisation helping divers towards physical, mental and emotional wellbeing when diving. She says many divers report that diving helps their mental health. Indeed, there are multiple ways it can lead to psychological benefits, including engaging in challenging activities, joining a community, and focusing attention.

When speaking about whether diving helps her feel calm, Dr Walton says that while she does feel at peace when diving, the reasons behind it are as yet unproven. Is it simply being able to leave the surface world behind and to disconnect from the over-stimulation we often feel? Or the impact of hyperbaric pressure on the body? Whatever the true reason, there are many possibilities as to why people feel their mind quietens when diving.



For me, concentrating on my gear, being aware of my surroundings, enjoying intentional movement, and accepting the unknown all help with a calm and collected dive. This obviously isn't without exceptions – it also depends on my anxiety levels that day. But, above all, when I focus on mindful breathing, grounding myself in the present, diving encourages me to relax.

The underwater world is unlike anything you can imagine on land: coral reefs plummet into the deep, shoals of fish move as one, the shadows of larger creatures play in the distance. You can look closely at rocks and find tiny creatures hiding from sight. It's a surreal experience that allows you to be present. Fully immersed in nature, floating without the boundaries of gravity, there are endless opportunities to focus on your surroundings. Diving has given me a deeper appreciation of the natural world and why we must protect it.

Sounds underwater are muted compared to on land. You're forced to move through your dive in silence, only occasionally communicating through hand signals. This gives you the space to listen to the bubbles coming from your regulator or the muffled sounds of sea life getting on with its daily business. Focusing in on the sounds of nature is like attending a sound meditation class, or putting on a 'Sounds of the deep' YouTube video – except you're actually there, experiencing it all.

Of course, our problems can follow us anywhere, even under the sea. But diving as a recreational activity allows you to ease into a different pace of life, where you can slowly float around marine landscapes, taking in everything around you and existing in the present. Walton believes



that acceptance is one of the most important aspects of maintaining mindfulness underwater. It's key to regulating stress. Acceptance of uncomfortable emotions and sensations, acceptance of our limitations and mistakes, acceptance that ocean conditions are out of our control.

One of Walton's suggestions for divers who are seeking a calm dive is to let go of preconceived ideas of how your dive should go. You should focus on accessing a safe physiological environment, with the help of instructors who can support your needs and make you feel comfortable enough to learn from your mistakes. The gradual stretching of your comfort zone is essential for easing yourself into the sport.

For me, nothing will ever beat descending into the colourful world of a coral reef ecosystem and existing, even if just for an hour, with the fish and the crabs and the moray eels. Diving has opened up a new physical world for me, but also taught me the foundations of mindfulness, a practice that I could never really figure out on land.

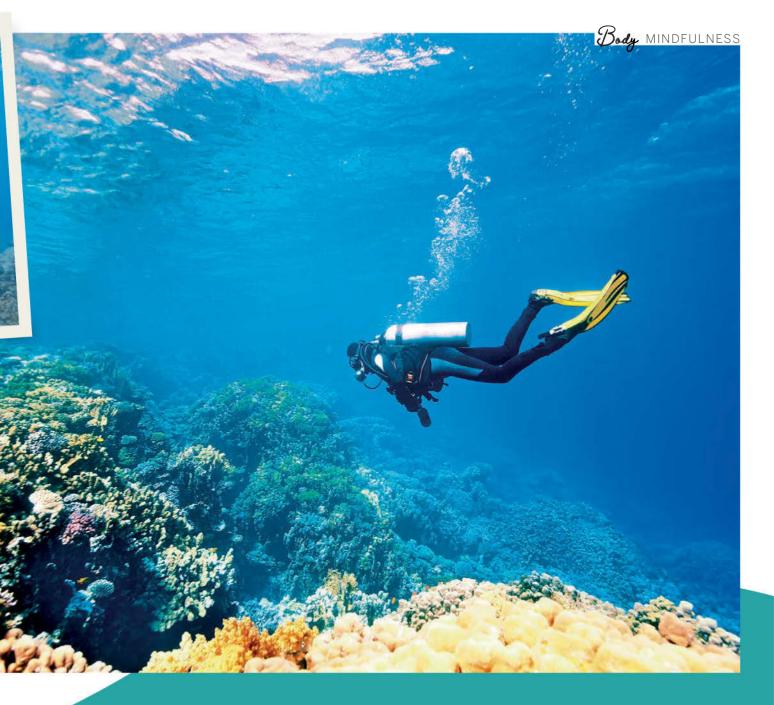
Leave no trace

Scuba diving can be catastrophic for the environment if not done responsibly, with divers littering, aggravating marine life, and baiting fish for tourism. Make sure you dive consciously, leaving no trace underwater

Dive with sustainable operators

responsible and respects the ocean, then your dive is likely to be sustainable too. Responsible instructors won't disturb wildlife, encourage damaging behaviour, or take you to vulnerable sites.

Don't touch corals
Coral reefs are on the brink
of extinction. When a group of
divers explore one, many of them will
kick coral by accident or break pieces
off as they try to control their buoyancy.
Never, ever touch coral. And work on
your buoyancy to make sure you're
in control of your body when diving.



Don't take anything from the ocean

Taking one pretty shell might not seem like the worst thing in the world, but if every diver took one shell during each dive, there would be a lot less shells in the ocean. End your dive empty-handed (unless you're holding litter!).

Use reef-safe sun cream .lt's important that you don't lather yourself in sun cream that bleaches corals and harms other marine life right before a dive. Usually you'll be in a wetsuit, so consider whether you need sun cream at all. And there are always reef-safe alternatives on the shelves if you do.

Join a research project Many dive centres run research projects that contribute to enhancing our knowledge of the qualification and help survey coral reefs. Ask your dive operator whether for you to get involved in, too.

"Responsible instructors won't disturb wildlife or take you to vulnerable sites"





SERVE UP summer

Whether you're eating at home al fresco or packing up a picnic, make plants the star of your plate this season with these nourishing and energising meat-free dishes from Danielle Brown's Healthy Girl Kitchen cookbook

BBQ chickpea chopped salad

My mum has always called me a drama queen, but I swear I'm not being dramatic when I say this is one of the top three best salads I've ever had. You know how restaurant salads tend to taste better than the ones you make at home? This salad changed that for me. When I first made it, my husband immediately said, "This tastes like a restaurant salad." It's smokey, sweet, crunchy, creamy, and crispy'

Serves 4-5

- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup BBQ sauce
- 1½ heads romaine lettuce, chopped
- 1½ cups halved cherry tomatoes

- 1 cup freshly steamed corn
- 1 avocado, cubed
- ½ cup chopped coriander
- 2 handfuls crushed tortilla chips
- 1/4 cup diced red onion
- Hempseed ranch dressing (see left)

I In a saucepan over medium heat, sauté the chickpeas in the BBQ sauce for about 5 minutes, until the sauce has thickened and the chickpeas are heated through. 2 In a large bowl, combine the romaine lettuce, tomatoes, corn, avocado, coriander, crushed tortilla chips, and red onion.

3 Toss with the dressing to taste, top with the chickpeas, and enjoy!





Beauty beet & bean burgers

'These are hands-down going to be the most delicious homemade veggie burgers you've ever had. Made with a base of quinoa, beans, and beets, these superfood, vitamin-rich ingredients are amazing for your skin, your hair, and your overall health. They are smokey, hearty, savoury, filling, and take less than 30 minutes to make'

Makes 7

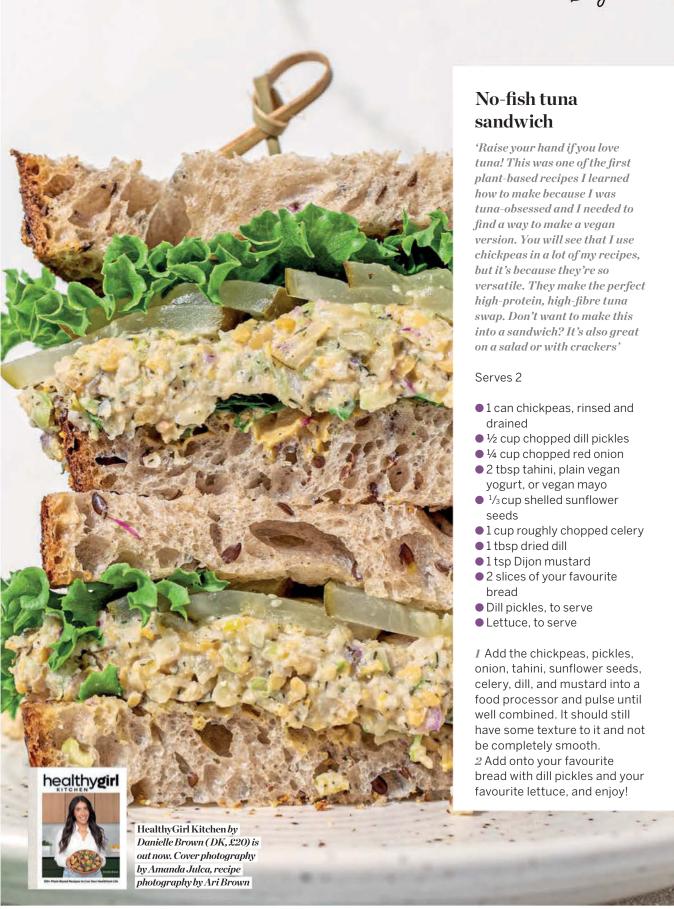
- 1 cup chopped white onion
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- •1 cup pecans

- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp chilli powder
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- •1 cup cooked quinoa
- ¹/₃ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 2 small pre-cooked beets (jarred, shop-bought)
- ¹/₃ cup BBQ sauce

 Sauté the onions in a pan on medium heat with olive oil until translucent. Remove from the heat.
 In a food processor, add the pecans, paprika, chilli powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper, and blend to combine.

- 3 Pour the onions, cooked quinoa, breadcrumbs, and pecan mixture into a large bowl.
- 4 Add the black beans and beets into the food processor, and blend to combine. Don't over-blend, as there should still be a little bit of texture present.
- 5 Pour the bean mixture into the bowl as well, along with the BBQ sauce. Mix until well combined.
- 6 Form into patties, it should yield about 7
- 7 Pan-fry on medium heat for about 4 to 5 minutes on each side, or grill them, if you prefer.
- 8 Serve on a bun with your favourite burger toppings.





Vitamin C

Discover how vibrant vitamin C can boost your mental vitality, as well as your physical wellbeing

or decades vitamin C has been hailed a winter saviour, protecting us from colds and flu. But not only is this most powerful of vitamins good for your physical health, it also plays an important role in your mental wellbeing, too. Here, nutritional therapist and A.Vogel education manager, Ali Cullen, waxes lyrical about its brain-boosting abilities.

Up your energy

'As well as all of its immune-boosting benefits, vitamin C also helps with protecting DNA, proteins and lipids from oxidative damage,' says Cullen.
'It's needed for the formation of collagen, which impacts skin health, but also tissues you can't see, such as blood vessels. When blood vessels are healthy, your whole body is better oxygenated; this can contribute to a more positive mood, as well as boosted energy levels.

Sharpen your brain

'Vitamin C is also essential for the optimal absorption of iron, which helps with good circulation, and supports healthy skin and hair,' explains Cullen.

'Recent trials have confirmed that low vitamin C

consumption is linked to a low level of mental vitality. Thankfully, studies show vitamin C supplementation effectively combats this, increasing motivation and focus, and contributing to better performance in cognitive tasks.'

Your natural source

'Most people will be aware that vitamin C is plentiful in fresh fruit and berries,' says Cullen. The richest sources include:

- Citrus fruits
- Kiwis
- Mangoes
- Blackcurrants
- Guava
- Peaches
- Passion fruit

'Vegetables are also a lesser-known source, and worth incorporating into your menu,' she adds. Try:

- Parsley
- Watercress
- Red and green peppers
- Cabbage
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Mangetout
- Tomato
- Sweet potato

Did you know?

Without vitamin C, we would struggle to absorb iron. Iron-rich foods tend to contain plenty of vitamin C for this reason. Those who find prescription iron difficult to stomach may find that a gentler version, accompanied by vitamin C, will be more easily tolerated.

OUR PICK OF PRODUCTS...

Try **A.Vogel Chewable Nature-C tablets** (£9.99, avogel.co.uk), which combine extracts of acerola, passion fruit, sea buckthorn, prickly gooseberry, blackcurrant and lemon.

For optimal absorption and convenience, try **Altrient C Liposomal Vitamin C gel** (£49.96, abundanceand health.co.uk), which can be taken direct or in water.

go option, opt for **BetterYou Vitamin C Oral Spray** (£11.95, betteryou.com)

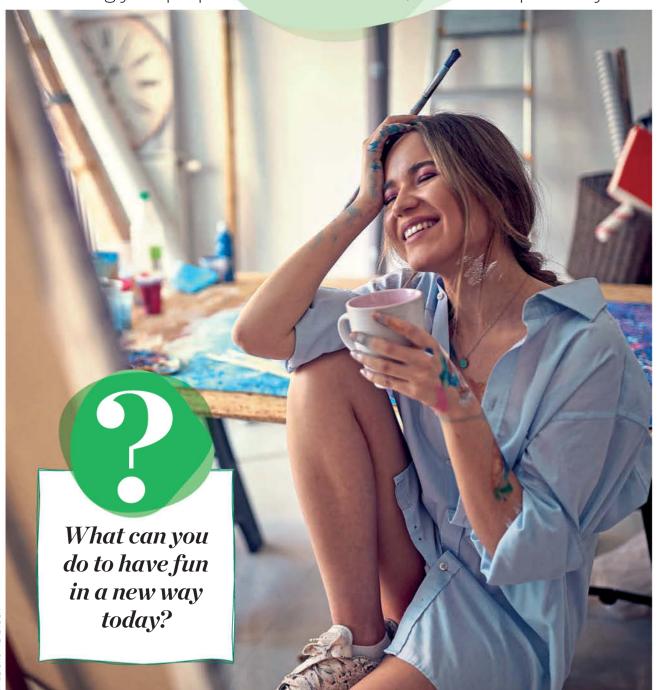
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Discover ways to make your soul sing... with creativity, nature, finding your purpose in life and at work, travel and spirituality



DEGELET I I G. TOAA



In the palm of your hand

Read between the lines and tap into a person's unique personality and potential – Johnny Fincham introduces the ancient art of palmistry...

umans have always been fascinated by their hands. If we take a deep dive into history, even prehistoric cave dwellers saw their hands as markers of their individuality. Anthropologists argue that the palm prints found in prehistoric caves around the world

were our ancestors' attempts to leave a personal signature of ownership. As each palm print is unique, this would have shown exactly who lived where.

Today, palmistry is principally a means of self-knowledge. It isn't a form of fortune telling; no tall, dark, handsome strangers are marked in your hand, nor will it tell you how long you'll live. But truly astonishing information can be gleaned from the palm: sensitivity, emotional balance, confidence, intelligence, and many other qualities.

There are four basic skin textures you will find on a person's palm, and each one indicates a different thing...

GRAINY SKIN

If the skin feels grainy, or the print shows firm, hard skin ridges with strong, red lines like cuts, the person is action-orientated. They are always busy and are by nature 'doers'. This skin type – known as grainy skin – is common among sporty and business-minded people. Grainy skin is much more common on males than on females.

PAPER SKIN

If the skin feels papery, dry and is slightly yellow, or the print shows tightly grained, fine skin ridges with long, scratchy lines, the person is cerebral and highly visual. They are sensitive but a little cool, and responsive to ideas, images, speech, and language. This skin type – known as paper skin – is common among teachers, office workers, call-centre operatives, and anyone who uses technology and communication skills at work.

CONSIDER HAND SPAN

Hand span can also reveal insights into a person. Check hand span by measuring across the palm, starting halfway up, just above the thumb. Now compare it with the length, which should be measured from just below the middle finger to the base of the palm. Is the palm broad, perhaps as wide as it is long? Or is it narrow, giving the hand an oblong shape? Broad palms show a fixed, stable, practical outlook. The person tends to seek order and to impose stability. If the palm is narrow, this indicates a more intuitive, instinctive and creative approach to life. Individuals with oblong-shaped palms are highly responsive to their environment and are strongly affected by other people. Those with very narrow palms can sometimes be psychologically sensitive, and tend to be more introverted.

COARSE SKIN

If the skin feels hard and rough,
with ridges that look and feel like wood,
or the print shows only a few deep lines, the
person is a hardy, outdoors type. They are
more practical than emotional. This skin
type – called coarse skin – is common among
farmers, gardeners and manual workers.
They are impervious to the outside
temperature and love to keep moving.
It's rare to see coarse skin on a
female, even if they work
outdoors.



In the early 1960s, the palmist, artist and astrologer Fred Gettings revived a centuries-old method of categorising palms that is extremely effective. He developed a four-fold system, classifying palms by the traditional elements of earth, water, fire and air. This works very well for the 70 per cent of people who have a clearly defined palm shape element. Unfortunately, 30 per cent of palms are undefined and difficult to categorise in this way.

It's important to note that those who show a clear element always have some contradictions at a deeper level of analysis, which stop them conforming 100 per cent to any one element. However, when a hand does fall into a classic elemental pattern, it's a wonderful, powerful way of reading the overall nature of their character before you get into a detailed analysis. The elemental system takes the whole hand, including the fingers, into account.







FIRE HAND

Fire hands have rectangular palms but they are not as narrow as water hands (below right). The fingers are short (but not as short as earth fingers, right), the palm is warm and dry, and the lines are deep and red. People with fire hands tend to have muscular or wiry physiques, short hair and intense eyes. They often find it difficult to relax, and usually switch off through sport or exercise. Fire-handed people are responsive, like those with water hands, but since they are broader with shorter fingers, consciousness is inclined towards change and action.

Fire brings about transformation and heat, and people with fire hands are always interested in self-development, acquiring skills, moving on, going places and doing things. Fire naturally abhors water, so deeper feelings and emotions tend to be ignored, repressed or displaced. Career is crucial because these individuals often feel that what they do is what they are. Achievement, kudos and power are the means by which they seek fulfilment. They're best suited to work that is challenging and allows them to use their initiative, such as self-employment, management positions, entrepreneurial enterprises, the media, money markets, and motivating other people - in fact, any situation that is fast-moving and has an element of excitement.

EARTH HAND

Earth hands are square, thick and heavy. The hand is fleshy and well padded, there are very few lines, and the fingers are short and stiff. Earth-handed people are usually short and thickset, and have natural strength and endurance. They are endowed with practical, manual skills and are likely to have a craft. Their life view tends toward pragmatism, and they are sceptical of abstract philosophies, ideals and high-minded views. They trust only what's familiar and tried-and-tested. Family and home, tradition and the past are enormously important in earth consciousness. People with this hand type usually have large families, and, because they are reliable, unpretentious and stable, they make good parents. Often, they will sacrifice opportunity in favour of security, and change is viewed with apprehension. Earth hands are displayed by those who do the crucial work that supports society, but that often goes unnoticed.

WATER HAND

Water hands have a narrow, rectangular palm. The fingers are long and flexible, and the lines are numerous, fine and delicate. Water types usually have pale skin and highly flexible joints. The narrow nature of the palm makes a water person highly receptive to their environment. The water hand is a sign of a changeable nature, driven by impulse, sensation and emotion.

Relationships dominate water people's consciousness. These individuals are also astute at making connections intuitively and creatively between ideas, objects and people. This gives them an intensely spiritual perspective, which often manifests in artistic qualities. Since they are driven by deeper impulses, water people tend to seek careers that are neither monotonous nor too physically demanding, such as alternative therapists, counsellors, artists, poets, social workers, charity workers and beauticians. Water-handed people dislike disagreements and abhor competition. Instead, they tend to seek harmony and inner calm.

AIR HAND

Air hands have a square palm, but whereas the earth palm is thickboned, the air palm has light, bird-like bones and the fingers are long. Air palms are the largest of the elemental hands and the palm is usually covered with lots of lines. The air-handed physique tends to be tall and thin. Often the person has visual problems, and their hair is extremely fine. They are the most prone to psychological stress, and the ability to be spontaneous and passionate is

People with air hands are primarily conceptual in nature and tend toward thought, analysis and ideas. They can also veer toward non-conformism, since they follow their own views on life. Journalists, social commentators and comedians all tend to have such hands. The worlds of teaching, planning, consultancy, research and science are all air-hand dominated ones. Air types like to work alone and to have a high degree of autonomy.

compromised by an ever-alert mind.

THE VENUS MOUNT

This large, fleshy mound at the base of the thumb protects the major veins and nerves that connect the hand to the rest of the body. Its size and firmness are general indicators of lust for life, capacity for human warmth, and physical resources. When this mount is large and well padded, it's likely that the person has a great capacity to enjoy themselves and will be vigorous, warm, generous, physical and energetic. Often, an enlarged Venus mount indicates the need to really embrace life in a full and lusty manner. When it is soft, flat or spongy, there may be a certain lassitude present – the person can lack energy and vitality.

CREATING A

fter much soul searching and seeking to find my purpose, as well as to equip myself better to be the editor of this wonderful magazine, a few months ago I set out on a journey to become a qualified life coach.

I've always been the kind of person people open up to. It's part of what makes me a good journalist, and so, I admit, I felt I had a bit of a head start. This, paired with my perfectionism (which I try to let go of but quietly persists), meant I had high expectations of myself as I entered those first few sessions. For all you qualified coaches out there wryly shaking your heads, I should probably come clean at this stage (and you probably won't be surprised): I have not yet had life coaching myself. Perhaps this meant I went into the programme with a slightly skewed idea of exactly what we would be looking at. I thought it would be mainly question based, and questions are something I'm good at - ask my interviewees, my colleagues, heck, even my kids. They come non-stop, usually good ones, and allow me to grasp a situation pretty quickly. They stem from my innate, often insatiable, curiosity - I really am very nosy!

But with coaching, all that goes out of the window. The aim here is not the headline, the killer quote, or just 'getting the story'. As soon as the course kicked off proper, we learnt that the point is to work in service of the client. It's the foundation of coaching that everything we do is client centred.

So as a coach my curiosity is going to have to take a back seat (and it's not the only thing!).

In our first full sessions we worked on discussing low-level 'problems' with a colleague from the course. My partner discussed an issue with their home, dismissing it as unimportant and a bit silly. But it clearly played on their mind, and as we dug deeper, we uncovered feelings triggered by this issue that showed why it was niggling them so much. And my curiosity was triggered, too. Why do they feel like this? What else is going on? Is it down to working from home, to Covid, to parenting? As each question bubbled up, I fought to stop it, to bite it back. Is that question in service of them, or is it my nosiness taking over? The result was a slower conversation than I am used to, more pauses, delays, time to think, for me and for them. At first it felt awkward, and clunky. But then I saw their face relax as we discussed the issue; after my faltering questioning, they seemed to feel more comfortable with the problem, and feel less annoyed at themselves for letting it bother them. At this stage, that felt like a win for us both, and one I was happy to take.

In my next session as coach, my questioning issues were set to one side to deal with another demon – the challenge of advice – or, rather, *not* advising. A partner was questioning their purpose, looking at how life, work and family fits together. At this point I had 43 years of life experience behind me, 14 years of parenting, and only a







As she starts coaching training in earnest, Psychologies editor-in-chief Sally Saunders discovers how much she has to learn



couple of weeks of coach training, but I did try to do the right things. We talked through the issues, looking at it from different angles. But eventually the coaching got put on the back burner and the life-experience voice won out. I turned into a mentor, a friendly adviser, a big sister, giving my viewpoint on their parenting, the right choices for them. I felt better - briefly. However, one of the crucial elements of this course is providing feedback to each other. My partner could have let me continue blithely on (I felt like I'd given some good advice; in the normal course of life, I'd be pretty comfortable having had that conversation with a friend). But instead of taking the easy way out and patting me on the back, my partner gently pointed out I was giving my viewpoint on their behaviour, motivations and actions in a way that wasn't really coaching.

I was stumped. Surely they felt better after my kind words of support? Well, perhaps, but my words aren't really what matters.

We discussed this issue with our group, and with our wonderful course tutor, Rachel Varrilly Gierula. She explained that coaching isn't about me telling my client what to do, or how to feel, it's about me helping them find it out for themselves. She explained that one of the monumental figures in the area is Nancy Kline, the creator of the Time to Think movement, the central idea of which is that 'the mind that holds the problem also holds the solution'. I could see I had been trying to provide solutions, or just calm a new friend who seemed troubled, but, on that morning at least, I wasn't coaching. I remembered my thoughts before I set out on the course - I'd promised myself I wouldn't let perfectionism stand in my way so I decided to try again.

The brilliant way Barefoot training is planned introduces us gently to concepts then helps you build up layer upon layer of knowledge and experience – and, crucially, gives you support and tools that help to overcome any issues like those I experienced. This is an important part of the coaching system – providing frameworks within which to carry out coaching. So we learnt about everything from the Grow model to career timelines, circles of excellence to peak experiences. Each one sounded a little bit strange as it was introduced, and at least one member of

Sally Saunders has been provided a complementary place on Barefoot Coaching's ICF-accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Business and Personal Coaching. This programme is approved as a Masters-level programme by the University of Chester as part of the Work Based and Integrative Studies accreditation (WBIS). The $course\, costs$ £5,500 + VAT*

our group expressed doubt, or simple confusion. But as we tried them out, so many were a revelation! I expected to feel restricted by these models: after all, I don't need a framework for a conversation, surely - I've been having them all my life! But what I found was that they gave me ways to ask questions that meant my curiosity didn't overpower me, and I didn't spend the session biting my tongue - instead, I sat and patiently listened. Likewise, my need to provide advice and mentoring was soon removed when I discovered the ability to guide my client to come to their own solutions, instead of trying to provide solutions myself. The challenges I faced in the first couple of sessions didn't disappear overnight, but as the weeks went past I found more and more sessions felt like I was actually doing this thing!

My feedback improved too. In normal life, despite my tendency to ask lots of questions, I'm also quite a quiet person – something I don't feel particularly proud of; it's always felt like a weakness. But, here, I've been getting great comments about what a calming presence I have, how easy I am to talk to, and how people are enjoying our sessions. It's a huge step forward for me to see this side of my character as a strength, and makes me feel more grateful than ever that I've stumbled upon a really exciting opportunity.

There are still a few bumps in the road, but my confidence is growing each week. The next step is a big one: to coach real people! Instead of coaching other trainees on the course, who know what it's all about and are prepared for the occasionally crazy conversations we have, we get to try this stuff out in the real world! Wish me luck...



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Hello!

When the world feels like it's spinning too fast, it's completely natural to grab on to something and hold on tight. But putting all

your energies into one area of your life can lead

to things feeling off kilter. Our new Psychologies journal will help you to see what is working for you, and where you think you need to invest more time and energy, so that you can begin to live a balanced life and make every day better.



 \bigvee ally χ Sally Saunders, Editor-in-Chief







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Retreat into August

Spot a meteor, visit a feelgood festival in Gloucestershire, and become a soul-voyager on a wellness break in Wales



Spot a shooting star

Every August, it's worth remembering that it's time for the Perseid meteor shower, when you can look up at the night sky and see shooting stars. So why not take yourself off one night for some meteor spotting? Debris from the comet Swift-Tuttle provides the show, which continues for around a month but will be at its peak this year on the night of 12 August and into the early hours of the next day. Try to find somewhere with minimal light pollution, a clear sky and a wide view for the best chances of seeing them. The darker it is, the more likely you will spot a bright little light streaking across the sky. And if you want to make a wish, well that's up to you!



TAKE A BREATHER

If you've always dreamed of running away to the circus now could be your chance: Soul Circus returns this year, providing you the chance to stretch out in yoga tipis and lush countryside by day and

dance under the stars by night. Launched in 2017, the event which runs from 17 to 20 August - features a host of wellbeing activities, with music, yoga and holistic therapies meeting glittery festival antics and DJ after-parties. It takes place in the beautiful setting of Elmore. in the Cotswold hills. Masters of yoga host sunrise sessions, aerial classes, and mindfulness workshops by day, while at night DJs set the skies alight with thrilling shows and exhilarating music. Electronic duo Groove Armada, of I See You Baby fame, will be headlining on the Friday, offering you the chance to 'shake your ass' as well as practise your downward dog. soulcircus.yoga

Dreaming of a break?

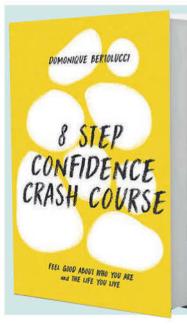
Singer Charlotte Church has founded a new wellness retreat in mid-Wales. The Dreaming is in the Elan Valley at Rhydoldog House. A range of activities are on offer, and guests are invited to try as many or as few as they wish – including sound healing, foraging, mythic storytelling, and den building. You can also visit the outdoor cinema and the silent disco. The retreat, set amongst stunning countryside, runs over three days, either at the weekend or midweek. Prices start at £450, with one 'pay what you can' space on every retreat. **thedreaming.co.uk**



The words

We're with CS Lewis, who said, 'You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me.' Alex Lloyd provides the inspiration...





Book of the month

8 Step Confidence Crash Course by Domonique Bertolucci (Hardie Grant, £15)

There's no point having goals in life if you don't feel content. Reformed self-critic Domonique

Bertolucci learned this the hard way, and now she wants to teach us all to embrace our flaws as the flipside of our strengths.

The bestselling author of *The Happiness Code* isn't selling you snake oil, however. Her guide is down-to-earth and achievable, written like a best friend, with oodles of common sense.

Each step to better self-belief – from 'Give up perfection' to 'Fall in love with yourself' – is broken into bite-sized chunks, with real-world examples to inspire you.

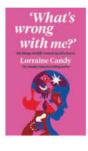
There's also a free workbook to download, to reinforce the key lessons and help put theory into practice.

'What's Wrong With Me?' by Lorraine Candy

(HarperCollins, £16.99)

When magazine editor and mum-offour Lorraine Candy was struck down with anxiety, brain fog and imposter syndrome, she feared a brain tumour – or insanity. But her physical and emotional crisis was down to midlife, and the changes that women need to navigate, often without a roadmap. Now, Candy has created the guide she lacked, weaving her searingly honest story together with experts' insight.

Frank about the myth of 'having it all' – which often leads to 'doing it all' – this is ultimately a hopeful read, re-framing midlife as an opportunity, rather than an end.

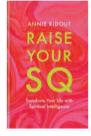


Raise Your SQ by Annie Ridout

(Octopus, £18.99)

Prioritising your head over your heart isn't always the route to success and satisfaction, writer and life coach Annie Ridout believes. Having grown up around oracle cards and reiki, she didn't share the cynicism about spirituality held by many of her peers. But it wasn't until she embraced this side of her life again that she found balance, professionally and personally. Her guide leads you through the

ways to connect with your inner self, whether that's affirmations, totems or tarot, with the clear message that manifesting your dreams requires hard work as well as hope.



Just Getting Started by Lisa Snowdon

(HarperCollins, £16.99)

As a top-model-turned-presenter, Lisa Snowdon has lived what seems like a charmed life. But from her first period, she has ridden a rollercoaster of hormones, finally crashing into perimenopause in her early forties – just as she met her soulmate.

A candid confessional about sex, weight gain, toxic relationships, and anxiety, this is honest without being sensational – and positive rather than

looking for pity.

Most moving are the passages about the grief of losing her chance to have children, and the public judgment and insensitivity around her not being a mum.

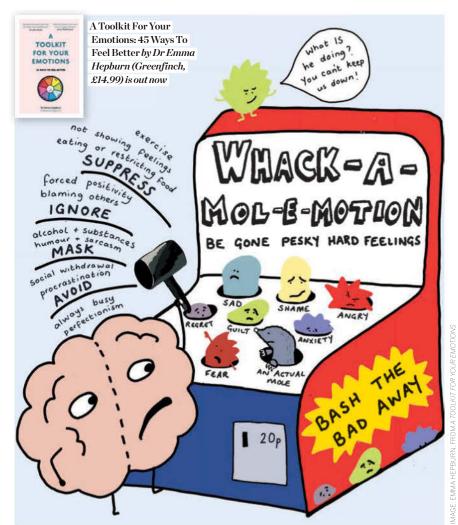


How to be happier

Emma Hepburn, aka The Psychology Mum, shares how to bring more bliss into your life

ife is tough at times, and it's inevitable that your emotional rollercoaster will experience some nose-dives. No one gets through life without feeling tough or unpleasant emotions at some point. But unlike on a real-life rollercoaster, no one raises their hands and cheers as they roll into these feel-bad stretches of track. It's an interesting fact that we have far more words for so-called negative emotions than positive emotions. Yet, despite having far more words for them, we tend to speak about them less. Often, we don't want to focus on them at all and find ways to push them away or avoid them. It's the most natural thing in the world to try to get away from something unpleasant. Unfortunately, it's not so easy to shut away the feelings that exist in our brain and body. In fact, this tends to make them come back stronger, or pop out in ways we don't expect.

One of the main reasons we want to get away from crappy emotions is obvious - no one wants to feel rubbish. I've never met anybody who said, 'It was great when I felt really anxious the other day' or 'I had a wonderful time when I was depressed'. We may also feel ill-equipped to deal with them: they might make us feel out of control; or we might feel fearful that if we let them in, we will make them worse. Alternatively, we might think we just don't have time to deal with these pesky difficult emotions that disrupt our busy life. Our beliefs play a role too: we may think we shouldn't be feeling this way so push it aside, or we might try to mask our feelings because we believe that feeling good is the only acceptable emotion to display. Let's be honest, we are never going to open our arms and welcome our difficult emotions, but we don't need to push them away either. Instead of

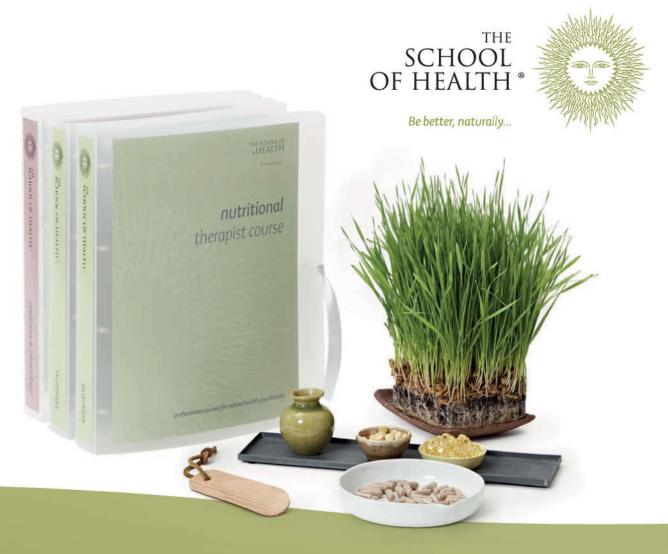


battling with them, we can learn to sit alongside them, with acceptance that they are an inevitable and necessary part of life. Research shows this can help stop the dips lurching down further.

Avoidance is when we try to not experience an emotion by distracting ourselves. Think about ways that you avoid emotions. Some distractions can be helpful but, like all coping strategies, it can depend on their function. Does this distraction help to support you with

difficult emotions and help you respond to them, or is it used to simply block them out? Exercise is a great example of this – it has a good evidence base for helping improve depression and reduce anxiety, and often people feel it helps clear their mind. Yet, I have worked with people who use exercise excessively to block out all those bad emotions. Look over the items listed on the image above, and consider whether you use them to block out emotions or to support your emotions.

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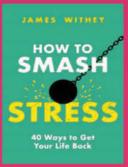
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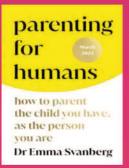
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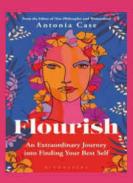
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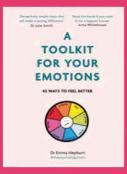


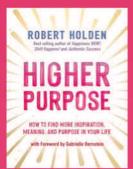


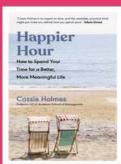


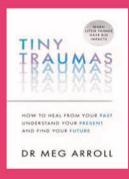


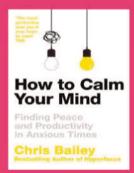


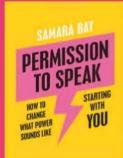












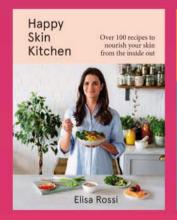




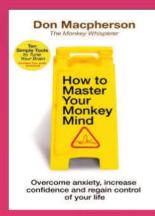
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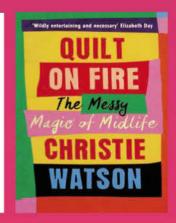
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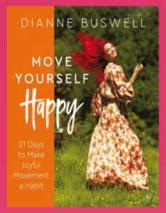
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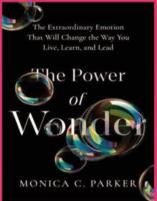


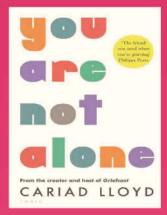






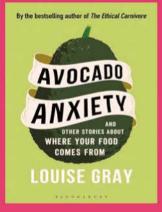


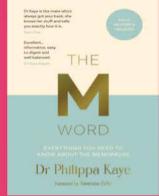


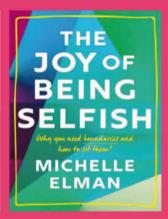












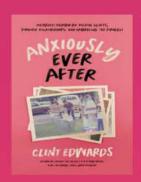


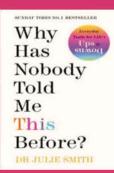
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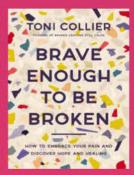
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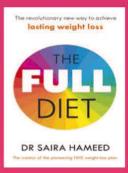


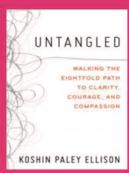


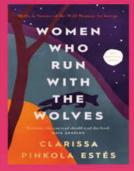






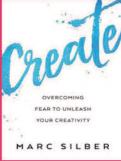


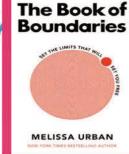


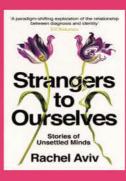


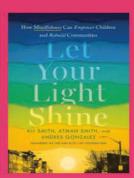


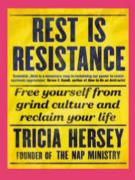


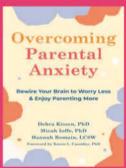


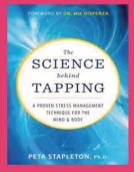














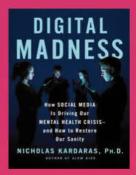


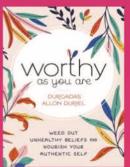


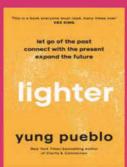
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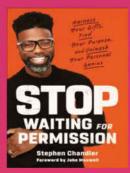
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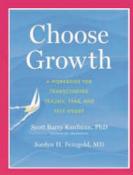




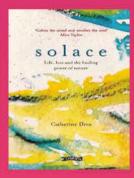


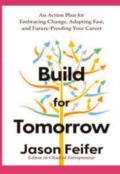


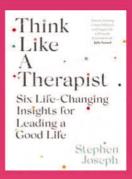


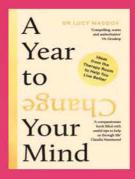


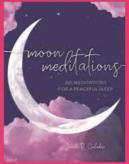


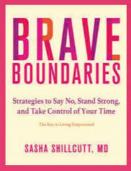


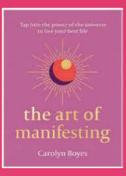










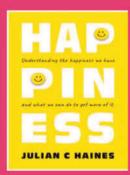


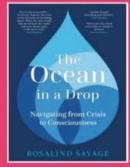










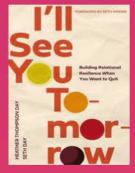


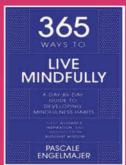


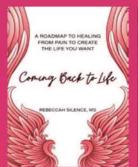
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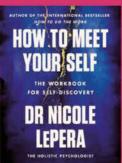


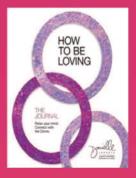
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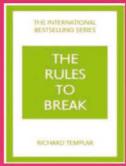


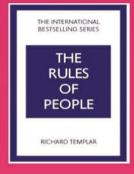


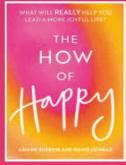


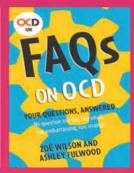






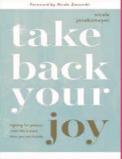


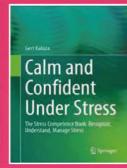




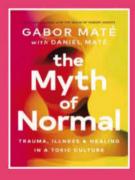


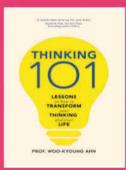




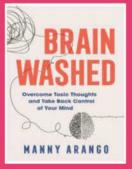


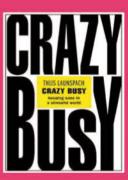














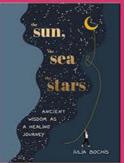
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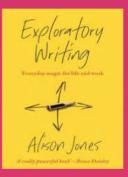
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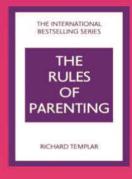


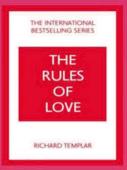


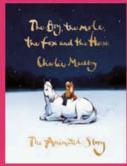


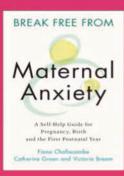








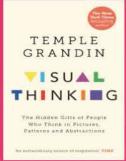




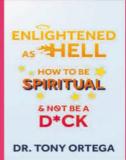




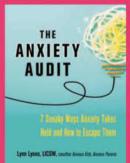




















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