

EXPERT **PROFILE**
WELLNESS
MAGAZINE

Expert Profile

Issue 4

W e l l n e s s

More
from our
global
experts
on
wellness

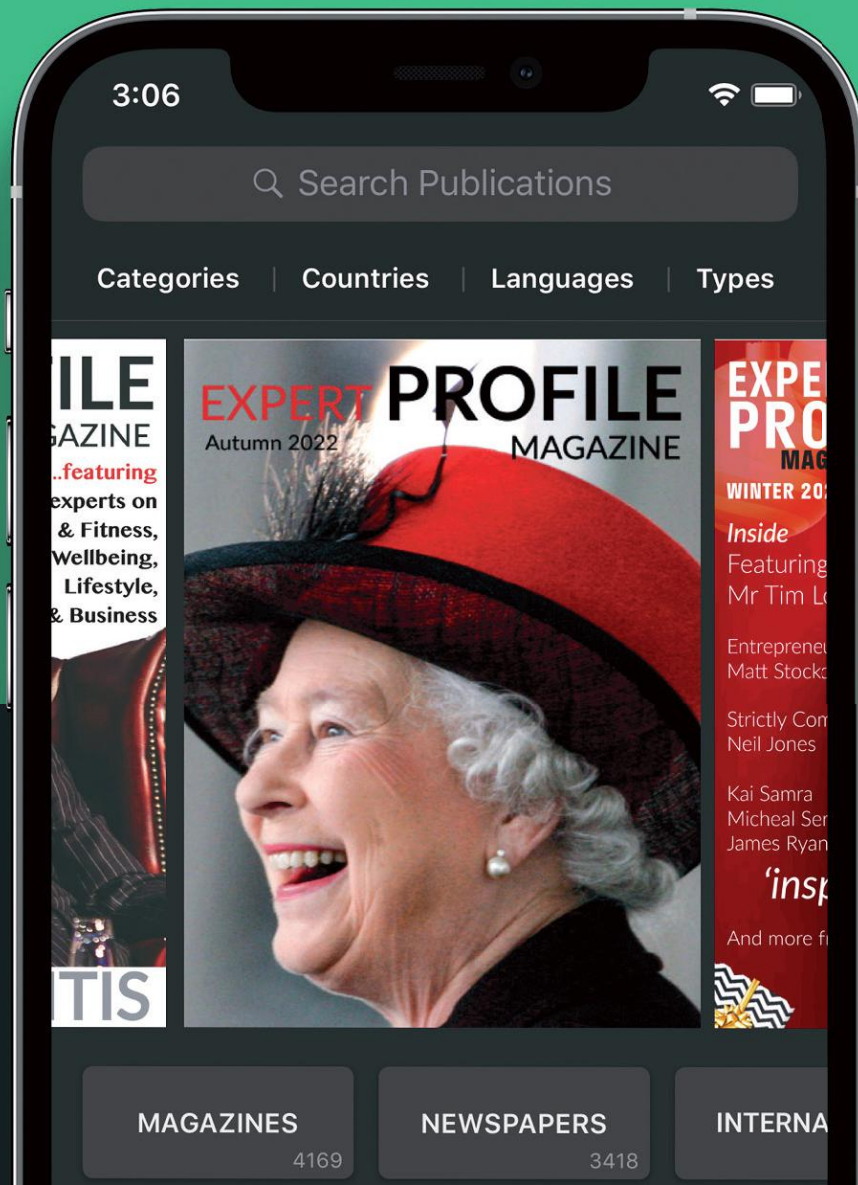
*The Story 'so far' of
Lisa Andrews
Holistic therapist & psychic*



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EDITORS NOTE

As we usher in the warmth and excitement of summer, there is a palpable sense of anticipation in the air. The long, sun-drenched days bring with them a host of activities and joys, but for many of us football fans, –the European Championships.

There is something truly magical about football. It transcends borders, languages, and cultures, uniting people from all walks of life in a shared passion. This sport, with its simple yet profound essence, captures the hearts of millions and brings us together in a way few other things can.

The European Championships are not just a tournament; they are a celebration of unity and diversity. Fans from every corner of the continent—and indeed, the world—come together to support their teams, revel in the beautiful game, and create memories that last a lifetime. Whether you are cheering from a packed stadium, a lively pub, or the comfort of your own home, the sense of community is undeniable.

As we look forward to this summer’s championships, let us embrace the spirit of each other. Let us celebrate our families, friends, colleagues, neighbours, and all human life. Most importantly, let us cherish the connections we forge through our shared passion.

Enjoy this issue of the Wellness edition, featuring our experts, who all share a similar passion for service. Like football, their work brings people together. Their invaluable advice on maintaining physical and mental health reminds us all of the importance of balance and self-care. Their dedication to promoting wellness is yet another testament to the unifying power of shared passions.

Rany Athwall
Editor



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Celebrating the story 'so far' of Lisa Andrews



Finding equilibrium between intuition and practicality is essential for a fulfilling and purpose-driven life.

Let me take you back to the beginning of my life. I have been told that I came into the world smiling and have been smiling ever since. Often, people jump to the conclusion that my life has been easy when, in fact, it's very much the opposite; as a young child, I was a deep thinker. I couldn't shake the feeling that I was different. My deep thoughts and introspective nature set me apart from other children. From a young age, I found myself attuned to energies and emotions in a way that transcended typical sensory experiences. This sensitivity often left me feeling overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of emotions I would be feeling. I would avoid being in large crowds and would find solitude wherever possible. The awkwardness I displayed outwardly often made me appear hard to approach and include in social circles. It was challenging for me to discern my emotions from other people. I would have dreams which would then play out in real life; now, as an adult, I recognise this as psychic awareness.

This heightened awareness would leave me confused as I didn't understand what was happening. It also left me feeling emotionally drained and unable to express my own feelings. This is a theme that continued for many years until later down the line when I had a deeper understanding of my psychic abilities. Despite my deep intuitive awareness and connection to energies beyond the physical realm, I was never a fan of the word "psychic." In many circles, the word carries connotations of mysticism and the supernatural. It wasn't that particular opinion that led me to dislike the descriptive word; it was the lack of understanding and judgment I would go on to receive from others. I would experience dismissive attitudes and skepticism. Throughout my childhood and adolescent years, it was spoken about much less than it is now. The only media coverage I saw back then would add to my belief that psychics aren't taken seriously and were showcased only for entertainment purposes and ridicule. I never heard anything positive or accepting. As someone who values groundedness, rationality, integrity, and truth, I sadly became allergic to my true self. Blending in with society and societal expectations, I quickly learned how to have menial conversations as opposed to the deep, meaningful conversations I naturally craved. I grew up hiding who I naturally am.

My introduction to tarot cards in 1997, at the age of 16, during a fated meeting was truly a game changer for me. I met up with my older brother, Chris. Our sibling relationship had always been a close bond; I had someone I didn't need to hide my true self from; I knocked on the door of the house he was

in. I felt calm and at peace as soon as I entered the home. I was meeting a group of strangers for the first time, yet I didn't feel socially awkward, and the shyness that would usually paralyse my whole being didn't pay me a visit on this day. I had unknowingly interrupted a spiritual circle. In a supportive and non-judgmental environment, people come together to explore and deepen their spiritual beliefs, practices, and experiences through discussion, mediation, and various rituals. At 16, I felt profoundly misunderstood, a sensation that fuelled intense, fiery emotions within me. I found myself feeling surprisingly calm. One of the individuals approached me with a tarot deck, saying that someday I would understand how to use them. Teenage me expressed gratitude but promptly packed them away, unaware of the transformative journey the cards would eventually lead me on.

A year after this interaction, I was in a state of uncertainty, drifting without a clear direction; seeking a path to help others, I enrolled in a college course in health and social care, a decision that seemed logical at the time, yet I never felt a true passion for the education system or the career path it offered. As a free spirit, I left home at a young age, shortly after beginning college, enjoying the taste of newfound freedom. While packing my belongings for the journey ahead, I stumbled upon the tarot cards given to me a year prior, a forgotten gift that now held the promise of unlocking hidden truths on my unconventional path. Dedicating myself to mastering this new skill became a passion project. With no online tutorials or forums to rely on, I turned to regular trips to the library. I excitedly read every book on tarot I could find and practiced on anyone who would allow me. It opened up a whole new world of possibilities and self-discovery. I cherished the sense of liberation and spiritual alignment that enveloped me whenever I engaged with tarot cards, relishing the opportunity to explore the depths of my mind and soul in a truly liberating way.

Despite experiencing immense happiness while delving into tarot, my appreciation was hindered by the subtle influence of societal norms, which suggested that such practices weren't taken seriously and were merely regarded as a hobby rather than a tool for self-discovery and spiritual growth. With this societal influence in mind, I continued to adhere to the perceived expectations placed upon me, dutifully following the path I believed was conventional and accepted. I consider this part of my life as my sliding doors moment. Had I not started working at a call centre., future events in my life would have been very different. I would encounter the man with whom I would have

two beautiful daughters, a significant milestone that unfolded a year later. I had never approached life by planning anything until I reached my 30s.

My intuition led me through every decision of my life. I wasn't about to start questioning it now. I may not have spoken about it, but I have always trusted it. It resolutely affirmed that starting a family at a young age was the right path for me, resonating deeply within every part of my being. It didn't make sense on a logical level and when considering practicality. I lacked financial stability and a concrete long-term plan. Yet, amidst these uncertainties, I was certain of my overwhelming love and the undeniable brightness it immediately brought into my life. I was excited about what lay ahead.

“What came next, however, was year after year of relentless pain-wrenching challenges and obstacles.”

The pregnancy wasn't plain sailing; I had pre-eclampsia. I stayed for two weeks in the hospital. I was lucky, and my health improved enough to go home. Two weeks after my 21st birthday, I had my first born. Their dad was by my side, and my family was in the waiting room, eagerly awaiting to share the celebration. I was beyond exhausted, and the nurses were concerned. I powered on, an obvious character trait of mine. Despite the setback, I somehow always manage to find the resilience to rise again and continue the fight. My health had improved, but it led me to a diagnosis of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS). My eldest had to spend two weeks in the special care baby unit. This was my first memory of acknowledging that angels are walking this earth in human form. I remember feeling extreme guilt when I was able to leave with my now healthy daughter, yet leaving behind families not celebrating.

Just as I was settling into the role of being a mother, my world came crashing down around me. 2 weeks prior to getting the news that would tip my world upside down; I had predicted it. It was almost like someone had said it to me, but I didn't hear the words. I now recognise this as being claircognizant (having clear

knowing). I had been walking down my local high street when I suddenly stopped in my tracks. I looked at my mum and had the saddest feeling that soon, she would have the news that my big brother, my only sibling, had passed. Sure enough, I was next to her two weeks later, as my dad told her. I had already made the phone call requesting my daughter's dad come and collect her as I could sense the news was pending imminently. There were no goodbyes; in the blink of an eye, my biggest supporter had left the earth two months before his 26th. When my eldest was poorly in hospital, he chose to drive a two-hour round trip each day after work to make sure I felt supported. Now, here I was, having to live life without him. My only comfort was that the last words we ever said to each other were, “I love you.” The days that followed are a blur. My heart shattered for my parents. I had always picked up on other people's emotions; this pain was unbearable. There was no plaster for this. No quick fix. The only chance of me remotely feeling better would be for me to go all the way through the pain. To lean into it, not ignore it.

Acknowledging the grief would be healthy. That's not what I did. I did the complete opposite of that. I was 21 and shocked. I didn't have the tool kit of life. It wasn't even half full. I had so much to learn about grief. I thrust myself into work. Anything that could keep my mind sufficiently distracted from the heartbreak. One year, almost to the day, my second daughter was born. I discovered that humans can feel a multitude of emotions at once. Happiness and deep sorrow co-existed in my world, but most days, depression won.

Not that anyone would have noticed. My smile was the perfect cover-up. Autopilot got me through. One day rolled into another. My world suddenly looked different, more bleak. With the help of a trained grief therapist, I became more aware of the importance of people and our connections with others. I had the harsh realisation that each day wasn't promised. For this life to be worthwhile, we have to make it count. Soon enough, the relationship with the girl's dad broke down. We weren't built on solid foundations. There were lots of hard challenges within that relationship. It was clear I needed to leave. I knew it was best for myself and our girls. It's never an easy task. I carried guilt for a long time that I had chosen to break up 'the family unit.' Even with a clear conscience, the guilt was so intense some days. This misplaced guilt would encourage me not to speak up. To people, please, I felt I owed people something because I had the audacity to put the needs of my daughters and myself first. The years that followed were no less stressful or challenging.

As a single mum, I prioritised my role as a parent; I took on a full-time administration role while running my spiritual business. I never had the confidence to launch my business full-time. It came down to deep-rooted insecurity and doubt. I was enjoying the new job and connecting with new people, but at the same time, I knew it wasn't my calling. Whilst navigating the new job position, my intuition screamed at me once again, loud and clear. I had the sinking feeling that my world would be flipped upside down once again. I knew this feeling oh too well—the sense of impending doom.

What happened next would once again tear me apart at the seams. My kids were in the middle of a family court battle. When emotions run high, ego often takes over. This part of my story is pivotal to how I discovered healing. It's also the part I wish to keep brief about out of respect for my children. Children are precious. They are emotional and sensitive beings. They shouldn't have to spend a lifetime unpacking trauma. Having children should mean putting their emotional needs first. Having to attend family court caught me off guard, and once again, I was gasping for air. No one is a winner in a situation like that. I started to see a common—theme running through my life.



“Intuition and psychic abilities thrive when the mind is still.”



Everything important to me seems to come at a price, and I couldn't understand why. I just knew there had to be a deeper reason.

Despite the deep sense of disorientation, I made a firm commitment to myself. I wouldn't allow any setback to turn me bitter. Life was hard enough, I didn't want to block myself from any chance of happiness that may come my way. I kept hope alive. Willing for a brighter day to come. I have always loved to read and learn. I've always had an inquisitive and curious mind—a thirst for knowledge. Sitting in a waiting room one day, I picked up a book to read. This book was all about the benefits of holistic healing and meditation. What did I have to lose? Although I was aware and understood about energy, I had never slowed down long enough to take it seriously. I had been in survival mode for so long that I hadn't noticed I was suffering from burnout. I was inspired, so I picked up the phone and booked my first healing session, Rehanni Healing (an angelic hands-on healing). Since I was a child, I have believed in angels. In moments of despair, I would sense a comforting presence around me, offering me solace and reassurance. In moments of vulnerability, I felt their guiding presence. It made sense to me that my healing would have an angel connection.

Attending the Rahanni healing session, I experienced an immediate sense of release and calm washing over me. Engaging in this holistic healing therapy and consistent meditation practice provided me with newfound clarity. It allowed me to see through the fog of uncertainty and confusion. I had at this time also been battling with the education system for one of my daughters, who has autism and PTSD. Feeling helpless and unable to alleviate my daughter's emotional struggles, therapy, meditation, and healing provided me with a lifeline. It helped me manage my emotions and brought my energy back into alignment. I could navigate challenges more easily. I was able to support my daughter better through the challenges that she faced. As each day passed, I was confident about one thing: my intuition. It has never let me down, and now it is proving to be even more apparent. What I didn't expect, though, was that it would save my life.

The critical difference between anxiety and intuition lies in their origins. Anxiety often stems from fear or worry, leading to feelings of unease, restlessness, and apprehension. It tends to be accompanied by negative thoughts and possibly physical symptoms such as increased heart rate. Intuition, however, comes from a deeper instinctual understanding or a gut feeling. It guides us to what feels right for us. It's accompanied by a sense of calmness, clarity, and confidence, as opposed to the

distress associated with anxiety. Throughout my life, I have had many of what I like to call “aha moments,” each revealing insights or prompting significant actions that are crucial further down the line—one such moment happened in 2018 when I felt an inexplicable urge to get my blood screened. Despite not fully understanding the reason behind this impulse, I trusted my intuition and followed through with the request. Though I couldn't articulate it at the time, I knew it was the right thing to do. The results revealed that I have a genetic blood clotting disorder called Factor V Leiden; I was at a higher risk of conditions such as deep vein thrombosis. I made adjustments to my medications to ensure they were aligned with managing the condition effectively and went about my day.

With my nervous system calmer thanks to regular meditation, I found myself able to refocus my attention on one of my passions, tarot reading. The vivid visions that once visited me so clearly in my dreams now accompanied my tarot readings while I was awake, commonly known as clairvoyance. I expected this to be because I had found stillness.

Intuition and psychic abilities thrive when the mind is still. I found myself becoming increasingly comfortable with my gifts. Where once I had the urge to hide them away, I boldly stepped into my power, embracing my abilities with newfound confidence and conviction. Now that I had become confident in my own identity, I struck a delicate balance between kindness and assertiveness, maintaining firm boundaries while also standing up for myself and others when necessary. Although my mind and body were now calm, my body had weathered years of intense stress.

In 2019, my health took a significant downturn, marking the most physically severe setback. Little did I know that the time I had dedicated to nurturing my emotional and spiritual well-being would ultimately prove to be life-saving. Trusting and using my inner voice is the only reason I can tell my story. I found a mass in my left breast in November 2019. Unfortunately, it took another four visits until I got diagnosed with breast cancer at the start of the pandemic on April 2nd, 2020. I instinctively knew I had to keep going back until I was heard. I want to emphasize that I have the utmost respect for the NHS and its workers; I worked for the NHS as a receptionist at the time of my diagnosis. However, as is the case in many professions, there's always the possibility that someone may fail to adhere to policy guidelines properly.

Navigating breast cancer amidst the backdrop of the pandemic was undeniably gruelling; the inability to have my family by my side during the arduous journey of undergoing a mastectomy, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy by myself added another layer of pain and isolation. Not only did I have to fight for my life, but I also had to battle for justice to ensure incompetence wouldn't wreak havoc again. I qualified as a spiritual life coach while on chemotherapy to keep my mind busy during the fight for justice during the pandemic. I have been in remission since 2020. I have since been diagnosed with Hashimoto's disease, a condition that affects the thyroid, but I am managing it daily and feel healthy. Justice finally prevailed three years later in 2023, settling out of court coinciding with my reconstruction surgery, which I had also waited three years for due to the COVID-related backlogs. It became apparent that one of the medications

recommended for post-breast cancer treatment was contraindicated for patients with Factor V Leiden, as it could be potentially fatal. Had I not requested the blood screening two years prior, I would have remained unaware of the potential danger posed by medication, highlighting the critical importance of advocating for one's health and being proactive in medical decision-making. I was now in a medically induced menopause, being told that if I had waited to have kids, it would have been very difficult to navigate.

During my cancer journey, what became clear to me was the incredible resilience and kindness of some individuals. I encountered real-life heroes who selflessly dedicated themselves to helping others, restoring my faith in humanity and reminding me of the innate goodness that exists in this world and the importance of spreading it all around. This period of my life highlighted the importance of truly living and making a difference. I am fortunate to be in remission from cancer. I have since qualified as an Angelic Reiki Master and Advanced crystal healing practitioner. I am able to help bring peace and clarity to other people. I marvel at the synchronicities woven through my life that have brought me to this point.

Fuelled by this newfound sense of purpose and gratitude for being alive, I gained the confidence to pursue my holistic business full-time and haven't looked back. I am elated that my business has recently won a global recognition award, and I recently won a Global Supermind award for my service to humanity. I have become so comfortable with who I am that I am okay with not being understood by everybody, and I have embraced the word psychic. Being psychic is about tapping into a deeper understanding of the world and the energies surrounding us. It's about interpreting subtle clues, trusting instincts, and offering guidance rooted in empathy and compassion.

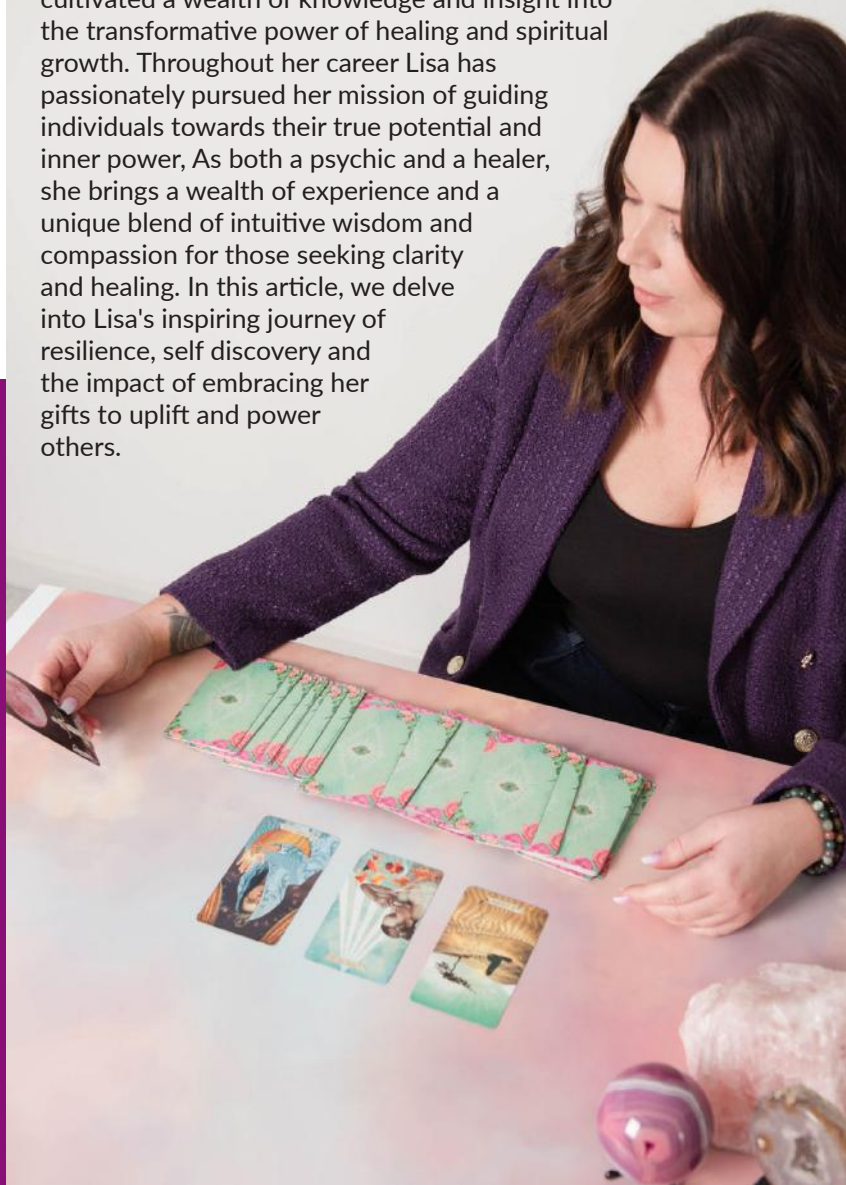
In conclusion, I find immense fulfilment in embracing my role as both a psychic and a healer. These intertwined aspects of my identity allow me to offer multifaceted support to those in need, guiding them on their path to self-discovery, healing, and empowerment. I recognise that my journey through pain and heartache has played a crucial role in shaping my ability to empathise and relate to others struggles. Had I not experienced these challenges first-hand, I may have lacked the depth of empathy needed to truly understand and connect with those seeking healing and guidance. Therefore, I am grateful for every obstacle I have overcome as it has enriched my capacity to support others on their own paths to wholeness compassionately.

Every hurdle I have faced along my journey has deepened my appreciation for the gift of intuition and strengthened my ability to stand confidently in my power. Through each challenge, I've gained invaluable insights, honed my intuitive skills, and emerged with a greater sense of self-awareness and resilience. I understand that balance is crucial in navigating life's complexities, and I remain committed to maintaining harmony between my spiritual pursuits and everyday responsibilities. Additionally, I am dedicated to advocating for autism awareness and combating exploitation.

Ensuring that all individuals are treated with dignity and respect is my priority. Finding equilibrium between intuition and practicality is essential for a fulfilling and purpose-driven life.



Lisa Andrews, an experienced practitioner in the holistic industry, with over 25 years of dedicated service, has cultivated a wealth of knowledge and insight into the transformative power of healing and spiritual growth. Throughout her career Lisa has passionately pursued her mission of guiding individuals towards their true potential and inner power. As both a psychic and a healer, she brings a wealth of experience and a unique blend of intuitive wisdom and compassion for those seeking clarity and healing. In this article, we delve into Lisa's inspiring journey of resilience, self discovery and the impact of embracing her gifts to uplift and power others.



The Golden Years

Love is in the air



The glorious beginning of Spring! The air smells sweeter and more fragrant from the opening buds and the yellow daffodils blooming. The squirrels begin to flirt with one another by chasing each other from limb to limb. The sun greets me with my morning coffee, and it feels like the world opens up to a fresher, more positive perspective.

Spring is in the air, and everyone, and everything, feels it. I can see it in how women begin to dress in the warmer weather: shorter skirts, open tank tops, and sandals. Everything seems more casual, easy, and accessible. Men notice, too. They seem to be highly aware that women are feeling more excited, and that makes them excited as well. The possibilities for romance seem inevitable as people begin to mix and venture out again. They're starting to feel themselves awakening from the drab, dull winter months and getting ready for the warm spring and summer.

As I am meeting with my couples, I ask them to become observant of this change in the universe, as well as in each other. What do you see, feel, and taste as you experience your partner in this new burgeoning, alluring second half of the year? This is

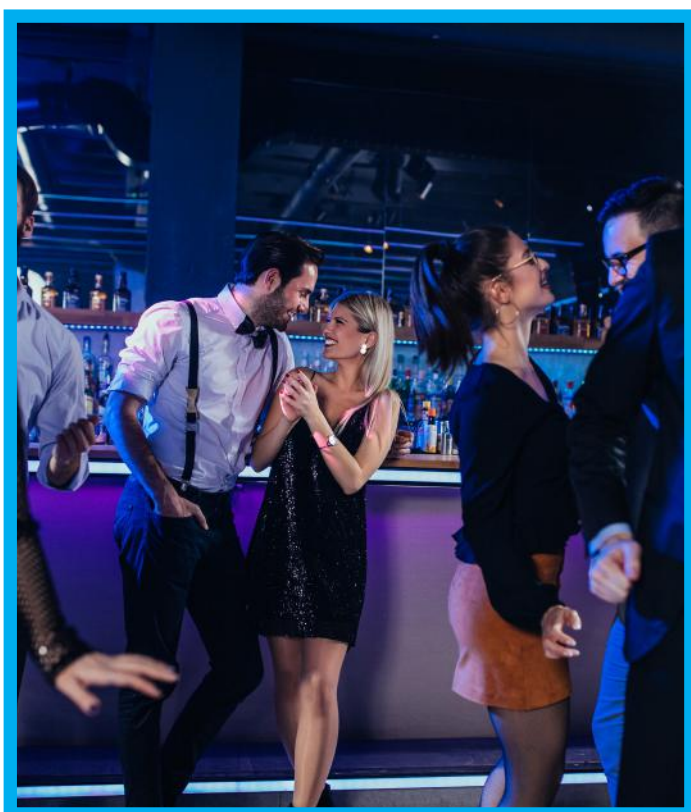
a wonderful time to begin reconnection if there has been a lack of romance or sexual drive between you. This is the time to begin to really admire your partner from a distance and make them feel wanted, needed, and appreciated. It is a wonderful time to try adding more affection to your daily interactions.

Why not spring awake and begin to excite your partner with some of those charming, tender gestures that have probably been lacking during the cold winter months? How do you reconnect and re-engage again, especially if the chill in your relationship has been there longer than the duration of the chilly winter months? Remember, valuing and respecting your partner's individuality is key to a successful relationship..

The key to reinfusing your marriage with romance is remembering that your partner is a person without you and beginning to see them as a separate entity. After many years together, couples often forget that they are each individuals with separate needs, wants, and desires. They have their own likes and dislikes and beliefs and interests, which we often forget to acknowledge when we're married. That separateness or 'mystery' is what attracts us to our partners initially but what seems to get lost over time. That unbalanced feeling of not knowing someone and getting to learn about them is sexy and alluring and creates flirtation.

To create this illusion of newness, couples need to start dating again. 'Dating' means imagining who your partner was before they were yours and using that as sexual fodder to build a more connected relationship. This may sound difficult, but it is actually quite simple! There is a great game that I play when I attend parties with my husband. I start by pretending in my mind that he's not my husband and that he is just a man having a drink and talking to other people. Your partner becomes immediately more attractive when they are untethered, and you view them as individuals with their interests and insights instead of those with whom you pay bills. You get to see them with fresh eyes and remember what attracted you to them in the first place.

It is essential to view our partners with a renewed perspective every day if we are going to feel passionate about them and appreciate them. It is



just not sexy to talk only about marital and parental business.

Passion is what you want to do with your life? Where do you see yourself in five years? What five new places do you want to travel to? These are the kind of questions you ask each other as individuals when you first start dating and have those flirty, interesting conversations that, if you are lucky, lead straight to the bedroom! The same is true when you are a couple, but we seem to lose the skill set over time and become “marriage lazy.”

Spring is about rebirth, which makes it the perfect time to breathe fresh life into your relationship! It is a great time to create new routines as a couple that create more connection. Meet your partner out for an ice cream cone, and take a walk through a park together. Plan a relaxing hotel excursion or a spa night.

Please don't talk about the kids or work – that is business, not romance! Talk about the things that you are enthusiastic about and ask questions to get to know your partner on a deeper level, and maybe, in the process, find out something about them that has changed or evolved over time.

Becoming curious creates playfulness in a relationship, and that playfulness creates infusions of desire over time that can become an intoxicating adventure as we drift into the warmer months!

By Marisa Giuliani-O'Keefe

Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist
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Demystifying Trauma

Our “Grounding is a lifeline back to shore, away from big waves of feeling” Lisa Najavits. PhD

Trauma could happen to anyone, anywhere at anytime. It is normal to have feelings, as that is part of being a human. We express our feelings safely in many ways. Yet these feelings can be dramatically altered by either having a traumatic experience or suffering from addictions. Then, feelings can either become too much or too little.

A person may experience being overwhelmed or become numb to feelings, as they have all become over the top! This may then lead to anger, resentment, shame, or blame, and a person may even suffer from flashbacks and night terror; these then lead to sleep deprivation, tiredness, exhaustion, and mental fatigue. This, in turn, may cause a person to lash out at others, and sadly, the people closest to them are the ones who will get the brunt of these rages, as they are “safe” people to vent to. This leads to further complications as the loved ones do not appreciate being yelled at, or being manipulated, or oppressed. Therefore, tensions can build and lead to further complications.



Back in 2006, my then-husband was suffering from PTSD and never talked about his experiences. He was stationary at traffic lights and hit by a car going at 90kph, which caused a 5-car pile-up. Whilst not physically wounded, apart from some whiplash and some muscle strain, he suffered mentally. What he heard was a bomb going off, which triggered all his suppressed memories.: memories from the war in Vietnam, the boat trip to Thailand, the time in the Thai refugee camp, and then various incidences and racial discrimination in Australia, causing him to have video loops replaying in his head ALL the time.

He didn't know how to turn them off, nor did I. We tried everything to get him some help. He saw a psychiatrist in Brisbane; he tried sand-tray therapy, herbal medicines, and psychiatric medications and had some counselling and some swimming therapy. The only thing that really helped was the swimming therapy, as that eased his neck and back as he had suffered whiplash from the incident.

Several years later, post-divorce, I discovered **TRTP** (The Richards Trauma Process), so now I am able to help my clients turn off those video loops and return to calm. Knowing that what happened then is over now, and they are safe now. I have now helped many clients to return to calm, to be able to turn off the video loops, and to get on with their life free from flashbacks and night terrors.



I have a wonderful client who was bullied by his consultants whilst in training as a Dr. Preparing to become a GP. He wrote:

***“I have PTSD, and I have tried CBT, EMDR, and TRTP, and if I had to describe the difference between these three treatment modalities, I would say CBT targets the conscious mind, EMDR targets both the conscious and subconscious mind somewhat effectively, while TRTP targets only the subconscious mind and does so effectively.*”**

Trauma, in my experience, is like a virus infecting a laptop; if it infects 1 or 2 programs, then all you need to do is uninstall those programs and then reinstall them, and that is what CBT and EMDR do, but what happens if the virus infects the entire operating system?



What if your laptop now works but glitches often?
What do you do?
You need to format the laptop and install a new operating system, which is what TRTP does.” DR E.

By Fran Nguyen

Trauma Counselling
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LIFE AS A BUSINESS WOMAN

“You can fail one million times, but you only need to succeed once.”

My journey began in 2017 when I took the decision to go full-time into business with my husband. I had been employed for over ten years, and what was becoming clear was that I now had to wear a different cap.

Chatterbox was born in 2017. Neither of us had ever run a coffee shop before, and as they say, eating in a restaurant and managing one are two totally different things.



From the outset, we knew it would be chaotic and many mistakes would be made. We were comfortable with that because we both knew that we had embarked on a steep learning curve to improve our business.

Most businesses in Seychelles face identical staff challenges, and this was our greatest challenge, as we could not find or maintain a good local workforce. As a result, both of us had to do everything, overseeing every aspect of the business's daily operation. Our life schedule was grueling.

My husband and I have different management and leadership styles: I am more of a team player, while my husband, on the other hand, has a somewhat authoritarian approach, so we used to clash a lot. In the beginning, it was quite challenging, particularly because I needed to learn how to draw the line between business life and married life. We had to wear different caps, and at times, we needed to learn how and when to switch caps.

I did not have a clue how to deal with my emotions or how not to take work issues personally. It took time to navigate all this and how to separate our business life from our personal life, which not only put a toll on our marriage, but also put a toll on my mental, emotional, and physical health.



Two years after opening Chatterbox, my husband decided to open another venue, and this new

venture brought more problems and sorrows. Already, we were understaffed, and when my husband travelled, I had to step in and manage everything during his absence. I found myself juggling two very demanding businesses with no balance in my life and no idea how to process all the business pressure and stress.

As months passed, we began to realise that this venture was not the right business model for both of us, so we called it a day. As an entrepreneur, you must know which battles to fight. At the end of the day, if the business or anything associated with it is causing unnecessary stress or mental health issues, it is not worth it.

At the core of my being, I am a driven, passionate woman who has always wanted to be the best in my field. As a businesswoman, my role has changed; I have become like a mother to my business with no choice but to make it work. When you are employed, you look forward to receiving your paycheck, but as a business owner, especially during challenging times, you do not look forward to the month's end because you know what is expected of you. The businesses taught me many lessons that pushed me to the edge where it was either sink or swim!

Fear of failure has always bothered me. It took me so long to realise that this is a part of life that I must become comfortable with in order to succeed. I learned that I will not always get it right, and that is totally OK.

Failure is a necessary part of the process because how will you ever learn if you do not fail? I learned to manage my emotions better, reminding myself that my job is to serve no matter what challenges I face. I learned that success is something I must work hard for and that success is an extension of my own ideas and creativity.



There is a time to walk alone, in a season when it feels like everything is working against you and when you are standing at the edge, with just two options: either you call it a day, or you continue. In choosing to continue, you will know that it is not going to be an easy journey.

Entrepreneurs swim against the tide, and it is very important to remain resilient through all the hard times, often against the odds.

School and society do not form entrepreneurs. Nobody is there to tell you what your journey will look like; they do not prepare us for the failures and what to do when we stumble. Persistence is key. If you believe it is really the right thing, commit uncompromisingly!

By Marsha Parcou



Unveiling Your True Essence: Unlocking the Codes Embedded in Your DNA

By Ariel Grace Snapp

Today, we're diving into the mystical realms of Human Design and Gene Keys, where the codes of your genetic inheritance and potential in your DNA are waiting to be unveiled.

Have you ever felt like there's more to you than meets the eye? That may be because buried within the very fabric of your being lies a map—a blueprint—that holds the key to your true nature. We are all made with access to infinite potential, and yet, there is a uniqueness to us that we inherit from our ancestors, which is woven into our DNA. Think of it as a hidden language written in our DNA, passed down through generations, carrying the stories of our ancestors, including the potential to heal and transform.

Human Design and Gene Keys are powerful systems that offer profound insights into how your unique genetic signature works at a fundamental level. They provide a framework for understanding the combination of traits, talents, and challenges that make you, well, you. Human Design, created by Ra Uru Hu in 1992, was inspired by ancient wisdom and modern science. It can be used to reveal the intricate interplay between your energy centers, personality traits, and life purpose. It's like having a personalized guidebook to navigate the complexities of existence, empowering you to make decisions aligned with your authentic self. It is intricately tied to your body, your actual organs, and how your energy moves and transmits information. While we are all exponentially unique, this system provides incredible access to deeper truths around our core tendencies and how to work with our way of being in a heightened state of awareness, care, and compassion.

Human Design is beautifully extended to the system called Gene Keys, created by Richard Rudd. The Gene Keys system is a synthesis of genetics, iChing, and patterned systems around emotional tendencies that delves even deeper into the mysteries of your DNA. At its core lies the notion of "genetic intelligence"—the idea that our genes are not fixed but responsive to our thoughts, emotions, and environment.

Imagine, for a moment, that your DNA is a library filled with countless stories, each waiting to be explored and understood. Some of these stories may hold the keys to your greatest gifts, while others may reveal the wounds and patterns passed down through generations. But here's the exciting part: by consciously engaging with these stories, we have the power to rewrite them. Through practices such as meditation, visualization, contemplation, shadow work, and self-reflection, we

can activate dormant aspects of our DNA, releasing old patterns and embracing our highest potential.

It's a journey of self-discovery and transformation—a sacred quest to reclaim our true essence and fully express who we are. And as we embark on this

journey together, remember you are not alone. You are part of a vast tapestry of souls, each one connected by the threads of our shared humanity.

I invite you to embark on this journey with an open heart and a curious mind. If this interests you, get curious and check out what pulls to your heart. Healing and being open to this can help not only you but your family and your lineage to become more open to creative, sustainable, and nurturing ways of living. Perhaps this is your moment to unravel the mysteries of your DNA, unlock the codes of your true nature, and step into the radiant light of your fully embodied, aligned self.

Ariel Grace Snapp is a coach for creatives, tech creative director, podcast host, intuitive and artist. She uses Gene Keys and Human Design with her clients to help them unlock their higher potential in their creative calling. She is particularly interested in co-creating new, collaborative ways to solve social challenges across different sectors. Connect with her online on Instagram or Facebook @ArielGraceFull



A NEAT way to stay healthy

In today's sedentary World, where many spend hours sitting at desks or watching TV on our sofas, the importance of moving more cannot be overstated. Regular physical activity is not just beneficial but essential for maintaining optimal health and weight management.

For most people, this would mean going to the gym, going for a run, or joining a fitness class. However, it is the day-to-day movements that will help with weight management. Non-Exercise Activity Thermogenesis (NEAT) refers to the energy expended for all physical activities other than structured exercise, eating, and sleeping. It includes activities like walking, standing, fidgeting, gardening, and household chores. NEAT encompasses the energy you burn throughout the day from spontaneous movements and activities that aren't structured exercise sessions. NEAT can vary significantly between individuals based on factors such as occupation, lifestyle, and habits.

NEAT accounts for a significant portion of daily energy expenditure, often more than exercise for most individuals. Increasing NEAT can contribute to weight loss or weight maintenance by increasing overall energy expenditure. Small changes in daily activities, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator or standing instead of sitting, can add up over time and significantly impact calorie burn. Conversely, prolonged periods of sedentary behaviour, such as sitting for long hours at work or while watching TV, can significantly reduce NEAT and overall energy expenditure and can contribute to weight gain.



NEAT can be increased through small daily increases; here are some strategies to increase NEAT:

- 1. Take Active Breaks:** Set a timer to remind yourself to take short breaks from sitting every hour. Use these breaks to stand up, stretch, walk around, or do a few simple exercises like squats or lunges.

- 2. Walk More:** Look for opportunities to walk instead of drive whenever possible. Take the stairs instead of the elevator, park farther away from your destination, and consider walking or biking for short trips instead of using a car.

- 3. Use a Standing Desk:** If feasible, invest in a standing desk or a convertible desk that allows you to alternate between sitting and standing throughout the day. Standing burns more calories than sitting and can help reduce sedentary behaviour.

- 4. Incorporate Movement into Daily Tasks:** Find ways to add more movement to everyday activities. For example, pace while talking on the phone, do calf raises while brushing your teeth, or do squats while waiting for the kettle to boil.

- 5. Do Household Chores:** Use household chores as opportunities to move more. Vacuuming, mopping, gardening, and cleaning are all physical activities that contribute to NEAT.

Energy Expenditure

High Energy Expenditure	-	Low Energy Consumption	=	Weight Loss
Low Energy Expenditure	-	High Energy Consumption	=	Weight Gain
Equal Energy Expenditure	-	Equal Energy Consumption	=	Weight Maintain

Make chores more enjoyable by listening to music or podcasts while you work.

- 6. Take Active Commutes:** If possible, walk or bike to work instead of driving or taking public transportation. If you use public transportation, consider getting off one stop early and walking the rest of the way.

- 7. Stand While Watching TV:** Instead of lounging on the couch, stand up or do light exercises like marching in place, leg lifts, or stretching during commercial breaks.

- 8. Engage in Active Hobbies:** Choose hobbies that involve movement and physical activity, such as dancing, gardening, or hiking. Not only are these activities enjoyable, but they also contribute to increased NEAT.

- 9. Use a Pedometer or Activity Tracker:** Track your daily steps or activity levels using a pedometer or activity tracker. Set a goal to gradually increase your daily step count and use the tracker as motivation to move more throughout the day.

- 10. Stay Hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water throughout the day can increase the frequency of bathroom breaks, providing additional opportunities to stand up and move around. Incorporating these strategies into your daily routine can increase your NEAT and burn more calories without engaging in structured exercise sessions. Remember that every little movement adds up, so focus on finding ways to stay active throughout the day.

In conclusion, moving more is not just a recommendation but a necessity for maintaining optimal health and weight management. Whether through structured exercise sessions, daily walks, active hobbies, or simply incorporating more movement into your daily routines, finding ways to stay active is essential for overall well-being. By prioritising physical activity, you'll reap numerous benefits for both body and mind.

By Craig Alexander

Anatomy 37
www.Anatomy37.com





The Sleep-Weight Connection

How Insufficient Rest Makes Weight Loss Harder

In the relentless pursuit of weight management, we often focus on diet and exercise, but there's a crucial factor that frequently slips under the radar: sleep. Yes, that nightly rendezvous with our pillow plays a pivotal role in our weight loss journey. Let's take a look at the science behind it.

The Sleep-Weight Connection

1. Short Sleep and Weight Gain

Short sleep duration—typically defined as fewer than 6–7 hours per night—has been consistently linked to higher body mass index (BMI) and weight gain. Research involving 300,000 people revealed a 41% increased risk of obesity among adults who slept less than 7 hours. But why?

Hunger Hormones: Lack of sleep messes with our hunger hormones. Ghrelin, the stomach's hunger signal, increases, making us crave more calories. Meanwhile, leptin, the fullness hormone, takes a nosedive, leaving us less satisfied after meals.

Belly Fat Accumulation: Short sleep duration is associated with greater waist circumference, a tell-tale sign of belly fat build-up. This visceral fat isn't just about aesthetics; it's linked to inflammation and health risks.

2. Metabolic Slowdown

When we skimp on sleep, our metabolic engine sputters. Here's how:

Sluggish Metabolism: Sleep deprivation reduces our resting metabolic rate, meaning we burn fewer calories at rest. It's like our internal furnace is running on low.

Insulin Resistance: Poor sleep affects insulin sensitivity, potentially leading to insulin resistance. This hormonal glitch impairs our ability to regulate blood sugar and store excess energy as fat.

3. Stress and Cortisol

Cortisol, the stress hormone, enters the scene when we're sleep-deprived. It's like a double-edged sword:

Appetite Surge: Cortisol revs up our appetite, especially for high-calorie, comfort foods. Hello, midnight snack cravings ...

Muscle Breakdown: Chronic cortisol elevation can break down muscle tissue, sabotaging our lean body mass. Remember, muscle burns more calories than fat, even at rest.

4. Late-Night Snacking and Decision-Making

Have you ever noticed how sleep-deprived nights lead to impulsive food choices? Blame it on our groggy brains:

Prefrontal Cortex: Sleep loss impairs our prefrontal cortex—the decision-making centre. Suddenly, that bag of chips seemed like a brilliant idea at 2 a.m., so why not have a glass of soda for the thirst?

Midnight Munchies: When tired, we're more likely to raid the kitchen for sugary or salty snacks. Our inhibitions take a nap, and the cookie jar beckons.

5. The Vicious Cycle

Poor sleep sets off a chain reaction:

Cravings: Ghrelin spikes, urging us toward calorie-dense foods.

Energy Slump: Fatigue prompts us to skip workouts.

Metabolic Halt: Our body clings to fat stores, fearing an energy crisis.

Weight Creep: The scale inches upward.

Unlocking Better Sleep for Weight Loss

Luckily, some simple – and remarkably effective – practices can significantly affect our sleep time and quality:

Prioritize Sleep: Aim for 7–9 hours of quality sleep each night. This means setting aside 7–9 hours for sleep.

Create a Sleep Sanctuary: Your bedroom should be a sleep haven: dark, cool, and gadget-free. If possible, set aside a workspace outside of your bedroom if you work from home.

Consistent Sleep Schedule: Train your body with a regular sleep-wake routine. This counts for weekends, too.

Limit Late-Night Screen Time: Blue light disrupts melatonin production, and the content you're watching might only serve to excite your brain.

Mind Your Meals: Avoid heavy, spicy, or caffeine-laden foods before bedtime.

Remember, the path to weight loss isn't just about treadmills and salads; it's also about cozy pillows and sweet dreams. So, tuck in, dream well, and wake up lighter!

On a personal note:

In the realm of fitness and bodybuilding, the significance of restorative sleep is often overlooked, yet it plays an all-important role in achieving optimal physical condition. Drawing from my own experience, I embarked on my first bodybuilding bikini contest at the age of fifty amidst the challenges posed by perimenopausal symptoms. One notable symptom was the occasional disruption of my sleep quality.

Throughout my competition preparation, daily biofeedback monitoring revealed a clear correlation: subpar sleep negatively impacted my muscle development, fat reduction, and recovery processes. This personal journey underscores a crucial lesson—the profound influence of quality sleep on our fitness and weight loss endeavors shouldn't be overlooked or underestimated. When approached holistically, optimal physical condition and weight management are achievable at any age.

Are you ready to transform your sleep, manage stress effectively, and enhance your recovery process? As a dedicated Sleep, Stress, and Recovery Management Coach, I'm here to guide you on a journey towards optimal well-being. Unlock the secrets to restorative sleep, master the art of stress resilience, and discover personalized strategies for peak recovery. Don't let fatigue and tension dictate your life. Take the first step towards revitalizing yourself by scheduling a consultation today. Your path to a balanced and energized lifestyle begins now. Embrace the change, reclaim your energy, and thrive.



The Body Talks

If you cannot Feel
you cannot
Heal

Our bodies communicate with us in many different ways. Sometimes, it's very obvious, like when we experience pain, anxiety, or get sick, and sometimes, it's much more subtle. There are times when we know what our body is communicating, and we can act to support ourselves as best as possible. But there are also times when we have no idea what is happening, why we're experiencing pain, indigestion, poor sleep, you name it. It can all feel really random. But is it? Are we just unlucky, or is there anything that can be done?

In 2019, I was diagnosed with IgA nephropathy, an autoimmune condition that has chronically damaged my kidneys. At 39 years old, I have the kidneys of an 85-year-old. The body still works without dialysis intervention until 15% of kidney function. Fortunately, I've been able to stabilize the damage with a bit of medication and diet and lifestyle adjustments. I'm not suffering, I feel healthy, I have energy, and I'm grateful for the life I'm living. I also know that people with the same disease and better kidney function are suffering from intense tiredness and other discomforts. Of course, I don't know what else is going on in their lives, but through studying molecular biology, yoga therapy, bodywork, and Ayurveda, I have been able to learn and discover a thing or two about my own health and well-being and the principles of health from a holistic point of view.

When we start paying attention to what our body is saying, it doesn't have to scream at us anymore.

Everything we experience, eat, and do needs to be processed or digested. And from an Ayurvedic perspective, we have our digestive fire, our "Agni," to do that. If our agni isn't strong and we do too much, we cannot digest everything, and we get stuck with "Ama," undigested waste that accumulates in the body. Accumulated ama causes inflammation and blocks the system. You can imagine that a body with blockages and inflammation, whether you see or feel it or not, will not have a lot of energy because it can't flow. It will be tired because it's busy trying to clear that up, while you are living your life. So how can we get rid of this ama and make our agni strong again?

The beauty of our bodies is that there are always ways to reduce our suffering. It won't happen magically, but in my experience with my kidneys, it's well worth the effort.

In Ayurveda, there are all kinds of daily and seasonal routines that support our health.

As we enter spring or autumn, we practice something that is called an Ayurvedic digestive reset. This is a process where you simplify your life and diet for a while in a way that supports your body towards more health and well-being. The idea is to let go of one habit that is not serving you (like smoking, coffee, snacking, etc) and add one practice that you think will serve you (meditation, yoga/movement, tongue scraping, etc). Then, for 3 to 14 days, you will change your diet into a mono kitchari diet (basmati rice with split mung beans, two types of veggies, and digestive spices).

Through simplifying your life and diet, you still receive the nourishment your body needs. It's not a cleanse or a fast, which can destabilize your system. It's an easy-to-



digest agni strengthening practice, where your body can focus on clearing the ama. During and after the practice, you can notice whether your normal and new habits were working for you or not. You may feel encouraged to keep some healthy new habits and reduce some old ones. It takes some time to change patterns and feel the effects. And there will be resistance, but we can't change what we're unaware of. Try 1 or 2 things at a time; it's more likely that something will stick.

The keys to healing are love, simplicity, and listening closely to how your body responds to whatever you are doing.

Rianne Wolswinkel

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YOGA OFF THE MAT



Unveiling the True Self

Exploring Our Identity Through Yoga Philosophy

In a world inundated with labels, responsibilities, and societal expectations, the quest to discover our authentic selves often feels like searching for a needle in a haystack. But beneath the layers of ego and societal conditioning lies a deeper truth waiting to be unveiled. In the realm of yoga philosophy, this journey of self-discovery is central to the question,



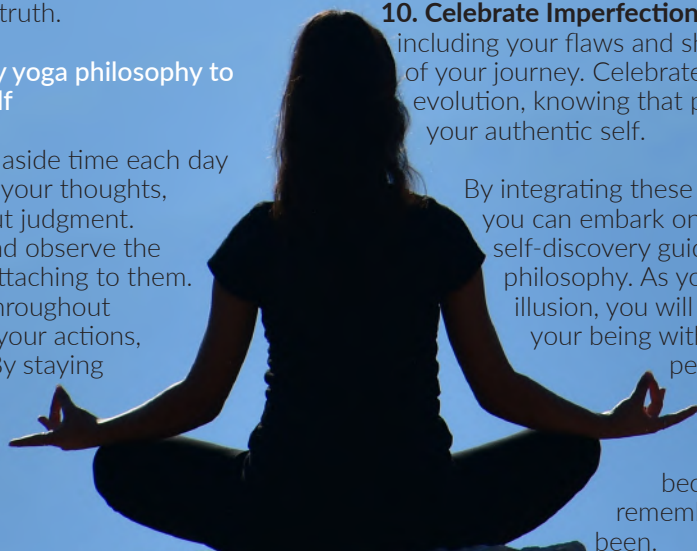
Yoga, an ancient spiritual practice originating in India, offers profound insights into the nature of the self. According to yogic philosophy, our true essence transcends the roles we play and the masks we wear. It is the unchanging core of our being that exists beyond the fluctuations of the mind and the fluctuations of life.

At the heart of this philosophy is the concept of "Atman," often translated as the true self or soul. According to yoga, the Atman is eternal, unbounded, and interconnected with the universal consciousness known as Brahman. Through practices like meditation, self-reflection, and mindfulness, we can peel away the layers of illusion (Maya) and tap into the essence of who we truly are.

After all, yoga is "The journey of the self, through the self, to the self" (Bhagavad Gita). This might sound really deep, otherworldly, or not connected to everyday reality. However, we can integrate these profound teachings into our everyday lives in tangible but simple ways in order to connect with our innermost truth.

Ten practical tips inspired by yoga philosophy to help you unveil your true self

- 1. Practice Self-Inquiry:** Set aside time each day for introspection. Reflect on your thoughts, emotions, and beliefs without judgment. Ask yourself, "Who am I?" and observe the answers that arise without attaching to them.
- 2. Cultivate Mindfulness:** Throughout the day, bring awareness to your actions, thoughts, and interactions. By staying present in the moment, you can disidentify from the ego and connect more deeply with your true essence.



- 3. Let Go of Attachments:** Recognize that attachments to external identities, possessions, and outcomes can obscure your true self. Practice non-attachment by letting go of expectations and embracing the impermanent nature of life.

- 4. Embrace Authenticity:** Honor your uniqueness and embrace your authentic self-expression. Release the need to conform to societal norms or others' expectations, and instead, follow the guidance of your inner voice.

- 5. Connect with Nature:** Spend time in nature to reconnect with the natural rhythm of life. Nature can serve as a mirror reflecting the harmony and interconnectedness of all existence, reminding you of your own inherent wholeness.

- 6. Nurture Self-Compassion:** Be gentle and kind with yourself as you navigate the journey of self-discovery. Cultivate self-compassion by treating yourself with the same care and understanding you would offer to a dear friend.

- 7. Practice Gratitude:** Cultivate an attitude of gratitude for the blessings in your life, both big and small. Gratitude opens your heart and shifts your perspective from lack to abundance, aligning you with the essence of your true self.

- 8. Surrender to the Present Moment:** Release the need to control or resist the present moment. Surrender to what is, trusting in the inherent wisdom of life unfolding. In surrender, you can find peace and alignment with your true nature.

- 9. Serve Others with Love:** Practice selfless service (Seva) by offering your time, energy, and resources to support others. In serving others with love and compassion, you dissolve the barriers of separation and recognize the interconnectedness of all beings.

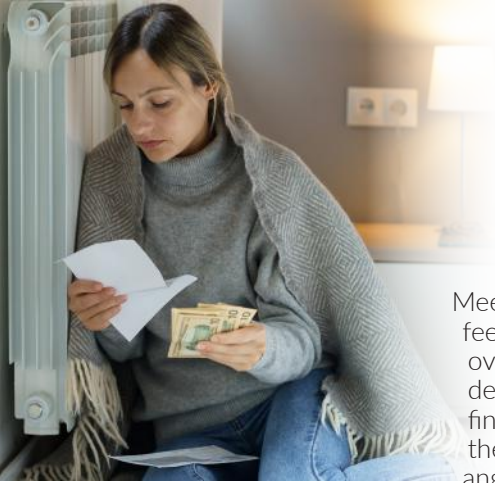
- 10. Celebrate Imperfection:** Embrace your humanity, including your flaws and shortcomings, as integral parts of your journey. Celebrate the process of growth and evolution, knowing that perfection lies in embracing your authentic self.

By integrating these principles into your daily life, you can embark on a transformative journey of self-discovery guided by the wisdom of yoga philosophy. As you peel away the layers of illusion, you will unveil the radiant truth of your being with authenticity, love, and inner peace.

Remember, the journey of self-discovery is not about becoming someone new but remembering who you have always been.

By Dawn Wright

How To Maintain Your Spirit During ... Tough Economic Times



Meet Sarah. She's been feeling increasingly overwhelmed and despondent about her financial situation. A trip to the grocery store leads to angst and stress. With bills piling up, prices rising, and a

shrinking income, Sarah finds herself sinking deeper into despair with each passing day. However, Sarah's story takes a transformative turn when she realizes the power of her thoughts and emotions in shaping her reality.

So, how did Sarah maintain her spirit during her tough economic times? Initially, she felt trapped in a cycle of negativity, consumed by worry and fear. Every financial setback reinforced her belief that she was powerless to change her circumstances. It's a dark and isolating place from which Sarah struggled to escape.

But then, she had a realization. Sarah recognized that although she may not have control over external factors like the economy or her current financial situation, she does have control over her thoughts and emotions. With this newfound awareness, Sarah embarked on a journey of self-discovery and empowerment.

And I invite you to do the same! In the face of challenging economic climates, it's easy to feel overwhelmed ... even defeated. The uncertainty of financial stability can weigh heavily on our spirits. However, an opportunity is available to cultivate resilience and maintain a positive outlook by taking control of our thoughts and decisions. Here's how!
Acknowledge Your Feelings: It is essential to recognize and accept your emotions rather than suppressing them. Allow yourself to feel the fear, frustration, or uncertainty that comes with financial difficulties. By acknowledging your feelings, you can begin to address them constructively.

Focus on What You Can Control: Many external factors are beyond our control during tough economic times; however, we can still influence some aspects of our lives. Redirect your energy towards actions that are within your control, such as budgeting or honing new skills. Taking proactive steps can help you regain a sense of empowerment.

Practice Gratitude: It's crucial to cultivate gratitude for what you have rather than dwelling on what you lack. Take time each day to appreciate the blessings in your life. Shifting your focus towards gratitude can foster a positive mindset.



Set Realistic Goals: Set realistic goals that align with your current circumstances. Break down larger objectives into manageable steps, allowing you to make progress

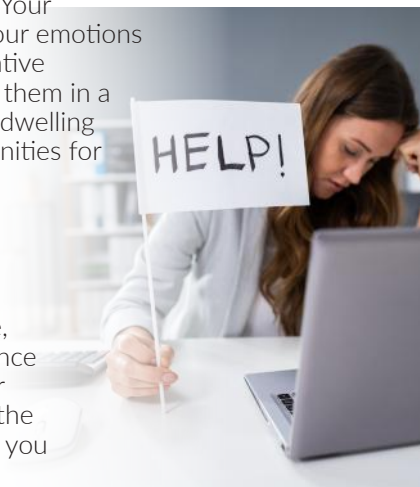
gradually. Celebrate each small victory.

Stay Connected: During tough economic times, it's easy to withdraw socially out of fear or shame. However, maintaining connections with friends, family, and support networks is essential for preserving your spirit.

Practice Self-Care: Make self-care a priority, especially when facing financial stress. Engage in activities that nourish your mind, body, and soul, whether exercising, meditating, or indulging in joyful hobbies.

Cultivate a Positive Mindset: Your thoughts profoundly impact your emotions and behaviors. Challenge negative thought patterns by reframing them in a more positive light. Instead of dwelling on setbacks, focus on opportunities for growth and learning.

Seek Support When Needed: There's no shame in asking for help when needed. Whether it's seeking financial assistance, counseling, coaching, or guidance from mentors, reaching out for support can provide you with the resources and encouragement you need to stay resilient.



Once Sarah shifted her focus towards what she **CAN** control, things changed. She created a budget and started to regain a sense of agency and empowerment. Gratitude became a cornerstone of Sarah's daily routine because it helped her shift her perspective and find hope amidst the chaos. She also prioritized self-care, recognizing the importance of nurturing her physical and emotional well-being.

Perhaps most importantly, Sarah adopted a positive mindset. She challenged negative thought patterns and replaced them with affirmations of self-worth and abundance. Instead of dwelling on what she lacked, Sarah focused on the opportunities for growth and possibilities that lie ahead. With each positive thought, Sarah opened herself up to new opportunities and experiences.

And you can do the same! Maintaining your spirit during tough economic times requires a proactive approach focused on taking control of your thoughts and decisions. Remember, tough times don't last forever, but the strength and resilience you cultivate within yourself **CAN** endure FOREVER!

Laila Morcos Zissis

*Professional Certified Coach
Executive Producer & Host of Breast
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Nature's Touch

Natural Approaches to Treating Neurodevelopmental Conditions in Children from the inside out.

By Rachel Marely



Neurodevelopmental disorders in children are chronic developmental conditions that impact upon speech, behaviour, intellectual development and learning and can have a significant impact on families.

Statistics indicate prevalence rates of 1 in 68 children in the US and 3-4% of children in the UK.

Conditions including autism, ADHD, tic disorders, and PANS/PANDAS are common neurodevelopmental conditions, and understanding causes is crucial for effective treatment.

Whether caused by genetic causes or acquired from toxins, infections, or nutritional deficiencies, an integrated healthcare approach involving a multidisciplinary team, including nutritional medicine and natural/herbal therapies, is pivotal for optimal outcomes in children's health and supporting families.

Understanding Neurodevelopmental Conditions and pathways to treatment

Functional medicine and Naturopathic care prioritize treating the whole individual, recognizing the interconnectedness of bodily systems rather than viewing them in isolation. Neurodevelopmental disorders' causes are complex, involving genetics, environment, immune responses, and metabolism. Genetics and epigenetics play crucial roles, affecting cellular processes and predisposition to conditions. Environmental factors such as prenatal influences, toxins, diet, and psychosocial elements also contribute significantly to symptoms. Research underscores the immune system's involvement in neurodevelopmental disorders, with abnormal responses increasing inflammation, impacting neurotransmitter function, behaviour, and cognition. Similarly, like leaky gut syndrome, a "leaky brain" phenomenon can occur, compromising the blood-brain barrier's integrity and allowing harmful substances to inflame the brain.

Gut health intimately influences overall well-being, particularly in neurodevelopmental disorders, where gut microbes can influence both gut and brain health. Factors like diet, food intolerances, infections, and toxins affect both systems. Metabolic irregularities, manifested as low energy, fatigue, behavioural issues, and weakened immunity, are prevalent in affected children. Understanding these interconnected aspects guides holistic approaches in Functional medicine and Naturopathic care for comprehensive management.

Natural Approaches to Treatment

Identifying the root cause of symptoms is key when considering approaches to treatment. Alongside a detailed case history, functional testing that looks at blood, urine, stool, or saliva can give insight into understanding the drivers of symptoms. Nutritional and herbal interventions are focused on improving symptoms by reducing inflammation, improving gut health, and supporting biochemical processes and neurological function.

Critical nutrients for neurological health include:

- **Essential fatty acids (Omega 3's)**
- **Vitamins A, C, D**
- **Vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9**
- **Minerals: zinc, magnesium, iron,**

selenium, chromium, molybdenum

- **Amino acids: glycine, glutathione, glutamine, Taurine, tyrosine.**
- **Probiotics and prebiotics to support gut health.**

Herbal medicine is a great addition to treatment and can help directly with reducing inflammation, correcting gut bacteria imbalances, and helping to regulate the nervous system and brain function.

Commonly used herbal medicines used in neurodevelopment conditions are:

- **Turmeric (curcumin): potent anti-inflammatory**
- **Saffron: anti-inflammatory for the brain and can help with mood.**
- **Antimicrobials - to help with rebalancing gut bacteria.**
- **Herbs to regulate and calm the nervous system.**

Nutritional and Dietary Interventions

Dietary recommendations form the basis of ongoing treatment, as many foods can drive inflammation, contributing to changes in behaviour, learning, and overall health. Often, children can present with food intolerances or allergies, and identifying these through elimination diets and/or testing can be beneficial, with immediate improvements.

Following specific diets may help improve symptoms in children, and this depends upon the cause, genetic susceptibility, and current state of health. Gluten and dairy foods are often recommended to avoid in children diagnosed with neurodevelopmental conditions due to their impact on inflammation, gut, and immune health.

Other specific diets may include, anti-inflammatory diet, GAPS, low salicylate, dairy-free and soy-free).

Alongside this, other key dietary recommendations can include:

- **Organic food where possible**
- **Avoiding processed foods and additives**
- **Including more fermented and probiotic foods into the diet to support gut health (Sauerkraut, kefir, yogurts)**
- **Eat a diverse range of plant-based foods - rich in polyphenols to help heal the gut.**

Conclusion

With the significant rise in children diagnosed with neurodevelopmental conditions, it is imperative to understand all causes to implement effective treatment options and to support children and families. Childhood neurological conditions can be improved through correct assessment and implementation of targeted nutritional and herbal medicines alongside integrative care. The human brain is very plastic, especially in childhood and when obstacles are removed and specific treatment advice is followed, it is then that children and families are given the best chance to heal and thrive.

Consulting with a qualified healthcare professional before implementing natural approaches is always recommended to provide the correct professional guidance.

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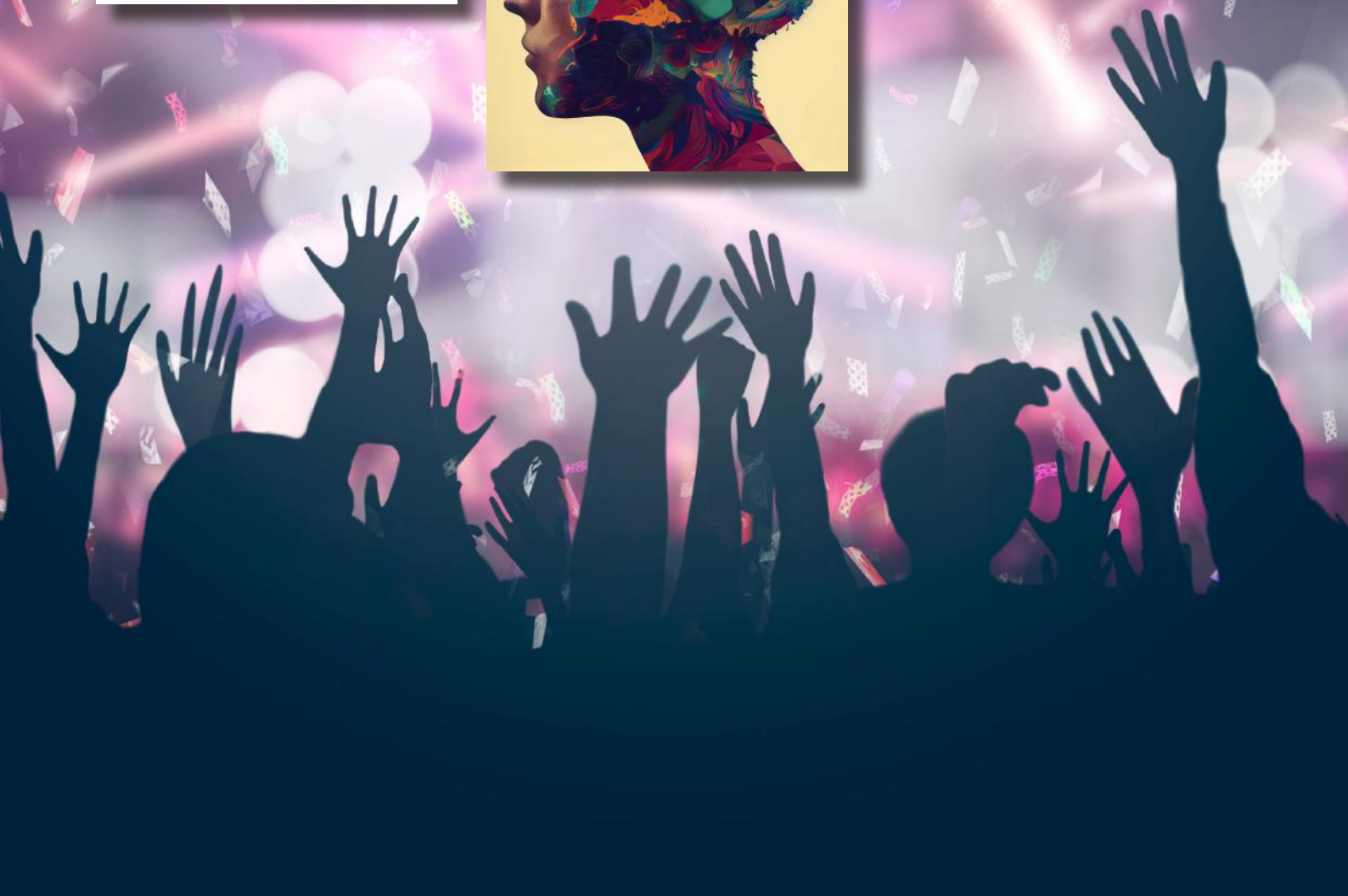
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Body Positivity

When I first started questioning body positivity, it was back in 2016.

I was cleaning up my own food and eliminating as much sugar, fake sugar, and processed foods as possible, noticing my shorts were too big, and I wasn't bloated at the end of the day. My clothes fit all the time, and I realized I had three sizes of the same jeans in my closet—not similar, the exact same pair. It made sense if you never know what size you will be, right?

Like a bad boyfriend, as Taylor Swift can relate, forgetting isn't easy. But now that we're done and it's over I bet you couldn't believe When you realized I'm harder to forget than I was to leave And I bet you think about me I was also becoming aware of my own issues with food addiction and the thoughts behind the behavior. When

I would get feedback from someone in a larger body, about my weight loss, I noticed there was a range of

- You go girl
- Are you worried your daughter will think you have an eating disorder?
- I thought you looked good before.

I would start to overexplain, usually at a school pick-up or a cocktail party for our neighborhood with someone I barely considered an acquaintance, my personal business. It dawned on me that a woman's body isn't just my business; everyone in my life, from the time I was a small child, felt the need to comment.

Age 5: never get fat; men won't like you

Age 8: you don't need any more dessert

Age 13: what size bra do you wear?

Age 15: you lost so much weight, I thought you were a transfer

Age 16: I am glad you gained weight; you looked awful before

Age 18: can you lose weight for the rush?

Age 23: you just gained weight in your butt

Age 25: you have lost too much weight for your wedding dress

Age 27: if you gain any weight, you won't be a lifetime member

Age 30: don't gain too much weight while pregnant!

Age 33: You weigh less now than when you got pregnant

Age 40: You don't look fat; you are a Mom

Age 43: Is everything okay? You look very skinny

Age 44: I think your New Year resolution should be to gain weight



You get the idea. All of these comments were by people in my life to some degree, not close enough to have been permitted to chime in on my body. I never had the wherewithal or guts to tell them I am sexy at any size, or no one asked you, minus when I was a small kid, where that would have been severely off-putting. I took it. Why did I take it? I thought I deserved it. My weight fluctuated as an adult due to pregnancies, extreme stress when getting divorced, when I stopped mainlining sugar, and when I went on ADHD medication.

Nothing super interesting, and despite having a blue checkmark next to my IG account, I am not truly a public figure. I wrote a book and have written a few articles. Kate Middleton, I am not! At the end of the last edition of the article, I asked about body neutrality.

Body Neutrality is not self-hatred or glorifying what most consider to be chronic health conditions.

For many of us, after years of disordered eating and images from the media, the idea of embracing our flaws, sends our brains into overload. Neutrality will not create the cognitive dissonance of cringing when we look in the mirror to pretending we embrace stretch marks, then going into a shame spiral when we can't love them. Body Neutrality is a good place to rest emotionally and psychologically instead of trying to tell ourselves. "I love my body as it produced three children and has gone along this journey of life with me."

It is more along the lines of "I have a body that produced three children and it has been with me since day 1."

It isn't as big of a leap, and pretending we have all the confidence or that there aren't some health conditions associated with our current body composition isn't going to work.

I am not a fan of faking it until we make it when it comes to self anything. Sure, was I scared the first time I did a Facebook Live, absolutely, am I now? No, as long as I can look somewhat decent from the waist up. To pretend we love our bodies, as we are told to, isn't a faking it sort of thing. It is more of a small steps in that direction type of set up.

If you find that looking at Instagram is triggering, then stop it. If you feel better after exercising, then do it.



If you discover the confidence you need after wearing your current size in jeans, not the one you wore in high school, then rock it.

“This is not a one-size-fits-all solution.”

I felt better once I stopped fighting my body by over-exercising and then eating a ton of sugar and Diet Coke every day, not sleeping enough, and being in a perpetual state of stress.

I can't wave a wand and have your stress disappear any more than I could for mine. I will say getting consistent sleep, exercising for mental benefits versus the pursuit of being “skinny,” eliminating addictive foods, and developing healthy habits such as always eating a green vegetable before lunch and dinner and drinking water all day did help my outlook.

Not just because I was in the bathroom more due to all the time and fewer chances for people to be annoying, but because I was different. I didn't have a hijacked brain reacting to high fructose corn syrup and constantly trying to go from dopamine hit to dopamine hit, which is an exercise in futility.

**Do I love my body now?
That is a tough one.**

Do I wish my eyebrows were even, I tanned better, or my rosacea didn't act up in the winter? Absolutely.

Do I wish I didn't have my c-section scar, as it was due to a rather scary delivery to save my daughter? No way, as it would mean things took a bad turn.

Do I wish I didn't need readers to see the restaurant menu and my hairdresser no longer colors my hair when I am bored but when grays sneak in? Sure, but not enough to turn back time and lose the last 20 years of memories. I earned the right to know that Dave Matthews Band isn't retro, and baggy jeans never went out of style.

I liked the days before cell phones when someone could only reach me in one place: when I was home. I am cool with not having a video of every dumb thing I have ever done.

I am somewhere between body neutrality and love. Is it possible to have a situationship with yourself? If so, my body and I will not put labels on things anytime soon.

By Erin Wathen

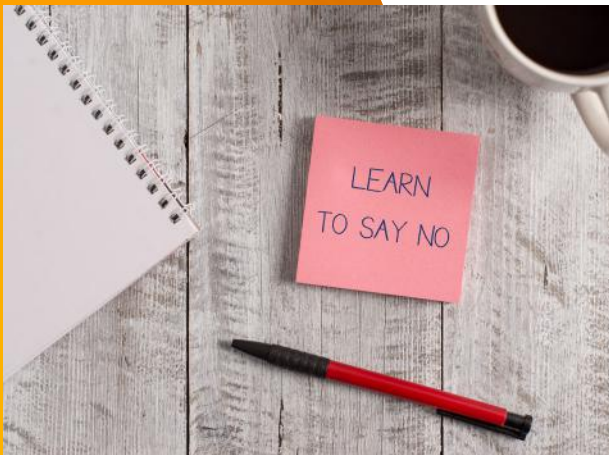


Self Care Corner

The Power of Saying **N O**



A few years ago, I found myself in a constant cycle of meeting after meeting each night after work. Volunteering for any opportunity presented to me, I found myself getting home well after 8 PM each night. Finally, I had to have an honest conversation with myself. Was I volunteering because I believed in the cause, or was I afraid of saying no? The answer was the latter: I was fearful of being denied future opportunities. I knew then that it was time to learn the word NO. If you're like me, let's talk.



Are you the type of person to always accept any opportunities and commitments that come your way, only to find yourself getting progressively overwhelmed and stressed? If so, it sounds like it is time to start practicing the art of saying "No"!

The fear of saying "no" is called FOSNO, or "fear of saying no." Contrary to popular belief, being able to say no is not a sign of weakness. It's one of the most powerful tools that goal-oriented people have at their disposal. Once you learn when and how to say no (with grace), your life will be less stressful and more focused on your highest aspirations. So don't limit yourself any longer.

Why Do We Love Saying 'Yes'

It can be tempting to try and please the people around us by saying yes more often than we should. After all, the feeling of being loved and appreciated can be gratifying. However, nine times out of ten, we take on more than we can handle.

It quickly becomes too much, and whether it's trying to say yes to every work task or always attending to social commitments, saying yes will ultimately cause us more distress than pleasure. Think about it - our daily routines and lives are already busier than ever, and by constantly taking on more, we put our tasks and goals on the back burner.

Taking a step back to evaluate each commitment honestly can help us keep our wits while maintaining composure amongst friends and colleagues.

Why You Should Start Saying 'No'

Saying no is an important practice that promotes personal growth and happiness.

It allows us to create healthy boundaries and protect our interests so we can focus on what matters and prioritize the things that make us feel fulfilled - our goals.

The responsibility of creating firm boundaries falls on no one else but you. Unfortunately, a big percentage of the yeses we keep saying is due to the fear of losing the opportunity in question. We don't consider the fact that while we may be helping someone, we are missing out on opportunities for ourselves.

Here are a few reasons why saying no is important: Saying no establishes boundaries: Boundaries demonstrate what you are willing to accept in a relationship and how you expect to be treated. They are essential for relationship dynamics and for mental well-being.



Say no limits stress: Taking on too much or saying yes to things you really don't want to do creates excessive stress. Saying no reduces resentment: If you say yes when you want to say no, you may end up resenting the person who made the request. While saying no can be difficult, it can protect the health of the relationship in the long run. Saying no can limit regret: If you say yes to things that don't align with your goals or values, you may experience regret in the future. Being able to say no to people means you'll have more time to devote your energy to the things that matter to you. [1]

We can free up the time and resources to work toward our projects and aspirations by saying no. Practicing how to say no and set limits is fundamental for better self-care and overall well-being.



How To Say It

Saying no can be quite daunting, especially in personal relationships or work-related cases. Here are some strategies you can incorporate into day-to-day interactions to help you become firmer.

Practice saying no. Knowing when to say no takes time and practice. The more often you say no, the easier it will become. Practice assertiveness in all areas of your life until the habit is built into your lifestyle.

Communicate your decision clearly. The clearer you are about saying no to someone, the better they will respond. If you are notably unsure about your decision to decline, it could be harder for others to respect your decision. Aim for clarity and simplicity.

Express gratitude for being asked. If someone asks you to do something and you respond with a no, a little bit of gratitude might help soften the delivery. Expressing thanks for being offered a new task will show others you care about their position, too.

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Be assertive but respectful. Not everyone who asks you to do something is trying to take advantage of you. They may just be desperate for assistance. If you can't accept their offer, be respectful in how you communicate with them.

Don't beat around the bush. Providing long-winded explanations about why you can't do something rarely makes things easier. Instead, opt for a short, simple, and straightforward approach to saying no. [2]

So far, we have established that developing the ability to say "no" confidently is key to making wise decisions for yourself and your future. Practicing on smaller tasks, such as turning down opportunities that won't have much impact, is a great way to start working up towards saying no when it matters. Knowing when to be selective will be helpful to you when you start developing this skill.

So next time your friend tries to convince you to go out when you have a lot to do at home, you can try to simply reject this request. Sometimes, the best way to establish boundaries is to say a direct 'no.' After all, we are not responsible for how the person on the receiving end may react, and we should not be made to feel like it.

This is why when saying the two-letter word helps to instead focus on the good impact it has on your mental state and stress levels. So the next time someone asks you to do something, think about what it is that you want.

If the answer is anything other than a resounding "yes!" then exercise your right to decline politely. And remember - practice makes perfect!

[1] "How to Say No to People", <https://www.verywellmind.com>

[2] "How to say no to others (and why you shouldn't feel guilty)," <https://www.betterup.com/blog>





Embrace and Empower

Navigating the Menopause with Self Love Mastery

Menopause is often framed as a time of change, but what if you could reframe it as the most empowering story of your life?

I wasn't prepared mentally for how the surgical menopause would impact me after my hysterectomy at the age of 42. The symptoms and changes to my body, emotions, and mind affected my relationships, work, and life quality.

Women like me for generations have been let down due to the woeful lack of education, research, and medical support for women's health. Leaving us unprepared and blissfully unaware of the impacts of peri-menopause and menopause symptoms.

Our roles in society mean we are conditioned to just get on with it, not make a fuss. We take great pride in ensuring everyone else's needs are taken care of before our own, leaving little time and energy for ourselves.

The guilt is overwhelming even when we consider giving ourselves permission to listen to our needs, which makes it easier to deny and ignore the changes to our bodies. This results in women feeling embarrassed rather than empowered and shame rather than worthiness, as their symptoms signify a loss of identity and sense of self-worth.

So then we don't talk about it, not even to each other. Resulting in women suffering silently without the support they deserve.

The biggest misconception is that the menopause only impacts women over 45 with hot flushes and mood swings. But it can impact women very early on in their lives for genetic reasons, it can be induced surgically, medically or chemically and there are a great deal of symptoms that most women wouldn't even realise are menopause related. Symptoms can also start years before periods stop and carry on afterward.

It is time to change the narrative for all women and replace the heavy sound of silence when it comes to menopause with one of empowerment and support.

We can do this by simply talking to each other, our children, friends, families, and colleagues, and start sharing our menopause stories. Talk about our challenges, including the dry vaginas, chin hair, and the loss of bladder control, and how we overcame them. So, it becomes an empowering rather than embarrassing phase in our lives that women are prepared for. I was never taught about the concept of self-love, but it has

helped me manage my mindset to better cope with my menopause symptoms and embrace the changes happening to my body.

It has taken me on a profound journey of self-discovery, unearthing hidden values, strengths, and dreams, which has allowed me to claim my identity, which I lost many years ago.

I have also learnt to appreciate and feel safe in my body. Like me, many women during this phase have goals to lose weight. We believe we are only worthy of love, appreciation, and feeling beautiful if we look a certain way. Our self-worth is intrinsically tied to how we see ourselves in the mirror.

The power of self-love during menopause is changing our beliefs and learning to love the woman looking back at us in the mirror unconditionally.

Harnessing a deep self-acceptance allows you to let go of the weight of needing to look a certain way and embrace who you truly are. Are you ready to start embracing the self-love you deserve so you can begin the most empowering chapter of your life?

Here is a simple self-love exercise to start you on your journey.

Take a pen and paper and start writing a letter about yourself, as if you are talking about your best friend. You are going to include your strengths and how appreciative of your body you are and remind yourself of how proud you are of the challenges you have overcome.

Include all the things you have accomplished, even if you think they are small and insignificant. Reflect back on what you have written and acknowledge how amazing you are. This is your time to re-write your narrative and begin navigating menopause with self-love mastery.

By Sarah Hunt

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Behind the Scenes: How a Female Manager Put an End to the Struggle with Leadership and Relationship Communication



The pressure, intense and unrelenting, surrounded me like a 360-degree storm. Every moment is critical in the fast-paced aftersales tech support for life-saving medicine production equipment. Urgent customer demands were the norm, and my team stretched across borders, facing the challenge of meeting expectations efficiently.

I had a go-to phrase: "Please organize this shipment today!" It got the job done, but it came at a cost. The words, coupled with the tense energy I unknowingly conveyed, created a disconnect with my team. They complied, but the tense atmosphere felt like a barrier between us, hindering open communication and collaboration.

All I wanted was to be accepted and liked.

Recognizing the impact of my unresolved pressure on my energy and team dynamics, I decided to change my approach. Instead of issuing commands, I began to express my feelings. The shift was palpable. By saying, "The customer needs his order shipped by today, and I feel extreme pressure from all sides. What do you think?"

I invited collaboration.

Surprisingly, the team responded with solution suggestions rather than defensive explanations. Empowered and motivated, they became proactive problem-solvers. The transformation was astonishing, and I felt a newfound relief as a manager.



Taking this newfound skill home, I applied it to my relationship. The change from "Hey babe, I need a plan" to "Hey babe, it feels so good hanging out on the couch after a busy workday. When will you be coming? What do you think?" yielded immediate results. My boyfriend not only responded promptly but shared his schedule, and we ended the call with a plan. The manager in me, craving structure, felt a wave of calm.

This revelation became one of the three keys that simultaneously radically changed my relationship and career. It wasn't just about words; it was about the energy behind them.

In the demanding corporate world, where the pressure to perform can be overwhelming, it's crucial to recognize the impact of language on relationships. Urgency can dominate conversations, leaving little room for collaboration. Creating space for others is essential, especially in male-dominated environments.

I advocate for a different approach in the battle of masculine energies, where a lack of space breeds conflict. Trust masculine energy, give it space, and witness a positive shift in dynamics. Complaining and shutting down only perpetuates a cycle of negativity. Instead, embrace a winning strategy – ask, "What do you think?" after presenting your ideas. Watch as acceptance and collaboration become the norm.

In a world filled with pressure and competition, staying, winning, and feeling good is a choice. It starts with a simple question that opens the door to understanding and collaboration. So, let's shift our language, empower our teams, and transform our relationships. Ask, "What do you think?" and see the tides of empowerment and connection sweep in.

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Juliana Joy





5 Lessons I Learned From A Health Challenge

Have you ever had an experience that completely changed your perspective? The last few weeks have been eye-opening for me. I had a significant health challenge, and as I worked through the physical process and fearful thoughts, I discovered the gift wrapped up inside—a timely reminder that we are all constantly evolving and learning.

myself experiencing some profoundly unhelpful thoughts. This time, I was prepared. The moment I knew I was going to need a prolonged course of antibiotics, I cut out coffee, tea, and alcohol and ramped up my intake of fresh vegetables, fruits, and alkaline-forming foods.

This allowed me to be conscious of any anxiety and to navigate a restless mind.



Our body, mind, and inspiration act similarly to a garden. They benefit from daily care and attention, love, and positive self-talk. I've always been blessed with good health. Nearly twenty years ago, I developed an overactive thyroid, and after a few months of attempting to manage the situation with medication, I had radioactive iodine treatment to resolve the situation. The beauty in the challenge at that time was a sharp learning curve in diet, physical exercise, and daily health habits.

I searched for every healthy diet, exercise, and natural way to balance my body. I dived into yoga, power plate, running, cycling, and more. I also discovered a Canadian athlete, Brendan Brazier, who created a plant-based product called 'Vega.' Stuffed full of nutritious plants, gluten-free, and pretty tasty in a smoothie, I found it extremely useful in bringing my body and mind back into balance after treatment. I have so much gratitude for the knowledge I discovered at the time, and it has served me well in avoiding any major illness or medication.

I live a happy and balanced life, and I'm well-practised at balancing my mind and managing stress. Once again, the universe reminds me that there is always room to grow, evolve, and develop new skills.

The Last Six Weeks

Over the last few weeks, I developed an infection, took antibiotics, had a general anaesthetic for an operation, more medication afterwards and steroids before both an MRI and a CT scan. My body and mind were reeling. Everything from my thoughts to my sleep patterns felt out of balance.

The sudden influx of medication, unfamiliar to my body, had quite an impact. I felt as if I was on a major adrenaline rush and it was challenging to focus. At one point, I found

What Did I Learn?

1. Prepare your body before and after medication. Your immune system is the foundation of your health. Maximise your sleep, keep moving your body, do things you are passionate about, and eat food that grows as fresh as possible. Consider cutting out caffeine, sugar, and any other foods that can increase stress in your body.
2. Be aware of daily habits. Make time to do things you love and enjoy. Work and life benefits from balance. Eat at regular intervals, and make time for friends, family, and laughter. Have you slipped into the convenience lifestyle where a quick fix overrides patience, calm, and trust?
3. Shadow work is often done in our most fearful times. If you find yourself experiencing fearful thoughts, reach out to someone or get out in nature. Do everything to relax your body and remove excess energy with light exercise.

Remind yourself to stay in the present and let go of old thoughts by asking yourself, "Is that true?" or "Is that my current reality?" You're the only person living in your mind, and you can only redirect fearful or negative thinking to supportive and loving thoughts. Put in the work - it's worth it.

Positive self-talk benefits from a nurturing environment. Notice your inner thoughts. Are they nurturing or critical? Be conscious and switch self-criticism to nurture by surrounding yourself with fun, caring, upbeat, and loving people.

The mind is just ONE of the many routes to healing. Body, mind and inspiration are all access points. When your heart feels light, your body heals. When you nurture your immune system, your mind feels calmer. When you create positive thoughts, you bring yourself into your empowerment.

Sarah Merron runs Primal Integrity training and coaching. Sarah is an NLP Trainer, Reiki & Egyptian Sekhem Trainer and guides her clients towards self-leadership through awareness, acceptance, integration, and alignment.

Why solving the **INSECURITY** problem in your life is your most important adult work.

Although personal insecurity is a universal affliction at some level, most people are insecure about being insecure. So, rather than overcoming their fear, they try to mask, medicate, and manage it instead.

However, when you come to understand the exact nature of all insecurity and how it is created, it becomes wonderfully obvious that feeling insecure provides us with our most important adult work.

If you're intrigued, here are 3 surprising distinctions about how all insecurity works.

1. It is natural

We are storytellers who must make sense of our experiences. In the difficult, upsetting or embarrassing movements of our childhood, it is impossible not to personalise these painful moments against ourselves, assuming we are the reason it is happening. In these moments, children inevitably form negative opinions about themselves.

The most precise definition of insecurity is that you are most afraid that your worst childhood opinion of yourself would be confirmed to be true by the world. Therefore, all insecurity is built on a work of fiction written by a scared child.

No one survives their childhood without developing limiting beliefs about themselves. Even perfect parents cannot protect their children from developing irrational fears and self-limiting beliefs. (Nor would they want to, even if it were possible.)

This means insecurity is completely unavoidable. Every human being who has ever lived and is yet to live will face this same longing for love, belonging, and significance in the process of forming as an adult. Your struggle with insecurity is not somehow special or unique. It's not that some people face the insecurity problem while others are spared; everyone develops this fear. If insecurity is the constant, the variable is what people do with it.

2. It is useful

There are seasons in life when having something to prove, driven by fear, neediness, and insecurity, is incredibly motivating. In fact, sometimes, this energy feels like rocket fuel or a performance-enhancing drug! The issue is that while it starts out as natural and useful, there is definitely an expiry date on both the usefulness and naturality of this fear. In fact, the longer insecurity remains intact and unaddressed inside you, the more toxic and maddening it becomes.

And then, after insecurity stops being useful to drive up performance, it becomes useful as the path to our maturity.

The gift within our insecurity is the resistance it provides. Growth never exists in a vacuum or perfect condition.

It requires some oppositional force. A voice of fear taunts us from our mind's deep, dark recesses. The terrifying question of what would be discovered if we were laid bare can either paralyse or energise us.

What if it's true? What if you are no good? What if you are unworthy? What if you are not enough? Sure, but what if it's not true? What if there is no substance to this fear? What if I am inherently good? What if I am deeply worthy? What if I AM enough? The voice of insecurity gives us the opportunity to find out which one is true.

3. It is removable

I have no confidence in common thinking about dealing with self-doubt, fear, and limiting beliefs. Podcasters, authors, and athletes' advice on dealing with fear frequently leaves me puzzled, while conversations about insecurity with practitioners in the personal development space rarely inspire me.

The general consensus seems to be to struggle against insecurity the best you can—mask, medicate, and manage the monster. I am of the heartfelt conviction that we can and must do better than that. The natural cycle of insecurity is for it to be felt, faced, deconstructed, removed, and replaced. The tragedy is NOT that children get wounded and afraid; it is that adults do not understand it is their most important job to go back into these wounds and set themselves free from the misunderstandings of their childhood.

With 100% certainty, this is a solvable problem when you are ready. Not only can you solve it, you must.

Jaemin is a renowned life coach, TEDx speaker and author of 'Unhindered -The 7 essential practices for overcoming insecurity'. He is the founder of the Insecurity Project and specialises in helping entrepreneurs, leaders and business owners eradicate insecurity so they can show up to life unhindered by doubt, fear and self-limiting beliefs. He is widely recognised as one of Australia's best life coaches and a leading voice globally on the subject of personal insecurity.

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Learning the Language of Soul.

What Movie Are You Living?

Your unconscious sometimes uses movie images to get your attention. In my mid-forties, I watched all 178 episodes of the Charmed series (Aaron Spelling) six times. I cried at the end every time, not knowing that something other than this TV show would be ending—my marriage and the way I had been existing.

Women Can Kick Alien Ass Too!

The film Alien (Scott, 1979) was the first science fiction film featuring a female hero who battled aliens as violently as men. In the sequel Aliens (Cameron, 1986), Newt was added, a little girl who was the sole survivor at the scene of destruction. She was a symbol of the barely surviving and forgotten feminine.

She is saved from death by Ripley (Sigourney Weaver), the kicker of alien ass, who refuses to leave her behind. These films reflected attempts to process the changing notions of feminine and masculine.

Choosing Death Over Oppression

The film Thelma and Louise (Scott & Gitlin, 1991) channeled rage being unleashed from the collective unconscious of women. A girlfriend trip turns deadly when Thelma (Geena Davis) accidentally kills the man who tried to rape her. She and Louise (Susan Sarandon) are on the run, knowing they will not be believed that it was self-defense. The detective (Harvey Keitel) symbolized the small number of men who sympathized with women's plight at the time.

I felt one with millions of women who cheered as Thelma and Louise drove off the cliff—choosing death over oppression. The anger on the screen coincided with the launching of the cable network Lifetime, which raised the consciousness of women and men about domestic violence and fueled the criminalization of marital rape in all fifty states by 1993.

The Second Coming of Age

My experience of the film Room in Rome (Medem & Longoria, 2010) prompted my understanding that reconnecting with the feminine was a Divine revelation regarding the body and sexuality. Two women come together, one lesbian and one heterosexual, and they journey towards relatedness. Religious symbolism on the walls and ceilings creates a sacred womb for their sexual/spiritual transformative experience.

Dismembering Old Beliefs

The sixth time I viewed Alita: Battle Angel (Cameron & Landau, 2019), I was surprised by what welled up in me. Alita (Rosa Salazar) takes a journey to the Self. She discovers she is a warrior empowered with ancient technology (feminine power) believed to have been destroyed in the war that created the boundary between Sky City and Iron City. She declares, "I will not stand by in the presence of evil."

In the last scene, Nova (Edward Norton), the omnipotent and all-seeing power who resides in Sky City, removes his goggles and reveals his cold stare down at Iron City, where his unexpected nemesis Alita is patiently plotting. Out of my mouth came Father God is going down! This moment unleashed my Warrior Self to confidently claim my spiritual path, which was not subject to anyone else's correction or condemnation.

God as Self

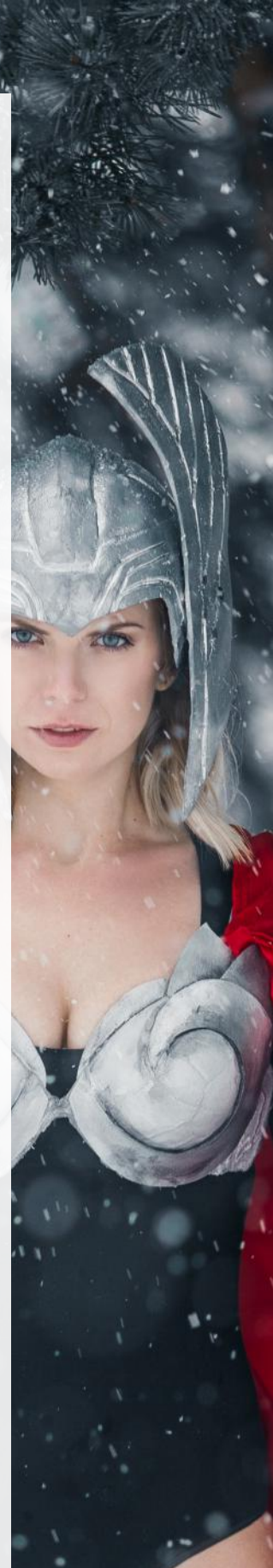
Captain Marvel (Boden & Fleck, 2019) was the second female superhero after Alita, who was not sexualized, and they both proudly and humbly proclaimed, "I'm just a girl." During this time, I often explained to people that I could do the strong and independent stuff but that sometimes I just wanted to be a girl.

Not knowing she had been kidnapped from Earth by another planet's race because she absorbed the energy from cutting-edge technology, Carol (Captain Marvel) is undermined by her ill-intentioned mentor (Jude Law), who scoffs at her tendency to lose control of her emotions. This tension between head and heart becomes the journey.

This film awakened in me a strong feeling of being manipulated by patriarchal religion, and the most powerful scene was Captain Marvel falling to her death after having her power taken away by the supreme intelligence. Regular Carol—not her superhero form—comes to life, stronger than ever after she surrenders to her true power, which is sourced in her inner being, not as given to her by someone else's perception of God.

Learn to find meaning in your experience of film, schedule a chat to explore, or just be entertained by my take on other films at www.deborahlukovich.com.

Deborah Lukovich PhD
Depth Psychology Coach,
Author & Podcaster



Time is Limited

By Sarah Stewart



Conscious Time Management

Our time is precious, and it is limited... making effective time management essential for leading a successful and fulfilling life. It might not be the sexiest of subjects, but time management is the most underrated skill.

Traditional time management techniques have long been employed to help individuals increase productivity and achieve their goals. However, a new approach, conscious time management, has emerged. In this article, let me explain how conscious time management differs from its conventional counterpart and why it holds the potential to transform the way we perceive and use our time.

If you didn't read my previous article - Hi! I'm Sarah, a Scottish time management coach and mindfulness practitioner. I help people get more time for the things that really matter.



Understanding Traditional Time Management

Traditional time management primarily revolves around planning, organising, and prioritising tasks to maximise efficiency and productivity. I see this as a more masculine energy; in this mindset, the mantra is 'busy, busy, busy' and 'do, do, do'. Techniques such as creating to-do lists, setting specific goals, and using time-blocking methods are commonly employed. While these methods can undoubtedly help individuals stay on track, and I use all these techniques myself, I personally believe that a more holistic approach is more impactful.

The Essence of Conscious Time Management

Conscious time management takes a holistic approach that goes beyond just external time-saving strategies. It encompasses self-awareness, mindfulness, and an understanding of our values and priorities. Conscious time management acknowledges that time is not an infinite resource and encourages people to cultivate a deeper



connection with how they are investing their time.

Emphasising Self-Reflection and Awareness

One of the fundamental differences between traditional and conscious time management lies in self-reflection and awareness. Conscious time management prompts individuals to regularly evaluate how they use their time and whether their actions align with their values and vision (long-term goals). By developing a keen awareness of our habits and behaviours, we can identify time-wasting activities and make conscious decisions to eliminate or reduce them.

Focusing on Energy and Wellbeing

While traditional time management often concentrates solely on completing tasks efficiently, conscious time management considers the importance of energy and wellbeing. Understanding our energy levels and circadian rhythms allows us to schedule tasks during our most productive times.

Additionally, conscious time management encourages incorporating regular breaks, exercise, and stress-relief practices into our daily routines, enhancing overall productivity and wellbeing. I have Crohn's Disease, a chronic bowel condition, and it most certainly can impact my energy throughout the day/week. I build this into my mindful schedule so that I have sufficient whitespace for rest if it is needed.

Prioritising Meaningful Goals

Conscious time management encourages us to delve into our deeper aspirations and values, helping us prioritise activities that align with our purpose and fulfillment. By identifying and focusing on meaningful goals, we avoid getting lost in the busyness of everyday life and channel our efforts into endeavours that truly matter to us. I love working with people to help them get more time for the things that really matter; it lights me up!

Promoting Work-Life Integration

Rather than advocating for a strict work-life balance, conscious time management promotes work-life integration. It recognises that the boundaries between work and personal life are often blurred, and encourages individuals to create a more harmonious relationship between the two. This approach enables individuals to find greater joy and fulfillment in both professional and personal aspects of life.



Remember that conscious time management is not about squeezing more tasks into your day but rather about making conscious choices that align with your values and priorities. Embrace this holistic approach, and you will find yourself experiencing a newfound sense of fulfilment and satisfaction as you optimise your time and create a life that truly reflects who you are.

As we strive to make the most of our finite time on this earth, embracing conscious time management can be the key to unlocking our full potential.

Sarah offers one-to-one online time management coaching, as well as her signature programme Project Manage Your Life. Find out more here: www.sarahstewart.co.uk

Sarah Stewart is a time management coach and mindfulness practitioner helping busy people get more time for the things that really matter.

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Is There Ever a Right Way to Break Up with Someone?



I recently coached a client through her relationship break-up. She had been unhappy in her relationship for nearly a year and had been thinking about ending it, but she could not make the break.

We talked through her reasons for wanting to end the relationship – not enough in common, and although she cared for her boyfriend, she did not envisage him as her life partner. She was very clear on the ‘why’ but not on the ‘how.’ She told me she felt frustrated at her inability to make the break. When I dug deeper, it became apparent that the thought of leaving terrified her. She also feared that she might not find someone else; she had invested three years in the relationship and felt guilty because she did not want to hurt her boyfriend’s feelings.

Sometimes, we stay in relationships and hold on to people for the wrong reasons. We invest time and emotion, which means that making the decision to leave is never easy. But as I say to my clients, putting in more time on something that is not workable will not make it so, and it is kinder to the other person to let them go.

Whether you’re the one initiating the break-up or on the receiving end, it can be a painful and emotionally challenging experience. If you are the one who wants to break up, remember that you will have already made that decision and will be further on emotionally. Which means how you communicate the break-up is key. Sending someone a text to ‘finish’ it or ghosting someone and abruptly ending the relationship without explanation is unkind and avoidant behaviour. It also does not provide closure for the other party.

One client told me that she ended the relationship by text because she could not tell her ex face-to-face because he was “too intense.” Another said he could not cope with the strong possibility that his girlfriend would become very emotional and the “risk” that he would end up consoling her and not breaking up with her. Both said that, in hindsight, they could have handled their respective situations better.

If you decide to break up, a face-to-face conversation is preferable. It may not be the easiest way out, but it does allow both of you to express thoughts and feelings openly and provides the closure I refer to above. If possible, it is better to bow out gracefully, which means being honest about your feelings and why the relationship is no longer working for you. Be very clear. How would you feel if it was the other way around? Be compassionate.

Resorting to lies or deceit to end the relationship will only cause more pain in the long run. Avoid placing blame or making hurtful remarks, as this will only add insult to injury. Instead, focus on expressing your feelings and acknowledging the feelings and emotions that the break-up may cause for your partner.

Now, you might be thinking, but what about if you discover your partner has cheated on you or betrayed you? When we are deeply hurt, we often lash out, but for an ex who has moved on emotionally, the impact on them will be minimal. Avoid falling into the trap of seeking revenge or trying to make your ex-partner jealous. These actions will only prolong the pain of the break-up and prevent you from moving on with your life.

Be kind to yourself, take the time to heal from the break-up, and focus on yourself and your well-being. Implement self-care. Allow yourself to grieve the loss of the relationship and let go of any lingering resentment or anger toward your ex-partner. When you forgive, you give back to yourself. Surround yourself with supportive friends and family members, and seek professional help if needed.

Breaking up may be hard to do, but by being mindful of your partner’s feelings and being kind, honest, clear and respectful you will minimise the pain for both of you. This will enable you to navigate the end of a relationship in a far better way.

By Celia Conrad



Celia Conrad, your Relationship Guru, is a former family lawyer and relationship expert offering emotional and practical support on dating, thriving relationships, break-up and divorce, personal loss and bereavement.



Living Fully

Embracing the Present Moment Through Mindfulness

Have you ever stopped to consider where your mind wanders - dwelling on the past, worrying about the future, or simply being in the moment? How does this affect your experience of life, and what can we gain from embracing the here and now?

Living in the present moment isn't just a passing trend; it's a profound shift in perspective that invites us to see the world with fresh eyes. It's about recognizing how our thoughts shape our reality and understanding the power we have to change them.

Imagine yourself in a quiet moment, feeling the serenity of your breath. As you tune into the present moment, you start to notice the small details around you - the sunlight streaming through the window, birds chirping outside, and the sound of traffic in the distant background. In this moment of awareness, you realize that life is at a complete halt. Because your senses are heightened, you fully immerse yourself into each passing moment. It is almost as if you are taking a mental snapshot of a specific moment in time.

But why does this matter? What's the big deal about living in the moment?

The beauty lies in its simplicity. When fully present, we can appreciate the little things, connect more deeply with ourselves and others, and tap into our creativity. Mindfulness is about being aware of our thoughts and feelings without judgment, allowing us to experience life more fully. It's removing those colored lenses that are constantly telling us how to interpret the world based on our life experiences.

In my own experience, I've found that mindfulness has been life-changing. It's helped me navigate my own challenges with greater ease and clarity. By practicing mindfulness, I've learned to break that endless loop that kept running through my mind. You know, the loop that causes us to question who we are, what we do, and mostly - what others will think of us. The endless loop that keeps us stuck because we are too afraid to move forward. It was through mindfulness and practicing the present moment that I realized that all these stories I told myself about my past and what my future might be were simply keeping me from moving forward. It was as if my mind was keeping me in that fight-or-flight mode because these stories were screaming danger in my mind. The irony? I had created that danger through my own thoughts and endless stories.

As I've become more present, I've noticed a shift in how I perceive the world around me. I no longer worry about what could go wrong or what others think of me. I simply focus on executing my present moment to the best of my ability through calm, peace, and kindness, regardless of what surrounds me. I am even more mindful of the content I consume daily because I know it has the power to influence my perspective and moment, especially when it comes to mainstream news.

But the most important lesson I've learned is that the present moment is all we really have. The past is behind us, and the future is uncertain—and I am more than okay with that. All we have is this moment, right now. And when we learn to embrace it fully, we open ourselves up to a world of possibilities.

So, the next time you find yourself lost in thought, take a moment to pause and come back to where you are - the present. Take a deep breath, notice the world around you. Because, in the end, that's all we really have.

Living in the present moment is not just about being here and now; it's about embracing life with open arms and an open heart.

Through mindfulness, we can learn to see the world in a new light and fully experience the beauty of each moment as it unfolds.



by **Joseline Carballo**
Positive Psychology Practitioner, Coach & Mentor

The Marriage Fixer

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Marital issues can be daunting and often lead to a cycle of stress, unhappiness, and discord between partners. While it's common to struggle with these problems, it's important to recognize that struggling might actually make things worse. Instead, focusing on constructive efforts can pave the way to a healthier, more fulfilling relationship.



The Problem with Struggle

In a troubled marriage, the natural response often involves stress-induced behaviours such as frequent arguments, trying to change your spouse's opinions, and overly accommodating their wishes in the hope that it will bring peace. Unfortunately, though usually well-intentioned, these things, more often than not, create misunderstandings and push your spouse further away.

The more you find yourself struggling to mend things, the more likely it is that negativity will grow - and this simply creates a vicious cycle of bad feelings and resentment.

Shifting from Struggle to Effort

The key to overcoming marital difficulties lies in taking a different approach. It's about replacing reactive struggles with proactive efforts. This means shifting your mindset from one that is fear-based to one that is grounded in positive, actionable steps.

Here are some ways to do that:

1. Promote Positive Experiences: Make a conscious effort to enjoy time with your spouse without focusing on the problems. Spend time together, sharing fun activities or happy memories from the past. This will not only make you both feel better in each other's company - it will strengthen your bond and remind you why you got together in the first place.

2. Practise Active Listening: Communication breakdowns are usually a major source of marital strife. Improve your interactions by listening more than you speak, validating your partner's feelings, and addressing their concerns without judgement or becoming defensive.

3. Increase Self-awareness: Understanding your behaviours and triggers can significantly affect how you respond to conflict. Think about how you act in various situations and consider how you can respond differently to prevent negative cycles from continuing.

4. Adopt a Forward-Looking Attitude: Instead of fearing what might go wrong, focus on what a successful relationship looks like for you both. Approach your marriage with hope and a readiness to invest in its growth. This will all help to shift the atmosphere from one of despair to one of optimism, which is what you need.

Implementing Change Without Fear

Identifying and confronting the fears that underlie your negative behaviour in your relationship is crucial. You may have fears such as conflict, losing your relationship, regret over a lost future, or being a "failure." All these fears will only sabotage your efforts to be the positive, loving person you need to be in your marriage. When you start to recognize your fears, you can begin to take steps that are motivated by confidence and clarity rather than panic and misunderstanding.

Broadening Perspectives

It's also beneficial to view the relationship from an outside perspective occasionally. Whether this means seeking advice from trusted friends or online resources or simply taking time to assess your relationship dynamics objectively, gaining a broader understanding can provide new insights into resolving conflicts.

Creating a Supportive Environment

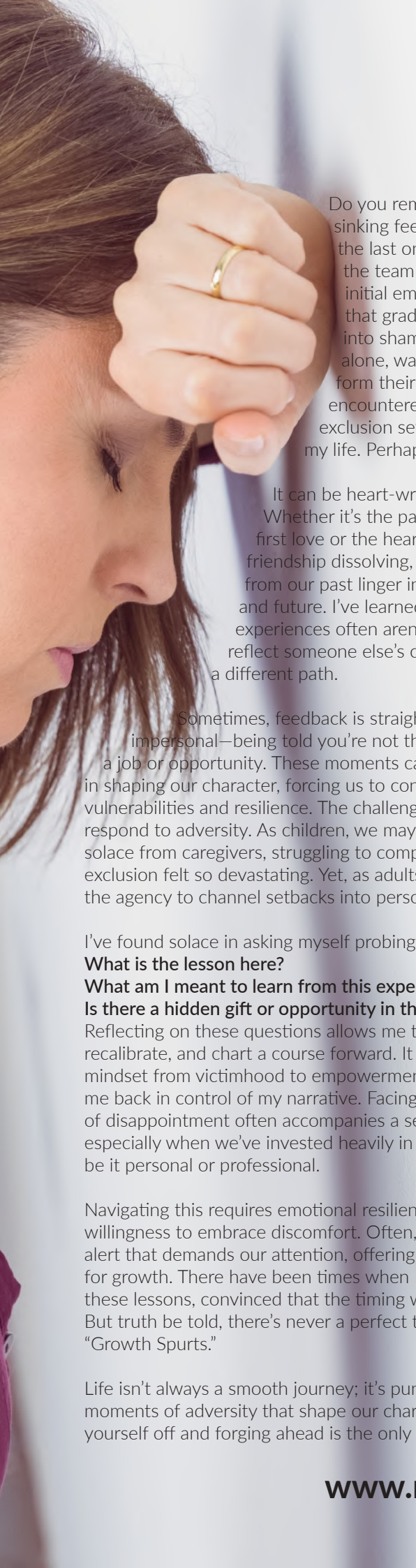
Another pivotal aspect is creating an environment that fosters mutual support and understanding. This involves both partners committing to a positive dialogue, where expressions of needs and desires are met with empathy rather than resistance.

Establishing a routine for checking in on each other's emotional well-being can also strengthen your connection.

Consistency is Key

Applying these strategies regularly is vital. Change doesn't occur overnight, and consistent effort is required to transform a relationship's dynamics. Set realistic goals together and celebrate small victories to maintain motivation. Remember, the essence of marriage involves growing together as a couple and continually nurturing the relationship.

In summary, struggle, and stress are counterproductive in solving marital problems. By focusing on positive efforts and embracing constructive strategies, you can transform your marriage into a source of joy and support. Remember, the goal isn't just to fix the negatives but to create enduring positives that enrich both partners. Take these steps not out of fear but from a place of love and commitment to each other's happiness and well-being. As the saying goes: "Whatever you focus on, you get more of."



Embracing Life's Lessons: Navigating Setbacks with Resilience

Do you remember that sinking feeling of being the last one picked for the team at school? The initial embarrassment that gradually morphs into shame as you stand alone, watching others form their groups? I've encountered moments of exclusion several times in my life. Perhaps you have, too.

It can be heart-wrenching. Whether it's the pain of your first love or the heartbreak of a friendship dissolving, some wounds from our past linger into our present and future. I've learned that these experiences often aren't about us; they reflect someone else's choice to follow a different path.

Sometimes, feedback is straightforward and impersonal—being told you're not the right fit for a job or opportunity. These moments can be pivotal in shaping our character, forcing us to confront our vulnerabilities and resilience. The challenge lies in how we respond to adversity. As children, we may have sought solace from caregivers, struggling to comprehend why exclusion felt so devastating. Yet, as adults, we possess the agency to channel setbacks into personal growth.

I've found solace in asking myself probing questions:

What is the lesson here?

What am I meant to learn from this experience?

Is there a hidden gift or opportunity in this setback?

Reflecting on these questions allows me to step back, recalibrate, and chart a course forward. It shifts my mindset from victimhood to empowerment—putting me back in control of my narrative. Facing moments of disappointment often accompanies a sense of loss, especially when we've invested heavily in a relationship, be it personal or professional.

Navigating this requires emotional resilience and a willingness to embrace discomfort. Often, it serves as an alert that demands our attention, offering an opportunity for growth. There have been times when I've resisted these lessons, convinced that the timing wasn't right. But truth be told, there's never a perfect time for those "Growth Spurts."

Life isn't always a smooth journey; it's punctuated by moments of adversity that shape our character. Dusting yourself off and forging ahead is the only way to go.

Be curious!

Embrace the discomfort, search for silver linings, and trust that good can emerge from adversity—even if it doesn't feel that way immediately. In time, the lessons gleaned will enrich your journey and redefine your understanding of success. These experiences can leave lasting impacts, both emotionally and psychologically. As a child, I distinctly remember the pain of exclusion, the ache of not being chosen. It made me question my worth and left scars that persisted into adulthood.

As an adult, the sting of setbacks hasn't lessened, but my response to them has evolved. I've learned that these moments often speak more about the circumstances or preferences of others than my own inadequacies. This crucial distinction empowers us to separate our self-worth from external judgments.

Moreover, challenges aren't limited to personal relationships—they also extend into professional realms. Failing to secure that job you wanted, business setbacks, or failed ventures can shake our confidence and test our resolve. Yet, each obstacle presents an opportunity for growth and self-discovery. I encourage you to adopt a growth-oriented mindset. Instead of dwelling on perceived shortcomings or wallowing in self-pity, view setbacks as invitations for self-improvement.

Ask yourself: **What can I learn from this experience? How can I use this setback to propel myself forward?** One lesson I've learned is the importance of resilience in the face of adversity.

It isn't about avoiding challenges; it's about bouncing back stronger each time. It's the ability to acknowledge disappointment while maintaining faith in yourself. In my own journey, I've discovered that embracing life's lessons fosters personal and professional growth. It cultivates humility, resilience, and adaptability—the cornerstones of success in any endeavour.

Remember, setbacks are not roadblocks; they are stepping stones. While they may bruise your ego temporarily, they can also fortify your character in the long run. Ultimately, how we respond to life's challenges defines our trajectory. Will you allow setbacks to undermine your confidence and derail your dreams? Or will you harness their transformative power to fuel your evolution?

Embrace life's inevitable challenges—they are a catalyst for growth, resilience, and self-discovery. Let them refine you, not define you.

Confidence Coach

Mary Scott



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The Art of Traveling Deeply: Experiences That Transform Your Life

Travel is more than just visiting new places; it's about experiencing the world in a way that changes you fundamentally. This deeper, transformative style of travel isn't about crossing destinations off a list. Instead, it encourages a journey of internal reflection through external experiences. In this exploration of the art of traveling deeply, we dive into how our travels can profoundly alter our understanding of the world, ourselves, and our place within it.

Understanding Transformative Travel

Transformative travel is rooted in the idea that travel can be a pivotal, enlightening experience if approached with intentionality and mindfulness. It's about engaging with cultures, communities, landscapes, and practices that are unfamiliar and that challenge your perceptions and beliefs. This form of travel pushes you out of your comfort zone and into a space where growth can occur.

Experiences That Catalyze Change

Volunteering Abroad: Engaging in volunteer work in places that need help provides a dual benefit. It offers vital assistance and fosters a deeper understanding of local issues. This can range from teaching English to children in Asia, helping with wildlife conservation in Africa, or building homes in South America. The immersive experience challenges your worldview, enhances empathy, and often reshapes your understanding of what's truly important in life.

Cultural Immersion: Spending time living as locals do—whether in a rural village in India or an urban neighborhood in Budapest—can be eye-opening. Eating local cuisine, participating in traditional festivals, and interacting daily with residents can culminate in a nuanced understanding of a diverse way of life. These experiences can dismantle preconceived notions and foster a global mindset.

Nature and Wilderness Expeditions: There's something inherently transformative about being in nature, especially in wilderness areas that are far removed from the hustle of urban environments. Trekking through the Amazon Rainforest, climbing the peaks in the Himalayas, or kayaking in the fjords of Norway force confrontations with your physical and mental limits. Such experiences can instill a profound respect for nature alongside insights into personal resilience.

Spiritual Retreats: Participating in spiritual practices away from home—a yoga retreat in Bali, a meditation retreat in Thailand, or a pilgrimage in Spain—is another avenue through which travel can transform. The quietude and teachings experienced in these settings can lead to significant personal clarity and spiritual growth.

Educational Journeys: Whether it's taking cooking classes in Italy, studying traditional dance in Cuba, or attending a history course in Egypt, educational travel combines the acquisition of knowledge with the joy of travel. This form of traveling deeply enriches your understanding and appreciation of different cultures and their histories.

Integrating Experiences into Everyday Life

The ultimate goal of transformative travel is to allow these profound experiences to inform your everyday life. It's about taking the lessons learned on the road and integrating them into your daily routine. This could mean adopting new practices such as meditation, changing consumption habits to be more sustainable, or simply maintaining an open, curious mindset towards the people and events around you.

Planning Transformative Travel

Planning must go beyond the usual logistics to embark on a transformative journey. It involves setting intentions: What do you hope to discover, or how do you wish to grow? It's also important to be open and flexible, allowing experiences to unfold naturally rather than adhering strictly to a predefined itinerary. After returning, give yourself time to reflect on your experiences and their impacts, which can often be as significant as the journey itself.


Conclusion

Traveling deeply isn't just about where you go; it's about what you choose to do and how you choose to engage while there. By embracing the opportunities for profound engagement offered by transformative travel, you open doors to understanding the world in more meaningful ways. This journey, challenging yet enriching, is not only about seeing the world but about allowing the world to change you. It's indeed an art—one that enriches, alters, and lasts a lifetime.

By Hayley Hunter Hines
Spiritual Advisor and Integrative Well-Being Strategist



What James Bond has to do with spiritual leadership



Steve Jobs, deceased co-founder of Apple; Oprah Winfrey, world-known talk show host; Richard Brandson, entrepreneur and order founder Mother Theresa - as different as these people are, they all have one thing in common: As passionate leaders, they are spiritual and thereby extremely successful. Passion unites all successful people. It makes the

eyes sparkle, infects people, and creates radiance. People like to follow this light. They get involved, commit, and work effectively and purposefully – a shared vision in mind because they can identify with an authentic leader.

But how do you become an authentic role model as a manager? The track to authenticity is always personal development. It's about discovering who you are within. Connection – the core of spirituality – with yourself is the key. What defines me? What are my most important needs? What emotions do I want to experience in life? How do I get it implemented? etc. Leadership is always self-leadership. Four stages form the basis for the corresponding personal development:

First of all, I need a vision. What does a typical working day as a manager look like? Who surrounds me? What goals do I pursue? How does my working environment fulfill me? The more comprehensive and vivid the images, the better. It's about wishing, about daydreaming, and an image of the future emerges that magically attracts me and brings me into passion.

The next step is to discover what behavior this “new version of myself” shows, what abilities it has, and what beliefs and values it follows. How does it feel to move in the newly created scenario?

Third, your own identity develops from these considerations. Who am I? What character traits do I live by? What reputation, what description of myself makes my heart leap for joy?

Based on the current situation, the final stage is to fill the gap that still separates me from the ideal. With the right (coaching) tools, this path can be followed with clarity, joy, and ease.

A win-win situation appears: On the one hand, the team members feel an authentic interest in further development and improvement, and they automatically absorb the energy radiated with them. On the other hand, managers take care of their own mental well-being. Inner strength and enthusiasm give rise to ideas that boost productivity.

Like my quirk for James Bond, which inspired the workforce of an entire production plant. As a technical journalist – a job that I've been passionate about beyond coaching for more than 25 years – I was responsible for a conference at Jaguar Land Rover in Nitra, Slovakia. It was about car bodies, engineering, production topics, etc. I worked with a great and engaged team at JLR that told me that the first vehicles out of production line were the Defender used in the last James Bond film, “No Time to Die”! I love this film, have seen it twelve times in the cinema, written various texts about it, and met wonderful people with whom I had great experiences.

Hearing that story, I was mesmerized and insisted on having one of the film cars at “my conference.” There were many e-mails wherein I repeatedly asked for the car, overcoming doubts and the fear of not being seen as a reputable journalist but a “James Bond fan girl.” Engagement paid off, and the responsible finally said “yes.” And there, in fact, was a film car! But, I'd never have thought about the huge benefits caused by it. First



of all, as I was so excited about the Defender, I uplifted the whole conference spirit with my enthusiasm. As a colleague reported afterward: “Whenever we heard your laugh, everybody immediately relaxed and had a smile on their face. There was a great atmosphere during the two days!” But not enough. On day two, I received official thanks from Jaguar Land Rover as the whole plant staff's motivation increased. Seeing the car at the entrance made people communicate with each other, have fun, and start their shift in a good mood. They recognized being part of something great.

It's about belonging, contributing to an overarching topic, self-worth. Intrinsic motivation fosters performance and productivity at a depth that cannot be achieved by money or other external gratifications.

So, what are you enthusiastic about? What are you longing for? Know yourself (and your dreams, needs, and values) and take action. Success, well-being, and professional recognition will follow automatically for a spiritual leader.

By Andrea Huber

Andrea K. Huber, works as Personal Trainer and Life Coach, specialised in stress management and emotion coaching.



Grief is like a private club that no one wants to join

At some point, everybody has to join this club. It's not one that people enjoy at all, and everyone stays in the club for different lengths of time, depending on how they deal with the types of grief they encounter.

I have been a member of this club for many reasons, and honestly, I don't think I will ever completely leave it. I have learnt to be a member on my terms and dip in and out as life progresses.

In these articles, we will delve deeper into why people join. Over the following few pieces, I will also give you some coping strategies that I, along with my clients, have used to help us avoid being fully paid-up members of this club.

Grief takes on lots of genres. Grief is when you have a significant upheaval in your life, and your emotions are everywhere. Grief isn't just when you lose a person through death. It comes in many forms; people mainly think grief is when they lose a loved one or a close relative. Even an animal they've had for many years has become part of family life. When you lose the pet, it will cause grief.

An important one is when you have a relationship breakdown, as you will be grieving the loss of your partner and the life that you used to have together. This can be difficult to overcome, and you need time and support to overcome these life-changing events. However, grief can also happen if you've lost your job or even left the career you've had for a long time. It can be when you fallout with a close friend or even when you move house.

Each individual copes with grief in their way. You can't mirror someone else's grief to your own; some people learn to live with it very quickly, and it alters their lives depending on what they're grieving; others can take many years. Grief is like a rollercoaster, so some days you feel on top of the world, and then within a couple of days or a day, you can feel very low again and very sad and confused.

The main thing to do is to take your time, deal with every situation, and not be rushed into thinking you should have stopped grieving. It might not be the right time for you at this present moment.

The one essential thing is that you get support to learn how to cope with grief and make lifestyle alterations to live a whole and meaningful life. There will always be days when you remember your life before the grief, but you will get there with time and support.

Journaling can help because it takes all your thoughts out of your head and lets you see them in black and white.

Write down each day how you are feeling. Look for positives, not just negatives. Aim to end each day's journaling positively; this will set you up for the day.

Grief is just like a rollercoaster, so sometimes you will be at the top and see the world in a wonderfully positive place, and other days you may have taken a significant dip down to the bottom; it's on these days that it is essential to write down how you feel so that you can see what the trigger is. It's learning what these triggers are that will help you move forward.

You may even be able to leave this club for quite a while. The goal is never to worry about re-joining because you know you can leave again once you reset. You learn to live differently and become a temporary member of the private club no one wants to join.

In the upcoming article, I will continue to provide insight into different ways to leave the club.

By Maxine K Brown
MKB Life Coach

**NEW
MEMBER**





FROM FAITH TO BUSINESS

BALANCING LIFE'S PILLARS WITH LOVE

Introduction:

Finding balance can seem like an elusive pursuit in the hustle and bustle of our modern world. We juggle multiple roles and responsibilities, often sacrificing one aspect of our lives for the sake of another. Yet, timeless wisdom suggests harmony can be found when we view life through love. This article explores how faith, family, and business intersect and how embracing love can help us find equilibrium in our pursuits.

Faith: Anchoring Ourselves in Purpose

For many, faith is a guiding force, providing a sense of purpose and direction in life. Whether through organized religion or personal spirituality, faith offers a framework for understanding our place in the world and our responsibilities to others. In business, faith can be a powerful motivator, inspiring entrepreneurs to pursue their ventures with integrity and compassion.

Embracing faith in business involves more than paying lip service to religious principles. It requires a genuine commitment to ethical conduct, respecting employees and customers, and striving for excellence in all endeavors. When faith becomes the foundation of our business practices, it infuses our work with meaning and significance beyond mere profit margins.

Family: Nurturing Relationships Amidst Ambition

Family forms the cornerstone of our support network, providing love, encouragement, and stability as we navigate life's challenges. Maintaining a healthy balance between work and family can be particularly challenging in business. The demands of entrepreneurship often require long hours and sacrifices that can strain familial relationships.

However, when approached with love and intentionality, family and business need not be mutually exclusive. Instead of viewing them as competing priorities, we can integrate them harmoniously, recognizing the importance of both in shaping our lives. This might involve setting boundaries to protect family time, involving loved ones in business decisions, or even starting a family business that fosters collaboration and shared goals. The key is prioritizing relationships over profit and cultivating an environment where family bonds are strengthened rather than strained by our professional pursuits. By nurturing our connections with loved ones, we find fulfillment in our personal lives and lay the groundwork for success in our business endeavors.

Business: Building with Purpose and Passion

In the fast-paced business world, it is easy to get caught up in pursuing success at any cost. However, true fulfillment lies not in accumulating wealth or accolades but in pursuing meaningful goals that align with our values and passions. When we approach business with love—for our work, customers, and employees—success becomes more than just a financial metric; it reflects our commitment to positively impacting the world.

Building a business with purpose and passion requires clarity of vision, resilience in the face of obstacles, and a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. It also requires a deep-seated belief in every individual's inherent worth and dignity, whether they are employees, customers, or competitors. When love guides our actions in the business world, we create organizations that prioritize people over profits and contribute to the well-being of society as a whole.



Conclusion:

In the quest for balance, we often overlook the most influential force of all: love. When we view life through the lens of love – embracing faith, nurturing family relationships, and building businesses with purpose and passion – we find harmony amidst the chaos of our modern world. As we strive to create a better future for ourselves and future generations, remember that true success is not measured by the size of our bank accounts or the accolades we receive but by the love we share and the lives we touch along the way.

How can one cultivate self-love?

What is the process of loving oneself? Do we have to take steps to reach self-love, or is it something we naturally possess? Self-love is where it all begins with understanding your own identity. Discovering your true self is the key to self-love. Some individuals need to delve into their family history, navigate life's circumstances, and build relationships in order to cultivate self-love. By loving yourself, you become impervious to negative comments about your status, recognizing your love holds your true worth. A deep understanding of your identity and purpose is vital for a meaningful, enduring love.



What is the purpose of practicing self-love?

Just as we require daily nourishment through food, self-love is a daily necessity for our overall well-being. Self-love results in respecting your body, appreciating life, and loving others as you desire to be loved. Our love can be perceived through our mannerisms, actions, and speech. When you love yourself, you are motivated to support others, impact lives, and make a difference in the world. Self-love has a contagious effect. Picture a world where everyone practices self-love. How different would the world be? Loving yourself stops you from harming others because you can identify yourself in them.

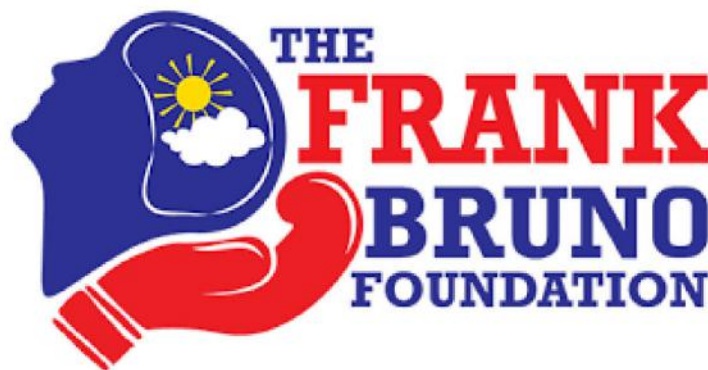
What are the benefits of self-love?

Self-love leads to rewards such as peace, hope, and happiness. Practicing self-love creates positive communication within yourself and with those around you. When you are authentically yourself, there is no need to prove anything to others. Begin by falling in love with yourself, and watch as abundance fills your life.



By Cleanne Johnson

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Event Season & The Need for Versatile, Transitional Wear

As winter fades and fresh blooms promise new beginnings, spring heralds the start of the event season.

This is my absolute favorite time of the year. Fashion month is officially behind us, and the pieces we loved on the runway are available to incorporate in our own closets.

But the trick is in the pairing. Unlike in summer, where there is less layering (and less creativity), Spring's unpredictable weather—warm afternoons often followed by cool evenings—necessitates a more thoughtful approach to dressing while also providing the depth of layers.

The key to mastering this transitional period lies in selecting pieces that are not only stylish but also multifunctional, offering the perfect opportunity to create interest in our outfits.

But with Spring, we get to incorporate color, again. With Spring, we explore the essential elements of a classic capsule wardrobe with the depth and variety to carry you through event season.

Thank you, sun.

Thank you, florals.

Which is why I love Spring; because nature's natural cycles are incorporated in fashion trends. Cruise and resort collections are released with patterns and movement that speak for themselves. Pair these flowing options with versatile outerwear and you've captivated eyes and drawn attention to your body—in the best possible way.

Because with the onset of warmer weather comes a full schedule. Calendars fill up with weddings, garden parties, graduations, and outdoor gatherings demanding versatile, transitional wear. Navigating this new season with style and ease requires a wardrobe that adapts seamlessly to varying temperatures and diverse occasions.

And, believe it or not, it's a necessity.

Because in the blink of an eye, it'll be summer. We'll have less of a need to layer. We'll be more focused on our bodies than our clothing. And so, with this spring window, there's an emphasis on classic staples incorporated with pops of color. We're seeing pastels in soft yellows and bold pinks and olive greens peppered against easy denim, poplin shirts, and tailored blazers, along with other versatile jackets that will carry the wearer from Spring and into Fall—when we'll need to layer again.

Tahirah Goins-Nall
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Lisa J Weiss.com
Transformation Maven

Breath as an Invitation

WELCOME BACK!

If you have been following me, you have become used to me, starting off by inviting you to take a breath. In this issue, I am switching things up a bit. I'm going to address a trend I see happening—one where engaging in a breathing technique has the potential to become a strategy.

Let's begin with the basics. We all breathe. We wouldn't be here if we didn't. Over the past few years, there has been an increase in workshops and retreats designed to teach you how to breathe by utilizing several different breathing techniques. Examples include Box breathing, the Wim Hof method, Belly Breathing, and, of course, my favourites, the Four

Elemental Breaths: Earth, Air, Water, and Fire. This is a wonderful thing.

Learning to take a conscious breath... no matter the breathing technique, is a good thing. It draws attention to something we tend to take advantage of and not think about twice. It's an invitation for you to pause, take note of what is happening in your body, and notice your thoughts. Like most things in life, there is also a shadow side to be aware of. The shadow side of using breathing techniques is when you use the technique as a strategy to not experience the uncomfortableness present in your body.

How does taking a breath become a strategy? It lies in your underlying expectations. When you are learning a new technique or process, you expect that there will be results. And there is an expectation you will feel different. The same applies when you learn new breathing techniques/processes.

Strategy vs Intention

I want to be clear. There is nothing wrong with strategies. They help us to create new habits and patterns. Let's break down the difference between strategy and expectation, as well as intention and presence. When you use breath as a strategy, often the expectation behind it is to experience anything other than what is happening at the moment. You engage the "breathing technique" to move past feeling angry, sad, frustrated, uneasy, ashamed, fearful, and many more emotions. This is an intelligent response. No one likes to feel uncomfortable. At the beginning of trying a new breathing

technique, most times, the feeling subsides and may even go away. So, the next time the feeling happens, you use the same technique in the hopes of getting the same result.

Unfortunately, over time the results may stop happening. The feeling still remains, and you begin to believe that all this talk about breathing doesn't really work. You see, as humans we like habituation, doing the same thing over and over, hoping and expecting to get the same result. This happens with any new process or technique that is used to create a desired result.

Moving Beyond Strategy

At this point, you may be asking... "How do I keep from using the breathing techniques and processes I learned as a strategy?" It all has to do with your intention. You invite a different experience when you choose to engage in a particular breathing process with the intention to BE present in what you are experiencing, as opposed to escaping from where you are. Intention and presence are the keys behind something not becoming a strategy.

For example, imagine you are in a meeting and someone says something that causes you to feel angry, ashamed, frustrated etc... Each of you will experience this in your own way. In that moment, because you don't want to feel what's happening, you decide to engage one of the four elemental breaths (Earth, Air, Water, and Fire) or another breathing process to help you shut down, move away from, or bury whatever you are experiencing inside yourself. This can be considered as using breath as a strategy.

Another approach is to consider engaging the same breathing technique. However, this time, engage it with the intention to become curious and invite yourself to let go of any expectation of resolving what you are feeling. This is a perfect opportunity to invite yourself fully into what you are feeling at that moment and know it is an intelligent response. It is also an invitation for you to learn something new about yourself or

the situation. There is no good/bad/right/wrong here. I am bringing this to your attention so that you can become aware of what is taking place beneath the surface:

- Are you choosing breath as a strategy because you don't want to feel what you feel?
- Are you choosing to BE in the moment and to experience what is presenting?"

Once you become aware of the underlying intention and/or expectation you have for engaging a breathing technique/process, you have an opportunity to discover if you are choosing to move away from or move into what you are feeling.

I believe it's important for you to continue to learn new processes and techniques. I also believe it's important to become aware when you have slipped into using a new breathing process as a strategy to bypass, and not feel the information that is presenting.

Choosing to take a breath is a good thing... and consider what you might discover when you choose from intention and not expectation. Until the next time!

Lisa



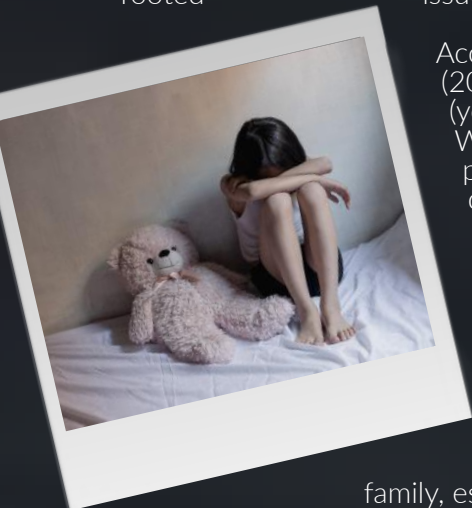
P.S. I'm always happy to hear from you. Feel free to connect with me on social media.

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The impacts of political and social policies on families and children effected by incarceration

Social inequality is a complex issue that takes various forms. Examples include differences in income level, access to resources, levels of power, disadvantaged backgrounds, vulnerability in times of crisis, and characteristics such as age, gender, and ethnicity. These differences can create stigmas that may result in groups and individuals being marginalized and discriminated against within society (Warwick-Booth, 2023).

Some may argue that inequalities are an assertion of political, economic, and cultural power that structure society. These structures may affect the distribution of resources and opportunities available depending on ethnicity, religion, location, gender, and age (Woodhead, Dornan, and Murray, 2012). According to Thompson (2011), social inequality can be defined as the power of ideas strengthened through ideology. Being aware of the functions of various ideologies can prevent the unintentional reinforcement of the status quo and its deep-rooted issues.



According to Barnardo's (2023) up to 310,000 (yearly) in England and Wales have a parent in prison. This can have detrimental impacts on the family's wellbeing, which could have significant implications on a child's mental and physical health due to the breakdown of the relationships and support networks surrounding the

family, especially if the person in prison was the primary carer. In addition to this, the breakdown of a family relationship due to incarceration can increase the risk of the family entering deep poverty (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2023).

La Vigne et al. (2005) argue that the challenges of reintegration from prison back into society can increase the impacts on individuals and their families due to the lack of support they receive in

finding employment and adequate housing due to the stigmas associated with being involved in the criminal justice system. Dependency on family members can have negative impacts on family dynamics.



Furthermore, research has suggested that the stigma associated with prison can be related to the gap in wages when released back into society. Additionally, after five years of the prisoner's release, wages were still reduced, and the negative impact of prison was higher for those who had better opportunities before they were incarcerated (Centre for Crime and Justice Studies).

In addition, government cuts have hugely affected the Crime Prosecution Service (CPS). With fewer resources available for crime prevention, more crimes go unpunished, leaving victims and witnesses feeling unsafe and let down by the system (Guilford, Robins, and Watson, 2023).

In 2013, the government introduced Universal Credit (UC) as part of the welfare reform system. UC is a credit payment that supports families and individuals with the cost of living. It is designed to get people back into work and to support those who work part-time or are self-employed (GOV.UK, 2015).

However, it has been argued that the way the UC was rolled out resulted in many families falling deeper into poverty. The inconsistency in payments and the sanctions put on those who breached regulations have left many families struggling with the cost of living. In addition to the changes to the welfare system, education, healthcare, and childcare have also been negatively affected by government cuts. When families are affected by these cuts, they often turn to their community and family for help; they will then turn to local services and organizations

that help families living in poverty (Caraher and Davison, 2019).

Others have argued that the rollout of universal credit can be conceived as a war on “the poor.” It has been suggested that it is part of a wider campaign to discredit welfare provisions and view the people in receipt of the benefit as incompetent (Caraher and Davison, 2019).

Structural factors such as poverty, family background, lack of education, family support, and overall quality of life can influence an individual’s decision to take part in crime. Numerous studies suggest there is a strong link between serious youth crime and individuals affected by deprivation, poverty, and mental health. According to these studies, some of the most deprived boroughs in London have the highest level of youth violence (City Hall, 2021).

Labeling theory argues that criminal justice interventions increase offending behavior. It suggests that labeling occurs after a person has been involved with the criminal justice system, creating stigma and bias towards known criminals due to the courts and police paying more attention to those who have been involved in the criminal justice system as opposed to those who have not. Labeling theory also implies that government policies may be partly responsible for encouraging intergenerational transmissions of criminal behavior. Investigating these biases is vital in the role of a professional as it increases knowledge surrounding these issues, which is important in preventing repeated criminal behavior (Besemer et al., 2016).

Intersectionality plays a huge role in highlighting the oppression and privileges that overlap and reinforce one another. Studies suggest that black women have different experiences in relation to inequality than a black man and a

white woman due to gender and racial discrimination (Learning for Justice, 2016). According to an article published by the Guardian, women of ethnic minorities are more likely to suffer from physical and financial stress when a family member is incarcerated. In addition to this, it also argued that women of colour, in particular, face emotional and financial burdens due to the lack of support they receive (Sullivan, 2015).

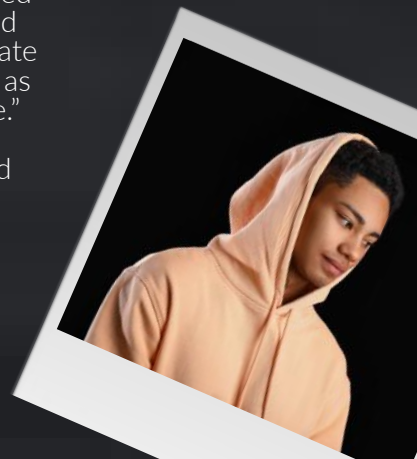
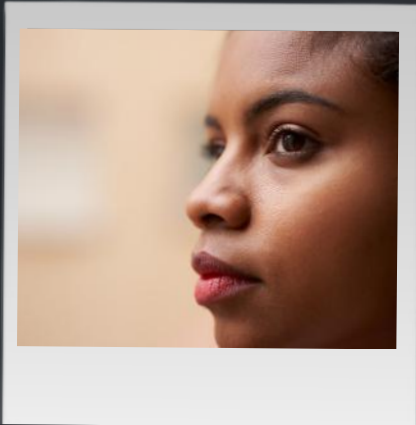
The financial pressures ethnic women face in these circumstances may result in less visitation. This can have major impacts on the emotional wellbeing of the family. It is suggested that people who have frequent contact with their loved ones who are incarcerated have far better

outcomes concerning their mental and physical wellbeing. Having a family member who is incarcerated may put the family in a disadvantaged position due to a loss of income (Sullivan, 2015).

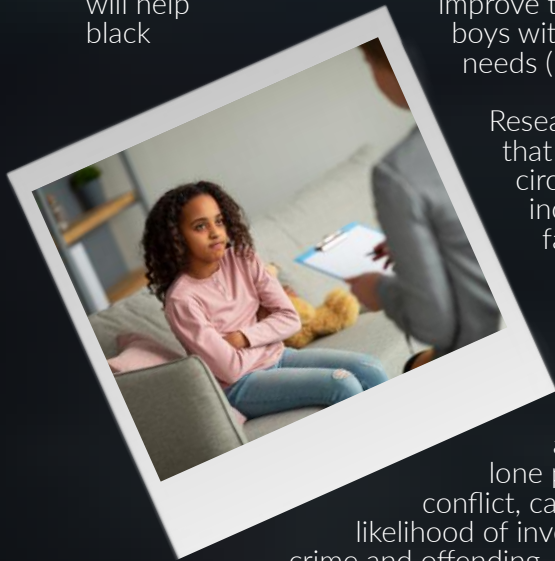
Research suggests that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can negatively affect a person’s life opportunities in the future, resulting in them being more at risk of

taking part in crime. It can have an enormous impact on future violence, perpetration, and victimization (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). An article published by The Guardian reported that there was great concern for the lack of support ethnic minority children receive from youth offending services. HM Inspectorate of Probation found deficits in the quality of the work conducted within youth offending services (Mohdin, 2021).

Organizations that advocate for Race Equality have condemned these findings and have urged governments to take immediate action to end what is known as the “school to prison pipeline.” The report also found that there was a lack of clarity and curiosity around the reasons why these inequalities exist within the youth offending



services. Furthermore, evidence suggests there is a lack of early intervention within the youth offending services to address the complex needs of boys from ethnic backgrounds. The report indicated that integrity and will help black positive working practices improve the support for boys with complex needs (Mohdin, 2021).

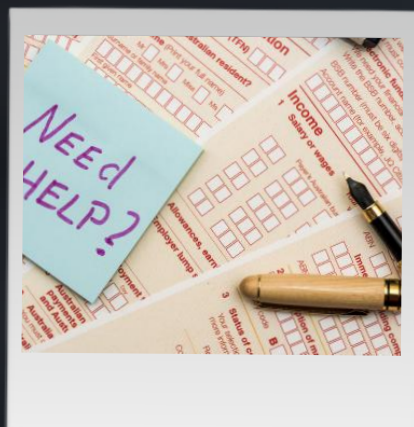


Research suggests that adverse family circumstances, including family factors such as poor parenting, lack of parental oversight, poor

attachments, lone parenting, and conflict, can increase the likelihood of involvement in crime and offending. Poor attachments and parenting can lead to pro-criminal associations, which can often lead to pro-criminal attitudes. Poor socio-economic background and employment status may also increase the likelihood of taking part in crime (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023).

The Family Systems theory suggests that boundaries and rules maintain the stability of the family unit. It argues that a family's characteristics and interactions decide the outcome of its relationships. Each member of the family interrelates with one another. Adverse circumstances such as incarceration mean readjustment to the family structure, which may have major impacts on all members of the family (Family Systems Theory, 2018).

An article published by the Guardian in 2021 suggested that to reduce crime, we must tackle inequality and poverty. Police constable Andy Cook argued that the best crime prevention is increased opportunity. Substantial funding and infrastructure in the inner cities and more deprived areas would help reduce crime and poverty (Dodd, 2021).



The importance of being trauma informed when working with families or children experiencing adversity is vital in ensuring they receive the proper support, especially among practitioners who work with children involved in the justice system Gray et al. (2021). Working with vulnerable families is a key enabler to good practice in ensuring the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults

affected by incarceration. However, evidence suggests that the definition of partnership can be poorly defined, leaving the style of working and the services supplied open to individual interpretation. (Clarke, 2020).

Working with Troubled Families (2011) was a government initiative under the conservative party aimed to improve the lives of those families in need of support due to a wide range of issues, including unemployment, debt, school attendance and attainment, mental and physical wellbeing crime, and anti-social behaviour, domestic violence, and abuse. When the initiative was first set up, it aimed at the 120,000 families considered troublesome, hoping it would turn their lives around. Promoting the family intervention model by the government was a way of finding these families considered anti-social.

However, many local authorities found it difficult to find the required number of families within the area they were working in using the TFP (Troubled Families Programme) and instead chose to use existing services. The framework around child development assumes that the white middle class is superior in parenting. As a result of this, practitioners may reinforce practices aimed at ethnic minority families from poor working-class backgrounds, which may create a power struggle between the practitioner and the families they are working with due to the practitioner's attempts to get the family to conform to certain expectations (Crossley, 2018).

Making practices more inclusive when working in partnership with vulnerable families from diverse backgrounds may sometimes involve a very painful process of challenging their own discriminatory practices and attitudes towards disadvantaged groups and vulnerable families. We must critically reflect on our own values, attitudes, and beliefs as professionals as they mediate our working with children and their families (Richards, 2018).

(UNCRC Article 27) States parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall respond appropriately to aid parents and others responsible for the child in implementing this right and supply material in case of need. Article 39 also says parties shall take all proper measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and

social reintegration of a child victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts.

Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment that fosters the child's health,

self-respect, and dignity. Assistance and support programmes, particularly regarding nutrition, clothing, and housing (UNCRC, 1989)

The Troubled Families program was relaunched as the Supporting Families program (2021), an improved service with strengthened aims and intense collaborative support to help care for the child in need. However, seeking family views, engaging with the family, and working closely with parents and carers is vital when it comes to understanding the issues and circumstances around the adversities they may face and the solutions. Disregarding the views of the parents and carers is not an effective practice when working in partnership with families (Working in Partnership, 2021).

Humility and respecting other people's professional perspectives are key enablers in effective communication and maintaining trusting working relationships with families that need professional support. Nonetheless, parents, family, and carers are the main support systems in a person's life. Parents and professionals must be transparent when communicating their problems and the support they need (Challenging Behavior Foundation, 2021).

Applying Bronfenbrenner (1979) should be central to the practitioner's role when working with children and families, especially those from adverse backgrounds. The link between a child and their immediate environment is a key enabler in their development. Families who face adversity may need additional support outside their support system. The services and organisations that support families who are disadvantaged must uphold good intentions and uphold values of inclusion, equality, and, most importantly, integrity for the support to be effective.

The interactions between professionals and the families may contribute to the outcome of the family environment. The practitioner's beliefs and actions form part of their character. Bourdieu (2003) argues that Habitus is important in the relationships between professionals and families. Internalized thought processes majorly impact how we think, act, and perceive one another. These characteristics and attributes are a result of societal conditioning. Our interpretations of others can create unconscious bias, which can have major implications for the families they support (Fearnley, 2019).

Reflecting on knowledge and skills as a professional is vital in successful professional practice. It is an essential tool aimed at helping professionals learn from experience, embrace the positive and negative by processing their emotions, and adapt to change. The reflective model can be applied to various settings as it offers a guide on how to support effective working relationships (Bassot, 2015).

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www.shadesofreality.co.uk
Shardia O'Connor



Five must-discuss Conversations

for couples to stay attuned

By Lilliana Gibbs

www.theredcouch.co.uk

Most couples will be talking about kids, housework, and careers among the practicalities of life, but when was the last time you enjoyed a deep conversation about **health** or **death, sex** or **money**, or your **desires**?

These are massive themes; if you share a life together, you'd best understand each other on these fundamental topics. Some people evade for fear of conflict, so the recent debt accrued won't be mentioned, and neither will their disappointment in bed. And these folks also won't be sharing their dream of learning Italian or running a marathon. These people are not letting their partners know them. And yet we want to be loved; to be loved is to be known.

The things that couples fight over pretty much all come under these headings. Relationship conflict can serve a purpose; it's one way you challenge your partner and how you are challenged to grow.

Be curious about each other and ask open-ended questions that invite exposition. What was an early memory? How did you feel/manage/navigate that situation? Speaking out loud is different from thinking. Conversing is how we explore our own ideas and beliefs—it's a potent way to better understand ourselves and our partner. Good conversation nourishes both people. So get comfortable and explore!

Money

Money can mean generosity, security, freedom, power, status, fear, manipulation...we inherit family beliefs and behaviours that shape our attitudes to money, and partnering will invariably bring different perspectives on money, and differences easily slide into conflict.

Money is up in the top 3 argument topics (sex and family). It's an endlessly intriguing topic to which so much else is attached, and to which we link so much judgement and emotion.*

There is no escape from having some sort of relationship with money; it is helpful if it's conscious. The goal of this conversation is to understand what money means to each of you. It's not the time to talk about a budget or practical stuff – all very important for another day.

- What were your parent's attitudes to money?
- What do you know about your grandparent's circumstances?
- What early memories do you have about money?
- When have you felt you didn't have enough?
- When have you felt rich?
- How is money featured in your life now?

When you understand each other's background stories and the role of money in the formative years, it's easier to consider how these factors impact your shared financial wellbeing.

You might enjoy trying this: HABITUDES is a useful way to visualise your attitudes and habits around money with a set of cards. www.moneyhabitudes.com

**I'm fascinated by what money means. In my previous career, I produced the documentary PIG TUSKS & PAPER MONEY about the meaning of money to people in Papua New Guinea, which was shown on BBC.*



Sex

Every couple needs to talk about sex, and those who do are having more sex than those who don't, and those women are also having more orgasms. Sharing what you enjoy and remembering good times enhances your connection.

It's a natural fact that one person is likely to have higher sexual desire than the other, so mismatched desire and sexual frequency are topics many struggle with. It's how you communicate that determines if it's a problem or something you can work with creatively. Being open about what's working and what's not is vital. You need to be able to say NO to genuinely say YES.

Touch, hugs, kissing, hand-holding, embracing.. all are good for us. The serotonin, oxytocin, and dopamine are released to make us feel warm, loved, and connected.

Most people get a bit lazy about making each other feel special and wanted. So do loving things, make romantic gestures, and be playful. There's a strong correlation between sex and play—couples who are playful together are happier.

- Have your turn-ons changed over the years?
- In what ways do you like me to let you know I want to have sex?
- How can I enhance our passion?
- When you think about sex, what are you thinking?
- What's a memorable time we had sex?
- Is there something you want to try?

Sex will change over time in every relationship. It's likely to reduce in frequency and intensity along with hormones. But when there's sexual chemistry, genuine interest, and conversation –passion and erotic pleasure continue indefinitely.

*You may like to try this: **The 3 Minute Game** - www.bettymartin.org
Experience touch as acceptance, allowing, taking, and serving.*

Or a sexy version:

3 Minute BATHTOUCH: One floats in a bathtub while the other sweeps their hands gently over their body in the water. Relax, enjoy, and swap over.



Health & Wellbeing

We're creating our reality all the time. The choices and decisions we make in the supermarket, at work, and in our relationships all impact what happens. And how we take care of ourselves—what we eat, how we sleep, and how we manage stress—will also affect our partner.

Attitude has a big impact on how we feel about ourselves, our loved ones, and our lives overall. Focusing on what is good rather than what's missing is a good place to start. Use the basic principle of success: do more of what works and less of what doesn't.

Wellbeing is directly linked to happiness. Research shows that these five things are key to life satisfaction:

Be grateful – expressing appreciation to others also makes us feel good

Be optimistic – intentionally have positive and optimistic thoughts

Count your Blessings – focussing on the positive reminds us what's good.

Use your strengths– doing something well heightens happiness

Commit acts of kindness– helping others also helps us feel good

- When do you feel at your best? What do you most enjoy doing?
- What stories do you have about your health? (Dad died of a heart attack at 60, so I might too; everyone in our family gets cancer)
- What is one thing you could do to support your mental or physical health?
- What about the addictions and habits that don't serve you? (sweet things, smoking, drugs, cola)
- Do you feel you're attending to your spiritual life?

*Want to check how happy you are? Martin Zeligman's latest book is **FLOURISH**. Using positive psychology, we can increase life satisfaction. Take the free 'happiness test' <https://www.idrlabs.com/happiness/test.php>*



Wishes, Goals & Dreams

These are the sparkly ideas that draw us forward, encourage us to try something new, or inspire a plan. But goals and wishes can also languish unattended.

People with a vivid sense of purpose feel happier and more satisfied with their lives. Sharing ideas and dreams can be a pleasure in itself or a challenge if one person's dream doesn't involve their partner. However, being supported in something meaningful to us is a great gift, as Mark Twain suggests:

"...throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbour. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

- A friend in her 70s went couch surfing around Europe for the summer
- A mother of 3 is intent on having her own room in the house
- A therapist colleague takes 3 months leave for an advanced ceramics course
- A young client enrolled in a ropes training in order to be BDSM safe
- A family of 5 went to live in Bali for a year
- A curious long-time couple went to a sex party
- At nearly 80, an artist embarked on ph.D
- A retired couple is passionate about growing food & teaching others
- At almost 70, my husband is completing an album of original guitar music.

Does your life reflect your interests and values? Do you share your desires? Do you play with ideas? Is there something calling to you?

- Did you have a dream for yourself as a child?
- If you had a year of paid leave, what would you do?
- What other career would you have enjoyed or might you enjoy now?
- What would you highlight in your eulogy?
- If you could live in another country, where would that be?
- If you had £5m, what would you do with it?
- How able are you to support or celebrate your partner's dreams?
- Is there something you've always wanted to do?
- If you knew you had 5 years left to live, what would you do?

Take a look at Ikigai, a Japanese concept that refers to something that provides a sense of purpose and a reason to live. Imagine four intersecting circles: PASSION, MISSION, PROFESSION, & VOCATION. <https://positivepsychology.com/ikigai/>

Dying and death

The certainty is that we all die; we just don't know when or how. Many people reach their 50s without having lost someone significant; they may never have seen or touched a dead body, so it's easy to be disconnected from all that is the end of life. And yet, death is an inevitable part of life.

- It's also quite staggering how few people prepare for no longer being alive.
- Have you got a Will?
- Power of Attorney?
- Have you made your wishes clear about end-of-life care?
- Have you chosen to be buried or cremated?
- Are your documents in order? Have you recorded passwords?

When something happens to you or you die, somebody has to manage your interests, and leaving your affairs in good order helps makes this difficult task less onerous. And this is one of the most caring and romantic gestures of all time – ensuring the safekeeping of your loved ones when you're no longer capable or present.

That's the practical side, so how about the emotional part and the existential questions;

- What happens to us when we die?
- Have your beliefs changed over time around death?
- How do you feel about me dying first and being left behind?
- How do you imagine your life at 60, 90, or 100?
- What do you want for yourself in the dying process?
- What don't you want when dying?
- And what do you want for your body after death?
- Is there anyone that you need to say something to?
- How would you like to feel more prepared for the end of life?
- How able are you to let go? What have you had to relinquish already?

Accepting those things we can't change can benefit us all, and it's good practice for the ultimate moment of letting go. Talk about death –it's going to happen someday, and the more you turn to face the end of life and see death as part of the whole life process, the less you have to fear.

Try writing your own eulogy. A eulogy generally summarizes a person's life, character, and impact on others. How will you want to be remembered? Are there unrealised dreams?

Enjoy talking..

Make time for your conversations. Go for a walk, lay on grass, have a long drive, go to dinner, or just get comfortable at home. Set a timer. Some couples find limiting a conversation to, say, an hour helpful. A timer also ensures both have equal speaking time. Topics can always be returned to again. Try Reflecting Listening. Take turns speaking and listening. One speaks for a few minutes, and the listener 'reflects back' what they heard. Then switch over. Do this three or four times. Enjoy yourselves—think of nice places to talk, and add on a movie, dinner, or a sauna.

Healthy relationships are crucial to happiness. Genuinely connecting with others results in positive emotions like security, peace, and joy. Studies show that people in satisfying relationships enjoy higher self-esteem, feel more empathy, have better physical health, and have a longer life expectancy. So, attend to your most important relationship through meaningful conversation.

Climbing the Corporate Ladder

Strategies for Your Next Promotion

Advancing your career and earning promotions is a goal for many professionals. While hard work and dedication are essential, there are specific strategies you can employ to increase your chances of moving up the corporate ladder. Here are some tactics to position yourself for your next promotion:

Effective Communication

Clear and confident communication is vital for career growth. Ensure your ideas are conveyed articulately in meetings, presentations, and written materials. Seek opportunities to showcase your communication skills, whether by leading a project update or presenting to executives. Strong communicators are often perceived as leaders.

Demonstrate Leadership Qualities

Even before obtaining a leadership role, you can exhibit qualities that make you a desirable candidate for promotion. Take the initiative on projects, offer solutions to problems, and lead by example through your work ethic. Develop skills such as strategic thinking, decision-making, and team management.

Take On New Responsibilities

Volunteer for challenging assignments that allow you to gain new skills and experiences. This showcases your eagerness to grow and contribute more to the company. Seek out roles that give you exposure to senior managers and cross-functional collaboration.

Build Relationships

Networking within your organisation is crucial. Get to know colleagues across departments, including those in leadership positions. Maintain a positive attitude and be known as a team player. Having influential supporters can be advantageous when promotion opportunities arise.

Continuous Learning

Stay up-to-date on industry trends, new technologies, and best practices relevant to your field. Pursue training, certifications, or higher education that enhances your expertise. Being a continuous learner demonstrates your commitment to professional development.

Quantify Your Achievements

Keep track of your achievements, successful projects, and measurable results you've delivered for the company. Quantifying your contributions makes a stronger case during performance reviews and promotion discussions.

By consistently employing these strategies, you will position yourself as an asset and an attractive candidate when promotional opportunities arise within your organisation.

by Jess Harvey

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"Mastering Fear:

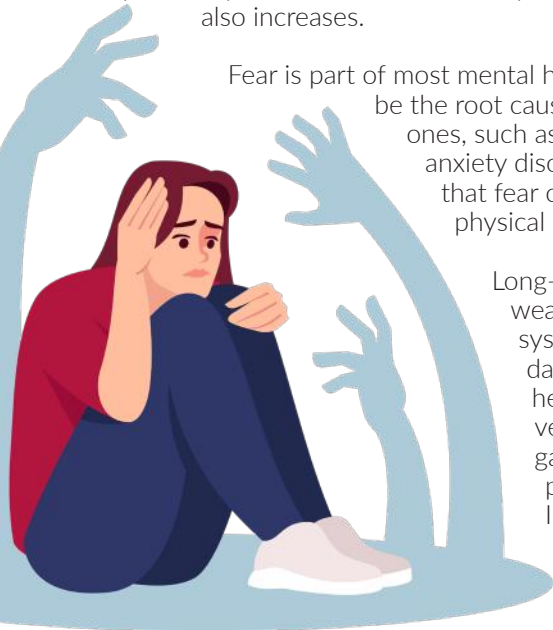
A Clinical Hypnotherapist's Guide to Conquering Your Greatest Fears"

What do you fear in life? Fear is the trigger caused by the potential of a perceived threat, real or imagined, and we can learn to become afraid of nearly everything.

When we sense danger, our brain will instantly react by sending messages/signals to our nervous system. The fight, flight, or freeze response results in physical responses, your heart racing, pumping more blood around your body. You breathe faster and your blood pressure also increases.

Fear is part of most mental health issues and can be the root cause of some common ones, such as depression and anxiety disorders. We know that fear contributes to poor physical health, too.

Long-term fear/anxiety weakens the immune system; it can cause damage to your heart and blood vessels as well as gastrointestinal problems such as IBS symptoms and ulcers.



www.yorkhypnotherapist.com

What are you afraid of and why?

The most common fears include fear of heights, flying, spiders, enclosed spaces, public speaking, open spaces, germs or illness, fear of the unknown, snakes, and social interactions.

Generally speaking, fear can be a learned response, and therefore, it can be unlearned. You can develop a fear if you have witnessed something, e.g., turbulence in a plane, someone being ill, or something in a film or on TV.

Someone with a fear of flying may find themselves avoiding travel altogether or resorting to extreme measures such as self-medication to cope with their anxiety. This fear can lead to feelings of isolation, frustration, and a sense of missing out on life experiences. Over time, the fear of flying can escalate and become more ingrained, making it even more challenging to overcome.

Hypnosis has emerged as a powerful tool to help anyone overcome their fear of flying. Hypnotherapy aims to access the subconscious mind to identify and reframe negative beliefs and thought patterns associated with flying. By addressing the root causes of the fear, hypnosis can help individuals reframe their perspective on flying, reduce anxiety levels, and build confidence in their ability to fly comfortably and safely.



By Angie Doig-Thorne



It's not about you.

Public speaking is not about you. You may be thinking, **"What?!"**

When I'm in front of an audience, everyone is looking at me. Everyone is listening to me. My name is in big, bold font on the agenda. Of course, it's about me."

I know this is counterintuitive but stay with me.

Remember those people in your audience? Those humans who are dealing with the slings and arrows of life at work, life at home, and life in this mixed-up world? This experience is for them. They are hoping to gain strategies, wisdom, and inspiration to make their lives easier and more meaningful.

Many of my clients initially come to me because they have had it with feeling anxious, self-conscious, and being in their heads. They are terrified about what people are going to think of them, and this fear undermines their confidence, creativity, and intuition. They've made the experience about them.

If you relate and hate being the center of attention, focus on being of service. Do all you can to understand who will be in your audience, what their struggles are, and how you can help them. This will help you get your center of attention off of you. (See what I did there?)

Also, try this: Picture that they are looking "to" you rather than "at" you.

You may be saying to yourself, "This doesn't apply to me; I love being the center of attention!" The same applies even if you are at home in front of a crowd. Center your attention on your audience and what they need. People can sense if you are trying to help them or if you love hearing the sound of your own voice.

Remember, you don't get a presentation; you give a presentation.

By Amanda Hennessey
Public Speaking Coach & Author

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NHS



Womb Energy

Why Our World Needs It

By Vicki Renz



Womb Energy is about Balance in Society. Let's dive deep into the world of "womb energy" – a force that's not just about creating life but plays a pivotal role in nurturing the balance in our world. In this article, we'll explore why feminine energy is so vital, affecting birth rates, fertility, and the overall harmony of our global community.

The Essence of Womb Energy:

Womb energy goes beyond the physical realm of childbirth; it's about embracing the nurturing, compassionate, and intuitive vibes that come with being a woman. It's like a secret sauce that adds flavour to our existence, reaching beyond childbirth into life's emotional and spiritual dimensions.

Balancing Act:

Just as the Earth relies on a delicate balance of elements to sustain life, our society also depends on equilibrium. Take, for example, yin and yang, dark and light, night and day; masculine and feminine energies need to coexist in perfect harmony. It's not about one being better than the other – it's about the unique dance they do together. Yet, how balanced are we truly? For many centuries, society has been predominantly patriarchal. Women stayed at home, tending to children and the household, while men went out to work.

Over the past 50 years, the role of women has significantly changed in modern society. It's now about fulfilling expectations as a mother and wife, societal pressures, work-life hustle, and personal well-being. While continuing to be the family nurturer and household manager, she is also a career woman and social queen. However, this also calls us to pay attention to bringing more feminine energy into our everyday lives. Are women spending too much time in their masculine energy as society changes? What is the knock-on effect of this?

The Impact on Birth Rates and Fertility:

Research has shown a correlation between a woman's overall well-being, stress levels, and her fertility. Womb energy, closely tied to a woman's mental and emotional state, plays a crucial role in the fertility equation.

High stress levels and low emotional well-being can disrupt hormonal balance, which can directly impact female fertility. Many women experience irregular cycles and physical blockages such as ovarian cysts, fibroids, endometriosis, and struggles when trying to conceive. Birth rates are declining, and infertility is rising in modern society. **The worldwide average number of births in 1950 was five; in 2020, it had fallen to two. In the European Union countries, the average was just 1.51 in 2021.**

The overall impact is an ageing population and declining workforce. Yet some experts say that this decline is necessary to protect our world in the longer term.

Others say that the lower child mortality rate means we no longer need to create such large families.

The question is, how far will the decline continue?

Empathy for Women:

More care should be taken to acknowledge the challenges modern-day women face. We need to ensure that women receive plenty of nurturing for themselves, where they are valued and uplifted. Compare her to Mother Nature, who always flourishes when she is given back her time and energy.

How can we increase Womb Energy?

Feminine energy is nurturing, providing, intuition, creativity, and flow. A woman can be powerfully feminine or flowing with nurturing and care. We can fulfill many roles, from the queen energy to the nursing energy. Masculine energy is that of logic, planning, focus, drive, and directness. Our society and a typical workday are founded upon masculine energies.

It is vital for women to find time in their day to rebalance their feminine energy. Too much masculine energy can result in stress. Let's recognise that women are flowing and cyclical by nature. Womb energy can be increased through daily self-awareness exercises that re-connect you with your body: yoga, pilates, getting out into nature, meditation, spending time with other women, pampering time, and really loving your feminine qualities.

My favourite is heart-womb connection, a short daily meditation to breathe love into your womb space and feel gratitude for your fertile flow.

For detailed support, a free womb connection guide is available on ohmymamabody.com.

Conclusion:

Womb energy is about recognising the unique power that women bring to the table, creating a world where both masculine and feminine energies coexist harmoniously. This isn't just about fertility rates; it's about fostering a world where every woman can flourish, regardless of her path.

Let's create more space for women to shine where feminine energy is honoured for the powerful nurturing and creative flow it brings to our community.



www.ohmymamabody.com

Wellness is about the Whole-Being

Behold the bees.....

It is no secret that bees are hugely important to our environment as pollinators and honey producers. For plants to fertilise and reproduce, pollen must be transferred between plants, a task completed by bees. Bees are, therefore, vital to the world's food supply. Yet they are under threat, declining at rapid rates while the human race increases in size.

There are also many bee-related products, many used for thousands of years. All are deemed beneficial to human health, known as Apitherapy. Some are more supported by science than others.

One beautiful example is the use of honey in modern hospitals to treat wounds. Honey is an ancient remedy often used in wound dressing because of its antimicrobial qualities (in other words, it reduces or stops the growth of bacteria in the wound). Unlike antibiotics, there are no reported cases of honey-resistant strains of bacteria.

However, there is yet more these tiny alchemists do for us directly.....

LIVE LONGER

Beekeepers have been acknowledged as living longer than other people, but this was not necessarily scientifically supported....until now.

First, the science part: Telomeres are structures made from DNA sequences and proteins found at the ends of chromosomes. They cap and protect the end of a chromosome like the end of a shoelace. Telomeres are required for cell division. Telomere length shortens with age and stress. Shorter telomeres have been associated with an increased incidence of diseases.

A small study of 60 men, half of whom were beekeepers, found that the telomere lengths of the beekeepers were significantly longer than those of the non-beekeepers.

Add to this the benefits of honey and bee propolis as antioxidants (thus combatting oxidative stress), and bee product consumption also positively affects telomeres.



HEALING

Attending to bees has been found to be beneficial for the recovery from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). There are now programmes where it is being used with war veterans with positive outcomes; feeling more relaxed, focused and productive. This has been measured.

When beekeeping, one must be mindful; this means being in the present moment, so meditative.

The humming of the bees, so the sound, has healing power, too. The frequencies that bees emit range from 10 to 1000 Hz, which resonate with organic tissues, thus promoting healing. The human brain can also entrain these sounds for an overall calming effect.

Bumble bees have an average buzz frequency of 270Hz (just above a middle C for the musicians amongst you).

If you can safely sit near a beehive, you can note how it generally affects your well-being and mood. If you get stung once or twice, you will be pleased to know that scientists have found evidence that melittin, a component in honeybee venom, could kill cancer cells!

Even the ancient Egyptians understood their importance and attached great religious and spiritual significance to the honey bee. The bee hieroglyph was the symbol of Lower Egypt.

Bee Therapy is here to stay, but before we consider using these creatures for our personal gain, it is worth noting that a growing group of scientists is seeking to understand the emotional capacity of bees. Experiments have shown bees recognise different human faces, process memories while sleeping and maybe even dream.

They experience sophisticated emotions commonly associated with humans. They are sentient and, with this knowledge, perhaps make some inroads to understanding the complexity of beehive hierarchy and an opportunity to learn from nature's hardest workers.

Ultimately, our destiny is entwined with the bees. If we look after them, they will look after us. We are part of nature, after all, not separate. The Zen Master, Thich Nhat Hanh, once articulated it beautifully: "There is no difference between concern for the planet and concern for ourselves and our well-being. There is no difference between healing the planet and healing ourselves."

(This summer, I am collaborating with Sunnyfields Apiaries in Norfolk. Join us for a special event that blends meditation with the calming presence of honey bees, creating a deep connection with nature).

By Wendy-Anne Steer

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