

EXPERT **PROFILE**
WELLNESS
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W E L L N E S S

*The Story 'so far' of
Emma Hull
Canada's Top Confidence Coach*

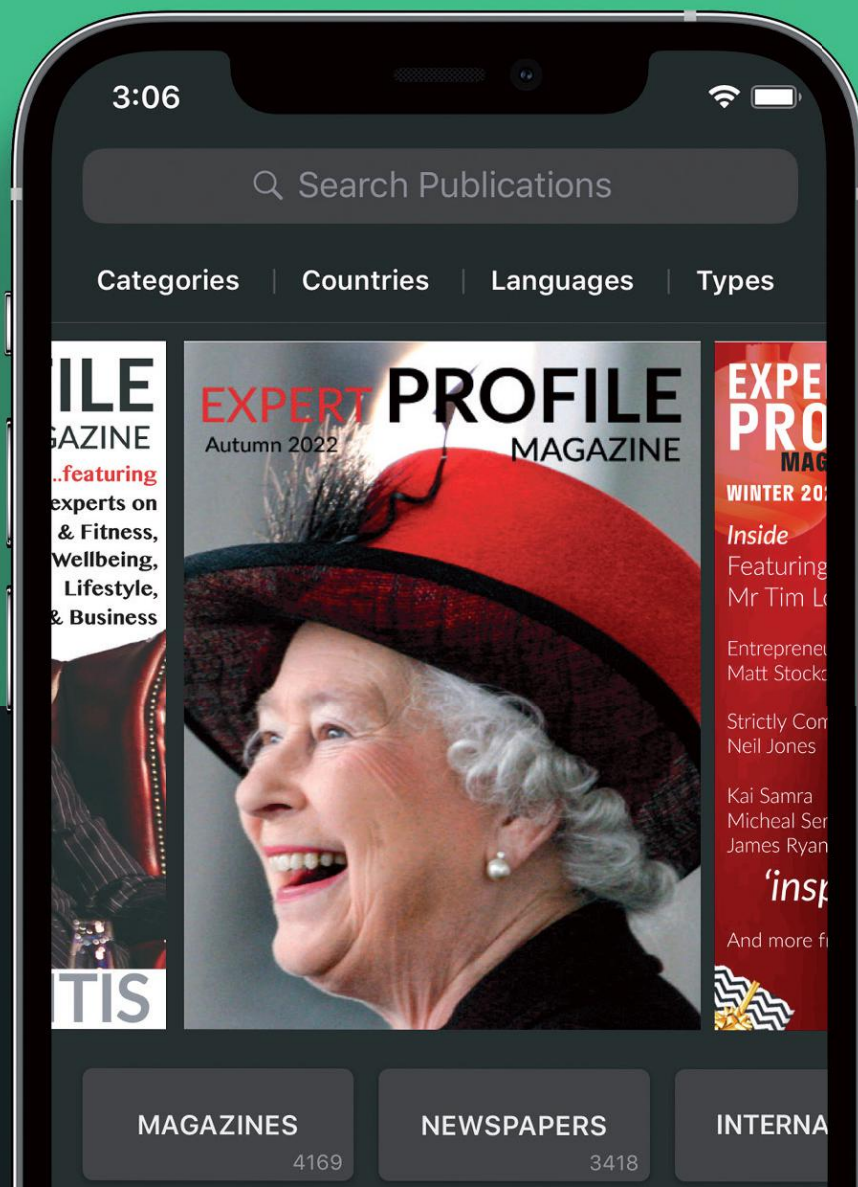
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EDITORS NOTE

As we close the chapter on 2024, it's impossible not to reflect on the turbulence that defined this year. From political unrest and economic uncertainties to global conflicts and natural disasters, the world has faced profound challenges. These trials have tested our resilience and reminded us of the fragility and interconnectedness of our global community.

Yet, amidst the upheaval, we've also witnessed remarkable courage, compassion, and solidarity. Communities have come together in extraordinary ways, voices of hope have emerged from the shadows of despair, and individuals have demonstrated the power of kindness and perseverance.

As we step into 2025, we carry with us the lessons learned from this difficult year. There is a renewed call for peace, understanding, and unity. While the road ahead may still present obstacles, the collective will to create a better future has never been stronger.

Let us approach the new year with hope—hope for peace where there is conflict, stability where there is chaos, and progress where there is stagnation. Together, we can shape a brighter, more harmonious future.

Here's to 2025, a year of healing, renewal, and new beginnings.

Rany Athwall
Editor



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SPECIAL FEATURE



7 Emma Hull



13 Laila M Zissis



14 Hayley Hines



15 Rachel Marley

CONTENTS



16 Este Bell



17 Sarah Merron



18 Rianne Wolswinkel



19 Rachel Bernard



20 Taneka Johnson



21 Lidia Kuleshnyk



24 Shardia
O'Connor



25 Dr Margit Muller



27 Beverly Johnson

CONTENTS



29 Cindy White



30 Gail Tagarro



31 Brandi Van



32 Marsha Parcou



33 Sarah Stewart



34 Joseline Carballo



35 Angelica James



36 Jaemin Frazer



37 Rebecca Thomas

CONTENTS



38 Sarah Hunt



39 Sarah Jayne
Gwynne



40 Fran Nguyen



41 Eve
Ostrovskaya



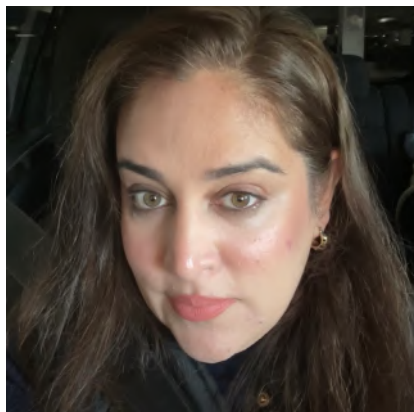
42 Celia Conrad



43 Jacqueline
Goncalves



46 Jane Parmel



47 Sonia Kay



48 Cleanne Johnson

THE EMMA HULL STORY



They say a smile is contagious, and I'm inclined to agree. When Certified Life Coach and Canada's top Confidence Coach, Emma Hull, opened the door to her suite at the Fairmont Vancouver Airport hotel, her striking smile was almost as big as the floor-to-ceiling glass. I wondered what she was so happy about (apart from seeing me, of course), but as our interview unfolded, I understood.

'Emma Hull is genuinely happy to be alive.'

In this interview, I'll reveal her personal story, exposing her transition from perceived success to genuine joy as dictated by Emma. By the end of this article, you'll understand why Emma Hull is such a successful coach and how you can find the strength to start living your own dream instead of someone else's—just like she did.

As an inspirational author, podcast host, motivational speaker, and sought-after Confidence and Life Coach, Emma is a pillar of positivity and energy among her clients, community, and readers. It's no wonder strangers approach her with coffee-date invites. She radiates a rare type of energy—a glow of deep-seated bliss that soaks her entire aura. According to Emma, this is because of her choice to live "Life Untethered".

Today, Emma Hull is Canada's most successful and in-demand Confidence Coach. Beyond her transformative client work, Emma shares her expertise through regular television appearances and as a writer for leading wellness magazines. A trusted voice in the self-improvement space, her insights have helped countless women redefine their realities. On-screen or in print, Emma's mission is to inspire women at a crossroads to move forward with confidence.

Her life-coaching clients achieve remarkable results. Kate went from hiding in meetings to landing a massive promotion and buying her first house. Taylor reclaimed time for her hobbies and found true love. Kelly cultivated the confidence to buy an RV and travel solo through the US

'The road here was far from smooth for Emma.'

I managed to secure some precious time with her before she jetted off to Quebec City for a speaking engagement. Even with a schedule as packed as Emma's, she welcomed me into her suite with grace and poise.

Most people would be manic and panicked in the hours leading up to a red-eye flight, but not Emma. She was positively serene, shimmying me out of my jacket and offering me a cup of tea. Her grace would lead you to believe she had all the time in the world, which she definitely doesn't.

Tea in hand and accompanied by the magic of planes passing overhead I got to talking with Emma. Aside from her charming British accent, the first thing I brought up was her smile. It truly was one of the most genuinely joyful smiles I had ever seen in my life. Emma laughed. "You're not the first to mention that," she said. "The other day, I was at an outdoor concert. It was cold and raining, and a total stranger approached me saying that my smile made her day."

According to Emma, one of the things that sets her coaching apart is the container she creates for her clients, a safe, judgment-free space she calls "Goddess Energy."

"Self-love is the foundation of my coaching framework," Emma smiles. She guides her clients to create genuine love that runs much deeper than cookie-cutter affirmations. "When you truly believe the words 'I love you,' it shifts everything." One of the ways she helps her clients foster this genuine delight in life is by coaching them to see that life is happening for them, not to them. Emma teaches her clients to always look for small things to celebrate in their day.

Curious to learn how I could start celebrating the small things, I asked Emma for more details. She suggested I keep a small notebook with me and use



it to track daily glimmers, things like finding change on the street, getting a seat on the bus, and finding the last bag of spinach at the supermarket. "It's easy to recognize our big accomplishments," Emma told me. "It's when you delight in the tiny moments that you reprogram your brain to default to joy and possibility. That is Goddess Energy."

"It's in this space that we identify the self-sabotaging behaviours, so we can remove them one by one and build that inner confidence to redefine our reality," Emma revealed.

There was something about that concept – redefining one's reality – that stirred something in me. Did we really have the power to do such a thing? According to Emma Hull, yes, we do.

"I'm my own greatest success story," explained Emma. "Before COVID hit, I told myself I had 'it all'. 6-figure incomes, house on the lake, condo on the ski hill, overseas vacations... But no one knew that I was desperately unhappy."

Emma opened up and revealed the sense of dread she'd wake up with every morning—the kind that causes nausea and makes you ill. According to Emma, the more "success" she found (by society's standards), the more lost she became.

"As humans, we're hard-wired to seek more,"

continued Emma. "But the problem is, the more we get, the more we want. We're chasing a finite concept, an impossible goal."

And then, COVID started to make an appearance, as did her husband's infidelity.

"I finally understood why I was so miserable, even with everything society defines as success," Emma told me. "I'd bought into the illusion of marital security, and a "good job"—someone else's dream, but not mine. My definition of success was different from anything my parents, TV, or magazines brainwashed me into believing. I didn't know what I wanted. But I knew I had to get out."

'So, Emma walked away.'

From her marriage, from her career, from the "dream life". Emma relocated to her own apartment, stripped her life down to the bare basics and rebuilt her own dream from the ground up. A life that respected her identity, connected to her authenticity, and projected her personality unapologetically.

Silencing and overriding everything she'd ever been told about success and happiness, Emma embarked on the scariest and most transformative journey of her life to discover what these things meant to her. It was a gamble, and she had no idea how it would play out. But even if it meant losing her apartment and having to sell her car to buy groceries, she was willing to risk everything in pursuit of the answer.

"It's been a scary 4 years, I'll tell you that," said Emma. "But small steps create big results. At times, I was terrified. I'd rather be scared and moving forward than faking happiness and trapped in toxic complacency."

Emma's self-assured, calm energy is infectious. Chatting with her, I feel like I can do anything. If you are sensing the same excitement as me, don't wait! Skip to the end of this article for her contact information and bask in her Goddess Energy for yourself. Under Emma's guidance, her clients are





able to grow their unshakeable self-confidence and rediscover and reinvent themselves, as can you!

I asked Emma how she did it, and she told me that the first step in any change is to take stock. Back then, she says she stood back and observed her dreams and desires from a neutral and logical standpoint. Where did she see herself in five years? How could she break down this massive goal into actionable steps to make her vision a reality?

Before the change, Emma – like so many others – lived on autopilot. She mindlessly and subconsciously followed the path in front of her. In retrospect, she says it's shocking how we simply fall into the lives we're given. "But we have the power to live and grow with intention. With purpose."

Today, she helps her clients achieve the same—to pause, rewind, and build up their confidence to create their Life Untethered.

"Maybe that doesn't mean chasing someone else's preconceived ideas of happily ever afters. Maybe it's not silencing your dream of living in a different city, plagued by excuses like family, cost, and logistics. Maybe it means turning up the volume on your heartbeat and hearing what it has to say."

The first thing Emma does with each of her clients is guide them through an exercise to take stock of their lives and imagine their dream reality.

Emma invited me to imagine for a moment: What if you allowed yourself to dream?

If I could live any life, any life at all, what would it look like? If I shelved the excuses and laid my most

organic dreams out on the table, what would I see? What hobbies and passions have you set aside? What if we relit the dreams we'd sentenced to the back burner? Most importantly, "why not?" said Emma. "Fear? Guilt?"

This is an exercise we should all do regularly. "It's never too early or too late to make it happen," said Emma. I was deep into my 40s when I rebooted my life. Truly, you never know how strong you are until you try."

Emma did exactly that, and by giving herself permission to dream, her vision took shape—and her anxiety melted. "Trusting myself was the biggest challenge, but one breath at a time, I started to believe that I deserved to be happy," said Emma. Emma truly knows what it takes to rebuild confidence, and she feels honoured to be able to share that with her clients so they, too, can believe they deserve their dreams.

'After beginning again, Emma rebuilt her existence brick by brick.'

She deepened her yoga practice. She trained to become a Certified Yoga Teacher, Reiki Healer, and Life Coach, with no clue that she would become Canada's top Confidence Coach. She prioritized the things that matter to her: exercise, journalling, peaceful quiet time in the morning, and the freedom to travel the world with no one to report back to or tell her how to live her life.

These days, Emma and Johnny Cash (her ageing dog, not the musical legend) live overlooking the golf course and ski runs of Sun Peaks Mountain in British Columbia.

Emma has built an inhibition-free life that matches her personality. She spends her days working and enjoying life! She just finished writing her inspirational book "Your Goddess Era: A Step-by-Step Guide to Reinvention", inspires audiences with her speaking, coaches her private clients, leads transformational retreats, hosts her Redo You podcast, and makes time for hobbies, travel, and celebrating life.

Emma goes wherever she wants, whenever she wants, unrestrained by the expectations of others. This freedom opened opportunities like leading luxury off-grid retreats in the wilds of the Yukon and sharing her inspiring story with global audiences. For the first time in her life, she is at peace with herself, the world around her, and the choices she has made for her Life Untethered.

She's traded closets full of material possessions for less stuff and less stress—no deadlines, no meetings, no dread. She runs her own business, which has redefined her understanding of success, powered by purpose, fulfilment, and pure joy.

Emma believes that every woman is a 'powerful Goddess'.

That would mean me too, right? "Of course," she breathed. "You can have anything your heart desires. Look at me, sitting in this epic hotel, watching planes. But," Emma said, "a vision is nothing without action." That is why she helps her clients craft their unique plans and take action towards their goals every day. "I'll let you into a secret," she giggles, "break your plan right down to the very smallest steps possible." She walks her fingers along the table to illustrate. "Teeny, tiny steps. That's what builds confidence."

While Emma dove right into the deep end without a life vest, she says going to such extremes is not vital. Emma offers personalized coaching programs designed to help you step into your own Goddess Energy and build the life you've always dreamed of. "My story is one of drastic measures, but you can still achieve your vision without blowing up your life", Emma told me. "Your values...your integrity...your self-worth...your dreams... they're all valid. You are important, and so are your dreams."

Emma is undoubtedly an inspiration and beacon of positivity. But what I admire about her most...is that she's also realistic. "I'm not saying your journey towards your Life Untethered will be all rainbows and lollipops. It can be messy, turbulent." A plane roared past the window as if to underline her point.

Emma went on to tell me that she endured plenty of trial-and-error on the flight towards her own beautiful, Life Untethered. But the most important thing is to never let self-love take a backseat.

"You are the only person who will always be there for you 24/7, no matter what",
Emma told me.

I asked Emma for examples of how we can implement self-love into our daily lives. Contrary to what many believe, self-love is about more than the odd face mask and herbal tea. "It could be morning yoga," said Emma. "Yoga is a priority for me; it brings clarity to my thoughts. I feel stronger and more flexible. I'm more grounded, calm, and able to make rational decisions."

She went on to tell me that self-love can take many forms and that she guides her clients to have the confidence to practice it "with wild abandon."

It could be mindful consumption, such as wholesome food choices or a proactive effort to avoid negative media. We can choose to nourish our bodies with sustenance that makes us feel healthy and happy, be it a kale salad, substituting juice for water, or choosing not to watch the daily news. "It can be hard to do what's best for yourself, I know" Emma smiled. "Having the confidence to stand up against your inner critic, that voice telling you what you 'should' do, is another key skill I teach my clients."

Emma is unashamedly her own biggest cheerleader and fiercely follows her dreams. Through Life Untethered Coaching, she helps others do the same. "It's all about helping you see your dream, view it as non-negotiable, and create actionable steps to reach it – with my full support every step of the journey," said Emma.

I couldn't believe the time – I'd been sitting with Emma for over an hour.

My tea was cold, but I didn't care. I was walking away with something far sweeter than a honeyed cup of Earl Grey – something I'm blessed to be able to share with you all today – the inspiration and practical tools needed to build your own "Life Untethered."

Emma works with clients worldwide.
You can connect with her at lifeuntethered.com and as
[@TheLifeUntethered](https://www.instagram.com/thelifeuntethered) across social media.



How to maintain your spirit during.....When Family Relationships Are Strained

Maintaining your spirit when family relationships are strained is no easy feat, especially when family means everything to you. This one hits close to home for me because family and close relationships are core values in my life. So, when I find myself in a situation where I love a family member dearly but don't like them much as a person, it's tough. It stinks, really! But how do we navigate this? How do we keep our spirits up when the people we care about most are the ones causing us pain?

First, let's be real—we must acknowledge and accept what's happening, along with all the complicated emotions that come with it. Feeling angry, sad, frustrated, or even invalidated is okay. Strained family relationships can stir up old wounds and drag painful memories to the surface, and that's tough. But here's the thing: we're human, and we're supposed to feel. So, let yourself experience those emotions without judgment. Allow yourself to cry, vent, and process. The only way out is through, and that starts with embracing how you really feel.

One of the hardest truths to accept is that you can't change other people. No matter how much you might want to get into their heads and understand why they act the way they do, it's just not possible. This is where compassion and empathy come into play—not just for the other person but for yourself, too. Give yourself grace as you navigate the situation, and remind yourself that you're doing the best you can with what you know. Empathy doesn't mean agreeing with or condoning their behavior; it means recognizing that they're on their own journey, with their own battles and baggage. Sometimes, a little compassion goes a long way in softening the edges of a conflict, even if it is just for your own peace of mind.

When relationships get rocky, setting healthy boundaries is crucial. Protecting your energy doesn't mean you're cutting people out of your life; it means protecting your heart, spirit, and well-being. Boundaries are not walls; they're guidelines that tell others how they can treat you while still being in your life. Yes, you love these people, but that doesn't mean you have to put up with crappy behavior that drains you. Drawing that line in the sand is an act of self-respect and self-care. It's not about shutting down the relationship; it's about showing up in it in a way that's healthy for you.

I know forgiveness isn't easy, especially when someone you love is causing you pain. But hear me out—holding onto anger or resentment only weighs you down. Letting go doesn't mean you're excusing their behavior; it means you're choosing your peace over the conflict. Sometimes, surrendering the situation to a higher power, whatever that looks like for you, can create space for healing. Lean into forgiveness—not because they necessarily deserve it but because you do. Forgive to free yourself from the burden of carrying that emotional weight around. This act of grace is for your own spirit so that you can breathe a little easier and feel a little lighter.

When you're in the thick of strained family dynamics, taking care of yourself isn't just important; it's non-negotiable. What fills your cup? And what do you need to learn about yourself in this relationship? Where are your growing edges? It's time to double down on self-care practices that fill your cup and bring you joy, and use this time as an opportunity for your own growth and development. In practicing self-care, answers you seek may surface that can help in your healing. When life gets emotional, and the curveballs are coming, self-care is one of the best ways to settle and balance.

When you're ready, open and honest communication can help move things in a better direction. But give yourself space and time until you are ready to have those difficult conversations **MINDFULLY**. Speak from a place of love and vulnerability. Try to avoid blaming; even if you disagree with what is being said, keep an open heart. Sometimes, the act of listening to the other person can move mountains in relationships and healing.

There's power in acceptance, recognizing that not every relationship will look the way you want it to, at least not right now. Letting go of the need to control the outcome allows you to focus on what you can change: your thoughts, your actions, and your own well-being. Acceptance doesn't mean giving up; it means finding peace in the present moment, even when it's not perfect.

Strained family relationships are tough; they can shake your core and make you question everything. But even in turmoil, you have the power to maintain your spirit. You can still navigate these moments with grace and compassion. Remember, it's okay to love someone and not like them much right now. Just keep showing up as the best version of yourself and know you are enough.



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Beyond the Destination

Creating Meaningful Connections Through Transformational Travel



Travel has long been a cherished activity for exploration and relaxation. Yet, in recent years, a new dimension of travel has emerged—transformational travel. This type of journey emphasizes deep, meaningful connections with local cultures and communities, offering a richer understanding of both the world and oneself. Going beyond the typical tourist experience, transformational travel invites individuals to learn and grow through authentic interactions, leaving them with cherished memories and newfound insights.

The Importance of Connecting with Local Cultures

Connecting with local cultures and communities is at the heart of transformational travel. These interactions provide travelers with the unique opportunity to learn from the perspectives and lifestyles of those who inhabit the places they visit. Building these connections allows for genuine cultural exchanges, fostering an appreciation for diversity and a broader worldview.

When travelers actively engage with local customs and traditions, they often gain insight into the values and histories that shape a community. This understanding nurtures empathy and breaks down stereotypes, leading to more open-minded, informed individuals who carry these lessons throughout their lives.

Deeper Understanding of the World and Oneself

Through meaningful connections, travelers learn not only about the world but also about themselves. When stepping outside their comfort zones and embracing new cultures, individuals often confront their own assumptions, biases, and expectations. This self-reflection can lead to significant personal growth and self-awareness as travelers develop a more nuanced understanding of their identities and roles in a global context.

For instance, experiencing a different pace of life, family dynamics, or community resources might prompt travelers to reevaluate their lifestyles and priorities. Realizing that there are multiple ways to approach life's challenges and celebrations can be both humbling and enlightening.

Tips for Meaningful Engagement with Local Cultures

Stay Curious and Open-Minded: Approach every experience with an open heart and mind. Being receptive to new ideas and perspectives will naturally lead to deeper connections.



Learn the Language: Even a basic understanding of the local language can go a long way in fostering connection. Simple phrases can open doors to more profound interactions.

Participate in Local Traditions: Whether it's attending a community festival or engaging in a crafting workshop, participating in local traditions provides first-hand insights into cultural practices and values.

Opt for Homestays or Community-Based Tourism: Staying in local homes or supporting community-run tourism initiatives offers an authentic glimpse into everyday life, encouraging meaningful exchanges and mutual respect.

Listen Actively: It is invaluable to listen to the stories and experiences of local people. By truly hearing what others have to say, travelers can form authentic connections and gain deeper understanding.

Be Respectful and Considerate: Respect for local customs, traditions, and environments is crucial. Being mindful of cultural norms and demonstrating genuine respect fosters goodwill and trust.

Reflect and Share: Take time to reflect on your experiences and consider sharing stories with others back home. This helps internalize lessons learned and inspires others to engage with the world more meaningfully.

Transformative Outcomes

The impact of creating meaningful connections through transformational travel extends beyond the journey itself. Travelers who immerse themselves in cultural exchanges often return home with a renewed sense of purpose and gratitude. They carry a wealth of knowledge, empathy, and understanding that can be applied to their daily interactions and decision-making.

These transformative experiences often lead individuals to become advocates for cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and social justice. By fostering broad-mindedness and compassion, they contribute positively to their own communities and inspire others to engage in similar transformative journeys.

Transformational travel, enriched by meaningful connections with local cultures and communities, offers a profound and impactful journey that extends beyond the boundaries of geography. By embracing the essence of a culture, listening with intent, and participating with sincerity, travelers can forge genuine connections that transcend traditional tourism. These experiences enrich their understanding of the world and themselves, resulting in a lifelong growth, empathy, and discovery journey.

By Hayley Hunter Hines

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Nature's Remedies for Little Minds: Managing Anxiety in Kid

Anxiety is a common issue faced by children, often presenting in ways such as restlessness, difficulty concentrating, or sleep issues. With the increasing prevalence of mental health challenges in young people, parents and caregivers are seeking to find effective ways to help their children manage their health and emotions. While traditional therapies like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and medications can be effective, many parents seek alternative or complementary treatments, such as nutritional support and herbal medicine. This integrative approach can provide holistic care, addressing children's physiological and emotional needs. Let's explore how natural remedies can help alleviate childhood anxiety and which practical strategies can help parents incorporate these into

Nutritional Support for Childhood Anxiety

Nutrition plays a pivotal role in mental health. Addressing dietary deficiencies and focusing on certain nutrients can help alleviate anxiety symptoms.

Magnesium

Magnesium is often known as the "relaxation mineral" due to its role in calming the nervous system. It regulates neurotransmitters like GABA, which reduce excitability in the brain. Foods rich in magnesium include leafy greens, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and legumes. Supplementing with magnesium glycinate may also be beneficial for kids with persistent symptoms.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential for brain health, particularly eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). They help reduce inflammation and promote balanced neurotransmitter activity. Fatty fish like salmon, walnuts, chia seeds, and flaxseeds are excellent sources. Research demonstrates that omega-3 supplementation can significantly reduce anxiety in children.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to mood disorders, including anxiety. This nutrient plays a key role in regulating serotonin, a neurotransmitter essential for emotional well-being. While sun exposure is the best natural source, fortified foods and supplements can help meet daily requirements.

B Vitamins

B vitamins, particularly B6, B9 (folate), and B12, are vital for producing neurotransmitters that regulate mood. A deficiency in these vitamins can impair brain function and contribute to anxiety. Incorporating foods like eggs, dairy, leafy greens, and whole grains into a child's diet can ensure adequate intake.

Probiotics

The gut-brain axis highlights the connection between gut health and mental health. Probiotics can improve gut microbiota, which in turn influences the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin. Fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, and kimchi are rich in natural probiotics.

Herbal Medicine for Managing Anxiety

Herbal medicine offers a gentle yet effective approach to managing anxiety in children. Naturally children are quite vital and often respond very quickly to herbal remedies. Many herbs are known for their calming properties and minimal side effects.

Chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*)

Chamomile is a well-known herbal remedy for its soothing effects on the mind and body. It contains apigenin, a compound that binds to GABA receptors, promoting relaxation and reducing anxiety. Chamomile tea or supplements can be safely given to children under supervision.

Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*)

Lemon balm is another gentle herb with calming properties. It helps lower cortisol levels, the body's primary stress hormone, and can improve mood and focus. Lemon balm can be taken as a tea, tincture, or capsule.

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*)

Ashwagandha is an adaptogenic herb that helps regulate the body's stress response. It supports adrenal function and reduces cortisol production, making it effective for chronic anxiety. While more commonly used in adults, pediatric formulations or low doses can be appropriate under professional guidance.

Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*)

Passionflower is often used to treat anxiety and insomnia. It boosts GABA levels in the brain, fostering relaxation without causing sedation. Passionflower tea or liquid extracts can be safely introduced to children.

Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*)

Lavender is widely recognized for its calming aroma. Essential oils can be diffused in a child's room to create a soothing environment. Additionally, lavender supplements or teas can further support relaxation.



While nutrients and herbal remedies are generally safe, it is important to consult with a professional when introducing any supplements or herbal remedies. Dosages should be tailored to a child's age, weight, and health needs.

Conclusion

Anxiety in children can be distressing for both children and caregivers, however holistic strategies involving nutrition and herbal medicine can offer promising support. Addressing key nutrients like magnesium, omega-3 fatty acids, and B vitamins can support brain health, while gentle herbs like chamomile and lemon balm provide immediate relief. With professional guidance, these natural remedies can empower families to manage anxiety effectively, nurturing both the mind and body of the child. By taking an integrative approach, parents can help their children thrive in today's often overwhelming world.



Eat Right, Sleep Tight: How Your Diet Directly Impacts Your Rest

Understanding the connection between nutrition and sleep quality is crucial in a world where sleep can seem like a luxury. Sleep is more than just a period of rest; it is a vital function that helps our bodies repair and rejuvenate. A good night's rest profoundly impacts both recovery and metabolism. Here is how:

Recovery

Muscle Repair and Growth: During deep sleep, the body releases growth hormones, which are essential for muscle repair and growth. This is crucial for anyone engaging in regular physical activity or strength training.

Cell Regeneration: Sleep promotes the repair of cells and tissues, including the immune system. It helps your body recover from daily wear and tear and physical injuries.

Reduced Inflammation: Quality sleep helps regulate the body's inflammatory responses. Poor sleep can increase inflammation, which is linked to a range of chronic conditions, including heart disease and diabetes.

Metabolism

Hormonal Balance: Sleep regulates hormones that control appetite, such as ghrelin (hunger hormone) and leptin (satiety hormone). Poor sleep can increase ghrelin and decrease leptin, increasing appetite and potential weight gain.

Insulin Sensitivity: Adequate sleep improves insulin sensitivity, which helps regulate blood sugar levels. Poor sleep can lead to insulin resistance, increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Energy Expenditure: Good sleep supports optimal energy expenditure. When you are well-rested, you're more likely to engage in physical activity and maintain a higher metabolic rate.

Metabolic Rate: Sleep affects your basal metabolic rate (BMR) – the number of calories your body needs to maintain basic physiological functions. Poor sleep can lower your BMR, making maintaining or losing weight harder.

But did you know that what you eat can significantly influence how well you sleep?

The Nutrition-Sleep Connection

1. Serotonin and Melatonin Production: The amino acid tryptophan, found in foods like turkey, nuts, and seeds, is crucial for producing serotonin and melatonin. These hormones play a key role in regulating sleep cycles.

2. Blood Sugar Balance: Consuming a balanced diet helps maintain steady blood sugar levels.

Spikes and drops in blood sugar can lead to restless nights. Aim for complex carbs, lean proteins, and healthy fats to avoid unnecessary blood sugar spikes.

3. Magnesium and Calcium: These minerals, abundant in leafy greens, nuts, and dairy products, help muscles relax and

promote sleep. A magnesium deficiency can lead to insomnia and restless leg syndrome.

4. Hydration: Staying hydrated is important, but drinking too much before bed can lead to frequent bathroom trips that disrupt sleep. Aim to drink more fluids earlier in the day and taper off as bedtime approaches.

Certain foods and beverages can interfere with your ability to get a good night's sleep. Here are some common culprits to watch out for:

1. Caffeine-Rich Foods and Drinks: Caffeine is a well-known stimulant that can keep you awake. Beverages like coffee, tea, energy drinks, soda, chocolate, and certain medications can contain significant amounts of caffeine.

2. Alcohol: While alcohol might make you feel drowsy initially, it can disrupt your sleep cycle later in the night. It can lead to fragmented sleep and a decrease in overall sleep quality.

3. Spicy Foods: Spicy foods can cause indigestion and heartburn, especially when consumed close to bedtime. This discomfort can make it difficult to fall and stay asleep.

4. High-Fat and Heavy Foods: Meals high in fat, such as fried foods and fast food, can cause digestive discomfort and take longer to digest, interfering with sleep.

5. Sugary Foods and Drinks: Consuming too much sugar, especially in the evening, can lead to spikes and crashes in blood sugar levels, making it harder to stay asleep through the night.

6. Foods High in Tyramine: Foods like aged cheese, processed meats, and fermented foods contain tyramine, which can increase the release of norepinephrine, a brain stimulant that can keep you awake.

7. Acidic Foods: Citrus fruits, tomatoes, and other acidic foods can cause acid reflux, which can be particularly troublesome when lying down to sleep.

Tips for Better Sleep:

To enhance your sleep quality, try consuming a balanced diet with foods that promote relaxation and avoid those that can interfere with it. And if you need personalized guidance, remember that expert coaching can make a huge difference.

By Este Bell

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Is Acknowledgement The Hurdle To Leap Before We Reach Acceptance?

How much mental energy do you spend replaying past events, wishing things to be different? Perhaps you have 'one that got away', a loved one, a job or an opportunity? When you think of that situation, do you wonder what could have been different, or can you peacefully accept the situation as it is?

In the constant juggle of life, a subtle but powerful shift from mere acknowledgement to genuine acceptance can be transformative. These two world perspectives might look similar, yet they lead us down very different paths.

Acknowledgement is about noticing something - an experience, a behaviour, an outcome - and then getting caught up in wanting it to change or feeling unsettled by its existence. Acceptance, on the other hand, opens up a new layer of freedom. When we accept something, we drop the inner struggle, surrendering the need to control it. Acceptance allows us to choose how to respond and move forward rather than wasting energy on resistance or frustration.

Interestingly, one of the most helpful foundations for learning acceptance can be drawn from the often misunderstood philosophy of solipsism. Solipsism suggests that only our mind is certain to exist, which, when applied pragmatically, can remind us to focus on the one thing we can control - our perception. As Alan Watts taught, true acceptance allows us to hold life's moments with a light touch, where we're no longer mentally owned by our desires or disappointments. This doesn't mean we stop caring; we merely learn to experience life's inevitable fluctuations with more equanimity.

The Acknowledgement Trap

Acknowledgement alone is proper but can keep us tethered to past outcomes. Imagine you've been passed over for a promotion. You acknowledge the decision, yet inside, frustration brews. Thoughts churn as you replay what could have gone differently or as you fixate on proving yourself, hoping the company will realise its mistake. In this state, the "what ifs" linger, keeping you tethered to an outcome outside your control.

Acceptance: Letting Go of the Script

Acceptance, however, is a shift toward inner freedom. By accepting the missed promotion, you acknowledge it without emotional attachment or the need for a do-over. You focus your energy on what's next - developing new skills, exploring alternative opportunities, or seeking a company that might better align with your values. This isn't passive resignation; it's an active choice to centre your life around your objectives rather than someone else's decision.

The Freedom in Focusing on Our Own Mindset

Solipsism, though extreme in its literal form, offers an insightful mental framework for cultivating acceptance. When we view our mind as the only element we can control, we stop expecting the world to cater to us. This perspective isn't about ignoring others; it's about liberating ourselves from the idea that we can, or should, shape people and situations to fit our desires. Instead of imagining life events as happening "to us", we recognise life as a series of experiences we interact with.

Non-Attachment: Your Mind, Free of Ownership

Non-attachment, championed by Alan Watts, isn't indifference but a conscious acceptance of life as it unfolds. When we practice non-attachment, we still care, yet we release the need for things to follow a certain script. Imagine the mental relief in allowing experiences, thoughts, and people to simply be. In this state, we gain clarity to act rather than react. Life's joys, pains, and surprises flow freely through us without taking control.

Acceptance as Momentum

Adopting acceptance over acknowledgement can transform the way we engage with the world. Solipsism reminds us that our only control lies within our minds, and acceptance encourages us to let go of the rest. This mental shift creates a sense of peace, empowering us to act with clarity, authenticity, and resilience. Embracing this mindset means we stop dragging life's heavy expectations around; instead, we ask ourselves what we can do right now to live in alignment with our values and purpose.

When we release our attachment to outcomes, we no longer avoid life's challenges. We meet them unburdened, mindful, and harmonised.

Are you ready to leap?



About The Author

Sarah Merron is an NLP Trainer & Coach, Reiki & Egyptian Sekhem Trainer and guides clients towards self-leadership through awareness, acceptance, integration and alignment.

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The Body Talks - *If you cannot Feel you cannot Heal*

Let's talk about taking care of our bodies. We should all take good care of our bodies if we want to live a happy, healthy and long life, right? But what does that mean? What is taking good care of your own body? What is healthy to eat, and which exercises should you do?

Do you need a cleanse or strict diet, and does 'no pain, no gain' really have value?

There is so much information out there. Everyone has an opinion about what is best, from healthcare professionals to the life-changing experiences of random people. I'm also sure that none of them will say the same. So, who is right, and is there such a thing? Should you 'just' listen to your body, to what feels good? But what does that 'feeling good' mean?

In movement, it can be this search for this intense stretch sensation, the intensity of those burning muscles, or pushing yourself to the limit to become stronger and fitter.

You feel like you're doing something that's good for you, but is that really conducive to your health?

That obvious sensation that just feels so good must be important, right?

Or the fasting, cleanses, and diets that make people feel so good, light, and energized. So light that they develop sleep problems, get constipated, or, after a while, develop nervousness and anxiety. But they say their diet feels so good.

And it's not just movement and diet; it also appears in relationships that need to be exciting and have sparks all over the place. Experiences that give you a rush, numb you down, or at least make you feel something. This constant chasing and distraction then require

an even bigger input to create a new sensation to satisfy us for a little while.

How would it be to go slower? To not go for the big sensation, but explore what there is to feel when it seems like you're not feeling anything. Is that a place where your mind becomes busy? Keeping you too occupied to actually sense your physical body? It's not about listening to or quieting the mind; that's not the point. It's all about getting back to your sensory experience. Your feet on the ground, your buttocks on the chair, the wind, rain or sun on your skin, the sounds of the singing birds, etc...



Connecting with your senses and the rhythm of nature.

Nature changes slowly. Whenever radical things happen in nature, it's usually bad news. It's similar for us. When we make big changes or do intense things, it tends to be depleting for our system. Even though it gives us a rush, we need time to recover.

Here is the health perspective from the sciences of Ayurveda and Yoga therapy. The goal of Ayurveda is longevity, improving, where possible, and maintaining one's health by living in harmony with the cycles of nature. It's not so much about following a particular diet because as we age, our needs change.

The important thing is: can you digest what you're eating?

You will know that by feeling satisfied and energized after your meal. If you feel bloated, gassy, headachy, tired, in pain, or suffer from diarrhoea or constipation, you are not digesting your food properly. Cooked foods, using a maximum of four ingredients per meal and kitchen spices, will be more supportive of your health and digestion.

When you experience pain while exercising, you're passing your body's limit from a yoga therapy point of view. This will make you compensate and, in the long run, create pain somewhere in your body.

From an Ayurvedic perspective, if you cannot breathe through your nose anymore while exercising, you are depleting your body.

Sustainable, healthy movement is easy, and you can breathe. For example, as you make a movement and begin sensing something, like a stretch or discomfort, breathe there, but don't push. Breathe into your ribs, chest, belly and back.

Explore here and sense what happens.

By Rianne Wolswinkel

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Are We Giving Our Kids Too Much Freedom, or Not Enough?



Ever feel like you're stuck in a tug-of-war between giving your kids too much freedom and trying to maintain control? Parenting can feel like an endless balancing act—juggling connection with authority. On top of that, we're all so busy with school runs, work deadlines, socialising, and endless household tasks! Knowing where to draw the line between giving kids too much freedom or not enough is tough. But sometimes, the smallest adjustments can have the most significant impact, especially at this stage of a young person's life. Let's explore how a few shifts in approach can restore balance and harmony to your family life.

My Top Tips!

Let Kids Experience Consequences

When kids refuse to wear shoes or coats, let them feel the natural consequences. Going barefoot outside or being cold without a coat will teach them the value of being prepared. It's a simple lesson that removes the need for constant nagging and could lead to smoother mornings.

Keep Bedtime Sacred

I often ask my clients if they still put their teens to bed. Even as kids grow older, bedtime is a prime opportunity to connect. Those last moments before sleep are when kids often feel most open. These quiet, intimate moments can build trust and understanding, making them more valuable than a long conversation earlier in the day.

Share Meals Without Distractions

One of the easiest ways to connect as a family is by sitting down for meals together. Even one meal a day without distractions can strengthen bonds. Turn off the TV and put phones away to focus on connecting with each other; avoid using this time to just solve problems or give advice, though!



The Changing Landscape of Parenting

Parenting has evolved over the years, certainly since I was a child! Many parents today are moving away from the old, authoritative styles—where rules were clear and firm consequences followed—and adopting a more democratic approach. This style values communication, equality, and respect for children's individuality.

But as the pendulum swings toward leniency, it can blur boundaries. In an effort to avoid conflict, parents unintentionally allow certain behaviours to slide. This leads to endless and exhausting negotiations and rising concerns about their child's well-being: Are they happy? Are they safe? Are they prepared for life's challenges? With the increasing stresses of modern life, many parents are left wondering if they're giving their children too much freedom—or not enough!

The Power of Small Adjustments

Creating a harmonious home doesn't require radical change, though. Often, small adjustments make the biggest difference. Healthy family dynamics thrive when everyone knows their role but also has room to grow. Conflicts are resolved more easily when each member feels heard and respected, and the family functions better overall. From my experience as both a parent and a hypnotherapist supporting families, I've found that these simple strategies are crucial to creating a calmer, more harmonious home.

Prioritise Consistent Bedtime Routines

A predictable, calming bedtime routine creates comfort and security for children. Sticking to a routine that signals it's time to wind down, such as brushing teeth, reading, or chatting about the day is important. This creates stability and helps both children and parents unwind.

The Role of Cognitive Behavioural Hypnotherapy (CBH) in Parenting

These small strategies are helpful, but sometimes parents need extra support. CBH can help parents shift their mindset, reduce anxiety, and gain clarity in managing the balance between authority and connection with children. Through CBH, parents can become more confident in their decisions, and children can develop better emotional regulation. It's not about eliminating freedom—it's about having the skills to navigate family dynamics.

CBH helps my families feel more secure and grounded, enabling them to handle the stresses of modern life without losing their sense of balance. Parenting is never easy, and there will always be moments of doubt. But with small, strategic adjustments, families can regain balance and harmony. It's not about being perfect; it's about being present, setting boundaries, and creating an environment where everyone feels heard. So, take a deep breath, try a few new strategies, and watch your family thrive.

By Rachel Bernard



Rachel supports parents, children, and teens through a combination of cognitive behavioural techniques, hypnotherapy, and mindfulness.

Preparing for Winter

Staying Grounded in Your Business During Seasonal Lows

As the days grow shorter and the temperature drops, many entrepreneurs find themselves in a unique battle—not just with their business demands but also with their energy, focus, and overall well-being. For some, this time of year can trigger symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) or seasonal depression, making it harder to stay motivated and productive.

In my journey as a business owner, I've learned that thriving during this season requires a balance between taking care of your business and taking care of yourself. This is the essence of my #bodyandbusiness philosophy—nurturing both your physical and mental health as an integral part of your business success. The winter months are perfect for reflecting on strengthening this balance, especially as you prepare for the year ahead.

Understanding Seasonal Shifts in Energy and Focus

It's no surprise that as the sunlight fades and cold sets in, our bodies and minds start to react. For many business owners, the hustle of daily tasks combined with the slower pace of the season can create a cocktail of stress and overwhelm. When Seasonal Affective Disorder comes into play, it's more than just a rough patch—it's a real challenge to energy and focus.

Studies have shown that shorter days can lead to lower serotonin levels, which contribute to feelings of depression. This drop in mood, paired with the stress of keeping your business running smoothly, can leave you feeling stuck. However, the key to navigating this season is understanding that preparation and self-care can meet these challenges.

Building a Foundation of Self-Care for Winter

One of the most powerful ways to stay grounded during the winter months is by being proactive about your physical and mental health. Here are a few strategies that have helped me and many others manage the ups and downs of the season:

- **Prioritizing Physical Health:** Regular exercise is a natural mood booster. Finding a workout routine that works indoors can help maintain your energy and focus even when it's too cold for outdoor activities.
- **Mindful Nutrition:** What you eat greatly impacts how you feel. Focus on foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, whole grains, and leafy greens, all promoting healthy brain function and boosting serotonin levels.

- **Routine Adjustments:** It's important to accept that your energy may fluctuate during this time, and that's okay. Instead of fighting it, try adjusting your routine to align with the season. Focus on peak energy hours, and give yourself permission to rest when you need it.

Planning for Business Success Even in Low-Energy Moments

Winter doesn't have to be a season of anxiety and overwhelm. By preparing in advance, you can safeguard your business's productivity, even when you're feeling low:

- **Batch Working & Planning Ahead:** Use your higher-energy days to batch tasks and plan ahead for those days when motivation is hard to find. Whether creating content, scheduling posts, or handling administrative tasks, batch working can give you peace of mind.
- **Delegation and Automation:** If you haven't already, now is the time to explore how automation and delegation can lighten your load. These strategies, from social media scheduling tools to outsourcing tasks, free up your time and energy for when it matters most.
- **Setting Realistic Goals:** This season isn't the time for overambitious goals. Instead, focus on realistic, achievable milestones that keep your business moving forward without overextending yourself.

Recognizing and Addressing Mental Health Needs

Finally, it's essential to remember that it's okay not to feel 100% all the time. If feelings of anxiety or sadness start creeping in, it's important to address them head-on. Meditation, journaling, or seeking support from a therapist or coach are all valuable tools for managing your mental health through the season.

Conclusion: Thrive Through Winter with #bodyandbusiness

Winter may bring its challenges, but it also offers an opportunity to reflect, recharge, and renew. By preparing yourself both mentally and physically, you can stay grounded and maintain your business's momentum through the season. Let this be the season where your business and well-being thrive together.

By Taneka Johnson



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MOVING BEYOND MINDSET WITH ANCIENT UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

“If You Want To Fly, Give Up Everything That Weighs You Down” Buddha

Achieving great success without debilitating stress is a journey of self-mastery that high performers throughout the ages have travelled. Drive, yearning, growth, breakthroughs and pressure are all part of success and the natural resistance to feeling stress. It can be an exciting adventure if you so choose. The secret is to master your highest state of balance and flow without attachment so that you are fully supported in your quest.

Welcome to my 9th column exploring moving beyond mindset with ancient universal principles. The 12 Ancient Universal Principles of my High-Performance Wellness Coaching are your foundational pillars for turning stress into success. These principles will help you find your center and achieve your goals with more energy and focus while eliminating the chronic stress that leads to exhaustion, burnout and chronic illness.

For Every Problem, There Is A Solution

This Ancient Universal Principle #3 reminds you that you don't have to be weighed down by your problems. If you want to fly with inner ease and flow as you live your passion, purpose, and mission, you must release the unnecessary friction and frustration, the burden of resistance, that makes your life harder than it needs to be.

There is one thing we can all agree on no one is without problems. We assume that challenges create stress. But is that always true? What if you could shift your relationship with the problem so it is no longer a burden? What if you viewed your challenge as a mystery to solve, an inner adventure to activate a part of you that is yearning to grow and breakthrough yet needs a resistance to push against to go forward?

You have the power to find solutions to your problems. My mentor and coach, Michio Kushi, taught, “If the solution didn't already exist, then the problem would not have appeared.” In other words, you already know the solutions to your problems deep within yourself. You are wise, strong, and powerful. You are brave and courageous. Own your power. Stop overthinking and eliminate the distractions that confuse and exhaust you.



“Sometimes You Need The Mind Of Sherlock Holmes To Find The Solution That Is Right For You” Michio Kushi, Macrobiotic Forefather

When faced with a problem, expand your perspective. Connect with your deepest self to activate new pathways and possibilities to move forward. Success and stress are interwoven as the essence of growth itself. Like the yin-yang symbol, they co-exist as complementary antagonists in the wholeness of your being.

There is always a bit of one in the other. To achieve success in all areas of your life, create a balance of stress and accomplishment. Practice this daily and in your long-term perspective. Where there is drive and yearning, there is growth. With growth comes expansion, which leads to breakthroughs. As you breakthrough to your next level of success, there is pressure. With pressure, there is resistance. Where there is resistance, there is stress.

Healthy stress is the natural resistance of growth that creates more energy and focus. It supports you. Like a seed that pushes through the soil to break through into the sunlight and air, healthy stress is required to grow.

Chronic stress is the artificial resistance of the mind, the overthinking and instability that arises when dealing with new and uncertain circumstances. It depletes you. Moving beyond an intellectual mindset into an expanded state of consciousness helps you explore and embrace possibilities in thought, belief and action. My 12 Ancient Universal Principles ignite your insight, expand your awareness and align your vision at the right time. In an instant, they can lighten your burdens and release chronic stress as you step into the unknown and evolve into your highest potential.

To release chronic stress, review my 12 Ancient Universal Principles.

12 Ancient Universal Principles

- 1. Everything is Energy***
- 2. Energy Never Lies. You Can't Fool Mother Nature***
- 3. For Every Problem, There Is A Solution***
- 4. Everything That Happens To You Is What You Lack. All That Is Antagonistic, Unbearable, Is Complementary***
- 5. Everything That Has A Front Has A Back. The Bigger The Front, The Bigger The Back.***
- 6. Everything That Has A Beginning Has An End.***
- 7. Everything Changes (aka Change is the Constant of The Universe)***
- 8. There Is Nothing Identical***
- 9. Divine Alignment, Is Divine Timing***
- 10. You Are Only As Strong As Your Weakest Link***
- 11. Yin and Yang Are Greater Than Willpower***
- 12. The Capacity Principle: Know Your Limit, Live Within It™***

Focus on one principle. Breathe. Center. Reflect. Imagine what it would feel like, deep within your center, if you could discern and deflect any external stressor. What would that do for you? What insight has been ignited? As you move through your day, let the circumstances of life flow around you, not drown you. Feel the strength in the center of your being. You are a powerful Buddha in the middle of a burning inferno, untouched by the fire. With Taoist non-attachment, you create security, stability, alignment and clarity. You can prioritize your next steps based on clear judgement, focus and balanced analysis.

As a high achiever with great visions and goals, you don't have to live with chronic stress. Ending this destructive drain is critical in creating more energy, achieving your goals and living your health and wealth potential. You will not be able to fulfill your destiny in a state of endless



frustration and energetic decline. Ignoring the ancient principles that govern life is depriving yourself of the gifts and abilities you have been given as your birthright.

Everything Changes (aka Change is the Constant of The Universe)

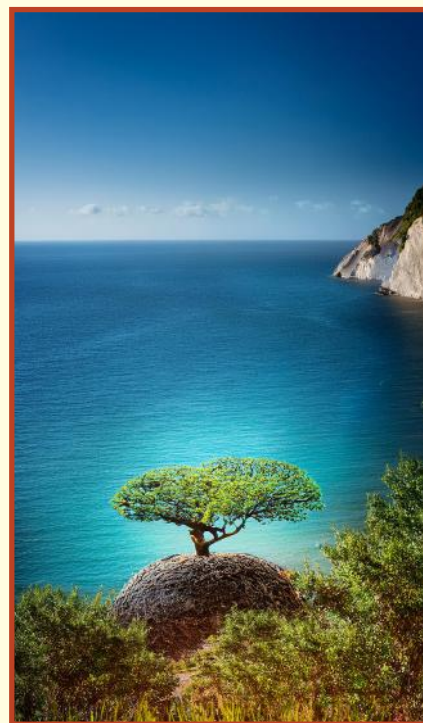
When you are in the most difficult circumstances, remember that nothing lasts forever. The change will come just as the light of dawn emerges from the darkest night. Embrace change. Flow with it. Create. Be a pioneer of consciousness. Humans do not like change. We have an innate need and desire to feel secure. What is inner security? It is your state of being, the strength and quality of your energy, and your conscious relationship with yourself. Your inner security is your inner power. When you expand your awareness and your capacity from your center, you feel secure as you flow with the natural energies of change.

Recognizing that there is always a solution to any problem lifts the heavy burden that can “depress” you and weigh you down. Action paralysis or reactive choices made from overwhelm, fear, and confusion come from depletion and stagnation. How you manage change and uncertainty is a major factor in determining the quality of your life and whether you embrace healthy stress or create chronic stress. By mastering ancient universal principles, you optimize a flow state to support the inevitability that you can turn lead into gold and create positive change.

Moving beyond mindset by connecting with your inner knowing, mastering your instinct and intuition and becoming Centered, Connected, and Conscious™ is a powerful gateway for limitless growth and lasting success. You become confident that you can navigate through every challenge, hardship and celebration.

No one said life on Planet Earth would be easy! When you learn how to fly and move forward with balance and flow, your life can be an incredible adventure, a fast-track to the greatest fulfillment, joy and empowerment you could ever imagine. With my 12 Ancient Universal Principles as your guide, you live with the power of Taoist non-attachment, create more energy and release that which weighs you down. You turn stress into success in the new paradigm of High-Performance Wellness. You reclaim your sovereignty and become the conscious leader of your life and the world.

Join me for my next column, where I will continue to explore Moving Beyond Mindset With Ancient Universal Principles.



Lidia Kuleshnyk is a High Performance Wellness Coach, 4 X Best Selling Author and Founder of AponaHealing.com. As a Renaissance Woman and Thought Leader, Lidia offers pathways, for every stage of personal development, to help you reclaim your sovereignty and live a Centered, Connected, Conscious™ Life.

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What is second-hand trauma?

Vicarious trauma, also known as second-hand trauma, refers to the emotional and psychological

impact experienced by individuals who are exposed to the trauma of

others, even if they are not directly involved in the traumatic event. This can arise in professionals who work with trauma survivors, such as therapists and social workers, or among friends and family members of those affected by trauma.

Constant exposure to the trauma of others can lead to emotional exhaustion, making it difficult to maintain empathy or a sense of accomplishment. Over time, this can contribute to burnout. Seeing the constant suffering of others may cause increased feelings of anxiety, fear, or helplessness. Individuals may become hyper-vigilant, fearing similar events might occur in their own lives or the lives of those close to them. The emotional toll of second-hand trauma can lead to depressive symptoms, including persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, and feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.

In severe cases, individuals may experience intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, or nightmares about the trauma they have witnessed or heard about, resembling symptoms of PTSD. To protect themselves from emotional overload, individuals may become emotionally detached or numb, distancing themselves from others and having trouble forming or keeping close relationships. Exposure to traumatic events may alter an individual's feeling of the world, causing them to see it as inherently unsafe or unjust. This can lead to feelings of distrust or disillusionment.

The stress from second-hand trauma can manifest physically through symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, difficulty sleeping, and gastrointestinal issues. For those who experience vicarious trauma in a professional setting, it may lead to decreased job satisfaction, compassion fatigue, or even withdrawal from social interactions due to emotional exhaustion.

To reduce the effects of second-hand trauma, individuals can seek therapy or counselling. These can help individuals process their feelings and develop strategies to cope with the emotional toll of the effects. Engaging in activities that promote relaxation and emotional well-being, such as mindfulness, physical exercise, or hobbies, can be protective against burnout.

Learning to establish emotional boundaries by separating work from your personal life can help in managing emotional strain. Also, engaging in debriefing sessions with peers who understand the nature of second-hand trauma can provide validation and reduce isolation.

Setting boundaries is a vital part of self-care, especially in a toxic environment, as toxic people often violate personal space, time, and emotional boundaries, which can lead to burnout and emotional exhaustion.


Communicate your limits with others, whether they are emotional boundaries, personal space, or workloads. It is okay to prioritise your well-being over others' expectations. Saying no is a powerful tool to avoid overcommitment and energy depletion. If possible, reduce your interactions with toxic individuals or minimise time spent in toxic spaces.

As professionals working within the mental health sector, it is vital that we take responsibility for our mental well-being and take the necessary steps to ensure we are supported in our roles.

Second-hand trauma can affect anybody who is indirectly exposed to the traumatic events experienced by others, whether that be in the workplace, within a family or in a social setting. Recognising and addressing the impact of second-hand trauma is essential for maintaining mental health and preventing long-term emotional distress.

By Shardia O'Connor





Beyond the Mind

Unlock the Soul's Power for Profound Emotional Healing

1. Introduction: The Importance of Healing from Within

What if everything you've been taught about mental health is incomplete? For years, we've been told that mental well-being comes from medication, therapy, and behavioral changes. While these methods are essential, they often only scratch the surface. The truth is, no amount of external treatment can heal the deeper emotional wounds buried in the core of our being. Real mental well-being begins with healing from within—at the level of the soul.

We live in a world where anxiety, depression, and emotional distress are rampant. According to the World Health Organization, more than 970 million people globally suffer from some form of mental disorder, with anxiety and depression leading the way. In the U.S. alone, nearly 1 in 5 adults experience a mental illness in any given year, and the economic burden of untreated mental health disorders is estimated at \$2.5 trillion annually. But rather than seeking short-term solutions, what if we could look deeper—into the emotional root causes that often drive mental health struggles?

When the soul is disconnected or misaligned, it often leads to emotional pain, which in turn affects our mental health. In this article, we'll explore how spiritual practices like soul alignment, mindfulness, energy clearing, and self-compassion can lead to lasting emotional freedom. It's time to rethink how we approach mental health—not as a problem to be managed but as a path to deep, transformative healing from within.

2. The Role of the Soul in Emotional and Mental Healing

Traditional mental health approaches focus on the mind and body but often neglect a critical aspect of healing: the soul. The soul is the core of our being—the place where our true essence, emotions, and purpose reside. Emotional pain doesn't just live in the mind; it often stems from a disconnection or misalignment with the soul. When this misalignment occurs, we experience deep emotional distress, anxiety, or depression, signaling that we are out of sync with our soul's truth.

The soul represents the essence of who we are—beyond thoughts, emotions, and experiences. It is the wellspring of our most profound truths, spiritual well-being, and connection to our truest self and the divine. When we lose touch with this sacred connection, emotional wounds and unresolved pain rise to the surface, often manifesting as mental and emotional distress.

Unresolved emotional trauma, grief, or spiritual disconnection creates internal blockages that weigh us down mentally and emotionally. By reconnecting with the soul, we unlock the potential for deep emotional healing and restore balance in our lives. This soul-centered approach addresses not only the symptoms but the root causes of our suffering, allowing us to heal at the deepest level of our being.

When we heal emotionally, we are also healing the mental layers of our well-being. Emotional healing paves the way for greater mental clarity, resilience, and overall balance.

3. Spiritual Awareness as a Tool for Releasing Emotional Pain

Spiritual awareness plays a pivotal role in emotional healing, offering a pathway to release the deep emotional pain that often traps us in cycles of suffering. When we become spiritually aware, we understand that our mental and emotional struggles are not just confined to the mind but are part of a larger, interconnected system involving the body and the soul. This awareness allows us to approach healing from a holistic perspective, where we engage in practices that not only soothe the mind but also realign and reconnect the soul.



Mindfulness and Reconnection with the Soul

Mindfulness is one of the most accessible and powerful tools for developing spiritual awareness. By practicing mindfulness, we learn to observe our thoughts and emotions without judgment, creating space to understand the deeper layers of our emotional state. This practice calms the mind and helps us reconnect with the soul, healing the disconnection that contributes to emotional and mental distress. As we become more present, we open ourselves to the messages of the soul, addressing the root causes of our emotional pain rather than just its surface manifestations.

In fact, studies show that regular mindfulness practice can significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Research found that mindfulness interventions reduced symptoms of anxiety by 30% to 38% and depression by 20% to 25%. This powerful shift occurs by altering our mental state and bringing us back to a deeper sense of alignment with who we are at our core.

Energy Clearing: Releasing Emotional Blocks

Emotional pain is often stored in the body as blocked or stagnant energy, especially when the soul is misaligned. This emotional stagnation can manifest not only in mental struggles but also in physical symptoms such as chronic tension, headaches, or digestive issues. Practices like energy clearing work to release these blockages, enabling emotional flow and healing.

Techniques such as Reiki, chakra healing, or even simple breathwork help move stuck energy through the body, allowing us to feel lighter, freer, and more connected to our true selves. When we engage in energy clearing, we are not just addressing emotional pain on a surface level but releasing the energetic imprints of past trauma, grief, or unresolved wounds. This restores balance to the mind-body-soul connection, helping us break free from emotional and mental distress caused by misalignment.

4. Self-Compassion: A Path to Emotional Healing

While spiritual awareness helps us reconnect with the soul, self-compassion is the key to unlocking deep emotional healing. Self-compassion is a powerful tool for breaking the guilt, shame, and self-blame cycle. Rather than judging ourselves in moments of distress, self-compassion teaches us to treat our emotional wounds with the same kindness and understanding we'd offer a loved one. This self-care nurtures both emotional and mental healing.

The Power of Self-Kindness

By practicing self-kindness, we soften the impact of emotional wounds. Research shows that self-compassion can reduce anxiety by 34%, depression by 27%, and emotional resilience by 22%. This practice nurtures emotional healing from within and strengthens our mental well-being.

Letting Go of Self-Judgment

Self-compassion also helps us release self-judgment, allowing us to accept our emotions without labeling them as "bad." Emotional acceptance doesn't mean resignation—it's a vital step toward healing. By recognizing and accepting our emotions, we move from emotional suppression to emotional healing, ultimately improving mental health by addressing the root causes of our suffering.

Conclusion

True emotional and spiritual healing is a continuous process that deeply enhances our mental health. By understanding the vital role that the soul plays in our healing journey and reconnecting with it, we unlock the potential for lasting emotional well-being. When we address the soul's misalignment and reconnect with our true essence, emotional wounds begin to heal, and mental clarity and resilience emerge.

I'm currently developing a groundbreaking, comprehensive program that considers these insights and is designed to guide you further on your journey toward lasting emotional and spiritual healing. To stay informed and receive updates, feel free to connect with me directly for more information.

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Self Care Corner

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS... HOW TO MANAGE DISAPPOINTMENTS AND SHIFT OUR PERSPECTIVES

Summer has just passed. What did it mean for you? Was it the beginning of your annual pilgrimages to the beach? The sunsets, sounds of waves, the sand, and the chance to create memories with our favorite people.

Or, if you're like me, you decided it's the perfect time for a home improvement project. I can hear the collective sighs because you're having flashbacks of



the last project you attempted. The highs and lows. The frustration. The questioning of your sanity, asking yourself if this was worth it.

In my mind, this was the perfect time to begin. After doing my research and setting my budget, it was time to start.

Contractor vetted and hired- CHECK!
Supplies purchased- CHECK!
Scheduled agreed upon- CHECK!
READY. SET. AND GO!

Phase One went smoothly. I'm starting to feel optimistic, so I decided to add on additional work. As the character Hannibal from the TV show The A-Team would say, "I love it when a plan comes together!"

Then it happened. Everyone's worst nightmare while amid a project. With no explanation, my contractor quit.

As I sat at my kitchen table, I looked around and took in my home's scenery: Furniture covered with tarps. Dust everywhere. Supplies are sitting in the corner. One homeowner was left in disarray.



There are times when your best plans will fall apart. When it happens, we're all tempted to abandon our goals and assume they're unattainable. My initial response was to have a pity party and give up on my project. While it was good to imagine giving up, I couldn't. I've committed to the project. My house was a disaster, and sitting in the chaos wasn't optional. One of my favorite quotes comes from Gene Kranz, the NASA Flight Director at the helm of the Apollo 13 Moon Landing mission- "Failure is not an option!"

Learning to navigate these situations is crucial when life throws us a curve. These moments teach us resiliency and how to look at problems differently. We can all agree that these are moments that we can gladly skip. This is one lesson that I would have gladly skipped!

What's the best thing to do when life gives you lemons?

You make lemonade! You allow the experience to teach you the lesson and apply it to the next one.

Here's how I made lemonade:

1. Acknowledge the emotions and process them. It's essential to recognize and accept the feeling without judgment. When my contractor was a no-show, I felt upset and confused. I had to figure out how I would continue with no support. "Whether it's disappointment or anger, you must feel it and let it out. A healthy way to achieve emotional health is to confide in your friends, family, or therapist. You could also channel this kind of tough emotion into a creative outlet. Try writing in a journal or doing something physical like taking a long run."
2. Reframe the perspective. "Your mindset can determine whether you experience negativity or positive thinking. If you can reframe a negative situation, you can see the good in any experience, helping you focus on happiness. Your perception can change any experience, but you must know how to reframe a situation." I thought it was a massive disaster with no chance of recovery. When I finally calmed down, I realized the moment was not as detrimental as I imagined. I could complete the rest of the project on my own. Ask for help. While it's tempting to solve my problem independently, there's power in the community.

When my friends found out what happened, everyone was prepared to help. Everyone was ready to roll up their literal sleeves and paint. Others offered names of contractors that wouldn't abandon me. "Social support also helps people to cope with stress. Stress has been shown to have serious health consequences ranging from reduced immunity to increased risk of heart disease. Being surrounded by caring and supportive people helps people see themselves as better capable of dealing with the stresses that life brings."

Learning how to navigate disappointment is crucial; developing it can take a while. If you're still learning to make lemonade, it takes time to master the recipe. Acknowledging, reframing, and asking are just a few tools to help turn your setbacks into opportunities. Without taking the time to regroup, I would've given up on myself. How did my project turn out? I'm almost done. It turns out that I'm pretty good with a set of tools and a paintbrush! Look out, HGTV, here I come!

1. "Ways to deal with disappointment", <https://www.betterup.com/blog/>
2. "How To Reframe A Negative Situation", <https://www.powerofpositivity.com/negative-situation-reframe/>
3. "How Social Support Contributes to Psychological Health", <https://www.verywellmind.com/social-support-for-psychological-health-4119970#toc-health-benefits-of-social-support>

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Calm Begins with Me

Embracing a Peaceful Family Christmas



Winter invites us to slow down with its darker, colder evenings, reflecting nature's natural cycle as wildlife retreats to rejuvenate. Yet, as humans, we gear up for the festive season, often finding ourselves overwhelmed by extra commitments. Family gatherings, gift buying, and work deadlines can lead to stress and burnout as we strive for the "perfect" celebrations.

As L.R. Knost wisely notes, "When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's our job to share our calm, not to join their chaos." Yet, humans under stress often regress, sometimes triggering tension and unwanted outbursts. We can't control everything and everyone around us; however, we can choose how to respond. Learning to be more self-aware helps us regulate our emotions and is a game changer in cultivating a calmer home.

Here are my practical tips to encourage a more peaceful festive season:

- 1. Check-in:** An essential act of self-care at this time of year. Mindfully pausing a couple of times a day and noticing how you feel mentally and physically creates a space for self-reflection and identifies any stressors.
- 2. Family Planning:** Pre-empt difficult situations by recognising any potential triggers that cause stress during this festive time. Have a family gathering, acknowledge the flames, and generate ideas that can dampen them down.
- 3. Anchor Yourself with 5,4,3,2,1:** This sensory grounding activity helps to shift your attention from stressful thoughts to the present moment. Name: 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste.
- 4. Maintain Routines, Set Realistic Expectations:** Try to keep routines in place, providing a safe space. This helps reduce anxiety and prevent meltdowns. Be realistic, let go of the pressure for perfection, and embrace the real moments—that's where the magic is.
- 5. Encourage Problem-Solving:** This builds resilience and helps children break down their big problems into manageable steps. For example, if they're sad about not seeing relatives, discuss alternative ways to connect.
- 5. Embrace the Mantra:** "Calm begins with me." Combine it with deep breathing, tapping each fingertip in turn with your thumb as you say it rhythmically over and over. This will help refocus and calm the mind.
- 6. Validate Emotions:** Acknowledge emotions such as frustration when you get last-minute changes. Encourage open communication so you and your children feel heard and understood.
- 7. Take a breath:** Engage in festive-themed breathing exercises. Imagine holding a festive scent (Christmas tree/cinnamon) in one hand and a lit candle in the other. Imagine inhaling the scent (through your nose) and then turning and blowing out the flame slowly (through your mouth). Repeat five times to calm the mind and body.
- 8. Allow Downtime:** Encourage kids to take breaks for self-regulation, whether it's burning off energy through outdoor play and movement, snuggled up in a tight blanket like a burrito, or being barefoot and free.
- 9. Take Time for Yourself:** Recharge your battery and self-regulate so you can bring calm back into the home. Go for that run, dance in the kitchen, soak in the bath, do a mindful activity—paint your nails, crochet, or do a body scan.
- 10. Practice Gratitude:** And finally, this is a time to be festive, so have fun with your family and friends, and share positives in your life that you are truly grateful for.

By Cindy White
Wellbeing and Parent Coach

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I WANT TO WRITE A BOOK - DO I NEED A WRITING COACH?

In a business world that abounds with coaches, it's a fair question for an aspiring writer to ask. First, though, let's explore what a book writing coach is and their role. A book coach is a professional mentor and guide who supports aspiring writers in writing their books from start to finish. It is an advantage for a writing coach to have extensive experience in the publishing world as a writer, book editor, or both. Writing coaches also work with previously published writers who want to improve their craft. This may be because sales of their books are low or they've received a significant number of negative reviews.



Who Benefits From Working With a Writing Coach?

It's a huge undertaking to write a book, and it doesn't come easily or automatically to many people. Often, they don't know how to even begin. They may try, only to be confronted by a blank page or screen, which they struggle to move beyond. One reason is that they probably lack a structure for their book, which will stop them in their tracks. A book without a framework is like a house without foundations. Other people encounter blocks caused by self-doubt or imposter syndrome, the worry that no one will be interested in their book. This is usually because they fear failure, perceiving that their writing isn't good enough. They have no point of comparison.

Some aspiring writers have tried for years to write their books, struggling to get beyond a certain point because they don't have the benefit of professional, objective feedback on their writing. Yet others fail to progress beyond a few words because they lack the accountability a mentor provides to set them weekly writing goals and regularly encourage, inspire, and motivate them. Not everyone needs a writing coach to write their book. An aspiring writer with a clear idea of their topic or genre, well-placed confidence in their writing ability, and the discipline to achieve a set weekly word count is likely to successfully achieve their book-writing goal.

Some Benefits of Working with a Book Writing Coach

Working with a writing coach will ensure you finish your book—assuming you put in the effort, attend all coaching sessions, and reach weekly goals. Your writing will be much more polished than if you wrote it on your own, especially if you've never written a book before. Why? Because you're receiving constant feedback and making constant improvements. A more polished book will likely reduce editing fees and result in more positive reviews of your published book.

In addition to producing a more polished book, having a coach supporting, goal-setting, tracking progress, and giving feedback means it'll take you less time than if you wrote the book without help. Often, people who choose to work with a book writing coach want to learn and improve the craft of writing because of a desire to write more books.



What to Look for in a Writing Coach

Working with a writing coach is a medium-term professional relationship, so working well together is important. It's not about being best friends but about being compatible, and mutually respecting and trusting each other. A professional book writing coach needs to have good communication skills and be empathetic. Their approach should be professional but friendly.



When considering engaging a writing coach, ask how they determine if you're going to be a good fit. Do they offer a free consultation to discuss in depth your book-writing goals? Make sure you find out whether their coaching program is self-led or guided, 'cookie-cutter' or tailored, and if coaching sessions are one-to-one, group, or a combination.

What does accountability look like with them? How frequently are their touch points with you? How do they help keep you on track? You'll also want to know admin details, like if they offer a payment plan. Check out client testimonials on their website and Google reviews. Follow them on social media to see what valuable content they post. Ask if they've published any books themselves.



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Unlocking Your Intuition

A Guide to Trusting Yourself

Have you ever experienced a gut feeling, an inner feeling of knowing what to do? Perhaps you didn't listen to it. You looked back and said, "I knew I shouldn't have done that!" But you did it anyway. That was your intuition talking to you. So, what exactly is your intuition?

Intuition is a gut feeling, an intuitive feeling. It's the ability to understand something immediately without the need for conscious reasoning. We are born with five physical senses, but we are also born with what's known as our sixth sense, and that sixth sense is our intuition. Our intuition has many different names. It's also referred to as our gut feeling, inner self, guidance, spirit, psychic sense, higher self, instinct, and more.

When we connect with our intuition, we trust what our hearts want. We connect with what we want deep down inside to live a truer, more authentic life. Our intuition works in tandem with our personal needs, memories, and core values.

Step 1: Ask

Ask your intuition a question. You don't want to ask your intuition a yes or no question; when you're first starting, you want to ask something small. An example of a small question to ask would be, should you go for a walk or eat breakfast first tomorrow, not something as big as should you change your career tomorrow?

Step 2: Feel

Feel an instant answer somewhere in your body. This is also known as a "download." It's when you know something without knowing how you know, you just know. And there will be no emotion attached to its answer because it gives calm, clear answers. When feeling your intuition's answer, pay attention to your senses. You may see an image or a vision in your mind's eye, or you may hear a voice from deep down inside of you.

Step 3: Trust

Because your intuition is guiding you to your most authentic self, you need to trust your feelings and ignore your thoughts. This will strengthen your self-trust.

Step 4: Act

The last step is to act on what your intuition tells you to do. It's guiding you to live your truest, authentic life, so if you don't act on it, you're missing out on your own inner wisdom. Try these steps any time you need to make a decision in your daily life. They will help you train and maintain your intuition's strength. Your intuition may not have all your answers, like the "hows" and "whys" of a situation, but it will always lead you to the answer of "what" you truly want.

Here's the kicker:

You only have 4 seconds to feel your intuition. Once you move onto the 5th second, your rational mind kicks in and starts to talk you out of what you want deep down inside because there's no logic attached to it.

Once you start implementing this four-step process into your life, I recommend you keep a journal of the questions you ask, the answers you receive, and the actions you take.

In a few weeks or months, review your journal. You should start to notice a pattern of your life changing for your greatest good—a life that feels freer and one filled with more energy, joy, and passion. It takes practice to connect with your intuition, but the more you do it, the easier it will become. Practice self-compassion and be patient with yourself. You'll get there.

BY BRANDI VAN

Psychic Medium Mentor

To learn more about intuition, visit my website, www.brandivan.com. I am a Psychic Medium Mentor, helping individuals overcome their self-doubt so they can fully embrace their psychic gifts, through my 90-Day Psychic Development Mentorship Program.

www.brandivan.com



My battle against over-eating



It all began when my older siblings left for Canada when I was about 13 or 14. Their absence left me feeling overwhelmingly lonely. I struggled to cope with my emotions as a teenager, often swinging between happiness and deep sadness, irritability, and anger. I had low self-confidence, harboured self-hatred, and felt pessimistic.

Over the years, I allowed myself to remain unhappy and unhealthy, thinking it was a normal part of life. I blamed my family for my unhappiness.

Food became my solace. I developed poor eating habits, seeking comfort in junk food and skipping proper meals. I didn't understand the impact on my body or health, and my parents weren't knowledgeable about proper nutrition.

Growing up, our family's daily life revolved around food. Meals consisted of bread with margarine, jam, marmite, or peanut butter, along with tea with milk and sugar for breakfast. Lunch and dinner followed a similar pattern: rice with meat or fish, lentils, and minimal salad, always ending with a sweet dessert like "ladob" (banana nougat coco) or ice cream on weekends. I snacked on chocolates, Simba chips, ice cakes, and anything else I could find.



My language and interactions with others reflected my belief that everything was working against me. I was unaware of how to manage and control my emotions, which led to further internal struggles.

With that eating pattern ominously, my weight kept piling on. I can say that was a real battle for me mentally, emotionally and physically. I did not like the way I felt, which made me feel worse about myself; I had poor body image and zero self-confidence. The more I felt terrible about myself, the more I continued

to use food to make me feel better, especially when I was lonely and going through a difficult time. Food became my companion. Especially when I am stressed, anxious or sad, I use food to make me feel better and for instant gratification. But afterwards, I felt guilty and self-sabotaged. I got into this vicious circle that I could not get myself out of.

What triggers me to Eat Emotionally?

In my youth, I always had low self-esteem, and I never had the opportunity to deal with my past. I believe that those emotions kept resurfacing in different areas. I felt rejected, and my body compensated for this by overeating. There is a link between stress and emotional eating. I

usually eat sweet stuff when I am stressed, as it gives me instant relief, although I know that it is not solving my situation.

The other symptoms are;

Body Dysmorphia – I worry about my flaws in my appearance.

Obesophobia - my fear of gaining weight or getting fat.

I tend to keep my feelings to myself, then end up feeling tormented by my silence and, as a result, use food as a coping strategy. When I am alone at home, especially in the evening, I get bored and have a tendency to snack.

The changes I made

I made my rules for what I should eat and not eat. My primary rule is to eat only what God created, so any processed food is not part of my plan. This rule had brought a positive outcome in my body transformation in terms of my newfound energy, focus, and not feeling as bloated and sluggish as I used to when I was yo-yo dieting. But the challenge comes when I restrict myself too much by not eating certain foods that I like and then overeat and binge, which leads to guilt, embarrassment and depression at times. In other words, restricting myself can lead me to binge, overindulge and overeat.



What I have learned on this journey!

"My need for love and acceptance led me to love and accept myself unconditionally. I don't let my weight, size, past, or mistakes define me. I embrace my identity, feeling youthful, confident, and beautiful inside and out. Pain and pleasure are the main forces behind my behaviour, influencing my emotions and actions. While sweet foods may bring momentary pleasure, they don't solve my problems.

Progress is more than physical appearance; mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being are equally crucial. I've learned to pick myself up after failure, recognizing it as part of my journey. Self-discipline helps me focus on tasks, persevere, and achieve my goals.

I've become more compassionate towards myself, avoiding self-sabotage and excessive exercise out of guilt. I've accepted life's ups and downs, realizing I can manage my emotions without turning to food or lashing out at others."

By Marsah Parcou



Time is Limited - Making decisions with ease

Did you know that, on average, people spend 3 hours daily on decisions such as what to wear, eat, watch, and when to sleep?

Mastering the art of decision-making is a great skill to cultivate. As a time management expert, I've witnessed in my clients the important role that decision-making plays in our lives. Every choice we make influences our next steps, but it doesn't have to be complicated.

Rules to live by; Creating rules to live by can streamline daily decisions and reduce decision fatigue.

Here are some examples:

- **Give yourself a bedtime**
- **Try a capsule wardrobe**
- **Meal planning**
- **Financial automation**
- **Setting clear boundaries**

For instance, I know that I need around 8-9 hours of sleep a night, and my bedtime is typically 9 pm, giving me a bit

The importance of our environment

Decision making can take up our time, but we also lose a lot of time as a result of our environment. The Wall Street Journal reported that the average American executive loses 6 weeks each year searching for items in messy desks and files!

Our physical environment can impact our cognitive resources, emotions, behaviour, decision-making, and relationships! Removing clutter from your environment can lead to a sense of calm and reduced stress levels, as a tidy space promotes relaxation and mental clarity. There are so many different approaches to decluttering, and getting started might feel overwhelming.

Experiment and see what works best for you, e.g. little and often, or carve out a day to blitz a few rooms. It might be tempting to start with a room that doesn't get used often, like a guest bedroom perhaps, but you want to be able to notice and appreciate the impact you're making - especially at the start - so I'd target instead a room that you do use.



of time to wind down before going to sleep by 10 pm. Routines can also reduce decision fatigue, and by reducing the mental load of some activities throughout the day, we can conserve energy for the more important tasks.

In this case, it's a bedtime routine, but you might have routines for other things - like a morning routine, a routine for exercise (you might have specific days on which you hit the gym or go for a run), key business activities and so on.

Meal planning is another way to simplify decision-making. Planning your meals in advance can save time and mental energy.

I've chosen other rules, such as not shopping around if the price is under £100. For instance, I had a small plumbing repair at my house, and the first quote was under £100. I didn't then spend time getting more quotes—I just went with the first one.

You can automate your finances, too, so that you don't need to make a decision to save or invest money—this can just automatically happen each month.

When it comes to my house, I subscribe to the approach called Döstädning, which is Swedish death cleaning, and it hails from the same Scandi shores as major lifestyle trends, hygge and lagom. It perhaps sounds morbid, but somehow, this felt right for me. The premise is that you are essentially decluttering your home to make it easier for your loved ones when you die... (hopefully not yet, at least!)... but it can be done at any time, and it's not intended to draw attention to death, rather more it's to celebrate life.

This approach involves holding onto items that have meaning to you (& subsequently will be meaningful to your loved ones when you pass).

Most of the items I have on display in my home have a story behind them. I have many antiques and ornaments from my late mum and a few pieces from my grandmother that I was gifted when she moved into a care home.

Döstädning works for me; it's allowed me to curate a home that has meaning.

By Sarah Stewart



Sarah Stewart is a Scottish time management coach and mindfulness practitioner. She helps people get more time for the things that matter through her one-to-one online coaching and her signature programme Project Manage Your Life. Find out more here:

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Finding Strength in Stillness

A Journey to Inner Resilience

When was the last time you sat in complete stillness? Not scrolling, not planning, not even meditating with an app—but just sitting with yourself, allowing the moment to unfold as it is?

In today's fast-paced world, stillness is an underrated power. We're conditioned to equate productivity with worth, busyness with success, and constant motion with progress. Yet, paradoxically, it is often in stillness where we find our greatest strength.

Stillness is about doing something other than being fully present with what is, even amid chaos. It's about pausing long enough to hear the whispers of resilience within us. Resilience is often seen as the ability to bounce back from adversity. Still, I've come to see it as something more profound: the capacity to remain grounded even when life feels unsteady. Stillness provides the foundation for this grounding.

Think of resilience as a tree rooted deeply in the earth. The winds may bend its branches but remain upright because its roots run deep. Stillness is what allows us to grow those roots. It's the intentional slowing down, the act of stepping away from the storm to anchor ourselves in the moment.

In my own life, I've experienced overwhelming uncertainty—moments when everything felt like it was spiraling out of control. The natural response was to fight against it, to “do something” to regain a sense of control. But it wasn't until I embraced stillness that I found clarity. In those moments of quiet, I realized that I didn't need to have all the answers; I just needed to trust my inner resilience to navigate the unknown.

We live in an era of noise. The external chaos of deadlines, digital distractions, and societal pressures often mirrors our internal turmoil. Without stillness, this noise becomes overwhelming, clouding our judgment and depleting our emotional reserves.

Stillness, however, acts as a reset button. It allows us to step back and observe the chaos without becoming entangled in it. In stillness, we are not ignoring the noise; we are creating space to respond to it with intention rather than reactivity. Consider this: When you're caught

in a storm, do you navigate better by running frantically in circles or by finding a moment of calm to assess your direction? Stillness equips us to face life's storms with clarity and purpose.

Stillness doesn't require grand gestures. It's not about retreating to a mountaintop or attending a silent retreat (although those can help). It's about finding micro-moments of peace in your daily life.

Instead of rushing from one task to the next, take a moment to pause. Close your eyes, take three deep breaths, and anchor yourself in the present. This simple act can reset your mind and restore your focus. Engage in activities that don't involve screens, such as gardening, painting, or simply taking a walk.

These moments allow your mind to rest and recharge. The next time you're in a conversation, practice listening without planning your response. Fully immerse yourself in the other person's words. This form of presence is a powerful act of stillness.

Stillness is not always easy. When difficult emotions arise, resist the urge to distract yourself. Sit with the discomfort and observe it without judgment. This practice builds emotional resilience over time.

What I've discovered is that stillness is not a retreat; it's a return—to ourselves, to our values, and to our innate strength. In stillness, we gain the clarity to discern what truly matters and the courage to face life's uncertainties. Resilience is not the absence of struggle but the ability to meet it with grace. And grace comes from stillness—the quiet assurance that we can weather the storm because our roots run deep.

So, I invite you to find a moment today to sit in stillness. Let go of the need to fix, plan, or solve. Just be. Listen to the still, small voice within you—the one that whispers of strength, clarity, and resilience.

Because in that quiet space, you might just discover the greatest truth of all: that everything you need to face life's challenges already resides within you.



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

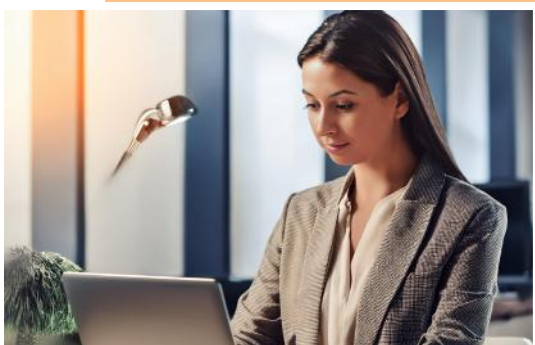
Solo Travel Successfully



Let's take a moment and recall your last group trip. Did you travel with family and friends? How long does it take to coordinate schedules, acquiesce to everyone's preferences, and get plans solidified? How many hours did you spend in that trip group chat sharing tips and suitcase-packing woes? Exhausting, isn't it all? For these reasons and much more, solo travel should be your new method for exploring the world. Some may say, "Isn't solo travel dangerous?" Or the age-old adage, "There is safety in numbers." With any type of travel, there are inherent risks, so why not take a journey by yourself?

Solo travel can be exhilarating. Imagine traveling to a new place, unhindered and unaccompanied, free to explore and indulge in an area of your own volition. The only preferences you would have to cater to on this adventure are your own! Let's get our travel bucket list ready. I can feel the excitement stirring and flight booking confirmations rolling in. However, before you book that dream solo destination, here are a few tips on how to travel solo successfully.

Initially, you have to know the country you are travelling to for entry requirements. Each country's requirements vary, and we should never assume we can just arrive humbly. Customs agents will not hug you on arrival. When I traveled to Ghana, a beautiful West African country on the Gulf of Guinea, I was in for some surprises. After booking my ticket and Airbnb, I proceeded to prepare my essentials and shop for some stylish Safari looks. I thought my printed tops and bug spray would be enough for the journey, but I was wrong.



Upon further research, I discovered I needed a Yellow Fever vaccination and a tourist visa from the Ghana Embassy in my country. Both of the items required time and additional finances to acquire.

My tourist visa took three weeks to process and cost an extra \$130.00 USD. Also, my local pharmacy had to specially order my vaccine, which cost over \$200.00 USD. I cannot stress enough the importance of checking and double-checking your solo destination's entry requirements. Being an informed solo traveler is a must.

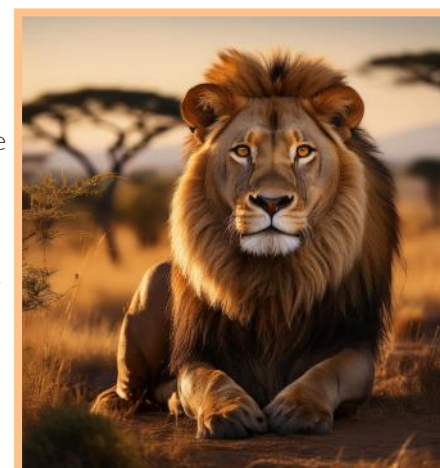
Secondly, it is a good practice to check the current travel advisories for the region you are visiting. Countries like the United Kingdom and the United States have government websites such as Gov.uk and Travel.State.

Gov that provide updated travel advisories on countries all over the world. These advisories can provide the level of danger and reasons why you should not travel to a specific country.

Some of these reasons can range from terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping risks, and crime. These websites are excellent at telling you which areas to avoid. Likewise, they can advise you regarding travel insurance and who to contact in an emergency. While no travel is guaranteed safe, it is always wise to check the lay of the land before venturing there, especially when venturing alone.

Lastly, be sure to book your stays and excursions with reputable companies. While staying on budget and traveling off the beaten path are equally satisfying, be sure to visit TripAdvisor, Viator, Booking.com, and GetYourGuide to have a successful journey. Some accommodations or tour operators may offer you an unauthorized, yet unbeatable bargain. No matter how tempting this may be, do not send money through channels that are not authorized.

For instance, while booking some excursions online for my trip to Egypt, I had a tour operator offer me some tour upgrades "off the books" through WhatsApp. I had not solicited these invitations, nor did I permit them to contact me privately. I felt unnerved by this encounter. In concern for my safety, I notified this particular operator that I was no longer interested in touring with them and canceled my booking.



In our solo quests, let's excursion and rest responsibly. There is no need to cheat yourself or anyone else to "catch a deal".

In sum, when traveling solo, know before you go! Be mindful of country entry requirements, check international travel advisories, and stick with reputable travel advisors. With the tips above, your solo treks are sure to be safe, fun, and amazing!

By **Angelica James**

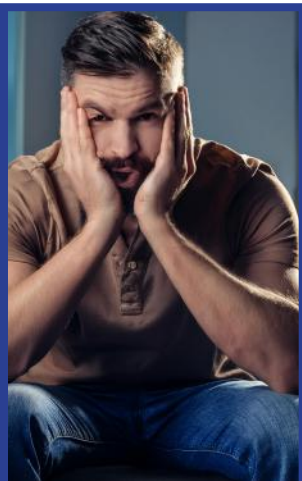


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How to eradicate insecurity without years of therapy.

I'm sure that most people understand that they are living with unresolved insecurities and that the wounds of their past still haunt and weaken them. Yet, the prospect of years of therapy to fix this problem often seems too hard, expensive or time-consuming.

Adding to the general lack of confidence in the therapy path is the fact that it is not guaranteed to work, which confirms the general suspicion that insecurity is not a solvable problem.



Therapists have much to answer for this dilemma.

The main problem with popular therapy models is that the therapist is NOT required to have eradicated their own insecurity and embodied their healing method before offering the solution to the suffering client. This means there is no certainty that they even know the way and are not just hoping and guessing, which can only further confuse the client and increase the misdirection that created the insecurity in the first place.

That's right; sometimes, therapy makes insecurity worse.

For those who've already had years of therapy and have devoted abundant time, money, and energy to healing the wounds of their past only to still feel unhealed, let me show you why - I'm sorry to say that you've been searching for the wrong thing. You've just been lost reviewing an unending sea of wrong data. When you are ready to face your deepest fears about yourself head-on, you will need help, but you must find help from someone who knows the way but, at the same time, doesn't get in your way.



The best thing about true experts is that they know exactly what to look for and precisely what NOT to look for. Watch what happens when you avoid the misdirection of looking at all the things that happened to you and instead examine your part in this mess.

And let me direct your search using just six keywords:

1. Accusation

At some inevitable point in your childhood, before you were seven, you got hurt, disappointed, or embarrassed for the very first time. Before that moment, you had

been completely relaxed in your inherent value and worth, but to make sense of this surprising moment for the first time, you pointed your finger at yourself and accused yourself of being the reason for this negative experience. Your childish logic led you to implicate yourself as the problem.

2. Betrayal

Based on this logic, you realise that you could never just be you again. From here on, it would have to be you, plus or minus something. You'll need to be better than you, different from you, other than you. This siding against yourself in your most vulnerable state is an act of deep betrayal that has reverberated through your being ever since.

3. Agreement

Because of how shocking this experience was, you also decided you had enough evidence to convict yourself without a trial. This accusation stands. You are guilty as charged. You accuse yourself of being the problem and then agree that this is the complete truth.

4. Certainty

This agreement then fills you with a sense of pure certainty that you now know who you really are. It is true. You are sure. This certainty comes with its own chemistry that floods your being and infuses the structure of your beliefs into every cell of your body. Lock it in.

5. Strategy

From this moment, you MUST direct all resources to protect yourself from anyone else ever finding out who you really are. Now, everything you do or say is a strategy to cover up and compensate for the agreement about who you think you really are.

6. System

These strategies receive so much creative energy they become the systems you develop for every area of life. Your results and relationships are exactly as you designed them to be. The systems you created are working exactly as you expected them to. This is the system you designed based on the strategy to protect your fears and meet your needs based on agreeing with who you initially accused yourself of being.

Now watch what happens instantly when you use precise language to cut through all the layers of misdirection again and reverse the order of the six keywords for how you created the limiting beliefs about yourself in the first place.

System. Strategy. Certainty. Agreement. Betrayal. Accusation.

Observe the system. Understand what it was designed to achieve and see how perfectly it works. Own that every behaviour is simply a strategy as part of your overall system. Uncover the central driver. Name the fear. What are you running and hiding from? Who did you say you were? What exactly did you accuse yourself of? Open the files. Review the case. Examine the data. See through the holes in the case. Bring new evidence to light. Notice how the old evidence falls apart: A huge mistake was made. Data was misunderstood and interpreted poorly. You can now disagree with the accusation.

Prove the charges are false. Apologise for taking so long to review the data objectively and for the years of betrayal. Discover and decide what is true about your nature instead. Wholeheartedly agree with these new truths. Hold firm while the new agreements are pressure tested. Experience the chemistry of certainty from being sure about who you really are. Now, there is nothing to prove or defend, and there is no need to run or hide; you are free to direct your best energy towards growth and contribution.

Notice the new system created as the fruit of being free to be at your best where it matters most, unhindered by self-doubt, fear and limiting beliefs.

Can you now see how solvable this insecurity problem really is?

By Jaemin Frazer



The Power of Pause

How Taking a Career Break Can Transform Your Life

"Sometimes the most productive thing you can do is relax." – Mark Black

Have you ever considered what a sabbatical could unlock in your life? Taking a sabbatical was the best gift I ever gave myself.

In 2016, I was faced with a career crisis after being promoted to director, and I knew I needed to step off the corporate hamster wheel. I craved a period of sacred time to relax and reset. My husband and I took eight months away from our jobs to explore what we wanted from our next chapter. Through a lot of discussion and dreaming, we landed on three themes to shape our future:

Freedom - People - Sunshine

In 2022, we left our corporate roles and took a leap of faith. I retrained as a coach, and we embarked on renovating a 16th-century derelict barn in France. Today, we live an endless summer across two continents, surrounded by our favourite people.

Vacation vs. Sabbatical

Sabbaticals and career breaks are becoming more common. Gusto Inc. found that 6.7% of salaried workers were on sabbatical in January 2024, double the rate from 2019. But what differentiates a sabbatical from a vacation?

As a coach specialising in career transitions and sabbaticals, I see the key differences in time and intention. Sabbaticals are longer than a standard two-week vacation, ranging from a month to more than a year. While vacations are primarily for recreation, sabbaticals are about intentional pursuits that can't be achieved while working.

Benefits of a Sabbatical

Gain Clarity and Perspective

Stepping away allows you to assess what's important and whether your current life aligns with your values. Our sabbatical gave us the clarity and courage to explore alternative lifestyles and

time to set a five-year plan to work towards our dream life.

Burnout - Prevention & Cure

In a world that celebrates "hustle culture," burnout is a growing issue. A 2022 McKinsey survey found that one in four employees globally reported burnout symptoms. Prolonged stress impacts health, but a career break can restore well-being, resilience, and a healthier work-life balance.

Rediscover Your Passion

Taking a break from routine can open mental space to rediscover passions or uncover new ones. Often, we're stuck on autopilot. I entered my career without a clear direction and, 15 years later, realised I didn't know what truly fuelled me. Our career break reconnected us to our love for travel, community, and sunshine, ultimately inspiring a life more aligned with our values.

Enhance Your Skills and Broaden Your Horizons

Many people use a break to learn new languages, retrain, or pursue hobbies that keep them mentally engaged. During our break, I tasked myself with building a travel blog website—a tech challenge for me! Though I didn't love the tech side, it improved my patience and problem-solving skills, which I brought back to my job.

Reignite Your Creativity

Creativity often feels elusive under routine. However, a change in scenery and the space to daydream can spark creativity in unexpected ways. The sensory inspiration from travel helped me improve my creative writing while blogging about our adventures, reigniting a spark I hadn't felt in years.

Strengthen Relationships and Build New Connections

We often underestimate the impact our careers have on relationships. A career break offers time to reconnect with family and friends or meet new people with shared passions. Our break allowed us to spend quality time with loved ones we hadn't seen in years, re-establishing those bonds.

Invest in Future You

Ultimately, a career break is an investment in your future self. It's a time to reflect and make intentional choices about who you want to become. Our eight-month break was the best investment in our future life, not merely a luxury but a vital opportunity for growth.

In a nonstop world, pressing pause can feel counterintuitive, yet it's often exactly what we need. As a sabbatical coach, I've witnessed how stepping away can empower people to return to their lives with fresh perspectives, renewed energy, and a clearer purpose. If you're feeling stuck, burnt out, or simply curious about what else is out there, a career break could be the transformation you're looking for.

By Rebecca Thomas

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Embrace and Empower Navigating the Menopause with Self Love Mastery

A silent symptom of the menopause transition is a lack of confidence, self-worth and self-esteem. In addition, new research confirms the decline of oestrogen levels affects almost all organ systems. Including urogenital, reproductive, cardiovascular, skeletal, dermatologic, immune and digestive systems. (The journal of The Menopause Society)

Which is no surprise this impacts how women feel about themselves and their quality of life.

Instead of being offered HRT, women are often dismissed, prescribed antidepressants and made to feel that it's all in their heads. Women are told that everyone goes through this, so they should be able to just get on with it. But everyday women are leaving careers, losing jobs, reducing their hours, missing out on promotion or going through formal performance and disciplinary processes.

They are struggling with daily life and relationships and losing their identity and confidence all because of their menopause struggles. Then, they feel like failures, rather than society and the system failing them.

Even if women are having their hormones replaced, taking supplements, exercising regularly, getting adequate sleep and nourishing their body, they can still feel terrible about themselves. Feeling disconnected, lost and hopeless because they lack self-worth and self-love.

Taking care of your physical needs during this transition is vital, but it is also important to embrace self-love, self-care and mindset mastery. It is not selfish to start putting yourself first; there will always be a list of things to do and other people to take care of. Creating space in your life for focusing on what makes you feel good will help boost your mood.

We are programmed to believe we will be able to feel good about ourselves by having, doing and achieving more, but we are not taught how to look within to create the fulfilment that we are all yearning for.

Menopause is the perfect time to reflect on how you want to feel about yourself for the next 40+ years of your life, and self-love gives you permission to do this. Self-love is about loving yourself unconditionally, and to do this, you have to make

deep mindset shifts to transform the limiting beliefs that are stopping you from feeling good about yourself.

Once you do, you can start loving yourself and stop feeling like a failure. Your self-worth and confidence are tied to the stories and beliefs you tell yourself every day, including what you think menopause signifies.

It is too easy to criticise yourself with the "I'm old" and "I'm not good enough" thoughts, but if you're constantly putting yourself down, you're living in a world where you're your own worst enemy, and that is what makes you feel like a failure. Menopause is a time when you need to be your biggest cheerleader by reminding yourself every day that you are doing the best you can. Take a moment every day to look in the mirror and repeat this affirmation: "I am enough, just as I am."

A simple way to start creating the mindset shifts is by reframing the negative self-talk. You can do this by taking time to appreciate the amazing woman you are by writing down 5 things you love about yourself and why.

Developing a sense of self-belief will help rebuild your confidence, which will create a ripple effect across all aspects of your life. Try writing down three unique qualities and strengths you have to remind yourself of what you are good at.

Celebrate your body's achievements; instead of focusing on what you think are flaws in your body, take a moment each day to appreciate what your body allows you to do because it has gotten you here today.

Menopause is not the end of being able to love yourself and your life. It is the beginning of the most empowering new chapter in your life. By embracing self-love mastery, you will start rebuilding your confidence and self-worth so you can start feeling fulfilled and good about yourself—even though you are still menopauseing!!

By Sarah Hunt

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The Door that led me to 'The Self Worth Secret'

Although I am not a mother yet, being an aunt to four beautiful children has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. I didn't realize it was possible to love that intensely or have that love reciprocated unconditionally in return. This led me on a journey towards increased awareness of the little girl inside of myself, and subsequently, when I knocked on that door, my life transformed!

What is the inner child?

Your inner child is the childlike part of your personality that includes what you learned as a child and how it influences your thinking and reactions as an adult.

Interestingly, a child's brain absorbs information like a sponge due to its rapid development and high plasticity in the early years. From birth to around age six, children experience the "absorbent mind" phase, where they unconsciously and then consciously soak up vast amounts of information from their environment. This period is crucial as the brain forms numerous neural connections that lay the foundation for future learning and development.

Your "Self-Worth can be described as your internal 'Sense of Self' and perceived worthiness of love and belonging from others. Furthermore, this can drastically be affected by childhood conditioning and belief systems. If this is the case, learning to self-soothe and reparent will be crucial in your journey of healing and discovery.

I want you to take a moment and imagine a perfect red shiny apple hanging on a beautiful tree in an orchard. This image symbolizes how we arrive flawlessly into this world as tiny newborn babies. Ten years later, Imagine an apple with 50 tiny pins in it, which symbolizes a child. This harm could be caused by not feeling seen or heard or from not having basic needs met.

Eighteen years on, imagine the same apple with a knife stuck in it after your first heartbreak as a teenager. All these 'injuries' 'wounds' deplete the sense of self. Consequently, we often cannot see our own value; we lack confidence, which contributes to low self-esteem, and these 'wounds' can send us on a catalyzing downward spiral to seek external validation and love.

Our inner child can manifest in our daily lives through fear, anxiety, feeling guilty, or a deep sense of shame or unworthiness. This part of ourselves will go above and beyond to try and keep us safe, but it could also prevent us from taking a leap towards something new and amazing.

One of the secret ingredients to mastering self-worth is that it must come from within. To enable us to feel truly fulfilled, we must be able to fill our own cup first. We must 'Love' ourselves. We must 'Feel' complete entirely on our own. Everything outside of our 'Self' simply only adds to or enhances our life.

I wrote a quote a short time ago describing how I define "Self-Worth. This is the mission behind my brand, which is to be powerful, real, and authentic.

Self Worth is more than two words

*'It is the Core of your being.
It is your love for yourself when you're feeling pretty but also when you are losing hope.
It is a feeling from within derived from a deep knowing of your personal value.
It is a Light deep inside your heart.
It is Warm, and it Shines.
That energy is magical.'*



One of the first steps in reconnecting with ourselves and reclaiming our self-worth is an awareness and acknowledgement of the inner child.

Connecting with and calming your inner child involves several therapeutic practices:

1. Visualization: Communicating with your inner child through visualization or speaking aloud, offering reassurance and understanding.

2. Writing and Journaling: Writing letters to your inner child, acknowledging past pains and providing comfort and validation.

3. Meditation and Mindfulness: Using meditation to connect with your inner child, fostering self-awareness and emotional acceptance

4. Creative Expression: Engaging in activities like drawing, music, or dance to express emotions and reconnect with childhood joy.

5. Self-Compassion: Practicing self-compassion by validating your inner child's feelings and offering empathy.

- If you feel this resonates with you the next time your inner child requires reassurance, imagine taking them by the hand and saying

"I am an adult now. I will keep us safe. Thank you for trying to protect me. We got this"

Then, take that little person by the hand and keep walking towards your goals and dreams. Love yourself. Know your value. Embrace your worth in all its entirety and keep moving towards the light!

By Sarah Jayne Gwynne

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Narcissism... rears its head again!!

Narcissists are from all walks of life and often are in leadership roles... making life very difficult for those they have in their sphere of influence.

What is narcissism?

It is a personality type in which the person is totally fixated on themselves and how not only the people but also the situations around them impact their life, with little or no regard to the impact on others.

In fact, Dr Maria Jansen describes the narcissistic person as acting like royalty in that they control all those who come into their sphere of influence...

Her book "From Victim to Victor" explains her story and what it is like living with a narcissist.

Do you know anyone like this?

Everything must revolve around them! Sadly, these people are real experts at manipulation and control... I even had one client who had suffered from an abusive narcissistic mother and had moved on to marry another narcissistic woman, who controlled his life to the "nth" degree. He tried to see me, but after the first session, he was stopped and not allowed to continue in therapy. I had emailed him personally, but even his personal emails were vetted, and he was not able to respond himself, as she had replied on his behalf.

Another client had abusive parents and grandparents. Helping him through the process, he did really well... and stayed clear of the toxicity in his life for 3 months... but was then sucked back into the fold.. and the toxic situation returned... It is so difficult to make changes in your life if you are stuck in a toxic relationship.

There are different types of narcissism, but I came across a covert passive-aggressive narcissist the other day. She presented as a client who had been abused by her husband and had acquired PTSD. (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) . they were still living together...after 56 years! She loved playing the victim to get the attention. She complained that her husband yelled and shouted at her. Yet they worked on their house together, decorating it and doing it up when it needed doing... at her dictation.

I took her through the TRTP (The Richards Trauma Process)... but there was little change... what is going on here? I realised that I had missed something, and so I asked to speak to her husband to find out whether he had PTSD as well, which might explain his anger...

Only to discover that this poor man was totally controlled by his wife, even to agreeing that he was the abuser, when in fact, he was the one being abused. He had even attended the police courses on how not to be abusive in the home... and had been questioned even then if he was sure he was the abuser. He had become totally codependent on her... and could see no wrong in her, only that she would not agree to have them live in harmony and peace..which was all that he wanted!!

He had even been asked to leave on several occasions and was yanked back to the house on her terms. I asked him how he felt about having to live elsewhere, and his reply was, "Absolutely terrified!" I did feel for this man, but in this instance, I could do nothing for him. He was incapable of seeing that he was the one being abused!

This type of personality is elegantly explained in the book "*The Covert passive aggressive narcissist*" by Debbie Mirza...

By Fran Nguyen

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Do mums have a 'human giver' syndrome?

In my work with my female clients, there is a strong theme of carrying the 'extra' – extra mental load, extra worrying, extra anxiety, extra guilt, extra house chores.

On the surface, these 'extras' seem to be self-imposed burdens. It's tempting to simplify and say that you should be able to set clear boundaries, have role-setting conversations with your partner, and get on with your share of the load.

Then why is it so hard? Why do women struggle to let go of some of the load and choose to carry the extra? Is it really all self-imposed?

While some burdens may appear self-imposed, they are often deeply rooted in societal expectations and cultural norms. Historically, women have been seen as the primary caregivers and homemakers, a role that has been ingrained over

generations. Even as more women enter the workforce, these traditional expectations persist, creating an internal conflict between professional ambitions and perceived domestic responsibilities.

All this makes the modern working mum a bit of a social experiment. There is a seeming movement towards gender equality; however, the infrastructure and social reality have not yet been established to support that equality.

Here are some of the things we talk about with my clients to help us set the scene in which they are trying to be a good mum and stay on their career path. Being aware of these is a good first step:

Societal Expectations and Gender Roles

From a young age, girls are often socialised to be nurturing and responsible for the well-being of others. This conditioning can lead to an ingrained sense of duty to manage household tasks and childcare, even when they have demanding careers. Emily and Amelia Nagoski cleverly label women in their book *Burnout* as 'human givers' vs. men who are 'human beings'. The pressure to excel in both domains can be overwhelming, leading to an 'extra' mental load.

The Invisible Load

The mental load, often referred to as the 'invisible load,' includes the planning, organising, and remembering that goes into managing a household. This load is not always visible to others, including partners, which can make it difficult to share or delegate. The constant juggling of tasks and responsibilities can lead to chronic stress and burnout.

Guilt and Perfectionism

Many working mums struggle with guilt and perfectionism. They may feel guilty for not spending enough time with their children or for not being able to keep up with household chores. When I did my market research on my recent coaching offer, one of the mums said these words that made us both laugh but also cry a little – 'will I go to my grave still wanting a cleaner house?'. This guilt can drive them to take on more than they can handle, striving for an unattainable standard of perfection.

Lack of Support Systems

Another significant factor is the lack of adequate support systems. While some partners are supportive and share the load equally, this is not always the case. Extended family support, affordable childcare, and flexible work arrangements can also be limited, making it harder for working mums to balance their responsibilities. This is even harder for women trying to continue climbing the career ladder and growing in their professional roles.

So, what is there to do to break the cycle?

While it may seem like a pretty bleak scene, there are ways to address these challenges.

- *The best starting point is working out what is real and what results from the human giver syndrome – anything in the second bucket – is a load we must drop.*
- *Having a brave conversation with our partner about these extras on our mind, introducing a concept of teamwork where sharing responsibilities is the new normal.*
- *And fundamentally, the most important - learning is that you are worth the self-care. Learning to truly believe that creating time for your well-being is the opposite of selfish. It's a long-term contribution to your relationship with yourself, your partner, and your children.*

By *Eve Ostrovskaya*





What now?

Moving forward after a relationship breakdown...

How you feel after the end of a relationship will be determined by several factors: how long you were together, the nature of the breakup, whether it was acrimonious or amicable, and whether you were the one to end it.

It will also depend on your own personal situation. And it is perfectly normal to have mixed emotions. On the one hand, you might be sad about the loss of the relationship and the life you envisioned with your partner and having "it wasn't meant to be like this" thoughts, or you might be feeling a sense of freedom if the relationship was unfulfilled, and relief if it was toxic.

If your relationship ended in divorce, that is a huge life change; moving forward from it is not something that happens overnight. The healing process is different for everyone, but it can be an opportunity for positive change and for rediscovering who you really are. People often lose sight of who they are "being" when they are in a relationship with someone else, especially if that relationship was abusive, and so this is a chance to reconnect with your authentic self and to find out who you intend to "be" and what you really want as you rebuild your life.

In my work with clients, a few common themes emerge around relationship breakdown: confidence, boundaries, and readiness for new relationships. Rebuilding confidence is an essential part of the healing journey, and a breakup can shake your self-esteem and self-worth, but it is important to work on your relationship with yourself. Self-love is not selfish, and when you recognise your value and what you have to offer in a relationship, then you will attract someone worthy of you.

An ability to set healthy boundaries is key. If the dynamics of your relationship were unhealthy, you may have become used to compromising too much and failing to assert your needs. Learning to set strong boundaries and being able to say "no" and not feel guilty about it is very liberating. It is all part of taking back control, making



decisions that feel comfortable to you, knowing where your limits lie, and sticking to them. As well as protecting yourself, it is also about respecting yourself. This is especially important when it comes to forging new relationships, which means you need to be clear about your boundaries from the start.

Dating after a divorce or a relationship breakdown will be different for everyone. Some people dive straight back in, whereas others prefer to dip their toe in the water first. If self-esteem has taken a hit during the previous relationship, that may bring up feelings of insecurity or reluctance to take the new relationship further. But there is no timeline for re-entering the dating world; it is a personal choice and something to approach at your own pace and when you feel ready, if indeed you decide to date at all.

Then there is the question of intimacy. Are you ready emotionally and mentally? Are you rushing into a new relationship before you have healed from the previous one? Or are you holding back for fear of being hurt again? Healthy relationships are built on mutual respect and trust, and sexual relationships require a level of vulnerability, which means you must feel comfortable with the choices you make.

Ask yourself whether you are truly ready to open yourself up to being with someone again. Do not feel pressured if you are not. If it does not feel right or the right time for you, then follow that feeling. This is where boundaries and confidence come into their own because when you are confident in yourself and with your boundaries, it is much easier to cultivate mutual respect and trust in all your relationships.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to navigating relationships. It is very important to take time out to heal, work on your confidence and boundaries, and reconnect with yourself. Whether you then decide to step into a new relationship with confidence or embrace a single life is entirely your choice. Ultimately, moving on from a breakup is about reclaiming your life, the life that you choose to create.

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.

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Time to Heal

A Vision of Tomorrow

The beautiful colors of orange, red, and yellow are beginning to spread across our land, and the smells of Summer are slowly fading away. It's beginning to feel a bit chilly in the morning as kids are returning to school, and our pools are closing up. The warm summer breeze has passed, and the air now has a crispness to it that instantly lets us know that a change of season is upon us.

The magnificent change of seasons often inspires and motivates us to begin making changes in our own lives. This is a natural response to our world, as we are not separate from nature but are a part of it. Like the earth itself, our lives are constantly in motion, continuously changing, shifting, growing and evolving.

Like the seasons of nature, changes in our lives are inevitable.

Of course, not all changes in our world arrive so expectedly. Unforeseen events such as illness, loss, financial struggles, accidents, etc., can shake up our lives and quickly change the course of days. Those are times we have no choice but to adapt to the storm that has altered our path. We grieve, feel deep emotions we cannot avoid, and go through a period of time it takes for us to accept a new chapter of our lives we didn't know was coming.

More often than not, the shifts of change in our lives come with many cues that let us know where we are heading. Despite our own resistance to change, our lives never remain stagnant. In fact, if you look back 12 months ago, your life likely looks significantly

different today. You are not the same person you were one year ago and are a very different version of yourself from how you were twenty years ago. So much so that you know you could go back to your younger self, teach them a new way of thinking and point them in a direction that will help prevent them from making choices you are wiser about today.

It's interesting when you start noticing how we respond to the change of seasons vs how we tend to participate in the changes of our lives. Notice how we acknowledge the transition into a new season with special care and attention.

We even get excited and ensure we prepare ourselves for what is to come. We reorganize and make adjustments to our homes, wardrobes, food, schedules, etc. We decorate and participate in traditions that honor the season and make it memorable. Step by step, we consistently take action, ensuring we do what is possible to enjoy and embrace the change that is coming our way.

As humans, we endure personal changes throughout the year, as each new year brings us new experiences. Like nature, our lives are forever in motion, growing and adapting to our environment. The difference is that we often lack awareness of subtle shifts within ourselves and the willingness to be a part of that change.

When it comes to being proactive in our personal journeys and phases of life, we have grown comfortable becoming stagnant and waiting for change to happen to us rather than taking action and steps to bring forth positive change that can happen for us.

Of course, we cannot predict every part of our future or prepare for what is to come. But we can significantly influence our future and take action to shift the direction of our lives. With each passing day, we have an opportunity to support the needs of our own bodies and minds. We have the ability to



adjust when we aren't feeling our best and make our own changes in order to prevent our situations from worsening. The truth is, we are not victims of our reality, and it's time we stopped living that way.

For example, many of our suffering from unexpected changes is something that we have been warned about for quite some time. Our bodies have been showing us exactly when we need to pay attention, revealing where there is imbalance and how it needs our support. Unfortunately, we were never taught to listen to those messages (symptoms), and they often go unheard or silenced.

As a society, we were conditioned to believe that we are powerless in our own skin and aren't capable of helping ourselves. Even when our bodies are pleading with us with ongoing symptoms, we have never understood that those symptoms were the cues we should have been attentive to.

Having lost total connection with ourselves, with zero awareness of our own power to heal, has resulted in a tremendous amount of unnecessary suffering and the realization that an enormous amount of untimely deaths could have been prevented.

We didn't know any better and did what we always thought was best. Now we know better, and there is no better time than right now to do better.

The first step in becoming the navigator of your journey is understanding and truly believing in your ability to do so.

You have the power to be the greatest influence of your reality. Becoming proactive in your path by listening to your body, shifting your beliefs, observing and changing your thoughts will ultimately modify and adjust your behaviors. Your entire perspective of how you view yourself and the world around you will begin to shift. This will be what changes the course of your life in ways you never imagined before.

When I work with people who are struggling with health issues, symptoms, or diseases, my goal is always to create awareness and show them how to reconnect with their own bodies again. They then begin to take the steps needed to shift the direction of their health and their lives.

It doesn't necessarily take massive changes to make a major impact. Small, consistent steps will lead to real, sustainable results. Before I explore their symptoms and discuss their current struggles, I always start by asking them to create a vision.

You may have heard or seen others create vision boards before and have an idea of what that looks like. People create visual pictures of what goals and desires they are focusing on achieving throughout the next year. This is a wonderful tool to begin

getting excited about what your future could look like and what you can do to get there.

The vision I ask my clients to create does not include a vision board (although there is nothing wrong with that if that is what you wish to do). The purpose of creating the vision of their lives 12 months from now is to not only clarify what they truly want and desire but also begin teaching them to embody what that future will feel like.

For instance, if you want to own a new home, get a clean bill of health and land your dream job, writing down those goals is only part of the process. To truly begin to bring things forward into your life and reality, you must embody each goal as if it is already happening. Your body and brain do not know the difference. If you are deeply feeling the emotions that you would feel when achieving those goals, your brain and body will believe that they are already happening in the present time.

The visions my clients create are as detailed as possible. They then take steps to begin becoming that person they want to be 12 months ahead. What does that person eat, how do they dress, what time do they wake up, etc? After creating this vision, they read it daily and practice feeling the emotion behind their vision, as if they are living it in their present-day life.

The next step is to take action by doing one small thing in their routine that their future self would do. This is a powerful method that allows them to orchestrate and embrace change. They are no longer watching their lives happen to them but are now becoming the navigator of their own journey and creating the life that they desire for themselves.

The idea is to step into the shoes of the person you wish to become, and you are already stepping in the direction needed to take you there.

If you find yourself procrastinating to make changes, try creating your vision and see where it takes you. Fact is, change is hard!

I have made massive changes in my life when embarking on my own healing journey. It was not pretty at all. It was uncomfortable, often painful, but at the same time, just like nature shows us, the transformation was a beautiful one. Growth





didn't happen overnight, and my body didn't heal from one magic solution. Time, commitment, and the non-negotiable decision to heal believing with every inch of my soul that I would heal, is how I completely changed my life from being disabled with "chronic diseases" to being healed without a single health issue.

Imagine what life could look like if you began to become the author instead of waiting for it to be written for you. You know without a doubt that over the next year, your life will change in various ways. I urge you to start listening to the cues that your body provides you.

Be observant of the symptoms and messages your body shows you, with the understanding that it is asking for your attention and not trying to hurt you. Learn how to support your body and get a true understanding of your own current needs. Get excited about what is possible, and most importantly, be gentle with yourself every step of the way.

Life is precious and so much more miraculous than we have ever comprehended. We do not have to live our lives by chance anymore. Be the one who creates your own journey ahead. Allow yourself to choose paths unknown, and have faith that you will always find your way. Love yourself through each season of change, and celebrate you as you always have the world around you.

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How a Profit Acceleration Coach Can Boost Your Bottom Line

Running a small business can often feel like you're wearing a dozen hats at once. From managing operations and marketing to handling finances, it's easy for one of the most important aspects—profit growth—to get overshadowed. That's where a Profit Acceleration Coach steps in and can make all the difference. A Profit Acceleration Coach goes beyond traditional consulting. They don't just analyze your numbers—they provide tailored strategies designed to rapidly increase your profits by improving efficiency, reducing waste, and identifying hidden revenue streams. This means you're not just adding another expense to your business, but rather investing in a service that delivers measurable returns.

How can a coach improve your bottom line?

- 1. Quick Revenue Wins:** A good coach will help you implement strategies that bring in revenue fast. Whether it's adjusting your pricing or uncovering underused assets, they'll help you tap into new income sources.
- 2. Reducing Costs Without Sacrifice:** Coaches identify where you're overspending and help streamline processes so that quality remains high, but unnecessary costs are eliminated.
- 3. Better Decision-Making:** Coaches guide you toward high-impact actions that lead to the biggest financial gains. Their insight helps you decide where best to invest your time and resources.
- 4. Sustainable Profit Growth:** Beyond short-term gains, a coach helps you build long-term strategies for continued growth. This ensures that as your business expands, it remains profitable.

A Profit Acceleration Coach can provide the focused expertise you need to align your business with strategies that lead to lasting financial success. It's not just about cutting costs or boosting sales—it's about creating a more profitable, resilient business. Investing in a coach isn't just an expense; it's the smart move that takes your business to the next level.



By Jane Parmel

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Envy into Inspiration

Feeling envious? You're not alone. It's a potent emotion that everyone encounters at some stage in life; for many, it can even become a daily experience. But what if we could channel that energy into something positive and uplifting? Instead of allowing envy to weigh us down, we can use it as a powerful motivator to achieve our own aspirations. When you notice feelings of envy toward someone else's success, take a moment to reflect on which aspects of their achievements resonate with you.

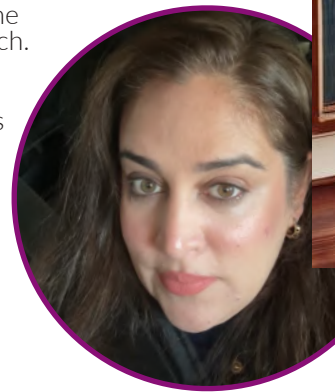
Is it their dedication, creativity, or resilience? Once you identify these qualities, consider how you can cultivate them in your own life.

Establish clear, attainable goals and create a plan to pursue them. Surround yourself with positive influences and seek out mentors who can guide you along your journey. Keep in mind that each person's path is distinct, and your journey to success will be no exception. By transforming envy into inspiration, you can fuel your own growth and strive to become the best version of yourself.

A Personal Experience and a Lesson Learned!

Let me recount a time when I felt envious without fully grasping why. I held no ill feelings toward the person I envied, yet something they said or achieved would trigger a sinking sensation in my stomach. At times, this led to bitterness, which swiftly turned into frustration because I didn't want to feel that way. I took a step back, realizing that a change was necessary since this person was a constant presence in my life. I began to analyze the reasons behind my emotions, questioning what I felt was lacking or desired.

I also pondered how this individual radiated such confidence, which I recognized as my own struggle. Each time they spoke or accomplished something, they did so with unwavering confidence and fearlessness. It was the confidence I lacked that I began to work on and develop. This person has since become my source of inspiration. Whenever I think of them or meet them, I listen and reflect, feeling calm and content with my body language. I embrace it and join in their joyful celebration.



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Discover the path to ultimate happiness

Your happiness lies solely in your own hands; nobody else can make you happy. Only you have the power to create happiness from within. It doesn't disappear overnight, even when circumstances aren't favorable. When happiness is present, it enables us to conquer the difficult situations we encounter along with the pain and sorrows of life.

Happiness cannot be purchased or sold; it transcends material possessions and relationships. Material things can provide fleeting happiness but no long-term fulfillment. Finding contentment in your authentic self and committing to self-improvement brings happiness. Once found, happiness is a precious gem that deserves to be polished and exhibited for others to see, potentially igniting a revival.

The happiest people in the world contribute to others' well-being. They dedicate their energy and resources to assisting others. They recognize reflections of others in themselves. Their goal is to see others succeed, and they offer support throughout the process. Self-love is the number one factor for experiencing true happiness: it's the game-changer in life. At that point, your happiness begins to emanate. Prioritize self-love before loving others, enabling you to love them as you love yourself authentically.

Methods to ignite joy in your daily life. Adopting a positive mentality. Daily Affirmations Taking care of oneself.

Can you explain what affirmations are?

Affirmations are statements that make you believe in their truth, often repeated to reinforce the belief. Daily self-affirmations lay the groundwork for self-belief. Your words can't be taken back unless you affirm something else. Affirmations help us overcome challenges and stay positive because the subconscious mind believes what it hears, especially when rooted in a strong foundation. Self-talk can significantly impact self-esteem. Repeating negative self-talk, like calling yourself stupid, can program your subconscious mind, leading to negative manifestations in your life.

Affirmations are deeply embedded in the subconscious mind, almost as if they're firmly fastened. Take the time to reintroduce yourself, crafting a new character embodying immense self-love, acceptance, positive self-talk, and affirmations. Affirmations bring peace and empower you to take charge. When you speak your intentions, believe in them, and act on them, you can bring them to life. There's no limit to how many times you can say or change affirmations. The moment you say it, it becomes a part of your life. Create stories with joyful conclusions that can change your reality.

Begin your life's adventure by embracing daily affirmations.

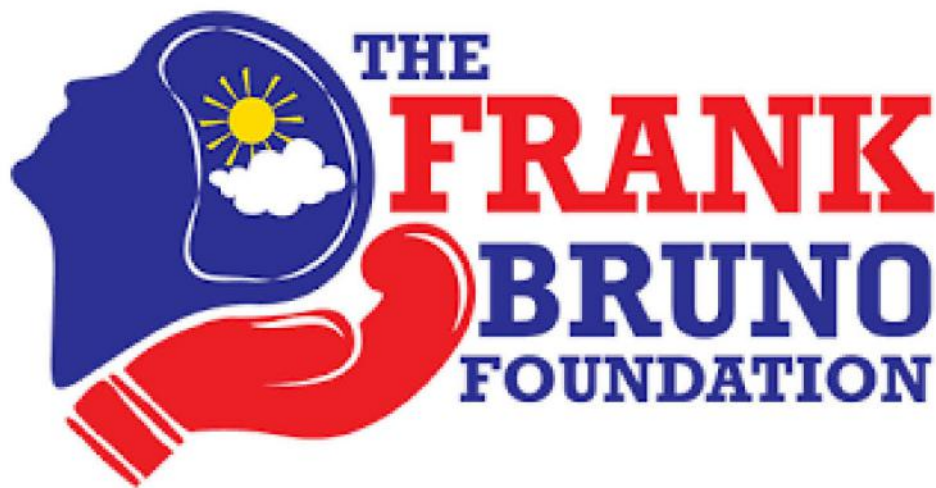
I am strong, I am a child of God, I am healthy, I am confident, I am courageous, I am successful, I love myself, I am enough, I am bold and brave

By Cleanne Johnson

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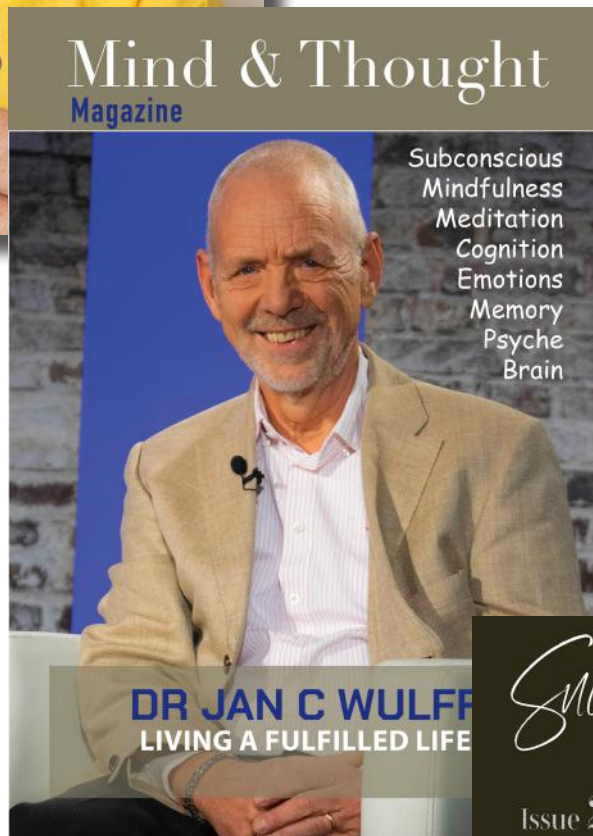


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