

# EXPERT **PROFILE**

MAGAZINE

More  
from our  
global  
experts

The story 'so far' of  
**Isobel Cripps**





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# EDITORS NOTE



Reflecting on the recent political contest here in the UK, the ongoing battle in the US and many other global changes. Clearly, the voters are no longer satisfied with mere rhetoric; the public is demanding transparency and sincerity from their leaders. This shift is not merely about policy positions or party manifestos; it is about the character and trustworthiness of the individuals who seek to hold office. The electorate sends a clear message: authenticity and integrity are in short supply.

In an age where misinformation can spread rapidly, the ability to trust in the authenticity of political figures is more critical than ever. Voters are keenly aware of the power of authenticity; they recognise it in leaders who speak plainly, act consistently, and remain steadfast in their principles, even under pressure.

The recent elections have also highlighted the consequences for those who fail to embody these values. Candidates perceived as insincere or lacking integrity have faced intense scrutiny and, often, electoral defeat. This outcome serves as a potent reminder that voters are not easily swayed by superficial charm or empty promises. They seek leaders who reflect their values and who they believe will act in the best interest of the public rather than their own self-interest.

Politicians have much to gain by looking beyond their immediate circles and learning from experts and coaches around the globe. There is a wealth of knowledge in fields such as leadership development, wellness, ethics, and public service that can help them make a significant difference and better serve humanity. By embracing the insights and methodologies of these seasoned professionals, political leaders can enhance their ability to connect with their constituents, make informed decisions, and navigate the complexities of governance with greater efficacy and compassion.

In this edition, we invite you to meet and connect with some of these professionals who are making a difference without the noise of politics. These individuals, ranging from leadership mentors and life coaches to many other industry experts, exemplify the very qualities that voters yearn for in their political leaders. Their work, often conducted quietly, provides valuable lessons in authenticity, integrity, and effective service.

EDITOR - RANY ATHWALL

## Special Feature The Story 'So Far' of Isobel Cripps



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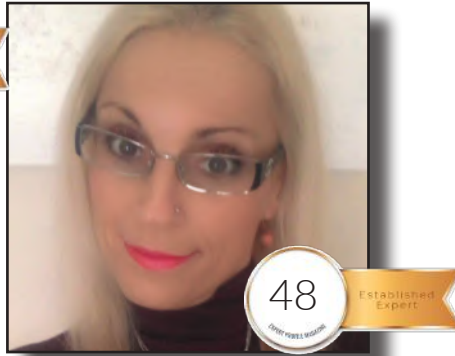
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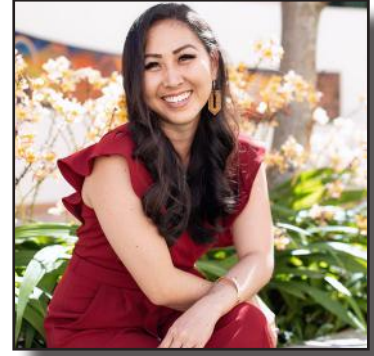
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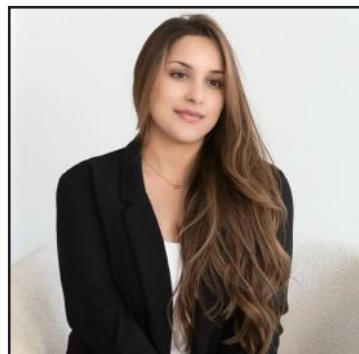
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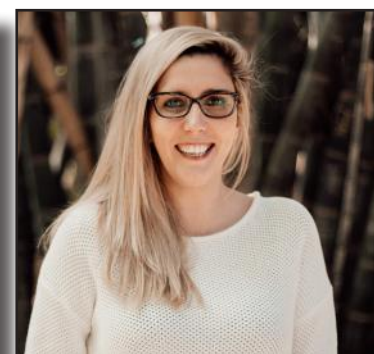
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# The Story 'So Far' of Isobel Cripps



## The Journey to Equilibrium and Vitality

Isobel Cripps, Mind and Body Practitioner talks to us about why working on a Physical and Mental level with clients achieves the most powerful and positive results, to ultimately achieve equilibrium and vitality.

### *Q: Where did your journey begin into Wellbeing?*

I had been enjoying an exciting but rather stressful 15 years in PR & Marketing and decided I needed to find something more purposeful to do that would also give me the freedom to raise a family. I had a real thirst for knowledge around anatomy and physiology, so I felt Wellbeing was an industry I could grow in, not grow out of. For me, having children triggered the search for something more meaningful. I think it really caused me to view the world slightly differently and to question things more deeply.

I then studied hard (whilst still juggling work in the city with new motherhood – not an easy task!) and went on to qualify as an advanced Personal Trainer and Sports Therapist. My learning journey has never stopped since then, and I love every minute!

### *Q: How would you describe your work as a Mind and Body Practitioner?*

Every day is different because every client/patient is unique. The work is always really challenging but deeply rewarding. It also requires a huge amount of energy and passion. Some days, I can be treating the injuries of footballers and rugby players and lifting legs that weigh more than me! On other days, I may be coaching clients working through difficult, emotional times in their lives, which requires a different kind of energy altogether.

It's just so mixed and so interesting. More than anything, it's just incredibly satisfying. Whether a client comes to me for combined Physical Therapy and Therapeutic Coaching or an exercise programme and nutritional advice, I always consider the whole picture. I am fortunate that my combined skill set allows me to take a holistic approach, which I believe is crucial when treating anyone.

I am naturally inquisitive and empathic, so I am good at treating people on both a physical and mental level. Body repair, a good mindset, and excellent nutrition are all vital components of healing. The aim is to achieve equilibrium in the body, the mind, and the spirit.

### *Q: Could you tell us in more detail the different therapies you specialise in?*

My Physical Therapy focuses on remedial stretch and massage, treating injuries and chronic pain. I combine muscle energy techniques, trigger point therapy and soft tissue manipulation to re-balance the body. The objective is always to 'heal'.

I also teach Stretchologie online and in-person, which is a therapeutic approach to developmental stretch, focusing on flexibility and mobility.

My Compassion Focused Coaching is a therapeutic approach to coaching. It creates a higher level of awareness and helps clients to look back to identify the root cause of emotional issues, negative self-talk and restrictive mindsets. I then support them in navigating a more helpful and compassionate way forward. I use various techniques that clients can adapt easily and it's very prescriptive, based on the individual clients needs.

My Wellbeing Coaching can involve many things, from designing exercise programmes to food plans, while helping clients understand the benefits and reasons for change. Every client is unique, so every conversation and programme is bespoke. A nuanced approach to a healthy lifestyle is important—it can never be one-size-fits-all. We have to consider everything from metabolic rate to blood glucose levels and gut microbiome if we are really going to help clients realise long-term results and healthy lifestyles.

### *Q: What's the most common thing clients approach you about?*

On a physical level, it's either specific (often sports-related) injuries or chronic conditions—for example, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow or sciatica. Chronic pain has a very debilitating effect on our mental fitness. It often impacts us more than we acknowledge, so it's important not to resign ourselves and know that there is nearly always a remedy or solution. I always talk to my clients about the effect that pain or injury has on their minds – it's often much deeper than they realise.

On a mental level, many people come to me because they are desperate for a change in their lives but can't action it. A counselling session often reveals a deep



unhappiness in their personal relationships or perhaps even a trauma from their childhood that is holding them back. It pays to be curious about a person's personal history. We often need to look back to our past before moving forward into our future.

**Q: What have the personal challenges been in your work?**

On a physical level, there is a huge toll taken on my own body doing the physical side of my work, and I have needed to manage this quite carefully as I have aged. But I think for me, the real challenge is learning to let go. The desire to heal people is very strong for me, but sometimes, you will work with a client who is simply not ready for change, even though they have come to you expressing a strong desire to change their lives. Learning to step back and let go has been very hard because I tend to form deep connections with people. But I remind myself that I am not a 'fixer'; I am simply the 'facilitator', and people will change when they are ready. We all have the power to change, but change can be quite scary for some people, and that fear will often prevent them from moving forward.

**Q: Can you give us examples of your success stories with clients?**

I worked for five years as a Physical Therapist with a women's premier football club. Many of them are now at the top of their game, so I hope along the way, I have inspired some of those brilliant young women. My mantra with them was always: stretch more, believe in yourself, and aim high!

But really, clients who reach their own personal goals, whatever they are, are a success story for me. When I reach the natural end of a working relationship with some clients and they thank me for healing their bodies or calming their minds, it makes no difference to me whether they are an A-list celebrity or a struggling student—their personal success is my reward and the reason I love my work so much.

**Q: What does your client base profile currently look like?**

It couldn't be more varied. My clients range from 8 to 88 years old, from high-profile footballers and actors to teachers and students. My own milkman even comes to me for his sciatica!

**Q: What's your prescription for a happy and content life?**

**I believe the 5-pillars of health are:  
Quality Sleep, Mindful Breath, Good Hydration,  
Informed Nutrition and Regular Movement.**

The philosophy I live by is:  
Be kind, Be Compassionate, Be Grateful, Be You.

We underestimate the importance of sleep and breath, don't drink enough water, eat too much sugar, and don't move enough. Vitality means achieving balance in all of these things.

It's very fulfilling when you work with people to help them achieve this balance. It isn't easy. We live in a world full of distractions that draw us away from the fundamental things that make up a happy and healthy life.

I also truly believe that finding some kind of purpose in life, however big or small, is also the key to a contented life. Shifting the focus away from ourselves and thinking about how we can support others raises our frequency and strengthens our sense of self-worth.

**Q: What good habits have you created for yourself, and which ones have you ditched?**

I'm actually struggling quite a bit with my newest habit; I haven't quite mastered it yet, but I have dabbled with ditching coffee first thing for water because the science tells us it's more beneficial and energising. But it's so hard! It's so frustrating that good habits are not always the easiest to achieve, yet we step into bad habits with a mindless ease!

I have recently adopted a morning breathwork practice, in addition to 5 minutes of Mindful Gratitude and 15 minutes of personal development reading. I am hoping to make this more of a morning ritual as it sets me up so well for the day ahead and helps me overcome any overwhelm or negativity. I would like to become a regular ice-water dipper, but I'd need the reward of a sauna afterwards to get my head around this one.

I've ditched the negative self-talk and replaced it with self-compassion. Oh, and I haven't ditched alcohol, but I have certainly cut down. It dims my light, and I can't have that; it took me too long to turn it up!



*The philosophy I live by is:*

*Be kind,*

*Be Compassionate,*

*Be Grateful,*

*Be You.*



**Q: How do you see the next ten years?**

I am definitely running more Wellbeing Retreats. My retreat is off the beaten track this year in the beautiful north of Ibiza. I know I will be doing more Compassionate Group Coaching as well as one-to-one work – online and in person. I expect I will be teaching more Stretch Therapy and Breathwork, too, because it is such an important aspect of my own Wellbeing, so I feel a strong desire to share that knowledge far and wide. Also, as I age, I feel that this is the kindest physical thing I can give my body – mindful breathing techniques combined with gentle stretch and mobility are transformative and probably more life-changing than most people realise.

**Q: Have any people inspired or influenced your work?**

Absolutely. I have been blessed to be mentored by two of the most incredible human beings I have ever encountered—my Osteopath and my Psychotherapist. They have not only inspired me but also believed in me, and that belief helped me get to where I am now. I have dedicated a whole page to them on my website.

We are very fortunate now, though, to have access to some of the most spiritual, wise, and inspiring people through TED Talks and Social Media. I draw inspiration from so many, including Dr David Hamilton (on kindness), Gabor Mate (on trauma), Brene Brown (on vulnerability), Mel Robbins (on motivation), and Rangan Chatterjee (on health). These beautiful, wise souls can enrich our lives if we are curious enough to lean in and listen.

**Q: What advice would you give to an aspiring Wellbeing practitioner?**

I really hope that anyone considering a career in Wellbeing is genuinely interested in helping others. It's a career that requires passion. It's purpose-driven, not ego-driven, and the focus should always be on the good we can do.

Never stop learning. Always seek and speak the truth. Always share knowledge and be open to others' opinions, even when they feel uncomfortable and far from our own. Always lead with compassion, for compassion is a motive that the world needs more than ever.

But whether it's Wellbeing or another profession, I think it's important to find a mentor who wholeheartedly supports and encourages you to aspire and grow. When the voice in your head gets in the way, be kind to it, but learn to quieten it with self-compassion. Once you have mastered that, you can achieve great things.

***www.isobelcripps.com***

***Insta: @acoach4life***

***Facebook: @abody4life***

***TikTok: isobelcrippsacoach4life***

# Your Personal Survival Plan

Most people in many of the developed economies are no better off in real terms than they were 20 years ago. Why?

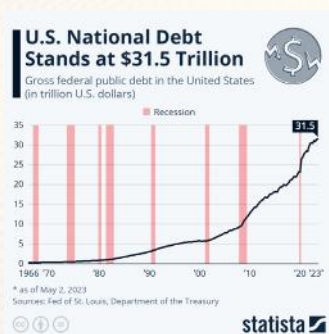
They may have more money in their pockets, but everything they need and want costs a massive amount more than it used to. Many people I talk to tell me there is “too much month and not enough money.” Does that resonate with you or perhaps people you know?

To understand how and why this happened, we need to understand some history and what has changed. Simply doing what our parents did and expecting to get the same results that they did will no longer work. Indeed, it is financially dangerous. Times have changed.

October 23rd 1981 was an historic day: The National Debt of the USA passed \$1,000,000,000,000. This is perhaps more easily understood as one trillion dollars.

In 1783, the Revolutionary War was won, and the newly formed USA was recognised throughout the world by the Treaty of Paris. To reach this mindbogglingly large amount of debt had taken 200 years.

Just 40 years after passing one trillion dollars of debt, on May 2nd, 2023, the US National Debt exploded to \$31.5 trillion. Why was US debt increasing so much more quickly?



As I write this on June 23rd 2024, just 13 months since the \$31.5 trillion of debt was recorded, we find ourselves here:



An increase in debt of \$3.2 trillion in 13 months is accelerating ever faster.

The current rate of increase is approximately \$1 trillion of extra debt every 100 days.

Stepping back and reflecting on this, we now see US debt expanding every 100 days by the same amount it first took 200 years to reach. Please just think about that.

**It might help to see how potentially scary this is by considering US debt is going up by \$1 trillion every 100 days: It took over 73,000 days to reach the first \$1 trillion.**

Where are all these dollars of US government debt coming from, and why has it happened?

In 1971, President Richard Nixon removed the USA from the “gold standard.” This ended the previous direct relationship between the value of the US dollar and physical gold.

Looking back at the 2nd May 2023 chart, can you see how, after 1971, the rate of debt increase simply exploded?

Prior to 1971, the USA could not simply print more dollars unless it increased its holdings of gold bullion to back those dollars. After 1971 this restriction was

lifted and the US government could simply print as many dollars as it wanted to.

The price of gold in 1971 was around \$40 per ounce, and by 2024, it had reached an all-time high of \$2,450. This is an increase in value, measured in US dollars, of 6,125% or just over 61 times.

Is this an increase in the value of gold or a decrease in the value of the US dollar?

In the simplest possible terms, not only has the dollar's value crashed when measured in other asset classes, but so has confidence that the US dollar is worth holding.



The US, in common with its allies including France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Canada, and Japan (collectively the G7), now uses "Fiat currency". Here is a definition:



Loss of trust in a currency is called inflation. The value of the currency falls relative to other currencies or assets you may wish to acquire.

Looking again at the May 2023 chart after the global financial crisis in 2008/9 and the lockdowns of the early 2020s, you can see the US national debt ballooned enormously. Many people would argue that the global debt spiral, led by US debt and mirrored by all the G7 economies, is now unstoppable.

Interest rates have risen, which increases the need for governments to borrow money; all of the G7 run government spending deficits (that is, the government spends more every year than it raises in taxes and other income), meaning that all G7

governments have to print more money and issue more debt over time.

### What is the inevitable outcome, and why should you care?

The inevitable outcome is inflation. Specifically, there are higher and higher levels of inflation, above the nominal target of 2% shared by most major economies.

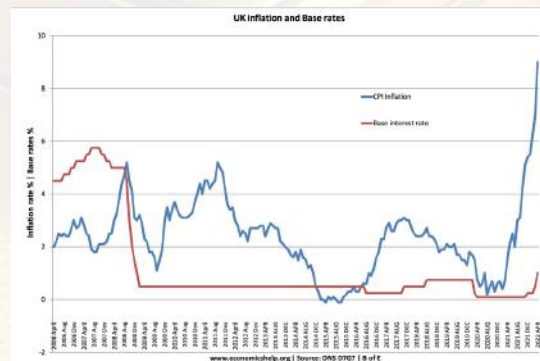
**This will badly hurt all those who hold cash and bonds, including government-issued bonds, but it will reward those who have assets and those who use debt to acquire assets.**

I will use the UK to illustrate how inflation destroys the value of money. The red line is the Bank Of England base rate, which closely aligns with the interest you would earn on money deposited in a savings account. The blue line is the inflation rate, the rate by which the value of your money is falling.

For the first time, in the first few months of 2009, the blue line went above the red line. In the simplest possible terms, this means holding cash and relying on interest to be paid to maintain or increase your wealth, which fails.

### Saving your money loses you money since 2009.

The larger the gap between the blue line and the red line, the faster the value of your Fiat currency will be destroyed.



This is true of all G7 economies. Why are people not protesting in the streets that their hard-earned life savings are being destroyed by inflation? I can only imagine that the vast majority of people do not understand what is happening to them. My approach to life is not to worry about what I cannot control but to focus on what I can.

Now that we know money's real value decreases over time, how can we use this knowledge to grow and protect wealth?

My answer is to use other people's money to buy assets for myself.

An asset is something that increases in value in real terms and puts money into my pocket every month without me having to work for it.

This sounds crazy, yet it is so simple. The asset class I buy is property, and the "other people's money" is called a mortgage. Investment property gives me two types of income: rent and capital appreciation over time.

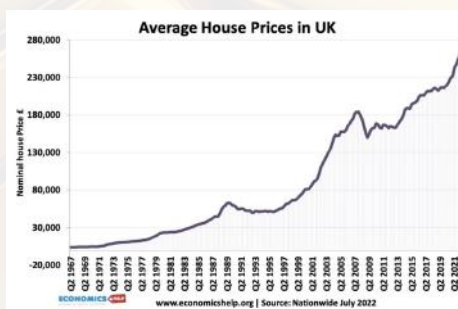
As long as I know what I am doing and buy the correct property, the rent covers the mortgage and all my expenses, plus it gives me a handsome profit every month.

Of course, a specific property value may drop in the short term, but 40 years from now, will the value be up or down?

For example, I bought my first property, an apartment in London, in 1982 for £9,000. Today, it is worth more than £500,000.

To give a far more recent example, I purchased a property for £100,000 in 2016 and sold it in 2022 for £260,000. I am taking care not to give extreme examples. These are "normal" or, if you prefer, average capital gains.

Staying with the UK as an example, look at this graph:



In 1970, the average property was £5,000. Now, the same average property is fast approaching £300,000. This is an increase of 60 times or 6,000%, almost a carbon copy of the increase in gold price versus the US dollar.

During the same period, to have the same purchasing power as £1 in 1970, you would need £13.30 in May 2024.

## Why do I prefer property to gold?

Three massive reasons:

1. **Property is a basic human need. People need security, warmth, and shelter. They do not "need" a yellow metal to the same extent.**
2. **Capital appreciation is similar, but you pay to keep gold, perhaps 1% per year. While it is simple to use other people's money to buy property (mortgages), you cannot do the same thing to buy gold.**
3. **Property pays you rent every month, which gives a profit after all costs. Gold does not. Cash has crashed to less than 1/13th of its former value while property values have soared.**

Bank of England  
Home / Monetary policy / Inflation and the 2% target / Inflation calculator

### Inflation calculator

Use our inflation calculator to check how prices in the UK have changed over time, from 1209 to now.

What would goods and services costing

£1 in 1970 cost in May 24 ?

Show amount

**£13.30**

Think about this: (I have simplified these calculations by assuming interest-only mortgages)

In 1970, you bought a house for £5,000 using perhaps £1,000 of your cash as a 20% deposit.

By 1980, the property's value had risen to £28,000. You choose to remortgage and take a 75% loan-to-value mortgage, which is £21,000.

This allows you to repay the initial £4,000 mortgage, take back the £1,000 you originally used as a deposit, and have a cash surplus of £23,000, for which no tax is due at all.

All the while, you have been making a very nice monthly profit after all expenses from your investment property.

Given that the average house price in 1980 is £28,000, you now decide to use £20,000 to further deposit in another three or four houses and spend the other £3,000 on a fabulous holiday. That would have been a major league fabulous holiday in 1980!

You are now the proud owner of a portfolio of perhaps five houses, starting with just £1,000. You wait for another 5 to 10 years and repeat, taking your portfolio to, say, 20 houses. You can see how this ends.

Every time you repeat this process, you use other people's money (mortgages) and capital growth from your assets.

Every time you acquire extra assets (Reminder you need to know what you are doing!), you will increase your monthly cash flow.

This is how you take back financial control of your life despite what the world is doing.

I have been a property investor since 1982; over those years, I have learned to accelerate this process and the money other people do not know how to.

If you would like to become rich using property as your asset class, I would like to offer you my best-selling book.

It took me four decades to amass the knowledge and over a year to write this book. It includes the specific strategies and techniques I used to grow my net worth from almost nothing. I left home at the age of 17 with £170 to my name. Now, I live in Monaco, and my net worth is close to \$100,000,000. I truly believe anyone can do what I have done with the right knowledge, support, and guidance.

My book is called simply **Wealth Through Property**.

I offer this to you for free using this link:

Please read, enjoy and implement.



To follow me for more here are my links:



**Paul Smith**

Founder Touchstone Wealth Limited

[www.touchstoneeducation.com](http://www.touchstoneeducation.com)



**TOUCHSTONE  
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GROW • CARE • LIVE • DREAM



# Self Care Corner

## The Power of Saying **N O**



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



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

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

### Why Do We Love Saying 'Yes'

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

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

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

### Why You Should Start Saying 'No'

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

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

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

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



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

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



### How To Say It

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

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

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

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

**BEVERLY JOHNSON**

beverlykjohnson.com

IG handle: imbeverlyjohnson

Facebook: Coach Beverly K. Johnson

Email: hello@coachbeverlyjohnson.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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





# *Time to Heal*

## The Missing Pieces of our Healthcare

There is this assumption that those with a specific degree hold the golden key to our entire overall health and well-being. That a specialist or those who hold a degree in conventional

medicine are the only ones who have the ability to improve your health, and that they are the ones who carry every answer we seek about medicine. It is a common declaration that those who did not attend medical school are not educated or qualified to speak on various health topics and shouldn't be taken seriously. This is the general mindset we have believed our entire lives, and most people still do.

While I completely understand that ensuring you are listening to a credible source is crucial, we have to take a step back and begin to look at what we have defined as our sole credible sources. By only allowing ourselves to hear the perspectives of those who have a certain degree, we are ultimately denying ourselves the expansion of our knowledge. We remain powerless in our bodies, and most will never learn that there is a world of healing that expands far beyond what is taught in a conventional setting.

First, let me clarify that our doctors and specialists are very well-educated and knowledgeable in ways that can and do save our lives. I have my own doctors, and I am grateful for all who have helped me through my lifetime. They are, in fact, brilliant in what they have studied and are an asset to our healthcare. But, their knowledge is limited. The best doctors I have known are those who openly speak of

their own limitations. They do not try to convince me that what they provide is the only way, and are open to hearing from my own experience and studies.

For example, a Primary Care physician I had seen over the years loved to talk with me about healing outside conventional medicine. He always stated how sad it is to see patients come in asking for more meds and presenting more and more symptoms. Based upon what is taught in medical school, I am a patient who should be confined to my diseases at this stage of my life."

Based on what is taught in Medical School, with my medical history, I shouldn't be capable of walking into my Doctor's office with a clean bill of health, full of life and taking zero pharmaceutical medications. My Doctor knows I have healed my own diseases, and doing so took an incredible amount of sacrifice, work, and independent studying. I heard my Doctor say all the time that he wished he would see more people take that initiative and be in the driver's seat of their own health and healing.

It's understandable why we turn to our doctors for the answers. The knowledge they have is exceptional. Medical School is certainly not something everyone can handle and excel in. It is an honorable degree and one that takes a tremendous amount of excellence to achieve. I was studying to become a Physician's Assistant and knew what it took. I hope everyone reading this understands that my words here are not to put down or lessen the significance of achieving a medical degree. Those who attain this degree deserve the recognition that they receive.

It is the education they receive and how they are taught to practice medicine that needs to be understood.



I've met many doctors and worked with several who walked away from their conventional practices to begin working in functional medicine and holistic services. Their reasoning is often because they themselves were diagnosed with the disease, and they came to the realization that the protocols they were taught were never going to heal them. Medical School does not capture the entire picture of what actual health and healing look like. In fact, their studies primarily focus on pharmaceuticals, surgery, and procedures. If you have a health issue, it is almost guaranteed you will be given one of those options as your solution.

The problem is that we believe that the options we are given in conventional medicine are our only options and the sole solutions to our health needs and concerns.

This is how we have approached our health since birth. If you have a symptom, you head to the Doctor to get some medication. That may seem simple enough, but that does not address why you are having that symptom, nor does it heal what has caused the symptoms to arise in the first place.

Most patients exhibit a plethora of symptoms for years before receiving any major diagnosis. Those who are already diagnosed with disease are also going back to their doctors with new symptoms that supposedly do not align with their disease. When this occurs, new medications are added to their list, and often, a new diagnosis is added to their chart.

The patients return home without having any understanding of why they are experiencing these health issues. They feel like it's just one thing after another because it is, and they just cannot catch a break. Yet, these are not random occurrences and they aren't happening out of nowhere.

This is why we are seeing people everywhere in a vicious cycle of illness and symptoms that appear to have no end. Our healthcare system is not designed to heal us, nor does it consider or ensure that the root of our health issues is addressed. It is designed to ensure we are stable, to save our lives, and to attend to us when we have an acute illness or symptoms that need immediate medical attention.

There is so much more to our health and well-being that is not being addressed, and we are seeing the long-term effects of this as a society today. If you take the time to begin studying functional medicine, root-cause-focused medicine, and/or holistic medicine, you will start to see that there is an entire world of knowledge out there that teaches you why you are experiencing these illnesses and how to heal from what was causing your symptoms to begin in the first place.

Most practices outside conventional medicine do not include pharmaceuticals, putting you at the forefront of your well-being. You are no longer dependent on others to tell you what you need; you have learned to understand that your body has been showing you exactly what it needs all along. You begin to realize that you are responsible for providing your body with the support it has been begging for. You learn your symptoms are there to show you where there is imbalance and are not meant to be silenced.

When we begin to integrate other health practices into our lives, we give ourselves the healing and vitality we have never experienced before. We learn real preventative medicine and understand that the healthcare we have always used is not something we want to be dependent upon.

I personally walked away from the conventional approach to autoimmune diseases and spent years learning from every innovative voice I could find. I was hungry to absorb as much knowledge as I could, and with confidence, I know I am capable of helping others like myself who are experiencing an array of constant symptoms, health issues and diseases. I did not go to medical school. Despite that, my voice and education have helped many others find their own healing, hope, and relief, which they had never experienced before.

If I had never allowed myself to learn from those who did not have that degree from medical school and whose thinking was outside the conventional norm, I would still be down the same path of disease I was suffering from. I would have continued to decline, and based on the rate at which my health was deteriorating, I cannot imagine where I would be today.





Walking away saved my life, but I didn't leave conventional medicine altogether. I know the vital role it plays in my life. I loved learning about functional medicine but did not proclaim it as the sole solution to our needs. I also didn't choose holistic medicine as the only way to ensure my health and healing would take place.

What I did choose was all methods of healthcare and medicine. I learned what my own needs were and found that it was not about choosing one way of applying medicine to my life; it was about understanding that there ARE more ways of approaching our health, and applying them all to my life was the key to my overall healing and well-being. I found purpose and a need in all healthcare settings. It's with an integrative approach and a mind open to the brilliance of people from all over the world that I found the healing I was always searching for.

I am speaking about this not to stir up any controversy or excite one approach versus another. It is to create an awareness of what is possible for all. It's about understanding that there are numerous components to our healthcare. It's about one day expanding our view of medicine and natural healing and understanding that the BEST healthcare is a balance of various methods. It's when the patients understand that they are empowered to ignite their healing and there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Healing isn't about a quick fix, waiting for a cure or any kind of magic pill. It's a beautiful journey of returning home to yourself, reconnecting with your innate abilities, and creating the balance needed to restore your health to an optimal place.

Let us remember this: we were not created on this earth to suffer. We are meant to live our lives feeling good each day and not wondering what might ache or hurt next. We deserve to feel our best every day, and we can do so. The healthcare system will not change for many reasons beyond our control. The change is up to us. Taking back your life and being in the driver's seat of your own health is a change that will forever impact your life in ways you never imagined possible.

## Jacqueline Goncalves Wellness Coach and Business Owner Inspired Healing LLC

To connect with Jacqueline:

Email: [inspiredhealingcoaching@gmail.com](mailto:inspiredhealingcoaching@gmail.com)

Instagram: [@inspiredhealing\\_](https://www.instagram.com/inspiredhealing_)

Facebook: [Become Your Own Healer Academy](https://www.facebook.com/BecomeYourOwnHealerAcademy)

[www.inspiredhealingcoaching.com](http://www.inspiredhealingcoaching.com)



# The importance of empowering susceptible and gifted children



As a child, I always felt different. I would watch other children effortlessly navigate social interactions. In crowds, I would feel incredibly overwhelmed to the point of not speaking. My teachers mistakenly thought I was extremely shy. I often retreated into the safety of solitude, where I could fully immerse myself into my own little bubble. Socially awkward, I preferred to blend into the background for fear of being misunderstood. I discovered solace in hours spent by myself doing crafts, writing and exploring the depths of my imagination. Often described as having my head in the clouds or being a dreamer, I was led to believe that being this way meant “wrong” and “not fitting in”.

Although I am certain this was not intentional, it was more of a lack of awareness. I have always possessed a deep love for human connection, and I am extremely sociable. The energy of large gatherings caused me discomfort, but it didn't diminish my genuine desire to connect with others on a meaningful level, even at a young age. In quieter settings, I thrived, cherishing the opportunity to forge genuine connections with those around me. My apparent shyness was not a reflection of a lack of social desire but a manifestation of my sensitivity to external stimuli and a need for a calmer, more controlled environment to fully express myself and connect with others. I have a heightened sensitivity to the energy of those around me. I found myself picking up on the emotions and vibes of others, intuitively understanding their unspoken thoughts.

This ability to sense and absorb the energy of those I encountered further contributed to my sense of being overwhelmed in certain social situations. I remember feeling that I had to hide this part of myself and completely adapt my personality out of fear of being labelled “weird”. This would later present in my life as low self-esteem. As well as navigating all this, my conventional academic system felt confining to my free, unconventional spirit. I struggled to fully comprehend or articulate these gifts. Lacking a framework to understand or validate those experiences, I often dismissed them as coincidences or my imagination. It wasn't until later in life, through introspection and self-discovery, that I began to recognise and embrace the depth of my intuition. Reflecting on my childhood experiences. I now understand that my intuitive abilities were always present. I didn't have any mentors or peers to help me to understand. Back in the 1980s, discussions surrounding intuition, spirituality and alternative forms of learning were relatively rare and often relegated to mainstream discourse.

Refreshingly, there has been a notable shift in societal attitudes towards topics such as intuition and spirituality. There is a growing recognition and acceptance of the validity of these experiences. The rise of social media has provided a platform for people to share their personal experiences and connect with like-minded communities, creating a sense of validation and support for those who may have previously

felt isolated or misunderstood. Although online interactions may lack the depth and authenticity found in face-to-face communication, it is reassuring that topics such as intuition and spirituality in children are now openly being discussed and explored.

Identifying a highly sensitive and gifted child involves recognising a range of emotional, behavioural, and intellectual cues. These children often display heightened sensitivity to their surroundings, showing deep empathy and intuitive insight. Sometimes, they show advanced cognitive abilities such as exceptional creativity, problem-solving skills, or a relentless curiosity about the world. Highly sensitive children could also demonstrate a strong sense of fairness or moral values. They may spend more time in solitude, needing to take time out.

Supporting highly sensitive and gifted children involves creating a nurturing and understanding environment. Having an environment that acknowledges, accepts and celebrates their unique qualities will do wonders for their self-esteem further down the line. Understanding their individual needs is crucial. Perhaps they prefer to have time to themselves after spending time in a crowd. These minor changes can lead to a significant positive impact on their emotional wellbeing. Emotional support is necessary.

Offer them coping strategies to help with any intense emotions or any sign of stress. Positive reinforcement and praise for their efforts and achievements help with self confidence. Step up and be an advocate for their needs in educational settings will ensure they have access to



suitable support services. It's not unusual for highly sensitive children to repel the idea of being in a busy classroom. If they manage to make it through the day in this environment, being a friendly face upon pick-up can provide them with a much-needed sense of comfort and reassurance, affirming that they are valued and loved inside and outside the classroom.

In conclusion, supporting highly sensitive and gifted children requires a calm, holistic approach that embraces and celebrates their unique selves. Creating a nurturing environment, validating their experiences, and encouraging their interests will empower them to be unapologetically themselves without any shame. By prioritising empathy and support, we can create a society where these children feel valued and heard. Through collective efforts, we can ensure that these children are poised for success and will be equipped to make significant contributions to society, lifting those who need it.

**By Lisa Andrews**



[www.lisaandrews.life](http://www.lisaandrews.life)  
[@lisa\\_andrews\\_psychic](https://www.instagram.com/lisa_andrews_psychic)

A photograph of Taylor Swift from behind, wearing a dark, sequined dress, standing on a red carpet at night. The background is filled with blurred lights and the silhouettes of a crowd.

# The Taylor Swift effect on

*By Rachel Pearson*

You may think that the Taylor Swift documentary, 'Miss Americana,' is only for her fans. It's a nostalgic look at her trajectory in music with several grainy home videos thrown in. **It's not.**

'Miss Americana' is well worth a watch, even if you're not a big fan of Swift's music. It's a masterclass in building a personal brand. What took Swift from a sweet country start to a pop icon to stratospheric success isn't linked to her music. Or her much-publicised love life.

The turning point is when she stands up for her values. There was a pivotal moment in 'Miss Americana' in 2018 when Swift decided to take a political stance. Until this point, she had stayed neutral and distanced herself from political allegiance. This neutrality pleased her record label. It made her safe and secure. You could like Swift regardless of your political views.

Swift was for anybody and everybody who liked her music. That was good for sales. In 2018, that changed. There's a scene in 'Miss Americana' where Swift tells her music label that she's going to publicly speak out against Republican candidate Marsha Blackburn and endorse two Democratic candidates.

Her label and even her father are spooked. They're trying to convince her not to. Swift is undeterred. The story is published. This decision changed her career.

Of course, there was negativity. The media questioned whether Swift should share her political views. But what outweighed the backlash was the respect for Swift's finding her voice in a way she hadn't before.

## ***She took control of her personal brand.***

Swift's influence became bigger than creating great music and a number-one album. Last week, within mere hours of Swift encouraging her Instagram followers to register to vote, Vote.org reported more than 35,000 registrations, a 23 per cent jump from last year.

Taylor Swift's voice now has power that transcends whether her single charts at number 1 or 20. It's not a coincidence that her popularity became truly iconic when she started to use her voice, advocate for LGBTQ rights, and share her opinions more.

She stopped being for everyone, and this drew more of her people to her. This is why Swift is a masterclass in personal branding. If you look at figures who have created a strong brand, it is because they have done so outside of their work. Their skill set and achievements help them to be noticed and seen as credible. However, it is their purpose and passion that create their long-lasting influence.

Another example is the athlete Allyson Felix. Felix, who is now retired, has won the highest number of Olympic medals of all track and field athletes. She also holds 10 US championship titles and a World Championship title. Felix has a remarkable reputation due to her achievements. However, it is her viewpoint that has built her global personal brand. At the age of 32, Felix decided to start a family. She knew (and had been told by others) that this would be the end of her career.

There was little career protection for female athletes who wanted to take maternity leave. At the time, Felix was re-negotiating terms with her long-term sponsor, Nike.

Knowing that she wanted to have a family, Felix had asked that Nike agree to still sponsor and pay her if her track performance was subpar following childbirth.



Nike refused to agree to this clause. Felix and Nike didn't renew the sponsorship agreement, and Felix then spoke out about the lack of maternity support in a pivotal article in The New York Times. The article not only prompted Nike to update its policies but also led several big sports brands to follow suit.

Furthermore, Felix became seen as an advocate for change around women's rights in sport. She went on to launch her own footwear brand, Saysh, which has sneakers designed specifically for women's feet. Sports shoes are generally still designed for men, but they then apply what Felix terms the 'shrink it and pink it approach', where the styles are made smaller and pink is added to denote they are for females.

Saysh also has a brazen gender bias returns policy. If you become pregnant and your feet change in size or shape, then you can request replacement sneakers at no extra cost. Felix built her stardom on the track. She is creating a world renowned personal brand through her opinions and values.

### **How can you start to cultivate this brand?**

Firstly, reframe what personal branding is. It is becoming increasingly about who you are rather than what you do. Other people may have similar businesses to you. They may have similar expertise. However, time and again, I see two people with very different expertise have wildly different levels of success.

The difference? The one who grows further focuses on adding their approach to their skillset. I term this as adding experience to your expertise. People looking to work with your business want to know that you have the skills to help them. But for them to choose you, they also want to connect with how you deliver this expertise;

What's the experience like working with you? How do you approach working with clients or customers? What defines your way of doing things? Social media trends are a good indicator of trends in consumer buying behaviour. Recently, there was the 'social media is not real' trend, which invited people to dispel myths about the

'perfect' lives shown on social media and share what their challenges are behind the highlight reels.

What can we take from this? People want even more authenticity. Social media will remain a key part of how people communicate. Still, I expect to see even more connection and collaboration and people with large followings moving away from their curated brand looks to deliver a more raw look behind their business.

How can you start to leverage the power of your personal brand and viewpoints today? What are your passion topics? What would you talk about if you were handed a microphone and asked to do a talk without notes? Is there a topic others regularly come to you for advice?

Identify what your truths are. What opinions do you hold about your area of work? What would you love to change and why? This is not about having opinions for the sake of creating controversy. When it comes from a place of authenticity, then people will resonate with the intention behind your opinions.

Where are you holding back, and why? Sharing your truths can feel bold, and it may be that some resistance comes through when sharing it. Get curious about this. What do you believe may happen if you share these opinions? Maybe it's a fear of not being accepted or 'losing' how you are perceived. Explore these beliefs. Do they still align with who you are and what you want to be known for?

In 2018, Swift asserted a key move over her personal brand by sharing her political views. A mere five years later, in 2023, she had the highest-grossing tour ever, the first to generate over \$1 billion and sell over 4.35 million tickets.

Her management team may have been concerned that her opinions were damaging her sales. However, it's your opinions and boldness in holding them that can make you truly own your place in a category of one.



[www.iamrachelpearson.com](http://www.iamrachelpearson.com)

[@rachelpearson.co](https://www.linkedin.com/in/iamrachelpearson)

[www.linkedin.com/in/iamrachelpearson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/iamrachelpearson)



# MOVING BEYOND MINDSET WITH ANCIENT UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

**“Wear Gratitude Like A Cloak And It Will Feed  
Every Corner Of Your Life”, Rumi**



Cultivating gratitude has always been part of humanity’s conscious teachings. At its core, gratitude supports a deep connection with oneself and an expanding consciousness of the value of who you are and what you have.

Welcome to my eighth column exploring moving beyond mindset with ancient universal principles. The 12 Ancient Universal Principles of my High-Performance Wellness Coaching are your personal roadmap and guide for life. They will help you move beyond gratitude into creating inner security, the most powerful foundation for mastering your inner power and achieving exponential success with fulfillment and peace.

***“Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues, it is the parent of all others” Marcus Tullius Cicero.***

You live in a free-will Universe. You may not be able to control what happens to you, but you have a choice as to how you respond in both your inner and outer worlds.

Whether you experience life with a negative or positive perspective is a significant factor in determining your capacity to manage your energy and stress, navigate uncertainty, and live your passion, purpose, and mission. Viewing your cup as half full or half empty will create a pathway of energy that will determine your destiny.

As a high performer, when you experience hardship or loss, you find opportunity rather than becoming a victim of circumstance. The high standards for who you are and how you live create value and meaning in your life experiences. With greater awareness of how gratitude impacts your life, you become more Centered, Connected, and Conscious™ and reach for the stars, regardless of the circumstances. One of my favourite mantras is “I live my highest quality life, in any circumstance”. I created this mantra because I refuse to let anyone or anything erode my deep connection with myself. I honour and value who I am and what I have.

***“When You Realize How Perfect Everything Is, You Will Tilt Your Head Back And Laugh At The Sky,” Buddha***

When I was a child, chronically ill and in pain, I would separate myself from my burdens and think how my life was perfect. Every night, I would say, “I have two arms and two legs. I can walk, talk, see, smell, taste, hear, feel, think. I have a comfortable bed, good shelter, and food. I have so much more than so many others. I am grateful.” At the time, there were a lot of things I didn’t have . . . big things, seemingly devastating things. But I didn’t focus on them. I focused on what I had. When I shifted my mindset from what I didn’t have to what I had, I could feel a positive energy move through me. As I embraced this flow of energy without attachment to my present circumstances, I felt the gateways to my future open as universal support flowed in.

Yes, I was filled with gratitude. But what I felt was beyond gratitude. I felt a connection to my power. I became power-full and hope-filled amid desolate and seemingly hopeless circumstances. As I released my attachment to what I didn’t have and focused on what I had, I released the worry, drain, fear, and chronic stress of my circumstances. I felt secure and empowered. I created more flow, more energy, and more ease to be able to think clearly and align my vision. I found the stability, strength, and courage to take the next step up the mountain.

## **Everything That Has A Front Has A Back. The Bigger The Front, The Bigger The Back**

This Ancient Universal Principle #5 reminds you of the depth of your experiences. You are bigger than your hardship. You are bigger than your success. There is always a reason, somewhere in the Universe, on some level, for what unfolds. You may not always discover the cause, but you can have gratitude for the experience. The inherent gift may not always shine forth, but the bigger the experience, the deeper the connection to yourself.

In my High Performance Wellness Coaching, I help clients become more conscious of the underlying connections and causes of not only their challenges, but also their accomplishments. To “know thyself” is the gift of inner security that is timeless and priceless. Working with Ancient Universal Principles helps you move beyond gratitude and step into your greatest power. You remember who you are as you expand your consciousness and ride the waves of the journey of life.

### **Here are highlights of my Gratitude Exercise for Conscious Connection:**

**First Step:** Identify three things for which you are grateful.

**Second Step:** Review my 12 Ancient Universal Principles. Write down the first one that draws your attention. Apply it to the three things for which you are grateful. This ancient principle will help ignite your insight and expand your awareness of the power of valuing what you already have.

#### **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™

**Third Step:** Ask Yourself,

“What do I value the most about these three gratitude's?”

“How do these gratitude's provide a foundation for my security and growth?”

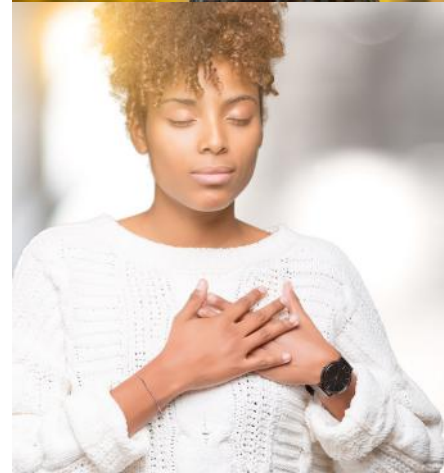
“What do they reveal about who I am?”

**Fourth Step:** List three of your personal traits or qualities that first come to mind as you review the last question in Step Three.

**Fifth Step:** Practice this mantra:

“I have #1 . . . #2 . . . #3 . . .

I am a) . . . b) . . . c) . . .



This is enough for me to feel good about my life right now. What I have and who I am support me as a strong foundation so I can move forward, step by step, to achieve my goals.”

This exercise helps you embody that which you already are, a fundamental pillar in owning your power.

Using Ancient Universal tension, the resistance become centered and and your ability to

Principles to deeply value what you have releases the insidious that leads to doubt, indecision, anxiety and chronic stress. You create more energy. Your vision of what is possible expands, make it happen becomes greater.

Gratitude is a powerful virtue. Moving beyond the mindset of gratitude into deeply valuing what you have and who you are is part of the new paradigm of High-Performance Wellness. It is self-worth on an upward spiral of exponential growth, eliminating the fear of scarcity and dissolving the highs and lows of extreme reactions to life’s events. With this feeling of inner security, you are able to let go of the attachments to what you think you need, breathe a sigh of relief, then tilt your head back and laugh at the sky.

As you embrace the flow of gratitude, you evolve to achieve the highest level of self-empowerment . . . knowing thyself. 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](http://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.

Connect with Lidia Kuleshnyk  
[www.AponaHealing.com](http://www.AponaHealing.com)



# MINDFUL MOMENTS

**Being mindful and knowing that you have changed, and that's okay as tough times and cycles do shift and end**

We all have ups and downs, and I want to reassure you that tough times and cycles do end - in one way or another. They do shift as you navigate yourself through them. You change as a person through them, too, with everything you're experiencing.

As you go through life, you're going to encounter negativity—maybe in families, relationships, business, the workplace, friendships, the weather, and much more.

You may have planned something amazing on a glorious day, but then the heavens opened, it poured down, and your plans changed.



*Things test you. Things push you to a limit. Things test your patience. Things happen. The main thing to focus on is your willingness to change, grow, and heal from whatever is testing you.* Life happens, relationships change, experiences take place, and work goes on. Nothing you ever go through lets you stay the same person forever. Everything that arises shapes you into the person you are right now. And that's okay.

Being mindful of this is paramount so that you can be gentle with yourself, nurture yourself, and really do the inner mindset work needed to continue along your journey, knowing that everything is going to work out the way it's supposed to. So, what's the lesson? What's the change needed? What decisions need to be made? Do you need to change your job? Release that old "friendship"? Walk away from a business niche and start a new one? Do you need to set boundaries? Have more patience?

What is it? *We always ask what others need, don't we? BUT..... what's important is to ask ourselves what WE need. So, what do YOU need? Want?*

Answer honestly and.... know at the end of a storm there is a rainbow and better days ahead. You can canoe, paddle or sail through your issues and experiences - it's all about mindset. Face the reality of things, show up for yourself, and know that you are strong and powerful. Even through tears and frustrations, you CAN get through the tough times and cycles. Nothing stays the same forever. Be prepped to pull out all the stops and go for it! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

You have a commitment to yourself and this life to always move, change, and grow through what shows itself in you. Learn the lessons and always take care of yourself. *That all starts with MINDSET and ends with MINDSET, too - the whole thing!* You can find yourself going around in circles, or you can decide to change what you need to in order to transform your life.

**But it all depends on you.**

A death will change you.  
A breakup will change you.  
An experience will change you.  
Knowledge and wisdom will change you.  
Skills and talents will change you.  
Relationships (love, family or friendships) will change you.  
Health will change you.

**ALL OF THIS ULTIMATELY BOILS DOWN TO YOUR MINDSET!**

A butterfly changes from an egg to a caterpillar to a chrysalis to a butterfly along its journey. It also trusts in its wings to be able to fly and can't see the beautiful colours on the wings themselves. It trusts the process and goes with the flow of its life. So, embrace your own life in the same way - different seasons will happen, and that's okay too. Over the years, I have worked with many clients to help them understand that there is nothing wrong with them at all. And there's nothing wrong with you either. Circumstances must have happened for you to have changed as a person, and every single person is unique and different, so life affects all people differently.

It's what YOU do with the opportunity of mindset with what arises in your life to how you feel, think and what plays out for you.

*Let your heart expand.  
Do the inner mindset work.  
Do the inner child healing.  
Regulate your nervous system.  
Release the pain, sorrow and heaviness within you.  
Nurture yourself.  
Flourish where you are.  
Believe in yourself.  
Keep showing up to your life.*

It's okay to be a different person - we all change. You are not the same person you were when you were 10, 20, or even 35 years old.

**You are like a butterfly - transitioning through life.**

Knowing the "how" to really step into the life purpose that is, to be okay with yourself changing and really do the deep healing needed to feel alive and have the phenomenal life you aspire to experience is all on you.



But know that you're not alone. *Go, go for the job, car, house, relationship, promotion, business or whatever you have your heart set on. Release all the control and go with the flow of everything working out the way it's supposed to, and easier times are ahead.*

Program your head that way, and your brain will believe you as it believes what it's told. **You've got this!**

**Rebecca Adams**  
[www.rebeccaadamsbiz.com](http://www.rebeccaadamsbiz.com)



# Are young girls at risk of exploitation within gangs?

This report will examine how the media shapes misconceptions about youth identity by exploring issues surrounding youth crime and gang culture. It will also explore the role of the practitioner when working with young people by applying theories, concepts, and principles related to that role.

According to Cieslik and Simpson (2013), the definition of youth reflects the biases of the people who define the term. Professionals who work with young people and their understanding of youth culture may differ from those of young people. Concepts of youth phases are believed to be historically and culturally specific. In contemporary society, the term youth is derived from eighteenth-century Western civilization. The way we understand the term youth in modern times is a recent phenomenon. Others believe that the term youth is a socially constructed phase that is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood (Furlong, 2013).

## Main findings

Farrell (2023) reported that as many as 60,000 young girls are at risk of being exploited by gangs within the UK. He went on to state that they are invisible to authorities due to the lack of emphasis and awareness around young females exploited by gang culture and drug trafficking, as youth prevention services are aimed at young boys.

The report suggests that young girls make up a third of young people who are at risk of extreme violence. The report also suggests that poverty, family structure and socioeconomic status are crucial factors in the exploitation of young girls in gangs. This is in comparison to a report by the Home Office (2018) that stated that the issue of county lines within the UK involves drugs, violence, criminal and sexual exploitation, and modern-day slavery, safeguarding and missing persons. These individuals can be as young as twelve and may come from a poor family dynamic and economic vulnerability.

Erikson (1958) stated that adolescence was a crucial stage in the development of youth identity. It is the transitional phase into adulthood, so it is vital that the adolescent develops a sense of identity at this stage, as failure to do so will lead to confusion and a poor sense of self (Furlong, 2013). Farrell (2023) reported that gangs were exploiting

women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their vulnerability goes unnoticed, leaving them to fend for themselves from an early age. The report claims that thousands of young girls are being sexually assaulted, raped and controlled on a large scale and is going unnoticed.

Additionally, Aliya Ali, founder of Daddyless Daughters, an organization aimed at helping young girls who have been exposed to gang culture and drugs, was once a victim of gang exploitation. She expressed her concern about the lack of support and knowledge around the effects of young girls being exploited by gangs. She told Sky News that professionals put them in a box of complex needs, which just means they do not know where to start and have no idea how to tackle the issues surrounding the exploitation of young girls by gangs (Farell, 2023).

While boys are at risk of violence within gangs, girls are not only at risk of violence, but they are also at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as emotional and mental abuse (Farell, 2023).

Intersectionality plays a huge role in analyzing the social inequities that plague our society. The lack of awareness surrounding the issues in the article relates to gender stereotypes and inequalities within society. Multiple forms of identity and inequalities, such as gender, race, age class, and so on, interconnect with one another, resulting in different experiences regarding inequalities and discrimination within our society (Gillborn 2015). Understanding the complexities of these inequalities is often overlooked within society due to the lack of knowledge and awareness surrounding these issues

### **Negative constructions of youth culture in the Media**

The media play a huge role in constructing narratives around youth identity. The constant emphasis on gang culture is often focused on young boys coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and poor family dynamics. However, a study which was conducted by the Metropolitan Police estimated that up to a third of youths who are groomed by gangs are females (Farell, 2023).

The young girls featured in the article suffered from neglect and emotional abuse at an early age. Asha was 16 when she lost her father. She was given a council house and was left to look after herself with no emotional or financial support, which led her to being exploited by gangs. It is suggested that a lack of family support and positive role models in a young person's life can often lead to them getting involved in gangs. In addition to this, financial gain and other rewards can also attract young people to get involved in gangs and gang crime (Farell, 2023).

Esbensen and Tusinski (2007) suggest that the image of youth gang culture is reinforced by the media based on data from law enforcement. Yet recent

studies on young gangs challenge the accuracy of the media portrayal. Surveys over an extended period suggested that youth gangs mirror the youth in their communities despite the significant differences between gang and non-gang members. The study found that if a community is white, the gang members within that community will be white. Furthermore, females that are in the juvenile population account for an insignificant number in youth gangs even though they may commit similar crimes as the males. These misconceptions and biases of youth gang culture in the media can have detrimental impacts on the development of young people within society.

Cohen (2011) argues that the media and those with political power within society create a moral panic through media headlines and coverage by defining a group as a threat to society's values and interests. These groups then become marginalized, preventing important debates about the social issues they stand for. Furthermore, it highlights the issues with the power structures within society.

The moral panic concerning youth gang culture uses the imagery of young boys in the media on a mass scale as the subculture's face creating stereotypes and narratives around the issues concerning youth crime and gang exploitation. These moral panics help take the focus off young girls who are just as much at risk of being exploited as well as being sexually abused, as seen in the article. The media creates misconceptions around the gender of those associated with youth gang culture, creating more focus on young boys and missing vital opportunities to protect the thousands of young girls being exploited by gangs across the UK (Farell, 2023).

Research has found that social media plays a huge role in inciting youth gang culture in the UK through music and visual content. Trap music is thought to be an instrument in promoting drug dealers and gang violence to build up a reputation. The promotion of selling drugs via county lines is also popular within the subculture, and the reinforcement of the risky behaviour and the social rules that dominate gang culture are also promoted through music videos via social media (Storrod and Densley 2016).

### **Key issues raised**

It has been argued that youth crime and other forms of deviant behaviour are rooted in the breakdown of the nuclear family. The illegitimate birth rates have created a greater dependence on the welfare state. Rejecting work and traditional family norms. This group of people are described as the Underclass (Murray 1990). For some, they are made up of the young and homeless from a section of the black population. Crime, promiscuity, drug use and child abuse were some of the key features of these groups (Muncie 2021).

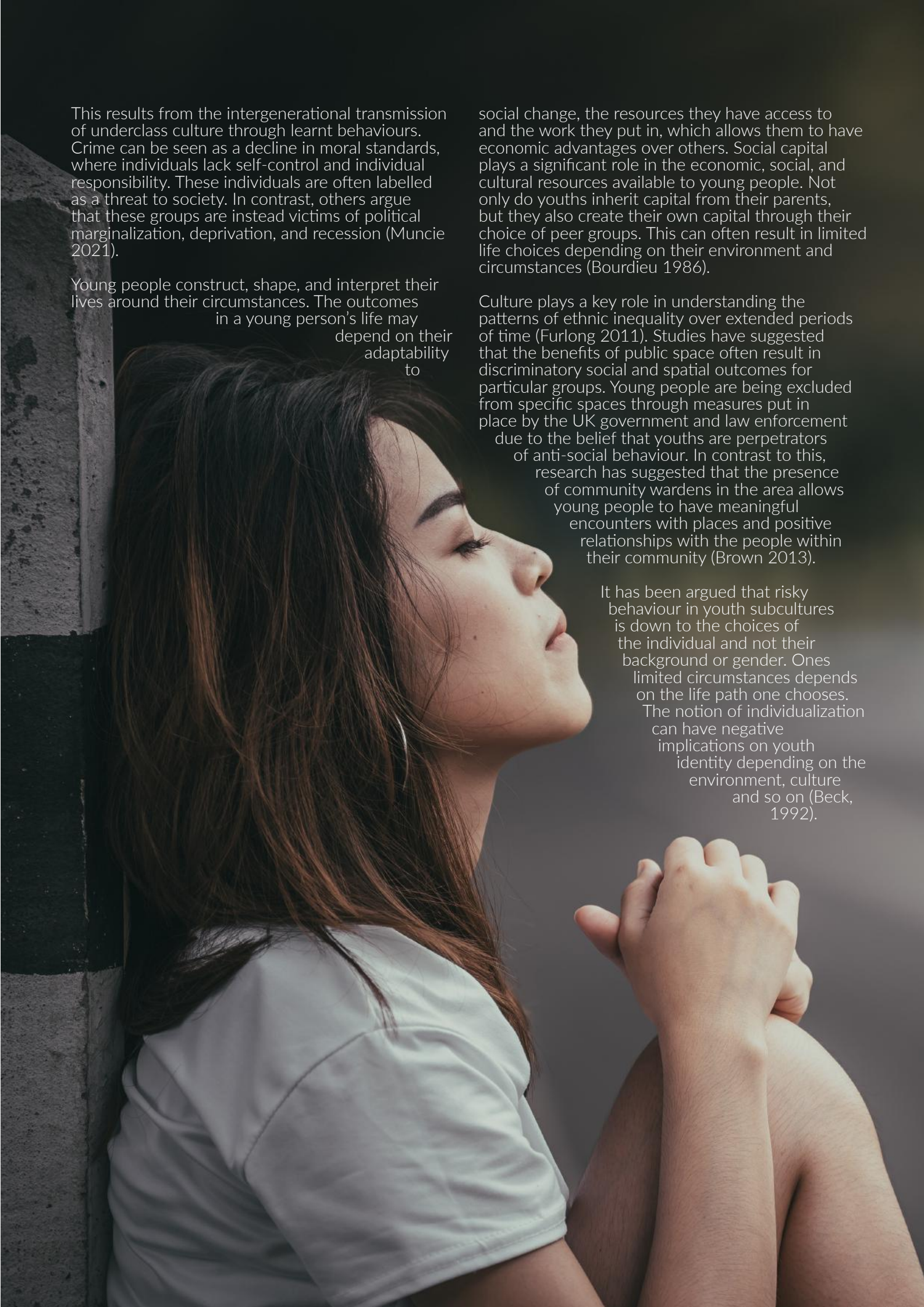
This results from the intergenerational transmission of underclass culture through learnt behaviours. Crime can be seen as a decline in moral standards, where individuals lack self-control and individual responsibility. These individuals are often labelled as a threat to society. In contrast, others argue that these groups are instead victims of political marginalization, deprivation, and recession (Muncie 2021).

Young people construct, shape, and interpret their lives around their circumstances. The outcomes in a young person's life may depend on their adaptability to

social change, the resources they have access to and the work they put in, which allows them to have economic advantages over others. Social capital plays a significant role in the economic, social, and cultural resources available to young people. Not only do youths inherit capital from their parents, but they also create their own capital through their choice of peer groups. This can often result in limited life choices depending on their environment and circumstances (Bourdieu 1986).

Culture plays a key role in understanding the patterns of ethnic inequality over extended periods of time (Furlong 2011). Studies have suggested that the benefits of public space often result in discriminatory social and spatial outcomes for particular groups. Young people are being excluded from specific spaces through measures put in place by the UK government and law enforcement due to the belief that youths are perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. In contrast to this, research has suggested that the presence of community wardens in the area allows young people to have meaningful encounters with places and positive relationships with the people within their community (Brown 2013).

It has been argued that risky behaviour in youth subcultures is down to the choices of the individual and not their background or gender. One's limited circumstances depends on the life path one chooses. The notion of individualization can have negative implications on youth identity depending on the environment, culture and so on (Beck, 1992).



However, the adversities that young people and their families experience are complex, interrelated factors and cannot be easily put into a box or reduced to an individualized sociological model.

Research suggests that the development of children and young people may be affected by several family factors, including parental poverty and bereavement (Brookes-Gunn, 2020, cited in O'Dell O'Dell and Leverett).

There is little literature to be found on female delinquency subculture patterns other than some sexual misconduct. This behaviour influences the choice of men they are intimately involved with and may affect the relationships within their peer groups. Cohen (1971) suggested that a girl's status depends on the male's status with whom she is associated. He argues that females of low socioeconomic status are not educated in being graceful and having self-respect and lack material means in competing for the attention of a respectable and responsible man.

By making themselves sexually available, due to losing all hope in a respectable marriage and social mobility, they attract the attention of males and male favours, forming unstable and transitory relationships, further lowering the value of them being suitable for a respectable marriage. Isolation from the norms of healthy intimate relationships, depression, and yearning for marriage from a respectable and responsible man leaves them vulnerable to the exploitation of irresponsible men who exercise their power over them due to the girl's need for male companionship and a substitute for love. These findings are based on interviews with negro women of low social status, some coming from respectable well-off families (Cohen and Short 1958).

According to UK law, anybody who works with young people has a duty of care to safeguard them from harm, abuse, and exploitation (Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023). This includes professionals who work with young people and their families.

The ability of families to support their children depends on wider environmental factors. The support system, including healthcare providers, social workers, educational institutions, quality of welfare services, the safety of the environment, and network of friends and family, are vital to a child's emotional and physical development. Practitioners must ensure they receive continuous professional development to maintain the standards of care and support given to children and vulnerable families. Building trusting relationships can help foster inclusive practices.

Creating environments where young girls feel safe to share information is extremely important in tackling the issue of gang exploitation. Understanding the links between trauma and culture is vital in reducing the disadvantages ethnic minority children may

face. A greater focus on early prevention, including gender-based cultural representation, is key (Farell, 2023).

## Conclusion

The lack of media coverage and focus on girls being exploited by gangs is a growing problem within the UK as increasingly young girls are going unnoticed and hard to reach. The focus on young boys in gangs has created a stereotype that young boys from a low socioeconomic background are the face of gang culture when, in fact, girls are participating in the same crimes as these males. The missed opportunities to support young girls exploited by gangs leave room for concern about the power structures within society. The misconceptions and biases concerning youth crime can have significant impacts on the development of young people. More training and education around intersectionality when working with families from an ethnic minority background and fostering a culturally informed environment are key enablers for more effective working practices.

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Shardia O'Connor

# Remember Who You Are

## Embracing Your True Self

**This life. This journey. This world. This Universe.**

*This is what you came for!  
Remember?  
Remember what? You may be asking.  
The truth of who you really are!*

Your soul is always guiding you. It even guided you here to this very article. That's why you're reading this right now ;) That feeling! That niggles from within. I know you know what I'm talking about. This time, pay attention to it! I invite you to play with me and use this exercise to help:

### An Exercise to Remember

1. Place one hand on your lower belly and one on your heart.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Breathe deeply, drawing air into your belly, then your ribs, and finally your chest. Hold your breath for a few moments, then release it slowly through an open mouth. Repeat three times.
4. Take another inhale, and on the exhale, make some noise, sliding down a scale from a higher note to a lower note, using a vowel sound like Oooooo or Ahhhhhhh.
5. Set an intention. Say out loud to yourself, in your head, or your heart: I am open and receptive to remembering in all loving ways.
6. Ask yourself: "Why do I remember everything?"
7. Sit quietly, breathing naturally, and allow memories to come into your awareness.
8. Enjoy the experience, letting the emotions amplify in your body.
9. Come out when you are ready.
10. Write a journal about the experience or write down anything important so that you can keep this memory and use it to help you remember more.

Let this exercise be your permission slip and repeat it as often as desired, each time meeting new versions of yourself and remembering more of who you are. So then, divine soul being:

*How are you feeling?  
Shook?  
Expansive?  
Neutral?*

All feelings are welcome here. Checking in is an essential practice of present-moment awareness.

### Consciousness is Self-Realization

In the limitless expanse of consciousness, it's easy to forget who we truly are amidst the distractions of daily

life. Yet, the essence of being transcends the mundane. At our core, we are spiritual beings having a human experience. This profound truth awakened me and guided me to align with the divine within and embody my true nature. This experience, this ride, this game that we call life is a journey of self-discovery, collective awakening, and realization—the see, with our REAL EYES, All That Is, and to explore, experience, and expand limitless consciousness.

### My Journey to Becoming

For much of my life, I, too, was entangled in the web of everyday life, unaware of and unconscious of the spiritual depths within me. My journey of awakening began in childhood. In truth, I feel like I was one of the lucky ones. I hadn't yet forgotten the magic and infinite possibility until I was forced to grow up.

"You're lying! I hate you! Santa is real!" I screamed at my mother, hurling myself face-first onto the cushions of the green couch in our living room with a wail as agonizing and deathly as the reality of my childhood innocence, belief in magic and miracles, and love for Jesus. "Jesus is the reason for the season." My mother's words mocked, echoing in my mind. I was so angry. How could my mother say this? Did she not remember? Had I imagined things? I was six. I was still very much unaware of the veil. The illusion was shattered, yet a part of me always held onto my own version of the truth. And then I fell asleep—figuratively speaking. I forgot about the magic and miracles. I forgot who I truly was. More accurately, I deliberately shut her down and hid her in the shadows in an attempt to keep her safe.

### Yet she was always keeping me safe.

For a moment of awakening, sparked by many profound personal crises and a series of unfortunate events, I was faced with immense challenges. I was pushed to the brink, time and time again, where the only way out was to look inward. Finally, I had crumbled. I experienced a breakdown, and the following period of intense self-reflection and soul-searching became the catalyst for my transformation.

### Breakdowns lead to breakthroughs.

At my lowest point, I was destroying everything, including my seven-year relationship and my life as I knew it. Despite being a free spirit, I repeatedly found myself in a self-imposed golden cage. A cage created by, I know

now, no one or no thing other than myself and my own definitions and beliefs.

I felt trapped, out of control, and alone. I had everything I thought I wanted, but I was deeply unhappy and unwell. Even though yoga was my permission slip to BE my most authentic self yet, making me the fittest and most flexible I had ever been, and I was in a loving relationship that seemed “on track” to my desired outcome of marriage and belonging, none of it felt right. I had become adept at abandoning myself, ignoring my intuition, and numbing myself to all the signs from Source. The Universe had to make me uncomfortable enough to force me to move.

## BREAKDOWNS LEAD TO BREAKTHROUGHS

As I broke free from my self-imposed golden cage and retreated to a special island, I sought refuge in yoga and delved deeper into my inner world. This journey helped me uncover dormant gifts and remember who I am.

Practices like Reiki, meditation, time in nature, and soul tribe connections revealed my path as a spiritual leader, healer, and ascension guide. I realized my purpose was not only to heal myself and navigate the journey back through and to my **HEART'S HOME** but also to share these gifts with the world, helping others navigate their spiritual awakenings and ascension journeys.

### The Nature of Your True Self

Recognizing the nature of the true self—conscious awareness—is the cornerstone of spiritual awakening. At our core, we are not transient thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations but the eternal soul, a spark of the Divine. Understanding this helps us see beyond the limitations of our perceived identity. When we realize the true self is infinite and interconnected with All That Is, we can live from a place of greater awareness and compassion.

### The Great Awakening

We are living in extraordinary times known as the Great Awakening. As a collective, we are raising our vibration and expanding our perspectives. More individuals are awakening to their true spiritual nature, inviting us to remember who we are beyond our individual stories. This process involves transcending old patterns of fear, judgment, and separation and moving towards a higher state of awareness where love, unity, and interconnectedness prevail.

### The Journey of Self-Discovery

Our human experience is a journey of self-discovery, where we are here to be more of who we truly are. It's not meant to be a solo journey. It's meant to be a “Soul! Oh! There you are!” journey as we discover new perspectives of ourselves, shedding layers of societal conditioning, limiting beliefs, and false identities that obscure our divine essence. As we reconnect with our inner wisdom and innate divinity, we align our actions with our true purpose.

This journey requires courage, grace, patience, and faith. As we reconnect with our true self, we experience

greater peace, joy, and fulfillment. We begin to live in alignment with our highest potential and contribute to the collective awakening of humanity.

### Choose Faith Over Fear

In this age of transformation, we are recognizing distortions in our belief systems. Beliefs are powerful constructs, but they are not immutable. We have the ability to change our beliefs and, in doing so, transform our reality. This involves moving from limiting beliefs to limitless ones—choosing **FAITH over FEAR**.

- *Fear (False Evidence Appearing Real) represents constriction, where belief is anchored in doubt and limitation.*

- *Faith (Full Assurance in the Heart) signifies expansion, where belief is rooted in trust and infinite potential.*

To shift from fear to faith, analyze your definitions and belief systems. Doubt is often seen as a lack of conviction, but this lack is an illusion perpetuated by fear. When you realize you cannot truly lack trust, you begin to dissolve the experience of doubt. You don't lack trust; you are simply trusting in something undesirable. By understanding this, you can place your trust in your



**'Having faith means having 100% trust in something that represents your truth.'**



Having faith means having 100% trust in something that represents your truth. This Full Assurance In The Heart is connected to your intuition and higher levels of consciousness. Unlike the fear matrix, which distorts your perspective, the faith matrix is unconditionally loving and supportive, allowing you to be free and limitless.

#### **Seeing Everything as Versions of Yourself**

A profound realization in spiritual awakening is understanding that everything and everyone around you are versions of yourself from different perspectives. You are a seed, an extension, of **ALL THAT IS**. Everything and everyone is inextricably interconnected. Compassion, empathy, and love become natural extensions of this awareness.

This realization transforms our interactions with the world. We begin to see that every person we meet is a reflection of ourselves, offering opportunities to learn, grow, and expand. This perspective fosters greater understanding, empathy, and compassion as we recognize the divine in each person and situation.

#### **Expanding Individual and Collective Consciousness**

Our journey of self-discovery contributes to the expansion of both individual and collective consciousness. By remembering and embodying our true nature, we raise our own vibrational frequency, influencing the collective energy field. Every act of kindness, self-awareness, and realization of our oneness with all adds to the collective awakening.

This process involves letting go of old patterns of fear and separation and embracing a higher state of awareness where love, unity, and interconnectedness reign. As we

expand our individual consciousness, we contribute to humanity's collective awakening.

#### **Enjoying the Human Experience**

It is important to remember that we are here to enjoy the human experience. Life is a gift; that's why they call it the present ;-). This life is an opportunity to experience the full spectrum of human experience in all its forms. By leading with love, seeking joy, pursuing our passion, and expressing gratitude, we align with the divine within, live a life beyond our wildest dreams, and celebrate the beauty of **All That Is!**

Remembering who you are as a spiritual being and having a human experience is a transformative realization. It invites you to explore the depths of your true self, see the divine in everything, and contribute to the great awakening of collective consciousness. Enjoy the evolution of this journey with love, compassion, grace, and joy, knowing you are here to be more of yourself and to experience every moment of this miraculous existence.

### **By Lizzie Siegel**

To connect with Lizzie further for more teachings, mentorship, retreats, and to receive her latest offerings, follow her on **Instagram @lizzienamasteplantbased** or email her at **namasteplantbased@gmail.com**



# The Marriage Fixer

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



## The Problem with Struggle

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

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

## Shifting from Struggle to Effort

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

### *Here are some ways to do that:*

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

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

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

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

## Implementing Change Without Fear

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

## Broadening Perspectives

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

## Creating a Supportive Environment

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

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

## Consistency is Key

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

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

# TRANSFORM

## WITH GERRARD FINLAYSON



## Transformations Through M&M's - Mindsets & Motivations

Although they are mentioned in the same bracket as psychological frameworks, Mindset and Motivation are two different principles. Adopting one of these principles can make you successful; adopting both can make you unstoppable. How do these two principles affect our training lives, physical achievements, and health?

Take a look at your work life or your family life. Would you say that you are a dedicated father or mother? Would you say that you are successful in business or at work? In my life, I have been fortunate enough to meet people with phenomenal mindsets who push the boundaries and status quo of most of their environments. These individuals "could do anything they put their mind to." It is a beautiful thing to have that resilience, tenacity and inexorable nature to succeed on your chosen path; it really is.

I must admit that these people were mostly in business or the workplace, highly successful people who would be up at 4 am and sleep at 11 pm, working off pure drive and determination to reach their goals. It would seem that these mindsets are not reared; instead, they seem to be some physiological incumbency that they just need to achieve; they need targets. We all have the Mindset of a champion inside us; its ability to manifest itself mainly derives from our reason to invoke it.

On to my next point, what is your Motivation? You see, so many people say they cannot train, exercise, whatever you want to call it – because they are "busy". If that Mindset is not invoked and your days are spent indoors eating and procrastinating, it would be because you are lazy! If that mindset is being used elsewhere, at work or with family, then you have already unlocked one of the doors. It is just that your motivation is not congruent with that activity.



So Therein lies the seeming paradox of human nature and behaviour. Some of the most amazing people in the workplace, or business owners, are fastidious by nature; they have a relentless work ethic for financial reward and a burning desire to be the best at what they do. I believe these traits exist in all of us, but that they are only invoked when we summon the Motivation and subsequently, the Mindset to execute. These people perform to the highest standards at all times on their chosen path, and they have an effervescence unmatched by their competition. Am I talking to you?

Are you one of those people with a burning tenacity, relentless and uncompromising in your efforts? If you have already found your mindset, you know

how to invoke it and yield its power to the benefit of your pocket, your family, and your life – then, at some juncture – you also find that motivation. It is the Motivation that sparks the fire in Mindset’s pit; it is the motivation that, when times get hard, keeps you working relentlessly through the knockbacks and ups and downs of daily life. For myself as a Personal Trainer, busy parent and expanding business owner, Mindset and Motivation are transferable skills. The irony is that so many people have the Mindset of a champion when it comes to their work; therein lies the Motivation, yet when it comes to their health, they are “too busy”.

Here is the world’s worst-kept secret; I will share it with you. I desire this to resonate with you because I believe this to be of the utmost importance: Exercise adds years to your life. If that is not Motivation enough to incite the Mindset of a champion into your health, then what will? In this life full of distraction, we sometimes forget the basics and prioritise things above our own health. Why? It is not because we do not care. That would be farcical. It is because we forget. We forget that the doctor exists until we get sick; we forget what dentists do until a tooth falls out; we forget our fitness; the ramifications of doing so can be worse than the dentist’s appointment. Sometimes, we need a snap back to reality, just a reminder. For example, when we get a cough during the flu season, we are quick to get our vitamins down!

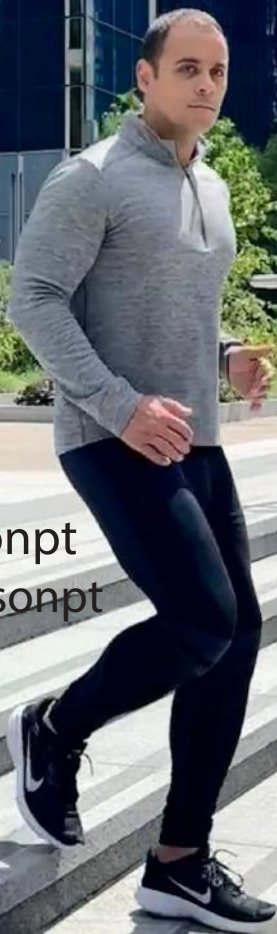
Although different, motivation and mindset go hand in hand. Our motivation lies in each and every one of us. Find yours and I can help you find that mindset – making you unstoppable. Your Motivation could go back years and years. It could be a childhood dream, an aesthetic goal in the short term, or something much deeper and more meaningful, but believe me, your Motivation for a healthier lifestyle exists.

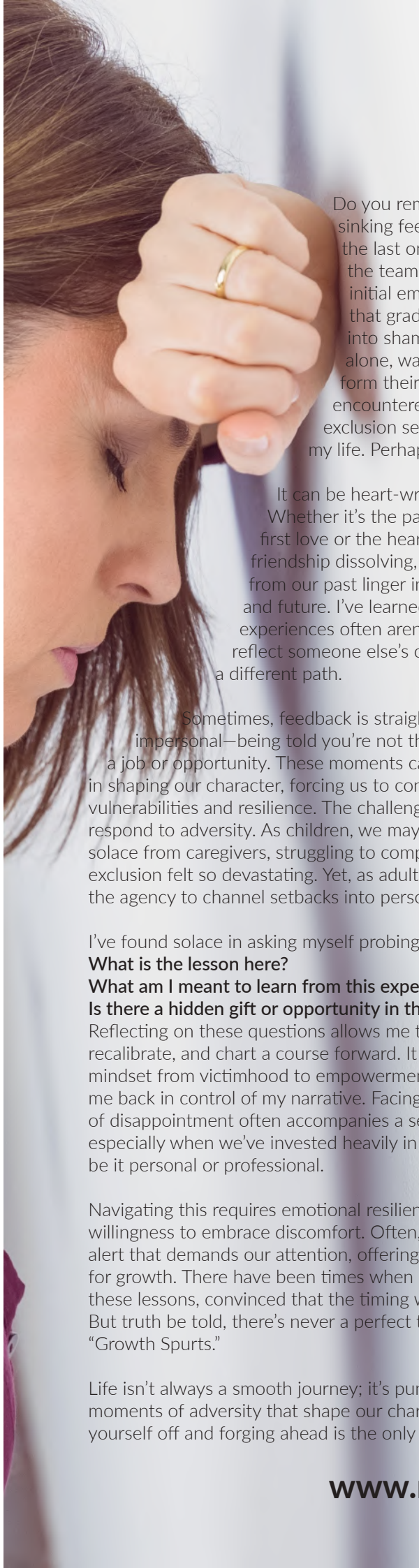
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## Embracing Life's Lessons: Navigating Setbacks with Resilience

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

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

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

I've found solace in asking myself probing questions:  
**What is the lesson here?**

**What am I meant to learn from this experience?**

**Is there a hidden gift or opportunity in this setback?**

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

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

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

Be curious!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Confidence Coach**

**Mary Scott**



[www.maryscottinfluence.com](http://www.maryscottinfluence.com)

# Small Changes, Big Impact.

## How Incorporating Micro Rituals Can Transform Your Wellness Routine

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of daily life, often losing sight of the bigger picture and long-term goals we have set for ourselves. However, it is the small, seemingly insignificant actions we take on a daily basis that can ultimately lead to the realization of our macro visions. These small actions, known as micro rituals and patterns, play a crucial role in creating change and achieving our goals.

Micro rituals and patterns are the consistent, daily practices that we engage in without even realizing it. From the moment we wake up in the morning to the time we go to bed at night, our lives are filled with these small habits that shape our daily routines. Whether it's making a cup of coffee in the morning, going for a run after work, or setting aside time for meditation before bed, these micro rituals and patterns have the power to transform our lives in profound ways.

Consistency is key when it comes to practicing micro rituals and patterns. By committing to small daily habits, we can create a sense of structure and routine in our lives that can lead to long-term success. Whether it's setting aside time each day to work on a passion project or practicing gratitude before going to sleep, these small actions add up over time and contribute to achieving our larger goals and aspirations.

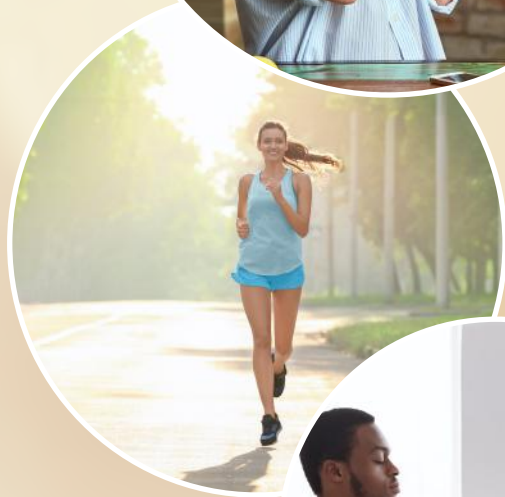
One of the most powerful aspects of micro rituals and patterns is their ability to create change in our lives. By incorporating small, daily habits into our routines, we can gradually shift our mindset and behavior toward the realization of our macro visions. For example, if your goal is to improve your physical health and fitness, incorporating daily exercise and healthy eating habits into your routine can lead to significant improvements over time.

Mindfulness and intentionality are also key components of practicing micro rituals and patterns. By being present and aware of the actions we take on a daily basis, we can ensure that they align with our values and goals. By setting clear intentions and purpose behind our daily practices, we can cultivate inspiration and fulfillment in our lives, ultimately leading to a more meaningful and purposeful existence.

Finding motivation and joy in the process of change is essential when it comes to incorporating micro rituals and patterns into our daily lives. By connecting these small actions to our personal values and goals, we can stay inspired and committed to our journey of transformation. Whether it's finding joy in the process of learning a new skill or feeling a sense of purpose in helping others, micro rituals can help us stay motivated and fulfilled in our daily lives.

*"Unlocking the Power of Small Habits for Lasting Wellness Transformation" "Your level of success will rarely exceed your level of personal development because success is something you attract by the person you become." Jim Rohn*

**By Jennifer Boyce**  
**Rooted Vision Wellness**





# Five must-discuss Conversations

for couples to stay attuned

By Lilliana Gibbs

[www.theredcouch.co.uk](http://www.theredcouch.co.uk)

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

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

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

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

## Money

Money can mean generosity, security, freedom, power, status, fear, manipulation...we inherit family beliefs and behaviours that shape our attitudes to money, and partnering will invariably bring different perspectives on money, and differences easily slide into conflict. Money is up in the top 3 argument topics (sex and family). It's an endlessly intriguing topic to which so much else is attached, and to which we link so much judgement and emotion.\*

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

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

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

*You might enjoy trying this: HABITUDES is a useful way to visualise your attitudes and habits around money with a set of cards. [www.moneyhabitudes.com](http://www.moneyhabitudes.com)*

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



## Sex

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

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

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

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

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

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

*You may like to try this: The 3 Minute Game - [www.bettymartin.org](http://www.bettymartin.org)*

*Experience touch as acceptance, allowing, taking, and serving.*

*Or a sexy version:*

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



## Health & Wellbeing

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

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

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

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

**Be optimistic** – intentionally have positive and optimistic thoughts

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

**Use your strengths**– doing something well heightens happiness

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

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

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



## Wishes, Goals & Dreams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Dying and death

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Enjoy talking..

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**By Celia Conrad**



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

[www.yourrelationshipguru.com](http://www.yourrelationshipguru.com)

# Cemeteries are the richest places

## The Fear of Being Seen

As I began to write this article, I searched my mind for a story that would demonstrate a time when I was afraid to let myself be seen and have my voice heard. “I realized I didn’t have one specific story but a thread of constant stories that have been with me forever. I also hear similar stories from almost every woman I’ve ever met.

And it goes like this...”

**“What if I say the wrong thing?”**

**“What if they get mad at me?”**

**“What if people laugh at me and figure out I don’t know what I’m talking about?”**

**“What if they think I’m stupid?”**

**“What if I get denounced as a human?”**

**“What if there’s a fight in the comments?”**

**“Nobody else is saying what I’m saying; what if I’m wrong?”**

**“I can’t ask that; I should know this.”**

**“What if I get canceled?”**

The words and phrases above are the topic for this fourth article and explain why cemeteries are among the richest places on earth.

These words are the gate that locks YOU out and keeps you from what you truly desire for your life and business. They keep you from your goals, dreams, and desires. They keep you from reaching for more. (Because asking for more is greedy. What would people think about you? This is another example of a fear of being seen.)

### Maybe you can relate?

Has there been a time when you wanted to speak up at a meeting and share an idea/invention or a solution that would help at work or in your business marketing, but you just couldn’t bring yourself to speak because those very words above were running through your mind, locking you silent and in place?

Maybe you’ve even felt your body lurch forward or your lips start to move to form the first letters of a sentence, but nothing would come out. Maybe you were so aware that these physical movements of your body were visible to others that you played it off like you had an itch on your arm or you had to stretch to cover them up.

Then, after the opportunity to speak passed, you felt the heat of shame on your forehead and began the internal beatdown, questioning yourself. “Why didn’t I share my idea? Why didn’t I speak up? Why do I always do this to myself?” This is what it sounds like and feels like when you have a fear of being seen.

I see this daily in my work as a money, energy, and manifestation coach for women in business. I’m sharing here with you today what I tell my clients. This is normal. It is not your fault. Women have been told for centuries to “Stand by their men.” “Don’t speak until spoken to.”

For centuries, women have been burned at the stake for voicing their opinions and ideas, even seen as witches for their ability to help and heal others. It’s been shown in studies that these horrific traumas that our ancestors suffered have been passed down through our genes, and today, we carry them with us. (There’s a reason that they burned people at the stake publicly. To keep people silent and unseen.)

It’s no shock that today, in these modern times, “to stay safe and alive” is not to be seen or heard from. To stay as small as you can. To fit yourself into the box even when you know you don’t fit. That’s what fitting in means, you know.

Squeezing and morphing yourself into someone and something you’re not so you “fit” in. Don’t stand out. Don’t be seen. Don’t be heard. “Just get back in the box, Barbie.”

And what’s worse, these are only the more apparent ways a fear of being seen shows up. On a subconscious level, it can look like a distraction. Those moments when “seemingly more important things” pop up and stop you from going to the meeting and sharing your thoughts and ideas.

Sometimes, it seems that you suddenly become overly tired even though you were excited and energetic about your day and schedule just moments earlier. Or, maybe out of the blue, you notice you're hungry, and it's time to eat. Or, you have to wash the dishes or answer one more email.

These are some sneaky examples of how subconsciously your brain tries to keep you safe, silent, and stuck in those invisible chains of silence.

Dear reader, your ideas, solutions, inventions, points of view, thoughts, and words are essential. They matter. They deserve the space to be heard and seen! But me telling you this is NOT enough.

Instead, I have a tool that  
will support you in  
navigating being  
seen and using  
your

Don't worry about saying the thing right then; just notice what you feel in your body. Do you feel a heaviness in your shoulders? An ache in your jaw, ear, or lower back? A "lump" in your throat? Pressure in your shoulders or between your shoulder blades? A headache? A feeling of dread in your stomach?

Just simply notice it. Then take a deep breath and breathe into that specific area of your body where you're feeling the discomfort and ask that feeling, "What are you trying to tell me?" And then just listen. You might not hear it right away. You might get a feeling or an image in your mind, a smell, a texture, or a color instead. It might be a memory that pops up for you.

Your body speaks in a unique response for you, so there is zero chance of getting this wrong. Whatever you notice, hear, see, or feel, THAT is the message that is coming through for you. Thank your body for letting you know.

When you have your answer, now you know what is happening in these moments. And when you have that awareness it puts you back in control and lights the way to success for you.

When we know what is ruling our decisions, fear or empowerment, we get to make a different choice, get unstuck, and then move forward. This is truly what it means to be seen and empowered.

Is there a promotion, transfer, leave of absence, or raise you haven't asked for yet?

Do you have a business that you would like to start sharing about on social media but haven't just yet?

Apply this exercise, see what shows up, and send me an email at [hello@manifestmoneywithlaurie.com](mailto:hello@manifestmoneywithlaurie.com) to let me know!

**By Laurie Juskiewicz**  
**Money Energy & Manifestation Coach**

[www.manifestmoneywithlaurie.com](http://www.manifestmoneywithlaurie.com)

empowered voice. It will help you know whether you're staying quiet by your own choice or if fear is stopping you. Be sure to take a screenshot of this so you have it handy.

The next time you are in a situation where you feel your body lurch forward, your hand starts to go up, or your lips start to form a sentence, or you notice something that you would like to say or respond to, but you suddenly stop yourself, notice what is happening in your body at that exact moment.



# Discover Inner Peace

## Embracing Inner Wisdom for Emotional Healing

In today's fast-paced world, achieving inner peace can seem like an elusive goal. Yet, it is a cornerstone of emotional well-being and overall quality of life. Inner peace allows us to navigate life's challenges gracefully, maintain harmonious relationships, and live with purpose and fulfilment. Drawing upon my extensive background in mental health coaching, mindfulness, and hypnotherapy, I have realized the importance of inner peace and emotional harmony as the main pillars of our lives. This article explores the importance of inner peace and provides a detailed overview of the journey towards lasting emotional harmony.

### The Essence of Inner Peace and Emotional Harmony

Inner peace is a state of mental and emotional calmness free from stress and anxiety. It involves a sense of balance and harmony within oneself despite external circumstances. The benefits of inner peace are profound and far-reaching. They enhance emotional health, improve relationships, boost resilience, and contribute to overall happiness and life satisfaction.

Studies have shown that individuals who practice mindfulness and cultivate inner peace experience significant improvements in their mental health. According to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs have been found to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression by up to 58% and 40%, respectively. Additionally, a report by the American Psychological Association highlights that individuals with higher levels of inner peace exhibit greater emotional resilience, better stress management, and enhanced overall well-being. The mind-body connection plays a crucial role in achieving inner peace and emotional harmony.

Our thoughts and emotions can significantly impact our physical health and vice versa. We can create a harmonious mind-body connection that promotes overall well-being by cultivating inner peace. This connection implies that our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs can significantly affect physical health, while our bodily states can influence mental and emotional well-being. The soul, or our spiritual self, plays a critical role in this equation by offering a sense of purpose and belonging, which is essential for mental health.

### Exploring Emotional Obstacles

Achieving inner peace involves recognizing and overcoming various emotional obstacles. Emotional blocks are unresolved feelings and experiences that affect our emotional health. These blocks can manifest as anxiety, depression, or other emotional challenges. By identifying these blocks, we can begin to address them and move towards a state of inner calm.

According to the World Health Organization, depression affects more than 264 million people worldwide, making it one of the leading causes of disability globally. Emotional blocks, such as unresolved grief, limiting beliefs, and

past traumas, often contribute to these mental health challenges. Processing grief and learning to let go are essential steps in overcoming these obstacles. Whether it's grief from life changes or personal losses, practical exercises on acceptance and moving forward can help individuals achieve emotional liberation.

Limiting beliefs, which are negative thoughts that restrict our potential, also play a significant role in hindering inner peace. Transforming these beliefs is crucial for emotional liberation and achieving inner peace.

### Cultivating Self-Compassion and Love

Self-compassion and self-love are foundational to emotional well-being. The RAIN (Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture) method is a powerful technique for dealing with difficult emotions. It helps individuals develop self-compassion and emotional resilience. By recognizing and allowing our feelings, investigating their roots, and nurturing ourselves, we can foster a deep sense of self-compassion.



Research conducted by Dr. Kristin Neff, a leading self-compassion researcher, indicates that individuals who practice self-compassion experience lower levels of anxiety and depression and higher levels of life satisfaction. Her studies show that self-compassionate individuals are better equipped to cope with adversity and exhibit greater emotional resilience.

Forgiveness, both of self and others, is another essential component of inner peace. Holding onto grudges and past hurts can create emotional turmoil. Exercises encouraging forgiveness help release these negative emotions and pave the way for emotional healing. Cultivating a loving attitude towards oneself is also crucial. Self-love enhances our overall emotional health, balances our emotional harmony, and enables us to build healthier relationships with others.

### Creating a Purposeful Life

A significant part of achieving inner peace is understanding our personal values and how they guide our life's purpose. This involves envisioning and creating a life that aligns with our deepest values and aspirations. By living a life that is true to our values, we can achieve a sense of fulfillment and inner peace.

A study published in the Journal of Positive Psychology found that individuals with a strong sense of purpose report higher levels of well-being and life satisfaction. They are more resilient in the face of challenges and have better mental health outcomes. Understanding and aligning with our personal values helps us navigate life's complexities with a sense of direction and inner harmony. Setting healthy boundaries is another vital aspect of maintaining emotional well-being. Healthy boundaries protect our emotional and physical space, allowing us to maintain balance and harmony in our lives. They enable us to interact with others in a respectful and nurturing way to our well-being.

**Dr. Margit Gabriele Muller is an award-winning Certified Mental Health Coach specializing in Inner Dynamics, Professional Certified Coach by the International Coaching Federation ICF, Master Life Coach, NLP Master, Certified Meditation Teacher, Certified Advanced Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness Practitioner, award-winning author, and sought-after speaker.**

[www.drmargit.com](http://www.drmargit.com)

### Practical Tips for Inner Peace and Emotional Harmony

Achieving inner peace requires consistent practice and patience. Here are some practical ways to incorporate these principles into your daily routine:

**Daily Mindfulness Practices:** Incorporate mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing, into your daily routine. Spend a few minutes each day reflecting on your emotions and practicing self-compassion.

**Journaling:** Keep a journal to document your thoughts, feelings, and progress. Journaling can help you gain insights into your emotional state and track your growth.

**Physical Activity:** Engage in regular physical activity to support your mental and emotional health. Exercise can help reduce stress and improve your overall well-being. According to the Mayo Clinic, exercise reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety by releasing endorphins, which are natural mood boosters.

**Consistency and Patience:** Remember that achieving inner peace is a journey. Be patient with yourself and stay consistent in your practices.

### Conclusion

Inner peace is a vital component of emotional well-being and overall life satisfaction. The journey towards inner peace involves overcoming emotional obstacles, cultivating self-compassion and love, and creating a purposeful life. By understanding the importance of inner peace, we can navigate life's challenges with grace and maintain a sense of balance and harmony.

Given the importance of inner peace, my "Soulful Awakening: Foundations of Emotional Harmony" course is designed to help you navigate this transformative journey. Discover the profound benefits of inner peace and emotional harmony and explore more resources on our website, [www.drmargit.com](http://www.drmargit.com). Join the course and take the first step towards a more peaceful and fulfilling life.





# Erectile dysfunction and Complementary Therapies

## Integrating Complementary Therapies:

### 1. Synergistic Approach:

Combining breathwork, mindfulness, and tantric massage creates a comprehensive approach to address both the physical and psychological aspects of ED. The synergy between these practices amplifies their individual benefits, fostering relaxation, stress reduction, and enhanced intimacy.

### 2. Improved Intimacy and Connection:

Integrating these therapies encourages emotional intimacy, communication, and a deeper connection between partners. Tantric massage, particularly, provides an avenue for partners to explore sensuality and promote trust and understanding, fostering a stronger bond.

### 3. Professional Guidance:

Learning these practices from qualified instructors or therapists ensures their safe and effective application. Seeking professional guidance helps individuals explore these therapies respectfully and informally, maximizing their potential benefits.

## Witnessing as a Tantra Practitioner

As a Tantra Practitioner and Somatic Body Worker, I have worked with clients dealing with erectile dysfunction (ED). The transformative impact of complementary therapies like breathwork, mindfulness, and tantric massage can be life-changing.

Through structured breathwork sessions, you can learn to manage stress and anxiety, key factors exacerbating ED. You can regulate the nervous system and reduce cortisol levels. Many clients report feeling more relaxed, which positively influences their sexual experiences. Mindfulness practices empower clients to confront underlying emotional triggers, such as performance anxiety or relationship stress, fostering a newfound self-awareness and emotional resilience. This translates into improved confidence and a more positive outlook on their intimate relationships.

Introducing tantric massage techniques allows you to explore a deeper connection with your partners, fostering trust and intimacy beyond the physical realm. This exploration of sensuality and touch in a safe, guided environment created a space for emotional bonding and rekindling intimacy.

I have witnessed complementary therapies empowering men to reclaim their sexual well-being, fostering a sense of control, enhanced intimacy, and a more fulfilling connection with themselves and their partners.

The integration of breathwork, mindfulness, and tantric massage as complementary therapies for managing erectile dysfunction offers a holistic approach to address its multifaceted nature. These practices, individually and in synergy, contribute to reducing stress, enhancing relaxation, improving intimacy, and fostering a deeper connection between partners. Incorporating these therapies into a comprehensive strategy guided by professionals provides individuals experiencing ED with alternative avenues towards improved sexual health and overall well-being.

Erectile dysfunction (ED) affects a substantial number of men, impacting not just their physical abilities but also their mental and emotional well-being. While conventional medical treatments provide solutions, the emerging field of complementary therapies—such as breathwork, mindfulness, and tantric massage—has garnered attention for its potential to address ED and enhance overall sexual health and intimacy.

## Understanding Erectile Dysfunction:

ED denotes the persistent inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse. Its origins can vary, stemming from physical factors like cardiovascular issues, diabetes, hormonal imbalances, or psychological elements such as stress, anxiety, or depression. Lifestyle choices, including smoking or excessive alcohol consumption, can also contribute to its development. From an energy perspective, ED can also be a result of confusion around masculine roles, identity, inner power, and control over life situations.

## Exploring Complementary Therapies:

### 1. Breathwork:

Breathwork techniques like deep diaphragmatic breathing and pranayama from yoga show promise in reducing stress levels, a significant contributor to ED. These practices calm the nervous system, lower cortisol levels, and induce relaxation, positively impacting sexual function. Mindful breathing exercises also enhance circulation, improving blood flow, which is crucial for achieving and sustaining an erection.

### 2. Mindfulness:

Mindfulness-based practices, including meditation and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), effectively reduce stress and anxiety—common culprits of ED. Cultivating present-moment awareness and acceptance alleviates performance-related pressures during sexual activity. Addressing emotional triggers like performance anxiety or relationship stress through mindfulness promotes self-awareness and mental health, indirectly supporting ED management by tackling underlying psychological factors.

### 3. Tantric Massage:

Tantric massage, rooted in ancient traditions, emphasizes enhancing sensual awareness, intimacy, and connection between partners. This practice focuses on touch, mindfulness, and energy flow to deepen the connection beyond physical pleasure. Its techniques induce relaxation, reduce stress, and potentially alleviate performance anxiety, contributing to a more relaxed and fulfilling sexual experience.



By Lorraine Crookes

[www.orgasmiclife.me](http://www.orgasmiclife.me)

# Unleashing Your Inner Power

## The Path to True Freedom



There is a profound truth in life: the power to change, grow, and thrive lies within each and every one of us. This is the essence of empowerment—the ability to harness our inner strength, rise above challenges, and sculpt our destinies with unwavering determination. Yet, what does empowerment truly entail? How can we unlock the door to our inner potential and stride towards genuine freedom?

Empowerment transcends mere external circumstances; it is an internal metamorphosis, a journey of self-discovery and self-belief. It is about becoming fully honest with ourselves, about realizing that regardless of the trials and challenges we face or the scars we bear, we possess an indomitable spirit capable of overcoming any obstacle. True empowerment begins when we shift our perspective—from seeing ourselves as victims of unfortunate circumstances to ingenious survivors and architects of our own fate.

Imagine a dusty old bookshelf—its shelves cluttered with forgotten tomes, each representing a part of ourselves obscured by doubt, fear, or past trauma. To unveil our true essence, we must embark on a journey within, brushing away the layers of self-doubt and inhibition that obscure our brilliance. It is not about reinventing ourselves but rather rediscovering the innate power that has always resided within.

The key to empowerment lies in embracing our authenticity, recognizing our worth, and embracing our imperfections and what we perceive as our flaws as stepping stones to growth. It is about embracing the unique richness of our experiences—the highs and lows, the victories and defeats—and using them as catalysts for transformation. As Helen Keller once said, “Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved.”

When we harness our inner power, we transcend the limitations imposed by external forces, societal norms, or self-imposed boundaries. We step into our truth unapologetically and wholeheartedly, liberating ourselves from the shackles of conformity and self-doubt. True freedom is not found in external validation or material wealth but in the unwavering belief in our capacity to create our own reality.

By embracing our true potential, we unleash a cascade of possibilities—new horizons to explore, dreams to chase, and heights to reach. We become the architects of our destiny, sculpting our lives with intention and purpose. It is a journey fuelled by passion, resilience, and unwavering faith in our abilities.

Moreover, true freedom is not just about external success or accolades but inner peace, fulfilment, and alignment with our higher purpose. It is about living authentically, in harmony with our values and aspirations, and embracing the journey with open arms. As Maya Angelou beautifully expressed, “The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” In essence, empowerment is the key that unlocks the door to our true freedom—the freedom to be ourselves, unapologetically and authentically. It is a journey of self-discovery, resilience, and unwavering belief in our inherent worthiness. So, let us embark on this transformative journey, shedding the layers of self-doubt and inhibition that obscure our brilliance and embracing the boundless possibilities that await us.

Remember that you are not defined by your past or limited by your circumstances. You are the authors of your own story, the architects of your destiny. Embrace your inner power, unleash your true potential, and soar

to new heights of freedom and fulfilment. The world awaits your brilliance and your light—embrace it wholeheartedly. The world needs you!

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, **“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”** Embrace your inner power and watch your true freedom unfold before your eyes. This is when true magic happens. This is when you start living the life you were always supposed to live.

Go and create the magic you were created to live!



**By Nadija Bajrami**



# You Can't Change Anyone, But You Can Change The Relationship

Welcome back to our journey into the heart of relationships. Whether you're joining us for the first time or have been part of this conversation from the beginning, our mission remains the same: to discover and implement unique ways to transform our relationships from the inside out. In our spring edition, we explored the fundamental Marriage Mindshifts that can transform our relationships:

- *Recognizing our partners as reflections of our beliefs.*
- *Building a foundation of self-trust.*
- *Understanding that one person can instigate change.*
- *Acknowledging that everything in our lives is a relationship.*

Today, we delve deeper into a powerful new approach that integrates these mindshifts: the Inner Mosaic Method.

## Recap of the Marriage Mindshifts

### 1. Your Partner is a Perfect Reflection of Your Beliefs

- Our partners mirror our subconscious beliefs. We must delve into and transform these underlying beliefs to change our relationship outcomes.

### 2. All Healthy Relationships are Built on a Foundation of Self-Trust

- Building self-trust involves trusting not only our human selves but also our higher self or Source energy.

### 3. It Only Takes One Person to Transform Any Relationship

- Individual transformation can ripple through an entire relationship. One person can create significant changes in the relationship dynamic by focusing on self-improvement.

### 4. Everything is a Relationship

- Our lives are a rich tapestry of interactions. Recognizing their interconnectedness encourages us to cultivate mindfulness and intention in all forms of engagement.

## Introducing the Inner Mosaic Method

The Inner Mosaic Method is my proprietary approach that helps you piece together the beautiful picture that your relationship has the potential to become. It integrates the Marriage Mindshifts with specific techniques designed to enhance personal and relational growth.

## Understanding Your Unique Inner Mosaic

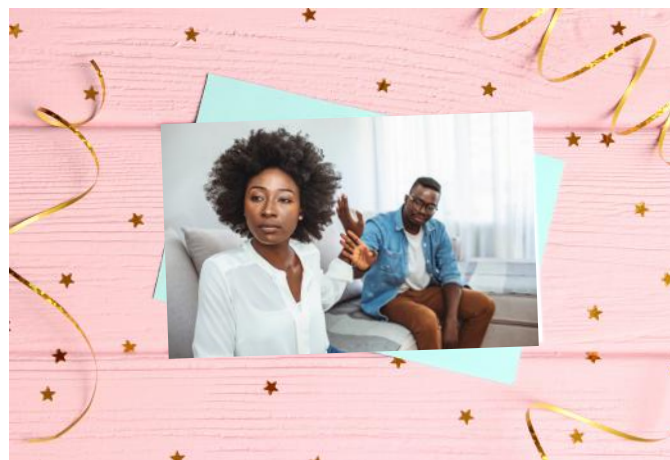
We are composed of many parts, like pieces of a mosaic. These parts, when understood and integrated, form a beautiful and whole image of who we are. The Inner Mosaic Method involves recognizing, understanding, and harmonizing these parts to create a cohesive and empowered self.

## How the Inner Mosaic Method Works

When you encounter a problem, the Inner Mosaic Method helps you increase awareness, align with your highest self, and take action from this place of alignment. It allows you to pause and make conscious decisions about how you want to present yourself, regaining personal power and responding to the world from a place of strength.

## Practical Steps to Implement the Inner Mosaic Method

Implementing the Inner Mosaic Method involves a structured yet deeply personal journey. Here are the six essential steps to help you integrate this approach into your life, transforming your relationships and fostering profound personal growth:



### Step 1: Identify the Situation

The first step is to clearly identify the situation in which you feel stuck. Reflect on what's happening or what has happened, focusing on the specific details. Think about your most recent argument or issue, writing down the details: what happened, who was involved, and any recurring themes. This helps you to understand the context without letting the situation dictate your thoughts, feelings, and actions.

### Step 2: Identify the Story or Theme

Next, identify the story you're telling yourself about the current situation. This involves recognizing the theme or underlying narrative you've attached to

the event, such as feeling powerless, unprotected, or not good enough. Write about the situation in your journal and find the recurring theme. Look for patterns or familiar feelings that may be repeating in your life. Identifying these stories will make it easier to understand and change them.



### Step 3: Identify the Part of You That's Showing Up

Find the earliest memory of experiencing the theme or story you identified. This might resemble inner child work, where you recall a time in your childhood when you felt similar emotions. Reflect on your earliest memory related to the identified theme. Write down the details of this memory, focusing on what happened and how it made you feel.

### Step 4: Personify Your Part

Give a persona to the part of you that was involved in the earliest memory. Identify your age during this memory and create a vivid picture of this part of yourself, including personality traits, values, likes, and dislikes. Answer questions such as: How old were you at the time of your earliest memory? What would you like to call this younger version of yourself? Describe your personality, values, and favorite activities at that age.

### Step 5: Acknowledge Who's Driving Your Bus

Acknowledge that this younger part of you is currently driving your reactions. Approach it with kindness and understanding instead of criticizing or belittling this part. Simply say to yourself, "I am aware that a younger version of myself is driving the bus right now, and this younger version of me is simply scared of getting hurt again." This acknowledgement can be transformative.

### Step 6: Support This Part of Yourself in the Current Situation

Finally, ask yourself what this part of yourself needs from you right now. This could be words of wisdom, comfort, or any form of reassurance. Building trust between your current self and this younger part is crucial. Identify what your Inner Mosaic part needs in the present situation. Experiment with different forms of support, such as self-soothing techniques or seeking comfort from loved ones. Reflect on your

experiences and offer the necessary support to yourself.

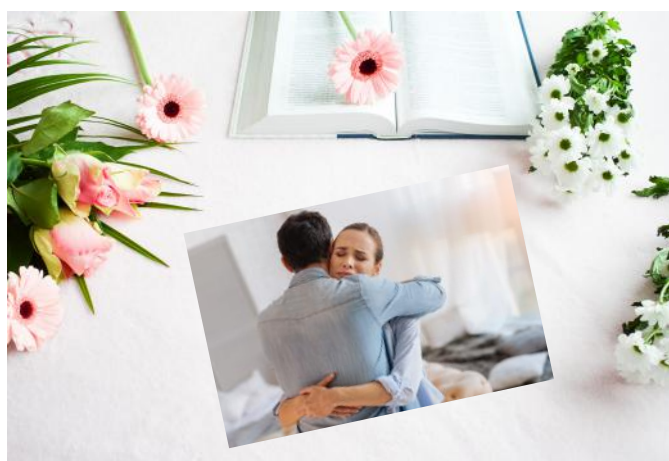
### The Power of Consistency

Consistency is key to maintaining positive changes. Practice the Inner Mosaic Method regularly to ensure long-lasting transformation. Set aside dedicated time each day for reflection, meditation, and self-care.

### Looking Ahead

As we continue this journey, we'll delve deeper into relationship transformation, offering more tools and insights to enhance all areas of your life. In our next article, we will explore specific communication techniques and tools, providing you with actionable steps to foster deeper connections and personal transformation

Remember, transforming your relationship is ongoing and filled with opportunities for learning and growth. By embracing these Marriage Mindshifts and the Inner Mosaic Method, we open ourselves to a world of possibilities, where every interaction is an opportunity to deepen our connection and understanding.



By Samantha Kaaua,  
Marriage Mindshift Coach,  
International Bestselling Author,  
and TEDx Speaker

[www.thegemms.com](http://www.thegemms.com)





# How Spiritual Leadership thrives in times of AI

“Artificial Intelligence is either the best or worst thing to happen to humanity,” Stephen Hawkins got to the point. And even if international initiatives such as the “AI Safety Summit” aim to keep its dangers as low as possible, a harmful gap is currently opening between managers and employees regarding AI in everyday working life. Spiritual leadership fills this gap and ensures a strong commitment of professionals, huge productivity, and personal well-being for everyone involved.

The background:

The expected increase in productivity through generative artificial intelligence technologies such as ChatGPT is gigantic and promises those responsible for medicine, research, economics, or mobility 2.6 to 4.4 trillion US dollars annually. These figures are based on a current study carried out by the McKinsey Global Institute. No wonder that almost two-thirds of business and technology executives feel excited about GenAI when asked in surveys.

The enthusiasm for the prospective productivity gain obviously prevents managers from recognizing the concerns of their team members: More than half of employees, 58 per cent, are afraid of losing their jobs due to GenAI. A total of 60 per cent fear stress and burnout. This is the result of a current Accenture study. However, it also shows that just 29 per cent of board members assume that their employees are worried about losing their jobs and that only 37 per cent of CXOs see stress and burnout caused by AI as a possible problem.

This lack of awareness could cost companies dearly, as chronic fear negatively impacts humans. Cortisol released during long-term stress causes, e.g., concentration problems, forgetfulness, reduced physical performance, and heart disease; even areas of the brain shrink under long-term stress. It's a knockout for employees' creativity. But creativity has never been more valuable and necessary than today. The art of questioning the existing and the limits of current imagination gets all the more important the more digital the world becomes.

Spiritual leaders can't just avoid this situation but also design it to benefit everyone. They provide certainty to the team members so that extraordinary ideas can be developed. “Come to the edge,” he said. “It's too high,” they said. “Come to the edge,” he said. “We'll fall,” they

said. “Come to the edge,” he said. And they did. And he pushed them. And they flew. (Christopher Logue) This quote sums up spiritual leadership: Managers deeply connected with the team give employees wings, carrying them safely through challenging times and upheavals such as those generated by GenAI. At that, one of the most powerful tools is the mindful use of language. It ensures mutual trust and allows the team spirit to flourish.

For example, while we traditionally talk about “change management”, spiritual leaders know the power of speaking about “choice management” instead.



“Nobody likes change except wet babies.” The known gives us a sense of familiarity and security. Change can be difficult, challenging, and scary, as it often involves stepping out of one's comfort zone and facing uncertainty. Maybe there were also bad experiences in the past, such as when “those above” decided over us and when we were confronted with arbitrary decisions and didn't feel seen, heard, or understood. Therefore, change management often has a very negative connotation.

Choice, on the other hand, is the act of selecting and consciously deciding among several alternatives. It gives us back our power and control and the opportunity to choose between two or more options. Leaders who talk about choice management to team members will experience two effects: They will internalize a mindset of self-efficacy and thus act out of inner conviction. Employees perceive the authenticity and receive the orientation they need to overcome insecurity. An atmosphere of confidence develops within the workforce.

Moreover, if managers communicate the company's decision, e.g., for GenAI, as a proactive choice due to the expected opportunities and benefits, they underpin the company's strong position that is not just following the force of circumstances. People will commit to a strong employer, embrace new situations with more confidence, develop more endurance, and set themselves ambitious goals. Spiritual leaders can thus act as a lighthouse and navigate the workforce safely through the unknown realms, securing the profitability of technologies like AI.

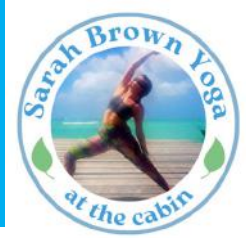
**By Andrea Huber**



[www.andrea-huber-coaching.de](http://www.andrea-huber-coaching.de)

# Why Yoga is for Every Body

## Yoga For Emotional Release



**Does 'Feelings are just visitors. Let them come and go,' Mooji**

Emotions get trapped in the body. This can cause muscle tension, stress, anxiety and feelings of depression. Without the means to release these emotions, it's as if we are carrying around a heavy backpack with unresolved feelings and tensions. Letting go of trapped emotions results in a sense of relief. Yoga is great for this as it encompasses three aspects: physical, mental, and emotional. It wakes you up on all three levels and brings you to a safe space to release these feelings.

Through the practice of yoga, you can become more aware of subconscious emotions. A regular routine can help you build a more profound connection within. This allows you to release feelings that no longer serve before they build up in the body. Finding a way to release can be a game changer. Here are my top suggestions to try:

### Shaking Meditation

Stand with your feet hip distance apart and play drumming music (or any music of your choice). Keep your feet still, but begin to bounce through the knees. Shake your arms, shoulders and hips. After a few minutes, the shake will take over, and you won't have to think about doing it. Try to practice for at least 5 minutes. Shaking is amazing, and you can feel the release. It calms the nervous system and puts the body back to equilibrium.

### Burning Meditation

On a piece of paper, write down anything that has been bothering you. Don't hold back – this is your chance to let go. When you have finished, burn this piece of paper (safely, of course). As you watch the smoke, know your worries have been released. In this ritual, you let go of the past and make space for the future.

### Pose: Child's Pose (calm the mind)

*When it comes to releasing suppressed emotions with yoga, few poses are as comforting as Child's Pose.*

- Come onto your shins with the tops of the feet on the floor. Bring your big toes together and spread your knees apart. Shift your hips back toward your heels and reach your arms in front of you.
- Rest your forehead on the floor or a block.

### Pose: Thread the needle (to combat stress)

*We carry a lot of stress and burden in the shoulders – use this pose to release.*

- Find child's pose and walk your hands towards you a few inches.
- Reach your right arm open to the ceiling, then thread it under the left arm, bringing your right shoulder and cheek to the mat.
- Do this pose on both sides.

### Pose: Bound Angle Pose (to free emotions)

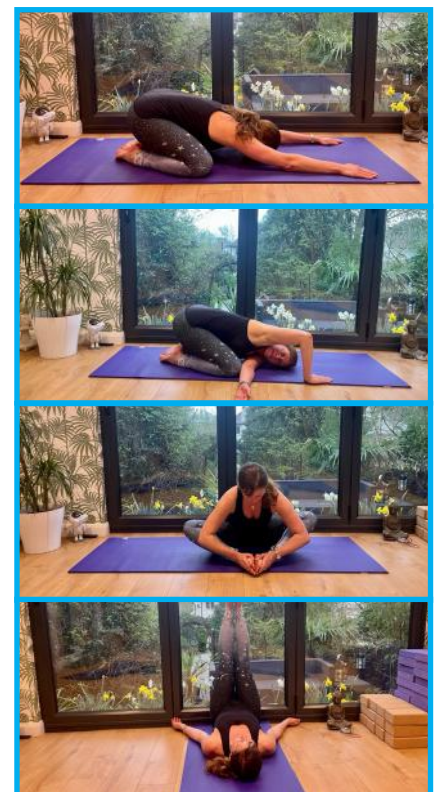
*Negative emotions tend to rest in the hips – use this pose to release.*

- Sit with your legs straight out in front of you, raising your pelvis on a blanket if your hips are tight.
- Bend your knees, pull your heels toward your pelvis, then drop your knees out to the sides and press the soles of your feet together.
- Bring your heels as close to your pelvis as you comfortably can.
- Hold on the ankles or outer edges of the feet.
- Relax the shoulders. You can stay upright or fold forward – chest parallel to the floor.

### Pose: Legs up the Wall

*Give your body and mind the chance to wind down in this restorative pose.*

- On your side, snuggle your bottom against the wall.
- Roll onto your back so that the backs of your legs are fully supported by the wall.
- Rest here and allow all stresses and strains to leave your body.



*Photographs from Sarah's studio.*

*Sarah Brown is an experienced yoga teacher, personal trainer, Reiki & energy healer, writer, and after-dinner speaker. She holds weekly group classes in her bespoke studio in South London and via Zoom. Sarah facilitates workshops and retreats internationally and corporate events.*

*Her book 'Healing with Yoga' is available on Amazon.*

*[www.sarahbrown yoga.co.uk](http://www.sarahbrown yoga.co.uk)*

*Instagram & Facebook: SarahBrownYoga*



# The Mirror Effect

## How Your Reflection Influences Your Daily Mindset

We stand before our mirrors every morning, preparing ourselves for the day ahead. Did you know this simple ritual, often rushed and overlooked, holds the potential to significantly impact our mindset and, consequently, our daily interactions and opportunities? The act of looking in the mirror and liking what you see can set a positive tone for the entire day, influencing your confidence, your mood, and how you engage with the world. The mirror becomes a reflection not only of our outward appearance but also of our inner self-perception, reinforcing positive traits and beliefs about ourselves. This phenomenon, known as the “mirror effect,” underscores the powerful connection between our self-perception and daily experiences.

The mirror effect is rooted in the concept of “encloded cognition,” a term coined by researchers Hajo Adam and Adam Galinsky in their 2012 study. Encloded cognition describes the influence that clothes have on the wearer’s psychological processes. This concept extends beyond clothing to include all personal grooming and appearance aspects. When you look in the mirror and feel satisfied with what you see, it can enhance your self-esteem and positively impact your mental state.

The mirror effect operates on several psychological levels. According to the Self-Perception Theory, we form our self-identity based on our perceptions of our own behaviour and appearance. When we see ourselves looking good, we are more likely to perceive ourselves as confident and capable. Additionally, positive visual feedback from our reflection reinforces a positive self-image, boosting our mood and motivating us to approach the day with a more optimistic and proactive attitude.

On the other hand, a mismatch between how we feel internally and how we perceive ourselves externally can create cognitive dissonance. Ensuring that our external appearance aligns with our desired self-image can reduce this dissonance and promote psychological harmony. As such, it prompts us to be mindful of our clothing choices, recognising their potential to influence not only how others perceive us but also how we perceive ourselves.



## The Power of First Impressions

First impressions wield an undeniable power in shaping our perceptions of others and influencing subsequent interactions. Within seconds of meeting someone, we form initial judgments based on their appearance, demeanour, and mannerisms. Research suggests that first impressions are formed rapidly and are remarkably resilient to change.

Given the significance of first impressions, it is essential to be mindful of the cues we convey to others through our appearance, body language, and communication style. Projecting confidence, warmth, and authenticity can enhance our likability and credibility, paving the way for positive interactions and relationships.

Whether it’s a job interview, a business meeting, or a social gathering, how we present ourselves can significantly impact how others perceive us. If you feel good about your appearance, this confidence will be evident to others, which in turn helps make that strong first impression.

However, the mirror effect goes beyond the initial impression. When you consistently present yourself well, you reinforce positive perceptions over time. This can lead to improved relationships, greater trust, and increased influence, both personally and professionally. It can also open doors to opportunities, whether they are professional advancements, social invitations, or personal growth experiences.

When feeling confident, you’re more likely to engage positively, and improved communication is a key benefit, as it enhances your ability to articulate thoughts and assert yourself clearly, facilitating more effective interactions. Moreover, confident individuals tend to exert greater influence, naturally attracting others and gaining their trust, which can also open doors to greater opportunities such as leadership roles and possible collaborative ventures. Additionally, feeling good about yourself may encourage you to venture further beyond your comfort zone, broadening your social and professional networks and giving you the confidence to try new and exciting things!



## The Mirror Effect and Long-Term Impact

While the mirror effect can provide an immediate boost in confidence and mood, its benefits can also impact your overall well-being and success. Feeling good about yourself also contributes to better mental health and can help to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as exacerbating feelings of inadequacy and isolation.

Our perception of ourselves can also influence how we handle stress and adversity. A positive self-view equips us with a stronger sense of control and the belief that we are more able to cope with difficulties. This helps reduce the impact of stress and promotes healthier coping mechanisms, such as seeking support or finding constructive solutions. A negative self-perception, however, can increase feelings of helplessness and increase stress, leading to maladaptive coping strategies like avoidance or denial.

So, how do you enhance your personal style? The key lies in understanding and embracing your individuality while staying open to experimentation. Start by identifying what styles, colours, and fits make you feel most comfortable and confident.

Assess your lifestyle needs and choose pieces that align with both your daily activities and personal preferences. Invest in a few timeless, high-quality items that can serve as the foundation of your wardrobe, and then incorporate trend-led pieces to keep your look updated. Take time to pay attention to the details—things like accessories and general grooming- and be mindful that even how you wear your clothes can make a significant difference to how you look and feel. Ensure your wardrobe contains items you love to wear and seek inspiration from various sources, but adapt those ideas to suit your own unique style.

Ultimately, personal style is about empowerment and self-expression, so trust your instincts and wear what makes you feel like the best version of yourself.

Keep in mind that your personal style is not vanity because it goes beyond mere appearance; it's a form of self-expression and self-care. Personal style encompasses how you choose to present yourself to the outside world, reflecting your personality, values, and creativity. It's a way to communicate who you are without saying a word—a visual representation of your identity. It's about feeling comfortable and empowered rather than seeking validation or approval from others.

Additionally, personal style can be a means of cultural expression and celebration of diversity and individuality. By embracing your unique style, you're embracing your authenticity and asserting your right to express yourself freely. Therefore, personal style is not vanity; it's a meaningful and empowering aspect of self-discovery and self-expression.

In essence, the mirror effect highlights the profound connection between our self-perception and our daily mindset. By taking the time to look in the mirror and appreciate what we see, we can set a positive tone for the day, influencing our interactions, opportunities, and overall well-being. It's a powerful tool for enhancing our mental and emotional health. So, the next time you stand before the mirror, remember that investing in yourself and liking what you see is the first step towards a confident, successful, and fulfilling day.

**By Angela Haynes-Ranger**

Contact email is [angela@adourable.com](mailto:angela@adourable.com)

[www.adourable.com](http://www.adourable.com)



# HONOURING THE WATERS OF YOUR BEING

## Emotional Healing: Journey To Awakening

*"Without understanding how our feelings, thoughts and behaviours work together, it's almost impossible to find our way back to ourselves and each other."*  
(Brene Brown ~ Atlas Of The Heart)

### What does it mean to honour your being?

Do you honour all aspects of your being: physical, emotional, heart, mind and spirit? Do you honour all the experiences you have passed through? These experiences, especially when they challenge you, are opportunities for you to heal, grow, transform, and evolve. In other words, to awaken.

### As within, so without

What draws your attention most closely in the world outside you right now? It will be deeply connected to that within you and how you feel. There is an illusion that we are separate from the world, but how you feel about yourself affects the outcomes of your life and your relationship with all those around you. All are interconnected. The world around you is truly your mirror—as within, so without.

### Emotions are innate

Love them or hate them; emotions are innate to your nature as a human being ~ joy, sadness, anger, relief, resentment, grief, bliss, frustration, heartache, hope... When they flow through you, they ensure your emotional wellbeing. When they are suppressed, they give rise to emotional imbalance. This can range from deep unhappiness to a mild sense of unease. Sometimes, in your need to protect yourself from further hurt, you may repress your emotions so they are no longer felt. Herein lies the danger zone.

### Emotions have a bad press

People will do almost anything not to feel pain, including causing pain and abusing power. Some may numb out, disconnect, or shrink from life and new experiences, seek solace in drugs or alcohol, or live over busy, distracted lives. All of this takes them further from themselves. But we forget that emotions are also positive: joy, optimism, hope, happiness, enthusiasm, curiosity, compassion...

### Suppressed emotions create physical dis-ease

When you are unable to articulate your emotions, you may feel hopeless, isolated, or even destructively angry. Ultimately, unreleased emotions like shame, fear, blame,

anger, and grief are toxic, especially when these feelings are directed towards the self. It is well documented that emotional stress ultimately gives rise to dis-ease physically and mentally. What is less well understood is that it also affects us energetically and spiritually.

### Emotional experiences determine the mindset

In my healing work with others, I witness how childhood experiences fundamentally affect their beliefs about life, relationships, and expectations of life. Life rises to meet their expectations, and they get locked into repeating generational patterns.

*"Scientists have repeatedly confirmed our emotional reactions show up in brain activity before we have time to think."*

*Doc Childre & Howard Martin, The HeartMath Solution*

### Nurturing role of the mother

The kind of mothering you have received profoundly affects your own ability to receive the goodness of life. If you felt nurtured and loved unconditionally, your self-worth will be healthy. Your ability to love yourself rests upon your ability to value yourself.

### Protective role of the father

The degree to which you felt protected by your father will deeply affect how safe you feel. If you felt safeguarded and precious to your father, you will find it easy to set boundaries, saying no with ease to anything not for your wellbeing.

### Wounded emotions as a healing resource

As people move through emotional healing, their view of what is possible shifts organically, positive expectations and emotional experiences increase, and damaged relationships mend or fall away. This creates space for new and healthier emotions, attitudes, and relationships to form. Personal and family healing occurs.

### Vulnerability as strength

We are all human and mixed bags of emotions. When we allow this, we enable healing, transformation, and evolution. Vulnerability becomes our growth point, and our empathy, compassion, and understanding increase for others.

### The healing response

When emotions are released in a safe and gentle manner, physical discomforts can ease, minds calm, and perspective and expectations shift. Life rises to meet those changed expectations, offering you new and life-enhancing experiences. You awaken to your beautiful potential. You honour and come home to yourself.

**By Elizabeth Chanter**

*For the past 20 years, shamanically trained Elizabeth Chanter of Honour Being has been transforming lives by honouring all aspects of being. She does this through interweaving the gentle healing art of Golden Way Reiki, compassionate listening, energy medicine and Dreaming Your Inner Child Sacred Art Workshops and Retreats. She is passionate about helping others to create bright, beautiful and balanced lives. Her next article will offer more on how to come home to yourself.*



[www.honourbeingreiki.co.uk](http://www.honourbeingreiki.co.uk)  
[elizabeth@honourbeingreiki.co.uk](mailto:elizabeth@honourbeingreiki.co.uk)

# Learning Unplugged

By Hulya Kurt



How to learn, un-learn, and learn again. The mastery of the new modality on learning. It is evident that with the rapidly evolving landscape of technology and AI, current education and learning need to undergo a huge transformation. This is valid not only for education in schools. It is valid for learning and upskilling in the professional environment as well.

Some explorations on how learning might look like and how it will change:

## Personalized and customized learning experiences

We know for a fact that one size does not fit all. In our education and professional learning, we generalize the modality and the content to make it easier and more consistent for everyone whom we want to teach. It is time-consuming to tailor each module of learning to one individual. AI comes in handy, as it can analyse the

student's potential and performance in real-time and adjust the curriculum to match the student's best way of understanding, pace, and rhythm.

Imagine a world where learning disabilities are highly addressed in an excellent way, where everyone is included,

and we don't label any more students who are different than the norm.

## Learning made fun

AI will be an immense assistant to craft learnings that are hugely interactive. Through Augmented reality, students will be living history, and through gamification, learning will be fun without realizing that they are learning and studying. It will be more engaging than listening to a professor or watching an online presentation. Hands-on and provoking for creative thinking and experimenting in a safe environment.

## Teachers' role re-imagined.

It will make life easier for the teachers. AI can take over repetitive tasks such as giving grades and other administrative responsibilities. The teachers will be acting as facilitators rather than conveying the essentials. With time at hand, teachers can address the emotional and individual needs of the students. AI cannot cater to emotions and creative thinking. This is where the teacher's role can be as a coach and mentor, complimenting AI learning with business cases, personal experiences, and controversial conversations and discussions.

## Life-long learning made possible.

I call myself a student for life, as we learn each day. With AI, learning will be available throughout the life cycle of any human, not only for the student. Training and courses can be offered by AI customized towards a human-on-demand basis, taking into consideration their interest and needs in an impactful way. It can monitor and measure progress and empower humans to take on more challenges, making it fun and enjoyable. Think about the step counters on your Apple Watch, for example. When I see that I did not take my 10,000 steps and it alerts me that I need to move, I immediately act.

## Curriculum and Professional Training updates

Using AI in our favour, it can immediately analyse and update any kind of training to meet the latest trends, information, and news. Meaning that any learning material will meet the current standards and the current skills needed for any industry and environment in a timely and relevant manner.

## Ethics and devil's advocate

And here is the challenge. Whereas AI can assist us tremendously, we shall be also mindful about data privacy, digital divide, and the dependency on technology. As always, balance is the key. AI-driven education and upskilling combined with a human-centered approach shall be the goal for humans.

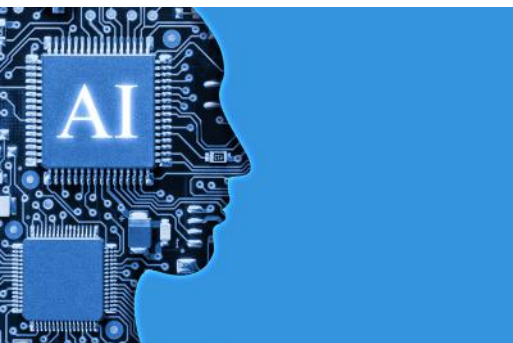
As a wrap-up and food for thought, we shall embrace AI, be eager to learn, and use it appropriately and with due diligence. Not all that AI has in its repository is always true and adequate, and it can all use what was in the past and what is in the future. Always remember that humans create and add to the data bank of AI. It can be bias, it can be out of date, not completely true or covering all perspectives.

What we shall drive from this is to learn how to use AI, how to pose the questions in a clear and precise manner so that AI can support us, give us ideas, and take us to the next level. This is

our power as humans. It is being able to gap the bridge between the data and the emotional aspects, creativity, and innovation. Humans, teachers, and leaders are still needed to create vision, craft strategies, and act as a force for good for a better world.

Enjoy the ride, be curious and open minded.

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# How To Live A Good Life

By Dr Jan C.Wulff

In the previous columns, we have examined some principles that help us lead successful, peaceful, happy, and fulfilled lives.

Today, let us look at some aspects of success, specifically. Success is a requirement for any living being, be it a plant, an animal or a human being. Remember, your very existence came about through that one out of 5 million sperms that competed successfully for the privilege to connect with the ovule.

After that, you had to take each and every step in your development successfully:

Knowing how to get (breast-)fed, learning how to sit, crawl, walk, speak, eat with cutlery, schooling, sports, etc. You were determined to learn each step – you had a somehow unstoppable desire to conquer new abilities. Just imagine how toddlers learn to walk – they try and try again and again, often without any evidence of frustration, lack of confidence or any other negative feeling. They somehow know that they will succeed. Just imagine you would have skipped only one of those steps mentioned above.

**“Success is the progressive realization of a worthwhile goal”.**

Success is a process, a journey, not a destination. You should never stop wanting to be successful. Success is the evidence that you are growing, and growth is a necessity of life – and, if you ask astrophysicists – of the known universe as a whole.

If you want to be more successful in any area of your life, successful people may be appropriate role models. So, what habits and skills do successful people practice?

They have learned to have a pleasing personality, smile, and laugh a lot. And they know **“How To Win Friends And Influence People,”** which is also the title of a book by Dale Carnegie, written some 70 years ago and still an absolute must-read. Reading it and applying its wisdom will improve your personal communication skills, sometimes dramatically. Consequently, you’ll be more successful in business, personal relationships, etc.

Stop “excusitis”, a term David J. Schwartz has used in his wonderful – again – must-read book **“The Magic Of Thinking Big”**. Successful people take responsibility for anything and everything in their life and never take refuge in excuses. And they blame nobody. Instead, they look out for the next step into a desirable direction.

Successful people don’t try to change other people. They don’t feel they have to. They are themselves. If asked to do so, they share their opinion, experiences or facts. And they don’t try to “make a pig sing” because they know they’d waste their time and would annoy the pig. Who is the pig you want to make sing? A family member, a neighbor, a friend, a business partner...? What “song” do you think they need to know? Your political, philosophical, economic or religious truths?

They don’t indulge in What-If Scenarios, insisting on clarification of what should be done if this or that happens. They have no fear of the future, which in those who have provokes failure.

And they don’t tell other people their pitiful stories, thereby dwelling in the past, which is unchangeable. You know that, of course, so you may want to act accordingly. The past is past. Not to dwell in the future or the past may raise the question: Where else? The obvious answer is: In the present. This word has more than one meaning. Living in the present is a present, a real gift. Successful people do this.

They are aware of the present time, which includes being attentive to any circumstance and being a pleasing personality and polite to other people. They know that it is extremely helpful to continuously ask themselves: “What benefit does the other person have from being around me? If they say yes or no, they mean it; they are aware of what they are saying and what that means: A Yes is a Yes, and a No is a No.

Successful people accept delay of gratification. They know that some things require time and patience. This you can very clearly observe in mother nature: The farmer sows in spring and harvests in autumn. He has to wait some five months for his “gratification”. A pretty extreme example is a certain Chinese bamboo tree. You seed it in, let’s say, year one, and you fertilize and water it regularly. For seven years, nothing visible happens, but in the 7th year, it grows 90 feet high in 2 months. Gratification comes after seven years.



Chinese bamboo tree. For seven years, nothing visible happens, but in the 7th year, it grows 90 feet high in 2 months. Gratification comes after seven years.

Yet another example: You plan to open a restaurant. From the initial idea, until you actually open, it takes approximately one year. And it usually takes several more years before you are making a decent profit. You have to accept the delay of gratification. Otherwise, you’ll fail by giving up too soon. To master a foreign language, play an instrument, or become really good at any kind of sport, accepting the delay of gratification is key.

They are always on time. They prefer to be an hour early than 5 minutes late. They acknowledge other peoples achievements – and their own.

When appropriate, they “let their hair down” and celebrate exuberantly. By doing so, they let go of inside pressure that may have built up over time. They go out and let themselves be inspired by Mother Nature. They watch, feel and listen to what she tells. By that, they practice awareness.

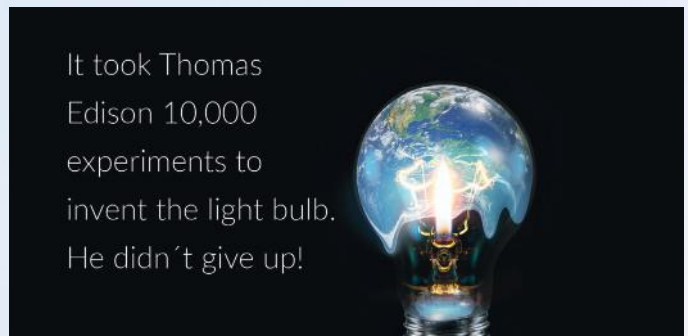
They look—they search—for the diamond in any negative situation, no matter how small that diamond may be. And they then amplify it and make it bigger and bigger in their minds. They know from experience that anything appearing negative at first glance may turn out to be a blessing later. “I wonder what is hiding behind the next corner?” is an attitude they keep remembering.



They look for newness and know that any newness equals anxiety and that it is very often best to step out of your comfort zone and overcome anxiety. They learn by and by that newness becomes more and more “normal” the more often they expose themselves to the unknown. Think of travelling to unknown places, countries or cultures. What may be exciting and frightening at first becomes “normal” later.

They don’t follow any leader; they are their own leaders. They ask for advice, other people’s opinions, and consultation. They listen to people who are where they want to be and have been where they themselves are presently. They carefully choose who they listen to. But they take no orders. They follow their gut feeling.

To empower themselves on a regular basis, they do little things that make them experience that they are in control of their lives. For instance, they don’t follow their normal route to work but choose a different one. They brush their teeth with their left instead of their right hand. They omit caffeine, alcohol, or sugar for a day or two. Doing so, they experience that they are “at cause” instead of “at effect” of what is happening to them.



It took Thomas Edison 10,000 experiments to invent the light bulb. He didn’t give up!

Leaders are always readers. Successful people read regularly. They listen to audios and attend meetings where they learn new or old stuff. An old Chinese proverb says: When you read a book 1000 times, you start to comprehend it. In any skill you want to really master, repetition is KEY. Famous Kung Fu master Bruce Lee said it very clearly: “I am more afraid of an opponent that has trained one hit 10,000 times than one that has trained 100 hits 100 times each.

Successful people never accept defeat. “The fight goes on until I win”. It took Thomas Edison 10,000 experiments to invent the light bulb. He didn’t give up. At the end of his life, a journalist asked him how he had been able to endure all those failures. He responded, somehow puzzled, “What do you mean—failures? I have successfully learnt 10,000 times how it wouldn’t work to eventually find the solution.

Do the right thing long enough, consistently. Knowing this will make you more successful.





## Reclaim Your Energy, Intimacy & Focus with a Digital Detox

In today's world, digitalization has become an integral part of our lives and has brought numerous benefits to education, health, and economic success. However, the prevalence of digital technology also poses some challenges, including privacy concerns, decreased cognitive abilities, and information overload. In this digitally saturated world, we are constantly bombarded with notifications, emails, and social media updates. This hyperconnectivity can have negative impacts on our physical and mental health, such as poor sleep, reduced physical activity, headaches and eye strain, repetitive strain injuries, depression, stress and anxiety, increased isolation, decreased focus, and poor self-esteem.

A digital detox will help you achieve balance in life. Instead of your devices controlling you, you will control them. By taking stock of your digital habits, you will see where they contribute to your health and happiness and where digitalization is detrimental. Technology has transformed how we live and work, making our lives easier and more convenient. But, like any other innovation, it comes with its own challenges. In today's digitally dominated world, finding balance is crucial. You need to ensure that you don't let technology take over your life, affecting your mental and emotional well-being.

The goal is to use technology to enhance your life, giving you more time and energy to enjoy the activities that bring you joy and fulfillment. By taking control of your use of technology, you can find a sense of peace and balance, which is crucial to your overall health. Strive to strike a balance between technology and your daily life so you can enjoy the benefits that both have to offer.

### How to Craft Your Digital Detox Plan

A well-thought-out digital detox plan will include your goals, strategies for handling challenges, and a way to measure the positive effects of a digital detox.

#### ***What Are Your Goals for Your Digital Detox?***

Take a moment of self-reflection to get really personal here and consider why you would do a digital detox. What improvements do you expect to experience in your life as a result of your digital detox?

#### ***How Much Do You Use Technology and What For?***

Keep a log of every digital interaction you have for a whole day, including automated ones (my smart bulb is programmed to wake me up with a simulated sunrise each morning). You will likely be surprised at how much more you use technology than you thought.

#### ***Decide What You Are Going to Eliminate***

For each technology you use, consider if it has a positive or negative impact, and ask yourself if this gives or takes away. It may be impractical to eliminate some items, such as your work emails and Zoom meetings, but you may choose to restrict them to only during set office hours.

#### ***Decide How Long You Will Detox For***

Set yourself a realistic duration for your detox. You can always add on, just like with the list of things you are eliminating or restricting. I do my best to



go tech-free for 24 to 48 hours every month. You might decide that Sundays will be your detox, maybe no devices from 8 pm to 8 am, or perhaps you decide to go a month without shopping on Amazon.

### ***Decide What You Will Do Instead***

For each of the digital habits you are changing, devise a plan. Consider how you will accomplish tasks instead of using digital means and decide on your strategy. If you do not use messaging apps, how will you communicate with others? Be careful not to replace one habit with another. Remember, this is your detox, so you get to decide the parameters. Start small; you can always add more as you get comfortable with the adjustment.

### **Practical Tips for a Successful Digital Detox Plan**

Let's explore some strategies to ensure your digital detox plan is successful, because you will be tempted to bend or break the rules of your detox.

#### ***Anticipate Challenges and Have a Plan in Place***

A digital detox can be challenging, especially if you're used to relying on technology for many aspects of your life. Before you start, think about the potential challenges that might arise and come up with a plan for how you will handle them. By anticipating these challenges and having a plan in place, you can increase your chances of success.

#### ***Make a List of Non-Digital Activities***

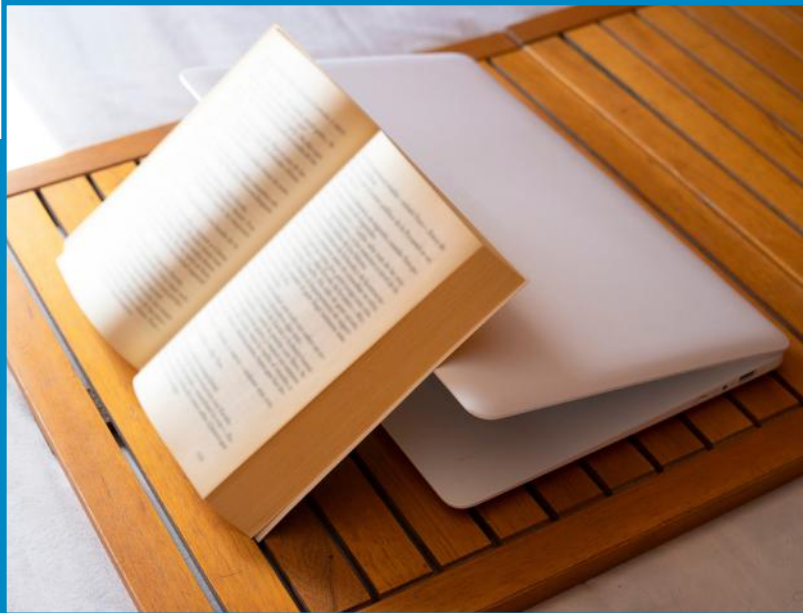
When you're used to spending a lot of time on your phone or computer, it can be hard to know what to do with your time during a digital detox. To help you stay busy and engaged, make a list of non-digital activities that you enjoy. This might include reading, going for a walk, or spending time with friends and family. Post your list in a prominent place to remind yourself of other ways to spend your time.

#### ***Establish Device-Free Bedtime and Morning Routines***

Using technology before bed can disrupt your sleep and make it harder to relax. Establish a device-free bedtime routine to help you unwind and get a good night's sleep. This might include reading a book, taking a bath, or practicing meditation. Similarly, try to avoid using technology first thing in the morning. Instead, start your day with a healthy breakfast, exercise, or some quiet time to center yourself.

#### ***Have an Accountability Buddy***

Recruiting others to join you in a digital detox can greatly enhance your chances of success. You can encourage each other to stay on track and celebrate your progress together. You can swap ideas for alternative activities to do instead of scrolling through social media or browsing the internet. Plus, you will have someone to talk to about any challenges or obstacles that may arise along the way.



### **Tracking Your Progress and Celebrating Your Success**

Keep a journal to track your progress and measure your success. This way, you can see how far you've come and identify areas that need improvement. Additionally, plan celebrations along the way to encourage yourself to keep going. Celebrating small victories and milestones is a great way to stay motivated. You can celebrate by taking yourself on a date, going out for dinner, having a massage, buying a new colouring book, taking an art class, creating a vision board, or anything else that makes you happy. Remember, every step counts, so keep moving forward and celebrate your achievements!

### **Striking Balance in The Digital Age**

Finding balance in this digitally dominated world safeguards your well-being while enhancing your ability to manage time, maintain critical thinking skills, and foster meaningful connections. Embarking on a digital detox journey brings myriad benefits. By integrating a digital detox plan into your life, you pave the way for a healthier, more mindful relationship with technology, ensuring a future where you control your devices, not the other way around.

If you would like support creating and implementing your digital detox plan, download your free guide at [www.lifeuntethered.com/detox](http://www.lifeuntethered.com/detox).

Emma Hull is a Transformational Life Coach and Founder of Life Untethered Coaching. She teaches you to have unshakeable confidence so you can achieve your audacious dreams.

Sign up for her inspirational emails and book your free strategy session at [www.lifeuntethered.com](http://www.lifeuntethered.com).

***By Emma Hull***



# Exploring Our Cultural Obsession with Alcohol

Alcohol is inarguably everywhere. If you grew up in most Western countries, you saw it being consumed from as early on as you can remember, whether it was directly in your home, in movies or on television, around your relatives, in restaurants, airplanes, or at parties and celebrations; its usage is almost ubiquitous and has been a part of human society for millennia.

Some of us have had horrific experiences witnessing the adults around us getting inebriated, while others may have felt less intimacy with it until we were older. Still, regardless of your earliest memories of drinking, at some point in your life (unless you are of the rare few to never have had it pass your lips), you became personally acquainted with what it feels like to be intoxicated. In my work as a hypnotherapist and Holistic Health Coach, working mainly and specifically with people to heal Alcohol Use Disorder, I see one great commonality that is - the first time that they drank, they remember it being foul-tasting, hurting their stomachs, and in many cases, getting very sick from ingesting it.



From an objective viewpoint, one might look at all of the tragedies, deaths, illnesses, personal loss, and grievances attributed to alcohol and wonder why we tolerate it at all. But by contrast, we celebrate it, promote it, push it on ourselves and others, rely on it to solve our problems and return

to it again and again even after we've incurred vomiting and nausea from drinking it.

We're very quick to notice when others have an apparent 'problem' with drinking, but we have greater difficulty seeing our own relationship with it.

## ***This is very curious, don't you think?***

Why would we be able to identify alcohol as a source of misery and pain but then also collectively insist on its presence? The answer lies deep in our subconscious. If you think back to your first experience with drinking something alcoholic or becoming buzzed or drunk, what was your motive for participating? Were there friends, peers, or people offering it to you that you wanted to appease? Perhaps there was some verbal pressure or other kinds of persuasion? Or maybe you'd simply seen people drinking, and you were curious about why this type of behavior is accompanied by so much energy, excitement, and drama.



Whatever your specific details, there was likely a strong motivation to feel connected with others by doing something that



would create a sense of bonding. To belong is probably our deepest mammalian desire because, primitively speaking, we do not survive without belonging. In our caveman days, this was explicitly true. If you were ousted from the clan, you were put out of the protection of the group and made vulnerable to the elements and predators. To our primal brain, to belong is to survive; to be separate is to die.

The mechanics of our needs for safety and belonging are constantly driving our behavior behind the scenes. We tend to think we make decisions based on logic and reason, but that is rarely the case. Especially when it comes to making decisions that feel controversial to us. For example, we can see the harmful effects of overconsuming alcohol in the lives of others, but we will rationalize and justify them for ourselves. Logically, it would make sense not to drink alcohol as we can perceive, accept, and notice the damage to humanity that it is responsible for, but subconsciously, we are deeply attached to the significance that we have assigned to it, such as comfort, self-identification, identifying as part of a group or culture, fun and, entertainment, friendship and camaraderie, among others.

This theory of subconscious motivation also helps us understand why, when we attempt to change our habits with an addictive substance such as alcohol, it can prove to be quite difficult even though we have strong intentions for the desire to make healthier choices and improve the quality of our lives and relationships.

We tend to accept that we are simply products of our culture, but what is fascinating about humans is that we create shifts collectively when we open our minds to the possibility of things being different. It is likely true that the act of drinking less or not at all is becoming a zeitgeist.

**By Jessica Betancourt**



***Jessica Betancourt is a certified Rapid Transformational Hypnotherapist and Life Coach, working with people to heal their relationship with alcohol since 2021. You can find her on Instagram and via the podcast - The Mindful Drinking Movement.***



# STRESS



Feeling the weight of stress is a shared experience, not a new concept. It's a part of our lives that has persisted for centuries. However, in recent times, stress has noticeably intensified, particularly for women. We find ourselves managing more responsibilities than ever, often feeling overwhelmed and out of control.

So, what is stressing us? The top stressors are financial, lifestyle, life-changing events, and environmental. What happens to our bodies when we encounter these stressors? Our sympathetic nervous system is triggered, and we enter a "fight or flight" response, leaving us anxious and on edge.



Women's various roles in today's society may make them a little more special. Women's tasks tend to involve a combination of employment duties, taking care of children and elderly parents (statistically more likely to be women), and other family responsibilities. This is compared to men who tend to take on more of a financial provider role, supporting their families through employment.

Time constraints and unfulfilled responsibilities might cause women to feel overburdened as their demands to perform these roles and the number of roles themselves continue to rise. Being unable to live up to the standards set for them by society and themselves may make women feel like they are failing. Women frequently devote more time to tending to other people's needs than their own. Women who find themselves in a stressed state cannot even be aware of their needs, as the needs of others drown them out.

We are under so much chronic stress that our bodies don't have a chance to calm down and exit that "fight or flight" zone. Long-term, chronic stress contributes to a few adverse effects on different parts of the body. These can include cancer, auto-immune diseases, and changes in the brain. Chronic stress makes it difficult to sleep, making us irritable and unable to concentrate throughout the day. Wellness is the comprehensive integration of mental, physical, and spiritual well-being, providing nourishment for the body, stimulating the mind, and fostering the spirit.

Wellness encompasses eight mutually interdependent dimensions: physical, intellectual, emotional, social, spiritual, vocational, financial, and environmental. All

elements must be considered, as ignoring anyone will eventually harm others and, ultimately, one's health, happiness, and standard of living.

We each react differently under pressure, and our situations differ. Evaluating our daily routines gives us clues that can impact us positively or negatively and influence our quality of life, thus affecting our health. Often, we don't realize how our daily life is self-sabotaging. Changing parts of our daily routine that do not serve us well can help improve our health and relationships with stress.

A bio-individualized approach using SMART goals helps you achieve your full potential. This acronym stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound. You make SMART goals to help you achieve a desired outcome. You can see exactly what you need to do through baby steps.

A healthy lifestyle includes proper nutrition, a good night's sleep, an exercise routine, and a supportive social network. Identifying the most significant cause of stress can be essential.

Stress is often temporary, though not always. It would be ideal if we could determine what causes the tension so it can be eliminated. Frequently, regardless of the technique, we may need to seek the help of mental health professionals who can assist in relieving the stress.

A successful stress management program starts with time management. Our daily routines typically leave us little time to practice stress management. We usually have at least 15-20 minutes in the morning and evening to relax, but each person's idea of relaxation varies. Some like to take this time in the morning, and others want to relax in the evening. Meditation is another excellent relaxing tool—positive socialization with others. Laughing and sharing help create a connection of support.

Wellness is not a constant. It is constantly evolving and changing. The personalized plan you set for yourself is yours alone. You create your life to help you be your best self. There are no right or wrong answers on how you can achieve your goals. What's holding you back from making the changes you need to be well?

**By Alayne Morena BS, NBC-HWC**





# YOUR SECRET SUPERPOWER YOUR HABITS

Back when I was navigating the corporate world, colleagues were always in awe of my daily exercise routine, my knack for healthy eating amidst a sea of office goodies, and my ability to say no to that after-work glass of wine. They'd raise eyebrows at my breakfast smoothies and packed lunches, opting for homemade over the usual canteen fare, and wonder where my seemingly endless motivation came from.

Now, I don't have any secret potion for instant willpower, but I do have years of experience showing me the transformative power of habits. Habits are the silent architects of our lives, influencing

more than half of our daily thoughts, feelings, and actions. Think of them as our brain's way of saving energy, like shortcuts to decision-making.

Picture this: your brain's a filing cabinet, neatly storing away actions and reactions for easy access. These habits, while handy and essential for how we operate as humans, can, however, sometimes lead us down paths we didn't intend, leaving us wondering how we got there.

Habits form through repetition, from something your brain has responded to in a particular way that works for you. When your brain gets the reward it craves, it catalogues the action, so it knows next time, when faced with the same problem, to respond with that file it's stored away. Your brain will open the filing cabinet drawer, find the right file, and put it into action to give what it's learned is the best solution. It does this in a split second without you even realising!



These shortcuts can be the key to living the way you want to, but they can also cause you to feel out of control and stuck, wondering why you keep doing the same things that aren't helping you to feel the way you want to feel.

Without good, helpful habits, you won't be living the way you desire. If you don't build those healthy habits you dream of forming, you'll stay where you are now, lacking energy and feeling like you're dragging yourself along each day.



The great news is that breaking bad habits and building good ones is possible. You can form new habits to help you change the way you feel, think and live. It starts with knowing what you want to change and being clear on why this change matters to you. Simply saying you want to start going to the gym four times a week and setting out to make this a habit is very unlikely to stick. You'll lose motivation, make excuses not to go, feel like it's a constant slog and tell yourself the story that you're better off as you are right now; you don't need to change; it's simply too hard.

The key to new habits is going slow and taking small steps, like planting a seed and patiently waiting for it to grow into the thriving plant it will become. Repetition, consistency, and patience will bring you the desired results.

It's important to know that with both bad and good habits, the results are often not seen for some time. Bad habits stay put because you don't realise their impact until it's often too late - like smoking, drinking too much alcohol, not exercising, or eating too much junk food. While you're doing it, it's easy to believe there aren't any negative consequences. You can convince yourself it's not that bad for you. But the long-term effects will take hold eventually, then it becomes a reactive necessity to stop the habit and make a change. It's the same for many good habits; the real gains and differences are seen over time. To make a real difference, habits need to persist long enough for you to achieve the ripple effect of their benefits.



If you want to take control of your life, you must shift your habits! They have the power to not only make your life the great one you want it to be, but to become a part of your identity so you don't have to be the biggest saint around and have everyone admiring your willpower of steel!

By Nicola Farndell

[www.lifenow.uk](http://www.lifenow.uk)

[www.instagram.com/lifenow\\_coaching/](https://www.instagram.com/lifenow_coaching/)

[www.linkedin.com/in/nicolafarndell/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/nicolafarndell/)



# Imposter Syndrome

## Turn Fear Into Action

Building your personal brand, creating content to demonstrate you're a thought leader, and accepting an interview on a podcast or radio are some of the marketing activities we must regularly undertake as entrepreneurs to help build our personal brand equity. The challenge is that it feels incredibly vulnerable and raw. The fear that you'll say the wrong thing, come across as less than, or receive some type of ridicule can be enough to make you pull away from any outward presentation.

How do you push past the fear?

Reframe your mindset by separating your self-worth from any single interaction. The fear often stems from tying too much of your identity and value to that one interview, video, or post. Instead, view each instance as just one small step, not your entire reputation being permanently formed or judged. Have the confidence that even if you make a mistake, you can learn from it, address it head-on, and do better next time.

For longer-form content, like a webinar, preparation can also help quell anxiety - make sure you understand the context by researching the audience, practicing your talking points, and visualizing your success. Most importantly, focus on serving the audience rather than wrapped up in yourself. When you make your message about providing value to others, you'll be freed up to be more present and authentic.

Establishing your persona as a thought leader ...

Ultimately, putting out content helps you build credibility and establishes you as a thought leader. Achieving thought leader status carries significant benefits beyond just building your personal brand.

When viewed as an authority and go-to expert in your field, it immediately elevates your credibility and the perceived value you provide.

The more you do, the more opportunities for podcast interviews, speaking gigs, media features, and co-marketing partnerships will surface, further increasing your visibility. The end result is that it becomes easier to attract your ideal customers. You're no longer seen

as just another business owner but a distinguished expert.

Establishing your persona as a thought leader also allows you to shape the broader conversation in your industry. As a respected voice, you have the platform to introduce new ideas, challenge conventional thinking, and drive innovation. Your insights can inspire others and move your field in positive new directions. This influence is powerful - it allows you to leave a true legacy by evolving the landscape.

Moreover, thought leadership generates tremendous goodwill. When you freely share your knowledge and expertise, it cultivates a loyal following who appreciate your value. Fans become evangelists who actively promote your work through word-of-mouth. This voracity of support is something money can't buy. It's the difference between running a transaction-based business and building a remarkable brand that people feel connected to. Thought leadership forges emotional bonds with your audience that transcend mere business relationships. It's human-centric marketing at its finest.

The ultimate result...

In a crowded market, your personal brand is a critical differentiator. By consistently putting yourself out there, you cement your position as an expert and thought leader that customers and clients can rely on. You build crucial "know, like, and trust" factors that allow people to connect with you beyond just your product or service.

The end result of consistently working on your personal brand will be greater credibility, more inbound leads, and a business that energizes you with work you truly enjoy doing for people you genuinely want to serve. While it may feel uncomfortable at first, each step gets easier. The potential upsides massively outweigh any temporary anxieties about putting yourself out there.

And finally, the more you do these activities, the more you can settle into the belief of your professional value. This will gradually and effectively quiet the doubting voices in your head, which are often associated with imposter syndrome.

Have faith in your value and make your voice heard.

By Nicole Spracale

[www.nicolespracale.com](http://www.nicolespracale.com)

[www.linkedin.com/in/nspracale](http://www.linkedin.com/in/nspracale)



# Part 3

## THE GLORIOUS RESPONSIBILITY OF HAPPINESS

*"The strongest women I know aren't always the happiest. The happiest women I know are at peace with why they've needed to be strong." Page 194 - The Glorious Responsibility of Happiness*

From one strong woman to another, I get it. I understand the turmoil that can exist between your necessary cultured resilience and showing up for everyone else while also feeling the disconnect from your ability to feel enthusiastic about it all. It can get noisy within your mind, and the fatigue is real.

After losing my mother and grandmother to breast cancer when I was a teenager and being flung into adulthood well before it was legally required of me, my sense of self was held to ransom. What chance did my brain have to process such information in the logical maturity of a grown-up hiding in a child's body?

Through such experiences, my thoughts and beliefs were created around feelings of lack. Lack of safety, lack of support, lack of worthiness, lack of importance, and lack of confidence. Parts one and two of my story in previous issues shared how my engaging in destructive behaviours such as alcohol dependence, drug use, and overworking was how I coped. The more out of control I felt, the more I made unwise decisions, thinking they were housing my safety.

Experiencing trauma at a young age disrupts the normal development of the brain. One outcome of this is the difficulty in regulating emotions. Other people see the behaviour and cast judgement of personality and capability, but they rarely understand what's lurking behind the actions. Most also won't understand this could be true for themselves.

By the time I reached my mid-20s, people saw me as a 'strong' person. I was resilient and fiercely independent. I moved to different towns and states and never allowed myself to be vulnerable. I had thrown myself into life and experienced many adventures. When I finally decided it was time to settle back in at home and start working on myself, I began my healing. With new ambitions and dreams, I decided to study and work to take steps towards creating a successful future.

My strength and independence were what attracted my first husband to pursue me. I was working behind the bar in a working-class hotel. I wasn't looking to meet anyone, but this man wouldn't take no for an answer.

After what started as a whirlwind relationship, we became engaged after a year and married after two. Not long after we met, my boss at the hotel said to me one day, "What are you doing?" My stubbornness was sometimes a hindrance I wasn't aware of at that time in my life, and I saw the conversation as an opportunity to rebel against advice that I was making the wrong decision. It only reinforced my desire to continue dating.

Things were great for the first few years until we started to disagree. The emotional upheavals that occurred during that time saw us both revert to punishing each other with the silent treatment for about three days. It never improved, but I kept pushing through. My three beautiful children occupied my time and energy as we typically navigated work, school, childcare, and misaligned values.

I became that person experiencing the turmoil of inner resilience that other people admired, but I was emotionally exhausted.

I felt dissonance within myself. I became curious about the bigger picture and longed for more in my life. My marriage hadn't been easy, and I was working long hours. I had also become the primary breadwinner. With the pressure to be everything to everyone while keeping a smile on my face, the rat-on-the-wheel feeling began to rise, as did resentment.

I assumed the role of a single mum within my marriage. Cracks were forming. The name-calling, put-downs, and manipulation I experienced drew a wedge between my husband and me. Being yelled at over the phone for being at the hairdresser half an hour longer than I estimated was the moment I wondered if that was all I deserved. I uttered the words in my mind, 'No one else will love you; this is as good as it gets.' The father of my children, whom I loved, told me I was "F\*d in the head," and I believed him. He was the one person to love me completely, wasn't he? The one thing everyone knew of me, my strength, became lost somewhere in a shroud of self-doubt, lack of confidence, and complete loss of self-worth. Because of my children, I stayed grounded, as I crawled on my hands and knees through each day until I made one empowered decision to prioritise my self-nurturing.

I created ways to nurture myself away from the family home during working hours when I wouldn't have to explain my movements. I connected with a healer who held me in a safe space to be vulnerable, honest, and raw. I shared my fears, anger, resentment, and consuming sadness. I also began to move my body. In building my physical and energetic strength, my emotional strength naturally increased. Collectively, these activities created the foundation I needed to continue my healing. I reconnected with my innate soul strength and slowly regained my confidence and self-worth.

After three years of doing this work, finally, one night after much debate, failed marriage counselling sessions, and separate bedrooms, when I was pressured to give an answer about our future together, I replied, "No, I don't want to be with you anymore."



The immediate release I felt within my body was sobering. Proud of myself for stepping into my power, I felt a tiny spark of excitement for the first time. Even though I was fearful of what may follow, the fire within was lit. My first step towards changing my life was firmly planted on the earth.

Many awful events happened through the divorce, settlement, and adjustment of the children. However, in the midst of all of it, there was beauty. I reignited my passion for life. It was the beginning of undoing all the trauma and rewriting my story. Although I had no idea what was to follow, this was the time my evolution was coded into my body. The old species became extinct, and the new was being birthed as my sovereignty morphed to survive, and then thrive.

Being strong is a survival adaptation. The brain and nervous system communicate with each other to hardwire patterns of behaviours within individuals that ensure self-protection and capability. Generally speaking, women are particularly successful at this. We can multi-task efficiently, take care of others, keep pushing on, and do it all with a smile on our faces. We make great school committee helpers, productive employees, supportive friends, and did someone say organised? However, this also comes at a cost. Strength breeds resilience, but it does not guarantee you will feel happy. To thrive in happiness, it is important to understand the difference.

The strongest people we know have often faced the most difficult challenges. How individuals process the emotions associated with those experiences determines how happy they may feel in life generally.

The more intense an experience, the stronger the emotions and memories of it that remain in your psyche. It will create who you are. Your thoughts, feelings, and actions are created from what you have been through, and the younger you were the more the impact on you as an adult. The reason you may not like asking for help is that you possibly didn't have a support network when you were younger, causing you to develop the belief that you could only rely on yourself. Your brain adapted during times of abandonment to not trust others. An example may be that you are determined and capable but feel unsafe during an argument with a loved one and shut down or fiercely fight back.

When we take responsibility for who we are, in the truth of how we think, feel, and act, we unlock the key to understanding ourselves like never before. We gift ourselves the reconnection to our power and find freedom in releasing the old patterns holding us back. We find the peace in why we've needed to be strong, which allows us to truly feel happy within.

In my final article, in the next issue, I will explain how my life experiences, including two cancer diagnoses in the last eight years, have allowed me to become the happiest version of myself. By embracing all that has been, I have found the freedom to connect with joy every day. Through all the pain and trauma, I have achieved and enjoyed more in my life than I could ever have imagined. I pinch myself when I reflect on who I once was and who I am now. As a therapist, I guide my clients to create equally powerful change in their lives. If there is one message I wish to share, it is the following:

***“Connect with your bravery and decide that it is time, now, to do the work and create change in your life. You may not think you are ready, but waiting for the right time may never come. You may also think you don't have the energy, time, or money. When you value your well-being and happiness, all three will magically become available and the perfect people to support you will appear. How many times have you wondered how differently you could be living your life but have no idea how to change things? You start with a decision to put yourself first.” ... “Everything changes when you give yourself permission to take action for your well-being.” Excerpt from page 195, The Glorious Responsibility of Happiness***

**By Ali Williams**



[www.alijwilliams.com](http://www.alijwilliams.com)



# The Art of Minimalism

## Doing Less to Achieve More in 2024

Embracing the art of living mindfully can serve as a powerful catalyst for cultivating more joy, purpose and success in our everyday lives. In today's modern world encapsulated by busyness, we're often inundated with to-do lists, endless distractions and an ever-evolving pursuit of happiness. Although the notion of doing less may initially seem counterintuitive, consciously reducing the quantity of tasks on our plate can help us create space to immerse ourselves fully in the present moment.

Rather than frantically multitasking or succumbing to the pressures of hustle culture, we can grant ourselves permission to slow down, surrender and move mindfully through life. This intentional act of simplification enables us to focus our energy and attention on what matters most.

Ultimately, this is our peace and happiness. Whether it's savoring a cup of tea, engaging in a meaningful conversation, or completing a work project with intention, doing less allows us to approach each task with heightened awareness, and in doing so, we cultivate a deeper connection to



ourselves. The flow- on effect of this is greater presence, greater clarity, greater success and great fulfillment.

Balancing masculine and feminine energies is a concept deeply rooted in achieving harmony and wholeness within ourselves. Doing less serves as a gateway to

this arena, offering us the opportunity to embrace the dynamic interplay between action and receptivity. Society typically glorifies masculine energy, characterised by assertiveness, goal-driven behaviour, and a relentless pursuit of success. However, it's worth noting the importance of tapping into your feminine energy and dialling back on this constant push, allowing you to access intuition, creativity and nurturing elements that open you up to receiving (an essential counterpart to all the hustle and action-oriented behaviour).

Cultivating feminine energy is not about abandoning ambition or drive; rather, it's about integrating qualities such as intuition, empathy, and collaboration into our approach to life and work. By doing less and embracing receptivity, individuals create space for inspiration to flow, creativity to flourish, and connections to deepen. This holistic approach to energy balance fosters a more sustainable and fulfilling way of living, where success is not measured entirely by external achievements but instead by the richness of our experiences and the depth of our relationships. Ultimately, by honoring both masculine and feminine energies, individuals unlock the full spectrum of their potential and cultivate a more balanced, harmonious, and authentic way of being.

Comparatively, simplifying tasks and commitments can serve as a powerful antidote to the mental clutter that often plagues our minds in today's fast-paced world. By decluttering our schedules and streamlining our responsibilities, we create room for mental clarity to flourish. This allows us to truly cut through the noise and distractions of the ego, honing our inner desires and focusing on what truly matters most. With a clearer mind, individuals can tap into their intuition and inner wisdom, enabling more informed decision-making and effective problem-solving. Freed from the burden of overwhelm and chaos, individuals are better equipped to navigate life's challenges with composure and insight.

Moreover, increased mental clarity not only enhances productivity but also fosters a more profound sense of inner peace and well-being. By simplifying our lives and prioritising mental clarity, we pave the way for greater clarity of purpose, sharper cognitive abilities, and a more fulfilling way of living.

Prioritising self-care and well-being is often overlooked in today's fast-paced world, where busyness is glorified, and productivity is scrutinised, measured and praised above all else. However, by embracing the concept of doing less, individuals can reclaim their right to prioritise their mental, emotional, and physical health. You can create the space needed to nurture yourself by intentionally scaling back on commitments and obligations. This may involve carving out time for restorative activities such as meditation, exercise, or simply enjoying moments of peace and solitude.

By honoring your need for rest and rejuvenation, you'll replenish your energy reserves and enhance all areas of your life. When you prioritise your well-being, you'll be better equipped to show up as your best self in relationships, careers, and communities. Ultimately, by recognising the importance of doing less in order to prioritise well-being, you'll pave the way for a more balanced, fulfilling, and sustainable way of living. Additionally, in a world where busyness often takes precedence over meaningful connection, the practice of doing less can be transformative in nurturing and deepening relationships. By consciously scaling back on where your energy is being consumed, you'll create invaluable space to invest in the people who matter most.

## Consider implementing these tips in order to achieve more by doing less.

### 1. Prioritise Tasks with the Eisenhower Matrix:

Utilise the Eisenhower Matrix to categorise tasks based on urgency and their corresponding level of significance. Focus on high-priority tasks that contribute to your long-term goals, delegating or eliminating those that are neither urgent nor important. This strategic approach minimises time spent on trivial activities, allowing for greater focus and meaningful change.

### 2. Implement Time Blocking:

**Blocking:** Dedicate specific time blocks for focused work or essential tasks, limiting distractions and multitasking. Research suggests that structured time blocking enhances productivity by promoting deep work and meaningful progress. This can be accounted for by understanding the cost of cognitive switching, which multitasking typically relies on.

### 3. Embrace the Pomodoro Technique:

**Technique:** Break down work into manageable intervals, typically 25 minutes of focused work followed by a short break. This evidence-based technique enhances productivity by leveraging the principles of time management and frequent rest. Studies indicate that the Pomodoro Technique improves concentration, reduces mental fatigue, and boosts overall efficiency, enabling individuals to achieve more with sustained focus.

### 4. Practice Mindfulness:

Cultivate inner tranquility through practices such as mindfulness meditation, breath work, or mindful movement. Research confirms that mindfulness enhances cognitive function, attentional regulation, leading to improved decision-making and productivity. Mindfulness as a self-care commitment enhances your overall well-being and contributes significantly to your performance, productivity and ability to achieve goals with clarity.



## By Aditi Kumar

*Aditi Kumar is a 'Coach, Speaker & Writer' from Sydney, Australia. Her mission is to support heart-led individuals to reach their full potential, shatter glass ceilings, and align with their purpose. Aditi's journey is multifaceted, spanning the landscapes of Education and Corporate Finance, into the Coaching & Personal Development World. Her pivotal transformation from burnout to brilliance forms the foundation for her world-class coaching, which is described as a unique fusion of Neuroscience, Positive Psychology, and Energetics.*

*Aditi is passionate about supporting high-achieving, impact-driven individuals to overcome chronic stress and rewrite the script for their success.*

*To explore the path of living in alignment, scan the QR code below and find out how you can work with Aditi.*

*Follow Aditi on Instagram @lifewith\_aditi*



# Holiday versus a Retreat: A Deep Dive into Well-Being

The well-being path is not always easy to stay on, is it? For many of us, incorporating self-care and healthy habits into our daily lives is a continual effort. Despite our best intentions, life has a way of throwing us off course. Whether it's a gradual veering off due to the daily grind or a sudden jolt that knocks us sideways, staying committed to our well-being can be a challenge. It's all too easy to lose the path completely amidst the chaos of life.

Ironically, maintaining our well-being helps us cope better with life's ups and downs. Yet, other priorities often take precedence. We've all heard the saying, "You can't pour from an empty cup," and it's true. Without taking care of ourselves first, we can't effectively handle the demands placed upon us. As an Executive Well-being Coach, I strive to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Despite my efforts to maintain a positive and healthy lifestyle, life still manages to sneak up on me. The opportunities to take stock and truly reflect are not always readily available.

Holidays and retreats offer two different approaches to breaking away from the routine and focusing on well-being. While both can be beneficial, they serve different purposes and yield different outcomes.

Understanding these differences can help you choose the best option for your needs.



## The Nature of Holidays

Holidays are often viewed as a time to relax, unwind, and escape from the stresses of everyday life. They provide an opportunity to explore new places, indulge in activities we enjoy, and spend quality time with loved ones. Holidays can be a wonderful way to break the routine, create lasting memories, and temporarily recharge.

However, holidays are not without their challenges. The reality of a holiday often involves planning, organising, and sometimes dealing with family dynamics. Someone has to take on the responsibility of cooking, managing schedules, and ensuring everyone's needs are met. These responsibilities can diminish the potential for true relaxation and introspection.

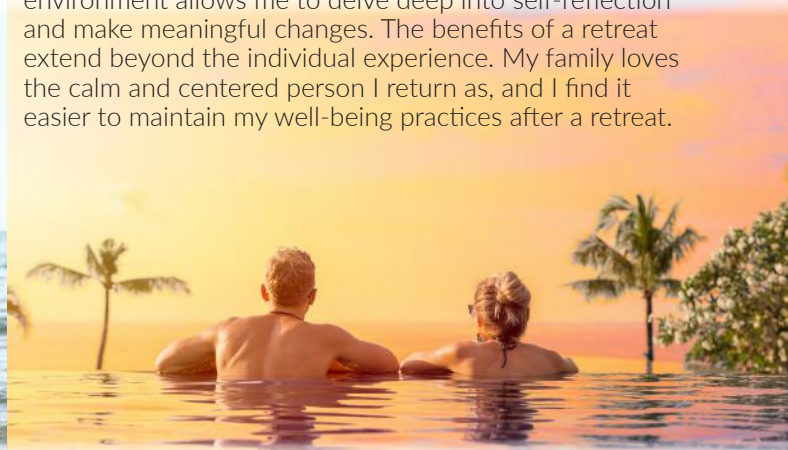
Moreover, holidays typically do not offer the space for deep self-reflection and personal growth. The focus tends to be on external experiences rather than inner work. While holidays can undoubtedly contribute to our overall well-being, their impact may be more short-lived compared to other options.

## The Transformative Power of Retreats

This is where retreats come into the picture. Unlike holidays, retreats are specifically designed to foster deep inner work, personal growth, and holistic well-being. They provide a structured environment where participants can release what no longer serves them, connect with nature, and feel truly supported.

Retreats offer a unique opportunity to step away from daily responsibilities and immerse oneself in a transformative experience. Whether it's a day-long retreat or a week-long immersion, retreats are intentionally crafted to create a safe and nurturing space for self-exploration and healing. The facilitators and practitioners who run these retreats play a crucial role in creating an environment where participants feel secure and supported.

From my personal experience, attending retreats has led to significant personal growth and profound shifts in my perspective. The focused time away from my regular environment allows me to delve deep into self-reflection and make meaningful changes. The benefits of a retreat extend beyond the individual experience. My family loves the calm and centered person I return as, and I find it easier to maintain my well-being practices after a retreat.



## Scientific Support for Retreats

Research supports the long-term benefits of attending retreats over taking holidays. Studies have shown that retreats can provide longer-lasting biological changes, similar to the effects of taking antiviral medication. These changes can include reduced stress levels, improved immune function, and enhanced overall well-being.

One study comparing holidays and retreats found that retreats offer more substantial and lasting benefits for participants. While holidays may provide a temporary boost in well-being, retreats foster a deeper and more enduring sense of transformation. This is likely due to the structured and intentional nature of retreats, which focus on holistic well-being and personal growth.

## Conclusion

Both holidays and retreats offer valuable opportunities to enhance well-being, but they serve different purposes and yield different outcomes. Whatever you choose, taking a step back to recharge and reflect is essential for maintaining a balanced and fulfilling life.

By Wendy-Anne Steer

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# Why Your Womb is Your Second Heart

## Women are Cyclical Beings

Our incredible female body is meant to flow. We are not meant to fit in a masculine structure that runs around the clock; we are the balance to the clockwork. Visualise an ornate Grandfather (or Grandmother) clock that tells the time and yet also runs based on an intricate system of cogs and a swinging pendulum. The masculine needs its feminine balance to function fully.

When we get stuck with focusing on the masculine, the pendulum does not have room to swing, and it either slows down or stops.

Our menstrual cycle has four phases where a beautiful symphony of hormones combine to create the possibility for new life and go on to conceive or release. When our womb flows, she naturally releases, physically and mentally.

The contraceptive pill may have been a groundbreaking medical innovation, yet it is completely blocking our feminine flow. The pill stops women from ovulating. The one phase of our menstrual cycle, when we are at our highest point of creativity, flow and intuition (due to the natural balance of hormones in our body), gets blocked by artificial hormones. The knock-on effect is that our natural feminine flow is literally being dumbed down.

## Blockages and Struggles Release Naturally When we connect

The medical system teaches us to take a pill or cut it out with surgery, yet through years of helping women to connect with their “second heart”, I have found that blockages and struggles dissolve on their own when they come back into their natural flow.



Perhaps this is why Western doctors don't tell us this; this isn't part of their training and doesn't bring any financial gain. Not that I am dismissing them here; doctors play a vital role in the fertility field by giving us the ability to view our wombs, take blood and measure our hormones.

## How Connecting with Your Womb is Transformational

Most women don't have a direct connection with their wombs and are missing out on being in tune with their innate intuitive feminine energy. In fact, connecting with your womb is transformational on many levels in life, which we will explore in this article.

## Why Are Womb-Related Struggles on the Rise?

Society is seeing increasing cases of ovarian cysts, cycle imbalance, PCOS, unexplained infertility, recurrent miscarriage and struggles to get pregnant. Now that I have brought your attention to thinking about this question, I bet you know someone who is facing womb-related struggles, or you are directly affected yourself. The question is, why? Why are women facing so many struggles with their core feminine flow?

## The Disconnect

We have been educated that our womb space is a place of pain; it is expected that our menstrual cycle should be painful, and many refer to it as “the curse”. As modern society has evolved, our feminine flow has been drastically damned up, literally blocking our connection with our womb.

The contraceptive pill was introduced in the 1950s as a medical innovation, celebrated for giving women freedom and reproductive autonomy. Tampons were invented around the 1930s, and girls were taught to “plug” their flow.

Fast forward to today and see the result for yourselves: the worldwide birth rate is rapidly declining, and struggles with physical blockages in the womb are on the rise.

There is a massive disconnect with our womb space. The gap has been gradually widening over the years to the point where we hardly feel our “second heart” at all. Our feminine core and our innate intuitive centre have been numbed.

## Your Womb is Your Second Heart

I absolutely love re-introducing women to their wombs; it is such a beautiful experience and often brings a flow of joyful tears. You see, your womb is an energetic, vibrational, living organ which holds on to emotions, trauma, attachments, ancestral wounds, patterns (and much more).

When you are disconnected from your womb and therefore not freely flowing, you are unable to release these energies, and eventually, they may show up as imbalances or physical blockages.

Your womb holds the key to your healing. When you connect with your womb, you activate your innate intuition, which allows you to stand in your full, confident, feminine power. Womb connection is truly transformational. Ready to learn how? Get your complimentary womb connection meditation from my website, **ohmymamabody.com**, to start shifting your blockages and reclaiming your flourishing femininity.



# The Power of Intention

## The Benefits of a Holistic Approach to Coaching: Integrating Somatic Breathwork and Reiki

The coaching field has evolved significantly in recent years, moving beyond traditional methods to incorporate more comprehensive and integrative techniques. One such approach I personally use is holistic coaching, which considers the whole person—mind, body, and spirit—in the pursuit of personal and professional growth. This article explores the benefits of a holistic coaching approach, specifically focusing on the transformative practices of somatic breathwork and Reiki.



### Understanding Holistic Coaching

Holistic coaching is rooted in the belief that proper growth and development can only occur when all aspects of an individual are addressed. This approach recognises that our mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual states are interconnected and that balance in these areas is essential for overall well-being. By addressing these dimensions, holistic coaching aims to foster a deeper sense of self-awareness, promote healing, and enhance personal empowerment.

#### What are the Benefits of Holistic Coaching?

**1. Comprehensive Personal Development:** Holistic coaching encourages individuals to explore various aspects of their lives, including their beliefs, emotions, physical health, and spiritual practices. This comprehensive approach ensures that growth is not superficial but deeply rooted, leading to lasting change.

**2. Enhanced Self-Awareness:** Through holistic coaching, clients gain a deeper understanding of themselves. By examining their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, they can identify patterns and triggers that may hold them back. This increased self-awareness is crucial for making conscious choices and fostering personal growth.

**3. Improved Emotional Health:** Addressing emotional well-being is a key component of holistic coaching. Techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, and somatic practices help clients process and release negative emotions and anxiety, leading to improved mental health, clarity and emotional resilience.

**4. Physical Well-Being:** Holistic coaching often includes practices that promote physical health, such as nutritional advice, exercise, and somatic therapies. By caring for the body, clients can experience increased energy levels, better health, and a stronger connection between their physical and mental states.

**5. Spiritual Growth:** Spirituality is an essential aspect of life for many, including myself. Holistic coaching respects and incorporates clients' spiritual beliefs and practices, helping them connect with their inner selves and find a sense of purpose and meaning.

#### Somatic Breathwork: A Pathway to Transformation

Somatic breathwork is a powerful technique used in holistic coaching to facilitate emotional and physical healing. It involves using specific breathing patterns to promote relaxation, release stress, and access deeper states of consciousness. Here are some key benefits of somatic breathwork:

**1. Stress Reduction:** One of the most immediate benefits of somatic breathwork is its ability to reduce stress. By focusing on the breath, individuals can calm their nervous system, lower cortisol levels, and experience profound relaxation.

**2. Emotional Release:** Somatic breathwork helps individuals access and process suppressed emotions. By consciously breathing and temporarily spiking their nervous systems, clients can release trapped emotions and achieve emotional freedom, clarity, and peace.

**3. Enhanced Self-Connection:** This practice fosters a deeper connection with oneself. It encourages individuals to listen to their bodies and become more attuned to their inner experiences, promoting greater self-awareness and intuition.

**4. Improved Mental Clarity:** Regular breathwork can enhance mental clarity and focus. By oxygenating the brain and reducing mental clutter, clients can think more clearly and make better decisions.

**5. Physical Healing:** Somatic breathwork can positively impact physical health. By balancing the body's energy systems, it can improve respiratory function, increase energy levels, and promote overall well-being.

## Integrating Somatic Breathwork and Reiki in Holistic Coaching

When integrated into holistic coaching, somatic breathwork and Reiki offer a powerful combination for transformation. Here's how they complement each other:

**1. Holistic Healing:** Together, these practices address both the energetic and physical aspects of healing. While somatic breathwork focuses on the breath and physical body, Reiki works on the energetic level, ensuring a comprehensive approach to well-being.

**2. Enhanced Self-Awareness:** Both techniques promote self-awareness and introspection. Breathwork helps clients tune into their bodily sensations and emotions, while Reiki encourages a deep connection with their spiritual selves.

**3. Emotional and Physical Balance:** The combination of these practices helps clients achieve emotional and physical balance. Breathwork releases stored emotions and tension, while Reiki restores energetic harmony, leading to a state of equilibrium. They can be used together or separately.

**4. Stress Reduction and Relaxation:** When used together, the stress-reducing effects of somatic breathwork and Reiki are amplified. Clients experience profound relaxation and a sense of peace, which can be transformative for those dealing with high levels of stress or anxiety.

**5. Personal Empowerment:** By incorporating these techniques, holistic coaching empowers clients to take charge of their healing journey. They learn tools and practices that they can use independently, fostering a sense of self-efficacy and empowerment.

## Reiki: Harnessing Healing Energy

Reiki is another powerful tool used in holistic coaching. Originating from Japan, Reiki is a form of energy healing that involves the transfer of universal life force energy through the practitioner's hands to the client. This gentle, non-invasive technique offers numerous benefits:

**1. Stress Reduction and Relaxation:** Similar to somatic breathwork, Reiki is highly effective in moving trapped energy to reduce stress and promote relaxation. The flow of energy helps to calm the mind and body, creating a state of deep peace.

**2. Emotional Healing:** Reiki can help to clear emotional blockages in one's chakras and balance emotions. Clients often report feeling lighter and more emotionally balanced after a session.

**3. Physical Healing and Pain Relief:** Reiki supports the body's natural healing processes. It can be used to alleviate pain, accelerate recovery from illness or injury, and improve overall physical health.

**4. Spiritual Growth and Connection:** Reiki facilitates a stronger connection to one's spiritual self. It can enhance spiritual awareness and help individuals connect with their higher purpose and inner wisdom.

**5. Enhanced Energy Flow:** By balancing the body's energy centres (chakras), Reiki promotes a smooth and harmonious flow of energy. This can lead to increased vitality and a sense of overall well-being.



A holistic approach to coaching, which integrates somatic breathwork and Reiki, offers a multitude of benefits for personal and professional development. Addressing the mind, body, and spirit promotes comprehensive growth and healing. Somatic breathwork provides a pathway to emotional release and physical well-being, while Reiki facilitates energetic balance and spiritual connection. Together, they create a powerful synergy that enhances self-awareness, reduces stress, and empowers individuals to live their best lives. As holistic coaching evolves, these transformative practices will undoubtedly play a crucial role in fostering holistic well-being and personal transformation.

For more information on these new services that Susanna has to offer, get in touch here.

*By Susanna Kenyon-Muir*


[www.coachingbysusanna.com](http://www.coachingbysusanna.com)

[@coachingbysusanna](https://www.instagram.com/coachingbysusanna) or

[hello@coachingbysusanna.com](mailto:hello@coachingbysusanna.com)



## 9 practical ways to improve your cultural intelligence



Successful cross-cultural collaboration starts with your intentionality to communicate, interact and build trust by bridging to connect with people, human to human. Working in international teams

does not automatically correlate to high levels of cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence involves developing a global mindset, creating an environment for an equal share of voice in team meetings, and encouraging people to contribute their ideas. Cultural awareness is important, but it is not the only factor.

### The 4 capabilities of cultural intelligence

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is a set of 4 capabilities which help individuals and teams understand their motivations, differences, the strategies they can use to adapt their approach, and how to adjust their communication style and behaviours to be successful in their interactions.

These capabilities can be measured and assessed for progress over time:

**CQ Drive:** *Your level of interest, persistence and confidence during multicultural interactions.*

**CQ Knowledge:** *Your understanding of how cultures are similar and different.*

**CQ Strategy:** *Your awareness and ability to plan for multicultural interactions.*

**CQ Action:** *Your ability to adapt when relating and working in multicultural contexts.*

When do teams need to improve cultural intelligence? Developing cultural intelligence is particularly important in diverse teams based in multiple locations around the world who need to work together to achieve their mission. The CQ assessment, training, and strategies can be used in talent and team development, supporting



global virtual teams in collaborating effectively, resolving cultural issues in teams, and forming new teams in project kick-off.

### 9 practical ways to improve your cultural intelligence

**1. Start with yourself.** It is hard to see how culture influences how you show up. Take a cultural intelligence assessment to explore your own cultural values. Recognise others communicate in different ways.

Assume positive intent when you experience unexpected behaviours. When you feel activated by the words or actions of other people, pause and ask yourself whether cultural differences are playing a role.

**2. Build your resilience.** Sometimes, you may not know what to say or how to adapt your communication to multicultural contexts. It is fine to feel uncomfortable and not always know how to respond. Get curious, explore,



ask open-ended questions and listen actively.

**3. Establish an inclusive environment.** Consider team members in various time zones when scheduling meetings, and take it in turns for individuals to join early or late. Increase the team's awareness of key religious and national holidays when individuals are not available.

**4. Create your team communication charter.** Make explicit how individuals prefer to communicate and contribute in meetings. Some individuals may not be comfortable to unmute and share, however they are happy to contribute in the chat or breakout rooms. Agree how you will communicate disagreements and make decisions. Explore together to establish expectations and boundaries.

**5. Support the team to know each other.** When you do not regularly meet in person, it is important to build trust through allowing time for unstructured conversation so the team can connect by sharing personal context, wins and challenges.

**6. Humour does not always cross borders.** Humour is often used in the workplace to create warmth and connection, and yet the style of humour does not always translate across cultures and can exclude individuals.

**7. Non-verbal communication is key.** Communication is also how we say things and the level of expressiveness and specific expressions, gestures and postures can be cultural. Observe and learn.

**8. Be mindful of your language.** Especially in multilingual teams, ensure that what you say is clear and simple. Slow the pace and pause regularly. Avoid specific idioms or expressions which may not be understood by all. Explain cultural references, acronyms and jargon.

**9. Keep curious, keep learning- cultural intelligence is a lifelong journey!**

Victoria Rennoldson, communication coach and Cultural Intelligence trainer, is the CEO and founder of Culture Cuppa, [culturecuppa.com](http://culturecuppa.com). She helps international leaders with elevating their communication skills, and multicultural teams to build trust and collaboration with cultural intelligence. Connect on LinkedIn: Victoria Rennoldson. Victoria is the podcast host of Cultural Communication Confidence, [culturecuppa.com/podcast/](http://culturecuppa.com/podcast/)



# “CREATING A BETTER LIFE THROUGH YOUR OWN LENS”



We can see things differently when we use a different lens and concentrate. Each of us sees the world, events, landscapes, and ideas through a unique “lens.” Imagine living your life as the cameraperson and having complete control over how the lens is adjusted. The landscape changes with every perspective change, unveiling fresh opportunities and revelations. This comparison highlights a crucial point: our reality is shaped by how we view the outside world.

## **Taking Action: A Change of View Empowers Us**

At the heart of this concept lies the notion that our perspective influences our actions. Our options seem limited when we view situations through a narrow lens, and our responses are often reactive. However, by embracing a broader perspective, we empower ourselves to take proactive steps towards creating positive change.

Consider the power of perspective in forming better relationships. When we view others through a lens of empathy and understanding, we cultivate deeper connections based on mutual respect and appreciation. We open the door to meaningful interactions and lasting bonds by shifting our focus from judgment to compassion.

## **Seeing Things Differently**

Things can only change for us when we begin to see them differently. It does not mean we're delusional or in denial about our reality. It simply means that we have decided to activate our faith, believe in the possible and (not just the impossible) and that we're audacious enough to go for what we desire.

Changing our perspective doesn't mean denying reality; rather, it means recognizing that our interpretation of reality is fluid and malleable. By acknowledging our power to shape our perceptions, we reclaim agency over our lives and unlock the potential for transformation.

## **Activating Faith and Belief in the Possible**

At the core of embracing a new perspective lies the courage to believe in the possibility of change. It's about daring to defy the status quo and envisioning a future that aligns with our aspirations. This audacious belief serves as the catalyst for action, propelling us towards our goals with unwavering determination.

## **Pursuing What We Desire**

Too often, we allow fear and self-doubt to dictate our choices, relegating our dreams to the realm of the impossible. However, by adopting a new lens—one that amplifies our strengths and minimizes our limitations—we embolden ourselves to pursue our deepest desires with conviction.

## **Embracing Perspective as a Catalyst for Change**

In essence, creating a better life through our lens is a testament to the transformative power of perspective. It's about recognizing that how we view the world shapes our reality, and by choosing to see things differently, we open ourselves up to a world of endless possibilities.

## **Conclusion**

As we navigate the complexities of life, let us remember that we hold the key to our own happiness and fulfillment. By embracing a new perspective—one rooted in faith, belief, and audacity—we can chart a course towards a brighter future. So, I urge you: dare to see the world through your own lens, and watch as it unfolds before you in all its splendor and possibility.



**By Kurline J Altes**  
[www.kurlinejspeaks.com](http://www.kurlinejspeaks.com)

# Cultivating Sisterhood in the Workplace: Fostering Collaboration and Empowerment

In today's dynamic work environments, the concept of sisterhood extends beyond familial bonds to encompass the supportive and collaborative relationships between women in the workplace. Cultivating sisterhood within professional settings is not only beneficial for individual career growth but also fosters a sense of empowerment, camaraderie, and collective success.

Sisterhood in the workplace is built on the foundation of mutual respect, empathy, and solidarity among female colleagues. It goes beyond superficial interactions and embraces the notion of lifting each other up, celebrating successes, and navigating challenges together. Here are some key aspects of fostering sisterhood in the workplace:

**Empowerment Through Mentorship and Sponsorship:** Establishing mentorship and sponsorship programs where seasoned professionals mentor and advocate for younger or less experienced colleagues is essential. By sharing knowledge, providing guidance, and opening doors to opportunities, women can empower each other to thrive in their careers.

**Creating Supportive Networks:** Encouraging the formation of support networks or affinity groups for women within the organization can facilitate connections, foster mentorship, and provide a safe space for sharing experiences and seeking advice. These networks offer valuable opportunities for professional development, skill-building, and career advancement.

**Promoting Collaboration Over Competition:** Shifting the workplace culture from one of competition to collaboration is fundamental in nurturing sisterhood. Women can leverage their collective strengths to achieve shared goals and drive innovation when they view each other as allies rather than competitors.



**Advocating for Equity and Inclusion:** Promoting gender equity and inclusion initiatives ensures that all women, regardless of background or identity, feel valued, respected, and supported in the workplace. This includes advocating for equal pay, addressing biases and barriers to advancement, and creating inclusive policies and practices.

**Celebrating Diversity and Intersectionality:** Recognizing and celebrating the diverse experiences, perspectives, and contributions of women from all backgrounds enriches the fabric of sisterhood. Embracing intersectionality acknowledges the interconnectedness of various aspects of identity, such as race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and ability, and promotes solidarity across differences.

**Leading by Example:** Leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering a culture of sisterhood. By modelling inclusive behaviours, promoting collaboration, and championing the advancement of women, leaders set the tone for creating a supportive and empowering work environment.

In conclusion, sisterhood in the workplace is a powerful force that drives positive change, fosters collaboration, and empowers women to reach their full potential. By cultivating a culture of support, inclusivity, and mutual respect, organizations can harness the collective strength of women to drive innovation, enhance productivity, and create a more equitable and thriving workplace for all.

By Ana Salido

By Ana Salido  
Counsellor / Life Coach / Mentor  
[www.anasalido.com](http://www.anasalido.com)



# Feel confident in your relationships and connect deeper with people!

## Why does it matter?

Regardless of whether we label ourselves as “introverts” or “extroverts,” human connection remains essential. This need for connection traces back to our ancestors, who relied on tribe living for survival. Today, this innate necessity for relationships persists. However, navigating relationships can be complex, often leaving us feeling insecure. But fear not because by reading this article, you’re already on the path to overcoming these challenges!



## What’s the problem?

In relationships, it’s common to attribute our emotions to others’ actions. We tend to believe that people are responsible for hurting our feelings or making us happy. But here’s the groundbreaking revelation: people don’t hurt our feelings; we do. While it’s unacceptable for someone to yell at us or cause us physical harm, in everyday scenarios, it’s our interpretations that shape our emotional responses.

Consider the example of someone constantly glued to their phone. The neutral fact is that Robbie is using their phone. However, individuals may interpret this differently based on their experiences, values, and attitudes. Billy 1 might think, “I don’t mind if they’re on their phone,” while Billy 2 might feel neglected, thinking, “They’re not paying attention to me.” Same circumstance, contrasting thoughts, resulting in different emotions!

## Our thoughts, not others’ actions, dictate our feelings.

Let’s revisit our Billies. Billy 1’s thought, “I don’t mind if they’re on their phone,” leads to a feeling of tranquillity. Conversely, Billy 2’s thought, “They’re not paying attention to me,” triggers insecurity. It’s not what someone does or says that affects us; it’s how we interpret it. People don’t have to change!

Here’s the beauty of it: people don’t need to change for us to feel better. Robbie can continue using their phone, and Billy 2 can alter their perception to feel at ease. Our power lies in intentionally choosing our thoughts about a situation. Most of our daily thoughts are recycled from the day before as our brain seeks efficiency. Billy may not even question their thoughts; they simply assume Robbie’s phone usage causes their insecurity. But in reality, it’s our interpretation that shapes our emotional response.

## What’s the solution?

Think of a relationship you wish to improve. Remember, relationships are reflections of our thoughts about a person. By changing our thoughts, we can transform our relationships. Instead of blaming others, recognize that you have the power to enhance any relationship.

## Confidence in your relationships

How we show up in the world stems from our thoughts. Take ownership of your emotions to improve your relationships. Remember, no one can make you feel a certain way; it’s your thoughts that shape your feelings.

## How do you want to feel in this relationship?

Ask yourself, how do you want to feel towards this person? Love? Calm? Compassion?

Opt for thoughts that cultivate feelings of love, tranquility, and compassion within you. Consider this scenario: you have a sister who frequently complains. Previously, you might have wished for her to change her behavior, hoping she’d complain less. However, now you understand that you can experience love and compassion towards her, even if she remains unchanged. Isn’t that a relief? To foster compassion, you might reflect on her challenges with a thought like, “This must be difficult for her,” allowing empathy to arise within you.

You have more control over your emotions than you realize! You are in control; you can feel better without changing anyone or anything. Exciting, isn’t it?



## Here’s the final tip for today:

Here’s a fascinating concept I picked up during one of my coaching certifications: “The Manual.” Essentially, it suggests that we all carry around manuals detailing how we and others should behave. If people adhere to these expectations, we’re inclined to label them as good friends, good parents, or ourselves as good daughters. Take, for instance, the notion that “a good friend remembers birthdays.” If someone forgets your birthday, according to this manual, they don’t fit the bill of a good friend. Consequently, our feelings towards them may shift.

Manuals serve as yet another insightful tool demonstrating how we often attribute our emotions to others’ actions. However, the truth is that it all boils down to our thoughts. It’s the space between what they do and how we feel where our interpretations lie.

Remember, you’ve got this! I believe in you!

*By Tamara Pflug*

Your **FUN & CONFIDENCE** coach  
[www.personal-development-zone.com](http://www.personal-development-zone.com)



# My Vanity Exposed



Now's the time to show up and show out! It's absolutely true; you have the ability to step into anything you desire... at any age! Recently, to my great surprise, I was invited to model for JC Penny. I was excited to jump into this opportunity and immediately said yes! I immediately began to notice that I had feelings I needed to address and unravel about this invitation. For context, I'm flowing into 50, and I feel more graceful and beautiful, more fully embodied than I have at any other time of my life.

And as is true for most of us, this was not always the case. When I was a teenager, I was fortunate enough to be able to participate in the Miss Teen San Diego pageant. It's important to share that this event was for 14-18 year old girls. And when I participated, I was just 14 years old. As you can imagine, there was a tremendous difference in my development compared to the older girls. Immediately, I found myself jumping into the compare-and-contrast routine. As I recall the event, the feeling that I had, that I never wanted to be defined by my physical beauty, welled up inside of me. I've never been one to buy into external beauty or others' opinions of what that was supposed to look like. I'd even go so far as to say that this so repelled me that I did not desire any attention for the way that I looked at all. And yet, it was always of note in the comments of others.


When I engaged with the other participants in the pageant, I noticed that the conversations seemed dull and lifeless to me. I felt the need to fundamentally challenge their understanding of what beauty meant. And in my inclination to become differentiated, I completely ignored all of the traditional expectations of outward beauty: the standards that are both a limited and limiting set of values applied to the appearance of men and women in order to be accepted by the community.

I felt and saw very early on that beauty, true beauty, encompassed much more than the physical. I knew that genuine beauty, rather than superficial beauty, flows from within - it is the expression of love radiating from within one's heart. However, that was not what I felt when participating in the pageant. Instead, what I felt was deeply rooted judgement. And I created a storyline around it that went something like this: The beauty industry was built solely on a superficial sort of presence, entirely rooted in vanity.

I recognize that vanity may be an uncomfortable word for many of us, and in our vanity, we do not usually like to associate ourselves with it. It is so valuable, though! It is one of the challenging states that exists here to help us learn to actually love ourselves. And vanity ceases to operate in our lives only when we realize that to love ourselves is actually to love everyone else... a revelation demanding a quantum leap out of ourselves altogether. You may be beautiful, intelligent and virtuous, but with vanity, you will create a feeling of separation from others and the love that would otherwise be available in that space.

In my storyline, I found my security through the judgment of others, thus creating a feeling of personal superiority. At that time in my life, I came to value only my mind; this created a feeling that I was smarter than those who celebrated the value of external beauty. I experienced such a feeling of security in this belief that I shifted my entire value to being known exclusively for my mind. It was the only thing I wanted recognition of, and I held tightly to this.

It's essential to recognize that collectively, we talk about being nonjudgemental as though it were one of the highest goals a person can achieve in life. But in fact, it is impossible not to judge because judgement is the way in which the human mind processes. What defines the low frequency of the 'victim mind' is that you personally identify with what you think. In other words, your judgements define your identity and make you feel more secure about yourself in some way. But there's something else available



here. If you can engage in judgement and at the same time be aware of the judging and not become it, then you are no longer trapped by your own mind; thus, the frequency around that judgement is elevated.

After all, all judgement is, in fact, self-judgement. And because we humans perceive ourselves as separate from each other, we often miss this vital fact. To challenge another person is to create a division within ourselves. This does not mean that you should never challenge others, but it does mean that you need to remember that what you perceive in the other represents something inside of you that you are being given an opportunity to resolve.

The key to raising the frequency of this challenge lies in the perspective that everything external in your life is a mirror of an internal process seeking resolution. There is a gift to be had in the challenge of judgement: the gift of integrity. This gift is to be able to hold your own space without reacting to your judgments, or self judgements. As a vibration, integrity means far more than just holding fast to your values. It is a word often used by architects and engineers to describe the strength of material structures. Integrity is a profoundly physical attribute and is actually a function of your immune system in maintaining the tensile strength within your body. Judgement, criticism, and correction are magnificent qualities when used correctly. The gift of integrity is about demanding and maintaining a high standard in everything we do.

To uphold your integrity, you must be courageous - you must challenge anything and anyone who does not meet your high standards. To live with integrity is to take on the whole world - to challenge it to meet your high standards. Wherever you see someone living with integrity, you are seeing someone using the power of judgement objectively and impersonally. This is not to use or take judgment personally but to learn to judge from your heart. Judging from the heart can never be cruel because true integrity has only one purpose - to serve the individual and, thus, the whole in the spirit of truth and compassion.

The highest aspect of awareness for this challenge is perfection because life continually offers you a pathway to realizing your own perfection. You are perfect, just as you are! Did you know that the probability of your existence is calculated to be 1 in 400 trillion?! You are a unique, divine expression that has never been and will never again be on this earth again. The perfect cumulation of being born to your specific parents, with your specific genetic makeup and each experience you've had, has purposefully cultivated the only YOU that will ever exist. You are forever being asked to identify with the perfection in yourself, just as you are.

**By Angie Grimes**

**Quantum Architect**  
[www.angiegrimes.com](http://www.angiegrimes.com)



# Breaking the Stigma:

## Mental Health Initiatives in Hollywood

### Overview of the Topic

Hollywood has long been a place where dreams come true, but it can also be a challenging environment for those involved in its production. One critical issue that needs addressing is the mental health of actors, producers, and crew members. With the increasing awareness of mental health's importance, it is crucial to create a healthier and more inclusive environment for individuals with mild to severe mental disorders. This includes providing proper support during onset work and auditions.

### History

The entertainment industry has historically been associated with intense schedules, high expectations, and significant stress. Mental health concerns in Hollywood have often been overshadowed by the glamour associated with the industry. In earlier times, mental health issues were stigmatized, leading to a lack of open discussion and support for those suffering. Prominent cases like that of Marilyn Monroe and more recent situations involving stars like Robin Williams have highlighted the severe impact that neglecting mental health can have. Over the last decade, there has been gradual progress with more advocacy for mental health awareness within Hollywood.

### Applications

Several strategies can be implemented to foster a better environment:

1. **Mental Health Training:** Offering training sessions to help cast and crew recognize signs of mental illness.
2. **On-site Support:** Providing access to therapists or counselors directly on set or nearby during productions.
3. **Flexible Scheduling:** Implementing more flexible working hours to help manage stress levels.
4. **Inclusive Auditions:** Creating audition processes that do not exacerbate anxiety or other mental health issues.
5. **Peer Support Programs:** Developing peer networks where individuals can share experiences and offer mutual support.

### Pros and Cons

Pros:

1. **Enhanced Well-being:** Improved mental health support leads to happier, more productive individuals.
2. **Reduced Stigma:** Normalizing discussions around mental health can reduce stigma.
3. **Talent Retention:** A healthier environment helps retain talented individuals who might otherwise leave due to stress.

Cons:

1. **Cost Implications:** Implementing these strategies requires financial resources which might be challenging for smaller productions.
2. **Complex Implementation:** Changing industry-wide practices involves navigating complex logistics and varying levels of openness to change among stakeholders.
3. **Resistance to Change:** There may be resistance from parts of the industry that view such measures as unnecessary or intrusive.

### Future Outlook

The future looks promising as there is increasing acknowledgment of the importance of mental well-being in

Hollywood. With ongoing advocacy from within the industry itself—such as initiatives from actors who have publicly discussed their struggles—there is hope for substantial improvement in conditions. Technological advancements such as teletherapy could also play a role in providing accessible mental health services on set.

Incorporating these measures comprehensively will require time, effort, and commitment from all levels of Hollywood's hierarchy. However, embracing these changes could lead to a much-needed cultural shift towards a more compassionate and sustainable work environment in one of the world's most influential industries.

**By Yolanda Nollie**

Entertainment Connector, Independent filmmaker Entertainment Business Consultant & Philanthropist

Connect with Yolanda at [linkedin](#)



# Embrace gratitude, let go of fear and step into growth

Surrender resistance and approach each day with gratitude. Understand that people have different personas in different situations.

Release scarcity thinking and feel abundance within and around you. Embrace this week's adventure and dance with Life. Step into your true identity that God is calling you toward.

Do not allow what has happened to you to define you. Instead, brush it off and move forward. You cannot control someone else's actions, only your own!

women regain their peace, confidence, and voice. Women weren't created to live a life of fear and anxiety. They were created for peace, joy, and love. Women were created to operate from a place of liberation, independence, and freedom! Although it made me nervous to spend so much money, I knew it was a necessary step to achieve my goals.

I have no college degree and no previous experience, yet I had a vision. I became a podcaster, women's empowerment coach, speaker, community builder, and entrepreneur. Although taking on so much at once is scary, I know that discomfort and fear are signs that I'm on the right track.

Next month, I'm relocating to Florida and other destinations to continue building communities and pushing myself to the next level of growth. Although I'm scared, I know that this feeling in my gut is telling me that I'm moving in the right direction.

If you're feeling stuck or unmotivated in your own Life, I encourage you to ask yourself if you're doing scary things. The things that make you uncomfortable and nervous are often the ones that will take you to the next level. So choose them every time.

We are given this special gift called Life!

We must let go of the past, put it behind us, and be in the present moment. We must plan for the future and all that it will be for us when it arrives.

DO IT SCARED...

One of the best pieces of advice I've ever received is to "do it scared." I took this to heart when I decided to start a podcast in 2020 to share my story of overcoming domestic violence and inspire others to break their silence. Although I had no experience in podcasting, I knew I couldn't keep living my Life the way it was.

Similarly, I recently left my full-time job, despite making a six-figure income, because I no longer felt aligned with the company. It was a scary move, but I had faith that it was the right decision. I also invested \$10,000 in mentorship to start my coaching business, which specializes in helping

by Angeline Mitchell



# Grief is a difficult word to confront

In a previous publication, I delved into the topic of "Grief: The Private Club No One Wants to Join."

This piece examines grief's influence on individuals who experience job loss while providing valuable guidance on navigating this challenging period and rediscovering joy in life effectively.

In a previous publication, I delved into the topic of "Grief: The Private Club No One Wants to Join." This piece examines grief's influence on individuals who experience job loss while providing valuable guidance on navigating this challenging period and rediscovering joy in life effectively.

Grief is a difficult word to confront, and many people are unsure how to respond when someone mentions their grief. It is common for people to avoid the topic altogether or ask if you have moved on from it yet, assuming that it should have a time limit. However, the truth is that grief is a unique experience for each individual, and it does not adhere to a specific timeline. It is crucial for others to respect and acknowledge this.

Furthermore, grief does not only impact one's emotions and mental state. It profoundly affects every aspect of one's life. For example, losing your job disrupts your entire routine and throws your life into chaos. Suddenly, the familiar faces of your colleagues are absent, and financial difficulties may arise. All of these factors need to be considered and addressed.

When experiencing this kind of grief, it is not a time to feel lost but an opportunity to take a step back and re-evaluate your life. Make a list of your desires and preferences for the future, including what you enjoyed and disliked about your previous job. This self-reflection is a powerful tool that can help you regain control and start figuring out how to move forward.

Establishing a new routine is crucial to provide yourself with structure and focus. Set daily goals for yourself and always have something to look forward to, whether a walk with a friend or a phone conversation. Avoid isolating yourself and openly express how you feel. You may be surprised by the number of people who can relate to your experience.

Adopting a morning routine similar to when you had a job can be helpful. Get up, get dressed, engage in some physical activity, and then dedicate time to searching for your next role. If you find yourself struggling at times, remember you are not alone. Don't hesitate to reach out and talk to someone. Seeking support is a sign of strength rather than weakness. Numerous support systems are available to assist you during this challenging time, providing a reassuring presence in your journey.

Ensure you don't isolate yourself. I suggest exploring options like exercising, meditation, or seeking guidance from a life coach before considering medical intervention personally. Keeping a journal can be a highly effective tool; it allows you to express your thoughts and emotions openly, helping you to analyse and address any challenges you may be facing in a more structured manner. Writing



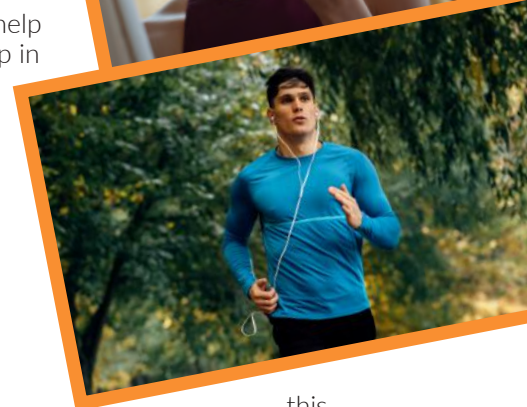
## By Maxine

things down can bring clarity and offer a path towards resolving issues step by step. Your journal can serve as a secure space to authentically express yourself.

It is essential to seek support when facing challenges in life. Whether it be through professional guidance from a life coach or attending group sessions, these resources can significantly benefit you. The worst thing you can do is not seek the support you need. Job centres often offer support clubs that can assist you in various ways, such as providing mock interviews and guidance on writing a CV for your desired job. In today's rapidly changing world, seeking as much support as possible is crucial to help you take the next step in your career.

Depression is a common outcome of grief, but it is essential to address these emotions and find ways to move forward. In today's society, various methods are available to navigate challenging period and discover a revitalised way of living. While grief may persist for some individuals indefinitely, it is crucial to reflect on the underlying cause of your sadness. If it stems from job loss, staying focused and actively seeking new opportunities can alleviate your grief. Despite the sadness of life changes, embracing a new role can lead to new relationships and personal growth.

Keep your primary goal as staying concentrated, working to conquer obstacles, and showing resilience. Through determination and perseverance, you can secure the perfect employment opportunity. If necessary, be open to retraining and adjusting to a new lifestyle.





# How can employers support staff wellbeing with employee fitness benefits?

Efforts to improve employee wellbeing are an increasing priority for organisations, all across the globe. More and more forward-thinking businesses are recognising that a good salary and other financial rewards aren't enough anymore within an increasingly competitive recruitment market. Not only do such companies become better able to attract and retain top talent, but the benefits on key business outcomes are profound. Employees who are happier and healthier in their roles are much more likely to perform well.

But when it comes to supporting the wellbeing of our staff, there is no such thing as a 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

Companies that take a systematic and preventative approach to wellness, taking into account the diverse needs of their employees, will be the most successful in achieving widespread benefits across their workforce.



Typical wellbeing provisions may include physical, social, emotional and financial support for employees. In our conversations with HR professionals and employee benefits/ wellbeing specialists across the UK, we often find that anything health-related tends to receive the best reception. Fitness benefits are especially popular- a recent Hussle survey amongst employees revealed that discounted gym access was their number one choice of corporate benefit.

## But how can fitness have an impact on the way that our employees carry out their day-to-day roles?

There's some concrete science behind it. When we exercise, the activity helps to reduce the levels of some of the body's main stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, mitigating the negative impacts that these can have on our mental health.

Beyond its stress reduction capabilities, exercise actively makes us feel better, too. Ever heard of 'runner's high'? This is the feeling that we get after being active when the body releases endorphins, which are natural painkillers and mood elevators. So, there really is some apparent chemistry behind it.

Less directly, exercise can also have a psychological impact on our behaviour. When we're active and work to achieve our fitness goals (whatever they may be), we tend to feel much better about ourselves and can transfer

this confidence to other areas of our lives. At work, this may equate to increased productivity and less time taken off due to sickness, enabling us to focus more heavily on progressing within our careers.

Regular exercise isn't always easy. Those who partake also develop key workplace skills such as better organisation, enhanced focus, and improved timekeeping. Engagement in physical activity is also closely linked to an improvement in cognitive function and a greatly enhanced ability to manage stress. For all of these reasons, workers who exercise are well-equipped to navigate the biggest challenges that they face within their daily working roles. So how can we support our employees in staying active? Even simple steps can have quite a significant impact. Many organisations are now championing 'walking meetings' to prevent their staff from becoming too sedentary in their day-to-day roles. Other traditional office-based initiatives may include lunchtime walking groups, company challenges, or on-site fitness classes.

However, working routines have changed dramatically over recent years. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, just 4.7% of UK employees worked from home, whereas now, almost half of us have at least the opportunity to do so. Therefore, a more inclusive approach is needed to have a true impact across an entire organisation. Companies need to find ways to care for the well-being of their staff, whether working at home, on-site, or traveling regularly. It's also important to understand the unique challenges that different staff groups may face.

When considering a range of available fitness benefits, perhaps the most inclusive option is multi-gym membership programs. These benefit providers (such as Hussle) hold relationships with a full network of gyms, pools, and often virtual fitness apps.

Thanks to our extensive UK coverage, Hussle sees uptake levels as high as 25% within the companies that partner with us. They value our variety in terms of venues and geographical reach, meaning that our members can work out where they want and how they want to.



For any business owner, HR professional, or wellbeing specialist considering offering fitness benefits to their staff, our message is simple and clear: The decision should be seen not as a cost but as an investment for both your colleagues and your business.

**By Neil Harmsworth**  
Co-founder and Chief  
Operating Officer at Hussle



*Neil is the co-founder of Hussle, a leading UK fitness marketplace which enables companies to invest in the wellbeing of their employees through highly inclusive, affordable, multi-brand gym access, available in 96% of UK postcode regions.*

[www.hussle.com/employers](http://www.hussle.com/employers)

# 7 Ways To Being Your Personal Best

*“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Your mindset has a powerful impact on your life. It can influence your beliefs, attitudes, and actions, and ultimately shape your outcomes. Having an optimistic mindset can be especially valuable, as it can help you approach challenges with a positive attitude and see opportunities where others may only see obstacles. By cultivating an optimistic mindset and striving to be your personal best, you can achieve greater success and happiness in all areas of your life.

## What Is Mindset?

Mindset refers to the way you approach and think about challenges, opportunities, and setbacks. It is your set of beliefs and attitudes that shape your perceptions and behaviours. There are two main types of mindsets: a fixed mindset and a growth mindset. A fixed mindset is characterized by the belief that your abilities and qualities are fixed and cannot be changed. People with a fixed mindset tend to avoid challenges and view failures as evidence of their lack of ability. They may also be more resistant to feedback and criticism, as it threatens their sense of identity and self-worth.

A growth mindset, on the other hand, is characterized by the belief that your abilities and qualities can be developed and improved over time with effort and practice. People with a growth mindset tend to embrace challenges and view failures as opportunities for learning and growth. They also tend to be more open to feedback and willing to make changes based on it.

## Why Is Optimism Important?

Optimism is the belief that good things will happen in the future and that things will turn out well in the end. It is a positive outlook on life that can help you stay motivated, resilient, and focused on your goals. Optimistic people tend to have better mental and physical health, stronger relationships, and more success in their personal and professional lives.

Being optimistic doesn't mean ignoring problems or denying reality. It means having a positive attitude and looking for solutions instead of dwelling on problems. Optimistic people tend to see setbacks and failures as temporary and solvable, rather than permanent and insurmountable.

## How To Be Your Personal Best

Being your personal best means striving to be the best version of yourself in all areas of your life. It means setting high standards for yourself and continuously working to improve and grow. Here are some tips for being your personal best:

1. Start everyday by thinking what would the best version of me do today and act accordingly for the rest of the day.
2. Set goals: Set specific, measurable, and achievable goals for yourself in different areas of your life, such as health, career, relationships, and personal growth.
3. Focus on your strengths: Identify your strengths and talents and find ways to use them to your advantage. Also, be aware of your weaknesses and work on improving them.
4. Learn continuously: Keep learning and growing by reading, taking courses, and seeking feedback from others.
5. Take care of yourself: Prioritize self-care by eating well, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep, and managing stress.
6. Surround yourself with positive influences: Surround yourself with people who support and encourage you, and limit your exposure to negative influences.
7. Stay optimistic: Cultivate an optimistic mindset by focusing on the positive, practicing gratitude, and looking for opportunities in challenges.

Your mindset, optimism, and commitment to being your personal best are essential ingredients for success and happiness. By cultivating a growth mindset, staying optimistic, and striving to be your best, you can achieve your goals, overcome obstacles, and live a fulfilling life.

*“Optimism is the most important human trait, because it allows us to evolve our ideas, to improve our situation, and to hope for a better tomorrow.” – Seth Godin*

**Paul Corke**

[www.paulcorkeinternational.com](http://www.paulcorkeinternational.com)





# Slides - Friend or Foe

Picture this. You're eight years old. I tell you, "There are lots of slides." This is exciting! Your mind conjures a lush playground with colorful slides of different heights.

Your heartbeat happily speeds up as you picture climbing to the tippy top of one. You feel the rush of letting go as you let gravity do its job. Wheee! You land, ready to spring into action, ready for more.

Now, picture this. You're 38. I tell you, "There are lots of slides."

Let me guess. You're envisioning a drab conference room with a screen displaying a boring slide covered in text. You feel despair as you visualize the speaker reading the slide out loud - word for word.

The next slide appears; it's all long sentences: just 72 slides to go, no images in sight.



What if slides in the office could feel more like....slides on the playground? What if you could create a slide deck that generates anticipation, momentum, and delight?

## Here are 5 tips to help you!

Create a map. Slides are for your audience; they're not just your notes. Outline the intellectual and emotional journey you'll take your audience on, then create your slides.

Include delight. What analogy would help explain the problem you're solving? Add an interesting image that represents this analogy.

Build suspense. If you have 5 points on a slide, reveal one at a time. Your audience will listen to you instead of reading ahead.

Create momentum. Once you've created your slides, confirm that each one moves your story along. If a slide brings your audience on a tangent, cut it.

Have a clear call to action. Let your audience know how they can spring into action.

Also, give yourself time to get creative so your audience enjoys the ride..

*By Amanda Hennessey*

Public Speaking Coach & Author Let's connect! LinkedIn:@AmandaHennessey

[www.sandiegopublicspeaking.com](http://www.sandiegopublicspeaking.com)

# Supporting



# Elevating Performance Through Pracademia:

## What Happens When Practical Experience Meets Academic Insights

Today's leaders constantly seek innovative ways to stay ahead of the curve in today's rapidly evolving business landscape. The fusion of practical application and academic knowledge—it's what we like to call "Pracademia." It is emerging as a powerful strategy for achieving sustainable success.

### What is Pracademia?

If you're not familiar, Pracademia is the integration of real-world experience with academic insights. This approach leverages the strengths of both hands-on expertise through the lens of practitioners and theoretical understanding, to create effective and impactful solutions. We believe that simplifying and blending these two elements can lead to transformative business outcomes.

### Why A Pracademic Approach Matters

**Informed Decision-Making:** We always view the world through a practitioner's lens and then use research and data to test, retest, and validate our theories. When combining practical experience with data-driven theories, this amalgamation of knowledge enables us to make well-informed decisions that, while simplified, are grounded in proven methodologies and evidence.

For instance, consider the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI). While academic research sheds light on the potential capabilities and ethical considerations of AI, practical experience highlights how these technologies can be implemented in everyday business operations. By marrying these perspectives, leaders can craft strategic initiatives that maximise AI's benefits while mitigating risks.

**Innovative Problem-Solving:** Complex business challenges often require innovative solutions. By embracing a pracademic approach, people can draw upon a diverse set of tools and strategies that have been tested and refined through real-world and, where possible, simplified applications. This approach fosters a culture of innovation, empowering teams to think creatively and approach problems from multiple angles.

Take, for example, the challenge of enhancing customer engagement in a digital age. Practical experience reveals what truly resonates with consumers, while academic studies provide data and theories on customer behaviour and engagement tactics. Integrating both of these elements can lead to groundbreaking customer engagement strategies that drive loyalty and growth... and who wouldn't want that?

**Enhanced Leadership Skills:** Effective leadership requires a balance of theory and practice. That's why at Pracademia Group, we offer a variety of specialist keynotes and

masterclasses to help equip leaders with the skills they need to inspire and guide their teams. We have intentionally designed our programmes to be interactive and engaging so that participants can immediately apply what they learn to their professional contexts.

Leadership development is not just about learning new concepts; it's about experiencing, practising and then embedding them. For instance, being told about groundbreaking & data-driven strategies might be helpful, but it's nowhere near as impactful as implementing them yourself and seeing the improvements come to fruition - the practical element allows you to feel it, which is something data alone will struggle to do. That's why incorporating role-play, storytelling and real-world scenarios with case studies means our programmes ensure clients are not only knowledgeable when they leave, but also capable.

**Tailored Solutions for Unique Needs:** A pracademic approach understands that every business is unique, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution to achieving success. Organisations that offer bespoke services co-deliver with leading experts across various fields to address the specific needs of each client, creating a more personalised approach and ensuring that businesses receive targeted support that aligns with their goals and challenges.


Whether you're a startup looking to scale or an established corporation seeking to innovate, developing tailored solutions provides the strategic edge required to navigate complex markets. We work closely with your team to understand your unique challenges and co-create solutions that drive tangible results.

**Insights That Matter:** Whilst nothing is quite the same as truly feeling the practical element of a project, relevant data does matter—it solidifies and adds gravitas to your experience. That's why we leverage relevant academic research to provide insights that highlight best practices and successful strategies for our clients. These resources serve as valuable references for business leaders looking to refine their approaches and achieve better outcomes.

We've worked with a wide range of industries, and a key theme we've seen for those who have had the most success has been collaboration and accountability. However, this only happens after trust has been formed and the content is relatable.

### Pracademia Matters Now More Than Ever

As we look to the future, the role of Pracademia Group will (we believe) only become more critical. The pace of change in today's business environment shows no signs of slowing down, and the ability to adapt and innovate



will be key to long-term success. Shining a light on real-world challenges that are solved in a collaborative process, replacing opinion with research and data.

We are passionate about bridging the gap between practical and academic = Pracademia Group. By harnessing the power of collaborative expertise, we empower business leaders to make meaningful impacts within their organisations. Whether through our keynotes, masterclasses, or bespoke services, we are committed to helping you achieve your World Cup moment in the business arena.

Interested in learning more about how Pracademia can transform your business? Contact us today or visit our website at [pracademiagroup.com](https://pracademiagroup.com) to explore our offerings and hear from some of our clients.

Where Practical Experience  
**Meets Academic Excellence**



 [team@pracademiagroup.com](mailto:team@pracademiagroup.com)

 [pracademiagroup.com](https://pracademiagroup.com)



# Conquering Summer Insect Fears

As the warm embrace of summer arrives, it brings with it longer days, blooming flowers, and, unfortunately for some, a renewed dread of the buzzing, crawling insect world.

For those plagued by entomophobia—the fear of insects—the season can be less about fun and more about anxiety. This fear can range from mild discomfort to a



debilitating phobia that hampers everyday activities. But fear not! Therapies like hypnotherapy and Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT) offer promising solutions to help you enjoy the summer insect-free—or at least without the accompanying dread.

## Understanding the Fear

Fear of insects, including spiders, bees, wasps, and other creepy crawlies, often stems from a combination of evolutionary survival instincts and personal experiences.

Our ancestors needed to potentially dangerous creatures to survive, and this primal instinct lingers today. However, personal experiences, especially traumatic ones from childhood, can exacerbate this fear.

A single painful bee sting or a frightening encounter with a spider can leave a lasting impression, manifesting as intense anxiety at the mere sight of these creatures.

## The Role of Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy is a therapeutic technique that utilises guided relaxation, intense concentration, and focused attention to achieve a heightened state of awareness, often referred to as a trance. In this state, a person can focus intensely on specific thoughts or memories while less aware of their surroundings. This focused state is ideal for addressing fears and phobias.

A trained hypnotherapist can help you uncover the root cause of your insect phobia, which is often hidden in the subconscious. By bringing these underlying issues to light, hypnotherapy allows individuals to reframe their thoughts and responses to insects. During a hypnotherapy session, the therapist will use positive suggestions and guided imagery to create new associations with insects, replacing fear and anxiety with calm and control.

For example, someone with a severe fear of spiders might be guided to visualise a peaceful scenario where they encounter a spider but feel safe and relaxed. Over time, this repeated exposure in a controlled, positive context can desensitise the person to the object of their fear.

## The Power of Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)

EFT, often referred to as “tapping,” is another powerful tool in the battle against phobias. This technique combines elements of cognitive therapy and exposure therapy with acupressure by tapping on specific meridian points on the body. EFT aims to balance the body’s energy system and alleviate psychological stress.

A typical EFT session involves tapping certain points while focusing on a specific fear or phobia and voicing affirmations. For instance, a person might tap on their meridian points while saying, “Even though I am afraid of bees, I deeply and completely accept myself.” This process helps to reduce the emotional intensity of the fear.

EFT works by addressing the energy disruptions caused by negative thoughts and emotions. By tapping and voicing affirmations, individuals can rewire their emotional responses, gradually reducing the anxiety associated with insects.

## Combining Therapies for Maximum Effect

While both hypnotherapy and EFT can be effective on their own, they can also be combined for a synergistic effect. Hypnotherapy can help individuals uncover and address deep-seated fears, while EFT can provide immediate relief and a practical tool for managing anxiety as it arises.

Imagine you’re at a summer picnic, and suddenly, a wasp appears. In the past, this might have triggered panic. However, through hypnotherapy, you’ve reprogrammed your initial reaction to stay calm. With EFT, you can quickly tap through any residual anxiety on the spot, allowing you to enjoy your picnic without fear.

Summer should be a time of joy, not anxiety. If the fear of insects has been holding you back, consider exploring hypnotherapy and EFT. These techniques offer hope and tangible results, empowering you to reclaim your peace of mind and embrace all the wonders of summer—buzzing insects included.

**Angie works both online and face-to-face. For more information, check out her website.**

**By Angie Doig-Thorne**



[www.yorkhypnotherapist.com](http://www.yorkhypnotherapist.com)

# 4 Consequences of Not Getting Enough Sleep

*Sleep is the unsung hero of our well-being.  
The game-changer that can transform your health.  
Here are four consequences of not getting enough sleep.*

## 1. Promotes weight gain

Many studies point to sleep restriction leading to increased levels of ghrelin, the hunger hormone, and decreased levels of leptin, the hormone responsible for fullness. A short-term study published in *Annals of Internal Medicine* found that two days of sleep restriction was associated with an 18% reduction in leptin and a 28% elevation in ghrelin. These changes were associated with increased hunger and appetite (1). Not only that, but chemical changes inside the brain also alter the kinds of foods you fancy eating.

So, by ensuring sufficient sleep, you're not just avoiding late-night snacking; you're setting the stage for a metabolism that works in your favour

## 2. Creates more inflammation

Practically every cause of dis-ease in the body (and also disease) is related one way or another to inflammation. Inflammation can wreak havoc on your body, and poor sleep might be fanning the flames. In the *Best Pract Res Clin Endocrinol Metab*, researchers found a clear link between sleep deprivation and increased inflammatory markers (2). So, when you prioritise sleep, you're not just easing into dreamland; you're actively reducing the risk of inflammatory conditions of all kinds.

## 3. More likely to get Diabetes

Lack of sleep has been linked to insulin resistance, paving the way for type 2 diabetes. A study published in the *Curr Diab Rep* found that there is substantial evidence to suggest that sleep habits and sleep disorders are related to diabetes risk (3)

## 4. Greater risk of heart disease

Interestingly, increasing attention is being given to poor sleep and cardiovascular risk. It's thought to be linked to the non-REM sleep stages, during which your whole body slows down (heart rate, blood pressure, breathing), which is restorative for the heart. Now, imagine getting less sleep or interrupted sleep. It's no wonder that chronic sleep deprivation is linked to a wide range of cardio conditions, like high cholesterol, stroke, and heart attack. A study published in *Current Cardiology Reviews* has revealed a relationship between sleep deprivation and hypertension and coronary heart disease. (4)

**Guard your heart – prioritise sleep.**

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**By Anne Anyia**

**Registered Nutritionist and  
Certified Health Coach**



[www.awesconutrition.com](http://www.awesconutrition.com)

Supporting

**CALM**

# Unlock Hidden Potentials

## The Game-Changing Benefits You Didn't Know About Coaching

Coaching has become a pivotal tool for enhancing both personal and professional growth. Yet, for many individuals, a lack of understanding about the benefits of coaching can create scepticism, potentially impeding their personal development journey. To overcome such barriers, here are several effective strategies:

**Meet-and-Greet Opportunities:** Creating spaces for individuals to connect with coaches allows for open conversations about the coaching process and addressing any concerns or questions. These interactions can foster a personal connection, making the concept of coaching more approachable.

**Sharing Success Narratives:** Sharing stories of individuals who have navigated similar paths of skepticism to achieve significant growth through coaching can be particularly inspiring. These stories serve as tangible evidence of coaching's potential to catalyze personal and professional development.

Sara, initially doubtful of the value of coaching, found her skepticism to dissolve after the first session. Her newfound confidence and clarity in her career goals led to a promotion she once thought was out of reach, embodying the transformative power of coaching.

**Comprehensive Benefits of Coaching:** Engaging in coaching can lead to profound self-discovery, enhanced communication skills, clearer goal-setting, and an overall boost in leadership capabilities. These sessions provide a platform for individuals to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, paving the way for impactful personal growth and achievement.

**Real-Life Impact:** Individuals have reported remarkable increases in satisfaction and productivity, often quantified at around 25%. The transition from skepticism to enthusiasm underscores a more profound comprehension of coaching's role in bridging the gap between present circumstances and aspirational goals.

Wary of coaching's effectiveness, Daniel decided to give it a chance at a friend's urging. Within only a few weeks, he experienced a dramatic shift in his approach to challenges, transforming from hesitant to proactive. His success in spearheading a critical project at work showcased the

undeniable impact of his coaching journey. Starting a coaching journey involves a blend of education, transparent dialogue, and trust. This approach not only unveils the potential within every individual but also fosters a culture of continuous growth and success.



By **Lizzie Claesson**  
CEO @BrighterLeaders

[www.brighterleaders.com](http://www.brighterleaders.com)

# Supporting

# NHS

# Master the Art of Storytelling

## Introduction

Imagine a world without stories - no tales of brave heroes, magical lands, or thrilling adventures. It's hard to picture, isn't it? That's because storytelling is woven into the very fabric of human existence. From ancient myths told around campfires to modern-day movies and books, stories have the incredible power to teach, inspire, and captivate audiences of all ages.

But have you ever wondered what makes a story truly great? How do storytellers weave their magic, captivating our imaginations and drawing us into their worlds? Well, that's what we're here to explore—the art of storytelling. Storytelling is a necessary part of life as human beings. It has so much power to teach, deliver a message and engage.

In order to master the art of storytelling it is important to understand the power behind it, the fundamental elements of any story such as the characters, setting the stage and the plot and using the right narrative and language to make the piece unique and to deliver its purpose.

## The power of storytelling.

You need to know your audience because this will lead and guide you correctly. You want to engage them and make them care so that what you say is relatable, compelling and memorable. To prepare you need to start with the end in mind. Know what message and purpose you want to deliver. Think about the structure and chronology of your story and map this out. Every story has a start, middle and end. And the power of storytelling is to captivate from the start through to the end.

I bet like me you can relate to what it's like reading a book that you can't put down. Or watching a film that seems to fly by quickly because you are so 'in the story'.

## Four fundamental elements.

### 1) Characters

The people are the heart of any story. Who they are, the problem or desire they have. They bring the story to life and need to be authentic and relatable. It's about making that emotional connection with our audience so that they can identify with parts of the characters.

### 2) Stage and plot

You need a plot and for that to include some kind of conflict where the stakes are high. This allows you to build the suspense of the story, where the tensions are rising to a peak. Will there be success or failure?

Any audience wants a resolution, whether satisfying or otherwise. But leaving them wanting more can also continue that suspense, that cliffhanger.

### 3) Narrative and language

It amazes me how a piece of writing can have so many different styles and tones. How they are all using words,

but the words that are used and the way they work together is unique. Can you relate?

A whitepaper, a novel, a letter or an email; they all use words, but how they are used, the narrative and the way they work together to deliver the overall message is incredible.

Every piece of writing is unique in its own way. But one of the key factors in storytelling is 'show, don't tell'. It's better to use the words cleverly to show what a character is like through their actions rather than TELLING your audience what they look like. The language and narrative you use is key to engaging your audience.

Like an artist with their own style, an author has a unique voice and style behind their writing. So to master the art of storytelling requires practice, and patience. The tone of voice and style may not come instantly but with time and practice and testing, the style will come so that it is inimitable. There are so many writing tools that can help and it's worth exploring these and just starting to write.

## 4) Message and purpose

Ensure there is an overall message and purpose to any piece. Think of the punchline and what you want your audience to feel and come away with. A successful story makes us want to tell others and share what we thought and have a discussion with a friend about that story. There is nothing more pleasurable.

## Conclusion

Storytelling is powerful for engaging, inspiring and influencing. It's used in our daily lives from retelling experiences, marketing campaigns, self-development, learning and so much more.

In order to master the art of storytelling, it's important to understand your audience, the fundamental story elements and the narrative and language in order to truly connect.

## By Natalie Alsop

Content Strategist with a love for words



# Love never dies

by Tanya Brown



Love never dies. This is one of the first things I learned, having done psychic readings for clients worldwide. Love never dies. I remember one client whose father died. They had a very contentious relationship in life. Once he died, he was able to communicate with her on the other side.

The relationship in life was contentious, but in death, they are now communicating better than ever. She has never had a better relationship with him. Once people pass to the other side, they see themselves from a more emotionless perspective. They are able to see how their actions, right or wrong, affect those they care about. It's like a review of their life. He was able to communicate his apologies and have a much better relationship.

That is why I say love never dies, although you may not be able to see your loved ones. They are always around you. Think about that time you were washing dishes and had a

random memory of a loved one who died. The memory is a good occasion you both enjoyed. You stand flummoxed by the memory—the randomness of it all. Truth be told, that is what your loved one on the other side thinks of you. They are sending you that memory because they love you and are thinking of you. But they do not end there.

I have had clients whose mothers have passed away. While they are in mourning, they constantly smell a certain perfume—one of their mother's favorite perfumes. Your loved ones who have passed are always around you. They also show up in your dreams to give you messages.

This is why I love what I do: I share messages from clients' loved ones and show them how they can do this on their own. Like I said, love never dies.

**Tanya Brown Spiritual Business Coach**

# Supporting



# Unlocking Healing & Performance: The Power and Promise of Brainspotting

Brainspotting is grounded in the understanding that trauma is often stored in the brain and body in ways that are not easily accessible through traditional talk therapy.

The technique involves the client maintaining a focused gaze on a specific point in the visual field, identified by the therapist as a “brainspot.” This spot is believed to correspond to an area in the brain where the trauma or emotional pain is stored. By sustaining eye position on this spot, the client can tap into deeper brain processes, facilitating the release and integration of traumatic memories and negative emotions.

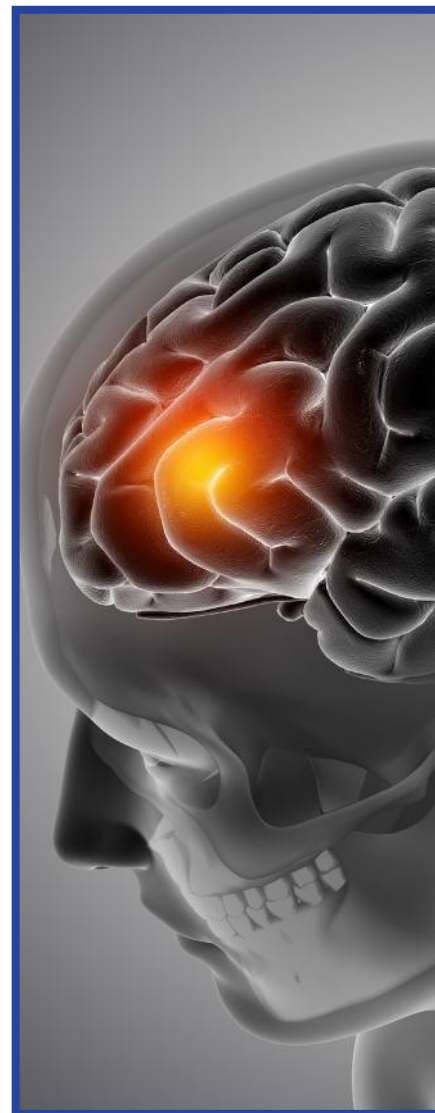
Brainspotting is based on the concept that the brain’s subcortical regions, which govern emotional and bodily responses, are more directly involved in processing trauma than the neocortex, the brain’s rational and thinking parts. Therefore, by using eye positions to access these subcortical regions, Brainspotting aims to bypass the more conscious cognitive defenses and directly target the areas where trauma is held. In practice, a Brainspotting session typically involves the Clinician and client working together to identify relevant brainspots using a pointer or the client’s intuition. Once a brainspot is found, the client maintains their gaze on it while the Clinician provides an attuned presence, allowing the client’s brain to process the traumatic material at its own pace.

The approach has been found effective for a variety of issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and chronic pain. It is also utilized to enhance performance in sports, the arts, and other areas where psychological factors play a critical role. Brainspotting’s non-verbal nature makes it particularly suitable for individuals who struggle to articulate their experiences or for whom traditional therapy has been insufficient.

In summary, Brainspotting is a focused, experiential therapy that leverages the connection between visual input and emotional processing to help clients access, process, and resolve deep-seated trauma and emotional pain, promoting overall psychological healing and well-being.

By Bonnie Kimpling

[www.coachbonniekaye.com](http://www.coachbonniekaye.com)



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# The Silent Saboteurs: How Mold and Mycotoxins Wreak Havoc on Your Health and Hormones

We are surrounded by environmental toxins. But imagine an unseen enemy infiltrating your home and pantry, quietly disrupting your health and well-being. This adversary is mould, armed with mycotoxins—potent compounds produced by mould spores. Despite their microscopic size, these toxins can significantly impact your body, especially your hormonal balance.

Mold thrives in damp, poorly ventilated areas like basements, bathrooms, and hidden leaks. Among the most dangerous is *Stachybotrys*, also known as black mould, which produces particularly toxic mycotoxins. Beyond your home's corners, mould can contaminate foods such as grains, nuts, beans, dried fruit, and coffee. When ingested, mycotoxins wreak havoc on various bodily systems.

One insidious effect of mycotoxins is their impact on the endocrine system, which regulates hormones. Hormones coordinate processes like metabolism, growth, and mood regulation. Mycotoxins can disrupt this delicate system, causing far-reaching consequences.

Exposure to mycotoxins has been linked to cortisol disruptions, leading to symptoms such as chronic fatigue, anxiety, and weight gain. Prolonged exposure can impair the immune system, increasing susceptibility to infections, autoimmunity, and other chronic illnesses.

Women may encounter hormonal imbalances leading to various challenges such as irregular menstrual cycles, severe premenstrual syndrome (PMS), fertility issues, and

## Mycotoxins

exacerbation of menopause symptoms. Men can face decreased libido and other reproductive health problems due to mycotoxins' effects on testosterone levels.

The respiratory system is another primary target. Inhalation can cause symptoms from mild irritation to severe allergic reactions and asthma attacks. Long-term exposure, particularly to *Stachybotrys*, has been associated with chronic respiratory conditions and lung damage.

To protect yourself, ensure your home is well-ventilated, fix leaks promptly, and use dehumidifiers in damp areas. Regularly inspect for mould and clean with mould-killing solutions. Store food properly, check for mould before consumption, and buy from reputable sources. If you suspect significant mould contamination, consider professional remediation services.

Awareness and proactive measures can help you guard against the hidden health threats posed by mould and mycotoxins, allowing you to breathe easier, eat safer, and maintain a healthier hormonal balance.

By Marie Cherrett



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# Mastering the Art of Global Living

In a world where borders are increasingly fluid, the art of global living is an essential skill for those who seek to embrace the full spectrum of what the world has to offer. Mastering this art involves more than just frequent travel or living abroad; it requires a nuanced understanding of how to weave the fabric of various cultures into the tapestry of daily life.

Creating a sense of home across continents starts with cultivating local connections. Engaging in community activities, learning the local language, and participating in traditional events can transform an unfamiliar place into a haven. It's about finding the local coffee shop where baristas know your order or the neighborhood park where faces become familiar. These small anchors create a sense of belonging, turning the foreign into the familiar.

Yet, global living also demands an adeptness in maintaining and nurturing relationships across time zones. In our digitally connected age, technology affords us the luxury of keeping our global network alive. Regular video calls, messaging apps, and social media help bridge the physical distances, allowing us to maintain a continuous presence in the lives of those we value.

Financial agility is equally crucial. Understanding and navigating the financial implications of living internationally—managing multiple currencies, understanding tax obligations, and securing international health insurance—ensures that one's global lifestyle is adventurous, secure, and sustainable.

Moreover, embracing global living means being an ambassador for your roots while being a respectful guest in your host countries. It involves a delicate balance of sharing your heritage and absorbing new cultures, fostering an exchange that enriches both sides.

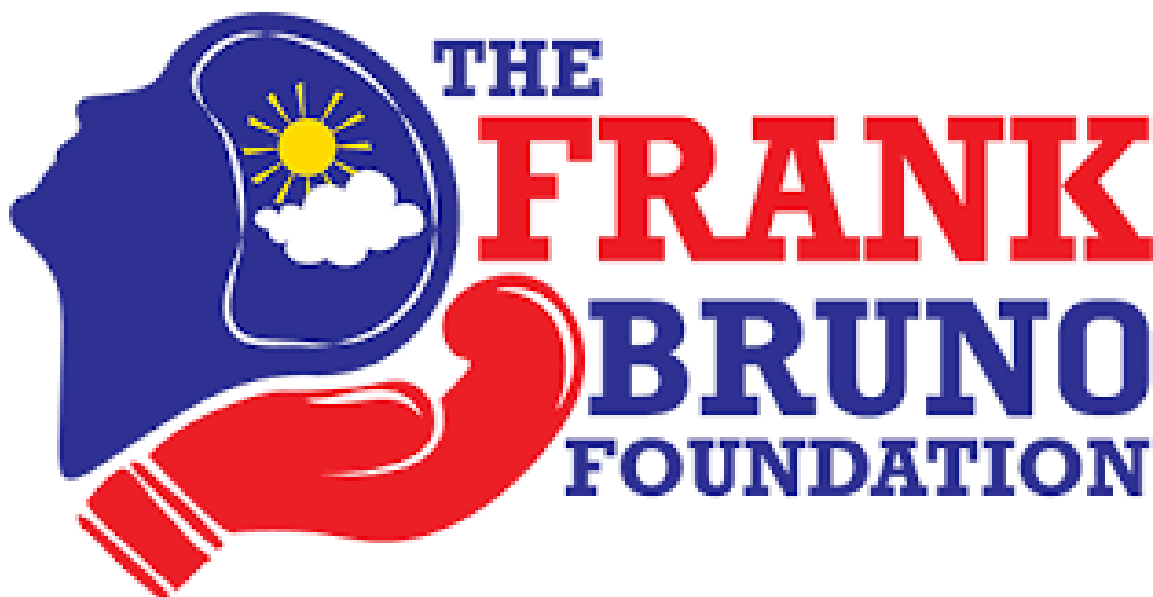
In essence, mastering the art of global living is about building a mosaic of experiences that respects both the world's diversity and the person's individuality. It is about creating a life where every place could be home, yet knowing deeply where your roots lie. This lifestyle is not just for the select few; it is a conscious choice for anyone willing to step outside their comfort zone and engage with the world in its vibrant diversity.



By Sally Pederson

[www.GlobalCitizenLife.org](http://www.GlobalCitizenLife.org)

## Supporting



# Planning Ahead of Time

We spend our lives planning events such as birthdays, engagements, marriages, and births. However, there is one thing we know for sure: Life cannot exist without death. Later life, the end of life, death, and post-death are topics that we shy away from, even though they are the only guaranteed events of life.

Incredibly, every living person is unique—not just in their fingerprints but also in how they live their lives. As we reach and celebrate life's milestones, we plan ahead for the next one, imagining how our lives will change and planning to make sure we have what we need and want. Being prepared allows us to be in control, and having a plan for the future brings peace of mind. Every day, we make choices, often subconsciously, based on our individuality.

When people think of planning for death, they often relate it to writing a will... and then, only when they feel they have something worth leaving. This puts great emphasis on our monetary value, yet we are worth much more than our assets, and when it comes to end-of-life, money is not the main focus. Planning Ahead of Time gives us the opportunity to organise documents that have the power to protect us and our families when we need it the most. Lasting Power of Attorneys (LPA), advanced decisions, expression of wishes, wills, trusts, digital asset instructions, funeral plans... and don't forget pet provisions.

When people are told of a life-limiting condition or given a terminal diagnosis, they often start planning. Why? Because they want to help their loved ones cope with the changing circumstances. Making plans for their care, ensuring people know what they want, disclosing

passwords, organising documents, giving financial details, leaving instructions for personal items and planning funeral celebrations are normal practices for taking control of the situation to create peace of mind. When all is said and done, we want to make our own choices until our last breath and beyond.

It is becoming more commonplace to make plans without an end in sight because life is not promised. Don't plan through the pain of a terminal diagnosis; plan through the positivity of life. It is never too early to gather information, make choices, and support the people you love, but it can be too late.



By Dayle Adams

[www.planningaheadoftime.com](http://www.planningaheadoftime.com)



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# Men... You need to hear this!

## Here is a serious question - 'Whatever Happened to Gary Cooper?'

As an Executive Mindset Coach, I primarily work with aspiring or established high achievers. During my coaching, there always seems to be an underlining and consistent theme amongst my male clients.

Between the sharp and defined lines of goal setting and formulating business strategies, there lies a faint blurred line that takes some time to unveil. Men are always asking themselves, "Am I doing enough? Am I behaving like a real man?" People shy away from stereotypes. But I am a bold guy. I am going to expose the elephant in the room. Men of a certain age, especially those of status, almost never admit they have a problem with their perceived masculine identity.

Trust me. I understand. I struggled with this for some time. But why does this happen, even now? Today, the definition of being a man is constantly evolving. In the old days, masculinity was defined by strength, power, and financial success. Today's modern man faces multiple challenges: balancing work, family, and personal growth, not to mention keeping fit and having six-pack abs. Traditionally, societal expectations placed a heavy emphasis on men being providers in financial terms only. However, as we progressed, the rigid constructs of masculinity are being dismantled, paving the way for a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be a man.

In my case, I struggled with the relentless pursuit of success in my career. From my time as a Police Officer to the high-pressured corporate environment, I tied my worth to my well-being in the pursuit of success. The pressure to climb the ladder, earn a high income, and maintain a certain status became overwhelming. I reached my thirties, burnt out and feeling emptiness and unfulfillment.

Looking back, this emptiness was due to many factors. Lack of meaningful relationships and not prioritising self-care played a part. In a world that glorifies hustle culture, it's important for men to redefine success on their terms, recognizing that fulfillment comes from a balanced life that encompasses work, family, and personal passions. Work-life balance should never be understated; it's a crucial aspect of mental and emotional well-being. We men must learn to set boundaries, prioritize our time, and cultivate hobbies and interests outside of work. Whether it's spending quality time with loved ones, pursuing creative pursuits, or simply taking time to relax, finding a balance between work and personal life is essential for long-term happiness.

Here is another problem. Men are often expected to suppress their emotions, adhere to rigid stereotypes, and avoid anything perceived as "feminine." However, real men are not afraid to express their emotions, seek help when needed, and embrace their authentic selves.

I never found this easy, but breaking free from societal expectations requires courage and resilience. However, the rewards are immeasurable. By embracing vulnerability and authenticity, men can forge deeper connections, foster healthier relationships, and live more fulfilling lives.

In my view, the true measure of a man is not his ability to accumulate wealth or power but rather his integrity, compassion, and empathy. In a world plagued by division and conflict, men have an opportunity to lead by example and promote positive change.

Whether it's advocating for gender equality, championing social causes, or simply treating others with kindness and respect, real men use their influence to make the world a better place. It is our duty as fathers, husbands, sons, and friends to provide that positive role model for future generations.

My enlightening moment came when my daughter was born. As I held that beautiful girl in my arms, I suddenly realised my masculinity would no longer be measured by the size of bank account or the latest title on my business card. It would be measured by my ability to ensure I do the utmost to keep her happy and safe and provide the security she deserves.

Ultimately, being a man means rejecting outdated stereotypes and embracing a more inclusive and compassionate vision of masculinity. It means prioritizing relationships over achievements, vulnerability over stoicism, and authenticity over conformity. It's about having the courage to define success on your terms. Stay true to yourself and live with integrity, purpose, and compassion. That is the true essence of masculinity.

**"People here are funny. They work so hard at living, they forget how to live." - Gary Cooper**

**By Tim Crouch**

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