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# PSYCHOLOGIES

MAY 2017 | £4.20

MAGAZINE

PROFILE

## Reese WITHERSPOON

On wielding  
power and  
showing  
vulnerability



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18-PAGE DOSSIER

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MAY 2017



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### PSYCHOLOGIES

MAGAZINE



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C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 Manual. Official Fuel Consumption Figures in mpg (l/100km): Urban 38.1 (7.4), Extra Urban 55.4 (5.1), Combined 47.8 (5.9). CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions 135g/km. All mpg and CO<sub>2</sub> figures quoted are sourced from official EU regulated laboratory test results. These are provided to allow comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect your actual driving experience. Model shown is C-HR Dynamic 5 door Coupe FWD 1.2 VVT-i Manual at £25,565. Price excludes metallic paint at £545. Prices correct at time of going to print.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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



## Emma Cannon

Women's health expert

Emma is a fertility and women's health expert, mentor and speaker. She is the author of the bestselling *The Baby-Making Bible* and her fifth book, *Fertile* (Vermilion, £20), is out now. 'To be fertile extends outside the realm of baby-making,' she says. 'To be fertile in all areas of life improves our relationships – living a fertile life enhances our sense of fulfilment and bliss; helping us receive greatness for ourselves, and others.' See page 94.

## Derrick Thomson

Photographer

From Jakarta in Indonesia, Derrick moved to Bali to escape the bustle of city life. 'Photography has always been a part of me, not just a business,' he says. 'I am enjoying my life here more than ever; it's relaxing, less stressful and I love the island's artistic culture.' This month, for our Dossier, 'Quit the chaos', Derrick photographs designer and businesswoman, Jennifer Hamley, who also made the leap to island life. Read her story on page 68.



## Laurie Hastings

Illustrator

Laurie is an artist and printmaker based in Nottingham. Much of her work encompasses the themes of wellbeing, mind, body and spirit; conveyed through muted colour and delicate line. 'My goal is to convey a snapshot of the written piece,' she says. 'I loved researching the vintage medicine bottles for the article, "Emotional first aid" (page 34), and discovering the fonts and intricate patterns used in the label design.'

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# Tiny steps and big leaps

As spring bursts into our lives, we invite you to clear the decks, quit the chaos and start prioritising your dreams and goals. Are you feeling brave enough to take a giant leap? Be inspired by Amber Key's piece on page 26 about how she left her possessions behind and radically simplified her life – by living in a field! If this is a stride too far, turn to page 60 and take a small step with Anita Chaudhuri, who got herself a pencil case to spark change for our 18-page 'Organise your life' Dossier. Anita interviews Sarah Knight, author of *Get Your Sh\*t Together* (Quercus, £12.99), a woman who truly walks the talk: while working a corporate job, she made a to-do list of 365 mini goals, which allowed her to save enough money to eventually leave the rat race and build a house on a tropical island in the Dominican Republic.

Little but powerful 'life-tweaks' run throughout this issue. On page 17, Oliver Burkeman shares how making tiny adjustments to the way that we speak to ourselves helps us forge a better relationship with ourselves. Learn how to tune into your sexual needs with Karla Newbey on page 46, as she experiments with unlocking her sensuality on her first tantra retreat.

On page 130, Vanessa King urges us to *really* hear people to improve our relationships, asking: 'How, and when, can you listen more empathetically?'

If you're feeling flattened by life, take comfort in our feature on emotional first aid (page 34) as Martha Roberts shares four ways to ensure a psychological lift.

Whatever you're facing, know that there is always someone who can help, or something you can do differently, to create change – and we're right beside you.

Suzy

## GET IN TOUCH

Join our tribe! Connect with us on our website at [psychologies.co.uk](http://psychologies.co.uk) and on social media. Share your comments, photos and inspiration on Twitter ([twitter.com/PsychologiesMag](https://twitter.com/PsychologiesMag)), Facebook ([facebook.com/Psychologiesmagazine](https://facebook.com/Psychologiesmagazine)), and Instagram ([instagram.com/psychologiesmagazine](https://instagram.com/psychologiesmagazine)).



**Suzy Greaves**

Editor, with Oscar  
the office dog

# Viewpoint

Let us know what you think of the magazine and, each month, we'll publish the best letters



## STAR LETTER

### TAKING CHARGE

I went through a difficult period, and knew I needed to exercise more self-care, but I did not know where to start, until I read your Energy Dossier (March). I found my answer: those seemingly undistinguished little things, which feed my pool of energy, aren't acts of self-indulgence, but practices that enrich me – and they shouldn't be neglected. I've decided to dedicate my energy to finding ways to fit the things that give me strength back into my life. I have a plan for how to reclaim myself. Thank you. Anna

## PHOTO COMPETITION

**Win!** £75 worth of products from across the Heathcote & Ivory Floral Collection

Would you like to showcase your talents in *Psychologies*? Each month, we ask you to submit a photo on a theme. We'll print our winner in the upcoming issue of the magazine and on [psychologies.co.uk](http://psychologies.co.uk), plus the winner gets a prize. The next theme is 'Change'. Send your photo attached in an email, with your address, to [pictures@psychologies.co.uk](mailto:pictures@psychologies.co.uk) by midnight on 30 April.\*



Prize includes: Hand & Nail Cream (100ml), £6; Moisturising Shower Gel (250ml), £7.50; Softening Body Cream (250ml), £7; Scented Sachets, £3; Scented Drawer Liners, £6.50; Hand & Nail Cream Collection (3 x 30ml tubes), £5; Bathing Flowers (85g), £10; Travel Hand Care Set (Hand Cream, 30ml, and Cuticle Cream, 15ml), £6; Hand Prep Set (Hand Cream, 100ml, Hand Scrub, 30ml, and emery board), £8; Eau De Toilette (50ml), £10; Scented Soap (175g), £5



### THE WINNER THIS MONTH

I took this photo during a recent trip to Norway at a place called Uttakleiv beach, where you find amazing rock pools and hues of pink and blue at sunset. I felt it suited your theme of 'Harmony' perfectly. I love the way this rock rests first in the still water, and then in its sandy bed, and how sky and sea merge. Charlie Nowlan

THE THEME FOR THE NEXT PHOTO COMPETITION\* IS 'CHANGE'. DEADLINE: 30 APRIL EMAIL [LETTERS@PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK](mailto:LETTERS@PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK)



## PLAY IT FORWARD

Your 'Play time' Happiness Book Club (March) resonated with me. After 21 years of working in a stressful, demanding job, I realised I needed more fun in my daily life – so I switched careers and became a teaching assistant. Now, I have endless opportunities to play, use my imagination and explore the universe. I still have targets to meet and deadlines to adhere to, but I cannot stress enough the importance of an enriched work-play balance – no matter what age you are. Thanks for highlighting, and reaffirming, the value of this in today's society of 'lost play' syndrome. **Angela**



## MAKING MY PEACE

I've just returned from *Psychologies'* Stillness Retreat feeling calm and blissful. It was such an amazing experience in the tranquillity of charming West Lexham. I arrived stressed but, almost immediately, felt a sense of peace. The retreat was nurturing and nourishing in every aspect, from the accommodation, to the delicious, fresh food – everything was perfect.

The workshops were energising, yet gentle. I gained insight into what stillness is, and how to connect with it daily. Everyone is commenting on how calm I am and I feel the benefits of my newfound knowledge will stay with me. **Salma**

\*FOR FULL TS&CS, SEE PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK. COLLECTION MAY VARY

**This  
month's  
winner**

## *I'd like to thank...*

*To my daughter, Bethany,*

Thank you for taking me on my journey into motherhood and all the lessons you've taught me. You were my firstborn and, at just three years old, you were diagnosed with severe autism.

You had very limited speech and understanding and, at 16 years of age, your condition deteriorated. Sadly, you never got well enough to live at home again.

Now, at the age of 24, you visit twice a week and, during those few hours, we as a family return to some semblance of normality. You're a joy to have around, for me and your younger siblings. You taught me so many things: honesty; humility; courage; how to be truly non-judgemental; and how to give and receive unconditional love.

I feel I can truly be myself around you. I know you'll never lie to me or be anything other than genuine. Despite the sadness and trials your condition sometimes brings, I wouldn't change you for the world. I would do this rollercoaster ride with you again and again, every single time. Sometimes people are brought into this world to give lessons and gifts to others – and that is what you mean to me, Bethany, so thank you.

*Love Mum*



### **THIS MONTH'S LETTER OF GRATITUDE WINS...**

A year's digital subscription to *Psychologies*, worth £28.99

**IS THERE SOMEONE YOU'D LIKE TO THANK? SHARE YOUR LETTER OF GRATITUDE BY SENDING IT TO LETTERS@PSYCHOLOGIES.CO.UK**

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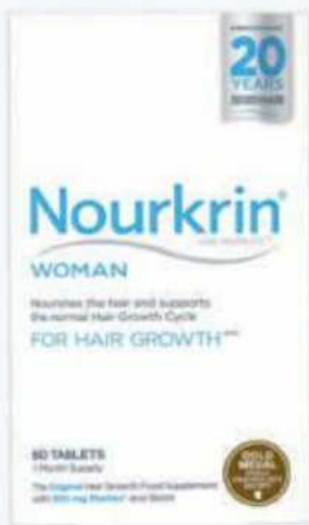
\*Terms and conditions apply. Discount available when purchasing Nourkrin® products using promotional code PSY20 only at [shop.nourkrin.co.uk](http://shop.nourkrin.co.uk) before 31st May 2017.

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# The Fix

News | Reviews | Books | Film | Art | Ideas

EDITED BY ELLEN TOUT

'This book is my love letter to the French capital,' says floral and travel photographer, Georgianna Lane. Her new book, *Paris In Bloom* (Abrams, £12.99), transports us through the city's hidden gardens, fragrant flower markets and seasonal walking tours. 'I found my own story of Paris, written in visual verses of petals and leaves,' says Lane. 'I am ever in awe of the dreamers, architects, artists and craftsmen who envisioned and created this magnificent city.'  
*Vive les vacances!*

*“There is nothing like a dream to create the future”*

VICTOR HUGO,  
*LES MISÉRABLES*

PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGIANNA LANE. FROM 'PARIS IN BLOOM'



**So Fabulous kaftan, £45, Littlewoods**

## Wish you were here

We may ask, 'How was your holiday?' – but, actually, we only enjoy hearing about other people's experiences if they're familiar to us. A study\* found human speech is full of informational gaps, so familiar stories (like about that beach we both visited) allow listeners to use their own knowledge to fill in the missing bits.

## UNLOCKING ANGST

Do you ever head out for work and then wonder whether you've locked the door? Researchers found that the unlocked door isn't really what we're worried about, but the fear of feeling guilty. Experts measured people's habits and found similarities among those of us who check compulsively. Scientists describe a 'sensitivity to guilt', which causes us to worry, and we're trying to minimise harm by double-checking and avoiding those dreaded feelings of responsibility.\*\*



**Sparrow key holder, £10.38, Design3000**

# 89%

**OF BRITS SAY THEY BELIEVE IN THE 'POWER OF NICE', AND THINK WE SHOULD CHAMPION VALUES SUCH AS RESPECT, KINDNESS AND GOOD MANNERS\*\*\***



**Medina lanterns, £7.95 each, Prezzybox**

## HAPPY CAMPERS

According to new research, just a couple of nights camping is enough to reset your body's internal clock, helping you to fall asleep more quickly, even after returning home. Researchers challenged people to camp without torches or technology for a weekend and found that the exposure to natural light rebooted their circadian rhythm – effectively syncing campers with the sun and seasons. Incorporating this practice into your everyday life could help you sleep and wake more naturally. Another reason to sleep under the stars.†

PHOTOGRAPH: CHELSEA GUGLIELMINO/GETTY IMAGES; LOS ANGELES, 2017; G. COONEY ET AL., THE NOVELTY PENALTY: PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE, 2017; GWILLI, THE ROLE OF GUILT SENSITIVITY IN FOOD SENSATION; E. STOTHARD ET AL., CIRCADIAN ENTRAINMENT TO THE NATURAL LIGHT/DARK CYCLE ACROSS SEASONS AND THE WEEKEND, 'CURRENT BIOLOGY', 2017; S. HEPPELL, LEARNOMETRE REPORT, UNIVERSITY OF BOURNEMOUTH, 2016

**ENJOY BEING BAREFOOT? RESEARCH†† FOUND THAT CHILDREN WHO DON'T WEAR SHOES IN CLASS NOT ONLY**





Culture

## Love trumps hate

*Why I March: Images From The Women's March Around The World* (Abrams, £11.99) celebrates the global women's marches of 21 January in a beautiful book of inspiring photographs. The emotive collection is a depiction of strength, solidarity and harmony among the five million people – from more than 80 countries on all seven continents – who walked side by side in the 'largest peaceful demonstration in history'.

Among those featured are the women of Costa Rica, Canada, Ghana, the UK, the United States (pictured) and beyond, all with one message: 'Love triumphs hate'. Royalties will be donated to non-profit-making organisations affiliated with the march.

### SCHOOL OF LIFE LESSONS

“ To seize the day, we must be spontaneous. Freedom; being able to exercise free will lies at the heart of wellbeing. It is key to self-realisation. We must practise spontaneity to embody *carpe diem* ”

ROMAN KRZNARIC

*Roman Krznaric is author of 'Carpe Diem Regained' (Cornerstone, £14.99, out 6 April). He leads a Sunday Sermon on seizing the day at The School of Life in London on 9 April. For details, visit [theschooloflife.com](http://theschooloflife.com)*

LEARN, BUT ALSO BEHAVE, BETTER. EXPERTS SAID IT WAS BECAUSE PUPILS FELT MORE RELAXED AND ENGAGED

# 10%

OF PEOPLE HAVE THE PHYSICAL ABILITY THEY WOULD HAVE NEEDED TO SURVIVE IN PREHISTORIC TIMES.\* QUIVERING IN OUR CAVES IT IS, THEN!

## Sleepy gene

Fresh research into why we feel tired, or low in energy, found that, although most causes are environmental, our genetics account for 8.4 per cent of the triggers.\*\* Essentially, we're inheriting tiredness! The findings also suggest that genetic proneness to some illnesses, even if you don't have any symptoms, are also linked to feelings of fatigue. For example, people who are genetically prone to diabetes, but do not have the condition, still experience this small genetic link with the tiredness of diabetics.



T-shirt, £20,  
Type on Top



Heart tea pot  
(cups not  
included), £30,  
Love Leaf Tea

## POTTY FOR TEA

As if we need an excuse for tea and cake at work: it turns out we are more focused and productive in an environment such as a café, than in an office. A study<sup>†</sup> revealed that idle chit-chat, say, with customers in a tea shop, is less distracting than office colleagues' conversations. Music and work-related talk are likely to divert our attention and lead to a drop in performance – but strangers are free to natter!

# 8in10

WORKERS AGREE THAT CURIOUS COLLEAGUES ARE MOST LIKELY TO BRING GOOD IDEAS TO LIFE,\*\* BUT 73 PER CENT SAID THEY ENCOUNTER HURDLES WHEN THEY'RE ASKING QUESTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE

FILM REVIEW: ELLEN TOUT; AUDIOBOOK RECOMMENDATION: ELISE ITALIA ANDER; AUDIBLE: "SPORTSSHOES.COM, 2017"; "Y/DEARY ET AL. GENETIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO SELF-REPORTED TIREDNESS, 'MOLECULAR PSYCHIATRY', 2017"; "MERCK GROUP CURIOUSITY REPORT 2016"; "TIMES JUNE EFFECTS OF MEANINGFUL OR MEANINGLESS NOISE"; "FAMAGUOSTA UNIVERSITY, 2016"; "SOKOLNICKI, EPIDEMIOLOGIC REGULATION OF LATERALIZED FETAL SPINAL GENE EXPRESSION UNDER LIES HEMISPHERIC ASYMMETRIES, ELIFE SCIENCES, 2017"

LEFT- OR RIGHT-HANDED? RESEARCH SHOWS IT'S NOT OUR BRAIN THAT DETERMINES OUR PREFERENCE, BUT





**Film  
of the  
month**

## The Sense Of An Ending

*Directed by Ritesh Batra*

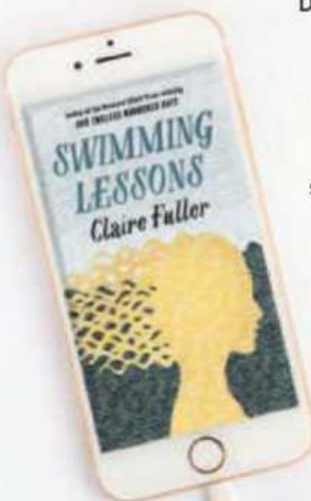
This is a film about life and how we routinely stroll through it without stopping to really look at our own story. Tony (Jim Broadbent), retired and living alone, is doing just that until a diary, left to him by an old acquaintance, knocks him from this cycle, and forces him to look back. Journeying through old loves, childhood friendships, memories and regrets, Tony realises that 'what you end up remembering isn't always what you actually witnessed'. He's stuck between choosing to live in the present and retracing his life, trying to understand the paths he followed, the impact of his actions, and what *really* happened 50 years ago. Based on the novel by Julian Barnes, this psychological drama is beautifully reflective, touching and real. **ET**

## AUDIO BOOKS TO SOOTHE THE SOUL

**WE LOVE:**  
'Swimming Lessons'  
by Claire Fuller

*Our friends at Audible tell us why you'll enjoy listening to this powerful story*

Twelve years since Ingrid vanished on the Dorset coast, her husband thinks he spots her through a bookshop window. Before she disappeared, Ingrid wrote letters about their marriage and hid them in the thousands of books on his overflowing shelves. Seeking answers after the sighting, their daughter, Flora, sets out to uncover the complicated truth. Rachel Atkins's narration brings to life a multi-layered narrative which flickers between Flora's present and Ingrid's past. It's a tale exploring the fragility, frustration and unbreakable bonds in families.



*'Swimming Lessons' by Claire Fuller, narrated by Rachel Atkins, is available for £14.99 on Audible, or free with a 30-day trial. See [audible.co.uk](http://audible.co.uk)*

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# A good talking-to

Oliver Burkeman tells us how making tiny changes to the way we speak to ourselves can create powerful results

## What's the big idea?

Most of us have a critical voice in our heads, sniping at us throughout the day. Unsurprisingly, psychologists call it 'negative self-talk'. You'll often encounter the advice to replace this inner critic with an inner cheerleader. That's sensible enough – but it's a tall order. Fortunately, studies show that far smaller changes to your inner talk can make a huge difference to your thoughts and emotions. Even altering a single word can transform your mood.

## How to make it happen

### Say 'I don't', not 'I can't'

If you're trying to break a bad habit – junk food, that third glass of wine, or checking your email in bed – stop saying, 'I can't check email after 8pm', for example, and start saying, 'I don't check email after 8pm'. As the social psychologist, Heidi Halvorson, puts it: '*I don't*' is experienced as a choice, so it feels empowering. It's an affirmation of your determination and willpower.'

### Replace 'I hope' with 'I wonder'

This trick, courtesy of author, Susan Jeffers, is a clever way to get comfortable with uncertainty. List something you hope for, such as, 'I hope I get a promotion', then rephrase it starting with, 'I wonder if...'. Hope feels optimistic, but it's closed-minded; it defines only one outcome as acceptable. By contrast, 'I wonder' is open-ended, and keeps you receptive to the possibility that unwelcome events might lead to better things.

### Treat your inner critic like a toddler

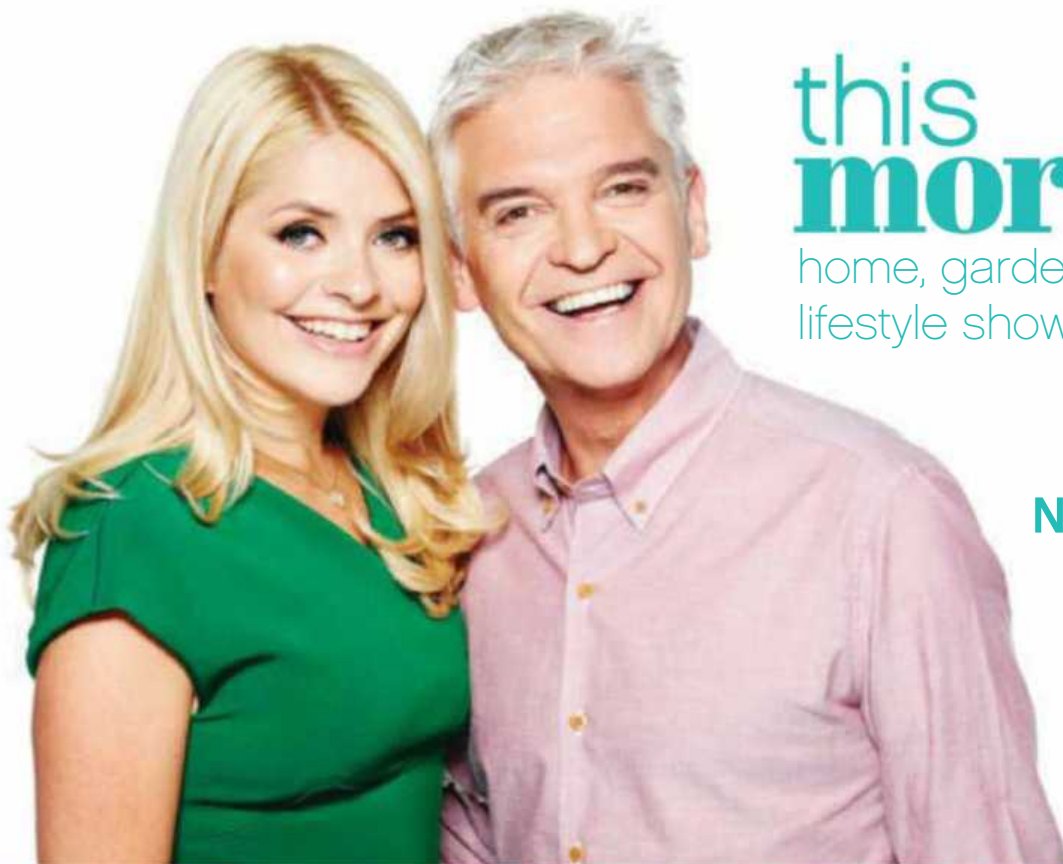
Once you see how much you criticise yourself, it's tempting to fight back against negative self-talk. But that sets up a battle in your head. Better to treat your inner critic like a small child: be kind, accept its tantrums, but don't take them too seriously.

*Oliver Burkeman is author of 'The Antidote: Happiness For People Who Can't Stand Positive Thinking' (Canongate, £8.99)*





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## LESSONS IN ADULTHOOD

# “Closed for business!”

Do you want a better work-life balance? Stop pretending you're a willing horse to be flogged – be less available for overload, and save your sanity, writes **Harriet Minter**

**T**his was the first lesson my friend learned when she started working for a global law firm: the longer you're in the office, the more you'll be rewarded. Anyone seen to leave before the boss could expect to be marked down in their performance review. However, we were in our early 20s and, as much as we wanted to succeed in our careers, we also wanted to make the most of having a pay cheque in a big city.

For a few months, we didn't see her; she had no life – until someone taught her the ‘coat and coffee’ trick. It's simple: you take two jackets into the office with you in the morning. In the evening, leave one of them on the back of your chair, and a hot cup of coffee on the desk. Anyone walking past thinks you're still in the office when, in fact, you've slipped out to meet friends.

I was telling this story to a group of twenty-somethings recently, and they nodded. It had been more than a decade since my friend was practising the trick, yet it remained relevant. We're still too afraid to say, ‘I'm going home,’ to our boss. So, how do we get around it? Do we have to accept that, if we want to get ahead, we must ensure we're accessible at all times? Well, we can do that, but the result won't be promotion, it will be burnout. Studies show that regularly working more than 40 hours a week negatively affects performance. We need to start thinking about how we can work smarter, rather than harder.

The temptation to check emails on our phones, respond instantly, and be available at the drop of a hat is piling on the pressure. The sad thing is: your boss won't appreciate it, they'll just come to expect it. We need to start looking for ways to carve out space for ourselves.

It's illegal for employers not to consider flexible-working requests, so be honest with yourself. Are you better in the office or working from home? Can you slog for 12 hours straight on a Monday, but barely know your own name on a Friday? If you can show that your proposal will benefit the company, bosses might be more responsive than you'd expect. If they're not, maybe it's time to think

about whether you're in the right place. Do you have a passion you'd like to pursue instead? Could you do your job on a project-by-project basis? The rise of the gig economy, that is, people hired for specific pieces of work, rather than on full-time contracts, means we're creating a working culture in which you can go full-time for a few months, then take a break. You sacrifice security but gain freedom.

These trends rely on us being responsible for our own wellbeing; stating what we need to operate at our best. If I could give you just one tip for a more balanced life, it's this: learn how to turn on your out-of-office, even if you're in the office. Managing others' expectations of you is the key to making work work for you. If someone needs you, they'll let you know. You never have to ‘coat’ the truth again.

*For weekly wisdom from Harriet, sign up for her newsletter at [tinyletter.com/harrietminter](http://tinyletter.com/harrietminter). Follow her on Twitter and Instagram @harrietminter*





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HOW TO...

# Grieve well

Our journey through life may be unique, but we are all united by death and grief. So, what can we do to weather the loss? Grief psychotherapist, Julia Samuel, shares her views with Martha Roberts

## 1 Understand the grief paradox

When you're grieving, it's natural to want to avoid things – whether it's songs, scents or people. But confronting them enables us to heal. 'The paradox of grief is that finding a way to live with the pain is what enables us to heal,' says Samuel. Alternating between letting go (with distraction and soothing activities) and holding on, helps us to adjust to the reality of death.

## 2 Use the anger 'package'

Anger is a well-recognised response to death. Repressing it can lead to depression, but venting it can result in greater anger, rather than release. Practise the following hour-long anger management 'package' frequently:

- 10 minutes of journal writing
- 20 minutes of running
- 10 minutes of meditating
- 20 minutes of watching or reading something funny

## 3 The light at the end of the tunnel

Research has shown that while loss can cause post-traumatic stress, it can also lead to post-traumatic growth – greater resilience – in some people. In her book, Samuel says suffering changed these people's views of what mattered most, resulting in deeper relationships and more wisdom and compassion.

*Julia Samuel is author of 'Grief Works' (Penguin, £14.99)*



## Reese Witherspoon

# “I’m tired of seeing talented women playing thankless parts”

Oscar-winning actress, Reese Witherspoon, shares her excitement about her new TV series, *Big Little Lies*, and reveals the turning point in her career which changed everything

PHOTOGRAPH MARK MANN/AUGUST

**E**ven though she’s long been one of Hollywood’s most-respected and well-known actresses, Reese Witherspoon has struggled to overcome her image as an effervescent southern belle. Despite winning the Oscar for her performance in *Walk The Line* in 2006, she couldn’t convince the studios to allow her to play the serious parts that she so desperately craved.

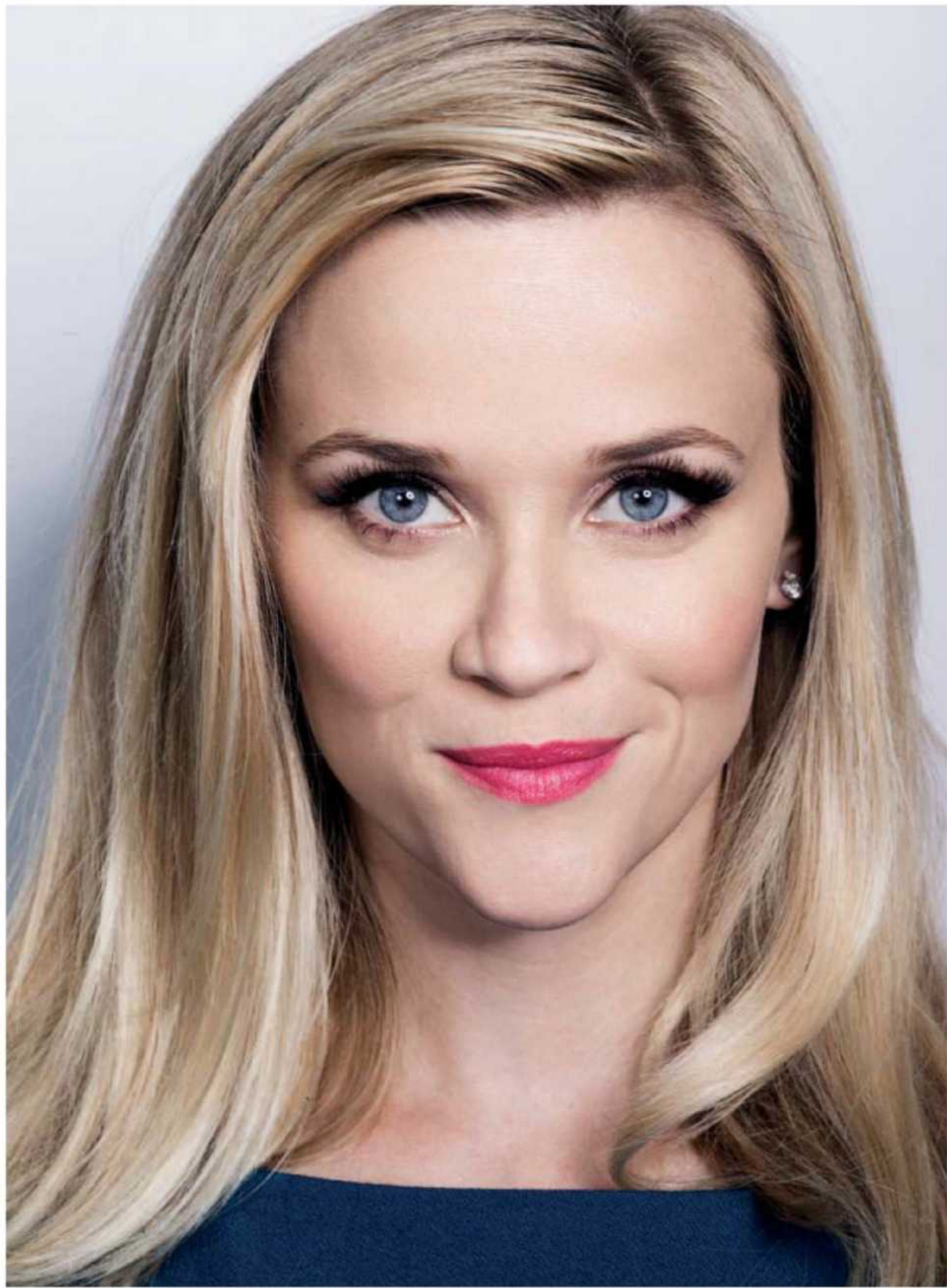
‘For a few years, I was a little lost as an artist, not being able to find what I wanted to do, and making choices that I wasn’t ultimately very happy with,’ says Witherspoon. ‘I wanted to play dynamic women and be part of stories that would allow me to explore all the doubts and anxieties that I was facing in my own life, and that most women go through.’

Films like *Wild* and *Mud* took her in that direction and merely intensified her ambitions. That led her to produce and star in *Big Little Lies*, the seven-part series based on the

eponymous bestseller by Australian novelist, Liane Moriarty, which is now being aired on Sky Atlantic. Centred around a trio of struggling mothers in an affluent seaside town along the coast of California, Witherspoon is excited to be producing something with such strong female leads.

‘It’s a unique pleasure to be able to approach other women with a piece of material I feel deeply proud of,’ she says. ‘These are the kinds of things that really shift consciousness. We need to create more series and movies that treat women in a realistic way, and enable female audiences, in particular, to be able to see themselves and identify with modern, complex characters.’

‘What was great about reading the novel for the first time, was that I saw myself in different stages of motherhood all through my life. I was a mother at 22, I’ve been divorced, I’ve remarried. The characters showed every spectrum and >>>





>>> colour of a woman's life. I thought it was incredible to have so many parts for women in one piece of material.'

Witherspoon, who produced *Gone Girl*, the David Fincher film that starred Ben Affleck and Rosamund Pike, approached *Big Little Lies* as the kind of prestige series that deserved the same amount of care and planning that came with getting a feature film made. First, she brought on board good friend, Nicole Kidman, to co-produce the series, and also play one of the three pivotal female roles. She asked for Kidman's help in securing the rights to Moriarty's book. 'I had coffee with Liane and said, "Let us option your book, please, and I promise you we'll get it made," recalls Kidman. 'Liane said, "Only if you and Reese play Celeste and Madeline," and I said, "Deal."

Reese persuaded *Wild* director, Jean-Marc Vallée, to take the helm for the first season of episodes, while signing up David E Kelley (*Chicago Hope* and *Ally McBeal*) to write the scripts. She then went about hiring top actors to complete the casting: Shailene Woodley, Alexander Skarsgård, James Tupper, Laura Dern and Zoë Kravitz. Knowing the frustration that comes with a dearth of intelligent roles for women in Hollywood, Witherspoon saw *Big Little Lies* as a golden opportunity to launch a unique, female-centric series that she hopes will spawn similar TV projects down the road.

'I've had so many conversations over the years with talented actress friends, and I feel like I constantly see women of incredible ability playing wives and girlfriends in thankless parts. I'd had enough. You can't imagine the level of exasperation that comes with having to compete for terrible parts in terrible movies,' says Witherspoon.

'For 25 years, I've been the only woman on set. They call it the smurfette syndrome: There are 100 (male) smurfs around and one woman. Together with Nicole and Laura, we nurtured each other's performances. It's a collective for all of us.'

*Big Little Lies* sees Witherspoon play upbeat and chatty Madeline. Adam Scott is her mild-mannered, tech-guru husband, Ed, and together they look after Abigail (Kathryn Newton), Madeline's teenage daughter from a previous marriage, and Chloe (Darby Camp), their precocious first-grader. On the surface, Madeline projects the confidence of a wealthy, ambitious woman on the cusp of middle age but, deep down, she's anxious.

'Madeline is battling with a lot of things, and she's open about her struggles,' says Witherspoon. 'I fixated on this idea that there's always someone within a group

***"For 25 years, I've been the only woman on set. It's the smurfette syndrome. There are 100 (male) smurfs and one woman"***

of women who is "perfect". She seems to have everything organised and together, then you realise she's the most cracked of everyone. I'm always wary of that person who is afraid to reveal vulnerability. Madeline only shows it to her friends, then later, you see how truly conflicted she is.'

The new series is the product of Witherspoon's sense of drive and ambition. Growing up in an affluent family in Nashville, Tennessee, her father was a top ear, nose and throat surgeon, and her mother, a surgical nurse and, later, a nursing teacher. She was impressed by her parents' accomplished lives, as well as their work ethic. Her mum would come to nickname her 'type A' due to her occasionally obsessive behaviour.

'I think I was born with it because my mom would keep telling me how serious and organised I was, even as a kid. But

I'm sure I became that way by watching my parents work hard and be good at what they do,' she says.

'My mom was my inspiration because she was really disciplined, and I get my work ethic from her. That's why I never take what I do for granted.'

Before her career took off with *Legally Blonde*, Witherspoon had already fallen in love with, and married, actor Ryan Phillippe. She was only 22 when she gave birth to their first child, Ava, followed by son, Deacon, four years later.

## Highs and lows

After a string of romcom successes, Witherspoon won an Oscar for her role as June Carter, Johnny Cash's wife in *Walk The Line*. It was at that point that her world began falling apart. First, her marriage ended in 2009 – reportedly

## THE TV SERIES

### *Big Little Lies*

***Big Little Lies* is a comedy-drama miniseries created by David E Kelley, based on the book by Liane Moriarty. Monterey is an affluent town on the Californian coast, where passive-aggressive politeness and 'helicopter [cossetting] parenting' abound. Madeline (Reese Witherspoon), a 'super mom' whose parenting is anything but, and Celeste (Nicole Kidman), whose perfect marriage really isn't flawless, take Jane (Shailene Woodley), an unpolished single mother with a chequered past, under their wing. What starts with fake smiles ends in murder.**



In *Wild*, Witherspoon plays Cheryl Strayed, who trekked the Pacific Crest Trail

Witherspoon rose to fame in *Legally Blonde* as ditzy law student, Elle Woods



*Big Little Lies* sees Reese co-star and co-produce alongside fellow actress Nicole Kidman

Her role as June Carter in *Walk The Line* won her an Oscar, and left, at the Golden Globes

over Phillippe's chronic infidelity, albeit never confirmed by Witherspoon – then she found herself in a career limbo.

'It was a hard time for me,' Witherspoon says. 'It was like I had reached a turning point where you need to take stock of your life and where you're headed. But those kinds of times are important and they give you a better sense of who you are.'

After a brief relationship with actor, Jake Gyllenhaal, she found happiness with Hollywood agent, Jim Toth, who she married in March 2011. Their son, Tennessee, was born in 2013. Toth has supported Witherspoon's efforts to redefine herself as a dramatic actress. She credits him with helping her regain her acting mojo. 'He said, "You should produce movies. You read more books than anybody I know. You should just buy some of them and turn them into films."'

*Gone Girl* was the first project she undertook, buying the rights to the Gillian Flynn novel before it was published. Reese then went on to produce and star in *Wild*, based on the bestselling book by Cheryl Strayed about her extraordinary 1,100-mile trek along the Pacific Crest Trail on the American

West Coast. Earning Witherspoon an Oscar nomination, it would prove to be the most challenging role of her career, involving nudity, sex scenes, and the physical strain of shooting in the wilderness, carrying a 65lb backpack for much of the film.

'It was tough for me. I nearly backed out of the film when I started thinking about how I was going to do those scenes,' she says. But she believed that the sexual aspects of the role were essential to defining the character's evolving sense of personal liberation. '*Wild* made a point that there's nothing wrong with having sex with a lot of different guys. Women should learn to own their sexuality, as well as their aspirations in life.'


Her experience on *Wild* gave her an added sense of mission when it came to creating similar projects that would be female-centric and give more opportunities for female actors. Witherspoon has over 25 film projects and five TV series in various stages of development, and is determined to help advance the cause of women fighting to become a greater force in Hollywood. *Big Little Lies* is just the beginning of that process.

*'Big Little Lies' is on Sky Atlantic now*



# My field of dreams

Fed up with her long commute, Amber Key spent a spring and summer living in a tent. She loved it so much, it has become the foundation for a whole new way of life



Camping is the Marmite of outdoor activities: people either love it, or book the nearest hotel instead.

I was in the latter group, until 18 months ago, when I undertook a 30-day camping challenge – which turned into a new life of all-weather living.

When I say ‘camping challenge’, that’s how I sold it to friends and co-workers, and anyone else who thought I’d lost the plot. It made me sound more like an adventurer than a hippy. And, at that point, maintaining a successful image was everything. In reality, I was camping because I was craving an escape from the drudgery of commuting two hours each way to work every day, and paying exorbitant bills on a flat I barely lived in. This

drastic change was a leap into the unknown to stop me from burning out. So, as spring approached, I put all my unnecessary belongings into storage, quit my lease and went back to basics, while maintaining a professional job in the media.

### A slower tempo

My camping inexperience was evident when I arrived at the carefully chosen five-star site above sand dunes at Gwithian in Cornwall. It took three of us to get the tent up; a week later, the wind battered it to the extent that it flipped over a hedge, poles akimbo.

Yet, within a few days, I was adjusting to this different way of being and its gentle pace. I noticed how the dawn was ushered in daily by a chorus >>>>



>>> of gulls and crows, amplified by my being in the heart of their world. My awkward 'hello' to regular campers had evolved into a daily conversation, especially with elderly John, a seasoned caravanner with a kind soul.

I looked forward to returning from work for a walk by the sea and reading a few chapters of my book before bed. There was no more escaping of an evening into numbing TV shows and a bottle of red. The dark days of winter had given way to the freedom of spring with a simplicity I hadn't anticipated.

But, at work, I felt self-conscious that I wasn't quite as 'ironed' as I should be; one of the challenges of camping is looking groomed. If I had a meeting with a client, I'd often spend the night at a friend's house, so that I could feel a little more presentable.

Another consistent challenge has been letting go of my 'achiever' self. She is the perfectionist who believes that she must be the best at everything to have a voice that counts.

**“If everyone graces this planet for only a brief time, surely we must live according to what we love? The correct way is your own way. My camping life felt right”**

On one occasion, I was at an evening event packed with former colleagues. The wine was flowing when one exclaimed, 'You're living in a tent!' Among those outwardly successful people, with their houses, cars, holidays abroad and large dual incomes, I suddenly felt exposed.

### Things fall into place

It's a feeling that I learned to embrace, because it's rooted in fear. During those panicked times, I would remind

myself of the words of legendary songstress, Ella Fitzgerald: 'We're all just here.' If everyone graces this planet for only a brief time, surely we must live according to what we love? The correct way is your own way. So, my camping life continued because, in the quiet moments, it's what felt right.

Home from March until October was a basic pop-up tent without electricity. I charged my phone in the car and ate simply. Over winter, I went indoors into a seasonal holiday home, unbooked by tourists for the low season. Last winter, it was a barn conversion deep in the Cornish countryside with a wood burner and state-of-the-art cooker, all of which felt like the epitome of luxury.

I changed my career as I lost the patience and will to be part of the media. Working in an office felt like wearing clothes that no longer fit me. I took a job as a teaching assistant in a primary school. To top up my income during school holidays, I launched a dog-walking business, combining my love of animals with my love of the great outdoors.

These days, the only expectations that I manage are my own and, as I've become comfortable about sharing stories of my tent-dwelling existence, I've met plenty of people who dream of a simple life, too. Some are busy professionals caught in the 'income trap' who take holidays in Cornwall and fantasise about making a break for freedom here one day; others are summer campers who have become good friends. I've even made the acquaintance of a writer who is living in a shed emulating *Walden; Or, Life In The Woods* (Dover Publications, £3.99), by transcendentalist, Henry David Thoreau, and documenting her experiences for a book.

I often wonder whether it's my outlook that's changed, or if we're seeing a societal move towards a less complicated life, with a few 'leapers'

## Pitch-perfect tips for happy camping

*It's liberating to go back to basics. Here are a few essentials, and observations, that make the experience that bit easier*

- Bring a stove and keep a large bottle of water handy to make your morning brew.
- Ensure you have a warm bed without gaps. Skip the airbed mattress – they're noisy and get damp. Try a camping mat covered with a thick folded double duvet, which makes a firm, warm base. Sleep under a double duvet (or king-sized for two people), which folds around your shoulders. Layer with blankets as needed. Unless you're off to the Scottish Highlands, you won't need a sleeping bag.
- Go to a site with top facilities. Most are well equipped and have a central hub with toilets, showers, sinks for washing dishes, baby-changing areas and washing machines.
- Avoid pitching your tent too close to others. Overstepping the 'boundaries' can be seen in the expressions on the faces of your neighbours as you pitch.
- Every site has a natural bedtime, usually 10.30pm. If you're a late-to-bed, tipsy talker, it's polite to pitch at a distance from other campers.
- Tent sizes are not always what they say on the packaging. Translate 'four-man' to 'four hobbits'. Do plenty of research to find what you need.
- Pop-ups are a great starter tent for novice campers. You simply pull a cord to raise the tent, then pin it. Easy.



who are brave enough to drive forward into the unknown and shake off the expectations that they once had of themselves. There's so much noise in our world, both physical and 'invisible' – we're all attached to our phones like they're an electronic shield from real life, which is happening all around us, largely unnoticed.

### Look and you will see

Instead of clinging to a screen for a distraction, and often for affirmation, you become a watcher when you camp. It's almost like being a bird in a tree, surveying your patch, unseen by anyone other than similar birds. You will observe that interesting patterns emerge when humans are left alone in a peaceful field for a few days.

When new guests arrive at the site, they're always frenetic with activity. They're the first up, the first to start playing energetic ball games at 9am,

the first to light the evening fire and the last to go to bed, drunk on booze and animated conversation. Yet, within three days or so, their pace mellows. They rise in a more relaxed way and go to bed exhausted at dusk, quietly soaking up the sunset, instead of comparing stories of their busy lives.

One of the highlights of last summer in our tented community, was joining a collection of neighbouring families around a log fire during the meteor showers in August. I find camping is a great leveller that brings together people from all walks of life.

### A new narrative

Of course, it's not all *alfresco* wine and warm sunsets. In April and October, especially, the camping experience is crippling cold. On some mornings, there's ice on the tent and, on others, you'll have a biting wind in your face. Yet, this is all part of it. I have watched

autumn creep in slowly, her first gold and red transmutations, then the daily clatter of crispy leaves on canvas. An investment in good blankets has been invaluable. During these times, I hunker down and start to get excited about my soon-to-be winter home under a hard roof. I plan warming recipes, list the books I'll read on wet afternoons, and look forward to the showers I will enjoy without trekking across a frosty field in four layers of clothing first.

And, as I enter my second year of camping, instead of feeling on the back foot about living an alternative lifestyle, I am happy to shout loudly and proudly that, 'Yes, I really *do* live in a field!' It might not be the life of an 'achiever' that I once lived, but it's certainly the most authentic. When people don't get it, I just shrug. It takes different to get different, after all.

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Want to expand your business? It's not as complicated as you think says our columnist, bestselling author and businesswoman, Sháá Wasmund MBE



# How to grow your business

**F**irst things first, taking your business to the next level does not mean you have to get an office or lots of staff. It means you need to mix things up and spread your wings a little. Even the biggest introvert will start to get tired of their own company at some point, but with so many options available for full-time or part-time co-working spaces, taking on the overheads of a 'proper' office should be last on your list. Instead, research your local area for co-working spaces and private members' clubs. Make sure to check them out at different times, so you can get a feel for how busy they are and what types of businesses use them.

## Get the hiring ball rolling

I'm often asked, 'When should I hire my first person?' So much of this depends on your own circumstances, but one thing I've found to be true is you should typically hire six months before you usually do. That means

the moment you start thinking about it is probably when you should do it.

I would recommend not making any full-time placements unless you need to. Look at what you can outsource; in the UK or abroad. What skill set do you need? Make sure you are really clear before you even begin looking for someone. Start small. Hire them part-time; twice a week, and build from there.

## Play to your strengths

Think you need a young millennial? Not necessarily. Often someone on a maternity break or at home with kids at school will have the hands-on experience you need at a price you can afford. And, remember, it's not just about their skill set. They need to 'fit', too. Take a few personality tests like Myers Briggs and Strengths Finder to identify your own strengths and weaknesses, so that you can hire in people to fill the gaps. This lets you do the work you love, and playing

your 'A' game will always deliver the best financial results.

To make hiring someone easier, create a 'playbook' instruction manual for every process in your business, so they can hit the ground running. One of the biggest reasons we put off hiring is we think it will take longer than doing it ourselves. Playbook it once and benefit forever. The best way to find the ideal person is to ask for recommendations; you want someone who's going to have a good mindset, as well as the right skill set. And make sure you set realistic targets from the start.

With all the different apps out there, it's easier to work with a remote team than ever before. I use Basecamp 3 to manage our projects, Zoom to handle our video team calls, Google Docs for all our documents, Evernote for note-taking and Dropbox for storage. Hiring in help is easier than you think.

*Sháá Wasmund is author of 'Stop Talking, Start Doing' (John Wiley & Sons, £9.99) and 'Do Less, Get More' (Penguin, £12.99). Join Sháá's Facebook group, The Freedom Collective, at [shaa.com/freedomcollective](http://shaa.com/freedomcollective)*



# Cynthia Nixon

The actress talks about confidence, happiness and parenting, and her new film *A Quiet Passion*, in which she portrays reclusive poet, Emily Dickinson

INTERVIEW DANIELLE WOODWARD PHOTOGRAPH MAARTEN DE BOER

**Emily Dickinson was ahead of her time.** She was a brave, clear-eyed explorer who wanted to understand the world and her psyche. She was individualistic at a time when being an individual wasn't a 'thing'. Her style of writing is so modern and direct, unlike the era in which she lived.

**People like Dickinson loom so large you wonder if they ever had any doubts.** It's appealing to witness the time when she was following her dream, thinking she wouldn't succeed. It's painful to think how amazing she was, yet she felt as if no one acknowledged that. At least we have her poetry; she made her sister promise that she would burn it all – can you imagine?

**Some people have an idea of the effect that they have on others but, as an only child, I don't know how to do that.** I think Dickinson and I share this feeling of, 'I don't know how to make you like me other than being who I am.'

**When I was younger, I was more introverted.** I didn't have the confidence to fight for my point of view; I didn't want the responsibility. What if I was wrong? I'm more confident now.

**When I was growing up, my mother gave me a sense that I was a strong person and could fend for myself.** I was raised feeling that I never wanted to be too dependent, and I've had to learn how to lean on other people and ask for help.

**I'm amazed at how *Sex And The City* endures.** I remember going to Japan and Korea and women would tell us how much pressure they're under; how they're raised to be deferential and not ask for things. To see women like us, with the power and freedom to assert ourselves, was showing them a different life.

***SATC* showed women earning their own money, enabling them to enjoy life.** At the start, Miranda [Nixon's character] was different from me – single, a workaholic and driven. As the

series went on, I felt I absorbed her confidence and self-belief. Then, all these things happened to her that were more like *my* life: she became a mother [Nixon has three children, aged 20, 14 and six] and was in a long-term relationship, so my personal and professional lives became more balanced.

**Actors have periods of unemployment and need a life to go back to.** We can make the best parents – although we can work crazy hours, we can also not work for months, and be with our families. But, if you've had a heavy work period, and you go back to a heavy child-rearing period, it can take a while to adjust.

**I don't enjoy travelling; I like being home, walking into my pantry and seeing everything I need.** I enjoy cooking for my family, and having guests. When I was growing up, we never had money to take vacations, so we'd go and stay with friends. I love being able to do that for my friends now.

**Happiness is a hard thing to pursue.** As an actor, one of the least successful routes to a good performance is to try and play an emotion; emotions are things that happen to you due to given circumstances. In life, I try to set up the circumstances that I think are best, then hope that happiness will follow.

**I'm a city girl. I don't crave being in nature.** I have a house in a beautiful part of Long Island, surrounded by water and trees – but I can look out of the window; I don't need to go hiking!

**I believe in love at first sight; I felt a lightning bolt when I met my wife.** I thought, 'This person seems extraordinary.' It's about trusting yourself and knowing what you feel is real.

**It's useful for me to have a day when I can just stay in bed if I want to.** Sometimes, I'm exhausted, so to reach the end of the day feeling rejuvenated, and not depleted, is so valuable.

*'A Quiet Passion' is in UK cinemas on 7 April*





# Emotional first aid

If we graze a knee, we reach for disinfectant and plasters, but how do we heal emotional cuts and bruises? Martha Roberts investigates

ILLUSTRATIONS LAURIE HASTINGS

**V**ery few of us see emotional cuts and grazes in the same way as we do a physical injury, but that is a mistake, says Guy Winch, psychologist and author of the book *Emotional First Aid* (Plume Books, £14.99).

‘We sustain emotional traumas, like rejection or failure, even more regularly than we do physical ones,’ says Winch. ‘And, like physical wounds, they can get worse when we don’t treat them. This can impact on our daily and long-term functioning and happiness. By treating these battle scars when we sustain them, we can heal more quickly and minimise their negative impact on our lives.’

So, when next you feel the weight of life bearing heavily on your shoulders, here’s what to reach for in your psychological medicine cabinet to give you a lift.

## **L** *LONELINESS*

*Hanging out at weekends with other single mates; a weekly catch-up with your best friend; the presence of teenage children in the house – these things give structure and meaning to life. So, what happens when single friends settle down into relationships, or your best buddy moves to another country, or your kids leave home?*

In these scenarios, says Winch, loneliness can creep up on us – our nourishing social circle can slip away, and we can find ourselves spending more and more time alone. ‘This damages our self-esteem, with feelings of “what’s wrong with me?”,’ says Elle Boag, social psychologist at Birmingham City University.

### *The damage inflicted*

These situations can lead you to retreat into your shell, says psychotherapist and corporate psychologist, Kate Nowlan. ‘Feeling unloved can be the loneliest feeling in the world. It reminds you of all the times when you have ever been rejected – those occasions when you were left out of playground games – and can leave you feeling desperate.’ You may start to lose your ability to see things from the other person’s perspective – your friends and children are happy, but all you can think about is how this contrasts with your own isolation. ‘Loneliness is a significant contributor to depression,’ says psychotherapist, Hope Bastine. ‘It is endemic to our social media-driven society and, as a result, we are becoming less and less comfortable talking about our true thoughts, feelings and emotions.’ >>>





### >>> **Effective first aid**

Treatment of loneliness involves challenging negative perceptions. Try to think, 'Maybe my new friend's boyfriend has some nice friends...' rather than, 'She cares about him more than our friendship.'

Bastine recommends being brave about connecting from the heart. 'Take a risk and talk to someone about something that is authentic and meaningful to your personal world.'

Crucially, you need to create new opportunities for social connection. This is a good time to approach clubs, or to look for new friends through websites, such as Meetup. Identify any self-defeating behaviours that are getting in the way, for example, feeling reluctant to show up alone for fear of seeming like a 'loner'. The bottom line is that you have to recognise loneliness as a place that needs effort, courage and a leap of faith to escape from.



## 2 **REJECTION**

*You think your relationship is working fine, when suddenly your partner says they want out.*

*Or perhaps you've been on a great date, only to be told, 'Sorry, but I just don't fancy you.'*

### **The damage inflicted**

Winch says that rejection can cause emotional pain 'so sharp, it affects our thinking', a flood of anger, the erosion of self-esteem and the destabilisation of our fundamental feeling of belonging. Studies<sup>7</sup> have shown that even mild rejection stings – participants who were excluded in a virtual ball-throwing game felt significant emotional pain. And we carry the memory of the rejection long after the event. Bastine says: 'Psychological fMRI scans show that even being reminded of the object of your rejection can be as painful as being burnt on a stove.'

### **Effective first aid**

This is a time to start reframing. Write down negative or self-critical thoughts about the rejection, then the counterarguments next to them. Whenever you have a self-critical thought, immediately articulate the relevant counterargument clearly in your mind.

**“Studies have shown that even mild rejection stings – participants who were excluded in a virtual ball-throwing game felt significant emotional pain”**

Counterarguments are anything that can inject some rationale and objectivity into a situation that is otherwise fraught with emotion. For example, counterarguments for dating rejection could include the absence of chemistry, a poor lifestyle match, or even being 'too good' for the other person – perhaps your career success holds a mirror up to their own failings. There is also the important matter of timing – maybe you want a relationship and they want a fling. If you start to criticise yourself physically, the counterarguments would focus on your strengths, and the fact that everyone has parts of themselves they'd like to change.

'Eventually, when you've had some rest and space, look at the reasons for the rejection and ask whether you could have behaved in another way,' says Nowlan. 'Maybe, in fact, your inner-being released you from a situation that might not have made you happy.'

<sup>7</sup>TEISENBERGER ET AL. DOES REJECTION HURT? 'SCIENCE', 2003

# 3

## FAILURE

*Whether it's not getting that promotion you wanted, or the feeling of not having achieved enough, failure can be tough. Winch says: 'Failing can induce you to feel less intelligent, less attractive, less capable, less skilful and less competent – all of which have a negative impact on your confidence.'*

### **The damage inflicted**

Failure damages your self-esteem, as you draw distorted conclusions about yourself, sapping confidence and optimism, and potentially sabotaging future efforts. If you were fired, it could blow a hole right through your self-belief – even though, as Winch explains, the rejection may be 'motivated by dynamics related to the organisation and its culture, not to your character or job performance'.

### **Effective first aid**

It's important to focus on factors in your control. Andy Cope, author of *Little Book Of Emotional Intelligence* (John Murray Learning, £9.99), says: 'In psychology, we hear a lot about post-traumatic stress disorder but less about post-traumatic growth, when an epic failure of adversity has enabled us to grow in confidence or resilience.' He says that next time you 'fail', ask yourself what you have learned, what you would have done differently and how this has made you a better person.

# 4

## RUMINATION

*Whether it's stressing out about a friend not calling, or fixating on being wronged, all of us ruminate at times. Winch says that, while self-reflection can be helpful, it can go awry. Instead of getting emotional release, you replay distressing scenes and feelings.*

### **The damage inflicted**

Rumination intensifies sadness, prolongs anger, steals emotional and intellectual energy, and is often a precursor to depression. It can also jeopardise relationships because of our need to constantly talk about what has gone wrong.

**“What makes rumination a form of psychological injury is that it provides no new understandings that could heal our wounds, and instead serves only to pick at our scabs”**

'We become like hamsters trapped in a wheel, running endlessly but going nowhere,' says Winch. 'What makes rumination a form of psychological injury is that it provides no new understanding that could heal our wounds.'

### **Effective first aid**

Research has shown that, when it comes to rumination, simply trying not to think about it doesn't work – you need a plan. Write a list of situations in which you ruminate the most and, for each, list short and long distractions, for example, a game of sudoku, watching a movie or going for a walk. Schedule in a 'break' of 20 to 30 minutes a day where you are allowed to ruminate. Discipline yourself to save any worries that pop into your head at other times for later.

Let go of things you can't control. If your ruminating consists of a jumble of scenarios, write a list of them and decide which you can control (tackling your tax return) and which you can't (worrying about decisions someone else is going to make). 'Rumination provides a means of exaggerating mundane events, so try to recognise when you're doing this,' says Boag. Take stock, stop, breathe and empty your mind. Think about a likely explanation. Does your friend no longer like you, or is she just busy?

Watch Guy Winch's TED Talk on emotional first aid [ted.com/talks/guy\\_winch\\_the\\_case\\_for\\_emotional\\_hygiene](http://ted.com/talks/guy_winch_the_case_for_emotional_hygiene). For more about Meetup, visit [meetup.com](http://meetup.com)





A woman with voluminous dark curly hair is smiling broadly with her eyes closed. She is wearing a light blue denim button-down shirt. Her arms are raised, and she is lying on a rug with a bold geometric pattern in red, black, and beige. The background is slightly out of focus, showing more of the rug and a white cylindrical object.

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In partnership with NOW Live Events, we're offering two workshops. In April, learn to be productive with Andy Gibson and, in May, coach Alastair Creamer will help you find work you love. We also invite you to our BODY event – the second in our #360me Wellness Series, at COMO Shambhala, in association with Wellbeing Escapes

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## APRIL WORKSHOP

## How to lead a productive life: Get more done and focus on what really matters



**DATE:** 12 April 2017 **TIME:** 7pm-8.30pm  
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Wouldn't it be a relief if you could stop feeling overwhelmed every day and learn to manage your responsibilities

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- How to feel energised and not exhausted
- Ways to concentrate in a world of distractions
- How to stay motivated
- Techniques to sustain your newfound productivity after the event

*Andrew Gibson is a writer and campaigner specialising in culture change. He founded the '5-a-day for your mind' campaign, Mindapples, which supports organisations and individuals, and helps businesses innovate and grow through his consultancy, Sociability. For more, visit [mindapples.org](http://mindapples.org). Join us! Buy tickets at [nowliveevents.org/tickets](http://nowliveevents.org/tickets)*



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## How to identify, and find, work that you will love – and lead a fulfilling professional life



**DATE:** 3 May 2017 **TIME:** 7pm-8.30pm  
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Creative thinker, consultant, coach and Eyes Wide Opened co-founder, Alastair Creamer, helps you explore how to find a job that you

love. What did you want to be when you grew up? What sort of work would make you feel content? Alastair will share 10 illuminating ideas, and valuable techniques, to help you uncover new opportunities and create a satisfying work life. He will guide you as you identify which questions you should ask, and how to reveal the answers that can change your life.

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- How to pinpoint where you're starting from, and where you're heading
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- Why your interests and passions are more important than you realise
- To redefine your story, and choose what to tell others

*For 25 years, Alastair has helped individuals and teams seeking new ways of working. Eyes Wide Opened is hosting a weekend course, 'Stuck?', on 6 and 7 May in London. For more, visit [ewopened.com](http://ewopened.com). Join us! Buy tickets at [nowliveevents.org/tickets](http://nowliveevents.org/tickets)*

## APRIL #360ME BODY EVENT

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**VENUE:** COMO Shambhala, London Metropolitan,  
 Park Lane, London W1K 1LB **COST:** £40

This lively event will take a deeper look at how our bodies naturally cleanse and heal themselves – investigating our energy meridians, traditional Chinese medicine practices, and seasonal changes, with acupuncturist, aromatherapist and healing holistic facialist, Annee de Mamiel. We will also be discussing the importance of moving more, and creating a manageable and enjoyable daily yoga practice, with *Psychologies* Yoga Editor, Kat Farrants, founder



of Movement for Modern Life. Then, strengthen that all-important mind-body connection during an energising meditation with Annie Clarke, founder of Mind Body Bowl. All guests will receive a luxury goody bag filled with wellness treats to take away.

*For more information on *Psychologies*' panel of guest speakers, visit [demamiel.com](http://demamiel.com), [movementformodernlife.com](http://movementformodernlife.com) and [mindbodybowl.co.uk](http://mindbodybowl.co.uk). Join us! Book your place at [tinyurl.com/hp9k4yb](http://tinyurl.com/hp9k4yb)*





*"We once laughed at 1980s cane furniture – but now it's collectable"*



*"Don't put original things in the loft – show them and share their story"*



# *"It's making the past liveable for today"*

**Vintage enthusiast, Kate Beavis, has filled her home with mid-20th century relics to create an eclectic, cosy retreat with ageless character**

WORDS OLIVIA GORDON PHOTOGRAPHS ANNA BATCHELOR AND TAMINEH DHONDY

From the outside, Kate Beavis's home looks like any other ordinary modern house. But, when she opens the door to people for the first time, they usually do a double-take, and then smile. Kate, a passionate fan of 1960s and 1970s style, has had enormous fun designing a home that takes her visitors back in time.

Kate thinks she is rebellious by nature. 'I've always liked to be different,' she says. 'I don't do conforming very well.' Growing up in the late 1980s, she got into alternative and goth culture, rejecting conventional consumerism. But it was only 10 years ago, when she met and married Adam, a carpenter who loved

mid-20th century style, that Kate realised how much she felt at home with this era, too. Vintage style, for Kate, is all about having integrity: 'Being unique and original; being yourself.'

While on her first maternity leave from her job designing supermarket interiors, Kate started selling vintage handbags on eBay to make extra money. Quickly, she discovered that she loved 'the thrill of the chase', finding desirable old things. When she was expecting her second child seven years ago, Kate decided to go self-employed as a vintage expert, selling mid-century homewares she had salvaged from house clearances, skips, car boot sales and auctions, and

blogging about retro style.

Her business flourished and then, three years ago, Kate branched into running wedding fairs, specialising in vintage style, all over the country every month, as well as writing for specialist classic and craft magazines. She works from home while the children, Herbie, nine, and Kitty, six, are at school.

When the family moved into their 1920s house in rural Bedfordshire, it had not been updated since the 1960s – but this, no surprise, was a bonus for Kate. She happily kept the textured, colourful wallpaper where it was in good enough condition, and couldn't bear to move a 'starburst' clock from the living room. >>>

Kate uses her vintage cookware every day – and she dresses the part, too. 'Boho dresses from the 1970s suit a 40-something woman's figure perfectly,' she says





*"I want to surround myself with stuff I'm passionate about – not high-street buys I don't love"*



**ABOVE** Kate's entrepreneur parents designed some of the classic biscuit tins of the 1970s and 1980s – now a feature in Kate's home

**RIGHT** Neutral floors and walls make fabrics and glassware 'pop' – as well as the 'starburst' clock, which the previous owners left behind



'I think we should surround ourselves with things we love,' says Kate. If she could go back to any decade, it would have to be the 1960s, she says, which is reflected in the kitchen – full of funky prints – while Adam's love of the 1970s is clear in the living room, with its executive leather chairs and vinyl bar.

### A bit of Ikea

Kate realises that some people might think her lovingly curated wardrobe of flowing dresses, and the fact that she cooks in psychedelic, flowery pots and

pans, is 'a bit odd' – but she's 'not trying to live in the past'. Although her home is chock-a-block with vintage items, it's also fresh and comfortable, with modern touches – from WiFi to pieces bought at Ikea, as well as 'modern-retro' furnishings. 'It's not about replicating the 1960s,' she stresses, 'but about making it liveable for today.'

Still, in an age in which people tend to buy everything new, collecting objects from long ago gives Kate a powerful connection to a very different era. 'The 1960s were a really optimistic time,' she

feels. 'It was a time of freedom; the music was great and so was the fashion; we were going to the moon! Then, in the 1970s, we had strides towards women's equality; it was an exciting time.'

### Memories are made of this

The joy of reconnecting with years gone by is compounded by 'nostalgic' memories for Kate – of family members who were young in the 1960s. Many of the objects in her house – from chairs to glassware and fabrics – belonged to her grandmother and great-aunt.



**LEFT AND BELOW**  
The master bedroom has a 1950s theme. Kate has created a 'handbag wall' to contrast with the retro wallpaper

**RIGHT** The lounge is 'adults-only' 1970s chic

**BOTTOM RIGHT**  
Kate made a rag doll out of fabric she inherited from her great-aunt, which sits next to her great-aunt's original doll



*"Bringing my relatives' old things into my house to enjoy makes me feel warm inside"*



'I really care about these things and want them close to me,' she says. 'Everything we have means something.' If we lose sight of the past, we can forget our own personal history, which shaped who we are today. Watching her children playing with Fisher-Price toys and games such as Buckeroo, which Kate remembers from her own childhood, gives her a comforting feeling of continuity, familiarity and rootedness.

The era of our grandparents and parents is gradually slipping into the distant past, which makes the items Kate

keeps from this time even more treasured. She claims she still can't get over the tragedy of her mother throwing some inherited furnishings from the 1960s into a skip in the 1980s, not realising how desirable and cool they would be a few decades later. 'My mum thinks: "Why are you buying the sort of furniture I put into a skip?"' she laughs. It makes Kate wonder what taken-for-granted, everyday objects from our own generation we might want to hold onto for our children's children.

[katebeavis.com](http://katebeavis.com) [vintageweddingfair.co.uk](http://vintageweddingfair.co.uk)





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# Surrender to the bliss

Like many women, Karla Newbey's sex life has never been truly fulfilling. But why? In search of answers, she embarks on a journey into tantra, and self-discovery

**B**lindfolded, I sit on cushions with my back against the wall in a room full of strangers. I wait while the other participants are led in and seated. My eyes had been covered before I entered, so I am completely disorientated; I've no idea of the proportions of the room, nor of my proximity to others.

A gong sounds and I feel it vibrating through my body. Music follows, then a thunderstorm, and the sound of delicious rain. As the evening progresses, I'm treated to a symphony of the senses: there is scent; fruit is placed in my mouth; a feather is brushed over my bare arms. My thoughts fall silent as I become totally absorbed in anticipating the next sensation.

An hour earlier, I'd planned to run away. This is my first workshop with the Shakti School of Sexuality and Tantra, and, when I arrived, my fear was overwhelming. Most of us have heard the phrase 'tantric sex', but few of us know what it really

means. Would I be asked to take off my clothes? Would people have sex? Would strangers touch me? Would I feel obliged to do something that I'd later regret? As it is, after the first evening of 'awakening my senses', I am still fully clothed and no one has invaded my space.

## Feel the fear, and do it anyway

So, why try something that frightens me so much? My recent divorce has led me to reassess my love life. My introduction to sex wasn't positive and, since then, I have lurched between prudishness and pleasing others, according to my perceived societal expectations, never delving too deeply into what I crave: a slower, more sensual experience. I am keen to explore my sexuality in a new way. But, how am I going to guarantee I won't repeat previous mistakes?

Tantra, surely, can offer beginners something different? It seems a better option than picking up men

in bars, or creating a Tinder profile. An ancient Hindu practice, the Sanskrit word 'tantra' means 'to weave together', which, in this instance, refers to uniting the masculine and feminine; the sexual and spiritual. Founder of Shakti Tantra, Hilly Spenceley, says, "Tantra is really about expanding your consciousness through the medium of sex. To begin with, it's about slowing down, letting go of the goal of orgasm, and being able to luxuriate in that place of being turned on, of pleasure, and awakening all your senses. With practice, this can become a sacred place but, before you can start this journey, it's essential to learn how to communicate clearly what you like and don't like."

## Yes... no... wait!

On the second day, newbies such as myself huddle together for moral support and giggle as seasoned participants swap sweatpants and T-shirts for sarongs. After >>>





>>> exercises involving movement, meditation and sharing reasons for attending, our group of 12 is divided in two. One half lie on cushions and don blindfolds. The remaining six pick a blindfolded partner with the intention of exploring how we like, or don't like, to be touched. This is exactly the kind of touchy-feely exercise I dreaded. But there are rules that put me in control, and my response surprises me.

### At last, I am in charge

Those wearing blindfolds have to instruct 'yes', 'no' or 'wait', and the person touching them must obey the command. Not only am I expected to verbalise my wishes, I can change my mind at any point, which is both empowering and thrilling. It allows me to say 'yes' to sensations that I hadn't expected to like. I discover that I enjoy my stomach being tickled without knowing who is doing the tickling and, when my top is lifted, I find it exciting to feel a hand grazing across my bra.

The exercise allows me more control than I have ever experienced with a partner: extraordinary, but true. Workshop leader, Becky Price, explains that one of the key purposes of the introductory tantra course, along with awakening the senses, is to lay the foundation for 'clear communication'. 'You can't explore tantra, or tantric sex, if you don't listen to yourself *and* express what you hear. It's how we give consent. It's not only essential for tantric practice but you can't experience "relationship" until you have developed your own sense of authority.'

The following morning, my exhilaration from the previous day is gone. Fear of what's to come triggers emotions from my past. I don't want anyone in my space; especially not men. They have overstepped boundaries all my life; I don't want to let them in now. When the next activity is revealed, my heart pounds. The teachers demonstrate a sensual

**“I'm in tears, but these aren't emotions of sadness, nor guilt... I experience deep sorrow for the times I've not been able to look after myself in the same way”**

touch practice, in which a 'partner' spends 20 minutes running their fingers from your toes, to your head and back. Men and women are randomly paired. I looked around to see if there are any other refusals but, instead, some people are disrobing. I felt guilty, but I tell my male partner that I do not want to participate.

### My feelings *do* count

While I sit out of the exercise, all the beliefs and judgements I have around sex flood through me. Am I being judged? Am I a spoilsport? A prude? Have I hurt the man's feelings? Have I let the course leaders down? I notice my thoughts are focused on pleasing others, not myself. When the practice is over, I'm in tears, but these aren't emotions of sadness, nor guilt for not joining in – instead, having honoured my feelings, I experience deep sorrow for the times I have not been able to look after myself in the same way.

After the workshop, I discuss the exercise with Spenceley. I fear being criticised for ducking out of one of the most sensual exercises of the course, but her response is the opposite. 'I had a similar experience years ago,' she explains. 'No one would work with one man, and I said I would. I wanted to be a 'good' participant, but I really didn't want to take part. In the end, I ran out. Instead of admonishing me, my teacher congratulated me. He said, "If you can't say no, what value is your

yes?"' It was one of the most important things I learned. Before embarking on a journey into tantric sex, you must have a clear "no" and "yes"; only then can you begin to understand your body, and explore your sensuality and sexuality more deeply.'

### Having the sex I want

The Monday following the weekend workshop, I feel happy. I have part of the answer to why it's been so difficult for me to get my sexual needs met – I don't have the communication skills to ask for what I want.

In the following weeks, I try out my new skills. I make time to listen to myself, and practise expressing my desires. I dare to invite a man over for sex and, albeit in a small way, I experiment with a more sensual, slower approach, led by me, and not him. I know I can't change the patterns of a lifetime immediately, but I can see that, with practice, the lessons that I have learned on the course could transform my life.

This is the beginning of a year-long journey I'm undertaking on the Shakti Tantra programme. I hope to discover a new way of enjoying my sensuality, sexuality and relationships.

### Rekindling arousal

Karla Newbey attended the Awakenings mixed workshop, run by Annabel Newfield and Becky Price at Shakti School of Sexuality and Tantra. The school was founded by Hilly Spenceley, who later co-created the retreat programme, with Sue Newsome. It offers mixed, women's and couple's workshops as well as one-to-one sessions. For more, visit [shaktitantra.co.uk](http://shaktitantra.co.uk) Karla will write about her journey on Life Labs. Go to [lifelabs.psychologies.co.uk](http://lifelabs.psychologies.co.uk) and [yabyum.co.uk](http://yabyum.co.uk)

# Trek26



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# “Help! My boss, is a narcissist”

Our award-winning coach, Kim Morgan, gives advice on how to deal with a bullying, dominating boss, who takes pleasure in humiliating staff

ILLUSTRATION ANDREA DE SANTIS

## COACHING SESSION

### **L** Doing the emotional groundwork

Denise\* has spent more than 35 years working as a senior PA to a series of successful CEOs. She told me that, while she knew high achievers could be demanding, she had never in her working life experienced anyone like her current boss.

Denise's discomfort was visible – she was fidgeting and kept looking over her shoulder, as if she felt she was being watched or overheard. Her boss had been extremely charming when she first started working for him. Denise said, ‘He can really fool you into thinking he is lovely. He can be so charismatic if he likes you but you are either “in” or “out”. If you are “in”, he beams all his charm on you and you feel really honoured. If you are “out”, he is cruel, puts you down and makes fun of you. He is a bully and I can see that everyone around him knows it, but

we are all scared. The “in” crowd fawn around him and fear putting a foot wrong. The rest of us don’t dare stand up to him because that is the biggest mistake anyone can make. He flies into a rage if he is ever challenged. He’s the boss and he has total control. He is not accountable to anyone and he tramples over everyone to get what he wants.’

In this first session, I just listened to Denise. I did also say how hard it must be for her to have to work so closely with a person like that, as I felt that she needed some empathy and acknowledgement of her feelings before we embarked on more challenging coaching work. At the end of the session, she seemed exhausted and relieved to have spoken some of these things out loud for the first time.

\*NAME HAS BEEN CHANGED

COACHING  
SESSION

## 2 Identifying the disorder

I am never keen on labelling people but, based on everything Denise had said to me, her boss seemed to be displaying all the signs of narcissism. Denise arrived for the second session in a terrible state, saying her elderly mother had been diagnosed with a terminal illness. When she'd told her boss the news, he'd replied, 'Oh, that is great! This is going to ruin my life for the next few months, isn't it?' All the narcissistic indications were there:

- Responding to challenge or criticism with rage
- Lacking empathy for others
- Obsessive need for attention and praise from others
- Excessive self-interest and self-importance
- Dominating, humiliating and controlling others
- Using insincere charm to get their own needs met
- Being prone to sudden and irrational changes of mood

Denise had spent her whole life assuming that others behaved in accordance with her moral values. She had spent all her time with her boss, wondering what she could do to make things better. It took a long time for her to accept that someone who has narcissist personality disorder has little or no empathy. Denise came to accept that she needed to look after herself in this toxic relationship. One strategy is to learn to identify the narcissist's predictable patterns of behaviour, and to stop expecting anything different from them.

“Because I have been so upset about work, I have not been there for all the people in my life who really need me”

COACHING  
SESSION

## 3 Taking back control

In our final session, Denise talked about how much time she had wasted thinking about what she could do differently in order to please her boss. She decided to focus on herself and her family and friends, instead. 'Because I have been so upset about what's going on at work, I have not been there for all the other people in my life who really need me.' In the end, Denise took control of her situation by deciding to walk away from her boss. She felt a huge sense of freedom and empowerment. The last time we met, she was juggling job offers, and trying to decide which new opportunity would be the best for her.

For more from Kim, go to [@BarefootCoaches](http://barefootcoaching.co.uk)

## Dealing with narcissists

### BUILD CLEAR BOUNDARIES

Narcissists choose to manipulate easy targets – people who don't have strong personal boundaries, and who are overly willing to do things for others. Learning to build your boundaries is a vital first step in protecting yourself from a narcissist's abuse.

- Define your limits. How have you been letting people take advantage of you? Make a list of behaviours you will no longer accept.
- Imagine the likely outcome if you continue as you are, without making any changes.
- Decide exactly what you will do and say when someone crosses your boundaries.
- Remind yourself who you are and what you stand for. What are your values, beliefs, hopes and dreams? Remember why you deserve to have your boundaries respected by others.
- Get as much support as you can from friends, family and, if necessary, from a therapist or coach.
- Spend time with people who respect you, so that you remember what it feels like to be held in high regard.

### MAKE TIME FOR NUMBER ONE – YOU

Put your focus firmly back on *you* by caring for yourself and your needs. Write your own self-care plan. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Keep a journal of all the good things in your life and the compliments you receive from others.
- Take time out every day to get in touch with your mind and your body.
- Treat yourself to a spa day, a haircut, a luxurious bath – something that says *you* matter.
- Spend time with people who make you laugh.
- Have a day trip to somewhere you have never been before.
- Learn something new.

### DISTANCE YOURSELF

Limit your contact with the narcissist. Curb conversation time. Curtail how much information you give them about yourself. Restrict the amount of interest you show in them. The closer you get to them and the more you reveal about yourself, the more they will manipulate you. Practising being distant will go against your natural instincts, but you will protect yourself from further damage.



# The joy of average

Most of us will never be exceptional at anything, or even reach the giddy heights of top of our game – and what's wrong with that? Run-of-the-mill Lizzie Enfield extols the pleasures of an ordinary life, self-esteem intact

**M**y 13-year-old son got his school report recently. It was OK, but it could have been better. He didn't seem to care. 'I'm at the average level expected of my year,' he said – and I had to stop myself from telling him that he should aim to be above average. But *should* he? And why? We can't all be better than average – there simply isn't room at the top for everyone.

## 'You're special'

The exchange made me think of WH Auden's poem *The Average* – about a young man whose parents sacrificed everything in their desire to turn their son into something incredible. But, when he saw himself as 'the shadow of an Average Man Attempting the Exceptional', he could only run away.

We have it drummed into us from an early age that we are exceptional, or that we have the potential to be. This is an appealing aspect of an egalitarian society – a meritocracy in which we can all become someone or something, if we only apply ourselves. It's a nice idea, reach for the stars, they're there for the taking, but the other side of it is: if we become anything other than ordinary, we feel that we've failed somehow.

'There's a painful divergence between our hopes for ourselves and the reality of our lives,' philosopher, Alain de Botton, tells the audience at a TED talk on success. 'You cannot be successful at everything. So, any vision of success has to admit what it's losing out to. A lot of the time, our ideas about what it means to live successfully are not our own, they are formed by our

parents and society.' De Botton, author of *Status Anxiety* (Penguin, £10.99), went on to make the point that we need to move beyond the expectations of others and engineer our own ambitions, in order to find true pleasure in all our achievements – however great or small they are.

## Need to make a difference

This struck a chord with me. I was telling a friend the other day that I felt that I was a second-rate writer. My reasoning? I am not an intrepid war correspondent in Syria, nor a Booker prize-winning novelist.

'What exactly is wrong with being a second-rate writer?' my friend asked. 'Or even a tenth-rate one, for that matter? It's better than a fiftieth-rate writer, isn't it?'

Her words gave me something to





>>> **“Many people in the Western world have low self-esteem... high achievers and perfectionists generally have a core belief, a deep-seated conviction, that nothing they ever do is good enough”**

think about. Why can't I be happy with what I have achieved, instead of fretting about what I have not – and feeling madly driven to do better?

I am not alone in my goal-orientated thinking, and some psychologists believe the tendency to aim ever higher has its roots in a fear of mortality. In a largely secular world, we feel the need to make our mark. The irony is, when it comes down to it, do we really want to be remembered as a high achiever who launched a company which made it to the top of the FTSE 100 index? Don't we actually want to be recalled as a kind, caring individual who was well thought of by friends and family?

I know I'd rather my epitaph was personal and not professional – and yet my professional life and chasing after elusive parts of it seem to matter more than they should.

### **It's never enough**

'For different reasons, many people in the Western world have low self-esteem,' says psychologist, Honor Jane Newman, author of *Killing The Perfectionist Within* (Balboa Press, £12.99). 'In Western culture, high achievers and perfectionists generally have a "core belief" – a deep-seated conviction – that nothing they ever

do is good enough,' says Newman. 'Therefore, they are constantly striving to disprove this with more and more achievement. In this sense, they are not able to appreciate their own achievements as much as they might.'

Newman believes this attitude stems, in part, from the way we parent, and were parented: either being on the receiving end of, or giving, extreme criticism; or being too doting or doted upon – creating young adults who can only be toppled from the pedestal of childhood and end up with low self-esteem as a result.

So, it's important to teach children the value of the ordinary things in life, and tread a fine line between praising genuine achievements and creating unrealistic expectations which, when they don't realise them, will make our children feel like failures.

### **'I'll make you a star'**

The media is as much to blame for these improbable beliefs, says de Botton, perpetuating the 'everything is possible myth' and taking little notice of concepts such as luck and misfortune. 'It's as unlikely nowadays that you will become as rich and famous as Bill Gates as it was unlikely in the 17th century that you would exceed to the ranks of the French aristocracy, but it does not feel that way. We are made to believe that, if you've got energy and a few bright ideas, anything is possible.'

This may very well be the media's attitude (and perhaps the reason that we have so many TV talent shows promising stardom and riches) and yet our language is full of references that underline our acceptance of, and even respect for, averageness: 'Salt of the earth; boy or girl next door; the man in the street' are phrases we use regularly to summon up a sense of admiration of ordinariness. And, despite the fact they often appear to

feel undervalued by their employers, we tend to value ordinary citizens – nurses, teachers, firefighters and road workers; those people who want to build communities, rather more than the ones constructing shrines to their own egos.

Researchers have even revealed scientific evidence to indicate that average-looking, less-distinctive people are more attractive to others than the exceptional beauties of the world.'

'Every person has something good to offer,' says Newman. 'But many of us need to cultivate a more realistic self-image, one in which we recognise that it's all right to have strengths and weaknesses in our make-up.'

So, here's to the joy of being average, unexceptional, middle of the road, whatever you want to call it. It's time to embrace averageness and enjoy our ordinary lives.

*Watch Alain de Botton's TED Talk, 'A Kinder, Gentler Philosophy Of Success', at TED.com*

## **Embrace your ordinary**

*Ponder and complete these sentences in your journal*

- I love to stand out because...
- I hate to stand out because...
- I want to be extraordinary because...
- I want to be ordinary because...
- Average means...
- If I believed I was good enough, I would...
- True success is...
- Real achievement is...
- I'll be happy when...
- In the past, I got approval by...
- I love my friends best when...
- I approve of, and like myself, best when...
- Whose approval do I seek most, and why?

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*Psychologies and the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP) are*

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*The UKCP has high standards of training and regulation – all their therapists have a minimum of four years' training. Our new service will help you get to know each therapist via our Life Labs site, so you can make an informed decision about which one to choose.*

*Suzy*

Editor

**Q** 'I hate my job, I'm single and would like a partner, but lack the confidence to make any changes. How can I become more self-assured?'  
**Julie, 23**

**A** 'I'd first ask: "What sort of relationship am I in with myself?"' says Lucy Johnson, an integrative psychotherapist who specialises in self-talk. 'It is hard to feel confident if your inner critic is constantly picking on you. Commit to treating

yourself as your best friend, because the relationship that you have 'inside' is the one you'll have with the outside world. If you hate your job, is it because you undermine your own ability? Or is it not the right job for you? If you're your own ally, you will find it easier to have the confidence to step away from this job and look for one that makes you happier. Remember that the relationship you have with yourself will be mirrored in your other associations. Once you learn to love yourself, you'll see this reflected in your most intimate relationships.'

## ABOUT THE UKCP AND HOW TO FIND A THERAPIST

- The UKCP are the leading body for the education, training and accreditation of psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors. Their membership includes more than 8,000 therapists and more than 70 training and accrediting organisations. Individual members work privately, in public health or third-sector organisations, offering a wide variety of psychotherapeutic approaches for individuals, couples, families and groups.
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Our agony aunt, Mary Fenwick, offers a new perspective on whatever is troubling you

# “*The fate of the world worries me*”



MARY FENWICK is a business coach, journalist, fundraiser, mother, divorcée and widow

**GOT A QUESTION FOR MARY?**  
Email [mary@psychologies.co.uk](mailto:mary@psychologies.co.uk), with 'MARY' in the subject line

**FOLLOW MARY ON TWITTER**  
[@MJFenwick](https://twitter.com/MJFenwick)

**Q** I am generally quite a cheerful person, but I find myself becoming overwhelmed by world events. I am scared about the future of the planet; about global warming; I am scared that there will be a war; that this country is going bankrupt. I am 19 and feel as if I am stepping out into a ruined world. I'm finding it difficult to cope. **Name supplied**

**A** My first instinct is to apologise to you. I feel responsible on at least two levels – as a journalist, and as someone who has been on this planet for a longer time than you have.

My second impulse is to thank you – for being cheerful, and also for articulating your fears. Every time you raise someone else's spirits, or admit your own vulnerability, that's making a human connection.

My third thought is perhaps more random. I was having a conversation last week about writer's block. I believe

that feeling comes when we have too many ideas, and they form a bit of a logjam in our minds. I wonder if you feeling overwhelmed is similar: there are so many things to change, it's difficult to know where to start.

I suggest that this is actually a brilliant thing. You were born into a world that really needs you. Although you haven't exactly asked me a question, I guess it is: 'What can I do?' The short answer is: start where you are. Have a conversation about your worries with a like-minded friend and go to a local meeting (almost any meeting with the purpose of improving or changing something in the world); sign up for newsletters from a number of political parties or charities and see if any of their suggestions strike a chord.

There is a lot of academic research into what constitutes hope (see 'More inspiration', opposite). It's not simply an airy-fairy mist that descends on our lives, it's a crucial survival mechanism that helps us to persevere with things. In one experiment, people who had been

assessed as more hopeful were able to withstand pain for longer. I also discovered it is particularly motivating to have a valuable goal – but one with an uncertain outcome. I think the future of the planet fits that description.

While I had your question at the back of my mind, I listened to a programme about Hannah Arendt, a philosopher interested in how mankind might fight the possible rise of future dictators. She invented a word, 'natality', which means being born into society is a second birth, during which we take our place in the world outside our home, and communicate and argue with others. That opportunity beckons you now.

In short: be active; be kind (including to yourself). The world is full of good people but, if you can't find one, be one.

PHOTOGRAPH: VICTORIA BIRKINSHAW

## “My husband thinks I’m being selfish for wanting to leave”

**Q** After much heartache, I told my husband that I was unhappy and thought that we should separate. I am 34; he is 49. He is a good man, but I feel as if I am living his life with little determination of my own choices, or influence in the relationship. I live in his house, surrounded by his things and abiding by his rules.

I recently found a job that I love, but the self-esteem and independence that I experience at work is not evident at home. My husband is making me feel guilty for wanting to leave and says that, if I did, he would lose his chance of having children. He says I am selfish. Am I? **Name supplied**

**A** I’m interested in the word ‘selfish’, but am thinking of it as ‘self’-ish – relating to the self. What you are trying to do is bring more of your self into your marriage. The question is for your husband: does he want to be in a relationship with you, as your whole self; or is he simply seeking a body to carry ‘his’ children?

Marriages can and do get rebuilt from this point, but it will take work from *both* of you. The challenge for your husband is to accept that, and the challenge for you is to hold onto, and honour your self. It’s a fantastic start that you have found a job in which you feel like the right person in the right place, and it’s completely appropriate

to seek that feeling in your life overall. On the theme of words, I suggest that you check the definition of ‘coercive control’, now enshrined in UK law. It’s a pattern of behaviour, not just one argument, which seeks to strip away that sense of self. I ask this because a controlling relationship can be difficult to recognise when you are in it, and I’m bothered by the phrase ‘his rules’. I’ll give you a behaviour checklist (see ‘More inspiration’, below) and, if you recognise a pattern, you will definitely need external support.

The marriage vows are to love, honour and cherish. If you hear the word selfish, and use it as a reminder to cherish your self, would that help?

## “I feel lonely and have no meaningful friendships”

**Q** I feel increasingly isolated and alone. I am married with a son and we live in an affluent area, but I’ve never really felt a proper connection with the people who like to ‘keep up with the Joneses’, and are pushy parents.

My husband works away a lot. I have a few friends, but no one with whom I feel a deep bond. I always seem to be the one making the effort to contact people, which is not easy for me as I am a person who fears rejection. What can I do? **Name supplied**

**A** Congratulations for having the courage to admit these feelings – research suggests that one in five British people feels lonely, but saying so is much more difficult. Ironically, most people identify with the statement, ‘I feel like

a bit of an outsider.’ An element of being vulnerable is what we need for deep connection. In the words of the song *Lean On Me*: ‘No one can fill those of your needs that you won’t let show.’

Please check with your GP to rule out other symptoms. I’m not sure how old your son is, but post-natal depression can kick in later than you think, and other issues, such as thyroid problems, can make everyday tasks feel like a big effort. Other than that, finding an exercise class, or a group centred around whatever you want to learn about or do next, will help (see ‘More inspiration’, right).

My own mantra, when I lived in Paris at the age of 23 – also a glamorous but lonely environment – was: ‘You meet people that you like when you’re doing things you like.’ What sort of thing have you enjoyed

in the past? Could you share a skill as a volunteer – reading at a story-telling group in your local library, perhaps, or befriending an elderly person with The Silver Line? The amazing benefit of helping others is that it’s one of the best ways of helping ourselves. I would normally describe myself as an atheist, but this one fact almost makes me believe in a divine plan.

I have faith that you are one proper conversation away from feeling better.

### MORE INSPIRATION

**Read:** [tinyurl.com/j6m9cns](http://tinyurl.com/j6m9cns)

**Research:** [Coercive control checklist: guilford.com/add/forms/fontes3.pdf](http://coercivecontrolchecklist.guilford.com/add/forms/fontes3.pdf)

**Read:** [mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness](http://mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/loneliness)

**Contact:** [thesilverline.org.uk](http://thesilverline.org.uk)



# Dossier QUIT the CHAOS

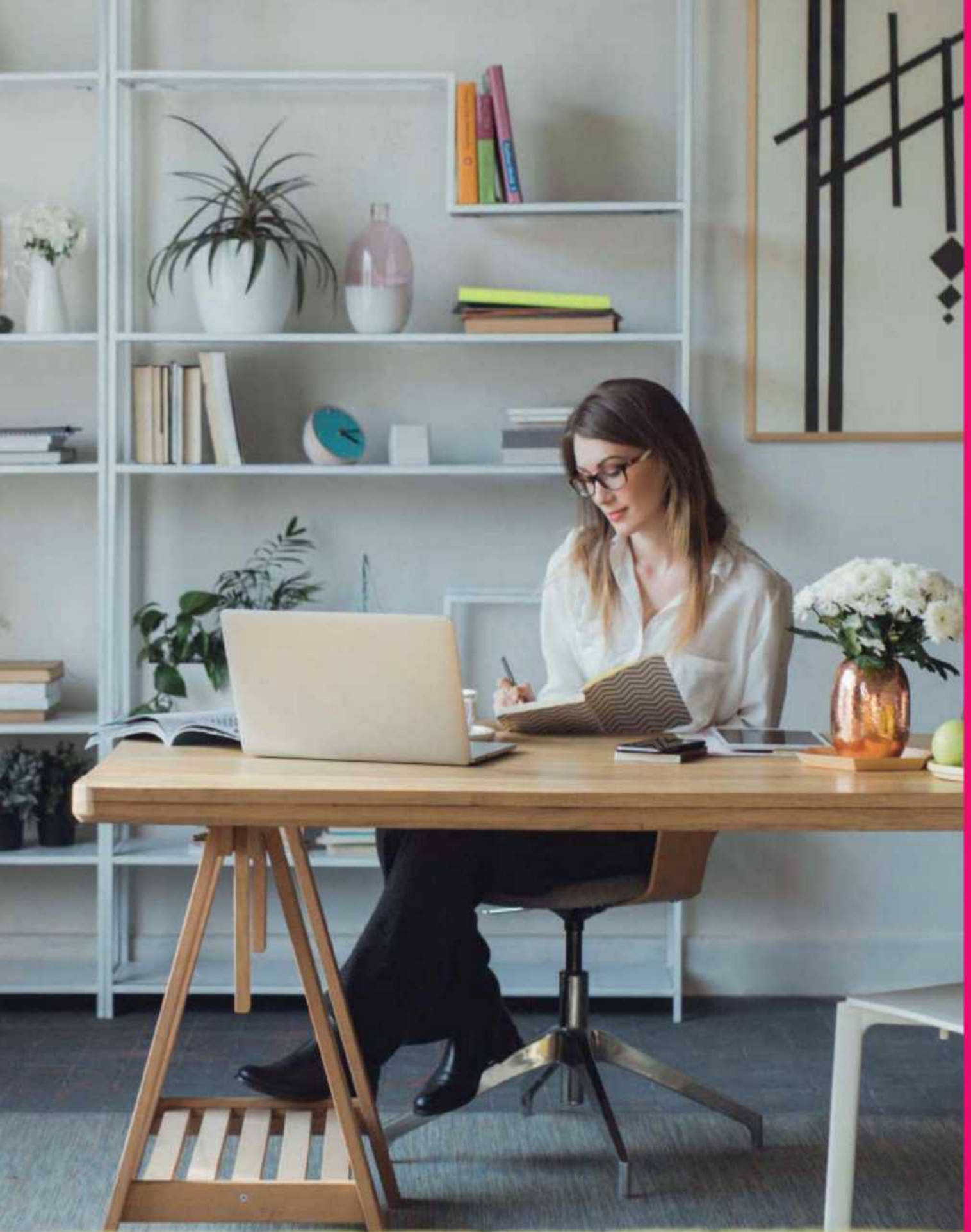
Physical disorganisation can be frustrating, but clutter inside our heads can be debilitating. Yet, they often go hand in hand. As spring takes shape around us, the urge to get organised begins to stir inside us all. Spring clean, anyone? But, where to start? How about here...

This month's Dossier is a gentle step towards a more organised you, tackling both your internal and physical worlds, including prioritising your dreams and goals, and hearing three inspiring stories from people who have moved from chaos to living the calm life they always aspired to. Grab your diary, pick up your planner – we're going to get ourselves better organised.

PHOTOGRAPHS STOCKSY

**“To be in hell is to drift; to be in heaven is to steer”**

***George Bernard Shaw***





# GET ME OUT OF THIS MESS!

From disorganised desks to mental chaos, Anita Chaudhuri discovers the joy found in creating more order in life...

**R**ecently, my sister gave me a present that, although modest, would change my life. It was a pencil case, decorated with the characters from Peanuts, a childhood favourite of mine, and featuring different zipped compartments. Strange to say, I have never possessed such an item in my grown-up life. Not so strange to say, I am always the person scrabbling around asking, 'Er, has anyone got a pen?' minutes before an important interview. Or, at least, I used to be...

After a couple of weeks of realising how much easier, and more efficient, my life was now I could always access vital writing implements, the penny dropped. Far from being boring, maybe a little organisation might, in fact, free up my energy to get more done? This was a difficult thought to take on board because, like many people who regard themselves as 'creative' types, I have always believed that chaos equals good things like creativity and spontaneity while, say, colour-coded ring binders and sticky labels are the enemy of originality.

I would probably have drifted back into my old ways, though, had it not been for Donald Trump. After his recent West Wing interview, Michael Gove observed

that the new president of the United States 'has an untidy desk, so not necessarily a well-ordered mind'. I double-clicked on the image of the Trump desk. It was indeed messy. I scrutinised my own desk – mounds of receipts, magazines, torn-out news clippings, half-eaten packets of fruit pastilles and discarded wrapping paper. Suddenly, a filing cabinet struck me as an alluring purchase. But how do you change the bad habits of a lifetime?

The first person I sought out for advice was Nagisa Tatsumi, author of *The Art Of Discarding* (Yellow Kite, £12.99), and the woman who is said to have inspired Japanese 'organising consultant' and author, Marie Kondo. She strongly believes that a tidy environment leads to a calmer, more focused mind. 'In Japan, we do not

separate body and mind,' she explains. 'Putting your body in a clear space automatically gives you a clear mind, and the process of tidying up your space is all part of getting your mind in balance. Paying attention to the details of your body and the space around it in the here-and-now, gives you a calm mind and makes your life more fulfilling.'

That's all very well, I put it to her, but what if the very word 'organise' makes you yawn? How can we live up the process? Her response amuses me. 'Why should >>>

**"The process of tidying up your space is all part of getting your mind in balance"**





>>> it be exciting? It's not a goal – it's just the means to get there. You don't need to get excited being in a plane when you travel to Egypt, for example. The important thing is to have a good time in Egypt.'

I confide in Tatsumi that my biggest problem isn't going to Egypt; it's paper. I'm drowning in the stuff and consequently I am constantly losing bills, plots for screenplays, appointment letters and invitations. What can I do? 'There are some simple rules. Do not keep things "for now". Do not think that there is a silver bullet for organising everything without reducing them. And do not say "someday" I might need these things. That day will probably never come.' Oh dear.

### FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Not everyone agrees that physical organisation is so crucial, though. Sarah Knight, author of the splendidly titled *Get Your Sh\*t Together: How To Stop Worrying About What You Should Do So You Can Finish What You Need To Do And Start Doing What You Want To Do* (Quercus, £12.99), believes we're now living in a 'post Kondo' society. 'Everybody took her advice and thought if they clean their house, it'll change their lives. It's true to some extent – that's probably better for you than outright chaos. But perhaps what got lost in the past couple of years is the idea that change comes from the inside. We can get everything done without having an introspective conversation with our winter coat.'

Knight is an advocate of tackling what she terms 'mental clutter' head-on. 'I am someone who has had plenty of experience with anxiety and depression. There's a lot of stigma around the idea of anxiety. Mental clutter is a very easy thing to banish; it doesn't need to come from a place of stigma. It's about discarding what doesn't make you happy and organising the rest.'

Personality does have some bearing on how good we are at organising ourselves and getting things done. Knight has come up with three organising archetypes based, obviously, on the cartoon *Alvin And The Chipmunks*. Theodores are relatively hopeless, the people who have to open their suitcases at airport check-in desks. Simons are high-functioning to-do lists.

**"Mental clutter is an easy thing to banish; it doesn't need to come from a place of stigma. It's about discarding what makes you unhappy and organising the rest"**

They roast perfect chickens and are a whizz on Excel spreadsheets. They might seem perfect, but are potentially on the verge of mental and physical collapse from having taken on so much. Finally, there are the Alvin's who talk a good game on the day-to-day stuff but, when it comes to doing things on a larger scale, they falter. The latter sounded worryingly familiar and that was before I got to the part that said, 'These people arrive home from a relatively productive day at work and make dinner in the microwave because the oven has been broken for three months.' I begin to wonder if Knight has installed a spycam in my kitchen.

Once you've identified your blocks to being more organised, you can do something about it, suggests Knight. 'Above all, it's really important to plan; many of us have forgotten how. You need to sit down for half an hour every day and look at your calendar and goals. How are you going to get everything done? Have a plan, make the time, then have the gumption to commit and get it done. When you break it down, people realise life is not as hard as they thought it was.'

Knight herself is an inspiration for the power of learning how to get organised. While still working a corporate job in Manhattan, she made a to-do list of 365 mini goals allowing her to save enough money to eventually leave and build a house on a tropical island. While a great many people share this fantasy, she didn't just daydream about it, she figured out what she needed to do and put those actions into her calendar to turn it into a reality.

### SMALL COG IN A LARGE WHEEL

'Life is like an adult colouring-in book. You simply work your way through each little section until the big picture materialises. Learning to compartmentalise has helped me to manage my anxiety. It's all about breaking things down into manageable chunks. Instead of having one massive to-do list, ask yourself what you have to do today, and only deal with that.'

Talking to Knight, I am struck by how simple and focused she makes it all sound. The biggest revelation, which sounds obvious but wasn't to me, is that it's not enough to make plans and schedule them, you have to >>>





>>> actually look at that schedule several times a day. Being a stationery addict, I have two beautiful diaries, but I rarely remember to consult them (classic Alvin). As an experiment, I switch to using the iPhone Reminders app, which allows you to have several different lists – for example, work, shopping and home. Within a week, I’m being driven mad by the constant beeping reminders, but I am more productive than I have ever been. There’s also something highly satisfying about writing down tiny manageable items and then checking them off (colour-coded, of course). ‘Everyone’s different,’ says Knight. ‘I personally use a paper calendar, but my husband loves apps. It’s all about finding what works and then using it.’

## URGENT VS IMPORTANT

David Stiernholm is a Swedish business coach and self-styled *struktör* – someone who teaches individuals and organisations how to create structure and systems in their daily routines, so that they can be more productive and efficient. ‘The people I work with all feel overwhelmed by the constant inflow of information from an increasing number of channels. It’s possible to work anywhere at any time these days, which is a hazard if you are ambitious. You feel as though you ought to make yourself available all the time.’

He believes that the biggest challenge we all face is how to organise information – both digital and paper – so we can find what we need when we need it. ‘Too many people put the most urgent task at the top of their to-do lists, rather than the most important thing. In order to achieve this, we need to figure out why something is important and that might require more thought than reactivity.’

Sarah Knight agrees. ‘The reason prioritising is so important is it reminds us to narrow our focus. It’s not possible to do it all at once; when we try to, that’s when things fall apart. Choose only three or four things to pay attention to in a day, not nine or 10. The wonderful thing is you get to procrastinate on all the other items on your list, and you can enjoy putting them off for another day.’

“The reason prioritising is so important is it reminds us to narrow our focus. It’s not possible to do it all at once; when we try to, things fall apart”

Stiernholm brings up another, more surprising, block to being more organised – distractions, particularly if they come in the form of other people. ‘If we have a better structure, that allows us to lessen the distractions that interrupt us. As a first step, get rid of all email and social media notifications.’

He cites a recent Microsoft study\* which found that the more time a person spent every day on email, the less productive and more stressed they were. Participants who checked emails at a time decided by themselves, rather than reacting to a reminder, reported higher productivity. ‘Choose to go through your inbox just a couple of times a day, and don’t respond immediately because that only creates more emails. Replying up to 24 hours later is fine.’

Another useful tip, he suggests, is to identify what tasks are recurring – for example, invoicing or filing expenses. ‘It’s really helpful to find a way of standardising them or, better yet, automating them.’ This might mean using software that will keep track of things more efficiently or doing the tasks at the same time every day.

## METHOD TO THE MADNESS

This much efficiency is all very well, but is it not true that some creative types might actually thrive on at least a little bit of chaos? ‘Yes, of course,’ says Stiernholm. ‘If I’m writing, my workspace is likely to be messy. But there’s also a time for order. Sooner or later, when we have an idea, we will want to set it in motion. In order to be creative, I need to be sure that this is the right time to be doing it. Having a clear desk helps. There are better ways of keeping in mind what we need to do, than having it lying all around you.’

OK, guilty as charged. But he also points out that once you become more organised, you will receive a wonderful gift – more time. ‘Having more structure ultimately gives us more time because we don’t waste it looking for things and redoing tasks we’ve somehow lost track of. Also, if we are organised, we’re clearer about what needs to get done today, which means we can more easily say no to things with a clear conscience.’

[sarahknightbooks.com/stiernholm.com](http://sarahknightbooks.com/stiernholm.com)

\*GLORIA MARK ET AL. EMAIL DURATION, BATTING AND SELF-INTERRUPTION, CHI, 2016



# 3 of the best planners

Write it down, make it happen – get motivated and organise your life today (each planner is undated so you can start any time)

## ● Daily Greatness Planners

This is the brainchild of coach, Lyndelle Palmer Clarke – the aim of this colourful series is to combine laser-focused page-per-day planning with a self-development workbook, packed with searching questions and inspirational quotes.

There are now special editions for fitness, parenting, business and, my personal favourite, the beautifully illustrated yoga journal. [dailygreatness.co.uk](http://dailygreatness.co.uk)

## ● Rituals For Living Dreambook And Planner

Briana and Peter Borten, co-founders of the Dragontree Spa in Portland, Oregon, and authors of *The Well Life* (Adams Media, £8.40), have created a planner (digital or paper) that allows you to combine long-term dream

planning with the daily grind, and more metaphysical rituals. They also do an impressive online course, *Dreaming and Planning*, which is a masterclass in the nuts and bolts of getting organised. [dragontreeapothecary.com](http://dragontreeapothecary.com)

## ● VoltPlanner

American tech entrepreneur, Kate Matsudaira, interviewed dozens of fellow notebook addicts, before launching a successful Kickstarter for her dream planner. Digital (dated only) and paper versions both include space for 31-day challenges, weekly goals and a progress tracker. This is a useful planner for creative types because, rather than a rigid time schedule, days are simply divided into Morning, Noon and Night, making it easy to customise. The ultimate in 'motivationery'. [inkandvolt.com](http://inkandvolt.com)

# MYTH OF THE MUDDLED GENIUS

Surrounded by ‘creative chaos’? Former musician and singer, Sheila Chandra, knows the feeling. But, she asks, what if becoming more organised could help you flourish in your artistic field?

**T**he household I grew up in was chaotic. By the time I was 16, I had a top-10 hit and, by the age of 27 in the 1990s, an international career as a ‘groundbreaking’ artist in the Asian-influenced world-fusion genre. As a performer, I had a highly creative approach to my music, ignoring trends and trying instead to define the boundaries of world music and my own voice. But those old chaotic habits I learned as a child were entrenched in every area of my life. My house always looked like a bomb site. I worked 16-hour days, often seven days a week.

## THE ‘CREATIVE CHAOS’ FALLACY

Even if you weren’t raised in a messy home, the chances are that you were fed the ‘untidy creative’ myth; the trope of the ‘artist genius’ – dysfunctional and living in squalor, yet contributing to the world with your talent. Because of this idea, many creative people don’t even think about how to approach their creative pursuits in an organised and efficient way, nor how this could benefit them. And, if they do, they often don’t believe they can achieve it. We worry about inspiration and making space for our best ideas to strike.

But, over time, I realised that being

organised doesn’t mean that our creative juices have to be stemmed. By injecting order around the incredible things creative people can produce, from music, to crafts and computer games, we can become more successful. Brilliant ideas are no longer forgotten, more of our products can be sold, and

**“Brilliant ideas are no longer forgotten... and we have more time and clarity to seek amazing opportunities”**

we have more time and clarity to seek amazing opportunities to progress. So, how do we honour our creative process, and schedule in that time, while remaining productive, and making sure our ‘great idea’ doesn’t get lost in all the other tasks we have to do?

We may fear that being organised will make us less creative but, if done properly, the opposite is true. Creative people work for years to train themselves to reproduce their ideas faithfully. A talented singer only has to ‘think’ a note to be able to sing it perfectly. A creative workspace should

operate around us like an exoskeleton, to make sure nothing impedes the efficient flow of ideas from the brain to the final medium – paper, canvas or hard drive. The result is inspiration captured faster and more loyally. In that sense, this is the creative person’s incentive to get organised.

One key to constructing that ‘flow’ is by creating a suitable workstation. Take a task you do frequently, say, mailing orders of a product that you have crafted. Set up a table dedicated to this job, with drawers for everything that you need, possibly scissors, tape, bubble-wrap and stamps. Make it your policy never to remove these items. Now, when you come to mail a batch of products, not only is it easier to get started, it’s also easier to put everything back in its dedicated place. A study in *Harvard Business Review*\* shows that having a neat workstation equates to more projects completed. You save time procrastinating and becoming distracted, time searching for the tools you need, doing the task, and tidying up. Totalled up over all your frequent jobs, you may save hours a day.

## CLEAR YOUR HEAD

Aside from the physical place in which we create, creative people need to make sure those ‘grand ideas’ that don’t yet

\*HBR.ORG/2015/01/WHY-A-MESSY-WORKSPACE-UNDERMINES-YOUR-PERSISTENCE





**“We developed a laser-like focus for him... He was a dancer, actor, musician and creator of art – I told him to choose one and concentrate on it”**

have a tangible reality (but could move their careers forward in a meaningful or prosperous way) don’t get forgotten. Arrange this by buying a notebook, or an organiser, and writing a ‘master’ to-do list. Create and keep project files by brainstorming all the steps that you think you’ll need to achieve your idea.

Then, do a daily ‘check-in’ with both your master list and your broken-down process of steps to prioritise your tasks. This will ensure that you have ‘touched base’ with all the important stuff that *doesn’t* have a deadline, as well as the urgent everyday tasks that *do* have a time limit. Checking in daily means your head space becomes more peaceful, because you know that even your intangible projects are moving forward consistently.

Organising your head space will make you more stable and resilient – thus better able to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. If you want to grow your skills, diversify, or find a new audience, formulating career goals

and prioritising ‘non-deadline’ jobs is crucial. Often, these are the long-term tasks that build your confidence, motivate you and keep you in control of your career direction and trajectory.

## **TRANSFORMATIONS**

As I implemented these small habits, my home and workspaces stayed tidy without any effort. What’s more, when disability ended my singing career, turning my hand to a new profession writing self-development books, which became bestsellers, was easy – because I had become focused and organised.

In 2008, I began mentoring a street artist named Stik. He’d been painting illegally on walls for the best part of a decade, but his creative work was not getting any attention.

When I met Stik, his life was extremely chaotic, mainly because he was homeless. He had no secure space in which to store his belongings, so even hanging onto a computer was impossible. Apart from his artist’s

notebooks, and an old-fashioned mobile phone, he had nothing in the way of a creative business set-up, or a stable space in which to organise one.

Together, we developed a laser-like focus for him, centred around his career goals – that he wanted to break through as an artist and subsequently keep his career on an upward curve. He was a dancer, an actor, a musician and a creator of art and other things – I told him to choose one and concentrate on it.

Stik made practical changes, such as shedding objects and ambitions that weren’t helping him to achieve his ultimate goal. He extended this to events in his diary and the contacts he pursued. I remember him telling me that a filing cabinet changed his life. I had to smile – a piece of furniture really did help him put things in the right ‘boxes’ in his own mind. ‘It literally separates the chaos into its component parts,’ he explained. ‘Sheila taught me how to apply that principle to the many chaotic elements of an artist’s life.’

Today, he is one of the most recognised street artists in the world, he regularly raises substantial amounts of money for charities and the NHS, his canvases sell for tens of thousands and, as an important bonus, his domestic life is healthier and more nurturing, too.

*Sheila Chandra is author of ‘Organizing For Creative People’ (Watkins, £10.99).  
sheilachandrabooks.com @sheila\_chandra*

# OUR CALL TO ORDER

Three disorganised people describe how they broke free from the chains of disarray in their lives – and purposefully, peacefully strode towards success

INTERVIEWS RIN HAMBURGH PHOTOGRAPH DERRICK THOMSON

*“We learned that when we are organised, we are calm, and get much more done”*

JENNIFER HAMLEY, 37, DESIGNER

When I met my husband, Ben, 10 years ago, I was utterly disorganised. I never planned anything and lived day to day with little thought of the consequences – and I never had any money. He was a student, also disorganised and also broke.

We decided it was easier to leave the country and travel, working season to season and having someone else do the organising for us. For a while, it felt good; it was fun. Every now and again, we would think that we wanted to stay in one place but, as the ‘seasonnaires’ we had met left, everything changed and so we would move on again. Very soon, I started to feel quite empty: I wasn’t getting anywhere; I wasn’t achieving anything. I had always wanted to create and design things, and I wasn’t doing that.

While we were living in Canada, we discovered self-development practices – self-hypnosis, yoga and neurolinguistic programming. We realised that there was more to life than running away from a disorganised existence that was transient at best. We got clarity and saw that we had

the power to choose what to discard, and what to build on, in life.

Fast-forward to today and we are living in the UK and running a company that we set up together making luxury bags. The main selling point of our handbags and work bags is centred around organisation; to give you the head space and freedom to do your best work. We learned that when we are organised, we are calm, and get much more done.

I have routines now, such as meditation and exercise in the morning. I write a lot of lists, too – which I always used to do but then lose them. These days, my lists are in a book. I have systems and processes and these methods make me feel peaceful, which helps me to get on with stuff – and then I get to create, which means extra happiness points.

And, we manage to organise life so well, we can work abroad, after all. At the moment, we’re running the business from Bali for a couple of months. Living the dream takes some organisation! I’m so much happier, and I’m no longer broke!

[jenniferhamley.com](http://jenniferhamley.com)









## ***“I ended up sending my boss to the completely wrong address for an important meeting”***

**REBECCA MILLER, 36, PUBLICITY COACH**

**W**hen I left university, I got a job as an administrator for a charity, and somehow ended up being promoted to a PA role, looking after the chief executive. I always struggled with the organisational side of things and, at one point, I ended up sending my boss to the completely wrong address for an important meeting. My disorganisation wasn't just at work. I was really muddled in every aspect of my life: I was untidy; I didn't have a diary; I was never quite sure where I was meant to be.

In hindsight, it had such a negative impact. I'd get stressed out by things that wouldn't have been an issue if I'd been organised. When I had a messy desk, I'd see the clutter, and feel anxious – because I had to sort things out before I could start doing what I was actually supposed to be doing. I lacked confidence, and wrote myself off as a disorganised person. It never occurred to me to step back and say, 'I don't *have* to be disorganised!'

What changed for me was hearing someone say that organised people always start the day by making the bed. I looked at my unmade bed and thought, 'Making the bed is such a small, easy thing – how can it make a difference?' But I decided to do it, and it did.

I realised that if you take that extra couple of minutes a day to make your bed, or pick up that piece of clothing on the floor, or file that bit of paper – those tasks don't take long to do and yet bring about substantial change. I started to feel better about myself as I looked at my tidy desk, or my organised drawer, and my positivity grew.

Now, I run my own business as a publicity coach and I have to be organised. I'm juggling lots of clients and I have to know what I'm doing and where I'm going at all times. But, because I've built those little habits into my life, it's become a game and actually quite fun. I love planning, organising and making lists these days.

*writeandreach.com*



## ***“Imposing discipline on oneself is, by definition, not very easy – but it's essential”***

**NICK SHEPLEY, 42, TEACHER AND PODCASTER**

**W**hen I started my working life as a newspaper journalist, I took a 'fly by the seat of my pants' approach. My desk was a sea of papers and my car looked like a tip, but it didn't matter because I got good page leads and, subconsciously, believed that mess and chaos were part of the process.

However, the underlying problem was my relationship with alcohol. It was only after I stopped drinking in 2004 that I realised organisation in life isn't a secondary issue – it's key to everything that you do and part of being a productive and happy person.

The impact of being disorganised was endless stress. I never had time to do anything because everything was chaotic. I'd need to get out in the morning and the car keys wouldn't be there because I'd put them down somewhere random the night before.

During my recovery, I decided to leave journalism and go into teaching. Having to take an organised,

disciplined, planned approach, making sure lesson plans, marking and assessments were all done, was one of the most difficult things I've ever learned. Imposing discipline on oneself is, by definition, not very easy – but it's essential. There have been a lot of positive things that have come out of being more organised over the past 13 years. I've got a career in teaching, copywriting and drug and alcohol counselling. I've done a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, a Masters and a foundation degree in counselling. I've written books. I've even got a podcast – because I'm organised enough to get content out every week.

I also met and married my wife and, in 2015, we had a son. You've got to be on your best game for that – you can't go around forgetting stuff, and not turning up for things. You can't say, 'Sorry, I just haven't managed to get organised.' There's no going back to my old ways now.

*explaininghistory.com*



# 15-MINUTE LIFE-CHANGERS

Do you ever feel as if you don't have enough time to worry about your everyday chores, let alone organise opportunities for happiness and growth? Authors, Emma Grey and Audrey Thomas, share three 15-minute practices to help you lead a more joyful life

## 1 NAME YOUR ADVENTURES

We can become so entangled and stuck in our 'comfort' zones of work and routine, that we forget how exhilarating it can be to step outside of them and experience something new and exciting. Spend 15 minutes choosing 12 mini adventures or fun challenges that you are going to commit to over the forthcoming year. Make a promise to yourself to start planning, and having, these adventures each month. Before you know it, life won't seem humdrum.

## 2 CHOOSE AND CHECK-IN

When you consider looking back on your life in years to come, what do you want to be able to say you achieved and contributed, personally and professionally? Spend 10 minutes writing a list. Then, look at your diary or current to-do list and ask whether the choices you're making will allow you to leave your chosen legacy. If some change is needed, make small shifts by finding, and acting upon: something you can cancel; something you can postpone; and something you can delegate.

## 3 ORGANISE YOUR OPTIMISM

Label a glass jar 'Happy days'. Note a few good things that have happened to you recently, on separate bits of paper, and put them inside the jar. Whenever something positive unfolds in your life, pop it into the jar. After a year, relive the times that brought you happiness. The simple act of paying attention when good things happen to you will be beneficial for developing an optimistic perspective.

*Adapted from 'I Don't Have Time: 15-Minute Ways To Shape A Life You Love' by Emma Grey and Audrey Thomas (Exisle Publishing, £10.99)*

# TEST

# HOW IS CHAOS AFFECTING YOUR LIFE?

Are you super-efficient at work, but never have anything to eat in the fridge? Always on time, but useless with names? Sometimes, chaos sneaks in where you least expect it, holding you back from living your best life. Take our test to find out how it's impacting you...

## 1 What do you feel guilty about most often?

- A Another day with no exercise
- B Cancelling a friend at the last minute
- C Leaving things unfinished
- D How messy your house is

## 2 People would be surprised to find out that you:

- A Worry about everything
- B Drink too much, or live on sugar
- C Can feel like an imposter at work
- D Actually hate being late

## 3 When you're very busy, you struggle to:

- A Keep up with your social life
- B Focus and concentrate
- C Get anything finished
- D Go to bed at a reasonable time

## 4 Your quality of life would improve if you:

- A Lost 10lbs and got fit
- B Had more free time
- C Could stop worrying about everything
- D Had less to do and more help at work

## 5 You secretly look up to people who:

- A Glow with good health
- B Always seem calm and happy
- C Say no to things and don't feel guilty
- D Effortlessly stay on top of your workload

## 6 If you could achieve just one thing this year, it would be to:

- A Work less and play more
- B Enjoy extra time with loved ones
- C Feel and look your best
- D Worry less and laugh more often

## 7 It's been an excellent week for you when you've:

- A Had more than one night in
- B Slept well and felt calm
- C Finished something that you started
- D Gone for a run or to the gym

## 8 You're most likely to apologise for:

- A Yawning
- B Losing things
- C Forgetting names
- D Being late

## 9 You are at your very best when you're:

- A In touch with your sense of achievement and purpose
- B Tuned into what your body needs
- C Connecting with someone you care about
- D In the 'zone', thinking creatively and productively

## 10 When you wake in the middle of the night, you're most likely to worry about:

- A What people think of you
- B Messing up at work
- C Getting ill or putting on weight
- D Why you can't sleep

ADD UP YOUR SCORE FOR EACH ANSWER, AND TURN THE PAGE TO FIND OUT WHAT AREA IN YOUR LIFE IS MOST AFFECTED BY CHAOS:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A	8	4	2	8	8	6	2	8	4	2
B	2	8	4	2	4	2	4	6	8	6
C	6	6	6	4	2	8	6	4	2	8
D	4	2	8	6	6	4	8	2	6	4

WORDS: SALLY BROWN.

>>>





# Chaos is having an impact on...

>>> IF YOU SCORED BETWEEN 20 AND 35

## *Your relationships*

Relationships are important to you, so it's frustrating that, at times, you come across as flaky. It's never your intention but, somehow, it's always you who turns up late, double-books or cancels at the last minute. The irony is that letting people down doesn't sit comfortably with you, and you truly value spending time with the people who matter to you. You also have a tendency to agree to commitments that you don't have a hope of sticking to. If you can't bear to say no, you may have a fear of being disapproved of, or of missing out, which suggests that your self-esteem needs nurturing.

Saying yes to everything does your relationships more harm than good – old friends may feel they can't rely on you, new ones may wonder why you get their name wrong! If saying no feels too uncomfortable, experiment with a 'soft no' – 'I'd love to come but I'm very busy at the moment, so can I think about it and let you know?' It's time to take a more mindful approach to work and social commitments, and prioritise quality over quantity.

IF YOU SCORED BETWEEN 36 AND 45

## *Your mental wellbeing*

Feeling slightly overwhelmed and out of control has become your default state of mind. At times, you feel energised by your chaotic approach to life, flitting from one task to another, or doing several things at once, as you can easily get bored. But you can also feel exhausted and trapped in a cycle of mental churn, turning over your unfinished tasks in your head. You tell people that you don't have enough time to do things properly but, the truth is, you prefer starting things to finishing them. What's worse, you live with visual reminders of your incomplete projects and it can be hard to totally relax in this environment.

Your priority is finding time every day to properly unwind, perhaps by following a guided meditation exercise. Then, when you are planning what you would like to achieve in the day, try halving it, or even picking one key task and focusing on it until it's done. Getting rid of the clutter in your work and home environment will also have a calming effect – if you find it impossible, try enlisting the help of an organised friend.

IF YOU SCORED BETWEEN 46 AND 60

## *Your work life*

There's a fine line between buzzing with energy and feeling frazzled, and you seem to walk that tightrope all too often these days. Do you start the day with a pounding heart as you think about all you have to get through? It may be a temporary phase of busyness, or it may be that you have taken on too much. Most of the time, you can keep on top of it, but there are also moments when chaos is undermining you, when you've made mistakes, or you haven't been able to deliver what you promised. It's easy to get trapped in fire-fighting mode, and spend all your time simply dealing with what comes up, but you risk losing sight of the 'big picture' and what's really important.

Taking a more mindful approach to the working day can help. Think about what you really need to achieve today, then make that task the first of the day. Starting the day with a calm brain can help, so make time for early morning meditation or exercise. Tackle your physical working environment so it's easy to see what needs doing.

IF YOU SCORED BETWEEN 61 AND 80

## *Your physical health*

You have great intentions to upgrade your health, but they rarely last more than a few days. You may have come to the conclusion that you just lack willpower, but the real barrier you face is not being organised. The truth is that big changes, like eating healthily, exercising regularly and feeling more calm, take organisation to achieve, no matter how enthusiastic you may be. If you're the person who turns up at the gym with only one trainer, you'll never improve your fitness. Or maybe you'd love to eat well, but you return to an empty fridge at night?

Your chaotic approach to self-care means you never feel at your best. You go through phases of picking up every bug going and, at times, you feel like life is a struggle, and you crave more mental clarity and energy, or just a good night's sleep. You may also worry that you're storing up serious future health problems by neglecting yourself today. Planning ahead is your secret weapon. If you're a visual person, bullet journaling may help (see YouTube for inspiration). Or consider getting help from a personal trainer or life coach.

“Life truly begins  
only after you  
have put your  
house in order”

*Marie Kondo*







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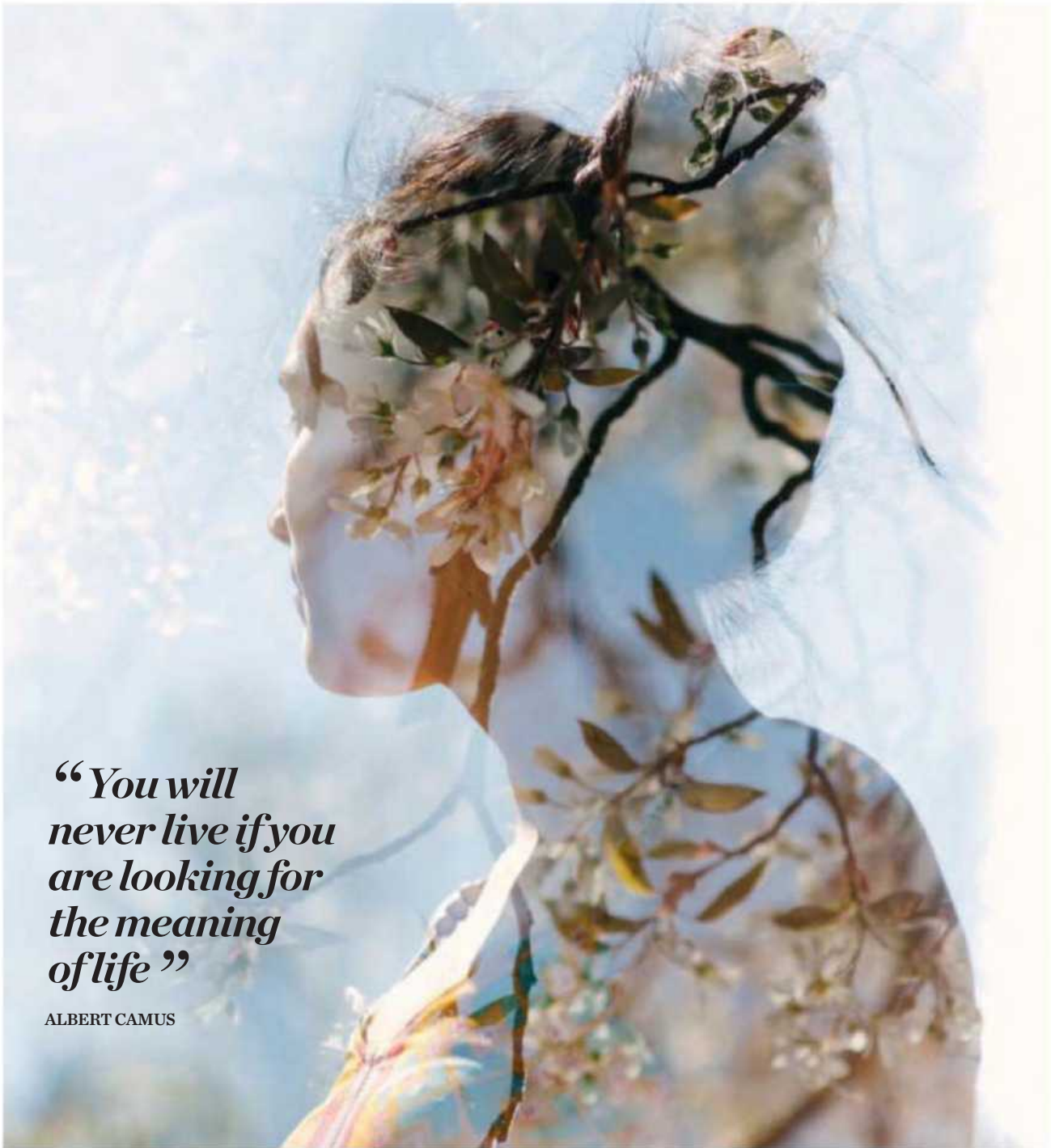
 @DreamChallenges  @DreamChallenges  #TrekJordan  @ActionForCharity



# #360me

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EDITED BY EMINÉ RUSHTON



*“You will  
never live if you  
are looking for  
the meaning  
of life”*

ALBERT CAMUS

PHOTOGRAPH: STOCKSY



# #360me *The plan*

Every month, the #360me team will be sharing our baby-steps approach to leading a healthier, happier life – expert-endorsed and real-life approved.



To feel your best, you have to consider the health of not just your BODY and GUT, but your MIND and SPIRIT too – this is holistic health in action. To help you, we've split all the advice in the plan into these four sections and, by spending a similar amount of time on each, you'll be looking after your 'self' in a truly holistic way. Dip in and try one thing from each section. Or dive in and do it all. It's here for you – to inspire, support and motivate. Share your journey with us @psydirector and we'll share ours too.

SHARE YOUR #360ME JOURNEY



@psydirector @psychologiesmagazine psychologies.co.uk



*Enjoy our suggestions to help you maintain a healthy body*

## JUST SMILE

'Why do we feel happier when we smile? Facial feedback works because our brains sense the flexion of the zygomatic major – the muscle which draws the mouth up and down – and interprets it as, "I must be smiling because I'm happy." This neural response is then supported by the consequent social feedback – if someone smiles back, we get an extra mood boost.' **Eminé Rushton**, Wellness Director @psydirector

# 70%

of our dietary intake of fluoride comes from daily cuppas – the flavonoids in tea protect against gum disease, and tea polyphenols help prevent bad breath too.\*



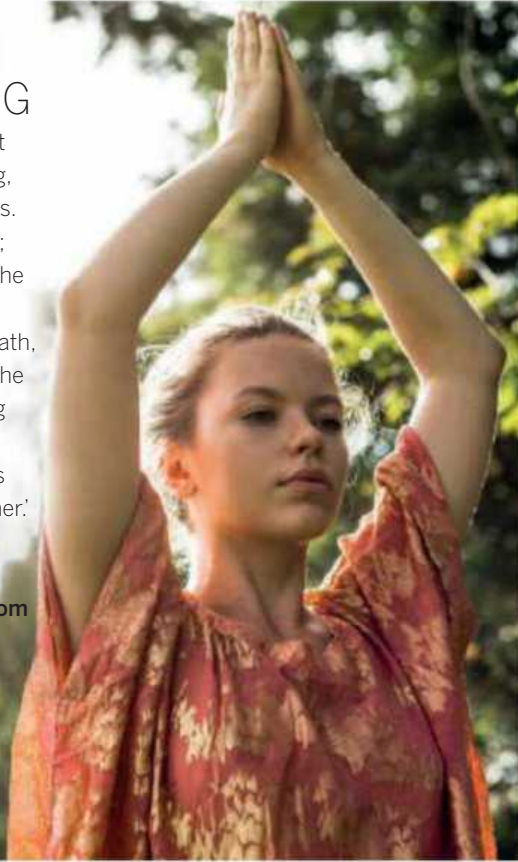
PHOTOGRAPHS: STOCKSY; CRUXTON ET AL. JOURNAL OF PRIMARY HEALTHCARE, 2016. FOR STOCKISTS, SEE PAGE 127



## MORNING GONG

'Make the most of the bright mornings with an energising, longer-than-usual yoga class. I savour my qigong practice; it allows me to gather in all the morning's energy with slow movements and guided breath, to set me up for the rest of the day. Check out some qigong and yoga classes with Mimi, Movement for Modern Life's fabulous qigong/yoga teacher.'

**Kat Farrants,**  
Yoga Editor @MFML\_  
movementformodernlife.com



*"Everything we see elicits an emotional response – this is especially true of what we view on social media. I encourage my clients to do an SM edit. Unfollow those people who make you feel boring, or that your body isn't up to scratch. If what you see makes you feel anything other than inspired and positive, it's not worth a second look"*

**Hollie Grant,** Fitness Editor  
@ThePilatesPT



## MASSAGE REMEDY

*Beata Aleksandrowicz is a massage and healing expert, and creator of Pure Massage. Here, she shares her tips for clearing spring-irritated sinuses*

'Place the middle fingers of both hands under your cheekbones on each side of the nose. There are shiatsu points here which relate to the sinuses. Exhale and gradually start to apply pressure. Hold and inhale, counting to five. Exhale and slowly release the pressure. Repeat three times. Move your fingers to another spot along the cheekbone, towards the ear, and apply pressure again. Repeat the sequence until you reach your ear.'

@puremassage

## GREEN GLOW

We're fans of Green People, whose products combine quality, purity and efficacy – and their new Age Defy+ Green Beauty with Astaxanthin, £32.95, is no exception. Based on a potent antioxidant that is 550 times stronger than vitamin E and 10 times stronger than beta-carotene, this complete formula also contains sea greens, wheatgrass, chlorella and spirulina.



## FIT KIT

'The fabulous new collection from Pineapple X Finery blends balletic yet cool wrap-tops with the cosiest slim-fit joggers... the comfy pale pink sweatpants are a new staple in my spring wardrobe – easy like Sunday morning, with a grey tee and some slip-ons.'

**Cabriole**  
sweatpants,  
£59, Pineapple  
X Finery





*Lift your spirit with these great finds and useful insights*

## STAR CHILD

'For those who are tricky to buy for (and never drop hints – see our story in the MIND section opposite!) – I have found that it's wise to aim for something both personal and simple, like this wonderful birthstone necklace.'

**Eminé**

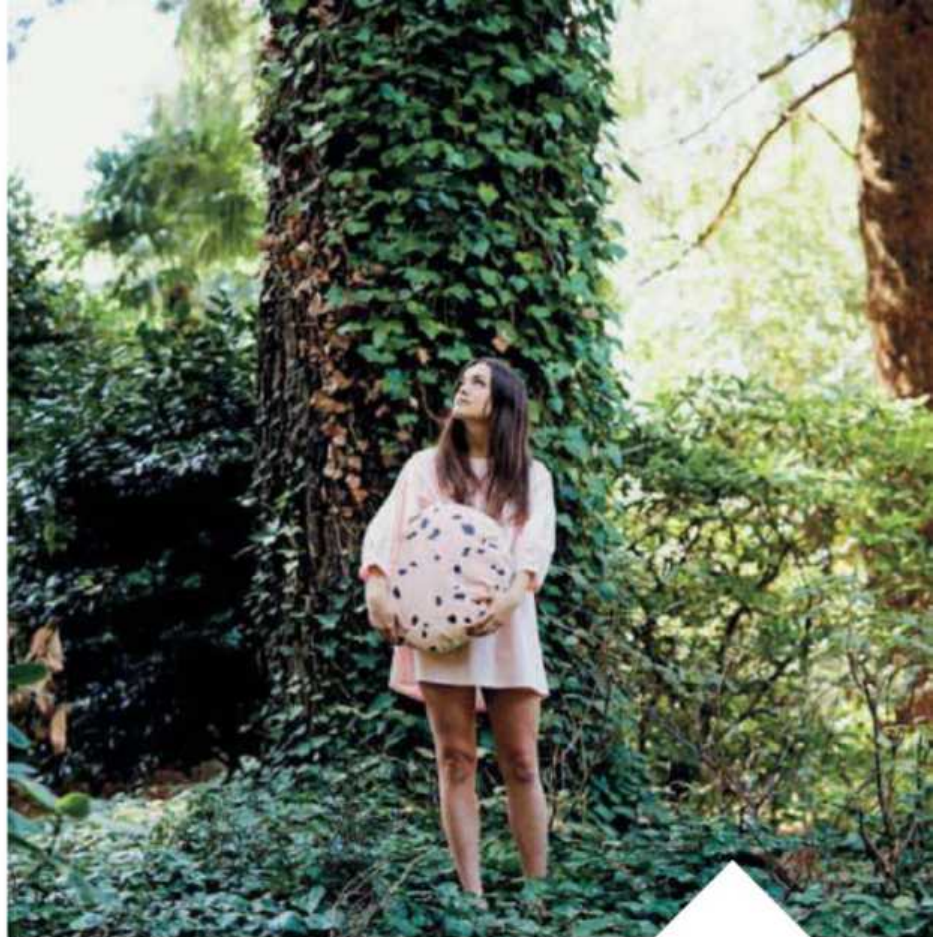
**Birthstone necklace**, from £29, Wanderlust Life



***"Spring is a season of renewal and new***

***beginnings, and many of us tend to begin with what we eat. But unless we consider what's eating us on the inside – from toxic thoughts, unhelpful beliefs and bad habits – and commit to reducing stress and increasing happiness, our spring clean will not be complete"***

**Akcelina Cvijetic, Spirit Editor**  
**@Akcelina\_Health**



## 2minutes

Think about a situation you need to surrender to. What would it be like if you could do this? How would that feel? Spend just two minutes contemplating living your life without worrying about the outcome of any of your anxiety-making scenarios.

*Extracted from 'The Anxiety Solution' by Chloe Brotheridge (Penguin, £12.99)*

## HELLO SUNSHINE

**Nothing buoys the spirit more than those first blooms, shoots and rays of spring sunlight, and this beautiful book captures the energy and possibility of even the most humble 'sunshine space' – blending foraging tips with crafty projects, to bring the power of nature and creativity together. *Sunshine Spaces* by Beck Orpin (Hardie Grant, £20).**



**Esta Aroma Diffuser**, £50.  
*Neal's Yard Remedies*

## GREEN HOUSE

'Though I use essential oils all around my home, I'd never thought of scenting my space with a diffuser. This diffuser from Neal's Yard Remedies is a lovely little compact design, which gets going in seconds. Simply add water and your choice of oil, and enjoy an ongoing, air-purifying and hydrating mist – an ideal antidote to central heating and stuffy offices.'

**@psydirector**



# mind

*This month's food for thought... Tell us how you get on by using #360me*

## 12 years

A study\* that compared people practising transcendental meditation for more than five years, found that the biological age of long-term participants in this programme was, on average, 12 years less than their actual chronological age.

### ASK YOURSELF 'WHY?'

'To alter negative behaviour, it's not enough to rely on willpower, we need to tap into our values. By taking time to contemplate your "why", you are connecting with what matters most, and this is what galvanises you into action. A strong value system helps to dial down the volume of temptation, making it simpler to choose more constructively.'

Suzy Reading, Mind Editor @SuzyReading



### DON'T CAUSE ALARM

'Rather than setting an alarm to wake you up (which is like a starter pistol for your nervous system and mind), wake yourself up with soothing, uplifting music, instead.'

Lara Davis, holistic health coach and founder of Ibiza Retreats @ibizaretreats



*“Minds are like parachutes – they only function once open”*

THOMAS DEWAR



*“Once you realise the power you have to let*

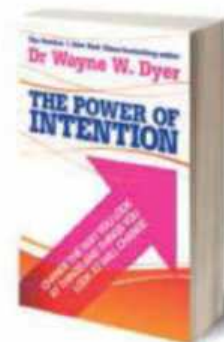
*go of the people and things in your life that are having a negative impact on you, or simply aren't right for you at this particular moment in time, it will be totally transformative – and the freer and happier you will become”*

Kat Farrants @MFML\_

### TO ALL INTENTS

'I love Dr Wayne Dyer's *The Power Of Intention*. It taught me how to harness the force of my intention through my thoughts, feelings and mental focus – to find strength, calm and clarity.'

Lara Davis @ibizaretreats



**The Power Of Intention**  
by Dr Wayne Dyer (Hay House, £14.99)



## OH SOW GOOD

'Casting inventive light on the use of seeds – those miniature powerhouses of good fats and minerals – is the new book from Vicki Edgson and Heather Thomas. From lemon poppy seed cakes to superfood salads, every base is covered – and sprinkled!' @psydirector

*'Amazing Edible Seeds' by Vicki Edgson and Heather Thomas (Jacqui Small, £20)*



*“Adding some raw honey (I love The True Honey Co. products) into your diet, not only helps boost immunity and gut health, but also builds up your resilience to allergens when the pollen count starts to rise”*

Eve Kalinik, Nutrition Editor @evekalinik

## SHINE ON

'Are you suffering from low moods, recurrent infections and ongoing fatigue? These could all be indications that you are deficient in the sunshine vitamin, vitamin D. However, now that spring has finally arrived, and the days are longer, just 10 minutes of exposure to sunlight (without wearing any SPF) can give you all the daily dose you need. You have my full permission to bask in a little bit of well-earned sunshine!' @evekalinik



*Nurture your gut health for an overall feeling of wellbeing*



## SNACK SAVVY

'As someone who is unable to make it from breakfast to lunch or lunch to dinner without having a bite, I've found it crucial to stockpile the staples – at work and home – to keep my energy levels steady in the day; live yogurt, homemade granola, wholegrain crackers, cashew milk, hummus, nut butters and whole nuts, all help to sustain my appetite, without any sugar spikes.' @psydirector

## 4 cups

Drinking 4 cups of green tea daily was found to help balance out gut bacteria within 10 days, increasing the relative proportion of healthy bifidobacteria. We love Lalani & Co for premium organic green tea, and the Pukka Matcha Green Tea range, too.

## RHUBARB AND COCONUT RICE PUDDING

*'I first tried rice pudding on a yoga retreat. I love it made with spices like cardamom and cinnamon, and it goes perfectly with stewed rhubarb,' says Madeleine Shaw in her book, 'A Year Of Beautiful Eating' (Orion Books, £20; out 20 April)*

### SERVES 2

- 500ml rice milk or other milk
- 200g coconut cream
- 1 vanilla pod
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 cardamom pod
- 1 tbsp maple syrup
- 120g pudding rice or short-grain rice

- 2 tbsp flaked almonds, to serve
  - Extra maple syrup, to serve (optional)
- FOR THE RHUBARB COMPOTE
- 2 rhubarb stalks
  - 2 tbsp maple syrup
  - Grated zest and juice of 1 orange

First make the rhubarb compote. Finely chop the rhubarb into 1cm pieces. Place in a saucepan with the maple syrup and orange zest and juice. Bring to the boil, then lower the heat and allow to simmer for 15-20 minutes until cooked through. Keep warm to serve with the rice pudding. Meanwhile, put the milk, coconut cream, vanilla pod, cinnamon stick, cardamom pod and syrup in another pot, over

a medium-low heat. Bring to a simmer and cook gently for 10 minutes, then bring to the boil and add the rice. Cook for 20 minutes, stirring well, until the rice is cooked through. Take out the cinnamon stick, and the vanilla and cardamom pods. Serve the rice pudding with a dollop of the rhubarb compote, sprinkled with flaked almonds on top, plus a drizzle of maple syrup, if needed.





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The former beauty and food writer, whose London hotspot, Jikoni, celebrates the finest seasonal Anglo-Indian fare, shares her holistic beauty rituals



## Ravinder Bhogal

**M**y skin is very sensitive, so I have to be careful with the products that I use – and I absolutely swear by Jurlique. I love the **Purely Age-Defying Ultra Rich Cleanser**, £25, and the **Moisture Replenishing Day Cream**, £29, is my hero product – super-hydrating and nourishing. I feel naked without it on my face. I also rely on some traditional family beauty recipes – my favourite mask is a simple mix of 1/8 tsp ground turmeric, 1 heaped tbsp chickpea flour and natural yogurt, which is a gentle exfoliant. I mix them to make a paste, then spread it on my face and rinse after 10 minutes. My skin is brighter and feels rejuvenated.

I keep my hair glossy with **amla oil**, a wonderful conditioner you can buy in Indian food stores or online. Simply leave in overnight and shampoo out in the morning. I love quality green tea, such as **Lalani & Co**, from £12, which is high in antioxidants. Wrap the used tea leaves in

muslin and refrigerate, then use as an eye pack. I'm all for everything in moderation, but I try to add nuts, lots of fresh, organic vegetables and fruit and spices, such as turmeric, to my diet – a shot of turmeric juice mixed in some orange juice is a great skin and immunity booster. I also try and eat lots of oily fish and green, leafy vegetables, such as cavolo nero, Brussels sprouts and broccoli.

If I can't find the time for a massage (I love a good Thai massage and have also recently been looking into reiki; a friend has recommended Sushma Sagar from **PUSH Mind and Body**), I make time for self-massage. I spend hours on my feet, so I regularly massage them and my ankles with almond oil. To unwind and get those ear-grazing shoulders to drop after a hot day in the kitchen, I run a bath with **Aromatherapy Associates Deep Relax Bath & Shower Oil**, £45, then meditate or pray before I sleep.

[@cookinbootspushmindandbody.com](http://jikonilondon.com)

**Soul & skin food**

- 1 Amla Hair Remedy.** £27, *Alchemy*
- 2 Deep Relax Bath & Shower Oil.** £45, *Aromatherapy Associates*
- 3 Moisture Replenishing Day Cream.** £29, *Jurlique*
- 4 Purely Age-Defying Ultra Rich Cleanser.** £25, *Jurlique*
- 5 Organic Matcha Grade III Green Tea.** £12, *Lalani & Co*

# JUST LET YOURSELF HAPPEN...



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# 1 IN THE BUFF

There's comforting ease in the dip of a Kabuki brush into a pot of mineral blush and a speedy buff over skin – you'll fall in love with these soft and pure products by The English Mineral Makeup Company.

**Colour Correcting Compact**, £25, Dr. Hauschka



## Go easy

Eminé Rushton uncovers a world of natural beauty and colour for sun-kissed, silky skin

**Kabuki brush** (top), £22; **Blush and Contour**, £25, The English Mineral Makeup Company

**Rose Lip Balm**, £6.95, Weleda



# 5 SWEET LIPS

Weleda's first foray into colour comes courtesy of their lovely new lip balms. Featuring three shades, a flattering nude, subtle rose and berry red, they contain jojoba, shea, olive oil and sunflower seed wax to ensure long-term lip comfort.

# 2 BRIGHT LIGHT

Dr. Hauschka celebrate their 50th anniversary this year and, to mark the occasion, they've launched an entirely new 83-strong make-up collection. My latest hero is their fabulous colour compact, which brightens, highlights and bronzes.

# 3 HEAD OVER HEELS

My *laissez-faire* approach to beauty is epitomised by this multi-purpose product – fuss and finickiness forgotten, in favour of monoi, coconut or tiare oils, slicked anywhere you please. Sheer bliss. It's light enough for locks and cossetting enough for skin.

**Ylang Ylang Nutrient Oil**, £40, Indie Lee



**The Honey Mud Gentle Cleansing Silk**, £64, May Lindstrom

# 4 HONEY POT

'Pudding-like' in its thickness and scent (thanks to the raw honey, cocoa and vanilla), my skin has come to crave its weekly fix of this luxurious product. It's expensive, but the large 100ml pot really does last an age.

“Here at Psychologies, we believe that how we feel is far more important than how we look”



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Q+A

From personal quest to wellness success, the Unbelievable Health founder shares her journey, which led to the launch of a range of supplements offering health from the hive

# Sarah Orecchia



## Q How did Unbelievable Health begin?

While travelling between London and the United States for years, I regularly used to fall ill, so I asked several nutritionists which natural remedies they felt were the best immune-boosters. Bee propolis and a few other things, such as olive leaf, elderberry and beta-glucans, kept cropping up, and I found them to be an effective combination. I have always been obsessed with natural health and had dreamed of starting a natural supplement business for years.

## Q How do you ensure that your products stand out in the flooded supplements market?

As I started to learn more about the beneficial superfoods that bees make, I realised no targeted supplement brands existed which were based on health from the hive. Our first products, the Bee Prepared immune formulas, combine those original 'hero' ingredients, including bee propolis, with several additional nutrients that have a great pedigree.

We make all of our products in the UK, with most ingredients sourced in Europe from ethical, sustainable producers. Our targeted remedies are unique because they combine plant-sourced nutrients with proven benefits, in therapeutic amounts, which are not usually found in a regular diet, or multivitamin supplement – so they are a great addition to any health regime.

## Q What are your five all-time favourite green products?

I couldn't get by without Manuka

Health's Manuka & Propolis Toothpaste, £8.99, Bramley bath products, from £3, Therapi Honey Skincare, from around £25, and Toca honey, £6.99 for 270g, an organic, sustainable honey from Spain's Galician mountains.

**Q How do you manage your time?** My secret is having very organised to-do lists. I saved for years to start the business and built it from the ground up without investors, so I'm an expert in multitasking. I have a design background, so I do a fair bit of the branding work myself and, as far as digital and social output, it's mostly me, too. Social media is a great way to connect with customers. There's also a wonderful community in the health and wellness industry, and we all try to support each other, so I've come to quite enjoy managing that side of things.

**Q How do you switch off and leave the business behind?** Starting and running one's own business takes a lot, so I do not have shedloads of free time. I love cooking and hanging out with my husband and teenage daughters – they've been so helpful and supportive over the years, and are such fun. Several daily walks with my Lucas terrier, Oscar, is also great for shutting off. For me, heaven is getting away to a quiet beach, out in nature, or enjoying an epic meal with friends and family.

[unbelievablehealth.co.uk](http://unbelievablehealth.co.uk) @unbelievablehealth



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<sup>1</sup>IRI Dry Skin Treatments Report w/e 6th August 2016

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# We've got the power!

Unrealistic goals and self-hatred, or self-empowerment, acceptance and a can-do attitude? It's all about choice, says Ali Roff...

**T**here's a moment I'll never forget; walking up the steps of the school bus, aged 12, overhearing my friends calling me fat. That's when I first realised that I could be validated by the way I looked, and so began to validate myself by it, too.

I've always felt like the 'fat friend'. I lusted over thigh gaps and wished my belly was washboard-flat. I thought like a victim – 'poor me'. It was only when I learned that, for some people, thigh gaps are anatomically impossible due to genetic bone structure (specifically hip width and the angle of pelvic bones), that I realised my perpetual struggle to have slimmer thighs was an unrealistic goal. I chased after the impossible and created hell for myself in the process.

## See things differently

The first step in coaching is to understand that when you can't change a situation, the one thing you can do, is change how you perceive it. That was where my journey to self-acceptance, body confidence and self-empowerment began. I love my bum, and my shapely legs come as part of that package. Once I accepted that, I started to discover

freedom and body confidence like never before. But I knew in my heart that, while there were some parts of my body I needed to accept, there were also steps I could take to be healthier and fitter. I had the power to create a truly balanced lifestyle, and I owed it to myself, not to look like a model or Barbie, but to be the best version of myself I could be.

I scrapped the punishing combination of diets and cardio, and started practising yoga and training with weights. The feeling of my body becoming stronger was beautiful. My confidence grew and I moved from feeling like a victim to feeling self-empowered. It's our choice how we view our own bodies, and our belief in what we can achieve with them that creates results.

I choose to focus on the parts of my body I love, accept and own the things I can't change, and believe and respect myself enough to exercise and nourish my body with kindness, to get to the place I want to be. I'm feeling like the best version of me now; strong and healthy, both inside my mind and physically in my body. For me, a blend of self-acceptance and self-belief is the ultimate power, and a force to be reckoned with.

@AliRoff

## Pick and choose

- Ask yourself **what you can't change**, for example, **'I can't change the length of my legs.'**
- What thoughts can you focus on **that will help you to perceive your body differently in order to own, accept and feel great about it?** For example, **'My legs are strong and defined and allow me to explore the world!'**

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We're swimming  
in an indestructible  
ocean, but it's time  
for a sea change, says  
former plastic addict,  
Sian Sutherland



# A plastic world

**M**y journey began at the Being Human Swedish Wilderness Retreat, above the Arctic circle, in 2015. Sonjia Norman and Frederikke Magnussen were my sled pals and, over reindeer stew, they told me about the film they were involved in – *A Plastic Ocean*. I was shocked at how little I knew about the matter. I'd never asked what happens to the plastic we use every day, or what effect it could have on our health. All I knew was that it made my life easier. But, once I started to learn the facts, I realised I had to get involved. As a new trustee of the Plastic Oceans Foundation, I set myself a single goal – to do everything possible to make this vital documentary famous. And, once the film came out in January, I joined forces with Frederikke to create anti-plastic activists far and wide so we could all collaborate to stop using this incredibly useful, but wholly indestructible, material.

## Drastic plastic

At 56, I am the plastic generation. Plastic started to be used in mass production for food packaging, drinks bottles and personal care products during the 1960s. Three-hundred million tonnes is manufactured every year, and only 12 per cent of it is recyclable. In 2017, we will make more plastic than the cumulative amount ever produced. Unless it has been burned, which produces toxic gases, it all still exists. And now it is coming back to haunt us, contaminating our oceans and our lands, killing marine life,

birds and animals – and entering our own food chain. My sons are in their 20s, and I wince when I consider how much plastic they have been touched by throughout their lives.

## Ever-present risks

We are only now discovering the connection with phthalates (a group of chemicals which act as binding agents and elasticisers) and endocrine (hormone) disruption. Countless studies have been done into the toxicity of these ubiquitous

substances – including the landmark CHAP (Chronic Hazard Advisory Panel) report on phthalates, published by the US federal government in late 2014 – and the picture is bleak. Since then, more reports have surfaced and, in the words of Erik Olson, former deputy staff director for the US senate's environment and public works committee, 'We're getting past the phase of complete denial from the industry

– they can no longer claim there's no risk at all with phthalates.'

But, how to live a plastic-free life? Trust me when I say, it's not easy. Yet despondency doesn't change things. So Frederikke and I are campaigning for something radical: A plastic-free aisle in every supermarket. We all need the chance to purchase real food that is free from worry and guilt. To choose glass bottles, to buy from local butchers and grocers, who wrap in paper, to carry your own stainless-steel caddy and coffee cup, and stop picking up that disposable plastic cutlery.

As explorer, Robert Swan, wisely said: 'The biggest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.' The responsibility for change belongs to us all. [plasticoceans.com](http://plasticoceans.com)

“We're getting  
past the phase  
of complete  
denial from  
the industry”



# Live a more fruitful life

Wellness and fertility expert, and author of *Fertile*, Emma Cannon, shares her five essential pillars for personal nourishment and a productive life, to feed your spirit and enrich your experience

**T**his time of year brings the greatest opportunity for growth, and there is abundant energetic potential to be our most bountiful selves. Everything around us is reawakening after a period of dormancy. Let go, enjoy yourself and try to engage in life as much as possible. In all that I have learned, and with all the women that I've worked with, I've come to see that there are five key anchors to feeling nourished and 'fertile', in body and mind.

**1 Flexibility**  
Of course, eating well and cooking delicious food is a healthy activity to be celebrated – but, with the explosion of detox, raw food and free-from diets over the past few decades, food has, for some, become associated with restriction and denial. There is either a sense of far too much control over our nutrition or, at the other end of the scale, too little – and we may end up seeing food as the enemy, rather than a joyful source of health and nourishment.

Often, when we feel out of control emotionally; and not in charge of our own lives, we exert added restrictions on the areas that we can control, such as nutrition. Rigidity towards food is typical and, sadly, on the increase; people are either excessively strict, or have a lack of discipline, over their intake. Strive for the middle road. This goes for everything in life, not just food. Try to develop a flexible attitude, and the ability to move around the hurdles that are put in your path

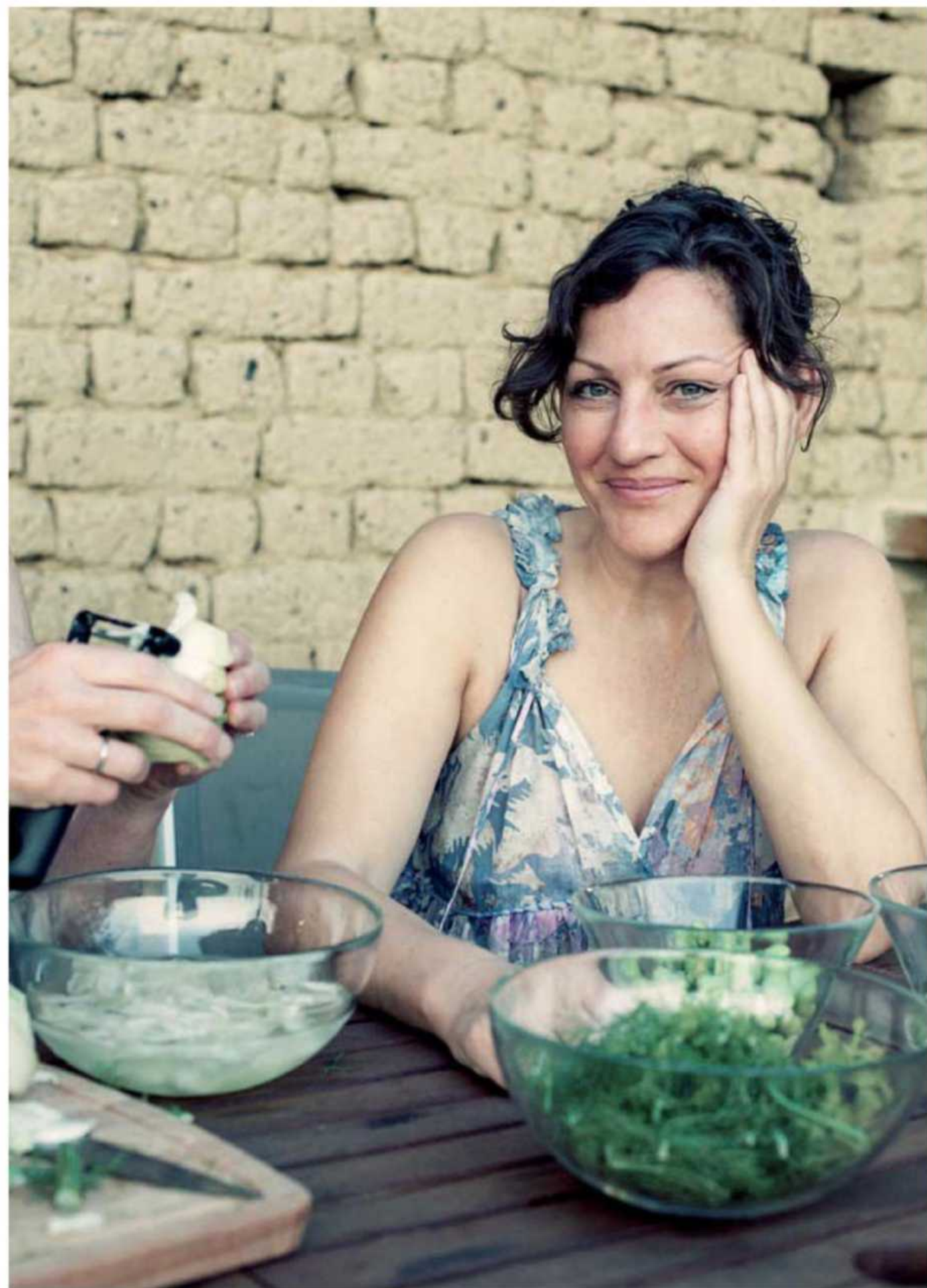
with relative ease. I often say to clients, 'What is so good about control anyway? All the best things happen when we let go of control – like love.'

**2 Creativity**  
The 'fertile' woman wants to create. I believe it is our true nature to be creative. At school, we tend to get labelled: creative, academic, sporty, and so on and, consequently, many of us will live half our life disconnected from our innovative side. I've witnessed how someone can come alive when they finally discover a long-hidden talent, such as painting or drawing. Of course, there are many ways to be creative and it is an individual thing. I encourage everyone to spend time exploring a creative pastime; this can be life-enhancing and enriching. Chinese

medicine says creativity nourishes our heart, and that which nourishes the heart, also nourishes the womb.

**3 Nourishment**  
So much attention has been placed on nourishment through food and, of course, I fully support this – however, our ability to *receive* nourishment is something that can get overlooked. Two people can sit down to eat the same meal, but an individual's constitution and attitude to the food determines how efficient they are at extracting >>>

“We tend to get labelled: creative, academic, sporty... many of us will live disconnected from our innovative side”



*"There is no light without dark, no day without night, no joy without sorrow – this is a universal truth"*



>>> nourishment from it. Equally, our ability to receive love, support and intimacy is impacted by our constitution. Do you ever find yourself saying, 'I'm fine,' when you are far from OK?

Nourishment starts with the self, with acceptance, gratitude and enjoyment – an open heart that *expects* good things, *embraces* good things and, therefore, *attracts* good things.

From a Chinese medicine point of view, 'thought' and 'thinking' are controlled by the earth element; the stomach and the spleen, and so are closely aligned with digestion. In the same way that we digest food, we digest thoughts and ideas. And, in the same way that we can overload the digestive system, we can overload the mind. When we overburden the digestive system, food sits in the digestive tract and doesn't get properly absorbed. It is similar with information and it is important to expose ourselves to things that make our heart sing. Feed your mind with inspiring, uplifting information, and that from which you can learn and grow – be discerning about what you read.

## 4 Transformation

There is an expression in Chinese medicine: 'Out of chaos, comes opportunity.' There is no light without dark, no day without night, no joy without sorrow – this is a universal truth; the *yin* and *yang* of life. While taking small steps towards discipline, the mind can bring about great shifts within us. People often resist change because they think their problems are insurmountable. I tell them, 'Change just one thing.' It is better to transform slowly, and for the alterations to be long-lasting.

The ability to learn and grow from difficult life experiences;

*"An open heart expects good things, embraces good things and, therefore, attracts good things"*

to turn wounds into wisdom, is at the heart of enrichment. This requires personal alchemy; the ability to transform and transcend problems. Knowing that life is cyclical, that nothing stays the same and we must adapt and grow, is the law of nature. Being well-supported at times of great change will help us transform, and having practices that encourage us – from yoga and meditation, to meaningful friendships and connection with others – can salve us. Even death is just another passing through; the end of a cycle.

## 5 Belief

Many people are afraid to believe because they fear they will be let down. Yet, when we believe in something, we allow it to become a powerful focus of our attention. When we give something attention, it can grow and 'flow'. A willingness to believe helps us become strong and resourceful. It gives us the ability to wend through life like a river, meandering around obstacles in its way. Belief is what keeps people going against all the odds; our will to survive and our innate drive. Fear is the enemy of belief and I often see how it can threaten to consume hope. The enlightened woman is the keeper of hope – she knows only too well its power and necessity. The internal conflict is that we hope that belief is everything but, deep down, we fear that it is nothing at all. I see belief to be at the heart of healing – and hope to be the flame that keeps it alive.

If we are able to integrate these five pillars into our lives and learn to be fruitful, prolific and resourceful; if we allow ourselves to receive love, abundance and nourishment – then we will embody being fertile in its fullest meaning.

*Emma Cannon is author of 'Fertile: Nourish And Balance Your Body Ready For Baby-Making' (Vermilion, £20). [emmacannon.co.uk](http://emmacannon.co.uk)*



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Eminé, @psydirector, Psychologies



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\*Offer valid for the first 500 Psychologies readers to place a Scent Discovery Test in their basket from 24 March using code DISCOVER, while stocks last. Free shipping. One test per customer. Reader must be signed up to a Neom account to redeem; and follow instructions to receive a free ebook and £5-off shopping code. No purchase necessary. Not exchangeable nor redeemable for cash. Online only. Not available with any other offer. \*\*Ebooks subject to availability. No cash alternatives. We reserve the right to withdraw this offer at any time.

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# Q *How can I overcome my eczema?*

Each month, leading integrative health expert, Dr Andrew Weil, gives his definitive answer to a medical question

**E**czema, or atopic dermatitis (AD), is a chronic inflammatory skin condition characterised by itchy patches of red, scaly rash. It is common in infants, children and young adults. AD typically affects the face, scalp, inside of elbows, knees, ankles and hands. It often accompanies other allergic conditions, such as asthma and hay fever. Symptoms can be worsened by temperature changes and dry climates, as well as stress. In some cases, certain soaps or detergents, metals, dust mites, and animal dander can trigger eczema. Dermatologists usually treat eczema with topical steroids or calcineurin inhibitors, but I believe these agents suppress the problem and may worsen it over time. Side effects are common and the long-term safety of these medications remains in doubt.

My patients find that simple measures can provide relief. Avoid triggers that seem to make your symptoms worse. Bathe or shower as quickly as possible with warm, not hot, water. Use non-perfumed moisturising soap sparingly and apply a hypoallergenic moisturising cream after patting yourself dry – don't rub skin with the towel. Aloe vera gel, calendula lotion, and topical preparations of chaparral plant may be helpful, as well as topical virgin coconut oil.

Diet can influence inflammation in the body – follow an anti-inflammatory pattern of eating. Try eliminating milk

and milk products, which may irritate the immune system. Supplementing the diet with fish oils and vitamin D has been associated with symptom reduction in some AD studies\*. One small trial found that a topical vitamin B12 cream offered symptomatic relief. Try taking 500mg of blackcurrant or evening primrose oil twice a day – they provide gamma-linolenic acid (GLA), an anti-inflammatory fatty acid that is hard to come by in the diet. Six to eight weeks may need to pass for you to notice an improvement.

Stress-management techniques can also be effective for providing relief of AD symptoms, as skin disorders are strongly linked to psychological stress. Explore visualisation, hypnotherapy or regular breath work. Gentle massage therapy has been shown to reduce redness and itching for eczema sufferers. Traditional Chinese medicine, including acupuncture and medicinal herbs, may help to relieve itching and improve sleep. Lastly, many experts recommend daily mineral soaks for people with eczema.

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# Sunny side up

How do you like your eggs in the morning? Nutritionist, Eve Kalinik, cracks open the golden, feel-good benefits of the humble hen's egg

There's nothing like buttery toast soldiers dipped into a runny yolk, savoured with lip-smacking pleasure. Indeed, eggs – boiled, fried, scrambled, poached or baked – are one of those universally 'happy-looking' foods, and this is no mistake. In fact, eggs provide many cofactors and amino acids that support our positive, buoyant chemicals – so that cheerful yellow appearance actually *does* help us feel jolly, too. Aside from that, they also include minerals such as zinc, iron and copper and are one of the few food sources of vitamin D. Plus, they provide an egg-cellent (sorry, I couldn't resist) source of protein.

Eggs were once rebuffed for their cholesterol content, yet they provide a healthy source of saturated fats. Overlooked for the 'healthy' cereals and granolas that are often loaded with sugar, this breakfast staple was off the menu for a while. However, with café menus now dedicated to celebrating eggs, they seem to be back on top, and rightly so.

In my opinion, buying organic eggs, which also means free-range, is non-negotiable as, not only are the hens raised outdoors, they also don't undergo beak trimming. Look out



for the Soil Association stamp indicating the birds have been fairly treated, or a code of 'O' that means they are organic. This is the highest measure of animal welfare. What's more, eating eggs that have been produced from organic measures means that they will be naturally higher in omega-3 essential fatty acids, vitamin A and antioxidants. You can tell that you're getting a superior egg from the richer yellow colour of the yolk.

One of the most versatile foods to eat, I love my eggs on sourdough with sauerkraut as an anytime meal that also gives the gut a probiotic boost.

[@evekalinik](http://evekalinik.com)

## Cook

**Green Pan Egg Expert** – This 'perfect for eggs' frying pan, from £10, has a healthy, ceramic, non-stick coating, to give you an exceptional fried egg, every time ([greenpan.com](http://greenpan.com)).



## Dine

**Eggbreak** – A must-visit West London haunt that will have you coming back time and time again for its delicious egg-based menu ([eggbreak.com](http://eggbreak.com)).



## Eat

**Daylesford Organic Free Range Hen Eggs** – The hens laying these beauties have been treated with respect, while roaming the grass pastures of Daylesford Farm – and you can taste it ([ocado.com](http://ocado.com)).





well travelled

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# Mates escapes

Studies show that close friendships boost our happiness, and even our health. Daisy Finer presents the quirkiest, loveliest and most inspirational places to stay for a happy getaway with your chosen few, or many

## 1 STYLISH COUNTRYSIDE IDYLL *Moat Cottage, Wilderness Reserve, Suffolk*

This is eccentric rural chic at its finest. Nestled in the rolling green Suffolk landscape, this perfect, pink five-bedroom cottage, with a sixth bedroom set in its own cabin at the water's edge, feels like your very own fairy-tale retreat. With only golden corn fields and wild pheasant as neighbours, and encircled by the mote that gives it its name, this cottage is a true haven for a relaxed escape.

Wooden crates filled with delicious, fresh produce from local delicatessens provide the perfect welcome and, whether you're hiding from the hustle and bustle craving peace, or planning a boozy staycation with your friends, the attentive Wilderness staff will ensure that your holiday is perfectly tailored. You can choose to be left to

your own devices – cooking with your nearest and dearest in the cottage's well-equipped kitchen is pure joy – or, kick back and hire a resident chef to help design your menu.

Moat Cottage is a real home from home, while maintaining a sense of luxury: fluffy towels, complimentary Neal's Yard products, big silver bath tubs, fur throws on the beds, patchwork armchairs, authentic thatched roof and heated stone floors all add to the cosy, comfortable feel.

As the night draws in, relish in the seclusion of the cottage as you lounge in the hot tub and look up at the clear, star-spattered skies. An enchanting sanctuary for an enchanted break.

*Moat Cottage sleeps 12 in six bedrooms; from £995 per night based on a three-night stay (including daily housekeeping). [wildernessreserve.com](http://wildernessreserve.com) >>>*

>>>

## 2 TOWNHOUSE SOPHISTICATION

*No 38 The Park, Cheltenham*

A smart Georgian townhouse in Cheltenham, owned by Sam and Georgina Pearman – it's part of their Lucky Onion group, which includes *en pointe* Cotswold pubs such as The Wild Duck and The Wheatsheaf – which is usually a B&B, but can be rented out in its entirety, too. Thirteen gorgeous rooms are decorated with groovy wallpaper, antique radiators and prints by David Hockney and Sir Peter Blake, and each comes with a hot-water bottle in a hand-knitted cover, ensconced in a comfortable bed, plus natural, botanical-based 100 Acres products in the bathroom (draw straws for room four, one of the biggest, which has a claw-footed bath at the end of the bed).

Not that you'll want to spend much time upstairs: this is the ideal place for a grown-up house party with plenty of social spaces, from the sitting room (where the honesty bar is stocked with local beers and lashings of Hendrick's gin) to the light-filled, open-plan country kitchen-style dining room, which has doors that slide open to reveal a pretty courtyard garden. Private chefs, butlers, bar staff and flowers can be organised in a jiffy if you want a fancy three-course feast without lifting a finger or, for a slap-up supper out, book a table at No 131, another part of the Pearman's brilliant mini-empire.

*No 38 The Park sleeps 26 people in 13 bedrooms; from £2,000 per night for the whole house. [no38thepark.com](http://no38thepark.com)*

## 3 MAGICAL BREAK IN 'THE FARAWAY TREE'

*West Lexham tree houses*

This unique tree house experience allows you and your friends to get back to nature – but in luxury – in rural North Norfolk. Set on 21 glorious acres in the grounds of a privately owned manor house, the six tree houses sleep up to six people each. Nestled in a protected valley, swelling up from the UK's cleanest chalk stream, West Lexham boasts floating water meadows, ancient trees, lakes and formal gardens, as well as a retreat centre – and it's truly an oasis of relaxation and calm.

The interiors of the tree houses are sumptuous – with beautiful reclaimed kitchens, bathrooms, log stoves and heating – yet the decor is quirky and eclectic: brightly coloured rugs and throws, and chairs and beds made out of branches. With tree limbs literally growing through the

floor, it all feels rather magical – as if you've been transported to Harry Potter world for a sleepover at Ron Weasley's house, or you've woken up a hobbit in The Shire. Second breakfasts all round!

This part of Norfolk is a Site of Special Scientific Interest; an area of importance for wildlife and a rich habitat for birds. It's wonderful to wake up every morning to the choir of birdsong, and you can spend hours on your treetop balcony mindfully watching heron fish in the lake.

If you choose to be more sociable, then this is the perfect place to mingle. Devised and created by on-site owners, Ed and Izzy, who were involved in the layout of the hip Secret Garden Party festival series, West Lexham is designed with group get-togethers in mind. Communal fire pits draw you together to chew the cud and stargaze, and an outdoor kitchen and pizza oven tempt you to cook and chat together in the wild outdoors.

If you have a bigger group to invite, or a family wedding or big birthday to celebrate (the party venue accommodates 150 for dinner and dancing), you can hire the 'Village Hall and Cottages', which sleep 24, or the 'Barn and Courtyard', which sleep 28. Combine these with the tree houses and you can host 95 lucky people in this beautiful rural idyll. There are also bell tents for group glamping holidays.

With tennis courts, boating on the lake and Norfolk's breathtaking beaches only half an hour away, there are plenty of soul-enriching activities to try before you retreat to your tree house and snuggle down in a four-poster bed, hand-crafted out of green hazel.

*West Lexham tree houses sleep up to six people; from £200 for two nights to £995 for five nights. [westlexham.org](http://westlexham.org)*

## 4 YOUR SECRET ITALIAN HIDEAWAY

*Al Jafar villa, Sicily*

A gem; a castle in the sky; a unique getaway for a gang of friends. Western Sicily is still largely an undiscovered delight. Come for the day-tripping – to the historic hillside town of Erice, the ancient ruins of Segesta, the Aeolian

OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Get away from it all, except the pool and Sicilian sunshine, at Al Jafar villa; bathe while your other half snoozes at No 38 The Park; dine on Italian delicacies *al fresco*, then sleep in a turret; your own cottage, in a moat, and with spacious dining area in the Wilderness Reserve, Suffolk; the elegant Georgian frontage at The Park, Cheltenham; climb up and pile in for a wonderful time together in a tree house at West Lexham

>>>









FROM LEFT Take a dip in the cooling pool after playing croquet, breathing in the scent of fragrant lemon trees at Dar Zemora; feast on incredible Moroccan food, made by a talented chef, away from the bustling old town of Marrakech

>>> Islands (like something out of *Il Postino*) and unsung sandy beaches with lulling waves and true-blue views. At the end of your jaunt, flop into the sparkling swimming pool, encased in its own little garden where oranges and olives grow. It truly feels like a departure from everyday life.

Al Jafar is all the more restful because of its caretakers, Nadia and Mommo, who look after you superbly. They take care of breakfast, nothing fancy, but they do rustle up some amazing pancakes; make the beds and clean the bedrooms and bathrooms; and ensure that you have everything you need. You can book a home-made meal in advance: rocket and Parmesan salad draped in *bresaola*, roast chicken with rosemary potatoes, *melanzane alla Parmigiana*, lasagne – there's plenty to choose from. The bedrooms are simple comfort: one twin and two doubles, and there is a fourth in a turret with an electric skylight revealing the stars at night. Quirky and cute. Don't expect full-on luxury – there's only one bath (the rest of the rooms have showers) and the feel of the villa is faded and cosy, rather than slick, with its framed, printed drawings and dark, solid furniture. It's perfect for a food-focused retreat or an exploration of the beautiful island of Sicily.

*Al Jafar sleeps eight in four bedrooms; from €4,050 (around £3,427) for a week. Book at [thethinkingtraveller.com](http://thethinkingtraveller.com) or email [info@thethinkingtraveller.com](mailto:info@thethinkingtraveller.com)*

## 5 EXOTIC MOROCCAN OASIS FOR FAMILIES

*Dar Zemora, La Palmeraie, Marrakech*

Leave the madness of the *medina* behind and have a rest at Dar Zemora, an intimate home from home with lemon trees, a three-acre garden and swimming pool. The five bedrooms are decorated in a Moorish style and boast wooden four-posters, sunny terraces and open fires for

cooler evenings. The chef is a genius. Expect everything from sumptuous Arabian feasts, including tender lamb *tagine* with couscous, to light lunches of barbequed chicken and salads; purées can be whizzed up for babies; and fish fingers and chips can be found for older children with particular tastes. Marrakech is a real eye-opener where visitors can marvel at everything from snake charmers and monkeys, to some of the world's most antiquated dentistry. However, the pool, villa, croquet lawn and playful staff are all pretty difficult to leave.

*Dar Zemora sleeps 10 in five bedrooms; from €5,500 (around £4,651) per week. Book at [chicretreats.com](http://chicretreats.com)*

## Avoid holiday hell

*Coaching questions to ask, and answer, before going away with friends*

- **Who does what?** You don't want one person taking responsibility for everything as it will cause resentment, so divvy up tasks and create a loose agreement of who does what, according to strengths and preferences – and make sure everyone feels it's fair before you go.
- **What are the unspoken rules?** Do you expect to eat dinner together every night? Who should get the biggest bedroom, and why? (Is it really 'first come, first

- served'?) Clarify these details so everyone can manage their expectations.
- **What are the 'deal breakers'?** Is it acceptable to bring back strangers after a night on the tiles? Are you allowed to tell off each other's children? Set ground rules before you go.
- **What happens when there are disagreements?** You're not always going to agree, so discuss how you will handle disagreements and people getting on your nerves, without arguing.



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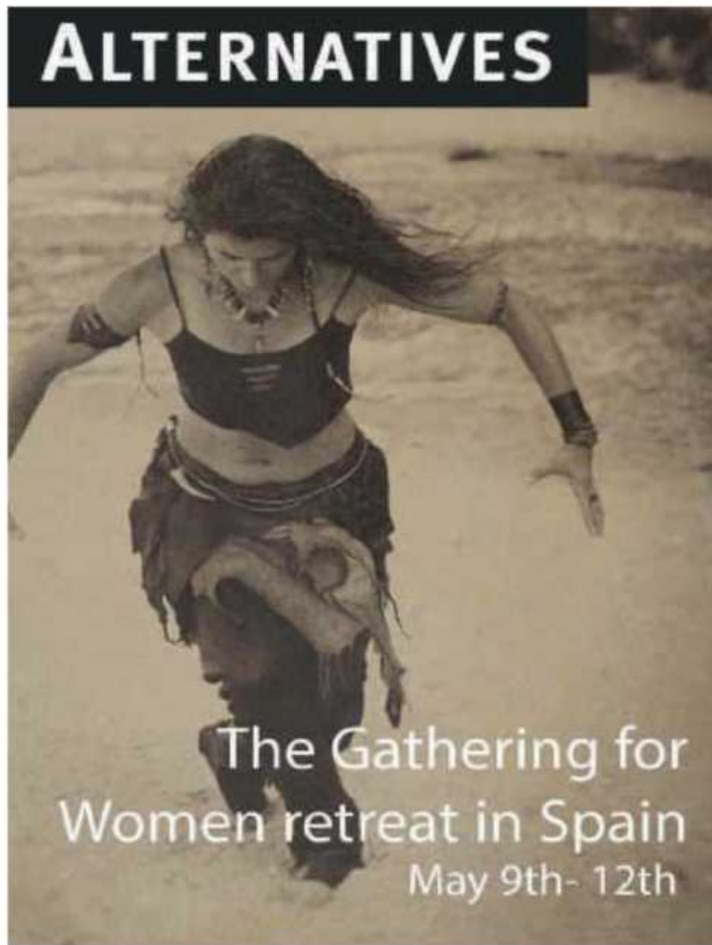
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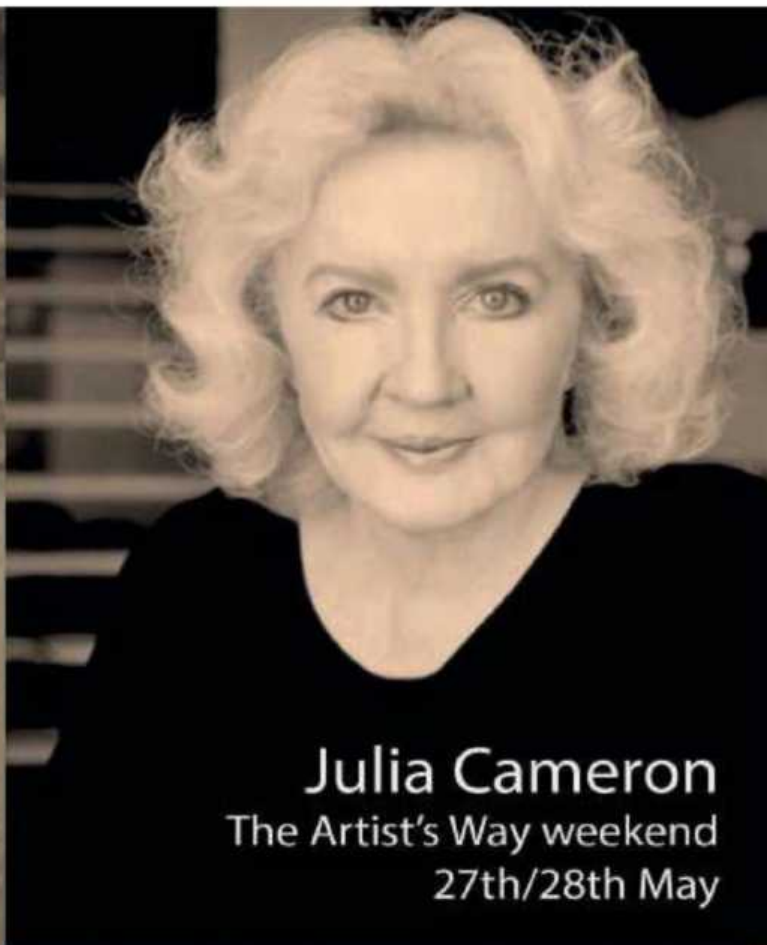
CLOCKWISE FROM  
TOP LEFT Majestic  
mountains in Chile;  
sailing on Lake Titicaca;  
a jungle adventure in  
green Costa Rica;  
Cuba's tobacco farms



# ALTERNATIVES



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Julia Cameron  
The Artist's Way weekend  
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## Elizabeth Gilbert

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Workshop

Saturday 23rd September  
Friends House, Euston

An Evening with  
Elizabeth Gilbert

Monday 25th September  
St James's Church, Piccadilly



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To book please visit [alternatives.org.uk](http://alternatives.org.uk)



# *The Retreat*

p110 **The Words** Best reads and how to write one / p114 **Living** Clash patterns for harmonious rooms /  
p120 **Garden Wisdom** Nettles / p122 **Feasting** Home cooking the easy-peasy way with Thomasina Miers



*“And spring  
arose on the  
garden fair, like  
the spirit of love  
felt everywhere”*

PERCY BYSSHE  
SHELLEY

PHOTOGRAPH: STOCKSY



How to  
write a  
novel

MONTH 4:

## Looking for trouble

Award-winning novelist, Lucy Atkins, says this month's task is to probe your characters and their circumstances, and turn up the heat



Conflict is the muscle of all good fiction: dilemmas and unresolved questions; secrets and lies; power struggles; contradictions; thwarted desires. No novel is strong without it.

By now you'll have been making notes of images, themes, characters and locations that interest you. You'll have drafted some fleeting, possibly disconnected, scenes. You'll have done a lot of imagining and have a sense of the 'fictional world' you want to explore. You might even have a plot outline, or at least a vague idea of where you'll go.

### The page-turner

Conflict is human, universal and compelling. It's also what makes your reader stay up until 2am to get to the last page. It can be obvious and

intense – perhaps a clash between two characters, or an unrequited love. It can be circumstantial: how will your mountain climber make it home now that his Sherpa guide is dead? And it can be internal. The poet, Robert Browning, said writers must be interested in, 'The dangerous edge of things... The honest thief, the tender murderer, the superstitious atheist.'

The most fascinating conflicts are those that lie deep in the heart of your characters. So, look at them and ask: where's the trouble? Where are their contradictions, dilemmas, weak

points, and inconsistencies? What makes them odd or compelling? These are the ideas to develop.

### What should she do?

External circumstances can heighten internal conflicts, and settings can be particularly fertile for this. In my novel, *The Missing One*, Kal, emotionally adrift after her mother's death, rashly takes her child to a remote island to find Susannah, a stranger who knew her mother. As Susannah's behaviour becomes more sinister, Kal's internal conflict rises:

“Conflict is what makes your reader stay up until 2am”

if she leaves, she'll never find out the truth about her mother but, if she stays, Susannah could be dangerous. As Kal decides to leave, a storm rolls in, cutting them off from the mainland.

Conflict is at its most

powerful when it is internal *and* external, and they work hand in hand.

So, start to make trouble for your characters. Play around, put them in challenging, fraught, or uncertain situations. Explore how they react, think, do, say or feel. Whether the conflict lies in quiet, deeply felt yearnings in a hushed tea room, or the loud drama of a crime scene, one thing's certain – it's your job to find it, work at it, and make it potent.

*Lucy Atkins is author of the novels, 'The Missing One' (£7.99), 'The Other Child' (£7.99) and 'The Night Visitor' (out 1 June, £14.99, all Quercus). [lucyatkins.com](http://lucyatkins.com) Follow Lucy on Twitter @lucyatkins*



Book  
of the  
month

## RESERVOIR 13

By Jon McGregor  
(4th Estate, £14.99)

Jon McGregor has described his fifth book as an 'anti-thriller'. It opens with the inhabitants of a small Northern town forming a search party for a missing 13-year-old girl but, as the book hypnotically follows the lives overshadowed by her loss, it's the extraordinary in the ordinary that McGregor reveals: as villagers have affairs, celebrate births, mourn the break-up of marriages, and grieve for lost loved ones.

His luminous prose describes the wonders of nature, the precariousness of life, and the way hidden violence can lurk under the most calm of surfaces, as the years slip-slide away.

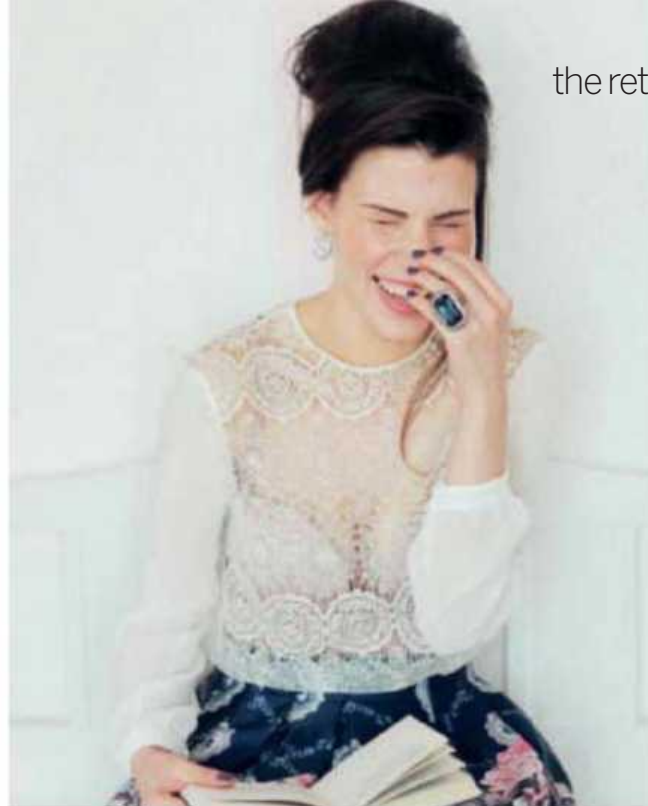
“I felt a momentary urge to leap into the sea and swim free of the present”

MEG ROSOFF, *WHAT I WAS*



# The words

From hypnotic prose and dark fairy tales, to permission to seek out struggle in the fourth instalment of our 'How to write a novel' series, this issue's books pages promise to be mysteriously magical...



## Paper therapy

*"Writing lists and sketching mind maps helps us see the wood for the trees and be more organised. To-do reminders on a page let us make creative connections that we miss when tasks are in our heads"*

Jackee Holder, author, coach and facilitator.  
jackeeholder.com @jackeeholder

## LOST IN TRANSLATION

### waldeinsamkeit

*Language: German. The wonderful feeling of being alone in the forest, reconnecting with nature*

Journal.  
£21, kikiki.K



## How To Be Human

By Paula Coccozza  
(Hutchinson, £12.99)

Mary's life is tilting. Her relationship is over, her ex is scary, the neighbours are hostile, and she's suffering from a bad case of suburban claustrophobia. Then, a gallant fox arrives and changes everything, as Mary undergoes a disquieting 'rewilding'. Troubled Mary interacts with the fox, as she tries to come to terms with all that's wrong in her world. Coccozza's eccentric, eerie debut is a singular love story, and wanders the smudged lines that mark out salvation, survival and insanity.

## The Blood Miracles

By Lisa McInerney (John Murray, £14.99)

The second novel from award-winning Lisa McInerney is as brilliant as her debut, *The Glorious Heresies*. Ryan Cusack, 21, is smart, articulate and full of irrepressible rage. He's been ditched by his girlfriend, and adopted by a grumpy granny, who's hoping to save him from his drug-dealing ways by getting him to concentrate on his music – but the Cork underworld, and the ambitions of his criminal boss, are difficult to escape, in this fast-paced drama that fizzles with chaotic action and dark humour.



Do...

## GET YOUR DREAM JOB

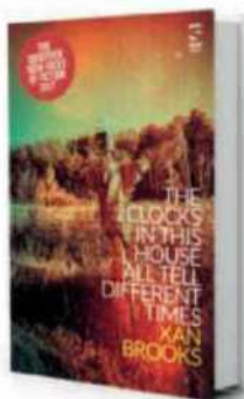
*"Realistic is the most dangerous word in the career changer's vocabulary. Try asking yourself, 'How could I make this work?' rather than, 'What if?'"*

*'How To Get A Job You Love'*  
by John Lees (McGraw Hill, £12.99)

## The Clocks In This House All Tell Different Times

By Xan Brooks (Salt, £8.99)

This debut is a twisted fairy tale, with a lot of darkness and a hint of magic. It's 1923, and orphan, Lucy Marsh, heads off to the wilds of Epping Forest – 'a fantastical place, where anything can happen', for a series of odd encounters with four disfigured ex-soldiers, named after Dorothy's companions in *The Wizard of Oz*. This startling novel's characters are emotionally damaged, and working out the best way to cope with their war wounds in a story that's funny, fiercely sad and elegantly surreal.



*“If you only read the books that everyone else is reading, you can only think what everyone else is thinking”*

HARUKI MURAKAMI,  
NORWEGIAN WOOD

## WORD OF THE MONTH

*mumpsimus*

*A custom or tradition that is honoured and adhered to, even though it is understood to be unreasonable*



## Based On A True Story

By Delphine de Vigan

translated from French by George Miller (Bloomsbury, £12.99)

Delphine de Vigan's novel is a masterclass in manipulation – as a seemingly supportive new friendship veers into obsession. Delphine has writer's block when she meets sophisticated, intuitive L, who becomes indispensable to her. Slowly but surely, L begins to take over Delphine's life, isolating her from family and friends, and taking an intense interest in her work. An uneasy blend of fact and fiction, this psychological thriller will keep you gripped.

Course  
of the  
month

## WRITERS' RETREAT WITH THE EXPERTS

'Holed up on Folly Farm, near Bristol, with authors, Julie Cohen and Rowan Coleman, 12 writers met to draft and discuss our novels, and brainstorm. After submitting our first chapter and a synopsis, we got specific feedback on everything from "show, not tell", to plot structure. Workshops covered topics including finding our authorial voice to nailing a theme and honing a one-line pitch. Then, Lizzy Kremer, agent to *The Girl On The Train* author, Paula Hawkins, led an invaluable session on how to submit your work. Inspiring input from people who know their stuff.' Suzy Greaves

[julie-cohen.com/for-writers/retreats](http://julie-cohen.com/for-writers/retreats)



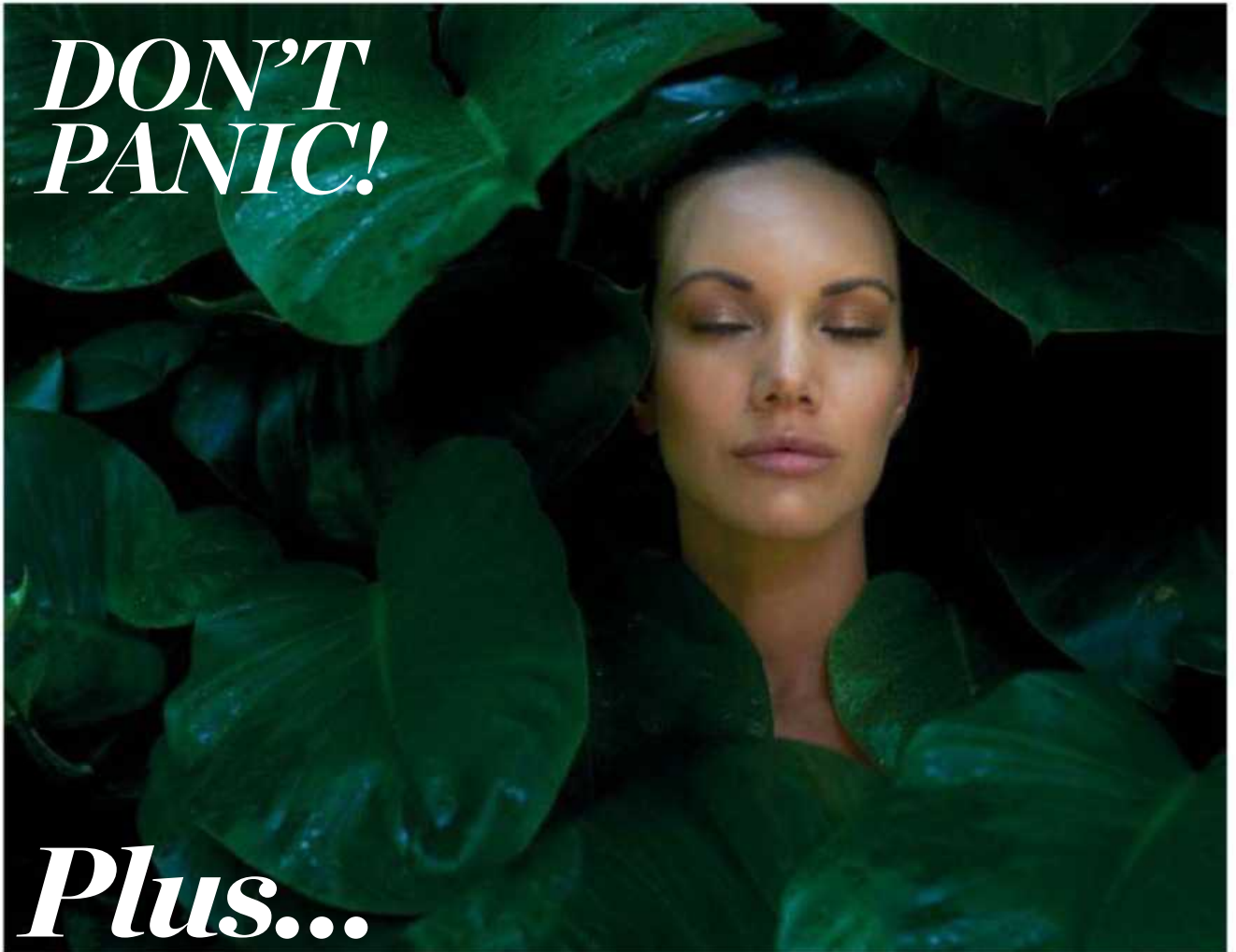
PHOTOGRAPH: ISTOCK



Next month in  
**PSYCHOLOGIES**

# Keep calm in a crisis

***DON'T  
PANIC!***



***Plus...***

• **So, what do you want to do with your life?** How to find your place in the world when you're starting out

• **See the world differently**  
Change your life by taking our one-month creative challenge

• **It's not only for the shower!** The full-throttle, joyful truth about the healing power of singing

***Don't miss the JUNE issue  
– on sale 21 April***

# PATTERN PLAY


Mix, not match, designs, colours, textures and periods to create surprisingly harmonious rooms from seemingly odd bedfellows. Free yourself, and throw out the rule book! >>>

EDITED BY LUCYINA MOODIE PHOTOGRAPHS JULIA BUCKINGHAM,  
ERIC HAUSMAN, LAURA MOSS, WERNER STRAUBE

Classic, contemporary and mid-century pieces in organic woods and leather give this living room a timeless quality. Note the happy clash of floral, printed cushions with striped and monochrome art







**T**his is the book for you 'if you have a sense of adventure, an eye for what's different and an itch to mix old and new', says Julia Buckingham, author of *Modernique* (Abrams, £27.99). 'I'm all for combining styles, colours, textures, materials and periods in the same interior. Pattern and texture, and vivid colour, are the elements of design that make a room dynamic.'

She adds: 'Pattern wakes up a room – with loud bravado, or an understated whisper – but the art of working with patterns comes from coupling them with others.'

There are no rules. Layer up to build a palette of large and small prints that work together. Before taking the plunge, pin up samples – you'll be surprised by how this helps you visualise the way they can coexist.

Accents of watermelon and coral lift this serene corner of a bedroom – the perfect place to curl up with your cat and a book and take a well-earned break





Sometimes a room craves high contrast. In this kitchen, black maple cabinets are offset with geometric tiles and highlights of brass that twinkle behind the stove. These are also echoed in the gold leaf-carved millwork of the island bases





When larger-than-life meets the scaled-down everyday, it creates a striking combination. This supersize antique table base is teamed with a classic dining chair upholstered in a dynamic floral-print fabric





**Embroidered Elephant cushion,** £35.99, *Ian Snow*



**Coconut Palm-Pickers cushion,** £55, *Postcards Home*



**Saffron velvet damask cushion,** £29, *Danetti*



**Glass rods chandelier,** £425, *Out There Interiors*



**Pimlico rug,** £109, *The Rug Seller*



**Jabatan tan leather chair,** £325, *PUJI*

## Bold gestures

Colour should be an adventure, so don't just be led by trends. Choose and combine bold shades and tones that make your heart sing. Explore, and uncover what delights you in unexpected combinations.

Buckingham tells us: 'The next time you find yourself attracted to a classic palette, do what I do and change the foundational shades. Fold in a splash of hot pink or shocking tangerine, unify with a grounding of black, try on the sophistication of grey or go for the command of royal blue. Suddenly, that understated interior, decorated for the everyday, becomes fresh, vibrant and memorable.'



**Sorrento porcelain tiles,** £99.80 per sq m, *Fired Earth*



**From left: bottle vase,** £165; **ceramic bottle,** £42; **iron vase,** £79; *Out There Interiors*



**Easel tripod lamp,** £165, *där*



**Abigail Ahern Edition lion head,** £80, *Debenhams*



**Romulus day bed,** from £1,386, *Rume*



**LEARN THE KNACK**  
*Modernique: Inspiring Interiors Mixing Vintage And Modern Style*, by Julia Buckingham, is published by Abrams on 4 April. For details, visit [abramsandchronicle.co.uk](http://abramsandchronicle.co.uk)



*Psychologies* Wellness Director, Eminé Rushton's husband, food and nature writer, Paul, celebrates the abundance of April, alongside the notorious nettle – bringing wisdom from Weleda's own garden in Derbyshire to his humble plot in Kent

# *Spring in the garden*

**W**e have had snow and showers, gales and gushes of the brightest sunlight... the journey into spring has not been without its surprises.

For us, with our postage-stamp-sized back garden, supplemented by a plot at our local allotment, things suddenly pick up a gear at the end of February – a beautiful little crocus forces its head up through the crumbling path outside our front door and I spend an enjoyable, if wet, Wednesday, popping my red and green broad beans into the soil, along with my well-chitted potatoes. At the Weleda farm, the same flurry of activity abounds, if on a much more orderly and intensive scale! We began our year-long partnership with

Weleda last month and we'll be taking guidance from Weleda's garden manager, Claire Hattersley, as we try to introduce biodynamic methods to our own garden. We receive an excited note from Claire saying, 'We're seed-sowing at full pelt on the farm now – for two days solid. There's such prolific leaf growth at this time – and a sense of being surrounded by this powerful life force and optimal vitality. You notice birdsong, bees and butterflies again. A festival of abundance – everything is wonderfully fertile.'

## **More for your nettle**

Too often seen as a weed to be plucked, the humble stinging nettle is eminently useful. Weleda grow it as

a crop for medicinal use; add it to the compost heap; and it's an abundant food source for wildlife. At this time of year, the young leaves are everywhere. When foraging for nettles, it's best to avoid the well-trodden paths and to seek out the young, fresh tips for all culinary and medicinal use.

For these, too, it is advisable not to harvest nettles after flowering between July and September – so *now* is the time (but leave some for the butterflies and bees). 'Grasping the nettle' is sound advice but I'd don a decent pair of gloves, too. As always, good, conscious foraging involves leaving plenty behind for others, and for the plant's own recovery. In the biodynamic garden and plot, nettles



*"There's such prolific leaf growth at this time – and a sense of being surrounded by this powerful life force and optimal vitality."*



LEFT Homemade bread and pizza with nettle pesto

BELOW Spring potato and nettle salad

FAR LEFT Paul working on the allotment where he makes his own nettle fertiliser



**"Nettles are a true convenience food; free, versatile and valuable at both ends of food production and preparation – often stingingly overlooked"**

are incredibly useful. 'At Weleda we actually grow the stinging nettle as a crop for use medicinally, harvesting the flowers and the whole plant,' says Hattersley. 'It is used in one of the biodynamic compost preparations, to nurture the garden. The Weleda gardeners also chop it up and put it in the compost heap as an activator. Additionally, it's useful as a plant food in the gardens (soak in water for two weeks, then dilute the filtered liquid 1:10) and as a greenfly spray (soak in water for 24 hours, filter, then spray directly onto the aphids). Plus, it's beneficial for wildlife, as nettle flowers are food for several species of butterfly, including the Small Tortoiseshell, so it's always welcome in Weleda's 13-acre herb gardens,' says Hattersley.

At home, we cook with nettles a lot – they're rich in vitamins A, C and E, and minerals, such as iron and calcium. We love them in a garlicky soup with stock, vegetables and a spud or two. We make nettle tea and a hot mixture of nettle, camomile and thyme during hayfever season. We also concoct what is a surprisingly delicious beer – a simple four-day brew from nettles, lemons, unrefined organic sugar, cream of tartar and brewer's yeast, produces a nutritionally superior pint.

Nettles are a true convenience food; free, versatile and valuable at both ends of food production and preparation – long-seasoned and, often stingingly, overlooked.

@mrpaulrushton @thebalanceplan

**Product of the month**

**RESTORE AND REVIVE**

The Weleda gardeners are

busy harvesting blackthorn leaves (if you've ever had sloe gin, you'll know the blackthorn berry). Weleda uses its extract – from the new leaves that appear on the thorny black branches in early spring – in their Skin Tone Lotion, £8.50. This is a great product for toning tired limbs; reviving aching legs – it's no accident that Weleda make so many products for gardeners!

[weleda.co.uk](http://weleda.co.uk) @weledauk









# Easy to please

Thomasina Miers's latest book is packed with time-saving, healthy recipes to bring joy and contentment to whoever sits at your table, every night of the week

RECIPES THOMASINA MIERS PHOTOGRAPHS TARA FISHER  
EDITED BY DANIELLE WOODWARD

**C**hef, restaurateur and food writer, Thomasina Miers, says, 'I'm at my happiest when feeding people. Creating, eating and sharing food makes me feel great.' This philosophy is at the heart of her new book, *Home Cook: Over 300 Delicious, Fuss-Free Recipes* (Guardian Faber, £25). Dip in, and give pleasure.

## FOR THE CHICKEN

- 1 garlic clove
- ½ tsp cumin seeds
- Pinch of black peppercorns
- 3 tbsp pomegranate molasses
- 1 tbsp olive oil, plus extra to fry
- Squeeze of lemon juice
- 6 boneless chicken thighs
- Seeds from ½ small pomegranate

## FOR THE SALAD

- 125g red or white quinoa, rinsed
- 2 handfuls toasted pistachios, chopped
- ¼ red onion, finely chopped
- Seeds from ½ small pomegranate
- 1 celery heart, finely sliced
- 1 red pepper, deseeded and finely sliced
- ½ bunch parsley (leaves and stalks)
- 2 large handfuls mint leaves
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1 lemon

## POMEGRANATE-GLAZED CHICKEN THIGHS WITH QUINOA SALAD

*My children love opening pomegranates, to find the sparkling, bright pink jewels hidden within. This is a cheering and colourful salad with a hearty, satisfying crunch.*

**1** Place the garlic in a mortar, with a pinch of salt, and crush to a paste with a pestle. Add the cumin seeds and peppercorns and crush them, too, then stir in the molasses, oil and lemon juice. Transfer to a large bowl, then add the chicken thighs and rub the marinade into them thoroughly. Cover and place in the fridge to marinate for 1 hour.

**2** Meanwhile, prepare the salad. Place the quinoa in a pan with a few pinches of salt and cover with 800ml boiling water. Cover with a lid and simmer for 15-17 minutes. Remove from the heat, drain in a sieve, then sit the sieve on top of the hot pan and cover it with a clean tea towel. Leave to steam-dry for at least 10 minutes.

**3** Combine the remaining salad ingredients in a bowl (except the oil and lemon juice) and season. When the quinoa has steamed dry, fluff it up with a fork. While it's still hot, pour

over the oil and half the lemon juice, mix well and season lightly. Combine with the other salad ingredients, squeeze over the remaining lemon juice and mix well. Set aside.

**4** Add a splash of oil to a lidded frying pan and place over a medium-high heat. Season the thighs with a little salt and add them, skin side down, to the hot pan. Fry for 2 minutes on each side until golden and crisp.

**5** Turn the thighs over once more, add the pomegranate seeds, any marinating liquid and a splash of water. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and continue to cook for another 3 minutes until cooked through (the juices should run clear when you insert a skewer). Uncover and leave to rest for around 3 minutes.

**6** Cut the thighs into thirds and sit them on top of the salad, spooning over the cooking juices and cooked pomegranate seeds. >>>



## >>> GRILLED HALLOUMI AND PEACH SALAD

*Halloumi is a wonder ingredient, best when it sees a flame. Here, I toss juicy peaches with wafer-thin courgette ribbons, almonds fried in butter and slices of halloumi whipped from the griddle pan or barbecue onto the plate (halloumi doesn't 'do' sitting around).*

### SERVES 4-6

- 6 small courgettes
- 4 peaches, cut into thick wedges
- Big handful mint leaves, roughly chopped
- Juice of 1 large lemon, plus extra to taste
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to taste
- 20g butter
- 50g skin-on almonds, chopped
- ¼ tsp smoked paprika
- 500g halloumi, cut into 1cm slices

**1** Using a vegetable peeler, cut the courgettes into ribbons, rotating them as you do and stopping when you get to the seedy centre (keep the middles to stew in olive oil for a soup or side dish). Put the ribbons in a salad bowl with the peaches, mint, lemon juice and 3 tbsp of the oil. Toss and set aside.

**2** Put a small frying pan over a medium heat, add the butter and season with salt and pepper. Melt the butter and cook it, swirling continuously, for 2-3 minutes until it starts darkening. Add the almonds and paprika and cook for another minute or so until the butter is a dark, biscuit colour and

the almonds are golden. Pour the almonds and butter over the salad.

**3** Rub the halloumi slices in the remaining 1 tbsp of oil, then place on a hot griddle pan. Grill for 30-60 seconds on each side until they soften and char marks appear. Cut the halloumi pieces in half, toss them into the salad and taste. You may want a scrunch more pepper, a squeeze more lemon juice or a drop more oil. Season and serve at once.

### READER OFFER

Psychologies readers can order a copy of *Home Cook* by Thomasina Miers for the special price of £15 (RRP £25).\*

To order, visit [bit.ly/2mbHND0](http://bit.ly/2mbHND0) and enter the code 'COOK' at the checkout.



\*OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. OFFER VALID UNTIL 31 MAY. DISCOUNT DOES NOT INCLUDE POSTAGE AND PACKING



# CARDAMOM CUSTARD TART WITH COCOA-RYE PASTRY

*This pastry is adapted from a recipe by Chad Robertson at the amazing San Francisco bakery, Tartine. I fill it with cardamom custard, a lovely contrast to the dark, earthy pastry. Rye flour makes the pastry low in gluten, but it's sticky, so chill it well.*

## FOR THE PASTRY

- 300g butter
- 125g caster sugar
- 1 egg, at room temperature
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 280g rye flour, sifted
- 125g cocoa powder, sifted, plus extra to dust

## FOR THE CUSTARD

- 300ml whole milk
- 300ml double cream
- Seeds from 6 cardamom pods, crushed
- 1 vanilla pod, seeds scraped out
- 9 egg yolks
- 75g caster sugar

**1** To make the pastry, beat the butter and sugar together for a few minutes in a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, until it is soft and a pale cream colour. Beat in the egg, then stop the mixer, scrape down the sides and beat in the vanilla, followed by the flour and cocoa powder, until thoroughly combined.

**2** Transfer the pastry to a large piece of cling film, pat into a rectangular shape and chill for at least 1 hour, or until firm.

**3** Meanwhile, make the custard. Put the milk, cream, crushed cardamom seeds, vanilla seeds and pod into a pan and bring to simmering point. Simmer gently for 3 minutes to infuse the milk, then set aside for 10 minutes. Whisk together the egg yolks and sugar in a bowl until light and pale. Whisk the warm milk into the eggs, discard the vanilla pod and pour into a jug. Cover the surface with cling film.

**4** Divide the dough in half, freezing half for another day. Dust both sides of the remaining pastry lightly with cocoa powder and roll out between 2 large sheets of baking parchment, or cling film,

rotating as you do, so you have an even thickness of about 4mm. Roll the pastry onto the rolling pin and carefully transfer to a 26cm loose-bottomed tart tin. Press firmly into the edges of the tin and trim the excess dough, leaving an overhang of roughly 5mm. Place in the freezer for 15 minutes to firm up while you preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) gas mark 4.

**5** Line the pastry case with baking parchment, fill with baking beans and blind bake for 20 minutes until slightly puffed up. Remove the paper and beans and bake for a further 10-15 minutes until completely cooked, being careful not to let it burn. Reduce the oven temperature to 140°C (280°F) gas mark 1.

**6** Run a sharp knife around the edges of the tart shell to neaten. Carefully pour the custard into the shell up to the top and bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 35-40 minutes until just set; it should no longer wobble in the middle when you gently move the tin, but you don't want it too firm. Leave to cool completely before serving with a bowl of fresh raspberries.







**A positive message for your kitchen.** Wall art, £85, Oliver Bonas



**Add character to your cuppa.** Coasters, £11 for four, PASX



**Sparkle makes a drink special.** Gold Splatter range, from £5 for a tumbler, Oliver Bonas



**Cute and quirky.** Alessi duck timer, £35, Black By Design



**Choose a cheery print.** Salt and Pepper oven glove, £20, Lush Designs



**Perfect for a country farmhouse feel.** Kanaset tray, £13.90, Vallila



**Protect clothes with a vibrant cover.** Green Pea apron, £24.99, The Oak Room

**Celebrate the cheese course.** Hammered brass cheese knives, from £32, Anthropologie



## Home comforts

How fab would it be to arrive home after a long day to know there are ingredients for a quick dinner waiting for you in the kitchen? There's no secret to enjoying speedy, delicious, healthy meals – the key is preparation.

Spend time at the weekend making garlic and herb butter, for example, then store in the freezer for a fast way to transform fish or meat from dull to delicious. And a few key staples in your cupboard, such as olive oil, spices, grains and stock, will save stress, and ensure you can whip up hassle-free, nourishing meals in no time. Getting organised is exciting!

### Blogger spotlight



Emily Leary is a food, lifestyle and parenting writer and radio presenter who created her blog, [amummytoo.co.uk](http://amummytoo.co.uk), out of a love for food, family and photography. With over 300 daily recipes, there are plenty of solutions for busy people to take the stress out of preparing food. Click on 'Casseroles, Savoury Bakes and One-Pot Meals' for fantastic suggestions for those midweek meal challenges.

## STAPLE READS *New and recent books full of inspiration for meals at home*



1



2



3



4

- 1 Gatherings: Recipes For Feasts Great And Small** by Flora Shedden (Mitchell Beazley, £25)  
**2 Bread Street Kitchen** by Gordon Ramsay (Hodder & Stoughton, £25) **3 One Pound Meals** by Miguel Barclay (Headline, £14.99) **4 Rick Stein's Long Weekends** (BBC Books, £25)



# Stockists

Find out where to buy the products featured in this month's issue

**A**

**A Beautiful World**  
abeautifulworld.co.uk  
**Alchemy**  
alchemyoils.co.uk  
**Anthropologie**  
anthropologie.com/en-gb  
**Aromatherapy Associates**  
aromatherapyassociates.com

**B**

**Black By Design**  
black-by-design.co.uk

**D**

**Danetti** danetti.com  
**där** darlighting.co.uk  
**Debenhams**  
debenhams.com  
**Design3000**  
design-3000.de  
**Dr. Hauschka**  
drhauschka.com

**E**

**The English Mineral Makeup Company** englishmineralmakeupcompany.co.uk

**F**

**Fired Earth**  
firedearth.com

**G**

**Green People**  
greenpeople.co.uk

**I**

**Ian Snow**  
iansnow.com

**J**

**Jurlique**  
jurlique.com

**K**

**kikki.K** kikki-k.com

**L**

**Lalani & Co**  
lalaniandco.com  
**Littlewoods** littlewoods.com  
**Love Leaf Tea** loveleaftea.com  
**Lush Designs**  
lushlampshades.co.uk

**M**

**May Lindstrom**  
maylindstrom.com

**N**

**Neal's Yard Remedies**  
nealsyardremedies.com

**O**

**The Oak Room**  
oakroomshop.co.uk  
**Oliver Bonas**  
oliverbonas.com  
**Out There Interiors**  
outthereinteriors.com

**P**

**PASX** pasx.co.uk  
**Pineapple X Finery**  
finerylondon.com

**Postcards Home**  
postcardshome.co.uk  
**Prezzybox**  
prezzybox.com  
**PUJI**  
puji.com  
**Pukka Herbs**  
pukkaherbs.com

**R**

**The Rug Seller**  
therugseller.co.uk  
**Rume**  
rume.co.uk

**T**

**The True Honey Co.**  
truehoney.co.nz  
**Type on Top**  
typeontop.com

**V**

**Vallila**  
vallila.co.uk  
**Veyep**  
veyep.fr

**W**

**Wanderlust Life**  
wanderlustlife.co.uk  
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weleda.co.uk



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[www.playtherapy.org.uk](http://www.playtherapy.org.uk)

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has to offer.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

● [www.yogaislandretreats.co.uk](http://www.yogaislandretreats.co.uk)

● [relax@yogaislandretreats.co.uk](mailto:relax@yogaislandretreats.co.uk)

● 020 8123 3163;  
0756 2122 462



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**Lynnette Curtis Dip RSA, PGCEE**

Quantum Coach, 'Clean-space' facilitator, Neurolinguistic  
Practitioner, Emotional Educator, TEFL Teacher. Passionate  
about coaching and helping people to reveal their 'inner-genius';  
Teaching, coaching and training in Paris, Milan, Russia and  
Belgium since 2014 now Normandy based. As well as the  
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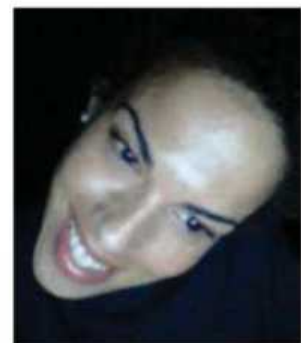
**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

● Email:

[lynnette\\_curtis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lynnette_curtis@yahoo.co.uk)

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# Health, happiness and wellbeing, empowering you to live well. A selection of products and services to improve your month.

## HOLISTIC & MYSTIC MIND, BODY, SOUL & WELLBEING FESTIVAL

**SATURDAY 27 & SUNDAY 28 MAY 2017 AT KEMPTON PARK  
RACECOURSE (16 MILES FROM LONDON WITH DIRECT TRAINS  
AND FREE PARKING).**

Whether you're a newbie meditator or a well-practised yogi, there is something for everyone at this vibrant and enriching mind, body & soul event.

Explore, discover and shop the collection of 70+ product stands from beautiful jewellery and crystals to organic skincare and essential oils.

Connect and gain insight from highly skilled individuals offering a wide range of experiences and treatments from psychic readings to healing massage.

You can also get inspired at the FREE talks and workshops covering a range of topics or join the fun at the LIVE STAGE.

We look forward to welcoming you!

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

To redeem offer enter code **PSYCH17** when purchasing your tickets from the eventbrite page, link found on Holistic & Mystic website.



Offer! Two  
Tickets For £10  
With Psych17  
Code!

## BECOME A RELAXATION TEACHER OR JUST LEARN TO RELAX YOURSELF

THE ART OF FINDING STILLNESS AND CALM  
Relaxation and Daily Awareness Workshop

A unique one day certificated teachers workshop with Buddhist monk **Ven. Lama Ngedon Drime** (shri sadhu dharmavira)

This unique workshop contains all the relaxation techniques needed to experience the wellbeing that comes through a life that is stress and anxiety free.

This course was created for those who wish to teach others to be stress free. But, anyone who would like to attend for their own personal wellbeing, is very welcome.

Booking now for workshops in London.

To ensure quality teaching, workshops are limited to a maximum of 8 participants

**To receive full details about the workshop and its benefits, please telephone: 01723 862 496**

**(calls taken between 8am - 6pm, 7 days a week)**



## RE-VISION - 4 DAY TRANSITIONS COURSE

The one thing we can be sure of in life is that it will change.

This non-residential intensive, exciting training is for those exploring new options in the face of such change and gives powerful ideas and creative methods to heal wounds and renew purpose. It can be a stand-alone experience or the beginning of professional training in counselling and psychotherapy.

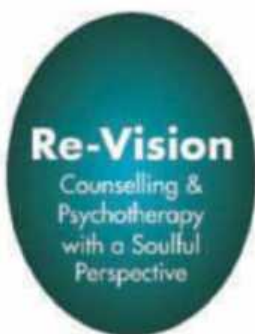
Dates: 27 April to 1 May, 27-31 July or 24-28 August

"This course can benefit anybody, but I would recommend it especially to people who are trapped, stuck and want to find a new direction." (Previous participant).

We are a small educational charity in London NW6.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

- Web: [www.re-vision.org.uk/](http://www.re-vision.org.uk/)
- Email: [info@re-vision.org.uk](mailto:info@re-vision.org.uk)
- Tel: 020 8357 8881



## A HEALTHIER HAPPIER YOU

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Horizons

**DETOX, RELAX, REJUVENATE**

**Join our women-only wellbeing retreats with Dr Claire Maguire.**

Are you exhausted, unhappy, feeling unhealthy?  
Need some time out to rest, reflect and refocus?

Take back control of your life, your health and your emotional happiness.

Emerge inspired, renewed and energised.

Raw Horizons combines yoga, wellbeing coaching & easy detox for a healthier happier you.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Raw Horizons Retreat

Split Farthing Hall

North Yorkshire

Tel: 01845 597 041

Email: [info@rawhorizons.co.uk](mailto:info@rawhorizons.co.uk)

Web: [www.rawhorizons.co.uk](http://www.rawhorizons.co.uk)



TO ADVERTISE IN ESSENTIALS PLEASE CALL 01733 353363



## HAPPINESS BOOK CLUB

# STRESS LESS, LISTEN BETTER

This month, Vanessa King of Action for Happiness and author of *10 Keys To Happier Living* recommends *The Stress Solution: Using Empathy And Cognitive Behavioral Therapy To Reduce Anxiety And Develop Resilience* by Arthur P Ciaramicoli

**S**tress is something many of us feel on a regular basis and, in excess, it's not good for us. But do we realise the impact it can have on our relationships – a vital ingredient of our happiness? In this book, psychologist, Ciaramicoli, argues that, alongside taking good physical care of ourselves, empathy for others can be an important key to reducing stress. When we have positive connections, we produce the neurochemical oxytocin which helps us feel calm and, in turn, more attuned to and trusting of others, leading to greater wellbeing. Yet, when we're stressed, our reactions to others can fuel our stress, rather than help it dissipate.

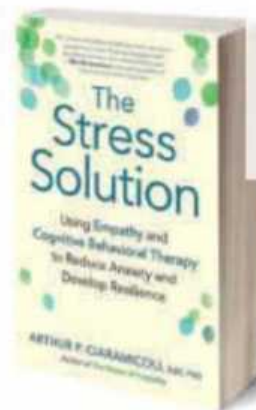
Becoming an empathetic listener helps reduce our own stress and other people's. The starting point is listening with genuine interest. It's about learning to listen to hear, not to fix or blame. Here are some of Ciaramicoli's tips on listening with empathy:

- Reflect back on what you heard the person say, for example, 'Did I hear you correctly that you found the situation challenging?'
- Be aware of the feelings the person is expressing in what they say, or in their body language, such as, 'I notice you seem worn out. Has it been a tough day?'
- Take note of your own reactions – are your past experiences causing you to make snap judgements?
- Let the other person's story unfold at their pace. Try saying, 'Tell me more about that...'

Next month, we're reading *The Power Of Meaning: Crafting A Life That Matters* by Emily Esfahani Smith (Ebury, £14.99)

### Questions to discuss at your book club

- When has your own stress contributed to tensions in a close relationship?
- What is one of your internal stories that can get in the way of really listening?
- Which of your relationships could most benefit from you listening more empathetically? When and how could you put this into practice?

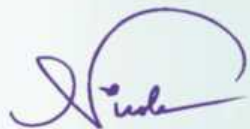


*The Stress Solution: Using Empathy And Cognitive Behavioral Therapy To Reduce Anxiety And Develop Resilience* by Arthur P Ciaramicoli (New World Library, £16.50)



# Perfectil

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Nicole  
Scherzinger

"My go-to vitamin  
is Perfectil. I really  
feel my skin and  
hair are radiant  
and shining."



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With biotin which contributes to the maintenance of normal skin, plus selenium and zinc  
which contribute to the maintenance of normal hair and nails.

\*UK's No1 beauty supplement brand for skin, hair and nails. Nielsen GB ScanTrack Total Coverage Unit Sales 52 w/e 3 December 2016.

  
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THE SUNDAY TIMES

