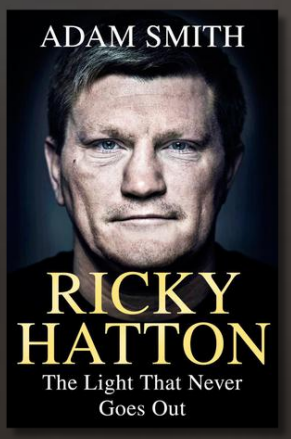
EXPERT PROFILE

Autumn 2026

MAGAZINE



Inside this issue

Health & Wellbeing
Business & Leadership
Mindset & Performance
Personal Development
Relationships

Adam Smith

Life & Death

And everything else in between

REAL STORIES I REAL EXPERTISE I REAL IMPACT

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Editors Note



There is something remarkably powerful about the relationships we build throughout our lives. Some are formed through shared ambitions, others through common interests, and many through circumstances we could never have anticipated. Yet, whether we recognise it or not, we are all connected in ways that contribute to the stories we create.

At Ranath Media, collaboration has always been at the heart of what we do. We believe that bringing people together, sharing experiences and embracing different perspectives creates something far greater than any of us could achieve alone. And sometimes, it takes a conversation to remind us just how important that philosophy really is.

In this Autumn edition, our main feature with Adam Smith offers precisely that reminder.

During our conversation, Adam shared a perspective that particularly resonated with me. He spoke about the importance of those we compete against, recognising that without them, there would be no contest, no challenge and, ultimately, no story.

It is a simple observation, yet one with extraordinary depth.

Think about sport for a moment. Some of the greatest moments in sporting history have been created not by individuals alone, but by the rivalries, challenges and competition between them. The very people standing in opposition to one another are responsible for creating the excitement, drama and entertainment that millions of us enjoy.

Without an opponent, there is no competition. Without competition, there is no victory. And without the challenges we face, perhaps there is far less opportunity for us to discover what we are truly capable of achieving. But what I find even more compelling is what happens when the competition ends. We see it in boxing, when two individuals who have spent months preparing to overcome one another embrace at the final bell. We see it in football, when fierce rivals shake hands after ninety minutes of intense competition.

For all their differences, there remains a recognition of mutual respect. And surely, there is a lesson here for all of us.

In business, in our communities and throughout our personal lives, we will inevitably encounter people whose opinions, ambitions and beliefs differ from our own. We may disagree, compete or even find ourselves on opposing sides of an argument. But those differences need not divide us. Indeed, they can challenge our thinking, broaden our understanding and encourage us to become better versions of ourselves.

We don't have to agree with everyone to respect them. We don't have to share the same ambitions to appreciate another person's journey. And we certainly don't have to diminish someone else's achievements to celebrate our own. As I often say, healthy competition can be a wonderful thing. It drives progress, inspires excellence and creates opportunities. But it should never come at the expense of our humanity.

Ultimately, we share this world, this moment in time and, in many ways, the responsibility for shaping what comes next. Because whatever our individual journeys, ambitions or beliefs, one thing remains true.

We are all part of the same story. And the story is far richer because we have each other.

Rany Athwall
Editor & Founder

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At Ranath Media, we believe in the power of collaboration and the value of building meaningful, long-term relationships. We work alongside a diverse network of individuals, organisations and businesses, bringing together expertise, creativity and shared ambitions across publishing, media, events and beyond. Our partnerships and collaborations reflect our commitment to creating opportunities, amplifying voices and delivering collective value.

Featured Experts

















Featured Experts

















Featured Experts

























More from our Experts

























More from our Experts











Life & Death

and everything else in between



The boy with the dictaphone could not have known whose stories he would one day tell. For now, there was a sport he loved and the chance to find his own words for it. Watching boxing, a young Adam Smith would practise his commentary, describing the action as though someone, somewhere, was listening.

When Adam shared that memory with me, it offered a way into a career that has brought him close to so many other people's lives. Before the familiar voice, the broadcasts and the big nights, there was the simple pleasure of telling a story.

It is still there in the way he talks about boxing. He spoke about fighters such as Tommy Hearns and Barry McGuigan, who helped capture his imagination as a child. But as our conversation developed, it became clear that his fascination extends well beyond what a boxer can do with a pair of gloves. He is drawn to what happens between people.

That is where this story begins to open out. We each have a life that starts at birth and ends at death. Most of what makes us who we are happens in the space between: the people we meet, the things we love, the work we pursue and the experiences we share. Adam has spent much of his working life helping an audience understand a small, intense part of that larger human story.

Consider the two people entering a boxing ring. Each arrives with a history. There have been decisions, sacrifices and private hopes long before the audience takes its seats. For the duration of the contest, those separate journeys meet. Whatever happens next, each fighter depends on the other to make this particular encounter possible.

One boxer advances and the other responds. A plan meets resistance. Someone has to adjust. Courage, patience and doubt become visible through the demands another person makes. The story develops between them, moment by moment, with neither able to decide its course alone.

Neither fighter can create this story alone. Adam explained that opponents share a connection which goes beyond the physical battle. They have faced something together that the audience can watch but cannot fully experience. At the heart of his account was respect for the courage required simply to step into the ring.

It helps explain the moments that can be so moving after a contest: the embrace, the conversation, the acknowledgement of an opponent's effort. Those gestures do not undo what has happened. They recognise it. Two people who have spent the fight trying to defeat each other can also understand something important about one another.

There is a human truth in that. Shared experience can bring people closer even when they begin on opposing sides. Disagreement does not always prevent understanding. Sometimes, having been tested by another person allows us to recognise a quality in them that we might otherwise never have seen. Listening to Adam, I found myself thinking about the person describing all this. The fighters create the encounter, but someone has to help it reach the audience. That is where his own story becomes part of theirs.

Adam explained that his commentary style had grown naturally with his personality. Storytelling is central to his approach: helping viewers connect with the people involved and understand why a moment matters. The words have to follow the fight, while making room for the lives that have led to it.

For someone watching far from the arena, a little context can change everything. Knowing what an opportunity means to a fighter can give a round greater weight. Understanding the difficulty of an adjustment can reveal an achievement that was easy to miss. A commentator's judgement directs attention; the feeling in a voice can bring the scale of the occasion into a room thousands of miles away.

This is why the telling matters so much. It can shape whether we recognise the tension in a contest, appreciate its subtleties or understand the significance of its ending. Adam cannot determine the quality of a fight. He can help us see more of what is there. A voice at ringside can bring people thousands of miles away into the same moment.

For me, that is the in-between: the connection between an experience and the people trying to understand it. Adam brings knowledge to that space, but he also brings his own interest in human beings. His task involves finding something an audience can recognise in people whose circumstances may be very different from their own.

The childhood dictaphone feels significant here. Even then, he was taking something that mattered to him and trying to communicate it to somebody else. Early work at ITN and CNN helped turn that instinct into a profession. He joined Sky Sports in 1994, beginning nearly three decades with the broadcaster.

Adam spoke about dedication, discipline and perseverance when reflecting on that journey. His academic path had not initially matched his eventual calling, and the career required sustained commitment.

> *"A voice at ringside can bring people thousands of miles away into the same moment."*



He now shares that experience through mentoring, helping others find their way into an industry he knows from the inside.

There is another kind of continuity in his life, one that led our conversation away from the ring and towards a shared football allegiance.

Adam told me about growing up in North London as a Liverpool supporter among friends who followed other teams. Kenny Dalglish was an early influence on his affection for the club. The demands of boxing have often made attending matches difficult, he explained, but the loyalty has endured.

As a fellow Liverpool supporter, I understood the pleasure of finding that common ground. We even spoke about the possibility of sharing match tickets. It was a small exchange, yet it belonged to the same theme we had been exploring. Sport gives people a reason to talk, to remember and to look forward to something together.

A club can run through a life like a familiar thread. Different jobs, changing responsibilities and new circumstances gather around it. The supporter remains connected to something loved long before those changes arrived. For Adam, Liverpool is part of a life that also includes family, friendships, tennis and cricket. Boxing matters deeply, but it is one part of the person.

His experience of serious illness has brought that wider life into sharper focus. Adam described feeling he had been given a second life, with a greater desire to enjoy the present and spend less of it consumed by work. The significance, in our conversation, was what he wanted to make room for: people, relationships and time to appreciate what was already there.

The story of a life is also the story of the people who become part of it. That thought carries into his book about Ricky Hatton. Here, the broadcaster's knowledge meets the experience of friendship. A book offers room to follow a life beyond the moments that fit into a televised event, exploring the person whose achievements brought so many people together.

Adam's concern for fighters also informed his views on boxing's future. He supports improvements that protect them while preserving the sport's essential character. The respect he describes between opponents has a wider responsibility attached to it: caring about what happens to the people whose stories we enjoy watching.

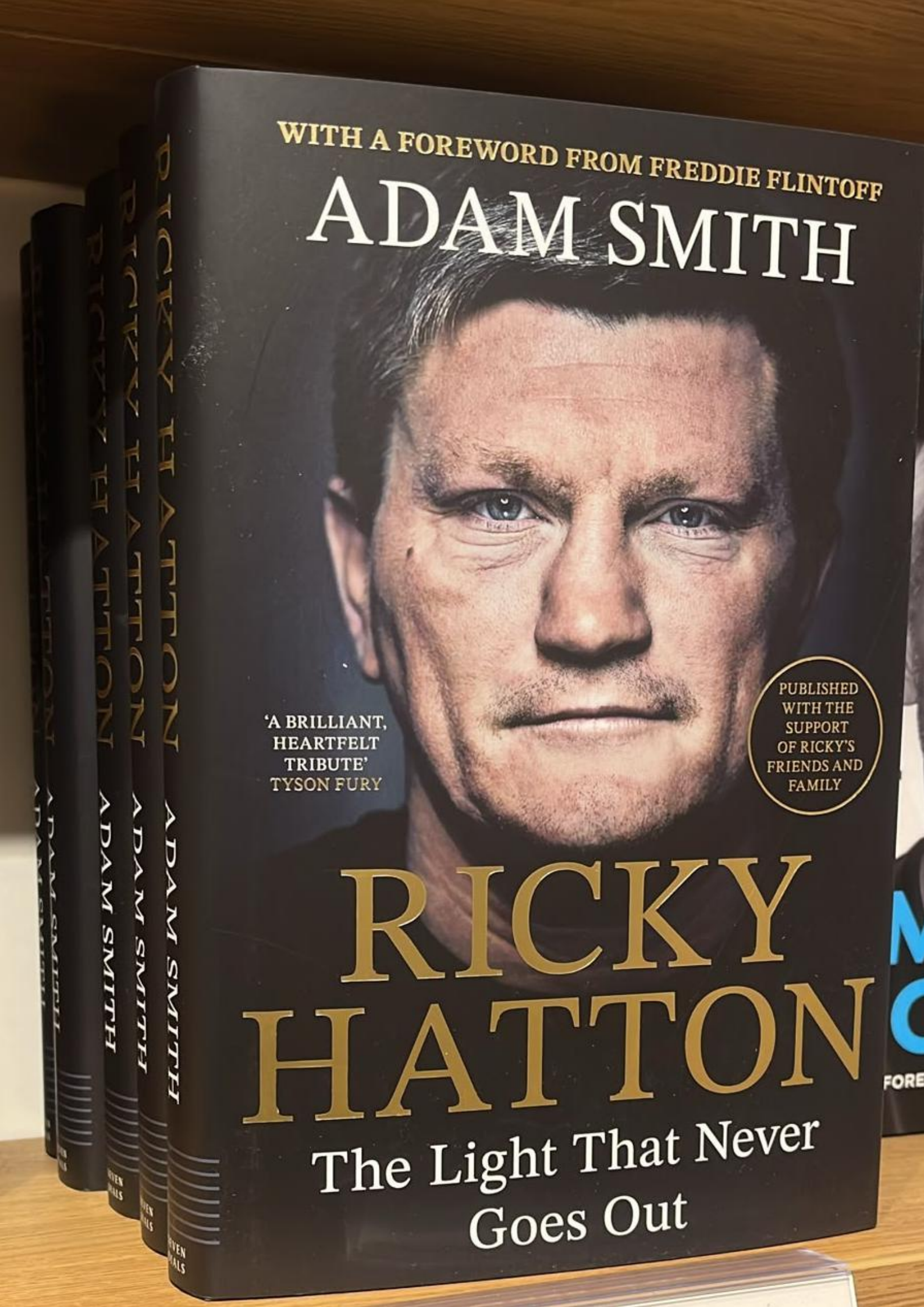
By the end of our conversation, the boy with the dictaphone seemed closer rather than further away. The craft had developed across decades, but the wish to communicate an experience remained. What emerged more clearly was the connection that makes that work worthwhile.

Two fighters bring their separate lives into the ring. They ask something of each other, respond and leave with an experience they will always share. Adam finds the words that help the rest of us enter it. Across an arena, a living room or a country, strangers are given something to feel and understand together.

That is what gives this story its reach. The boxing is real, the competition matters, and the people remain after the result. Through them, and through the voice telling their story, we catch sight of something familiar: how much of what happens between the beginning and the end of a life is made with one another.

> ***"The story of a life is also the story of the people who become part of it."***




WITH A FOREWORD FROM FREDDIE FLINTOFF
ADAM SMITH
'A BRILLIANT, HEARTFELT TRIBUTE'
TYSON FURY
PUBLISHED WITH THE SUPPORT OF RICKY'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY
RICKY HATTON
The Light That Never Goes Out



Write It Down

Why Experts Are Building Their Brands on Substack

Established business owners are moving their best thinking into long-form writing, and finding that it brings in clients.

In 1947, a young copywriter called Frances Gerety was working late on the De Beers account. With the deadline close, she wrote four words on a notepad: A diamond is forever. Nearly eighty years later, the line still carries the brand. Advertising Age named it the slogan of the century, and a version of it still sits inside how people think about engagement rings.

I spent part of my career in that world, working on Forevermark within the De Beers group. The lesson I took from it is simple. In luxury, value comes from meaning built patiently and protected carefully. The brands that last decide what they stand for and say it with enough consistency that the idea becomes theirs.

I've carried that lesson into two decades of work across luxury, aviation, corporate facilitation and my own businesses. I think it now applies to anyone whose business rests on their expertise.

The autumn review

Autumn is when most business owners I know take stock. The year is close enough to its end to judge, and early enough to change direction before January. It's a good moment to ask where your visibility actually came from this year, and how much of it you still hold.



For many established founders, the honest answer is uncomfortable. A lot of effort went into content that was seen for a day. Reels, carousels, and reactive posts did their job in the moment, then disappeared into the feed. The effort was real, but very little of it was kept.

The business owners I watch most closely have started to work differently. They are writing at length, publishing to spaces they control, and treating what they publish as something that accumulates. They post less often and say more when they do. The quality of their thinking has become their marketing.

Positioning equity

I call this positioning equity. Most people think of positioning as what you say about yourself, or how the market sees you. Both matter. Positioning equity goes further. It treats your intellectual property, your frameworks, your point of view, and how you see your industry as a business asset that grows in value over time.

Every established business already has this asset. It lives in how you advise clients, in the questions you ask on a discovery call, and in the judgement you've built over years of doing the work. In most businesses, it stays in the founder's head, which means it only works when the founder is in the room.

Written down and published, it starts to work on its own. A client reads your thinking at eleven at night and arrives at the first call already understanding your approach. A potential partner finds an essay you wrote two years ago and sees that your view hasn't wavered. A journalist searching for a perspective on your subject finds a body of work instead of a single post.

Accountants already recognise this kind of value. When one company buys another, a large part of the price is often goodwill and brand value, which covers the reputation, relationships and recognition the business has earned. For an expert-led business, the published body of thinking is a large share of that goodwill. It is evidence of how you think, dated and searchable.

Why Substack has become the home for it

This is where Substack comes in, and why so many experts, journalists and founders have moved their writing there in the last few years.

Substack isn't the only place to publish long-form work, but it has made a few things easy that used to be hard. First, the relationship belongs to the writer. Readers subscribe by email, and that list can be exported and taken elsewhere. For anyone who has built an audience on a social platform and then watched the reach shift overnight, that ownership matters a great deal.

Second, the writing lives in an archive. Each piece stays findable and connected to the ones before it. Over a year, a publication becomes a library of your thinking, which

a new reader can move through at their own pace. This is how trust gets built with an audience that is careful about who it buys from.

Third, readers choose to be there. Nobody lands on a newsletter by accident. The people reading have opted in to your thinking, and they tend to read closely. For business owners selling considered, high-value work, a small audience that reads closely is worth more than a large one that scrolls past.

Fourth, the platform has grown a network between writers. Publications recommend one another, and readers discover new writers through the ones they already trust. For experts, this creates a kind of peer referral system, where your standing grows through association with other serious thinkers in your field.

Paid subscriptions are available, and some writers build a revenue line from them. For expert-led businesses, the larger return comes from the clients the writing brings in.

What it asks of you

None of this requires a new marketing strategy. It asks for a shift in where you put your effort, and a few decisions made clearly.

Decide what you believe. Established business owners usually hold strong views about their industry, often ones they share freely with clients and rarely in public. Those views are the raw material. A publication with a clear point of view attracts the right readers and quietly filters out the rest.

Write at the level you advise. The most common mistake I see is experts simplifying their thinking for public consumption, as if the audience couldn't handle the version they give paying clients. Your ideal clients are sophisticated. Write for them.

Choose a rhythm you can keep. A considered essay every week, sustained over two years, builds far more equity than weekly posts that stop in March. Consistency is what turns individual pieces into a body of work.

Keep each piece to one idea. Long-form writing gives you room, and the temptation is to fill it. The pieces people remember and forward tend to make a single point well, with evidence and a story behind it.

Rethink what monetisation means. Most of the conversation around Substack centres on subscriber growth and paid tiers. For an established business owner, the commercial value sits in what readers go on to buy from you. Each article builds trust in advance, and the revenue arrives through your advisory work, your programmes and your private clients. A few hundred engaged readers who include next year's clients are worth more to your business than a large free list that never converts.

Sell from the archive. When a reader books a call after reading a dozen of your pieces, much of the sales conversation has already happened. They know how you think, what standard you hold, and they've decided they want you to apply that to their business. Make the route to working with you easy to find, and let the writing carry the case.

The long view

The business owners who are doing this well share a particular mindset. They think about their visibility the way a luxury house thinks about its brand, as something to build carefully and protect, with decisions measured in years.

That mindset changes the questions you ask. Instead of wondering what to post this week, you start asking what you want to be known for in five years, and whether what you published this month adds to it. You stop measuring success by reach alone and start noticing who is reading, who is replying, and who arrives at a sales conversation already convinced.

It also changes how the work feels. Publishing becomes an extension of thinking rather than a performance. Many of the founders I work with find they enjoy it, because they are finally saying in public what they have been saying to clients for years.

Frances Gerety's four words have outlived her, the agency she worked for, and every campaign that ran alongside them. They lasted because they captured something true about the brand and were repeated with discipline for decades.

Your ideas can work the same way. This autumn, as you look back at where your attention went this year, it's worth asking which of your thoughts deserve to still be working for you in 2030, and giving them somewhere to live.

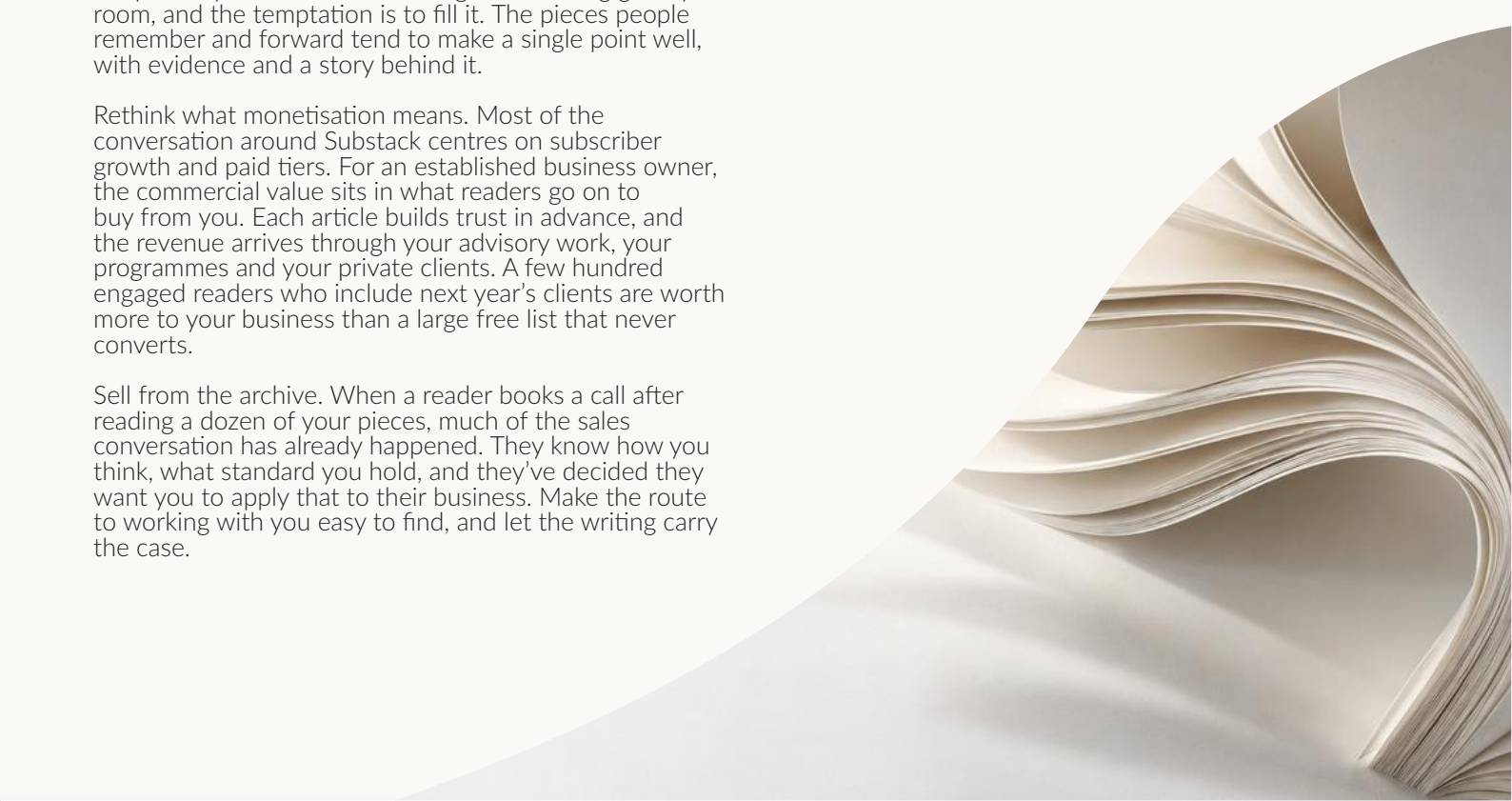
By Rachel Pearson

Rachel Pearson is a Global Brand and Business Strategist and the host of the Rich Work podcast. She works with established business owners on positioning, pricing and building brands with lasting value.

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MOVING BEYOND MINDSET WITH ANCIENT UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES

"Above all else, I have myself"
Lidia Kuleshnyk aka Lady Apona

The journey to lasting self-empowerment is the journey to reclaiming your sovereignty. As you heal, grow, and evolve, you move from self-discovery to self-mastery. Mastering mindset, energy and stress works in harmony with mastering balance, capacity and flow. Mutually foundational, these elements support you in creating sustainable growth that leads to limitless success . . . success without fear, overwhelm, burnout and regret.

Success in the midst of uncertainty is attainable. It is, in fact, natural. The ancient principles of yin and yang, the essence of balance, allow for the manifestation of all potentials. Challenges create a greater opportunity to go within and access your greatest power.

The ambition to be successful in achieving your goals despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, cultivates the resilience that breaks through old paradigms. This inner drive is a duality for high performers; the seeming obsession to achieve new heights of success, to create more, without the chronic stress that leads to depletion of body, mind and soul. Mastering this duality creates the resilience that leads to sovereignty, the power of conscious leadership.

Welcome to my 17th column exploring moving beyond mindset with ancient universal principles. The 12 Ancient Universal Principles of my High Performance Wellness Coaching help you master resilience by becoming Centered, Connected, Conscious™. With resilience, you own your power in any circumstance.

With sovereign resilience, you live without the fear and attachment to external stressors. You know you can rely on yourself... the greatest security of all.

"I feel like I am dying inside" CEO of a multinational corporation.

This quote is from one of my CEO clients. In our second coaching session, he humbly and nervously stated, ***"Lidia, I don't want you to think that anything I am about to say has any bearing on you or your professional work. It's just . . . that . . "***and then he froze. I was expecting a round of constructive criticism. What I received was a confession from his soul.

"It's just that . . ." he continued ", I keep thinking about what could happen if I keep living like this, in this constant pressure, no real relief, the stress . . . that it could lead to serious illness".

I listened. I observed. I validated (the first three steps of my L.O.V.E. Method). ***"I don't want to become the CEO who 'dies on the job ' ". It all terrifies me". In the next moment of silence, he said, "I can't stop. I won't stop. Everything relies on me . . . I feel like I am dying inside".***

This is the duality of success for high performers . . . the relentless drive to create "more", yet the yearning for relief.

In a recent interview, Elon Musk stated: "I am not afraid of dying. It would be a relief".

The drive to "keep going, no matter what" is not necessarily an addiction to external success. It is often much deeper. It is the connection to your inner power, to the unlimited energy of the Universe that is channelled through your mortal mind and body, then shared in the density of material existence as achievement. It is the natural



propensity to create. And with it, come the feelings associated with rapid growth.

Intensity, pressure, imploding, exploding, feeling "terrified", "trapped", "numb", "empty", "suffocating" are all words that clients are sharing with me at this epic time in human evolution. These are the challenges of living in the uncertainty of unprecedented change. These are the catalysts of creating the resilience that leads to inner sovereignty . . . the lasting self-empowerment of freedom and security.

Resilience is the diamond forged in the pressure of growth. Resilience is creation in action, the evolution of manifesting human potential in an ever-expanding world.

"Every time you heal yourself naturally, every time you overcome a challenge, you become stronger ". Michio Kushi, Macrobiotic Forefather.

Resilience is not new. Resilience has always been the ability to survive and thrive in any circumstance and create a greater, stronger state of being. This trait is a natural response to the stressors of life.

Once you become aware that resilience is natural, like any quality or gift, you can consciously develop it.

Sovereign resilience is the evolution of empowerment. It is comprised of conscious resilience and dynamic resilience.

Conscious resilience is the inner awareness, the moment you pause, breathe and return to your center before you act. You remember the "I am . . .", the power of Oneness, of unity consciousness. Dynamic resilience is the outer agility, the ability to "turn on a dime" when the circumstances change, when the timing shifts, when the window opens. It can be moving fast when an opportunity strikes as "the sun breaks through the clouds." You flow with what is instead of resisting what "should be".

Conscious resilience and dynamic resilience take you out of your head. You move beyond the perceived security of intellectual "certainty" into the flow and adaptability of instincts that respond to immediate circumstances. Resilience is the fourth step to reclaiming your sovereignty in the process of balance, capacity, flow, and resilience.

To master resilience and not collapse under pressure, becoming Centered, Connected, Conscious™ is your greatest foundation.

Here are the highlights of my introductory Sovereign Resilience exercise:

Sovereign Resilience Exercise
1. Find a quiet place with no distractions. Breathe.

2. Feel the flow of Universal Energy moving through you, from the top of your head, through your body to your feet

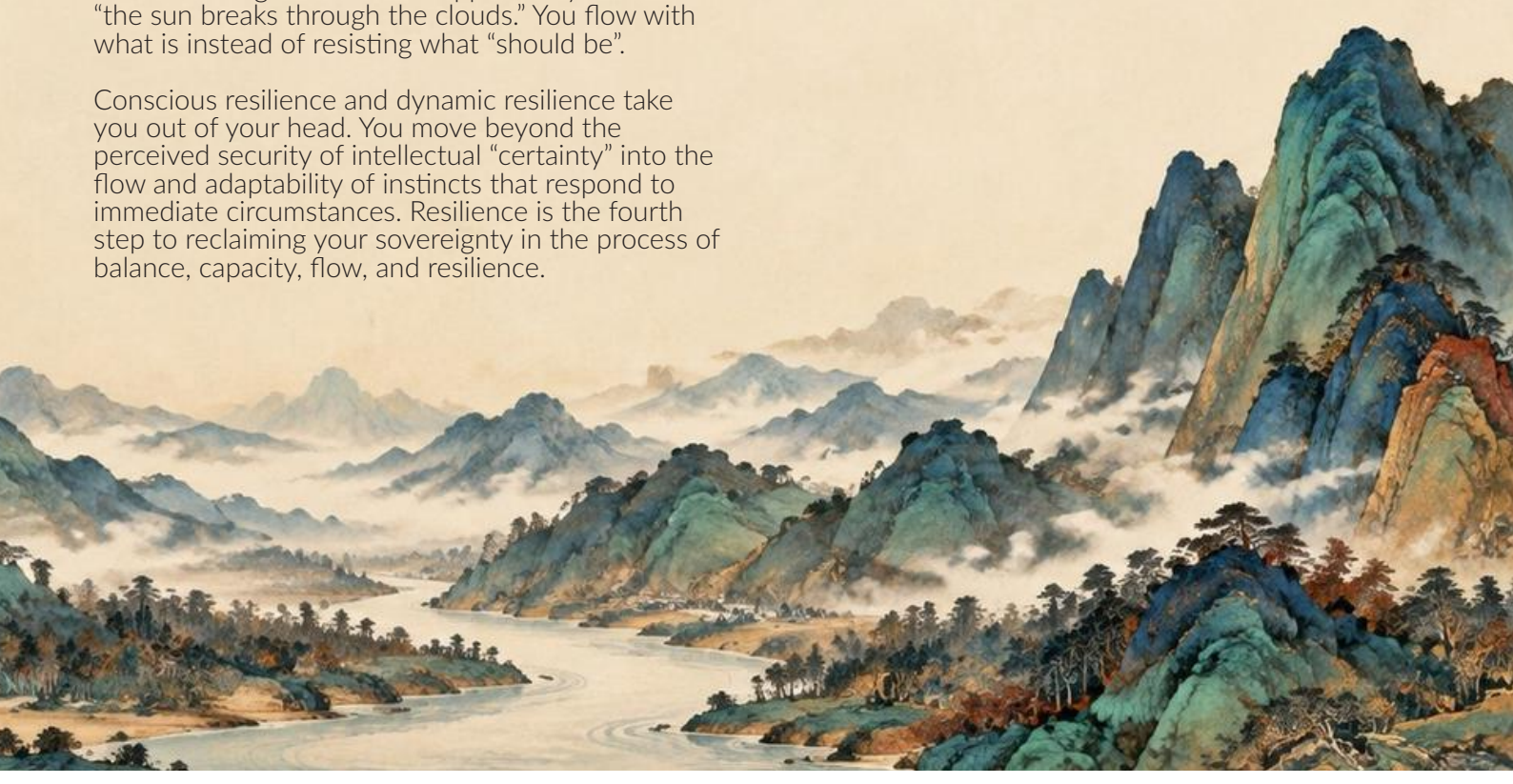
3. In your own way, take 2 minutes to:
Get Centered in your core energy.
Get Connected to your essence and power.
Get Conscious of who you are . . . your thoughts, beliefs, values, choices and actions.

4. Ask yourself:
What am I creating, both within myself and externally?

Pause and reflect.
What do I want to create?
Then embody the energy of how you would like to feel and declare:
I am _____ (for example, I am relaxed, I am confident, I am inspired. I am accomplished. I am healthy. I am stress-free, I am at peace. I am fulfilled)

5. Go to my 12 Ancient Universal Principles. Intuitively pick one. Write it down.

6. This Ancient Universal Principle is your anchor to keep you grounded, focused and energized, to be Centered, Connected, Conscious™ in your present circumstance. It is your guiding North Star, your compass for limitless living, strengthening your resilience. With your Ancient Universal Principle, you embody the energy of that which you wish to create.





12 Ancient Universal Principles

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

"Remain Centered" Tao Te Ching, Chapter 26

As you navigate the journey of your life, the greatest security you have is yourself.

To remain Centered, Connected, Conscious™ in the midst of stress, overwhelm and uncertainty is to cultivate resilience. The self-mastery of resilience creates an inner security, a knowing beyond confidence, that you can find your path in any storm, turn lead into gold and achieve your goals.

Your trust in yourself is your greatest power, the sovereignty that already exists within you.

With sovereign resilience, you master the balance of the insatiable drive to achieve new heights of success while finding relief and peace within the intense pressures of growth.
With sovereign resilience, you harness your natural power to create, unlocking the key to the duality of success.

In the new paradigm of High Performance Wellness, you can have it all . . . a limitless life full of energy, time, health and wealth. You reclaim your sovereignty. You become the conscious leader of your life. You share your vision and strength as a conscious leader of the world.



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

Connect with Lidia Kuleshnyk

www.AponaHealing.com



The Art of Disappearing

A Spiritual Leader's Legacy

By Andrea Huber

Imagine you have spent weeks creating a new project. You have researched the market, developed the concept and carefully designed every step of the structure. There're even plans for potential pitfalls. And finally, you launched it. The first people join. Everything goes well until someone questions your carefully curated plan. Instead of following your carefully designed process, someone says: "Could we do something different instead?" The others agree. What would you do?

That is exactly what happened to me.

I recently started the "Sunday Conversations – Questions that Matter" in the churchyard of St. James's Church Piccadilly in London. They are built around a simple format that helps people have meaningful conversations and helps strangers get involved in the community easily.

During one session, I suggested the next step exactly as I had planned it. Before I could continue, one participant proposed something different. Others immediately liked the idea. People stopped treating it as my project. Without asking for permission, they began contributing their own ideas. They suggested changes, shaped discussions in unexpected ways and gradually took ownership. And I realised something surprising. I wasn't losing control. I was witnessing success.

It made me wonder: How do we usually define success? We celebrate leaders whose vision remains untouched and whose ideas are implemented exactly as they imagined them. But what if we have misunderstood success? What if true success begins the moment people stop asking for permission? What if leadership reaches its highest form when others stop carrying out your ideas and start making them their own?

The greatest achievement of a spiritual leader is not building followers. It is creating owners. Watching people make something you created their own is a strange feeling. Your first instinct is to protect it. Your second – if you allow it – might be to realise that this is exactly what you hoped would happen.

This is why I believe spiritual leadership is fundamentally different from traditional leadership. It is not about influence. It is not about authority. It is not even about being followed. It is about creating such a deep sense of connection that people begin to care as if the idea had always been their own.

The art of disappearing begins the moment your idea no longer needs your ownership because it has found a home in other people.

At first glance, that sounds risky. If people no longer depend on you, aren't you making yourself replaceable? Perhaps. But maybe we have been asking the wrong question. The real value of a leader is not being indispensable. It is making an organisation more capable.

A team that depends on one person is fragile. A team that takes ownership is resilient. One leader can only make so many decisions. A connected team makes hundreds – without waiting for permission. That is not a loss of control. It is the multiplication of leadership.

This is why I believe spiritual leadership matters. Not because it is softer. But because it creates something traditional leadership often struggles to achieve: connection. Connection to a shared purpose. Connection between people. And connection to the confidence that every contribution matters. When people feel that connection, they stop working for the leader. They start working for the idea.

Ownership scales. Control doesn't.

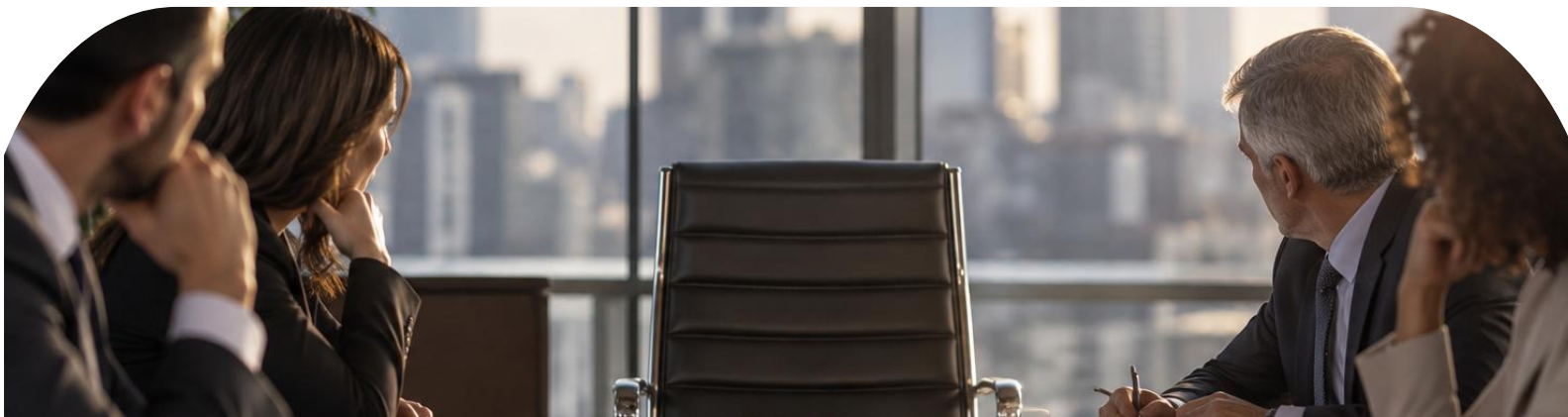
Does that make leaders replaceable? In one sense, yes. But organisations don't remember great leaders because they made themselves indispensable. They remember them because they left behind people who could lead without them.

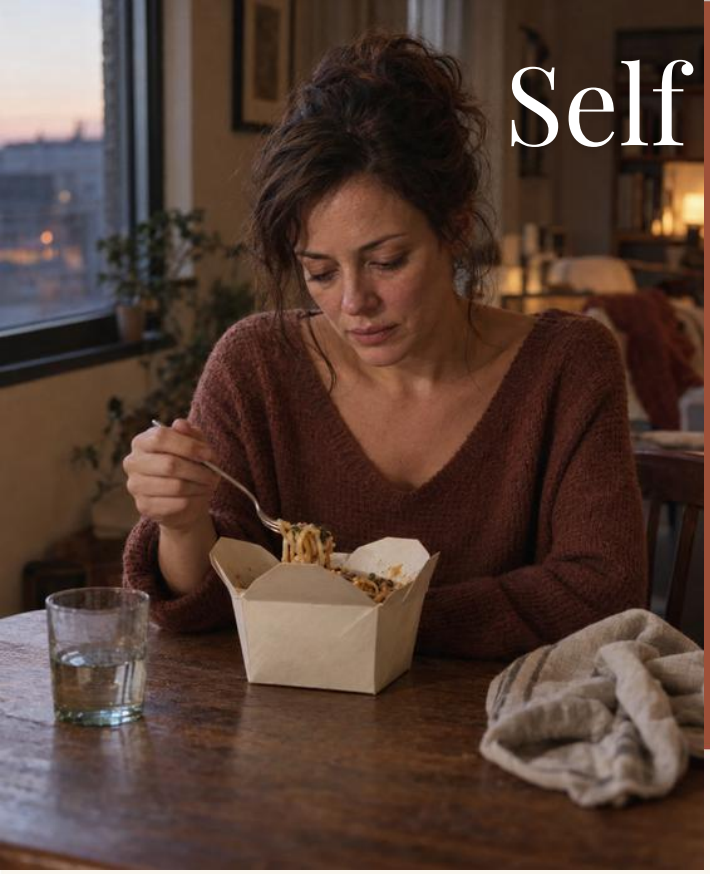
Spiritual leadership is often misunderstood as just being kind. It isn't. It is about building organisations that no longer depend on a single person. In business, that means faster decisions, greater resilience, stronger ownership and teams that keep moving even when the leader is absent. That is not a soft skill. It is a competitive advantage. An organisation in which people take ownership is scalable.

Perhaps the true art of disappearing is not becoming invisible. It is creating something that remains visible long after you have stepped back. In an increasingly complex and competitive world, organisations cannot afford to wait for every decision to come from the top.

They need leaders who create more leaders, not more followers.

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Self Care Corner

When You Don't Recognize Yourself Anymore

The Quiet Identity Shift No One Prepares Women For

By Beverly K. Johnson

The first time I ordered dinner for one, I cried. Not because of the food. Because I didn't know who I was anymore.

Only weeks earlier, dinner had been effortless. We had our favorite restaurant, our favorite order, and the quiet comfort that comes from sharing an ordinary evening with someone you've built a life beside.

Now I was sitting alone in a small apartment, staring at a takeout container that somehow felt much heavier than the meal inside. At first, I thought I was grieving my marriage. Years later, I realized I was grieving something much deeper.

I was grieving the woman I thought I had to be—and the lesson was that I no longer needed to be her.

At the time, I couldn't explain that feeling. I only knew that everything familiar had disappeared. My routines were different. My home was different. My future felt uncertain. Even the simplest decisions suddenly carried unexpected weight.
When your life changes, people often ask how you're doing. Rarely do they ask who you're becoming. The takeaway is that sometimes that's the real story.

We Think We're Mourning the Event...
But often, we're mourning our identity. Beneath divorce, retirement, menopause, burnout, children leaving home, or a career transition is another loss that rarely gets discussed: the loss of certainty.

The loss of routine. The loss of the roles quietly answered the question: Who am I?
For years, many women have introduced themselves through the people they love and the responsibilities they carry.
"I'm a wife."
"I'm a mother."
"I'm a caregiver."
"I'm the dependable one."
"I'm the one who keeps everything together."

These identities are meaningful and beautiful. But they were never meant to become our entire identity. The takeaway is that when one of those roles changes, it can feel as though the ground beneath us has shifted. Suddenly, we're not just adjusting to new circumstances; we're trying to understand ourselves all over again. That can feel frightening. It can also become one of life's greatest invitations.

When the Noise Finally Stops
The hardest part of my healing wasn't learning to be alone. It was learning to hear myself. Without constant responsibility, silence began asking questions that busyness had kept hidden for years.

Who are you when no one needs you today?
Who are you when your calendar is finally empty?
What brings you joy when you're not taking care of everyone else?

At first, those questions felt uncomfortable. I had spent so much of my life accomplishing, serving, producing, and showing up for other people that I wasn't sure how to simply be. Like so many women, I confused productivity with purpose. I thought rest needed to be earned. I believed slowing down meant I was falling behind. In time, healing exposed the stories I'd quietly believed about myself.

And once those stories are exposed, we can write new ones. That season taught me that healing gives us permission to begin again.

Why Midlife Feels So Different
As a menopause wellness coach, I've learned something that surprises many women. They often come looking for relief from hot flashes, poor sleep, weight changes, or brain fog. Those symptoms are real. They deserve attention. But after a few conversations, something deeper almost always emerges.

They're asking how to feel better. They're asking who they're becoming. In midlife, the identities we've worn for decades begin to peel away.
Careers evolve.
Children become independent.
Relationships change.
Parents begin needing care.

Our bodies ask for something different.
The version of us that once navigated life so confidently suddenly feels unfamiliar. No one talks enough about how emotional that can be. The takeaway is that transformation almost always feels unfamiliar while we're living through it.

Your Nervous System Prefers Familiar
There's also a biological reason this season can feel so unsettling. Our nervous system is designed to seek familiarity because familiarity often feels safe. The challenge is that familiar isn't always healthy. What we assume is familiar often masks constant stress. The constant busyness, overworking, people-pleasing, and even ignoring our own needs become normal.
When life finally slows down—or when circumstances force it to slow down—peace can feel uncomfortable. Many women mistake that discomfort for failure. It isn't. The takeaway is that your nervous system is learning that safety doesn't have to come from constant striving.

Sometimes healing feels unfamiliar because you've never experienced this version of peace before.

The Woman Waiting on the Other Side
Looking back now, I wish I could sit beside the woman eating takeout in that little apartment. I wouldn't tell her to hurry. I wouldn't promise that everything would work out. I certainly wouldn't try to convince her to "stay positive." Instead, I would simply remind her to be gentle with herself. I would tell her that grief and growth often arrive holding hands. The takeaway is that she hadn't lost herself. She was meeting someone new.

A woman who would eventually become a speaker. A coach. A founder. A writer.

A woman whose greatest strength wouldn't come from having all the answers—but from surviving enough life to ask better questions. None of those things was visible in that apartment, but they were already quietly unfolding.

Stop Trying to Go Back
One of the greatest misconceptions about healing is the belief that we're supposed to return to who we used to be. Over the years, women would often lament who they were in the past.
Women often tell me:
"I just want my old body back."
"I want my old energy."
"I want the old me."

I understand that longing. I've felt it myself. But what if "back" was never the destination? What if life isn't asking us to recover an earlier version of ourselves? What if life is inviting us to become someone wiser?

Someone softer. Someone more authentic. Someone who finally understands that worth was never tied to productivity, perfection, or performance. Maybe this season isn't about reclaiming your old identity.

Maybe it's about discovering the one that has been patiently waiting beneath everyone else's expectations.

The Quiet Truth
Today, I still order dinner for one sometimes. The difference is that I no longer see one plate on the table as evidence that something is missing. I've slowly embraced this new version of myself. I've learned to embrace peace, healing and freedom.

I see a woman who enjoys her own company. A woman who has learned that solitude and loneliness are not the same thing. A woman who understands that becoming isn't loud. Most of the time, it happens quietly.

One decision.
One boundary.
One peaceful evening.
One small act of choosing yourself again.

If you've been looking in the mirror lately and wondering where the old version of you went, I hope you'll consider another possibility. Perhaps she didn't disappear.

Perhaps she simply made room for someone stronger, someone wiser, someone more whole. Someone wiser. Someone more whole. Sometimes the most important reunion in life isn't finding your way back to who you were. It's finally meeting who you've become.



Beverly K. Johnson is a Certified Health Coach, Menopause Wellness Coach, Speaker, and Founder of the Luxe Wellness Collective. Through evidence-based education and compassionate coaching, she helps women reclaim their health, confidence, and identity through every stage of midlife. Her work blends science, soul, and lived experience to remind women that reinvention isn't something to fear—it's often where life truly begins.

Rooted in Science, Soul & Sisterhood™

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Time to Heal

Going Back To Our Roots

I don't know if at any point in my life I lived without symptoms or health concerns. There were time periods where things seemed to subside or suppress, but that never lasted too long. I was never told, nor did I ever consider, that every one of my symptoms was connected.

Like most of you, I spent my entire life unknowingly silencing symptoms, but never fully healing from what caused my symptoms in the first place.

I was in my late 30s when I learned that my symptoms weren't occurring spontaneously and that they were manifesting from deeper issues that were never before considered or recognized.

There were root causes that we were able to identify that went as far back as my childhood. I was frequently sick as a child, and over time, my symptoms became so severe that I was admitted to the Pediatric ICU for months.

I had a stomach virus that wasn't going away, and my paediatrician eventually sent me to the hospital. I experienced months of suffering in a hospital bed, with no answers and no real solutions. I reached a critical state, unable to consume a sip of anything for a long period of time. I was losing weight rapidly (I was already a thin person), and becoming weaker and weaker.

Although we were told that there wasn't a definitive answer as to why I was sick, every day I was in that hospital, I received a shot of Penicillin in my leg. There was no infection, nor was there a diagnosis. The antibiotics were given as a precaution, I suppose, but the truth is, we never really knew why it was being administered to me on a daily basis.

My symptoms were managed in the hospital, and one day when everything finally calmed down and stabilized, I was sent home. It's now 2026, and this is how our healthcare system continues to work today.

I wasn't sent home with any real advice, no lifestyle shifts, no answers. I was only 8 years old, and for a long time I was deeply fearful of my symptoms returning someday again. The fear was justified, because not a single adult could reassure me that this wouldn't happen again. We also had no idea what could be done to prevent the illness from ever returning again. We lived hoping I would remain well.

> Hoping for wellness certainly didn't ease my fears. I wished for some type of answer or someone to assure me that everything would be okay. That reassurance never came.

The symptoms I presented in the hospital were managed, but the root causes of my symptoms and illnesses were not addressed. In fact, the overuse of antibiotics in the hospital set me up for further issues in the future. I look back at my childhood, and for two years prior to my hospital admission (ages 6 and 7), I was on antibiotics every other month for illnesses.

Not only do I suspect my severe digestive trouble at 8 years old was a result of constant antibiotic use, but I also know that the root of those digestive issues was never resolved and followed me into adulthood.

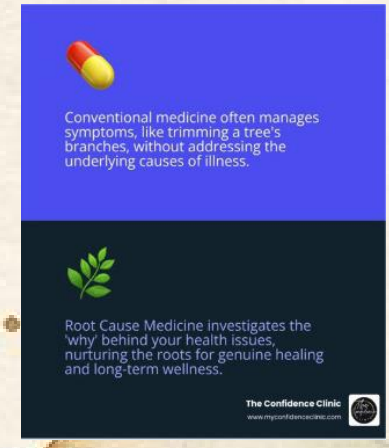
As I grew older, more symptoms appeared and were, of course, treated with medications (in other words, symptoms were silenced and suppressed). I showed every sign of having poor gut health and past trauma, but still, not a single professional ever looked deeper than the surface.

The reason our doctors do not dig deeper for the root causes of our symptoms, is because they do not study health from a root cause perspective in Medical school. Root cause medicine is not part of the curriculum, therefore, identifying and treating the root causes of our health issues isn't practiced in conventional medicine. Instead, protocols are designed around stabilizing and suppressing the symptoms. Once a patient is stable and symptoms subside, the treatment is considered successful and complete. The immediate crisis has been averted, but unfortunately, the root cause(s) remain.

If you look at my earlier years from a root cause perspective, so much of the suffering I faced could have been prevented and healed long ago. Once we begin peeling back the causes of our symptoms and get to the deepest roots that were planted years ago, that is when true healing can finally begin.

What is root cause medicine?

Imagine, if you will, having a lovely yard and garden, filled with various plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables.



It is something you have tended to for years, often adding new additions to it. If it was brought to your attention that one of the plants you grew in your yard was poisonous and unsafe to be around, what would you do to remove it? Would you simply trim the branches and leaves, but never go deeper into the roots? Most will answer no, of

course not. Because we know that if we do not remove the roots of the plant, it's going to grow back the same way it did before, or may even grow larger this time.

Why is it important to address the root causes?

When you try to remove a poisonous plant by simply trimming the leaves off, your plant is still very much alive. The plant will continue to grow until you finally pay attention to its roots.

Every symptom or health issue we face has a root cause. For instance, if a child went to their Pediatrician experiencing frequent constipation and skin rashes, the doctor would treat the rash with topical ointments, antihistamines or steroids. The doctor would also give the parents advice to help relieve the child's constipation. If that doesn't work, another medication would be given to help the child have more frequent and comfortable bowel movements.

The child will probably have some relief, and the rash may even clear up for a while. But unfortunately, nothing healed. The only thing that was treated was the symptoms.

It is so important to understand that symptoms are our body's way of telling us that there are imbalances that need our attention. They aren't meant to be silenced and ignored. They are there to show us where our bodies need our support and where there are imbalances occurring.

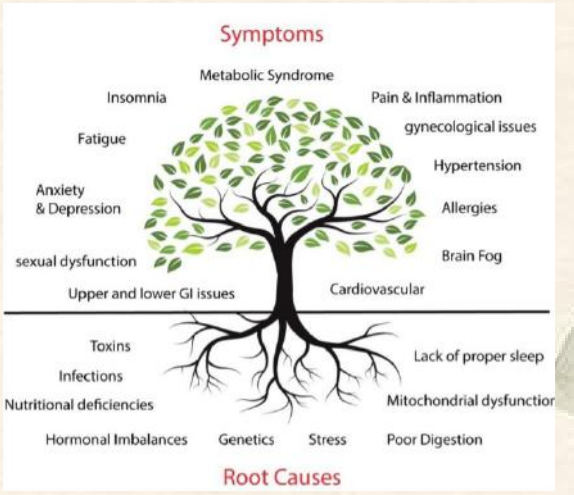
The child's doctor never looked deeper into why this child is experiencing these symptoms. The root causes of the child's symptoms remain, and if nothing changes, the child will likely experience further inflammatory concerns in the future. Over time, the symptoms may become more severe.

This is a major flaw in the way our healthcare is approached. Inflammatory symptoms at such a young age (which is very common these days) are concerning, but can be resolved quite effectively when the root cause(s) are identified. Instead, the root cause is ignored, and this child is at risk for further inflammatory symptoms and future health issues.

As I have often spoken of in previous articles, almost every prominent disease we face today is inflammatory driven. It is crucial that we do not ignore inflammatory symptoms when they come. If left unattended, the root causes will drive further inflammation and, over time, can lead to disease.

Here are examples of common symptoms and the root causes that usually can be connected to them:

For me personally and many people I've worked with, life without addressing root causes resulted in decades of illness, suffering and



disease. I was fully disabled by age 38, with my health continuing to rapidly decline. Learning and applying root cause medicine to my life is the reason why I am alive, disease-free, and thriving today. I didn't just suppress my symptoms for relief. For the first time in my entire life, my body was given the support, attention and tools it needed to heal the way it was created to, and restore the balance that is necessary to return to a healthy state.

While I have come a long way in my own healing journey and education, the healthcare system and how we approach our health still operate the same way they did before. Nothing has changed. In fact, people are sicker today and living with more symptoms and medications today than they were decades ago.

Numerous factors outside our healthcare system contribute to our society's health decline. But there is also a tremendous amount of healing and prevention that could be happening if Western medicine would finally agree to expand the way patients are cared for that goes way beyond a pill bottle or short stay in a hospital.

The cost of neglecting to address root causes is monumental. It plays a significant role in the rise of ongoing chronic and inflammatory disease that impacts people of all ages and backgrounds.

Our Doctors are taught life-saving and critical care that is an essential part of our lives. But, at the same time, once the crisis is averted and we are in a stable place, our treatment comes to an end, and we move forward with our lives, hoping to never face the health issue again.

Staying healthy isn't something we should be just hoping for. We do not get sick because of bad luck or even not so favorable genetics. Sitting back and continuing to live our lives as we did before getting sick is a recipe for ensuring our symptoms, or new ones, will resurface at some point. It is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when.

The hard truth many struggle to accept is that our wellbeing and health are in our hands. We cannot wait for our healthcare system and insurance companies to get on board with root cause medicine, functional, integrative and naturopathic doctors. The pharmaceutical industry will not let it happen.

While more and more people are awakening to the need for root cause healing and natural medicine, the healthcare system is still not budging.

The greatest thing you can do for yourself and your family is become aware. Learn as much as you can. Ask questions, get curious, and be open to innovative voices that will give you new perspectives.

The next time you or someone in your family is experiencing symptoms, I hope you remember this article and remember that the symptom has a deeper cause.

Identifying and addressing the root causes can change the way you feel today and provide you with a much healthier outlook for tomorrow.

Jacqueline Goncalves
Wellness Coach and Business Owner
Inspired Healing LLC



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Beyond Success: Finding True Happiness Through Authentic Living

In a world that constantly tells us who we should be, what we should achieve, and how we should live, one of the greatest acts of courage is choosing to live true to ourselves.

For many years, I believed that success, happiness, and fulfilment were found outside of me—in achievements, approval, and meeting expectations.

Yet the more I grew, the more I realised a profound truth: true happiness is not created by becoming someone else. It is created by fully honouring who we already are.

Living an aligned life means making choices that reflect our values, passions, purpose, and authentic selves. It means listening to the quiet voice within rather than the noise around us. When we live in alignment, we stop forcing life and begin flowing with it.

The truth is that every one of us has unique gifts, strengths, and a purpose that no one else can fulfil. Yet many people spend years disconnected from themselves, seeking validation from others or trying to fit into roles that were never meant for them.

This disconnection often leads to frustration, exhaustion, and a feeling that something is missing—even when life appears successful on the surface.

Alignment changes everything.
When we honour who we truly are, we unlock our natural power. We begin making decisions with greater confidence. We attract opportunities that resonate with our values. We experience deeper fulfilment because our actions are rooted in authenticity rather than obligation.

Most importantly, we create a life that feels like our own.
I have learned that greatness is not about perfection. Greatness is about authenticity. It is about having the courage to show up as yourself, embrace your uniqueness, and trust your inner wisdom. The more aligned we become, the more our energy, creativity, and potential expand.

Living true to ourselves does not mean life will always be easy. There will still be challenges, setbacks, twists and turns, and moments of uncertainty. However, when we are aligned, we face these experiences from a place of inner strength rather than fear. We become resilient because we are anchored in who we are.

The most fulfilled people I have met are not those who followed someone else's definition of success. They are those who dared to define success for themselves. They built lives that reflected their values, honoured their passions, and embraced their authentic identity.

The invitation for all of us is simple: stop asking who the world wants you to be and start asking who you truly are. Because the moment you choose authenticity over approval, alignment over expectation, and purpose over pressure, your life begins to transform.

True happiness is not found in becoming more. It is found in becoming more of yourself.

Practical ways to live a more aligned life

1. Get clear on your values.
Ask yourself: What matters most to me? When your decisions align with your values, life becomes more meaningful and fulfilling.

2. Listen to your intuition.
Your inner wisdom often knows the answer before your mind does. Create space for reflection, stillness, and self-awareness.

3. Let go of external expectations.
Release the pressure to live according to other people's standards. Your path is uniquely yours.

4. Embrace your strengths.
Focus on what makes you unique rather than comparing yourself to others. Your gifts are meant to be shared.

5. Take aligned action daily.
Small, consistent actions and baby steps that reflect your authentic self create extraordinary transformation over time.

As you move forward, remember this: the greatest relationship you will ever have is the one with yourself.

Honour it. Trust it. Nurture it.

When you live true to who you are, you don't just create success—you create significance. You create fulfilment. You create joy.

And in doing so, you step into the greatness that has always existed within you.

By Nadija Bajrami



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The Grief Nobody Names

When Your Old Life Is Over but the New One Hasn't Begun

We usually associate grief with losing someone we love. But grief does not always arrive because of one loss. Sometimes an entire chapter of our life begins to disappear. A loved one passes away. A beloved animal is no longer there. A childhood home filled with memories has to be sold. A career or role that shaped our identity changes or ends. Relationships change, people move away, priorities shift, and suddenly the future we had always imagined no longer seems to exist.

When several of these losses happen within a relatively short period, we may realise that we are grieving something much larger than each individual loss. Psychologists sometimes speak of cumulative loss, but what we experience can feel like the loss of an entire world. We are grieving the life in which all these people, places and familiar things still existed together. Once enough of those pieces disappear, we can no longer recreate that world, however much we may wish to.

I understand this kind of grief differently today because I find myself in such a transition too. Sometimes enough changes accumulate that we realise we are no longer dealing with individual endings. An entire chapter is closing, together with some of the identities, certainties and expectations that belonged to it. I have come to understand how unsettling it can be to know that the old life cannot return while having no clear picture of what the new one will look like.

When There Is No Going Back
Much of what we hear about healing focuses on recovery. We are encouraged to find ourselves again, rebuild and return to normal. But profound life changes may leave no old normal waiting for us. The people are gone, places have changed, our roles are different and, perhaps most importantly, we are no longer quite the same person who once lived that life.

We understand ourselves partly through our relationships, responsibilities, work, homes and routines. When enough of these disappear, grief becomes connected with identity and another question quietly appears:

Who am I now that so much of what defined my life is no longer there?

The mind does not particularly like this question because it wants certainty. It wants the new plan and the next destination. We may make plans, reconsider them and become frustrated because we believe we should be moving forward, while part of us is still trying to understand what has been left behind.

Living in the In-Between
Psychology uses the word liminality for the experience of being at a threshold, when one state or identity has ended but the next has not yet fully formed. It describes major life transitions remarkably well. We no longer stand firmly in our old life, but we cannot yet see the shape of the new one. It can feel as if we stand at the edge of an abyss, looking back at something familiar we cannot return to while looking ahead at something we cannot yet see.

This can bring sadness, anxiety, restlessness, exhaustion or emptiness, even when our lives appear perfectly functional from the outside. We should also be careful not to turn every difficult experience into a story of transformation. Some losses are simply heartbreaking. Accepting them does not mean pretending they were somehow necessary.

Grief needs time. The mind may already be searching for the next chapter while another part of us is still saying goodbye. We may need to mourn not only people, but also places, dreams, roles and identities that disappeared with them.

The Mind Wants Answers, the Soul May Need Time
When the external structures through which we have known ourselves fall away, we eventually meet a quieter question beneath the practical ones: what remains when I am no longer defined by the life I used to live?

The mind wants to answer immediately. It tries to construct the next identity before we have finished grieving the previous one. Yet my own experience is teaching me that the soul moves at a different pace.



Perhaps there are periods when we are not meant to know immediately what comes next because we first need time to recognise what is true for us now.

Our values may have changed. Dreams we carried for years may no longer feel like ours, while new desires appear that we do not yet understand. If we rush to replace what we have lost, we risk rebuilding another version of our old life simply because it is familiar. Speed favours the familiar. Time allows us to notice what has changed.

The Empty Canvas
And yet, within this unsettling period there can also be a remarkable opportunity. When many of the roles and responsibilities that defined us fall away, life can resemble an empty canvas. At first, that emptiness may feel frightening because there is nothing familiar painted on it. But it also means there is space.

Much of our life is shaped by responsibilities. We build careers, care for families, meet expectations and become the person other people rely on. These roles can give our lives enormous meaning, but they also shape our choices. When some eventually fall away, grief can come with a freedom we may never have experienced before.

We can begin to ask not only what we should do next, but what we actually want. Where would I like to live? How do I want my days to feel? Who do I want around me? What still gives my life meaning? And perhaps most importantly:

Who might I become when I no longer have to be the person everyone else needs me to be?

Not everyone gets the opportunity to ask that question. Something extraordinary happens when you reach a point where the years ahead don't automatically have to resemble those behind us. The empty canvas may frighten us, but it also gives us the possibility of creating our life more consciously than perhaps we ever could before.

Letting the New Life Unfold
But having an empty canvas does not mean that we have to start painting immediately.

After profound change, we may need months or longer before we know what we genuinely want. That time is not wasted, nor does it mean we are failing to move forward. We may simply need it to grieve what has ended, rest after what we have carried, and let our own wishes become audible again.

We can make the decisions that genuinely need to be made while leaving the larger questions open. We can explore, change our minds and discover new interests without feeling that every month must produce visible progress. Waiting does not mean withdrawing from life. We can keep living while letting the larger direction remain uncertain.

Perhaps the new life is not something we have to force into existence. We can give ourselves permission not to rush, not to have all the answers and not to fill the empty canvas simply because emptiness makes us uncomfortable. It may take months. It may take longer, and that is all right. The old life deserves to be grieved, and we deserve the time to discover who we are without it.

If we give ourselves that time, the new life may begin to unfold naturally, and in ways we could not have planned while still living the old one. Perhaps our task during this in-between period is not to know exactly what comes next, but to create enough space within ourselves for whatever comes next to find us.

By Dr Margit Gabriele Muller

www.soulilluminary.com



"The old life deserves to be grieved, and we deserve the time to discover who we are without it.



Your Life Doesn't Have to Make Sense to Everyone Else

We don't all have to fit the same mould. Sometimes authenticity matters more than fitting in.

Having connected with many clients over many years, one pattern has become very clear to me: we spend a huge amount of our lives worrying about whether the choices we make will make sense to other people. We question whether we're doing the right thing, whether we're on the right path and whether other people will understand the decisions we're making. We can spend so much time looking outside of ourselves for reassurance that we sometimes forget to ask the person who matters most: does this feel right for me?

Perhaps that's because we're taught from a young age that there is a right way to do things. We learn what is considered sensible, realistic and acceptable, and anything outside of that can feel like something we need to explain. But life doesn't always work that way. Sometimes the path that makes the least sense to everyone else makes perfect sense to the person walking it.

We don't all have to fit the same mould. Sometimes authenticity matters more than fitting in.

As human beings, we like things to make sense. We like answers. We like putting things into boxes and understanding where they belong. We also like knowing where we belong. When someone takes an unexpected path, changes direction, thinks differently or experiences life in a way we don't recognise, our first reaction can be to question it. Sometimes that is a good thing. We should ask questions. We should think for ourselves. But sometimes the reason we question something is much simpler: we don't understand it.

And when we don't understand something, we can quickly decide it must be wrong.

This is particularly interesting in the world we live in now. We have access to more information than ever, yet we don't always seem comfortable with not knowing. We can find an answer within seconds. We can find an expert, a study, a video or thousands of people who agree with us. Social media can turn uncertainty into certainty in an instant. One wrong turn can become a pile-on. One mistake can become someone's whole identity. One opinion that doesn't fit with the majority can be enough for people to decide they want nothing more to do with you. Sometimes it can feel like a modern-day witch hunt.

But perhaps we need to get more comfortable with saying "I don't know." There is a big difference between saying, "I don't understand this," and saying, "This cannot possibly exist."

We accept different ways of doing things all the time. Take cars. Some run on petrol, some run on electricity, and some use both. We don't look at an electric car and say, "That's not a real car because it doesn't work in the same way as mine." We understand it works differently, but it can still get us from A to B. So why are we sometimes less accepting when it comes to people? Perhaps different doesn't always mean unusual. Perhaps it simply means we're looking at life through another lens.

It's also interesting to see how much more we're talking about ADHD, autism and AuDHD now. Once rare conversations are becoming more visible, and people are beginning to understand that there are many different ways to process and experience the world. An AuDHD brain can process information, patterns, sensations and connections differently. For many people, receiving an autism or ADHD diagnosis later in life can provide a completely new way of understanding things they may have struggled to explain for years.

And I think there is something really important in that: understanding yourself.

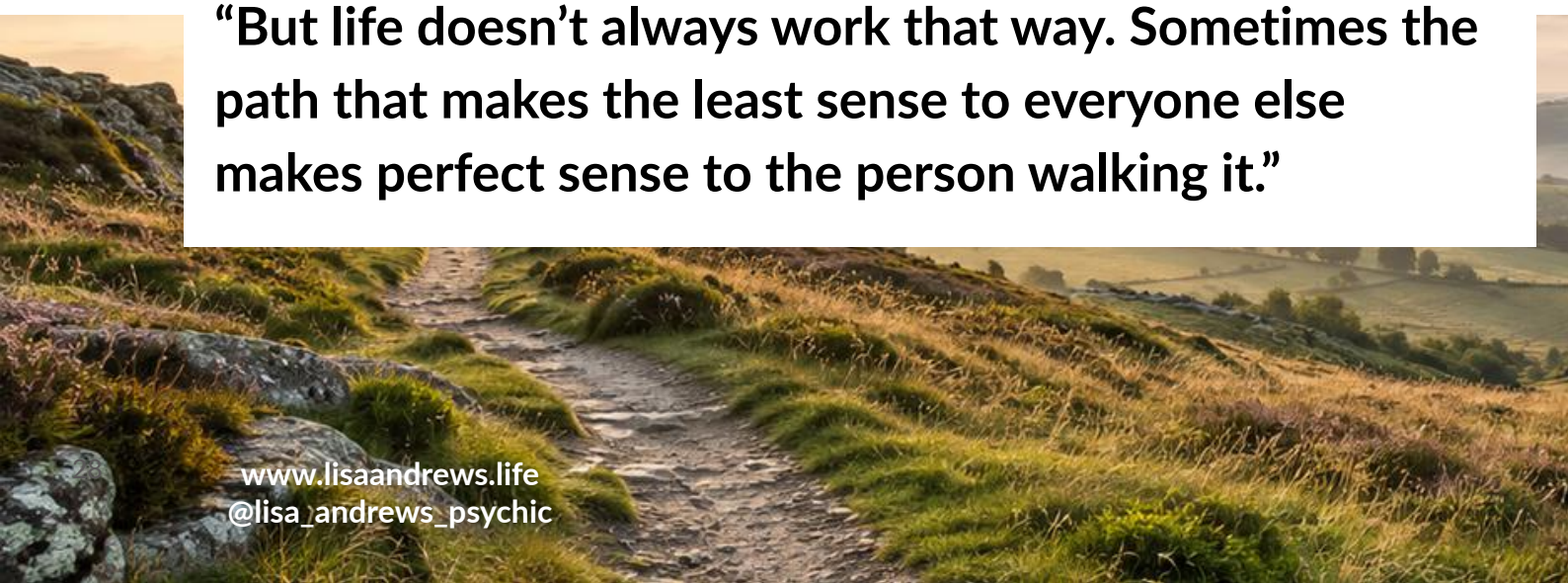
When you've spent years believing you should think, react, communicate, or experience life the same way as everyone else, finally understanding your own brain can change everything. What you once saw as a weakness, a flaw, or something you needed to hide can start to make more sense.

You can begin to recognise your own patterns, understand what overwhelms you, appreciate what you are good at and, perhaps most importantly, stop constantly measuring yourself against somebody else's way of being.

For me, one of the most interesting parts of understanding my AuDHD has been realising that it isn't about putting myself into another box. It's about finally having the language to understand myself.

And perhaps that is why the wider conversation around intuition is so interesting too. When we begin to understand that people can process information and experience the world differently, it becomes easier to accept that there may be things about another person's

"But life doesn't always work that way. Sometimes the path that makes the least sense to everyone else makes perfect sense to the person walking it."



experience that we simply don't see or understand ourselves.

Maybe we've spent too much time asking people who see things differently to adapt themselves to the world, without asking what the world could learn from them. We live in a world that can be loud, fast and full-on. Everything wants our attention. Everyone has an opinion. We're encouraged to react quickly, make decisions and move on. Maybe what we need isn't always more noise.

Maybe we need people who stop and notice, people who question things, people who see connections others might miss and people who experience life through a softer lens. Perhaps, in a world that can sometimes feel quite hard, a softer way of seeing could be exactly what we need.

And that brings us to psychic work. Of course, being psychic can become a trend. Social media can turn almost anything into one. People will always exaggerate what they can do, follow what is popular, or claim a level of ability they don't really have. We would notice pretty quickly if someone announced they were the next Messi or Ronaldo without having the football skills to match. Give them a football, and we'd soon know. Charlatans can exist. That doesn't mean skill doesn't exist.

Every field has people who overstate what they can do. One dishonest person doesn't mean an entire profession is dishonest. One athlete cheating doesn't mean athletic talent isn't real. One person pretending to be a musician doesn't mean musical talent doesn't exist. Psychic work deserves questioning. It deserves common sense and discernment. But perhaps it also deserves the same fairness we give other areas of human ability.

Another part of modern life makes this even more interesting: followers. We've become very used to looking at someone's audience and using it as a measure of their talent. Of course, the two can absolutely go together. Someone can have millions of followers and be incredibly talented, experienced and genuine. But someone can also have a small following and be very good at what they do. The two things simply aren't the same.

Followers show us how many people are watching. They don't automatically tell us how much someone knows, how much experience they have or how good they are at their craft. Years of building a career away from social media can teach you something that numbers can't: discernment takes time. Wisdom isn't always loud. Experience isn't always visible. And talent doesn't always come with a huge following.

Sometimes you become good at something by simply doing it for years. You listen. You learn. You make mistakes. You get better. And perhaps that's another thing we need to remember. We're very quick to write people off when they get something wrong. One bad decision can suddenly become the only thing people see.

But most of us have made mistakes. We learn from life. We change. We grow. Sometimes the things we wish we'd handled differently become the very things that teach us the most. A mistake can be part of someone's story without becoming the whole story.

That's why discernment isn't about looking for reasons to discredit someone. It's about looking at the whole picture. This isn't about believing everything we're told. It isn't about ignoring science or evidence. It isn't about saying every psychic is genuine or that every feeling we have is intuition. It's about staying curious.

Because "I don't know" is very different from "this cannot exist." And perhaps our lives don't have to make sense to everyone else either.

Maybe the people who see things differently aren't seeing a different world at all. Maybe they're seeing the same world through a different lens. And perhaps the people we are quickest to question aren't always asking us to follow them. Maybe they're simply showing us where to look. Maybe, now and then, the seers are the ones who can light the way.

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The Energy of Ending Sexual Harassment

Why It Happens, and Why "Not Doing It" Isn't the Same as Understanding It



By Lorraine Chapman

Let's talk about something a lot of people would rather tiptoe around. Sexual harassment. Not the dictionary definition, not the HR training video with the terrible acting, but the actual energy underneath it. Because if we want to genuinely end it, not just police it, we need to understand why it happens in the first place, not simply congratulate ourselves for not personally doing it.

Here's the bit that makes people uncomfortable. Not exuding harassing behaviour is not the same as understanding harassment. Plenty of decent people think, "Well, I'd never do that," and consider the conversation closed. But that's a bit like saying you understand fire because you've never set anything alight. Understanding requires looking at what actually drives the behaviour, in the people who do it, and in the cultures that quietly let it slide.

It Was Never Really About Attraction

This is the first myth worth binning. Sexual harassment isn't fundamentally about desire. It's about power, and a nervous system that has learned to seek control through domination rather than connection. Someone who genuinely feels secure in their own worth doesn't need to diminish, corner or unsettle another person to feel powerful. That urge comes from somewhere hollow, often an old wound around control, rejection or inadequacy that never got looked at, so instead it gets acted out sideways, onto someone with less power to push back.

That doesn't excuse it for one second. But it does explain why harassment shows up more in environments with steep hierarchies, unclear boundaries and silence around uncomfortable topics. Wherever there's a power gap and a culture that doesn't talk openly, there's fertile ground for it to grow.

Silence Is the Soil It Grows In

Here's the uncomfortable truth. Harassment doesn't usually thrive because everyone around it is complicit or cruel. It thrives because most people are simply uncomfortable, and discomfort makes people go quiet. Nobody wants to be the one who "makes it awkward." A comment gets laughed off. A lingering hand on the shoulder gets ignored. A joke that landed wrong gets excused as "oh, that's just how they are."

Every one of those small silences is an energy leak of its own, and collectively they add up to a culture where harassment isn't confronted; it's simply absorbed. No policy survives contact with a culture that would rather stay quiet. The goal isn't just removing the individuals who cause harm. It's building workplaces where discomfort gets spoken instead of swallowed.

The Body Knows Before the Policy Manual Does

Something I say to my clients constantly is that your body registers a boundary crossing long before your rational mind catches up. That tightness in the stomach. The nervous laugh. The instinct to make yourself smaller. These aren't overreactions. They're your energy system doing exactly its job, alerting you that something isn't right.

Part of ending harassment culturally is teaching people, especially those conditioned to prioritise others' comfort over their own safety, to trust that early signal. And just as importantly, teaching those in positions of power to notice when their own energy shifts toward control, and to catch it before it becomes behaviour.

So What Actually Shifts This

Real change here isn't a poster in the break room, however well designed. It's a few honest things happening at once.

It's leaders doing their own inner work, so power stops feeling like something to hoard and starts feeling like something to hold responsibly. It's organisations building genuine psychological safety, so raising a concern doesn't feel like career suicide. It's normalising early conversations about boundaries and consent, long before a formal complaint. And it's all of us getting comfortable with discomfort, because an awkward conversation today beats a devastating one down the line.

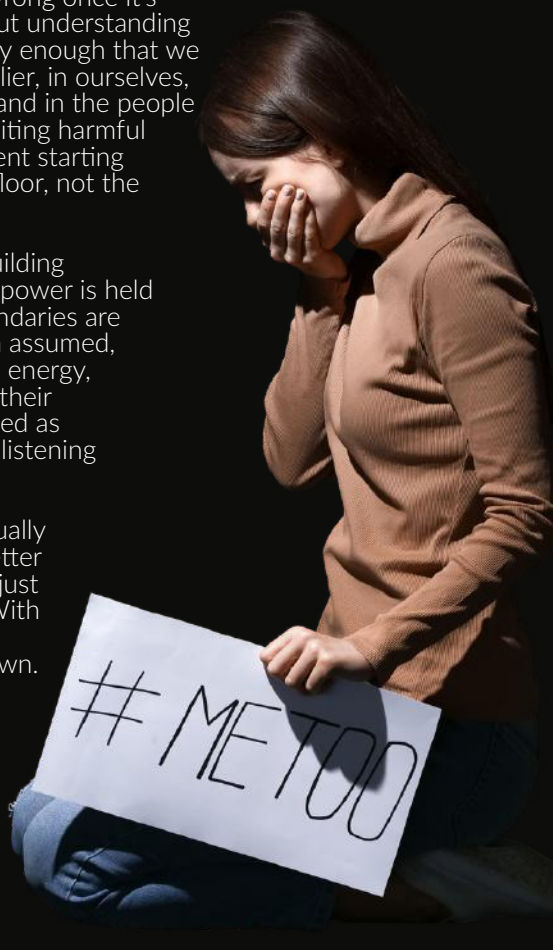
The Real Work

It's worth saying too, since October 2026, UK employers have carried a new legal duty to take "all reasonable steps" to prevent workplace sexual harassment, including from third parties like clients and customers. Welcome, and long overdue. But laws change behaviour on the surface far quicker than they change energy underneath it, so it can only ever be part of the answer.

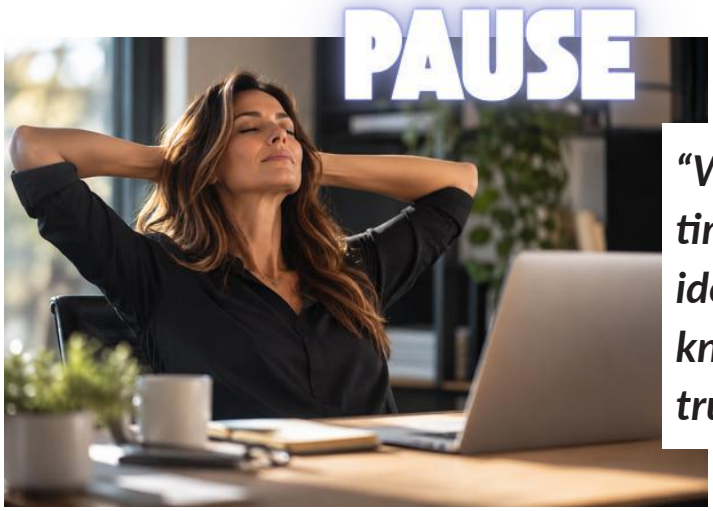
Ending sexual harassment isn't just about punishing what's wrong once it's happened. It's about understanding the root of it clearly enough that we can interrupt it earlier, in ourselves, in our workplaces and in the people we lead. Not exhibiting harmful behaviour is a decent starting point. But it's the floor, not the ceiling.

The real work is building workplaces where power is held with integrity, boundaries are spoken rather than assumed, and every person's energy, their yes, their no, their discomfort, is treated as information worth listening to.

That's how we actually end it. Not with better posters. Not even just with better laws. With better awareness, starting with our own.



WHEN DID YOU LAST STOP LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY THINK?



In a world overflowing with opinions, how do we know which ones are truly our own?

After more than 50 years of observing human behaviour and reflecting on my own, I've noticed something.

We seem to be losing the art of discernment.

There has never been more information available to us. Courses. Podcasts. AI. Social media. Webinars. Books. Masterclasses. Every day we're invited to consume something else. Another opinion. Another strategy. Another way to improve ourselves.

Don't get me wrong. Learning is important. I've spent a lifetime studying the human condition. But I wonder if we've become so busy consuming other people's ideas that we're in danger of losing touch with our own. More importantly, we're not creating enough moments of reflection and silence to discover what our own considered opinion actually is.

We need to protect our capacity to think for ourselves.

We can do this by taking time out to reflect, spend some "me" time in silence, pause long enough to ask: Is this really what I think? What am I feeling about this? Or have I simply absorbed someone else's opinion?

Over many years I've seen people enrol in course after course, download another workbook, listen to another podcast and fill another notebook with ideas. Yet very little changes. The information sits on a desktop, in a folder, or on a bookshelf, quietly waiting for a day that never seems to arrive. The purpose of a course isn't simply to learn something new. It's to integrate what you've learnt into who you are and how you live. One of my favourite sayings is:

To know a thing and not to do it is not to know.

To keep learning without implementing what we've learnt is a missed opportunity. Real learning begins when we take action, practise, make mistakes, fail forward, reflect and try again. Repetition matters. Real learning comes through repetition. Every time we put an idea into practice, we deepen our understanding and make it a little more our own. We create new experiences and gradually embody what we've learnt.

Miss out on any one of those steps and the process remains incomplete. Knowledge on its own changes very little. It's only when we apply what we've learnt, reflect on the experience and make it part of who we are that real growth occurs.

Information changes what we know. Integration changes who we become.

Somewhere between learning something new and living it lies a forgotten quality: discernment. Discernment is the space between consuming an idea and deciding whether it deserves a place in your life.

It asks different questions. Do I actually believe this? Does this fit with what I've learnt through my own experience? Is this right for me, or am I simply afraid of missing out? Wisdom doesn't come from moving quickly from one idea to the next. It grows when we slow down long enough to reflect on what we've experienced, allowing those experiences to shape us and inform our opinions.

"When was the last time you sat with an idea long enough to know whether it was truly yours?"

Reflection is where discernment grows.

It gives us the space to weigh up an idea carefully and decide whether it's right for us or whether we simply let it pass us by. We begin to make sense of what we've learnt through the lens of our own experience, rather than someone else's.

Not every good idea is our idea. Wisdom comes from knowing the difference. Perhaps most importantly, reflection helps us hear our own thinking again.

The older I get, the more I believe that wisdom isn't about knowing more. It's about becoming more discerning. Being far more selective about what we consume, creating enough quiet to hear ourselves think, and having the courage to decide what truly deserves a place in our lives.

Before you sign up for the next course, download the next PDF or ask AI the next question, pause for a moment.

Ask yourself:
When was the last time you sat with an idea long enough to know whether it was truly yours?



By Mary Scott

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Healthy Boundaries Begin with Healthy Needs



One of the most common misconceptions I encounter in my work is the belief that having needs is somehow selfish or a sign of weakness. In reality, the opposite is true. We all have emotional, psychological and practical needs.

They are part of being human. Healthy relationships are not built on pretending we don't have needs. They are built on recognising them, communicating them clearly and respecting both our own boundaries and those of the people we care about.

Many of the conflicts I see between couples arise not because their needs are incompatible, but because they become lost in criticism, defensiveness or misunderstanding. Instead of expressing what they need, partners often tell each other what the other person is doing wrong. As a result, both people feel unheard.

A simple framework I often share with clients is the difference between an **invitation**, a **request** and a **demand.**

An **invitation** gives complete freedom to choose. "Would you like to come for a walk with me?" The other person is free to say yes or no without fear of upsetting their partner. A **request** goes one step further. It communicates a need while still respecting the other person's autonomy.

"I'd really appreciate it if we could spend some time together this evening. I've been missing our connection." Here, the need is expressed honestly, but the choice remains. The other person can respond, discuss alternatives or explain why today might not be possible. A **demand**, however, removes that choice. "If you really loved me, you'd come with me." Or: "You have to do this."

Demands often rely on guilt, pressure, criticism or emotional consequences. Instead of encouraging connection, they create resistance. Even if someone complies, they often do so out of obligation rather than willingness, and resentment quietly grows. One question can help us recognise the difference:

Can the other person genuinely say "no" without being punished, criticised or made to feel guilty?

If the answer is yes, it is likely an invitation or a healthy request. If the answer is no, it has become a demand. This naturally leads to another important concept: boundaries. We talk about "setting boundaries", but what a boundary actually is may be misunderstood. Many people believe a boundary is something we place on another person: "You must never do that again." When in fact, a healthy boundary is about our own behaviour, not controlling someone else's. A boundary communicates what we need to remain emotionally, mentally or physically well, together with what we will do if that boundary is crossed.

For example:
"I want us to be able to discuss difficult issues respectfully. If our conversation becomes shouting or personal criticism, I'm going to pause the discussion and come back to it when we're both calmer."

Notice that the boundary is not about forcing the other person to behave differently. It is about taking responsibility for how we protect our own well-being. Needs and boundaries are closely connected. Our needs tell us what is important. Our boundaries help us protect those needs.

When we understand both, we become better able to communicate openly instead of expecting our partner to read our mind or becoming resentful when they don't.

Healthy relationships also recognise an important truth: no one person can meet every one of our needs all of the time. Partners are not mind readers, nor are they responsible for our entire emotional well-being. Equally, we should not dismiss our needs simply because they are inconvenient.

The goal is not perfection. It is understanding. When couples learn to replace demands with requests, criticism with curiosity and assumptions with honest conversations, something remarkable happens.

The relationship becomes a place where both people feel safer expressing themselves. Differences become easier to navigate because they are approached as problems to solve together rather than battles to win.

Ultimately, healthy boundaries are not walls that keep people out. They are clear, respectful guidelines that allow trust, safety and intimacy to flourish. They remind us that we can express our needs honestly, respect another person's freedom to choose and still remain true to ourselves.

That is where healthy relationships begin.

By Celia Conrad



Celia Conrad, Your Relationship Guru, is a former family lawyer, a relationship expert and well-being advisor specialising in loss and life-changing events. She supports individuals navigating divorce, break-ups, grief, and other life transitions, and helps employers assist affected employees facing these challenges in the workplace. www.yourrelationshipguru.com

AI Can Find Talent, But Can It Find Potential?

Recruitment is having a moment. Tools are faster, systems are smarter, and the promise of automation is everywhere. If you listen to the noise, you may think hiring has become a science: feed the machine a role profile, and out pops the perfect shortlist.But anyone who has spent time building teams knows that talent is only part of the story. Potential is the bigger prize. And potential is stubbornly human.

AI is brilliant at patterns. It can sift through thousands of profiles, surface skills and find matches that a human might miss. It can reduce administrative burden and create efficiencies across the hiring process. That matters. However, potential does not always leave a tidy digital footprint.

Potential often shows up in places algorithms struggle to measure. It is the sideways career move that should not have worked but did. It is the candidate who successfully changed industries more than once. It is the individual who consistently learned quickly, adapted under pressure, yet still emerged stronger from setbacks. These are signals of growth, not simply competence.

Therefore, the question for business leaders is simple: if AI can widen our view of talent, how do we ensure we still recognise potential?

The first step is to look beyond the traditional CV. The neat, upward-only career path has never been the only indicator of future success. I often encourage hiring managers to look for stretch moments. When has an individual taken on something unfamiliar? When have they stepped outside their comfort zone? How have they responded when circumstances changed? These moments reveal far more than a list of responsibilities.

Structured interviews also play a crucial role. Instead of focusing solely on achievements, explore how a candidate thinks. Ask what they learned from a failure. Ask when they changed their mind based on new information. Ask how they approached a challenge they had never encountered before. The answers often reveal learning agility, resilience and self-awareness, all powerful indicators of potential.

Practical exercises can be equally valuable. A well-designed scenario or case study allows you to observe how someone processes information, manages ambiguity and collaborates with others. Rather than relying on assumptions based on their previous job titles, you gain a real-time view of how they think.

References offer another often-overlooked opportunity. Instead of asking whether someone performed well, ask how they evolved. What changed during their time with the organisation? When did they demonstrate growth? Development over time is one of the strongest predictors of future potential.



There are also some quieter signals that should not be underestimated either. Curiosity. Humility. Follow-through. Curious people ask better questions and pursue better solutions. Humble people are open to feedback and willing to learn. People who consistently follow through build trust and deliver results. These qualities rarely dominate a CV, but they often distinguish high performers from average contributors.



This is where recruitment professionals continue to add immense value. The future recruiter is not simply a gatekeeper moving CVs through a process. They are a strategist, coach and advisor. Their role is to help organisations understand the difference between experience and capability, between past performance and future potential.

The future of recruitment is not AI versus humans. It is humans empowered by better technology. AI will help us find talent faster and more efficiently than ever before. But recognising potential, that spark of future capability that cannot yet be measured by experience alone, remains a deeply human skill.

And that may prove to be the most valuable skill of all.

By Penelope Layzell

> **“The first step is to look beyond the traditional CV. The neat, upward-only career path has never been the only indicator of future success.”**

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ARE EMOTIONS THE BACKBONE OF OUR SERIOUS ILLNESSES



We are told not to suppress feelings, but when we do, interesting research has come to light when looking at breast cancer cases. The women who had more aggressive cancer were the ones who had the most amenable personality. They hated conflict, abided by the rules, and pushed down any anger they had. This trait also affected other conditions, like rheumatoid arthritis flare-ups.

A common factor found in single men: they had more heart disease & cancers than married men. 5 x more than women. Loneliness is a common factor comparable to smoking and obesity. Without a wife to vent to or talk through frustration, they can pick up bad habits, like not cooking, and see the issues. Unhappily married men didn't fare as well. Possibly because they pushed down their discomfort to keep the peace in their relationship, this has a knock-on effect on children living in stressed atmospheres who may develop asthma and skin conditions.

"Anything that affects how we stay balanced or causes pressure for our immunity to be suppressed can create problems."

Our jobs also make us push down irritation. We can't actually blow a fuse at our boss. Decorum is required. When you say this job is killing me, it could literally be. Emotions can build up, holding the body in a stressed state constantly. Every cell in our body can go into mutiny at any time; designed to duplicate and go rogue, we don't catch cancer; our cells develop it.

External stress from outside, such as racism, can stir up deep feelings of shame and isolation. This sets up inflammation internally, altering our telomeres that stabilise changes in our genes. Changes from stress in our father's sperm are transmitted down the line. Our mother nurtures us normally, but the alteration is within our DNA now. A precursor for cancer to develop some time in our lifetime.

We develop conditions that make ailments more likely. We don't suddenly develop an autoimmune condition or serious illness. But we may have been building up to it until it makes itself known to us. Stress stimulates inflammatory proteins that can change cell DNA, stopping its repair or inactivating genes that suppress tumour growth.

If we have felt threatened or insecure over a long period, these emotions can switch genes on once inflammation kicks in. Symptoms start, and the cells play the wrong tune. A knock-on effect from modern media unkindness or inferiority can have long-term consequences. Being mindful of how we speak to others is key. But letting hurt stay deep inside isn't good either. Communicate and acknowledge how we feel emotionally. Being a martyr and staying quiet for peace is only really hurting ourselves.

Anything that affects how we stay balanced or causes pressure for our immunity to be suppressed can create problems. From birth, we crave attachment, but some children are told from birth to be quiet, don't answer back. Good children don't make a noise. Our beliefs then are that we must not speak up to our peers.

Keep our opinions private. We may become perfectionists, striving to be perfect just as we did as children. Once in the workplace, pressures mount, but we still swallow our words of resentment or anger. To be seen as professional and not to rock the boat or draw attention to ourselves. We go inward.

We try to seek approval externally as we become adults, seeking love, attention, wealth to feel accomplished, even caring for someone in exchange to feel wanted. Nowadays, society has teenagers who are depressed, self-harming and many with a neurodivergent diagnosis. Is it just because parents are too ultra-stressed, distracted from their children from birth? Mobiles, long work shifts, media from TV to gaming.

Years ago, none of this was a distraction for parents. Nowadays, children are becoming singularly focused on tech. Many countries that are not modernised carry their young whilst working. We are abandoning ours in a nursery, a baby bouncer in front of the TV or iPad. Their only attachment is to online fake characters or friends they've never met.

When bullying and trolling occur, maybe this is our release of emotions, but it is way more vicious and harmful to others on the receiving end. A calm but articulate discussion face to face allows emotions felt to be expressed in a two-way situation. A safer and calmer release for all.

By Nicky Abell-Francis



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How to Maintain Your Spirit When the News Never Stops

I spent years in newsrooms, so trust me when I tell you: the news cycle isn't designed to end. It is designed to keep you watching. There is no final headline, no anchor who signs off and says, «That's everything — go live your life now.» The feed refreshes forever. And somewhere between the third crisis of the morning and the tenth alert of the afternoon, something quiet happens inside us: our spirit starts to dim under the weight of a world we cannot fix by doomscrolling.

If that's you, you are not weak. You are human, and you are in good company. The American Psychological Association's 2025 Stress in America survey found that 76 per cent of U.S. adults say the future of the nation is a significant source of stress, and stress tied to misleading information has spiked sharply. Researchers now have a name for the compulsive consumption of negative content. It's called «doomscrolling,» and Harvard Health reports that studies link it to lower well-being, reduced life satisfaction, and even existential anxiety. The Mental Health Foundation notes it can trigger our fight-or-flight response, raising stress hormones and disturbing sleep. In other words: your body is reading every headline right along with your eyes.

Here's the good news (pun absolutely intended). You can stay informed and stay whole. Staying informed is a form of stewardship; staying anxious is not a requirement of citizenship. Here's how I coach my clients (and myself) to protect the spirit while the world stays loud.

1. Ration the news; don't renounce it.
Ignorance isn't peace — it's just anxiety with a blindfold on. Instead, appoint the news a scheduled visitor rather than a permanent houseguest. Choose one or two trusted outlets and one or two set times a day. Turn off push alerts; if something truly urgent happens, I promise you will hear about it. Researchers at McMaster University suggest a simple test: if headlines leave you feeling anxious, hopeless, or exhausted in a lasting way, your consumption has crossed from informed into harmed.

2. Guard your attention — especially morning and night.
Scripture says, «Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it» (Proverbs 4:23). Practically, what does that look like? Don't let the world's chaos be the first voice you hear or the last. Give your first 15 minutes to prayer, gratitude, or stillness before you give a single second to a screen. End the night the same way. Studies during the pandemic found daily social media exposure was associated with increased depression and post-traumatic stress symptoms, and the antidote begins with what you let in at the edges of your day.

3. Let your body finish the stress cycle.
Bad news lands in the body, not just the mind, and the Mental Health Foundation lists headaches, muscle tension, and sleepless nights among doomscrolling's physical calling cards. So move the stress through: walk, garden, stretch, dance in your kitchen if you must. As a HeartMath practitioner, I teach heart-focused breathing: slow, even breaths while imagining them flowing in and out through the area of the heart to shift the nervous system out of alarm and back into coherence. Five intentional minutes can change your entire afternoon, and your body will thank you long before your mind catches up.

4. Trade scrolling for action.
Helplessness is the real wound the news inflicts. Prayer heals it from above; action heals it from below. When a story breaks your heart, do something the algorithm can't measure: pray by name, give, volunteer, check on a neighbor. One faithful act outweighs a hundred anxious refreshes.

5. Choose faces over feeds.
The APA's 2025 survey also found that more than half of adults feel isolated, and 69 per cent say they needed more emotional support this past year than they received, yet 92 per cent name relationships as a key source of meaning in their lives. Read that again. The news connects you to everything and anchors you to nothing. People do the opposite. So log off and gather. Break bread. Call the friend instead of reading about the crisis. Your spirit is fed at tables, not timelines.

The world's noise won't go quiet anytime soon. But your spirit was never meant to run on headlines. It runs on hope, on purpose, and on the One who was never once surprised by the news. Stay informed. Stay prayerful. Stay lit from within.

By Laila Morcos Zissis

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Why Building Muscle Matters More Than Losing Weight

When most people decide it's time to improve their health, they first focus on losing weight. The conversation usually starts with a number.
"I want to lose a stone."
"I just want to get back to the weight I was before the kids."
"I felt my best when I was 70kg."
For many people, a point in their life becomes the benchmark. Perhaps it was their wedding day, a holiday, a sporting achievement, or simply a time when they felt fitter, healthier, and more confident.

The strategy often seems simple: eat less, burn more calories, and get back to that number on the scales. And for a while, it works. But as the years pass, something changes. We get older. Careers become more demanding. Families grow. Stress increases. Sleep becomes harder to come by. Life becomes busier and more complicated.

The methods that once worked can become increasingly difficult to sustain. The aggressive dieting approach that helped someone lose weight in their twenties may feel almost impossible in their forties or fifties. Yet many people continue chasing the same goal: a lower number on the scales. What if that's the wrong goal? What if, instead of focusing on losing weight, we focused on building muscle?

Because while the scales tell us how heavy we are, they tell us very little about our health, strength, resilience, or how well we are likely to age.

What Is Muscle Mass?

Muscle mass simply refers to the amount of muscle tissue you carry on your body. For many people, muscle is associated with bodybuilders or elite athletes. In reality, we all rely on muscle every day. It lets us stand, walk, climb stairs, lift groceries, play with our children, and stay independent as we age.

Muscle is far more than a cosmetic feature. It is a health asset. Research continues to show that maintaining muscle mass is associated with improved health outcomes, reduced risk of injury, better metabolic health, and greater longevity. In many ways, muscle can be viewed as the body's pension plan. The more we invest in it now, the more we benefit later in life.

How Do We Build Muscle?

We build muscle through resistance training, often called strength training. Strength training involves applying an external force to the body through free weights, resistance machines, resistance bands, kettlebells, or even bodyweight exercises.

When we challenge our muscles, tiny amounts of damage occur within the muscle fibres. This is completely normal and is part of the adaptation process. The body responds by repairing those fibres, making them stronger and more resilient than before. Repeated over weeks, months, and years, this process increases strength and muscle mass.

While there are many ways to train, strength training generally falls into three categories.

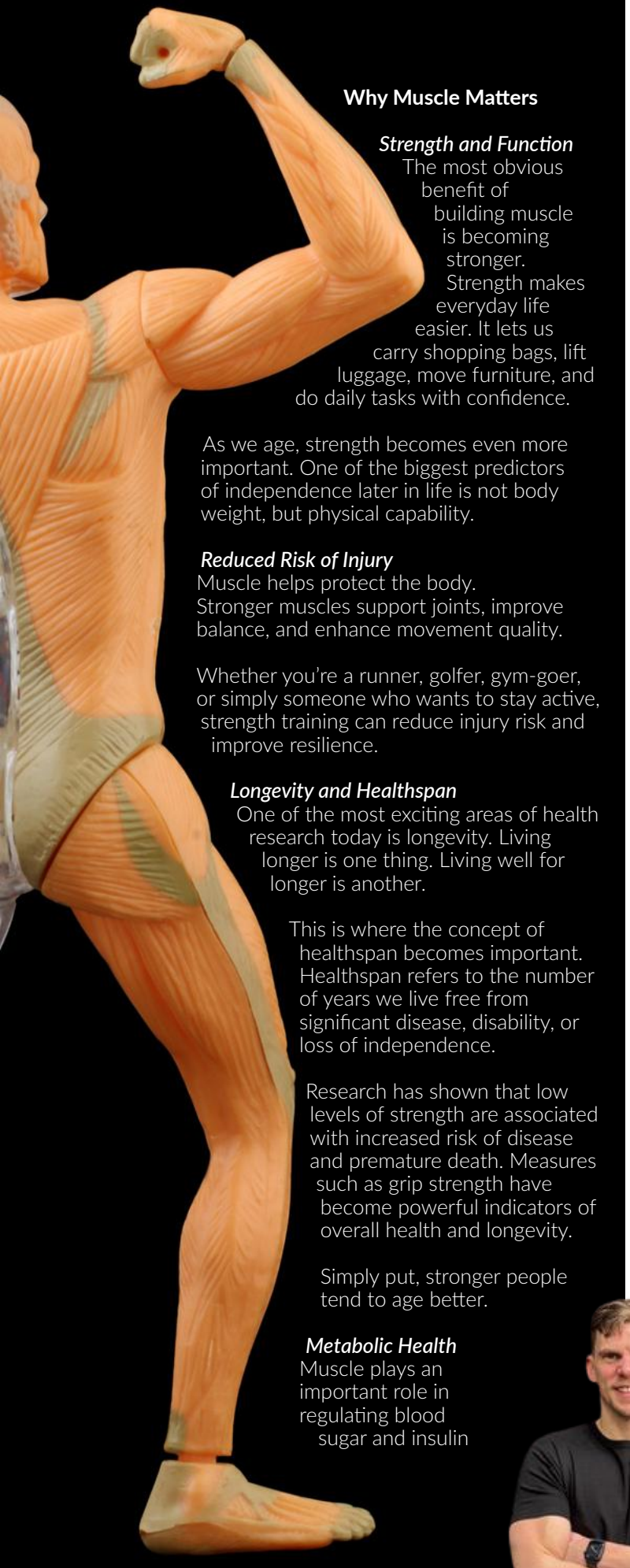
Strength Training
Typically performed for 1-5 repetitions per set using heavier loads. The primary goal is to increase force production and improve the nervous system's ability to recruit muscle fibres. Powerlifters and strength athletes often use this style of training.

Hypertrophy Training
Typically performed for 6-12 repetitions per set. The goal here is to increase the size of the muscle fibres themselves. This is generally considered the most effective range for building muscle mass and is commonly used by bodybuilders and general fitness enthusiasts alike.

Muscular Endurance Training
Typically performed for 15 or more repetitions per set. The focus is on improving the muscle's ability to repeatedly produce force over longer periods. This can improve fatigue resistance and overall work capacity.

The good news is that you don't need to become a competitive athlete to benefit. Almost any well-structured strength training programme can improve muscle mass, strength, and health.





Why Muscle Matters

Strength and Function

The most obvious benefit of building muscle is becoming stronger. Strength makes everyday life easier. It lets us carry shopping bags, lift luggage, move furniture, and do daily tasks with confidence.

As we age, strength becomes even more important. One of the biggest predictors of independence later in life is not body weight, but physical capability.

Reduced Risk of Injury

Muscle helps protect the body. Stronger muscles support joints, improve balance, and enhance movement quality.

Whether you're a runner, golfer, gym-goer, or simply someone who wants to stay active, strength training can reduce injury risk and improve resilience.

Longevity and Healthspan

One of the most exciting areas of health research today is longevity. Living longer is one thing. Living well for longer is another.

This is where the concept of healthspan becomes important. Healthspan refers to the number of years we live free from significant disease, disability, or loss of independence.

Research has shown that low levels of strength are associated with increased risk of disease and premature death. Measures such as grip strength have become powerful indicators of overall health and longevity.

Simply put, stronger people tend to age better.

Metabolic Health

Muscle plays an important role in regulating blood sugar and insulin sensitivity. As one of the body's primary glucose storage sites, muscle helps improve metabolic health and reduce the risk of conditions such as Type 2 diabetes. This is one reason why two people can weigh the same yet have very different health profiles. Body composition often matters more than body weight.

Does Muscle Help Burn Fat?

One common reason people become interested in building muscle is that they have heard muscle burns fat. There is some truth to this. Muscle is metabolically active tissue, meaning it requires energy to maintain itself, even at rest.

While building muscle will not dramatically increase daily calorie expenditure, it does contribute to a higher resting metabolic rate. More importantly, stronger people tend to be more active, train harder, recover better, and maintain healthier body compositions over time. The goal should not simply be weight loss. The goal should be improving the ratio between muscle and body fat.

Where Does Protein Fit In?

Whenever people begin a health journey, one of the first nutritional changes they make is increasing protein intake. Often, people view this purely through the lens of weight loss because protein increases feelings of fullness.

However, protein's most important role may be supporting muscle repair and growth Every time we strength train, we create a stimulus for adaptation. Protein provides the raw materials needed to repair and rebuild those muscle fibres. Protein is made up of amino acids, often called the building blocks of life.

Without adequate protein, recovery becomes more difficult and building muscle becomes significantly harder. Think of it this way: Strength training provides the blueprint. Protein provides the bricks.
You need both to build a stronger body.

A Different Goal

For decades, health and fitness have been dominated by one question: "What do you weigh?" Perhaps we should be asking a different question: "How strong are you?" The scales cannot tell us how healthy we are. They cannot tell us how well we will move in twenty years' time.

They cannot tell us how resilient we are to injury or disease. Muscle can. So rather than focusing solely on losing weight, consider focusing on building strength, maintaining muscle, and improving your healthspan. Because while losing weight may change how you look, building muscle can change how you live.



By Craig Alexander

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Wellness Fatigue

When Self-Care Starts to Feel Like Hard Work



We live in an age of relentless self-optimisation. From the moment we wake, we are met with advice on how to sleep better, eat more cleanly, think more positively, exercise more effectively, and improve almost every part of ourselves. Wellness, once intended to support our lives, has in many cases become another standard to live up to — and many people are quietly burning out under the weight of it.

There was a time when wellbeing felt far simpler. The foundations were clear: eat nourishing food, move your body, get enough rest, and pay attention to your mental and emotional health. Yet somewhere along the way, that simplicity became buried beneath a constant stream of routines, trends, and "must-do" habits designed to help us become the best version of ourselves.

As a faith-based transformational coach, I believe true wellbeing is not just about outward habits, but about inner alignment, emotional balance, and living from a place of purpose. When wellness becomes rooted solely in performance, perfection, or productivity, it can leave people feeling disconnected rather than restored.

Today, wellness is everywhere. It shapes our social media feeds, fills our inboxes, and dominates conversations around modern living. We are encouraged to wake earlier, journal more often, drink more water, take supplements, meditate daily, avoid certain foods, track our sleep, protect our peace, and remain consistent through it all. Much of this advice is well-meaning, but for many people, the pursuit of health has become another source of pressure rather than support.

This is what I think of as wellness fatigue — that quiet exhaustion that sets in when taking care of yourself starts to feel like one more thing you are not doing well enough.

What I have noticed increasingly is that people are not short of information when it comes to their health. If anything, they are overwhelmed by it. One expert champions discipline and routine, while another encourages softness and letting go. One trend promotes elimination; another advocates balance. The result is often confusion, guilt, and the sense that no matter what you do, it is never quite enough. Social media has added another layer to this.

Wellness is often presented as something beautifully curated: the spotless kitchen, the green juice, the morning yoga flow, the expensive supplements, the glowing skin, the calm and carefully structured routine. It is an image that can feel aspirational, but it can also be deeply unhelpful. For those navigating busy schedules, financial pressure, family responsibilities, or emotional strain, that version of health can feel unrealistic and out of reach.

The reality is that wellbeing is rarely so polished. Sometimes it looks like going to bed earlier rather than waking at 5 am. Sometimes it means choosing a short walk over an intense workout because that is what your body can manage. Sometimes it is saying no, cancelling plans, asking for help, or allowing yourself to rest without feeling the need to earn it. That is perhaps where the wellness conversation needs to become more honest.

Too often, we have turned wellbeing into a performance. Even rest can feel like something to optimise, track, and improve. There is now a subtle pressure to "do wellness well", and when people cannot keep up, they are left feeling inadequate rather than encouraged. The irony is impossible to ignore: the very habits meant to improve our lives can end up making us feel worse.

What many people need is not more advice, but more permission.

Permission to simplify. Permission to step away from the endless cycle of trends. Permission to accept that good health is not built through perfection, but through small, realistic choices repeated over time.

In truth, the most powerful wellness habits are often the least glamorous. They are the quiet basics we return to again and again: eating regular meals, drinking enough water, moving in ways that feel good, sleeping well, managing stress where possible, and being kinder to ourselves in the process. These habits may not make for compelling social media content, but they are sustainable — and sustainability is where true wellbeing lives.

From my perspective, transformation happens not when we force ourselves into rigid routines, but when we learn to live in greater alignment with who we are and what we truly need. Wellness should not become another burden to carry or another standard we are constantly striving to meet. At its best, it is a support system — one that nurtures the whole person, from the inside out.

It is also important to remember that wellbeing is deeply personal. What works for one person may not work for another, and it was never meant to. Our health is shaped not only by habits, but by our responsibilities, our energy, our circumstances, and our emotional lives. There is no universal formula for feeling well, and perhaps that is something we need to make peace with.

As the seasons shift and autumn invites us into a gentler rhythm, we have an opportunity to rethink how we approach our wellbeing. Instead of striving to do more, perhaps this is the season to return to what truly sustains us — rest, balance, simplicity, and self-awareness. In a world that constantly asks us to optimise, true wellness may be found not in doing everything perfectly, but in learning to care for ourselves with greater intention, compassion, and grace.

By Marsha Parcou



The Quiet Wisdom of the Body



By Helen Gullick

The body speaks first. Long before the mind has organised itself into a sentence, the shoulders begin their slow climb toward the ears, the chest folds quietly inward, and the breath stays close to the surface, as though waiting for permission to go any deeper. I see this constantly in my work: hands resting on a client who has just told me that everything is fine, while their shoulders sit hiked up around their neck and their breath barely reaches the bottom of their ribs.

Early on, we are taught to live mostly in our minds, reasoning our way through decisions and treating the body as something that carries us around, rather than something that knows. Underneath all that thinking, the body has been paying attention the whole time, registering atmosphere, safety and unease in a language that has nothing to do with words.

This is something I come back to again and again as a Reiki practitioner. The body isn't standing between us and our own wisdom. It is usually the first place wisdom speaks. When something is wrong, the body tends to know before we do. We walk into a room and feel, before anyone has said a word, that something isn't right. Most of us learn to dismiss these signals, sometimes for years, until the body, ignored long enough, finds a louder way to make itself heard.

When something is right, the body knows that too, and it tends to say so in the same understated way. It might be sitting with someone you trust, or a walk you've done a hundred times before. There's often a small, unbidden exhale in moments like these, one the mind didn't authorise and can't take credit for.

Somewhere within every treatment, this is what I am waiting for. There's often a point, sometimes early, sometimes much later, when something shifts. The breath that has been sitting high in the chest drops into the belly. A place that's been held tight for days, or longer, softens almost imperceptibly. Nothing dramatic happens. Yet something in the body remembers what ease feels like.

Reiki works in much the same quiet register, which is part of why I was drawn to it. Mikao Usui, who developed the practice in Japan in the early twentieth century, described Reiki as a way of returning to one's natural state: rei carrying a sense of the spiritual or universal, and ki the life force that moves through every living thing.

When I place my hands on someone, I'm not pushing anything into them or pulling anything out. I'm offering the body a steady, unhurried presence, the kind it so rarely gets to rest into. What happens after that isn't really mine to take credit for. My role is closer to a tuning fork than a fixer, to hold something steady and quiet for long enough that the body, given the chance, remembers what it has known all along.

Coming back to the body:

You don't need a treatment table for this, just a few minutes and a willingness to actually feel what's there.

Sit somewhere you won't be interrupted and close your eyes. Take a few slower breaths and let your attention travel from the crown of your head down through the body, taking your time.

Notice whatever is asking to be noticed: tightness, warmth, heaviness, ease. There's no need to fix or explain any of it. Simply feel it. Let your breath support whatever needs to soften, imagining the energy held there releasing and moving freely with each exhale.

I think it's why Reiki has the effect it does, not by overriding the body with something more spiritual or more elevated, but by giving it the rare experience of being properly listened to. The mind is useful for a great many things. It is not the only place wisdom resides.

So perhaps the practice is simply this: notice a little sooner, pause before reacting, and trust the small, early signals before they grow loud enough to demand it.

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Stop Fighting Your Body: A Gut-First Approach to Weight Loss

For many, losing weight feels like a battle against their own bodies. They are told to eat less, exercise more, and cut carbs. When weight loss stalls, the typical conclusion is that they need to be stricter with themselves.

What if constantly fighting your body is actually part of the problem? As a nutritionist and health coach, I often see people who jump from diet to diet. They know how to restrict their food intake and count calories, but maintaining their results is a significant challenge.
This is why I encourage my clients to shift their focus: stop eating just for weight and start eating for better health.

A gut-first approach focuses on supporting the systems that affect digestion, appetite, food choices, and overall health. This support makes it easier to establish and sustain healthy weight management habits.

Beyond Digestion
The gut is not just for digestion; it communicates with the brain and other systems. It is essential for nutrient absorption, immune function, and the regulation of hunger and fullness signals. The gut hosts trillions of microorganisms, known as the gut microbiome, which interact with food and produce compounds that affect health.

Researchers have found differences in the gut microbiomes of people with obesity and those who are lean. Attributing weight gain or loss solely to specific gut bacteria is overly simplistic. Dietary habits that promote gut health also enhance metabolic health and support sustainable weight management, emphasising the importance of practical applications.

The Gut-Appetite Connection
Have you ever eaten quickly and later realised that you felt much fuller than you expected?

Your stomach and brain are in constant communication. As food moves through your digestive system, various signals help your brain understand when you have had enough to eat.

Gut-derived hormones, such as glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) and peptide YY (PYY), play important roles in signalling satiety, while other hormones, like ghrelin, are involved in hunger and initiating meals.

You don't need to memorise the names of these hormones; what truly matters is how you eat.
Diets focused on nutrient-dense whole foods rich in protein and fibre can help you feel satisfied and manage hunger better than simply trying to eat less.

If your weight-loss strategy consistently leaves you hungry, preoccupied with food, and waiting for your next meal, consider whether it's sustainable long term.

Feed Your Gut, not a Diet Mentality.
One of the biggest changes I recommend is to stop focusing solely on what to remove from your diet. The weight-loss culture often emphasises restriction with questions like:

- What can't I eat?
- What do I need to cut out?
- Which foods are making me gain weight?

Instead, I suggest a different approach: ask yourself, "What does my body need more of?"
For many people, the answer is fibre.
Fibre-rich foods like vegetables, fruits, beans, lentils, whole grains, nuts, and seeds provide beneficial substrates for gut microbes. Gut bacteria ferment these fibres, producing short-chain fatty acids vital for gut and metabolic health. Eating a diverse range of plants increases the variety of fibres and beneficial compounds your gut microbes receive.

This does not require a complicated diet. You can make simple additions, such as:

- Adding beans or lentils to a meal
- Sprinkling nuts and seeds over yoghurt
- Choosing whole grains more often
- Including vegetables with lunch and dinner
- Having fruit as a part of your snacks

Remember, small, consistent changes matter far more than striving for dietary perfection.

When Your Gut Isn't Happy
Gut symptoms like bloating, constipation, and irregular bowel habits can make you feel uncomfortable and frustrated. Many mistakenly believe bloating means weight gain, but bloating and changes in body fat are not the same.

Instead of restricting your food intake on tough days, consider your digestive needs. Are you getting enough fibre and fluids? Are you staying active and eating at a reasonable pace? Have your bowel habits changed?

If you experience persistent or unexplained digestive symptoms, it's important to consult a qualified healthcare professional for evaluation rather than self-treating indefinitely.





Stress, Sleep and Your Gut
Food is important, but gut health and weight management are interconnected. The gut and brain communicate through the gut-brain axis, which helps explain why stress can affect digestion.

During stressful times, you might eat quickly, skip meals, or feel low energy for exercise, all of which can affect digestion. Sleep is also crucial; insufficient rest can disrupt appetite regulation and food choices, complicating weight management. Thus, simply advising someone to "eat less and move more" overlooks many factors. Overall lifestyle matters greatly.

Five Gut-First Habits
You don't need to completely overhaul your life to start supporting your gut and your weight. Start with a few habits you can realistically maintain.

• *Increase fibre gradually*
Add more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds to your diet. If your fibre intake is low, increase it gradually and drink enough fluids to avoid digestive discomfort. Increasing fibre too quickly can cause uncomfortable digestive issues.

• *Think about plant diversity.*
Experiment with a variety of fruits, vegetables, pulses, whole grains, herbs, nuts, and seeds each week. This variety offers a range of fibres and plant compounds that benefit you and your gut microbes.

• *Build satisfying meals*
Pair a protein source with fibre-rich carbohydrates, vegetables, and healthy fats. Meals that leave you satisfied can make it easier to manage hunger than repeatedly trying to survive on the smallest portions possible.

• *Slow down*
Eating is not a race. Give yourself time to chew, taste your food and recognise your body's signals. Sit down to eat rather than regularly eating while distracted or rushing between tasks.

• *Look beyond your plate*
Regular movement, adequate sleep and strategies for managing stress are part of the picture too. You cannot separate your gut from the rest of your health.

Work With Your Body
I want to change how people think about food and weight. Food should not just be a means of lowering the number on the scale; it provides essential nutrients your body needs to function well.

When you start eating for health, your focus shifts from "How little can I eat?" to "How can I nourish my body?" Although you need an energy deficit for fat loss, the approach matters. Restrictive diets that cause hunger and dissatisfaction are unsustainable.

A gut-first approach is not another fad diet. It focuses on creating healthy eating patterns and lifestyles that support your digestive and metabolic health while helping you achieve a healthy weight.

Nurture your body instead of viewing it as an enemy. Focus on good nutrition, stay active, support your gut, prioritise sleep, manage stress, and be patient. Aligning with your body can transform weight loss into a path toward lifelong health.

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"What does my body need more of?"

By Anne Anyia



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Osteoporosis, GLP-1 Medicines and the Whole Person Approach

Osteoporosis rarely announces itself. Bone loss usually develops without pain or obvious signs, and plenty of people only learn they have it after a fracture. When the diagnosis does arrive, it often brings a string of questions. How fragile are my bones? Is it safe to exercise? What should I be eating? And for the growing number of people taking GLP-1 medicines for diabetes or weight management, a newer question has joined the list: could the treatment itself affect my bones?

None of these questions has one answer that fits everyone. Osteoporosis is shaped by age, previous fractures, hormonal changes, family history, nutrition, movement, other health conditions and medicines. From around age 40, bone mineral density (BMD) begins to decline gradually as part of normal ageing in both men and women. Typical losses are relatively small, often around 0.3–0.5% per year in middle age, but can accelerate substantially around menopause.

Studies report roughly 1–2% per year on average in the postmenopausal period, with some women experiencing 3–5% per year during the most rapid phase. Adding GLP-1–based weight-loss treatment may potentially compound this age-related vulnerability, particularly when it produces substantial or rapid weight loss: weight loss reduces mechanical loading on bone and can increase bone resorption.

The responsible response is to look carefully at what the evidence does and does not show, and to support the person as a whole rather than one number on a scan or a scale.

In this article, we bring together two perspectives. Terry works in neuropsychology-informed coaching, including his signature approach, NASR (Neuro Adaptive Subconscious Repatterning). Zita brings a nutrition and fitness perspective, focused on practical ways people can support their eating, strength and everyday activity. We see both as complementary to medical care. Neither coaching nor lifestyle support diagnoses or treats osteoporosis.

What do we know about GLP-1 medicines and bone?

GLP-1 receptor agonists, including semaglutide and liraglutide, are used to manage type 2 diabetes and obesity. Tirzepatide works on both GIP and GLP-1 receptors. These medicines reduce appetite and slow food movement through the stomach, which helps many people lose a significant amount of weight. How strongly they affect appetite and digestion varies widely from person to person.

It would be misleading to say that GLP-1 medicines cause osteoporosis. Research has not shown that everyone taking them will lose bone or break bones. It would be just as unwise to ignore bone health during substantial weight loss.

The reasoning is fairly straightforward. Bone responds to the demands placed on it, and when body weight falls, the skeleton carries less load. Weight loss can also include a loss of lean tissue, including muscle. Muscle matters twice over here, because it keeps people steady and able to recover from a slip or trip, and because muscle pull on bone is part of the mechanical loading that helps keep bone strong. Appetite changes can also make it harder to eat a varied diet, particularly when someone feels full quickly, feels nauseous or has simply lost interest in food.

The most direct evidence comes from a Danish trial published in 2024. Sixty-four adults at increased fracture risk, most of them postmenopausal women, were randomly assigned to weekly semaglutide or placebo for 52 weeks. The trial's main question was whether semaglutide would boost bone formation, measured through a blood marker called P1NP. It did not.

However, compared with placebo, the semaglutide group had lower bone mineral density at the lumbar spine and total hip after a year, alongside higher levels of a marker of bone breakdown. They also weighed around 6.8 kg less than the placebo group. The researchers suggested the extra bone breakdown may be explained by the weight loss itself.



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there."

That is an important finding, but it needs to be read carefully. It was a small, one-year trial. It measured bone density and bone markers, not fractures. And it cannot tell us whether the changes reflect something specific to semaglutide or the effect of losing weight, nor what happens over many years or in other groups of people. Other research gives a more reassuring, if incomplete, picture. A 2025 systematic review and meta-analysis of people with type 2 diabetes found no statistically significant increase in fracture risk with GLP-1 receptor agonists. The uncertainty around that estimate was wide, though, and the studies available may not be long or large enough to settle questions about long-term bone health. People with diabetes may also differ from those using these medicines mainly for weight management.

Our view is that this calls for neither alarm nor complacency. The evidence does not support telling people that GLP-1 treatment causes osteoporosis. It does support including bone, muscle, nutrition, and physical function in the conversation, especially when weight loss is substantial, appetite is very low, or someone already has osteoporosis or a history of fragility fractures.

Nutrition: making a smaller appetite count

Food is not a cure for osteoporosis, and eating well does not guarantee that someone will avoid fractures. Nutrition supplies the raw materials the body needs to maintain bone and muscle, and that matters more, not less, when portions shrink.

Calcium is a major building block of bone. The 2024 UK osteoporosis guideline recommends at least 700 mg a day for postmenopausal women and men aged 50 and over with osteoporosis or at risk of fragility fracture, ideally from food, with supplements where diet falls short. Milk, yoghurt and cheese are the familiar sources. Fortified plant drinks and calcium-set tofu can also contribute, depending on the product, and some green vegetables provide calcium too, although how much the body absorbs varies between foods.

Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium. The same guideline recommends getting it from food, or from prescribed supplements of at least 800 IU a day, where insufficiency or risk factors have been identified. Needs differ, so a conversation with a GP or pharmacist is worthwhile, particularly for anyone with other health conditions or on medicines that affect bone.

Protein supports muscle as well as bone. If someone is eating less because of appetite changes, it helps to consider where protein appears across meals and snacks, whether that is eggs, fish, dairy, meat, beans, lentils, tofu, or nuts. The right amount depends on health, age, body size, kidney function and activity level, and the research on protein and bone is genuinely mixed, so personal advice from a registered dietitian or healthcare professional is far better than guesswork.

This is where Zita's perspective brings things back to everyday life. When appetite changes, advice like "eat a balanced diet" doesn't tell someone what to do at lunchtime when they feel full after a few bites. The practical aim is to make the food a person can manage as nourishing as possible. Smaller, more frequent meals may suit someone who fills up quickly. Others find certain foods easier at particular times of day. A dietitian can help tailor this to personal needs, preferences, and symptoms. Nutrition should never become a source of shame.

Someone struggling to eat enough while dealing with side effects does not need criticism or an unrealistic meal plan. They need an honest conversation about what is manageable, what symptoms they are having and what support is available. Persistent vomiting, difficulty keeping fluids down, marked weakness or an ongoing inability to eat enough should always be raised with the prescribing team or another healthcare professional.

Exercise: strong, steady and straight

For people with osteoporosis, exercise is not about burning calories. The right activity helps maintain muscle strength, balance, posture, and everyday function, and it can also support bone strength. But any plan must reflect the individual, including their fracture history, physical ability, symptoms, confidence, and clinical advice.

The UK consensus statement on exercise for osteoporosis, known as Strong, Steady and Straight, sets out three priorities. To build bone strength, people with osteoporosis are advised to combine resistance exercise with impact exercise. To reduce falls, they are advised to practise activities that improve strength and balance. And to support posture, they are advised to include spinal extension exercises.

In practice, that means muscle-strengthening exercise on two or three days a week, progressing in intensity over time. For people without vertebral fractures or multiple

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low-trauma fractures, moderate-impact activity on most days is recommended, such as stamping, jogging, low-level jumping, or hopping, often in short bursts. For people who have had vertebral fractures or several fractures, impact is pitched lower, at roughly the level of brisk walking.

That distinction matters, and it is one of the main reasons individual guidance is worth getting.

Anyone with a recent fracture, spinal fractures, repeated falls, significant pain or marked unsteadiness should get individual advice before increasing intensity. Repeated, forceful forward bending of the spine should be approached with care by people with osteoporosis, as it may be linked to a higher risk of vertebral fracture.

This doesn't mean people with osteoporosis should avoid movement. The 2024 UK guideline is clear that, in general, they can exercise safely, and inactivity carries its own cost in lost strength and confidence. The goal is to find the safest useful level of activity and build from there.

That starting point does not need to be an ambitious gym programme. Depending on the person, it might be supported balance exercises, a short walk, learning to use resistance bands, or practising a movement that makes daily life easier. A physiotherapist or appropriately qualified exercise professional can help judge what is suitable.

Zita's fitness perspective also pushes us to think beyond the workout itself. How easily can someone get up from a chair? Do they feel steady walking? Can they carry the shopping, manage the stairs or return to something they enjoy?

These everyday measures keep exercise tied to real goals. The aim is not to push through pain or keep pace with someone else, but to find movement that can be repeated and gradually progressed.

This also helps when weight is changing. Someone's weight may fall while their strength, balance and ability to cope with daily life change in a different direction. Walking more steadily, rising from a chair more easily, or getting back to a valued activity can be meaningful progress, even when the scales don't tell the whole story.

How I use NASR in coaching (Terry)

A diagnosis or a new treatment plan can stir up strong thoughts and feelings. Someone might think, "If I move, I'll break something," or, "The medicine has taken my appetite, so there's no point trying to eat properly." Thoughts like these shape behaviour. Fear can lead to avoiding almost all activity. Frustration can lead to abandoning routines. A low appetite can make planning meals feel pointless.

NASR, NeuroAdaptive Subconscious Repatterning, is my signature coaching approach. I use it to help clients notice the patterns shaping their responses, ask whether those patterns are serving them, and practise different ways of thinking and acting, supporting more useful conversations about food, movement, confidence, and consistency for someone managing osteoporosis alongside GLP-1 treatment.

If someone is convinced that every form of exercise is dangerous, for example, we might look at what they have actually been advised to avoid and what has been recommended. The point is not to argue them out of their fear or push them into activity. It is to help them have a better-informed conversation with their clinical team and, where appropriate, take one small agreed step with guidance from a qualified professional.

If appetite is low, we might look at their usual routine and find one practical way to make nourishment more consistent. That could mean taking specific questions to a dietitian, planning a small meal for the time of day when eating feels easier, or keeping a note of symptoms to share with the prescriber. My role is to help the person notice patterns, set realistic actions and reflect on what is working. I don't prescribe a diet or change medication.

NASR can also help shift attention from a distant, overwhelming goal, such as "fix my bones" or "never fall", to something that can be done today. That might be completing an agreed strength session, preparing a calcium-containing snack or ringing the GP about a concern. Small actions do not guarantee a medical outcome, but they can make a health plan feel achievable.

I want to be clear about the limits. NASR is not a clinically validated treatment for osteoporosis, and there is no basis for claiming that it increases bone density or prevents fractures. Its role here is to support awareness,



"Success should be meas
by more than weight los

decision-making, confidence and follow-through. Those are worthwhile coaching aims, but they should never be confused with treating the disease itself.

Bringing care together

Anyone taking a GLP-1 medicine who has osteoporosis, a previous fragility fracture, repeated falls, very low appetite or concerns about weakness should talk to their GP or prescribing clinician. Depending on individual risk, that might lead to a review of medical history and medicines, a fracture risk assessment, a bone density scan or osteoporosis treatment.

Good care here usually involves more than one professional. A doctor or prescriber can review medication and fracture risk. A dietitian can assess food intake and help with symptoms or nutritional gaps. A physiotherapist can advise on movement, posture, strength and balance. A coach can help the person reflect on habits, work through barriers and build routines that fit their life.

These roles complement one another. Nutrition and exercise do not replace osteoporosis medication when it is needed. Medication does not make nourishment, physical activity or falls prevention irrelevant. Coaching does not treat anything medically, but it can help someone engage with their plan in a way that feels practical and personal. Success should be measured by more than weight loss.

It is worth asking whether the person is eating enough, keeping or building useful strength, moving safely, feeling more confident and getting the right clinical care. With good communication and an individual plan, it is entirely possible to pursue weight-related health goals while keeping bone health, mobility and independence firmly in view.

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THE COLOURS DEFINING AUTUMN

The shades taking centre stage this season— and how to wear them with confidence.

As the seasons change, so too does our wardrobe. Autumn invites us to embrace richer tones, softer textures, and effortless elegance. While spring and summer often celebrate bright, playful colours, autumn is all about warmth, depth and sophistication. It's a season that encourages us to slow down, layer thoughtfully and choose pieces that feel both timeless and luxurious.

The beauty of autumn fashion isn't about chasing every trend. It's about discovering the colours that make you feel confident, complement your complexion and bring new life to your wardrobe. Whether you're refreshing your style with a statement coat or introducing subtle accents through accessories, this season's palette offers something for everyone.

Burgundy: The Colour of Quiet Confidence
If one shade defines autumn this year, it's burgundy. Rich, elegant and endlessly versatile, this deep wine-inspired hue has become a modern classic. It offers the sophistication of black but with added warmth and personality.
A tailored burgundy blazer instantly elevates denim, while a knitted jumper paired with cream trousers creates an effortlessly polished daytime look. If you're not ready to embrace the colour from head to toe, start with a handbag, ankle boots or a silk scarf to add a subtle touch of seasonal style.

Chocolate Brown: The New Neutral
Chocolate brown continues its rise as one of the most wearable colours of the season. Soft, luxurious and incredibly easy to style, it pairs beautifully with cream, camel, white, olive green and even soft blush tones.

Unlike black, which can sometimes feel harsh, chocolate brown creates a warmer and more relaxed look without compromising elegance. A beautifully tailored brown coat, leather handbag or pair of knee-high boots can become investment pieces you'll reach for year after year.

Olive Green: Timeless with a Contemporary Twist
Olive green remains a wardrobe favourite thanks to its understated versatility. Inspired by nature, it works effortlessly with denim, tan leather, cream knitwear and rich autumn textures. Whether you choose an oversized utility jacket, tailored trousers or a flowing midi dress, olive green strikes the perfect balance between casual and refined. It's a colour that transitions seamlessly from weekend walks to smart office wear.

Plum and Aubergine: Rich, Feminine and Elegant
For those looking to add depth to their wardrobe, plum and aubergine offer a beautiful alternative to brighter jewel tones. These luxurious shades bring richness without feeling overpowering and work particularly well during the cooler months.

A satin blouse, knitted dress, or tailored coat in these colours can make an elegant statement while staying timeless. They also pair beautifully with charcoal, navy and soft metallic accessories for an elevated finish.

Warm Taupe and Mocha: Understated Luxury
Neutral lovers will appreciate the continued popularity of warm taupe and mocha. These soft earthy tones create a calming, refined aesthetic and are ideal for building a versatile capsule wardrobe. Layering different shades of beige, cream, camel, and mocha adds depth through texture rather than bold colour, creating an expensive-looking outfit that feels effortlessly chic. Soft knitwear, tailored trousers and structured outerwear in these tones never go out of style.

Metallic Accents That Shine
Autumn is also the perfect time to introduce subtle metallic touches. Rather than overwhelming an outfit, gold, bronze and pewter accessories add warmth and polish. A pair of gold earrings, a statement belt or metallic flats can transform even the simplest ensemble. The key is balance—allow one or two carefully chosen accessories to enhance your outfit rather than compete for attention.

Bringing Colour into Your Wardrobe
If you're hesitant about trying new colours, begin with accessories before investing in larger pieces. A handbag, scarf or pair of shoes allows you to experiment without stepping too far outside your comfort zone.

You don't need to replace your entire wardrobe each season. Instead, build around quality basics you already own, introducing one or two new colours through carefully selected pieces. This approach is not only more sustainable but also creates a wardrobe that feels authentic to you rather than dictated by fleeting trends.

Perhaps most importantly, choose colours that make you feel your best. Fashion trends come and go, but confidence is always in style. The right colour has the power to brighten your complexion, lift your mood and transform how you carry yourself.

As you step into autumn, think beyond what's fashionable and focus on what feels true to you. Whether you gravitate towards the richness of burgundy, the warmth of chocolate brown or the understated elegance of mocha, let your wardrobe become a reflection of your personality.

After all, the most stylish women aren't remembered simply for what they wear—they're remembered for the confidence with which they wear it.

By Angela Haynes-Ranger

"Fashion trends come and go, but confidence is always in style."





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Your Diet Isn't Just What You Eat

When we hear the word diet, most of us immediately think about food. We think about calories, carbohydrates, sugar or the number on the scales. But what if I told you your diet is about so much more than what's on your plate?

Your body is constantly absorbing what you feed it physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. The food you eat matters, of course, but so do the conversations you have, the people you spend your time with, the environments you choose, the content you watch online, the books you read, the podcasts you listen to and even the thoughts you repeatedly tell yourself.

Everything we consume has the potential to nourish us or deplete us.

As a gut health coach, I often start with nutrition because it's tangible. We might look at hydration, balancing blood sugar, supporting digestion, or building simple, sustainable habits. These are important foundations, and our gut plays a vital role in so many aspects of our health.

But what I've learned through both my own journey and working with others is that healing rarely stops with food. Many years ago, my life took an unexpected turn. My marriage broke down, and what followed was one of the most challenging seasons of my life. There was heartbreak, financial hardship, losing our family home and eventually facing bankruptcy. Looking back, I can see that while I was trying to rebuild my life, I was also living in survival mode.

At the time, I believed I was coping because I simply had to. Like so many people, I kept going. I focused on getting through each day, putting one foot in front of the other and doing the best I could.

It wasn't until much later that I realised my body had been carrying far more than I had ever acknowledged. Stress isn't just something we experience in our minds. It influences our digestion, hormones, immune system, sleep, energy, and even the choices we make each day. The brain and the gut are constantly communicating, and when one is under pressure, the other often feels the effects too.

I also came to realise something else.

For much of my life, I became so focused on looking after everyone else that I stopped listening to myself. I didn't really know what I needed because I had spent years responding to what everyone else needed from me. That awareness didn't arrive overnight. Healing never does.

The real turning point came on 23rd September 2023 when I woke up and simply knew that enough was enough. I realised I didn't just want to survive anymore; I wanted to truly live.
I began investing in myself, learning, reflecting and creating new habits that supported not only my physical health but my emotional wellbeing too.

I discovered that nourishment isn't just about eating more vegetables or drinking more water. It's also about creating a life that supports your health.
It's asking yourself questions like:

- *Are the relationships in my life lifting me or draining my energy?*
- *Do I allow myself time to rest without feeling guilty?*
- *Am I constantly consuming negative news or comparing myself on social media?*
- *Do I speak to myself with kindness, or am I my own harshest critic?*
- *When was the last time I spent time in nature, sat quietly or simply listened to what my body was trying to tell me?*

These questions matter because our bodies are always communicating with us.

Sometimes digestive symptoms are exactly that—digestive symptoms. Sometimes they are influenced by nutrition, medications or underlying health conditions. But sometimes our bodies are also responding to the pace we've been living, the stress we've been carrying or the fact that we've forgotten to care for ourselves with the same compassion we give to everyone else.

This is why I never believe in quick fixes or restrictive diets. I don't encourage calorie counting or chasing a number on the scales. Instead, I help people build sustainable habits that work for their life because lasting health isn't created through perfection. It's created through consistency, awareness and self-compassion.

For me, gut health is often where the journey begins. As people start nourishing their bodies, they often begin noticing other things too. They recognise patterns they hadn't seen before. They become more aware of how stress affects them, how certain environments make them feel, or how little time they have been giving themselves.
Those moments of awareness are incredibly powerful because change begins with awareness.

Today, I can honestly say I know myself in a way I never have before. I listen to my intuition, I trust myself, and I no longer feel I have to be everything for everyone else. That doesn't mean life is perfect, but it does mean I meet life's challenges from a very different place.

So, I'd like to leave you with one simple question. What are you feeding yourself each day? Not just on your plate, but in your mind, your heart and your environment. Because your diet isn't just what you eat. It's everything you allow yourself to absorb.

When you begin to nourish yourself as a whole person, you may discover that your body has been trying to guide you all along.



By Amanda Whitehead

Gut health and Lifestyle coach

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Trust Is Built Through Consistent Leadership

Trust is often described as the foundation of leadership. Yet trust is rarely built through one conversation, one decision, or one accomplishment. Trust develops through consistency.

Employees pay attention to patterns. They notice whether leaders communicate the same expectations, apply the same standards, and follow through on commitments. Over time, those repeated actions shape confidence in leadership.

Trust is not built by what leaders say occasionally. Trust is built by what leaders consistently do.

Consistency creates stability.

Priorities shift. Deadlines move. Unexpected challenges arise. During these moments, employees look for stability.

Leaders who remain consistent create confidence. They reinforce expectations, explain changes, and hold people accountable with fairness and respect.

Without consistency, uncertainty grows. Employees question priorities. Decision making slows. Teams spend time interpreting direction instead of moving work forward. Consistency allows people to focus on performance instead of uncertainty.

Credibility is earned through repeated actions.

Each commitment honored strengthens confidence. Each difficult conversation handled with respect reinforces fairness. Each decision aligned with organizational values demonstrates integrity.

These moments seem small, but together they define how leadership is experienced. Teams trust leaders who follow through, apply standards consistently, address concerns directly, and remain steady during change.

I learned this through my own leadership. Earlier in my career, I felt the need to step in and fix every problem. I wanted to know every detail, stay in the loop, and understand what was happening at all times. At the time, that felt responsible. In reality, I kept too much ownership with myself.

"The shift happened when I stopped focusing only on completing the task and started focusing on building leaders."

That shift changed how I led my team.

I gave them room to think, make decisions, and work through problems before bringing them to me. Mistakes still happened, as they do throughout every career. The difference was how we handled them. We focused on accountability, learning, and teaching newer team members how to avoid repeating the same issue.

Over time, the team grew stronger. They learned to think through problems, communicate clearly, and bring solutions forward when they needed support. They didn't waste hours getting stuck, and they no longer relied on me to solve every issue first.

That consistency built confidence, trust, and efficiency. It also changed how the team operated. I no longer needed to be involved in every meeting to know what was happening. Communication became strong enough that information moved clearly, issues surfaced earlier, and people understood where to go for answers.

A design manager once introduced me as the person who knows every end of the business and the go-to person for answers. No one knows everything, but the comment reflected something important. Strong communication and consistent leadership create visibility without control. That is the difference between managing every task and building a team that owns the work.

Fairness strengthens trust.

Consistency does not mean treating every employee the same. Every employee grows at a different pace. Consistency means applying the same principles to everyone.mExpectations remain clear. Accountability remains fair. Recognition remains genuine. Respect remains constant.

When employees believe decisions are made fairly, trust becomes stronger. When standards change by person or situation, trust weakens.

Culture reflects leadership habits.

Culture is shaped by what leaders consistently reinforce every day. Feedback, mistakes, recognition, and expectations all teach people what leadership values. Employees often mirror the behaviors they experience from leadership.

Trust is built before it is needed.

During periods of stability, consistency often goes unnoticed. During periods of pressure, it becomes essential.

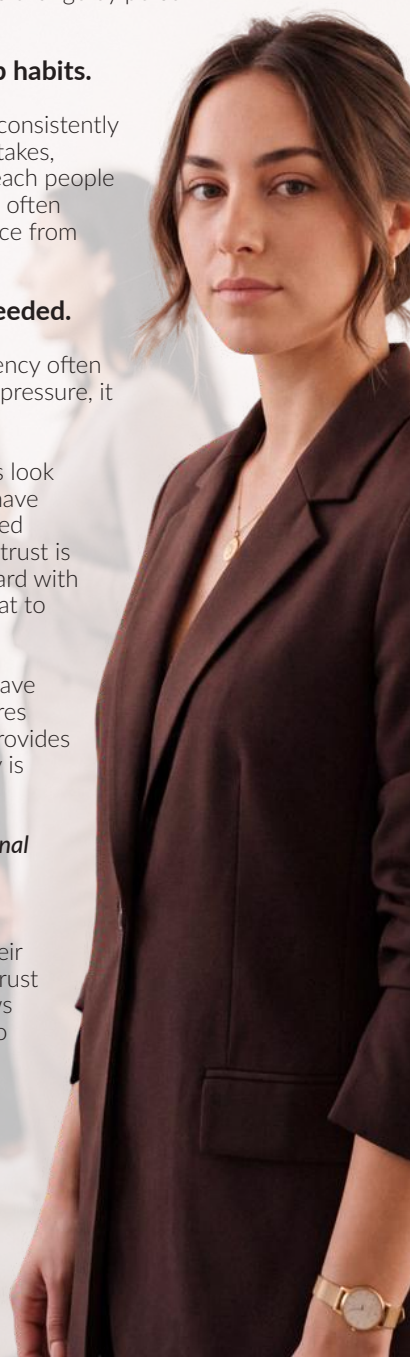
When uncertainty rises, employees look to leaders for direction. If leaders have consistently communicated, followed through, and upheld expectations, trust is already in place. Teams move forward with confidence because they know what to expect.

Throughout this year's series, we have explored how accountability prepares leaders and how communication provides clarity under pressure. Consistency is what allows both to endure.

Leadership is not defined by occasional excellence. It is defined by the daily choices that earn trust over time.

When leaders consistently align their words, actions, and expectations, trust becomes the foundation that allows people, teams, and organizations to grow together.

By Emily Apell





Healing Begins on Your Plate

Hippocrates famously said, "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

And honestly? He wasn't wrong.

What we eat, drink, and put into our bodies affects not only our waistline or energy levels. It also shapes our moods, pain levels, inflammation, emotions, and ability to heal.

Every cell in your body is built from what you consume. So when we're feeding ourselves nourishment, we're feeding healing. And when we're feeding ourselves stress, sugar, chemicals, and convenience... well, the body has to work a whole lot harder just to survive, never mind thrive.

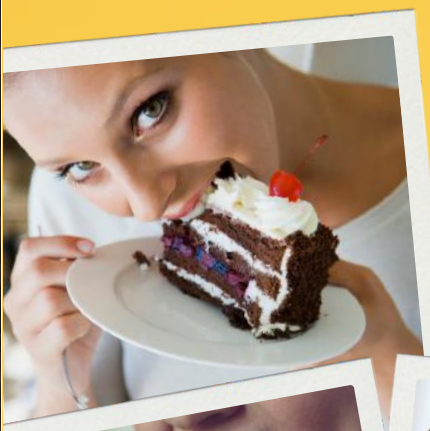
But comfort food doesn't bring comfort to the body. Sometimes it just soothes the moment while quietly fuelling the fire underneath. And this is not about blame. Or discipline. Or "being good."

This is about compassion. Awareness. And choice.
So many people live with daily physical discomfort from aching joints, stiffness, fatigue, headaches, gut issues, and brain fog and are often told, "That's just ageing," or, "That's normal," or worse, "You'll have to live with it."

Pain is information. Inflammation is communication.
The body is speaking. And often, what it's saying is: "I'm overwhelmed."

Inflammation is at the root of many chronic conditions, and diet plays a huge role in either calming or fuelling that fire. Diets high in sugar, refined carbohydrates, processed foods, alcohol, and acidic foods can exacerbate inflammation, worsen joint pain, disrupt hormones, and impact mental health.

Your body is doing its best to process things; it simply can't handle this volume, frequency, or chemical load.
We haven't evolved enough to eat takeaways or sugar spikes and crashes. Especially ultra-processed foods. We evolved on food that grew from the earth. That came from soil, sunlight, rain, and time.



And when we return to that kind of nourishment, this happens: The body softens.
Inflammation eases.
Energy returns.
Pain reduces.

Would you feed a racehorse fast food and expect it to win? Would you fuel a high-performance car with contaminated petrol and expect it to run smoothly?





Would you water your plants with chemicals and expect them to thrive?

Of course not.

Yet so many of us feed our bodies in ways we would never treat anything we cared about; not because we don't care, but because we're tired, busy, overwhelmed, emotional, stressed, grieving, surviving.

And survival doesn't make space for optimal choices.
It makes space for quick ones. But healing begins when we stop treating our bodies like something to manage and start treating them like something to nourish.

This isn't about aesthetics. It's not about weight. It's not about control.

It's about energy, mood, clarity, pain, longevity, vitality, resilience and the ability to feel at home in your own skin again.

Healing is also about subtraction.
Reducing sugar.
Reducing processed food.
Reducing inflammatory oils.
Reducing artificial chemicals.
Reducing emotional eating without awareness.
Reducing food that stresses your system instead of supporting it.

Prevention is the most powerful medicine we have. Not fear-based prevention... empowered prevention.
Not "do this, or you'll get sick" but "do this because you deserve to feel well."

We wait until we're exhausted, inflamed, depressed, burnt out, and broken down before we change. But what if we didn't wait? What if we treated our bodies like something worth investing in before crisis hit?

Start small - healing doesn't need to be extreme.
You do not need to overhaul your entire diet tomorrow.
You do not need perfection.

You need consistency.
You need compassion.
You need small, sustainable changes.

This isn't about being perfect - it's about being intentional.

So start where you are.
Add a salad to one meal a day.
Drink more water.
Swap one sugary drink for herbal tea.
Add one vegetable you don't usually eat.
Replace one processed snack with something whole.
Read one label.
Cook one meal at home.

Remember, small changes, repeated consistently, can transform your health - and your life.

By Nikki Hillhouse

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The Courage to Begin Again
Why Your Next Chapter Requires a New Version of You

Sometimes the bravest thing you can do is admit that the life you've outgrown can no longer be the life you keep choosing.

I recently packed up my life in Florida, boarded a plane, and began a new chapter in Greece. On the surface, it was a relocation.But for me, it represented something much deeper. It was a decision to release what was familiar and step toward a future I could not fully see yet.

As I looked at everything I was leaving behind, I realized that beginning again isn't simply about changing your circumstances. It requires changing the version of yourself you bring into those circumstances. Because you cannot create a new chapter while continuing to live from an old identity.

When the Old Version of You Has Done Her Job

For years, I lived in survival mode. I learned how to read a room. How to anticipate what might happen next. How to stay strong when life felt uncertain. How to keep moving when stopping long enough to feel everything seemed impossible. Those skills served me.

They helped me survive domestic violence, rebuild after leaving my marriage, navigate financial setbacks, and continue moving forward when life looked nothing like I had imagined it would. But eventually, I discovered something about healing:

The version of you who survived the storm isn't necessarily the one meant to build the life that comes after. Survival teaches you to protect yourself. Purpose asks you to trust yourself.

Survival asks, "How do I get through this?"
Purpose asks, "What am I being called to create from this?"

There comes a point when the very armor that once protected you becomes too heavy to carry into your next chapter.

Beginning Again Requires Release
We often talk about new beginnings as though they are exciting, beautiful moments filled with possibility. Sometimes they are. But beginnings also require endings.

They require us to release relationships, environments, beliefs, expectations, and identities that no longer align with who we are becoming. And that can be uncomfortable.

We may know something has ended long before we're willing to let it go. We stay because it's familiar.
We stay because we've invested years in it.
We stay because other people expect us to remain who we've always been.

Sometimes we stay because the uncertainty of a new life feels more frightening than the old one's discomfort. But I've learned that outgrowing something doesn't mean it was a mistake. A chapter can have served its purpose and still need to end.

Your Identity Determines What You Believe Is Possible

Through my work with women, I have seen how often transformation begins with identity. We can set new goals. We can create vision boards. We can change careers, relationships, cities, businesses, and even countries.

But if we carry the same limiting beliefs into those new environments, we eventually recreate versions of the life we tried to leave. Real transformation asks a different question. Not simply: "What do I want next?"

But:

"Who must I become to create it?"
That question has changed my life.
The woman entering my next chapter isn't trying to prove her worth. She isn't shrinking to make other people comfortable. She isn't waiting for permission to use her voice. She isn't allowing fear to make decisions that belong to faith.



She understands that everything she has lived through has prepared her—not imprisoned her. That is the difference between changing your circumstances and transforming your identity.

Courage Doesn't Always Feel Courageous

People sometimes look at someone making a bold move and assume she must feel fearless. I don't believe courage works that way. Courage can look like packing a suitcase while still wondering whether you're making the right decision. It can look like leaving something you've known for years. It can look like starting a business after failure. Speaking after years of silence.

Setting a boundary without knowing how someone will respond. Walking into a room where nobody knows your name. Or simply waking up one morning and deciding: I cannot keep abandoning myself to maintain a life I've outgrown.

Courage isn't always loud.

Sometimes courage is simply choosing the unknown over the familiar because something inside you knows there is more.

Stop Asking for Permission to Become Her

One of the greatest freedoms I've discovered is realizing that we don't need permission to evolve. You are allowed to change. You are allowed to want something different. You are allowed to redefine success. You are allowed to walk away from an identity other people have become comfortable with. And you are allowed to become a woman your younger self wouldn't yet recognize.

For years, my story was about what happened to me. Then it became about what I survived. Today, it is increasingly about what I am creating because I survived. That distinction matters.
I am not erasing my past.

I am refusing to let it have the final word.

Identity. Freedom. Purpose.
As I've stepped into this new season, three words continue to guide me:

Identity. Freedom. Purpose.

Identity is remembering who you are beneath everything life taught you to believe about yourself. Freedom is releasing what no longer belongs in the life you're creating.

Purpose is taking everything you've learned and choosing to use it in service of something greater than yourself. They aren't separate journeys. They build upon one another. When you know who you are, you stop negotiating your worth.

When you stop negotiating your worth, you become free to make different choices. And when you're free to make different choices, you create space to live your purpose.

The Next Chapter
As I begin this new chapter in Greece, I don't have every detail mapped out. And perhaps that's part of the lesson. There was a time when uncertainty frightened me because I associated control with safety.

Today, I am learning that faith sometimes means taking the next step without seeing the entire staircase. My surroundings have changed. My address has changed. My season has changed.

But the greatest change is happening within me.
I'm no longer asking whether I'm allowed to begin again.
I'm asking what becomes possible because I did.

Maybe you're standing at the edge of your own next chapter. Maybe something in your life no longer fits. Maybe the person you've been is beginning to feel too small for the person you're becoming. You don't have to know exactly how the story ends.

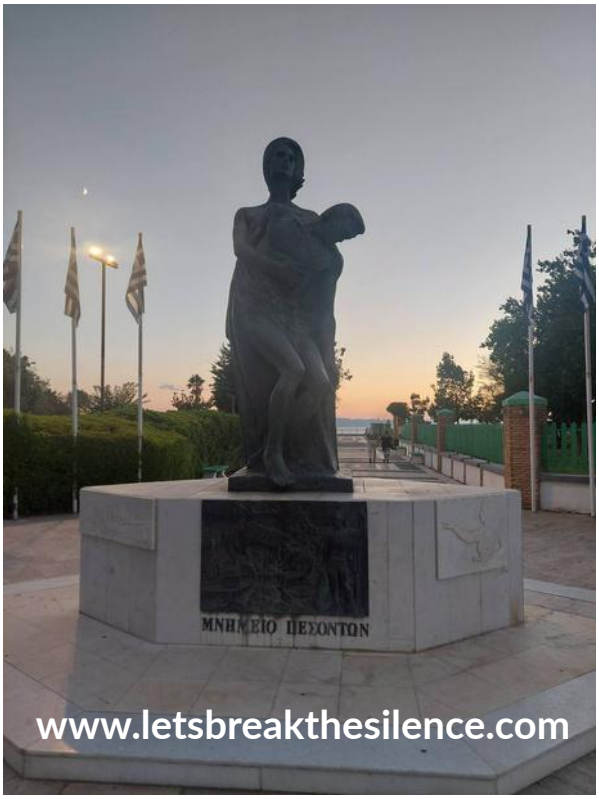
You simply have to be courageous enough to turn the page because your next chapter isn't waiting for a perfect version of you.

It's waiting for the version of you who finally believes she is worthy of writing it.

Begin again.

Not because your past didn't matter. But because it did. And because everything you've walked through has given you the wisdom, strength, and courage to choose what comes next.

By Angeline Constantinou



Energy Matters

A Spring Clean for the Soul

Don't you just love a good spring clean?

There's something incredibly satisfying about opening the wardrobe, pulling everything out and finally being a bit hard-ass with your decisions. You know the clothes I'm talking about … the ones you haven't worn in years but keep hanging onto "just in case". Some find their way back into the wardrobe, others are donated, and suddenly everything feels lighter. You can actually see and appreciate the things you love wearing.

It made me realise we're pretty good at clearing clutter from our homes, yet we rarely do the same for ourselves. Over time, we accumulate mental, emotional and energetic clutter just as easily. We hold onto beliefs that no longer fit who we've become, responsibilities we've carried for so long they feel normal, and stories that no longer reflect the person we're becoming. Before long, life feels much heavier than it needs to.

Nature reminds us that nothing is meant to stay the same forever. Winter gives way to spring, trees release their leaves and new growth appears in its own perfect timing. Nothing in nature clings to what has already served its purpose, yet we often do. We hold on to old hurts, old identities, and old versions of ourselves simply because they're familiar.

Perhaps life hasn't become heavier at all. Perhaps we've simply forgotten how to put some things down.

More Than Just Physical Clutter

After nearly three decades working in health and wellbeing, I've come to realise that people rarely seek support because they're simply physically tired. More often they're mentally overloaded, emotionally stretched and energetically depleted. They're juggling careers, families, ageing parents, finances and endless responsibilities. From the outside, they appear to be coping, yet underneath, many quietly admit they're exhausted. Life has gradually become more about getting through each day than genuinely enjoying it.

I often describe this as becoming part of the "tired and wired" generation. We've become so accustomed to running on adrenaline that genuine calm can feel unfamiliar. We promise ourselves we'll slow down once life settles, but unless we consciously create space, that day rarely arrives.

Science is beginning to support what many of us instinctively know. Research from the HeartMath Institute shows that greater heart coherence is associated with clearer thinking, improved emotional regulation and better overall wellbeing. At the same time, growing research on the vagus nerve continues to highlight the importance of feeling safe enough for the nervous system to shift from survival to rest, repair, and restoration.

Our bodies have been communicating this to us all along. Tight shoulders, restless sleep, digestive changes, shallow breathing and persistent fatigue aren't signs that our bodies are failing us. More often they're gentle invitations to slow down and pay attention.

Creating Space to Hear Yourself Again

When life feels overwhelming, it's natural to search outside ourselves for answers. We read another book, listen to another podcast or ask another opinion. While learning is valuable, I've come to believe that many of the answers we're looking for don't come from gathering more information. They come from creating enough space to hear ourselves again.

I think of it like a snow globe. When it's constantly being shaken, everything inside becomes cloudy. The moment we place it down, the particles naturally settle and clarity



"Perhaps life hasn't become heavier at all. Perhaps we've simply forgotten how to put some things down."

“Sometimes it’s simply giving yourself permission to pause.”



returns. Our minds and nervous systems work much the same way. When we’re constantly rushing, reacting and filling every spare moment with noise, we make it difficult to hear the quiet wisdom that’s been there all along.

Creating space doesn’t require disappearing to a retreat or taking a month off work. Sometimes it’s simply giving yourself permission to pause. Just as we emptied the wardrobe before deciding what was worth keeping, we occasionally need to sort through our inner world and ask different questions. Which responsibilities genuinely belong to me? Which beliefs still fit the person I’m becoming? In those quieter moments, clarity often emerges.

Coming Home to Yourself

One of the greatest gifts of creating space is that we begin hearing a voice that’s always been there. It’s rarely loud or dramatic. More often it’s a quiet knowing, a gentle feeling that something no longer fits, or an inner nudge towards the life we’ve been longing to live. I often say the answers don’t lie outside of us - they lie inside of us. The challenge is that when life is full of noise and distraction, it’s difficult to hear them.

As we reconnect with ourselves, something else begins to change. We return to our families, workplaces and communities with greater clarity about who we are and what truly matters. Rather than slipping back into old habits or carrying everyone else’s expectations, we become more discerning about where we invest our precious time and energy. We begin recognising the difference between supporting others and carrying them.

Life doesn’t necessarily become easier overnight, but we become more anchored within ourselves. We trust our intuition more readily, make choices that feel aligned with our values and stop seeking validation from everyone around us. Instead of simply reacting to life, we begin to create it consciously.

To me, that’s what living authentically looks like. It’s not about creating a perfect life or never making mistakes. It’s about having the courage to honour what we’ve discovered during those quieter moments of reflection and allowing those discoveries to shape the way we live each day.

Like our homes, our inner world will always collect a little clutter over time. That’s why this isn’t something we do once and forget about. It’s an ongoing practice of checking in with ourselves, asking what still belongs, what no longer fits, and having the courage to let go of what no longer serves us.

Spring reminds us that before anything new can flourish, we first need to create space for it. Perhaps the greatest gift we can give ourselves isn’t another thing to do, but permission to release what we’ve been carrying for far too long. In doing so, we don’t simply create more space in our lives - we create space to become more of who we truly are.

If this article has inspired you to do a little spring clean of your own, discover more resources, podcasts, workshops and ways to work with Sally at www.sallyestlin.com.

By Sally Estlin

Sally Estlin is an award-winning Wellness Coach, Frequency & Energy Specialist, educator, speaker and founder of Self Empowered Lifestyles.

With almost 30 years’ experience in health and wellbeing, she helps people understand the language of their body through frequency, vibration and energy, empowering them to create greater consciousness, coherence and connection so they can live with more clarity, purpose and authenticity.

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When Peace Isn't Freedom

There is something comforting about the word peace. We hear it and think of calm. Safety. Resolution. The end of conflict.

I've been thinking about whether peace always means that something has actually been resolved. What if the conflict has stopped, but the conditions that created it haven't? What if people have become quieter?

Liberation is different. It requires movement. It asks us to confront what restricts people, challenge what has been normalised and create the conditions for genuine agency and self-determination. Peace can exist without any of that. Perhaps that's why we need to be careful not to treat peace and liberation as though they mean the same thing.

Kwame Ture, formerly known as Stokely Carmichael, understood the importance of this distinction. Born in Trinidad and raised in New York, Ture became a prominent figure in the Black freedom struggle in the United States. He worked with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, including on voter registration campaigns across the American South. During the 1966 March Against Fear, he publicly called for "Black Power", shifting the conversation towards political power and self-determination. He later published Black Power: The Politics of Liberation and devoted much of his later life to Pan-African organising. The U.S. National Archives documents this progression in his political work.

What interests me isn't simply the phrase "Black Power". It's the question underneath it.

What does freedom actually mean if you don't have meaningful influence over the conditions shaping your life?

We can tell somebody they are free. But what does that freedom look like when their choices are still restricted by their environment?

Psychology gives us an interesting way into this conversation. Self-Determination Theory, developed by psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci, identifies autonomy, competence and relatedness as basic psychological needs, with their satisfaction associated with healthy motivation and wellbeing. Liberation, then, isn't only something that happens through political movements or changes in law. It can also have a psychological dimension. What happens when you repeatedly experience a lack of control? What happens when you're constantly told what you can be, where you belong, what you should accept or how much space you're allowed to take up?

Before anything changes externally, there may first need to be awareness. The awareness that this isn't simply how things have to be. Think about Rosa Parks. Most of us were introduced to her story through a very simple narrative: she was tired, she refused to give up her seat, and something changed. The historical record tells us more. Parks was already active in the NAACP when, on 1 December 1955, she refused a bus driver's instruction to give up her seat and was arrested under Montgomery's segregation laws. Her arrest became a catalyst for the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which lasted 381 days.

There is something powerful about challenging an expectation that has become normal. Social environments teach us what is expected. We learn what gets rewarded, what gets punished and what happens when we step outside the lines. Some of those lessons help us navigate life. Others can teach us to tolerate things we should be questioning. This is where liberation becomes psychologically interesting.....

Sometimes the first step isn't resistance.
Sometimes it's recognition. The recognition that this isn't just how things are. South Africa gives us another perspective. The end of apartheid did not erase everything apartheid had produced. A society cannot simply declare an oppressive system finished and expect its consequences to disappear with it. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to address human rights abuses committed during apartheid.

Its work included a Human Rights Violations Committee, an Amnesty Committee and a Reparation and Rehabilitation Committee. It created a formal process for people to give testimony and for the country to confront its past. That raises a question that goes far beyond South Africa.

Can you really move forward if you're unwilling to look at what happened before?

We often tell people to move on. Move on from what? Move on how? Move on for whose comfort? There is a difference between healing and forgetting. There is a difference between reconciliation and pretending something never happened. There is also a difference between peace and justice. Then there is Windrush. This part of the story feels different to me because I can't completely stand outside of it and observe it as history.
I'm British....My parents were born here, but my grandparents were born in the Caribbean. When I think about Windrush, I'm thinking about a generation that came before me. I'm thinking about people whose lives, decisions, sacrifices and experiences form part of the story I inherited. That's what generations do. They leave things behind us that we don't always recognise until we start looking. Windrush wasn't simply about one ship arriving in Britain.

The National Archives makes clear that Caribbean migration to Britain existed before the Empire Windrush. The ship became a symbol of wider post-war migration, when Caribbean people came to Britain as British citizens. Many responded to opportunities and Britain's need for workers in areas including transport, healthcare and the postal service. Between 1947 and 1970, nearly half a million people left the Caribbean to live in Britain.....



They came to build lives. They became part of Britain.
They built families. Those families became generations.
Mine included.

Alongside that contribution was another reality. Many Caribbean migrants experienced racism and discrimination in employment and housing, despite Britain's need for their labour. Decades later came the Windrush scandal. People who had lived in Britain for years, sometimes most of their lives, became caught up in immigration enforcement measures because they could not always adequately prove their status. Wendy Williams' independent review examined what happened and its impact on those affected. She described the scandal as a "profound institutional failure" and made 30 recommendations. That part hits differently when you realise history isn't always something sitting neatly in a textbook.

Sometimes it's your grandparents.
Sometimes it's the stories your family tells.
Sometimes it's the things they don't tell you.
Sometimes it's simply knowing that the circumstances surrounding your own life didn't begin with you.

I'm not suggesting every descendant of the Windrush generation carries the same psychological experience. We don't. Families are different. Experiences are different. Psychology does, however, remind us that our sense of identity doesn't develop in isolation. We are shaped by relationships, communities, social experiences and the environments in which we grow. What gets passed between generations isn't only property, money, names or photographs.

It can be stories. Beliefs. Warnings. Coping strategies.
Ideas about safety. Ideas about belonging. Ideas about what is possible. That doesn't mean we're prisoners of our history. Understanding where something came from can give us more choice about what we carry forward.

This is where the idea of critical consciousness becomes interesting. Psychological research describes it as involving awareness of social inequality, reflection on the conditions producing it, a sense of efficacy and, in some models, action. A systematic review examining critical consciousness and wellbeing among adolescents and young adults found relationships between the two, while also highlighting differences across age groups and dimensions of critical consciousness.
The nuance matters.

Liberation isn't a psychological formula. People respond to oppression differently. Some resist publicly. Some resist quietly. Some organise. Some leave. Some adapt. Some simply survive. Survival should never be mistaken for consent. Human beings are remarkably adaptable. We learn how to function within the environments we're given. Sometimes that adaptation protects us. Sometimes it helps us survive circumstances we have little immediate power to change. But surviving something doesn't automatically mean the conditions were acceptable. Becoming accustomed to something doesn't necessarily make it healthy.

That's the part I keep coming back to. Peace matters. Of course it does. Nobody needs unnecessary conflict. But if peace requires people to remain silent about injustice, accept unequal treatment or stop questioning the structures around them, what exactly are we protecting?

Rosa Parks showed us that peaceful resistance can still challenge a system.

Kwame Ture challenged people to think beyond the language of freedom and towards self-determination. South Africa showed us that ending an oppressive system doesn't mean the work of confronting its consequences is finished.

Windrush reminds us that history doesn't simply disappear because decades have passed.

It can sit in families.
It can shape communities.
It can influence how generations understand belonging.
So perhaps the question isn't simply:

Are we at peace?

Perhaps we should ask:

What has actually changed?

Who has agency?
Who has been heard?
Who still has to adapt?
What have we normalised?
What have we inherited that we now have the opportunity to question?

Liberation isn't necessarily about choosing conflict over peace. It's about recognising that peace without justice isn't necessarily freedom.



Sometimes liberation begins quietly.
Not with a protest.
Not with a revolution.
Sometimes it begins with a question:

Why have we accepted this as normal?

Perhaps freedom begins there. Not when we stop making noise, but when we become conscious enough to understand why we needed to make it in the first place.

By Shardia O'Connor



Honouring our beautiful brains

Everything we do, every thought we've ever had, is produced by the human brain. But exactly how it operates remains one of the biggest unsolved mysteries, and it seems the more we probe its secrets, the more surprises we find. - Neil deGrasse Tyson

Earlier in our series, we explored planting seeds of intention by going inward and asking, "What can I cultivate, what can I grow?" We then leaned into the softening reminder of simply "being" here and now, immersing ourselves in each moment rather than pushing harder.

In the Northern Hemisphere, we move into a new season: Autumn. One of reflection and harvest.

For many, the crisper air and the changing colours of the leaves evoke a sense of transition. A shift. One that offers us an opportunity to move inward. Reflecting on what we've so tenderly grown. This is more than checking off boxes of things we have accomplished; it's also an opportunity to lean into our learning and insights. Harvesting what matters and honouring the process and meaning of our unique growth.

This is where we get curious, especially around the brain part of "Be Brain Breath". We don't need to understand every detail of how the brain works (I'll leave that to my colleague). It helps to know that a large portion of our decisions, emotions, and thoughts comes from our subconscious mind.

Instead of living in our mind's patterns- repetitive thoughts, old beliefs and actions, can we cozy into the season by beginning to slow down and sit in the presence of stillness, noticing what's here?

What supported our growth? Where have we been holding? Where have we been resisting? Where can we allow a gentleness and some compassion to let go of that which we've outgrown?

Just as the autumn wind carries leaves away to make space for what comes next, so too can we. Not all at once. Gently. With awareness. Trusting what emerges is where we are meant to be.

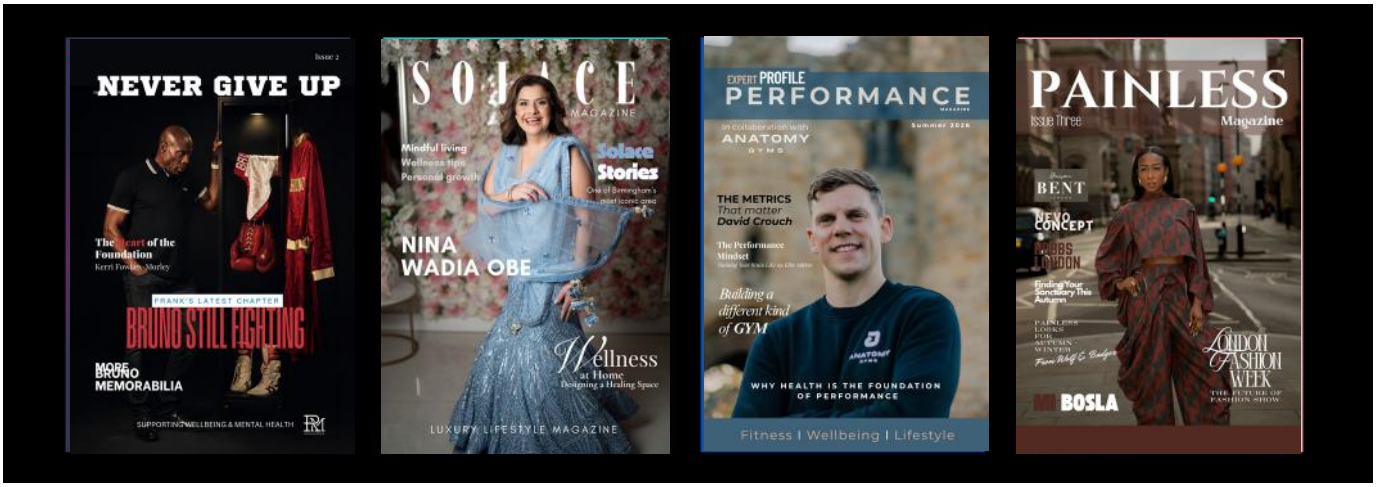
Did this column spark your curiosity? Take the next step and visit www.talkbreathelive.com to continue the conversation.

By Darlene Wierski-Devoe
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The Achievement Is Not the Finish Line
What Makes Growth Sustainable?



There is a difference between making progress and building a life that can support it. We rarely discuss that difference when celebrating achievement. We applaud the promotion, the business launch, the new opportunity, the ambitious goal finally reached. We admire the visible result, often without asking what it takes to maintain.

But what happens after the applause?

A leader earns a larger role, yet continues making every decision personally. An entrepreneur attracts more clients, but has no reliable process for delivering the work. A professional reaches a long-pursued milestone and discovers that the schedule, expectations, and responsibilities attached to it leave little room for anything else. These are not necessarily failures of ambition or discipline. Sometimes growth has simply outpaced the structures supporting it.

In my work across human performance, leadership, and organizational development, I have become interested in what happens between achievement and sustainability. We spend considerable time helping people identify what they want to accomplish. We spend far less time examining whether their current ways of operating can accommodate the results they seek. Consider a business owner whose reputation rests on being exceptionally responsive. At first, answering every message and personally handling every request may have helped build trust. As the business expands, those same behaviours can create delays, exhaustion, and dependence on one person.

The behaviour did not suddenly become wrong. The demands surrounding it changed. This distinction matters because people often interpret new friction as a sign they need to work harder. They extend their hours, increase their effort, and hold themselves to an even higher standard. Yet the underlying problem may not be insufficient effort. It may be that the system that produced their early success was never designed for their next level of responsibility.

We see similar patterns outside business. Someone commits to improving their well-being but builds a routine that only works when nothing unexpected happens. Another person accepts a leadership position without changing how they manage priorities or communicate boundaries. Their intentions are genuine. Their plans simply lack the flexibility required by real life.

Sustainable performance asks a different question: not merely, “Can I achieve this?” but “What must be true for me to continue doing this well?” That question shifts our attention from individual determination to capacity. Capacity includes time, attention, resources, relationships, processes, and recovery. It also includes the ability to recognize when a familiar approach has become less effective. None of these elements is particularly glamorous. Yet they influence whether progress becomes a stable part of our lives or another demanding experience we struggle to repeat.

This is especially important for leaders. When we reward outcomes without examining how those outcomes were achieved, we risk normalizing practices that are difficult to sustain. A team may meet its targets through constant urgency, unclear responsibilities, or the extraordinary effort of a few dependable people. The results look impressive on paper. The conditions behind them tell another story.

> *“Growth should change more than our results. It should change how we operate.”*

Good leadership requires looking at both. It means asking whether people have the tools to do their work, whether decisions are being made at the appropriate level, and whether expectations match available resources. It also means recognizing that a high-performing person is not an unlimited resource.

I believe growth should change more than our results. It should change how we operate. That might mean replacing constant availability with clear communication standards. It might mean documenting a process instead of relying on memory, delegating a decision instead of remaining the bottleneck, or reconsidering a commitment that no longer serves its intended purpose.

These adjustments can appear small compared with the excitement of a major breakthrough. But they are often what make a breakthrough useful beyond the moment it occurs. We do not have to diminish ambition to make room for sustainability. We do, however, have to stop treating endurance as the only evidence of commitment.

Perhaps the next measure of success is not simply how far we can go, but whether we have created the conditions to remain effective, healthy, and present once we arrive. After all, reaching a new level is an accomplishment. Being able to live and lead well there is a different kind of achievement in the years that follow.

By Taneka Johnson



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Could This Be Our Last Christmas?

7 Ways to Navigate the Festive Season When You're Questioning Your Marriage

Christmas is supposed to be the season of togetherness. Yet what happens when the person sitting opposite you at the Christmas table is the very person you're questioning whether you want to spend another year with?

Perhaps you've been asking yourself:

- Should I stay?
- Should I leave?
- Am I unhappy enough to end my marriage?
- What would happen to the family if I did?
- Should I just wait until after Christmas?

For many women, particularly after a long marriage, Christmas can magnify everything that has been quietly sitting beneath the surface. The photographs show smiling families. The Christmas tree is up. Presents are wrapped. Children and grandchildren may be coming home. Yet underneath all of that can be a woman carrying a question that nobody else can see:
Do I still want this marriage?

If that's where you find yourself this Christmas, you don't have to force an answer before you're ready. Instead, here are seven ways to navigate the festive season while creating some space for clarity.

1. Stop demanding an answer from yourself
One of the biggest pressures women put themselves under is believing they should know. After all, you've probably been thinking about your marriage for months, perhaps years. Surely you should know by now? Not necessarily.

There is an enormous difference between knowing something isn't right and knowing what you want to do about it. Fear, finances, children, grandchildren, the family home, loneliness, guilt and uncertainty can all become tangled up with the fundamental question of whether you still want the relationship. Christmas doesn't have to be your deadline. For now, allow yourself to move from: ***"I have to make a decision."*** to:
"I'm giving myself permission to understand what I really want."
That's a very different place from which to think.

2. Don't let Christmas become evidence that everything is OK
There may be lovely moments. You might laugh together. You may have a wonderful Christmas lunch. You might exchange thoughtful presents or enjoy having your family around you. Suddenly, a little voice says: See? Maybe it isn't that bad after all. Be careful about making a permanent decision based on a temporary environment. Christmas can create a bubble. Equally, one terrible argument on Boxing Day doesn't automatically mean your marriage must end. Instead of judging your entire relationship through the lens of a few highly charged days, notice the bigger patterns.

Ask yourself: ***What is my relationship actually like throughout the rest of the year?*** That's where some of your answers may lie.

3. Lower the emotional temperature
When you're already emotionally exhausted, Christmas can add another layer. Shopping. Cooking. Family expectations. Socialising. Alcohol. Travelling. Trying to keep everyone happy. Then somewhere underneath all of that, you're contemplating one of the biggest decisions of your life. Something has to give. You don't have to create the perfect Christmas. This is where I encourage women to call upon some of their archetypal superpowers.

- ***The Warrioress delegates.***
- ***The Queen says "no" and holds her boundaries.***
- ***The Lover recognises what she needs and takes herself for a walk, rests or goes to bed early.***

Give yourself permission to be and do what you truly stand for. Step away from conversations that are becoming heated and protect your energy. Sometimes clarity doesn't come from thinking harder. ***It comes when the noise becomes quieter.***

4. Notice yourself, not just your marriage
Women often come to me with an enormous amount of information about their partner.

- ***What he does.***
- ***What he doesn't do.***
- ***What he's said.***
- ***What he's failed to say.***
- ***Whether he's changed.***
- ***Whether he might change.***

Yet there's another person you may be forgetting. You. So turn the attention towards yourself for a moment:

- ***Who have you become within this relationship?***
- ***What do you need?***
- ***What matters to you now?***



"For many women, particularly after a long marriage, Christmas can magnify everything that has been quietly sitting beneath the surface."





- *What have you tolerated?*
- *Where have you compromised?*
- *What parts of yourself have become smaller?*

Perhaps the most important question:
Clarity isn't only about evaluating your marriage. It's also about reconnecting with yourself.

5. Separate fear from fact
Fear loves the future.
- *What if I'm lonely?*
- *What if I can't afford to leave?*
- *What will the children think?*
- *Where will I live?*
- *What if I regret it?*
- *What if I've left it too late?*

Before long, you've mentally lived through 25 different versions of the future, none of which has actually happened yet. Bring yourself back to what you know today.

Take a piece of paper and write two headings:
WHAT I KNOW | WHAT I FEAR
Then start separating the two. ***Fact from fear.***

Fear deserves compassion, but it doesn't automatically deserve the deciding vote.

6. Don't make January your escape hatch
January is often talked about as the month when people decide to divorce. Yet January itself doesn't create clarity. You don't need to wake up on 2 January and suddenly know exactly what to do. Instead, use the New Year as an opportunity to become curious.
- *Gather information.*
- *Understand your financial position.*
- *Explore your options.*
- *Consider what would need to change for you to genuinely want to remain in your marriage.*

Then ask yourself one powerful question: ***If nothing changed in this relationship over the next 12 months, how would I feel about still being here next Christmas?***

You don't have to act on the answer. Just notice what comes up when you allow yourself to answer it truthfully.

7. Give yourself the gift of clarity
Perhaps the greatest gift you can give yourself this Christmas isn't something wrapped underneath the tree. It's space to hear yourself.

- *Not your partner.*
- *Not your adult children.*
- *Not your friends.*
- *Not society.*
- *Not the frightened voice imagining everything that could go wrong.*

You.
The decision to stay in a marriage deserves just as much conscious thought as the decision to leave one. Staying because you're frightened to leave isn't necessarily choosing your marriage. Equally, leaving simply because you desperately want the uncertainty to stop isn't necessarily clarity either.
The aim isn't to push yourself towards stay or go. The aim is to reach the point where your decision feels like your own.

Having said all of that... you don't need to decide before Christmas

If you're quietly wondering whether this could be your last Christmas together, you don't have to solve your entire future while you're carving the turkey.

Get through Christmas. Look after yourself. Get grounded through observation, reflection, breathwork, being out in nature or simply listening to the birdsong.

Then, when the decorations come down and life becomes a little quieter, give yourself the space to look honestly at what you want from the year ahead.

Sometimes the first decision isn't: ***"Do I stay or do I leave?"***

It can be much simpler than that: "***I'm ready to stop living in limbo and find out what I really want."***

By Jennie Sutton

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About Jennie Sutton
Jennie Sutton is an accredited Divorce, Relationship and Court Coach and founder of Untying the Knot. She supports women, particularly those navigating midlife and long-term relationships, to move from uncertainty and overwhelm towards clarity, confidence and informed decision-making.

Her work supports women at every stage — from questioning whether their marriage is right for them, through separation and divorce, to creating their next chapter.

Finding the end to make a new beginning.





The Luxury of Letting Go

Why Your Next Level Requires Less, Not More

Autumn arrives without asking permission. The trees simply let go; there is no negotiation, no attachment, no attempt to hold onto what was once beautiful simply because it feels familiar. There is wisdom in that.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, autumn is governed by the Metal element, associated with the lungs, large intestine, grief, discernment, and the art of release. It is a season of refinement, of determining what is essential and having the courage to eliminate what is not. For modern entrepreneurs and leaders, this is a powerful metaphor.

We have been conditioned to equate expansion with accumulation: more revenue, more visibility, more clients, more credentials, more responsibility. But there is a point where more becomes noise, and noise makes it nearly impossible to hear intuition.

The most evolved form of leadership is not perpetual acceleration. It is discernment, knowing when the strategy has expired. Knowing when the identity you built your success around has become a constraint. Knowing when a relationship, obligation, belief, or definition of success belongs to a previous version of you.

Your body often recognizes this before your conscious mind does. The tension you normalize, the exhaustion you call ambition, the shallow breathing, the heaviness you cannot explain. These can become invitations to listen more deeply to the body, the nervous system, the subconscious, and the energetic field beneath the visible story.

This is where holistic health, energy medicine, spirituality, and transformational mentorship converge because true transformation is not about endlessly fixing yourself. It is about becoming available for who you are next. There is a luxury in having enough self-awareness to stop forcing what no longer fits.

Enough sovereignty to disappoint others rather than abandon yourself. Enough energetic capacity to receive instead of constantly chasing. This autumn, consider a different kind of growth: not accumulation, elimination. Release the identity, release the expectation, release the strategy, release the need to prove.

Then notice what has room to emerge because sometimes your next chapter doesn't require a bigger life. It requires a more aligned one.

By Gena Bradshaw Vitale
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Is Stress Really the Problem?



We have been conditioned to believe that stress is harmful. We think that if we feel it, something is wrong, that we are overloaded, underperforming, or not coping as well as we should. The instinctive response is to push through it, suppress it, or try to eliminate it altogether. This is where the real problem begins, because stress itself was never the enemy.

Stress, in its acute form, is not negative. It is a precise biological response designed to enhance performance. When something matters, your system activates: focus sharpens, energy rises, awareness heightens, and for a short period you are genuinely more capable than you were a moment before. This is not dysfunction.

It is preparation. A presentation, a difficult conversation, a tight deadline: acute stress switches on exactly when you need it and switches off once the moment has passed. Yet most people experience this activation and label it as a threat.

"I'm stressed."
"I can't handle this."
"This is too much."

That interpretation keeps the nervous system in a prolonged state of alert, long after the moment has passed. Over time, this is what erodes performance - impacting clarity, communication, decision-making, and emotional control – all signs of chronic stress.

Chronic stress is a different condition entirely. It is the same activation with no off-switch, triggered again and again, or never fully resolved, until the body forgets what "off" feels like. Think of it like a Broken light switch. This is where the damage happens, not in the spike itself, but in a nervous system that never receives the signal to stand down.

A simple filter helps here. Ask whether the feeling is new, time-limited, and tied to something specific you can act on today. That is acute stress, and it will pass once the demand does. Ask instead whether it has been present for weeks, showing up in your sleep, your patience, or your body. That is chronic, and it calls for a different response: reframing, energy shifting, or a genuine change to what you are carrying.

The cost of prolonged activation is well documented. Sustained high cortisol disrupts sleep, suppresses immune function, and is linked to raised blood pressure and greater cardiovascular risk. The majority of adults will experience physical symptoms directly attributable to stress, from fatigue and headaches to digestive and cardiovascular complaints. Memory narrows, decision-making becomes reactive rather than considered, and communication loses precision under pressure. None of this is a character flaw. It is what happens when a system designed for short bursts of demand is left running continuously.

Here is the distinction that changes everything: not all stress behaves the same way, even at identical intensity. Psychologists call the useful version eustress, the stress of a challenge you feel equipped to meet, that mobilises rather than depletes you. Its counterpart, distress, is the same physiological signal interpreted as a threat you cannot handle. The trigger can be identical: a stage, a deadline, a difficult client.

What separates the two is not the event. It is your interpretation of it, and interpretation is something you have far more influence over than most people realise.

The shift, then, is not to remove stress but to change your relationship with it. Start with language. Instead of saying "I'm stressed," try "I'm activated." This is not semantics; it is a neurological shift from threat to readiness, and the nervous system responds to the story you tell it.

From there, ask better questions. What is this feeling trying to tell me? What matters here? How can I use this? Stress is rarely random. It points, reliably, to something that requires your attention, your skill, or your focus. Meet it there, and the same energy that once felt overwhelming becomes directed and usable. This is where performance changes.

These ideas are part of the Stress key, one of the tools within the Limitless pillar of the NAIL-IT Leadership system. Recognising acute versus chronic, distinguishing eustress from distress, and consciously reframing the language you use are not separate ideas. Together, they form a single, repeatable practice for turning activation into an asset rather than a threat.

Stress unmanaged drains you. Stress understood guides you. The difference was never the pressure. It is always your perception of it, and that shift, from suppression to utilisation, sits at the heart of NAIL-IT Leadership: Your Blueprint to Optimal Performance.

By Dr Rana Al-Falaki

Dr Rana Al-Falaki is an optimal performance strategist, award-winning executive coach and keynote speaker, and the #1 best-selling author of NAIL-IT Leadership: Your Blueprint to Optimal Performance and Women Who Want More. She is the founder of the NAIL-IT Leadership frame-work. Find out more at www.drranaalfalaki.com



The energy *of autumn*

Creating a home that supports the season ahead



"Think about how you feel when you arrive."

As autumn arrives, I don't know about you, but I really notice the shift. The light changes, mornings feel cooler and even the air smells different. Nature tells us one season is ending and another is beginning. As the natural world slows and prepares for the quieter months ahead, we keep moving at the same pace we carried through summer, filling our diaries and expecting ourselves to maintain the same energy.

Feng Shui encourages us to work with these natural cycles, and autumn invites us to turn inwards, simplify and create space, allowing our homes and routines to support the season we are actually in.

As the evenings draw in, our surroundings play an even greater role in how we feel. Feng Shui is often associated with just moving furniture or placing objects around the home, but at its essence it is about creating an environment that supports the way we want to feel and live. I often describe our homes as an energetic mirror. They can reflect where we are now, but also reinforce patterns and habits we have probably outgrown.

Start at the entrance.
In Feng Shui, the front entrance is known as the mouth of Chi, the point through which energy enters the home. In my work as a Feng Shui consultant, one of the first things I look at is how energy enters and moves through a space.

Think about how you feel when you arrive. Are you greeted by an inviting entrance, or by shoes, coats, unopened post and things waiting to be dealt with? An entrance crowded with belongings can create a sense of mental overload, whereas a clear and welcoming entrance sends a very different message: you have arrived somewhere that feels calm and cared for. Clear anything that has accumulated around the front door or hallway, check the lighting and consider what would make the space feel more welcoming. Sometimes simply creating space is enough to change how an area feels.

Clear what belongs to another season.
We are very good at adding things to our homes, but often less good at taking things away. Summer shoes remain by the door, wardrobes hold unworn clothes and cupboards contain things we have forgotten we own. Broken appliances sit waiting to be taken to the tip. Individually these things may seem insignificant, but collectively they create visual and energetic noise.

Decluttering in Feng Shui is really not about having an immaculate show home. Decluttering is about letting your home breathe, especially by dealing with things that are broken, unfinished, or permanently waiting for attention. Autumn gives us a natural point to reset.

Work with the energy of autumn.
Within the Five Element system used in Feng Shui, autumn is associated with the Metal element. Metal energy is connected with clarity, structure, refinement and the ability to let go of what is no longer needed, which makes its symbolism particularly relevant at this time of year.

We see the same process happening naturally outside. Trees release their leaves rather than trying to carry everything into the next season. Nature does not resist letting go; it is part of the cycle.

We can bring the same thinking into our homes. What are you holding onto simply because it has always been there? What has served its purpose? What no longer reflects the person you are now or the life you are creating? Autumn is a wonderful time to edit rather than accumulate. Metal can be represented through metallic finishes, circular shapes and colours such as white and grey, but Feng Shui is never simply about adding objects. Sometimes the strongest expression of Metal energy is more space, order and clarity.



> *"Sometimes simply creating space is enough to change how an area feels."*

Create warmth without creating heaviness.
As the weather cools, we instinctively want to make our homes feel cosier by adding blankets and candles along with richer textures, but there is a difference between creating warmth and just filling a room with more 'stuff'.

Ask whether the rooms you use most feel comforting or crowded. Warmer lighting, natural materials and layered textures can soften a space without overwhelming it. The Five Elements — Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water — remind us that our homes benefit from balance, and Feng shui is about having a balance of the 5 elements within your home.

Look at the rooms that support you most.
Your bedroom should support rest, intimacy, and a sense of security, but bedrooms often fill up with laundry, paperwork, and reminders of work. Consider what your bedroom is communicating. Does it feel restorative? Does it support the relationship you have or the relationship you would like to welcome?

Is there balance around the bed? Is there space?
The same principle applies elsewhere. A living room should encourage comfort and connection, while a workspace should help you focus. When I work with clients, I am not looking for a perfect home; I am looking at whether your home is supporting the life you are trying to create.

Notice what you have stopped seeing.
One of the most interesting things about our homes is how quickly we stop noticing them. For example, the piles of paperwork become invisible, the dusty windowsill, the dying plant, or the broken lamp or the cupboard door that gets stuck.

I find that the things people have stopped noticing in their homes are also the things affecting how a space feels. So walk through your home as though you were visiting it for the first time. What catches your attention? What feels good? What feels irritating, heavy or unfinished? You do not need an advanced understanding of Feng Shui to recognise when something in your environment is draining your energy.

Allow your home to support the season ahead.
I regularly hear that there is a common misconception that Feng Shui is about creating a perfect home, and I am here to tell you that is not the case at all. A supportive and balanced home is not one that looks immaculate or feels staged; it is one that works with you, supports how you want to feel and reflects the life you want to create.

Perhaps you want more calm. Perhaps you are moving through change and want your surroundings to reflect where you are going rather than where you have been. You do not need to change everything at once. Choose one area. Clear the entrance. Sort the wardrobe. Repair something broken. Create a bedroom that feels more restful.

Autumn really does remind us that change does not always require adding more; it begins by releasing, refining and making space, and so when we work with the natural rhythm of the seasons, we feel more grounded, supported and aligned as we move into the months ahead.

When we become more intentional about how our home feels and functions, it can become part of the strategy for creating the life we want to live. So clear a little space, soften the lighting and put the kettle on. Autumn is here.

By Gayle Swaffield

Discover what your home could be telling you.

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There's a little bit of ritual within each of us

By Claire Chitty

From brushing our teeth and washing dishes to birthdays, weddings, graduations, holidays, and other celebrations, people have incorporated ritual throughout history to honour life, death, and community. Scientifically, neuroscience has discovered ritual can synchronize heartbeats, calm the nervous system and create a sense of belonging. Subconsciously, we engage in traditions passed down through ancestral lineage and societal beliefs yet seldom question why we habitually do certain things. We have been entrained to accept rather than recognizing we are master creators. Each action we take affects atoms around us.

By shifting our awareness, intentional practices turn ordinary actions into experiences which offer life meaning. As we evolve and collectively shift, now is the time to contribute to global change. Rituals strengthen connection and build identity and safety, especially in group settings. As a Women's Sacred Circle facilitator, I find that people, individually and collectively, are curious about ritual. Some may initially question its validity: is it woo-woo or weird, or simply a focal point for intention to manifest our dreams and desires?

The results and outcomes through sharing and engaging in activities are profound. I've witnessed women free themselves from toxic situations, find inner peace and true connection, and live more empowered lives. Their success has resulted in selling houses, career changes, new relationships and babies.

The power of intention and ritual can never be underestimated. We lay the foundation for creation with what we put our energy into.

Many people go through life unaware that intention is a generating energy. I see this time and time again; those who focus on lack and negativity generally attract challenging experiences: physically, emotionally, mentally, work or relationship issues. For example, someone who constantly places attention on money stress may find themselves struggling financially. In comparison, those who look for solutions, are open to possibilities, combined with positive thoughts and words of abundance, are more inclined to attract opportunities in miraculous ways.

Words are not just expressions; they are frequencies that shape the field around us. Every thought, every internal narrative, every phrase forms our experiences. When we forget this, we also forget the ripple effect this creates, influencing our choices, relationships and the way life responds. The universe answers not as punishment or reward but simply as vibrational energy, rather than what humans consider as 'good or bad, right or wrong.'
Holding this information foremost in your mind, we are fast approaching equinox season (21st September), a powerful time when many traditions, including Celtic faith, focus on inner reflection or external energy.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the Autumn Equinox heads into shorter daylight hours. This is a perfect time for harvesting, preserving or trading excess food, drying herbs, pruning trees, storing wood and preparing for the approaching winter. You may wish to hold a celebratory feast with others to honour the 'fruits of your labour.' Symbolically, these 'fruits' may also represent personal or shared achievements, completed projects or new family members. Release anything that you wish to let go of by burning, clapping or singing, visualizing completion.

An additional practice could be to light an orange or brown candle surrounded by autumn leaves, then offer gratitude for the abundance received, especially that which was grown directly from the earth.
In the Southern Hemisphere, we step into the Spring Equinox, representative of new beginnings and renewal. This is evident through nature's explosion of vibrant colours, spring blossom and lambs joyfully

“By shifting our awareness, intentional practices turn ordinary actions into experiences which *offer life meaning.*”

leaping in lush meadows. Take advantage of this time of fertility, both literally and symbolically. Create a vision board filled with images that represent your dreams: travel, career, working from home, family, a safe, happy place to live- anything that acts as an optical reminder and continued inspiration. Add a few drops of patchouli, bergamot, ginger, frankincense, or cinnamon essential oil, renowned for good luck, prosperity, and positive change, in each of the four corners. Place your board somewhere visible as a constant reminder to keep moving forward. Once a goal has been reached, attach a gold star on the image, honouring your success.

Additional rituals may include spring-cleaning your home or connecting to the earth in some form: planting a tree, sowing seeds, touching a tree, placing your hands on the soil, feeling the sun’s gentle warmth on your skin, lying under the stars, or soaking in a bath steeped with fresh herbs. It’s also a time to honour and reconnect with your body, free of the confines of heavy winter clothing and hearty comfort foods. It comes as no surprise that weight loss companies and gyms during this season have an influx of clientele eager to embrace the beach and light attire.

As the daylight hours increase, light a yellow candle, place flowers around the outside and give thanks for all the good flowing into your life.

Chances are you are already practicing ritual in some form, whether it be community connection, energetic practices or wishing. Wherever you are in the world, I encourage you to take the opportunity and use the equinox energy. Adapt to suit your environment; reflect on your achievements, goals and future choices. You have the power to change your life and the energy around you, limited only by your imagination.

Go be the change the world needs: peace, joy and unity.

By Claire Chitty

Claire Chitty is an Australian author, teacher in Women’s Sacred Circles and multidimensional healing facilitator whose work empowers individuals to reconnect with their innate clarity, emotional wellbeing and soul-led purpose.

With more than 27 years of experience in energetic healing, she weaves together metaphysical kinesiology, spiritual healing, intuitive guidance and ritual design to create transformative experiences that are both grounded and expansive. Claire is also the channel and creator of 26 etheric aura sprays, each one a vibrational portal supporting emotional healing, energetic clarity, and soul alignment.



WHEN A CHALLENGE BECOMES CHALLENGING – AND READJUSTING YOUR GOAL BECOMES NECESSARY



How often have you set yourself a goal and simply given up when things become challenging? Or set yourself a goal so rigid that you are unwilling to adjust it, regardless of circumstances – and then felt like a failure for not achieving it?

Setting the goal is just the first step

I ran my first road marathon at the 2026 London Marathon at the age of 52.

I had only started running four years earlier, as a coping mechanism after my husband had left. It turned out I was quite good at it, and I began setting myself various running and endurance challenges.

I am likely only to run a road marathon once in my life at speed, so I set myself a structured training plan. Of course, living in England, most of my training runs from January to March were in the wet, wind, and dark. It was hard and at times demotivating, but I was determined – I wanted to be able to say that I had run a sub-four-hour marathon.

I ran London 2026 in a time of 4h 3m 54s, and I was elated!

When circumstances change

On one of the first dry days towards the end of February, I got over-excited by the clear weather. A dodgy side-step on the still-wet pavement to overtake a walker meant I lost my footing and thwack! I hit the pavement face-first.



A trip to Accident & Emergency, a facial X-ray and two follow-up appointments with the maxillofacial specialist team saw me having to take an enforced two-week time-out to recover.

Goal still intact, I restarted my training. Only one week later, another fall! This time, an uneven pavement and a familiar story of losing my footing. Another X-ray – showing a partially torn ligament in my shoulder.

This really did set me back and was far more restricting and painful than the facial injury: another two weeks out and a necessary, gentler reintroduction to my training plan.

Reassessing the goal

I had to accept that losing so much time from my training plan meant I was unlikely to reach my original time goal. I won't lie, that was hard, and I was initially disappointed.

But as I reassessed my goal, I reoriented towards the thought of getting 'near to four hours'. That was good enough for me, and I was excited to reach the start line with renewed focus and determination.

Success will only come to you when you allow it in

I ran London 2026 in a time of 4h 3m 54s, and I was elated! Had I kept strictly to my original time goal – and ignored the changing circumstances around me – I would, no doubt, have been disappointed. I would not have given myself any credit for the marathon I had just run, let alone those months of training.

- *How many of you have got to the end of a project, a challenge or an initiative and been disappointed because you 'didn't quite' reach what you wanted to?*

- *At what point did you assess and reassess whether that goal was still valid for your circumstances?*

Reflection

Setting ourselves ambitious goals can motivate us into action. This doesn't mean they need to be set in stone.

It takes courage to reassess a goal and modify it. When was the last time you did this – or, on reflection, ought to have done?

By Martine Garabette PhD

Martine is a woman of remarkable resilience and determination, having faced more challenges in a few short years than she would have wished for in a lifetime. With a PhD in neuroscience and leadership experience as Managing Director in medical communications, she blends sharp insight with intelligence and deep empathy. Drawing on her ADJUST Coaching™ framework, Martine helps people navigate life's transitions with clarity, courage and confidence.

www.ADJUSTcoaching.com

RECOVERY IS JUST THE BEGINNING...



When I was 27, I completed my 12-step recovery program for my eating disorders. I was no longer harming myself in the way I had for so many years, and I was grateful to be in recovery. But what I wasn't prepared for was figuring out how to actually live my life.

For so long, my life had been shaped by my eating disorders and by the expectations I had put on myself. I had spent years believing I needed to do things a certain way and that if I couldn't meet those expectations, there was something wrong with me. I had no capacity to give myself any grace. So here I was at 27, no longer living the way I had been living for 18 years, but not really knowing how to move forward either.

I had dreams and goals, but there was a lot of hesitation around them. I was still learning who I was without my addiction running my life. I knew I couldn't go back to how things had been, but I didn't yet know what moving forward would look like. You know the old way isn't an option anymore, but the new way isn't always clear.

Fortunately, a friend told me about a women's weekend that focused on relationships—with men, with women, and with yourself. At the time, I really wanted to be in a relationship with a man. I thought that was what I needed. What this weekend taught me was that this woman needed to be in a relationship with herself first. I remember thinking, if I wanted someone to fall in love with me, I probably needed to fall in love with myself first. If I didn't love me, who would?

That was the beginning of learning how to live differently. I started getting out of my comfort zone in small ways. Early in recovery, I took an acting class and some fencing lessons. Neither was something I had to do, and I certainly wasn't great at either. But that wasn't really the point. I was trying something new and realizing I could do things even when I wasn't sure I would be good at them. Each small step gave me a little more confidence to try something else. I was beginning to see that I didn't have to have everything figured out before I moved forward.

That lesson has stayed with me throughout my recovery. There have been many times when I've found myself moving in a new direction without knowing exactly where it would take me. And that middle part can be really uncomfortable. You're no longer the person you were, but you're not quite sure who you're becoming either. You're going after something you want, taking steps toward it, and then you can reach a point where you start questioning yourself. Am I doing the right thing? Is this really what I'm supposed to be doing?

I think that's where letting go and trusting the process becomes the hardest part. We want to know that we're making the right choice before we move forward, but sometimes we don't get that reassurance. Sometimes we must keep going even when we're uncomfortable and don't have all the answers. I've had to learn that feeling uncomfortable doesn't necessarily mean I'm on the wrong path. Sometimes it just means I'm doing something different and growing into a new version of myself.

I think this is an important part of recovery that doesn't always get talked about. Getting sober or stopping the behavior is such an important part of recovery, but then you have to learn how to live. You must start making choices for yourself and figuring out what you want your life to look like. You don't have to have all the answers.

For me, moving forward has happened one step at a time. Sometimes that step has been small, and sometimes it has taken me somewhere I never expected to go. But I learned that I don't have to know the entire path before I take the next step. I just have to be willing to take it.

Going back is no longer an option. So how do I live now that I'm sober? I live by continuing to learn who I am, trying things that may be outside my comfort zone, and trusting myself a little more with each step. Recovery gave me the opportunity to stop living the life my addiction had created and start creating a life that was actually mine. I'm still learning, and I think that's okay.

I don't think recovery is about reaching some point where you have everything figured out. For me, it's about continuing to move forward and being willing to discover what comes along the way.

Recovery and Beyond.

By Ginamarie Rizzolo-Epstein

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The Woman in the Mirror Isn't Who You Think She Is



For years, I was convinced I had to become someone else to be worthy. I became a chameleon of sorts. I changed my identity, values and conversations based on who I was with and what I thought their expectations were. I learned this from childhood. It was safer to become what others needed me to be than to stand in my truth.

From an early age, many of us receive messages that eventually shape who we become. As a little girl, I learned three simple lessons: be good, be quiet, and look pretty.

Be good taught me to meet other people's expectations rather than listen to my own heart.

Be quiet taught me to doubt my voice, suppress my opinions, and believe that everyone else knew better than I did.

Look pretty taught me that my value rested in how I appeared and how others perceived me.

Those childhood messages evolved into even more powerful beliefs, such as: You must strive to be perfect in the eyes of those who are judging you, because they are always judging you. You must earn approval by doing/saying what people want to hear, not using your own voice. You must prove your worth by agreeing to everything. You must earn love; it is not just freely given.

Somewhere along the way, we stop asking who we truly are and begin asking who we need to become to be accepted. The result is an identity built on performance instead of authenticity. We become people pleasers. We struggle with boundaries. We over-function, over-give, and slowly abandon ourselves in exchange for belonging.

Sometimes it shows up professionally. We build careers that look successful on paper but leave us emotionally empty. Other times it appears in relationships where we lose ourselves trying to keep everyone else happy. Many women eventually find themselves living what I call an "uncomfortable comfort zone" a life that no longer fulfils them, yet feels too familiar to leave.

Eventually, the question begins to surface: If I stop being who everyone expects me to be...will I still be loved, accepted, appreciated? For nearly two decades of coaching women, I have found that this question sits beneath countless struggles. It isn't a lack of confidence that keeps us stuck. More often, inherited emotional patterns, unconscious beliefs, and survival strategies that once protected us no longer serve us.

I know this because I lived it. Between the ages of twelve and fourteen, I experienced my parents' prolonged and painful divorce. The stability and security every child longs for disappeared, replaced by resentment, generational alcohol addiction, and very little emotional guidance. My siblings and I learned to navigate life largely on our own.

Long before that, at the age of six, childhood trauma embedded itself into my subconscious. It was never to be discussed; instead, it added to the programming that my voice and feelings don't matter. As a result, it shaped how I viewed myself and the world around me for years to come.

By the time I became an adult, survival had become familiar. I married young, stepping into a relationship that reflected many of the same dynamics I had witnessed growing up. It wasn't healthy, but it felt normal because I knew how to survive it. At the time, I didn't realize there was a difference between surviving life and truly living it.

When my first child was born, I was haunted by a promise I had made to myself as a young girl: My children will never experience divorce. Yet by the time my second child arrived, I realized that keeping that promise meant sacrificing something even more important - myself. Choosing divorce became one of the hardest decisions of my life, but it was also the first true step toward breaking the very generational cycle I had vowed to end.

Looking back, I understood something I couldn't see then. I wasn't broken. I was living from programming that was never mine. That realization changed everything.

It became the foundation for the Soul Mirror™ Method, a transformational process that helps women separate who they truly are from everything they were taught to believe they were.

The Soul Mirror™ Method isn't about fixing yourself because you were never broken. It's about gently uncovering the beliefs, emotional wounds, inherited patterns, and protective identities that have covered your truth for years. As those layers begin to fall away, something remarkable happens: You remember who you've been all along.

Every woman already possesses the wisdom, strength, resilience, and wholeness she has been searching for. Sometimes she simply needs a different mirror, one that reflects her soul instead of her conditioning. When you begin living from that place, your relationships change. Your decisions become clearer. Your boundaries strengthen. Joy returns. Peace replaces performance. And the life you build is no longer based on fear or approval, but on truth.



The woman in the mirror isn't who you've been told you are.

She is the woman you've been searching for all along.

By Sue Campanella

www.suecampanella.com

Crystal Skull Wisdom

by Alphedia Arara

As humanity continues to ascend in frequency, our consciousness expands in ways that let us perceive and experience life beyond the limits of our previous understanding. We begin to awaken to the subtle energies around us, recognise the interconnectedness of all life, and deepen our awareness of the universal presence of Source flowing through everything. As our frequency rises, we can become more receptive to the wisdom, guidance and energetic information that has always been available to us.



Crystal Skulls are powerful allies on this journey of awakening. They hold an advanced consciousness and ancient energetic wisdom we can access when our soul is ready to receive it. For many people, connecting with a Crystal Skull can create a profound sense of recognition, almost as though something ancient within them is being remembered. Many souls feel they have worked with Crystal Skulls before, particularly in Atlantis and other ancient civilisations. The Maya, for example, are believed within the spiritual traditions surrounding Crystal Skulls to have worked with their energy to receive healing guidance, knowledge and transmissions of energetic codes that supported their civilisation.

Since the powerful shift of 21.12.12, an increasing number of people have felt mysteriously drawn towards becoming Crystal Skull keepers. Many say to me, "I don't know what I am supposed to do with my skull, or what it is trying to tell me, but I just knew I had to become its guardian." This is the soul recognising something before the conscious mind has understood it.

Crystal Skulls communicate in their own way. They can speak through intuition, dreams, sensations, visions, synchronicities and an inner knowing that cannot always be explained through the logical mind. When we become quiet enough to listen, their energy can act as a catalyst for profound shifts in our consciousness and frequency. They can help us see what we are ready to release, remember aspects of ourselves that have been dormant and open doorways into a deeper relationship with our own soul wisdom.



I am now the guardian of hundreds of Crystal Skull carvings, including Dragon and Unicorn Skulls, and I experience each one as having its own unique consciousness, energy, healing qualities and purpose. Over the years, working with the skulls has supported me through many profound transformations. I have experienced them helping me to release energy that felt stuck within my body and was connected to physical pain, to unlock what I experienced as blocks around abundance and prosperity, and to clear past-life and ancestral patterns that I had been carrying.



Their energy has also transformed the vibration of my home. People regularly walk into my living room and immediately say, "Wow, it is so peaceful in here." To me, this is an example of how Crystal Skulls can become energetic guardians, helping to hold and amplify the frequency of a space.

We are now moving through a powerful transition from the consciousness of third-dimensional ego living towards higher states of awareness. As we explore life from fifth- and seventh-dimensional consciousness, we are being invited to move beyond fear, limitation, separation and the drama that can keep us trapped within lower vibrational patterns. This is about us remembering who we are. As our consciousness expands, we begin to recognise the invisible boxes of conditioning that have shaped our lives - beliefs about who we are, what we are capable of, what we deserve and what is possible for us. These patterns can give the ego mind the opportunity to remain in control, keeping us focused on limitation rather than possibility.

The Crystal Skulls can become powerful teachers during this process of Soul liberation. Their energy can help us look beyond the limitations of the conditioned mind and reconnect with the deeper soul intelligence held within. They invite us to question the reality we have accepted and to open ourselves to the possibility that life is far more expansive than we have been led to believe. Perhaps this is one of the greatest gifts of the Crystal Skulls: they help us remember that, deep within ourselves, we already carry the wisdom we have been searching for. To become a crystal skull guardian, visit my Elemental Beings Emporium and enjoy your journey of soul exploration with them.

Visit **www.elementalbeings.co.uk** *for more information. Alphedia Arara is a Scottish author, workshop facilitator, and healer with over 20 years of experience channelling Crystal Skulls. You can book personal skull channellings through the website.*



THE POWER OF THE GUT MICROBIOME

From Data to Direction: Why Personalised Biology Is the Future of Health

At some point, every high-performer reaches the same moment. You have the data. You've done the tests. You've tracked the metrics, followed the protocols, adjusted the routines. And yet, something still doesn't fully align.

Not enough to stop you. Not enough to fail. But enough to know that optimisation has quietly turned into maintenance. This is where most conversations about the gut microbiome lose their depth. We've mistaken information for understanding.

The Illusion of Data
We are living in an era of unprecedented access to biological data: microbiome analyses, wearables, genetic reports, biomarker panels. More data than ever. More confusion than ever. Because collecting metrics is not the same as understanding biological patterns. A list of bacterial names does not explain why your recovery is slower. A score does not tell you why pressure feels heavier. A dashboard does not reveal how your nervous system is compensating.

The gut microbiome, or gut microbiota, is not a static entity to "fix." It is a living regulatory system that constantly adapts to stress, workload, sleep, emotional load, and ageing.

The Gut Microbiome as the Control Room
Certain gut bacteria stabilise long-term health and performance. Akkermansia muciniphila is associated with metabolic flexibility and longevity, yet declines rapidly under chronic stress. Faecalibacterium prausnitzii supports anti-inflammatory balance and gut barrier integrity, but is highly sensitive to poor sleep and persistent inflammation. Bifidobacterium species contribute to immune tolerance and emotional regulation, often reduced in high-pressure lifestyles.



"The gut microbiome, or gut microbiota, is not a static entity to "fix." It is a living regulatory system that constantly adapts to stress, workload, sleep, emotional load, and ageing."

These shifts are not random. They are responses. The gut microbiome translates how you live into how your body functions. It connects nutrition, nervous system regulation, immune tone and cognitive performance into one continuous conversation. This is why I often say: We are not managing systems in isolation. We are reading how they speak to each other.

Why Protocols Fail and Patterns Matter
Most approaches fail because they treat the microbiome as a target, not a language. People copy protocols. They follow trends. They stack supplements. And for a while, something improves. Until it doesn't. Because biology does not respond to formulas. It responds to context.

The difference between short-term improvement and long-term regulation lies in pattern recognition. Not just what is present in the gut, but why it is there, what it is compensating for, and how it interacts with stress, recovery, environment and behaviour over time. This is where my work differs. I don't read tests in isolation. I read trajectories.

Longevity Is a Strategic Decision
For high-performers, longevity is not about extending lifespan at any cost. It is about preserving clarity, resilience, adaptability and decision-making capacity over decades. That requires biological literacy. It means knowing when inflammation is adaptive and when it becomes corrosive. When microbial shifts are temporary and when they signal deeper dysregulation. When pushing through is strategic and when it is biologically expensive.

The future of health is not more information. It is better questions. Questions like: Is my biology supporting my ambition, or surviving it? Am I optimising output, or eroding future capacity? Am I listening to signals, or overriding them?

From Information to Direction
This is where personalised work becomes essential. A test can show us what is happening. Interpretation shows us why. Integration tells us what to do next.

This is the foundation of ***The Mantovani Method®.*** Not a protocol, but a framework for meaning. A way to translate biological signals into strategic direction, before dysfunction becomes decline. Because preventative care is not passive. It is an active choice to intervene early. Those who do not wait for breakdown retain their edge longer. The gut microbiome will always speak. The question is whether you are listening early enough to act.

The test gives us the truth.
The Mantovani Method® gives you the transformation.
Spaces for this work are intentionally limited to ensure depth, precision and results. Executives and high-performers who resonate with this approach are invited to submit an enquiry and request an eligibility review. If you qualify, we begin with a full assessment and build your personalised strategy immediately—ensuring every step you take from this point forward is supported by data, clarity, and biological alignment. Your system is already signalling. What you do next determines your trajectory.

By Letizia Mantovani

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ROOTED IN CHOICE AND READY FOR THE NEXT SEASON

As autumn arrives, there is something about the changing light, the cooler mornings and the leaves beginning to turn that naturally invites reflection. It is a season that reminds us that change does not always need to be dramatic to be meaningful. Sometimes change is quiet. Sometimes it is gradual. Sometimes it begins long before anyone else can see it.

Earlier in the year, our butterfly journey began in spring, with the egg stage representing possibility and potential. There may have been a sense that something needed to change, even if you could not yet name exactly what that was. From the outside, life may have looked perfectly fine. You were functioning, achieving, supporting other people, running the business, leading the team, looking after your family and keeping all the plates spinning, yet underneath all of that capability there may also have been a growing awareness that something no longer felt quite right.

That is often where change begins, not necessarily with a dramatic crisis, but with the quiet discomfort of knowing that the way you have always done things may not be the way you want to continue doing them. It can be the point at which the life you have created no longer quite fits the person you are becoming.

Spring invited us to notice that discomfort rather than dismiss it. It also introduced the idea of One Wee Thing, because I have always believed that meaningful change does not have to begin with turning your entire life upside down. Sometimes it begins with one conversation, one boundary, one decision, one moment of rest or one small action that moves you closer to yourself.

Then came summer and the chrysalis stage of the butterfly journey, which represented the part of transformation that is less visible. From the outside, very little may appear to be happening, but internally everything is being rearranged. Summer brought us through intuition and implementation, courage and change, energy and execution and, ultimately, success. It was a time to begin listening more closely to what you already knew, to act on those intuitive nudges and to make choices that perhaps you had been postponing.

Maybe you made a decision that had been sitting with you for months. Perhaps you changed direction, asked for help, stopped over-explaining yourself or finally admitted that a version of success built around exhaustion and constant busyness was no longer the version of success you wanted.

Perhaps, in your own way, you began to emerge.

Autumn is the season that comes after that emergence, and I think it is an important part of transformation that we do not always talk about. We spend so much time focusing on breakthroughs, brave decisions and bold changes that we can forget what happens afterwards. A butterfly does not emerge from the chrysalis and immediately fly perfectly into the distance. Its wings need time to strengthen. It pauses, adjusts and allows itself to become ready for what comes next.

We need that too.

Autumn is not necessarily asking you to push harder, set more goals or immediately decide what your next big move should be. It is inviting you to integrate what you have learned and become rooted in the person you are becoming. It is an opportunity to notice what has changed within you, gather the wisdom from the season behind you and consciously decide what deserves to travel forward with you.

For women who are used to leading, achieving and carrying responsibility, this can be surprisingly difficult. We are often excellent at asking, "What's next?" We achieve one goal and immediately create another. We finish one project and move straight on to the next. We overcome something difficult and, before we have even acknowledged what it took, we are already looking for the next challenge.

The danger is that constant forward motion can stop us from receiving our own progress. We become so focused on the next result that we overlook the confidence we have built, the patterns we have broken, the conversations we have handled differently and the choices we are now making from a completely different place.

I often say in my coaching that you do not need someone else's answer; you need somewhere safe to hear your own. Most of the time, we already know the answer. The difficulty is that we do not always like the choice that comes with it.

That is one of the reasons autumn feels like such a natural season for reflection. It gives us permission to listen again, not necessarily for something new, but for what we already know and perhaps have not yet fully acknowledged.

By Ev Foster



www.changestartswithchoice.com

The Surgery is Over. Now What?

The short answer is: Bariatric surgery is only one part of the journey; long-term success also requires nutritional, emotional and personal support.

Bariatric surgery can be life-changing, but the operation itself is only one part of the journey. The months and years that follow can involve significant physical, nutritional, emotional and psychological changes. Having the right support around you can make the difference between simply losing weight and learning how to thrive in your changed body.

If you only read one thing... Bariatric surgery changes much more than the size of your stomach. It will change how you eat, how your body responds to food, how you see yourself and even how you feel about your identity. Good medical care is essential, but so is support with nutrition, mindset, body image, emotions, relationships and the practical realities of everyday life.

Navigating these changes alone can be challenging. Why I believe support matters. My interest in bariatric surgery began with someone very close to me — my daughter. My daughter's journey changed my life as much as it changed hers. When she made the decision to undergo bariatric surgery, I naturally wanted to support her in every way I could.

Like many families, we understood the physical side of the procedure, but what became increasingly apparent to me was that there was so much more to the journey than the surgery itself. There were changes in eating habits, lifestyle and body image. There were emotional adjustments and new challenges to navigate. There were questions that didn't necessarily have simple answers.

And I began to wonder: Who supports the person through all of this? The surgical and medical team plays an incredibly important role, of course, but a person's needs don't stop when they leave the hospital. This is when their needs change.

This realisation became one of the reasons I pursued further study in bariatric nutrition. With my background in Nutritional Medicine and Life Coaching, I became particularly interested in the space where nutrition, mindset and personal transformation meet.

Watching my daughter's courage inspired me to create the support I wanted every woman to have. Surgery is a beginning, not an ending. One of the biggest misconceptions about bariatric surgery is that once the operation is over and the weight starts coming off, everything else will simply fall into place.



But your body is changing, and your mind needs time to adjust too. Your nutritional requirements become particularly important. Protein, hydration, vitamins and minerals, appropriate supplementation and regular follow-up all form part of the long-term bariatric care. But there is another side to the journey.

You may look in the mirror and see a different person, while emotionally still feeling like the person you were before surgery. Old relationships with food don't necessarily disappear overnight. Emotional eating can have roots that go much deeper than hunger. Confidence and body image can take time to catch up with physical changes.

These are not failures. They are part of the transformation. What does good support look like? For me, good support means looking at the whole person. It means having somewhere to ask questions without feeling judged. It means understanding how to nourish your changing body. It means having support when old habits or difficult emotions resurface.

It also means celebrating the victories that don't appear on the scales: increased confidence, improved energy, trying something you once avoided, or simply feeling comfortable in your own skin. Most importantly, it means remembering that there is a person behind every number on the scales.

Frequently Asked Questions

Isn't the surgical team enough?
Your medical and surgical team is essential, but bariatric journeys can involve nutritional, emotional, relationship and lifestyle challenges that extend beyond clinical appointments. Additional support can complement your medical care.

Why is nutrition so important after surgery?
Because your ability to eat and absorb nutrients may change, depending on the procedure you have undergone, adequate protein, fluids, vitamins and minerals are important for supporting your health. Always follow the individual nutrition and supplementation advice provided by your healthcare team.

Is it normal to struggle emotionally after surgery?
Yes. Significant physical change can bring unexpected emotions. If you are struggling, seeking appropriate professional support is a strength, not a weakness. You are more than your weight loss. Bariatric surgery may change your body, but your journey is about so much more than a number on the scales.

Give yourself permission to learn, adjust and grow. Seek the support you need, celebrate the small victories and remember, transformation takes time. You don't have to navigate this journey perfectly. You simply need to know that you don't have to navigate it alone.

By Susan Moore



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CO-REGULATION IN PARENTING

CONNECTION BEFORE CORRECTION

Have you ever noticed how your child's emotions can trigger your own? One moment, everything is peaceful, and the next, you're both overwhelmed, frustrated, and struggling to regain control. What if, instead of trying to control your child's behavior, you focused on creating connection?



This is the heart of **co-regulation.**

Children aren't born knowing how to manage big emotions. Their nervous systems are still developing, and they rely on the adults around them to help them navigate overwhelming feelings. Co-regulation happens when a calm, emotionally present adult helps a child move from distress toward safety and balance.

As Gabor Maté's work reminds us, beneath challenging behaviors are often unmet emotional needs. A child's meltdown isn't necessarily defiance; it may be their nervous system communicating, "I'm overwhelmed, and I need help."

Imagine your six-year-old screaming because it's time to turn off the television. Your instinct might be to demand compliance, threaten consequences, or raise your voice. But consider another approach.



First, notice your own reaction. Take a slow breath, soften your shoulders, and remind yourself that your child's distress isn't an emergency.

Then, kneel beside them and gently say, "I know you're upset. You really wanted more time. It's hard to stop something you're enjoying. I'm right here."

You're not giving in or abandoning boundaries. The television still goes off. You're simply offering emotional safety while holding that boundary.

Your calm presence, gentle tone, and compassionate acknowledgement communicate something powerful: "Your feelings are welcome, even when your behaviour needs guidance."

Over time, repeated co-regulation helps children build their own capacity for emotional regulation, resilience, and healthy relationships.

And here's something equally important: parents won't always remain regulated. When you lose your patience, repairing the connection teaches your child that relationships can withstand difficult moments.

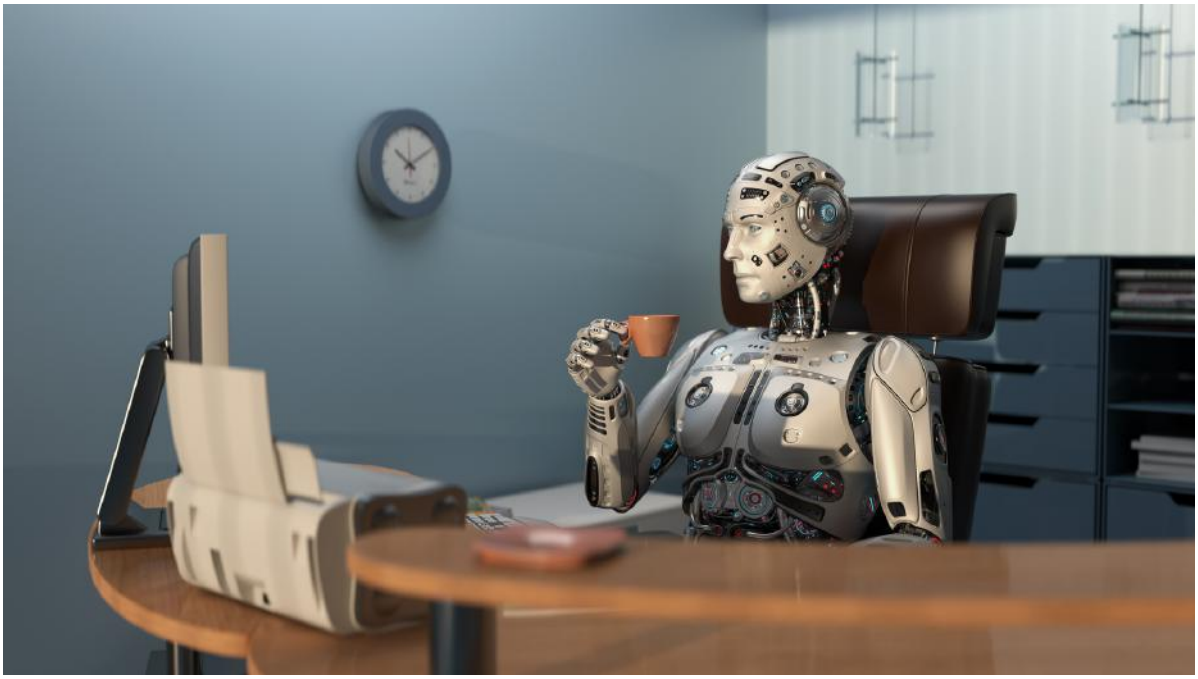
Parenting isn't about raising children who never struggle. It's about becoming the safe connection they can return to when they do.

Because ultimately, regulation needs compassion, not judgment.

By Kimberly Trickey MS LPC



Using AI Without Losing Your Voice



AI can multiply your reach or quietly erode your reputation. Business systems specialist Seb, founder of Brantigan Enterprises, explains how to use it to amplify who you are rather than replace it. We have all read it. The LinkedIn post that opens with "In today's fast-paced world." The email that is perfectly polite and completely empty. The caption that says "game-changer" three times and somehow says nothing at all.

You can feel it within a sentence: a machine wrote this, and nobody cared enough to fix it.

I spend my working life building AI-powered systems for businesses, funnels, automations, content engines, customer journeys. I am an advocate. But I have also watched good people damage hard-won trust by handing their voice to a tool and hitting publish. The question is no longer whether to use AI. It is how to use it without sounding like everyone else, or worse, like no one at all.

Why AI content feels fake
Audiences are not rejecting AI. They are rejecting the absence of a person behind the words. The tells are easy to spot once you know them:

- *No point of view. Balanced, safe, agreeable, and therefore forgettable. Real experts have opinions.*
- *No specifics. "Many businesses struggle with growth" instead of "a client of mine lost 40% of her leads at one broken form."*
- *No scars. AI writes about success as if it were tidy. Anyone who has built something knows it rarely is.*
- *The same rhythm everywhere. Every post a hook, three bullets and a question. Your followers notice the pattern even if they cannot name it.*

The common thread is simple. Generic input produces generic output, and generic is the opposite of trust.

1. AI drafts. You decide.
The most useful shift I can offer is this: treat AI as a brilliant junior assistant, not as your spokesperson. A good assistant can research, structure, summarise and produce a first draft at remarkable speed. They can't know what you actually believe, what you have lived through, or what you would never say to a client's face. That part is yours, and it is the part people are paying attention to.

So let AI do the heavy lifting on the blank page. Then do the work only you can: cut what doesn't feel true, add the opinion it was too cautious to give, and replace every vague claim with something you have seen happen.

2. Feed it you, not a one-line prompt
"Write me a post about customer service" will get you the same post as ten thousand other people. The quality of what comes out is set by the quality of what goes in.

Before you ask AI to write anything, give it the raw material that makes you different:

- *Your stories. The client who nearly walked away. The launch that flopped. The lesson you learned the expensive way.*
- *Your numbers. Real results, real timeframes, real costs.*
- *Your opinions. What you think your industry gets wrong.*
- *Your voice. Paste in three or four pieces you have written and loved, and ask it to match the tone, sentence length and phrases you naturally use.*

I keep a simple document of stories, client wins, strong opinions and phrases I actually say. It takes an hour to start and saves me hours every week. More importantly, everything that comes out of the tool starts from something true.

3. Automate the backstage, stay human on stage
The biggest wins from AI are often invisible to your audience, and that is exactly where it belongs. Let it sort enquiries, book appointments, send reminders, summarise sales calls, tidy your CRM and draft follow-ups for you to approve. In the systems I build, this kind of automation routinely gives business owners back hours every week.

Then spend those hours where a human matters most: the voice note to a client who is wavering, the personal reply to a comment, the phone call instead of the sequence. Use AI to create time for connection, not to replace connection.

That is the paradox. Used well, AI should make you seem more personal, not less, because it finally gives you space to show up properly.

4. Be honest, and pass the "room test"
You do not need to stamp a disclaimer on every caption. But never pretend AI is something it isn't. If a chatbot answers enquiries on your website, let it introduce itself as an assistant. If a client asks how you produce so much content, tell them. Nobody minds a tool. People mind being fooled.

Before anything goes out, I run one simple check: would I say this, in these words, if I were standing in a room with the person reading it?

If the answer is no- too polished, too salesy, too vague, or simply not something I believe- it doesn't get published. That single question has saved me from more bland content than any editing tool ever has.

A simple workflow you can use today

1. Start with a real moment. A conversation, a result, a mistake or a strong opinion. Jot it down in your own words, however rough.

2. Give AI context, not commands. Share the story, who it is for, what you want them to feel or do, and examples of your writing.

3. Ask for options: three openings, two structures, a shorter version. Choose; do not just accept.

4. Edit for truth and voice. Remove anything you would not say. Add one specific detail and one honest opinion.

5. Read it aloud. If it sounds like a brochure, rewrite it until it sounds like you.

6. Run the room test. Then publish, and reply to the responses yourself.

Impact still comes from trust.

AI has made content cheap. That means the things that cannot be automated , your judgement, your experience, your willingness to say what you actually think , have never been more valuable.

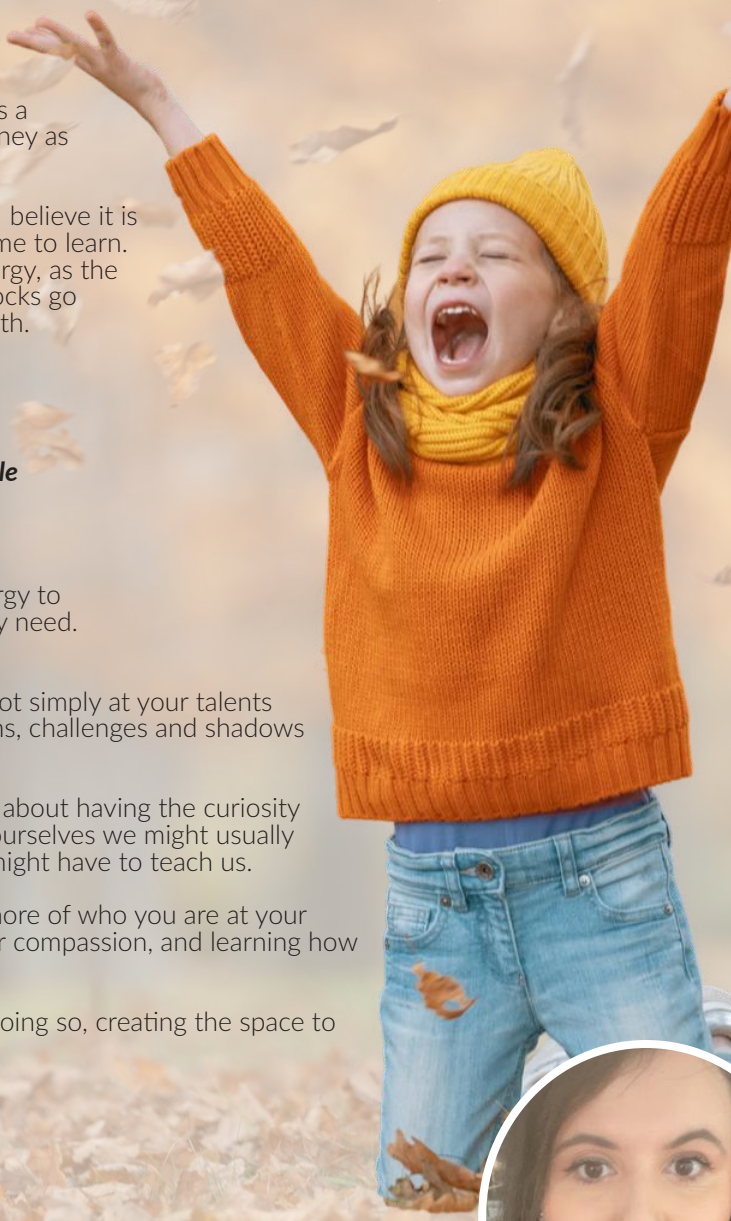
The businesses that win in the next few years will not be the ones producing the most. They will be the ones whose audiences still believe every word. Use AI to go further and faster, by all means. Just make sure people can find you when they arrive.

By Seb Brantigan
AI and Marketing Automation Expert
Co-founder and COO of DBSS Digital

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'LESSONS FROM WITHIN'



As the colours around us become deeper and richer, perhaps it is a time in which you can do the same. Focusing on the inward journey as you retreat from the external noise.

Autumn is very much a time in which 'letting go' is a theme, but I believe it is equally important to nourish and to harvest. It is an important time to learn. Since childhood, September has carried that 'back to school' energy, as the academic year begins just as we start to turn inwards and the clocks go backwards. It is a time for openness and curiosity, a time for depth.

Invitations to ask yourself this Autumn:

What can I really get my teeth stuck into?
What is going to light a fire inside my belly and keep me warm while everything outside becomes cooler?
How can I nourish myself deeply?

If the answers lie in giving more time, more space and more energy to yourself, then perhaps it is a journey of self-discovery you deeply need. Soul Plan can be one beautiful doorway into that self-discovery.

It is a tool that invites you to look at yourself at a deeper level, not simply at your talents and the things that come naturally to you, but also at the patterns, challenges and shadows that can shape your experience.

Self-discovery isn't just about looking towards the light. It is also about having the curiosity and compassion to sit with the shadows. To notice the parts of ourselves we might usually avoid, question or judge, and become curious about what they might have to teach us.

Perhaps this is the quieter harvest of going within: discovering more of who you are at your core, recognising your gifts, meeting your challenges with greater compassion, and learning how to use what you have been given in a way that feels true to you.

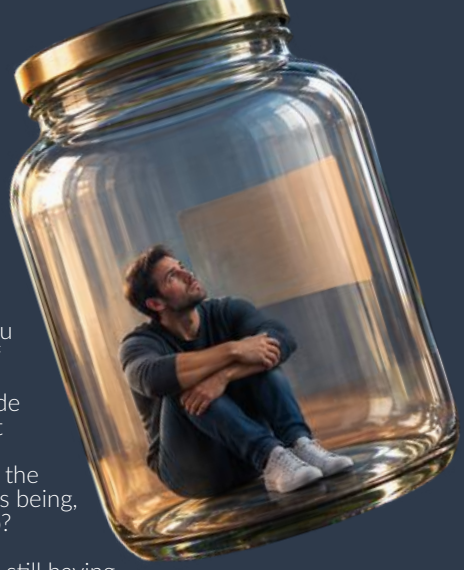
Simply becoming more deeply acquainted with yourself, and in doing so, creating the space to just be.

By Georgina Goldstone
Instagram: @justbe_withg
Facebook: Just Be with Georgina Goldstone

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You Can't See the Label From Inside the Jar



Why being too close to your business could be hiding your next growth opportunity

There is a saying I come back to often in business: ***you can't see the label from inside the jar.***

And the longer I work with established founders, the more I see just how true that is. You can build a successful business, have customers, a team, a reputation, years of experience and all the things that, from the outside, look like success, and still find yourself wondering why it feels harder than it should, why growth has slowed, why you are still involved in everything and why the business seems to need more and more from you just to stand still.

From the outside, people may look at what you have built and think you have made it. From the inside, it can feel very different. You are the person carrying the history of the business, the relationships, the decisions, the team, the clients, the problems, the opportunities and the hundred little things nobody else even notices, and because you are so close to all of it, it becomes incredibly difficult to look at the business objectively. You know too much.

You know why that offer was created, why that client matters, why that team member is still there, why that process became complicated, why you made that decision three years ago and why you have kept doing something in a certain way long after it stopped being the best way. That closeness is not a weakness. It is simply what happens when you have built something you care about. But it can create one enormous blind spot.

Sometimes the biggest opportunities in your business are sitting right in front of you, and you simply cannot see them because you are standing too close. The money is often already there. When business owners want to grow, the instinct is often to look outside the business first. More leads. More marketing. More social media. More networking. More visibility. More ads. More offers. And sometimes, yes, that is exactly what is needed.

But sometimes it really is not. After more than 25 years working across sales, leadership, business growth, and commercial strategy, I have seen businesses spend huge amounts of time, money, and energy trying to find something new when untapped value already sits inside what they have built. It might be in a client who could buy more but has never been asked. It might be in an old enquiry that disappeared because nobody followed it up properly. It might be in expertise that has never been packaged in the right way.

It might be a service priced too low, a relationship that has never been properly developed, a reputation far stronger than the marketing suggests, or a part of the business that looks incredibly busy but quietly leaks time and money. None of these things is dramatic. That is exactly why they are so easy to miss. Money does not always disappear through a huge mistake. Sometimes it leaks out through dozens of small gaps nobody has stopped long enough to notice.

Busy can be very convincing. One of the most dangerous things in business is confusing activity with progress. When the diary is full, the inbox is overflowing, and everybody is working flat out, it can feel as though the business must be moving forward. But busy and profitable are not the same thing. Neither are busy and growing. Sometimes all that activity is simply maintaining something that has become too complicated.

The owner is still the person making the important decisions, fixing the problems, holding the relationships, pushing the sales, checking the numbers and making sure nothing falls over.

www.debbiebryan.com

If that sounds familiar, you may have reached one of those awkward stages in business where what made you successful in the first place is now holding you back. Because eventually the question changes. It stops being, How much more can I do?

And becomes, „Why am I still having to do all of this?"
That is an entirely different conversation.
Sometimes you need to step outside the jar. The most useful conversations I have with business owners are rarely about adding another complicated strategy.

They are usually about looking differently at what is already there. Where is money being missed? What are you already sitting on? What has become more difficult than it needs to be? Which clients, relationships, ideas or assets have you never fully developed? Where are you undercharging, overdelivering or spending energy on something that no longer earns its place? And if you disappeared from the business for a month, what would stop working?

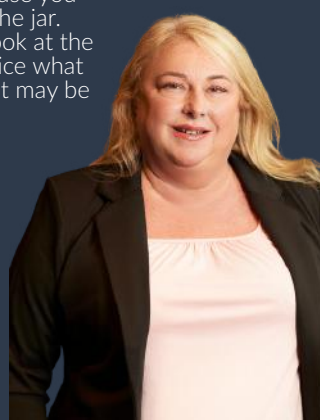
Those questions can be uncomfortable, because sometimes the answer reveals just how much of the business still depends on the founder. But they can also be incredibly freeing. Because once you can see the gap, you can do something about it. And often, the next stage of growth isn't about creating more.

It is about seeing more clearly. Autumn is a good time to look again. Something about autumn naturally makes us take stock. The year begins to feel more finite; the summer distractions disappear, and suddenly the final quarter is sitting right in front of us. It is tempting at this point to panic and start adding more activity in an attempt to finish the year strongly. But this can actually be one of the best times to do the opposite.

Stop. Look at the business properly. Ask yourself what is working, what is not, what you have already built and where opportunity might be getting missed. Not from a place of criticism, but curiosity. Because there may be far more potential inside your business than you currently realise. The next client might already know you. The next revenue opportunity might already exist. The next premium offer might already be hidden inside something you currently sell. The next partnership might already be sitting in your contacts. The next stage of growth might not require you to become busier at all.

It might require you to become clearer. What are you not seeing? If your business is successful but feels heavier than it should, if revenue has plateaued despite you working harder, or if you have a nagging feeling that there should be more opportunity in what you have already built, do not automatically assume that the answer is to find more people, launch more things or create more noise.

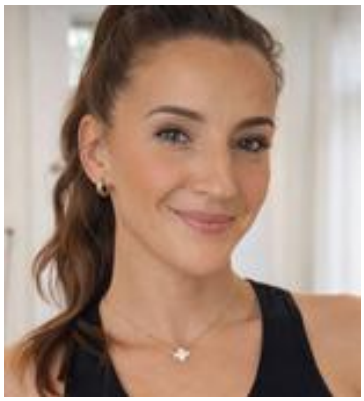
You may simply be too close to it. Because you really cannot see the label from inside the jar. Sometimes you need to step outside, look at the business from a different angle and notice what has been sitting there all along. And that may be where the money is.



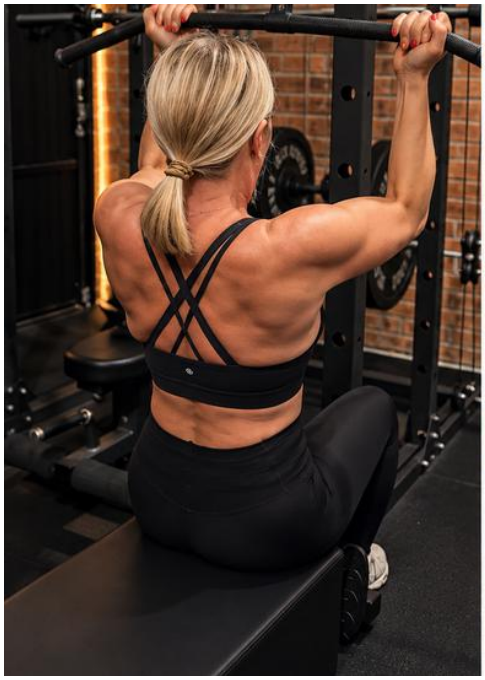
Debbie Bryan

Business Growth Advisor, Speaker & Founder of The Money Gap Method™

Why Women Don't Need to Train Harder — They Need to Train Smarter



By Lauren Kay, Founder of ReformHer Pilates & PT





There's a message that women have been sold for years: if you want better results, you need to do more. More workouts.

More cardio. More steps. Fewer calories. More discipline.

But in my experience coaching women through strength training, Reformer Pilates, pregnancy, postnatal recovery and different stages of life, doing more is rarely the missing piece. More often, women need a training routine that is structured, progressive and realistic enough to maintain.

Stop measuring a workout by how exhausted you feel

A good session doesn't need to leave you unable to walk downstairs the next morning.

Sweating more, burning more calories or feeling completely exhausted aren't reliable measures of whether a workout has been effective. If your goal is to get stronger and improve your body composition, your training needs to provide an appropriate stimulus—and then give your body the opportunity to recover and adapt.

That means resistance training with intention, gradually progressing exercises over time and prioritising good movement rather than simply trying to make every session as difficult as possible.

Strength training and Pilates don't have to compete

One reason I love combining strength training with Reformer Pilates is that they complement each other brilliantly. Traditional resistance training lets us progressively load the muscles and build strength. Reformer Pilates can challenge control, stability, coordination, mobility and muscular endurance.
You don't have to choose a camp.

For many of the women I coach, a week containing two or three strength sessions alongside one or two Reformer sessions is far more productive — and enjoyable — than trying to exercise intensely every day.

Recovery is part of your programme.
This is the part people often struggle with. Rest can feel like you're doing nothing, particularly when social media constantly tells us we should hit 10,000 steps, do an early-morning workout, and somehow squeeze another class in before bed.

But your body adapts between training sessions. Sleep, nutrition, adequate protein, hydration and genuine recovery all influence how well you perform and progress. If you're permanently exhausted, sore and dreading your next workout, adding another high-intensity session probably isn't the solution.

Your training should fit your life.

Women aren't robots, and our capacity to train isn't identical every week. Pregnancy, the postnatal period, menstrual symptoms, menopause, stressful periods at work, poor sleep, and simply raising a family can all change what is realistic at different stages of life.

Adjusting your training doesn't mean you've failed. Sometimes progression means lifting heavier. Sometimes it's improving your technique. Sometimes it's returning to an exercise after pregnancy or injury.

And sometimes maintaining what you've already built during a hectic period is an achievement in itself.
Consistency will always beat the perfect programme
The programme that looks impressive on paper is useless if you can't sustain it.

I'd rather see someone train three times a week consistently for the next year than attempt six sessions a week, feel overwhelmed and stop after a month.

Choose a realistic number of sessions. Give those sessions purpose. Fuel your body appropriately. Recover properly. Then repeat.

"Sweating more, burning more calories or feeling completely exhausted aren't reliable measures of whether a workout has been effective."

You don't need to punish your body into changing. You need to give it a reason to adapt — and enough consistency to allow that adaptation to happen.

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