

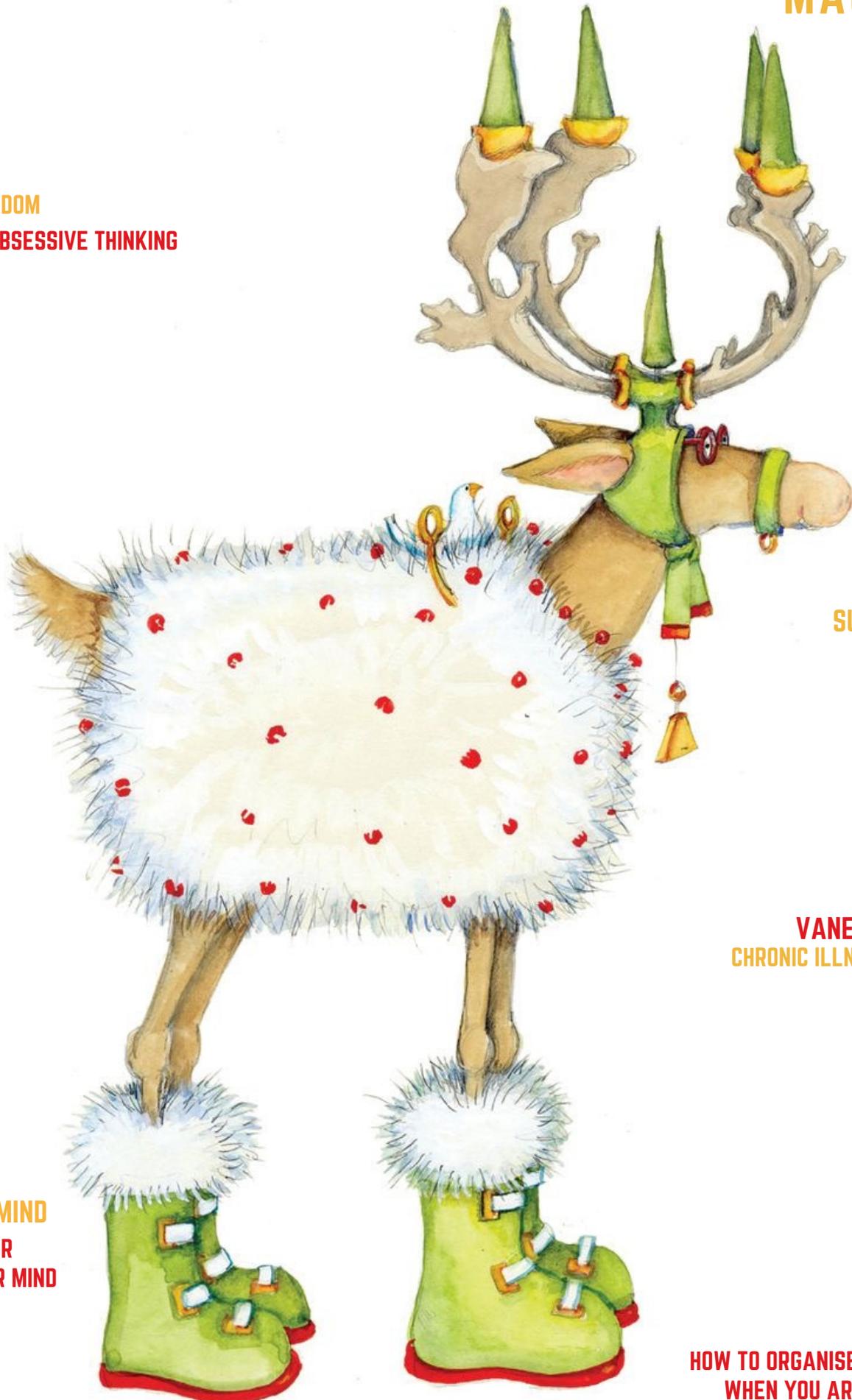
HONEYBEE



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Chronically Inspired

Life.Beyond.Disability



Nourish your soul - Achieve your goals - Design your life - Inspire your everyday - Anchor your spirit

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Say hello and join the conversation

Follow us and stay up to date with some inspired content for quality of life & feel good stories, the chronically inspired way!

It's so easy to join me on my various platforms which are set up to be interactive, inspirational, and enjoyable. Subscribe by email, or from the new website, and apply to receive our glorious publications straight into your inbox!

- Join us on our social media platforms & website.
- Email to subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter and seasonal magazine.
- Stay up to date with blogs, community events, educational seminars.
- Invitations to "Gather Together - TasteBuds Club" (WA only).
- Receive free gifts and tools to build your self-care toolkit.

(Former PHNA members have automatically been subscribed to Chronically Inspired and all publications/Invitations unless otherwise directed by you in writing).

Join in the Gather Together - TasteBuds Club

A wonderful new way to connect with others while socialising and receiving support and fellowship, all while enjoying a lovely meal together - WA only, contact me directly for more information.

Honeybee Magazine is proudly sponsored by



Melissa Dumitru
Founder & Creative Director/Consultant

Join the conversation

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Say hello, we'd love to hear from you.

Acknowledgement to Country

Chronically Inspired would like to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First People and Traditional Custodians. We value their culture, identities, and continuing connection to country, waters, kin and community.



Welcome

to "HoneyBee Magazine" for Chronically Inspired.



she
overcame
everything
that was
meant to
destroy
her

Hello my lovelies, so it's that time of the year again....should we dance and sing or cry and roll around on the floor with relief that 2020 is nearly over? We **survived** for the most part, but we are forever changed I think..? I know I am. This is not necessarily a bad thing either. Whether you actively decided to make changes in your life this year, or they were a consequence of the Pandemic, chances are not all the changes are bad or negative.

It can be an **opportunity** for growth, personal development, renewal of the spirit, and even a way to reinvent yourself in some aspects perhaps? **Learning** to live with my diagnosis of PTSD and consequent issues that arise from suffering with this injury to the brain has been the hardest thing I have had to face in many years. The depression that accompanies this **mental health** condition has been smothering at times. I have struggled to find "**myself**" again in all the fog that comes with this, something I know a lot of you feel too.

Our new journey into "**Chronically Inspired**" has been warmly embraced by our previous membership of (PHNA) and I have welcomed some new members from other sectors as well, which is very heartwarming. I got some amazing feedback from the inaugural first edition of our magazine "**HoneyBee**", in particular that all the medical "**jargon**" stories are gone. In their place are uplifting heartwarming, encouraging and real stories that really interest us and may be of help in our everyday lives. Incidentally this year was the launch of **#Drop the Jargon** between Doctors and patients so that everyone can understand the conversation. **Perfect timing!** I am so excited to share some amazing individuals and organisations in this edition who work so hard at helping others, all while living with their own chronic conditions or mental health challenges. They have turned sadness and adversity into something truly inspiring.

I have also been working with the **WA Recovery College Alliance** who opened recently, on their Educators Foundation Workshop. I then commenced the actual training to become an Educator in the hopes I can combine my skills and lived experience with this new educational experience, and implement this at the college through their courses. I will keep you updated about this as we progress. I am both terrified and exhilarated by this process, and I have met some truly amazing people in this sector. It has been incredibly humbling to be in the company of both lived and learned experience mental health professionals, and to have been embraced so warmly. **I have found it very healing...** and I will share more with you in 2021!

It was absolutely wonderful having our first "**Gather Together - TasteBuds Club**" luncheon in October. You could feel the love and friendship as we reunited over great food and conversation. Thank you to everyone who came along, our spirit was alive and kicking as we laughed, talked and ate together. This is the true power of a support group.

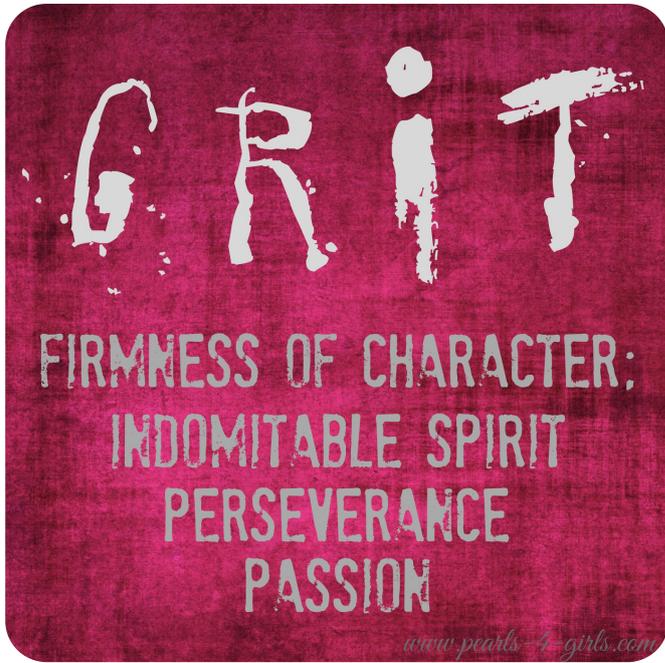
I look forward to **sharing my new ideas, adventures and stories** with you as we move into 2021. Thank you for being part of this new journey we are taking together to find our Y in life! From my family to yours, I wish you all a safe and peaceful festive season filled with love and laughter. **See you soon!**



Be well,
be glam!
Xo Melissa



GRIT ISN'T WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK IT IS...



CAROLINE
CAROLINE ADAMS MILLER, MAPP

Caroline Adams Miller, MAPP is a pioneer with her ground-breaking work in the areas of goal-setting/accomplishment, grit, happiness and success.

Caroline is the author of seven books, including Positively Caroline, My Name is Caroline, Creating Your Best Life and Getting Grit. Live Happy Magazine named Creating Your Best Life one of the top ten goal-setting books ever published and Getting Grit one of the ten books that will change your life in 2017.

She has been featured in BBC World News, The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, U.S. News & World Report, ABC, CBS, NBC, NPR and CNN.

Caroline is a graduate of Harvard University and holds a Master's degree in Applied Positive Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania. And, she has more than three decades of unbroken recovery from bulimia.

Caroline speaks to you from her lived experience, something to be applauded.

HOW THE WORD OF THE YEAR HAS BEEN INCORRECTLY CO-OPTED

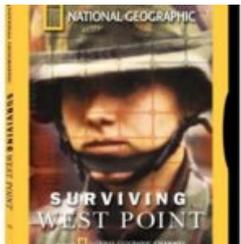
Wherever you look, it's there. "Grit" is the showcased word in this year's commencement speeches, sports pages, and any internet viral stories of overcoming any variety of ills. There are gritty scholars, gritty pole vaulters and gritty entrepreneurs. These are the same folks who used to have "heart," but now they have "grit," which has come to mean any type of resilience or bouncing back from adversity.

The overuse of the word, and the misinterpretation of what it really means, has now begun to cheapen the extraordinarily rare quality it represents. And like any currency that has flooded the market and become devalued, too many complimentary references around grit have detracted from what it really connotes.

Before we take a look at grit and what it is and isn't, I have a personal story to share that demonstrates why grit trumps lots of other qualities when it comes to getting what you want:

When my oldest son was looking for a job as college was nearing an end, he began to send out resumes and make calls to accounting firms where he could put his college degree to good use. He did this amidst a sea of depressing headlines and media stories about how his generation was mostly unable to land jobs, let alone move away from home. Throw in some stories about how his peers are more saddled with college debt than previous generations and you have a bleak picture.

He found something very different, though, when he got out there. Although my son had often paid more attention to swimming than academics during his college career, many of the top accounting firms wanted to interview him. And once he got into those offices, the interviews quickly focused on the massive amount of time he'd spent honing his strokes and times in the pool over 14 grueling years – not just his grades.

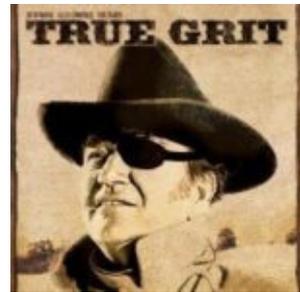


"Beast Barracks," the notoriously difficult first summer at West Point, has many dropouts. West Point now uses Duckworth's Grit Scale to predict who won't make it.

As he recounted to us later, the hours of questions centered around several things: the number of years he'd swum competitively at an elite level, the fact that he'd changed colleges yet been elected captain for his spirit and leadership, and the extraordinary amount of pre-dawn and afternoon workouts he'd logged during years when his friends were having fun and sleeping. It wasn't hard to see that these firms, many of which offered him high-paying jobs, were looking for signs of diligence, hard work, motivation and competitiveness more than the perfect GPA. They didn't want whiners, quitters and kids who would groan if they had a late night in the office. It was an eye-opener, as well as a relief.

Angela Duckworth, who won a MacArthur Genius Grant for her work on identifying, quantifying and educating others about grit, describes this particular quality as "passion and perseverance in the pursuit of long-term goals." Her work on grit is so popular that her TED talk about it is ranked as one of their all-time hits, and is approaching 5 million views.

Your grit score – 5 is perfect – is now the leading predictor of who drops out at West Point, who finals in the National Spelling Bee, and even who is most likely to stick out the two years required of students who are selected for "Teach for America." Angela believes that grit is contagious, which she describes in a podcast interview I did with her a few years ago.)



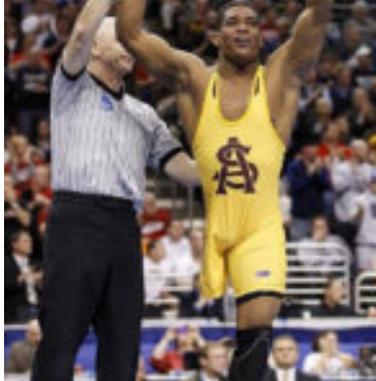
While John Wayne's seminal movie, "True Grit," introduced people to the idea of toughness, the word has now become so enthusiastically overused that it has lost its specialness.

What is grit in real time? Grit is a **janitor who studies for twelve years at Columbia University** after mopping floors and cleaning toilets, only to graduate with honors at the age of 52. Grit is the recovering alcoholic who sidesteps multiple potential opportunities to relapse but reaches several decades of sobriety while helping others to do the same.



Grit is not necessarily the soccer player who gets through one game with a knee injury after years of being healthy. Grit is not the kindergartener who got up every morning and went to school despite being tired. Grit is not the woman who pushes out a 10-pound baby after hours of labor. **These are all examples of discomfort that have been overcome, but they aren't grit because there isn't a long history of overcoming setbacks in pursuit of cherished dreams and goals.**

Your grit score can predict if you make the final round of the National Spelling Bee, which often features boys and girls who have been eliminated in previous years, but who went home to study even harder.



Despite being born with one leg, Anthony Robles overcame physical and emotional limitations to win the Division I NCAA wrestling championships in 2011.

Let's restore the word "grit" to its rightful place in the pantheon of adjectives that describe amazing feats. Use it for the immigrant who manages to adapt to a new country and thrive in tough situations, like school.

Use it for **Rick Hoyt, who pushes, drags and pulls his crippled son** through hundreds of triathlons so that he can feel like he's an athlete and not handicapped. **Use it for the one-legged wrestler, Anthony Robles,** who won the NCAA Championships despite colleges refusing to recruit him.

Resilience is a necessary quality for grit, but it's not always enough to hang in there for multiple years and lots of hardship. So the next time you are tempted to call someone "gritty," ask yourself if they meet the criteria described by Duckworth and the examples laid out above. **If they don't, use other words – "tough," "resilient," "heart" or "impressive," for example –** and save "grit" for only the rare person who has gone the distance and lived to inspire all of us to try a little harder, too.

For more about Caroline Miller and to read further inspiring articles go to www.carolinemiller.com

NOTE FROM YOUR HONEYBEE EDITOR...

Hello my lovelies, I really liked this article as it totally resonated with me and my own life path.

I've been called strong, resilient, determined and even told that my integrity actually worked against me in some situations I have experienced in the last few years.

As I read the final paragraph of this article it occurred to me that I am much more than resilient and strong.

I have TRUE GRIT! I am more than a survivor, I am a thriver, and I try to inspire others to be the same!

I have met many others who have Grit, and I just know a lot of you have it inside you too.

So the next time you are experiencing another life challenge, ask yourself "am I strong, am I resilient, or do I just have **TRUE GRIT!**" Amen people....Melissa x

Grit | *Noun*

COURAGE, bravery, pluck, mettle, backbone, spirit, strength of character, strength of will, moral fiber, steel, nerve, fortitude, toughness, hardiness, resolve, resolution, determination, tenacity, perseverance, endurance; informal: guts, spunk.



Midweek Magic



Do you find yourself wishing away the hours because all the exciting things are scheduled to happen on Saturday or Sunday?

Here's how to bring the weekend vibe into weekdays (and nights).

Thank goodness it's Friday. You might catch yourself saying this and you'll most likely have heard others repeating the phrase too. The weekend, for many people, holds the promise of freedom, excitement, entertainment and fun times (there's a reason for the [hashtag #fridayfeeling](#)). But why reserve the weekend spirit to just two days a week? Why can't a Monday evening contain a little magic, or a Thursday lunchtime provide the chance to do something you love?

One of the reasons people are extra thankful when Friday comes around is the prospect of an entire work-free 48 hours (shift and work patterns permitting) - there's time and space to make the most of their leisure. For many, the weekend equals an opportunity for fun, travel, gatherings with loved ones and, generally, a chance to unwind. It's no wonder that after two days of living on one's own terms that Monday arrives with a bump. But there's no need for weekday doldrums (not all the time, anyway) when you can bring some of those weekend highlights into everyday life.

Nicholas Haines, author of *The Art of Kind and Flowing Relationships*, a kindness ambassador and creator of the Vitality Test, says: *'Weekends are usually what we look forward to the most as soon as we start a new week because they're usually when we can relax, unwind from the business of work and take time to do all the things we love in life. But what if we changed our mindset to a kindset, and became the people we are on the weekends every day of the week?'*

It's true that self-kindness is central to changing how you view (and spend) your time. If your hours are 9-to-5 on weekdays, you might feel that you have to put away your carefree weekend spirit because there's no place or space for it to appear during work time. Life might then feel governed by seriousness, strict routines and feeling time-poor, which can seem overwhelming and deter you from making the most of any free hours that you do have.

Nicholas adds: *'Consider this, if your wardrobe is filled with clothes, you'll need to take something out for the new pants you bought, right?'* The same holds true for your headspace. If your head is full of fixed, rigid thoughts about how you spend your weekday evenings, then you might find yourself in such a small box that you can barely breathe before letting it all out on Friday evening. Why not make space and time for yourself during the week, too, to soak in new knowledge and experiences? Be willing to learn new things and give yourself the space you need for meaningful personal growth'.

You can start by creating time every day for a little self-nourishment, mindfulness and doing a little of what you love (and would normally keep for the weekend). Even if your working hours are long, there are still opportunities to indulge yourself in something meaningful and fulfilling.

Acts of self-care can make a real difference. Feeling good about yourself, and dressing up in readiness for something special, brings more of the weekend spirit into your day.

Although you might have appointments to keep, work to tackle and deadlines to meet, there may be a chance to do something you enjoy in your lunch break, such as eating at a cosy cafe, or an improvised picnic in the park with friends or colleagues on a sunny day. And you still have the evening to use as you choose. Little acts of self-care every day (not just on the weekend) can ground you, keep you connected to who you are, and fill you with joy.

When you make space in your life for what brings you joy, peace and contentment, you'll be more likely to feel a greater sense of overall well-being. Take a close look at how you spend any free time in your week and try to turn some of them into magical moments.

On the next page find out how to put self-care into practice by turning midweek excuses into midweek treats!



Midweek Treats

What you do during the week doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive. As long as you feel good about it and enjoy the experience, that's what matters. Keep things fresh by mixing it up each week. Here are a few things you could try:

- Have friends over for movie nights
- Plan and cook a themed food fiesta
- Find a passion project or take a night class
- Set up a pamper session at home
- Go to a poetry night or music gig
- Attend a book club or set one up with friends (via Zoom works too)
- Spend time in the garden or go for a walk
- If you're arty, get creative. Paint, write, sculpt, colouring books, (portable too).
- Go dancing, swimming or cycling (NLNL - No Lights No Lycra for example)
- Create a chill-out self-care sanctuary at home
- Make time for new experiences



Escaping Excuses

There are many reasons for not making the most of downtime in the working week. And many people understandably feel they don't have space for themselves until the weekend. Here are a few suggestions as to how to address what might be stopping you from bringing more of what you enjoy into the day:



'I can't because I'm too tired'

This is the most common reason for not making more of the weeknights. A physically or mentally demanding job or caring for children or other relatives takes its toll, but an evening doing something different, perhaps a trip to the movies to see a light-hearted film, can be an enjoyable pick-me-up.



'I can't because I don't have time'

What's taking up all your free hours? How can you change your routines? What can you do differently to make more time for you? It might be a matter of not worrying so much about household chores or stepping down from a demanding extra role. If your free time is taken up with caring for others, see if you might be able to ask for support.

'I can't because I don't want to miss my favourite TV show'

There are no rules on how to spend your leisure time. It's a personal choice. But tuning into the TV most evenings, week after week, might indicate you're stuck in a rut or aren't sure how to make the most of leisure time. Ask yourself if it's really how you want to spend your weeknights. If not, try something new. Don't forget you can always record your favourite shows and turn that into a special leisure occasion too!





AFLOAT and at Ease

Introducing Vanessa Vajana
Chronic Illness Life Coach



Hello my lovelies, I like to feature different inspirational people who may help me and others on our journeys. I discovered Vanessa on all places LinkedIn back in August this year. It was her posts that really drew me in as they are written by someone with a lived experience of pain and managing chronic illness, but with a positive and realistic slant. It is true that everyday is a choice in how you will cope with the illness and or side effects you may have on an ongoing basis. Some days you will inevitably cry and crumple, and that is ok as long as you don't unpack and live there! Most days though I hope that you will strive to cope and overcome the obstacles that are encountered wherever you can. Vanessa's experience shows that she has a true understanding of how to do this and I hope you enjoy all she has to offer online, and even in person or via zoom session. Cheers Melissa, HoneyBee Editor

I'm Vanessa and I am a Game Changer; I help you get back on track with your life following a change in your health.

Let's face it... when we undergo a change in our life for which we have little or no control over, we feel lost, overwhelmed, lonely, misunderstood and often stuck in that vicious circle of self-pity. Sounds familiar? What if... you could be the best version of yourself, take back control of your life, and move forward? How would you feel? What would you see? What would you hear?

I am a keen outdoor swimmer and live with chronic pain and other long-term health conditions that affect my quality of life. I am a qualified coach and practitioner of NLP. I am based in the UK and work with people around the globe as my coaching sessions are carried out via telephone and/or video conferencing (Zoom/Skype).



I primarily coach people living with chronic pain and/or long-term health conditions work through the effects that their health condition has on their lives. This helps them be better equipped in managing themselves (both physically and emotionally) and their relationships with others. So, if you are committed to moving forward with your life and breaking free from what is holding you back. Get in touch! **Web:** www.vanessavajana.com **Email:** vanessa@vanessavajana.com

BLOG *How swimming helps me manage my health challenges!*

My life changed in 2013 following spinal surgery and then bowel issues due to nerve damage. I went through a very dark time spanning over 2 years, trying to make sense of the changes, looking for someone to blame for this, then trying my hardest to get back to "normal".

Nothing worked, until I took time to do some work on myself to manage my situation and the changes that came with it. During this time, I re-discovered my love for swimming and exercising in water. On the darkest days, when I was in a lot of pain or worried sick about my bowel changes, I would make myself go to the pool even if it was to swim gently up and down with a float – sometimes even shedding a few tears whilst doing so.

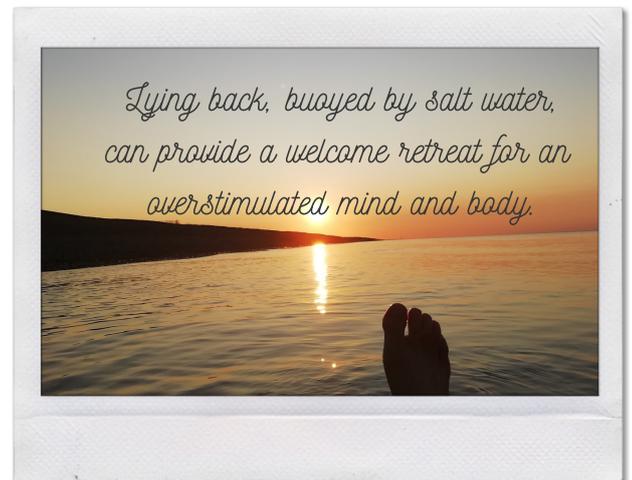
Being in water, gave me a sense of grounding, I felt at ease even if in pain. I used the time in the water as my "therapy" – I started repeating affirmations to boost my self-esteem and sense of self-worth as well as gently doing mindfulness as I increased my distances swimming up and down the pool.

As I got stronger both mentally and physically, I used swimming to push myself that little bit further. I put my name down for a charity swim raising hundreds of pounds for people living with a spinal injury.

Following this, I used swimming to set up a group to help others who were struggling to get back into swimming due to their health or change in body and got involved with the local leisure centre as a volunteer. This gave me a renewed sense of purpose and lifted my spirits up – I could now start rebuilding my life.

I make it a point to swim as often as I can, sometimes 3-4 times a week. I love the sea and try to either walk on the beach daily and/or swim. I now swim in the sea in winter too (without a wetsuit!) – and yes it did get some getting used to!

Two years ago, this month, I challenged myself to swim 10km in a river for charity, I told myself if I could do this, I could do anything I set my mind to. The experience was fantastic, and the sense of achievement has stayed with me. I now must set myself a "new" swimming challenge.



I can honestly say that swimming has really made a positive impact on how I manage my health conditions and has improved my quality of life overall. In summary, swimming has helped me:

- Reduce pain levels
- Improve overall strength and fitness (mentally and physically)
- Increase energy levels
- Find a purpose in life
- Make friends
- Raise awareness of living with long term health conditions

What exercise has helped you manage your long-term health condition?

Editor's Note: I look forward to sharing more of Vanessa's inspiring stories with you in the coming editions. Please take that step and get in touch with her to see if she can help you in a one-on-one capacity, and check out her website testimonials too!

Community, ALL THE LATEST H.O.P.E.S



H.O.P.E.S. = Helping Other People who've Experienced Suicide - Support Group
Sharing our stories helps us to heal. Meet others who know how you feel. No need for you to be alone.
Everyone here can understand. A Suicide is different to other deaths.

Losses to Suicide have long been looked upon as a slight on the families and friends of those who have died. Until recent years there was nowhere one could find support and understanding. Our Peer Support Group was formed in 2011 by four women, all of whom had been bereaved by suicide. They were trained and worked for the Arbor Service [Active Response Bereavement Out Reach](#) now part of Anglicare Perth. Having a limited amount of funding they realised the service could not offer follow-up support to those who had used the Arbor Service and felt they could meet the ongoing needs of these people by using their facilitator training to form a Support Group.

To the newly bereaved and for those with losses from long ago, we provide a sense of belonging. Of not being 'alone' as this is how many feel when faced by this tragic event. Enhance healing, decrease isolation and give hope for productive, healthy and joyous future lives.

H.O.P.E.S meet the first Thursday of each month at The Hepburn Centre, 46 Highclere Blvd, Marangaroo WA from 6.00-8.00pm.
Contact: 0410 631 157 - **Email:** hopes.aftersuicidehelp@gmail.com

Your loss is recognised here - Your loved one is honoured - You are understood
Your story is confidential - Your emotional safety is assured

To have a loss to Suicide is to have every aspect of your life changed in an instant. In the early days after a Suicide there is nowhere we go and nothing we do that is not affected by that loss. Our usual experiences at work, at home, shopping, driving or watching TV have changed and will never be the same again. The entire fibre of our lives has been damaged, everything that was 'normal' is now strange and unfamiliar. It's as though we are living someone else's life.

We go into a spin wanting to regain our way of life and escape the pain we feel. The strength of that initial pain is like nothing we have ever experienced before. The pain continues but the intensity of it will wither, that first pain is the worst you will ever feel. People often ask **'when do things go back to normal?'** The 'normal' we had before is gone, because the 'normal' included our loved one. We included them actively and internally in our lives, by phone, email, gatherings, Facebook and more. They were a constant thread running through the fibre of our lives.

This is why we **'feel'** this loss so greatly, we didn't expect it, we didn't deserve it and we don't want to have to face the reality of it. No-one can prepare you for the experience of a loss to Suicide.

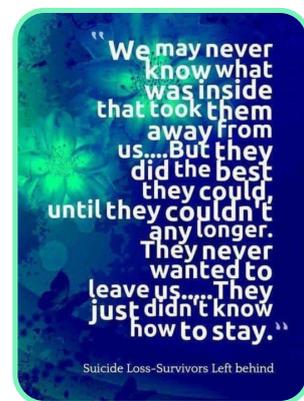
Many of the significant changes in life are ones that we have chosen and made plans for. Like moving into a new house, bringing home a new baby, or changing jobs. These life changing events happen with an expectation that they will come. Even unplanned events such as flood or fire have some expectation about them. We have plans in place to help deal with these events.

We can **'see'** the cause and effect of these natural disasters and although 'out of our hands' so to speak, they are somewhat **'acceptable'** to us. But Suicide is **NOT** acceptable. It's neither natural nor normal, it goes against our natural human instinct of survival.

When such a chord is struck in our lives we cannot expect acceptance from within to come easily, naturally, or without pain and suffering. Your reactions, whatever they are, are 'normal' for this most unnatural, **'un-normal'** disaster that has occurred in your life.

Take the time you need to rest, drink plenty of water and remember to breathe. Sounds very simple but in times of trauma we need to be reminded of our basic needs. Look to the signs in the body to guide your self-care at this time.

We will never be the same or live the **'same'** life, but we did live it, we did have our precious time with our loved one and we can treasure that time for the rest of our lives. Slowly, slowly without us noticing, the shock begins to lessen a little at a time. As the days turn into weeks after your loss, you begin a life without your loved one. You have not forgotten them or love them any less. You are simply existing the best way you can whilst grieving your loss.



As the weeks turn into months, new routines become more acceptable, beginning to build the new foundations of your life ahead. Knowing that you will be okay is very important. There have been many others like you, they came through it and live meaningful and productive lives on these foundations.

Remember whoever you are, however long you have been bereaved, so far you have survived it all. You have managed to get through 100% of the days since your loss. May your journey bring you to a place of acceptance, and guide you towards understanding. **Always remember you are not alone.**

Our Vision

Is to create a service solely for people who are bereaved by suicide. Providing a specific caring service for the unmet needs of people impacted by this traumatic experience of death. To create a network of support and educational services which will enhance healing, decrease isolation, and give hope for productive, healthy, and joyous future lives.

Our Mission

To provide a safe place to support people bereaved by suicide, to meet and be heard and to hear the stories of others. Our team of trained Peer Supporters will extend the hand of lived experience to the group, offering reassurance and assistance with what they are going through right now, in the moment. We will offer the group hindsight from our own experiences and help them understand the many varied aspects of their reactions to their loss. We will assist the group in the journey of their 'new' lives as well as coping with reminders whenever they occur. We will engage with other existing services relevant to the various and unique needs of our group members.

Our Values

Respect and confidentiality are core values within our team of Peer Supporters. The needs of the bereaved are foremost in mind when planning our strategies. All group members will be protected by our code of conduct during our meetings. All group members will be offered a confidentiality agreement. We exist to provide a service that goes beyond just surviving and leads to productive lives filled with meaning and joy. Our support will be offered with unconditional regard and genuine empathy to the bereaved.

live
laugh
love

IS EVERYTHING LOVE?



"A person can choose love or anger," a friend told me, "and I choose love." It sounded terrific, and she wore a serious expression on her face. I felt like applauding her choice. Yet something was off. This woman, as I know her, is driven by fears and insecurities.

As far as I can see, she hasn't absorbed, explored, and transformed them. Instead, she has simply decided they no longer exist. She has swept them under the rug and embroidered LOVE on that rug in capital letters, like a magic word to keep them trapped there.

"Everything is love". It's very tempting to think that way, to relax into a safe, fluffy world in which everyone is on the same wavelength. I'm familiar with the perspective, that hope, and for a long time I tried to keep it going. I was only too eager to believe that the light (love, goodness, awareness) would always defeat the darkness (fear, evil, ignorance), in the tradition of the finest fairy tales. After all, I thought, a single candle flame can light up every corner of a dark room.

It wasn't until later that I realised this isn't entirely true: a candle's light, however bright it may be, cannot illuminate a closed door. As long as there are closed doors in this world - in other words, ignorance - the light will not reach every corner.

In a way, that insight feels liberating. It seems you can't force people to light up their dark places, so you don't have to waste a lot of energy trying. As long as the door is shut, not a sliver of light will enter.

What you can do is let your own light shine without limit, offering your loving awareness to the world without the slightest reservation. And that will inspire others to do the same.

In this world, we are surrounded by differences, contrasts, and extremes. The whole range of experience can be found here: light, shade, and utter darkness, illusion and reality, purity and obscurations. Fear and love. As a human being, you must eventually face up to everything that crosses your path and respond to it.

You cannot simply deny a lack of love because it makes you uncomfortable, and you don't have to be so afraid of it. All those different energies are in contact and influence each other. You will dance with them, fight with them, and work with them, be disappointed and inspired by them. And that's exactly how it's meant to be.

LOVE DRIVEN BY WILLPOWER IS NOTHING MORE THAN POLITENESS



There are closed doors in all of us. You cannot be loving just by shouting, "I am love". Love driven by willpower is nothing more than politeness, good manners.

True love wells up from the heart when you welcome all the differences and extremes, and recognise how fascinating and instructive they are.

You have thrown yourself into this earthy adventure. So do it with your eyes and heart open. Dive into it. Cherish and spread your own light.

STORY BY SUSAN SMIT

Susan Smit is a Dutch writer, speaker and author of novels and books about personal growth and spirituality.



HoneyBee Editors Note: I hope you enjoyed this article, I stumbled upon it recently when I was feeling very conflicted about something, and it really spoke to me. I have found many wonderful articles in the happinez magazine and will continue to share them with you all.

STRATEGIES FOR RELAXING YOUR MIND'S STRESSFUL THOUGHTS



When your thoughts seem to be swimming, you may wonder how to relax your mind. And because learning how to relax your mind can bring benefits for your health and wellbeing, it's worth taking a few minutes to learn how. *These are practises that take time to learn and implement in an ongoing way in your life, so be patient with yourself. Below are some simple tips for how to relax your mind to get you started. You can find more at www.verywellmind.com*

MEDITATION

Meditation helps you learn how to relax your mind in a few different ways. One meditation session can calm your physiology and relax your mind, but many sessions over time can help you to feel less stressed when you face stress in the future, you can become more resilient to stress with the help of meditation! Meditation can clear your mind from thoughts that are stressing you, and over time, regular meditation can lead you to be less reactive to stress, and more resilient in the face of your stressors. *Mantra meditation*, one of the many useful *meditation techniques*, is a good place to start because it's simple.

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

Cognitive restructuring is a strategy that shows you how to relax your mind by changing habitual thought patterns that trigger your *stress response*. Because we react to stressors that are a *perceived* threat to our wellbeing, if we can alter our perceptions to be more optimistic (and more accurate), we can learn how to relax the mind and experience less stress.



GRATITUDE JOURNALING

Shifting your focus from what stresses you, to everything you have to be grateful for, is one of those *"how to relax your mind"* tips that works quite well. Research on *gratitude* shows that cultivating an attitude for gratitude brings many benefits, and maintaining a *gratitude journal* is an easy way to accomplish this shift in focus. After a few weeks, you should find yourself zeroing in on the things in life that help you feel grateful instead of stressed, and a more relaxed mind will follow.



TALK TO A GOOD FRIEND

Gaining social support from trusted friends can help you to process what you're feeling, and supply you with an influx of new and helpful ideas for how to manage your stressors, which can help you know how to relax your mind by helping you feel less burdened by your stressors. That's why maintaining a supportive *circle of friends* is important. Getting out of a *ruminating* rut by talking things out with a trusted confidante can help you to feel more relaxed, and have the clarity you need to take action. Learn more for yourself about *social support*, and don't forget to be a *good friend* too!

FIND MORE ON STRESS MANAGEMENT

Learning more about *stress and stress management*, and having a few ongoing habits that relieve stress can help you to maintain a more relaxed mind as well because you will feel more equipped to handle whatever comes. Google *articles on stress* and ongoing resources for *stress reduction*. *Relax, enjoy the discovery of these new techniques and remember recovery takes time. It is a journey not a sprint! Editor HoneyBee.*



Selflove - Wisdom

Article shared with you by selflovetowisdom.com

HOW TO STOP OBSESSIVE THINKING

Once you know why these unwanted thoughts have popped up in your mind, it is essential that you figure out if it is as bad as you think it is or if you are just getting a distorted image of reality. It is true that this can be harder but, if you keep in mind what I am about to tell you, you will finally get rid of this constant problem.

You must accept that thoughts are largely out of your control... just like you do not decide how you feel about a person or with whom you fall in love, thoughts are the same! You can not shout. **"STOP!"** so this thinking ends... you need to accept the truth and relax.

In fact, if you try to avoid them or escape them, it will strengthen the unwanted thoughts making them even worse! However, you accept your human condition where thoughts are out of our control, you will feel much more relieved and eventually, the thinking will be gone. How? Being realistic, and again, accepting our reality.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Try to ask yourself this question: "Can I do anything about what I am thinking RIGHT NOW?" You have to options: yes or no. If you realistically consider you can do something about that specific situation, take your time to examine the problem and identify your possible options. You can also ask for help and for your friends' and family's opinion. Nevertheless, if you decide the answer is "No", accept what you are facing at the moment. Think about this, if you can not do anything about it, why worry and feel bad when you could be doing something else? This means that if you find yourself in a situation which is completely out of your control and start overthinking, but decide you are unable to do something, it comes without saying that you should stop thinking about it, because... even if you think about it a 1000 times, you will never find a solution! It is not worthy to lose your time thinking about something that will not lead you anywhere... I am sure you could be doing better things instead of that!

Furthermore, **meditation and mindfulness** are also a key to stop obsessive thinking because it helps gaining control over your emotions, clearing your head and focusing on your wellness.

Moreover, it is important to know that you can reach out to a professional in case you needed it. There is nothing wrong about it... in fact, it is probably the best way to finally stop obsessive thinking due to the fact that someone experienced will be able to help you, so if the options mentioned above did not work for you, keep in mind that other people are willing to help you. You do not need to fight against this on your own!

CONCLUSION

Taking everything into consideration, if you want to stop obsessive thinking you must know there are a lot of people who want to help you, you are not alone! Do not forget to accept the truth and face it, because if you stop them by avoiding them... these unwanted thoughts will just be even worse! Accepting is the key! Finally, it is important that you keep this in mind in order to get better: **"The essence of wisdom is to see that there is always a solution, once you realize that the mind, which seems to create so much suffering, has infinite potential to create fulfillment instead."** Deepak Chopra.



From your HoneyBee Editor:

I just love this article. I don't know about you but I have been doing a lot of obsessive thinking this year and it can make you very unhappy.

I was so thrilled when I came across this informative yet simple explanation and guide to helping us overcome obsessive thinking. I hope this helps you as much as it's helping me.

"He is not texting back... he doesn't love me anymore." "She is not picking up... what if something happened to her while I was gone?" "I am not good enough to do this." "Am I making the right decision? Or, will I be wrong and ruin my future?" "What if this is not what I am supposed to do?"

"If you relate to any of these sentences you may be wondering why you keep having negative thoughts about everything in your life... nowadays, many people suffer from what it is called "Obsessive Thinking", so do not worry... you are not the only one dealing with this constant thinking.

In fact, it is estimated that 2.2 million people in only America have experienced obsessive thinking. But, if you are reading this, it means that you want to know how to stop obsessive thinking in order to get better, right? Then, keep reading! Today we will be explaining what you can do to finally stop this compulsive thinking.

WHAT IS IT?

First, we need to know what this is exactly because there is a lot of people who do not actually understand what obsessive thinking truly is: **it is a series of negative thoughts which are occur repeatedly, and the inability to gain control over distressing thoughts.** However, these thoughts not only affect you and your opinion about yourself ("I will never be good enough to do this!"), but it affects also those whom you surround yourself with due to the fact that these thoughts can hurt your loved ones, too. ("Where were you?! Why didn't you tell me anything?! Something really bad could have happened to you!"). Moreover, this can change your mood and if you started your day with a big smile, due to this obsessive thinking, you will finally end your day with a high level of discomfort.

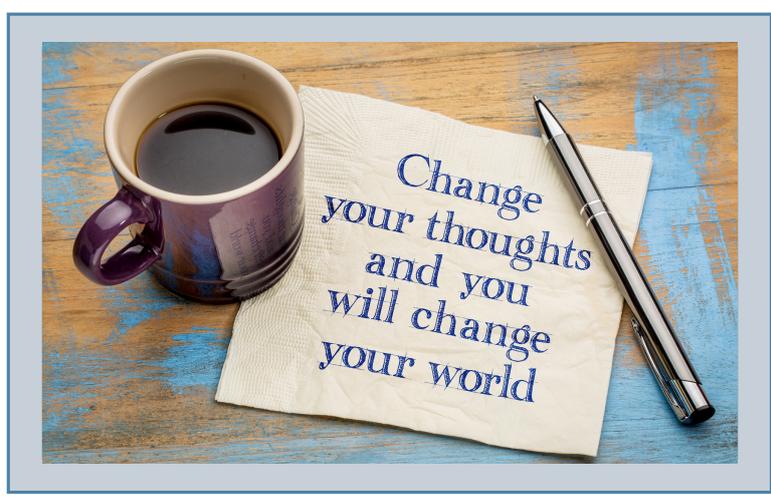
Why is it so hard to stop it? Well, it has been proven that when we try to stop thinking about something specific, our brain keeps reminding us about that thought and you are never able to get it off your mind... It is about the importance that we give to those unwanted thoughts and how to manage it... so, let's start talking about how to stop obsessive thinking.

HOW TO STOP IT?

In order to stop overthinking, it is vital to identify these thoughts... and trust me, it is harder than it looks. When you finally finish this process and you realize which thoughts are making you feel like this, you must discover its origin, the cause... why and when did this happen? That is a question you should start asking yourself if you want to feel better and stop obsessive thinking.

Questioning Your Thoughts

A self discovery exercise for feeling better by thinking straighter, and acting constructively.



HoneyBee Editors Note: I have found myself trapped frequently in a cycle of "obsessive thinking or thoughts" this year. Processing trauma and coming to terms with the outcomes is often really painful and difficult and can leave you almost with a feeling of unsaid conversations? I was given this worksheet by my Clinical Psychologist who suggested it may help me when I can't stop the loop, and I thought it was a good addition to the article next to it. Let me know your thoughts on this exercise and if you have any constructive things to add to it at chronicallyinspiredau@gmail.com and please remember, **recovery takes time!**

Briefly describe the problem:

And how it makes you feel:

And what you think about it:

What is the evidence that supports our thoughts?:

What is the evidence against our thoughts?:

Is there an alternative explanation for what happened?

What is the worst thing that could happen?

What is the best thing that could happen?

What is the most realistic outcome?

What could be the effect of questioning your original thoughts?

What should I do about the problem?

What would I say to a friend if they were in the same situation?

ARE YOU FEELING



Do you see the glass half full or half empty?

Why optimists are happier, healthier, and wealthier!



Margie Warrell
Contributor - Forbes.com

Margie Warrell emboldens people to live & lead more bravely. Her latest book is "You've Got This! The Life-Changing Power of Trusting Yourself"

Times are tough and many people are struggling to stay optimistic given the state of the economy, the insecurity of their jobs (if they have one), the size of their mortgage and the strain that puts on relationships at home. Maybe you are one of them, or maybe you know someone else who is having it tough.

But just because you can find lots of reasons for feeling down and becoming a bona fide pessimist doesn't mean that you should. The fact is, optimism creates opportunity and pessimism kills it.

Research has found that seeing the glass half full not only makes you happier, it makes you healthier and wealthier. A study by Psychologist Susan Segerstrom found that ten years after graduation, law students who were optimistic earned an average of \$32,667 more than their glass-half-empty peers.

Expecting good things to happen will lead to taking actions that produce positive results. Expecting only more bad stuff to come your way will keep you from doing the very things that might have minimized or avoided just that!

The word "optimism" actually derives from the Latin word "optima," meaning the best outcome or belief in the greatest good. As I said during my interview on the TODAY SHOW, while some people are naturally more optimistic than others, ultimately we all get to wake up every day and choose whether we are going to be a glass half-full, or a glass half-empty person.

Below are 7 strategies for filling up your cup of optimism.

My challenge to you is to try at least one of these and notice the difference it makes to your outlook and your life.

1. SET YOUR INTENTION

Before you step out of bed (and if you forget, before you leave your home) take one minute to set your intention for the day by coming up with one word that resonates with you about the attitude or spirit you want to bring to the day. Being intentional acts like a compass and helps you better focus your time and energy. For instance, if you've been looking for work but have found yourself stuck in a rut and procrastinating, you might choose to be proactive and set yourself a goal of making at least 5 calls/emails today to follow up on job leads and opportunities. The intention you choose will vary according to the challenges you are facing.

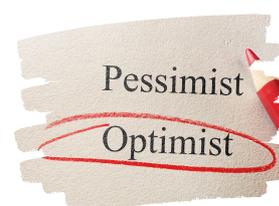
2. DO SOMETHING OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Often the very thing we need to improve our circumstances requires courage. That is, closing the gap between where you are now and where you would like to be in life will require stepping outside your comfort zone and doing something that scares you in some way. It could be picking up the phone to invite someone to dinner, attending an exercise class, or having a conversation with your boss about an issue that's been upsetting you. There is no better way to build self-confidence than by doing something that stretches you as it teaches you that you are capable of more than you thought you were.

3. REFRAME A PROBLEM INTO AN OPPORTUNITY

You can't solve your problems by complaining about them. But you can solve them (or at least learn to accept them) by reframing them so that you can approach them from a new angle. To quote Einstein: "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of thinking at which they were created."

"Where pessimists see problems, optimists find opportunities. If you change the way you look at your problems, your problems change and transform into a rich array of opportunities to grow, learn and discover inner resources you never knew you had!





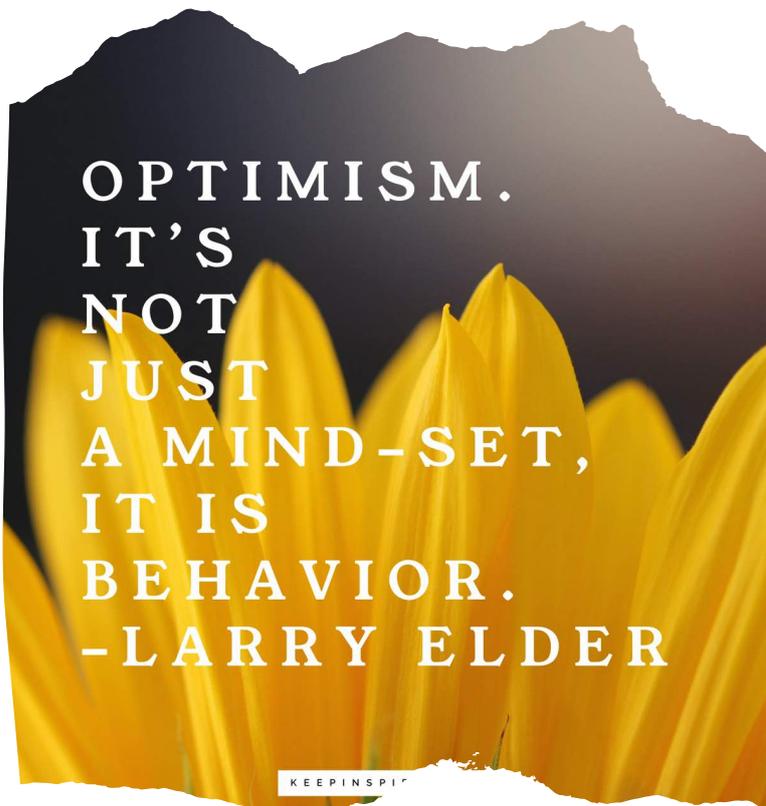
It always
seems
impossible
until it's done

5. CARRY YOURSELF LIKE AN OPTIMIST

Scientists have already proven that how you present and carry yourself on the outside has a huge impact on how you feel on the inside. Harvard researcher Amy Cuddy has gone a step further, discovering that specific adjustments in your body language make you feel more powerful and confident – which in turn can positively affect the quality and outcome of your most important interactions (think meetings, interviews, and other potentially stressful conversations).

If you change how you hold yourself physically, it will change how you feel emotionally. Slump your shoulders, pout your bottom lip and look down to the ground and optimism and opportunity will elude you. But stand tall, chin up, smile and engage with people as though you were the outgoing, confident, optimistic and successful person you aspire to be, and you will attract all sorts of positive people and opportunities into your life.

As people relate to you differently, you will gradually begin to feel differently - and more positive - yourself. Don't feel like it? Do it anyway! The old saying "Fake it 'til you make it" is literally true.



OPTIMISM.
IT'S
NOT
JUST
A MIND-SET,
IT IS
BEHAVIOR.
-LARRY ELDER

KEEPINSPIR

4. AVOID ENERGY DRAINERS

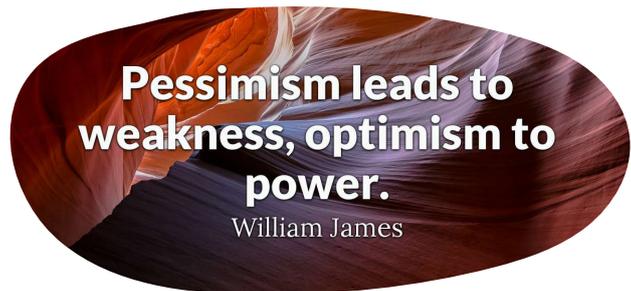
Optimism is contagious. So too is pessimism.

If you are struggling to feel more positive, don't spend your time hanging out with "emotional vampires" – those people who suck the life out of you with their complaints and commentary about everything that is wrong with both the world and the people in it. Choose your company wisely and limit the time you spend with people who don't fill your cup of optimism and "can do" self-confidence.

6. LIGHTEN UP

Why is it that comedians tend to live very long lives? It's because they have become so masterful at finding the humor in even the most unfunny situations. While it's not always easy to see the lighter side of things, it's always helpful. Humor is a highly effective antidote to almost every ailment, anxiety or adversity. Watching a funny movie or spending time with a friend who really makes you laugh is literally medicinal.

A 2009 study by researchers at the University of Maryland has shown that laughter has more health benefits than we can imagine. Laughter can flush clots, cholesterol and inflammation from the body. It increases heart rate and blood flow, and has similar health benefits to exercise. Endorphins are released during laughter, which help to relieve pain, reduce cravings and stress, and slow the aging process. Laughter can also lower blood sugar levels, improve your immune system, and increase our disease fighting antibodies. If that's not enough, laughter is a natural sleep aid. So what are you waiting for? We all know it takes more muscles to frown than to smile – start laughing and increase your beauty sleep!



**Pessimism leads to
weakness, optimism to
power.**

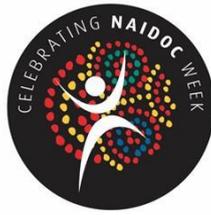
William James

7. EXERCISE

If you are one of those people who never exercises, then I'm sorry, I know you hate to hear it again, but **EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOU.**

Not only is it great for you physically, it's a very potent drug for making you feel better psychologically. As your heart starts pumping, your body releases endorphins into your system which not only burn off stress, but allow you to view your life and challenges through a more empowering and optimistic lens. Seriously, what's not to like about exercise? (Besides doing it?)

Please try one of these strategies today and let me know how it helps. Because as an optimist, **I KNOW it will!**



**Always Was,
Always Will Be.**

Always Was, Always Will Be.

Always Was, Always Will Be. recognises that First Nations people have occupied and cared for this continent for over 65,000 years.

We are spiritually and culturally connected to this country.

This country was criss-crossed by generations of brilliant Nations.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were Australia's first explorers, first navigators, first engineers, first farmers, first botanists, first scientists, first diplomats, first astronomers and first artists.

Australia has the world's oldest oral stories. The First Peoples engraved the world's first maps, made the earliest paintings of ceremony and invented unique technologies. We built and engineered structures - structures on Earth - predating well-known sites such as the Egyptian Pyramids and Stonehenge.

Our adaptation and intimate knowledge of Country enabled us to endure climate change, catastrophic droughts and rising sea levels.

Always Was, Always Will Be. Acknowledges that hundreds of Nations and our cultures covered this continent. All were managing the land - the biggest estate on earth - to sustainably provide for their future.

Through ingenious land management systems like fire stick farming we transformed the harshest habitable continent into a land of bounty.

NAIDOC Week 2020 acknowledges and celebrates that our nation's story didn't begin with documented European contact whether in 1770 or 1606 - with the arrival of the Dutch on the western coast of the Cape York Peninsula.

The very first footprints on this continent were those belonging to First Nations peoples.

Our coastal Nations watched and interacted with at least 36 contacts made by Europeans prior to 1770. Many of them resulting in the charting of the northern, western and southern coastlines - of our lands and our waters.

For us, this nation's story began at the dawn of time.

NAIDOC 2020 invites all Australians to embrace the true history of this country - a history which dates back thousands of generations.

It's about seeing, hearing and learning the First Nations' 65,000+ year history of this country - which is Australian history. We want all Australians to celebrate that we have the oldest continuing cultures on the planet and to recognise that our sovereignty was never ceded.

Always Was, Always Will Be.

Article and 2020 Theme Artwork are proudly shared with you from the NAIDOC website at www.naidoc.org.au



FIGHT OVERWHELM WITH A *Brain Dump*

How to organise your thoughts when you don't know where to start



Sometimes, there's just too much going on in your head. At least, that's how I feel some days (okay, a lot of days).

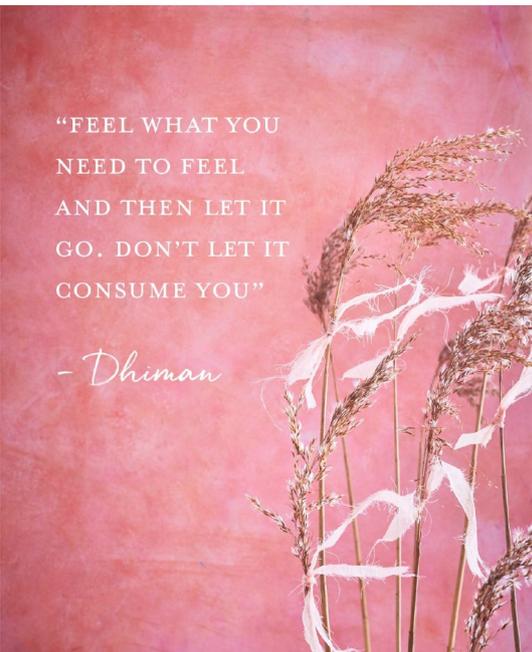
When this happens, it makes it hard to know where to start in order to get things done. I've found that a great way to help me fight overwhelm is to brain dump. It's a really silly name for a highly effective productivity tool! If you've never tried this technique before, you should read on so you can try it next time you feel overwhelmed.

What Is A Brain Dump?

Like I said above, brain dumping is a really silly name for a simple, yet effective task. It is a time that you take to figuratively "dump" all of the extra thoughts out of your head, so that you can concentrate and make sense of it all. You might find this effective if:

- You have a really busy week and keep losing track of every little thing you need to do.
- That to-do list has gotten so long you have given up.
- You're really stressed out by being pulled in too many directions.

I find that when I get too overwhelmed, I can't figure out where to start. I end up sitting on the couch, unable to make a decision, and just stress about all of the time I'm wasting, instead of actually doing something productive. This is usually the perfect time to try this technique.



What You Need

This is an incredibly simple technique, that requires very little. You don't need a fancy planner or bullet journal. Just use something that inspires you to actually carry out this activity.

You probably already have everything you need on hand.

- A simple notebook (I have these everywhere to jot down thoughts)
- A pen to write with
- Coffee (totally optional, but I can't function without it, so it's always on my list)

Once you have gathered your supplies, all you really need is a comfy place to sit, a hard surface, so that you can write, and (if you can) a few minutes of peace and quiet away from everything else.

Get To Work

Now it's time to get to work! As you finish one task on your list, you'll be able to move on to the next without needing to stop and think about what's most important. A brain dump is a great way to fight overwhelm and be more productive when you need it most.

HoneyBee Editors Note

You have probably all heard about journaling, or writing letters to people who have hurt you or you're angry at and instead of mailing them you burn them. A proven tool used by Clinical Psychologists and Life Coaches is to write down your feelings and thoughts, even just swear words if that's the headspace you are in. This act frees the brain of the clutter, and is also a type of brain dump.

The idea of this activity is to help you clear your mind of clutter, unfocused thoughts, problems with prioritising and procrastination when you are particularly overwhelmed. The mere act assists the brain and helps fight overwhelming feelings or thoughts.

Take a minute to just jot a few words or draw some doodles, or take an hour and write for as long as you feel you need. It's great to check the list and eliminate things as you go, which you should be able to do after you dump the overwhelm!

Good luck, do it often and remember it doesn't have to lead anywhere, it's a dumping ground!





Article shared with you from www.thoughtcatalog.com

Written by Rania Naim

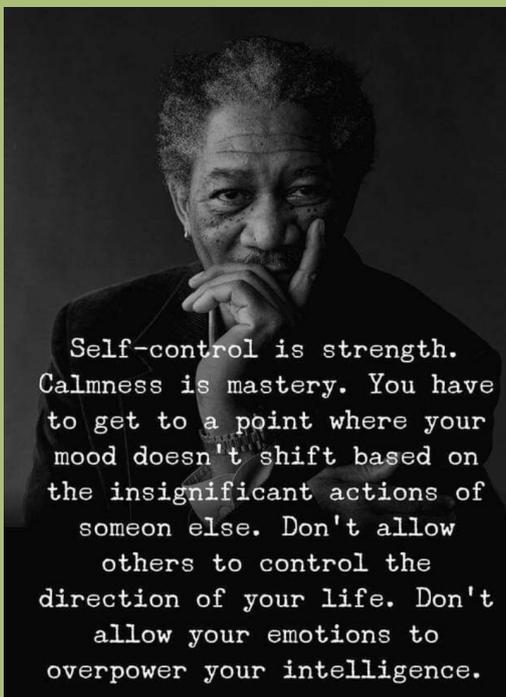
"Writing makes me feel alive. Words heal me".

I'm slowly learning that I don't have to react to everything that bothers me

I'm slowly learning that I don't have to hurt those who hurt me. I'm slowly learning that maybe the ultimate sign of maturity is walking away instead of getting even.

I'm slowly learning that the energy it takes to react to every bad thing that happens to you drains you and stops you from seeing the other good things in life. I'm slowly learning that I'm not going to be everyone's cup of tea and I won't be able to get everyone to treat me the way I want to be treated and that's okay. I'm slowly learning that trying so hard to 'win' anyone is just a waste of time and energy and it fills you with nothing but emptiness.

I'm slowly learning that not reacting doesn't mean I'm okay with things, it just means I'm choosing to rise above it. I'm choosing to take the lesson it has served and learn from it. I'm choosing to be the bigger person. I'm choosing my peace of mind because that's what I truly need. I don't need more drama. I don't need people making me feel like I'm not good enough. I don't need fights and arguments and fake connections. I'm slowly learning that sometimes not saying anything at all says everything.



Do not
learn how to react.

Learn how to respond.



I'm slowly learning that reacting to things that upset you gives someone else power over your emotions. You can't control what others do but you can control how you respond, how you handle it, how you perceive it and how much of it you want to take personally. I'm slowly learning that most of the time, these situations say nothing about you and a lot about the other person. I'm slowly learning that maybe all these disappointments are just there to teach us how to love ourselves because that will be the armor and the shield we need against the people who try to bring us down. They will save us when people try to shake our confidence or when they try to make us feel like we're worthless.

I'm slowly learning that even if I react, it won't change anything, it won't make people suddenly love and respect me, it won't magically change their minds. Sometimes it's better to just let things be, let people go, don't fight for closure, don't ask for explanations, don't chase answers and don't expect people to understand where you're coming from. I'm slowly learning that life is better lived when you don't center it on what's happening around you and center it on what's happening inside you instead. Work on yourself and your inner peace and you'll come to realize that not reacting to every little thing that bothers you is the first ingredient to living a happy and healthy life.

Why are some friendships temporary and others last a lifetime....

Article shared with you from the happinez magazine and blog at happinez.com



It's a common fact...

As we grow older, we're less likely to befriend new people. Adult friendships can be very close ones, yet not all friendships last. According to "science says", it makes perfect sense.

In order to have a blossoming friendship, you need a few ingredients. First of all, you have to meet somewhere and be interested in one another.

Friends are often quite alike when it comes to hobbies, lifestyle, and personality. According to Medical Daily, most friendships spring from situations where you meet regularly.

It makes sense: the more often you see each other, the more time there is for something beautiful to originate.

Reciprocity is Key...

No wonder many friendships arise between classmates or colleagues. But you won't become friends with just any colleague, something special has to happen between the two of you. The secret of the transformation from acquaintance to a friend is reciprocity. Do you share your personal story with them, and do they share theirs with you? Then there's a reciprocal relationship, and the seed of friendship was planted.

Now, this can turn into a solid friendship that - if maintained well - can last a lifetime. Being interested in each other, being there for each other, and having a laugh together is all very important for the continuity of the friendship. But if the feeling is good, you don't have to work hard for it.

How long will a friendship last...

Now that we know how most friendships come to life and are maintained, the question is why some friendships come to an end. Brett Laursen, professor at the Florida Atlantic University's Department of Psychology, researched 410 children's friendships for six years.

As it turned out, only one percent of the friendships that were there at the start, survived the six years. The researcher says the ending of the friendships has to do with differences in gender, educational level, popularity and physical aggression. If two people are too different, the friendship will usually end.

"Differences are disastrous for friendships. They cause conflict and inequality in the relationship, for instance when one of the friends' social status changes," says Laursen.

Endings are part of life...

Once things are changing in your life or your friend's life (moving to a new town, the birth of children, developing new hobbies) while the other one's life doesn't evolve with it, the friendship usually comes to an end. The things you had in common are less important to you, there are fewer things to talk about. Maintaining a friendship becomes a lot more difficult.

After all, it's the likenesses in personality, lifestyle, interests, and habits that were once the base of the friendship. Once these bricks change a lot, you'll find it's suddenly more difficult to set a date for your next appointment, the conversations are less personal and you're both less interested in each other.

Of course, maintaining a valuable friendship can be hard work sometimes - you don't want to throw away a cherished relationship just for nothing. But as soon as a friendship starts requiring more energy than it gives you, you may have reached the expiration date of the friendship.



tastebuds club

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FOR REAL CONVERSATION,
GREAT FOOD, AND A
HAPPY MIND & TUMMY

Christmas Chocolate Dipped Almond Florentines

Florentines are not your regular cookies: no chocolate chips, no classic cookie dough, no butter... Halfway between a cookie and a candy, they are incredibly thin and nutty, with a subtle chocolate coating. You can make them in a traditional way or add in your favourites to make individualise them to your tastes.

INGREDIENTS

- 2/3 cup (130g) sugar
- 1/4 cup (70g) honey
- 1/4 cup (70g) heavy cream
- 2.5 ounces (70g) candied orange or mandarin
- 5.3 ounces (150g) slivered almonds
- 4.2 ounces (120g) milk or dark chocolate

INSTRUCTIONS

- Heat honey, cream and sugar in a small saucepan until the temperature reaches 245°F (118°C). If you don't have a cooking thermometer, simmer for about 5 minutes but do not let the mixture turn brown.
- Remove from the heat and add the candied orange/mandarin and the slivered almonds. Stir gently until coated.
- Preheat the oven to 340°F (170°C).
- Spoon one teaspoon of the batter on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, or ideally in a silicone muffin cup so that the cookie keeps its shape.
- Bake for about 5 to 10 minutes, or until golden. Let cool, then invert the cookies.
- Meanwhile, melt the chocolate in the microwave and stir every 20 seconds until melted and smooth.
- Dip the bottom of each florentine in the melted chocolate, or use a spoon for coating if easier. Invert and allow the chocolate to set.

You can substitute the orange for cranberry or cherries or another dried fruit. **Get creative!**



Let cool and enjoy! **Editor: These are great wrapped up as gifts too!**