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Introduction

.....

During a dream in April 2008, tucked cosily under my thirteen-point-five-tog duvet, I was visited by eighty butterflies dancing together above my head. It was calming, peaceful, and a little bit magical, and I knew life was changing.

The following night, I had the same dream. This time, while I watched the eighty dancing butterflies above my head, I watched as another butterfly on its own flew over to join the others: Eight plus one equals nine. The numbers were symbolism of end, completion, and a new beginning. I just didn't know what any of it meant.

This is my belifehappy story—one about a dream, a reality, a life, and a love. Through the beginning of a new journey, these quotes have been written to simply share with you now, right now, today, tomorrow, every day, that we can be life happy.

More than twelve years ago, I found myself in a very dark spiral hole and really could not see life and me together. I was diagnosed with depression, and with support from my GP, family, and close friends, I worked through the darkness and regained my health and some spirit.

What this experience gave me was an opportunity to change and be who I wanted to be. Honestly, I don't think I realised the full extent of the opportunity or embraced the changes as I could.

In 2008, the full stop came to all I had been doing to myself. Life was about to change, and I somehow knew it was. I just didn't know how.

It was a regular Sunday morning while visiting family in the UK, and the next moment, I was in an ICU with my sister and other family as my dad left this world. That was it. During those eleven hours I sat with my unconscious father, I was given an opportunity to embrace change and do it my way: a positive, optimistic way. The key thing from this experience was that it was all down to me. No one in my world could change anything. This time, the whole responsibility was on me.

I transformed my world, values, and beliefs by:

- Learning to love myself for me and to experience true love with my world.
- Learning that simply giving was not enough. If I really loved myself, I would also be open to receiving.
- Learning that it was okay to play and do all the things I loved, which helped me relax, be happy, and be me.
- Learning that my thirst for learning was okay. Actually, there were lots of people out there who also liked what I did. The more I learned, the more people and dear new friends I met.

I have been writing since I was very young. It was in 2005 when I moved to Cyprus that I started to understand that I could actually put a story together. In 2007, I wrote *Finding Happiness*. What I didn't know was that this was the start of my story. Returning to the UK to retrain in holistic therapies and NLP and then choosing to go back to Cyprus in 2009 was confusing for many. What is clear to me was what I achieved while I was there. This book is my complete healing journey. Why did I leave in January 2011? The book was finished, my story was healed, and it was time for action: to start those small steps in my new life with new thoughts and new perspectives.

With my sincerest love, I wish to share with all of you reading this who have or know someone or are experiencing depression, anxiety,

panic attacks, IBS, and all manner stress-related illnesses and for those of you who are curious about optimism and challenging your own thoughts and actions. This book is the first positive step forward and is a chance to be honest with yourself and to live the life of your dreams. It's a chance to believe that you will always be supported and loved by the universe. It's your focus towards improving your life without expecting others to change it. You will start to live and love life.

Thank you all dearly for your support, and I do hope you continue to enjoy the energy from the belifehappy butterfly today, tomorrow, and every day.

Emma x

PART ONE

Finding Happiness

25 March 2007

To find happiness, I realised I needed to understand what it is. Happiness has so many meanings, and it means different things to different people. I needed to find out what makes me happy. And if I found that difficult, I would also try to find out what wasn't making me happy.

What I did know was that love would not give me happiness. When I found happiness, I would find love.

On this day, I felt the most amazing experience in my lifetime. It was a feeling of true freedom and spiritual connection that made me smile. A true smile. I was on my own walking on the coast. The sun was warm against a cold wind, the sea an aqua blue reflecting light. I was surrounded by peace and the earth's natural state. Everything was moving at different rates with me in the middle of it all. I was the centre of peace.

The feeling of freedom and relaxation make me happy. Being respected makes me feel happy. Fighting everyday battles at work and home does not bring happiness, but rather is part of everyday life. It is what we do for ourselves that makes the everyday battles easier to deal with.

So does this mean I need to find happiness in my life? The answer is yes, and my journey starts here.

I have tried visiting a clairvoyant, I have read the Kabbalian, I had my first full-body massage, I revamped my hair, I manicured my nails, I walked along the beach, and I updated my CV to push myself forward in my career, all in the last month. Next month, I have an appointment with my UK channellist.

I'm tense and tired. I have spent a day out with a friend watching a rugby match, having Chinese, and watching a funny movie. I'm still tense and tired.

So what is it I want? What should I really be doing? Analysing your life on your own is no easy task. Helping and advising your friends is easy; we all do it. But turn that mirror to reflect your face. Look directly into the mirror, and what do you see? I did this last night, and it frightened me. I was unhappy-looking with a poor complexion and soulless eyes with no sparkle to be seen.

It's not sad. It's just a true reflection of what the continued battles of everyday life have done to me, and action is required. You cannot blame anyone else, and you can't expect anyone else to solve or fix your anxieties. It's your world, and you have to make it what you want.

My realistic aims in life are to be happy (when I discover what that is) and to have a job I enjoy in an environment I am happy in. I want to make the most of my interests and push myself wherever I see an opportunity. As for money, I want to earn money that reflects what I do. Eventually, I would like to own my own house and have minimal debt.

British summertime commenced this week, and the clocks move forward one hour today, 25 March 2007. I have nine months before the end of the year to achieve another piece of the puzzle, but my main priority is to go on the trail of finding happiness that lasts. It will

not be easy, and I'm sure I can't go online and print a treasure map that leads me to happiness. It's going to be something that takes my own personal thoughts and experiences, and I have many to look forward to.

Eleven months later ...

with a guy I really liked, loved I guess, some months before and kind of still had that around me.

Exhausted one afternoon after packing more boxes and just hanging up from a call with my ex calling to see how I was getting on, I flaked out across my bed. The blinds were down to block out the light, and above my bed was the central room light. I stared up at the ceiling. And in this moment, I heard, “I don’t know what you’re doing or why you’re doing it, but you’ll be OK, that’s all I can say.” And then my Dad’s voice left the room, as did the smell of his pipe smoke.

In a different country, the selling of a car had a completely different process, and here in a queue, waiting to do the final sign over of ownership, the couple and I got talking about stuff. The lady said, “You know with the way you think about life Emma, you should read the *Celestine Prophecy*... you sound just like the book.” Right then, I thought I’d heard of this book before; however, back then, any suggestions would have flown right by me.

Back in the UK, at my desk, I’m thinking about life. Where is it taking me? Thirty-one, single, and no plans for where to work. What to do?

A few days on, the phone rings. It’s my sister, and she tells me there is a job going at a local company for a marketing position that has not been advertised yet. Perfect. I called and sent off my CV. I’d worked in marketing since I left uni, and I love a challenge, so the job sounded perfect. A perfect solution to my fear.

I go off to a bookstore in search of *The Celestine Prophecy* with some kind of urge that it’s the right thing for me to do. As I head over to the book stand of mind, body, and spirit, I see a book with angel wings: *How to Hear Your Angels* by Doreen Virtue. Interesting. While I was abroad, one of the PAs once gave me a CD of Doreen Virtue to help me relax (little did I know until eighteen months later

that this lady was an earth angel, a reiki master.) I picked the book up knowing, just knowing, I was to buy this book. I searched for *The Celestine Prophecy* and also came across *The Alchemist* (my first introduction to Paulo Coelho.) I was set.

After my A levels, especially English literature, I always remember saying I would not read a book again for a very, very, very long time. (I was also told by an English teacher at school that my English was not good enough to be a writer.)

Back at home, I got settled in my sister's nursing chair. I had no furniture when I moved into my new UK home, and she needed a temporary home for this nursing chair and stool. It's great, so comfy, and the seat and footstool rock together. At my side is a wonderful sideboard, another donation from a friend, which holds my cup of tea. (I love tea.) Warm, comfy, and safe, I opened up the first book, *The Celestine Prophecy*. I was hooked. I get up only to make another cup of tea and smoke a cigarette in the back garden. I want to stop, but I'm just not ready yet.

For two days, my body was comfortably supported in the nursing chair, gently rocking, sometimes stopping for a moment as the words from the page sparked light bulbs. Each time, everything seemingly got brighter. I was hooked.

It's okay, though, I have two more books to read. My mind was now an absolute sponge for all this new information. The covers say these books have sold millions (and we know they have).

Where this is all taking me, I have no idea. What I do know is that it's okay.

I get a letter in the post inviting me to an interview for the marketing job. What a relief. I have a presentation to do, and it looks like a

four-hour interview. A new suit is required, and I've not worn one of those for about four years.

Standing in Marks and Spencer's, I see this lovely suit dress. It's cute, it's serious, and it's professional. I try it on, and I feel amazing. I look amazing. (The size twelve body is simply down to a tough six months.) The dress is a size fourteen, although this fact is irrelevant to the job I'm applying for!

The job interview goes very well, and I'm still feeling really good. It's all part of a new phase, and I'm going with it. The phone rings; I have the job starting in June. Job, house to live in, car, suits, money in the bank: I'm sorted. Oh, I'm single, but that's okay right now. (Seriously, it is. Just now!)

With five new suits and a nine-to-five marketing manager position, I'm all go. Forward or backwards?

2008: a new life. Pressing the pause button.

Finding Love

.....

It is fast approaching a time of year that I would once dread. It is fear of the reminder of being single and/or the fear of my partner forgetting. It was once very important to feel loved. With no love inside, it must come from other?

Did I know I had no love? Of course, I loved. The difference was that I wanted it back, and when I didn't get it back, I clearly wasn't loved. Therefore, why should I show love? Are you with me? For what appeared in my world was society (my family, friends and work buddies) had expectations of love and what it should be. I was never one to hug a friend: You know personal space and everything! It was at university when I met an incredible lady who was what we call a friend for a reason (as sadly I have not been able to get in contact for the last couple of years.) She taught me from the age of eighteen about drinking. She also showed me how I could care about people and show affection towards friends. She was my first friend I could openly go up and hug when I met her in the street. She was an inspiring friend.

So for the next ten years, this is what happened. The expectations still were there in my life. I didn't settle down in a relationship until my mid twenties. I was far too busy building a career because I felt it was expected of me. When I did finally settle down, I felt it was the one, and now I sadly looked back and realised it wasn't. I still didn't know what love was. I then went on to make huge changes in my life, still searching. As my ex said in a card as we parted, "I hope you find what you are looking for." Much wiser than me because I had no idea

what I was looking for. Was it still love? The move introduced me to another new friend, who is thankfully still very dear and close in my life (When I say *close*, I mean in friendship, not proximity. We don't live in the same country and haven't for a few years.) This lady has a huge heart, and she might remember at first I really didn't know how to relate to her. She cared, she cried (I know I didn't cry for quite a few years!), she loved, she showed so much affection towards people, and it helped them feel good. Not one day in the time we were in the same country went by without her saying, "Emma you look gorgeous today, simply beautiful my babe!" I can tell you now when I had to leave and travel back to the UK that I missed that very much. I did not realise how much joy this lady was showing me. It all came to a stop. Suddenly.

The last time someone told me they loved me romantically was two years ago. Then it was time to learn what love really was.

Still Finding Love

.....

On Sunday, 10 February 2008, my dad died. No one knew exactly why, but we all saw the light. For what seemed a long time, I had sat and held my dad's hand stroking his thumb with mine. Walking down the stairs afterwards, everything was different.

What does death mean for love? This was how I found out what love was. In the events after this sudden loss in my life, I started to ask myself questions. I wanted to know why on earth this had happened to me? Victim? I was queen of the victims, but to me, I had lost my dad and that was all that mattered. When you depend so much on others for your happiness and for their love, when it is gone, you are left empty. It is a fact.

Was happiness a route to love? It was my first question: How do I find happiness? And the answer was I am to find love? Now this wasn't a "get out there Em and find a boyfriend!" The reality was I could not find a boyfriend as I had nothing to offer. I was empty.

I coasted for a while. One afternoon in July, I remember sitting with my granny in her flat. We had a cup of tea, and we were talking about my dad. I found it easy to talk to her about him, and she always listened. Then, while we were talking, I remember saying, "thank you Granny I know I have gone on a bit, I just wanted to talk to someone who understands." Then I saw from that very moment rays of pure unrefined love started streaming from her eyes. I felt all love around me. I know it's not the kind of love I thought was expected; this was unconditional love. It was like a miracle, a gift to me.

I've Found It Over Here: Love

.....

My next stop was a trip to see my dear close friend, and this trip is the one I refer to as the start of my journey, because it was on this trip I made decisions to change my life. I discovered what I was looking for. It took four or five years after my ex wrote, "I hope you find what you are looking for." Within months, I had left my job and started along the reiki healing path. With reiki, I felt a completeness and a channel of the highest intentions. I felt at home.

Five Years Later

.....

25 March 2012

In an email to myself five years later after writing Finding Happiness, I realised just what I had learned and how I now trusted the guidance and inner knowing. At last not only had I found love within myself and trust, I had found happiness too.

From: emmalannigan
Subject: What I have learned
Date: 25 March 2012 23:10:32

Establish what your stuff is.

Tidy your stuff up.

Be ready to walk away from the stuff that is no longer supporting you.

Be focused on what new stuff you're looking to support you.

Be sure you've cleared the old stuff.

Now get on, and when the new stuff comes, you'll be ready.

With no stuff in sight, you're now greatness and light.



PART THREE

Sunny Side Up

belifehappy: Why Not?

.....

8 September 2009

Because why not belifehappy? You have a choice every second, minute, hour, and day. Not yesterday or tomorrow. Today.

Some people choose to be unhappy, as it gives them attention from family, friends, co-workers, and employers. It's not always good attention, but at least it's attention.

You can wake up in the morning, stub your toes, feel a bit fuller because it's that time of the month, see the kids have toothpaste on their school uniforms, and look out the window to see it's raining again. How do you feel right now? The same way you felt when this last happened?

You have a choice to change this. Every moment you use negative energy in any situation, you affect your mind and body balance, which effects your long-term health.

Stress manifests in your body in different ways. Sometimes, it is fatigue, anger, IBS, or a manifestation of a fear or phobia to limit us from the situation that makes us stressed.

You think I'm exaggerating?

Time Loss

.....

16 February 2010

Are you lost in time? What time is it? I'm late! You're late! I'm in a rush. Can't talk or stop just now. I'm going to the gym. Just got to make time?

From the minute you wake up to your alarm, whether human, phone, or bedside clock, to the minute you go to bed, time is our day. And for those of you who do not sleep very well, time is still present during the night when you check the time and wish you were asleep.

When I was very little and we as a family went on holidays (which usually meant a very long car journey), my favourite question was, "what is the time?" I always wanted to know what time it was. I remember one of my first watches. It had a white wrist strap, and Mickey Mouse told me the time with his big white gloved hands. I loved it!

This was sure to stop my issue with time. Not really, though! (Just got my phone to check what time it was as I'm writing this!) We then go to school, and whilst at primary school, there is a schedule. It was at secondary school that time was a huge thing. Do they still have those homework diaries with the lesson planner in the front? We carried around a diary with this planner that was our day planned out for us. It was the same at university, and in my career world, I was led by media schedules, copy deadlines, and event planners. It was all time-related and for another need, but not for my own personal needs.

I stopped wearing a watch a few years ago. The first time I stopped was just during the day because it would irritate my arm when I was working at my desk. There was the clock on my PC screen, and I always put it back on when I went into a meeting. I was still not without time. In the last twelve months, I have not worn a watch. I use my mobile for only phone calls and odd texts, so it is usually in a bag, not near me. I did not consciously say, "I will stop wearing a watch." It just happened.

They say time is relative, but relative to who and what? Time is relative to you, and what I began to understand is that managing time is not managing it. It is allowing and accepting time. Time is of no importance, for when we live in the current moment of now, we lose our focus on time. And we already know what we focus on we attract. For example, people say, "I never have enough time!" Well, that's right. You won't! When you stop thinking about time, it becomes less important. Now for some of you planners (I was/am one!), you can still plan. You still set goals and targets all relative to time; however, right now, time is not conscious. I have now created in my world (where I still have a diary and three planners for different areas of my life), a time-relative world. It is relative to me and my needs. I wake up with my own body alarm (unless I need to be up exceptionally early and then I require assistance). I know when I want to eat lunch and dinner. What time it is no longer controls me. I control my own time. Imagine a world where time is controlled by you?

Finally, for those of you now reading and asking how this works with school runs and a job to get to and this and that, it is still relative to you. When major changes occur in my life, I know I will require a few adjustments in my control of time.

When time controls you, you feel stressed. Stress steals your time. When you are in control, you are happier. The next time you feel rushed or pressed for time, stop for a second and ask why. Within seconds, you will find the answer. That answer is you.

be endless. be eternal. be now. belifehappy.

Walking to the Core

.....

17 February 2010

It had been a while since I checked my ticket - my ticket for this journey called life. After a walk on Saturday, I finished and sat on a bench by the sea. The sun was beautiful, and there was a lovely breeze cooling me after my two-hour walk. The walking is achieving so much. I know it is reaching out to people, and that means a lot to me as I chose the Mental Health Foundation to do my charity trek. It is an area many people have a fight with at some point in their lives. The walking is having other benefits, too. I have always been a walker. I had no idea, like on Saturday, how much my mind and body need this. We all benefit as from our strength within. Our core. And that's what this journey is about: Our core. In love. In health. In mind. In purpose.

When we are zooming about, we start to ignore our core, and that's a bit like ignoring someone you love dearly. Do you see that? It's okay to love you. You are as special and important as someone you love dearly. Walking is what I have found to give to my core. The fresh air, the beauty, the walks, the peace within – and yes, I have still experienced those things when I walked along the A15 and around the villages back at home in the UK! Amongst the car fumes! Peace is not the same as quiet. I can still hear the sound of the sea and the noise of building work or traffic when I walk, except for some reason, I stop hearing when I walk since I have my peace.

I'm a big vision and kinaesthetic person, so seeing and feeling things is how I communicate and receive information around me. My hearing switching off when I walk makes sense to me. (Just for my NLP friends: Yes, there was just a bit of auditory digital just there.) Understanding how you communicate is very helpful in our relationships at home, at work, in school, and socially with friends. If you were to say to me, "Did you hear ... I heard ... Have a listen to this ... Did you hear that sound," let's just say I'm going to switch off at some point after you said the word *hear*! However, to say, "I love listening to Jason Mraz," I just felt the word *love*.

So do I hear anything when I'm walking? No! I do see and feel. Ask yourself how you look after your core?

Chaos Theory

.....

18 February 2010

The chaos theory is as follows: “It has been said that something as small as the flutter of a butterfly’s wing can ultimately cause a typhoon halfway around the world.”¹

A butterfly symbolises many things, from the personification of a person’s soul to symbolising rebirth. In Ancient Greek, the word *butterfly* was referenced to mean *soul* and *mind*. Butterflies are important as agents in pollination, and in the case here, the belifehappy green butterfly symbolises the spreading of happiness and inspiration.

While researching over the weekend, I was drawn to the chaos theory. Appearing in a search online, I started to feel intrigued and became more interested when I saw it is also known as the “butterfly effect”. *The flapping wing represents a small change in the initial condition of the system, which causes a chain of events leading to large-scale phenomena. While the butterfly does not cause the tornado in the sense of providing the energy for the tornado, it does cause it in the sense that the flap of its wings is an essential part of the initial conditions resulting in a tornado, and without that flap, that particular tornado would not have existed.*²

¹ Butterfly effect, from Wikiquote, 3 December 2014
http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/The_Butterfly_Effect

² Butterfly effect, from Wikipedia, 14 February 2010,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect

What does this mean to you and me? In the simplest terms, we each have an effect on the world with each action and thought. Each breath. Each word spoken. Each smile. Everything you do has an effect on something else. It's huge, and I think that's pretty hard to get my head around. Although I understand it now, it has taken some practice. It's hard to see you are a part of a bigger picture and then to see that you are whole and the picture is in you. It goes back to the simple statement of "we create our world." What we do or don't do creates our world. Our thoughts when negative breed negativity. So when you think of positive actions and emotions, your butterfly wings become part of a chain of events that lead to more positive actions and emotions. Just by simply smiling at a friend or a stranger, you are offering hope and love to that person as your wing flutters past them. In turn, that person then carries with them during their day the feeling of hope and love and flutters his or her wings with all the people that person interacts with on that same day. One smile.

Imagine knowing today, tomorrow, and every day that you are offering a positive butterfly effect.

Love: Time to Balance and Be You

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22 April 2010

What would happen if you keep breathing in? You inhale, inhale, inhale? With no release, there is no balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide. We unconsciously inhale and exhale to keep a balance in our body.

If you were to sit and listen to your body right now, do you feel any blocks? Perhaps a pain in your body or a tightness in a muscle. Why is it there? Your unconscious mind will not lie to you! So it is up to us to decide if what we are experiencing is an imbalance.

Like breathing, we don't think about each time we breathe. It just happens, and I am sure we are all very thankful for that. Again, though, when we experience periods of anxiety, stress, or depression, we will not first of all say to ourselves "That's it I'm stressed and exhausted I need to allow myself to rest." We instead start to complain of feeling tired and not knowing why. Then we feel nauseous, random pains appear in our joints, and our muscles become tense. That will be because we lifted something heavy last week.

We naturally make excuses for how our body is working or not working. We excuse the imbalance since we know only in ourselves from our unconscious mind that we created the imbalance.

Let's go back to the breathing. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. With one comes the other. A balance. Now look at your daily life and

everything from inside, as well as the things outside that are out of your control. Are you in balance?

When we feel anxious or stressed, we are allowing ourselves to feel this way. As we take in more stress or place ourselves in situations where we feel anxious, we inhale and inhale and inhale the stress and anxiety. What are you exhaling? Where is the balance? And what is the balance?

This is where we create blocks internally. The block is our physical warning of an imbalance: where you start to feel tired, don't want to eat your dinner, and really just want to go to bed and not get out for a few days. By listening to our bodies and accepting when something doesn't feel right, we can ask we are feeling this way. You will know by the answer what you require.

Our human body, its systems, and its mechanics reflect our consciousness. Things maybe defined differently; however, they remain the same. We live inside incredible machines that work in conjunction and in balance. So why do we sometimes forget and take for granted the balance of our systems? By being aware and thankful for its work, we give back, thereby creating a balance. By taking a five-minute break of peace and stillness, we give balance.

Exercise: A Short Internal Balancing Exercise

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When you are balanced within, your world is in balance.

Now, allow yourself five minutes. Switch off your mobile phone and find somewhere quiet. Let the day drift away, and read this simple relaxation to refresh and balance your mind and body. Likewise, you could ask a friend or a partner to read it to you.

The *Yellow Rose Light* was inspired by a gift I received from my dad later in the year after he died. I'd come down into the kitchen in the morning and walked over to switch on the kettle, as I did and do every morning. Over to the cupboard to get my dotty china tea cup and then back to the kettle. It was then I did a double take. I moved to stand in front of the sink and looked out of the window towards the hedge that bordered the back garden. It was all green except for one yellow rose flower. It was all green yesterday and the day before. Today though it appeared there was a yellow rose, just one, about two feet up, nestled in the hedge. With disbelief at there being only one flower, I went out into the garden in my dressing gown and flip flops. I felt the dewy grass as I walked over, and there, sure enough was one yellow rose.

Now, how it grew over night I have no explanation. Had I just not noticed it before? The reason I know it was a gift was the feeling I felt inside. Love.

Yellow Rose Light (inspired by my dad and his gift of a yellow rose)

Sitting or lying comfortably, with your hands by your side, you close your eyes and start to feel relaxed. All of the day disappearing, floating away, and you see yourself, sitting still, rested. You become aware of your breathing. Become aware of you and your body's balance. Inhale. Now exhale. Take a deep breath in, and slowly exhale. Slow your breathing to a calm balance. Feel calm. Be calm.

Now imagine beautiful yellow light surrounding you. All around you is this beautiful yellow light. Feel its warmth and love. Now inhale this beautiful yellow light. Let its warmth, love, and light travel and flush through your body. Now exhale slowly. Exhale, letting go of all the tension, the worry, and the stress of today. Keep the balance.

Now inhale again the warmth of this light. Inhale the love, and feel it fill your body from your head down to the ends of your toes. Now exhale, letting go, releasing, and relaxing. Enjoy this moment of releasing your worry, your stress, and your anxiety. It is all going and leaving you now. Focus on the balance of your breathing as you inhale and exhale. Breathe slowly. Breathe calmly.

Still with your eyes closed. One, two, three: Wriggle your toes. Four. Open your eyes. Five. Wide awake and feeling refreshed and alive! All your cells are singing warmth, love and happiness.

Allow yourself time to do this every morning or anytime you wish to revitalise your body and maintain your balance of mind and body.

be balance. be health. be peace. be joy. be love. be life. be happy.

Love: I Can't Get No Sleep

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29 April 2010

You've tried counting sheep years ago, one, two, three, and even pausing whilst one or two of them missed the stile and went back to jump over it again. Hot chocolate before bed, warming and calming. What else is there? Turning your partner over when they snore. Light on? Light off? Up and down all night.

After a bad night's sleep, the morning is in one way a relief. In another way, you just feel tired. Do you always feel tired? Do you wish you could sleep just one night? Or are you one of the few who sleeps each night? Whatever sleep pattern you have, let's look at some of the reasons for not sleeping and ten tips on improving the quality of your sleep.

With the exclusion of specific illness and medication, many people experience a lack of sleep due to lifestyle in the main. Life has changed: Our environment and requirements in life have changed, and our physical and mental requirements have changed and family life to an extent. It is out of our individual control. When was the last time you thought about your lifestyle and how it was affecting your sleep?

You end each day getting into bed. Snuggle under the duvet and nothing. Eyes open, wide awake. It's infuriating.

So what is stopping you from sleeping?

Touch therapies are relaxing treatments that, with regular (maintained) treatments, will aid improved sleep. It comes back to balance, of which touch therapies work on rebalancing the mind and body. A rested mind means a rested body. Therefore, a stressed mind equals a stressed body.

Does it mean you are stressed if you do not sleep? Not necessarily. I'm using the term *stressed* here as some of my clients and people I speak to use that word (unfortunately!) Anything that troubles the mind will trouble our body. So to get sleep, the body and mind require a balanced state. A calm neutral state allows both mind and body to rest. (I'm guessing like your laptop in hibernate mode.)

Ten tips to help get the sleep you want

Clear the clutter in your bedroom

Check under your bed, on the bedside table, and in your wardrobe. Make your bedroom a sanctuary for you.

Open the windows

When you can, leave the windows in your bedroom open for a few hours. Let your room breathe.

Check your mattress

You spend on average of six to eight hours of your day in bed asleep (when you sleep!) You are worth a mattress that is right for you. Turn it, and air it. Consider investing in a new one.

Music

Play relaxing music. Get into bed, lie on your back, and focus on the music. Listen to the music as you relax and float off to sleep.

Thank your day

When you get into bed, settle in, lie on your back, think of everything in your day, and say thank you. Say thank you for your health, happiness, family, friends, and the people at work. This will help you let go of today, clearing your mind.

Balance

For those of you stationary most of your day at a desk, make time at lunch or after work to go for a stroll around the block or do some kind of exercise. For those of you active during your day, take five to sit and relax with no music, TV, or anything. Just you.

Talk and write it out

When something is troubling, your mind talks. Talk to a friend, family member, or partner, or write the problem out. The key is to stop the pattern. Think about finding a solution. Don't pressure yourself. You might need to make steps towards a solution. The first step will help ease and rest your mind.

Laugh

Isn't it just the best medicine? Have a laughter night where you get comedy movies. Laugh with your children. Find your inner child just

for a moment and let all your worries go and laugh and play. Stand wherever you are, and say to yourself, “I am happy.” Repeat ten times, and feel the smile come across your face. (Others will see it, too!)

Variety

Bring variety into your day. Allowing your mind and body to experience new sounds, sights, and tastes distracts, grows, and rests your mind. It is all about choice. Allow yourself to experience new things and give yourself more choice.

Relax

You are special. The feeling of touch is soothing, nurturing, and relaxing. It calms the nervous system and the mind. Have pamper-me time, and allow yourself this special time once a week. Remember many complementary touch therapies all promote relaxation and improve sleep over a period of time and with regular treatments.

We are given choice, and we have the choice to stay the same. To create change can be sudden or gradual. Changing lifestyle habits is a change for life. A lifetime of happiness. Sleep well.

Give: What Is Giving?

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4 May 2010

Giving: What does it really mean? Is it about money, or is it about time or love or other things? To give, by definition, can sometimes be a bit vague. What about giving to yourself? How can we do that?

It is strange, really, because when you immediately hear the word *give*, you associate it with an external action. I wonder how many of you reading this will be thinking of giving to yourself? And can giving to someone else or an organisation be giving to you, as well? Most of our giving actions will unconsciously balance with receiving simply because we work in balance. When you feel unhappy or have a grievance towards giving, then the question is whether you are giving in the right way for you? There are many ways you can give:

Money

Time

Assistance

Your skills

Volunteering

Fundraising

Then, there are:

Kindness

Love

Comfort

Rest

Relaxation

Listening

People who fundraise for charities will be drawn to organisations that research, support, and promote a cause that they have been affected by, directly or indirectly. It is a way of giving in memory or support and with thanks.

I was drawn to help support the Mental Health Foundation for these reasons. There is still some way to go in terms of stigma; however, people are becoming more aware of mental illness, action, and available treatments. I realised that one of my greatest mental escapes was walking and decided to do my first charity trek this year to give to a charity so I could give thanks.

Play: Find Your Inner Child

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5 May 2010

Think about the laughter of a child. The infectious pure laughter and smile, of innocence, of now. Enjoying the fullness of the moment. The playful, joyful sound of laughter.

Amongst our daily responsibilities, we can forget our innocence, our inner child. As days pass and weeks pass, we forget. So what can we do to play and bring our inner child into daily living.

What brings you joy? Write a list of people, activities, books, music, movies, and places that bring you joy. From this list, you might even find that your daily work is one of your joys.

When was the last time you did any of the items on your list? With the list in front of you, you can now plan how you can bring these things into your life every day, thereby bringing joy into your day.

I spent a recent afternoon with my nephew. We danced and sung our hearts out to a film we were watching. We laughed so much as we became rock stars. In that moment, there was nothing but happiness. To be and allow yourself to have that joy is a gift, something many of us do not allow ourselves because we are busy and there are other things to do.

What would happen if you laughed more? (I'd love right now to hear all your answers.) I'm sitting here, smiling. Laughter is music.

Play. We had playtime at school. We played with our friends. We played games. We played in teams. We played music. As we grow, do we stop playing? Playtime changes from creative imaginations to creative holiday planning or creative home/gardening DIY. How else do we play?

We have a world full of creatively inspired playtime, and we can find joy in everything we do. Look at your world, and ask how you can play today.

be playful. be joy. be laughter. be love. be life. be happy. belifehappy.

List: What Brings Me Joy

(This page is all yours!)

Love: Finding and Growing

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6 May 2010

Today is about love. Love for yourself. Finding and growing it.

Love is everywhere in our world, and love for ourselves is often something we don't prioritise. We have love for others, and we neglect ourselves. Without love for ourselves, we surely have less to give.

Belief is fuelled by love. Everything comes back to love. Have you asked where this source of love is? When you have asked, you will know the source is you. Love is a journey to the top of the mountain; as we approach it, we believe in ourselves to reach the top, and as we climb it, we are protected and motivated to reach the peak we know we are: love. The work in reaching the top is not easy, and finding ways to care for ourselves requires us to allow ourselves to love: you.

And this is the hardest thing. The ultimate achievement to love is in what we see and feel today, tomorrow, and every day. Each day requires work. Over time, the changes, the results, and the gifts appear. We see out over the mountain, absorbing the beauty of the view.

Finding ways to bring love into our daily lives is a learning process. Believing in love will make a difference and is perhaps the first step. Then there is the wonder of what and where it will take us.

There are many ways we can allow love into our lives, from simple meditative, quiet time to tai chi or other activities and complementary therapies. Anything that gives you joy is giving you time to love yourself.

Love is all encompassing, a pulsing flow of rose petal pink light flowing through your body from head to toe. It is pulsing waves of pink light, slowly filling all of your body, energising, caring, and healing your body. Sit still, and allow this light to surround you. It wraps around you, and you feel as though your worries are drifting away. This is love. Love all encompassing. Love unconditional. You are love. I am love. We are love. Breathe in this beautiful, loving pink light now. Be love.

Believe you are protected, safe, and loved today, tomorrow, and every day.

be you. be love. be life. be happy. belifehappy.

Are You Comfortable in Your Zone?

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10 May 2010

I know (and I'm included) that many of you reading this have a comfort zone. The comfort might be a thing that provides comfort in a place, a person, a job, etc. Jumping outside the comfort zone is a testing time and only to us individually. I've spent the last two weeks out of my comfort zone and proved to myself so many things on different levels across different areas of my life.

Not unusual is the comfort of our own bed, and for me, it is also my sofa (although I don't spend that much time on it – when I do, I grab half an hour, and it is my heaven of comfort!). Other areas of comfort we find are in our general environment, the people we are with, and the conversations we have. After spending the last six months readjusting my life, this recent trip back to the UK has showed me what life was like before and how I would manage it. I did. You really do not get the opportunity to avoid and bury things in your life! They will come back in some form for you to either accept or continue to fight off. I have no more fight! And I found myself further along the path of forgiveness and acceptance. Have you heard these words before? "It's OK. I'm OK with it. It's sorted." Was it? Was it really? Having used the words for years and then during this trip hearing others saying it, I realised there were some things in my own life that still required complete acceptance. How easy it is really to just let go?

Flip this round now! We all can look at a situation that we have buried, and look at our daily lives in words spoken, music, and how we feel physically, and ask what you have to learn from this? When you don't hear the answer, keep going! Giving up will just let the situation come back! The answer is always inside: How much do you want to find the answer?

After acceptance in my personal relationships zone, I was comfortable again! That doesn't mean there are no more zones, though. We all have challenges to our comfort. Are you looking to keep your life inside your zone, or are you seeking ways to expand your zone?

Our internal confidence has a lot to do with how far we will push our own personal zones. Later this year, I am flying to China. I have flown quite often and find being up in the sky a relaxing time. This, however, will be my longest flight, and this takes me out of my home zone. Where once I would dedicate sometime to worry about this, I now understand this will not change the outcome. I am flying to China. Fact. Worry apportioned to this event is simply wasted, so I accept the fact!

Social comfort zones including networking are all together another thing. Many of us find our confidence is tested in terms of meeting new people, speaking in public groups, and even in situations with people we have known for years. Overcoming this comfort zone has the same process as others. Get your spade, and let's start digging! What is it that allows you to feel out of your comfort zone? Why? And what would you do if you did not feel out of your comfort zone?

Step outside of you when you ask these questions. Let your true self speak.

Our comfort zones are a baseline in basic need of security and safety, and that's a positive! Maintaining the zones can require work on our part to protect us from experiencing new things, learning, and growing. This is a choice on our part. We also have the choice to learn and grow and expand our comfort zones.

Do you listen to the same radio station every morning on the way to work? This is an example of a comfort zone. What would happen if you tuned into a different one on the way home from work tonight? This really is the simplest of changes to a comfort zone in your life. We have a choice on how we manage and expand our individual zones.

A comfort zone is a limitation of your world. Work with your comfort zones, and feel your world expand with new views, new experiences, and new choices.

It is your world. be you. be life. be happy.

Give: Understanding How You Can Help

11 May 2010

The challenge ahead of me is approaching, and the reality of the trek is getting closer into my vision. Whilst I have been training since the New Year, I feel the next four months will fly by.

Training takes another new level now as I start using walking poles and increased weight in my rucksack. Determination is the best word I can give you to describe how I feel about this personal walking challenge. And the challenge is not just the physical training to ensure that I am able to complete the task. The challenge has now become so much more: about sharing with you and many others I meet about mental health and how we look after our mind/body balance.

Knowing I am able to reach more people to share the light at the end of the tunnel is my gift to give.

Ten years ago, the attitude in society, in the workplace, and in the world in general was to not discuss stress or depression, let alone use the words *mental illness*. Dementia was perhaps more acceptable as this was a perception of elderly people, so that was okay. Ten years on, and I hear from people with depression or from people supporting others with depression, and it is so wonderful to hear them say that they are not afraid to tell people what they are experiencing and of all the support they are receiving from relatives, friends, and professional medical support.

One lady described her experience as the closest she has been to hell in all her life and that she believed this happened only to other people. This is such a common belief. I believe, as one of the others it happened to in a time of high stigma, I was given the opportunity to turn my world from the darkest depths of being forced underground in a world with no light, to a world years later, standing on top of the highest mountain breathing in the brightest light.

We all have the ability to give a gift of our time, our support, our kindness, and our love.

More and more people are turning on their light to help and give to others, and this is why we are able to openly speak of helping our heroes, some of whom experience posttraumatic stress disorder. Just by understanding we help. Learning and sharing creates awareness, and awareness grows.

We all choose our own way in which we can give to help others. Simply inviting a friend for a cup of tea and a chat can make a difference. If you don't know how to help friends or family members, ask. They will tell you. They might even ask for you to leave them to have some time or ask you to go to the supermarket with them. Some of the things they ask you to do you might feel are insignificant, but to your friends, it will be all the difference from the darkness to knowing and believing they have people who care and are there to help them with the little things.

Give your gift of a smile, and shine your brightness to everyone around you.

Thank you.

be thankful. be kind. be support. be patient. be love. be life. be happy.

Play: Dancing Through The Fields

12 May 2010

Inspired in play today by two dancing butterflies. They danced for what seemed like hours across the top of the long grass, with a bright blue sky as their backdrop. Happy, light and fluttering in front of my eyes, I had to press pause on my walk to notice the playfulness.

Get active and bring play into your day

Dancing is not just for the professionals! Dancing is something you can do on your own at home, with your friends, children or partner. You can join a dance group to learn and meet new people. Dancing doesn't feel natural for everyone, however with so many instruments and artists - we all love music as a vibration of life.

Get creative inspiring your mind

Writing stories, journals, and your thoughts stimulates your mind and creates an outlet of expression, releasing emotions and ideas and opening your mind - boosting your creativity.

Get away and play

Change is as good as a rest. A break can rest your mind from daily routines and inspire with new air, new places, and new faces. Your

break can be whatever you want it to be. A walk around your local woods or park, a weekend break, or a two-week vacation. Allowing yourself to experience a new environment or a break from your daily routine can be just the break you need.

Create your own smiles and play in your day.

be creative. be inspired. be play. be joy. be life. be happy.

Love: You

13 May 2010

In our lifetime, we proclaim to love another and others. How many of us proclaim to love ourselves? And for those astounded by the question, please stay with me here. Discover just how simply you can begin to give love to yourself and feel and see the full experience and benefits loving yourself ignites across your life and throughout your world.

When you feel love, what are those feelings? What do you feel? Where do you feel the feelings of love? What do you see, and how do you see love? What do you hear, and what sounds does love make? What do you taste, and how does love smell? Light up your senses towards love, and awaken your love of *you*.

Loving ourselves is not a headline or often found on a priority list. Why? Love can be referred to as something we give externally to others. It is an exchange of giving and then receiving. Or do we? Many people who experience disease, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem have at some point neglected themselves of love. It is a very easy thing to do (to stop loving who we are), and it is a very easy thing to start loving you again today, tomorrow, every day.

Bringing love into your day and to you is simply awareness and balance. Control, gratitude, thanks, giving, and receiving.

By taking control, we take back the power to drive our focus into what we actually desire in our day-to-day lives. From a simple decision

of I am leaving work an hour earlier than usual to I will apply for the promotion/job today.

Decisions irrelevant of the impact of change, all can create change. Take back the control by taking decisions today, tomorrow, every day. You will find the result of your decision-making gives you more time in your day to love you.

Gratitude for our life and everything in our life is an awareness of ourselves. By reminding ourselves each day what we are thankful for, we acknowledge, learn, accept, and are grateful for. We then move on.

Again, it is another way for us to allow more time into our life. Start with a list of the things you are thankful about yourself:

I am thankful for my health.

I am thankful for my legs so I can walk for charity.

I am thankful for my fingers so I can write.

Your own personal gratitude list will become endless as you become more aware of who you are. Start a list to be thankful for people in your life and other areas of your life. Once you start this list, you will be surprised at what you are thankful for. You can write one of these lists at any time or even to help you relax in the evening, on the way home from work, in the bath or shower, or when you get into bed. Simply say thank you for the events and people you have encountered that day.

So far, you have a list of how you feel; what you see, hear, taste, and smell when you think about love; a list of actionable statements or decisions of simple actions you can start taking; and a list of what and who you are thankful for. What have you achieved in that short time?

Awareness

Awareness of you. You have given yourself time to be aware of who you are. That is love. A simple step to loving you today, tomorrow, and every day.

be love. be life. be happy.

Turnaround

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17 May 2010

Welcome to another amazing week, day, and moment. Do you feel the amazingness right now? Stop and breathe it all in. Just how big is that amazingness right now?

Turn around your day. Last week, in the space of twenty-four hours, events in my life were, let's say, not going the way I expected. The way I wanted. Least of all when I dyed my white clothes an off-brown shade! It was not the best experience. Then I was informed I definitely have no TV connection in my apartment, analogue or digital. Not a major thing: My TV functions well as a feature in the lounge! Then in order to rescue my clothes, I had to bike to the next village. Okay, I began to feel a little fed up. Knowing there was nothing I could do except get my bike out, I headed off up the hill. Ouch. I was test driving a car that morning. A car I had happened to walk by the day before and was the make and model I had been looking for. I walked in (parked my bike!).

As I waited for a lady to come down to the garage to come with me on the test drive, I sat and talked to the owner. We talked about what I do and enjoy doing. He asked, "Do you play golf?"

What I'm trying to explain is that from the disaster of my clothes washing to the uphill battle on my bike, this question presented an opportunity for me, and I saw it. Had I been stressed and upset that my clothes were presently a lovely new shade of off-brown at home in my washing machine, and my personal fitness being a constant

battle for me as I aim to be the best I have ever been (breathe), I would have missed this opportunity. How many opportunities do we miss simply because we woke up in the morning and spilt milk on our shirt? By simply letting go of that moment, we can enjoy every moment fully.

The thing I am learning is when I am not really thinking about anything, my life goes really smoothly. Opportunities fly through my door. It then becomes a question of how to manage this every day.

You can turn around any moment, event, or comment. What just happened? My clothes are an off-brown (some were new, if this can add to my moment of despair). What can you do to correct it? Bike to the shop, and buy a corrective washing powder. How do you feel now? Okay. Being aware of the questions and process of learn, accept, resolve, leave, and move on, I was able to do just that. Pretty much any part of my day that throws me a good one, I stop for a minute, think of the event, process it, and move on.

In the last six days, I have been sent many experiences, people, and events to test my process. Going on how I would have reacted before, this new way is much less time-consuming, so I get to enjoy my day today, tomorrow, and every day.

Before you react, think about what has just happened. Turn around events and see the opportunities fly through your door.

be positive. be proactive. be acceptance. be gratitude. be life. be happy.

P.S. My clothes are white again! And from the conversation with the car sales man, I was connected with the owner of a local golfing range who kindly allowed me to host a fundraising event for the Mental Health Foundation.

Give: A Helping Hand

18 May 2010

Finding some days when we feel nothing is going our way, from the morning through to the end of the day, feels like rubbish. The next day is the same. Whilst we share a little laugh now and again, in a month's time, we wonder when the last time we laughed was. You see your friends less often, opting for sleeping or simply doing nothing. As the weeks pass, you start to realise you don't even want to answer your text messages, let alone a phone call. For now and this minute, just going to work and doing the basic errands is enough. Dinner is ready, and today, you watch yourself push your food around your plate, maybe one mouthful, because you simply can't be bothered to eat. Everything takes time. Do I really need to wash my hair? More time. One day and the next is a daze. A numb daze.

Then there it is right in front of you. Yes, you in the mirror. That is you in the mirror, except you don't see you. You see someone else. Suddenly, you are no longer you. You are trapped inside a mind and body that is no longer communicating. Scared. Who on earth will understand? Have I gone mad? Am I having one of those breakdowns people talk about? Goodness, I feel like I haven't eaten in months. How did I not eat? I can't speak. Even this is too much to do.

The day when help is realised is the day the tears fall, and the numbness alters to allow an emptiness of you. You know you are empty, and you know you want help.

The above is my account and experience of depression. Everyone will have their own individual experience, and that is one in four of us who will be affected by mental illness at some point in our life. Once, we heard of someone with depression months or years ago, and now, it is common to hear of someone you know who is currently experiencing stress, anxiety, or being treated for depression. For those who have been the other three and have not experienced this, it is similar to being trapped in a hole that I can only liken to the early 1980's children's programme *Jamie and the Magic Torch* with his slide (except here there is no torch), spiralling down, and it can take months and months to realise you are ill. Believing the aches and pains are from something else, the frequent colds are hay fever or maybe the air conditioning system at work. Everything is just an off day until it just becomes a blur.

Spotting the signs are difficult as we are all individuals. Signs of stress and anxiety are most common now, and people are more likely to talk about it. Getting help and asking for help; we all still have a long way to go.

Offering a helping hand is a way for you to give. As you give your help, your friend, family member, or colleague will acknowledge and receive your kindness. This starts a process. Once people receive, after feeling totally isolated, they know there is help. As they ask more, you give them more strength. With more strength, their confidence grows. As you give more confidence, they start to return to everyday errands. As you give them living, they will give you love and joy.

You can choose to give support and your kindness daily. In return, you will receive joy daily. Think about your friends and your family. Is there someone who has asked for your help but maybe you didn't have time? Allow yourself time to make a drink and pick up the

telephone. Call them. Write them an email. Get out and visit them. Giving yourself time to help others gives help to you.

There will be times when you offer help, and it is refused; this is not because your help is not good enough. It is simply that the friend is not ready for help yet. Always be available to help others when they are ready for it. We all find people, the right people, to help us when we are ready. Be patient, and they appear, sometimes miraculously. They are just the right person, at the right time, saying the right thing, and giving the right help.

Your hand waves hello and goodbye, it wipes away tears, it soothes pain, it protects you and your loved ones, it makes things, and it moves things. Your hands are amazing. Give a helping hand today.

belifehappy.

Play: Holiday Vision Board Party with Survival Tips

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19 May 2010

The smell of warm air, the gentle touch of the warm air breeze tickling your skin – splash! Laughter. Where are you?

We work hard, and there is always time to play! However, why did holidays get so stressful? Is there a way to enjoy the whole process of booking, preparing, and being away on any kind of escape?

First of all, a definition of a holiday (because we really do have different views of what a holiday is):

noun 1: an extended period of recreation, especially away from home. 2: a day of festivity or recreation when no work is done.³

(Recreation is an enjoyable leisure activity.)

A great way to get your friends and family involved in planning a holiday is creating your very own holiday vision board. Why not? We talk about them for our lives; why not for a holiday? The fun starts here. Invite everyone who is going on the trip to your home, and ask everyone to bring magazines, newspapers, and holiday brochures. Find a large cardboard box or ask at your local supermarket (about

³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "holiday"

A2), some A4 card, too, sticky glue, blu-tack, sellotape and scissors. Pop on some happy holiday music, and get creating!

Focused

Is there a budget? Agree on your budget first to make the creativity realistic. Then get started by asking everyone to make a small board for themselves. What is their holiday choice? Places, activities, food, drink, entertainment, and climate. After half an hour, everyone should have their personal holiday.

Fun

See from each person's board what similarities you have on destinations, climate, and activities, and start to create your group holiday vision board. Let's go!

Faith

By creating your holiday together in this way, everyone will enjoy it. You all created it!

I thought it would also be helpful to share with you some tips on how to create your holiday (playtime) without the stress to help you have a belifehappy holiday.

Your destination

You always have a choice on the type of holiday, who it is with, and how much: Get your vision board!

Packing

Roll your clothes in your baggage for less creasing (much easier to unpack, too!).

Journey

Plan your journey in advance. Allow yourself time and build some stops in if required.

Entertainment

Plan entertainment for you and everyone else traveling. Ask what everyone wants to do.

By air?

If traveling by air, take your time at the airport. Accept that there will be a queue at the check-in desk. Enjoy the queue!

Managing delays

Are you delayed or stuck in a jam? Play the “How many happy words do I know” game? Sounds a bit happy? It will have you all happy!

People

It's your break, and yet, there are other passengers on your journey. That's okay. Be respectful of their space, and if they are not of yours, it is an experience they are creating. You enjoy your experience.

You've arrived

On arrival at your destination, smile. You have arrived on your break!

Enjoy!

Each day, ask yourself and the people traveling with you what you would all like to do in your day. You are not responsible for other people's happiness. You are able to give people a choice, and you also have a choice. Listen, decide, and then enjoy!

Returning home with a smile

Repeat these steps on the return!

Wishing you belifehappy holidays.

Love: Focused Energy, Focused Needs

20 May 2010

Focusing our energy towards what we are passionate about is love. Where is your energy focused, and how does it make you feel? Our lives can be packaged into key areas of health and fitness, social, relationships, career, financial and well-being. And whilst we have these compartments, how often do we review how we actually feel about them? And how would we know when we looked? We might just find the answer we were looking for.

The only limits we have are the limits we place on ourselves. Is that love? We have basic (physiological) needs as Abraham Maslow pointed in his Hierarchy of Needs (from the bottom to top):

Physiological

Breathing, food, water, reproduction, sleep, homeostasis (balance), excretion

Safety

Security of body (self), employment, resources, morality, the family, health, property

Love and Belonging

Friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Esteem

Self-esteem, confidence, achievement, respect for others, respect by others

Self-actualization

Morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, acceptance of facts

Our basic needs are required to be in balance in order for us to have security, and with security in our life, we can have love. With love, we have confidence, and with confidence, we can solve problems and be creative, nonjudgmental, and accepting.

Another way to look at this is our everyday lives. Where is your energy focused, and how do you feel? When we are focused on something that we are not in alignment with, some of our basic physiological needs may be neglected a little (for instance, not drinking enough fluid and missing meals). The security in some areas of your life may also feel less as this focus draws your energy away from these needs. Love through friendships, family, and relationships may also be affected. You start to lose respect for others and yourself, and self actualisation seems a million miles away. So let's go back to the bottom to your physiological needs.

We are so complex and yet so simple to rebalance through our basic needs. Tiredness (insomnia, aches and pains, and joint stiffness) to stomach discomfort will more often than not be traced back to one

or more of your basic needs. Call it homeostasis, balance, inner balance, holistic balance, or basic needs – it is one of the same.

We do not have to wait for someone to love us before we are able to love ourselves as it might appear in stage three of Maslow's hierarchy. In fact, being in love with yourself (especially our single friends) draws love to you. Look at it another way. When you are able to maintain balance in yourself, you feel, look and sound amazing. You will bounce through hallways, train stations, buses, and out with your friends. When you focus your energy on what you really are passionate about, you are in alignment. In balance. You are in love with yourself, because you are love. How awesome!

With so many areas and needs to fulfil in our life, there are times when focusing on one area can leave you feeling a little depleted in another. The fear creeps up inside you, and you remain with a small internal battle on your hands. Refocus now. That's right: Get your lens, and start to turn. As we change our thoughts and our focus, we sometimes leave parts of us behind. By actually refocusing, you will catch up and be one. In balance.

There are many holistic treatments that support you through these refocussing/rebalancing times, such as reiki, holistic massage, reflexology, acupressure, shiatsu, and other treatments, and therapy including yoga that work within our energy meridians. You can also find that a simple walk will help your mind and body balance. All of these things help us release the energy we no longer wish to hold onto. The energy that is pulling us back. Breathe out, and let go of the energy left behind that is still within, and breathe in your focused energy. Where you are and want to be and do and have. Allow through love time to rebalance, and give love to yourself to continue to give your love to others.

be focused. be balance. be releasing. be love. belifehappy.

In the Flow

24 May 2010

I've spent a few days in the last week walking and was lucky enough to be invited to a small village in the hills on Saturday. After a wonderful drive there, (the views as we went higher were simply amazing and a Cyprus not many get to appreciate), we arrived at our destination, a cafe. As I sat down, I instantly felt relaxed. This was life. Simple. We had a drink, and it turned colder, and we moved inside whilst our food was being cooked. Accompanied by a flat screen on the wall with local TV, the rest of the room was simple. The television programmes were a luxury to me. What I realised in that moment was the peace, tranquillity, and simplicity was around me and within me. The birds flew above our heads into their nest and out again, and five hours later, after superb food, we drove back down to the coast before sunset.

As I walked back from the shops collecting my weekend newspapers, I looked around each corner, still learning my way around this old part of the village where I now live. (I just typed *love* before I typed *live!*). I remembered the peach-coloured house, and as I turned, I looked again, seeing two rows of beautiful sunflowers upright. They even looked like they were greeting me and smiling. I smiled and walked along the next road, and all I could see was the beautiful green trees lining the road and the stunningly bright flowers waving me through and down the road ahead. For that moment, I was the road, the trees, the flowers, and the breeze. It was all flowing through me.

I looked around again and thought back to the day in the hills. For these moments, I was in the flow. The flow of life. My life. And now having fully experienced that flow and the moment in complete consciousness, I feel more alive than ever before.

I am what is around me. I am the warm breeze, the peace, the calmness, the beauty, and brightness of nature. I am simplicity and tranquillity. I am my own road to happiness today, tomorrow, and every day.

I've found myself with this new experience reviewing the last five months. We sometimes forget or miss our achievements and the goals we set out at the beginning of the year, and I realised with some peace around me that I could do just that. I'm ticking off things, that's for sure, as I moved house, I officially completed my reiki master certification, and I have settled into my new life. So far, so good! The next six months hold for me to walk on the Great Wall of China for the Mental Health Foundation and for me to step into my light and stand in my love.

The review has been worth the personal time investment. I have learnt a lot that I have been able to release and let go and to finally realise through my own fear that I have been holding back a huge personal opportunity. I am now feeling so much better, both physically and mentally, as I am one again with my focus completely aligned with me. Like holding three pieces of ribbon together at the top and smoothing them down together to the bottom. In alignment, becoming one piece of ribbon.

To be in the flow, in alignment, and in balance helps each of us review, appreciate, be grateful, and move onwards brighter and happier. The stream runs into the river, and the river joins the sea. All flowing.

Loving the flow and the learning, and wishing you all a very awesomely fabulously flowing day.

Give: Without Reason

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25 May 2010

What will you do today that will change a moment in someone else's day? Will you offer your seat to someone travelling on the tube or the bus? Will you offer to help someone with shopping bags? Will you help a stranger who has fallen in the street? (We will get back to this one!)

Will you make your colleague a cup of tea this morning? Or help them with a project? Will you listen to a friend who has a problem today? Will you spend time playing with your child? Will you visit a family member just for a chat?

There are many, many actions you can choose from today to give to a stranger or colleague, friend, or family member. Giving is help without expecting anything in return. Your help becomes an act of kindness, which with the universal laws, will be returned to you. This is not to say the kindness is to be expected back from the person you helped. It is just that your act of kindness will be repaid when you need it, maybe from someone you have not even met yet.

How would you respond when you see a stranger in distress in a public place? Do you walk on by? Call for help? Go over and offer your help? According to a book I am reading at the moment (*59 Seconds: Think a Little, Change a Lot* by Professor Richard Wiseman), acts of kindness are few in these situations. Why? When there are a large number of people whose attention at this point is drawn to the incident, in most circumstances, people will watch

and wait to see what other observers are doing. No action, and no responsibility. When there are only one or two observers, you are more likely to be helped. So where does this leave you when you need help, and there are lots of observers? It is recommended that you look for a friendly face, one you can connect with and explain to (if you can) what help you need. That person will then act (in a sense, you passed the responsibility needed in order to for an individual to act). Look for the friendly face.

So giving isn't a reciprocal action between the same giver and receiver, and when we get caught in the trap of this is what we think, we can become disappointed that a friend or colleague or family member didn't help when we helped them. Giving is without response.

You receive in your life because you give. Giving in this way opens more opportunities for happiness and balance. After helping someone, we feel good unless you are helping only because you feel you have to.

How do you feel about your giving? Do you feel you give too much? Are not receiving? Some of us are so happy giving that we often forget to ask for help, or we refuse help that would in return allows us to accept and receive. By blocking your receiving, we often become upset that we never receive help. In these situations, ask yourself whether you asked for help and if you asked the people who can help you.

Our expectations are often misled when we do not understand how to give. Give openly and allow yourself to receive, remembering that there are people we might not even know yet who will come into our lives to help us when we need it. You know that they were just the right person. Feel and show gratitude for all you receive to complete your balance.

Be the friendly face in the crowd, and step in to help a stranger. Be allowing of yourself to receive others' giving and be grateful for what you receive. You will find more daily happiness from giving with no expectation. The next time you help someone, think for one second afterwards about how you feel.

Every little gesture of your kindness helps another.

be kind. be acceptance. be grateful. be love. be life. be happy.

Love: Your Stage

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27 May 2010

Speaking of love is more than just a word. Love has a power that some connect to as a high vibration of energy. As everything moves and everything changes, there are different levels of energy. The lower the vibration, the denser the object is. Love is a pure form of energy that equates in numerology to the number nine (eight plus one equals nine where the *belifehappy* dream started), which is also a high vibrational number, and for some, it is referred to as a spiritual enlightenment.

So love of yourself really does come from within. You are your own source of love. Each of us has a choice to speak to ourselves and to work with our love. Share our love, and receive others' love.

Love is the abundant light. It is the stage spot light within which you stand. The light moves with you as you move around the stage; acting your life; choosing the role you wish to play each day, each hour, each minute. Choosing the script you wish to read from. The light never leaves you; it is constantly moving with you.

Your light fades and brightens according to your control. You have the power of love to control the light. Your mind and body work with love. Love fuels the mind and body, and out of balance, the light will become dim. When you are in harmony, the light shines brightly, emanating your inner light. Your love. That's when other people comment and say, "You look really great today, have you done something different?" You know you have dressed much the same; you just added more light (and love!).

We say we are looking dull when we are ill or unhappy, and this is in reference to your light. The secret is to learn how to maintain your energy and your brightness on stage. We all have a dimmer switch we can flick; however, it is about how you manage to get the brightness back.

To live life as in dark, light, dark, light, dark, light creates unrest in our mind and body and becomes tiring (an everlasting disco). To live in darkness is to have no love. To live with brightness, accepting a few dimmer days is living with love and accepting your control over your light. Finding a stage light you can work with and feel comfortable with is the key. It's your show!

Whilst on stage, acting your life, you have all the props and different stage set screens covering the places, activities, and people you love. You choose these props and sets. Your director allows you to choose. Would you choose something you don't enjoy to join you on your stage? No? Let your stage light guide you now to what props and stage sets you have right now. How do you feel when you look at them? For the props and sets you no longer feel fit in to this act and scene, thank them and work with your director to let them go. As the play continues, new props and new sets will emerge for you to choose.

You've created your stage for today. Your props, your sets, your script, and the brightness of your stage light. You are the director. You call the shots. Be the star of your show today, tomorrow, and every day.

Control your light, and let it guide you effortlessly with your love around your stage.

be love. be life. be happy.

Learning Through The Shift

31 May 2010

To say this is a time of change is understating. Change is constant; sometimes we notice it and feel it, other times we don't. Right now I'm feeling it!.

What I've found myself doing over the last few days is asking new questions, and a new perspective is developing. A new window in which to look out of. To go back to what is around us, what we have created is interesting for me right now, relating to Buddha's principle of what we think, we become.

So this is what I have been thinking. What thoughts have I been thinking, and how have I created what is around me? What do I want to change to progress my goals? Other situations through conversations or newspaper and magazine articles have led me to discussions about fear in present situations and personal desires for the future. We all have situations of fear; it is the action we take that is important.

It is interesting to read and discuss how people feel towards happiness and what stops people from allowing themselves to live it. It is also interesting because it is a reflection of me and the world I am creating. I'm still learning on that level!

The conversations I feel deeply involved in as I listen to how people are feeling trapped into their lives and understanding their reasons, and it is only a lack of action that holds them back. It is similar to

walking yourself into a remote prison cell, locking the door, and throwing the key outside. Why would you do that? Do you really think someone is going to save you?

When the excuses start, others follow until we have convinced ourselves it wasn't for us or our time. Later, we look back and ask ourselves why we didn't do those things. The only person stopping you is you. You just threw the keys to your prison cell out the window! What are you going to do now?

In creating our reality and our desires, included in the thoughts is a safety net. It is invisible to us. The challenge is to jump and trust, because when you fully believe in yourself, you will take a leap and let go of the 'how' and start to allow everything you have been focusing on to happen. The purpose of life is not to get stitched up by someone or something. Only you can do that.

So when I go back to the articles on happiness, I go back to thinking of the days when I created belifehappy back in early 2008. A dream it was, and why belifehappy? These articles are now talking about happiness being likened to a shopping trip: short-term fixes, and that joy is longer lasting as joy is love. Being happy and extending our lifetime as long as we do a list of things, which is the writer's perception of information received. I was surrounded at the time in an environment where all I could see being offered were short term fixes for happiness and all I wanted to know was how could I be happy each day for my lifetime? I'd wasted enough, as far as I was concerned, and now I was ready to start living! I just wanted to live happy and be life happy. Not long after, I found love: the love within. There are so many on a journey, including some of you guys, searching for something. Happiness in my eyes comes only from being honest with yourself. It really doesn't matter what other people want for you or think they want for you. You know inside what will allow you to be happy, whether it is a new career, a new hobby, a new

relationship, a new location, and you have control. (What I didn't tell you was when you locked yourself in the remote prison cell, there is a spare key inside your cell. You'll see it when you are ready to see it!)

The world is your world today, tomorrow, and every day. This is your lifetime of happiness, through your choices, acceptance, and love. You create how you balance your mind and body, how you fuel your machine, and what thoughts you have. No one else is responsible, and if you let others make the choices for you, then that was your choice.

A lifetime of happiness involves giving, playing, loving, and learning. belifehappy.

What choices will you make today to create a day filled with happiness?

Give: Effortlessly

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1 June 2010

Without effort, everything appears to be much easier. So why do we often feel things are such an effort? Did we make them an effort? I read an article this week about giving in terms of continuing to give as one of the ways to happiness. This is similar to when we spoke about giving unconditionally.

This is my first trek and first solo fundraising effort, and I am learning so much. At first, I thought of the training as just getting fitter and giving me an edge to ensure I had the endurance for five solid days of walking. Now each time I walk, I think about the time I am giving to me and others, and with each conversation, I am giving myself the opportunity to speak the truth about people's fears of these two words together (mental health) and for people to have the opportunity to support this great charity.

I have the opportunity to give my time of anywhere around ten hours of walking a week. I give my time to write about my experiences of depression and about how life, in balance of mind and body, has all the possibilities of creating a lifetime of happiness through little changes every day. This includes a smile, a laugh, helping your neighbour, listening to what words you use and replacing them with words of encouragement and positivity, including play and relaxation time in your day, and learning to tune into your love.

I chose to live like this. Simple. I accepted the changes, and this brought new people and places around me. I accepted to earn less

money whilst I made changes, and I accepted this way of living, a way that allowed me to give effortlessly. It was a life I really wanted, and I let go of opportunities that contradicted this.

In return, I have received the best health. My body is relaxed, and my mind takes mini-breaks. Life is not a constant smile; however, it can be constant love in your heart, and this love creates all the effortless giving you have to offer.

Each of us is an individual with our own priorities on our own personal journey. I've chosen to share parts of my journey with you, and this is not to say the same is right for you, (but it is right for me, right now). The lesson is about our alignment with internal love. When we act out and live through our hearts, our mental and physical bodies are aligned, which gives us health.

One of my priorities after I came back to being Emma after an encounter with depression, (I wanted to write *my encounter*; however, I removed *my* because that creates ownership of the depression, and I don't own it) was to stand on a table in an office where I knew of other people, colleagues who were going through the same thing or living with anxiety attacks and the physical effects of stress, and shout out that there was nothing to be ashamed of and to share my experiences and of the help and support I received from friends (who I did not know where friends.) Instead, I'm going to stand on the Great Wall of China and shout it from there!

One of the biggest disappointments and misunderstandings many people have of when they have helped others, is when they need support for themselves, and they find their 'friends' do not help. This is important for us to learn and accept it is not that our friends have stopped loving us. Instead look at it as there are other people who we might not have met before who can help us with what we are going

through. Allow yourself always to accept new friendship, as this is a gift to you; with play, love and learning.

Remember as you stand on your stage with your stage light bright above you that there are many other dancing lights, and these are your friends. Some shine brighter right now, and as the scene develops, the lights change and the dance continues.

Enjoy giving effortlessly from your heart with love, allowing you to grow your love of your life today, tomorrow, and every day.

be giving. be grateful. be accepting. be learning. be loving. be life.
be happy. belifehappy.

Play: And Capture

2 June 2010

We enter this world with all forms of play around us, and in fact, most of the play is learning. As we progress through our years, play continues with learning and developing the beliefs and values we associate with areas in our lives. As we start working and take on daily responsibilities, play becomes less, and we learn less. At times, we feel less playful.

When we allow the time to play, we bring back the power of learning into our lives for that experience. The learning helps us grow individually, helps maintain our balance in mind and body, and allows us happiness and joy.

Play is anything that brings joy, and most of all, this describes capturing and recording moments of happiness. Photography is something everyone has access to. It is how we perceive our surroundings. We have the ability to learn through our images. What and why a photograph was captured can help us understand and see what our world looks like in the very moment the photograph was taken.

Whether you capture the bright colours of the flowers in your garden, people, buildings while walking, or happy times with family and friends, the smiles, vibrancy, and feelings of what you see will show you how you perceive the object you are capturing.

Photography is art. It is something you can learn and master with different techniques. It allows challenges of mental skill, patience, creativity, and flexibility. What do you want this image to look like? What would happen if you changed your focus? Adjusted your angle? Perhaps moved closer to the subject? What would happen if you added more light? How would the photograph feel in black and white? These questions are similar to what we can ask ourselves daily when we look around us. Do you see the vibrancy of the green of the trees? The brightness and warmth from flowers in your garden?

You have the same control on the result of your photography as you do in your life. To make changes to the image, close your eyes and create the image. Feel, touch, hear, and taste it, and when you open your eyes, what do you see?

Photography creates a stillness of the mind through focus on an object or moment. This stillness allows the mind and body to relax and be in the present moment, enjoying and playing.

Let's turn up the brightness in your day and play today, tomorrow, and every day. belifehappy.

Love: Relationships Versus You

3 June 2010

Butterflies carry on their wings eternal love for you today, tomorrow, and every day.

After recently watching the first *Sex and the City* movie, I was drawn to how when Carrie interviews candidates to be her personal assistant, it is Jennifer Hudson's character's answer of moving to the Big Apple to find love that catches Carrie's attention. My ears perked up, and I immediately thought of how different love was in a relationship to that of love for yourself. The sequel is out, and I've not yet seen it, so I don't have any answers from the film. I do, however, have some questions about this! So here we go on relationships versus love.

Relationships: The search is on

When we decide we want to meet a partner, we are tuned into this frequency. We often get a little disappointed when it doesn't quite turn out the way we'd expect, though. "Confident, feeling good," says the angel on your left shoulder, and in your right ear you hear yourself say, "I really want to meet someone because I don't want to be on my own anymore."

Meeting the one (you might have already!)

You meet, and you're in love, your world spins. All you see is love in everything. The flutter of your energy mixing leaves you feeling amazing, like you are dancing on air. For each moment, you are special, and you are loved.

Time goes by

The sparkles and pizzazz calm down, and daily life returns. You start to notice the grey clouds on the way to work, and the traffic queue once again irritates you. You feel like you are missing something and yet don't know. All these emotions go home with you, inside you, and now and again you erupt with a few words. You feel better for the release.

When it comes to an end (as some love stories go)

Torn and broken: That's your heart. You feel ill, and the light has darkened. You feel alone and lonely. After the hurt, you begin to question why this happened to you. How will you ever find the right one?

Love: The search is on

You asked the question why and waited and waited and waited patiently, and the answers started to come. With each answer you were given, you started to question more. Eventually, a different feeling starts to emerge about you and your world.

Meeting the one (well, it's all individual)

Meeting with your love, your pure source of energy, is the greatest mind-blowing experience. It's unexplainable to others, a feeling of immense pure and unconditional love. A release and acceptance of all you are and all you are part of. For that moment and future moments, love becomes the greatest friend, greatest inspiration, greatest creativity, and greatest love.

Time goes by

After the learning of this beautiful source of energy is reached, daily life continues, except you become more aware of daily life and how you play a role in your day. How you direct your day. You remember the ultimate feeling of love and are able to make choices you once procrastinated about. You continue to learn each day from everything and everyone around you. You start your day welcoming love and end it with gratitude for the love in your day. You know you are not alone, and feeling lonely is an emotion you have replaced with your complete acceptance and love of yourself.

When it comes to an end (as some love stories do)

When you find this love, it is unconditional and eternal. You have this love for your lifetime. You can stop loving yourself at any time through choice. Why would you? When you love you, your world loves you.

So what is there to learn about relationships versus love? Relationships can leave us, and while we had the feelings of love, these have an opposite of emptiness and loss, which we ultimately feel when we say goodbye to someone we love. With love from our

own source, our dependency on love is already fulfilled and therefore removes the desperate feeling of needing to be in love.

Falling in love with ourselves is the searching and meeting who we really are and being truthful with what we believe and feel is our true purpose. With this, we begin to make decisions for ourselves that match our beliefs and feelings. All of our cells sing, sing, sing loudly of love and joy.

How to find someone who has found love

It's the same as when you see one of your friends who is in a new relationship. You see the sparkles of light in their eyes. They walk like they are secretly dancing (on air) and smile. These are just for starters. It is not disappointing, however, to meet someone who has found love to not smile because some days are learning days!

Find, give, play, love, and learn in love. Whether you prefer to be in love in a relationship or in love with yourself and single or in a relationship is your choice. Love is your gift which you allow for yourself. Stay open to love, and let its frequency flow through you today, tomorrow, and every day.

be love. be life. be happy.

Release Your Entertainer

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7 June 2010

The last seventy-two hours have had me spinning around, from seeing the Pope in Cyprus when he visited Paphos, to reclaiming my youth at a club night and also meeting lots of new and interesting people. Only last Thursday, I was feeling a little lost. Being blessed with some very inspirational friends, one reminded me to focus the day on abundance. I did: Abundance in all areas of my life, and the following days transformed with joyful emotions and people.

All individuals who place themselves in the public realm (yes, even you with your Facebook profile) is entertaining an audience in some way, and this is what transpired for me this weekend. Whilst my visit to see the Pope was one of historical value rather than of religion, I had still unconsciously set a level of expectation of actually seeing him. Whether it was a spiritual expectation as we all believe, I am not sure. My body, however, spoke for me in taking my hand, which I realised minutes later had been held against my stomach and my solar plexus, and I felt sick. Asking myself why this experience would create a feeling of nausea, I came to the conclusion that it was emotional disappointment of not being able to hear him properly as I was quite far back. My level of expectation hadn't been met. There are several explanations of the solar plexus chakra, and my simple translation is of one of our body's main power houses of emotion and intuition. Personally, I'm not clear on why I felt this on seeing the Pope, and I imagine it will come to light when I'm ready to understand.

I moved from the feeling of nausea to complete opposite emotions created by another entertainer, this time in the form of a DJ. The club scene is not somewhere you would be likely to find me anymore. I still love dancing, and this was no exception! This DJ was creating a room full of happiness: What an awesome gift! This was the first time I had ever thought of a DJ in this way. Before I figured DJs just played and mixed records, right? Now there was a whole experience, feelings and emotions that were being created by this one person.

These two events and polar-opposite individuals sparked in my mind about how we are each entertainers within our universe and to our audience. This can be our audience at home with our family, at work with our colleagues, or with friends socially. The questions that naturally follow are:

How do you create and entertain in your day?

What atmosphere and emotions do you project outwardly into your universe?

It starts within us as the creation, so on reflection what I was feeling inside about the events I attended was first disappointment of not receiving my full experience, and then secondly complete happiness, with feelings of joyful expression to be able to be in the moment of music and dance. My experiences of each event will also be very different from others who attended. That is the true uniqueness of who we are in that we create our experience. What could I have done to improve my first experience? I could have researched and found out how I got a pass to stand closer. That's really how simple it is.

From enjoying the experiences of the entertainers in our worlds, remember you are an entertainer, too. What experience do you

want to create for your audience today, tomorrow, and every day?
Ask what action, if any, you need to make to create the brightest
experience? Stand forward, take control, and turn up the brightness
in your universe!

Give: Thanks

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8 June 2010

Attitude of gratitude. Three words can change your day today, tomorrow, and every day. It's simple and frequently forgotten how the act of giving thanks throughout our day can create a happier you.

We can be a little shortsighted in our gratitude and be thankful for only significant things in our life. This is where extending our vision is often helpful. We close our eyes and are still, and when we open our eyes, we see so much more. We have so much more to be thankful for!

Some families give thanks for their food on the table, I remember doing this as a child. Now life is much more demanding, and while I give thanks for my day, I no longer give thanks before I eat. Dinner for one at home has become, at times, simply a necessary function.

The basis of the attitude of gratitude is that we practice like everything on this journey. What we do today will change tomorrow, and when you stop, so do the changes. It is an ongoing daily progress of being thankful.

When was the last time you sat and wrote a list of what you are thankful in your life? And secondly, why would you? It's really not something we would place on the top of our daily priority list. To give yourself five minutes to write this list while on your coffee break, whilst watching TV, or before you go to bed, you not only give thanks

for your life, but you also give acceptance and release what you are thankful for.

As we hold on to things, we become cluttered, except we're not really talking about material clutter here. Rather, it's more emotional clutter. Clutter creates blockages, similar to a traffic jam on a highway, and we all know a traffic jam is not great. How does it make you feel? A little anxious and angry maybe? And with each bit of clutter, you create more of these negative emotions, leading to a general unhappiness.

Can being thankful and adopting this attitude of gratitude really make a difference? It really does by simplifying what is in your life in the present moment. It also helps you identify very quickly what you have in your life that perhaps you are not thankful for. That being the case, you can ask yourself why it is in your life. Your list can be endless, or you can create a focused list on key areas of your life and all the things you are thankful for in that specific area. Again, it's a great way to review and declutter!

Your list is your list, because it represents what is in your world and what you are thankful for. Whilst washing up, I realised I was thankful for the day I had experienced so far. From that, I realised I was thankful for the great network of people in my life, and by being thankful, I was accepting these experiences.

I am receiving, and I am grateful to receive. I am now in control of these experiences, and my direction of thought will direct the outcomes.

(What a responsibility we have to ourselves!)

The attitude of gratitude allows free-flowing experiences in your life, moment by moment. Saying yes, accepting the experience, and

being thankful for the experience continues the flow through you. I can hear someone asking, “That’s OK, however, how am I going to be thankful for being stuck in a traffic jam and being late for an appointment?” When you are in the traffic jam, ask how can you change the situation? Unless there is a detour, the main thing you can do is call ahead (hands-free, of course) of your appointment. Your courtesy will be thanked, and the rest of your day will continue in the flow. You will not add to your emotional clutter, which in turn keeps you calmer.

Start now, and let your attitude of gratitude flow freely today, tomorrow, and every day.

Play: Discover Your ZING (Zone. In. Now. Go!)

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9 June 2010

Joy is an unconditional emotion, something that fills us with happiness, and whilst at times we experience this emotion for only a brief moment, by discovering and experiencing new activities of play in our day, we can create more of these brief moments of unconditional joy.

These emotions are amazing for us in mind, body, and spirit. These brief moments will have you dancing, singing, smiling, laughing, and experiencing inner peace and love of pure unconditional beauty. This will have every cell beaming light! Imagine your body right now with lots of lines (arteries and veins) that are now bright white light pulsing upwards through your entire body, racing with joy and love and exploding through the top of your head, the palms of your hands, and the soles of your feet. You become your light, a stunning, awesome, shining beacon of joy. Do you feel it? Are you seeing it right now? ZING! (zone. in. now. go!)

What will we do to create the ZING? Let's look at the zone. What creates a zone? It's a place and space in time which you have created, that leads to now. Where do you go when you are in your zone? You will find your now, and within your now, you can go! Go and create, be you, be alive, be ZING, and believehappy!

Discovering your zone is not always as easy as it first sounds, although it will be when you find it. We all try different activities for a brief time, and we give up simply because we tried. To find your Zone, the first thing you must do is to stop trying and start experiencing! That means to remove your limits. You do not have to go to the gym or do one or two forms of activity. What would happen if you experienced something new, like a different activity? Does this sound crazy?

If you always go to the gym, you will only experience the zone you create in the gym. If you were to go to the gym and then go for a walk, you would start to experience another zone. These are similar regular activities. To create more ZING in your day, there are other things you can do, be and have; maybe just once to simply have the experience. Do you and a friend, partner, or family member have different play activities, such as:

Mum is a photographer, and son mountain bikes?

Husband plays golf, and wife swims and does spinning classes?

Friend goes hiking, and another friend goes to the theatre?

Dad listens to classical music, and daughter goes salsa dancing?

These are random suggestions and all potentially realistic. Why not find out now about experiencing someone else's ZING experience? Say yes to a new ZING! Discover a new zone, get in the now, and enjoy the flow of zing! Say yes this time, and next time in your play time, you can choose what you would like to do to discover your zone. Outdoor activities including walking, cycling, and golf; learning an art, like painting or photography; relaxation, through meditation and yoga and holistic therapy; and visiting new places with new scenery and beauty to capture and music to inspire or learn a new dance are all possibilities. Life presents us with many ZINGs, and we have the choice of how many brief moments of ZING we want to experience. I'm not suggesting living in a constant state of ZING! Rather, just to

allow yourself to discover ways to have more experiences than just a few brief moments for our mind, body, and spirit to light up our worlds and shine brightly. ZING!

be ZING. be joy. be life. be happy. belifehappy.

Love: Free-flowing

10 June 2010

Our ideal is to be a free-flowing highway traveling north and south, the outward journey breathing in the new and the return journey collecting waste materials, recycling, and exhaling the old. Our mind and body work together, and what we leave behind physically affects the mind. What we hold on to mentally affects the body. To achieve the ideal free-flowing highway, we can do simple things to release physical waste and look at new techniques for emotional release. Everything to help restore and maintain balance today, tomorrow, and every day.

Physically, part of our job is to release the waste materials to prevent a build-up traffic jam, and this is where drinking water and moderate exercise (from walking the dog, walking to the shops, and taking the stairs not the lift) helps in working the systems in our bodies to release the toxins. (Note the use of the word *toxins*; maybe you want to help start removing them!)

Staying with our physiology, breathing also helps our bodies release waste materials. Often, small changes in our breathing and posture will improve our mind and body. When we are running around every day, we will find our breathing is shallower and more frequent, taking in oxygen to fuel our fast-paced life. For those of us who sit during the day, if our posture is out of alignment, the air we breathe in and exhale is not as free-flowing. Therefore, it is not as effective, whereas this technique below will help you improve your breathing at the start and end of your day.

Exercise

Sit on a chair with your back straight and head high. Place your left hand over your heart and your right hand over your stomach, and close your eyes. As you breathe in, notice the movement of your stomach. Now take a deep breath in, and exhale feeling as though you are flushing your body with new light. Hold it, and now exhale slowly and intentionally. Release your breath out there, and release everything you want to let go of. Exhale until it has all left you, breathe in, and repeat up to five times. On your last breath, take your hands away from your body and shake them at your sides. As you exhale, slowly open your eyes and then return to your regular breathing. Look around the room, and when you are wide awake, you are ready to go.

This type of exercise can be done anywhere. When you are feeling under pressure, this technique will help you calm and centre yourself and relax your body and mind.

Physically, we know breathing and any moderate exercise will help with our free-flowing highway. There are other road blocks that occur through our mind creation which can lead to disease. To help remove and manage these problems, we can – just like with our physical bodies – apply a few techniques to help us.

Emotional clutter is something we can miss very easily as we cannot see or feel it as clearly; however, when we have too much, our physical bodies will often send us warning signs. We have a filter in our minds to process the enormous amount of information we come across in our day. The filter allows you to see what you want to see; feel what you want to feel; and hear what you want to hear, touch, and taste. We create beliefs, values, and attitudes, and these act as our filter. We also operate on a level where when we feel hurt by something someone has said or done or not done, this

feeling will attach itself to an area in the filing system. It joins a queue of other key emotions: anger, sadness, fear, hurt, and guilt. Without acknowledging, accepting, and releasing each emotion we experience, we create a traffic queue. This highway is endless. It will keep adding to each queue, and when a similar situation occurs to one of your unresolved emotions, it will, like a car junkyard, pick up the emotion and throw it right there in front of your eyes! It is up to you how you manage it. Will you ignore or release it?

Without releasing our emotions, our bodies respond with physical warnings (aches and pains, painful backs caused by tension, headaches, nausea, and IBS). We can become scared of facing our emotions and continue to carry these around with us, and carry we do! Our bodies reflect the weight through exhaustion, slumped shoulders, and lack of interest, and the future stops on the highway look more like anxiety attacks, panic attacks, and depression.

For some of us, we do not see or feel the warning signs, and the point here is to create things in our day so we can actively choose to release the emotions as we go along. We can do this with gratitude, giving thanks when we wake up and at the end of the day and allowing acceptance of everything in your day. Any form of time you spend on yourself, you can use this time to acknowledge things that upset us and accept and release them.

You can decide how you wish to manage every emotion. Likewise, if you wish to hold on to an emotion, you can, and you can also ask how this will help you flow freely.

For now, spend time on your highway, help it become free-flowing and relaxed, check your pace and balance, look out for warning signs, and give thanks every day.

be love. be life. be happy.

Just a Nudge

14 June 2010

Yesterday, I found the goals I had written in pencil on 14 January 2010, six months ago. The goals were personal, including releasing limiting beliefs I'd had on a specific area in my life.

2009 was a roller coaster year: nonstop study, learning, practice, and more learning. Then, there was the breakthrough nearly twelve months ago when I was trained to become an NLP practitioner and coach. To do this, you experience all of the training, and there was my breakthrough and another move (to another country, no less).

Whilst I have achieved all my goals, for the last few weeks, I have felt some unease and not really had any answers. (This means I did! I just didn't want to admit to really knowing!) Finding my goals was not by chance. I'm more than sure they were placed in front of me to say, "Update me, please" with sirens and great big flashing lights. I feel pretty fulfilled in my life in this moment (and I say *pretty fulfilled* based on the fact I still let my mind and other people's reality affect me to an extent). Years ago, I would spend my days wishing and wanting anything but the life I was living. Thank goodness I changed it. Now I have no wishes and no wants. However, I still create goals, and these goals are in alignment with what I believe my purpose is: to help other people restore and maintain balance in their lives through coaching and holistic therapies. This is my giving in life – to help support and raise the consciousness levels to a higher vibration of love, compassion, joy, and peace through what I love: communication.

In play, I am more active than ever before through walking and training for the charity trek I am doing the Mental Health Foundation and getting on my bike after nearly six years. Yesterday, I got back in the pool and have a good few months of swimming to get on with. My shelves are full of inspiring books, and my iPod is to capacity with music I once would not of dreamed of listening to (classical - now love it!). I've been to see the Pope, and I've partied with an old school house DJ in the same week!

In love, I am blessed with wonderful friends, family, and belifehappy friends who bring so much joy in to my life every day! Love brings lessons every day in the beauty around us, and when the beauty fades or even disappears, it is knowing how to recognise this and how to bring it back by finding your ZING!

Learning comes moment by moment, as well as in spells where I have discovered by a little retreat that I can gather my thoughts, process, and move on. I have learned by reading new books and from different spiritual teachers, as well as by finding friends who have the same interests and learning from them. So far, it has been six months of expanse – a night sky being filled with so many shinning bright stars, creating a galaxy of uplifting consciousness – and I am so blessed to be learning with you.

So what happens now? It's all about balance. In giving, my aim is to grow and continue sharing my experiences and other enlightening inspirational people's experiences with you. In play, I'm leaving the doors open as this has led me to so many places I have not been before. No limits in play! In love, my aim is to continue to change, accept, believe, and trust in my mind, body, and spirit. I am loving my internal world to be able to share this love with the universe. The learning is my life. Without it, I stop inside. It is my adventure, play, inspiration, and love. I learn from meeting new people, catching up

with old friends, walking along the coast, and even watching Twitter updates. Everywhere I go with open eyes and I learn.

Whilst I have shared with you my aims, I know I need to create my list and place it back inside the cupboard, so when the end of the year comes, I will check back on it. The feeling right now is to go and create! The universe of which we are all collectively a part of is awesomely amazing. To feel, see, and hear it, we just have to listen to ourselves, believe we can do it, and start being it. Go create!

With love and light sparkle smiles always fluttering at your side today, tomorrow, and every day.