

EQUILIBRIUM

Your Total Wellbeing & Resilience Guide

PART 03

CONNECTION



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RAWenergy

Resilience - Authenticity - Wellbeing

Give Your Loved Ones The Gift Of Wellness

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My Mag
Essentials
Magnesium Lotion
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Biody Organic Hand
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From left to right:

Miessence Milk of Magnesia Ultrasensitive Roll-on Deodorant

Miessence Intensive Body Cream 250ml

Miessence Balancing Cleanser Normal Combination Skin 250ml

Miessence Rose Moonson Hydrating Mist

Miessence Lemon Toothpaste



The Ultimate Wellbeing Edit



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Welcome!

“When people go within and connect with themselves, they realise they are connected to the universe and they are connected to all living things.”

~Armand Dimele

Out of all the tools in our wellbeing toolkit, Connection is the one that bubbles to the top. We are all connected to each other whether we are aware of it or not. Something occurs in Wuhan in China and the next minute we are all in lockdown, leveraging technology to connect to each other.

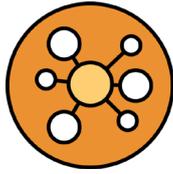
Connection is a huge topic. It is easy to forget, but we are nature and we need and rely on other people and the natural ecosystem to survive and to thrive.



Not only are we all connected to each other but we are also connected to other forms of nature. To think otherwise is a mistake. A drop in the ocean is still the ocean. We are not separate from the earth, we are part of the earth, and if you do the right thing for the earth, she will look after you. As history has taught us, the more disconnected we become from natural cycles, the sicker we become.

At times, we may feel that we are better or more superior than nature. We treat animals dreadfully in wet markets, we disregard the knowledge and wisdom of indigenous people who understand and work with the earth, we abuse our bodies with dead chemicalised food, we pour chemicals on the earth and in the oceans and then wonder why our immune systems become compromised and why natural catastrophes are becoming regular occurrences.





Connection

by Lawrence Mitchell

Within the Raw Model, Connection is the broadest. It covers relating at the deepest level and is so important to our Total Wellbeing:

- We are connected to ourselves through taking responsibility for our actions, through forgiveness, through gratitude, through personal development, and through just Being
- We are connected to other people and animals through our hearts and through the power of speech and touch, and via subtle vibrations
- We are connected to a higher consciousness and purpose through our work, spiritual practices, journaling, meditation, reading, watching, and through how we spend our resources
- We are connected to the earth, including the food and drink we consume, through being in nature, swimming in the ocean, and through our senses and our actions



Photo by cottonbro from Pexels



In these times of change, my hope is simple. That we come together as a collective and reclaim our EQUILIBRIUM and move away from the overwhelm and fear that modern life can bring. Knowledge is truly power and in this issue of EQUILIBRIUM, we have brought together the collective voices of different people from across the world to share their perspectives, their insights and their tools to help you move towards EQUILIBRIUM in your own life.

This guide is organised around the RAW model, with each part focused on a different pillar:



Physical
Your body.



Mindset & Emotion
Your thoughts and feelings.



Connection
Your relationships, your work, your purpose.



Money
Your financial wellbeing.



Time
How you use your time.

There are **5 principles** that underpin our guidance:

- 1.** We are all different - which means there is no “one size fits all”. Each of us is unique and requires an individual lifestyle plan to keep us healthy in mind and body.
- 2.** It’s not what you do occasionally; it’s what you do every day that makes the difference. In short, it’s all about habits. Transform your habits and you will transform your experience of life.
- 3.** Food, movement and sleep are the foundational habits that will support us every day.
- 4.** Do what you enjoy. Willpower doesn’t work over the long-term, so find things you enjoy and you will look forward to doing them.
- 5.** We are not separate from nature, we are nature. We can’t be healthy in a sick world.

To learn more about the RAW Philosophy of Total Wellbeing, visit: getrawenergy.co



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Meet Your Team



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As a Wellbeing coach and integrative nutritionist, Lawrence's Total Wellbeing philosophy sees people as whole people with whole lives. He works with business owners and leadership teams to create high performance cultures that drive growth during periods of rapid change and uncertainty.

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I also want to give a massive shout out to the globally-based contributors who have shared their knowledge and wisdom throughout these pages:



Connecting With
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Himalayan Secrets

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Lessons From A Super-Connector

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First up, we have Christina Gerakiteys, the Co-CEO of SingularityU Australia, a change-making organisation using exponential technologies to tackle the world's biggest challenges. I first met Christina back in October 2019 at the SingularityU Summit, a three day, mind-expanding experience. To start our exploration into the importance of connection as a driver of wellbeing, Christina shares her views on how everything is connected, interdependent and inter-global.

Connecting With Purpose For Impact

by Christina Gerakiteys

Nothing is ever static. Where change once slowly bubbled until it was “inevitable”, in the current iteration of our “instant” world, it now leaps at us and catches even the most agile adopters by surprise.

As Bob Dylan wrote, “the times indeed are a changin”.

We've been discussing connections a lot this week. Actually this month. Well really since the world as we knew it changed in March.

COVID-19 stretched and questioned our connections like never before. Physical distancing kept people at home, away from loved ones and colleagues, friends and associates. Yet in the distancing, the unbelievable happened; some connected more regularly and, once we got used to connecting through technology, more deeply.

Was it our forced separation that ignited the recalcitrant child, determined to connect? Or was it our innate humanity that was awakened by a heart that knew survival was only possible in reaching out in connecting?

We are social beings. Our emotional and physical wellbeing requires touch. Touch is just one of the ways we connect. Physical touching has been linked to lowered rates of violence, increased trust, higher and faster recovery rates of neonates, stronger immune systems and overall wellbeing. This is not a definitive list.

It's a matter of trust

Touch increases the release of oxytocin, also referred to as the cuddle hormone, which affects our trust reactions.

While we experienced a decline in connecting through physical touch for a few months, connections also happen through eye contact. According to many experts, it takes three to five seconds of eye contact to make a connection. And this is why we innately turned our cameras on when we dialled family, friends and colleagues. Why we looked for eye connection on the exercise outings we were fortunate to hold onto.





Photo by Gustavo Fring from Pexels

Technology as friend

COVID-19 indeed stretched our concept of connections. Stuck behind computers, physically distanced, there were times we wondered if deep and authentic connection was possible. Now we know it is.

Technology, once considered foe by those believing it had been advancing to take jobs and rearrange whole ecosystems, connected us far and wide, to loved ones and colleagues, services and information. Technology allowed us to talk and see, listen and hear, plan and continue, learn and grow.

Not that we ever want to replace physical connection permanently with a screen. Still we have realised that it's not a bad alternative. Over the last months we've connected through conversations, meetings, workshops, webinars and podcasts on a variety of online platforms.

One Thursday evening in June, twelve speakers took part in TEDx Melbourne. This event was the first TEDx to take place virtually. Topics included everything from new systems of governance to leaving a legacy, to what it was like to be a refugee packing your bag (note "bag" singular) to leave your home and not know where you would land. Empathy and compassion were overflowing. So at times were the tears. The connections and the emotion transcended the technology.

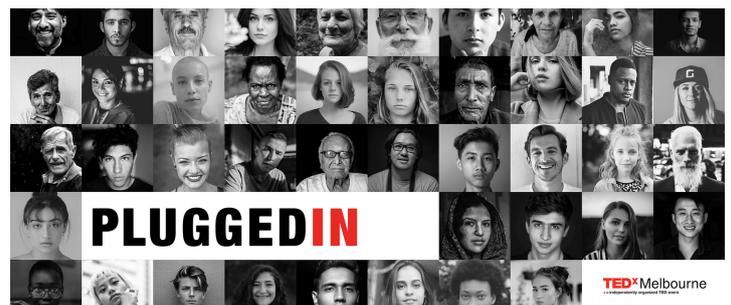




Photo by Johannes Plenio from Pexels

Authenticity & vulnerability in connectivity

All this led to the realisation that connections come from the heart and soul. Our body is merely the vehicle, the portal, that allows the connection to surface and reach out. Connections are through the authenticity and the vulnerability that we are brave enough to expose to the world. At times, COVID-19 provided us the shield of a computer screen through which to expose these qualities that help us connect yet can be terrifying for us to do.

Connection with nature strengthened as we stepped outside to pace under the sun, swim in a surf or walk within the trees. Outside became the refresher. We renewed our appreciation for the natural elements that we once took for granted and swapped so readily for any type of screen.

Real change is actually overdue

As we began our emergence from the forced deliberation time of COVID-19, something that in January had not entered our wildest imaginations, we stared at the inequities and blatant discriminatory behaviours that reared their head in the USA and around the world, and the dots connected globally; it is indeed time for change. Global Change. And in the commitment to creating change, our connections deepened.

It's all connected. We are all connected.

The COVID-19 dots magnetised and drew apparently disparate forces together. Data released from the Centres of Disease Control in the USA highlighted "the death rates amongst Black and Hispanic/Latino people are much higher than for white people in all categories" from COVID. The point is that there is a socio-economic factor connected to the COVID-19 factor. There is also an environmental factor connected with hypotheses linking the pandemic to the destruction of forests, the illegal trading of undomesticated animals, and high density living.



Time to dive inside

For many the ultimate connection has been an internal one; a connection between body, mind, heart and soul. Many looked inward to gauge satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a life in progress. Gratitude (journaled or spoken), meditation, mindfulness, yoga and other forms of practice deepened our connections with ourselves. Which in turn gave us the internal security to expose more of who we truly are, to others, who were exposing who they truly were to us.

COVID necessitated that we look after our own. Notes with offers of assistance were dropped into the letterboxes of the elderly. The homeless populations in many city centres were offered accommodation in Corona-empty hotels. Those in lower socio-economic groups were targeted for food and medicine donations.

You can't escape connection. Why would you want to?

Everything is connected. Everything is interdependent. We are inter-global. Our lives are interwoven.

Let's interweave our hearts and minds and create the change we want to see in the world. Let's look to treating each other equally, with respect and kindness, compassion and love.

History is recording us in a plethora of formats. How will we be judged by our future selves? By future generations?

Let's leave a legacy we can be proud of. For our children.



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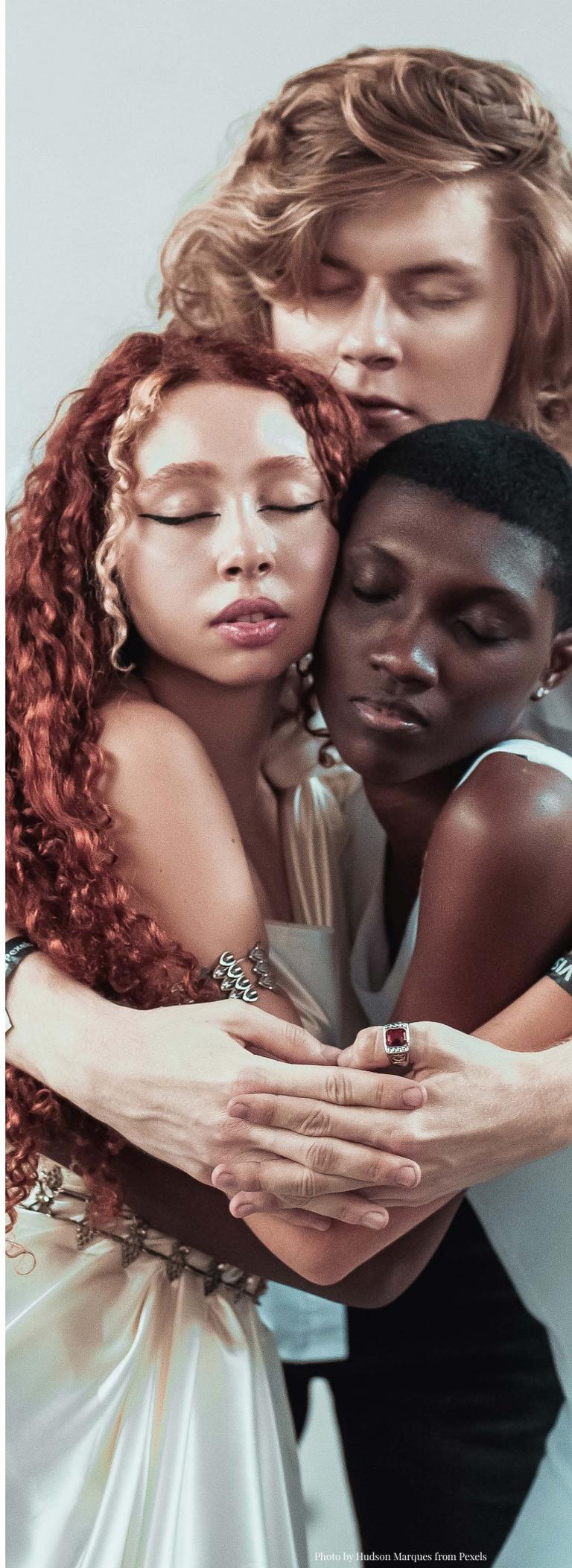


Photo by Hudson Marques from Pexels





Photo by Prakash Aryal from Pexels



Thanks Christina for sharing your insights. Leaving a legacy for our children and future generations is certainly a big driver for me. Let's change the pace a little bit now and hand over to Vidya Ragu who is based in India and is about to transport and connect us to the Himalayas and the secrets they can teach us about connection. See you on the other side!

Himalayan Secrets

by Vidya Ragu

In December 2016, we travelled with our group of participants through the beautiful Himalayan mountains for a week-long leadership retreat in the world's highest village. There, in the snow clad, mighty Ancient Himalayan range in India, where the temperature easily hits sub-zero degrees, the luxuries of life are a distant memory and even the basics of life seem to be a gift in these lofty mystical terrains. There, the very breath that we normally take for granted, soon becomes the epicenter of our attention.

One of the participants, a senior business leader who for decades had experienced the peak of material success in business and life, found the journey particularly difficult and challenging. The rugged terrain, the rawness of nature and the simple living practised in the mountains, everything made him uncomfortable. From the very beginning of the journey he was in a high state of discomfort and anxiety and he then succumbed to health issues as well.



Whilst the obvious reason for all this distress was the outer hostile conditions and extreme journey, they had fogged his view of the divine sight of the white snow heaven, and had built walls caging and depriving his soul of listening to the songs of silence surrounding him in the Himalayas. There were others who also experienced similar states of irritation, anger, anxiety, health issues, mental noise pollution, sleep issues and overall discomfort on and off during the drive. However, it's very interesting to see how these same people could leave their mental baggages, anxiety and helplessness behind and come back through the same route with a sense of wellbeing, peaceful oneness and the feeling of being totally in charge of their life and wellbeing.

We see this same pattern time and again in our retreats. People can move from dis-ease to graceful ease in a matter of days. So what changes? The weather and conditions can get rougher but their experience can be profound joy and smoothness. How? What do they stumble upon in the few days spent in these mystical mountains?

The ancient Himalayas, the abode of great saints, sages and mystics, are like the great teachers who install learnings in everyone according to their phase

of life and journey. Many are in awe of their gigantic presence on earth and existence of over 50 million years, but most of us will miss noticing the invisible currents and movement beneath the surface, which shape, move and hold even the strongest, largest and tallest peaks.

It is the same with human wellbeing. We often focus on wellbeing only at the surface as expressed in mind, body and soul but often miss asking what the undercurrents are that control the surface phenomenon. In India, 5000 years before modern Western medicine began researching the connection between the mind and body, our ancestors practised the oldest and most complex collection of wisdom for wellness by healing the mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of the body.

More than for treating ailments, it was about "the science of life and wellbeing" and aimed to balance the mind, body, and consciousness. It was about working with the roots rather than clinging on to shoots. Though wellness is a vast ocean and there are many Himalayan secrets that we can deep dive into, one of the pivotal aspects is how we experience connection in our day-to-day lives.



How can we understand Connection & how does it influence our wellbeing?

Understanding wellbeing as a Progressive rhythmic movement and not just as a momentary phenomenon that one can experience one moment and lose in another, helps us develop actionable routines.

When we observe an oscillating pendulum (a ball tied to a thread) connected from its pivot, we can see that it consistently moves towards its natural EQUILIBRIUM state, but if we leave the same ball in the air without the connection to its pivot, we may not even be able to trace its trajectory. It is this solid anchoring and connection that makes the movement directed towards EQUILIBRIUM.

The Power of Connections is critical and vital to our wellbeing, mostly we are conditioned to experience connections through other human relationships. The Grant Study at Harvard is one of the longest studies in the world and points to the fact that how happy we are in our relationships has a powerful influence on our health and longevity. Being a behavioural scientist, another experiment that I see often shocks people is the Timothy Wilson University of Virginia experiment ¹, which demonstrated that people would rather receive an electric shock than be left alone to deal with their thoughts.

These scientific experiments expose our lack of preparation and training on how to be by ourselves and the power that connections can have on us. As infants we could have experienced connection through our mother's love; as teenagers through our friends; as adults it could be through our interests or passions. However often we miss the fruit for the peel, as it's not about the entity of connection that matters. All of us have an eternal longing to experience connection and when it's based on temporary, ever-changing pivots (objects or people) we often lose them fast.

1. <https://news.virginia.edu/content/doing-something-better-doing-nothing-most-people-study-shows>



Time spent in the Himalayas helps us to anchor our connections beyond the temporary relationships and objects, to something more than what our senses are satiated with. In the movie "Bucket List" one can find one of the finest representations of what man experiences on the Himalayas. You can call it connection with nature, you can call it divine, the ancient Himalayas have helped yogis experience the connection in different dimensions. Sri Paramahansa Yogananda, known as one of the greatest Yogis of modern times, who inspired world leaders like Steve Jobs and The Beatles helps us understand deeper connections through 8 forms.

8 Forms To Experience Power Connections

In the Himalayas, you are pushed out of your comfort zone to experience the following 8 forms in every part of the journey. These connections can be experienced as

1. Peace
2. Calmness
3. Love
4. Joy
5. Light
6. Sound
7. Power
8. Wisdom

There are multiple exercises & techniques for each form; the more we practise the techniques the deeper we experience these attributes and dimensions of connectedness. It is like entering the unlimited ocean of wellbeing through different channels. Here are 3 simple techniques to build and strengthen your experience of this "Connection" even when you don't have access to the Himalayas. These can be practised at any time, to usher in a wave of wellbeing:

1. Connection exercises:

Sit in a comfortable position, relax, allow yourself to immerse and focus on any one of the 8 forms. For example, with Sound, pick any sound or music that soothes you and holds your attention. Concentrate on different aspects of the sound and visualize the sound emanating and coming closer and closer and touching you. Visualize it penetrating every cell and making your entire space light up. Enjoy the feeling. Allow it to grow. Slowly allow the music to lead your body to move, in case you feel inspired to use your body.

2. Build a relationship with the day-to-day sounds around you:

Notice how sounds affect your mood, feelings, how they move you and touch you. Weed out the ones that put you down. Take notice of new and familiar sounds around you. Note and engage more deeply in sounds that have a charging, soothing or calming effect. The more you practise noticing and building the connection through these 8 forms you can start to see your days as a crafted blend of these 8 forms. The practice will heighten your awareness of how you interact with each sound unconsciously.



Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels



These techniques aren't just ancient practices but have a scientific basis as well and work at the neurological level. During my decades of work in the human development space I have been blessed to see the parallels and intersection of ancient practices and modern science. For example, in psychology we call this the healthy priming effect exercise which can have a very beneficial impact on your productivity and energy. With practise you can begin to design and master your connections and tap into an unlimited source of wellness and vitality.

3. **Conscious input recharge technique:**

One of the physical energisation rituals you can practise to strengthen your connections is conscious input charging of your cells.

Consider your body to be like a magical machine which needs input for processing and timely recharging. The most vital connections on the physical level are within your body itself where every

cell, which is an ecosystem in itself, is connected to other cells.

This connection is recharged when you focus willpower and attention on the movement and intake of water and breath. The next time you breathe, eat or drink, visualize how you are facilitating a powerful connection for your body to thrive. Practise sipping water slowly (this is also an elixir* recharge technique). As you feel the water flowing in, visualize water and air recharging your cells and connect them all through this circulation process: Inhale and tense your body muscles and consciously feel the tension turning into energy and charging your body cells. Then exhale and relax your muscles and visualize the circuit connecting the cells across your body lighting up and making your body feel energized.

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Photo by Daria Shevtsova from Pexels





Thanks Vidya. That was truly awesome. People could do so well if they learned how to connect to themselves.

Let's move back to Sydney now and welcome back resilience and mindfulness specialist, Chibs Okereke who will help us to appreciate how mindfulness can support us to create a space that allows anger, confusion and shame to express themselves without us reacting to them. Welcome Chibs!

Using Mindfulness To Combat Racism

by Chibs Okereke

June 1st 2020 - I went to bed at 11 pm, fell straight asleep, and woke up just after midnight with a strange feeling in my chest.

I had never experienced this sensation before. At first, I thought it might be something I'd eaten, and then I thought it was perhaps a panic attack.

I turned to my Mindfulness practice and scanned through my Rolodex of emotions—It didn't feel like dread, fear, anger or sadness, I could not place the feeling. I tried sitting up, lying on my back, curling into a ball, putting on a podcast in the background, walking around my room, watching YouTube. Nothing would shift it. It reminded me of a bout of food poisoning I once had where no matter what position I put myself in, I couldn't get more than a few seconds of relief. The sensation in my chest was not pain, it was a feeling of heaviness. I'm not sure how to explain it, but at that moment, I would have preferred pain. I'd been looking after myself, I'd been eating well and I had gone to bed tired, so it made no sense. There were a few unsettling things in my life, but nothing too out of the ordinary.



Photo by Jumana Dakku: from Pexels



After some meditation and reflection, I realised what this intense, uneasy feeling in my chest was.

It was a deep-felt connection to the racial trauma that I had observed during that week.

The following article will share a few ways that I used Mindfulness to manage my emotions so I could combat racism from the inside out. At the time of writing this article, many passionate individuals are fighting for external change which I am truly thankful for. That being the case, I am going to focus my article on how to affect internal change.

External or Internal Change?

Whether you believe racism is systemic and deeply embedded, or you think only a tiny percentage of society is racist, my recommendations are the same:

1. Create external change

Reform organisations and society at large through protests, changes to the law, changes in organisational culture, and so on.

2. Create internal change

Cultivate awareness and understanding on all sides. This will result in more compassion, connection and positive behavioural change.

My hope is that the techniques I share in this article don't stop people fighting for justice or trying to effect change. My hope is that people gain new understanding about what they are fighting for so that they try to do what's "right" as opposed to merely destroying what's "wrong".



Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels



Furthermore, I want to share how to manage your stress responses so that you can effect change sustainably and effectively without burning yourself out.

Burn the House Down

Let's take cancer as an example. One way of treating the disease is to use chemotherapy to get rid of it. Still, we do so knowing that we are going to be compromising the body and destroying healthy cells along with the cancerous cells. Another way to tackle cancer is to open our possibilities to other, more holistic, less aggressive methods.

The more imminent or life-threatening the prognosis, the more prepared we should be to treat the disease aggressively. We can risk damaging the body to eliminate the threat to the body if it's a matter of life-or-death.

If the cancer is in remission, we might be more inclined to seek alternative, gentler methods. Alternative treatments might take longer to heal the body; however, healing may occur with less collateral damage.

The Big Picture

Whether you think racism is a life-threatening condition or disease in remission depends on a complex of factors—your environment, location, peer-group, life experiences, and so on.

All I can say for sure is that when I am calm and relaxed, I'm more nuanced, I'm more creative, I quickly see the bigger picture and I rarely, if ever, behave in ways I regret. When I am in fight-or-flight, stressed, scared, ashamed or overwhelmed, I see things as black-or-white, right or wrong, and I often behave in ways I regret.

This is only my opinion, but I believe that no one is 100% evil or 100% good. We are a product of our experience, and almost everyone is doing the best they can with the information they have. I'm here to help the racists, the anti-racists and everyone in between. The more perspectives that are heard and the safer everybody feels, the better life will be for you, me, and the world at large.

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is a way to practise sitting with uncomfortable feelings.

We may feel uncomfortable when we become aware of racism, especially when we realise that the way we think, speak and act might be part of the problem.

How do you think you would react if someone points out something you said or did was racist? Would you become angry about the accusation? Would you want to run away from the conversation? Might you perhaps get stuck for words and freeze? Maybe you would get on your knees and accept all the blame? Or you might look for someone else to confirm that what you did wasn't in fact racist?

What I have just listed are examples of the five threat responses of the nervous system (fight, flight, freeze, submit, attach). Without mindful awareness, we will simply react according to our programming. We feel shame when we are judged negatively by others. When we feel negative emotions, our nervous system kicks into action with one of the five responses.

Ironically, it is our fear of being racist that prevents us from exploring our own prejudices. We might find that we are shaming others to make ourselves feel better about our opinions. For a more detailed explanation, see my article **"Understanding... Racism"** where I discuss ego. However, the research is unequivocal - shame does not lead to positive behavioural change. Shame results in us digging into our existing beliefs so that we become even less open-minded.

Mindfulness helps create a space that allows heartache, grief, anger, confusion and shame to express themselves, without us reacting to them. Once we have calmed down our threat response using Mindfulness, we are better able to take on board the perspective of others, and that is where change begins.

Hold Space For Those That Are Hurting

If my daughter is angry because she is hurting or injured, I don't react by shutting down her anger.





I support her, hear her and hold space for her. I allow her to express herself without criticising her for her reactions. The black community and its allies were angry and tired of waiting patiently for change. The anger was valid, and if we react to the anger and not the injustice of George Floyd's murder, we add to the hurt.

Practise Nuanced Rather Than Black-And-White Thinking

Mindfulness helps us to hold complex ideas in our minds. Our brain prefers simplicity—it takes minimal effort to confirm existing beliefs, and it requires far more brain-power to learn new perspectives. This is true, especially when we are emotionally triggered (see “Understanding... Racism” article).

When the fight-or-flight wing of our nervous system is activated, the body feels threatened. It then switches off the slow, rational, measured pre-frontal cortex, turning on the amygdala, the quick-thinking part of the brain.

Speak Up If You Witness Racism

It can be challenging to address the topic of racism, it's such a complex and sensitive subject. It takes courage to challenge an opposing point of view, especially with those close to you. It also takes courage to confront your own racism. We should note that while it might be hard to speak up in front of friends, family or work colleagues, it's even more challenging to be on the receiving end of racism.

When you speak up, make sure you speak from a place of calm. Maintain awareness of the emotional state of both you and the other person. The more emotional you are, the greater tendency you will have to shame, preach, and dig into your existing belief system. The more relaxed you both are, the more collaborative you will become, and the more likelihood of shifting the other person's perspective.

Photo by Retha Ferguson from Pexels



Check-In With Your Black Friends.

Reach out to black or indigenous friends and colleagues if you're worried about their mental health, wellbeing or safety. This can be a tricky one if you're not black, so proceed with sensitivity. Begin by checking in with yourself to make sure that your motivation isn't to make yourself feel better. It's about the other person, not you. Also, be careful that you are not adding fuel to their hurt or anger. If systemic racism does exist, and you incite your black friends towards aggression, they will likely suffer harsher penalties compared to you.

Look After Yourself

We're no use to anyone unless we are in a stable place ourselves. The more relaxed, healthy and calm

we become, the more connection we feel towards others, and the more good we can do. As we hear at the start of every flight, put the oxygen mask on yourself first before you assist others.

If there is immediate danger in your environment, the fight-or-flight response will help you to protect yourself. However, if there is no imminent threat, you must put on your oxygen mask, breathe, reset, open your mind and open your heart. From a place of love, connection and calm, you can then make meaningful change.

Written by:

Chibs **Okereke**

Founder of Wild Mind Meditation & Co-Founder of Beyond28Days

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Fight | Flight > EQUILIBRIUM

A 7 Day Mindfulness Challenge

Believe it or not, it is possible to get out of that feeling of fight-or-flight and unease, no matter what's happening around you. You can get into that state of EQUILIBRIUM where life flows and you're at ease, relaxed and focussed on the present moment.

Mindfulness meditation is a simple, straightforward practice, but meditation isn't always explained in a simple, straightforward way. This 7-day challenge will teach you the fundamentals of meditation, in a systematic, no-nonsense, relatable way. Research shows that just 10-minutes of mindfulness meditation over 25 days significantly strengthens positive emotions, reduces stress, increases self-compassion and increases focus.

The 7-day challenge is a great starting point to notice a real difference. Each day, for 7 days, you'll be emailed a 10-minute meditation:

- Day 1:** Relaxing Your Body
- Day 2:** Your Automatic Pilot
- Day 3:** Concentration
- Day 4:** Mindful Attention
- Day 5:** Sensations
- Day 6:** Thinking
- Day 7:** Emotions

JOIN NOW

chibs.co/challenge
See you on the other side.





Many thanks Chibs, that was really thought-provoking. Let's now talk about how you can build deep connections and relationships in your own life. Building connections has certainly been made easier thanks to the power of technology. With platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and other social media, we are now able to be connected to thousands, and maintain contact with people from every chapter of our life. But not all connections are equal. I like to think of relationships as bank accounts, the more you invest in those relationships, the deeper and richer they become. Let me now hand over to Heather Mitchell and Laurene McKenzie to share some great tips on how to create deep connections that last.

Lessons From A Super-Connector

How To Create Deep Connections

By Heather Mitchell & Laurene McKenzie

Back in January 2020, I took over as Sutherland Team Leader for Bx, a business networking group in Australia, New Zealand and soon India. With such a role, you'd think that I was a networking champion, but in truth, as an introvert, nothing could be farthest from the truth! The very word 'networking' didn't fill my body with joy.

However, over the last few years, I have made a concerted effort to reframe my thinking and to connect with more people and Bx has been part of that journey.

There I met Laurene McKenzie, affectionately known as Loz, Bx Australia's Super Connector! I sat down with Loz a couple of weeks ago to find out her top-tips for super-charged connecting.



Over to you Loz:

Thanks Heather. In truth, I'm actually really shy and introverted. But I've always been intuitively good at making sure the right people connect at the right time. As a beauty therapist, someone would tell me something, then someone else would say something 2 years later, and I'd be like "OMG! I must introduce these 2 people!" So I've always been really good at joining dots. I just seem to have this 6th sense about it.

And it's not just about connecting for the sake of connecting or buying each other's stuff. It's the level above that - it's connecting for a purpose. It's about building a relationship that's ongoing and goes beyond the introduction. It doesn't mean that you have one conversation - I want you to stay in touch because I can see the potential.

My clients say I'm good at value-matching. I really get a feel for what this person is like and the sort of

person that would be great for them to work with - it's my superpower! (I say that tongue-in-cheek). If you're looking to deepen your connections, here are some tips gleaned from my experience:

The Power Of A One-To-One Conversation

The real power is in creating an opportunity for a conversation to take place. People underestimate the power of where a conversation can go. Say you regularly see the same people. Some people say "I spoke to Kathleen last time." And I say, "I've never failed to learn something new about a person in a one-on-one conversation." People miss the power of having a real - not superficial - conversation. Ask them "What do you need right now?", "What can I do for you?" or "Tell me about what you're doing." Some think it a waste of time but you never explain things the same each time, so there's always something new in every conversation.



Photo by Jopwell from Pexels





Each Conversation Is An Opportunity To Learn About Another Person

Start by asking people about them, rather than focussing on how they can help you. It's my trick. I just ask them all about themselves and at the end of the 10 minutes they'll say 'I didn't ask anything about you!' And I'm like "That's cool! I know everything about you – I can go and do my thing!" I don't like talking about myself so I just find it easier.

It's like dating, you just ask lots of questions. People are always happy to talk about themselves.

Be Interested & Interesting

If I wanted to meet a life partner, one of the criteria would be for them to be both interested and interesting. It's the same when you have a business conversation. Just be in the moment and pay attention, giving that person the courtesy of actually listening to what they have to say.

Instead of thinking about yourself, think "How can I help them?", "What can I do?", "Who can I introduce them to?" It's the Law of Reciprocity - it always comes back over time. Intend to give before you expect to receive.

Follow-up

If you have a conversation and you promise something, make sure you do what you say you are going to do. And I'm guilty of that too because I want to help so many people. I always get there in the end but it sometimes takes longer than I'd like.

Be authentic and be genuine. Be that person that people can rely on, even when it's early on in the relationship. Be that person that does the things you said you were going to do, and shows up when you said you were going to show up. That helps the other aspects of the relationship build as well.





Photo by Jopwell from Pexels

What's The Worst That Could Happen?

Always think, "what's the worst that can happen?" If you think, "I wish I could do that" just step into it, because the worst that can happen is you just return to where you are now. It's not catastrophic. But the best thing is that it could create something. So I always take that approach for any decision. If I take a job and it doesn't work out, I can go back and do what I did before. But most of the time it does and at other times, mistakes are character building.

So always lean into those opportunities instead of being too scared to have that conversation, make that approach or ask for what you need. Just do it in a nice way. If there's kindness behind everything, then, what could go wrong? I never want to die wondering

what would have happened. And then, whether it's a conversation or an action, just do it. And make yourself accountable by telling someone about it. Then, because you've said it out loud, you have to do it!



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Thanks Loz for those amazing networking tips. Now we are all one step closer to being a Super Connector! Let's now talk about a topic that we don't like to discuss too often: Loss. Loss comes in many forms. Every one of us will experience it many times throughout our lives, yet most of us do not know what to do or say when loss comes to visit. Welcome loss expert, Karen Chaston, co-founder of Live Love By Design.

The Power Of Loss

by Karen Chaston

"When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change."

~ Dr Wayne Dyer

We live in a world of duality. Light and Dark. Good and Bad. Love and Loss.

I've noticed we can't have one without the other. Though we do have choice in the way we live and interact with each. I've had many tragic loss events in my life. I've also shoved the pain down, down, down, to get on with life.

That is what you do, right? It must be. Everyone tells you to get over it, stop talking about it, just give it time. Well guess what?

That is not the way to move beyond any kind of loss. As that leads to us being disconnected from ourselves and others. Creating thriving alcohol and pharmaceutical industries and a suicide rate that's out of control and growing each year.



Photo by Bianca Salgado from Pexels



The Journey To Becoming My Own Best Friend

In 2011, as a CFO of a publicly listed company, many thought, "Wow look at successful Karen. She has the career, the salary, the family, the "lake house", the Mercedes, the overseas trips. Sure, a tad overweight though, but so are most with that job"

Ticking all the proposed success boxes. Though I was unfulfilled and felt something was missing in my life.

Then tragedy struck. On the 11th July 2011, within 15 minutes of waking, the paramedics announced our 27-year-old son, Dan had died several hours earlier at our back door. We thought he had just passed out there.

Following all the clichés about death, I went straight back to work after Dan's funeral.

Eating more. Drinking more and working even harder.

Then, 15 months later, another curve ball, another choice to make: stay with the newly formed company, not as CFO though "doing all that you do now and more" for two-thirds of my current salary, or take redundancy.

Finally, I chose me. Starting on the journey to becoming my own best friend. Along the way I found what had been missing in my life.

It Was Me!

So often we're busy doing for everyone else, forgetting us in the equation. I now know that if I'd chosen differently, more tragic losses would have come; my health, wealth or any of the other 40+ loss events that can affect our lives. The path to becoming my own best friend led me to becoming a Beyond Loss Mentor, Speaker and Author and creator of the Gift of Loss programs.



Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels



Unwrapping The Gift Of Loss

Wayne Dyer's advice assisted me to realise that I found me and the GIFT of LOSS the hard way.

After learning about the numerous loss events that can affect our lives, I knew that loss comes to assist us. To get us back on track.

From there I knew I could make it easier for others. Though before I delve into the five steps, It's important to know that every relationship has three components:

- **The Physical:** The way we hang out together. What we do, say. The way we touch each other.
- **The Emotional:** encompasses all of our emotions: The Good, The Bad, The Glad and the Sad.
- **The Spiritual:** Is the intangible. We know we're connected just not sure why we are so connected.

Whilst the physical relationship may end, the emotional and spiritual will continue forever. It's the emotional component that causes all the grief and suffering.

The gift of loss program assists you to have a healthy emotional relationship moving forward. It is a five-step process that shows anyone who has suffered any kind of loss, how to create a better everyday life.

The first step is to Stop: Allows you to take that conscious loving breath. Filling you with all the love and wisdom required to gain the insights into what has happened. The impact in every area of your life.

After one of your major losses, did you stop?

The second step is to Accept: To take responsibility about what's happened, what did not happen and your changed circumstances. Release the blame game. There are two people in every relationship.

Accepting redundancy gave me back the gift of my life and my health. Have you found any loss hard to accept?



Photo by Daria Shevtsova from Pexels



The third step is to Identify: There are two stages to identify. First, identify what actions and communications are incomplete. What are the things you did or did not do or say? What are the things you wished they had done or said? The second identify stage is to realise that every relationship has hopes, dreams and aspirations. What were they, how can they come to fruition another way?

Do you have any incomplete communications and unreconciled hopes, dreams and aspirations?

The fourth step is to Complete: This step allows us to become complete with the often-painful reality that the physical relationship has ended. During this step we get to apologise, forgive and acknowledge every aspect of the relationship.

One of my greatest realisations along my journey was "I am the only person I'm going to spend my entire life with." This assisted me to dream big. To get out of my own way. To pivot.

Yes, the last step is to Pivot: This is the fun part. You look at what is required to close the gap from where you are now, to where you'd like to be. What action steps are required to close that gap ...in all areas of your life.

There are over 40 different loss events that can affect our lives. I feel it all happens for a reason.

All the storms and rainbows. All the ups and downs.

Leading us all to becoming our own best friend. Living and Loving life.

I know this is a different way to look at loss, though don't you feel that Life is too short for any of us to be spending our time grieving and suffering?

Reach out when you're ready to unwrap the Gift of Loss.



Written by:

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Grief/Loss Events That Affect Our Lives

Death of Your Spouse

Death of Your Child

Death of Your Parents

Close Family Member's Death

Death of Your Pet

Dismissal at Work

Retirement

Change Careers

Work Responsibilities Change

Trouble with Boss

Change in Work Conditions

Loss of Status

Change in Recreational Activities

Change in Social Activities

Loss of Safety

Loss of Trust

Marriage

Divorce

Marital Separation

Marital Reconciliation

Pregnancy

Adoption

Abortion

In-Laws Issues

Spouse Stops or Starts Work

Sexual Difficulties

Fertility Problems

Menopause

Gain a New Family Member

Empty Nester

Child Starts / Finishes School

Change to Family Member's Health

Business readjustment

Change in Financial State

Major Mortgage

Foreclosure of Mortgage or Loan

Personal Injury/Illness

Loss of Mobility

Outstanding Personal Achievement

Change in Living Conditions

Imprisonment

Change in Residence

Change in School

Christmas &/or Holidays

Change in Sleeping Patterns

Change in Eating Habits

Loss of Approval

Loss of Faith





That was beautiful. Thank you Karen for your heartfelt words. Now, time spent in nature helps us to anchor our connections beyond temporary relationships and objects, to something more than what our senses are satiated with. Here, Adam Barringer shares how connecting to surfing brings with it huge benefits to our mental wellbeing. Thanks for joining us Adam.

Connecting to the Waves

by Adam Barringer

It's likely you're aware of surfing's benefits on your physical health.

But did you know it also improves your mental health? Surfing has been scientifically proven to decrease stress by clearing your mind, stabilising your emotions and boosting your mood.

Here at Waves of Wellness (WOW) we've seen it first-hand, throughout our evidence-based surf therapy programs over the years and we continue to be

guided by international studies on the positive effects of salt water therapy. The Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice recently featured 12 academic studies¹ on the benefits of surf therapy on mental health.

Surfing can be an ethereal experience for your mind, body, soul, and during tough times it can be a welcome antidote to the stresses of everyday life.

Here are five of the mental health benefits of surfing...

1. <https://wow.gjcpp.org/en/>



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1. Surfing Produces Joy

Catching a wave requires risk but it comes with great reward. When we conquer these walls of water our brain high fives us with a boost of dopamine - which we recognise as pleasure and joy. And it's not just a quick hit, this happiness is sustained long after you've showered and put the board away. The thrill of catching a wave might only be seconds long but it lasts much longer than that in the mind. In his book Blue Mind, Marine Biologist Dr Wallace J. Nichols discusses the scientific evidence of the ocean's effect on mental health and wellbeing. The "blue mind" he describes is the mildly meditative state that water puts us in, helping us achieve elevated and sustained happiness. And this is without a surfboard...

2. Surfing Helps A Flexible Mindset

When you learn to surf you have to be prepared for wipeouts. After the hundredth time of falling into the ocean and resurfacing you start to think that falling down isn't so bad. All of a sudden life doesn't seem so serious. Even the littlest waves feel epic and even the hairiest wipeouts become hilarious. Your mind is shaping over time, just like your body. Being flexible allows us to problem solve and gain new perspectives on life. Being able to shift the elements of a problem in our mind is the first step to shedding the weight of negativity and building resilience. Cognitive flexibility, just like a flexible wetsuit, gives us the performance and agility to ride out even the most powerful and challenging of waves. In the ocean - and out of the ocean.

3. Surfing Helps Us Make Choices

One of the key elements to surfing is making the right wave choices. In the ocean we must be patient but also think on our feet - often while under pressure. We must overcome fears and take calculated risks. These are great life skills we're learning.

Making the right choices in the ocean can be the difference between a great surf (and therefore increased happiness) or a return to the sand feeling pretty sorry for yourself.

If you look at it from an elite level, such as surfing in a professional competition, wave selection is critical. Here, you're not only dealing with the pressure of the arena, the crowd and your competitors, but being able to wait for the best waves of the heat can be key to out-surfing your opponent and winning. As they say, patience is a virtue.



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4 • Surfing Teaches You Respect For The Ocean

In surfing we quickly learn that there are forces greater than ourselves. You can't fight the ocean, but you can let it carry you. Surfers are at peace with this. They use the ocean's natural pull to gravitate to the line up and then they let the force of the ocean push them onto the wave. Go against it and you're just making everything harder for yourself.

Professional big wave surfers respect the ocean in the greatest sense, and they are always prepared for the worst. They have professionally trained water support, jet skis, life jackets, and inflatable rescue vests - so they're ready for whatever the ocean throws at them. If you think you can take on big waves without being prepared, you'll soon regret it! Surfing will humble you.

5 • Surfing Helps You Seek Mindfulness

Surfing requires pure concentration, and forces you to be completely in the moment, aware of your

surroundings, your body and the ocean. Surfing is mindfulness in action.

You're meditating in the ocean and you're completely in the zone, or what is known as the "flow state". It's also one of the few times in life we're not attached to a device. Completely unwired. The only thing you're attached to out here is your legrope.

At WOW we incorporate guided mindfulness sessions as part of our programs, helping our participants to pause and reframe their perspective. We find that people leave the beach with a greater sense of calm, relaxation and clarity throughout their day. The only thing they look back on are the waves!

Written by:

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Thanks Adam. I definitely feel more inclined to check out the waves now! Next, if you're seeking to understand yourself and the world around you, then astrology could provide the answer. As a student of astrology myself, it has opened up a whole new world for me and I'm delighted to welcome back Astrologer and Ayurveda practitioner, Benjamin Haynes, also known as the Medicine Man, to tell us more.

Connecting To Yourself Through Astrology

by Benjamin Haynes

*"Be humble, for you are made of earth.
Be noble, for you are made of stars."*

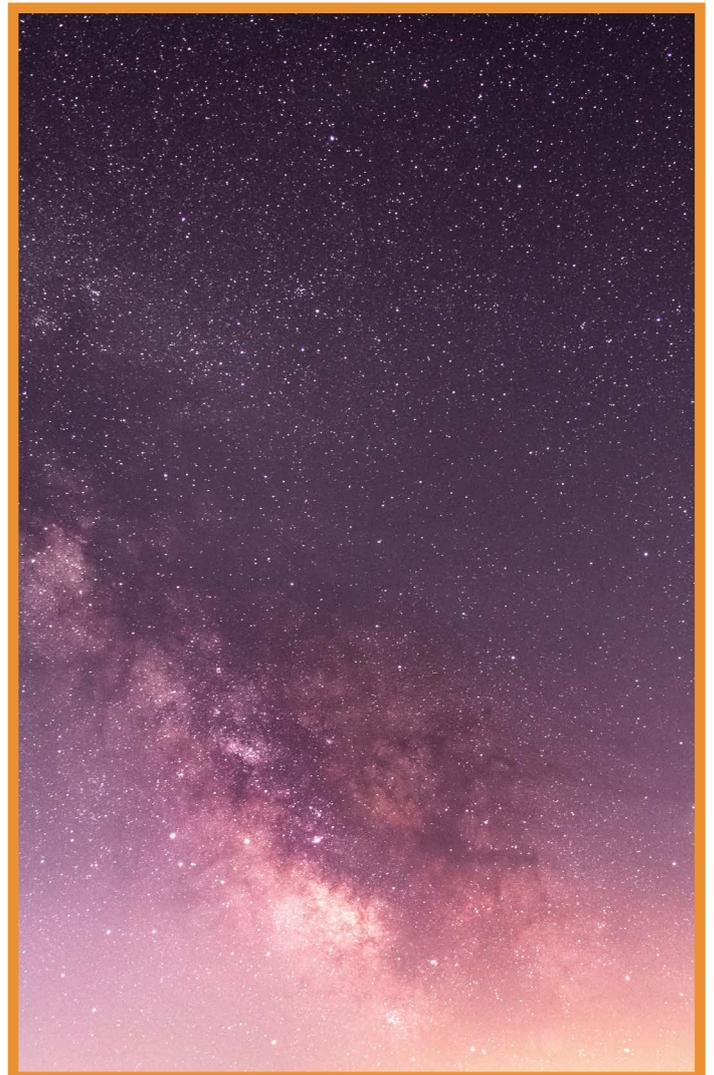
~Serbian proverb

When most people think of Astrology, they think of star sign columns in newspapers and magazines.

But this is just the tip of the iceberg. An accurate birth chart contains within it the entire blueprint of the person, business or country that it represents. Yes! Astrology can be applied to more than newborn babies!

But how does it work?

There are many ways to answer this ageless question, and the level of satisfaction provided by each of these answers will differ from person to person. For some, and certainly in ancient times, the answer is "magic". Astrology was and still is seen by many as a "divine science" that allows us to understand and read the mystical language of God! In ancient times the ability to read this divine language was reserved strictly for the Astrologer-Priests of the time and only for the King or Pharaoh.



For other people, the 'how' of Astrology is a more quantum affair – where every individual part is interlinked with and impacts the whole. Still others find it very easy to accept through their own observation that the moon affects the tides and plants here on Earth, and by extension the notion that other planets might exert an influence of their own upon us - whether that's through electromagnetic energy or something more new age such as morphic resonance. It all depends on the mental nature of the person asking the question. Fittingly, an accurate birth chart would enable an Astrologer to know which answer would appeal to whom!

But where does it come from? And how can your time of birth have any impact on your character or the nature and timing of events in your life? To understand this, it is helpful to look back into the history of humanity and the role of this ancient practice throughout.

Astrology is perhaps the oldest science in the world. Its origin and history trace back thousands and thousands of years to our early Neanderthal ancestors who, whilst different from the other animals, were nonetheless deadlocked in the struggle for survival with them. Due to the absence of strength and speed, they were forced to use their superior mental capacity to begin to understand themselves and their environment in order to exist.

Archaeological evidence shows the marking the lunar phases on animal bones to help with the planning of hunts for times when there would be more available light. This led to an understanding of the passing of time - a critical leap in human consciousness – and an understanding of the year – a repetitious cycle of seasons that signalled when to migrate, when to gather berries and fruits for the cold months, and as this concept took root, it gave birth to more stable agrarian communities.



Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay





Image by SpaceX-Imagery from Pixabay

From here Astrology evolved into more sophisticated forms, illuminating the leaders of powerful countries via the priesthoods whose job it was to interpret the heavens and, as such, God's will. Detailed records were kept of the correlations between the stars and events here on Earth, and it was the role of these Astrologer-Priests to advise on the most auspicious times to plant crops, invade other countries and predict events that would impact the king or kingdoms. Often under pain of death!

At this time, Astronomy, the study of the movement of the heavens, and Astrology the interpretation of its meaning and impact relative to us on Earth, were one and the same. Movement or form was not divorced from meaning and function. The cosmos was seen as an interconnected living ecosystem, where each part was impacting and impacted by everything else.

And so it is that the science and art of Astrology was handed down to us over millennia through the most powerful dynasties of humankind – Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, India and China to name just a few. For every one of these great civilisations, Astrology was central to their culture and their understanding of the meaning of life.

But of what use can such an antiquated body of knowledge be to us here in the modern world of the 21st Century? A time when science has sent men into the far reaches of space and split the atom itself? Well, in this time of ecological and spiritual crisis, Astrology is more relevant and potent than ever. As Carl Jung himself stated:

“Astrology is assured of recognition from psychology, without further restrictions, because astrology represents the summation of all the psychological knowledge of antiquity”

According to Astrological thought, you are the physical embodiment of a particular moment in time. The time, date and place of your birth are the unique coordinates of a living map that can be used throughout your entire life for guidance and self-understanding, providing unparalleled insight into your relationships and life purpose, as well as highlighting personal strengths, shadows and talents.



It has been referred to as the Golden Key that can shine a light on your greatest gifts and challenges, providing context for the dynamics that play out in your life and relationships.

In my work as a healer, I have found the most powerful use for Astrology is in self-knowledge and ultimately self-acceptance. Astrology allows otherwise subconscious aspects of yourself to become more conscious, helping us move from entrenched reaction to conscious response. Becoming conscious of a particular behaviour pattern or discovering its origin can facilitate a dramatic change in our lives. We are no longer driven by unconscious impulses to act out in certain ways. When we recognise that a certain dynamic is at play, that moment of recognition creates a small gap in which we can choose consciously how to respond. These moments of choice are the pivots that can change the trajectory of our lives.

Another potent gift of Astrology is that it allows what would otherwise be a purely subjective experience of life, to become more objective. When we are able to view ourselves and our lives from a distance, we gain a different perspective on things. From this new vantage point, we are able to see things more clearly and from multiple angles in order to comprehend how certain dynamics connect to and impact other parts of our lives.

Objectivity allows us to discuss deeply personal and sometimes painful experiences or unresolved feelings in a manner that feels less traumatic. We can see ourselves almost like a character in a story and discuss the struggles and issues that are playing out and give words to feelings that might have stayed locked inside for a lifetime. This is a profoundly healing process.

On an interpersonal level, Astrology allows us to understand the dynamics existing between two people. This is known as Synastry in Astrology and in the context of relationships - whether between lovers, parents and their children, or other family members - provides deep and profound insight into the nature of both connection and conflict. This is achieved by

understanding the way different archetypes (planets and signs in Astrological parlance) are operating within each individual and how compatible they are with each other.

The way we communicate, what we need to feel valued and loved, how much importance we place on sex, money or status can all be discerned from the charts of both people and related and compared. This insight has the power to transform our perspective from a "right or wrong" mentality and into an "equally valid but different" understanding. How many years would we need to live with another person to really understand each other in such ways - and that assumes that effective communication is taking place!

But what about fate versus free will and character versus destiny, I hear some of you ask? The answers to these curly questions will have to wait for future articles!



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Reader Offer:

Curious to understand your own astrology? Have your birth, forecast or relationship chart read with Benjamin - sessions conducted via Zoom.

Contact him on:

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to find out more.

FIND OUT MORE





*Thanks Benjamin for that great intro to Astrology.
Now it's time to learn more about our superpowers! Yes, we all have them.
Welcome back Sean Hall, who is Chief Energiser and CEO of Human Performance
company, EnergX.*

Finding Your Superpowers

by Sean Hall

Often when we think about our strengths, we focus on what we do, the things that we are good at. In recent times, research

into the whole field of positive psychology has discovered focussing on our character strengths - who we are, rather than what we do - has a huge impact on our overall wellbeing and happiness.

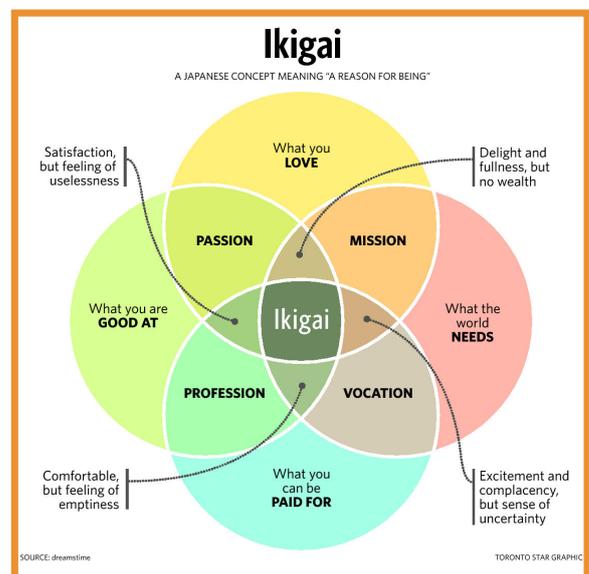
There are multiple practical applications of your superpowers. The more you use them, the greater the impact on your wellbeing. For example, if you start with your Top 5:-

- You can use them as a way to start your day with an "I am" affirmation. Say out loud "I am [your name] and what I appreciate about me is that I am [your Top 5 strengths]."
- For each of your Top 5, think of creative ways you can direct them towards other people e.g. how many ways can you be kind, how many ways can you be brave and so on.
- Think of ways that you might apply your Top 5 to yourself e.g. what might you need to be honest with yourself about how to improve your wellbeing; how could you be more loving to yourself etc.

You can even use your strengths to discover your purpose.

My favourite framework is inspired by the residents of the island of Okinawa. These islands at the southern end of Japan have historically been known for longevity, once called the land of immortals. Okinawans have less cancer, heart disease and dementia than Western nations, and women there live longer than any women on the planet. You may have heard that the reason for their health and longevity is due to their diet, however Okinawans also have a strong sense of purpose in life, a driving force that the Japanese call "ikigai".

The framework below shows the components of your ikigai. You can use it as a way of collecting data. Your superpowers are a scientific set of data that confirm what you're good at.



It's a great idea to create your own Ikigai board and get all your ideas out of your head. You know what you love. Next, have conversations with people you trust and capture ideas for the other circles. Then look for the connections between the circles to look for clues and design career prototypes that you can test to ultimately take charge of your career, do more of what you love, and even get paid for it!

You can discover your character strengths, or superpowers as we like to call them, in just 10 minutes by **clicking here**. There's even a youth version you can select for 10-17 year olds.

Once you have completed the survey, download the free version of your report by:

1. Scrolling down past the number "24"
2. Click on "PRINTER FRIENDLY RESULTS" to download :)
3. BOOM!

Your report has your superpowers ranked from 1 to 24.

Our superpowers are a great way to connect, value and energise each other. Try these:-

- **Do the assessment with your teammates** and make a map of all your connections and overall diversity of your strengths. Are there any superpowers missing that are potential blind spots you have as a team?
- **Do the assessment with your loved ones** and share stories of when you've seen their superpowers in action. What happened when they were used well?

Watch this short video for more on the science of character.



Written by:

Sean **Hall**

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Photo by nappy from Pex





Image by www_slon_pics from Pixabay

Connecting Through Work

by Lawrence Mitchell

Research by Gallup shows that as many as 87% of people are not engaged with their work. Think about that for one moment.

87% of people are NOT engaged in their work! That means that just 13% of people are engaged. The positive news is that there's a lot of room for improvement and one of the impacts of the lock-down period is that organisations are being forced to reinvent their working contexts, embrace flexible and remote working and deeply consider their own personal wellbeing, and the wellbeing of their employees and customers.

This has been a very challenging process for us all, but there's always a bright spot in any situation. And a bright spot amongst all of this darkness is that Wellbeing is no longer perceived to be "fluffy", but is instead a strategic enabler of personal and business performance, the force powering every other priority to achieve its potential.

Work, what we do every day, is a huge source of connection. Yes, a key motivator of work is to earn money, but over and above that, work is a source of learning new skills, connecting and engaging with different people, exposing ourselves to other ways of thinking, gaining a sense of worth and feeling part of something bigger than ourselves.

With the world of work changing around us, the future of work will look different to the past. More and more people are working with their heads, rather than their hands. Technology is increasingly automating different processes, removing many jobs, but creating others, roles that we don't yet know are needed.

What we can do, though, is to control what we can control and learn and integrate the skills of resilience and adaptability.

To help you, we've created two new propositions so you can cope with change, adapt to change and ultimately drive change, designing the future that you want to be a part of.



Advertorial

Finding EQUILIBRIUM: Mindset & Emotional Wellbeing Programme

Having spent years learning the hard way on the front-lines running global teams through the ups and downs of business cycles, the core of our belief is that transformation starts by taking baby steps and doing tiny changes consistently, until they become habits. You can then build in more “micro habits” as the company evolves.

Right now, the challenge is to keep your people **connected, engaged** and **supported** as you travel through the high seas of change. One thing I can say for sure is that when people feel calm and relaxed, they're more nuanced, more creative, they more rapidly see the bigger picture and rarely, if ever, behave in ways they regret. Alternatively, when they are in fight-or-flight, stressed, scared, ashamed or overwhelmed, they see things as black-or-white, right or wrong, and quite often behave in ways they regret.

To guide your people from a state of stress to a state of EQUILIBRIUM, armed with the knowledge, skills and tools to achieve balance, whatever is going on around them, we've developed **a four-step programme:**

- 1:** Finding EQUILIBRIUM For Resilience & Wellbeing@ Work Webinar
- 2:** Where are you on the EQUILIBRIUM scale?
- 3:** From Fight/Flight to EQUILIBRIUM 7-Day Challenge
- 4:** From Fight/Flight to EQUILIBRIUM the next 21 Days

To find out more about the Finding EQUILIBRIUM: Mindset & Emotional Wellbeing Programme:

CLICK HERE

www.totalwellbeing.co/ex



Lawrence Mitchell

Chibs Okereke



Photo by Bess Hamiti from Pexels



Advertorial

ENERGISING The Energisers

Creating positive change in any community or organisation requires champions on the ground who have the skill and the ability to connect at an emotional level with other people to drive progress. However, we often see people who have the passion and desire to make a difference in some way, but lack the skillset required to lead the change and often get frustrated and waste energy trying different things that don't work.

Within the context of business, the Wellbeing and HR Leaders are champions that need support to have more impact and create a "High Capacity Organisation", one where productivity, innovation, inclusion, creativity, agility and performance are high.

Over the last few months, we have created a programme that we're calling **ENERGISE the Energisers**. In a nutshell, this is a Fun, MBA-type experience centred on the key themes, knowledge, skills and behaviours that champions need to develop to have positive impact. The programme is organised into four parts:

Phase One: Leadership Immersion

Four half-day masterclasses delivered over four weeks to give you the knowledge and resources you need to make a difference. We'll cover:

- Moving From Crisis to Confidence to Competitive Advantage
- The EX Factor for Employee Experience
- Innovation and Inclusion in Practice
- Leading Change and Prioritising For Impact

Phase Two: Pilot Scoping and Business Case Development

Once you complete the Leadership Immersive, it's time to put the knowledge into action as knowledge without action won't get the results.

We'll support you the whole way to:

- Craft the story of the future - your vision
- Articulate the opportunities and risks
- Create an impactful business case to engage your executive leadership
- Develop the implementation plan to build a bridge to the future

Phase Three: Pilot Implementation

Once you've been given the green light on your pilot, the fun can start as we're in the implementation phase! We always recommend starting with a pilot so that we can test, learn and build confidence ahead of roll-out. We'll be there to support you through the pilot:

- Weekly zoom coaching sessions
- Whatsapp support for day-to-day troubleshooting
- Access to a network of vetted delivery partners
- Invitation-only access to the EX Factor peer-to-peer community for networking and advice
- Support to develop a case study to share with sponsors and stakeholders and for award entry

Phase Four: Scale Readiness

Finally, you are now at a stage where you'll have the knowledge, skills, experience and insights to extend your pilot and start to grow and scale so that you can impact more people. The journey ahead is exciting and we'll be there the whole way through.

To learn more and to apply for the ENERGISE the Energiser programme:

CLICK HERE



Lawrence Mitchell

Sean Hall





Connecting to a purpose larger than ourselves is a big part of our total wellbeing. There's a lot to share on this topic and here to help is nutritionist and wellbeing awakening coach, Ashleigh James.

Finding Your Purpose

by Ashleigh James



Many people I speak to struggle to find their purpose, and find themselves in their late 20s, 30s and even 40s living a life that doesn't feel aligned with what they truly want.

For many reasons, they've found that life has swept them down a specific direction and they aren't sure what to do, how to pivot, and how to change direction towards something that truly lights them up.

If this is you, you absolutely have the power to change course and walk a different path towards something that feels right.

If this resonates with you, below is a 6-step process to help you align with your purpose and take action towards the life you know you deserve.

This is the exact method I use to help my clients transform their mindset and find the confidence and drive to consciously create the life they want.

If you want to learn more about this method, visit my website ashleighjames.com.au



1. Start thinking about what you are drawn to and what your ideal life looks like

Most people struggle to get clarity on what they really want, because they are pushed onto paths dictated by what society, parents or teachers tell them they should do. They then set goals based upon these “shoulds” and then wonder why they are left feeling unfulfilled.

Many people also struggle to get clarity on their desires or purpose because they don't know how to access their intuition. They don't know the questions they need to ask themselves in order to figure out what they really want. They may limit themselves in some way by setting goals based around what they feel is possible for them.

So the first step is getting out there and researching – what are you attracted to, who's doing the thing that you feel drawn to? Remember, clarity of goals and desires is not just about the physical goal, but also about the emotional goal. So it's important you have clarity not just on what you want, but how you want to feel when you get there.

2. Identify what is keeping you stuck

The next step is to identify why you don't yet have your desires. Most people think they don't have their goal or desire because they are lacking some sort of action. They believe that they haven't yet done the thing that will get them from A to B or they don't know what strategy they need to help them achieve their goals.

Whilst action is required, the biggest thing holding most people back from having what they want is their belief system. We know now that whatever you believe in and focus on shapes your world. If you believe you can't, chances are you probably won't. We all have limiting beliefs that hold us back from achieving our desires and living our most brilliant lives. Some we are aware of and some are completely under the radar and will need to be uncovered so that you can then do the work to change them.

Digging work and inner child healing work can be used to identify what is keeping you stuck and causing the patterns that keep showing up in your life.



Image by Jills from Pixabay



3. Transform your negative beliefs

Once you've identified both your conscious and subconscious beliefs, the next step is to transform them. This involves reprogramming your mind with a new set of beliefs that match the reality you want to create for yourself.

So let's say you want to find a career where you feel you are making a difference. You need to let go of any conscious or unconscious belief that it's too late, that you don't deserve it, or that you aren't capable of creating it. You need to erase this belief from your belief system at both a conscious and unconscious level. You then need to find a new belief, for example "I'm capable of creating the life I desire", and reprogram your mind with this new belief so that it becomes your new reality.

With the right kind of beliefs, anything becomes possible. Various techniques including NLP, EFT and visualisation can help transform and remove negative beliefs.

4. Raise your vibration and frequency

We are all made up of energy and our energy has its own vibrational frequency. We magnetise into our life the people, things and experiences that we are a vibrational match to. In order for you to possess your desire, you have to be on the same energetic frequency as that desire.

This is where energy work comes into play.

Energy work falls into two parts: Part one is all about releasing negative energy and part two is all about raising your vibration. Once you match your energy with the frequency of your desires, you can manifest them into your life. Energy healing, meditations, visualisations and chakra balancing can be used to lift your vibration, as well as healthy food and exercise habits.

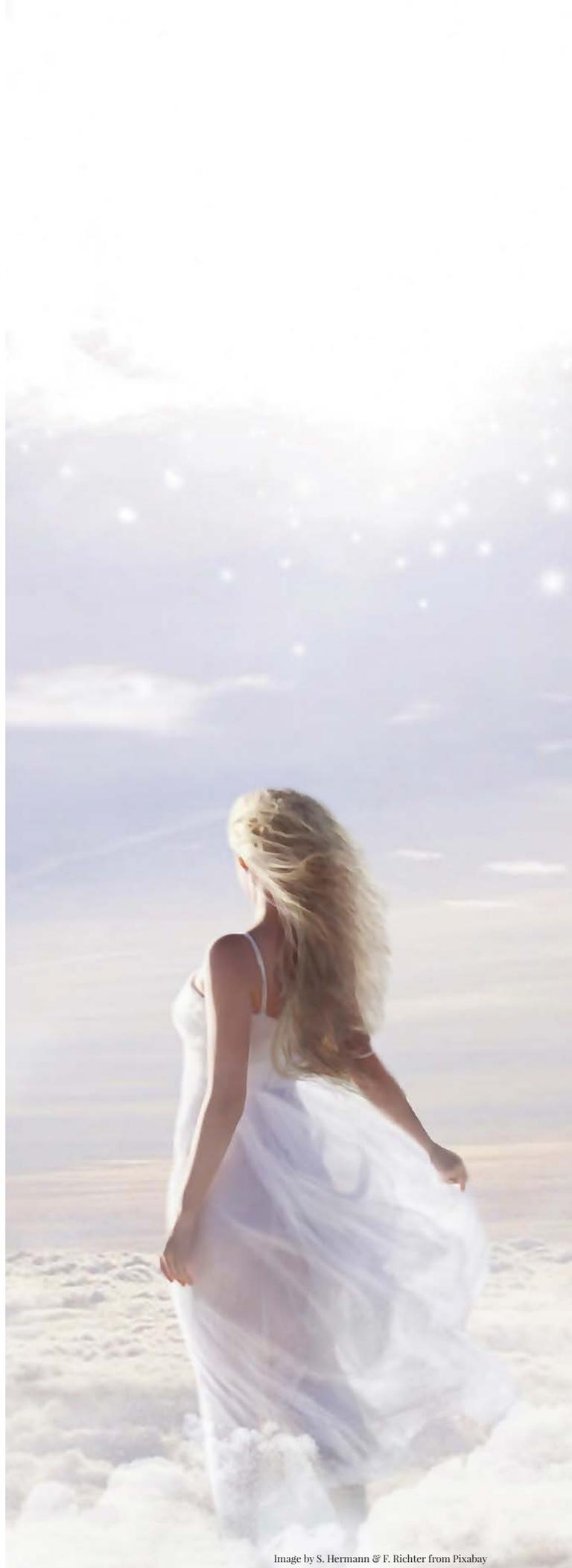


Image by S. Hermann & F. Richter from Pixabay





Photo by cottonbro from Pexels

5. Take inspired action

To achieve your desires is a process of co-creation. You take your role and The Universe plays its role. A part of your role is taking action.

You can't just sit in an empty room and do nothing and connect with no one and expect everything you want to fall into your lap. You have to be getting out there and doing things that are going to move the needle towards your desires. Mindset is 90% of the work, but the remaining 10% is your own action.

Knowing what kind of action to take is part of the struggle and most people don't have in place a step-by-step strategy to get to their goals, which keeps them stuck. But the other part of the struggle is understanding how to take inspired action. To take any kind of action is not enough. It has to be INSPIRED action, action that keeps you in alignment and action that feels good.

6. Surrender and let go

The next step is to surrender to the process. You have to be able to hand things over to The Universe so it can play its role.

Your job is to get clear on what you want, work on your beliefs and your energy and start taking inspired action but then you need to let go and trust that the universe will deliver, without resorting back to fears or doubts about whether it will actually happen.

As soon as you start to doubt, you hold your desires apart from you even further. You can only get to where you want to go with a firm, unshakeable belief that things are working out for you.

Written by:



Ashleigh James

Founder & CEO Ashleigh James Coaching - Holistic Nutritionist & Awakening Coach

Instagram: @ashleighjamescoaching





Thanks very much Ashleigh! As a keen runner, I first got into wearable technology in 2001! It feels like an age ago, but I bought a device that gave me accurate insights on my pace, distance and heart rate. It was game-changing and over the years, I got into the Quantified Self movement and have tried a whole range of different devices. You can imagine how excited I was when I first met Anuraj Gambhir, a tech specialist behind a whole range of tech initiatives and devices. Anuraj is here to share with us some insights on the latest wearables in the marketplace, and most importantly how these devices can help us build self-knowledge and a connection to ourselves.

Using Smart Wearables To Understand Yourself Better

by Anuraj Gambhir

Tech Tools For Total Wellbeing: A guide to select innovative solutions to be on top of your game during these extraordinary times.

Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Fatigue & Burnout are all overwhelming the human condition, adversely impacting society, combining to create their own 'epidemic' that is a greater risk to humanity than even the COVID-19 pandemic we are currently facing. The lines between work and life are blurring in new and unusual ways, and many people adapting to working remotely, are struggling to preserve healthy boundaries between their professional and personal lives.

This is where tech can, perhaps surprisingly, come to the rescue.

There are a growing number of exponential technologies and tools that can enable us to achieve better balance - rapidly achieving calm and reducing stress, improving focus, helping us sleep better, reducing anxiety, increasing a positive outlook and

even boosting our energy levels. As a result of using these tools, we can build and sustain resilience, maintain EQUILIBRIUM and improve our overall health & wellbeing.

The smart wearable and device ecosystem is undergoing major paradigm shifts, with several advances in sensor technologies. Developments are bringing about radically new benefits and disruptions in the Health & Wellness domain, among others. We currently face extraordinary times and the utmost need of the hour is rapid Adaptability, Re-invention & Frugal Innovation.

Wearables have rapidly evolved beyond fitness trackers and simple wrist-worn devices. There are a range of devices adding substantial value, from head to toe. They have manifested as new-age smart devices with an exponential re-invention and a new movement has emerged. We call it 'WEAR-TO-ABLE', and it sits at the intersection of Technology and Humanity. I was fortunate to curate and perform in a unique fashion show where we showcased Wear-to-Able at three events: Hunter Manufacturer Awards, SingularityU Australia and the SU Costa Rica Summit.



I also recently visited one of the world's five Blue Zones (**hotspots with the most centenarians**) - Nicoya Peninsula in Costa Rica - where I experienced 'Bliss mode' first hand. It sparked me further on my quest to curate and help develop democratised solutions that can bring a Blue Zone to everyone's fingertips. This is closely related to a 'White Mirror' concept I am working on to elevate humanity (a multimedia/transmedia narrative about a utopian future, explained **HERE**).

Many startups have sparked this next wave of Wear-to-Able tech that is bringing new meaning to our lives. What you wear will become accessories to your gadgets, the technology embedded in your everyday clothing. And it is becoming seamless and invisible.

Good health is true wealth. Democratisation of technology has enabled a new definition of self-help health. In the following sections I will explore some common technologies, applications and solutions that can be used for the quantified self.



Physical

General Health

Tool

NeuroSky gives detailed heart health quantification - Stress, Mood, Heart Age, etc. and is in the following products: : LifeBeat, Medical Center, Health Center (with Blood Pressure (BP) cuffs) and LifeBand (a smartwatch measuring BP on your wrist)

For more information visit:
www.neurosky.com

Function

Imagine having the capabilities of the Tricorder from Star Trek at your fingertips, with BP, Blood glucose, Body fat, Body temp, Oxygen saturation, ECG and Heart Rate Variability (to detect stress), all measurable in one device. With sophisticated biofeedback sensors, they enable diagnostic and prescriptive opportunities. They quantify body, mind and heart so we can monitor and reduce stress & anxiety.



Oura Ring is an innovative smart ring that monitors the body's pulse, movement, temperature and provides a holistic health dashboard

For more information visit:
ouraring.com

Has interpretations for sleep, readiness and activity. It is also being used for helping predict COVID-19 illness symptoms (Oura has partnered with University of California for this).



Physical

Fitness / Movement

Tool

Nadi X intelligent yoga tights from Wearable X help you self-adjust your yoga poses so you get fitter, faster.

For more information visit:
www.wearablex.com

Function

These tights transform your yoga practise by guiding your exercises using vibrations on your skin that sync with personalised instruction from your smart device.





Physical

Fitness / Movement...continued

Tool

Teslasuit (from VR Electronics) is a human-to-digital interface designed to simulate experience and accelerate mastery in the physical world.

For more information visit:
teslasuit.io

Function

The integrated complex of haptics, motion capture, and biometry improves human performance. Initially intended as an entertainment and gaming platform, Teslasuit has transformed into a powerful tool in xR (Extended Reality) training.



BioConnected HR+ is a smart 'hearable', using Bluetooth stereo buds as an in-ear training coach with a clinical-grade heart rate monitor and embedded AI at the core

For more information visit:
bioconnected.com

This assists with improving your sports performance. It provides feedback on your fitness and is able to prescribe individualised training programs.



Physical

Sleep

Tool

LifebySmartCap with its quad-channel EEG is able to monitor driver fatigue by measuring your brainwaves.

For more information visit:
www.smartcaptech.com

Function

Preventing accidents caused by fatigue, this will save thousands of lives.



Addressing critical health issues such as Insomnia, Sleep Apnoea & Sleep Paralysis, **Sleep Shepherd** is a comprehensive Sleep Lab

For more information visit:
sleepshepherd.com

Sleep Shepherd has a smart alarm that wakes you according to your natural body clock and has binaural beats playing through the speakers integrated in the fabric. It also uses EEG (powered by NeuroSky) to give detailed states of awake, restless, light and deep sleep. Sleep is critical for good cognitive function, which is essential for learning, creativity, and problem solving.





Physical

Pain Reduction

Tool

ReliefHeat from Relief is a smart heating wrap for your back re-imagined.

For more information visit:
reliefheat.com

Function

In under 10 seconds it begins to provide instant pain relief. Besides being high in comfort, it deploys pulsating technology for auto temperature variation, to avoid heat desensitization.



iTENS is an FDA approved Wearable Pain relief solution.

For more information visit:
www.itens.com

Uses a modern day electrotherapy device that merges technology with the proven results of "TENS therapy" to provide effective and lasting pain relief via a simple medical device app.



Mindset & Emotion

Calm / Mindfulness

Tool

Muse is a personal meditation assistant that helps you get to a calm and relaxed state faster by providing real-time feedback on your mind & body.

For more information visit:
choosemuse.com

Function

Muse is a multi-sensor meditation device that provides real-time feedback on your brain activity, heart rate, breathing and body movements to help you build a consistent meditation practice. It uses a research grade EEG that passively senses your brain activity and translates it into the guiding sounds of nature to help you stay calm & focused. The App platform has 300+ Meditations on Sleep, Performance and Stress. A new model Muse S (a more flexible textile based version) is now available.



Emotiv MN8 is a Bluetooth stereo headset with integrated 2-channel EEG buds as a unique discreet device.

For more information visit:
www.emotiv.com

As an enterprise solution, it leverages personalised neuro-informatics and machine learning to provide feedback on the level of stress and distraction to inform workplace wellness, safety, and productivity.





Tool

NeuroSky boosts your learning effectiveness with the Effective Learner + Study Trainer App (use with NS Mindwave Mobile EEG headset).

For more information visit: neurosky.com

Function

A simple app called Visualizer shows meditative and attentive cognitive states. There is also a tool to enhance your 21st century skills with the Peak Performance Algorithm which quantifies behaviours such as creativity, empathy, engagement, collaboration, mindfulness, inspiration, awareness, mental agility and emotional states eg. anger, depression, happiness, calmness and mental preparedness.



MyndPlay (with embedded NeuroSky tech) brings in deeper psychology.

For more information visit: myndplay.com

This is essentially a platform that empowers users to train their brains to improve attention, meditation skills and the ability to overcome mental obstacles through entertainment, simulations and guided training applications. Some of their apps include Mind Yoga, go Calm, Mynd Meditation sunrise/nature and Float One. MyndPlay has also combined virtual reality (VR) with EEG to provide immersive experiences.



Halo 2 by Halo Neuroscience is taking brain interaction to a whole new level.

For more information visit: www.haloneuro.com

Imagine improving your performance for a given activity, optimizing your time or even recovering lost skills - Halo aims to do just that by using neuroscience with Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (TDCS). It applies a small electric current to the area of the brain that controls movement, putting it into a state of hyper-learning and positively influencing neuro-plasticity.



© WearableX 2020



For a basic entry to wearables you could certainly use the usual devices - your smartphone, smartwatches or other wristbands to monitor general fitness, heart rate and other parameters. The true value of utilizing these devices and tech is only realized when we apply deep analytics to go beyond diagnosing to predicting/prescribing and taking relevant actions to proactively manage our wellbeing.

Take charge of your wellbeing, quantify yourself and fast-track your journey to happiness. Enable your personal bliss-mode, transit into theta stage, float into the flow state and discover your 'Blue Zone' using relevant exponential technologies and solutions.

The accelerating pace of technological progress can elevate your body, mind and spirit to a whole new dimension for the betterment of humanity. Amplify

your senses, sharpen your intuition and connect with the universal consciousness. We invite you to embrace this exponential *transhuman** journey towards Wear-to-Able.



Written by:

Anuraj **Gambhir**

Thought Leader, Strategic
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**Transhumanism is a philosophical movement that advocates for the transformation of the human condition by developing and making widely available sophisticated technologies to greatly enhance human intellect and physiology (from Wikipedia). Its 3 pillars constitute Super-Longevity, Intelligence & Wellbeing.*



© TeslaSuit 2020





Thanks Anuraj – it sounds like science fiction is becoming science fact. Next, telling stories has been the way we have learnt for thousands of years. Whether it's stories at bedtime, stories around the campfire, stories in the pub or from the stage, the story and ability to tell a story is a highly valuable skill. Today, 5 billion videos have been shared on YouTube, each providing an individual story, some of which have gone viral. Here to help us understand the power of both stories and videos is film, television and music creator, Vicki Hansen.

Connecting Through Stories

by Vicki Hansen

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you"
~ Maya Angelou

Everyone has a story worth telling.

It is through stories that we connect with each other and share the common essence of what makes us human.

Stories are the way we learn about the many different journeys that people have taken to get to where they are now. There are as many stories as there are people on the planet, yet the heart of stories - the grief, the joy, the laughter, the triumphs, the failures - are common to us all.

These days social media mostly provides a one-dimensional view into someone's world - and it is from this limited information that we make our decisions about that world and react accordingly.

But what is behind that perfectly-crafted image, that perky smile beaming at us from our Instagram feed?

Does it tell the story of the moments that happened just before, or after, that flawless pose?





Photo by Rodrigo Souza from Pexels

Does it show the argument that may have just preceded the shot, the underlying feeling of dread and hopelessness that the person may be trying to mask, the convoluted, dysfunctional upbringing that they may be hiding?

This is the stuff of REAL stories - and it is so important to how we connect and relate to each other as human beings.

Isn't it almost a relief when a seemingly successful personality finally admits to suffering depression and anxiety? Doesn't that "admission" allow us some space to acknowledge our own suffering, feel a sense of connection with that person and thus allow us to begin to heal?

Not to say, of course, that all stories need to be about agony and pain. Humour is also a fantastic way to communicate. Judd Apatow, well-known American comedy writer and producer, when asked what makes things funny, said that it is "recognition" that makes things funny - the sheer release of knowing that you aren't alone in your own sometimes crazy thoughts and feelings.

So how can you tell your story through videos?

Videos provide a unique way to reach out to countless others with stories. The visual, aural and narrative elements of video stimulate us in a way that makes the stories engaging and, if done properly, can touch on raw emotions and move us in so many ways.

The story is always king. Time and attention must be given to the video script, if one is being followed, to ensure that a story is clear, concise and to the point, and follows a story "arc".

The speaker should be encouraged to relax and feel free to express. With someone who is camera shy, a sensitive director can help them feel at ease - by choosing an appropriate and comfortable location to film, asking relevant questions and just helping them to be generally comfortable in front of a camera so that they can tell their story in a natural, engaging way.



The visuals must be properly placed to enhance and illustrate the story. They must relate in some way to what is being talked about, to emphasise the story points. The music is absolutely essential to creating the mood - carefully chosen music can really make or break your video.

All it takes is for one person to find the courage to stand in front of a camera and tell their story. The more raw, the more honest it is, the better the engagement and sense of connection. We all want to know that others feel the same as we do, that others have the same struggles in life, the same joys, the same emotional challenges.

Through the creation of genuine, authentic videos, your story can be seen and heard by the world. You may not feel that you have an interesting story to tell, but it's guaranteed that there will always be a story that will connect with certain people. During these uncertain and challenging times there is so much noise on the internet and social media channels - and what is sorely needed is authenticity and raw honesty. And the greatest authenticity will come from your own experience, as you are the one who lives to tell the tale.

Video stories have enormous power to engage, connect and communicate - and this is key to spreading your unique message for the benefit of others and the world as a whole.



Written by:

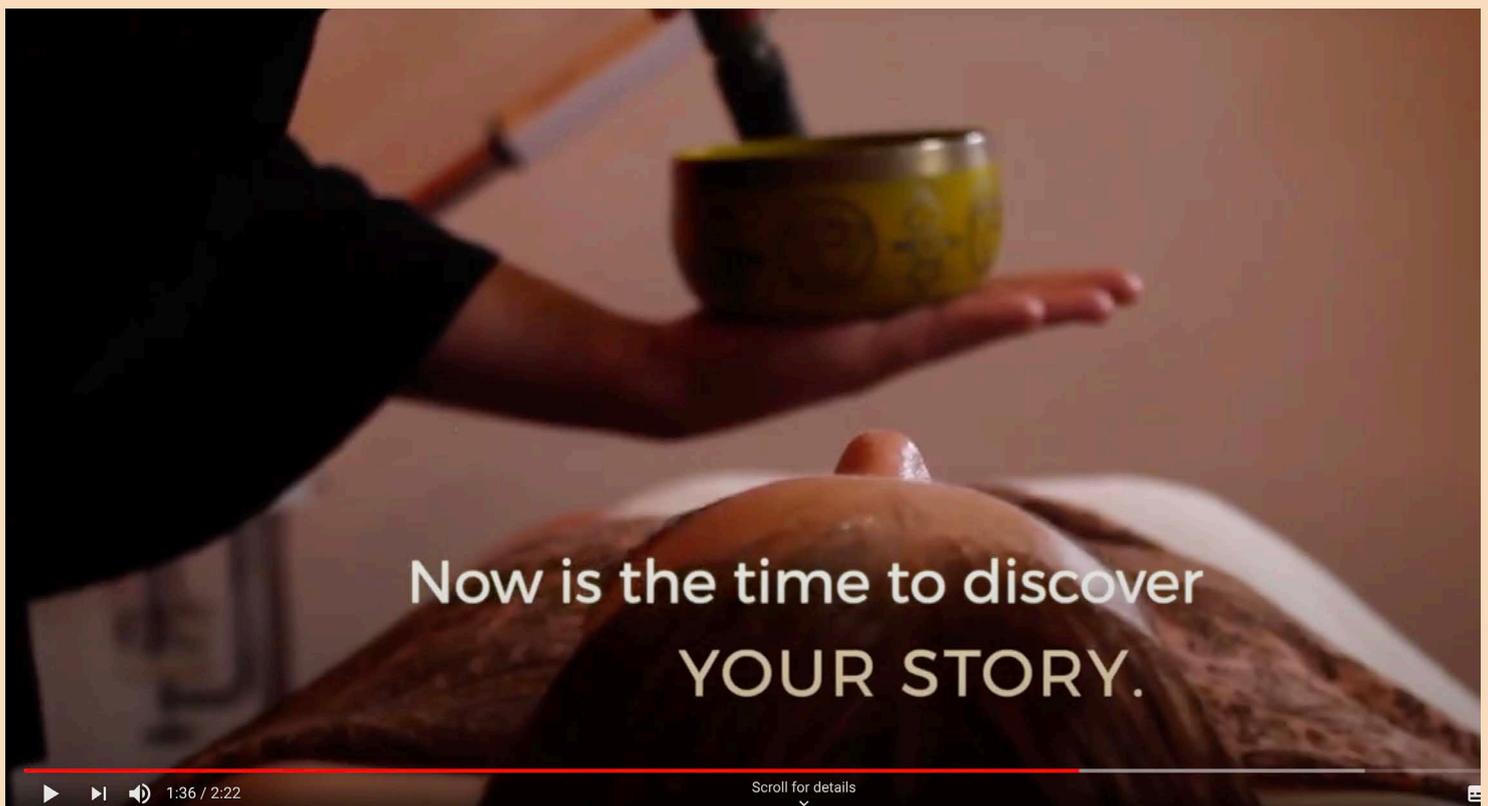
Vicki **Hansen**

Multi-Media and Music Composer
& Producer at StoryCast

Instagram: @storycastmedia

Reader Offer:

Quote code **EQ3**: storycast.com.au





Thank you Vicki. We all have so many stories inside us that need telling. One of the huge challenges we have seen through the pandemic has been the requirement for parents to wear multiple hats. Working and home-schooling isn't easy! Whilst some schools around the world are reopening, we've all learnt a lot and I'm delighted to welcome Helen Simpson and Helen Lewis to support parents to navigate family life and prepare for the future.

Enhancing Connection To Children

by Helen Simpson & Helen Lewis

Future Fit Families helps children and parents understand and prepare for the future of work, through training and events on 21st century mindsets, techsets and skillsets. Helen Lewis and Helen Simpson founded the business, driven by a common desire to support

parents make more informed choices for themselves and their families.

At Future Fit Families, we focus on building stronger connections between parents, education and industry. In recent months, these groups have collided under one roof as parents have found themselves taking on the unique role of parent, teacher AND employee.

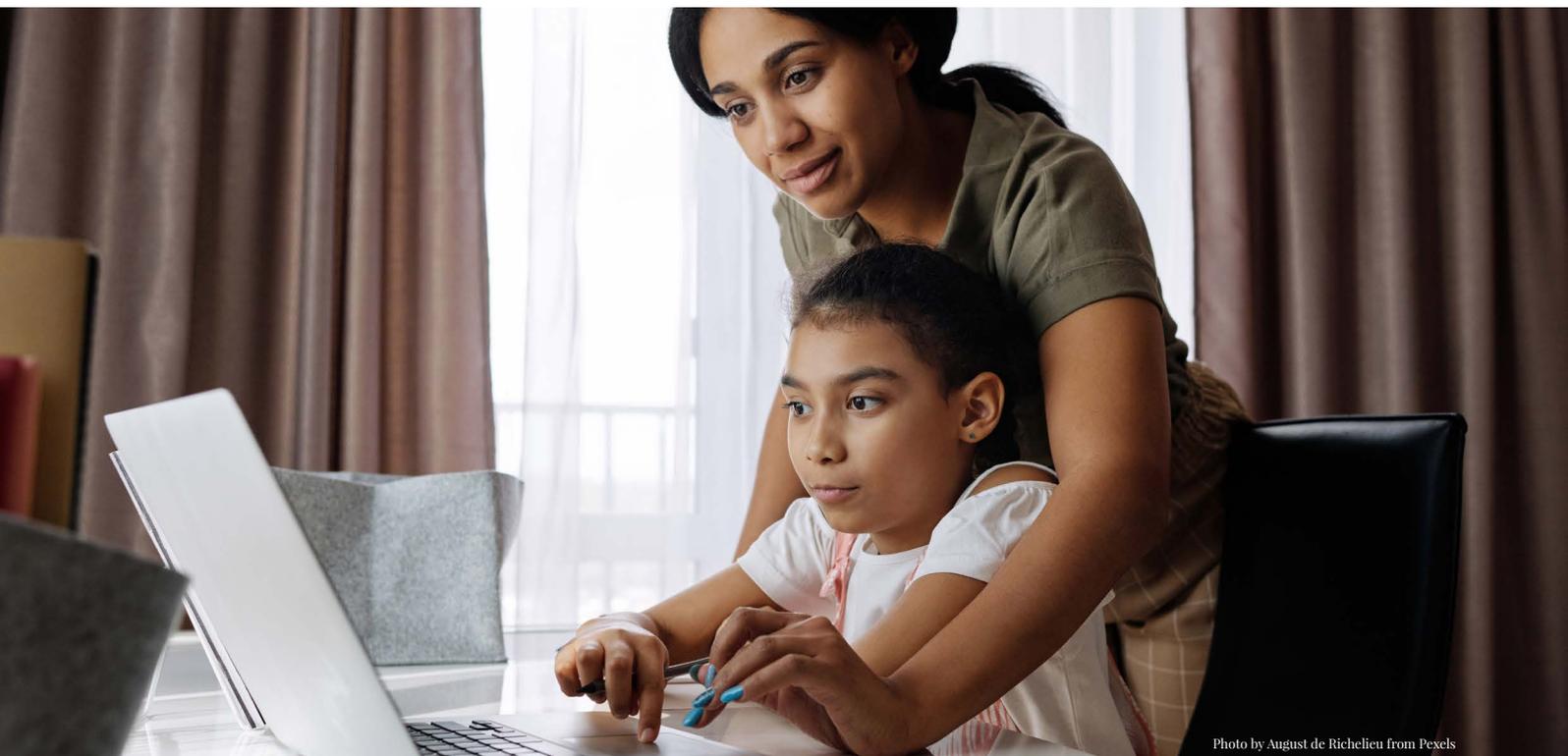


Photo by August de Richelieu from Pexels





Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels

Covid-19 has altered our personal interactions and severely restricted our physical ability to connect with loved ones. Whilst some countries are starting to see restrictions lifted, others are seeing few changes. It's likely that you and your family are adapting to the "new normal" and it's important not to forget everything you are learning from this experience.

There are numerous innovative ways we have been able to remind ourselves that we are all in this together (such as celebrating our front line health workers) and we can continue to find connection even whilst being apart.

Deepen the parent-child connection:

Taking on the role of employee, parent and teacher has been a steep learning curve and has most likely thrown you into a situation where you feel out of your depth. No doubt you received a tsunami of activity suggestions too.

In early childhood education, we don't start with the activity, we start with the child. Before we plan, we observe, we listen and we connect. As a parent, use that specific and targeted knowledge about your

child's interests to identify what resources you need and then "pull" it from the internet. This will help you cut through the noise of online suggestions. Use the power of reflection to build even stronger connections as you learn more about the things they enjoy.

Consider involving your children in your hobby too, encouraging them to be a part of the decision-making process. Dinner table conversations are a brilliant way of brainstorming ideas. It is these healthy habits that you might strive to maintain post-Covid.

Manage work expectations:

Connections have become more personal as the lines between work and home are blurred for those working from home. We have seen our work colleagues like never before, including their children as they sneak into camera view during virtual meetings. I hope after the frenzy of the initial impact, you settled into a rhythm with your work colleagues, though don't be afraid to block times you are not available, or to cut back on online meetings. Ensure that when you do connect online, to check in with each team member for a few minutes, because they may be struggling.



Reimagine school work: For those homeschooling, you have had a rare opportunity to see what your child does at school and for you to connect with them in a different way, not as a teacher, but as someone who has become a bigger part of their learning journey.

Continue to find a workable solution that you and your child can maintain and feel comfortable with. You may not be able to do everything the school may be asking. Remember, it's not really home schooling in the true sense of the word - it's just making the best of the situation you are in. Tap into the school network for support and understanding. Accept that you will have good days and bad days - it is part of the journey.

Keep in touch with family and friends: It is important that in times of uncertainty, you find anchors for your thoughts and outlets for your emotions. Your circle of family and friends can provide these emotional stabilisers and it is important to recognise your network of support has not disappeared, just because you are not able to physically connect. Through technology, we are still

able to hear and see one another, which enables us to connect and feel comfort. Try and find inventive and fun ways to stay connected by sharing small moments together.

Maintain your child's friendships: When you consider the amount of contact your child needs with their friends, it is helpful to consider which age bracket they fall into.

In the preschool years, relationship skills are forming and children spend most of their time with their main caregivers. Friendships are reliant on both verbal and non-verbal communication, making online communication less effective.

Through primary school, deeper friendships begin to emerge. Primary school children are able to verbalise and communicate more effectively and benefit from connecting with their peers.

By the time they reach secondary school, they will have developed deeper bonds with their peers and start to crave independence from parents. Friends are everything at this age and the concept of social isolation is almost unthinkable. They can manage their interactions independently.



Photo by Tatiana Syrikova from Pexels



Photo by Julia M Cameron from Pexels



Know when to disconnect: The volume of information we receive contributes to our mental workload, affects our ability to focus and ultimately leaves us feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Take this time to reflect on how you manage your own information. Give yourself permission to declutter, unsubscribe and see the beauty in a less busy calendar.

Find moments of solitude: Due to increased levels of isolation, normal routines have been changed, and those precious moments of solitude may have completely disappeared, such as a child-free commute to work or having a quiet lunch out.

You need to carve out time for self-connection throughout the day, to help you to recalibrate and replenish your energy levels. Try something you enjoy whether it's reading, or working on a passion project, even if it's just trying a new meditation or a yoga class.

Conclusion: What positives can you take from this situation and what healthy family habits have you adopted that you might want to keep post-COVID? This situation has offered us an opportunity to re-discover the importance of connection and to never take it for granted again.



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Helen **Lewis**

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Betsy's Positive Videos

Life can be tough at the best of times, but throw in a pandemic, job losses, race riots and economic uncertainty, and it's enough to push us all over the edge! But in the face of adversity, there are always reasons to be cheerful and nobody brings this to life more than Betsy Griffith, a six year old girl based in England.

In her six short years, Betsy has faced a brain tumour, chemotherapy and blindness. And yet, despite all of these challenges, she remains upbeat and shares her messages of positivity to the world via her increasingly popular YouTube channel.

Whatever kind of day you're having, check out and subscribe to **Betsy's YouTube Channel** and bring a ray of sunshine into your life.



WATCH BETSY





Thanks Helen & Helen for your sensible advice. It can get very challenging being both parent and educator, especially with work thrown into the mix. Community is an important word in our time, and here to help us understand how we can connect with different types of community is Simon Shepherd, followed by Kristen Marconi and Jessica Bancroft.

What Is A Community & How Can You Interact With It?

by Simon Shepherd

Most people are positive about the word “community”.

They want to help it, be part of it and build it, but what actually is it? Does the word describe the 2747 people who you have arbitrarily connected with on a social media platform? Is it the affinity you share with the fellow supporters of your favourite football club or the affiliation you have with other members of your professional body? Is it a description defined by geographical boundaries, or does it bind you through religion, sexuality or another demographical marker?

Defined as “a group of people either living in one particular area, or considered a unit because of their common interests, social group, ethnicity or nationality” the word community reaches far and wide. It is one of those words that can mean pretty much anything, yet it often amounts to nothing. In this article I haven’t tried to develop the meaning of the word but have taken a look at three different ways that we can interact with it.

Community Giving relates to pounds and pennies or dollars and cents, a financial transaction that is made either by an individual or an organisation.

A key catalyst for “community giving” occurred in 1984 when Sir Bob Geldof staged the Live Aid concerts in London and Philadelphia. Moved by the poverty and starvation in Ethiopia, Geldof brought together an array of stars from the world of music and put on a show, televised to millions, the like of which had never been seen before.

Whilst the event was spectacular, it was the emotional pleas and the use of film to show the devastation that pulled at the emotional heart strings of so many people. Delivered in a concentrated timeframe the message was raw, challenging and gnawed away at the conscience; suddenly charity was not nice, and the wallets of the masses opened up.



Community supporting is an interaction that is no longer about money. You may be an accountant who is happy to give up some time to help oversee the finances of your child's youth club, or you may be someone who marshals at the local park run. The commodity has now become time or knowledge.

Many organisations who have traditionally delivered their "corporate social responsibility" strategy through the donation of money are starting to complement this with the donation of time; examples may include committing a team of people for a day to tidy up the local park. This is seen as a win / win. The action is clearly good for the park and there will be benefits for the organisation too.

Community being

The investment of time and money are straightforward; the concept of "being" is nebulous and tougher to explain. Fabian Pfortmuller, co-founder of The Together Institute, suggests that for all the dialogue around shared interest, purpose, intent and togetherness, if a "fully trusting relationship" is not present then the soul of the community is absent. My view is that whilst "community being" may still involve money and time, it is centred around people who have a mutual sense of purpose and are bound by reliability, acceptance and safety. Community being is something that makes you solid on the outside and smile on the inside.

An example of community being

In 2005 I moved out of London and headed 20 miles north to the city of St Albans. There are many ways to integrate with the local community, but with children aged nine and six, the school playground was an obvious starting point and I soon discovered the existence of a dads' cricket team that sold itself as a collection of gentleman, players and useful chaps.

This eclectic mix turned out at least once a week and played matches against other school-inspired teams. The cricket was poor, I was poor, but there were two factors that made this so enjoyable. The first was the venue: Verulamium Park provides an appalling pitch, but is surrounded by a collection of magnificent trees



and overlooked by the inspiring St Albans Cathedral – it is a beautiful place to spend a summer’s evening. The second was the camaraderie; a post-match visit to the pub furthered the bond and activities such as golf days and Christmas parties were a great way to meet new people and settle into the local community. Happy days.

During my first season, one of the members was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and two years later he passed away leaving a wife and daughter. He died aged 41. Inevitably, there was a sense of loss, help was offered to the family and the community rallied around in the same way that is typically seen in times of grief. What was interesting was that this rally, unlike so many others, didn’t dissipate and disappear – if anything it grew. A decade on and the group continues to play cricket and socialise, but the greater purpose now revolves around supporting each other, the families, and the local community.

When I think about why this group of cricketing dads continue to do so much, I am drawn to a couple of possibilities. Firstly, human beings enjoy giving; whilst good deeds help others, they also make the giver feel good too. Secondly, the death of a fellow cricketer

and friend had highlighted just how vulnerable we are. For some, it was a catalyst for a visible and major shift in their personal lives. For others the impact was less obvious, but for all, the event triggered the importance of togetherness. Community being can, in some ways, be considered an insurance policy – if something happens to me I know that there will be a group of people out there who will help me and those who are important to me as best they can.

And finally, as a pandemic highlights the importance of gloves, masks and sanitizer, and promotes health through diet and exercise; we should also consider the concept of psycho-social immunity. Research suggests that love, laughter and connection can increase the level of lymphocytes, the blood cells that help us deal with infections; if you are looking for an additional layer of protection, it may be worth exploring your ‘community being’.



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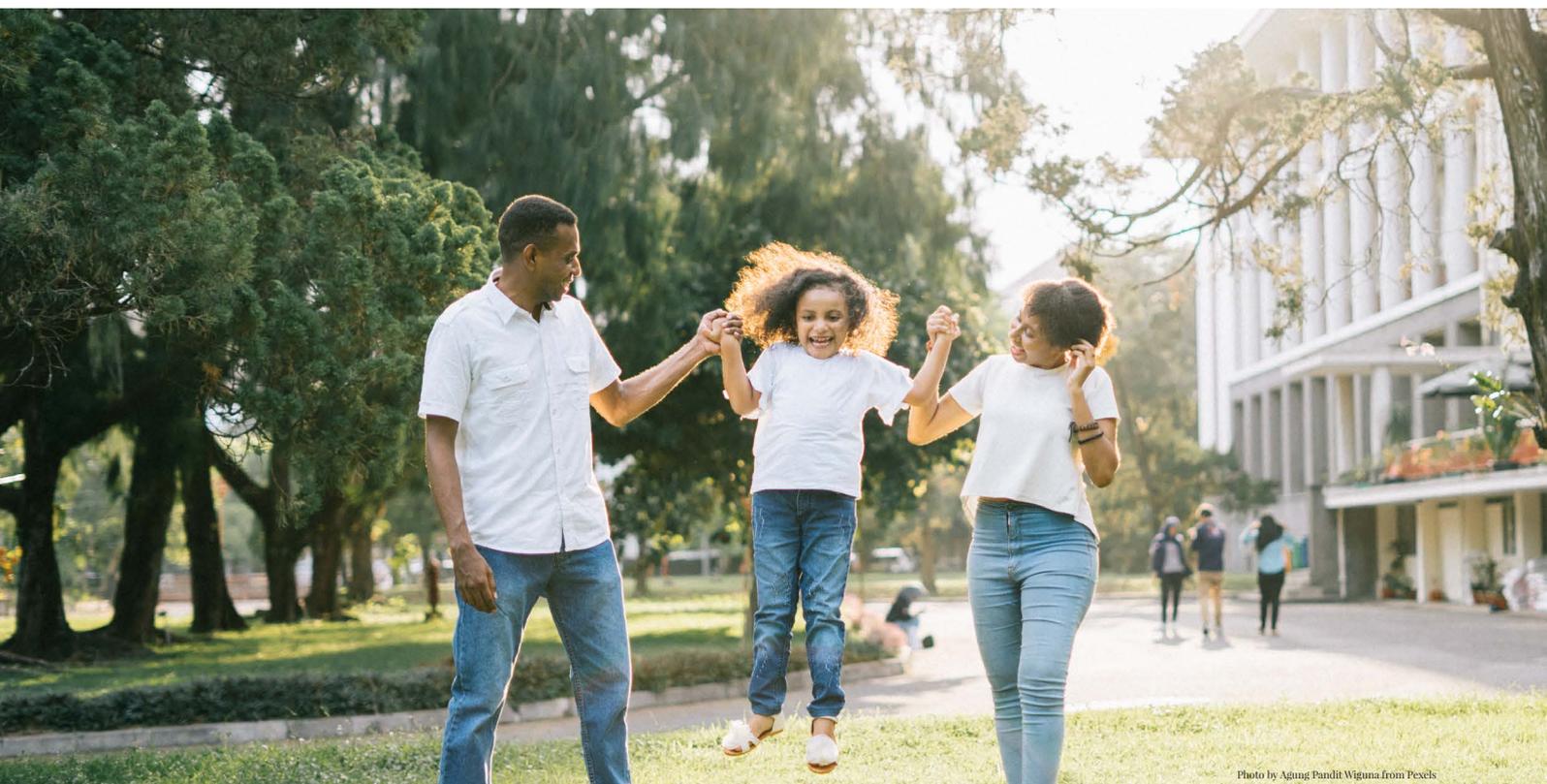


Photo by Agung Pandit Wiguna from Pexels





Connecting To Community

by Kristen Marconi & Jessica Bancroft

Daybreaker is a global community, lifestyle and movement, centred around wellness and connection. With 500,000 members and counting in 28 cities globally, founder Radha Agrawal is on a mission to end loneliness and isolation. Creating community and belonging is the reason we do what we do.

At the core of all events is **connection**. We need connection to other humans for survival. Isolation is completely against our evolutionary needs. So how in times of having to stay away from crowds at a safe

space from others and “flatten the curve” do we stay connected to community and in doing so maintain our mental wellbeing?

Choose your different types of connection and relationships to fit your different needs and schedule them in the diary like they're essential to your health, because they are! Allow flexibility when needed of course but really keep a check of how you're feeling as it's easy to get into an avoidance isolation loop when stressed. And that's when you need healthy connection the most. It's also easy to get into conflict if you're relying on the people you live with to be everything you need at all times.



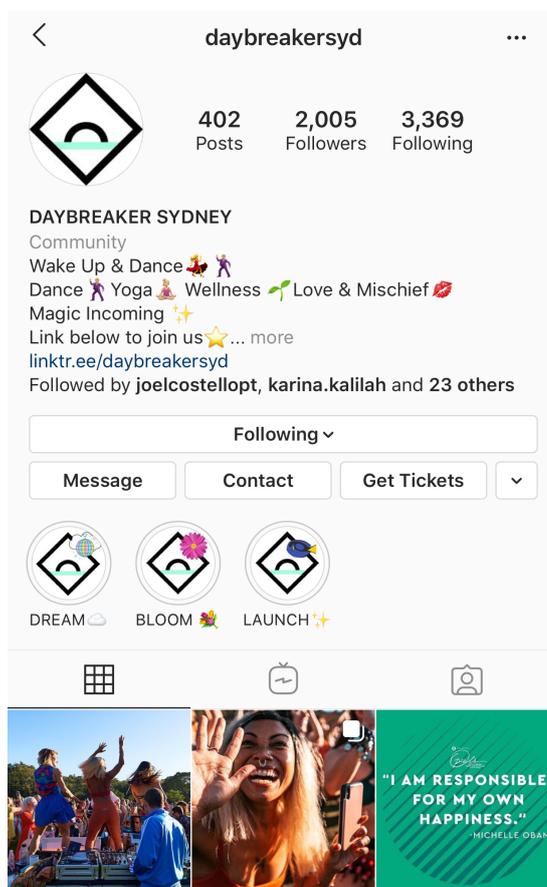
Develop some self-awareness of when you need alone time, partner time and also when to connect to others outside your relationship. Friends, mentors, workout buddies, music friends, work colleagues - it's all needed. The main tools we're using to get our connections are Facebook Communities, Whatsapp groups, Zoom meetings, Instagram live, Skype, YouTube and online virtual studios. We have the tools and additional skills to connect even more than we did before isolation. Some of us miss hugging our friends but we really don't need to miss talking to them, training with them, even eating meals. Most of Australia is lucky now to be moving out of isolation, opening up with safe spacing and smaller classes but these useful tools still remain to connect us to people all round the world. This time will hopefully teach us how to use technology as a connector in a more positive and authentic way.

Connect to a like-minded community:

Find people who like the same things as you. Facebook community groups are a great way to find people in your city. Ours is Daybreaker Sydney and it's a home to house music, yoga, wellness, fitness, meditation and fun lovers like us. We're pretty open to all involved and let them share their wellness offerings too so we all know what's going on and can share. Name your interest - there's almost definitely a group of people online connecting over it. Probably communities you were involved with in real life, like your fitness studio, sports club, or other interest. A favourite of mine, Travel Play Live, is for women to connect and find other friends to travel with. I know we can't travel right now but I would hope we will again one day soon.

Connect for support: This is a very strange time. We are all going to need to support each other. Kindness Pandemic is a great group on Facebook designed to support positive connection and kindness at this time. Also Feel More Good, where people are gifting their fitness, meditation and other wellbeing practises to help people feel better and have open conversations. What I've loved is to also start little Whatsapp or Facebook Messenger groups

with close friends, to check in on each other. We have the groups for messages then have times throughout the week where whoever's available jumps online for a Zoom meeting to be with each other face-to-face in real time. I'm looking forward to my lunchtime Friday group check-in with some amazing supportive friends and another chat tomorrow with my self-proclaimed Good Vibe Crew. Check in with your communities and set dates to get on that Zoom call or Facetime and really ask how they are doing and be there for each other.

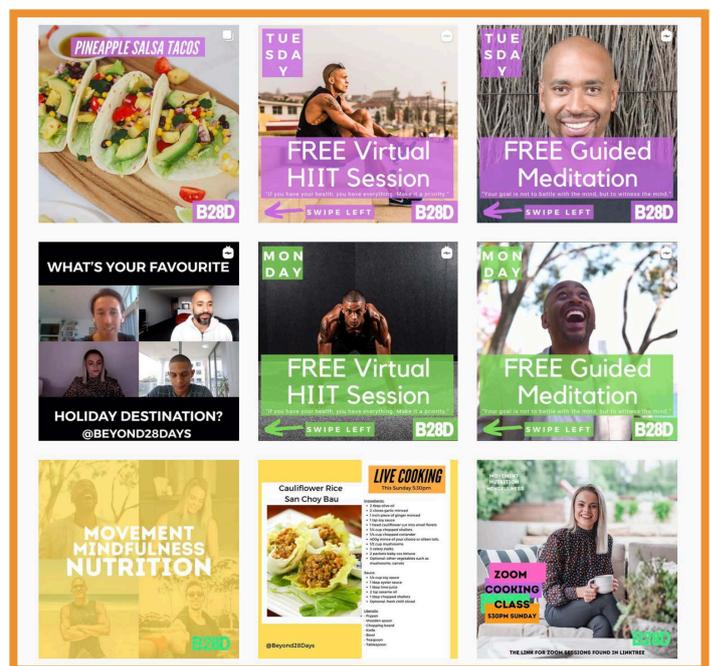
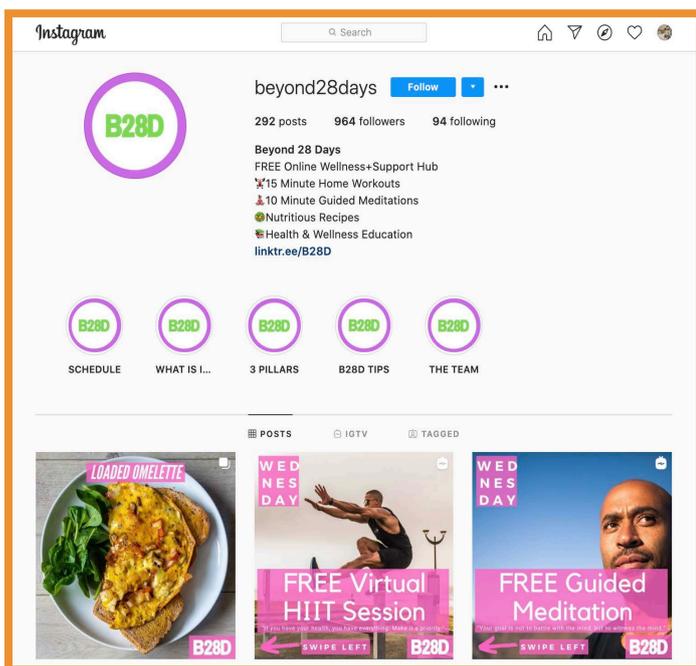


Connect to get moving. Fitness and movement is essential. If you've got a routine and some accountability it's so much easier to stick to. Plan workouts with your friends. Check in with your favourite trainers. Join fitness groups on Instagram or Whatsapp. Start a challenge - there's so many, from 21 days to 12 weeks online. Our favourites at the moment are Beyond28days on Instagram for our daily fitness and meditation check in, ClassPass & Mindbody for finding online studio workouts, Live It Up's 21 day challenges, LIVE dance events, dance class online pop ups, yoga classes with our favourite instructors on Zoom and I'm looking forward to Really Lively launching soon as it's been a long worked-on passion project to help people understand the importance of movement, play and breath to our mind-body connection, mental health, recovery, immunity and wellbeing.

Connect to learn: Join a study group or online course group. What have you always wanted to upskill on? Or learn to create - there's a heap of free or affordable online courses. I've got friends doing a Science of Happiness and Wellbeing course with Yale University right now. Other friends are learning guitar, music production, languages, dance, how to make meals and DIY home styling.

As a community, Daybreaker completed an anti-racist study group around Ibram X Kendi's book How To Be Anti-Racist, their goal being to learn, listen and to find a way to consider anti-racism work as liberating and energising rather than sombre and triggering. Education as a way to deeper compassion and understanding. When you understand what has been done to other cultures over generations it can be a lot but we're learning to come together to change the narrative - it's often far easier to love each other, have compassion and support change and healing when we know why it's needed.

Connect over a meal: Plan a Zoom dinner. You can all cook individual dishes and meet at a certain time or order takeaway and support the local restaurant you would have gone to eat at. Order at the same time to see who wins and gets their food first. Zoom and Skype are so great here. You can connect on video, eat and chat and have music in the background, just as if you were in the same room together! I've been doing this for years with friends and family that live overseas. They'll have breakfast when I'm having dinner or vice versa but it's still so nice! If you pick someone in the same time zone, it's even easier to navigate. Our friends at Beyond 28 Days have started Sunday night cooking classes on zoom. Check their insta for more @beyond28days



Connect to serve: “The secret to living is giving” is a Tony Robbins quote that really resonates with me and the easiest way to create a sense of abundance instead of lack in this time is to give to someone. There’s actually a thing called a “givers high” - it just feels good. It can be as simple as an act of kindness which is where The Kindness Pandemic is focussed. A friend messaged us and sent over cooked meals, and has gifted teaching yoga or meditation classes. Jess has been leaving kindness notes and encouragement on Post It’s in random places to help cheer people up. It doesn’t need to cost. Giving your time to someone is a gift. Giving your skills to those that need counts too. Starting your own community donation class to a cause you want to support is a nice way to connect and give.

Connect to teach: When you learn something to teach you absorb it so much better. For those already teaching and coaching, helping people grow and learn in this time is helping them keep their brain healthy and out of worry and in growth mode.

Share and teach - it’s so important. If that’s a real skill you have, there’s definitely an audience for it. It could be as simple as getting on Zoom with your friends’ kids to help them with their homework and give your friend a break that’s teaching & serving. Share your skills.

Online community connection tools:

Zoom, Instagram, Facebook, Skype, Facetime. Use the technology for connection rather than escaping and scrolling - it’s far more rewarding.

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Photo by Gustavo Fring on Pexels





Thanks so much Simon, Kristen and Jessica. Community feels even more important during these times. Finally, my family have reached a point where we're ready to welcome a dog into our family. Research shows that having a dog or any pet for that matter brings with it a huge amount of wellbeing benefits. Let's welcome Brand Strategist, Rachel Bevans, to share some insights from her own personal experience and the wider research.

The Power Of Pets On People's Wellbeing

by Rachel Bevans

It's a known fact that pets, particularly dogs, contribute to our total wellbeing.

Pet ownership is increasing around the world, and the current proportion of households with dogs in various countries is:

- US 50%,
- Brazil 44%,
- Australia 40%,
- UK and France 26%,
- Germany 20%,
- China 16% and
- Japan 14%.¹

People are putting off having children until later, if at all, and our fur babies are filling the gap. And we certainly are opening up their purses for them - natural and organic food and treats, clothing, toys and bedding, along with medical treatments, are all seen as essential items for our much loved family companions.

Whilst cost remains a key barrier to owning a dog, the other two main barriers of time and living environment are gradually being broken down by an influx of dog walking and sitting services and political legislation rewriting, acknowledging the benefits of pets to individual and community wellbeing.

With pet rescue, adoption and fostering becoming more popular in general, we've seen quite a dramatic increase in this area since the start of the coronavirus. Facing social isolation, with the barrier of time eliminated and exercising dogs seen as a permissible essential activity, people around the world have been jumping to the occasion. Compared to the same time last year, RSPCA in Australia saw an increase of 40%; Battersea Dogs and Cats in London doubled their adoptions; and Foster Dogs and Muddy Paws Rescue in New York saw 1000% increase, receiving thousands of applications per week versus 100 on average.^{2,3,4}

Workplaces are also cottoning onto the benefits, allowing people to bring their dogs into work, resulting in a significant difference in people's moods, relationships with one another and general office vibe, with a positive impact on both the employee and customer experience. Some are even going a step further acknowledging the importance of employees' pets as family, with pawternity leave and flexible work to look after their "kids".

1. Household pet statistics have been sourced from the most credible local market statistics body or bodies in eight key markets.

2. <https://amp.smh.com.au/national/nsw/pet-adoptions-boom-as-people-look-for-love-in-all-the-fluffy-places-20200326-p54ed8.html>

3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/coronavirus-dog-cat-pet-adoption-battersea-rehome-covid-19-a9426741.html?amp>

4. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/30/us/dogs-adoption-surge-trnd/index.html>





© Benjamin Haynes & Rachel Bevans

The pet-friendly trend is also extending to businesses such as clothes shops, car service centres, cafés and pubs with dedicated outdoor areas to please the pawrents and to enhance social interactions. This is having such a positive impact on customer experience, not only entertaining people as they wait and causing people to spend larger amounts, but also bringing them back again for more!

A survey conducted by the Human Bond Research Institute (HABRI) amongst 2000 pet owners in the US found that 98% considered their pet as part of the family, with 87% more likely to buy products from pet-friendly businesses and 58% (74% millennials) agreeing that employers should consider allowing employees to bring pets to work.⁵ Definite reasons for businesses to become more pet friendly!

Research On The Wellbeing Benefits Of Pet Ownership

Pet ownership, in particular dogs, has a reciprocal effect, and studies show that pet wellbeing and human wellbeing are strongly linked.

1. Overall health, doctor visits and relationships

Longitudinal surveys across Germany and Australia compared people's health and pet ownership over time. Findings indicated that "people who continuously own a pet are the healthiest group and people who cease to have a pet or never had one are less healthy"; and "pet owners make about 15% fewer annual doctor visits than non-owners."⁶

From the HABRI study, 88% of pet owners agreed doctors and specialists should recommend pets to patients for healthier living, and 65% said they would have a more favourable view of a doctor who discussed the health benefits of the human-animal bond with them.⁵

5. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-005-5072-z>

6. <https://bmcpyschiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-018-1613-2>





Photo by La Miko from Pexels

2. Mental and emotional wellbeing

A systematic review of 17 qualitative and quantitative studies unearthed the benefits of pet ownership in providing emotional and mental stability through being an unconditional source of support and acting as a non-judgmental sounding board.⁷

Source Of Support

Pets provide a consistent source of comfort, affection and support, which people can trust and rely on, available instantaneously without request and intuitively, especially in times of crisis.

Opportunities For Communication

Pets provide a safe environment where people can open up without fear of being judged or being a burden to others, allowing them to express their feelings and clarify their thoughts without interruption, criticism, advice or betraying confidence.

Emotional Stability

The study states that: “By providing unconditional positive regard, pets promoted emotional stability through the regulation of feelings, management of stress and helping people to cope with difficult life events.”⁷

Mental Stability

One study focussing on military veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder had significant findings for the benefits of canine companionship, including effects on reducing feelings of loneliness, depression, worry and irritability, and increased feelings of calmness.

3. Connections wellbeing

The review also identified the power of pets for creating connections with self and others.⁷

⁷. <https://habri.org/2016-pet-owners-survey>



Connectedness

They found that “people reported a profound connection with their pet, sometimes preferring relationships with pets over relationships with other humans and viewing pets as replacement family members”.

They found that pets provide a source of physical warmth and companionship and reduced feelings of isolation. For people living alone, pets provide “connectedness”, reassurance, and normalcy.⁷

Identity & Self-Worth

Pets give unconditional love and affection which fosters self-worth and alignment.

They enable a sense of purpose and give meaning to people’s lives, giving them a newfound sense of self-awareness.

Social Interaction

Pets increase social interaction with friends and family, facilitating meeting new people and encouraging social and community integration.

4. Physical wellbeing

Exercise

In the HABRI study, 54% of pet owners reported physical health improvements from pet ownership and 55% agreed that a friend’s or family member’s physical health has improved from pet ownership.⁶

Walking or running, picking up and throwing balls, chasey and tug, all provide good physical exercise for both owner and dog, with additional benefits gained by walking outdoors and in nature.

Nutrition

Increasingly we’re feeding dogs more nutritious food, with the trends in pet food following those in human food. In particular, across various online platforms, and through research, I’ve observed two reciprocal paths to wellbeing, driven by pet ownership:

1. Humans who eat healthier themselves are relaying this to their dogs and learning additional information along the way.
2. Humans who make healthy food for their dogs are inspired to do so for themselves.

What is also noteworthy is that among people suffering from mental health issues like depression that might otherwise prevent them from preparing a decent meal, simply preparing good food for their pets encourages them to prepare a good meal for themselves.⁷

And how lovely it is to be able to share your food with your very own fur baby.

6. <https://bmcp psychiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-018-1613-2>

7. <https://habri.org/2016-pet-owners-survey>

Written by:



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Final Words

So there we have it. Another bumper issue of EQUILIBRIUM. As we close this issue, let's remind ourselves of our journey towards EQUILIBRIUM through the pages of this issue and the two that have come before.

Issue one focused on the physical body and the tools and habits that we can apply to support our body whilst we're on this earth. *Issue two* focused on the mindset and emotions that drive the essence of our personal, day-to-day experience of life. And **this issue** focused on Connection and the different ways that we are connected and seek connection with each other and other forms of nature.

We're living in a time when loneliness and isolation are significant problems in our world. We can change that. You can change that. As Seth Godin wrote: "Our goal isn't to touch everyone. Our goal is to touch someone. To change someone. Just one person. If you get good at that, do 5, then do 100. But stop worrying about everyone. Everyone doesn't matter."

Let me leave you with one closing thought. Through these pages, our discussion of connection has covered social connection, romantic connection, animal connection, environmental connection and self connection. If you replace the word "connection" with the word "love", you realise that everything we have been discussing boils down to love. Compassion, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Friendship are all different words for Love. Love is what makes the world go round. Hate and Love cannot coexist.

As human beings, we all have tremendous capacity for love in our hearts. Many of us have closed our hearts and become full of anger, rage and despair. At this time of change, uncertainty, disruption and fear, I ask you to tap into your personal capacity for love and love unconditionally so that love and connection become the norm, and we can repair the deep wounds in our world and return to the whole.

Until next time, keep safe, keep well and keep in EQUILIBRIUM.

Lawrence Mitchell
Editor

Ps: if you missed any of the issues, download them for free at totalwellbeing.co



Photo by Helena Lopes from Pexels



*"Be humble, for you are made of earth.
Be noble, for you are made of stars."*

- Serbian proverb

Photo by Snapwire from Pexels

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