

Holistic

Therapist Magazine

APR/MAY/JUN 2022
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NEW THERAPISTS:

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SPECIAL:

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PLUS, the latest news and research, HRT alternatives, mental wellbeing, star signs for success, art as a therapeutic tool, nutrition, books, recipes, inspirational people, new products and so much more...



Foreword



Spring News from Complementary Health Professionals

Hello everyone and we hope you are enjoying the better weather now that Spring is in full bloom. We have had such a busy time in March and April that our feet have not touched the ground! Complementary Therapy Week took a great deal of work and organisation and we learnt so much from the process. It also generated lots of enquiries and we are just about caught up with those now.

We have had some issues with our database. It is not an online database so is very secure but that in itself has caused some issues. The database was inherited from back when we were called the AAPA and probably was never anticipated for the volume we now require. We are in the process of selecting a company to create a new all singing, all dancing database and this will allow things to run much smoother. Whilst all of this work is taking place, we do apologise if you have not received your renewal notifications in March, April and May. If your membership has expired, you can check your membership certificate and just go ahead and renew on the CHP website as normal and we will honour that for you. We will however be sending out individual emails to everyone soon with renewal information if you are due at this time of the year. In recompense, we will start your membership for twelve months when you new renewal is activated.

Membership Fees

We are pleased to announce, that unlike other associations, we will not be raising our fees for membership. We have maintained the same fees for the past 6 years and as prices are going up in just about every aspect of life at the moment, we want you to be assured that we are not going to be one of them. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that unlike other large associations, our conference is free to our premier members and includes hot buffet and beverages throughout the day.

This is really amazing and helps those of you that need to travel long distances and stay overnight in order to attend.

National Complementary Therapy Week 2022 (20th – 27th March)

This was a huge undertaking and we would like to thank all of our accredited schools who took part and offered free webinars and presentations. If you missed it, the presentations have been uploaded to the CHP YouTube Channel, so you can watch them at your leisure. It was widely advertised in Holistic Therapist Magazine, Positive Health Online and Massage World Magazine and we would like to thank those editors for their support. As well as us promoting it, other associations did too as well as our voluntary self-regulatory body, the CNHC.

We feel this is important and it will grow year on year and it is an excellent way for us to get our message out there about the value of our therapies. It is also valuable for you as therapists as you can use this event every year to promote your services and get the word out in your local community about what you offer and spread your success stories.

Also, if you would like this png image for your website or other marketing materials, do contact the office and we can email it to you. It is also in the member's area of the website along with lots of other amazing information and discounts. Please note that the passcode for the member's area changes every May and the new one will have been in the email sending you this newsletter.



CHP Annual Conference

We have scheduled this year's conference for the 15th October 2022 and it will be at the same venue as last year following the positive feedback from those of you who attended. Although most enjoyed the food from the feedback, we will ensure that some fruit is also available this year!

The theme for this year's conference will be Musculoskeletal injuries and we have already confirmed the speakers from EMMETT UK, Spiral Stabilization, Jing Advanced Massage and Neuroskeletal Re-alignment Therapy. We will be offering two workshops during the conference that will be repeated so that everyone has the opportunity to attend all of the talks and workshops on offer. Booking will open in mid-June once the agenda is complete and you will be able to book through the member's area of the website. The closing date for bookings will be the 20th September and we need to confirm numbers for catering and for the speakers.

Last year we invited Jonathan from Oshadi and Carl from Massage World and this was so well received by the members that attended that we have decided to invite some more companies to attend that sell interesting products at a special discount for CHP members.





continued...

Therapy Awards 2022

As usual, your chance to win one of the prestigious awards will be up for grabs. The nomination form is on our website so you just need to give your clients and colleagues the link and they can nominate you:

<https://www.complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk/award-nomination-form>. These awards

look great on your CV and also wonderful for using on your website and marketing materials. We love these awards as they really allow us to showcase the amazing work our members do. To see previous winners, see the CHP website. Last year's winner has also written an article, which you can read on the articles page of our website about her work in the NHS using reiki in mental health services.

Quarterly Zoom Information Share

At the practitioner meeting at Complementary Therapy Week, it was suggested that we offer a quarterly zoom meeting for our members and we would love to hear from you if you think this is a good idea. We will not be putting on talks, it will just be a place to connect with other members and ask questions and share knowledge and experiences. So, watch this space and if there is a great deal of interest, we will announce the dates in the next newsletter.

NHS Opportunity

As part of our work with the GCMT, we have received a request from UCLH in central London. They have set up a staff massage service and are in the process of setting up a designated space for staff wellness. The qualified therapists already working there all say how much they enjoy the experience. Many have said how much they have learned and improved, working under quite different conditions to those which they may be used to. As well as offering 50-minute couch-based treatments in the UCLH 'Spa' they also have a 'Roving Service' which takes non-couch-based shorter treatments onto the wards which allows maximum accessibility for many frontline teams. They are looking for more volunteers. There are over 10,000 staff working in the Trust and the

mission is to get a treatment to everyone! If you are interested, contact amanda.tata@nhs.net.



GCMT Update (The Council for Soft Tissue Therapies)

As many of you are aware, Carole has been working with the GCMT on several working groups and in particular, on the one for sexual harassment. Following on from a consultation that took place last December, we were all amazed at how prevalent a problem this is. Two documents have now been finalised and Carole will be using this to put a CHP Guide together in the near future, which will be published in the member's area of the CHP website for you to access. It will include legal advice on what you can do legally to report anyone who has made lewd suggestions or asked for inappropriate treatment along with a whole guide for the "lone worker" on things you can do within your practice to minimise problems.

The GCMT is currently working on a revised version for its website and we will let you know when this has been finalised. The next GCMT meeting will take place on 16th June 2022 and we will report on any useful information from that in the next newsletter.

Reiki Council Update



The Reiki Council are currently working to revise its anatomy and physiology exam for Reiki practitioners. Not a requirement in the CNHC core curriculum but the Reiki has approved the

need to all reiki practitioners to have a basic A&P qualification, so there be a CPD course for reiki practitioners and it is being led by CHP. The next meeting is on 18th May where Dan will be presenting the information.



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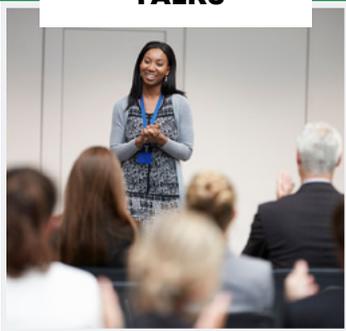
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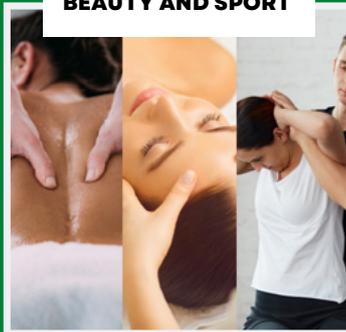
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Editor's Letter



Hello again,

This issue is all about success both in business and life. It's not, however about that old-fashioned yuppy take on success. We're not talking about success meaning you have to own a designer wardrobe, fly by private jet, have a holiday home in Tuscany or buy a new car. That's not what success means today.

How do you define success? Once it was probably fairly straightforward for most people. Success was doing well at school, finding a job, falling in love, settling down after marriage, buying a house and having a couple of children that you hoped would do better than you had. You'd know you'd made it when you bought your first car, went on your first holiday abroad or when one of your kids was the first person in your family to graduate from university.

With the 1980s, success became synonymous with wealth and possessions as we moved towards a more polarised and materialistic society. Cheap credit led people to spend money they didn't really have on things they didn't really need. The era of the 125% mortgage was followed by global recession after recession.

So what does success mean now? How do we define it and how do we achieve it? Success is now far more personal than in previous generations. We don't have that procession of milestones to measure ourselves against. How can it be the same when a third of adults are still living at home when they are 25? When the average age of a bride, at 31, means they fall into the category of geriatric mothers? A generation ago, they'd have been buying their first flats and pursuing a career. A generation before that, they'd be married and be looking after a child or two. Now, even young people with a fortunate start in life face a mountain of student debt, frightening rents and a cost of living that's getting out of control. Social mobility and standards of living are going backwards. This generation will be worse off than their parents.

In these circumstances, it's less about fitting with the external view of what makes a person successful and working out what it means to you as an individual. It's not about an excess of wealth, but about getting the balance between work and other aspects of your life right. It's about feeling safe, happy, healthy and fulfilled.

We're here to help you find success on your own terms!

Love,

Love, Alison and everyone at Holistic Therapist x

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OTHER ISSUE 42 CONTRIBUTORS AND PEOPLE WE'D LIKE TO THANK

OUR THANKS TO ALL THE OTHER CONTRIBUTORS AND THOSE BEHIND THE SCENES WHO HELPED OUT TO GET THIS ISSUE TO PRINT.

Openers

All the latest news and dates for your diary...



GERSON SUPPORT CHARITY IS WOUND UP

Following concerns expressed by the Charity Commission, a small charity that promoted treatments based on diet, nutritional supplements and enemas to cancer patients has been wound up.

The Gerson Support Group has now been removed from the charity register after the regulator opened a compliance case into its work. Under new guidance issued in 2018, charities which promote alternative medicine or therapies have to provide objective, scientific evidence in support of their claims.

The charity was registered in 1997 and its own board agreed that it would not meet the requirement

to provide scientific evidence, should it have been trying to register today. The charity regulator says it is exploring a number of other cases examining alternative and complementary medicine charities.

Speaking to charity sector trade magazine *Third Sector*, a spokesperson for GSG commented, 'The trustees of the Gerson Support Group are extremely sad that the charity had to close down. They are aware of many thousands of people worldwide who have been helped by Dr Gerson's therapy, and personally know people who believe they would not be alive today but for Dr Gerson's work.'

CANADIAN GPs PRESCRIBE NATURE

Doctors in Canada's British Columbia province are increasingly prescribing the great outdoors as a way of improving the mental and physical wellbeing of their patients.

It's part of the PaRx programme organised by the BC Parks Foundation. "We do have a standard recommendation that you spend at least two hours in nature each week and at least 20 minutes each time to maximize those health benefits," PaRx director and family physician Dr. Melissa Lem explained. "There's almost no condition that nature isn't good for, from diabetes to high blood pressure, ADHD in children, anxiety and depression."

PaRx has already changed the way many Canadian medical professionals and their patients think about nature, Lem said. But the



program still has a long way to go.

"When medical schools start teaching nature, prescribing and recommending nature as just important as a healthy diet and lifestyle, I'll know we're getting there," she said.

The prescription allows free access to 80 sites including national parks, marine conservation areas and historic places throughout Canada.

WORDS OF WISDOM...

If we could give every individual the right amount of nourishment and exercise, not too little and not too much, we would have found the safest way to health.

Hippocrates

SHORTAGE OF BEAUTY THERAPISTS

According to a report in a beauty trade publication, spas and salons are finding it increasingly difficult to find beauty therapists who are happy to work during the evenings and weekends. Since the pandemic, many people have re-evaluated their work/life balance and are choosing not to work for 40 or more hours a week

on low salaries, particularly where childcare costs need to be factored in. The labour market has also contracted since BREXIT as fewer beauty therapists have come into the UK.

While no figures are available, it is believed that a similar shift is happening in the holistic therapy sector.

FORECAST: KEY TRENDS FOR CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS

A US food broker has unveiled their key trends and predictions for conscious consumers in the coming year. Younger consumers in particular are becoming more conscious of the impacts resulting from the way they shop, consume and dispose of everyday items. They are also better educated about their products and more adventurous, while prioritising better-for-you products and their personal health and wellbeing.

Key points of interest for holistic therapists are:

A 43% growth in relaxation supplements for stress and sleep with those containing magnesium, MCT or ashwagandha performing strongly.

A global market growth of 7.2% in the use of probiotics, with carbonated drinks with digestive benefits – prebiotic, probiotic, and postbiotic – emerging as the next generation of functional beverages. Mushrooms seem set to be a major area of interest, with sales up 16.1% in the past year. There's



a renewed interest in medicinal mushrooms and those with psychedelic properties. In 2020, the global functional mushroom market generated \$7.98 billion. By 2030, the global functional mushroom market is expected to amount to \$19.33 billion, seeing a CAGR of 9.3% between 2021 and 2030. Supplements that contain mushroom as a key ingredient in the form of capsule, powder, tinctures, or teas are also becoming more popular.

A preference for more sustainable packaging and regenerative agricultural practices such as no-till and biodynamic farming were also highlighted.

PEOPLE: SOO CIESZYNSKA JOINS HUXLEY EUROPE AS BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Soo Cieszyńska, who has been in the natural products industry since 2007, has joined the Huxley Europe team as Business Development Manager. Soo commented, "I am very excited to have joined the Huxley team and am looking forward to achieving more recognition for this amazing brand. There is a need for products formulated by a pharmacist, using 100%

natural ingredients to be on the shelves in our independent health stores."

One of the company's principal customers is the NHS, as well as selling overseas through a network of distribution partners. The company's product line includes HuxD3, a food sourced vitamin D3 supplement and the newly launched HuxQ10 Coenzyme Q10 supplement.

UK ORGANIC BEAUTY AND WELLBEING MARKET GROWS

UK sales of organic beauty and wellbeing products grew 15% in 2021 with consumers now spending £11 million every month. According to Soil Association Certification, this marks the 11th continuous year of growth, with the market at a record £138.23 million in 2021. The market has grown 30% since the start of the COVID pandemic. Almost half of consumers say they are more concerned for the environment, with a loss of biodiversity being the leading concern.

"This remarkable growth is largely down to the significant interest in health and wellness, coupled with the greater visibility of environmental issues such as climate change in the media, which has propelled the organic sector into the mainstream as consumers seek to align their



purchasing decision with their principles," said Soil Association Certification business development director Clare McDermott.

"Consumers are increasingly informed and motivated about what is in their beauty products and we anticipate that these trends will continue into 2022 as the sector influences the wider beauty market and the availability of organic beauty and wellness products grows."

WORDS OF WISDOM...

Rest when you're weary. Refresh and renew yourself, your body, your mind, your spirit. Then get back to work.

Ralph Marston

TRY THIS... FORAGE FOR BLACKBERRIES

New research suggests that both wild and cultivated blackberries may help ease gut conditions like IBS. 43% of the berries' phenolic compounds, which give the berries their colour, remain in the gut during digestion and fermentation. The phenolics enable the helpful gut flora to flourish, while unhelpful bacteria are reduced. You can find recipes at www.lovefreshberries.co.uk/recipes



OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT FOR WELEDA'S JAYN STERLAND

Jayn Sterland, Managing Director at Weleda UK, was presented with an Outstanding Achievement Award at Natural & Organic Products Europe as part of the 2022 Beauty Awards. The event was held at London's ExCel in April. The award recognises Jayn's efforts leading the Sustainable Beauty Coalition in championing ethical, sustainable business practices, and driving change for a more planet-positive



future. The award was presented by Millie Kendall, OBE, Founder and CEO of the British Beauty Council.

ANTRIM MASSAGE THERAPIST FACING NINE SEX OFFENCE CHARGES

Antrim-based sports massage therapist Kevin Bartlett is facing nine sex offence charges following the emergence of a second alleged victim. Mr. Bartlett is due to stand trial in June.

The 61-year-old is charged with sexually assaulting a male and causing him to engage in sexual activity without consent in December 2020. An additional five sexual assault charges have now been added to the indictment.

Mr Bartlett was one of the founders of the Belfast Azlans, a



predominantly gay rugby team and also won a gold medal at the Vancouver Gay Games.

As part of his bail conditions, Bartlett, from Fountain Street, Antrim, is banned from practising as a personal masseur.

AWARENESS DAYS

Here's our selection of Awareness Days to incorporate into your marketing and social media posts.



JUNE

There's a bumper crop of awareness events in June. June is the awareness month for Pride, Bowel Cancer's Step Up for 30 month and SANDS, the stillborn and neo-natal deaths support charity.

- 2-5 – Big Jubilee Lunch
- 3-8 – Massage at Work Week
- 6-12 – Aromatherapy Awareness Week
- 7-12 – Carers Week
- 8 – Best Friends Day
- 13-17 – Loneliness Awareness Week
- 14-19 – Diabetes Awareness Week
- 14-19 – International Nutrition and Hydration Week
- 14-19 – BNF Healthy Eating Week
- 15-20 – Men's Health Week

- 17 – Plastic Free Beauty Day
- 19 – Fathers' Day
- 21 – Bring Your Dog to Work Day
- 27-1 July – World Wellbeing Week

JULY

There are fewer awareness events in July and August as the holiday season kicks in. July is Plastic Free July and Good Care Month.

- 4 – Thank You Day
- 7 – World Chocolate Day
- 12 – National Simplicity Day
- 23-31 – Love Parks Week
- 24 – Samaritans Awareness Day
- 24 – National Tequila Day
- 30 – World Day Against Trafficking In Persons

AUGUST

August is Psoriasis Awareness Month

- 1-6 – World Breast Feeding Week
- 5 – Cycle to Work Day
- 8 – International CBD Day
- 9-14 – National Allotments Week
- 18 – International Never Give Up Week
- 19 – World Humanitarian Day

MUSIC IMPROVES MENTAL WELLBEING



A meta-study of 26 previous studies has concluded that singing, listening to or playing music can improve mental wellbeing and quality of life. 10 of the studies involved participants listening to music, seven featured music therapy and eight included singing, while the remaining study investigated the effects of gospel music.

Findings also showed the benefits

to mental quality of life associated with experiencing music are similar to those associated with exercise or weight loss. It's not clear which types of music or how long a session needs to be for optimal benefit, but it's believed that music could enhance the wellbeing benefits of a visit to the practice room.

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YEAR ONE: SURVIVING AND THRIVING

*A UK start up business is 50% likely to fail in the first year. For holistic therapy businesses, that figure rises to 70%. **Mark Shields** shares how to make sure your start up doesn't become a shutdown...*

LETS start with some scary numbers. In the UK, somewhere around 390,000 new businesses were started in the last year. Only half will make it through the first year. After four years, only a quarter are left. After ten years, only 10% of businesses are still going. That means 90% fail. Keep in mind that these are just the overall figures for all types of business, some, like restaurants and, sadly, holistic therapists, have lower success rates. The trick is to make sure that your business is not one of those that falls by the wayside.

The congruence principle

A proven business principle is that success comes

down to an individual having an equal balance of confidence, competence and commitment. Holistic Therapists are often highly academic bright students with oodles of great ideas and the commitment to succeed, but they often lacked the business experience and knowledge and personal confidence to make a success in private practice.

It's not practice that ensures good performance, but perfect practice that ensures perfect performance - "the difference that makes the difference", as I call it. By definition this meant that newly qualified holistic therapists were highly knowledgeable in their chosen coaching modality but lacked the business knowledge and skills to ensure they achieved commercial success in private practice. These are things that can be learned.

Why do holistic therapists fail in business?

When Simon Martin and I were researching our book, *The CAM Coach*, we discovered there were eight main reasons that holistic practitioners failed in business.

1. They adopt a 'can't do' mind-set. It has been proved successful practitioners think differently than unsuccessful practitioners.
2. A lot of practitioners work generically across the whole market, fail to identify who their ideal client is and subsequently don't niche market or brand their business to match the market segment they plan to work in
3. Many practitioners are very subjective when designing their business model. It's important to always adopt a successful business model achieved by modelling success. So doing your research and finding a similar business to the one you have in mind and model their success. It's a golden rule in business, "never run an unproven business model" If you do you increase your chance of failing in the first year by 900%
4. A lack of competitor analysis. 88% of holistic therapists fail to do any competitor analysis at launch. This results in uncompetitive and disadvantaged pricing of products and services especially client packages
5. No business plan. 90% of holistic therapists businesses launch without a business plan increasing their chance of failure by 1000%
6. No website. On average holistic therapists don't invest in a website until they are a year into their private practice
7. The majority of holistic therapists go into private practice without understanding proven strategies or processes of attracting and retaining quality clients. The main reason is they don't have a proven advertising process or logistical process to recruit new clients
8. They believe they "will build it and they will come" Unfortunately they build it and they, new clients, don't come. Once again most holistic therapists adopt zero proactive activity when running their business day to day.

8 strategies for success

1. Build a 'can do' mind-set. Learn to develop your business knowledge. 90% of success comes from confidence. Knowledge is power. Building your knowledge increases your confidence, change your beliefs and unlock your potential. Take action and increase your results. Overcome your fear or blockages by accepting results, being flexible, try new things and build on outcomes.
2. Begin your client recruitment activity by making a decision on who your ideal client is and working backwards from there. This will drive how you brand your entire business and how you market your ideal client. For example, older clients buy differently than younger clients and use different social media platforms.
3. It's important to always adopt a successful business model achieved by modelling success. So doing your research and find a similar business to the one you have in mind and model their success. It's a golden rule in business to never run an unproven business model. It always fails. Don't be afraid to approach the owner of your chosen business and ask how they've achieved success. You'll probably be surprised with the help they offer. Business owners love talking about their success.
4. Ensure you complete as much competitor information as possible. It's important to know and understand the logistics of who your main competitors are. In particular focus on pricing, packages, services and products.
5. Ensure you have a detailed business plan outlining your outcome focused goals and actions for the first 3, 6, 9 and 12 months. After that reverting to 1, 2 and 5 years. So short, medium and long term business planning. Ensure all goals are realistic and achievable and make sure you clearly display your business vision, mission, philosophy, goals and actions. An idea is just an idea until you write it down
6. Ensure you have your website built as soon as you can so it's ready to go as soon as you graduate. It can take up

to 12 months to build and get a site to feature on google. Unfortunately the average holistic therapist doesn't start building their website until 5 months after graduating, thus substantially delaying their start of attracting the majority of their clients

7. It has been proven in the business world of holistic therapists the number 1 strategy for attracting quality clients is online using google ad words or organic google SEO. In fact 78% of private clients confirmed in a CAM COACH survey conducted on 2011 their first port of call when looking for a therapist was google.
8. Even when your website is live and you've launched your business in the first 12 months it will still be difficult to reach your clients. It's important to remember it takes 12 months for your website to reach the top of google and it's important you attract paying clients from day 1. This is done by setting yourself a target of at least 1 proactive marketing activity every day. This can take the form of approaching others EG gyms to joint venture with, letters to private GP surgeries to offer your services for potential referrals, offering free talks at networking events, posting on various social media forums, and finally monitoring your campaigns on google.

Believe in yourself, do your research and build a business model, plan and client acquisition methodology that maximises your chances of succeeding.



MARK SHIELDS is amongst the

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MAKING A GREAT START



Magdalena Vonk shares how to make sure your new business gets off to the best start...

LOTS of people dream about starting their own business, but relatively few ever make those dreams a reality, because it takes a lot more to create a successful business than it does to daydream.

Assuming that you've taken accredited training courses, you may already be a student member of an industry body and hold student insurance. Once you're fully qualified, it is essential that you change your membership category from student to graduate and do the same with your insurance. Make sure you know your insurance provider requirements to ensure you are keeping within them – otherwise you may not be insured. Most providers will require you to keep records of each client session for a set period of time and follow particular safe storage requirements.

Start with a plan

A business plan is like a GPS system, guiding you to success, working out the most efficient route and helping you when you make a change in direction. A business plan includes a marketing roadmap, addresses finances, training and staff and provides an idea of the structure of your business and plans for future years. A business plan is a fluid structure and changes as your business evolves and takes shape.



You can get advice on how to write a plan from The Prince's Trust (www.princes-trust.org.uk) and the government website (www.gov.uk/write-business-plan). You can also check with your local business enterprise company who can provide training and support.

If you are relying on a bank loan to start your business, a business plan is essential if you need to borrow money.

Finding the right place

Finding the right premises is important. This has to be more of a head decision than a heart one, so take your time. You need to ensure that your premises meet all your and your clients' needs e.g. space, type of flooring, noise, neighbours, parking and location. You don't want to rush this and end up in a space that doesn't work and that's not somewhere your clients will feel comfortable visiting.

Money matters

If you are new to finance, and especially business bookkeeping, you need to take some time to learn about this. If you need to take a loan to start your business, it is important to know how you are planning on paying it back and to calculate the basic income your business must generate to meet those payments.

As a new business owner, you will require a business account. Don't use your personal bank account, because it is good practice to keep the two separate and also facilitates tracking income and expenditure. You'll also need to register the business with HMRC online, though your accountant could do this for you.

You'll have a lot of outgoings when starting up. It can be tempting to buy a great many things, but it's wiser to create a list of what you already have in terms of equipment and products. Then look at what purchases are essential and which are merely nice to have. Research prices thoroughly and check out local marketplace sites, because you may find a second hand bargain. Similarly, if your premises need to be altered or refurbished, get several quotes and consider if there's work you could do yourself.

Looking back at my own first months in business, I wish I hadn't gone crazy on Vista Print. Branding has its place, but I soon learned that no-one bases their choice of massage business on the basis of a free pen or

cheap notepad. Save yourself money and stick to some basic leaflets and business cards.

What will you offer?

You'll need to decide on what services and treatments you will offer and whether this will be a narrow specialism, or a broader range of services. How will you stand out from your competitors?

You'll need to research the local market. Check out your competitors online and work out who offers what and how much they charge. It will probably be best to offer similar prices – but

always make sure you set prices that will be profitable.

If you can, try out various businesses in your area, as a customer. This is hugely effective as you can then choose the best things from all of them to implement in your own business.



It's often tempting to go to every possible networking event, but I find that my clients are much better at spreading the work than I was.

You also need to think about who your ideal clients will be. Once you have this, you can think about how you can attract them: Where will you advertise? Newspapers, leaflets, local magazines, or/and social media?

Create a marketing plan and ensure you review and amend it when you see which of your efforts are working and which are not helpful.

Soon after I qualified, I advertised my business as "Relaxing Massages". I had a website and all the merchandise promoted this. After a few months in business, I realised I was better at giving deep tissue / sport massage than relaxing massages. More importantly, my clients asked me more frequently for injury work and post injury support rather than they did for stress reducing treatments. Eventually, I had changed the

name of the business as the old one made no sense to my clients or to me. We all need to allow ourselves time to figure out what we need. If possible, give yourself a little time before you choose a domain name and logo. It's easier and cheaper to change your social media page name than it is to redirect your page to different website address

It's often tempting to go to every possible networking event, but I find that my clients are much better at spreading the work than I was. You will not get recommendations from people that do not know you, so keep in mind that real networking and building connections takes time. I don't recommend signing up to an expensive annual contracts or join expensive

networking groups when your business is not yet bringing in enough money to pay your bills.

Similarly, don't offer your services for free in hope people will try and love them. Discounted introductory offers are usually fine to gather the interest but overall, you want to encourage people who will become your regular customer and will have enough expendable income to allow this.

Make sure that you speak to people who are ready to invest in your services. Ensure you know who your (potential) clients are and that you direct your marketing at them.

Your new business may start off as a dream, but getting the basics right can turn that dream into a reality. ■



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REDISCOVERING YOUR FLOW

Between spiralling prices, an ongoing pandemic, wars and the state of the planet, it's no wonder many holistic therapists have lost their mojo.

Treatments get delivered on auto-pilot and we lose the caring connection to our clients.

Elizabeth Ashley reflects on how to recover your joy and enthusiasm for what you do...

READER, I have hurt my back. Goodness knows what I've done. Probably an amalgamation of moving my mum into a new flat and a bit too much stress, I think. So, this past fortnight, I have had cause to go for massages, chiropractic treatment and for reiki. I am gradually

but slowly mending, but after so much time away from having therapies myself, I was both relieved by people's care, but also saddened by the new normal. The heart seems like it's ebbing out of complementary medicine and feels like its gripping on by its finger tips, so used to trying to keep its head above water for survival.

I don't want you to mistake me, the care I got wasn't substandard. In fact, it was very good. But there was something in the pressure of the massage that felt like a chore rather than an act of love. There was no eye contact as the therapist reeled off the oils in her blend. It was as if it was a tick box had to be done. I felt disappointed, not for me, but for them. Everything has become rote, decided, and probably feels like some big compromise.

Certainly, a SWOT analysis could help freshen things up, or some different marketing, but it feels to me that an outbreath is required. A pause where we try to capture something of what got lost, and that's the why...

In that first day you walked into that classroom, why did you want to be there? I'd be very surprised if many said money. The desire to care for and to help someone to reach their optimum health and wellbeing runs through some of the oldest traditions. Ancient archetypes place them both under Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. The endless flow of energy from the heart. The place of tears, but of course also the place of respiratory distress, grief, and fear. It's no surprise that energy no longer flows easily from here.

In parts of Africa, the desire to make someone's life better is called Ubuntu. It flows through the very heart of tribes. The word derives from an Nguni proverb that translates as, "a person is a person through other persons". It speaks of a love of community and responsibility for another's wellness. It speaks of no-one existing in isolation and is perhaps the root of the saying, "It takes a village".

The leader of the tribe, in ritual, is the medicine man or healer.

In our zeitgeist, we often see schadenfreude talked about, people delighting at someone else's misfortune. However, in China they have Mudita, which is the opposite. The Buddhist experience is joy at someone else's happiness; unselfish joy achieved through contemplation and meditation. Gifting your joy to someone is a privilege felt by the many.

In New Zealand, Kaitiakitanga is kindness to other spirits and to one's self. The Maori peoples have an animist culture, where they see everything as being alive. People are placed to protect and care for the spirit of a certain river or set of trees. There, rivers have the same rights as people, meaning corrupting the water brings the same penalties as if one was to hurt a human. Where a river spirit

deserves a guardian, so then does the human spirit. The body on your couch is so much more than a collection of aching muscles.

Venus, of course is intimately connected with Eros, the god of desire. In ritual however, aeros is connected to the idea of fragranced smoke. In the ancient Greek temples, the priestess would open the space for the supplicant to come into communion with the goddess, however it was aeros that decided whether the deity would come.

It is said there were rules surrounding how mortals and deities interacted, and that any communication must only be at the mortal's behest. Odd, but then if you think about it, that also still forms the basis of prayer, the mortal beseeching the deity to intercede or not.

Make a conscious effort, I implore you, to make every treatment like a prayer.

So, the deity is perceived to be patiently waiting for that spark of attraction to appear. Aeros means *loving intention*. It was said that scent carried aeros, and it was only through aeros that any deity would appear. In particular that applied to Asclepius, the god of medicine, and Hygeia, the goddess of cleanliness and healing.

Ceremony returns sacredness to ritual. Therapy rooms become sacred space. What then passes through the therapists hands then becomes holy, and any practice devout.

Perhaps, no other generation has ever felt the privilege of being able to touch someone as heavily as we do. Communally we have shields around us to protect us from this germ. The bravery of therapists, unprotected, as we have been, and thrown financially to the lions, means our barriers may be cast iron. We think of the clients and what it means to be touched, but what about ourselves as therapists? Do we still manage to act with the same energetic trust?

Make a conscious effort, I implore you, to

make every treatment like a prayer. Let's try and bring aeros back into the room. Allow the spirit of the healer to rise up, to lock eyes with the client's spirit.

When you ask how they are today, care about the response. Look at them, breathe and allow them to give you a real answer. When they say, 'Oh, fine', wait. I promise you

there's more to come, and they have come here to unload it.

When they lie on the couch, let them hear your words and actions, as "Just lie back. I'm going to take care of you".

Concentrate on bringing yourself into spiritual union with your client, by emulating their breath.

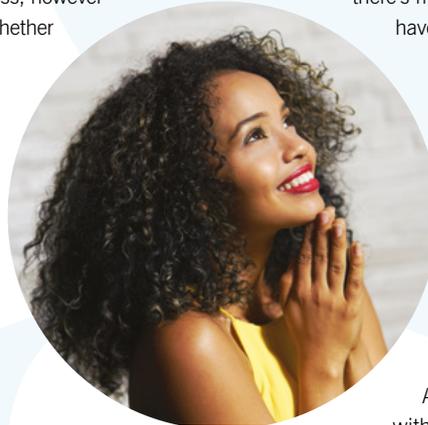
As theirs comes into line with yours, gradually slow it and concentrate in allowing the

flow of love.

When you chime the tingschen, or however you signify the end of the treatment, allow your heart centre to close to protect you for the future.

When love flows from therapist to client, something magical happens. They feel more than just relaxed. It builds a desire to return, a trust and an openness.

Remember too, that Venus had another realm. She was the goddess who ruled finances. When Venus energy fills a room, money, they say, should follow. ■



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THE HRT CRISIS

Over a million women in the UK are on Hormone Replacement Therapy, but many are unable to access the drugs they need because of shortages and supply chain issues. We take a look at some alternative solutions...

AROUND 80% of women undergoing menopause suffer from hot flushes, night sweats, insomnia, fatigue, palpitations and discomfort during sex. Couple this with heightened anxiety and issues with memory and concentration and it's no surprise that at least a million women have prescriptions for hormone replacement therapy. This often comes in the form of bio-identical or close mimics of the hormones that the body has reduced or stopped production. HRT treatment has also been shown to reduce the risk of dementia and also protects bone density, reducing the occurrence of osteoporosis.

The British Menopause Society (thebms.org.uk) lists a range of drug options on their website, so it's possible to find out the nearest equivalent treatment and then what the pharmacist has in stock. You can then ask your GP to change your prescription to a treatment which is available.

CBT can help with managing some of the symptoms, particularly around recognising that hot flushes are related to stress, but NHS waiting lists tend to be in excess of six months. Stress breathing exercises may also be of some use, as may other forms of stress relief, like meditating, yoga and being in nature. Exercise, too, has been shown to reduce the severity of the symptoms.

If insomnia is a problem, there are various herbal supplements as well as sleep apps that may help. In the latter case, however, there is some evidence that sleep apps can increase anxiety around sleeping. Night sweats can

be helped with the use of cooling pillows and mattress pads. Opening a window or using a cooling fan may help. Some people recommend freezing nightwear before use and a cold shower before bed may also be of assistance.

Natural supplements such as St. John's wort, black cohosh and soy or red clover phytoestrogens can ease symptoms in the short term.

Natural supplements such as St. John's wort, black cohosh and soy or red clover phytoestrogens can ease symptoms in the short term. NICE have published findings that St. John's wort, which is also used for depression, can relieve hot flushes. There's also evidence that black cohosh is as effective as HRT when it comes to dealing with hot flushes, but it's known to cause rashes and stomach upsets in some users. It's best to take professional advice from a medical herbalist

or your GP as some of these supplements can have a detrimental effect on other medications, such as cancer drugs. As ever with supplements and herbal formulations, it's important to buy from a reputable supplier, with properly measured doses and quality control.

Some private clinics offer an unlicensed, unregulated drug combination called compounded bio-identical hormone therapy, but, as yet, there is no evidence that these treatments are efficacious.

Diet is another useful way of getting phytoestrogens into the body. Celery, green beans, lentils, chick peas and, above all, soya products like tofu, soya milk, miso and tempeh are all useful sources. Pumpkin seeds, flax, sesame and sunflower seeds can also help. One small study found that a soy-rich, low fat plant-based diet, similar to that of many Japanese women - reduced the number of hot flushes experienced by over 80%. 15 of the 38 women involved found that their hot flushes disappeared. B vitamins, particularly vitamin B9, known as folate, and B6 can be useful in symptom reduction. The former can alleviate hot flushes and the latter lowers the risk of depression associated with the menopause.



IS YOUR WEBSITE PUTTING NEW CLIENTS OFF

Websites are supposed to help bring customers to our practice rooms, but all too often a poor website can put potential clients off. We look at the pitfalls you need to avoid...

LET'S start with the most obvious one, which is a website that's incomplete or which contains out of date information. Not only does this make you look incompetent, but also suggests a lack of care and attention to detail. People may even assume you've gone out of business. Make sure your staff listings,

service offerings, schedules and contact details are all correct.

There should be no pages that have no text and every click through should take you to the right page with the right information. If people want to find out more, the information they need should be available.

Even if all you have is a holding page, make sure this displays your phone number or email so people can get in touch.

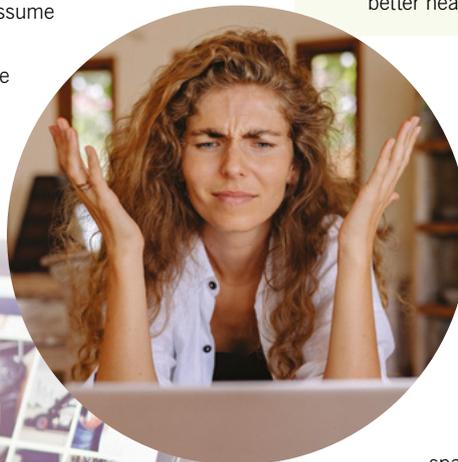
No clear call to action

It's surprising how often websites fail to tell their readers what they should do next. Make sure that both your services, contact, about us and home page include a call to action. Effective calls to action are things like:

- Want to feel better about yourself? Call (our number) for a free consultation.
- Call (our number) to book an appointment.
- Book your first session online here
- Sign up for our free taster course today
- Subscribe and receive our free eBook
- Take your first step on the journey to better health

Inappropriate imagery

Think about your customer base when choosing website imagery. There are a huge number of stock images of attractive half-naked women with orchids in their hair receiving relaxing massages in upmarket spas. The chances are that your customers are a bit older, a bit lumpier, a bit less perfect and a little more real. They often have health issues and may not feel that great about themselves, physically or mentally. Images of physical perfection can be off-putting and pictures of luxury spas may not only misrepresent your practice room, but can also send a subliminal message that they cannot afford your services.



If the majority of your customers fit a particular demographic, say older women, or men with sports injuries, then your website should reflect this visually. This helps people feel like they have found the right place, where they will feel a sense of belonging.

Poor descriptions of what you do

Potential customers are browsing your website for one reason. They are looking for someone that can solve a problem, whether that's physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. The descriptions of what you do should be clear and concise. Don't assume that your client knows the difference between Shiatsu and Swedish Massage or that they already know about the Emmett Technique or Kinesiology.

When you explain your services, focus on the benefits they offer to your potential customers, rather than giving the history of the modality. That can go elsewhere. Your job is to make readers feel comfortable enough to take the next step and book an appointment.

Personal polemics

While it's fine to let your personality shine through in your website and all aspects of your business, there's such a thing as too much information. Few people choose a holistic therapist on the basis of their opinions on Ascended Masters, vaccinations, veganism or their opinions on the current Prime Minister. They just want someone who can provide the right treatment that will make them feel better.

Essentially, your website needs to be focussed on your potential clients and you as a conduit to better health, rather than a place to share your deeply held beliefs. This also applies to your business social media. Make a clear separation between your public persona and the private you and remember that things you write now can come back to haunt you later. Privacy is increasingly illusory.

If your website looks more like a manifesto than someone explaining the benefits their services bring to health and wellbeing, then you may well be sending potential clients to your competitors. Obviously, how much your personal beliefs can be expressed is tied to the modalities you offer. As a general rule, the more physically-based or the more common your services, the less room there is for esoteric views. This means it's okay to be a bit off the



wall if you're offering spiritual retreats, but not if you offer sports massage.

Tone of voice

There's an old saying that you'll catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.

If you read the wording on your website, then imagine a person who might be saying them, how does that person seem? Are they happy and pleased to see new clients? Do they sound competent and down to earth? Do they seem friendly and approachable? Do they know what they're talking about, but able to explain what it means to a potential client? Or do they sound unhappy, crotchety, or exhausted?

You may have a page on your website which discusses things like fees and cancellation policies. It's important that the tone of voice here does not drift into the draconian. You want to be firm but friendly. If there are too many rules, some people may feel too intimidated to make an appointment. Think about where this information needs to be shared on the customer journey and the best way to deliver it.

Lack of testimonials

Testimonials and reviews help potential customers recognise that others in the same situation felt they could trust you and that they

received a good service. Most of your clients may find you via word of mouth, but this should also be leveraged on your website to help new clients feel secure. Testimonials help make it easier to build trust.

Technical issues

Aside from the look and feel of your website, you can also put people off by not understanding how they use websites these days. When browsing, the average attention span is between six and ten seconds. That means you have a very short window in which to grab a potential client's attention. If your site is clunky and slow to load, then people won't hang around. Similarly, if the information they want isn't the first thing they see, then you've lost them.

Keeping a close eye on your web analytics can help with this. You'll be able to see how people move around your site, which pages are popular and how long people visit for.

Your website needs to be designed so that it loads quickly and looks good on mobile devices. Up to 94% of people scroll through websites on their phones, so this needs to be a primary design consideration.

Remember that the first thing a potential client encounters your business is when they visit the website. Your website is the face your business presents to the world and its job is to help persuade people to take the next step along the customer journey. If it doesn't attract people visually and provide the information they need quickly, easily and in a convincing fashion, then it has failed. ■



HOW TO LOSE CLIENTS BEFORE YOU EVEN HAVE THEM: SOCIAL MEDIA

James Urquhart of Let's Run Social says you need to understand your client base and spark their interest or your social media posts could be putting potential clients off...

WHY are you as a holistic therapist using social media in the first place? It could be because you've set up your own business and you feel it's vital that your friends and family know exactly how you're doing. Or you're using

it as a tool to create revenue and educate your audience.

Whichever camp you sit in, these are two very different objectives. It's important to stress that if you're solely basing your success on the amount of likes and followers on your social media page, you'll likely have fallen

into the trap of 'vanity metrics'. These are measurements that look good on the surface, but when you delve deeper, they're doing little to impact your business's bottom line.

The truth is *anyone* can post static images to their page to gain a few likes. However, when only 3% of your organic following *actually* sees your posts, it's vital you upload content your audience wants to consume.

Whether you're a brand-new business that employs a small team of therapists or are flying solo, your social media strategy can help you grow your client base. The good news is, you don't have to spend hours each week posting on social, or bursting your budget, if you want to generate a return on investment from your social media page and keep an audience engaged. Here's where to start...

Rule 1: Begin with a clear objective

Ask yourself, 'why am I posting this image and what will the audience get from it?'

Use this as an opportunity to drill down into the types of clients you specialise in. Using massage therapy as an example, you'll most likely have four different personas in your client base, such as:

- 1. Over-50s:** With ailments in-line with aging, such as a bad back or troublesome knees, and who need a bit of help from a once-a-week massage.
- 2. Full-time professionals:** Who may have a desk job and want to step away from the laptop and get back into shape because they've got a young family, or protect their work-life balance. They might've picked up an injury from light training and require assistance for a particularly persistent issue.
- 3. Regular gym goers:** Someone who may have slightly overdone it and are struggling with a niggle or something more troublesome. Therefore, they require regular treatment.

- 4. Elite athletes:** Used to physiotherapy, sports massages and who sees it as part of progressing their sporting career, so have regular sessions.

While the above is a loose example of a typical client base, it's important to note that every single persona is different – therefore you need to personalise your content.

Rule 2: Avoid generic social media posts

From an organic perspective, it's not always bad to put out a message that's niche to a specific target group because social media platforms – such as Facebook and Instagram – will know who you're trying to target.

As an example, if you post about how to get up in the morning without your knees hurting – specific to your over 50s group – social media platforms will know who to serve that content up to.

However, if you put up a generic post about some products you sell – such as a gel or type of protein shake – it won't be specific enough and the majority of your audience simply won't care.

They want to know what *problem* you can solve. In this case, how your advice can help alleviate a certain type of muscle pain or help them manage a persistent *problem* such as a back issue. Always come back to *why* your audience engaged with you in the first place.

Rule 3: Show you're a trusted therapist with valuable social media content

Case studies and testimonials are extremely powerful for holistic therapists. This type of content is educative and when you 'give it away', you're more likely to build up an engaged following that sees you as an expert in your field.

If you don't offer up content for free, business opportunities will be few and far between because nobody will really know what makes you stand out. Offer *relevant* content that adds value to a customer's experience. 'Before and after' imagery is also strong in this industry, but it's worth noting that you can only upload these organically.

Facebook and Instagram want to see you

engaging your audience and. In return, these social platforms will give you a cheaper cost when you pay to promote your social post. Plus, they can ensure that more people – in the right demographic – see your adverts.

How to set up a paid-for social media campaign

When you want to create leads and convert them into revenue, the first thing you must do is set your budget – how much do you want to spend?

1. Ask yourself, 'how much can I afford to spend on a lead?'

If your conversion rate is around 10% for example, simply put, you need 10 leads to convert 1 person.

2. Present value with a 'hook'

Could you offer a free 15-minute massage or 30-minute consultation? From that session, you can build a rapport, offer further advice, and see if they want to rebook.

3. Target specific groups

Serve up relevant social media ad content – for example if they're over-50s, look at providing content on stretching in the morning, and techniques to use. Then, from these interactions, drill down into who is really interested and offer them a freebie.

4. All is not lost if you don't convert from your first ad

Follow up with testimonials as well as your freebie offer – that way, while your advert might not have cut through, you're complementing it with additional content.

5. Use language your audience understands

Whichever persona you're targeting, create paid content that reflects the terminology they understand. What works for an elite athlete isn't going to have the same effect on someone who attends the gym once-a-week for a 20-minute run on the treadmill.

Overall, however you act online, make sure it's representative of how you are offline too. There's nothing worse than seeing an ad for a business and when you engage with it, you receive a poor customer experience that doesn't match what you've interacted with on social.

Offer relevant content that adds value to a customer's experience.

A few quick tips to end...

- Use a simple form for people to fill in as part of your paid ad, especially if you're a local firm wanting to attract local clients. There's an in-app form on Facebook that allows you to respond directly to someone. You can also use this platform to connect and ask them to follow your page.
- Always be responsive – within 24 hours is ideal, but if you can get back to them within the hour, even better. The longer you leave it, the more your conversion rate will decrease.
- Push out content on the platforms where your clients are. Instagram and Facebook are great for holistic therapists. TikTok is also fantastic for engagement, but it doesn't provide the same level of data as the other platforms mentioned.



JAMES URQUHART is the managing director and

co-founder of social media marketing brand Lets Run Social. An experienced digital marketer who fuses social and data together seamlessly, he has one mission – to create as much revenue for clients as possible. Get in touch at james@letsrunsocial.com or visit

www.letsrunsocial.com.



The right CHOICE

Choosing a new modality means balancing research, reward, interest and instinct...

MANY holistic therapists find their way into the industry almost by chance, or perhaps fate. They may have experienced illness or seen those around them improve their health and wellbeing when using some form of holistic treatment. Unsurprisingly then, most therapists start out by training in a modality that they have personal experience of and that they know has a positive benefit. We follow our hearts and our instincts in the earliest stages of our careers, choosing what feels right.

Holistic therapists are often life-long learners, adding new modalities or specialisms as their career progresses. Sometimes we feel drawn to

a new modality and simply want to learn it out of personal interest. That's fine, but training is also an investment both in yourself and your business, so care should be taken to ensure you're making the right choice.

Futureproofing

One lesson we all learned from the pandemic is just how quickly and dramatically circumstances can change. When selecting a new modality, it makes sense to start with a SWOT analysis looking at the existing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing your business. If you're vulnerable to lockdowns and can't easily pivot to delivering services online, then this should be one of your main considerations when choosing to qualify in an additional modality.

Look for something which lends itself to both in-person and remote delivery. Many holistic therapists who switched to online delivery during the pandemic found that they had an increased demand for their services and that

this has been sustained in the period after restrictions eased. Many clients may prefer to get their treatments delivered at a distance.

Balancing your service portfolio

The next thing to consider is the overall balance of your service portfolio. You might want to train so you can offer more advanced or specialist treatments in a given modality. This is great if you have a large enough client base with clearly differentiated needs. So, specialisation can work out well for, say, therapists who specialise in pain relief or sports injuries and work in sports centres in urban settings. It can also work well for therapists who have a tremendous reputation and draw in clients from a considerable distance.

Where specialisation may not be the best strategy is where your clientele is local and your services are less differentiated than most therapists. Say you work in a holistic centre or your own practice room and are trained in Swedish massage.

Will training in Thai massage bring in a whole raft of new customers, or do your clients simply come for a massage without being bothered by the type of treatment? In these situations, it may be worth choosing a related therapy such as Shiatsu or acupuncture that would allow you to reach out to new client groups or offer a wider range of treatments to existing clients.

Alternatively, it may be better to learn something unrelated to your existing modality, but which still meets the needs of your current customer base. Reviewing and broadly classifying your current and past clients into different categories for why they came to you in the first place, such as injury, stress, wanting to lose weight or change a bad habit, can throw up ideas for further training.

Local competition

Once you've narrowed down your choices to a few modalities, it's time to look at the local competition. How many holistic therapists offer the treatment you're thinking about? What do they charge? What distance to their clients come from?

Work out if there's an adequate market for the services you're thinking of adding. Don't assume that there's an unmet demand just because no-one appears to offer a service. If, for example, your town is largely known as a retirement community, there may not be any demand for pregnancy and baby massage, but there may be a profitable niche in managing the aches and pains of the elderly.

Length and quality of training

Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the training required. Not purely in terms of upfront costs, but also associated costs like travel, accommodation, loss of free time and loss of income. Some training, such as becoming a qualified acupuncturist or medical herbalist, can take years and involves a great deal of commitment. Others may see you qualified over the course of a day or weekend.

Similarly, there are some modalities that are best learned face to face, while others suit online learning.

Before embarking on any training, make sure that the course, and training provider meets with the approval of your membership body and your insurance provider. Check reviews by previous students and course outcomes. If very few students go on to practice professionally,

you may want to find out why.

Understanding the total package

Sometimes, the temptation is to go for a modality that very few people practice. This means that clients may be willing to travel for a considerable distance and that you can build a loyal customer base.

However, you need to consider the total package, from training all the way through to marketing. A lesser known modality necessitates that you spend more time educating people and marketing your services. In general, people need to understand and feel comfortable with the services they are buying, so a clear, step-by-step guide on your website is essential.

Expected return on investment

Leaning any new modality is both a business and personal investment. Your business is investing the costs of training and you are investing your time and energy. Thus, your choice of new modality needs to produce a good return on your investment both financially and in terms of personal satisfaction and achievement.

You need to put a value on all the costs associated with your intended choice and then balance this against how many new clients and how many sessions you would need to do to recoup the costs of your investment.

Let's say that you know that the training to gain an accredited qualification in modality A would cost you £5000, but you know you could see ten additional clients a week and would be able to charge them £50 per session. Modality A is in high demand and theoretically you could make your investment back in just ten weeks. Of course you also need to consider that it would take you a year to qualify and that you'd need to spend one weekend a month at the training school. That ten weeks is now 62 weeks, when you include the training time, and even longer when you include the normal overheads of running a session.

If you're considering an extended or expensive course, check online for calculators that can work out the return on investment.

Choose what speaks to you

Once you've explored the options, done your research and totted up your sums, you may find that although your head says you should choose one option, your heart is leading you in another direction. It's okay to follow your heart. You may not make as much money, but it's difficult to quantify happiness and personal satisfaction when trying to make a decision. Most holistic therapists are their businesses. There's little point in making the right decision on paper if you'd prefer to do something else. Choose what speaks to you, because a modality that loses its appeal is a poor investment.



DEFINING SUCCESS ON YOUR OWN TERMS

Shannah Kennedy discusses how to decide what success looks like for you...

W **EALTH?** An expensive car? Your own business? Buying a home? Growing your own food? Having a close friends and an interesting social life? Travelling the world? Having time for creativity and hobbies? What does success mean to you?

This is a wonderful and simple, yet very powerful, question to ask ourselves before we plan, set goals, build habits, and work on our thoughts.

Each of us has a different and unique answer to this question. Depending on how you were raised, your ideals around money, wealth, the life experiences you have had and your own unique personality, you will have a different measurement of success than the person next to you. We can take a look around us and find many ways to measure success as well as thousands of articles and advice on how to be more successful, such as:

- how you position yourself on the career ladder,
- how to achieve a profitable portfolio,
- how to get better abs,
- how to be a great podcaster, and on and on.

There is no shortage of advice, but, how you define success for yourself is one of the most empowering exercises we can do for our one and only true self.

Defining what success means to you, taking the time to think about it, write about it, and refine it allows you to control the controllable, focus in on what matters to you and your life, and build your own personal calm confidence. Without doing this, we tend to do live someone else's dream or pursue another's view of success, leaving us feeling a little empty and often leading to frustration, stress and burnout.

To live a truly successful life, perhaps we need to steer away from being a, "rushing achievement junkie" and move to a more meaningful and fulfilling life that you have created and constructed for yourself. Now, what is meaningful to you? For me, success is living the life I choose and adding value to the world—one conversation at a time. I work to educate and empower my clients, so they can have and experience personal clarity, purpose, and direction in their lives. I express creativity in my daily life through having a mindful mindset and approaching my days with lightness and joy, rather than overwhelm and anxiety, which I have trained my brain to do over the years. I live by and for my values and work on showing up each day as the best version of myself (which of course doesn't happen all the time but that is the goal and the direction). I choose to be kind to myself and embrace the pace and progression, rather than perfection, and the list goes on.

So, do your current measures of success assist you in having more intimate connections with people in your life and greater fulfilment within your days, or are your measures keeping you from experiencing success on a daily basis?

Many people measure success with negative terminology, such as needing to be a certain weight in order to be happy, rather than focusing on being the healthiest version of themselves, or they strive for that certain dream car, banking their happiness on driving

and owning it at the cost of all the other amazing things that are happening in their lives. Happiness is an inside job, and the science of happiness shows us that 10% of happiness is based on external factors, such as money, cars, clothing, online shopping, etc. A few weeks later that external object doesn't give us the same feeling of success. About 40% of our happiness comes from intentional activity, such as our habits, routines, and rituals that we can control daily. Maybe we could add in some of those in our success measurements. For example, measuring success for me is asking myself whether I consciously took three breaths each time I washed my hands that day as that keeps me grounded, calms my nerves, recenters me, and also keeps my overwhelm at bay. This is more important than gaining more clients because if I don't do the breathing, I will feel burnt out and be no good to anyone.

Vision boards are also amazing vehicles to imagine, visualise, and raise your energy toward success. My definitions of success are on there, how I want to feel is on there, some small external rewards are on there, but primarily my mindset is on there—what I am telling myself for today. Today is a gift, control the controllable, focus on being mindful and present, be impeccable with your words, do your best each day, and just go for it.

So, remember to ask yourself: What is your definition of success? How do you want to feel? Where do you want to be? What do you want in your life on a daily basis so that you can tap into the feeling of success each and every day?

What you imagine and define is what you create, and you can't achieve it if you can't see it. Having a picture of our own definition of success is an essential step in having your own personal life plan. The journey miles begins with a vision and a clear understanding of what success means to you, so you can plot, build habits, routines, and rituals to support you on the way to reaching your goals. And, don't forget to celebrate all the small wins along the way.

Take some time out for yourself. You owe it to yourself, to sit and reflect, and connect with your true self. Simply follow these steps:

Write down your values and what is most important to you.

Write down what your goals are.

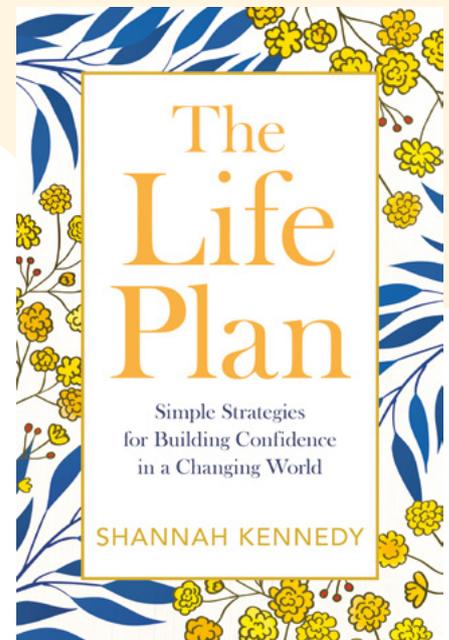
Plot out some dates and times to give the

brain a roadmap, your life plan!

Write down how you want to feel each and every day.

Write down the daily habits that will enable you to feel successful on your life journey

We plan in decades, think in years, work in months, and live in days. To live today, mindfully and gracefully, while controlling the controllable, we need to have a clear life plan, a healthy definition of success, and some solid daily habits that support us in showing up as the best version of ourselves. ■



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www.shannahkennedy.com



HOW TO BUILD A TRUSTWORTHY CLIENT BASE

The FHT's Molly Denton shares how to build your reputation with loyal clients...

Join a professional association

There are many benefits to joining a professional association. Not only can it help your business credibility, it can give you a sense of belonging and allow you to feel part of a flourishing therapist community.

For example, the FHT offer many benefits such as: Tailor-made insurance policies; access to our Therapist helpline; — therapy articles and industry news; local meetings with likeminded therapists; CPD building events such as our annual Virtual Conference; and a listing on our FHT Therapist Register.

Tailored marketing

Think about the treatments that you offer. Who do they target? Who are they best suited for? Narrowing down your target audience can make all the difference. When you target a well-defined segment of your customers, it's easier to refine your marketing message and your brand so you're speaking directly to them, resulting in more targeted promotion and efficient marketing.

Top Tip: The internet is wonderful, but offline can be just as successful. Word-of-mouth marketing is one of the most powerful tools for making new clients. In a FHT 2016 study, over 80% of Complementary Therapists said it was the easiest and most beneficial way to communicate with clientele.

Build a strong rapport

It is important to build relationships with your customers – whether they're old or new. Keeping in contact through social media channels is a great way to let them know you're still about. LinkedIn is a great network for motivated professionals; signing up can help you to engage with other industry professionals and new clientele, build relationships, stay connected with business news and increase your exposure and business credibility.

Stay in the loop

As the saying goes 'knowledge is power' and keeping up to date with industry news can ensure a more pro-active approach to what's good and bad practice. You can do this by staying in contact with your clients interests; responding to their reviews; thanking them for their custom; and reading daily news updates. Having insurance will also show your customers that you are professional and take their health

seriously. After time, when you deliver a consistently good service, you will increase your chances of being referred to new clients by your existing ones – saving you time and money.

Showcase positive customer reviews and testimonials

After every treatment, politely ask your customers to review their experience – perhaps have review cards, or offer a discount for leaving one. These are great to showcase on your social media and website. With Facebook and Google reviews, you'll get an overall rating score out of five, so your prospective clients can get a snapshot of how your customers rate you. The better your feedback, the more likely new clients are to trust you. Reflect on all your feedback – good and bad. Find out what your clients are happy with and what they think you could improve.



The Federation of Holistic Therapists (FHT) offers students and qualified practitioners a range of membership benefits to help support them, every step of their therapy career.

For further information, visit

www.fht.org.uk or call **023 8062 4350**.





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PREPARING FOR A LONG AND SUCCESSFUL PRACTICE

*Success needs careful planning, as **Ran Janda** explains...*

ACCORDING to data from the UK Government's Office of National Statistics, the five-year survival rate for businesses born in 2015 was 39.6%. So for every ten businesses that were started, only four were still going after five years. It drops to 30% after ten years. Despite this, another UK study recently revealed that 64% of UK workers would like to set up their own business.

So, why do 70% of those who decide to take the plunge, not last more than 10 years in business? Two main reasons for failure are not understanding your market and not knowing your customer. If you are planning on becoming a holistic therapist or are already one who is struggling to grow their practice, market research is essential for growth and long term success.

Understanding your market

Many holistic therapists decide to practice a therapy as they have experienced healing from receiving that treatment themselves. A worthy reason, but not a business orientated one, and that is how you need to see your practice first and foremost, as a business.

Market research should begin as soon as you decide to study to become a holistic therapist. It is key to having clients ready to book with you once you have graduated. If you have been in practice for some time, then the time to start is now.

That is what market research and strategy can do for your business. So, wherever you are in your practice journey, follow these steps for more clarity and to really begin to understand who your clients are or will be.

Competitive Landscape

Let's assume you are a herbalist, or planning on becoming one. Do an online search and see how many other herbalists are in your local area and how long they have been practising for. Look at their websites and social media accounts and take notes on what you like so you can incorporate it into your strategy.

If there are many herbalists who have been in business for a long time, it shows that there is a market for what you have to offer. Have a think about how you as a herbalist can differentiate yourself from everyone else.

You might decide that you will specialise in treating a particular condition to narrow your niche market and become an expert in a particular area. This can go a long way in becoming a thought leader and in clients finding you easily because of your speciality.

This will also allow you to create a marketing strategy that targets relevant clients and develop your brand around a niche topic. Marketing to a niche group of people will lead to greater success, as it is well known in the marketing industry, when you market to everyone, you market to no one. If you are still studying, you can focus your attention on your speciality, so you have this knowledge when you graduate. If you are already practising, you may need to look at taking additional courses to upskill.

Know your customer

Starting to understand who your clients are and beginning to connect with them as early as possible is key and crucial to having a busy practice.

Client email list

Email marketing is still the number one marketing strategy and will serve you for years to come. Creating and growing your list of clients or potential clients will allow you to offer tons of value to them directly, engage with them and show them that you are a thought leader which will help turn many of them into paying clients.

Create something for free, a lead magnet. This should showcase you as a thought leader

in your specialised area. It could be a free video workshop, or a 5-day plan that they can follow to get some relief from a particular condition, or anything else that offers huge value.

You will offer this for free in exchange for an email address, which will automatically be added to your subscriber list through software such as MailChimp, Aweber and Constant Contact. You then nurture subscribers through an email campaign, perhaps by sending them an email each week, and continue to offer plenty of value. Include anonymous success stories from previous clients. You should also give them information on how to reach you should they want to work with you one to one, just don't always make it about booking an appointment, always think value first.



Search for relevant Facebook groups and engage in them.

Ensure you ask subscribers to follow you on social media for more health advice and tips and provide the relevant links at the end of every email. This is an easy way to build your social following.

Social media presence

Share and even promote your lead magnet on social media and watch your subscriber list grow. If you don't get many subscribers from promoting your lead magnet, share it with friends and family and get some feedback on what you can do to improve it.

Post relevant and engaging content regularly across at least one social media platform. Use a social media management system such as Hootsuite or Later to schedule your posts in advance to save time. You could spend half a day and create posts to go out automatically for the whole month.

Be consistent, if you are planning on sending out three posts a week, ensure you maintain this posting rate. Inconsistency in posting could disappoint followers or cause them to forget about

you! Consistency builds likeability and trust. Respond to all posts and comments made on your account. If you don't respond, it shows a lack of care, why would somebody book an appointment with a practitioner that doesn't care?

It is also important to engage with other users who may well turn into followers or subscribers. Like and comment on their posts. Search for relevant Facebook groups and engage in them.

Share your lead magnet with the group, but don't be salesy.

Respond to and engage with posts and always provide value. Be seen as the thought leader that you are.

Client feedback

The best way to understand what your clients' needs are is to hear it from them directly.

Ask them what content they would like to see from you, how they choose a practitioner to work with, what is their number one pain in life right now. The responses to these questions will guide you in your marketing strategy and in how you shape your practice. This is also why it is so important to grow a strong email list, it allows you to get answers to all your questions, straight from the mouths and minds of your ideal clients.

Preparing for a long and successful practice takes time and commitment. However, it is the best way to reduce the likelihood of ending up being part of the statistic mentioned at the beginning of this article. It is also never too late start, regardless of how long you have been in practice.



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– a platform that

matches users with the most relevant holistic health practitioner for their needs, and to support them to achieve their health goals.



MAKING REMOTE SERVICES WORK FOR YOU

Holistic therapy is one of the most hands-on of professions, but now's the time to think about how best to deliver services remotely...

IT'S tempting to behave as if COVID-19 has just disappeared from the face of the earth and that this pandemic is a thing of the past. The current variant is mild, but there's nothing to suggest that future mutations will remain so. Nor is this likely to be the last pandemic we witness, so it makes good sense to plan ahead so we can design and deliver some of our services remotely.

There are three main reasons for doing so. The first is that it allows us to keep in touch with existing clients in the event of not being able to offer in-person services. The second is that working remotely offers a secure revenue stream in adverse circumstances. The third is the additional flexibility and opportunities that hybrid working offers. Many holistic therapists find it brings in a wider clientele, suits their lifestyle and offers a more balanced approach.

Obviously, not all the benefits of every modalities can be delivered online and touch

deprivation is a very real problem that technology can do little to ameliorate. Yet, with a little creativity, certainly, the mind and spiritual benefits of holistic therapy can be delivered at a distance, as can some aspects of physical treatment. Hybrid working can be particularly useful for those who practice talking therapies, or those which are less well known, as a much wider audience can be reached. This is not only true in the geographic sense, in that you can attract clients from across the globe, but it also means you could reach people who don't feel able to come to your practice room.

Many of your clients who previously worked in offices will still be working from home. Indications are that people are now choosing to switch jobs in favour of remote working, rather than returning to the corporate environment. This also offers more opportunity for remote working for holistic therapists as more flexible working hours means that people are now available

during the day when they may not have been previously. This is likely to fuel a rise in the remote delivery of online holistic therapy.

Hybrid working can be particularly useful for those who practice talking therapies

Remember that working remotely is something you will have to actively market, both to existing and potential clients. You can't just sit back and wait for the universe to send you some customers. Blogging, social media posts, YouTube videos and above all, online ad campaigns can all support your marketing efforts when shifting to remote service delivery.

You'll also need to make sure you comply with regulations such as GDPR, by asking people to opt in to your online services.

Email newsletters for existing and past clients

Emailed newsletters can be used to keep in touch with current and past clients, and could bring some of them back to your practice room. The contents should be an uplifting mix of wellbeing tips, general health information, interesting health research and modality-specific information for self-care. This might mean embedding videos of exercises, demonstrating acupuncture points, or discussing the merits of a given essential oil depending on your modality.

Aim to send a newsletter at least once a month and preferably once a fortnight. Remember to direct people towards your website or to call for an appointment with an appropriate call to action.

Sessions via Zoom or other online platforms

Many modalities lend themselves to online sessions using Zoom or similar platforms. Virtually all forms of energy healing can be delivered at a distance and in other cases, a bit of brainstorming can throw up solutions that overcome the apparent limitations of working online.

It's possible to offer group classes, such as meditation, mindfulness, yoga or exercises, as well as individual sessions for many forms of holistic therapy. Where some form of touch is required, you could teach couples to deliver massage to each other, or provide packages to help people treat themselves in the event of a lockdown. For example, a reflexology package could include training, an eBook and reflexology socks that guide your clients towards the right regions of the sole. An aromatherapist might deliver an online session that includes several essential oil samples or some pre-made blends, then demonstrate how to make, say a pillow spray to help with sleep.

Phone sessions

Phone sessions work particularly well for those modalities which focus on mental wellbeing and behavioural change. It's often easier for clients to disclose what's at the heart of their issues when they are in the familiar surroundings of their home and don't have the distractions of the therapist being present. The downside here is that a great deal of communication is non-verbal and it's possible

for body language signals that might lead to further explorations to be missed.

Quick phone calls can also be a useful tool for retention rates in the more physical modalities, as a quick call lets a client know you're interested in how they are getting on and helps strengthen the bond between the client and therapist.

You can also use calls to talk a client through a treatment or to discuss the merits of a product you think would work for them.

At home video lessons and handouts

Many holistic therapists provide printed guides detailing at-home exercises for care in between appointments. You can take this up a notch by creating instructional videos for use at home. Start by examining the main complaints people come to you for and make videos for these. After a while, you'll have an entire library that you can use with your clients. You can also make videos in answer to specific questions or to help with emerging issues such as hunched backs, poor posture and tech neck that comes from working at home.

LinkedIn and YouTube videos

Videos need not be solely for your current clients. Good quality, professional looking videos posted on YouTube and LinkedIn, for example, could help you reach out to a wider audience and gain new clients for both your remote services and in-person sessions.

On YouTube, it's best to make videos that have a specific audience. So a sports massage therapist might look at shoulder problems that affect golfers, tennis elbow or advise runners on gait issues. With LinkedIn, the focus should be on issues like stress, desk exercises and short mindfulness exercises as well as the biomechanical and health issues associated with a sedentary lifestyle.

With a degree of creative thinking, almost every holistic therapist should be able to incorporate some form of remote delivery into their practice, ensuring that they are well-equipped to deal with both the move towards working from home and are better placed to thrive in the event of further pandemics or similar upheavals.





IS PODCASTING FOR YOU?

One of the things to emerge from the pandemic was a huge growth in podcasting. We look at how you can connect with an audience and use podcasting to build your business...

ACCORDING to specialist research firm Backtrack.fm, around 6.5 million UK adults listen to a podcast a week. That's 12% of the population. What's interesting is that two thirds of people will listen to an entire episode of a podcast and a further 22% will listen to most of the episode. That means that once you have attracted a listener, they'll probably stay for an extended period of time as you put your messages forward. On average, podcast users listen for 3.7 hours a week. Given that the average online browsing attention span is now between 6-10 seconds, it's practically miraculous.

Factor in that 81% of podcast listeners say they've taken some form of action after listening and it's clear to see why podcasts are so

popular.

There are, naturally, some caveats on this. Like every other marketing tool, how useful podcasting might be as a business building tool depends on your customer demographic. 63% of podcast listeners are male and around a fifth are between 25 and 34, so podcasting might be great if you're a sports massage specialist dealing with rugby players, triathletes or Sunday footballers, but not so good if your customer base consists largely of retired women. Only 5% of those listening to podcasts are over 55. This may signify an untapped audience, or simply be because most listeners use a smartphone and often listen while commuting.

The peak time for podcast listening is 8am to 8.15am, so some form of morning podcast can work well. Guided meditations, setting

intentions, affirmations, stretches or self-care could all work well, as could any form of modality that can be delivered at a distance, like Reiki or EFT. Podcasts that share information or teach new skills also work well, so you could do a series exploring each of the Bach flower remedies, or exploring essential oils, nutrition, natural menopause or men's health, for example.

Almost 40% of people also prefer to listen at home, 23% at work or a place of study, 21% while walking or on public transport and 13% in the car or other vehicle. Listening to podcasts is a solitary activity, with just 5% of people listening with someone else. This makes it a matter of personal interest, so you can really make a connection with the audience if you get it right.

Planning your podcast

If podcasting appeals, then there are some simple steps you should take to maximise your chances of success.

Establish your audience

Once you know who you will be talking to, you will be in a position to tailor your content and increase engagement as you deliver the quality content that your listeners are looking out for. By creating a persona of your ideal audience, you can gain a deeper understanding of the behaviours which influence their decisions and shopping style so you can find the best way to reach them. For example, in the United States, 44% of 26 to 35 year olds said that they listened to podcasts so by not utilising popular platforms, you could be missing out on a huge opportunity that is right in front of your eyes.

Make use of existing content

Give old content a new lease of life by repurposing it into fresh formats, utilising the power of podcasts. Instead of letting an article or video sit on your website with little to no traffic, use the information to create an exciting podcast that reaches a brand new audience. With 55% of businesses saying they were working on internet video projects over the last couple of years, staying on top of the trends and adapting to your surroundings will ensure you can maintain your position in the market.

Maximise audience engagement

When it comes to the power of podcasts, keep your listeners interested as they hear what you have to say, avoiding external distractions once they press play on your content. Studies have shown that audiences are more likely to take action from podcasts in comparison to written content, increasing your success rate as a business.

Establish your position as a leader

Stand out from your competitors with the addition of a podcast, becoming a go to source for information among your audience. A study of over 1,000 respondents resulted in 33% showing increased interest in eLearning content, so get your name out there by giving your audience what they are looking for. Whether you create short and snappy podcasts, or record long form podcasts which go in depth on

specialist topics, positioning yourself as an authority figure will help you build a leading reputation.

Drive people to your website

By experimenting with new platforms, reach a new audience who are likely to search for your main form of contact when looking to convert. As you mention your product or service offering, let your listeners know where they can find you and build up your website traffic, opening up new opportunities as you grab the attention of your new audience.

Give them what they want

When you are planning out your podcasts, ask yourself what value you are offering to your listeners. Content for the sake of content can sabotage your strategy and lose the interest of your audience, not only wasting your time, but impacting your reputation as a brand.

When you are planning out your podcasts, ask yourself what value you are offering to your listeners

In the United States, the most popular genres are comedy, news, and true crime so look into the preferences of your target audience and consider whether you can offer fresh and exciting content that will grab their attention. On a worldwide scale, the highest earning podcast to date is The Joe Rogan Experience, having found a desirable niche by discussing an extensive range of current topics with different guest speakers. Once you find your gap in the market, quickly position yourself as a thought leader and become a trusted name among your listeners.

Consider your delivery tactics

Reach all the right people by delivering your content in the most effective way. Depending on the message you are trying to get across, ask yourself whether you should be hosting a fun and informal chatty style podcast, a professional talk with specialist speakers or even whether a written form of content is more suitable. Although you can back up your podcast with supporting materials on other platforms, the 18% penetration rate of podcast listeners worldwide means you could be missing out on a huge up and coming trend if you don't jump on the bandwagon soon.

If you're good at talking, full of enthusiasm and expertise and can engage with a defined audience, a podcast could be a great way to build your business.



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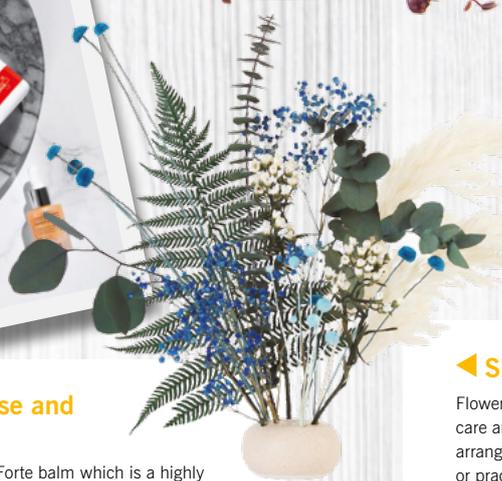


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▶ Swissforce Couperose and Thread Veins Balm

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COULD THIS SELENIUM BE THE KEY TO BATTLING Thyroid Disorders?

*Health writer **Bjørn Falck Madsen**, explores the growing body of evidence which suggests the micronutrient selenium may have a key role in thyroid health...*

MOST of us live our lives without paying much attention to the thyroid gland. Situated at the base of the neck, this butterfly-shaped organ releases hormones that control our metabolism, which is the rate at which the body's cells convert the food we eat into energy. The metabolic rate is of key importance to basic body functions such as breathing, heart rate, central and peripheral nervous system, staying warm, and maintaining normal body weight. In fact, many people with weight problems, overweight or underweight, are likely to have

a malfunctioning thyroid gland. Either their metabolic rate is too high (hyperthyroidism) or too low (hypothyroidism). The most common form of hyperthyroidism is Graves' disease, while the most widespread form of hypothyroidism is Hashimoto's thyroiditis. Both thyroid disorders are known to target women aged 30-50 years in particular.

The thyroid gland is packed with selenium

Interestingly, the thyroid gland is one of the body's tissues that contains the highest concentration of selenium. Because of this,

scientists theorise that selenium may have a key role in maintaining a normal thyroid function. Their theory is supported by the fact that patients with autoimmune thyroid disorders often have reduced levels of selenium in their blood, and numerous studies have looked into whether selenium supplementation could be of potential value to those suffering from various thyroid complications.

For instance, several studies of patients with autoimmune thyroid disorders (AITD) have demonstrated that selenium supplementation helps by dialing down certain inflammatory processes and fine-tuning the patients' immune response. The first placebo-controlled study¹ of selenium in AITD was carried out by German scientists and found that daily supplementation with 200 micrograms of selenium for a three-month period decreased levels of certain antibodies (anti-TPO) by 36%, showing that the

selenium helped calm down the “overheated” immune system. The study was designed in such a way that half the patients got selenium while the other half got placebo. Both groups of patients continued receiving medical therapy (levothyroxine) for the condition in addition to their respective interventions. In the placebo group, there was only a 10% reduction in anti-TPO levels, suggesting that selenium had a better effect. In the course of the study, anti-TPO levels were normalised in 25% of the participants in the selenium-supplemented group.

A superior form of intervention

Another randomized, placebo-controlled study², which was carried out on 65 patients with autoimmune thyroid disorders, showed that daily selenium supplementation lowered anti-TPO levels by 46% (after three months) and 55.5% (after six months). In the placebo group that only received thyroxine therapy, levels of anti-TPO only decreased by 21% and 27% during the same period. Again, selenium proved to be a superior form of intervention.

Endocrinologists use selenium

In a recent review³ published in the journal *Diagnostics*, Portuguese scientists wrote that an increasing number of endocrinologists use selenium supplementation as part of the treatment for AITD, although it is not yet recommended in the international treatment guidelines. Moreover, they write that selenium supplementation in patients with Hashimoto’s thyroiditis where selenium levels are low may be useful even for those who already receive medical therapy for their condition.

A shortage in the soil

The UK together with vast parts of Europe, is a low-selenium region due to the fact that the agricultural soil contains very little of this key nutrient. Thyroid diseases affect an estimated 200 million people worldwide and selenium deficiency is likely to be a contributing factor.

Selenium has a number of functions in the human body. It fuels somewhere between 25 and 30 different selenium-dependent compounds known as selenoproteins that control a number of different body functions. Some of these selenoproteins are involved in and our metabolism and help the body convert T4 thyroid hormone into T3, which is the

active form. If a person lacks selenium this conversion may not function properly and that can affect the thyroid function.

Makes thyroid medicine work

What is interesting is that even in cases where thyroid patients receive medical therapy for their disorder, the medicine alone may not be able to do the trick. Patients often take synthetically manufactured T4 because their thyroid gland is unable to produce the hormone. However, if they are selenium-deficient at the same time, they will have difficulty with converting T4 into T3. A selenium supplement, on the other hand, may be useful for ensuring a successful conversion of thyroid hormones.



How much selenium is needed?

One of the primary selenoproteins is selenoprotein P. Researchers have gauged the saturation level for this specific selenoprotein and found that daily selenium intake (from food or supplements) should ideally lie in the range between 100-110 micrograms in order to achieve full saturation. Some years ago, a group of Danish scientists set up a trial to test a seafood diet (a good source of selenium) could provide enough of the nutrient to reach complete saturation of selenoprotein P. One group of participants was given a total of 1,000 grams of seafood every week for half a year, while a control group was instructed to continue eating their regular diets withing changing anything. As it turned out, the generous intake of seafood was unable to fulfil its goal. The scientists explained that it was partly due to the fact that selenium binds to heavy metals such as mercury in the fish meat. The selenium is therefore sequestered and no longer available to the human body. The scientists specifically referred to supplements of organic selenium yeast as a reliable way of increasing blood levels of selenium to the desired values.

Choose a selenium supplement with high absorption

It is important to stress that there are comparatively large differences when it comes to selenium forms and their absorption. Studies show that the most bioavailable form of selenium is selenium yeast that contains a blend of different selenium species. It delivers the same variety of selenium compounds as you get from eating a balanced diet. The Danish company Pharma Nord has developed a pharmaceutical-grade selenium yeast called SelenoPrecise and conducted an array of studies to document its bioavailability. The studies show that 88.7% of the selenium in this selenium yeast is absorbed in the body, which is rather compelling if you compare it to other selenium sources. It was because of the documented quality of this brand that Swedish scientists specifically selected SelenoPrecise for their KiSel-10 study, which is published in the *International Journal of Cardiology* (2013). ■

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JOURNEYS: Malika & Prerna Aswani

All the ideas for our products have come from the skin issues experienced by those close to us

When **Malika Aswani** entered her forties, she resumed studying when her daughter **Prerna** went to university. Now they own their own skincare company...

‘MY interest in holistic health started when my son, who is a special needs young person, with multiple health issues, had to take a lot of medication and antibiotics with so many side effects.

It was incredibly painful to see him suffer like that and be so helpless about it. And so I decided I needed to do something about it,’ Malika explained. ‘I studied naturopathic nutrition, so that I could heal my son through nutrition and alternative medicine. I was able to tackle a lot of his health issues through natural remedies and soon my family and friends were coming to me with their skin and health issues. That sparked my interest in crafting my own blends for skin and hair care.’

Prerna added, ‘Although I work full-time in the not-for-profit sector, I’ve found that working with Mum has unlocked skills and potential within me that I didn’t know I even had. We are able to support and encourage each other whenever we face a challenge. My motivation comes from the desire to bring my mother’s talent and creativity in her handmade blends to a wider audience.’

Malika agreed, ‘Prerna really pushes me out of my comfort zone to try new things to expand the business, like putting myself out there on social media through videos and reels on Instagram, or selling in person at Greenwich Market instead of just online. Prerna is always in a rush, she’s 100 miles an hour, whereas I’m more about creating new blends and continual innovation, so we’ve learned to adjust to each other’s working styles.’ Prerna agreed, ‘It’s a learning curve, but I genuinely think our differences make us stronger together.’

‘All the ideas for our products have come from the skin issues experienced by those close to us. Prerna never had time for a multi-step skincare routine, so that led to our Glow Me Moisturiser, while our Beauty Balm was originally formulated for a friend with dry skin and eczema. Everything is pure, organic and natural.’

Prerna has some ambitious goals for the business, saying, ‘I want to build a luxury brand that stays authentic to its roots of utilising the highest quality natural and organic ingredients even as we scale and be a business that is centred on social impact. We’re determined to be mindful of how and who we employ, once we get to that stage, providing an opportunity to people from otherwise marginalised and underrepresented backgrounds. I think that will truly merge my two passions together- building my mum’s business and having a positive social impact in the world.’

‘The goal for me is for our skincare range to one day be on the shelves of Selfridges and other mainstream luxury and health and beauty retailers, and to be an affordable luxury skincare brand that is firmly grounded in our values of being rooted in the earth, in sustainable sourcing and natural wellness.’

Malika concluded, ‘I’d say I’m proof that it’s never too late to follow your dream, find your passion or start a business. I got so much encouragement from my family.’



Find out more about Mother Earth Beauty at www.motherearthsbeauty.co.uk/



FATTY LIVER DISEASE

Jordi Mascio explains why fatty liver disease is becoming increasingly prevalent, but remains unknown to many people...

WHEN we think about lifestyle diseases, we often associate these with obesity, diabetes or heart conditions, but Fatty Liver Disease is also becoming increasingly common. According to the British Liver Trust, deaths due to liver disease have increased by 400% since 1970. Every day, over 40 people die from liver disease in the UK. 90% of Liver Disease is preventable, but diagnosis is often slow, because, in the majority of the cases, Fatty Liver Disease (FLD) remains asymptomatic, and the affected individuals appear healthy. In rare conditions, FLD may become progressively complicated which may lead to liver damage. FLD is a reversible health ailment provided that an individual remains compliant to the treatment and adopts a healthy lifestyle.

The function of the liver

The liver is the largest endocrine gland in the body. The liver has a number of functions including synthesising essential plasma proteins such as albumin which maintains the colloid osmotic pressure and maintains blood pressure and interstitial fluid volume. Hepatocyte cells produce bile that contains bile salts, acids, cholesterol, and metabolic waste products including bilirubin. The bile salts aid in the process of digestion of fats. The liver also converts excess glucose into glycogen for storage purposes. Glycogen is reconverted to glucose when the blood levels of glucose decline. The liver also acts as a storage hub for iron. Hepatocytes express transferrin receptors and accumulate iron in the form of ferritin. Ferritin readily mobilises iron whenever required by the body.

Types of fatty liver disease

There are two major types of Fatty Liver Disease. Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) occurs in the absence of alcoholism. There are two sub-types. Simple fatty liver is characterized by the accumulation of fat in the liver; however, hepatocytes do not undergo inflammation and damage. In Non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH) there is an excessive accumulation of fat in the liver resulting in inflammation and hepatocellular damage. This may lead to fibrosis or scarring of the liver parenchyma. Further complications may arise if NASH is left untreated, including cirrhosis and hepatic carcinoma.

Alcoholic fatty liver disease (AFLD) arises due to excessive alcoholism. When alcohol is consumed in large amounts, the buildup of toxins causes tissue damage, elicits an inflammatory response, and results in hepatocellular damage. AFLD is the first stage of liver disease that is associated with alcohol consumption. Further complications such as alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis may arise if AFLD is left untreated.

FLD can also be diagnosed in pregnant women. This is called acute fatty liver of pregnancy (AFLP). AFLP usually arises during the third trimester of pregnancy and poses threat to both mother and fetus, however, AFLP resolves after birth.

Causes and stages of Fatty Liver Disease

Unsurprisingly, alcohol is the primary cause of AFLD, but a wider range of risk factors underlie NAFLD. These include obesity, diabetes mellitus type 2, insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome, hypertriglyceridemia, pregnancy, genetic predisposition, Infections and inflammation of the liver (such as Hepatitis C), and drug adverse effects. Genetic predisposition, obesity, old age, alcoholism, smoking, a history of hepatitis C and being pregnant can all raise the risk of developing some form of fatty liver disease.

The medical profession recognises four stages in the progression of the disease. Simple fatty liver is a non-pathological condition characterised by the accumulation of fat in the liver. This develops into Steatohepatitis an excess accumulation of fat gives which rise to inflammation of the liver and then fibrosis when persistent inflammation causes surface scarring of the liver tissues.

Even at this stage, the liver function is intact. Stage four is Cirrhosis, a severe and irreversible scarring of liver parenchyma and the resultant decline in liver function.

Symptoms of Fatty Liver Disease

FLD rarely gives rise to symptoms until the disease progresses to the cirrhosis stage.

At this point, the patient may experience a loss of appetite with associated cramping, nausea and weight loss. Fatigue, itchy skin and easy bruising or bleeding can occur, and the urine can become darker while faeces become paler. As the situation worsens, oedema of the extremities, ascites, gynecomastia and confusion can occur. The veins and arteries can also become malformed.

Diagnosis normally includes taking a medical history, blood tests for liver function, imaging and tissue biopsy. Signs of jaundice and an enlarged liver are also sought.

Prevention and treatment

Currently, there are no therapeutic techniques or medications available for the treatment of FLD. More rigorous research and testing are required to develop an optimal treatment for FLD.

In the majority of the cases, lifestyle modifications can reverse all the stages of FLD except for cirrhosis. Additional surgical and non-surgical techniques are required to manage the patient's condition in FLD complications. Cirrhosis may progress to liver failure if left untreated and the patient may eventually require liver transplantation.

Lifestyle modifications

Patients are advised to consume a healthy and well-balanced diet, increasing dietary fibre and limiting the consumption of high-calorie foods and those that are high in sodium, saturated fats, trans fats, and refined carbohydrates. Where alcohol is a factor, this should be limited too.

Exercise, reducing excess body weight,

limiting the use of tobacco, improving glycaemic control where the subject has diabetes and avoiding medications which increase the risk of FLD are recommended.

The role of glutathione and supplements

Various supplements are also available for restoring liver health. For instance, glutathione supplements have antioxidant properties that protect hepatocytes from oxidative damage and also modulate the immune system. Alpha-lipoic acid supplements are important for protecting cells against free radicals and also promote the production of natural antioxidants. Herbalists often recommend Milk Thistle and dandelions for liver support, but a professional consultation should be undertaken, rather than self-prescribing.

The prognosis for Fatty Liver Disease

In most cases, reversal of FLD has been witnessed through dietary and lifestyle modifications, leading to early resolution of FLD and better treatment outcomes. If left untreated, FLD can progress to inflammation, fibrosis, and cirrhosis of the liver. Liver cirrhosis is an irreversible condition that may even progress to liver cancer or liver failure in the worst-case scenario. ■



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Dealing with **Difficult Clients**



At some point, we all come across a client whose appointments fill us with dread. So how can you spot and deal with difficult clients?

MOST of the clients who visit your practice room will be a pleasure to deal with, but just like any other job, holistic therapists have to deal with a few difficult clients. They may be people who are perpetually dissatisfied with everything and everyone in life, who drain your energy, who always try to get something extra for free or who just don't feel right to you. The trick is to be able to identify difficult people early and work out a strategy to mitigate the experience of dealing with them.

Spotting a difficult client

There are many types of difficult client and someone you find grating or a pain to deal with may be perfectly lovely with another therapist. Here are the main types of problematic clients:

The Cheap One

This is an entitled kind of person, who always thinks they deserve the best, but should pay less. They'll haggle for a discount, even though your prices are published on the website.

They'll mention that another therapist has a special offer on Groupon, or charges less in the hope you'll drop your prices. They'll keep you talking or suddenly mention another area of pain in the final five minutes of their appointment so you spend more time on them.

Cheap clients, generally, aren't the same people who might find it difficult to afford you. There's a world of difference between working with a client who has lost their job and could use a little financial slack till their new one starts and the one who wants to drive a hard bargain. These clients need to feel they are winning and that involves you losing.

Cheap clients don't place much value on what you are offering, which is better health. It may even be that their behaviour stems from a feeling that investing in themselves is somehow wrong. If you know them well, and your modality is a talking therapy, it may be worth exploring this issue.

Another approach is to offer a cheaper option, but this must be one which is based on reducing the scope of your services. You could, for example, offer a 30 minute treatment rather than an hour, or move them from a prime appointment time to one you have difficulty filling otherwise, or even introduce stand by appointments at a slightly reduced rate for when a client cancels.

The Instant Cure One

This type of difficult client is the one who fails to recognise that it almost certainly took a long time to get into a state of poor health and somehow believes that somehow you will be able to fix them in just a couple of sessions. They're often hugely enthusiastic at first and sing your praises, but quickly cool, particularly if your treatment includes longer term goals and behavioural change.

It's important when dealing with this type of client to make it clear that recovery will take some while and will require an ongoing commitment. Very often this is the client who never does their at home exercises or follows a nutritional plan for two days.

Explain that the client will get much better results if they can take a longer-term view and make gradual changes rather than repeated cycles of rushing and failing.

The Poor Communicator

Some clients find it difficult to express what's wrong with them and what they hope to achieve by seeing you. This, naturally, makes it very difficult to achieve a successful treatment outcome, especially with nebulous or intermittent symptoms that are common to many issues. At the same time, they may feel uncomfortable if you ask too many questions.

This is obviously less problematic as you gain experience and can read what's wrong with a client based on the signals their body provides. Ask open questions if possible, rather than anything that allows a straight yes or no answer. Try various techniques like self-reporting pain scales or written symptom logs if verbal communication is not a strong point.



The Joy Sucker

Some people seem able to suck all the joy from a room and may leave you feeling drained of energy after an appointment with them. This is not the same as dealing with a depressed client. The joy suckers habitually moan about everything and everyone and seem to be unhappy all the time. Their lives are marked by constant slights, drama and injustice and they make sure everyone is aware of it. This state of constant disapproval can even be mirrored in the way they hold themselves and hold onto past traumas.

Interestingly, there are a number of studies showing that people with such negative outlooks experience less positive outcomes.

If you don't have the appropriate qualifications to delve in their sources of unhappiness, you might try using guided meditations during your treatments, as this will require them to remain silent. You can also try changing your opening approach during appointments by asking questions which force them to focus on the positives in their day rather than offloading negativity on you.

Grounding exercises can be useful here as can a space clearing ritual if you feel the

negative atmosphere spills over into other clients' sessions.

The One You Connect With Too Much

This can be a particularly difficult one. Sometimes you may have a client that you find you are attracted to. Around a third of people meet their future partners at work, but like nurses and teachers, this avenue is problematic for holistic therapists.

No-one is saying that you can't feel things or be human. You can be friendly with a client, but you simply cannot have relationships with current clients.

There is scarcely a week goes past where we do not see newspaper stories and court cases where bodyworkers have been accused of inappropriate touching or sexual offences against clients. Feelings are open to misinterpretation.

If you find you have inappropriate feelings towards a client, you should refer them to another therapist. How you take things forwards subsequently is up to you.

The One Who Feels Wrong

It's almost inevitable that you'll run across a client who you don't feel safe around. You may tell yourself you're just imagining it, or they may be nothing directly in the client's behaviour that generates the feeling. If you find you feel uneasy, or the hair rises on the back of your neck, then trust this feeling, even if you can't fully understand or define it.

Sometimes, it can be a client who requests happy endings or sexual services or it might simply be a client who feels wrong.

Make sure that your website and your client intake process makes it clear that you do not provide such services.

If you find yourself in this situation, you need to leave the room immediately and get help. Never compromise your own safety. End the session and do not make any further appointments with that client. This may feel rude or awkward, but trust your instincts.

Marketing to time-poor clients

Time poor clients are often amongst the most stressed out. So, how do you encourage them to take the time out to look after their health and wellbeing?

PEOPLE are busy. Lives are complicated. We seem to have less time for ourselves. We look after children or elderly parents, we have blended families and complicated relationships. Work spills over into weekends, we spend what spare time we have working side gigs or just trying to keep the wolf from the door. In urban areas, we no longer even have to fetch our own takeaways or groceries, other people use their own time to make our lives notionally easier.

It's a mistake to assume that time-poor always equates to cash-rich. Particularly for younger consumers, depressed wages, spiralling rents and costs of living, the need to pay back student loans and

other financial pressures mean that many people are both time-poor and cash-poor. These are the people working multiple jobs and side gigs, shifts or juggling work with childcare and caring responsibilities. They are often under such financial stress that, unless recovering from injury, they are unlikely to constitute a large percentage of your customer base.

Research shows that those who make more money believe they are busy, whether that's the case or not. These people feel 'time-stressed'. They feel constantly rushed or pressed for time. Those who earn more often work longer hours, get less sleep and watch less TV. More money brings more choice

in how to spend what time they have, be it holidays, trips to the theatre or eating out, hobbies and courses. We may think of the city traders in some London skyscraper, so stressed, so busy, busy, busy that their employers offer a seated massage service at their desks as typical of this, but actually, higher earning women, particularly those with a university education, often feel the most time stressed. This includes teachers, accountants, office workers and those with their own businesses.

These better-off time-stressed people can be ideal clients, but only where your offering acknowledges their business and time-stress. This demographic needs to feel special. They need to feel that they are busier, and therefore simultaneously more important and more stressed than other people. There is an element of self-dramatisation in some cases. They are almost competitive in their busyness.

Marketing to the time-stressed client

So how do you market to the time-stressed? There are three key concepts here. The first is convenience, the second is concerned with exclusivity and recognition of their specialness and the third is persuading them that they deserve to take some time for themselves.

Intensive packages, boot camps and retreats

Time-poor clients often prefer intensive treatments, or will use their spare time in a way that should get results in a short time period. Examples would include weekend boot camps for fitness and weight loss, spa breaks and retreats. The latter, when located somewhere warm and sunny, often double up as holidays, given the time-poor need to multitask!

Anything which offers a combination of a luxurious setting, authentic food and the promise of resetting stress levels, giving health a quick boost, or teaching new skills which aid relaxation would appeal to this market.

Part of the appeal comes from the recognition that they need to make a break from the everyday if they are to make lifestyle changes and take some time out for self-care.

Express services

Another option is to offer treatments which are as effective, but are more intense and so take less time. Admittedly, these may have little in the way of destressing benefits, but can still be effective. Take the beauty sector as your pattern and look at lunchtime treatments. It's possible to get an express manicure or facial, or even some aesthetic treatments in the time it takes to pop to Prêt and pick up a sandwich, so why not an express massage, or Kinesiology session?

Bespoke treatments

One of the key drivers for time-poor clients is that they be recognised as special. They believe they are busier, more rushed and have more going on than other people.

Interestingly, this applies even when they don't have a job!

Creating bespoke treatment packages, whether it's a massage oil blend, guided meditation or specially selected crystal, should feel very individualised. Everything needs to be, 'Just for you' or 'Normally, I would simply do X, but in your case'. The time-poor client can be a loyal, long-term client when treated this way. Conversely, they will quickly move on if they feel that you don't appreciate how very busy and important they are.

Online or distance delivery

Depending on your modality, online or distance delivery of treatments, by phone, for example, can be a great way of working with time poor clients. This is particularly good for talking therapies, exercise based physical modalities and those which are delivered hands-off.

You could look at early morning appointments, evening appointments or Sunday morning sessions focussed on stress relief and mindfulness

Even some forms of bodywork can be delivered online, such as check in sessions and home exercises and teaching self-delivered treatments.

Online delivery also offers the option of small group work, with each participant in their own homes, meaning you can bring in more revenue by running five parallel appointments rather than five sequential ones.

Online delivery has a further advantage, in that you can reach out to a global audience. This means you can offer out of hours services, at out of hours rates, during your

normal working day, because your client is in a different time zone. You may have an insomniac client in Sacramento, who calls at 3am, but that's 11am here.

Extended hours

The time-poor are often unavailable during the conventional 9-5 working day. Add in that their evenings and weekends may be consumed by ferrying children to classes and sports matches and it's easy to see why appointments in extended hours may appeal.

You could look at early morning appointments, evening appointments or Sunday morning sessions focussed on stress relief and mindfulness. The possibilities here depend very much on the location and facilities your practice room offers. For example, clients may feel uneasy about visiting a practice room in a shopping centre which is deserted in the evenings except for roaming teenagers, while your family may not appreciate clients popping in for a session when they are trying to watch their favourite soap opera if you work from home.

Keeping a balance

Tempting as it may be to provide treatments in the early mornings, evenings or weekends, or to make yourself available online at all hours, you also need to keep a balance in your own life. Just like everyone else, you only have 24 hours in a day. You need clear differentiation between your work and leisure time, lest you become time stressed yourself.

It's also good practice to make sure your time-poor clients understand your cancellation policy as this client group may be more likely to cancel at short notice, which can be frustrating if you've made special provision for them. Remember that they are simply clients, not your boss! ■





LIFESTYLE DISEASES

We have an aging population, staggering health inequalities and growing levels of obesity and lifestyle diseases. We look at the latest statistics, research and how holistic therapists can help...

Go back a hundred and fifty years or so and people died of quite different causes than they do today. Increased life expectancy, safer working conditions and improved medical care mean that we no longer die of communicable diseases, industrial diseases, childbirth, or childhood illness in the vast numbers that we did in the Victorian age. In 1900, 60% of deaths were due to communicable diseases like consumption, diphtheria, typhoid, TB, polio and many diseases that are no longer classified as life threatening like rubella or scarlet fever. Diarrhoea and enteritis were leading causes of death around 1900.

Life expectancy has essentially doubled since the Victorian period, though the rate of increase has slowed over the past decade and has now started to slip backwards a little thanks to the pandemic. Previously, people did not die from lifestyle diseases because, all too often, they simply did not live long enough to develop them.

What's killing us now?

According to UK government statistics, dementia and Alzheimer disease is now the most frequent cause of death recorded, at 12.7% of all deaths. This means that just over one in eight of us will die this way.

Up till 2008, breast cancers were the leading cause of death in women aged 50 to 64, but this has now been overtaken by cancers of the lung, trachea and bronchus. 10.1% of deaths of women in this age group were due to lung cancer in 2018. In the 21st century, the leading cause of death in both men and women in the 20 to 34 age group was suicide, or injury or poisoning of undetermined intent, such as accidental overdoses. This accounts for 27.1% of male deaths and 16.7% of female deaths in this age group, a clear indication of a growing mental health epidemic that we are ill-equipped to counteract. We are now dying of diseases that are caused by the way we live, the so-called Lifestyle Diseases.

The principal lifestyle diseases

So what are the main lifestyle diseases? The World Health Organisation identifies these as diseases that have come about where economic development has led to a high rate of lifestyle changes. With these changes comes a crop of diseases. These diseases have been also been called 'diseases of civilization' and 'diseases of longevity'. Obviously, those living in extreme poverty and famine in third world countries suffer different lifestyle diseases than those that come with increased affluence. The WHO lists atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, some types of cancer, asthma, liver cirrhosis, type 2 diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, heart disease, metabolic syndrome, chronic renal failure, stroke, osteoporosis, obesity and depression as lifestyle diseases.

A complicated scenario

It's easy to assume that, since many of the underlying factors that increase the risks are superficially choice-driven, that people have control over all the factors that can lead to poor health and simply change their behaviours. Simply eat a healthier diet, reduce alcohol consumption, give up smoking and exercise more and everything will magically get better and we'll all look like supermodels and live to a sprightly 120.

In truth, the situation is complicated and individual. Many factors, often interrelated, underpin the risks of developing any disease, lifestyle or otherwise. Education, relative

wealth or poverty, physical location, living conditions, access to green space, access to healthy food, housing, cooking facilities and food knowledge, upbringing, genetics, personal outlook, weight, the degree of control and autonomy one experiences, social support networks and even a sense of purpose in life can all come into play.

Disease is not democratic. Even viral diseases, such as COVID, that we might think of as affecting all types of people in a similar fashion, can mean a more severe outcome for those who were elderly, poor or from certain ethnic groups. COVID intensive care patients from the top 20% of incomes were significantly less likely to die than those from the bottom 20% of incomes, simply because relative wealth often correlates to better living conditions, a healthier diet, greater educational attainment and all that comes with it.



Obesity often goes with metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease, as well as increasing the probability of depression.

Risk factors clump together. You are statistically more likely to have adult asthma, for example, if you are in the bottom 20% of incomes. This may not be directly because you are less well off, but it's more likely that you live in damp conditions, perhaps with mould

on the walls, because you cannot afford to live in a better home. It's more likely that you'll live in an inner city and thus suffer higher levels of air pollution. You may be more likely to smoke or drink because those around you do so and because you are more likely to be depressed. You may work longer hours on a job that has associated health hazards, or have few shops around that offer fresh fruits and vegetables, but have plenty of takeaway food options. As a result, you may be more likely to be obese and again, this can be correlated with depression, as can the lack of healthy food which depletes the diversity of the microbiome. It's a complicated situation and often people lack both the knowledge, resources and will to make the changes needed for better health.

Causes of lifestyle diseases

Diet and lifestyle are the most common causes of these lifestyle diseases. Tobacco smoking, drug abuse and alcohol intake as well as a lack of exercising can increase the risk of acquiring certain diseases. This is especially common in the elderly.

In western nations, people consume a lot of meat, vegetable oils, dairy products, alcoholic beverages and sugary foods. People have also adopted sedentary lifestyles and thus increasing the prevalence of obesity. These dietary changes have led to an increase in medical cases such as colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, breast cancer, lung cancer and endometrial cancer. People living in developing countries consume foods that are low in sugar and high in starch with lesser quantities of meat. As a result, the cancer rates are lower in these nations. Indeed the WHO classifies processed meat, such as bacon, as a carcinogen and red meat as a possible carcinogen, with both implicated as a risk factor in colorectal cancers.

Obesity

In the UK, an estimated one in four adults and 1 in 5 children are classified as obese. While genetics and other physiological factors exist, it is generally accepted that obesity stems from consuming an excess of calories, particularly from fatty and sugary foods, combined with a sedentary lifestyle. These excess calories are stored in the form of fat.

As we've seen, obesity is more prevalent in those of lower socioeconomic status, which suggests that an element of education about health and its lack thereof can be a factor, too. Obesity often goes with metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease, as well as increasing the probability of depression. Poverty effectively means a much more restricted choice of foods and that the food choices available are likely to be high in calories and low in nutrients. When a punnet of locally grown strawberries costs the same as twenty packs of instant noodles, healthy eating isn't a choice that everyone can afford, particularly in an era of rising prices.

Cheap food tends to mean processed food. In turn, this means food filled with cheap ingredients such as high levels of sugars and fats, which create a temporary sensation of reward and set up a cycle of cravings. The latest research from the New University of Pittsburgh research shows for the first time that the

microbes in animals' guts influence what they choose to eat, making substances that prompt cravings for different kinds of foods. We know the gut and brain are in constant communication using by-products of digestion as go-between molecules which signal that you've eaten enough food or maybe that you need certain kinds of nutrients. We also know microbes in the gut can produce some of those same molecules, potentially hijacking that line of communication and changing the meaning of the message to benefit themselves. For example, many people nap after Christmas dinner, because turkey contains tryptophan. This is also produced by gut microbes. When it makes its way to the brain, it's transformed into serotonin, which is a signal that's important for feeling satiated after a meal. Eventually that gets converted into melatonin, and then you feel sleepy. Ultimately, 'bad' gut microbes may make it more likely that we consistently make poor food choices.

Factor in that obesity is a common cause of joint problems and, in more severely affected individuals, can lead to osteoarthritis and that we know obesity is correlated with depression, feelings of isolation and low confidence and self-esteem. Essentially, the complex of factors involved in lifestyle diseases feed off each other, reducing the quality of life quality of life and often causing people to isolate themselves from their social surroundings and further exacerbate their physical and mental health problems.

Metabolic Syndrome and Type 2 Diabetes

According to the Mayo Clinic, metabolic syndrome is a cluster of conditions that occur together, increasing the risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes. These conditions include increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels. Thus,





it's often associated with being overweight or obese and is sometimes considered as a precursor to type 2 diabetes or heart disease.

Metabolic syndrome is increasingly common, and perhaps one-third of U.S. adults have it. As with many of the lifestyle diseases, aggressive lifestyle changes can delay, prevent or in some cases, reverse, the development of serious health problems.

Most of the disorders associated with metabolic syndrome don't have obvious signs or symptoms. One sign that is visible is a large waist circumference. High blood sugar can result in noticeable symptoms like increased thirst and urination, fatigue, and blurred vision.

The impact of lifestyle diseases on the health service

Currently, the National Health Service is focussed on curative medicine, rather than preventative medicine. Given that one in five children is considered obese, and around a sixth of NHS budgets are spent on type 2 diabetes, it's clear that, at some point, there will need to be a shift towards preventative care. Lifestyle diseases take a long time to develop, but they are often expensive to manage and could be either avoided or significantly reduced given proper funding.

We issue about 420 million repeat prescriptions in the UK each year — about 200 for each general practitioner each week. These are for chronic ongoing conditions. In January 2022, pharmacists in England issued over 92 million prescribed items. In 2017-18, Public Health England reported that 7.3 million people (17% of the adult population) received at least one prescription for antidepressants, 5.6 million (13%) received opioid pain medication, 1.5 million people were prescribed gabapentinoids, which are used for epilepsy and increasingly for anxiety and neuropathic pain. 1.4 million people were on benzodiazepines for anxiety and 1.0 million were on z-drugs which are sleeping tablets with similar effects to benzodiazepines.

Prescribing rates for opioid pain medicines and gabapentinoids had a strong association with deprivation, being higher in areas of greater deprivation. Antidepressant prescribing had a weaker association with deprivation. For benzodiazepines and z-drugs, prescribing rates

slightly decreased with higher deprivation. For all medicine classes the proportion of patients who had at least a year of prescriptions increased with higher deprivation and we know that prescribing rates for unnecessary antibiotics, for example, are twice as high in the most deprived areas of the country than in the best off.

Current research

There's a huge amount of ongoing research into the causes and prevention of lifestyle diseases, much of it focussed on intervention to support behavioural change. A study from Northwestern University showed that four of the most common bad habits - too much screen time, too little exercise and high fat and low fruit and vegetable intake – increase the risk of heart disease and cancer, but a simple intervention using mobile health tools and coaching normalised these behaviours, and improvements were sustained after intervention.

Prescribing rates for opioid pain medicines and gabapentinoids had a strong association with deprivation, being higher in areas of greater deprivation.

Another study from Augusta University in the USA showed that even a single 45-minute session of moderate intensity exercise can enable activation of a natural system we have to grow new blood vessels when existing ones are ravaged in those with diabetes. In fact many of the interventions supported by researchers are simple. For example, brisk walking has been found to reduce the effects of aging, which may be important as lifestyle diseases largely affect

those in middle age and beyond.

On a larger scale, there's evidence from Boston University of Public Health that greening urban spaces offers a potential population-level approach to improve processing speed and attention, and overall cognitive function. Trees not only improve air quality and enhance mental wellbeing, but can actually help reduce the risk of dementia.

What's the solution?

We need to start thinking of such diseases, not as something inevitable that requires being cured after they have developed, but as preventable problems that could be reduced or eliminated with a concerted programme of education, support and resources. At the moment, around 4% of the NHS budget goes on preventative health measures, despite such investments returning much more in the way of long term benefits than is spent. Even back in 2016, the Health Foundation calculated that 40% of the burden on health services in England could be avoidable if we took action to tackle the causes of these conditions. This only represents a fraction of the total cost to the country though, when we look more widely at the costs of people being unable to work due to preventable ill health.

To do so, it makes sense to make holistic therapy more accessible, particularly when there are huge waiting lists for appointments with physiotherapists and dieticians in the NHS.

Even the most capitalistic organisations see the benefit of this approach. Economic analyses show that most preventive interventions are relatively low cost and highly cost-effective. Some are also cost-saving, with avoided costs of preventable ill health being greater than the cost of action. Given the high and rising costs of preventable ill health, there is clearly therefore an economic case for prevention. The trouble is, that, just as these diseases may take many years to develop, so too do the benefits. Those in control of spending are generally only concerned with short term gains and self-interest. This is a problem that requires co-operation and joined up thinking.

The other problem with short term approaches are that they are often driven by the stick, rather than the carrot. Increasing taxation on 'undesirable products' such as cigarettes or alcohol may lead some people to give up, but for others, their needs become even more entrenched and their limited budgets are cut in other areas to allow the purchases they need to make. As an example, during the first lockdown, I was volunteering and was asked to do the weekly shop for an obese young man. His weekly food bill, which consisted of the cheapest white bread, four of the cheapest yogurts, two packs of the cheapest biscuits, cheese spread, milk, the cheapest cereal and four microwaveable burgers. This includes no fruit or vegetables and precious little nutritional

value. It came to less than £10. The rest of his budget was taken up with the purchase of 5 packs of cigarettes, costing almost £50. How different would his life be, how different would his health be if he gave up smoking?

People only change when they are ready to do so. Often this involves waiting until a disease has already taken hold. Preaching can have the opposite to the intended effect, particularly now that there are movements for fat acceptance and accusations of fat shaming. That said, some measures, such as banning smoking in workplaces and public buildings have already led to reductions in smoking rates. In other cases, such as the introduction of minimum unit pricing for alcohol can have a positive impact on the health of an individual, but also knock-on benefits like an improvement in social cohesion, reduced weekend attendance at A&E as a result of drunken brawls and even lowered rates of domestic violence.

Ultimately, we can only reduce preventable ill health when the 'causes of the causes' are addressed – the social, economic and environmental factors that drive our health, including housing, education and employment. These are largely outside the control of health services, and tackling them requires coordinated action across different sectors of government and society.

The role of holistic therapy in lifestyle diseases

Obviously, there are two main roles that holistic therapy can play. The first of these is preventative. We've seen that there are direct correlations between diet and environment, gut microbiomes, mental wellbeing and physical health when it comes to lifestyle diseases. The causes of lifestyle diseases are a complex mesh of both individual and societal factors, but both physical and mental holistic therapies have a role to play in supporting people on their journey towards better physical and mental wellbeing. Any modality that involves helping people changing

their behaviours around food, exercise and addictive substances has a role to play.

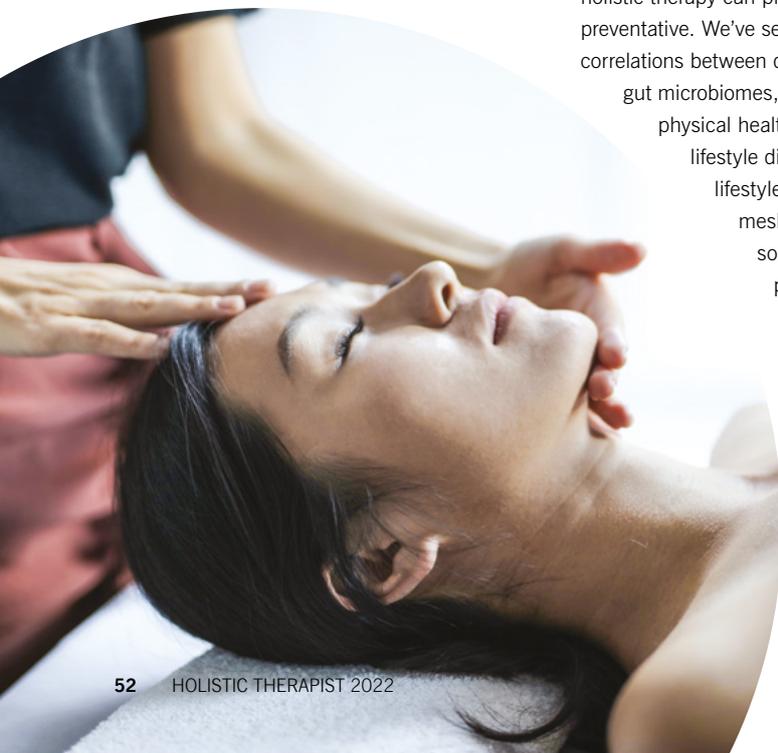
Bodyworkers can help the obese start exercising with safe programmes and recuperative treatments following injuries. Naturopaths are almost designed to help prevent lifestyle diseases, acupuncture specialists can help reduce food cravings, aromatherapists could provide energising or uplifting blends, even just listening to clients and supporting them to take the first steps on their journey to change is valuable work.



People only change when they are ready to do so. Often this involves waiting until a disease has already taken hold.

The second role is in reducing or managing the symptoms of lifestyle diseases, helping people adopt healthier habits. This may involve modifying treatments, such as offering seated massage where a client may be too large to easily climb onto a massage couch, or developing effective stretching exercises for home use. Hypnotists can help with appetite suppression and giving up smoking or drinking. Nutritional based therapies have a huge role to play here too, not only from an educational viewpoint, but also in providing individual support.

What's clear is that we need to change the way we think about lifestyle diseases, moving towards a preventative approach that encompasses holistic therapies.





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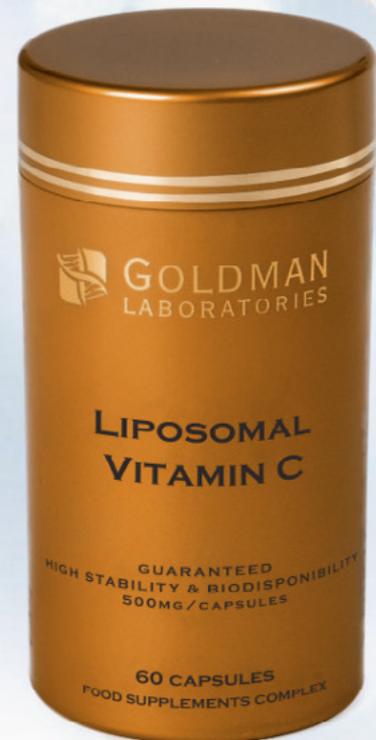


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WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOUR ZODIAC SIGN?

Astrologer *Ildiko Egyed* shares what's written in the stars...



Aries

Aries sun signs are ultra-competitive. As the first sign of the zodiac Aries energy is like a sparks that ignites a flame and

flares up. Aries embarks towards their goal with tremendous amount of energy, speed and warrior spirit, thanks to ruler Mars. If the road to success is a long one, they give up, get bored and seek out a new road; a faster and more exciting one, that gets them there before anybody else. Aries Sun cannot lose, they do whatever it takes to get there first and take the trophy. Aries should choose short term goals to succeed and also to satisfy the competitive spirit.



Taurus

Success means luxury and financial security for the sensual Taurus born natives. Taurus is a fixed, feminine,

earth sign. The bull is the most material sign of the zodiac, ruled by Venus. Their sense of value comes from the feeling of safety, loyalty and material resources. They are slow and practical, but they have a deep drive with sustainable effort to achieve, so long-term goals are achievable, step by step. What success means for them is prosperity and creating a sumptuous sanctuary.



Gemini

Curious, gregarious Gemini has such a light hearted energy that suits multi-tasking. Ruled by Hermes and the least

stable of the sun signs, Gemini is all about movement, the mental-intellectual quality and communication. Geminis flit from idea to idea. They know everyone and everything that can help them to the top of the podium. Yet, very often, something new will look more interesting. Gemini therapists often benefit from a broad portfolio of modalities, rather than the constraints of one specialisation. Gemini success means taking things easy, to socialise, express their ideas and learn to be the jack of all trades.



Cancer

Cancers are the great matriarchs. This cardinal water sign is ruled by the Moon and abounds in the feminine, emotional

and nurturing qualities. Cancers want to feel safe and secure in their cosy shell, surrounded by those they feel comfortable with. Cancerian success means building that home like practice room, fulfilling their carer role, sensing the needs of others and bringing healing. Cancer sun signs need to feel the success otherwise they won't go for it.



Leo

For Leo, success - and other's recognition of this - means everything. Sun-ruled Leo needs to shine constantly,

with inspiration and creative expression. A successful Leo is a natural born leader, courageous, noble, confident, generous, yet playful. Leo's success means being in the spotlight, yet if they are not the star, it can turn into a dramatic, ego driven performance.



Virgo

Mercury-ruled Virgo has a feminine, earthy but mutable quality to it. Virgo is the most detail oriented, carefully

organised, receptive and practical sign of the Zodiac. Virgo wants to serve by finding all the mistakes and fixing them. Success for Virgos comes in a supporting role, being able to improve and perfect things by analysis and correction, achieving goals through determination and logic. Getting down to the nitty-gritty equals thriving for excellence for the humble, hardworking Virgo.



Libra

Creating beauty and harmony is what makes Libra feel accomplished. Venus-ruled Libra is a cardinal air sign. Libra

generates new ideas, carefully weighing pros and cons and going to any length to keep the peace, be just and bring things to balance. People with lots of Libra energy thrive on diplomacy in social situations, can counterbalance friction or bitterness and they feel content when they managed to fulfil that. Success comes with a friction-free practice and life.



Scorpio

Mars-ruled Scorpio is a feminine, fixed water sign. Scorpio possesses a determined energy, extreme drive,

armour and arms. Scorpio lets very little get

in the way of success, rising from the ashes transformed. They thrive on researching the bottom of something, digging down to the deep, finding hidden treasures. Success comes from fulfilling their interest, fascination and intensity in wanting to go to the edge where life and death intersects.



Sagittarius

Sagittarius is very goal oriented, but that goal will be grand, inspirational and larger than life. As Jupiter's masculine, mutable fire sign, Sagittarians get to their purpose by going on a quest, exploring, taking a leap of faith to the unknown, by broadening their horizons by learning something new. Sagittarian success comes in satisfying a desire to move around, learn by experiencing things and inspire by reciting their epic adventure with heroes, heroines, gods and monsters in it.



Capricorn

Capricorns are the most ambitious, goal oriented sign of the zodiac. As Saturn's feminine, cardinal earth sign, they like to initiate things, to build a structure that has substance and long term value in it. Success means getting to the top and getting ahead in life. They don't get disheartened from the extra mile and effort the relentless work and time they have to put in it. They are still moving slowly, following the rules when others lost hope and gave up. There is no stopping until they create a luxurious nest where they live an enviable lifestyle and can enjoy the fruit of their labour. Capricorn has achieved success when they become the authority figure, either because they are the boss, or a parent.



Aquarius

Aquarius is the sign of friends, groups, communities and also future goals and wishes. Ruled by Saturn, this is a fixed, masculine, air sign. Success for an Aquarius

means to be able to bring the vision of the future into today's society, realigning and reforming to create harmony. Only an Aquarian can see how this mission can be attained. Achievement comes by thinking outside of the box, breaking the tradition, going out there to find and invent their new ideas. Being a humanitarian, a philanthropist or environmentalist or all of them together makes a happy Aquarian. Their stubborn resistance and keeping aloof makes them different from the all others. They always march to their own beat and they go for innovation in that manner.



Pisces

Pisces energy is the least goal oriented sign of the zodiac, perhaps because Pisces is the sign of great quantity with no boundaries, like the vast ocean. Jupiter-ruled, their fulfilment is in compassion, healing and art. They prefer to escape to their own reality where they can

create through their imagination or meditate to get closer to the source and fine-tune their psychic abilities. With strong Piscean energy, people are like the fish, slippery and intangible but also soft and gentle which makes them less able to achieve structured targets but they can excel more as healers or artists composing soulful music, lyrical poems or painting the immense ocean.



ILDIKO EGYED is a teacher, professional astrologer

and constant student of Eastern philosophy. Her approach to astrology is rooted in ancient tradition but embraces contemporary techniques too. She focuses on allowing the soul's evolutionary journey through healing and remedial work. Find out more at

www.astrologycrafts.com





Care of the Spirit

Clinical Psychologist **Charlie Hallings-Potts** explains why we all need to take care of our spirits...

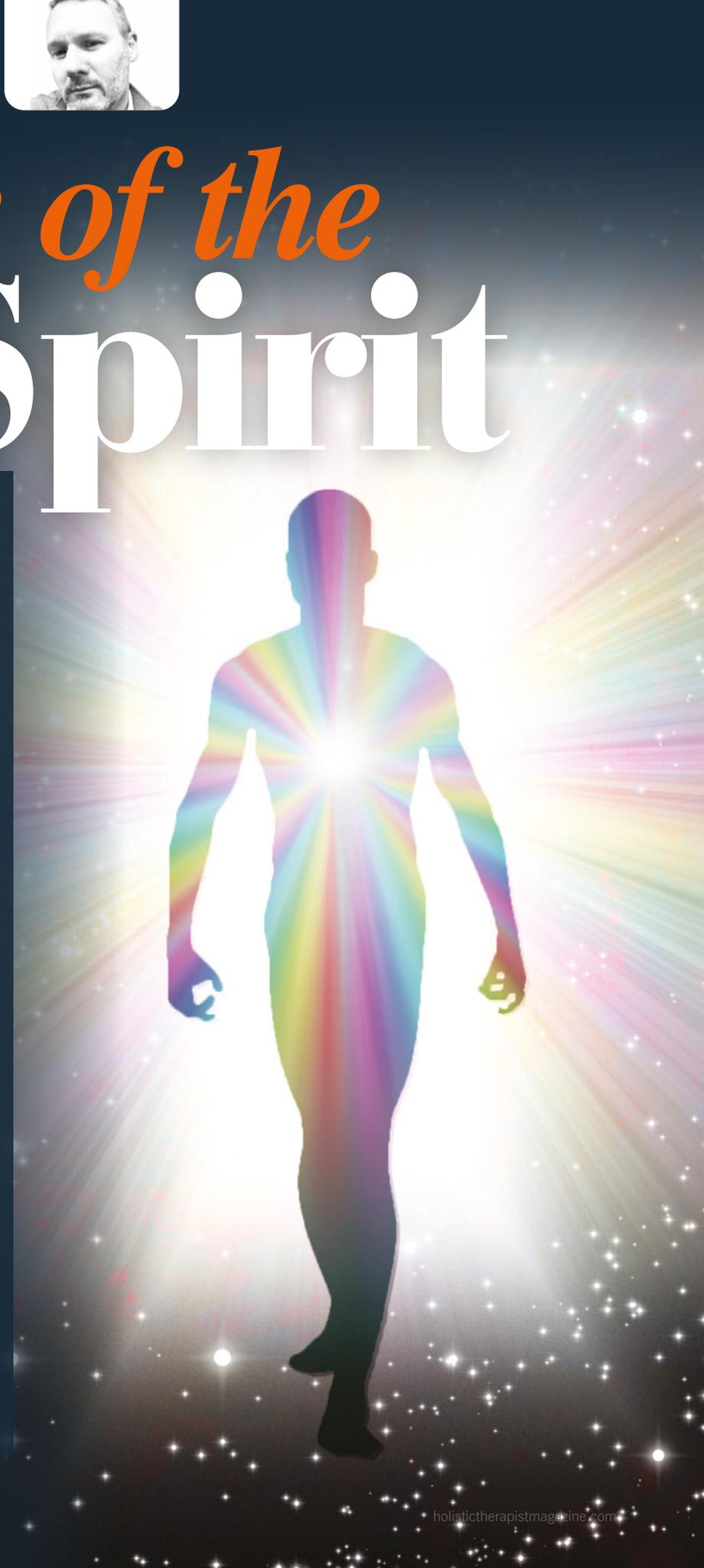
THERE was never any real divide between us and our clients. There were times when we may have muttered or prayed under our breath, 'There, but for the Grace of God go I.' Now more than ever, given the painful spasms and contractions of the world over the last few years, we might truly acknowledge we are all in it together.

This blurring around the edges of the client/therapist relationship makes it even more important that we take the time to look after ourselves as therapists. This has always been important. In fact, I would suggest that self-care and the avoidance of burn-out has never been more vital. No client wants to go to a session and feel they have heard or felt more about their therapist's issues than their own.

Optimism and faith in systems, and therefore their ability to restore balance and peace, has fallen foul of the decades' worth of change occurring in the health and geopolitical arenas and the news pumped in through our phones and TVs on a minute by minute basis. Our clients might look to us for reassurance but we have been fully immersed in the uncertainties ourselves.

The wounded healer

There is a trope of the 'wounded healer' from the Greek myth of Chiron. This recognises that although some might not like to admit it, a large proportion of us in the 'caring professions' are on some level attempting to heal our clients' wounds in order to - or indeed instead of - healing our own.



This leads to all kinds of difficulties, in that it is harder or even impossible to distinguish between the feelings which arise in session. It comes back to that biblical quote, 'Take the plank out of your own eye, so that you might see more clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye'. This screams of the paramount importance of doing your own work, your own in-depth psychotherapy, preferably before letting yourself loose on others. Identifying and, preferably, clearing one's own blind spots, trigger points and intolerances allows the client a much greater likelihood of knowing that they will be fully heard with

'I am not my Mind. I am not my Body. I am not my Story. I am a Spiritual Being having a Human Experience'.

How does this help? This phrase, deeply steeped in the language of the soul, reminds us of and permits us that Retreat we can rarely afford to go on. It hints strongly towards the Stillness within which we try to reach in a multitude of ways: meditation, prayer, breath work, chanting, and the beauty of nature. This stillness is the ultimate well of spiritual self-care, and can be found beneath the Monkey Mind and its associated symptoms



impartiality, neutrality and also compassion from someone who knows what it's like to be in the other chair. This doesn't just apply to psychologists or talking therapists, but to any holistic therapist who needs to listen to their clients.

Doing one's own therapy. Perhaps as part of our Continuing Professional Development is important for the care of the mind and to revitalise our stores of knowledge and motivation. Regular breaks, time off, sleep, balanced diet and exercise are essential for keeping the body healthy, rested and in equilibrium. However, it is the care of the spirit which is sometimes neglected and which forms the core of this article.

The care of the spirit

So how do we take care of the spirit, the soul or that mysterious energy within? I have found that fusing the words of Sadhguru, the Indian mystic, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French philosopher and priest, and my own understanding into a simple phrase can be a simple entry point to self-care:

of rumination, doubt and guilt. It is also to be found behind the sensations of the body, behind excitement and pain. It is not affected by or indeed dependent on the narrative webs with which we weave ourselves into knots and traps. This stillness is where we Let Go. Where we get out of our own way. Where we trust in the knowing that the mind, body and spirit has a natural tendency towards balance and towards health.

Organising ourselves towards a single point of stillness, perhaps the Heart or a mantra might suit some. Whereas for others we might feel drawn to the centredness and orderly aspects of the chakra system aligned along a plumb line from crown to base: each wheel of energy offering the possibility of corrective balance. Sadhguru again said that understanding the chakra system (through all forms of yoga) offers us access to the amazing *'inner technology'* and true potential of our energetic selves.

Pathways to stillness

Whichever pathway to stillness you prefer, whether it's an ancient tradition or an app such

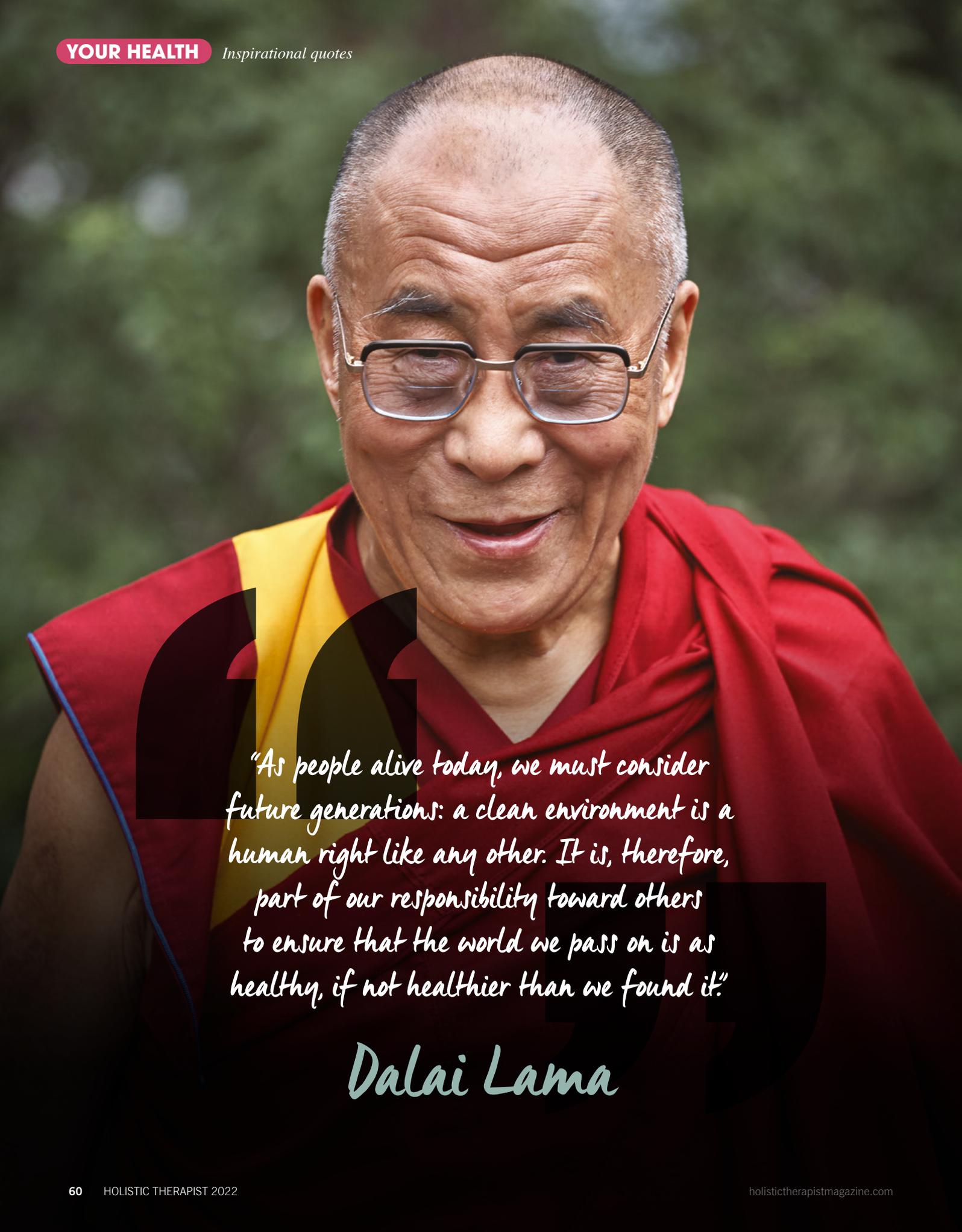
as Insight Timer which offers thousands of meditations to choose from, it is also comforting to know that it need not be mechanistic or particularly disciplined. Stillness can be achieved within an instant. It can be found in the retreat behind the noise, in the appreciation of what we might perceive as beauty, and in that precious gap at the end of each out-breath before we breathe in again. Finding time before a session with a client, centres and grounds us so that we are clearer instruments for the work we do. Finding time in our non-work hours taps us back into the Truth of who we really are beneath the ego, the complexes and the drama of everyday happenings. Spiritual teachers refer back to us being souls having human experiences to remind us, as David Hawkins did, that *'Each moment is perfect -emerging from the previous perfect moment and so on'* and that step by step, whatever we experience (even and especially the adversity) is contributing to overall growth. It is this perspective which can prevent burn-out, over identification with the pain of our clients and hopelessness. From this space we can observe with compassion, the journeys our clients take. Moreover, inviting our people to explore this non-dualist perspective can be a freeing element of some forms of psychotherapy. Not having to effect urgent change frees us as therapists, when even high pain and drama provides opportunity for growth.

Imagine a hose pipe riddled with kinks and knots emitting a dribble rather than a strong jet. Self-care is akin to the straightening out of the kinks allowing for the full flow of water or – in our case - energy. Being in this Flow state allows us to get out of our own way, where thinking and conditioning might cause us to tense up or over complicate the issue. Being in flow reconnects us to ourselves and to one another. As is often said: we are all One. So when we heal ourselves we help heal others and when we heal others we help ourselves. Like I said, we all in this together. ■



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is a Clinical Psychologist, specialising in all forms of Trauma, Dissociation and Personal Development. He works privately and at the Oxford Development Centre. You can find out more at www.safeplaceuk.com



"As people alive today, we must consider future generations: a clean environment is a human right like any other. It is, therefore, part of our responsibility toward others to ensure that the world we pass on is as healthy, if not healthier than we found it."

Dalai Lama

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Holistic

Therapist Magazine

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NEW FRONTIERS: RESEARCH ROUND UP

THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH OF INTEREST TO HOLISTIC THERAPISTS AND THEIR CLIENTS...

FOOD AND PAIN: A NEW CONNECTION

We've long known that many people with chronic pain also struggle with their weight, but now researchers at the Del Monte Institute for Neuroscience have suggested that circuitry in the brain responsible for motivation and pleasure is impacted when someone experiences pain.

The team used a gelatine dessert and pudding and altered the sugar, fat, and texture of the foods. They found that none of the patients experienced eating behaviour changes with sugar, but they did with fat. Those with acute lower back pain who later recovered were most likely to lose pleasure in eating the pudding and show disrupted satiety signals - the communication from the digestive system to the brain - while those with acute lower back pain whose pain persisted at one year did not initially have the same change in their eating behaviour. But chronic lower back pain patients did report that eventually foods high in fat and carbohydrates, like ice cream and cookies, became problematic for them over time and brain scans showed disrupted satiety signals.

These findings suggest obesity in patients with chronic pain may not be caused by lack of movement but may be because they change how they eat. *Ref: 10.1371/journal.pone.0263527*

NUTRITION: THE GUT SENSES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAL SUGAR AND ARTIFICIAL SWEETENER

A team from the Duke University School of Medicine has discovered a previously

unknown type of cell in the gut that can distinguish between natural sugar and artificial sweeteners. The neuropod cells are located in the upper reaches of the gut and function, essentially, like taste buds or the retinal cones of the eye to detect colour. They sense traces of sugar versus sweetener and then they release different neurotransmitters that go into different cells in the vagus nerve, and ultimately, the animal knows 'this is sugar' or 'this is sweetener.'

Originally termed enteroendocrine cells because of their ability to secrete hormones, specialised neuropod cells can communicate with neurons via rapid synaptic connections and are distributed throughout the lining of the upper gut. In addition to producing relatively slow-acting hormone signals, the research

team has shown that these cells also produce fast-acting neurotransmitter signals that reach the vagus nerve and then the brain within milliseconds.

Using lab-grown organoids from mouse and human cells to represent the small intestine and duodenum (upper gut), the researchers showed in a small experiment that real sugar stimulated individual neuropod cells to release glutamate as a neurotransmitter. Artificial sugar triggered the release of a different neurotransmitter, ATP. *Ref: 10.1038/s41593-021-00982-7*

DEMENTIA AND NUTRITION: A HIGH-FIBRE DIET MAY REDUCE RISK OF DEMENTIA

In a new study published in the journal *Nutritional Neuroscience*, researchers in Japan



have shown that a high-fibre diet is associated with a reduced risk of developing dementia. The study was based on a sample of over 3700 adults in Japan who completed food surveys between 1985 and 1999 and were followed up until 2020.

“Dementia is a devastating disease that usually requires long-term care,” says lead author of the study Professor Kazumasa Yamagishi. “We were interested in some recent research which suggested that dietary fibre may play a preventative role. We investigated this using data that were collected from thousands of adults in Japan for a large study that started in the 1980s.”

The researchers found that the groups who ate higher levels of fibre had a lower risk of developing dementia. This was even more marked in the case of soluble fibres found in foods such as oats and legumes. These encourage important for the beneficial bacteria that live in the gut as well as providing other health benefits.

The exact mechanism by which fibre acts to reduce the risk of dementia is unknown, but soluble fibre may reduce neuroinflammation

and regulate the composition of the gut microbiome as well as reducing other risk factors for dementia, such as body weight, blood pressure, lipids, and glucose levels. *Ref: 10.1080/1028415X.2022.2027592*

DEPRESSION: MINDFUL CBT CAN HELP THROUGH SELF-KINDNESS

New research from the University of Exeter, Oxford and Magdeberg shows that Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) can help promote self-kindness in people with a history of depression, thereby putting their bodies in a state of safety and relaxation. It also appears to help break the cycle of highly critical thoughts and feelings of worthlessness, which often lead people with depression to relapse, by increasing levels of self-compassion.

The researchers studied 50 people who were in remission from depression and at risk for depressive relapse.

25 of this group were tested before and after an eight-week MBCT treatment and compared with an untreated control sample. The untreated control group showed body responses indicative of a more adverse response to the self-compassion meditation when they engaged in it a second time.

Self-compassion exercises can temporarily activate a pattern of self-kindness and feeling safe in healthy individuals, but this alone was not sufficient to bring about the feeling of safety, but combining this with MCBT did so effectively. *Ref: DOI: 10.1007/s12671-022-01845-3*

ANXIETY: HUGGABLE ‘BREATHING’ CUSHION CAN REDUCE PRE-TEST ANXIETY

Researchers have developed a huggable, cushion-like device that mechanically simulates breathing, which appears to help reduce students’ pre-test anxiety. It’s thought that at-home anxiety aids could complement treatments for anxiety disorders and also benefit people experiencing temporary anxiety, such as those with pre-exam stress. The device proved as effective as a guided meditation in reducing anxiety levels.

The researchers now hope to further refine the cushion for testing in people’s homes. They

also plan to investigate people’s physiological response to the device -for instance, changes in heart rate or breathing patterns -in order to elucidate the particular mechanisms by which the device might ease anxiety. *Ref: 10.1371/journal.pone.0259838*

MINDFULNESS: UNINTENDED SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF REDUCING GUILT

Mindfulness meditation is known for cultivating non-judgmental awareness of the present moment, but a new study suggests there may be an unanticipated downside to secular mindfulness meditation practices. A team from the University of Washington discovered that mindfulness meditation reduces negative emotions, like anger and guilt, which can help us navigate social situations and maintain relationships.

The study covered over 1400 participants from different locations in the USA and Portugal. The researchers demonstrated that mindfulness does reduce feelings of guilt. Participants were randomly assigned to either write about a past situation that made them feel guilty or write about their previous day. Then, they listened to either an eight-minute guided mindfulness meditation recording that instructed them to focus on the physical sensations of breathing or an eight-minute control condition recording in which they were instructed to let their minds wander. Participants who listened to the mindfulness recording reported feeling less guilt compared to those in the mind-wandering control group. This was true whether they had written about a guilty situation or their previous day.

In two further experiments, subjects were asked to recall and write about a time they wronged someone and felt guilty, before being randomly assigned to meditate or not. After that, they were asked to allocate a hypothetical \$100 between a birthday gift for the person they had wronged, a charity for African flood victims, and themselves. Participants who had meditated allocated approximately 17% less to the person they had wronged compared to those who had not meditated. *Ref: 10.1037/pspa0000298* ■



GETTING YOUR CLIENTS TO OPEN UP THROUGH ART

HTM's Jason Firmager explores art as a therapy tool...

MY life was going through one of those phases where work, family, responsibilities, digital distractions and a million other things were getting on top of me. I found myself in Kent's Bluewater Shopping Centre when I was drawn to a shop which had the most amazing paintings in the window.

For the first time in a long while, I found that childlike pull of fascination and wonder, and I realised in that moment that my daily bombardment of 'what I need to do' stopped!

Gazing in the window made me realise that I no longer took the time to appreciate some of the things that I once loved. I used to love painting and drawing as a child. I could spend hours drawing and looking at pictures. Art and music spoke to me, calming the torrent of thoughts that ran through my overthinking brain.

I was drawn into the shop, where I sat staring at one particular image. Before I knew it twenty minutes had flown by. I realised that I felt calmer, my day and life challenges seemed to make sense and my stresses seemed to have been somewhat humbled. I realised that I was using art to somehow make sense of myself.



As many of you know, as well as owning Holistic Therapist Magazine, I am also a therapist of the mind, with a practice offering Hypnotherapy, CBT and NLP. On the way back to the car, I found my mind was racing, wondering how to use this discovery to help clients. Perhaps art offered a more present version of a Rorschach inkblot test? After all, art speaks to us all in different ways – but it does speak to us all.

The next day, I contacted Castle Fine Art and explained that I would love to explore using art in a therapy setting and explore new methods based on my reactions to some of the work in their gallery. The company are huge supporters of mental health and were equally excited at this idea, particularly since many of their artists draw on their own mental health struggles when creating their pieces. The piece I wanted to explore first was called Yellow Brick Road, by an artist called Whatshisname?

This thought-provoking yet utterly heart-warming signed limited edition artwork is part of a series called Gone. The artist explores visions of his childhood heroes who re-enter the contemporary conscious in fleeting moments of nostalgia. **“Our childhood heroes are reaching out to us with an extended hand and saying, ‘Hello, I’m still here, do you remember me?’ or if those are fading memories, they are saying goodbye.”**- Whatshisname.

To me, this piece was so powerful. It invoked reflections on how it feels to be in the depths of depression and how life is right there yet we feel surrounded by a bubble that means life is simply seems out of reach. I looked at the lion in the movie, kind, funny, heart-led, passionate and just wanting to love and be loved - yet the world had made him feel like he was not enough, he had to be fierce, tough, and roar the same as all the other lions. Is this not true of us all? Feeling that by being different we are somehow not enough? Yet we are all unique and beautiful just as we are. Despite this, we feel the need to constantly change ourselves in the fit the image of what we think the world will love. This made me smile and realise that there is beauty does not need to fit the mould. After all, in the Wizard of Oz, there is darkness behind

Dorothy’s image of sweet perfection. It serves as a reminder to never judge or compare myself to someone else’s life, as it’s not always as it seems. Dorothy had the power to find her way home all along.

The work reminded me that we can both relate to others stories, but also appreciate our own a little more. What I know is this seemingly simple piece of art had a profound effect on me personally and led to hours of thoughts, memories and reflections of my own journey. I could fill several pages of this issue sharing the self-discoveries this piece led me to.

So what of my clients? How did my sessions go while including this art? I can’t think of a better word than amazing! I had hardened men who struggled to speak of their emotions, yet when I asked them what they see in the picture, their own life’s reflections became apparent, leading to emotional release and the pre-conditioned masculine barriers being lowered, leading to successful therapeutic outcomes. It helped me to explain life situations in an unintimidating story format, took the nervousness away from first sessions and allowed the client to break the emotional state when needed and was a fantastic tool to induce hypnosis and deep visualisation.

This particular piece I have had for months now, it is the talking point of nearly every client that walks in, and depending on lighting, angle and my

mood, and I discover something new each time I really look at it.

My exploration with art and therapy, is just beginning, I shall continue to explore this - and what I will say is that, whether it’s for you, your family, or your practice - I invite the therapy industry to step away from the generic lotus flower and spa style imagery and invest in something that’s inspiring, that’s been in our genes since the earliest cave dwelling days - art. ■



For over 25 years, Castle Fine Art has delivered quality, creativity and style to its clients. With a current estate of 37 galleries across the country, Castle Fine Art is widely regarded as the UK’s most innovative retail gallery group. You can see and buy work from some of the UK’s best known and most talented artists at

www.castlefineart.com

There are works from over 50 different artists available from the company’s stores and website, from limited edition prints to original pieces. Sale prices start from under £100 to over £75,000.



SUMMER

Veggie heaven

The Vegetarian Society have rustled up some fantastic summer recipes for us...

- Make the salsa by combining all of the ingredients in a medium-sized bowl.
- Combine the cooked rice with the olive oil, spring onions and coriander.
- Serve the Quorn with the rice and salsa.

NUTRITION PER SERVING

CALORIES 460 kcal, PROTEIN 30.9g, FAT 12.3g, SATURATES 2.1g, CARBS 60.1g, SUGAR 14.5g, FIBRE 6.3g, SALT 1.67g



ROASTED CAULIFLOWER, GRAPE AND WENSLEYDALE SALAD

(Serves 2) PREPARATION 15 MINS, COOKING 25 MINS

EGG-FREE, GLUTEN-FREE, HEALTHY, WHEAT-FREE

Cauliflower is a very rich source of vitamin C, which plays a key role in maintaining a healthy immune system. A single serving of this dish provides half of your recommended daily intake.

Ingredients -

- 1 medium cauliflower, broken into small florets
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of ground black pepper



CAJUN QUORN WITH CORIANDER RICE AND MANGO SALSA

(Serves 2) PREPARATION 15 MINS, COOKING 20 MINS

DAIRY-FREE, EGG-FREE, HEALTHY, NUT-FREE, VEGAN

Ingredients

For the cajun quorn

- 350g vegan Quorn chicken style pieces
- 1/2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp ground cumin,
- 1/2 tbsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp crushed dried chilli
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 tbsp. olive oil

For the mango salsa

- 1 medium ripe mango, peeled and cut into small chunks
- 5 medium cherry tomatoes, halved
- 5g coriander, finely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- Pinch of salt

For the coriander rice

- 100g brown rice
- 1 olive oil
- 1 spring onion, finely sliced
- 10g coriander, finely chopped

Method -

- Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4
- Bring a medium-sized saucepan of water to the boil and add the brown rice. Lower the heat, cover, and cook for about 20 minutes until the rice is tender. Drain and set aside.
- In a plastic freezer bag add the Quorn pieces, paprika, ground cumin, ground coriander, dried chilli, garlic and olive oil. Shake the bag until the Quorn is completely coated in the spice mixture.
- Transfer the spiced, coated Quorn pieces to a large, non-stick baking tray and bake in the preheated oven for 10 minutes until lightly browned. Remove from the oven and set aside.

- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 25g sultanas
- 40g vegetarian Wensleydale cheese, crumbled
- 60g seedless red grapes
- 2 tbsp walnuts
- 1 tbsp mixed seeds
- 10g fresh parsley, chopped

Method -

- Heat the oven to 200°C / gas mark 6.
- Put the cauliflower into a bowl and toss with 2 tsp of the oil and season with salt and black pepper. Spread on an oven tray and roast for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring once or twice, until nicely browned. Set aside to cool.
- Meanwhile, in a bowl mix the remaining oil with the vinegar and mustard. Add the sultanas and leave to soak while the cauliflower is cooking.
- Transfer the cauliflower to a bowl with the cheese and grapes and toss together with the sultana dressing. Sprinkle with walnuts, seeds and parsley then serve.

NUTRITION PER SERVING

CALORIES 414 kcal, PROTEIN 13.1g, FAT 32.3g, SATURATES 7.4g, CARBS 18.4g, SUGAR 16.7g, FIBRE 4.6g, SALT 0.585g

PEA, SPINACH AND GOAT'S CHEESE FRITTATA

(Serves 2) PREPARATION 10 MINS, COOKING 30 MINS
HEALTHY, PROTEIN-RICH

This meal provides you with two of your five-a-day and is a good source of high-quality protein.



Ingredients

For the frittata

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium red onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 50g spinach
- 100g peas, fresh or frozen
- 6 free-range eggs
- 100ml semi-skimmed milk
- 5g chives, finely chopped
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of ground black pepper
- 50g vegetarian goat's cheese, broken into small pieces

For the salad

- 100g salad leaves
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice

Method -

- In a non-stick frying pan, add 2 tsp of the olive oil and cook the red onion and garlic over a medium heat for 5 to 10 minutes until soft.
- Remove the pan from the heat, transfer the onion and garlic to a small bowl.
- Add 1 tsp of olive oil to the frying pan, turn the heat to high, and then add the spinach and peas. Cook for a few minutes until the spinach has wilted, then add the cooked onion and garlic, spreading the mixture evenly to cover the base of the pan.
- Crack the eggs into a bowl with the milk and whisk until fully combined, then add the chives, salt and pepper. Pour the egg mixture over the vegetables in the frying pan.
- Heat the grill to medium. Dot the egg mixture with pieces of goat's cheese and turn the heat down, leaving the frittata to cook until the egg starts to set.
- Now place the pan under the grill to cook the top of the frittata until it starts to brown, approximately 10 minutes. 8. Remove the frittata from the grill and leave it to cool for a few minutes.
- While the frittata is cooling, evenly divide the salad leaves between

two plates and dress with olive oil and lemon juice.

- Carefully slide the frittata onto a chopping board, slice and serve on the plates with the salad.

NUTRITION PER SERVING

CALORIES 329 kcal, PROTEIN 32.9g, FAT 32.3g, SATURATES 11.2g, CARBS 15.5g, SUGAR 9.9g

CHOCOLATE AND CLEMENTINE MOUSSE

(Makes 2) PREPARATION 6 MINS

DAIRY-FREE, EGG-FREE, GLUTEN-FREE, HEALTHY, NUT-FREE, WHEAT-FREE

Cacao and cocoa powder are rich sources of magnesium, which is essential for many functions in the body including bone and heart health.

Ingredients

- 2 tsp extra virgin coconut oil
- 1 medium avocado
- 2 tbsp raw cacao or cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 clementines, cut into thin slices

Method -

- Warm the coconut oil by placing in a small bowl over hot water.
- Put all the ingredients, except for a couple of clementine slices, into a food processor and process until thick and smooth.
- Spoon mixture into 2 bowls and chill in the fridge until required but it will keep several hours in the fridge. Decorate with slices of clementine and serve.



THE VEGETARIAN SOCIETY is a

campaigning charity bringing

the benefits of plant-based eating to all! It campaigns to make the changes happen that need to happen. Changes to help people. To help the planet. And to help animals. Find out more at

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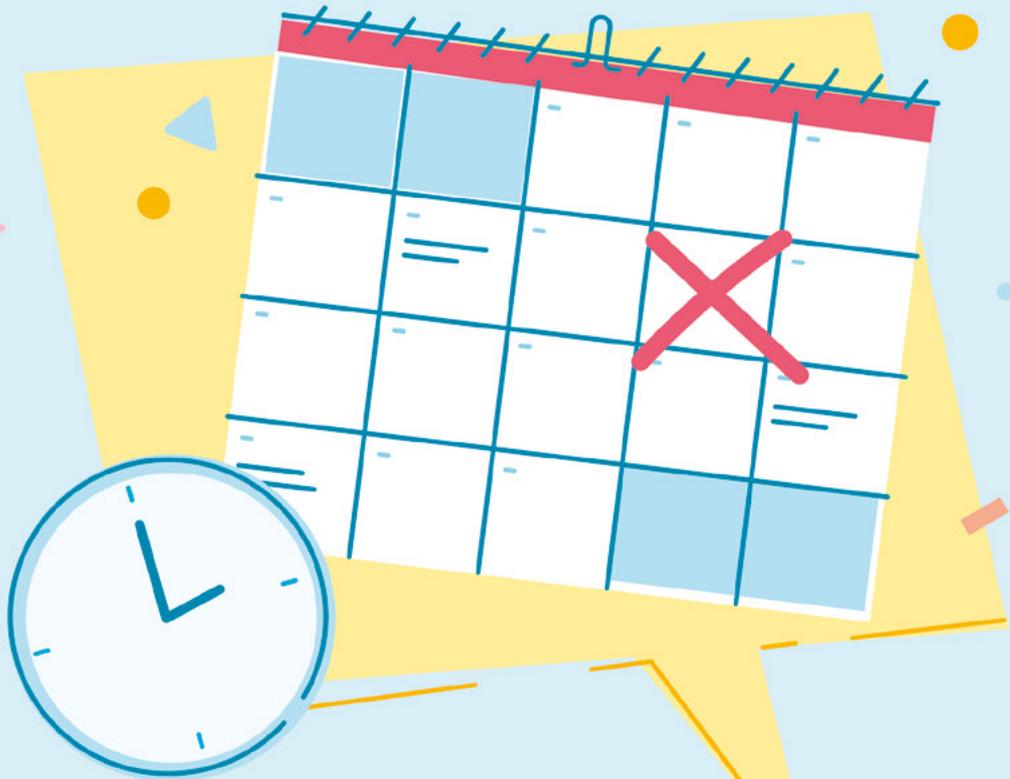
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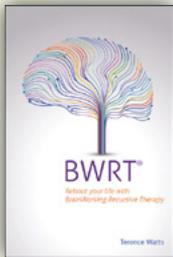


BOOKSHELF:

Spring selection

Our pick of the latest titles to entertain and educate...

BWRT®: Reboot your life with BrainWorking Recursive Therapy

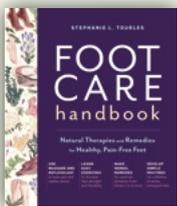


Author and therapist Terence Watts, has produced an engaging self-help guide to using BrainWorking Recursive Therapy. BWRT

is a completely personalised psychological approach designed to tackle stress, anxiety, phobias and many other of life's challenges. Essentially, it takes into account the way your brain and mind works and overwrites it with new thinking, rather like re-recording over an old VHS tape.

There are some simple exercises that demonstrate how the technique works coupled with a step-by-step guide that covers a range of challenges from phobias to boosting self-esteem and enhanced performance.

Foot Care Handbook

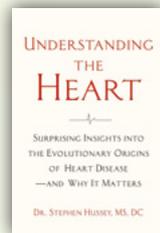


Stephanie Tourles has featured on these pages before, mainly for her books on essential oils. This time, she's switched

her attention to the feet. The number of people who experience foot pain is on the rise, and it's been shown that those plagued by chronic foot pain are more likely to have pain in other parts of their

body. In her Foot Care Handbook, she provides natural remedies for common foot problems – from athlete's foot, through to plantar fasciitis, with accessible sections on foot physiology, exercises for stretching and strengthening feet, relaxing and restorative massage techniques, and reflexology.

Understanding the Heart

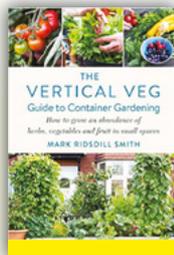


As a type 1 diabetic, Dr. Stephen Hussey was well aware of the greater risk of developing heart disease. He spent a lifetime studying the heart in order to

avoid becoming a statistic. When he had a STEMI heart attack, a variety known as a widowmaker, he chose to ignore the protocol suggested by his cardiologist and follow his own, radically different approach to recovery.

Dr Hussey believes that the continued rise in heart disease is due in part to fundamental misunderstandings about how the heart really functions and how to keep it healthy. These misunderstandings can result in improper medical approaches and off-target intervention therapies.

Vertical Veg

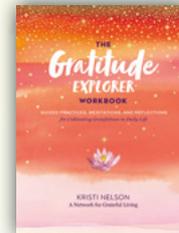


Mark Ridsdill Smith has created an online community of over 200,000 people who use vertical gardening to maximise their returns from relatively little space. This new guide explains how to

grow delicious fruit, vegetables, herbs and salad in containers, pots and more – in any space at home or the practice room – no matter how small!

Find out how walls, balconies, patios, arches and windowsills can be used to create rich, beautiful and delicious home-grown food in this great introduction for beginning gardeners and patio potterers.

Gratitude Explorer Workbook

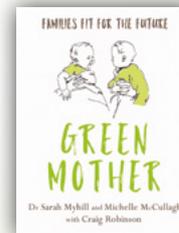


The Gratitude Explorer Workbook is the latest offering from the Network for Grateful Living. This is a distinctive, engaging and visually appealing

workbook for those who want to start a gratitude practice or integrate gratitude into their lives with greater intention and consistency.

It offers a great selection of writing prompts, quotations, exercises and guided meditations designed to progressively deepen a daily gratitude practice. It would make a great gift for a friend, or a little pick-me-up for yourself.

Green Mother



Green Mother seeks to find a balance between modern western life and the impact this can have to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health

of our children. This book aims to give parents, would-be parents, grandparents,

siblings and all members of ‘the Tribe’ that surround a new baby, the theoretical and intellectual imperatives to tread this difficult path, together with the practical day-to-day realities that must be overcome and the encouragement to do so.

Author Doctor Sarah Myhill espouses a paleo-ketogenic dietary approach and is firmly opposed to vaccination. She lists dental work, mycotoxins and 5G electromagnetic pollution as causes of serious childhood illnesses, so this is not a title for everyone. She was previously a doctor for over 4 decades before deregistering from the GMC and becoming a naturopathic doctor.

Breaking Free: A Guide to Recovering from Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Long Covid Symptoms



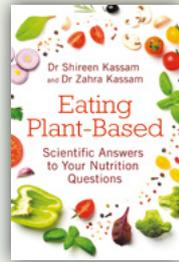
There’s no doubt Jan Rothney’s guide to CFS and Long Covid recovery is timely, given that more than 1.3 million people in the UK alone are thought to be suffering from

the post-viral Long-Covid syndrome. Add in more than 260,000 with CFS or ME all trapped in a cycle of debilitating and unpredictable bouts of extreme exhaustion as well as ‘brain fog’, joint and muscle pain, insomnia and other life-disruptive symptoms and it’s clear a more nuanced approach to recovery is required.

Rothney, herself a sufferer of CFS and a lecturer in health and social care, is exceptionally well placed to provide this. Her method encompasses emotional regulation, social connection and ways to retune the body’s primitive fear responses. The book helps readers to understand the science behind the symptoms while guiding

them step-by-step, at their own pace, with techniques to speed up recovery, rebalance their body systems and move forward with the knowledge they need to stay healthy.

Eating Plant-Based: Scientific Answers to Your Nutrition Questions



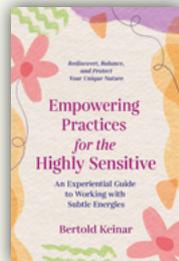
Specialist cancer doctors Shireen and Zahra Kassam set out to answer the most commonly asked questions about plant-based eating and nutrition,

such as concerns over adequate protein intake, the effect of soya on hormones, the suitability of veganism for children etc.

Given that so many people embark on plant-based eating without having even a rudimentary understanding of the need to create a nutritionally- balanced diet, it’s good to have a guide that’s equally suitable for new converts to plant-based eating and those who advise them.

Simple and straightforward answers are supported with the scientific background make this book both practical and a reliable source of information.

Empowering Practices for the Highly Sensitive



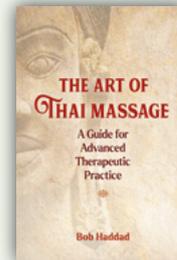
Empaths don’t have it easy, but sensitivity can be a gift according to author Bertold Keinar.

This book offers easy solutions for the everyday

challenges of the highly sensitive, whether at work, at home, with friends, or out in the world, and helps empaths master their

emotions and thoughts. Keinar explores the levels of our subtle energy bodies--the etheric, the emotional, and the mental--showing how they are impacted in our daily activities and environment. He offers a gradually progressive series of 30 structured practices to help clear, balance, and protect the energy field, release fears, and allow empaths to gain lasting stability and equanimity in daily life. Each exercise is well explained including guidance on how to tell if it’s working for you.

The Art of Thai Massage



Bob Haddad’s new book is not simply a practical bio-mechanical guide to Thai Massage, but rather a more in-depth work that delves into the concepts, and

spiritual aspects of Thai massage. Much of this material also underpins other forms of bodywork, yoga and the healing arts, so it’s of broad appeal.

Haddad guides the reader through the fundamental importance of the awareness of breath and provides assessment guidelines for working with others, based on the client’s physical appearance, pre-existing conditions, and elemental predisposition. There are exercises designed to help the practitioner sharpen sensing abilities and intuition, and to find, coax, and release blockages in the body.

Thai massage techniques described in great detail, as are sequences of practice, segues from one movement series to the next and the use of traditional herbal preparations in Thai Massage. ■

All titles can be ordered from your local bookshop, acquired from the publishers’ websites or bought online.

Back

All the stuff we wanted to tell you about but didn't have room for elsewhere...

PAGES

RESEARCH SHOWS WOMEN LESS LIKELY TO SURVIVE WITH A MALE SURGEON

A fascinating large scale review of the outcomes of over 1.3 million surgeries conducted by almost 3000



surgeons in Canada has shown female patients operated on by male surgeon have a statistically significant increased change of adverse postoperative outcomes. Women operated on by men were found to have a 32% higher risk of dying and a 15% higher chance of a complication following surgery.

Where a surgeon was female and the patient male, there was no increase in the level of adverse outcomes. Nor was there any marked increase where both the patient and the surgeon were of the same sex. The researchers believe further work is required to work

out why this should be the case. *Ref: 10.1001/jamasurg.2021.6339*

DR. OZ DROPPED BY COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY AS HE ENTERS POLITICS

Dr. Memhet Oz, the heart surgeon best known for his appearances with Oprah Winfrey and The Dr. Oz Show, has



been downgraded by Columbia University where he was previously director of surgery and director of integrated medicine at their Irving Medical Centre.

The move follows on from Dr. Oz's move into politics as he seeks the Republican nomination for US Senator for Pennsylvania. He is said to be a close personal friend of Donald Trump.

Dr. Oz has been described as using his TV platform to push medicines ranging from ineffective diet pills to discredited Covid treatments and appeared before

the Senate in 2014 as a result. In 2011 the US Food and Drug Administration responded that a report on his TV show claiming apple juice had dangerously high levels of arsenic was, 'misleading and irresponsible.'

WALMART RECALLS AROMATHERAPY ROOM SPRAYS AS BACTERIA LEADS TO DEATHS

US retailer Walmart has recalled Better Homes and Gardens aromatherapy room sprays



after bacteria cause the deaths of two people and left several others in hospital.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed that a 5-year-old boy in Georgia and a 53-year-old woman in Kansas died from a rare tropical disease that was linked to an imported aromatherapy spray product sold at Walmart stores.

One bottle of the essential oil spray was found to contain *Burkholderia pseudomallei*, a dangerous bacteria that lives in soil and water and causes the melioidosis infection when ingested, breathed or absorbed through the skin.

The infection, also called Whitmore's disease, can lead to skin abscesses in the absence of fever, pneumonia, sepsis, organ abscesses, genital infection, and inflamed brain or spinal cord.

After testing numerous items the four patients were exposed to, researchers connected the strain of bacteria to an aromatherapy spray bottle that was imported from India.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI AND DOTERRA PARTNER TO ADVANCE ESSENTIAL OIL RESEARCH

The University of Mississippi National Center for Natural Products Research (NCNPR) has



signed a five-year research partnership with doTerra that will focus on establishing quality standards for the essential oil industry.

As part of the partnership, NCNPR will study the chemometrics, pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics, and metabolomics of essential oils. doTERRA and NCNPR anticipate that the research will result in multiple peer-reviewed, published studies that will serve the broader essential oils and scientific communities.

A FIFTH OF CANCER CLINICAL TRIAL PATIENTS ALSO USE COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE

As many as 1 in 5 cancer patients enrolled in phase 3 clinical trials may use complementary medicine, according to a

study published in *The Oncologist*.

The study also showed superior outcomes among patients taking complementary medicines, though these results may have been influenced by baseline characteristics or other factors, according to researchers.

The study looked at data from over 3700 patients enrolled in six trials. Complementary medicine use was more common in patients with breast cancer (35.6%) than in patients with colorectal (15.6%) or lung (18.5%) cancer.

The most common complementary medicines were herbal/natural products (46.6%), dietary supplements (22.1%), fish oils (18.0%), glucosamine (11.0%), and homeopathy (2.3%).

The patients who used complementary medicine were more likely to have favourable baseline prognostic factors, such as younger age, better performance statuses, non-smoking status, and fewer sites of metastasis.

However, when the researchers looked at each cancer type individually, complementary medicine use was only associated with a survival or progression benefit for patients with lung cancer. There was no significant association between complementary medicine and survival or progression for colorectal or breast cancer.

Complementary medicine was not associated with any improvements in quality of life. However, the incidence of grade 3 or higher adverse events was lower in patients using complementary medicine (50.0% vs 61.6%; $P = .002$).

WORDS OF WISDOM...

Make it a habit to tell people thank you. To express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you'll soon find many others around you. Truly appreciate life, and you'll find that you have more of it.

Ralph Marston

FIVE TYPES OF BACTERIA LINKED TO AGGRESSIVE PROSTATE CANCER

Researchers at the University of East Anglia have found a link between bacteria and aggressive forms



of prostate cancer. They identified five types of bacteria which were common in urine and tissue samples from men with aggressive prostate cancer.

It is hoped that these findings could help pave the way for treatments that could target these particular bacteria and slow or prevent the development of aggressive disease.

Little is known about what causes some prostate cancers to become more aggressive than others, but this evidence suggests that certain bacteria are involved. The team found several types of bacteria associated with aggressive prostate cancer, some of which are new types of bacteria never found before. Two of the new bacteria species have been named after two of the study's funders, *Porphyromonas bobii*, after the The Bob Champion Cancer Trust and *Varibaculum prostatecancerukia*, after Prostate Cancer UK.

It's not yet known how men pick up these bacteria, whether they are causing the cancer, or whether a poor immune response permits the growth of the bacteria.

Dr Hayley Luxton, Research Impact Manager at Prostate Cancer UK, said, "This is an exciting discovery that has the potential to truly revolutionise treatment for men. If the team can demonstrate that these newly-identified bacteria can not only predict, but actually cause aggressive prostate cancer, for the first time we may actually be able to prevent prostate cancer occurring. This would be a huge breakthrough that could save thousands of lives each year."

Currently one man still dies from prostate cancer every 45 minutes in the UK.

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A person's hands are shown holding a tablet. The tablet screen displays the website for "Holistic Therapist Directory". The website has a navigation bar with "Home", "About", "Blog & Videos", "Search", "Why Join?", "Advertise", "Contact", "Sign in or Register", and "Add Profile". The main content area features a search bar with the heading "FIND HOLISTIC THERAPISTS NEAR YOU" and fields for "Where To Look?", "Specialising In", and "What Are You Looking For?". Below the search bar, there are images of a person with glasses and a "REGISTER" button. The background of the entire advertisement is a wooden surface.

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31st October – 2 November 2022
Course completion 23 November