



**HOW TO  
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IMPORTANT**

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UGLY DUCKLING  
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IMPACT FOR PEOPLE,  
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# WELCOME.

With the New Year on the horizon (can you believe it?), we have an opportunity to engage in a conscious sifting through our experiences of the last 10 months—and to give careful thought as to how we'd like to spend the next few months and the coming year. It's so easy to focus on where we think we should be rather than where we are—and the progress we've made.

Design goals around what you want—not what you feel you should be. Maybe you feel you should lose weight but look at your motivations. Why do you want to lose weight? How do you want to feel about yourself? How does weight play into that?



Photo by Evamaria Kulovits

An example of this from my own life is when I was seeing a coach about wanting to lose weight. They kept asking me, "But why? Why do you want to lose weight?" And eventually, I said, "Because I want to be able to take myself seriously." So the real goal needed to be about addressing the root of my problem (low self-esteem) rather than its symptom (the weight).

So when you choose goals that are driven by what your soul is calling you to do (rather than what your mind is telling you to do because of social expectations, etc.), you find it easier to breathe. You become more energised as you move forward to attaining your goal, and may even enjoy it!

Have fun with this latest FEM edition!

**Mags Thomson**

Editor In Chief





# Picking Your Battles Will Not Let Your Activism Down

**The state of the world can feel rather overwhelming. Between war, climate change, misogyny, homelessness, racism and more it can be challenging to find a cause to rally behind. It may well leave you feeling overwhelmed and frozen. I mean, with so much injustice, what can one little you possibly contribute? More than you think, I would like to argue. It's a question of picking your battles and connecting the dots!**

*By Mags Thomson*

Recently, in [What Are Equal Opportunities, If Not Pie?](#) I wrote: "When we start looking at the impact that inequality has on the world, we must realise that equal opportunities are not pie. They are the medicine that the world needs to solve real problems we are facing as a species. In [Getting Curious - Are Mushrooms Truly Magical](#), Dr Patty Kaishian points out that the way we have categorised our world in hierarchical systems, has allowed us to exploit each other and other species on our planet and as a result, we are destroying the planet, and potentially overlooking solutions."

When we zoom out on each issue that we are facing as a world, we can start seeing how they are all symptoms of underlying issues. And if that is true, it stands to reason that actively trying to address one symptom contributes to the dismantling of the underlying structures. That is, IF we can keep our minds open to the larger picture. Let's take it one step at a time.

## Connecting the Dots

Let's dive a little deeper into the idea that the overall categorical and hierarchical way that we have organised our world lies at the very heart of many of the problems we face. This mindset goes beyond marginalising groups of people, it also paves the way for factory farms and even climate change. If after all "man is superior" it goes without saying that "nature is subordinate". It all comes back to the power-over system that requires—no demands—control over people, life, circumstances and even our environment.

These structures are not always obvious. We are intimately familiar with them. We've been socialised to accept them not only as acceptable but as infallible Truths (yep, with a capital T). We've been gaslighted en-masse for years, if not centuries. Women have been portrayed as manipulative, untrustworthy unintelligent hags since Eva took a bite out of that apple. We can often spot the most blatant sexist behaviours or remarks when we go about our day. But do we spot all the subtleties? Do we catch ourselves EVERY time we avoid the risk of male violence on autopilot?

The same is true for other iterations of the power-over system. Whether it's closing our eyes to fast fashion, cheap fried chicken or the newest smartphone with a questionable supply chain. All of these things are possible because somewhere along the line we as humans decided that there's a hierarchy in this world, and it's okay to turn a blind eye.

I am not accusing you of anything that I am not part of myself, too. In fact, I bought a new jacket for autumn this week on sale for just 30 euros. A great find that I was very excited

about. I didn't consider the supply chain or the social corporate responsibility record of the brand before clicking the purchase button. Of course, I didn't! I needed a new jacket, it was on sale, and I am as much part of the capitalist system as anyone.

Always making the right choice or always considering every angle of a decision is impossible. It would leave us all utterly overwhelmed and unable to live our lives in any way. The system is broken, but at the same time it is the system that we live in and very few of us can afford to just exit the matrix.

There is hope to be found though, in the idea that all these different issues we are facing in our societies are connected to the same underlying systemic issue: power over!

## Why an Open Mind is a Prerequisite

There are so many unintended consequences to each decision we make because we live in a complex global system. That system has been broken for many years, and it feels like more and more people are waking up to that fact. But then what? Let's go back to my nice cheap jacket. Could I have made other choices? Obviously, but buying second-hand is considerably more complicated when you need larger sizes (although Vinted has made that a lot easier in my experience). So aside from fast fashion, and questionable value chains, now the issue of fatphobia and size discrimination enters this decision. You can see how a seemingly small issue can spiral out very quickly, especially when we also look at personal budgets and the uneven distribution of wealth.

Of course, we cannot sit and analyse this for every grape or dinner plate we need. We have lives to live and families to care for. It is important to understand though that our ability to choose whether we will or will not consider certain aspects of life is in fact part of our personal privilege. You see, not everyone can switch everything off. As a woman, it is difficult to fully disengage from the risks we face when walking outside. As a fat person, it is impossible not to be aware

of the way society talks about body size and shape all the time. As a person of colour, it is impossible not to feel and experience systemic racism at every turn. When a particular inequality is part of your being, you cannot just switch that off.

The reason this is so extremely important to understand is that it keeps our minds open to feedback from people from these marginalised groups. When they share our experience with you, rather than dismiss their concerns based on your own experience of the world, consider if you have privilege in that area. For example, I understand that people of all sizes have hang-ups about their bodies. It is an unfortunate result of our societal obsession with physical attractiveness. However, I doubt that your doctor has ever laughed at your symptoms during a consult or that people in the street shout “oink oink” at you as you walk down the street, let alone the looks you get when you buy a snack or eat something while you are out. There are experiences you have when existing in a fat body that have nothing to do with how much you like or dislike your shape. Understanding that not having those experiences is privileged will help you accept that the experiences exist and that you may inadvertently be contributing to the narrative that keeps the oppressive system in place.

### **There Is Room For Us All!**

We all exist as intersectional beings with a mix of attributes that cause oppression or provide privilege. There are very few of us that are not in some way oppressed or privileged. Once you can acknowledge your personal privilege and keep an open mind to people who are oppressed in that area, you can find ways to support their fight. Consider how your privilege shows, even if you will not always be able to stop showing it. Help lift voices, do the research, and have conversations with your privileged friends about it.

Only too often I hear people’s voices dismissed because they do not align with our own experience of the world, or because we don’t have space to deal with yet another injustice. Or even because we don’t like the way that the other person expresses their frustration. Let’s unpack all these things individually.

### **This is not my experience!**

In the last few weeks, there has been a bit of an online kerfuffle about Taylor Swift’s new video and whether it was a relatable depiction of having an eating disorder or a hurtful confirmation of fatphobia. I would argue that it may have been both. I think we have established in this article that the world isn’t black and white and two things can be true at the same time. Or in the words of JP Sears:

**YOU CAN HAVE BOTH HANDS AND FEET. THEY ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE.**

The crux of the matter is that eating disorders and fatphobia are intimately related. Our societal obsession with thinness and moral judgements of fatness makes for an ideal environment for obsessive thoughts and behaviours to develop.

So, when you are confronted with someone sharing an experience you don’t know, or challenging your privilege in a certain area try not to fall into defensive or dismissive behaviour. Instead, listen and ask compassionate questions. See how your experience and theirs may be intertwined and see how the power-over system MAY be responsible for both sides of this particular coin.

I don’t have the bandwidth to deal with this!

Yeah, I get it! The world is in turmoil and there



is a challenge around every corner. As we established already, most of these causes are interrelated. Pushing back against transphobia, racism, poverty, climate change, abortion laws... it’s all pushing against the same system that has us in a chokehold. It is totally acceptable that you pick your battles and find the issues that you are most passionate about. This is where you can make the greatest difference.

However, just because you didn’t pick a battle, doesn’t mean you should deny its existence. You can support any cause by acknowledging it, lifting voices, understanding your privilege and considering how it ties in with the activism you are involved with. Every little helps, after all!

### **I don’t like the way you are showing up!**

I hear this a lot when it comes to people who are expressing anger. They are dismissed or told to calm down. Honestly, angry activism isn’t my jam. It drains me dry. BUT, I do appreciate that there is plenty to be angry about, and it is not just legitimate but important that this anger is expressed. So, I am happy there are people in the world who are able to express that anger on my behalf. Besides, not everyone will listen to a well-reasoned argument, some people need to hear the scream to wake up to the issue.

The opposite is also true. Some people are incapable to hear the anger and they need



someone to share the stats with them or tell them stories of what it is like to experience the world in a different way. There are so many ways to express yourself and an equal amount of ways for people to open their minds to injustices.

Rather than dismissing someone who expresses themselves differently, celebrate that you are broadcasting on different channels. The more channels are broadcasting your message, the more people will be able to learn about it. This is another opportunity to lift a voice that is different from yours and may resonate with some of the people you are connected to. Rather than trying to shut the other voices down, let's turn up the overall volume!

### How Not To Burn Out On Activism

To me, the activism game is a marathon, not a sprint! We have a lot of change to create and a long road ahead. So, how do we make sure we make it to the finish line?

**Pick Your Battles:** find causes that hold your interest and will create the greatest benefit for you and the people in your life.

**Understand Intersectionality:** acknowledge how different topics are related and require us to join forces. Life isn't black and white, so accept that multiple experiences and opinions can be true and valid at the same time.

**Understand Your Voice:** find your voice and medium. We can't all be angry, we can't all be statisticians, we can't all be comedians, we can't all be authors... Find the most natural and easiest way for you to lift your voice.

**Explore Your Privilege:** figure out where you have privilege in your life, and what that means for how you show up. Talk to your friends about these topics, and invite them to explore their own biases. It can be complicated to unpack, but it's an interesting and worthwhile journey.

**Accept You're On a Learning Curve:** although I didn't touch upon this today, but I covered it extensively in *Why You Need to F\*ck Up in order to Change the World*. Accept that you are learning and trying to change a system that you are also a part of: you will make mistakes. Own them, learn from them and keep going! At the same time, understand that other people are also learning and will also mess up sometimes.

**Rest!** I know it can be hard to escape the areas where you are oppressed, but we sometimes need to let things go. We can't address every sexist remark, mention of diet culture or microaggression. Sometimes we need to allow ourselves to just exist for a bit. And if that feels too much when you are outside, find ways to create pockets of rest within your home.

## EMOTIONAL PAIN TURNS TO PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

**The body is the link between the subconscious and conscious mind. My work is about removing the specific emotional pain that's related to your pain so it's really deep healing.**

*A conversation with Rachel Claire Farnsworth*

A few years ago, I got an emotional wake-up call. Around the same time my friend and spiritual medium came back into my life. "I always thought you'd be good at psychotherapy," she said. I wasn't so sure, but it did get me thinking. I worked in a bank because it was what my parents wanted me to do, but what else could I do? What did I WANT to do?

This is when I found rapid transformational therapy (RTT). I trained and got certified, but I didn't really know what I was going to do with it.

Then my daughter got a flare-up of her autoimmune disease. When we first got a diagnosis for her, we were happy in a way. Finally we had a name for what was happening, finally a diagnosis. Now we have a packet of pills for her to take. But, we also had to watch her throw up all the time. We had to watch her have no memory. Finally, when she was in drug-induced remission for two years, they told us she could come off the drugs. In those eight weeks, we got our normal life back, we'd almost forgotten what that was like. But then, she had the flare-up. She had to go back on the drugs again. But more and at a higher dose, so more potential side-effect. Was this the only option?

Now, as I said, by now I was certified and I figured I could maybe work with my daughter, but I wasn't at all confident. My trainers always said that one to three sessions is enough for one issue. So, of course, I thought of this as the benchmark. No, it felt more like a stumbling block. "I can't do it in that short amount of time," I had been thinking. "You don't have to fix it in one go," one of my friends said, "You could do 50 sessions." That took the pressure off, and we got to work.

This all happened in 2018 and she has been pain and symptom-free, and more importantly, medication free since then. So she's got her life back. She trained to be a hairdresser in 2020, something that she wanted to do since she was a little girl but didn't feel she could. Now she's able to do that, that's what I call life-changing!

### About Rachel Claire Farnsworth

Rachel Claire Farnsworth is a Transformational Life Changer who works with clients to release trauma to overcome both physical and mental health issues that are affecting their lives. She specialises in helping people with anxiety, chronic pain and autoimmune conditions, using advanced hypnotherapy methods to work with the subconscious mind and get to the root of the problem.

Rachel takes clients back to the moments the issues began so that the issues can be understood, reviewed and released. Regressing to the root cause is very powerful and effective as is discovering how, when and why these issues began so that they can be overcome and released.

Rachel also uses Silent Counselling – a method that allows people to work through emotional pain without having to relive the pain and talk about it, by working with acupuncture pressure points to release emotions. It has been described as EFT (tapping) on steroids! She is a Soul Speak Practitioner, Reiki Master and best-selling co-author.

At the age of 50, she quit her job and began practising full-time, just days before the UK went into lockdown in March 2020. Instead of giving up, she began working with clients online and she now helps people all over the world. Rachel has regularly featured on Sky TV's Empowering Women show.

[Find our more about Rachel here.](#)







# HOW TO HEAL FROM HEARTBREAK

**LaNise is an Author, Speaker, IT Project Manager, and Founder of The Love Cheerleader®; where she teaches women how to heal from heartbreak such as divorce so they can regain their confidence and have freedom. LaNise is the Co-Author of The 8 Qualities of the EXCEPTIONAL Black Woman in Business and Entrepreneurship released in February 2022.**

*By Mags Thomson*

## **Tell us a little about yourself and how you got to do what you do, LaNise**

My dad was in the military, so I was born in New Haven, Connecticut. My parents are from Georgia (USA), so we immediately moved to Atlanta, Georgia to be with family when I was three months old. I moved around a little bit but Atlanta was always home. My dad's last military station before retiring was in St. Mary's, Georgia and I spent all my free time going back and forth to Atlanta. After graduating high school, I moved back to Atlanta for good! From a young age, I have been a "Cheerleader of Love"! I grew up surrounded by loving

relationships. Therefore, I wanted everyone to experience this level of love. Whenever someone was in a new relationship, I would cheer them on and keep them encouraged. On the flip side, I became the go-to person for family and friends when they were experiencing relationship difficulties. I took pride in helping people heal from heartbreak. I knew they would experience immense happiness in the future, but I had to guide them through that healing journey.

Fast forward, I went to college, met the man of my dreams and fell head over heels in love. After graduating college, we got married and I was on Cloud Nine! I had the biggest smile on my face because I was filled with so much joy.



Five years later, I was crying uncontrollably because I made the decision to file for a divorce. I was hurt, embarrassed, depressed, devastated, and felt like a failure just to name a few emotions! Nothing prepared me for this level of heartbreak! The Coach who helped so many people now became the student to navigate this new season in my life.

I navigated through an extensive healing process which led me to develop courses and begin coaching others to help them heal the smart way, not the hard way.

I want to help women know that they are not alone when dealing with heartbreak. Heartbreak has been hush-hush for far too long. I want to change that thought process and allow for authentic healing to take place. But more importantly, I want to teach people how to heal from heartbreak, so they are not bleeding all over others who did not hurt them.

All women deserve to be healed and it is my mission to make sure that every woman I encounter, leaves me feeling better than they were before they met me. I want women to be happy, glowing, thriving, and radiant after healing properly after heartbreak.

## How have your experiences influenced your approach to your work?

I have worked as a coach, and I have also lived through the trauma of a divorce. So, I KNOW how my clients are feeling on their emotional rollercoaster, where they are happy, sad, mad, and frustrated all in a matter of minutes. I know what it is like to have your confidence take a hit, but you still must show up at work. I know what it is like to fill my work and personal schedule with everything possible, so I do not deal with the pain. BUT I also know what it is like to overcome every emotion that arises during a divorce or break-up in a positive way.

In my coaching, I give real-world examples and teach techniques that my clients can use when they are learning how to trust and ultimately learn who they are again.



## I can imagine this can be challenging work. How do you make sure your own needs are met?

My mental health is a top priority in my business! I have learned to take a break when I need one. I cannot pour into other people if I am empty. Therefore, I must take care of myself, so I am at my best for my clients.

I learned this lesson the hard way in 2019 when I came down with shingles.

Shingles was HORRIBLE!

Shingles sat me down for 19 days and forced me to learn how to be honest with my emotions, learn how to rest and not allow stress to take over.

If you do not take care of yourself, your body will let you know immediately!

## That sounds intense! Have you been able to transfer some of those lessons to other areas of your life?

One of the hardest challenges that I have had to face, was realizing that I was dealing with a scammer! I hired a Service Provider to provide a set of services and they presented themselves very well in meetings. They assured me that they would deliver every single deliverable we agreed to. But when it came time to deliver services, they had an excuse for everything. When I confronted them, they continued to make empty promises. Eventually, I received my money back and fired them.

This really challenged me, and truth be told, it stressed me out for a few weeks. I couldn't believe that I was working with a SCAMMER! How had I gotten myself into this mess? This situation taught me to make sure that every person I work with has integrity. But most importantly, it reminded me that when I feel like something is off, it probably is!

You should trust what you're feeling!

## This is great advice! Are there other integral parts of how you run your business?

Being a Black Woman, diversity is extremely important to me in business. By having a diverse environment, you allow for smarter decision-making, and more opportunities for creativity, innovation and problem-solving.

I love collaboration in business, and I encourage it. When you collaborate in business you can learn from others and work together as a team. Teamwork makes the dream work. To win in business, you must have both diversity and collaboration. You cannot win in business by yourself. But if you allow diversity and positive collaboration to be part of your business makeup, you are bound for success.

## Where can people find you, LaNise?

You can find me on Instagram @ [thelovecheerleader](https://www.instagram.com/thelovecheerleader).

If you would like to take action TODAY to start the process to heal heartbreak, you can download my FREE [Moving On From Your Ex Checklist](#).

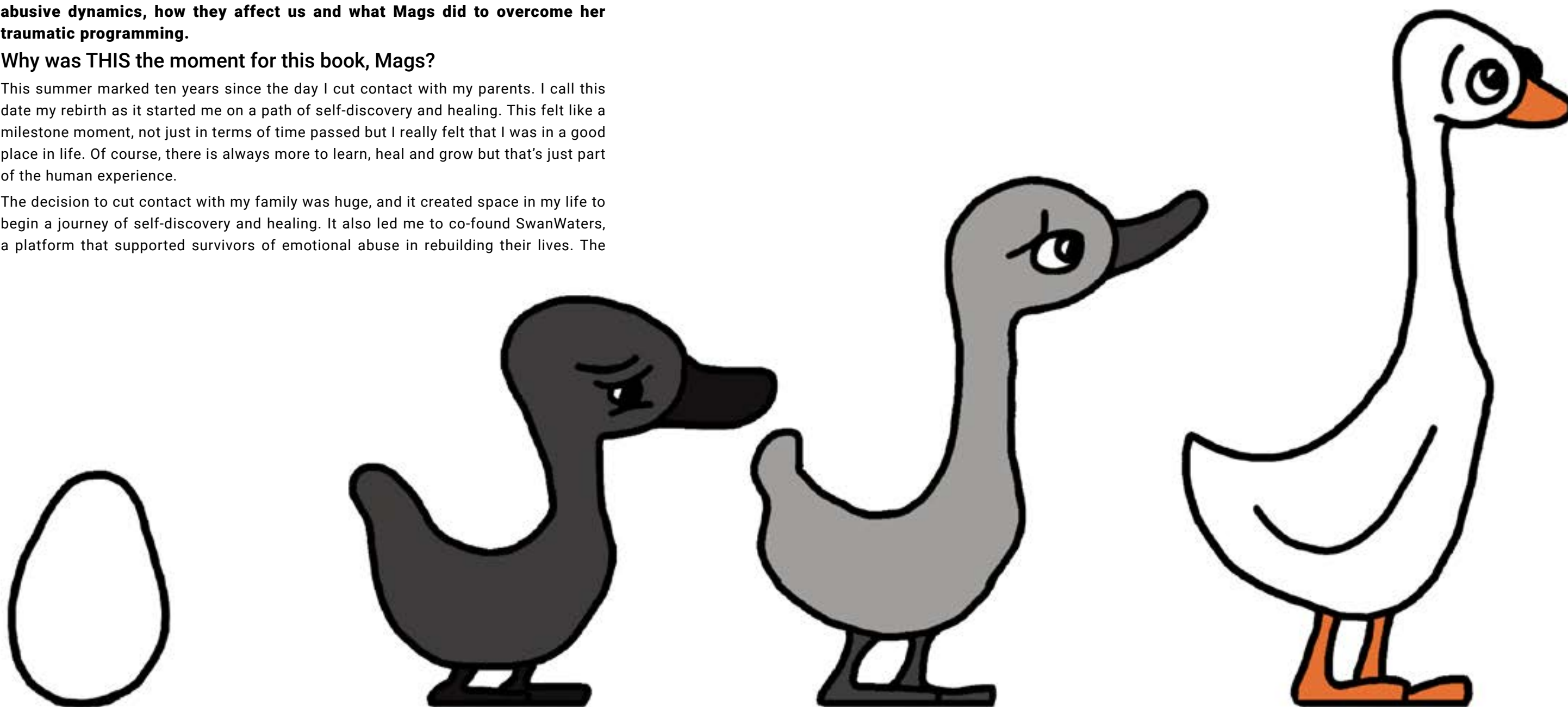
# OUTGROWING THE UGLY DUCKLING WITHIN

House of Hives founder Mags Thomson is never shy to walk the walk. Since she helps people share their personal stories, it was only fair for her to do the same. She did so with no half-measures and released her autobiography/self-help book *The Ugly Duckling Diary* during this year's Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Recounting her story of emotional child abuse is only part of this extraordinary publication. It also includes vast resources that explore abusive dynamics, how they affect us and what Mags did to overcome her traumatic programming.

**Why was THIS the moment for this book, Mags?**

This summer marked ten years since the day I cut contact with my parents. I call this date my rebirth as it started me on a path of self-discovery and healing. This felt like a milestone moment, not just in terms of time passed but I really felt that I was in a good place in life. Of course, there is always more to learn, heal and grow but that's just part of the human experience.

The decision to cut contact with my family was huge, and it created space in my life to begin a journey of self-discovery and healing. It also led me to co-found SwanWaters, a platform that supported survivors of emotional abuse in rebuilding their lives. The





platform has since shut down, but through this work and my journey, I became increasingly aware of how the stories we are told in life impact the stories we tell ourselves, and how they feed into the choices we make in life. As I healed my stories, I changed my personal narrative.

This is where my obsession with stories entered my professional life, and it is also one of the reasons why I think it is so important to share my experiences and insights. When you find yourself in an abusive relationship you are purposely isolated by your abuser, and even when you get away you may still feel very alone. Hearing someone else's story helps us feel connected and less alone.

### What is the significance of the Ugly Duckling?

We all know the story of the Ugly Duckling. It is about a duckling who is attacked and abused for being different from the other ducklings. Of course, there are plenty of lessons to take from this story. The focus is usually on the need to love yourself for who you are and what you look like – even if you don't fit the mould that others made for you.

This fairy tale, however, differs from other tales in one very critical way: the hero of the story, the Ugly Duckling, doesn't have to do anything to become heroic. There are no dragons to be slain. He doesn't have to go to towers and travel places. By simply being himself he grows into his own. At the end of the day, there is nothing wrong with the Ugly Duckling at all. He always was a swan; he always carried his grace and beauty within him. He was just surrounded by characters that couldn't see his true nature and had no desire to nurture what he had to offer. This is what made him feel insignificant and wrong and out of place. Unfortunately, there are many little cygnets that are growing up like this. I was one of them and I truly believed there was nothing about me to love. But, like the Ugly Duckling, I always was a swan. I just had to find the way back to myself.

Why is it important that people read your book?

As I said, this book is a companion piece for anyone overcoming an abusive relationship. Whether parental, romantic or in a work setting for example. But to be honest, knowing to

recognise toxic behaviours is useful to anyone and especially if you are supporting a partner or friend through their healing journey.

You see, in some ways, my childhood seemed very normal. Looking from the outside in, it may even have seemed amazing. My parents had a stellar reputation in their community. That was part of the gaslighting though because as much as our town celebrated my parents and commented on how amazing they were... I never felt like that from within our family. Our relationships were strained, and I felt that there was something innately wrong with me. How else could I explain what was going on? If the whole town loved them, surely my inability to see that goodness was MY fault.

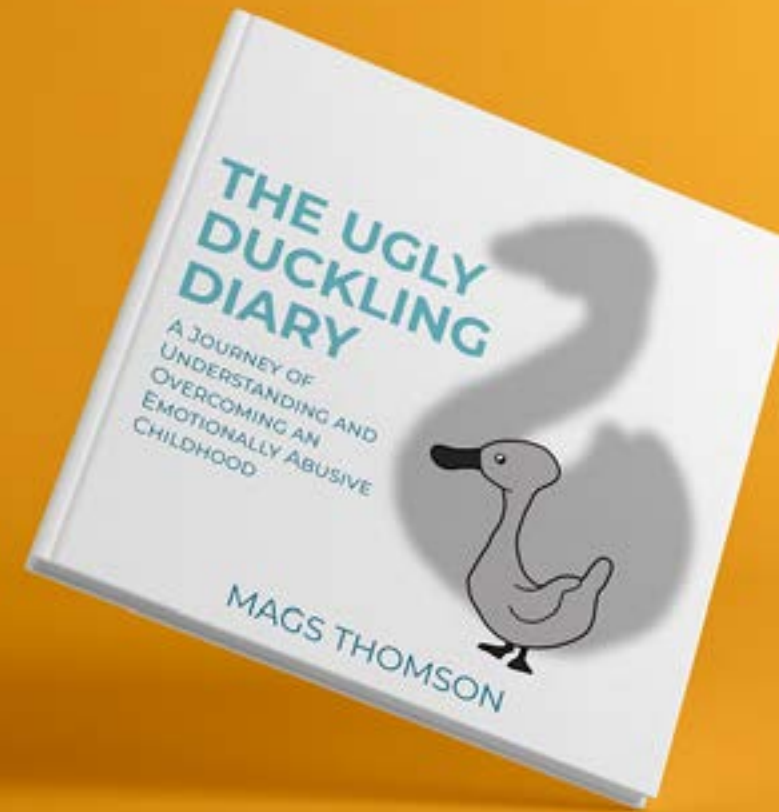
It took me 32 years to fully understand the toxic dynamics that played out in my family and how everyone was played against each other in a strained effort to protect my mother's fragile ego. If only we learned about healthy relationships. how we can set boundaries and recognise manipulative behaviours. But the topic of abuse is swept under the rug, and we mostly just ask "why didn't she leave?" without understanding the complexities of an abusive relationship. So, read the book and learn how people get trapped.

### Can you give us an example of how abuse can affect your sense of self?

According to my mother, I have struggled with addiction throughout my life; in fact, she claims I was an alcoholic by the age of one.

This is a story that is shared over and over again at family gatherings and parties. I have been hearing it my whole life. It is all based on this photo of me as a one-year-old baby, where I am holding an empty wine bottle. The story goes that I used to crawl into the hallway, find the bottles waiting on the floor to be taken out to the recycling bin, and then drink the last drops of wine that were in them.

I obviously have no recollection of doing, or not doing, this. The only proof that exists is a photo of me, as a baby, holding a wine bottle. But does that mean I drank from it? And if I did, does that mean I did it all the time? Maybe I did. Or maybe it was a story my mother concocted to shine an unfavourable light on me when talking to others.



A witty and charming  
joy-filled survival and  
recovery guide to abuse

The problem with stories like this is that biology dictates that we imprint on the messages we receive in early childhood, and when those are false, negative and dismissive, we do not just learn we are substandard, we believe that we are wholly unworthy of love, compassion and kindness.

This lack of self-esteem obviously impacts how we then show up in our life. It affects our adult relationships, making us more vulnerable to further abusive relationships, what jobs we apply for, and the possibilities we see for ourselves. The list goes on.

### What has been one of the most profound lessons you have learnt through your healing journey?

One of the biggest lessons I learnt going through this healing journey is that really the only way to overcome is to lean in. We have this tendency to push stuff away. Societies aren't really equipped to deal with people who are processing trauma,

which is unfortunate. We have this tendency to try and just push our uncomfortable emotions away.

I always say that's just like pushing a ping pong ball under the water. As soon as you let go of it, it will just shoot back up. And the deeper you push, the harder it will come up.

### Where can people find your book?

The Ugly Duckling Diary is currently only available as a Kindle e-book. You can read it on your Kindle or in the free Amazon app on your phone or computer. The paper version of the book is in the works, but it will be a few months before that will hit the shelves.

For now, just head to Amazon and get your Kindle copy!

[Find it on Amazon UK](#)

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Are you in one of the other Amazon territories? Find the book by searching "The Ugly Duckling Diary".



# CAN A BUSINESS CREATE POSITIVE IMPACT FOR PEOPLE, PLANET AND PROFIT?

**Cathy Nesbitt is a Health and Wellness Advocate. Founder of Cathy's Crawly Composters (est 2002), Cathy's Sprouters and Cathy's Laughter Club. She is a multi-award-winning environmental innovator who uses workshops and inspirational speaking to motivate people to live a more sustainable life. She offers simple solutions for today's challenges. Worms for amending the soil, sprouts for eating and laughter for overall health and wellness.**

*By Mags Thomson*

Cathy is a certified Laughter Yoga Teacher. Appointed Laughter Ambassador in 2017 by Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of Laughter Yoga. Since 2015 Cathy has been leading Laughter sessions at assisted living facilities, schools, summer camps and corporations. She shares her energy, passion, generosity and vast professional experience to help you take advantage of the natural health benefits of laughter yoga. Cathy is an avid cyclist and gardener. Cathy graduated with a BA in Psychology from York University 2000.





**WHEN YOU GET THAT INSPIRED THOUGHT, MAKE SURE THAT YOU WRITE IT DOWN BECAUSE THOUGHTS ARE LIKE CLOUDS, THEY COME AND GO**

**Looks like we have plenty to talk about, Cathy! Why don't we start at the beginning?**

I grew up in Toronto, Canada in the 60s, at a time when women were given about five job options. You could be a secretary, waitress, nurse, stewardess or teacher. Of that limited selection, I chose to become a secretary, and I was an awesome secretary for 20 years. I didn't know being an entrepreneur was also an option.

In 1993, I bought a house outside of Toronto and a teacher friend asked me to look after her worm bin for the summer. I couldn't wait to start composting and gardening. I didn't really want worms in my house, but I come from a place where I think we should try things for ourselves, rather than have somebody tell you that you probably won't like something. So, I took on the challenge of worm composting. It was a bit of a disaster in that I had fruit flies and all that, but I did manage to keep the worms alive for the summer. After it was done, I declared: "I'm never doing this again." Here I am now, a worm farmer. A worm advocate. How fun! So that summer really did inform my life.

In 2000, I graduated with my psychology degree and got a job at a group home working with challenged adults. They had 10 homes and a farm, and they didn't compost. When I questioned them about composting, the greenhouse manager said: "why don't we try worm composting?" Have you ever gotten that feeling that you've done something before, but it didn't quite work out, then someone asks you about it and you feel resistant to try again? That's how I felt. I was passionate about it, but I didn't think I wanted to actually do that again. But it was a big institution, so I figured that they wouldn't be getting worms anytime soon, and there would be no harm in doing some research. That's when I discovered the magic of the worms and vermicomposting.

**They really wormed their way into your life, he? How do you think worms can change the world?**

One of my main goals is for businesses to manage their organic waste on-site, with worms or whatever method they choose. This will stop this organic matter being trucked around. I guess what it all boils down to is that I would love for businesses to embrace the triple bottom line People, Planet & Profit rather than just profit. It's a different way of viewing the success of our businesses.

For me, success is making a positive impact every day. Inspiring people and helping them connect. Just have a beautiful, hopeful impact on the world. I once heard a speech where the speaker explained it's all about beliefs. He believed that the more he laughed, the more money he would make. I loved that, and I took that one on. So now, while I teach laughter yoga, I am laughing all the way to the bank. Things like that have such a positive impact. You raise vibration, while also increasing your bottom line. That's what I call beautiful success!

I hope that the impact my work will have on the world is that people will live a more joy-filled sustainable life. With every worm I sell, I help the planet. Every sprout they eat, people get healthier. Every giggle raises the vibration. All three of my offerings worms, sprouts and laughter have a beautiful impact on the world and make the world a better place.



**You didn't always think about becoming an entrepreneur. How do you feel about that part of your journey now?**

I would love to see more people value entrepreneurial life. There's a big divide between entrepreneur and employee mentality. I would love for more people to understand the joys of being an entrepreneur, as well as the trials and tribulations. They too bring joy because the effort you put into your business is for you and so beautiful.

We've all had those thoughts where we get all excited. When you get that inspired thought like that, make sure that you write it down because thoughts are like clouds, they come and go. Knowledge is power but without action, it will not lead you anywhere. Knowledge without action is simply information. So when we get those inspired

thoughts, make sure that you write it down or put a reminder in place so that you can remember to come back and take the action. Otherwise, when you get that beautiful inspired thought that gets you all revved up, your engine keeps on revving if you don't put the car into gear.

**So which is the magic ingredient, inspiration or action?**

Actually, it is to laugh every day and not take yourself too seriously! I would love to invite readers to my free Tuesday Laughter Club on Zoom, every Tuesday at 9:30 AM ET. Just [register in advance](#), and you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Of course, you can also learn more about all of my work on [my website](#) or by connecting on [Facebook](#).



# MAKE YOUR CHANGE PART OF YOUR HIGHEST VALUES

**You can't go to a personal development seminar, or open a book about leadership or something like that, without someone talking about principles, values, vision or mission statements.**

*A conversation with Martin Sharp*

One of the things I was always struggling with was that I could never guarantee to be in the same county, city or country at the same time, let alone turn up the gym at the times that they're open. Let's face it when you're a busy person, it's hard to fit it all in.

That didn't change until I started working with Adam. One of the first things he said to me was that if you don't make your change part of your highest values, then actually, you're never going to change. It took me a while to understand what he meant by that. And to do the fundamental work behind it to work out what my highest values were.

Everyone talks about values, but what Adam meant was that you've got three or four fundamental things, that you get out of bed for every single day. As soon as I worked out these things, I was able to commit to change.

I love getting results for my clients, I love spending time with friends, and I absolutely adore being able to love and support my family. Those are my key values and the reason why I get out of bed every day. Then I thought, what if I couldn't do that? I started to reverse engineer what it might mean if I did not prioritise my health. As soon as I worked that out, I realised that sometimes you have to be selfish to be selfless, I had to put myself first.

I spent so many years putting everybody else first. I took such a backseat. That's the reason why my health suffered. Now, I started implementing the principles of business consulting in my health journey. Understanding how to schedule things, how to do risk assessments, understanding how to ensure consistency. Also, things like putting in rest periods, so that it's not just all about exercise.

Then little by little things started to change.

## About Martin Sharp

Martin Sharp is a multi-award-winning international consultant, coach, speaker and author. At age 43, his working lifestyle led him to weigh 154kg/340lb with a 54"/137cm waist. But by age 45, he weighed just 94kg/207lb with a 32"/81cm waist.

He now specialises in transforming busy and out of shape business owners and consultants into fitter, happier and more confident versions of themselves. As a business transformation consultant since 1993 working with corporates on major changes ranging from \$16bn digital asset transfers, and £15bn airport purchases, to £1bn-£2bn growth structures and many multi-million improvement programmes.

Martin understands the unique challenges faced by busy professionals and why up until this point, it has not been easy to fit health into their lifestyle. What lights Martin up more than anything is the joy he hears as others enjoy newfound freedom, confidence and happiness from health and fitness.



# #STORYBOOST



## HOW TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD YOUR HEALING AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

**Sometimes you meet a new person, and you KNOW something magical has just happened. That's how I felt when I first met Holly Purchell. She is a multi-disciplinary healer who supports her clients with hypnotherapy, reiki, breathwork, sound baths and more. Today I had the pleasure to talk to her about trauma and how we can take the first steps on our healing journey, even when we are quite fearful.**

*By Mags Thomson*

**Tell us a little about how you got to where you are, what is Holly's origins story?**

I am able to do what do because I lived the polar opposite of it. I did everything the hardest possible way, and I suffered very deeply. I constantly cursed myself with my own words. When I realised what I'd done, I went off to see Joe Dispenza and did some really crazy things with other gurus. I learnt breathwork and accumulated knowledge of all I was doing. But I was welcoming the darkest and the most awful things into my life. Until I learned to turn that around into a positive.

You can't know pure joy unless you've known pure suffering. The levels have to be weighed out equally with each other, they have to be balanced. So, now, I do anything I can to stop people from suffering and let them live in joy. They didn't come here for suffering. They have to have a beautiful open heart and as soon as they do, I can release them from that suffering and take them to joy. I've got loads of methods of how to do it. So, whatever they come to me with, I can turn it around round to be the beautiful level that mirrors their suffering. Whatever it is they experienced, if they feel they've suffered, I believe them.

I have got a wonderful toolbox of all the things that I learned that have helped me, that I can give them. So that's from magic mushrooms and CBD, all the way through to crazy breathwork, that they say is the same as running 10 miles. So all the way through.



**We were going to talk a little bit about abundance. So just tell me what defines abundance for you?**

I think abundance is just huge amounts of anything, happiness and health. It's not just money, I think it's whatever brings you joy. To have loads of it, loads of that joy, and to have everything you need at this very moment. Bringing that in and living in the present moment with everything you need. And maybe if we even stripped that down, we find out we don't need as much as we thought we did. But it can be millions of pounds and a mansion too. It is whatever they feel is abundance.

For me, abundance is having really beautiful soft materials around me and good food, a happy family and good health. That's abundance for me. But I'm really good at stripping down what people actually want, making sure that they are polished of all limiting beliefs, conditioning and any trauma. Once they're set free from that and can spectate it without pain, then I help move them into a future with focus. So they know exactly where they're going. And the universe knows exactly what they want. Because I see the universe as a three-year-old child, just absolutely beautiful and wanting to say yes

to everything. And if you're going to ask the universe, pick up this, pick up that, I want that maybe, I beg, I wish, I pray! That three-year-old will get confused and throw a hissy fit. We need to be clear, and simple and move away all the crap. Some people say I command the universe, some people say I choose the end result. However you phrase it, make sure it's simple.

It's all about keeping it simple and consistent. I always think of it as if you did one session of yoga. It wouldn't change your whole entire life. But if you did 10 minutes, three times a week, it would change it in every single way, right? And I always think, if I just sit down every day, even if it's for 10 minutes, and just write out the best possible result for that day, that week, that year, that's going to have an effect.

I like to say to the people I teach to have that clear dream board. I say to them, I want you to lay in bed, and I want you to lay as if it's already happened. Envision how tomorrow is when everything that you've wanted has come true. And just start to live in that energy. That if you were waking up tomorrow, how would your day go? If everything was absolutely brilliant, your health was great, you had everything you needed, live as if it's now. I've found every time that they're manifesting so quickly.

**I SEE THE UNIVERSE AS A THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILD, JUST ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL AND WANTING TO SAY YES TO EVERYTHING. AND IF YOU'RE GOING TO ASK THE UNIVERSE, PICK UP THIS, PICK UP THAT, I WANT THAT MAYBE, I BEG, I WISH, I PRAY! THAT THREE-YEAR-OLD WILL GET CONFUSED AND THROW A HISSY FIT.**



**I always find this such a hard question, and I think in part because of how we've been conditioned to set goals. How do you go about helping people sort of figure out what it is that they want? How do I figure out what abundance means to me? And what I'm trying to manifest?**

I turn around. I'll say to my client: "Okay, your wildest dreams are coming true. What are they?" Or I'll ask: "What is the best thing that happened to you this year? What is it that you want from working with me? If we take all the blocks away?" Then I'll let them flow and once we have the broad strokes, I'll polish up what they're saying. But it turns out that a lot of the time, people don't actually want what they thought they wanted. So I'll find that nugget in what we're talking about, and keep on going and going and going until we find what feels right. Sometimes they just didn't want to admit it. They don't want to they're embarrassed by it. Or they think that they want a Ferrari and a mansion. But really, they want amazing health and a loving husband.

Then we'll create the vision and we visualise that it's all happened. Then we explore if there's anything blocking them. What is that right now? What is that right now? Then we can get to clear that together. Although, in hypnotherapy, you don't have to know what is blocking you for it to be released. So, I find a lot of the time once we've made a really, really clear vision we can let the hypnotherapy do the rest.

Sometimes I work with people that have been reliving a trauma that happened 20 years ago every day and every night. They just never had a break from it. Through breathwork, we can completely and utterly relax their nervous system. Now they have space to see their vision and find joy. Every single story is different, of course, but the fact is, that first they need the nervous system to relax the body, mind and soul. You need to be told you are totally

safe to be creative right now, you do not have to be in survival mode.

Once you've got everything else out of the way, and the blocks are gone, then all you have to do is sit on the sofa, shut your eyes and pretend you're driving your new car. Feel the key hand, see and feel the logo, put it in the ignition and drive that car, do the movements, imagine how smooth it handles and how safe and free you feel. Think about how grateful you would be for that car and thank the universe for bringing it to you.

That's how simple it is, but for it to work we need to remove our conditioning, beliefs, or trauma. We hold on to these things we were taught, like "money doesn't grow on trees," "girls shouldn't do this," or "you'll never be as good as your brother." All the bullshit that they contaminated us with even though we were born perfect. Remove that, strip that back, find out what you really want, focus on it, and then visualise or write a story about your new car and how it makes you feel and the places you will go. Never ever limit yourself by putting in deadlines or specific ways of how you will manifest. By saying: "In two weeks I'll win the lottery and that's how I'm going to be a millionaire," you shut out every other way that a million pounds might come to you. You've limited your opportunities. I am a massive fan of writing out a million ways of how your dream can come true. This is a great way to remove limitations and to stop worrying if it will or won't because you know there are so many opportunities.

I want people to open up and take away the walls that they're putting around their manifestation. We don't want to trap beautiful children into being certain things and in the same way, we don't want to trap our manifestations, We want to be open-minded so that our manifestations can flow in from a million different directions. It's the square peg round hole thing. If you are constantly focusing on that round hole, and then the universe gives you a square peg, you're not going to notice that.

**You touched upon removing limiting beliefs and trauma. What are some ways for us to begin addressing that programming?**

A lot of people are constantly living in flight or fight. That greatly limits the number of options for their survival but also their healing. That is why I have such a big toolbox, there is always something that resonates. It's all a tapestry. I can't tell you how I do it. Because every single individual will be so different, have so many different problems, and have different amazing skills.

For example, most people aren't breathing right to start with. We need to breathe into our stomachs, but many people don't. Doing breathwork can be as complicated as working with someone like me, or as simple as starting to sing. I find that absolutely gorgeous, there are so many ways to support ourselves. Whether it's tapping, whether it's breathwork, whether it's sound baths, whether it's meditation, or whatever modality works for you. It's really important to come out of that flight or fight response and relax the nervous system. That's when we can see there are limitless options available to us, and so we can allow them in.

Once we remove all of the beliefs, all of the conditionings that aren't serving us, we can move forward and let all of those possibilities in and just do fun things. The universe loves fun! So you do fun things like sitting on your sofa and pretending to drive your dream car. Or if you want a horse, and you can't afford the whole horse today, go buy a bridle. And a little later, you buy some grooming bits, and you savour the smell of them. Get ready. While you're at the gym, pretend that you're on your horse. Visualise before you go to bed each night and as you get up in the morning. Go to the stables. Feel the feelings, smell the smells. Start creating the space in your life. Like, if you're looking to manifest a husband, stop sleeping in the middle of the bed. Whatever it is, start living it.



But, if you're still knee-deep in that fear, start by getting yourself out of this constant survival mode. At the start, this can be really overwhelming. So, go to a hypnotherapist or go to get a sound bath. Do something where you are completely at peace. Get some help to get out of flight or fight. This will take you into creativity and then you'll see that there are options. Go see a professional who can help you, especially for that initial reset. I'd personally say hypnotherapy or a sound bath because those for me were things that sledge-hammered me out of survival mode. Now I've got about 6000 tools that I could tell you about, but those take time to learn.

For instance, there was one point where I was deep in the throws of depression, anxiety and complex PTSD. Before I went to bed, I wrote a letter to the universe. I've got this shit, and it's so bad! It was horrific list, of everything bad and all that I was suffering. Then I turned it around. I wrote down everything I was grateful for. Now, this was a LONG letter. It was pages and pages. I said thank you for ladybugs, thank you for benches, thank you for the little memorials people put on benches, thank you for this food, thank you for roast dinners, thank you for chocolate brownies, and it went on and on and on. It was so cleansing. The next morning, I ripped it up and posted it into the river and released it to the universe.

It has to be something that will completely smash those neural pathways and rip that glue. You have to feel it's kinda shocking. It doesn't matter what it is or how you get there. But to do something that's so different, where you're moving those neural pathways. There are 1000 ways in which you can do this, it has to be something new and something that you are genuinely open to. When you have when you're just surviving and suffering, it can be really hard to sledgehammer your own path. So, get some help!

### Okay, so step one is to get help to clear trauma. Step two is to have fun visualising. What's the next step?

Consistency! You wouldn't build a house and never ever maintain anything. Right? You don't just get a perfectly healthy body without looking after it or a brand new car and never do anything to it. We're constant work in beautiful progress, and we can get better and better and better. We can have a higher baseline.

You see, there's a baseline that we fall to when we have a bad day. Because we have bad days, right? Sometimes our baseline can be really fucking low. Right? So, you'll want to raise that baseline up. So that when you have like a shit day, you hardly fall at all, because you've got so many resources and so much support. In the end, you've got a full toolbox inside of you that you can use to look after yourself. You may need a self-care day, stay in your pyjamas on the bed. Make plans for yourself next week to have a delivery of flowers, invest in yourself and raise your self-worth and the whole universe will move with us to that level. If our baseline is just there, and you have all that support, and all that love, self-compassion, self-love... We ay wobble for a tiny bit, but then we're straight back up again.

Like the other day, I felt anger. And that was for a really good reason. Because I needed to change something. And we can go into that, and explore those feelings. But, you can stay close to those people that are sunshine and love you. Always keep up that maintenance and keep that baseline high.

### Where can people learn more about you, Holly?

The best way to get in touch or find out about my retreats is by connecting with me on [Facebook](#).

## IF I DIED IN FIVE YEARS' TIME, WHAT WOULD I THINK OF THE LIFE I'VE HAD?

**The world is an extraordinary place. It's not an ordinary place. You're only here once, it's a one-time rodeo. That's it. So why do so many people settle for ordinary?**

*A conversation with Amanda Wheal*

I was relatively happy, or at least I thought I was quite happy. I had lived a really safe life so far. I was a teacher, a safe job and a safe life. I had a few doubts about the direction I was going, but not enough to course correct. Then some crazy things happened in my life.

I just reconnected with my eldest brother, and that was really good. We talked a lot. He was an ageing hippie really. So, he had lived, you know, really LIVED. We had a lot of things in common, and I was fascinated with some of the things he'd done. He kept saying to me: "There are so many things that you could be doing with your life," and we started planning lots of things... But then, he died unexpectedly.

It was awful! It was the first major bereavement that I experienced, even though I'm from a big family. At the funeral, there was an inspirational celebrant there. I didn't even know what a celebrant was, but he made what I thought was going to be the worst day of my life into just an amazing occasion. I had written a eulogy as well, which I was convinced I wouldn't be able to read. But I did. I read it. I realised I really wanted to do this for other people. It almost felt like this was my brother's message to me.

Now, at the time, there were lots of other things going on in my life that weren't too good. So, I said to myself: "If in six months' time, I still feel like this, I'm just going to do it."

Because I think when you're in that place when you've lost someone close to you, you realise how precious life is. You reflect on the things you could be doing and what you've done so far. If I died in five years' time, what would I think of the life I've had?

### About Amanda Wheal

Amanda is a modern quirky celebrant creating beautiful ceremonies that express your love in a way that says everything about you as a couple. From the sublime and sentimental to stunning and surprising, it's all about you, the only limit is your imagination. She can make your special day a unique and beautiful expression of your love, where you choose the words, the setting and the time, for a day you will never forget. Working with you she will create a ceremony exactly as you want it, where your dreams become reality, and you share special once-in-a-lifetime moments.

Find out more about Amanda on her [website](#) or follow her on [Instagram](#).



# SEARCH OUT YOUR IDEAL CLIENTS

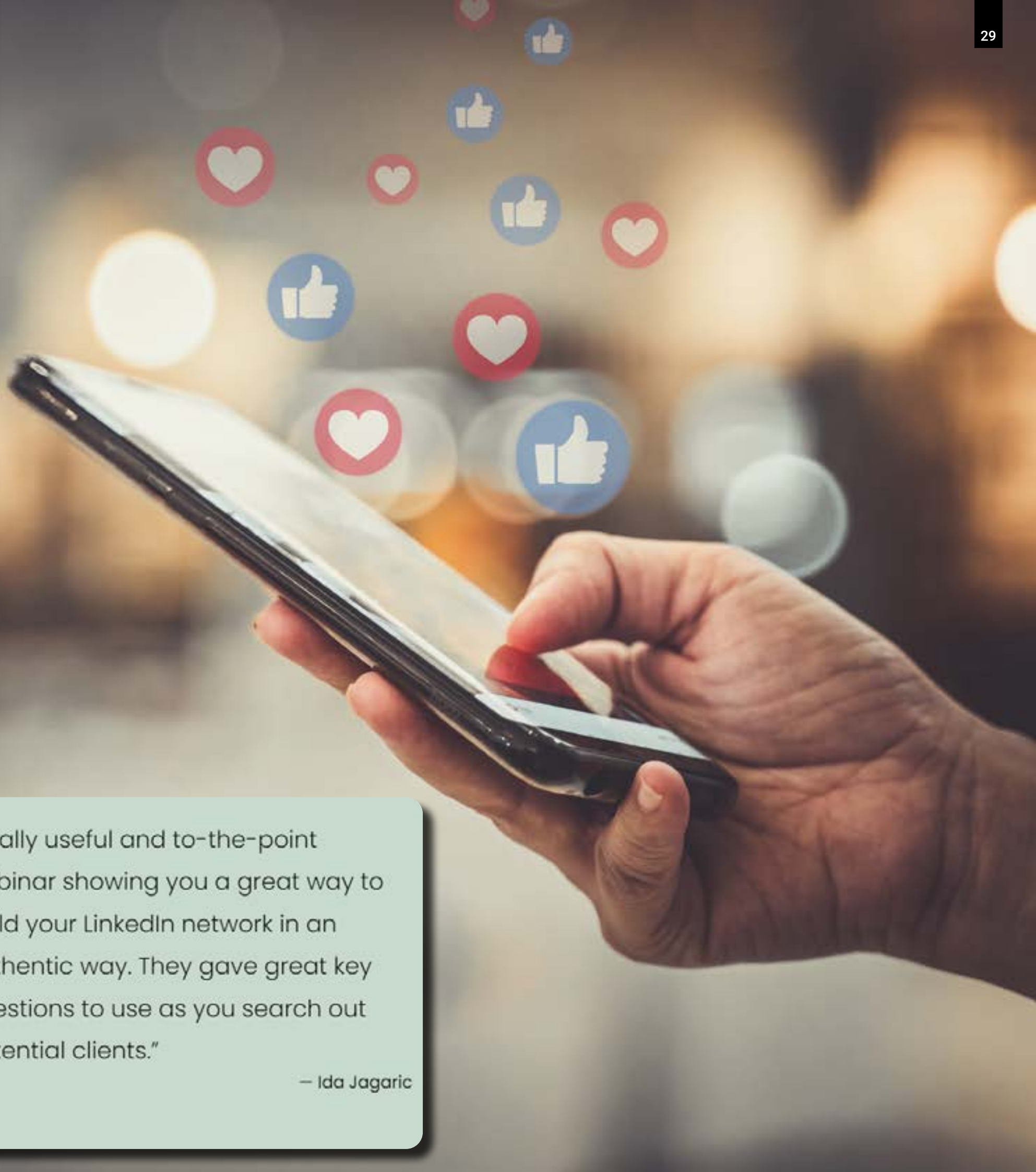
After years of working with clients on creating content, it is becoming increasingly clear to us that content should never be the end-all of your social media strategy. It is just a means to start a conversation with people.

Over the years, we --Andrew Lopez of Elevated Shorts and Mags Thomson of House of Hives-- have learned so much about marketing and social selling, and have developed a simple system to create warm, quality leads for our own business, and for those of our clients!

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— Ida Jagaric



# IS IT TIME TO STOP POINTING FINGERS?

**The polarisation of the world seems to be at an all-time high. All our problems are caused by the members of a group of 'others' we conveniently label as Them. Whether they are immigrants, the poor, the unvaccinated, women, queer people, liberals, socialists or whichever difference with ourselves we deem the catalyst of all that is wrong with the world;**



**IT'S ALL THEIR FAULT**

*By Suzy Jacobs*

The divisions we've created in the world are increasingly devoid of shades of grey. I am sure that our increasing reliance on social media has fed into that narrative immensely. Not only are we much more aware of our friends' opinions and leanings, but the algorithms conveniently sift out opposing stances and arguments. This has left us stranded in a weird kind of echo chamber of like-minded people.

This may sound amazing, and to a degree, it is lovely to be in that bubble. But it seems to have robbed us of the ability to engage in critical discourse with people who disagree with us. The times of philosophical debate seem to have been relegated to conversations with people who we know agree with us, at least for the most part. And I will be honest, I started to swallow my opinions more and more over the last few years as the fear of backlash increased. I still do now.

We live in a time where the separation between Us and Them is no longer just part of the way our brain views and organises the world. Segregation is actively promoted in the media, by our governments and our social media platforms. And regardless of which side of any argument you are on, that should worry you.

By not engaging in critical discourse with people

who have different opinions and experiences, we miss out on the opportunity to reflect on our own convictions and assumptions, too. Have you really considered all angles, or did you jump to conclusions or rely on stereotypes and societal programming?

I am not necessarily saying you need to change your opinions, but it does us good to consider different viewpoints and experiences. We may be opened to alternatives we hadn't considered, it may lead us to find previously unconsidered middle ground that is the innovative solution humankind was waiting for. Our inability, unwillingness and public pressure not to question the mainstream and simply to discard people we don't agree with is killing our creativity, critical thinking skills and is stunting our personal and communal growth.



## We Need to Repair Our Relationship Thinking

My father-in-law and I used to have very different ideas about most things in this world. That often led to fiery political debates around the dinner table. Something, it took me a while to realise, my father-in-law loved, and looking back he may have taken a few stances just to challenge me. Although the rest of the family didn't always share our passion, we enjoyed digging into an argument. Of course, I didn't always feel like debating, and neither did he. On those days we'd just talk about different topics where we had more common ground. Maybe we'd talk about something we'd seen on TV or I would ask him for stories of his younger years.

We could probably not have been much further apart on the political spectrum, but we had a

loving relationship nonetheless. Mostly, because I did not dwindle the whole complex human being that was my father-in-law to a set of political and religious beliefs. I was able to see our common ground, understand our different life experiences and how those informed both our opinions and respect him as a person regardless of our differences.

I think it is time we return to relationship building and leave this endless culling of people we don't agree with. Let's start finding common ground again. Let's listen to each other's stories and let's get back to some interesting debates around the dinner table. Let's be okay with a little discomfort here and there, so we can get back to growing and evolving as a person and a species.

It's time to stop pointing fingers and start reaching out hands.

**FEM IS A HOUSE OF HIVES  
PUBLICATION.**

Editor in chief: Mags Thomson

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