



Be the CEO

of your health



No matter your role in life, there is none bigger or more important than being the CEO (the chief executive officer) of your own health. Whether you believe it or not, you have as much control over your own health and happiness as a CEO has over the success of their company - and often much more.

It is a sometimes-uncomfortable truth that you are responsible for everything that you do (or don't do) in the area of your health and happiness. If you don't like something and want to change it, you can. Often, people don't take the same kind of approach to managing their personal lives as they do their professional lives - even if they are, in fact, a CEO of a business. They allow the actions of others or even outside events to influence their health, their life and their happiness. This is the exact opposite of empowering - so let's change that!

Any CEO worth their salt knows that you cannot ignore an entire aspect of the business and expect the company as a whole to thrive. It's the same with your health and happiness. You cannot just take a view that there is no time for eating well or relaxing and hope to make up for it by shoehorning in a yoga class between trips to the supermarket and taking the dog to the vet.

I bet you're wondering how this can be done. Listen up. All CEOs have an overarching vision, aka a plan. For you, this means you will not be making scattergun decisions on impulse and neglecting important aspects of your life on a whim. Once you know what you really want for your health and for your life in general, you can plan to make the magic happen.

Throughout this little guide, I'll be giving you a structure I often use with my clients. That starts with figuring out what you want, setting your daily intentions, and learning to create habits that last - including moving your body in a way you love and doing things just for the joy of doing them (aka your self-care).



“Good health is
not something we
can buy. However,
it can be an
extremely valuable
savings account.”

ANNE WILSON SCHAEF

Create your *health* vision



Figuring out what you actually want for your health (and your life) is really important. All businesses require a vision and purpose, and your life needs the same driving force. Without this vital piece of information nailed down - 'what do I actually want?' - you will never know whether you have achieved your goals. Once you are clear what it is you want, your actions and how you spend your time and money might change to become more aligned with the vision you have for your future self.

Take some time to complete the visioning exercise on the next page. There are a number of questions to ask yourself. Be honest. This is really for your eyes only and to help you get clear on what you actually want. Often, we're too busy with everyday stuff to pause to question where we are headed. Work out what you want now. Consider why you want it. What's stopping you having what you want? Consider also what you might need to have in place to support you.

My *health & wellness* vision

What do I want?

Why do I want this?

What actions will I take?

How will I do it?

What might stop me?

What support do I need?

*"It's time to start
living the life
you imagined"*

HENRY JAMES



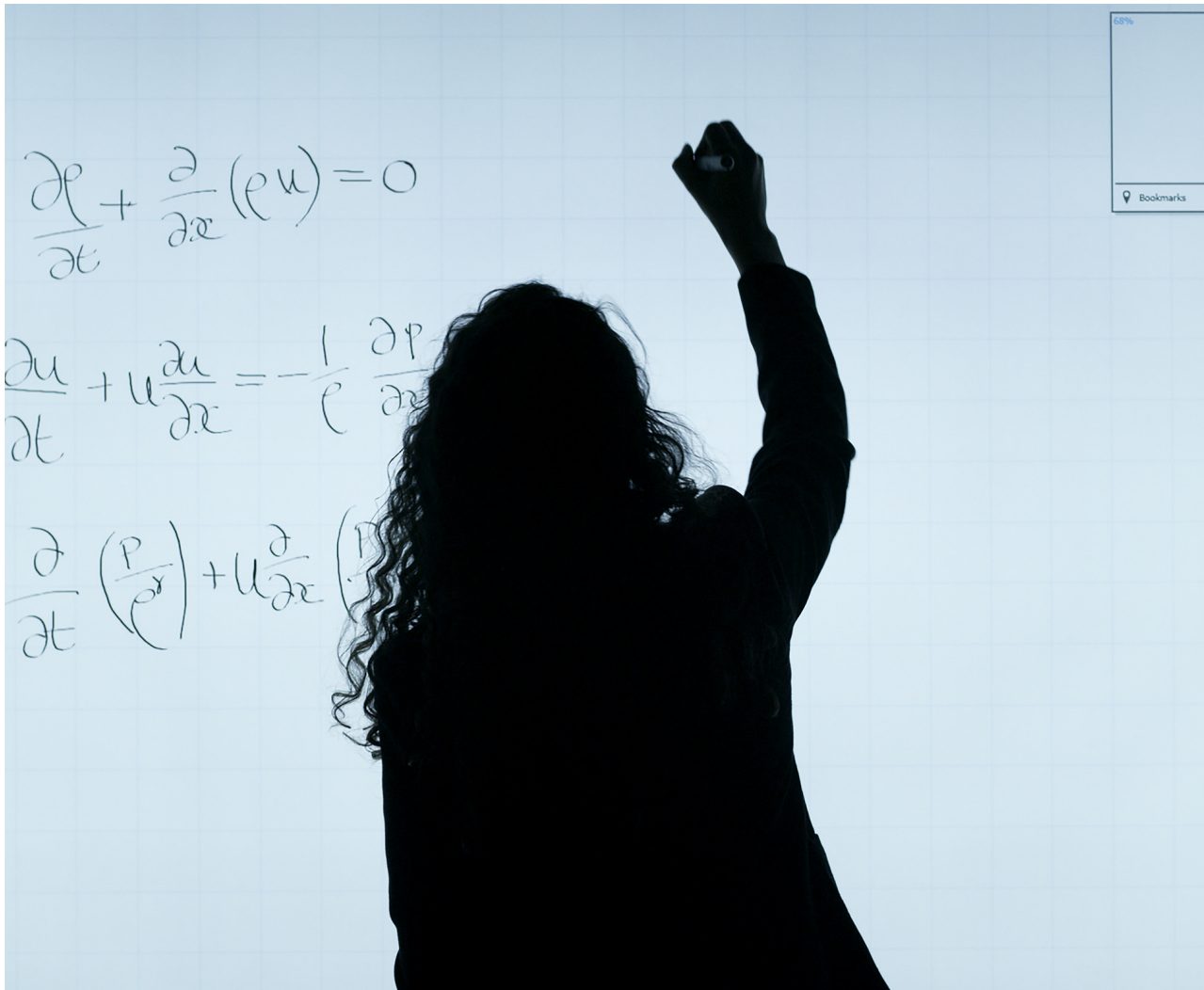
Remind yourself *everyday*

The only way you will ever get what it is that you want is to take action. Knowing is not enough. The job here is to tie the actions you take in your everyday life to that vision you just created.

How to do that is to have a business meeting with yourself every morning - just like a regular business leader. This little business meeting is the same as setting a daily intention. It will take you no more than 30 seconds - such a tiny demand on your time - but it is very powerful. The reason why this deceptively simple mindset trick works so well is that what hides behind so many deviations from a healthy eating plan is forgetting what you want and why it's important.

Think of your day as being a journey. The way to get to where you want to be is to read the map or use the sat nav. You are literally setting your GPS for success. How it looks in practice is that you take inspiration from the vision you created and attach an action to it. That might mean something like 'every day I make healthy food choices. I take one step closer to my goal'.





The formula

WHAT I WANT + WHAT I MUST DO TO GET THERE = SUCCESS

The deal is, you must say this out loud or write it down if you are the kind of person who loves to journal. That makes it much more real. Often, when you start taking actions that are not aligned with your vision, what has happened is that you can no longer remember 'what's in it for me?' Bringing in this practice of the daily business meeting can gently help you get back on track.

“*I regret* eating
healthily today”

- SAID NO ONE EVER





Love your body with *food*

A healthy body relies on your eating real food most of the time rather than the junk you may sometimes convince yourself is OK to get away with. Since I earlier used the analogy of driving, let's continue with that. One of the absolute basics about owning a car is that you put the right fuel in it. Sounds pretty straightforward but, according to the AA, hundreds of thousands of people misfuel every year. The result is thousands spent on unnecessary damage: new fuel tank, new fuel lines, new fuel pump, new injectors - in fact, a whole new fuel system.

What if I told you right now that the car you drive is the last one you will ever have? You can't ever have a new one - not even if it starts to go wrong - and it must last you for the rest of your life. If you absolutely knew that this would be the last vehicle that you will ever own, do you think you would take better care of it?

Why do people change their oil filters? Cars with clean oil filters run better and last longer. Why do we do frequent preventative maintenance? Isn't it because we know that it's a lot less costly to take care of the oil, the filter, and so on than it is to replace an engine or transmission, or worse, replace the entire vehicle? Well, guess what? You are in the last vehicle you will ever have in your lifetime: it's your body. So, if you don't put the right fuel in your body, you cannot expect things to run smoothly.

Love your body with *food*

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE COMPLICATED

Eating 'real food' doesn't have to be a juice cleanse, just good, honest food. Natural ingredients. Make things from scratch. It doesn't have to be fancy. Three meals a day.

Drink plenty of water, too. Your body will thank you for it.

Keep a handle on how many cups of tea and coffee you have, and watch the fizzy drinks (diet or otherwise), which add little and - in some cases - can steal your health.



KEEP A FOOD DIARY

The easiest way to keep track of what you're eating and drinking is to keep a food diary. I'm a big fan. Keeping some kind of journal, whether you like pen and paper or an app, forces you to be 100% responsible for everything you eat and drink. You cannot argue with the facts. If you have bothersome health symptoms - digestive problems, perhaps - keeping track of what you eat might help you join the dots between what you are eating and the severity of your symptoms.

“Going through life hoping other people will make you happy is like walking around in a fully stocked kitchen, never reaching for food but hoping to be fed. Reach. It is your responsibility to feed your own soul.”

NANEA HOFFMAN

Feed your *soul*

Mindset plays a huge role in your overall wellbeing and how good it feels to be you. And yet you might find that taking care of your emotional needs when life gets busy or complicated slips way down your list of priorities. It's during these exact times that practising self-care is even more essential.

Self-care is the recognition that you are entirely responsible for your own happiness (although others can, of course, contribute to it). All kinds of things might come into a good self-care plan, from doing little things for yourself every day just because they bring you joy, to deliberately seeking out the good in life and ensuring that you get enough rest.



When life feels a little tricky, or you're just feeling a little bleugh, you're not in the right space to begin thinking about what might help in the moment. That's a job you must prioritise now - it's hard to feel creative when the chips are down!

Feed your *soul*

CREATE A SELF-CARE PLAN

My coaching for you would be to begin to compile a list of all the things you might do to bring joy to your day. It must be an actual list (in a notebook or in the notes section of your phone) rather than a conceptual 'in your head' one because it will be easier to take action on any ideas written down when you're most in need of some self TLC rather than try to recall them from your memory.

What might be on your list? Pretty much anything goes, but it's important that these are not things that you do 'in order to...' Simply things that make you happy. Enjoying a cup of coffee in the garden before the rest of the house gets up, reading a chapter of a novel you've been meaning to read forever, doing a jigsaw, taking a long, luxurious dip in the bath, dancing around the kitchen, watching an episode of 'Friends'. Start with five things and keep adding to your list over time as you get into the swing of things. You're heading for 20. Consider that self-care is a skill, and it is a discipline. It may take a little time to force yourself to be a priority in your life once again, but I cannot stress enough, it is something that is really worth doing.



Feed your *soul*

PAUSE & GIVE THANKS

There's a lot of evidence to show meditating and practising gratitude really work for your general wellbeing as well as a 'treatment' for insomnia.

If you think you are not a natural meditator, you are not alone. Guided meditation is what you need. There are plenty of free or low-cost apps around that will literally guide you through the process for ten minutes. It's easier than you think, especially when you consider that there is no 'getting it wrong'. Your mind may well wander. Gently bring it back. Even the busiest of people have ten minutes for a good cause (which this is).

There's a lot to like about gratitude. Essentially, it's about training your mind to seek out the good stuff in life instead of gravitating to the bad on the basis that the brain (though complex in so many ways), cannot focus on both good and bad at the same time. And, quite simply, what you focus on increases. If you focus on the good, you will find more of it! Some people like to keep a gratitude journal where they write down the things they are grateful for every day. Some people aren't that way inclined.

A very simple way to try out gratitude is to start each day, before you've even got out of bed, by telling yourself that something truly amazing and wonderful is going to happen. It will be something unexpected, exciting and awesome.

This sets up a powerful intention for the day. Then make it your job to seek out the joy in every situation, the good fortune, the luck or the beauty and mentally comment to yourself on these. This takes a little practice, but it's worth it. Don't believe me? The only way to really know is to try...



Reset & recharge

Sleep really is a gamechanger for your health and for your emotional wellbeing. I know that you know that everything looks better when you are well rested.

The purpose of sleep is for the body and mind to rest and repair, and that process in humans takes between seven and nine hours, which is where the idea comes from that everyone should get eight hours' sleep a night. Perhaps you do, in which case I salute you, but many people don't, and there are always consequences. Your mood, creativity and tolerance are lower than they would otherwise be, and your motivation to eat well goes out of the window.

“Your future depends on
your dreams, so go to
sleep.”

MESUT BARAZANY



Reset & recharge

There will be times when sleep gets a little patchy. However, if you regularly get less than seven hours a night (and it really doesn't matter what you have convinced yourself you can get by on), really look at the impact it might be having on how that's working for you.

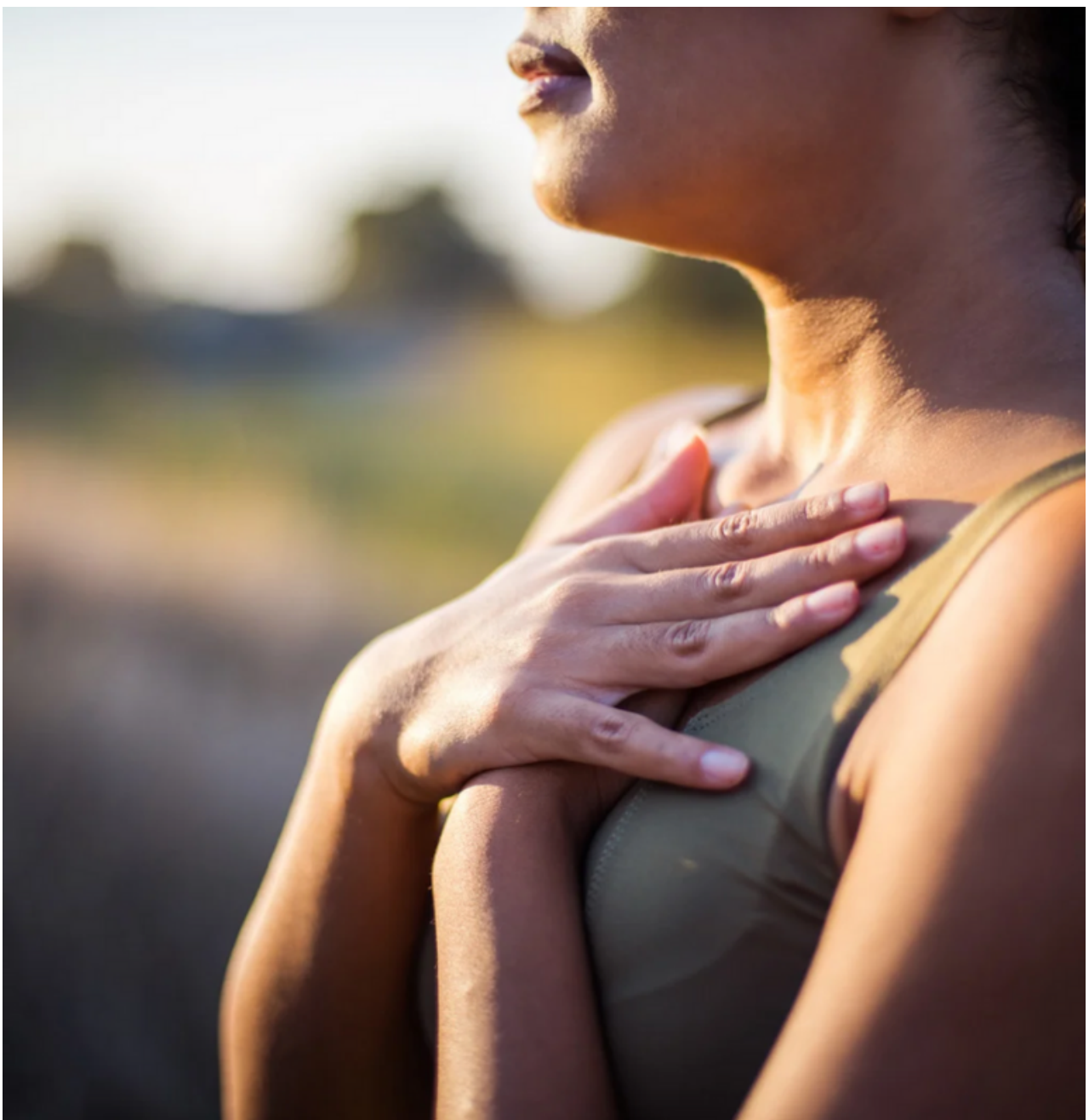
Sleep has a terrible PR and can often feel like just another thing to add to your list but - for one week - I invite you to really prioritise your sleep and throw everything you have at getting more of it. Then step back and see how you feel. Good, right?

That includes setting an unbreakable caffeine curfew by early afternoon, so those coffees can clear your system. It means finding something else to do instead of scrolling on social media 90 minutes before bed. Dimming lights in the evening and blacking out your bedroom (or at least investing in a silk sleep mask) are good ideas to help the body make more of the 'sleep hormone' melatonin.



And *Breathe...*

As the Chinese saying goes, 'if you know the art of deep breathing, you have the strength, wisdom and courage of ten tigers.' Of course, you breathe practically every second of the day, but really, I'm talking here about the magic of something called 'breathwork'. Essentially, breathwork involves any exercises that you might take on to help improve mental, physical or spiritual wellbeing. Usually, this would involve intentionally changing your breathing pattern.



Move in a way you *love*

You probably know that moving your body is good for your long-term health. It might be tempting to think that what's best for your body is pretty hardcore exercise like running or spinning - all those things people typically turn to in order to get super healthy.

That's not the case. In fact, these very intense forms of exercise can stress the body and, if your body is already stressed, it's just too much. Yoga, Pilates, Zumba and other dance-based classes are good, and don't knock a decent walking workout. Resistance/strength exercise (weights) is also good to help with the loss of muscle, particularly as you get above 40. Strength training also helps women shore up bone, maintain balance, and avoid injury - important for protecting your skeleton both now and when you're older.



Move in a way you *love*

The important thing is consistency, and you only get to be consistent if you're doing something you love. If you're someone who says, 'I don't like exercise', ask yourself 'what specifically do I not like about exercise?' Try to come up with five or six answers.

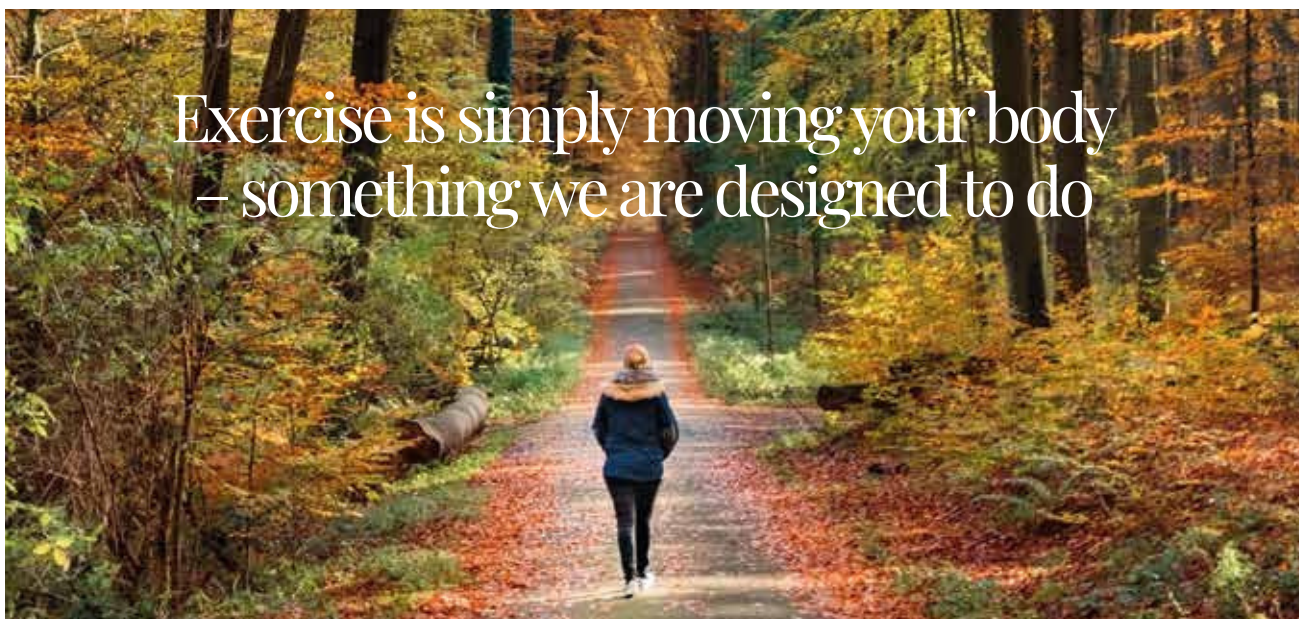
Next, consider, 'When did I stop enjoying it? What happened? What did I used to enjoy? What did I like about it then?'

You like what you are good at. If you see yourself as 'not good at' exercise you won't want to do it. What if you could wave a magic wand and suddenly be excellent at something, what would it be? What's really stopping you?

You don't have to draw the line at traditional sports. What floats your boat?

Aerobics, aqua aerobics, badminton, ballet, ballroom dancing, basketball, canoeing, Ceroc dancing, circuits, cycling, fencing, football, frisbee, gym workout, hopscotch, hiking/rambling, horse riding, ice skating, kick boxing, line dancing, netball, paddle boarding, roller blading, running club, sailing, salsa, self-defence, skiing, softball, squash, step, swimming, tai chi, tap dancing, tennis, toning class, trampolining, water skiing, walking (with or without a dog) - and more!

Think of some ideas to get your body moving. Tracking your steps and ensuring you hit your target every day helps, too!



Exercise is simply moving your body
– something we are designed to do

"The only person you
should try to be better than is
the person you were yesterday."

TONY ROBBINS



Create healthy habits *that last*

I know from working with clients that eating well and living well gets results fast. I can't say specifically how it will show up for you, but it might be that your energy levels increase, you sleep better, your skin starts to glow - or even lose a few pounds. Your friends will wonder what your new regime is! But healthy habits don't just happen overnight. They need time and persistence.

Studies have shown it takes time for a new habit to become the default choice.

Keep in mind the 3 / 6 / 36 rule:

3 weeks to break a habit.

6 weeks to create a new habit.

36 weeks for the new habit to become a default habit.

The good news is that, since habits are just a series of repetitive actions you practically do on autopilot, you can teach yourself - over time - to do something else instead.



Create healthy habits *that last*

The first job is to become aware of what needs to change. That might be too many snacks, not enough water, too much wine sneaking into the week. Instead of bowling in with 'I need to change everything immediately', often what can help is by making a micro-commitment. This is a healthy commitment so tiny that you literally cannot fail at doing it. Like drinking three glasses of water or having an extra two veggies at dinner. Just start with one thing and repeat over and over.

These micro-commitments, although small, have a huge impact over time because of psychology. The way the brain works is it loves winning at this one thing, and that encourages you to make another micro-commitment, and then another.

Do you notice how quickly time goes by? In a few months, by stealth, you will have built up a bank of successes that will move your health forward.

Breaking the bigger, really ingrained habits and having them release their grip on you takes time, persistence and the accountability to change. If you need some help, you know where I am. In the meantime, use the healthy habits tracker on the next page to select a habit you want to track and make a cross through or colour in each day you win at your new habit.



Monthly *healthy habit* tracker

HABIT

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30		

GOAL

REWARD

HABIT

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28
29	30		

GOAL

REWARD