



New year, new outlook

by Emma Symons

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a peaceful time over the holidays.

I thought I would start the year on a slightly different note and give you all something to think about until my next piece in the newsletter. We all like to make new year's resolutions; things we want to achieve, new habits we want to create, but this year how about trying to be a human being! Now, before you start yelling that you're already a human being, stop and think about it for a moment. Most of us spend all our time 'doing' and not 'being'. We become human 'doings': we create to-do lists, we have tasks and jobs that we must get finished and we always seem to have a million things on the go. Whilst there's nothing wrong with any of these things, if we forget who we need to be, it can make these tasks much more stressful.

Just for this month, instead of waking up in the morning focusing on what you need to do, try instead to focus on who you want to be. This isn't about pretending to be something you're not, it's about recognising that we all have different qualities and at different moments, it would be beneficial to intentionally bring out those qualities. For instance, do you need to be your organised, practical self to complete a project? Do you need to be your patient, compassionate self to deal with a difficult situation? Do you need to be your calm, efficient self to manage a busy day? By deciding to bring out who you really need to be, you may find that what you need to do gets done far more easily and with much less stress.

When we decide to be a certain way and believe in our abilities, we can accomplish far more than when we rush headlong into tasks without stopping to think about how we're going to deal with them.

I have included a card from my meditation inspiration deck to give you a daily mantra to help you. If you meditate then you can print the image and use it as a focus for your meditation practice, and if you don't, you can repeat the phrase in the morning while deciding who you want to be, or at any time of the day to give you an extra boost of confidence. Neuroscientists have proven that repeating a mantra regularly positively affects your brain chemistry.



NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

Tips for keeping a new year's resolution

Research and personal experience tell us that January is the time for looking ahead, for resetting and for setting out goals for the coming year. Research also tells us that even with the very best of intentions, many of us fall at the first hurdle! So how can we stay on track with our good intentions, be they big or small, as the challenges stack up against us? Consider these simple pointers and hopefully at the end of the month you'll look back and celebrate your success:

Set goals – but make the achievable:

You may want to get fitter this year? A fantastic goal, but keep it achievable so you can celebrate small wins rather than mourn falling off the wagon. Rather than setting out to run four times a week, set a plan such as Couch to 5k with an achievable deadline.

Start with small steps:

Perhaps losing a few pounds is a focus? Rather than go straight from indulgence over the Christmas period to cold turkey, slowly try to introduce healthier habits. Cut down as opposed to completely cutting out alcohol. In week one, introduce more fruit and veg to your diet, week two, cut down on red meats. Don't attempt to do it all at the same time or it will be overwhelming and frankly miserable, and you'll most likely start to deviate.

Avoid repeating past failures:

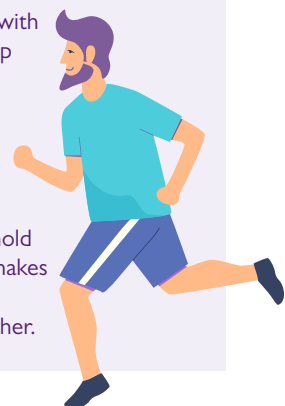
Tried dry January last year and succumbed on weekend one? Don't beat yourself up by trying again this year as you'll most likely end up thinking you've already tried and failed, so why should this time be any different? Considering altering your resolution to make it more achievable – maybe a compromise; don't drink Monday to Thursday, then reward yourself on Friday and /or Saturday – just don't overdo it!

Remember change is a process:

It's not a race to the goal. Those unhealthy or unwanted habits you're trying to change probably took years to develop, so you can't reasonably expect to change them in just a month. Be patient with yourself and be kind. If you take a misstep don't just give in, restart and continue on your journey towards your goal.

Get support:

The age-old cliché, but some things are easier done with the support of a friend; be that a jogging buddy or someone to hold you accountable and motivated. It also makes it more fun, so enlist a friend, partner or family member and set some goals together.



January Nutrition with Elaine



As we all know, January can be a bit of a struggle what with colder weather setting in and generally feeling a bit below par after the festivities of December. An anti-inflammatory diet can have great health benefits which can prevent viruses, joint pain/arthritis, headaches, helps with asthma and can also improve your mood depending on what foods you eat. Inflammation and stress are connected so healthier, more colourful foods consumed, can improve low mood/depression/tiredness.

Fruits and vegetables

Eat high in colour such as apricots, berries, oranges and mango to add sweetness to your food as opposed to choosing foods high in artificial sugar.

Broccoli, spinach, red cabbage and Brussel sprouts all have powerful anti-oxidants to help fight inflammation.

Spices

Ginger, cinnamon, turmeric and chilli powder add colour and flavour to savoury dishes and the majority of these spices have antibacterial properties – these can also replace salt.

Healthy fats

Extra virgin olive oil, avocados, fatty fish and brazil nuts all fight inflammation.

Foods that cause inflammation are unfortunately the naughty/nice foods high in saturated fat such as ice cream, crisps, fast food, cakes and biscuits. Try and reduce these and you will see your mood improve and also lose some unwanted pounds which you may have consumed over the Christmas period.

Mineral of the Month... Selenium

Selenium is an essential mineral but is only required in small quantities. Here are some health benefits of why we should include selenium in our diets:

- It's great for asthma sufferers as selenium lowers the amount of inflammation in the lungs
- It boosts our immune system – reducing oxidative stress in the body
- It's important for thyroid function and produces hormones to enable this gland to work properly
- It improves memory loss – some studies have shown that one brazil nut a day improves verbal fluency with patients who have dementia

Great sources of selenium are brazil nuts, eggs, sardines, chicken breast, sunflower seeds and oysters.

Happiness chemicals

There are four types of happy chemicals – try and do the following for a positive start to 2022.

Dopamine – this chemical is caused by completing a task. This could be something simple like performing a random act of kindness, rewarding someone for an achievement or self-care activities such as having a massage or yoga.

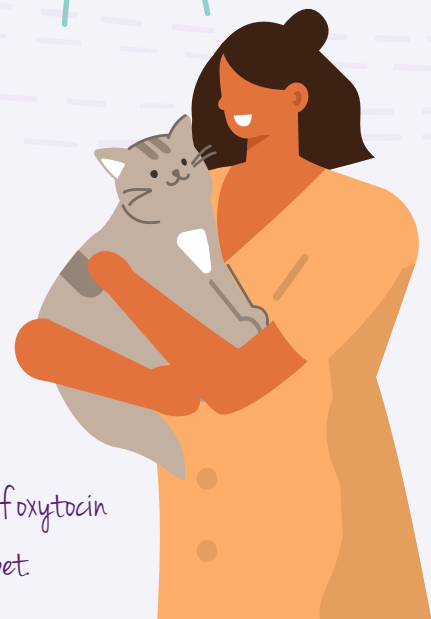
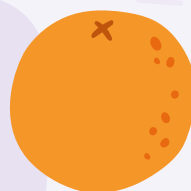
Endorphins – endorphins are released when we watch a funny film/laughing with friends, exercise and dancing – easy to produce whilst having fun too!

Oxytocin – this chemical occurs when you stroke a pet, give somebody a cuddle or give a compliment.

Serotonin – take a run in the fields, lay in the winter sun and try simple meditation.



"I think in terms of day's resolutions, not the years!"
Henry Moore



Get your top up of oxytocin by stroking your pet.