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## Section 1

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# Survival

Getting the Basics Right

Are You Waving or Drowning?



## Day 1

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# Begin and end with gratitude

You don't have to see the whole staircase –  
just take the first step.

**Martin Luther King**

Perhaps the most fundamental element to get right in life is our ability to experience love and feel gratitude, so it seems appropriate to start right there. Why is gratitude so important? Feeling grateful for all that we are and have is deeply satisfying and enriching. It also reduces feelings such as inadequacy, envy and frustration which are the usual stumbling blocks to reaching our full potential. Plus it aids acceptance of other people and their situations, and thereby creates greater empathy.

We will introduce a simple but effective exercise that is designed to top and tail each day. This exercise will, over time, reduce negative thoughts, aid clarity, increase a sense of contentment and lead to greater inner peace.

Today's exercise

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## Wake up with gratitude

Take a few moments, just as you wake up, to immediately 'catch your mind' and think about a person, a place, a song or an activity that you love. Stay with the thought, elaborate on the visualisation and really go into it until you experience a sensation of love; then set your intention to go into your day with that loving feeling. It may not last all day but the fact that you did it first thing becomes a habit and has an accumulative effect.

It is also important to round up the day's events and experiences and to clear your mind for that all-important sleep to have its full regenerative effect. Before going to sleep, lie down flat on your back and relax (in bed or on the floor). Gently rest your hands by your side or on your chest, whichever feels right. Now start to run a list in your head of all the things you are grateful for. Start with yourself, including your body, mind, soul, achievements and so on. Move on to all your relationships, experiences, comforts and joys. Imagine that you gently hold all this gratitude in your heart and set your intention to wake up the next day and be even more grateful for all your gifts.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◊ Exercises throughout the book  
Wake up with gratitude

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## Day 2

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# Wake up your body

A healthy mind in a healthy body.

### **Buddhist proverb**

**W**e all know that it's advisable to look after our bodies, yet it can seem impossible to prioritise the time and the space needed to do so. If we eat unhealthily and refrain from exercising or taking adequate rest there is a risk of a build-up of toxins in the system. In time this can lead to disease. Traditional Western ideas, both scientific and religious, have in some ways led to the belief of a separation between the physical body and mental and emotional activities. This can make it difficult to appreciate to what extent general mental and emotional health can impact the physical body, and vice versa.

The body is full of sensory centres that make it possible for us to experience feelings of love, contentment, ecstasy, pain and so on. Toxins left in the body can start to consume vital energy and clog the system. When our energy is low we may become less focused, attentive, open-minded or thoughtful – less aware of and in touch with our feelings. Furthermore, various additives in foods can create chemical imbalances in the body so that physical ailments as well as mood swings and depressive symptoms may ensue. The more toxins are eliminated, the greater our ability to feel energised, alert and relaxed.

As well as causing harm by neglecting our bodies physically, maintaining a negative body image can also be very destructive. This may stem from a variety of sources, such as pressure from popular culture, religious beliefs, traumatic personal experience and so on. An essential element of personal development is to fully accept who we are. A negative body image equates to a lack of self-acceptance which can hinder personal growth. These are extremely personal topics and can be very deep-seated.

The process of investigation and the consequent discovering and demystifying of those beliefs can be painful but ultimately hugely freeing and rewarding.

## Today's exercise

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### Exercise and eating diary

Do you accept the mind–body connection or are you rejecting it? If so, why? What are your reservations or fears? What is your body image? Are you dragging around negative ideas about your body? How can you celebrate and be grateful for the health and the body that you have?

Starting today, keep a food and exercise journal for the next ten days. Where are your blind spots? Are you getting adequate rest or are you always doing something? Do you eat a lot of junk food that is potentially clogging your system?

Commit to changing at least one bad habit regarding your diet, exercise and rest. Commit to working on gratitude for your body and an improved body image.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Exercise and eating diary                      Wake up with gratitude

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## Day 3

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# Knowing a habit when you see one

Failure is an attitude, not an outcome.

**Harvey Mackay**

**H**ow do we recognise our habits? How do we determine if they are good or bad? Habits are repetitive behavioural patterns that can be useful if they cut the delivery time of a certain positive result, or they can be negative if they stop us from developing and growing by keeping us stuck in the same rut and leading to destructive behaviours towards ourselves and others.

A lot of people report that they simply don't know why they react a certain way in a given situation. Indeed, they may not even be aware of how they are responding and how it affects those around them. Often the reason is a lack of understanding of the underlying emotion from which the behaviour stems. This is how bad habits are created. The emotion or impulse comes first, the behaviour second.

By observing our reactions and taking note of them we can start to explore what our emotional triggers are – the people, events and situations that create strong reactions in us. These powerful emotional responses lead to behavioural patterns or habits, so by understanding the trigger we are getting to the root of what is causing the habit and can thereby change it.

## Mood diary

Make a list of all the bad habits you feel you currently have.

Start keeping a journal or make a note below on a daily basis for the duration of this section of what your moods are and how they shift during the day. Record if your emotions are fluctuating depending on what you eat and drink – especially in relation to red meat, refined sugar, lack of water, alcohol and prescription or street drugs.

Start to be observant of your body language. This will provide you with clues on how you might feel about a person or situation. Are you closing yourself off? Holding yourself back or tensing up? Covering your mouth and not speaking out? Getting a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach? Are you lashing out, losing patience, reaching for the biscuit tin or engaging in some other deflective behaviour?

In the evening, take a few moments to reflect – retrace your steps and look at what situations you found yourself in when the mood set in. By doing this you will soon discover which situations, places and people affect you in particular ways. After a while you will start to see patterns.

Review your bad habits list and match it to your mood patterns. Try to see if there is any correlation between the people and situations you have identified as bothering you and any ensuing reactive, negative behaviour or bad habits.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Exercise and eating diary		Wake up with gratitude
Mood diary		

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## Day 4

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# Choosing the habits that you want

We first make our habits, then our habits make us.

**John Dryden**

**W**e define a ‘good habit’ as a behavioural response that gets the desired result quicker, more effortlessly and with a positive, constructive effect on ourselves and our environment. As discussed above, by understanding our emotional triggers we are getting to the root of what may be causing the habit and we can thereby change it or choose it.

The next step from yesterday’s exercise is therefore to *remember* how certain situations affect you and thus be prepared beforehand. The journal-keeping is essential in this process. Magic happens when the emotional states are no longer ‘surprises’ – they start to lose their power, thereby making it easier to control the ensuing behavioural reaction. Think of the old adage ‘forewarned is forearmed’. For example, if you know a certain colleague always rubs you up the wrong way in meetings, and if you are mindful of that before you go in, it won’t come as a surprise and you can control your response to that person.

Over time, situations and people will be easier to handle and eventually you might even be able to see something positive in a previously difficult situation. How? By experiencing the transition, you will have learnt how to neutralise a negative situation. Once you’ve done this in one instance you can replicate the process: analyse your emotional response, be prepared, diffuse the negative reaction, then choose a positive behavioural response. This will make you feel more empowered and less like a victim of circumstances that are seemingly beyond your control – a habit well worth developing!



## Day 5

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# Manage your mind

Whether you think you can or whether  
you think you can't, you're right!

**Henry Ford**

**M**editation is the activity of learning how to manage the mind so that incessant and negative thought patterns abate. Meditation is not about sitting still and doing nothing. It requires technique and practice but the rewards are immeasurable. In time, regular meditation practice can begin to permeate all areas of life and we start to feel more present, connected and peaceful – which can make acceptance, forgiveness and personal achievement easier to master. This is what Buddhists call meditation in action, or mindfulness.

Today's exercise

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## Meditation

### Prepare the space

Choose a space in your house where you will not be disturbed by anyone, including the phone. Ideally the space should be clean and clutter-free. Perhaps you would like to enhance the atmosphere with candles, incense, flowers or an inspiring picture – anything that encourages calm and connectedness in you.

The ritual of clearing the space and decorating it as you wish provides a preparation for the practice. It calms the mind and

sets your intention, which is to focus actively on meditation. According to many Eastern philosophies (e.g. Buddhism, Feng Shui, Taoism) the energy of the space is very important and will have a direct impact on the depth of your practice.

## Sitting posture

Once your space is ready, sit down in a cross-legged position, gently resting your hands on your knees. Make sure your shoulders and jaw are relaxed and your back is straight. Use a cushion under the buttocks to relieve tension in the knees and hips if necessary. Relax your face and gently close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths and become aware of your body. Put your focus on any areas of tension or aches and breathe deeply with the intention of relieving it.

## Breathing

Once you have settled in more comfortably, bring your attention to your breath. Breathe in through the nose and out through the mouth (though the nose is OK too). Count to three on the in-breath and three on the out-breath. Continue for ten breaths, then relax and breathe normally for ten breaths.

Repeat the cycle four times. After that, sit quietly, breathe normally and focus on the breath. Your mind may wander off as thoughts pop into your head. Gently bring your attention back to the breath. Do not get frustrated if the mind keeps wandering – this is normal and will stop with time. As soon as you feel yourself getting tired of focusing on deep breathing, just breathe normally and observe each breath, in and out.

For the first week do this meditation as often as you like but ideally at least once a day in the morning. Try to sit for a minimum of twenty minutes. As the breathing exercise becomes more comfortable you can experiment with longer counts on the

in- and out-breaths. Just make sure you don't get light-headed – this is not an endurance test! The aim is to calm the mind, lower your blood pressure and relieve tensions.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Exercise and eating diary                      Wake up with gratitude  
Mood diary    Meditation

## Day 6

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# Just do it!

Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration.

**Thomas Edison**

**F**or the past few days we have looked at how to develop and grow intuitively (gratitude), physically (wake up your body), emotionally (habits) and mentally (manage your mind). Carl Jung called these ideas the four basic intelligences or modes of interacting with the world. The most important thing of all is now to 'walk the walk', so today is all about just doing it! Go back and review the exercises from the last few days and make sure you are actually doing them. Reading about them will provide you with ideas and insights, but real change comes from taking action. Life is a constant spiral of opportunities, action and learning. Start twirling!

Today's exercise

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## Take action

Today is all about action. Try not to think too long and hard – take action instead. How does it feel to leap into something? Do you do that often and then think about what you did afterwards? Or do you tend to ponder and perhaps arrive too late to the party? Make a note in your journal of what you feel is your default mode, but for today practise not thinking too much but taking action instead; always of course with a loving and considerate intention – we are not advocating rash and thoughtless behaviour. Just have the experience of being daring.

Today's exercise: Take action

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Exercise and eating diary      Wake up with gratitude  
Mood diary      Meditation

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## Day 7

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# Build confidence, not arrogance

To thine own self be true.

*Hamlet, I, iii*

Confidence is quiet, consistent, discerning and thoughtful; arrogance is loud, erratic, non-discriminatory and selfish. Confidence does not require praise or attention; arrogance screams 'look at me'. Let's not worry about confidence – it takes care of itself. Arrogance, on the other hand, needs some work.

Arrogance is a mask for underlying insecurity. Just as before when we suggested that habits emanate from deep-seated emotions, so too does arrogance. In order to deal with it and convert it into confidence it is therefore essential to locate the insecurities that underpin it.

Self-love can be one of the hardest qualities to develop but it's an essential ingredient of confidence. Arrogance often comes from self-loathing or lack of self-respect. We love that which we look after and respect, including ourselves. The way to build true self-confidence is therefore to ask 'Do I love myself or loathe myself?'

### Today's exercise

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## Self-love

Find a quiet moment, perhaps after your morning meditation or with your evening journal. Make a list using two columns: in

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the first one describe what you loathe about yourself (note: we are deliberately using a strong word here; this is about absolute honesty, not being politically correct with yourself) and in the second column, what you love about yourself.

Whatever feelings come up for you as you are doing this *allow yourself to feel them* – don't censor yourself. Cry if you want to; laugh at yourself if that feels right. This can be a very cathartic experience. Once you have uncovered what is lurking in your mind you can deal with it.

Later on in the book we will look at the act of forgiveness (Day 72) and give you exercises to be used to revisit this list and deal with the 'loathes'. For now, vow to start loving and respecting yourself. When you go to bed tonight make sure you revisit the gratitude exercise from Day 1 and include in your list all the things you love about yourself.

Today's exercise: Self-love

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Exercise and eating diary      Wake up with gratitude  
Mood diary                              Meditation

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## Day 8

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# Stopping is not quitting, you are just taking a breath

You can live for two months without food and two weeks without water but only a few minutes without air.

**Hung Yi-hsiang**

**A**s far as our physical priorities go, breathing is one most people take for granted and don't even think about. According to Daniel Reid (2003) regular, deep breathing gives an immediate boost to the circulation, parasympathetic nervous system, immune system and other vital functions; not least of all is lowering blood pressure. It is essential to breathe properly not only for survival but to ensure health and longevity.

Deep breathing comes from the diaphragm. Watch a baby or child sleeping and see how their bellies gently rise with every in-breath. That is correct diaphragmatic breathing. Most adults tend to carry tension in this area, so instead take shallower, higher breaths by raising their shoulders to their ears. During stress and emotional pressure, muscles tense up, thereby making breathing shallower still. The system thinks it is in fight-or-flight mode and releases stress hormones. The parasympathetic nervous system, which is the natural healing process, is taken out of action. Conversely, when we want to calm down, deepening our breath relaxes the system, taking us out of fight-or-flight mode.

## Deep breathing practice

Lie flat on the floor with your legs comfortably bent, knees up and feet flat on the floor. Relax all tension in the shoulders, stomach, jaw and pelvis. Place one hand on your tummy and for every in-breath expand the stomach out; on every out-breath relax the stomach and let it fall back again. Repeat ten times. Relax.

Now sit up and do the same exercise. Pay attention to your shoulders so that they don't start to rise up (raising the shoulders is harder to do on the floor, but if you're sitting up bad habits can creep back in).

Once you have mastered the relaxed, diaphragmatic breathing lying and sitting, try it standing and also walking around.

Repeat this exercise over the next few days. Start monitoring how you feel emotionally after the ten deep breaths. You are hopefully feeling calmer and more focused.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Exercise and eating diary		Wake up with gratitude
Mood diary		Meditation
Deep breathing practice		

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## Day 9

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# This is your life

Your vision will become clear only when you  
look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams.  
Who looks inside, awakens.

**Carl Jung**

**T**oday we are putting a mirror up in front of you and asking: 'Is this what you want?' Are you living the life you want to live? If yes, are you celebrating that? If no, what are you doing about it and what are you waiting for? Do you think you are in rehearsal for your 'real' life? In that case, when does that real life actually begin? Whatever your spiritual beliefs may be, for the purposes of this discussion we are using the premise that this is the one shot you get, so what are you going to do with it?

Today's exercise

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## Wake up with vision

The first thing we want you to do is to remind yourself of the gratitude exercise we started on Day 1. Think about what it is you truly love; get into that loving feeling and feel really grateful to be alive. Consider how you can be more loving towards yourself and your surroundings.

Then move on to thinking about what you truly want that you do not yet have. Make sure however that none of your desires are at the expense of anyone else – there is no room for envy or jealousy in visualising your fully realised life!

Make your vision come alive: Is it seeing yourself as a more loving and generous person? How does that look? Is it owning a new house? If so, where is it, how big is it, does it have a garden, a fireplace? Is it being with a loving partner? Be clear about them – what are their qualities and attributes? Write down these dreams in your journal or below.

When the vision is strong, return to your feeling of gratitude and feel grateful that you *already have* what you just visualised, as if it had already happened.

Let these visions work their way into your daily gratitude practice. By repeating this vision daily, making it stronger and more alive, you are reaffirming your focus and intention and you are starting to make it happen. Later on in this book we will look at creating proactive and realistic goals which will serve as stepping stones to the manifestation of your vision. Action follows thought.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Exercise and eating diary		Wake up with gratitude and vision
Mood diary		Meditation
Deep breathing practice		

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## Day 10

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# Recognition and reward

The price of freedom is insecurity,  
but security is often an illusion.

**Lesley Garner**

There is a lot of conditioning in society that tells us not to stand out from the crowd or to think we're special. Over time, this can lead to a lack of self-belief and ultimately the relinquishing of possibly the most unique aspect of being human: the ability to reflect and marvel on life in its infinite variety. But guess what? *We are* totally special. There is no one human being that is exactly the same as another. Each one of us deserves the same marvel and wonderment that all of life deserves.

Your undisputed number one fan has to be you; not in a selfish, ego-centred way but in a loving way, full of gratitude and a sense of achievement. It is wise to have a well-functioning system for self-caring, nurturing and pampering that we regularly check in with. If we wait for others to tell us that we are good or worthy we are handing over a lot of power and also losing the ability to be proactive. *We* decide when we are great. By practising loving kindness on ourselves, we also become better at being loving and kind to others.

Today's exercise

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## Treat yourself

Revisit your list from Day 7 on what you love about yourself. Make a new list of all the things you love to treat yourself to,

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large or small – anything from chocolate cake to a holiday. Reflect on where, when and how you will get these treats. Start with the small ones and go out now and do it. For the larger ones, start formulating a plan for how they can happen. Take some concrete action today such as searching online for flights or blocking off time in your diary for a break.

Today's exercise: Treat yourself

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Exercise and eating diary		Wake up with gratitude and vision
Mood diary		Meditation
Deep breathing practice		

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## Day 11

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# Stop!

The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.

**Oscar Wilde**

If you have followed this book from Day 1 and done the exercises on a daily basis (which of course you have!), chances are today you are feeling a little raw, a little fragile. So far, we have stirred the pot vigorously. After all, it's survival we are talking about – not of the fittest, but of you becoming the fittest you can be, the best possible version of yourself. Today is therefore about gently relaxing and letting the experiences settle. Today is a 'do nothing day'. Don't ponder too hard, don't touch your journal, eat what you want, have a lie-in, spend time with your loved ones, watch some trashy TV ... You're not quitting, just taking a deep, relaxing breath.

Today's exercise

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**Today make time to indulge yourself  
and do absolutely nothing!**

## Day 12

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# Listen to your voice

It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.

**Ursula K. Le Guin**

**H**ow have you been getting on with your meditations? Is there still a cacophony of voices in your head when you sit down and try to concentrate? Which one should you listen to? The answer is your deeper, intuitive self, the soul voice, your heart. However you want to imagine it, it is that deeper sense of *knowing* something to be true rather than actually *hearing* it.

The way to develop this ability is to go deeper into your meditations. This is a further exploration of mindfulness which we introduced on Day 5. What you are developing is an ability to start observing yourself. Think of it as if you are standing slightly behind yourself and looking over your shoulder and thinking ‘Aha! So I am meditating, and here comes a thought but I will let go of that ...’ and so on. You are starting to single out that one voice you really want to hear and letting the others fade into the background.

This is quite advanced meditation practice and you might not ‘catch the wave’ immediately, so do not feel discouraged. We are introducing it fairly early on in the process despite its complexity as this is an invaluable tool for self-knowledge, and for many it can have a powerful impact on daily life.

## Deepen your meditation

Start your meditation by focusing on your breathing. Once you have calmed your mind and feel focused on the breath imagine you are a wind gently blowing across a peaceful landscape. You gently move over mountains, rivers and forests. You see them as you pass by but you do not linger, you gently move on. The idea is that the wind represents your mind, relaxed and free, and each part of the passing landscape represents the thoughts that pop into your head.

As soon as you feel yourself getting tired or unable to retain the image in your mind, just relax and go back to your breathing. When you are ready, recall the image of the wind and landscape and muse on this image as a representation of your inner voice and the landscape as the shifting thoughts that move in and out. The wind is ever present, gently in the background, while the landscape shifts. Start feeling the difference between the two.

Conclude your meditation by saying a word of thanks for this moment of calm and connectedness and set your intention to maintain this state of peacefulness throughout your day. Whenever you feel yourself getting caught up with thoughts racing around the mind, recall the image of the wind and the landscape and go within and try to listen to that calmer, deeper voice. Take a few deep breaths as you are visualising.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Exercise and eating diary		Wake up with gratitude and vision
Mood diary		Deepened meditation
Deep breathing practice		

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## Day 13

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# Preparing for the next stage

Being defeated is often a temporary condition.  
Giving up is what makes it permanent.

**Marilyn vos Savant**

**Y**ou have completed the first of the eight stages we described in the introduction. You are at the end which is simultaneously the beginning. The start had to be about survival of the 'I'; going deep, addressing the habits and starting to eliminate the blockages that may have been there. It has been about finding a deeper, truer voice and acknowledging your needs and abilities. But you do not of course exist in isolation. Now that the 'I' has been reviewed and is on the path to deeper self-knowledge, the scope can widen. The camera is panned back. Now the 'I' has to look at the 'we', and identify the tribe. The challenge is not to lose this sense of 'I' or to get too stuck in its self-centred realm. Striking that balance is the key.

Today's exercise

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## I vs. we

Ponder how a balance can be struck between my individual needs and the needs of those around me. Who is dependent on me? Who do I depend on for love, work, life? How can a gentle hold of my sense of self help others to achieve balance and inspiration? How can I retain the excitement and keep celebrating myself while positively impacting others?

Today's exercise: I vs. we

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Exercise and eating diary		Wake up with gratitude and vision
Mood diary		Deepened meditation
Deep breathing practice		

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## Section 2

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# Tribal

**Who Are My people? Do I Make a Positive Impact On Those Around Me?**



## Day 14

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# My place in the family tribe ...

Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family.  
Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.

**Jane Howard**

**W**ho your tribe are and what your relationship is with each of them is crucial to any successful venture. Many of us find ourselves working in close quarters with people we did not necessarily choose to be with. These may be our blood relatives – those people we love dearly but sometimes find more frustrating than we can express. Or we may have the daily challenge of engaging (or not) with our work colleagues. Whatever your tribe is, you need to be able to understand their reason for being part of it, while they need to have some idea of why you are there.

At best a family can be the source of energy and passion to go out into the world and make a difference. At its worst it can cause us to question our role and function in the world. This tribal-induced anxiety can prevent us from awakening to and achieving our goals and purpose in life.

Knowing our place does not necessarily mean understanding our role in the pecking order, although this does have some value. Older members of the tribe often need to feel that their experience and years are valued and welcomed. If you are fresh to a team, especially if you are a new leader, the last thing you should do – if you want to have any hope of full engagement, support and success from your team – is disregard their past and pay no heed to their traditions, rituals and hierarchies. You may not understand, agree or give value to their past, but they do.

To understand the place where you find yourself you need to have a benchmark of feedback from those that know you or need to know you. As in all tribal traditions, the starting point of understanding who we are in relationship to who we are with is to listen to and tell stories that move, interest or celebrate.

### Today's exercise

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## Time with each tribe member

This is a simple yet powerful exercise which draws on the dialoguing (rather than the debating) traditions of our ancient past. Find time to sit for an hour with each member of the tribe – this could be family or work colleagues. Some of you will already be throwing up your arms in frustration at this idea: How on earth are you going to fit in an hour with each of your tribe? There are two things to bear in mind: (1) don't confuse the tribe (small, tight-knit team) with the community (those people that the tribe serve, support or collaborate with) and (2) finding a few hours early on can save days, if not weeks or months (possibly years), of life-sapping aggravation and conflict later on.

Ask them their story. What made them want to be part of this tribe? Tell them your story. Explain why you need the tribe. Seek their guidance. How can you best serve the tribe? Once you have listened and spoken then the ground has been broken and the work of planting can begin.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Time with each tribe member		Wake up with gratitude and vision Meditation

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## Day 15

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# What I learn from key people: Positive and negative traits

If you can't be a good example, then you'll just  
have to serve as a horrible warning.

**Catherine Aird**

**T**here is an apocryphal story of twin brothers born in the United States in the 1950s. Their father was an abusive, alcoholic, womanising thug who spent his life involved in violent crime. He ended up on death row after being caught and convicted for a series of horrendous offences. One of the brothers followed his example into a world of criminality, addiction, drugs and all the associated demons and destruction that go with such a life. The other twin worked hard at his education, despite his lack of family support. He went on to lead a very successful life as a family man and pillar of his local community. When the brothers were asked why they had turned out as they had they both gave the same reply: 'With a father like mine, I had no choice.'

What this story highlights is that there is always a choice. While we may feel that we have no alternative, in a very real way, *we* decide if we have choice or not. It is about our perception of our power to act, rather than our inability to engage. When it comes to defining our values we are of course influenced by those close to us. As children we just accept this but as we get older we can question the opinions and ideas we have inherited. We have to challenge these ideas so that we can move forward in our lives standing on a foundation of values and understandings that are true for us and not just habitual.

The following exercise is about raising your awareness of the choices you make to a very conscious level. Much of what we say

can be a quick response to the immediate stimuli of where we are and who we are with. It is this dynamic relationship between who we are, where we are and who we are with that can lead us sometimes to act first and think later.

## Today's exercise

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### Three-second rule

Choose a period of time (a minimum of five minutes but it could be much longer) when you know that you are going to be in conversation with other people and play a game called the 'three-second rule'. Before you respond to a question think for three seconds before replying. See how this space impacts your response. If people comment on your low-gear interaction, you could explain the exercise and they could join in (depending on how well you know them). In most cases, people will not comment other than to express their gratitude and admiration that you are such a good listener.

Today's exercise: Three-second rule

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation

## Day 16

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# Working with colleagues

If you befriend someone, but lack the courage to correct them, you are, in fact, their enemy.

### Japanese proverb

If you have never had a disagreement or confrontation with a colleague in your organisation, group, school or business then you're obviously blessed enough to be working in a perfect palace of productivity. But perhaps it feels more like a brooding cauldron of frustration, resentment and fear. Often we sacrifice ideas, innovation and evolution for a quiet life. Our sometimes overwhelming desire to be part of the tribe denies our individual need to express and explore ideas. We are talking about striking the right balance, of course, as neither an apologetic, compliant mouse of a person or an arrogant, self-opinionated bully are going to be useful to the tribe.

While the intention to maintain calm and order within the group is of great value, the danger is that you can end up with so many elephants in the room it becomes stifling just to be there. Sometimes someone has to point at the elephant. Here is the challenge to the tribe: Who will be the first person to point the finger?

The moment you highlight an inconvenient truth you begin the inevitable emotional chain of reaction from others, which will vary from the closed 'fight' (become defensive), 'flight' (refuse to stay and 'listen to this rubbish'), 'freeze' (become unable to think and speak rationally) and 'flock' (go to other members of the tribe that are close to them and plot, bitch and seek reassurance that they are right in word and deed). The opposite end of this spectrum is the uncorking of all the repressed feelings that have been stored away with an outpouring of emotion that

is disproportionate to the situation. These extreme reactions, however justified, are rarely helpful.

There is no way out of the need from time to time to challenge the actions or comments of others. It does not mean that you are seeking to attack them, although this may be how they feel. As the proverb above highlights, it is only through challenging our own anxiety about what might happen in the future that we are able to take action to deal with the realities of the present.

## Today's exercise

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### Conflict resolution

If you want to address an issue with someone, use the following steps to manage the situation:

**When you say** – tell them what it is that they have done, identify the behaviour.

**I feel** – express dispassionately how you feel without apportioning blame (i.e. not 'You *make me* feel ...').

**Because** – give a logical reason or example of why you feel as you do. It might be that you need to highlight or draw attention to agreements that have been broken or the impact their actions are having on others or the project you are involved in.

**What can we/I/you do** – give them a way out. You are not seeking to escalate a problem but to resolve a conflict.

If they challenge you, then go back to step one and start again:

When you say ... I am being over-sensitive.

I feel ... angry and frustrated.

Because ... I do not want this situation to continue as people are suffering.

What can we do ... or when would be a better time to talk?

In most cases, people respond constructively to this logical and emotionally balanced approach. If not, then your best bet is to find the person in the tribe who they will listen to and ask them for their help.

N.B. If you can only get to the first two steps of the model (When you say/I feel) and can give no rational reason (Because), then it is your issue, not theirs.

Today's exercise: Conflict resolution

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Time with each tribe member		Wake up with gratitude and vision Meditation

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# Do I have trust in others?

Techniques and technologies are important,  
but trust is the issue of the decade.

**Tom Peters**

**M**anagement and leadership guru Tom Peters made this statement in the nineties when the world was beginning to be swept along with technological advances that would have seemed like science fiction only a decade before. From momentous breakthroughs in the understanding and application of the Internet to home computing to gigantic leaps forward in medical science and media hype, the nineties was the decade that marked the arrival of a new generation of working, living and learning.

In the midst of this frenzy to be early adopters and investors in the next big idea Tom Peters was a voice of reason. Of course, he was up there with the best of them advocating the potential of all of this new gadgetry but he was also warning not to forget the basic principles of any strong team. Namely, do not let your enthusiasm for the brave new world of the future lead you to disregard the traditions of the past that brought you to this point. Indeed, it is only by keeping such basic human values close to our decision-making and future plans that we can maintain our healthy growth as organisations and individuals within those organisations. Remember the dot-com collapse?

So, as the question for today asks, do you have trust in others? We are going to consider if others have faith in you later on in the book, but today is the day you begin to discover if you trust other people.

## Building trust

This exercise is designed for the workplace but can easily be adapted to any environment where you engage with others and want to build greater levels of trust. This is a particularly good one for parents seeking to build greater independence and trust with teenage children.

Choose one person that you live with, line manage or are collaborating with professionally or personally – anyone, in fact, that you want to show that you trust and value (you can do this for more than one person if you feel up for the challenge). Agree something that needs to be done and what their role is in achieving the goal, target or task. Clarify the desired outcomes, time scale and support (materials, costs, expertise, etc.) that they need. Agree a date and time when they are going to feed back. Let them know that you are there for them to talk to if need be, but you trust them to do what they have agreed to do. Ask them if they have any questions or concerns and then wait for them to feed back to you. Do not send them an email, constantly bring it up every time you see them or ask someone else to check up on them on your behalf.

Note your own emotional or habitual tendencies to repeat the instruction, complete their sentences, do it for them or interfere. Yes, they may make a mistake or not do it exactly like you would do but that means they are learning to manage this on their own. As long as you have agreed the parameters (what, when, how, who, etc.) and made it clear that you trust them to do it, the outcomes will be better than you had planned, simply because you trusted in the intelligence and creativity of someone else.

Today's exercise: Building trust

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation

## Day 18

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# Should I stay or should I go?

A fear of the unknown keeps a lot of people from leaving bad situations.

**Kathie Lee Gifford**

The head teacher of a school has helped turn it around from being a failing institution to an outstanding one. She has achieved this in just a few years, despite the fact that one or two people in the school had made it clear that she was not part of the tribe, and never would be.

The school is in a small English town and a core of the staff had been educated there; they left only to go to university or teacher-training college, then returned to the area to work back at the school. Over the years this core group had made newcomers (other staff members and head teachers) feel so unwelcome that they didn't stay longer than a couple of years. Small daily exclusions from informal meetings, lunchtime chats or after-school social events made it clear to those that were not able to engage in the rituals and values of the older tribal members that they would never be part of the team.

This may sound petty but when there are eight people in a staff-room and teas and coffees are made for only seven, the pain and discomfort the excluded person feels can be huge. Imagine this and related actions occurring in some form every day. How would you feel? The impact on this head teacher has been painful. While on the outside she is determined to do the best for the children and staff – even those that interpret her actions as an attack on them (see Day 16 for more on this) – it has had a devastating impact on her physical and emotional health.

When she was describing all the things she had done to seek to engage staff in activities to support the children and school, it

was obvious that she'd had to battle daily to keep the school progressing. She is mentally exhausted, physically ill, emotionally drained and spiritually lost. She has tried dialogue and debate and given clear rationale and examples of best practice. She has trusted, challenged and made sure there were no elephants in the room. However, at the time of writing, there is an outing planned for all the teaching staff which has been arranged by one of the oldest staff members of the school. No classroom assistants, administrative staff, cooks, cleaners or governors are invited. The head wasn't even informed; she found out when the caretaker told her.

Our advice to her was to leave. She has tried many people-managing techniques and has been working hard at personal change. This has worked at an 'outcomes' level but not at a fundamental, tribal, heart-based level. Sometimes, enough is enough. This is not failure – it's recognition of a painful truth that, for a whole variety of complex reasons, there are some people that just may not like you or your message and may even seek to damage you through undermining behaviour.

### Today's exercise

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## Is it working?

This exercise focuses on working relationships rather than families. While in very extreme circumstances you may want to leave a family unit, this is a rare and radical option. However, this exercise is still very powerful in highlighting whether the dynamic balance of any group – including a family – is working.

List all the things about the team, group or community which you are a part of that are keeping you there and all the things that make you want to go. Compare the two lists and then decide if it is worth the effort to continue. If you do want to carry on, then begin the process of challenging or decluttering today. Don't wait another moment. You don't have to sort it all today

but you do have to begin – or start the process of managing your departure.

Sometimes our biggest challenge might be to move into a world of uncertainty. ‘Better the devil you know’ is often used as an excuse by the fearful to create the life they both want and end up deserving.

Today’s exercise: Is it working?

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation

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## Day 19

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# Seeing myself through others

What we all tend to complain about most in other people are those things we don't like about ourselves.

**William Wharton**

**I**t is a powerful and painful truth that when someone's actions, comments or attitude annoy and frustrate us, it is often because they are manifesting a trait that we have yet to master or manage in ourselves. This is not to say that everyone who creates a feeling of unease, discomfort or despair is without fault. They may well be all the things we say they are; their actions may be intolerable and their attitude flawed. However, just because an individual is acting like a fool does not mean to say that they are not in front of another fool when they meet us.

Two opportunities are presented to us when we encounter someone who challenges us in this way: we can discover and understand what motivates and moves this person as well as seeing what motivates and moves us. Instead of immediately taking up a position of defence we can adopt an attitude of curiosity. There is a reason why people react as they do, and much time can be saved and pain avoided if we invest a little effort and engage with that person to understand why they are behaving as they are.

Engaging in conflict should always be driven by a genuine desire to understand the other person – their needs, aspirations and expectations. However, it is a normal human response to seek also to get the other person to understand our needs, aspirations and expectations.

The effort required to not act based on emotion is part of our lifelong challenge. Children have emotional responses to people and situations and then say and do things because they

are driven by their feelings first and their thinking second. A genuine adult will have the same, if not a greater, intensity of emotion and then step back from that whirlpool of righteous indignation and check out the reality of what is happening before taking appropriate action. That may well be to get angry but, more often than not, other more constructive options and actions present themselves.

### Today's exercise

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## Open questions

Today become aware if you are open or closed in your communication. Then choose one specific conversation, discussion or meeting that you have to attend to try this technique. Don't attempt to sustain it all day at this stage.

Whatever the focus for the meeting, when you ask questions, make them specific. Do not repeat or over-complicate and make sure that your questions are open and not closed. By that we mean no 'Did you ...?' and 'Do you ...?' questions but lots of why, how, where and when questions to invite a more considered response.

This is a simple but powerful way of highlighting whether you are leading the discussion or genuinely interested in communicating with others.

You can also add the three-second rule (see Day 15) if you want to raise your level of conversation to genuine dialogue.



# Am I a team player?

To lead the orchestra, you have to  
turn your back on the crowd.

**Max Lucado**

Playing to the gallery and seeking to be seen and appreciated by a wider audience is a common desire in the more ambitious among us. There is nothing wrong in ambition and drive. In fact, it's an essential quality in anyone seeking to improve, learn, advance and make a difference. However, there is a time and a place, and some people can forget about the team of which they are a part when someone from outside is looking on.

If you are in a position of leadership within a team this tendency to be seen from those outside the group (the boss, the board, fellow managers, etc.) as the star is a very dangerous position to find yourself in. On the one hand you have the needs of your team and on the other you have your personal career path. Here's a thought: What if your success in the future is directly linked to your capacity to support, inform, develop and care for the people you are with at the moment? What if you are being observed by others in potential positions of power and influence? What if they are assessing your suitability for personal future success based on how well you engage with your team?

You don't have to be a leader to hold this thought. It applies to everyone in the team. Anyone who is more driven by their future potential and the impression they are making on those outside the group runs the risk of neglecting the tribe. Of course there is a balance to be struck, but it is worth checking once in a while to see if you need to turn your back on the crowd and spend some time focusing – without fear of what outsiders think – on the needs and feelings of your tribe.

## Be supportive

It is painfully simple to get others to feel supported. Ask them what they are doing and how they are feeling – and allow them to speak. Building from yesterday's exercise, play 'let this person finish their sentence and then ask another question'. Seek to ask at least three open-ended questions focusing on them, their needs and their concerns. Not you – not how you feel or what you did. Give them the attention and respond to what they have said as if you are interested.

At the end of the day, write a few words in your journal or below about what you did and what the impact was on you and the person you were listening to.

Today's exercise: Be supportive

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation

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## Day 21

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# Helping hands

He who is ashamed of asking is afraid of learning.

**Danish proverb**

**I**t is an inevitable by-product of a Western educational system which focuses on competition, testing and 'getting the right answer' that many of us who have been through this factory-focused approach to child development think that we are expected to have all the answers. If we don't know the answer we need to find it out on our own – no cheating by looking at the back of the book or asking others! One of the great benefits of tribes and teams is that there are others around you who have similar values, challenges and interests. They are the people who can help, so what is holding you back from making the most of their tribal wisdom?

Ego and fear are two elements that can stupefy the most experienced and oldest among us. The perception in the tribe might be that as you are one of the 'elders' you should be able to provide definitive answers to many questions. But what happens if you don't know? What will people think of you if you actually used those words? What if you not only said you didn't know, but you needed some help? Well – and this might come as a knock to your ego – most people wouldn't care. In fact, when someone within the group comes to them for help, especially if that person is one of the older members, the person being asked for assistance will feel honoured. We don't just help ourselves when we ask others for guidance and support – we give them an opportunity for their own confidence to grow.

With such a win-win aspect, why won't we do it? Back to ego and fear again. Our little ego cannot bear the fact that we need help because we have always been 'top of the class'. Our fear is that people will think we are stupid or lacking in some way.

Remember that child in your class who was ridiculed because they weren't the brightest button in the box? Memories and emotions linger and lie. They become distorted over time and layer our present actions with future fears.

There is no shame in not having the right answer. The tragedy is in lacking the courage to ask the question.

### Today's exercise

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## Ask for help

Build your help muscles! Today ask for help from someone, even if you don't need it. It's good for you and good for them. Over the remaining eighty-one days, regularly make a conscious effort to ask for help. Keep a note in your journal of the impact of this on you and others.

That's it. It might sound simple but if you're someone that has always been expected to know the answers (and take pride in having this status) this could be a real challenge.

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Time with each tribe member		Wake up with gratitude and vision Meditation Ask for help

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# Opening up the dialogue

The happiest conversation is where there is no competition, no vanity, but a calm, quiet, interchange of sentiments.

**Samuel Johnson**

**W**hen was the last time you sat down with your family, work colleagues or a group of good friends and had a proper conversation about things that matter to you all? It's all too easy to be like the proverbial ships that pass in the night – grabbing moments here and there to talk about practical arrangements and exchanging cursory greetings, without going too far below the surface. If this is our default position then we can begin to take each other for granted and forget to see one other as cherished members of the tribe.

We may find that we have to invest proper time to really sit down and exchange ideas, thoughts and feelings. This means that we need to timetable it into our schedule. It can feel formal and self-conscious to plan these things, especially with our families, but this could be exactly what is required if we are to stay up to speed with those that truly matter to us. The most obvious time to have a relaxed dialogue is over a meal. Sitting around the table, sharing food and time with others is a wonderful opportunity to dig deep into subjects and maybe even discover new aspects of each other.

Good dialoguing involves being able to listen as well as speak. Active listening means respecting the speaker enough to focus on what they are saying without wishing to dive in with an opinion or finish the other person's sentence. All too often we want to proffer our own viewpoint as soon as we can or we may be stuck on 'transmit', where we railroad other people's voices, forgetting that they may have equally valid perspectives. This is about having a dialogue, not a debate! We need to stay mindful

of this if someone in the group has a tendency to enjoy the spotlight and the sound of their own voice.

Good dialoguing also requires a level of discipline that we may be unused to, but it gives us the chance to truly absorb and digest what other people around us are saying. It can be helpful, too, to introduce a subject or a theme. Again, this may feel forced and a little embarrassing at first but it will reap rewards in terms of feeling witnessed and understood.

### Today's exercise

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## Good dialoguing

Make the time or plan a date in the future where you will sit and eat with your family, work colleagues or friends and have a proper conversation. Consider giving it a structure – such as each person introduces a subject (What was the most significant thing that happened to you this week? What did you find the most challenging aspect of your day?) or perhaps something more philosophical (about people's values, etc.) – around which everyone has a chance to talk while the others listen. Try to practise active listening and suggest that nobody talks at the same time as anyone else. Note how different the experience is: Was it successful? Did people feel awkward? Did you learn anything new about each other? Did it become an argument? Is it something you should do more regularly? How challenging was it to make the time?

Today's exercise: Good dialoguing

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation  
Ask for help

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## Day 23

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# Valuing my people

I've learned that people will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did, but people will never  
forget how you made them feel.

**Maya Angelou**

**F**ollowing on from yesterday, today we are going to think about all the positive aspects of the groups that we identify with. Whether it's family, friends or work colleagues, what is it that binds us together? What unites us in terms of our values, ideals and history?

The people who really know us can give us strength when we need it, a trusted support mechanism and a place to truly be ourselves, where we know we are accepted and understood. The unconditional nature of this love and care provides us with a base camp from where we can go out into the world, take risks and embark on bold endeavours, knowing that we can rely on a place where we can rest and take refuge when life becomes too pressurised. These are the people that we don't have to explain ourselves to because they know who we are in our depths. If you're lucky enough to have this as a constant in your life, then it's important to acknowledge and celebrate it. Appreciating what you have means that life becomes more meaningful and you are able to invest in the right relationships without taking them too much for granted.

## The people that matter

In your journal take time to acknowledge the people in your life that truly matter and keep you grounded. What is it that unites you with them? Focus on the positive events and moments that have bound you together thus far. How have they supported you and what have you done in return? What are your positive qualities as a group? How do you celebrate your togetherness? What is your shared language (humour, short-cuts, anecdotes, etc.)? What does it mean to you to have these people in your life?

Today's exercise: The people that matter

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation  
Ask for help

## Day 24

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# Stop!

Learning how to be still, to be really still and let life happen  
– that stillness becomes a radiance.

**Morgan Freeman**

**T**oday is an opportunity to reflect on what you've been focusing on so far and to slow down. Don't worry about trying to achieve anything or tick anything off on a list. It's your free time and about staying in the present and enjoying whatever the day has to offer. Just take the pressure off and allow yourself to be here now!

Today's exercise

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## Enjoy yourself!

# Create a family event

If I want to be loved as I am, then I need to be willing to love others as they are.

**Louise Hay**

**H**ow much quality time do you spend with your family? If you don't have an immediate family group that you live with, think about the family you grew up with. How often do you speak to them or see them? Perhaps you live far away and it isn't practical to see them as much as you'd like. Or you may not be a particularly close-knit unit or have active relationships with your parents or siblings, or your parents may have passed away.

Most of us have some remaining family members, even if they are great aunts or distant cousins twice removed! It's useful to remember that these relationships could have a lot to offer us in terms of people who may have known us all our lives and therefore have a unique perspective on who we are. Some of us may try to put a lot of distance between our nuclear family and who we are today. Are there relationships that could do with mending? Or old patterns or behaviour that just don't fit with who we are today? Sometimes as teenagers or adolescents people go through extended periods of rebellion or estrangement from their parents in order to become individual and distinct from the family unit. This is only natural – we need to have independence in order to discover who we are and how we differ from our tribe. Some of us may stay in that place and want to be separate, yet most of us are able to get to a point in our adult lives where we see how valuable and important our families are to us and how they have contributed to making us who we are.

Family landmarks and milestones automatically suggest themselves for parties or gatherings – birthdays, anniversaries,

Christmas and so on. Of course it's traditional to celebrate these events together, surrounded by our nearest and dearest, but why not ring the changes and think about getting your family together just for the sake of it? It could be a hearty meal, a theatre visit or even a trip away together – whatever feels appropriate. The important aspect is to remember that you only get one family and it's all too easy to take them for granted and forget where you came from and who helped to shape you.

### Today's exercise

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## Family reunion

Try to consider a way to bring family members together to celebrate where you are today and, if necessary, to re-establish bonds. Think about venues and dates. Weigh up who you want to invite and what would be appropriate for you all to do. If there are any negative issues around family dynamics consider how you can navigate them. Try to remember that your overriding, positive intention is to spend quality time with the people you are related to and who are, essentially, on your home team. Will this help you to become a stronger and more supportive unit? If this exercise is an impossibility, why is it? Are there realistic things you can do to address difficulties within your family?

Today's exercise: Family reunion

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section ◇ Exercises throughout the book  
Time with each tribe member      Wake up with gratitude  
and vision  
Meditation  
Ask for help

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# Time for friends

A true friend is one who knows all about you ...  
and likes you anyway.

**Christi Mary Warner**

**H**ow do you define friendship? And how many long-standing, solid relationships do you have with people you would class as friends? Friendships can resemble family for many people who are far away from their blood relatives or, for whatever reason, don't have much contact with them. The advantage of friendships, of course, is that they are relationships we can actively choose to invest in. We are under no obligation at the outset and usually are drawn to people with a similar worldview, sense of humour, sensibility or levels of experience in terms of background or work. Naturally friendships need extra maintenance from time to time and are certainly not to be taken for granted. Like most things, there's also a balance to be struck: perhaps the ones that need the most work or dutiful upkeep aren't necessarily the truest ones.

How many times have you temporarily lost touch with someone that you've made a strong connection with and then found you are able to pick up exactly where you left off when you meet up, whether six months or even six years on? Why does that happen? It's as if we have a profound understanding and empathy on a fundamental level and know that this bond has been soldered forever. There's a chiming of values, a deep mutual regard. This essential appreciation of the other allows us to be truly ourselves with that person; we realise that we can be natural and don't have to be on our best behaviour.

If we're lucky enough to have such cherished friendships, it's important to keep fuelling the fire and to invest time and effort in seeing people. It is also beneficial to surround ourselves with

people who we know have our best interests at heart – who are therefore able to be honest and direct with us. Being known and witnessed by these people gives us a solid and dependable support network.

### Today's exercise

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## Fuelling friendships

Who are the friends you see the most of? Do you feel relaxed and able to be truly yourself around these people? Are these the relationships that you feel you want to invest in or do you maintain the connection through force of habit or a sense of duty? Are there people you miss talking to and being with that you don't see enough of? Think about ways to remedy this.

Today's exercise: Fuelling friendships

Notes:

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Exercises throughout this section	◇	Exercises throughout the book
Time with each tribe member		Wake up with gratitude and vision
		Meditation
		Ask for help

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