

BALANCE

The official newsletter of Integrative Clinical Psychology Pty Ltd



Is your internal voice holding you back?

BY DINUSHA CRAGG, CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST

One thing that is common to all humans is that we have thoughts. While some of our thoughts can be helpful in moving us toward a valued behaviour such as hugging our friend or child, many of the thoughts we have can be unhelpful. In fact, a large number of us have quite critical internal dialogues and it can be hard to move through life when these unhelpful thoughts or beliefs show up, particularly those deeply ingrained beliefs such as “I’m not good enough”; “I’m a failure”; “I’ll stuff up”; “I’m not important”. We are not born with a critical internal dialogue. It is something that develops and is learned over time. For many of us, these beliefs can develop early on in our lives based on our experiences including the environment in which we grew up in and our attachments and interactions with significant others. With time these beliefs can strengthen. Often these beliefs act as magnets such that when a difficult event happens in our lives, for example, a relationship breakdown or failing an important test, we zoom in and latch onto this as evidence to support the belief that we are “not good enough”.

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This often leaves us feeling defeated, overwhelmed, hopeless, angry or hurt and can lead us to engaging in behaviours that are unhelpful to our wellbeing such as criticising ourselves, withdrawing, isolating or disconnecting from others, and/or using unhelpful coping strategies to numb or suppress our emotions. While we cannot go back and change the events that have happened to us or get rid of our thoughts for good, we can learn to heal and move through life doing the things that are important to us even if our thoughts come along for the ride. Here are 4 steps to move through this process.

1. Notice your dialogue. Our minds are constantly generating thoughts. It is easy to go through the day in 'autopilot' mode with little awareness of how our thoughts are influencing our feelings and behaviours. As such, when we're in autopilot mode it can be harder to choose helpful and valued behaviours. Bringing awareness to our thoughts can help us to gently step back from them, observe them and choose how we would like to respond or behave.

2. Name the story. It is common for our mind to bring up difficult thoughts. These thoughts often have themes. For example, a common theme might be never feeling good enough or competent enough. Being able to notice our themes or stories as they show up and then naming them can be a helpful way to take a step back and not get so hooked by them. Therefore, when the unhelpful thought shows up we can gently acknowledge it by saying something like "Ah there's that I'll never be good at anything story". By doing this we are gently acknowledging our mind and not allowing our thoughts to completely take over and control us.

3. Shift your language. When our mind generates unhelpful thoughts three things often occur. First, we listen to our mind. Second, we think what our mind is saying is important. Third, we take what our mind says as fact. Together, these can be a harmful combination. Bringing awareness to what our mind is telling us and then gently shifting our language by recognising that are thoughts are simply just thoughts can be a powerful intervention. For example, there is a difference between saying "I'm not good enough" and saying "I'm having the thought that I'm not good enough". This shift in language creates a subtle yet noticeable space between who we are and our thoughts.

Giveaway Time!

Go into the draw to win a self-care pack! For your chance to win you must:

1. Follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram @integrativeclinicalpsychology
2. Find the competition photo on our page, tag two friends AND tell us one of your 'go-to' self-care rituals

Terms and Conditions Apply. You must live in Australia to be eligible. The pack may be collected in person or sent via post in Australia. Entries close 5pm AEST on 31st October 2018.

There is a difference between saying 'I'm not good enough' and 'I'm having the thought that I'm not good enough'.

4. Self-Compassion. Of all the people we spend time with, we spend the most time with ourselves. Therefore, it is important we treat ourselves with kindness and compassion, in a similar way we would treat our best friend, pet or loved one. Self-care is a form of self-compassion. Speaking to yourself from a place of love and acceptance is an essential step toward developing self-compassion. Try asking yourself what you would do if you were to treat yourself in the same way you would a dear friend or family member. Would you be kinder? Gentler? More loving or nurturing? By making a commitment to do one nice thing for yourself each day you will watch your relationship with yourself grow.



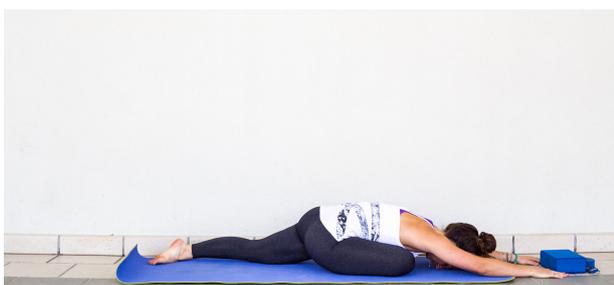
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Movement with Wild and Well

BY JESS WATERS, YOGA TEACHER

Having been through my own mental health battles, one thing that I found incredibly vital in my healing was movement. Moving became a non-negotiable practice for me every day and I'm not talking about doing a full blown gym session every day, rather tuning into my body and asking what it needs on any given day. Some days this came in the form of a walk out in nature, or a 15 minute bodyweight workout. Sometimes I would spend an hour in the gym and others I would practice yoga. It doesn't really matter how you are moving your body, as long as you get moving in a way that is nurturing to your body and your mind. For me, Yoga has been a constant favourite over the years and its the one thing that really allows me to re-connect to myself and check in with my body and my mental state. I understand that finding time in a busy schedule can be tough but even 10 minutes of yoga in your day can hugely impact how you and your body feels. If I only had time for one yoga pose on a particular day, I would have to say Pigeon Pose would be my favourite. It is said that the hips store a lot of emotion and so releasing tension from the hips can be very therapeutic and also really beneficial for lower back pain. If you do have 10 minutes to spare and you're not sure how to stretch, you can access my 10 minute stretch guide here:

<https://www.wildandwell.net.au/movement/2018/3/6/a-few-of-my-favourite-stretches>



You can visit Jess at her website www.wildandwell.net.au



Follow Jess on Instagram @jesswildandwell



Local Inspiration Talks Self-Care

What is one of your 'go-to' self-care rituals?

My go to ritual starts in the evening, at bedtime. I brew a pot of fresh herbal tea, which includes Chamomile, Lavender, Spearmint, Marshmallow Root, Echinacea, and Licorice .

I then write in my journal, things I am grateful for, affirmations, and anything that is on my mind, to promote a healthy, restful sleep. I then wake between 5am-5.30 and take my dogs for an hour a walk at the off leash beach and have a swim at dawn, every day of the year & give gratitude to all that is around me. I believe this ritual keeps me healthy in mind, body & Soul.

If you could, what would you say to your younger self?

To my younger self, I would say to be present in whichever moment you're in. Don't be distracted, as you won't get that moment back.

You don't want to miss it.

I would also say, to listen intently to others, again with no distractions.

What are you grateful for today?

Today I am grateful for my legs, to take me where I want to go.

My eyes, to see the beauty surrounding us.

My hearing, to hear the ocean and the birds.

And mostly I am grateful for my health.

Vanessa, founder of Nessi Nude Food, is the creator of raw, vegan, DF & GF desserts. Find her on Instagram @nessinudefood

Recipe Share

DINUSHA CRAGG, FOOD ENTHUSIAST



DF & GF Brownie Goodness

Brownie Ingredients (makes 6 medium brownies):

- 1 finely grated uncooked medium sweet potato
- 1/2 cup raw cacao
- 4 tbs almond meal
- 1/2 tsp vanilla powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 coconut oil
- 1/4 raw honey (or rice malt / maple syrup for vegan option)
- dark chocolate chips (optional)

Fudge Topping (for 1 - 2 brownies):

- 1 tbs almond butter
- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 tbs honey or rice malt
- 1 tsp cacao power

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 160 - 180C degrees (depending on your oven).
2. Place all ingredients into a bowl and mix well with spatula.
3. Place in greased muffin tray (or tray of choice).
4. Bake for 20 - 30 minutes (or until ready depending on oven).
5. Allow to cool before serving.
6. For the topping, mix all ingredients in a pan and stir well until smooth. Serve on top of warm brownie and enjoy!

About Didi Cragg

Dinusha (Didi) Cragg is a clinical psychologist, personal trainer and director of Integrative Clinical Psychology Pty Ltd. She has a passion for providing an integrative and holistic approach to psychological services focussing on clients' strengths, building resilience, fostering positive change, and assisting clients to achieve their personal wellness and health goals. She also has a personal interest in the field of psychoneuroimmunology.

Didi works within the private health sector on the Sunshine Coast and has previously worked at a university providing counselling services to university students.

She has delivered evidence-based psychological treatment to individuals across the lifespan and from varying cultural backgrounds. Didi has authored two research papers on the influence of the media on men and women's body image and she has also been a guest speaker on a body image expert panel.



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