

WHAT I KNOW NOW...



Coming First

When it comes to our mind health, small changes can lead to big rewards. Here, Judy Klipin shares her top five fulfilment-boosting tips, starting with prioritising yourself.



1/ BE SELF-CENTRED Most of us are hard-wired to believe that other people's happiness is more important than our own. We're taught from an early age that we need to compromise and put other people first. True, relationships are about give and take – but when you are all give and no take, it's a problem. So often I see clients who feel trapped in jobs, cities or relationships that make them unhappy, but they feel they have to stay because they think it is what someone else wants.

When we put other people's real or imagined needs above our own – what I call being "others-centred" – we can become resentful of ourselves or the other person at best, physically and/or emotionally ill at worst.

2/ ASK FOR HELP There are many reasons we don't ask for help: we can't imagine anyone else will be able to do as good a job as we can; we don't want to impose on others; we think we should be able to cope on our own; or it simply doesn't occur to us to ask.

Giving up control and making yourself vulnerable can feel scary. More impor-

tantly, it allows others to grow, share and support you. Asking for help is a sign of strength rather than weakness. When I let others do something for me, it's an opportunity for me to receive love.

3/ YOU CAN CHANGE YOUR MIND It took me years to give myself permission to choose life coaching as a new career path. Now my aim is to help my clients remember the dreams they gave up and give themselves permission to realise them too.

Why do we carry on with things – marriages, jobs, friendships – when they bring no pleasure? Partly it's because we feel we have to finish what we start. We think we can't change our minds or we have to put up with the hand we're dealt.

But we have more choice than we are aware of. The trick is to be mindful about our true desires. Stumbling unconsciously through the world is how we wake up one day and find ourselves in a life we feel we didn't choose.

4/ WHAT WOULD MADIBA DO? When I want to be bossy, or needy, I try to connect with the rational adult part of me. I ask: "What would Mandela do if he was me?" This helps me to be more objective and less emotional about the problem I'm facing. It doesn't have to be Madiba – tap into someone whose values you admire. Try it!

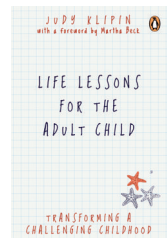
5/ WHO YOU ARE IS PERFECT My school reports said I needed to do better – this made me believe I wasn't good enough. If only I'd had a teacher who'd said it wasn't me that needed improving, but my performance. I'm not alone in this limiting belief: "If I were better, life would be better". The truth is, it's not us that isn't good enough; it's either our situation or our attitude that needs to shift. Now I know: it's not who I am that needs a tweak, but how I am. **S**



JUDY KLIPIN is a Johannesburg-based life coach and author.

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