

WELLBEING

HOW positive ARE YOU?

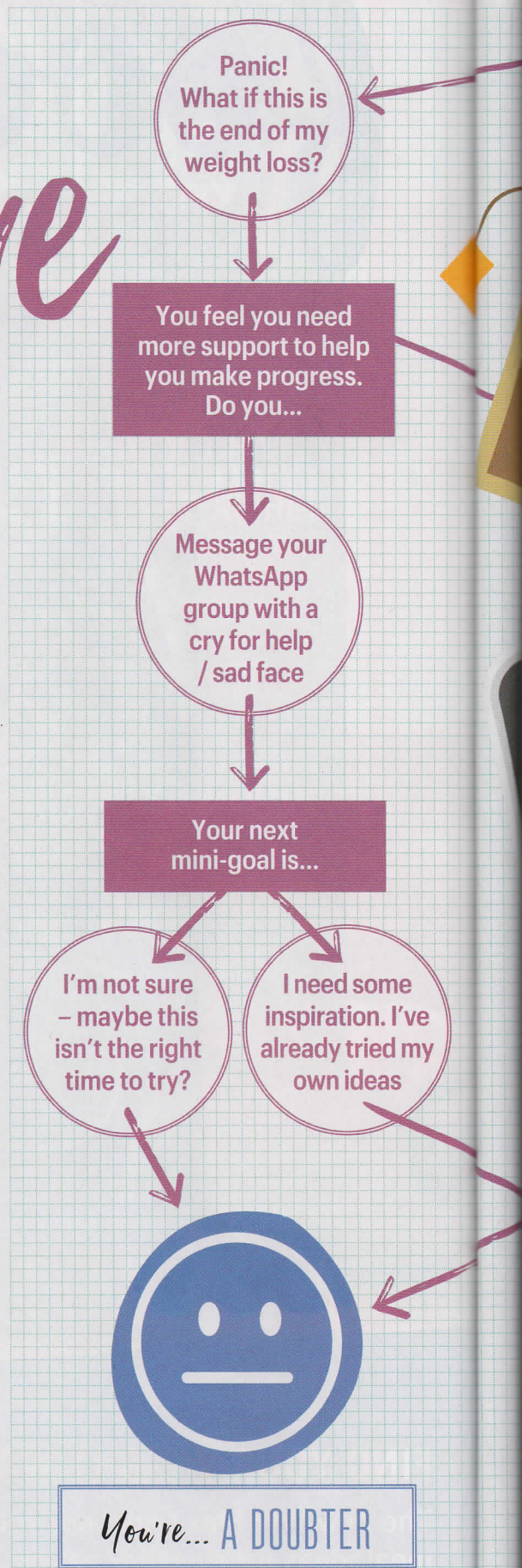
Positive psychologist **Deborah Smith** is here to help you find easy ways to **boost your positivity this year**

Staying positive, no matter what life throws at you, is key to achieving your goals. But looking on the bright side isn't always easy, especially if you're a natural worrier. Take the quiz (right) to find out if you're a doubter, an optimist, or just stuck in a rut, then read my tips to discover how you can shift your mindset.

MEET OUR EXPERT

Deborah Smith is a positive psychologist specialising in the science of happiness and mindfulness. She has more than 25 years' experience as a psychotherapist and is here to help, so email her at weightwatchers@seven.co.uk

Deborah tweets at [@growurhappiness](https://twitter.com/growurhappiness)



START HERE

Uh oh! You've gone
off track today.
Do you...

Relax!
Tomorrow is
another day

Your fitness buddy
cancels a workout
session. You...

Have a wobble,
then sit down
with a cuppa and
make a plan
of action

Smile and
lace up your
trainers; you're
confident enough
to do it alone.

The non-scale
highlight of your
journey so far
has been...

Your biggest aim
for 2018 is...

If I haven't
been losing
weight, does it
even matter?

All the
unexpected
support and
compliments I've
received

To move
my journey on
- I just don't
know how!

To look and
feel my best
ever (and I
believe I can!)



You're... **STUCK IN A RUT**



You're... **AN OPTIMIST**

TURN OVER FOR DEBORAH'S TIPS...



If you're...

A DOUBTER LOOKING FOR A NEW APPROACH

You struggle to feel positive, or suffer from a lack of confidence and are scared to try because you're afraid to fail. Turn things around with a fresh approach.

1 Make the decision to replace negative thinking with positive thinking. Once you're determined to do this, you will begin to catch yourself each time you make self-limiting statements (such as 'I'm not worthy of success'), and replace these negative messages with encouraging thoughts, whether things are going well or not. Be kind to yourself! Think of what you would say to a friend and apply that to yourself. Congratulate yourself each time you manage to do it.

2 Shower yourself in positivity. Display uplifting pictures around your home, such as holiday snaps that bring back great memories, photos of your loved ones, pets, beautiful environments and inspirational people. Create a positive photo album on your phone too, so you can look at it any time. Listening to your favourite songs is another good way to lift your spirits. Music has the power to instantly shift your mindset, especially if you sing and dance along to it.

3 Give yourself credit. We often focus on what we haven't done, can't do, or what makes us nervous, but this only reinforces the negativity. Instead, acknowledge what you have done and can do, no matter how small or insignificant you think these things are. The more you do this, the more you will boost your confidence and build a positive outlook.

4 Believe you can be positive. This means letting go of old belief systems you're holding onto and opening the door to the idea that you can embrace a happy, positive and joyful life.



If you're...

STUCK IN A RUT, BUT HOPEFUL

You've been positive so far, but these days you feel you're not progressing and are starting to get despondent. Time to get your mojo back!

1 Practise using positive language. We often don't even realise how negative we are being until we start being mindful of what we say. Think of it as a game where you gain a point for each positive word you use, and lose a point for each negative one. You'll be amazed by how changing the words you use will help you feel more positive.

2 Change your attitude towards obstacles. If you accept you're likely to encounter obstacles during the course of your journey, you'll be less likely to be derailed by them when they arise. Think about the potential pitfalls and the best way to overcome them. You might even discover that unexpected difficulties create positive new opportunities.

3 Change your daily routine. When we've been doing the same things for too long, they can become draining, so it's important to shake things up every now and again. For example, try taking a different route to work. Stay mindful while you're on your new route, appreciating the environment and finding beauty in the unexpected.

4 Learn something new. Taking up a new hobby will make you feel more positive, and choosing something that challenges you could also encourage you to try new ideas in other areas of your life. Why not sign up for a dance class, cookery lessons, learn a new craft or language, or join a book club. There's a good chance you'll meet like-minded people there too.



If you're...

OPTIMISTIC AND OPEN-MINDED

You have a sunny attitude already, but everyone needs a little motivation to stay smiley during the winter months! Try these ideas for a happiness upgrade.

1 Bring more colour into your life. Studies have shown that brighter colours – and yellow in particular – can make us feel happier and more optimistic. So make the conscious decision to wear brighter clothing or add a few colourful touches to your home or office, and notice how it helps to shift your mood. Fragrance can also have a big impact on mood, so put on your favourite perfume or light a scented candle and let the aromas make you smile.

2 Write your own mantra and repeat it to yourself whenever you need an extra boost. 'I am a powerful, positive person' or 'I trust and believe in myself' are great options. Find the right mantra for you, and use it to help you feel good and move your journey forward.

3 Plan and visualise something you want to accomplish. Whether it's a fitness goal, a work ambition or a milestone you'd like to reach – be specific about what it is, and the steps you need to take to achieve it. The clearer you are about what is required, the easier goals are to achieve. Visualise what success looks like and think about how it will make you feel; this will help you get there.

4 Remember, you can be a role model. It's much easier to be positive when the people around you are positive too. So let your kids, loved ones or friends see your optimism and how you are kind to yourself, and they might just follow your lead. It's not fair to expect everyone else to look on the bright side if we are not doing that ourselves.