

Ask our EXPERTS

OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS HAS
ALL THE ANSWERS WHEN IT
COMES TO HEALTH, FITNESS,
AND LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL



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Ask our EXPERTS

WELLBEING NUTRITION FITNESS HEALTH STYLE

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

Q As I get older I find I need to take more time out for myself, but when I do, I feel selfish. How can I stop feeling like that? *Lilly Howard, Norwich*



A Self-care is a buzzword right now, and for good reason. We all need to make the most of life and take time to look after ourselves, and as with most things, it's all about finding the balance.

Think about how much of your life you have spent doing things for other people and how much time you have actually spent on yourself. Of course, if you have children you will naturally devote a lot of time to them, but their needs aside, do you spend a lot more time doing things for others than you do for yourself? How often do you put your own needs first?

Try this exercise: think about the past year and how much time you've taken as me-time, then how much time you have dedicated to others. Look at it as

a percentage – is it a 50/50 split? For most people it will be nowhere near. Decide to reclaim some of that time for yourself. Once you've looked at it like this and seen how much time you spend caring for others, it will be much easier to let go of the guilt.

Your next step is to start saying no to things that will eat into your precious me-time, and start doing more of the things you want to do. Even if it's just taking an hour to sit by yourself with a cup of tea as you flick through a magazine, schedule it as you would any other important activity and make it happen. And remind yourself – you deserve this time!

TALKING POINT

THREE WAYS TO FEEL IN CONTROL OF YOUR LIFE

1

PLAN YOUR TIME

Simply planning your day/week/month will help you manage your time more effectively and feel more at ease. Sunday might be a good day to sit down and plan your meals, exercise schedule, and work and social commitments for the week ahead.

2

DECLUTTER YOUR SPACE

It's amazing how much a cluttered environment can affect our mood and thinking. Notice how as you tidy things away, you also clear your head!

3

GET ON TOP OF YOUR FINANCES

Financial pressure creates huge amounts of stress and it's something many of us ignore. Work out a realistic budget so you feel in control of your finances.

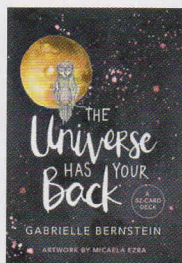
MANTRA

'Learn with pleasure'

What we learn with pleasure, we never forget. And as we tend to get a renewed sense of enthusiasm in spring, now is the perfect time of year to enjoy learning something new.

GET WEEKLY INSPO

Find guidance for the week ahead with **The Universe Has Your Back: A 52-card Deck**, by Gabrielle Bernstein and Micaela Ezra (£14.99, Hay House UK), a set of affirmations presented on beautifully illustrated cards.



TRY IT THIS MONTH