



The Recipe for Life

10 Point 'Reignite Your Spirit' Action Plan

“ *The biggest adventure you can take is to live the life of your dreams.* ”

OPRAH WINFREY

At any point in our life, we can experience a feeling of burn out, fatigue or slump. We might not have the get up and go we once did. We may feel like a small part of our heart or soul has fallen asleep or even disappeared completely. If you're feeling your life is at a crossroads right now, not sure where to turn or which direction to take, then I welcome you, as you're in the right place. Many of us can feel disconnected at some point or another, whether this is because of a change of job; life adversity like divorce or either in or ending of, a difficult relationship; or simply that you want to know more about why you're feeling lost right now.



I remember waking up one morning and thinking, is this it? What happened to my hopes and dreams? Where did I leave them and how could I get them back? Why wasn't I happily married, living in my French Chateau and doing a job I absolutely loved? Freeing myself from a difficult marriage, I then spent 5 years immersing myself on a journey of self-discovery and healing, exploring the true meaning of who I was and my purpose while on this beautiful earth. I had to do a lot of soul searching and go really deep within myself to learn about behaviours and thoughts that had been controlling my life and ultimately how to free myself from those limiting thoughts and old energies that were holding me back.

Sometimes, simply escaping a crappy job or getting a divorce; starting a business or moving house can seem overwhelming and if you don't really have a deeper understanding of yourself, tackling the underlying effects of our choices or experiences we've had, then you can struggle to realise your true essence and potential.

Life is one big journey, it's a process, each day, moment, month or year that happens has its own challenges... It's learning how to manage those challenges without letting them takeover and have you feeling like your spinning out of control.

I've put together this essential 10-Point 'Reignite Your Spirit' Action Plan that will help you to start your journey of discovery and relight that flame where smouldering ashes now sit. My wish for you is that you too can begin that journey of self-discovery to a brighter, happier, more contented you.



1. STOP JUDGING YOURSELF!



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“ *No need to hurry, no need to sparkle, no need to be anybody but oneself.* ”

VIRGINIA WOOLF

When we place harsh, unachievable goals on ourselves, or simply criticise everything we do or say, for fear of looking a fool, we set ourselves up for failure, or what we perceive it to be. If you adopt a deeper level of kindness to yourself, as you would do to a dear friend or relative, then you learn the art of compassion and kindness and how it stems from within. Stop offering the oxygen mask to others before you've taken a breath yourself.

Action:

LOOK IN THE MIRROR. Look deep in to your own eyes and tell yourself how great you are. How much you love you! And how you are doing brilliantly right now.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

2. BE KIND TO OTHERS



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“ *Never look down on anybody unless you're helping them up.* ”

JESSE JACKSON

Did you know that simple acts of kindness to others can ignite the hormone Oxytocin, which has been known to reduce blood pressure and is often referred to as “The Kindness Hormone.” Being kind can strengthen your immune system, reduce stress and aid in cardiovascular health. These are just some of the benefits. Kindness is also contagious! By being kind, you can ripple this effect across a whole community of circa 125 people by simply being 3 social steps from others. So just think of it as your way of giving a gift to the world!

Action:

COMMIT TO ONE ACT OF KINDNESS AT LEAST ONCE A DAY. Kindness can come in many forms, including a simple touch on the hand of a loved one, listening to a friend in need, empathy to others, connecting with a long lost friend. Even witnessing an act of kindness or watching a feel good movie can give you the same feeling and hormone levels. Show love to your family, a pet or anyone that you'd like to connect with. Both you and your recipient will benefit from this beautiful, healing act.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

3. RELAXATION TIME



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“ *There is more to life than increasing its speed.* ”

MAHATMA GANDHI

Give yourself permission to relax. This may sound simple in principle, but for some it can be one of the hardest things to do. It's a proven fact that through some form of relaxation, we can learn to switch-off our over active stress response. Especially with our hectic lives and getting caught up in all of the usual things that occupy our minds from work, travel and home life, we can find ourselves in a constant state of fight or flight mode, which in turn ramps up your cortisone levels, keeping our sympathetic nervous system activated. This can lead to far more serious health implications.

Action:

GIVE YOURSELF 15 MINUTES A DAY OF RELAXATION TIME, MORE IF YOU WANT TO. Purely all me-time! Without the use of devices if you can. So, whether this is to listen to some music, read, meditate, draw, do some gardening, take a walk in nature or by the sea, anything that will bring on a sense of relaxation for you. Immerse yourself in the experience, breath naturally and close your eyes if it suits the activity but really feel the sense of enjoyment from this moment with yourself.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

4. SLEEP



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“ *To achieve the impossible dream, try going to sleep.* ”

MAHATMA GANDHI

As if we needed permission to get those valuable ZZZs we all so lovingly need, you'd be surprised just how little some of us are actually getting. And even more surprising, the quality of the sleep we get. If you've got an overactive mind and struggle to rest yourself when it's time for bed then here's not just one, but two actions to help you get your head down and get that deep restorative rest you need.

Action 1:

CAFFEINE! Yes, as much as we might love that glorious pick me up, it can also be a contributor to bad sleep and insomnia. If you're going to have your daily cup of coffee or tea, it's best to drink before midday. Depending on your metabolic rate, (so how quickly your body is able to process foods and calories), the half-life of caffeine is 6 hours. Which means, that after 12 hours of drinking it, you would still have a quarter left in your system. Or looking at it another way, if you drink it at 4pm, you still have half of it in your body at 10pm and a quarter of it at 4am the next day! And then you start the cycle again, hence caffeine dependency. Prof. Matthew Walker, sleep expert says, "the shorter your sleep the shorter your life." Moderate your caffeine, replace it with herbal teas such as a lemon and ginger infusion, to keep you activated and refreshed throughout the day so you can have a much better night's sleep. Aim for 7 to 8 hours a day for real rejuvenation.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

Action 2:

TAKE A NAP. Don't deny yourself this wonderful Mediterranean ritual. In fact, most hot countries will practice this delightful exercise. Usually by mid-afternoon, around the 3pm mark, we might start feeling a little sluggish, tired or struggling to concentrate. Many times, this is where we reach for the caffeine (see above) or sugary foods to keep us motivated. Instead of this, try a 10 to 15 minute power nap, as it was known back in the 90s. You'll be astounded at how much of a difference this will make to the rest of your day. You'll feel instantly refreshed and better equipped to tackle the rest of the afternoon. Plus, you're less likely to eat bad foods and you'll feel calmer too.

If you can, go and sit or lie somewhere quiet, so you can really get in to the sleep. Set a timer so you're not stressing about waking up, if you have to. You can even do this upright, at your desk. Hibernate your computer, set the phone on silent and rest your head back on your chair. Breathe in, breathe out, close your eyes and just feel the calm. This is a light sleep, not your night time type, but will refresh your mind and give you a little boost of energy.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

5. MEDITATE



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“ Sometimes the most important thing in a whole day is the rest we take between two deep breaths.

ETTY HILLESUM

It's been proven for centuries that the power of meditation and regular practice of this ancient art can bring great contentment, happiness and reward with just 15 minutes practice a day. It doesn't mean that you have to sit in an uncomfortable position for hours on end, chanting or with a mind that's completely empty! There's a lot of misconception about meditation and any human being, no matter how Zen they are, can never completely blank their minds of any thought. What you can do, is to recognise that thoughts and sensation will come and much like the sea lapping against the shoreline, simply allow them to pass on, swishing them back in to the sea.

Action:

MEDITATE. Take a comfortable position that works for you, whether it's lying down, sitting up in a chair, on a cushion on the floor, or even on the sofa with your head on a pillow. You can keep your eyes open or closed but I prefer closed, so you are unaware of anything around you. Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Bring yourself to a place of calm. Think of a word or intention, if that helps you, something positive. Repeat this word in silence, in your mind. Keep breathing in and out, slowing down the pace. Count if you like, breath in for 5, out for 5. Do this for as little as 5 minutes or longer for 15, 30 even an hour.

The most important thing is to take time out, for you. To take a breath, a moment to re-centre yourself, get in touch with who you are as this is how we bring ourselves to a greater height of awareness of everything around us and stop allowing situations to control how we react.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

6. LAUGH AND CRY, IT'S OK



“ *The ones who laugh the loudest have cried the hardest.* ”

ANON

Just as we have positive and negative in science, in life too, we all experience days when we're on top of the world and other times when we have great sadness or a need to cry. So, what do we do with that, do we constantly push ourselves to keep being happy all the time, suppress our tears and keep smiling, carrying on regardless? Most definitely, NOT! There is a time to laugh and there is a time to cry.

Action:

WATCH A SAD MOVIE. It may sound ridiculous but actually learning to be in tune with your feelings can really help you release pent up hormones and energy to ultimately bring on calm and contentment, actually making you feel much more relaxed and in tune with who you are. This in turn makes you a far more empathetic person to others, so you can share their joys and their lows. It helps you to overcome embarrassment over crying that sometimes society can instill in us and so you feel freer to be your true, authentic self.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

7. PRACTICE GRATITUDE



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“*Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.*”

ARTHUR WARD

This is so valuable for helping you to appreciate the small things in life. The things you have around you that often we can neglect to notice or realise are so important in our everyday lives. This is where practicing a daily gratitude ritual, at the start and end of each day, can seriously do wonders for your mental wellbeing and give you the power to value the greatness all around you without harbouring on the lack of something, or negative events that may have happened that day. Psychological studies have shown that by practicing this habit, for over a week or more, will make you feel less depressed and much happier within. A great one for tackling anxiety too.

Action:

KEEP A GRATITUDE JOURNAL. Buy something special just for this. Every morning as soon as you wake up and every night before you go to sleep, write down at least three things you're grateful for. This could be as simple as the meal you ate that day to something deeply profound that resonates with you such as your religion, beliefs or someone you cherish. The simple act of writing it down in your favourite journal makes it real and gives you a sense of achievement and pride. Keep it by your bedside so it's always there to hand.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

8. SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT



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“ *Every moment is a fresh beginning.* ”

T.S. ELIOT

I'm sure you've heard many people talk about being spiritual or having spirituality in their life but what does that mean or look like? Feeling spiritual definitely doesn't need to make you think we've all gone woo-woo or deeply religious, although much respect to anyone that has a religion they practice with love in their heart and that is one form of spirituality. I like to say Spirituality is Individuality. What having spirituality or practicing some form of this in your life, simply means is that you are at one with yourself, without ego and are part of a much bigger creation, knowing that we are all interconnected. Your priority will be the concern of the human spirit or soul as opposed to the material or physical things we are surrounded by in modern, first world society. Now I'm not saying chuck out the Gucci or Prada but just don't place too much importance on those things or base your whole life around acquiring those objects. In the end, you can't take them with you. It's more important to appreciate the spirit within ourselves and that happiness derives from within, not because we bought something. Spirituality is having a sense of purpose, knowing that what we do is for the greater good of the world and not just ourselves. Practicing some form of spirituality is also great for your emotional wellbeing too as it will nurture and support a positive state of mind.

Action:

PRACTICE FORGIVENESS – LET GO OF BLAME. This isn't easy but when you learn to let go of blame you ultimately let go of negative thoughts and feelings too and I'm sure I don't need to tell you the immense benefits to your mental wellbeing that can have. One suggestion is to find the right balance or perspective on what you're feeling. So, is the blame, anger, disappointment or whatever you are carrying, coming from the actual experience of someone hurting you or whether you've built up continued resentment and anger that you keep playing out the scenario in your mind? Recognise how those feelings affect you and then let go of what doesn't help you. Be kind and gentle to yourself, you certainly don't have to face the person that wronged you to physically forgive them. Know this, Forgiveness is a personal thing, it's for you and you don't have to share it with anyone.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

9. EXERCISE



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“ *Exercise is a celebration of what your body can do, not a punishment for what you ate.* ”

WOMEN'S HEALTH UK

Now I'm not a fitness instructor or guru but I can tell you one thing that doctors, physiotherapists and personal coaches all say, taking some form of active exercise, whether that's in the form of Yoga, Pilates, walking, cycling, HiiT training, spinning or whatever rocks your boat, will have profound effects on not just your body but your mind and spirit too. Scientific studies have proven that daily exercise of a minimum of 15 and up to 30 minutes a day from moderate to more intense activities will increase your life expectancy and ward off longer term health problems including weight related issues. It's not just what you eat that matters but the activity you take too. In addition, when we exercise our brains become more active, our mood is lifted, we have glowing, healthy skin and it even supports good sleep.

Action:

FIND SOMETHING THAT WORKS FOR YOU. One size doesn't fit all. Think about any health related issues you might have before embarking on any exercise routine and it's always good to seek advice from a professional.

Depending on your age, you may find that something like a more vigorous or gentler yoga style workout is going to be much better for you than diving in to Insanity or other super active style class. You Tube is brilliant for a whole plethora of styles and it's worth trialling out a few to find what fits and what you enjoy! Remember, this isn't a punishment. Exercise should be a part of your life, your daily routine that is just as important as eating breakfast!

In addition to any routine, I highly recommend Qi Gong. This is an ancient style of movement that has been practiced for centuries and is the perfect antidote for a stressful day or to ground you and bring you back to yourself. It's gentle and can be practiced by people of many ages.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:

10. EAT MINDFULLY



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“ *Mindfulness eating replaces self-criticism with self-nurturing. It replaces shame with respect for your own inner wisdom.* ”

JAN CHOZEN BAYS

Eating mindfully may not be something you've come across before but more likely than not, at some point in your life you've eaten mindfully. This can be in the shape of a fantastic meal at a swanky restaurant to a little picnic in the park with a loved one to drinking a glass of fresh orange juice on a hot sunny day.

Eating mindfully is a beautiful and present moment awareness activity that engulfs all of your senses in appreciating the food that you have and minimising distractions during meals. This will have profound effects on your brain and physical wellbeing. It's about truly being in touch with the food you're eating, so in turn you become more conscious about what you're eating, the way you eat it and the pace at which you're immersed in the whole experience. This can be from the very get go of shopping for the ingredients, to the preparation of chopping and slicing, washing and peeling, to cooking it and then actually taking a seat, in quiet, getting your utensils and fully concentrating on the appearance of what you've created, the aroma of the food, the textures and flavour of each bite you take to the very end of the meal and even the washing up!

Food and cookery have the power to transform your life, whether this is for good or bad, depending on how you treat it and yourself. In many cultures, food is the heart of everything they do, from the gatherings at a wedding, to nourishing you when you're ill. It can be an incredible and empowering tool in our lives that plays a large part in transforming us to be our best possible self.

Enjoy the action I've set out below, this is a simple technique that will really create a sense of awareness of the food you eat and help you to feel calm within yourself.

Action:

THE FRUIT MINDFULNESS MEDITATION. Get yourself a green, Granny Smiths apple or any other favourite fruit. This could even be a dried fruit.

Sit in a comfortable position. Upright in a chair or on the sofa is fine too. I want you to just bring yourself to a place of calm, to this present moment we're in right now. Close your eyes and take a deep breath and release with a deep aaaahhhh! One more time and release....

Take a look at the apple or fruit that you hold in your hand, feel its weight and how it feels in your palm.

Look at the shape, the beautiful curves, the indentation at the top where the stalk of the apple sits, the shiny, smooth skin, the luscious, vivid green colour of the apple or other fruit you have.

Move the apple around in your hand. Keep touching and smoothing your hand over it. Really becoming familiar with every part of that apple or fruit.

Now smell it, does it smell of anything. Does it smell fresh and green, like grass or is it earthy, or sweet, fruity, perfumed. Feel your mouth watering, the sensations that are coming to you, in your mind and body as you long to eat the apple or fruit.

Now take a bite out of that apple or fruit. Listen to the crunch sounds as your teeth sink deep in to the apple. Be aware of how the juicy flesh splits and the liquid of the apple flies out around the apple and your mouth. Savour the flavour of that tangy, crispy, sweet Granny Smith apple or fruit. Chewing slowly on the flesh, letting it fully break down in your mouth.

Feel the flesh around your mouth, quenching your thirst but also, softening up in your mouth and then coolly passing down your throat to your stomach.

Now think about how you feel, how does eating that apple make you feel when you take each bite, one after the other, filling your stomach as you finish the apple?

How does your appetite feel once you finish eating that crisp, fresh, juicy apple?

How do you feel while eating this luscious piece of fruit?

Take another deep breath now and bring your awareness back to where you are. Sit quietly for a moment, getting in touch with how you're feeling. Aware of all of your senses.

Open your eyes if you had them closed and just take a moment to continue breathing as you come back.

YOUR PERSONAL PROGRESS:



You can get in touch with me via my email: hulya@therecipeforlife.com and I'd be happy to hear how the Reignite Your Spirit plan has helped you relight those flames of joy in your heart.

Hulya



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