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# 43

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## Lifestyle coach **SUSIE PEARL**

Susie Pearl, mentor and author of *Instructions for Happiness and Success*, answers your questions.

**Q** I feel weighed down by previous events and I often harbour grudges about how people have behaved. How can I get my head out of the past and move on to living in the present? *Louisa, Weymouth*

**A** You can't change the past, but you can change how you think about it. Once you realise that you're in control of the way your mind works, you'll be able to shake off negative feelings more easily. It's fine to feel down, but it's up to you how long you stay there. Ask yourself if it's helping you to hold on to these feelings. It's likely the answer will be to move on.

What are you talking about with your family and friends? If you're constantly mentioning things from the past, ask your friends to point out when you do, so you can stop and step into 'now'.

Living in the present is the secret to feeling joyful. Living through bad things once is hard enough, so it's vital you let go. This will help you forgive yourself and others for past actions. We can't change what others have done or what they choose to do. The important thing is that we learn from our own mistakes and move on fast.



Tell us  
your favourite  
de-stress rituals  
@TopsanteUK

**Q** I'm constantly worrying about my health and it's stopping me from enjoying each day. How can I stop my anxieties spiralling out of control? *Polly, Bristol*

**A** We all have issues that concern us, but worrying rarely helps and is more likely to make things worse.

However, if you're genuinely worried about your health, visit your GP, who can treat you or allay any fears. Once you've been reassured that you are healthy, it's time to stop exercising your 'worry' muscle and instead spend time thinking about what's going well.

Take 10 minutes every day to appreciate everything that's good in your life and you'll feel much better.

Also be proactive – think of the ways in which you can lead a healthier lifestyle. Do you need to cut out things in your life? Or should you increase your exercise and relaxation time? Perhaps making plans with a health buddy to eat better and get fitter would help if you're supporting and encouraging one another.

Most importantly, stop worrying about what may or may not be and focus on what is – and you'll find that you feel happier, healthier and able to enjoy your life today.



## 'Don't feel guilty about taking time out'

**I have a hectic work schedule and find it increasingly difficult to relax in the evenings. How can I de-stress and enjoy my evenings more?** *Eve, Leeds*

The busier we are, the more we need to de-stress regularly. When you're on your commute home or just as you walk through the door, try a '10-second pause.' It involves closing your eyes and breathing, while visualising yourself moving from one zone to another. When you open your eyes, you'll feel that work is behind you and your evening is ahead.

To help you unwind more easily, try scheduling in regular 'me-time' too. Plan it like you would a meeting – so block off time in your diary specifically for you to slow down and relax. Learning how to

switch off in your own home is crucial, so try creating a quiet corner or happy space that you can slink off to.

Switch off all technology, so you can disengage from the outside world, change gear and turn your mind away from everyday worries. Take a bath, listen to music, play sport, meditate or even daydream to help distract you. Don't feel guilty about taking time out. You can go back to your urgent task list soon enough. Being relaxed will help you feel happier and more productive at work. ♦