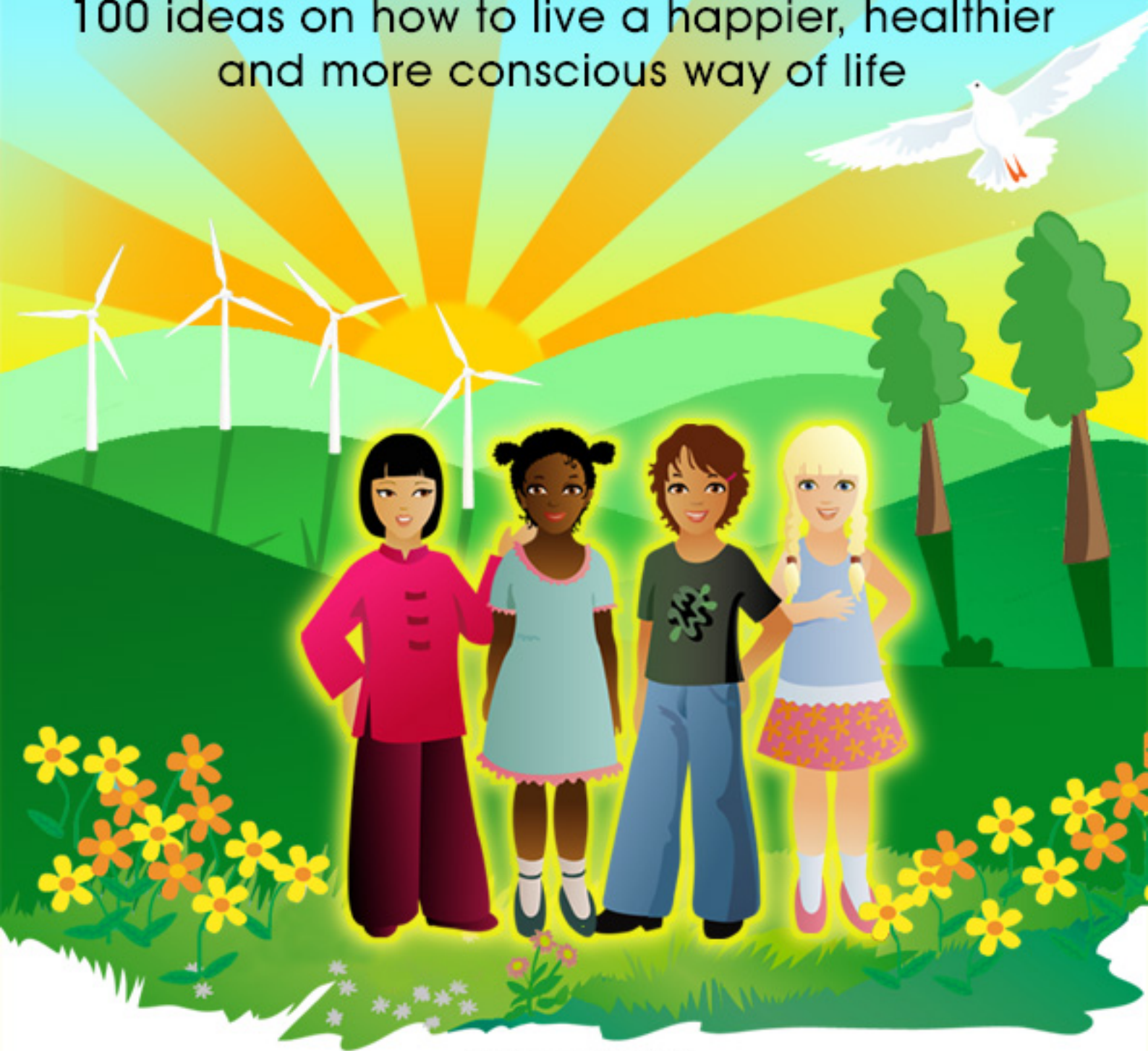


The Natural Living Guide

100 ideas on how to live a happier, healthier and more conscious way of life



Brought to you by

HolisticLocal

Your Local Guide To Holistic, Green & Conscious Living

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Welcome

Hello and welcome to our Natural Living Guide, which we trust you will find helpful, inspiring and informative.

It's for people who care about the wellbeing of themselves, their family, their community and the planet as a whole.

Whether you are new to this way of thinking and living, or are an 'old timer' in natural ways of living, we are sure you will find something – if not many things – of interest here.

Throughout the guide, you'll find a mix of inspirational quotes from people who have led or are leading the way in natural living, as well as information on ten key topics.

By definition, holistic and natural living concerns every area of our existence - the whole lot - the way we eat, work, travel and relate to each other and everything in-between. So we've endeavoured to cover as much as we can including recommended resources for further exploration and a list of suggestions for action, because after all, actions speak louder than words.

We see natural living as a journey, not an end in itself. So, wherever you are along the way, we wish you well and hope that the quality of your life and the lives of those around you is changed for the better by reading our guide.

Go well...

***“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life.
Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's
thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice.
And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.
They somehow already know what you truly want to become.
Everything else is secondary.”***

– Steve Jobs, Co-founder of Apple and Pixar

This guide is distributed through

Tools for Transformation

Resources for personal development and transformation of body, mind and spirit

Why Natural Living?

Growing concerns about health, food and the environment are just three reasons why more and more people are seeking a more natural, holistic and sustainable way of life. Green businesses that are complementary, ethical or alternative are most definitely on the increase.

Whatever your interest in living a natural way of life, chances are there's a book, special interest group or small business out there to meet your needs - thankfully it's getting easier to find the resources you need.

Natural living is so important because it's for everyone - the individual, for families, for communities and for planet as a whole.

It's also a big subject and we know that many people find it difficult to balance their ideals and dreams with the realities and pace of modern life. We trust this guide will make it that little bit easier.

We believe in taking the natural living journey one step at a time, and one day when we look back on our lives, those little steps will have added up to a life well-lived and lived naturally. For one and for all.

Have a great journey!

The Holistic Local Team

What is Holistic Local?

Until recently, finding a natural or holistic business was like looking for an acupuncture needle in an organic haystack - it's been hard for natural and green businesses to get noticed and very time and energy consuming for customers who are searching for their products and services.

And how do you find what you need in a globalised, corporate marketplace, dominated by the advertising budgets of multi-nationals?

Holistic Local was created to help natural businesses get noticed and help people like you to find them more easily – just go to www.holisticlocal.co.uk to find out how.

Our hope is that natural and holistic living will get easier, more irresistible and more enjoyable for everyone, and we invite you to join us in the process by telling us how we can help you to find more of what you need – naturally.

Foreword by Janey Lee Grace



Well done to Holistic Local for putting The Natural Living Guide together.

We are all increasingly beginning to query just what is in all the foods we eat, the substances we spread on ourselves, as well as the chemicals we are using around the home.

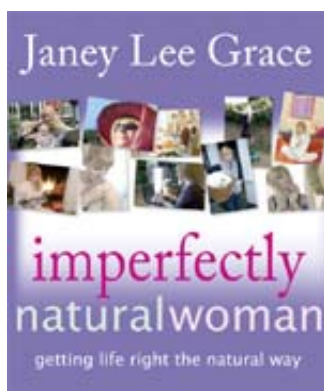
I'm sure this guide will help many people discover new, safer and healthier ways to stay holistically beautiful, keep their homes holistically clean and care for the planet we all walk on - staying healthy in the process.

To me, these ideas are not 'alternative' or 'New Age' – many are simply going back to basics. In fact, I've recently been described as a 'modern day Mrs Beeton' for resurrecting some old fashioned tips and encouraging the use of products that usually cost less than regular brands.

This guide is a great way for busy people to get informed, get involved and take action.

All the best,

Janey



Janey Lee Grace, broadcaster and author of 'Imperfectly Natural Woman' (Crown House) can be heard on BBC Radio 2 hosting her own early Saturday morning show and as a regular co-host on Steve Wright's afternoon show. She is fast gaining a reputation as the BBC's 'Holistic Ambassador'.

<http://www.crownhouse.co.uk/>

www.holisticlocal.co.uk

Disclaimer!

The information in this guide is not a form of treatment, cure or a substitute for professional medical care.

It's more a way to get you thinking about your lifestyle in a more practical and responsible way - a natural lifestyle guide.

It is in no way intended as an alternative to professional healthcare. It is advisable to consult your existing healthcare professional(s) before making any changes to your healthcare regime.

Holistic Local and the authors have made every effort to ensure that the information in this guide is accurate. However, we recommend further research before making any critical decisions based on this information, and will not be liable for any outcome that may result from acting on this information.

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Sharing this Guide...

Our hope is that readers will want to share this guide and its information with friends, family and colleagues. If you wish to do so, we ask simply that you share the whole e-book and not extracts. Please feel free to forward this e-book by email or just tell your friends about the website.

If you are a business and would like to use the guide as a marketing or promotional tool for the development of your natural business, then we are currently offering you the opportunity to co-brand this guide with your own logo and marketing message.

To find out more please visit www.holisticlocal.co.uk/naturalliving/cobrand



Natural Health

Natural Health

“Medical Science has known for years the answers to heart disease, cancer, stroke and other illnesses lie in nutrition and lifestyle changes, not radical surgeries, toxic drugs or radiation.” – Phillip Day, investigative writer and author.

Despite endless claims, counter-claims and controversy, interest in natural health such as health foods, supplements and complementary therapies, is experiencing a massive growth.

In the UK alone, an estimated £130 million a year is spent on alternative therapies like acupuncture and reflexology, and total spending is expected to rise by over 50% in the next four years. Health food stores are facing increased spending too with the popularity of whole and healthy food advocates in every magazine and on TV.

Recent surveys suggests that more than two thirds of British people believe that complementary therapies, including nutrition and herbal medicine, can be as valid as conventional treatment.

But why is there such unprecedented interest?

According to Damian ‘The Diet Detective’ Houston (www.thedietdetective.co.uk), a natural therapist, author of ‘Naked Nutrition’ and speaker: “Nutrition and lifestyle influences such as stress, over-acidity and toxicity are where modern medicine doesn’t have a clue, yet these are pivotal issues vital to good health.”

“I think people are no longer content with a ‘drug, cut or burn’ approach that often just deals with the symptoms of disease. We instinctively know that a preventative approach that supports our bodies’ natural ability to heal and maintain itself is preferable,” says Damian.

But should there really be a battle between conventional and complementary medicine? Many therapists think not and seek the best of both worlds in a new era of integrated medicine and a return to common sense, natural law and a respect for the human mind, body and spirit. A mission supported by Prince Charles’ Foundation for Integrated Health.

Natural therapy centres, health stores and the Internet are great places to find out more about natural health; or visit www.healthchampion.co.uk where you can discover the key areas of natural health such as detoxification, hydration and oxygenation, and download a free holistic health assessment.

There are thousands of books on this subject ranging from Phillip Day’s controversial *Health Wars* to the gentler, but no less powerful Dr John Briffa’s *Natural Health for Kids: How to Give Your Children the Very Best Start in Life*. The work of natural living pioneer and guru Leslie Kenton is also well worth a look.

Take a Holistic Approach

Western medicine tends to treat the symptoms of illness rather than the underlying cause. Holistic health is a philosophy for well being which promotes wholeness and considers the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of life as closely interconnected and balanced. According to the holistic view, illness is caused by an imbalance within our being and only through identifying this imbalance and treating the whole self can we truly heal.

<http://www.holisticlocal.co.uk>

Detox Yourself!

Thanks to modern life, many of us suffer from a toxic overload of poor food, chemical and pharmaceutical residues plus stress and electro-magnetic radiation. Combine this with dehydration and oxygen-starvation (to name just a few influences) and our bodies can become an ideal environment for chronic disease where illness may take hold. Maybe it's time to cleanse, or 'detox' as it's now commonly known.

<http://www.drgillianmckeith.com>

Pint of Water Please

Our bodies are thought to be over 70% water and keeping properly hydrated is thought to contribute to glowing skin, weight loss, less cellulite, better immunity and a huge boost in energy levels. Yet how many of us get anywhere near one litre a day, let alone two as many experts suggest?

<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/.../drinkingenough/>

Alkalize & Energise

It's reckoned that the human body likes to dwell in a slightly alkaline state, and just as minor body temperature changes can cause serious problems, so can changes in our internal pH. Most of the Western world's current food favourites boost acidity, which can leave the body in a very sorry and vulnerable state. Once over-acidic, we are prone to the increasingly familiar symptoms of tiredness, moodiness, fuzzy-headedness, headaches, aches & pains and obesity in the short term.

<http://www.ph-health.com>

Fitness First

Regular exercise is essential to keep your body and mind in good shape. By exercising regularly you can experience increased energy levels, increased metabolism, better health and a strengthened immune system. Exercise can also help reduce stress and increase your self-esteem.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/fitness/

www.holisticlocal.co.uk

Catch Some Rays

The sun has been getting some bad press lately; however, research has shown that sensible exposure to sunlight is incredibly important if we want to maintain good health. It's been discovered that exposure to sunlight enables the body to manufacture vitamin D which is used to ward off chronic diseases like cancer, osteoporosis, mental disorders and more.

<http://www.truthpublishing.com/MichaelHolick.html>

Earth Medicine

Herbs have been used since the earliest times to safely and effectively treat an almost unlimited range of diseases and ailments. Even today, herbs are still the primary source of healthcare for 80% of the world. Herbal remedies and supplements are the fastest growing area of complementary health in the UK.

<http://www.nimh.org.uk/>

First, Do No Harm

Do you smoke, drink alcohol regularly, or eat too much junk food? While these may bring short-term pleasures, you may be doing a great deal of long term damage to your health. If you truly want to experience good and lasting health, then it's time to stop polluting your body with harmful toxins.

<http://www.givingupsmoking.co.uk/>

No Place Like Home

We like to think of our home as a safe haven, however, the modern home can be an extremely dangerous place. It is a source of toxic pollutants as well as other hazards that threaten our health and well being. Many of the cleaning products we use in our home are highly toxic and so are the personal care products we use in the bathroom.

<http://www.greenpeace.org.uk/Products/Toxics/>

Breath of Life

Breathing is something we do automatically and rarely even think about; however, we might not breathe in the healthiest way. For most of us our breathing is too shallow and too quick - we are not taking in sufficient oxygen and are not eliminating sufficient carbon dioxide. As a result, our bodies are oxygen starved, and a toxic build-up can occur. Every cell in the body requires oxygen and our level of vitality is a product of the health of our combined cells.

<http://www.heartofbreathing.com/>



Healthy Eating

Healthy Eating

"The wise man should consider that health is the greatest of human blessings. Let food be your medicine." - Hippocrates

Of all the aspects of natural living, healthy eating is perhaps the most accessible and, if you are what you eat, surely one of the most important. What's more, there's never been more awareness on the subject, thanks, love 'em or loathe 'em, to the likes of nutritional guru Gillian McKeith and Chef Jamie Oliver.

Sure you can get books, magazines and DVDs on healthy eating, but if you want some human help and advice, a great place to start is your local health food shop which, if you haven't ventured into it before, is probably a treasure trove of health enhancing foods, drinks and other products.

"If you've not been into a health store, it can be a little daunting with so many things on offer," says understanding natural health retailer Michael Jull who runs such a shop and website in Devon.

"Don't worry however, we're a nice bunch of people and happy to help from our experience and knowledge. Although we cannot diagnose or treat customers, our shelves are lined with natural products that have helped countless people – many for generations - without harmful side effects. We have even had customers claim their local GP and Practice Nurse has sent them to the shop!" adds Michael.

Although changing habits can be hard, remember that new habits are formed by persistence and enjoyment – so ensure you get a few healthy treats in among your new nutritional regime!

Some experts, such as Dr Steve Nugent, an American naturopath, claim that our food supply no longer contains enough nutritional content because of intensive farming and modern methods of food production. They suggest supplementation is a necessity.

Your local health food store is a great place to get to grips with supplementation in the form of vitamins, minerals, probiotics and digestive enzymes, and if recent scares around supplements have left you in doubt, bear in mind the words of Austin Mitchell, UK Member of Parliament:

"The streets would be littered with the dead if vitamins were half as dangerous as some people like to make out!"

Whilst nutritionists vary greatly in their ideas, there are some common themes that most agree on including the value of drinking more water and less caffeine; eating more fruit and vegetables as well as reducing wheat, meat and dairy intake.

Try reading books by Gillian McKeith, Patrick Holford and The Diet Doctors too.

Don't Panic; Go Organic

There are many good reasons to eat organic food. It's thought to be healthier because it usually contains more vitamins and nutrients and is also free of harmful additives, flavourings and preservatives. Chances are you won't find any residue from poisonous chemical pesticides either so organic foods are good for wildlife and the environment too.

<http://www.whyorganic.org>

Balancing Act

Why become too obsessed with various healthy eating or diet fads? You could just stick with a healthy and balanced diet that gives you all the vitamins and nutrients that you need to stay healthy. And there's nothing wrong with having a few guilty pleasures providing they are taken in moderation and balanced with a range of healthy and nutritious foods.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/your_weight/eatingwell_balanced.shtml

Eat Your Greens

A large body of research proves that fruits and vegetables are critical to promoting good health - experts say you should aim to have at least 5 portions a day. Fruit and vegetables are packed with essential vitamins, minerals, fibre and disease-fighting phytochemicals, which can help reduce the risk of many serious illnesses.

<http://www.5aday.nhs.uk/>

Frankenstein Foods?

There are many claims that genetically modified food is an experiment that is doomed to end in disaster, and evidence of this is already accumulating at a frightening rate. Not only is GM potentially harmful to our personal health, it could also prove to be harmful to the environment and even our entire food supply.

<http://www.seedsofdeception.com>

Super foods Rule!

Check out the exponential nutritional benefit of superfoods like broccoli, avocado, aloe vera, phytoplankton, noni, goji berries and mangosteen. It's been said that nature is complex so that we don't have to be – and these amazing foods prove it. Simply eat, enjoy and reap the nourishing benefits. Glyconutrition is a missing link in the modern food chain worthy of research too.

http://www.nutripeople.co.uk/super_healing_foods_index.asp

Meat Halfway

Eating too much meat is thought by many to be unhealthy for us, and devastating to the environment. Meat contains saturated fats, which result in higher cholesterol and greater risk of heart disease, cancer and obesity. In many parts of the world, meat farming practices are contributing to a rapid increase in global desertification and the destruction of our rainforests.

<http://www.eatlessmeat.org>

Sweet is Sour

Understanding the truth about refined sugar would probably put you off it for life! Some nutritionists even call it a poison and say it can be lethal when ingested by humans because it provides only 'empty' or 'naked' calories. It lacks the natural minerals which are present in sugar beet or cane and is worse than nothing because it drains and leaches the body of precious nutrients when digested

http://www.mercola.com/article/sugar/dangers_of_sugar.htm

Due Process?

According to a report by the World Health Association, processed foods are to blame for the sharp rise in obesity levels and chronic disease around the globe. Many processed foods contain too much sugar, salt and other harmful additives. Many of us who lead busy lives buy processed foods for convenience, but the harmful effects they're having on our health and vitality are definitely not convenient!

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/2814253.stm>

Weight For It

All of us come in different shapes and sizes and there are also many factors that determine an 'ideal weight'. It is important however that we discover and maintain our individual optimum weight – through personal exploration and experience - otherwise we can suffer from a wide range of health problems.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/healthy_living/your_weight/

Learn to Cook!

Our busy and fast-paced lives mean that many people rely on eating out, takeaways or convenience foods. As a result we may have forgotten the simple art and pleasure of cooking. Cooking our own meals encourages us to be healthier by making us aware of the ingredients and can unleash an often untapped creative side. For those on a tight budget, cooking can be a lot cheaper and tastier than eating out too!

<http://allrecipes.com>

www.holisticlocal.co.uk



Go Green

Go Green

“Embracing an eco-friendly lifestyle can be a daunting prospect for your average urban dweller: our synthetic surroundings are miles away from inspiring pastoral scenes, and the temptation to indulge in a spot of mindless consumerism lurks around every corner.”- Lucy Siegle, author Green Living in the Urban Jungle

Sharing as we do, a planet whose finite and dwindling resources power our economy and lifestyle, most of us recognise that we need to change our ways for the sake of our own survival and that of future generations.

On the other hand, doomsday scenarios of global warming, melting ice-caps and environmental destruction can leave us feeling disillusioned and disempowered when it comes to altering the way we live.

Put simply, ‘going green’ tends to revolve around the 3 R’s – Reducing, Recycling and Re-using, and balance is surely the key.

Everything little thing we do to help the environment matters and - as with all areas of natural living - ‘going green’ is perhaps best seen as a journey and not a destination.

Now that 60% of our rubbish can be recycled, but only 11% actually is, and with the knowledge that recycling a one-metre stack of newspaper can save a tree, there’s clearly loads to be done! And doing our best is what matters, not feeling bad, guilty or beating yourself up for not doing enough.

We’re told it costs £332 million a year to clean up the litter on Britain's streets – that’s a lot of money that could be used for health or education, if we just take a little more responsibility for our immediate environment.

Given that 150 million plastic carrier bags are used in the UK each week, which are thought to last up to 500 years in landfill, re-using your old shopping bags, for example, is a small gesture that makes a big difference.

Just about every area of our life can be blessed with green treatment - reducing, recycling and re-using – and thereby lessening our impact on Mother Nature and the world of our children’s children.

“It’s hardly news that a growing number of people want to step back from the brink of western consumerism and find a way to live an all-round cleaner existence - one that is not only easier on the physical body but one that is lighter on the conscience too. So how do we go about it?” asks Leo Hickman, who shows us how in his excellent book *A Life Stripped Bare*, a practical look at how to live in a more ethically sound and environmentally aware way.

Other books with a practical edge on going green include Allan Shepherd and Caroline Oakley’s *‘52 Weeks to Change Your World’* and Mark Hegarty’s *‘The Little Book of Living Green’*.

Tread Lightly

Calculate your ecological footprint and discover how sustainable your lifestyle really is. You may be shocked to discover that if the entire world's population consumed as much as the average westerner, then we would need several planets to sustain us all.

<http://www.myfootprint.org/>

Recycle...again and again and again

One of the easiest ways to help reduce your ecological footprint is to recycle as much as you can. Usually at least 60% of our household can be recycled, yet few of us actually do it. Waste that can easily be recycled includes glass, plastic, metal and paper.

<http://www.recycle-more.co.uk/>

Rotten Shame?

A compost heap is easy to make and maintain and it's a wonderful way of recycling organic material such as leftover food. Compost makes excellent fertilizer because it returns all the nutrients and energy from your leftover food into the soil where they can be reused.

<http://www.compost.org.uk/>

Vote with Your Wallet

Become an ethical consumer and vote with your wallet! Why give your money to businesses and corporations who think nothing of harming the environment as long as they're making a profit. These companies will only change their ways when they start losing what matters most – customers and profits.

<http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/>

Live in a Green House

No, we don't recommend living in a glass house! But do try and make your home as green as possible. Make sure your home is properly insulated, so you're not wasting energy. Avoid using cleaning products with harmful chemicals and consider using efficient light bulbs. Saving energy not only saves the environment, it can also save you cash. Use the calculator below to see how much money you could save:

<http://www.est.org.uk/myhome/whatcan/calculate/>

Car Crime

Having a car is fairly essential for many of us today; however, most of us use our cars far more than we maybe need to. Leave your car at home as much as you can and try using public transport whenever possible. Alternatively, walk, cycle or share a lift. If you're looking to buy a new car, make sure it's an efficient model, or even better go for an electric or hybrid car. Hybrid cars produce 75% less pollution than standard ultra low emission vehicles.

<http://www.eta.co.uk/>

Don't be a Drip

Water is one of the most important resources on our planet and none of us can survive long without it. Water seems to be everywhere, yet most people don't realise that only 0.3% of all the water on the planet can be consumed by humans. Be conscious of the amount of water you use. Take more showers instead of baths and use water-conserving devices around the home.

<http://www.h2ouse.org/>

Green Power

Not only is carbon based energy bad news for the environment (burning it releases harmful carbon dioxide into the atmosphere), it's also starting to run out! Many experts predict that the world is on the brink of a major energy crisis caused by rapidly dwindling oil supplies - known as Peak Oil. The only way a crisis can be avoided is if we all switch to renewable energy supplies in the years ahead.

www.greenenergy.org.uk

Be Fair

Globalisation has sadly resulted in many unscrupulous corporations exploiting the workers of less developed nations, while significantly damaging the environment – all in the name of profits. In order to redress this imbalance and help put an end to this global exploitation, Fair Trade has been developed, which ensures that workers are treated fairly and are not underpaid.

<http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>

Keep it Light

How much of what you buy do you really need? And does buying lots of stuff really make you any happier? Most people consume far more than they need to without realising the damage that consumerism is causing to the environment. Try and simplify your life as much as you can. People who practice voluntary simplicity can find their lives to be happier, more meaningful and a lot less stressful.

<http://www.simpleliving.net/>

www.holisticlocal.co.uk



Connect With Nature

Connect With Nature

“Only when the last tree has died and the last river been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realise we cannot eat money”. - Cree Indian Proverb

No guide to holistic living would be complete without due respect for the universal single parent Mother Nature – Father Time would have been included, but he’s still at the office doing some overtime!

On a more serious note, nature – ‘the roofless temple of all religions’ - is where we came from and where we are due to return if only in the sense of ‘ashes to ashes and dust to dust’.

This section encourages us to check in with Nature from time to time and sense the greatness and magnificence that she holds in store for us, and where we can return at any time in our lives to savour her peace and wonder.

A soaring bird, autumnal leaves blowing in the wind and a glorious hilltop view all feed the soul and help us get out of ourselves and bring perspective to our troubles.

It would appear to be a medical fact according to researchers in the British Medical Journal who said: “Connecting with nature can improve your health and well being. The theory is known as ecotherapy - restoring health through contact with nature.”

“Use of wildlife in some therapies is reported to improve quality of life,” wrote the authors. “Smaller animals (for example, squirrels, owls, and raccoons) have been used successfully in therapies for children with emotional and behavioural problems.”

What’s more, people who take part in conservation projects report subjective health benefits, associated with being outdoors and feeling part of a greater system beyond the individual. “Such projects can help overcome social isolation, develop skills, and improve employment prospects, as well as provide the known benefits associated with exercise,” concluded the report.

However, anyone who has ever watched the sun rise or set; who has left their footprints on a white sandy beach or had the satisfaction of resting aching limbs in front of an open fire after a good day’s hiking, won’t need a scientist to tell them how healing nature can be.

Look no further for proof than author of the hunter-gatherer classic ‘Food for Free’, Richard Mabey, who has penned a new work in which he charts his descent into clinical depression and subsequent recovery thanks to his rediscovery of nature and its restorative power. It’s called ‘Nature Cure’.

If you go down to the woods today...

Why not leave the noise and pollution of the concrete jungle whenever possible? Even if it's just to walk through your local park or woodlands. Studies have shown that just looking at trees and plants can reduce stress, lower blood pressure and relieve tension in your muscles.

<http://www.ramblers.org.uk>

Go Wild!

Going out alone into the wilderness can bring about remarkable healing. Solitude affords us the quiet to enjoy the wholeness of self, yet heighten our awareness of our connection to life around us. Wilderness visitors are inspired and humbled by the feeling of being part of something larger than themselves.

<http://www.wilderness-trust.org/>

Save the Rainforests

The rainforests are the lungs of the Earth and perform the vital job of removing huge quantities of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, converting it to oxygen. They're home to an incredible variety of plant and wildlife, as well as millions of indigenous peoples. The destruction of our rainforests is one of major contributors to global climate change as well as causing thousands of species of wildlife to become extinct. Millions of hectares of our rainforests are being destroyed each year.

<http://www.rainforestfoundationuk.org>

How does your garden grow?

Gardening – the 'Green Gym' - connects you with nature and the rhythm of life. Offering many wonderful health and therapeutic benefits, it contributes to healthy active living and encourages all three types of physical activity - endurance, flexibility and strength. Horticultural therapists have discovered that gardening provides a form of emotional expression and release, and it helps people to connect with others.

<http://www.letsoggardening.co.uk/>

One Potato, Two Potato...

Why not grow your own vegetables? If you don't have a big enough garden then see if there are any allotments available in your local area - they can often be had for less than £40 a year! Not only does growing vegetables help you become more sustainable and self-sufficient, it can also save you money!

http://www.bbc.co.uk/.../growfruitandveg_index.shtml

Talk to Your Plants!

Don't worry; they won't laugh at you – even if your friends do! Believe it or not, many studies have suggested that plants have feelings and they have a variety of ways of expressing them. American researcher Clive Backster discovered that he could measure plants reacting to our thoughts by hooking them up to a polygraph (lie detector) machine. It's believed that talking to plants can have a positive affect on their growth.

Stop – Smell the Flowers

According to recent behavioural research conducted at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, nature provides us with a simple way to improve emotional health - flowers. The presence of flowers triggers happy emotions heightens feelings of satisfaction and effects social behaviour in a positive manner far beyond what is normally believed.

<http://www.aboutflowers.com/happier.html>

Water Whole

There is no better way to encourage wildlife into your garden than by building a wildlife pond. Frogs, newts and toads will be obvious residents. Dragonflies should find your pond quickly and will amaze you with their aerial acrobatics. Birds should come down to bathe in the water and to drink, and if you're lucky you might even get foxes, deer, hedgehogs and other mammals, possibly badgers using your pond as a watering hole in certain parts of the country.

<http://www.noahsarkgardens.co.uk/Articles/WildlifePond.htm>

Change of Green Scene

Eco tourism can be an excellent way to spend time in nature and make a positive difference. Many eco tour operators offer travellers the opportunity to participate in conservation or preservation projects. An important element of this type of project is education. The goal is that through participation, eco travellers will return home with increased awareness and concern for environmental issues and therefore continue to behave in an environmentally conscious way.

<http://www.ecotourdirectory.com/>

Pesticide Aside

Stop using chemical pesticides and insect sprays. Pesticides are the only chemicals deliberately made to be toxic and introduced directly into the environment. They are used in agriculture, in homes and in urban areas to kill or control insects, weeds and diseases. Poisonous residues can be found in humans, water, food, air and soil.

<http://www.pan-uk.org/>

www.holisticlocal.co.uk



Know Thyself

Know Thyself

**Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.**

-- Tao Te Ching

Some people reject personal development and self-improvement as nonsense; the territory of no-hopers and losers who are simply lacking willpower.

Others, the 'glass half-full' brigade, claim your fate lies in your genes, the environment or some other factor over which we have little or no control.

If the 'human potential' movement, which arose out of California in the 1970's was right in its assertion that we only use something like 3% of our psychological resources, then clearly, there's room for improvement – and it starts within.

Those with what could be called a holistic outlook on life are often 'glass half-full' types, characterised by a willingness to take responsibility for their lives and the planet, a sense of connectedness as well as an acknowledgement of something bigger than themselves – a universal intelligence or something spiritual.

Personal development, positive change and spirituality are all arguably the quest to realise our own individual power and the greater power out of which all life arises.

Life Coach, and change expert, Vinny Grant (www.invinceability.co.uk) says there are common themes among people who are committed to 'knowing themselves' better, they are:

- An ability to address and ultimately resolve conflict (within and without)
- A yearning to find peace and fulfilment
- An ability to create a vision and structure for the future
- A sense of personal and planetary responsibility
- A realisation of something greater than the self we started out with
- An interest in ideas and techniques that support any of the above

Personal development is therefore the difference that makes a difference in our lives, but sometimes it's hard to see a way beyond our personal limitations and comfort zone.

Think about: Whatever goes on in your life, you're the one thing that's always there in the middle of it and it's the little differences in what you are 'being' that will make a massive difference in how you are 'doing'.

And there's no time like the present. Anthony Robbins, internationally respected author, trainer and guru tells us: "What you do right *now* is what will shape your destiny."

Other big names in spirituality and personal development such as Louise Hay, Stuart Wilde, Deepak Chopra, Susan Jeffers, Wayne Dyer and Marianne Williamson are all well worth a look if you are not familiar with their work.

Make a Date to Meditate

It's claimed and proven that meditation truly benefits the mind, body and soul. On the health side, a mountain of research shows that it reduces stress, improves your immune system and your body's ability to heal itself. Mentally, it increases your concentration and capacity to learn more easily. On a soul level, deep meditation helps you to bypass your conscious mind and connect with your true or higher self, which will help you, discover who you really are.

<http://www.newscientist.com/article.ns?id=dn8317>

Get On Purpose

Few people, on their deathbed are likely to say: "I wish I'd spent more time at the office." What would you like to say, when you look back? Are you doing what you came here for? Sure, the bills have to be paid, but a life well lived will certainly feature a sense of fulfilment that goes beyond 'the job'. Take time to uncover your unique contribution or as Buddhists say – 'right livelihood'.

<http://www.stevepavlina.com/.../how-to-discover-your-life-purpose-in-about-20-minutes/>

No Fear

It's possible that fear is the only thing that holds us back in life. This may include fear of failure, fear of change, fear of getting hurt, fear of what others might think and even fear of success. Why not "Feel the fear and do it anyway?"

<http://www.susanjeffers.com>

Whose Life Is It Anyway?

One of the most important lessons we can learn is to take full responsibility for everything that happens in our lives. That doesn't mean it's all our fault, it means we are responsible for how we respond. What's the point in complaining and getting depressed by events? When – in truth – all that really changes is the way we see and react to things. "It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness".

Sixth Sense

It's thought that everyone is born with intuition, but sadly most of us have been taught to ignore our intuitive feelings and rely solely on our logical mind. We have all relied on 'gut instinct' or had 'a feeling' or even felt 'vibes about someone, something or a situation. Imagine what life could be like if you could develop a healthy balance between logic and intuition – and use it wisely.

<http://www.silvaultramind.co.uk/>

Go Native

Some of the most profound and useful spiritual wisdom comes from the indigenous peoples of this planet like the Aborigines, rain forest peoples and Native Americans. Their ancient and deeper knowledge of nature, the cosmos and spirituality can put us in touch with our true, timeless selves.

<http://www.shamanism.co.uk/>

Thought Process

Have you heard the expression: "Thoughts are things"? Think about it: everything that exists began as a thought – even you. What if you could think something and then have it happen? Well you do – just about every minute of every day! It may be that your 'luck' is random, simply because you are not consistent or focussed. Too good to be true? Only one way to find out...

<http://asamanthinketh.net/>

Talking Back to Happiness

It's one thing to know where you are and where you want to go, but it's another to know what might be in the way. Talking it through, out loud with a therapist, can really help. Seeing a counsellor or psychotherapist - a non-judgemental, sounding board who has your best interests at heart - can help realise and release long-held blockages.

http://www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html

Old News?

Forget the new age - why not re-discover the old age! Truth transcends time and the ancient scriptures of India, China and the Middle East have treasure beyond measure hidden from busy, modern life. Try the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Tao Te Ching and Sufi texts for ancient wisdom as useful today as in the time it was written.

<http://www.thetao.info>

Essential Guide

We are blessed in our times to have so many inspirational authors, teachers and gurus who may have that little nugget of much-needed inspiration that helps us to understand and breakthrough the blockages that hold us back. It's important to choose wisely however, using a mixture of rational judgement and intuitive trust. "When the student is ready, the teacher arrives," said one old sage.

<http://www.transformationalbookcircle.com>



Relax!

Relax!

“Slow down and enjoy life. It’s not only the scenery you miss by going too fast – you also miss the sense of where you are going and why.” - Eddie Cantor

“Chill out!” could well be the most-heard mantra of our busy, stressed-out times - where the pursuit of rest and relaxation has become stressful in its own right.

What, indeed, is this world – if full of care – we have no time to stop, let alone stop and stare? If, right now, you direct your attention to the core of your body and imagine that ‘Friday feeling’ or the joy of being on holiday with no agenda or timetable – feeling the sun on your back - you may well be able to understand the therapeutic benefits of relaxation.

Stay with it, and your heart rate can drop and at will you can move yourself out of the danger zone where stress hormones singe your health and your love of life is lost to a mental to-do list as long as your arm.

Clearly, relaxation is not merely a physical state of rest, and not only a state of mind. To realise our deepest states of spiritual connection and peace, we need holistic relaxation – the state enabled by techniques such as meditation, tai chi, yoga and other processes of ‘mindfulness’.

That said, physical rest is perhaps our first building block and there are health foods that can promote ease such as kava, passionflower, chamomile and valerian. It’s always best to work with your healthcare consultant before managing stress with any herbal product – they’ll help you to handle the bigger picture because it can be hard to do it all alone.

Put simply, relaxation allows the immune system to recover and function more effectively. It has been shown to lower blood pressure in many people and so decreases the likelihood of stroke and heart attack.

Anyone who’s tried it knows that meditation isn’t just about sitting cross-legged and chanting ‘Om’. Thankfully, it’s no longer the occult practice it once was, now that athletes, business leaders and pop stars have realised its benefits.

Interestingly, beyond reduced stress and anxiety, meditation claims a huge range of benefits including reduced incidence of disease, improved intelligence and memory as well as increased creativity and learning.

Beyond the personal level, experts claim that meditation practiced within communities can even bring about improved social behaviour and better relationships at home and work plus increased tolerance, improved job performance and satisfaction. Need we say more relaxation is an obvious health issue, and not a soft option or the domain of navel-gazing hermits?

“Life is what happens when you’re busy making plans” - John Lennon

Stillness Speaks

Most of us have an incessant internal chatter within our minds, which usually degenerates to the negative. We talk to ourselves and imaginary others, about the past, about the future and all the things we want to change. Yet, only by stopping or modifying this internal dialogue can we ever hope to truly relax and find inner peace.

<http://www.eckhartolle.com>

If Not Now, When?

Hey – there's only now! What if you could give yourself fully to this moment? Each moment well lived, without fear for the future or regret over the past, would add up to a totally momentous life. People say life is short, but it's the longest thing you'll ever do! Why not enjoy every moment you can?

www.deathclock.com

Feel the Force

Tai Chi is based on the concept of chi, a vital force that – in ideal circumstances - courses through your body through specific pathways or meridians. Some say Tai Chi improves health by breaking up blockages in the flow of chi, thereby restoring energy balance. Tai Chi began as a martial art, but these days it's most frequently practiced for its health benefits and meditative properties. A technique that integrates body, mind and spirit, that's been practiced for centuries in China.

<http://www.taichifinder.co.uk/>

Mother of All Therapies

Massage is one of the oldest and simplest forms of therapy and is brilliant for health and relaxation. As well as being an excellent stress reliever, massage has been proven beneficial for treating sleep disorders, high blood pressure, diabetes, low back pain, immunity suppression, spinal injuries, age-related disorders, infertility, eating disorders, smoking cessation and depression, to name just a few benefits

Can't Beat a Retreat

If you feel stressed, over-worked and in desperate need of rejuvenating then consider a holistic retreat. There are many kinds of retreats including spa retreats where you can detox, and be pampered to your heart's desire. Or if you fancy something a little deeper and more challenging, consider a spiritual retreat that encourages self-exploration and inner healing.

www.theretreatcompany.com

www.holisticlocal.co.uk

Child's Play

What happened to that happy little soul who used to play in the sand, rock pools and mud? We grew up didn't we? We became adult-erated! Wouldn't it be great to be un-self-conscious again? To rediscover the bliss of getting totally absorbed in a jigsaw, game or some colouring-in. Go on, get your felt-tips out - we won't tell anyone.

<http://www.arujo.co.uk/>

Sleep Tight

Sleep is essential for good health and wellbeing, yet millions of us are not getting enough. Our individual needs vary, but most adults should be trying to get an average of 7 to 8 hours a night. Sleep helps repair the body and mind; a lack of sleep can result in emotional disturbances, aggressiveness, apathy and depression say experts.

<http://www.sleepcouncil.com/>

Why Worry?

There's a Buddhist proverb that asks: "If you have a problem you cannot solve, why worry about it? If you have a problem you can solve, then why worry about it?" Mark Twain said: "I'm an old man and have known a great many troubles – most of them never happened."

Worry: what is it good for?

Train your Brain

The idea that relaxation is a skill that can be learned may seem a little odd to some. Fact is, busy lifestyles, long working hours and the pressures of work can condition us out of the 'relax-reflex', making it impossible to switch off without the aid of drink or drugs. Thankfully, there are many books, classes and workshops devoted to relaxation training, offering techniques that can be learned and used – to good effect – for life.

Best of Both Worlds

Bear in mind that there are two sides to relaxation – that of the body and of the mind too. Whilst a hot bath, can do wonders for the body, it may not calm a troubled mind. And conversely, where meditation can do wonders for the mind, the Lotus position can wreak havoc with achy joints! Pick techniques that will offer ease to both the mental and the physical.



Express Yourself

Express Yourself

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he or she grows up.” - Pablo Picasso

The demands of work and family life can often leave little time for creative expression. And as the great Victorian social reformer John Ruskin said: “Industry without art is brutality.”

Whether you see yourself as an artist, or not, it's important to take time out for creativity. Just as we need to relax to receive peace, it could be argued that we need creative expression to realise the beauty of life as the energy we can shape with our heads, hearts and bodies.

As Cathy Better puts it: “Life is raw material. We are artisans. We can sculpt our existence into something beautiful, or debase it into ugliness. It's in our hands.”

That said, it's interesting that we admire artists of all kinds – notably in film, music and the fine arts – but in the process create a ‘them and us’ situation that can render our own creative efforts a little embarrassing.

However, persevering with drawing, painting, words and music in our own right can bring extraordinary fulfilment if we can just overcome that first cringe factor and the overly-harsh judgement our own efforts.

Keeping a journal or diary is a great way to foster creative reflection. As Oscar Wilde said: "I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train."

Some researchers have even found evidence to support the notion that journaling has a positive impact on physical well being saying it strengthens immune cells.

Certainly writing about stressful events can help you come to terms with them, thereby reducing their impact; many great songwriters have turned traumatic relationship breakdowns into million-selling hits!

If you fancy having a go yourself, you might find Julia Cameron's *The Artist's Way* helpful. Described as ‘A Course in Discovering and Recovering Your Creative Self’ it's perhaps the ultimate guide and workbook on the subject and suggests that creative expression is the natural direction of life.

She and collaborator Mark Bryan lead their reader through a comprehensive 12-week program to recover their creativity from a variety of blocks, including limiting beliefs, fear, self-sabotage, jealousy, guilt, addictions and other inhibiting forces, replacing them with artistic confidence and productivity.

“The heart of creativity is an experience of the mystical union; the heart of the mystical union is an experience of creativity.” Julia Cameron

Dear Diary

When we capture our thoughts on paper, we can explore different sides of our nature and personality. We can identify beliefs that hold us back and glimpse our potential and thereafter monitor ourselves. We can discover insights, creativity and wisdom we didn't even know we had. We have all the wisdom we need inside us - journaling gives us the power to draw it out.

<http://www.journalingtools.com>

Draw Your Self Out

As children we loved to draw and paint and make a good old mess. Being an artist is a wonderful method of self-expression, but as we get older we develop an inner critic and forget art was fun when we didn't care what other people thought of our work. If you feel like reconnecting with your inner artist then you'll be pleased to know that experts say drawing is a skill that can easily be learnt with practice.

<http://www.drawright.com/>

Make Beautiful Music

Music can be inspirational, healing and lift our spirits; the ability to appreciate and respond to music is an inborn quality in human beings. It can be a wonderful tool for personal growth and self expression because it can so easily help us release our feelings. If you've always dreamed of learning a musical instrument, perhaps now is the time to stop making excuses and just do it!

<http://www.makingmusic.org.uk>

I Like to Move It Move It

Throughout human history, people of many cultures have used dance to express powerful emotions, tell stories, treat illness, celebrate important events and maintain communal bonds. Seems like the disco has untold potential! A powerful form of self-expression and a great way of letting go, dance can move you in more ways than one.

<http://www.danceweb.co.uk/>

Use Your Brain for a Change

You've probably heard it said that we only use 10% of our brains. Some researchers even believe it's more like 1%! Imagine what we could achieve if we used the other 99%, or even just 10% extra. Try 'brain foods', memory games and activities like crosswords and Sudoku that stretch and expand your brainpower.

<http://www.mindtools.com/>

Write On!

It's often said that each of us has at least one book inside of us. So what's yours about? Why not start writing a book, even if you have no intentions of getting it published. Who knows what kind of a journey it might take you on and what you might discover in the process?

<http://www.writing.com/>

Act Up

"All the world's a stage" right enough, but there's a time and a place for drama. What if you could get that drama queen (or king) on stage enjoying a little creative self-expression? Acting is a great way to learn about teamwork, expand your memory with remembering lines, overcome stage fright, and a safe place to act the fool!

<http://www.amdram.co.uk/>

Rhyme and Reason

Poetry can be a great creative release. Why not celebrate your love by trying your hand at a romantic sonnet or how about discovering the spiritual simplicity of Zen through the ancient Japanese Haiku? Getting a mental 'can of worms' out of your head and on to paper can bring peace of mind - and even earn you the odd poetry prize!

<http://www.haiku.com/>

Creative Inspiration

If you're ever short of inspiration, why not visit an art gallery or exhibition? The work of the great and ancient masters, as well as the efforts of local amateurs, can be a great way to get the creative forces working in your favour. The Internet also gives you unprecedented access to just about every important work of art ever created.

<http://www.britisharts.co.uk/galleries.htm>

Turn it Off

Don't waste your life on the couch and consider the benefits of giving up television. Your mind becomes less cluttered and more importantly you then find the time to create the life you desire. You can spend the extra time you gain (often two, three, or four hours per day) developing creativity, learning new skills or just spending quality time with your friends, family or loved ones.

<http://www.trashyourtv.com>



Live Your Dream

Live Your Dream

“Not finding our true vocation is a cause of enormous personal suffering in our life, and finding our vocation is one of the greatest sources of joy and fulfilment to us and a blessing to the world. The world needs more people living their personal purpose and being a source of inspiration to themselves and those around them.” – Nick Williams, ‘work expert’ and Dream Builder.

Imagine for a moment a life that allowed you to be well paid, doing your dream job whilst making a positive difference. Impossible? You can't have it all ways?

Well, increasing numbers of people are realising this dream despite the notion that you can't have your cake and eat it too. Surprising really, when the most commonly-held beliefs around work and money are that work is something you do to pay your bills, not enjoy, and that money is the root of all evil.

Arguably, if that's the way most of us see it, that's exactly how it will be for us - cradle to grave struggle, making ends meet and living for the weekend.

If, however, you are ready to challenge this way of thinking and living and can entertain the idea of getting rich, loving what you do and changing the world through your work, there are many authors, speakers, publications and audio programmes that can help you get started.

One such expert, Nick Williams, has identified the twelve principles of what he calls 'the work we were born to do'. He shows how we can activate these principles to amazing effect and utilise our inner power at whatever stage we have reached in our working lives.

Other authors worth looking at include Richard Nelson Bolles, creator of the fulfilling employment classic *What Color Is Your Parachute?* First published over 30 years ago, Bolles's formula for finding the right job is to ask two refreshing questions: What do you want to do? Where do you want to do it? Answer those and you're well on your way to finding your ideal job.

Laurence G. Boldt's *Zen and the Art of Making a Living: A Practical Guide to Creative Career Design* and Julie Jansen's *I Don't Know What I Want, But I Know It's Not This: A Step-By-step Guide to Finding Gratifying Work* are also well worth a look.

For those considering opting out of the 'rat race' or becoming their own boss, try Jonathon Jay's *Sack Your Boss! - Quit Your Job and Turn Your Passion into Your Profession*.

Do what you Love; Love what you Do

You only get one life - unless you believe in reincarnation (but that's another story!) Given that time flies, do you really want to trudge through life doing something you hate every day? Probably not, yet so many people do. If you haven't worked it out already - it's time to discover your true purpose in life.

<http://www.nick-williams.com>

Life Long Learning

Most people stop learning when they finish their formal education, but why stop learning? It's never been easier to pick up new skills, especially with the rapid growth of the Internet. People who live their dreams and are the most successful in life, have a thirst for knowledge. You could re-train yourself by distance learning, whilst counting down the remaining days of your daily drudge. There can always be light at the end of the tunnel – you just might need to switch it on.

<http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>

Change Career

Experts say that, on average, people change their job about every seven years. Are you happy in your current job? Have you given any thought to what your next step might be, or are you leaving it all to chance? What sort of work would have you leaping out of bed in the morning? A life coach can be a great ally when looking at career moves.

http://content.monster.co.uk/career_change/

Sack your Boss!

Fancy starting your own business? It takes a lot of courage, hard work and admittedly a certain amount of risk, but the pay-off can be hugely rewarding. Let's face it; it's hard getting wealthy working for someone else and often unfulfilling too. Be your own boss – if only part-time - If you really want to make money and make a difference.

<http://www.businesslink.gov.uk>

Get Out and Stay Out

Get out of debt! We know it's easier said than done when modern banking practices seem to be positively encouraging debt. Debt is a form of slavery because you are in financial and psychological bondage to others. Debt is a dream killer because when you're shackled by debt it's unlikely you'll risk changing your circumstances in order to follow your heart's desire. Make it priority to get out of debt. If you can't stop spending, cut up your credit and store cards!

<http://www.cccs.co.uk/>

www.holisticlocal.co.uk

Don't Forget Your Passport!

Travel broadens the mind and can nourish the soul. The diversity of people, places and experience on this incredible planet is mind-boggling. 'Wanderlust' is a powerful force - once you have it, it's hard to get rid of it. If travelling is your dream, but money is your problem, why not learn the art of backpacking and see the world close-up and personal.

<http://www.artoftravel.com>

Score Goals

Few people set goals and few people realise their dreams – there is a link! You multiply your chances of success if you write your goals down and visualise your dreams on a regular basis. When setting goals, make them big, yet simple and quantified – read them every day and over-rule your negative beliefs with focussed repetition and positive affirmations.

<http://www.simpleology.com>

Get Guidance

If you're serious about succeeding in your calling - consider finding a mentor or life coach. If you are on a 'road less travelled', you may benefit from the advice and insight of someone who's walked that path before you. Why not start at the top and ask your hero or heroine – in your dream job, hobby or achievement – to be your life coach?

<http://www.lifeshift.co.uk>

Be Adventurous

How exciting is your life? Sometimes we all need to cast off the shackles of normality and do something exciting for a change. Try something new and adventurous – even just a break from the norm - so that you can feel alive again and get your passion back. In fact, why not do that thing you always wanted to do, but keep putting off? Book it now!

<http://www.explore.co.uk>

Never Give Up

Think about it: perseverance and failure cannot live in the same body. Failure is a judgement, not a fact. You didn't fail, you just ran out of time, motivation or resources. So keep on keepin' on! Champion figure skater Sasha Cohen knows the deal: "Follow your dreams, work hard, practice and persevere. Make sure you eat a variety of foods, get plenty of exercise and maintain a healthy lifestyle."



Community

Community

“When I meet people from other cultures I know that they too want happiness and do not want suffering, this allows me to see them as brothers and sisters.” - Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso

One of the ironies of the ‘global village’ Internet age is that whilst we may be connected to a thriving online community, we may not even know the people who live next-door, let alone a few doors down the street.

Indeed, the word ‘community’, once almost certainly meaning your physical locality has been stretched beyond all recognition to mean a group with which we have something in common.

It’s therefore odd that in these times when there are more ways to communicate with each other than ever before, isolation and loneliness still exist – but exist they do.

Now we’re not suggesting everyone should join a 1970’s style commune to overcome the great divide – although it’s interesting to note that there around 4,000 ‘intentional’ communities such as eco-villages, alternative and co-housing groups in the UK alone – but we do reckon the benefits of getting connected are under-rated.

One of the qualities of the ‘holistic mindset’ is the view that everything is connected, so it’s no wonder we humans get unhappy when we get a sense of disconnection from the people, things and places around us.

Getting involved with a group of some kind – perhaps based around a special interest – could be a great way to overcome separation AND improve your social life, doing something you love.

Reaching out through environmental or other charity work is also a great way to connect with other people and the sense of achievement that comes from working together on a project – where the collective energy is greater than the sum of the parts – can be truly life changing.

But connecting needn’t be so obvious. The idea of performing ‘random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty’ will do wonders for your sense of connection with your fellow humans and your community alike, without anyone needing to know what you are up to!

If many spiritual teachers are to be believed, separation is thankfully only an illusion, so let’s get together and break down the barriers that keep us apart – emotionally, mentally and physically.

After all, it’s only by being part of our community that we can change it for the better.

Shop Locally

Did you know that on average, for every £1 you spend in a supermarket, farmers only get 9p! By using local farmers' markets you can help them and get your produce fresher and healthier because it hasn't been imported, warehoused and distributed like most so-called 'fresh' foods.

<http://www.bigbarn.co.uk/>

Come Together

Intentional Community is an inclusive term for eco-villages, co-housing projects, residential land trusts, communes, urban housing cooperatives and other related projects and dreams. They cater for the growing number of people who desire to live with people who share the same vision or similar values. Who could you live with?

<http://www.ic.org/>

Strength in Numbers

Start a food co-operative and, as a group of consumers from one locality, you can get access to good quality, healthy and specialist food at the best possible prices. By combining your buying power and buying in bulk you, your friends and neighbours, can source whole and organic foods economically.

<http://www.avoncda.coop/foodcoops.htm>

LETS Work Together

LETS - Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes - are community-based mutual aid networks in which people exchange all kinds of goods and services with one another, without the need for money. The complications of bartering are reduced by the creation of a nominal, non-sterling currency. Is there one in your community?

www.letslinkuk.org

Agitate, Educate and Organise!

'Don't do anything for us, without us' is the call of communities who are finding their power and taking control through participatory regeneration initiatives, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, citizen's juries and increased consultation. It's your community – if you don't speak up and call the shots, someone else will!

www.holisticlocal.co.uk

Be the Business

If you own a business, why not put your commercial skills to good use in your community? Local groups and charities need trustees, leaders and advisors. It probably goes without saying that they may well need funding too from sponsors – like you! If you've made it in business, you've most likely got a transferable skill set that could work wonders in the not-for-profit sector.

<http://www.bitc.org.uk>

Dancing in the Streets

How well do you know your next-door neighbours? And what about the folks who live four doors down, or across the street? Perhaps one of your neighbours would be a fountain of knowledge or support in helping you achieve your goals; or you theirs. Consider organising a street or garden party to get to know your neighbours better, or if that's not feasible why not just invite a few of them round to dinner.

<http://www.streetsalive.net/guide.html>

Room for Reading

You can hardly mention a book these days without someone mentioning they've seen or even read it themselves in a reading group. Whether it's a small gang that meets in a living room, a library based gang of word worshippers or an on-line literary fan club; reading groups ignite debate, broaden perspectives and offer a great opportunity to socialise with other book lovers.

<http://www.readinggroups.co.uk/Groups/default.aspx>

Community Garden

City farms and community gardens are community-managed projects working with people, animals and plants. They exist mainly in urban areas and are created in response to a lack of access to green space, combined with a desire to encourage strong community relationships and an awareness of gardening and farming.

<http://www.farmgarden.org.uk>

Get Culturally Creative

Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson have identified the emergence of a new culture they've labelled the 'Cultural Creatives'. Perhaps you're one of them. "Cultural Creatives," they say, "are people who care deeply about ecology and saving the planet, about relationships, peace, social justice, and about self actualization, spirituality and self-expression. They are both inner-directed and socially concerned, they're activists, volunteers and contributors to good causes more than most other types of people." Welcome to the club.

<http://www.culturalcreatives.org/>

www.holisticlocal.co.uk



Give Something Back

Give Something Back

“If ever there is a lack of any kind, whether it is need for employment, or for money, or for guidance, or even for healing, something is blocking the flow. And the most effective remedy: Give!” – Eric Butterworth, *Spiritual Economics: The Prosperity Process*.

Most people with a holistic understanding of life have a sense of justice and an urge to give something back to their community or the planet - a kind of cosmic recycling.

It often takes the form of charity work or may influence their buying decisions in the form of ethical spending and clearly helps to make the world go round with a different conscience.

Ethical spending in the UK alone is worth £26 billion a year and in a recent Fair-trade survey, 54% of people questioned agreed with the statement: “As a consumer, I can make a difference to how responsibly a company behaves.”

Without a doubt, a spirit of giving with a focussed intent is changing the world.

But there’s a deeper spiritual principle at work here that is becoming better known thanks to authors who are popularising prosperity and abundance consciousness.

Want to know the ‘greatest money-making secret in history’?

It’s simple; it’s as old as the hills and it concerns every flow of energy – not just money. According to Joe Vitale, author of *Spiritual Marketing*, the answer is: “As you give, so will you get.”

It may not be rocket science, more common sense really. But while it makes sense, it’s not exactly common. In our pursuit of the things we need in life, as a species we tend to focus on getting rather than giving – which of course creates a world of competition, fear and lack.

Another inspirational and motivational guru, Zig Ziglar, assures us that: “You can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want.”

It’s a clear message, if a little hard to put into practice. But imagine what the world would be like if our first impulse was to give, knowing that our needs would be met in relation to our readiness to give – awesome!

Whether we believe in the metaphysics of money or not, we can make a big difference with any form of giving be it energy or just things we don’t use or need anymore.

Another title worth a look, despite its seemingly money-grabbing title is the ‘The Science of Getting Rich’ by Wallace Wattles – an absolute classic on creating abundance, available from free the Holistic Local e-book library.

Need a Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to make a difference in your community and a positive impact on your own life. Many volunteers encounter a variety of new challenges when they begin giving time and energy to their communities. Sharing new experiences with new people, we can pick up skills that give us confidence to face challenges in other areas of our lives.

<http://www.timebank.org.uk/>

Give Away

Why not combine your love of travel and adventure with your desire to make a difference in the world? Volunteering abroad not only gives you the opportunity to give something back, it gives you something to do, somewhere to go and somewhere to stay. Bingo!

<http://www.volunteerabroad.com/>

Charity Begins

There are thousands of worthwhile charities that rely entirely on our support and donations. Why not give to at least one charity that supports a cause that means something to you. It could be social justice, environmental concern, animal welfare or perhaps something health related. Remember too that you don't just have to donate money - you can donate food, clothes, pet supplies, blood or even just time.

<http://www.charitychoice.co.uk/>

Waste Not...

If you own something you don't need or use any more - give it away. There's an excellent website called Freecycle which helps people do just that. The Freecycle Network™ is made up of many groups across the globe and it's a grassroots movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns.

<http://www.freecycle.org>

Pledge with an Edge

"We all know what it is like to feel powerless, that our own actions can't really change the things that we want to change. PledgeBank is about beating that feeling..." Speaks for itself really – this brilliant concept invites us to take a stand and be our word – and commit to making a difference.

<http://www.pledgebank.com/>

Click Here

Did you know you can help feed the hungry, save the rainforests, fund healthcare for children, plus help them to read and also help rescued animals just by clicking your mouse a few times each day? What are you waiting for? Get clicking!

<http://www.thehungersite.com>

One of a Kind

Kindness is often contagious - so why not be kind to as many people as possible, even complete strangers? It always feels great to do something nice for someone and even just a small gesture can really make someone's day, particularly when they're least expecting it.

<http://www.actsofkindness.org>

Reach Critical Mass

Malcolm Gladwell, staff writer for New Yorker Magazine, wrote *The Tipping Point* – a fascinating study of human behaviour patterns. It reveals that the smallest things can trigger an epidemic of change and demonstrates that the tiniest of efforts backed by a powerful intention can be a force to be reckoned with. You are an agent for change – big change!

<http://www.gladwell.com/tippingpoint/>

Never doubt...

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has." Said Margaret Meade. Slowly but surely the world is changing. We simply have to change if we are to avoid the complete breakdown of society and the natural world. However small your contribution seems, remember you are making a difference!

<http://www.worldchanging.com>

Pass it on...

If you've enjoyed reading this e-book, we would be delighted if you would share it with your friends and family (or anyone!). You can either send it as an attachment with an email or use our tell-a-friend form on our website. Go on! There are 100 tips to share – something for everyone.

<http://www.holisticlocal.co.uk/naturalliving/friends>

Afterword

We hope you have enjoyed our Natural Living Guide and found it helpful.

If you have, we hope you will continue to put some of the ideas into practice, maybe trying something new every week.

Remember that Ghandi said: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world".

If not YOU then who?

Please remember to pass the book on to anyone you think might enjoy it and come and visit us at: www.holisticlocal.co.uk - we'd love to know how you are doing.

Do keep in touch...

"You'll encounter many obstacles along the road to living your dreams.
Some obstacles may be real, some imagined,
some may be tangible,
and some may be intangible.

Some of those obstacles will be created by others,
and some will be self-imposed.

However they manifest, you will always be given the choice as to whether you give them power." - **Francine Ward**

Need More?

We are planning to write and release several more free e-books on subjects related to those found in the Natural Living Guide. If you received this e-book from a friend, and have not already signed up to our mailing list then please register with us so that you'll be kept informed of our future releases, as well as other news, articles and information about natural living.

To sign-up to our mailing list visit: www.holisticlocal.co.uk/naturalliving/newsletter

Meeting Holistic Needs Locally

Holistic Local is a directory for holistic, green and conscious business services, however we soon plan to offer social & community networking services for people who want to make new friends and connect with others who share similar values and way of life.

Our vision is to become the world's most popular Internet directory and search engine for holistic and socially responsible business services, products & information. We hope that our website and this guide will help you to reach your personal and planetary goals too.

It's always been our aim to play a role in bringing about personal and global transformation by inspiring and helping people to raise their awareness. We hope this guide will be useful to you and our beautiful Earth and inspiring to you learn more and to take action for a better, kinder and healthier world.

Our search engine can be used to find:

Business & Services - Find holistic & conscious business services locally - e.g. holistic therapists, health food stores and spiritual retreats.

Events - Including workshops, retreats, lectures, expos, conferences and more.

Courses - Further your education or just learning something new - this section contains local courses.

Information - All our members are invited to add their articles into our information database. If you're looking for articles or information on a particular subject then check out our information section.

Holistic Local is available on-line in the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand - www.holisticlocal.co.uk; www.holisticlocal.com; www.holisticlocal.ca; www.holisticlocal.com.au; www.holisticlocal.co.nz

About the Authors

Carl Munson

With many years experience in the field of complementary and alternative issues, Carl Munson is a massage therapist, teacher of meditation and runs Newton Natural Health, a natural health centre in Devon, UK.

He is a regular columnist for two local papers and was Assistant Editor at Positive News. Working as a practice development coach and publicist for a number of complementary clients, Carl is also the creator of the HealthCHAMPION approach to natural health - www.healthchampion.co.uk and www.extraincomefortherapists.com

Carl has also written a spiritual inspiration book - Come Back to Life (www.comebacktolife.com) and has been a speaker on various aspects of natural health to network marketing companies, doctors, The Women's Institute and The Rotary Club.

Contact Carl via carl@holisticlocal.com

I dedicate this guide to Ruby – the girl who turned me green, when she arrived on the scene. ‘Go forth’ Rubes, you make a beautiful difference by just being here.

Andy Metcalfe

Andy escaped the rat race in 2002 when he quit his job as a 3D graphics designer for a corporate events agency.

Since then he's worked as a freelance designer and also a web consultant helping holistic companies establish an effective web presence for themselves.

In 2005 he co-founded Holistic Local a directory and information resource for people wanting to live a more holistic, green or conscious lifestyle.

His main passion in life is exploring and learning about different spiritual disciplines, particularly ancient and shamanic traditions.

Contact Andy via andy@holisticlocal.com