Ten positive steps to a more compassionate and better life

The key is to a more fulfilling existence is within all our grasps. We have to learn to banish negative behaviour and cultivate self-compassion.

Yoga is a wonderful tonic for your mind, body and soul. I often talk about the physical and mental benefits in this column, but yoga as a whole is a philosophy which underpins the benefits of Yoga which you can tap into.

Yoga’s main philosophy scripture is called the Yoga Sutras of Pantanjali. Granted it’s not an easy read, but the gems within it are profound! In summary, the key to your happiness is already within you and the way to unlock that happiness is through what Pantanjali calls ‘self-transformation’. Self transformation doesn’t happen overnight, but you can overcome negative patterns one step at a time. If you are gentle with yourself and accept your setbacks with compassion, you can change your life for the better.

New scientific research is giving this ancient wisdom credence and showing that, when it comes to changing this change, self-compassion is your greatest source of strength. So, whether you want to change a negative behaviour (like overeating or sniping at your kids) or commit to a positive one (like meditating every day), the best approach is to cultivate self-compassion and tap into its power, so that you can build a better life.

To help you on your way follow my 10 steps to happiness.

1. Express gratitude
   Appreciate what you have, then what you have appreciated in value! We practice gratitude for a few moments in every yoga class, as it’s essential to see, understand and feel the thanks we have for all the positives in our lives.

2. Cultivate optimism
   The law of attraction - be positive and positive things will happen in your life.

3. Avoid over-thinking and comparing yourself to others
   Comparing yourself to others is detrimental, and is more often than not misconstrued as you see what others want you to see, not the true self.

4. Practice acts of kindness
   Selflessly helping someone is a wonderfully powerful way to feel good inside. Aim to do one kind act a day, and see how it makes you feel. Again the law of attraction comes into play – be kind, and you’ll experience kindness is abundance.

5. Nurture your personal relationships
   We all feel better when we’ve had quality time with our close friends and family. Make time to have quality time with those you care about, and develop meaningful relationships.

6. Learn to forgive
   This is something else we spend a few moments on in yoga class, as this is also essential in life – to allow forgiveness wholeheartedly. Try to forgive something every day, make it real and genuine, it can be something small or significant it’s your choice. Allow the forgiveness wholeheartedly and then feel how much lighter you become in body and mind.

7. Savour life’s joys
   Happiness cannot exist without taking the time to experience the joy that surrounds us. Enjoy the simple things in life, keep your eyes open to such things as a baby’s smile, fresh dew in the morning, blossoming flower buds. When you open your eyes these things are in abundance everywhere.

8. Commit to your goals
   Take some time to think about what your goals are, and whether they will make you truly happy. Once you’ve decided upon them, take the necessary steps to get there, give your full commitment. And once your goals have come to fruition, repeat the process.

9. Develop coping strategies
   Life isn’t easy and is full of ups and downs. Develop some coping strategies which work for you. Work out what your coping strategies are before events unfold, so that when they happen you have a plan on how to best deal with it.

10. Take care of your body
    Taking care of your body is essential to happiness – hence the common phrase ‘if you have your health you have everything’. Eat nutritiously and take exercise which suits your lifestyle such as walking, yoga, cycling etc. When your body is feeling good and your mind is feeling good – you have a great base for happiness. And remember, small steps are the way forward.

Namaste, Adele