

ATTUNE YOUR BODY NATURALLY



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EVOLVE WITH LOU
EMPOWERING YOU

EMOTIONAL
FREEDOM
TECHNIQUES &
MATRIX
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PRACTITIONER

In 2010 I was working in an area that I was devoted to and I was on a mission to 'save the world. I had completed a Bachelor of Science in zoology and marine biology at university and taken jobs as a research assistant, wildlife presenter and program co-ordinator to land a permanent position as a ranger. I can now see that, to my own detriment, I cared too much. I had ridiculously high expectations for myself that I expected others to meet and would then get frustrated at people that 'didn't care enough'. I felt the world on my shoulders as I attempted to carry my load and everyone else's too. In hindsight, I can see how unsustainable my drive was, yet I also understand that I didn't know any other way. I didn't have the awareness or resources, that I have now, to get myself off that roller coaster called 'Chronic Stress' that was headed straight for chronic illness.

Now I don't want to paint stress as being our mortal enemy. For immediate and short-term situations, stress can be beneficial as it readies our body for fight or flight; the brain sends a signal to the body to release the stress hormones that increase your heart and breathing rates and prepare your muscles to respond – it helps us cope with potentially dangerous incidents. You'll be familiar how this feels in your body from times you were startled or under pressure and in most cases life would return to usual and the body would quickly return to its normal 'rest and digest' mode and carry on keeping all the usual systems and organs ticking over. But when triggered day after day, chronic stress can accelerate, exacerbate and sometimes even cause depression, headaches, insomnia, back pain, heart problems, high blood pressure, a weakened immune system, digestive disorders, chronic fatigue syndrome and fertility problems.

Somewhere along the way I got stuck in Fight-Flight mode and didn't know how to get out of it. Even the smallest things stressed me out, I stopped having quality sleep, my immune system went down the drain, my brain stopped functioning and my body was tight, in pain and felt like a bag of cement. I couldn't even look after myself let alone 'save the world'. By the time I was diagnosed I was experiencing fully-blown Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

Unfortunately for me it had to get to that point for me to wake up and pay attention and since then I have been on an internal adventure on my path through and out the other side of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I've had to have the courage to delve deep on some occasions and sometimes I've just had to hold on and wait for things to change but the journey has given me many things to be grateful for as I have learned some life-changing tools and made connections with beautiful and inspiring people. So I thought I'd share a few of the things I had to learn to cut through the internal jungle I had allowed to establish over my lifetime. I took all the support I required along the way

whether that be medical, emotional, nutritional and environmental and ultimately these practices are what have guided me through that landscape. The greatest advice I can offer anyone is to tune-in and to listen to your own body and tune-in to your own intuition.

In the beginning I had to learn to listen to what my body was trying to tell me and follow its advice – this is closely related to listening to your intuition. I had to accept where I was at, even if I didn't like it – it is important to acknowledge where you are starting from and to get the help that you need. Soldiering-on in an attempt to make out things are not so bad only keeps you stuck. In my case, with great stubbornness and sheer willpower I carried on making the whole I was in even bigger. Learn self-compassion and self-love – this is for the whole journey and for ongoing well-being – it provides the motivation for self-care and nurturing.

■ 'Grace' – this was the word that allowed me to graciously accept help and to have patience and kindness towards myself.

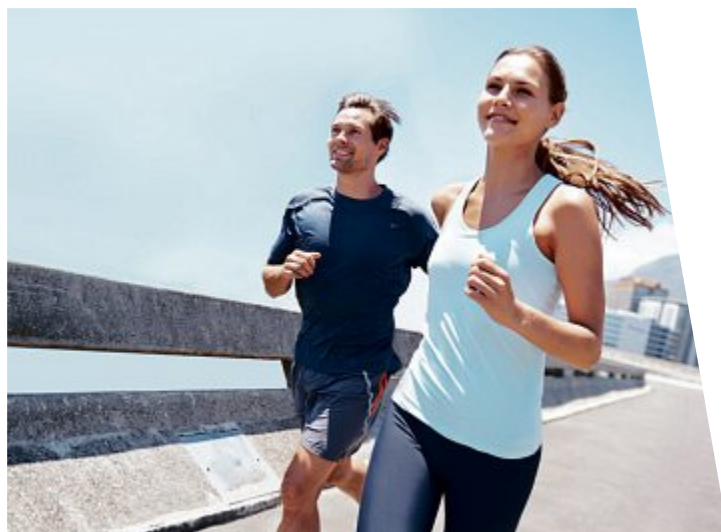
■ Meditation – this sustained my self-compassion, motivation and mindfulness.

■ Mindfulness – becoming aware of emotional drains and stress triggers.

■ Emotional Freedom Techniques – releasing underlying stress such as past events and unhelpful patterns and beliefs – this released mental and emotional energy drains and was a massive turning point in my recovery. It provided me with a tool to release fears and emotions as they came up. It cleared habitual patterns and beliefs that were keeping me stuck and continually crashing. Figure out what inspires you and what nurtures you and do both often.

Through these practices I brought vitality and joy back into my life. However, I no longer wanted to go back as I had learned a far more authentic and connected way of experiencing life. After coming out the other end of Chronic Fatigue, I use that experience as a harsh reminder to stay on track and in doing so I am able to live a vibrant and active life with far more love for myself and others.

I did end up getting back to full-time ranger work doing dream jobs such as being the duty ranger for marine strandings. However, I realised when I was dealing with dead and dying animals that I was working at the wrong end of the chain. Through my health challenges, my purpose and passion had changed – I now wanted to help people in the way that I had been helped. By helping people become more connected to themselves they can't help but feel connected to the world around them so this is now how I indirectly contribute to earth and all of its inhabitants – not just the animals and plants but the humans too.



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