

EXCLUSIVE
SAMPLE CHAPTER

LIFE WILL SEE YOU NOW

QUIT WAITING FOR THE LIGHT AT THE END
OF THE TUNNEL AND LIGHT THAT F^{UCK}ER UP
FOR YOURSELF

GAVIN OATTES



It's ok to lose your shit

**sometimes because if you keep your shit,
you'll end up full of shit and you'll explode and
there'll be shit everywhere. A shit storm.**

And nobody wants that.

—Anon



Shit to Do When You Feel Like Your World Is Caving In, You Can't Stop Worrying and You Feel Like You're About to Explode

1. Find Your 'Shove' (Less Sympathy, More Symphony)

Everyone says it, few do it. Every mental health charity, every mental health spokesperson and every single mental health campaign tells us the same thing, TALK TO SOMEONE. And yet it's just so fucking hard. It feels so embarrassing. The last thing you want to be is that negative person who no one wants to be around. But this is different, this is your health and well-being. This is your happiness, you're not being negative, you're reaching out for help.

To be clear: This is NOT you becoming a fucking asshole! You will be amazed just how willing others are to help you during tough times.

They tell us it's OK to not be OK. Well, it's also OK to feel shite.

I'm lucky I have my wife Ali. She's amazing. She listens *and* kicks my ass all at the same time. But kicks my ass in the most positive, loving and 'exactly what Gavin needs' kind of way. She picks me up and gives me just the right amount of 'shove' in the right direction.

This is the very woman who, whilst lying on the surgeon's table after 25 hours of labour, took my hand and told me I was going to be OK. She told *me* I was going to be OK!

Strongest person I know.

Ali's a world-class teacher, an outstanding mum and a phenomenally skilled musician. She says all the right things in the right way at the right time. Just as all great mums and teachers do. And just how a natural musician plays, all the right notes in the right order at the right time, with feeling. Occasionally they improvise. And they mean it, always.

Ali's less sympathy, more symphony. And this is where my inspiration for this chapter comes from. It's about building from the ground up. It's about capturing the right energy and directing it for good. Allowing yourself to draw on all the different sources of help and inspiration. I've no idea if this makes sense to you and I'm even guessing that when Ali reads this, she's going to wonder what the fuck I'm on but trust me, this shit works. So, find your 'shove', whoever they might be.

And remember, less sympathy, more symphony.

The definition for 'symphony' is...

symphony

noun

An elaborate musical composition for full orchestra, typically in four movements, at least one of which is traditionally in sonata form.

The official definition for sympathy is...

sympathy

noun

Feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.

Read them again, which one excites you the most? Which one is going to help you kick the shit out of life and fill you back up with magic? Pity and sorrow, or an elaborate musical composition for a full orchestra?

I'll say it again; less sympathy, more symphony.

Just so you understand, I'm talking about going all-out full orchestra on your ass. Building your team, your gang.

Your clan.

Full. Fucking. Orchestra.

Now don't get me wrong, we all want, need and deserve a little sympathy from time to time. We naturally forgive failings in others out of sympathy – in fact, we'll dish it out in abundance when it's not ourselves. But when it *is* ourselves, it's all about how we channel it. We definitely need to cut ourselves some slack every now and then, but when we're feeling low, we need energy, movement, passion and that wee piece of magic.

During my toughest days I gave myself a hard time. My self-talk was anything but gentle. This was coming from a place of embarrassment and trying my very best to 'man up'. Other times I found myself wallowing and this is not a helpful place to be.

Ali got the balance right with me and this taught me that I needed to get better at doing the same for myself. And for the record, at no point did 'manning up' help. It was more a case of tuning up.

The best symphonies feature lots of instruments with many different energies, It's no different with people. You need to speak to different types of people that each offer something different, but together they combine to create your own masterpiece.

I have spoken to so few people about my struggles with anxiety. Probably because I don't feel there are too many I could speak to. Some will be surprised to read this because for the main part I've been able to hide it so well.

I also have my mum. She's the second part of my symphony. I can speak to her about anything.

Mum is crazy. Completely and unashamedly cuckoo. And I love her for that. She gives exactly zero fucks at all about anything other than the stuff that matters in life. She's an ex PE teacher from Glasgow who smokes cigars and boy does she speak her mind. Always positive, she's pure west coast magic. One part terrifying and two parts gallusness personified.

Lost her dad when she was 13, lost her husband (my dad) to cancer when she was 60, lost her best friend to cancer when she was 61, and kicked her very own cancer's ass at 62. One hundred per cent brave and *all* mum. She listens to me. And I love her for that.

Then there's Dougie. I work with Dougie. We run a business together. We were thrown together by a previous employer and somehow over time became business partners. Like all the best partnerships, on paper it shouldn't work, but it does. We come from very different backgrounds with very different upbringings. We're trouble together but in a good way. He's old school, I'm new school. He's pies, chips and football, I'm charcuterie, olives and running. But I love him. Like, actually love him. It's an odd relationship. We don't hang out, we never socialize but I can tell him anything.

He's the first person I phoned when my dad died because he'd know what to do. He'd make everything OK. And he did just that. During my worst lows with my anxiety I speak to Dougie. He listens, he doesn't judge. He effectively coaches me through it.

Like Ali and my mum, he doesn't give me too much sympathy, but lots of little 'shoves' when needed.

Symphonies are mostly in four parts. My symphony of people is finished off by my dad.

My dad died in 2012. He's gone but I can still tell him anything. I can still ask him for help, for advice. We have some splendid conversations and I can always ask, 'What would Dad do?'

Fuck I miss him.

Talk to someone. Sit with someone. Hug someone. Find those that will listen, pick you up and dust you down. Talk to those that will allow you to express exactly how you are feeling. It's not always the most obvious people, welcome them in.

And if you get it wrong and they dismiss you, hurt you, mock you, then you tell them to fuck right off.

Notice the people who make an effort to stay in your life.

Friends are great, but only a select few are going to be with you when you are up the whole night crying and need help, it is only going to be someone who genuinely loves you.

2. Write Shit Down

Nowadays we live in a digital world of to-do list apps and Google Docs. The 6000-year-old practice of putting pen to paper is sadly losing its appeal.

Writing stuff down just helps. In my teens I filled notebooks with comedy sketches, stories *and* well, my emotions. Just getting it out, getting it down on paper brings a sense of relief. But there's proper science behind this stuff.

If you don't write things down, your mind spends more time 'paper shuffling' and the fucker creates its own anxiety.

Just like having too many internet tabs open on your laptop at once, sometimes it feels like your brain has done the same thing. It's often the result of trying to mentally juggle too many thoughts or tasks at the same time.

Your brain is like a hard drive. A multilayered, super-epic, crazily complex hard drive. And to make matters worse, it lies to us. I'm sure we'd love to know that our brain is our friend, but it's not. It's tricking us all the time. Even in important moments, our brains are not as good at creating accurate memories as we think they are. There will be memories from your childhood that simply aren't true, but you remember them clearly.

Your brain can help you to convince yourself you were awesome at something when in actual fact you were fucking shit. Or quite the opposite, it can make you feel like a fraud when in actual fact you are fully deserving of all the recognition you are receiving.

And of course, it can make you scared of things that will never happen, or at the very least are incredibly unlikely to happen. Remember from earlier my fear of flying? I've never been scared of heart disease and yet I'm from Scotland. My chances of dying from heart disease are far higher than being on a plane blown up in a terrorist attack. But hey, for a time I wasn't concerned about my diet but was entirely convinced I shouldn't be getting on a plane.

The Zeigarnik effect says we tend to hang on to things in our mind if we don't finish what we start. Writing down your ideas, thoughts and emotions gets them out of your head, freeing up your mental space. It allows your brain to unload some baggage, preventing you from crashing your own precious mental browser.

It might even help you to relax.

There are no notifications popping up to distract you. A proper physical notebook or journal means no emails pinging in, no Facebook updates and no phone calls. Your thumbs can have a rest from the endless scrolling.

You'll remember more. In 2014, the Association of Psychological Science reported that students who physically took notes received a memory boost – particularly when compared to those who took notes via a laptop.

You can write anything down. Bright ideas that pop into your head. Goals that you want to achieve today or for the week ahead. One-liner reminders. To-Do list. To-Done list. Your little nuggets of wisdom and 'ah-ha's'. All the

things buzzing around in your brain. Anything keeping you up at night. Your hopes, your dreams, your goals, and aspirations. Your fears, anxieties, and concerns. You get the idea.

Writing things down is a powerful and useful habit. Even if you throw it away, you still get the benefits.

Writing Challenge

I dare you to buy yourself a lovely new notepad. A proper one. One that takes your breath away when you see it. (Tweet me a picture please to @gavinoattes)

OK, so here's your challenge to get you started. All I want you to do for one week is write a three-word happy story to describe your day.

That's it, just three words. Just before bed, create quite literally a three-word happy story about your day.

If you feel the need to keep writing then I dare you to keep going.

3. Don't Just Sing Along, Commit

I've always been a huge fan of music. From a young age I have been in awe of anyone who can sing and play a musical instrument. As a child I loved sitting trying to record the charts on my cassette player. For the younger readers, ask your parents!

I was a teenager in the 1990s and as I mentioned in Chapter 2, it was all about the bands. Britpop was in full swing and Grunge had well and truly arrived. I spent many a night with my headphones on being transported to a place in my imagination that made me feel spectacular.

I miss being 16 and buying a physical album, putting it on and reading the lyrics from the little booklet that was inside the box. I miss reading the artists' notes, all the people they had to thank. The messages for those who have shaped the album and the shout-outs to us, the fans.

Listening to music is a universally enjoyable activity for most people. But it's so much more than just a bit of fun. There are many mental health benefits that come from listening to music. Whether you're stressed, depressed, or even unable to sleep well, music can alleviate negative symptoms and improve your mood.

My drive to work in the morning is like my own sell-out stadium show. Volume is up and fuck me am I Freddie Mercury!

I don't just sing along, I commit.

I *am* Freddie Mercury, or David Bowie, or Debbie Harry, or Mick Jagger, or Paul Stanley, or Marie Fredriksson (Yes, I love Roxette) or whoever the fuck I want to be. I'm pretty much my own Live Aid concert but way more selfish in that I'm helping myself. And it feels incredible. It can be the lyrics, the melody, the riffs, the vocals, if it gets you it gets you.

I'm almost certain I don't need to tell you of the healing properties contained in your favourite songs and albums. You'll have a favourite for all occasions. There are songs out there that pick me up almost instantaneously and there are those that I can have a good cry to.

'One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain.'

—Bob Marley

We all know that research has proved the benefits of listening to music; it improves our mental well-being but it also boosts our physical health.

'If people take anything from my music, it should be motivation to know that anything is possible as long as you keep working at it and don't back down.'

—Eminem

Music makes us happier, fact. It relieves stress and anxiety. Music therapy can alleviate depression with wonderful benefits to our self-esteem and interpersonal skills. Certain types of music can increase our ability to concentrate and listening to music actually helps us to sleep better.

I go to sleep every night with my headphones on; currently it's my Roger Waters live album, *In the Flesh*. Music lifts our mood, reduces pain, pumps us up and motivates us. It keeps our brains healthy and can help Alzheimer's patients to remember things. It even reduces road rage, especially if you're lost in your own sell-out stadium show!

Or if you get the chance to go and see a live concert, take it! Unlike sport where half the crowd leaves disappointed, everyone leaves happy.

Got a night to yourself? Perfect. Headphones on, phone off, volume up, eyes closed, world off and away you go.

Bliss.

4. Channel Your Inner Goose – Create Uplift

We humans can learn loads of incredible stuff from geese. Yes, geese! Take a ‘gander’ below...(Gander? Anyone? As you were.)

Geese are among the most incredible creatures on earth. A collective group of geese is commonly known as a gaggle BUT only when they are on land. In the air they are known as a skein, team or my particular favourite, a wedge of geese. And in the sky is where they truly come into their own, outperforming other birds. They are the New Zealand All Blacks/Team SKY/Emergency Services/A-Team of birds and there are some pretty incredible reasons why many successful people in the world are citing the simple goose as their inspiration.

Put it this way, if you want to be the best human you can possibly be, then you need to learn to channel your inner goose.

Confused? Good, limber up those wings, shine those beaks and prepare to get honking.

First though, and before we learn ‘the way of the goose’, a quick and very true story involving 40,000 superheroes all heading in the same direction.

Fairly recently, I figured that I’d run a marathon, as you do. Have you ever watched someone run a marathon? It’s a crazy undertaking that requires months of training and anyone who decides to run one is clearly some kind of machine. Or goose. Or both. Part machine, part goose. Robogoose. I thought that if I was going to commit to this then I might as well run the most famous marathon in the world. A trip to London beckoned.

Even though I ran 26.2 miles and lost all my toenails as a result, I still reckon the London Marathon is to this day one of the most fun, uplifting and

inspiring experiences of my entire life. Which is odd, because it's also one of the most painful. Weird, right? What's this got to do with geese? Keep reading.

Sure, a giant Spongebob sprinted past me on the final 100 metres and yes, I was beaten by a tyrannosaurus rex, but I am certain that nothing will ever again compare to the euphoria of finishing the London Marathon. Even without toenails.

It took me 270 minutes to finish. That's a four-and-a-half-hour journey across London, giving me plenty of time to reflect and think about life.

I was pounding the pavement with 40,000 people, each and every one running for a reason. A positive reason. Running with a purpose. Whether that is to win, set a new PB, have fun, raise money for a charity, raise awareness of something meaningful, remember a loved one or support a loved one, everyone was running in the same direction with purpose. (Apart from the guy who ran backwards. Although technically he was still moving in the same direction.)

I didn't win but then again that wasn't my purpose. I was running to raise money for charity in memory of my dad. My only competition that day was myself. But the others played their role in keeping me going.

Super-elite, Olympic-level athletes aside, no one was competing against each other. Quite the opposite. Runners were encouraging each other, helping, supporting, stopping to check on those struggling in the heat and some literally carrying complete strangers over the finish line.

Then there's the crowd. I have no idea how many people line the streets for the London Marathon but it sure felt like millions. Millions of complete

strangers, each and every one there for a reason. A positive reason. A purpose. Whether that was to have fun, support a charity, raise awareness of something meaningful, remember a loved one or support a loved one running, everyone was cheering with purpose.

At about 16 miles in, I spotted a spectator holding what looked like a fishing rod. Hanging on the end was a horn, one of those proper old-fashioned horns that you have to properly honk. Attached was a sign that read 'Free Honks to Keep you Going', and boy did I honk that horn. And yes, it kept me going, it made me smile and my energy lifted yet again. I was channelling my inner goose.

This is the very reason geese honk, to encourage others to stick together and keep on going. How cool is that? I basically turned into a goose during my marathon. Well, not really, but it's still cool, right?

Goose Fact Alert

When a goose falls ill, is wounded or shot down, two geese drop out of formation and follow it down to help and protect it. The geese stay with the injured goose until it is able to fly again or until it dies. Then they launch out with another formation or catch up with the flock.

And as if geese weren't already awesome enough, when the lead goose tires, it rotates back into the formation and another goose flies to what's called the point position. They are always looking out for each other, helping, supporting and encouraging.

And this was the big takeaway for me. It seemed that at every moment I began to slow, struggle or hurt – and I assure you there were many. Remember, I started with 10 toenails and ended with none – there was someone or something in place to lift my spirits. It all came from people and their kindness, their humour, their creativity and energy. Just like geese.

It's an incredible sight to see a flock of geese flying overhead in the sky. You'll have noticed they always fly in a V formation. As each goose flaps its wings it creates an 'uplift' for the birds that follow. In other words, by flying in a V formation, the whole flock makes it easier for the geese to stay up in the air. This adds a greater flying range of over 70% than if the birds flew alone.

Goose Science Alert

By taking advantage of the wingtip vortex of the bird in front, each bird can save energy by reducing drag. The energy saved can be as much as 50%.

Just like when I ran the marathon. I was running with others who shared a common direction with a real sense of community. This helped me to keep going, allowing for a tough challenge to feel more bearable. HONK.

Everyone needs free honks to keep them going from time to time. We just need to always ensure that our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is positive encouragement, we achieve more and we'll have a lot more fun in the process.

I can recount tales of fellow runners stopping to help those who were injured or struggling. We all have times in life when we need help, we need someone to come to our rescue.

Be a goose, be a pal, a superhero, a sidekick, a Robogoose, look out for others, be there, create 'uplift', stick together and when you or others need it, HONK as loud as you can. Humans are great, mostly.

Running has changed me forever. I needed to make a positive change. How many times have you heard people banging on about how running helped them not just physically but also mentally? Well, get ready to hear it again.

The way I feel after a run is mind-blowing. I feel a genuine high after a run.

Runner's high is a real thing. Honestly, it exists. But what I've learned is that it only exists after strenuous exercise. In other words you need to push yourself, you need to pretty much knacker yourself. But not overdo it. If you do too much, you'll just feel ill.

The problem now is that if I don't run I begin to feel agitated and my anxiety is more likely to kick in.

To be clear, just like my writing, when it comes to running, I'm not a natural. I'm more Phoebe from *Friends* than Mo Farah. The thought of running 26.2 miles was hilarious, I couldn't even run around the block to begin with. But I did it sensibly, one step at a time, literally. I still hate the actual running part but the way I feel after is magical. I want more of this in my life. So I run more. Simple.

And I appreciate it because one day I won't be able to do it.

In 2018, when my anxiety properly kicked off again, I hadn't been running as often and it definitely had a part to play. Try it, give it three months and you'll be hooked. Let those endorphins do their thing. Trust me, you'll amaze yourself and you'll probably live longer, you big fucking goose!

Honk honk.

5. Read

Books are great. I'm not an avid reader but depending on where I'm at, a book can be my pick-me-up. I love biographies of old rock stars and a good self-help book can definitely help. I also love kids' picture books. Books give us a sense of escapism, occasionally they can give us permission. They can distract us from daily life and keep us in the present.

Here are my top three self-help books:

- **The Art of Being Brilliant** by Andy Cope and Andy Whittaker
- **Tuesdays With Morrie** by Mitch Albom
- **Shine** by Andy Cope and erm, me! Seriously though, it's a really good book!

6. Switch Your Phone Off (Look Up)

I love technology. I'm not a tech geek, I'm not particularly intelligent when it comes to tech and I certainly don't live in a house that's teched up to max with all the latest gadgets and gizmos. But I'm impressed by it.

Just like I'm impressed by engineering. I don't necessarily understand it but I can still be impressed. Planes for example. Show me all the science and breakdown all the workings of a plane and I'll be impressed. But I don't get it. There's no way such a thing can take off and carry hundreds of people *and* their luggage, that's just ridiculous. But it does. Huge ferries don't make sense either. I'm just not clever enough to fully comprehend it. Technology is truly incredible, at times life-enhancing, other times life-changing and, of course, life-saving. If it falls into these categories I'm pretty much all for it.

Kind of.

It can't all be good though, right? Smartphones for example, they can definitely be life-enhancing, the shit you can do now with a phone is unbelievable but again, it can't all be healthy can it?

One of the original commercials for mobile phones sold us the dream of a 'freer life'. Perhaps before SMART technology took over this is exactly what it gave us. But now? A freer life? Really? I have images of Superman

wearing his medallion of kryptonite, struggling to move and fighting for energy and air. Drowning almost. Some might consider this a rather dramatic comparison; I'm beginning to think it might be pretty accurate...

Nowadays, telecoms giants have cottoned on to this and offer us a chance to go back. Back to the once mind-blowing days of a mobile phone that allowed us to simply make calls, send texts and play Snake. These once complicated, yet now simple, machines are again on sale. Tempting.

I'm old enough to remember these handsets first time around; strangely I find it once again incredibly appealing. I'm being pulled back in some ways, yet the lure of a new modern handset that allows me to do literally everything is still strong. Perhaps too strong. Maybe I'm hooked, addicted.

We can order our weekly shopping, our takeaway dinners, our taxi, FFS you can basically order your next date. You can record your favourite TV shows, check the score from football fields, check progress from strawberry fields, watch live videos from actual battlefields, turn your lights off, listen to any song you want and you can even post pictures of yourself for absolutely no reason whatsoever other than to be validated by complete strangers who actually don't give a fuck about you.

We can do some cool stuff but there's a side to it all that we know isn't good. Yet many of us choose it. Some of us choose it for our kids, too.

One of the biggest problems we have in our primary schools is bullying on social media apps. Who is letting their child on social media? Who's even buying their child a mobile phone? I always hear the argument, 'but it allows me to keep in touch with my child'.

It's very hard to argue against this. Yes, it does help you to keep in touch. But your 8-year-old needs an iPhone because...?

Ah, that's right, because they fucking don't.

If I could change one thing about the world, I'd switch off social media for kids. We have a generation of parents coming through who don't know any different. If you are a parent and you are allowing your young child on social media then you are fully responsible for that. Not the school, not the teachers. You.

Experts tell us we're in the middle of the biggest social experiment there's ever been. We already know the results and yet we're still going strong.

Just in case you don't know what the results will be, let me tell you: we're fucked.

Absolutely fucked.

We have an entire generation coming through that won't be able to look you in the eye. We have an entire generation who communicate through the medium of thumbs. Imagine how many miles we've scrolled with our thumbs. In a million years our thumbs will be massive. We'll be ruled by thumbs. We'll *be* thumbs.

'Unfortunately, it seems that we, as a society, have entered into a Faustian deal. Yes, we have these amazing handheld marvels of the digital age – tablets and smartphones – miraculous glowing devices that connect people throughout the globe and can literally access the sum of all human knowledge in the palm of our hand. But what is the price of all this future tech? The psyche and soul of an entire generation. The sad truth is that for the oh-so-satisfying ease, comfort and titillation of these jewels of the modern age, we've unwittingly thrown an entire generation under the virtual bus.'

—Nicholas Kardaras, *Glow Kids*.

Social media. Tell me, what exactly is social about it? Simon Sinek makes a great point about groups of friends all sitting together on a night out staring at their phones. He asks why on earth do they even have their phones, they're with their friends. Again, I can't argue. You might as well have just stayed at home.

I'm certain that we've all had at least one moment (probably many) where we catch ourselves scrolling, just staring at our phones, endlessly scrolling and knowing we should just put it down but even more so *wanting* to put it down...but we don't. We keep scrolling, endlessly scrolling, staring, staring and staring some more. But our thumbs, wow, they're getting strong. Oh and someone 'liked' your heavily filtered duck face. Excellent, well done humans.

Remember when we smiled in photos. That was nice wasn't it?

We spend a lifetime average of 5 years and 3 months on social media. Today alone, more than 3.2 billion images will be shared on social media posts.

Now that I think about it, maybe I would switch it off to everyone...

I became scared of my phone. I've never told anyone this but for almost the entirety of 2018 I had a fear about my phone. I dreaded emails and I'm convinced that social media notifications were making me feel ill at times. I had so much on, actually scrap that, I had *too* much on. Way too much and with 5 different email accounts, 5 different Twitter accounts, 5 different Facebook accounts, 5 different sets of clients and 20 employees all in constant communication, I was drowning.

Notifications are now off. Apps are removed from my phone and trust me, I feel healthier for it.

I still do the social media thing but now I need to log in and I'm moving ever closer to switching off, for good.

'Remember, it's totally fine to put down your phone, look a friend in the eyes and ask if they're ok. Caring is cool.'

—Susan Calman

Turn your phone off for a while. I fucking dare you.

On a side note, Christopher Reeve is the best Superman ever. This has nothing to do with anxiety or this book, but my point still stands: he's the best. And while I'm at it, Superman 2 is the best of the Superman films. Fact.

7. I'm Having the Thought That...

This is one of the best techniques I've ever come across for reducing anxiety and/or removing upsetting thoughts. I learned this from Russ Harris's wonderful book *The Happiness Trap*.

The human mind is such a skilled storyteller. Not only is it skilled in creating the story but it has the unique ability to tell us those stories all the time, forever. It never stops.

The problem for many of us is that the story isn't always the happiest of stories. Some of the daily themes can be rather unpleasant.

Harris teaches us that most psychological approaches regard negative stories as a major problem and make a big fuss about trying to eliminate them. We're told to rewrite the story, think more positively, make ourselves busy and we'll be distracted and on it goes. But the negative story never really goes away.

What we need to do is acknowledge the story but don't give it the time and energy we perhaps would normally unknowingly allocate.

At the height of my anxiety, lying in my bed, eyes wide awake, craving sleep and my chest ready to explode, I simply take the negative thought I'm having, e.g. I'm never going to be able to sleep again, and focus on it for about 10 seconds. Next I take that thought and simply add to it, 'I'm having the thought that...I'm never going to be able to sleep again.' I then run it again and instantly I can feel lifting. Then I do the same again but this time it's slightly longer: 'I notice I'm having the thought that I'm never going to sleep again.' Again, a further lifting. A distance is felt.

It really works for me but it takes practice. Try it now. You'll find in time you are less likely to beat yourself up over negative thoughts and feelings. Remember, thoughts become things. This was a turning point for me. Practice, practice, practice.

8. Hey Google, 'What's wrong with me?'

Dr Google is 100% the wrong doctor to visit when you're feeling anxious or indeed if you have anything at all wrong with you. You can Google 'Why is my ear sore?' and Dr Google will reply with 'brain tumour'. 'Why am I sneezing a lot?' 'Cancer'.

All symptoms tend to lead to some form of cancer; there appears to be no middle ground with Dr Google.

Google is great for real positive information around your personal wellness, just be sure to check credentials and if you're really worried about something it's best to go see a real doctor.

9. Remove the Assholes

We've already looked at not being a dickhead. Now it's time to remove the assholes.

Neighbourhoods, communities, school, work, sport, club, life, the world – we're all a team. The way I see it is we're in this together. And there's no room for assholes.

We all know someone who is a grump, I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about the ones who actively go out of their way to ruin it for everyone else.

Actual assholes.

Negative, arrogant, miserable, bored, egotistical, narcissistic, angry and they love it. They love to share it and drag others down with them, as it makes them feel bloody great. We're all guilty of having a moan from time to time, it can be good to get it off our chests. This is different from being an asshole.

'You wouldn't let assholes live in your house – why let them live in your head?'

—Hishi Khan

A friend of mine lives in a lovely wee town on the west coast of Scotland. Her house is in a very quiet street with very little traffic. Outside her house is an enormous van. To be clear, it's huge. About 7 ft tall, 11 ft long, 6 ft wide and to top it off (literally) a selection of ladders. Oh, and it's vulgar. Visually, it's the

opposite to aesthetically pleasing. It's aesthetically unpleasing. Disagreeable, pleasureless, unpalatable, displeasing, repulsive, unsavoury, you get the idea. It's an eyesore.

You are perhaps wondering why she has such a van. Well, it's not actually hers and she lives on her own. You might be wondering if it belongs to a neighbour. Nope. The van is not owned by anyone in her street and yet every day it is parked outside her house.

So who owns the van?

The owner of said eyesore lives in another street entirely. When asked if he could move it, he simply said no. When asked if he could perhaps park it outside his own house he simply replied no. When pushed a little more on the subject matter he stated, 'I don't want to have to look at that thing outside my house.'

So just to be clear, this guy knows his van is a big ugly mess, so he has consciously chosen to park it on a different street outside someone else's house, so he doesn't have to see it.

What. An. Asshole.

'Some people will only like you if you fit inside their box. Don't be afraid to shove that box up their ass.'

—Anon

So, I'm going to buy the biggest, shittiest looking van I can, get it insured and park it outside his house.

I'm not really, it would be amazing but hey, I'm not an asshole.

You'll know it's not always easy to deal with assholery and that ignoring/removing them doesn't always work. Over time, an asshole can have a devastating effect on our existence, leaving us feeling traumatised.

Ask yourself if the asshole in your life is temporary or permanent? Assholes are rarely permanent. I don't believe revenge is the right way to go. It feels great in the moment, but the problem is you'll start ruminating and this absolutely doesn't help the way you're feeling. If anything, it makes it worse.

I've thought about doing something to the van, of course I have. But that will come back and haunt me.

Research suggests that karma really does exist, as long as you play the long game.

This isn't new advice for anyone and yet we welcome the Derailers, Negatrons, Mood Hoovers, *Insert own favourite here* into our lives. The difficult truth is sometimes they're family. But if anyone in your life is causing you to feel sad, scared or if they're simply not good for your mental health, then put in the effort to do something about it. Keep a diary of what they say and do. Present it to them in time. But if you need to, remove the ones in your way and actively seek out those who lift you.

10. Say No When You Have To

Saying no to someone is hard. I'm getting better at this. I'm not talking about being busy and adding to your to-do list, although that can cause a lot of stress, I'm talking about the stuff that can make me feel uneasy, anxious and unwell.

Parties, awards nights, certain bookings, weddings, specific family engagements. People can be hugely offended when you say no.

You can offer an explanation if you need to, but when you just know, you know, so say no.

11. Breathe

Seriously, remember to breathe. Not breathing is the number one cause of death. Be sure to keep it going. A good deep breath can fix many a broken thought. Scientists have found that breathing practice is effective in fighting anxiety, depression and stress. Especially proper good belly breathing. The great thing about it is you're doing it right now and it's free and you can do it anywhere.

According to the American Institute of Stress, 'Deep breathing increases the supply of oxygen to your brain and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which promotes a state of calmness.'

Trust me, learning about this stuff was a lifesaver. The biggest surprise for me was how quickly it took me away from the worries in my head and quietened my mind.

12. All We Are Is Dust in the Wind, Dude

In 1989, not too far from Los Angeles, in a small town called San Dimas, Bill S. Preston Esquire and Ted 'Theodore' Logan were dreaming of rock 'n' roll superstardom. What they didn't know then was that they would be responsible for saving the future and become time travelling legends.

No matter where they go, Bill and Ted never stop being 'excellent' to whoever they meet. A most excellent philosophy that I urge the world to get on board with.

Yes, that's right my friends, I am recommending you watch the Bill and Ted movies and always, always, be excellent to each other.

And kind.

And caring.

And giving.

You'll feel better.

The Bill and Ted movies give me hope that there will come a time when everyone is excellent to each other. The world needs it.

Let's finish this chapter with a snippet from the film's theme song, 'In Time':

'In time, we'll be dancing in the streets all night

In time, everything will be all right

It'll take time but we're going far

You and me, yes I know we are.'

Be excellent to each other....and PARTY ON, DUDES!

Like what you've read?

Laughed?

Nodded your head?

Thought '*this guy is onto something here, where can I get the rest of the book?*'

Well *Life Will See You Now* is currently being sold where all good books are sold – either online or instore (although at the moment, you are better off looking online – and that could be either your local independent bookshop or it could be that big online seller beginning with A). Here are a few of our favourite links:

Amazon

Waterstones

(and if you type in the promo code:
Tunnel – you'll get a sneaky 20% discount)

Blackwell's

The Book Depository

Foyles

Hive

WHSmith

Thanks for reading

LIVE LIFE BETTER THAN YOU HAVE TO, NEVER BE AFRAID OF YOUR OWN STYLE AND BLOW YOUR OWN GOD DAMN MIND FOR A CHANGE

Life Will See You Now is a rousing, uplifting anthem that will inspire you to put down your phone, rediscover what truly matters and completely rethink what 'making it' in life actually means.

A personal development title with a difference; there's no step-by-step guide and no map to change your life. Instead, it provides you with hilarious real life inspiration, motivation and energy to figure it out for yourself, while rediscovering that wee piece of magic you had when you were just five years old.

Bestselling author, award winning comedian and international keynote speaker Gavin Oattes makes the argument, backed by both positive psychology and an abundance of childlike wonder, that in an anxious world ruled by pressure, ego and other people's expectations, we are all incredibly lucky to be alive at a time where kindness, gratitude, play and ice-lollies really do matter.

So you've picked up this book for a reason...and you've read this far...

Now, in your best interest, it is recommended that you switch off your phone, turn to chapter 1, take a big deep breath and remember just who the f*ck you are.

"Funny, enigmatic and heartfelt, Gavin Oattes is officially the 4th emergency service. If you're stopped by the roadside of life, the wheels close to coming off, this book is a must."

Jamie McCall, VP Brand Marketing, Nike Direct EMEA


"Thank Christ for Gavin Oattes. I literally didn't put this book down. To all the dreamers out there, put the phones down, get this book, start the dream today. I nearly read it in one day and that's saying something, as I'm thick as shit!"

Jason Byrne, Comedian and Radio Host

Cover design and image: Peter Cotter

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 Also available
as an e-book

ISBN 978-0-857-08808-6



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