

HEALTH | WELLNESS | PERSONAL GROWTH | RELATIONSHIPS

# Indigo **BLUE**

## ARE CRYSTALS GOOD FOR HEALING?

*By Kaneesha Allen*

JUNE 2023

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## EDITOR’S NOTE—JUNE 2023 ISSUE

Growth and movement—that is what we focus on for this summer issue. Whether it is yoga, mindfulness, or breathwork, we can go within and make energy shifts through physical consciousness. Our authors provide personal stories and advice on ways to maintain balance and wellness by witnessing our thoughts, emotions, and physical limitations. Without judgement we can shift our awareness to greater self-acceptance. We remain committed to helping our readers achieve their goals, maintain their health and wellness, and establish lasting, healthy relationships.

*Laura Boyle*

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# Are Crystals Good for Healing?

*By Kaneesha Allen*

**C**rystals have unique vibrations that can restore balance and harmony to the body's energy fields. Energy is the basis for everything in the universe; [quantum](#) physics explains this.





Photo: matt\_benoit

I received a stone for self-love because someone told me I was too hard on myself after yoga practice. I felt awkward and uncomfortable. Here I am holding a light pink crystal to my heart as instructed. The kind person who gave me the rose quartz crystal informed me that this would help me believe in myself. Various questions ran through my mind, such as :

- Will this work for me?
- What benefits do crystals have?

Don't worry; we will discuss the following two questions shortly. Did it work? Yes, it did. I brought it everywhere with me. Whenever I felt self-doubt, I held it against my chest and took a deep, cleansing breath. I started researching rose quartz and bought all the crystals I needed.

### What is Crystal Healing?

Crystal healing is a holistic approach using crystals to promote physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. How does this work? Crystals can stimulate healing through [electromagnetic](#) forces. This ancient practice dates back thousands of years and is still popular today. Crystal healing provides unique energy vibrations that can help restore the body's energy. Some other benefits of crystal healing include the following:

- **Spiritual growth** – Crystals promote a deeper connection to the universe.
- **Emotional balance** – Crystals can help instill calmness and tranquility.
- **Stress relief** – Crystals can help reduce stress levels and promote relaxation.
- **Improved sleep** – Crystals can help promote restful sleep and improve overall sleep quality.
- **Increased energy** – Crystals can help to increase energy levels and promote overall vitality.



Photo: capturenow

## Why is Healing Important?

Healing is essential because it [restores](#) the body into harmony. Have you heard the saying when the body is out whack, it's a recipe for disease? Three things can happen when your body's energy becomes imbalanced or blocked. You can experience physical, emotional, and spiritual symptoms. It's essential to keep our energy aligned to prevent unwanted imbalances.

## How to Perform Crystal Healing

Crystal healing is quite simple. The best part is it's non-invasive and doesn't take much of your time. You're already busy enough.

Some examples of crystal [healing](#) include the following:

- Meditating with crystals on or around you
- Wearing a necklace or bracelet
- Keeping a crystal near you, like on your desk or in your car

Depending on the day, I use one to two crystals to stay aligned and positive. For example, I keep my Fluorite crystal near my desk to stay focused on my task.

## Healing Crystals and Their Meanings

There are many different crystals to help with all areas of your life. Each person experiences different situations, but that's okay. Note there is a crystal to help you on your healing journey. Here are a few common crystals to get you in the right direction.

### 1. Citrine

Use Citrine when feeling low energy or out of place. [Citrine](#) works by maintaining a positive mindset. For example, I brought this crystal to my first interview. It helped me stay positive and answer all the questions with confidence.

## 2. Rose Quartz

Rose quartz helps when you are in an unbalanced emotional state. This love crystal can help bring [compassion](#), love, and trust into your life. For example, I placed this stone in the center of my bedroom for continued love in my relationship.

## 3. Amethyst

Amethyst helps with melting away [anger](#) and negative thoughts. This crystal can also help with sleep. For example, I place amethyst under my pillow to help with sleepless nights.

## 4. Moonstone

Moonstones can help with PMS by promoting better hormonal balance. This crystal can also help with anxiety and [depression](#). For example, I use this stone to stay balanced and less cranky during my menstrual flow.

## 5. Clear Quartz

Clear quartz can help manifest your dreams. This gem will keep your aura [clean](#) and open to possibilities. For example, I call this the “positive vibe only” crystal. I take this to work to stay open to change and positivity.

## Find the Right Crystal for You

Besides restoring harmony to the body, crystals have unique vibrations. As I mentioned earlier, I had a special connection with rose quartz. It helped me believe in myself when I needed it the most, and I still carry the crystal with me

today. Find what crystal connects with you—then you may want to wear it as a necklace or bracelet or just keep it close.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

### [Kaneesha Allen](#)



Kaneesha is a registered nurse and coffee lover. She enjoys spending time with her husband, family/friends, and cats, and reading personal growth books.



**Myth**

**Reality**



*Photo: zimmytw's Images*

# My Journey In Overcoming My Persistent Fears And Anxieties

*By Stan Popovich*

**I** struggled with fear and anxiety for over 20 years and there were times I felt like giving up. During these times, my anxieties and fears were so powerful that I had trouble getting through the week. It was very difficult, however I did not lose hope and I continued to be persistent in finding ways to manage my mental health.





## Discovering Effective Techniques In Overcoming Fear

In order to get through those difficult times, the first thing I did was admit that I had a problem. I then took the steps to find a mental health counselor who could help me with my situation. I also made the effort to learn as much as I could in dealing with my persistent fears and anxieties by reading a lot of books and doing a lot of personal research. I knew that the answers I was looking for were out there and all I had to do was make an effort to find them. Over time, I became very knowledgeable on how to deal with fear and anxiety which helped me in the long run.

**As a result, here is a brief list of techniques that I used in helping me overcome my fear related issues.**

**1. Get all of the facts of the situation:** The first thing I did in overcoming any stressful situation is to gather all of the facts which helps me from relying on exaggerated and fearful assumptions. By focusing on the facts, a person can rely on what is reality and what is not and it also prevents me from predicting the future. I learned that while the consequences of a particular fear may seem real, there are usually other factors that cannot be anticipated and can affect the results of any situation. A person may be 99% correct in predicting the future, but all it takes is that 1% to make a difference. Always focus on the facts of any situation rather than dwelling on what you may or may not think.

**2. Take a break:** Sometimes we get stressed out when everything happens all at once. When this happens, take a deep breath and try to find something to do for a few minutes to get your mind off of the problem. A person can get some fresh air, listen to some music, or do an activity that will give them a fresh perspective on things. Whenever I get anxious, I try to read something that makes me feel good.

**3. Exercise Regularly:** Physical activity helps at lifting your mood and fighting feelings of fear and depression. Whenever I get stressed out I like to take a brisk walk in the park to help relax. If you don't exercise regularly, it can be particularly beneficial to simply invest some time in doing a small activity. Regular exercise provides many





Photo: FatCamera

mood lifting benefits, as well as benefits to physical health. It is also a great way to meet other people. It is important to talk to your doctor before doing any exercises.

**4. Use Self-Visualization:** Sometimes, we can get anxious over a task that we will have to perform in the near future. When this happens, visualize yourself doing the task in your mind. For instance, I had to give a business presentation at my place of work. The day before the presentation, I rehearsed doing the speech in my mind and pretended that I was talking in front of my manager and co-workers. The next day I was mentally prepared in giving my presentation and I was not nervous at all because I practiced the day before.

**5. I learned to manage my thoughts:** At times, a person might encounter a fearful

thought that may be difficult to manage. When I encounter a fearful thought, I try to visualize a red stop sign, which can serve as a reminder to stop thinking about that negative thought. I realized that regardless how scary the thought may be, do not dwell on it. Through my experiences I also realized that my negative thoughts are exaggerated and that it is best to ignore the fear behind these obsessive thoughts.

**6. Carry a small notebook of positive statements with you:** I decided to keep a small notebook of positive statements in my pocket when I get anxious. Whenever I come across a positive and uplifting verse that makes me happy, I write it down in a small notebook that I can use when I get anxious. This also helps me to focus on what I am doing right now rather than worrying about how I will get through the rest of the

week. I learned that each day provides us with different opportunities to learn new things and that includes learning how to deal with your situation.

**7. I learned from my mental health experiences:** Whenever I encountered a fearful and anxiety related situation, I would apply the techniques I learned from the professionals and from my research. For example, I tend to do everything all at once in my professional and personal life. I talked with a counselor on what I could do, and they recommended that I do things in order of their importance and then go from there. At first it was difficult, however I got into the habit of not trying to everything all in one day.

Instead of looking at my stressful problems as a problem, I looked at each situation as a learning experience.

### **In Summary**

The key is not to give up and to seek help from a qualified professional. You are not alone when it comes to your mental health challenges. There are many support groups in your area where you can get assistance and where you can meet others who can relate to your circumstances. Your situation is not hopeless and by making the right decisions, you will eventually be able to get your life back on track.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

### **Stan Popovich**



Stan Popovich is the author of the popular managing fear book, *A Layman's Guide to Managing*

*Fear*. For more information about Stan's book and to get some more free mental health advice, please visit Stan's website at <http://www.managingfear.com>



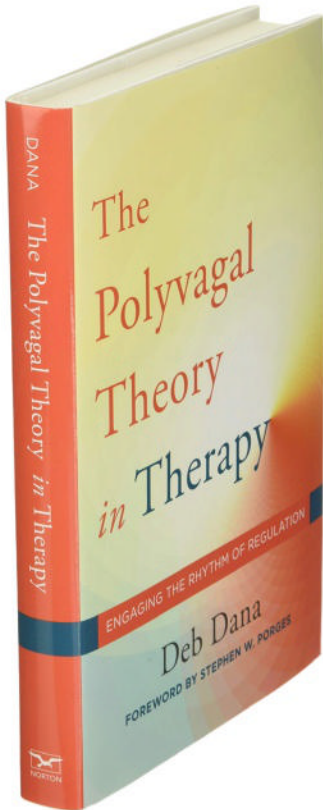


*Photo: Raphael Angeli*

# Shining the Light on “Glimmers”

*By Dhanista Shah*

**S**elf-help literature has focused on a lot of “triggers.” There are workbooks and worksheets that help us identify what triggers us so that we can regulate our emotions and our behaviors. However, recently the concept of ‘glimmers’ has been the focus. While it may be useful to watch out for what works you up, it is also meaningful to look out for those little sparks that fill your days with peace, love, contentment, and wonder.



Glimmers are indeed those little sparks or beams of happiness, moments of light, that ‘spark joy’ to put it in a simple phrase. Deb Dana coined the term in the book [The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy](#).

### It’s neural you see

To understand how triggers and glimmers work, one needs to briefly look into the workings of the nervous system. On a more physiological level, when we encounter ‘triggers,’ they indicate something that signals danger. We enter the flight and flight mode, and it spirals the nervous system into ‘protecting’ the self. This urges us to shut down, or get worked up and defensive. Physically our heart beats faster, breathing becomes heavier, and we just don’t feel good. We may be angry and upset, or just hyper-aroused in general.

However, when we encounter glimmers, they help cue our nervous system to feel safe or calm by activating the ventral vagal nervous system. They enhance regulation of the autonomic nervous system. We become open and more relaxed. Breathing is calmer and there is a sense of peace and grounding. For a more detailed understanding of the polyvagal theory, you may watch this [video](#).

### Find them and use them

Now that we know glimmers impact our nervous system and thereby our moods and behaviors, how do we go about finding them? One of the simplest ways to experience them is mindfully, though the senses. Sit in a quiet place for a few moments and mindfully tune into your thoughts. Think of a moment when you felt safe and connected to life, to yourself







Photo: vladans

and to others around. Or, think of some person with whom, and around whom you feel grounded. Think of little moments in your daily routine where you get peace and feel at rest. All these moments or experiences can be a part of your very own resource base of glimmers.

## Count your glimmers

Count your glimmers, and name them one by one. These are indeed blessings in disguise. Once you identify the little objects or moments that give you joy, it could be useful to make a note of them and consciously seek them. Your very own menu of glimmers may just be a great idea. It could be little moments that bring you happiness—watching the sunset, sipping your tea before the day starts, hugging your pet, getting in touch with nature, the fragrance of fresh flowers in your room, a specific perfume, playing with your children, going out for a walk with an empathic friend, finding some me-time to journal, and so on. [A Quick Guide to Ventral Vagal Anchors](#) by Deb Dana is a short online guide that can help you explore your very own glimmers.

## Glimmer-trigger balance

Identifying glimmers is just the first step. To make them work for you, the glimmer balance has to be more than the trigger balance. In other words, you need to consciously seek out and experience more glimmers. This may sound simple, but for all practical purposes, the human brain is wired to look for danger. Thus, one may be oblivious to the obvious benefits of being attuned to glimmers.

Be mindful of the sense of calm that your body experiences when you encounter glimmers (such as sitting on a garden bench with closed eyes listening to the birds). This will automatically also attune you to how different you feel when you encounter triggers in your daily life (such

# Blessings

Remember to count them  
each and everyday

Photo: Simon Robben

as a comment by a friend that immediately puts you off and makes you want to argue and retort back). Once you sense the difference in how you feel in the body on experiencing glimmers versus triggers, you'll be motivated to seek out glimmers and make them a part of your arsenal in dealing with life!

The term 'glimmers' may be new, but the concept has been around for quite some time. As I think of an apt phrase to end this article, a classic song pops to mind.

*When the dog bites,*

*When the bees sting,*

*When I'm feeling sad.*

*I simply remember my favorite things*

*And then I don't feel so bad!*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

### Dhanishta Shah



Dhanishta Shah is a writer based out of India.

She believes that reading

and writing gives

sense to experience, and is constantly on the quest to explore new and exciting territories and formats for writing. She is the founder of literary portal [www.bookedforlife.in](http://www.bookedforlife.in), and is especially interested in the connection of books and literature to our lifestyles.





Photo: fizkes

# I Discovered Somatic Yoga by Chance—and Here is Why I Practice It Daily

*By Gurnoor Mutreja*

**A**s I held child's pose for five breaths, I felt a strange constriction in my heart area. The teacher guided us to move on or stay as long as I wanted if the pose was serving me. I lay in a wide-stance child's pose with my hands in front of me, I noticed my breath. I had a sudden flash of anxiety and as my mind ran in thousand different directions, I got my focus back on my breath. I decided to disengage from my emotions and see what happens. Tears rolled from my eyes. I felt a bit lighter and slightly at home in my body, something I had not experienced in a long time.



Photo: Africa images

It felt like the tip of the iceberg breaking. There was a lot to be worked upon. But I had found a way.

### **I stumbled across somatic yoga by chance.**

There are a gazillion forms of Yoga styles to suit everyone's requirements. The prominent ones include Hatha yoga, Ashtanga yoga, Iyengar yoga, and Kundalini yoga. Each form of yoga has its respective physical and psychological benefits and works on a separate level.

Thanks to YouTube, I tried my hand at various [Vinyasas](#) which combine cardiovascular activity and flow movement altogether. The beauty of these practices was that I felt like water flowing from one pose to another seamlessly. In a quest to

try something new, I stumbled across [Yin Yoga](#). Contrary to the Vinyasa flows, this form of yoga was based on ancient Chinese principles which were full of deep holds and helped developed flexibility in my body.

My YouTube algorithm started directing me to more [somatic yoga](#) practices like trauma-informed yoga and restorative yoga. As a young adult, I could not recall an incident of severe trauma, yet I was taking medication for anxiety. I decided to take a heart-opening trauma yoga class. Though the asanas were the same, the class was radically cleansing.

Contrary to what I believed, our body holds trauma in various parts and though we forget about it on a conscious level, our subconscious body holds on to those





Photo: oksanashufrych

unpleasant memories. It can be held in energy centers like the heart and pelvic region or body parts such as the shoulders, hips, jaw, etc. These unresolved feelings are likely to result in aches and pains, and rounded shoulders. Untreated past trauma can have a big impact on our present and future health.

Trauma occurs when your nervous system is overwhelmed. It happens in the mind as well as the body. A thing about trauma is that nobody escapes it. Bessel A. van der Kolk the author of the pathbreaking study *The Body Keeps the Score* rightly remarks “Up until recently, ‘trauma’ has been a whispered word; reserved for private moments in therapy, not to be uttered outside of that room.”

### How is somatic yoga different than other forms of yoga?

The instructor is present as a guide who gives a variety of options. Everything in the class is an invitation. And surprisingly, this invitational language ushers in a sense of freedom and empowerment all at the same time. The teacher usually provides various options of the same pose and also an option to remain still depending on what serves the body on a particular day. The idea is to create a safe place and atmosphere for emotions to come up and deal with them in a detached way.

This practice works internally on tense and tightened areas, helping to ease symptoms of past trauma and anxiety. Mindfulness



Photo: Krisda Bisalyaputra

accompanied by physical practice helps to look inward rather than focusing outward. These practices are therapeutic in nature and the accompanied mindfulness helps to bring unresolved emotions to the surface. More than focusing on the perfection of the asana and moving into the next one, somatic yoga offers an opportunity to accept the emotions and move on.

### **What to expect after practice?**

The time period of release of trauma varies, however, over a period of continuous practice. I noticed a relative change in my body after the very first session. The tightening of my body loosened. Remarkably, I could breathe deeply and much more fully.

I developed a sense of relaxation and reconnection with my body. Over the course of time, I learned to observe my emotions and not engage with them. This has helped me to experience a sense of spaciousness which is only possible with the release of held-up emotions. Moreover, it has helped me develop greater introspection, the ability to feel my inner world, and listen to bodily sensations. There were times I felt a sudden urge to shout or cry incessantly. However, releasing them without judgment made me feel lighter.

Each practice brought up different emotions to the mat. There were days when I would lie on my back not wanting to move and, on some days, I would want to enter into a deeper stretch with the help of my blocks. Nonetheless, I got up from each practice after surfacing a variety of emotions that I was reluctant to feel in my everyday life.

### **Is there scientific proof that this practice works?**

There is evidence to suggest that somatic therapy is an effective way to reduce stress and anxiety levels in PTSD patients, as well as work on overall improving welfare.

A study published by the National Library of Medicine found that [Yoga Nidra](#) was a successful treatment for reducing anxiety and stress in patients with menstrual disorders.

A 2014 study published in the [Journal of Clinical Psychology](#) found that one hour of trauma-informed yoga for a period of 10



weeks significantly reduced symptoms of PTSD and depression in women who had experienced trauma.

A 2018 study published in the [\*Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine\*](#) found that trauma-informed yoga was effective in reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression in adults with a history of trauma.

### How often do I practice it?

Classes can be around an hour or 15 minutes. As I like to feel significantly lighter and am on a quest to reconnect with my body, I am practicing it every single day depending on the area that needs a bit of softening. Like Bessel A. van der Kolk, says: I am trying to ‘befriend my body.’ He adds, “Trauma victims cannot recover until they become familiar with and befriend the sensations in their bodies. In order to change, people need to become aware of their sensations and the way that their bodies interact with the world around them. Physical self-awareness is the first step in releasing the tyranny of the past.”

After a few months of practice, I have started to deeply reverberate with the words of Mark Wolynn in [\*It Didn't Start with You\*](#) “Ignoring the pain actually deepens it. What is hidden from sight often increases in intensity.” So, every day for an hour I come face-to-face with my pain.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

### Gurnoor Mutreja



Gurnoor is a lawyer and passionate writer. Her publications include *Voices of Academia* and

*The Daily Life Magazine*. She is fond of exploring the quirkiest and the weirdest places in the world. When she is not writing, she can be found spending time in her kitchen garden. You can reach her at @niftyshadesofnoor on Instagram.







Photo: FatCamera

For me, self-discipline simply means turning up each morning. I usually meet myself on the yoga mat, but I might also run on the forest track or stand barefoot on the earth. The practice is about being *in the now*, a place in time and space that I access either through seated meditation, rhythmic running, or flowing movement. This might not sound very disciplined in the old-fashioned sense of the word, but it keeps me mentally and emotionally stable, and in that way, it's beyond price. Miss a few mornings and my head is all over the place.

### Discipline and fire

Discipline is one definition of the Sanskrit word, *tapas*. Also interpreted as self-practice or burning enthusiasm, *tapas* is one of yoga's first limbs: the *yamas*. But in ancient times, *tapas* had a very different meaning. London-based [Shamita Ray](#) is a yoga teacher and former professional

dancer and choreographer. In her third year of acquiring a master's degree in traditions of yoga and meditation at [SOAS University](#), Ray has studied yoga's origins and development. She says: "Tapas means heat. It's the idea is that you can burn away impurities in order to move toward a spiritual practice. They used to believe that you could literally burn away impurities, fasting almost to the point of death, for example."

I once met a sadhu in India who said he had not sat down for years, and when I saw how swollen and misshapen his calves were, I believed him. This [standing baba](#) was practicing a form of *tapas*. "It was to become liberated," says Ray. "Some yogis keep their arms in the air for many years. These are all ways of destroying the body."

Don't worry if this seems completely alien to you. You're not likely to learn this in a modern yoga class. "The yoga we do today



Photo: SDI Productions

has transformed since the early days, says Ray. “That’s not a bad thing: anything that’s living will change all the time. Our 21<sup>st</sup> century tapas is a lot more sanitized.”

### **Can tapas be useful today?**

“Yes,” says Ray. “Vinyasa flow is dynamic. It warms the body, the muscles, and the joints, and it gets the blood circulation flowing. This is a very literal interpretation of tapas. But there is also a mental type of fire that you can build. We all sit in front of screens and watch movies in a very passive way. Mental fire is the opposite of this: it helps you stay alert and not get easily distracted.”

She continues: “I’ve experienced this by doing the practice. It just comes. I’ve done group classes with a teacher and gone completely into the zone, forgetting there were other people in the room. I would say that it’s similar to dancing. When you’re performing on stage you can’t be thinking about what you’re eating for dinner that night. Perhaps it’s easier when you dance because the adrenaline makes you do things that you can’t normally do. This is an emotional kind of fire.”

### **How do you get to know your inner fire?**

Finding your inner fire means becoming more familiar with the subtleties in your life. If you’re constantly seeking the easy option, trying never to experience discomfort, the chances are, you could do with cultivating tapas. If you’re the kind of person who seeks refuge on the sofa or has trouble finding motivation to finish things (or even start them), working with tapas could be of benefit. That’s not to say there’s anything wrong with resting on the sofa. But when you’re really honest with yourself, you’ll know whether you’re challenging yourself sufficiently.

You might say that with all of modern life’s distractions, self-discipline is more important than ever. But it’s hard! “That’s what makes it interesting,” says Ray. “You do all these postures and all this breathing; there is technique but there’s no formula to feeling great. You can’t click your fingers and make that kind of thing happen every time.” And that’s all part of the practice. Sometimes it’s hard and it feels as though you’re not achieving anything at all. And other times, the magic happens: you get into that flow state where you feel completely at ease, beyond thought. You only notice it when it’s over.

While there is no blueprint for reaching that state, there are things you can do to make it more likely to occur.

### **Practice**

Don’t feel as though you need to do a two-hour practice every day. In fact, you



needn't ever put that much time in on a daily basis. It's far more beneficial to cultivate a regular practice, and if five minutes is all you can manage each day, go for it. Slot it into your day, wherever it fits, and make it just as an integral part of your life as taking a shower or cleaning your teeth.

### Take your yoga off the mat

If you're not taking your yoga off the mat, how can it help you? Sure, it can make you feel good in the moment. But what about later in the day when you're tense at your desk or feeling irate with family members? By trying to bring a bit of the peace you feel on the mat into your daily life, you're really working on your discipline. But what if it's not peace you feel? What if you feel strong fear or anger? Try and sit with it. By learning to name these feelings in a moment of calm, you'll be more likely to recognize them when they crop up in your everyday life.

### Ask yourself: would it be wise?

With self-practice, you become a fortune teller. You learn to look into the future to understand how a certain action will make you feel. While guzzling on cookies feels great in the moment, use your understanding of your own body to note how you will feel in an hour's time. And while staying in bed late and rushing out to work feels like a good idea in the moment, learn to ask yourself what that hurried approach to life will do to your nervous system.

### Let go of expectation

If you're constantly striving to reach a goal in your-self practice, you're likely to be frequently disappointed. In this control-obsessed culture, it's normal to try and govern every aspect of your life. But in reality, you simply can't. Letting go of how you want the world to be will help you encounter the world as it really is.

None of this stuff comes easily, and that's why we need to practice it. No one ever became an orchestral musician without it. And neither will you become an expert in yourself without diligence. After all, says Ray: "Getting your leg up is the easy bit when you realize that practice is the tool.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

#### Laura Parr



Laura is a yoga teacher and therapist with a background in nursing and public health.

She thinks that health needn't be complicated and is passionate about helping people find simple ways to achieve wellness in their lives. Laura founded [Slow Yoga Portugal](#), and when not on her mat or at her desk, she can be found running with her dog or growing vegetables.



Photo: SolStock

# How To Make Friends as an Adult

*By Kate Orson*

**I**s it harder to make friends the older we get? Science seems to suggest it is. [One study](#) found that we need to spend 50 hours with someone to become friends, and 200 hours to build a close friendship. In our busy lives that kind of free time just isn't always available.





Photo: SDI Productions

Yet friendship is so important for our emotional wellbeing. We might not live near our childhood friends or have drifted away because of circumstances and life interests. So, how can we make truly like-minded friends that reflect our adult selves?

Despite all the obstacles, friendships can blossom, whether we are 9 or 99. With research there are always exceptions to the rule. With the right person you can instantly be soulmates.

When I moved to Italy, six months before the pandemic, my husband and I met

a couple who we instantly clicked with. In the post-lockdown months, we were our own little bubble, going on holidays together, having sleepover parties for our children—and adults. I wasn't expecting this much closeness from people we'd barely had a chance to socialize with before being locked in our homes. When two years later our friends moved back to their home country, there was no replacing that gap in our lives. Friends like that just don't come along every day. But there are still things we can do to make it more likely to find an instant grown-up bestie or develop a more slow-growing friendship.



Photo: SDI Productions

Here are a few suggestions.

### Spread your net wide

In order to make it more likely to find someone you click with it makes sense to find as many possibilities as possible to meet people. What activities are you regularly doing that could be opportunities to meet someone? Whether it's a local exercise class, book club, or co-working space, in-person living is vital for friendship opportunities. Over time acquaintances can grow into friends as those connection hours stack up. It can take years for an acquaintance to switch to friend mode, however in-person interaction benefits our wellbeing even when it's between strangers.

### When online go local

The internet can be both a help and a hindrance to friend finding. Connecting with hundreds of people all over the globe can be enriching, but those online connections can be a false substitute to real life-relating. One solution is to go local. I've lived in four different countries as an

adult and have had to start again multiple times. I've made close friends, simply by connecting to other English speakers locally to me on social media. Focus on local Facebook groups or follow local people on Twitter, Instagram, or LinkedIn. A search in your local city could bring up people that are not only like-minded but also nearby.

### Be an organizer

When I moved overseas, there were things that I used to do in my home country that just weren't available in my new locale. I wanted a writing class, so I found I had to start one. I wanted to have an evening out for other writers, so I had to organize it. I never considered myself to be an organizer, but found myself in the position that if I didn't take the plunge, I couldn't do the things I loved. If there's something you love doing that you'd love to attend like a book group, hiking with other people, or cooking class, could you start it yourself? It can be a wonderful way to meet new people and find those you click with. While some might remain acquaintances, you might find over time close friendships are formed.

### Say something or just listen

Every friendship starts with strangers breaking the ice and speaking to each other. In the book [Here To Make Friends](#), therapist Hope Kelaher says that 'people are often reluctant to engage in a conversation because they fear that they will have to say something meaningful.' She points out that most people like talking about themselves and don't have good



listeners in their lives. Even if you don't feel like you have anything important to say, just start up a conversation and see where it leads. A simple compliment or introducing yourself can be enough. Asking questions and showing genuine interest can take the pressure off and give the chance to offer someone the gift of listening and warm attention.

### Building friendship through self-disclosure

[Research has found](#) that self-disclosure; revealing personal facts about ourselves tends to make us more likable. While we don't usually tell all to distant acquaintances it's worth bearing in mind disclosure when meeting new people. It's kind of like a dance where both parties gradually reveal themselves to each other over time. If something's holding you back from sharing, then it can be helpful to ask yourself why? If it's just a matter of fear or rejection, then there are times when it's worth taking a risk and sharing something personal. It might just build the foundations of a new friendship.

In her book Kelaher shares her thoughts on why younger adults tend to make more friends because they are 'more apt to take risks when it comes to meeting new people and seem to be more open to make themselves vulnerable.' Kelaher suspects this is because the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain responsible for inhibitions such as fear of rejection and embarrassment is not fully developed until age 25. It's worth bearing this in mind when you meet older adults. They may

be more reserved, but it's not necessarily because they are too busy or to make friends or have enough already. It could be their inhibitions holding them back. If you can be the one to take the risk, it may be the start of a wonderful new friendship.

Loneliness is more common than ever so if you're craving connection, you are not the only one. Setting a conscious intention to get out there and let go of fear of rejection are the hardest parts, you might be surprised how easily the friendships come.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Kate is a freelance writer and author of *Tears Heal: How to Listen to Our Children*.

She writes about wellness, parenting, and sex, and is currently crowdfunding to publish a memoir, *A Cut in the Brain*. Originally from the UK, she now lives in Italy with her husband, author Toni Davidson, and their 8-year-old daughter.



# About *IndigoBlue Magazine*

*Editor-in-Chief: Laura Boyle*

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