



# Spring clean your mind

HOLISTIC THERAPIST, DR KAREN WARD, OFFERS HER RECOMMENDATIONS ON STARTING SPRING WITH A HEALTHY RESET.

**I**s your poor head wrecked like a computer on overdrive or a cupboard bulging at the seams with old repetitive thoughts and negative thinking? Do you worry about things that might never happen? Is your head always full of anxieties that distract you from living life? Then help is at hand this season of spring.

Nature mirrors this key time in our

year with emerging buds and vigorous growth. The longer days and brighter evenings are very conducive to fresh starts. Remember that if we want to bring new experiences into our lives, we need to make room for them. Therefore, spring cleaning is essential. That cluttered desk or stuffed spare room is also filling your mind subconsciously!

Here are some simple tips to help.

## ➔ How to alleviate worry and negative thoughts

This is a very simple and highly effective three-step technique to counteract the habit of worrying.

### ♥ **Label the negative thoughts:**

What are you ruminating about? This way you can actively see the pattern of who or what upsets you or is in your head. Does it really matter if it rains today? Take an umbrella and stop thinking about it. Being worried about someone's health is more likely to upset them and so a positive outlook is more beneficial to their recovery in the long run.

### ♥ **Distract yourself by reading,**

**walking or exercising:** This is a marvellous way to get the negative

thoughts out of your head. Choose distractions that excite you or that you are passionate about. Watching a film or phoning a friend are also other superb ways to do this easily.

♥ **Positive self-talk:** This is the most important step where you are talking yourself out of negativity. For example, you could say 'What am I like? Why am I worrying about something that may never happen?', or 'There I go, worrying about my daughter's exams when she always does her best'. The vital part is not to beat yourself up but to be kind as if talking to a friend or beloved family member.



## ➔ The timeline chart

This is an excellent technique to find out what is causing any deep-down distress so it can be dealt with for once and for all.

- ♥ Take some time for yourself with paper and pen.
- ♥ Mark out each decade you have lived, i.e. 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, etc.
- ♥ Jot down the highlights, both good and not-so-good, you remember from each decade.
- ♥ Now take one decade at a time and think for a few moments about each event.
- ♥ See what emotion arises. If you think fondly of a particular time and it brings a positive feeling, then note this for future reference as a good resource to think about if you are feeling down or out of sorts.
- ♥ If you think of a not-so-good time but are philosophical about it and have learned from it, well done.

♥ However, if you think about a not-so-good time and strong negative emotion arises, and you feel sad, angry or depressed, then this is not resolved and needs to be spring-cleaned by talking to a trusted friend/family member or professional counsellor. The Irish Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy is a great source of information (@iacp.ie).

Look to the spring weather and feel your sap rising as you go with the flow of wanting to free yourself of old habits using these tried and tested techniques.



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