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## Introduction

Last week, my LSW Mind Cards arrived in the post and there was a sense of ‘knowing’ as soon as I held them. The self-help movement has gathered much momentum in the past decade, and it runs alongside the increasing images of perfection of self that swamp society. One of my hopes is that the images of so-called perfection get torn to shreds as we all shift through this global crisis. Some over commercialized aspects of self-help feed into the perfect images and it leaves folk nowhere to go with the internal dialogue of not being good enough.

Feeling my way through life, with exploration and trying different ideas and patterns, has built a foundation of action. I am finding these cards a beautiful prompt to try new things, one simple step at a time.



## Ritual

Every action we take, no matter how small, creates the life we live in the following days. The spectrum of choices we have from how we brush our teeth, communicate with others, the food we buy, work we do, to the time we choose to go to bed all feed into our daily round. All these small choices build an energy that creates the life we live and there are many actions we do automatically.

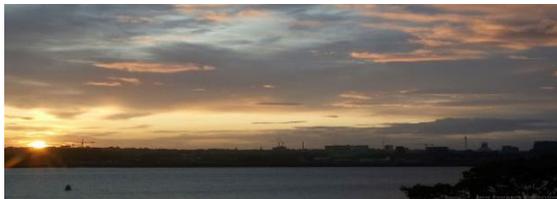
Over the years, I have often heard the cry from those reaching out for help 'I just want things to change' & 'I don't want my life to be like this anymore'.

My perspective is that change comes from taking small choices that bring about a different outcome. Sometimes we can anticipate the result and at the other end of the spectrum it truly is an unknown. That thought can freeze us into not making any kind of change and stop us from making different choices. Going all out for change can easily lead to feeling over-whelmed, as on a practical level you have way too many new things to remember and do each day. Just ponder on New Year's resolutions and you see why they are unsustainable. One small change, practiced each day till it becomes automatic, can gather the energy of momentum to usher in changes that you have chosen.

It is like getting on the same bus and expecting the route to be different. Mind you, that did happen once when the driver forgot which bus he was driving, but that is another story.

Early morning is such a peaceful time and I had a daily habit of wrecking mine. Fresh from sleep I would check my phone, start answering emails, reply to comments on various web sites and fall down a hole of reading other posts, all whilst drinking a lot of coffee. I felt driven, on top of things and busy, which ironically, was not setting me up for a productive day. I had created a corkscrew routine of fake productiveness, which turned tighter over time, and I felt drawn to call myself on my own BS. Our modern way of communication is advanced, yet still an intrusion if we allow it to be. The world will not stop if I reply to emails and messages later in the day, or even on another day.

My early morning routine is now simpler and peaceful. I breathe deeply, sit in meditation, pray for help for souls in my healing book and anyone who needs loving energy from spirit, write in my gratitude journal and draw a daily ritual, kindness, gratitude, journal or reflection card.



## Gratitude

My Mum and I are alike in looks and character, and this strengthens our loving bond. I also find freedom in being understood unconditionally and hold much gratitude in my heart for her love.

When I moved to my first floor flat, over three years ago, there was a flat roof accessible from the hallway that adjoins my neighbour. It was covered in rubbish and old plant pots that were so choked with weeds it took a serrated carving knife to break them up into manageable chunks. With my landlady's permission I was able to clear it, creating a clean, freshly swept canvas. The view is across The Mersey River looking towards Liverpool and every day I filled with awe as I watch nature and life play out.



My Mum was ahead of my plans and when I next visited her and Dad, she gifted me several light planters and some beautiful plants to fill them.

Hydrangeas, blue and pink, that remind me of my childhood, a miniature pink rose for love, red hot geraniums, like the ones my beloved paternal Grandad used to grow in his greenhouse, white milk maids, which are a profusion of flowers in the spring and autumn and an azalea with memories of my teenage years in Africa.

Through trial and error, I have found the best place for them all to thrive and it is against the house wall, where they are protected from the worst of the sea breezes and storm winds. At the front there is a large dish which I fill with fresh water every day for the birds.

Mum gifted me the little stone rabbit from her garden.



## Kindness

We view life through a multi-layered lens of our choices and the past. One of my layers is the hope that everyone is doing their best in any given moment. This may not always be the case, yet it feels kinder for me to feel that way and life is softer because of it.

When anyone acts with anger, bitterness, jealousy or any harsh emotion, it is all too easy to take it personally. Nine out of ten times it isn't about us. There are many emotional triggers inside each of us and we can react to harsh emotions, usually adding our own upset energy to an already volatile mix.

It is challenging, yet kinder for all involved, not to react immediately. Not always easy by any means, yet softer. Gifting time to ponder on why we were triggered and allowing us to gain fresh perspective on why the other person may have acted with harsh emotions initially. We may never know the other person's 'why', or fully understand our own triggers, yet building in a pause gifts a non-reactive space and flows a kinder energy.

I was asked the other day which value I looked for in any connection with someone new and I replied 'Kindness'.

When my daughter was nine, her Dad was taken ill, and it quickly became apparent that it would be a challenge for a long time. It was one of those moments when life as we knew it ceased and we were left scrabbling for loving things to hold onto.

The first day at the school gates was an ordeal and after I had dropped my daughter off a lady I did not know well, asked if I was alright. I briefly explained and she put her arm around my shoulders, and I didn't have to say anything else. A friend, who knew us well as a family, sailed past and said 'Cheer up, Jane. It may never happen.' The lady beside me shot back with 'It already has'. My friend carried on and I doubt she even heard. I remember fondly, the shared moments in my new friend's home. Popping in for a quick coffee after grocery shopping, teas together for all the children and a kindness that flowed naturally from her.

One afternoon, it started pouring with rain as I stood outside the school gates and a car door opened nearby. I could see an arm waving and I walked over. Another lady I didn't know invited me to sit beside her, as her baby girl slept in the car seat behind us. There was no pressure to talk and there followed many afternoons I shared her car. As we slowly opened-up, I discovered an understanding and wisdom within that loving soul, built on a strong foundation of kindness. On difficult days she collected my daughter and took her to school and there were times she would collect my ironing and bring it back pressed and fragrant. She was an anchor in a stormy sea and I have never forgotten her kindness and we are still in touch today. Her greatest gift was non-judgment and I feel that goes hand in hand with kindness.

We are finding out in these times of global crisis, just what a difference the kindness of strangers makes, as we discover new ways to flow care for each other.

## **Little Things Poem**

by Julia Carney, 1845

Little drops of water  
Little grains of sand,  
Make the mighty ocean,  
And the pleasant land.

So, the little moments,  
Humble though they be,  
Make the mighty ages  
Of eternity.

So, our little errors  
Lead the soul away  
From the path of virtue,  
Far in sin to stray.

Little deeds of kindness,  
Little words of love,  
Make our earth happy,  
Like the Heaven above.



## Journal

At the start of the Falklands war I returned from South Africa to live in the U.K.. My family had settled in Salcombe, Devon and that is where I landed after catching the last train out of London, changing trains a few times as I zig zagged my way down to the South West and arriving in the middle of a belting snowstorm. I remember getting off the train at Totnes station in the early hours of the morning and seeing my Mum and Dad for the first time in over four years.

I got a job waitressing in a local restaurant in the evenings and during the day divided my time between babysitting, cleaning and data entry stints. One of those has stayed in my heart and even now the memories are clear.

I started to work for a quiet, thoughtful lady who lived with her husband, known to everyone as 'The Major'. For all I know, he may well have held that rank in the army and my memories are of him striding about the place, 'hurrumphing' a lot and I cannot recall ever having a conversation with him. I used to go and help Barbara clean her home and we developed a loving bond, as we bottomed out rooms together and had fun re-arranging furniture. I used to shake the dusters outside the window, looking out over the estuary and sparkling sea beyond, and it all had a touch of bygone times. It was a beautiful, rambling house, set into the hillside with a garden full of roses, sweet peas in summer and aquilegia (Granny's bonnet).

Our favourite time of day was mid-afternoon when we would sit at her huge kitchen table, chat and drink Earl Grey tea. One day she asked if I would help her with something important and for the next few months, I would type for her. She had kept her Mother's diaries and the letters between her Mother and Father during the Second World War and lovingly, we pieced them together into a book. The blue airmail paper was transparent after all these years, yet the dark ink was legible. They were parted for years and living through dark times and it was humbling to read their words and shared thoughts.

I can still feel Barbara's loving energy from spirit and hear the ticking of her kitchen Grandmother clock.



## Reflections

I had been living in North Wales, just outside Ruthin, for a few months and my phone pinged with an unexpected text from a long-term friend. She was staying nearby and wondered if she could call in. We hadn't seen each other for a few years, and I was delighted at the opportunity to have a catch-up.

We used to live across the road from each other in Bedfordshire, when my daughter was a baby and Kate worked from home crafting beautiful pottery. A friendship started the day she asked me over to share in the homemade lemon drizzle cake her Mum had sent her from Germany and over time we shared many moments together. I remember feeling heartbroken when she moved away.

In Wales, we sat in my new home, chatting over a cup of tea and decided to spend the next day having an adventure together. Kate had worked out that I was only a few hours drive away from Snowdonia, so she suggested that we went walking there and a day unfolded that I will never forget. I didn't have any walking boots, so Kate gifted me an old pair that she had used since her teenage years. I still use them today. We met up in Betws-y-Coed and explored the town a little, stopping by the babbling river for morning coffee. A short drive took us into Snowdonia National Park and we started to walk towards Mount Snowdon, meeting many interesting people as we walked around the lakes and across the hills. There was one chap and his friend, and he shared that he used to be a caretaker for that area, for many years.

He looked as hardy as the countryside around us and I can still see his happy face now, as he talked about the land he loved. Pausing, we even paddled in one lake and yes, it was freezing. It is where I took the cover photograph for this book.



We met a sheep farmer who had just been to market and had paused on the way home to have an ice cream and soak in the scenery. With his cloth cap at a fun angle on his head, he shared farming stories and invited us back for tea. Smiling, we declined and carried on.

It was late afternoon when we started to feel chilly and although we were at the foot of Snowdon by then, it was pushing it to do the final climb that day. We turned back and re-traced our steps along the cobbled miner's path.

As we walked and talked, we made discoveries about each other in stories not shared before.

## Contact

### **LSW Mind Cards**

Lili is the founder and creator of LSW Mind Cards.

She spent a decade forging a successful career in the Film and TV industry, but despite the occasional red-carpet glamour and glitzy parties, she never felt truly fulfilled. Overworked and surrounded by people suffering from burn out and high stress, she realised that despite originally believing working in film was her dream, it wasn't making her happy, so she took the plunge and retrained as a Cognitive Hypnotherapist and NLP Master Practitioner.

Through her ever-growing interest in positive psychology and her work with her clients, she noticed the profound effect our daily habits have on our emotional wellbeing. It is not the grand gestures which bring us happiness but the small, easy to do actions we make each day which build up over time, and so the idea for LSW Mind Cards was born. She wanted to make the secret to happiness more accessible to everyone in a simple way!

[Contact LSW Mind Cards...](#)



## Jane Sturgeon

Jane is a writer, creative and storyteller who lives next to the Mersey River where it meets the Irish Sea. Sharing her life with loved ones and an impressive collection of yarn, which is fast diminishing.



[Contact Jane...](#)

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