

EIGHT IS THE MAGIC NUMBER

Our clinical experience is enormous and the evidence that has accrued as a result has helped shape an approach that we can confidently say works. We've developed a truly holistic, integrative and person specific approach, which means that although we have a clear model and structure which looks at all aspects of the human condition, we always adapt that to the individual, rather than expecting the individual to adapt to the model. This is the key to our success.

We know that the main reason that individuals do not reach their desired destinations is in fact a lack of application. Those who understand that creating a mind-body-spirit-environment plan is the primary purpose of personal growth, get busy making the necessary changes in each of these four areas. They have come to realise that weakness in any one of the four (and in most cases there are shortcomings in more than one area) will continue to undermine their best efforts.

They also come to realise that in fact there is nothing fundamentally wrong with them, but that it is the lack of the 'right' method for creating a balanced, peaceful and stable life, which is actually missing. This realisation, that they are okay, in fact they are more than okay, is itself wonderfully liberating.

So the agenda is clear: create a set of non-negotiables that fits with your lifestyle, non-negotiables, which lovingly embrace you and your life. To do that, you need to perform an honest audit. See: Non-Negotiables and also An Inventory of Incongruence.

Once the audit has been carried out, it is important not to be overwhelmed by the size of the task and it is equally important not to be overly critical of yourself. Positive change is more readily available to you through compassion. The compassionate mind reaches its destination more easily.

What we know from experience is that when it comes to creating a life of positive and sustainable change, where the negative patterns of the past have largely been overthrown then a minimum of eight non-negotiables is needed. Eight is the magic number. It is at this point that the individual is able to take healthy control over their life, relinquishing the self-harming, destructive patterns that have denied them clarity, peace of mind and happiness.

At the outset, we nearly always suggest trying to create four non-negotiables - one non-negotiable for each aspect, mind, body, spirit and environment. This can be compared to laying a foundation and without this foundation healing and a sustainable recovery are unlikely. We use the term sustainable a lot in our work because we don't believe that the purpose of personal development is only to get past a current problem or issue, instead, we believe the primary purpose is to help you to see how you can rise to and then transcend all the challenges and demands of your life. Only when you can do this, can you truly be free. This does not mean a life free from difficulty - it means being 'free in your mind' in such a way that the external difficulties do not dictate how you feel about yourself.

So, begin by looking for one thing in each area that needs improving. There is no 'perfect' list, because each one's deficiencies and needs are different. 'The Story of Health' offers an indication of what each of the four aspects needs. However, this is not a definitive list – it does highlight the primary needs within each area, but your honest audit will tell you where 'your' starting point needs to be.

Sit quietly and reflect on exactly what it is that you need to strengthen. Be excruciatingly honest with yourself because the more honest you are the more your spirit will be set free.

Then try to implement the four things you've chosen during the next three months. When you can make this foundation strong, it is at that point that you will be ready to add a further four non-negotiables, leading to eight... the magic number. Don't try to force or rush this, as we all know what happens when we try to build something on a shaky foundation – it eventually collapses.

It should be said for clarity that when you've identified the eight magical helpers that you need, you will find this number is based on the principle that you have two helpers supporting you in each of the four areas. This numerical balance has proven to be the tipping point from lack of discipline and chaos to creating a pattern of routine, clarity and power. See: Routine is Power and also Patternology.

However, in some instances, when the deficiencies in one area are substantial, more than two magicians may be required to restore balance. This is often the case where another area is actually quite strong and so the distribution of the eight non-negotiables would, under those circumstances, need to be different.

Although it's perfectly possible for you to take this journey on your own by drawing on your own experience and self-awareness, do not be afraid to get help from those who understand these matters and are therefore able to support and guide you, should you need it. You could do this with a trusted friend, or within a supportive group, or you may need professional assistance – listen to your heart and you'll know what's right for you.

Whatever you decide to do, do it with honesty and integrity and the results will be spectacular. You will discover that we humans are amongst the greatest miracles in the universe, but only when we unwrap this gift called life.

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act but a habit.”

Aristotle (384BC – 322BC)