

HOT TIP
Staying positive and keeping your focus are the best ways to take control of your life and get things done. Never miss an opportunity with our top tips!

BE YOUR OWN LIFE COACH

Demoralised? Confused? Look to yourself for guidance...

Life can be tricky. There are many twists and turns that threaten to throw you off balance. But fear not! Follow these tips to become your own life coach and you'll navigate those stormy seas with ease



1 FOCUS ON WHAT YOU WANT

Makes sense, right? But, says business coach Sarupa Shah (sarupashah.com), 'the biggest mistake people make is to focus on what they don't want. If you focus on what you do want – be it a better career or enhanced personal growth – you'll avoid getting too downhearted about what you wish was different.' 'Take action every day, no matter how small,' says life coach and mentor Cheryl Lisbygd (thenankoo.com).

2 SEIZE YOUR DESTINY

Looking for love? Go find it! 'Don't wait for Mr Right to whisk you off your feet,' chides lifestyle expert Louise Presley-Turner (thegameoflife.co.uk). 'Start

socialising in new places, change your body language and, most importantly, smile! Your future is in your own hands. 'Each week, do something that takes you out of your comfort zone,' Louise advises, 'from joining a new social group to making eye contact with someone you fancy.'



3 WRITE A BUCKET LIST

You don't want to make it all the way to 90, only to regret that you didn't write a book or travel the world. 'Make a list of 20 things you'd like to accomplish in the next 10 years – from learning a new language to having a family,' suggests Louise. 'Put your list somewhere that's visible

and start making those all-important steps towards living your life to the full.'

FIND A MENTOR

Seek out someone who has achieved a goal that you'd like to accomplish and find out how they did it. 'You'll be surprised how willing people are to help, so don't be shy to ask,' says Cheryl.



4 TRY HYPNOTHERAPY

Self-sabotage by our 'inner critic' can keep us from reaching our true potential. 'Use hypnotherapy to take

back control,' suggests psychologist and hypnotherapist Joanne Reeves-Baker (joannerb.co.uk). Hypnosis allows access to the subconscious mind, creating a doorway to have a conversation with your inner critic. 'You can ask it why it's worried, what it's afraid of and what it wants to happen, then negotiate with it to formulate a plan,' recommends Joanne.

5 NURTURE YOUR POSITIVITY!

'Yoga and meditation are well-known for increasing positivity,' notes Joanne. 'But other things – like gardening, decorating, writing or any activity that requires concentration – will give your mind downtime to process and come back into balance. Find the activity that makes you smile most and make it part of your routine.'



6 KEEP A JOURNAL

'Writing a journal is like an emotional detox,' explains Sarupa. You can share your private thoughts, fears, concerns and joys without fear of judgment. And it allows you to sort through your emotions so, says Sarupa, 'you're better equipped to approach them from a grounded, powerful place.'

7 TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR MONEY

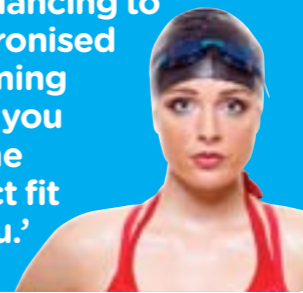
'Do an analysis of your last bank statement,' suggests Louise. Mark each item A (essentials such as your mortgage or rent), B (important but not crucial things, such as your cable TV bill) or C (luxuries like DVDs and clothes). 'You'll get a clearer picture of where your money's going,' confirms Louise. And if you need to cut back quickly, foregoing a shop-bought morning latte could save you hundreds of pounds a year!



WORDS: KATHERINE BEBO. PICTURES: SHUTTERSTOCK SARUPA SHAH IS FOUNDER OF THE SOUL AGENCY (THE SOUL AGENCY BLOG.COM) AND THE AUTHOR OF AFFIRMATIONS. LOUISE PRESLEY-TURNER IS THE AUTHOR OF FINDING A FUTURE THAT FITS

ONLY DO THE EXERCISE YOU LOVE

Don't spend hours in a gym if you don't enjoy it. 'Find something you'll look forward to doing,' says Louise. 'Try everything – from belly dancing to synchronised swimming – until you find the perfect fit for you.'



8 DON'T LET THE PAST DEFINE YOUR FUTURE

Maybe you've done things you're not proud of, but it's time to let go. 'Forgive past errors and accept mistakes you've made,' advises Cheryl. Allow yourself to learn the lessons and move on. 'A negative attitude just won't do,' Cheryl adds. 'As Walt Disney said, "If you can dream it, you can do it."'

9 DO IT TODAY

It's too easy to put things off until tomorrow – you know, the tomorrow that never comes! 'Create a plan,' advises Sarupa, 'then add in some deadlines.' Putting the first, second and third steps in place will help quash your procrastination. And don't just keep the plan in your head: write it down! 'In black and white, you can define what should be done,' Cheryl reminds us. She also recommends creating an inspiration board: 'Find pictures of what your goal looks like – someone crossing a finish line? – and create a board to motivate you. Use Pinterest or go old school with scissors and glue.'



10 FIND YOUR CALLING

What would you love to do if money, time and education weren't an issue? 'Create a visual mind map of the things you're passionate about and of your skills,' recommends Louise. 'Then brainstorm your career ideas, no matter how crazy they might seem.' Once you've narrowed your options down, it's time to make a plan to make it happen: start saving up, look into training options, register a website domain... whatever you need to do. 'Every step moves you towards your dream,' says Louise.

SAY GOODBYE TO GUILT!

Don't spend enough time with your partner? Juggling kids and a career? We can be plagued by guilt, but life coach Louise Presley-Turner says, 'Enough already!'

1 Say 'No'

'Do you constantly overcommit to things? You need to realise you're not a superhero! Learn to say no.'

2 Create an 'energy drainer' list

'The cobweb-filled trainers, the disorganised paperwork... We all have things that make us feel guilty and sap our energy. Make a list of 10 of these things, then write actions that will eliminate them. This could be putting your bills on direct debit or walking to work.'

3 Be grateful

'Each night, write a list of 10 things you're grateful for – big and small. This will highlight the good in your life and change your focus to feel content.'

4 Avoid people who make you feel guilty

'The right friends are essential for success. Choose friendships wisely and mix with people with a sunny disposition.'

5 Love yourself

'Make time for yourself. Have an early night with your favourite book or spend an afternoon shopping. You deserve guilt-free "me time" to rejuvenate physically, mentally and spiritually.'

