

SO WHAT IF 2020 **ISN'T** CANCELLED?

No one's year has gone to plan but, by boosting your resilience, finds Lynn Enright, you are harvesting hope. Plus, turn the page for our Reboot 2020 Workshop



HAD EVERYTHING gone to plan, I'd be six months pregnant right now. I'd have a bump. I'd be working, contributing to a growing savings account.

I might be about to take a holiday in this world where plans work out. It would be lovely to see and smell and feel the sea, to hug my family, so a trip home to Ireland would be nice. But this is 2020 – and nothing has gone to plan, for anyone.

As it stands, I am not pregnant – a round

of IVF failed in late February and subsequent treatment was postponed indefinitely as the NHS was besieged by the coronavirus crisis. I've been ransacking that savings account, spending the money on tests at a private fertility clinic. My income has taken a hit, as has happened to so many others. I haven't seen the sea since summer 2019 and I haven't hugged my family since just before Christmas. This wasn't the plan.

Since March, so many people's lives have been turned upside down in so many ways. There have been small annoyances and

profound, devastating losses. Weddings and holidays have been cancelled. Jobs and businesses have been obliterated. Tens and tens of thousands of people have lost a loved one. Change that might have ordinarily taken months or even years – implementing a working-from-home policy for all staff at a large corporation, for example – happened overnight.

Occasionally, that change has been positive. Nearly everyone I know has enjoyed the enforced slowing down. For many, though, it has been devastating. ▶

IMAGE T/C

GIVE 2020 A REBOOT

There has been so much loss and grief and, even when the disrupted plans have been relatively trivial, it has been tricky because, for most of us, change is difficult.

'Most people like the safety of familiarity,' says Julia Samuel, a psychotherapist and author of *This Too Shall Pass*. 'People don't recognise how difficult [change] is and think they are doing it wrong. The truth is that change on all fronts requires work. We need to work at actively adapting.'

Instead of doing that often painful work, we might rely on unhealthy coping mechanisms: it's rare to come across someone who didn't spend spring 2020 swaddled in a comfort blanket of screen time, banana bread and wine. Coping mechanisms will only get us so far, however, and we will eventually have to find other ways to support ourselves. We will have to adapt to the stress and the trauma. We will have to be resilient. 'Resilience is key to how we recover from difficulty,' says Julia, who defines it as 'a combination of grit and flexibility to bounce back'.

Writer Kerry Hudson, who recently published a memoir about growing up poor in Britain, is currently working on a non-fiction book about resilience, a subject that is now particularly timely. 'Resilience – and the hope that accompanies it – has saved my life on more than one occasion,' she says of her decision to write the book. She considers it a 'vital but often overlooked quality' and says that she wants to explore 'how it can be harnessed and fostered'.

She worries, though, that the concept of resilience is sometimes 'skewed to make people – women especially – feel like they're not tough enough, not doing enough, just not enough generally'.

'It's not a stick to beat yourself with,' she says. 'For me, it is knowing you can be vulnerable, struggling or fearful. Be gentle with yourself and find resilience within that kindness. It's about learning where your personal, unique strengths lie and understanding how to use them.'

For the hundreds of thousands of people

who will be facing unemployment or reduced working hours over the coming months, that kind of resilience will be key. Jade Haynes-Love was working in an east London florist when the pandemic hit and lost her job as soon as lockdown was introduced. There were no opportunities in floristry and 'the first few weeks were tough', she admits. 'I was sitting around thinking, "What am I going to do with myself?" I had days when I thought, "Oh God, I can't do this."' She began to spend her days gardening on her balcony and cycling around the empty city. 'I tried to use that time to think about what I want. What I want to change if things go back to normal, and what I don't want to go back to, at all.' Now Jade has set up her own floristry business, selling bouquets in cafés and at a weekly market stall. She knows that she has more to learn in floristry but being either a freelance florist on major projects or a full-time employee under more experienced florists is not an option right now. Setting up her own small business is her Plan B and she's making it work.

Jade says that the support of friends and family was crucial in allowing her to make the change to being self-employed – and it's widely acknowledged that good relationships underpin resilience. When mourning a death, a job loss, a failed round of IVF or an old, more carefree way of life, we get through with the help of those to whom we are closest. 'When we are grieving, it is love and a connection to others that enables us to survive,' says Julia. The practical basics of self-care – taking exercise, aiming for plenty of sleep, moderate drinking, sensible eating, practising meditation – are necessary for building and maintaining the strength to be resilient, too. And once you've done all that, there is the more difficult task of holding on to the slippery, mercurial quality of hope.

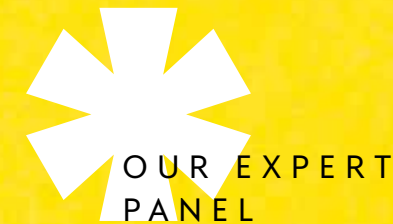
There will be tough times ahead. The pandemic has underlined the harsh truth that life is not a straightforward ascent. We must have hope if we are to be resilient when the unexpected setbacks show up. As Jade arranges a bunch of bright orange dahlias, she must be hopeful. And as I begin to inject myself with synthetic hormones, I must be hopeful.

Julia puts it this way: 'In the end, hope is the alchemy that turns a life around.'

HELL'S BELLS, WHAT a year we've had. Is there anyone out there who honestly wouldn't like to reset 2020? Nope, didn't think so. And September, with its 'back to school' feel, is the perfect time for a reboot. 'September brings that feeling of freshly sharpened pencils and notebooks full of blank pages ready to be filled,' says behaviour change expert Dr Heather McKee. 'It's a great time to capitalise on that industrious energy to make some changes. None of us can control what's going to happen over rest of the year, but we can certainly future-proof our lives so we're in the best possible position to cope.'

Dr McKee is just one of the experts we've enlisted to help you with a seven-day life audit, designed to bolster your resilience in key areas so that you'll be better equipped to ride out the pandemic roller-coaster and stay focused on what matters.

It's not too late to rescue the year – and, with our expert-led seven-day workshop, you can transform everything from finances to friendships



Dr Christian Busch, teaches at New York University and the London School of Economics and is the author of *The Serendipity Mindset: The Art And Science Of Creating Good Luck* (Penguin Life).

Dr Heather McKee is a behaviour change specialist who uses evidence-based health programmes to help people make long-term, healthy changes.

Janet Bray Attwood is the co-author of *The New York Times*' best-seller *The Passion Test: The Effortless Path To Discovering Your Life Purpose* (Simon & Schuster).

Registered psychotherapist **Richard Nicholls** is the author of *15 Minutes To Happiness* (Bonnie Publishing).

Brian Jeffrey Fogg is a Stanford University behaviour scientist and the best-selling author of *Tiny Habits: The Small Changes That Change Everything* (Virgin Books).

The Female Money Doctor, **Dr Nikki Ramskill**, is a money coach and host of the Money Medicine Clinic podcast.

Viv Groskop is the author of *Lift As You Climb: Women And The Art Of Ambition* (Bantam Press) and is the host of the podcast *How To Own The Room*, featuring inspiring women such as Hillary Clinton.

IMAGE T/C

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» HOW CAN I BE HAPPIER?

'Keeping a journal is a great way of keeping things in perspective,' says psychotherapist Richard Nicholls. 'Moving your thoughts on to paper helps you separate yourself from them and feel calmer.' Research has even shown that journalling has similar benefits to counselling. 'If you've ever written an email or text to someone then not sent it, you've already used this process,' says Nicholls. You can then occasionally look back over your journal to see how far you've come.

TRY THIS: Simply grab a notepad and pen and get writing (an electronic device doesn't seem to have quite the same effect). Don't worry about spelling and grammar, the point is to get your feelings down and dump everything that's in your head on the page. But journalling isn't about wallowing in self-pity; instead, it should be a means of finding alternative ways of viewing things. Write down what made you unhappy and what lay behind that feeling, for instance. Then look for an alternative way of viewing it. Write about how you'd prefer to feel if it happened again. Or ask yourself: 'How do I feel right now?' Actually write the words: 'Today I feel...' Write quickly. Pick specific days of the week to journal and stick to them. ▶

'HOLD ON TO THE SLIPPERY, MERCURIAL QUALITY OF HOPE'

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» HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY FINANCES?

The Covid-19 pandemic has been wake-up call for so many of us who live from pay cheque to pay cheque. Dr Nikki Ramskill, aka The Female Money Doctor, suggests we use this moment to 'future-proof' our finances.

If you're still working, start to build up an emergency fund, aiming (eventually) to put aside £1,000 for unexpected costs, like emergency dental work, or a broken boiler. Experts recommend saving 20% of your monthly income, between a pension and other savings, such as ISAs. 'Yes, retirement seems a long way off, but could you live on the Government pension of £175 a week?' says Dr Ramskill. 'Think of your pension as your "freedom fund", the thing you are going to rely on, which will free you up from work.' And don't worry if that sounds like a very tall order. Start with 1% and build up from there.

TRY THIS: If you have debts, as many of us do, streamline your finances by using Ramskill's traffic-light system. Go through all your transactions from August (print out a statement if you find this easier) and take a highlighter to them. Use a green highlighter for everything you CANNOT stop paying – mortgage/rent, electricity bills, etc. Use a yellow/orange highlighter for things you'd be willing to stop for a short period of time: gym memberships, TV subscriptions. Then use a pink/red highlighter for everything that you can stop spending on immediately to release savings – subscription boxes, cloud storage for photos you don't use, random amounts of money spent on shopping without planning, flower delivery. If you need to save money, be ruthless. Remember, this doesn't have to be forever; you can reintroduce things later.

» HOW CAN I DEVELOP HEALTHIER HABITS?

Countless studies show that those who track their habits are much more likely to achieve long-term success. Say, for example, you want to stop mindless snacking. Keep track of your eating habits over the next few days.

'Most of us quickly forget unplanned snacks,' says behaviour change expert Dr Heather McKee. 'The odd handful of Doritos here, a couple of biscuits there. I'm not a fan of counting calories, but they can quickly add up. The average person lapses 5-10 times a week and the average lapse is around 150 calories (a handful of crisps, or two biscuits). That's an extra 840-1,500 calories a week.'

TRY THIS: There are two separate elements to this. First is emotional tracking, second is nutritional tracking. 'Track the different emotions that come up for you; are they resulting in unhealthy coping behaviours, such as overeating?' says Dr McKee. 'Or are your triggers more environmental, for example seeing the cheese/chocolate/beer when you open the fridge?'

Track three weekdays and one weekend day. Note the time of day you were tempted, why you were tempted (eg, boredom, stress, environment), and what the temptation was (eg, beer, chocolate, taking an extra portion of something). At the end of the week, take a moment to reflect. Did any patterns emerge?

Don't rely on willpower. 'It's better to build an environment or daily routine that replaces a bad habit with a healthier one,' says McKee. 'If you eat when you're tired or stressed, what can you do instead that could give you a similar "reward"? Could you make a cup of tea, go for a walk, or call a friend?'

» HOW CAN I STRENGTHEN MY FRIENDSHIPS?

'Our happiness is directly linked to the quality of our closest relationships,' says Stanford University behaviour scientist Brian Jeffrey Fogg. 'We need at least one close friend, but can only manage about six close relationships.' So focus on quality over quantity. What can we do to strengthen the quality of relationships? 'Tell that person what you appreciate about them,' says Fogg. 'It's tempting to talk about all the bad stuff at the moment, but try to say something positive and uplifting; that way they will want to be close to you.' If you feel that some of your friendships have drifted through the pandemic, make a real effort to get back in touch.

TRY THIS: Fogg suggests playing the following text game to reconnect. Get out your phone and scroll back through your text/WhatsApp history. 'Scroll all the way back to December to find a friend you haven't connected with in a while. Check in with your emotional reaction until you find someone who makes you feel: "I really want to reconnect with this person" – notice what it was about them that makes you want to reconnect. Then send them a brief text. Something like "I was just thinking about you" or "How are you doing?" Pick three friends this way.' If they respond, arrange to call or FaceTime. 'The human voice carries our personality and will bring you closer than texting,' says Fogg.

» CAN I IMPROVE MY LUCK?

Wouldn't it be wonderful if luck was always on your side, if chance opportunities fell in your lap left, right and centre? Well, according to Dr Christian Busch, author of a new book, *The Serendipity Mindset*, luck is a skill we can all learn, we just need to 'expect the unexpected' and look for silver linings.

We can even 'seed' more lucky encounters. When meeting someone new, 'Instead of the usual autopilot questions, such as "What do you do?", try asking, "What did you find most interesting about...?"' says Dr Busch. 'Dig deeper with a couple of "why's?" or "how comes?"; these will open up the conversation and might lead to intriguing – and often serendipitous – outcomes.'

TRY THIS: Grab a notepad. Now, whenever something unexpected happens – a train is delayed, a work project is cancelled, your friend is late to the picnic so you end up chatting to someone you don't know – ask yourself, 'What's the upside here?' At the end of the week, look over your 'lucky notebook'. How do you feel about these opportunities? Listen to your gut. Cross out those that no longer excite you and ask what you can do about the rest. It's not too late to send that new acquaintance from the picnic, say, an email about their exciting new business. 'Send a non-pitchy message about what excited you and how you'd like to be involved – be precise,' says Busch. You can create opportunities by speaking to new people. Every time you go to an event or jump on a group conference call, pick a colour and challenge yourself to speak to a person who is wearing it. Work your way through the rainbow. ▶



DAY
6.

» HOW DO I GET NOTICED AT WORK?

'I would caution against setting yourself the tricky goal of "getting noticed" at this time,' advises Viv Groskop, author of *Lift As You Climb*. 'That's a huge pressure to put on yourself in an uncertain climate. That said, you can easily improve how you come across on screen communications, especially if you're starting to get jaded or you have a lot of these screen meetings to get through.' Aim to have more meaningful interactions but be kind to yourself – with the recession and many of us still working from home, this is a tough working environment for those of us still lucky to have a job.

TRY THIS: The best practical tip for Zoom? 'We connect best on video-conferencing platforms when we look directly into the camera rather than looking at the screen,' says Groskop. 'Make sure the camera is pointing down at you slightly by raising up your screen (rest it on a pile of books) and tilt it slightly forward. Listen carefully and look at the camera instead of staring at the screen. Don't stare and look vacant, though; imagine someone you love or who inspires you behind the camera. Zoom seems like a video communication tool but it actually works best if you use it for listening: a lot of the visual cues are dispiriting – people looking away, not making eye contact, looking down to make notes.'

Practise listening hard on video conferencing calls as if you were on an audio call: it makes a massive difference to your ability to concentrate. The visuals use up a lot of our emotional bandwidth without contributing much in the form of meaningful interaction (other than being able to see your colleague's new haircut).

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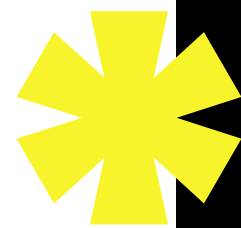
» HOW CAN I GIVE MY LIFE MORE MEANING?

Meaning is a fundamental human need. But we're often so caught up in the day-to-day of life that we rarely step back and think about what really matters to us. Or whether we're living by someone else's values. If you've lost your job, or are currently furloughed, this could be a good moment to think what you want out of life and to consider a new direction.

TRY THIS: *The Passion Test* by Chris and Janet Attwood. You start by filling in the blanks 15 times for the following statement: 'When my life is ideal, I am ____.' The word(s) you choose to fill in the blank must include a verb. For example: When my life is ideal, I am doing great creative work, enjoying close friendships, exploring a new country – or whatever it is that lights you up.

Once you've created 15 statements, identify the top five choices. To do this, you compare statements 1 and 2 to identify which is most important. Take the winner of that comparison and decide whether it's more or less important than statement 3 and so on.

Once you've identified your top five passions, create an action plan and start designing your life to include more of what matters to you. A life with purpose is a life well-lived.



WOMEN
MAKING
IT HAPPEN



'It's so important to enjoy the "journey", the here and now – it's all we ever have'

Stine Dulong, 40, is a London-based ceramicist and founder of SkandiHus. Her ceramics are used by Jamie Oliver and Tom Kerridge, while Nigella Lawson follows her on Instagram.

'I worked in the City of London as a business crime lawyer for six years but quit in 2013 as I felt suffocated. I didn't quit being a lawyer to "follow my dream"; it was more about quitting my stressful life. My journey has been about saying no to things that don't feel right, appreciating what I do have and making room for something new. I now run my

Having my finances under control has freed up my mental energy'

Stephanie Ward, 29, runs The Jack Ward Inclusion Initiative charity

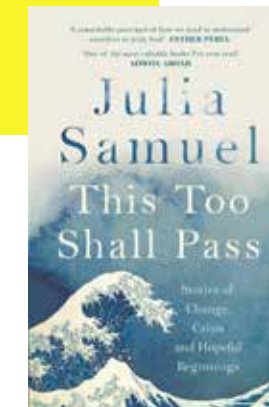
'I was training to be a speech therapist, but quit to take care of my son, Jack, who was being disruptive at nursery and has since been diagnosed with autism. I also had hip dysplasia, which is an oddly-shaped hip, and needed an operation. I had no idea how to manage my finances until I joined a Facebook Group, Women Working Towards Money Freedom. I've paid off my debts and started saving with an ISA and put £50 a month into LOQBOX, which is designed to boost your credit rating. Having my finances under control has freed up my mental energy to think about what I really want to do. I've recently set up The Jack Ward Inclusion Initiative, named after my son, to help other parents access information if their children are struggling with additional needs. Running my charity has given me a real sense of purpose.'



own pottery studio, SkandiHus, where I make and sell handmade ceramics and teach pottery classes. But it didn't necessarily have to be pottery. No job is going to tick every box, they all have their ups and downs. It's like looking for love – no one is going to fulfil your every need. My tip? It sounds like a cliché, but it's so important to enjoy the journey, it's all we ever have. We're all so busy striving and looking for the next thing, we often forget to enjoy the here and now.'

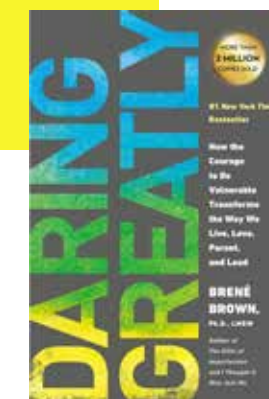
To find out more about Stine's business, visit skandihus.co.uk

» GRAZIA'S ESSENTIAL REBOOT READING LIST



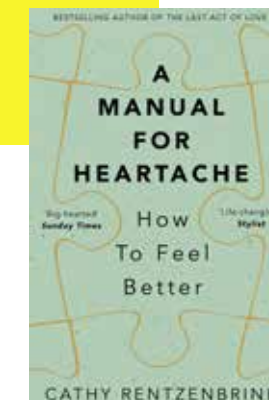
'This Too Shall Pass: Stories Of Change, Crisis And Hopeful Beginnings' by Julia Samuel.

Published earlier this year, Samuel's wise writing – she is a psychotherapist who works with bereaved families – struck a chord. She encourages the reader to consider new ways of thinking about themselves, pointing out that since change is the natural order of things, why do so many of us struggle with it?



'Daring Greatly: How The Courage To Be Vulnerable Transforms The Way We Live, Love, Parent, And Lead' by Brené Brown.

Brown spent over 20 years studying courage and vulnerability. Her resulting book, now a classic, also contains her personal experience and argues that vulnerability is far from a weakness. Instead it is a strength – and exactly what we need to see us through uncertain times.



'A Manual For Heartache: How To Feel Better' by Cathy Rentzenbrink.

When Cathy's beloved brother was left in a coma following a traffic accident, her life fell apart. Here she explains how we will all experience sadness and loss in our lives; heartache simply makes us human. Her wise words and warm writing style will both resonate and reassure.



'Wild: A Journey From Lost To Found' by Cheryl Strayed.

Rather like *Eat, Pray, Love*, this inspirational memoir can change your life. Cheryl embarked on an epic solo hike of over 1,000 miles following her mother's death and her own failed marriage. Her journey of self-discovery is both emotional and enlightening.