From shame to strength. Or finding my way towards emotional alchemy.

January was about ‘in with positivity, out with shame’ for me. Not, in the way that many self help books might have you think. January started with a very positive feeling, doing my 5K training, with my laughter yoga basic course around the corner, reading Bulletproof, musing on my new key words that came to me after my first Wim Hof yoga session.

Initially they were 3.

Focus. Strength. Compassion.

It was the day after those words (the focus, compassion, strength) came to me that I woke feeling bleak, and worked through options for ending things if it got too bad. That’s really not my way of being, not the way I generally wake, and certainly not how I like to.

I wonder if Wim Hof’s deep breathing the day before had perhaps allowed emotion out. I’d never cried over the whole covid thing, rallied plenty and considered options very different to the mainstream. I have concerns over increasing suicide rates – damn it, especially if I devoted 20 minutes of my time to that. I’ve a Little Miss Sunshine mug, and it probably fairly well fits. My dad says he admires how I have a childlike outlook on the world and can get plenty excited about small things. I do consider it a gift to feel joyful plenty of times.

Strength. Compassion. Love.

I realised I needed 4.

Some days these words got me out of bed on a morning, especially focus and strength, and reminding myself why I was getting out whilst it was cold and dark to run, others they made me see things in a different light. Compassion is perhaps the hardest so far, especially as I write now, stuck a little (though lifted after some very helpful conversations with friends and colleagues), in a bit of a big pit of shame. The pit is less than it was at least, I’ve been handed some climbing ropes. Talking about it is crucial for dispelling the darkness I believe.

So, January ended with shame. Of my actions perhaps more than of myself, which is at least a positive to take from the situation, however I, the being responsible for the actions, was definitely being beaten up. By yours truly. No compassion there.

Interestingly, the work of Brene Brown has been of interest to me for some time, and this morning read an article on Shame Resilience Training, and realised I wasn’t actually doing that badly. I was in the process, I was definitely feeling shame, but not entirely stuck in it. I had self awareness, I had reached out to people who I knew would be realistic whilst having my back, I had shared my shame. I had owned it. And I do here.

I had shared a post on a page that I work for which mentioned how Cuba were trying to prevent covid using homeopathic medicines. They were. They are. This was picked up either by skeptics or a keen but fairly incapable reporter (at least of reporting events at least), and changed into how homeopaths were a challenge to the vaccine movement as they were recommending ‘duck bits’ to the public as more effective than vaccines. There was no mention of vaccines in the post. It could be laughable if it wasn’t damaging. The two pieces were unrecognisable from each other, and yet Mr Joe Public, who has no awareness of the twisted nature of the media, would of course think WFT?!?

I want to share words from a good friend and international colleague who was so angry about this situation spent time creating a brilliant response to the situation.

The tiny article actually was copied from a published letter to the editor, written by Cuban scientists in volume 14, issue 4 of the Indian Journal of Research in Homeopathy. https://www.ijrh.org/article.asp?issn=0974-7168;year=2020;volume=14;issue=4;spage=293;epage=294;aulast=Delgado The letter was written by some of the most eminent and respected scientists in Cuba, including Dra Concepcion Campa who was the director of the Finlay Institute for decades and the creator of the Meningicoccal Meningitis C vaccine that saved many lives in Cuba and South America. It is clear to me that Justin Stoneman, the author of the Telegraph news story, did not perform his due diligence by reading the original letter to the editor. Or perhaps he did, and chose to omit important information to craft an inaccurate narrative.

Follow me as I break this down:

“A post dated January 5 stated that a diluted duck heart and liver extract, had been distributed to "953,416 families".The content headlined the Covid-19 prevention study had received "spectacular" results using the remedy in one million people.”

Well this is extremely inaccurate portrayal, since the remedy in question is a formula made up of 12 homeopathic remedies along with some bach flowers. They are intentionally misinforming people and possibly guiding readers who no longer trust mainstream media to go out and try Anas Barbariae for themselves, without accurate information on its use or misuse.

“Prof Powis added: "Spouting claims on social media about Covid cures that are not backed by scientific evidence and accurate public health advice is the latest in a long line of disturbing and potentially dangerous online myths. We urge everyone to ignore misleading claims and get vital protection against Covid when they are invited for their vaccine.”

Again we begin with deceptive assumptions that none of these claims are backed by science, doctors or public health. The authors of the original letter and executors of the homeopathic intervention represent the following entities:

· The Department of Natural and Traditional Medicine, Ministry of Public Health, Havana, Cuba

· AICA Laboratories, BioCubaFarma Enterprise Group, Havana, Cuba

· Outpatient Clinic, National Institute of Gastroenterology, Havana, Cuba

· Center for State Control of Drugs, Equipment and Medical Devices, Havana, Cuba

· Department of Clinical Trials, National Coordinating Center of Clinical Trials, Havana, Cuba

· Moringa Project, Entity of Science, Technology and Innovation (ECTI) Sierra Maestra, Havana,

Just because you don’t agree with the narrative, doesn’t mean it isn’t science. Dear Telegraph, you are peddling dangerous misinformation that will bring harm to many as they are warned against methods that have been scientifically observed to support and act as an adjunct to other treatments. The public is being discouraged from doing anything outside the drug model to strengthen their immune system.

At no point in their letter do Cuban scientists assert that the homeopathic formula represents an alternative to other methodologies; “Cuba PrevengHo®-Vir is an add-on measure to prevent COVID-19. It is not intended to substitute any other recommendation such as social distancing, hand cleaning and mouth and nose coverage with mask.” and saying otherwise is just a lie.

This stinks of the church of scientism disrupting genuine science and investigation. The telegraph article is basically calling for an end to research that has the capacity to expose the mainstream narrative as wrong. In my opinion there is a nefarious element at work here that is trying to eliminate the competition to chemical based medicine. By controlling the narrative there is no consideration being made for those with allergies, auto-immune conditions, and health conditions that contraindicate medical interventions.

So where does this lead us? Apparently The World Health Organization has appealed to Facebook to take down posts. Homeopathic organizations are being removed from social media platforms. I call on all of us to remove ourselves from these platforms – no reason to continue to support them when they no longer stand for the pursuit of truth, science, nor freedom of speech. We must find ways to keep the spirit of investigation alive. To stand strong in the knowledge that we hold the seeds to a wonderful art that stimulates health and healing, and despite their efforts to silence science, we will continue to ask questions, develop studies, record observations and learn.

The original witch hunt was fuelled by a terror of the plague and the belief that heretics were inciting God’s wrath in the form of disease. Those identified as witches were the natural healers, midwives and care givers. There is a direct parallel to what is happening today, history is repeating itself. The real harm comes from banning the inquisitiveness of the human mind.

If you want to learn more about Cuban efforts I encourage you to watch Magic Pills <https://watch.magicpillsmovie.com> the film Ananda, who wrote the above created. She knows as much about the manipulation and patronising media suppression of homeopathy as anyone else I know, having been at the receiving end of some similar situations.

The Telegraph have run other, pretty horrendous articles in the past slating homeopaths and homeopathy. The cringey issue for me mainly was about dragging others through the mud. To be fair, not the first time that homeopathy was in the headlines – for negative reasons, but I really didn’t want it to be me that had instigated it.

As I write – Mary has just walked past our house, sternly telling our cat to ‘go away you horrible thing’, and I am grateful to her for starting this process off, this year of building strength and resilience. Without it I think I’d be in a poorer way currently. I feel perhaps 6 days in I’m starting the picking up process, but am conscious of it, what the shame has brought me, what I am learning, and will learn from it.

During this time, just the last 4 days, I’ve heard of two people I knew/knew their partners who’ve passed onto the next place we go, or if you’re not a spiritual type, died, one this morning and one on Sunday. Whilst I might have had musings of ‘what if I wasn’t here, would that be easier?’ Wow - shame really hurts!! I have the potential to rise up and get on with life. With feeling pain, discomfort and joy and love and all the things we get to feel in this human experience. Which is all to learn from, to experience, to be. And after all, that’s what this year was all supposed to be about for me. Learning greater strength, resilience, with compassion, focus and love.

So the main point of writing is to share what I’m doing to build that resilience muscle. One thing that has surprised me – particularly as this is no damn laughing matter for anyone, is that laughter yoga has helped me feel mentally stronger. This has been awkward, it’s hard, but nothing is impossible to grow from. Growth, surely, isn’t meant to be easy? Ah I can forget that bit so often.

Laughter Yoga, of which I’ve just completed the basic course, has been a gift. The training I’ve been really enjoying but also sharing it with friends and family has been a wonderful experience. One of my ambitions is to train as a teacher of it and I have just volunteered to laugh with friends and colleagues at a conference coming up this year.

Is it possible to boost our resilience by doing something as simple as laughing. Intentional laughing however isn’t just simple, it’s worth forming a habit of, it’s a serious matter. Ha. I genuinely think it has some answers to questions I haven’t even yet asked. Which is a great position to be in. I like it. I am excited to feel excited about it.

It’s not just been the Laughter Yoga though this month. My ability to get excited about life has got me doing several things during my month challenge – do you remember – one thing a month?! So there’s been the laughter course, also following Wim Hof ‘s work, - we’ve started his Fundamentals (online) course, my Couch to 5k run training and the reading. I’ve read Evy’s Becoming Bulletproof, am reading Michelle Obama’s Becoming, and have a whole host of books lined up to enjoy.

I’ve been cold showering, breath holding and learning my tolerance for discomfort can be stretched. I started off enduring and now am most definitely enjoying the cold showers.

*This has happened for a reason.* There was a clear message of that this morning. There is a reason, and even (dare I believe it) for the greater good, or at least for the bigger picture, of which I’m merely a cog in a giant wheel. Is that just me telling myself to make myself feel better? Well, even if it is, what’s the danger in feeling better? Not feeling guilt? Disempowering. Not beating yourself up? Done enough of that. Not feeling bad? Because a pity party will certainly solve it all.

I’ve cringed about being able to laugh. I’ve been embarrassed colleagues may think I’m taking this lightly. Ah those sleepless nights and constant crappy feelings – I can assure them I’m not. If you’re in the ‘mistake’ camp then well, it’s done. If you’re in the ‘crack on it was the right thing, no mistake’ camp, then, well no point. I’ve apologised, I’ve tried to make it right, suggested ideas, I’ve put myself down. There’s not more solutions, so moving forwards is it.

So action. Take action. Move. I believe movement is so essential to our lives in these amazing human bodies – and I often forget it. I can understand why sometimes people sit on the sofa with a bag of crisps and Netflix when they’re feeling bad. It’s easy to see that we all need a way to switch off. And which is sold to us stronger, more? That said on the converse, I can definitely push it beyond a place I should have stopped at – and hmmm not always sure I’m learning here… one thing a month and all that. But in general I don’t believe we move enough. Movement allows things to be released, to filter down, to become accepted or aware of in my opinion. I’ve had some great thoughts, realisations whilst out on runs, on walks. Sitting doesn’t tend to be my creative space. My ex brother in law worked in the city in advertising and on a tour round his office we spotted they’d a games room with a pool table they could use anytime. Movement, a different focus, I think it all helps with creativity.

Whilst my Couch to 5K has been challenging working around snow and ice – it’s certainly been good for me and hugely helpful. It remains an important part of my year going forwards. I’m nearly at the 5k mark – though may have to ditch the dogs to do it within the time. Too many interesting things to sniff. That said, I may just keep the dogs, movement with something to sniff at surely makes life more fun. If I’m slow, I’m still faster than the folk who’ve not started yet.

Wim Hof breathing is interesting to be doing, and the small steps that we make from consistency – I know I’ve talked about that before – make such a huge difference. As of the end of January I’m up to 45 seconds in a cold shower and occasionally can breath hold for 2 minutes. In the beginning after 30 seconds I felt I was going to burst.

Inspirational reading I can definitely recommend – others who’ve overcome challenges, have a bad ass approach to life. Do feel free to suggest reading to me, I love to be inspired.

Tolerance to discomfort can increase with practice. Practice. That’s the word.