

O's Five-Point Plan to ...

GIVING PEACE OF MIND A CHANCE

Whatever's keeping you up at night – enough already! Follow these steps to serenity. By **AISHA I. JEFFERSON**



1 Know Your Family History

This means so much more than understanding hereditary illnesses – it also means unearthing learnt habits. According to Iyanla Vanzant, author of *Peace from Broken Pieces*, your financial or relationship troubles may be linked to your parents' beliefs and behaviours. "You inherit your patterns of behaviour through observation," Vanzant explains. Use this knowledge to see beyond your conditioning, which will enable you to make choices that yield better results.



2 Take Care of Your Own Needs

We often place the responsibility for our happiness in other people's hands, expecting them to make us feel secure, safe and content. Dissatisfaction is the inevitable result. When the person we've handed the responsibility to fails in our eyes, we project the reasons for our discontent onto them. Cape Town-based life coach Warren Munitz says, "If you're seeking inner peace, learn to fulfil your needs on your own. You will then be free to live and love without expectation, because you won't be anticipating a particular result from something or someone."



3 Tell the Truth

Let's face it: Lying, including not being upfront about your expectations in your work, personal and social relationships, can be exhausting. Avoid a potential meltdown by being honest about who you are. This means not settling for less than what you want, and not engaging in relationships and situations that aren't healthy. "When you go along to get along, you're not going to have peace," says Vanzant.

4 Be Willing to Forgive

It takes a lot of energy to be angry, resentful or regretful. Forgiveness is a process that helps to release that mental energy, automatically putting you on a path to contentment. Surrendering to the emotion that an upsetting incident caused – and accepting it – encourages greater self-awareness. Munitz explains, "It's important to first become aware of being upset, and to simply feel those emotions without judging them. Only then can you open your heart to fully forgive the other person and let go of the hurt."



5 Choose Consciously

According to Vanzant, people live in one of three ways: consciously, unconsciously or by default. When you're living consciously, you choose what you're going to do, feel and think moment by moment. Unconscious living occurs when you behave out of habit, while living by default means you'll go with whatever comes up. The latter two behaviours are common to people in the victim category, because they are dependent on outside forces. "If you really want to have peace in your life, choose consciously that which honours you. Then, no matter what comes up, you can say, 'That was my choice, what am I learning here?'" says Vanzant. When you start taking ownership of your decisions, your mind is less likely to be consumed with regret, and you will feel more contented as a result. **Q**

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