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INTERVIEW

**Sophie
Turner**

On romance,
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becoming a
superhero

Renew, reboot, RECHARGE

*Burned out? Learn how to beat exhaustion forever
3 ways to create more space and time in your life*





I think, therefore I am

In a life-changing, year-long experiment, Suzy Walker confronts her 'stop the world I want to get off' state of mind, and commits to designing a calmer, less frazzled life. This month, she faces her greatest fear while meditating

During the first three months of 'My slow year', I've addressed my addictions to my phone and fast food, and I've put the brakes on mindless spending.

This month, I've been focusing on creating the healthy habit of meditation, taking part in the Zenways 'Mindfulness for health and wellbeing programme', developed by Julian Daizan Skinner, the first British person to go to Japan and become a Zen master. Signing up with local teacher Nick Scaramanga, I learned how to sit, lie and walk while meditating, which would help me deal with stress and emotional and physical pain. My daily homework was to meditate for 25 minutes and journal for five minutes.

Eyes open in the darkness

I had expected to feel calm and Zen-like but, at first, I was anything but. I became aware of what I was running away from – the uncomfortable feelings, the destructive thoughts, the dark spiral that took me to places I'd rather not go. 'The trick is not to get hooked by the thoughts, but to observe them,' said Scaramanga gently. 'Rather than escaping emotional

pain, we can deal with it through the practice of awareness and acceptance.'

I found it difficult to merely observe. I was plunged into the vat of nonsense in my head, like a witch strapped to a ducking stool. Being still, there was nowhere to hide. And it wasn't only the small stuff. Yes, there was the anxiety-inducing scroll down my endless to-do list – but I also found myself face-to-face with my crippling fear of dying.

I lost both my parents to cancer as a teenager, so Dr Death had made a big impression. 'You're going to die!' boomed my inner voice. It took a couple of weeks of regular meditation but, for the first time, instead of trying to escape that thought, I looked at it head-on. Correct, I thought. I *am* going to die. I considered what that might be like and I accepted it.

'Perhaps,' I journalled, 'my constant busyness was my way of running away from my existentialist angst; my fear of death...' Suddenly, I felt as if I'd come up for air. Yes, I am going to die and I have no idea when that might be. 'But I am alive right here, right now,' I wrote.

Nick Scaramanga runs meditation classes in Sussex. For more information, visit howtobemindful.co.uk

TAKE YOUR SWEET TIME

It's easy to end up in a too-busy whirl, without taking precious moments to notice the small things; the simple things. And, just as it pays to slow down and pay attention in our daily lives, we can do the same on holiday. In fact, Inntravel, the self-guided travel expert, positively encourages it!

Forget your bucket list, or racing to tick off destinations like items on a shopping list – by taking things at a more leisurely pace on your well-earned break, you stop the clock somehow, creating longer-lasting memories and enjoying every single moment of rest and wonder. A 'Psychologies' promotion in partnership with slow travel specialist Inntravel.

Inntravel.co.uk
The *Slow Holiday* people