

Don't stress there's a doctor in the house

Darling editor chats to Dr De-stress Mariette Jansen about living stress-free

Mariette greeted me in her Kingston offices on Eden Street. There is something uplifting and reassuring about her manner - maybe it's her friendly Dutch accent that she hasn't let go despite a long professional career here, ranging from teaching and management consultancy to becoming a psychotherapist, writer and a life coach. I feel immediately in safe hands, maybe it's the Dr in her title - she has a PhD in Philosophy - or the fact that she is referred to as the best stress coach around by her clients.

Your professional name, Dr De-stress, speaks volumes. How did you decide to choose stress management as your speciality area in coaching?

"Stress is a word that represents unhappiness and feeling out of control. I help people to get control of their lives and experience greater happiness. Stress in simple terms means a position of friction and a tension between where you are and where you want to be. It has a very strong emotional component, which isn't often



Photography by Cythare Cooper

recognised or realised. Until we talk. One of my main slogans is 'there's more to this than meets the eye'. And time and again, the cause of unhappiness is the distance between head and heart, which when not aligned, gives us different messages making us feel stressed, unhappy and out of control."

Life coaching is becoming mainstream. Can we all benefit from seeing a coach?

"We are not born with a manual on how to live. We are also not trained on how to live a happy life. The focus of education is academic, our upbringing is often concerned with behaviour and morals, and what is missing is how to discover and honour who you really are, what makes your heart sing and how to live a life of fulfilment.

It's difficult to be objective about ourselves and our lives; a coach can help us to step away from

what is familiar and find new angles and perspectives. It is important though to find the right coach! One of the easiest ways to move away from our habitual approach to life is to ask questions, endless questions. This helps to identify the underlying areas. I drive my clients bananas with always finding the next question. But I believe that is where I add value. One of the other tools I use is meditation. This is one of the most important life skills we should learn when growing up."

You also have a very inspiring and life-changing story to tell with your impressive weight loss some years ago, and you have managed to keep the weight off. What advice would you give to those battling with their weight?

"I suffered for 22 years from bulimia nervosa, the eating disorder where fasting, bingeing, discarding of food through being sick or laxatives is the sequence of actions. I was totally preoccupied with calories, planning and I was continuously anxious because I knew I was going to lose control at some stage. I also suffered from low self-esteem and deep unhappiness.

My head and heart were talking a different language and I was totally disconnected from my body. Luckily I have left my eating disorder and my extra weight behind. And my clients now benefit from my experience. I am working with nutrition coach Leonie Wright on this

area. My website has our reports and details about my books on this."

What are your interests and passions in life?

"I grew up in a very suffocating and dysfunctional family, being scared to do something wrong and looking to please others, especially my mother. In my mid-thirties I started to discover who I was, learned to appreciate myself and make choices that made me happy. It's now my passion to share my knowledge and experiences with others, helping them create their happiness. I am also passionate about learning - life is so interesting and there is so much to discover

I love writing as that's sharing and teaching. I am currently writing the second edition of my book on meditation, which will be published in December and also a new book on stress. And I send out a weekly email with tips and food for thought. I also love being in the outdoors, getting my body in a sweat through exercise, cooking and eating, meditating and just embracing each day as it comes."



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You live in Weybridge but your office is in Kingston? Is Kingston a particularly good location for a life coach?

"I love my office here and it is good to be away from home. Anywhere where people live is a good location. But Kingston is a hub for SW London and parts of Surrey, so the catchment area is fairly sizeable."

More info at: drdestress.co.uk