

Awakening Your Authenticity – a Prescription for Wellness

by Emily Forbes, founder of Wylde Wellbeing

Unmasking and peeling off the many layers of my own identity and truth, was an epiphany for me



When we embark on any personal journey of growth, recovery or wellbeing (whether through chance, circumstance or active pursuit), we will ultimately awaken our true, authentic inner selves and learn many critical lessons along the way. As women, our identities are often caught up in the roles we play – in our career, our businesses, at home, in our friendship circles or relationships.

The visible identity of the mask that is worn in any particular context, by any one of us, is often far removed from the reality of the more invisible woman beneath the surface, spinning lots of plates and navigating the rapids.

Unmasking and peeling off the many layers of my own identity and truth (which I thought was my authentic self), was an epiphany for me, realising their interconnectedness. This was primarily my career, my polished presentation of myself to the world and the perception of what others saw of me that defined my identity. Viewed as an ambitious professional, CEO of a government body, the breadwinner, mentor to many, active mum, fixer of everything and holder of space for others, I never truly unpicked the elements of me as a whole person. I never delved deeper into my true needs, desires, goals, nor took a holistic approach to my body, mind, soul and emotions – at least not until now; not until illness made me take notice of my wellness.

When my professional role was temporarily stripped away due to ill-health, at first I felt naked, lost, adrift in an ocean of uncertainty, and I wasn't even sure who the real me was anymore. Like many others, I've remoulded myself and my life, shaped by this adversity and experiences of trauma and loss via divorce, bereavement and illness.

Many experts have written widely on the impact that mental and emotional stress, trauma, grief and change has on the physical body and the memory of this influence at a biological and cellular level. The mind-body connection and mind-gut axis are now being researched and mainstreamed more widely, including the unknown impacts of Long Covid too, which is well needed to support us globally. We are learning that we must listen to our bodies whispering to us, or else we'll hear them scream! The lessons I share are to take care of your own wellbeing, your own wellness journey and focus on meeting your own needs, instead of relentlessly filling up the cups of others and going unnoticed, remaining invisible with your own unseen wounds.

I haven't been able to eat solid food since the summer of 2021

My unseen wounds mean that every day, I am dealing with a chronic condition with my oesophagus; I've had major surgery, a number of procedures and suffered a lot; and crucially, I haven't been able to eat solid food since the summer of 2021. Even writing that sounds incredible and unmanageable! Yet, I manage a whole range of weird and wonderful symptoms all day, every day. I can't swallow properly (dysphagia) but manage on a liquid (mostly prescription) diet. I suffer oesophageal spasms, extreme nausea, chronic pain, bloating, trapped air, constipation and

nutrition deficiencies, chronic fatigue and reduced physical activity. Possibly linked on an autoimmune basis, I also have agonising joints, psoriasis flare ups, and physical symptoms of anxiety when my body is trying to expel anything that's trapped. It's tough; it's bloody rotten to deal with; it's heartbreaking; it's depressing..... but it IS. And that's the very point! It is something I have to deal with until I no longer have to deal with it.

Wellness is not necessarily the absence of illness

I've come to learn that this illness does not define me; it is something that I can't control or change but I'm choosing to live with it as well as I can. So my journey has been about moving from illness to wellness and choosing to live well with a condition and manage these debilitating symptoms of invisible illness and disability. My main lesson for others is that wellness is not necessarily the absence of illness, rather, it's about how you choose to navigate the path alongside trauma, ill-health, dark days or suffering; it's looking for the ability in disability, the visible in the invisible, it's about changing the impossible into the possible! Much of this is about mindset, acceptance and being in the present moment. Comparison is the thief of joy and ruminating on the past and what used to be only leads to depression; whilst becoming a chronic worrier about the future only leads to anxiety. But being present, in this moment, in this breath, in this heartbeat, is what truly matters. You are here; it is now; and you are a warrior.

You can lean into the duality of life and be accepting of the whole spectrum of the human condition without judgement; you can be scared, yet brave; grieving, yet hopeful; struggling, yet successful; depressed, yet cheerful; lonely yet outgoing. The ebb and flow of life is a constant, and part of this is about accepting that the

lowest lows can actually help you to experience the highest highs. For me, a true wellness prescription is about finding, awakening or recovering your authentic self-signature and knowing that many of the answers and solutions are inside you, they just need teasing out. If you're stuck in tough times, whether loss, grief, ill-health, change of direction, divorce, birth, death, marriage - all these things (!), then please be gentle with yourself and ask:

- What do I need right now at this very moment?
- What can I control in this situation?
- Where can I focus my energy to move towards what I want?
- What could this be teaching me?
- How can I reframe these challenges into opportunities?
- Who can help me?

Pause. Reflect. Reset.
R-ecalibrate your focus
E-nergy map your resources
S-elf-care and self-love
T-rust in what your intuition is telling you

See adversity as a route to unmask your authentic self; as a way to make yourself known to you, to make visible your wildest hopes and dreams and discover your real essence. The only person in this whole world that can offer you unconditional, unfaltering, unabridged, inexhaustible love is YOU.

Embrace that and make space to spend time with yourself, not by yourself.

You are the narrator of your own story, the curator of the life you want and the co-creator of your abundant future. But first, awaken your authenticity to understand your own wellness prescription. Self-compassion, self-love, gentleness, kindness and clearing space and time for healing is paramount; whether that's from physical, emotional or mental trauma. •



wyldewellbeingcoaching



wyldewellbeing.uk