

7 secrets to self help success

Holistic coach **Noni Boon** shares essential soul strategies to keep you feeling happy and stress-free.



In 2005, I enrolled in a Holistic Counselling Course at Sydney's Hammond Institute. I thought I'd make a great counsellor: I had a stable marriage, two happy children, and nothing too traumatic had ever happened to me, so I figured I would be fabulous at directing others on how to live their life because I was pretty good at living mine. I was in for a rude awakening! I thought that I had it all together - but I had no idea that I was about to fall apart.

Studying to become a therapist is all about working on you. A therapist needs to be a clear vessel, able to separate the self from clients and avoid transference and counter-transference. The first step is to open up and acknowledge that you have issues that have not been dealt with. You have to completely transform yourself so that anything a client may bring up during a consultation doesn't trigger you. I didn't think I had any issues, addictions, resentments, and grief or communication difficulties. However, I was about to learn that I had the lot.

If you live in the Western world, you have addictions. There is somebody you resent. There is somebody you haven't forgiven - perhaps yourself? Your ego builds defences that protect you from knowing you have anything 'wrong' with you. Everybody I have ever met has issues. All you need to do is scratch the surface and there they are: childhood pain, ongoing conflict, family stand-offs, trauma, and crisis.

1 Deal with unfinished business

The first step is to admit you have events or feelings you haven't dealt with. People who appear to have the perfect life are often in the most pain. They work hard at ensuring it all looks good on the outside and invest their energy in maintaining the façade. Often the interior life of these people suffers tremendously. Pouring energy into your interior world - that being the life of your soul - is paramount to having a healthy, happy life. Pretending everything is perfect is a defence mechanism delusion. Delusional people project an image of superiority and often blame others, rather than taking responsibility themselves.

2 Pick a start point

Once you honestly highlight areas of your life that aren't perfect or aren't actually

If you find it intriguing or appealing, then that is because it is meant for you. Follow your intuition.

even working, you can take steps toward improvement. If you are totally sincere, you will identify at least one area of life where you could revise and revamp. Once you pinpoint it, start researching different types of help available for that particular issue, e.g. one-on-one counselling, a coach, a mentor, a course, or a book.

3 Take baby steps

Don't tackle many issues at once. Start with one or two small areas that require change. Avoid the 'all or nothing' approach where you either completely overhaul your life or do nothing at all. This will sabotage your attempts at life improvement. Start small. For example, if you want to get fit, start by asking yourself, "How do I like to move? What is fun? What fits into my lifestyle?"

4 Watch for signposts

When you acknowledge that you have something you would like to change, simply admitting it is a big step forward. Until you are ready for change, nothing happens. When you are ready, the universe supports you and sends the right information, people, and opportunities your way. Pay attention to what you see, hear, read, and gain access to. Often guidance is subtle. Look for colours, shapes, music, and words that resonate with you.

5 Believe

Once you have done your course, read your book, or completed your sessions, honour the process by implementing the changes into your life. There is no point having a Ferrari in the garage and never driving it! Your inner

saboteur is the lazy person in you that can't be bothered changing. "It's all too hard." "It doesn't really matter anyway." Don't let this part of you dominate for even a second. Replace negative self-talk with positive affirmations. You are more than capable of change. If you can change your mind, you can change yourself. How often have you changed your mind and chosen something different? It's easy if you tell yourself it is.

People have a way of slipping back to their comfortable default position, the place where our belief systems are neatly filed away. Open the drawer and throw out the archives. You must believe that change is possible. Tell yourself 1,000 times a day that you can do this, and it will eventually become a belief. The only real safeguard you have against slipping back to where you were is awareness. So, become intimately aware of your every thought. Consciously witness the reels of information that pass through your mind. And when you catch yourself thinking something contradictory to your goal, replace it with a new thought.

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Try it today!

- Know that everybody has problems - drop the defences that protect you from knowing things aren't right.
- Admit that your life isn't perfect and neither are you. Stop blaming others.
- Isolate areas of life that aren't working for you.
- Choose to work on one small issue first - the small issues create bigger issues. Start with the source.
- Research your guru. Remember, when the student's ready, the teacher appears.
- Apply what you learn. Don't let your saboteur take over and revert you to the person you were before.
- Don't slip back to the default position. Awareness is key to maintaining and cementing changes you want to make.