

# Chnika

UNITING STRONG MINDED BUSINESS PEOPLE



Re-wiring your Brain:  
Letting go of Anxiety

Reducing Financial Stress  
How you're going to get  
through the next few months

You are totally enough  
Why do we spend so much  
time looking to everything  
external to tell us that we  
are enough?

Managing your  
environment to  
stay healthy  
**What's my  
healthiest choice?**

Swallowing a  
concrete pill  
**Dealing with  
change and  
adapting**

APRIL 2020

A string of warm white lights with gold star-shaped ornaments is draped across a textured, light grey background. The stars are scattered throughout the scene, some appearing to be part of the string and others floating independently. The overall mood is soft and inspirational.

“Success is not final,  
failure is not fatal:  
it is the courage  
to continue that  
counts.”

*Winston Churchill*



# So, I thought I'd start a magazine!

Hello! I'm Catherine and as a graphic designer I get to work with so many amazing small business owners who work exceptionally hard and don't always get the recognition they deserve. The idea of a magazine to unite business owners and give them a place to share their knowledge and tell their story has been lurking in my mind for many years.

With so much change and uncertainty happening at the moment, small businesses need all the support they can get. Now seemed like a great time to start a magazine so I can show my support and help my clients and other business owners in my networks to gain some extra exposure.

Everybody I asked jumped at the chance, not everybody made the deadline, but there will be an Issue 2. Keep an eye out for it, as there are already some great articles lined up. If you are keen to be

involved please do get in touch - I'd love to include you and share your story.

It's a while since I've been involved in a full magazine production, so bear with me with any errors. I'm doing my best to embrace "imperfect action" otherwise this would never leave my desk.

I hope you enjoy the following pages. Let me know your feedback and ideas so the next issue can be even more awesome.

I must mention our gorgeous cover superstar - Monica Ferguson. Her article on page 6 is just a mere introduction of what she offers. Talking to her is refreshing and invigorating and she just gets you. Check out her podcast too, well worth listening to when you need a touch of real.

*Catherine*

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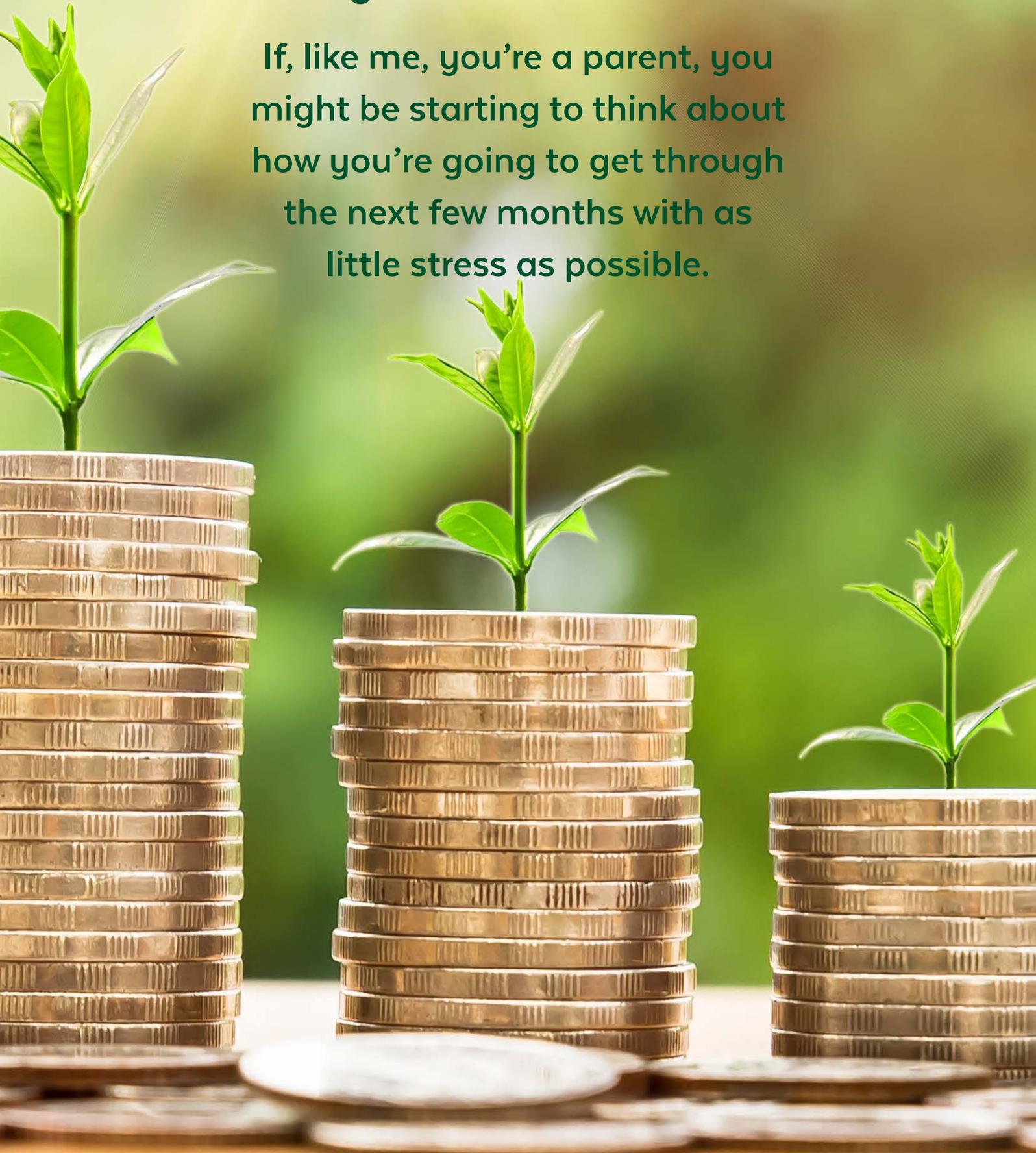
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# Reducing Financial Stress

If, like me, you're a parent, you might be starting to think about how you're going to get through the next few months with as little stress as possible.



**I'm finding the kids are taking a lot of my attention at the moment, and its easy to sweep the bills and budget under the carpet right now.**

Food is not only harder to get, but why does it not seem to last as long in the cupboards with a teenager?!

I know that now is an opportune time to start reviewing my finances to see what changes I can make. (although it's the last thing I feel like doing!)

But if anything can resonate here, it must be to act now, not when accounts are showing distress. Banks are less inclined to want to assist when you're accounts are overdrawn and you're missing payments.

I've got some ways that you can start to get the financial burden from being too heavy on those shoulders

## REDUCE

Now's the time to look at that gym membership (donation) that you've had coming out of your account for the last 2 years without having attended. Start culling unnecessary expenses. Are you paying for subscriptions that you're not making use of? Do you know that your insurance outgoings are all correct and accounted for? Do you have the best and most affordable power and phone providers? How much monthly bank fees do you pay?

## CONSOLIDATE

If you have multiple store cards, credit cards or unsecured lending, start looking at consolidating this. Have one easy to manage payment for this stuff. The amount you'll be spending in interest could all be going towards paying this off. Consider topping up your mortgage to cover these debts. Then close them all off.

## MANAGE

Start setting your regular outgoings as an automatic payment each payday. Don't worry if your power, gas or water fluctuate, set up a payment that will allow this to build up in summer, so that in Winter you're working on a credit. Have all your utilities come out of one account. Then each payday, you're having a payment go across to this one account that will cover the bills. Anything that is left is what you use for your food, petrol and spending.

This might take a wee bit to set up, but sit down with all your bills, these have the bank accounts and details you need to enter, and once its done, you barely need to look at them again!

## RESTRUCTURE

Your mortgage is one of the biggest outgoings you'll have... but there's ways we can provide temporary relief without having to sacrifice your goal of reducing your lending. We can look to put you on a lower interest rate and extend your loan term. These two steps in themselves will reduce your payments whilst continuing to reduce your loan amount. You can do this until you find you're comfortable enough to start focusing on debt reduction again. Then we can look at ways to increase your repayments.

Start this as soon as you can.... The sooner you can start reducing and streamlining your expenses, the less overwhelmed you'll feel. And use experts! Use a Mortgage and Insurance advisor to help with your reviewing of finances/insurances. There's also lots of really cool tools to check your utilities, my favourite is [www.fastconnect.co.nz](http://www.fastconnect.co.nz). 

**Good luck, and if you need any help please reach out.**



**By Jess Pronk, The Mortgage Supply Co**

Jess has had more than a decade of banking experience, working as a customer service manager, a personal accounts manager, and a branch manager. In these roles she excelled in mentoring her staff and assisting her customers.

Jess is now a mortgage broker with 8 years experience and along with her team loves working, and building long term relationships, with all sorts of clients helping them to achieve their dreams.

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You are  
totally  
enough.

Imagine if we all walked around with signs on our heads that said how we actually feel about ourselves. “I feel ugly.” “I feel alone.” “I feel like I am too big.” “I feel like I’ve wasted my life.” “I feel like I’m not good enough.”

**Imagine if you saw someone who you think is the epitome of beautiful, glamorous and successful wearing a sign that said “I feel so alone and so scared all the time.” “I am really struggling with depression.”**

Years ago I was at a photography shoot for three of the most beautiful women in the world. They spent the entire session focused on everything that they felt wasn’t good enough. “My bum is too big, I hate my legs, my smile is weird, that tooth is crooked,” and on and on it went. I was bewildered. I had spent my life thinking that if I looked like them, all of my problems would be gone. I learned an extremely valuable lesson that day.

I learned, that what we look like is truly irrelevant. How much money we have, how many assets we have, how many likes on Facebook we get, it means nothing if we do not truly feel like we are enough on the inside. The days where we can hang out at home with track pants on and no makeup and watch Netflix, knowing that our worth and our value will never change because we don’t earn it. It is inherent within us. Within, not without.

So, why do we spend so much time looking to everything external to tell us that we are enough? Here’s my take. Firstly, there are a lot of companies that spend a lot of money on marketing that is designed to make us feel like we need their product because we aren’t good enough. In New Zealand there is a fine line between respecting yourself and being “up yourself”, the tall poppy thing is definitely an issue that stops us from wanting to move forward.

Also, we are raised to believe that we need the money, the partner, the house, the car, the children etc in order to be complete. So, we are constantly striving for the things that we think are going to make us feel at peace. The thing is, approval of who we are right now and knowing that we are more than enough right now, is the answer to every problem.

So, I want to remind you that you are more than good enough. You have overcome so much, you are talented, brave, one of a kind, beautiful and you are more powerful and capable than you could ever imagine.

I believe in you! 



**By Monica Ferguson, Monica Ferguson Coaching**

Monica is a Coach specialising in self-worth and mindset. She helps visionary women get out of their own way and claim their dreams. Monica works alongside her clients in a very intuitive way, and no session is ever the same. It’s all about you and what is most going to serve you.

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## Re-wiring your Brain: Letting go of Anxiety

**We are facing unprecedented times – never before have we had to retreat back into our homes (bubbles) for safety on a global basis. We are learning new ways to connect, new ways to live and we are, many of us, focused on survival.**

It is not surprising then that our bodies are firing off different triggers, as we try to find a way to navigate ourselves through to the other side – and beyond.

For many – anxiety will be showing up. Anxiety is defined as “a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome” (Oxford online dictionary). Often, we talk of this being related to worrying about something in the future, that has not yet happened, and this is apt right now as we face uncertain times. We like

certainty and we like control – without it we can get caught up in anxiousness and our heads trying to sort things out for us – not always in the most resourceful way!

The good news is there are some simple tools and techniques, which if we use them regularly – can help you to reduce anxiety in the moment and rewire the brain and regain control in the longer term.

IF after practising the tools, you could still use some support, do not hesitate to get in touch.

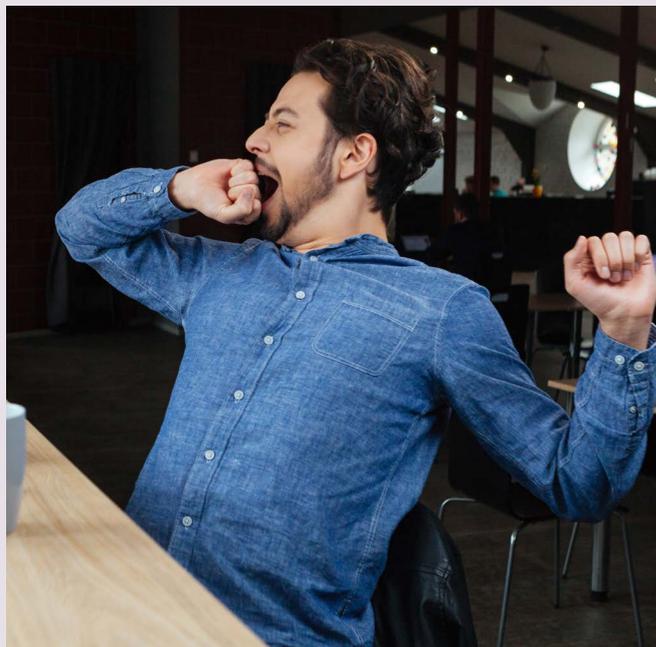
## HEAD BASED CHATTER

To quieten down that inner voice, which runs away with ideas of everything that is going to go wrong and all the reasons why something is not going to work:

- Recognise the inner chatter and say STOP
- Do a massive, loud, mindful yawn while stretching
- Repeat 6 times.

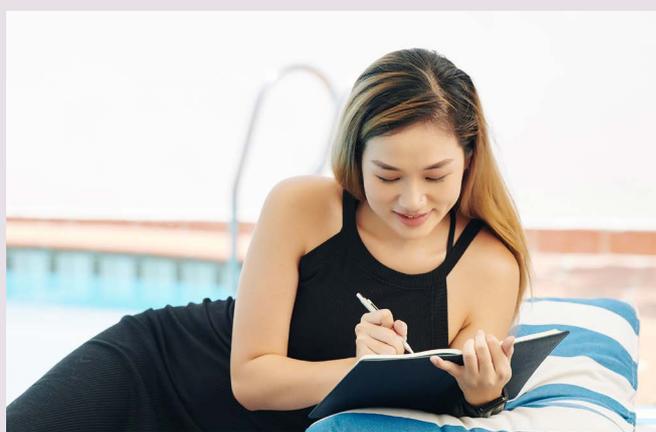
Notice how your head based chatter and anxiety stops

Mindful yawning is shown by research to be one of the quickest and most effective ways to literally and metaphorically cool the brain down. ([www.mindfullyalive.com/blog/2016/6/16/yawning-is-the-fastest-way-to-hack-mental-stress-and-focus](http://www.mindfullyalive.com/blog/2016/6/16/yawning-is-the-fastest-way-to-hack-mental-stress-and-focus))



## FOR ANXIOUS FEELINGS

1. Practising Gratitude - writing things you are grateful for, or writing thankful letters, has been shown to have an impact on your baseline state (how you feel). Ideally set this up as a daily practice. (This works really well as part of prayer.) [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how\\_gratitude\\_changes\\_you\\_and\\_your\\_brain](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain)
2. Ensure you limit exposure to news sites and select reliable sources that are based on well established facts. Avoid drama based, catastrophising social media which could escalate your anxiety.
3. Be deliberate with the words you use - in verbal communication and in your thinking. When you hear yourself say, or think, an unhelpful word or phrase - smile - say STOP out loud and ask your head to come up with at least 3 alternative words that are more resourceful.
4. Direct your own movies - Our heads create images and movies to process and create memories of events and feelings. And to project what might happen in the future. You can decide to become the director of your own movies and ensure the movies and images are uplifting and safe to watch.
5. Focus on a positive end image - this is temporary - we will come out of isolation - this too will pass. What do you want to be doing after this is all history? Create a picture of that and keep building it up over time with colour, movement, sound, feelings etc.



## SOCIAL ANXIETY

It is important to stay connected, so choose who you feel safe to connect with and talk to them and set up an agreed way of staying in touch that you feel safe and comfortable with.

Do not underestimate the power of connection with other sentient beings (aka pets). Time with dogs, cats and other pets, with physical touch, if they are in your bubble, can create calm feelings in your body to settle anxiety in the head.



## IF FEELING LIKE THINGS ARE ESCALATING OUT OF CONTROL

**Note: With any physical symptoms check out with a medical professional that it is not something that requires attention. There will be a medical helpline, or telephone service available in your area. For clinical anxiety disorders always seek professional help.**

As soon as you feel things escalating: Stop what you are doing and focus on the here and now. Take a breath in and then give a long, audible sigh out.

Briefly Describe:

- 5 things you can see
- 5 things you can hear
- 5 things you can feel

Reassess and if any remaining anxiety, drop to 4 things, then 3, then 2 etc.



Choose the techniques that resonate with you and commit to practising them four times a day. 



*By Dr Suzanne Henwood, mBraining for Success*

Dr Suzanne Henwood is a Stress and Anxiety coach, using a range of physiological techniques to change patterns for good. She has authored numerous books, book chapters and articles, with a particular interest in stress, communication, leadership and personal and professional development to improve and transform practice, supporting people to operate from a place of excellence.

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“Strength doesn’t come from what you can do.  
It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn’t.”

*Rikki Rogers, writer and marketer*

# Why you are probably wearing the wrong size bra, and why you should care

**A recent survey in New Zealand found that almost 80% of women are wearing the wrong size bra. This may seem bizarre but as a Bra Fit Specialist I see this at almost every fitting I do, and am concerned as women don't realise the damage it could be doing.**

Part of the service I offer as a lingerie consultant is measuring and styling ladies for bras. For many it's the first time they've had that done, and they've been wearing something too big or too small their entire adult life. They don't realise an ill-fitting bra can lead to headaches and breast, back and neck pain. In fact the British School of Osteopathy found that badly fitted bras can put stress on bones and muscles leading to breathing problems.

And it's not just the health side of things. The wrong bras don't help appearances either. A wrong size bra can lead to irreversibly damaging breast ligaments leading to sagging - a look most women try to avoid. The right supportive one can actually assist your posture. This is especially helpful for women who are working at computers, stooped over keyboards for hours, but equally those working in the health industries and childcare. Supportive bras assist straighter backs and can reduce the appearance of 'side and back fat', so you'll look slimmer and your clothes will look as their designer intended.



A bra's purpose is to support, elevate and enhance your breast shape, comfortably. Over a lifetime breasts will change shape and size so being measured and styled regularly is essential to good overall health. The service I provide can be given one of several ways. Until restrictions are lifted I can help ladies online using one of several platform to connect....Zoom, Skype and Mobile 'phone. In the future a face-to-face styling session can be arranged in-home.

I love to see women fitted properly. They stand straighter and look way more comfortable and confident in their bodies. And that can only be a good thing. 



**By Pamela Elliot, Intimo**

Pamela has been a Bra Fit Specialist for 15 years serving New Zealand and Australian women professionally and privately in-home and online. Being able to offer women lingerie ranges in sizes 8A - 24G means most will be able to find several options for their Lingerie Wardrobe. Accompanying our Lingerie is lovely clothing in durable fabrics and classic styles. My service is unique and personal which supports women throughout their lives.

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# Managing your environment to stay healthy



**Picture this: You walk into your kitchen and open the fridge; you find it filled with fresh vegetables, fruits, hummus, containers of raw nuts, baked root vegetables, wholegrain wraps or bread, sliced grilled chicken breast, a hearty pumpkin soup leftover from dinner last night. “Hmm, what do I want to eat,” you think to yourself. Then you think, “I’ll just check the pantry.”**

You open the pantry and find potato chips, packets of biscuits, chocolate, packets of microwave buttered popcorn, roasted nuts, some sugary cereals and boxes of flavoured crackers.

Now ask yourself, “what’s my healthiest choice?” I hope you chose something from the fridge!

Whilst these are two extremely different examples, most homes would be somewhere in between the healthy and not-so-healthy options in the pantry and the fridge.

When working with my weight loss clients I discuss two important topics. The first deals with ‘tidying up’ their environment. To get rid of the calorie-dense nutrient lacking items and replace them with healthier options. If some food belongs to other family members, I suggest they relocate it to an agreeable location out of their sight. The second is the most important question they will ask themselves in all situations (at or home or outside of home). What’s my healthiest choice? It’s a bit hard to choose a bag of chips over a lovely crisp apple when you ask yourself this question.

I have touched on food first because when it comes to our weight and our health, what we put in our mouths makes the difference between staying at a healthy weight, losing weight if needed, reducing the likelihood of developing lifestyle-related diseases and living to a ripe old age.

However, when it comes to managing our environment (this can be home or work), we also need to think about sleep, stress and exercise. I will leave you with the following questions to think about:

**Do you get enough sleep?**

**Do you ensure you go to bed at the same time and always get up at the same time?**

**Do you make time to stop, relax and just breathe?**

**Do you have a stress-busting strategy?  
E.g. going for a walk, meditation etc.  
(No, wine does not count - sorry!)**

**Do you have planned exercise you do on a regular day(s) no matter what?**

**Do you try to get up and move regularly if you are in a desk bound job?**

Now that you have an idea of how to manage your environment to be healthier, I hope you'll try some of my tips. Enjoy the recipe I have included on the following page, to help you start your food- related healthier choices.

# Broccoli, quinoa medley with dry roasted cashews

Gluten Free | Dairy Free | Vegetarian | Oil Free | Serves 4

Great as a side, a main meal or leftovers for lunch.

## INGREDIENTS

3/4 cup mixed red & white Quinoa  
(optional just use 1 colour)

1 cup Water

1 large Onion, diced

5 large cloves Garlic, crushed

1 head Broccoli (med-large), cut into small florets

2 cups frozen Peas

2 tsp Gluten Free Vege Stock powder + water to mix

1 cup dry roasted Cashews



## METHOD

Cook quinoa in 1 cup boiling water for 10-15 mins till water has almost disappeared, turn off and remove from element. Let it sit for 10 mins to finish absorbing any moisture.

Heat oven to 180°C and place cashews in a small roasting dish (no oil!) cook 5-10 minutes shaking frequently. Do keep an eye on them as they do tend to brown quite quickly. When toasted to your liking, remove and set aside.

In a large wok or similar, sauté the onion until soft, using a little water if necessary, to prevent sticking. Add garlic and do the same for a few more minutes.

Add broccoli and continue sautéing for another 3-5 mins taking care not to overcook.

Fluff up quinoa in the pot with a fork and add to the wok along with the frozen peas. Continue cooking for approx. 5 mins until heated through.

Mix the stock powder with 1/2 c water and stir through the broccoli medley. Taste and adjust. If it's a little too salty add a little more water.

Add cashews and serve. 



**By Tracey Williams Scott, The New You**

Tracey is a weight loss consultant and qualified chef who specialises in creating healthy, easy and tasty recipes. She helps clients reduce weight, improve their well-being and energy levels whilst creating long term healthier lifestyles. Tracey takes the too hard out of losing weight with simple strategies.

[www.thenewyou.nz](http://www.thenewyou.nz), [info@thenewyou.nz](mailto:info@thenewyou.nz)

Now, more than ever we have to encourage people to support small and local businesses. Here are my ideas on ways you can help other small businesses, even if you can't afford to purchase from them or don't have a need for their product or services.

### How to support small businesses

- Like, comment on and share their social media posts
- Recommend them to your friends and family
- Write a positive review on their social media or Google
- Sign up to receive their newsletter
- Send them a personal message of support or thanks
- Pay your bills on time
- Buy their product or service



# SWALLOWING A CONCRETE PILL

Jim Kent is one of those great kiwi men with a wicked sense of humour and a wealth of life experience. He has had change forced upon him many times over and had to adapt. Together with his wife he is now building his fourth business and shares his story with us.

**I was born in Tuatapere Southland in April 1961. fifth child out of seven. We lived in an area called Wakapatu (Google it and you will see it's the end of the earth) which as far as we were concerned was the centre of the universe. My parents had a 400 acre farm with both sheep and cattle.**

One of the best things about living there was the seafood. We had a local mussel rock which we raided at least once a week. Nothing beats the taste of fresh mussels straight from the sea. I could not eat store bought mussels for many years. We also had paua and crayfish at our doorstep and would use crayfish for bait to catch blue cod.

We also had the Longwood hills at our doorstep so by default became hunters and shot deer whenever the meat supply demanded it.

Life was pretty good and a lot of family fun was had with large gatherings of family and friends, and eating off the land.

We learnt from a young age that there was no escaping the ongoing work associated with farming and we all had that work ethic installed into us from a young age.

Many times throughout the farming calendar we had time off school to help with haymaking, sheep

shearing, tailing season, and so on. This was great from our point of view, but from the teachers side of things not the best idea.

My father also worked at the local sheep and beef processing plant during the season so we had to do the farmwork after school as he left early and got home late.

One of my jobs every day after school was to feed out to the animals, mostly the cows. I would have to get the tractor and trailer and load up the hay bales then go out to the animals and feed them. This was not very safe as the tractor had no brakes and I used to set the tractor throttle on slow then put it in gear and while it was moving walk between the tractor and trailer balancing on the drawbar to the trailer to feed out to the stock. This process was repeated in reverse to get back on the tractor while it was still moving, so if I ever slipped off I would have been run over by the trailer. It never entered my head that this was not good practice.

Dad sold the farm when I was 15 years old and we moved to the big city of Riverton which had a population of around 1500. We now lived in the big smoke and found new things we could do as teenagers which was not always in line with our parents ideals.

We learnt about alcohol, marijuana and girls in a very short time and this changed our lives forever.

No more going to church on Sundays which I think broke my mother's heart, but these new things in our lives were so much more interesting.

Riverton is about a 35 minute drive to Invercargill so it was logical as young teenagers to hang out there on the weekends to party, get drunk, stoned and enjoy life as we had never known it before. We bought cars, wrecked them, drove drunk and tried to outrun the cops on a regular basis. This was our favourite pastime, with the cops always coming out on top in the long run.

Around this time a Riverton local was trying to sell his carpet cleaning business. He had a few permanent jobs around town so I made the purchase and was in business for myself. There were four hotels in town and I cleaned their carpets every couple of weeks. This was good profitable work for me as it was a couple of hours per hotel each Sunday and I would charge around \$80 which somehow ended back in the hands of the hotel owners via the bottle shop over the following week. I used to get paid in cash so this money went straight into my pocket then back out again buying beer and cigarettes etc.

The IRD never got to see any of this hard earned money. This taught me how the economy works. (not really) I eventually sold this enterprise as I got sick of working on a Sunday morning with a hangover.

At 18 years old I got work in the New Zealand Forest Service with a guy I knew pruning pine trees. This

was a very lucrative job and I managed to obtain a contract with the Forest Service.

This was my second foray into business and with all the skills learnt from the carpet cleaning business. I believed I was an expert in running a successful business. This was around 1980 and I would get paid a dollar for every tree pruned. I could prune 200 trees a day which used to take around six hours. Back then this was very good money and I managed to save enough to buy my first home. I quickly realised that if I employed staff I could pay them 50 cents a tree and I could earn another \$100 a day. The only issue was that I still had some bad drinking habits. We used to call in the pub on the way home and buy beer until we were full, go home and get up the next day and do it all again. Of course, me being the "high flyer" picked up the bar tab most of the time and wondered why at the end of the month I struggled to pay my bills.

In the meantime I met my future wife. We got married at a young age, which didn't work out due to my lifestyle and underlying issues. Being young and naive didn't make for a good relationship. This ended in tears so I decided to make a move out of the rat race of small town living.

Somehow, although not planned, I ended up in Auckland. I landed a job with New Zealand Steel, based out in Waiuku, but had a large warehouse building at Auckland waterfront which is now where all the restaurants and apartment buildings are. This was the start of a long career with this company



which changed hands to BHP, an Australian owned steel company, during my time. I started in 1984 and was made redundant in 1996

During my time with NZ Steel I met a lot of local business people doing various jobs around the waterfront. Being entrepreneurial I would use the company's forklift to do jobs around the area for cash or beer. This was quite a lucrative way to make a few extra \$\$\$ on the side.

One of the business owners I used to deal with started a boat hire business, Captain Pugwash Boat Hire and was looking for investors to purchase boats to increase his fleet. I decided to invest so bought a second hand boat off him and started hiring this boat out.

A few hires in and we had a few issues where the boat broke down and the people had to be rescued by the Coastguard. This was not good and thank goodness there was no social media as my reviews would not have been favourable. I decided to buy a brand new

“I had a great team of guys and made sure they had some perks so all was hunky dory.”

boat and this made life a lot easier. I then bought a second and third boat and used to run this while still working for NZ Steel. I ran the warehouse operations so I could sneak off and do what I wanted during the day. I had a great team of guys and made sure they had some perks so all was hunky dory.

In 1995 Peter Blake and his team did the unthinkable and won the America's Cup in San Diego and we all celebrated New Zealand's victory. Little known to me this event was to change my life forever.

BHP which bought out NZ Steel had established another warehouse in the Port of Tauranga and a lot of the exports were being railed there before shipping overseas. They decided that all operations would be run out of Tauranga and the location of the warehouse in Auckland was hot property due to the location and the area designated to be home of the America's cup defence. They closed down the Auckland branch which was sold off to North Sails, a supplier of sails to the America's Cup fleet. At the same time the building we were renting for the boat hire business had a sky high rent increase due to the

location and there was no point to keep running the boat hire business. I sold out of this and thus ended another business venture.

It took another 12 months for the warehouse to close. All the senior managers had left and moved to Tauranga so it was up to me to close the shop. My manager at the time said to me that during the last week he would come back up and take us all out for drinks and dinner.

A few weeks before this happened I took the boys to our local bar and had a deal with the owner to run a bar tab until my boss got back on the understanding he would pick up the tab. This was quite successful from our point of view (free beer) and the look on his face when he had to pay the tab was priceless.

I had one or two different jobs over the next few years until one night in a bar (does this sound familiar) I got offered a job at a waste company which in the cold light of day with a fuzzy head I decided to take on. By default I became a garbage man which started another long term job which lasted 16 years. At the same time I met my soon to be wife at Danny Doolan's bar in the Viaduct.

So two events in a short period of time changed the course of my life once again. Working in the waste game was a great experience and as a new manager I decided to spend time with the boys and see what they did and what happened on their shifts. This was a move which was taken by the team as WTF is this guy doing out and about with us. No one has ever done this before. Is he spying on us? It meant I had to go to bed early to try to get some sleep as some of the team started at midnight and worked through to 2pm the following afternoon. Yes they worked some long hours and under duress and sleep deprivation. It was good to see what they had to put up with for something we all take for granted. The midnight starts were ideal to get the rubbish removed as they could avoid the traffic. Over time as apartment buildings popped up downtown and more and more people lived in the city, noise complaints rolled in and we had to continually adjust the runs to get the work done. This just extended the time it took to do the waste collection. The company grew from around 250 employees to over 1000 employees in the time I was with them. I left after nine years of running the Auckland fleet with over 50 drivers and support staff to look after. With teams working around the clock my phone never stopped ringing and in the end I was driven crazy and had to leave for sanity sakes.

Around one year later I got a phone call and was asked back on a three month contract to look after the landfill, which I accepted. This turned into another long stint at the company. It was a great experience to run a landfill and learn about engineering practices and running another large team with both landfill staff, workshop staff, landfill gas operations, and contractors. I thought I would be at this job until I retired but fate intervened and I was let go, which did rock me somewhat. It took a long time to get over what happened and left a bitter taste in my mouth with people whom I had worked alongside with.

“At the end of the day I had to swallow a concrete pill, get over it and move on with my life as there was no going back.”

At the end of the day I had to swallow a concrete pill, get over it and move on with my life as there was no going back.

While this was happening and it took around three months of garden leave for the outcome we had our Sandringham house on the market to sell and while we had it rented to the same couple for many years and they had looked after the

property reasonably well there was still a lot of work to be done to get it ready for market.

We engaged a few different people to get this work done but we were not happy with everything so decided to finish it off ourselves. We thought that we would like to do this for a living, as we liked the Australian Programme “Selling Houses Australia”, which turned houses from a bit ugly into something marketable to sell. We started our business and asked the Real Estate agent who sold our Sandringham property for work. We got a few good jobs over that summer which helped us on our way.

To cut a long story short we ended up owning a company called Property Pro Ltd which was a cleaning company and we changed direction quite early in the piece to property maintenance. Our first good break was joining BNI Epsom as this introduced me to a lot of different business people looking for a maintenance company to look after their customers. We were introduced to Ray White Mt Eden and did several jobs for them and now are their preferential go to company that they recommend to their clients.

Through BNI we also have a Property Management company based in Titirangi that we help with all the property maintenance on their investors homes throughout the Auckland area.

We also went to a conference with Dale Beaumont called 52 Ways which gave us a lot of wise advice. We joined his programme and have been slowly putting into practice all the learnings from these conferences. He has a lot of information which members can download and use to get their business moving along. His programme also gives you a mentor which is invaluable to bounce ideas off.

We have now been trading for over 12 months and have gone from myself running around doing small fiddly jobs to employing a builder who can fix or repair anything and another handyman (who happens to be my brother), a painter and a part time office assistant to help run the back end.

I now concentrate on getting work in the door and going out to see potential customers. My wife is in the background making sure that I don't get out of control and keeps the books in order. We use technology as much as possible to generate leads, pay staff and run our business with an app so the team knows what work they have each day and what they need to be and what work that they have to do.

We are still not where we want to be yet but are building systems in our business so it can be run remotely at some stage. This will take some time and effort and a lot of hard work still needs to be done to get us over the invisible line which keeps moving. We were just at the stage where we had a lot of work in front of us and trying to manage the inflow of these jobs when the Covid19 lockdown hit and changed the playing field.

While this will eat up our meagre reserves we have to look at this positively and once the lockdown has been lifted focus our energy back into getting work through the door and working smarter. This will be a challenge but we believe we have the ability to do this. We are a small team who do great work. We look forward to the challenge ahead and hopefully we can help and inspire others in this life.

**By Jim Kent, Property Pro Services**

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