

GRAZIA'S LIFE SKILLS

MASTER

ASK THE EXPERT

How can I heal my relationship with Mum before Mother's Day?

Dr Sarah Woodhouse is a psychologist, trauma expert and author of *You're Not Broken – Break Free From Trauma And Reclaim Your Life*

First, we need to talk about the T word. No, not therapy (although I highly recommend it). The T word I'm skirting around is trauma. Not a topic typically broached around Mother's Day, is it? Not least because many of us are approaching it without our mothers, which is of course a different trauma in itself.

But the reality is that relational trauma can covertly derail mother-daughter relationships, even despite the best of intentions on both sides.

Let me explain: if your childhood relationship with your mother was emotionally dysfunctional, you might still carry unprocessed trauma. How do you know? See if this scenario rings a bell: you walk into a café to meet your mum feeling strong and adult (*Good As Hell* by Lizzo would be playing in the movie of your life for



this scene). But five minutes later you feel anxious and are behaving like your younger self. If you can relate, it's likely that your relational trauma is being triggered when you see your mother.

The real plot-twist is that relational trauma tends to run in families. This means your mum is also likely to be triggered by the lunch. So what can you do about this trigger double-bind? The key to improving your relationship with your mother (and to surviving a Mother's Day lunch) is to remember that when you're triggered you

disconnect from your adult self and the present moment.

To heal, you need to return to the here and now. Short of splashing a glass of water in your face at the table, try poly-vagal breathing (in for four, out for eight) and reaffirming your adult identity ('I'm 36 years old, I'm a strong woman not a child'). If you find your relationship with your mum difficult – and, crucially, you want to improve the dynamic rather than walk away – it's worth considering how the T word might be affecting you.

WORK WISDOM

Tune into the right time to quit your job

Alice Stapleton is a careers coach specialising in change

If you've been considering quitting your job in the last few months, you are in good company. New research by Ipsos has found that nearly half of British workers aged 16 to 34 have considered quitting their job, looked at, or applied for another job in the last three months.

But how do you know whether it's the right time to hand in your

notice and jump ship?

If you've been thinking about moving on for more than three months, then it's definitely time to start looking, as this suggests that nothing has changed enough to change your mind. If you've spoken to your employer about alternative roles, new projects, more responsibility and nothing has materialised, it's a sure sign that now is the time to move on. If you don't want your boss's job and you're not learning anything new, a

new role would likely invigorate you and increase your motivation.

More existentially, if you struggle to see the point of the work that you do, then moving into a new role – one where you can see the value and impact of what you're doing – could be a great next step to take. And, with a record number of vacancies being recorded recently (by the Office for National Statistics), there are plenty of opportunities for you to seek out. So, what are you waiting for?

LIFE ADMIN

Got a stocks and shares ISA? Hold your nerve

Laura Whateley, author of *Money: A User's Guide*

Managing money is as much about understanding your emotions as it is colour coding your spreadsheets. Especially if you've taken on risk to try and grow your savings and opened a stocks and shares ISA.

If your money is invested in the markets, perhaps through a

fund that tracks the FTSE 100 (the 100 largest companies on the London Stock Exchange), you can expect to see it go down in value at times. Global turmoil is hitting markets right now, so if you look at your ISA on screen, it'll probably appear to have shrunk.

The instinct is to take your money out and put it in a cash ISA instead, to avoid further loss. But if you can afford to, hold your nerve. Our worry often means we withdraw at the worst possible moment.

'While periods of volatility are difficult, it's part and parcel of investing,' says Sarah Coles,

senior personal finance analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown. 'We expect there to be times when portfolio values fall, and others when they recover.' She says if your ISA is well-diversified, ie, your money is spread over different companies or countries, and you don't need the money for a few years, taking a deep breath and ignoring what the markets are doing may be your best bet.

Even during the financial crash, investors who hung on eventually saw the value of their investments recover. And with inflation so high, you are losing money on cash savings anyway.

MODERN MUM DILEMMA OF THE WEEK



'I miss my child when I'm at work and can't handle her tantrums when I get home'

Anna Whitehouse, aka Mother Pukka

I'm going to coin the phrase 'the parental paradox'. Because I think we are in this constant pendulum as parents. Like you, I miss the kids when I'm at work. But am desperate for them to go to sleep when I get home. I want them to grow up while willing them to stay small. Most parents I know want to keep working but their hearts are often breaking – at missed moments and distracted huffs of 'just a minute' when children ask for just a second of your time. The guilt is always there.

I'm in this hinterland of pining and trying to escape the whining. I flit between aching for them and aching from them. Like all parents, I've found love on another level – but wonder how much of myself I've lost along the way. I'm stronger but also weaker. Broken but also robust. I want it all to stop, and yet, am willing it never to end.

I don't think there's a solution to this, it's simply acknowledging that your favourite things in the world can be soaking them up but, equally, dropping them off at school or nursery. And that's OK.

So your feelings are totally normal. And to anyone questioning mind, body and knackered soul, the parental paradox is real. @motherpukka

WELLBEING

Take the opportunity to spring clean your mental health

Noel McDermott is a leading UK psychotherapist

Just like our homes, our minds benefit from a deep clean and spring is the ideal time to clear those psychological cobwebs. It's important to take stock and examine how you sleep, be aware of changes in appetite or weight, general energy levels, worries for the future and feelings of hopelessness.

Take this chance to examine how you feel about yourself and assess your ability to relax. Create a check list that acts as your action plan for the future and if, for example, your sleep isn't great, learn about sleep hygiene and make some changes.

Developing good habits promotes positive mental health, so eat regularly and healthily, sleep well, stay hydrated, try to manage your work/life balance, socialise with loved ones, keep alcohol consumption down, exercise regularly and get out into nature. These good habits will allow you to have positive and healthy psychological functioning for the coming months ahead.

PHOTOS: XXXXX

THREE STEPS TO...

MAKING THE PERFECT TASTY SPRING SALAD

Lily Simpson is creator of home delivery service the Detox Kitchen

- 1. Pick a wide range of ingredients.** Go for crunchy, seasonal produce, such as radishes, spring greens, rocket or lettuce, all tossed together with a vibrant dressing, nuts and seeds.
- 2. Choose your dressings.** It really is all about the dressings, so pick two fats (oil, mustard, mayo, avocado or yogurt), add acid (vinegar, lemon or lime juice) and salt and a touch of sweet (honey or maple syrup). Then add garlic, ginger, fresh chillies, chopped herbs or dried spices to bring it to life. I love a classic one of rapeseed oil with apple cider wine vinegar, Dijon mustard, a drop of honey and a good pinch of salt.
- 3. Heat some toppings.** The effect of hot crispy seeds or croutons being mixed through a salad just as it's ready to eat can transform not only the texture but the taste of your salad, taking it to the next level.

Need some expert advice on money, work or anything else? Let us know what you'd like to see on this page at feedback@graziemagazine.co.uk