

Q&A digest from 'Festive Fatigue Rescue' session held on 7/12/24

Question: When prioritising tasks, how do we gauge 'importance'. Am I grading it based on the fact that I'm obliged to do it (e.g. task return)? Or because it's something nice for me that I know I'll enjoy and it'll make me happy?

Answer: Such a good question! We have to make these priority calls based on a range of things, and that differs from person to person and situation to situation of course! As mentioned in the webinar, I very much encourage the people I'm helping to save at least a little bit of their energy quota for the day to spend on a 'nice to do' task. Something that brings them joy. Indeed, the most successful journeys I've seen are those where the person has recognised that it's ok to do things that they want to do sometimes!! It can't all be about grinning and bearing it and only doing things that are either health-related or critical must do's. Even if, theoretically, you tag on a few more days to your end-to-end journey, if it's felt that bit more enjoyable and bearable, then that's the right call to make. If you remember, the no.1 item on my 'Healing State' square is NOURISHMENT. Nourishing your soul by doing things that bring you joy is as helpful as nourishing your body.

That said, I talked a lot about the importance of staying in a calm and constructive mindset at the webinar today, and if someone has several critical 'must do' tasks that they are obliged to do that day, and they deprioritise doing them, that's not going to help them stay calm and unpressured.

When I'm giving someone personalised pacing advice, I suggest they give priority energy each day to any time-critical 'must do' tasks. Because they NEED to happen, and so allocating energy to them first when planning their day is the sensible plan. Then they know what they've got left over for the less critical must-do's, and hopefully one or two nice-to-do tasks too. On some days there'll just be too many important must-do tasks to leave space for any nice to do's. And doing those *anyway*, by piling them on top of an already busy day, is going to be the opposite of helpful. But do remember that things aren't one size fits all! If you can only spare a small amount of energy to do something more treatful, shape it accordingly. For instance, you might love the idea of a friend coming round for a couple of hours, but perhaps having just a short phone call with them is the smarter plan on that particular day. Save the visit for next week when things are a little less busy.

The most important thing is to figure out, and feel confident about, how much energy you have available to use each day. The amount you can confidently allocate, knowing that you'll be staying within your comfortable limits. THEN you can start to plan what you're going to use it on each day – remembering that breaking things down into smaller mini-tasks can sometimes allow you to balance things out a little more.

Also pay attention to things that can affect the 'size' of a task – e.g. the difference between wanting to do something, and not wanting to do it! Or doing something for the very first time, vs doing something for the 15th time and so it's all feeling much more familiar and easier now.

Question: Other than avoiding eating too close to bedtime, do you have any more suggestions about how to make it easier to fall asleep?

Answer: We discussed the benefits of Yoga Nidra – it translates to 'sleep yoga' and is much closer to a guided meditation, than a yoga practice. It can be such a lovely helpful way to get you into a sleepy place, and many people find it a helpful step-down from their pre-bed routines; into a state where they start to drift off.

There are many free yoga nidra routines on YouTube and Spotify etc, but a lovely one to start with is: <https://youtu.be/8mM5Oks8yZc?si=UwsRFYLgtCx67ybl>

We also talked about body temperature, and the fact that a drop in temperature sends a helpful and important signal to our brain to switch on sleep processes (this is why a warm bath before bed is helpful – it's not the warmth of the bath itself, it's the cooling of your body after you get out!). Make sure your bedroom isn't too warm, and perhaps pop your arm out of the duvet to let yourself just gently cool a bit if you feel a little too cosy under there!

Finally, we talked about harnessing the benefits of natural light. Getting natural light in your eyes, within an hour of waking, is a great way to tell your body that it's day time – and to help you establish a helpful bodyclock. Likewise, avoiding artificial light later at night (post 11pm) stops confusing your bodyclock. We discussed 'happy' lamps (daylight lamps) and one of the attendees shared how hugely helpful she's found it to use one every morning. They're quite affordable now, and Amazon has a range to choose from. I like the Beurer brand in particular. I also mentioned that I have daylight glasses! Here they are here: <https://myluminette.com/>

Question: It's coming up to New Year – the time we make resolutions. What are your thoughts about longer term goal setting? Is it helpful?

Answer: On the whole, getting very specific about long-term goal setting and vision creation can often be counter-productive to those managing a fatigue journey. It can encourage you to focus too much on exciting things that you know you can't do yet, rather than being motivating . However, I do encourage my clients to think about the life they want to create once they're better – but to do it by defining how they want to FEEL when they're there, not by getting really specific just yet. For example, they might decide they want to feel: recognised; spacious; adventurous; cosy; successful; accomplished; comfortable etc etc. Even just at that high level, identifying how you want to feel can help you make some helpful priority calls as your journey moves forwards. For example, if you want to feel adventurous you might decide you do want to renew your passport that's just expired. If you want to feel spacious, you might decide not to pursue plans to refit the kitchen because you might want to move to a bigger house further down the line. You're not locking down specifics yet, but you're also not creating blockers to shaping that wonderful life when you're ready to do so.

On a day-to-day basis, it can be really helpful to define a shorter-term achievable goal that feels motivating. Something that you can see that you're making some progress towards – if not every day, then at least every week or so. You want it to help you feel motivated to make that particular day go as well as it possibly can; because then it's a step closer to being able to do *the mini goal you've set*. It might be being able to read a certain number of pages of a book; or walk for a certain number of minutes; or drive a short distance. Whatever is relevant to you, and where your journey is right now. And when you get there, the first thing you do is CELEBRATE your lovely achievement! And then you can decide what the next mini-goal is. As your journey moves along, you can start to link these goals to some slightly bigger ambitions that you want to get achieve. But early on in your journey, small achievable goals are definitely the best plan.