

Janey Lee Grace



imperfectly naturalwoman

getting life right the natural way

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Introduction

If the closest you've ever come to natural living is choosing the 'light' version of mayonnaise – this book is for you. If the only recycling you've ever done is chucking your wine bottles into the car park's bottle bin just to rejoice in the crashing sound – it's still for you.

The title is all-important you see. It's 'Imperfectly Natural Woman'. After all, if you're one hundred per cent 'natural' that wouldn't be 'natural'. We've all got imperfections and we're all at a different stage in our life journey.

What you won't find in this book is padding. You won't find pages and pages of diagrams or photographs of people exercising. Be honest, when did you last get up in the morning, decide to do a workout, pick up a book and follow the diagrams? It just doesn't happen. A video or CD maybe, but a book? Never. Also, I haven't bulked it out with pages of recipes. Sure, I may have sneaked in one or two but, mostly, I'll try to point you in the direction of a healthy attitude to eating. Once you know which ingredients you need, you'll find that there are millions of books and websites dedicated to the recipes you'll need.

There is also not too much in-depth technical information or analysis of the products or treatments I've recommended. I am not a medical expert, nor am I a nutritionist, and there are even those who think my little bit of learning is a dangerous thing!

As H H Munro said in the last century, 'A little inaccuracy sometimes saves a ton of explanation.'

I know what I'm passionate about. I figure that, like me, you're busy and most of the time you'll settle for whether or not something works and forego much of the in-depth knowledge as to how it works. In case you want to check out something in detail, I'll also list references and web addresses.

What I really want to offer is recommendations you can trust – stuff that is safe, ethical and has really worked for me.

You know what it's like when your girlfriend bounces in looking ten years younger with shiny hair and bright eyes? You just want to know what she's on and where can you get it. All you ask at that point is, will it do me any harm, what does it cost, how soon can I buy it? Sometimes it's hard to prise it out of them because, after all, they don't need you looking ten years younger too! Girlfriend – I'll fast-track you to all those secrets.

The other really exciting sections of the book are the Imperfectly Natural People. With the best will in the world I can't 'guinea-pig' everything and, for example, I don't have pets, so I can't make any recommendations there. Alas, because of my imperfections, especially when it comes to recycling, I need a steep learning curve too, so I asked some colleagues and friends whom I respect for their lifestyle and they've given you their best tips too. I've already stolen several of their ideas so the whole thing is escalating wildly!

As I said, you'll already know some of these products and treatments. You may disagree vehemently with some of my suggestions and be convinced that the one you use has the edge, in which case, please take the time to write or email and we can spread the word. All these little ripples of holistic living will some day add up to a sea of health.

By the way, if looking at any part of this book just makes you feel guilty, just move on and find another section that appeals to you. I really believe we all need to make these changes at our own pace. You may not be ready for some of these suggestions yet, while other ideals you'll have been practising for years. But one thing is for sure: once someone is informed, if it's meant to be, their conscience will nag away till they give it a go.

So, thanks for buying this book and I hope you'll find it incredibly useful and inspiring. Hopefully, if you take up some of the ideas, you'll be living a little more simply and saving a good few quid into the bargain. You'll be healthier and, in a sense, wealthier and, in the currency of doing your bit for the environment, you'll be richer indeed!

PLEASE NOTE: None of the recommendations in this book is a prescription, more a way to get you thinking about your health and home in a more practical and responsible way – a lifestyle guide. Its contents are in no way intended as an alternative to professional healthcare and it is advisable to consult your existing healthcare professionals before making any changes to your healthcare regime.

“

Dance as though no one is watching you.
Love as though you have never been hurt before.
Sing as though no one can hear you.
Live as though heaven is on earth.

SOUZA

”



That's very important for the unconscious mind, which doesn't differentiate between real and imaginary. He told me to be very specific.

Well, on that bit of paper, alongside a few 'wants' (too personal to mention here) was the line, 'I am presenting my own show on national radio.' I had dreams of presenting on Radio 1. In reality, where was I at that point? Well, I was what they endearingly call the 'traffic crumpet' doing a few reports on local radio, the 'Stray dog on the B3352' sort of thing.

When I came across this bit of paper five or six years on, Richard Branson's new Virgin Radio had just launched and I had my own show. Goal achieved!

Second on the list, which was in no particular order, was, 'I am a successful singer/songwriter and will tour as a support act for a well-known artist.' But was the reality there? I'd always loved singing and earned a living with my voice, but I'd never written my own material, and doing live shows as a support artist was notoriously difficult, unless you had a major record deal, which I didn't.

Five years on? I had toured the world singing backing vocals with Wham! and George Michael; I sang with, among others, Boy George, Kim Wilde and Natalie Cole; and I had my own hit record in the UK called '7 Ways to Love', which reached Number 8 in the charts. Seeing myself on *Top of the Pops* was a bit of a shock, though: it was like, 'How did *that* happen?'

Things to do with my personal life had equally come to fruition. I shocked myself, actually, because each of the seven things I'd written on that list had come into being. Why? Because I really wanted them. I do believe that, if I hadn't put some time into correctly identifying what I wanted, they might not have happened.

Goal setting and affirming what you really want is something you can easily do for yourself, but it also plays a part in professional counselling or therapy.

Therapy is no longer the dirty word it was thirty years ago. Back then only people with serious psychological disorders or people who felt sorry for themselves went to see counsellors. The general consensus of opinion was that, if you were having any kind of emotional 'mental' problems, the best answer was to 'pull yourself together' (a popular philosophy with blokes!). As a nation, we laughed at the Americans with their fascination for visiting their analysts for years on end. Now things have changed to a certain extent, but I still believe long-term analysis is a very bad idea. I have a girlfriend who was unhappy, in and out of relationships of the one-night-stand variety, unable to function at work and at home, and I found out she'd been seeing a therapist, the same counsellor every week for twenty years! Was it working, then? Clearly it was for the therapist!

When I first developed an interest in holistic health, I quickly realised that spiritual and mental wellbeing was a huge part of it. Our minds are as important as our bodies, if not more so, in terms of our

Properly certified organic coffee makes a good attempt to follow each stage of the production process. An easily available one that I like is Percol Organic Americana – free trade of course. (See www.coffee.uk.com.)

Teas

Green tea is very good for you. One of the main benefits comes from polyphenol oxidase, an abundant supply of antioxidants. To be absolutely honest, I'm imperfect on this one. I just hate the taste, though the one I can drink is Clipper Green Tea with Lemon, but, even then, I need a bit of honey to sweeten it. If you can drink green tea regularly, go for it.

There are lots of excellent organic herbal teas and it really just depends on your taste, unless you're using them therapeutically (peppermint is great for digestive problems; chamomile is good for stress and insomnia). As the Law of Sod would have it, Celestial Seasonings, well known for their great range of teas, seem to have discontinued my all-time favourite, Almond Sunset. If you're in the States, buy it there and send me a pack – please! (See www.celestialseasonings.com.)

Clipper Teas do a brilliant range of organic teas and they also do a sensational hot chocolate. The packaging is made from 100 per cent biodegradable, non-chlorine-bleached material from managed sustainable forests, and they use only unbleached tea bag paper. (See www.clipper-teas.com.)

Juicing

There are loads of great books on the benefits of juicing. It's the fast-track way to get your (at least) five portions of fruit and veg every day. It can be totally creative as you can combine just about any fruit, seed or vegetable you choose. Drinking fresh fruit and vegetable juice is the quickest way to absorb easily all the nutrients, phytochemicals and enzymes found in plant food that we need to make us healthy. They are cleansing and give us energy.

Celery juice is said to help asthma and bronchitis and to lower blood pressure. Radish juice controls coughs, soothes sore throats and reduces fever, and pineapple juice helps digestion and cardiovascular disease. Carrot is a bit of a wonder food and fantastic to juice up on its own or mixed with other things. As well as being a great source of beta-carotene and vitamin A, new studies have shown that carrots contain falcarinol, a substance that can help prevent the development of cancerous tumours.

My absolute favourite pick-me-up, though, is carrot and orange juice with the zest of one lemon and a few scrapings of fresh ginger. I came across this gem ten years ago in America. DH (Darling Husband – then boyfriend) and I were on our first holiday away together. Totally lost in a convertible hire car somewhere in the wine country of Marin County, just north of San Francisco, we stumbled on a kind of New Age town called Fairfax and first stop was the juice bar, something you



The great wheat debate

Either you or someone in your family or close friends will be allergic or intolerant to wheat, I can assure you. Alarming, isn't it? It's hard to believe that such a staple food and one that has dominated our diet for so many years can be bad for us. I have a girl-friend whose stomach blows up as if she were five months pregnant if she takes one bite of a bread roll, and another friend who, after many years of headaches, bloating, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), wind and acne, has finally cut out wheat and is glowing with health and vitality.

Wheat contains gluten and often it's that protein that is the baddie, as it can be very difficult to digest. I think that all of us have some level of intolerance to gluten; some just cope with it better than others. Many people feel better when they exclude it from their diet, even for a short time. This is not to be confused with the very serious gluten allergy, coeliac disease. Sufferers from that condition really must avoid gluten completely and for ever.

I don't believe the solution is as simple as suggesting that everyone give up all bread products for ever. I think one of the problems is the way bread is now produced. Go and look at the ingredients of the average so-called 'healthy' loaf on the supermarket shelf, whether brown or white. Even one that claims to be free from artificial preservatives and colourings is likely to contain a heap of stuff apart from wheat flour, yeast and gluten, including hydrogenated vegetable oil, salt, emulsifier, spirit vinegar, mono- and DA glycerides of fatty acids and treacle or sugar/sweetener. No wonder a loaf lasts for up to a week.

I find the best way is to get a breadmaker and make your own wholegrain or even mixed-grain bread. In Karen Kingston's Book *Creating Sacred Space with Feng Shui* (Piatkus), she says,

Everything is alive. Pure energy is all around us even if we cannot see it. Kirlian Photography (photography which shows up the auric field) offers proof to clinical western minds of the existence of energy fields which emanate from all things. I once saw a Kirlian photograph of a slice of white processed bread alongside a slice of organic brown wholegrain. Around the white bread there was a flimsy excuse of an energy field, whereas the brown bread's emanation was so strong, vital and many times bigger. Processed food loses so much of its vitality.

The great advantage of having your own breadmaker is that you can experiment with different types of wholegrains. Spelt is an ancient grain that is more easily digestible

by many people who are intolerant to wheat. You can also make your own wheat- and gluten-free bread but you'll need to be a bit more creative with the recipes. Sweeten it with honey instead of sugar and chuck in lots of hemp/poppy/sesame/pumpkin/sunflower seeds to increase your essential fatty acid intake and make it taste of something, otherwise it can be quite bland. I always use honey or molasses to sweeten any bread I make instead of sugar, and organic unsalted butter instead of margarine, and I usually reduce the amount of salt quoted in the recipe. Also, go to the health-food shop or organic supplier to buy your grains and try to get organic yeast. Bear in mind, too, that homemade bread has none of the preservatives of the shop-bought stuff, so you'll need to keep it in an airtight container and eat it within two days.

If your imperfections stretch to just not coping with a breadmaker, or for those times when you've run out of yeast or other ingredients, the good news is that there are some great alternatives available in the shops. Look for the Terence Stamp range (yes, the actor with the gorgeous blue eyes) of wheat- and gluten-free foods. Try to find a local bread shop that will make 100 per cent rye bread, since many of the supermarket brands are only *part* rye, part wheat and gluten. Try pumpernickel bread, hemp, buckwheat and, if you can find it, a ready-made spelt loaf.





flavour (and isn't cheap) and it's also available in a tablet form.

What about DHA-fortified foods? I've seen them appearing recently. Normally, I hate that word 'fortified'. It usually means throw something in that you want to brag about to make your otherwise fairly unhealthy product healthy. But I must confess that I'll try anything to 'get some in' when it comes to my children. Believe me, I've given my kids 'liquid EFAs' (essential fatty acids in liquid form) in vanilla flavour, lime and tutti-frutti; I've called it special astronaut juice and then watched them go into orbit after they've tasted it. I've tried sneaking a bit into their dessert only to be told, 'Mum, this pudding tastes of rubber and acid.' (I know they only mean to be honest!) A range of DHA-fortified foods is now available and marked with a DHA logo. You can get a 'good health loaf' for women and 'healthy eggs', so are these enriched foods actually 'get-downable' or do they taste of fish? Please, I don't want fishy eggs!

The manufacturers claim that the DHA-rich natural oil that is added to enrich foods is in the form of tiny droplets, each of which is protected by encapsulation. The result is tasteless and odourless and does not affect the flavour of the food while delivering the benefits of DHA.

So in my imperfect state I've resorted to buying a DHA-'fortified' drink to supplement my fussy boys until they're of an age when they just understand they must take this capsule or have a spoonful of this oil and be done with it. You're dying to know what this drink is, I know. It's called Supajus, 'the think drink', and it's a 250ml carton of orange juice enriched with Omega 3 DHA. Apparently, they use pure tuna oil from the southern Pacific Ocean.

Supajus claims to contain half the recommended daily allowance needed (up to 1mg), so we still need to eat healthily – but it is a start. One thing is for sure: you can't taste the fish oil at all. It just tastes like regular concentrated orange juice. It also gives 100 per cent of the recommended vitamin C intake for children. I'm not shouting this from the rooftops as a 'superfood' but I am recognising that in this imperfect world imperfect parents like me probably do need this imperfect drink to supplement the imperfect diet of their imperfect kids. Supajus costs around 79p for a 250ml carton from health-food stores and some school vending machines. (See www.supajus.co.uk.)

Incidentally, I've written to the manufacturer asking if they can do a version with apple juice, which would be less acidic but I'm waiting to hear.

For veggie kids, the Groovy Food Company offer a 'yogpot' – a yoghurt with the Omega oils sneaked in. Excellent.

Nuts and seeds

What we haven't mentioned yet is the wonder that is a bowl of nuts and seeds. I don't mean salted peanuts but pretty much anything else will do.

Mixed seeds are really a wonder. Try to eat a bowl every day if you can. It's so simple. Get a little coffee grinder (use a separate one unless you want coffee-flavoured seeds) and grind up a handful of sunflower, hemp, pumpkin and sesame, add a few linseeds and sprinkle the mix over cereals and yoghurt.

For savoury snacks, you can't do better than a bowl of toasted seeds. Heat up a frying pan with a dash of olive oil and when it's hot, throw in any mix of seeds (all of the above work great), then drizzle a bit of tamari over them. Lightly toast until browned, cool and eat by the handful or as an addition to salads and sandwiches. They taste great and give you a real boost of the essential Omega 3 oils.

A brilliant book that explains all the benefits of eating more EFAs is Dr Basant Puri's *The Natural Way to Beat Depression* (Hodder & Stoughton). He has been able to identify physical changes in MRI scans of brains after patients suffering from depression have been taking fish oils for about a month.

To end on a technical note, all reports I found said that there are no known side effects from eating EFAs.

Janey's natural, calm and down-to-earth advice comes straight from her heart. Read it. It's therapeutic.

Dr Hilary Jones, practicing GP and medical broadcaster

If the closest you've ever come to natural living is choosing the 'light' version of mayonnaise – this book is for you. If the only recycling you've ever done is chucking your wine bottles into the car park's bottle bin just to rejoice in the crashing sound – it's still for you.

Trust me, I'm no natural superwoman, but I do want to be as healthy, happy and eco-friendly as possible. In this book, I'll share with you my best-kept secrets for holistic living in a realistic way.

You'll find great ideas for:

- healthy eating
- natural beauty
- green living
- feminine care
- space clearing
- chemical free cleaning
- organic clothing
- alternative medicine
- and much much more.

Janey Lee Grace is a radio and TV presenter. She can currently be heard on BBC Radio 2 hosting her own early Saturday morning show and as a regular co-host on Steve Wright's afternoon show.



She gives the old-fashioned, simple living tips a makeover – it's like having a modern day Mrs Beeton on your shoulder!

Tracey Smith, writer and broadcaster

If you'd like to feel good about yourself and save the planet – read this book

The Ecologist



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