

# WELLBEING

## *with Heart*

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# WHAT YOU FOCUS ON GROWS

## creating new habit-loops

At the beginning of this year, I set a couple of intentions. I prefer not to say New Year's resolutions, mostly because all previous resolutions lasted until end of Jan 1. This year was gentler, potentially a little more earnest, and not hastily done at 11.55pm.



### Intention 1 - Don't say the word hate

My grandmother would rebuke us grandies if we were lazy with the English language and slipped into colloquialisms or foul language. Whilst I could never swear in front of her, I would slip into 'that's cool', 'no way!', 'same!', sentences premised with 'like' and overusing 'hate'. Mumma would say, "We don't hate Sarah, we can dislike something, but your heart hardens with hate". So, thus far this year, I have only disliked immensely the edge of our bed when it connects with my toe, being coeliac, Excel, kids wiping their hands on my towel, unchanged toilet rolls.

## Intention 2 - Don't complain about the weather

Don't complain about the weather. (Considered not talking about the weather, but apparently this is very un-Australian).

Being in the Southern Highlands, always speaking fondly about the weather – in the least, not whinging about it - can be tough. Especially as I write this at the end of July sitting 1.25m from the blow heater, in slippers, thermals, trackies, fingerless gloves, skivvy and beanie, and still not toastie warm. The two cats on my lap are helping, but I'm going to need to move soon, pins and needles are setting in.



I have noticed that these two intentions have broken a well-worn habit-loop of negativity. I have noticed by cueing in these intentions, I have transformed my language and therefore my internal and external behaviours. I find myself adding a pause in when thinking, reframing in my head before speaking, intentionally choosing words rather than mindlessly slipping into expletives and whines.

This in turn has not only changed the words I use, but how I speak and what I speak about. I have found that I speak slower (as a naturally loquacious person, this may be hard to detect!) and I speak more positively even from the beginning of simple interactions as we all tend to commence chats with comments about the weather. When people speak of their frustration, disappointment, feelings about the weather, I do not engage but redirect to something positive. I have noticed that if I cannot complain about the weather, I notice the positives. I appreciate the sun when it breaks through the clouds, the rain when they make my trainers soggy, the clouds. I see the small things more, I have gone back to childhood noticings of the patterns in the sky and pictures in clouds.

I am noticing the difference in the wind without judging it. I have controlled what I could and left what I could not. I control what I wear rather than complain about what I have no agency over. I have thought kinder thoughts and worried less.

If we focus on the negative things, then our negative bias skews even further towards the negative. The more negative things we notice, the more they become our focus and what we see. Conversely, we have a superpower! You practice noticing the good and the positives, the more you find!

Creating a whole new positive habit-loop! If you have a habit-loop that you would like to change, try setting an intention and practicing it. Additionally, this book Atomic Habits is brilliant.



So the paradigm shift is:



**Intention 1: Speak kindly, with intention so to respond rather than react.**

**Intention 2: Look for the positives**

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