

Voice Note from a Turkish Mountain

How to celebrate the wisdom of your body when your brain tells you you're not enough

20 years ago I was sitting on a mountain in Central Turkey agonising over what I was going to do with the rest of my life. I was 28, I'd just had my heart broken, my business was going under and I had completely lost my way.

As the sun rose in golden ribbons that lavished the mountains all around me, I picked up the journal by my side, that I'd been keeping over the last few months. I leafed through the pages. Poems. Lists. Wonderings. Reflections. The sound of the paper flicking, there on that early-morning, silent mountainside, was really the only thing I could hear. Next to the beating of my own heart.

It was like I knew something momentous was about to happen.

Then, it did.

A realisation swooped into my body like some kind of glittering memory. I all at once felt alive and alert, victorious and invincible. After so many months of emotional chaos, this was nothing short of remarkable. I can still remember that feeling now. I picked up a pen, found a blank page in my journal and wrote in big letters:

STORIES. PEOPLE. WORDS.

And after that day, I started writing.

So what did I learn in that moment, on that mountain? Apart from the fact that I needed to be a writer? Well, that moment – and many more after it – taught me that the body is a genius. That the body – if we let it – can lead the way to the kind of authenticity that not only shines from the outside, but glows from deep on the inside.

The glow, the lightness, the sparkling buoyancy that I felt on that mountain in Turkey that day was felt through the body first and then the brain had to catch up. I mean I was immersed in nature, away from home, I had no agenda, it was SO quiet. I'd just spent months enduring the emotional torment of heartbreak so this contrast was huge. And the body paid attention. It absorbed the nutrients I was giving it and it gave me something back. My truth.

I learned then and there that if you strip things right back, give yourself moments of simplicity and surrender – the answer's already there. In fact, it was likely always there.

Providing these moments for yourself might just sound like another thing on a never-ending to-do list. And that's the last thing any of us need. So let's avoid that like the plague. Let's make it just how we do things. Maybe we answer questions more slowly.

We pause before giving an opinion. We take walks in the middle of the day. We eat food so that we can actually taste it. We breathe so deep we can feel it in our toes.

We can have more intention for more of the time to be more mindful. Or, as I like to think of it, more heartfelt.

And the other thing I've learned is to drop expectation. To drop judgement. We can't all be having epiphanies on Turkish mountains every single day but we can know – quietly and firmly – that when we slow down and embed pauses throughout our day that that is the space where nourishment and authenticity live. That is where our heart can breathe.

So, are you in this with me? Shall we let our big old hearts lead the way together? I do hope so. One of my favourite things in the world is connecting with people who aren't afraid to let their heart lead the way. Or maybe they are afraid, but they do it anyway.