

# Be kind to yourself

Learn to be your own best friend **By Lizzy Denning**



## Meet our expert

Anna Pinkerton is a speaker, author and therapist specialising in kindness, [www.annapinkerton.com](http://www.annapinkerton.com)

It's all too easy to put others first. From helping out with childcare for your grandchildren, rallying round to help friends or running errands for elderly neighbours, we're often so busy that we end up forgetting about our own needs. But, contrary to what you might think, being kind to yourself is anything but selfish.

Being stressed and unhappy can cause your adrenal glands, which regulate adrenalin and cortisol, to become over-worked, leaving you feeling exhausted but simultaneously finding it hard to sleep.

A spot of precious 'me-time' will leave you feeling more relaxed, robust and better able to cope with

day-to-day problems, as well as boosting your immune system.

Learning to silence any internal guilt or criticism will also make you happier and better able to face what life throws at you.

"Being kind to yourself will give you more energy and a real feeling of ease," says Anna Pinkerton, an author and speaker on kindness. "As well as allowing you to feel connected to other people, being less self-critical makes it easier to see the good in others too."

## Switch off your inner critic

We all have that little voice in our head that brings us down, whether it's making us feel guilty, powerless or just not good enough.

"Being unkind to yourself is a bit like slamming the door in your own face, in that it's something you'd never



## Yours readers' tips for a treat

+ A pedicure... absolute bliss.

*Ros Ridler*

+ A long soak in a warm bath listening to a comedy on the radio, then into pyjamas to watch an old film on TV.

*Elaine Pannell*

+ A bus ride to somewhere different and a cake in a nice little tearoom.

*June Fletcher*

+ I just love an afternoon tea with cake and a pot of Earl Grey, sitting in the sunshine with a friend.

*Vivien Anderson*



**A spot of precious 'me-time' will leave you feeling more relaxed and robust**





# Good to KNOW...

## Be kind to yourself

do to someone else," says Anna. "Imagine saying the things you think about yourself to someone else – it just wouldn't happen."

Start talking to yourself the way you'd speak to a friend if they were feeling low. Be as comforting to yourself as you would be to them, and try to concentrate on all of your good qualities, and the positive things you've achieved.

You may take your qualities for granted, whether you're an excellent cook, a generous charity volunteer or a playful grandmother, but make sure to give yourself a mental pat on the back every so often.

Gently rephrase every negative thought, and don't worry if it takes a while for the habit to stick – you're essentially learning a new language! If in doubt, start by telling yourself every morning: "I deserve to be happy."

### Make time for yourself

If you find yourself being run ragged, take a basic check on how you're feeling. Getting enough sleep, taking

the time to eat well, drinking enough water and taking gentle exercise are the foundations of looking after yourself, for your own benefit as well as those who depend on you.

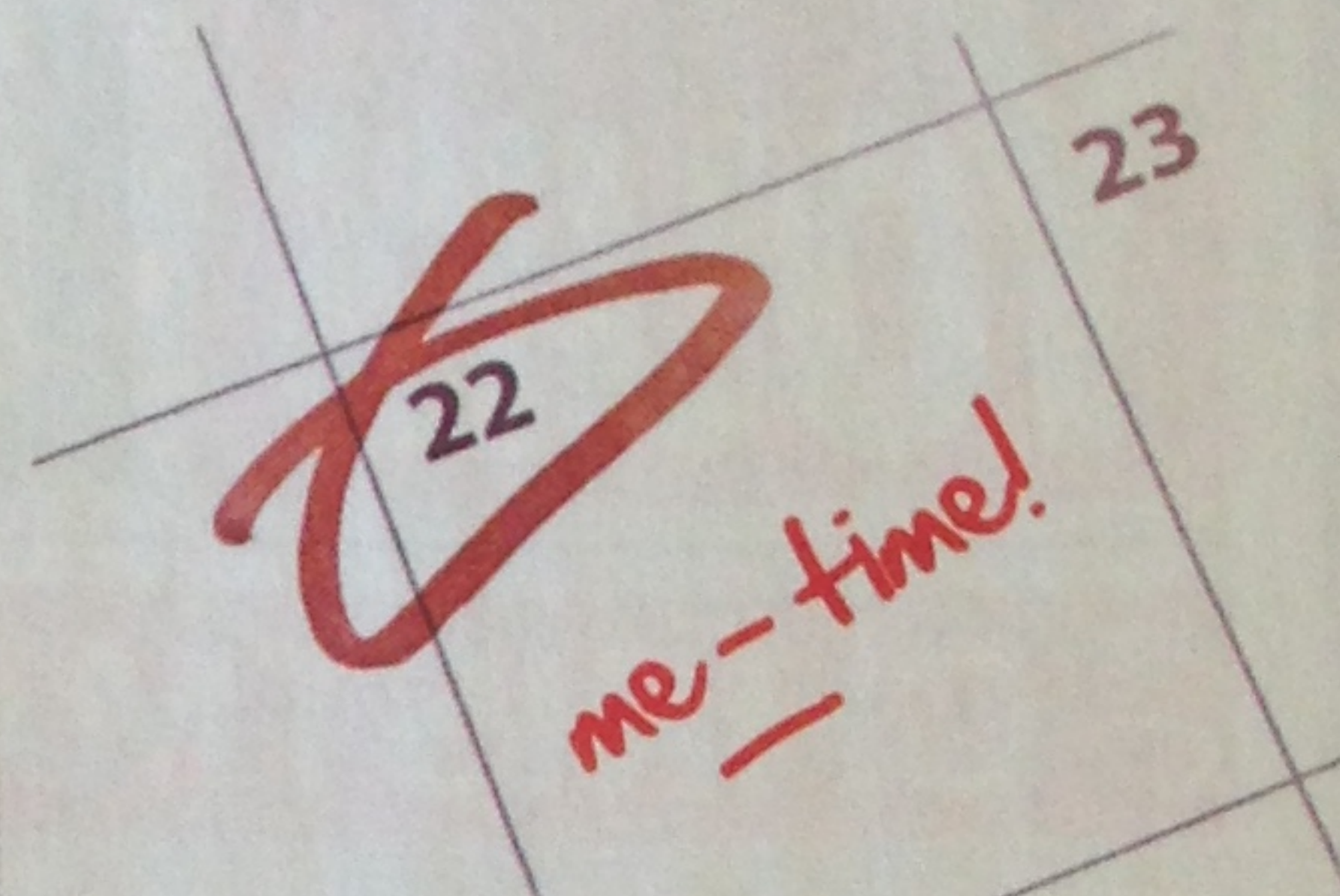
"Being kind to yourself costs nothing, but can be so beneficial," says Anna. "We can sometimes confuse being kind to ourselves with being selfish, feeling that we shouldn't be taking time out for ourselves. But it's important to have things in our life that make us happy and sustain us through hard times, whether that's spending time with certain people or some alone time doing something you love."

## We confuse being kind to ourselves with being selfish

Take a quiet moment every day to assess how you feel – whether your mind is whirring or you're exhausted, and how your body feels. Use that to work out what treat might help you feel calmer, from a walk around a local park, to a phone call with a friend, or just half an hour on the sofa with a book. Even just ten minutes to yourself will help life's problems seem much more manageable.

## ANNA'S TOP FEEL-GOOD TIPS

- + Buy a bubble bath or essential oil, then take the phone off the hook and indulge in a long, hot soak.
- + Make time to prepare and eat a delicious meal, with no rushing or distractions.

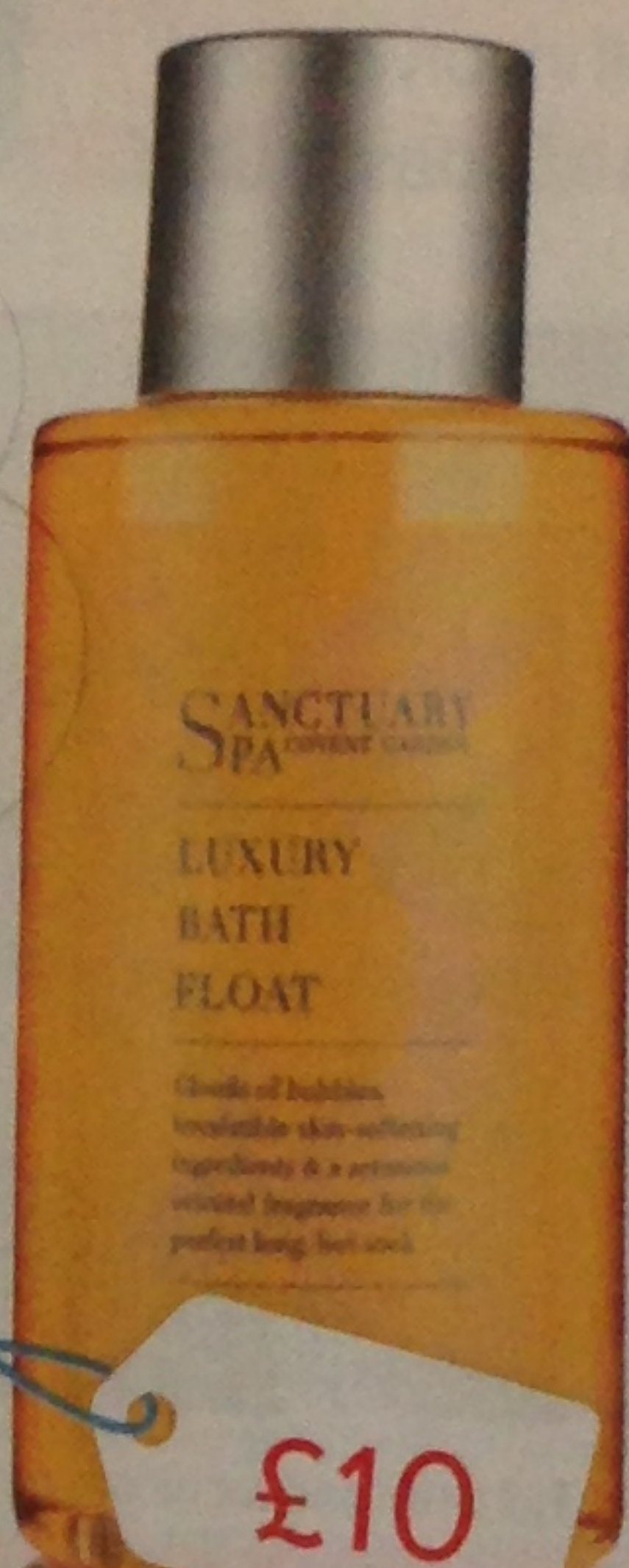


- + Schedule in 'me-time' as you would any other event. Pop it into your calendar or diary and don't let it get crowded out.
- + Choose cheese, wine, fruit (or whatever your favourite treat is) that you really love, not just like.



- + Pop something in your shopping basket that doesn't cost much but is just for you, such as a Yours magazine or a new lipstick.

## LITTLE TREATS FOR A BIG LIFT!



£10

**SANCTUARY SPA LUXURY BATH FLOAT,** £10/500ml, Boots  
Pamper yourself with Vitamin E and baobab, both known for their moisturising qualities.

**PUKKA REVITALISE TEA,** £2.39/20 bags, Holland and Barrett  
Packed with warming organic cinnamon, cardamom and ginger to perk you up for the day ahead.



£2.39

**7TH HEAVEN PINEAPPLE FACE MASK,** £1, [www.my7thheaven.com](http://www.my7thheaven.com)

A bargain way to enjoy 15 minutes of 'me-time' while treating your skin – pop it on while enjoying a bath for twice the relaxation.



£1

**POMEGRANATE & RASPBERRY SCENTED CANDLE,** £10/200g, Body Shop

Lighting a scented candle is a decadent treat – but you're worth it – and this one's especially lovely.



£10

