



# mind your body

PSYCHOLOGY • DIETETICS • FITNESS



## Spring 2018

**FEATURING IN THIS EDITION:**

**Nature Connection**

**ABC News Article On Mental Health**

**What Is The Problem?**

**Being A Good Support**

### Nature Connection

With warmer days and much-needed sunshine approaching, Spring is the perfect time to get outside and re-engage with nature. Indeed, it has long been thought that nature connectedness is a central element in wellbeing. This is especially true in this modern age of technology, social media and the fast pace of life. These factors have contributed to many of us being less engaged with our natural environment than previous generations.

Research has also supported the notion that nature is linked to happiness. For example, Zelenski and Nisbet (2014) found that emotional connection to nature was positively related to happiness and this was also linked to sustainable attitudes about protecting the planet. These sustainable attitudes were found to promote feelings of meaning, purpose, responsibility and good will. A further study used meta-analytical methodology (examining the results of many studies) to comprehensively support the positive link between nature-engagement and “feeling happy” across various domains (Capaldi, Dopko, & Zelenski, 2014).

Therefore, the benefits of engaging with nature are clear. Using mindfulness practices to fully experience the positive aspects of our natural environment can enhance our rewards. Take a moment to ponder your connection to nature and your children’s. What small thing can you do today to increase your nature-engagement?

So please, take the time to get outside and take a walk, take your shoes off and feel the earth beneath your feet and notice things around you like the blossoms appearing on the trees. Wonder and delight in the beauty of nature, big and small.

For families, there are some wonderful resources about nature connection including lists of suggested activities at [natureplaysa.org.au](http://natureplaysa.org.au).

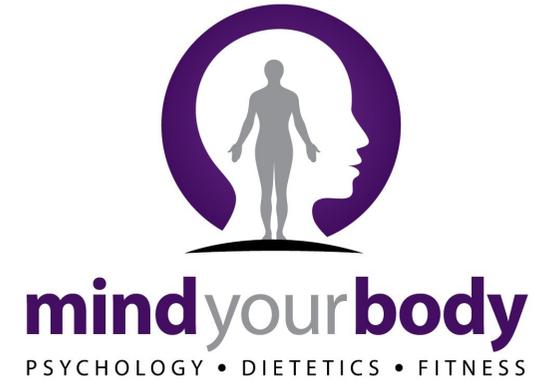
#### References:

Zelenski, J. M., & Nisbet, E. K. (2014). Happiness and feeling connected: The distinct role of nature relatedness. *Environment and Behaviour*, 46, 3-23.

Capaldi, C., Dopko, R., & Zelenski, J. (2014). The relationship between nature connectedness and happiness: a meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 976.

**By Kylie Bubner**

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## ABC News Article On Mental Health

ABC news recently released an excellent article interviewing bestselling author, Jill Stark. It explains how, during what ‘should’ have been an amazing time in Jill’s life, she was experiencing crippling anxiety. Jill brilliantly describes her critical inner voice and the power of it to undermine any success she experienced. She also makes a link between a powerful social media and how this strengthens people’s inner critic. Furthermore, she acknowledges that many people have an inner critic but how hidden this is in our society.

Jill goes on to explain the power of accepting that life is difficult at times and acknowledging some of the early life factors that contributed to her inner critic. She also noted that the therapeutic process to get there sounded a little dubious to start. But it reveals how Jill eventually overcame her demons to live a life feeling more freedom. Jill wrote a book about her experiences (which I haven’t read but intend to!).

The full article is available on the Mind Your Body Facebook page. It can also be accessed at:  
<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-02/jill-stark-on-anxiety-and-ditching-the-fairytale-filter/10056662>

Definitely worth a read!



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## What Is The Problem?

Sometimes it can be very difficult to pinpoint what is causing us distress in our lives – we know we are distressed but don't know how to fix it because we don't know where it is coming from! Distress often comes from underlying human needs that are not being met over time.

In the 1940s, psychologist Abraham Maslow developed a hierarchy of five levels of needs that human beings have that motivate human behaviour. Although there has been some debate about this hierarchy structure over the years, and additions have been made to it by others since then, Maslow's hierarchy provides a neat summary of the types of needs we have as human beings, and can be seen below:

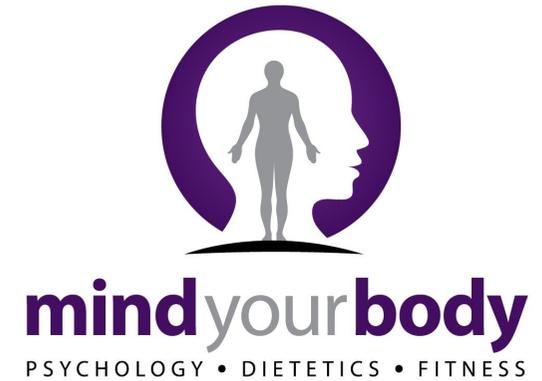
*We can use this summary to identify where certain feelings of distress might be stemming from. So, if you feeling distressed in your life, are any of these needs not currently being met for you?*

- Are you getting enough sleep? Are you eating enough food/nutrition?
- Do you get fresh air or breathe deeply on a regular basis?
- Do you live in a safe environment? Do you feel safe in general?
- Do you feel like you have meaningful relationships?
- Do you feel listened to, loved, and supported by others?
- Do you have regular physical contact with other people in your life?
- Do you feel like you have goals you are working towards/ a sense of accomplishment?
- Do you feel respected and recognised by your efforts in your main role everyday?
- Do you feel like you belong? Do you respect yourself?
- Do you do things for creativity or fun regularly?



*Can you identify anything that is currently missing for you in your life?*

# Being A *Good* Support



I watched a fabulous clip online the other day that discussed how to help a grieving or struggling friend (“what to do when a giant hole opens up...”). The clip highlighted that we all want to help take away the hurt, the pain, the sadness, the depression, and the cause of pain in another person’s life. It is like we are hard wired to try to help by making the other person happy or telling them to be strong. Here in lies the problem, how do you *make* someone happy and is being strong really a solution? How can you make them content, peaceful, relaxed or even angry? Emotions are an individual event and no one person can make another feel a certain way. Sure, you can trigger off an emotion, but that isn’t the same as making them feel it.

When someone you love is struggling, grieving or just not in a great place, the best thing you can do as a supporter is let them feel whatever they are feeling. Do not try to *cheer* them up. Do not try to *stop* them feeling. Do not try to *distract* them from feeling. Do not try to *make* them feel something else.

Instead, acknowledge their feeling. Label their feeling. Discuss their feeling. And most importantly, sit with them in that feeling. Let them know that it is okay to feel how they are feeling. Let them know you are there for them. Let them know that the feeling is real and okay to have. Be with them in their feeling.

Our gut instinct is based on loving the other person and wanting them to no longer hurt, however, it is so important for everyone to feel all feelings. The good, the bad and the uncomfortable. Sit with your loved ones during their distress – let them feel it and give them the support to know that they can get through this, with you at their side.



So remember:

**DO** listen, acknowledge, sit with, and be with them in their feeling

**DO NOT** try to cheer them up, tell them to be strong, tell them to stop feeling, or distract them from feeling

**ENCOURAGE** them to feel the feeling and be okay with whatever it is they are feeling. Let them know they can get through feeling this because you are there, to be there.

<https://www.facebook.com/officialgoodful/videos/317384995674502/> or visit the Mind Your Body Facebook page.