

THE F-BOMB

Can't relax? Always feeling stressed? Perhaps it's time to break loose with a few profanities, writes **Catherine Rodie**.



John C. Parkin has a theory. He thinks we all spend too much time worrying about things that aren't important. His solution? We would all experience less stress in our lives if we just dropped the F-bomb a bit more.

"The things that concern us moment to moment, the stuff that makes us sick, what hardens our arteries, is worrying about things that don't matter," says Parkin, author of the best-selling self-help book, *F**k it: The Ultimate Spiritual Way*.

Parkin's philosophy doesn't encourage swearing for the sake of swearing; it is about using expletives in a very conscious way. "Swearing can be spiritual and therapeutic,"

he says. "It is the perfect Western expression of the Eastern spiritual idea of letting go, giving up and relaxing our hold on things. It allows you to move from tension and attachment to release and freedom.

"You give in to the flow of life – you stop doing what you don't want to do, you give up, let go, stop resisting and relax back into the natural flow of life itself."

Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and Taoism became central to Parkin and his wife, Gaia Pollini, when they quit their jobs at a London advertising agency.

Having left behind careers as creative executives, they spent time exploring their shared passion for alternative therapies such

as breath work, meditation and qigong. In 2004, the couple moved to Italy and started a business running holistic retreats for "stressed out" executives.

Parkin recognised a common theme among them: people were working too hard. "Lots of our guests were in a similar position," he says. "They wanted to be more relaxed, but they were always chasing after things, always wanting to do better. We started telling people that they just needed to say 'f... it' to the idea that it matters what you do. We told them, 'you need to say f... it to the idea that you have to be managing director by the time you're 30.'"

It worked. The couple started receiving positive feedback from their retreat guests, in particular about how their advice had given them a fresh perspective on life.

Since that first retreat, Parkin's philosophy has evolved considerably. The couple now run retreats in the UK as well as Italy, they've

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launched a website and offer a range of merchandise. But it's Parkin's book that has had the biggest impact, selling more than 400,000 copies globally and appealing to those who might be put off by more traditional styles of "self help" practices. It also provides a therapeutic soundbite.

"We give people something that they can use straight away so, therapeutically speaking, it is an instant hit," says Parkin. "The idea is that you go out and start saying 'f... it' to a few things, recognise why you are saying it and start to see the areas in your life that are holding you back."

Parkin believes that the philosophy can help you discover what really makes you tick.

"Our conscious mind and our conscious actions are just a tiny part of who we are. We are instructed by many, many unconscious desires and triggers. Self-exploration allows us to shine a light on ourselves and explore the way we are. Why do I get angry when that happens? Why did I feel like that?"

Saying "f... it" is a technique, he says, that can be applied to every area of our lives: relationships, money, food, work, parenting, the list is endless. "Say f... it to something, anything. And feel the freedom and release that it brings."

An updated version of *F**k it: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* is out this month.

MY DAY ON A PLATE

ANNA ROSE

Environmentalist, national manager of Earth Hour

6am I make a smoothie from organic light milk, natural yoghurt and frozen organic raspberries.

9am At a cafe I order a soy latte. I rarely drink coffee, but I'm tired from a late night out with one of Earth Hour's celebrity ambassadors.

12.30 At a food court I order a Mexican salad of beans, lettuce, tomato and avocado with salsa – no cheese or sour cream.

4pm A sushi roll with tofu and wakame from the shops.

8pm I get some groceries on my way home and have a piece of oven-baked trevally with steamed broccoli.

12am I'm working late, so I raid my newly-stocked cupboard for a snack of two corn thins with macadamia butter.



DR JOANNA McMILLAN

Nutritionist

A homemade smoothie is a great breakfast for those who don't feel like solid food. Frozen berries are cost effective and there is very little loss of nutrients as they are snap frozen on the day of picking. Raspberries are fabulous for antioxidants, including vitamin C, and are excellent for fibre. Dairy foods can also help with weight control and they boost the protein of Anna's breakfast. Her lunch incorporates one of my favourite foods – beans. These provide plant protein and serious amounts of fibre, folate and low GI carbs. While Anna's meals are all healthy, she could add a greater variety of vegies to maximise her nutrient intake. Broccoli is definitely on my list of star foods, but adding a couple more vegies to dinner would be beneficial. I'd advise being careful with late night snacks. Drinking herbal teas while working late might help curb the appetite.

