

Progress not perfection

Rachel Grunwell
inspires us to move
more and live well

WORDS Catherine Murray



Making changes in your life is never easy, but Rachel Grunwell shares advice which not only makes sense, it's also achievable.

Rachel's encouragement comes from a place of experience – it wasn't that long ago the mum-of-three was a stressed-out journalist, unfit, and with a diet that was average rather than awesome. Skip forward several years, and she now lists health and wellbeing writer, yoga teacher, personal trainer, and motivational speaker in her suite of skills, in addition to being an accomplished marathon runner of over 20 events.

The catalyst for her new path was a string of assignments for a weekly wellbeing column, where she tried a range of fitness, health and wellbeing activities, from a flying trapeze to boxing to surfing in Hawaii.

This opportunity gave Rachel a kick-start towards healthier living, a change in her career which would ultimately inspire others to make changes too.

Showing up

After spending a lifetime thinking she was missing the 'fitness gene' and simply could never be a healthier, fitter person, Rachel started listening to the experts she was interviewing and to the science around health and wellbeing.

She began running, taking her first steps by walking and jogging around the block for twenty minutes, twice a week.

"I thought, I'm just going to try. The start of the journey was horrendous, it was really hard, and I didn't enjoy it at all. I wasn't any good, and I didn't really think I could ever be any good. But I just kept showing up."

Finding balance

"Balance means something different to everyone," says Rachel, who doesn't strive for perfection, preferring instead to be grateful for progression.

Balancing food, health, and happiness is not about all or nothing, it's about taking small steps, being kind to yourself, eating healthy and having treats on occasion, and finding your flow.

Rachel's book *Balance* came from a desire to clarify some of the confusion around what it means to lead a balanced life, and to provide a realistic starting point for change.

"Balance decodes everything! There's an art to simplicity, and the book is very readable. It gives the pieces to complete the wellness puzzle - nutrition mastery, physical mastery, and emotional mastery."

That's the book's superpower, says Rachel - you don't need to buy 31 wellness books, you can buy just the one. It's other superpower is that it helps people know where to start.

"You have to be brave to start, and be kind to yourself on the journey."

Inspirational people

“

I like sharing my journey because I never worry about being perfect. It's always about progression, and it's always about the journey.

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Rachel says if she can go from unfit mum to multi-marathon runner, then it's possible for others to do the same.

“People are capable of so much more than they dream.”

Giving back

One of the chapters in the book looks at giving back, which Rachel considers one of the major keys to happiness.

“If you want to feel happier, give back authentically. It uplifts someone else, and uplifts your heart even further.”

Rachel encourages others to share her passion for running through her own coaching business, as an ambassador for the Rotorua Marathon, and as a run guide for athletes with disabilities through her work with the Achilles New Zealand charity.

“It's a way for me to give back. It's a joy to run my own race, but it's even a more



beautiful thing to share a journey with someone else.”

Demonstrating kindness also shows those around us how important it is to give back, without the expectation of receiving something in return.

“I don't preach giving back or kindness to my kids, but they see it. If you want to start inspiring your kids, then you have to do it first. They're watching you!”

Progress not perfection

When you're looking at making changes, big or small, forget about trying to be perfect, says Rachel, and move to a place where progression is the goal. She says people often think they can't be a runner because they can't do it perfectly, and so they give up and walk away.

“I like sharing my journey because I never worry about being perfect. It's always about progression, and it's always about the journey.”

Rachel's tips for starting your running journey

- 1. Make the decision to start**
- 2. Show up, and keep showing up**
- 3. Ease into your programme by alternating walking and jogging for 20 minutes, two or three times a week.**
- 4. Have recovery days in between your runs, to allow your ligaments and muscles to adapt**
- 5. Focus on your progress, not doing everything perfectly**



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We have one copy of Rachel's new book Balance: Food, Health + Happiness to give away to one lucky reader. Contact us by Facebook [@healthbynaturenz](#) or Email to editor@communityhealthstores.co.nz and tell us why you deserve to win this amazing book.

Terms and Conditions apply. Entries must be received by email or on facebook by 2 Feb 2020. The winner will be drawn and contacted via Facebook or email on Monday 3 February 2020.