



FEELING STRESSED? JUST SAY 'F*** IT' (YES, REALLY!)

It's a controversial new therapy that promises to reduce anxiety and kick into touch those late-night urges to answer just one more work email. But does simply saying 'f*** it' really work? *Grazia* reports

AFTER LOSING her job, her father and her relationship, Fatima Khan, 30, was – understandably – at breaking point. 'I felt like I was carrying a ton of pressure around every single day and life was tiring me out,' she says. Feeling that depression might be about to take hold, she decided to seek professional help.

'I was all set to try counselling, but then I read about a new sort of therapy at a place called the F*** It Retreat,' she says. 'When I arrived at this tiny resort off the coast of Sicily, I wasn't surprised to see the group was mostly women in their twenties and thirties like me, either burnt out through work or suffering a bad break-up.'

But the therapy is far from conventional. Rather than rely on endless emotional sessions, ►



it's based on breathing and relaxation techniques and saying just two little words. 'We were told to just go with the flow,' says Fatima. 'The therapy gets you to realise that when bad things happen, it's the way life is supposed to go. Take a deep breath and don't get worked up about things out of your control. And the way to do that is by simply saying, "F*** it." After all, what's the worst that can happen?'

It might sound overly simplistic when faced with mounting deadlines, debts and relationship pressures. But the results speak for themselves...

The therapy was devised by John C Parkin, a copywriter turned best-selling author, who believes those two tiny yet powerful words are the key to becoming happier, calmer and less stressed. 'I left my job in London to study Eastern philosophies and disciplines, such as Buddhism and t'ai chi, then started running relaxation and therapy retreats in the UK and Italy. I found myself telling people to just say "F*** it" to things that were stressing them out. It soon became clear that most people found saying that phrase just as relaxing and powerful as hours of meditation.'

It certainly seems to have struck a chord. John's first book was a best-seller and his second book, *F*** It Therapy: The Profane Way To Profound Happiness*, is out next month, with a series of one-day courses planned for the UK in December.

'We had one woman on a retreat who had just turned 30 and was totally stressed out about what her friends, family and colleagues thought of her. I said to her, "Why don't you just say 'f*** it' every time

you think those negative thoughts and get on with doing what you fancy?'" She wrote to me afterwards to say she loved the retreat but what was really working was my advice about saying "f*** it". I knew I was on to something, so I set up a retreat week and it sold out straight away.'

So, why those two words? 'They pinpoint what causes the most stress in our lives: that we care too much about too many things,' says John. 'And of course, the F-word has inherent power. If you say it calmly, it helps you let go and relax.'

But what if you don't like swearing? 'Some people don't like saying it,' says John. 'But most of our clients don't have a problem with it. They're mainly stressed individuals who are ambitious and driven and not averse to swearing. We see a lot of young women who are over-analysing their lives, feeling the burden of others' expectations and running around trying to keep everything together. They want to learn how to relax, get perspective and care less about the small stuff.'

It has certainly worked for Fatima. 'I used to feel incredible pressure, stressing about everything. After the retreat, I came away feeling amazing, having got rid of all the toxic emotions I'd been carrying around. I feel like a subtle shift has taken place and I feel recharged and ready to take on life again. Now, when I start feeling stressed, I just think, "Oh, f*** it, whatever's happening – it's meant to be and I'll get through it." I know I'll be OK.'

*'F*** It Therapy: The Profane Way To Profound Happiness' is published on 5 November (£10.99, Hay House)*

ARE YOU READY TO SAY F*** IT?

It might be time to take back control if you answer yes to more than two of the following...

- * Do you constantly feel stressed?
- * Do you feel overwhelmed by your to-do list?
- * Are you a people pleaser?
- * Do you spend a lot of time worrying about what others think of you?

HOW IT WORKS

John believes that saying 'f*** it' – either as a direct response to something that's stressing you out or as a general daily chant – is like a massage for the mind. 'It instantly relaxes you and releases tension,' he says.

PUTTING JOHN'S THEORY INTO PRACTICE GOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS: You say 'f*** it' whenever you feel stressed or anxious. It's best not to say it to the people who are causing you to feel this way (for obvious reasons), but merely about the situations you find yourself in. 'I don't know any other expression that works so well,' says John. '"Just let it go" or "relax" don't have the same effect. To me, f*** it is the perfect Western way of expressing the Eastern way of letting stuff go and finding freedom from your stress.'