

# ANTICIPATION: THE ANSWER TO FEELING GOOD

I woke sluggishly on Saturday morning – it's been the same pattern most days for the last three months! But I pulled the curtains back to find a bright, sunny sky, and I almost *ran* down the stairs. My dogs read my excitement and pushed past me to get out into the garden first.



And **THERE** it was...the first touch of sunshine.

I made myself a cuppa and sat outside, facing the sunshine, smiling about the day ahead. By 4pm, I'd potted colourful flowers around the garden, weeded the patio, and sat on the lounge with the dogs! A perfect day...



It took me a moment of contemplation to realise that I'd been stuck in the thick of winter for too long, but with a bit of sunshine, I suddenly felt alive again! It had been easy to forget the importance of getting some sunny rays when it had been raining for 20 days in February! But, as I saw the first touch of Spring, I reminded myself of the benefits of feeling the sumptuous sun on my skin:

- ✓ It causes our skin to make beta-endorphins which are hormones to reduce pain (although I *DID* ache after gardening all afternoon!)
- ✓ It helps wounds to heal
- ✓ It boosts our immune system
- ✓ It helps us feel relaxed
- ✓ It improves our sleep quality
- ✓ It reduces depression and promotes a sense of well-being and an improved mood



But I think it was more than that...I was suddenly thinking about getting out on my bike, taking kayak trips on the river, walks in the mountains, reading my book in the garden, summer concerts, BBQs...the list could go on!

And *THIS* was the feeling of anticipation of what's about to come, bubbling up inside me! It was a bit like when I was child and the feeling I got the night before a holiday, or before my birthday. It's a sense of giddy excitement.

It's imagining the great things that will happen in the coming months.

And I suddenly understood the power of anticipation...the need to have something to look forward to. The anticipation of the positive experiences that are to come as Spring takes a hold, increased my happiness and positivity. It boosted my excitement and kept me going...even when I woke up on Sunday to torrential rain!

In fact, anticipation can be incredibly powerful because it gives us a feeling of *optimism* about the future and daydreaming about the potential of these happy future experiences fills us with giddy excitement.





We picture a brighter future which gives our life more purpose on the dreary days. So that in the meantime, knowing that something good is coming our way, we feel more productive and feel able to deal with the day-to-day stuff...those tasks we don't necessarily want to do! *Does ANYONE enjoy walking the dogs across muddy fields on days with torrential rain?!*

When life is tricky or mundane, having something to look forward to gives us the chance to imagine the future with good things in it and can give us a lift. It can be the key to happiness because we get distracted from any overwhelming feelings by the anticipation of a bright future.

I know this goes against the 'mindfulness' trend, but when it's raining, and getting dark by 4pm, the joyful anticipation of Spring and Summer is a *welcome* distraction.

So, I've started planning things to look forward to, and as I stretched into a plank in my Bodybalance class this morning, I thought about my first kayak trip of 2024 and smiled.

