

# Organise

## a better life for yourself by taking a snapshot

**ADVICE:**  
Life coach  
Malminder Gill  
shows how to  
get back to  
the real you

**T**OO OFTEN we take on board roles and responsibilities in life, whether chosen by us or not and we walk the streets in the robes of our roles.

We are daughters taking care of our parents, we are partners in relationships, we are parents tending to our children, we are career women earning a living, we are friends supporting our peers, and the list can be endless, varying from person to person.

Amidst all of these roles, who we are? Are there hidden roles and responsibilities we have taken on board without it even knowing it? Do you only take stock of your life after a crisis or major event?

Are you so busy with responsibilities that you have lost yourself, your happiness, balance and energy in the process?

Take a snapshot of your life, re-discover your identity beyond roles and responsibilities and regain balance, energy and happiness. The following techniques are designed to raise awareness, helping you on a journey of self-discovery with practical ways to implement the real you into your everyday life.

● **Take a snapshot of your life**

We often take stock of our lives during or after major life events, on birthdays or New Year's Eve — proclaiming that this is the year that will bring change. However, you needn't wait for such events to take a quick snapshot of your life and this simple exercise will shift your perspective and raise your awareness.

● **Discover your identity**

Our personalities evolve over time

By Eva HOGAN

through life experiences and people. The core of who we are usually remains constant and intact regardless of career changes, forthcoming parenthood, looming retirement etc.

To discover your identity amidst the roles and responsibilities you have, take a few minutes to ponder over the following questions which will also help to unravel your core values:

- What are the qualities that define you?
- What is important to you in life?
- What frustrates you in life?
- What brings you joy in life?
- What are you good at?

● **Regain balance, energy and happiness**

On a daily basis, start asking yourself these powerful and practical questions aimed to help bring forth more of who you are into your experience.

● **Be curious before taking on more roles, responsibilities or duties**

Consider asking yourself: 'Why do I want to do this? How does this fit in with who I am? Am I able

to take this on and still make time for myself and my other responsibilities? Whose expectation am I managing here, mine or someone else's?'

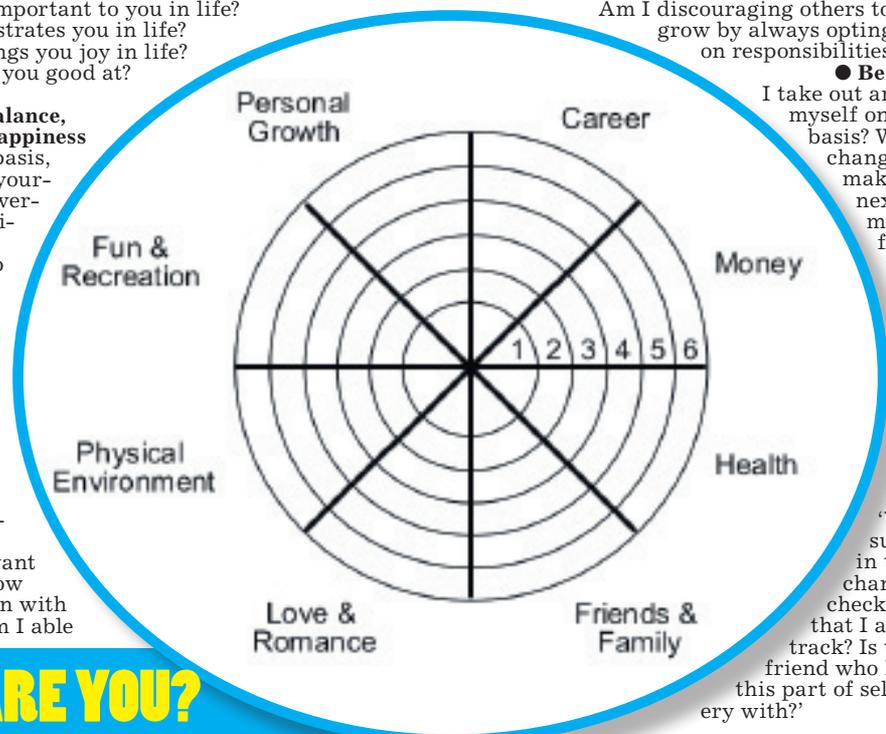
● **Be aware of your behaviour:** 'Am I mothering those around me and therefore taking on board hidden roles and responsibilities? Am I denying experiences others can have in their own lives when I take on their responsibilities?'

● **Be an allowor:** 'Do I take on all of these responsibilities because I feel that others can't do them? Am I inadvertently training others to give me more responsibilities because I always say yes and deliver? Am I discouraging others to learn and grow by always opting to take on responsibilities?'

● **Be kind:** 'Do

I take out any time for myself on a regular basis? What changes can I make in the next week to make time for myself to do things I enjoy? What would bring me some joy into my life today?'

● **Be supported:** 'Who will support me in these changes and check in to see that I am on track? Is there a friend who I can share this part of self-discovery with?'



### HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU?

LOOK at the diagram (above right) and shade each segment on a scale of 0-6 to show how satisfied you are with that particular part of your life. 6 is most satisfied, 0 is least satisfied.

When you look at the diagram now, what do you notice? Are you surprised that some elements of your life are quite good or require more attention?

If the outline of your shaded area was the wheel of a bicycle — how

bumpy or smooth would that ride be? Now look at each section and ask the following questions:

- What do I appreciate the most about this part of my life?
- What frustrates me the most about this part of my life?
- What can I do in the next week to improve this part of my life?
- Who can assist me in improving this part of my life?
- What would it be like if this part of my life was rated higher?

Peace of mind really starts with our thoughts and what we decide to focus our attention on.

By taking stock of your life and discovering your identity, you have already focused your attention in a different way.

Part of bringing forth balance, energy and happiness is remembering who you are, what you stand for and knowing life's moments, whether they are judged good or bad, are just snapshots in time.

Malminder Gill is an inspirational personal coach and Certified Master Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). See [www.the-coaching-agency.com](http://www.the-coaching-agency.com)

# lifestyle

edited by  
MOIRA  
HANNON

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# Get rid of excess weight on the

# 2 DAY DIET

**T**HINK weight loss and what springs to mind? Endless exercise? Rabbit food? Salivating in the direction of the fridge? Well, it doesn't have to be that way, especially if you follow the 2-Day Diet.

Clinically proven to work, it simply means eating a low-carb diet for two days a week, and normally but sensibly for the other five.

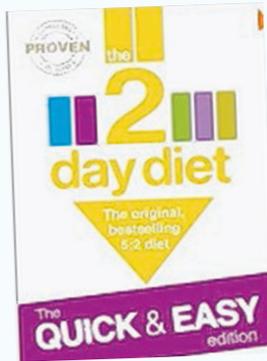
Devised by Dr Michelle Harvie and Professor Tony Howell, the diet has seen followers

lose more weight, almost twice as much fat, and more centimetres around their waist than

those on a continuous calorie-controlled diet.

To find out what it's about, here is some of the advice in The 2-Day Diet: The Quick & Easy Edition,

**BETTER CHOICES:** If you avoid carbs for two days a week, you can eat normally for the other five



By **Celina MURPHY**

which also has healthy recipes...

**How do I follow the two diet days?**

You eat a low-carb diet with 650-1000 calories per diet day.

You are allowed plenty of high-protein foods, healthy fats, low-fat dairy foods, vegetables and some fruit.

You avoid high-carbohydrate foods.

Try to do your two diet days back-to-back to get the full benefits of the diet. Stay well-hydrated and drink at least two litres of fluid a day.

There is no need to take a vitamin supplement.

Eat the recommended portions of protein, fats, low-fat dairy, vegetables and fruit.

**How do I do my five non-diet days?**

You should follow a healthy Mediterranean diet, which includes wholegrain carbohydrate foods, lots of vegetables, fish, poultry, beans, pulses, fruit, nuts, healthy fats and oil, low fat-dairy foods and small amounts of lean, red meat.

Eat plenty of healthy protein foods on these non-diet days to help to fill you up, stop you overeating and maximise your weight loss.

Have plenty of high-fibre carbs on non-diet days, including cereals, rye crispbreads, wholemeal pasta, pulses, vegetables and fruit. The Mediterranean diet is packed with disease-fighting antioxidants, vitamins and flavonoids as well as fibre and has been shown to lower the risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. It may even protect against some cancers and Alzheimer's disease.

You can have treats such as alcohol and chocolate, but limit them to two or three times a week on non-diet days.

Don't overeat on your non-diet days. If you overeat, you will hinder the weight loss process.

**Case Study 1:** Pan (41) has always struggled with her weight and has tried lots of diets, but thanks to the 2-Day Diet, she has gone from a size 22 to an 18 and the weight is still coming off.

"None of the other diets really suited me because they didn't let me enjoy the foods I like and not feel guilty about having a drink or two at the weekends.

"The 2-Day Diet has been great. My husband and I started it together and six months on, I have slowly but surely lost just over a stone — I'm aiming for two more.

"Even after a two-week holiday, I managed to keep most of the weight off and get right back into the diet afterwards.

"I feel so much fitter and less lethargic and actually want to do more exercise. And as this diet is only two days, it's easier to get back into it if you have a blip.

"It has made me feel better in myself, more confident and fitter. I no longer suffer as much with knee problems or breathlessness."

**Case Study 2:** Katrina (42) started the 2-Day Diet after she gained weight over Christmas.

"I chose to have my diet days at the beginning of the week. The first week, I found breakfast a challenge because I'm so used to having toast or cereal.

"The first week I had fruit and yoghurt for breakfast but that felt quite restrictive — gently getting my head around the fact that I could have bacon, eggs or an omelette made it so much easier.

"I have done slimming clubs in the past and have lost weight, but the 2-Day Diet is so much easier. I've also felt far less hungry than I did on the other diets.

"And I like the fact that it's flexible. If I have weeks where I'm out a lot and it's not easy to avoid carbs, I switch my days that week, or I switch to a one-day a week maintenance plan."

*I feel so much fitter and far less lethargic*

The 2-Day Diet: The Quick & Easy Edition by Dr Michelle Harvie and Prof Tony Howell is in bookshops now, €15.70

## Have you got write stuff?

● THE Irish Daily Star and Ireland's biggest bookseller Eason, are asking Ireland's schools to get writing to celebrate the April 4 cinema release of blockbuster Divergent.

There is a €1,000 voucher from Eason up for grabs as first prize and the winning school can use it to fill their library.

The Divergent Schools Short Story competition encourages secondary school students to write a short story between 500 and 1,000 words and submit it to features@thestar.ie.

● Divergent stars Shailene Woodley, Theo James and Kate Winslet (Cert: 12A) and is released by Entertainment One Film Distributors.

Divergent is based on the worldwide best seller by Veronica Roth, who is a big supporter of encouraging young people to write.

She urges: "If you love to write, and you love books, you can do it. So be brave and take risks. Young writers, I salute you."

The film is set in a futuristic Chicago, where society is divided into five factions based on personality type, created to bring everlasting peace: Dauntless — Brave; Abnegation — Selfless; Amity — Peaceful; Candor — Honest; Erudite — Intelligent.

Each year, all 16-year-olds must take a test and choose where they belong. For Tris Prior



**DIVERGENT:** Shailene and Theo star in it

(Shailene Woodley) the choice is not easy. In a divided existence where everyone must conform, Tris is divergent — a danger to this seemingly perfect world.

Forced to hide this deadly secret, Tris chooses Dauntless and is drawn to her enigmatic mentor, Four (Theo James).

● The short story should be on the topic of "What it means to be Brave", to tie in with the Dauntless faction.

The winning story will be published on the Eason website. The entries will be judged by a team of Eason senior staff and the Irish Daily Star. You just need to enter your story, your name, age and what school you're from.

Book bundles, film merchandise and CD soundtracks will be available as runner up prizes, with the writer of the winning story also receiving a personal book-bundle.

So whether you're a parent or a teacher, encourage students to enter now! The closing date is 5pm on Thursday March 27.

The 'Divergent' trilogy is available at Eason bookstores nationwide.

Terms and conditions apply, see [www.easons.com/t-termsandconditions.aspx](http://www.easons.com/t-termsandconditions.aspx)

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