

VOICES

MAGAZINE FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD

september 2025





Since I arrived in Macedonia, I have felt a small shift inside me. It might be the way people open me their doors without hesitation, or how a shared drink can turn strangers into something closer. The welcome I've received here has been more than politeness, it feels like a real invitation to belong, to be part of a rhythm I didn't grow up with but somehow recognise.

This issue of our magazine gathers voices and explores stories and connections that cross borders, both literal and emotional. From a volunteer's journey in the sun-soaked shores of Aruba, to the quiet yet profound lessons of yoga or the subtle ways music can heal our minds and hearts.

Living here has taught me that culture is not only what you see in traditions or architecture. It is in the pauses between words, in the way people care for each other without making a show of it, in the music that pulls you into its beat whether you understand the lyrics or not.

It is in these moments, building quietly into everyday life, that I've found a sense of place far from home. So I wanted to say: Thank you Macedonia!

Cassandre Journoud

Отако пристигнав во Македонија, почувствував мала промена во мене. Можеби е начинот на кој луѓето ми ги отвораат вратите без двоумење, или како само една пијачка може да ги претвори странците во нешто поблиско. Добредојдето што го добив овде беше повеќе од учтивост, се чувствува како вистинска покана за припадност, да бидам дел од ритам со кој не пораснав, но некако го препознавам.

Поентата на нашето списание е да прибира гласови и да истражува приказни и врски што ги преминуваат границите: и буквалните и емоционалните. Од волонтерско патување на сончевите брегови на Аруба, до тивките, но длабоки лекции по јога или суптилните начини на кои музиката може да ги излечи нашите умови и срца.

Живеењето овде ме научи дека културата не е само она што го гледате во традициите или архитектурата. Тоа е во паузите меѓу зборовите, во начинот на кој луѓето се грижат едни за други без да прават претстава, во музиката што ве влече во својот ритам без разлика дали ги разбирате текстовите или не.

Во овие моменти, тивко вградувајќи се во секојдневниот живот, најдов чувство на место далеку од дома. Затоа сакам да кажам: Ти благодарам, Македонијо!

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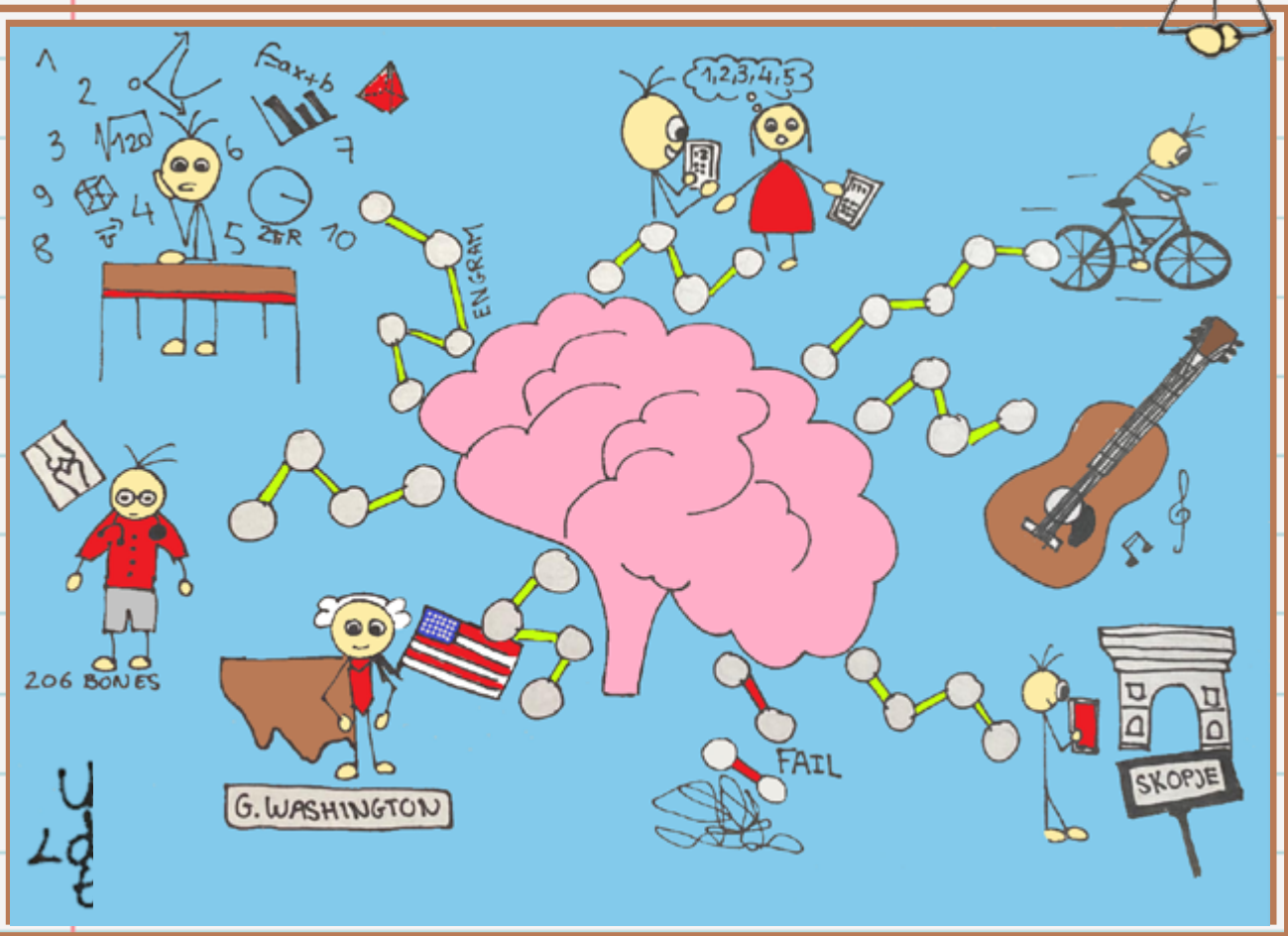
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Евгенија Петрова



House of memories



Can you count to ten in a language you learned in school? How many bones are there in the human body? Who was the first president of the United States? When was your first date? What is the formula for the perimeter of a circle? What is the capital of Australia?

Asking these questions triggers your brain. Sometimes you know the answer because you remember it; other times, you just forget or simply don't know. After all, when are you ever going to use some of this information? This article will help us to understand how we remember.

HOW DOES OUR MEMORY WORK?

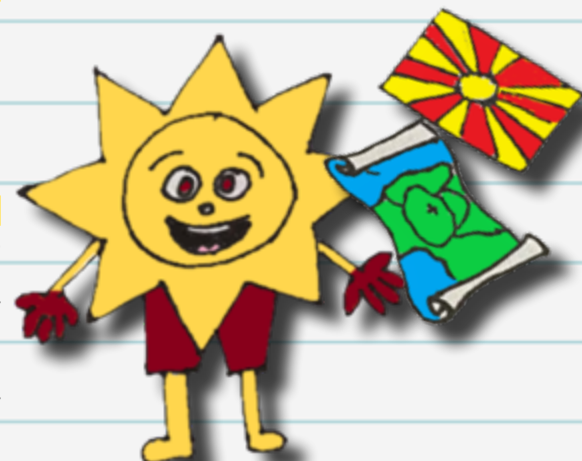
Imagine you are waiting for your meal at a street food restaurant, and the cook tells you that you are number 22. You will remember this until it is your turn to pick up the food. A few days later, you won't think about this information anymore. This is an example of using your short-term memory. How can we use the memories?

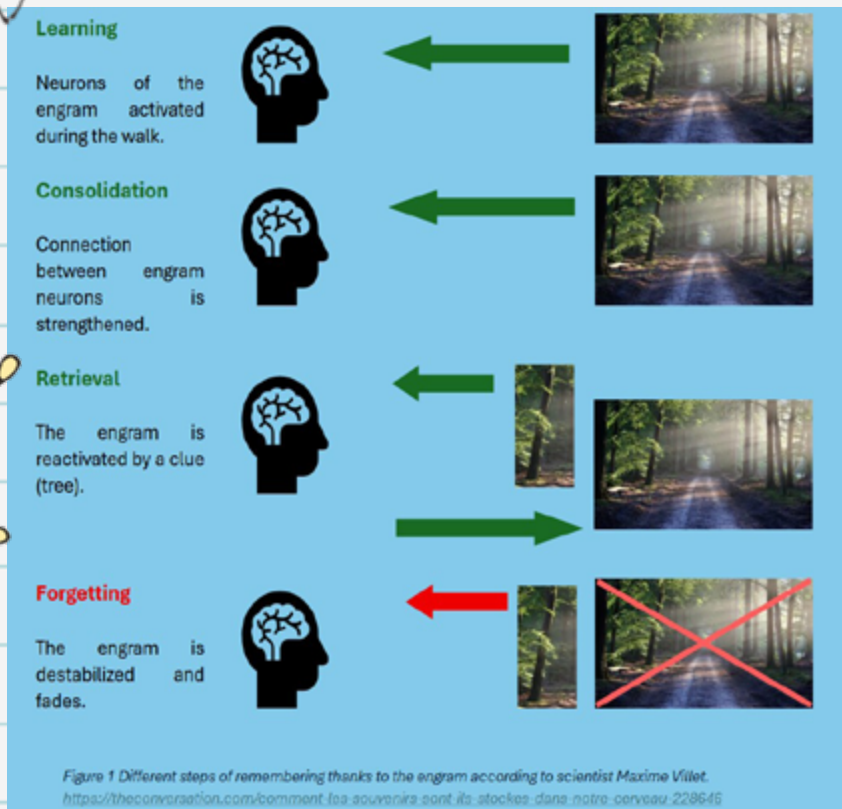
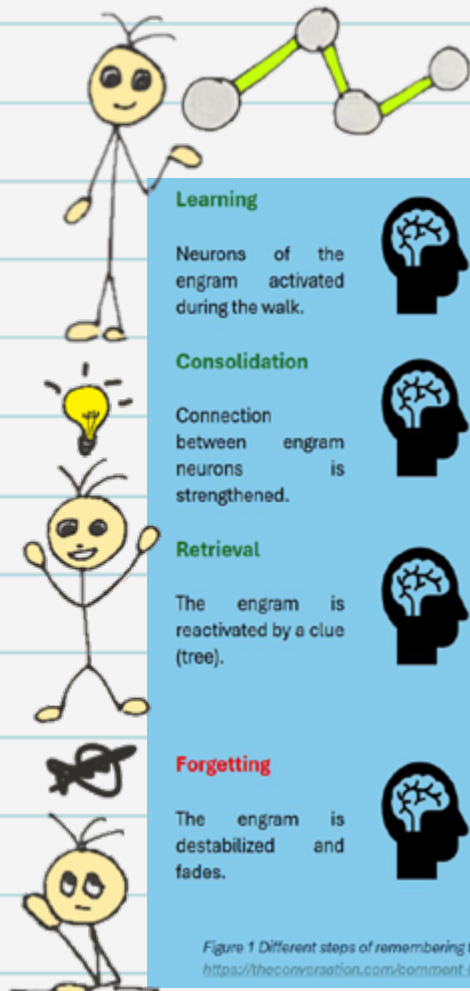
In our everyday lives, we have to process tons of information about the world and our surroundings. We don't always retain it, but when we do, we use different types of memory. **Short-term memory**

refers to recalling information for a few seconds to a few hours, while **long-term memory** can keep the information for years. When it comes to **working memory**, it is involved when you repeat an action or piece of information until you remember, like tapping your phone number several times to memorize it.

Long-term memory can be categorized into **explicit and implicit memory**. The first one involves the conscious and intentional recollection of factual information, personal experiences, or concepts. It can be further divided into: **Episodic memory**, which refers to personal experiences and emotions. For instance, at the end of the European

Youth Olympic Festival, all the volunteers went to Ragusa to evaluate the experience, eat a traditional Macedonian meal, dance, and have fun.





Amnesia is a deficit in memory caused by brain damage or brain disease. There are two main types of amnesia. **Retrograde amnesia** which is the inability to remember events that occurred before a specific incident (like an accident or surgery). **Anterograde amnesia** is the inability to form new long-term memories.

There are some **diseases relating to memory disorders** such as Alzheimer often associated with aging, agnosia which is the inability to recognize certain objects, persons or sounds.

Sometimes, we forget things simply because **we haven't had the chance to apply or reinforce what we have learned**. This highlights how important repetition is in helping us to remember.

How can we make a memory unforgettable? Take, for example, a volunteering experience in Macedonia: building bonds, visiting new places, and sharing special moments. As it was written in a kafana: "One moment lasts a second, but a memory lasts forever."

AS A CONCLUSION:

I am pretty sure that you have learned something from reading this article, but will you remember the difference between a semantic and an episodic memory? What is an engram again?

Loline Thomas

Sources:
 Greshko, M. (n.d.). Souvenirs : comment sont-ils créés, retenus ou oubliés ? National Geographic France.
 Villet, M. (2024, May 5). Comment les souvenirs sont-ils stockés dans notre cerveau ? The Conversation.
 Wikipedia contributors. (2025, July 2025). Amnesia.
 Wikipedia contributors. (2025, June 2025). Explicit memory.

Semantic memory, which relates to factual information and general knowledge. For example: Macedonia, capital Skopje, population about 2.10 million, etc.

- The **amygdala** of the brain processes emotions,
- The **striatum** is involved in skill learning,
- The **hippocampus** helps with storing and retrieving explicit memories.

On the other hand, implicit memory is unconscious and influences our thoughts and behaviors without conscious awareness. It allows us to perform tasks automatically, such as riding a bike or playing an instrument, even if we are not actively thinking about how to do them.

HOW DO WE REMEMBER?

The first time you visit Skopje, you will likely look for practical places first such as supermarkets, workplace, city center, etc. To do this, you might start by using Google Maps. Gradually, you begin to recognize landmarks like statues, street names, and restaurants that help you get oriented and feel more familiar with the area and draw a mental map of the city. Once you know it is thanks to the engrams. What are they?

There is **no single location** in the brain where memories are stored. Different brain areas handle different types of memory:

Indeed, memories are formed and maintained through networks of connected neurons known as **engrams**. These neurons are activated during the process of remembering. Explicit memory involves three main processes: acquisition (learning), consolidation, and retrieval. (see figure 1)

When we forget something, it is often because the neural connection does not follow its usual pathway, and access to the stored information fails. This leads us to...

HOW OR WHY DO WE FORGET?

There is this film called "50 first dates" where the actor Adam Sandler's character falls in love with a woman who has a form of amnesia. She lives the same day over and over again, forgetting everything she experienced the day before. This is an exaggerated example, but it highlights how memory loss can affect us.



My Solo Summer Trip Across Europe with DiscoverEU



In August 2022, just after turning nineteen, I boarded a train with nothing but a backpack, a mobile travel pass, and an entire continent ahead of me. For three weeks, I traveled across Europe alone, visiting thirteen cities in ten countries, sometimes only for a day. My ticket to ride was an Interrail pass I had won through the European Commission's DiscoverEU program, a contest that gives eighteen-year-olds the chance to explore Europe by train for free. This program was launched in 2018 and is now part of the Erasmus+ program 2021-2027.

Interrail is a single pass that allows unlimited train travel across most of Europe, and in some cases ferries too. I learned about the program by chance while scrolling through travel accounts on social media, something I started doing during the pandemic. The rules to apply are simple: be eighteen, live in an Erasmus+ country, and answer a multiple-choice quiz about the European Union and its youth initiatives. There are quotas by nationality, and competition is fierce. I applied in October 2021 during my first semester at university, along with two friends. Three months later, in January 2022, I found out I'd been selected. I was eager to participate in the DiscoverEU initiative, and thrilled to be among the winners. The pass, worth 283€, covered all train travel, leaving me to pay only for seat reservations when necessary. With this pass, I could travel any time for one consecutive month between March 2022 and February 2023, but summer was the easiest option as I had more than a week free.

DiscoverEU offers two types of passes: a fixed one, which limits you to two countries (excluding your country of departure and those you simply pass through), and a flexible one, which allows you to travel on any seven days within a month to as many eligible countries as you like. Your journey must include at least one country other than your own. I chose flexibility. It was my first backpacking trip, and I wanted to make the most of it. As an added bonus, I also received a European Youth Card, which gave me discounts on cultural visits, local transport, and hostels.

One of the unexpected joys of the program was its community. Through the official Facebook group and the DiscoverEU online community, thousands of participants traded itineraries, hostel recommendations, and even met up on the road. I found

many travel buddies through a French WhatsApp group, where people would post their locations and ask if anyone was in the same city. I created an Instagram account to document my trip, occasionally crossing paths with other DiscoverEU travelers, swapping tips, and sharing activities. I loved seeing so many young people enthusiastic about travelling and discovering the world.

In the end, I went alone. My friends and I couldn't get time off at the same time because of internships and summer jobs, and I didn't want to go at any other time of the year. It was my first time planning a trip entirely from scratch: budgeting, booking hostels (for the first time), and navigating foreign train websites in search of the "change language" button. I only told my parents about the trip at the last minute, after weeks of quietly researching routes through travel blogs, YouTube videos, TikTok, and Instagram. The Interrail app made things easier, allowing me to activate my pass and see most train schedules. Travelling solo, I preferred to plan my entire trip in advance and book seat reservations whenever possible.

66% OF CANDIDATES TRAVELLED FOR THE FIRST TIME BY TRAIN OUT OF THEIR COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE.

Over three weeks, I moved from Venice to Vienna, then on to Villach and Lake Bled, Ljubljana, Budapest, Bratislava, Prague, Dresden, Copenhagen, Malmö, Stockholm, and Cologne. Some stops were bucket-list cities I had dreamed of for years; others were affordable detours suggested by other travelers and I didn't regret a single one. Slovenia was the biggest surprise, I knew nothing about the country before arriving, yet its mountains, lakes, and quiet charm made it one of my favorite destinations. This experience gave me a better understanding of other cultures and of European history.

The journey changed me. Traveling alone taught me independence, resilience, and the importance of speaking other languages, especially English, to connect with people from all over the world. It also gave me my first taste of large-scale sustainable travel, taking night trains, crossing borders by rail instead of air. I would never have done it at that age if I hadn't won the pass, it's a rare

opportunity to travel at low cost. Thanks to DiscoverEU, I also discovered the European Youth Portal, which opened my eyes to other opportunities like the European Solidarity Corps. That trip is one of the reasons I'm in Macedonia today.



What I loved most were the small, unplanned moments: conversations with locals curious about my solo journey; the changing landscapes framed by train windows; the beauty of the trains themselves; and the incredible diversity of architecture in each city. I was struck by how many solo travelers there were, of all ages, and how easily we connected through shared trips.

Three years later, I still think about that month often. It was my first real taste of freedom, my first time traveling across Europe without family or a school trip, and the experience cemented my love for solo travel. It is different from going with friends or family: you decide your pace, your routes and you meet people along the way. Since then, I've wanted to travel even more and discover new cultures.

If you're turning eighteen, don't miss the DiscoverEU application rounds in spring and autumn. If you've never travelled alone, this is the perfect opportunity to try. You'll spend little, learn a lot, and see more than you ever imagined. The ticket is free, but the memories, and the confidence you'll gain, are priceless.

Camille Baudouin

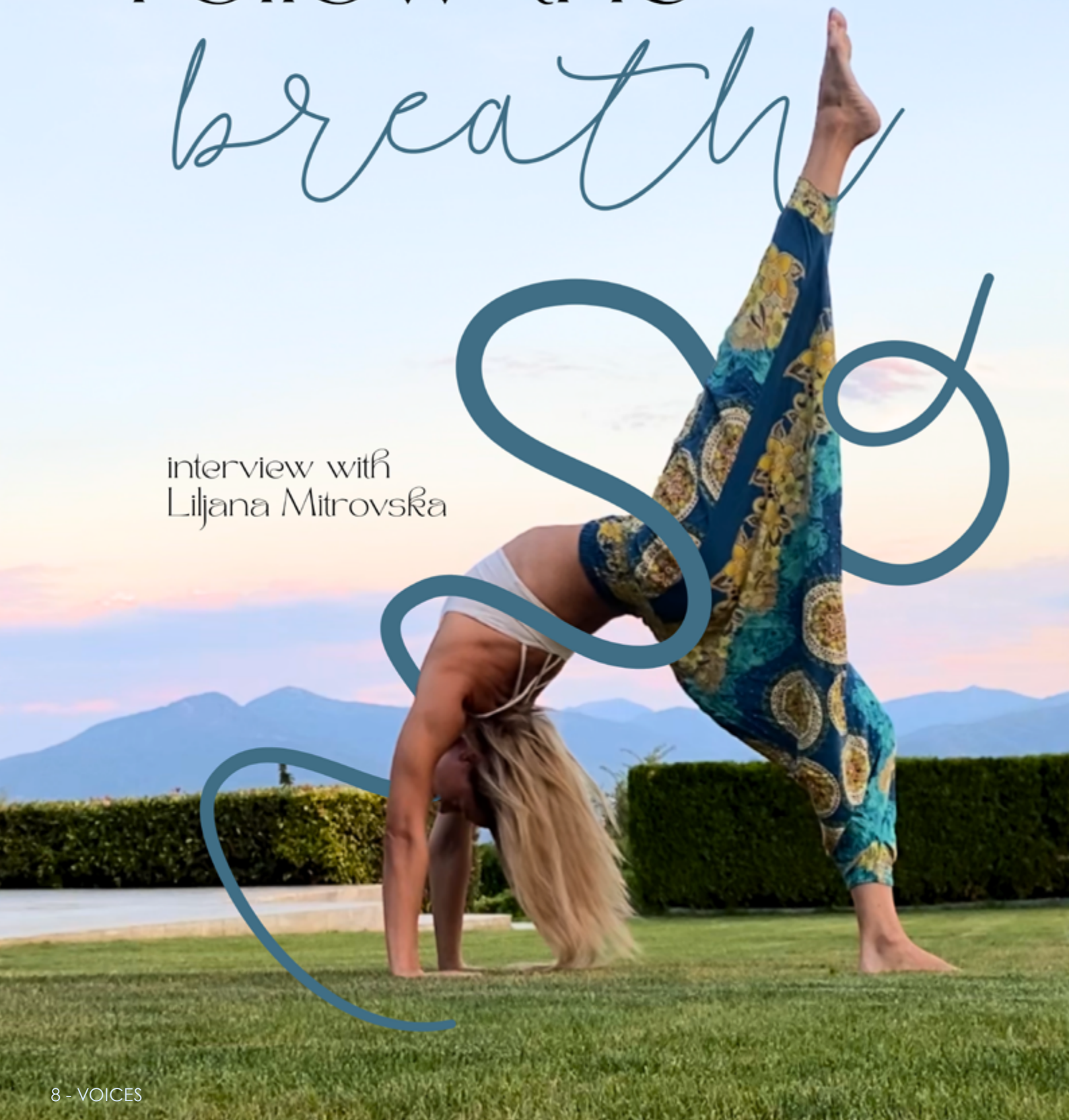
Sources:

European Youth Portal - Announcement of DiscoverEU results
European Youth Portal - DiscoverEU
Interrail - Interrail community



Follow the breath

interview with
Liljana Mitrovska



Be mindful of the energy you bring into this space. This is the sign you see when you first enter the studio – a place where I was spending two hours a week for the past few months... and it was one of the best decisions I've made.

Today, I'm taking you there with me – at least metaphorically, as I share my conversation with Liljana Mitrovska, the teacher at Long Life Yoga Studio in Skopje. This is where I tried yoga for the first time in my life, and now I know that I couldn't have asked for a better instructor than her.

As always, she welcomed me with a smile and warm energy. *Let's start from the beginning*, I said. *What made you get into yoga in the first place?*

She explained that it all started when she was twenty-two years old. Her friend's mother, who had breast cancer, was the one who recommended Lili doing yoga. At first, it was simply just fun. But after a year or two, she started to feel that this practice has a positive impact on her life, and... today she's a yoga teacher, sharing her passion with other people on a daily basis. Where did the idea to teach others come from, though?

I decided [to teach yoga] when I was working in banking, and I started realizing that I'm not doing anything good for people, she told me. *Then I thought that I can share everything I know from yoga with other people, and be satisfied with what I do – help others and have some aim in life.*

When I asked what her favourite part of teaching is, she said it's simply seeing the people enjoying and listening, and feeling the changing of the practice.

Lili also explained how the approach to yoga changed in Macedonia in the past few years.

In recent years, it's popular. But five, six years ago, it was like a taboo. Like yoga is something weird, unknown... and we are afraid of the unknown. When I mentioned that I've seen a lot of yoga studios in Skopje, she agreed. *In the last two, three years, there are a lot of them. We are happy because people will get closer to yoga, and I think it will be good for society.*

When it comes to her own practice, Lili shared that she started with ashtanga yoga. *I fell in love with ashtanga, then I started to learn hatha vinyasa yoga, and from time to time yin yoga. But I definitely love ashtanga.* Sometimes she does the full yoga sequence in the morning, and sometimes it's just stretching and breathing exercises as a form of meditation – on the couch or bed, walking around, drinking water, brushing her teeth. Habits from yoga help her in daily life also because they are the reminders to slow down. *When I'm rushing with my family, I remember: calm down, breathe and make it slower.*

But her yoga journey goes beyond home or studio – she has also practiced in some really special places. Asked about the most interesting place where she did yoga, she answered without hesitation: Mysore in India. *It was two years ago, one month of practicing – pranayama [breathing technique], meditation, learning full day. It was very nice. We also practiced the second series ashtanga. Yesterday, I started to practice the second series again, and I was like, how did I do this? Every day. Only on Sundays we had a break*, she laughed. This experience not only taught her new things about yoga, but also made her switch to a vegetarian diet.

Even though yoga is becoming quite popular, there are still common misconceptions surrounding it. When I asked Lili for an example, she said it's definitely the belief that yoga positions – *asanas* – are purely physical. *It's not true. It's not only physical asana, even though we're starting with our body. But yoga is the whole union. Mind, body, soul. Especially the sitting pose. When you do this, you're quiet and you don't have thoughts – that is yoga.* She explained that we all start with thinking *wow, a good pose, I want to try that*, but after that yoga is actually inner practice. This connection is summed up perfectly in her favourite quote from Napoleon Hill: "The body achieves what the mind believes".

If you consider trying yoga, Lili also shared some advice for you. *Follow the breath first. And after that everything will come in the right place.* As our conversation was coming to the end, she added: *Everybody should try yoga one, two times. And listen to their intuition.*

For me, it didn't end with one or two times. After a few months of practice, I can tell you many things – that I wanted to give up several times, that there were times when my muscles hurt even the next two days after the classes, that I was out of my comfort zone.

But for some reason, I kept on going. Sometimes it was the only time of the week when I could switch off my thoughts and focus on the present moment. When I'm stressed, I automatically go into breathing learnt at the classes – six seconds inhale, six seconds exhale. However, I think the most important thing Lili has taught me is to not compare myself to others during practice. It's not about doing the most advanced poses, and more about feeling what your body needs right now – what *you* need right now.

Anna Wojdziak

Психо- терапија ДОМА

Холистички
пристап за
внатрешен мир



Во време кога
анксиозноста,
стресот и
несигурноста
чукаат на сечија
врата, особено кај
младите луѓе, не
секој има пристап
до психотерапевт,
ниту, пак, секогаш
сака да седне пред
некого и да отвори
душа. Ама, што ако
ти кажам дека не
мораш да бидеш
во канцеларија
со терапевт
за да почнеш
да се лекуваш
одвнатре?

Терапијата дома не е само тренд — тоа е самогрижа, дисциплина и љубов кон себе. Има многу пристапи кои можат да се практикуваат самостојно и кои имаат длабоки ефекти врз менталното, емоционалното и енергетското здравје.

• EFT – Emotional Freedom Technique

Позната и како tapping, EFT е енергетска психолошка техника што комбинира когнитивна терапија со тапкање по акупунктурни точки на телото. Според истражувањата, EFT може да ја намали активноста на амигдалата – делот од мозокот што ја активира реакцијата на страв.

Оваа техника е лесна за учење и може да се практикува секојдневно. Потребни се само неколку минути за да се намалат стресот, паничните напади, емоционалната болка или дури и зависностите.

Пример: Ако чувствуваш тежина во градите или гнев што не можеш да го изразиш, тап на точките на челото, под окото, под раката и кажувај си:

„Иако се чувствувам лут/а, длабоко и целосно се прифаќам себеси.“

Практиката на tapping ја активира енергетската рамнотежа во телото и ти овозможува да ги ослободиш блокадите што ја кочат емоционалната слобода. Доколку сакате да пробате во удобноста на вашата соба, може и на Youtube да се најде.

• Breathwork – Дишењето како лек

Можеби звучи премногу едноставно, но breathwork е моќен алат за емоционална регулација. Има техники како box breathing, 4-7-8 метод, или conscious connected breathing кои буквално можат да те ресетираат.

Јасно се чувствуваш после сесија, како да ти се „исчистил“ мозокот од магла. Само седни, затвори очи, и диши.

4 секунди вдишување
7 секунди задржување
8 секунди издишување

Повтори 5-10 пати – и веќе не си истиот човек.

Редовното практикување на свесно дишење помага во намалување на кортизолот (хормонот на стресот), ги подобрува циркулацијата и те враќа во состојба на мир.

• Journaling – разговор со себе

Не потценувај ја силата на пенкалото. Кога мислите се во хаос, journaling е како организатор за умот. Напиши што чувствуваш, без цензура. Или пробај prompt-и:

„Што сакам да пуштам од себе денес?“

„Кој дел од мене бара љубов, а не го слушам?“

„Каде се криев, и зошто?“

Овој процес ти овозможува да ги истражиш своите емоции, да го видиш твојот напредок и да ги откриеш длабоките пораки од твоето несвесно.

• Mirror work – лице во лице со твоето внатрешно дете

Ова може да биде интензивно, но истовремено длабоко трансформирачки. Гледај се во огледало и зборувај со себе. Да, всушност. Кажи си:

„Те гледам. Вредиш. Без разлика што другите рекле.“

Прво ќе те фати срам, па можеби и плач, ама потоа доаѓа нешто што зборовите не можат да го опишат – прифаќање. Оваа пракса ги лекува длабоките рани од детството и ти помага да изградеш вистинска љубов кон себеси.

• Природна терапија

Сета оваа работа не мора да се случува во затворена соба. Grounding, односно стапнување бос по трева, сончање рано наутро, или само седење до дрво со кафе и мисли, е исто така терапија. Природата е најстар терапевт.

Истражувањата покажуваат дека контактот со природата ги намалува симптомите на депресија и анксиозност, ја подобрува концентрацијата и го зајакнува имунитетот.

Заклучок:

Терапијата не е луксуз. Таа е потреба. А дома имаме се што ни треба за да почнеме. Себе, простор, малку волја и љубопитност.

Пробај една техника дневно, и види каде те води. И ако си во процес на healing, запомни: it's not linear – и тоа е во ред.

Томи Ѓошев

Овој текст е изработен врз основа на комбинација од научни истражувања, стручни статии и практични совети од реномирани извори, како и на лични сознанија и искуства во областа на менталното здравје и самогрижата. Консултирани се публикации од *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Scientific Reports*, *Purdue University*, *WebMD*, како и платформи и автори како *Louise Hay*, *Centre of Excellence* и други.

• EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique) Clinical EFT Improves Multiple Psychological Conditions

Сеопфатен преглед објавен во *Frontiers in Psychology* покажува дека Clinical EFT е ефикасен во третманот на психолошки состојби како анксиозност, депресија, фобии и PTSD. Студијата нагласува дека EFT може да намали физиолошки проблеми како болка и несоница, и да ги подобри биолошките маркери на стрес.

pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Research Supports Benefits of Tapping for Mental Health

Статија од *Purdue University* објаснува како техниката EFT (tapping) помага во управување со емоции, преку тапкање на одредени точки на телото за подобра емоционална регулација.

purdue.edu

• Breathwork Breathing Practices for Stress and Anxiety Reduction

Студија објавена во *Frontiers in Psychology* анализира како дишењето може да ја зголеми активноста на парасимпатичкиот нервен систем и да го намали ефектот на стрес и анксиозност, влијаејќи позитивно врз автономниот нервен систем и мозокот.

pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Effect of Breathwork on Stress and Mental Health: A Meta-Analysis

Објавена во *Scientific Reports*, оваа мета-анализа покажува дека breathwork може значително да ги намали симптомите на анксиозност и депресија и претставува корисен терапевтски алат за подобрување на менталното здравје.

nature.com

• Journaling Efficacy of Journaling in the Management of Mental Illness

Истражување објавено во *Frontiers in Psychology* открива дека journaling доведува до статистички значително намалување на симптоми на анксиозност и ПТПС, со што се истакнуваат терапевтските придобивки од експресивното пишување.

pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

Mental Health Benefits of Journaling

WebMD објаснува како journaling може да помогне во управување со анксиозност, намалување на стрес и справување со депресија преку пишување за чувствата и мислите.

urmc.rochester.edu

• Mirror Work Mirror Work: Transforming Self-Perception Through Reflection

Centre of Excellence дава преглед на mirror work како практика на самопомош која вклучува позитивни афирмации пред огледало, со цел да се подобри самодовербата и да се пројдлабочи врска со себе.

psychologytoday.com + centreforexcellence.com + thefemaleceo.com

What is Mirror Work? – Louise Hay

Веб-страницата на *Louise Hay* го опишува mirror work како ефикасен метод за развивање љубов кон себе и гледање на светот како безбедно и љубовно место.

louisehay.com + psychologytoday.com

• Grounding (Earthing) Nature-Based Therapy in Individuals with Mental Health Disorders

Пилот-студија објавена во *Frontiers in Psychology* покажува дека терапијата базирана на природата може позитивно да влијае врз менталното здравје и да ја зголеми поврзаноста со природата.

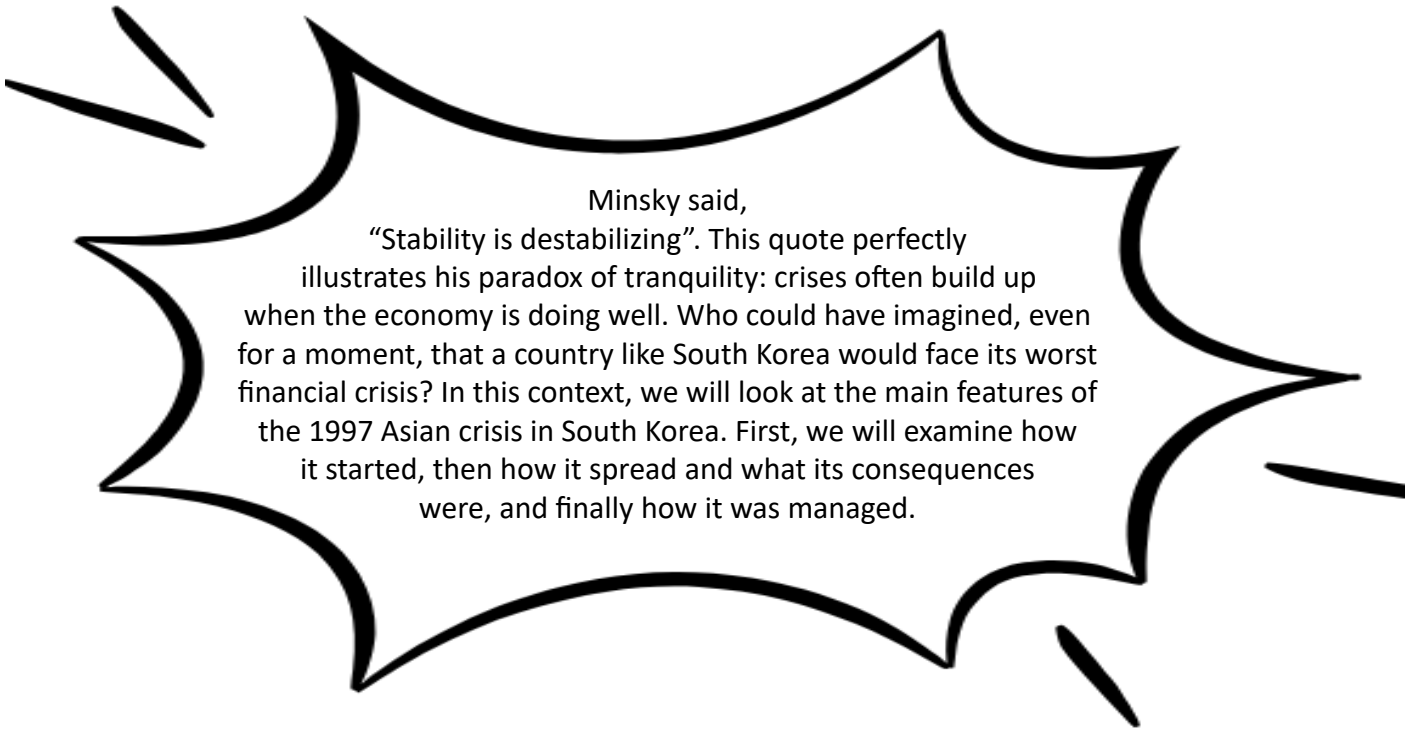
pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

What is Grounding and Is It Really Good for You?

Mission Health објаснува што е grounding (earthing) – пракса на директен контакт со површината на Земјата, и ги разгледува потенцијалните придобивки врз здравјето и расположението.

missionhealth.org

FROM ECONOMIC MODEL... ...TO FINANCIAL NIGHTMARE



Minsky said,
“Stability is destabilizing”. This quote perfectly illustrates his paradox of tranquility: crises often build up when the economy is doing well. Who could have imagined, even for a moment, that a country like South Korea would face its worst financial crisis? In this context, we will look at the main features of the 1997 Asian crisis in South Korea. First, we will examine how it started, then how it spread and what its consequences were, and finally how it was managed.

THE ORIGINS

The East Asian countries, including South Korea, experienced rapid economic growth from the 1970s to the 1990s. Thanks to generally cautious budget policies and high interest rates, South Korea was considered a model for many nations. The country aimed to attract foreign capital by reassuring investors about the stability of its exchange rate. The value of the won **was pegged** to the US dollar. As a result, South Korea's GDP growth reached around 13% in 1983. Originally a country facing economic difficulties, it saw its situation improve thanks to large amounts of foreign investment, especially from the United States, as investors sought higher profits. Domestically, the real estate sector attracted household savings as well as foreign capital. In addition, the financial liberalization that began in the early 1990s made it easier for these foreign funds to enter the country. The 1997 crisis was a currency crisis. It began in Thailand and spread to several countries, including South Korea. This crisis displayed all the classic features of financial crises: high debt or even over-indebtedness, euphoria, herd behavior, and speculation.

The crisis worsened because banks kept granting loans and speculating on them, as they were highly profitable. They were lending blindly to households and entrepreneurs just to meet their targets. If you asked for a loan of 30,000 won, the banks might say: “Wouldn't you prefer 40,000 won instead?” This led to an excessive flow of credit, beyond the real financing needs of the economy, much of which ended up in real estate projects. This is known as a speculative real estate bubble.

This crisis had several causes. First, in the early 1990s, international investors borrowed in US dollars because the Federal Reserve had lowered its interest rates. Later, when US interest rates rose, **the dollar appreciated**. What is dangerous is if the dollar appreciates, and you guessed it, it has appreciated and therefore the won has depreciated losing about 55% of its value. The country's foreign exchange reserves fell from 22 billion US dollars on October 31, 1997, to 6 billion by November 20. This triggered panic. As a result, foreign capital fled South Korea, and the most vulnerable banks and real estate companies went **bankrupt**. Speculators began selling their

assets, leading to what is called **debt-deflation**. The devaluation of the won increased the country's debt, creating a vicious cycle: as debt rose, loans decreased, which reduced consumption, and foreign capital continued to leave the country.

Second, South Korea **liberalized its economy** even though it lacked strong protective and regulatory institutions, within an international monetary system that was itself liberalized and dominated by the US dollar. Because of this lack of regulation, investors were able to speculate more. On top of that, a **leverage effect** appeared. Since the won depended on the dollar and the dollar appreciated, debts in dollars became harder to repay because they became more expensive. Finally, investors were able to withdraw their money easily because they knew a crisis was coming. As a result, other investors, seeing others leaving the market, were influenced to do the same, like a social convention. In other words, it was a collective belief that everyone had to follow, similar to J.M. Keynes's beauty contest theory.

THE SPREAD

South Korea was affected in September 1997. Several signs appeared before the crisis began. As mentioned before, people borrowed too much, and companies produced more than what the real economy needed.



Big banks and chaebols (large family-owned business groups) went bankrupt. The crisis first spread within the financial sector. Banks **stopped lending** money to each other in the interbank market because they feared not being repaid. Also, there was a **shadow banking** system made up of institutions financing the economy outside of normal banks. These included bank subsidiaries and non-bank institutions like pension investment funds. They took big risks because they did not report their accounts clearly and avoided financial rules. Shadow banking was characterized by **high risk-taking** and very little regulation. Finally, with financial globalization, the crisis became a systemic risk because South Korea and other East Asian countries had strongly **interconnected economies**.

South Korea, which had the highest GDP growth rate among all OECD countries more than 8% on average from 1985 to 1995 and the lowest unemployment rate at 2% in 1996, saw its situation worsen quickly. Against the dollar, the won lost half its value in November 1997 alone. The big chaebols, like Daewoo (the country's second largest) and Hyundai, faced huge difficulties, and the country's global ranking fell from 24th to 55th. The unemployment rate quadrupled from 2% at the end of 1997 to 9% by early 1999. Moreover, **the credit crunch** a slowdown in bank loans to households caused a drop in household consumption, which fell by 8.6% for food. This economic decline worsened South Korea's social situation. The poverty rate doubled, reaching 20% of the population in 1998.

Many families had to take multiple jobs to survive. Some sacrificed their children's **education** because it was too expensive, leading to fewer school enrollments and some students dropping out of university to help their families financially. Also, some families fell into absolute **poverty**, which led to problems like alcoholism and drug use. This in turn caused more domestic violence against spouses and children, with some children even abandoned by their families.

CRISIS REGULATION

To respond to this crisis, South Korea turned to **the International Monetary Fund (IMF)**, which provided a financial aid package of about 21 billion dollars over roughly three years.



The IMF put in place several strategies to save the country, using common **economic policies**.

First, a **monetary policy** was established. The goal was to temporarily raise interest rates to stabilize the won and prevent further depreciation and inflation. By increasing these rates, commercial banks also raised their rates, which led to a decrease in the demand for credit by economic agents and a reduction in the money supply. This caused economic activity to slow down, but inflation dropped. Once confidence returned, interest rates were lowered again. Second, the Korean government implemented a strict **fiscal policy**. This aimed to fight inflation and reduce the trade deficit by managing the state's budget that is government spending and revenues. This could mean increasing taxes and cutting investments and state aid to slow down the economy. These measures led to higher unemployment and slower growth. As a result, GDP dropped by 7% in 1998.

Then, it was necessary to strengthen banking supervision and regulation. Prudential regulation aims to reduce banks' risk-taking to avoid costly crises for taxpayers. This can be done by introducing solvency ratios, mandatory capital requirements. **The Basel agreements** raised banks' capital requirements from 2.5% to 4.5% and added a conservation buffer of 2.5% to the existing 8%. Another way to limit bank risks is to separate commercial banking activities from investment banking, reducing risk-taking by some banks.

Thus, financial institutions **in default of payment** are closed and those still profitable were rescued by the government. There is greater transparency in the financial, public and corporate sectors. As a result, financial markets quickly stabilized in early 1998, interest rates returned to low levels, and economic activity began to recover gradually. By 2000, South Korea recorded an 8% growth rate. Socially, they expanded social protection and introduced unemployment insurance. In conclusion, we have seen that many factors led to a general crisis in the system, but institutions intervened in time and managed to save the country from bankruptcy. Given the dangers crises can bring, it is essential to understand them well because their costs are very high. To prevent future crises, it would be good to make progress and find new innovations that help to foresee and avoid them.

Narjesse Ahrrouq

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COASTLINE THOUGHT



DON'T
STOP
ME
NOW!

If you could capture one image that represents your view of the world today, what would it be and why?

Is the world you see you? The image in our head that is created about the world upon our beliefs, is unique for each one of us. The initial step to get to know yourself better is to deeply analyze your view of the world because what you perceive around you reflects what occurs within you.

Yet a part of it is blurred. It is blurred as I lack experience and knowledge to understand everyone and everything around me. But trying to decode the blurred part, we're going to miss every detail that hides deeper meaning. Nothing is ever hollow.

If I was asked to describe the world in one word, I would choose competitiveness. It's in human nature to fight with our egos or nourish them by accomplishing "quests", striving to surpass ourselves, peers, or some individual we have chosen. After all, it's easy to see the competitiveness of the human, the hope in their eyes followed by their fast paced movements and the busyness. Glances are exchanged, they speak of either admiration or envy, evoking feelings of either inspiration or judgement. Competing isn't absent from any world, personal, professional... The explanation is simply humanity. To capture their potential I'd pair the image to the Rocky Balboa theme song. Competitiveness has driven us here. The modern backdrop, the buildings, parks, cars, trains...

However, we shouldn't linger too long here, it lacks emotion and understanding. Technology? The reason why you are able to make a choice between products, brands, people offering services is our nature, competing as well as pursuing goals. And the downside comes along. We frequently lose passion by setting excessively high standards. Comparison kills joy as it is said. We say "No, there is room for improvement!" and there is, but why not enjoy the change, the healing, the growing? We limit ourselves, but society does too.

The next thing we reckon is networking, the world is connected like a spider's web in red. Red? Because every connection is deemed significant. Some people just met each other, some already know a few and there are lonely people. Everybody is soaked in their inner world. No person is bothered enough to offer help to the hopeless ones, they are ignoring them or they simply are too blinded by their thoughts to notice, maybe someone will notice.

...Socializing is crucial for human survival. One bond should always be built upon what are the qualities both of us are seeking instead of interests. Because our interests tend to change daily and our emotions too. There is then the moral and the values, a more promising way to rely on building a bond with someone. It is oftentimes mistaken and it results with divorces, broken friendships or broken promises.

In the way they move, dignity and pride is sensed. Insecurities are flooding the real people, conditioned by what society wants and is expecting to see. That says it all. There is something fake, or better said suppressed. The only way to heal our wounds is to embody them, it's the only path that leads to authenticity. If you walk through the image you notice many heads down, scrolling through their phones, totally unconscious.

We are absent from the present, only notice it when it becomes our past... That is where beauty is, in those people in the spectrum who practice mindfulness.

Every change that occurs is impossible to capture. Nothing is forever and everything changes its tracks each second. The truth is that we see the world based on our current situation. The more we grow, heal, the more we expand our horizons which results in clearer future vision. Of course, we are able to take a more objective approach but subjectivity is human, speaks about each soul, mind, background, goal. Before I close the current image, I hear a song, it's playing "Don't stop me now" by Queen.

Ivana Stankova

MELODIES OF MIGRATION





I have something to share about a piece of music that I really like. It tells the story of many Caribbean people who came to France through Bumidom. Bumidom (Bureau pour le développement des migrations dans les départements d'outre-mer; in English; Office for development of migrations within overseas departments, also known as Windrush in the UK) was a French governmental agency between 1963 and 1982 in charge of emigration of the inhabitants of French overseas departments to Metropolitan France.

The name of this song is "Mwen dòmi déwò", "I slept outside", by Super Combo. Super Combo is a Guadeloupean Salsa and Konpa band, probably the most popular one in the French West Indies in the 70s, and even elsewhere. The song mentions the disillusionment upon arriving in France: "Mwen té konprann lavi-Pari Sété « Pigalle », sété « Barbès ». Mwen rèsté pri douvan on gran désèpsyon." - "I thought that Parisian life was Pigalle, it's Barbès, I was confronted with a huge deceptiveness".

Life in France can be brutal. "Ay, ka fè fwèt, fwèt kon adan on frijidè. Mwen pa menm tin on vyè pilovè, mwen vini isi vrè mizè" - "God, the weather is so cold, cold like in a fridge, and I don't even have an old pullover. I came here to meet misery."

When they arrived, they had a problem of precariousness, homelessness, and the expectations and promises were completely different. There were no

opportunities to study, and family reunification was also complicated. And it was a one-way ticket. This meant they couldn't leave France. To combat this precariousness, some turned to crime, while others used other ways to manage.

"Mwen té aka on zanbèl, lè i vwè sa akòz dè frik i mèté-mwen déhò" - "I slept at women's homes, but when they understood that it was just about money, they kicked me out." Some men turned to prostitution just to avoid sleeping outside and to get money. Caribbean men were exotic to French women, and they were often abused. The moment the women didn't need them anymore or they noticed that their man would not fall in love, the men were returned to the streets, back to homeless life. "Sa ki pli bèl ankò, mwen ja ka fè klòch" - "The funniest part, I started again to be a hobo".

In the last part of the song, the singer related how the French Caribbean feel after having discovered the reality.

"Mwen subi on désèpsyon ki té manké kyoyé-mwen, mwen subi on désèpsyon ki arété « cœur » an-mwen, mwen subi on désèpsyon, ki té ka dérayé-mwen, mwen subi on désèpsyon ki anki chouboulé-mwen" - "I faced a disappointment that almost killed me, I faced a disappointment that gave me a heart attack, I faced a disappointment that drove me crazy, I faced a disappointment that rattled me."

When I listen to this song, it stirs up a lot of emotions in me, because it was my parents' reality, and it is still the reality of many young people from the Caribbean who come to France to study, fail in their studies, and never return home out of shame, or pride, etc. You may not know this, but Guadeloupe and Martinique used to be rather poor countries. Today, conditions are improving, but mentalities remain unchanged. You don't have the right to fail, because you are the pride of your family, sometimes the first in your family to pursue higher education. Failure is not an option. That's one of the only things I dislike about my culture.

That was only a short story to explain the 1970s in France, seen through the eyes of Caribbean people, in music.

Terry Ruart

Sources:

Moin domi dewo

BUMIDOM - Wikipedia

Image from the film "L'Avenir est ailleurs" by Antoine Léonard-Maestrati © DR

Jeune ne quittes pas ton pays!
NON AU BUMIDO

BUY NOW

PAY LATER

The Future of Credit or a Debit Trap in Disguise?

If you have bought anything online in the past two years, chances are you have seen the option “Buy Now, Pay Later.” A couple small payments, zero interest, instant approval. It sounds perfect, right?

Platforms like Klarna, Afterpay, and Affirm have turned this option into one of the fastest growing trends in consumer finance. And for many people, especially younger shoppers, BNPL seems like a smarter alternative to credit cards. But as it grows, so do the questions. Are we witnessing the future of flexible finance? Or just the next financial bubble forming quietly in our shopping carts?

Why BNPL Took Off

BNPL's rise isn't random. After the COVID19 pandemic, people were more cautious with spending but still wanted to shop. At the same time, inflation was pushing up prices, and wages weren't keeping up. That's where BNPL came in, offering a way to delay payment without interest or fees.

The Wall Street Journal reports that tens of millions of Gen Z shoppers are now opting for the “buy now, pay later” option over traditional credit cards to fund their spending. Retailers love it too. It boosts sales and it brings access to new customers as paying in installments allows people to have more financial flexibility. It is reported that online retailers strategically use BNPL as a tool to attract non-loyal customers and potentially encourage impulse purchases.



The Psychology: Why It Works So Well

BNPL changes how people think about spending. Instead of seeing a \$200 price tag, they see ‘\$50 today’ or even ‘\$0 today’ for smaller items. This approach makes the cost feel more accessible which makes people less likely to hesitate. Behavioral economists call BNPL a way of “reducing the pain of paying.” Thus, in

an online shopping environment, BNPL encourages customers to adopt an “I want it now” mindset, highlighting the tradeoff between immediate satisfaction and future cost. However, this can lead to disconnecting people from the actual cost, leading many BNPL users to overspend or make purchases they didn't intend to.

Most BNPL loans are small, ranging between \$50 to \$1,000, averaging just \$135. Because of this, BNPL tends to be used more for low-cost items rather than expensive ones. This works alongside the “lipstick effect”, where consumers, especially during financial stress, cut back on big purchases but still treat themselves to smaller luxuries. BNPL can increase this effect, encouraging frequent, low cost purchases that quickly add up.

The Risks Are Adding Up

The issue isn't just overspending, it's how easy it is to lose track of the debt. Most BNPL platforms don't do strict credit checks. They also don't always report a user's borrowing to credit agencies. That means people could be taking out multiple BNPL loans at the same time, on different platforms, and no one might have the full picture of their debt. Companies like Klarna have already seen a rise in missed payments. In fact, its net loss for the first three months of 2025 totaled \$99 million which is much worse than the previous year. This suggests the current BNPL model might not be as stable as it appears. For people using BNPL to cover essentials, not just clothes or electronics, the risk is even greater. A short-term solution can easily turn into long-term debt.



So, Who's Watching?

Governments are starting to introduce rules to make “Buy Now, Pay Later” safer for consumers. In the UK, new laws will soon require BNPL companies to check if people can afford the payments before approving them. Shoppers will also have the right to complain to an official service if something goes wrong, and they'll get the same protections as credit card users. In the U.S., similar rules are being considered, but they haven't been fully put in place yet. These changes are meant to make BNPL clearer and more secure for everyone.

What's Next?

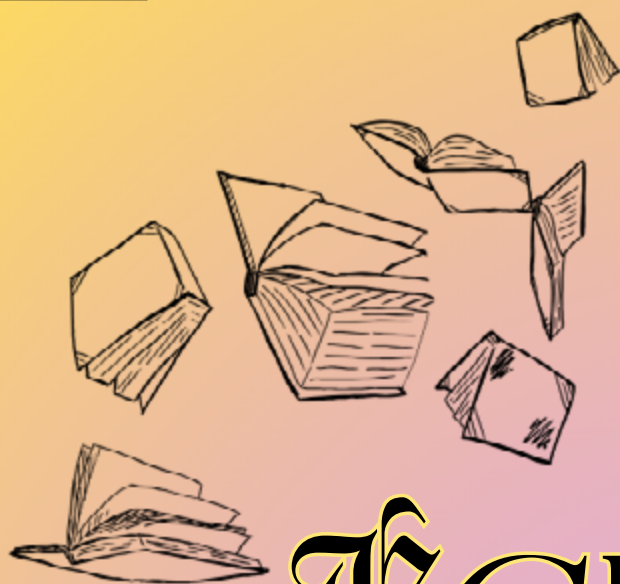
BNPL has real potential. It can be a smarter, fairer way to borrow, only if used carefully. But for now, it's operating in a grey area. Too easy to access, too hard to track, and too tempting to ignore. So, is BNPL the future? Maybe. But it depends on how we manage it. Because if we don't take a closer look now, we could be setting ourselves up for another financial mess.

Joana Janevska



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ECHOES OF THE SELF IN TRANSLATION

If you have read my self-reflections in the previous edition of *Voices* you will most likely already understand where this article is going. In case you haven't already, I highly encourage you to do so, just like I hope to motivate you to read all the books that I'm going to mention in this article.

Indeed, my reflective thoughts have not been fed just by my anxiety. Holidays at the seaside, and reading have also been contributing factors. From what I just said, you might think I was reading some deeply philosophical essays or some self-help book. But actually no. A "simple" compilation of short stories in Italian ("Racconti Romani", Jhumpa Lahiri translated in English as "Roman Stories") was what fed my thoughts. How can short stories taking place in Rome, a city I've only briefly visited when I was 5 years old, inspire my mind?

Well, to be honest, I don't really know either. The only connection is between my current living situation, as a person living abroad, and the fact that the book chooses to focus on foreigners living in Rome and its outskirts, rather than on native Italians. While this choice may seem "unusual", it makes this book even more interesting and impactful in my opinion.

Furthermore reading this book reminded me of another book of the same author that I read at the beginning of last year ("In altre parole", translated in English as "In Other Words") and that also left a mark on me. In this book the author explored her curious relationship to the Italian language, how she found herself attracted to Italian by chance, and most importantly all the efforts that she put into immersing herself in the culture and to take this language as her own. Efforts that led her to do a really peculiar thing: writing mostly in Italian despite not being a native speaker, and despite already having an established career as an English language writer.

You might be wondering why I'm bringing up books about the Italian language in the middle of my self-reflections. It probably feels a bit out of place and honestly, I'd agree with you, because it

is rather random. However, it somewhat still perfectly makes sense if you know me, my sometimes niche interests, or if you're learning or interested in learning foreign languages. Indeed every person that ever got invested in learning some foreign language, whether it's Italian or not, will relate and understand all the phases of doubts mentioned in "In Other Words". And while being able to write books in a foreign language may not be the goal of everyone, having the confidence to do so certainly is. For example, I know that reading these books in a way made me envious of the capacity and confidence that Lahiri has to have been able to reach such a level of "fluency" that she can now write books in her 3rd language.

I'm aware that the process of learning a foreign language can be a long journey, which is what makes it frightening to most people. There's for example this metaphor used at the beginning of "In Other Words" that really stuck with me. I still remember it even more than one year after having finished reading the book. Indeed the language learning process is compared to swimming across a lake. That is whilst arriving on the other side of the lake might be appealing, leaving the comfort of the bank to be in the deeper water of the middle of the lake can be dissuading. However, once the other side is finally reached after having gathered the courage to swim to the other side, we realise that after all it wasn't as scary as we thought. I believe this particular metaphor comes back to my mind quite regularly as I'm still in the process of contemplating the other side of the lake, notably because I'm scared of making mistakes. Making mistakes is totally normal, and is the way you learn to do things, but even knowing this I haven't been able to let go of my fear for now. In spite of this, I keep trying little by little, due to the fact that doing so will make it less and less scary and the end result will be even more rewarding.

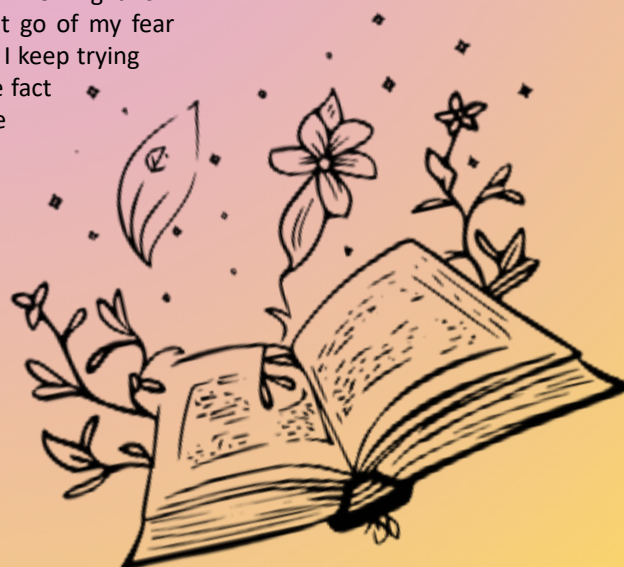
I could go on writing many more paragraphs about the different books by Lahiri that I have read or am currently reading, and how they inspire and motivate me in different ways. The first one is keeping on learning Italian or any other language I'm interested in right now. If I continue learning and making progress, then maybe one day I could be the one writing books in foreign languages, or sharing how I came to learn various 'random' smaller languages. I never thought about being a writer, but the more I read her books, the more I somehow feel inspired to write one in some distant future, about my journey to learning languages.

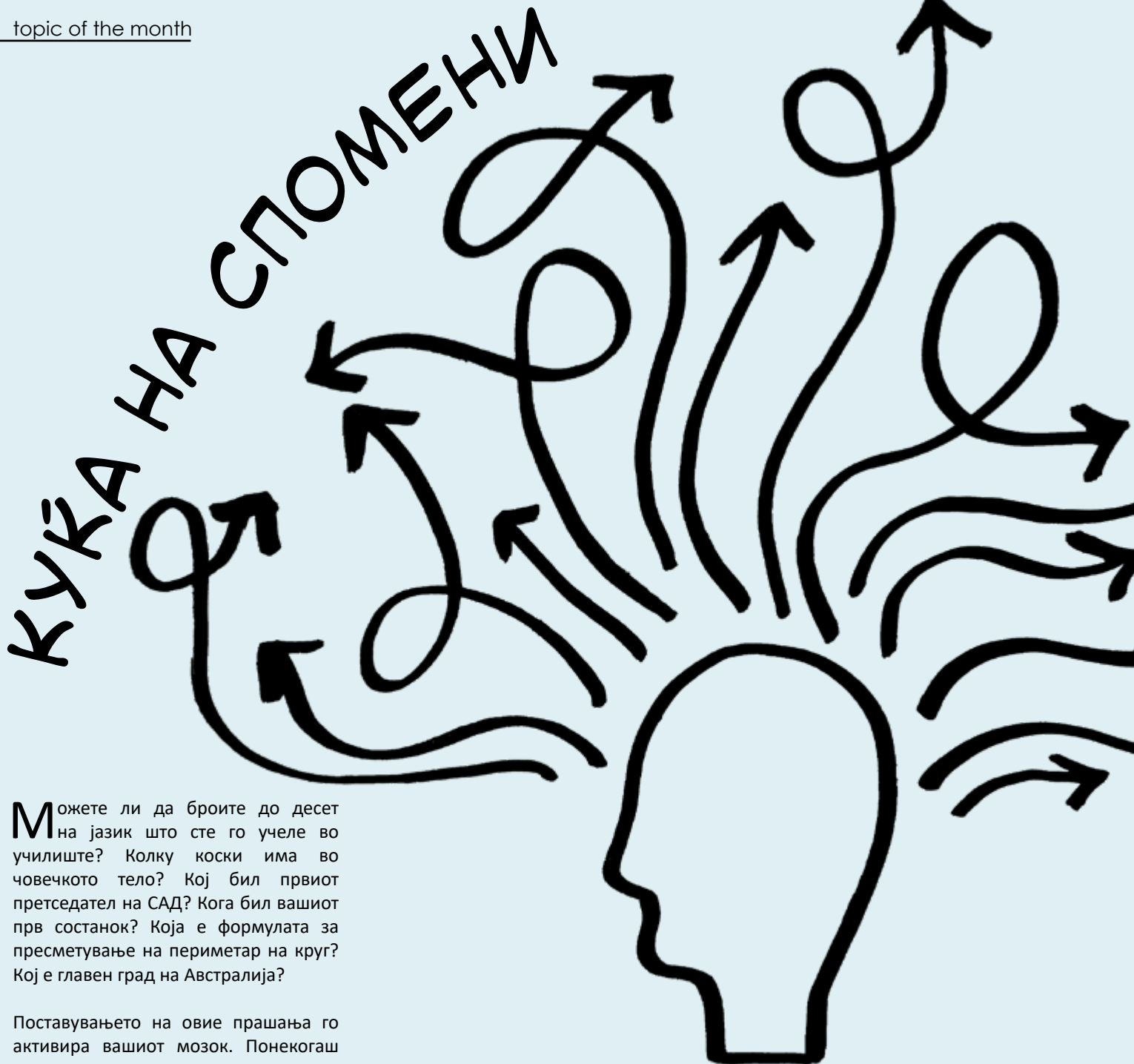
In the introduction, I mentioned that my goal with this article is to encourage every reader of this article to read the books that I made references to here. While it's not exactly a realistic goal, if I manage to inspire at least one person, this goal will be achieved for me.

Chloe Gaschy

Books mentioned/ inspirations:

In altre parole (Italian) (2015)
(translated in English as *In Other Words*, 2016)
Racconti romani (Italian) (2022)
(translated in English as *Roman Stories*, 2023)
Translating Myself and Others (English) (2022) (translated in Italian as *Perché l'italiano? Storia di una metamorfosi*, 2025)





Можете ли да броите до десет на јазик што сте го учеле во училиште? Колку коски има во човечкото тело? Кој бил првиот претседател на САД? Кога бил вашиот прв состанок? Која е формулата за пресметување на периметар на круг? Кој е главен град на Австралија?

Поставувањето на овие прашања го активира вашиот мозок. Понекогаш го знаете одговорот затоа што го помните; друг пат, се случува да заборавите или едноставно не знаете. На крајот на краиштата, кога некогаш ќе ги примените некои од овие информации? Оваа статија ќе ни помогне да разбереме како памтиме.

КАКО ФУНКЦИОНИРА НАШАТА МЕМОРИЈА?

Замислете дека чекате оброк во ресторан за брза храна, а готвачот ви кажува дека вашата нарачка е број 22. Ќе го памтите ова сè додека не дојде ваш ред да ја земете нарачката. Неколку дена подоцна, повеќе нема да размислувате на оваа информација. Ова е пример за користење на вашата краткорочна меморија. Па, како можеме да ги користиме сеќавањата? Во нашиот секојдневен живот

обработуваме илјадници информации за светот и нашата околина. Не секогаш ги задржуваме, но тогаш кога ги задржуваме, користиме различни видови памтење или меморија. Краткорочната меморија се однесува на помнење на информации од неколку секунди до неколку часа, додека долгорочната меморија може да ги зачува информациите со години. Кога станува збор за работна меморија, таа е вклучена кога повторувате дејство или дел од информацијата додека не се сетите на истата, како на пример повторување на вашиот телефонски број неколку пати за да го запомните.

Долгорочната меморија може да се категоризира на експлицитна и имплицитна меморија. Експлицитната вклучува свесно и намерно сеќавање

на факти, лични искуства или концепти. Може понатаму да се подели на:

- Епизодна меморија, која се однесува на лични искуства и емоции. На пример, на крајот од Европскиот младински олимписки фестивал, сите волонтери отидоа во Рагуза за да извршат евалуација на искуството, да јадат традиционална македонска храна, да танцуваат и да се забавуваат.
- Семантичка меморија, која се однесува на фактички информации и општо знаење. На пример: Македонија, главен град Скопје, население од околу 2,10 милиони, итн.

Од друга страна, имплицитната меморија е несвесна и влијае на нашите мисли и однесувања без активна свест. Ни овозможува автоматски да извршуваме задачи,

како што се возење велосипед или свирење инструмент, дури и ако не размислуваме активно како да ги извршиме.

КАКО ПОМНИМЕ?

Првиот пат кога ќе го посетите Скопје, веројатно прво ќе барате практични места како што се супермаркети, работно место, центарот на градот итн. За да го направите ова, можете да започнете со користење на Google Maps. Постепено, почнувате да препознавате обележја како статуи, имиња на улици и ресторани кои ви помагаат да се ориентирате и да се чувствувате позапознаени со областа и да нацртате ментална мапа на градот. Сето ова е благодарение на енграмите. Што се тие?

Не постои единствена локација во мозокот каде што се складираат спомените. Различни мозочни области се одговорни различни видови меморија:

→ Амигдалата на мозокот ги обработува емоциите,

→ Стријатумот е вклучен во учењето вештини,

→ Хипокампусот помага во складирањето и преземањето експлицитни спомени.

Всушност, спомените се создаваат и одржуваат преку мрежи од поврзани

неврони познати како енграми. Овие неврони се активираат за време на процесот на помнење. Експлицитната меморија вклучува три главни процеси: стекнување, консолидација (зајакнување) и присеќавање (прикажано на слика бр.1).

Кога забораваме нешто, тоа често е затоа што невронската врска не го следи својот вообичаен пат и пристапот до складираните информации не успева. Ова нè води до...

КАКО ИЛИ ЗОШТО ЗАБОРАВАМЕ?

Постои еден филм со назив „50 први состаноци“ каде што ликот на актерот Адам Сандлер се заљубува во жена која има вид на амнезија. Таа го живее истиот ден одново и одново, заборавајќи сè што доживеала претходниот ден. Ова е преувеличен пример, но истакнува како губењето на памтењето може да влијае врз нас. Амнезијата е дефицит во меморијата предизвикан од оштетување на мозокот или мозочна болест. Постојат два главни вида на амнезија. Ретроградна амнезија, што е неможност да се присетат на настани што се случиле пред одреден инцидент (како несреќа или операција). Антероградна амнезија е неможност да се формираат нови долгорочни спомени.

Постојат некои болести поврзани со нарушувања на меморијата, како што се Алцхајмеровата болест, често поврзана со стареењето и агнозијата, што е неможност да се препознаат одредени предмети, лица или звуци. Понекогаш забораваме работи едноставно затоа што сме немале можност да го примениме или зајакнеме она што сме го научиле. Ова истакнува колку е важно повторувањето за да ни помогне да запамтиме.

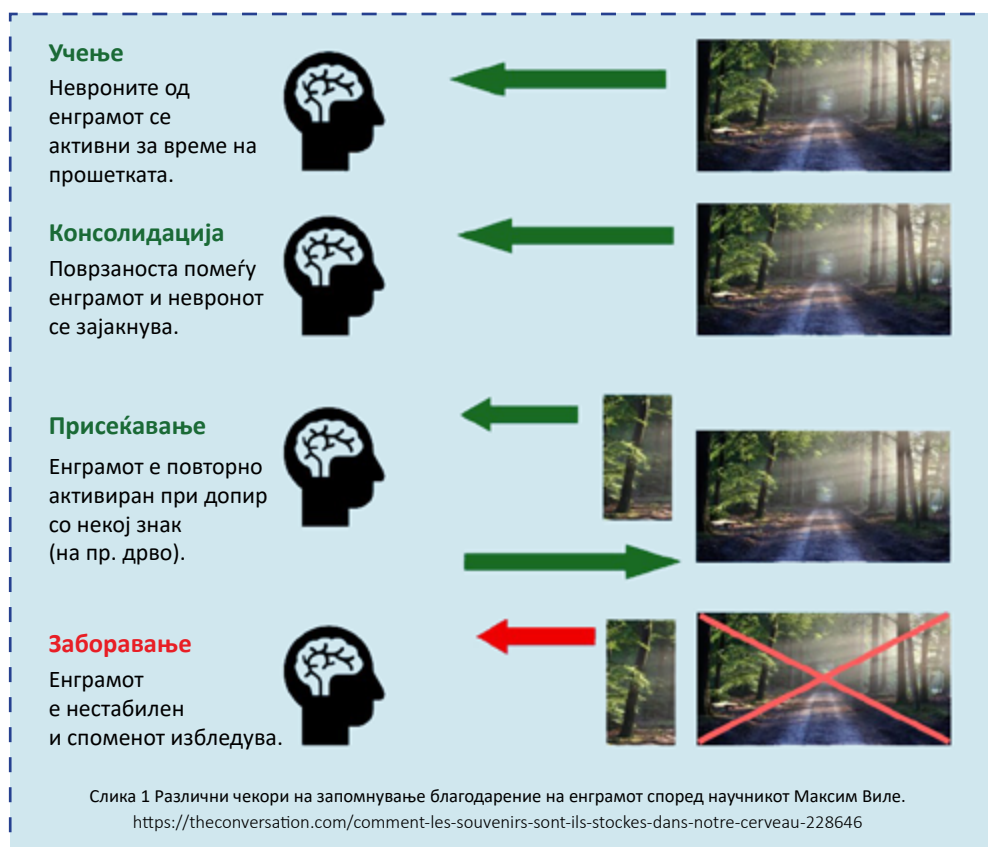
Како можеме да направиме едно сеќавање незаборавно? Земете, на пример, волонтерско искуство во Македонија: градење пријателства, посета на нови места и создавање посебни моменти. Како што беше напишано во една кафеана: „Еден момент трае секунда, но споменот трае засекогаш“.

КАКО ЗАКЛУЧОК

Прилично сум сигурна дека научивте нешто од читањето на оваа статија, но дали ќе се сетите на разликата помеѓу семантичко и епизодно сеќавање? Уште еднаш, што беше тоа енграм?

Лолин Томас

Превод: Дела Додевска



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How music shapes our minds

Music has always meant more to me than just sound. It isn't just a background noise or a hobby. It feels like a part of who I am, shaping my mind and its thinking patterns. Waking up, the first melody I hear can change how the first hours of my day flow. When I feel down, music can either lift my spirit or pull me deeper into sadness. It acts as a mirror and a guide, a companion that stays with me.

Scientists have studied how music affects the brain and body, but I feel it impacts every day, even without data. It can slow my breathing, soften my heartbeat, or make my pulse faster. It can wrap me in nostalgia so strongly it hurts or push me toward hope when I feel lost. The power of music is immense, and this sometimes frightens me. A single song can completely change my mood, point of view, and even my sense of self.

Music does not just affect humans. There was an interesting study where researchers played different types of music for plants. They found that plants exposed to classical or soft instrumental music grew faster and healthier, while those exposed to loud, chaotic noise became weaker. It feels strange, but it makes sense. Vibrations move through air, ground and water. Life also responds to these vibrations, whether it's a plant moving toward a sound or a human closing their eyes as a sound resonates within.

Just like plants lean toward a melody, I sometimes feel my own body responding to music. A slow song makes me breathe deeper, my shoulders relax, and my thoughts untangle. A strong beat makes my feet move almost without my own will. It's as if music speaks directly to parts of me I don't fully control.

Researchers have discovered that music can help reduce signs of depression and anxiety. It can trigger the release of dopamine, the brain's good feeling chemical, and lower cortisol, the stress hormone. It can improve focus, memory, and even how we deal with pain. Hospitals sometimes use music therapy for patients recovering from surgery or dealing with chronic illness. But beyond the science, there is something almost magical about how music can reach parts of us that words cannot.

When I reflect on the toughest moments in my life, I can recall the exact songs I was listening to. Some became my anchors. Others turned into wounds I couldn't touch for years because they reminded me too much of what I lost. Music holds emotions like glass jars contain light, and when I open them, everything spills out. Sometimes I let it out. Sometimes I cannot handle it.

What also fascinates me is how universal music is. Across every culture and throughout history,

humans have created music. With drums, flutes, strings, voices, every community has found ways to make sound meaningful. Maybe it's because music was there before language. Or maybe it's because our hearts already know rhythm from the moment we are born. After all, I think we are built from it.

For me, music is a need. It has helped me through times when words failed and when the weight in my chest felt unbearable. It has given me strength when I was too exhausted to go on. It reminds me that beauty exists even through pain and I don't think I could live without it. Or maybe I could, but I wouldn't be the same person.

I believe that if plants can grow toward music, so can we. We can reach for the sounds that make us stronger, gentler and more alive. We can choose the songs that remind us of who we want to be. And in those moments when life feels overwhelming, perhaps all we need to do is press play and let the music guide us, note by note, back to ourselves.

Cassandre Journoud

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Si e formëson muzika mendjen tonë

Muzika gjithmonë ka qenë diçka më shumë për mua sesa thjesht një tingull. Nuk është thjesht një zhurmë në sfond apo një hobi. Ndiem sikur jam pjesë e saj, duke formësuar mendjen time dhe mënyrën e të menduarit. Kur zgjohem, melodia e parë që dëgjoj mund të ndryshojë mënyrën se si rrjedhin orët e para të ditës sime. Kur ndihem keq, muzika mund të më ngrejë moralin ose të më tërheqë më thellë në trishtim. Ajo vepron si një pasqyrë dhe një udhërrëfyes, një shoqërues që qëndron me mua.

Shkencëtarët kanë studiuar se si muzika ndikon në tru dhe trup, por unë ndiej se ndikon çdo ditë, edhe pa të dhëna. Mund të më ngadalësojë frymëmarrjen, të më zbusë rrahjet e zemrës ose të më shpejtojë pulsën. Mund të më mbështjellë me nostalgji aq fort sa të më dhembë ose të më shtyjë drejt shpresës kur ndihem i humbur. Fuqia e muzikës është e jashtëzakonshme dhe kjo ndonjëherë më frikëson. Një këngë e vetme mund ta ndryshojë plotësisht humorin tim, pikëpamjen dhe madje edhe ndjenjën time për veten.

Muzika nuk ndikon vetëm te njerëzit. U krye një studim interesant ku studiuesit luajtën lloje të ndryshme muzike për bimët. Ata zbuluan se bimët e ekspozuara ndaj muzikës klasike ose të butë instrumentale u rritën më shpejt dhe u bënë më të shëndetshme, ndërsa ato të ekspozuara ndaj zhurmës së lartë dhe kaotike u dobësuan. Duket e çuditshme, por ka kuptim. Dridhjet lëvizin nëpër ajër, tokë dhe ujë. Jeta gjithashtu i përgjigjet këtyre vibracioneve, qoftë një bimë që lëviz drejt një tingulli apo një njeri që mbyll sytë ndërsa një tingull rezonon brenda.

Ashtu si bimët anohen nga një melodi, ndonjëherë e ndiej trupin tim që i përgjigjet muzikës. Një këngë e ngadaltë më bën të marr frymë më thellë, supet më relaksohen dhe mendimet e mia qartësohen. Një ritëm i fortë më bën të lëvizin këmbët pothuajse pa vullnetin tim. Është sikur muzika u flet drejtpërdrejt pjesëve të mia që nuk i kontrolloj plotësisht.

Studiuesit kanë zbuluar se muzika mund të ndihmojë në uljen e shenjave të depresionit dhe ankthit. Ajo mund të shkaktojë çlirimin e dopaminës, kimikatis të trurit që shkakton ndjesi të mira, dhe të ulë kortizolin, hormonin e stresit. Mund të përmirësojë përqendrimin, kujtesën dhe madje edhe mënyrën se si përballemi me dhimbjen. Spitalet ndonjëherë përdorin terapinë muzikore për pacientët që shërohen nga operacioni ose që përballen me sëmundje kronike. Por përtej shkencës, ka diçka pothuajse magjike në mënyrën se si muzika mund të arrijë pjesë të trupit tonë që fjalët nuk mundin.

Kur reflektoj mbi momentet më të vështira të jetës sime, mund të kujtoj saktësisht këngët që po dëgjoja. Disa u bënë spirancat e mia. Të tjera u shndërruan në plagë që nuk munda t'i prekja për vite me radhë sepse më kujtuan shumë atë që kisha humbur. Muzika i mban emocionet ashtu si kavanozët e qelqit që përmbajnë dritë, dhe kur i hap, gjithçka derdhet jashtë. Ndonjëherë e lëshoj. Ndonjëherë nuk mund ta përballoj.

Ajo që më magjeps gjithashtu është se sa universale është muzika. Në çdo kulturë dhe gjatë gjithë historisë, njerëzit kanë krijuar muzikë. Me bateri,

flauta, instrumente me tela, zëra, çdo komunitet ka gjetur mënyra për t'i dhënë tingujve kuptimplotë. Ndoshta sepse muzika ekzistonte para gjuhës. Ose ndoshta sepse zemrat tona e njohin ritmin që nga momenti që lindim. Në fund të fundit, mendoj se jemi ndërtuar prej saj,

Për mua, muzika është një nevojë. Më ka ndihmuar në kohë kur fjalët dështonin dhe kur pesha në gjoks ndihej e padurueshme. Më ka dhënë forcë kur isha shumë e rraskapitur për të vazhduar. Më kujton se bukuria ekziston edhe përmes dhimbjes dhe nuk mendoj se mund të jetoja pa të. Ose ndoshta mund të jetoja, por nuk do të isha i njëjti person.

Unë besoj se nëse bimët mund të rriten drejt muzikës, edhe ne mundemi. Mund të arrijmë tingujt që na bëjnë më të fortë, më të butë dhe më të gjallë. Mund të zgjedhim këngët që na kujtojnë se kush duam të jemi. Dhe në ato momente kur jeta ndihet e tepërt, ndoshta e tëra çfarë duhet të bëjmë është të shtypim butonin "luaj" dhe ta lëmë muzikën të na udhëheqë, notë pas note, përsëri tek vetja.

Cassandra Journoud
Përktheu: Dora Arifi

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A PROMISE TO my past self

Not too long ago, I received an email I was not expecting at all. Even though I knew I would have to face it sometime, it hit me out of the blue. Okay, not completely out of the blue but rather from one year back in time. It was a letter I had written for my future self. Taking some time to reflect on it, I realized that despite having evolved a lot over the past year, in the core I was still struggling with the very same thing that I had been writing the letter to make sure I did not: letting myself be led by the voice of fear. Therefore, my future-self of the past, also known as my current self, promised to my past self to finally tackle my greatest flaw and work on. So, here I am today to take a first step towards embracing my full self. Join me on the ride down the thought spiral of people pleasing.

People pleasing has evolved to become a widely-spread buzzword for an experience many can relate to. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that it is by no means any form of a professional diagnosis but rather a pop-psychological umbrella term for a certain

set of behavioral patterns. Most often, people pleasing is described as traits and behaviors evolving around pleasing others even at the cost of one's own needs and wishes. The general dynamic of people pleasing allocates between personal wishes, on the one hand, and the need for external validation and the fear of rejection, on the other. Regarding people that show people pleasing tendencies the two sides are in an imbalance in favor of the latter. In other words, whenever the two sides conflict, fear wins over the self-interests. Consequently, in order to appease their own fear and need for validation, the people concerned prioritize others' desires and wishes over their own. As a result, a certain set of behaviors can be observed in those affected that includes being overly compliant and submissive, rarely disagreeing or criticizing, apologizing excessively, and trying to maintain closeness by sacrificing oneself.

This thought and behavioral pattern is doomed to be unsustainable and destructive but due to most of it taking

place unconsciously, it is hard to break out of this vicious cycle before one is not already fully absorbed in it. Even though pleasing other's desires and wishes may cause satisfaction and validation in the moment, the behavior is more harmful than helpful if it is at the cost of one's own needs. In the long run this path leads to nothing but sublime resentment against oneself and others as well as unhealthy dependencies.

Anxiety about perceived abandonment and perception that one's likability is based on meeting other's needs can take on deep, existential dimensions that make it even harder to break this pattern. The reason for this lies in the roots of people pleasing tendencies. People pleasing is widely acknowledged to be the product of unmet psychological needs, a response to trauma or a learned behavior based on social conditioning. In any case, the people concerned perceive an existential threat looming in social relations. This translates to people with people-pleasing tendencies feeling

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that their existence is at stake whenever they are in a social situation. In order, to ensure their existence, they feel the need to blend in with the needs of others and thereby to disappear. This dilemma cannot be solved any other way than by escaping the vicious cycle of people pleasing tendencies and the destructive thought patterns behind it.

As the roots of people pleasing reach as far as questions of being or not being, the ways to overcome its destructive nature are also quite substantial ones. When trying to break free from the vicious cycle of people pleasing, two areas need to be addressed: the superficial behavior and the underlying thought patterns. The first step in tackling the former is to reflect on your own needs and desires. Based on the findings about what is good for yourself, what you enjoy and what you simply do not want, the next step is to observe when you give these things up for the sake of other people. As a German proverb says, insight is the first step toward improvement. Once insight is mastered, the time has come to actively change your behavior. So, when you notice that you are disregarding your own needs and prioritize the ones of others, take a step back and question your motivation. If you realize that you are acting on the basis of the voice of your inner people pleaser, your voice of fear, try to put yourself in the shoes of someone who cares for you and set limits with others or speak up for yourself on behalf of them.

Alongside this work on the external manifestations of people pleasing, work on the inner implications of these behaviors is also significant. As previously discussed, people pleasing is rooted in negative self-beliefs making it seem as if one's very existence is tied to the recognition of others. To overcome people-pleasing tendencies, it is therefore necessary to challenge these beliefs and replace them with positive ones that will ultimately nurture self-esteem and self-respect. As people pleasing is the manifestation of an existential fear, it is also a source of identity. To put it differently, it is a way in which we relate to others that shows how we relate to ourselves. In this sense, people pleasing is not a constructive and positive source of identity but a negative one that should be replaced. Rediscovering and redefining who you are may sound unclear and abstract, but, as with overcoming people pleasing tendencies it is a process: Despite being challenging, it is ultimately rewarding.

The hardest part of the journey is taking the first step – without making excuses or putting things off. For most of my life, I was stuck on thoughts like “When I grow up, all my problems will be gone”, “When I just spent a year abroad, all my struggles will be resolved”. However, even after having started to grow up and almost completed a year abroad, I cannot say that all my problems disappeared magically and that my people pleasing tendencies just solved themselves. In fact,

I am still far from being done with people pleasing. I am still struggling but that is okay because what matters is that I am working on it and giving my best. I want to take my time and practice being truly kind to myself and to others, step by step and day by day. When I first realized how deeply ingrained my people pleasing behavior is in many aspects of my life, I felt sad and angry with myself. But in a way, I am also proud of myself for finding a way to deal with the struggles I was facing. Nevertheless, the time has come to break free from these self-imposed chains and move on. I hope everyone that can relate to what is written here, will read this as the first chapter of a letter to a future that is yet to be written - a letter full of healing and hope. Equipped with this knowledge, the road ahead is uncertain – in the best way possible.

Sophia Abegg

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My journey of mentoring youth dreams in Aruba

My name is Evgenija, and right now, I'm living one of the most rewarding chapters of my life: volunteering in Aruba through the European Solidarity Corps. I chose this volunteering project because I wanted to combine my passion for youth development with gaining new cultural and professional experiences.

At the school where I volunteer, my main focus has been mentoring students. We've worked on activities designed to spark creativity and self-reflection, such as creating vision boards that help them visualize their goals and ambitions. This has opened important conversations about their future and how they can take steps toward achieving it. Another key part of my work has been helping students prepare for EduFest, the school's end-of-year festival. This event gives them a platform to present and promote their small business ideas.

My role has been to support them in getting ready, helping with planning, presentation tips, and encouragement so they can confidently share their work with the community. Outside of the school, I also assist in the CEDE Aruba office.

My responsibilities include onboarding new volunteers and contributing to youth-focused activities. This side of my work has shown me the planning and coordination needed to make community projects successful. My volunteering journey here isn't over yet. I'll be in Aruba until the end of October. In my remaining time, I'm also taking on a new role: serving as an activities supervisor to help elderly people. I'm looking forward to contributing to this area as well, offering companionship and organizing activities that make their days more engaging and joyful.

My experience in Aruba has shown me the power of mentorship, creativity, and collaboration in driving personal growth. Whether in the classroom guiding students, in the office supporting projects, or soon in the community helping elderly people, each role has deepened my understanding of service and human connection.

The most rewarding part has been watching young people gain confidence and pride in their achievements. And as I prepare to expand my volunteering to a new area, I'm reminded that the impact of this journey goes beyond the time I spend here. It's about the relationships built and the skills shared, which will continue to grow long after I leave.

Evgenija Petrova



МОЈОТ ПАТ КОН ИНСПИРИРАЊЕ НА СОНОВИТЕ НА МЛАДИТЕ ВО АРУБА

Здраво, јас сум Евгенија, и во моментот го живеам најисполнувачкото поглавје од мојот живот: волонтирање во Аруба преку Европскиот Солидарен Корпус. Го избрав овој волонтерски проект затоа што сакав да ја спојам мојата страст за развој на младите со стекнување на нови културни и професионални искуства.

Во училиштето каде што волонтирам, мојот главен фокус е менторирање на учениците. Работевме на активности дизајнирани да ја поттикнат креативноста и саморефлексијата, како што е изработката на „vision board“ - табли кои им помагаат да ги визуелизираат своите цели и амбиции.

Ова отвори важни разговори за нивната иднина и за тоа како можат да преземат чекори за да ја остварат. Друг клучен дел од мојата работа е помошта на учениците во подготовките за „EduFest“ – завршниот фестивал на училиштето. Овој настан нуди платформа за претставување и промоција на бизнис идеи.

Моја улога е да им помогнам во подготовките, со поддршка во планирањето, совети за презентација и охрабрување, за да можат со самодоверба да ја споделат својата работа во заедницата. Надвор од

училиштето, исто така, помагам во канцеларијата на CEDE Aruba. Моите одговорности вклучуваат интеграција на нови волонтери и придонес кон активности насочени кон младите. Овој дел од мојата работа ми покажа колку се важни планирањето и координацијата за успехот на заедничките проекти. Моето волонтерско патување овде сè уште не е завршено – ќе бидам во Аруба до крајот на октомври.

Во преостанатото време, преземам и нова улога: надзорник на активности за помош на постари лица. Со нетрпение очекувам да придонесам и во оваа област, нудејќи им дружба и организирајќи активности кои ќе им ги направат деновите поинтересни и повесели.

Моето искуство во Аруба ми ја покажа мојта на менторството, креативноста

и соработката во поттикнување на личниот развој. Без разлика дали сум во училиштето за менторирање ученици, во канцеларија поддржувајќи проекти или наскоро во заедницата помагајќи на постарите лица – секоја улога ми го продлабочи разбирањето за човечка поврзаност. Најисполнувачкиот дел беше да ги гледам младите како добиваат самодоверба и гордост од своите постигнувања.

И додека се подготвувам да го проширам моето волонтирање во нова област, се потсетувам дека влијанието од ова патување оди подалеку од времето кое ќе го поминам тука. Се работи за врските кои се изградени и вештините кои се споделени – и кои ќе продолжат да растат долго откако ќе заминам.

Евгенија Петрова



DOES IT TAKE JUST A LITTLE TO BE HAPPY?

When was the last time you felt truly happy in your life? Maybe you will feel that is a deep question, maybe too deep to start an article, but actually, it can be really easy to answer. Maybe it was just taking a coffee with a friend, going for a walk in nature, travelling in another country or spending time with your family... But, if I'm asking you the question it's because most of the time, we are not really thinking about it. We live our lives without paying attention to our feelings, especially when they are positive, as if being happy was our normal state.

Therefore, I decided to talk about happiness. To reconnect to our positive feelings first, but also because, if there's one thing that people in our society all seem to aim for, it's without a doubt, happiness. This search for happiness naturally leads us to think about the conditions that could make it possible.

Thus, we can ask ourselves: Does it take just a little to be happy? Before you start thinking about it yourself, I just want to make sure the question is clear. In the common language, happiness means a pleasant, balanced, and lasting emotional state, which a person reaches after achieving essential goals and desires.



Being happy with only what's necessary : "the little" to be happy

From this definition, we can already start answering the question. The word "essential" in "essential goals and desires" tells us what can lead to happiness. If we talk about essential desires, that means there are also non-essential desires. But, what are essential desires? Drinking, eating, sleeping, and protecting ourselves from cold or heat are considered basic human needs. From this, we could say that "the little" simply means meeting these essential needs and giving up the rest. If happiness comes from meeting essential needs, then yes, happiness can be found in having little. But let's be realistic: having "what's necessary" may be little, but it's not always easy. Today, meeting basic needs is becoming more and more difficult for many people. So, how can we claim that "living with little" is enough to be happy, when that "little" isn't enough to cover basic needs? The goal here isn't to start a political debate on inflation and purchasing power, although I'd have a lot to say about it... It's simply to remind ourselves of our current reality: not everyone starts with the same chances in life. Some people don't even know what "little" or "necessary" means, because they never have the luxury of asking themselves that question.

Beyond the necessary : "little" in modern society

If we go back to the question "Does it take little to be happy?", we're already assuming you need something to be happy... because having little still means having something. Until now, we've treated "little" as "the necessary," but maybe we can go further than this philosophical idea. Let's be honest, I don't think anyone could truly be happy with just eating, drinking, and sleeping (okay, except if we are eating and drinking in a kafana). If we go beyond the idea of "the necessary," we need to rethink what "little" means in today's world. I believe (actually, I'm sure) that nowadays we don't know how to be content with the essentials. That is logical: we live in a system driven by the economy, which only works through consumption... even overconsumption. So, if changing the whole political system crossed my mind, I'm afraid that politics can not solve every problem in the world. This is why I will address us. Us, the consumers. Us,

the citizens. Us, the future generation. Without waiting for any reply from your side, I'm guessing one of our goals in life is to be happy.

Let's think about what we already have. What is already around us. What we truly need to be happy. You might realize that happiness lies in appreciating what you already have. Happiness lies in the present moment. Happiness lies in the people around us. In the time we spend with them, but also in the time we spend without them, because being alone is also a part of our happiness. Despite what the Stoics might say, happiness is in the small pleasures of life. Collecting small joys adds to our happiness. Let's be Epicurean, leave behind overconsumption and excess, and choose a simple, sufficient way of living, freely and consciously chosen.

After all, where is happiness?

To be happy, you don't need little or a lot. You just need to be free to be yourself. Free to choose to travel to Macedonia rather than a super fancy destination, and even more free to opt for green travel to go there, because you should enjoy the journey as well as the destination. Free to enjoy every night in a kafana, because, you know, ajvar and makalo are absolutely tasty. Free to take your time like Macedonian people, to never be in the rush. Free to prefer eating in the dormitory instead of your house, not because the food is better but just because you like the people around the table. Free to play cards everywhere, with everyone and even more with foreigners, to secretly steal their cards at the end of the game. Free to take a nap every two seconds because you need to be at 100% for the thing that really counts for you. Free to spend all your money outside, even when you don't have any left in your wallet, because you can always borrow it from your friends; money will come back, not time.

In conclusion, feel free to not seek happiness, because maybe it's only when we stop searching to reach it that we realize we already have it. And as C2C sang, "you'll never feel happy, until you try!".

Youna Léauté-Guillet

HOW TO WRITE ARTICLES FOR VOICES



TOPIC

- Anything, except politics or hate speech
- Think of topics that would interest **our audience** (youth)
- Maybe a **current event or trend** that you could write about?

RESEARCH

- Use **credible sources** when researching your topic
- Double-check** any information you include in your article to ensure **accuracy**
- Don't plagiarize**
- Link the sources** at the end of your article

STRUCTURE

- Use **short, attention-grabbing headline**
- Write an **introduction** at the beginning (what, who, when, why, how)
- Include **body** and **conclusion** in your article, maintain a logical flow
- Write your **full name** at the end

WRITING

- Use **clear and concise language** that your audience will understand
- Avoid** too technical terms and **hard language** unless necessary
- Be engaging** and try to make your article interesting to read

FEW RULES

- The article should be around 500 - 1000 words
- Don't** include images or illustrations in the document
- Send possible **photos separately** (with sources and assured they're **free of copyrights**)
- Edit and revise** (clarity, grammar, and spelling error)

WHAT ELSE?

- You can write in **English, Macedonian and Albanian**
- You don't need to be pro, **VOICES is open for everyone!**
- Writing to the magazine is **voluntary**
- We can provide you with a **certificate** if you become a writer for VOICES magazine





Our monthly magazine has a very simple, yet powerful, mission - to be the voice of youth. And how do we do that?

We encourage young people to take an active part in today's society through journalism and designing by giving them a platform to express themselves. VOICES is produced in Skopje, Macedonia, and published online every month and four times per year as a printed edition.

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