

## **SMALL THINGS MATTER**

We all have it in us to live a happy, healthy life!  
Yet self-improvement can be difficult, and knowing what to do on a day-to-day basis is not always obvious or intuitive.

**Your life is the sum of the small micro-actions you do every day, and every choice you make is significant.**

This book will empower you to make change happen – one micro-action at a time.

**Because the small things matter.**

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The Book of YOU makes self-improvement bite-sized. Give the book just one minute of your day, every day, and it will give you simple micro-actions you can do for a happier, healthier you.

When you've completed a micro-action, tick it off in the circle provided at the top of the page. You'll also find space to write down your thoughts and note down your achievements.

### **What is a micro-action?**

A micro-action is small, simple and achievable in a normal day. For anyone. 'Meditate for twenty minutes' isn't a micro-action but 'sit quietly for two minutes' is. 'Run a marathon' isn't a micro-action but 'take the stairs' is. Simple, but they make all the difference.

## MICRO-ACTION CATEGORIES

**Each micro-action comes under one of four categories:**

**FOOD:** Food is such an integral part of how you live that small, simple changes in how you eat can add years to your life. 'Food' micro-actions are not only about what you eat but how, when, how much and with whom. 'Stop eating chocolate' is not a micro-action. 'Snack on a veggie' is.

**MIND:** The mind determines who you are and how you act. But it isn't set in stone – it can be trained. 'Mind' micro-actions tackle mindfulness (being present in the moment), productivity and organization (making sense of the world around us). 'Tidy the house' is not a micro-action. 'Organize the kitchen cupboard' is.

**MOVE:** 'Move' micro-actions are about everyday movement – small, easy micro-actions that you can incorporate into your daily routine. 'Sign up for a triathlon' is not a micro-action. 'Do two minutes of heel kicks' is.

**LOVE:** Don't be fooled by the title – it's not about romance. 'Love' micro-actions are about your relationship with yourself and others. Here, micro-actions really matter. Treating someone well triggers a positive reaction in that person, which triggers a positive reaction in you too. 'Make a new friend' is not a micro-action. 'Reach out to someone' is.

## HOW DO I START?

There are 365 micro-actions in this book: one for each day of the year. We suggest you start at number 1, then after the first few you can either follow the daily order or jump around to mix things up – it's completely up to you.

## HOW DO I MAKE THE MOST OF IT?

- **Take your time** – Change works most effectively in small steps, so don't try to over-achieve. Take your time, and reflect on each micro-action.
- **Be open** – Be open to different micro-actions, but if the micro-action is just not for you, simply turn to a different page and perhaps come back to it another day.
- **Repeat micro-actions** – The key to creating lasting change is to form new habits. Having a habit means your brain does it on autopilot, and it can last you a lifetime. Many habits can be formed in around 28 days, so use the 'Reflect and Renew' pages to record and follow up on them.
- **Make it your own** – We're all different, so make this book work for you. Write in it. Doodle in it. Carry it around as a companion. Flip through the pages. Skip micro-actions. Redo micro-actions. Do it alone, or with your loved ones.

**Get ready to start living a happier, healthier life, for you.**

## THE BACK STORY

The Book of YOU was born out of an app called YOU-app. We at YOU-app have always been passionate about health and personal change, and the road here has been an interesting one.

**We know that change is hard for most people.**

We all make big resolutions and struggle to fulfil them. In fact, 9 out of 10 fail, resulting in us feeling worse about ourselves.

**We've been there.** We've struggled with the same issues as most people – finding that elusive 'work-life balance', feeding your body right, a healthy self-image and not getting bogged down in the stresses of everyday life.

**We wanted a simpler approach.** We started working on micro-actions because science, as well as our own experiences, has proved it's the small changes that truly make a difference. Micro-actions build the habit of success, and behaving just a bit differently inspires more awareness and personal progress.

**And so, YOU-app was born.** The movement of YOU is about the power of small changes to have a real impact on your life. We want to bring a sound, fresh voice to the diet-crazy, transformation-obsessed world of self-improvement.

## WHO WE ARE

**YOU is a team effort.** The team consists of designers, developers, micro-action creators, the marketing team and the brilliantly warm and supportive YOU community.

Former management consultant turned eager entrepreneur, **Nora Rosendahl** is the editorial engine behind the YOU micro-actions. Engineer by background and with years of experience solving tough business problems for some of the world's largest companies, she's often the odd one out in the health start-up scene. A meditative weekend spent in self-reflection changed the course of her career, and Nora now combines creative writing, empathetic community management and hard-core number crunching on a daily basis for YOU.

Engineer by background, entrepreneur through passion and musician at heart, **Nelli Lähteenmäki** is a true people connector. An interest in sales took her to San Francisco, a passion for growth entrepreneurship made her stay and a longing to build a health start-up made her return to Finland and start the journey that eventually led to YOU. A bundle of positive energy and with a network to die for, Nelli can navigate any start-up scene like a lioness on the savannah plains.

With a determined, thoughtful and decisive touch, **Aleksi Hoffman** steers the direction of the YOU product. He has a background in engineering and bioelectronics, so can be trusted to code anything from healthcare IT to IPTV systems. A passion for personal behaviour change, a visual eye to match any professional designer, a heart of gold and a perfect overhead squatting technique make Alekski a solid rock to lean on.

The designing duo other teams would kill for, **Jaakko Hyvärinen** and **Toni Sallinen** are the powerhouse behind the YOU brand and visual identity. With a creative touch, crazy humour and a human-centric approach they carefully craft the YOU we know and love.

And it's not just us, we've made some good company along the way. Among others, we've enlisted the help of category-specific experts, such as Jamie Oliver and Caroline Arnold. You can find out more about all of our guest contributors on the next few pages.

Now we're on a mission to make the world healthier and happier, one micro-action at a time.

## CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

### **Jamie Oliver** (Food)

Jamie's micro-actions exist to help everyone eat better and have a healthier relationship with food, one step at a time. After refocusing on his own health over the last two years, YOU-app has provided a powerful platform for Jamie to offer up his in-depth food knowledge, as well as tips he learnt during a recent qualification in nutrition. Jamie is a global phenomenon in food and food campaigning. Over a sixteen-year television and publishing career, he has inspired millions of people to enjoy cooking from scratch and eating fresh, delicious food.

**Dani Stevens (Move)**

Dani believes in starting small but dreaming big. In her ten-year journey to fitness and wellbeing, she has lost close to 100 kilograms over the course of four pregnancies. A busy mum, she proves that you don't need an army of fitness trainers and private chefs to turn the dream of enjoying a healthy lifestyle into reality. As a Fitness Food Motivator DaniStevens.com has a community of over 200,000 people across the globe.

**Jamie Sawyer (Move)**

Jamie is one of the UK's leading strength and conditioning coaches and is also a personal trainer. His experience has taken him from working with elite athletes to Hollywood A-listers. Jamie uses his knowledge of sports science to create bespoke training, nutrition and lifestyle regimes.

## 1. USING THE BOOK OF YOU

Making the decision to live happily and healthily is the crucial first step towards changing your life for the better.

Use The Book of YOU in the way that suits you best – on your nightstand as a daily diary to record your micro-actions and thoughts; as a 'coffee table book' to give you occasional inspiration; or carry it around with you to reach for when you have a spare minute. So today, simply reflect on how best to make time for you every day and what you hope to achieve from this book.

## 2. THANK A PERSON WHO MAKES YOU HAPPY

Having positive people around you gives you energy and a more positive outlook on life. Take a moment to reflect on someone you love who's a positive force in your life. How could you show your thanks to them?

## 3. LET'S GET PHYSICAL

You don't have to climb mountains, pound treadmills or lift weights to get active. Research shows that just working small, extra movement into your day has amazing health benefits. Make a regular journey more physical – park at the far end of the car park or climb the stairs instead of using the escalator. Whatever it is, no matter how big or small, just get moving more. **Jamie S**

## 4. TAKE A MOMENT

Take a moment without any disturbances to simply observe your surroundings. When life feels busy we often forget to take the 'me time' that our minds need to relax, refresh and regroup. Do you regularly take time during the day to pause?

Observe your surroundings for 5 minutes.

## 5. FILL YOUR FRUIT BOWL

Today, stock up your fruit bowl, and if you don't have one – get one! I like to think of fruit as nature's sweet shop – it's delicious, pretty much the simplest snack there is, and of course it's all packed with different and wonderful vitamins, minerals and nutrients. To see snacking on fruit as a pleasure not a chore, just stack up your fruit bowl with lots of lovely, colourful, seasonal choices. **Jamie**

## 6. YOUR COMMANDMENTS

Why not devise some personal commandments?  
Today, take a moment to think about what's important to you and create three personal commandments – for example, 'Keep a positive outlook' or 'Put family first'.

Record them here:

## 7. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Neglecting personal needs can impact physical and mental wellbeing, and putting off scheduling appointments creates low-level anxiety that can dampen your productivity. Today schedule an appointment with a doctor, dentist, accountant or neglected friend. You'll feel more relaxed immediately and it only takes a phone call. **Caroline**

## 8. ENJOY THE WEATHER

All weather is beautiful in its own right. Today, take a few minutes and enjoy the weather outside, whether it's ambient rain, cheerful sunshine or a dark and stormy sky. How will you make the most of the weather?

## 9. HUMBLE H<sub>2</sub>O

Being hydrated is super important as it means everything in our bodies works better – especially our brains, which are more than 70% water. Try swapping juice and fizzy drinks for H<sub>2</sub>O today. The cheapest way to hydrate is to turn the tap on. Water doesn't have to be boring: get creative with natural flavour combos. Think zingy citrus slices, cucumber ribbons, fresh mint or basil leaves, juicy berries or fresh ginger. **Jamie**

## 10. PICK A NEW HABIT

Whether it's brushing your teeth, washing your hair or putting on your make-up, habits constitute 40% of what you do every day. They're crucial to help rest the mind. Creating a new habit has the power to improve your health, appearance, productivity, relationships and work life. And the magic of a habit is that once it's been established, it will support you for life. Decide on one micro-action you will make a habit. Flip through the book to get inspiration on what your next new habit could be.

## 11. MAKE YOURSELF SMILE

How are you putting a smile on your own face today? Research shows that the mere act of smiling will actually make you feel happier! Do it early, and your smile can spread the mood to other people throughout the day.

## 12. WORK IT IN TO WORK IT OUT

Simply planning to exercise makes a big difference to whether you actually do it. Commit to a simple exercise routine for next week. Book it, call someone up to arrange a session, write it down – however simple it is, it will help you to make it happen. For an extra boost, lay out your gear the night before. **Jamie S**

## 13. A QUICK FIX

Today, fix something in ten minutes or less. Change a light bulb, sew a button on a shirt, install fresh batteries in a device, fertilize a plant. Repair just one thing. These tasks may not be critical, but completing one will make you feel back on top of things. **Caroline**

## 14. PRACTISE MINDFUL EATING

Eating better is not only about what you eat but how, so try to practise mindful eating. Think about what you're eating and why. At your next meal, take a moment to appreciate the sensations. **Darya**

## 15. PAY SOMEONE A COMPLIMENT

Giving and receiving praise increases goodwill and lifts mood in both the giver and receiver. Making someone feel good is likely to make you feel good too, putting a spring in your step. Today, be mindful and vocal about the contributions and positive attributes of others, and feel the boost. **Caroline**

## 16. A HABIT TO HANG ON TO

Here's a crazy fact – we make more than 200 decisions about food and drink every day and, out of those, we are aware of fewer than 15 of them. Today, identify a good eating habit that you want to keep. Becoming a bit more aware of the choices you make when it comes to food is the first step to improving your overall health. **Jamie**

## 17. UNSUBSCRIBE

Is your inbox inundated with promotions and newsletters? Today, unsubscribe from unnecessary emails. See how many mailing lists you can remove yourself from in five minutes. Searching for the word 'unsubscribe' in your inbox can help you target unwanted subscriptions. **Caroline**

## 18. WRITE A SHOPPING LIST

Sounds simple, doesn't it? But whether scribbled on the back of an envelope, tapped into your phone or written in a cute little notebook, a shopping list could save you money and mean you're less likely to impulse buy – which in turn can often mean spending too much money, buying food you don't need and ending up with food waste. Follow this simple step and take a few minutes to write a shopping list to avoid that impulse-buy cycle today. **Jamie**

## 19. TWO-MINUTE WORKOUT: STEP IT UP

Moving your body doesn't have to be hard – we have endless possibilities around us to add a bit of extra movement to the day, we just need to notice them. For example, use the stairs and steps around you. Two minutes spent walking up and down those will work up a real sweat. **Dani**

## 20. MAKE A CONNECTION

Happiness may seem like a fluffy, subjective topic, but extensive research on the science of happiness has shown that there are ten main factors that drive it. One of them is connecting to other people. Pick up the phone, send a postcard, order some flowers – connect to someone today.

## 21. TAKE A REAL BREATH

Our breathing is often too shallow. Try diaphragmatic breathing – it activates the lower parts of the lungs, which are seven times more efficient at helping our cells get in the good stuff (oxygen) and get rid of waste (carbon dioxide). This kind of breathing also has lots of other benefits: calming us down and improving stress management, digestion and blood pressure. Try it out. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Breathe in through your nose for three seconds, hold for three seconds, then exhale through your mouth for five seconds. Throughout the breathing, only the hand on your belly should move. **Jamie S**

## 22. MAKE A DAILY ROUTINE INCONVENIENT

If you build movement into your daily routine, you will ensure that you move more throughout the day – and it really adds up over time. Use a small glass so you have to get up to refill it with water more frequently, move the bin to a different place, park at the far end of the car park, take the longer way round.

**Jamie S**

## 23. HOME EXERCISE

We often think that being active involves spending hours at the gym, but you can achieve a healthy lifestyle much more simply. Add small micro-movements into your day. Get up and do squats over a chair, run up and down some stairs, take a walk around the house or do some work in the garden to get that blood flowing. **Dani**

## 24. A CULTURAL MICRO-EXPERIENCE

Did you know that cultural activities improve the bond between the two halves of your brain? Anything counts – from reading a novel to attending an opera or going to the theatre, from visiting a gallery to writing a poem or story, or even doodling. **Tara**

Have a go here:

## 25. A FAMILY MEAL

Sharing scrumptious food with the people you love is one of life's great pleasures. Take the time to enjoy a home-cooked family meal today or this week. Gather your loved ones around one table – whether that's your partner, a family spanning generations or the bunch of mates you live with – and enjoy some tasty homemade grub. **Jamie**

## 26. **JUST FEEL IT**

Notice how you are feeling today. Blue? Excited about the week to come? Nervous, happy or hopeful? Write down a few thoughts and, if you're feeling negative, just let it go.

## 27. TAKE STOCK

Devote a bit of time today to take stock of your fridge's contents. I bet it gets to a certain point every so often when your fridge – like mine – has been totally neglected. So have a rummage and pull out all those half-used, leftover and past-their-prime items. Use them up – turn them into meals, freeze them or simply pop them at the front of the fridge so they're not forgotten. **Jamie**

## 28. OFF WITH DIGITAL ALERTS

It's hard to make progress on priorities when a beep, buzz or notification alert interrupts you every thirty seconds. This digital chain-jerking can be a real drag on productivity. Turn off one or more alerts today to regain some focus. **Caroline**

## **29. FIND MICRO-MAGIC IN YOUR DAY**

Remember when you were a kid and everything around you had the potential to generate wonder and awe? Find some magic again today, be it in the sound of the rain, looking up at the moon, discovering something in nature, the laughter of a loved one or a quiet moment alone.

## **REFLECT AND RENEW**

As mentioned in the introduction, the most effective way to create lasting change is to create new habits. Many habits can be formed in around twenty-eight days.

Write down a few notes and feelings from the past weeks.

Do you have a favourite micro-action so far?

Now's the best time to pick one and make it your Keep It Up action for the month to come.