

Women's Community Counsellor  
Inspiring and Empowering You To Become Even More Fabulous  
Published by Esther Kane, MSW (<http://www.estherkane.com>)

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In This Issue

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- Welcome
- Featured Article: Move Your Body, Change Your Mind
- About Esther Kane, MSW, RCC
- Books by Esther

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Welcome

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Welcome to my August e-zine! I hope you're having a fantastic fun-filled summer full of lots of physical activity. Read my article for more on this topic...

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Featured Article: Move Your Body, Change Your Mind

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A woman-centred psychotherapist explores both the agony and bliss of regular exercise.

"Keep your knees locked! Hold your arms straight until they hurt! If you feel pain, good for you...it's doing something..."

Ah, the soft and tender words coming from my militant hot-yoga instructor...not exactly soothing. Isn't yoga supposed to be relaxing, you ask? Not the kind I've been doing for a while. I prefer to think of it as "bootcamp" yoga: an hour and a half dripping with sweat in a very hot room, often practising next to someone who had too much garlic at dinner last night, contorting myself into positions that make my head want to explode, while feeling murderous towards the teacher...welcome to my form of heaven.

Do I enjoy torturing myself this way three times a week come rain or shine? NO. Do I often get into the hot room and want to run out the door screaming? YES. Do I pay a lot of money to go through this torture? YES. Am I glad I do it? ABSOLUTELY.

You may be scratching your head in confusion at this point and I totally understand why. But when I tell you the real reason I do this exercise regime three times a week religiously, suffering and cursing the entire time, you'll understand where I'm coming from.

At the age of 36, I've gotten a bit wiser when it comes to health and taking care of my body. Gone are the days of starving myself or overeating and then punishing myself through exercise. Believe it or not, I absolutely LOVE exercise now. Not because it makes me skinny (nothing will do that due to having the pulchritudinous physique of my shapely Jewish female ancestors which I have come to learn is purely genetic). However, regular exercise does keep me at a healthy weight for my size and stops me from obsessing about my body and food (except during PMS when my body and mind are overtaken by some form of alien life who temporarily makes me think that chocolate is in itself, *an entire food group* and that excess water in the tummy area is a must-have).

The reason I love exercise now is how it makes me feel AFTERWARDS. You see, after I leave an exercise class, I am transformed. No matter how crappy, miserable, sad, or angry I am feeling before I exercise, for some incredible reason, I consistently feel energized, positive, relaxed, and peaceful after a good workout. And so do many of the women I know. Now we know from brain research that exercise boosts serotonin, the "feel-good" neurotransmitter in our brains, increases endorphins; chemicals in our bodies that make us feel happy and neighbourly, and relaxes our muscles, which in turn, relaxes our mind.

I encourage all of my clients to follow a regular, three-times-a-week exercise regime of their choice as the first step in improving their mental health. I have not met one single person who has adopted this healthy lifestyle habit who has not greatly improved their mood, productivity, and reduced stress in their lives as a result. I know we hear it over and over again about exercising regularly, but being the stubborn self-willed person that I am, I have finally accepted that other people are wise when they espouse this concept and it's not a conspiracy to make me conform to some strange cult.

I have witnessed countless women's mental health improve vastly from including regular exercise into their lives including recovery from depression, anxiety, disordered eating, post-traumatic stress, and many other issues.

I especially recommend regular exercise for women who are suffering from the effects of being in any kind of abusive relationship where they were systematically stripped of their dignity, sense of worth, and faith in their abilities. Vigorous exercise in this case, especially something like kick-boxing, can be extremely empowering and help you to overcome feelings of worthlessness and toxic shame. Through the act of exercising, you can transform a negative self-concept into one of power, strength, and awareness of your abilities and gifts.

In my therapy practise, I have discovered that many women are weighed down with "depression" or "anxiety" and that what is often underneath those labels is suppressed anger and/or grief. Being in our bodies and expressing ourselves physically through regular exercise is a fabulous way of releasing emotions that have been stuffed down for a long time.

Exercise can be extremely helpful in moving our feelings ‘up and out’ of the body and can thus free up energy and leave us feeling lighter, stronger, and more peaceful and in control of our destiny.

There are so many wonderful, exhilarating, and enjoyable forms of exercise out there. Check them all out, try them out, and find the one(s) that you feel the best doing. Experiment and have fun!

To end, I’ll leave you with some very inspiring reasons for working out regularly...

Esther’s “Top Ten” Reasons to Exercise regularly:

1. Time for yourself- you get to leave all the people and things that you feel responsible for behind for a time and just focus on yourself
2. Lifts your mood and helps you feel more positive
3. Stops you from obsessing about your body size and shape (in most cases- if you are really prone to this, try a form of exercise that focuses on how you feel on the inside; not how you look on the outside- focus on becoming strong and feeling good emotionally).
4. Gives you a sense of routine which can help you feel more grounded emotionally
5. Gets you out into the world connecting with people you may not meet otherwise
6. Increases your self-esteem as you grow stronger and feel fit
7. Normalizes metabolism which helps you gain or lose weight depending on what is best for your body
8. Improves your sex drive- not a bad side effect, huh?
9. Makes you nicer to be around because you’re happier, healthier, and calmer
10. Helps you get out of your head and into your body; this is great for us “thinkers” and “analyzers”

So go hop on a bike, take the dog out for a walk, or crank up the stereo and boogie up a storm in the living room - you’ll feel better as a result!

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About Esther Kane, MSW, Registered Clinical Counsellor  
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Esther Kane, MSW, Registered Clinical Counsellor, is in full-time private practise as a psychotherapist in Courtenay, B.C. Esther has over a decade of experience counselling women and their loved ones with a multitude of presenting problems. Her main focus is helping women to become free of barriers which keep them stuck so that they can become all that they dream of being.

To book a session or to set up a free 15-minute phone consultation (**only if you reside in the Comox Valley or surrounding areas**), call Esther at (250) 338-1800.

To learn more about Esther's services, please visit her website and read glowing testimonials from many satisfied clients, <http://www.estherkane.com>

Please note: due to the high volume of e-mails received, Esther only replies to potential therapy clients and the media.

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Books by Esther

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### **"WHAT YOUR MAMA CAN'T OR WON'T TEACH YOU: GROWN WOMEN'S STORIES OF THEIR TEEN YEARS"**

"Esther Kane, MSW, RCC, has collected a delightful set of stories in her book, "What Your Mama Can't or *Won't* Teach You: Grown Women's Stories of Their Teen Years." The voices of 20 women are interweaved with each other to create a conversation-like book of women talking about their early struggles. The issues discussed are diverse and cover so many things that affected the way they grew into adults. Their insight back into what shaped them the most is sometimes funny, other times heartbreaking and often poignant. Esther interviewed these women on topics that she asked her teen clients they would most like to read about. What amassed is wisdom from a generation of women who survived and are willing to share their experiences to the youth of today."

- Lori Henry, Eating Disorders Writer, [Suite101.com](http://Suite101.com)

To find out more about the book, go to:

<http://www.guidebooktowomanhood.com>

### **"DUMP THAT CHUMP: A Ten-step plan for ending bad relationships and attracting the fabulous partner you deserve"**

"This is a well written and easy to follow guide for all women that struggle to find that perfect match for a lifetime relationship. The information you will gain will help strengthen your understanding in how very important positive self-talk is: it will strengthen your ability to not repeat wrong decisions in regards to relationship choices. It will also show you how that phrase, "settling", is not and should not be acceptable to you. You will learn that settling for someone or something eventually drowns your own ideas of what you deserve in life as far as a partner is concerned. People choose to settle because it is safer, more predictable, easier to control and a lot less challenging than actually striving for more.

The author uses this very powerful phrase to help you look at the core of your bad decisions, "What You Expect Is What You Get". If you expect nothing then you will get

nothing. DTC will also teach you how to retrain your mind so that you can get to know yourself through positive self-acceptance. To know and understand who you are is a definite key in helping you to make the correct choice in relationships. Lets face it, no one wants to be stuck in a bad relationship. Womensselfesteem.com highly recommends, "Dump That Chump" as a very good source book in opening your eyes to the many reasons that we end up in failed relationships!"

-Review by Dorothy of Womensselfesteem.com

To find out more about the book, go to:

<http://www.dumpthatchump.com>

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Archives

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To view previous editions of Women's Community Counsellor, visit [http://www.estherkane.com/free\\_stuff.htm](http://www.estherkane.com/free_stuff.htm)

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Pass it on and Enjoy

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