

Family Ties

Could karma coaching work for you? By delving into her ancestral past and facing up to some traumatic family secrets, Jini Reddy discovers this potent healing method can bring about profound and positive changes...

At a glance, karma coaching doesn't sound wildly appealing – not esoteric enough with its nod to life coaching, and devoid of that pampering, touchy-feely element so many of us are really seeking in an alternative therapy. That's my first impression, at any rate. But am I being too hasty?

The therapy is based on the belief that we store potentially damaging ancestral memories in our DNA. When these memories are triggered by events and those around us, they can make us feel and behave in often unhelpful and irrational ways. The cure? A session (or sessions) with The Karma Coach, aka Nikki Wyatt, who will help you to bring these ancestral memories to light, shed the troublesome baggage and emerge lighter and happier. The Karma Coach's 'tools' are a combination of guided role playing, talking, flower essences and Gaia healing.

All well and good, but to me dredging up the past – or my family's past – doesn't sound like much fun. But here's the thing – and admittedly, I say this after a single session – karma coaching is engaging, not at all dull, leaves you feeling good, and more to the point, seems to work.

Nikki is a professional healer and has studied just about every therapy under the sun. She's no lightweight, and used to work in marketing, flogging language training manuals to blue chip businesses. When I speak to her on the phone to arrange an appointment she sounds quite forthright, and blunt. In person though – Nikki runs her practice in Hove – she is gentle, welcoming and possesses that indefinably soothing aura that puts you at ease in the way that the most

gifted healers are able to. I also feel she can see through me, which I find reassuring, in a 'pew, she gets me' way. Which, I suspect, is how Nikki makes most of her clients feel.

Still, I'm averse to the idea of looking back, or revisiting past pain. God knows I've had my share: bereavements, romantic disasters, work and health dramas. But if you're going to see a Karma Coach, well, it seems churlish to resist.

Delving deep

Before our appointment, Nikki had emailed to ask if I could dig up any facts relating to my family history which might be relevant: "The sort of things which can create issues in later generations – for instance, members who have been 'disowned' for any reason in past generations, such as having a child out of wedlock, homosexuality, marrying outside the family religion, mental illness, family 'secrets' such as bankruptcy, gambling, alcoholism, illegitimacy, miscarriages, terminations, adoptions, stillbirths, early deaths, accidents, tragedies and emigration."

From that long list of familial woes, I instantly identify a few that strike a chord: bereavement (both my sister and father died of heart attacks), miscarriage (my mother had one before I was born) and emigration.

"What do you hope to achieve from this session?" she asks, once I'm comfortably seated in her treatment room, a glass of water in my hand. Good question, but I've come prepared. I tell Nikki that I want to communicate more honestly and from the heart. More and more I feel that if I reveal who I am, then the person I'm

talking to will also feel comfortable opening up, which can lead to real intimacy. What's the point if we're all just pretending to feel and think things we're not? And I don't just mean in romantic encounters, but in relationships with friends, and family. I'm also curious to find out why I've always felt like an outsider, and vaguely lonely, no matter how cared for I am.

She nods reassuringly, and then takes my medical and family history, sketching out a rough family tree.

These are the significant things that arise: my parents grew up under the apartheid regime in South Africa, and their early lives were a bit of a struggle (they are Indian and didn't have the right to vote). My great-grandparents emigrated there from India. My own parents emigrated to Canada. My mother miscarried a child during some riots, and in the past decade both my sister and father.

Decoding the evidence

Drawing all the strands together, after a brief, thoughtful pause, and with the precision of a forensic scientist, Nikki delivers her verdict: "I can see that you would have inherited the loneliness

"The Karma Coach's 'tools' are a combination of guided role playing, talking, flower essences and Gaia healing"



"I let go of my past demons"

Jaynie Ralph, 35, presents a radio show called the *Holistic Network*, on Brighton's Radioreverb

"A friend of mine recommended Nikki. I'd been feeling unwell and low on energy for months, which was out of character for me. I had a cold I couldn't get rid of, my relationship with my boyfriend was getting to me and I hated my job at the time. In our first session, we talked through my symptoms and Nikki used her intuition to understand what was going on on a deeper level with me. She did 30 minutes of Gaia healing (hands-on-healing). She was holding my feet, then moved to my head but I could really still feel her at my feet. The next day I felt much better.

"In subsequent sessions, we did flower card readings (similar to tarot) and looked at how karmic patterns within the female side of family, in particular those relating to my grandmother, were affecting my life on a subconscious level. Nikki felt that all romantic relationships in my life had sprung from patterns of relationships with my family, and that if these issues weren't addressed it would be hard to move forward. She gave me some flower essences to take eight times a day to help clear these patterns and suggested that I visit my grandmother's grave, which I did. All of this helped to heal a significant mis-alignment in my family history. It felt profound and significant and had a huge effect on every area of my life. I saw Nikki about eight times, and throughout she was very professional and nurturing.



and sense of being an outsider from the unique struggles your family has faced, and from the waves of emigration. And the difficulty you have in expressing yourself authentically is linked to family feelings of being suppressed, of not having a voice historically."

Now, all of this might seem blindingly obvious to an outsider, but funnily enough it wasn't to me, until Nikki said it and then it made perfect sense. It's like finding the missing piece of a jigsaw. She gives me a great tip for communicating with others: "If you're hesitant about telling someone your real thoughts, practise saying to yourself 'what I need to say to you, is more important than how I feel'." The gist of it is, you can't please everyone – I'm an approval-seeking Sagittarian – and as Nikki says: "You'll be



"Karma coaching with Nikki was like finding the missing piece of a jigsaw puzzle"

surprised at how much more people are able to handle than you think."

We then move on to a role-playing exercise which initially has me shuddering inwardly. I hated drama class in school! The principles of which some of the exercises are based are derived from a process called Family Constellation work, developed by Bert Hellinger, a German therapist, she tells me.

"It's a way of discovering underlying family bonds and forces that have been carried unconsciously over several generations."

Under Nikki's guidance, I arrange family members, dead and alive (represented by pink sticky notes) in a configuration that intuitively feels right, interpreting what this means (in my case that I'm close on a soul level to one sibling and less so to the other). Then I take on the persona of each family member, describe my feelings, and deliver a loving message of intent (dictated by Nikki) to heal ancestral 'loose ends' and achieve closure. I admit I feel faintly ridiculous doing this, but, crucially, not pained,



fed up or bored. I also become a bit tearful, but if anything that's a bit of a relief to me, a sign that something is happening.

Healing remedies

All in all, the exercise leaves me feeling light-hearted and eager for my 'reward' – a dose of Gaia or 'earth energy' healing. I lie on the treatment bed while Nikki places her hands variously on my head, above my body, and on my feet. (At one point, bizarrely, I am sure I can feel her hands on my head and my feet simultaneously.)

All too soon, we're done, and Nikki leaves the room to give me time to collect myself. Ten minutes later she returns bearing a flower essence remedy. Like Bach remedies, they feature heavily in her therapeutic toolbox. "Traditionally, we've always turned to nature for a cure, and essences are an extension of that philosophy. They're a form of energy medicine, and work a bit like homeopathic remedies," she explains. The right flower can correct an imbalance in your energy field, before it manifests in emotional or physical symptoms. "They help us to feel and release buried emotions and unhelpful thought patterns," says Nikki.

To make the essences, the flowers are floated on water, in sunlight, and their energy is transferred to the liquid. The energised water then has a drop of

alcohol added to it, to act as a preservative, which makes up the tincture. My remedy contains Himalayan Poppy, Lapis Lazuli, Ruby, Pearl, Columbine, Desert Rose, and Bluebell. Collectively they work on a dizzying array of 'stuff' – helping to fulfill potential, cleanse toxicity in the body, stimulate personal expression and psychic insight, ease stress, open the heart to joy and love, and much, much more.

I'm to take four drops four times a day. I started taking them two days ago and so far have been feeling fine – sunnier than usual, in fact, which is a relief as you can also feel quite sad and emotional on them. But my gut feeling is that the karma coaching has already worked – it gives me strength and confidence to know a little more about why I am the way I am, and that can only be a good thing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, call Nikki on 01273 773324 or visit spiritoftransformation.com. A face-to-face or telephone consultation with Nikki costs £65 for two hours, £55 for a 90-minute session, and £40 for an hour. (The first appointment is always 90 minutes for an adult.) Remedies are an additional charge, but one essence usually lasts five or six weeks, costing from £12-£20.



"Karma coaching helped me get over my birth trauma"

Debbie Lewis, 33, Parenting Consultant and Coach, from Herefordshire.

"I went to see Nikki when I was five months pregnant with my second child. My first daughter was a caesarian birth and I had post-traumatic stress after she was born, as a result of the interventions I had during the labour. With my second baby I wanted to have a home birth and was keen to gain back some faith and trust in my body and the process of birth. I had already been for several sessions of counselling and although the immediate distress and feelings of trauma had gone I still felt there was a 'body memory' of the experience that I knew counselling couldn't touch. I was looking for something on a much deeper level.

"Nikki took my family and medical history, and suggested some flower and crystal essences to help me. I also had some healing. The following sessions followed the same pattern, but with more time for reflection, feedback and discussion.

There were times while I was taking the essences that felt like a bit of a bumpy ride, like I was letting things go. However, it was never more than I could manage and I didn't feel worried by what was happening. There were also times of amazing clarity and the sense that things were falling into place. It was quite an amazing process. I had a beautiful home birth and the transformation I felt after this was wonderful. Nikki and the essences had a profound effect on my life and that of my family."