

Led by heart, backed by mindfulness

Emma-Kate, like many New Zealand small business owners, had to shut the physical doors of her Massage Therapy and Mindfulness Coaching business while, together, we rode the early waves of Covid-19. During this time, she reflected on life and business pre-Covid and how her learnings will not only strengthen her future, but the future of those around her.

She shares her story with us.

I was born in 1974 with a rare heart condition - Truncus Arteriosus if you're curious - and given a 1% chance of life. I've been told my entire life that I'd need ongoing heart surgeries or worse - that I wouldn't survive. I was told that I'd never reach adulthood, have children or live a normal, healthy lifestyle.

Over the following years, my spirited determination saw me through many surgeries

and helped me rise when I was seriously ill. I went on to have three beautiful children who've helped to push and drive me to beat the odds. My middle child, Rossi, was also born with a heart condition and underwent open-heart surgery as a baby and countless other procedures over the years. Together, we know how scary it feels to have life taken out of your hands and to be at the mercy of hospital visits and medical intervention.

The power of Mindfulness

Four years ago, I discovered the power of Mindfulness. Put simply, Mindfulness is allowing yourself to be in the moment. An empowering practice that allows a person to sit with, and acknowledge, their thoughts and feelings – to Let Be, Let In and Let Go.

Mindfulness has been a gift to both myself and my family and has allowed us to keep our heads above water. Since introducing a daily practice of Mindfulness, I've managed to come off all my heart medication for high blood pressure and no longer take pain medications. My sleep has improved, I'm less tired during the day, I'm able to cope with my daily life with ease. Most recently I've increased my moments of mindfulness to guide me through the grief of losing my beautiful Mum.

Strengthening Wellbeing

As a dedicated massage therapist – I care deeply about relieving tensions in the bodies of my wonderful, supportive clients. As I was guided by my appreciation of Mindfulness it started to make sense that I looked to complementary practices to strengthen the overall wellbeing of my clients. To relieve tensions in both body and mind.

But, for a long time I treated my massage practice and mindfulness business quite separately. Under one umbrella, one location but clients generally booked one treatment or the other. Until, I was given the gift of slowing down....

The gift of slowing down

While it saddens me greatly that I wasn't able to treat my clients during our National response to Covid-19, and I – like many small NZ business owners – have suffered financially, I've appreciated the gift of slowing down. Slowing down has afforded me the time, patience and grace to look towards a new way forward.

I've recognised that our once busy lifestyles separated the alignment of body and mind. People treated one or the other but were never fully healed. Going forward, if I'm to treat the tensions, pains and sufferings of my clients I must gently blend massage and mindfulness together.

Time has allowed me to strengthen the connection between massage and mindfulness. To strengthen the new way forward for my business. And, most importantly – to strengthen the wellbeing of my clients and their futures. [U](#)

Wellbeing at home - Top 3 Tips

1. **Breathe and sit with your thoughts and feelings** – acknowledge them. Take 3 deep breaths. Do not dismiss or rush your feelings. Why are you feeling this way? What can you control? What can you change?
2. **The power of words** – be mindful of the words you use. Speak kind words to yourself and others. Replace negative words, with more empowering words. A current, topical, example – I chose to replace with word 'Isolation' with 'Self-Retreat' – I am not stuck at home, I am safe at home.
3. **Practice gratitude** – I start each morning with a heartfelt intention – "Good morning Emma, I love you" is my favourite intention. Journal your gratitude as a powerful reminder.



By Emma-Kate Woodham, Emma-Kate – Wellness

Emma-Kate is a Wellington-based Wellness Practitioner – specialising in massage therapy and mindfulness. She helps people gain back their quality of life by achieving freedom from tensions in the body and mind.

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