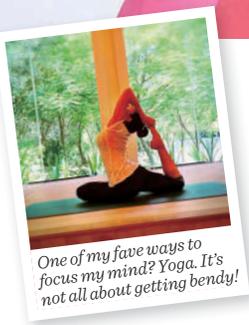


# Freedom in solitude



Come on, admit it—we've all taken those online quizzes that tell us the answers to questions like, "Which *Harry Potter* house would you be in?," (Gryffindor), "What career should you have?" (...astronaut?!), "What city should you actually live in?" (hello Cape Town!), "What would be your fate in *The Hunger Games*?" (Apparently I'd win them, through brute strength or maybe sheer stubbornness) or "Which *Game of Thrones* character are you?" (I got Daenerys, obv). But aside from the evident fun factor, why is it that while we are all well aware of how silly they can be, that we're still so beguiled by the answers? Do we really need a series of questions answered with hilarious GIFs to tell us who we truly are?

Questioning who we are seems to be human nature—Socrates did point this out back in the day, explaining that our need to "know thyself" is an innate drive. When you translate this to the internet age, as trivial as they may seem, taking

these quizzes or even sharing snippets of our lives on social networks like Instagram can help us not only reveal insights into our personality to the world, they can also help us with our own never-ending journey of self-discovery, perhaps even determining what kind of person we would *like* to be. I was, in spite of myself, proud that my results reflected qualities I value: courage, passion, compassion, determination, and a sense of adventure. It also made me question the parts I wasn't so keen on. They prod us to think, and psychologists claim that they help us reinforce our sense of self, while sharing them affirms this to our community.

Yet while many of us can spend a lifetime trying to figure out who we are—invariably reassessing as we grow—I can't help but wonder why it is, then, that so many of us are afraid to spend time solo. After all, if you're trying to get to know someone better, don't you want to spend more time with them? And if the person you're trying to get to know better is yourself, why not do just that? Now, I'm not saying that we should all suddenly become hermits, but there is a certain bliss in a cosy fort of solitude from time to time, and not just when we seek solace. Being comfortable in your own company is a stepping stone to so many other things—like feeling happy in your own skin, gaining more confidence, building a healthy level of respect for yourself, understanding yourself better and, in turn, figuring out what you want out of life—which will all translate to your relationships with others, too. Whether it's by choice or not, at some point we'll all face situations in life where we'll have to go it alone. And what better time is there than a long, hot summer in which to spend some quality time with yourself? So we've packed these pages with ways to help your introspection and show your mettle. Enjoy it, and we'll see you in August!

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## TIME FOR A CHANGE

### IF YOU HAVE...

#### 30 SECONDS

Before making a decision that might affect you both, ask your man what he thinks: What he actually cares about his input on might surprise you, and strengthen your bond. "Stay True To You," p.93

#### 1 MINUTE

Got some leftover, or even semi-stale bread? Pulse it in a food processor until its nice and crumbly and use it as breadcrumbs instead of chucking it out. "Beyond Slicing and Dicing," p.84

#### 5 MINUTES

If you're starting to lag at work mid-afternoon, take a break even if it's just to stretch your legs: It could help you resist reaching for a cheeky snack. "Outwit Temptation," p.74

#### 12 MINUTES

Try one of these quick and easy ways to give yourself a mental break (a mini meditation, if you will)—the tiny tweaks could vastly improve your mood. "Instant Bliss!" p.65

#### 1 HOUR

Get yourself to bed just a little bit earlier, as often as you can: Not only will it feel awesome, it can even help you lose weight and get stronger. "A Hotter Body—No Sweat!," p.47

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