

# Au courage, mes amis



I used to think that to be strong, you always had to be tough. Typical of someone raised by a “Tiger Mum,” I know, but it is a pretty universal way to think. After all, isn’t that what warriors, soldiers and all of the people stereotypically seen as being “strong” have in common—they’re stoic and brave, and don’t let anything get to them? Even as a kid, if I fell down, I’d pick myself up. If I cried, I’d do it alone—my tears were a sign of weakness, and as such, so was showing any emotion. I figured if people could see my vulnerabilities or my flaws—my Achilles heels, so to speak—then they’d know just how to hurt me. But then I grew up. As much as we may scoff at the “emo” kids of Gen Y, they’re really on to something when it comes to expressing our more gentle sides. Because as I grew up, I realised that to be truly strong, we actually have to learn how to embrace how we feel—and that *not* doing so is actually what can make us weak. Last year, I watched this brilliant Ted Talk by Brené Brown, a researcher, social worker and expert on human connection, on the power of vulnerability. In it, she explained how over the years, with the countless people she’d

met, those who were the happiest and had the strongest sense of love and belonging in their lives all believed they were worthy of it—and that a key thing they all had in common was courage. Not the bravery that sees warriors pick up their weapons to head into battle, but the true courage that comes from the origin of the word: From the heart. They

had the strength to be kind to themselves, allowing themselves to be who they *really* were rather than who they thought they *should* be, soft bits and all. By embracing their vulnerability—the things that perhaps made them a little more raw or “imperfect”—they were living their lives wholly. Rather than denying or numbing the things they cared about or that scared them, they’d face them head on, finding triumph in what could have otherwise been an eternal internal struggle. Just like the way our muscles develop little tears when we lift heavy weights and work out hard only to grow bigger and better upon repairing themselves, sometimes we need to be unravelled to be put back together stronger than ever. In a world where the power of women is ever on the rise, amidst all of the amazing, strong gals out there just killing it—like the inspirational women featured across this issue—it’s also important to admit that we’re not always made of steel, and that’s ok. Being unbreakable isn’t about never cracking—it’s about allowing yourself to pause and breathe when you need to, and then being able to pick yourself up and keep going. I’ve been described as an “Alpha Female” or told that I’m a little intense more times than I can count, and I’ll be the first to admit that I’m not always the best at expressing my more clandestine feelings. I know, for someone who’s all about living with passion and *really* values honesty and being upfront, it seems odd that spilling my heart out to those that matter is so hard for me. But I’m working on it. This happens to be my birthday month, and each year I try to set a goal that will leave me not just older but hopefully also a little bit wiser by the next one. If sometimes wearing my heart on my sleeve promises to help fuel my next year with an unstoppable inner fire, then I’m ready. Who’s with me? Enjoy the issue, and see you in June!

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## TIME FOR A CHANGE

### IF YOU HAVE...

#### 10 SECONDS

Call your best pals (or even open up a Facebook event page or start a WhatsApp chat group) to arrange a group workout sesh: Team activities can boost your mood, health and fitness all at once. “Group On!” p.58

#### 5 MINUTES

If you’re whipping up an AM smoothie that needs a little something more, and you want to include a powder, these options give you a real health kickstart. “Eat My Dust,” p.73

#### 10 MINUTES

Boil up a white tea brew, but don’t just dunk and chuck the bag: Let it steep for at least 10 minutes, and leave it up to two hours, to release the max amount of benefits. “Discuss: Health,” p.14

#### 20 MINUTES

Pop on a sheet mask and soak in the benefits while you either rush around with errands or just relax for fuss-free, serum-soaked and visible, instant results. “Hit The Sheets,” p.38

#### 60 MINUTES

Whether it’s twerking, boxing, parkour, or water sports that strike your fancy, try these workouts that’ll leave you with real-life superpower skillz. “Who Needs A Superhero?” p.89

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