

# *The OWL Express*

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### A Big Shift

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From a very young age I have been a worrier, family and friends would describe me as such and I thought it was just a characteristic I would have to live with - a side effect of being a caring person. Worrying quickly became second nature to me and therefore overthinking and indecisiveness also became common themes throughout my life. I would find it incredibly hard to make a decision in fear of making the wrong one and being a failure.

Worrying and overthinking were relatively under control during my time at school and whilst living at home because I always had my parents around to give me reassurance. However, when I moved out of home to start my studies at university in London I quickly learnt how easy it was for my worry to spiral out of control. Worry and overthinking would (and sometimes still do) affect all aspects of my life - my studies, friendships, relationships, jobs and free time. I knew I could not let it control me anymore but I didn't have the awareness or understanding of how to make long lasting changes so the cycle continued for another couple of years. Self-doubt and lack of trust in my ability to do things grew to the point of me nearly throwing the towel in on my studies at university but thankfully through the support of my lecturers, friends and family I continued with my degree and graduated with a First Class Honours.

It was actually quite coincidental how I came across OWL's training programme. In the summer after graduating I read *The Power of Now* by Eckhart Tolle - a book that changed my mindset and outlook on life for a solid couple of months but of course, old habits die hard and I soon found myself back in a whirlwind of worry and fear. I had experienced what life could be like without these emotions and I was eager to find a way to make a more permanent shift in my consciousness which would enable me to reach my full potential. It was through a conversation with a work colleague that I discovered OWL and I was instantly intrigued as to what they were about. I went along to an OWL Express taster session and was captivated by the experience. After what had been a long week at work and a physically exhausting OWL workshop I came out expecting to feel



totally drained but to my surprise I felt the complete opposite - I had a new lease of life and felt as though I had the energy to do the week all over again. From this point I knew I wanted to know more about OWL and what their Express programme could provide me with.

As someone who has always been very active and keen to make the most out of my body I have always been curious about the connection between mind and body. Throughout my training my body has been my most accessible tool to calm my mind, reduce anxiety and improve my mood. With this in mind the principles of OWL immediately resonated with me and this encouraged me to enroll on the OWL Express programme. I am motivated by physical activity and therefore knew I would find it easy to commit to the 15 minute daily exercise routine. I had also read through the OWL website after taking part in the taster session and I found so much truth in what it explored - I couldn't not give the programme a chance.

For me, one of the main things the programme enabled me to do was to identify how much the pattern of worry and overthinking was affecting my life and behavior. During the programme I was able to start a big shift in my mindset in order for me to start taking back control and making decisions from a healthier, more positive place, rather than a place of fear. These changes in my mindset have made me feel free and more confident. Just the simple fact that my OWL trainer believed I could make the desired changes was enough for me to fully commit to the programme and have belief too.

If someone would ask me whether to enroll on it, I'd say: do it! We've all got unhelpful behavioral patterns that we are carrying with us and that ultimately hold us back from doing the things we really want to do. It is our responsibility to address these in order to become the best versions of ourselves. I once heard someone say 'we have the choice to living by an unconscious or a conscious programme' - we just need the awareness to acknowledge this and take responsibility. OWL's approach to helping people make long lasting changes to their behavior is simply unique and one that everyone should experience.

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