

Our Impact

Making a Difference to Improve People's Lives.

8th Issue

Well-being Special

Public Health Matters

Exclusive interview with Professor Kevin Fenton.

A Path Through the Jungle

Exclusive interview with best selling author Professor Steve Peters.

Dancing With Spirituality

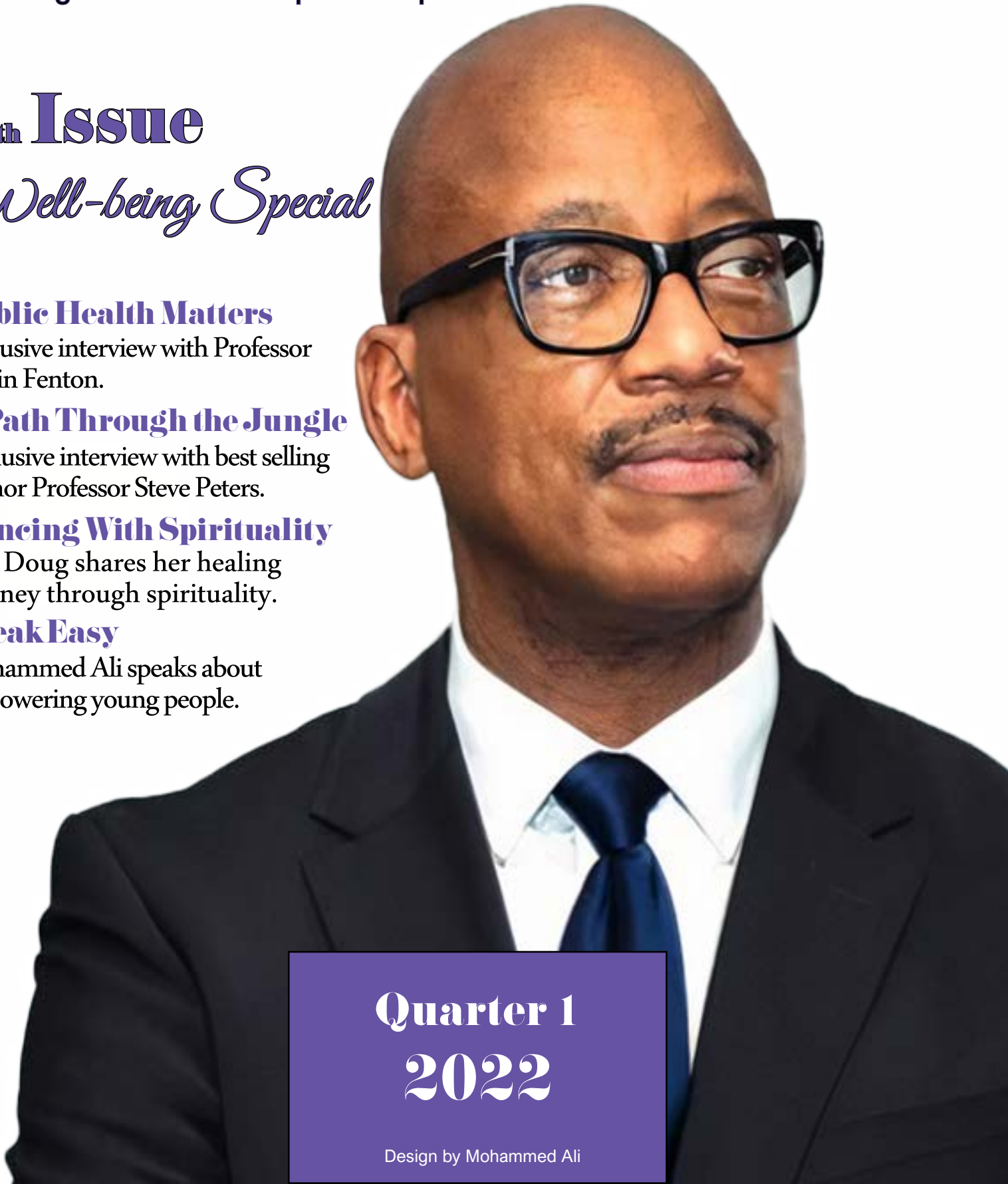
Roz Doug shares her healing journey through spirituality.

Speak Easy

Mohammed Ali speaks about empowering young people.

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Design by Mohammed Ali



EDITOR'S NOTES

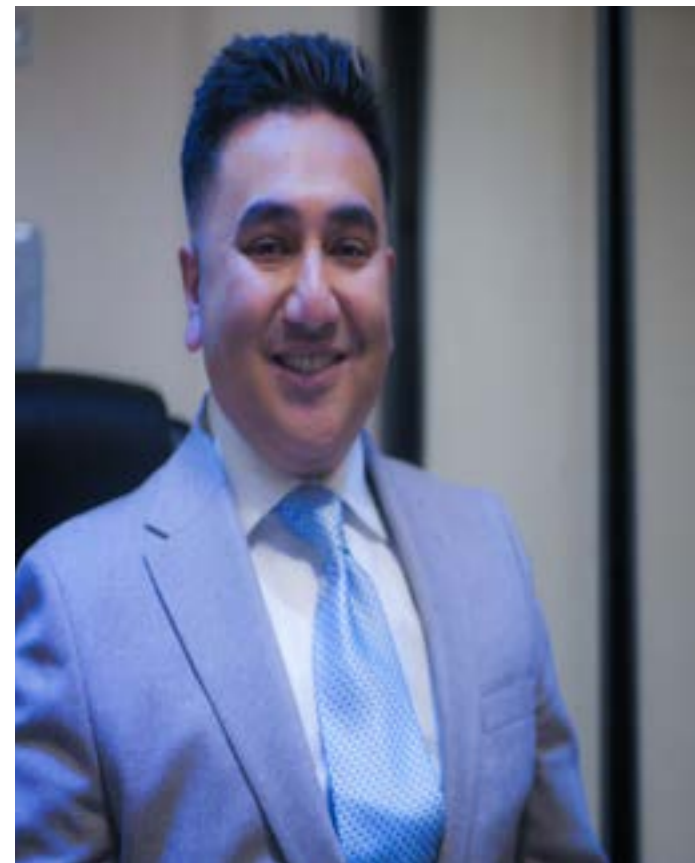
FIRST QUARTER

ISSUE

It's a new year and a time to reflect. OUR IMPACT Magazine covers health, human factors, and inclusivity across the globe. This special issue focuses on improving well-being and the health of our population. In our 8th issue, OUR IMPACT magazine brings you inspiring articles, real life experiences, and interviews

aimed at health and well-being. In this special edition, we have exclusive interviews with two of my personal heroes. Kevin Fenton MBE, London's leading Public Health Director, discusses Healthy Lifestyles, COVID-19 vaccines, and the role of Corporate Social Responsibility during the COVID-19 pandemic. Steve Peters discusses developing robustness and resilience and his work assisting seven-time World Snooker Champion Ronnie O'Sullivan, former England and Liverpool FC Captain Steven Gerrard, and Olympic Gold Medallists Sir Chis Hoy and Victoria Pendleton. Roz Etwaria shares her journey into spirituality in her role as an ambassador for survivors' voices and I discuss my projects supporting young people in the discovery of self-actualisation through public speaking.

MOHAMMED ALI
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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Public Health Matters

Professor Kevin Fenton interview
by Mohammed Ali

Professor Kevin Fenton MBE is a senior public health expert and infectious disease epidemiologist. He is the current London Regional Director of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Professor Fenton was born in Glasgow, Scotland but was raised in Lucea, Jamaica. He previously served as the London Regional Director for Public Health England. Professor Fenton has also served as the director of the United States National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention as part of the Centres for Disease

Control and Prevention. Professor Fenton has recently accepted the role to lead the Faculty of Public Health which will commence starting June 2022. Professor Fenton was among the people awarded in the 2021 New Year's honours list as he received the title of Commander of the British Empire (CBE) from the Queen. Professor Fenton and his team have been instrumental in the work to protect Londoners during the COVID-19 pandemic and the COVID-19 vaccination rollout. Professor Fenton led the national PHE review of disparities in risks and outcomes of COVID-19. Professor Fenton was part of a ground-breaking research publication

called "Beyond the Data: Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on BAME Communities." This paper was noted for highlighting the associations between belonging to particular ethnic groups and the likelihood of testing positive and dying with COVID-19. In 2021, Powerlist listed Professor Fenton as the second most influential black person in the United Kingdom. Professor Fenton also sits on the board for NHS Race and Health Observatory. Here Mohammed Ali speaks to Professor Kevin Fenton about his work during the COVID-19 Pandemic. This interview was carried out in the Public Health England offices in the summer of 2021.

"They reduce the risk of severe clinical disease and they significantly reduced the risk of death from the infection."

Mohammed: Thank you for your time, Professor Fenton. Why should we get vaccinated?

Professor Fenton: Now, vaccines are a miracle. They really have been at the forefront of helping to reduce our susceptibility to a range of other infectious diseases: measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria...all these infections, which really caused lots of harm in the past, are now under control because we have vaccines.

So, the vaccines which are now available for COVID-19 and to control the Coronavirus are really important because they reduce the risk of severe clinical disease and they significantly reduce the risk of death from the infection if you have it. So, vaccines are one of the very important tools we have to control and prevent the Coronavirus. So, like all viruses, the corona virus tends to mutate. And so we continue to see slight-

ly different versions of the virus as it circulates; and if it circulates in conditions where you have uncontrolled spread of the virus, you tend to have more of those mutations.

Now with each mutation, the virus can either develop into a form which is far more infectious and far more severe, or may mutate into a variant that is less likely to be transmitted and therefore dies out...So, we look out for variants because of the possibility of them becoming more transmissible and more severe. But we also have the tools to deal with the variants at the moment, which are the effective vaccines.

Mohammed: What role does lifestyle and diet play in terms of COVID-19 risk?

Professor Fenton: So, we've learned so many things throughout this pandemic. Key among them are the things that we need to do to protect ourselves to prevent transmis-

sion of the infection. So, we now know that vaccination is the most powerful thing we can do. We know that testing regularly allows us to know your status. We know that wearing a mask and keeping social distance and keeping our hands clean are all important. But we also know that your lifestyle is important as well because people who have conditions such as obesity or who are overweight, people who have uncontrolled diabetes or poorly controlled high blood pressure and heart disease and lung diseases, tend to have a poor outcome with COVID if they're infected.

So if you have any of those conditions, especially if you are of ethnic origin making sure you are having your vitamin D as recommended because we don't get enough vitamin D; if you are overweight or if you are obese, do speak to your doctor about weight management services and set yourself targets to do more walking or physical activity,



"Get your dietary advice so that you can have a healthy weight which in turn helps to take care of your physical and mental health."

"The pandemic...has really shown us a humanity, a different side to us. It shown us the importance of taking care of each other."

get your dietary advice so that you can have a healthy weight which in turn helps to take care of your physical and mental health. Finally, we know that through the pandemic a lot of people have had challenges with their mental health and wellbeing. So, in addition to taking care of your physical health, it's really important that you do the things that you do to replenish you and to sustain you mentally: see friends, volunteer, be physically active, go out in nature, and ensure that you're enjoying the outside spaces and do the things that replenish your soul. Those are things that we can all do for well-being as well.

Mohammed: Public Health England has been replaced by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and also the Office of

Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID). Could you expand on this further?

Professor Fenton: So, the UKHSA is a new agency which is going to be focusing on global as well as domestic or national health protection. In other words, protecting the population from infectious disease threats, and of course, other threats and incidents as well. So, whether it's bio-terrorism or chemical, recent flooding that we've been working with environmental agencies to protect local communities, and of course, other infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, flu, and so forth. So, the UKHSA is different from Public Health England, although Public Health England also included these functions that UKHSA has included and integrated a range of other functions. For example: it did a lot

of health marketing, it did a lot of health promotion, it did a lot of work on creating healthier communities, and health in the workplace. So broader health issues apart from infectious diseases and infectious disease threats. So, in the new system we now have the UKHSA which will give that laser-like focus on protecting health, dealing with infectious disease threats, dealing with chemical bio-terrorism, and other threats in the UK that will be complemented by a new agency called the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. This agency will focus on the things that we all do together with communities to improve our health: more exercise, better diets, taking care of our mental health, dealing with resilience. And of course, local authorities will be doing more prevention as well.

Mohammed: What's your thoughts about corporate social responsibilities and the role of philanthropists during the pandemic?

Professor Fenton: You know, as hard as the pandemic has been, it has really shown us as humanity a different side to us. It showed us the importance of taking care of each other. It has perhaps shown us how we in the lockdown have to stop doing the things that we thought were essential in life and to find a new way of being alone or being with family and living life differently. And in that time we've also seen the power of innovation in science of people who are doing things that can make a difference in peoples' lives. And so when we look back on the pandemic, I think it's important not only to think about the damage that the pandemic has caused, but perhaps the new

ways it's taught us to engage with each other; the things that it has allowed us to value more because we've been knocked down for so long. The ways in which we work with people who are able to help us to support the lives of those who are most weak within our society.

So, whether it's asylum seekers, whether it's people who are homeless, or whether it's people in the most disadvantaged parts of the city, the pandemic has taught us that the pandemic is not over until it's over for all of us, and therefore focus on those who are most vulnerable. And whatever we can do to reduce inequalities must be part of both ending the epidemic and it must be part of how we recover and rebuild.



Professor Kevin Fenton MBE is a senior public health expert and infectious disease epidemiologist. He is the current London Regional Director of the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities. Professor Fenton is best known for his work during the COVID-19 response, as well as his work in HIV and STI prevention.

A Path Through the Jungle



Professor Steve Peters interview
By Mohammed Ali

"Within our brain there is an entire system that we inherit that will actively think for us and react to situations, without our input."

Professor Steve Peters is a Consultant Psychiatrist, a bestselling author, and a European Masters M65 triple Gold Medallist. Professor Peters has supported and coached many elite athletes including former Cyclist World Champions and Olympic Gold Medallists Sir Chris Hoy and Victoria Pendleton.

He has worked with and inspired seven-time World Snooker Champion Ronnie O'Sullivan who has said "I put it down to Steve Peters, really. The men-

tal side has been a big change for me".

Former England and Liverpool FC captain Stephen Gerrard has benefited from Professor Peters' work and has said "I read his book and now I basically understand the different parts of the brain... I am a lot more patient as a person now and I think I've improved as a person. He's also helped me with the game as well".

Professor Peters is also the creator of the chimp model, which

has been used as part of a Pragmatic Randomised Control Trial (RCT) in partnership with the NHS. Professor Peters' book The Chimp Paradox has gone on to become the UK's bestselling self-help book of all time.

Most recently Professor Peters released his newest book "A Path Through the Jungle". This book builds on from The Chimp Paradox and provides 8 stages of self-help guidance which now focuses on finding empowerment, staying robust, and being resilient.

Mohammed: Hi Professor Peters, thank you for taking your time for this interview. Can you summarise The Chimp Paradox, which is now the #1 selling self-help book of all time in the UK?

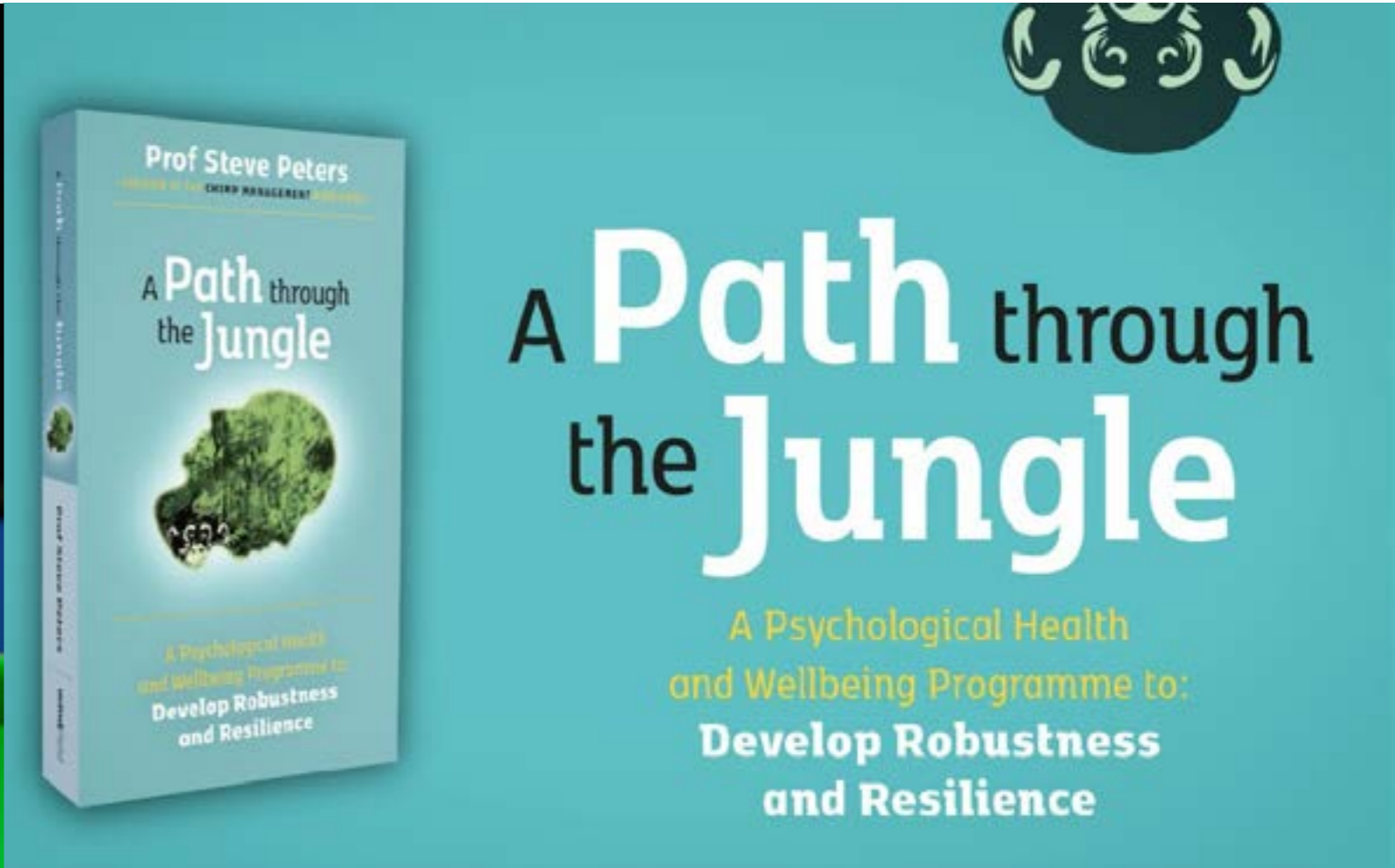
Prof Peters: The Chimp Paradox explains the neuroscience of the brain using the Chimp mind management model. The Chimp model offers a way for people to access their mind and understand how it works. They can then get the best out of themselves by managing their own mind and getting it to operate in the way they want it to. Our mind is not easy to manage because within our brain there is an

entire system that we inherit that will actively think for us and react to situations without our input. This system is there to protect us and to keep us safe. However, this system needs managing, otherwise it will overreact to situations and take over our mind and give us feelings, emotions, behaviours, and thoughts that we don't want. The Chimp model is a model that works with three systems within the mind. The Chimp system is the inherited defence system. The Human system is effectively you. It is those parts of the mind that we have full control over and make our own decisions with. The underpinning system

within the mind is a computer system that stores memory, beliefs and values. This Computer system acts as an advisor to both Human and Chimp and it can take over if it is programmed to do so.

Mohammed: As well as your books, The Chimp Paradox, The Silent Guides, My Hidden Chimp and A Path Through the Jungle, you also have a mind management course delivered by your company, Chimp Management. How can people benefit from this course?

Prof Peters: The "Mind Management Skills for Life" course consists of 8 work-



"People bring to the table what they want to address and then we work together to address it."

shops. These workshops explain with insights and practical applications how we can work with our mind in all situations to get the best out of ourselves and others. It is a course that leads to robustness and resilience in both personal and professional spheres. In 2020 the course was delivered as a randomised controlled trial involving nearly 200 community nurses. The trial is a National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) portfolio-adopted study. The course has been undertaken by many professionals from businesses to organisations, as well as members of the general public. It is fulfilling my hopes of helping people to have a great quality of life.

Mohammed: Former England and Premier League Captain Steven Gerrard, and seven-time Snooker World Champion Ronnie O'Sullivan, have praised you for your role in transforming their careers. How does your work help alleviate the

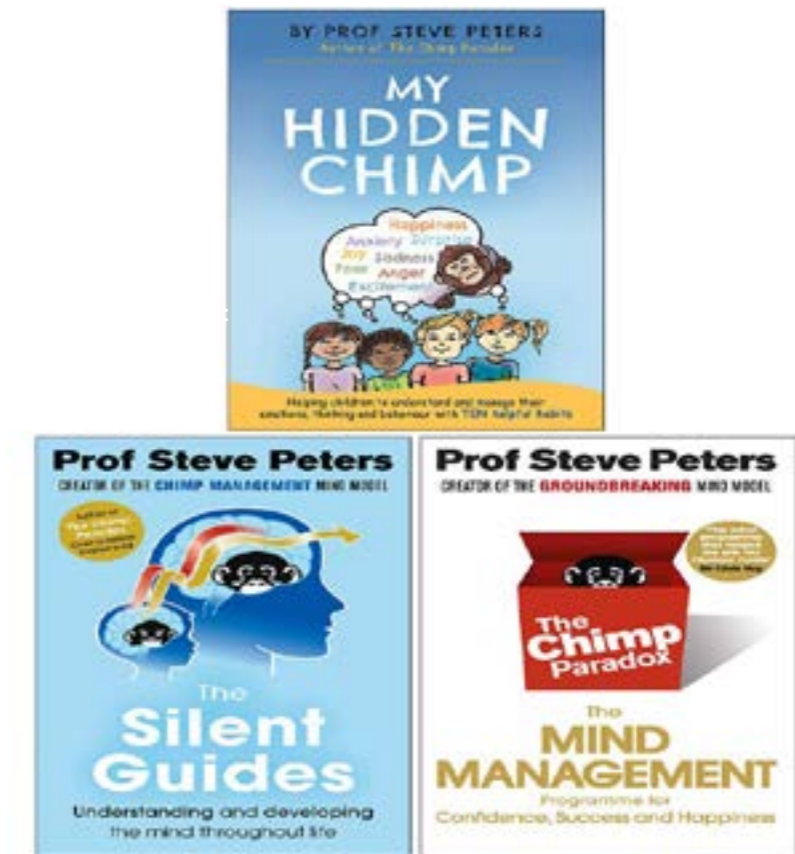
added level of pressure experienced by elite level professionals?

Prof Peters: The way that I work is to help people to gain an understanding of their own unique mind. Having gained insights, I then help them to develop their own emotional skills in order to optimise their performance. Everyone has a unique mind and has unique circumstances; therefore, I believe that only they can decide what works best for them. My role is to support, guide, suggest, and help someone to present to the world the person that they really are without interference from the machine within their heads. People bring to the table what they want to address and then we work together to address it.

Mohammed: 'The Chimp Paradox' has also been adapted into a children's book, 'My Hidden Chimp'. How important was that for you and why?

Prof Peters: After the success of The Chimp Paradox I had lots of requests for a simplified version of the book that could be used by primary school-aged children. My aim with the book is to introduce some basic neuroscience of the mind using the Chimp model with some practical and fun exercises included as well. As we know, many children learn habits during childhood that are carried into adult life.

The book is based on habit formation and hopefully it will help young children to develop constructive and healthy habits for life. The feedback on the book has been very positive, so it's humbling to see it helping to do this. It is very important to me that every child has the opportunity to have the best start in life and learn how to understand and manage their emotions and behaviours—effectively find themselves.

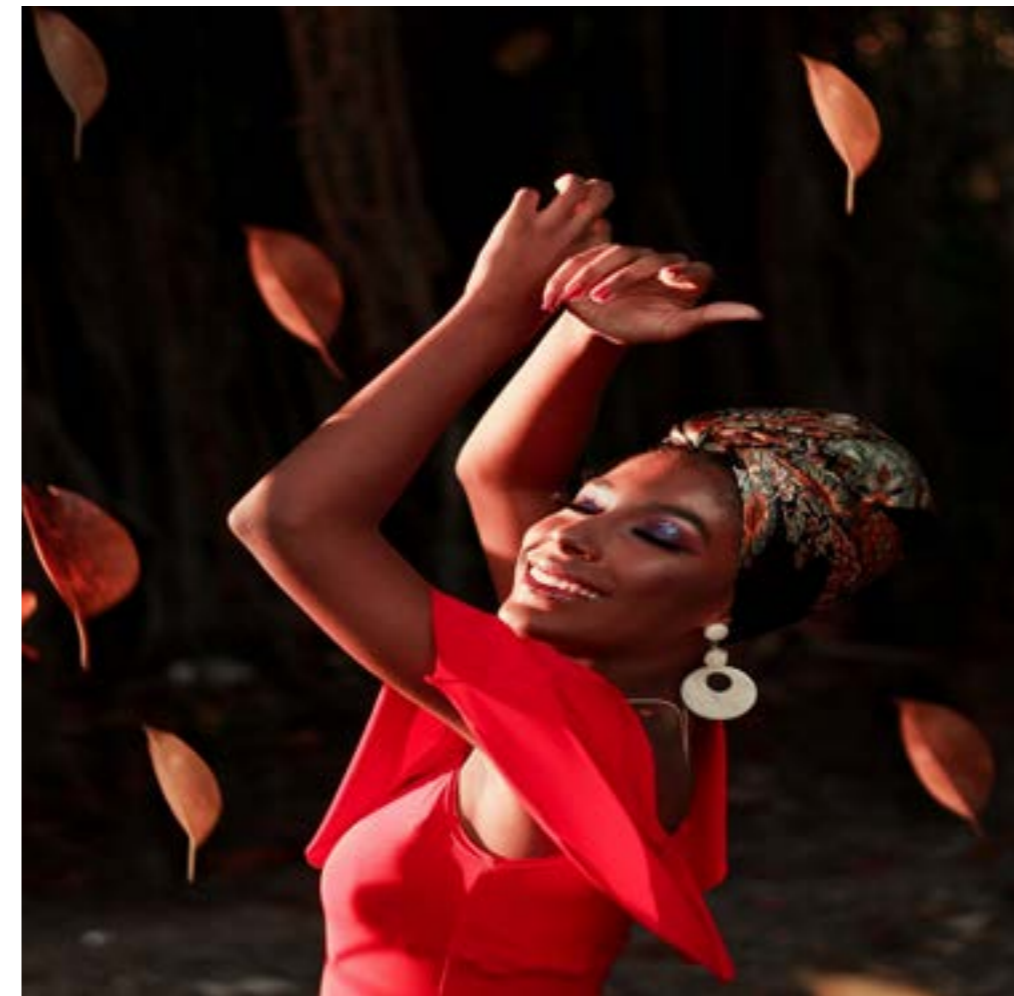


Professor Steve Peters is a British psychiatrist who works in elite sport. He is best known for his work with British Cycling. He has published four books, A Path Through the Jungle in 2021, The Chimp Paradox in 2012, My Hidden Chimp in 2018 and The Silent Guides in 2018.



Dancing with Sprituality

by Roz Etwaria



ruled by letting things take their course'. So I am no longer expecting my lifelong trauma to heal in days. And it has taught me that I am 'Flawsome', flawed but awesome.

In my spirituality, I have found peace. Now, some may be reading this who want hard data evidence that believing in something unseen works. A whole body of evidence exists. Nisbet's 2000 study shows that the rate of suicide is four times lower in people who attend religious activities².

That is very much in line with the early finding of Durkheim's seminal work in 1897. And studies by researchers like Snider & McPhedran show that holding onto something bigger than ourselves reduces anxiety and depression³.

But if you need that evidence, then you are not ready to begin your dance with spirit. Spirituality is not believing but knowing we are from a greater infinite intelligence. And we know when we touch it with our souls it frees us from the bonds of "I think therefore I am" superior.

I have found and a whole body of research agrees that Spirituality boosts mental wellbeing. It is way past time that Spirituality was incorporated into trauma treatment. It's time to embrace the spiritual dance.



Roz Etwaria is the project director for a CSA charity, Litte RO. She is a public speaker, a social advocate and journalist. Roz is the 2020/21 D91 Toastmaster Evaluation Champion. Roz is also presents and produces on Galaxy Radio 102.5 and Starr Radio UK.

In 2018 my life fell apart. The tectonic plates of my life shattered beneath my feet. An 18-year relationship took a nosedive, but that wasn't the worst of it. That life-changing event was nothing compared to the hollow and horror within. And the realisation that I was traumatised. My definition of trauma is very simple and shared by Dr Gabor Maté, trauma is the separation from one's self. 'Simples' but painful. It is a wrench that distorts our view on life and one from which we need to heal.

And that is how I entered the NHS care for my mental wellbeing. I was fortunate that after six months I had a therapist assigned to me. (That is a long time to wait, other geographical locations can take longer.) I had a very good therapist, who advised that I was depressed and promptly took out the prescription pad. I was alarmed at both the diagnosis and the cure. I did not see myself as depressed and I certainly knew I did not want to be medicated. I knew I was anx-

ious and sad and hurting and empty. But popping pills did not feel right for me. Frankly, there was also a fear of addition to pill-popping. I was happy to embrace talk and try Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing therapy.

It was at that time that I became involved in littler.org and an ambassador for survivors voices. A mouthpiece to campaign for change in how the system treats victim-survivors of childhood sexual assault (CSA). It is such an abhorrent and stressful area that having a therapist is essential. So I had two therapists. I also had the opportunity to attend victim-survivor support groups. Both the group and second therapist felt spirituality was fundamental to recovery from trauma and for mental health wellbeing. And that is how my dance with spirituality was rekindled.

Generally within society, 'spirituality' and 'religion' tend to be used interchangeably. They are not. Spirituality is a knowing in 'something' e.g. a supreme power, a non-physical reality as perceived by the individual. Whereas

religion is a more organised social phenomenon with observance or obedience to beliefs, practices and rituals directed towards a specific being or power.

Despite the history and academic work by therapists like Dr Carl Jung and others, on the benefits of spirituality in healing and for mental well being, spirituality remains at the fringes of mental health science to this day. A patient wanting spirituality included in their treatment is likely to have that request pathologised.

Western civilisation has been shaped by industrialisation and the period of the Enlightenment. Its overwhelming philosophy and operation are Descartes "I think, therefore I am". And that is accompanied by the tacit rule 'I do therefore I am. Application of that thinking to life has marginalised our connection with our emotions, our instincts, our higher selves, our spirit. Instead, we practise the "Gospel of Independence".

We have a "stiff upper lip and pull ourselves up by our bootstraps". That thinking is the exact opposite of spir-

ituality which encourages human connection, which grows our humanity.

So it cannot be surprising that people with mental health problems tend to be treated primarily with medication. Yet support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous all speak to working with a 'higher power'. In his book *Healing The Child Within*, Dr Charles Whitfield says the way out "is to surrender". Surrender to whom? A higher power.

Some would say that their higher power is God in the religious context. But working in the field of CSA I recognise that some victim-survivors suffered trauma at the hands of the clergy and others are angry at God so which contributes to emotional distress. However, others such as Viktor Frankl and author, playwright and filmmaker Joy T Riley who I recently interviewed say they found purpose in their pain. That is not my belief.

In my spiritual journey, I have learnt that I do not need to find purpose. I am "A child of the universe, I have a right to be here". Now, that took a load off my mind. I no longer have to prove to nameless faces, whom I will never meet, that I have to have a reason to exist.

Phew! Spirituality takes us back to ourselves and in so doing frees us of our trauma. It is an emancipatory transformation. It's freedom.

I learned one of life's biggest lessons, surrender. I have 'let go'. Instead of feeling a compulsion to fix things myself, that I have to do something I applied 2 Chronicles 20:17, I stood still. I did nothing and waited for salvation. And salvation came in the form of returning to humanity.

So, like a child, I can ask for help, I don't have to do it alone. And so don't anymore. Spirituality opens the door to social and community support which boosts our mental wellbeing because we know we are not alone. That swells our reservoir of hope.

When my madness descends, my mind working on the treadmill of anxiety, I go into meditation. There I connect with my higher self and quiet the noise. In that silence, I find the things that bring me joy. I am bombarded with happy creative ideas. I practise spirituality in line with Ubuntu and Taoism.

It has taught me patience. Okay, I am still working on patience but I accept that the 'world is



Vacci-Nation

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Speak Easy

by Mohammed Ali

Nobel Prize winner and eminent economist Amartya Sen said: "The identity of an individual is essentially a function of her choices rather than the discovery of an immutable attribute." The notion of function can refer to basic human functions like nutrition, education, and health, as well as self-respect and social recognition¹. Additionally, this builds on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs model, in which self-esteem and belonging are crucial to self-actualization². Public speaking training allows individuals to develop soft skills that enhance their verbal communication. Public speaking has numerous styles that can be adopted in different combinations. It can be presented online, face to face in front of a live audience, or as a hybrid of both, and can be prepared or impromptu. According to bestselling author and leading voice coach Caroline Goyder, the voice is an instrument that can be played in different tones depending on the organs in the body that are respon-

sible for producing it³. She also says that confident people have knowledge and understanding of how their bodies communicate with other people³. Practicing public speaking can result in positive benefits, such as cognitive restructuring, fear associated with public speaking and unhelpful thoughts can be changed. Some types of fear associated with public speaking, including stage fright, embarrassment, and performance anxiety, can be addressed through public speaking training. A speaker can change the way the audience perceives them from critical, judgmental, and harsh to encouraging, empathic, and supportive using cognitive restructuring. In this way, many benefits can be gained, such as confidence and self-esteem. Research by the University of Wisconsin found that skills training and cognitive restructuring can reduce communication anxiety⁴. Moreover a study by the University of Colorado concluded that basic public speaking courses may boost self-esteem and behavioral competence among participants⁵. Study results showed

that younger participants, female participants, and participants of non-Anglo ethnicities achieved the most improvements in their self-esteem scores⁵. With the aforementioned benefits along with my own personal experiences in public speaking training, I set out to work in a variety of educational settings to help young people increase their self-confidence and self-esteem through public speaking. The first project was in collaboration with the London Borough of Sutton (LBS), and community-based organisation Rotary International. The project served to facilitate a public speaking contest which was part of a series of COP26 activities delivered by the LBS. Through my experience as president and committee member of a local Toastmasters International club, I was able to add value to the project's design, delivery, and evaluation. A diverse set of schools within the borough participated in the contest. There was an effort made to ensure a wide range of students were included in the contest. There were students of different ages, genders, ethnicities, abilities, and backgrounds that took part in the



"In the words of Ken Blanchard, the best-selling business author: 'Feedback is the breakfast of champions.'"

contest, and there was even participation from a pupil referral unit. The contest was in line with LBS's climate emergency call to become a carbon-neutral borough. By creating a call to action to address global climate change, the contest raised awareness of the issue. Through participation in this project, young people demonstrated the importance of being included in the global climate change dialogue. The second project supported sixth form students at Reeds School, an independent boarding school in Cobham, Surrey. The school was founded by Rev Dr. Andrew Reed. Dr. Reed is credited with founding the Royal Earlswood Hospital, The Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability, and The London Orphans Asylum. A bursary fund at Reeds School provides educational opportunities for young orphans with one or both deceased parents. Through their club in Epsom, Surrey, Toastmasters International had a long standing-

project I embarked upon. The students of Reeds School presented prepared speeches at an evening dinner as part of this project. Based on my own experience as a Toastmaster, my role was to observe, listen, and provide constructive feedback to students to help improve their performance. When feedback is provided correctly, it can improve performance, motivation, and confidence. An evaluation should not be overly critical but instead should provide a structured balance of commendations, recommendations, and actions to consider for the next speech. In the words of Ken Blanchard, the best-selling business author: "Feedback is the breakfast of champions." The third project involved me participating in the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's (LSHTM) Pentacell Project. In this unique intervention, wellbeing support was offered to MSc students at LSHTM during the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of the Pentacell program, alumni such



Mohammed Ali has a BA (Hons) in Accountancy and Business, and an MSc in Global Health Policy. He is a member of the Coordinating And Mobilising Emergency Response Activists (CAMERA) Emergency Volunteer Team in Hammersmith & Fulham. He is also President for Sutton Speakeasy (Toastmasters International).

as myself participated in weekly sessions with a maximum of five students. Due to the lack of interaction created by online classes, the sessions focused on improving students' well-being and mental health, which was felt during the times of isolation. Participants in this evidence-based intervention took part in listening circles, role-playing, and the creation of a well-being toolbox. Training in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion was provided to enhance understanding of the needs of diverse students. Using public speaking as a way to address and support one another was very important. It helped us to be empathic and supportive one another through words of encouragement. Additionally, I helped the students discuss their differences as well as their commonalities. Speaking in public and cognitive restructuring improves confidence and self-esteem issues, both of which are lacking in some people. Through my experiences, I have discovered that public speaking benefits people, especially young people's confidence, self-esteem, and motivation. This can allow them to achieve their full potential through self-realisation and become tomorrow's inspiring leaders and mentors to guide the generations to come.

AUTISM AWARENESS FILM

YOUNG PEOPLE IN SUTTON

This powerful film explores the diverse variations within the autistic spectrum, as well as highlighting the stigmas associated with autism.

YOUNG SUTTON VOICES UNDERSTANDING THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

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Further Reading

Dancing with Spirituality

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