



THE SCOTSMAN

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FEATURES

'I wanted to run away and be somewhere else, on my own'

An existential crisis prompted **Kay Hutchison** to leave her husband while they were on holiday and try to rebuild her life and find a purpose. Now she has written an account of her recovery – and the 37 therapies she tried on the way

I found myself in a basement room, asked with a champagne-scented doctor to bring a potpourri of plastic packaging of pins before sticking them in various places around my body. It was a mystery to me a site why he was pushing pins into such odd places (ankles, hair line, ears, wrists, neck) – he didn't speak a word of English, so obviously no point in asking. I hadn't told him my life story. I hadn't even mentioned my long list of specific issues but needed sorting. With pins in my little back ground information – how could he know how to treat me?

I'd been lured into a false sense of security by the well-dressed receptionist I met upstairs and the impressive descriptions of herbs and their many benefits were on large red and gold posters on the

give anything a try to help me move on.

After years happily juggling all of life's brightly coloured balls, suddenly everything felt empty and meaningless. No idea why. I wanted to run away and be somewhere else, on my own. And I did. I left my dear husband right there in the middle of our annual holiday in the South of France. I went to catch a flight home to try and sort myself out.

Back in London, I took a flat just over next week and went to see my GP. I told her about my situation and the genetic attacks, difficulty sleeping, erratic energy. She sent me for tests. Maybe it was a hormonal problem? Maybe I needed counselling? Maybe I hadn't fully dealt with the death of my mother and then, just months later, having to care for my

suspect that would knock me into shape. I slept better that night. And so I went back for more and things improved. Gradually I set the into the routine and stopped worrying about those pins.

That was my first therapy and it was to lead to many more. One thing led to another. And so this:

I went to have a massage and that calmed me down. The therapist said she did try reflexology too, so off I went. Pressure points on your feet correspond to different organs in your body and manipulation can stimulate your entire system. A friend suggested I do acupuncture as she knew I wasn't taking any pills. I found someone experienced who helped a great deal. We'd talk through my problems at length. She seemed to



Kay Hutchison tried therapies including reflexology, homeopathy and acupuncturist breast massage. PICTURE: CHARLES COOPER

experience was far from that of the pristine, smiling model in the window (I later discovered how effective it is in reducing stress and back pain, although the angry-looking round marks stamped on my back took days to disappear.)

Then I lost my job. That sent me spinning. I loved my work and it was the only place of stability I had left. As my old world fell apart, I redoubled my attempts in therapies. I started seeing a boat mindfulness and positive thinking. I went to see a psychic therapist. What a relief to get a firm frustration out in the open with someone who didn't judge.

I discovered not sea to were a wonderful sea go – yoga, diet, diet, creative on the most unusual site at a restaurant not sea to. Some were in the UK, many were in far flung places. It was interesting to see the different cultures and approaches, how the therapies worked, if they helped physically, mentally or both.

I travelled to India with a group of women for a traditional Ayurvedic retreat. Ayurveda is one of the world's oldest complementary medicine systems and I was keen to try. We lived in simple mud huts by the sea with palm trees and sweeping lawns. Hands of soft silk saw my from problems back home.

Over the first day, a team of medicine gave out health assessments on your lifestyle and physical state to allow them to prescribe diet, herbal remedies, and physical treatments. A doctor in a stethoscope coat carefully examined my tongue and consulted his clipboard before announcing that I was 'not a type' (always on the go). I was out only those foods suited to

dates back to ancient Egypt, it's basically a no-no using far too many volumes of water and it seemed quite basic to me. I am sure it checked my skin. It probably even gave me a flutter to my ch and you could believe your whole body and mind has been cleared out at the end, but surely there are easier ways. Another surprise was something called Esoteric Breast Massage. It's, if exactly what you're thinking. It's a therapy you closed only by women, for women and is said to be good for helping reconnect with your feminine side by delicately massaging the lymphatic area of the breast. Unlike my work colleagues who told me she would 'especially in today's hard business world', I just couldn't get it. I'm all for checking for lumps or problems but need investigating, but I'd rather do it myself. Tax!

To day, life is different, and mainly thanks to the therapies.

My whole life was in a mess and I'd give anything a try to help me move on

I run my own business, I'm happy at home and, despite everything, still have a good relationship with my former husband. Each of the therapies I tried, in some way, helped me get through a difficult time. What I learned during the way was to have faith – the importance of rest and good nutrition, how to be more self-sufficient, that there is no often going through similar issues and that whatever your challenges, there's always a