

Make your life into an adventure

Rosie Swale, 50, is a motivational expert who believes filling life with adventure is the perfect tonic. Here she talks to Mary Hampshire

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Life is an adventure and it's important to make the most of it. Some people think you have to quit your job, delay having a family and travel the world to find excitement. That's an easy way of doing it but it's not the only way. You can find adventure in bringing up kids, running your own business or burying yourself in the library with the British Geological Survey – anything that catches the mind and excites.

I found it by pushing myself through physical activity. I wasn't born a gifted athlete but I enjoyed the adventure of achieving physical challenges. In 1983 I sailed around the Atlantic singlehanded in a 17ft boat and in 1984 I travelled 3,000 miles on horseback in Chile. This year I ran 200km across the Sahara and 1200km across Romania.

It's hard to feel enthusiastic and motivated all the time, which is why some people get bored and depressed. Motivation doesn't come in a big wave. Sometimes, it's a case of trying to feel it for five minutes at a time. To start each day feeling motivated I wake up and do something pleasurable for 10 minutes such as reading a book. Then I make a realistic list of all the tasks I want to achieve. I'll start with something easy then go on to whatever is more difficult. Don't scold yourself if you feel fearful about the task you want to achieve. Fear is natural and can be a friend, spurring you on to better things.

It's important to keep reasonably fit. It's also crucial to remember that you don't need to be an over-confident incredibly gifted person to achieve what you want. There's nothing wrong with a bit of struggle. The most important thing is not to give up. You can never be defeated so long as you feel a flash of hope.