

# F\*\*k It Freedom



**Claire Gillman talks about the therapeutic power of profanity with F\*\*k It founder, John Parkin**

I have known and worked with John Parkin, the author of best-selling book, *F\*\*k It: The Ultimate Spiritual Way* for over four years and I count him and his wife, Gaia, as good friends. So it may come as a surprise that I was nervous about this interview with him. The reason being that John is one of the most mischievous people I know. He gets a twinkle in his eye and has a throaty, infectious laugh. His razor sharp wit often leads him off down surreal yet entertaining paths, and he loves to play pranks. So I confess I that was anxious. But I should have known that the one thing that John is serious about is spreading the message of just how the principles of F\*\*k It can help people to worry less and live more.

The interview was great fun. As I suspected, there was a lot of laughter, but John's answers were characteristically

original and thought-provoking. Here he shares his thoughts about his new book, *F\*\*k It Therapy: The Profane Way to Profound Happiness, freedom and healing.*

**Were you specifically targeting those who would never normally buy spiritual books, especially men, with your first book?**

I mainly wrote the first book for myself, to remember all the things I was realising at the time. At the beginning, I was printing it out for the guests to read. I didn't want to send it to a publisher or agent so I really was happy for it to remain quite quiet.

My sense is that it appeals to people at the beginning and people at the end of their search. There are a lot of people who come to it fresh; we get a lot of emails from people saying, 'I've not been involved in any kind of spirituality before but this really works for me. I can understand it.' So, it

introduces a lot of people who have never been involved in this stuff to some spiritual ideas.

Yet, it seems to me that we get a lot of people who are very, very experienced who have explored lots of different ideas and philosophies, who've got into various things over the years, who come to F\*\*k It and say, 'It really makes sense. This is simple and easy and it feels actually more truthful.' The truth underneath it all is actually pretty simple and it's actually quite funny as well. F\*\*k It comes out of spiritual observation or insight, I suppose.

**You've had lifelong experiences of traditional practices such as QiGong, Tai Chi, Breathwork and Shamanism, and you seem to have distilled the most basic and effective principles from all to help others. Is it OK for people to cherry pick what they**

**like from various teachings and modalities?**

I think it's more than OK, I think it's the way to go really. We've moved from a deferential society where we used to take what other people said as read. We used to listen to what our parents or teachers said no matter what, otherwise we'd be punished. And we used to listen and accept completely the philosophy that the government and church would tell us. So we would take the whole idea of Christianity or whatever we had in our upbringing and believe the whole lot. Whereas in every area of society now, we're given more freedom and power for the individual to say, 'OK, I've got a brain, a heart and a soul, let's see what feels right out there. I'm going to find out for myself what feels true.'

In a way society has become more individualistic which can have its disadvantages but, in a spiritual context, an individualistic approach is the way you approach truth. So, you go from looking outside for the answers (the superficial things such as money, jobs and relationships), to looking for something more profound but still outside such as a religion or spirituality, but then a true search for any kind of spiritual seeker is the search inside, which is an individual search. You have to go inside for yourself. But, when you go deeply inside, where you end up is the Universal truth. It's only by going inside that you realise that we're all linked and it's all One. It's a beautiful thing really.

**Why is the time right to bring out the F\*\*k It Therapy book now?**

We wanted to share the F\*\*k It idea with even more people. Our society is so much more open now. It's a post-Oprah society and we're more open about our emotions, so I think the idea that we can then provide a therapy that is radical and different is really interesting.

F\*\*k It was interesting as a spiritual way (it can be spiritual to say F\*\*k It), but the idea now is that saying F\*\*k It as well as being spiritual can be completely therapeutic, ie it can heal you and make you feel better.

It is a more pragmatic approach to the F\*\*k It philosophy really, and understanding life. I like the idea that I'm encouraging people to start a questioning process. So F\*\*k It can really help us let go of stuff, but this is most about not getting fixed on anything and questioning stuff. So not going, 'OK, I've got it now. If I just do another three months I'll be completely healed.'

We're releasing an e-book at the same time as this one and it's called *I Said F\*\*k It*. And it's going to be 50 or 60 stories of people who read the book or saw the video and started saying F\*\*k It and had massive changes. With the new book we aim to take that even further by giving people more tools to work with.

When me and Gaia get in touch with our sense of freedom and when we get in touch with this truth, and we put it in a book or we talk about it or do a F\*\*k It week, people just feel it. And when you feel that sense of freedom, it starts to affect your life. F\*\*k It is like a freedom virus.

**What are your ambitions for the book?**

Since we wrote the first book, we've had seven years of teaching F\*\*k It retreats here, so I spend my life trying to work out why this profanity really, really works in helping us. I'm constantly exploring why it's helpful in a million ways.

My ambition was to give more in-depth teaching into how it works and more of the stuff that we do on the F\*\*k It weeks, and to explore some of the paradoxical levels as well. F\*\*k It is not just about relaxing, it's about different things at different levels.

I only write these books every five years and I really wanted it to be a fantastic encapsulation of everything I'd been

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thinking and teaching for the last few years. It feels like a bumper book for radical spiritual seekers.

The idea is that we take people from the model that we're imprisoned and uptight and bound by the fact that we give things too much meaning in our lives, and that it doesn't matter so much and you relax. That was the idea around the prison metaphor – that F\*\*k It can help to release us from various prisons that we're in. But the book moves towards this idea that the true freedom comes from realising that

wherever you are, you're free anyway.

It's a more pragmatic approach to F\*\*k It which is another reason why it takes a longer book to explore. We look at how F\*\*k It can work in two directions – it can work in helping you to let go and relax when you're too fast and too tight, but it can also work in the sense that when you're too slow and unmotivated it can get you going. That's the kind of dual thing about F\*\*k It.

**Why do you think so many relatively affluent and comfortable Westerners are feeling so discontent?**

Osho used to talk about those of us in the West being very privileged because unlike the people around him, we have the opportunity to rush through our desires. Obviously mainly material things, but wherever we think we're going to get happiness, the more affluent the society, the more quickly we get to rush through it. So, if I think my happiness will come from earning lots of money and from owning a big house and having nice cars, then I can pretty much do that. I can get my Porsche if I work very hard. And what Osho was saying is that you get all this and then you realise that it's not enough and you say, 'Well there must be more to life than this.' So my sense is that it's a great blessing to have an affluent society where you can get even more quickly to the point where you say to yourself, 'Is this really what it's about?' So many of us are very blessed to be able to go, 'I feel there's more to life than this and I think it's to do with a spiritual side, and I'm going to explore a spiritual dimension and ask the bigger questions.'

Some talented young people are going into their chosen careers – fashion, the media, journalism, advertising, TV, setting up their own internet businesses – and they're making relative fortunes very quickly. But people get to 30 and they've lived a whole career and they've gone through lots of different relationships – we're living everything at such a high speed now – it's great in many respects, though, because they run through that stuff really quickly.

That's the discourse in an affluent Western society but what we're in at the moment is a deep recession. That's quite interesting for us because it's allowed everyone to take a little breath and stop and think what's important. I don't know in business terms whether spiritual books or KS is selling better at the moment, but my sense is that a lot of people are taking this opportunity and life is forcing this period of



reflection on them. So we're going, 'My job was everything. My career was everything and I can't progress in it; I've been made redundant, or the company is going out of business, so I have to look at other areas of my life. I'm being forced to look at what else there is.'

It's a beautiful thing to see people being more conscious of how they are and becoming more conscious of other aspects of their life, whether it's the spiritual aspect or the emotional aspect. In some ways, our focus has shifted. The first book was looking at the spiritual side and now we're looking at the spiritual/emotional side with the therapy.

**Are you more drawn to the scientific, quantum physics side of spiritual living and enquiry, or to the magical, mystical inexplicable aspect?**

There's a kind of paradox there for me. Edgar Allen Poe wrote a poem about science killing the mystery. I actually like the stuff that seems mysterious and magical. The everyday miracles that happen still amaze me. The wonderful way that things intersect – I love that magical and mystical side, but I'm equally delighted when someone like Lynne

McTaggart quotes some study that I can then quote in our workshops to show that prayer does work, for example.

I do like it that there's scientific evidence for some of this stuff. It doesn't mean I need the scientific evidence in order to believe it. I like to come into this from being a curious kind of explorer of life and spirit, to draw my own conclusions. Then to see lots of scientific evidence that something is probably happening because of this is beautiful.

**You are now running your retreats from other venues rather than The Hill That Breathes. How did that come about?**

We had some difficult things happen in 2010 but they were really gifts because it made us realise that we were doing things that we didn't really want to do. Much as we loved having the retreats at the Hill, we realised that it was the teaching and hanging out with people that we loved most; what we didn't like was the running of a hotel and looking after staff and the responsibility and work that it involved.

We could not have made a better decision because now we just teach and share this stuff with lots of people and

I've been able to write loads of music this year. I have booked Bush Hall, London for Sunday 9 December for a two-hour F\*\*k It experience, which is F\*\*k It Music with me talking over the top. So that's what I've been working up to all year. Now I've got time to do amazing things with F\*\*k It – it's lovely.

**Is there a pressure to always appear happy when you teach happiness for a living?**

What we teach really is authenticity, being true to yourself, being open and being real, being in touch, and tuning in to yourself.

We've been through some really tough times and we've lost people close to us. Without bringing the detail into the session, we bring how we are into the session and some of the best F\*\*k It weeks we've had have been when we've been very open about being upset or finding things difficult, or having a tough time in our relationship or whatever it's been. When we've been absolutely real to how we are and have brought that into the group, it's amazing how the group have that energy there. And it's usually the right time for them. So let's take something like grief – if we bring our sense of grief into the group, it's almost always the case that there is grief in the group, beyond the statistical probability.

We've been doing this such a long time now that we know if we just tune in to what we fancy doing and what's true for us during that week, we tend to hit the note of what people are after during that course. These everyday miracles are even more impressive when you see them in the every day. When you're looking out for them, you get more of them. It's beautiful.

**Find out more**

F\*\*k It Therapy: The Profane Way to Profound Happiness by John C Parkin, published 5 November by Hay House, £10.99

The F\*\*k It Experience, a night of words and music from John, on 9 December at Bush Hall, London, price £35. For tickets and more details on the F\*\*k It courses, go to [www.thefuckitlife.com](http://www.thefuckitlife.com)

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