

# Independent.ie

[News](#) [Opinion](#) [Business](#) [Sport](#) [Life](#) [Style](#) [Entertainment](#) [Travel](#) [Sections](#)

Health & Wellbeing

- [Health Features](#)
- [Healthy Eating](#)
- [Fitness](#)
- [Karl Henry](#)
- [Mental Health](#)
- [Baby Loss](#)

Premium

## ‘In a short space of time my whole family was gone – my fiancé, my dad and then my mum’

Niamh Ennis from Dublin helps women make life-enhancing changes and says a series of tragic events in her own life sparked a career reinvention



Niamh Ennis says her experiences of grief changed her profoundly

As told to Katie Byrne

December 28 2021 02:30 AM



“When I was in my thirties, I felt like my life was mapped out in front of me. I was flying along in my career, I was engaged to be married and there was so much promise and so many plans for the future.

It really felt like I had found my groove but then things changed quite dramatically. A few months before our wedding, my fiancé was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. We found out on a Wednesday and he died on the Friday week. My dad died very unexpectedly four months later and then my mum died a few years after that.

In the space of a fairly short time my small family unit was completely gone and nothing in my life was the same.

The experience changed me profoundly and it got to the stage where I felt like I wasn’t able to move beyond it. I knew I needed time to grieve so I took a year’s sabbatical and moved to Spain. There, I gave myself the space to think about what I wanted to do next and how I was going to make sense of all this. Then, as the years went on, I began to gain some clarity.

### Most Watched



Tea  
kills  
stra  
dur  
ran  
atta  
pop  
Tull  
jogg  
rou



‘Rea  
mer  
don  
wor  
- Ga  
con  
mar  
who  
alle  
hit  
wor  
on I  
Stre  
Dub



Stu  
dro  
foot  
reve  
hidi  
bea  
insi  
sink

communications and fundraising. That’s where the idea of transformation and change coaching was born.

If I could share the experiences I had through grief, loss and, ultimately, through my own transformation with other people, maybe it would make them feel less alone.

The idea began to take shape but it took time to bring it to fruition. It didn’t happen in the space of six to 12 months. It happened in a four- to five-year period. When I look back now, I can see how I was following the breadcrumbs. One step led me to the next step and to where I believe I was always supposed to be.

Today, I work with women who feel stuck and unable to move forward. They might be dealing with redundancy, loss and grief or a breakdown in a relationship.

## Home & Property

Get the best home, property and gardening stories straight to your inbox every Saturday.

Enter your Email Address [Sign Up](#)

### Read More

- **‘Some of the best orgasms I’ve had happened when no one was even touching me’**
- **Modern Morals: Is it wrong to put a spying app on my teenager’s phone?**

There is no typical client profile but in the last 18 months I’ve noticed a marked increase in people in their forties and fifties who are, probably for the first time in their lives, re-evaluating where they are.

Lockdown gave people so much time to question their purpose and reassess their careers and their lifestyles. A lot of people started to think, ‘Before I feel like time has run out, I want to do something different’.

One of the silver linings of the pandemic is that it has made change less dramatic.

People have found their voice and they are less afraid to use it. They can now ask for things they never asked for before, even if it’s just different working arrangements.

I suppose that’s one of the benefits of re-evaluation. And that’s what time, space, silence – and removing yourself from the busyness of life – can do.



Sho foot sho mar falli off s



Tra 10-y girl car from petr

### Latest Health & Wellbeing

- **Ask Allison: ‘I am done with my mother-in-law. How can I get my husband to take my side?’**
- **From lean cuisine to eating clean: How dieting became a dirty word**
- **Dear Mary: I cannot find an emotionally and intellectually satisfying man – must I live a sexless life?**
- **‘Without my anorexia, who am I?’ – Micheál Costello on letting go of an eating disorder**
- **Want to stop drinking? Try quiet: From middle-class wine mummies to world famous celebs, there’s an addiction memoir for you**

### Most Read

- 1 **‘Hugely triggering’ – well-known Irish faces criticise ‘damaging’ Operation Transformation**
- 2 **Managing IBS: ‘The cramping and diarrhoea stopped, the bloating disappeared. I lost 10lbs and my energy returned’**
- 3 **Ask Allison: ‘I am done with my mother-in-law. How can I get my husband to take my side?’**

themselves out of the dreaded comfort zone can fill them with so much resistance.

That resistance can stop people from doing anything different. And then there's the fear that they might not be able to do it.

Some people aren't sure what it is they want to change. A lot of people come to me thinking one area in their life is causing all the problems but, actually, when we take a step back and look at the bigger picture, it's rarely that one thing.

Others encounter resistance from their loved ones. When we start making changes, what we're actually doing is declaring, 'I am not happy with who I am or how I'm living my life' and, unfortunately, the people who are closest to us can sometimes feel like we're holding a mirror up to them.

It can show them what they're not doing and they can start to feel a little unsettled or insecure. They might think, 'If she's not happy, how do I know she's happy with me?'

So you have to be mindful of others but you also have to be careful not to be influenced by their reaction to you wanting to change.

They might do it with a full heart or with the best of intentions but they're holding you back to make themselves feel more comfortable, rather than them wanting what is right for you.

A lot of people start thinking about the changes they want to make in their lives around this time of year. But I have a big problem with the concept of New Year's resolutions. I used to spend the first week of every year writing a very long list, and it only made me feel worse.

Nowadays, I prefer to think of it as the setting of intentions for the year ahead. When I'm working with clients, I advise them to pick one or two goals they would like to start working on – less is more – and I tell them that their goals should be realistic and achievable.

I also advise them to think of their goals in terms of the feeling they want to achieve. It's not necessarily what you want to get but why you want to get it and how you want to feel when you get there.

You have a much stronger likelihood of achieving something if you're in pursuit of a feeling as opposed to a thing.

If you were to say to me, 'In 2022 I want to be really rich or make loads of money', I would ask why that matters to you. What is the feeling? Is it because you want to feel more safe, more secure, less worried about paying the bills? Likewise, if your goal is weight loss, the feeling might be one of being stronger and healthier. That's more likely to result in you getting out for exercise or maybe making better food choices.

It is never too late to change. There are so many ways we can change who we are and how we show up in the world that can make such a difference. And so much of the work I do, and the message I'm trying to get across, is that change is not just possible but that it's entirely possible.

**Thoughts are not facts and teens don't predict the future**

**5 Get fit in five minutes with Anna Geary: creating SMART goals**

**Latest**

**Mo**

● 1 hour ago

**'Of course, it's highly unlikely Jamie will be a St Mirren player next season' – Ireland's McGrain in demand**

● 1 hour ago

**Gardaí investigating an incident of attempted criminal damage at a pub in Dublin last night**

● 2 hours ago

**Emma Raducanu gets tough draw in Australian Open in first grand slam match since her New York triumph**

● 2 hours ago

**Gardaí 'urgently' seeking more witnesses to murder of teacher Ashling Murphy (22), killed by stranger on popular Tullamore jogging route**

● 2 hours ago

**'They serve a purpose in preparation and trying to identify new talent' – Dessie Farrell defends O'Byrne Cup**

The alternative is finding yourself this time next year saying, 'Damn, I wish I had done this last year.' And we all know that feeling..."

*niamhennis.com*

### Read More

- 'Some of the best orgasms I've had happened when no one was even touching me'
- Modern Morals: Is it wrong to put a spying app on my teenager's phone?

#### News

- Irish News
- World News
- Local News
- Local ePapers
- Environment
- Weather
- Latest News
- Video
- Topics

#### Opinion

- Letters
- Editorial
- Comment
- Journalists

#### Business

- Budget
- Brexit
- Irish
- World
- Technology
- Personal Finance
- Small Business
- Farming
- Jobs
- Commercial Property
- In The Workplace

#### Sport

- Sportstar Awards
- Rugby
- GAA
- Soccer
- The Left Wing
- The Throw In
- Women's Sport
- Golf
- Horse Racing
- Other Sports
- Dublin GAA
- Tee to Green

#### Life

- Health & Wellbeing
- Home & Garden
- Family
- Parenting
- Food & Drink
- Motoring

#### Style

- Celebrity
- Fashion
- Beauty
- Sex & Relationships
- Voices
- Galleries

#### Entertainment

- Movies
- Television
- Music
- Radio
- Books
- Theatre & Arts
- Games
- Festivals
- Puzzles
- Horoscopes
- Competitions

#### Travel

- Reader Travel Awards
- Travel News
- Staycations
- Ireland
- Reviews
- Walks
- Europe
- World/USA
- Travel TV
- Cruise
- Ski

#### Podcasts

- The Indo Daily
- The Left Wing
- The Big Tech Show
- Real Health Podcast
- The Throw In
- Going to College
- The Floating Voter

#### About Us

- Video
- Newsletter
- Jellow.ie
- IndependentShop
- Discount Codes
- Learning Force
- Socials

