

Who

life&style health

Breaking the Doubt

Pay attention to your own life and become a positive new you, says author Tricia Brennan

As a writer of books on overcoming fear and doubt, Tricia Brennan had already learnt that some people didn't want to read anything "new age." And others who did wouldn't necessarily gain anything. "They'd read the book, close it and that was the end of it," she says.

But Brennan felt "that these messages were very powerful and necessary for everyone." So she decided to deliver the information in a way she hoped a wider audience could relate to. The result? *Looking Beyond the Mirror* (New Holland, \$24.95), in which the western Sydney suburbs-born author, who is in her mid-40s and divides her time between Sydney and Los Angeles, tells 12 juicy true stories of models, trophy wives, high-powered executives and actors all struggling with personal problems—problems she says are common to us all. Brennan follows up with simple ways to solve these problems, such as by being mindful and attentive to our emotions and feelings.

During the 20 years in which the sleekly dressed Brennan, who says she is clairvoyant and calls herself an "intuitive counsellor," worked in the Australian film industry as an art director and designer, she travelled regularly to the US. She often found herself in the company of Los Angeles's beautiful people, "sitting around, talking to directors about their emotions and their relationships." By word of mouth, Brennan gained a reputation as a spiritual counsellor and was soon in the confidence of celebrities (she won't name names) who came to her to work through their fears and doubts. "I was working with people who were very successful, who seemed to have this ideal, perfect life. Yet they had fears; they were tripped over by self-doubt. Their self-image was distorted, the same as everyone else."

Brennan decided to write *Looking Beyond the Mirror* using their stories (names have been changed) to show that "no matter what our props are or how glamorous our lives, fundamentally

"You have to be intentional about what kind of life you want," says Brennan (in Sydney on Jan. 25).



Photograph by TOM HOLLAND



we are exactly the same and struggle with the same things. And no matter what we do, or who we are, we all have the same power to overcome them. Everyone loves a good story, especially a true story and [one] about glamorous people. I thought if I could use interesting examples, it might open up a few more people to the possibility of living a more positive life."

By concentrating on the "12 virtues we all possess," (see below) self-doubt can be overcome, says Brennan. The virtues range from taking responsibility for our own actions, to being prepared to imagine a better life for ourselves. Focusing on them, says Brennan, will lead the way to a less stressed and anxious life: "It's about self-awareness."

But if there's one key ingredient to conquering crippling fears and doubts, Brennan believes it's paying attention to our feelings. "We are the caretakers of our own hearts," she says. "No-one else is. Be compassionate towards yourself and you will immediately begin to consider your own best interests. And when you really know something, then doubt just has no place."

• AJUKETA JAMESON

12 STEPS TO OVERCOMING SELF-DOUBT

- 1 BE A CARETAKER**
Accept responsibility for your own happiness.
- 2 BE AN OBSERVER**
Remain clear and mindful.
- 3 BE A PEACEMAKER**
Don't be judgmental and critical.
- 4 BE AN EXPLORER**
Develop your internal resources.
- 5 BE A DREAMER**
Use your imagination to inspire yourself.
- 6 BE A HEALER**
Resolve the past and restore your esteem.
- 7 BE A NURTURER**
Give yourself loving attention.
- 8 BE A PIONEER**
Use initiative to implement change.
- 9 BE A NEGOTIATOR**
Communicate and be fair.
- 10 BE A BUILDER**
Use wise choices to build your own security.
- 11 BE A VISIONARY**
Hold a vision of your optimum future.
- 12 BE A CO-CREATOR**
Work in partnership with your heart's desire.