

Robb Report
PRESENTS

M U S E

Balancing Act

Breakthroughs
in health • New great
escapes • Spring's
off-duty fashion

— *Plus* —

The Next
Business Superstars
Revealed

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ROBB REPORT



Who's the next you? That is the question we posed to some of our favorite leaders for this issue. Who do the top women in business, the arts, and media see as the future trailblazers? Who catches their eye, who has that spark, who are the ones to watch? Their answers were wide-ranging, revealing influencers of various ages, backgrounds, and accomplishments, but one thing all of their responses showed was a deep admiration.

This became even more apparent during the photo shoots for "Who's the Next You?" (page 48). Those smiles, laughs, and hugs were spontaneous and real, and they made me think about how important—essential, really—it is to have cheerleaders rooting for us. It's that spirit that Regina King expressed so well in accepting her Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress in *If Beale Street Could Talk*: "I'm an example of what it looks like when support and love is poured into someone." She gets it. Just as important as talent and tenacity is the encouragement from the people around you.

It is unwavering support that shaped sisters Camilla and Carolina Cucinelli, whom I visited in Solomeo, their hilltop Umbrian village, last fall. Yes, they had advantages—their father is the designer and entrepreneur Brunello Cucinelli—but they inherited much more than gorgeous looks and luxurious wardrobes. From a young age, they had instilled in them by their parents a love of the arts, history, and nature, and a commitment to bettering their community. In "Family Matters" (page 90), they open their restored and redesigned homes and share their clan's humanistic mission.

At the end of the day, everyone loves the feeling of coming home, and that is why we love the spirit of Château du Grand-Lucé, an 18th-century estate in the Loire Valley that after a two-year renovation reopens as a boutique hotel in June. It's part of Marcy Holthus's "anti-hotel-brand hotel brand," Pilot Hotels, which offers curated, authentic experiences designed to transport guests (page 60). You will also be transported when you see the relaxed spring clothes that Harper Smith photographed in Malibu in late February for "Far and Away" (page 68). Smith's images reflect the prevailing easygoing style in fashion and illustrate that you can indeed dress comfortably without sacrificing style.

Finding a sense of balance is something we all seem to be striving for today, and this issue is packed with stories that can help. For those of you looking to get a good night's rest, we explore the latest research and remedies in sleep (page 98). We check out new integrative medical centers that are like one-stop shops for your health, with everything from traditional medicine and cutting-edge diagnostics to acupuncture and nutrition (page 102). And we offer advice



on getting over your email addiction (page 104).

Hopefully all of this gets you thinking. I thought for a long time when someone recently asked me, "Who's the next you?" Suddenly I realized that she's right next to me: my daughter, Emily. That might sound obvious—who doesn't think their kid is wonderful? Still, we often overlook the people closest to us because we imagine that success and inspiration must be far afield or hard to come by. What I admire about Emily is her quiet tenacity in pursuing her passion and her work without distraction. And she has my unending support.

—JILL NEWMAN, EDITOR

On a quest to unearth the next round of extraordinary women in business, we asked eight of our favorite leaders a single question...

“Who’s the next you?”

BY **Mark Ellwood**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Mark Mann**

Bozoma Saint John ↳ **Amber Grimes**

Bozoma “Boz” Saint John elevated the brands of PepsiCo, Apple, and Uber before becoming the chief marketing officer for global media behemoth Endeavor (endeavorco.com). The business celebrity—whose new docuseries, Bozoma: Being Badass, will debut on the Starz network later this year—met Capitol Music Group’s (universalmusic.com) senior vice president of global creative Amber Grimes last year at the Roots Picnic in Philadelphia.

“My first impressions of Amber were that she’s sharp, witty, ambitious, and beautiful—she’s the dopest! We’re both committed to black excellence and to showing the world it’s possible to be a double minority and succeed. Amber is unflinching in her desire to make the best of every situation: She’s unafraid of unknown spaces.

Her current job is remarkable. She is a young woman who has risen quickly, and that’s because of her grit,

tenacity, and smarts. There aren’t many people who have achieved what she has in the amount of time she has. I credit her level of focus. She hustles to find opportunities that she deeply cares about, and she won’t let them fail.

Where do I see her in five, 10, or even 20 years? I have no idea, but if I had to guess, she’ll be curating a magical cultural experience on Mars. She’s so special.”



“She is a young woman who has risen quickly, and that’s because of her grit, tenacity, and smarts.”

—Bozoma Saint John, left, on Amber Grimes

“There’s a realness to her, an authenticity which doesn’t usually happen until you’re in your fifties or sixties.”

—Bobbi Brown, left, on Hannah Bronfman



Bobbi Brown ↳ Hannah Bronfman

In 1991, Bobbi Brown founded her eponymous makeup line (bobbibrowncosmetics.com) with a capsule collection of lipsticks; within a few years, she was one of the biggest names in beauty. Decades and nine books later, Brown’s empire continues to grow, most recently with the launch of her highly successful website JustBobbi.com. Along the way, she met Hannah Bronfman (hbfit.com), a former DJ turned wellness entrepreneur who has become a digital guide and all-around inspiration for the makeup maven.

“I fell in love with Hannah when I first met her. She has lights in her eyes, the most beautiful skin and body—she’s not about skinny, she’s about strong. We talked a mile a minute about everything from the new world she was leading to building a brand, and what it takes—how to live your life, and be happy.

We have several things in common: being very naive, for example, meaning we don’t worry that something’s not going to work. We are very positive and excited about what we’re doing and see opportunity where no one else does, and then act on it. She’s relentless, and I’m the same way: You just keep going.

I’ve heard people say I was a name-dropper. The first time that happened was when I’d done something so cool, and it happened to be with someone well-known, and I wanted to relay my excitement. I’m sure Hannah has heard people say the same about her. She has access to lots of interesting people whose stories she shares on Instagram.

There’s a realness to her, an authenticity which doesn’t usually happen until you’re in your fifties or sixties. She is what she preaches. And she’ll educate me on wellness. I have her on speed dial when I need a [recommendation for] a facial or a massage. We share a lot of that.”



Alexandra Champalimaud (left) and Anna Beeber

“Anna and I bonded instantly. The fact that she was true to herself was important to me: She had stepped out, stepped up, and stepped away, doing different things from her family back in Alaska.

Right at the beginning, I took Anna on a job with a wonderful older gentleman who had extensive residences and homes. He was rather *méfiant*, as the French say—careful that people didn’t take advantage of him, as I’m sure people had done before. Approaching work with him, one had to be very

careful. And as a very, very junior person, Anna showed such leadership skills in engaging this gentleman. By one point, he thought she was far more interesting than me, so she took over the job and they’ve been friends ever since.

I’m very inclusive as a leader—generous with my information, but also quite demanding in a soft way. I think Anna has modeled herself after that. She’s someone who can be a team player as well as a leader with enormous potential.”

Alexandra Champalimaud ↳ Anna Beeber

Interior designer Alexandra Champalimaud (champalimauddesign.com) has become synonymous with good taste: Her singular style can be found everywhere from LA’s Hotel Bel-Air to the Carlyle in New York. Increasingly by her side is Anna Beeber, a principal designer at her firm who has risen through the ranks from an entry-level position nearly a decade ago.

Yana Peel ↔ Farah Jassat

Philanthropist and Goldman Sachs alumna Yana Peel became CEO of London's Serpentine Galleries (serpentinegalleries.org) three years ago, after cofounding Outset, a foundation focused on innovative funding solutions for cultural projects. Journalist and former BBC producer Farah Jassat works for Intelligence Squared (intelligence-squared.org), a nonprofit media group that organizes live events, where Peel is currently on the board of trustees. The two women met three years ago, when Jassat helped produce a festival of ideas for the Serpentine in collaboration with the BBC.

"She has a boldness to challenge the status quo. It's interesting to see it in someone who is so much younger than I am."

—Yana Peel, left, on Farah Jassat

"Farah has inquisitiveness, curiosity, and tenacity. At a time when all of us want immediate, instant gratification, she hunts and waits until the right moment. She's particularly thoughtful in a way that isn't necessarily something people would instantly associate with a professional of her age.

She has a boldness to challenge the status quo, wrapped up in her quiet, petite 28-year-old frame. She's not shy in expressing her own opinions or questioning an organization. I've been the same way here at the Serpentine, but it's interesting to see it in someone who is so much younger than I am. She comes to a situation, pokes and prods it, and is such a quick study.

I think we're both trying to master storytelling in the digital age, and [we] have a real interest in the human story. We're always thinking about the future—but making sure no one is left behind in terms of the voices we're amplifying—and coming up with the most thoughtful way to question a topic, whether it's about the West engaging with Saudi Arabia or the future of Facebook.

Whatever happens, she will never be replaced by a robot. At her core, she has an ability to pivot, transform, and reinvent, which I hope people see in my work as well."

Debra Lee ↳ Nikkole Denson-Randolph

Media mogul Debra Lee became one of the country's top female executives during her three decades at BET Networks (bet.com). Now retired, she serves on the boards of companies including Twitter and Marriott International. Six years ago, at the Black Filmmaker Foundation Summit, she met Nikkole Denson-Randolph, a former executive at Starbucks who now serves as vice president of content strategy and inclusive programming at AMC Theatres (amctheatres.com).

"The one piece of advice I would give her is to always be true to what she thinks is right."

—Debra Lee, left, on Nikkole Denson-Randolph



"I remember Nikkole standing up to answer a question with such poise at that summit. She was personable and very focused on how her business could help other filmmakers. When filmmakers there complained to her about how hard it is to find distribution, she wasn't defensive. She said, 'Come talk to me. On Saturday and Sunday, we have a program where we show independent movies. I want to help you out.'

We both have legal training, and she's an attorney like I am. She has all the wonderful traits

that come along with that: In addition to problem-solving, she's fast on her feet and a great speaker. She's someone people really enjoy being around.

I'm so impressed with the way she's handled her career at AMC. She has an unusual position, especially for an African-American woman. The one piece of advice I would give her is to always listen to her inner voice and be true to her own values and what she thinks is right. That's a hard thing for women in a corporate environment to remember."

"Ty and I took parallel paths to different places, but they were just as hard."

—Kara Goldin, right, on Ty Stiklorius



Kara Goldin ↳ Ty Stiklorius

In 2005, former AOL executive Kara Goldin developed Hint (drinkhint.com), a healthier alternative to flavored water that has since become the largest independent nonalcoholic beverage company in America. Ty Stiklorius—founder of Friends at Work (friendsatwork.com), a boutique firm that combines management services for musicians like John Legend with social activism programs—reached out to Goldin more than a decade ago, after she picked up her first bottle of Hint. Stiklorius would eventually become an investor in Goldin's company.

"I thought Ty was very smart, beautiful, and not concerned with following the rule book in her industry. John [Legend] and Ty had gone to college together and were just really good friends, which is not a traditional way of going to market in the artist-management world.

There were lots of roadblocks in that industry: If you did not have a relationship with Sony, or similar, [the idea was] that you could not be big. It is just like when people told me that if we did not have a relationship [with a major beverage distributor], we could not be a \$100 million brand. Ty and I took parallel paths to different places, but they were just as hard.

Ty is a connector, which I think I am as well. She's constantly there to help. Early on, shortly after she had invested, she opened up her Rolodex. That may sound like an easy thing to do, but people tend to be very guarded, in Hollywood in particular. The festivals we've done with our brand, she would figure out the right person in the music world to talk to. I'd never think she wouldn't connect me.

We think the same way: We may not know the answer today, but we're going to take it on and solve the problem."

Amanda Sharp ↳ Victoria Siddall

Amanda Sharp is a force in the art world, having cofounded Frieze (frieze.com), one of the leading contemporary art fairs, in London in 2003. When her show expanded with Frieze Masters—the first edition of which took place in 2012—she knew just the woman for the job: Victoria Siddall, who has since been tasked with running the growing franchise’s shows in New York and Los Angeles.

“On the surface, Victoria and I look and act in different ways, but we have a lot of the same skills. If we were to undergo psychometric testing, like Myers-Briggs, we’d come out as similar types. We share competencies, but have different personalities.

I think it’s important to understand you’ll do better in the workplace if you have work-life balance: I try to never travel on weekends, and I take my kids to school in the morning. Victoria privileges her daughter in a similar way. I love that we have that in common.

Victoria comes from a military family, and she is the trooper to end all troopers. She just got back from LA, where she had food poisoning for four days. But she stood up, did a press conference, and charmed gallerists at lunch, probably all the while trying to avoid throwing up at the table. But no one would have known or had any inkling she was in anything but top form.

She’s a great underpromiser and overdeliverer, and she’s a very modest person. Whether she’s taken Beyoncé around an art fair or been invited to stay on some fabulous yacht, she’s never going to mention it. But I would say one thing: She’s wilder than people realize, and there’s a hidden monkey in there.”



Victoria Siddall (left) and Amanda Sharp

Katrina Adams ↳ Nicole Kankam

When Katrina Adams was appointed chairman, CEO, and president of the United States Tennis Association (usta.com), she became both the youngest and first person of color to hold the positions. A former pro tennis player herself, she met Nicole Kankam, USTA’s current managing director of marketing, more than a decade ago, when Kankam was first hired as a junior staff member.

“Nicole was young, bright-eyed, and very intuitive when I first met her. We both exude confidence, but in different ways: I’m pretty loud and boisterous; she isn’t, but you can tell it’s there from the look in her eyes. She doesn’t have that bold personality you expect of someone in marketing. Nicole is quiet and unassuming; she’s elusive in the way she goes about things.

In the same way, we’re both very competitive, but I wear it on my sleeve. According to my mom, I’ve always been competitive at everything I do, even in conversation. Nicole has that quality, too. She will never settle, and her aspiration is always to grow. She is not one of those people who is complacent in her role.

If I could give her the advice I wish I’d been given at her stage in life, I’d say this: Show your weaknesses, because in my opinion, that shows strength. As a professional athlete, I had to be so prepared, to know everything. But you’re not supposed to know everything. That’s why you have people in other roles in the organization.

She’s also a person of color who’s a managing director in an organization where we don’t have a lot of them. There’s always a spotlight on her to see what she can do. She could easily be a chief marketing officer of any company.” ■



“[Nicole] will never settle, and her aspiration is always to grow.”

—Katrina Adams, right, on Nicole Kankam

The **Bold** *and the* **Beautiful**

Punch up your wardrobe with deliciously vibrant gemstone designs.

CURATED BY **Jill Newman** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Jeffrey Westbrook** STYLING BY **Miako Katoh**

Piaget (piaget.com)
Limelight Mediterranean
Garden earrings with
spinels, tourmalines,
aquamarines, and
diamonds; **Assael** (at
neimanmarcus.com)
ring with angel-skin coral
and lavender spinels;
Van Cleef & Arpels
(vancleefarpels.com)
Liane necklace in
18-karat rose gold with
diamonds, tanzanites, and
chloromelanites.



Silvia Furmanovich (at bergdorfgoodman.com) wood marquetry earrings, with green tourmalines, tsavorites, and brown diamonds (pair at left), and with emeralds, pink tourmalines, and fire opals (pair at right); **John Hardy** (at neimanmarcus.com) cuff in green jade and sterling silver; **Sharon Khazzam** (sharonkhazzam.com) bracelet in fossilized agate with tsavorite, emerald, and diamond accents.



Harry Winston (harrywinston.com) Candy rings, clockwise from top: a pink sapphire center stone with rubies, diamonds, and pink sapphires set in platinum; a tsavorite center stone with peridots, aquamarines, blue sapphires, and diamonds set in 18-karat gold and platinum; and a red spinel center stone with diamonds and pink-and-yellow sapphires set in platinum.



CLOCKWISE FROM
TOP: **Nikos Koulis** (at
neimanmarcus.com)
gold earrings with
turquoise and diamonds;
Sharon Khazzam
(sharonkhazzam.com)
Amethyst ring with a blue
zircon center stone, a
Tanzanian spinel, pink-
and-purple sapphires,
and diamonds; **Marina
B** (at juststoneeye.com)
earrings with amethysts,
turquoise, and black
diamonds.



Mizuki (mizukijewels.com) pearl-and-diamond earrings;
Kimberly McDonald (at bergdorfgoodman.com) multi-gemstone necklace with hand-carved scarabs.



FROM TOP: **Neha Dani** (at macklowgallery.com) Myra ring in 18-karat gold and green rhodium with diamonds and tsavorites; **Cismondi754** (at neimanmarcus.com) ring with an emerald, pink sapphires, and diamonds, and ring with orange-and-pink sapphires; **Temple St. Clair** (templestclair.com) multi-gemstone necklace with diamonds.



Hemmerle (hemmerle.com) earrings with two large rubellites—each weighing more than 23 carats and sapphires; **Van Cleef & Arpels** (vancleefarpels.com) Jaspee butterfly clip with multicolored sapphires, emeralds, tsavorite garnets, and diamonds.



Graff (graff.com) Foliage earrings with rubies and diamonds. **Coomi** (coomi.com) Affinity pearl necklace with gemstones and diamonds.

PHOTO ASSISTANT:
Brendan Phelan
STYLIST'S ASSISTANT:
Tanya Neumann

A photograph of two women, Carolina and Camilla Cucinelli, sitting on a large, light-colored sofa in a modern, well-lit kitchen. The woman on the left is wearing a white ribbed cardigan and light-colored trousers. The woman on the right is wearing a dark blue suit. They are both looking towards the camera with neutral expressions. The background shows a kitchen with wooden cabinets, a window, and various kitchen items.

Family Matters

Camilla and Carolina Cucinelli are embracing their philosopher-designer father's vision of home.

By JILL NEWMAN
Photographs by
VALENTINA SOMMARIVA

Sisters Carolina (left) and Camilla Cucinelli.

When you arrive at Camilla Cucinelli's hilltop home in the Umbrian countryside, the first thing you notice is the statue of Apollo on the veranda overlooking a sweep of fields and vineyards. The Greek and Roman deity of music, poetry, sunlight, and healing, Apollo is more than mere decoration. Like nearly everything here in Solomeo, it is a poetic symbol of the spirit that permeates this tiny medieval town. The bust was a gift from her father, the Italian designer Brunello Cucinelli, who, with his wife, Federica, has spent the past 30 years restoring the village's ancient buildings, narrow streets, and surrounding landscape—and building a theater, amphitheater, park, and more. "His objective," says Camilla, "was to create a hamlet where there is room for thought, a place to cure our souls, a place of natural beauty."



"I'm an art lover in all of its forms, and music is one of them," says Carolina, who sits at the piano her mother gave her when she moved into the house. OPPOSITE: A bust of Apollo graces a veranda at Camilla's home.

Camilla and her sister, Carolina, have embraced their father's philosophy and his enviable signature aesthetic—a down-to-earth style that defines their fashion, of course, but also their homes and their way of life. On a late fall day, dressed in flowing white shirts, cuffed jeans, and sneakers, they curl up on Camilla's couch and talk affectionately about their father's influence, their cherished Sunday family lunches (where talk of business is happily barred), and their sense of place. "I grew up enjoying the simplicity of my mom's vegetable garden and playing in the open air," says Camilla, 36, who is co-chair of the company's women's style team. "I feel so fortunate to be able to give our daughters, Vittoria and Penelope, a life surrounded by natural beauty, where you can still enjoy an afternoon reading a book under a tree or marvel at the beauty of a special sunset."

The sisters' Solomeo homes were part of the expansive restoration of the once crumbling village. That ambitious project—which includes a sprawling, light-filled Brunello Cucinelli headquarters and factory where employees are served lunch made from locally grown produce in the subsidized canteen—was officially unveiled last fall, and Camilla and Carolina played a meaningful role in the renewal. Camilla and her husband, Riccardo Stefanelli, renovated their 1890s home, which was originally a small hotel, in a layout that recalls a traditional Umbrian country house. It is striking in its simplicity: wood-beamed ceilings, whitewashed walls, and floor-to-ceiling windows fronting the fields, fruit orchards, and olive groves in the valley below. The stacks of books on shelves and in piles around the rooms are part of the

Carolina's kitchen is a gathering place for family and friends. RIGHT: Artemisia Gentileschi's painting *L'Annunciazione ad Abramo* was a housewarming gift from her father. "The painting belonged to him," says Carolina, "so I have a special emotional connection to it, as I do with the story behind the artist. She fought for her freedom as a woman and as one of the first female artists of her time."





library Camilla's parents gave them as a wedding gift—a collection filled with notable volumes on philosophy, art, history, and literature.

Just a few houses away, Carolina, 28, and her husband, Alessio Piastrelli, redesigned their home with an expansive modern kitchen that is integrated into the airy, light-filled living space. "I enjoy cooking and entertaining at home, and when our friends come over, we end up spending most of the evening there," says Carolina, who serves as the company's chairman executive assistant. "I inherited my mom's love of cooking and knowing how to pick fresh ingredients to make simple, traditional dishes that have always been a part of our local cuisine."

Ever present in the sisters' homes and gardens and throughout Solomeo are classical marble sculptures of philosophers and Greek gods.

Brunello Cucinelli commissioned several of the pieces from a young artist in the Tuscany town of Pietrasanta, which is known for its marble caves and classical arts tradition. "I often walk with my daughters through the parks and share the stories behind the historic and mythological figures captured in these sculptures," says Camilla. "It is a way to continue the tradition that has been at the center of my father's life."

Cucinelli has even surrounded his swimming pool with sculptures of Sophocles, Eros, and Apollo. It's as if they are watching over Solomeo as the guardians of his mission, which today is perpetuated by his daughters. "We don't just take care of what we have," says Carolina. "We must work to leave the place we found more beautiful for the future generations." They have set the bar high for those who will follow. ■

OPPOSITE: Camilla's house has sweeping views of Solomeo's picturesque fields and village. BELOW: Carolina's minimalist living room boasts wood-beamed ceilings, white-washed walls, and cozy Molteni couches.





The Well will combine Western medicine and Eastern healing practices at its 13,000-square-foot center in Manhattan.

might not like what your MD is telling you, and that makes it really hard to integrate all of your wellness into one program on your own,” says Sarah Hallock, cofounder of the Well. “We’re bringing the doctors and practitioners who are craving this kind of collaboration to one place.”

Still, the new model isn’t a cure-all just yet: All memberships are out-of-pocket, and some specialized services and diagnostic tests must still be outsourced to traditional providers. At Parsley, Berzin is addressing this by following patient outcomes via biomarker tests and a proprietary tracker that measures progress related to everything from symptoms to prescriptions, in order to bring big insurance into the fold and eventually reach a broader socioeconomic base. “We’re saving on average \$5,000 per person by reversing sickness rather than simply treating it,” she says, pointing to improvement rates she’s seen for chronic conditions ranging from insomnia to infertility. And as part of the Well’s commitment to social impact, Hallock and her partners will ask their practitioners to volunteer in clinics and find ways to share knowledge with all communities.

“This is just phase one,” says Hallock. “We will be seeing a lot more of this being offered on a mass level. In a few years, we’ll look back and ask, ‘Why didn’t this exist sooner?’”



Is Email Ruining Your Life?

Research suggests all those electronic messages are bad for your health, but thankfully, help is on the way.

By Christina Binkley

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FEELING STRESSED? Blame it on your email.

Researchers have begun issuing health warnings. “Unless we live in unusually extreme situations such as war zones, for example,” a report in *Psychology Today* noted, “our life doesn’t usually have frequent and sequential stressors thrown at us.” At least it didn’t until 1971, when the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPANET), a creation of the U.S. Defense Department, sent the first rudimentary email. Had we only known.

Each time you decide to check your email, your body responds with a fight-or-flight response that has evolved over millennia. As you reach for your device, your brain anticipates that something may be prowling in your inbox, ready to leap out and pounce. This triggers your body’s built-in alarm system, notifying your adrenal glands to make more cortisol, your body’s main stress hormone.



Your heart rate and blood pressure rise. Within seconds, you are gloriously prepared to respond to the challenges that lurk within your inbox—a pesky request from a client, a less than stellar sales report, or your interior designer’s estimate for a new marble bathroom.

If you checked email just once a day, the jolt to your system might help you defuse the incoming explosives—because, let’s face it, email is an ingenious system of pushing one person’s responsibilities off onto another. But many of us are inundated with hundreds of emails daily, working in environments that encourage constant monitoring, immediate response, and 24-7 engagement. Such exposure sends cortisol levels yo-yoing throughout the day.

“The habits we develop, the emotional reactions we have to messages and the unwritten organizational etiquette around emails combine into a toxic source of stress which could be negatively impacting our productivity and well-being,” said Dr. Richard MacKinnon, a researcher with Britain’s Future Work Centre, after conducting a study of 2,000 workers across a variety of industries that was presented in 2016 with the British Psychological Society.

Another concern—especially, perhaps, for parents of teenagers (or anyone who’s ever been a teen)—the bodily email chain reaction

Best Practices to Unplug (and Get Your Life Back)

- 1. Take back control:** Turn off push notifications for your accounts. Check for emails periodically—say, two to three times per day. Is it time for your 2 p.m. email check? Take note of how your heart rate and breathing respond.
- 2. Set expectations:** Tell your coworkers, friends, and family that texts or phone calls are the best way to reach you if it’s urgent. Ask them to stop forwarding chain emails from their weird uncle. You’ll find those on social media, thank you.
- 3. Force the issue:** Set a permanent out-of-office response notifying emailers of rule number two. Be very polite—no one wants to be humiliated by an OOO.
- 4. Get real:** Recognize the “inbox zero” goal for what it is—the modern Sisyphian task. It’s OK if you have 12,436 unread emails. At 30 seconds each, that’s 103 hours added to your productive life—not to mention the savings in your precious cortisol.

It’s OK if you have 12,436 unread emails. At 30 seconds each, that’s 103 hours added to your productive life.

also impacts human emotional intelligence. *Psychology Today* reports that when the stress response is triggered, the part of our brain that responds with anxiety or fear—the amygdala—takes over. This weakens our ability to use a more evolved part of our brain, the prefrontal cortex, which allows adults to think logically and make rational choices once they emerge from adolescence.

Adults in the working world are at risk, too. Last August, researchers at the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech, Pennsylvania’s Lehigh University, and Colorado State University called the expectations of the “always on” organization, which includes constant email monitoring outside of regular business hours, an “insidious” threat to the well-being of individuals and their families. They titled their report *Killing Me Softly: Electronic Communications Monitoring and Employee and Spouse Well-being*.

But stop blaming everyone else. Luis Suarez, a data analytics guru who largely avoids email communications in favor of phone calls, group chats, and texting, argues that the way out of this is up to us—or else.

“Email is one of the prime reasons that people don’t have a life anymore,” says Suarez, who gave up nearly all email communications a decade ago and says his sense of overload disappeared as his inbox shrank to a few handfuls a week. “I’m much more productive,” he says (via a Skype call). “I go on holidays and there’s no email waiting for me. I have regained my life.”

Health researchers argue that practicing mindfulness can help as well. In other words, have a mindful willingness to walk away, forget the FOMO (fear of missing out), and let it go. Over time, people will learn that there are better ways to communicate with you.

“Email is not the problem; we are,” says Suarez. “It’s how we abuse the system.”