

'Kindness can change the world'

Actor and musician **Luke Goss** reveals how his mother's death started a journey of self-discovery and a spiritual awakening

You grew up in Lewisham, London. What was your childhood like?

I was raised in a tough part of south east London by my mother, Carol, and mum's dad, Harry, a faith healer. My grandfather gave me the belief of healing through faith. He'd get rid of inoperable tumours on people. He was a tough, strong man who served his country in the Second World War as a gunner and later was a head foreman on large building sites in London. He lost his wife to cancer when she was only 55 years of age. During this time, he became aware of the gift he had – the gift of healing through faith. Being the wonderful man he was, he dedicated his life to healing others without any desire to be financially rewarded for it. I can easily say he was the most loving, guiding male force in my life. A Light Being, he guided me and is still guiding me by downloading chunks of information into my head, wise thoughts, anytime, anywhere.

What inspired you to take a spiritual trip into the Mojave Desert in Joshua Tree National Park in 2018?

In May 2014, I lost my beautiful mother to breast cancer. It challenged my faith and shook me to my core. After Mum died, a good friend of mine had a vivid dream with a message from my late mother telling me to meditate, so being a good son, I did. It helped with the grief. And that's where my journey of self-discovery began. A starting point of a journey filled with a deep desire to seek answers.... Why am I here? What do I want to do with my life? Some people may think I'm already doing it, fulfilling my dreams in film, acting and directing, writing books or playing large concerts with my brother, Matt (lead singer in Bros), who I love more than anything in the world and would give my life for. But before I went to the desert, I'd spent seven



Being a musician is a huge part of me

months followed around by a documentary crew making a film about me and Matt (*After The Screaming Stops*). It was the story behind the story of our beginning and our band, Bros. Like anything for public consumption, it must be entertaining and there's always an agenda. It wasn't until the process was underway that I realised it was a daily goal for the crew to unpick me and reveal cracks in my wall where I compartmentalise my pain and suffering to endure life. I was desperate to get away for peace and quiet.

So I loaded up the car with the motivation behind my trip to ask myself what I could do to feel authentic, to improve myself as a contributing human being?

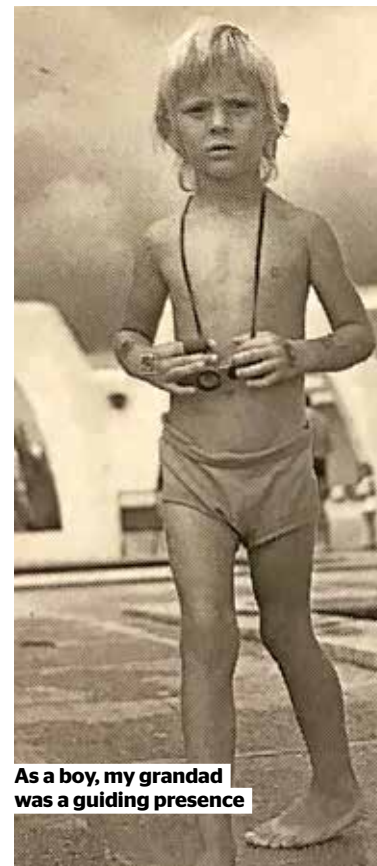
Where did you stay?

In a white canvas tent. The retreat was peaceful and beautiful with no other guests. I was happy to be alone, without temptation to befriend anyone.

As a celebrity, finding time for myself is just as hard as it is for all of us. We're all addicts in a way – to Facebook, email, texts, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, or food, booze, drugs, porn – whatever distracts us from something that can get us closer to the Divine. Regardless of a chosen faith, being closer to the Divine is one thing that can assist us in having a happier, more peaceful, abundant and authentic life.

At the campground, I spent the first two hours going back and forth to the car for supplies, chopping wood for the cold night ahead and putting on my new thermals and boots. I finally sat down as the sun began to set. For the first time in my entire life, I was totally alone with just the Joshua trees (a symbol of strength and resilience that grows in an adverse arid environment, representing overcoming pain and loss) around me as my only companions. I felt truly lucky and said a quick prayer of gratitude.

'For the first time in my entire life, I was totally alone'



As a boy, my grandad was a guiding presence

PROFILE...

Luke Goss

Career A 51-year-old actor, director, producer, author and drummer.

Born on 29 September 1968 in Lewisham, London, he found fame with twin Matt in boyband Bros.

Luke lives in LA with his backing singer wife, Shirley Lewis, and has forged a successful career as an actor, winning the **Ultimate Badass Award** at the PollyGrind Film Festival in May 2010 for his role in zombie-vampire film **The Dead Undead**.

In February 2018, he released his directorial debut **Your Move**.

Did you know? Luke is 11 minutes older than his twin Matt and the brothers had 13 hit singles in the UK as Bros during the Eighties.

What was your first night like?

When the sun set, the desert chill was well and truly underway. I lit my fire earlier than I needed because I was excited and found a campfire comforting. I soon realised firewood is not to be squandered because the sooner you light it, the sooner you burn through it, and running out of wood is no fun on a night when you can see your own breath mixed with a mild icy breeze that doesn't let up. So began my first night alone. At first I tried to ignore my fears. I'm a tough boy but after a few hours I realised I would leave this beautiful place without a lesson if I didn't own my fears. Lessons come during silence and fear is the loudest of all the noise that fills our minds. I asked myself what I was afraid of, what made me feel uneasy. I was alone without distractions or counsel from anyone. Just me, my faith and my demons to keep me company. As I sat alone in the cold, dark desert, I felt a judging energy saying things like, 'he's such a hippy,' 'he's going through a phase'. I felt a nagging guilt about being peaceful. Around midnight I said, 'Stop, Luke, really listen. That's why you're here.' It was a firm outburst that came from nowhere. Maybe from a higher source. I listened to the guidance and sat in silence for the next hour. Watching the red moon break the horizon and listening to dozens of coyotes howling. I sat feeling uneasy with the rustling noises behind me, while the kangaroo rats ran around in search of my gifts of cashew nuts

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With Matt, who I love more than life



My grandad, Samuel, who was a healer



The Mojave Desert, where I had my spiritual awakening



My beautiful mum, Carol

that fell on the desert floor. I realised that even though I'd spent years in the pursuit of acceptance and release of fear, that was exactly what I was doing now – listening to things outside of my mind with irrational fear instead of letting it all just be.

What was it like waking in the desert the first day?

It felt great because I knew I had three days and nights left. My first feeling was excitement about the outdoor shower the retreat had installed in a small outbuilding near my tent. I allowed myself to enjoy a longer than needed shower, taking time to feel the sun, wash my body with the water. I prayed as I washed myself, attempting to clean my body not only of dirt but also of negative energy. It was like I had an obsession

with cleansing but it felt liberating and energising. I felt joyful because nobody was there to view me as crazy or obsessed. The day was warmer than the day before, so I chopped some fire wood, ate light and moved slowly. I allowed my thoughts without debate, like meditation, where I let my thoughts behave like clouds passing. I observed them but let them go their way without curiosity, and worry or fear.

Did you feel a connection to your environment?

Something I had on my to-do list was to walk barefoot on the desert floor to connect with Mother Earth. So I took off my boots and socks and spent a few hours feeling the floor of the desert through the soles of my feet. One reason I did this is because while feeling the sandy gravel barefoot, I felt less disconnected from simplicity and less connected to the fear of the fire ants and scorpions or whatever was wandering the floor of the desert. In reality, it was their turf, they own it and I was a guest there. And with that thought, I had my first moment of acceptance of my new residence.

Did you emerge from the desert with any intentions for the future?

On the morning of my last day, when I was thinking about how raped people are by politics,

government and ego, a question popped into my mind, 'Have you ever dreamed of a different society where we're kinder, more loving and supportive of each other, regardless of social or financial standing, someone's religion, colour or sexual preference?' And I realised a simple commitment to kindness will set into motion a ripple that will become a tsunami of change for the better, toward a more conscious world.

Between my first inhale and my last exhale, I want to remember that it's a blessing to be alive. Life is brief and eventually we will all leave this earth.

Apathy is becoming a norm, but let's make a commitment to kindness because it can change the world. Nothing will change by itself, it needs us to do that.

Does meditation still play a vital role in your life?

I took to heart my friend's dream with Mum's instruction to meditate more. And I'm deeply thankful for the place meditation now has in my life. It's the catalyst that assisted me back to a place of faith, not religion. I've always loved the wisdom and guiding words of Buddha, love Christ and pray to the Divine, but I'd never felt comforted by established religions because I saw too many examples of man's input and manipulation of religion for their own benefit

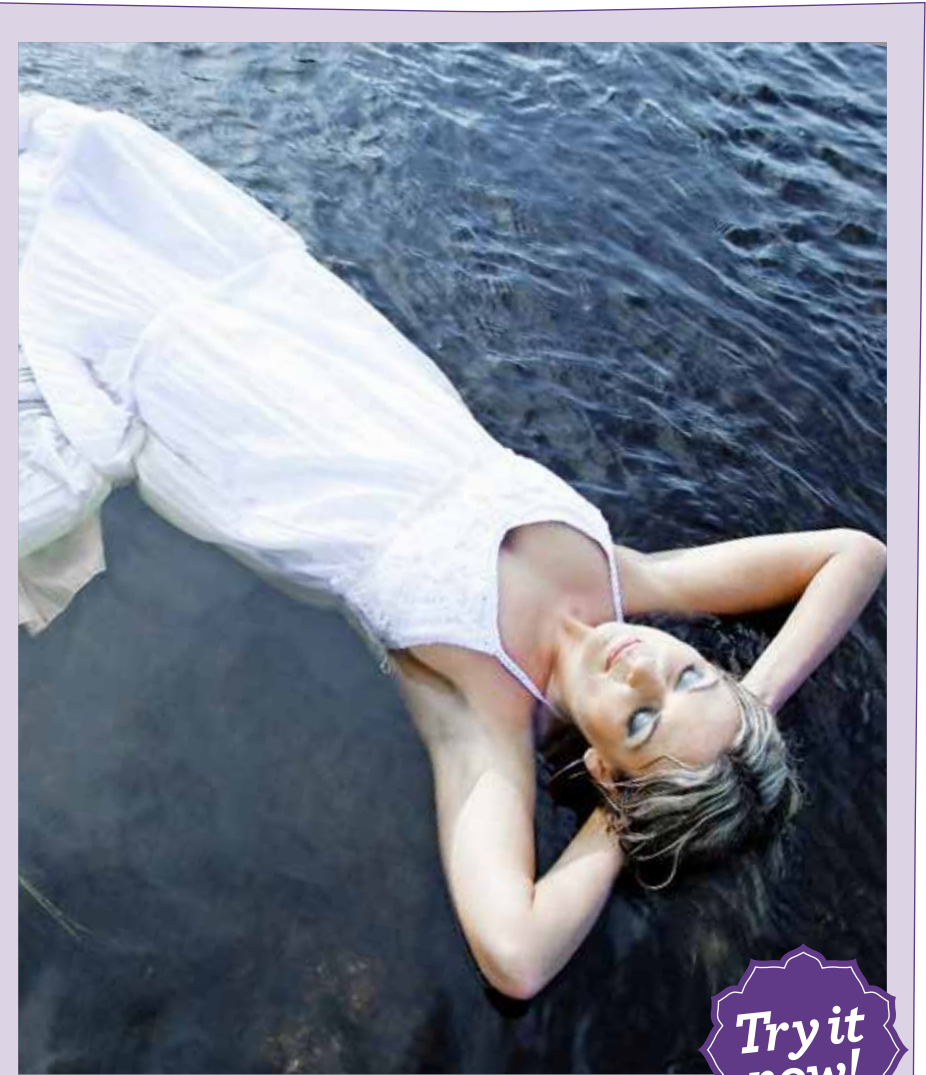
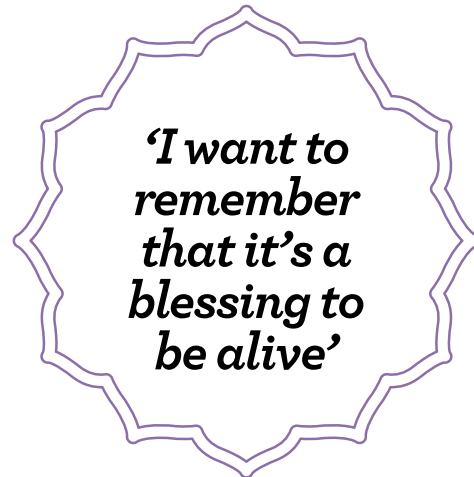
to feel trusting of it. Meditation gave me the environment to connect to my faith again. I learned to calm my body and mind and, in that state of peace and centredness, I found questions came up in my mind about subjects of previous heartache or moments of pain and foolishness that I was forced to address. I've also had many beautiful experiences meditating that instilled my belief that the Divine is everywhere. I meditate daily and it's the closest place I've ever felt to the comforting presence of the Divine, our creator, something far beyond my comprehension, that I can't quantify but that I have absolute blind faith in. Anyone out there dealing with worry, stress, anxiety, fear or depression or pain from any source, meditation will absolutely help you.

Any overriding lessons your time in the desert taught you?

That solitude is not something to fear, it's something essential and needed for our souls to be heard. Only then will pain become a lesson that can guide your next step forward. Life's hard and I've been beaten sideways by it. My sister Carolyn was killed in a car crash by a drunk driver, Mum died of cancer, my grandad was beaten up in his nineties on his doorstep and went blind. And being a celebrity was a lonely journey. I've been known all over the world, had so many headlines and been so misrepresented. I've been ridiculed, accused of things I haven't done and bullied. Life's given me plenty of opportunities to lose hope. In the desert I tuned into my soul self and now feel stronger and faster as a result. Meeting myself was like 'shaking the Joshua tree'. Dead leaves will fall and some will have names on I cherish. There may be a change of life, a rebirth, but, above all, I desire to be the best version of myself.

✦ **More info** Luke's book about his experience in the Joshua tree desert, *Desert Conversation*, is published by New Haven Publishing.

✦ You can catch Luke in the film *Loss Adjuster*, released this Christmas, where he stars alongside Dame Joan Collins and Martin Kemp.



Try it now!

Find your own flow

Learn to let go like **Luke** with this simple meditation

- 1** Get settled in your favourite quiet space. Close your eyes and allow the flow of breath in and out of your body to steady your mind.
 - 2** Step back from your thoughts and be aware of where the mind wants to go today. Is it into the past? The future? Worrying or planning? Detach yourself and let these thoughts pass without getting involved. Know that by doing so you are moving brain activity to the more reflective part of your brain. Do this until you feel present.
 - 3** Next, picture yourself in a fast-moving stream. You're clinging to the edge of the bank, holding on tightly, terrified of what will happen if you let go. The water is pulling at you but you're adamant you're staying where you are. What does it feel like to be this scared?
 - 4** Now summon up the courage and allow the water to carry you away. As you float on your back, look up at the sky and realise how wonderful it is to flow with life. Accept the journey the stream is taking you on effortlessly as it naturally navigates the route.
 - 5** As you drift, release any fears. Enjoy the freedom and liberation of being in the flow of things.
 - 6** Float for as long as you want. When you're ready open your eyes and give thanks to yourself for making the decision to finally let go.
- ✦ **More info** Meditation taken from *Quantum Sobriety* by Jo De Rosa, £13.99, Quantum Superpowers Publishing

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