

Robert, 39, is a high-level accountant in the City. "I have more money than ever, and the opportunity to earn even more," he says. However, since he started seeing a shaman — who, he says, has the ability to clear his "emotional blockages" using crystals, whistling and rattles (that's gourds filled with seeds) — "the door to the spiritual world has been opened". He goes on silent retreats, meditates and participates in plant ceremonies in Spain, where he takes san pedro, a hallucinogenic cactus. It has prompted a rethink: "I realised the futility of just striving to earn money. It triggered a deeper quest for more meaning in life."

There was a time when you might expect such mystical waters to be paddled by trustafarians and trophy wives; now it's the top tier of the corporate world dipping in a toe. "Things have definitely shifted in the past year," says Erin Knowles, a "lifestyle curator" for high-net-worth individuals. "The true elite are seeking enlightenment to fill the third metric of their lives. My clients are starting to look within — they have partied hard, worked hard, shopped hard, and now they're exploring their inner health and spirituality. Because there's no point in having lots of money if you're not happy." While she has no problem getting her hands on the £5,000 Chanel Lego clutch, or a table at Scott's, or even a celebrity for the evening, what her clients — aviation chiefs, bankers and oil traders — are increasingly saying is, "Get me a gourd", "Get me a reiki healer", "Get me Deepak". Are the CEOs going soft?

"People are realising that something is missing," says the Shaman in Stilettoes, aka Anna Hunt, a Cambridge-educated journalist who helps Robert, among other corporate clients, to unleash negative thoughts apparently stored around their bodies. "It's a cliché, but money can't buy you happiness: you have to go deeper within to find other sources." What's more, she says, at the heart of capitalism is individualism — "and that can make us feel lonely".

Laura Barwick is a fortysomething media entrepreneur who found herself experiencing high stress levels. "I was having so many massages, but the knots were still there." It was only delving into the more spiritual stuff — she is a client of Knowles — that helped her free her mind. "I can still be thinking a million things on a treadmill," she says. She now has regular sessions with Su-Man, the renowned facialist/healer who digs deep to turn on your "inner light" ("A life-changing experience," according to Anne Hathaway), and the spiritual masseur Louka Leppard, who charges £300 for an "inward journey towards your axis". "It doesn't feel weird that he's spooning you," Barwick says. "He definitely senses your energy. Afterwards, I felt elated."

All this from someone who says: "I'm a difficult person to convince. I'm not happy-clappy; I have too much of a practical head." So it helps that, as Knowles puts it, "these therapists get the corporate world". The intuitive coach Becky Walsh, who works with corporations and politicians to provide them with "information that's missing when they get stuck", explains that she rebranded herself: formerly a "psychic", she felt "intuitive" was more palatable. And she had to learn to speak "man", saying "vibe" instead of "energy", for example, otherwise they would shut down. It also helps that many of these therapists had similar starting points on their spiritual journey to those of their clients: the greasy pole, corporate burnout and stress-induced illnesses leading to the pursuit of something more meaningful. "Having someone you can relate to, someone you can imagine going out for a glass of wine with, can be the bridge," says Hunt, whose

shamanic road began on a sabbatical to Peru after she suffered stress-induced stomach problems.

Also on Knowles's books is the "breath guru" Alan Dolan, who teaches "transformational breathing". (Rumour has it that David Cameron's Easter break included a session at Dolan's Lanzarote retreat.) By changing the way his clients breathe, he gets them to "a very high vibrational state", where they can "access parts they haven't accessed before and rid themselves of baggage". In a former life, Dolan worked for BAE Systems and had "kind of made it", working "pretty hideous hours", eating badly, drinking too much and suffering stress. He now works with, among others, HSBC, Goldman Sachs and Channel 4, as well as bankers, billionaires, oligarchs and CEOs on an individual basis — "people who wouldn't have gone near it a couple of years ago. They're very left-brain, rational and, unlike women, can be intimidated by the emotional content." That's also exactly why these logical, left-brain leaders make such prime spiritual pupils — they could do with nurturing their intuitive right brain.

Of course, there's the odd raised eyebrow, for example "at the G-word", says Dolan, who refers to God as "Derek". Yet Dolan also witnesses his clients' catharsis, tears and frequent conversion. His litmus test, he says, is London taxi drivers. "Ten years ago, they used to say, 'What a great scam.' Now, it's, 'Oh, yeah, my breath.' Everything is really broadening."

What's also compelling for the high-net-worths is the promise of tangible results, fast. "Sure, there's a place for years of psychotherapy and looking back at your childhood," says Knowles, "but some of these treatments deliver a shift in just one session." Dolan says his typical client will come in and say: "It's this, this, this. I want to get over it and move on." Meanwhile, Knowles's "sexual Jesus", Mike Lousada, solved one client's sexual anxiety in one session, after he'd spent years doing everything else possible to fix himself. How? Erm, via touch. "He works with tensions trapped in the body to release the emotions," Knowles says. Hunt typically sees clients for three sessions. How can it work so fast? "I'm trying not to sound like too much of a hippie," says Knowles, "but some work with your emotions on a cellular level."

If it all sounds like quite a leap, that's because it is. "If you're going to get anything out of these therapies, you have to completely embrace them," says Barwick. "I leave my disbelief at the door." Knowles says she notices a trend among her clients, who now think: "If it works, it doesn't matter how." After all, she says, "the more you believe, the more likely it is to work for you. Look at placebo drugs". It's an acceptance, she says, that we can't understand everything. "There has to be magic out there."

So never mind the means, it's the end that matters. "Life is more fulfilling," Robert says. "I feel more grounded in reality. My ability to empathise has increased hugely and I get more out of people, yet I'm less worried about what they think of me. I'm a lot happier in who I am." Needless to say, the work-life balance has swung in favour of fun. Ten years ago, he says, he was a heavy-drinking workaholic. Now he's teetotal. "I'm the last one on the dancefloor. Confidence has replaced cockiness."

What does all this do to their drive, though? What will happen to our masters and mistresses of the universe? "It doesn't crush drive, it tempers it," Robert says. "I make better work decisions, and I have the ability to stop, while I see colleagues go way beyond, with extra work that doesn't take them where they want to go." Looks like you may need that gourd after all. ♦

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Unlike conventional acupuncture, here the needle dips in and out of whichever of your five elements — earth, fire, water, wood and metal — is off-balance. Expect a strong emotional response.

Metatronic healing

Lie down and regenerate by harnessing the healing energies of the Archangel Metatron, who will help you release your "energetic debris", to rid you of limiting beliefs and behaviours.