# The Self-Care Revolution

Reclaim Your Energy, Boundaries, and Sanity in a Burnout Culture. by Ricky Jarnagin

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How guilt, comparison, and perfectionism keep you stuck — and how to shut them down.

This chapter will expose common inner (and cultural) traps that derail even the best self-care intentions, and offer grounded strategies for reclaiming clarity. Think of it as the "inner critic detox."

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- One-breath resets
- 2-minute boundary statements
- Nervous system grounding
- Micro habits for movement, hydration, connection
- Scripts for saying no with grace
- Phone detox techniques
- "Pause + re-enter" rituals

### Dedication

For the burned out. The boundary-breakers. The ones still showing up — even when they're empty. This is for you.

### **Forward**

This book was created for people like me — people who've hit the wall. People who've tried to keep up with the fast-paced, get-it-now, always-on digital world and found themselves burned out, numb, or just plain tired.

I wrote *The Self-Care Revolution* not because I mastered self-care, but because I needed to reclaim it.

Not the spa-day version. Not the bubble bath myth. But real, sustainable, sanity-saving self-care — the kind that gets you through your worst days, not just your weekends.

As you move through these pages, I want you to remember one thing:

### "Self-care isn't soft. It's survival. It's sovereignty."

If that truth hits you where you live — welcome. This revolution is for you.

— Ricky Jarnagin



# The Myth of Self-Care

"Why bubble baths never fixed burnout."

We've been sold a version of self-care that's beautiful on Instagram and useless in real life.

Candles. Retreats. Rose-colored journaling prompts. The occasional bubble bath. It's not that any of these are wrong — it's that they're wildly insufficient. And for many of us, they've become a distraction from what's really going on underneath:

# Burnout. Overwhelm. Disconnection. Exhaustion so deep we can't name it.

Modern self-care has been packaged and polished into something soft and aesthetic, not something urgent and essential. But real self-care isn't a treat — it's *triage*. And when you're navigating a world that never shuts off, where your attention is for sale and your worth is tied to productivity, you don't need pampering.

You need **power**. You need **sovereignty**.

### From Wellness Industry to Wellness Illusion

Let's start with the numbers.

The global wellness industry has ballooned to over \$4.4 trillion. It includes everything from supplements to yoga pants to AI-powered meditation apps. Marketers have latched onto the word *self-care* because it sells — not because it saves.

And this creates two serious problems:

- 1. Self-care becomes a luxury product, not a daily practice.
- 2. People blame themselves when they're still exhausted after doing all the "right" things.

It's not your fault if a 10-minute meditation didn't erase your anxiety. It's not your fault if you set a boundary and still feel wrecked. It's not your fault if journaling didn't fix your burnout.

The system was never built to serve your healing — only to sell you temporary relief.

### ⚠ The Privilege Problem

We also have to talk about access.

"Self-care" is often portrayed as something you buy: organic groceries, therapy apps, wellness retreats. But what if you're a single parent, a shift worker, someone surviving paycheck to paycheck? What if you're navigating trauma or chronic illness?

For many, self-care isn't a luxury — it's a lifeline. And when that lifeline is only accessible to people with money, time, and freedom, it becomes a false promise.

# **6** Closing Circle Break

True self-care must be inclusive, not elitist. Radical, not performative.



## © Case Study: When Self-Care Backfires

Take Melissa — a teacher, mom of two, who started blocking off time every Sunday for "self-care." She bought bath bombs, lit candles, and read wellness blogs. For a while, it helped. But underneath, nothing changed: she still couldn't sleep, still woke up anxious, still resented her endless to-do list.

Why? Because the bath wasn't the problem. Her lack of recovery, lack of boundaries, and constant over-functioning were.

Real healing didn't come from treating herself — it came from *changing how she treated herself* every day. Small rituals. Early bedtimes. Saying no. Releasing guilt. That's the revolution.

## The Real Definition: Self-Care is Functional, Not Fluffy

At its core, self-care is the deliberate act of preserving your energy, your clarity, and your sense of self in a world that constantly pulls you away from all three.

It's gritty. Unsexy. Often inconvenient.

It's the habit of turning toward your needs instead of away from them. It's boundaries. Breath. Reconnection.

And it's available to *everyone* — when we strip away the noise.

### 🔑 Reflection Prompts

- Where did I first learn what self-care meant? Who defined it for me?
- What forms of self-care have I tried that didn't actually help?
- What parts of me are asking for something deeper than just a break?

# **O**Closing Circle Break

"The revolution begins not with luxury—but with listening."



# What Self-Care Actually Is

"Beyond aesthetics. Toward agency."

Ask ten people what self-care means and you'll get ten different answers.

Some say it's rest. Others say routines. Some think it's indulgence, while others think it's discipline. And honestly? They're all partially right. But here's the problem: most of what we call self-care today has been **filtered through marketing algorithms and magazine covers**, not actual human experience.

To truly start a self-care revolution, we have to **define it from the inside out**.

## **A Working Definition**

Self-care is the intentional practice of preserving and restoring your energy, clarity, and sovereignty — mentally, emotionally, physically, and socially — in a way that is sustainable, accessible, and self-honoring.

That's a mouthful. But each word matters:

- **Intentional**: not reactive or performative.
- **Preserving/restoring**: not escaping or numbing.
- **Sustainable**: not another thing to hustle.
- **Self-honoring**: not self-erasing in the name of "shoulds."

This isn't about one-size-fits-all routines. It's about tuning into your own rhythms, needs, and boundaries — and protecting them like your life depends on it. Because some days, it actually does.

### **What the Science Says**

- Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan) tells us that autonomy, competence, and connection are basic psychological needs. Self-care honors all three.
- **Neuroscience** shows us that habits, emotions, and even stress response systems are malleable. Through **neuroplasticity**, we can rewire burnout into balance but only if we give the brain and body space to recover.
- Self-compassion research (Dr. Kristin Neff) reveals that treating ourselves with kindness, rather than criticism, leads to more motivation, less shame, and greater resilience.

In short: science backs what your soul already knows.

You don't need permission to care for yourself. You need practice.

### **M** Self-Care ≠ Self-Indulgence

Let's get something straight.

Self-care is **not** about endless pampering or self-absorption.

It's not about becoming your own project or productivity experiment.

It's about becoming your **own advocate**.

There's a critical difference between:

- Self-care: taking a walk to clear your mind
- Self-indulgence: avoiding what needs doing by numbing out

• **Self-improvement**: optimizing yourself to meet external expectations
The goal here is not to "upgrade" yourself — it's to **restore** yourself.

### Cultural & Historical Roots

Self-care isn't new. In fact, it's ancient.

- Indigenous communities practiced communal healing rituals not isolated self-optimization.
- Civil rights activists used self-care as a form of resistance and restoration.
- Spiritual traditions around the world emphasized rhythm, rest, and seasonal alignment.

It's only in the last few decades — under neoliberal, capitalist, tech-driven pressure — that we've shrunk self-care down to a solo, consumer-based task. But real self-care is *relational*. It impacts how we show up for others, too.

## Reframing Self-Care as Radical Preservation

When the world tells you to keep producing, keep pushing, keep performing — pausing to rest becomes an act of rebellion.

- Turning off your phone at 9pm? Rebellion.
- Saying no to another unpaid obligation? Rebellion.
- Choosing presence over perfection? Rebellion.

You are not here to be endlessly productive.

You are here to be present, connected, and alive.

That's why self-care matters.

# **Ø** Quick Self-Check: The "Real vs. Reactive" Test

When evaluating a self-care practice, ask:

Question	Real Self- Care	<b>Reactive Coping</b>
Does it restore me long-term?	V	X
Does it align with my values?	V	X
Does it help me listen inward?		X
Is it sustainable without guilt?		X
Am I doing it to escape or to return to myself?	<pre>= return</pre>	$\mathbf{X}$ = escape

# **Reflection Prompts**

- What does *real* self-care feel like in my body?
- What needs in my life are going unmet under the label of "self-care"?
- What would it look like to rebuild my self-care from the inside out?

# **O**Closing Circle Break

"Self-care isn't what you buy. It's how you begin again."



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# Why We Need a Revolution

"The burnout isn't your fault — but the recovery is your responsibility."

Something's not working.

We live in the most connected, resourced, tech-enhanced world in history yet millions of us are burned out, anxious, disconnected, and running on empty.

And we're told it's personal. That if we just meditated more, or meal-prepped better, or managed our time more efficiently, we wouldn't feel this way. That's a lie.

### **6** The Burnout Epidemic

Let's start with what the data tells us:

- The World Health Organization has officially recognized burnout as a workplace phenomenon.
- Nearly **8 in 10 adults** report symptoms of chronic stress.
- Teachers, healthcare workers, and tech professionals are among the most burned-out — yet they're also the most underserved by existing "wellness programs."
- Even mental health workers are reporting compassion fatigue and collapse.

Burnout isn't about not trying hard enough. It's about trying **too hard**, for too long, without rest, support, or boundaries.

# **The Systems Behind the Suffering**

Burnout is not just a personal failure — it's a **systemic issue**. Consider:

- Capitalism rewards overwork and ties self-worth to productivity.
- **Social media** floods you with comparison, urgency, and performance pressure.
- Workplace cultures often glorify grind and ignore recovery.
- **Technology** creates 24/7 access, leaving no room for true disconnection.
- Mental health stigma still discourages asking for help until collapse.

You weren't designed to be **always on**. No one was.

Yet modern life punishes stillness and praises exhaustion.

We've confused busyness with value.

Hustle with purpose.

Collapse with strength.

That's why we need a revolution.

### What Burnout Feels Like (and Why It's Misdiagnosed)

Burnout is tricky — because it often doesn't look like falling apart.

Instead, it looks like:

- Numb scrolling
- Snapping at people you love
- Creative drought
- Insomnia

- Sunday dread
- Foggy decision-making
- Constant guilt for "not doing enough"

Most people don't realize they're burned out. They think they're lazy. They're not.

They're depleted. And depletion demands repair, not punishment.

## **\*** The Cost of Ignoring It

Unchecked burnout doesn't just affect your mood. It impacts:

- Immune function
- Hormonal balance
- Decision-making ability
- Relationship satisfaction
- Long-term health (increased risk of anxiety, depression, heart disease)

It also creates a ripple effect in families, workplaces, and communities.

You can't pour from an empty cup — and this isn't just a slogan. It's **science**.

### **\*\*\* The Revolution Begins with Refusal**

The revolution starts when you refuse to normalize the numbness.

- Refuse to keep operating from survival mode.
- Refuse to see self-care as selfish.
- Refuse to delay your well-being for "someday."

This book is not a call to opt out of responsibility — it's a call to reclaim the responsibility that matters most: your energy, your focus, your wholeness.

Self-care is not the reward for surviving.

It's the requirement for continuing.

### **Reflection Prompts**

- Where am I most feeling the effects of burnout?
- What systems in my life reward me for being exhausted?
- What would it look like to design my life for recovery, not just survival?

# **O**Closing Circle Break

"The world won't hand you balance. You have to build it—boundary by boundary, breath by breath."



# Physical Self-Care Beyond the Basics

"Your body isn't a machine. It's your compass."

You've probably heard it all before:

- Get 8 hours of sleep.
- Eat your greens.
- Move your body.

But real physical self-care isn't about checking boxes. It's about **coming home to your body** — not treating it like a project or a problem. This chapter isn't here to guilt you into more rules. It's here to help you **tune in**.

Because physical self-care isn't about what looks good on a wellness tracker — it's about what *feels* good, sustainably, in the body you're living in today.

### Sleep: The Foundation You Can't Fake

Let's start with the underrated, overlooked, over-caffeinated truth:

### You can't self-care your way through burnout without sleep.

According to Dr. Matthew Walker, sleep is the single most effective thing we can do to reset the brain and body each day. Yet in hustle culture, sleep is treated as optional — or worse, a weakness.

Real physical self-care prioritizes sleep not as indulgence, but as strategy.

### **Try this:**

- Build a wind-down ritual that cues your nervous system it's time to unplug.
- Set a tech curfew (screens off 60 minutes before sleep).
- Trade late-night "scroll" time for a calming activity: reading, stretching, or silence.

## 🥗 Nutrition for Energy — Not Restriction

Forget food rules. Forget calorie math.

### Your body wants fuel, not punishment.

Physical self-care means feeding yourself in a way that supports your energy, mood, digestion, and resilience — not some external aesthetic.

Some ideas to shift toward *nourishment over restriction*:

- Tune into hunger and fullness cues *not* clock-based eating.
- Practice **intuitive eating** over diet culture dogma.
- Try "how do I feel after I eat this?" as a compass instead of macros.

Also: water. If you're tired, irritable, or foggy — drink first, diagnose later.

### 🧘 Movement That Feels Like Medicine

This isn't about a workout plan. It's about *body dialogue*.

Some days that might be:

- A walk while listening to the wind.
- A quick stretch between meetings.
- A dance in the kitchen.

• A slow, grounding yoga pose.

The science is clear: consistent movement improves cognition, reduces anxiety, boosts sleep, and even supports emotional regulation.

But here's what's rarely said:

### Movement counts even when it's not tracked.

Even when it's small.

Even when it's for joy, not metrics.

# X Listening to Your Body's Signals

Your body speaks. Burnout muffles that voice. Self-care helps you listen again.

# Ask yourself:

- Am I breathing deeply or shallow?
- Am I clenching my jaw or shoulders?
- Do I feel fueled or depleted after meals?
- Is my posture telling me I need a reset?

These are data points — not flaws. Your body isn't betraying you. It's *informing* you.

### **A** Environmental Self-Care

Your space is your second nervous system.

Small environmental shifts can have outsized impacts:

- Clear the clutter from your workspace.
- Add natural light and plants if possible.

- Turn down background noise when overstimulated.
- Try low-stimulation colors or soft textures in your recovery zones.

You don't need a perfect aesthetic. You need a space that whispers: *you're* safe here.

### **Preventive + Proactive Care**

Taking care of your body also means taking it seriously:

- Schedule your overdue checkups.
- Say yes to therapy if your body stores trauma.
- Reclaim medical visits as empowerment not shame.

Proactive self-care isn't a weakness. It's a form of self-respect.

### **Keflection Prompts**

- When does my body feel most alive?
- What signals have I been ignoring?
- What kind of movement or rest is my body asking for this season?

# **6** Closing Circle Break

"The world won't hand you balance. You have to build it—boundary by boundary, breath by breath."



### Chapter 5

# **Mental and Emotional Self-Care**

"Boundaries, resilience, and the space to feel what's real."

So much of what wears us down isn't visible.

It's not the to-do list.

It's the pressure beneath it.

It's not the hard day.

It's the unspoken emotion we carry into the next one.

Mental and emotional self-care isn't about *fixing your feelings*. It's about **making space for them**. It's about learning to navigate your inner world with the same compassion and clarity you offer others — often more than you offer yourself.

This is the work that reclaims your peace.

### **Mental Self-Care Isn't Just Mindset**

We're not here to "positive-think" our way out of exhaustion.

Mental self-care is **cognitive hygiene** — tending to your mind the way you tend to your body. It includes:

- **Mental boundaries** (what you give attention to)
- Cognitive rest (quieting overstimulation)
- **Decluttering your inner narrative** (interrupting self-criticism)

### Try this:

• Turn off notifications that hijack your attention.

- Create space for stillness not to be productive, but to *pause the scroll*.
- Practice a **brain dump**: empty everything swirling in your head onto paper. It clears mental bandwidth.

### **Emotional Regulation: Feeling Without Drowning**

Emotions aren't problems — they're messengers. But without emotional self-care, we either **numb them**, **ignore them**, or **let them rule the room**.

Dr. James Gross's research on **emotional regulation** highlights how we can:

- Name what we're feeling (labeling reduces intensity)
- Choose how we respond (vs. react)
- Make space for emotion without being consumed by it

### Try this:

- Use **emotional granularity** name your emotion specifically (not just "bad" or "stressed" but "overwhelmed," "disappointed," "raw")
- Ask: What is this feeling trying to protect?
- Validate first, solve later.

### Boundaries Are Self-Care in Action

Want to know the fastest way to burn out emotionally? Say yes when you mean no.

Boundaries are **not walls**. They're the **fences with gates** that let you protect your energy while still loving others well. They let you:

Choose your commitments

- Define your limits
- Filter out guilt-based decisions

### Try saying:

- "That doesn't work for me right now."
- "I don't have the capacity for that."
- "I want to support you, but I need to protect my peace too."

Boundary-setting is a skill — not a personality trait. You can learn it.

# Self-Compassion: The Foundation of Emotional Strength

According to Dr. Kristin Neff, self-compassion has three parts:

- 1. Self-kindness: speak to yourself like you would a hurting friend
- 2. Common humanity: remember you're not alone in your struggle
- 3. **Mindfulness**: acknowledge your pain without over-identifying with it Self-compassion isn't weak. It's what keeps you *soft enough to feel* and *strong enough to stay present*.

### Try this:

- Place your hand over your heart and say: "This is hard. I'm allowed to feel this."
- Journal from the voice of a wise, kind mentor toward yourself.
- Replace "What's wrong with me?" with "What do I need right now?"

# **Solution** Clarity: Detoxing Mental Clutter

We spend most of our mental energy managing:

- Other people's expectations
- Our own perfectionism
- Internal narratives that no longer serve us

Mental clarity is about subtracting what drains you — not adding more "shoulds."

### Try this:

- Limit decision fatigue with routines and pre-decisions
- Use "stop thoughts" to interrupt spirals ("Not helpful right now let it go")
- Clear one mental tab before opening another

### Guilt Around Self-Care Is a Lie You Can Delete

So many of us feel bad *for feeling bad*. We think self-care is only for when everything else is handled.

But emotional self-care isn't a luxury — it's what lets you handle anything at all.

### Remind yourself:

Taking care of your inner world is never selfish. It's sacred.

### **Keflection Prompts**

- What emotions have I been pushing aside lately?
- Where in my life do I need stronger boundaries?
- How can I practice more compassion when I'm struggling?

# **6** Closing Circle Break

"Peace isn't something you earn. It's something you learn to protect."



# **Social and Relational Self-Care**

"Who drains you, who fuels you, and how to draw the line."

We often think of self-care as something we do alone — a solo ritual or personal routine. But **relationships shape our energy as much as rest, food, or sleep.** 

Relational self-care isn't just about saying no to toxic people. It's about saying yes to the people who make you feel whole. And maybe most importantly — it's about **examining how you show up in your own social dynamics.** 

## Who's in Your Energy Economy?

Think of your relationships like a bank account:

- Some people deposit energy they leave you feeling grounded, supported, or expanded.
- Others withdraw they create tension, guilt, or mental noise.
- And some bounce between both, depending on your boundaries and theirs.

### Relational self-care means auditing your social ecosystem.

Try this:

- Make a two-column list: "Energizes Me / Depletes Me"
- Look at your calendar or inbox. What names bring stress just by popping up?

• Ask: What would it look like to invest more in relationships that actually feed me?

#### Dealing with Energy Vampires

You know the type:

- Conversations that leave you drained, not inspired
- Friends who vent constantly but never ask how you're doing
- Family members who guilt, manipulate, or expect unlimited access

Boundaries are your defense system here. But many of us struggle to set them because we:

- Fear conflict
- Feel obligated
- Think saying "no" is unkind

Here's the truth:

Boundaries are kindness with structure. They protect your connection by preventing resentment.

Try saying:

- "I want to be present for you, and right now I'm depleted. Can we reconnect later?"
- "I care about you, and I also need time to rest this weekend."
- "That's not something I have the bandwidth for right now."

#### **\*** Community vs. Individualism

We've been sold the myth of the lone-wolf achiever — but humans are wired for **interdependence**.

Research by Dr. Vivek Murthy and Dr. John Cacioppo shows that **loneliness** is as dangerous as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. And yet, many adults don't have even one relationship where they feel emotionally safe.

Relational self-care means:

- Seeking mutuality not one-sided emotional labor
- **Reaching out** even when it feels awkward
- Letting people in not just fixing yourself before you're "worthy" of being known

You don't need dozens of friends. You need 2–3 real ones.

#### **X** Boundaries ≠ Burned Bridges

Many fear boundaries will destroy relationships. But the opposite is usually true.

When you create clear expectations:

- People trust you more
- Resentment decreases
- You model emotional health

Want to know a relationship's health level? Set a boundary and observe the response. If it explodes, the relationship was running on entitlement, not connection.

#### Support Systems: Ask for What You Need

Relational self-care also means letting people show up for you.

#### Ask:

- "Can I talk this through with you? I'm not looking for advice just space to process."
- "Would you be okay checking in with me about this goal next week?"
- "I feel off today. Could you just hang out with me for a little bit?"

Letting yourself need others isn't weakness. It's wisdom.

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- Who leaves me feeling more like myself after I spend time with them?
- Where in my relationships am I giving too much and receiving too little?
- What small boundary could I set this week to protect my peace?

### **6** Closing Circle Break

"Not everyone deserves unlimited access to you. Protecting your energy protects your presence."



### **Micro Self-Care**

"Five minutes. One habit. Real change."

You don't need a weekend getaway to feel better.

You don't need a 10-step routine or a perfectly curated morning ritual.

What you need is something that fits into your **real life** — not your ideal one.

That's where **micro self-care** comes in.

These aren't watered-down versions of "real" practices.

They're **minimum effective doses** of restoration — tiny, repeatable actions that rebuild your clarity and energy from the ground up.

And for most of us?

They're the only kind of self-care we can actually stick with long-term.

#### **Why Micro Works**

Big changes feel exciting... for a minute. Then life happens:

- The routine breaks.
- You forget a step.
- You fail once and give up entirely.

Micro self-care removes that pressure. It uses:

- Tiny habits (BJ Fogg)
- Environmental triggers

- Momentum stacking
- Wins you can feel immediately

#### Try this:

Instead of "meditate 30 minutes every morning," start with "pause for one mindful breath every time I close my laptop."

One is *doable*. The other is *ideal*. We build from the first.

#### **Examples of Micro Self-Care**

#### Mental

- One-page brain dump before sleep
- Turn off push notifications for 24 hours
- Set a 15-minute "digital white space" block mid-day

#### 🍍 Emotional

- Say "I'm feeling \_\_\_\_ right now" out loud or in a journal
- Name and validate one hard thing you're carrying
- Text someone you trust: "Hey, just need a little support today"

#### 💪 Physical

- 60-second doorway stretch
- Walk around the block no phone
- Drink a glass of water as your first "task" after waking

#### 🧘 Nervous System

- Hand over heart + 4-count inhale / 6-count exhale
- Tense-and-release body scan (shoulders, hands, jaw)

• Stand in sunlight for 2 minutes with no agenda

#### 🧱 Boundaries

- Delete 1 low-value meeting, call, or app
- Use a post-it note to visually mark your "off" hours
- Say no to one thing that isn't aligned (without apology)

#### 🔁 How to Build a Micro Practice System

- 1. **Pick 1 daily moment** you already do (e.g. closing the fridge, brushing teeth)
- 2. Attach a micro action that brings calm, clarity, or connection
- 3. Repeat it consistently until it becomes automatic
- 4. Stack new micro-habits onto that anchor over time

This is how you build a sustainable self-care *ecosystem* — not a heroic routine you abandon in week two.

#### **Why It's Not Laziness**

Some people reject micro self-care because it feels "too small."

But here's the truth:

The people who need self-care the most are often too tired to do it big.

Micro doesn't mean weak.

It means wise. It means realistic. And most importantly — it means done.

# **Micro Habit Prompt Builder**Fill in the blanks:

•	When I	, I will	take	1 minute	to	
---	--------	----------	------	----------	----	--

- Every time I \_\_\_\_, I'll check in with how I feel.
- Before I go to sleep, I'll do \_\_\_\_ for myself.

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- What's one small habit I could try daily for the next 5 days?
- Where have I made self-care too complicated in the past?
- What "anchor" habit (like coffee or closing the laptop) could I attach something supportive to?

### **6** Closing Circle Break

"Small doesn't mean shallow. It means sustainable."



## Seasonal and Cyclical Self-Care

"You're not meant to run at full speed all year long."

Nature doesn't hustle year-round.

It blooms. It rests. It sheds. It waits. It starts again.

And yet, we expect ourselves to be **constantly productive**, **always on**, and emotionally consistent — in a body that's deeply cyclical by design.

**Seasonal and cyclical self-care** is about learning to *honor your rhythms*, not override them. It's how we reclaim energy, deepen emotional resilience, and stop burning out on repeat.

#### **Y** The Myth of Constant Output

Western culture teaches:

- Work the same 8-hour days regardless of season or stage of life
- Stay emotionally neutral and "high-performing" no matter what's going on
- See rest as laziness and slowing down as weakness

But your body, mind, and spirit are constantly cycling through:

- Energy highs and lows
- Emotional openings and closures
- Creative bursts and quiet recalibration

Self-care that ignores this... fails you.

#### A Micro, Macro, and Monthly Rhythms

There are layers to your personal cycles:

Rhythm	What It Affects	Examples
Daily	Energy, focus, mood	Circadian rhythm, cortisol curve
Monthly	Hormonal, creative, relational	Menstrual cycle, moon phases, team dynamics
Seasonal	Motivation, emotions, lifestyle	SAD, winter fatigue, spring momentum
Life-stage	Capacity, priorities, identity	Parenthood, illness, grief, transition seasons

Self-care becomes powerful when it **adjusts to these patterns** — not resists them.

#### **©** Cycle-Aware Self-Care Ideas

#### Menstrual or Energy Cycles

- Track energy patterns across 4-week cycles
- Use high-energy weeks for creative or social output
- Use low-energy weeks for rest, reflection, internal planning

*Not everyone menstruates* — *but everyone cycles*.

#### 🍂 Seasonal Shifts

- Create different self-care rituals by season (e.g., hygge in winter, nature walks in spring)
- Adjust expectations: don't set launch goals in your lowest-energy month
- Use seasonal decluttering, vision resets, or rest weeks intentionally

#### Life Transitions

- Build "transitional rituals" for identity shifts (e.g., job change, move, breakup)
- Don't rush into new habits allow an "in-between season"
- Recognize that grief and growth often ride side-by-side

#### **Anchor Practices by Season**

Season	Focus	<b>Anchor Practice</b>
Winter	Rest, stillness, deep nourishment	Quiet mornings, early bedtimes, journaling
Spring	Clarity, creation, expansion	Vision boards, creative sprints, social re-entry
Summer	Celebration, embodiment, lightness	Dance, connection, playful movement
Fall	Reflection, release, slowing down	Let-go rituals, digital decluttering, reset walks

#### 🔄 Reclaiming Rhythmic Living

Rhythmic self-care asks:

- What if I stopped expecting myself to be "on" every day?
- What if I tracked how I feel as much as what I do?
- What if I built self-care into my cycles not against them?

It's not about quitting your job or living off-grid. It's about working **with** your body and energy instead of trying to force it into a productivity box it was never made to fit.

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- What seasons of my life am I in right now physically, emotionally, spiritually?
- How does my energy naturally rise and fall across a month or year?
- What rhythms do I want to honor more intentionally?

### **6** Closing Circle Break

"Rest is not a reward. It's rhythm."



### **Crisis Self-Care**

"How to hold yourself when the world falls apart."

It's easy to talk about self-care when things are going fine. But what about when you're falling apart?

What about when the grief is fresh, the loss is sharp, the stress is so loud you can't hear yourself think?

#### **Crisis self-care** is not about routines.

It's about rituals that hold you together when you don't have the strength to hold yourself.

It's not about doing more.

It's about surviving with dignity — and healing without shame.

#### ሾ The Nature of Crisis

Crisis doesn't wait for you to be ready. It just arrives.

- A diagnosis.
- A job loss.
- A breakup.
- A global event that changes everything.
- A quiet collapse no one else sees.

In these moments, your nervous system shifts into survival mode. Your priorities change. Your capacity shrinks. And your self-care must adapt accordingly.

#### 1 The Nervous System in Overdrive

When in crisis, your body may be experiencing:

- Elevated cortisol and adrenaline (fight-or-flight)
- Numbness or detachment (freeze)
- Overfunctioning or shutdown cycles

Trying to keep up your normal routine during crisis can lead to:

- Guilt for "failing" at self-care
- Shame around needing help
- Total burnout from over-efforting

So we shift the goal: from thriving to grounding. From progress to presence.

#### 🧰 Crisis Self-Care Toolkit

These practices are designed for *minimum effort*, *maximum grounding*:

#### Anchor Practices

- Repeat a simple grounding phrase: "I'm safe right now."
- Place one hand on your chest, one on your belly. Breathe deeply.
- Carry a small sensory object (stone, bracelet, essential oil) to recenter.

#### Mental Space Clearing

- Use a "half-journal" (1 line: "Here's what I feel." That's enough.)
- Set phone timers to check in with your breath, not your to-do list
- Pause notifications and give yourself permission to not respond

#### 🍍 Emotional Self-Holding

- Let yourself cry, rage, rest no fixing
- Identify what part of you needs the most care right now: inner child? adult self?
- Listen to music that reflects or releases what you're holding

#### 🔁 Routine Reset

- Simplify. Strip everything back. Eat the same meal on repeat if needed.
- Ask: What are my non-negotiables right now? (e.g., water, rest, one connection point)
- Postpone everything that can wait. You are not behind you are healing.

#### Support Structures in Crisis

This is when support matters more than ever — but also when it's hardest to ask.

#### Try saying:

- "I'm not okay, but I don't know what I need. Can you just be here with me?"
- "Can you check in with me once a day this week?"
- "I need space but I also need to know I'm not alone."

Support doesn't have to fix you. It just needs to hold space for you.

#### **©** Rituals That Help You Re-enter Life

When the acute crisis starts to lift, your self-care can shift toward:

- Movement to release trauma (walks, stretching, shaking, swimming)
- Reflection rituals (journaling, prayer, therapy, group processing)
- Reclaiming joy without guilt yes, laughter and levity are allowed

Healing isn't linear. Some days you'll backslide. That's not failure — it's human.

"Start again" is a sacred phrase. You can use it as many times as you need.

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- What does my body need most when I'm overwhelmed?
- What tiny action helps me feel even 1% more grounded?
- Who can I reach out to and how could I ask without pressure?

## Creating Your Personal Self-Care Revolution

"This isn't a prescription. It's a reclamation."

There is no perfect self-care plan.

There is only **your** plan.

Built for your capacity, your season, your values, your life.

This chapter is where you take everything we've unpacked — the myths, the micro-habits, the nervous system resets, the boundaries, the rhythms — and turn it into something personal, practical, and sustainable.

Because a real self-care revolution doesn't start with a checklist.

It starts when you decide you're worth the effort it takes to keep showing up — for yourself.

#### **Step 1: Audit Where You Are**

Grab a pen or use the worksheet in the appendix. Start here:

Area	Rate (1–10)	Notes
Physical Care		Sleep, movement, nourishment
Mental Clarity		Focus, boundaries, input overload
Emotional Resilience		Self-compassion, regulation, expression
Social/Relational Health		Connection, boundaries, support

Rate (1-10) **Notes** Area

Spiritual/Reflective Life Purpose, values, stillness

Joy/Play/Creativity Laughter, exploration, hobbies

Visual, sensory, energy of your spaces **Environment** 

Rhythmic Alignment Seasons, transitions, energy cycles

Which scores feel **lowest**?

Which areas are **calling** for attention — not guilt, but care?



#### Step 2: Identify Your Core Needs

#### Ask:

- What area of my life feels most neglected right now?
- What's one thing I *crave* but have felt too depleted to ask for or create?
- What kind of support would I never ask for but wish someone would offer?

Start with that Self-care is **needs-based** Not aesthetics-based

#### 📆 Step 3: Design Your Rhythm

Don't build a plan you'll resent.

Start with your **current reality**, then choose 1–2 anchor points:

#### **Frequency**

#### **Sample Practice**

2-minute nervous system reset, digital white space, hydrate on Daily

waking

Nature walk, phone-free block, therapy or support call Weekly

Monthly Vision check-in, slow weekend, energy audit

Seasonally Decluttering, planning reset, joy infusion, permission to pause

Aim for rhythm, not rigidity.

#### 📜 Step 4: Write Your Self-Care Manifesto

This isn't fluff. It's an anchor — for when you forget why it matters.

"I protect my energy because it holds my presence.

I rest without guilt because I am not a machine.

I move with grace, not urgency.

I begin again whenever I need to.

My self-care isn't a performance.

It's a promise — to show up for the life that's mine."

Now write your own.

Put it somewhere you'll see it when your energy falters.

#### 🔄 Step 5: Expect Resistance, and Keep Going

You'll forget. You'll slip. You'll go three days (or three weeks) without practicing any of this.

That's not failure. That's feedback.

Self-care isn't a straight line. It's a **spiral**. You'll revisit the same lessons at deeper levels. And each time — it will feel a little less like survival... and a little more like coming home.

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- What's one rhythm I can create that feels nourishing, not forced?
- Where am I making self-care harder than it needs to be?
- What will I do when I inevitably fall off track?

### **6** Closing Circle Break

"You don't need a new version of you. You need a kinder relationship with the one who's already here."



## Beyond Individual Self-Care

"From 'me' to 'we' — why the revolution has to ripple."

You've done the inner work.

You've challenged the myths, faced the guilt, reset your rhythms, and started building rituals that protect your peace.

But the truth is:

You can't self-care your way out of a broken system.

You can build boundaries — but you still live in a world that rewards burnout.

You can rest — but you're surrounded by people who glorify overwork.

You can heal — but your community might still be in survival mode.

So what now?

We zoom out.

Because self-care that stops at the individual becomes self-contained.

But self-care that extends outward becomes culture-changing.

#### IIII The Role of Workplaces, Systems, and Leadership

Let's be blunt: many people don't lack self-care — they lack **support**.

If your employer:

Encourages wellness but penalizes unplugging

- Offers yoga but ignores toxic management
- Rewards overfunctioning but punishes boundary-setters...

Then your self-care will always feel like swimming upstream.

#### We need systemic alignment. That means:

- Flexible policies rooted in human needs
- Leaders modeling recovery, not just performance
- Metrics that value *sustainability*, not just output

If you're in a position of influence — start small:

- Normalize "I'm offline to reset" messages
- Acknowledge emotional labor
- Create opt-out spaces for people who need silence over Zoom "team bonding"

#### 🛂 Self-Care as Community Care

Individual wellness without **collective care** will always feel incomplete.

Self-care shouldn't isolate. It should *connect*.

#### That means:

- Mutual aid
- Checking on your strong friends
- Inviting others to rest with you not just hustle beside you

#### Try this:

• Host a "quiet coworking" session

- Gift someone a boundary they're afraid to set ("I've got this you rest")
- Share resources, not just inspiration

Wellness becomes sustainable when it's **shared**.

#### The Social Justice Layer

We cannot talk about wellness without talking about access, privilege, and injustice.

- Not everyone can afford therapy
- Not everyone feels safe asking for time off
- Not everyone's body is treated equally in medical or wellness spaces

Real self-care includes:

- Advocating for affordable care
- Listening to marginalized voices
- Designing systems that don't require burnout to "earn" rest

The revolution includes everyone — or it's not a revolution at all.



#### The Ripple Effect of Your Healing

When you care for yourself:

- You parent with more patience
- You lead with more clarity
- You friend with more presence
- You inspire without preaching

One boundary you set gives someone else permission to do the same.

One breath you take ripples into the energy of a room.

One pause you protect rewrites your family's story.

Self-care starts with *you*. But it never ends there.

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- Where am I being asked to model healthy boundaries for others?
- How could I share my healing without performing it?
- Where do I see an opportunity to make someone else's self-care easier?

### **6** Closing Circle Break

"Your peace is not the finish line. It's the spark."



## The Self-Care Saboteurs

"Guilt, comparison, and perfectionism — and how to break free."

You've made space. You've started healing.
But some days, it still feels impossible to care for yourself.

Not because you don't know what to do.

But because something **internal** is fighting you.

That's what this chapter is about — the **invisible resistance** that whispers:

- "You haven't earned rest."
- "You're being selfish."
- "Everyone else is handling more than you."
- "If you can't do it perfectly, don't bother."

These aren't logistical obstacles. They're **emotional saboteurs**.

#### SABOTEUR #1: Guilt

"I should be doing more."

"Taking time for myself is selfish."

#### Guilt makes self-care feel like stealing.

It thrives in people who were raised to be needed, not nourished.

It tells you that the needs of others come first — always.

But the truth is:

You can't love from depletion. You can't show up if you're falling apart quietly.

Guilt shrinks your permission.

Revolutionary self-care reclaims it.

#### Try this:

- Write down: "I'm allowed to rest even when others are struggling."
- Notice: Whose voice is the guilt echoing a parent, culture, religion, workplace?
- Replace it with your own: "I choose to care for myself *so I can* show up with integrity."

#### 🎢 SABOTEUR #2: Comparison

"Everyone else is handling more."

"She bounces back faster."

"I'm behind."

Social media. Productivity culture. Personal trauma histories.

They all feed the lie that your worth is based on your output — or how quickly you recover.

Comparison makes someone else's highlight reel your measuring stick. And it always leads to burnout.

#### **Try this:**

- Unfollow the voices that cause emotional shrinking.
- Return to your lane: "My pace is sacred. My energy is mine to protect."
- Replace comparison with curiosity: "What is this emotion asking me to examine in myself?"

#### SABOTEUR #3: Perfectionism

"If I can't do it right, I won't do it at all."

"What's the point of a 2-minute reset when I'm this far gone?"

Perfectionism disguises itself as discipline.

But it's actually fear:

- Fear of not being enough
- Fear of failure
- Fear of vulnerability

It leads to all-or-nothing thinking that kills consistency — and compassion.

#### Try this:

- Reframe: Progress is sacred. Perfection is optional.
- Choose "better than nothing" instead of "all or nothing"
- Start ugly. Start tired. Just start.

#### Interrupting the Pattern

When you feel resistance to self-care, ask:

#### **Question**

What would I tell a friend in my shoes? What is comparison distracting me from? What's the smallest, gentlest action I could take right now?

## Disarms Which Saboteur

Guilt Comparison

Perfectionism

#### **Keflection Prompts**

- Which saboteur shows up most often when I try to care for myself?
- Whose approval or permission am I still unconsciously waiting for?
- What truth could I write to replace that sabotage with sovereignty?

#### **6** Closing Circle Break

"Your healing is not a competition. Your self-care doesn't need permission. Your peace doesn't have to be perfect."





"Small practices. Real power. Start here, return often."

#### Instructions:

Flip to this section when you're tired, overwhelmed, or unsure where to begin.

Each practice is designed to take **under 5 minutes**, and most require no tools, apps, or preparation. Just your willingness to pause.

#### 1. One-Breath Reset

Place one hand on your chest, the other on your belly. Breathe in for 4 seconds... hold for 2... out for 6. Do it once. Then once more. Let that be enough.

#### 2. The 5–5–5 Grounding Scan

- Name 5 things you see
- Name 5 things you hear
- Name 5 things you can feel touching your body (clothing, surface, temperature)

Return to now. You're back.

•	3.	One-	Line	Jo	ourna	1]	Pro	mpt
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Open a page or notes app. V	Write just this:	
"Right now, I feel	and I need	· ·
No more is needed. You've	checked in with yourself.	

#### • 4. The "No Without Guilt" Script

Say out loud or text:

"Thanks for thinking of me — I'm at capacity right now, so I need to pass."

Reread that. Practice it. Let it sit in your nervous system as a new normal.

#### 5. Water as a Ritual

Drink a glass of water slowly, like it's medicine.

Not for hydration — for presence.

#### 6. Nervous System Touch Points

- Press your palms together and breathe
- Run warm water over your hands
- Press your feet firmly into the ground Each one reminds your body you're safe.

#### • 7. The "Digital Door Close"

Turn your phone off or face down.

Set a timer for 10 minutes.

Let your brain be *unreachable* for just a moment.

#### 8. Anchor Phrase Repetition

Repeat silently or aloud:

"I am allowed to pause."

"Nothing is wrong with me for being tired."

"I can begin again."

Pick one and carry it through the next hour.

#### 9. One Song Reset

Play a song that calms or strengthens you.

Lay down. Sit still. Let it run its full length with no other task.

#### • 10. The "Done is Enough" Mantra

Close your laptop. Step away.

Say:

"What I've done is enough for today. My worth is not attached to my output."

#### **6** Bonus: Create Your Own Anchor

Pick a moment you do every day — brushing teeth, pouring coffee, shutting down work.

Then link it to a micro practice from this list.

#### Example:

- After I brush my teeth → I name one thing I'm grateful I survived today.
- Before I check email  $\rightarrow$  I breathe for 10 seconds with my eyes closed.

Make it sacred by making it yours.

### **6** Closing Circle Break

"Anchor practices are how we come home to ourselves. One pause at a time."





#### The Future of Self-Care Starts Now

You've just completed a journey most people never take.

You've dismantled myths.

Faced your guilt.

Reclaimed your rhythms.

Built boundaries.

Survived crisis.

Named your saboteurs.

And practiced returning to yourself — one breath, one moment, one habit at a time.

But here's the truth:

Self-care isn't something you finish. It's something you live into.

#### **6** You Will Forget

You'll lose the rhythm.

You'll burn out again.

You'll say yes when you meant no.

You'll overextend.

You'll collapse.

And when that happens — don't shame yourself.

Don't restart from scratch.

Just return to one practice. One anchor. One reset.

Let that be enough.

#### 🔁 You Can Begin Again

Self-care is not a prize you earn. It's a practice you return to — again and again and again.

Even now.

Even here.

#### Y What Comes Next

- Keep your Anchor Practice Library within reach
- Try the 30-Day Self-Care Challenge
- Use the Vitality Wheel each season
- Share this book with someone who needs it
- Keep rewriting the rules that never served you

You are allowed to grow slow.

You are allowed to rest without guilt.

You are allowed to show up imperfectly.

You're not late.

You're just on your way back to what matters.

Welcome to the revolution.



#### **A1: Self-Care Audit Worksheet**

Category Rating (1–10) Notes

Physical Sleep, energy, nourishment Focus, calm, boundaries

Emotional Regulation, expression, self-compassion

Social Connection, boundaries, support Spiritual Meaning, reflection, stillness

Joy/Play Laughter, hobbies, flow

Environment Clutter, stimulation, sensory space

Rhythm/Seasonal Alignment with energy cycles, rest cycles

Highlight your top 2 needs. Start there.

#### A2: 30-Day Self-Care Challenge

Do one of the following each day — in any order:

- Drink water before coffee
- Sit in sunlight for 5 minutes
- Say no without guilt
- Take a one-song dance break
- Do nothing for 2 minutes
- Delete 1 app that drains you
- Name what you're feeling
- Text someone you trust
- Write a 1-line journal entry

- Breathe in for 4, out for 6
- Go outside, even briefly
- Unplug for 30 minutes
- Move without metrics
- Say "I am enough for today"
- Stretch in silence
- Write your Self-Care Manifesto
- Let yourself rest early
- Use an Anchor Practice
- Write "I need..." and finish the sentence
- Take a long shower and call it sacred
- Read a page, not a chapter
- Ask for help
- Practice gratitude (real, not forced)
- Make yourself laugh
- Eat with awareness
- Set a timer and daydream
- Light a candle with intention
- End one draining commitment
- Celebrate doing less
- Reflect: What changed?

#### **6** A3: Vitality Wheel Template

- Circle divided into 8 sections (as in Chapter 10)
- Rate and shade each section
- Use seasonally to rebalance your plan

#### A4: Recommended Resources

#### **Books:**

- Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff
- Why We Sleep by Matthew Walker
- The Gifts of Imperfection by Brené Brown
- Rest Is Resistance by Tricia Hersey
- Set Boundaries, Find Peace by Nedra Tawwab

#### **Apps & Tools:**

- Insight Timer (free meditation)
- Notion or Evernote for habit tracking
- Google Keep or Post-it Notes for visual reminders
- Voxer or Marco Polo for asynchronous support conversations

#### **♦** A5: Stay Connected

- Subscribe to updates at [https://substack.com/@rickyjarnagin? utm source=user-menu
- Download your printable toolkit at [AnchorStack.pro/toolkit]
- Join the community conversation using #SelfCareRevolutionBook

#### Bonus Page 1: "Permission to Begin Again"

#### Permission to Begin Again

No matter where you've been or how many times you've started over, today is not too late.

You don't need to earn rest.

You don't need to justify your boundaries.

You don't need to explain your burnout.

What you *do* need is permission — and that permission is already yours.

This is your line in the sand.

Begin again. Gently. Boldly. Without apology.

#### Bonus Page 2: "AnchorStack Self-Care Micro-Practices"

#### **AnchorStack Micro-Practices**

Flip to this page anytime you need a 30-second reset.

- **©** Close Your Tabs: Name one thing you will *not* do today. Say it out loud.
- **6 Breath Check**: Inhale for 4... Hold for 4... Exhale for 4... Repeat twice.
- **Ground**: Touch a surface near you and describe its texture silently.
- **Solution** Name the Need: Ask: "What do I really need right now?"
- **Micro-Boundary**: Turn off notifications for the next 20 minutes. That counts.
- \* Keep these tiny practices close. Self-care isn't a someday. It's a right-now.