

# Self-Care

A WORKBOOK PACKED WITH EXERCISES, TIPS, AND TRICKS TO CREATE  
OR IMPLEMENT IN YOUR DAILY SELF-CARE ROUTINE



Hello you,

**Thank you for choosing to go through your self-care journey with me.**

I have created this workbook because self-care is the ultimate everyday gift you can give to yourself - and the people around you.

Self-care is not about going to the spa everyday! Self-care means listening to your body, being present and taking care of your mental health.

When you take care of your needs, you will be recharged enough to be the best friend, colleague or mother that you can.

When you are full of positive energy and feeling good about yourself, you can do more good out there. Achieve more. Offer more help - while keeping your energy and vibes high.

You will be a pleasure to work with and to be around. You may not be aware of this - but your positive state will inspire people around you to smile and relax more.

Hope you enjoy the journey  
Sincerely

Solange van Dijk

*Unfold*



This is the power of self-care:  
You take care of yourself and  
your community benefits  
from it too.

*"Self-care is giving the world the best of you instead of what's left of you" Katie Reed*

### **What is self-care?**

"Self-care is a conscious act one takes in order to promote their own physical, mental, and emotional health. There are many forms self-care may take. It could be ensuring you get enough sleep every night or stepping outside for a few minutes for some fresh air."

quote from [everydayhealth.com](https://www.everydayhealth.com)

### **Why it is important?**

Consider you are on a plane, traveling somewhere and the crew begins their safety briefing. What is the number one thing they tell you to do in case the oxygen masks drop? Yes, you are correct, first put on the mask, so that after you can take care of others.

Self-care is precisely that and it is essential to our wellbeing, although is sometimes wrongly perceived as being selfish. By others or by ourselves, when we judge ourselves or when we believe it's more important to sacrifice ourselves for others, to please others, and place their needs first. Or when we mistake being of service or being a good person with sacrificing our own dreams to make others happy, when we sacrifice our boundaries or keep betraying what would be best for us for the sake of making others happy. When we disconnect from our true self's that we become people pleasers.

Don't get me wrong, it's important to be there for loved ones, for that friend or family member that just called you in need of help. It's admirable to have compassion and care for others but there are moments we really must consider we have to say no. Especially if you are an empath and your mission here is to care for others, always trying to keep the peace, making sure everyone is happy.

I get it, it is an innate and beautiful quality but again if you are not putting yourself first when you really need it, you will end up feeling exhausted and depleted of energy, love, etc. That friend always calls you with the same issue, this month was the 3rd time and today you just had a bad night's sleep, and you are already drained. What will happen if you go and meet your friend to help her or him? Firstly you will not be in your best place to help and second, you will leave potentially drained and even more exhausted.

Self-care encourages you to maintain a healthy relationship with yourself, encourages you to reconnect with yourself, and nourishing yourself before you go out and give to the world.

When you take care of yourself, you will have so much more to give and with much more quality. When you feel good, treat yourself with respect, compassion, and care you raise your vibration, not only showing the path for others but also attracting healthier relationships to your life. When your vibration raises, you feel good, your mood is high, you are happy, and that is just simply magnetic!



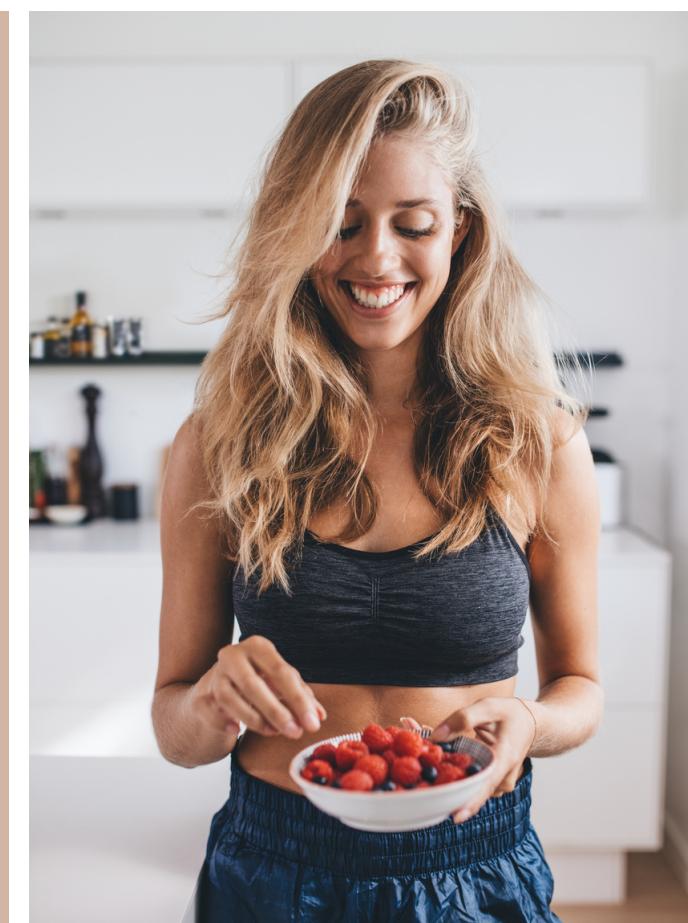
# the path to self-care

Start by dedicating some time per day for yourself to do things that are important to you at a physical, mental, emotional or spiritual level. A good self-care practice starts with self-awareness, you must learn to recognize what are your needs and how are you going to fulfill them.

## PHYSICAL

Activities that help you to stay fit and healthy:

- Develop a regular sleep routine, nap if you need to
- Exercise; If you don't like heavy exercise, just go for a walk
- Be in nature for 10 mins a day
- Nourish your body with quality food
- Hydrate; drink lots of water especially after an energy cleansing
- Be clean and hygienic



## MENTAL

Activities that help you to feel clear-headed and able to intellectually engage within your work and personal life:

- Keep a reflective journal.
- Make time for relaxation, listen to music, read a book
- Explore hobbies and creative activities, painting, music, etc
- Time-Management (prioritize)
- Plan something to look forward to, every day
- Looking for the 'good' when something unwanted happens
- Break the pattern by trying a new recipe, a new restaurant, or a different way of working

## EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL

Allowing yourself to take care of your feelings in a healthy way.

It could also include things you do for others and the world around you.

- Engage in reflective practices like mindfulness/meditation.
- Get support from a close friend or Therapist when you need it
- Observe how you feel without judgment and cry if you want to
- Honour, respect, and take action in line with your feelings, Learn to say no
- Do something nice for someone else
- Meet up often with people you love and develop supportive relationships



## SPIRITUAL

Activities that give you a sense of higher perspective about life.

- Immerse in the feeling of gratitude for 5 minutes per day
- Be present whilst eating or drinking tea, coffee, or maybe a cup of cacao
- Practice guided meditation (YouTube is a great source!)
- Do journal prompts that resonate with you
- Listen to a good spiritual podcast

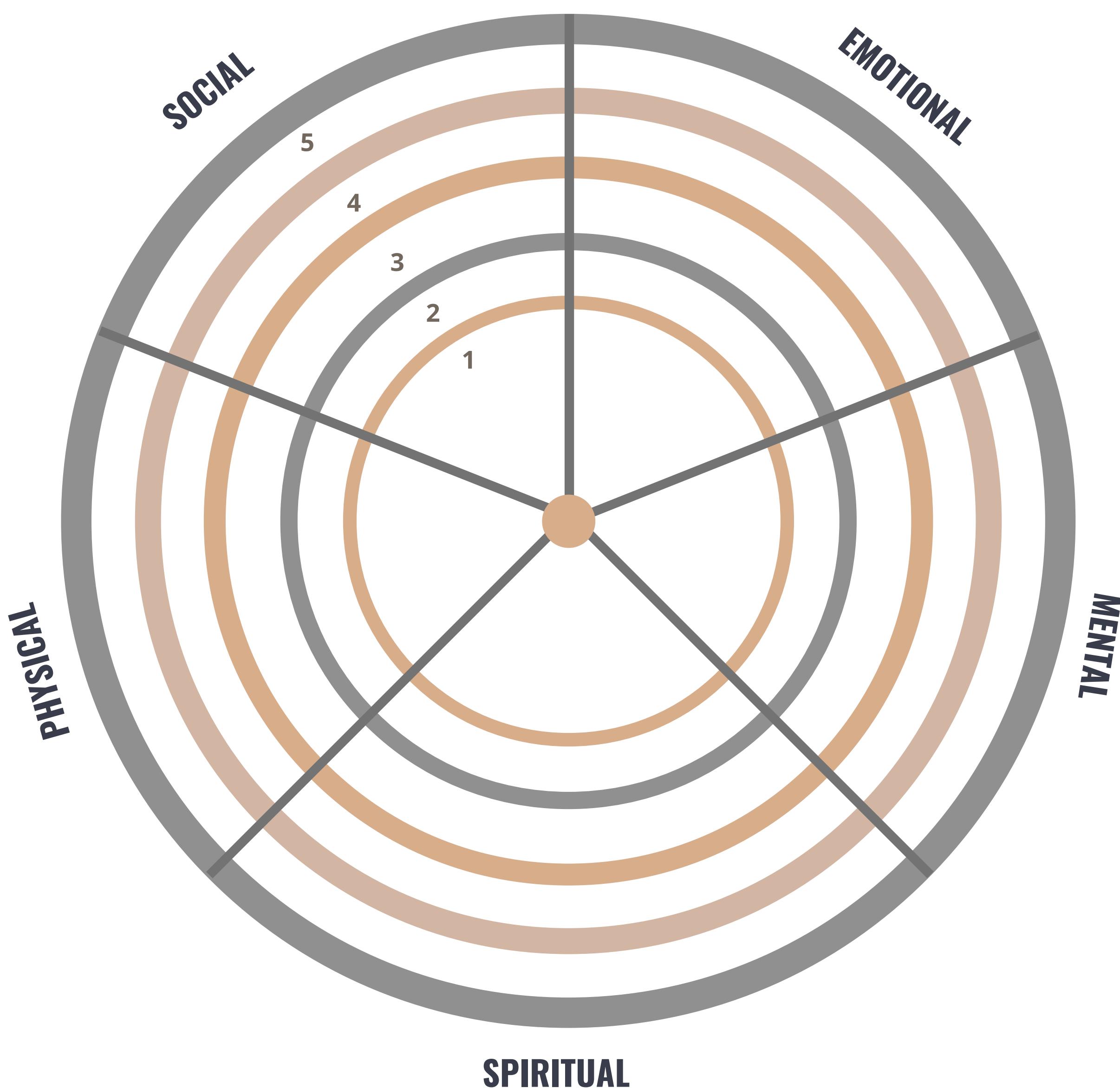




## EXERCISE 1

### MY SELF CARE WHEEL

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being **least** satisfied and 5 being **most** satisfied, rate how satisfied you are with these 5 areas of self-care. Are you happy with your emotional health? What about your mental health?





## EXERCISE 2

Did you have ‘aha’ moments or feel surprised after completing your Self-Care Wheel? Which areas of your life need more care right now?

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Which 2 or 3 areas of my life I want to improve when it comes to self-care?

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Why is this important to me?

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## EXERCISE 3

Now that you have assessed your satisfaction level on your different aspects of self-care, let's go ahead and make a list of things that make you feel good, that calm you, or bring you joy. Things that are important to you. Do not worry about what comes up, just go ahead and write it all down.

### PHYSICAL

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### MENTAL

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### EMOTIONAL/SOCIAL

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### SPIRITUAL

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## EXERCISE 4

From the previous exercise list and considering your self-care wheel, think of 3 things on that list that you can incorporate in your life right now and how?



### WHAT CAN I IMPLEMENT IN MY LIFE RIGHT NOW?

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### WHO CAN HELP ME HOLD ACCOUNTABLE?

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### WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL OBSTACLES? HOW CAN I OVERCOME THEM?

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# How do I create and Implement a self-care plan and why it is important?

Once you have a list of the activities that are healthy and nourishing for you at an emotional, physical and mental level we are now ready to start your Self-Care plan. A personal self-care plan is crucial for 2 reasons: commitment and integration.

Commitment to your daily routine, especially if you book those 5 minutes, 10 minutes, or 30 minutes (whatever much time you can and want to allocate to it) per day for yourself in your diary. The alarm will remind you to take that time. It will also help you integrate the routines in your day as gradually as you wish.

Or even if it's just a list of activities or things that are specific for your self-care plan and place them somewhere you see them regularly. It will already assist you in your awareness, especially in those moments you are so exhausted or upset you do not want to do anything, you will quickly look at the list and be reminded of what will make you feel good again.

With a self-care plan in place, you will be setting intentions, work every day on replenishing your energy and what makes you feel good. You are creating a pattern and the more you do it the more becomes second nature.

Basically, putting a plan together means you first became aware of what you wish to have more in your life and took responsibility for that. So well done to you! The biggest step is achieved!



## TIP

Once you have your self-care activities list, start by blocking some time in your calendar for yourself, set the alarm so it will remind you. It could be anything from 5 minutes per day to 30 minutes or 60 minutes per day.

And during that time make sure you do something for yourself from your self-care list. You can even distribute your list through the days, see some examples on the next page.

# How to create my self-care plan?

Each plan or list is very personal and it will change as you grow and your needs evolve. You can start by simply blocking 5,10,30 minutes per day in your calendar for your self-care routine and expand from there.

You can work out a weekly, monthly, or even yearly self-care plan. Use a digital diary or hardcopy, whichever you are more comfortable with. It's your own plan and you can make it as simple or extensive as you wish.

**I personally just use a journal and block some me time in my phone calendar, it's simple and works like magic.**

If you are super organized and love these sorts of things, you can put together a file with all your favorite self-care activities and exercises, tracker templates to evaluate how you are doing, etc. There are loads of online resources. Go for it, be as creative as you like.



# Tips for your self-care plan



## DO THINGS YOU LOVE

If you hate running, for example, don't include it in your physical self-care routine! Choose an exercise or activity you LOVE doing.

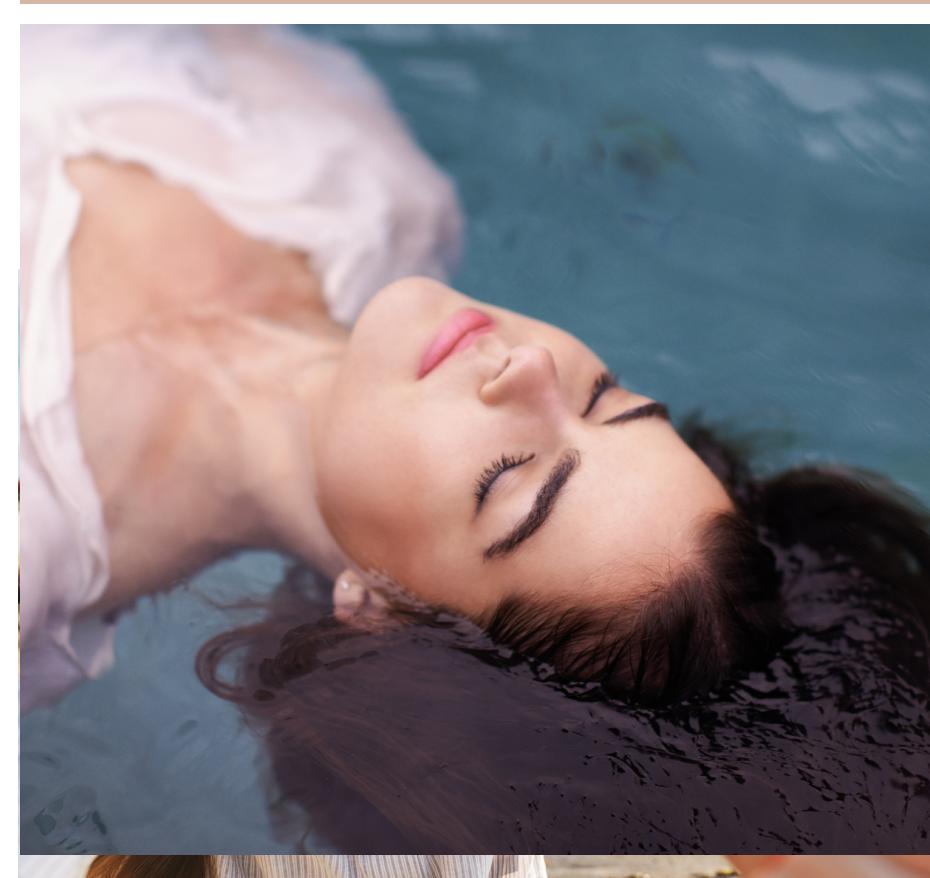
## STARTING SMALL IS GOOD

If you want to eat healthier, you can start by having one salad a day. Or replace a sugary treat with a fruit you love. Small habits will lead to big changes.



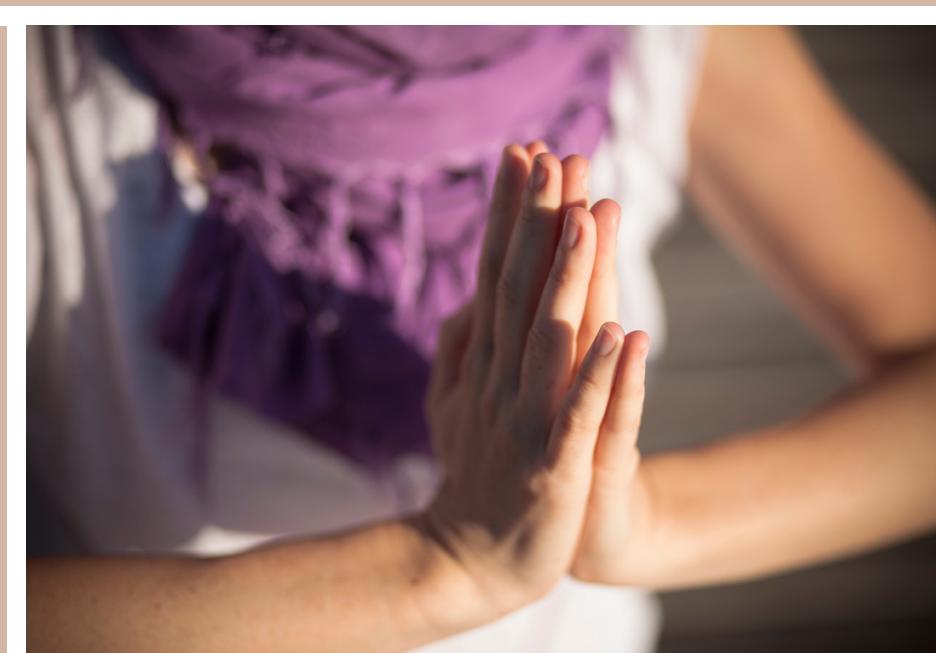
## LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

You may have bulldozed your body's needs so that you can finish your to-do list, be 'productive' or to meet a goal. If you feel terrible or 'off', it's a sign you should be doing something in a different way. If you feel good, it means you are on the right track. Our emotions never lie and act as our compass in life.



## REWARD YOURSELF

If you feel satisfied with how your day went, give yourself something to look forward to. A Netflix chill session, a treat or time to relax.



## BE FLEXIBLE

If a new habit or routine does not work, or fills you with dread, look for ways to tweak it. Make little changes and adjust as the days go.



# self-care activities and Exercises : My go to list

There are so many great ideas and inspiration online that you can source to add to this list, However, I wanted to share the stuff that worked for me, so here is a list of my 5 favorite self-care exercises and activities.

1

Journaling

2

Meditation with Cacao

3

Gratitude challenge

4

Listen to music

5

Walk in nature

# self-care activities and Exercises ; My go to list

## Meditations

I do meditation almost daily, and many times I use 100% ceremonial cacao to help me practice awareness, gain clarity and focus. Since the entire ritual of cacao starts by giving thanks it's my 3 in one perfect solution.

I combine gratitude exercise with cacao and meditation as a daily practice. It also helps me make sure to take those 30 minutes or 60 minutes per day for myself.

If you are looking for some great resources on guided meditations see below some of my favorites free channels on youtube:

Michael Sealey - Guided Meditations

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MichaelSealey>

Pura Rasa - Guided Meditations

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCICMa3NDLe2pxaeIXHw9a7A>

Unlock Your Life - Guided Meditations

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm3z\\_id9UHQYdqfIJMjgQnA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm3z_id9UHQYdqfIJMjgQnA)

If you are new to meditation and want to learn more, Netflix partner up with headspace and created a documentary series on meditation called Headspace guide to meditation.

You can learn the science behind it and get to build your meditation practice. They also have an app, which you can try for free or pay a monthly fee.

# self-care activities and Exercises ; My go to list

## Gratitude Challenge

A gratitude challenge is a truly magnificent tool, it will shift your mindset so drastically as it will lead your mind to start focusing on the good and letting go of the complain victim mode we all fall trap to.

There are many variations of the gratitude challenge, I always like to say thanks to at least 3 things before my daily meditation.

You can use whichever variation suits you best, below are some suggestions:

- Make a list of the 10 things you are grateful for in your life, write them down on ina piece of paper and place them in a place you will read them every morning.
- Take 5 minutes before you go to bed and write down 3 things you were grateful for that day.
- Take a 21-day gratitude challenge, where each day you write 1 thing you are grateful for. (see an example on next page)

Choose whatever options seem more suitable to you right now and notice how you feel afterward. You will, by experience, realize how powerful this exercise is and how it shifts your perception entirely.

With gratitude, we acknowledge the goodness in our lives, we feel more positive, build our resilience, and have happier relationships.

21 DAYS

# Gratitude Challenge

Each day, select a gratitude exercise and spend a few minutes with it, in the morning or at night before bed. You can choose to do them in order or pick them randomly, it's up to you. You can also replace them with your own. Just make sure you cross all 21 items for 21 consecutive days.

Recognise today  
as a gift

Express gratitude to  
at least one important  
person in your life

Go 1 full day without  
complaining

List 3 people you  
are grateful for

Engage in a random  
act of kindness

Think of what your  
grateful for before  
going to bed

Thank a family member  
for something great  
they did.

List 5 things that  
you like about  
yourself

Do something nice  
for a co-worker

Think of something great  
that happened to you  
in the last year

Be kind,  
No Judgement day,  
for self or others

What's your favourite  
part of the day

Recognise 3 things  
that you usually take  
for granted

Refrain from Gossip

List 3 things you  
appreciate about  
your boss

Notice positive traits  
about your colleagues

Think of a way  
someone helped  
you today

Compliment a  
Stranger

Go outside and appreciate  
the beauty of nature

Spend time  
with loved ones

Express your thankfulness  
for lessons from life's  
hardships

# self-care activities and Exercises ; My go to list

## Listen to Music

Music has a powerful effect on us and it can easily and rapidly shift our mood as it elevates our emotions.

- Create a playlist of your favorite feel-good songs, so you can just play them when you need a shift in your energy. I have one called my Happy Playlist.
- I have a few youtube channels I follow for more meditative and healing music, here is a list of my favorites:

### Calm whale

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCphOK9NiPE6qnj9Mp9aHWZg>

### Music for the body and spirit

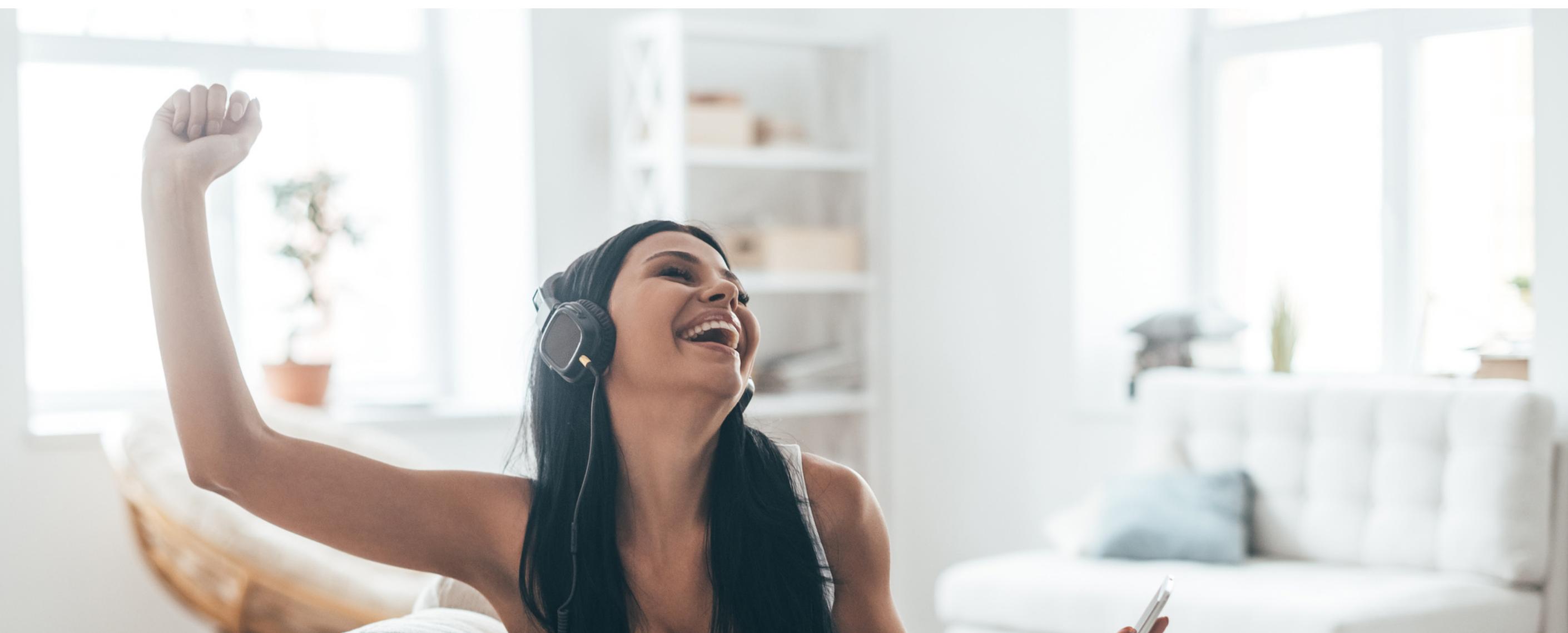
[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfVJ\\_-zdASq6HR-ocl8yTww](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfVJ_-zdASq6HR-ocl8yTww)

### Musiqaa

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvj-OzOR3JY9tU6cojLqrAQ>

### Mystical Vibes

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCk9Bz3r3hQxI-t2st2Ukgxw>



# self-care activities and Exercises ; My go to list

## Walk-in Nature

The benefits of walking in nature are undeniable, we have all experienced them. There is something really calming about being in Nature, taking a walk on the beach or in a forest or park. Being surrounded by trees. Maybe instinctively we feel we are somehow connecting with something bigger than ourselves, maybe we recognize how nature reflects the cycles of life, perhaps it just reminds us how we are such a small part of a bigger picture.

Einstein put it quite simply: "Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better"

Some of the benefits:

- It's free!
- It boosts your energy levels. Fresh air will reawaken your brain.
- Reconnecting with nature reduces stress and calms your nerves.
- Exercise, peace, and quiet will lift your mood.
- Trees naturally give off something called 'phytoncides' or 'wood' essential oils, which have a beneficial effect on our nervous systems.
- Walking through green spaces can create the calmness needed for reflection. It's in this calm, quiet reflective state that creativity can flourish.

You can turn it into a mindfulness practice, just by walking slowly and taking in everything that your senses can pick up. It will support bringing you into the present moment, helping you to dissolve all your cares and worries. Listen to the insect and animal sounds, observe the movement of the grass, smell what scents are carried on the breeze.



## TIP

**What can you do if something upsetting, stressful or harmful happens?**

In this situation, we have to apply self-soothing rather than self-care. (Usually, things that are your top 5 self-care, or favorite self-care activities). Activities that calm you, ground you, and balance you. Ideally, you have this list prepared in advance so when a situation arises you know exactly what to do to soothe you effectively.

Examples:

Use the energy cleansing exercise on the next page

Go for a walk or talk to a supportive friend or family member

Use the self-soothing tips and exercise on the next page.

# self-soothing

## Grounding Exercise

Using your 5 senses is a fast way to bring you out of your thoughts or intense emotions into the present moment.

- Name 5 things you can see: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name 4 things you can hear: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name 3 things you can touch: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name 2 things you can smell: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name 1 thing you can taste: \_\_\_\_\_

## Slow Your Breathing Down

Slow your pace of breathing way down. Breathe deeply from the abdomen (belly). Breathe out for longer than you breathe in (e.g. 4 seconds in and 8 seconds out). Do this for 1-2 minutes to relax you. Exhaling fully activates our body's relaxation response, which is calming and soothing.

## Energy Clearing

Affirmations are powerful, close your eyes and take a few deep breaths in, then put your hand in your heart and say out loud any of the below versions 3 times, or create your own:

- "I release any energies and emotions that are not mine and allow them to move out of my energy field with ease and grace at the fastest speed possible for my comfort and grounding."

- "I release any and all thought forms, negative energies, lower vibrations that are no longer a service to my highest and greatest good, across all planes of my existence, universes or lifetimes. I ask that all energies that are less than love be transmuted for the highest good of all. And so it is, thank you, thank you, thank you"

Then imagine all you need to let go, being released through the bottom of your feet to mother earth to be transmuted.

You can also do this while burning some sage or other incense to clear out your space of any negative thoughts or lower vibrations.

# self-soothing

## Talk to yourself in a soothing way

When stressed or triggered by intense emotions, our inner critic is usually loudest. Unfortunately, this only makes you feel worse. What is needed rather, is a kinder, compassionate, and soothing voice. Because when we feel safe and connected, we can regulate difficult emotions, increase confidence and have the motivation to try again. see below some examples of soothing words of comfort to say to yourself:

I'm sorry you're going through this.  
I'm here for you.  
I love you.  
I know this is a difficult time for you.  
You are not alone.  
I believe in you.  
It's okay to feel this way, it makes sense to me.  
I can understand ...  
You can count on me

## Other ideas/suggestions:

- Think of your favorite movie, color, place, animal, person, season.
- Get yourself some hot cocoa or tea. Drink slowly focusing on the sensations of taste, smell, and temperature.
- Take a warm shower or an Epson salt bath.
- Light scented candles or oil.
- Play soothing music.
- Burn essential oils in a diffuser or some incense
- Go out into the warm sun for 15-30 minutes
- Say a coping statement – “I can handle this”, “The feeling will pass”.

From: <https://eddinscounseling.com/grounding-techniques-self-soothing-emotional-regulation/>

# What if it's an argument with someone, or a difficult discussion?

If it's a difficult situation with someone, and you are feeling upset or triggered, instead of responding immediately you can always answer: I'm feeling a bit upset, unwell right now give me some time and I will get back to you on this. And after you calmed down and gave yourself time to reflect and ground get back to that person.

While reflecting pay attention to what really triggered you about the situation, remember that every situation is reflecting something back to you. Is teaching you something so ask:

- **What I am learning from this?**
- **What does my soul want to learn from this?**

On the following pages, you will also find some tips and exercises to work on how to say NO and set boundaries.

# *How to say 'No' without seeming selfish*

When we were growing up, we were praised when we put others' needs before our own. We were told not to be selfish and that self-sacrifice is a noble thing to do.

But who will be taking care of your needs then? Your needs and wants are as worthy as anyone else's.

The word 'No' is one of the most difficult words to say. You don't want to hurt, offend or anger and risk losing relationships.

But taking care of your own personal space and boundaries is important for your mental and emotional well-being.

Thus, we need to know when to exercise our right say 'No'. If not, we will be sacrificing our own mental and emotional health if we keep saying 'Yes' and doing things we don't want to do.



# How to Say 'No' Without Hurting Others:

I've listed 5 proven-to-work responses to help you refuse requests from people who don't have your best interests at heart.

Beware of ill-intentioned people using the word 'help' to get you to do something to their advantage. For example: "Can you help me and lend me some money again this month?", "Can you help me write this report just like last week?"

Some people will continue persuading you to 'help' them because they are used to you saying 'yes' to their requests.

If you are uncomfortable saying 'No' directly, here are 5 responses you can use to avoid potential conflict and drama:

**#1**

"Let me think about it / Let me check my schedule and get back to you."

**#2**

"I can't do that today. Perhaps you can approach Lily (insert name of someone who can help) to help you with that."

**#3**

"Thanks for inviting me but I have plans already. Sorry!"

**#4**

"I can't do that right now, but I can show you how you can do it yourself."

**#5**

"I'm extremely busy this week. Can it wait till next week?"

# Saying 'No' for Good Mental Health

## 1 I need to say 'No' and set boundaries when...

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

(eg: "A family member asks for a non-urgent favour and I'm dead tired")

## 2 How can I say 'No' in the above situations with minimum guilt or discomfort?

- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_

## 3 What are my biggest fears when I say 'No' to the situations in Question 1?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## 4 How valid are these fears on a scale of 1-10 and why? (1 being 'not valid' and 10 being 'most valid') If these fears are valid, what can I do if the worst case scenario happens?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

# What if I'm getting anxious or worried about something or a potential future outcome?

Do a meditation, ground your self and clean your energy. Then either self-reflect in meditation or journal and answer the following question:

## - What's the worst thing that can happen?

This question usually allows us to clear out any negative outcomes scenarios that our mind likes to run with and it will allow you to become aware of the internal negative dialogue.

Notice your feelings as you are going through the exercise and become aware that your mind means well, it's trying to protect you. However, most of the time it holds us back from growing and changing. It fears the unknown and is trying to stop you from trying something new, especially if in the past you have ventured into new paths and it left a bittersweet experience. The trick here is to always focus on the lessons learned from past experiences. Plus, when considering the worst-case scenario question, it will allow you to become aware of whatever self-limiting beliefs are preventing you from moving forward.

You can also use the 3 questions formula or thought reframing exercise on the next page.

# 3 Question Formula

If you feel **overwhelmed, lost or anxious**, ask yourself the 3 questions below to instantly calm your emotions and take action where needed.

## 1 How do I feel at this moment?

(write between 1-5 emotions)

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## 2 What do I need right now?

(Write 1-5 things that will make you feel MUCH better)

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## 3 What specific actions can I do to make me feel better right now?

(Write 1-5 actions which help control your emotions + reduce overwhelm)

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# Thought Reframing

My thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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Is this thought true and do I have evidence?

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On a scale of 1 to 10, how big is this issue for me?

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Is there something actionable i can do? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what will I do? If no, what are ways I can move past the thought?

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Reframing the thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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## TIP

**What if I haven't done any self-care practice before?**

Self-care means something different to everyone, and it evolves as we learn more about ourselves and our needs. The more we are aware of them the better we can take good care of ourselves.

For example, if you are new to this perhaps at the beginning self-care might mean not picking up that drink, avoiding unhealthy situations, or getting out of the couch for a 15 minute walk. However, as you understand your needs at a deeper level you will begin to learn what your mind, body, and soul need to be healthier and happier.

# 30 Days of Happiness

## Fill your month with self-care

Each square represents one day of the month. Mark the box when you have fulfilled the day. Let's try to leave no box unchecked!

Take a walk	Practice breathing exercises	Read a good book or article	Try something new	Sleep in or go to bed early
Do something creative	Eat a favourite meal	Spend time in nature	Chat with an old friend	Write down 3 things you are grateful for
Pamper yourself	Declutter and donate	Watch a favourite movie	Do yoga or stretch	Take a digital detox day
Cuddle with a pet or watch animal videos	Listen to your favourite music	Take 5 minutes to breathe and be still	Say No	Say Yes
Plan Your Next Vacation	Do something fun	Random Act of Kindness	Listen to a Podcast	Create a list of short term goals
Drink Enough Water	Take a Nap	Watch a sunrise or sunset	Do something you loved as a child	Dress up in your favourite outfit

# Daily Check-in

How is it going today? Rate 5 rates for super and 1 for not so well

Physically 

Emotionally 

Mentally 

Spiritually 

How I reacted at my lowest point of the day?

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What did I learn about myself today?

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How I reacted at my highest point of the day?

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## REFERENCES

[www.socialwork.buffalo.edu](http://www.socialwork.buffalo.edu)  
[www.schools.au.reachout.com](http://www.schools.au.reachout.com)  
[www.eddinscounseling.com](http://www.eddinscounseling.com)  
[www.leeharrisenergy.com](http://www.leeharrisenergy.com)  
[www.stress.org.uk](http://www.stress.org.uk)  
[www.mindmatterstraining.co.uk](http://www.mindmatterstraining.co.uk)

## FURTHER READINGS:

10-minute mindfulness by Eve Boggenpoel  
Mindfulness of breathing by Bhikkhu Nanamoli  
10 step stress solution by Neil Shah  
The untethered soul by Michael Singer  
Inspired destiny by Dr. John Demartini  
In the meantime by Iyanla Vanzant

