DNR stands for Do Not Resuscitate. It is a legal order for doctors to withhold treatment in the case of heart or breathing failure. In the US, 80% of people say that when facing a terminal illness, they would prefer to avoid aggressive life-saving treatment. This number increases to nearly 90% among doctors. This may be because doctors are more knowledgeable about the suffering and reduced quality of life after treatments such as CPR and electric shock. Despite these high numbers, doctors regularly give these treatments unless there is an official DNR on file. But what do they do when there is an unofficial DNR? Doctors at Jackson Hospital faced this dilemma when an unconscious patient was found to have a DNR tattoo on his chest. It said, “DO NOT RESUSCITATE” with the ‘NOT’ underlined. The elderly patient had no ID and a high blood alcohol level. Aside from that and the tattoo, they had nothing to go on. They couldn’t find any medical records and didn’t know if the tattoo was a joke or the man’s true wishes. Dr. Holt, the physician on duty said, “We always kind of joked around about doing that. A lot of physicians say, ‘Boy, I’m going to have that tattooed on my chest so everyone knows my status’. Then you see it and…holy crap,” If the tattoo were just a joke, it wouldn’t be the first time. In another case, a doctor noticed the letters D.N.R. tattooed on a man’s chest and asked him about it. He said he got the tattoo because he lost a bet as a young man and he didn’t think anyone would take it seriously. In the case of the Miami man, Dr. Holt and the other Jackson Hospital doctors weren’t so sure it was a joke. The tattoo even included a signature. And Dr. Holt pointed out the placement of the tattoo on the chest was exactly the spot in which CPR treatment would be given. There are a lot of rules for a legal DNR. In Florida, there is even a rule about the color of paper that it needs to be on. There’s nothing mentioned about tattoos. Despite this, the doctors decided that the tattoo did probably represent the man’s true wishes and should be respected. Nearly 2 hours after the decision had been made, an official DNR order on paper was found. The man died the following morning. Some would say it was a more peaceful and natural death. Doctor Holt says of the man’s decision to get the tattoo, “It also seemed that he didn’t trust that his end-of-life wishes would be conveyed appropriately. So, to me, it means we need a better system.”

Like many people, Gemma Hartley struggles with depression and anxiety. For five years, she used meditation to keep her symptoms in check. But one day, facing some tight writing deadlines at work, she felt herself beginning to slip back toward her old symptoms. This time, meditating wasn’t enough. That’s when a friend told her about something the Japanese call Shinrin-Yoku. This roughly translates to Forest Bathing. Forest bathing is a practice which involves walking slowly through a forest. While walking, forest bathers intentionally experience nature through all five senses. Unlike hiking, forest bathing is not about exercising. Rather, forest bathing is about connecting with the forest and letting go of worries. Hartley decided to give it a go. She was led out into the forest with 30 others by a certified forest bathing guide. Under the treetops, she was encouraged to see, hear, feel, smell and taste the forest in new ways. Afterward, she headed back to the city where she had a mountain of work to do. But instead of feeling stressed and agitated, she thought of the forest. Suddenly, the words flowed freely from her fingers. For Hartley, forest bathing had been a success. In Japan, forest bathing is considered standard preventative medicine. And now, studies have confirmed its incredible benefits. That’s why other countries are beginning to follow suit. Instead of prescribing medications, some doctors are writing prescriptions for forest bathing. Research shows that just a 15-minute leisurely walk in nature decreases the stress hormone, cortisol, by 19 percent. Blood pressure and heart rate also dropped. Considering that in the U.S., 75 to 90 percent of all doctor’s visits are stress-related, this is very good news. Forest bathing doesn’t just help humans to cope with stress. It also boosts the immune system. It turns out that trees produce a chemical that supports disease-killing cells in the human body. In one experiment, participants walked in the forest twice a day for three days. Afterward, studies showed that they had 40 percent more white blood cells. These cells boost the immune system. A month later, their immune system still showed a 15 percent elevation. Time in nature also works wonders on our cognitive performance. College students took tests before and after being in the wilderness for three days. They performed a whopping 50 percent better on cognitive tests after being in the wild. Humans evolved in nature, and studies now show that’s where our bodies feel most at home. The next time you’re feeling down, remember just 15 minutes under the trees does a world of good. If you happen to be one of the majority of humans who live in cities, don’t lose hope. Even looking at a picture of nature or diffusing pine tree essential oils in your home improves health.