

# THE SELF-CARE IMPERATIVE

DECEMBER 16, 2021

Presented to the  
CT Association of  
Schools (CAS)

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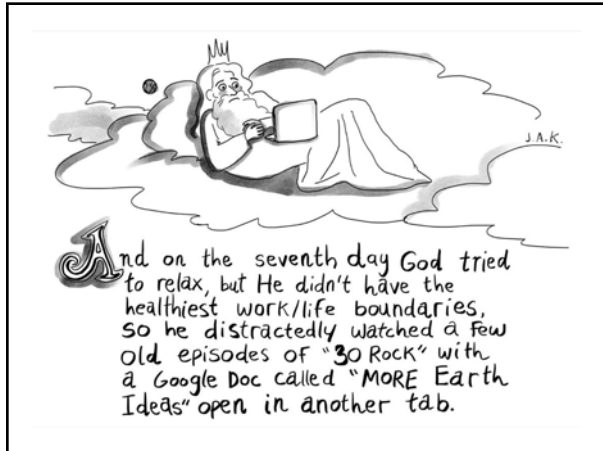
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And on the seventh day God tried to relax, but He didn't have the healthiest work/life boundaries, so he distractedly watched a few old episodes of "30 Rock" with a Google Doc called "MORE Earth Ideas" open in another tab.

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## Our "New Normal" is Ever Evolving

To evolve positively we must:

- ✓ Understand the importance of self-care to mitigate the negative effects of stress
- ✓ Learn the why & how of practicing self-care
- ✓ Appreciate that practicing self-care doesn't have to be time-consuming
- ✓ Learn a variety of self-care strategies



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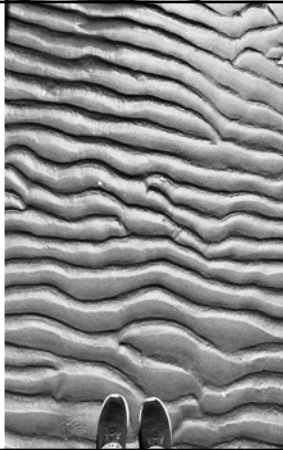
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**CRISIS 101**

- ✓ A typical crisis has a clear beginning and ending.
- ✓ There is usually a clear population of victims, survivors, and their family and friends.
- ✓ We usually know who is likely to have acute stress and potential traumatic stress symptoms.
- ✓ In a pandemic:
  - We can't predict the future.
  - We are all vulnerable.
  - We are all experiencing loss and/or grief.
  - Maslow's Hierarchy...loss of safety, belonging/connectedness and we can't promise safety




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**WHAT is SELF-CARE?**

Self-care is the **intentional, proactive** pursuit of **integrated** wellness; **balancing** mind, body and spirit personally and professionally.\*

\* One person's self-care should not be at the expense of another's self-care

\* Self-care is not always easy

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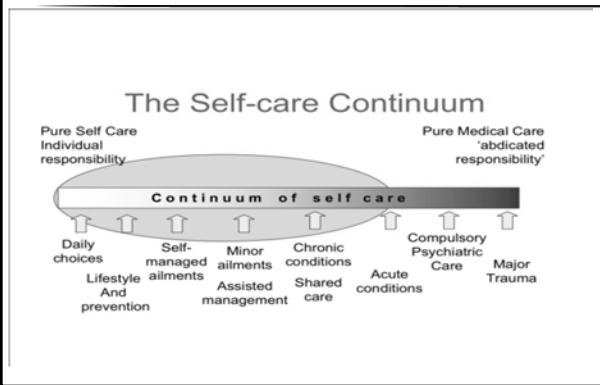
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**THE IMPORTANCE OF PROACTIVE SELF-CARE**




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**WHY practice SELF-CARE?**

1. TO PRACTICE ETHICALLY (DO NO HARM)
2. TO COMBAT BURNOUT (DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE SICK & TIRED TO REPLENISH YOUR RESOURCES)
3. TO PROVIDE A MODEL OF SELF-REGULATED PRESENCE (DO IT FOR THE KIDS!) (& COLLEAGUES/SIGNIFICANT OTHERS)

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**THE ETHICAL MANDATE OF SELF-CARE**

The universal ethical principle across ALL disciplines is "DO NO HARM."

To counteract the negative MENTAL HEALTH effects of stress and burnout, practitioners must take care of themselves BEFORE they can care for others, otherwise those with whom they work may be put at risk.




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**THE OXYGEN MASK PRINCIPLE**

**YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF BEFORE YOU CAN DO ANYTHING FOR ANYONE ELSE.**

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**A SIMPLE ILLUSTRATION OF WHY SELF-CARE IS IMPORTANT FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UO2A2p-19A>

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Compassion fatigue is a condition characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion leading to a diminished ability to empathize or feel compassion for others (Figley, 2002).

SELF CARE  
means giving  
THE WORLD  
the best  
OF YOU INSTEAD OF  
WHAT IS LEFT  
OF YOU.

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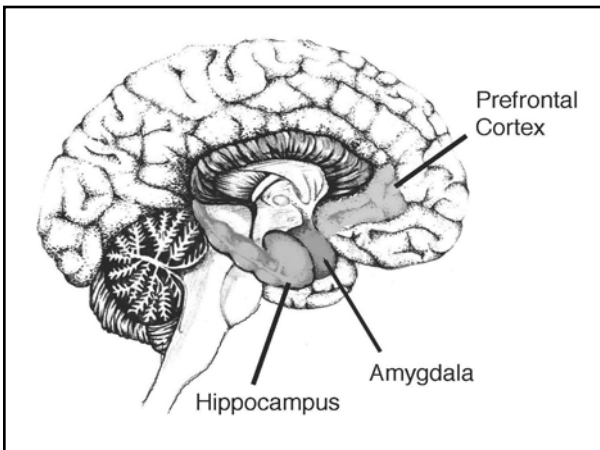
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**IDENTIFYING YOUR STRESS - *WORKSHEET page 2***

**TAKE 3 MINUTES** TO IDENTIFY 1 or 2 STRESSORS THAT WEIGH HEAVILY ON YOU AND IF ALLEVIATED, WOULD MAKE YOUR LIFE QUALITATIVELY BETTER. AS WE GO THROUGH THE PPT LOOK FOR PRACTICES TO ADDRESS THE STRESSOR.

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**Who thinks you don't have time for self-care?**

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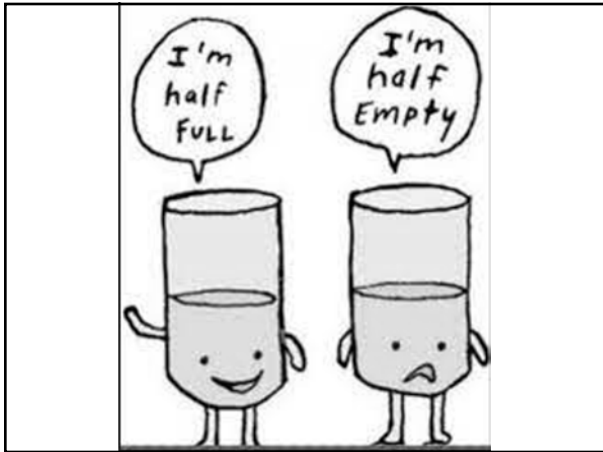
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**WORKSHEET PAGE 1**

### SELF CARE WHEEL

**TAKE 3 MINUTES TO REVIEW THE SELF-CARE STRATEGIES.**

**CHECK THOSE THAT YOU'VE ENGAGED IN THE LAST MONTH.**

**STAR THOSE THAT YOU'VE ENGAGED 3-4 TIMES IN THE LAST WEEK.**

(www.OlgaPhoenix.com)

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SELF-CARE PLAN								
MIND BODY SPIRIT CONNECTIONS	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Personal</th> <th>Professional</th> </tr> <tr> <td>READ BIBLE. in AM*</td> <td>Write article about self care</td> </tr> <tr> <td>READ FOR FUN</td> <td>Set timer to take ultradian rhythm breaks every 1 1/2 hr.</td> </tr> </table>	Personal	Professional	READ BIBLE. in AM*	Write article about self care	READ FOR FUN	Set timer to take ultradian rhythm breaks every 1 1/2 hr.	
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<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Personal</th> <th>Professional</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Practice yoga/walk in nature 4-5x/wk. in am</td> <td>Eat lunch*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SHOWER MINDFULLY*</td> <td>Eat protein before class</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hip exercises in bed in am*</td> <td>Practice chair yoga</td> </tr> </table>	Personal	Professional	Practice yoga/walk in nature 4-5x/wk. in am	Eat lunch*	SHOWER MINDFULLY*	Eat protein before class	Hip exercises in bed in am*	Practice chair yoga
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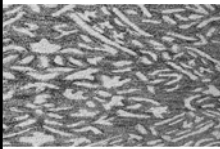
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### 3 TYPES OF SELF-CARE PRACTICES

*Temporary self-care* practices can relieve stress during the activity by releasing "feel good" hormones and neurotransmitters (oxytocin, endorphin, dopamine, serotonin) that subside after the activity ends



*Enduring self-care\** practices can develop a non-judgmental awareness that strengthens certain neurological functions, such as focused attention and self-regulation.

### 3 NEURAL PROCESSES

*Enduring self-care\** practices can rewire the brain for positivity, counteracting the natural tendency towards negativity.

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## EVIDENCE- BASED SELF-CARE PRACTICES

Loving Kindness

**MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSE**

**CREATING POSITIVE HABITS**

**TLC**

*What brings you joy?*



**TAKING IN THE GOOD/SAVORING gratitude**

*social support*

**Self-care in the background**

Honoring Ultradian Rhythms

**BOUNDARIES**

*BUSYNESS*

*SILVER LININGS*

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**Mindfulness** is “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and **non-judgmentally** to the unfolding of experiences moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, page 145)



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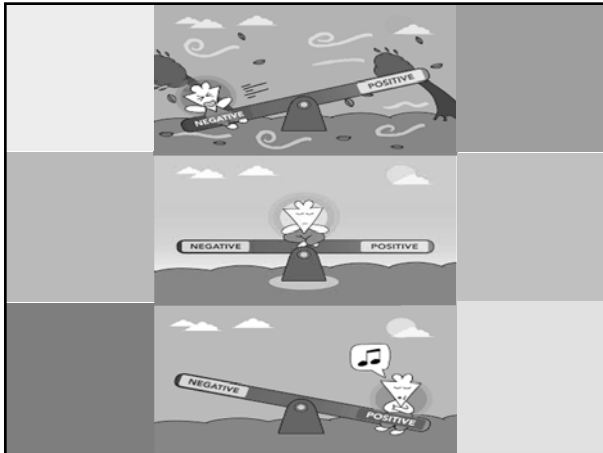
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**Research has found the benefits of mindfulness include:**

- ❖ Reduce stress
- ❖ Reduce depression
- ❖ Lessen effects of PTSD
- ❖ Increase compassion for self and others
- ❖ Strengthen the immune system
- ❖ Help reduce self-focus and quiet the mind wandering that leads to rumination, worrying, and unhappiness.
- ❖ Lead to improvements in health, including decreasing pain & inflammation; and increasing immunity & longevity.



<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/>

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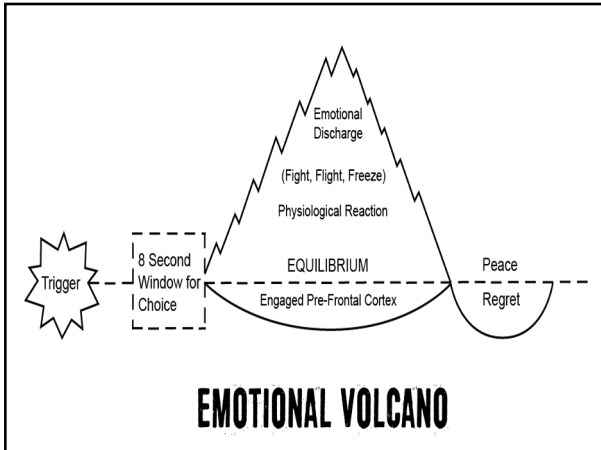
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What you  
do speaks  
so loud  
that I  
cannot hear  
what  
you say.

Ralph Waldo Emerson  
makoodle.com

Especially when working with children,  
**WHAT YOU DO IS ALWAYS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHAT YOU SAY.**

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TWO TYPES OF MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

<p><b>FORMAL –</b> SETTING TIME ASIDE TO PRACTICE BRINGING FOCUSED ATTENTION TO THE PRESENT MOMENT</p>	<p><b>INFORMAL –</b> BRINGING FOCUSED ATTENTION TO ANY THING YOU DO</p>

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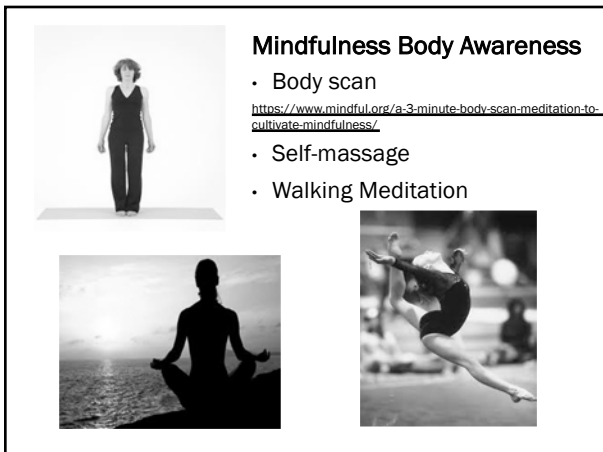
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**GRATITUDE RESEARCH OUTCOMES**  
[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude/definition#why\\_practice](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/gratitude/definition#why_practice)

- ✓ Gratitude brings us happiness, optimism, joy, pleasure, enthusiasm, and other positive emotions.
- ✓ Gratitude reduces anxiety and depression.
- ✓ Gratitude is good for our bodies, including strengthening immunity, reducing perceptions of aches and pains.
- ✓ Grateful people sleep better.
- ✓ Gratitude makes us more resilient.
- ✓ Gratitude strengthens relationships.
- ✓ Gratitude promotes forgiveness.
- ✓ Grateful people are more prosocial.
- ✓ Gratitude is good for kids and good for schools.

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**WAYS TO PRACTICE GRATITUDE**  
[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten\\_ways\\_to\\_become\\_more\\_grateful1](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten_ways_to_become_more_grateful1)

- ✓ Three Good Things: Tune into the positive in your life.
- ✓ Write a gratitude Letter: Deliver it in person.
- ✓ Mental Subtraction of Positive Events: appreciate what you have by imagining your life without it.
- ✓ Give It Up: Taking a break from something to appreciate it more.
- ✓ Keep a gratitude journal.
- ✓ Thinking hard about our own mortality makes us more grateful for life; and praying increases gratitude.
- ✓ Create a grateful school climate by fostering gratitude among staff and getting buy-in from leaders.

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How do we build our MINDFULNESS “muscle” when we don’t even have time to eat lunch?



Whenever you’re anchored and focused in the present moment, NOT dwelling on the past or lost in the future, YOU’RE PRACTICING MINDFULNESS.

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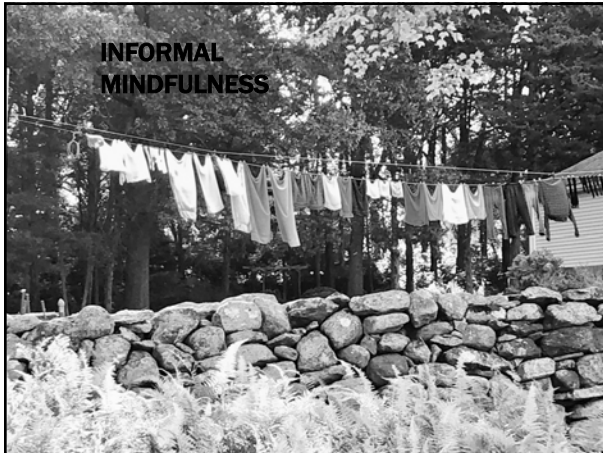
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**EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS**

- Washing the dishes
- Taking the trash out
- Vacuuming
- Folding laundry
- Grocery shopping
- Baking or cooking
- Bathing
- Playing with your pet
- Driving to work
- Listening to music
- Lifting weights
- Shaving
- Grooming
- Eating
- Making the bed

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**MINDFUL EATING\***

[https://gaia.berkeley.edu/practice/raisin\\_meditation](https://gaia.berkeley.edu/practice/raisin_meditation)

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**SAVOR THE GOOD\***

- 1) Look for positive facts and let them become positive experiences.
- 2) Savor the positive experience:
  - Sustain it for 10-20-30 seconds.
  - Feel it in your body and emotions.
  - Intensify it.
- 3) Sense and intend that the positive experience is soaking into your brain and body – registering deeply in emotional memory.

*"Whatever we repeatedly sense and feel and want and think is slowly but surely sculpting neural structure."*

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**DEEP SENSORY MINDFULNESS\***

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GEI-Qu7ApGQ&feature=related>

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**SIMPLE  
EVERYDAY  
WELLNESS  
PRACTICES**

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**SOCIAL SUPPORT\***

“Decades of research suggest that the quality of our social ties might be the single biggest predictor of our well-being” including contributing to happiness, physical health, longevity & life satisfaction (Retrieved from [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/social\\_connection/definition#why-practice-social-connection](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/social_connection/definition#why-practice-social-connection))

Familial and extra-familial social support are protective factors for resilience (Werner, 1993, Rutter 1987)

Social support reduces the risk for traumatic stress and other negative mental health outcomes following school crises (e.g., Banks & Weems, 2014; Charuvastra & Cloitre, 2008; Dyb et al., 2014; Haden, Scarpa, Jones, & Ollendick, 2007; Hahn, Hays, Kahn, Litwin, & Ganz, 2014; Ma et al., 2011; Trickey et al., 2012; Zhang, Jiang, Ho, & Wu, 2011)

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**REDUCING PERCEPTIONS OF BUSYNESS**

Busyness is indicative of “cognitive overload” which inhibits executive functioning and more

**Strategies:**

- ✓ Be awe inspired-awe - inspired people feel like they have more time and are less impatient  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jBnseji3tBk>
- ✓ Create flow – stop multi-tasking and create a distraction/interruption free workspace
- ✓ Enact an anti-busyness ritual – brains are calmed by repetitive behavior

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**WORKSHEET PAGE 2**

**CREATE DAILY SELF-CARE HABITS**

CREATE AT LEAST 1 SELF-CARE HABIT TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF YOURSELF.

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**HABIT LOOP - 3 Parts**

(1) CUE/TRIGGER (tells the brain to go into autopilot) →

(2) BEHAVIOR/ROUTINE (habit) →

(3) REWARD (reinforcement)

**EXAMPLES:**

When I am asked to do something extra (TRIGGER), I will say yes only if it aligns with my priorities (BEHAVIOR/ROUTINE), and I will not feel as overcommitted (REWARD).

After I put down my backpack in my office (TRIGGER), I will turn on my diffuser and Pandora radio (BEHAVIOR/ROUTINE), and I will benefit from self-care in the background (REWARD).

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(TRIGGER) (BEHAVIOR/ROUTINE) (REWARD)

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**MINIMUM EFFECTIVE DOSE (CARTER, 2015)**

Doing **SOMETHING** is better than doing **NOTHING.**




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*Yoga with Adriene*  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3-gKPNyrTA&t=3s>

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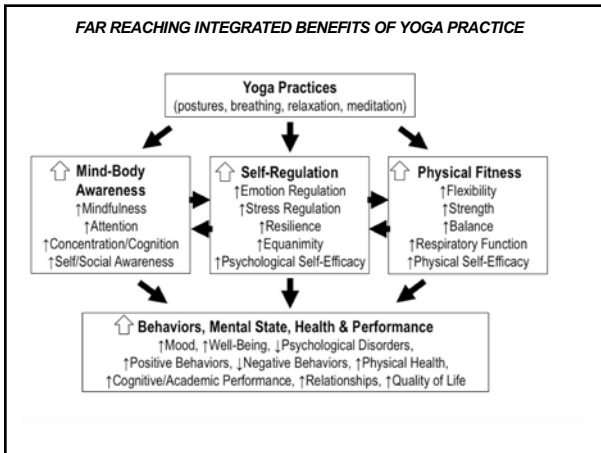
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SAY A  
**STRATEGIC  
 “NO”**  
 IN ORDER TO  
 CREATE SPACE  
 FOR AN  
**INTENTIONAL  
 “YES”**




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“Compassionate people ask for what they need. They say no when they need to, and when they say yes, they mean it. They’re compassionate because their boundaries keep them out of resentment.”  
- Brene Brown




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**ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO\***

Sleep in on Saturday;  
Go to your favorite creamery;  
A virtual game night with extended family;  
Paint rocks while watching football;  
Take a weekday walk at the beach after work;  
Watch Hamilton – again;  
A weekend away;  
Plan a post-COVID vacation




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**WORKSHEET PAGE 3**

- smell of fresh cut grass
- purple
- Trader Joe’s 72% dark chocolate
- driving back roads
- walking at Walnut Beach
- potting petunias
- having class outside
- celebrating birthdays
- clean kitchen counters
- summer pedicures

When you recover or discover something that nourishes your soul and brings joy, care enough about yourself to make room for it in your life.  
Jean Shinoda Bolten

**TAKE 1 MINUTE TO WRITE DOWN AS MANY THINGS AS YOU CAN THINK OF THAT BRING YOU JOY.**


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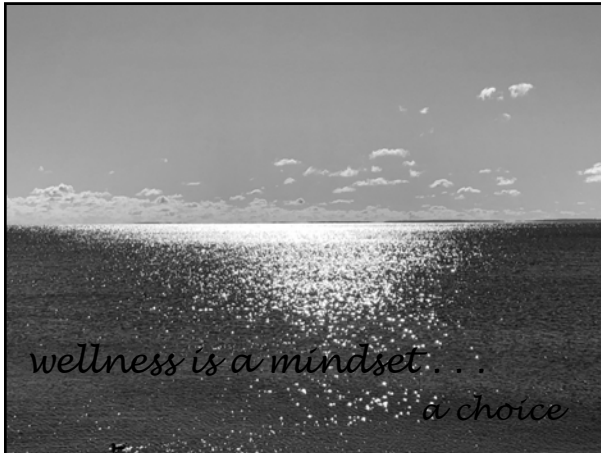
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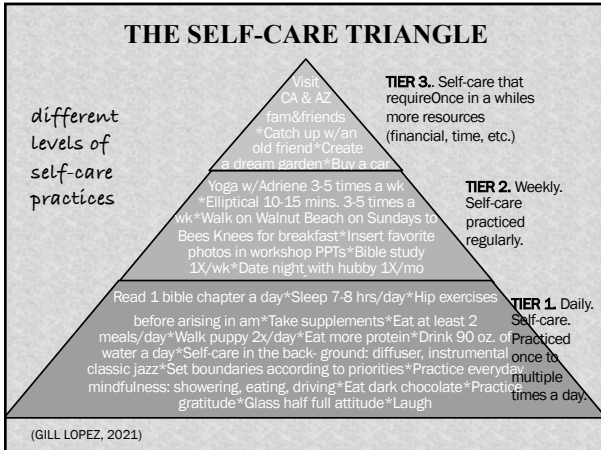
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**MINDFULNESS RESOURCES**

- ✓ **Science of the Greater Good:** sponsors groundbreaking scientific discoveries—and turns them into stories, tips, and tools for a happier life and more compassionate society. Since 2001, the GGSC has been at the fore of a new scientific movement to explore the roots of happy and compassionate individuals, strong social bonds, and altruistic behavior—the science of a meaningful life. It also offers free articles and a newsletter to spread information about emotional health and overall wellbeing. <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/>
- ✓ **Smiling Mind:** Smiling Mind is now considered to be one of the world’s leaders in the free pre-emptive mental health space and Australia’s go-to expert for youth- and adult-based mindfulness programs. <https://app.smilingmind.com.au>
- ✓ **UCLA Health Website:** free guided meditations that offer mindfulness meditation to both English and Spanish speakers. Examples include loving kindness meditations, body scans, and Spanish meditations for eating with more mindfulness. <http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations>
- ✓ **Inner Health Studio:** free relaxation scripts to work on coping skills related to stress management, anxiety, panic attacks, anger, pain relief, and insomnia. The website also has relaxing imagery available for download. <http://www.innerhealthstudio.com/relaxation-scripts.html>
- ✓ **Calm:** a mindfulness meditation company. Calm offers quiet music, relaxing sounds, and peaceful imagery to relax its users. Calm also has an app that can be downloaded on mobile devices. <https://www.calm.com/>
- ✓ **Yoga with Adriene:** Our mission is to reach as many people as possible with high-quality free yoga videos. We welcome all levels, all bodies, all genders, all souls! Browse our library of free yoga videos to find a practice that suits your mood or start a journey toward healing. <https://www.youtube.com/user/yogawithadriene>

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