

# SELF-CARE — THE TIME IS NOW

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**“With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts.”** *Eleanor Roosevelt*

The past two years have been difficult for so many. Sometimes just making it through the day was a victory in itself. While the end of a chapter means a new beginning and a clean slate, there continues to be much uncertainty with the pandemic. As each one of you move forward into 2022, how can you cultivate your own resilience and improve your overall quality of life? Self-care is not a one size fits all approach, here are a few recommendations to help make the journey ahead a little easier to navigate.

## Practice Gratitude

**“Gratitude is one of the most powerful human emotions. Once expressed, it changes outlook, and broadens our perspective.”** *Germany Kent*

Each day continues to present many overwhelming challenges and it is easy to get caught up in a discouraging mindset and begin to feel even more defeated. Instead of concentrating on what is not working, make a conscious effort to shift your focus toward gratitude. At the same time, it is essential to acknowledge your feelings of stress, frustration, and exhaustion are very real. It is not a matter of choosing appreciation over adversity but embracing both.

When the workday is complete, reflect upon a positive moment you experienced. Start small and begin to recognize the little things that made you smile and warmed your heart. Try to make thankfulness a regular part of your day and over time it will become second nature to you. Feeling grateful can be the simplest and fastest way to lift your spirits. As a result, gratitude can transform your life and your resilience to challenges increases.

## Ignite Kindness

**“There is nothing more valuable than kindness. A little bit can change a whole day, a whole year, and a whole life.”** *Author Unknown*

Life is filled with tough and challenging moments. Now, more than ever, kindness is the best remedy for bringing hope to people. When you view the world through a lens of kindness, it can change your entire perspective. If you take time to be kind to people, it can make a significant impact, especially if someone is truly hurting at the time. Kindness can be a smile, saying hello, sharing a compliment, lending a listening ear, sending a thank you card, or just being present for someone. Showing kindness can leave a lasting impression on the receiver, but it will change your heart and enrich your life as well.

## Bolster Connections

**“Your support network is the solid ground from which you can propel yourself upwards.”**

*Anna Barnes*

Forming meaningful connections is at the heart of resilience. Having a strong support system can strengthen your resilience by establishing trust, providing positive role models, as well as promoting hope and encouragement. Your personal and professional relationships remind you everyone struggles, and setbacks are a part of life. The strongest relationships in your life help nurture your resilience. Positive and supportive connections cultivate happiness and confidence in the face of hardships. Creating and maintaining a supportive network takes some time and effort. Remember every connection you make throughout your life builds your resilience:

- Stay in touch with family and friends
- Be a good and patient listener
- Reach out to an old friend now and again
- Contribute to a greater cause
- Interact with coworkers during lunch
- Introduce yourself to your neighbors
- Participate in a group activity or join a club

## Harness Mindfulness

**“Instead of bracing yourself for the perils of the unknown, embrace the joy that is here, in your present moment.”** *Michelle D. Rosado*

Mindfulness is the ability to be present in the moment directing your attention to what is going on in your mind, body, emotions, and the world around you. Some of the potential benefits of mindfulness include strengthening relationships, reducing stress, decreasing depression, and improving memory. While mindfulness is associated with meditation, not everyone is ready to adopt this particular philosophy.

If meditation is not your preference, you can still strive to live in the moment. Being mindful means staying in the present, rather than ruminating over the past, worrying about the future, or becoming easily distracted. When your thoughts constantly drift to the past or the future, the present will slip through your fingers. If you are interested in exploring mindfulness further, some options include:

- Take a mindful walk out in nature
- Insight Timer Meditation App
- Mindfulness.com App
- Practical Meditation for Beginners by Benjamin W. Decker
- Stress Less, Accomplish More by Emily Fletcher
- Ten Percent Happier Meditation App or book by Dan Harris
- The Little Book of Mindfulness by Dr. Patrizia Collard
- Real Change, Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves and the World by Sharon Salzberg



## Invest in Yourself

**“Rest and self-care are so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.”**

*Eleanor Brown*

Self-care is defined as the practice of taking action to preserve and improve your health. Consider performing a daily ritual that signifies the transition from work to home. It could be as straightforward as listening to uplifting music or a positive audiobook in your car on the drive home, removing your nametag, changing out of your uniform, and washing off the day. Focusing on healthy nutrition, staying hydrated, exercising regularly, receiving adequate rest, and taking time to relax can aid with protecting yourself against compassion fatigue.

Self-care is an ongoing process and evolves as you do. When creating a self-care plan, it is necessary to identify what brings joy to your life and replenishes your soul. Strive to have a work-life balance by finding a hobby that inspires you, taking a scheduled vacation, and connecting with family and friends. Mindfulness assists with diminishing stress and enhancing overall well-being. Through self-reflection and mindfulness, you can examine events and triggers, learn from them, and move in a forward direction.

## A Final Note

**“Nothing can dim the light that shines from within.”** *Maya Angelou*

As you enter 2022, attempt to work on one or several of these resilience-enhancing skills each day. Even the smallest of steps can make a deep impact on your life. The more you integrate self-care into your daily routine, the stronger you will become over time. You might endure some obstacles along the way, but you will find a determination emerging from within. The process is different for everyone, and you will discover what works best for you on your path.

\*If you would like to discuss any of these topics in greater detail, please know I am here. May the new year be filled with hope, peace, joy, laughter, good health, and many adventures!



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