

-Care Norkbook Ú

FOR JOURNALING, INTROSPECTION, & PLANNING

# WE OFTEN HEAR THAT SELF CARE IS IMPORTANT...

But it's not one size fits all. We may tend to first think of self care in its commoditized form: massages, pedicures, bath oils, luxury shopping. But "treat yourself" doesn't mean "heal yourself," and that kind of consumer self care is largely out of reach for many of us. It also ignores the origins of the idea of "self care," which are grounded in the fight for racial equality. This self care workbook aims to help you take an inventory of what real self care looks like for you: for your life, your personality, your budget, and your world.

Self care is not an add-on, a treat, or a luxury. It's the backbone of your mental health and wellbeing. Approach these pages with intention and kindness towards yourself. You are worthy of care.

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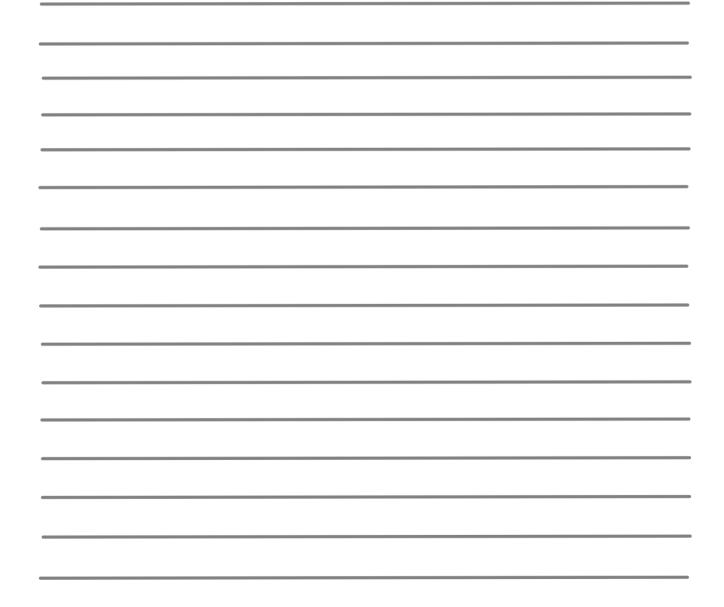
### SELF CARE INVENTORY

Begin with this short inventory. Fill in the blanks to finish the statements.

I feel most relaxed when	
I feel most energized when	_
I feel most tense when	•
I feel most drained when	-
I feel most myself when	-
To me, self care is NOT	

### PROMPT: INVENTORY REFLECTION

What patterns did you notice in your inventory responses? In this current phase of your life, do you find that you have energy and excitement for self care, or have you already reached a point of exhaustion? What kinds of self care feels easy, and what feels like more work? What self care attempts/practices haven't been working for you? What self care has felt beneficial?



### CATEGORIES OF SELF CARE

Explore ideas across the self-care spectrum. Circle the ideas that appeal to you or that you perform regularly. Add in one additional idea for each category. What might you want to try?

# R E S T Take a nap Lie down & listen to music or a podcast Take a bath Watch a show Go to bed early

# C R E A T E Journal Make art Take photos Try a craft

# M ○ ∨ E Take a walk outdoors Go to the gym Take an exercise class Stretch or do yoga

C A R E Take a shower Organize one surface Schedule a medical or dental appointment Do a chore you've been putting off

#### CONNECT

Call a loved one Meet up with a friend for coffee or a walk Attend a meetup group Attend a political, spiritual, or religious gathering INDULGE Get a massage or pedicure Savor your favorite meal Treat yourself to a small purchase

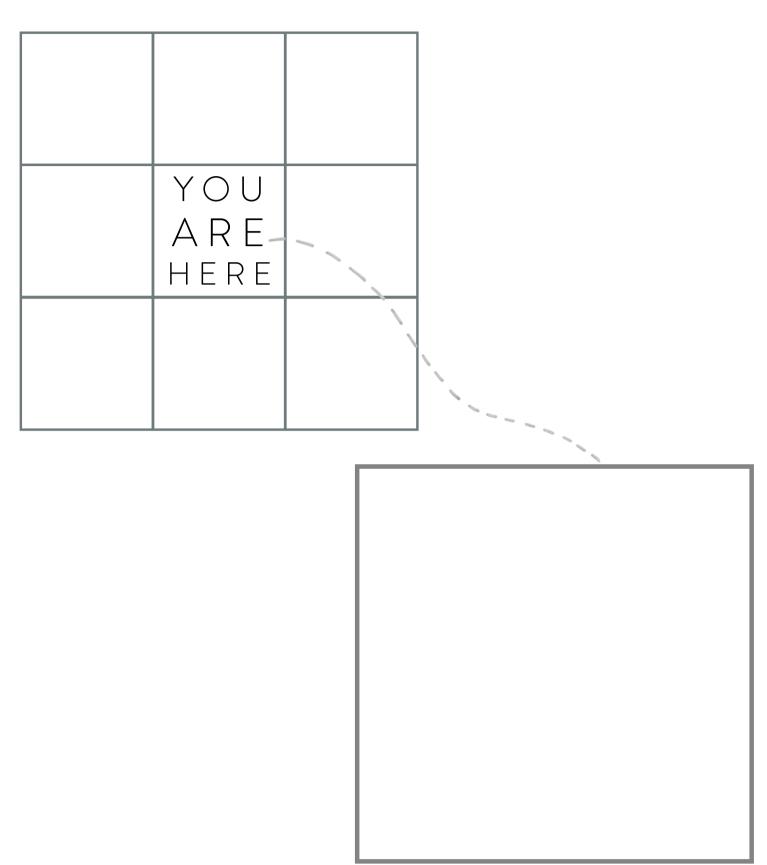
#### PROMPT: SELF CARE AS SELF PRESERVATION

Self care, at its historical roots, is about self-preservation in the midst of oppression. For BIPOC, self care is a necessary, radical act in a hostile world. And racism is not the only battle humans encounter. On all sides, whatever your ethnic or racial identity, you are surrounded by heavy, complicated forces to carry or navigate. On the next page, fill in the outer squares of the grid with words or images that depict things in your life that press in on all sides. Then, in the expanded "You Are Here" box, draw images or write

words representing the specific self care that might allow you to preserve and revive yourself for your encounters with these elements.

SYSTEMIC, INTERPERSONAL, & MEDICAL RACISM	PERSONAL & INHERITED TRAUMA	EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE
WORK STRESS	YOU ARE here	GRIEF
DOMESTIC / EMOTIONAL LABOR	GLOBAL PANDEMIC	POLITICAL POWERLESSNESS

# SELF CARE AS SELF PRESERVATION



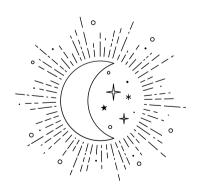
PROMPT: A DAY OF SELF CARE

Which categories of self care leave you feeling the most restored? If you could create a formula for a full day of self care, how would it look? Use the ideas from the different self-care categories as building blocks to map out a schedule for what that day might look like.

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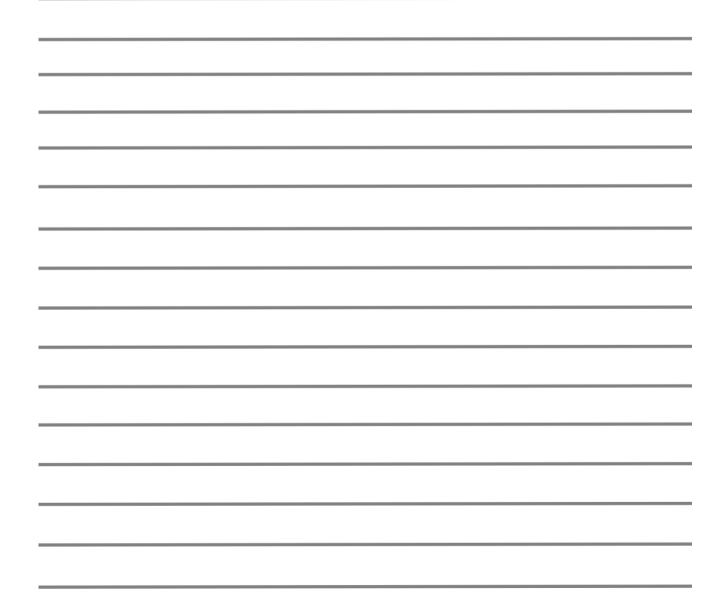
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#### PROMPT: A DAY OF SELF CARE

Looking at the schedule you made on the previous page, think a bit more about how you would turn a day of self care into a mini "self care retreat." Are there ground rules (say, a day without your phone / social media?). Are you alone, with a friend, or some of both? What meals will you eat? If you are at home, will you prepare your space in a specific way? Now: is there a way to put this day on the calendar?

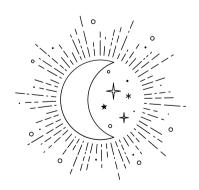


Next think about your actual normal day with all of your real obligations. Where might there be room to build in self care? Consider small windows (15 minutes), piggybacking self care on other habits, and the possibility of micro self care rituals (short breaks to go outside, for example).

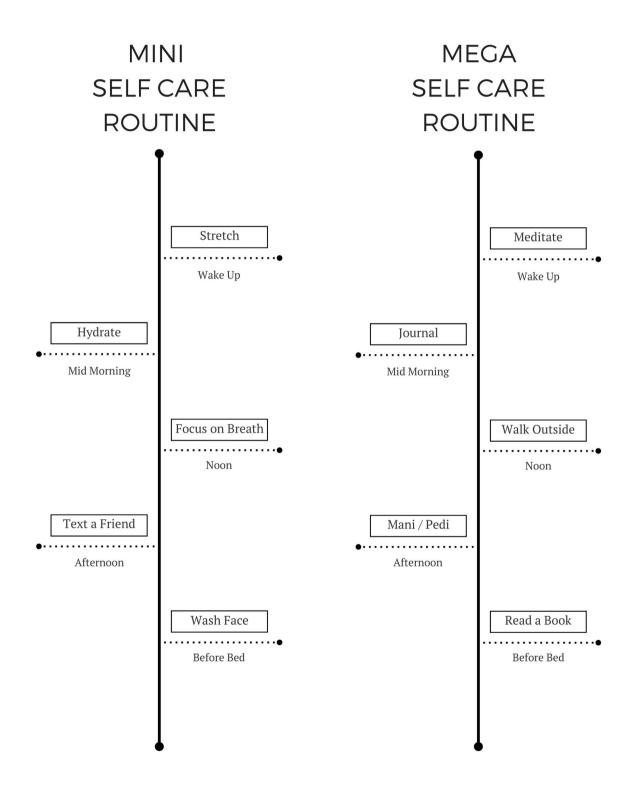
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# SELF CARE FOR SCALE Not every day can be a full day of self care. Here are examples of "mini" and "mega" self care routines. How would you personalize these routines?



#### MICRO SELF CARE

Here is a list of ideas for "micro self care"--ways to honor and connect with yourself when you don't have time in your day for a longer break. If you see a technique you'd like to try, here's a good self-care hack: set an alarm for it in your phone. It may seem odd, but in the middle of a stressful day, hearing an

alarm and seeing a message to do something as simple as "take three deep breaths" can help to remind you of your self care priorities and ground you in

#### the moment.

TAKE THREE DEEP BREATHS PULL AN AFFIRMATION CARD PUT ON HAND LOTION WASH YOUR HANDS/FACE TEXT A FRIEND DRINK WATER GET A CUP OF COFFEE/TEA STEP OUTSIDE LOOK AT PHOTOS THAT MAKE YOU FEEL GOOD LISTEN TO YOUR FAVORITE SONG PUT YOUR PHONE DOWN FOR 30 MINUTES READ ONE CHAPTER OF A BOOK TRY A NEW RECIPE EXPLORE THE MAGAZINE AISLE AT THE STORE IMAGINE A SAFE PLACE WALK AROUND THE BLOCK HUG A LOVED ONE SPRAY LAVENDER SCENT IN YOUR ROOM LIGHT A CANDLE PUT ON COZY CLOTHES SIT ON THE GROUND MAKE A DOODLE

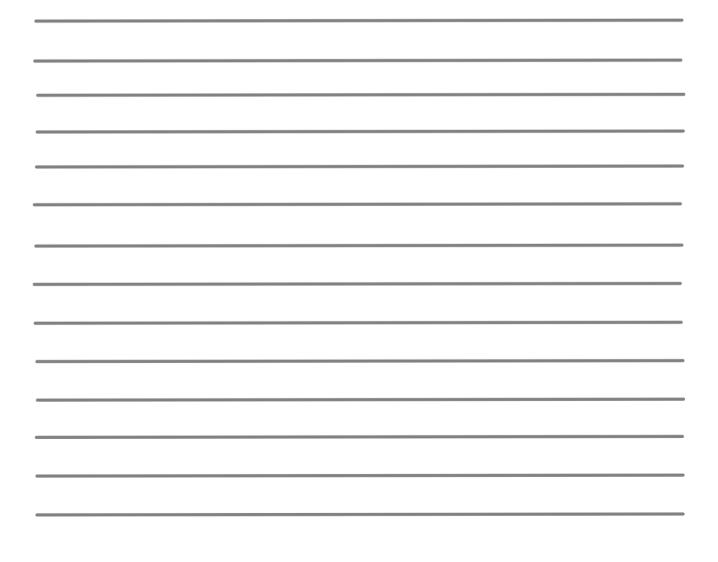
A WEEK OF JOURNALING TECHNIQUES If you're using this workbook, it's likely that you're open to (or already have) a journaling practice. If you're looking to begin or shake up your self care practice, journaling is one of the best places to start. It's free (minus the cost of a notebook or whatever phone/computer you're already using), and journaling has been connected with incredible positive effects on the body, like better memory, sleep, communication skills, and even a better-functioning immune system. Why? When you journal, you begin to organize the events of your life externally, and you can make sense of the things that have happened to you. This external processing frees up your brain from having to spend energy processing or holding on to these experiences. Think of journaling like setting down a heavy burden. It won't necessarily make your problems go away, but if your brain learns it doesn't have to bear quite so much weight, your body will benefit as a result.

This workbook contains seven different journaling styles for you to try--one for each day in a week. Try one each day, then revisit your pages to decide which technique is most enjoyable and best suits your schedule. Note that the Day 1 technique should be completed upon waking up, while Day 2-6 should be completed before bed.



DAY 1 - MORNING PAGES

In Julia Cameron's The Artist's Way, she describes morning pages as three pages of longhand writing, strictly stream-of-consciousness (no set topic), to be completed right when you wake up. Think of the words on these pages as "brain drain"—don't try to sound smart or say anything profound.




### DAY 2 - NOTICED LIST

Writer and artist Mari Andrew describes this journaling practice as a list of things you notice throughout the day, both external and internal: things that anger you, annoy you, delight you, make you resentful, make you swoon, make you act out of character. Things to give thanks for, apologize for, things to commit to memory. Honor the whole of your internal experience instead of choosing what looks best from the outside.




DAY 3 - FOUR SQUARE JOURNALING Cartoonist Lynda Barry's journaling technique is to divide your page into a grid of four squares: DID, SAW, HEARD, and DRAW. In the "DID" square, list seven things you did that day. For "SAW," list seven things you saw or noticed. In the "HEARD" square, write a snippet of conversation you heard during your day. In the "DRAW" box, make a little doodle.

Dale: Did Sau 1. 1. 2. 2. 3. 3. 4. 4. 5. 5. 6. 6. 7. 7. Heard Draw

DAY 4 - ONE LINE A DAY

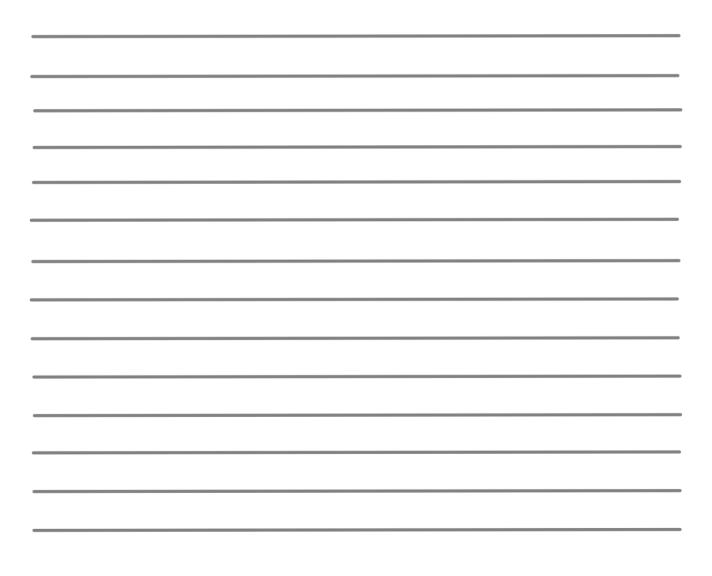
Journaling by writing only one line a day allows you to distill things completely. Write down one thing from your day you want to remember. This can be something that happened, something someone said, something you read, an image, a lyric, a thing you've been mulling over.

### DAY 5 - LOGBOOK

Writer and artist Austin Kleon describes his logbook technique as a simple list of things that happened in your day, kind of a reverse appointment book. Who you saw, what you read, what you watched, what you listened to. This is a good way to start the practice of journaling without the pressure of diving into your feelings or capturing every single thing every day. You'll be amazed at what a short list of mundane details can jog in your memory when you look back later.



DAY 6 - GRATITUDE JOURNALING A practice that feels essential for some and cloying for others. Time to find out which camp you're in. For today's journaling technique, write down three things (the more specific the better) for which you are grateful.



#### DAY 7 - HIGHS & LOWS

It's probably quite easy to remember the worst thing that happened to you today.

It's the problem you're chewing on, the incident that still makes you boil with rage, the worry that's keeping you up at night. Put it down on the page. But then also take a few moments to jot down the day's best thing. Don't limit yourself to "things that happened." Today's best thing could be that you got a promotion or celebrated the birth of a child, of course. But today's best thing could be the way the light shone on the train window. The song you heard in an internet video. A

show you watched. A pastry you ate. A conversation with a stranger.

Today's Yorst Thing Today's Best Thing

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SELF CARE THROUGH CONNECTION In an article on "The Revolutionary Origins of Self-Care," Nicole Stamp writes that our society often presents self care as a means of disengaging, but that systemic oppression cannot be outrun. "Inequality is the root problem we all need to fix, and it would be dangerous to let self-care evolve into a way to ignore it. Our culture is already structured in a way that encourages us to turn inward and away from one another...but research shows that socializing...markedly increases wellbeing. This means that the best self-care might not really be focused on the 'self' at all...true self-care might look like forging human connections, processing and validating our feelings through reciprocal relationships and creating true community with the people around us."

In these isolated days of the pandemic, many of us have become disconnected from our communities. And in the stress of our day-to-day lives, it can be easy to forget that we do have networks of connection and support. Seeing our social connections compiled on one page is a good reminder of where we can keep connections and where we might forge new ones. As you make your lists, it's okay if certain categories have only one name, or are blank. The categories are just to help you brainstorm expansively—everyone's lives, networks, and relationships are different, and list lengths may also vary depending on whether you are an extrovert or introvert.



### SELF CARE THROUGH CONNECTION

BEST FRIENDS	CLOSEST FAMILY MEMBERS	FRIENDS FROM MY HOMETOWN
FRIENDS FROM COLLEGE/EARLY ADULTHOOD	FRIENDS FROM WORK (PAST)	FRIENDS FROM WORK (PRESENT)
SUPPORT TEAM (THERAPIST, SPONSOR, SUPPORT GROUP)	N E I G H B O R S	FRIENDS ON THE INTERNET

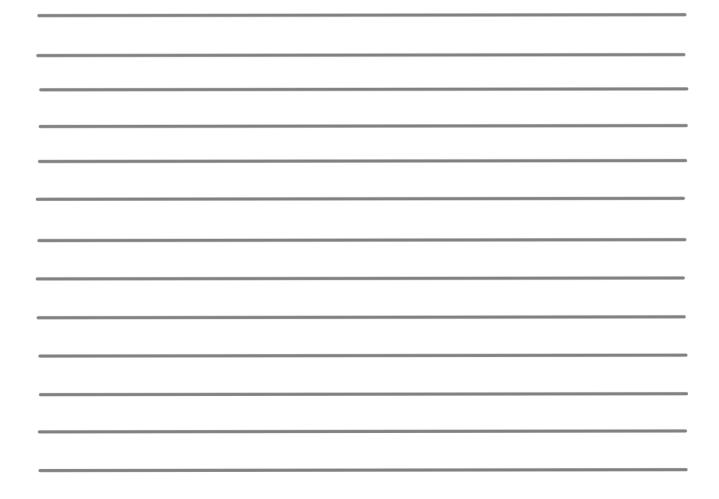
GROUPS/ ORGANIZATIONS WHERE I AM A MEMBER

FRIENDS FROM THOSE GROUPS

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REFLECTION - CONNECTION EXERCISE

Is connection with the people on this list part of your self care practice? Is connection and community a balanced part of your week, or are you mostly striking it out alone? What changes would you like to make? What reconnections? What empty spots on your list would you like to try to fill with new or rekindled relationships? Who on this list helps you to process and validate your experiences?



# RESOURCES

If you enjoyed this workbook, you might enjoy some of our other resources for thinking about self care and introspection. Find art prompts, self-soothing techniques, and more at the links below:

20 Prompts for Art Making: https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/20-promptsfor-art-making

Journal Prompts for Introspection: https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/journalprompts-for-introspection

100 Ways to Self Soothe: https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/100-ways-to-self-soothe

Self Care While Breastfeeding: https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/self-care-while-breastfeeding

Coping Skills for Caregivers: https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/coping-skills-for-caregivers

100 Coping Skills: https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/2015/11/19/100-coping-skills

Self Care for Patients and Medical Caregivers:

https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/self-care-patients-caregivers

How to Be Unapologetic About Your Self Care Practice:

https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/how-to-be-unapologetic-about-your-selfcare-practice

