



# Starts w/ Me

## **SELF CARE AND SELF AWARENESS GUIDE**

Everyday practices to build character improve wellbeing, and promote resilience.

*"You have plenty of courage, I am sure. All you need is confidence in yourself. There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid, and that kind of courage you have in plenty."*

***The Wonderful Wizard of Oz - L. Frank Baum***

**This guide belongs to**

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## INTRODUCTION

The contents of this guide will help you to build character, self-awareness and resilience that will help to provide you with essential life skills and promote good mental health as you mature into adulthood.

What follows is a series of questions that will encourage you to clarify how these qualities influence your daily life and relationships. Life has its ups and downs, the world is not perfect and neither are you. Knowing this is a wonderful thing because it allows us to be less critical and more forgiving to ourselves and others.

The goal of building your emotional wellbeing is **not** to stop difficult thoughts & feelings, make them go away, or only allow good ones. Rather, it is to help you develop the ability to **notice when they arise within you**.

By cultivating these skills you can expand your understanding of life and the inevitable struggles and joys. Remember, if you carry yourself each day with a sense of agency and resilience, you will have one **super-human-power** that you can always count on.

## WHERE TO BEGIN?

### START WITH THE WHY

*My why is, "I don't want to live with addiction and be tormented by my mental health issues. I live by these practices so I can liberate myself, and help others do the same".*

To help us develop the discipline to practice self-care, self-awareness, and wellbeing, we must understand our own Why.

Your why is your underlying motivation for developing and sticking to self-care routines. It's easy to start something that promises to improve your life, but an ongoing practice is what develops self-care, resilience, and an overall state of positive health and wellbeing. Knowing why you practice will help keep you practicing.

**WRITE IT DOWN:** why do I want to develop resilience?

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*"The practice itself has to become the daily embodiment of your vision and contain what you value most deeply."*

**Jon Kabat-Zinn**, *Wherever You Go, There You Are*

## GETTING STARTED

**WRITE IT DOWN** - Start by observing your current state of mind and body.

Did I get a decent sleep last night (am I tired)

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Have I eaten enough healthy food or drank water today?

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What thoughts am I having right now?

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What **body sensations** am I experiencing right now?

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What **feelings** am I experiencing right now?

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## REFERENCE FOR BODY SENSATIONS (possibilities)

Calm	Relaxed	Dull	Empty	Dizzy
Energized	Open	Frozen	Sensitive	Spacey
Warm	Light	Pain	Bruised	Breathless
Cool	Spacious	Blocked	Achy	Electric
Flowing	Knotted	Contracted	Sore	Tingling
Drained	Hot	Heavy	Tense	Nervy

# REFERENCE FOR FEELINGS (possibilities)

<b>SAD</b>	<b>MAD</b>	<b>SCARED</b>	<b>PEACEFUL</b>	<b>POWERFUL</b>	<b>JOYFUL</b>
Lonely	Hurt	Rejected	Content	Hopeful	Excited
Guilty	Angry	Confused	Loving	Proud	Sexy
Ashamed	Hateful	Helpless	Trusting	Respected	Creative
Inferior	Critical	Insecure	Nurturing	Important	Aware
Stupid	Selfish	Anxious	Thankful	Valuable	Amused
Miserable	Jealous	Weak	Relaxed	Confident	Delighted
Apathetic	Irritated	Discouraged	Sentimental	Intelligent	Fascinated

Source: Dr. Gloria Wilcox

## TAKE NOTICE

### THOUGHTS

**What you are thinking and the nature of your thoughts.**

*E.g. negative, hopeful, grandiose*

### BEHAVIOURS

**Actions—what you are doing or not doing.**

*E.g. Getting exercise, resting, substance use*

### FEELINGS

**The emotions you're experiencing right now.**

*E.g. sad, nervous, excited, confident*

### PHYSICAL STATE

**Changes in or current state of your physical body.**

*E.g. weight gain or loss, excessive sweating*

## MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT

The **Starts With Me** message is that each of us has the innate capacity for wellbeing. It is our responsibility to do what we can to strengthen it, so we can then share that strength with others. We can't share what we don't have. To embody wellbeing, we must practice taking care of our mind, body, and spirit regularly. Mind, body, and spirit are three terms often used when trying to understand a holistic view of wellness. To embark or continue your journey, it is important to take care of yourself on each of these levels.

Ask yourself the following questions to understand how you might actively take care of your mind, body, and spirit.

## MIND

### WRITE IT DOWN

- What does taking care of my mind look and feel like to me?
- What thoughts and feelings do I have when my mind is being nourished?
- What thoughts and feelings do I have when my mind is being neglected?
- What happens in my life when my mind is being nourished?
- What happens in my life when my mind is being neglected?
- What are the things that pollute my mind?
- Can I identify what it feels like when my mind starts to feel out of balance?

## BODY

### WRITE IT DOWN

- What does taking care of my physical health look like?
- What does neglecting my physical health look like?
- How do I feel when my physical health is being nourished?
- What happens in my life when my physical health is nourished?
- What happens in my life when my physical health is neglected?
- What are the things that get in my way of nurturing my physical health?
- What might I do differently to allow for more nurturing of my physical health?

## SPIRIT

### WRITE IT DOWN

- What does spirit mean to me?
- What does taking care of my spirit look like?
- What happens in my life when my spirit is nourished?
- How do I feel when my spirit is being nourished?
- What happens in my life when my spirit is not nourished?
- What things do I do, or can I do, to nurture my spirit?
- What things do I do to prevent the nurturing of my spirit?



*"Health is a state of complete mental, social and physical well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."*

**World Health Organization**

## DEVELOPING YOUR PRACTICE

Now that you have taken stock of your current state of mind, body, and spirit, you can actively nurture and nourish them. The following simple activities are a good place to start.

### GRATITUDE

#### WRITE IT DOWN

- What are three things I am grateful for today?
- Can I describe two moments in my day when I could've nurtured gratitude?
- What feelings and thoughts do I have when I'm experiencing gratitude?
- What can I do to have more experiences like these?
- What does it look like when I'm not practicing gratitude?
- What feelings and thoughts do I have when I'm not practicing gratitude?

### NURTURING SELF-COMPASSION

#### WRITE IT DOWN

- List two things you like about yourself today.
- List two things you did recently that you would admire in other people.
- What does it look like in my life when I'm being kind, patient and forgiving to myself?
- What feelings and thoughts do I have when I'm being compassionate toward myself?
- What can I do to have more experiences like that?
- What does it look like when I'm not being kind to myself? How does it feel?
- What are the thoughts that get in my way of being kind and compassionate to myself?
- How might I change those thoughts?
- Can I forgive myself for something I did today that I'm not happy with?





## ENJOYABLE MOMENTS

### WRITE IT DOWN

- What was the moment I enjoyed most today?
- Was I aware of the enjoyable moment while it was happening?
- What thoughts and feelings was I experiencing at the time?
- What can I practice to have more moments like this?
- What gets in my way of opening to these experiences?

## STRESSFUL MOMENTS

### WRITE IT DOWN

- What was the moment that was most stressful or difficult for me today?
- Was I aware that I was under stress while it was happening?
- What thoughts and feelings was I experiencing at the time?
- How might I reduce the frequency of these moments?
- How do I know I am managing my stress in healthy ways?
- How do I know I am managing my stress in unhealthy ways?
- How do I feel when I know I am managing my stress as best I can?

## SUPPORT NETWORKS

Having support from friends, family, teachers and coaches can help you maintain your practice and find support when you need it most.

### WRITE IT DOWN

- Who do I like to reach out to when I'm looking for support?
- If I don't have people to reach out to, where can I start?
- Who are the people in my life who don't support my wellbeing?
- Where can I find groups of people or activities to strengthen my support networks?
- How do I feel when I know I can count on someone to help me?
- How do I feel when I know I am helping someone else?



## GOALS

### WRITE IT DOWN

Identify some wellbeing goals you'd like to achieve, to establish your practice. Some ideas include:

- I'd like to meditate 5 days a week for at least 5 minutes per day.
- I'd like to exercise 3 days a week for 30 minutes.
- I'd like to read for 20 minutes, 5 days a week, before I go to bed.
- I'd like to turn off my phone at 9pm so I can wind down before bed.
- I'd like to get involved in a team sport.
- I'd like to spend more time with my friends and family.
- I'd like to improve my diet.

## ROLE MODELS

### WRITE IT DOWN

Who do you admire, respect, think is amazing and why?

Write down the **QUALITIES** that you admire in your role models, **NOT** what they possess or the roles they fill. ie: famous actors, athletes, musicians, historical figures. Learning to emulate and work towards the qualities that exist in others and that we can develop within ourselves is one way to develop essential life skills that help keep us focused on what is most helpful to our mental health and wellbeing.

## SPECIAL THANKS

I want to express my gratitude to all the teachers, students, friends and family who've helped me on my journey. This guide is inspired by the teachings of Dr. Heidi Walk. I have learned so much from her and her teachings.

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## PLEASE SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH US







