30-DAY SURVIVAL AND WELLBEING PLAN

for changemakers in high stress times
MAKE A PLAN TO CENTER YOUR WELL-BEING. NO MATTER WHAT.

Dear Changemaker,

You are beloved and valuable. You are enough. If there’s nothing else you take from this guide, may it be these words.

But sometimes it takes more than words to help us put into place the realities that will support our survival and wellbeing, especially in deeply stressful times and circumstances.

This is a guide intended for social justice changemakers to help you create the conditions, reminders and practices that can support you in the times of intensity, whether it’s a personal or work crisis, escalation in a community organizing campaign or election. Or, simply being alive in the midst of a world now shaped by pandemic on top of violence of so many kinds.

You can use these prompts for reflection and planning on your own, or in a group with community. We have created it in preparation for the 2020 Election, but hope it can be of use in any and all times.

Organizers, activists, faith leaders, and leaders of moral courage; you are our people. And as in the words of the song by Hezekiah Walker, we need you to survive.

With our love,
Faith Matters Network | November 2020
CARING FOR MYSELF IS NOT SELF-INDULGENCE. IT IS SELF-PRESERVATION, AND THAT IS AN ACT OF POLITICAL WARFARE.

AUDRE LORDE
“We are taught to plan our lives but we are not taught to plan our joy.”
—Michelle Obama

Name what helps when things are rough or high stress.

Make a list of tools and practices that have helped you get through times of stress and crisis. Stick with the ones that are most healthy for you. List as many as you can, even if you haven’t done them in a while, or which you see others doing that you want to try. Let your imagination get as big as possible. For a deeper dive into crisis planning with a special focus on the intersection of mental health and oppression, check out Mad Maps from Fireweed Collective (link in additional resources).

Schedule in what helps.

Look at your list of what helps. Choose 3 practices that spark the most joy for you (shout out to Marie Kondo!). Maybe you listed 10 ideas, but it’s hard to incorporate 10 new practices or patterns into your life in realistic ways. Choosing three will help you to actually make it happen. Look for the three you think make the most impact at this season in your life, and also are realistic. You can try some more things next month!

Example 3 point list: 1. Play basketball twice a month 2. Breaks from digital devices every Saturday 3. Call best friend on Wednesday nights

I am better in stressful times when I...

Here’s when I’ll do those things: ____________
Schedule your off time, now.

Look ahead in your calendar for days and other chunks of time (including during the day) when you will be truly taking off from your social change work, in which you can be as restful as possible. No extra meetings or new projects or catch-up work. Off means off. You may need to change your expectations of what you can get done in your work, sizing down your work plans accordingly. Do this even when - and in fact, especially when it feels impossible to take time off because things are so urgent. This goes for folks who are volunteer activists, spiritual and community leaders, as well as people who are paid for their time.

Many of the world’s faith and wisdom traditions treat rest as sacred. It helps our brains and bodies bounce back from activity. It gives us the space to grow and cultivate wisdom.

Prepare your ‘no.’

Write down a phrase that feels good to you that will help you to say no to a demand on you that is beyond your boundaries or bandwidth. Keep this on a note on your phone or on a sticky on your computer / device.

Example "No": “Thanks for asking. That’s not something I can do right now, but I have faith that you’ll find the right person and hope it goes well. (or add, Here’s someone I recommend... )

Here’s the time I’ll be truly off: ___________

I’ll say no, even if I want to do something, with these words...
Make space for you within your living space.

As you are able, prepare a space in your living space that feels good to you, whether for work, play, or ritual / centering, and try to keep it that way. Maybe if it’s just a small corner.

Set up your basic needs in advance.

So that you don’t have to think of them in the midst of a busy schedule or a crisis, carve out some time at the start of the month to set yourself up with some of your basic needs as you are able. This might look like stocking up on your most fave healthy foods, or gauging who in your community can make you dinner or order you food in tough times.

It may be tending to things like getting prescriptions filled. Getting pet food. Scheduling out doctors, wellness, or therapy appointments now. Tending to bills or logistics that might otherwise go by the wayside. Make sure essential things you need on a daily basis, that you may lose track of, are easy to find. Anything that needs to get done so that they are not hanging above your head when you’re already under pressure, or that might cause further problems down the line.

Tip: Instead of working from obligation or paranoia, approach these tasks from a place of love for your future self.

“Home is where our story begins.” — anonymous

Here’s what I can change in my living space for my well-being: ____________

What tasks can I take care of now that future me will love me for?
**BUILD UP YOUR SQUAD**

“We need to learn how to practice love such that care—for ourselves and others—is understood as political resistance.” —adrienne maree brown

Make asks of others to support you.

We are interdependent beings. Write down names of people you will reach out to for support when you need it this month. Make an ask now of them to be there for you. Looking at your choices from the prompts above, think on what you can ask of friends, loved ones, family and chosen family, organizing comrades, or work colleagues to support your plan for wellbeing and survival. Continuing the example, maybe it’s signing up for the dance class with a friend. Or telling people that you won’t be looking at your phone in a certain time you’ve planned to be off digital devices. Make a commitment to make these asks within the coming days while they are fresh on your mind.

Move care forward.

None of us are safe and well until all of us are safe and well. As part of your own wellbeing think about one thing you might do for a friend or beloved that makes it easier for them to survive and be well. This might be financial - Can you pay part of a friend’s therapy bill or send a gift card or Venmo for a community yoga class? Or at no cost at all - like being proactive to offer to go on a walk with a friend, or scheduling in reminders to check in with someone in your life who has gone through a loss or another big challenge. When we are strategic in our care for ourselves first, we can naturally extend out more care to others without leaving ourselves at a deficit.

Here’s who I can call on for support: ____________

I can show up for someone else in their own survival by...
additional resources

The Not-To-Do List
https://etsy.me/2GbGyiT

The Nap Ministry
https://thenapministry.wordpress.com/

Madness & Oppression: Paths to Personal Transformation and Collective Liberation
https://fireweedcollective.org/fireweed-publications/

Affirmation Pod
affirmationpod.com
Faith Matters Network is a womanist-led organization focused on personal and social transformation.

www.faithmattersnetwork.org