

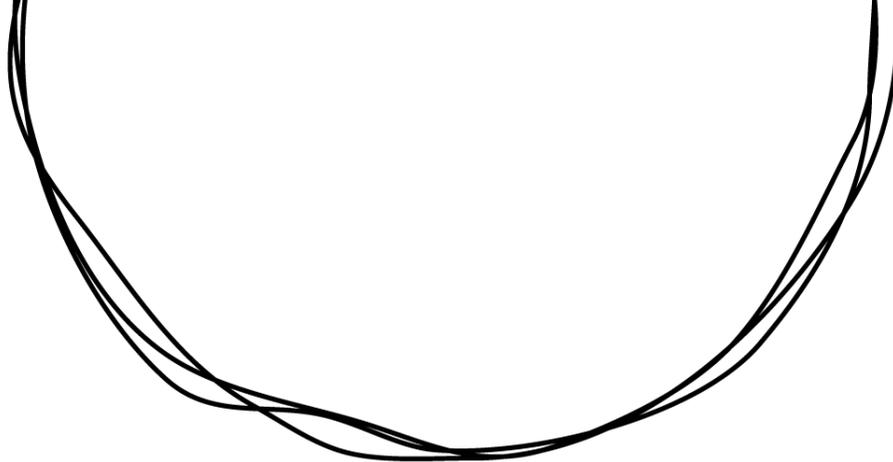
# *Self-Care Workbook*

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.



## 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 \_\_\_\_\_



## 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?

### REST

Take a nap  
Lie down & listen to  
music or a podcast  
Take a bath  
Watch a show  
Go to bed early  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CREATE

Journal  
Make art  
Take photos  
Try a craft  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MOVE

Take a walk outdoors  
Go to the gym  
Take an exercise class  
Stretch or do yoga  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CARE

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  
\_\_\_\_\_

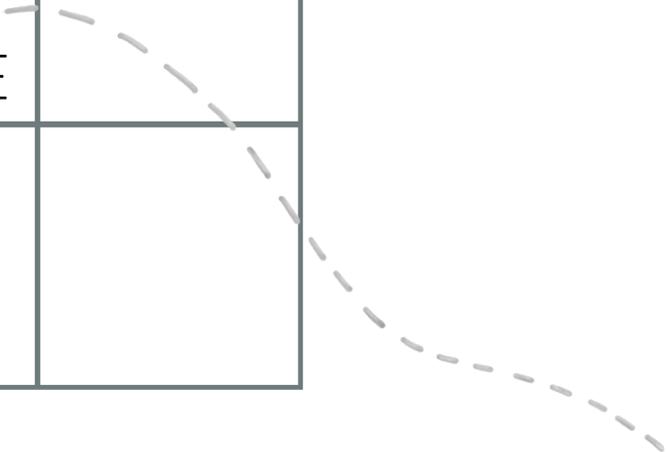
# PROMPT: SELF CARE AS SELF PRESERVATION

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

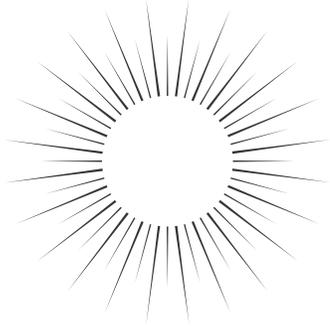
# SELF CARE AS SELF PRESERVATION

	YOU ARE HERE	



P R O M P T : A D A Y O F S E L F C A R E

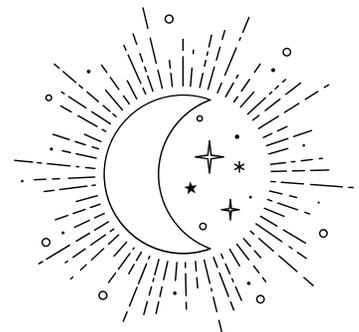
Which categories of self care leave you feeling the most restored? If you could create a formula for a full day of self care, how would it look? Use the ideas from the different self-care categories as building blocks to map out a schedule for what that day might look like.



*morning*

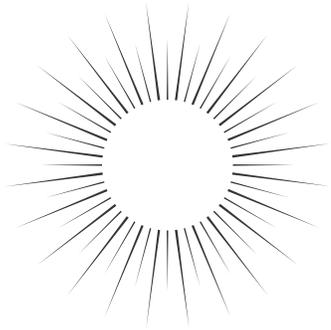
*noon*

*evening*





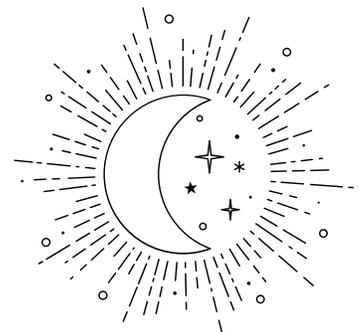
Next think about your actual normal day with all of your real obligations. Where might there be room to build in self care? Consider small windows (15 minutes), piggybacking self care on other habits, and the possibility of micro self care rituals (short breaks to go outside, for example).



*morning*

*noon*

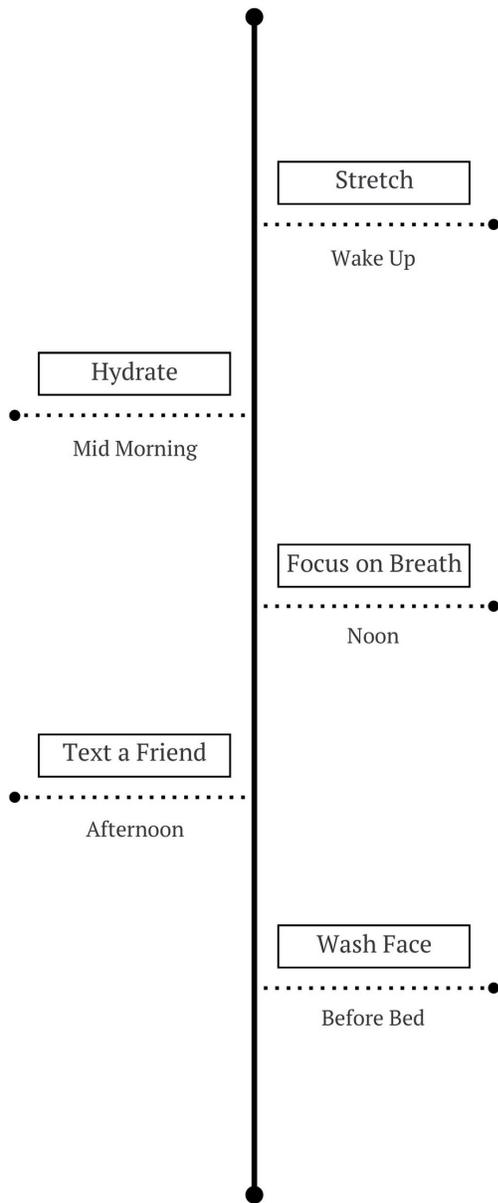
*evening*



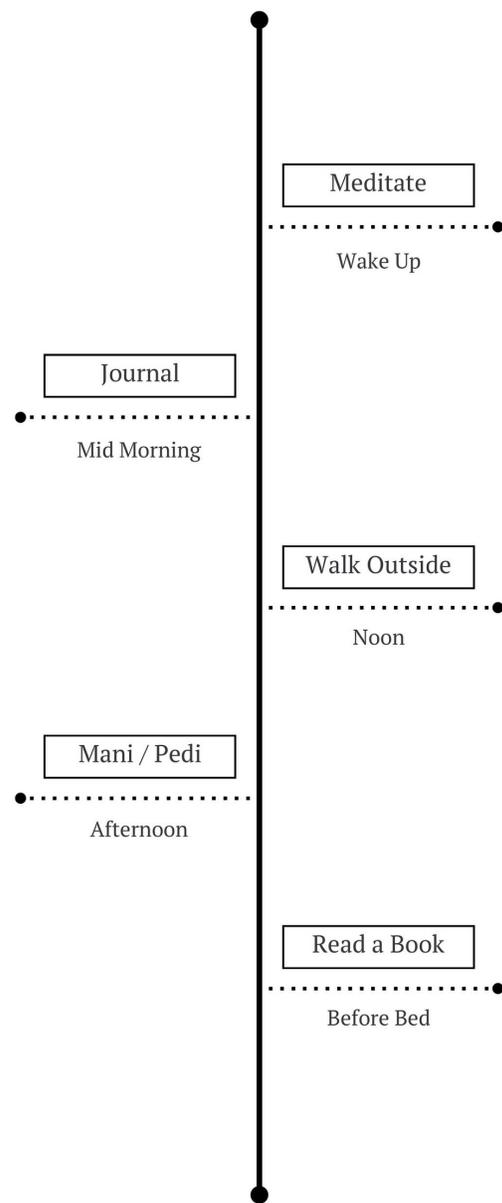
# SELF CARE FOR SCALE

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?

## MINI SELF CARE ROUTINE



## MEGA SELF CARE ROUTINE



## 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.

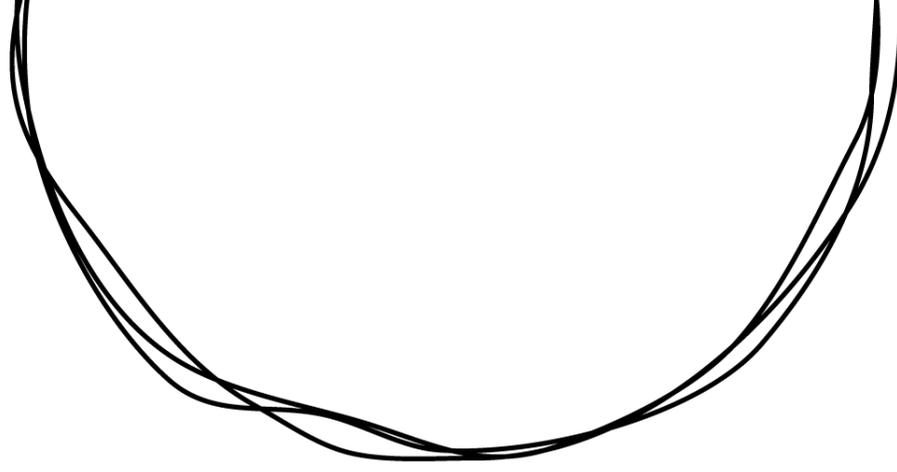










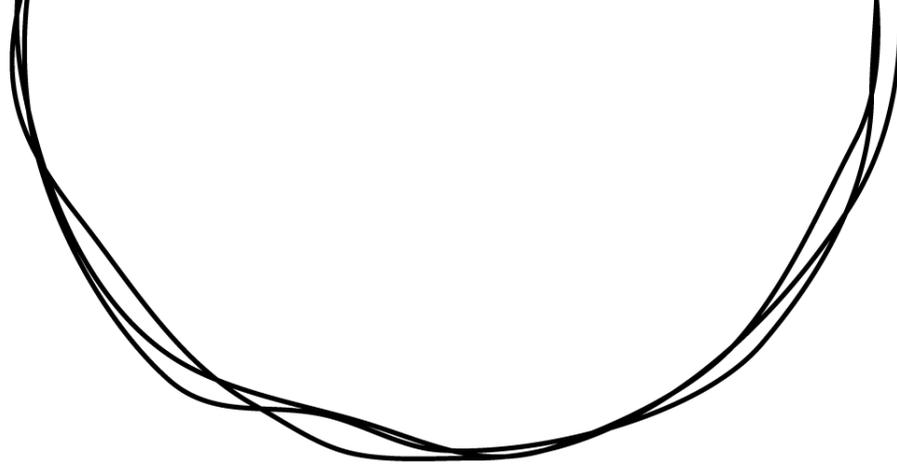


## DAY 3 - FOUR SQUARE JOURNALING

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.

Date:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Did</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li><li>5.</li><li>6.</li><li>7.</li></ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Saw</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li><li>5.</li><li>6.</li><li>7.</li></ol>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Heard</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Draw</i></p>



## DAY 4 - ONE LINE A DAY

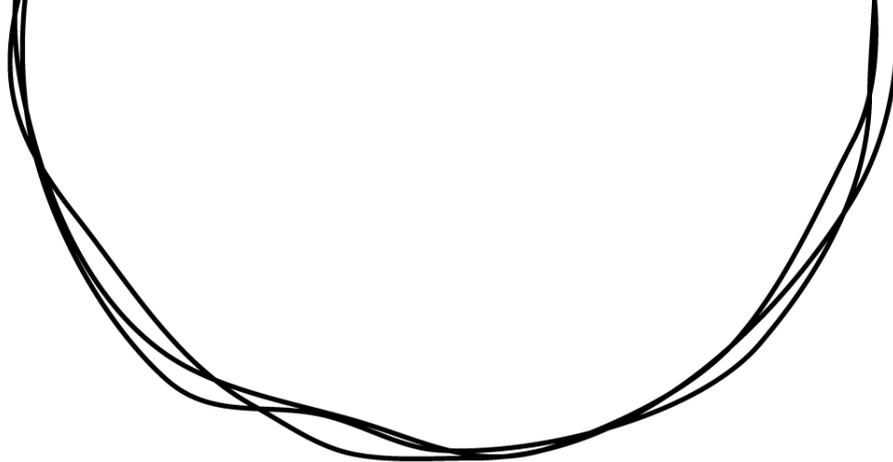
Journaling by writing only one line a day allows you to distill things completely.

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 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.



## 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 well-being. 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

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CLOSEST FAMILY  
MEMBERS

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FRIENDS FROM  
MY HOMETOWN

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FRIENDS FROM  
COLLEGE/EARLY  
ADULTHOOD

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FRIENDS FROM  
WORK (PAST)

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---

FRIENDS FROM  
WORK (PRESENT)

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SUPPORT TEAM  
(THERAPIST,  
SPONSOR,  
SUPPORT GROUP)

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---

NEIGHBORS

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---

FRIENDS ON THE  
INTERNET

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GROUPS/  
ORGANIZATIONS  
WHERE I AM A  
MEMBER

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FRIENDS FROM  
THOSE GROUPS

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## 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-prompts-for-art-making>

Journal Prompts for Introspection: <https://alexandriaarttherapy.com/blog/journal-prompts-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-self-care-practice>

