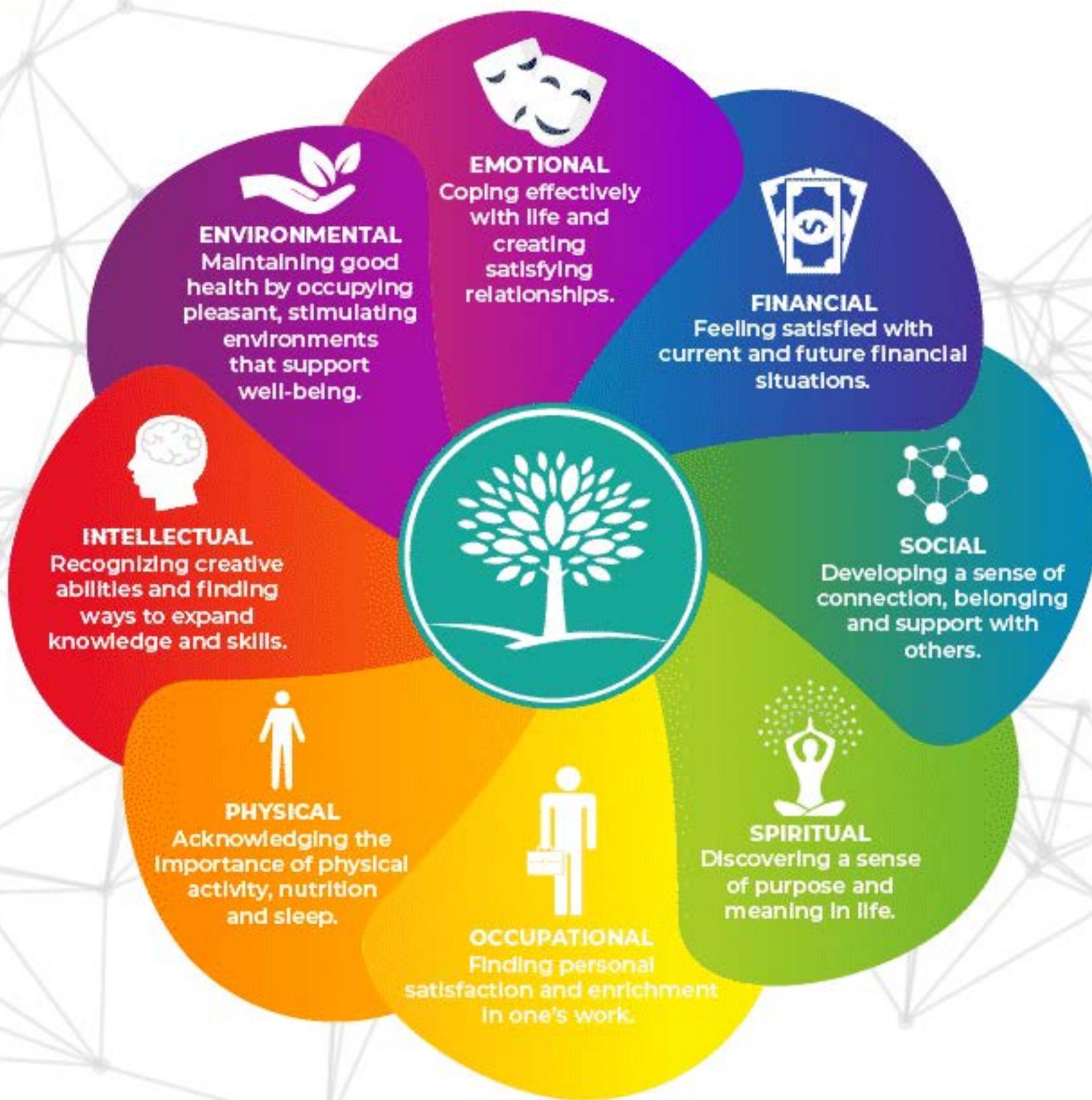




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# 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS



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# 101 Self-Care Suggestions for When It All Feels Like Too Much



Annie Wright, LMFT

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April 4, 2016

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## Editor's Note

Need to take your mind off what you're going through? [Join the Distract Me group on The Mighty.](#)

I think that, for most of us, there are times in life when it all just feel like Too Much.

There may be some days, weeks, months, maybe even years when – for whatever reason – just getting through the day, or going to work, or putting one foot in front of the other feels hard. Really, really hard.

Maybe it's because you're wrestling with anxiety, depression or some other mental illness. Maybe it's because you've had your heart broken. Maybe you've gone through a physical or emotional trauma. Maybe you're deeply grieving. Or maybe there's no easily understood reason for why you're feeling bad.

**Whatever the case, I want you to know that it's OK if you're going through a tough time.** This doesn't make you any less lovable, worthy or capable. This just means you're human.

**Being a human can be a messy, hard, confusing, painful experience sometimes.**

So if you or someone you love is going through one of these tough times right now, a time where it all just feels like too much, I want to offer up 101 suggestions for self-care to help you or your loved one get through this time.

1. Have a good, long, body-shaking cry.
2. Call a trusted friend or family member and talk it out.
3. Call in sick. Take comp time if you can. Take a mental health day.
4. Say *no* to extra obligations, chores, or anything that pulls on your precious self-care time.
5. Book a session (or more!) with your therapist.
6. Dial down your expectations of yourself at this time. When you're going through life's tough times, I invite you to soften your expectations of yourself and others.
7. Tuck yourself into bed early with a good book and clean sheets.
8. Watch a comforting/silly/funny/lighthearted TV show or movie. ("[Parks and Recreation](#)," anyone?)
9. Reread your favorite picture and chapter books from childhood.
10. Ask for some love and tenderness from your friends on social media. Let them comment on your post and remind you that you're loved.
11. [Look at some some really gorgeous pieces of art.](#)

12. Watch Youtube videos of [Ellen DeGeneres and the adorable kids](#) she has on her show.

13. [Look at faith-in-humanity-restoring lists from Buzzfeed.](#)

14. *Ask for help.* From whoever you need it – your boss, your doctor, your partner, your therapist, your mom. Let people know you need some help.

15. Wrap yourself up in a cozy fleece blanket and sip a cup of hot tea.

16. *Breathe.* Deeply. Slowly. Four counts in. Six counts out.

17. *Hydrate.* Have you had enough water today?

18. *Eat.* Have you eaten something healthy and nourishing today?

19. *Sleep.* Have you slept 7-9 hours? Is it time for some rest?

20. *Shower.* Then dry your hair and put on clothes that make you feel good.

21. Go outside and be in the sunshine.

22. Move your body gently in ways that feel good. Maybe aim for 30 minutes. Or 10 if 30 feels like too much.

23. Read a story (or stories) of people who overcame adversity or maybe dealt with mental illness, too. ([I personally admire JK Rowling's story.](#))

24. [Go to a 12-Step meeting.](#) Or any group meeting where support is offered. Check out church listings, hospital listings, school listings for examples.

25. If you suspect something may be physiologically off with you, go see your doctor and/or psychiatrist and talk to them. Medication might help you at this time and they can assist you in assessing this.

26. Take a long, hot bath, light a candle and pamper yourself.
27. [Read these inspirational quotes.](#)
28. Cuddle someone or something. Your partner. A pillow. Your friend's dog.
29. Read past emails/postcards/letters etc. from friends and family reminding you of happier times.
30. Knit. Sculpt. Bake. Engage your hands.
31. Exhaust yourself physically – running, yoga, swimming, whatever helps you feel fatigued.
32. Write it out. Free form in a journal or a Google doc. Get it all out and *vent*.
33. Create a plan if you're feeling overwhelmed. List out what you need to do next to tackle and address whatever you're facing. Chunk it down into manageable and understandable pieces.
34. *Remember*: You only have to get through the next five minutes. Then the next five. And so on.
35. Take five minutes to meditate.
36. Write out a list of 25 Reasons Why You'll Be OK.
37. Write out a list of 25 Examples of Things You've Overcome or Accomplished.
38. Write out a list of 25 Reasons Why You're a Good, Lovable Person.
39. Write out a list of 25 Things That Make Your Life Beautiful.

40. Sniff some scents that bring you joy or remind you of happier times.
41. Ask for support from friends and family via text if voice-to-voice contact feels like too much. Ask them to check in with you via text daily/weekly. Whatever you need.
42. Lay down on the ground. Let the earth/floor hold you. You don't have to hold it all on your own.
43. Clean up a corner of a room of your house. Sometimes tidying up can help calm our minds.
44. Ask yourself: What's my next most immediate priority? Do that. Then ask the question again.
45. Read some poetry. [Rumi](#), [Hafiz](#), [Mary Oliver](#) are all excellent.
46. Take a tech break. Delete or deactivate social media if it feels too triggering right now.
47. Or maybe get on tech. If you've been isolating maybe even interacting with friends and family online might feel good.
48. Go out in public and be around others. You don't have to engage. But maybe go sit in a coffee shop or on a bench at a museum and soak up the humanity around you.
49. Or if you're feeling too saturated with contact, go home. Cancel plans and tend to the introverted parts of yourself.
50. Ask friends and family to remind you that things will be OK and that what you're feeling is temporary.

51. Put up some Christmas lights in your bedroom. They often make things more magical.

52. Spend a little money and treat yourself to some self-care and comfort. Maybe take a taxi versus the bus. Buy your lunch instead of forcing yourself to pack it. Buy some flowers that delight you.

53. *Make art.* Scribble with crayons. Splash some watercolors. Paint a rock. Whatever. Just create something.

54. Go wander around outside in your neighborhood and take a look at all the lovely houses and the way people decorate their gardens. Delight in the diversity of design.

55. Go visit or volunteer at your local animal rescue. Pet some animals.

56. Look at photos of people you love. Set them as the wallpaper of your phone or laptop.

57. Create and listen to a playlist of songs that remind you of happier times.

58. Read some spiritual literature.

59. Scream, pound pillows, tear up paper, shake your body to move the energy out.

60. Eat your favorite, most comforting foods.

61. [Watch old Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood videos online.](#)

62. Turn off the lights, sit down, stare into space and do absolutely nothing.

63. Pick one or two things that feel like progress and do them. Make your bed. Put away the dishes. Return an email.

64. Go to a church or spiritual community service. Sit among others and absorb any guidance or grace that feels good to you.

65. Allow yourself to fantasize about what you're hoping or longing for. There are clues and energy in your reveries and daydreams that are worth paying attention to.

66. [Watch Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response videos](#) to help you calm down and fall asleep at night.

67. Listen to [monks chanting](#), [singing Tibetan bowls](#) or [nature sounds](#) to help soothe you.

68. [Color in some adult coloring books](#).

69. Revisit an old hobby. Even if it feels a little forced, try your hand at things you used to enjoy and see what comes up for you.

70. Go to the ocean. [Soak up the negative ions](#).

71. Go to the mountains. Absorb the strength and security of them.

72. Go to the forest. Drink in the shelter, life and sacredness of the trees.

73. Put down the personal help books and pick up some good old fashioned fiction.

74. Remember: Your only job right now is to put one foot in front of the other.

75. Allow and feel and express your feelings – all of them! – safely and appropriately. [Seek out help if you need support in this](#).

76. Listen to sad songs or watch sad movies if you need a good cry. (“[Steel Magnolias](#)”, anyone?)

77. Dance around wildly to your favorite, most cheesy songs from your high school years.

78. Put your hands in dirt. If you have a garden, go garden. If you have some indoor plants, tend to them. If you don't have plants or a garden, go outside. Go to a local nursery and touch and smell all the gorgeous plants.

79. If you want to stay in bed all day watching Netflix, do it. Indulge.

80. Watch or listen to some comedy shows or goofy podcasts.

81. Look for and Google up examples of people who have gone through and made it through what you're currently facing. Seek out models of inspiration.

82. Get expert help with whatever you need. Whether that's through therapy, psychiatry, a lawyer, clergy, let those trained to support you do it.

83. Educate yourself about what you're going through. Learn about what you're facing, what you can expect to feel, and how you can support yourself in this place.

84. Establish a routine and stick to it. Routines can bring so much comfort and grounding in times of life that feel chaotic or out of control.

85. Do some hardcore nesting and make your home or [bedroom as cozy and beautiful and comforting as possible](#).

86. Get up early and watch a sunrise.

87. Go outside and set up a chair and watch the sunset.

88. Make your own list of self-soothing activities that engage all five of your senses.

89. Develop a supportive morning ritual for yourself.
90. Develop a relaxing evening ritual for yourself.
91. Join a support group for people who are going through what you're going through. Check out the listings at local hospitals, libraries, churches, and universities to see what's out there.
92. Volunteer at a local shelter or hospital or nursing home. Practice being of service to others who may also be going through a tough time.
93. Accompany a friend or family member to something. Even if it's just keeping them company while they run errands, sometimes this kind of contact can feel like good self-care.
94. Take your dog for a walk. Or borrow a friend's dog and take them for a walk.
95. [Challenge your negative thinking.](#)
96. Practice [grounding, relaxation techniques.](#)
97. Do something spontaneous. Walk or drive a different way to work. Order something new off the menu. [Listen to a Spotify playlist of new songs.](#)
98. Work with your doctor, naturopath or nutritionist to develop a physical exercise plan and food plan that will be supportive to whatever you're facing right now.
99. Pray. Meditate. Write a letter to God/The Universe/Source/Your Higher Self, whatever you believe in.
100. As much as you can, please try and trust the process.

101. Finally, please remember, what you're going through right now is temporary. It may not feel like that from inside the tough time you're in, but this too shall pass and you will feel different again someday. If you can't have faith in that, let me hold the hope for you.

I hope you found this list of self-care suggestions helpful in some way. **But please remember, by no means is this list exhaustive nor will every item on this list possibly feel good and right for you.** This list is not meant to be prescriptive, nor do I mean to imply you need to do all or any of these things to take good care of yourself. You are the expert of your own experience and I trust that you know what's best for you.

Really, this list is really just a starting point meant to catalyze your own thinking about how you can best take care of yourself during life's tough times and to spark your curiosity and interest in strengthening your self-care now and ongoing. Also, my hope is that in reading this you're also hearing me say how normal and natural it is to struggle and to have these tough, hard times. It's part of being human. You're not alone in this.

But I have to say: The suggestions in this list are in no way a substitute for care or advice from a licensed mental health care clinician. These are self-care coaching suggestions, not therapeutic advice. Moreover, if you feel suicidal or find yourself having suicidal ideations, please call the 24/7 [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) at 1 (800) 273-8255.

**Now I'd love to hear from you in the comments below: What self-care techniques have really supported you when going through life's tough times? Let us know one or more ideas, tools or activities that have brought you relief and comfort so that others can benefit from your experience and wisdom.**

Until next time, take very good care of yourself.

Warmly, Annie

This piece was originally published on [Annie Wright Psychotherapy](#).

## *emPower Wellness Series – 2019*

**to promote empowerment and independent living**

# 100 Ways To Feel Better Right Now

a fun light-hearted yet  
purposeful workshop

- ✓ simple solutions
- ✓ provides a list that can possibly be used as a great stepping stone to pain/mood management



Facilitator: Dave Thomson

Date: Feb 28, 2019 (Thursday)

Time: 4 – 5:30 pm

Venue: RCD (#842-5300 No. 3 Rd, Richmond) in Lansdowne Centre

Register: 604-232-2404 / [dave@rcdrichmond.org](mailto:dave@rcdrichmond.org)

# **“FINDING YOUR HAPPY PLACE”**

## **SESSION COMPANION MATERIAL**

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*I hope you enjoyed the session and are having a good time attending this conference.*

*Here are some more general tips and for those living in Richmond I have listed some of my favourite; “happy places”.*

### **GENERAL TIPS:**

- It should feel safe and secure.
- Be comfortable
- Try to have a place where the temperature will not change rapidly due to things like wind direction and the movement of the sun.
- Look for places with focus points such as a garden, body of water or a water feature.
- The place does not have to be empty of people. If you have identified certain things you enjoy make sure they are there. This would be things like the sound of water, children playing or whatever you find relaxing.

## **HAPPY PLACES in RICHMOND:**

- The Richmond Nature Park
- The Richmond Oval
- The Richmond City Hall
- The grounds around the new “Active Living Centre” Minrou Park.
- The raised lookout platform at Moncton Street and #1 Road.
- The River Lookout at River Road and #4 Road.
- Especially on the weekends the office building space around #6 Road and between Cambie and West Minister Roads. Many of the offices around this area have benches and some have fountains.
- At Garden City Road and Alderbridge Road . If you go up to the top of the parking structure beside the Marshals department store. The view from there is very good.

Thank You and Enjoy



**FINDING YOUR HAPPY PLACE  
SESSION COMPANION SLIDES**



## Divine design

How to set up your own sacred space

**SET AN INTENTION** Close your eyes and think about your intention for creating an altar. Maybe it's to inspire you creatively, or to express gratitude. It could be for somebody (including yourself) who needs healing or for someone you're having a hard time with. The most common reason is simply to create a sacred space that reflects back the energy of your yoga and meditation practice. "The first thing that pops into your head is the right one," Brower says.

**FIND SPACE** Next, choose a place for your altar, ideally somewhere quiet and private. It could just be a corner of your dresser—what imbues an altar with its energy is the spirit you bring to it. Once you choose a spot, consider placing your mat or a pillow in front of it. This delineates the space, setting the altar ever so gently apart from everything else, suggests Brower.



**COLLECT** Place objects on your altar that have special significance or meaning for you. They can be photographs, flowers, images of deities, and even sweets (in the Hindu tradition, food or *prasad* is offered to the deity as an act of devotion before prayer). If you don't feel drawn to a particular deity or spiritual image, don't worry: There are no rules or must-have pieces for an altar. "What is most important is that you choose something you can direct your own devotion toward," Johnson says.

**CHANGE IT UP** Your intention may evolve from day to day or week to week, and your altar can, too. Swap out pictures, replace dried flowers with fresh ones, and continue to add pieces as they come into your life and speak to you.

Lauren Ladoceour is a writer and editor in San Francisco.



Saraswati  
The Essence of the Self  
Knowledge, music, arts, & nature

**THE ART OF FOCUS**

For the mystically inclined, this exquisite Saraswati yantra print by **Melissa Forbes**, a professional artist and yoga teacher, represents the essence of the self, knowledge, music, arts, and nature (\$35, [forbesyantra.com](http://forbesyantra.com)).



**HAVE A SEAT**

Support yourself during practice with this Zafu Statics Meditation Cushion from **Relaxso**, printed on both sides and filled with buckwheat hulls and recycled styrofoam; comes with a carry handle (\$69, [relaxso.com](http://relaxso.com)).

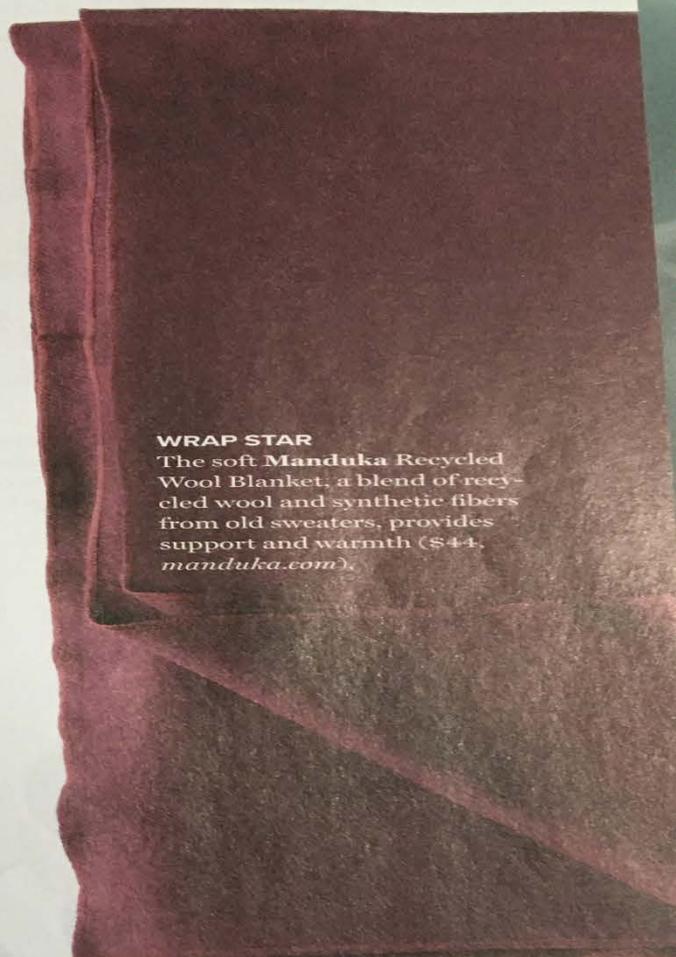
**CLEAR THE AIR**

**Lite and Cycle's Sage Candle**, made of soy wax and Spanish sage essential oil, is designed to enhance concentration and clear stagnant, negative energy. As an added perk, the underside of the etched neo-mandala lid has a textured surface for striking a match (\$62, [liteandcycleshop.com](http://liteandcycleshop.com)).



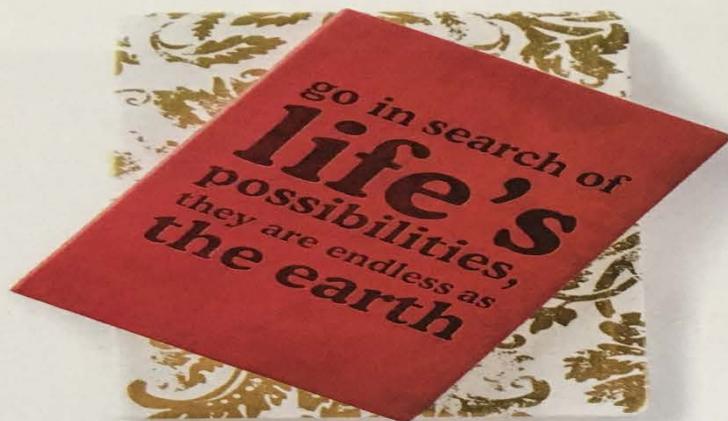
**GOOD CHIMES**

The **Sat Nam Gong Clock Pyramide** will bring you to mindfulness during sitting meditations. Three chimes start the session, and three chimes end it; in between, you can set the timer to a variety of durations (from 20 to 90 minutes). Made of sycamore wood in the proportions of the Pyramid of Cheops. Runs on 4 AA batteries (\$87, [satnam.eu](http://satnam.eu)).



**WRAP STAR**

The soft **Manduka Recycled Wool Blanket**, a blend of recycled wool and synthetic fibers from old sweaters, provides support and warmth (\$44, [manduka.com](http://manduka.com)).



#### THE WRITTEN WORD

Record your thoughts in this faux leather journal from **Eccolo World Traveler**; 256 pages, 5 by 7 inches. Also comes in other cover colors, patterns, and sayings (\$14, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)).

**SMOOTH OPERATOR**  
Soothe your skin and relax before or after meditating with **Ling New York's FeeLING Calm Body Balm Butter**, containing mandarin orange and lavender oils to promote calmness of mind (\$45, [lingskincare.com](http://lingskincare.com)).



#### GET CENTERED

Perfect for the person on your list who is always on the go, the über-portable **Simplysitting Meditation Seat** has a pedestal design that easily breaks down and slides into a sleek merino-wool felt sleeve (**Simplysitting seat**, \$149; sleeve, \$30; [simplysitting.com](http://simplysitting.com)).



#### SCENTS AND SOUND

**Incausa** is a Brooklyn-based company that helps indigenous Brazilians, Peruvians, and Nepalese by creating a thriving marketplace for their goods. The Incausa singing bowl and incense set comes with a hand-hammered fair-trade Thadobati bowl (from Tibet), a stone-ware incense holder, a vegan cold-pressed soap, and a variety of artisanal incenses (\$184, [incausa.co](http://incausa.co)).

## Pleasant Events Diary

Intentionally reflecting on the pleasant events that happen in our lives can bring a level of awareness that helps turn our minds away from negative thoughts, to positive ones. When we note the pleasant feelings, thoughts and sensations we experience in a given moment, we begin to relate to 'unpleasant' experiences differently.

<b>What was the experience?</b>	<b>Were you aware of the pleasant feelings <i>while</i> the event was happening?</b>	<b>How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?</b>	<b>What moods, thoughts, and feelings accompanied this event?</b>	<b>What thoughts are in your mind now as you write about this event?</b>
<b>Monday</b>				
<b>Tuesday</b>				
<b>Wednesday</b>				



<b>Thursday</b>				
<b>Friday</b>				
<b>Saturday</b>				
<b>Sunday</b>				



## Mental & Emotional

### Self-Care

#### Tips to Help Survive Isolation

#### **Introduction;**

Hello my name is Dave Thomson I am the Community Outreach Coordinator here at the Richmond Centre for Disability. I have lived with a serious chronic illness for 20 years. During the first 5 of those years I spent most of it isolated at home. I also worked as a Corrections Officer and was in the Navy as well. So I have seen isolation from many different perspectives.

Most of us are experiencing a drastic change in lifestyle. This can have serious effects on your mental and emotional well-being.

I would like to provide you with some suggestions for mental and emotional self-care during an extended period of isolation.

**Please consider the following tips:**

**1- Try and maintain some or parts of your regular routine.**

*-- Try and start to claw back parts of your former schedule.*

**2-Take a good look at what you've been wearing;**

*– Switch in some brighter clothes into your wardrobe*

*-- Maybe make an effort to get out of the pyjamas/sweatpants and dress as you usually would.*

**3-Make lists of things to do;**

-- Often when life slows down, so does our brain and we start to forget some of the things we should do. You may feel you're definitely not getting as much done as you used to. So by making a list it can often be just an accomplishment to know you're not going to forget about it.

#### **4- Do not neglect your personal hygiene:**

-- Your body and brain are used to doing these same things every day your whole life. Stopping them abruptly will start to have an effect on your mood and motivation.

#### **5-Some days may just end up being a write off:**

-- Try not to be too hard on yourself. Not everyone is cut out for effectively working from home. It will take some time to adjust and to sort out the other distractions in your home and possibly several technical difficulties as well. On days like these or when your motivation is very low try celebrating small victories or breaking tasks down into smaller parts.

**6- If you are finding yourself watching a lot of television try and make a conscious effort to vary the types and topics:**

- Try scenic/scenery channels where they get you to guess the location.
- Maybe try television programs from other countries
- Travel Shows
- In times like this we are often talking about people's behaviour. So maybe watching programs about social experiments and sociology.
- Knowledge, Knowledge, Knowledge

**7. Exercise your brain:**

--You may have found that your memory has been worse during the lockdown. For example: little things like phone numbers or going to a place in your home and then not remembering why you went there. Your brain needs exercise to stay sharp and performing well. Try puzzles, crosswords, video games (in moderation), darts and any other pursuits that need brain power.