

# together ALONE TOOLKIT

A toolkit designed to help you reflect on your own self-care





Photo submitted to *Together, Alone*

***Together, Alone*** is part of **CLiCK Magazine**, an online platform created by **CLiCK** to amplify the voices, needs and experiences of women who sell or exchange sex or images during the coronavirus pandemic. It is a well-being arts project which aimed to work alongside women to build a collective self-care toolkit.

A huge thank you to all the women who took part in the ***Together, Alone*** project, helping to build this toolkit and explore a collective journey into self-care.



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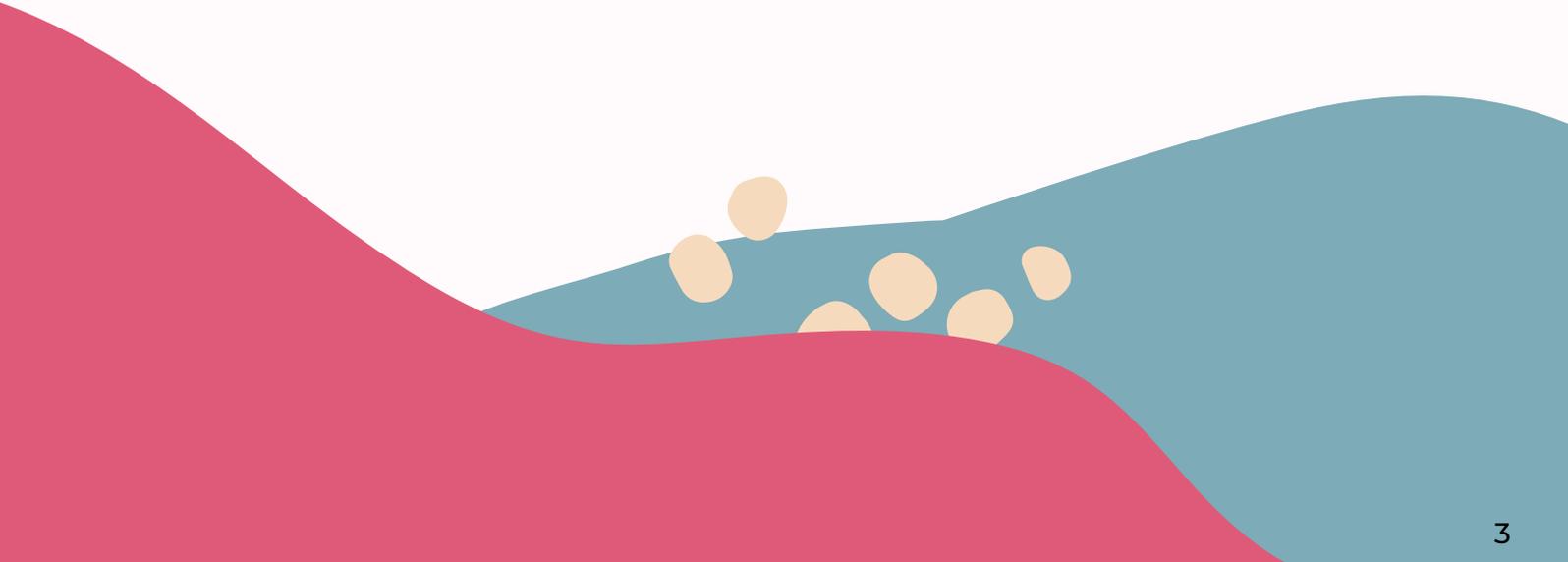
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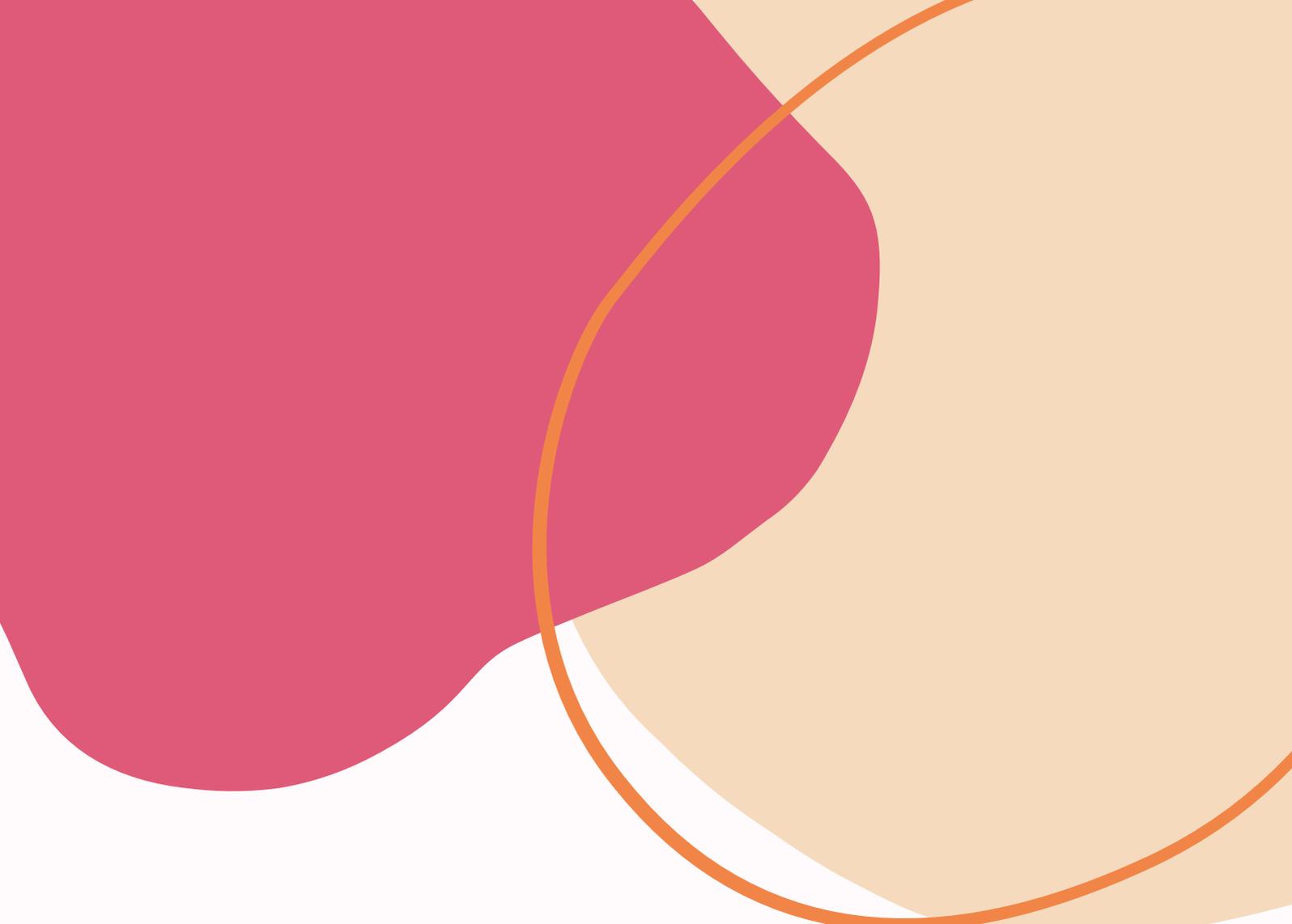


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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Together, Alone* toolkit.

The coronavirus pandemic has been a time of social isolation and loneliness, a time where we have been physically parted from one another. Over the course of the pandemic, *Together, Alone* has sought to foster connection and try to find ways to build our own self-care when it is difficult for so many of us. Over the past 7 months, the *Together, Alone* project has grown from an idea to build a collective self-care toolkit, to a rich exploration of what self-care means to us all right now. We have dug deep into different forms and practices of self-care, working alongside women with lived experience of selling or exchanging sex or images, artists and partner organisations via our blog, artists

masterclasses and gathering of tips and tools. We explored the links between self-care and creativity, looked at what radical self-care means, taking it away from consumerism and back to its roots in activism and collective self-care, as well as sharing helpful tips and self-care practices throughout the process. You can read our blogs, find our masterclasses and see the whole project [here](#).

This toolkit is the culmination of the *Together, Alone* Project. Although the toolkit has been developed alongside women with lived experience of selling or exchanging sex or images, it is designed to help anyone looking to build on their own self-care toolkit right now.

# WHAT HAVE WOMEN TOLD US?

Over the course of the pandemic, women have told us that they don't feel they have the capacity or time for much self-care. Women have faced huge challenges related to selling or exchanging sex or images and the many other roles they have in their lives such as carers, parents and neighbours. Women have been incredibly generous in sharing the self-care tips and tools that they find helpful in the hopes that other women may also find them useful. *Together, Alone* has also acted as a reflective and critical space where we have discussed the limits of self-care and provided a space for calls to action for services to become better resourced, better informed and better at supporting women's mental health and wellbeing. Women aren't in this by themselves – *Together, Alone* is calling for real, measurable change so that women can access appropriate, inclusive, and effective help and support.

**Thank you so much to everyone who contributed their views, experiences, and tips to this toolkit. We truly appreciate everyone's time and energy.**

# WHAT CAN YOU USE THIS TOOLKIT FOR?

This toolkit is designed to help you to reflect on your own self-care: What works? What doesn't work? Does anything need to change?

In the next sections, we look at:

- What self-care is
- How you can use this toolkit in your daily life
- How to get into the self-care mindset
- Creativity and self-care

We'll then look at all the tips and tools that were shared during the course of *Together, Alone*.

Different days sometimes call for different forms of self-care. Feel free to use this toolkit in whatever way suits you – we hope that you find the tips and tools to be flexible and varied, don't feel like you need to stick to a specific set of tools.

Some of the tips and tools are designed to help with recognising our emotions and needs, while others are more practical activities. It may be that you need something quick to help ground you when you're experiencing anxiety, or you may want to explore your self-care through a creative activity. Whatever you choose, try

to remember to treat yourself with self-compassion. Know that you deserve to be looked after and valued, whatever that may look like to you.

Where the tips and tools are activity based, we have tried to make sure they can be done with things you already have in the house to make them as accessible as possible. Sometimes, our chosen self-care activities involve making a purchase, and sometimes spending that money on ourselves can be an enjoyable thing to do, a reminder that we are worth time and care. However, self-care shouldn't need to cost you anything, financially or otherwise, you can look after yourself without feeling you have to fork out for the latest trends or products that are marketed as being the answer to self-care.

**This toolkit doesn't cover every aspect of self-care, the tips and tools are suggestions from people who chose to take part in the project. We would love to hear from you if you have something that isn't here that you feel should be added at: [www.clickmagazine.online/contact](http://www.clickmagazine.online/contact)**



## WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

At times, we can all find our reserves are low. We struggle to find energy, motivation or time for ourselves. The ongoing pandemic has made this more difficult as it impacts on our daily lives and how we connect with the world around us.

Self-care can loosely be thought of as the things we do to help ourselves when we feel like everything is overwhelming. It is a belief that we are important, even when our own internal voices, or even external pressures - like messages we receive daily from the media – try to tell us we are not. It's being allowed space and time to recharge our power, to know we are enough and that we deserve energy, effort, joy and rest. It's not a one-size fits all approach. It's about finding ways to

understand our value and build our own set of tools to help with this.

The roots of self-care are political, with activists such as Audre Lorde coining the phrase as a way of looking after themselves in times of hardship and oppression. We have found that self-care has moved away from this in recent times and thanks to consumerism and capitalism, it has turned into something that costs money and only counts if it's posted on social media. But radical self-care can still be an act of resistance when times are tough, just like they are right now for so many of us. What radical self-care means is that we deserve to top up our own cups, even if it feels like the world wants to empty them for us.

As Audre Lorde said:

***Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.***

Self-care doesn't have to be explicitly political for it to be "self-care" though! Just taking some time to pay attention to yourself and your needs is really important if you can get the chance to.

We hope that this toolkit can provide you with some ideas and space to top-up your cup. However, we also know that what works for one woman, may really not be another woman's cup of tea - it's about building our own toolkits that work for us. As one woman told us:

***Really do whatever makes you feel more like you. It's about letting go of the guilt. If the way you get through the pandemic is to wrap yourself in a duvet and find a whole new genre of favourite films or whether it's going for a two hour run round the park – there is really no right way to support your own mental health. My advice really would be to try and keep in touch with the things you know make you feel good.***

Self-care isn't just about activities or exercises, it's also about finding ways to be more in touch with your emotions, needs and boundaries, and finding ways that work for us as individuals to build our resilience around stresses and worries. It's about finding what makes you feel good and feel more like you.

# GETTING INTO A SELF-CARE MINDSET

You may already have your own self-care toolkit that you've built up over time. If you don't feel you have one, you still have more strength and spirit than you know. We all need to start from somewhere and that baseline will be different for everyone. Whether you're building your toolkit for the first time or expanding on an existing one, we hope this resource will provide you with a space to reflect on your own skills and the things you enjoy.

An openness to believing that you are worth looking after is a good starting point in your self-care journey. Even if you don't believe that now, your own journey can help you to be kinder to yourself. To begin this, try speaking to yourself as you would speak to someone you really care about. Offer yourself the same care, benefit of the doubt and kindness. We can all give ourselves a hard time, but we don't always deserve it.

It's also helpful to feel able to allow yourself time for self-care. We know how hard it is to both find and allow yourself time and space, so some of our tips are things that can be done quickly - perhaps you could start with shorter tips and build up to allowing yourself more time. Why not try and set aside 5 minutes just before you go to bed, or 5 minutes after putting the kids down? Tell yourself that you need and deserve this space.

# CREATIVITY AND SELF-CARE

Many people use creative things like painting, drawing, sculpture, writing and photography to help with self-care, with some people getting into a mindful “flow” state while they work. This can help people take their minds off worries, reflect on how they are feeling and process emotions, as well as provide a pleasant way to spend some time. Being creative isn’t always about producing something tangible – creativity can be just as much about enjoying the process and the effect that this has on you.

A lot of people worry that you need to be artistically talented or gifted to be creative - this thought can often hold us back from trying something new. CLiCK Women’s Worker Jo says:

***“Being creative is not about making something perfect and especially not the first time around. It’s about trial and error and playing with your ideas and representations in different ways. By giving yourself that space to play and explore you’re already being creative.”***

As part of *Together, Alone*, we worked with an artist and photographer to create a series of easy-to-follow masterclasses that offer the space to try out different creative activities, building your confidence and skills. We share some of the tips and tools from these masterclasses as part of the toolkit, but you can also find the full masterclasses [here](#).



Photo submitted to *Together, Alone*

## **TIPS AND TOOLS**

# THE 5 CATEGORIES OF SELF-CARE: WHAT ARE OUR TIPS AND TOOLS?

Our tips and tools are organised into 5 categories to help you to draw upon different ideas and strategies depending on how you are feeling and what you need at the time. Our categories are:

- Grounding
- Connection
- Joy
- Comfort
- Movement

We decided that putting self-care roughly into these categories was a useful way to structure the toolkit. It can be hard deciding what tool to use sometimes. The very act of reflecting on our needs and emotions is a form of self-care.

As CLiCK Women's Worker Jo says:

***Part of your first steps to a self-care routine might be taking some time to identify how you feel when you are experiencing different emotions and what activities can help you achieve this. Think about how your body feels and the sensations you can feel around you when you're experiencing these emotions. Does your body feel heavy or light, do you feel slow or fast? Is it hot or cold? Bright or dim? Noisy or quiet? For example if you want to feel calm it might be baking something with some relaxing music on in the background or if you want to be silly and energised it might be putting your favourite music on loud and dancing around your bedroom with all the lights on and the windows open. Feeling sad? Maybe you need to get snuggled up on the sofa with a cup of tea, watch a sad film and have a good cry. Having a list of emotions, how you feel when you're***

***experiencing them, and activities related to them can be helpful to refer back to when you're taking some time for self-care***

Some tips and tools are practical, some are physical, some are to help turn our attention inwards, focusing on our thoughts, feelings, and emotions.

Tips and tools have come from women with lived experience of selling or exchanging sex or images, as well as from workers from CLiCK and other third sector organisations, and other people who wanted to add their support. Now more than ever it feels important to be able to draw upon each other's experiences to add more self-care options to our currently depleted plates. As one woman told us:

***If your own plate is empty then you don't have anything to give to anyone else, so for those of us who are doing OK during this lockdown our plate is full metaphorically and it means that we have stuff to give to other people and that's really how you create the flow of solidarity, if you've got enough to give then you should but if you don't then don't worry about taking***

So please, don't worry about taking a dive into someone else's toolkit for a loan of their joy hammer or connection wrench from this collectively built toolkit. It's also OK to move on and try something else if your current tools no longer serve you. Take a read through the following tips and tools and see if anything strikes a chord with you. Let's see what we can all add to our own toolkits at a moment when we all need to rely on one another more than ever.

# Grounding

Grounding is all about activities that ground us in the here and now, connecting us to the present. They can be strategies that help us if traumatic thoughts or memories are triggered or we're experiencing anxiety. They can also be useful tools when we are busy and things are hectic. Examples of this could be mindfulness techniques, grounding yourself in nature or taking a few minutes to connect with your body.

# MEDITATION AND MINDFULNESS

These are techniques you can use to help connect with the present moment. They can help with feelings of anxiety, traumatic memories and flashbacks, sleep, general stress, and worry. You may want to find a course or do some research into them (see our links section at the end of the toolkit for help), or you may want a taster to see if the techniques might help you. [This easy-to-follow meditation](#) has been suggested by a woman working with *Together, Alone* that helps her to ground herself.

## MINDFUL BREATHING

Focussing on our breathing is a straightforward way to begin to bring yourself back when you feel panicky, anxious or have past trauma triggered. It is a very simple way to begin to be in the present moment and to add some self-care to your day. There are lots of different techniques you could try - the 4-7-8 technique is easy to do and to remember:

Close your mouth and breathe in through your nose for a count of 

Hold your breath in for a count of 

Let all the air go out through your mouth for a count of 

## GROUNDING THROUGH DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITIES

One woman we spoke to found tidying and decluttering her house helps her to feel more grounded when things feel out of control. It also gave her a sense of taking joy in the small things in life.

**“I find if your house is less cluttered then your mind is less cluttered. I don’t know, it’s like, I don’t know what you call it, it’s like a yin-yang sort of thing.”**

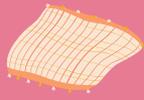
5, 4, 3, 2, 1

# GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

This technique is a way of bringing ourselves back into our bodies when our emotions, thoughts and sensations become overwhelming. It helps to bring us back to the here and now and begin to calm our physical responses, as well as our thoughts. Begin by taking one deep breath – in and out. Imagine the breath really filling your tummy. Now you can work through the 5-4-3-2-1 laid out here. Can you name...



5 things you can SEE?



4 things you can FEEL?



3 things you can HEAR?



2 things you can SMELL?



1 thing you can TASTE?

# GROUND YOURSELF IN NATURE



Take a walk outside to connect with nature – even if you live in a city try and find your nearest patch of grass, hedge or flowers growing in someone’s garden. Take a moment to notice what that looks like and breathe in some fresh, different air.

Photo by Anna, CLiCK Development Worker

# DOODLING

Artist Alice Dansey-Wright created a masterclass on doodling for *Together, Alone*. She spoke about how calming she finds the process of finding a creative flow:

***"Doodling can offer a way to relax and just get involved in the 'flow' of creativity, hopefully allowing us to switch off from some of the busy, more demanding aspects of life. Usually when we doodle, we're not thinking about the finished result...it's intuitive"***

Her masterclass in Doodle Design takes us step-by-step through a process of doodling, leading to the creation of a design that you might like to use on textiles or as the basis for her follow up masterclasses on motif making and printing with household objects. You can find the full masterclasses [here](#).

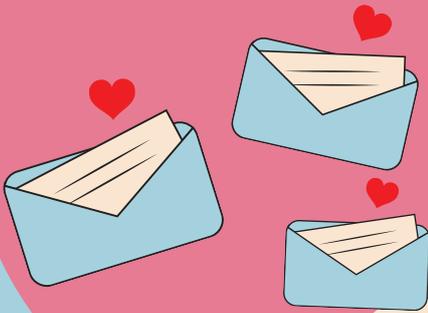
If you don't feel like following a whole masterclass, why not take 5 minutes to try doodling to see if you enjoy it and find it calming. The goal isn't to produce something "arty" but just to give your brain a break for a few minutes. Start by drawing a line on the page and take it from there!



Photos by Alice Dansey-Wright

We can be our own worst critics at times, our inner monologues doing ourselves down instead of building ourselves up like we deserve. If you are struggling with your inner critic, try these exercises:

Write yourself a letter in the third person. Write it as if you are writing to a friend or loved one. Give yourself the caring, loving advice you would offer to them. How does it feel to gently turn around that voice and talk to yourself like a friend? How does it feel to let the words sink in and connect? It might not feel easy to begin with, but this is only the first step so it's absolutely OK if it feels a bit weird! It will become easier and you will start to believe your own words more with time.



Follow these 6 steps:

**REPLACE** Imagine someone you care deeply about, such as your furry companion, or best friend. Now, insert that individual into whatever hardship you're dealing with.

**THINK** Ask what you'd expect of and from that person if they were in the situation you're in.

**ENCOURAGE** Based on your answers, consider what you would encourage that person to do and what you would do for them if you could.

**RETURN** Put yourself back in the situation.

**REBUT** You're probably hearing a bunch of "Yeah, buts" right now. Rebut all of that harsh head trash by thinking about what you'd say to a friend with a case of them. It'll weaken the "Yeah, buts" power.

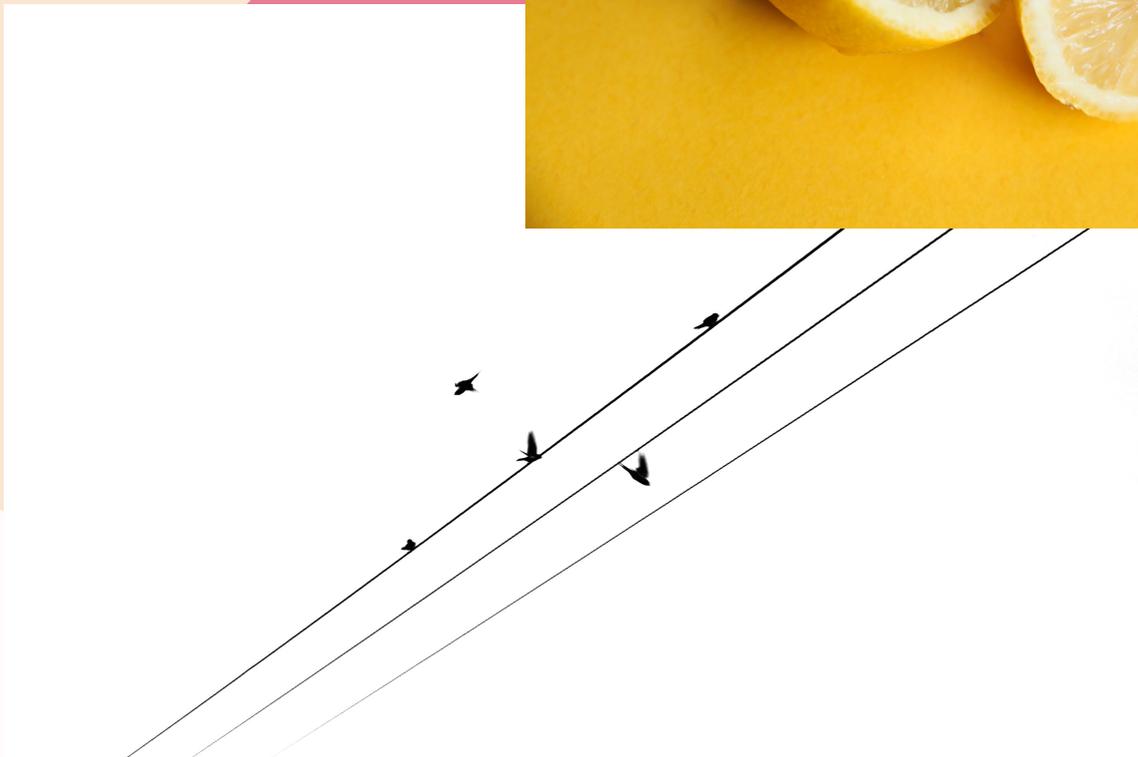
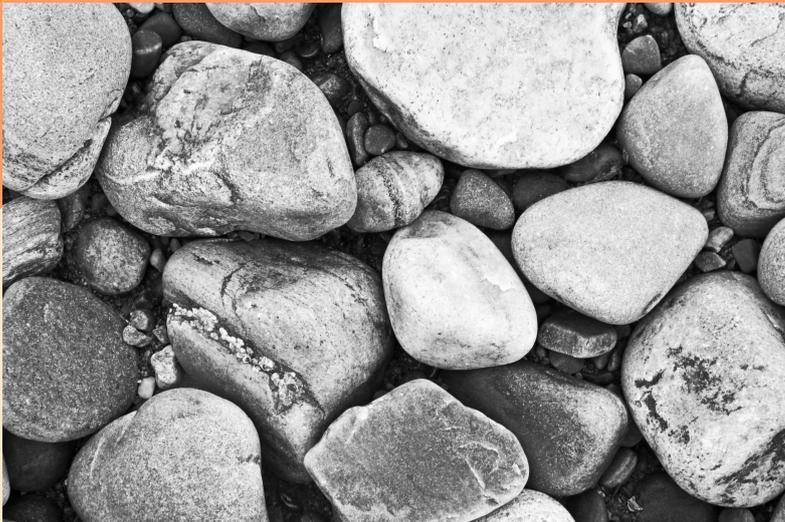
**ACT** Take action on the things brainstormed in step 3.

[Find out more here.](#)

# GROUNDING THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY



Kathryn Rattray used the 5-4-3-2-1 technique as the basis for her masterclass on grounding for *Together, Alone*. She took different photos of the same thing for each category. She chose to take 5 photos of the sea that she spent a long time looking at, 4 photos of the stones she could pick up on the beach that made her feel calm, 3 photos of birds on a wire that she could hear, 2 photos of her favourite smell of lemons and 1 photo of her favourite taste of coffee. She suggests thinking of what makes you feel grounded, happy and safe and then think about how you want to represent those things – will you take a photo of something outside, or do you want to set up a home studio? Keep it simple, these photos are yours, they are for you to feel grounded and connected. Here are some examples from Kathryn's masterclass:





# PAUSE AND REFLECT

WHAT DID YOU CONNECT WITH?

A large rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal grey lines for writing.

# 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 TECHNIQUE

Begin by taking a deep breath and work through the 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 technique below.

## 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

5 things you can see

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

4 things you can feel

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

3 things you can hear

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_

2 things you can smell

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_

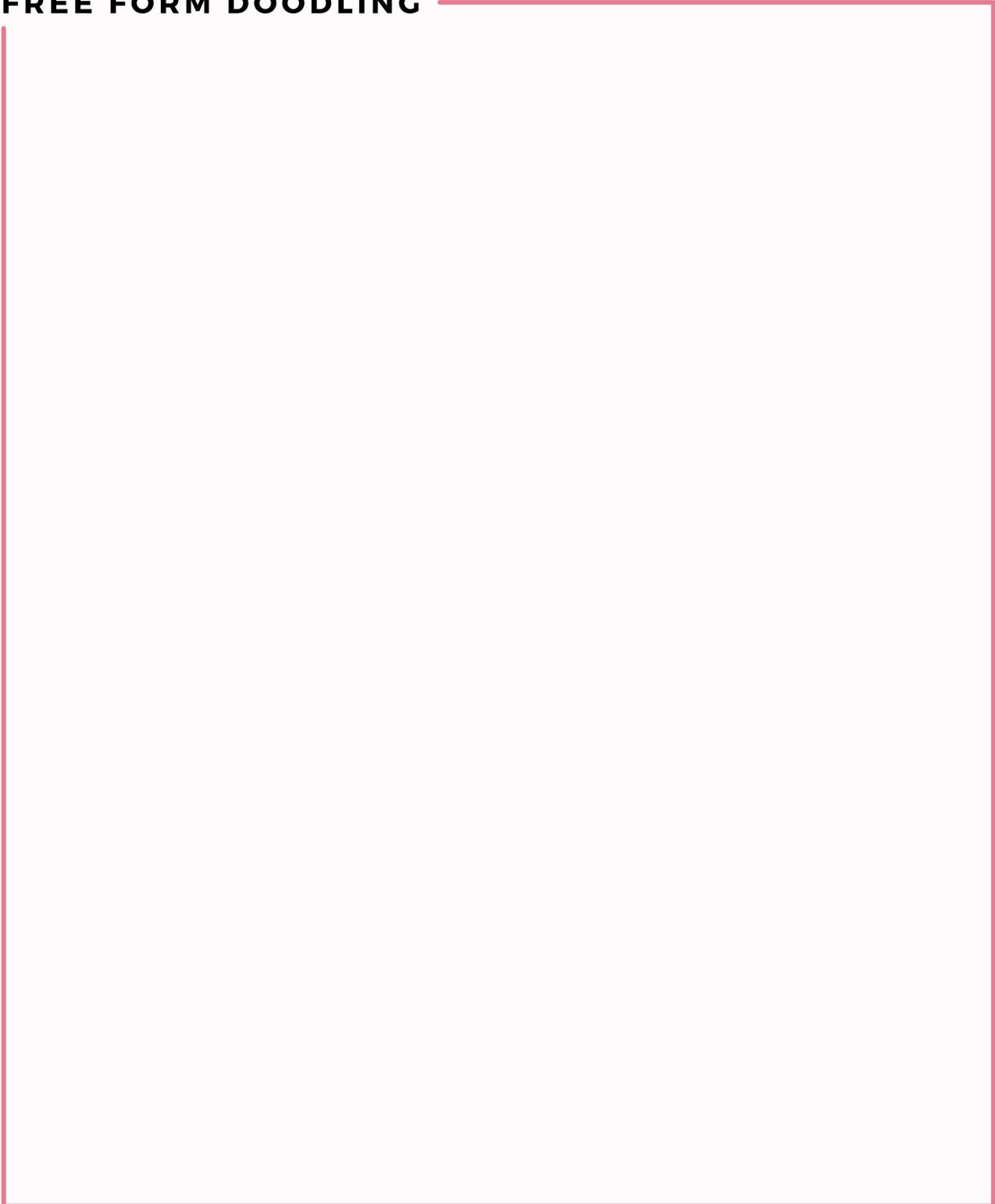
1 thing you can taste

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_

# DOODLE DESIGN ACTIVITY

The first exercise of the Doodle Design Masterclass by Alice Dansey-Wright is to just see what happens when you start doodling! Alice suggests listening to something, watching TV or talking on the phone whilst doing this. Have a go in the space below and go to [www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-masterclass](http://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-masterclass) for more.

## FREE FORM DOODLING



# WRITE A LETTER TO YOURSELF

Have a go at the self-compassion exercise and write yourself a letter. Give yourself the caring and loving advice you would offer a friend or loved one.

**DEAR** .....

A large rectangular box with a red border containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.



# Connection

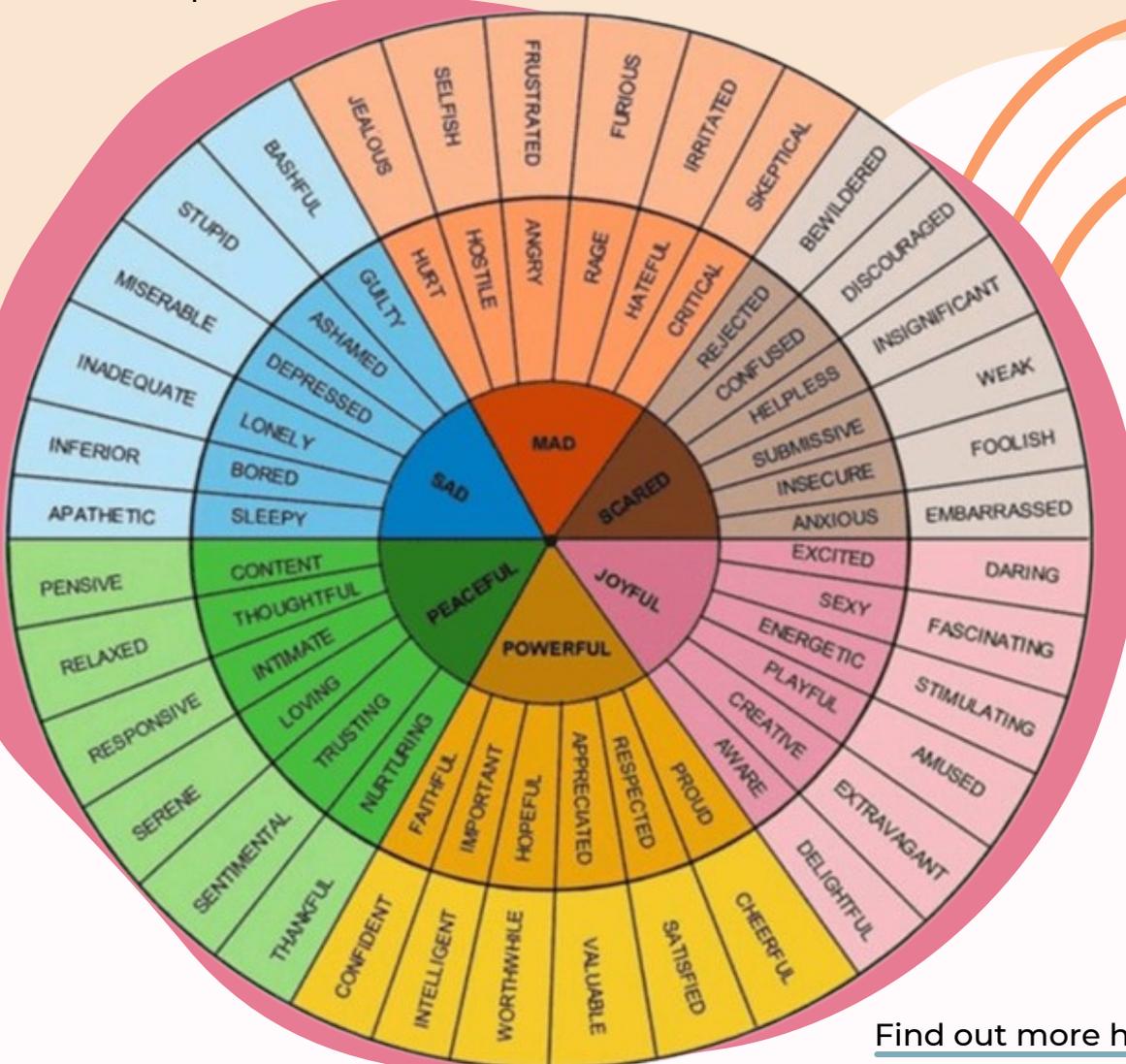
Connection is all about making links with yourself, other people, and issues you care about. This can be about trying to find the time to connect with people we enjoy being with or exploring feelings you have that you are struggling to connect with.

# EMOTION WHEEL TOOL

## CONNECTING WITH YOURSELF

The emotion wheel below can help us to check in and name how we are feeling right now, as well as accepting those emotions without judgement and helping us to understand what we can do to help to manage that emotion. This doesn't have to always be around more negative emotions either – it can be about connecting with yourself and exploring positive ones too, such as naming something you are grateful for and then using the wheel to identify exactly what emotions this produces in you. The wheel can not only help us to name emotions, but also to validate them and begin the process of understanding where those emotions come from.

- There's no right or wrong way to use an emotion wheel – try beginning by looking at the 5 emotions in the middle and establishing which category your feelings are in now.
- Then look at the next ring of emotions – do any of them more accurately describe how you are feeling?
- Then the final ring – do they help to name how you feel in a more specific way?
- Now try and think about what made you feel that way.
- And what can you do if you want to change that emotion? Is there some self-care that can help?



[Find out more here](#)

## MINDFUL JOURNALING

This can connect you with how you've been feeling lately. Ask yourself – how am I really doing? Notice what reactions you have to this question. Try to think about how you would like to acknowledge that feeling, or how to meet your need around it.

- Write down words that come to mind when you ask that question – try to use specific words to really dig into how you are feeling. You can use the emotion wheel on the previous page to help.
- Spend 5 minutes writing about how you are feeling. Don't worry about it being cohesive or structured, just let the words flow from your pen as they come into your mind. After the 5 minutes is up, take time to think about what you have discovered – how are you feeling right now?
- Write on a blank piece of paper “I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because of \_\_\_\_\_” This can help you to name emotions and worries, as well as help to understand and validate them.

As Shannon from CLiCK said,

***“Your journal doesn't need to look perfect or match a certain aesthetic. You don't need to buy fancy stationary and you don't even need to buy an actual journal; you can scribble down your thoughts on the back of an envelope with an old pencil. If you find it hard to get started with writing, there's loads of writing prompts available online. You can even start off with just trying to write one sentence about how you feel every morning or every evening. Don't worry about your spelling, grammar, or whether or not what you're writing even makes sense. Your journal is for you and there is no pressure to share it with anyone else. There is no right or wrong way to keep a journal, all that matters is that you find a way that works for you.”***

## OUTLETS FOR EMOTIONS

Sometimes connecting with your feelings is the first step towards expressing them. Why not try to find an outlet for how you're feeling once you've identified it - whether it be happy, sad, angry, scared – and consider making your own list of go-to activities that can help you when you're feeling a specific way (e.g. angry = rage cleaning, sad = watching a sad movie and curling up on the couch).

## DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY AND SELF-CARE

As Elena from the [Empower Project](#) says:

“With our work and social lives moving online, there is more need now than ever before to equip ourselves with the tools required to protect ourselves in online spaces and combat digital fatigue. We must strive to find a work-life balance all while operating from the same space for both.”

- Privacy. Privacy can be anything from the level of privacy we have on our social media accounts and who we share our passwords for our pages with, through to who we let follow us on social media accounts. Some apps will auto-set your privacy settings to basic when you update or re-install, so it's always important to check.
  - Boundaries. It's OK to set boundaries around what we see on our feeds – you can use the mute or block features for this. You can also set boundaries around how much time you spend online if you are able to, to ensure you get some time to switch off. Sometimes, we need support from our families and friends, but they also need to know your boundaries! It is okay for you not to want certain content shared of you online, even if you have an active presence on social media.



## MIND MAPS

A woman working with *Together, Alone* suggested creating a mind map of “me” – connecting with yourself, thinking about what you enjoy/are good at/strengths and writing it down so you can refer back to it when you're maybe not feeling so great. This will be easier to do on some days than others so it's up to you if you choose to do it on a day that you feel good about yourself, or on a day where you could do with a boost.

Check out the mini mind map masterclass on the following page for a place to start.

- Begin by putting the page landscape as it gives you more room.
- Write a title in the middle – the example here has “My Mind map Of Me” but feel free to name it whatever feels right to you. Having it in the middle allows thoughts to “flow” into the blank space.
- Then create subheadings, which are there to help to organise the information by providing different avenues or “branches” to explore. Some ideas for categories are below. You can use these, or you can pick your own categories – the great thing about mind maps is that they are adaptable and flexible and can be based on what suits YOU!
  - What things do I enjoy?
  - What do I like about myself?
  - What do I deserve to hear when I don’t feel great?
  - What nice things have others said about me?
  - What is important to me?
  - Who cares about me?
  - Who do I care about?
  - What are my skills?
  - What do other people think I’m good at?
  - What are my hopes and dreams?
- Use flowing lines to connect your categories to the central theme. This process can feel calming, helping get into a place of flow and think more freely. Write simple words or phrases under each subheading as you think more deeply about each category.
- There is no right or wrong thing to write at this stage, it is about allowing the mind map as a tool to help you to think about and jot down everything that comes into your mind. Some examples are included in the picture on the right.

Once you’ve finished your mind map, keep it as something to look at when you need a reminder of all of your positive qualities and attributes.

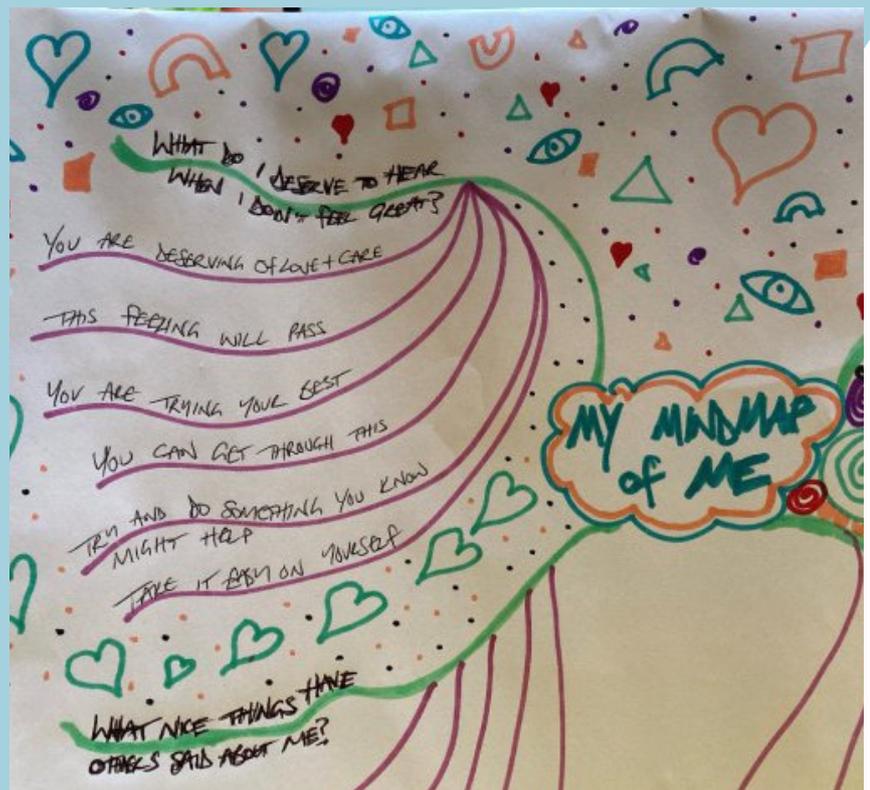


Photo by Anna, CLiCK Development Worker

## CONNECTING DURING THE PANDEMIC

At the moment, many of us can't see loved ones indoors or we may be physically parted from them due to being in different tiers of lockdown. Sometimes that can mean we aren't able to connect with the people we usually rely on. Here are some suggestions for ways to stay connected to those you care about:



- Where you are able to, why not go for a socially distanced walk in the park with friends or family?
- Write a letter old school style – imagine the joy on the person's face to get it through the post.
- Make your friend a Spotify playlist of songs that remind you of your friendship and share it with them.



# REFLECTING ON OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Reflecting on our relationships with those close to us can lead to discoveries about how many positives we draw from those relationships. This process can also help us to establish more boundaries around those relationships. A woman working closely with *Together, Alone* created a list of the self-care benefits she gets from the relationship she has and the time she spends with her dog. She said -

***“When I was thinking about self-care during difficult times, I considered how much my dog helps me. I explored the idea in more depth with Anna, and I saw my relationship with my dog was even more important than I realised”***

Take a look at the list she worked on below. Why not try creating your own list of positives from a relationship? It could be with a pet, or with someone you enjoy spending time with.



# BOUNDARIES

Being able to establish our needs and boundaries can be an important form of self-care. Paula from the [Rosey Project](#) has some tips around how to establish them:

Working out what your boundaries are and learning how to put them into the practice without guilt is the work of a lifetime. These are some top tips to start yourself on this journey.

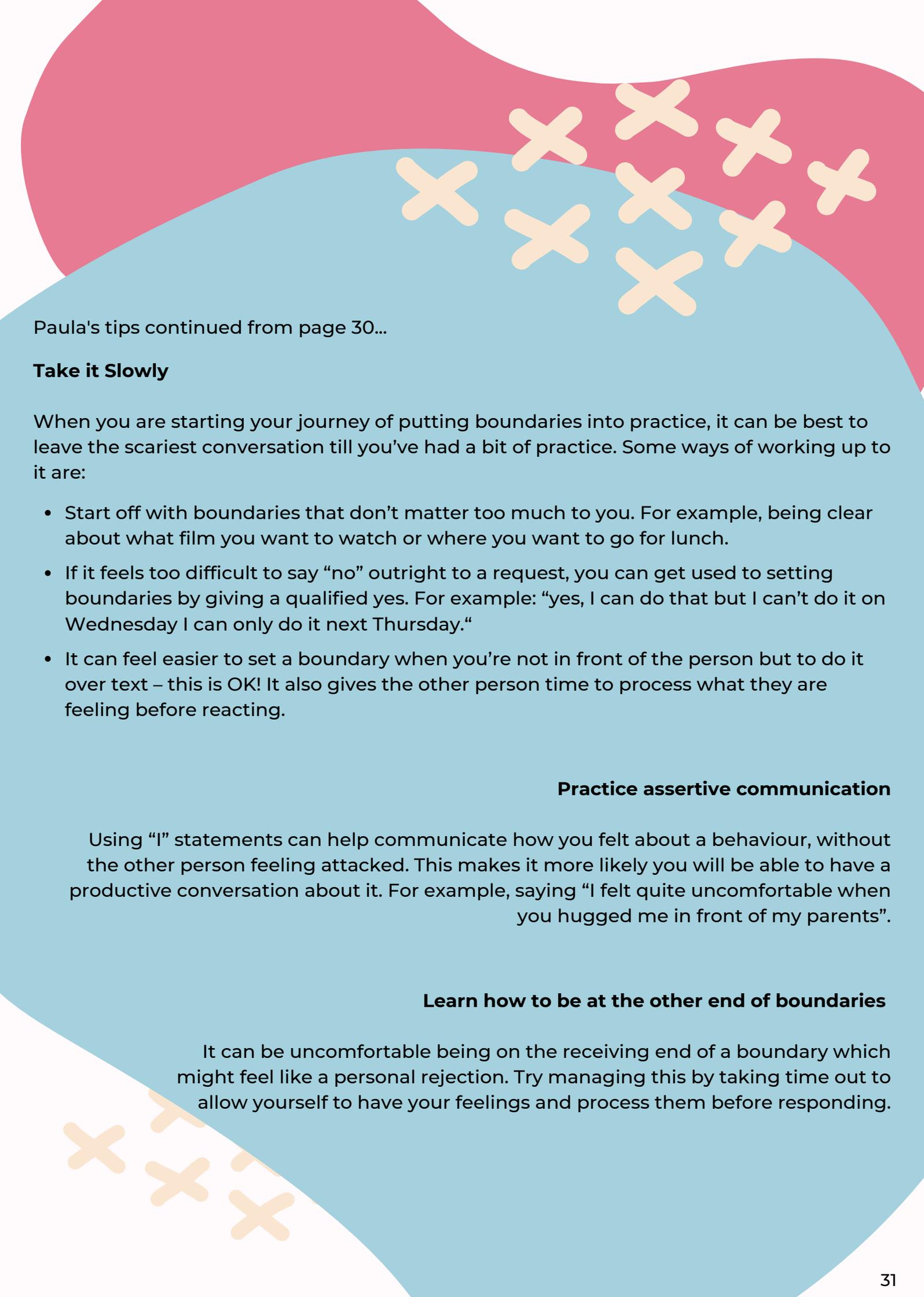
## What are my boundaries?

For many of us, we are so focused on meeting the needs of other people that we have never really stopped to think about what our own needs are! Boundaries are a way of expressing what we are comfortable with and how we want to be treated by others. A key place to start is noticing when your boundaries have been crossed. Some things to look for could be:

- Feeling resentment
- Feeling exposed and vulnerable
- Feeling drained or overtired

## Different boundaries for different people

You might have different boundaries with different people and that is OK! For example, you might feel comfortable telling your best friend details of your romantic life, but not want to talk about this with your family. These boundaries might also change over time as your relationships shift and evolve: self-reflection is key to work out what is right for you and this is an ongoing process.



Paula's tips continued from page 30...

### **Take it Slowly**

When you are starting your journey of putting boundaries into practice, it can be best to leave the scariest conversation till you've had a bit of practice. Some ways of working up to it are:

- Start off with boundaries that don't matter too much to you. For example, being clear about what film you want to watch or where you want to go for lunch.
- If it feels too difficult to say "no" outright to a request, you can get used to setting boundaries by giving a qualified yes. For example: "yes, I can do that but I can't do it on Wednesday I can only do it next Thursday."
- It can feel easier to set a boundary when you're not in front of the person but to do it over text – this is OK! It also gives the other person time to process what they are feeling before reacting.

### **Practice assertive communication**

Using "I" statements can help communicate how you felt about a behaviour, without the other person feeling attacked. This makes it more likely you will be able to have a productive conversation about it. For example, saying "I felt quite uncomfortable when you hugged me in front of my parents".

### **Learn how to be at the other end of boundaries**

It can be uncomfortable being on the receiving end of a boundary which might feel like a personal rejection. Try managing this by taking time out to allow yourself to have your feelings and process them before responding.

## COOKING AS CONNECTION

This could be a connection with yourself – taking time to ask yourself, am I hungry? What does my body need/want? How can I use food as a way of honouring myself? Sometimes that will be salad, and sometimes that will be cake! Cooking can also be a way of connecting with family and friends, bringing people together through food.

CLiCK Women's Worker Isla loves cooking for friends and family and said:

**"I feel that it can also boost self-esteem as it's something you get better at the more you do it. You can try to create more complex dishes and each time you succeed, it feels good! I get so much out of other people trying what I cook or what I bake, I love knowing that people enjoy something which I can provide to them and that has massively helped my confidence."**



Photo by Isla, CLiCK Women's Worker

If you are looking for a quick easy thing to cook, why not try Isla's easy to follow recipe for pumpkin soup found at the end of this section.



## CONNECTION THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

Some people use photography as a way to connect with other people – it can take us out of our comfort zone and be a way of meeting or talking to others. In her Connection Masterclass, Kathryn Rattray uses food photography to connect with her local Chinese supermarket, as well as connect with friends over a tasty homecooked meal that she prepared to take photographs of.

You can find her full masterclass [here](#).



Photo's by Kathryn Rattray

# CONNECTING WITH OTHERS AND SHARED IDEAS

## KNOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Life under a pandemic can be a very isolating experience and sometimes it's hard to remember that we are experiencing a collective trauma and wider systems impact our everyday lives. Taking time to understand that what may be causing some of the feelings you're experiencing is actually out with your control can be scary at times and freeing at others. This recognition in itself can help to reduce some of the intensity of the emotions we may be finding unmanageable, giving ourselves space to feel and do something else.

Know that there are other people out there fighting some of those big fights on your behalf – if your cup is empty, don't feel you need to tackle these bigger issues, it's OK to focus on yourself and your own self-care.

## CONNECTING OVER A COMMON CAUSE

There are times though that you may want to top up the cups of others when yours is full enough. Just remember to try not to drain your own cup in the process of filling others' – it's OK to set boundaries around what and how much you can do and not feel bad or guilty for doing so. Here are some suggestions for when you feel that connecting with others this way will help your own self-care:

- Finding an issue you care about and connecting with others around it. This could mean taking part in some sort of activism around an issue that is important to you, or joining a discussion group for example.
- Talking with others about a shared passion or hobby – finding a Facebook group where others share your passion of knitting or gardening.
- Volunteering some of your time and energy (even a few minutes' worth). This could be helping a neighbour with their shopping, or looking for an organisation that you want to devote some time to on a weekly/monthly basis.
- It could also look like reaching out to other people when you need them or letting others know that you are there for them when you can. Know that others want to know how you are doing, and also know that you can also bring a lot to others just by being yourself



# PAUSE AND REFLECT

WHAT DID YOU CONNECT WITH?

A large rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

# MINDFUL JOURNALING

## JOURNAL PROMPT IDEAS

How are you really doing?

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Write a list of 3 things you are grateful for

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What makes you feel loved and cared for?

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What would you like more, or less, of in your life?

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What has made you smile recently?

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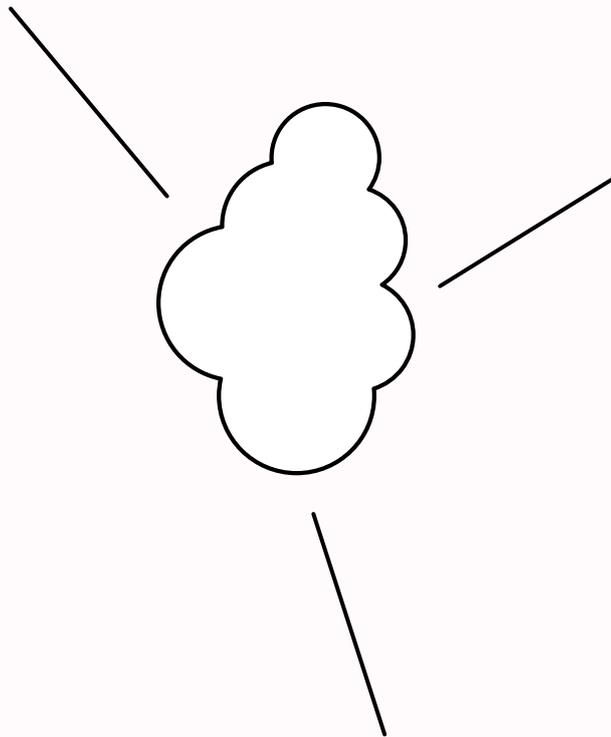
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# MY MIND MAP OF ME

Use the space below to have a go at the mini mind map masterclass described in the previous pages. To read more, go to [www.clickmagazine.online/blog-19](http://www.clickmagazine.online/blog-19)

MY MIND MAP OF ME



You can find more of Isla's delicious comfort food recipes at [www.clickmagazine.online/blog-22](http://www.clickmagazine.online/blog-22)

## PUMPKIN SOUP

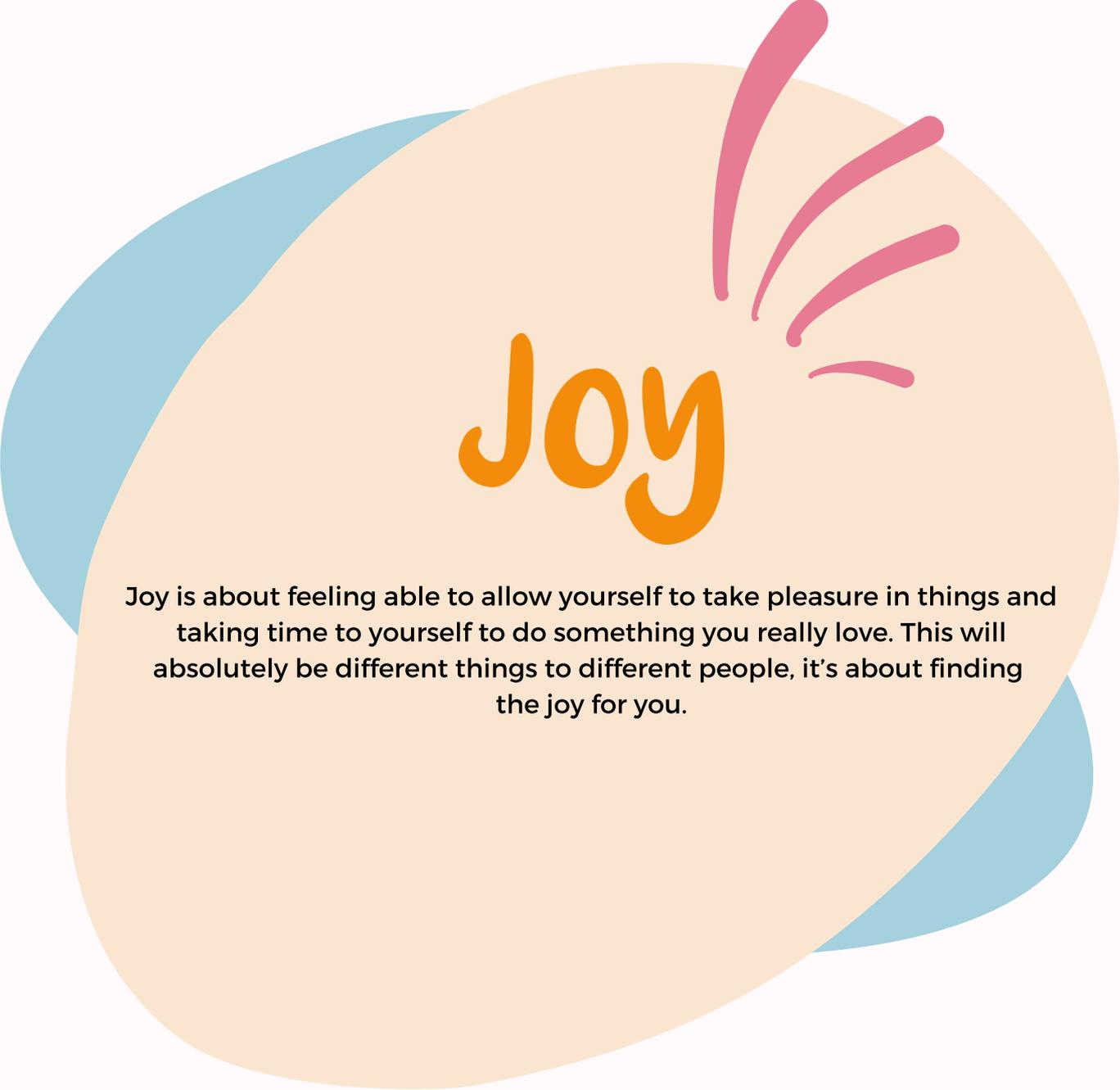
### Ingredients:

- 1 Pumpkin or 1 Butternut Squash
- 2 Onions
- 2 Red Peppers
- 2 Carrots
- 300ml Single Cream
- 1 Litre Vegetable Stock – this requires 2 stock cubes
- Salt and Pepper

### Method:

1. Pre heat your oven to 180 degrees c/Alternatively you can pop all the vegetables into a pot with the stock cube and let it boil until the vegetables soften.
2. Remove the top from the pumpkin/butternut squash and scoop out the seeds.
3. Chop up the pumpkin/butternut squash into small chunks and do the same with the rest of the vegetables.
4. Pop the veg onto a baking tray and roast in the oven for around 35 minutes or boil for around 20 minutes on a high heat in a large pot.
5. Prepare the stock by putting your stock cubes in a jug and adding in boiling water, if you do not have a measuring jug, fill the pot with water until it is just covering the vegetables.
6. If roasting, once the vegetables are ready add them to a large pot along with the stock and bring the stock to the boil.
7. Add some salt and pepper.
8. You can either leave your soup chunky or if you have a blender you can blend it up until smooth.
9. Add in some cream and give it a stir, taste and add more salt and pepper if required.
10. Once cool, pop in the fridge or alternatively you can freeze it and defrost it when suits.
11. The soup should last 3-4 days in the fridge.





# Joy

Joy is about feeling able to allow yourself to take pleasure in things and taking time to yourself to do something you really love. This will absolutely be different things to different people, it's about finding the joy for you.

# JOY AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Kathryn Rattray explored Joy through photography with her [masterclass](#). She talked about how photography can be about...

***“The JOY of you and your camera and allowing yourself time to play with it. Time to absorb yourself into the creative world, time to allow it to become second nature and to do things your way.”***



Photos by Kathryn Rattray

## Hints 'n' Tips for the Joy Home Studio

- You can use any type of camera for this masterclass. Remember it's not the camera that makes the photo it's the photographer.
- Take your time, set aside a half day perhaps, get the music blaring. Use the home studio as time to focus on something else.
- Try to clear your mind.

***'Light makes photography. Embrace light. Admire it. Love it. But above all, know light. Know it for all you are worth, and you will know the key to photography.'***

***George Eastman - Founder of the Eastman Kodak Company***

- Use a natural light source, it is always the best for photographs. Set up the table preferably close to a window. I chose to set my studio up outside (as it was a beauty of a day) in the shade as it kept the light level even. Direct sunlight is great too, but it can be just a bit too hot and if the clouds appear the sun disappears too.
- I love using coloured paper for backdrops, and A3 works best for this. A3 sheets are about £1.50 each and can be used many times especially if you are careful with them. Once I am finished with them I give them to my kids to make posters. I like to use 2 colours.
- Use a book to prop up the paper if you need some more height.
- For this shoot I found that the table and the positioning of the paper was always uneven, no matter how many times I tried to straighten it. I even propped the leg of the table up with folded magazines. To combat this 'stress' I deliberately stuck the paper to the wall really squint. This actually added to the overall effect of the final images.
- Make sure your vase is dry or it will drip onto the paper.
- The trick is to fill your view finder with just the colour and the object. With lots of my photographs at the start, you can see the black masking tape in the corner of the shot, so annoying, but just keep taking more photographs until you work out the best way for you.
- Start/keep moving - take photographs from above, below, underneath, from the side and direct on. Try different angles, shoot close in and move far away, move your objects/ flowers. Use your hands and even have them in shot. This is very Instagram!



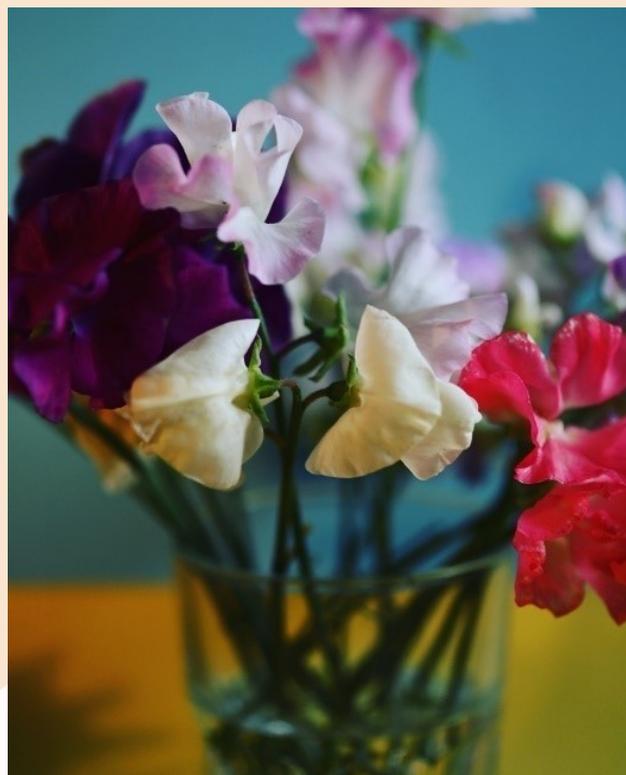
Photo by Kathryn Rattray

- Keep checking your images as you go. I shot about 10/15 at one time before I checked. It was during the 'checking' phase that I realised how difficult it was to get a really straight line between the pink and yellow paper. Some images the paper was the tinniest bit off and it just upset the whole look of the photograph.
- Keep using your imagination. If something doesn't seem right, stop walk away and have think. This is your home studio you can make it what you want.
- Keep persevering, keep practicing.
- Try to keep calm when things don't work out.
- Remind yourself that this is your home-made Home Studio, be proud of what you are doing and what you are achieving.
- Have fun!
- Share your photos with your friends and family, or with us at CLiCK.

Here's what a woman had to say about her experience of trying out the Joy masterclass:

***"I loved the Joy Masterclass as my flowers are my photography comfort zone. This class pushed me though as I'd never used the colour backdrops before so lots of rearranging and recomposing shots. All of the flowers are from my mum's allotment so home grown and free."***

We have shared some of the beautiful pictures she took throughout this toolkit and here are some more of her lovely images:



Photo's submitted to *Together, Alone*

## EVERYDAY GRATITUDE

Take a few minutes to reflect on and find gratitude for the small things that bring beauty to normal, everyday life. You could even start a gratitude journal – find a notebook where you write down 3 things you are grateful for every day. Gratitude journals can help us reflect on the things that we are happy for and enjoy in our lives.

Here's what a woman working with CLiCK had to say about taking joy in the everyday things in life:

***“Well I've sat in the garden, I've painted my garden fences, I've generally been doing things around the house, clearing things out, just odd jobs that I haven't really thought about, well I have thought about it's just always been a chore and I thought well, may as well use this time and get it all done. The weather's been quite nice as well which has been a bonus so I thought I may as well do it, cos I like the sun.”***

## LEARNING A SKILL OR FINDING A NEW HOBBY

As part of your self-care toolkit, why not try to allow yourself the space to take up something new. Know that it's OK to make mistakes and try to find the humour in those mistakes. You could even try something that challenges and pushes you in a positive way and surprise yourself with your own skills and abilities! But remember, it's not always about talent - you may find pleasure just from doing something you have never tried before.

CLiCK Women's Worker Annabel says that what we wear can really have an impact on our mood, which in turn can affect our daily life. When we're not feeling good, some days it can be hard to find the motivation to get out of our pyjamas. Although it may not seem obvious, fashion can be a form of self-care. If we don't feel good in what we're wearing, this can impact on our mental wellbeing.

- Utilising summer clothes in winter by layering is a great way to save money and get the most out of your clothes.
- Wearing new colours and prints can really lift our mood. If you have any bold colours or prints in your wardrobe which you don't normally wear, why not try these out?
- Why not find your cosiest outfit and think about the comfort that those clothes provide you, or perhaps put on something colourful and see if that changes your mood, even briefly.

Read Annabel's blog [here](#) for more.



Photo's by Annabel, CLiCK Women's Worker



# PAUSE AND REFLECT

WHAT DID YOU CONNECT WITH?

A large rectangular box with a red border containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

# EVERYDAY GRATITUDE

Take a few minutes everyday to reflect on the things that you are grateful for. Give it a try for a week and see how you feel.

## GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Monday

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Tuesday

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Wednesday

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Thursday

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Friday

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Saturday

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Sunday

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# Comfort

Comfort in self-care involves finding things that make you feel comfortable and safe. It could be finding something that reminds you of happy memories, finding a blanket to wrap yourself up in to feel contained or giving yourself a hug when you feel you need one. It can also be about revisiting things you take comfort in such as a favourite recipe or book.

## SAFETY BLANKET

Wrapping yourself up in a favourite blanket can help to create a sense of safety, security and containment when you feel you need comfort. Think of it as giving yourself a big hug.

## ROUTINE

When we've got a lot going on, are stressed or low, our routines can get out of whack, leaving us feeling out of sorts. Why not try to establish a morning and evening routine if structure and order brings you a sense of comfort?

- Begin by thinking about what you need to do in a day – that might be getting out of bed, brushing your teeth, eating at regular times and going to bed in the evening.
- Set yourself a goal of doing these things at around the same time each day.
- If you're going to bed too late and sleeping all day, start by aiming to get to bed an hour earlier each night until your bedtime feels better for you and you feel more able to get up during the day.
- If this all feels overwhelming, then check out the list of support at the end of this toolkit and reach out if you can. There are people who are there to help.

## NOSTALGIA

Find something that reminds you of happy memories (e.g. old photos, trinkets, watching a nostalgic show or film) and bask in a bit of nostalgia. This may help to change your mood - even briefly - as you reflect on something that has brought you comfort, joy or peace.



## COMFORT BOX

Make a comfort box containing things that help create that sense of safety and security for you whenever you may feel anxious, stressed or fearful. This could include things like a photo of something that reminds you of a happy time, something with a calming smell, something with a nice texture such as a smooth stone, a favourite affirmation written on a piece of paper, an object that reminds you of a loved one. This is a personal collection chosen by you – it's about what provides you with comfort when you feel you need it.

## PLAYLIST

Make a playlist of your favourite music/podcasts that provide you with comfort when you listen to them.

## MINDFUL COLOURING

Colouring in can provide comfortable, warm space for reflection and calm a busy mind.

Check out the mindful colouring pages at the end of this section.

## PLANTS

Bring a bit of greenery into your space through plants and flowers. Greenery and growing things can make an environment feel more comfortable and give us a sense of accomplishment and peace in nurturing them.



# COMFORT FLAT-LAY

Photographer Kathryn Rattray suggested creating a comfort flat-lay of the things that you use for your self-care.

***“My CLiCK Comfort flat-lay is a sneak peek into just a few things that make me happy, keep me calm (often sane), encourage me to do things that help my self-care and spark my creative mind.”***

Here are her hints and tips to create your very own Comfort Flat Lay.

## What you need

- Brightly coloured A3 paper. You could also use a plain coloured surface in your house, or a plain scarf if you don't have paper.
- 5-6 of your favourite self-care items. These can be things that you use for a self-care activity, or things that represent self-care to you.
- Table or any surface.
- Natural sunlight.



Photo by Kathryn Rattray

## How to create your comfort flat-lay

- Lay the A3 paper or other coloured background on the table or any surface preferably in natural light, by a window and or outside.
- Lay your favourite self-care items in a neat pattern on top of the paper. Move the items about until you feel it looks best – play about with it and trust your judgement when you think you like how it looks.
- Photograph from above looking through the camera until your flat lay fits perfectly into the view – you can use your grid setting to help with this.
- Take lots of pics whilst still moving the objects around.
- You might have to stand on your tip toes as you lean over the flat lay.
- Keep a steady hand.
- Take your time and try out different ways of arranging the items until you are happy with how it looks.



Photo by Kathryn Rattray



Photo submitted to *Together, Alone*

A woman who had a go at Kathryn's masterclass created her own flat-lay for *Together, Alone* and let us know what each object means to her:

A little bit about my comfort items:

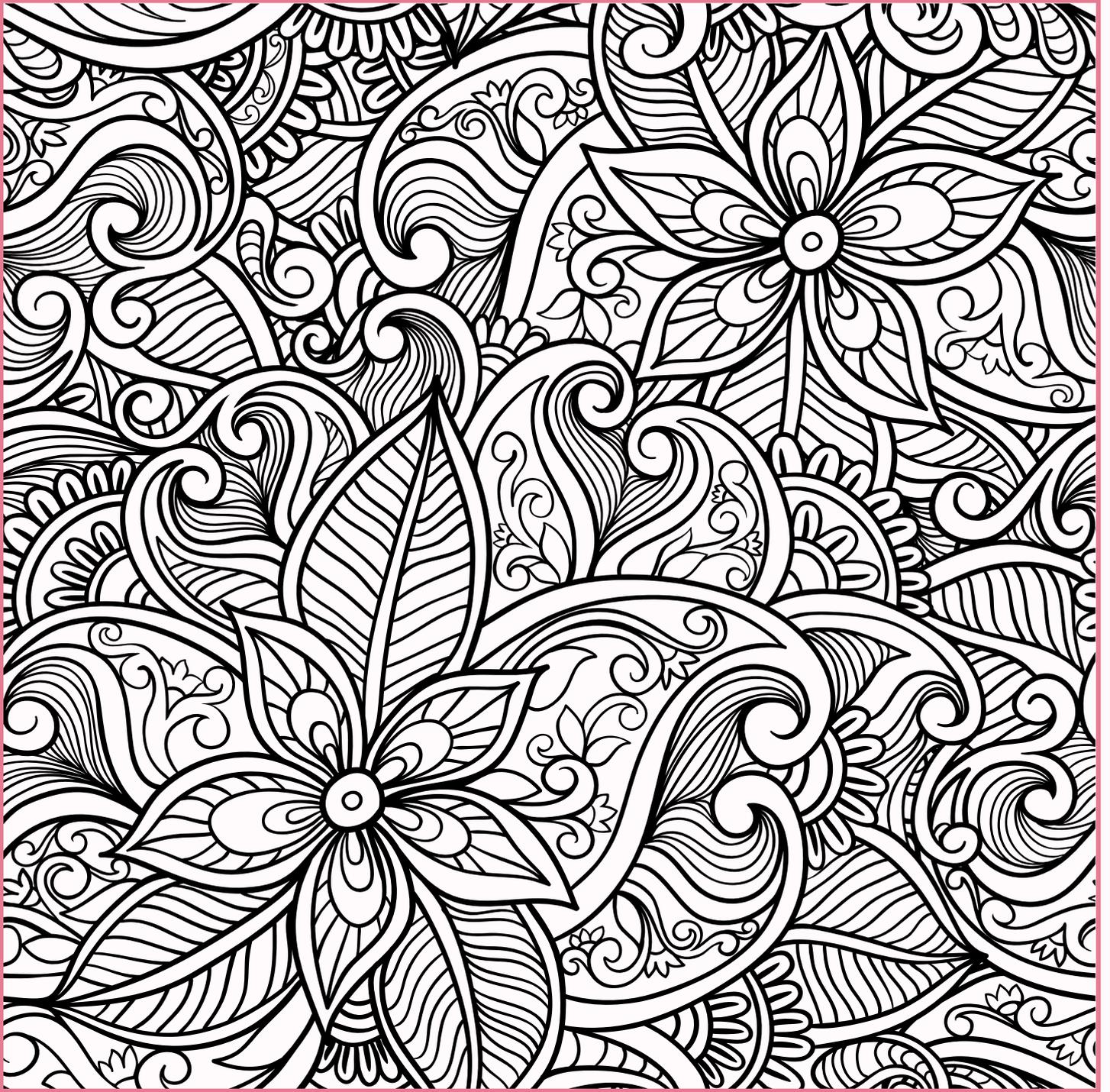
- COFFEE - I love how I can get an instant wake up shot of my favourite Americano from this little pod at home
- MY DIARY - every year I get a Paperchase diary in the January sales. Much prefer paper and pen to the digital version
- HAND CREAM - to combat the excessive use of alcohol sanitisers and hand washing at work
- MY CAMERA - my me time, my hobby, my creativity, my stress reliever, my walks with it, my meet up with friends with it, my camera club, sharing photos, sharing memories, engaging with others, flower photography, the list could go on and on....
- MY MAGAZINE - The Simple Things, nature, crafts, recipes, seasons, I love reading it each month, my favourite piece is "flowers in the house". I am an aspiring flower arranger and my dream job would be to be a florist in a flower shop, never say never...
- LAVENDER - flowers, candles and essential oil, aromatherapy, helps me wind down at the end of the day, bliss



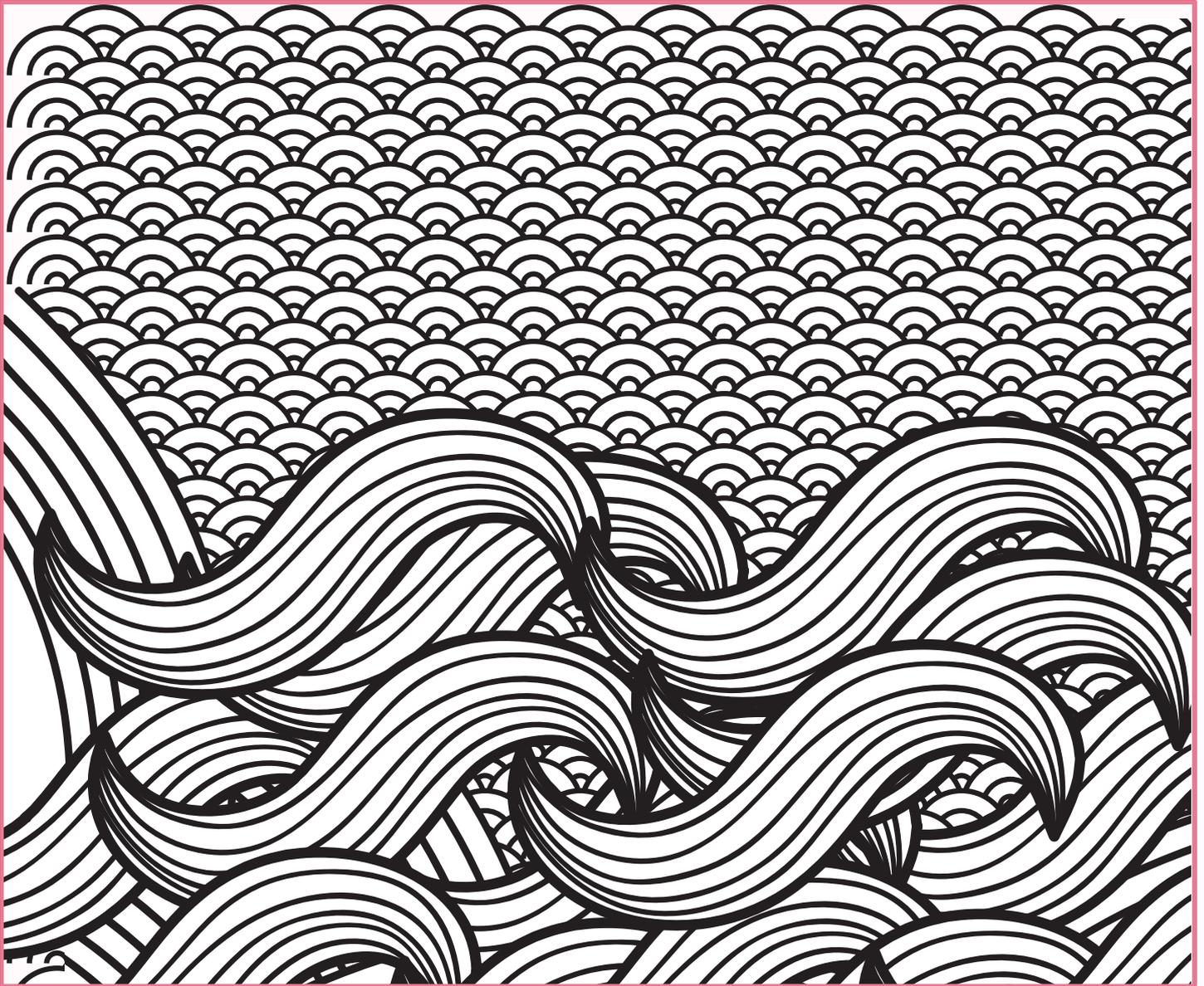
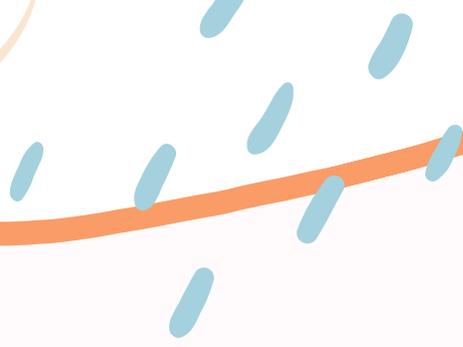
# PAUSE AND REFLECT

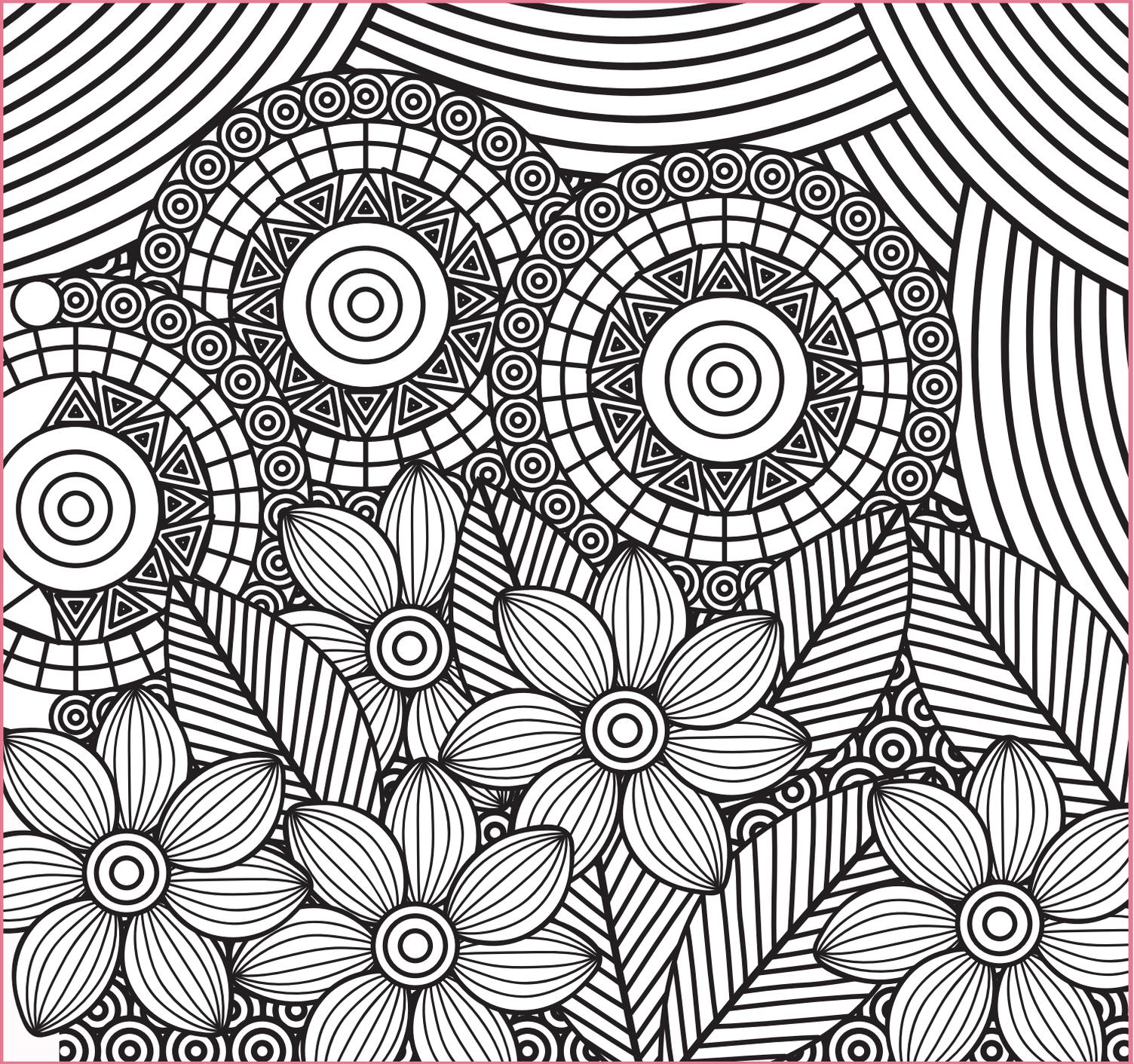
WHAT DID YOU CONNECT WITH?

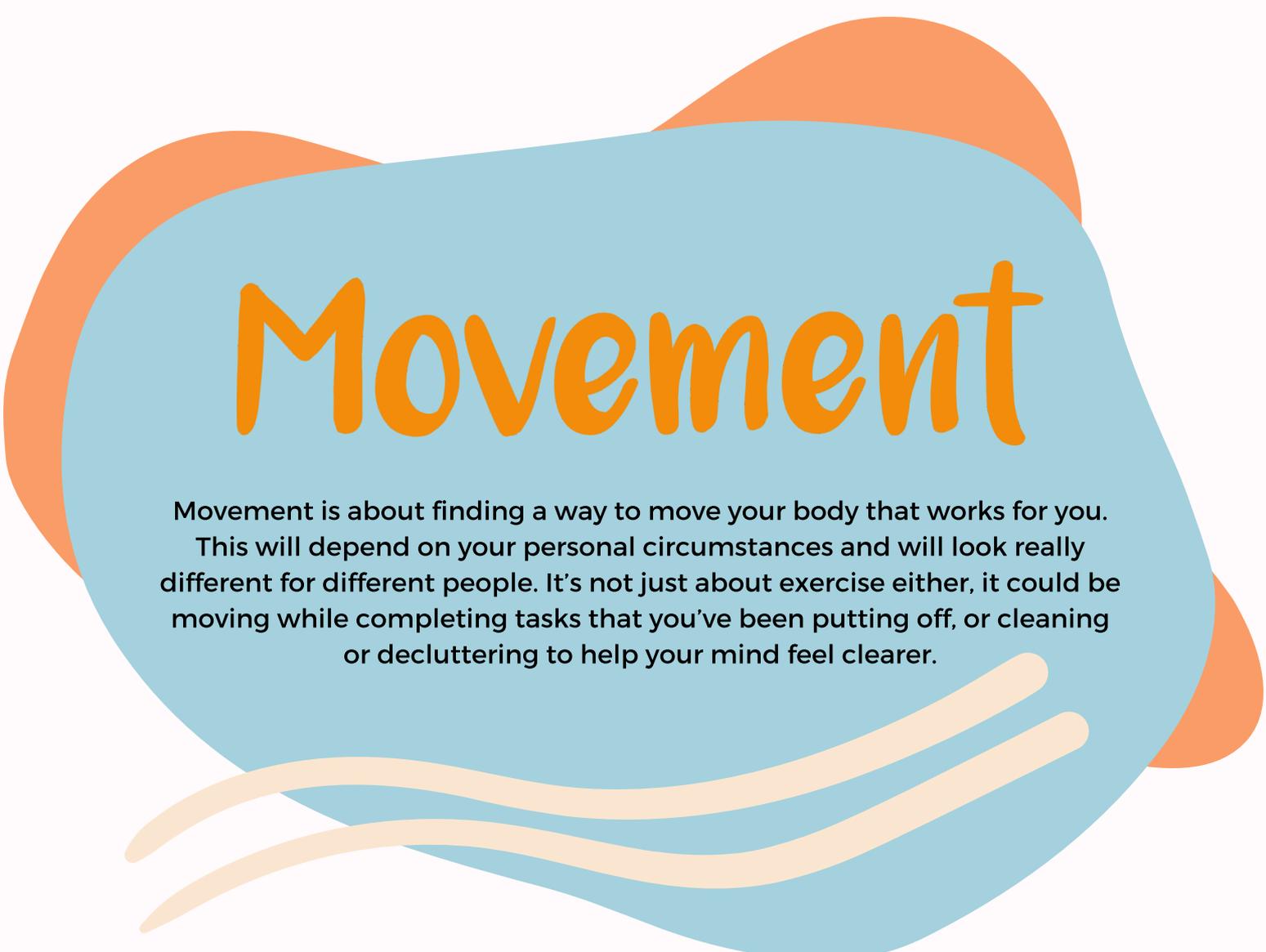
A large rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal grey lines for writing.



**MINDFUL COLOURING**







# Movement

Movement is about finding a way to move your body that works for you.

This will depend on your personal circumstances and will look really different for different people. It's not just about exercise either, it could be moving while completing tasks that you've been putting off, or cleaning or decluttering to help your mind feel clearer.

## ATTENDING TO OUR BODY'S NEEDS

Movement looks different to all of us on different days. It may be that one day you've got the energy to do a full workout, the next you can only manage a walk to the end of the street. It's about being gentle with yourself and focussing on the type of movement your body is capable of at the moment. It may be that there's something you want to speak to someone about in relation to your body – so self-care around this could be booking an appointment to have particular body issues addressed with the help of a professional. This could be a physio, a massage therapist, or GP for example. Take a few minutes to think about what you feel you need and what others could help with around this. It also may be that it's not realistic to have movement as part of your toolkit at the moment, and that's OK too. This is about you building something that works for you and you alone.

## RECONNECTION

Movement can help us reconnect with our bodies and check in with how we're doing and what our needs are. What does your body feel it needs when you spend some time listening to it? Do you need to stretch after being at a desk all day? Or do you feel like you need some vigorous movement to get you really going?

## ADD MOVEMENT ON TO OTHER ACTIVITIES

Can you add movement into other hobbies, like going for a walk round the park and taking pictures of the changing seasons, or dancing while cleaning?

# EMBODIMENT THROUGH MOVEMENT

A woman working with *Together, Alone* shared with us her five ways of reconnecting with herself through dance. You can also find her blog [here](#).

- Martial arts – “I feel present and within my body when I train which helps my overall mental health.”
- Running – “ I decided to take up running for races. I achieved a sense of community and a shared motivation for obscure medal collecting. I also accidentally discovered the power of emotional processing whilst running and how the brain heals when you assist any recovery work with a form of movement.”
- Stretching – “Mindful movement is a brilliant way of integration which helps ease mood and energy in a way which is both gentle and adaptable.”
- Improvised Dance – “Dance that is impulsive without pattern or direction is a practice that aids the creative side of thinking, it helps problem solving skills, builds confidence and enables an authenticity which seldom has a chance to emerge in such immediate and pure form as improvised dance.”
- Choreographed dance – “(Contemporary dance)... is pure emotion in motion and stunning to watch. If I am to overcome my resistance to choreography, I most definitely would start here.”

## 5 MINUTES OF MOVEMENT

Movement for self-care doesn't have to be some massive commitment to attending a weekly class, it can look like a quick 5 minutes out of your day.

- Getting outside even for 5 minutes to walk round the block.
- A gentle stretch routine such as this from [Yoga with Adrienne](#).
- This [“yoga at your desk”](#) routine.
- Putting on your favourite song and moving around to it. It could be a slow sway to a slushy number, or an energetic big box little box to some techno – whatever feels right for you.
  - Getting up from where you're sitting and moving to make yourself a cup of tea.

# PHOTOGRAPHY AND MOVEMENT

Kathryn Rattray's photography masterclass on movement looked at the 7/7 approach. Here's what she had to say:

**"This is a simple and effective method to learn how to see the world through the lens and at your own pace. This method encourages you to get outside and explore your surroundings with your camera, warming up your brain, body and heart.**

**Take 7 photos outside, rain or shine every day for 7 days (of course, you may take many more than 7, sometimes you may even shoot up to 50. What I mean is pick your BEST 7 pics each day for 7 days). You don't need any fancy equipment, your camera phone is brilliant too, after all it's not the equipment that matters it's the photographer – it's about us all feeling up for it and ready to try things out."**



Photo by Kathryn Rattray

## Choosing a theme

Before you leave the house, try to centre yourself, plan a route and think about what you want to take photos of. Take some water too as it's thirsty work! It can help to think of a theme to take photos on - take 7 pics of the colour green as an example. Having a theme in mind is so effective as it gives you a starting point and a direction. It helps you to seek out what it is you want to take photographs and gives you the right focus. Here's some ideas, but the list is endless as the world is your blank canvas:

- Colours
- Flowers
- Trees
- Buildings
- Famous landmarks
- Signs
- Shop fronts

## Self-Encouragement Self-Care

Set yourself a challenge and then set your goals for the 7/7 method. You can write this down. A small challenge and goal setting can give us something new to focus on and offer a sense of achievement. Encourage yourself to get up and out and remind yourself of why you are doing this. For example, you can tell yourself, 'It's a little bit of 'me time' or you might want to improve your confidence and skills around taking pictures. Photography can also be therapeutic - calming and relaxing a busy mind, a form of self-care in and of itself. Getting moving also floods the body with the 'happy hormones' whilst fresh air and sunlight boost Vitamin D levels.

### Hints 'n' Tips

- Any time that suits you is good to go out with the camera. It could be the quiet early mornings when the light is new or the Golden Hour of the early evening when the light itself is "golden"...
- En route to your desired location, start to think like a photographer. Imagine yourself on a shoot, imagine yourself as a photographer.
- Use the first 15 minutes to warm up. Photography is certainly not about being in one position all the time. You have to get used to getting into unusual positions. If you are able to do a physical warm up, then do one that is right for you. Here's what I do -

BEND • STRETCH • LUNGE • PIVOT • CROUCH



Photo by Kathryn Rattray

- Make mistakes, don't worry if it doesn't look right the first time. Keep shooting and moving all the time. Sometimes photographers will get exactly the shot they need first time. Think about watching the paparazzi or nature photographers on TV, with the constant clicking as they push the button and or the flash going off again and again as the paparazzi try to get their shot.
- Practice taking 1-10 pics of the same thing, adjusting your depth and distance from the object. This lets you see the object in different ways and angles, don't be afraid to try new perspectives of the same thing to see what you like.



- Work with light, find shadows and contrast. You can see how the light is hitting the leaves in this shot, creating lots of interesting shadow.
- Look for shape, form and texture.

- Think of composition, how you want to frame your photo. This photo of lavender uses the rule of thirds – it positions the lavender 2 thirds of the way into the picture because our brains prefer seeing things on the left or the right rather than right in the middle. You can use the grid function on your camera to position things left or right.

- Break the rules - go for it!
- Stop, take your time and slow it all down.
- Most importantly, have fun! It's all about embracing the 7/7 Movement Method.





# PAUSE AND REFLECT

WHAT DID YOU CONNECT WITH?

A large rectangular area with a red border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing.

# WORKOUT RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5 MINUTES

- The Fitness Marshall – 5 minute dance videos to pop tracks:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheFitnessMarshall/videos>
- Lottie Murphy - Restful night sleep pilates:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIE1FPNDQTs>

## 10 MINUTES

- Jessamyn Stanley – 8 minute yoga for self-love:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdIX8auOH\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdIX8auOH_M)
- Yoga with Adrienne – 10 minute yoga for self-care:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VpW33Celubg>
- Tonic – 10 minute pilates for beginners:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9yRDQhzb0A>

## 15 MINUTES

- The Body Coach – 15 minute HIIT home workout (Beginner Workout Series, Workout 1): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSXR6V9q6rM>
- The Body Coach – 15 minute advanced HIIT home workout:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2DhV7Gr8wQ>
- Kukuwa African Dance Fitness: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kv3mGwG-rtE>
- Jessica Smith TV – 1 mile walk and talk: gratitude and goals:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLqDUsh17o0>

## 20 MINUTES

- The Body Coach – 7 Days of Sweat HIIT workouts:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXmdXilQaqA>
- Cosy yoga flow for bedtime: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHZPtn15agE>
- Gentle chair yoga: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1DYH5ud3zHo>
- Ashley Freeman – Seated upper body workout, wheelchair and disability friendly: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCF0gm1YZeM>

## 30 MINUTES PLUS

- Yoga with Adrienne – Yoga for beginners:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQ6NfF1r2jw>
- Aerobics for people with limited mobility and everyone else:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sn57z\\_sAls4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sn57z_sAls4)
- All-levels cardio dance workout: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBtP7008EfA>
- Lottie Murphy – Ultimate Pilates Toning Workout:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQRoS0KsQBo>

# 7/7 MOVEMENT METHOD

If you'd like to have a go at Kathryn's *7/7 Movement Method* photography masterclass, you can use the space below to get your thoughts and ideas down on paper.

## MASTERCLASS PLANNER

Your goal:

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Theme ideas:

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Location ideas:

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Photo submitted to *Together, Alone*

## WHAT ABOUT WHEN SELF-CARE DOESN'T GO FAR ENOUGH?

It might be that the way you are feeling right now is that self-care just isn't enough for you. If that's the case, please don't turn that around against yourself or take it as any kind of failing. There are other people out there who can help you when you are feeling this way. There are services you can reach out to for emotional and practical support with whatever is going on that may feel like too much right now.

As one woman told us:

***“I think the idea that we're all working from the same base line level of achievement is actually really harmful.”***

***Y'know, everyone has their own baseline for what is a good day. It's only by consistently achieving your personal idea of a good day that you're ever able to advance beyond that. If you're always reaching for someone else's idea and never making it, then you're never going to motivate yourself to go any further because you're going to feel like you're failing.”***

If you just don't have the capacity or time to focus on yourself at the moment, you could also try doing one thing from our list of speedy self-care tips on the following page.

## QUICK TIPS AND TOOLS

- Do 1 thing, just 1 thing, that you enjoy. Purely for yourself, whether it takes 5 minutes or 50. You deserve time to do things that you like. Sometimes it can be hard to remember the things you enjoy, or you feel paralysed by choice and can think of too many things you would like to do. How about writing a few of your favourite activities in your phone's notes app or on a bit of paper that you can refer to when you're feeling stuck?
- Look for the hope – write down 1 thing you are grateful for each day. This can be something small like “it didn't rain today and I could get the washing out” or “I had a really nice chat with my neighbour”. Small things deserve to be celebrated just as much as big things.
- Ground yourself in the moment – here is a meditation a woman kindly shared with us.
- BREATHE. Breathe in for 4 and out for 4. Do this for 2 minutes. This video might help you to focus on your breath for a short while.
- Go outside – even for 5 minutes – breathe in some new air and change your scene. If going outside feels a bit much right now, consider opening a window and taking a few minutes to look out.
- Message/phone/email someone you connect with and like. You don't even need to tell them how you feel, just enjoy a brief connection with another person. If you do let them know how you are, you may be surprised at how helpful it can be to tell someone how you are feeling.
- Clean your immediate surroundings. For example, if you've been lying in bed, give your duvet a shake and change into fresh pyjamas. Pick up any cups/plates that might be sitting out and pop them in the sink.
- If you're feeling like you need to freshen up but don't have the energy for a shower or bath, consider using some wet wipes and putting on some moisturiser and body lotion.
- Check in with what your body needs. Are you hungry or thirsty? Consider getting a quick snack – something that you can just grab – and a drink of water to keep yourself hydrated.

## FURTHER SUPPORT

If you feel you need some support, here are some services that can help you:

CLiCK supports women who sell or exchange sex or images. They offer emotional support, as well as a referral to counselling via the Encompass Fund, and support and advocacy to tie in with local mental health services. CLiCK provide confidential webchat sessions and a free helpline (0300 124 5564). Please see [www.click.scot](http://www.click.scot) for operating hours.

Samaritans free helpline is available round the clock on 116 123. You can also email them at [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org) or write them a letter.

Breathing Space is a confidential phonenumber for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16, feeling low, anxious or depressed. Their number is 0800 83 85 87 and they are open:

- Weekdays: Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am
- Weekend: Friday 6pm-Monday 6am

Rape Crisis Scotland helpline is usually open from 6pm to midnight, 7 days a week on 0808 8010 302, You can also find your local rape crisis centre [here](#).

Scotland's Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline is available 24/7 on 0800 027 1234. You can also find your local Women's Aid [here](#).

The Revenge Porn Helpline is currently operating an email only service due to the Coronavirus pandemic. You can contact them at [help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk](mailto:help@revengepornhelpline.org.uk)

Umbrella Lane are a peer led sex worker organisation who can provide emotional and practical support to anyone involved in selling or exchanging sex or images. They have also linked with Wellbeing Scotland to provide free counselling sessions.

You can also speak to your local GP if you feel comfortable to see what options there are for mental health support for you locally.

- [CLiCK Magazine Online](https://www.clickmagazine.online/): <https://www.clickmagazine.online/>
- [CLiCK Support Website](https://www.click.scot/): <https://www.click.scot/>
- [Encompass Network](https://www.encompassnetwork.info/), Scotland's network supporting those involved in selling or exchanging sex: <https://www.encompassnetwork.info/>
- [Umbrella Lane](https://www.umbrellalane.org/), peer support for those involved in selling or exchanging sex: <https://www.umbrellalane.org/>

## Together, Alone

- [Masterclasses](https://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-masterclass.html): <https://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-masterclass.html>
- [Blogs](https://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-blog.html): <https://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-blog.html>
- [Tips and Tools](https://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-tips-and-tools.html): <https://www.clickmagazine.online/together-alone-tips-and-tools.html>

## Tips and Tools

### Grounding

- Introduction to Mindfulness:
  - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness/>
  - <https://www.headspace.com/mindfulness/mindfulness-101>
- Breathing Exercises:
  - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress/>
  - <https://www.healthline.com/health/breathing-exercise#belly-breathing>
  - <https://www.roseproject.co.uk/content/support-resources-breathing/>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXItOY0sLRY>
- Grounding Exercises:
  - <https://www.roseproject.co.uk/content/support-resources-grounding>
  - <https://www.ercc.scot/calm/>
  - <http://www.new-synapse.com/aps/wordpress/?p=1938>
- Self Help guide for stress: <https://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/stress.asp>
- Self-Compassion: <https://self-compassion.org/>

## Connection

- How to use an emotions wheel: <https://www.wellandgood.com/feelings-wheel/>
- Mindful journaling prompts: <https://psychcentral.com/blog/30-journaling-prompts-for-self-reflection-and-self-discovery/>

## Joy

- How to start a gratitude journal:
  - <https://www.wikihow.com/Start-a-Gratitude-Journal>
  - <https://headspace.org.au/blog/how-to-start-a-gratitude-journal/>

## Comfort

- How to create a comfort box: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/>

## Movement

- Gentle Yoga with Adrienne Routine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHZPtn15agE>
- Yoga at your desk routine: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDbD1LeJwus>
- Exercise for mental health: how to get started: <https://www.lovelyanxiousbrain.com/exercise-for-mental-health-how-to-get-started/>
- How to stay motivated to exercise when you have anxiety: <https://happiful.com/how-to-stay-motivated-to-exercise-when-you-have-anxiety/>



Photo submitted to *Together, Alone*

**Thanks again to everyone who took part in *Together, Alone* and helped to build this collective toolkit by being part of discussions, providing tips and tools, writing blogs and trying out masterclasses. We hope that you have found something useful in here to add to your own self-care at the moment. We would love to hear any other tips and tools that you find helpful.**

**Take care and try to remember that you are so important and you deserve time, care and attention.**