

A vibrant field of sunflowers under a soft, overcast sky. The foreground features a large, detailed sunflower with bright yellow petals and a dark brown, textured center. The background is filled with many other sunflowers, some in focus and some blurred, creating a sense of depth. The overall mood is peaceful and optimistic.

# My Power Journal

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE





Publisher: MIELI Mental Health Finland Ry

Content: Leila El Krekshi

Graphic Design: Fiorenza Marani

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Hug.

mieli

REACH FOR  
CHANGE

# My Power Journal

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE

This book belongs to \_\_\_\_\_

## Content and tools

My Power journal is designed for all of us in need of some motivation to get through the day, our focus is to encourage users from the multicultural community to promote their mental well-being. We want you to embrace your diversity and mental health for a happier and more balanced lifestyle. Keep this journal with you, in your bag, use it while sipping your cup of coffee or as a break during the day to reflect on what is going on.

We have put together checklists, lifestyle exercises, daily quotes to inspire your day and a daily check-in tool to acknowledge what went through the day and to help you build a journaling habit.

Journaling is a powerful tool to declutter our minds, enabling us to be more objective. It is a tool for self-reflection as well as self-care and it provides a free space where one can write important experiences. It helps process an experience, to get emotions out without judgement. It can also help reduce stress. Write whatever comes to mind, do not criticize it or judge it. In other words, you can vent as much as you want... If there are days you do not feel like writing, do not worry about it. Instead, use the quotes, and other tools we put together in this booklet for inspiration, observation and exploration.

This is for you:

- when you feel you need some motivation to get through the day. After all we all have bad days and we all have times when we doubt ourselves and are even a bit hard on ourselves;
- to get inspired and get action oriented ideas to get through stressful situations;
- to give you guidance, to help clear your mind and become the best version of yourself;
- to take a deep breath, and remind yourself that you do possess tools and strengths to get through this;
- as a reminder that you are amazing, and you have what it takes to get through what life may throw at you;
- as a tool to help you feel more, do more and be more...

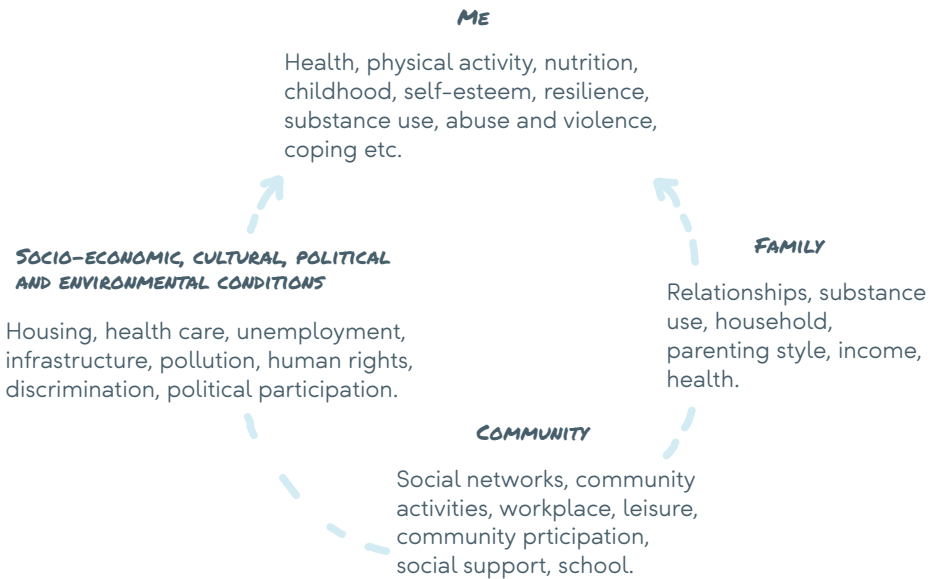
Are you ready for this? If yes...

**YOUR JOURNEY STARTS HERE**

# MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a key resource for our general well-being. Without mental health there is no health. Just as much as we take care of our physical well-being, we need to take care of our mental well-being. Mental health includes psychological, physical, social and spiritual dimensions. It is our ability as individuals to realize our own potential, the ability to cope with stress, and to recognise the protective and risk factors. It is also our ability to sustain healthy relationships and to positively contribute to society.

Mental health internal and external factors:



Establishing a healthy routine is essential for our well-being. The choices we make in our daily lives can have an impact on our mental health. Sometimes, we can be extremely busy, or worried about a particular event. Whatever stressors those may be, we tend to put ourselves last and not necessarily take good care of ourselves. This may affect how we treat ourselves, and how we deal with others.

For instance: you had a bad argument at work, you have a tight deadline coming up. You have been stressed due to the pressure, you cannot sleep, and you are not eating properly. This accumulation, worries, not sleeping and eating properly, can make you grumpy, overwhelmed, and unable to concentrate.

We tend to naturally take care of certain areas of well-being while ignoring others and we like staying in our comfort zone. When we make changes, we often set unrealistic goals and want to change everything at once. However it is more important to proceed with smaller and more realistic steps. Developing a healthy lifestyle, mentally and physically, is a continuous process that has a positive impact on you and on people around you. There are five key components that affect our lives and that are necessary for us to keep our lives in balance.

These are the five areas where you can make changes on your own:

#### Food & Nutrition

What did you eat during the day?  
Did you remember to snack?  
Who did you enjoy your meals with?  
Did you eat leisurely or were you in a rush?

#### Sleep & Rest

Did you sleep well?  
What time did you go to bed?  
Did you wake up refreshed?  
Did you have time to relax and rest?

#### Playing & Creativity

Did you do something creative?  
Which fun things did you do today?  
What is beautiful in your eyes?  
What kinds of stories do you like?

#### Relationships & Emotions

How was your mood today?  
What made you happy or sad?  
Did you tell someone about your emotions?  
Who did you meet today?  
What will you do with your family?

#### Exercise & Moving Together

Did you climb, run, crawl, dance or jump today?  
What is the best kind of exercise?  
Would you like to learn a somersault?  
How does exercise make you feel?



Use these questions to help you keep track of the way your life is proceeding.

## SELF CARE CHECK-LIST

Tick the day when you succeeded in doing these activities that help improve your lifestyle.

	m	t	w	t	f	s	s
I had a good sleep	✓						
I exercised							
I spent time outdoors							
I kept myself hydrated. I had water throughout the day							
I did not smoke							
I did not drink alcohol							
I had nourishing healthy breakfast, lunch and dinner							

	m	t	w	t	f	s	s
I did not skip a meal today							
I took a few breaks during work							
I took some deep breaths in and out							
I meditated and practiced deep relaxation							
I helped a friend							
I socialised							
I spoke about how I feel							

# CHECK IN

Feel the feeling, but do not become the emotion. Witness it. Allow it. Release it. Take a moment and observe.

How do you feel today?

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excited	not confident	frustrated	grateful	annoyed
uncertain	strong	stressed	relaxed	disappointed
guilty	nervous	bored	calm	sad
empowered	unhappy	motivated	safe	tensed
energetic	inspired	unsafe	loved	negative
weak	content	.....	.....	.....

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## JOURNAL DAY 1

"HOME IS WHERE YOU ARE APPRECIATED, SAFE, PROTECTED, CREATIVE  
AND WHERE YOU ARE LOVED - NOT WHERE YOU ARE PUT IN A PRISON."  
NAWAL AL SAADAWI - FEMINIST WRITER AND PSYCHIATRIST - EGYPT

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## JOURNAL DAY 2

"YOU CANNOT TURN THE WIND SO TURN YOUR SAIL."

UNKNOWN SWAHILI PROVERB - EAST AFRICA

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## JOURNAL DAY 3

"NO ONE IS BORN HATING ANOTHER PERSON BECAUSE OF THE COLOUR OF HIS SKIN, OR HIS BACKGROUND, OR HIS RELIGION. PEOPLE MUST LEARN TO HATE, AND IF THEY CAN LEARN TO HATE, THEY CAN BE TAUGHT TO LOVE, FOR LOVE COMES MORE NATURALLY TO THE HUMAN HEART THAN ITS OPPOSITE."

NELSON MANDELA - ANTI-APARTHEID REVOLUTIONARY AND FORMER PRESIDENT  
OF SOUTH AFRICA - SOUTH AFRICA

## MY STRENGTHS AND VALUES

**K**nowing your strengths can improve your life satisfaction, your relationships, enhance health and help manage and overcome problems. Research has suggested that everyone possesses strengths that can be used to improve the quality of their life. An individual's motivation to have a better life stems from the focus on his/her strengths. What we mean by strengths are our inner capacities and how we think, behave and feel. We all possess unique strengths that once identified we can tap into to have a more fruitful life.

Go through the following strengths.

Identify what you view as your strengths as follows:

**MY TOP STRENGTHS**

**MY MIDDLE STRENGTHS**

**MY LESSER STRENGTHS**

**Supportive** .....

You encourage and support others.

**Honest** .....

You value integrity and authenticity.

**Hopeful** .....

You are optimistic about good things to come.

**Cautious** .....

You do not take unrealistic risks, cautious.

**Fair** .....

You treat others equally and with respect. You are objective, you don't let feelings affect your decisions.

**Trustworthy** .....

You do what you promise, and take ownership of your communal responsibilities.

**Sensitive** .....

You observe in depth both internally and the world around you. You sense and feel strongly.

**Modest** .....

You are able to self reflect on your own strengths and weaknesses and you have control over arrogance.

**Reflective** .....

You weigh things up precisely and constructively before you act, say or choose.

**Friendly** .....

You are cordial, polite and well-intentioned and treat others like a true friend should.

**Enthusiastic** .....

You have the zest, energy and enthusiasm.

**Loving** .....

You are able to both love and be loved.

**Disciplined** .....

You are able to have discipline, to regulate impulses and emotions.

**Optimistic** .....

You face the future with confidence and with a positive outlook.

**Conscious leader** .....

You focus on "we" rather than "me". You inspire positive transformation and bring out the best in others. You stay focused on the bigger purpose.

**Joyful** .....

You have a great sense of humour that allows you to see the funny side of life. You help others relax, and can also have a good laugh at yourself!

**Forgiving** .....

You are able to see shortcomings in others, and in yourself, you are merciful, and you give second chances.

**Critical thinker** .....

You are able to analyse and evaluate a situation in order to form a sound judgment. Open mindedness.

**Creative** .....

You see new synergies between things. You think out of the box, allowing you to develop exceptional ideas and concepts.

**Curious** .....

You show interest, and have a penchant for seeking new experiences, knowledge, and an openness to change.

**Brave** .....

You show strength in facing fear, danger, or difficult situations. You also show moral strength in speaking for what is right.

**Persistent** .....

You are persevering and do not give up easily. You are resilient and tenacious, even when things don't go to plan.

**Socially in tune** .....

You have a good understanding of interactions between people. You are a competent conversationalist, a good listener and can boost the overall atmosphere in any company.



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## JOURNAL DAY 4

"YOU HAVE POWER OVER YOUR MIND, NOT OUTSIDE EVENTS. REALIZE  
THIS AND YOU WILL FIND STRENGTH."

MARCUS AURELIUS - ROMAN EMPEROR AND PHILOSOPHER - ITALY

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## JOURNAL DAY 5

"WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT, WHICH IS GREAT, BECAUSE WE ARE ALL  
UNIQUE. WITHOUT DIVERSITY LIFE WOULD BE VERY BORING."

CATHERINE PULSIFER - AUTHOR - USA

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## JOURNAL DAY 6

"LETTING GO GIVES US FREEDOM, AND FREEDOM IS THE ONLY CONDITION  
FOR HAPPINESS. IF, IN OUR HEART, WE STILL CLING TO ANYTHING—  
ANGER, ANXIETY, OR POSSESSIONS—WE CANNOT BE FREE."

THICH NHAT HANH - VIETNAMESE BUDDHIST MONK AND PEACE ACTIVIST  
- VIETNAM

# WHAT DO I DO WHEN I MAKE MISTAKES?





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## JOURNAL DAY 7

"COFFEE SHOULD NOT BE DRUNK IN A HURRY. IT IS THE SISTER OF TIME,  
AND SHOULD BE SIPPED SLOWLY, SLOWLY. COFFEE IS THE SOUND OF TASTE, A  
SOUND FOR THE AROMA. IT IS A MEDITATION AND A PLUNGE INTO MEMO-  
RIES AND THE SOUL."

MAHMOUD DARWISH - POET - PALESTINE

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JOURNAL DAY 8

"NOBODY DESERVES YOUR TEARS. BUT WHOEVER DESERVES THEM  
WILL NOT MAKE YOU CRY."

GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ - AUTHOR - COLOMBIA

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## JOURNAL DAY 9

"WE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW STRONG WE ARE UNTIL WE ARE FORCED TO BRING THAT HIDDEN STRENGTH FORWARD. IN TIMES OF TRAGEDY, OF WAR, OF NECESSITY, PEOPLE DO AMAZING THINGS. THE HUMAN CAPACITY FOR SURVIVAL AND RENEWAL IS AWESOME."

ISABEL ALLENDE - AUTHOR - CHILE

## MY SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

Who needs a support network? Well... We all do! Having a good social support network is vital for our mental health and our well-being. Being able to share our thoughts and emotions and opening up to someone who cares can be very beneficial. It is important to reach out so that people are aware of what you are dealing with. Often we assume that people know what we are dealing with, or that people will not understand because they did not go through the situation themselves or due to cultural differences. But until you reach out it is difficult for people to know what you are going through and how they could possibly support you.

After all, if someone you know was struggling and needed support, wouldn't you want to know and help them? Think about who are the important people in your life. They can be close ones or even distant ones.

## MAPPING AND BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

When building a network it is useful to consider having a mix of different people as this will help you have different perspectives and will allow you to see issues from different points of view. Having a diverse range of people in your support network also ensures that you do not rely too much on one or two individuals and exhaust them. To build your network, first recognize the support that you already have and the strengths they may bring to various situations. Then you can begin to identify where the gaps might lie and expand your contacts.

Example of support: family members, friends, colleagues, neighbours, casual acquaintances and friends of friends, social worker, personal trainer, teacher, community e.g. sports club, faith-based communities, peer support group, social media group etc...



### NOTE

Remember that people in your support network and their importance in your life might change depending on your life situation, and that is totally fine. While having a support network is beneficial for our well-being, remember that we all need to respect boundaries. Support is good but we should not expect others to fix our problems, and do things for us while we are not making any effort to change. Ask yourself what does helping others mean to you.

## MAPPING MY NETWORK



My current social support network: who are they?

A large, light blue rounded rectangular box with a dotted grid pattern, intended for writing the names of people in the user's social support network.



What are their strengths?

A large, light blue rounded rectangular box with a dotted grid pattern, intended for describing the strengths of the individuals in the user's social support network.

## BUILDING MY NETWORK



What kind of support do I need?

Where can I find it?

What challenges do I see in finding support?

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JOURNAL DAY 10

"TOXIC PEOPLE MAKE YOU THINK YOU'RE HOLDING A GRUDGE  
WHEN YOU'RE REALLY HOLDING A BOUNDARY."

MEL ROBBINS - AUTHOR - USA

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## JOURNAL DAY 11

"HOLD ON TO YOUR FAITH, YOUR LOVE, AND YOUR STUBBORNNESS;  
THAT IS WHAT MATTERS THE MOST."

SERHIY ZHADAN - AUTHOR - UKRAINE

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JOURNAL DAY 12

"ONE GOOD THING ABOUT MUSIC IS WHEN IT HITS YOU, YOU FEEL  
NO PAIN."

BOB MARLEY - SINGER - JAMAICA

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS MEAN HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

Strong and good relationships are important for our own well-being. First, it is the relationship with ourselves, then our family, friends, workplace or school, the community and the society as a whole. The sense of belonging is also a key contributor to our mental health. All types of relationships count, whether it is romance, friendship, family or work relations. It is important to recognise that unhappy and toxic relations are more destructive than being alone.

People who build positive relationships:

- respect boundaries
- listen to each other without judgement and give space for being heard and supported
- make time to connect with people
- are present and when they are with friends and family, they focus on cherishing the moment instead of checking the phone or work emails
- are able to express their feelings in a safe space and be honest

### SIGNS OF HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Open communication  
Respect for each other  
Strong sense of trust  
Shared values  
Realistic expectations  
You enjoy time together  
You enjoy time apart  
You inspire and support each other  
Healthy disagreements  
Healthy boundaries  
You have a sense of belonging  
You are yourself  
Feeling safe  
Shared decision making  
Constructive feedback

### SIGNS OF UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

Regular criticism  
Feeling of being put down and guilt trips  
Withdrawal of affection  
Disrespect  
Unconstructive communication  
Humiliation and embarrassment  
Feeling unsafe  
Compulsive lying  
Threats with violence  
Physical and/or emotional violence using threats and intimidation  
Financial control  
Manipulation  
Constant blaming  
No apologies

Setting boundaries is important in any kind of relationship. They allow us to be comfortable and develop positive self-esteem, confidence and emotional balance. Personal boundaries are physical, emotional and mental limits that we need to establish with ourselves in order to identify our safe ways that we allow others to interact with us. It is not about putting a wall and not allowing people in. It is about taking responsibility for our own actions and emotions, being able to say "No" to others, while letting others take responsibility for their own actions or emotions.

When boundaries are unclear, responsibilities are also unclear. This may lead to confusion and to excessive and displaced blame. Establishing healthy and clear boundaries is about knowing who you are, what you want, your values and limits.

### HOW DO I MAINTAIN MY BOUNDARIES?

Identify your needs and what kind of boundary you want



Communicate and say what you need in a constructive way and with respect



Breathe, regroup yourself and sustain with vigor and confidence



Keep it simple, stay confident, you do not need to overexplain

Say why it is important with objectivity



Respect others' needs

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What does this feeling signal?



What would you experience if you let go of this feeling?



What would you feel if you held onto that feeling?



Do you have control over the causes? How long do you think this feeling will last? Will this feeling or situation really matter tomorrow, or later?



What are you grateful for today? Write down three things:



What is your happy hour of the day?

## JOURNAL DAY 13

"YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW YOURSELF. YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT IGNITES YOUR MAGIC, WHAT FIRES YOUR SOUL INTO PERFORMING MAJESTIC ACTS OF LOVE. YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW YOURSELF SO MUCH THAT NOT EVEN HUNDRED VOICES WILL DROWN YOURS. YOU'VE GOT TO OWN YOURSELF, THIS JOURNEY IS ALL YOURS. ALL YOURS. NO ONE CAN DO IT AND YOU DECIDE WHENEVER YOU ARE READY TO EMBARK ON IT. UNLEARN, LEARN, MASTER YOURSELF AND LOVE YOURSELF, OR ELSE THEY WILL DEFINE YOU AND THAT'S A POISONOUS KIND OF LIFE. THAT'S DEATH."

IJEOMA UMEBINYUO - POET - NIGERIA

# CHECK IN

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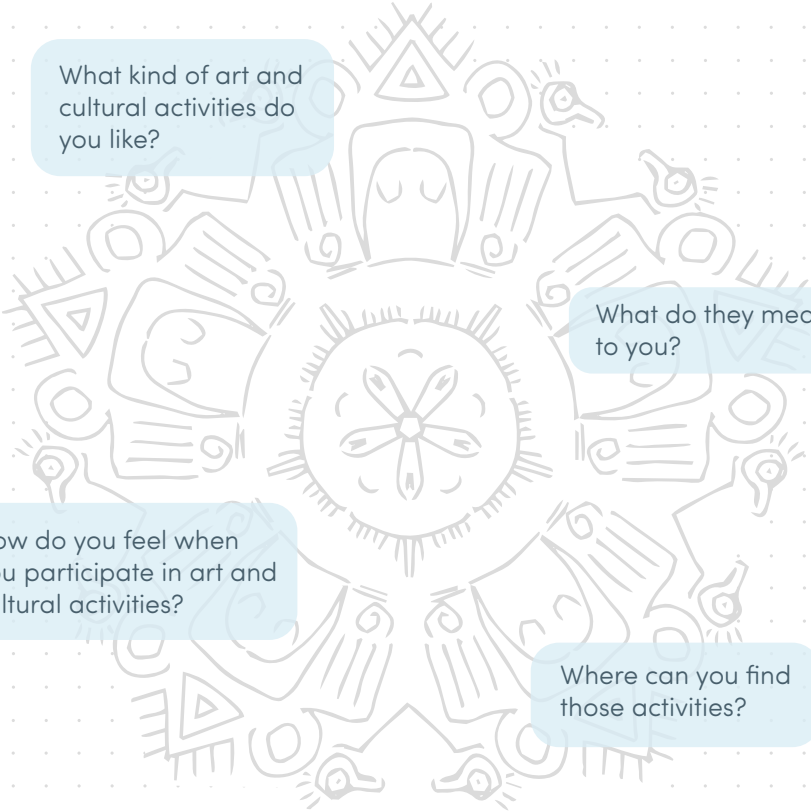
## JOURNAL DAY 14

"IF YOU CRY BECAUSE THE SUN HAS GONE OUT OF YOUR LIFE,  
YOUR TEARS WILL PREVENT YOU FROM SEEING THE STARS."

RABINDRANATH TAGORE - POET - INDIA

## ARTS AND CULTURE

A number of research has proven the positive effect of arts and cultural activities on mental health and social connection. A report from the World Health Organization has shown that engaging with arts can be beneficial for both mental and physical health. Arts and creativity can be a different and fun way to express and talk about emotions and to release stress. The social connections created through arts and culture help with various challenges such as ageing and loneliness. By arts and culture we mean various types of visual and performing arts, such as sculpture, digital art, writing, dance, film, literature, music, singing, painting, photography, as well as going to museums, concerts, and theatre etc.



What kind of art and cultural activities do you like?

What do they mean to you?

How do you feel when you participate in art and cultural activities?

Where can you find those activities?



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## JOURNAL DAY 15

"I AM NOTHING, I WILL NEVER BE ANYTHING, I COULD NOT WANT  
TO BE SOMETHING. APART FROM THAT I HAVE IN ME ALL THE  
DREAMS IN THE WORLD."

FERNANDO PESSOA - POET - PORTUGAL

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"ART IS A WOUND TURNED INTO LIGHT."

GEORGE BRAQUE - ARTIST - FRANCE

## SMALL STEPS TO BEING MORE MINDFUL - NOW -



Slowly breathe in, breathe out, feel the air gently flowing through your nostrils.



Engage your senses: when eating, notice the smells, textures, colors, and flavors of each food bite you take. Notice how the food texture changes as you chew each bite thoroughly.



Clear your mind, take a few moments to be still.



If your mind wanders off, observe the thoughts, acknowledge them, and let them be. Bring your attention back to your breath.



Practice listening without judgment.



Go out, walk around nature and observe the beauty of things around you.



Forgive yourself for negative thoughts.



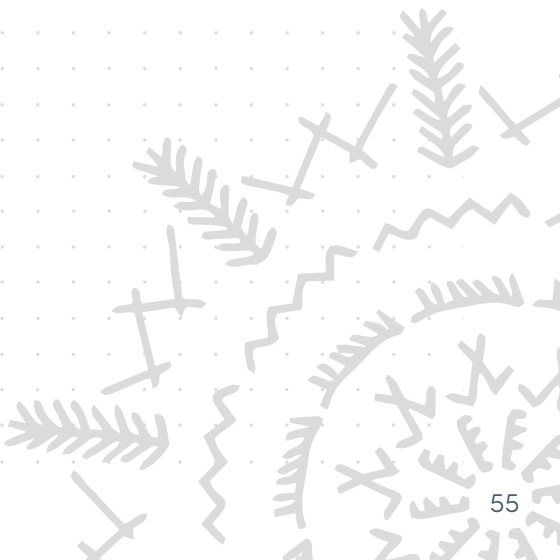
Be grateful – Say thank you to nature, people and things.



Be you. Be proud of who you are. Acknowledge the things you may not be good at, but also recognise and focus on the things you are good at.



Life is a cycle. Don't be too hard on yourself. Take small steps towards positive change.



## A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Our body and mind need good sleep to rest and recover. A good sleep does not just mean sleeping a lot, it also means a good quality of sleep. Sleep affects our ability to function, communicate, and concentrate. If we compromise on our sleep, we compromise on our performance, our moods, and on our relationships including work relationships.

### SLEEP BETTER...YES BUT HOW?



Sleep around 7 – 9 hours.



Keep the same routine, going to bed and waking up the same time every day.



Turn off your phone and all your electronic gadgets one hour before going to bed.



Eat healthy food and get regular exercise. However, avoid exercising or eating heavy meals after mid-evening or too close to your bedtime.



Avoid caffeine, tea, alcohol and other substances before going to bed.



Change your bedding regularly.



Check the quality of your mattress and pillow. Too soft

or too hard? Depending on the person, some mattresses can cause physical pain, and disrupt your sleep.



Ventilate the room before going to bed.



Go for a walk, or practice deep relaxation before going to bed. This may help you sleep better. Deep relaxation and stress relief breathing techniques help you release mental and physical tensions and prepare you for a good sleep.



Keep a sleep diary. The amount of light, noise, other distractions and temperature of your room can affect your sleep. Make note of these conditions, your state of mind, your eating and exercise habits to see what works and what does not work for you.



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## JOURNAL DAY 17

"WE ARE ONE WITH THE LAND SACRED AND UNIQUE. ALL OF US BELONG,  
AND WE CELEBRATE TOGETHER. WE FEEL DADIRRI (DEEP LISTENING), THE  
DEEP SPRING THAT IS INSIDE US. WE CALL ON IT AND IT CALLS TO US. WHEN  
WE LISTEN TO THE LAND WE ARE MADE WHOLE AGAIN."

MIRIAM ROSEUNGUMMERR BAUMANN - ABORIGINAL ACTIVIST, AND ARTIST  
- AUSTRALIA

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JOURNAL DAY 18

"HAPPINESS IS NOT SOMETHING READY MADE. IT COMES FROM  
YOUR OWN ACTIONS."

THE DALAI LAMA - SPIRITUAL LEADER - TIBET

## LET'S MOVE

Physical exercise has a positive impact both on our physical and mental well-being. We often think that exercising means that we have to go to the gym to exercise. But that is not the case. Even just a short 10 minute walk in fresh air can increase our energy, positive mood and keep us more mentally focused.

Physical exercise helps:

- to boost our mood and energy levels
- to manage the impact of stress
- to improve our self-confidence and self-esteem

### I AM READY TO EXERCISE... WHERE DO I START?



Deciding that you will start exercising is the first step  
– Congratulations!



Consider whether you want to start a new sport for the sake of moving, relaxing, strengthening or a mixture of everything. It does not have to be one way. Be creative, and remember that even going for a walk or gardening are forms of physical activity.



Reassess your schedule. How do you include it in your routine? What time can you exercise? You may need to consider making adjustments in your timetable and possibly looking at your priorities again.



Identify what activity would best suit your needs and current situation, including costs.



Establish a reasonable goal for yourself.



Don't rush... Start gradually so your body can slowly adapt to a new active lifestyle, and to build your energy and strength avoiding injuries.



At work or at school, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or go for a short walk around the block during your lunch break.



Use a bike as a means of transport, or get off the train or bus one stop earlier.



If you prefer to be at home, make your household activity such as cleaning more energetic and vigorous, or you can also sign up for online classes.

## LET'S MOVE: GOAL SETTING AND STAYING MOTIVATED

**A** more hands-on approach to start your workout journey. Setting up goals that are designed to help you succeed. Remember to be realistic about what you want and positive when answering the questions.

### INITIAL GOAL

Write the goal you have in mind.

What do you want to accomplish? Who needs to be included? When do you want to start?

Do you have the skills required to achieve the goal? If not, can you obtain them? Can someone help you?

### LOCATION

Where can you start? Do you need a specific location(s)? Identify them for each specific needs if necessary.

## RELEVANCE

Why am I setting this goal now? Is it aligned with overall objectives?

## TIME

What is my current schedule? How do I include it in my daily routine?  
What time can I exercise? You may need to consider making adjustments in your timetable and possibly looking at your priorities again.

What is the deadline for my goal? Is it realistic?

## COST

Can I afford it? How do I adjust?



**REVIEW:** Check what you wrote, and based on your answers see if it makes sense or if you need to redesign your plan.

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## JOURNAL DAY 19

"THE KEY TO COMMUNITY IS THE ACCEPTANCE, IN FACT THE  
CELEBRATION OF OUR INDIVIDUAL AND CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IS  
ALSO KEY TO WORLD PEACE."

SCOTT PECK - PSYCHIATRIST - USA

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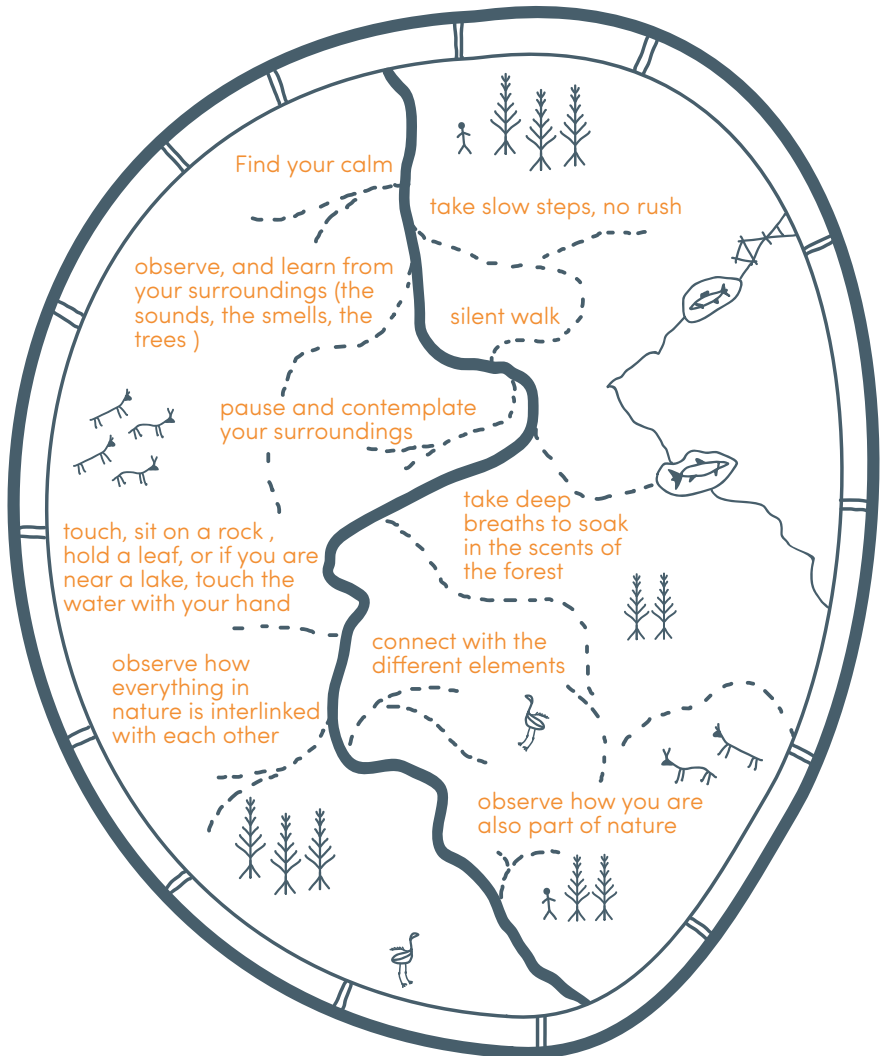
## JOURNAL DAY 20

"FACE YOUR DEFICIENCIES AND ACKNOWLEDGE THEM BUT DO NOT LET THEM MASTER YOU. LET THEM TEACH YOU PATIENCE, SWEETNESS, AND INSIGHT."

HELEN KELLER - AUTHOR AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST - USA

## NATURE LOVE - MINDFUL FOREST WALK

In Japan, they call it *shinrin-yoku* – literally, "forest bathing." But we can call it forest walking. Science has proven the immense mental and physical benefits we get from walking in the forest. Walking for one or two hours in the forest enhances our immune function, reduces levels of stress hormones and lowers blood pressure. In countries like Finland, we are blessed to have nature just at our doorstep, even when living in the city.





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JOURNAL DAY 21

"ROOTS ARE NOT IN THE LANDSCAPE, OR A COUNTRY, OR PEOPLE  
... THEY ARE INSIDE YOU."

ISABEL ALENDE - AUTHOR - CHILE

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JOURNAL DAY 22

"TURN YOUR FACE TO THE SUN, AND THE SHADOWS FALL BEHIND YOU."

MAORI PROVERB - NEW ZEALAND

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"YOUR TASK IS NOT TO SEEK FOR LOVE, BUT MERELY TO SEEK AND  
FIND ALL THE BARRIERS WITHIN YOURSELF THAT YOU HAVE BUILT  
AGAINST IT."

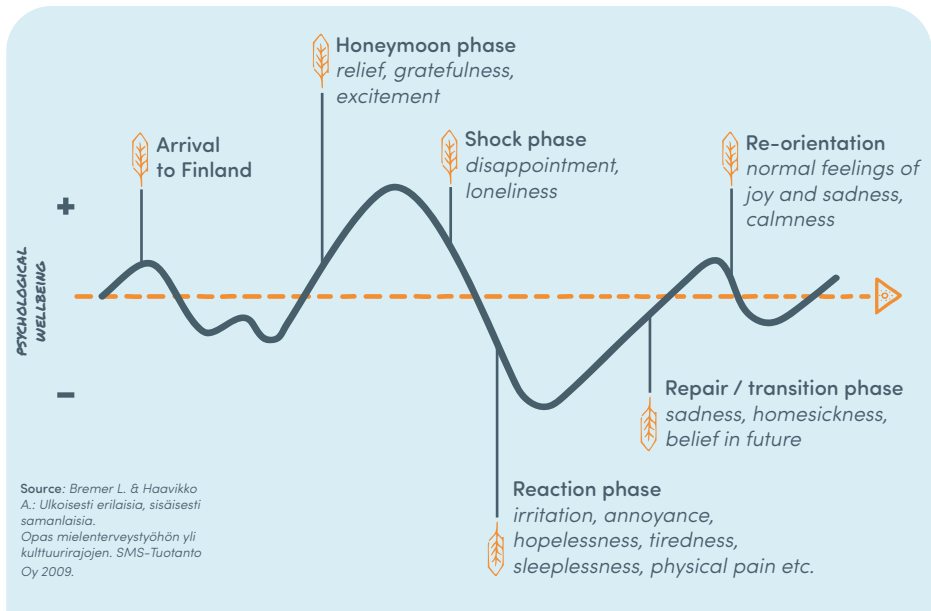
RUMI - SUFI POET - AFGHANISTAN / TURKEY

## HOW DO YOU BOUNCE BACK

Life is a cycle. There are periods in our lives when we are well, and other times when we feel we just can't take it anymore. Stress and different types of crises are part of our lives. A number of events can happen in one's life: for example, loss of job, a conflict, a divorce, moving to a new country, discrimination, loss of loved ones, loss of livelihoods etc. On top of that some of us have experienced a form of injustice, such as unfair labour practices, racism, discrimination due to gender orientation, ethnic, religious, or socio-economic and political backgrounds etc. They become part of our journey.

Moving from one country to another is one example when the moving process can turn into a stressful experience and even a crisis. Being away from our homeland, our families and friends and adapting to new cultures and customs, can be exciting but also overwhelming. How we react and deal with what life throws at us differs from one individual to another. Below is a description of the immigration process and the different psychological phases one goes through. As a foreigner in a new country, understanding the various phases and emotional reactions one might experience during the immigration process, can help better deal with the new challenges. It also helps realise that the emotional reactions do not last and are part of the process.

### IMMIGRATION: A PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESS



### Enthusiastic anticipation

When we arrive to a new country, the first reaction is often relief. This stage can be exciting and fascinating for some, and for those who have fled wars or natural disasters and been displaced can be overwhelming with mixed feelings. Feelings of ambivalence, grief, or even devaluation of the host culture may coexist with gratitude for safety and hope. All of these responses are valid and should be acknowledged as natural parts of the integration journey. Often this first stage is called the “honeymoon stage” as it is the start of a new beginning and future looks better.

### Conflict of aspirations and possibilities

Attitudes towards a new country and its culture become more realistic when a person has been in the country for a while: One may face challenges everywhere. We start to see the downsides in the new country, such as difficulty to get a job, or go to school. The home country seems to be a better place in comparison with the new country. At this point, one often feels uncomfortable and out of place. Feelings of loneliness and disappointment are common: Maybe it wasn't worth coming here after all? Did I make the right choice?

### Strong reactions and emotions

Life becomes stressful and frustrating when there is uncertainty in what the future holds and when there is a lack of balance in the daily routines. Because everything is new in the new country, one has to put more efforts to focus on things. This takes away your strength and energy, and it is emotionally straining and difficult to come to terms with. At the same time, new relationships are to be established to replace family and old friends left behind. Finding a suitable work may not be easy and there may be difficulties with housing and financial matters. These types of situations may trigger strong reactions and emotions that can even seem frightening. However, even strong emotions are an understandable and normal part of the adaptation process. It often makes it easier when you know and are aware that negative emotions are part of the normal immigration process and that this phase does not last.

### Heading up towards stability and balance

Little by little, one starts to see the positive things in the new country and develops a more positive attitude toward the future. The newcomer starts seeing hope, and believing in the possibility of overcoming the challenges he/she is facing. One has more courage to invest in life at both emotional and practical levels. For example, we start building lasting friendships or investing in our own apartment.

Homesickness and sadness are common during this phase. Mourning a loss helps to heal and to look forward to the future and opportunities in the new home country. Mourning is normal and even necessary, it is a sign that you are ready to move on.

As humans we all possess assets, resourceful powers of strength, compassion and adaptation skills to help us get through different situations. Tapping into that resourceful strength is a continuous process and journey that helps us respond to what happens in our lives. But once you start tapping into that energy and inner strength of yours and further develop those skills, you will be able to obtain a much more balanced life. You will be able to see beyond doubt and uncertainty and develop life skills that will help you get where you want to be.



**T**ake a moment to think: what kind of things have been helping and supporting you in a difficult life situation? What coping skills do you identify with?

A large area of dotted lines for writing, consisting of a grid of small dots.

## COPING SKILLS

We often cannot choose what happens to us, but in principle we can choose our own attitude to what happens. In practice it is not always easy, but one of the most exciting findings from recent research is that resilience, like many other life skills, can be learned.

### PHYSIOLOGICAL

- I go for a walk and enjoy the outdoors
- I do my favourite sport
- I relax
- I eat well
- I sleep enough

### CREATIVE

- I use my imagination
- I think positive
- I listen to myself
- I explore new ways to act

### SPIRITUAL

- I seek sanctuary and hope from religion, ideas and values
- I ponder the meaning of life
- I pray, contemplate and quiet down

### SOCIAL

- I spend time with friends
- I attend group hobbies
- I accept/receive support and also I support others
- I share experiences with others

### INTELLECTUAL

- I find out additional information about issues
- I make plans
- I write things down
- I solve problems
- I make lists

### EMOTIONAL

- I laugh, cry, rejoice
- I talk about my feelings
- I express myself and my emotions: I dance, play an instrument, tinker, cook

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"THE MORE ONE IS ABLE TO LEAVE ONE'S CULTURAL HOME, THE MORE EASILY ONE IS ABLE TO JUDGE IT, AND THE WHOLE WORLD AS WELL, WITH THE SPIRITUAL DETACHMENT AND GENEROSITY NECESSARY FOR TRUE VISION. THE MORE EASILY, TOO, DOES ONE ASSESS ONESELF AND ALIEN CULTURES WITH THE SAME COMBINATION OF INTIMACY AND DISTANCE."

EDWARD W. SAID - AUTHOR - PALESTINE

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## JOURNAL DAY 25

"IT IS A COMMON EXPERIENCE THAT A PROBLEM DIFFICULT AT  
NIGHT IS RESOLVED IN THE MORNING AFTER THE COMMITTEE OF  
SLEEP HAS WORKED ON IT."

JOHN STEINBECK - AUTHOR - USA

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"NOTHING IS WORTH MORE THAN LAUGHTER. IT IS STRENGTH TO  
LAUGH AND TO ABANDON ONESELF, TO BE LIGHT."

FRIDA KAHLO - ARTIST - MEXICO

## SELF CARE IN A CRISIS



Hold on to your daily routines: they will provide safety and a sense of continuity in your life.



Take good care of yourself. Exercise, and be as active as you can. Eat healthy food, and remember the importance of sleep.



Be compassionate and patient towards yourself: Things are not easy right now.



Accept the help that is offered.



Return to work or to your activities as soon as possible.



Talk about what happened: it will help you come to terms with the incident in your mind.



Meet others who have experienced the same, in peer support groups for example.



Stay away from intoxicating substances.



Stay away from toxic and negative people.



Cry if that helps.



If intense symptoms continue for more than a month, seek professional help.

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## SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONES AFTER A CRISIS



Ask if they are ok.



By being present.



By taking care of basic needs: food, drink, and warmth.



By listening with compassion and without judgment.



Do not criticise them if they do not want to talk or receive help.



Check in with the person. Follow up with a phone call or visit.



Some situations and conversations are too much to handle for friends and family. If necessary, call a professional for help.

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"WHEN YOU FLEE FROM A WOLF YOU RUN INTO A BEAR."

FINNISH PROVERB - FINLAND

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excited	not confident	frustrated	grateful	annoyed
uncertain	strong	stressed	relaxed	disappointed
guilty	nervous	bored	calm	sad
empowered	unhappy	motivated	safe	tensed
energetic	inspired	unsafe	loved	negative
weak	content	.....	.....	.....

◇ What does this feeling signal?

◇ What would you experience if you let go of this feeling?

◇ What would you feel if you held onto that feeling?

◇ Do you have control over the causes? How long do you think this feeling will last? Will this feeling or situation really matter tomorrow, or later?

◇ What are you grateful for today? Write down three things:

◇ What is your happy hour of the day?

## JOURNAL DAY 28

"WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS THE SAME IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE  
STOPPED NOTICING THE GOOD THINGS THAT APPEAR IN OUR  
LIVES."

PAULO COELHO - AUTHOR - BRAZIL

## Mental health calendar for small positive changes

Here are daily actions to help you improve your wellbeing that you can include in your life routine. Let's get started! Pick one challenge per day to complete.

Start your day by looking at yourself in the mirror, smile and say out loud: "I feel good, I am ready for today. I got this!"

Take a different route to work, school, or market today and see what you notice.

During your break use 5 minutes to do an energising exercise. Notice how you feel afterwards.

Leave your phone at home and go for a nice walk in the park.

Find out about values and traditions of another culture.

What are your most important values? Think how you can use them today.

Identify three strengths you used this week.

Give someone positive feedback today.

Take time to really listen to someone without judgement.

Shift your mood by doing something you enjoy today.

Go to an art exhibition or a cultural event in the theatre, or cultural centre. Take a moment and share how you feel about the experience.

Pick your favorite song and listen to it without distraction.

Call someone who might need help today.

Do something you enjoy for 10 – 30 minutes and write down what you loved about that experience.

Think of three family members or friends or colleagues.  
What strength does each one have?

Set your alarm or calendar alert four times during the day. When it goes off, stop what you do, check in with how you feel and what you need.

Pick a nice recipe you want to make, go to the market, get fresh products and spend quality time cooking a healthy and delicious meal.

Practice deep relaxation before going to bed. This may help you sleep better.

Go for a walk to clear your head when you feel overwhelmed or stressed.

Listen to others, and talk about your feelings.

Turn off your phone and all your electronic gadgets one hour before going to bed.

Notice when you overreact and take three deep breaths in and out.

Think of a time when you went through a crisis and write down three positive things that came out of it.

Start a sport activity you are interested in and ask a friend to join you today.



Go easy on yourself!  
Take small steps towards change.



*When it is  
too  
over-  
whelming,  
asking for  
help is not  
a sign of  
weakness,  
it is a sign  
of **courage.***

## ***Do you need urgent support?***

Do you live in Finland? If you feel you are in a crisis, your emotional well-being is getting worse or know someone else who needs support, call our Crisis Support Line available in Finnish, Swedish and English. All calls are free, anonymous and confidential.

### Crisis helpline

#### **In Finnish**

Open 24 hours everyday  
09 2525 0111

#### **In English**

09 2525 0116

#### **In Swedish**

09 2525 0112

### SOS crisis centre

**In Finnish, English, Swedish and through an interpreter in your mother tongue by appointment**  
09 4135 0510



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