



Replenish

*Caring for Your Whole Self
After a Stressful or Traumatic Event*



Allina Health

Replenish

Caring for Your Whole Self After a Stressful or Traumatic Event

First edition

Developed by Allina Health.

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For specific information about your health condition, please contact your health care provider.





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Chapter 1: Introduction

In This Chapter:

- Replenish
- How This Book Can Help
- Stress
- What Stress Can Do
- How to Manage Your Stress
- Traumatic Events
- Reactions to Traumatic Events
- How to Cope After a Traumatic Event



Chapter 1: Introduction

Replenish

Tip

See chapter 2 for more information about **Whole Person Care!**

Each day, you're faced with challenges. You may need to get the kids off to school, finish a deadline project at work or be a caregiver for a family member or friend. No matter your circumstances, it's important to **replenish** or "refill your cup" to prevent stressing out, overworking and burning out.

You can't pour from an empty cup

Have you heard the saying "You can't pour from an empty cup?" You can try but it won't work. That's why practicing Whole Person Care can help you replenish ("refill your cup") as you face challenges throughout your day.

After a stressful or traumatic event, it's especially important to take time to care for yourself as you cope. That way, you can pour yourself into the things that matter most while facing even the most challenging of circumstances.

How This Book Can Help

This book will guide you through the process of coping after a stressful or traumatic event. It will provide you with resources to help you:

- manage stress
- care for your whole self
- practice relaxation
- practice mindfulness
- practice resiliency
- care for others.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" for coping. Some of these resources will work for you and others may not. Pause to reflect along the way and continue with only the things that feel best.

Stress

When to Get Help

Talk with your health care provider if stress interferes with your everyday life or if you are having physical problems.

Stress is your body's fight-or-flight response. You may feel energy surge through your body if you are in an emergency, or if you are worried or anxious about something.

Stress can be found at home, work, school or in traffic.

A situation you find threatening may trigger stress.

For example, you may feel stress in the following situations:

- a co-worker gets a promotion you thought should have been yours
- divorce
- financial problems
- marriage
- job loss or change
- moving
- having a baby
- a disagreement with a child
- a serious illness within the family
- being stuck in traffic when you are running late
- standing in a long line at the grocery store with a fussy child.

What Stress Can Do

Stress can give you health problems or make a current problem worse. It can increase your breathing, heart rate and blood pressure. Feelings of anger may turn into long-lasting (chronic) irritation and feelings of fear may become anxiety. Long-term stress can interfere with your daily life and cause:

- illness (weakened immunity)
- depression
- anxiety disorders
- ulcers
- high blood pressure
- phobias
- disturbed sleep patterns
- tension headaches.

Stress affects everyone but reactions to stress vary from person to person. You cannot make stress go away but you can manage it.

How to Manage Your Stress

To manage stress, start by learning about yourself. What do you like? What do you hate? What calms you down? What stresses you out? Know that, and you're on your way to managing stress.

Here are some tips to help you manage stress.

- **Maintain good health habits.**
Eat healthful foods and avoid caffeine, alcohol and nicotine. A healthy body tolerates stress more effectively.
- **Be physically active.**
Physical activities often relieve the body of unnecessary tensions. Strenuous exercise is not necessary because even moderate exercise has health benefits.
- **Get plenty of rest.**
Your body and mind need to “re-energize” each night. Most adults do not get enough sleep each night.
- **Structure daily activities.**
Plan out your activities to make the best use of your time. Make sure to include personal time for yourself and do something you enjoy.
- **Set realistic goals.**
Ask for help if you need it.
- **Do not worry about things you cannot change.**
Let it go. Focus on what you can do.
- **Identify what causes you stress.**
Avoid those situations if possible.
- **Talk about stress.**
Talking with a close friend, spouse or health care provider may help you relax.



Set realistic goals and focus on what you can do.

Traumatic Events

Important

Remember, you are not alone! It's OK to ask for help from a family member, friend or your health care provider.

A traumatic event is an unexpected, terrible event that overwhelms your ability to cope. Examples may include:

- crimes
- tornadoes, hurricanes and other natural disasters
- abuse: physical, emotional or sexual
- discrimination (race, gender, sex)
- rape
- fires
- violence
- terrorist attacks
- drownings
- medical events (heart attack, stroke)
- military experiences
- accidents (car, airplane, boat)
- riots.

Not everyone who experiences an unexpected, terrible event feels traumatized by it. However, some people may have trouble coping afterward. This is normal and it's OK to ask for help.

Reactions to Traumatic Events

Everyone responds to traumatic events differently. However, it is helpful to be aware of some of the possible reactions you may have so you can better understand what you are going through and find ways to cope.

You may have many, some or none of the following reactions.

Common physical reactions (without a known physical cause) include:

- headache
- upset stomach (nausea)
- changes in eating habits
- trouble with speech
- skin problems (rashes, redness).

Common emotional reactions include:

- feelings of anxiety and nervousness
- fear of the event happening again
- fear of being alone (especially being separated from family)
- having trouble getting close to others
- having changes in sexual relationships
- feeling unsafe or like the event is happening again
- feeling irritable
- feeling “numb”
- sadness, depression or both
- having trouble staying positive
- anger
- guilt
- shame
- grief.

Common spiritual reactions include:

- feeling as if you have lost meaning to your life
- a feeling of hopelessness or failure.

You may also question things you believed to be true in the past.

Common behavioral reactions include:

- “childish” behavior
- drug abuse, alcohol abuse or both
- “freezing” (not being able to react)
- violent or aggressive behavior (yelling)
- withdrawal from social situations
- avoiding people, places or things that remind you of the event
- risky behaviors
- being jumpy, jittery or easily startled
- not being able to fall asleep
- waking up during the night.

Common thinking (cognitive) reactions include:

- confusion or memory loss
- forgetfulness
- trouble trusting yourself or others
- poor performance at work or school
- having nightmares, flashbacks or both
- having unwanted thoughts of what happened
- losing your sense of direction (disorientation)
- trouble concentrating.

How to Cope After a Traumatic Event

- **Take care of yourself.**
Make sure you are eating well, drinking enough water and getting enough sleep.
- **Create a safe space.**
Surround yourself with family and friends. Talk with them about what happened and how you are feeling. This can help reduce anxiety and stress. Familiar surroundings and routines can help too.
- **Connect with others.**
Take time for social activities with family and friends. Volunteering is a great way to connect with others too!
- **Empower yourself!**
Create a few goals and talk with others about how you plan to reach them. Make sure the goals are small and realistic so they are not overwhelming. Completing simple tasks may provide the motivation needed to resume your regular activities. Participating in family activities can help life feel “normal.”
- **Make an appointment to see a mental health care provider.**
A mental health care provider can help you better understand how you are feeling and work with you to create a treatment plan that is right for you.



Talk with family and friends about how you're feeling. Make an appointment with a mental health care provider if you need more support.



Chapter 2:

Caring for Your Whole Self (Whole Person Care)

In This Chapter:

- Whole Person Care
- Caring for Your Body
- Caring for Your Mind
- Caring for Your Spirit
- Caring for Your Community
- Putting It All Together
- Activity: Caring for Your Whole Self



Chapter 2: Caring for Your Whole Self

Whole Person Care

Did You Know?

Holistic care sees you as a whole person, made up of connected parts (body, mind, spirit, community). This type of care follows the belief that you cannot care for (or treat) one part of yourself without considering the others.

Paying attention to your whole self is especially important during or after a stressful or traumatic event.

Whole Person Care is a **holistic** approach to care that considers the connections of body, mind, spirit and community. When you practice Whole Person Care in your own life (at home, at work and within your community) you are able to do more, feel stronger and live better than you ever thought possible — and help others do the same.

This chapter will describe each of the areas of Whole Person Care and provide a few quick tips for getting started with caring for your whole self. Notice how many of the tips can fit into one or more of the areas of Whole Person Care.



When you take time to care for yourself, you can be at your best to care for others.

Caring for Your Body

Your body takes you everywhere you need to go. It gives you the ability to live out your purpose and do what you love. It's important to take care of your body to nourish your whole self and live your best life.

Quick Tips for Caring for Your Body

Set an alarm to sound 15 minutes before your ideal bedtime. When you hear it, get ready for bed!

Pack a snack. Whether fruit, yogurt or a handful of nuts, you'll be prepared for the day ahead.

Get outside for some natural sunlight (and vitamin D too)!

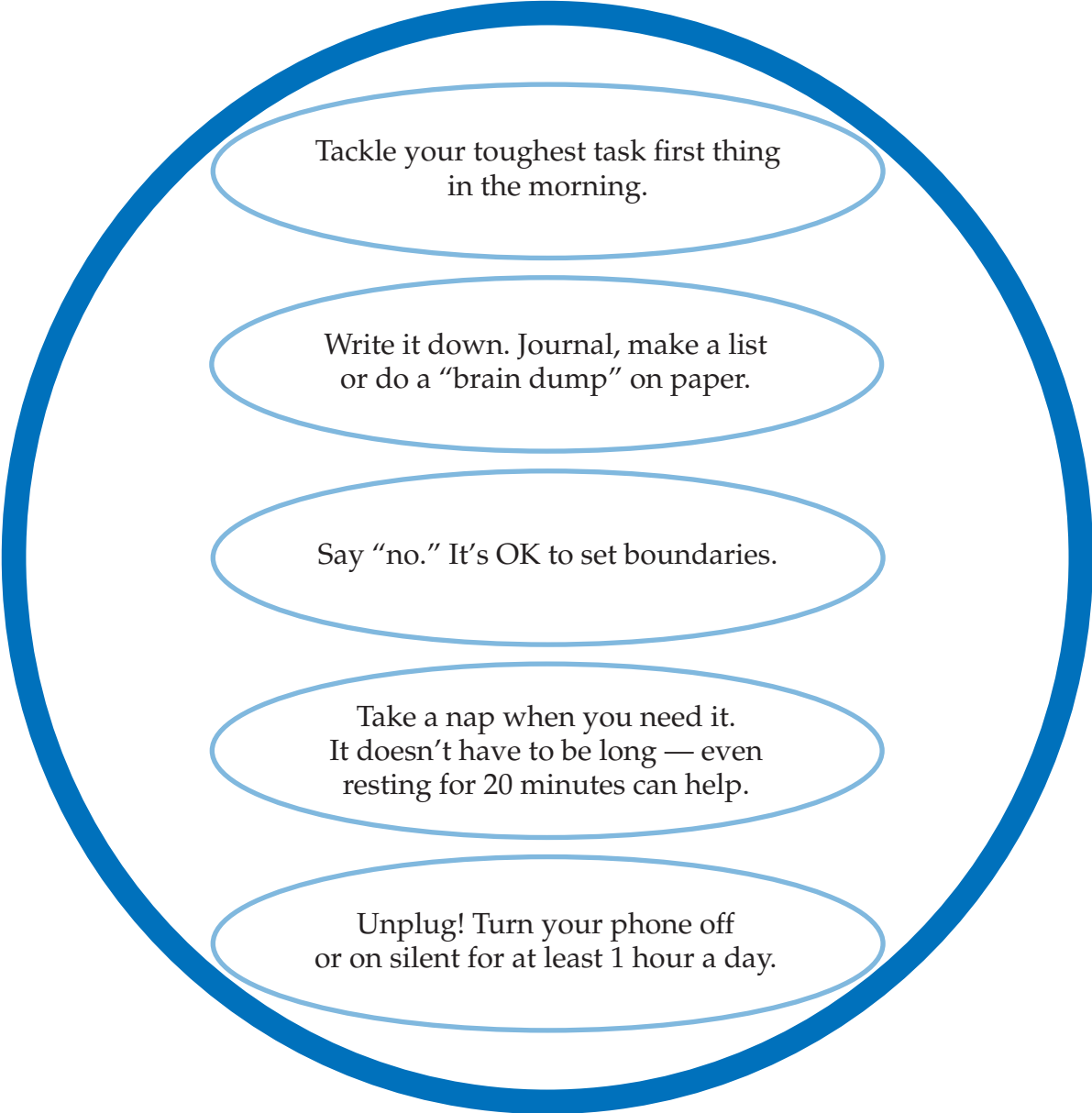
Think posture! Throw your shoulders back and straighten your back each time you pass through a doorway.

Drink plenty of water! Add some fresh lemon or lime if it helps encourage you to drink.

Caring for Your Mind

Using your mind is the way you process information, understand emotions and create calm. Make sure to include activities in your day to **challenge** and **rest** your mind — the key is balance! Too much challenge without enough rest will leave you exhausted and stressed, while resting too much will prevent you from personal growth.

Quick Tips for Caring for Your Mind



Tackle your toughest task first thing in the morning.

Write it down. Journal, make a list or do a “brain dump” on paper.

Say “no.” It’s OK to set boundaries.

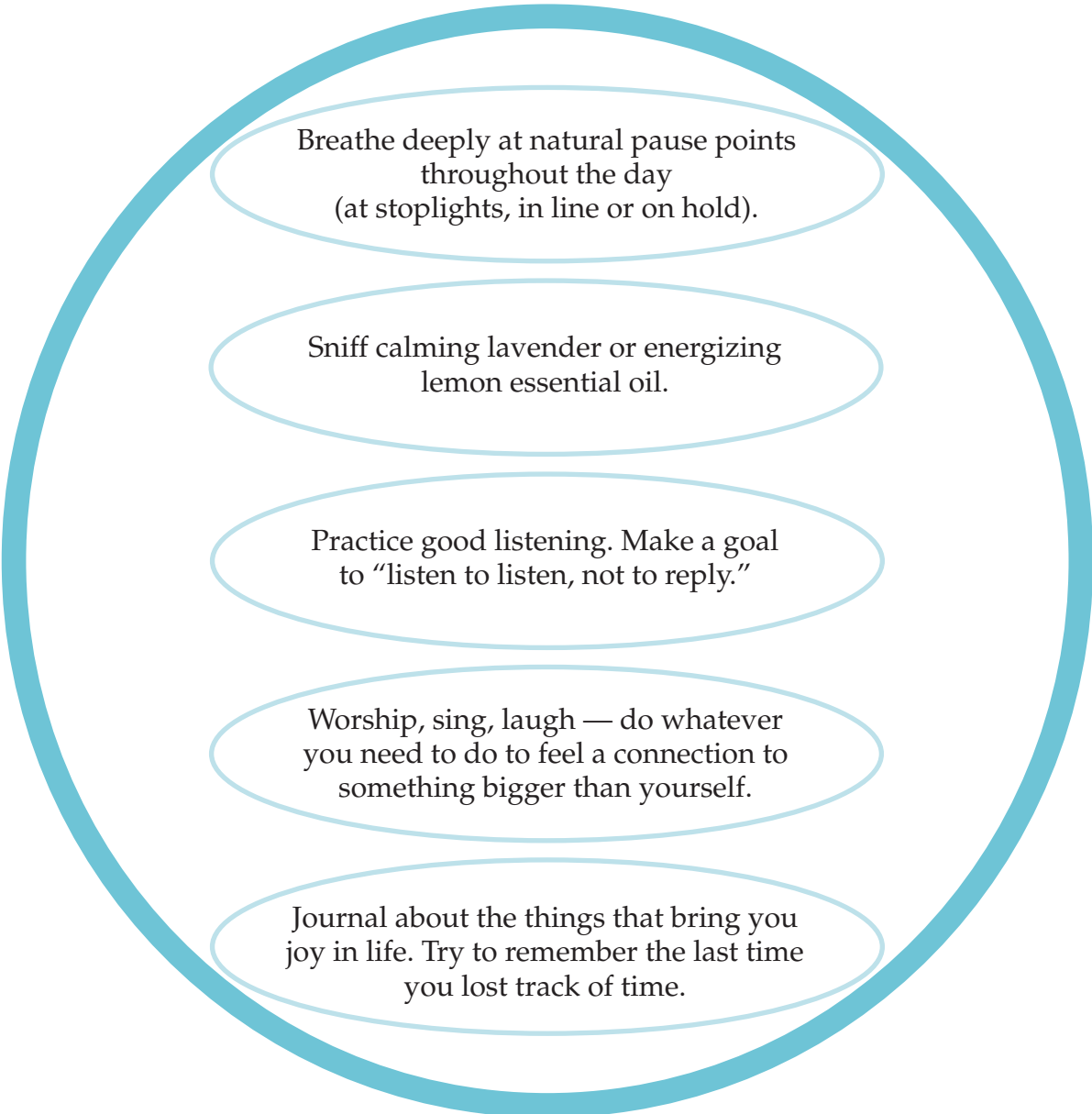
Take a nap when you need it. It doesn’t have to be long — even resting for 20 minutes can help.

Unplug! Turn your phone off or on silent for at least 1 hour a day.

Caring for Your Spirit

Your spirit is a sacred part of you, bringing meaning and purpose to your life. Your sense of spirituality is an important point of connection as you relate to yourself, others, communities, environments (nature, sanctuary) and the divine.

Quick Tips for Caring for Your Spirit



Breathe deeply at natural pause points throughout the day (at stoplights, in line or on hold).

Sniff calming lavender or energizing lemon essential oil.

Practice good listening. Make a goal to “listen to listen, not to reply.”

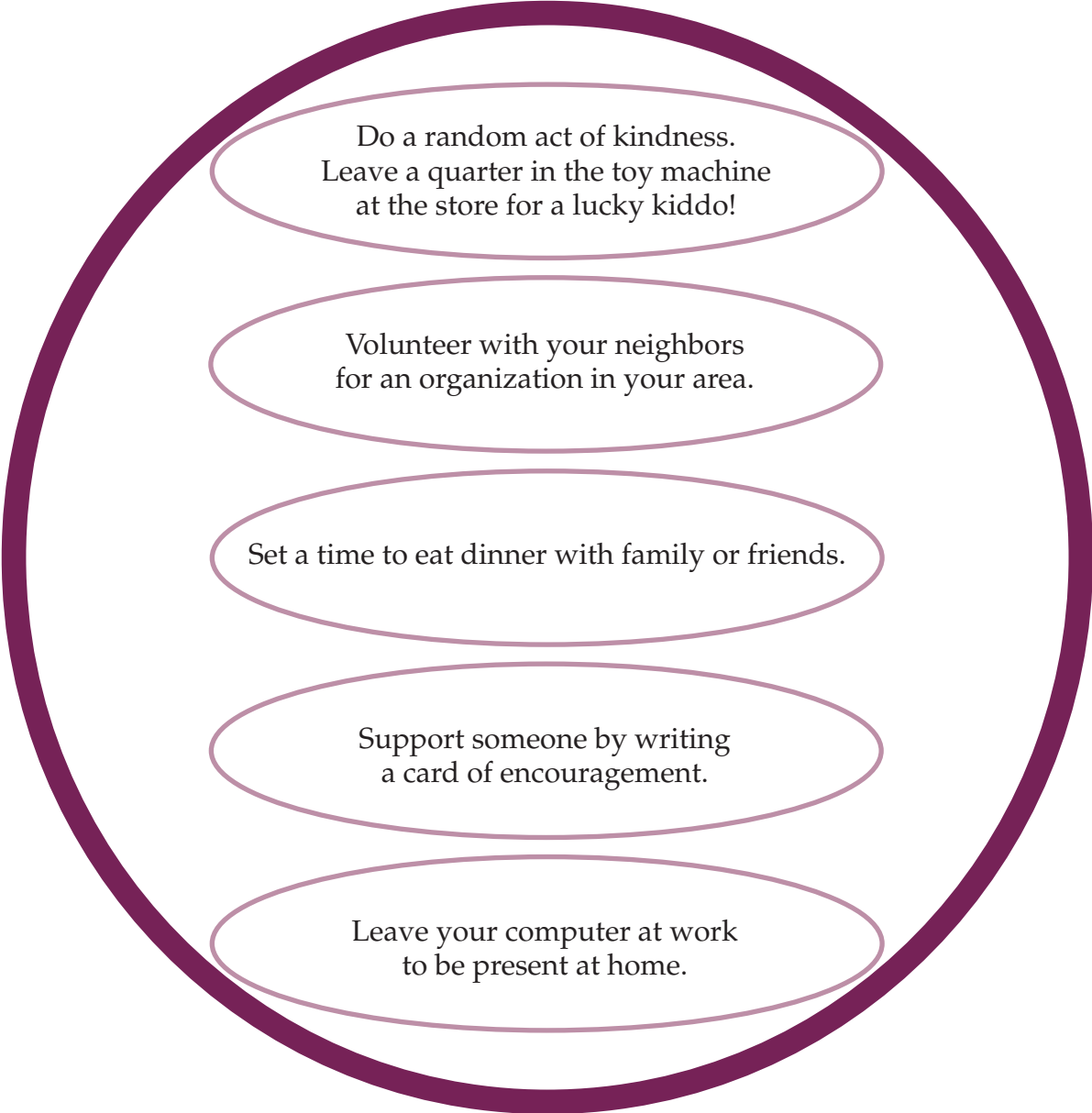
Worship, sing, laugh — do whatever you need to do to feel a connection to something bigger than yourself.

Journal about the things that bring you joy in life. Try to remember the last time you lost track of time.

Caring for Your Community

Your community provides a way to connect with others in a meaningful way. By nourishing your relationships, you can deepen bonds and create a positive atmosphere for yourself and those around you.

Quick Tips for Caring for Your Community



Do a random act of kindness.
Leave a quarter in the toy machine
at the store for a lucky kiddo!

Volunteer with your neighbors
for an organization in your area.

Set a time to eat dinner with family or friends.

Support someone by writing
a card of encouragement.

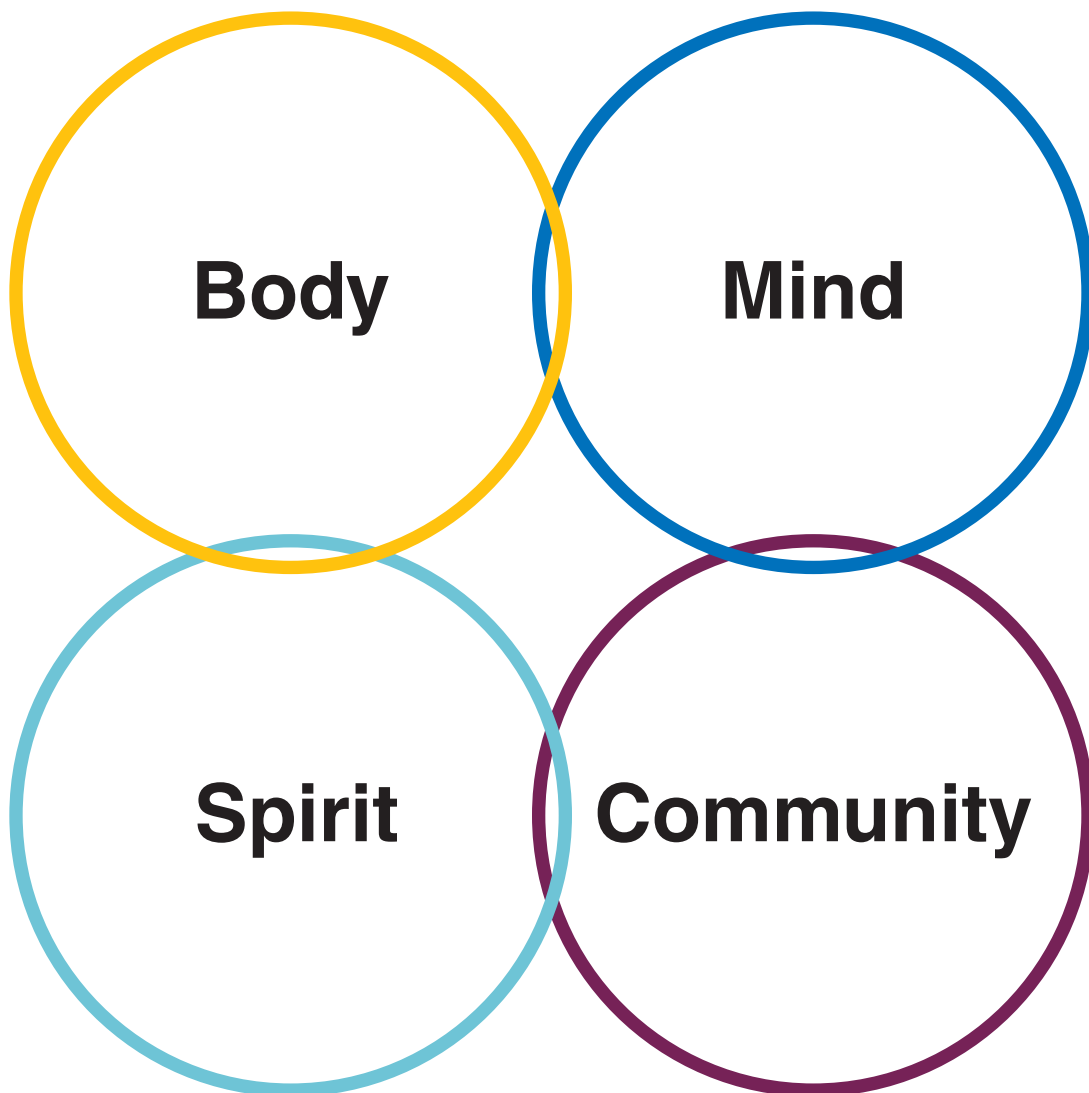
Leave your computer at work
to be present at home.

Putting It All Together

Important

Remember, you cannot care for (or treat) one part of yourself without considering the others.

As you read through each of the quick tips for each area of Whole Person Care, you likely noticed some overlap. For example, tips about getting good sleep could be considered caring for both your body and mind. Once you start caring for your whole self, you'll naturally begin to appreciate how your body, mind, spirit and community are connected and work together to help you feel your best.



Activity: Caring for Your Whole Self

Use the table below to write ideas for how to care for your whole self — body, mind, spirit and community. If you see that you have a lot more ways to care for one area than the others, try to balance them out. Take another look at the ideas listed on pages 18 to 21 to help you get started.

| Caring for Your Whole Self | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Areas of Whole Person Care | How to Care for Yourself |
| Body | |
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| Mind | |
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Chapter 3:

Practicing Relaxation

In This Chapter:

- How to Relax
- Ideas for Relaxation
- Activity: Color Your Way Calm!



Chapter 3: Practicing Relaxation

Are you a “go-getter” who never seems to stop working? Or maybe you say with pride that you’re a “type A” personality. In order to feel and perform your best, you need to set aside time to rest and relax.

This chapter will help you practice relaxation and provide ideas to help you build it into your daily routine.

How to Relax

- Find a comfortable position on the floor.
- Use pillows to support your head and legs.
- Keep all of your joints flexed and supported.
Do not rest one body part on another.
- Take a deep breath and relax.
- Contract the muscles of your forehead. Release.
- Focus your eyes. Release.
- Clench your teeth. Release.
- Contract your jaw. Release.
- Draw your shoulders up toward your ears. Release.
- Make fists and straighten your elbows. Release
- Take a deep breath, expand your chest and hold. Release.
- Tighten your abdominal muscles. Release.
- Squeeze your buttocks together. Release.
- Tighten your pelvic muscles. Release.
- Tighten your thighs. Release.
- Tighten your calves. Release.
- Point your toes toward your nose. Release.
- Contract everything. Release.
- Let your entire body relax.
- Breathe deeply in a rhythm.
- Rest this way for a few minutes.
- Get up slowly and gently.

Ideas for Relaxation

Tip

There are relaxation apps available in app stores (Apple® and Google Play®) too! Find them by searching for the following key words in your mobile app store:

- nature sounds
- qi gong
- acupressure
- stress tracker

Abdomen (diaphragm) breathing

Abdomen (diaphragm) breathing is a simple way to relax. If you can deep breathe slowly and evenly using your lower abdomen, you can start the process of the relaxation response. You can do this breathing anytime and anywhere.

Autogenics

In autogenics, you use a word or phrase to start the relaxation process. By focusing on the feelings of warmth throughout your body and the heaviness in your arms and legs, you can promote relaxation of your entire body. You can even use autogenics to block out pain such as headaches and backaches. You can regulate your breathing, heart rate and blood flow through thinking of your word or phrase.

Imagery

In imagery, you use a positive suggestion to create a mental picture. For example, you try to remember a favorite place or create one in your mind. Choose a place you feel safe and calm. Try to remember as much detail as possible. Your body will relax as if it were a real experience.

Progressive muscle relaxation

Progressive muscle relaxation is a way in which you tense your muscles and then relax them. This allows you to recognize the difference between tension and relaxation. You can use this technique to cope with insomnia, high blood pressure, headaches and low back pain.

Biofeedback

Biofeedback helps you learn how to manage your body's responses to stress. It gives you an active role in improving your health by using signals from your body. Special equipment collects and displays information about moment-to-moment body changes. This information helps you learn to make physiological changes that improve your health, level of comfort or both.

Exercise and nutrition

Exercise can also help you relax. It is important to choose an exercise that is not going to increase the tension such as a competitive sport. You may want to try walking, swimming, hiking or bicycling. These are activities you can do at your own pace and by yourself.

Eat a healthful meals and snacks. Your body needs healthful foods to feel its best. Some foods can actually cause stress. Eat fewer foods with sugar, caffeine and salt, as they can weaken your body's resistance to the stress response.

Meditation

In meditation, you learn to develop mental control over your own body. Meditation is an increased concentration and awareness. It is a process of living in the present to create a calmer state of mind.

Yoga

In yoga, you learn to develop control over your mind, body and will. Through a system of exercises, you learn to control your mental and physical responses to situations and your life in general.

Music therapy

Music therapy includes listening to and creating music for a soothing effect.

Tai chi

Tai chi is a moving meditation. It is the harmony and balance of mind and body. Studies show that tai chi is effective in promoting relaxation.

Water therapy (hydrotherapy)

Baths, hot tubs and floatation tanks make up water therapy (hydrotherapy). This technique decreases depression, muscle tension, resting heart rate, resting blood pressure, anxiety and physical pain.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy uses perfumed scents to promote feelings of calmness. It replaces threatening situations with ones that are pleasant. Many fragrances can cause powerful thoughts and memories.

Pet therapy

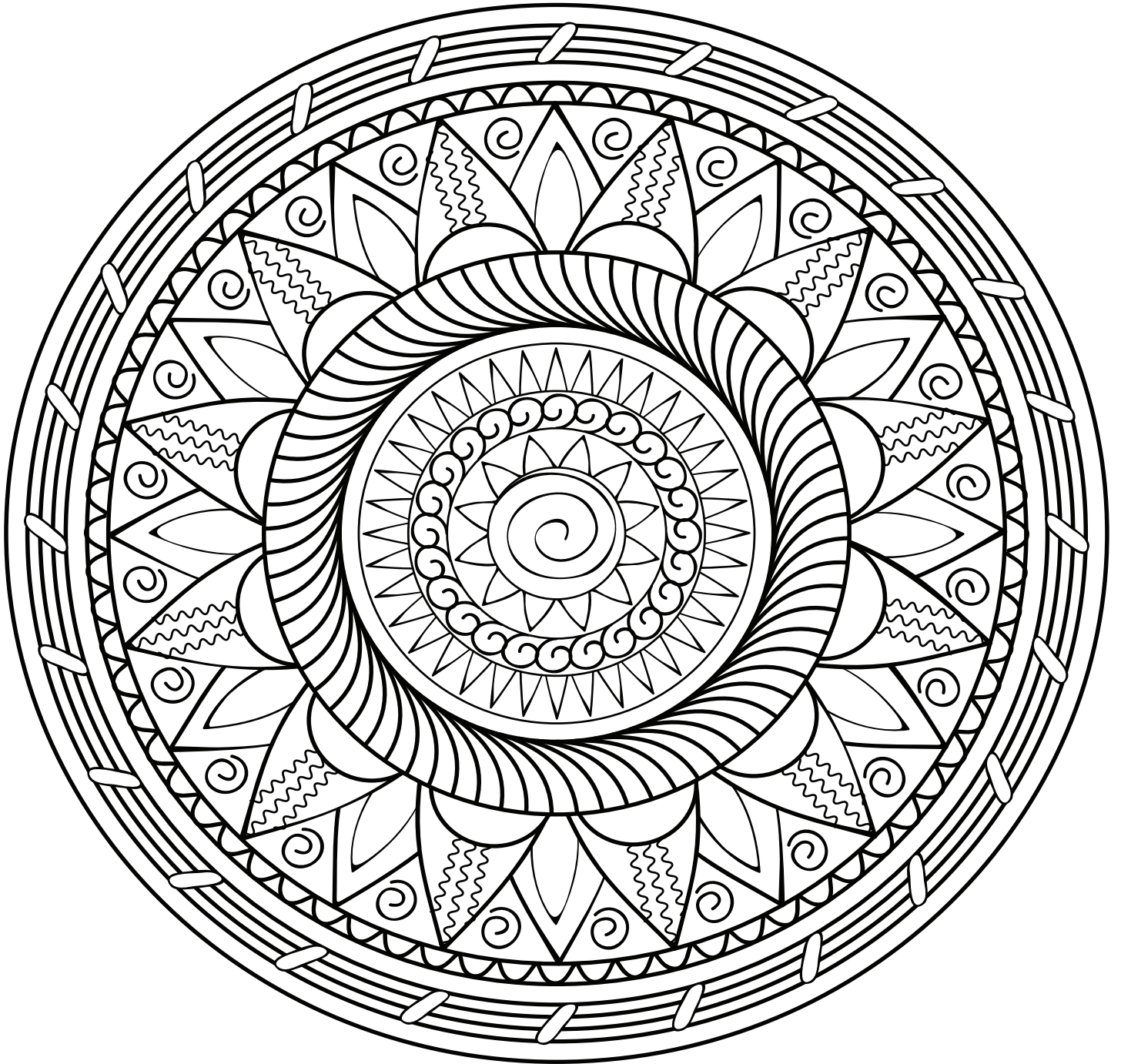
Pet therapy uses animals to help lower stress. By touching or petting an animal, your resting heart rate and blood pressure can decrease while your mood improves. Having a pet or spending regular time with a pet can make you feel physically better.

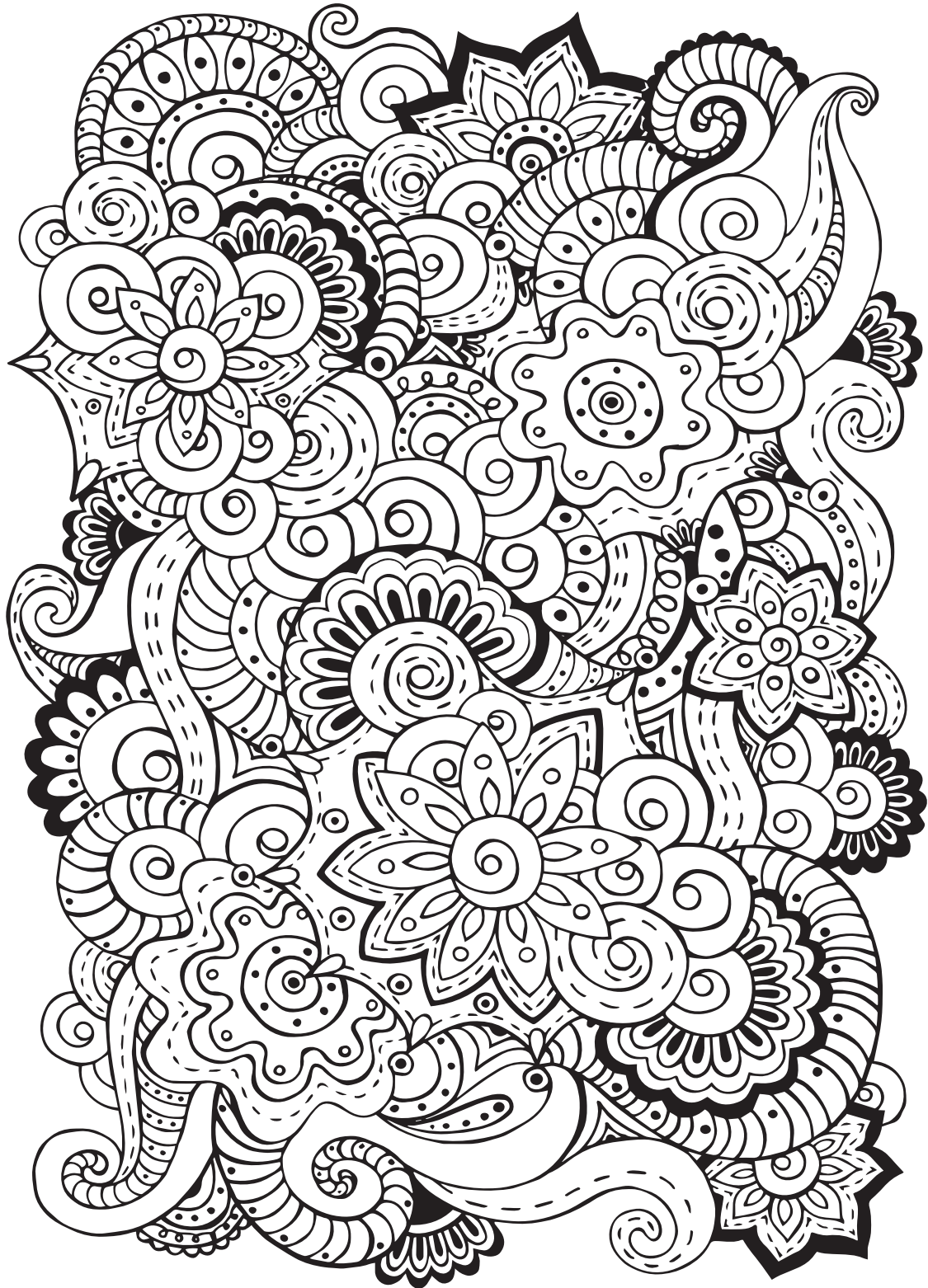


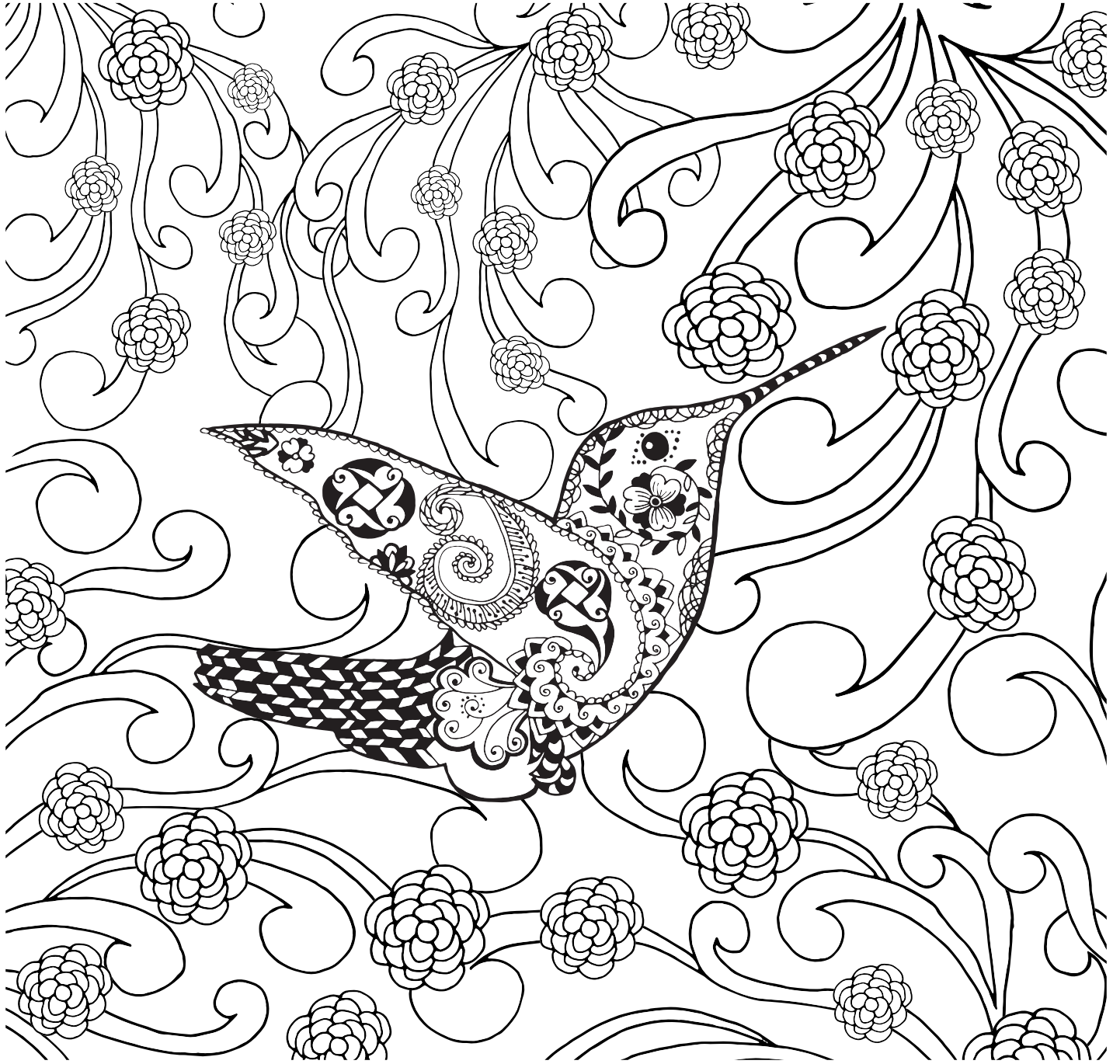
Spending time with a pet can help improve your mood too!

Activity: Color Your Way Calm!

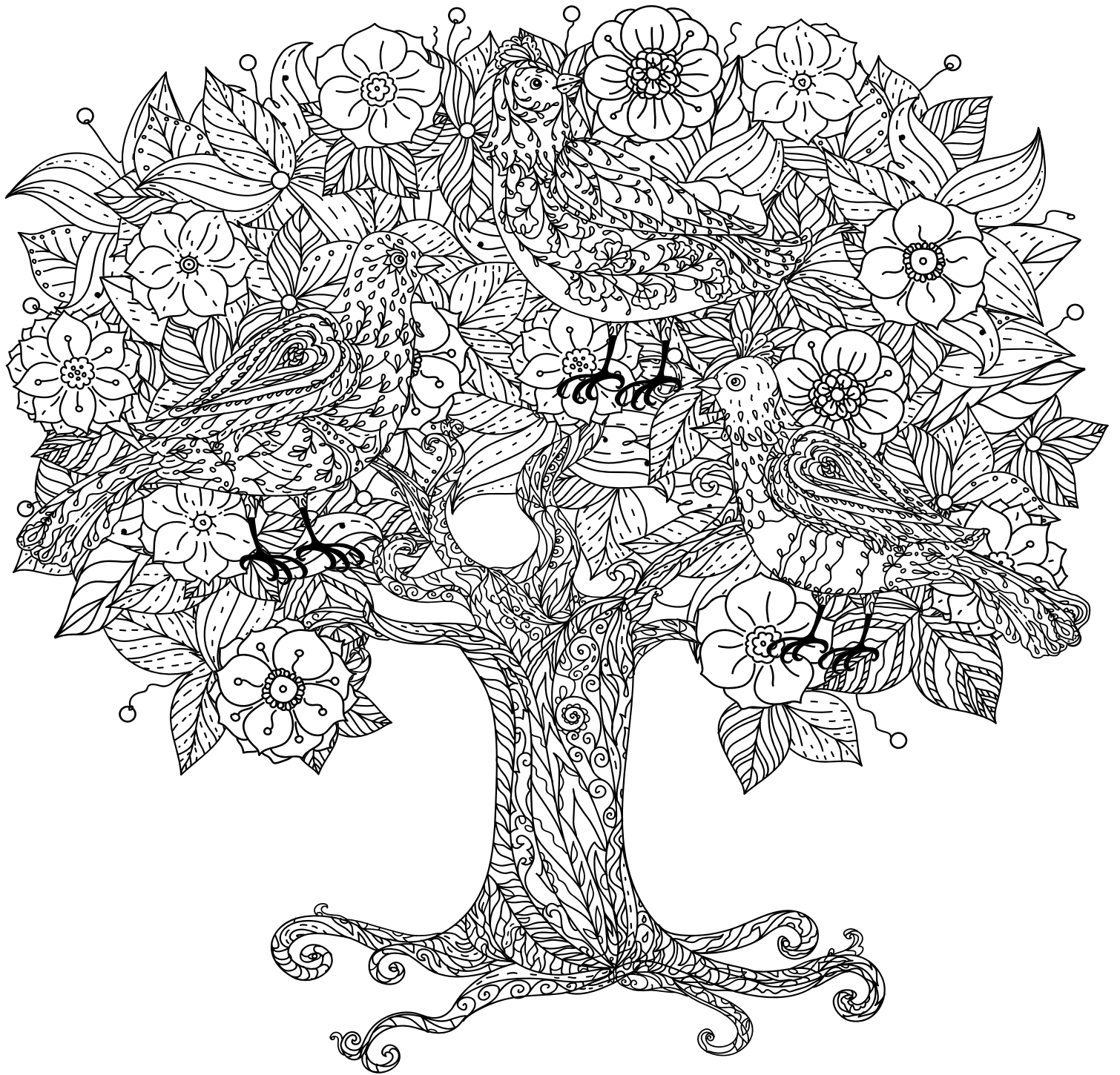
Coloring can have a calming effect on your body, mind and spirit. Use the following coloring pages as an activity to help you relax.

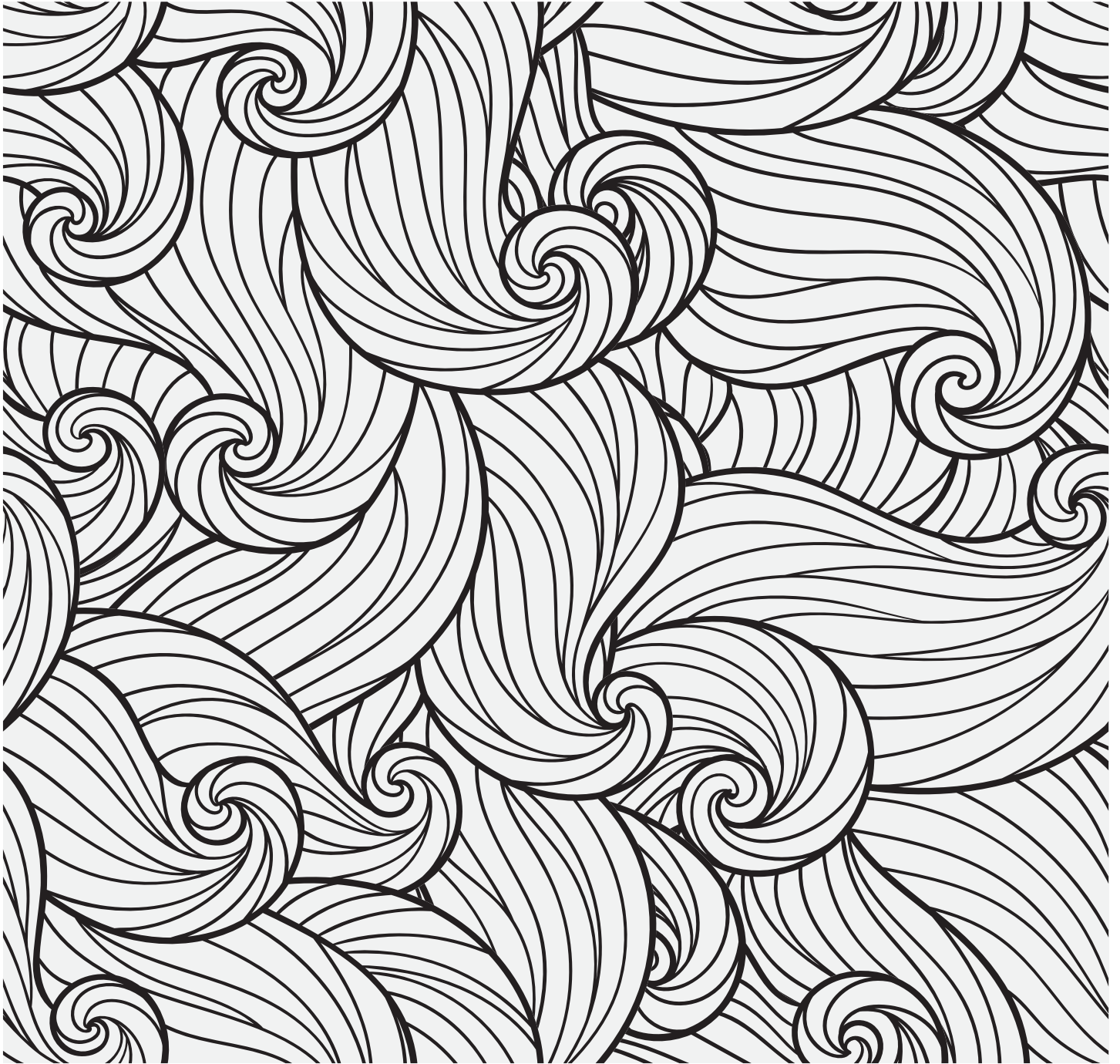


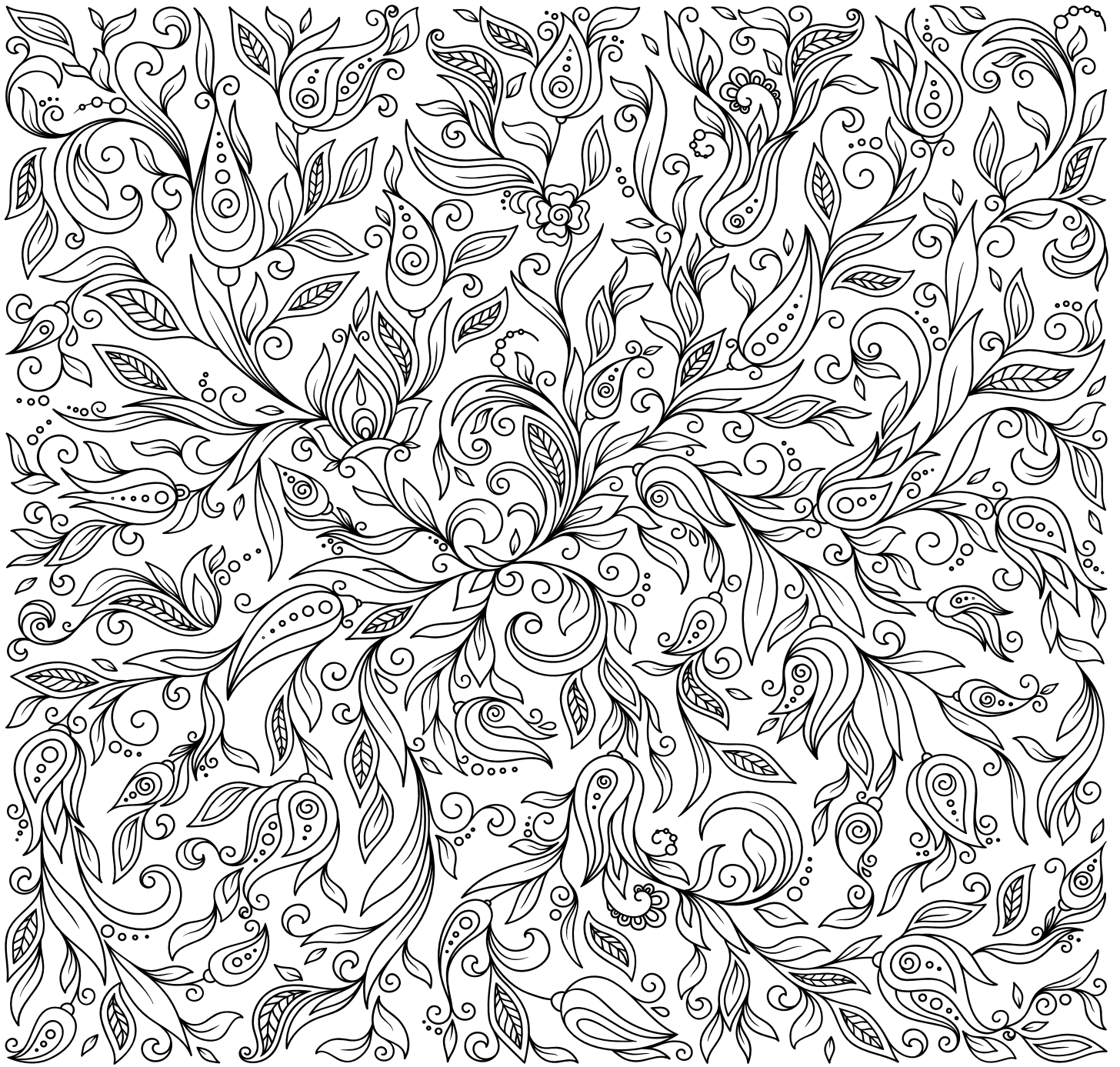












Chapter 4:

Practicing Mindfulness

In This Chapter:

- Mindfulness
- Mindful Eating Exercise
- Activity: Journaling
- Journaling Page



Chapter 4: Practicing Mindfulness

Mindfulness

Did You Know?

It's also common to rush through eating, forgetting to pause to enjoy each bite and "check in" with how you're feeling. Practicing mindfulness can help you be more present in your body and aware of how hungry or full you feel. The goal is to feel satisfied ("just right") after eating.

Turn to the next page to try a mindful eating exercise!

Have you ever driven somewhere and once arrived at your destination, realized you don't remember driving there? Or how about forgetting your keys in the door as you get home from work? Or maybe as you make your favorite homemade muffin recipe, you forget if you've added 2 or 3 cups of flour. It's easy to go on autopilot during daily activities — and multitasking doesn't help.

Mindfulness is a moment-to-moment awareness of the things around you. It's a way to "wake up" to life. Mindfulness takes practice and you're likely already practicing it in your day-to-day life. Think of times when you've been focused on what you're doing. These are times of mindfulness!

Some characteristics of being mindful include:

- **non-judgement:**

When you find the mind judging, become aware of it. There is no need to act on these thoughts. Simply observe.

- **patience:**

Patience involves accepting that things unfold in their own time. There is no need to be impatient about progress (or a lack of progress). Patience is simply being open to each moment as it unfolds even when there is resistance.

- **"beginner's" mind:**

Having a beginner's mind (also known as a "child's" mind) is willing to see everything as if for the first time. This helps you to be free of expectations, open to new possibilities and able to develop a sense of wonder.

- **trust:**

In practicing mindfulness you are taking responsibility for being who you are, and learning to listen to and access your own basic goodness and wisdom. You become more fully who you are. The more you develop this trust with yourself, the easier it becomes to trust others.

- **non-striving:**

Mindfulness involves simply paying attention to whatever is happening as it is happening, without pushing or pulling. In doing so you gently and naturally turn toward a richer, fuller life.

Did You Know?

You already know how to “let go.” You do it every time you fall asleep!

■ **acknowledgment:**

You often use a lot of energy denying and resisting what is already fact in life. By developing acknowledgement, you become willing to see things as they are, taking each moment as it comes and being with it as fully as possible. “It is what it is.” If you cannot see things as they are, how can you change them?

■ **letting be:**

When you start paying attention to your inner experience, you realize there are thoughts, feelings and situations the mind seems to cling to or push away. In mindfulness practice, you remind yourself to let go of those impulses and see what happens. In letting be, you are letting go.

You can practice being mindful during your daily activities using these characteristics.

Mindful Eating Exercise

Think About This!

During your last meal or snack, were you:

- happy
- sad
- relaxed
- rushed?

Afterward, did you feel:

- satisfied
- guilty
- nourished
- overstuffed?

Using what you’ve learned about mindfulness, try this mindful eating exercise to practice being more present.

- Choose a food that’s easy to hold in your hand such as a grape, almond or date.
- Let go of any judgements you hold about the food you’ve chosen.
- Pick up the food and look closely at it. Imagine you’ve never seen it before.
 - What is its shape and size?
 - How heavy is it?
- As you hold the food:
 - Think about from where the food came. Imagine the tree or plant from which it grew. Feel the warm sunshine, and see the rain and soil that helped it grow.
 - Take a moment to thank the workers who grew, packaged, transported and sold the food — all for you! Honor the work they did and appreciate their unique talents.
- Take the food in your fingers.
 - Feel the surface.
 - Look closely at the textures and colors.
 - Bring the food to your nose and notice how it smells.
 - Bring the food to your ear, gently squeeze it and listen for any sounds.

- Pause to consider how you're feeling.
 - Are you already "tasting" the food as you look forward to eating it?
 - Are you feeling impatient?
- Place the food on your tongue. Do not chew. Roll it gently around your mouth as you notice the feel and taste of it.
- Bite down gently **one time**. Notice:
 - the change in flavor, texture and shape
 - any feelings or thoughts you have.
- Slowly continue chewing the food.
 - Notice how the food continues to change in texture, taste and shape.
 - Chew the food completely (to a liquid) before swallowing.
- Pause to consider how you feel after eating the food. Practice gratitude for the nourishment your body received. Sit quietly and breathe. Hold this moment.

Adapted from: Kabat-Zinn, J., 1990

Activity: Journaling



Now that you've learned about mindfulness and practiced it, how do you think being mindful could improve your well-being? Here are some ideas for you to consider as you write:

- During which activities do you find yourself on "autopilot?"
- How would slowing your pace affect your day?
- When is the last time you felt you were in a mindful state?
- Do you ever feel "out of control?"
- Do you eat mindfully? How often?

Use the space on the next page to write your thoughts down on paper.

Chapter 5:

Practicing Resiliency

In This Chapter:

- Resiliency
- Activity: Writing Your Own Daily Mantra or Breath Prayer



Chapter 5: Practicing Resiliency

Resiliency

Important

Resiliency is a skill! You will need to practice to get better at it.

Did You Know?

Examples of challenges include anything from experiencing a death in the family, to stress at work to facing a traumatic event such as a fire or natural disaster.

Consider what the following examples have in common.

- After losing your job, you start networking with people you know work in areas of interest.
- You continue going on dates even though you feel frustrated each time a first date doesn't lead to a second.
- A neighbor calls, only to yell at you for finding your dog in her yard — again. You apologize and talk with your family about keeping your dog on the leash at all times when outside.
- You have a bad review at work but continue to do your best to improve your performance.
- After committing to “eat better,” your Friday evening trip to the movies tempts you into ordering a large popcorn with extra butter. Rather than saying, “Oh well, may as well enjoy myself this weekend,” you get back on track the next morning by making a breakfast of eggs and fruit.

These are just a few examples of practicing resiliency.

Resiliency is your ability to overcome challenges, learn from the experience and come back a stronger person. It's a way to “bounce back” in life.

The following are some things you can do to help build resiliency.

- **Take care of your whole self.**

You must be well to do well! See chapter 2 for information about how to practice Whole Person Care.

- **Focus on relationships.**

The people in your life — family, friends, neighbors, colleagues — will support and encourage you when you experience challenges. You'll be able to do the same for them too!



Focus on the people in your life to build a network of support.

- **Accept change.**

Focus on what you **can do** when things change instead of what is out of your control.

- **Change your response.**

When something doesn't go the way you'd like it to, pause instead of reacting right away. You may find that allowing yourself space will increase your ability to respond with a sense of calmness and grace.

- **Take action.**

Think about what you can learn from a setback. Consider it an opportunity to grow — personally, professionally or both — and continue moving toward your goal(s).

■ **Learn something about yourself.**

You may wish you didn't have to go through challenging times but you can take the opportunity to learn something about yourself. For example:

- How do you react under stress?
- Do you offer yourself grace when things don't go the way you had hoped?
- How does your attitude impact your actions?

Focusing on what you can learn about yourself can help you move forward in similar situations in the future.

■ **Think big picture.**

In one year, will you remember this moment in time? Keeping a long-term mindset can help you see beyond the discomfort you're currently feeling and focus on the big picture instead.

■ **Be hopeful.**

During hard times, remind yourself of the things that **are** going well. Attitude is important! Maintain hope that things can and will improve.

■ **Write a mantra or breath prayer.**

Mantras are short phrases you repeat over and over as you go through challenging times, or they can act as gentle reminders that help shift your focus from fear to trust. For example, "I am present," "This too shall pass," "God give me strength" and "Through challenges, I grow."

A breath prayer is a prayer that can be spoken in a few words while taking deep breaths in and out. You might also think of this as your mantra.

The next pages will give you space to write your own daily mantras or breath prayers.

Activity: Writing Your Own Daily Mantra or Breath Prayer

It may be helpful for you to create a morning routine during which you prepare your mind, body and spirit for the day ahead. What you do during this time is up to you! One practice you can try is writing down a mantra or breath prayer on which to focus each day.

Date: _____

What will be your mantra or breath prayer for today?

Date: _____

What will be your mantra or breath prayer for today?

Tip

Consider using a sacred text, personal affirmation, quote, or short phrase from a song to write your mantra or breath prayer.

Date: _____

What will be your mantra or breath prayer for today?

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Chapter 6:

Caring for Others

In This Chapter:

- Whole Person Care for Others
- The Three Building Blocks of Caring for Others
- Activity: Ideas You Can Try
- Why Relationships Matter



Chapter 6: Caring for Others

Whole Person Care for Others

You've already read about the importance of caring for your whole self (Whole Person Care) but did you know **caring for others** with Whole Person Care is important too?

When you care for others, you build relationships, increase trust and create a "safe space" in which all are welcome, accepted and loved.

Think of the people you're around each day, week or month. To whom could you offer support and encouragement? You may think of others who are:

- going through a divorce or breakup
- grieving the death of a loved one
- stressed about work
- trying to have a baby but cannot
- planning a wedding or large event
- uncertain about the future
- feeling depressed
- going through a job transition.

Pause to ask yourself: How could you care for these people with Whole Person Care?



You may have friends, family members, colleagues or neighbors who need your support. How could you encourage them today?

The Three Building Blocks of Caring for Others

Be present

- Listen without judging.
- Make space for silence.
- Thank the person for sharing.
- Practice empathy.

Empathy is being aware of and sensitive to the person's thoughts, feelings and experiences.

Listen

- Encourage the person to tell you his or her story.
- Listen without trying to "fix."
- Repeat back what you heard.
- Ask how the person is feeling.

Support

- Consider: what you would want someone to say to you if you were going through something similar.
- Talk about your experiences if it helps decrease feelings of aloneness.
- Talk about ways the person can cope and help him or her make plans to take action.

Activity: Ideas You Can Try

Read through the ideas for supporting and encouraging others below and circle those you plan to try!

Send a greeting card.

Drop off a meal or baked treat.

Go out to lunch together (your treat)!

Offer to help with child or pet care.

Ask the person over for coffee or tea.

Send fresh flowers or a potted plant.

Offer to help with cleaning or yard work.

Ask the person to go for a walk together.

Send an email with a link to an upbeat song.

Send a text telling the person how he or she makes a difference in your life.

Call the person and allow space for sharing.

Find out what the person's favorite movie is and host a movie night.

Why Relationships Matter

Tip

When you think of relationships, think quality over quantity. It may feel better for you to have a few close family members or friends than a lot of surface-level relationships.

Connecting in a meaningful way with others may be one of the most important things you can do for your health. Good relationships are good for you! They can improve your physical, mental and emotional health.

If you don't have good relationships right now, that's OK! It's never too late to start "pouring" into others' lives. By doing so, you'll gain more than friends — you'll gain a support system to walk beside you in good times and bad.

Experience life through relationships. Open up to those you trust. Put yourself in positions to positively impact others. You'll likely find you get more when you give generously.

How can you "refill another person's cup" today?



Good relationships can improve your physical, mental and emotional health!





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