

Reconnecting to Rhythms

Exploring the Connection Between Our Inner Vitality + Our Bodies



Week 4 // Our Internal Home

Let's embody...

Feeling Grounded

I choose the feeling of my feet planted affectionately and confidently on the ground. My home is my safe space and it nourishes me. That grounded feeling can be felt throughout my whole body.

Warmth

I reach for things that bring me warmth and feel cozy and familiar. No matter where I roam, it is the warmth of the hearth that brings me back. I can conjure up that feeling whenever I need some added comfort.

Quiet

I choose to be still and quiet. I choose rest. I choose the contentment that fills the walls of my body when I sit and allow myself to be. I call in that feeling whenever I need to, for the four walls of my home are always within.

Why Are We Focusing on Our Inner Home?

Our Home module is one of foundation, warmth and rest. We carry our home with us, no matter where we roam, and this module helps us remember what it's like to come home to ourselves. We break this module down by looking at how self-awareness, self-compassion and self-care are the keystones to staying connected to ourselves. We'll focus on the science behind self-compassion, vulnerability, resilience and authenticity and move into journal prompts and mindfulness practices to foster a deeper connection to the place inside of us all that holds unmoveable love and acceptance for all we are.

Why Are We Focusing on Our Inner Home?

What does home mean to you and how do you feel when you're at home? Whether that home exists within four walls or within ourselves, home is what we need to be able to wander, self-discover, prevail and leap. It's where we come to rest, listen and be at our fullest, most nourished selves. It's here that our souls can talk, whisper, sing and dance with us. It's here that we are most comfortable in our skin.

Throughout this module, we'll discover what home means to you and how to nourish that inner landscape you've known your whole life. Our wildish nature needs it and us.



hom·ing// (n)

*We end our journey with our
homecoming.*

"What is homing? It is the instinct to return, to go to the place we remember.... We know for creatures to live on, they must at least from time to time have a home place, a place where they feel both protected and free."

- Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Our Signs and Signals

Leaving home is a must. We must go out and adventure, seek, ask questions, make mistakes, get hurt and fail. And then we must go home to grow, heal, integrate, gain perspective, renourish and rest. This cyclical way of being is never ending and it's in this cycle that our life happens.

The question becomes how to know when we've stayed away too long. How do we know when we need to head home?

As Clarissa Pinkola Estés explains, "when a [woman] is too long from home, she is less and less able to propel herself forward in life...Her fuse burns shorter and shorter. Popular culture calls this "burnout" — but it's more than that, it's hambre del alma, the starving soul. Then, there is only one recourse, finally the [woman] knows she has to — not might, not maybe, sort of, but must — return home."

Our Signs and Signals

She continues, "...They are dying for new life. They are panting for the sea. They are living just for the next month, just till the semester is past, can't wait till winter is finally over so they can feel alive again, just waiting for a mystically assigned date somewhere in the future when they will be free to do some wondrous thing...And there is a quality of mourning to it all. There is angst. There is bereftness. There is wistfulness. There is longing. There is plucking at threads in one's skirt and staring from long windows. And it is not a temporary discomfort. It stays, and grows more and more intense over time."

Our signs and signals that we need to return home differ and live on the spectrum, but we know when it's time. That call and feeling inside whimper then howl — it's time to return.

Empowering Ourselves

Going home is so sacred, so unique and so personal that it ranges in size, temperament and quality. For some, a closed door works fine. For others, more distance and time is needed and for most, stepping out into nature with nothing but the natural order and sounds of our Earth is repleting.

Clarissa Pinkola Estés explains in *Women Who Run with the Wolves*; "There are many ways to go home; many are mundane, some are divine...Rereading passages of books and single poems that have touched them. Spending even a few minutes near a river, a stream, a creek. Lying on the ground dappled in light. Being with a loved one without kids around. Sitting on a porch shelling something, knitting something, peeling something. Walking or driving for an hour, any direction then returning. Boarding any bus, destination unknown. Making drums while listening to music. Greeting sunrise. Drive out to where the city lights do not interfere with the night sky. Praying. A special friend. Sitting on a bridge with legs dangling over. Holding an infant. Sitting by the window in a cafe and writing. Sitting in a circle of trees. Drying hair in the sun. Putting hands in a rain barrel. Potting plants, being sure to get hands very muddy. Beholding beauty, grace, the touching frailty of human beings."

Empowering Ourselves

What does home look like? That's for you to explore and decide. This module is here to support the foundation of your home – to hopefully make it easier to return and to feel held, seen and connected with yourself. But you and only you know what home looks like, feels like, loves like. Only you know how your body sways and moves and lets go when you step over the threshold.

"For some, home is taking up of an endeavor of some sort. Women begin to sing again after years of finding reason not to. They commit themselves to learn something they've been heartfelt about for a long time. They seek out the lost people and things in their lives. They take back their voices and write. They rest. They make some corner of their world their own. They execute immense or intense decisions. They do something that leaves footprints...Whenever we are in our rightful wildish nature, we all feel this bright life. It is one of the signs that we are close to Wild [Woman]. We all enter the world in a dancing condition....When you focus with soul eyes, you will see home in many, many places." - Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Empowering Ourselves

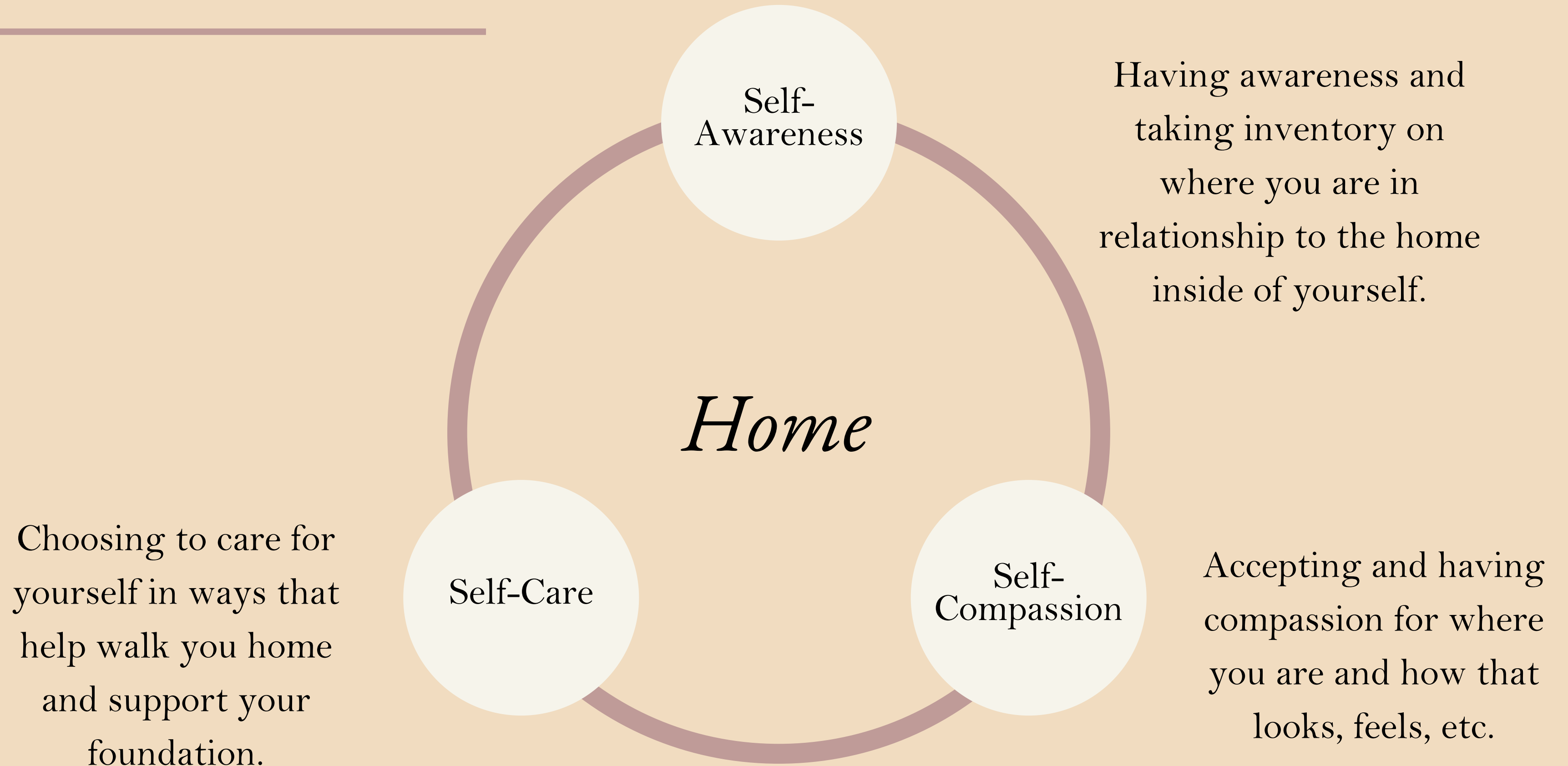
Before we dive in, we want to keep one question top of mind: how do we integrate our way back home into our daily lives? How do we choose to make coming home a priority, a value, amidst adventure and exploration?

As Clarissa puts it, "...We pre-plan home into our lives...Going home has to be given the same value, even stated in crisis proportions if necessary. For it is unequivocally true, if a woman doesn't go when it's her time to go, the hairline crack in her soul/psyche becomes a ravine, and the ravine becomes a roaring abyss."

So go out — thrive, soar, leap, fall, fail, laugh, love and head home. It's waiting for you.

Our Homestead

The Flourishing Center Model of Flourishing



Prompts for when you want to sink into home quickly and swiftly.

Homecoming: Rapid Journal Prompts

Self-Awareness

- How do I feel when I'm at home with myself?
- How do I feel when I've neglected my inner home and landscape?
- How do I feel when I'm on the run from myself?
- How do I feel about my home right now?

Self-Compassion

- What does compassion feel like in my body?
- How do I act when I have compassion for myself?
- Why is self-compassion important to me?
- What can I do right now to feel self-compassion/accept where I'm currently at with kindness?

Self-Care

- What do I need right now?
- How will that make me feel?
- How will that support the home I've created inside of myself?
- What will incite me to go do this?

Self-Awareness + Mindfulness

Self-
Awareness

Purposeful, non-judgemental focus of attention onto the present moment. A way of being in the world.

(not yet another way of improving yourself)

(not another item for your to-do list)

(not just meditation)

Self-Awareness + Mindfulness



Self-
Awareness

Benefits of Mindfulness...

...Increases emotional regulation

...Decreases anxiety and stress

...Increases heart-rate variability

...Increases immune response

...Decreases reactivity and increases response flexibility

...Less impulsiveness

...Better emotional handling of the past

...More pronounced presence (Whitman et al., 2014)

....Mindfulness can mitigate the distress related to socially prescribed perfectionism by removing the mediating effect of ruminative thought. (Short & Mazmanian, 2013)

Self-Awareness + Mindfulness

How it works...

IAA Theory - Intention, Attention, Attitude:

Intentionally (I) attending (A) with openness and non-judgement (A) leads to a significant shift in perspective.

Intention:

Why you're doing what you're doing — the compass of your heart.

Attention:

To what or who you're paying attention.

Attitude:

How you're paying attention — with acceptance, openness and curiosity.

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Self-Awareness + Mindfulness

Mindfulness Practices

Vacuum Breathing

Vacuum breathing helps move through any energy you may be holding in the body. It also helps with strong mind chatter or rumination. Imagine that the inhale sucks up the thoughts or tensions and the exhale releases it out of the body, either into the Earth where it decomposes or into the air where it evaporates.

Continue until you feel relaxed and still — both in body and mind.

Self-Awareness + Mindfulness

Mindfulness Practices

Loving Kindness Meditation

Find a place to sit comfortably. Place your attention on your body — the places that ache, the places that rest. Breathe into your chest and let it flow throughout your whole self. Continue to connect with your breath and bring a sense of love and appreciation into your body. Let the sensation wash over your body, then repeat in your mind, "May I be happy, may I be healthy, may my heart be at peace."

Repeat this exercise by bringing someone you love with your whole being to mind. Share this with them. Next, say it to someone you don't know well — perhaps a stranger or someone you bumped into today. If you can, repeat the mantra to someone you are struggling to connect with or someone who has hurt you. After that, repeat it to all beings everywhere.

Lastly, speak the mantra back to yourself — bringing the love and kindness full circle.

Self-Awareness + Mindfulness

Self-
Awareness

Mindfulness Prompts

- How do I feel when I'm at home with myself?
- How do I feel when I've neglected my inner home and landscape?
- How do I feel when I'm on the run from myself?
- How do I feel about my home right now?

Self-Compassion

A look at self-esteem vs. self-compassion



Self-
Esteem

- Global evaluation of self-worth
- A judgement: "am I a good person or a bad person?"
- The problem is not necessarily lack of self-esteem; the problem is how we try and "get" it. We feel the need to be special and above average to overcompensate thus we have to put ourselves up and others down.
- We see this in Narcissism disorders (which are on the rise)
- Self-esteem is contingent on success.

How do we get off of this treadmill of needing to feel better than others to feel good about ourselves?

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is more effective than self-criticism

(Neff, 2013)



Self-
Compassion

- Treating self with kindness
- Sharing a common humanity
- Building mindfulness
- According to studies by Odoua & Brinkerb (2014a, 2016b), self-compassion was associated with autonomous goal motivation and thus lower negative affect.
- Participants who wrote self-compassionately experienced increases in positive affect while participants who didn't experienced reductions in positive affect.
- Neff's findings show that self-compassion can reduce anxiety and actually help us make real changes in our lives.*
- They also show that self-compassion promotes a sense of common humanity, we can stop seeing ourselves from a victimized or narcissistic vantage point.*

Self-Compassion



Self-
Compassion

"One of the exciting aspects of self-compassion is that it is a skill that can be learned through targeted interventions (eg., Bluth et al., 2016; Neff & Germer, 2013) and brought to bear on the struggles of living an imperfect human life.

It will be important as we move forward to have a deeper understanding of how self-compassion functions and facilitates the alleviation of suffering, so that this body of research can ultimately be used to help people learn to thrive in the midst of their struggles and find inner happiness."

"New frontiers in understanding the benefits of self-compassion" by Karen Bluth

Self-Compassion

Building Self-Compassion



Self-
Compassion

- Build emotional intelligence; notice, name and navigate emotions in self and others — use the "Emotion" module to practice this.
- Identify and tend to your own needs!
- Be aware of your mind chatter, in particular Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs)
- Build mindfulness (ie: use your breath, meditate, etc)
- Validate/normalize your experiences and the way you reacted/responded (ie: "it makes sense that...")
- Treat yourself with kindness and self-soothe
- Self-awareness and care

Self-Compassion

Building Self-Compassion: Journal Prompts



Self-
Compassion

- What do I need right now?
- What Automatic Negative Thoughts are keeping me stuck from giving myself what I need?
- What can I do right now to get myself back into my body and quiet my mind?
- How can I see and validate myself, my feelings and my experience without judgement or the need to grow/change/shift right now?
- Finish the sentence, "it makes sense that I feel this way because...."
- Talk to yourself — what do I need to hear right now to feel loved, to feel kindness?
- What can I give myself right now that would feel soothing and calming?

Self-Care

Self-care can look like many different things to different people, which is why the emphasis is put on "self." In this section of the module, we're approaching self-care as the "inside work" we can do to support and care for our internal homes. We encourage you to define the different ways self-care manifests for you and to find simple yet effective ways to integrate them.

We'll be focusing on...

1. Fostering Your Solid Flexible Self
2. Embracing Vulnerability
3. Practicing Resilience
4. Honoring Authenticity



Self-Care



Self-Care

Solid Flexible Self Theory...

...Many of us lack a solid sense of self without a solid identity.

...When lacking a solid sense of self, we depend on a reflected sense of self.

...Oftentimes, we depend on getting a positive reflected sense of self from other people. We look to others for: Validation, acceptance and unconditional love.

...It's healthy to look for this in relationships until you don't get it and then deeply **NEED** it.

...This then can result in feeling emotionally claustrophobic or overly dependent in committed relationships.

...Feeling rigid, brittle, controlling in relationships to fit with your own needs and wants.

...This can also lead to becoming increasingly dependent and emotionally fused with your partner.

...Which then perpetuates feelings of insecurity, lack, comparison, blame/shame and more.

Self-Care



Self-Care

Stepping Into Our Solid-Flexible Self Can Look Like...

- ...Having an internalized set of core values by which you run your life.
- ...Having a sense of your own self-worth that persevere through hard times.
- ...Maintaining your own viewpoints and sense of direction when others pressure to conform.
- ...Drawing your sense of personal stability, values and direction from within yourself, which comes from frequently confronting yourself (from the best in yourself) that you could be wrong.
- ...You don't always have to be right and you don't crash when you're wrong.

Self-Care

Solid Flexible Self: Journal Prompts

- Look back to your values in the Spirit module — are you supporting yourself by living within your values? If not, which areas of your life can you align a bit more with your values?
- Write your own worth mantra or repeat, "I am worthy of being loved, accepted and treated fairly, kindly and with respect no matter my mistakes or imperfections." Then complete the sentence, "this is true because..."
- What makes me feel empowered?
- Finish the sentence, "I am okay disappointing others to stay within my values because..."
- What can I learn from being wrong?
- How can I help myself shift from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset when I'm feeling defensive?
- How can I better see what emotional work is my responsibility and stand firmly in that (with love) instead of taking on others' responsibilities?



Self-Care

Self-Care



Self-Care

Vulnerability...

...is the emotional risk, exposure and uncertainty which fuels our daily lives. Daring to show up and letting ourselves to be seen — the catalyst for courage, compassion and connection. Our willingness to own and engage with our vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose; the level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable is a measure of our fear of disconnection. Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. It is not weakness. It's the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change. It's a marker of strength.

(compiled from Daring Greatly, The Gifts of Imperfections and TED Talks by Brene Brown)

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Self-Care

Vulnerability Journal Prompts



Self-Care

- What is my relationship to vulnerability?
- What do I judge about being vulnerable?
- Where does that judgemental voice come from?
- Why do I value being vulnerable?
- Where does that loving voice come from?
- In my life, being vulnerable has given me... (positive aspect)
- Without being vulnerable, I never would have... (positive aspect)
- How can I tend to myself when I'm feeling a "vulnerability hangover"?
- How can I help others feel safe to be vulnerable?

Self-Care



The Factors of Resilience...

Emotion Regulation:

The ability to stay calm under pressure and identify personal emotional experiences.

Impulse Control:

Ability to discipline behavior to achieve goals and tolerate ambiguity.

Self-efficacy:

The ability to use skills in given circumstances and a sense of mastery.

Reaching Out:

Having social support and feeling comfortable reaching out to others when in need or otherwise.

Self-Care



Self-Care

The Factors of Resilience...

Empathy:

The ability to read other people's cues to their emotional states and share in their experience and feelings.

Optimism:

Hope for the future wedded to reality, a belief that things can change for the better and a focus on what is controllable while also choosing to making a change there.

Causal Analysis:

Flexible and accurate thinking about causes and implications and the ability to keep a perspective.

Self-Care



What is Real Time Resilience? (Reivich, 2003)

- ...the ability to reframe your mind chatter in the heat of the moment.
- ...a tool for disrupting your thoughts in real time.

Get Calm First...

- ...when stressed, you don't have access to your prefrontal cortex. Relax first.
 - Take a deep breath
 - Count backwards from 100
 - Connect your senses instead of your thoughts

When you are a little more centered, you are ready to talk back to your mind in real time.

Self-Care



Self-Care

Facts About Real Time Resilience...

- Most of us don't take the time to question our mind chatter.
- We assume if it came from my mind, it must be true.
- We don't realize we would never be that mean, cruel, judgemental or pessimistic towards others, but we are that way towards ourselves.
- Real Time Resilience is a fast skill that takes time to develop.
- It helps us become more flexible and accurate in our thinking.
- It decreases the potency of rumination through resilient statements.
- It increases the experience of neutral and positive feelings.
- It helps people become more resilient and better able to come home after adversity.

Self-Care

Resilience Practice



Self-Care

Practicing "Talking Back" to Build Real Time Resilience...

List your frequent mind chatter, particularly thoughts that start with:

- "Im a..."
- "He/She/They think I'm..."
- "He/She/They are..."
- "I'll never..."
- "I always..."
- "He/She/They always..."
- "This/That is so..."
- "I'm going to..."

Practicing "Talking Back" to Build Real Time Resilience...

1. Pick an adversity that generates lots of beliefs for you.
2. Tell your partner the gist of the thoughts you have.
3. Your partner will repeat your beliefs back to you, one at a time.
4. You'll respond by starting the statement with:
 - a. "That's not true because..."
 - b. "Another way of seeing that is..."
 - c. "The most likely outcome is...and I can..."
5. Use one "talk back" statement and make sure they pass the "gut test" meaning you can feel the shift in perspective in your gut!

Self-Care



Self-Care

Authenticity...

...is letting go of who we think we are supposed to be and embracing who we actually are.

Choosing authenticity means cultivating the courage to be imperfect, to set boundaries and to allow ourselves to be vulnerable.

(compiled from Daring Greatly, The Gifts of Imperfections and TED Talks by Brené Brown)

Self-Care

Resilience Practice



Self-Care

Authenticity can look like...

- Integrity — Honesty — Authenticity
- Speaking the truth, even when it's challenging or scary.
- Allowing others to see the "real you."
- Living in a way that is true to yourself.
- Taking responsibility for what you do and say and feel.
- Knowing your likes, wants, needs, values, strengths and "how your intuition communicates to you."
- Maintaining healthy boundaries.

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Self-Care



Self-Care

10 Guideposts for Authentic Living...

1. Cultivate authenticity — let go of what people think
2. Self-Compassion — let go of perfectionism
3. A resilient spirit — let go of numbing and powerlessness
4. Gratitude & joy — let go of scarcity and fear of the dark
5. Intuition and trusting faith — let go of the need for certainty
6. Creativity — let go of comparison
7. Play and rest — let go of exhaustion as a status symbol and productivity as self-worth
8. Calm and stillness — let go of anxiety as a lifestyle
9. Meaningful work — let go of self-doubt and "supposed to"
10. Laughter, song and dance — let go of being cool and in control

(compiled from Daring Greatly, The Gifts of Imperfections and TED Talks by Brene Brown)

Self-Care

Home Visualization

Close your eyes...

Take a deep breath in through your nose and let it go with a sigh through your mouth. Take another deep breath, counting to 4 slowly, and exhale through your nose on the count of 6. Keep breathing like that — in for 4, out for 6 — until you feel calm and relaxed; in your body. Allow your breathing to regulate and imagine yourself laying down somewhere with your eyes closed. When you open your eyes, you're in a bed. It's your bed, but it's not the bed you usually sleep in. It's somewhere else but you know it's home because of how it feels. It feels safe, slow and warm. It's comforting, quiet and joyful. You notice that the bed is soft and you don't feel rushed to get out. That feels good. Once you're ready, you swing your feet over the side and walk downstairs or into another room. It's bright and light yet soft and welcoming. It's cozy and spacious and you instantly feel at peace. There is a fire on in the fireplace and windows all around. Outside it's sunny and full of nature that fills you up and makes you feel both free and grounded simultaneously. You look around, taking a deep breath and breathing this feeling into your cells — feeling grateful for this home that is always, always here for you.

I am my home. I will leave it to learn,
grow and explore and I will always
return. My soul home nourishes me,
holds me, keeps me safe and sets me
free. And for that, I am grateful.
