

SELF-PRESERVATION STRATEGIES

CASW 2022

MAUREEN POLLARD, MSW, RSW

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BSW 1992, MSW 2011

Child Welfare (20 years)

High Conflict Custody and Access (10 years)

Traumatic Bereavement (11 years)

Compassion Fatigue Specialist (10 years)

Resilience and Wellness Consultant (8 years)

Grief Stories (Consultant and Podcast Host)

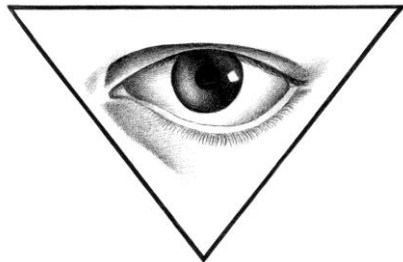
Author: *The Twentieth Year: A Memoir of Miscarriage* (2019)

Songwriter: *I Hope You Stay* (2020), *One Breath at a Time* (2020), *I'm No Hero* (2021)

WHAT I EXPECTED



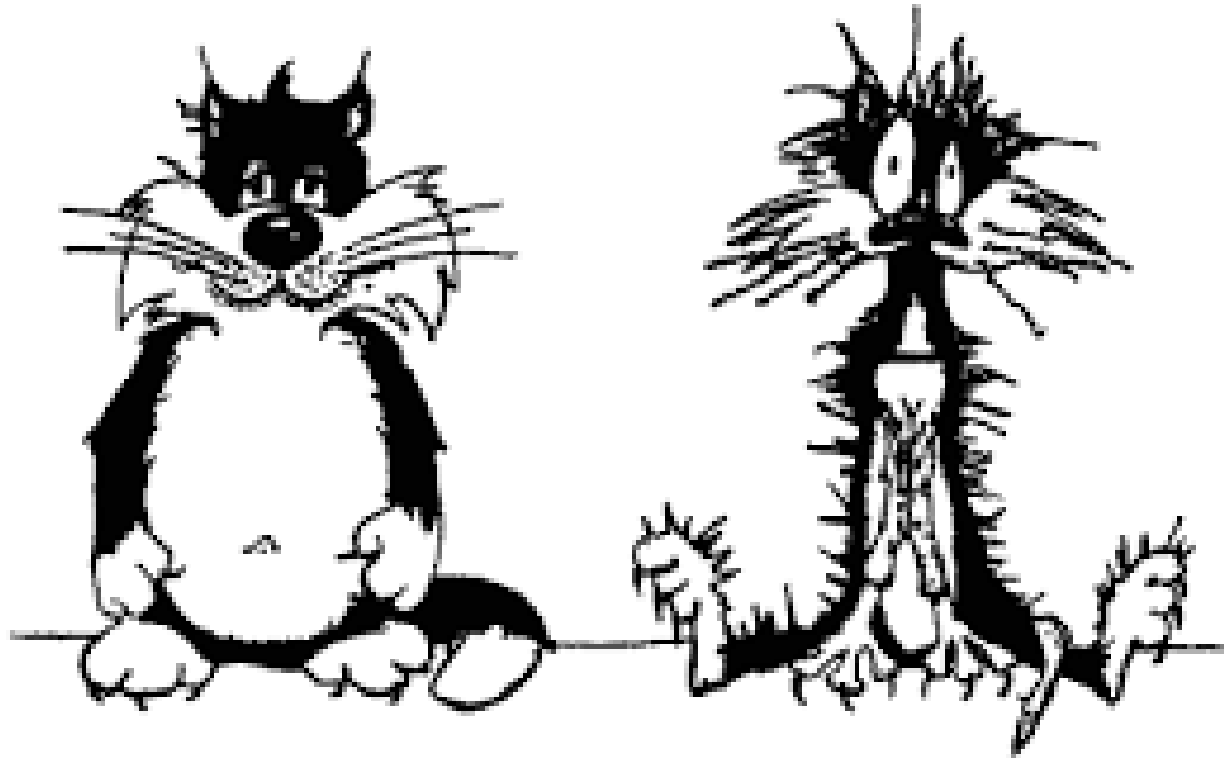
LISTEN



WHAT I DISCOVERED



WHAT HAPPENED

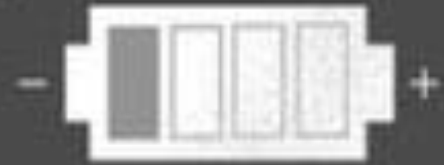
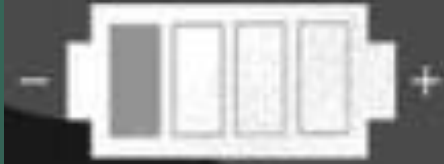


Before Work

After Work

COMPASSION FATIGUE

EROSION OF THE
ABILITY TO ENGAGE IN
CARING
INTERACTIONS



FACTORS IN COMPASSION FATIGUE



Burnout



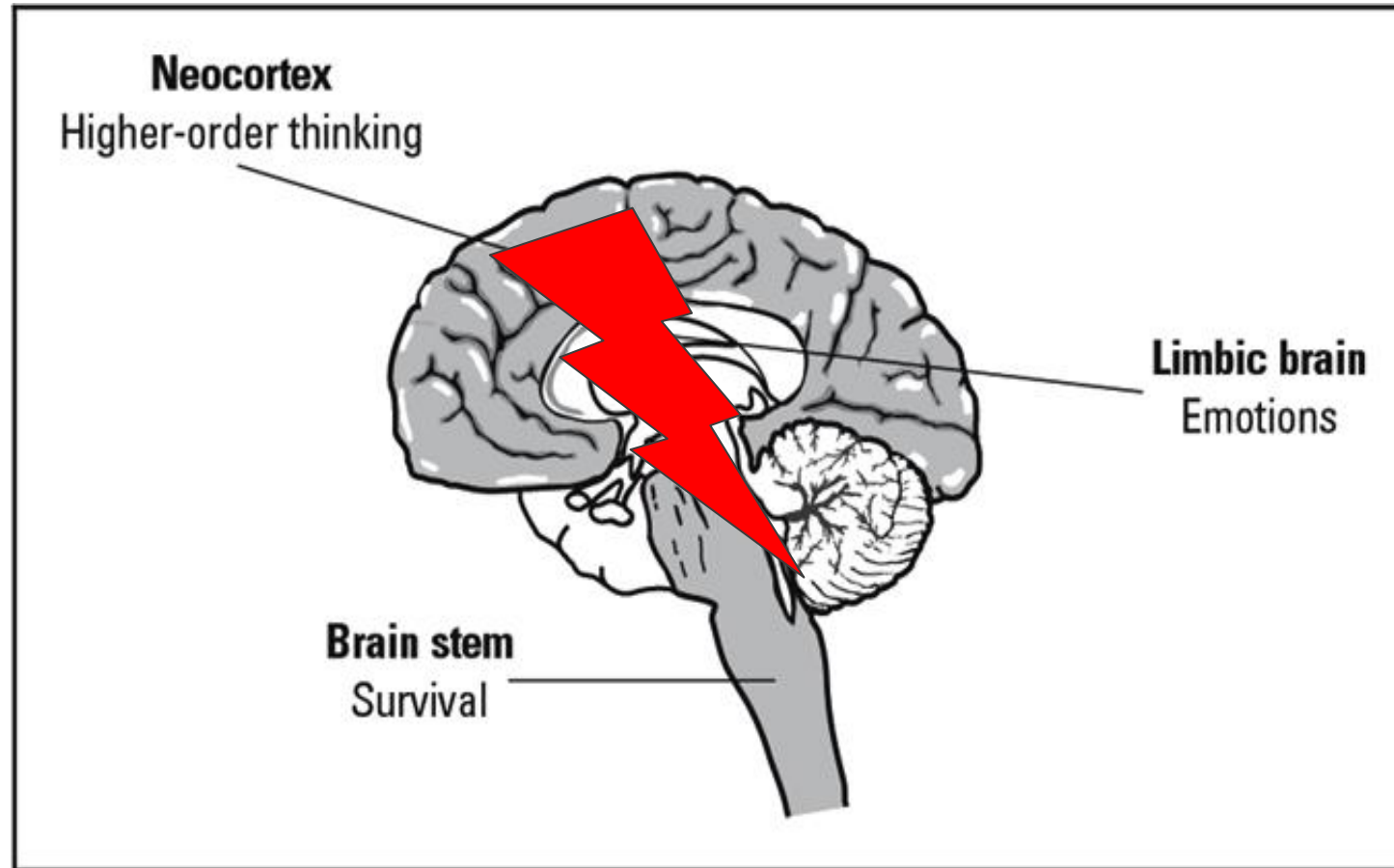
Trauma



Moral Injury

NEUROBIOLOGY BASICS

THE AMYGDALA – ALARM CENTRE



NEUROBIOLOGY BASICS

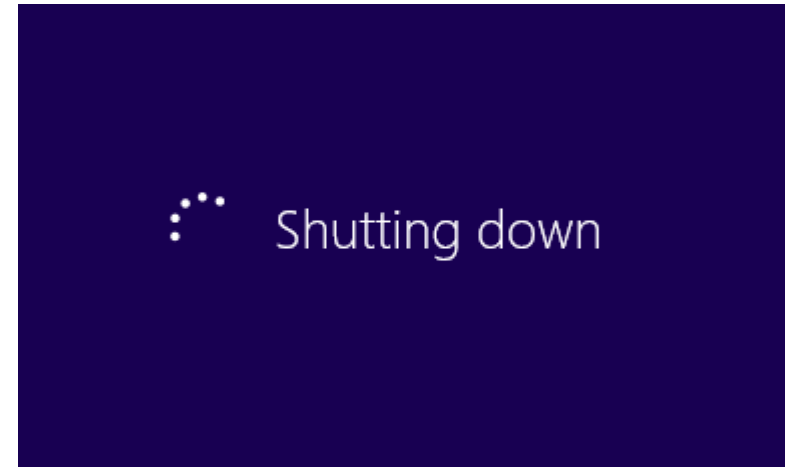
THE VAGUS NERVE – CALMING CENTRE



THE GOLDBLOCKS PRINCIPLE



Too Hot – Alarm State



Too Cold - Numbing

Hyperarousal

Hyperaware or vigilant
Overly quick or intense reactions
Feeling a lack of emotional safety
Overwhelming emotions

Window of tolerance

Able to think and feel
at the same time

Hypoarousal

Shut down, flat or numb
Hard to think, disconnected
Feeling shame, can't say 'no'

YOUR SURGE CAPACITY IS DEPLETED

BY TARA HAELLE AUGUST 17, 2020

- **Surge Capacity** = mental and physical adaptive survival systems
- Chronic, ever-changing and indefinite uncertainty **depletes capacity**
- ***Tangible Loss*** – relationships, employment, physical and mental health
- ***Ambiguous Loss*** - way of life, security, freedom, trust, routine, rituals

TWO TYPES OF INTERNAL DANGER

- **Psychic Battering** – the wear and tear of working in trauma exposed environments over time and witnessing so much tragedy takes a toll
- **Getting Stuck in a Moment** – focusing on what went wrong during an incident, ruminating on self-blame and self-doubt

Tania Glenn, 2017

COMPASSION FATIGUE AT WORK

- Horizontal Violence
- “Must be nice” phenomenon

Francoise Mathieu, 2012

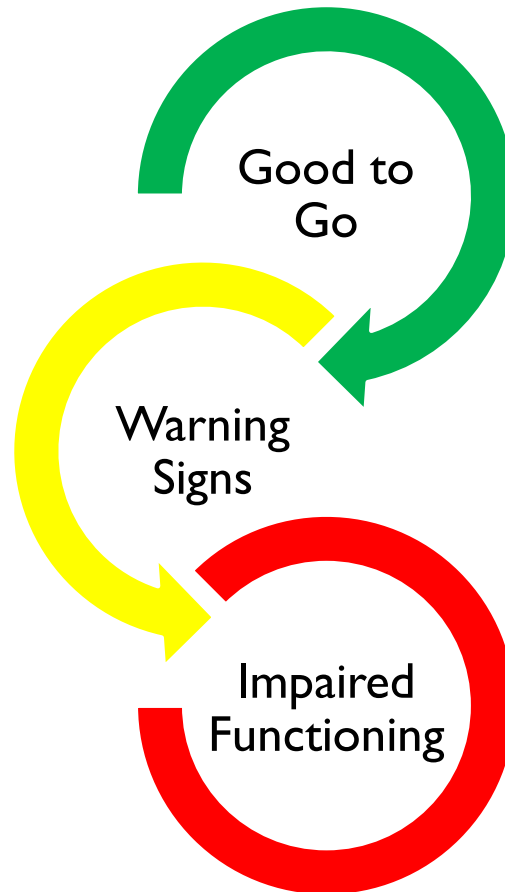
POTENTIAL FOR HEALING

- **Compassion Satisfaction** (Kelly and Todd, 2017)
Pleasure and satisfaction received from the work of caregiving.
- **Post Traumatic Growth** (<https://ptgi.uncc.edu/what-is-ptg/>)
Positive change following the struggle with a major life crisis or a traumatic event.

HOW ARE YOU DOING?



PERSONAL INVENTORY



Francoise Mathieu, 2012.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is the ability to adapt in the face of adversity, trauma and stress.

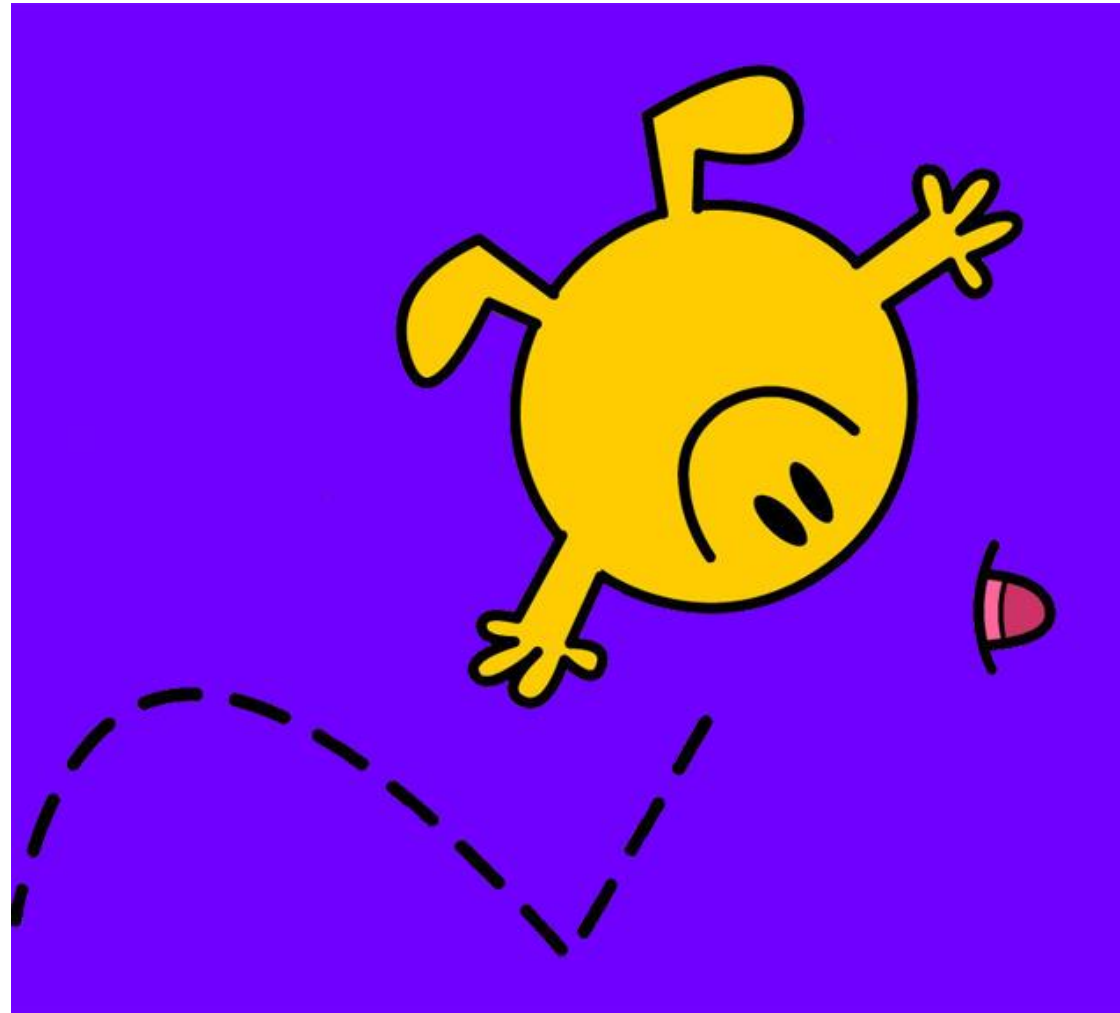


American Psychological Association. 2015. The Road to Resilience.

A WORD ABOUT RESILIENCE...

- We're going to talk about what you can do to take care of yourself during these challenging times. This isn't about making an individual responsible for systems issues.
- We can acknowledge the fact that we're working in systems and structures that are deeply problematic.
- We can work to change this reality AND we need self-preservation strategies as we do this work.

PERSONAL FACTORS IN RESILIENCE



COPING WITH THOUGHTS



COPING WITH FEELINGS



Feelings are like waves:
we can't stop them from coming,
but we can learn to surf.

SMART GOALS

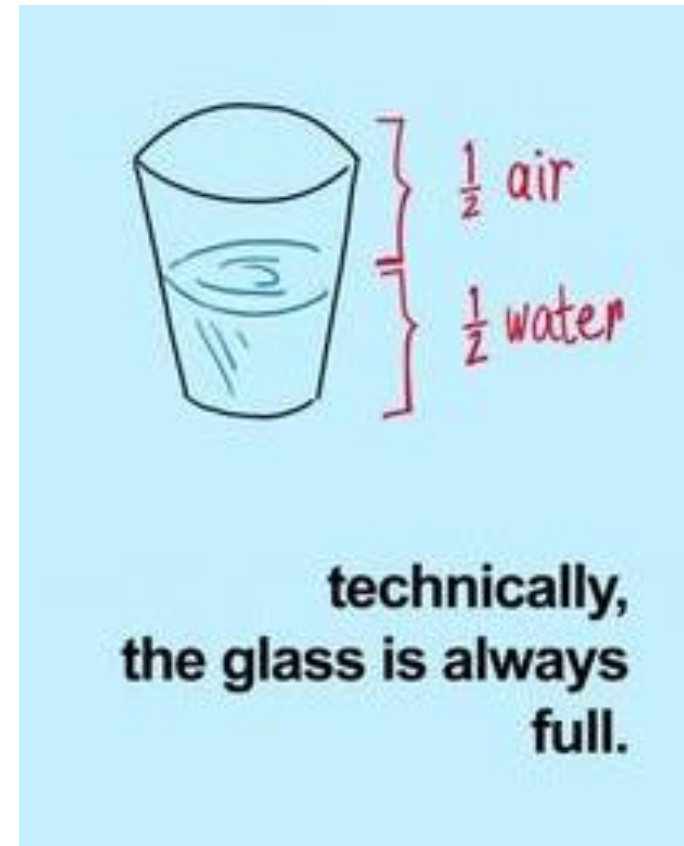
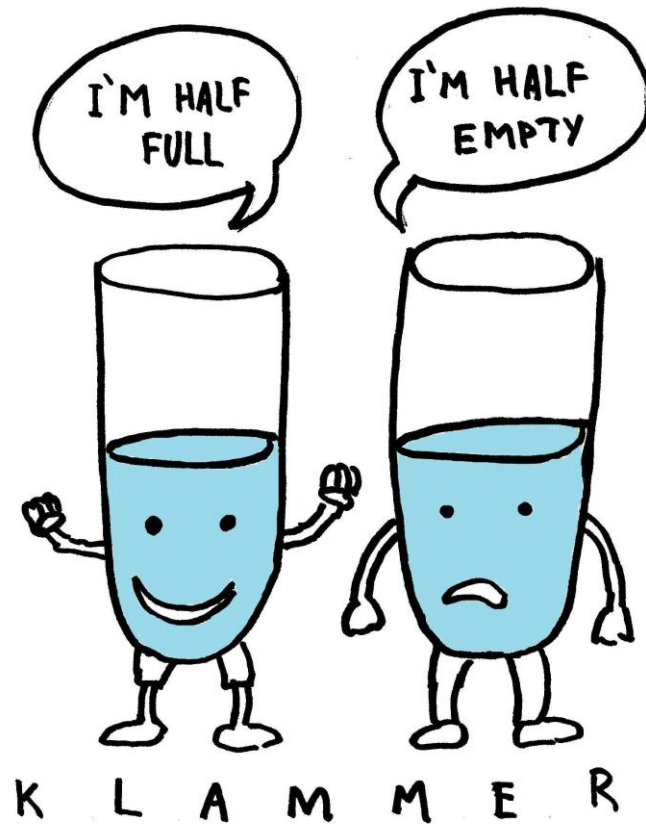


"Why can't you support my dream of moving to the desert?"

ACCEPTANCE OF CHANGE



OPTIMISM & PERSPECTIVE



SENSE OF CONTROL



We can't direct the wind but we can adjust our sails.

M. Jackson Brown

SENSE OF HUMOUR

Things That
Should Not Be
Joked About



Why I Keep
My
Mouth Shut

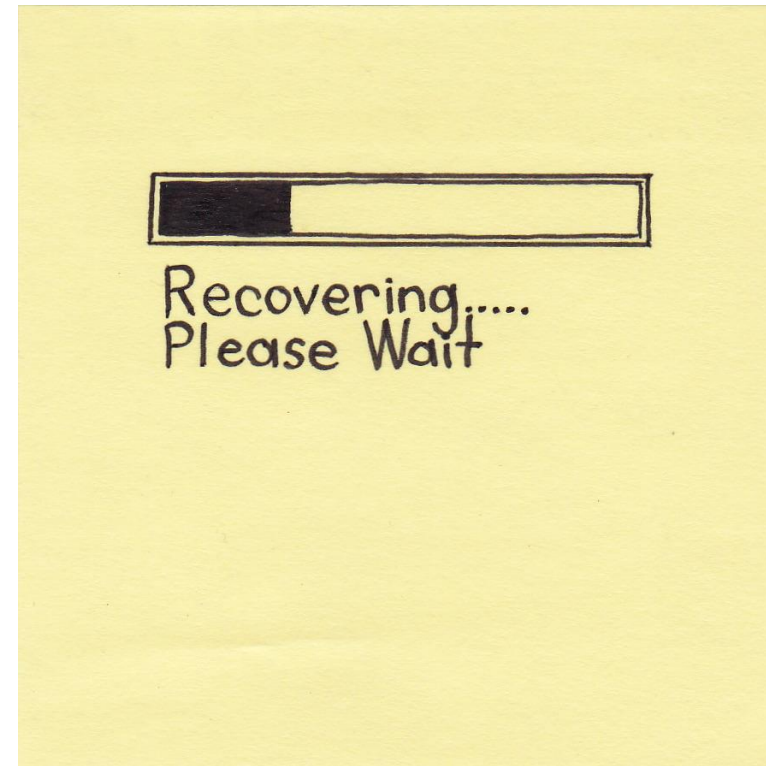


Things I
Find Funny

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES



REST AND RECOVERY



Passive Rest
Two-Hand Tea



Active Rest
Cruise Control

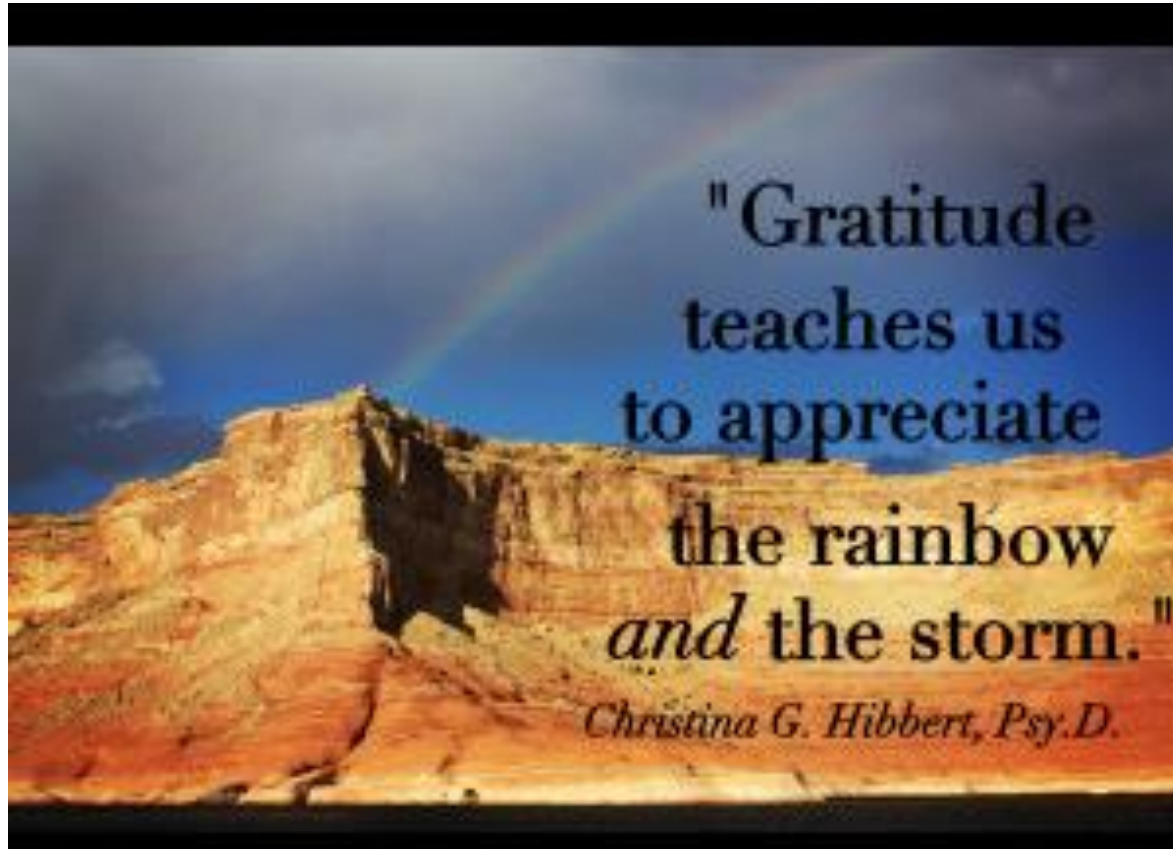


Amanda Rocheleau, 2020

SOCIAL SUPPORT & CONNECTION



GRATITUDE



Three Good Things Challenge



52 Card Thank You Challenge



TYPES OF SELF-CARE



PHYSICAL

- Sleep
- Stretching
- Walking
- Physical release
- Healthy food
- Yoga
- Rest



EMOTIONAL

- Stress management
- Emotional maturity
- Forgiveness
- Compassion
- Kindness




SOCIAL

- Boundaries
- Support systems
- Positive social media
- Communication
- Time together
- Ask for help



SPIRITUAL

- Time alone
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Connection
- Nature
- Journaling
- Sacred space



What did you learn about
self care growing up?

What do you believe
about self care now?

Self Care *is a deliberate practice
of knowing your **needs and desires**,
taking responsibility for them,
and living in a way that honours them.*

Amanda Rocheleau

Suffering = Pain x Resistance

— *Shinzen Young* —

- ***Pain*** comes from dealing with what is difficult.
- ***Suffering*** comes from getting locked in negative thoughts.
- ***Compassion*** for self and others helps relieve suffering.

Self-Compassion

Kristen Neff

Self-compassion has three key features:

1. **Self-kindness** - giving yourself warmth and understanding when you suffer, fail, or feel inadequate.
2. **Common humanity** - knowing you are human and that as humans we share this mutual experience of being human and suffering. Part of being human means that we will make mistakes, experience loss, and encounter frustrations.
3. **Mindfulness** - paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.

WHAT CAN HELP WHEN DIFFICULTIES ARE ON-GOING?

- Acceptance and non-resistance of the fact that this is a difficult time
- Adjusting expectations for yourself and others
- Allowing for reduced capacity to function during this time
- Consider your perception: this may be both a terrible time of loss and uncertainty AND a time of growth
- Seek fulfilling activities you can do even now
- Find ways to stay connected to others and offer help, even when you feel depleted

ACTIVATE YOUR VAGUS NERVE

[HTTP://DRHABIB.CA/2016/07/ACTIVATE-VAGUS-NERVE](http://DRHABIB.CA/2016/07/ACTIVATE-VAGUS-NERVE)

- Cold Showers
- Singing or Humming
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Deep Breathing
- Laughter
- Light Exercise
- Massage



- **S**top what you're doing
- **T**ake a few deep breaths
- **O**bserve what's happening in your mind & body
- **P**roceed intentionally and with compassion





breathe.

GET COMFORTABLE.
NOTICE YOUR BREATH.

“BREATHING IN, I CALM MY BODY.”

“BREATHING OUT, I CALM MY MIND”

4-7-8

HAND ON HEART



- May I learn to accept myself as I am
 - May I be safe
 - May I know peace
 - May I have the compassion that I need
-
- May we all accept ourselves as we are
 - May we all be safe
 - May we all know peace
 - May we all have the compassion we need



SHINE YOUR
LIGHT

THANK YOU

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