



WELL- BEING PLAY BOOK



BY LEYSA CERSWELL KIELBURGER



CHAPTER TWO

BE YOUR OWN BFF

THE WE WELL-BEING PLAYBOOK

BY LEYSA CERSWELL KIELBURGER
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AFTERWORD BY DANIEL J. SIEGEL, MD



SUSAN ALLAN, EDITOR
WE WELL-BEING

FOR

**ERIKA & THE
ELKINGTON FAMILY**

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO

BILL, SABRINA AND THE ERIKA LEGACY FOUNDATION

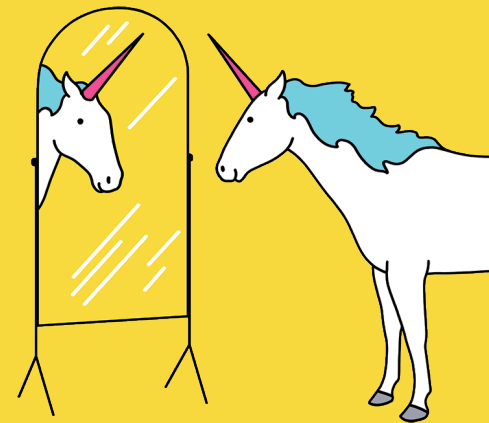
FOR THE MANY WAYS YOU LIVE TO INSPIRE

LITTLE THINGS MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

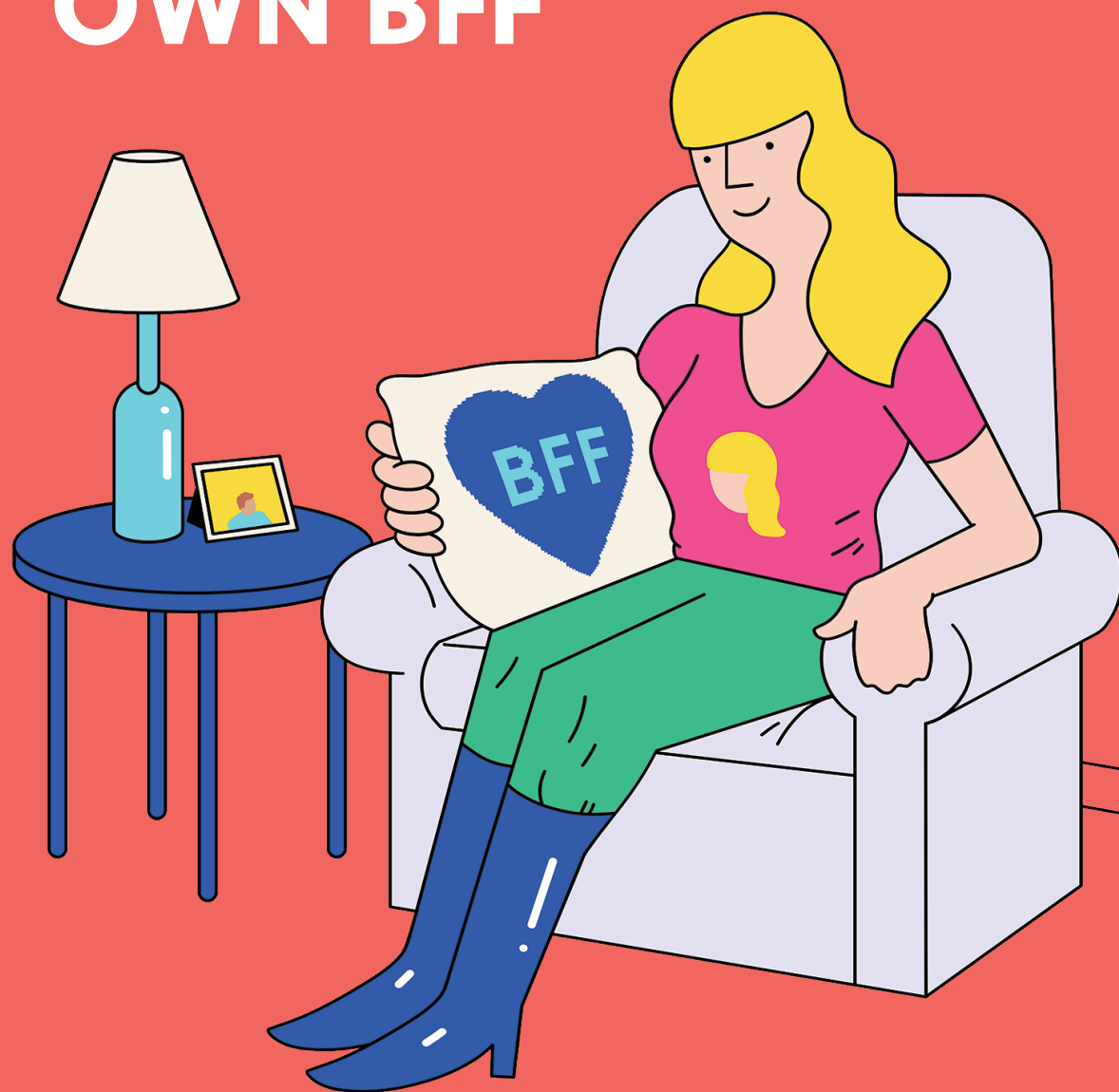
**OUR STARTING
EQUATION?
YOU = AWESOME**

Little things make a big difference. So we've created a hands-on, start-anywhere guide to inform and empower your day-to-day actions and interactions.

This is our top 10—the best of the best recommendations for self-care, maintenance and optimal performance. The actions may seem simple but don't let that deceive you. Each one is based on evidence – we've taken the leading science and made it applicable to our daily lives. Start with Chapter One and work your way to Chapter 10. Experiment. Play. And discover what works for you!



BE YOUR OWN BFF



OWN YOUR STRENGTHS AND FIND YOUR POWER SOURCES

Self-compassion is everything. Learn how to own your strengths and discover your power sources.





**I LEARNED A LONG
TIME AGO THAT
THE WISEST THING
I CAN DO IS BE ON
MY OWN SIDE,
BE AN ADVOCATE
FOR MYSELF AND
OTHERS LIKE ME.**

MAYA ANGELOU



Be Your Own BFF

Think about how you would greet and treat an old friend. Probably, with a great big bear hug! Now consider ways you can extend that same affection to yourself.

Not sure where to begin? Stretch your arms wide. Cross your hands to opposite shoulders. Squeeze!

You have every reason to be your own BFF.* Being kind to yourself is a good place to start.

"The nurturing quality of self-compassion allows us to flourish, to appreciate the beauty and richness of life, even in hard times," says Dr. Kristen Neff, who has made the field her life's work.

Self-compassion is a source of inner strength that is linked to well-being, resilience and productivity.

Neff, a researcher at the University of Texas at Austin, has studied the many ways self-compassion trumps self-esteem. For one thing, it does not depend on achievements or accomplishments. "Whether we're on top of the world or at the bottom of the heap, we can embrace ourselves with a sense of kindness," she explains.

Go ahead and turn some kindness inwards!

TRUE FACT

A friendly hug or a pat on the back releases oxytocin – the hormone involved in social bonding – and reduces cortisol, the stress hormone.

*FOR THE RECORD,
A BFF KNOWS YOU
WELL, LOVES YOU
UNCONDITIONALLY,
RESPECTS YOU
ENOUGH TO BE
HONEST AND BRINGS
JOY AND LAUGHTER
WHILE DRAWING OUT
THE BEST IN YOU.

Own Your Strengths

CIRCLE AND CELEBRATE THE WORDS THAT APPLY TO YOU →

GOOD LISTENER OPTIMISTIC HUMBLE CREATIVE CURIOUS
COURAGEOUS DETERMINED HARD-WORKING FRIENDLY
AUTHENTIC GENEROUS OPEN-MINDED PATIENT HELPFUL
RESPECTFUL FOCUSED FLEXIBLE APPRECIATIVE ARTISTIC
DISCIPLINED WISE LOVE OF LEARNING GRATEFUL KIND
ACTION-ORIENTED COMPASSIONATE CALM ADVENTUROUS

ADD MORE OF YOUR OWN WORDS HERE

WHERE DO YOU SEE THESE STRENGTHS
REFLECTED IN OTHERS?

IF YOU DID NOT
CIRCLE CURIOUS,
SEE CHAPTER 7

WANT TO FOCUS ON
COMPASSION, TURN
TO CHAPTER 2

LEARN TO PRACTICE
GRATITUDE IN CHAPTER 4

1

UNDERSTAND THAT
MAKING MISTAKES
AND FACING CHAL-
LENGES ARE ALL PART
OF BEING HUMAN

2

LEND YOURSELF
A CURIOUS AND
COMPASSIONATE
EAR. IF YOU NOTICE
SELF-CRITICISM,
ASK YOURSELF:
IS THERE A KINDER
RESPONSE?



3

SEEK TO IDENTIFY AND
CARE FOR
YOUR NEEDS

DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 8

4

REALIZE YOUR
THOUGHTS ARE
JUST THOUGHTS

DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 6

5

BE KIND WHENEVER
POSSIBLE

SEE CHAPTER 8 FOR
MORE FROM THE DALAI
LAMA ON THIS!

How To Be Your Own BFF, No Matter What

KNOW YOUR VALUES

CIRCLE THE WORDS THAT RESONATE WITH YOU → ABUNDANCE ACCEPTANCE ACCOUNTABILITY
ACHIEVEMENT ADVENTURE ADVOCACY AMBITION APPRECIATION ATTRACTIVENESS AUTONOMY
BALANCE BEING THE BEST BOLDNESS BRILLIANCE CALMNESS CARING CHALLENGE CHARITY
CHEERFULNESS CLEVERNESS COMMUNITY COMMITMENT COMPASSION CO-OPERATION
COLLABORATION CONSISTENCY CONTRIBUTION CREATIVITY CREDIBILITY CURIOSITY DARING
DECISIVENESS DEDICATION DEPENDABILITY DIVERSITY FAIRNESS FAMILY FAMOUS FEARLESS
FEELINGS FEROCIOUS FIDELITY FOCUS FORESIGHT FORTITUDE FREEDOM FRIENDSHIP FUN
GENEROSITY GENIUS GOODNESS GRACE GRATITUDE GREATNESS GROWTH HAPPINESS
HARD WORK HARMONY HEALTH HONESTY HONOR HOPE HUMANITY IMAGINATION
IMPROVEMENT INDIVIDUALITY INNOVATION INQUISITIVE INSIGHT INSPIRING INTEGRITY
INTELLIGENCE INTENSITY INTUITIVE IRREVERENT JOY JUSTICE KINDNESS KNOWLEDGE

LEADERSHIP LEARNING LOGIC LOVE LOYALTY MASTERY MATURITY MEANING MODERATION
MOTIVATION OPENNESS OPTIMISM ORDER ORGANIZATION ORIGINALITY PASSION PATIENCE
PEACE PERFORMANCE PERSISTENCE PLAYFULNESS POISE POTENTIAL POWER PRESENT
PRODUCTIVITY PROFESSIONALISM PROSPERITY PURPOSE QUALITY REALISTIC REASON
RECOGNITION RECREATION REFLECTIVE RESPECT RESPONSIBILITY RESTRAINT
RESULTS-ORIENTED REVERENCE RIGOR RISK SATISFACTION SECURITY SELF-RELIANCE
SELFLESS SENSITIVITY SERENITY SKILL SKILLFULNESS SMART SOLITUDE SPIRIT SPIRITUALITY
SPONTANEOUS STABILITY STATUS STEWARDSHIP STRENGTH STRUCTURE SUCCESS SUPPORT
SURPRISE SUSTAINABILITY TALENT TEAMWORK TEMPERANCE THANKFUL THOROUGH
THOUGHTFUL TIMELINESS TOLERANCE TOUGHNESS TRADITIONAL TRANQUILITY TRANSPARENCY
TRUST TRUSTWORTHY TRUTH UNDERSTANDING UNIQUENESS UNITY VALOR VICTORY VIGOR
VISION VITALITY WEALTH WELCOMING WINNING WISDOM WONDER → FILL THE MARGINS

WITH ANY WORDS WE MISSED!

FROM THE LIST OF VALUES YOU
CIRCLED, RANK YOUR TOP 10:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

NOW WRITE YOUR NO. 1 PICK
TEN TIMES ...

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

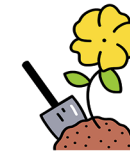
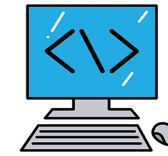
FOR MORE TIPS,
DOWNLOAD CHAPTER 10

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU
HAVE TO PRACTICE THIS VALUE?

WHERE IN YOUR COMMUNITY DO
YOU SEE THIS VALUE REFLECTED?

Express Yourself

CIRCLE THE WAYS YOU LIKE TO CREATE ↓



ADD ANYTHING WE MISSED ↓

DID YOU KNOW

Making time for creativity – from coding to gardening, drama to art, to wherever your imagination takes you – enhances well-being.

Use this space to create words or a picture that inspire you to create ↓

Practice Self-Care

Identify your power sources

Check the activities that give you an energy boost. Add your own!

- TALK TO A FRIEND ON THE PHONE
- COOK YOUR FAVORITE DISH
- VISIT A FAVORITE PERSON
- TRY A NEW RECIPE
- GO OUT FOR A BITE TO EAT
- ORGANIZE A PARTY
- PLAY WITH YOUR PET
- EXERCISE, DO YOGA OR TAI CHI
- GO FOR A SPIN
- STRETCH YOUR MUSCLES
- EAT ICE CREAM
- GO FOR A WALK
- WATCH A FUNNY MOVIE
- SLEEP OR TAKE A NAP
- GO OUT AND WATCH THE CLOUDS
- GO TO THE MOVIES
- RIDE YOUR BIKE
- GO FOR A SWIM
- GO TO A SPORTING EVENT

ADAPTED FROM THE
DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR
THERAPY SKILLS WORKBOOK
BY MATTHEW MCKAY ET
AL. (NEW HARBINGER
PUBLICATIONS, 2007).



DISCOVER MORE ENERGY BOOSTERS

- GO HIKING
- PLAY A GAME WITH A FRIEND
- DO SOMETHING EXCITING LIKE
SURFING OR ROCK CLIMBING
- PLAY SOLITAIRE
- DO A PUZZLE
- GET A MASSAGE
- WRITE A POEM OR STORY
- EAT CHOCOLATE (IT'S GOOD FOR YOU!)
- GO TO A LIBRARY
- READ YOUR FAVORITE BOOK
- VISIT A MUSEUM OR ART GALLERY
- GO TO THE MALL OR THE PARK
- PRAY OR MEDITATE
- WRITE IN YOUR JOURNAL

PICK ONE ACTIVITY YOU WANT TO DO
IN THE NEXT WEEK

DRUGS, ALCOHOL & YOUR BRAIN

Practicing self-care skills on a regular basis builds stronger neural connections in our brain, called synapses. Using drugs (including cannabis) and alcohol can undo the hard work of building a healthy brain by scrambling the flow of information between synapses and negatively impacting memory, attention, and problem solving.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DRUG
ABUSE (NIDA), NATIONAL
INSTITUTES OF HEALTH,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES.



DISCOVER MORE
ABOUT BRAINS
AND DRUGS

Kind Hand + Open Heart = Self-Compassion 101

Caring for yourself, as you would a friend

Self-compassion is a life-long survival skill – one that is never too late to learn!

Author and educator Rachel Simmons is on a mission to show how it's done.

Sometimes she invites assemblies of high school kids to place their hands on their hearts: "Feel the pressure and warmth of a kind hand."

Go ahead: Try it yourself. (Or place a hand on your cheek, or arm.)

This simple exercise moves many to tears. Simmons explains: "They'd never thought to approach their own setbacks with gentleness."

TAKEAWAY LESSON

The next time you mess up, think about how you would respond to a friend. Without hesitation, extend the same compassion, kindness and care to yourself!

Create a go-to collection of your favorite things

Gather together a few treasures – comfort items – to have on hand when you need a lift. Some ideas: Photos or souvenirs from your happy place. Letters from awesome people. A favorite sweatshirt. Inspirational quotes. A sachet of tea. You get the idea!

INCLUDE THE SUPPORT NETWORK YOU CREATED
IN CHAPTER 1

You may also want to create a digital space with meaningful photos, movies and songs.

FOR WAYS TO TAKE IN THE GOOD EVERYDAY
AND WHY IT'S IMPORTANT, SEE CHAPTER 4

Make Your Own Emotional First Aid Kit

Create a Playlist of Happy Tunes

What are your go-to, feel-good songs?

Plot your playlist, then create it wherever you listen to music. Bonus points for sharing it with a friend.

DID YOU KNOW

Brain imaging technology has revealed that listening to pleasurable music releases "feel-good" neurotransmitters.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

1

DON'T STOP ME NOW
QUEEN

DANCING QUEEN
ABBA

3

GOOD VIBRATIONS
THE BEACH BOYS

UPTOWN GIRL
BILLY JOEL

5

EYE OF THE TIGER
SURVIVOR

ARE THESE THE 10 HAPPIEST SONGS ON EARTH?



Dutch neuroscientist Jacob Jolij created a Feel Good Index that measures the number of positive references in a song, its tempo and its key.

Songs on his feel-good list feature a tempo of about 150 beats per minute.

I'M A BELIEVER
THE MONKEES

**GIRLS JUST WANT
TO HAVE FUN
CYNDI LAUPER**

LIVIN' ON A PRAYER
BON JOVI

I WILL SURVIVE
GLORIA GAYNOR

WALKING ON
SUNSHINE
KATRINA & THE WAVES

Save Your Fan Mail

P.S. And send some, too!

Create a space where you can save words of praise and appreciation.

Set up a file in the cloud or kick it old school and use an empty shoe box.

File any kudos that come your way – texts, emails and letters.

Make this stockpile of cheer and acclamation a go-to place whenever you're in need of a pick-me-up.

In one study of the negativity bias – our tendency to focus on unpleasant things – researchers at Florida State University noted the power of noticing and accumulating the good.

Think about sending your own fan mail to yourself, or to others.

BASED ON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT OVERCOMING OBSTACLES, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER YOURSELF FOR THE NEXT TIME YOU CONFRONT A HURDLE?

**ADD THIS NOTE TO YOUR FAN MAIL STOCKPILE
AS A REMINDER TO YOURSELF THAT YOU KNOW
HOW IT'S DONE!**

Let Go the FOMO

Embrace this down lo:
Life online ≠ Real life

The fear of missing out is understandable in these days of living out loud. So too is a rise in perfectionism – up 33 percent among U.S., Canadian and British college students since 1989.

“Millennials feel pressure to perfect themselves partly out of social media use that leads them to compare themselves to others,” explains Thomas Curran, a researcher at the Centre for Motivation and Health Behaviour Change at the University of Bath. None of us is immune.

Start by memorizing this equation: Life online ≠ Real life.

Real life is actually greater – and, yes, messier – than living online. It’s worth reminding yourself every time you check in on your social feeds.

Notice when you find yourself comparing yourself to strangers. It happens to everyone!

See if you can shake it off ... maybe even LOL and give yourself a break. <3

Practice Self-Kindness

Send a wish for well-being
to yourself and others



As odd as it sounds, being kind to yourself can take practice.

Here is a little technique used by people all over the world. You will need a little quiet and a couple of minutes.

- Find a safe place to sit comfortably.
- Start by paying attention to your breathing, feeling your breath move in and out.
- Rest in the quiet, repeating a small wish for yourself.

Meditation teacher Sharon Salzberg teaches people to use a phrase something like this: “May I be peaceful and happy.” You can use any words you like.

Research shows even a few minutes of this practice can enhance your sense of daily joy, gratitude and hope.

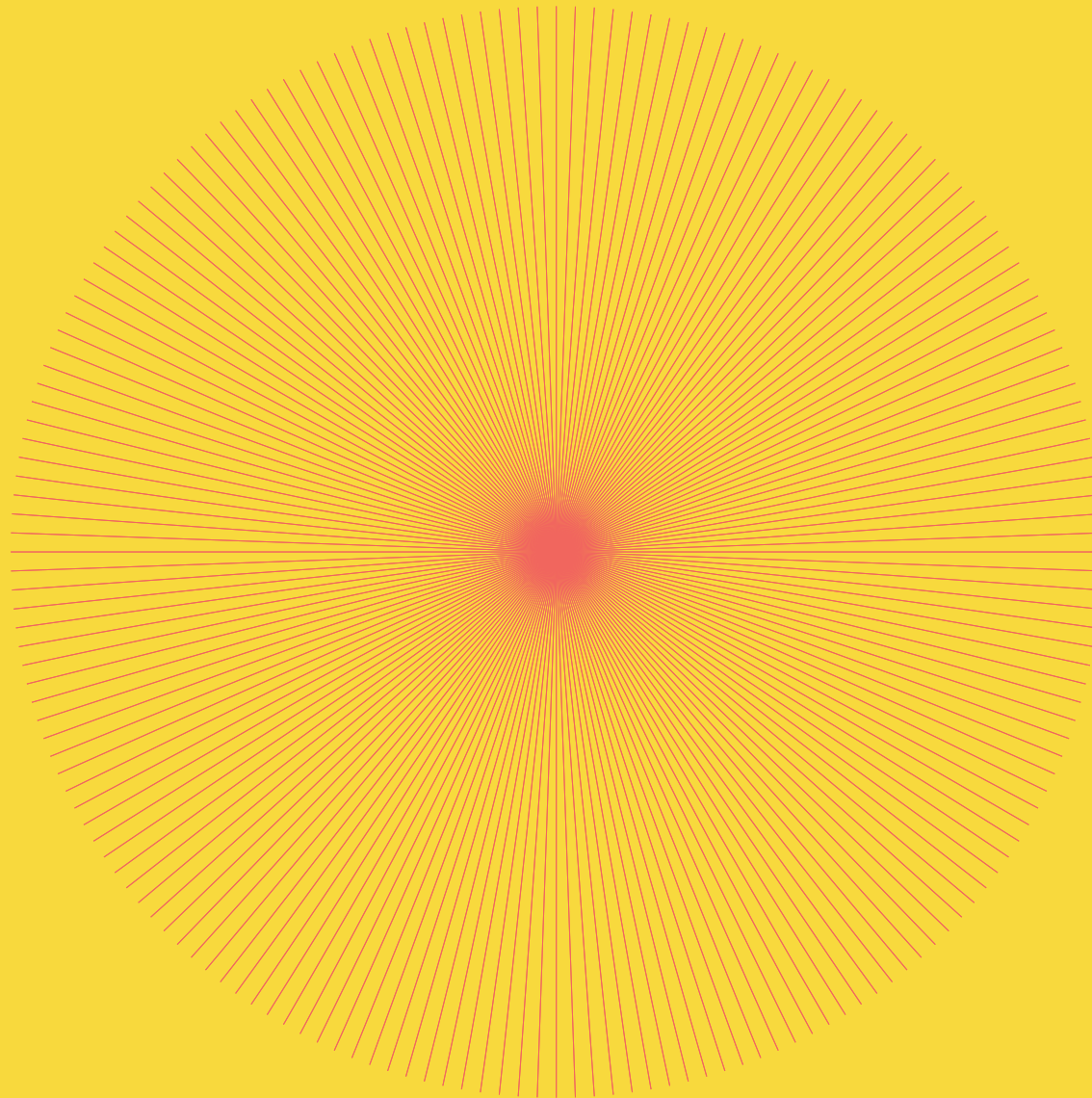
Chances are this will feel weird at the start. It gets easier.

**TO EXPAND THIS MEDITATION,
SEE CHAPTER 4**



**DISCOVER MORE WAYS TO
PRACTICE SELF-KINDNESS**

Shine



We dare you to own
a compliment.

It's not always easy,
especially if you're
not tapped into your
strength and stand-
out qualities.

Because the brain is
hyper-alert to poten-
tial threats, it is wired
to pay acute attention
to negative informa-
tion. This may be one
reason we struggle
with positive feedback
and praise.

Bask in kind words
without deflection.

Instead of talking
yourself down, or
diminishing your
achievement – "Oh,
it was nothing" – try
saying ... THANKS!

ENDNOTES

The Well-being Playbook was inspired by ongoing work and conversations with leading thinkers in the world of education and mental well-being. This is a list of books, articles and resources that helped inform our contemplation.

CHAPTER 2

Be your own BFF

Kristen Neff et al., "Self-compassion versus global self-esteem: Two different ways of relating to oneself," *Journal of Personality*, 2009.

Kristen Neff, "Why self-compassion trumps self-esteem," *Greater Good Magazine*, May 27, 2011.

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Know your values

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Express yourself

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Practice self-care

Matthew McKay et al., *The Dialectical Behavior Therapy Skills Workbook* (New Harbinger Publications, 2007).

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Rachel Simmons, "The promise of self-compassion for stressed-out teens," *New York Times*, February 20, 2018.

Create a playlist of happy tunes

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Jacob Jolij, "The Feel Good Song Formula," www.jolig.com, September 20, 2015.

Did you know

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Save your fan mail

Roy Baumeister et al., "Bad is stronger than good," *Review of General Psychology*, 2001.

Alina Tugend, "Praise is fleeting, but brickbats we recall," *New York Times*, March 23, 2012.

Let go the FOMO

Thomas Curran and Andrew Hill, "Perfectionism is increasing over time: A meta-analysis of birth cohort differences from 1989 to 2016," *Psychological Bulletin*, December 28, 2017.

Jane Adams, "More college students seem to be majoring in perfectionism," *New York Times*, January 18, 2018.

Practice self-kindness

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Sharon Salzberg, "Cultivate goodness: How to practice lovingkindness," *Yoga Journal*, August 13, 2015.

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Shine

Charlotte van Schie et al., "When compliments do not hit but critiques do: An fMRI study into self-esteem and self-knowledge in processing social feedback," *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 2018.

Roy Baumeister, "Bad is stronger than good," *Review of General Psychology*, 2001.

Alina Tugend, "Praise is fleeting, but brickbats we recall," *New York Times*, March 23, 2012.

Don't miss a single chapter!

01

Read the Owner's Manual

Like any good guide, we begin with key recommendations for care

02

Be Your Own BFF

Self-compassion is a source of inner strength

03

Connect

Identify your supporting players and champion communication

04

Tap Into Your Superpowers

A celebration of gratitude, resilience, altruism and empathy

05

Feel All the Feels

A user's guide to emotions

06

Flex

Tips for managing stress, resolving problems and cultivating mindfulness

07

Know, Grow, Flow

Explore, revel and marvel

08

Expand

The world needs you, at home and at large

09

Be Your Own GPS

Chart your course, overcome obstacles ... stretch!

10

Find Your True North

You are ready to become a life-long explorer



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO



FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT
TO ENABLE US TO SHARE THIS
CHAPTER WITH ALL.