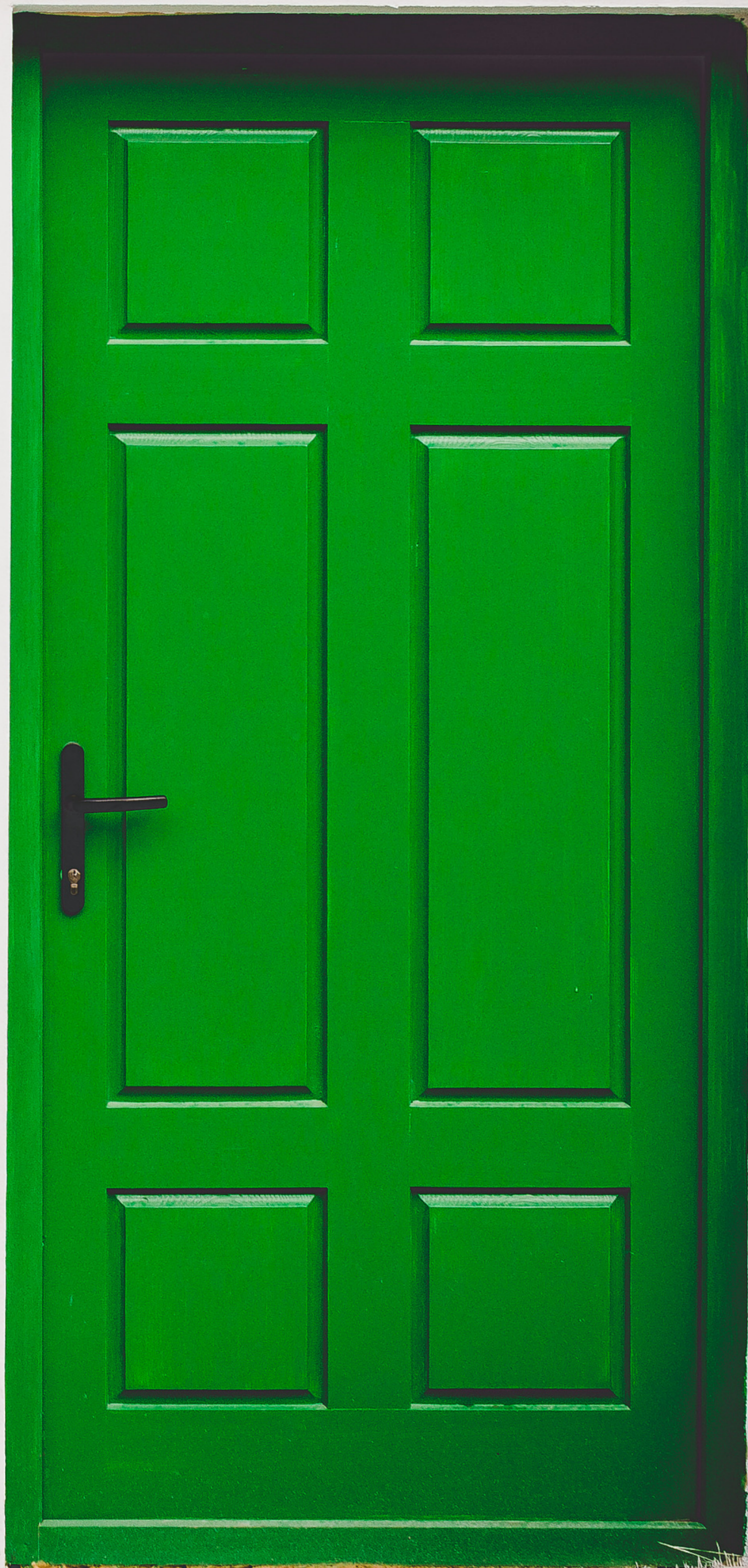


THE SELF-CARE WORKBOOK

YOUR GUIDE TO PERSONAL
GROWTH AND LOVING YOURSELF



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YOUR GUIDE TO PERSONAL GROWTH
AND LOVING YOURSELF

For Coco, a gifted therapist.

This booklet is for educational purposes only and not to be taken as medical advice or a substitute for the advice and therapeutic relationship with a trusted professional.

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This is your own personal resource guide to self-care, personal growth, mental health and emotional wellness.

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ABOUT THE SELF-CARE WORKBOOK

This is your own personal resource guide to self-care, personal growth, mental health and emotional wellness.

INTRO

My name is Talia Marcheggiani, ND. I am a naturopathic doctor with a special focus on mental health and emotional wellness. I believe in exploring the mind-body connection with my patients and using narrative practices to help shape identity and uncover the skills, knowledges, strengths and innate tools we all possess for healing. I frequently use some or all of the exercises outlined in this eBook with the people I work with. I find they are powerful tools for learning more about ourselves and delving deep into the personal work of healing our mind, emotions and bodies.

I created this free eBook, THE SELF-CARE WORKBOOK, to provide a resource for existing patients, potential patients and members of the public who are committed to living their healthiest and happiest life possible. To get the most out of this eBook, I recommend getting your hands on a journal, notebook or folder and pen or pencil so that you can write down the answers to the exercise questions. Writing is essential to the process of working through these exercises. Through writing we balance both sides of our brain, which allows us to fully integrate the realizations we make and the lessons we learn from doing this work.

I created this book because I love sharing love and knowledge. I want everyone to have the tools to love themselves fully. However, this workbook is meant to be used in conjunct with the work you're doing with a trusted professional and shouldn't be used instead of medical or psychotherapeutic advice.

I hope you enjoy the journey!

In health,

Dr. Talia Marcheggiani, ND



WHY YOU NEED SELF-CARE

Chronic stress has become an epidemic. The latest statistics claim that 70% of people are stressed and yet only 25% of people are actively doing something about it.

STRESS

We know that stress can cause us to feel fatigue, that familiar "burnout" sensation, to wake sleeplessly in the middle of the night and to crash in the early afternoon, desperate for a sugar or caffeine fix.

We know that stress is, if not the cause, then a serious aggravator of chronic disease. 75-90% of doctor's visits are attributed to stress-related causes. Stress can cause mental illness, such as anxiety and depression. It can cause cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, neurological disease, digestive disorders and autoimmune disease.

We often fail to fully perceive the amount of stress we're experiencing. Many of us are even addicted to the hormones released into the body during times of stress. We say yes to more things than we should, we work long hours, we juggle hundreds of daily responsibilities and, in doing so, we sacrifice our own well-being. This sacrifice results in symptoms such as digestive disturbances, brain fog, mood disorders and low energy. It might result in us taking medication for diabetes, high cholesterol or high blood pressure. We have a hard time losing weight, our immune system suffers and we tend to look older than our years.

So, what steps can we take to manage the impact of stress on our lives? The first step is to take whatever measures we can to lighten the burden on us: say no to engagements, ask for help, cut back on working hours and, if possible, schedule time to relax. Secondly, we need to get **SERIOUS** about our stress and develop a plan for self-care. Self-care helps balance the nervous system, create resilience against stress and calm the body and mind. It provides us with armour against stress.

The following exercises in your personal Self-Care Workbook are protection against the short and long-term effects of mental, emotional and physical stress. Let's start doing something about stress by caring for ourselves.

YOUR FAMILY HISTORY

The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) was developed to inspire self-reflection and self-development. It allows us to make sense of our lives. --From *The Mindful Therapist* by Dr. Dan Siegel

THE AAI

The security of our primary attachment relationships in infancy and childhood predict the health of our adult relationships. If you did not grow up with a secure and healthy relationship to your primary caregivers, working through the questions in this interview can help you "earn" security by making sense of your life right now. The AAI can help spawn important realizations about your relationship with the world. Grab a pen or pencil and a piece of paper and work through the questions to the best of your ability. Don't think too hard about the answers, just let them flow out of you.

THE ADULT ATTACHMENT INTERVIEW

1. What was growing up like in your family?
2. Who was in your home with you?
3. Think of five words that reflect your earliest recollection of your childhood relationship with your mother. Now, think of an example for each word that illustrates a memory or experience that supports the word. Now, do the same with your father and anyone else who was an important attachment figure in your life.
4. Who were you closest to and why?
5. When you upset as a child, what would you do? Can you think of a specific time that happened?
6. Do you remember the first time you were separated from your parents? How did you respond? How did your caregivers respond?
7. Did you lose anyone close to you when you were a child? What was that like for you?
8. How do you think the experiences you had as a child affected your adult personality?
9. Why do you think your parents or caregivers behaved the way they did?
10. What is your relationship like with your parents or caregivers now that you are an adult?
11. How did all of these things we've been exploring in these questions influence your growth as an adult?
12. What are the main things you've learned from being parented by your parents? If you have or anticipate ever having children, what would you want them to say that they learned from being parented by you? What would you want for them in the future?

DEVELOPING A PREFERRED STORY

Narrative therapy aims to draw attention to the stories we tell about ourselves. -- From the *Narrative Therapy Centre*

NARRATIVE THERAPY

Through looking back over time and enriching the details of events and memories that happened to us, we can begin to recreate a fuller, more complex identity for ourselves. The identity that begins to emerge contains examples of the skills, knowledge, tools, strengths and talents we possess that can help shape future actions and preferred ways of being.

RE-AUTHORING EXERCISE: DEVELOPING A PREFERRED STORY

1. Think about something you have done in your work or life that you are pleased about. Try to think of a fairly recent event. This may be acquiring a new skill, trying something new for the first time or something else you have done that is significant to you. Please choose an event that you are happy to explore. Begin by describing what it is you are pleased about.
2. Describe the events in detail.
3. Where were you when this happened? Who, if anyone, was with you?
4. Were there any steps you took? Highlight them in detail.
5. Can you describe in more detail what you actually did?
6. Can you remember what was important to you about doing this at the time?
7. When you think about what was important to you, is there a word or phrase that would capture what you've been describing?
8. Do you think these things say something about values that are important to you?
9. What might be some of the hopes or dreams you have for your life that are linked to these values?
10. Thinking back can you think of other times in your life when this has been important to you?
11. What is it like to make this connection between things in the past and now?
12. What might it be like for you, if you were to keep connected to these values and the history of them? What might it make more possible?

GAINING CLARITY ON A PROBLEM

When we externalize a problem, we can gain clarity on new ways of dealing with it. --From the work of Michael White and The Narrative Therapy Centre

NARRATIVE THERAPY

This is a practice for deconstructing the problems in our lives. When we look closely at the problems we face, we are able to discover new ways of taking action against them. Externalizing aims to empower by separating you from the problem you are dealing with.

EXTERNALIZING EXERCISE

NAME THE PROBLEM:

What would you like to call this problem?

EXPLORE THE EFFECTS OF THE PROBLEM:

How is (name) a problem for you?

How long has it been a problem for you?

How does the problem interfere with your relationships?

How does the problem interfere with your school or work life?

When is the problem bigger in your life? Smaller?

What does the problem try to tell you about the sort of person you are?

How does it affect your hopes for the future?

EXPLORE THE SUPPORTS FOR THE PROBLEM:

When is the problem most likely to show up? Where?

Who is around you when the problem shows up?

What is it about these people, places and times that gives the problem power?

What ideas in society give strength to the problem?

EVALUATE THE EFFECTS OF THE PROBLEM:

How do you feel about all of this?

Is this ok or not ok with you?

JUSTIFICATION OF THE EVALUATIONS:

Why is this ok or not ok?

Knowing that you feel this way, what does this suggest about what you want for your life?

DISCOVERING POWER OVER THE PROBLEM:

Are there times when the problem is not hanging around? When?

Did you take steps to stand up to the problem?

What do you tell yourself?

What does the fact that you were able to stand up to the problem tell you about yourself?

Who would be the least surprised to read this about you? Why?

What would this person say about the kind of person you are?

THERAPEUTIC LETTER WRITING

Writing letters helps us externalize our problems and gain fresh perspectives on them.

NARRATIVE
THERAPY

6 Ideas for Therapeutic Letter Writing

1. Write a letter to someone who has hurt you. Express your feelings fully. Destroy the letter.
2. Write a letter to a physical complaint, addiction, health condition, etc. Or have that entity write to you. What would it say to you or ask you, if it could speak?
3. Write a letter to yourself from an older version of you. For example, write a letter to yourself now from the perspective of 80-year old you.
4. Write a letter to your future self on futureme.org, a free website that sends your email back to you at any time in the future that you select.
5. Write a letter to your inner child, comforting him or her during a tough time you experienced in the past, perhaps giving him or her the support and comfort he or she did not have at that time.
6. Write a dialogue with your higher self, asking it questions with your dominant hand and receiving the answers by writing them with your non-dominant hand.

SELF-CARE ACTION PLAN

Self-care is about finding ways to cultivate and feel deserving of self-love. It helps us build resilience, reduce stress and move forward in times of adversity.

SELF-CARE

Having a comprehensive self-care regimen is essential for health maintenance and affirming self-worth. We must take care of ourselves first before we are able to help others. Everyone's self-care plan will look different. The actual activities and rituals are not as important as is the intention behind the actions. Self-care actions intend to build balance, mindfulness, self-awareness and, above all, self-love. Taking care of oneself is about taking responsibility for one's own health and well-being. It is about recognizing your physical, mental and emotional needs and ensuring that those needs are met.

THE BACE METHOD FOR SELF-CARE

The SCaR Foundation BACE Method of self-care helps us draw awareness to the simple acts we can engage in to care for ourselves. Read the examples for all the BACE elements: body care, achievement, connection and enjoyment on this page and print out the next page to create your own self-care BACE Method plan for reducing stress and helping yourself through hard times.

BODY CARE means taking care of your body and choosing activities that make you feel good on the inside and out.

ACHIEVEMENT consists of finishing the daily tasks you have on your to-do list and setting short-term and long-term goals that you take steps towards.

CONNECTION is essential for health and well-being. As humans, we need to feel heard, loved, valued, acknowledged and connected in order to live a happy and healthy life.

ENJOYMENT involves having fun, engaging in hobbies, making time for leisure, travel and prioritizing the things you love.

SELF-CARE ACTION PLAN

SELF-CARE

Print out and complete this sheet to prioritize your BACE Method self-care plan. Making time for self-care can help you manage stress over the long-term and bounce back more quickly from hard times. Write 5 ideas for each area.

THE BACE METHOD FOR SELF-CARE

BODY CARE

Examples are: meditation, exercise, green smoothies, remembering to take medications/supplements, haircuts, your favourite outfit, booking a massage, visiting your naturopathic doctor, etc.

CONNECTION

Who can you call on when you: need a shoulder to cry on, wise advice, someone to laugh with, someone to have fun with, someone who's known you for a long time, someone to listen, someone who tells it like it is, etc.?

ACHIEVEMENT

What are your goals for the next day, week, month, year, five years, etc. in the areas of work/study/family/health/finances/personal development? What are the first steps involved in working towards each of them?

ENJOYMENT

What activities fill you and bring joy to your life? When will you make time for them? What are some new hobbies you'd love to try? etc.

GETTING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

SELF-CARE

This is a list of the things you love, that make you feel calm, centred, happy and healthy. Print out this list and leave it in a place where you can see it easily. Turn back to this list during times of loss, heartbreak or stress.

People:

Places:

Activities:

Things (songs, books, TV shows, movies, objects, foods):

SELF-ESTEEM BUILDING EXERCISE

SELF- LOVE

Positive affirmations are often prescribed as a healing activity for boosting self-esteem. Positive affirmations work in some people--those who already have high self-esteem--but fail to help those who need a boost in self-worth. For building your self-esteem from the ground up, practice this powerful 3-Step exercise daily. --From *Emotional First Aid* by Guy Winch, PhD

Step 1: Set the context

Choose a specific context in which you feel low self-esteem. Where are you? Who is involved? Why is this context important to you? Examples: a work assignment, going on a first date.

Step 2: List what you bring to the situation

Write an exhaustive list of what you have to bring to the situation in the particular context you identified. What about you might make you a good employee? A good date? For example, you might dress well, be on time, make eye contact, care deeply about your work or remember birthdays. Get as specific as possible and keep writing until you've thought of everything. If you can't think of anything that YOU bring to the context, pretend that you're doing this exercise for a friend.

Step 3: Write a 2-paragraph essay

Choose one of the positive attributes you've identified in yourself (or your friend) and write a 1-2 paragraph essay about it. How have you shown this trait in the past? How do you continue to show it in the present? Can you think of specific examples? How might you continue to display this trait in the future? Why is this trait a valued asset in the context you identified in Step 1?

Repeat this exercise with a different attribute on a daily basis.

THE POWER OF NO

SELF- LOVE

When it comes to managing stress, saying NO is crucial. We need to be able to establish clear boundaries around what we give our energy to, in order to avoid spreading ourselves thin and experiencing resentment. When we say NO to one activity, we say YES to many other activities, be it a quiet night at home or more time to work on special projects. Most of all, when we say NO to the things we don't want to do, we say YES to ourselves.

Things I'd like to say NO to

What I am I saying YES to instead

DOCUMENTING HAPPY EVENTS

Paying attention to pleasant events helps correct the brain's inherent negative bias and put us in a state of gratitude. --From the *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook*

MINDFULNESS

By paying attention to the pleasant events in our day, we train our brains to practice gratitude. Writing down the events in detail helps you stay mindful of the thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations you experience before, during and after. This can greatly benefit low mood, low self-esteem, worry and the tendency to ruminate and focus on the negative.

MINDFULNESS PLEASANT EVENTS CALENDER

For the next 7 days, document all the pleasant events that occur each day. For each event, record the following in your journal.

1. Describe the experience. What happened? Who was there?
2. Were you aware of your feelings while this was happening? What were they? How strong were they?
3. How did your body feel? Can you describe the sensations? Where were they located in your body?
4. What thoughts were going through your head before, during and after the event occurred?
5. What thoughts are going through your head as you write this? What are you feeling?

Keep a record of these happy events to look back on during tough times. The richer the description of the experience, the better for transporting you back to the happy feelings and memories.

21-DAY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

BEING GRATE- FUL

Studies show that establishing a daily practice of gratitude can rewire the brain's inherent negative bias, help heal from depression and manifest more positive experiences. Challenge yourself to write 3 things you are grateful for each day before going to bed for 21 days in a row. Try not to put the same thing twice. Observe how your thoughts and feelings change!

WEEK 1

DAY 1: I'm grateful for:

DAY 2: I'm grateful for:

DAY 3: I'm grateful for:

DAY 4: I'm grateful for:

DAY 5: I'm grateful for:

DAY 6: I'm grateful for:

DAY 7: I'm grateful for:

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WEEK 2

DAY 8: I'm grateful for:

DAY 9: I'm grateful for:

DAY 10: I'm grateful for:

DAY 11: I'm grateful for:

DAY 12: I'm grateful for:

DAY 13: I'm grateful for:

DAY 14: I'm grateful for:

21-DAY GRATITUDE JOURNAL

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WEEK 3

DAY 15: I'm grateful for:

DAY 16: I'm grateful for:

DAY 17: I'm grateful for:

DAY 18: I'm grateful for:

DAY 19: I'm grateful for:

DAY 20: I'm grateful for:

DAY 21: I'm grateful for:



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