

20 Second Self-Care Breaks

You are a human being. Don't burn out.

In the middle of this extraordinary public health crisis, the pressure to be a superhero can be overwhelming. You're not a superhero. Make new habits that remind you of your own needs. These might help:

Goal #1

Get present.

Whether we are working on a material problem, making observations, or imagining and planning for future issues, it is very easy to lose a sense of our own experience. While you are washing your hands, gently bring your full attention to the experience. Notice how the soap feels on your skin. Watch the bubbles form as you lather. Inhale and breathe the fragrance of the soap, or simply notice how the flow of air feels in your nostrils. Notice the temperature of the water. If your attention moves away, gently bring it back. Notice that you are present, now.

Goal #2

Feel what you feel.

When we notice and claim our feelings, they can help reorient us to our immediate experience and make important choices about it. Ask yourself: what do I feel right now? Don't judge the answer. If the answer doesn't immediately appear, ask yourself: Do I feel mad? sad? glad? afraid? tired? Often, or even usually, we feel more than one thing at once. Repeat this from time to time. You might set an alarm on your phone to go off at different times of the day.

Goal #3

Connect.

We need to know that we are not alone, and when we are struggling we often turn away from others. Pick someone convenient and safe (i.e., not likely to open a long or complicated exchange, particularly not one that will pull you away from your mission). Do something small to acknowledge them as a human being apart from their role: Say hello. Compliment their shoes. Make a joke. Thank them for something you saw them do.