



Unqualified Opinion



E B O O K

SELF-CARE THAT GOES DEEPER

**REAL SELF-CARE FOR YOUR MIND,
BODY AND NERVOUS SYSTEM**

CALM YOUR BODY. SUPPORT YOUR BRAIN. RECONNECT WITH YOU.

WHAT SELF-CARE REALLY MEANS

Forget the perfect morning routine or 10-step
skincare ads.

Real self-care is about tending to your whole self.
Your mind, your body, and your emotional needs,
especially when things feel heavy, messy, or
overwhelming.

This eBook is your gentle guide to self-care that
actually helps, based on both practical strategies
and real psychological tools. Including DBT-
inspired self-soothing techniques, emotional
regulation strategies, and body-based practices.

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SECTION 1

SELF-CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Self-care isn't all about candles and cucumbers. It's also about supporting your inner world.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM

Ever felt like your body is reacting before your brain catches up? That's your nervous system doing its thing. It's wired to keep you safe, but it sometimes overreacts, especially when life's chaotic or emotionally intense.

Let's break it down simply:

1

FIGHT

You feel irritable, snappy, or driven to "sort it out now."

2

FLIGHT

You're anxious, overthinking, avoiding, or can't sit still.

3

FREEZE

You feel stuck, zoned out, or struggle to make decisions.

4

FAWN

You people-please, avoid conflict, or say "I'm fine" when you're really not

Recognizing which state you're in helps you choose the right type of self-care.

You wouldn't do a high-energy workout if you're frozen and numb, right?

Your body and brain need different things depending on the state they're in, and that's okay.

Try this: Ask yourself: "Am I feeling frantic, foggy, or flat?" It's a gentle way to check your state.



NUMBING OUT VS. SOOTHING

Sometimes we think we're doing self-care, but really we're just numbing.

Here's the difference:

Numbing	Soothing
Scrolling endlessly to escape	Watching a feel-good show that brings comfort
Drinking to forget feelings	Drinking a herbal tea to calm the body
Shutting down completely	Taking quiet time to reset
Ignoring your needs	Meeting your needs gently and with intention

There's no shame in numbing. It's a survival response. But soothing helps us heal, not just escape.

Ask yourself:

"Am I feeling more connected or more checked out after this?"

"Is this helping me cope or just avoid?"

Even just noticing the difference is powerful.

BUILDING YOUR EMOTIONAL TOOLKIT

Emotions don't need to be "fixed". They need to be felt, understood, and supported.

A good emotional toolkit includes:

<div>1</div> <div>REGULATION TOOLS</div> <div>breathwork, grounding, movement, journaling</div>	<div>2</div> <div>COMFORT TOOLS</div> <div>cozy spaces, music, scents, textures you love</div>	<div>3</div> <div>EXPRESSION TOOLS</div> <div>art, talking it out, voice notes to yourself</div>	<div>4</div> <div>RECONNECTION TOOLS</div> <div>nature, spirituality, pets, humor</div>
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Create a list of 3 tools in each category.
Stick it somewhere you'll see when your brain goes blank under stress.

DAILY CHECK-INS: “HOW AM I REALLY FEELING?”

We often push through the day on autopilot. A daily check-in helps bring you back to yourself.
Here's a simple one-minute check-in you can do morning, midday, or before bed:

What's going on in my body?

(Tense shoulders, racing heart, heavy eyes?)

What emotion is present right now?

(Use real words — not just “fine.” Try: anxious, drained, peaceful, sad, hopeful.)


What do I need right now?


(Rest, reassurance, hydration, movement, connection?)

MY INTERNAL WEATHER TODAY

Choose one, or write your own word below:

 Cloudy, but calm

 Stormy, and I
need to pause

 Mostly sunny with
a few wobbles

 Clear and light

 Foggy or low-energy



My word: _____

FINAL THOUGHTS FOR THIS SECTION

Mental health self-care isn't always pretty. Sometimes it's cancelling plans, crying in the bath, or saying
“no” even when it feels scary. But it's always worth it. You're worth it.

This section is your permission slip to feel, not just function. And the rest of this eBook? That's your
toolkit to help you through.

SECTION 1

MINI TOOLS & EXERCISES

Quick ways to connect with yourself, especially when you feel disconnected.

THE 3-MINUTE SELF-AWARENESS SCAN

This is your mental "cup of tea and check-in" moment. Just pause and ask:

MINUTE 1 BODY CHECK

- Where am I holding tension?
- How's my energy level right now?
- Am I hot, cold, thirsty, fidgety, sleepy?

MINUTE 2 MOOD CHECK

- What emotion am I feeling?
- Is it light or heavy? Loud or quiet?
- If my emotion had a color or texture, what would it be?

MINUTE 3 NEED CHECK

- What do I need in this moment — physically, emotionally, or mentally?
- Can I give myself something small right now to meet that need? (e.g. deep breath, kind thought, glass of water)

Use this scan before responding to messages, making a decision, or just when your brain feels scrambled.



MOOD TRACKER WITH “WHAT HELPED”

Tracking your mood isn't just about noticing how you feel, it's about understanding what helps.

Date	Mood (1-10)	Emotion Word	What Helped?
Mar 7, 2025	4	Anxious	A walk + texted a friend
Apr 7, 2025	7	Calm	Morning playlist + slow start
May 7, 2025	3	Overwhelmed	Said no + shut my laptop early
			
			
			
			

MOOD TRACKING JOURNAL PROMPTS

<p>What small action made a big difference today?</p>	<p>What drained me, and what refilled me?</p>	<p>Is there a pattern I notice over the week?</p>
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This tool works best when it's gentle, not judgy. No right or wrong, just information you can use.

EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY LIST

Because “fine,” “meh,” and “I dunno” aren’t actually feelings.

Use this list to get clearer on how you really feel. It helps with journaling, talking to others and even choosing the right kind of self-care.



FEELING CALM & OKAY-ISH

Content
Peaceful
Present
Hopeful
Neutral



FEELING LOW OR FLAT

Drained
Sad
Empty
Lonely
Unmotivated



FEELING ACTIVATED OR ANXIOUS

Overwhelmed
Jittery
Tense
On edge
Panicky



FEELING FRUSTRATED OR ANGRY

Irritable
Resentful
Snappy
Hurt
Fed up



FEELING UP & ENERGISED

Joyful
Excited
Confident
Connected
Inspired

Try this: Choose a word from this list each day. Over time, you’ll get better at naming it and meeting it with the right support.

SECTION 2

SELF-SOOTHING TECHNIQUES

(INSPIRED BY DBT'S ACCEPTS)

For the days when your brain is loud, your chest is tight, and everything feels like too much.

WHAT IS DBT — AND WHY IS IT HELPFUL FOR SELF-CARE?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) is a therapeutic approach that was originally created to support people who experience intense emotions and find it difficult to regulate them, particularly those living with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD).

But here's the thing: DBT skills are incredibly useful for anyone who feels emotionally overwhelmed, struggles with impulsive responses or finds it hard to soothe themselves when things go sideways (hello, ADHDers, trauma survivors, anxious overthinkers... sound familiar?).

DBT isn't about bottling up feelings or pretending to be positive. It's about building real tools to help you:



Handle distress without spiralling



Create space between feeling and reacting



Soothe your nervous system in healthy ways



Build resilience in your everyday life



In this section, we're going to look at one of DBT's most practical tools: the ACCEPTS skill. This technique gives you an actual plan for getting through the toughest moments. The ones where "just breathe" or "have a bath" doesn't quite cut it.

Whether you're anxious, angry, numb, overwhelmed, or emotionally exhausted, ACCEPTS gives you options. It's not about fixing everything in the moment. It's about surviving the wave without drowning.



WHAT IS A.C.C.E.P.T.S?

Each letter stands for a category of distraction or self-soothing strategy that helps you tolerate distress in the moment:

A – ACTIVITIES

C – CONTRIBUTE

C – COMPARISONS

E – EMOTIONS

P – PUSH AWAY

T – THOUGHTS

S – SENSATIONS

These aren't solutions to the problem, they're survival strategies. They're the things that help you get through the moment until it's safer to process or respond.



A – ACTIVITIES

Do something that fully absorbs your attention.

When your brain is spiralling or you're emotionally flooded, distraction through activity can interrupt the loop just enough to help you ground.

Ideas:

Clean a drawer or shelf

Paint your nails or organize your workspace

Try a new recipe

Play a puzzle game, word search, or video game

Dance around to your "feel better fast" playlist

Go for a walk and name 5 things you see

Choose an activity based on your energy level — low-energy doesn't mean do nothing, it means do something gentle.



C – CONTRIBUTE

Do something kind or helpful for someone else.

It sounds counterintuitive, but helping others can create a shift in perspective and reduce emotional overwhelm. It reconnects you to purpose, even in a small way.

Ideas:

Send a kind message to a friend

Bake something and share it

Offer to help a neighbor or colleague

Write a glowing review for a small business

Share a resource that helped you

This isn't about fixing people, it's about reminding yourself you can make a difference, even when you feel powerless.



C – COMPARISONS

Look at how far you've come with compassion, not shame.

This isn't about comparing yourself to others on social media (that's the unhelpful kind).

This is about shifting perspective, especially when you feel stuck or like nothing has changed.

Ideas:

Compare your growth: "I used to struggle with _____. Now I'm handling it differently."

Remember someone who overcame something tough and what inspired you about them

Reflect on a time when you felt this way and got through it

Use a grounding mantra like: "This isn't forever. I've handled hard things before."

Your past self might be in awe of the way you keep showing up. Let that be your lens.



E – EMOTIONS

Use one emotion to shift another.

Sounds strange, but it works. When you're overwhelmed with sadness, stress, or anxiety, sometimes leaning into a completely different emotion (like humor or awe) can help shift the state.

Ideas:

Watch a funny video or light-hearted TV show

Listen to music that evokes a strong emotion
(joy, nostalgia, hope)

Look at uplifting or inspiring quotes or stories

Try a playlist that evokes calm, gratitude, or energy

Make a “soothing scroll” folder — memes, affirmations, puppy pics — whatever makes you feel good

Let emotion be the medicine, not the enemy.

P – PUSH AWAY

Give yourself permission to temporarily shelve a thought.

Some thoughts or feelings feel too big to deal with right now and that's okay. You can gently set them aside until you're in a more resourced state.

Ideas:

Visualize placing the thought in a box on a shelf

Say to yourself: “I don't have to solve this right now.”

Set a timer for 20 minutes to revisit it later (if needed)

Journal it down and close the notebook

This is a pause, not avoidance. It's self-protection with boundaries.

T – THOUGHTS

Distract the brain with something neutral or engaging.

When your thoughts are spiralling, give your mind a different puzzle to solve. Something absorbing, but not emotional.

Ideas:

Do a crossword, Sudoku, or logic game

Count backwards from 100 by 3s

Repeat a mantra or affirmation

Try “name 5 things that start with the letter B”

Make a list of movie titles, cities, or animals alphabetically






This helps shift you out of emotional brain and into thinking brain which can reduce intensity.

S – SENSATIONS

Soothe your system through the five senses.

Sensory input is incredibly regulating. When you're emotionally activated or disconnected from your body, grounding through sensation helps you come back to the present.

Ideas:

 TOUCH <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wrap up in a cosy blanket• Use a weighted item (pillow, stuffed toy)• Touch something cold or textured (ice cube, smooth stone)	 SMELL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Light a candle or use essential oils• Smell ground coffee or fresh herbs• Spray your favorite perfume	 TASTE <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat something crunchy or strong (peppermint, citrus)• Drink tea slowly and mindfully• Try a strong flavor to reawaken senses (ginger, salt, lemon)	 SOUND <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put on calming music or white noise• Use a grounding playlist• Listen to a guided meditation or nature sounds	 SIGHT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watch a candle flame or moving clouds• Look at calming photos or nature scenes• Try color-spotting: name everything around you that's green
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Sensory soothing is especially helpful for ADHDers, those with anxiety, or anyone who feels detached from their body.

CREATE YOUR OWN ACCEPTS PLAN

ACCEPTS Category	My Go-To Strategies
Activities	
Contribute	

ACCEPTS Category	My Go-To Strategies
Comparisons	
Emotions	
Push Away	
Thoughts	
Sensations	

Fill this out and keep it somewhere accessible (digital planner, fridge, or journal). When things feel overwhelming, you won't need to figure it all out, you'll already have a plan.



EMERGENCY SELF-SOOTHE CHECKLIST

Sometimes you just need a grab-and-go list, no decisions, no scrolling, no prep. This is your screenshot-friendly, print-and-stick-it-somewhere checklist for those overwhelmed and done moments.

WHEN EVERYTHING FEELS TOO MUCH

- ☐ Put on calming music or background noise
- ☐ Grab something to hold (pillow, blanket, textured object)
- ☐ Drink a glass of cold water or something comforting
- ☐ Name 5 things you can see around you
- ☐ Step outside or open a window
- ☐ Light a candle or smell something grounding
- ☐ Take 3 slow, deep breaths — out-breath longer than in
- ☐ Say one kind thing to yourself out loud (even if you don't believe it yet)
- ☐ Repeat: "This feeling isn't forever. I am safe in this moment."
- ☐ Set a timer for 5 minutes and pick one soothing activity from your plan

This list doesn't fix the problem, it helps stabilise you enough to feel steady again.

SECTION 3

SELF-CARE FOR THE BODY

(THAT ISN'T PUNISHMENT)

Your body isn't a project, it's your home.

So much of the wellness world still talks about the body like it needs to be hacked, fixed, or sculpted. But real self-care starts with respect. Listening in. Meeting your body where it's at; tired, tense, energized, hungry, hormonal or anything in between.

This section is your invitation to build body-care rituals that feel nourishing, not punishing. Some of it is practical (hello sleep hygiene), some is intuitive, and some is pure spa-day energy you can recreate at home.

GENTLE NOURISHMENT OVER FOOD RULES

You don't need a perfect meal plan to take care of yourself. You need food that supports your energy, honors your cravings, and doesn't come with a side of guilt.



HERE'S THE MINDSET SHIFT:

- Swap “clean eating” for kind eating
- Replace food rules with curiosity: What actually feels good in my body?
- Ditch restriction and try rhythms: eat when you're hungry, stop when you're satisfied, and allow comfort foods when they truly comfort



BODY-LOVING PRACTICES:

- Keep “anchor snacks” on hand (things that keep your blood sugar steady & your mood from tanking)
- Light a candle or play calming music when you eat. Turn it into a ritual
- Add something nourishing to your plate, rather than focusing on what to take away

SLEEP ROUTINES FOR MENTAL CLARITY

Sleep is one of the most underrated forms of self-care and often one of the hardest, especially if your mind won't switch off.

Instead of trying to "sleep better," try creating an environment that invites rest.

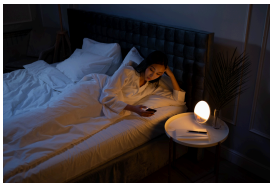
IDEAS TO SUPPORT YOUR SLEEP RITUAL:



A warm shower or bath before bed



Spritz your pillow with lavender or neroli



Dim the lights and unplug screens 30 mins before bed



Journal out any swirling thoughts ("download the day")



Try a calming bedtime tea: chamomile, lemon balm, or rooibos

**AFFIRMATION
FOR THE
OVERTHINKERS**

**"Rest is productive. Sleep is self-care. I
can start fresh tomorrow."**





REST WITHOUT GUILT (ACTIVE VS PASSIVE REST)

True rest is about giving back to your energy, not just taking a break. Rest can look like lying down, but it can also be something simple and calming that helps you feel more like yourself again. The kind that makes your nervous system go “ahh” instead of “ugh, I’m wasting time.”

Passive rest = stillness, like lying down, watching a comforting show, or meditating

Active rest = gentle, intentional rest that gives energy back, like stretching, slow walking, creative hobbies, or reading fiction

Rest doesn't have to be earned. It's a rhythm. A reset. A right.



RECLAIMING MOVEMENT AS SELF-RESPECT, NOT A CHORE

Forget punishing workouts and shame-based goals. Movement can be sacred. It can be grounding. It can be fun again.

Start by asking, “How do I want to feel after I move?”
Then work backwards from there.

Examples:

- Want to feel calm? Try yoga, stretching, or a slow walk
- Want to feel strong? Try light weights, Pilates, or dancing
- Want to feel clear-headed? Do 10 minutes of body movement with music you love

There's no “ideal body” here, only an *ideal feeling*.

MINI TOOLS & WORKSHEETS

“HOW DO I FEEL IN MY BODY TODAY?” TRACKER

A simple daily check-in to build body awareness and honor what your body needs.

Today I feel...	Energy	Tension	Craving	Movement desire
e.g. Sluggish	Low	Shoulders tight	Comfort	Gentle stretch

Use feeling faces, colors, or quick words, whatever makes it easy.

COMFORTING MEALS VS ENERGIZING MEALS WORKSHEET

Use this to help balance what you want and what you need without the guilt.

Meal or Snack	Did it Comfort or Energize Me?	How Did I Feel After?
Mac & cheese	Comfort	Satisfied, sleepy
Greek yoghurt + berries	Energize	Light, clear-headed

The goal isn't perfection, it's awareness. Over time, you'll start tuning in more naturally.

MOVEMENT MOOD MATCH

Pick your energy, match your movement.

Mood	Suggested Movement
Tired & Foggy	Slow stretching, gentle yoga, short walk
Anxious or Restless	Dance it out, go for a walk, bodyweight circuits
Low Mood	Nature walk, Pilates, mobility flow with calming music
Energized	Brisk walk, strength training, upbeat dance session

Add one song that matches your current mood. Music transforms movement into a ritual.



OPTIONAL SPA ENERGY:

BRINGING THE TREATMENT ROOM HOME

Turn your bathroom into your sanctuary. Here's how:



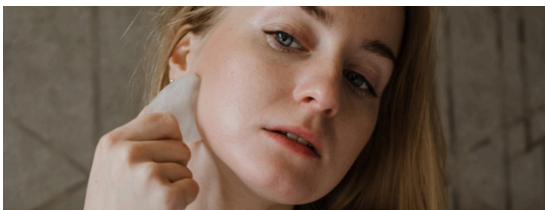
Add essential oils to your shower or bath (eucalyptus for sinuses, lavender for calm, rosemary for focus)



Create a facial ritual: cleanse, warm flannel, massage in a few drops of oil using circular motions



Do a 5-minute dry brush to boost circulation (always toward the heart!)



Use a crystal roller or gua sha for a mini face massage



Play spa-style music and light candles to signal "this is me-time"

You don't have to book a treatment to treat yourself.

SECTION 4

CREATING YOUR OWN SELF-CARE SYSTEM

Self-care works best when it's not something you have to figure out while you're falling apart. The goal here isn't to be perfectly balanced or to have a Pinterest-worthy routine. It's to build something that supports you in real life, especially when things feel messy or overwhelming.

In this section, we'll guide you through the key elements of creating a personal system. Not a schedule, not a rigid checklist, but a flexible rhythm you can return to again and again.

THE POWER OF A DAILY CHECK-IN

You don't need a long journal session or a full moon ritual to reconnect with yourself each day (though, go for it if that's your vibe). A daily check-in can be quick, intuitive, and honest.

A GENTLE CHECK-IN MIGHT INCLUDE:

How am I feeling emotionally?

What does my body need right now?

What's on my mind today?

What kind of support or care would feel good?

Even a 30-second pause to ask these questions can shift your whole day. Start by simply paying attention to what's coming up for you today. This is your moment to tune in and notice, not to problem-solve. And when we notice, we can respond with kindness instead of autopilot.

THE ENERGY MENU

One of the biggest mistakes people make with self-care? Expecting themselves to do the same thing, no matter how they're feeling. But energy levels change and your self-care should flex with them.

Think of this like a menu of options to choose from depending on how much fuel you've got in the tank.

LOW ENERGY

- Gentle stretching in bed
- Cuppa and a cosy podcast
- A slow walk in nature
- Soothing music or white noise
- Saying "no" to one thing that drains you

MEDIUM ENERGY

- Prepping a nourishing meal
- Journalling with soft background music
- Doing a creative hobby (coloring, baking, pottering)
- Light house reset (putting one room back in order)

HIGH ENERGY

- Dancing it out to your favorite playlist
- Deep-cleaning or organizing a space
- Going for a power walk or doing a workout
- Having an energizing catch-up with a friend
- Tackling a task that's been hanging over your head

This kind of system makes self-care feel more accessible. You're not trying to run a marathon on a flat battery.



YOUR MINI COPING TOOLKIT

There are days when everything feels a bit “too much” and those are the moments where a ready-made list of soothing tools or helpful habits can make all the difference.

Start to notice what helps when you feel certain ways. You might not always remember in the moment, so this is about gently preparing ahead of time.

Some examples:

When I feel anxious: walking, sensory grounding, talking it out

When I feel overwhelmed: brain-dump journalling, low-stimulus space

When I feel low: comfort show, small tasks with visible progress, sunlight

When I feel angry or restless: moving my body, venting into a voice note, deep breaths with a long exhale

When I feel numb or disconnected: textures (blanket, hot drink), music with emotion, noticing five things around me

Over time, you'll learn your own patterns and build your toolkit from what genuinely works for you, not what the latest social media trend says should.

DESIGN YOUR PERSONAL RESET RITUAL

We all have “off” days, foggy, frazzled, can’t-quite-function kind of days. That doesn’t mean you’ve failed. It means you might need a reset.

A personal reset ritual is a series of small, supportive actions you can come back to when you’re feeling burnt out, lost, or emotionally overloaded.

Your ritual might include:

A grounding drink (herbal tea, warm water with lemon)

Tidying one surface or lighting a candle

Washing your face or brushing your teeth to reconnect with your body

Putting on music that matches how you want to feel

Changing into soft clothes or fresh pyjamas

Saying to yourself, “I’m allowed to begin again.”

Opening a window or stepping outside for fresh air

Even one small action can create a shift. Just enough to pivot the energy. Just enough to help you feel safe in your own skin again.



FINAL THOUGHT

Your self-care system won’t look the same every week. That’s a good thing. Flexibility is a form of wisdom, not weakness.

The more you learn to tune in and respond with care, the more powerful your system becomes. Not because it’s perfect. But because it’s yours.

REFLECTION & RECONNECTION

Self-care is less about ticking things off and more about the way you show up for yourself, day by day. And like any healthy relationship, it thrives on reflection, gentle attention, and small acts of intention. This section is your invitation to tune in, to notice what's working, and to quietly reconnect with yourself as you grow, not from pressure or perfectionism, but from a place of self-trust and curiosity.

You don't need a journal full of perfect pages to reflect. Some days, it might be a quiet thought while you stir your tea. Other days, it might be a walk where a question lingers in your mind. You don't need to capture every thought, sometimes just taking a quiet pause helps you reconnect with what's really going on inside.

You might find yourself wondering: What felt nourishing for me this week? When did I feel most like myself? What helped when I felt overwhelmed? Is there something I've been avoiding that needs kindness, not criticism? And if today had a lesson, what would I want to carry into tomorrow?

Progress in self-care often shows up in quiet ways. There's rarely a gold star moment, and no one's handing out certificates for remembering to drink water or finally saying "no" without guilt, but those moments matter. Some of the most powerful steps forward are the ones no one else sees: listening to your needs even when you can't meet them all, pausing instead of reacting on autopilot, softening when you usually tense up, or choosing what feels good in your body, not just what sounds right in your head. These are the kind of wins that deserve to be recognized, not because they're flashy, but because they're real.

You might be wondering how to know if your self-care is actually making a difference. The truth is, it often starts subtly. You may find yourself recovering from overwhelm more quickly than before. You begin to reach for things that support your wellbeing without feeling guilty about it. You notice your emotions instead of avoiding them, and start responding with tools that feel kind and helpful. You stop confusing numbing with nourishing. You start making space for joy, not just functioning. Healing rarely announces itself with fanfare. Often, it arrives quietly, in moments where you realize you're handling things with more grace than you used to.

And what about consistency? That word so many of us dread. The good news is, consistency doesn't mean doing the same thing every day without fail. It means returning, gently, again and again, to what helps. It means letting your routines flex with your energy. It means keeping your tools close, not hidden away until you "really need them." It means recognizing that missing a day doesn't mean starting over. It means you pick back up when you can. True consistency is compassionate, not rigid. It grows from practice, not pressure.

This journey you're on isn't about changing into someone new. It's about coming home to yourself; slowly, kindly, and with patience. Whatever chapter you're in right now, you are allowed to take up space. You are allowed to rest. You are allowed to care for yourself without apology.

You don't need to earn rest.

You don't need to have it all together to be worthy of care.

You're already enough and self-care is how you honor that truth.



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