

Wellbeing Toolkit

A product of the College Collaboration Fund
2021-2022

INTRODUCTION

This toolkit is one resource that forms one part of a specialist package of mental health and wellbeing support developed for the further education community. Its resources and toolkits will help staff and students to look after their mental health, emotional wellbeing and resilience so they can move forward and cope with the different challenges we face today. It has been created with funding from the Department for Education (DfE) via the College Collaboration Fund.

The project is a partnership between two large further education colleges and a specialist delivery partner:

- Weston College of Further Education
- City College Plymouth
- National College for Advanced Transport and Infrastructure

We understand that your overall wellbeing is important and that studying, working and managing your wellbeing at the same time can be a bit daunting.

With that in mind we have developed this toolkit to enable you to pull various resources, tips, tricks and hints together to help you manage overwhelming feelings and difficult emotions, while you are studying.

Using the Contents, you can explore what we mean by 'Wellbeing', how we look after our wellbeing, why it is important and where to find further help and guidance.

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- What is Resilience?
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- Anxiety and Stress
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- Strategies & Tools to Improve Your Wellbeing
- Activities and Reflections
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WHAT IS WELLBEING?

“The state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.”

When we talk about wellbeing we are talking about you as a complete package, encompassing both physical & mental health. Depending on your challenges this can be both positive & negative.

Our aim throughout is to give you the skills to create a more positive wellbeing.



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma or stress.”

We build resilience when we experience challenges & overcome them. Being Resilient doesn't mean you won't face difficulty again, but rather you'll approach it & manage it better.

The graphic below outlines factors of a resilient person. Our top tip is 'Look after yourself'

This is the first thing you need to be able to do, as it is a fundamental need for resilience.



WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

20 TIPS TO BUILD YOUR RESILIENCE

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

LEARN FROM MISTAKES

BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

KEEP CHALLENGING YOURSELF

FORGIVE YOURSELF

LEARN TO PROBLEM SOLVE EFFECTIVELY

DEVELOP A STRONG SOCIAL NETWORK

NEVER GIVE UP

CHALLENGE THOSE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

PUT THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE

LEARN FROM DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE RISKS

WORK ON YOUR STRENGTHS

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR OWN NEEDS

BE OPTIMISTIC

SET GOALS YOU CAN ACHIEVE

BE CONFIDENT IN YOURSELF

SPEND TIME REFLECTING

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FEELINGS

@BelievePHQ

ANXIETY & STRESS

What is a more helpful thought?

What is another possibility?

What would the people who care about me say?

What is the worst that could really happen?

If my friend had this thought, what would I tell them?

Can I be 100% sure this is true?

If the worst really did happen, what could I do to deal with it and who could help me?

What is the best possible outcome?

Anxiety is a feeling of stress, panic or fear that affects your everyday life both physically & psychologically

Anxiety is normal!

Anxiety is something everyone experiences, it controls our flight/fight/freeze responses and will keep us safe when we are in danger.

However, if our brain perceives danger that isn't danger (like changing jobs, starting a new hobby, meeting new people) and we react accordingly, our brain tells us to react this way again.

To manage our anxieties, we must work on those reactions & 're-program' our brains to let them know we are not in danger.

If we can't do this, it can impact our ability to engage in life, work or college



APPLE Technique

This a useful technique to manage stress, worry and anxiety



Acknowledge: notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.

Pause: don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.

Pull back: tell yourself it is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not facts.

Let go of the thought or feeling; It will pass. You don't have to respond to this. You might imagine this thought floating away in a bubble or cloud.

Explore the present moment; because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch and what you need to do. Reflect on what you were doing before you noticed the worry or do something else - mindfully with your full attention.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Why is Emotional Intelligence important?

Being Emotionally Intelligent is the ability to understand, use and manage your own emotions in positive ways, to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges and defuse conflict.

Emotional intelligence helps you build stronger relationships and achieve your personal goals. It can also help you to connect with your feelings, turn thoughts into action, and make informed decisions about what matters most to you.



Self-Awareness

It's the ability wherein you identify your emotions and mood swings.

Emotional Self Awareness is your ability to recognize and feel your emotions which also enables you to understand its aftereffects. Self- Confidence is where you understand your abilities better than others and are confident about your self-worth.

Self-Regulation

As the name indicates, it's your ability to keep a check on your outbursts. You are able to directly control your emotions and redirect them to something else, to avoid acting on impulse. Doing so, also helps you anticipate the consequences of your actions.

Motivation

Staying motivated helps you achieve your goals faster and enjoy the learning process, whilst also being able to maintain your perseverance when faced with obstacles.

Empathy

One important factor which separates us from other living creatures is our ability to understand the emotions. Empathy too helps you utilize this unique ability bringing you closer to your loved ones as well as others in your vicinity.

Social Skills

Going by Daniel Goleman's EI theory, indulging in social skills and activities teaches you the art of managing your relationships properly. It strengthens your bond with others and helps you inspire them.

SLEEP

Sleep is an important part of your daily routine; you spend about one-third of your time doing it.

Quality sleep – and getting enough of it at the right times -- is as essential to survival as food and water. Without sleep you can't form or maintain the pathways in your brain that let you learn and create new memories, and it's harder to concentrate and respond quickly.

Sleep is important to brain function, including how nerve cells (neurons) communicate with each other. In fact, your brain and body stay remarkably active while you sleep. Recent findings suggest that sleep plays a housekeeping role that removes toxins in your brain that build up while you are awake.



STRATEGIES AND TOOLS TO IMPROVE WELLBEING

EXERCISE

The NHS recommends that adults should do some type of physical activity every day. They have set out guidelines for different types of exercise below:

Always make sure your activity and intensity are appropriate for your fitness.

Adults should aim to:

- Do strengthening activities that work all the major muscle groups (legs, hips, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders and arms) at least 2 days a week.
- Do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week or 75 minutes of vigorous activity a week.
- Spread exercise evenly over 4 to 5 days a week or every day.
- Reduce your time spent sitting or lying down and break up long periods of not moving with some activity.

What counts as moderate aerobic activity?

- Brisk walking
- Bike Ride
- Dancing
- Hiking
- Pushing a lawnmower

What counts as vigorous activity?

- Running
- Swimming
- Walking up stairs
- Rugby, Football, Hockey

Very Vigorous Activity:

- Lifting Weights
- Interval Training
- Spinning Classes

6 MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

1. BOOSTING HAPPY CHEMICALS

When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. Endorphins trigger a positive feeling in the body.

2. HELPS WITH ANXIETY

Exercise is a natural and effective way to help with anxiety.

3. REDUCES STRESS

Exercise is a fantastic way to reduce stress as it helps to relax muscles and relieve tension.

4. BETTER SLEEP

According to research exercising consistently can lead to improvements in sleep over time, but not immediately.

5. IMPROVES SELF CONFIDENCE

Working out can be a great way to boost your confidence, not only will you feel better but seeing your body change will do wonders for your confidence.

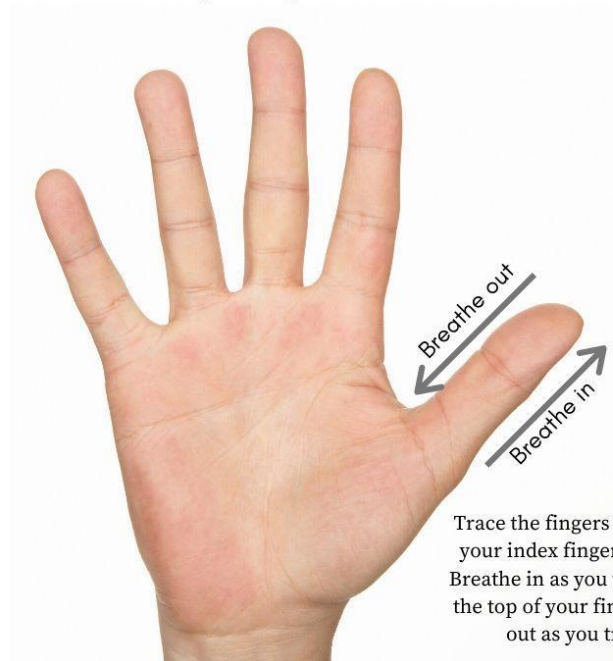
6. IMPROVES WORKFLOW

Multiple studies have shown the positive effect that exercise has on productivity, so get more work done today by incorporating exercise into your life.

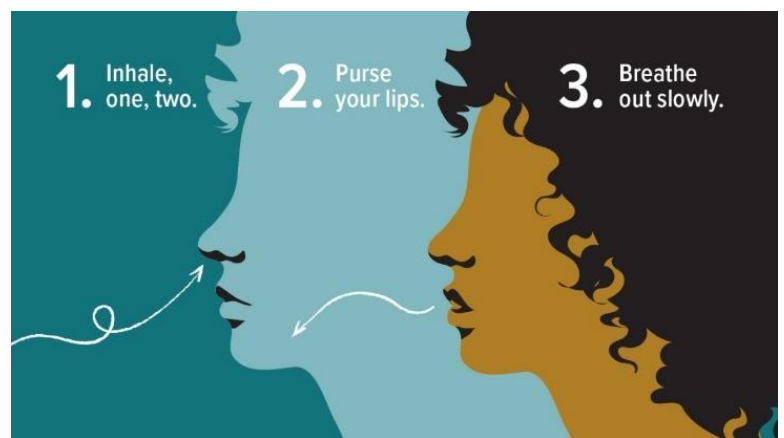
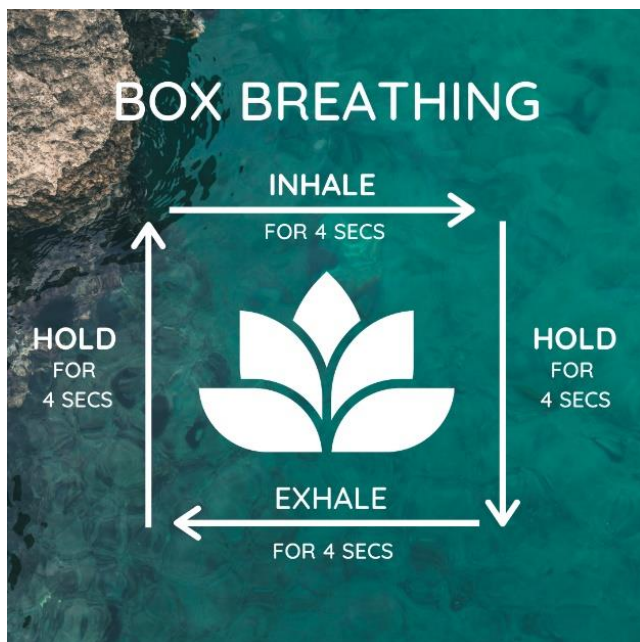
BREATHING TECHNIQUES

Below are a selection of breathing techniques, that you can do without any equipment or anyone noticing, anytime anywhere!

A Handy Way to Pace Your Breathing



Trace the fingers of one hand with your index finger as you breathe. Breathe in as you trace up, pause at the top of your finger, and breathe out as you trace down.



Breathing exercises can reduce stress, as it reduces your blood pressure and slows the heart. These physical changes also benefit your mental state, concentrating on your breath can bring you into a state of mindfulness.

Breathing exercises are particularly effective during periods of stress, when your body is in "fight or flight" mode. This state of mind increases your heartbeat, as well as fast, shallow breathing patterns, due to the feeling of immediate danger. In today's world, the triggers of fight or flight mode tend to be stressful situations or experiences that cause anxiety.

MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment, using techniques like meditation, breathing and yoga. It helps us become more aware of our thoughts and feelings so that, instead of being overwhelmed by them, we're better able to manage them.

How can Mindfulness help?

Mindfulness can be used as a tool to manage your wellbeing and mental health. Some people call mental health 'emotional health' or 'wellbeing'. We all have times when we feel down, stressed or frightened; most of the time those feelings pass, but sometimes they develop into a more serious problem, and this could happen to any one of us. It's important to maintain your mental health; but being mentally healthy doesn't just mean that you don't have a mental health problem. With good mental health, you can:

- Make the most of your potential
- Cope with life
- Play a full part in your family, workplace, community and among friends

Mindfulness One of the best things about learning how to be mindful is that it can teach us how to slow down in our everyday lives. It isn't easy to be calm and relaxed in the modern world, but mindfulness can help us to achieve this. Being mindful is very much about being and noticing the present moment we are in and preventing our thoughts from racing ahead to the future and things we may worry about that haven't happened yet.



What is Meditation?

Meditation is the delicate art of doing nothing and letting go of all efforts, in order to relax in your true nature. Practicing meditation gives you deep rest and can help reduce stress levels and improve mental hygiene.

Meditation isn't about becoming a different person, a new person or even a better person. It's about training in awareness and getting a healthy sense of perspective. You are not trying to turn off your thoughts and feelings, but better observe and understand them.

Learning to meditate is like learning any other skill and it will take time to get comfortable with your mind. Think of it like exercising a muscle that you've never really used before. It is important to keep practicing and we have included some tools to help!

Useful Meditation Apps:

Headspace

Calm

Insight Timer

Balance App

For further information, please search on Apple Music, Spotify and Amazon and YouTube for a selection of free content with your subscription.



the one minute Meditation

Breathe in through the nose,
Breathe out through the mouth.

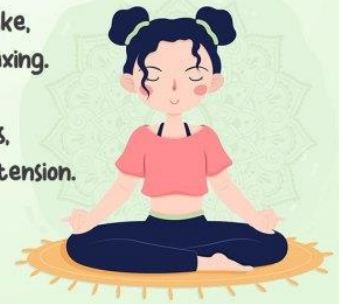
Breathe in feeling the lungs expanding,
Breathe out feeling a sense of letting go.

POSTHOOD

Breathe in to feel the body getting fuller,
Breathe out to feel the release of any tension.

Breathe in feeling alive and awake,
Breathe out feeling muscles relaxing.

Breathe in that sense of fullness,
Breathe out that unnecessary tension.



Posthood

How to Practice Mindfulness

mindful
mindful.org

1

Take a seat. Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you.

2

Set a time limit. If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as 5 or 10 minutes.

3

Notice your body. You can sit or kneel however is comfortable for you. Just make sure you are stable and in a position, you can stay in for a while.

4

Feel your breath. Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes out and as it goes in.

5

Notice when your mind has wandered. When you get around to noticing this—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath.

6

Be kind to your wandering mind. Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back.



By Mindful Staff

ACTIVITIES & REFLECTIONS

Please spend some time browsing the toolkit and if you haven't already completed some of the activities and exercised detailed, as they may really help you. You may like to continue to practice some of the mindfulness techniques as well.

- Take advantage of the Connect 5 courses that are on offer locally to support your course and to further develop your skills.
- You may also like to set some goals or create a to-do list of activities that you would like to do or a list of things that you would like to achieve.
- Understand yourself better and spend some time reflecting on your feelings about things in your life, perhaps write these feelings down or start a journal.
- Consider whether you might like to access further support.

Above all, we hope that you enjoy using the Wellbeing Toolkit and please do contact us if you have any questions or would like to seek further guidance and support

WHERE TO FIND HELP

You are not alone and can access support now, through the following links and through your college

www.themix.org.uk

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/mental-health-services/

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.mindshift.org.uk

www.wellbeinginfo.org

Additional guidance for the welfare and wellbeing for those studying an apprenticeship is available at the below:

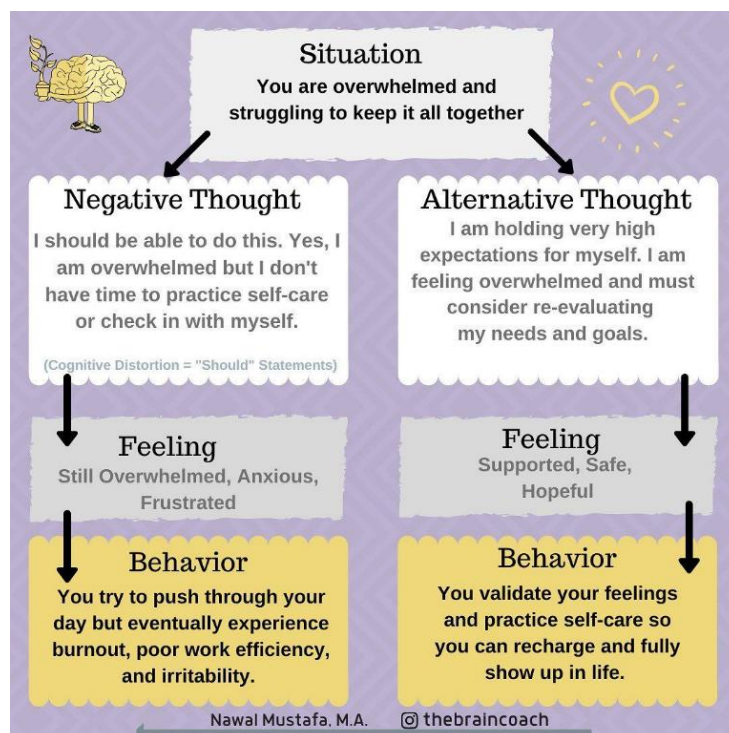
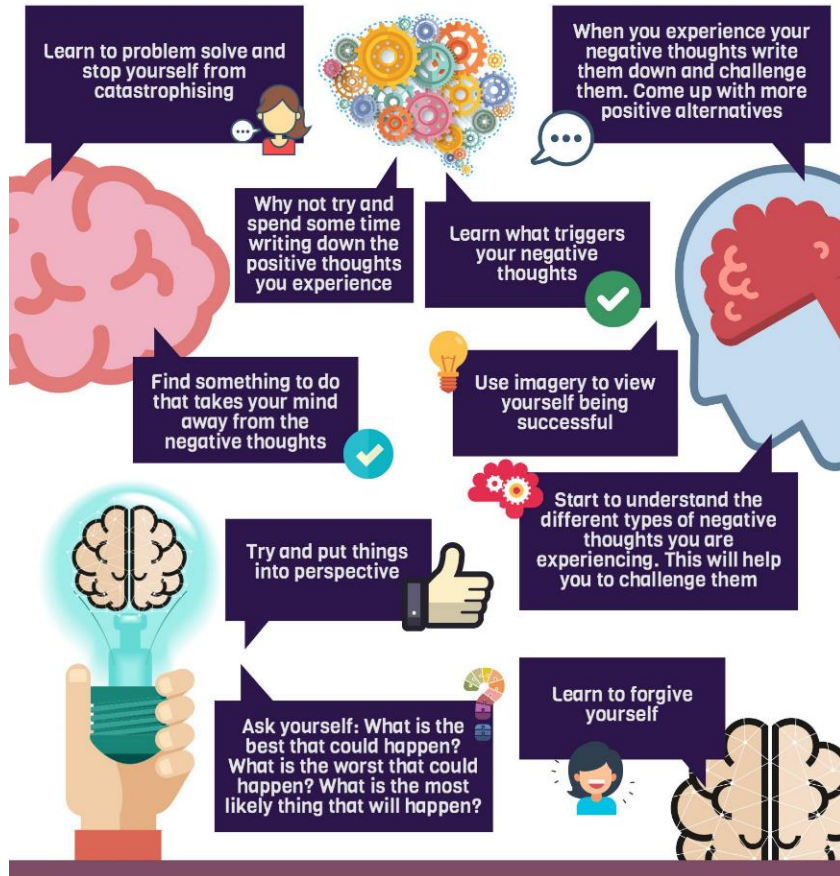
[Welfare and wellbeing in the apprenticeship / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education](#)

If you do need any further support, it is also a good idea to contact your GP.

If you are in immediate danger of harm, from yourself or someone else, please call 999.

10 TIPS TO HELP YOU MANAGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

@BELIEVEPHD



Have a go at reframing negative thoughts for yourself!

Instead of...	Try...
I should go to the gym every day.	I will try my best to go to the gym every day. Here's how...
I should eat healthier.	I can eat healthier today by doing these things...
I should stop thinking this way.	I see that I'm having anxious thoughts right now. What's a more credible thought? What would I tell my best friend?
I should be able to get on a plane without anxiety.	I wish I wasn't so afraid of flying, but I accept that I'm working at a solution. What can I do in this moment?

Thought	How can I make this more positive?

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

If I'm not perfect I have failed

Either I do it right or not at all

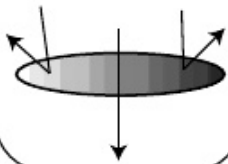
Over-generalising

"everything is always rubbish"

"nothing good ever happens"

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence.

Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes

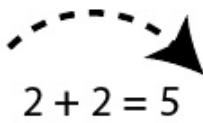
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

That doesn't count

Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimisation



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophising), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true.

I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot

should
must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

I'm a loser

I'm completely useless

They're such an idiot

Personalisation

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault. Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault.

Coping with Challenging Situations
Describe the Situation

Who _____

When _____

What _____

Why _____

Anxiety Rating

1 (no anxiety) – 10 (extreme anxiety)

Automatic Thoughts

Identify thoughts and feelings in the moment

Behaviour

What did you do? How did you react?

Identifying Unhelpful Thoughts

(E.g. Catastrophising, Overthinking, All or Nothing)

Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts

Is there another way of thinking about or understanding the event?

Anxiety Rating

(1 – 10)

Practices to Improve Your Emotional Health



Learn Your Emotional Language

Develop your emotional vocabulary to clearly discriminate between feelings and better communicate with yourself and others.



Express Yourself

Avoid letting emotions build up and find ways to appropriately communicate those feelings.



Manage Stress

Identify stress triggers and incorporate relaxation methods into regular day-to-day routines.



Develop Resilience

Cut out negative self-talk and evaluate what happened, why you're feeling the way you do and how you can move forward.



Find Balance

Focus on things you are grateful for and try not to obsess about problems and negative feelings.



Take Care of Your Body

Incorporate exercise into routine, eat a healthy diet and get the rest your body needs.



Practice Mindfulness

Take time to be fully present in the moment and focus on your breathing and the emotions that arise.



Connect with Others

Nurture current relationships and take time to find new ones.



Find Your Purpose

Figure out what is important in your life and how you can let it grow and flourish.



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TALK & LISTEN,
BE THERE.
FEEL CONNECTED



DO WHAT YOU CAN.
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO.
MOVE YOUR MOOD



REMEMBER
THE SIMPLE
THINGS THAT
GIVE YOU JOY



EMBRACE NEW
EXPERIENCES.
SEE OPPORTUNITIES.
SURPRISE YOURSELF



Your time,
your words,
your presence

