



Self Care Shorts Digital Magazine 002



Welcome to the second edition of the Self Care Shorts digital magazine.

We find ourselves still in lockdown with no end in sight. And I find myself asking the question how to stay well physically, mentally, and emotionally at this time?

In many ways nothing has changed. It's still important to exercise regularly and eat well and get enough sleep. The environment has changed but the advice hasn't – but – environment has a huge part to play in how successful we are at everything!

Put a plant that likes dry soil and full sun in a shady, damp spot and it may well survive but it won't thrive. And thriving is what we are after! And while we are not plants (!) the same applies to us. Put us in the wrong environment, or a toxic environment and we don't do well.

I'd ask you to consider what do you need from your employer or your family or your friends. This might need some difficult conversations – but conversations that are so important.

Also think about what you can do to change your environment. There is evidence for example that working in a cluttered, untidy, disorganised environment causes us to reflect those same things in our thinking and our approach to what there is to do. **Think minimal, think tidy.**



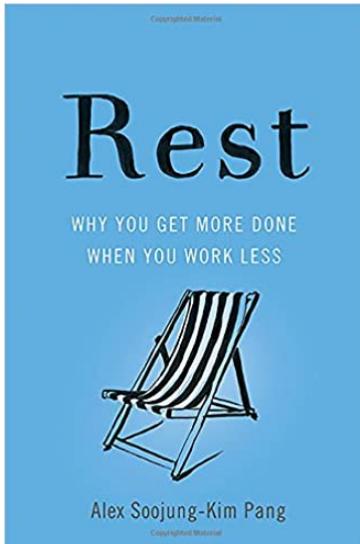
Exercise



- Pencil it in – writing things down sets our intention
- Do what you love!
- Exercise with a friend
- Prepare what you need before hand
- 20 minutes per day of something that gets you a little breathless
- Start gentle and build up slowly



Must Have Books



Rest is so important relative to how much we can get done. Bertie Forbes (founder of Forbes Magazine) says that how we spend our time at rest largely determines how effective we are at work.

David Allen, author of Getting Things Done says that our ability to rest is proportionate to our ability to generate power which we can turn into motivation.

If we are able to ‘educate’ our body to rest, then we are more likely to be able to relax *into* stressful situations and maintain a practical and pragmatic response rather than resort to an emotional one.

If you want to explore the finer points of rest then Pang’s book ‘Rest: Why You Get More Done When You Work Less’ is the place to go!

“We shouldn’t regard rest as a mere physical necessity to be satisfied grudgingly; we should see it as an opportunity. When we stop and rest properly, we’re not paying a tax on creativity. We’re investing in it. (pg.11)



GET CONTROL OF YOUR EMAIL *for a cleaner inbox*



Emails are both the miracle of the modern workplace and the scourge! They allow us to communicate quickly and easily but.... maybe too quickly and easily!

David Allen (*have I mentioned him yet! ;-)*) says that your Inbox is for collecting things for you to think about and is not for storing things in. He suggests you should get *in to empty* every day.

You need to look at each email in turn and decide what to do with it. Some you may be able to *Delete*. Easy! Some you may be able to simply *Do!* Allen gives us the concept of the 2-minute rule. If it’s going to take you less than 2 minutes to do it, then.... Just do it! Easy!

Then we are left with the ones that we may need more time for. These are the ones that we *Delegate* into our working system. Is it something we need to do at a particular time on a particular date? If so, it goes into your calendar in that time and date slot. While you are there – do you need any prep time for whatever it is? Allocate some time to that if it needs it as well. Is it something non urgent you need to get around to at some point? These go into my calendar as a daily task on a day I think I might find time to do them. Once you've got a calendar entry cut and paste anything you need from the email into the Notes section of the calendar entry and, if you're brave enough – delete it! If you're not brave enough (or your company need you to keep things for an audit trail (which is highly likely)) put it in a folder in your Outlook folders.

But! Crucially! Move it out of your Inbox... because your Inbox is not for storage it's for collecting.



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from the selfcareshorts.com blog

Happiness - the elusive goal!



We are always telling each other to be HAPPY! Happy Christmas we all say to each other. And then Happy New Year. We're obsessed! Once a year we say Happy Birthday to each other as well. Clearly 'Happy' is very important to us. Yet it alludes us – or at least its elusive more often than we're like it to be. Daniel Levitin in his book ['The Organized Mind'](#) says that generally we think life should be easy, so, when it proves difficult, we don't like it.

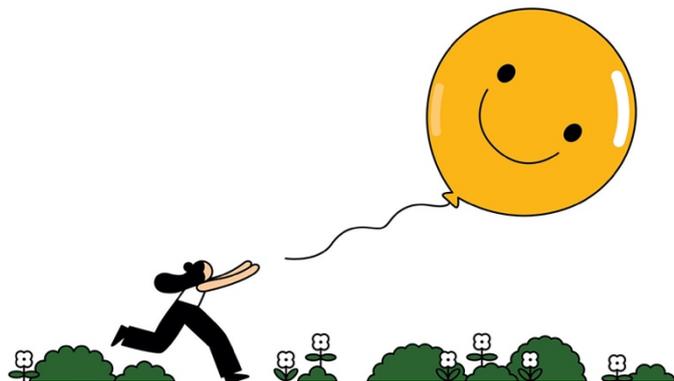
'Life' (in all its guises) is largely difficult and takes some 'doing' and every so often we get that little pocket of happiness. So, if there are little pockets of happiness then the more we can find them then the more we can be happy – and happy people get more done – more in their work lives and more in their personal lives

Sometimes we look for happiness in things – but that's not where to find it. Advertisers and sellers of things wouldn't tell us that though. 'Buy this', they say, 'and it will make you happy, have the perfect life' etc etc. This comes with a 'Halo Effect'. The thing you buy is wonderful. The new TV, the new car. But after a while it becomes just the car you get from A to B in or the TV you watch Masterchef on. Oh – except you are now in debt possibly paying for it for the next 'however long' and now you're not happy anymore!

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi says we have to find joy in everything in order to create flow. Flow is that ability to move effortlessly from thing to thing and get things done. But he means joy in **everything** – not just that new purchase. Joy in the washing and ironing, joy in the reporting writing. By doing this we will find flow and flow leads to people being happy.

We find happiness in the most unusual places sometimes

Sometimes, I'd argue, we find joy in difficult and problematic things. In Alex Pang's book ['Rest'](#) he talks about how difficult things – things that we are trying to master but are difficult – are actually restful and good for us – something that is mentally absorbing, that feels difficult to do, is deeply satisfying – such things – difficult things – hard work – make us happy.



In a Jewish Parable there are two men arguing over some knotty issue in the Torah. God gets annoyed so comes down from on high and says, 'I've listened to you two argue about this for 20 years so let me tell you what it means'. 'No', they say, 'what right have you! Clear off!' They delight in the difficult thing – they are thinking, striving, and making a connection with one another.



I find that I am a person who finds great joy in the process rather than the outcome. Stoic philosophers say that some things are outside of our control, but we still need to do them. Some things are completely under our control and some things are not fully under our control, but we have influence. The influence is where we have control.

The secret, they would tell us, is to focus on the bit you can control and as Massimo Pigliucci (in a video presentation I watched recently on iai.tv) said “bet your happiness on those things”. We have no choice other than to take the stuff we can't control just as it comes, because, well, we can't control it. We also have limited control over the outcome of things. I can control when I write a blog, what I write about, what words I use, and take great joy in the doing. But I very little control over how you receive it. That is dependent on so many things, like, what you already know about the subject, what you think of me, whether you agree or disagree with the idea. So I set my happiness on the doing of it (I am currently very happy in the doing!) and not on how many 'likes' it gets, or how many people read it.... although I do hope you enjoy it. The pleasure and happiness is in the doing not in the plaudits.

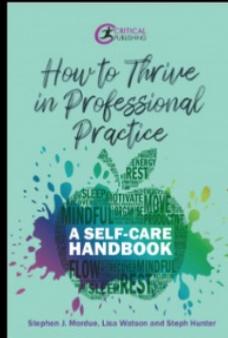
So we need to find our happiness in every moment – the work we do – the study we do – the fun we have – tidying things up – we need to find joy in all of these things. Where do you find your joy and where do you find your happiness I wonder? And here's the thing – if we think that everyone else has found it and we haven't – then – sorry – for the most part they haven't either.

Sometimes those difficult things will be at work, some will be home, some we'll create all on our own by not being in charge of ourselves – how we approach things – how we set our minds to what is to do

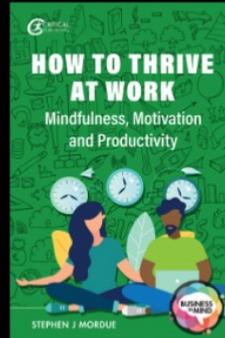
Daniel Gilbert in ‘Stumbling on Happiness’ says that we come into this world wanting to control things and we go out the same way – and that research suggests that if at any point during our arrival in, and departure from, this world, we lose our ability to control things we become unhappy, feel helpless and hopeless and can become depressed. I hate to use the 'P' word again but planning is the key. Bringing the future into the present so we can have a look at it and control, I'd suggest, is the root to happiness. Delight in the doing! **We look into the future so we can make predictions about it and control it – that's where happiness is.**



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