

**THE
RESILIENT
LIFE**



WORKBOOK



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**BEAUFORT
BOOKS**

The Resilient Life WORKBOOK

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FIRST EDITION

This book should not be used as a substitute for medical advice from a qualified physician. The intent of this book is to provide general information in regard to the subject matter covered; it does not create a physician-patient, counselor-client, or coach-client relationship. If medical advice or other expert help is needed, the services of an appropriate medical or health-care professional should be sought. Coaching client names and other details of client circumstances have been changed to protect confidentiality. In some cases coaching client examples are a combination of details from one or more client situations, for the purposes of illustration.

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INTRODUCTION

Hello! Thank you so much for choosing to read my book, *The Resilient Life*. Know that I am both impressed and happy that you've chosen to download this companion Workbook—and that you have actually opened it!

This indicates that you're sincerely interested in taking action to improve and strengthen yourself and your life. In turn, it also means that you're a person who is highly likely to achieve their goals and dreams. You're willing to do what it takes (or at least get started – which is everything!).

The exercises in this workbook will help you go deeper with each chapter of *The Resilient Life*. I've included space with each exercise, for

INTRODUCTION

you to write your own comments (and action steps) in response to each of the Coaching Tips found in the book. I've also added additional reflective exercises.

I'll ask you to think and write about a variety of perspectives, changes, and actions, as if I were coaching you directly. I'm excited just thinking about it! I'm thrilled that you're take advantage of this opportunity to apply the principles in this book directly to your life.

Here's to living more effectively and resiliently. It won't just make your life better—it will also increase your positive impact on everyone else that you encounter, both personally and professionally. Let's do this.

1

RESILIENCE AS A SCIENCE AND A WAY OF LIFE

1. FACING YOUR CURRENT CHALLENGE.

Are you going through something difficult right now? Describe it in one sentence.

How would you ideally like to come out of this challenge or crisis, once you're on the other side of it? What would you like to be able to look back and say about the situation, or how you navigated it?

Who would you ideally like to be in this situation, right now? How do you want to show up?

What strengths do you want to demonstrate?

In what ways do you find yourself struggling within this situation?

What are your unique vulnerabilities in this situation? Where might you be most likely to go wrong, or deal with it in a way you might regret?

What is the best, most realistically optimistic outcome you could hope for?

What are some steps you could take, to make that optimal outcome more likely?

What do you need to do? (Write this down, and then also add it as a task or tasks to your calendar)

Who can you reach out to for support? (Again, set a reminder to do this or put a note on your calendar)

What resources are available to you, that you could make use of? (Make a note of when you'll do this, again)

**2. THINK OF A TIME IN YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU HANDLED
A SITUATION IN A WAY THAT YOU NOW REGRET.**

Write down a sentence to describe it.

What happened? What was the decision you made, and what were the negative consequences?

When this type of difficult situation presents itself again in the future, how will you handle it differently? (Or have you done so already?)

How have those previously experienced consequences made you a more resilient person?

3. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR ROLE IN THIS WORLD IS?

Write this down:

Who are you important to?

Lean into these aspects of your life. Let your value to the world (even if it's just your small corner of the world) sink into your bones.

- 4. IS THERE AN AREA OF YOUR LIFE, OR A SPECIFIC PROBLEM, THAT YOU FEEL PARTICULARLY NEGATIVE ABOUT RIGHT NOW?**
(this may or may not be the challenge you detailed in the first exercise, up to you!)

Write down some of your negative thoughts about this area or issue.

Now write down a list of realistic, positive thoughts that you could choose to focus on instead.

What good can you anticipate, related to this, in your future?

5. WHAT AREA OF YOUR FINANCES NEEDS THE MOST ATTENTION RIGHT NOW?

What is one step you could take to start to improve this area?

When will you do it?

(Put a note or reminder in your calendar)

2

REDUCE YOUR VULNERABILITY TO BURNOUT

1. DO A BURNOUT SELF-CHECK.

Score yourself in the following areas (0 = feeling great, 10 = feeling terrible in this area)

Emotional exhaustion

Negativity/Cynicism about work

Decreased productivity/effectiveness/confidence at work

If you have a significant score in one or more of these, what is the biggest factor (or factors) in your work that contributes to your feeling this way?

What kind of support is available to you, in your work or in your life, that you could draw on?

Do you think you need to see your doctor, or a counselor, coach, mentor or other supportive individual? Who will you reach out to, and when?

2. IF YOU'RE EXPERIENCING A FRUSTRATING LACK OF CONTROL IN YOUR WORK, WHAT MIGHT YOU DO ABOUT IT?

Instead of descending into chronic complaining or fueling your resentful anger, examine the problem or conflict.

What is one area of your work are you experiencing a lack of control in? (try to pick something where you may actually be able to modify or change the circumstances)

What would make it better?

What needs to be resolved?

Is there a possibility to adapt your schedule, or your tasks, to what would work best for you?

Is there someone you can talk to about your concerns, who has influence within the organization? Write down their name(s). When might you be able to talk to them?

If you're not sure what to do, or are nervous about speaking to higher-ups, discuss your situation with a mentor or someone wise whom you respect.

3. REFLECT ON WORK-RELATED REWARDS,
IN YOUR UNIQUE CONTEXT

If you're a *leader*, what are you doing to ensure that your people

- feel appropriately financially rewarded for their efforts?
- feel recognized by you and your organization for their positive contributions?
- experience rewarding interactions and connections with their colleagues and superiors?

Don't forget that as a leader you're at risk for burning out, as well. Managers can be at even higher risk for burnout than the people they lead. Take a look at the "if you're an employee" exercise below, and remember to apply those questions to yourself, too.

REDUCE YOUR VULNERABILITY TO BURNOUT

As an *employee*, if you've been feeling deprived and unrewarded by your workplace, identify what's missing (write down your initial thoughts in the space below).

Are you way overdue for a raise, or is there some other issue with your pay?

Are you lacking positive feedback from your manager?

Do you feel disconnected from your coworkers?

Have you felt unappreciated by your clients, customers or colleagues?

Do you let even the slightest negative feedback get to you?

Now, are there steps you could take that might solve the issue(s)?

Pick one or two issues from your list above and write them down below (“a” and possibly “b”), along with some steps you could take:

(i.e., talking to your supervisor about a raise; asking your manager or coworkers to give you feedback regarding your strengths and things that you are doing well; making more of an effort to build closer, more rewarding relationships with the people around you; reminding yourself of positive feedback you have received from clients/customers and not letting the occasional complaint drag you down etc.).

a)

b)

4. IDENTIFY AND ASK FOR SUPPORT.

First, identify what kind of support you need the most.

Do you need help from your supervisor in dealing with technical situations?

Are there trainings, certifications, or conferences that would help you grow and feel more inspired and capable? List them below.

Do you have any mentors in your life currently? (If not, who might you approach for mentorship? Is there a mentorship program within your organization or community?)

Do you need more emotional support and advice, in order to better handle stressful circumstances?

If you would like more support from your manager, how and when will you approach them about this? (and: do you feel you need coaching or counseling from someone else on how to bring this up?)

Note: If your manager isn't the type to give this support, see if you can find it somewhere else: a mentor, a colleague, another leader in the organization, a counselor, your spouse, a friend, etc.

Who else may be able to provide you with emotional support and advice?

Consider asking for what you need. Pick your battles and timing wisely.

5. BE THE CHANGE IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

How can you help create a “lively, attentive, responsive community” culture in your workplace, or wherever it is that you make your contribution to society? Write down some thoughts or ideas you have related to this.

If you're in a role of influence, how can you be a more supportive, generous leader?

Encourage and support your coworkers. Be that person who energizes others. Bring those around you up, not down. Check in on the people around you. A simple “How are you doing?” or “How can I support you?” goes a long way.

REDUCE YOUR VULNERABILITY TO BURNOUT

Think of a colleague who you could check in on. Write down their name.

Why not send them a message right now?

If you'd rather check in with them in person, when might you do that?

3

HOW TO STOP FEELING STRESSED AND OVERWHELMED

**1. TRY A “MINI” OR “MICRO” RELAXATION RESPONSE
TECHNIQUE TO CALM YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM AND
REDUCE YOUR BODY’S STRESS RESPONSE.**

- The 4-6-8 breath

Take note of how you feel, before you start. Where do you feel tension? What is your mood? Do you feel stressed? Now, give it a try. Breathe in through your nose for a count of four (not a full four seconds, just count it out).

Hold your breath deep in your chest for a count of six.

Breathe out through your mouth for a count of eight, releasing your stress through your breath as you exhale (if you're in public or in a stressful meeting, breathe out through your nose so no one can hear or notice what you're doing).

Do this once, or a few times in a row.

How do you feel after doing this? Do you notice a change in physical tension levels, feelings of stress, or your mood? Write it down.

If you noticed a positive shift, would you like to consider doing this periodically at certain times in your life or your day? And if so, when might you want to do this? (write down some situations)

- The physiological sigh

As I mentioned in the book, this stress-reduction, RR-inducing technique that uses a “double inhale” has been studied and popularized by Dr. Andrew Huberman, PhD, a Stanford neurobiologist and neuroscience researcher. Give it a try:

Take a breath in through your nose.

Follow that immediately with a shorter second breath, inhaling through your nose once more.

Exhale through your mouth.

How do you feel after trying this? Write your observations down.

Which of these two techniques do you prefer?

2. KNOW WHAT HELPS YOU RELAX, AND DO IT.

For each of these time spans, list three things that you enjoy and that help you relax and unwind:

- 5 minutes (e.g., making a cup of tea; taking some deep breaths; doing some stretches; listening to a song that you like.)

1.

2.

3.

- 15 minutes (e.g., going for a quick walk; doing a mindfulness meditation; spending some time with a pet; texting with a friend to talk about your day.)

1.

2.

3.

HOW TO STOP FEELING STRESSED AND OVERWHELMED

- 30 minutes (e.g., calling a friend or family member to say hello; taking a bath; reading a book.)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 1 hour (e.g., taking an exercise class or dance class; going for a long walk; listening to your favorite album; painting, crafting, or some other creative endeavor.)
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

I encourage you to keep a list of these in your phone or somewhere handy, and add to the list as things occur to you. Then, when you find yourself with a sudden spare few minutes or an hour, you can refer to what you've written so you don't end up wasting time scrolling through your phone (which is more likely to negatively impact your mood and energy) or watching some mindless show.

3. APPLY THE TOP FOUR PRIORITY FRAMEWORK TO YOUR LIFE.

1. Identify what's most important to you right now.

Your health? Your mental health? Your family? Feeling less stressed and more engaged at work? Switching careers? Be specific. Write these things down in a list (there can be more than four, just brainstorm this for now).

Once you have a list, decide which items are in your “top four” by putting a star by each one, and then write them out in order below:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

(If this is difficult to come up with, try thinking of what you resent most right now. What are you most frustrated about? Your weight? Your health? How tired you are? Being unable to spend quality time with your spouse or kids? Feeling stressed about debt?)

2. Determine what you want and need to start doing to honor these priorities.

Identify which of your top priorities are suffering the most right now (write them down below).

For each area that is suffering, come up with one way to give that more time and attention. Write these down below.

Be specific. Some examples: going to bed at ten o'clock; going for walks with a friend three times a week after work; planning a date night once a week with your partner; spending Saturday mornings with your kids; signing up for that photography course you've always wanted to take.

Pro tip: Keep it simple at first—aim for easy wins.

3. Identify the greatest obstacles in your life that are preventing you from taking care of or finding time for your priorities.

Take a look at your calendar for the next month. What can you realistically remove?

Is there anything on there that's not truly necessary, or that you dread or feel stressed about, such as social obligations (e.g., the ones that you regularly find tiresome, stressful, or draining)? Unnecessary commitments (e.g., that committee you joined ages ago, where you don't really do anything meaningful and you kick yourself every time you lose another Thursday night to a meeting)?

Make a list:

Have you been wasting time on activities that have nothing to do with your priorities or that sabotage those priorities? Take another look. What could you remove that's less important than your identified priorities?

If there's something in your life that you long to be rid of, get creative about ways that you might finally be able to be free of it. Write down some ideas below:

4. Brainstorm how you can start to remove these obstacles.

Identify the low-hanging fruit; what are the easiest things for you to remove from your life?

What can you easily start saying no to?

What can you delegate to someone else or remove from your plate?

What in your life, or your work, might you be able to change?

What are some of the resources around you that you could leverage to help take a load off, or help you achieve your priorities? Who might you ask for help?

(For example, if you're caring for aging parents, or have a child who faces significant challenges, have you fully explored the resources that may be available in your community to support you or your loved ones?)

5. Cultivate your ability to say no.

Take your list of “low-hanging fruit” from #4. Look over the things you could easily say no to, and start there.

As you think about saying no, notice what comes up for you.

What feelings or thoughts make you tempted to just cave in and say yes? Guilt? Fear of conflict? Fear of someone getting angry or upset with you? Fear of what people will think or say about you? It's important to understand what has been stopping you from doing what you know you need to do.

Write down some of the feelings or thoughts that you notice (or that you know have affected you in the past).

Why do you think you have these feelings? (e.g. do you identify with being the person everyone can count on? Do you fear people not liking you, or disappointing people? Do you feel really uncomfortable saying no, period? Write down your experience below)

Looking at your reasons, what do you think would be the wisest, healthiest perspective to have in this area or areas of your life?

How would your life change if you were willing to see things from a different perspective, and change some of the circumstances of your schedule and your life?

If you feel conflicted, stressed or guilty about pruning your schedule or removing activities or commitments from your life, it can help to talk to someone you respect about the situation. They may help you give yourself permission to stop participating in this activity, relationship, or commitment.

Who might you talk to?

Going forward, practice different ways of saying no. If it's too hard for you in person (maybe you panic and abandon your resolve, or you're afraid to see the person's reaction), start by turning down requests in writing through text or email. These means of communication can make you feel more in control, as you can really think about and craft your responses.

Where, when and how would you like to start practicing saying no?

When you're tempted to just give in and say yes, remind yourself of why it's so important for you to stand your ground.

What will you lose, how will your life suffer, and who else will suffer if you keep saying yes to things?

Take accountability if you're really struggling with implementing this. Perhaps you could make a pact with a friend that you're both going to start saying no to certain things, and check in on each other for strength, resolve, and encouragement. A counselor can help you with all of this as well (from exploring your reasons for feeling you have to say yes, to implementing new strategies and skills in saying no).

When it comes to identifying and protecting your priorities, brainstorm as many possibilities and solutions as you can. Invite trusted others to chime in with their suggestions, too. You'll be surprised by how much in your life can be improved when you know and commit to your priorities, start saying no, consistently make choices that honor what matters most, and tap into the resources that are all around you.

4

UNDERSTAND DEPRESSION AND ENJOY MORE GOOD DAYS

1. REFLECT ON YOUR THOUGHT LIFE.

Are there persistent negative thoughts that you have been having about yourself? Write them down.

Can you see any themes here?

What might be the source of these beliefs or thoughts about yourself or your life?

What are some truthful, realistic, helpful thoughts that can act as antidotes to these negative thoughts? (i.e. “nothing will ever get better” changes to “it’s entirely possible that things will get better for me, especially if I take positive action”)

Do you feel you might benefit from talking to a professional (like your doctor or a qualified counseling professional) about thoughts and concerns you have been having? And if so, when and how will you reach out for help?

2. IDENTIFY KEY ACTIONS TO OPTIMIZE YOUR SELF-CARE.

Regardless of whether or not you're depressed, it's always a good idea to take good care of yourself, in ways that matter to you.

Write a list of actions that make you feel better about yourself or give you a lift (e.g., taking a shower in the morning, going for a daily walk, having a supply of healthy food, dressing nicely even if you're not leaving your home on a given day, etc.)

Pick one that you'd like to work on doing every day this week, if that's possible. It can be something super simple (ideally it's something you can do reasonably easily). Write it down here:

Now do this over the course of the week, as often as you can (please don't be hard on yourself if you miss days, or even just manage to do it once!). Notice how much better you feel on the days that you take this positive action, however small it is.

3. PRACTICE JOY.

List five things that bring you joy (simple things that ideally are easily accessible in your daily life).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

In your calendar, plan out one of these per day over the next five days, so that you will be reminded to do it.

Notice how much better these “touchstones of joy” make you and your life feel.

5

CALM ANXIETY, FACE YOUR FEARS, AND TAKE BACK YOUR LIFE

1. IS THERE SOMETHING YOU'RE FREQUENTLY ANXIOUS ABOUT?

Write it down here:

Often, the answer is clear. When looked at in the light of reason and objective facts, this is a reasonable “risk” to take, in spite of the related fear or anxiety. So, you take it (and continue to talk to a counselor, mentor, or friend, or your journal, as fears come up). Feel that fear. Feel all the fears. Do that thing anyway.

6

WHAT TO DO WHEN CRISIS (INEVITABLY) HITS

1. REFLECT ON A CRISIS THAT YOU NAVIGATED IN THE PAST.

Think of a specific crisis that you have experienced in the past, one that significantly impacted your life. Write it down in a few short words (no details, just a single summary sentence):

Looking back, what do you feel you did well as you navigated that season?

What, in retrospect, would you have done differently?

In what ways did this experience change you for the better? (e.g. understand others better, have more empathy for their experiences; stronger; wiser; learned new skills or perspectives etc.)

How would you handle a crisis or major life challenge differently in the future, as a result of what you have learned from this past experience?

2. TAKE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR LIFE TODAY.

Go through the list of points and ask yourself whether you can strengthen yourself by enhancing your use of, or your well-being related to, each of these areas. For each area that you want to strengthen (and it can just be one), write down a specific action that you can take to begin strengthening this (or each) area:

- Building a strong network and letting people support and help you
- Protecting your work, your ability to make a living, and your financial health
- Having positive structure and routines in your life
- Making good choices when you're upset or things are difficult

7

RECLAIMING COMMUNITY IN AN ISOLATING WORLD

1. BOOST YOUR RESILIENCE BY TAKING A SOCIAL INVENTORY.

How is the health of your social life? Score it from 0 (terrible) to 5 (amazing).

Who are the people you value most in your life? Write one or more names down in each category, if possible:

Family

Friends

Work colleagues

Neighbors

Community

Now, go back and put a star next to the names of people you would like to make an effort to spend more time with.

Next, ask yourself what you need more of in your social life. Some examples:

More time with your partner or spouse

More time with friends who make you laugh

More time one on one with a close friend

More time going out on adventures with your kids (or anyone else you like to have fun with)

More time reaching out to distant friends and relatives who you love

More regular, planned activities with others, such as belonging to a team, where you'll show up and will have to go on a regular basis

Write down a list of those types of social activities you need or want more of:

Take one of the types of connections that you've written above, that you can easily add to your life. Plan it into the next week if you can. Put it on your calendar.

Do it, and pay close attention to how good it made you feel. Plan to do it again! Or pick something else from your list and plan that instead.

Now, are there social activities you are currently involved in that you don't feel connected to, that don't bring you joy, and that are stealing time away from more important relationships? List them:

Put a star* next to the ones that might be easiest for you to eliminate. Write down how you might shift them out of your life and calendar:

8

PRACTICE HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AT WORK AND IN LIFE

1. TAKE A BOUNDARY INVENTORY OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Are there people in your life who make you feel stressed? Your experience may be that they take more than they give. Or, they make it very hard for you to say no. Perhaps they don't respect boundaries that you put (you say you're busy but they show up at your door). Sometimes, the only sign that alerts you to boundaries being crossed is that you feel increasing resentment toward certain people.

(I should point out here that sometimes when we resent others for crossing our boundaries, the primary cause is that we haven't had the courage or resolve to actually state those boundaries!)

Think of one person who frequently crosses your boundaries (if this is the case) and write their name down:

What is the type of boundary-related circumstance that repeatedly occurs in this relationship? Write down one or more examples:

For these situations, what would a healthier boundary look like for you? What kind of a boundary would you like to have in place? Write this down.

What are some ways you might be able to communicate or establish this boundary?

(Note: I'm not suggesting that you should take specific action, as this exercise is more for reflective purposes. If the relationship is particularly difficult or unsafe, it's prudent to get the input of a licensed counseling professional or other trusted person, before taking any steps).

**2. EXAMINE WHICH ASPECTS OF YOUR WORK LIFE
FRUSTRATE YOU OR CAUSE YOU STRESS.**

What are you doing, or agreeing to do, that isn't really necessary and makes your day exhausting? Take time to reflect on this, and write down what comes to mind:

Where and how can you adjust your actions to realign people's expectations? (with respect to this list – i.e. do you need to advise people that there are certain things you won't be doing anymore, and why?)

What are your most important priorities at work right now? List them.

Which are the ones that you are having the most difficulty getting done?
Put a star next to them in the list above.

For each of the ones you struggle with, what is the main reason why that priority isn't getting enough of your time or attention? Write down each neglected priority, and the related main reason it's not getting your time, here:

What do you need to do differently, to give this priority more of your time? (Again, write down each relevant priority and what you need to do differently)

Now, how can you set your day (and your boundaries) up so that your true priorities get done? Write a list of key ways that you can set up your day or your boundaries, to protect these priorities:

Talk to your colleagues and clients about any changes you plan to make, to assist them in readjusting their expectations.

**3. REFLECT ON THE WAYS THAT WORK CAN
INVADE YOUR PERSONAL LIFE.**

What are five ways that your work tends to negatively impact your personal life? (e.g., after-hours emails or calls, thinking about it when you're with your family, reminders of your work in your personal space). List them here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Using these five ways that your work invades your life, come up with five strategies to improve those boundaries (e.g., no checking email after six o'clock):

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

HOW TO SLEEP BETTER

1. REFLECT ON WHAT YOU NORMALLY DO IN THE EVENINGS.

Are there activities that you regularly do that are stimulating? (i.e. things you do that wake your brain up, like working out close to bedtime, or checking work emails, or getting into intense conversations)

Make a list, especially if you've noticed they negatively impact your sleep:

How could you eliminate these activities, or move them to an earlier time?

What are some things that you could do to make your evenings feel more relaxing, to help your brain and body wind down and prepare for a good night's sleep? (examples: reading a paper book, having some tea, listening to quiet music, journaling).

Make a list:

Is there anything you need to do to make these relaxing activities more readily available to you? (i.e. download some quiet music, buy some soothing uncaffeinated teas, order “real” books or dig up some old favorites, buy a beautiful journal).

Write a list:

Looking at this list, put reminders on your calendar to find, pick up or order these items. Or better yet, find or order them now!

2. TRY KEEPING A SLEEP LOG.

Sample sleep log:

Day/Date	Time started getting ready for bed	Time lights out	Time to fall asleep (est)	Time woke up	Hours asleep (total)	Hours in bed (total)	Alcohol	Exercise	Sleep Quality (how I felt waking up)

Use the above sample, or track your sleep information in a journal or a notes app on your phone.

You don't have to track all the things that I did, just what seems helpful to you. There are also many apps out there that track sleep data for you.

After a week or two of tracking, is there any information or pattern that jumps out at you?

Does anything surprise you?

What does it tell you about where you could improve, or what you could do differently and more intentionally, when it comes to your sleep?

Adjust your habits based on what you observe.

(Note: It really just takes a few seconds to make your notes after you wake up, but if it feels like too much for you to do right now, feel free to review some of the other easy-to-implement recommendations in the book)

**3. IF YOU'VE BEEN STRUGGLING WITH INSOMNIA,
SEE WHAT HAPPENS IF, FOR A NIGHT, YOU AVOID ALL
SCREENS AND READ A "REAL" BOOK INSTEAD.**

This exercise doesn't have a written component—I just want you to try this!

I predict that you'll find yourself getting deliciously sleepy, and fall asleep—and stay asleep—more easily than usual. If you notice a difference, consider making this a new habit.

Of course, if you notice a significant improvement in your ability to fall asleep, or your overall quality of sleep, feel free to make a note of that here (for future reference, as a reminder).

10

MAKE FOOD WORK FOR YOU, NOT AGAINST YOU

1. HELP YOURSELF TO REDUCE STRESS-RELATED EATING.

Make a list of (non-food) things that help you relieve stress and feel better:

Make these things that you genuinely enjoy, that are relatively easy to access in the moment, that you can do the next time you catch yourself wanting to stress-eat or stuff down emotions. They should be things that you won't feel regret about afterward.

Put a star next to the ones that are the most easily accessible for you, that you're most likely to do.

Next, put this list into a notes app on your phone, or some other place where you can reference your list quickly when you need it (for example, in a moment when you're feeling upset and tempted to relieve your negative emotions through eating comfort foods).

2. IDENTIFY YOUR "TRIGGER FOODS".

Make a list of specific foods and situations that trigger you to stress-eat or overeat:

Next, for each of these, make a sample plan related to that trigger food: (i.e. popcorn – don't buy bags of popcorn or keep them in the house; buy a healthier, smaller snack at the movies next time)

How can you set yourself up for success and fewer regrets? Are there certain foods you could simply stop buying or having around? Write them down:

What could you plan to do or eat the next time you find yourself in a particular stressful or emotional situation (based on your list of trigger situations)?

Make a list of snacks or foods that comfort you, or that you enjoy, that you would consider to be healthier, less regret-provoking options:

3. CONSIDER DINING HABITS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SHIFT.

Are there restaurants that you would prefer to stop going to? Fast food chains? Places where the food is really rich, or deep-fried, or you always end up eating too much and regret it?

Write a list.

What are some things you may want to stop ordering at restaurants? (Bread baskets? Appetizers? Desserts? High calorie sugary mixed drinks?)

USE MOVEMENT TO BOOST YOUR BODY, MOOD, AND BRAIN

1. **BUILD A BASELINE PLAN TO START MOVING MORE,
BY ANSWERING THESE SIMPLE QUESTIONS.**

What is a physical activity that you would like to add into your life? Something you already know you enjoy, or believe you would you enjoy, or believe is important for your well-being. Make it something that would be simple for you to start doing ASAP:

When would this best fit into your schedule?

How often do you think you can realistically do this, at least to start? And for how long at a time? (Make it easy—for example, a fifteen-minute walk three times a week after dinner.)

What would you need to do to make it happen? (Pack gym clothes to work? Set up a workout area in your home? Get your partner to watch the kids? Sign up for a membership? Text a friend to set a date?)

Is there someone you could be accountable to, to either encourage you in your plan or participate in the activity itself?

Send them a text, email or note about this, right now.

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THE ART OF CRAFTING A PURPOSEFUL LIFE

1. REFLECT ON YOUR LIFE.

What do you love about your life?

What gives the most meaning and purpose to your life? What do you want to change the most?

What do you want (or need) to get rid of?

What do you want (or need) to stop doing?

What do you want your life to be about, going forward?

2. A DAY IN YOUR IDEAL LIFE.

Ten years from now, what would a reasonably typical day in your ideal life look like? There's a big chunk of space below for you to write it out, describing it in detail. Have fun with it!

Let's start with some initial details.

What would be the primary aspects of your day, from waking up in the morning to when you go to bed at night? Imagine that anything is possible.

Here are some aspects to think about as you come up with this list of key details:

Where are you living? Who do you live with? In what type of living space?

Who are your neighbors? Who are your friends? How are you engaged with your community?

What are some things you would do in a typical day? Are you working, and at what? What other activities do you do?

What gives your life meaning and purpose at this time?

What gives you the greatest joy?

What is your life about, if you could summarize it in one sentence?

Now you're ready to write out a paragraph description of this day in your life. Try writing it in the first person, i.e. "I wake up _____ . Right after I get up, I _____ ...)

Finally, what will you need to do in your life, from today forward, to increase the probability that this meaningful, purposeful future might come to fruition? Is there one primary thing, or several?

Write that one thing down, or make a list.

Now go do that.

