

# **It's All About You**



## **A Health & Wellbeing Self help Booklet**

**Debbie Reilly**

**UNISON Health and Wellbeing Officer**



# Chapters

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction.....                           | 4  |
| The Importance of Prevention.....           | 6  |
| Introducing Wellbeing Tools.....            | 8  |
| Lets Talk Gratitude.....                    | 9  |
| Why is Journaling Important.....            | 11 |
| What Drains You and setting Boundaries..... | 13 |
| Reviewing Your Life.....                    | 22 |
| Carving Out Time for You.....               | 25 |
| Self-Care Planner.....                      | 28 |
| Visioning Your Future.....                  | 29 |
| Mindful Activity Sheets.....                | 31 |

## Introduction

It is truly a privilege to be a Health and Wellbeing Coach as well as an Occupational Therapist. "UNISON's Health and Wellbeing Service" has now been running fully for the past 5 years. Unfortunately, by the time people come to us for the ten week coaching programme many are very unwell. Anxiety, stress, burnout, low mood and depression are some of the conditions that we see in those using the service.

Whilst those who have attended have all benefited greatly from the programme we wanted to look at reaching more people before they become unwell. We can see more people with workshops, but what better way to reach even more than by producing this Self Help Booklet. This booklet will assist you in looking out for you and truly listen to what your body needs.

In this modern world, life can be a bit of a roller coaster with all the ups, downs, twists and turns. We are all so busy that our true instincts are suppressed as we try to just get through the day. Unfortunately, that means that ill health can creep up on us, as we forget to eat and drink for most of the day and our sleep is short or restless rather than restorative. We have somehow stopped listening to our basic instinct telling us to

stop and eat or just rest.

This short booklet is here to help you make sure that your health, life balance and happiness is front and centre so that life is a joy not just a means to an end.

“Putting Yourself First” or taking time out for you is not selfish, it is absolutely essential to your health and wellbeing. If you think about it this way, if you can’t look after you, how can you be there to help others? You will learn that it’s good to set boundaries and it’s ok to say no.

Hopefully, this little booklet will help you to do just that, as well as give you increased confidence and resilience when things take a wrong turn. It’s there to help you create a fulfilled and joyous life that, you can look back on with satisfaction and joy.

*“This little booklet is your companion in rediscovering balance and joy in everyday life”*

*Debbie Reilly*

## **The importance of Prevention.**

It is not always easy navigating your true life path. That's the one where you feel fulfilled confident, resilient and worthy of all the good things you experience. As you live your life with real joy, and dancing your way from child hood to that elderly person who is looking back on a life well lived.

For many of us, we are trying to navigate our way through the noise of the ever more busy days in this ever changing busy world.

We Juggle and often struggle to be all the things for everyone while losing ourselves in the hustle and bustle that is constantly demanding all of our attention. In our work, our personal life or indeed a combination of both.

We become stuck on a treadmill living on autopilot with no stop button. Missing the signs that tell us we need to be nourished, rested and sometimes looked after.

All of this can accumulate into a crash and burn where we feel stressed. Anxiety creeps in and we start to lose our confidence, our sense of self and self worth. We muddle on just to get to the end of the day, the month/ year to survive. At best we get to that age when we are looking back on the life we have

With all of the above in mind, the following chapters have been designed to take you on a little journey of self discovery, self belief, gratitude and self-care. You will rediscover your passion for life and you may even make some big changes, although the little changes can make a profound difference on how you take control of YOUR life and make it a life worth living and remembering.



## Introducing Wellbeing Tools

Firstly, I want to introduce you to some of the tools to help you be a well balanced individual, who is accomplished, fulfilled and truly dances with life.



Lets start off with a positive mental attitude and there are some tools in our arsenal for navigating life's journey that can help with that positive aspect. Like gratitude and journaling.

Both of these tools really can make a difference to how we feel and think about ourselves and our lives. The tool we talk about a lot is self-care, it is not a tool in itself but a tool in its application. In this booklet we treat self-care as a tool, as its one of the most important things we can do to help ourselves. Proper self-care helps to ensure we have the energy and that spark of life that helps us navigate our life pathways with joy.

Read, "The Secret" By Rhonda Byrne or watch the documentary as the chapters of the book come to life, watch those who live by, practice and talk about some of the things discussed in this booklet.



## **Lets talk Gratitude**

Now that we are familiar with some wellbeing tools, lets focus on one of the most powerful practices – gratitude.

Daily gratitude is an amazing daily ritual that with a bit of practice will become a normal part of your daily routine. Gratitude has a strong link with mental wellbeing and science shows that it increases self-esteem, creates more energy, a forgiving attitude, less anxiety, depression and brings more Joy.

Everyday, morning or evening think of at least three things that you are grateful for. It doesn't have to be something big. Maybe someone has given you a compliment or you saw a beautiful bird on your way to or from work.

Daily gratitude in particular really sets you up in a good frame of mind if you do it first thing in the morning or it helps you get a good night's sleep. When you go to bed thinking of the things we are grateful, for will help calm your mind allowing you to sleep well.

Keep a journal and document your gratitudes use coloured pens or snazzy stickers. There is even a free app for your phone you can use to input your gratitude and you can upload pictures along with your text. Play around with it and do it your way.

## **Why is journaling important in your life?**

Journaling is a powerful tool for many reasons and can be especially beneficial in helping to maintain mental health. Expressing your feelings on paper helps you cope with stress or anxiety, leading to improved wellbeing. It also allows you to process what's going on inside without having to explain it all out loud.

If there's something you're struggling with, putting it into words can help make it more manageable. However, Journaling in our coaching advocates doing this slightly differently in that it is only gratitude, happy joyful events thoughts and feeling that we put in our lovely journals. We use note pads for any negative upsetting things that you feel you want to get out. This way when you are ready that book can be closed and set aside.

Journaling helps to build a stronger connection with yourself. When we document our thoughts and feelings regularly, we get to know ourselves better, and that self-awareness can inspire positive change in every area of our life.

Writing in a journal can also help you prioritise what's important to you and

determine your goals for the future. Don't be afraid to write down your heart's desires as you vision your life going forward. Get some happy stickers, photos etc and stick them on the pages with your thoughts and gratitude. I guarantee that every time you open your journal it will put a smile on your face.

Journaling does require some commitment on your part; it takes time and effort to get started. However, the benefits are well worth the effort. Soon, it will just become part of your daily routine.

You can improve your mental health and journaling helps to build a stronger connection with yourself.

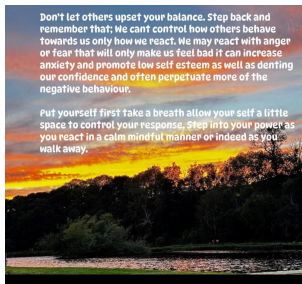
*"Don't worry if you miss a day – it's about creating a habit of noticing the joy in your life, not about being perfect".*

## What Drains You and Setting Boundaries

Ask yourself if you are happy? What Drains your energy ?

Space is provided underneath for you to write your reflections down as writing in this way helps you to clarify and find solutions to those areas that need change.

**People:** As a starter, let's look at the people in your life. Do friends and family come to you with their problems; are you able to go to them to share your problems, is each of your friendships balanced?



What others do or say can cause us some upset. The thing I find most useful to discuss when I am doing 1:1 coaching sessions is understanding that; ***We cannot control how***

***other people behave towards us, we can only control how we react.*** If we engage and get into an argument it only makes us feel worse and often leaves us feeling more upset. Sometimes it's best to walk away and not engage at that time. Once a situation

cools down it can be approached in a very different way. This applies to work colleagues as well as friends and family. However, sometimes these are the people that we wish well on their life journey and we just let them go.

Does your social circle need cultivated? Our strongest friendships are mutual; they lift and support both people. It's not a bad thing to let go of those connections that no longer serve your wellbeing. Let's get started reviewing all the areas of your life

**Home:** What needs repairing in your home, is it cluttered do you need to decorate? *It's only a problem if it is annoying you.*

**Work:** What is bothering you and draining your energy in work?

Is it colleagues, workload does your phone keep ringing?

Do you leave work at the end of the day or do you take it home, taking phone calls, answering emails etc?

**Finances:** Is money a problem, are debts worrying you?

Can you pay the bills on time?

Do you have disposable income when everything is paid at the end of the month?

**Health:** Do you worry about your Health Physically and/or Mental?

Do you worry about the health of others?

**Relationships:** Do you worry if you are in the wrong relationship?

Is your relationship emotionally draining?

Are you stuck thinking of a past relationship?



This exercise is designed to let you see what it is that you need to focus on. For instance; if things around your home are getting you down. Make a plan and tackle each problem one at a time (you could enlist others to help).

If debts are mounting out of control, it will really drain your energy and bring you down. It's imperative that you make a plan to pay regular affordable monthly payments seeking help with this if needed. You'll be surprised how just talking about it will help you cope and work your way through the issues.

When we talk about health remember, that worrying about another person's health (elderly parents or children) is perfectly normal. It is our internal reminder to check in. It is only a problem if you are thinking of this all the time.

Now for work; we spend a lot of time at work. However, at the end of the day we all should be working to live. We shouldn't be living to work. It should not consume our every waking hour, disturb our sleep, nor impact negatively on our lives.

At the end of your working day, turn off the computer and the phone. If you don't have a work phone, make sure your colleagues, staff and managers know that you will not take calls after you are finished for the day.

Thoughtfully consider if you are in the right job and what the barriers are to moving on to something new. Write them down and ask yourself why are you holding on?

What is the worst thing that can happen if you let go or break down those barriers? After all, reviewing aspects of your life is important and the reward is your happiness. Working in a job that values you and gives you job satisfaction becomes part of your enjoyment of life.

Before we look at friendships let's try a little exercise on balanced relationships.

On the next page you will see a set of scales. On the right of the scales, list those who you support in your life, on the left list all those who support you. In the central stabilising post list those who deeply nourish you, your go to people when you need support, when your energy is at its lowest. You may have some of the same people in all of the areas although; there will likely be less in the centre post.



The centre post is steady and Reliable the scales may not be balanced but, that steady force keeps them from falling over

This exercise gives you a visual and allows you to see how easily things can go out of balance. You will be able to see that the scales will shift, if those you support outweigh what you receive.

Setting boundaries is not always about saying goodbye or always saying no. It's a contingency to ensure you have the energy to help you give to others and share your spirit with others knowing that they can also restore your light and energy.

Friendships are one of the things that I value most in my life. Friends can really top up your energy when you are feeling a bit off. Friendships and in particular that best friend who you share everything with, who often knows you better than you do and will always have your back.

Friendships that are balanced are to be cherished and nurtured. However many of us have or have had "friends" who are constantly seeking support. You know the one, the one that you don't hear from unless they want something, the ones who are always happy to gossip but not listen. These are the friends that are never there when you need some help, a shoulder to cry on, someone to talk to or even share in your good news.

To create that harmony and balance in your life it's good to let those relationships that don't work for you go. Wish them well and set yourself free to nurture your true friendships.

*"I believe in you; this is your time, and it's time to build your confidence and self esteem. It's time for you to really believe and trust in yourself"*

## **Reviewing your life**

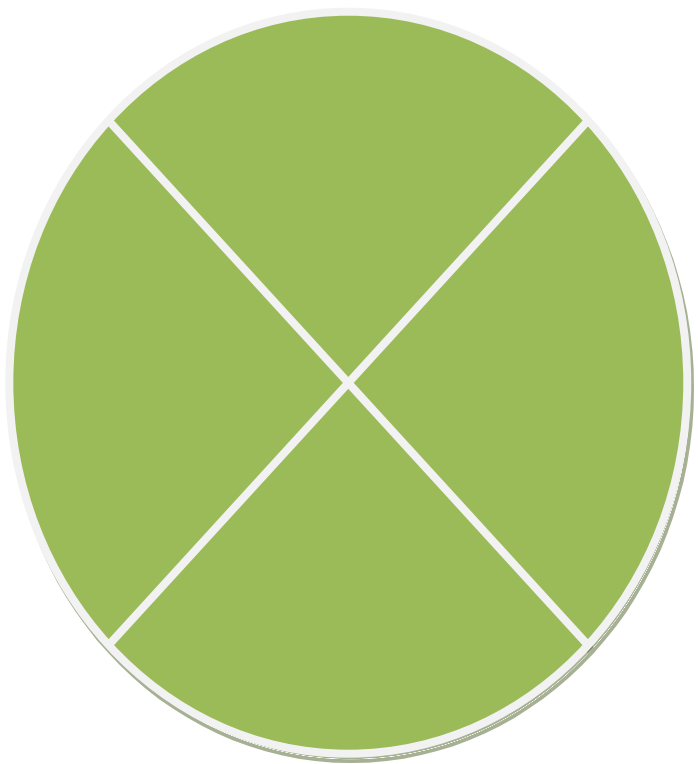
The follow pages are about looking at your life now and asking yourself if there is anything you need/want to change. It is important that your life plan looks at self-care and as previously said, sometimes saying no and taking time for you is not about being selfish, it is a necessity to ensure you are living a healthy balanced life

### **Now the important part:**

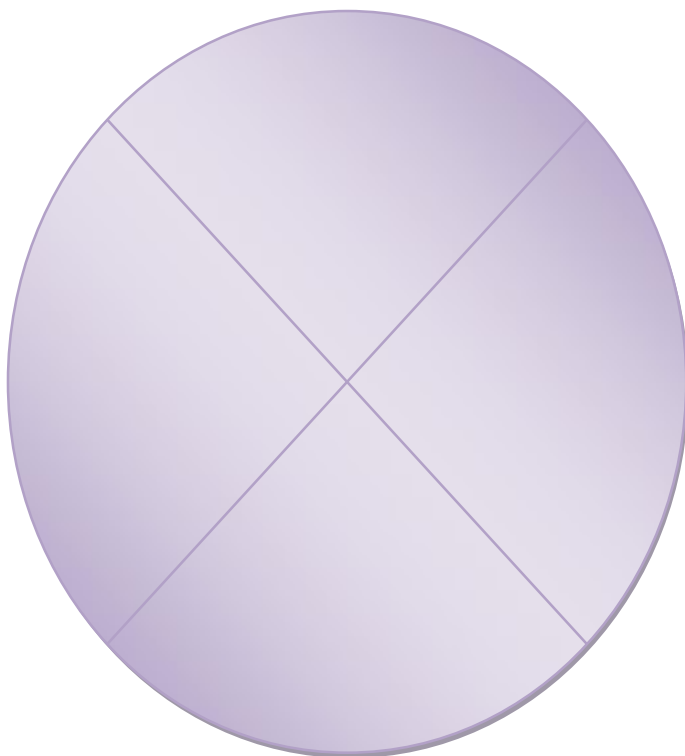
In the first circle on the next page take some time and divide the segments around how you spend your time right now. Include restorative sleep/restless Sleep, family time, work and housework etc.

Make sure to section out your time if you have any, for your self-care and can include hobbies or any activity that lifts you up and restores your energy.

**How I Spend My Time Now**



**How do I want to spend My Time Going Forward.**

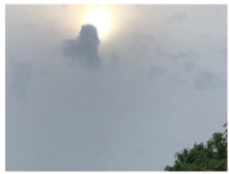


Redo the previous part of this exercise and redesign how you would like your life to look. Remember, the importance of self care/time for you as you do this.



## Carving out some time for you

The universe is a great provider. There will be a number of places not far from where



you live that can give you that precious time. This great healer is not too far from our doorsteps. You can sit quietly in the

garden; have a gentle stroll to the park, woods or the seaside. Mindfully enjoy the walks listening to all the sounds, feel the warm air gently blowing in the summer. Take in the scents and sounds all around you and/or take a dip in the water at the beach. Sit against a large tree taking in its strength and shelter. If nature, is not your thing do what makes you feel good, cooking, running etc.

What is your favourite thing to do? The one thing that tops your energy and you are immersed in the process mindfully? Now think back, and answer the question. **When was the last time you gave yourself the time to do exactly that?** If it's a while you know what to do....

If you have a busy household try getting up 15 minutes early before the house stirs. Just sit in the quiet, meditate to soothing music. Take a luxurious bath in the evening; just take some time for you.

These next few pages are filled with ideas and activities that you can use if you wish before completing your personal care planner.

### Nourish

Breathe and slow down as you enjoy herbal tea/coffee/hot chocolate

Cherish yourself in comfortable, soft clothes. Snuggle and rest in soft beautiful blankets.

Relax and clear your mind with scented candles or essential oils, take a long hot bath, have a pedicure. Listen to soothing music.

### Restorative

Ground yourself by placing your feet or laying your body on the grass. Mindfully carry out activities, (painting, crafts, colouring in, any activity that you can do that find you in the moment) Rest when you need it by taking short naps or longer when you can.

My favourite thing to do when I need to restore my energy is Nature bathing. Spending time outdoors is one of the simplest, most powerful ways to restore your energy. Take in the sunshine all year round

as, you listen to the sounds of nature. Enjoy the soothing rhythms of the sea (day or night)

### Energise

Take a run, go to the gym, have a cycle or dance around your home to your favourite tunes.

### Contemplate

Meditate or sit in quiet reflection. Journal your feelings so you can gain perspective. Leave a thoughtful note to a friend or loved one.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. I am sure there are lots of things that you truly enjoy. You just need to give yourself permission to take the time for you.

## Self-Care Planner

Let's look at your self-care planner; completing this is making a contract with yourself, a commitment if you will, to take care of your needs: please complete the following Table. (Gratitude and Journaling are a given for a daily activity)

The last column is very important. Sometimes life throws us a curveball and brings us to our knees. Sometimes we just need to cocoon curl up under the duvet. This is ok; as long as we don't stay there so; give some thought to this last section. This will help you cope with the difficult things and have the ability to get back up off your knees.

| Why is self Care important? | My daily 15-30min energy top up | My weekly 1-5hrs self- care (can be spread over the week) | My Energy rebalance when I am totally wiped out |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|
|                             |                                 |   |   |

## Visioning your future

If there are no barriers, money or responsibility standing in your way. What would you like your future life journey to look like from today?

Make a vision board and fill it with your heart's desire. Believe that it is yours from today and make it happen.

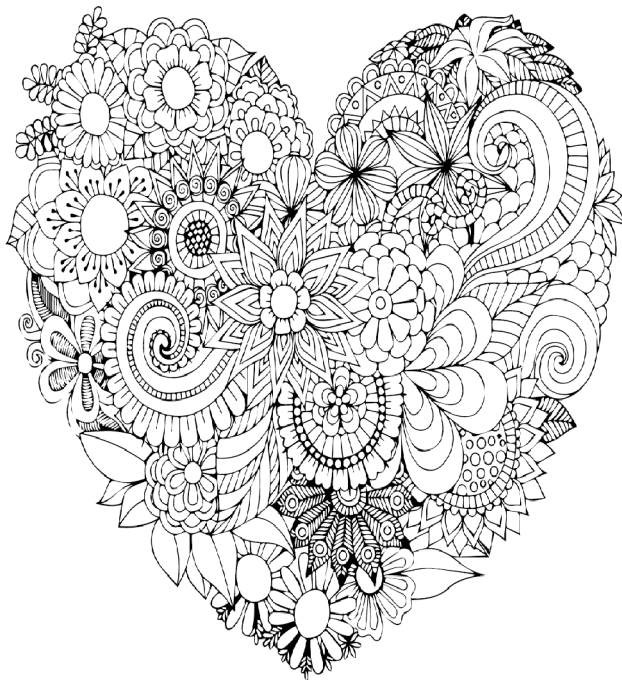


I hope you have found this little booklet helpful.

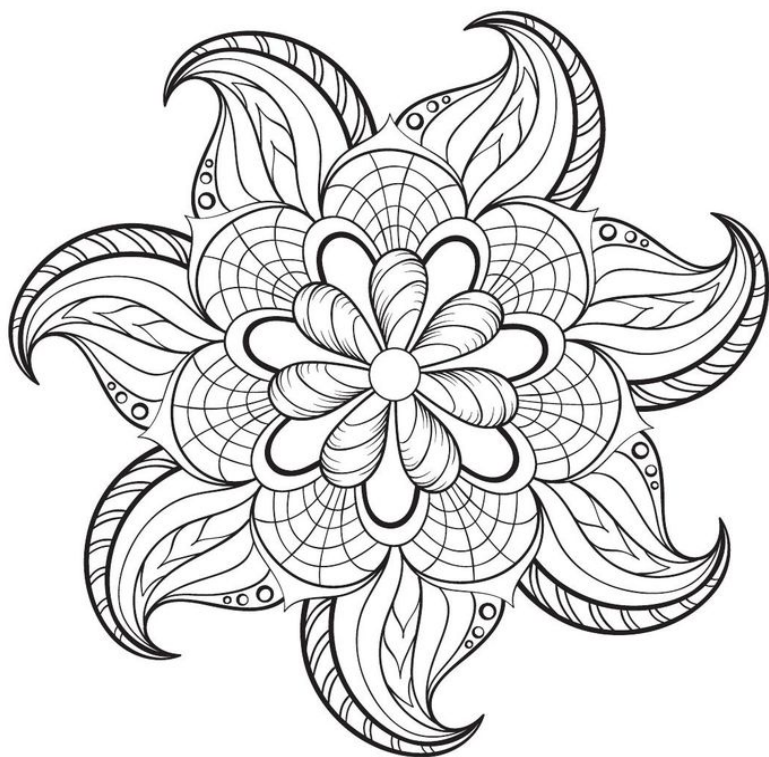
*“you deserve to live your best life, filled with balance. peace and joy”.*

*Debbie*

Some Mindful Activity Sheets



Coloringpagesonly.com











**Do you feel stressed, anxious, burnt out, or depressed; UNISON LHB Health and wellbeing Coaching may be something that you would benefit from.**

**The Health and Wellbeing coaching service we offer sits between life coaching and counselling focusing on the importance of self-awareness confidence and resilience through assisting people to adopt a balanced life with health and wellbeing front and centre.**

**Those who attend for Coaching (10 sessions) will review all aspects of their lives and look at how they can support and look after themselves. This process leads to increased self awareness, self esteem, confidence and resilience as well as being more productive in and out of the workplace.**

**The coaching is another resource for those requiring support and is very much aimed at those who are suffering from burnout, stress, anxiety and depression. It is not an alternative for severe mental health issues but another tool and the coach will review through the application suitability of the person to access the service.**

**UNISON members can contact [loth.unisonhealthandwellbeing@nhs.scot](mailto:loth.unisonhealthandwellbeing@nhs.scot) (please add a contact phone number and place of work in the email) if they think they may benefit from Health and wellbeing coaching. This service is strictly confidential.**

