

# 21 DAYS TO A MORE IMPACTFUL YOU MOVEMENT

# SELF-CARE CHALLENGE

<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>Ditch Habits, Create Practices</b></p> <p><b>HABITS</b> Unconscious repetitive acts that are done without intention or mindfulness.</p> <p><b>PRACTICES</b> Repetitive acts that are consciously done for an explicit benefit and can be improved upon time.</p> 	<p><b>2</b></p>  <p><b>Stay Hydrated Regularly... With H2O!</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p>  <p><b>Practice 20-20-20 Vision</b></p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>Breathe Low and Slooow</b></p> 	<p><b>5</b></p> <p><b>Spaciousness is Essential for Self-Care</b></p> 
<p><b>6</b></p> <p><b>Go Screen-Free</b></p> 	<p><b>7</b></p>  <p><b>Connecting to Your Whole Self</b></p>	<p><b>8</b></p>  <p><b>Go Pee – Join the Self-Care Revolution</b></p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>Give Yourself 10-15 Minutes of Spaciousness</b></p> 	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>Building Resilience</b></p> 
<p><b>11</b></p>  <p><b>Connecting to Others</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p><b>Get Outside and Take a Fresh Air Break</b></p> 	<p><b>13</b></p>  <p><b>Invite Poetry into Your Life</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p><b>Connection between Mind, Body, and Spirit</b></p> 	<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>1 Minute of Breathing... With Your Hands!</b></p> 
<p><b>16</b></p>  <p><b>Don't Eat Lunch at Your Desk</b></p>	<p><b>17</b></p>  <p><b>You are Not Your Performance</b></p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p><b>Make the Time and Space to THINK BIG</b></p> 	<p><b>19</b></p> <p><b>RULE OF 5</b></p>  <p><b>The Rule of Five</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>  <p><b>Put Your Oxygen Mask On First!</b></p>
<p><b>21 You Did It!</b></p> 				

# WELCOME TO THE 21-DAY CHALLENGE!

Congratulations on taking this step to deepen your practice of ***self-care for greater impact and sustainability!***

To achieve lasting social change, we need a movement that is driven by powerful, resilient, creative, and impactful individuals *who stay in this work for the long-haul*. At Move to End Violence, we believe that to show up this way -- as our most impactful and innovative selves -- we need to intentionally practice self-care. We created the 21-Day Challenge to help build a powerful community of movement activists engaged in this practice together.

This first 21-Day Challenge drew more than 2,000 activists hungry for this practice--including you. Together, we examined our habits and took steps towards embracing more mindful practices. From drinking more water and focusing on more intentional breathing to pushing ourselves to incorporate spaciousness, creativity, and risk-taking into our days. Congratulations.

And, as we all know, this is a practice. We've compiled this packet that puts the entire challenge at your fingertips in hopes that it will be useful as you continue your practice of a more sustainable and impactful you! Consider posting the practice you are intentionally cultivating on your wall as a reminder and source of ongoing inspiration.

We will run this challenge again. If you know someone who missed out this cycle, be sure to tell them to sign-up on [www.movetoendviolence.org](http://www.movetoendviolence.org) to be notified when we initiate another 21-Day Challenge. Not to worry, we'll let you know too.

Thank you for joining our community of practice!

# Day 1: Ditch Habits & Create Practices

---

**Habits** are *unconscious* repetitive acts that are done without intention or mindfulness. Our habits often conspire to eliminate spaciousness in our daily lives. Creating “spaciousness”—a breath, an interval, or a moment to consider or to reconsider—is one of the most critical aspects of self-care. It’s key to unlocking our creativity, gaining a wide perspective, cultivating resilience, thinking strategically, and making a greater impact as a movement!

When we become aware of our habits, we can choose to replace them with intentional **practices**, which are repetitive acts that are consciously done for an explicit benefit (like creating spaciousness) and which can be improved over time.



## Today's Challenge

Self-care confessions: When we stop to think about it, we probably all have some pretty hilarious stories about the habits we hold which sabotage our self-care. For instance, an advocate we love gave us permission to share her recent confession:

*“I used to hold my pee for hours at a time to work longer without taking a break. When I finally did hurry down the hall to the bathroom, I would unbuckle and unzip my pants along the way to “save time.” Even after several embarrassing encounters with unsuspecting passersby, I kept it up in service of getting more done.”*

We’re happy to report that she has recently replaced that habit with the revolutionary practice of making time to pee (and is now keeping it zipped). But the first step was to name the habit and to hold it lightly enough to laugh about it.

Today, confess (if only to yourself) one specific habit that is undermining your self-care -- the more embarrassing the better. Then name an intentional practice that you want to shift toward instead.

## Deepen Your Practice

Practicing with a friend? Share your new practice with them and check-in to hold each other accountable.

## Day 2: Stay Hydrated Regularly... With H2O!

---

Hydration is one of the simplest, yet most essential things you can do for your self-care. We're sure you already know how good water is for you, that it boosts your energy, and helps with digestion. But did you know that:

**85% of your brain tissue is water!**

If you're dehydrated, your mind and body are like a car running on empty.



Bottom line: If you're like some people around here not drinking enough water, you are not giving your mind and body what they need to be their most impactful.

*Psst.* Coffee drinkers. If you've been drinking that cup of coffee and feeling pretty good about yourself, thinking "It's not like I'm drinking *Diet Coke* for breakfast. It's mostly water, right?" We've got some bad news for you. That ain't gonna cut it. You need the good stuff: the pure H<sub>2</sub>O. At a bare minimum, drink 1 cup of water for every 1 cup of coffee.

### Today's Challenge

Place a big bottle of water by your desk and **drink from it** regularly. Was it empty by the end of the day? Did you do multiple refills? Note how much you drank by the end of the day.

### Deepen Your Practice

Increase that amount a little bit each day. Try to add a cup a day this week.

## Day 3: Practice 20-20-20 Vision

---

How long have you been sitting there staring at your screen? How are your eyes doing right now? Many of our jobs require us to stare at a computer for a good chunk of the day. When we get into this zone, we begin to over-tax our mind and body **which leads to a diminishing return on our productivity.**

### Today's Challenge

Set a calendar reminder or alarm on your phone to look away from the computer screen for 20 seconds every 20 minutes. You should try to focus on something at least 20 feet away. This will give your eyes a chance to re-lubricate, your mind to rest, and your body to notice any physical needs you might be ignoring (gotta pee?). Does the idea of looking up from your computer every 20 minutes sound disruptive to you? Here's the thing: we *need* to disrupt this habit which is causing us to work in a less-than productive way. **Work smarter. Not harder.**



### Deepen Your Practice

When you look up and out, notice one thing that you never noticed before. *How long has that building been there?*

## Day 4: Breathe Low and Slooow

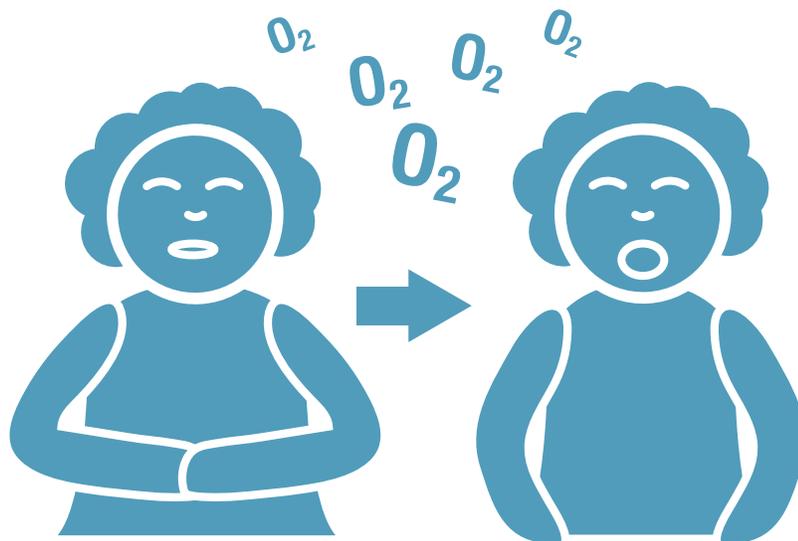
---

Are you aware of your breath right now?

How about now?

Did you know that over 90% of us are using less than 50% of our breathing capacity? Think about the last time you were anxious or stressed. Was your breath fast and shallow? High up in your chest? Could you not think properly or strategically? Our body will often exhibit signs of anxiety and stress before our mind even registers it!

By intentionally breathing slowly from low in our core and cultivating this practice on a regular basis, we become our most powerful selves: physically AND mentally.



### Today's Challenge

Intentionally set yourself up to be your most grounded, present, powerful self. Before each call, meeting, or appointment you go into, take three slow and deep breaths. Make sure you can feel the balls of your feet on the ground. Focus on your breathing to let your mind clear – experiment by filling your mind with a single exhale. You will literally feel more grounded and better able to engage in the meeting you are going into! Over time, this practice can help create the spaciousness that is required for strategic thinking.

### Deepen Your Practice

The next time you find yourself breathing fast and high in your chest, take a moment to slow your breathing down. Breathe deeply from just below your belly button. You want your exhales to be longer than your inhales. You may find that relaxing your body out of the state of anxiety may also affect the anxiety in your mind. This will allow you to respond (or not) rather than just react.

## Day 5: Spaciousness is Essential for Self-Care

---

On our first day, we introduced spaciousness as a breath, an interval, or a brief pause from our daily work. Can you remember why spaciousness is essential for self-care?

If you answered something like: “because it allows you to think creatively to imagine new possibilities for greater impact and to be sustainable in the long haul?” You got that right!

Poetry is an amazing tool for helping to cultivate spaciousness and unlock our creative side. And the poem “Fire” reminds us of how important spaciousness is.

### Today’s Challenge

Read “Fire” out loud to yourself (or with others who might be taking this challenge with you!).

#### FIRE

What makes a fire burn is space between the logs,  
a breathing space. Too much of a good thing,  
too many logs packed in too tight  
can douse the flames almost as surely  
as a pail of water would.

So building fires requires attention  
to the spaces in between, as much as to the wood.

When we are able to build open spaces  
in the same way we have learned to pile on the logs,  
then we can come to see how it is fuel,  
and absence of the fuel together, that make fire possible.

We only need to lay a log lightly from time to time.

A fire grows simply because the space is there,  
with openings in which the flame that knows  
just how it wants to burn can find its way.

- Judy Brown

### Deepen Your Practice

Let’s get creative. Pick one line from the poem and -- using your selection as the first line -- write your own 5-line poem. Give yourself only 5 minutes to do this and write whatever comes to mind. Don’t overthink it! Set the timer, let it flow and see what’s in there, waiting to come out.

## Day 6: Go Screen-Free - Be Impactful

---

Do you ever notice people walking down the street without looking up and where they're going? Staring at the various sized screens (phone, iPad, computer, TV) can literally shrink our perspective of the world to that sized screen (this is one reason texting while driving is such a bad idea).

To be most impactful, we want to practice being present in the moment and widening our perspective so we can see all the strategic possibilities available to us.

### Today's Challenge

Practice the physical experience of **b r o a d e n i n g** your perspective and being present by not looking at a screen (when possible). How long can you go? If it is the weekend could you go a whole evening? A whole day? How did this practice change how you experienced today?



## Day 7: Connecting to Your Whole Self

---

When was the last time you drew, sang out loud or did anything that involved art? Children are encouraged to color, explore, and create. These activities foster imagination, innovation, and risk-taking. Unfortunately, this important way of being can get lost along the way to adulthood. A part of self-care is reconnecting to your whole self to unleash your full potential.

However untapped it may be, each of us has an artistic/right-brain side. (Yes, even you.) By tapping into that side of you, you can unleash the creativity and innovation our movement needs to create bold social change.



### Today's Challenge

Do one thing that taps into your creative self. Try drawing a picture, singing or dancing to your favorite song, playing an instrument or writing a poem!

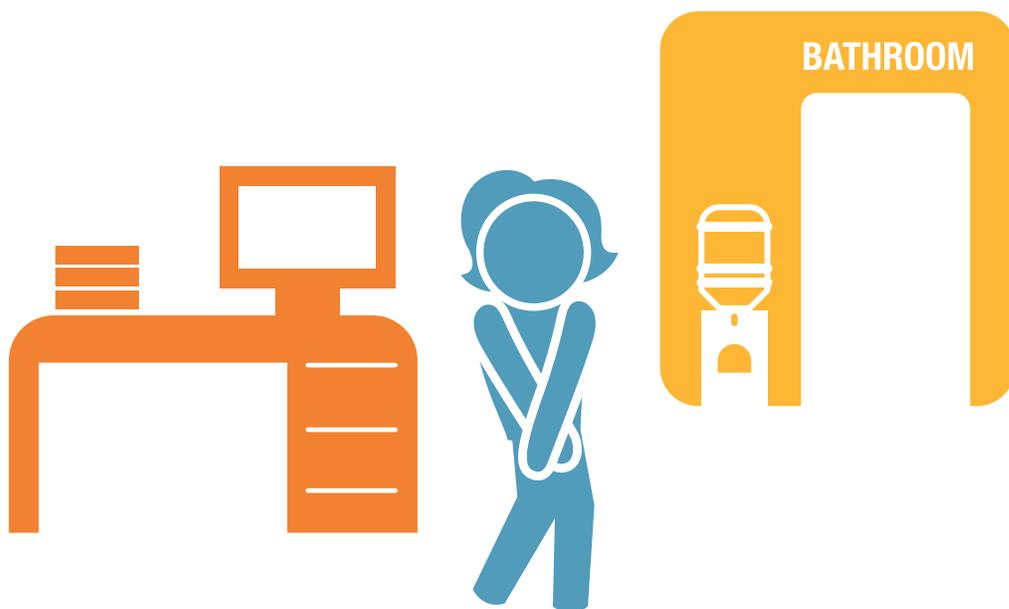
## Day 8: Go Pee -- Join the Self-Care Revolution!

---

Ever heard yourself or someone else say: "I haven't had a chance to pee all day!"? Are YOU holding it in *right now*?

For those of us scheduling back to back meetings or appointments with no spaciousness for thinking, much less other critical bodily functions, not having to pee can seem like a great convenience. Of course, what it tells us is that you are not hydrating sufficiently and your body is not getting what it needs to function at its peak performance.

Your mind and body are intimately connected. Think of it this way: If your bladder isn't charging on all cylinders, neither is your mind.



### Today's Challenge

Note how many times you go to the bathroom. If you're not going at least once in a 3-4 hour block, drink more water! Psst. If you are proudly peeing due to the amount of caffeine you are drinking, this is your friendly reminder that coffee, doesn't count as water. Try to replace at least one of those split-shot americanos or double soy lattes with a nice, refreshing cup of H<sub>2</sub>O.

### Deepen Your Practice

Check out the color of your pee before you flush: the lighter, the better! Yeah. We went there.

## Day 9: Give Yourself 10-15 Minutes of Spaciousness

---

One common habit of office work is to crowd our days with back-to-back meetings or appointments, without breathing space (aka spaciousness!). When we do this, we are not creating the time to refill our water glass or go to the bathroom, much less to **properly reset our mind for the next endeavor to show up as our most strategic selves**. (And there is a decent chance we are showing up to that next meeting late and stressed).

The paradox is that the meetings feel so important that they must be squeezed in, and yet, by packing our days so tightly we are absolutely ensuring that the quality of our work will be reduced.



### Today's Challenge

Look at your schedule to see if there is evidence of this lack of spaciousness. **Where possible, make adjustments to your schedule so that there is at least 10-15 minutes between each appointment.** If this feels impossible today, start with 5 minutes and look for other creative strategies to create space for yourself. Stand up, take bathroom breaks when needed, sit across from a window and allow yourself to look out at the horizon.

### Deepen Your Practice

Make it a personal practice to block out 10-15 minutes on your calendar between any appointments you set up.

# Day 10: Building Resilience

---

We practice self-care to have the most powerful impact possible for the long haul. An essential element of this is building up your resilience so that you're able to deal with the unexpected. Resilience can only be built up over time, with practice. It requires many of the tips that we've given you around cultivating spaciousness, breathing deeply, and having a wide view.



## Today's Challenge

Think about a challenge you are facing, what self-care practices from the last nine days could you employ to ground yourself in the face of this difficult situation?

## Deepen Your Practice

In any type of reflection of your choosing (art, writing, poetry etc.), describe how the movement might look if we were all resilient. What might be possible?

# Day 11: Connecting to Others

---

Have you done a quick check-in with your people today? Creating space to connect with others is another form of self-care! By investing the time in seeing each other's humanity (*and in being seen*), we build relationship and trust. And that is the foundation for a powerful movement for social change.



## Today's Challenge

At one of your meetings, instead of going straight into the agenda, do a short check-in with folks first. Try these prompts or create one of your own:

- One thing I do to take care of myself is...
- Tell a story about a recent time you felt powerful. How did it feel in your body?
- What are you going to do after we end violence against girls and women?

How did starting by connecting as human beings affect your experience? Did you learn anything new about your colleagues? Appreciate them differently? Did the tone of the meeting shift?

## Deepen Your Practice

Want to connect more deeply with your colleagues? Try out our love notes toolkit by checking out [movetoendviolence.org/resources](http://movetoendviolence.org/resources).

# Day 12: Get Outside and Take a Fresh Air Break

---

When was the last time you were outside?

Just like taking a deep breath, taking a fresh air break creates spaciousness and allows you to think more strategically and innovatively. And it helps recharge your mind, body, and spirit!



## Today's Challenge

**Take at least one short break outside.** Allow yourself to just be still for a moment and take an expansive view of the landscape. Find the horizon. Notice what you can see in your peripheral vision. Find one thing that you haven't noticed before. Take several slow and low breaths. Soak it in. Practice this big awareness here so you can intentionally bring this same practice back into your strategic thinking at work. Doing so will help you begin to see new possibilities

*Psst. DO NOT check your smart phone during this short break!*

## Deepen Your Practice

Create a longer opportunity to enjoy the fresh air today. Can you catch up with a co-worker or friend over lunch outside? How about having that meeting while walking?

## Day 13: Invite Poetry into Your Life

---

On Days 5 and 7, we tapped into your creative side. You might still be wondering, how is art so essential to creating self-care for impact and sustainability? Art allows us to tap into our creative and FULL potential. It creates spaciousness from our daily habits and provides the opportunity to think differently and to discover new possibilities.



### Today's Challenge

Even if you are not much of a poetry person, we bet there is one poem that spoke to you at some point! Rediscover that poem and read it out loud to yourself, your loved ones, and family. Got kids? Invite them to read it aloud with you. Can't think of a poem? Share some inspirational quotes!

# Day 14: Connection between Mind, Body, and Spirit

---

Science tells us that it takes 21 days to break a habit and we are well on our way! By now, we hope you've learned that your mind, body, and spirit are beautifully interconnected. This poem introduced by our faculty member, [Norma Wong](#), demonstrates what it means for YOU to be connected to your mind, body, and spirit.

Our mind, body, and spirit are “hard-wired”  
together; each impacts the other

When one part is tired or depleted,  
all parts are tired and depleted

By working on and restoring one part,  
all parts benefit



## Today's Challenge

Remember that old adage that smiling and laughing can instantly make you feel better and happier? Find a video clip, gif/meme, or photo that has never fails to make you smile.

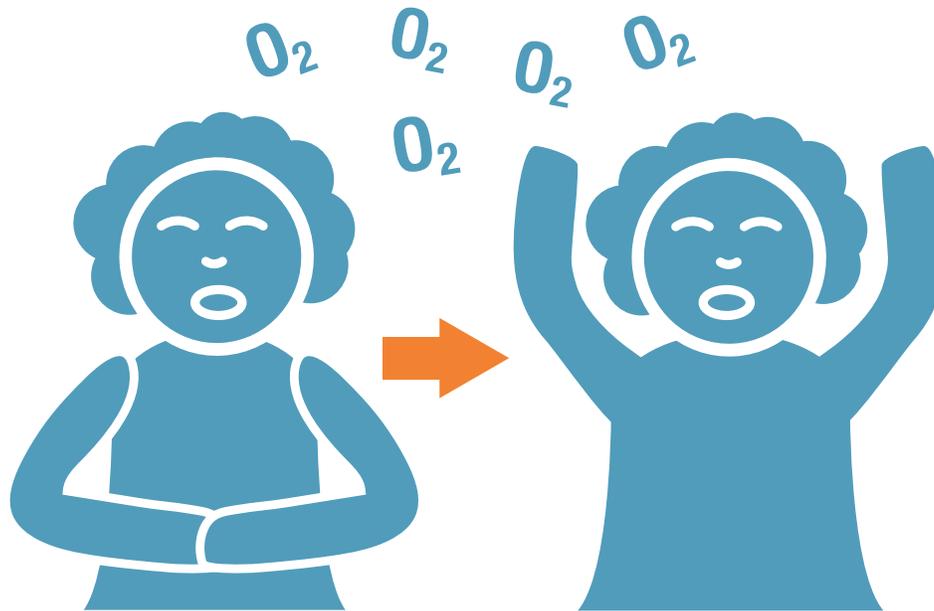
## Deepen Your Practice

Notice whether caring for your physical self has benefited or improved your mental and spiritual self and share with us.

## Day 15: 1 Minute of Breathing... With Your Hands!

---

Hopefully in these past 15 days, you've become more conscious of your breathing! The breath is one of the best diagnostics we have of how we are doing. It acts like an alarm system for the body - we tend not to notice it when all is well, but when we feel anxious, scared or angry, the breath - or lack thereof - is a great indicator. Once we get into the practice of noticing our breath, we can use it to our strategic advantage. One way to observe your breathing is to visualize it with your hands.



### Today's Challenge

Spend 1 minute focused on your breathing. Clasp your fingers together in front of your belly, palms facing up. On the inhale, lift your clasped hands up – when you can no longer inhale, rotate your palms face down, begin to exhale slowly and bring your clasped hands down for the duration of your exhale. Repeat 10 times.

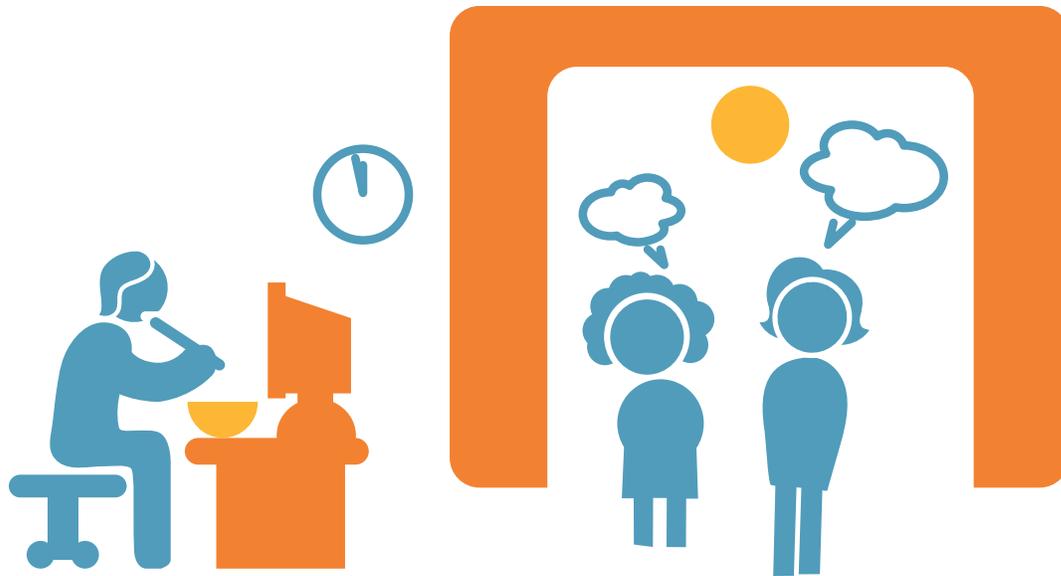
### Deepen Your Practice

Do this at least 2 more times with a partner and see if you can lengthen the exhale each time.

## Day 16: Don't Eat Lunch at Your Desk

---

Fun (and gross) fact: Did you know that the average desk and keyboard have more germs and bacteria than a toilet seat? And yet, so many of us consume our lunch hovered over our desks. Many of us have fallen into this (literally) nasty habit because we have limited time during the day and we're trying to maximize every minute we're at work. But, the reality is, by failing to take a lunch *break* we eliminate the opportunity for spaciousness and for our minds to reset and recharge.



### Today's Challenge

Eat your lunch somewhere besides your desk! This gives you a chance to practice spaciousness, get-up, stretch and change your surroundings for a short while.

### Deepen Your Practice

Sharing a meal with other people is a time-honored way of connecting to our own and each other's humanity. And, even if you must talk about work instead of the last great book you read, the unstructured nature of lunch can open up space for creativity. Notice what becomes possible when you eat lunch with someone else today.

# Day 17: You are Not Your Performance

---

In our hectic world, there is often an unyielding pressure to perform in a certain way, rather than to just be who you are. Know that ***your performance is not who you are***. Your worth is inherent, it's not transactional, to be won or lost in an instant. External performance is not about who you are.



This element of self-care is critical to the success of our movement because when our self-worth is tied to our performance, we tend to shy away from risk-taking and experimentation - two qualities that are essential for creating bold social change. To be our most impactful, we need to be able to fail spectacularly - time and again - without feeling like a failure.

## Today's Challenge

**Step outside of your comfort zone. Identify something that you've been wanting to do but feels risky.** Don't be afraid of failing. Success for today is in committing to the trying, not the outcome. Write down your commitment and have a conversation with a colleague or friend about it.

# Day 18: Make the Time and Space to Think Big

---

Sometimes in our daily work routine, we get so caught up in the never-ending tasks at hand that we don't have the spaciousness to step back and think big; to reflect on the world we are trying to create. To be a powerful movement for social change, **we need to have a clear vision of where we are trying to get TO in order to develop strategies for how to get there.**



## Today's Challenge

**Actively schedule a big chunk of time to get your best big picture thinking.** Start with 30-60 minutes to think about the world you are trying to create and how your current work drives toward that purpose --and note where it doesn't! You might find opportunities to be your most impactful by eliminating projects that don't serve your purpose!

## Deepen Your Practice

Do this activity with your colleagues and share what your powerful visions entail!

## Day 19: The Rule of Five

---

Multi-tasking is a myth! When we think we're multi-tasking, we're simply doing one thing at a time sequentially, switching our focus from one to another rapidly. This is a recipe for doing many things poorly rather than a few well. We can really only excel at a "handful" of things at any given time. As such, we should only have five priorities at most. Beyond that, we will lack spaciousness and impact.



### Today's Challenge

Hold up your hand and identify your five priorities for the week. Knowing what your priorities are increases the energy, creativity, and focus on what you're doing as whole. Try to focus with intention on only these priorities rather than letting your day turn into a bunch of to-dos that don't add up to you being your most impactful self! To do that, cut out the activity that makes you busy but doesn't advance your priorities. What can you say no to that will allow you to concentrate your efforts on your most important work? Feel free to print and use this tool we developed at [movetoendviolence.org/resources](http://movetoendviolence.org/resources).

## Day 20: Put Your Oxygen Mask On First!

---

Every time we board a plane, flight attendants tell us we must put on our own oxygen mask before attending to anyone around us who might require assistance. We know that we can't reliably show up for others if we haven't taken care of ourselves first. The same applies in this work. While we may be able to keep driving forward by sheer force of will without practicing self-care, we are simply not bringing our most powerful selves to the effort. To stay in this for the long haul, stay open to possibilities, cultivate our creativity **and have the greatest impact possible**, we need to take care of our most essential resource: ourselves.



### Today's Challenge

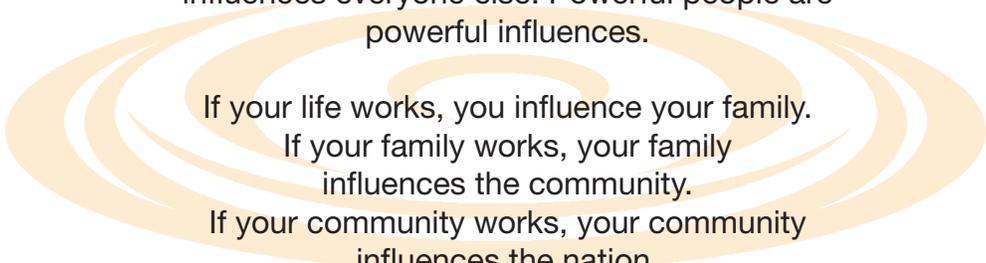
Read this piece about the ripple effect out loud. Think about the people in your family, community, and beyond that you could affect by being a more impactful you through self-care. Reflect on what this looks and feels like to you.

## **The Ripple Effect**

Do you want to be a positive influence in the world? First, get your own life in order. Ground yourself in the single principle so that your behavior is wholesome and effective.

If you do that, you will earn respect and be a powerful influence.

Your behavior influences others through a ripple effect. A ripple effect works because everyone influences everyone else. Powerful people are powerful influences.



If your life works, you influence your family.

If your family works, your family influences the community.

If your community works, your community influences the nation.

If your nation works, your nation influences the world.

If your world works, the ripple effect spreads throughout the cosmos.

Remember that your influence begins with you and ripples outward. So be sure that your influence is both potent and wholesome.

How do I know that this works?

All growth spreads outward from a fertile and potent nucleus. You are a nucleus.

—Dr. Elaine Millam

# Day 21: You Did It!

---

Congratulations! You practiced self-care! Our movement is a little bit more badass today because you practiced showing up as your most powerful self.

Over the past 21 days, we hope you became aware of the habits that sabotage your self-care and intentionally created new practices that allow you to be your most strategic, creative, and impactful self. We hope you recognized that the choice we have to make is not WHETHER to take care of ourselves or change the world. The choice we have to make is to take care of ourselves SO THAT WE ARE POWERFUL enough to create the world we want to see.

Self-care is not something we do when we are beyond depleted (that's recovery). Self-Care for impact needs to be in every moment. In the breathing, hydration, spaciousness, and more that we have been and must continue to cultivate every. single. day.

We thank you for joining us in this challenge and hope you discovered one new practice that you will carry on tomorrow. We wish to express our deepest appreciation to our amazing faculty member, [Norma Wong](#), who has been such an important source for our learning and inspiration on self-care for sustainability and impact.



## Today's Challenge

Take time to celebrate how far you've come by reflecting on how participating in this challenge impacted your work, your relationships, and **you**. Commit to one practice that you will continue to cultivate tomorrow. Write a note and send us a selfie of you after 21 days of self-care!

## Deepen Your Practice

Write a letter to yourself about what hopes you have for yourself in the wake of this challenge. Put it in a self-addressed stamped envelope and ask a trusted friend to drop it in the mail in about a month.