

REPLENISH: A BLUEPRINT FOR THRIVING BEYOND SELF-CARE

REPLENISH is a 28-day program to support anyone who is tired of the self-care diatribe and still wants to prioritise themselves and their needs.

Especially woman who want to find the center of their lives and stand unapologetically, and gloriously, in it. Women who are done letting everyone (but themselves) be whole and fully invested in.

The **REPLENISH** is a blueprint that turns the table on the flawed premise of self-care offering a simple and practical reframe to make self-tending possible (even for the most jaded, burned out and overwhelmed).

THE BACK STORY TO THE REPLENISHMENT PHILOSOPHY

The Shit Bits

I have lived through chronic depression, anxiety, pain, insomnia and a fried nervous system. I was a burn-out junkie for almost a decade, using the mania of sleep

deprivation to fuel years of creativity. Then I turned 40 and how I abused my body caught up with me, compounded by the stress of involuntary home schooling (years before lockdown brought this experience to every home).

I lost my ability to read, write and think. Had a creeping paranoia that suburbia was devouring and would one day I'd disappear altogether. For two years I felt not existing would be an easier option. Exhausted and pain kept me in bed. And for many years my world shrunk to the size of my house; friendless and lost.

The first year of pandemic stress combined with perimenopause left me in the emergency department on the December solstice 2020, unable to walk or talk. I'd finally hit the bottom.

Learning to Refill

I dedicated 2021 to prioritising the tending my nervous system (using every single tool my training offered to support “uncoachable” clients).

By mid-2022 I knew self-care needed a rebrand.

I had used self-care tools to heal myself ... but had refused to call any of it self-care. Then in my exit interview for my coaching accreditation an entirely new self-tending structure came to me.

Since adopting self-replenishment in late 2022 I've been able invest in the slow, long-term repair of my nervous system and my overall physical, mental and emotional health. Even though I'm a work in progress, my general wellness is the best it has been in decades.

I am dialled in, resilient and proactive in ways I never thought I could be. I have an incredible pit crew of health care providers. I've created adaptable routines and rituals of refill which support my healing and growth.

In the last two and a half years I've written six drafts of a novel, completed my coaching accreditation, done solo international travel, consistently built a business, supported dozens of clients out of dark places, collated and released legacy work as an author, co-run a 12-week group coaching program for more than 30 people and across a year of grieving, never for a moment doubted I was living a bigger life each day.

Most days I'm up before dawn, alive with ideas and enthusiasm for what lies ahead. And on the days I don't ... I have a structure to support me in deciding what I need and how to best to deliver it. I also have people close to me to help remind me when I fall out of that structure that supports me.

WHAT REPLENISHMENT OFFERS YOU

The first mention of replenishment often floods the body with relief. To finally be freed of self-care's bondage. The dynamic of fill, empty, refill ignites possibility. The spark and excitement of self-replenishment replaces the former drudgery and grind. The heaviness lifts.

You move out of emergency/drowning mode, to become forward facing, self-directed and invested in exploring and experimenting with the best ways to fill yourself.

Because there's multiple entry points, it meets you exactly where you are.

It situates existing practices along a continuum, so your beloved tools and practices become more useful and

powerful. They have scope to do what they are intended to do: heal, expand and enliven you.

Replenishment is not haunted by old stories of why you can't, don't and won't make time and space for yourself.

It's not punitive and doesn't run on shame or guilt.

And as you slowly refill, there is more of you to go around. More ease. More vibrancy. There is joy and awe and delight again. You increasingly have more energy and bandwidth for your family and friends, your job or business. You reclaim old passions, hobbies and experiences. You love life, and life can't help but love you back.

THE GENESIS OF REPLENISH

Replenish was born in January, in a marketing container I'd signed up for. I'd done it to help overcome the considerable fears I had around getting myself and my work out there.

It was fucking overwhelming though.

28 days of content-heavy emails. Live calls (that happened before any sane person should be awake in the morning).

As *Replenish* grew from the fertile grounds of the original live call I did in December 2022, in the pressure cooker of Anna Bellissima's group -- I knew I didn't want to bombard anyone with my philosophy of replenishment.

ALL THE SPACE

Replenish is a blueprint. The sketching of ideas that hang together in a (mostly) coherent fashion.

There is intentionally a lot of space.

I don't want to tell you what to do -- that's really not my gig. I'll offer you a lot of things to consider though.

Additionally, I also don't want to put you under the hammer.

This is designed for people who are probably already overwhelmed, over-committed and (probably) over

everyone having an opinion on how their life could be better *if they just did self-care*.

- What I want to offer first is a different language around prioritising yourself and self-tending.
- Next I want to offer the opportunity to write a new story for yourself around it.
- Then I want to provide a framework to add practices and tools you love, and spark ideas for new ones you might want to include.
- Lastly, I want to leave you with a roadmap that can be rewritten, refined and reinvented over the coming months and years to support you at every quirk and turn of life.

I hope your time in *Replenish* flourishes into something incredible for you long after we've had our time together.

THE GRANULAR

You will receive an email every day for 28 days -- however half of them will be to remind you that it is a pause day. There is an overview of topics below.

Your first email arrives tomorrow, by email at 6am (AEST) tomorrow.

Each micro-reframe is between 3 and 10 minutes. They arrive as text and audio.

Each email will also contain 2 or 3 short reflective questions and a somatic practice. Feel free to experiment with these (or ignore them!)

You get to choose how much of this material you engage with!

The first two reframes are a little longer than 3 minutes as I get all the background out of the way, plus some admin, so we can get into (shorter) nuts and bolts after that.

OVERVIEW OF TOPICS

Self-Fidelity

Tale of Two Words

The Philosophy and Practice of Replenishment

Emergency Triage: Tending the Nervous System

Renewal: an overview

Befriending Your Allostatic Budget

Rest Is More Than Sleep

Rest and Recharge

Revive: Returning to Creative Pursuits

Peak Experiences and Play Dates

Depth Work and Therapy

Self and Others

Thriving in Limitations

Micro-Reframe #1

Self-Fidelity

Self-fidelity is first and perhaps most important tenant of replenishment.

Self-fidelity is what makes replenishment possible.

So what's self-fidelity?

In short self-fidelity is forming a deep and unwavering partnership with yourself.

It's the kind of faithful and unfailing commitment you make with a partner or spouse.

It's the presence and patience you have with the children in your life.

It's the prioritisation of your work, businesses and clients. Or perhaps your community or volunteer work

And lastly it's the love and attention you lavish on who and what is most important in your life.

With self-fidelity all that is directed back at you — love, patience, faithfulness, presence, commitment — chosen by you for you.

Self-fidelity is being true to yourself. To what you need: in the immediate, short, medium and long terms . What you want. And what you desire.

It puts you at the centre of your life. Unapologetically.

Perhaps not all the time, but some of the time.

Starting small, starting simple and building on that.

And let's be clear, it's not easy.

Why.

Women are socialised (through grooming, shaming and gaslighting) to deprioritise ourselves. We are literally taught (then expected) to put everyone and everything ahead of us.

We live a life of abandoning ourselves.

And that's the opposite of what self-fidelity is.

With self-fidelity we choose ourselves, over and over again.

We do this relentlessly. We do this imperfectly. And over time it becomes easier — we do it lessening guilt and shame.

We stop leaving ourselves behind.

We say yes to ourselves.

So why not no to others? Because each yes to us, has an inherent no to others. Self-fidelity is all about positioning yourself in the centre of your life.

It starts with your yes.

Self-fidelity is the first step in deprogramming the old stories we live in.

The next reframe disrupts these stories through the words we choose to build ourselves and our realities

around.

Regardless of how you feel in this moment, or how momentous the responsibilities stacked behind you are, there is a choice to disrupt society's need for you to abandon yourself here. And now.

This is not about perfection. Or getting it right. Or letting others down.

This about saying yes, and together we'll figure the rest out as we go.

Questions (for now or later)

1. Where and how do you abandon yourself? Is there a common thread (or a common person) in these situations?
2. What's the smallest yes you can say in the next 24 hours? (And how does it make you feel?)

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Hack #1 — Beautiful Sounds

The first thing we are often told to turn to, to regulate our nervous system is breathing.

The first thing I am going to offer you is a soothing sound? Have it in an easy accessible place on your phone.

Perhaps it's birdsong. Or the ocean. Or your favourite poet reading your favourite poem. A song that does all the right things. Maybe it a binaural beat.

Maybe you need to close your eyes as your listen. Or to lie down. Or have your spine flat against a surface. Or your feet bare.

Or perhaps it's something else you need to do with your body as you listen.

Experiment with this as a way to gently attend to your nervous system.

Micro-Reframe #2

Tale of Two Words

There are three things I want you to know about words.

The first is words are bigger on the inside — they are literary zip files.

The second is words are the smallest unit of magic

And the last is: words matter

And this is why.

A single word — like a seed — births a different story, a different world and a self. It is the simplest point of transformation. And that’s why I say, words are the smallest unit of magic.

The fastest way to hack an old story (especially an “I am ... story) is to change the word at the end.

For me, I changed the phrase “I am exhausted” to “I am

low tide”. It was the start of a profound healing and my permanent break up with self-care.

Words also matter because of the multitude of stories each contains.

Ones we inherit from our family, from friends, our workplaces, the culture, society, the isms and ologies we live within.

We also store our own stories, our experience, inside words.

So let’s dive into the tale of two words: care and replenish.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary states: care implies oppression of the mind weighed down by responsibility or disquieted by apprehension.

Just from this short definition you can see how the word “care” is loaded.

And why the term self-care is problematic. Why you’ve spend years subconsciously rejecting it because you

don't want to identify with any part of it.

The stories inside the word care are associated with frailty, vulnerability and marginalisation. it is about illness, limitation, disempowerment and brokenness.

On 2022 live call I asked what people associated the word care with.

They replied grind, emergency, vulnerability, looking after others, burden,

They said the word felt: draining, taxing, heavy, that it took effort

As humans, we are all about protection.

We are never going consciously or unconsciously embrace a word internally full of those stories. We will do everything to protection ourselves from it.

And for the most part — we have.

The term self-care is associated with overwhelm, chronic stress and exhaustion.

It's paradox. Subconsciously this is what we side with when we choose the words self-care. This is the story we live. When outwardly we are trying to do the opposite.

This is why we reject self-care. Not because we don't want to prioritise ourselves and our needs. Instead we don't want to partner with a word entangled with oppression, weightiness, responsibility, apprehension and disquiet.

Change a word, change a story, change a life.

This is where replenishment comes in and why it is so powerful.

Replenishment doesn't come with the stories that care does. It's a brand new player in the arena.

Replenish simply means to fill something up again.

It is dynamic. Non-linear. And has all the space within it to be imperfect. For trial and error. For experimentation.

For us to be messy humans.

It's a brand new story, and you get to write it on your own terms. With your own experiences to inform it's future shape.

Best of all, replenish doesn't come from a place of lack.

On the 2022 live call, people spoke of replenishment in regards to filling up, water, nourishment, new life.

It felt light and inspiring.

The first time I mentioned it to a friend, she said it about seven times in the first five minutes. She told me how much she loved the sound of it. How it felt in her mouth.

How self-replenishment was vastly different to self-care.

I originally spoke about self-replenishment and now I just talk about replenishment.

First we get a handle on how to fill, empty and refill ourselves. Then from that we get to apply the same principles to our families, our friendships, our workplaces, neighbourhoods and communities.

When we are able to go into the world from a place of fullness, or overflowing, anything is possible.

We are possible.

And at this pointy edge of humanity's story ... change is possible.

Questions for now (or later)

1. What words do you associate care with? (And how does it make you feel?)

2. What words do you associate replenishment with? (And how does it make you feel?)

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Hack #2 — What Can I Hear

This can be done anywhere. (Doing it in the same place over time can be very interesting though.)

Set a timer for one minute. (Over time you can set it for longer periods of time).

Stop and tune in to what you can hear.

You can mentally make a note of it. Or write it down.

This is a potent way to slow yourself down and bring yourself into presence.

Micro-Reframe #3

Replenishment: philosophy and practice

The philosophy of replenishment is actually super simple.

We fill. We empty. We refill again.

Our remit over time is to go out into the world intentionally filled up. For that to be our starting point.

Broken down into more granular parts:

replenishment is about recognising ourselves as dynamic beings not static or stagnant

It's about become cyclical rather than linear.

Replenishment's focus is on renewal instead of repair

It asks us to be proactive rather than reactive

Living within replenishment is to live from creativity

mindset and instead of a victim mindset -- not one fuelled by drama.

Replenishment encourages imperfection, curiosity and experimentation.

And lastly, replenishment is about repetition and resilience rather than one-and-done solutions, despair and disappointment.

The idea is to move toward more fullness, incrementally over time, but right now, here in this moment, what each of us has and what we do with it, is what really matters.

Fullness and Emptiness

I offer fullness and emptiness as neutral concepts.

And also as *a* judgement free and shame free metric.

Full doesn't mean good and empty bad. Full and empty correspond to your capacity. What's in your tank on any given day.

I love the Facebook status from one of my dear friends and fellow coach Janette Dalglish: If your tanks are at 50% today and your productivity is at 50% - then you're giving it 100%, and that's absolutely perfect.

Expressed like that it helps to put what we have and what we give into a new kind of perspective. We can also see how we run quickly into deficits that lead to a kind of bankruptcy I'll talk about in a few days time when I introduce you to the allostatic budget.

But for now -- the fullness-emptiness spectrum gives us something to assess the impact people and activities have on us. Ones that fill us up and ones that drain us.

This can help in deciding what to say yes and no to. Or putting limitations around the amount of time we offer to people or activities which take more than they give.

A Rhythm

Fullness and emptiness are also linked to a rhythm.

I'd like you to consider what your rhythm is. Tidal.

Lunar. Seasonal. Diurnal. Something else perhaps.

I invite to you to let that rhythm be a container to hold you AND partner with across the next four weeks.

To become a terrain to explore within and beyond yourself — physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually and energetically.

New Stories

The last thing replenishment offers at this stage, is the chance to write a new story divorced from any of the toxicity of self-care.

I mentioned in an earlier reframe that I went from I am exhausted, to I am the low tide.

I didn't want to deny the challenges I was facing, but I wanted to create a narrative that had movement in it. Something that also offered hope for change. I trusted in the fact that the tide always came back in. (It did eventually, but holy shit, it took time!)

The Granular

The nuts and bolts of replenishment come in five basic pieces, which we'll tease apart for the rest of our time together..

1. emergency triage.
2. renew and refill.
3. play dates and peak experiences.
4. therapy and depth work
5. self and others.

For now, I'd like you to consider what core narrative you've developed around self-care and how it makes you feel. Then consider a new narrative you'd like to try. Something that honours where you are now and also where you'd like to go.

Questions for now (or later)

1. What story have you told yourself about where you are in your body/life? (How does it make you feel when you think about it?)
2. What new story would you like to cultivate with replenishment? (And how do you want it to feel?)
3. What rhythm are you interested in exploring?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Hack #3 — Humming

Humming is a simple, gentle and readily available nervous system regulator.

The vibration in the throat stimulates the vagus nerve and helps to activate the parasympathetic nervous system (our rest and digest state).

It's one of the go-to vagus nerve tools Resmaa Menakem

suggests in his book *My Grandmother's Hands*:
radicalised trauma and the mending of our bodies and
hearts.

Micro-Reframe #4

Emergency Triage -- tending the nervous system

The central nervous system is the command centre of our body. It is our brain, spinal cord and all the nerve which branch out from there. It is also like an old-fashioned switch board, processing in-coming information from the environment and body, to make out-going decisions on how best to keep us alive.

The part of the nervous system that's important to replenishment is the autonomic nervous system. It has two parts. The first is the sympathetic nervous system, where everything turns on and its superpower is to enable fight or flight. The parasympathetic nervous system is the opposite and its superpower is rest and digest.

Figured prominently in this speeding up and slowing down is the vagus nerve.

The Vagus Nerve

Resmma Menakem calls the vagus nerve the soul nerve and devotes an entire chapter to it in his book on healing trauma.

The vagus nerve is actually two nerves the begins at the brain stem, where our skull meets our neck, comes down the side of our neck, wraps around into our throat, down into our heart, our lungs, down into our diaphragm where it branches out into our stomach. It touches just about every organs. It's a bottom up system, meaning it is passing information to the brain upward, from our body and our organs.

The vagus nerve is involved in our heart rate, our breathing rate, sleep and digestion.

The train line of the vagus nerve gives some pretty serious hints as to how overwhelm in our nervous system can play out. Anyone who has experienced anxiety or panic knows the way the throat closes up, the heart thunders, it's hard to breath, the churning in the stomach.

The Problem of Modern Living

Modern living plays havoc with our nervous systems, which evolved out of simpler times and was designed for more obvious and clear cut experiences of danger.

Where stress was acute, not chronic.

If our nervous system is struggling to regulate, because of chronic overwhelm, stress or illness, then we become a colander, unable to hold water.

This means our best efforts to refill become a titanic struggle. It also why so many “self care” regimes fail — because we simply don’t have the physical, emotional and mental reserves to do the things we want to do, or that we know we need to do.

We are Sisyphus — trying to accomplish the impossible — and beating ourselves for our perceived failures.

This is why I begin the deeper drive into the nuts and bolts of replenish with the nervous system.

Baselines and Regulation

Jessica Maguire, a Sydney-based physiotherapist and bioplasticity specialist talks about regulation in very simple terms.

First she places and brain and the body separate from each other to create a baseline.

With the brain, she says you to place yourself on a scale between 1 and 10, where 1 is unable to think and 10 is a constant swirling vortex of thoughts. We want to be around 5. That's regulation. Activated enough for movement, but still enough for clarity and focus.

Then with the body, again, 1 to 10. With 1 being exhausted collapse and 10 as a constant restlessness. At 5 there is regulation, energy and movement to do things, but with a sense of anchored direction.

So sometimes we want to up-regulate and sometimes we want to down regulate to find our way into the middle.

If our brain is at one end and our body at the other, Maguire says to focus on the body first.

For me this middle is a sense of being in the centre. But I know for others the middle is a place of flow, or clarity or grounding to move with and from.

Regulation Practices

A lot of the self-care practices derided by the main stream are actually very simple and potent somatic practices for tending the nervous system. For moving toward that mid-point. For example: A bath is the soothing that comes with immersion in water. A candle is the relief of low light. Or the gentle impact of a favourite scent.

There are at least half a dozen things you already do unconsciously to down-regulate (or up-regulate) your nervous system. Each of these emails also offers a bio hack to support you in moving toward to that mid-point.

Emergency Triage — The First Step

The first step into replenishment will always be to check in with your nervous system and tend to it, with the longer term focus about becoming more of a beautiful, robust vessel that can be easily filled, emptied and refilled.

Replenishment for some of you, like it was for me, might be a long journey through nervous system regulation. Especially if you have trauma or any other chronic issues that perpetually activate the nervous system.

On any day though, or in any minute or hour, we can be back in triage mode and that's okay. And in no way a failure.

We are in endless movement and relationship with our body and the world around us.

Having the skill, experience and resources to identify where your nervous system is and move toward the middle is what ultimately will become your super power.

REFLECTION

1. Right now — where is your brain on that baseline of 1-10. And where is your body on the baseline?
2. What word resonates most with you — centre, flow, clarity or grounding? How could you incorporate that into your understand of regulation for you?
3. What regulation practices are already in your tool box? If at a loss, think of your go to things for soothing or comfort?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Hack #4 — Contact Points

This is a practice on exploring up-regulation and down-regulation. It is a four step bottom up practice.

First take a baseline of your brain and body. Does your body need to up-regulate or down-regulate?

This works best seated.

Feet

Feel where your feet touch the floor. The pressure between your sole and the surface. Which bits make contact. Which bits don't. Focus on the touch of the air or your socks. Explore the temperature difference of different parts of your feet. If you are down-regulating, imagine your feet melting a little into the floor. Ice turning to water. If you are up-regulating, press your feet gently into the ground.

Consider how this changes how your body feels.

Back of legs, bottom of pelvis

Feel where your legs touch the chair. The pressure between of your thighs on the surface. Focus on the touch of clothing. Explore the temperature difference of different parts of your thighs. If you are down-regulating, imagine the chair taking up a little more of the support of your body. If you are up-regulating, tighten just gently, your thighs and glutes, then release.

Consider how this changes how your body feels.

Spine

Feel where your spine touches the chair and where it doesn't. The pressure of your spine against the surface. How your clothing meets the spine. Is the temperature the same the whole way along. If you are down-regulating, relax into the chair more, letting the chair support you. If you are up-regulating, rise up to straighten and lengthen just a little. Press the feet into the chair a little height. Then release.

Consider how this changes how your body feels.

Hands

Notice your hands. Where are they? Are they touching each other? What sensory information are you getting from them? If you are down-regulating, soften your hands. To up-regulate press them together to create resistance then release.

Now take another baseline.

Where is your body from 1 to 10. And your brain? How has it changed? How do you feel?

Micro-Reframe #5

Renewal -- An Overview

One of the big differences with replenishment is its focus on renewal rather than repair.

Not to say that healing isn't an important part of renewal, it's just not the only part.

The word renew harkens back to the 15th century. It's a latin-germanic hybrid meaning to be restored, or to flourish once more.

All of the pieces below are directed toward the idea of restoration or inflorescence — a beginning to bloom.

The renewal puzzle piece is broken down into four smaller ones.

1. **Refill** — befriending your allostatic budget.
2. **Rest** — how it's more than just sleep.
3. **Reset and Recharge** — processes and tools for gentle up/down regulation.

4. **Revival** — returning to what you love.

Refill

Refill is about getting friendly with your allostatic budget, and creating a simple system to begin physically, emotionally and mentally refilling. For those who love lists, there is a list option for this. Those who love a good habit stack, it's possible to use that here also.

This piece offers an arbitrary metric for how much you fill and refill on any day — which can be confronting in the beginning. But after drifting lost under the immense umbrella of “self care” working with your allostatic budget is a radical refocus on the things you already do (hooray) and the things you've been putting off.

Rest

Rest is more than sleep.

We go into the roles that --

- solace
- space
- simplicity
- silence
- solitude and.
- stillness

-- play here ... as well as sleep.

It's a multifaceted exploration of ways we can access relief from overwhelm, stress and exhaustion.

Reset and Recharge

Reset and recharge looks at tools and processes for up regulation and down regulation that don't rely on stimulants or sedatives, that can be tailored for home and the workplace.

Revival

Revival is about how we return to beloved creative outlets, exploring how creativity can break the stress

cycle.

REFLECTION

1. What piece of renewal immediately excites you? (And why do you think this is the case.)
2. What piece immediately elicits a “fuck off!” (And why do you think this is the case.)
3. What is the piece you truly need, right now, but you’ve been denying yourself? (And why do you think this is the case.) Could you commit to including more of it in your life over the next 2-3 weeks?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Please note that the biohacks for today and for most of this week, build toward tools you’ll use further down the track. They’re all quick and simple, and can be built with as much or as little time as you have on any given day. And can be added to, adapted and revised at any point in the future.

Hack #5 — Sensory First Aid Kit

We're going to build a first aid kit leveraging your senses.

Why?

Because engaging with our senses gives us quick and easeful access to our nervous system -- usually totally bypassing the higher ordered thinking of a pre-frontal cortex.


It allows us to chose something we love or enjoy to regulate our nervous system -- things which we know bring calm or pleasure or joy.


If not lift us up, than at the very least, these things can hold us steady.


Add one to three items beneath each of these headings.


*If you can include at least one **practical addition** (something you could have on-hand at home, in the office, in your bag or car) and **one “extravagant”***


addition (*that you'd have just at home or could access outside of work hours*).


 What you love to see

 What you love to hear

 What you love to smell

 What you love to taste

 What you love to touch

 How your body loves to move

Put this list in multiple places so it is easy to find when you're stressed, overwhelmed or exhausted — like the fridge door, on your phone, your work screensaver, stuck to the back of the toilet door, on post-it notes on your car's dash or inside your work diary.

Micro-Reframe #6

Befriending Your Allostatic Budget

Today we're talking about allostasis, the impact it has on your body, how you can think of it as a budget and how to create a better relationship with that budget.

The prefix *allo* mean other.

Stasis refers to standing still, a point on the compass or the position, state or condition of anything.

Put together we have the phrase “stability through change” or “the other state”.

Allostasis

Allostasis is the physiological mind-body process of mobilising energy to meet demands, take action and then return back to a baseline.

Ideally, when we are stretched, and meet the demand then return to a state of calm, over and over, thanks to

neuroplasticity our mind and body learns and we become more effective at dealing with challenges and navigating stress in the future.

We know though, that more often than not, stress continues. And accumulates. The demands pile up. And there is little to no relief.

Allostatic Load

Allostatic load refers to this **cumulative burden** of chronic stress and life events on an individual.

This is when the demands and challenges we face cannot be effectively met or resolved and there's no easy return to that baseline calm.

This has a negative effect on all aspects of us and our life in the short, medium and especially long term.

A doctor will look at allostatic load as the physiological impact on an individual. Metrics like blood sugar, sleep patterns, blood pressure, heart rate and changes to the immune system and hormones.

Psychologists will look at allostatic load as the psychological impact on an individual, such as depression, anxiety and panic or problems with things such as resilience and social connectedness.

But we also know that the mind body connection is more complex, varied and rich than a simple brain-body split. We know gut health impacts mental health.

A Whole-Person Energetic Perspective

When I was training to be a coach we approached allostasis and allostatic load as a whole-person budgeting issue. Of energy as a person resource.

If we stop for a moment and consider our car. We never assume we can constantly drive without ever stopping to refill with petrol. The same goes for our bank account.

Yet this is exactly how we treat our bodies.

And like our bank accounts, we pretty much run our minds and bodies right at the edge of our budgets.

We rarely have anything in reserve, which is fine under normal circumstances. But when life takes a turn and we are suddenly confronted with a situation which requires more of us, our minds and bodies go into deficit.

In the short term, the mind and body can cope, not well, but they will. Stay in deficit too long, and like our bank accounts, we end up bankrupt. Or our cards, broken down on the side of the road.

The Allostatic Budget

In returning to allostatic load as a whole-person budgeting issue, we need to consider the totality of our personal resources — that is the combination of our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual energy.

We want to have as much of that energy available to us as possible.

We need a budget that is constantly filled to meet the demands of life — which is constantly emptying it out.

The simplest way of considering this budget is through knowing what your basic needs are for the day. This looks different for everyone.

It might be a certain number of hours sleep. Taking your supplements. Doing exercise. Screen free time. Spending time with loved ones. Meditation. Or no longer checking your work email after 6pm at night.

If we think back to *stasis* — these basic needs become points on the compass to guide you toward where you need to place your energy, to generate more energy.

To focus on filling the tank.

Creating Our Allostatic Budget

How do we do this?

We construct a list of ten things and then for the next 14 to 28 days do as many of them on a daily basis as can manage.

If you get 5 done, consider yourself just making parity.

You're filling, but not completing refilling, so there's nothing extra in the tank for surprises.

Anything above five banks for the future. Not just random unpleasantness, but the extra that gets invested in things like play dates or peak experiences, that can give you the reserves required for therapy or other kinds of depth work.

As I said yesterday, this is a very arbitrary exercise. It's not the full picture. But it is a focused way of considering how much you actively add to your tank each day.

Over time your allostatic budget will change, your capacity might expand or contract, and what's on that list will change with it.

**Please know, this is not performance management.
This is not fodder for self-flagellation.**

This is a genuine inquiry into how you fill and refill yourself on a daily basis -- how you meet your most basic needs, in ways that restore your mind, body, heart

and soul, so you ultimately have more energy to do the things you love.

REFLECTION

1. How do you feel having listened or read the information on allostasis and the allostatic budget?
2. What are your three biggest needs this week? (And is that different to other weeks?)

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Hack #6 Your Allostatic Budget

This is offered in two parts - one as a list if that's your happy place. The other as habit stacked rituals, if you prefer to meet your needs this way (or if lists freak you out).

The List

Write a list of 10 basic needs that would fill you up if you were to do them each day. Consider how you mentally refill, physically refill, emotionally refill and spiritually refill. The percentage of these things can change from week to week, or month to month depending on where you are and what is happening in your life.

Keeping them as simple as possible helps also.

Once you've written up your list, cross the items off each day for 14 - 28 days to see how many are possible.

You can do these however you want — a star system on the inside of your wardrobe door or a digital list in your favourite notes app.

You can add a basic note at the bottom about how you were feeling or your energy levels if you want to create extra data for yourself.

The Habit Stack

Do you have a couple of very big needs that need to be met each day? You'll also need ten things, but you won't be working them as a list. Your challenge is to bundle them together into mini rituals or routines around those larger needs.

For example ...

I have a friend who has a very big basic that's taking a break in the middle of her work day. She schedules it exactly for when she's busiest, makes herself a nutritious lunch (or orders in) and spends half an hour eating and reading. It's a non-negotiable part of her day ... and says if she were to list it — take a break at 12:00pm, eat a healthy lunch, read a book — she'd never do it. As a ritual/routine these it's something she looks forward to doing.

Micro-Reframe #7

Rest Is More Than Sleep

I want to park two thoughts at the start of this reframe for you to consider.

The first is, as the title of the reframe suggests, not all rest is sleep.

The second consideration is that rest is not the antidote for tiredness or exhaustion. It is instead, perhaps, a way of navigating, managing and ameliorating overwhelm. And that overwhelm is a significant player in the experience of tiredness, exhaustion and stress.

Rest as Resistance and Rebellion

There's a lot of shit-talk thrown at rest thanks to capitalism, ableism, patriarchy, white supremacy and a grind culture that shapes our world .

When you look at rest through those lenses you can understand why Tricia Hersey says **rest is an act**

resistance.

Rest becomes a rebellion, a reimagining of life when we start to pull apart:

- * the guilt and shame associated with rest
- * lies about indulgence
- * and the perverse sense of inadequately around needing to rest ... much less intentionally choosing to rest.

We all know the cost of a life defined by efficiency and relentless activity. We have all suffered at the hands of it.

A New Kind of Rest

The rest of Replenishment says *enough!*

The rest of Replenishment says, *we are enough.*

The rest of Replenishment says, *fuck you, I am enough.*

So let's invite a kind of rest into our every day which is both protective and restorative.

Proactive and provocative .

Rest that supports the repair of our energetic leaks but also gives us a sense of renewal. That refills our hearts and souls, alongside our bodies and our minds.

Rest which is an active choice of relief.

Rest that is more than just sleep.

What is Rest?

At the most fundamental level, rest is about changing the amount of stimulus we experience, usually to lessen the stimulus.

Rest is about having a break, about having down time.

Rest is associated with relaxation — but need not necessarily be relaxing.

Rest is an intentional disruption of the relentless nature of life. To portion life into mouthfuls which we can

slowly chew on, savour and digest.

Seven Key Areas of Rest (Dr Dalton-Smith)

Dr Sandra Dalton-Smith, working with new mothers, identified seven key areas of rest. They are

- * sensory
- * social
- * emotional
- * physical
- * mental
- * spiritual
- * creative

I love this frame work that thinks broader about where and how we can find rest. It allows us to get truly creative about how and why and where we seek our down time. To get specific about relief. It allows us to tailor rest exactly to our needs.

The 7 S's of Rest (Evidence from a Depth Year)

Across the depth year program I ran last year, we had six months of ongoing discussion around what rest is and needs to be (before I knew about Dr Dalton-Smith's work.)

We came up with the 7 S's:

- * solace
- * space
- * simplicity
- * silence
- * solitude
- * stillness
- * sleep

Solace

Solace is about comfort.

A depth of comfort normally reserved for others who are in distress.

Here is becomes self compassion, self kindness, self love

as much as it is the physical comfort of a weighted blanket, boundaries with energy vampire or intentionally cultivating a relationship with beauty — which I am certain strums the string of solace.

Space

Space is also the concept of spaciousness. Of internal and external space. This boundaries (again) and activities such as daydreaming as much as it is about going outside to stand on the grass.

Simplicity

Simplicity goes hand with specificity which goes hand in hand with discernment. Simplicity is a potent partner with both solace and space.

Silence

We don't realise how loud our worlds are, or how draining that is, until we intentionally turn everything off. Turn the volume all the way down.

Silence is a potent form of sensory rest. Here less is more.

Solitude

Solitude is like the big social exhale ... the relief that goes the whole way through your body.

It's worth remembering aloneness is not loneliness.

Sometimes we just need to be ourselves. It's not anti-social (I'd actually go as far as saying, filling up your well this way is very pro-social).

Plus, there is nothing more potent in terms of "being the center" of your life than being the only person, for a short period of time, in your life.

Slowness and Stillness

Both are about disrupting the speed with which you move through life.

Stillness and slowness is not stopping. They create space for pauses and pivots. Of being able evaluate and change

direction. That discernment piece.

Cultivating a relationship with slowness can lead to an appreciation for stillness.. Which as an aside doesn't mean sitting still. Active stillness is definitely a thing.

An important side note, a need for perpetual movement can be about safety for anyone who has experienced and lives with, trauma. Thus, slowness and stillness can be terrifying suggestions. They are also powerful ways to bring healing to the nervous system

Sleep

While I am partial to an afternoon nap, and as a recovering insomniac I know how important sleep is — sleep can be a bit of a hammer solution if you are looking at it as the only solution to tiredness and exhaustion.

Rest Revisited

Combining Dr Dalton-Smith's 7 categories with the 7 S's creates a rich and complex matrix of rest potentials

that can target overwhelm as one of the root causes of tiredness, stress and exhaustion.

Rest is the next frontier. One of your design.

REFLECTION

1. Which of Dr Dalton-Smith's seven areas are you drawn to? (Which one makes you nauseous?)
2. Which of the 7 S's are you drawn to? (Which one is a hard hell-no?)
3. If you tease apart illness, tiredness, exhaustion, stress and overwhelm -- which one do you have the most influence over?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

The Rest Matrix

[Download the overview/worksheet here.](#)

This is offered in three parts - starting small and getting more complex as we go.

One Topic

Focus first on one topic which would support easing your overwhelm.

Maybe the tool for you is *simplicity*. Or the area that makes most sense is *emotional rest*.

Map out a few activities which correspond to those and then start doing them. As often and as imperfectly as you can.

One x Seven

If you have a little more personal bandwidth take one area and work it across multiple tools. eg social rest across solace/space/simplicity/silence/solitude/stillness.

Or take one rest tool and work is across multiple areas:
etc simplicity with
sensory/social.physical/emotional/mental/spiritual/creative

Or as many as you have capacity for.

What activities come out of these combinations?

Maybe there is no good fit for some. Perhaps there is a surprising fit with others.

Seven x Seven

When you're ready, or as a tracking sheet, fill more and more of this worksheet out until you have a completed matrix. This could be a year or two's exploration.

Take note of where one activity appears multiple times.

Is it an easy suggestion or does it hit rest on a multiple of fronts and does that make it a uber rest activity .

Micro-Reframe #8

Rest and Recharge

I want to begin today with wisdom from my dear friend Erin Hansen: energy needs space to transform.

These resets and recharges to up regulate or down regulate your nervous system do just that.

They create space for your energy to transform.

We are going to look at one-act resets and recharges along with longer ritual versions.

So let's dive in.

Returning to the Middle

If we remember back to the reframe on the nervous system, the sweet place we are aiming for, is that middle portion of the baseline around 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.

Where 1 is a de-energised state where you're unable to think or physically move, and 10 is perpetual restlessness of the body and thoughts. Neither are optimal places for moving through the world.

Let's be clear, the resets and recharges are short term refills for difficult situations. They are not the holy grail to performance manage you into being a better human for others.

These are to help you get through tough portions of your day.

Reset

A one-act reset is a single activity that can support your nervous system to **down-regulate**.

Here we are working with overwhelm.

These are my top three resets:

* sitting in the bottom of a shower (especially at night)

when I can sit in the dark, it's perfect for when I have pain and wild, circular thinking.)

- * sending a voice memo where I can blurt out everything that's swirling inside me and then it's outside of me.

- * sitting on my back verandah and watching the trees for 15-30 minutes (this one literally saved my life)

My *anam cara*, Christina's, favourite reset is to clean her kitchen bench. She also swears by a cold pack on the back of the neck.

The Ritual of You

Then there is the longer version which I call **The Ritual of You**. It combines several (or all) of the senses into a single ritual sequence.

This habit stacking at it's finest.

Christina's given me permission to share hers.

- * She goes to her bedroom and closes the door.

- * Opens the windows (if the Auckland weather is conducive to it).
- * Turns on her essential oil diffuser.
- * Pulls several tarot or oracle cards to approach what's underneath the overwhelm through a side door (also acts a visual cue).
- * Rolls out her yoga mat and runs through a series of stretches.
- * If she needs more, she'll climb into bed with her journal.

If it's a day that feels like a no return, she simply goes into her room // Lies on the floor // Puts on Spotify, with earphones// Closes here eyes and waits for the song that will break the stronghold on her overwhelm.

Recharge

The one-act recharge is a single activity to support your nervous system to **up-regulate** without sugar or caffeine.

Here we are moving upward out of underwhelm.

My top three recharges are:

- * music (I always start here)
- * the shower; standing rather than sitting.
- * change my physical location.

Jessica Maguire says the nervous system will up-regulate when we change our posture to lengthen our spine.

The Ritual of You (or Rethinking the Morning)

I don't have an example of the more elaborate Ritual of You in this upswing space.

I did wonder though — how many of our morning rituals

and routines are up-regulation versions of The Ritual of You?

Is it worth thinking deeper about what each of us needs in the morning (other than caffeine) to give us a sense of possibility, momentum and anchoring.

Either to top up where sleep has left us wanting or to mitigate those start-of-day drains, so we have more energy moving into, and through, the day.

REFLECTION

1. Are you more likely to need a reset or a recharge (or do you need them equally)?
2. Where and when are you most likely to need them?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Part One

One-Act Resets

What would work as single act resets? (To down-regulate overwhelm or stress).

List them and place the list somewhere you can find them.

Use them. Adjust the list if any don't work.

Add at least one reset you can use at work.

Part Two

One-Act Recharges

What would work as single act recharge? (To up-regulate out of a de-energised state).

List them and place the list somewhere you can find them.

Use them. Adjust the list if any don't work.

Add at least one recharge you can use at home

Part Three

The Ritual of You -- The Reset Edition

Take your sensory first aid list from early last week and combine 3 or 4 different things into a ritual sequence.

Place the sequence in a place you can access it when you hit overwhelm.

Experiment with the components of the ritual until you have the best fit for yourself.

Micro-Reframe #9

Revive: Returning to Creative Pursuits

I realised when I sat to write this reframe that I could have called this portion rediscovery, so I invite you to choose the word which feels most resonant with your present experience.

Revival or rediscovery or re-invigoration — or perhaps another word. This is your replenishment journey. Hack and customise it to fit you.

This reframe is about returning to a creative life or your creative expression.

For many of us, our creative lives are put indefinitely on hold.

Clarissa Pinkola Estes writes in *Women Who Run With the Wolves*:

“A woman must be careful to not allow over-responsibility (or over-respectabilty) to steal her necessary creative rests, riffs, and raptures. She simply must put her foot down and say no to half of what she believes she "should" be doing. Art is not meant to be created in stolen moments only.”

As we'll explore, creativity gives more than it will ever take.

Before we jump to creative expression, I want to start at generative practices and activities.

Generative Activities and Practices

Generative practices foster space for new things to emerge — even if they completely unrelated to anything work or creativity wise.

Anyone who's ever had an idea come to them in the shower or out driving or folding washing knows this. And the quiet thrill of it. (Well at least for me).

Revival and rediscovery begin with a toe dip into intentional generative activities.

Not because a creative practice is pointless without new ideas, but because generative activities are small, doable re-entry points ... that are generously and conveniently scattered through everyday life.

Our mundane activities become TARDIS like - bigger and more complex than they appear on the outside.

My former writing partner used to say his best ideas came when he was washing the dishes at night. We dubbed it sudspiration.

When we combine things in this way — we do the impossible — we stretch time. And anyone whose been lost in a generative space knows how it has the capacity to warp the usual speed and experience of time.

So that's the starting point.

Creativity and the Stress Response Cycle

Emily and Amelia Nagasaki in their book ***BurnOut: solve your stress cycle*** list a number of activities that end

the stress response cycle (imperative in situations where the stressor might not change, but the body's capacity to process and reset from the stress is essential.)

The first six are as follows

- * **Exercise** (we touch on this in allostatic load)
- * **Breathing** (strongly linked back to the nervous system)
- * **Crying and laughter** (both potent reset and recharge activities)
- * **Positive social interactions and affection** (which we'll touch on next week in self and others.

The final is creative expression.

Amelia and Emily note that creative expression **builds energy, enthusiasm and excitement**. All of which we take *forward* into life.

Perhaps most importantly, they highlight that creative spaces not only make room, but actively encourage big emotions.

And who wouldn't like a little extra room for all the

feelings?

What The Science Says

The science shows that engaging in a creative practice:

- * supports improved problem solving and critical thinking
- * relieves anxiety and stress
- * improves fine motor skills
- * is an excellent mood modulator
- * has a positive effect on the immune system, including reducing inflammation.

The Gifts of Creativity

Here's what I think creative expression and generative practices gift us

- * a liminal space to rest and recharge in
- * an alternate space to sink into and explore
- * presence and flow (both highly regarded mental states)
- * a focal point beyond ourselves, and whatever is going on in my our lives
- * something new/different/ unique to think about and feel into
- * a moving meditation, especially if your creative expression involves the use of tools or your body
- * an emotional and mental upswing, especially after
- * curiosity
- * expansion
- * a "sneaky", but potent, form of both conscious and unconscious processing and healing.

* an uncomplicated sense of achievement and completion.

* a unique kind of high (or maybe that's just me).

What's The Way Back In?

It starts with **a commitment to return.**

Next you need to portion your time into gentle and sensible increments.

Five minutes of continuous line drawing every day, will ultimately be more refilling than waiting months for a whole day to paint.

The important thing to note here is something creative, anything creative, is better than nothing.

Decide the best or easiest part of your day to show up to your creativity ... and do it.

An evening creative practice will support down regulation and the completion of the stress response

cycle.

Alternatively a morning or mid afternoon practice may give you a delightful upward bump.

Maya Angelou said it perfectly:

You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.

It makes creativity a stellar template for Replenishment.

REFLECTION

1. What is (or was) your creative rest? Your creative riff? Your creative rapture?
2. Where do ideas find you? How do you (can you) tap inspiration?
3. What new creative outlet would you love to explore?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Brain/Eye Rest

This practice falls under the umbrella of Kaplan's *Attention Restoration Theory*.

Find somewhere to sit that's:

- * quiet
- * comfortable
- * where you won't be interrupted/disturbed, and
- * you can see nature

1. Set a timer for 5 minutes.
2. Sit and observe the natural world.
3. Increase the time you sit there, with an aim to sit for 30 minutes.

PositivePsychology.com states: It has been reliably reported that the natural environment is the most effective in renewing our resources, due to the process of increasing effortless reflection.

(This was the most effective tool from me in 2021, to bring my nervous system back from the brink of chronic and perpetual panic. My panic was so bad, I would have the first wave of panic before I was even fully conscious each morning.)

Micro-Reframe #10

Peak Experiences and Play Dates

Each part of replenish builds on what came before.

Without self fidelity it's difficult to clearly identify an old story of abandonment. Without the desire to jettison an old story and write a new one, there is no replenishment journey.

We need a well regulated nervous system to access the components of renewal.

And once you have a robust sense of fullness, that is more full than empty, then the new pieces of replenishment unlock.

Those new pieces are peak experiences and play dates, then depth work and therapy.

What is a peak experience?

A 2001 research paper defined a peak experience as a heightened sense of wonder, awe, or ecstasy over the course of an experience.

Simply put, they are transcendental moments of pure joy and elation that stand out from every day experiences .

Maslow found to his disbelief, studying the phenomena across the 60's, that peak moments could happen in the most mundane of circumstances.

He went on to write: the sacred is in the ordinary.

Other words associated with peak experiences are rapture, epiphany, the numinous.

I'm sure several of have peak experience rushing back as you're listening to this.

Bigger on the Inside

Here's what we know about peak experiences. They:

- * have a long half-life in our memory.
- * lead to an increase in personal awareness and understanding.
- * can serve as a turning point in a person's life.
- * allow people to feel at one with the world
- * are often connected to religious, artistic or athletic pursuits.

If we go granular and look at the role of awe and wonder, we can see why peak experience are so profoundly powerful.

Awe

The benefits of awe include:

- * slowing the heart rate and deepening breathing. It also

aids digestion. Awe is basically a down regulator of the nerves system

* quietens the negative self talk in our head - perhaps because of an absence of self-preoccupation. This is doubly important in a digital world of comparison and shame.

Where do we find awe?

Awe can be found in:

- * the present moment and the lives of inspiring people
- * through curiosity and novelty
- * via interpersonal wonder — seeing the goodness and kindness in others

Where there is slowness and reflection -- there is the possibility for awe to bloom

Personally knowing where and how and with whom you find awe can give you a starting place to intentionally cultivate a relationship with awe.

Peak Experiences as Rapid Refills

If we pull out to the macro, peak experiences are pretty amazing as refills.

You can go from 15% capacity to 100%, or overflowing, in a very short period of time.

I have a theory there is a way to hack peak experience; that if you combine novelty and a shared experience, you've got a ripe circumstance for a peak experience.

Which leads us into playdates.

Play Dates for Big People

Calling our paired forays a play date, rather than a social outing, turns our catch ups into something adventurous and magical.

Play date evokes all the benefits of play:

- * simplicity

- * creativity

- * the joy of purposelessness

- * and yes, plate dates are **fun and relaxing**

Play dates are about doing something you enjoy, or trying something new with no real aim or reason other than you want to.

And why the fuck not?

And why not share it with someone.

The Benefits of Play Dates

Doing things with others releases all the feel good hormones — endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin which reduce stress and enhance mood.

People also say, that play dates are prime locations for serendipity, glimmers and glows.

Lastly, play dates embody two of my favourite states (one we recognise from childhood and another that's more in the grown up realm) — anticipation and savouring.

Anticipation and Savouring

There is a special childlike delight and excitement, looking forward to something (especially if we have trained ourselves out of it because we don't want to be disappointed).

Additionally in a world where just about everything can have an instant gratification angle.

Savour provides us all the benefits of being in the

moment, regardless how much time has passed. It is made up of three parts

- * prolonging

- * intensifying

- * shifting gears.

Choosing to savour a moment takes us back into the positive experience, intensifies it and prolongs the good feelings associated with it.

What's not to like there?

The Renewal Pay-Off

I know you can probably now count more reasons, than you have fingers, as to why you're committed to replenishment.

If nothing else, the pay off for dedication to the renewal portions of replenish is the ability to enjoy peak experiences and play dates.

May your cups truly runneth over, in the most delectable of ways.

REFLECTION

1. What new thing would you love to try? Who would you take on a playdate to try it?
2. Write about a peak experience. Include as much granular details as you can, invoking all the seasons and how you felt in the moment (and after).
3. What do you persistently tell yourself you don't have time for? (Double dare you to go organise a play date to do it!)

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Biohack #10 Foot Rub

Invite someone over for a foot rub (or foot tub)

If they feel weird letting you touch their feet (or you feel weird being touch) you can offer to just sit side-by-side soaking your feet.

The whole thing can be as simple or as elaborate as you want: shared buckets of warm, beautifully scented water with a fabulous view. Marbles make excellent massage beads if you have them hanging around.

Share a favourite beverage. Music.

Use lovely massage oil if you're going to massage feet (or the simplicity of coconut oil.)

If you feel the urge to go small, go big. Get lush.

Resmaa Menakem writes about washing and massaging feet:

You may be surprised at what a profound experience this

is for some people They may (or may not) melt or swoon or cry. You may be surprised at how few people will agree to it — even though it is almost universally pleasurable and deeply settling.

Micro-Reframe #11

Depth Work and Therapy

I want to begin today's reframe on depth work and therapy with research I came across in 2020 when I was writing an essay on help-seeking behaviours for uni.

Papers often began by citing the reasons people didn't seek help with a psychologist. Or as we more colloquially put it, why people didn't do therapy.

The top three reasons were:

- * money

- * access to services — both a lack of services or transportation to get to a service.

- * a lack of believe they had it in themselves to do therapy.

So that means with money and somewhere to go and a way to get there, the perceived lack of personal capacity

prevents people from seeking help.

Four years on that research still haunts with me.

The Hope Built into Replenish

It's my hope that the replenish framework and the overall philosophy of replenishment gives you the personal resources and bandwidth for the healing and growth work you want to do in the future. So you gain the insights and understanding important to you.

Anecdotally, I know there is a lot of truth in this.

I have friends who were finally able to enter therapy because they had both the internal and external support to weather what therapy bought up and demanded of them.

Because healing and growth are never passive pursuits.

If you Google any number of related questions about coping with therapy — you'll get a raft of results about

how, as a psychologist, to cope with difficult clients.

Dealing with the difficulties of therapy as an individual
— well that's on you.

Just go do self care.

Differentiating Therapy and DepthWork/Coaching

Before I go on I want to differentiate therapy from depth work or coaching.

I separate them out via the training one has with trauma.

As a depth worker, I am trauma-informed through my coaching qualification but have no formal training in trauma work.

This compares to one of my closest friends, a clinical psychologist who does have the training. Just like my network chiropractor is specifically trained in how trauma sits in the nervous system and the ways it

manifests in all areas of life.

If you're not ready (or aren't in the market for) structured therapy one of the gentlest and most profound ways I've found for the growth and healing that comes self inquiry, is to commit to a depth year.

The Depth Year

The idea was first put forward by David Cain in a 2017 blog post. He wanted to create a social and individual movement that disrupted among other things, the consumerist mindset of new and more, especially where it was easy to start and never finish something.

So he encouraged people to go deep rather than wide. For an entire year.

He wrote:

Drill down for value and enrichment instead of

fanning out ... turn to the wealth of options already in your house, literally and figuratively.

And went on to say:

A big part of the Depth Year's maturing process would be learning to live without regular doses of the little high we get when we start something new. If we indulge in it too often, we can develop a sort of "sweet tooth" for the feeling of newness itself.

Cain proposed people improve skills rather than learn new ones. To consume media already stockpiled instead of acquiring more.

At the conclusion of 2017 he reflected on his experience, which he said was not what he expected.

Caine wrote:

...we can't go deeper in a given area of life without coming to terms with why we were never able to go deep before.

This goes for relationships. For creative pursuits. For

just about anything in life.

Read the original articles:

[Go deeper, not wider](#)

[Why the depth year was my best year](#)

My Depth Year (2022)

I took a depth year with my *anam cara* in 2022 and it didn't look anything like I thought it would.

I put a moratorium on new books either bought or borrowed, and on purchasing new courses. My focus was to read what was already in my house. To learn from what I'd already invested in

But that wasn't how it unfurled.

Instead, I read just about nothing. I bought two new books which were required reading for my coaching qualification. And all the courses on my hard drive, yep you guessed it, they remained untouched.

Instead what happened was, I found slowness. Then eventually experienced stillness.

I learned that it was okay to return repeatedly to pain and tender points. That it didn't make me a failure. It instead made me a human with layers (yeah like an ogre and an onion) and each time I returned to these, I came with new insights and tools and experiences to excavate the next layer.

It was never the old me there.

It built a new kind of self belief and tenacity in me.

It also significantly shifted how I thought about my client work.

Lastly, on the back of everything I experienced, I freed

myself from a significant relationship, after a lifetime of gaslighting and trauma.

The enrichment that happened in my home was after almost eight years of camping on the floor of my office on a single mattress I chose better for myself.

I chose a bedroom over an. I dismantled my office, clearing out the felted layers of dust and misery accumulated over the years. The carpet came up. The walls got repainted. I did it with the support of my family and neighbourhood friends.

Now, every time I open the door and look into my room there is a rush of joy and relief. Yes, there is sanctuary there, but also the memory that I am not alone in this gig called life.

A depth year is a beautiful companion to the work of Replenish. It is a powerful investment in the present and the future. I highly recommend sharing it with a friend.

Our 2022 depth year laid the foundation for my *anam cara* and I to do a Year of Uncertainty in 2023 and a

Year of Asking right now, in 2024.

Supporting Change

Change requires a considerable stockpile of personal bandwidth, resources and support.

I was trained to support people who were uncoachable. We spent almost six months exploring all the ways people could be uncoachable and why and how to meet them where they were.

Most people can go into deficit to push through to create a change in their life, but once in deficit, it's almost impossible to maintain that change.

To have an experienced change and then to lose it, I'm a firm believer that is the biggest way to fail a client. The most catastrophic way to undermine any future investment in change. And I just won't do it.

We need that stock pile if we're going to incite a change

and hold onto it until it eventually becomes our new normal.

Imperfection's Roles With Change

We also need to experience the imperfection that is often and two steps forward one step back that comes with exploration, decision making and integration — which I hope has been woven deeply into the framework we've been building over the last 3 weeks.

Let's circle back to therapy to end.

Therapy Again

Long term therapy of any kind — whether it psychological or somatic — is a long term investment in

the future. And it is my hope that replenish provides you with what you need if you take this path.

I want there to be more of you, present and energised on a daily basis, to go out into the world. To have everything you need to bring you into a closer relationship with yourself and others, your passions, your dreams and the necessities of social and environmental change that will support and sustain us all into the future.

REFLECTION

1. What growth or healing work would you like to do in the future? What additional resources would you need?
2. How does the idea of a depth year sit with you? What would you commit to go deeper with? Who would you share it with?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

Biohack #11 Minus

Take something OFF your to-do list today. How does it feel? What's the response in your body?

Tomorrow take something off.

And every day for the next 14 days.

Trust that less is more.

Micro-Reframe #12

Self and Others

When I first spoke about my ideas around reframing self-care, I spoke of self-replenishment. Across February, as I was promoting the course I felt less and less like it was just about self — yes self first — but I wanted the philosophy to be something that could be applied to families, friendships, workplaces, neighbourhoods and communities.

I hoped the framework could be adapted to other circumstances where people were in desperate need of refill.

Especially community organisations whose members often burn out in the process of trying to effect lasting change.

Self-care is often derided because of the emphasis of self .. It's countered by the idea or the need for “community

care”. And I am all for that — however I’m not apologetic that Replenish starts with you.

Masks On

Once you’ve got your mask on, you can do something about assisting others. What is an imperative on a plane is somehow lost in every day life as selfish and indulgent or as yet another toxic hallmark of individualistic society.

It’s not when society rides on your back.

None of us can truly replenish in isolation though. We live communally. We work with others. And as much as becoming a hermit might seem like the gold standard for life sometimes, there are benefits of having others in the replenish equation.

So today we take a tiny toe-dip into the world of others.

Because of the immensity of where replenishment touches other people in our life — this reframe drills down on five areas:

- * Co-regulation
- * The drama triangle
- * Gratitude
- * Pets
- * Forgetting

Co-Regulation

Co-regulation has been the buzz word in parenting circles for at least the last half a decade. It didn't belong to the parenting vernacular 20 years ago when my son was born.

The simplest definition is:

... the process through which children develop the ability to soothe and manage distressing emotions and sensations through connection with nurturing and reliable primary caregivers.

Co-regulation isn't just for kids though.

Sometimes regulation is too much for us to do alone.

This is where loved ones enter the picture. We can co-regulate with a close friend or a partner. Our bodies can also learn to regulate in the presence of an experienced therapist.

Plus, in a group, our bodies regulate in the presence of other regulated bodies.

We can find regulation in meditation groups, yoga classes and spiritual gatherings. But we can also find it in dog parks, libraries and other quiet places or locations of shared passion.

We also co-regulate at comedy shows and concerts.

We know heart rhythms entrain when people sing together.

Studies show when people have similar physiological experiences, they forever feel closer.

Elegant studies from 2022 showed when people heard a story, their hearts beat in a similar way even if they were not in the same room as each other.

Narrative is a potent form of refill. It drives common physiological responses. These responses are a powerful glue for relationship building and maintenance.

Watch movies together, share stories, play or listen to music together. No one said co-regulation couldn't be fun.

The Toxic Drain of Drama

Stephen Karpman is the father of The Drama Triangle.

In this three-way dynamic there is a victim, perpetrator and rescuer.

While drama is entertaining on screen and in books, it is a diabolic drain in every day life. Especially if you are in close relationship with someone who perpetually needs to be a victim.

We are often drawn repeatedly into this dynamic — through guilt, through a need to help and sometimes

through no fault of your own (especially if you are targeted as the perpetrator — as a friend of mine once said, in the absence of an axe to grind one will be created).

Two things to know about this: if you choose to step out of the role of rescuer or perpetrator, the victim will readily find someone new to play the part, as their identities are very often aligned with the victim personae and their view of the world is skewed. It is one of the few places where it's good to be replaceable.

The second thing to know is that there is a way to transmute this. The drama triangle becomes the empowerment dynamic when the victim becomes a creator, the rescuer becomes a coach and the perpetrator becomes a challenger.

This becomes a generative energy where dynamic tension drives healing and growth.

You can learn more about this in [The Power of TED by David Emerald](#).

Gratitude

Here's the low down on gratitude. The sweet spot is not keeping a gratitude journal.

The most potent form of gratitude — the one that juices the circuits in your brain and lights up your endocrine system — is when someone tells you that they are grateful for you.

This is very much a pay it forward model of gratitude.

Developing a practice of actively expressing your gratitude for others lays the foundation for others to in turn express their gratitude for you.

It's not intended as transactional — ie. if I tell you how much you make my life easier by making me a coffee in the morning I don't then expect you to tell me something that I do that makes your life easier in the morning.

It is intended to be given as selfless appreciation and

thanks.

It is about developing a culture of gratitude around you; leading by example.

Pets

Not all the others in our sphere are of the human variety.

Pets have a positive impact on our social, mental and physical health.

Everything from improving heart health, lowering cholesterol and cortisol, increasing your mobility and fitness, and decreasing your sense of loneliness. They can give a sense of security and routine. And offer distractions from distress or disruptions in life.

Lastly our furred companions offer us the kind of unconditional love that can be hard to find among our

human companions.

So go pat your fur babies, often.

Forgetting

On our last group call we talked about the cycles of forgetting that we go through in regards to known trajectories of self degradation, self destruction or repeated ways we lose those essential anchoring practices we need daily and weekly.

Or maybe it's the shitty dynamics we get caught in over and over again — which ultimately lead to being physically, emotionally, and mentally wrecked.

Why? Why do we forget? And how do we stop forgetting?

The best answer I have as to why we forget — there is

bad wiring, both handed down in our genes and in our socialising that favours the reversal of the prioritisation of self. So that we go back to giving to everyone else instead.

From an evolutionary perspective, this gives our offspring an advantage. It makes it more likely that our partner will continue to stay and provide protection and security.

Fuck that though. We are no longer in primitive societies or family groups.

How do we stop forgetting?

We need people close to us, that know our patterns, that know the hills we continually die on, and remind us of them before we go full phoenix.

We also need people who see that tending ourselves ultimately makes everyone's lives easier, so we can be reminded to do the things we need. And for them to graciously give us the space to do them.

Years ago, my friend wrote a story where the primary

caregiver turned into a vending machine. Their family didn't realise anything had changed.

Let's choose people who want us to be part of the feast. Not the sole provider of it.

REFLECTION

1. Where are you embedded in someone else's drama? What role do they expect you to play in it (perpetrator or rescuer?) What would happen if you simply stepped out of the story?

2. When was the last time you expressed your gratitude to someone? When was the last time someone expressed their gratitude for you?

3. Who will you nominate as your "Remembering Person"? And who will you nominate yourself as "Remembering Person" for?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

BioHack #12 The 6-second kiss and 20-second hug

Kiss your partner for six seconds (that's one six second kiss not six one second kisses). Six seconds is too long to kiss someone you don't like nor someone you feel unsafe with.

You must deliberately notice you like this person, trust this person, and feel affection for them. Noticing these things tells your body you are safe with your tribe.

Hug someone you love and trust for 20 seconds, each keeping your center of balance. No leaning in.

Research shows this kind of hug can change your hormones, slow your heart rate, lower your blood pressure, and improve your mood through the release of oxytocin.

These are both ways to end the stress response cycle -- where your body is shown it is safe and you're home safe and sound with people you love.

Micro-Reframe #13

Thriving in Limitations

I want to start by addressing the elephant in the room — humans don't actually do well with infinite possibilities. They don't even excel with lots.

When decision fatigue is a real thing, exacerbated by all the micro decisions that social media alone demands — less is more.

Also when you're suffering from compassion fatigue, limitations can be your best friend.

What if limitation didn't mean deprivation, but a strange form of freedom? What if?

Today we're exploring two different kinds of limitations — time and boundaries.

The things I'd like us to consider about time are:

- * the story we have around it
- * where our time goes
- * where we want our time to go

- * our best and worst times of the day
- * how to make best use of time
- * the perceptual skews of time
- * and, the impact of others on our time

The Story of Time

What is your story around time is?

Do you consider there is always enough time. That things happen with perfect timing. Or do you err on the side of not enough and that shitty circumstances stack.

Whatever your time story is — your brain, a pattern matching maven — will continually find affirming evidence for it.

If your story is there's not enough time, your brain will be continually compiling a highlight reel of all the ways you never have enough time.

If you feel hounded by time, it's worth experimenting with a gentler and more expansive story and let your brain pattern match to that for a few weeks and see how that changes things.

Where Your Time Goes

I had a client who was continually upset about the fact she struggled to maintain her morning meditation practice and the writing she needed to do to launch a business.

When she audited her time she found, that with three small children, one of whom wet the bed each night, she did 2.5 hours of laundry every day. The time she thought she had, and was somehow squandering, actually wasn't there.

When you know where your time goes, you can make informed decisions about what you'd prefer to spend your time on OR give yourself some grace for what you can't currently give yourself.

You can audit your time with [this document](#). The spaces are numbered 1 - 16. They represent 16 hours in the day. Place the hour increments according to when you wake up.

This same document can be used to create a schedule, though not everyone thrives in a schedule.

Knowing The Best Parts of Your Day

Even if you're not into schedules, even the loosey-goosey unstructured kind, knowing when you have energy for certain things and when you don't is essential for making the most of your time.

If there is something you love, that's really important to you, make time for it (if you can find a best fit time ever better) then protect the fuck out of it.

Pleasure Stacking

Pleasure stacking is combining the tedious with the beautiful.

What can you add to your chores so you're getting a hit

of something you enjoy? Maybe listen to music or an audio book or just plug into silence.

Is there something else you can combine with your commute? I have a friend who sketches on the train.

Similarly, if you have flexibility with your work, can you take it into a more beautiful space..

Our Perception of Time

While logically, there are 24 hours in a day, which pass in increments of hours / minutes / seconds which move in a more or less mechanised way per a clock, we all know the speed of time doesn't conform to a clock.

We can speed up time and slow it down.

We know flow states can stretch time into an endless state. Just as pain can drill time down so it feels never ending. Time passes quickly with friends. Or when we're working to a deadline. Plus different emotions change the quality of time.

The Changing Nature of Our Perception

The human experience of time has shifted over the last five or so years, amplified by the collective and individual experience of time during lock downs.

We are now more likely to experience time like a string of pearls, where like experiences are strung together. This is great when it comes to spending time with loved ones — it can feel like no time has passed (even more so than it used to.)

For everyday life it can feel like being trapped beneath layers of lead.

Time has become similar to text on a page. Trying to read a page with no white space, no margins or adequate line spacing, is overwhelming.

Because this is our new experience of time, cultivating temporal white space is really important.

Temporal White Spaces

Small activities that add the space between each strung pearl is essential.

Tiny disruptions, especially ones which slow down time, can ease the suffocation that time often comes with now.

This can be as simple as getting up and stretching your body. Or mindfully enjoying the view from the window (if there's one) as the jug boils for a cuppa.

Anything that breaks the relentlessness of time.

This is where time and rest and sensory first aide and your nervous system can all intersect for your highest good.

White-Anting

What eats into your time, especially responsibilities on a second and third consideration, that are habit rather than necessity?

What do you forgo because of the things you do for

others under this paradigm?

What do you resent? What tires you out? What do you give that is never appreciated?

And how do you support yourself and tend to the bruised heart and spiralling thoughts when you start to say no, as you start to reclaim your time, as there is always backlash in the beginning.

What do you need to keep saying yes to you?

Which brings us to final topic of Replenish ... boundaries.

Boundaries

One way of looking at boundaries is how we intentionally, with future-focus, informed by the past, limit the impact of others.

Yeah, just that.

Prentice Hemphill says that boundaries are the distance which I can love you and me simultaneously.

I also say boundaries are the distance which I can respect you and me simultaneously.

Boundaries are a gift to our children that bloom the older they get.

Boundaries are simple and complex and fraught.

Boundary setting is a skill we are not taught.

It is a skill we have to practice.

And it's a skill that hurts as we practice, but it gets easier with time.

Boundaries are a must. They protect us. And they protect others.

Anyone with has strong boundaries knows the importance of them and will honour others. It's the people without boundaries who are the social grenades waiting to go off.

Returning to Self-Fidelity

This brings us full circles to the start of Replenish and self-fidelity.

Perhaps boundaries are invoked in the no we say to others.

Perhaps self-fidelity resonates in the yes we gift ourselves.

Perhaps they are different sides of the coin of our sovereignty.

The boundaries we hold with ourselves, for ourselves, they bring us right back to where we began this journey: with a choice to no longer abandon ourselves.

REFLECTION

1. What is your story of time? What do you want your story of time to be? What you would have to let go / cultivate to tend to that story (so it can then tend to you??)
2. What time drain do you resent?

3. Who respects your boundaries (perhaps they sometimes remind you that you have boundaries around an issue or behaviour?) How reliably breaches your boundaries? What are you going to do next time this happens?

EMERGENCY TRIAGE

BioHack #13 Breathing

Breathing is the simplest way we have to communicate to our nervous system that we are okay.

Extending the out-breath is the sweet spot, but there are dozens of permutations on breathing.

Find a breathing pattern or modality that both you and your body love.

Practice it while you are calm, so you bring that settledness when you turn to breathing in moments of dis-regulation or distress.