

Sustainable Self-Care

Living a Life That You Love

Monica Fauble

Acupuncture with Monica





This workbook is designed to help you live a life you love *without the guilt and overwhelm*.

Hi, my name is Monica Fauble, and I'm a licensed acupuncturist in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

I've helped hundreds of people figure out what health looks like for them and how to get there. I especially love helping women struggling with ongoing health issues who want to feel good again.

Learn more and stay in touch at www.acupuncturewithmonica.com



© Monica Fauble 2017

Do you find yourself at a loss as to how to care for yourself?

Or maybe you know what you would like to be doing, but you just don't have the energy to do it, or you have no idea how or where to start?

Are you exhausted by keeping up with what to eat or how to live according to the wisdom of friends, doctors, gurus, or anyone else who claims to have the "ultimate" answer?

Do you have a list of "shoulds" that feel all-consuming, guilt-producing, and completely overwhelming to your heart?

You are not alone.

We live in an era of overwhelm, and an era of abundance.

These days, there is so much (too much) advice “out there.”

The real challenge with all of that well-intended advice is that it's completely external and may not be connected to the needs of your heart. It may also feel like too much because (very simply) it actually IS TOO MUCH to do it all.



You may have tried many times to stick to a plan but failed. This leaves you feeling discouraged and unsure that you “have it in you” to see yourself through to achieving your goals. Those dreams you hold dear might seem so distant that you’re not even sure if you will ever see them come to life.

You might also feel frustrated and worn down by others telling you to “power through” your resistance or “just stick to the plan.” **You feel like you just don’t have enough willpower to do what you’re supposed to be doing.**

But there is another way available to you.

When you know what your values are, and you hold dear to the deepest vision of the life you want to live, you’re able to tap into what it is you REALLY want, so that you can prioritize small steps that will take you towards your goals.

When you sink into self-care that’s individualized, and in alignment with your deepest desires, your self-care practices are able to stick so that these little touchstones of self-love can become a real support to you.



**Self-care at its best
is sustainable,
deeply supportive,
and so nourishing.**

But You Can't Get There Without Two Things

The first essential component is **a solid sense of WHY you are doing what you've chosen to do to care for yourself**. Without this, your self-care becomes just another box to check off in a long list of to-dos. You end up losing sight of your real goal, get discouraged, and end up throwing in the towel.

The second essential component is **a plan and a structure about how you are going to integrate self-care into your daily (or weekly) life**. It's easy to think that you're going to pump yourself up and just do it, but this often doesn't work because it's not always realistic to pile on one more thing atop the structure of your busy life.

With these two frameworks in mind, this workbook will help you work through your true goal/deepest desire behind the self-care that you want to implement.

It will also help you create a plan and a structure for yourself so that you can start integrating self-care into your busy life in a supportive and sustainable way.

But First...Why Care About Self-Care?

Self-care, in my experience, is the foundation for a full and fabulous life. Knowing how to care for yourself helps you have enough energy and feel plugged-in to yourself and your values.

Even more importantly perhaps, self-care allows you to be of service. Self-care helps you find the inner mojo and the motivation to extend yourself out and care for other people.

These connections, in turn, help fill you back up with a sense of contribution, community, caring, and connection.

This is why we care for ourselves. To have enough energy to do what we love. To have enough energy to make a difference in the world and in the lives of those we care about.

But Isn't Self-Care SELFish?

In my experience: no, absolutely not. **When your energy is bound up by exhaustion, burnout, anxiety, or overwhelm, it's almost impossible to be available for others.** For some of us, it's tempting to just keep giving, but this ultimately leaves us depleted and unable to help the people we care about and love.

If you aren't taking care of yourself, and you don't feel you're at your best, you can end up angry, annoyed, depleted, or just completely uninterested when someone you care about has a need or makes a request. If you want to be effective in the world, you have to be ready to do the work you're wanting to do. For me, self-care is the foundation that provides me with the resources to do that work.

Why Willpower Alone Will Never Be Enough

Our culture tends to rely A LOT on willpower.

Just push through! Just do it! Mind over matter.

If only it were that simple. When we rely on willpower time and time again, we often end up burned out and exhausted by the effort.

Relying on willpower over and over again sets you up for a struggle, a struggle that sometimes feels like an epic battle! This battle pits you against your cravings, against your desire to stay comfy on the couch. It pits you against yourself. This kind of confrontation ends up as a lose-lose.

The [first definition of willpower](#) according to the American Psychological Association (APA) is: “The ability to delay gratification, resisting short-term temptations in order to meet long-term goals.”

Willpower is intended to be a SHORT-TERM effort! It’s not intended to be an everyday strategy.

There’s nothing wrong with willpower and sometimes we do have to stop, take a breath, and say NO to something that’s not in alignment with what we REALLY want, or be brave enough to say YES to something that may seem challenging but is in alignment with our heart’s desires. I find that willpower is most effective as an occasional effort to help you stay on track.

Willpower can be great for unusual or occasional situations that pop up (i.e. I won't eat that cake that appeared just now in the office breakroom, or at the very least I will avoid that cake for 30 minutes, come back, and hope that it's gone!), but **willpower is a limited resource**.

Willpower is not intended to be our number one strategy. Willpower isn't meant to be the force that helps us give up cake forever and ever, over and over again.

Willpower might serve you very well to get you past that single piece of cake. But what about the candy at your coworker's desk, which you pass at least 20 times in a day, or the brownies that appear an hour after the cake?

Willpower can effectively get you through a single hurdle, but it's not realistic, and it's actually incredibly draining, to keep expecting yourself to OVERPOWER temptation over and over again.

Close your eyes for a minute and imagine “powering through” every single time you see a piece of cake, or are confronted with whatever it is that you have been struggling with.

I’m guessing that might feel like a lot of pressure. You may feel tightness in your chest or shoulders or a sense of clenching in your guts. You may just feel exhausted by the effort required to say no over and over again.

Asking your adrenal glands to CONSTANTLY push you away from your temptations, or towards whatever it is you want to achieve, is asking A LOT from your endocrine system.

This constant struggle sets you up to be at odds with some part of yourself, and over time this struggle can end up in exhaustion and collapse.



Framing a **positive motivation** for yourself instead is a much more friendly and powerful way to help you stay on track with your deepest wishes and truest desires.

The words “positive motivation” may sound happy-go-lucky to you, but it’s actually incredibly brave to envision for yourself *exactly* how you want to live.

How Having a “Positive Motivation” Can Get You There Instead

Establishing a positive motivation can help gently and reliably guide you towards a life you love.

Rather than the brute force of will, a positive motivation will help reinforce a sense of caring and your deepest desire to feel good in your body and content with how you live your life.

A positive motivation is simply a compelling image of whatever it is you truly want for yourself.

It may sound wishy-washy or too “dreamy” to you, but because a positive motivation is actually in alignment with your core values, and the desires of your heart, that makes it incredibly powerful.

Here's the problem with positive motivation. We usually frame our "positive" motivation with what we DON'T want, with what we want to escape from.

When we focus on what we DON'T want, we end up pushing life away.

An example of what we DON'T want might be: "I want to feel less stressed at work."

You might be thinking that pushing away/pushing against stress isn't such a bad idea, but this process of resisting, rejecting, pushing against, or negating can end up in a struggle that uses up A LOT of your energy.

It may take a little more work to figure out what you DO want, but it's worth it, because then you can set your compass and move towards whatever it is you truly desire.

Three different people might all say that they “want to feel less stressed at work” but when all three dig deeper into what that really looks like, the process might be radically different.

The first person might define less stress as a sense of ease. Her effective strategy to meet this goal of ease might be setting aside time once a day to take a twenty minute break. (Positive motivation = I want to feel at ease at work.)

A second person might define less stress as more community at work and a feeling that she is working in collaboration or partnership. She might want to find ways to share the workload with colleagues or have back-up on a project so that she doesn't feel alone. (Positive motivation = I want to find a sense of community and collaboration at work.)

A third person might want to be less stressed by experiencing a little bit of spaciousness or a more leisurely pace. Her strategy might be arriving at work ten minutes early to have a cup of tea so that she can start the day with a sense of ready calm. (Positive motivation = I want to find some spaciousness and leisure within my workday.)

Because all three *strategies* fit under the umbrella *need* of “I want to be less stressed at work,” it’s important that you dig a little deeper to uncover what it is you DO want (ease, community, or leisure for example) so that you can start making small steps in that direction.

With that framework of a positive motivation in place, let’s move into the exercise.





The Exercise: Connecting with the Needs of Your Heart

1. Find a nice comfortable quiet place where you can be un-interrupted for about 15 minutes. You may want to have some paper or a journal with you to jot down a few notes. Or you can print the last few pages of this workbook and use the space provided here to take notes.

2. You can do this exercise either lying down or sitting up fairly straight with a tall spine. Choose a position that helps you feel connected to your body and relaxed. This exercise can be repeated as many times as you like, so don't worry about getting it "right" the first time. Each time you repeat this exercise, you can go deeper and deeper or find a different perspective.

Example: I decided to try lying down and I'm noticing that my mind is thinking a lot about how lazy this feels! And about how long it's been since I've really let myself relax without stimulation like TV or music! This feels kind of weird and also wonderful.

3. Let your eyes close if that feels comfortable to you so that you can begin connecting more intentionally to your body. Notice any tightness or pain or discomfort or areas that feel numb or absent. None of these feelings are incorrect or a problem. We're just taking stock of how we feel.

Example: Wow my shoulders feel so tight. I felt them on and off all day, but now that I'm taking time out to be with myself, I notice that I'm holding a lot of tension!

Example: I feel cramped for time and drained at the end of the day. I'm really feeling worn down and exhausted. I'm wanting more spaciousness and I'm wanting more energy so that my body can feel strong and my mind can feel clear instead of thinking all the time and feeling worried.

6. Stay in connection with yourself and take three gentle breaths in and out. Look back at the previous question and double-check that what you're wanting is indeed a positive motivation.

By positive motivation, I mean something that you want to move towards rather than something you want to move away from. Take a moment and jot down some notes on what comes to you.

Example: I want a feeling of spaciousness and more energy. I would like for my body to feel strong and my thinking to feel clearer.

7. Now that you have your positive motivation written out, I would like to invite you to find one small action that will help you move towards this goal.

Example: I would like to try taking a walk at lunch at least three times a week for 20 minutes. This will give me a sense of spaciousness in my busy day and the exercise will help clear my mind and strengthen my body. I'm aiming for three times a week so that it's manageable and I can miss walking during two work days if needed. I usually take at least one walk per weekend, so I'm going to focus on my work week, which is when I feel the most overwhelmed.

8. Now that you have a small action, I want to invite you to check in with yourself and see if this feels doable. Remember that self-care is ideally supportive and sustainable. Most of us have a tendency to bite off more than we can chew.

Example: Walking three days a week feels good to me, but now that I'm reflecting on it, I feel a little anxious about doing this since I haven't been taking lunch breaks at all! I'd like to try to walk

20 minutes just once a week to start, then when I've started to really get into that, I will add a second day and maybe eventually a third.

9. Now that you have your positive motivation and your doable action written out, I want to encourage you to celebrate your sincere intention to start stepping towards a life you really love.

Write out your positive motivation and your doable action (small step) on the next page and hang them up to help you remember.

Congratulate yourself for taking the first step on this path to better health.



My positive motivation (what I want for myself)

My doable action (a small step to help me start moving towards my positive motivation)



Closing your eyes again, sink back into your breath.

Repeat your positive motivation either out loud or in your mind three times.

This is the bedrock of your self-care.

Repeat your doable action out loud or in your mind three times.

This is the soft wooded path that will start taking you towards a life you truly love.



Here we are at the end of this workbook and the beginning of your self-care journey! If you need additional support, please [contact me](#).

Acupuncture might just be the support that you need. I'm happy to talk this over with you.

Do you have a friend who you think might benefit from this workbook? Please encourage them to sign-up for my email list to access this resource and many others.

www.acupuncturewithmonica.com

Thank you so much for taking the time to care for yourself.

I hope that this workbook was helpful for you.

I would love to hear what you think and what happens with your self-care!

Let's be in touch.



monica@acupuncturewithmonica.com

All images are courtesy of [Hanbit Kwon](#)

