

# The Trauma Stewardship Institute's MAP FOR MANAGING ONE'S LIFE

DAY

When I wake up, I will protect my morning. I won't reach for: News, social media, work/school updates, anyone who needs me for anything. This helps me avoid being flooded by cortisol first thing.



Pema Chödrön says, "Death is certain, your time of death is uncertain. How do you want to spend your time?" Ask myself once a day, am I spending my time - in life - how I want to be? If so, how can I further support myself? If not, what concrete changes can I make?



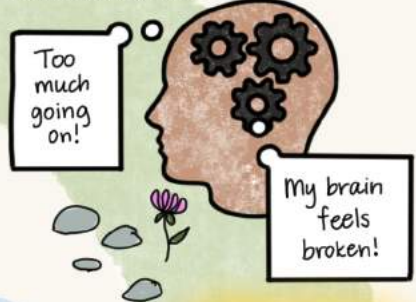
↓ **BLOOD PRESSURE + SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM ACTIVITY**  
↑ **IMMUNE SYSTEM + ELEVATED MOOD**

Decision fatigue & cognitive overload can be debilitating. Simplify my surroundings & my routines. Be mindful of hydration + glucose levels. Track when my mental acuity is high and maximize those times.

6 days a week [unless medically advised against it], I'm getting my heart rate up and breaking a sweat. Thinking to myself: "Anything that has accumulated in my nervous system over the past 24 hours, may it be completely released so I can show up for this next 24 hours..."



Look outside, be outside. When I'm in a meeting, during a class, to work, to play, when I have a few mins for a break. If even for a moment or two, feel the unassailable power nature has on my health - on all levels.



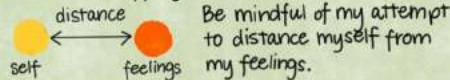
Too much going on!

My brain feels broken!

For optimal coping, I must tend to my nervous system. Given it's continuously anticipating & reacting to my surroundings, I need conditions in place that prevent me from becoming saturated and, ultimately, rupturing. **Tactic #1** - Limit exposure to anything unnecessary that adversely affects my nervous system. **Tactic #2** - Metabolize, efficiently, anything that starts to accumulate in my nervous system. Note to self: While I have my own nervous system, it may be helpful to consider the nervous system of my home, of where my loved ones spend time, of my community, etc. and how those nervous systems, too, can become saturated, and rupture, over time.



How's my consumption? Need help with any of my addictions? Substances/screen time/caffeine/constantly criticizing/adrenaline/being over scheduled/shopping, etc.?



With news and social media, be deliberate and mindful if/when, both what I'm taking in and what I'm putting out. Reminder: the degree to which I'm dedicated to social and environmental justice does not equal time spent digitally dialed in.

Understand that every day I may be influenced by moments small & large, mundane and significant, that continuously arise, like waves. These waves, and how I experience them, may have deep undercurrents from what has come before me via intergenerational oppression, intergenerational trauma, and epigenetics. Sometimes it may make sense, or not, but [even if it's not my strong suit], acting with self-respect and compassion, towards myself, is essential. Historical forces beyond what meet the eye can impact me in ways I may not understand or be conscious of and I will remember Jack Kornfield saying, "If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete."

What's going well? What am I grateful for? What am I psyched about? Who can I thank? Repeat a-l-l day.



When navigating a pandemic and systematic oppression and structural supremacy and the climate crisis and democracies in peril and my job/school and caretaking and my life in general...

**< REACTIVITY > INTENTIONALITY**

In the spirit of striving to Do No Harm, I will pause and think before I speak/post/tweet/reply/engage. Despite the negativity bias headwinds throughout society today, I will practice extending grace and humility, over & over + remember the merit of approaching life with a beginner's mind.



Sleep = critical. What is my bedtime tonight? How can I sequence my evening so I can shut it down by then & not get into sleep-deficit. Set a reminder to: Give all my electronics and screens their own bed time, an hour before mine.

When and where possible, be around animals and take a moment to notice the reduction in stress hormones and how regenerating even a moment or two can be.



Engage in mindfulness to assist my nervous system in staying regulated and countless other health and mental health benefits. Tai chi, qi gong, yoga, meditation. All portable and accessible and even a few minutes here or there can provide the right scaffolding.

Have I done anything edifying for myself today? Actually connected with someone I care about? Taken a moment to laugh or find levity in a nourishing way? Be transported by art?



My day begins

And if it's been one of those days, I'll remember Jeff Li's mantra: "Forgive yourself every night, recommit every morning."

Our systems & structures have a moral mandate & an ethical obligation to create sustainable environments within which we work, learn, and engage. When they do, let us pause, notice + give thanks. When that's not the case, we can decide if/when/how to engage. While these choices may be fraught and complex, I hope refuge can be found in Howard Thurman's offering: "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that, because what the world needs, is people who have come alive."