

BEAT THE
BLUES

A collection of suggestions and ideas
from the **Touch Network team**

TOUCH

Telling stories
Touching lives



Hello

Staying upbeat can be tough. Life can sometimes get us down. The season, the weather, a challenging situation in work or study, poor health, difficulties in relationships or family life or something else entirely. Whatever it is, you are not alone, we can all feel blue at times.

This little book of suggestions and ideas is designed to help to Beat the Blues.

It comes from our experience of hearing amazing people's stories of how they got through tough times.

People continuously amaze us at how they show resilience, resourcefulness and strength in the way they move through struggles, and many of these people have no idea how amazing they are. We've learnt that everyone has a story, and everyone has their own way of journeying through it. My Amazing Story facilitates the sharing of these stories so that we can all be inspired, encouraged and feel hopeful that we can all get through tough challenges both now and in the future.

We hope these suggestions and ideas come in useful to you, either now or in the future, but whenever you are in a place of needing to Beat the Blues.

Thanks for reading,
The My Amazing Story Team

1. Take the First Step

With many things in life, it is really difficult to take that very first step on the road to completing your goals. It is particularly hard, if they are something which you anticipate being difficult for you or for others, physically or emotionally. The hardest part is the anticipation and then the realisation comes that the anticipation is normally much worse than the actual doing.

Try to think of the positives of doing it and focus on them. Try to remember that you're thinking about taking the first step because you imagine that it will have a positive outcome for you or for other people.

Don't fear the first step, it will be worth it.



2. Know What Gets You Out of Bed in the Morning

To get out of bed in the morning, sometimes we need a little extra push. A huge mug of our favourite hot drink can be a good start, but it can also be helpful to focus our minds, and reflect on our goals in the morning. This can help to motivate and inspire us to keep going when things might be tough.

Try to write down two or three future goals which you can work towards. You could do smaller daily goals or larger yearly aims, or even a mixture – whichever suits you the best! Maybe also reflect on things you've done in the past which may inspire you to come up with new ones.

3. Trust your instincts

Instincts can be difficult things to change because they are, by their nature, formed without conscious thought. However, it is possible to 'retrain' them by knowing, understanding, and trusting yourself.

Think about the outcomes and reactions, of yourself and others, to situations which you've been in, both good and bad. Becoming aware of both positive and negative things will help you recognise your instinctive reactions. Then in the future you can try to enforce the good positive instincts.

Trusting yourself also comes with practice, so try to actively believe and tell yourself that you can do things and know what is best for you.

You're the one living your life, trust yourself to make good decisions.



4. Find Your Friends

Friends are an integral part of most people's lives and they can be an extremely important support system for you if you choose to reach out and use them.

Think about instances when your friends have really been there for you or had a positive impact on your life, whether it be something small or big. Think about which friendships you feel have value and focus on connecting with those people. Try to be honest with them and tell them when you're struggling because people can only help you if they know you need it.

So, try to be aware of who you can share your best and worst moments with and talk to them.



5. Feel Powerful

Being uninspired or unmotivated is a feeling which we commonly get when we're not in control, or we're unable to do the things we need or want to do. So sometimes you need a little boost to help you to feel like you are more able to face the day head on.

Make yourself feel powerful, find a song or a quote or a phrase which you relate to and play it or read it when you're feeling uninspired or down. Maybe you'll need to change it over time but that's okay because we also change over time.

So, read those words, or go blast that song and feel more powerful about the day ahead!



6 . Listen to Yourself

People often joke about people who talk to themselves, but it can be a very effective tool to work through your feelings and find your perspective on your situation or other issues.

Try to see what works for you, talking to yourself in front of a mirror or, if that makes you feel a bit silly, then just say the words aloud as you're cooking or getting dressed. It may help to write these thoughts down as well and stick them up around your living space so you can be reminded when going about your everyday activities.

So, write down some uplifting phrases and say them back to yourself, maybe you'd like to start with 'You've got this'.



7. You're Not a Burden

It can be easy to think that other people wouldn't want to hear your story, maybe you think they are too busy to listen or they wouldn't be interested in listening to you. But if you reach out to people and just ask, then they are very likely to listen.

There will be times when people can't listen because they have stuff going on in their own lives or they are busy. But even if they do put you off, try to be objective and recognise that it's life getting in the way and it's not because they don't want to listen to you. Try to arrange a time to speak with them when you're both free and able to speak to one other.

Maybe sharing your story will give them the courage to share their story with you or somebody else.

And remember... you and your story are not a burden.

8 . Press Pause

It's very normal to get caught up in daily life, and it can be hard to take a minute to look at what you've achieved during your day before continuing with the next one. We live in a world with a lot of stimulation, from the internet, the news, radio, TV, email, so take a step back and look at where you are. It can be hard to remove yourself from these distractions but just try to unplug for a moment.

Learn to recognise your achievements and things which have not gone so well during your day. Try to look at these objectively so find one negative thing, and then two things which have gone better about your day.

Life is often compared to a treadmill, so press the pause button and look at how far you've come, before beginning again.

One bad thing

Two good things



9. Listen to Others

People, particularly your friends, are an extremely useful resource for overcoming difficult times in your life. Sometimes when you're inside a situation it's really hard to look at it objectively, which is why the outside perspective from others can be particularly valuable.

Try to talk to people you trust about your situation. By this we mean listening and thinking about what they're saying and their recommendations and reasonings. You may even disagree with them, but if you listen to their perspectives, you can understand more of your own perspective.



10. Let Yourself Breathe

When people are stressed they are often told “to just breathe”, which can be unhelpful if said as a simple platitude. However, it can be an important exercise to stop for a moment, get your bearings, and get in touch with yourself.

Try slow, deep breaths. Concentrate on the air rushing in through your nostrils, the lifting of your chest, the drawing of that breath to a close and then slowly releasing it. Maybe do it a few times and count your breaths.

Try it whenever it suits you, maybe work it into your daily routine - when boiling the kettle, getting out of the car, getting ready for bed etc. Breathing is natural, we do it all the time, so we don't lose anything by focussing on breathing for a few minutes, or even just one.

11. Celebrate the Small Things

It can be easy to focus on the large achievements in life, the big goals and milestones which people tend to recognise and celebrate more. However, you must also remember all the little achievements you make. They are small stepping stones which help you to reach the bigger goal.

Try to celebrate the little things which may be routine but can become quite hard to do when you're feeling down. Like getting dressed, or cooking a meal, having a shower, or making time to meet with friends. Allow yourself to celebrate the little things because it really is an achievement to get out of bed and get dressed.

So... go and CELEBRATE the small things!



13. It's Not Too Late

Something which causes people to procrastinate or not do the things which they're supposed to do, is the fear that it is too late to fix things. Try to remember that it isn't too late, so take a deep breath and convince yourself to try to do it!

People tend to be more understanding than we often give them credit for, so often it is not too late at all.

At the same time, our jobs will sometimes come with certain deadlines which cannot be changed but try not to panic. It can feel like a huge leap of faith, but it will be worth it in the end.

So, send that late email or talk to that friend, you'll feel so much better.



14. Treat Yourself

It can be hard to keep going and keep going, so... when it gets too much, treat yourself! Do something you enjoy (it doesn't have to be a grand trip abroad), maybe go on a bike ride, spend the day reading a book, or watch that movie you've been meaning to watch for a while.

Try not to weigh up whether or not you deserve it because you do, your brain deserves some time off, and a treat will boost your positivity. Just little things which you enjoy will give you those positive feelings and the energy to continue.

So, go and treat yourself!

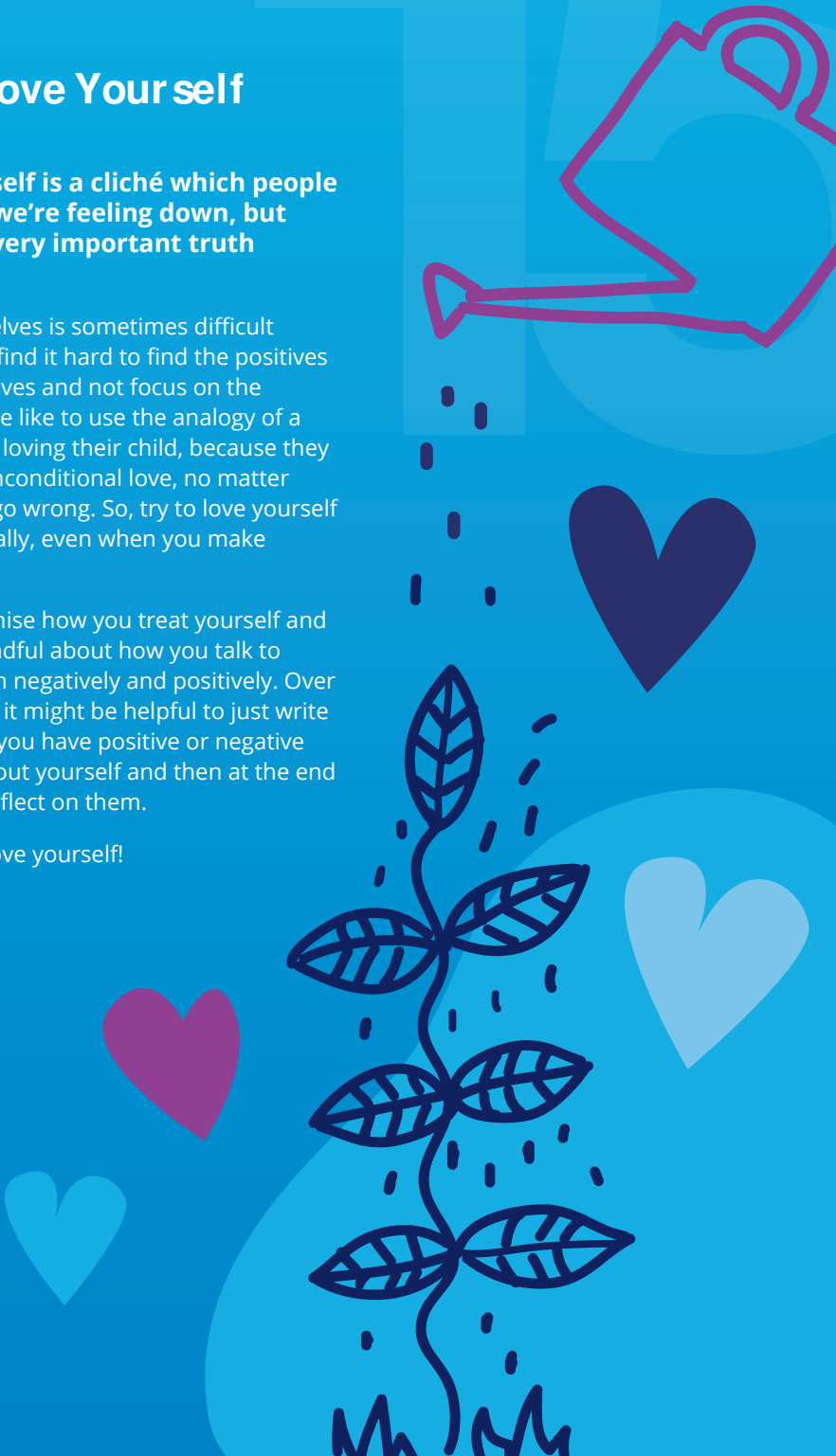
15. Love Yourself

Love yourself is a cliché which people say when we're feeling down, but there is a very important truth behind it.

Loving ourselves is sometimes difficult because we find it hard to find the positives about ourselves and not focus on the negatives. We like to use the analogy of a good parent loving their child, because they give them unconditional love, no matter where they go wrong. So, try to love yourself unconditionally, even when you make mistakes.

Try to recognise how you treat yourself and be more mindful about how you talk to yourself both negatively and positively. Over the next day it might be helpful to just write down when you have positive or negative thoughts about yourself and then at the end of the day reflect on them.

So, go and love yourself!



16. Give Yourself Time to Worry

Most people try to convince themselves not to worry because we all know it is unhelpful to be worrying all the time. We try to force those worrying thoughts out of our heads and concentrate on other things. Except of course, this normally makes us worry even more...

When you know that you have all these worries whirling around in your head, try to set yourself some limited time where you allow yourself to worry. Maybe allow yourself this time once a day. But stop when time is up! You may find it much easier to concentrate after allowing yourself this time. If you find yourself plagued with worries later, write them down, and worry about them when you next have 'worry time' scheduled in your diary.

So, do worry! But, do it, when the time is right, so it doesn't control your life too much!



17. Work When You're Feeling Inspired

We do our best work when we're feeling motivated so try to work when you're feeling inspired about what you're doing. Of course, we all have good days and bad days and if you have a flexible schedule, it may be possible for you to only work on those good days. However, if you don't have this luxury, then try to focus on the positives of your job, any bits that make you feel happy or inspired, such as how your work helps you or others.

Try to pin down why you have the job, and maybe write a little reminder for yourself so you can look at it and feel positive, or maybe even inspired!



18 . Look for the Silver Linings

It can be easy to focus on the negatives when you feel like things aren't going your way or when you know you have made a mistake. However, try to find the positive side to your experiences, maybe you learned how not to do something, or upon reflection would change the way you react to the situation next time. Hindsight can be a wonderful thing!

So, try to find the silver lining – there normally is at least one!

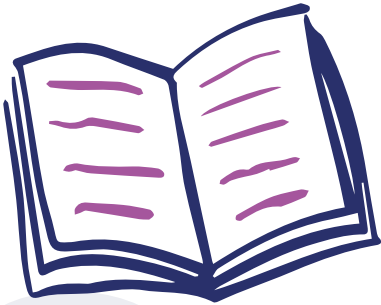
Try to write down an example of a time where you had a negative experience and then find the silver lining in it.

19. Push The Reset Button

It can be hard to get out of a hole which we talk ourselves into, when we feel like our day didn't go as planned or we messed up. Try to recognise where you went wrong but also try not to let it impact the rest of your day or week or month.

To do this, try to find a little activity to 'push the reset button'; little things like having a shower, tidying up, or going for a swim can help to clear the mind. Find something which suits you and helps you to have a clean slate for your upcoming days.

So, take a little breather to reset and focus on yourself.



20. Notice Compliments

Sometimes we find it hard to know what to do with compliments, even when they come from good friends, so why don't you write them down! If you do something physical with the compliments, then you're far more likely to remember them. Try to notice compliments that people give you, write them down and put them in a noticeable place so you can read them, maybe your wardrobe or bathroom mirror.

Write them down and maybe soon you'll amass a collection!

21. Tell Your Story

Communicating is the single most helpful thing you can do when you're struggling with anything. You can do this by talking to someone you know, getting in touch with a helpline, writing it down and getting somebody to read it... any way which you think is most helpful to you.

It can be hard to bring yourself to tell your story and it may take some time but take the leap. Writing or telling your story may also emphasise to you the most important outcomes or achievements you've made.

You have a unique story. So, feel free to write down a line of your story here, it may be the first line, a line in the middle, or even an end line, whichever way, you may find it helpful to start somewhere!





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