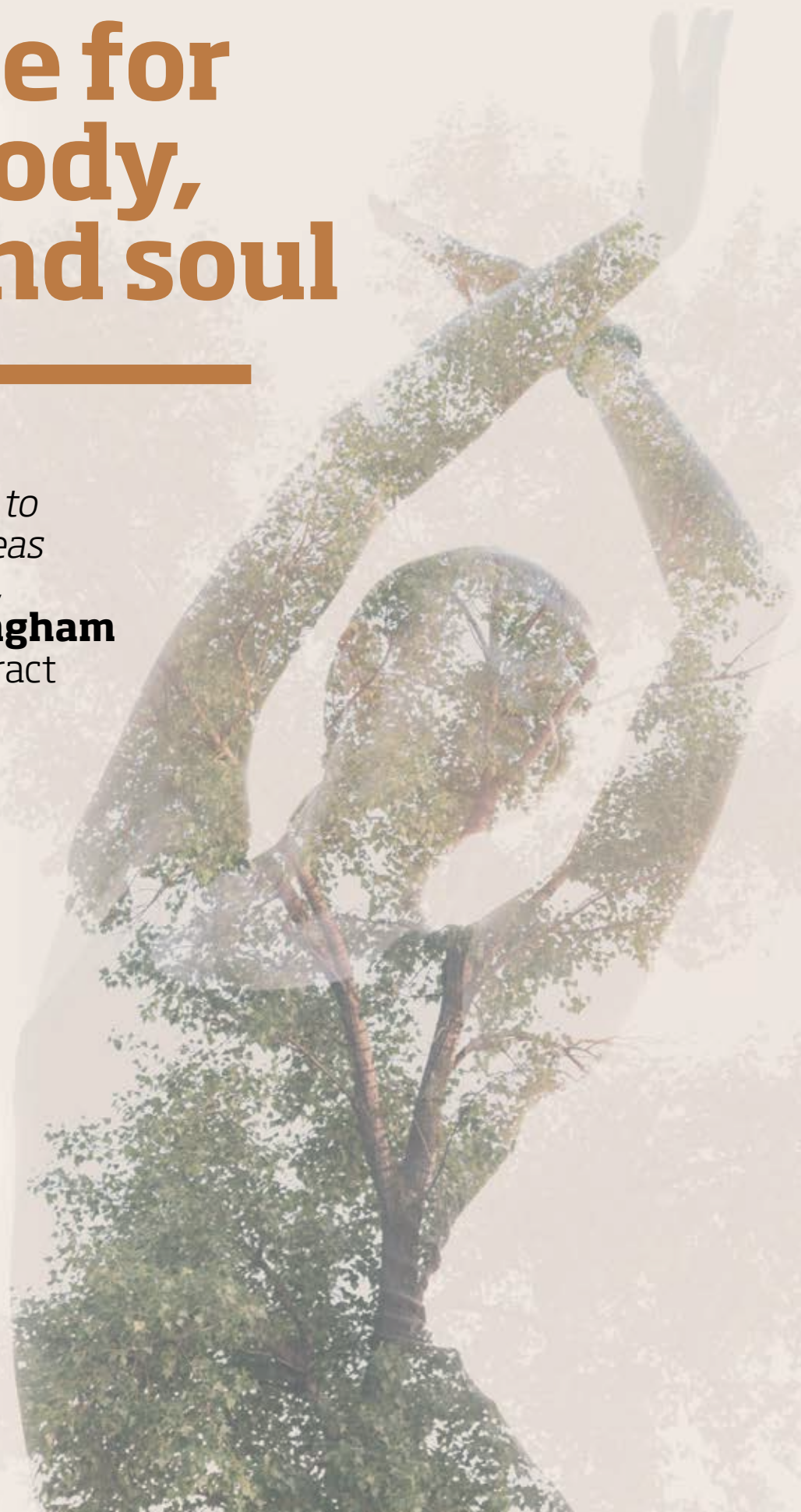


# Self-care for mind, body, heart and soul

---

Chair of BACP Coaching and author of *365 Ways to Feel Better: Self-Care Ideas for Embodied Wellbeing*, **Eve Menezes Cunningham** shares an exclusive extract from her book with *Coaching Today* readers and invites us all to pause and consider our own embodied self-care as practitioners.



**M**y book, *365 Ways to Feel Better: Self-Care Ideas for Embodied Wellbeing*,<sup>1</sup> was a pleasure to write. The result of over 15 years of my own experience, trainings and integrations, it gave me the opportunity to put all my weirdness in one place: self-care for your mind, body, heart and soul.

Working with the BACP Coaching Executive and my additional training in integrative counselling and coaching helped me bring everything together in the book, as I have in my practice.

I know that not all of the ideas will be everyone's cup of tea, but with a different tool for each day of the year, I was able to include my favourite ideas, ranging from crystal therapy to emotional freedom technique (EFT), from neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), yoga, mindfulness and other meditation tools to, of course, coaching and psychosynthesis.

I wanted to make the book as accessible as possible and to encourage readers to remember and tap into their own resources. I regularly laugh at the fact that self-care has become my niche; much of it is so simple and yet it's easy to get swept up in life's busyness and forget to take care of ourselves. I sometimes hear myself sharing with clients, supervisees and yoga students advice I've given in various articles and realise I need to pay more attention to it myself. Fortunately, I've become better at pausing to check in with what the most supportive thing in any given moment is for me. For example, instead of beating myself up for still working now at almost midnight, I can congratulate myself that this is no longer the norm and I'm choosing to do this so that I can have the whole weekend off.

Choosing segments for inclusion in this article was challenging as so much of it could be relevant to therapeutically trained coaches. In choosing an NLP tool for the excerpt on the facing page, I hope that it's recognisable enough to encourage you to experiment with, and that it's not already overly familiar to you.

Ideas from the book that I didn't have space to include here but which, if you have a copy, you may want to read, include:

### **Bifocal vision**

This is the psychosynthesis approach of seeing each client as more than whatever their presenting issue happens to be - seeing the soul qualities struggling to emerge and holding that expansive vision, as well as addressing the more pressing issues.

### **Thoughts, feelings, the body and the transpersonal**

While some people are more cognitive, others are more body based, some more emotional and others spiritual (mind, body, heart and soul), the more we are able to move between our preferences, the more we can experience different aspects of the world and our lives. I know certain clients, for example, are very cognitive based, so in my work with them I am less likely to use certain tools or approaches. Other clients may be more open to body work or use of imagery. The more we integrate, the more we can access our whole selves.

### **The ways**

In *Inevitable Grace*, psychosynthesis author (and co-founder of the Psychosynthesis Education Trust, the organisation at which I trained) Piero Ferrucci builds on Assagioli's work on the ways.<sup>2</sup>

Some of our souls express themselves in this world through beauty, others through action, or illumination (also known as love), or dance and ritual, or science, devotion or will. Ferrucci uses examples of genius in different areas (from Tolstoy to Isadora Duncan, Buddha and Patanjali, Mother Teresa to Mozart, Marie Curie to Galileo) to illustrate how we can better support ourselves, whichever way (or ways - sometimes, there's more than one through which we seek expression) we most resonate with.

This demonstrates how we're all different and how certain values, which are so important to some of us, don't even register with others. It's not about attempting to become more rounded and building 'muscles' in less used areas as we might with body work, the mind, the emotions or the transpersonal, but simply recognising what we need to support that sense of purpose and meaning we all crave.

### **Other tools**

While yoga, crystal therapy, EFT and some of the meditations I use might be less familiar or relevant to you, I also created several bonus videos to accompany the book. These are obviously not a substitute for private sessions, classes or training with qualified and experienced practitioners, but I hope they'll encourage you to play with whichever tools feel most appealing for you. They can be accessed at [www.feelbettereveryday.co.uk/book](http://www.feelbettereveryday.co.uk/book)

I hope you enjoy this excerpt. ■

---

**Eve Menezes Cunningham**, Chair of BACP Coaching, is a writer, coach, BACP accredited counsellor, supervisor, yoga instructor and integrative therapist (incorporating coaching, counselling, yoga, meditation, NLP, EFT and crystals as appropriate). She works with individuals in Essex (Witham, Colchester and Frinton on Sea), worldwide (via telephone or Vsee/Skype) and with groups. She loves helping people support their whole selves with simple and effective mindbody practices. Find out more about Eve's work and access free resources at [www.feelbettereveryday.co.uk](http://www.feelbettereveryday.co.uk)

### **References**

- 1 Cunningham EM. 365 ways to feel better: self-care ideas for embodied wellbeing. White Owl; 2017.
- 2 Ferrucci P. Inevitable grace: breakthroughs in the lives of great men and women: guides to your self-realization. Tarcher; 1991.



### The logical levels

Also known as neurological levels, this is one of my favourite NLP tools. Created by Robert Dilts, it helps us embody various levels of change. We can examine our goals from several different angles and sense into each level.

To start, consider a goal (aka well-formed outcome). Ideally, we physically step into each one (we can use a piece of paper with the level jotted down and move up and down the levels). It can be illuminating and really shifts energy around our goals.

### Environment

Stepping onto the first level, when you think of working towards your goal, and you consider your environment, does it feel supportive? Is it sabotaging you? For example, if you want to make healthier food choices, is your kitchen filled with cakes and other obstacles to healthy eating?

Would filling it with fresh fruits and veg (leaving room for cakes as treats, perhaps) help? Maybe your goal is to bring more life into your work/life balance. Has your home office taken over your living room?

Whatever your goal, notice what springs to mind when you consider the environment you're mostly in when working towards it. What tweaks might better support you? Environment can include our clothing, shoes, car and more.

### Behaviour

Once we've looked at our Environment, we step forward to Behaviour. From this spot, what springs to mind as we consider our current behaviour affecting this goal? What are we doing that brings us closer? What might be sabotaging us? Some work with our Saboteur may be useful. What essential behaviours are we skipping? How can we better support ourselves in doing more of what will work?

### Skills and capabilities

Sometimes, our Environment and Behaviour are stuck because we simply don't know how to do better. As Maya Angelou famously said, 'Once you knew better, you did better'. Is there a way to get more training to get you through this patch? Maybe it's just a matter of asking someone and tapping into your resourcefulness. What springs to mind as you contemplate your goal from the Skills and Capabilities spot?

### Beliefs and values

Sometimes, our Beliefs and Values are at odds with our goals. Even if we're doing all the right things (and know how to) in the right places, if we're fundamentally at odds with ourselves, we'll keep sabotaging ourselves. As you step from Skills and Capabilities to Beliefs and Values, what springs to mind? Which values support you in your pursuit of your goal and which get in your way? What do you realise about yourself and your goal as you ponder this?

### Identity

For my first several years as a coach, there was a discrepancy between my coaching work and my idea of how a 'proper coach' would be. While I adore what I do, I'm not a corporate soul. And my style, while challenging when needed, is also gentle.

Adding other therapies helped and I'm quick (and happy) to refer people on if they call and sound like they need someone more dynamic. My main client work environment (a beamed room in a Grade II listed property with nods to Ganesh, Mary, Buddha, Lakshmi and modern science) is perfect for my integrative practice.

Now, when I go into organisations, because my focus is very much on embodied self-care, there's no incongruence.

What springs to mind for you as you step from Beliefs and Values to Identity?

### Spirituality/purpose

This is the game changer. Where we step beyond our own little world into something bigger. If we believe in God/Goddess, the Universe or any kind of spirituality, this can enhance our sense of purpose.

If we don't, simply tuning in to that highest, wisest, most miraculous part of ourselves can help us tune in to a sense of motivation we never knew existed.

What springs to mind as you step from Identity and ponder your goal from this space of Purpose? What happens as you think about some of the obstacles that have sprung to mind as you've tuned in to each level?

### Going back through each level

When you feel ready, turn around and look back. From this space of embodied Purpose, walk back through each level.

How do you feel about your Identity now you can integrate that higher, more spiritual energy?

How about your Beliefs and Values now you have the added insights regarding your Identity and Purpose?

And as you step back to Skills and Capabilities, what else can you bring to your pondering here? How about your Behaviour? Does this feel easier to change now you have more insight? And your Environment? What changes are you ready to make to better support yourself as you work towards this goal?

Making notes can help us ground this. Scheduling any concrete actions in can help us build on our insights.

Excerpt published with permission from White Owl, an imprint of Pen & Sword © 2017. [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/White-Owl/i/33](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk/White-Owl/i/33)