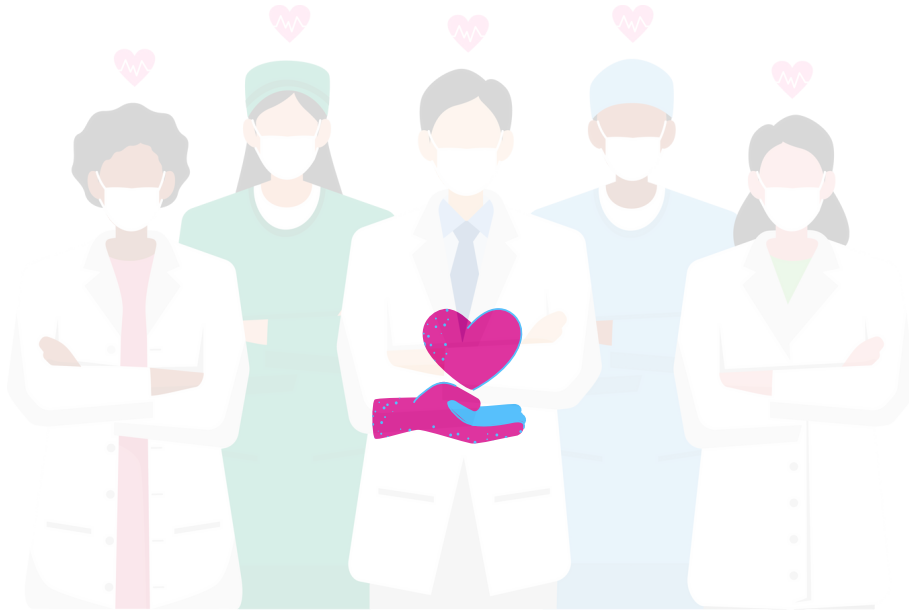




# Happy Doctors' Day

*Three little  
habits you can  
try to take care of  
yourself*

**Why self-care MATTERS  
and how **three little habits** can make  
a **quick** and **lasting** impact on your day**



« *When was the last time  
anyone ever told **YOU**  
how *important*  
**YOU** are? »*



**Maya Angelou**



# Happy Doctors' Day



**WHY self-care matters**

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**Habit 1: BREATHE**

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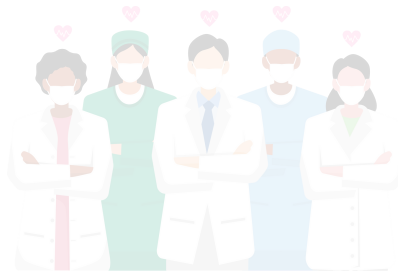
**Habit 2: GRATITUDE**

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*Today and Every Day*

**Thank You FOR ALL YOU DO**

Hi there,



We know that **self-care can sound like a luxury** no physician can afford... and **YET** study, after study, **AFTER STUDY (and not to mention common sense)** remind us of how **important** and **VITAL** self-care is.

So, on this very special day,

*when we get to **celebrate** you,  
to remind you of how **appreciated** you are  
and to show you how **grateful** we are for you,*

it seemed important to focus on  
**what truly makes a difference for our patients.**

*And this "what" is a who.*

**You**

And you are not a timely prescription, a skilled scalpel, a life-saving diagnosis or a one of a kind drug. You're **the human being** who allows the prescription, diagnosis, scalpel and drug to find their way **to the person who needs it.**

**We need YOU. And we want you to feel cared for.**

*Self-care is not just about taking a bath in the middle of the afternoon or spending a day at the spa.*

Of course not.

Self-care has nothing to do with laziness or complacency.

**Self-care is our responsibility  
& our source of agency and empowerment.**

We can only give the time and energy we have. Pouring from an empty cup is glorified by many, but it doesn't work...and as physicians, it is also our right and our mission to embody health and well-being, and to model that resilience starts by taking care of ourselves.

## **YOU ARE HOW YOU HELP**

*It's as simple as that. If you can't function, you can't help. And you **DESERVE** to feel good and supported. That's not taking anything away from your patients or loved ones! It's **making sure everybody receives what they need and want.***

**"Everybody" includes you.**

We hope this pamphlet will show you that we're not talking about drastically changing your entire day. **We're offering three easy and quick tools to help you refill your cup and go through your days exactly the way they are.**

1

# BREATHE

*Yes!*

*It can really be that easy!*

**Objective:** Most of the time when we are stressed, we hold our breath.

*Before entering a patient room.*

*Before opening the scan report.*

*Before delivering bad news.*

*Before the budget staff meeting...*

*It is such a common reaction that it became a common saying!*

But taking **a few intentional breaths** is the BETTER way to come back to the present moment and find our ground.

**Methods:** You can experiment with **a few different rhythms**.

Here are TWO of the **EASIEST** ways to implement this technique!

But first let's take a minute.

*No really. Take your timer out and let's take **a minute!***

A minute where you are going to close your eyes and breathe normally, while counting how many breaths you take.

That's right:

**Your respiratory rate.**

**Ready? Go.**

**60 seconds: 60... 59... 58...**

*60 seconds: 3... 2... 1... 0!*

**Methods:**

*Ok! What was it? 11? 12?*

**Write your number down to remember it!**

And now every time you need it, you know that you can just consciously breathe [insert your number] times to soothe yourself down.

This was OPTION 1. *Easy enough?*

Now, OPTION 2, *if you want a more GROUNDING effect*, you can CONTROL your breathing *by COUNTING* each step of the breath cycle:

- \* Breathe in for 4 (Inhale while counting 1-2-3-4)
- \* Hold for 4
- \* Breathe out for 8 (Exhale while counting 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8)

And repeat this 4 times (or more! *It's quick and free*).



# *Breathing conscientiously* **WORKS**

**Results:** Just do it tomorrow at work and see. It takes an actual minute. Not a second more! You timed it this way. **And it can make all the difference.**

And just remembering to take a breath when you're feeling overwhelmed - **to actually breathe** ! - will be a game changer.

*The next time you're listening to someone (in your clinic, in a staff meeting, during rounds), check your breath.*

**If it's intense you are probably holding it!**

**Then breathe. And see how impactful it can be.**

**Conclusion:** Breathing is a tool you can basically use anytime, anywhere, and for any purpose.

All you have to do is be mindful of your breathing for 60 seconds.

You can **make it a HABIT.**

*Before each consult. When you put your white coat on. Before calling back a family with hard news. Before logging into Epic (after the sigh!)...*

**60 seconds. How hard can it be?**

2

# GRATITUDE

*Yes,*

*it's a practice.*

**Objective:** It is impossible to feel angry, afraid, or sad while feeling grateful.

Even for doctors. It just is.

*And feeling grateful is a really good feeling, isn't it?*

Gratitude is like a muscle: yes, it requires exercise, but once you get in a groove **it feels so good !**

Always checking for what could go wrong does keep us on edge and is part of our job...but if we're not careful, it can also quickly burn us out. Then we can't help anyone anymore and **there's nothing left for anybody to be grateful for.**

**Gratitude is a practice and even if it's not an instinct, it's a necessity.**

**AND A LIFE SAVER.**

*Like a bathroom sign in the hallway when you haven't peed in 12 hours... or your bed after an on-call night.*

**So here's the HOW!**

## **Methods: Keeping a small journal is the easiest way to make it happen**

Which can be a note on your iPhone or a scribble on a post-it.

Every day, WRITE - or at least name - **three things that you are grateful for today.**

*Do it when you wake up (no judgment if it's in the subway) or when you go to bed (at home, in your office... or in the on-call room).*

**It does not have to be big. But of course it can be huge.**

It can be for a person, an object, a thought or for a moment.

*It can be for your morning coffee (because let's face it, coffee never disappoints).*

*Or your iPhone charger (because let's face it, it's a lifeline).*

*How beautiful was the sky this morning.*

*How caring your new intern is with patients.*

*How warm your apartment is tonight after such a long day, when it's snowing in Central Park.*

**But it has to be something or someone from **TODAY****

**AND it has to be DIFFERENT every day.**

*Again, writing it down makes it a bit more powerful,  
but you can just think it if that suits you best:*

*You are doing it for you, so it has to be done **YOUR** way.*

## *Gratitude* **WORKS**

**Results:** A glass half full of any liquid you love.

**Conclusion:** It does take a little bit of practice.

*But it's a cure that **ALWAYS** works*

**and FAST**

(BONUS: No negative **side effects** involved!!)

# 3

## SCHEDULING

*But not what you're thinking*

*(hyperventilating) about!!*

**Objective:** Everywhere (from the parking lot, to the cafeteria: **Coffee. We covered this**) AND through every patient area in between & at every moment (day and night - **thank you technology for saving and ruining doctor's lives at the same time**), people are requesting your attention, focus and time.

*The work is never done. The news never fully known. The research never complete. Our loved ones never loved too much. And of course there is always another patient.*

SO we forget about us in a second. This is how we end up depleted, overwhelmed, and feeling like we can not do it all.

*Even though you did more in an hour than most people do in a day.*

**Methods:** We doctors love **GUIDELINES**. Well, then please refer to the **EFFICIENCY** guidelines!

*Stephen Covey kindly wrote them for us.*

And here is the one point you need to start implementing today:

*"The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule,  
but to schedule your priorities."*

**Let's see how it's done.**

Because *"If it is not scheduled, it is not real"*

- Marie Forleo

**Methods:** Each night before going to bed (or each morning when you wake up: *Once again, whatever works for YOU*), review the day ahead and schedule TWO THINGS YOU PLAN to do FOR YOURSELF by the following day.

**SCHEDULE:** which does mean writing it down on your schedule **this time.**

*Paper or phone is NOT the debate here. Write it down on a post-it if it is, like so many of us, what your mind gets its assignments from! Or on a prescription pad if you've got an old stock to go through now that most of them are computarized.*

But choose two things that you want to get done  
IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS and write them down.

It can be ANYTHING.

It doesn't have to take a lot of time  
(*plan something fun for the weekend, read 10 pages, buy dark chocolate...*)

**BUT** it must be **for YOU!**

(*you the actual person, not you "the doctor"*)

*"Either you run the day or the day runs YOU."*

- Jim Roth



**Results:** The much needed change to the rewarding mindset you deserve.

*"I had victories today. I know I made progress".  
I had a busy... NO ==> **PRODUCTIVE** day!!"*

*"Not everything in the entire world was fixed...  
- **Editor's note:** because it never will be!!! -*

*and there are still sick patients somewhere...  
- **Editor's note:** because there always will be!!! -*

*But I did what I needed to do for myself."*

And THAT COUNTS. It REALLY does.

**Conclusion:** Your time is YOUR time. THAT'S ALL YOU HAVE and ALL YOU CAN CONTROL.

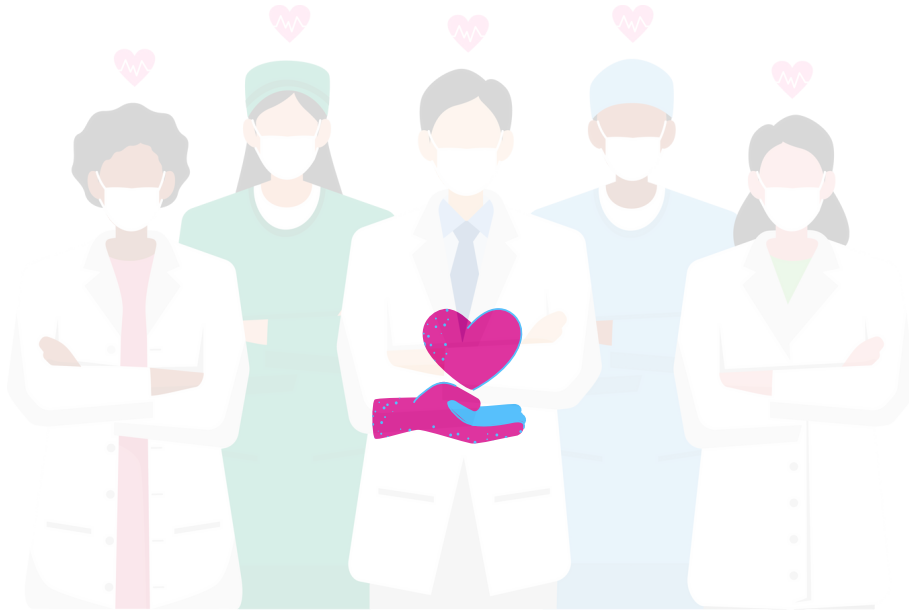
**And to gain back control over it, you must PRACTICE.**

*Because the world has been telling you since Day 1 that your time belongs to others and because you then learned in Med school that it belongs to the hospital. That is a lot of nothing left for you...and two huge limiting beliefs to unroot all at once.*

So let's **baby-step** this one!

**But just wait until the end of the week... you will already see the results.**

**Congratulations, Doc**



« YOU are  
undeniably  
important »



# Happy Doctors' Day



*Today and Every Day*

**THANK YOU**

**WE NEED YOU**

**WE APPRECIATE YOU**



*And we are here to support you*

**YOU CAN FIND US HERE**

**Website** <https://icahn.mssm.edu/about/well-being>

**Email** [owbr@mssm.edu](mailto:owbr@mssm.edu)

**Brought to you by the Office of Well-Being and Resilience**