Kindling Creativity and Calm: Fueling Your Classroom and Yourself

Actionable classroom management solutions and vital self-care practices for teachers and students

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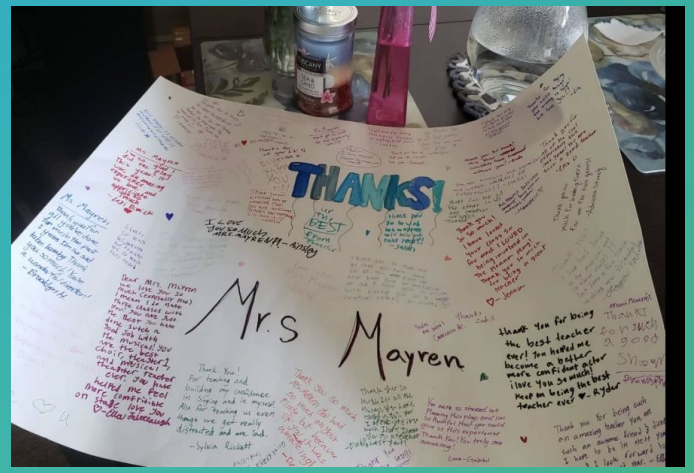
Presentation made with Microsoft Copilot AI

Who am I?

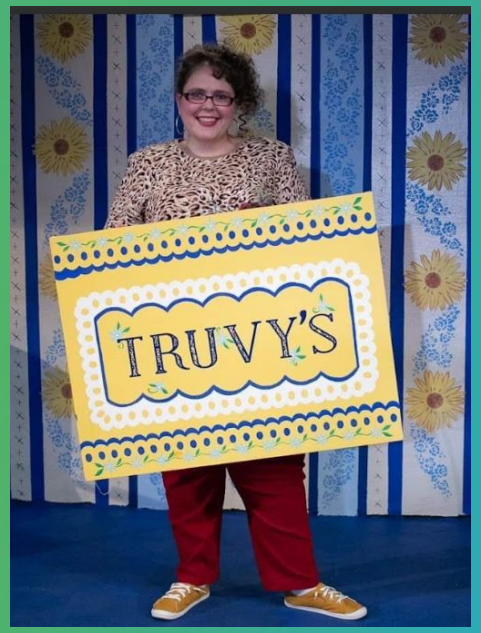


-Musician

-Educator

-Actor

-Mental health advocate



Why does it matter who I am?

Agenda of Today's Discussion

- Understanding the Unique Energy of Middle Schoolers
- Classroom Management Solutions
- Implementing Calm and Mindfulness Techniques
- Vital Self-Care Practices for Teachers

Understanding the Unique Energy of Middle Schoolers

Navigating Identity

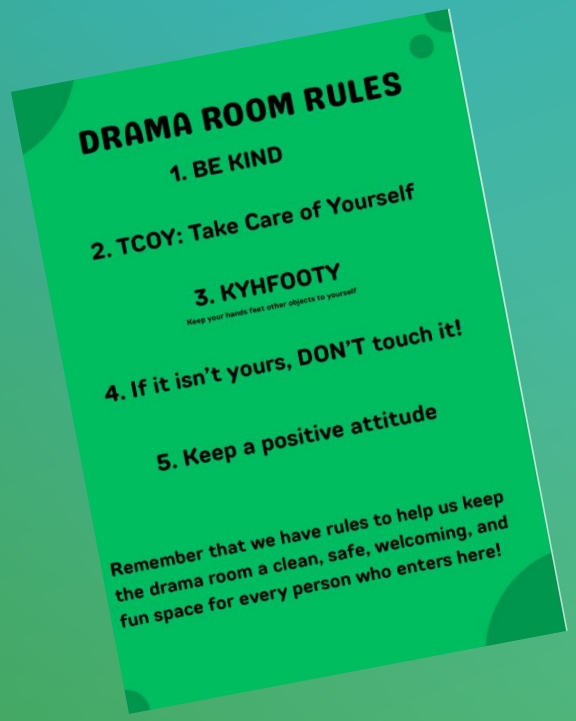
Middle school students are in a critical stage of developing their personal identity and self-concept.

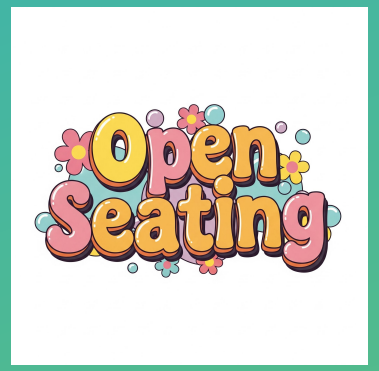
Students don’t care how much you know until they know you care.
-John C. Maxwell

Seeking Independence

Students at this age are striving for independence, wanting to make their own choices and assert autonomy.

- Personal meaning
- Guided Choices
- Clear consequences
- Controlled chaos





Establishing Clear Rules

Clear rules outline expectations for student behavior, promoting a structured learning environment.

Routines and Procedures

Implementing consistent routines helps students understand daily expectations and fosters a sense of security.

Positive Reinforcement

Using positive reinforcement encourages and rewards appropriate behavior, motivating students to adhere to classroom norms.

PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE

Stickers and Starburst

May I have your attention, please!

Rhythmic clapping

Chime/ instrument

Airline Announcer voice

Sports Announcer voice

Repeat After Me

Do you hear that? Listen...

Wheel of Destiny

Call and Response

Tell me your most "Unhinged" classroom management strategy or procedure!

Simplify, slow down, be kind.
And don't forget to have art
in your life — music, paintings,
theater, dance, and sunsets...

Eric CARLE

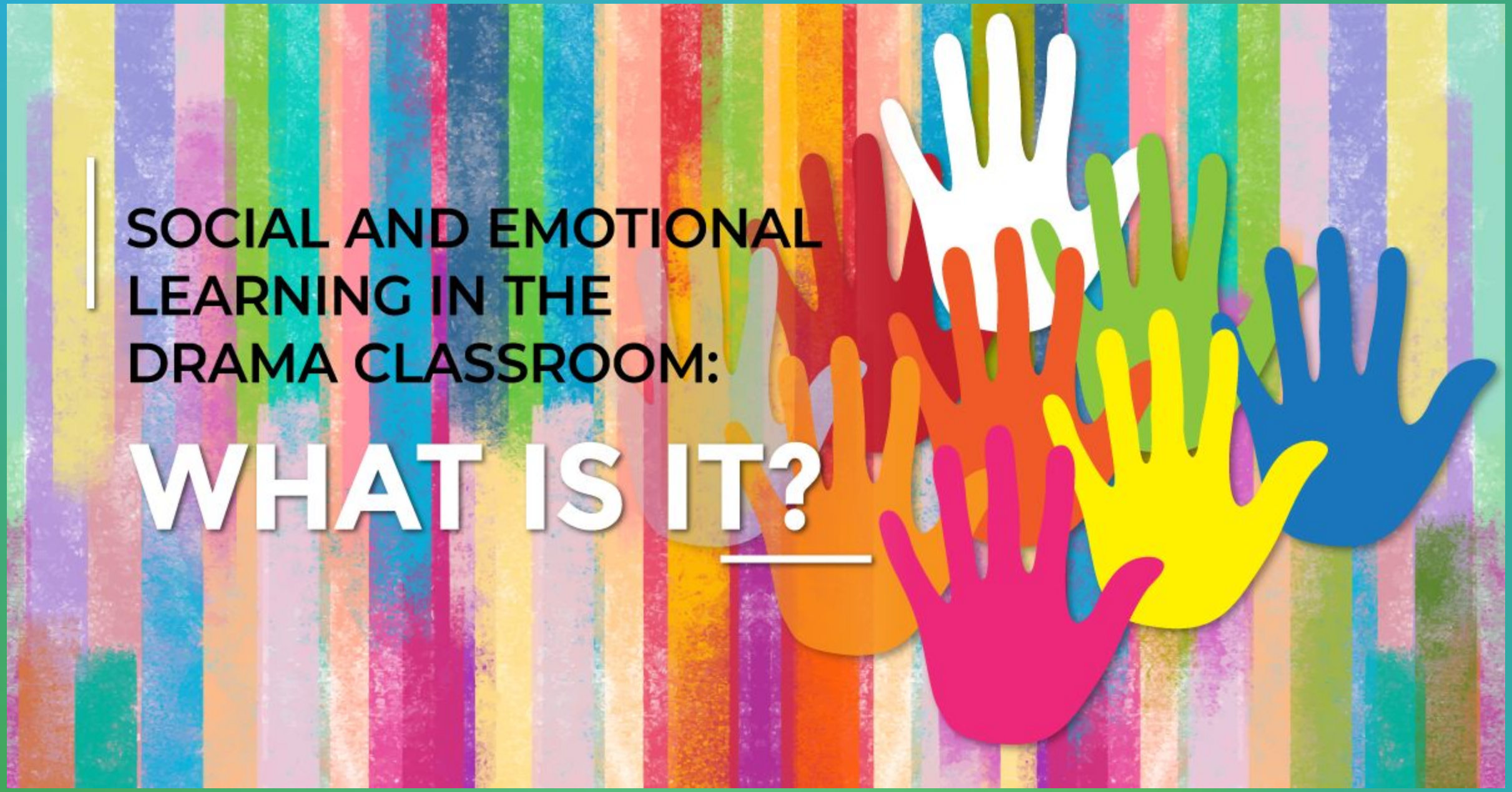


Image from theatrefolk.com

The concept of SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) was defined by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) more than two decades ago to promote equity and excellence in education through social and emotional learning. SEL is defined as:

*"The process through which students gain and effectively apply the **knowledge** , **attitudes** , and **skills** necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and express empathy for others, develop and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions."*

Implementing Calm and Mindfulness Techniques

Mindfulness Observation

Meditation

Guided Imagery

Stretching Exercises

Breathing Exercises

Incorporate Nature

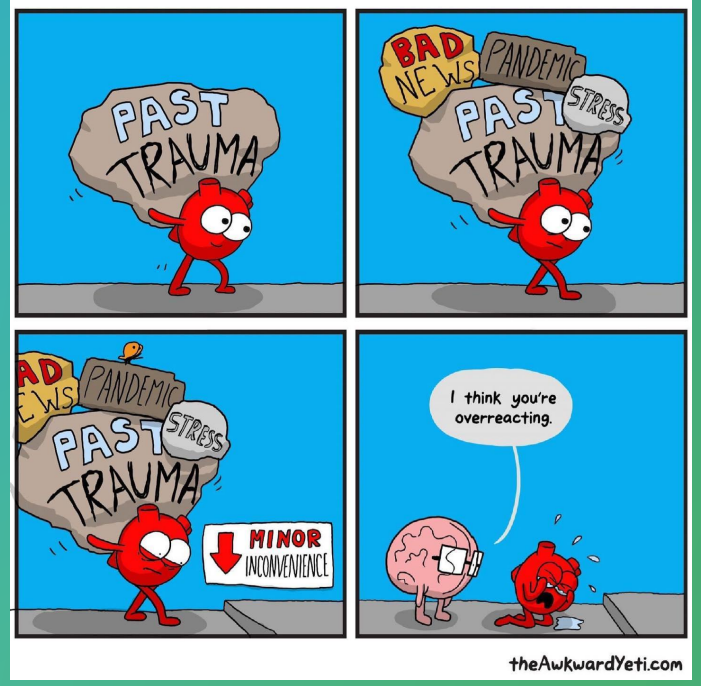
Gentle Music

Dim the lights

Soft color schemes

Digital Calm Room

10 things to do when the world seems like it’s too much:



1. Write down 3 things that went well today

2. Set a timer and do nothing until it goes off

3. Drink something warm whilst sitting down

4. Call or text someone who cares about you

5. Put your hands on your heart and take 3 deep breaths (vagus nerve regulation)

6. Write down what you’re worrying about and throw it away or close the notebook

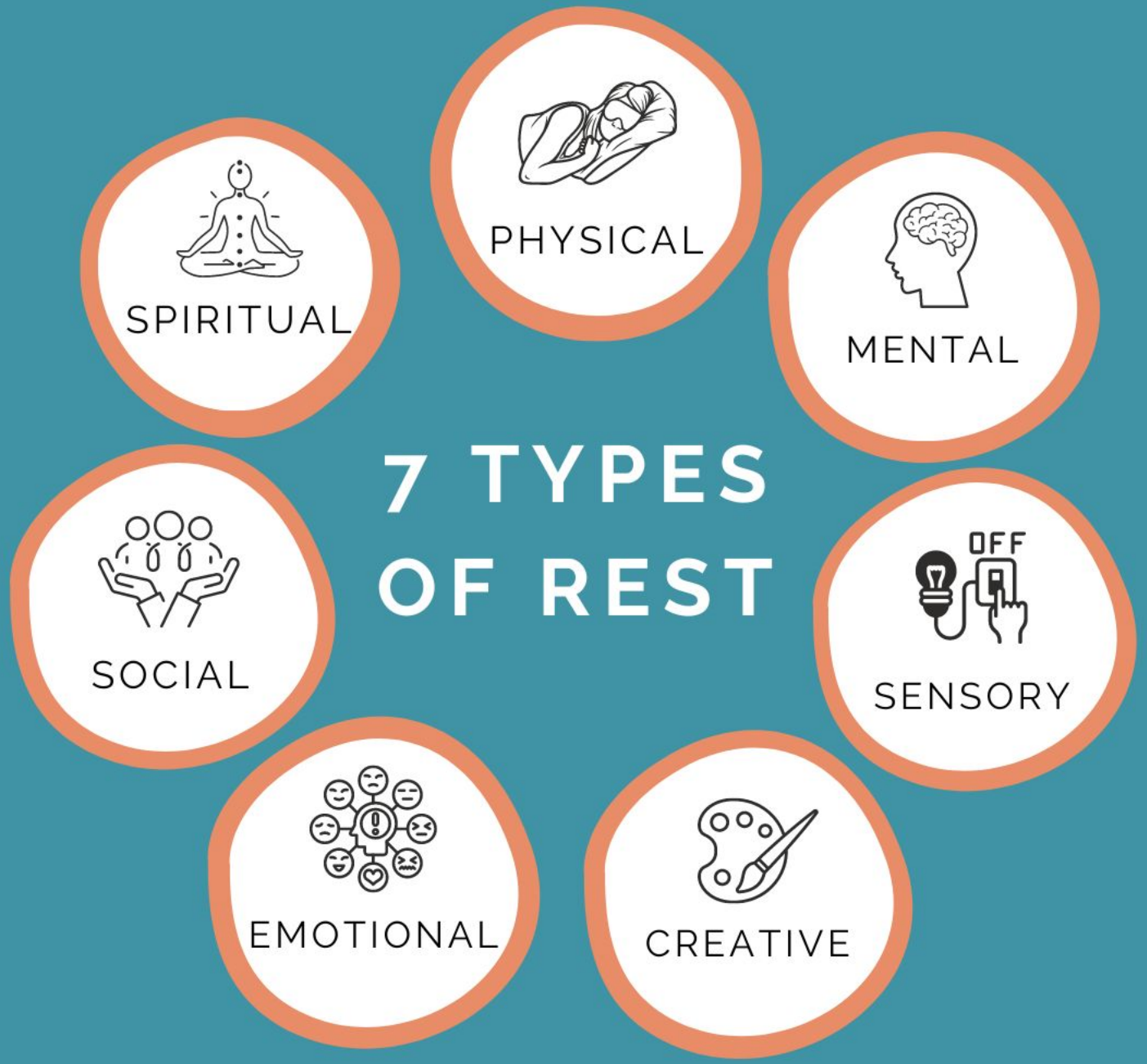
7. Go outside for 5 minutes without your phone (fresh air and natural light regulate your nervous system)

8. Tell someone – anxiety thrives in isolation

9. Press your palms together in front of your heart and breathe (parasympathetic nervous system activation)

10. Give yourself a 30-second hug – oxytocin for physical comfort

Vital Self-Care Practices for Teachers



SELF CARE LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE. IT ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT SCENTED CANDLES, BUBBLE BATHS, POWER NAPS, YOGA, OR GETTING A MASSAGE.

SELF CARE IS LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE WHAT YOUR BODY AND MIND NEED TO FEEL RESTED, REJUVENATED, AND READY.

Physical rest involves taking a break from physical activity to allow the body to recover and replenish its energy. It's about providing the body with the time it needs to repair and recharge after exertion.

Ways to get physical rest:
-Sleep, one of the most important things you can do
-Active rest (stretching, gentle walks, restorative yoga)
-Restorative activities – physical therapy, massage, things that reduce muscle tension
-Mindful practices – deep breathing and thinking that can contribute to physical relaxation and recovery

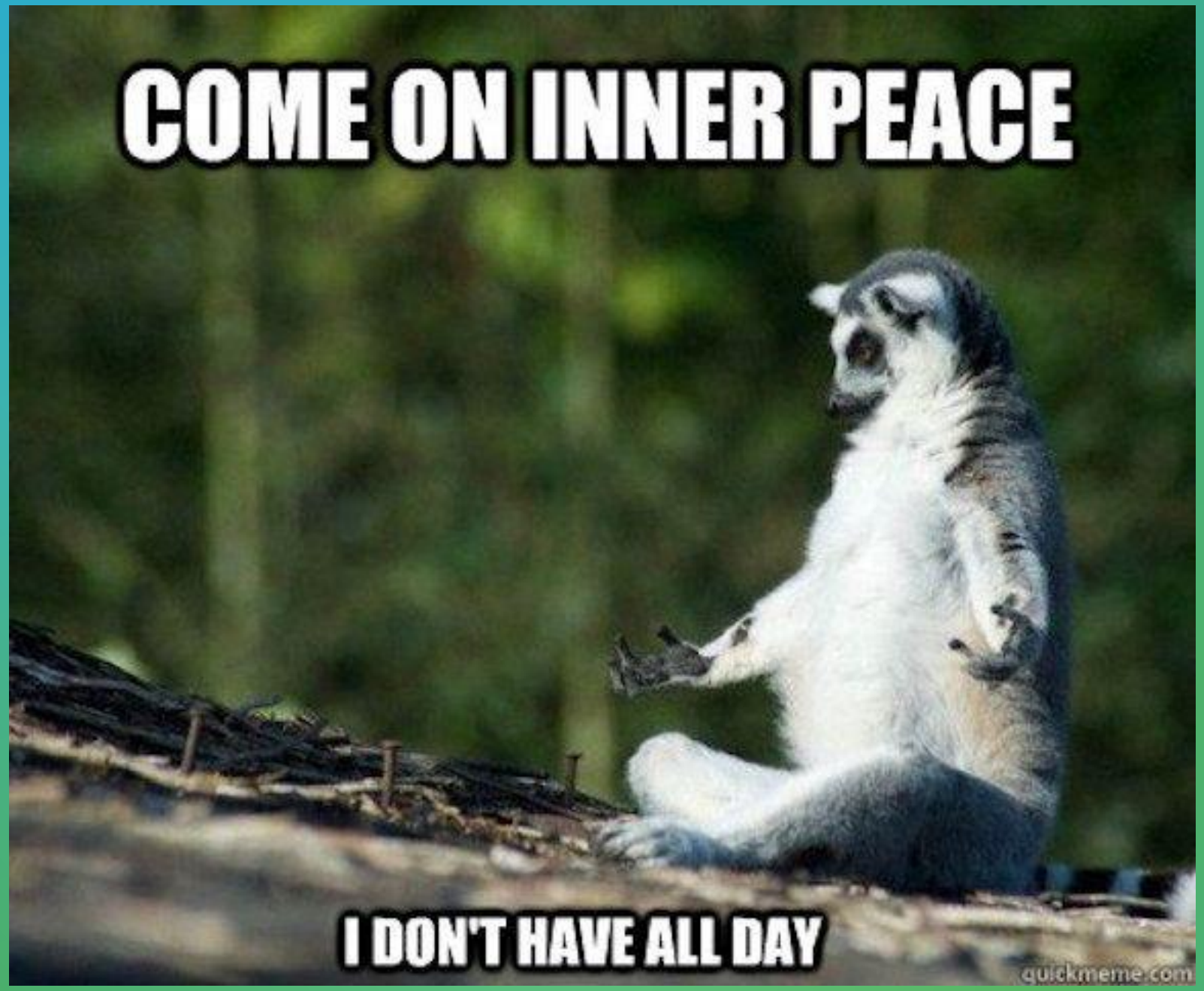
Benefits:
-Reduce stress
-Replenish energy
-Improve sleep quality
-Enhance performance in both physical and mental activities
-Reduce risk of injury

“Don’t fight with the pillow, but lay down your head, and kick every worriment out of the bed.”

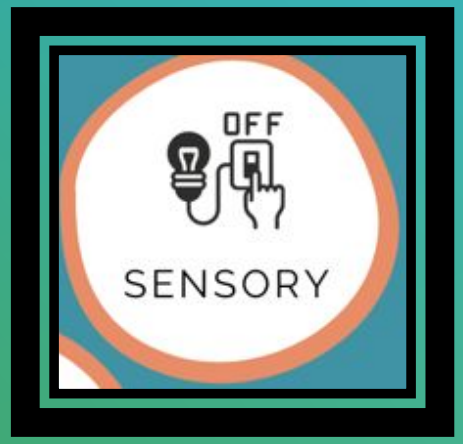
Mental rest is about giving your mind a break from constant stimulation, information overload, and the pressure of problem-solving. It allows your brain to slow down, process information, and recover from mental exertion. Mental rest focuses on recharging the mind.

Ways to get mental rest:
-Take regular breaks
-Practice mindfulness and meditation activities to clear the mind
-Set boundaries
-Journal to help organize thoughts
-Prioritize sleep

Benefits:
-Reduce stress and improves mood
-Prevents burnout
-Improves focus and productivity
-Supports mental health
-Enhances problem-solving and creativity


COME ON INNER PEACE
I DON'T HAVE ALL DAY
quickmeme.com

Sensory rest involves reducing overstimulation of your senses, allowing them to recover from excessive noise, bright lights, and other external stimuli. It's about creating a break from constant stimulation to recalibrate your senses leading to a calmer and more focused state.



Ways to get sensory rest:
-Reduce screen time
-Find quiet spaces
-Enjoy natural light and silence
-Dim the lights
-Wear comfortable clothing
-Mindful practices – deep breathing and thinking that can help clear the mind

Benefits:
-Reduces feelings of overwhelm
-Improves concentration
-Reduces stress and anxiety
-Provides a reset for your senses

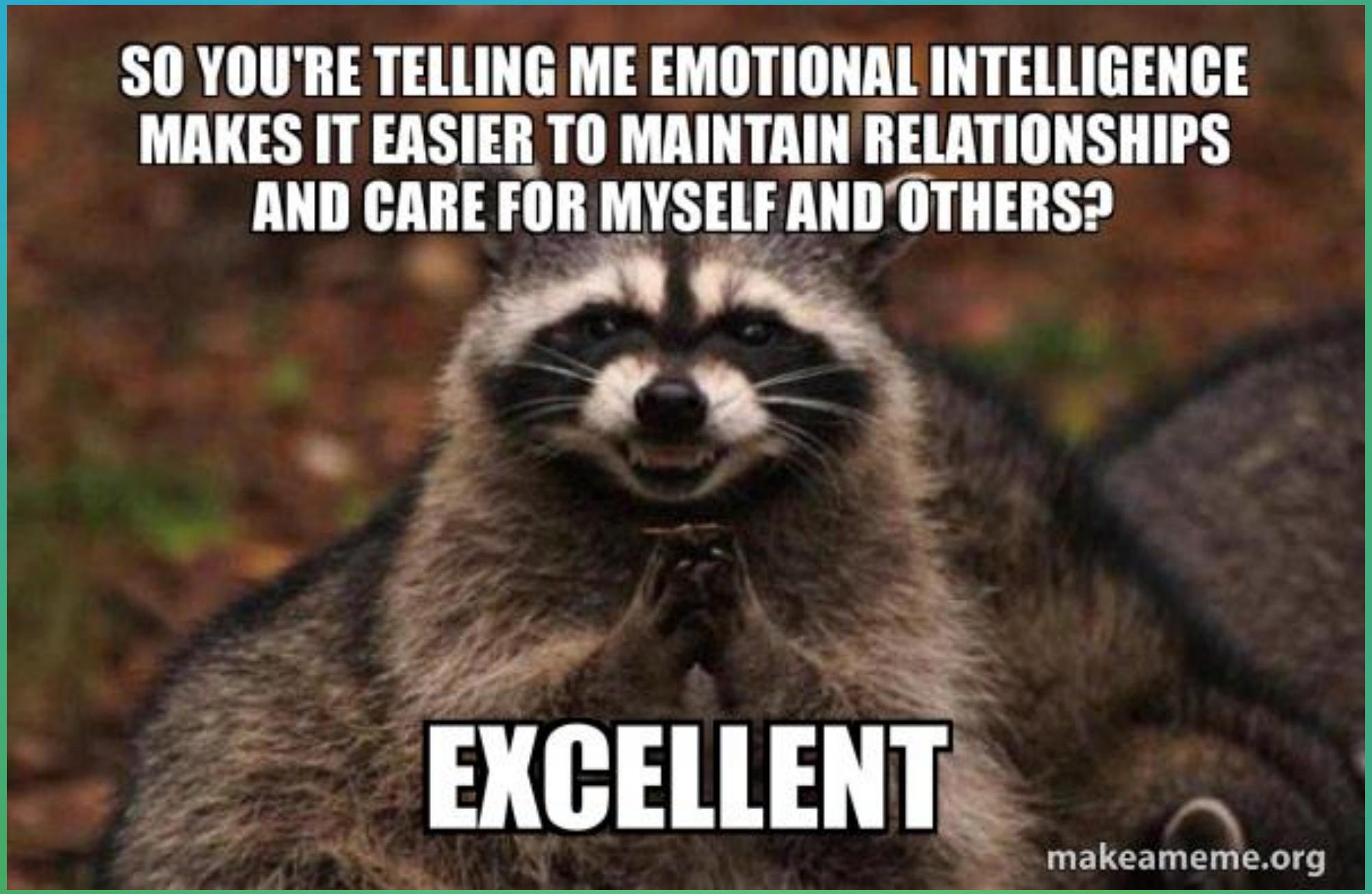
"When you pay attention to sensory details in the present moment, your thoughts and mental chatter fade into the background. Your nervous system settles down. It makes room for positive feelings to bubble up within you."

— Gina Simmons Schneider, Frazzlebrain: Break Free from Anxiety, Anger, and Stress Using Advanced Discoveries in Neuropsychology

Emotional rest means allowing yourself to feel and express your emotions in a healthy way. It’s about being honest with your feelings, seeking support when you need it, and stepping away from emotionally draining situations.

Ways to get emotional rest:
-Prioritize self care
-Establish boundaries
-Seek support
-Create emotional space
-Keep a feelings journal

Benefits:
-Greater sense of well-being and resilience
-Creates a strong sense of self
-Helps build better relationships
-Improved mood and emotional regulation


SO YOU'RE TELLING ME EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MAKES IT EASIER TO MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS AND CARE FOR MYSELF AND OTHERS?
EXCELLENT
makeameme.org

Social rest is about strategically managing your social interactions to ensure they are fulfilling and restorative, rather than draining. It involves choosing to spend time with supportive and positive people who uplift you, while limiting or setting boundaries with those who deplete your energy.

Ways to get social rest:
-Identify and limit energy-draining relationships
-Prioritize positive connections
-Set boundaries
-Communicate your needs
-Engage in meaningful interactions

Benefits:
-Improved mood and energy levels
-Better emotional boundaries
-Reduction of social burnout
-Improved mental clarity

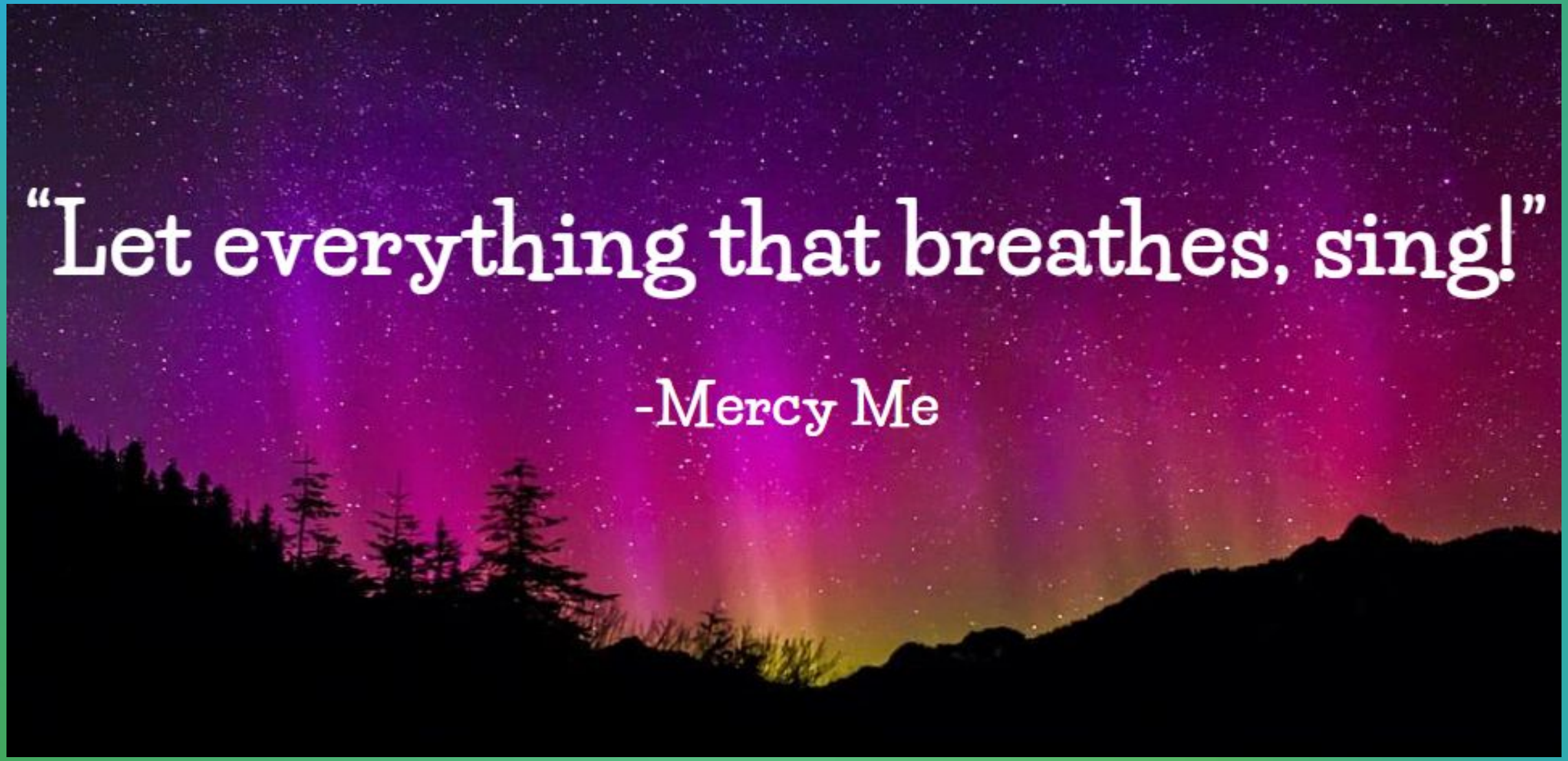
"We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness, without these qualities, life will be violent and all will be lost."

— CHARLIE CHAPLIN
excerpt from his speech in the film
'THE GREAT DICTATOR'

Spiritual rest is about finding meaning and purpose beyond your daily routines. It is a state of inner peace and contentment that comes from a connection with something larger than oneself. It’s a deep sense of contentment from being free from worry and trusting in a greater plan.

Ways to get spiritual rest:
-Meditation
-Spending time in nature
-Prayer or worship
-Community involvement
-Acts of service

Benefits:
-Freedom from worry and anxiety
-Sense of purpose and meaning
-Enhanced physical well-being
-Greater resilience


"Let everything that breathes, sing!"
-Mercy Me

Creative rest focuses on engaging in activities that are not directly related to work or problem-solving, allowing the mind to wander and make new connections. Creative rest is not about checking out mentally, but rather about actively shifting focus to allow for mental regeneration and the development of new ideas.

Ways to get creative rest:
-Try something new (take a class, learn a new language, travel)
-Listen to music
-Engage with art, go to a museum or draw something
-Pursue hobbies (baking, sewing, gardening, reading, painting, writing, etc.)
-Go to a movie, play, musical, or concert

Benefits:
-Helps maintain a high ability to focus
-Improves mood, reduces stress and anxiety
-Allows for long-term success and a sense of accomplishment
-Clears the mind leading to better problem-solving and decision making

"**Practice any art**: music, singing, dancing, acting, drawing, painting, sculpting, poetry, fiction, essays, reportage, no matter how well or badly, not to get money and fame, but to **experience becoming**, to find out what's inside you, to **make your soul grow**. Seriously! I mean starting right now, do art and **do it for the rest of your lives**."

-Kurt Vonnegut

Resources

Would you rather game:
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1F7qgnQjxOcvb7CLOsEzoPETFp6VJYKsiH4SxOcjykgE/edit?usp=sharing

Digital Calm Room: https://sites.google.com/granitesd.org/calmroom?usp=sharing

7 Types of Rest:
Calm: https://www.calm.com/blog/7-types-of-rest
Mindful Health Solutions: https://mindfulhealthsolutions.com/embrace-these-7-types-of-rest/
Ted Talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGNN4EPJzGk&t=217s

Binaural Beats Spotify Playlist:
https://open.spotify.com/playlist/37i9dQZF1DX7EF8wVxBVhG?si=PP9xgA4wRKCX8VDB7SZ9FA

Body Scan (3 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ihwcw_ofuME

Body Scan (7 minutes): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1saZqSr2zGM&t=11s

Brad Montague (motivational speaker, teaches about being the you that you needed when you were a kid) – I highly recommend signing up for his free newsletter and buying the book “Becoming Better Grownups”
https://montagueworkshop.com/