

# Conscious Coping in the Time of COVID-19:



*a creative,  
reflective  
workbook*

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# Hi!



Our names are **KERRY ACHESON** -  
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Kerry has been living and practicing in beautiful Cape Town since 2010 and Karen practiced in South Africa for 5 years before relocating to sunny, exotic Dubai in 2014. We've been friends for years, we studied together and we're excited to collaborate on this book!

We're both currently in a lockdown situation and our practices have gone online.

A fast, steep learning curve but thankfully it's working well for us! Our need to wrap our heads around this has led us to create this workbook, and it's an offering from our hearts.

In this Covid-19 Crisis, fraught with enormous uncertainty, tragedy and chaos on a global scale, people are struggling with feelings of being overwhelmed, grief, fear, fatigue and frustration. Know that you aren't alone in this. None of us have all the answers on how to navigate this all. Our hope is that engaging with these creative and reflective pages will leave you feeling more grounded, connected, and empowered as we face uncertain days ahead.

Theoretically, we draw from narrative therapy, solution-focused therapy, positive psychology, and life coaching in the exercises below. While these activities have therapeutic value, they don't replace psychotherapy. Should you be feeling overwhelmed and in distress, we encourage you to reach out to a board-licensed professional. If you're in crisis, reach out to your doctor or present at your nearest emergency rooms.

*...this workbook [is]  
an offering from  
our hearts...*



## How to use this workbook:

Don't rush this. We don't want to add to your information overload. Rather, we've designed this to guide you inwards, so that you can connect with your innermost wisdom, values, skills in living, and creative thinking. The more you slow down and engage mindfully with each activity, the more you will get out of it.

Most importantly – leave your Inner Critic out of it – this isn't a space for perfectionism or judgment. Rather, we encourage you to 'go with the flow', don't over think it...play with it. Express yourself freely, uncensored. Artistic ability really doesn't matter here. Better yet, draw things as your much younger child self would have. Go with the gut. Pop the phone on airplane mode and try to give yourself some undistracted time of peace and quiet where possible. Hold Courage, Curiosity and Compassion throughout.



*this isn't a space  
for perfectionism  
or judgment*

You can print this out and write or draw in the spaces allocated. Alternatively, you can use these pages as a guide and write and draw your responses on your own paper or in your journal. Whether you use your own paper or print the workbook, ideally use coloured drawing materials.

**Yours in solidarity against  
COVID-19**

*Kerry &  
Karen*

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*“Trust yourself. You  
know more than  
you think you do.”*

- Benjamin Spock

# Section A: Grounding Yourself

The exercises in this section are to bring you into the present moment, where you will find calm. They help you find solid ground on which to stand before we dive in to explore other parts of you. Practice these often, we all need to ground ourselves, and come back to these whenever you need them as we go through this workbook.

## 1. Checking in exercise

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in and out for a moment.

**Where are you right now? How are you right now? Draw/ write what you are noticing right now in your:**

mind	emotions	body

*keep calm &  
check in*

## 2. Grounding in your senses exercise

Grab a cup of tea, or look at a pleasant object (eg candle/ plant etc). Get into a comfortable seated position. Take a deep breath in and out. Notice what colours you can see... notice what sounds you can hear... notice what you can feel on your skin... notice what you can smell and what you can taste. Notice where in your body you feel most relaxed. Can you hone in and make that feeling bigger?

How do you feel after that compared to before?

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*just be in  
the moment*

### 3. Happy place visualisation exercise

Get into a comfortable seated position. Take a deep breath in and out. Imagine that you are somewhere absolutely wonderful, peaceful, and beautiful. Go into this happy place. Notice what colours you can see... notice what sounds you can hear... notice what you can feel on your skin... notice what you can smell and what you can taste. Imagine yourself exploring and enjoying this happy space. Where in your body do you feel most relaxed. Can you hone in and make that feeling bigger?

**Draw a picture of your happy place you imagined below:**



*all is well in  
my happy place*

## 4. Appreciating your physical environment

Reflect on the space where you are staying, whether at home or elsewhere. Who (people and pets) and/ or what (favourite chair/ plant/ art/ mug etc) in your space brings you moments of comfort and joy?

**Draw in the space below:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing. It occupies the central portion of the page.

*what you see depends  
on how you look*



## 5. Take ONE mindful breath

Taking one mindful breath is about bringing your full attention to your magical, life-giving breath, which is always there for you no matter what might be going on in your body, your busy mind and your external environment. All you need to do is....

### Smell the flowers



### Blow out the candle



**How was that for you? How do you feel in your body and your mind?**

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## 6. Gratitude: count your blessings.

Draw or write below what you are currently grateful for in your life:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a person to draw or write their current blessings.

*The struggle ends where  
the gratitude begins.*

## Section B: COVID-19

*“You can’t change what you don’t acknowledge.”*

- Phil McGraw



### 7. Depicting COVID-19

Supposing you could visualise the COVID-19 situation as you are experiencing it. What would it look like? Is there a colour, pattern, symbol or metaphor that captures it for you?

**Draw COVID-19 below:**

## 8. How the COVID-19 situation is currently affecting you

What have been the effects on you of this COVID-19 situation? What emotions, concerns, challenges has it raised for you?

**Draw something or jot down your thoughts below:**

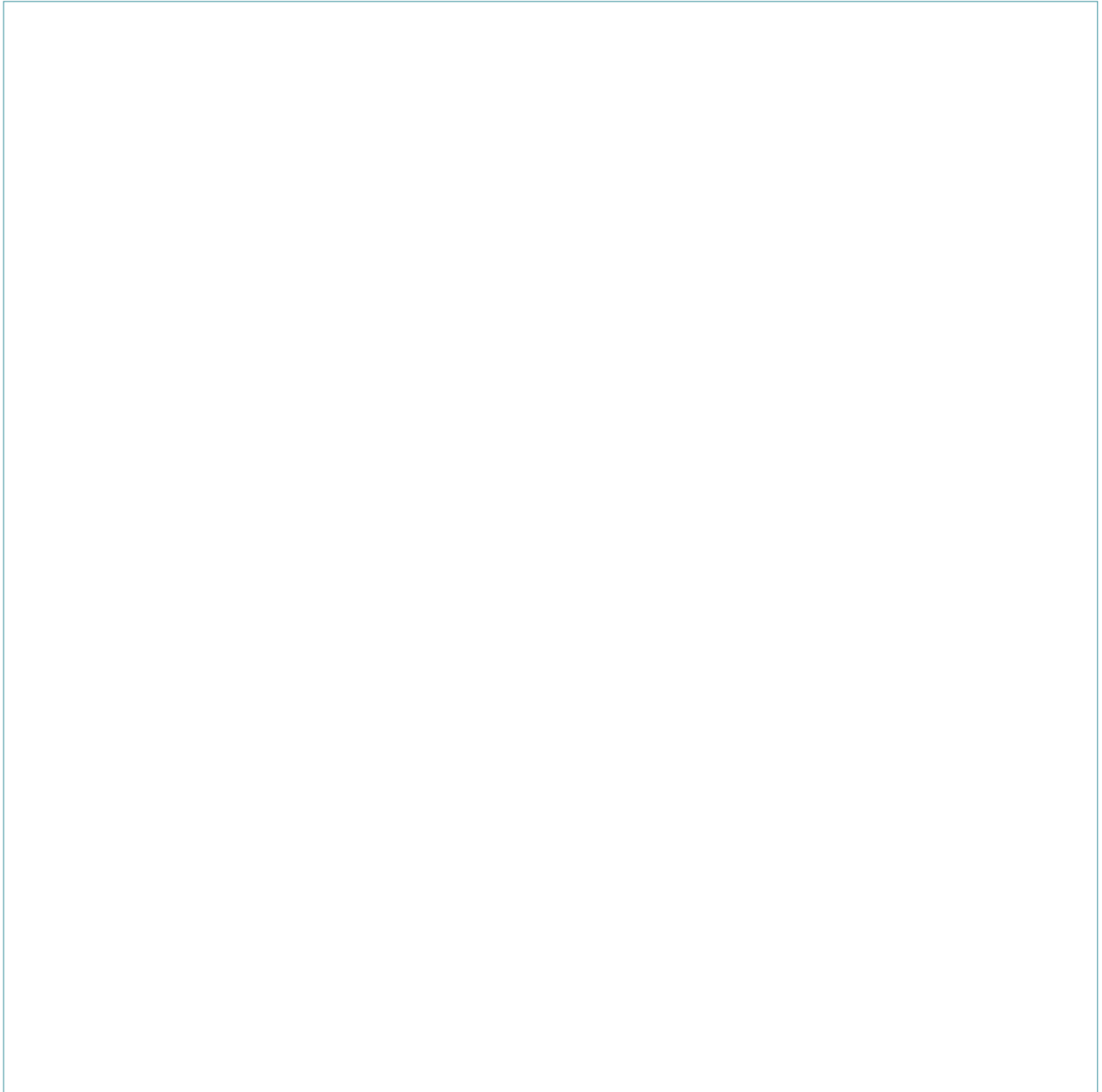


*It's OK to be affected  
by all this*

## 9. Your best hopes for the COVID-19 situation

What are your best hopes for managing the COVID-19 situation?

**Think of a way to draw that below, perhaps through using a metaphor (eg. a monster banished/ in prison, a storm shrunk to a minuscule size, etc).**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a drawing or illustration. The box is currently blank.

*“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness”*

– Desmond Tutu





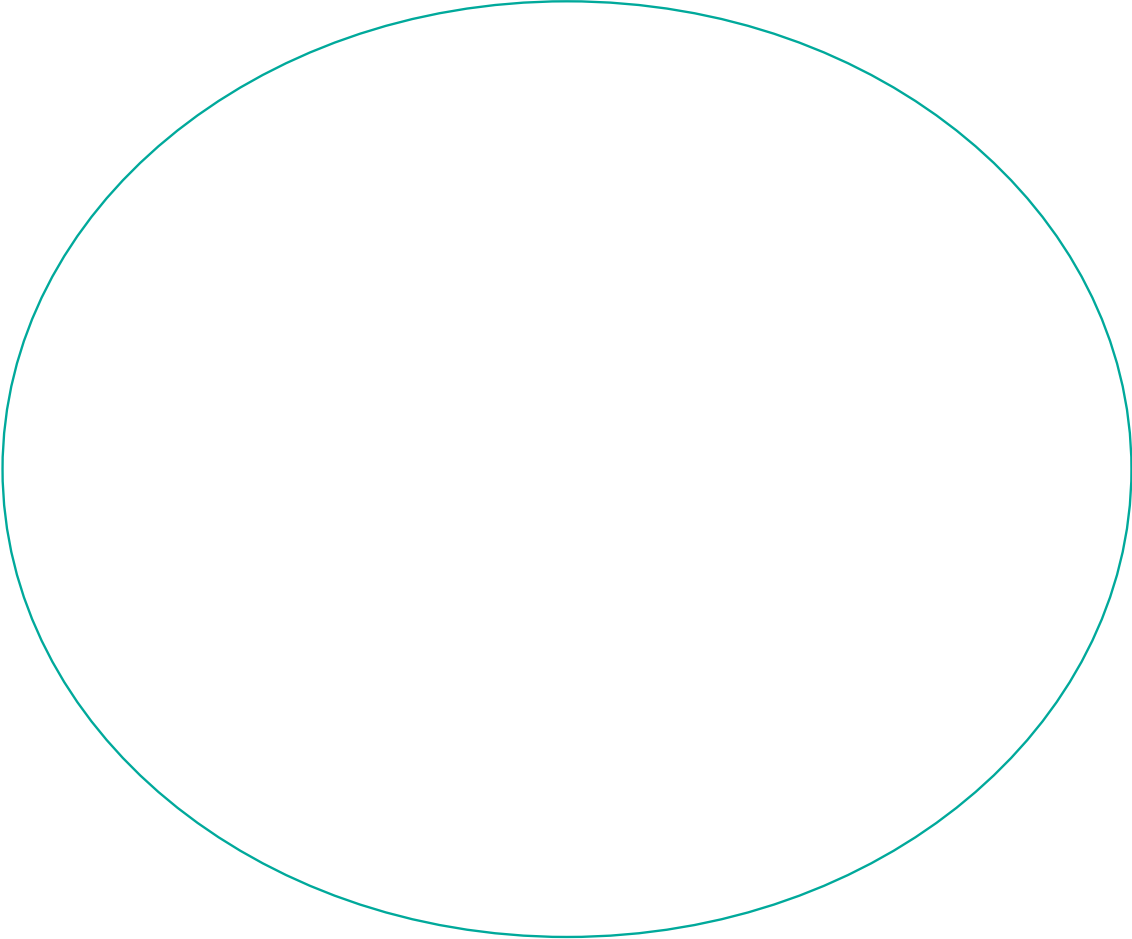


## 12. In our control vs out of our control

It's important to distinguish between what is in our control, and what is not. Our work then is to try to action that which is in our control (eg actions, thoughts, decisions you can choose etc), and try to come to terms with that which is out of our control (eg what other people do etc).

*Focus on what you can control,  
leave what you can't*

What can you choose to focus on that is IN your power? **Write or draw this inside the oval below.** What can you choose to let go of that is out of your hands? **Write or draw that in the space around the oval below:**



### 13. Time travelling forward

Imagine you could time travel forward to the day that you realise that the COVID-19 situation is no longer a threat.

**Draw or jot down the feelings you would feel:**



*“The best way to predict your future is to create it”* - Abraham Lincoln

## 14. Time traveling forward: self-appreciation

Imagine that on this day that you realise the COVID-19 situation is no longer a threat, you feel proud of how you approached these difficult times. You feel satisfied that you did your best, and really pleased that you approached this period in your best ways possible. What were the things you did that led to these proud feelings? How did you spend your time that was pleasing to you? What was it about your way of being that you were appreciative of?

**Write or draw these aspects of you in the space below:**



*If I could have anyone in the  
world, it would still be you.*

- Love from Future Me

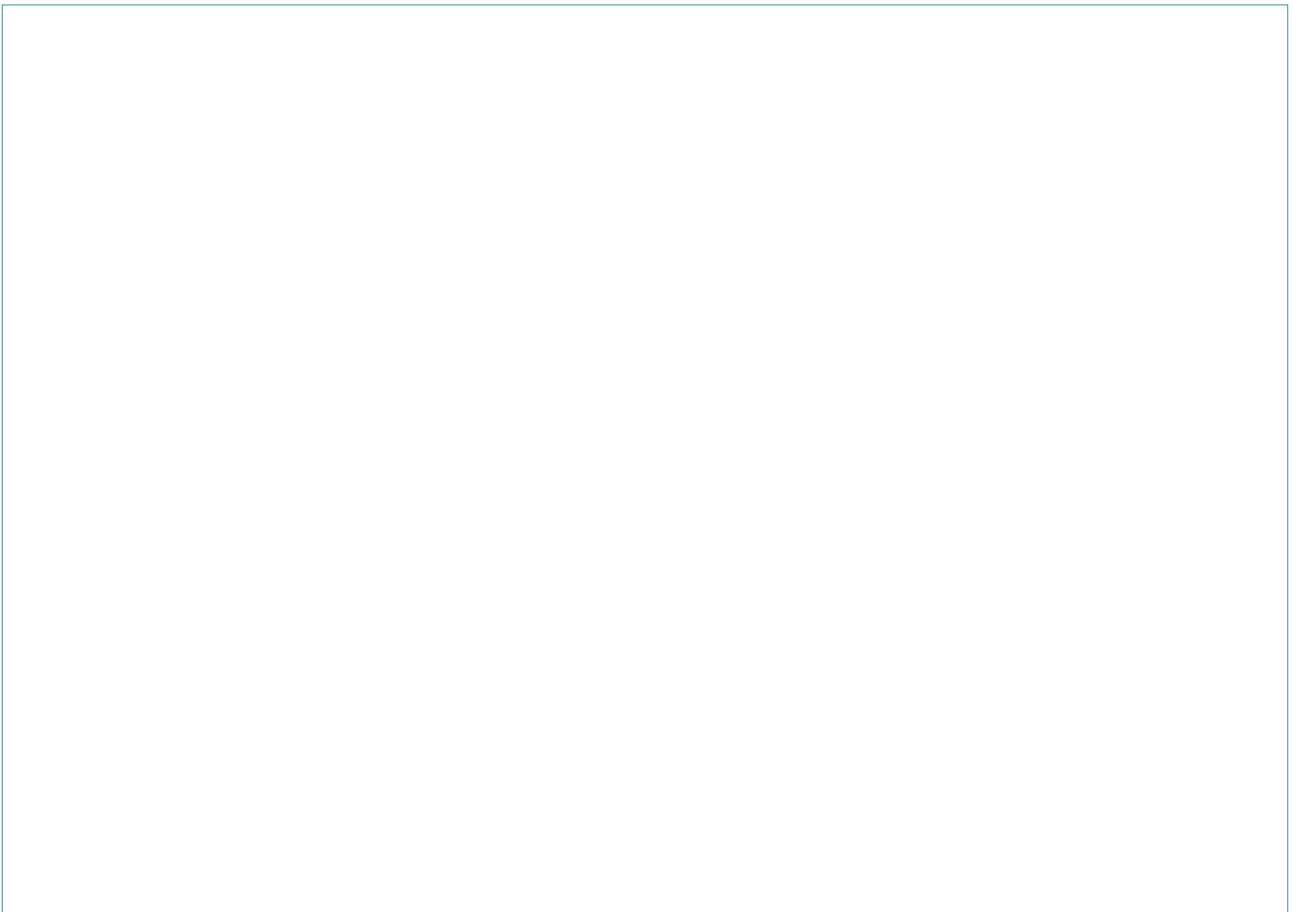
## 15. Creating your Miracle Day

Imagine that you go to sleep tonight and while you are sleeping a miracle happens! Although the circumstances around you remain the same, you are suddenly able to cope and respond to these circumstances from your highest self, in a way that really serves YOU. You're suddenly able to feel, think, and act in all the ways that you'd most prefer.

You slept right through the night, and so you don't yet know that the miracle took place....  
You wake up the next morning.

What's the first moment tomorrow where you notice something is different on this Miracle Day? It could be a feeling, thought, or action that is different. And what is the next moment? What are all the moments on this miracle day from waking to bedtime that you notice?

**Draw or write them in the space below.**



*“You can create your own miracle,  
but you do it by never looking past  
all the little steps along the way.”*

- Mikaela Shiffran

## 16. Reflecting on where you are now in relation to your Miracle Day

What aspects of your Miracle Day are already happening, at least some of the time? I.e, what is already working that you have or that you are doing? What helps? Might these include times, places or activities where you are more free from COVID-19's influence?

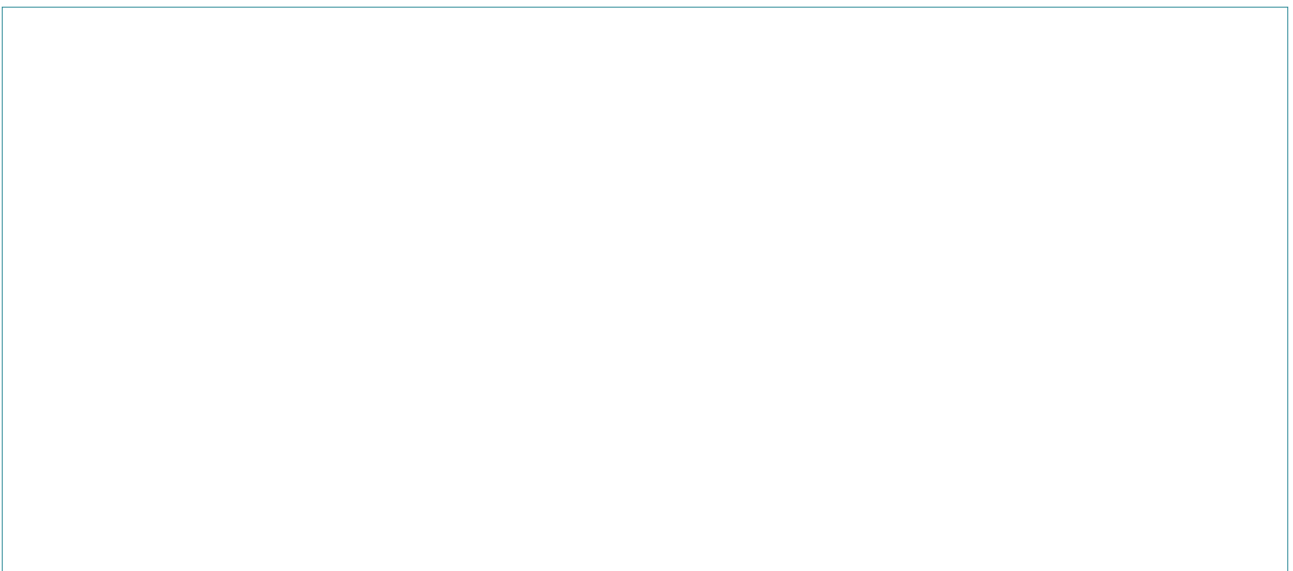
**Draw or write what works/ helps below:**



## *Tiny steps will get you there*

If there were a few very tiny steps that you could realistically take in the week ahead that would bring you closer to how you were in your Miracle Day, what would they be?

**Draw or write these steps below:**





## 17. Identify your core values

We all need to find our own true, authentic values that we aspire to and that we want to be the overarching guide to our lives. When you make your value system explicit, it helps you to make good decisions.

As a rule of thumb, your list of personal values should be between 3 and 10.

**Jot down or draw your core values below.**



A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the user to jot down or draw their core values.

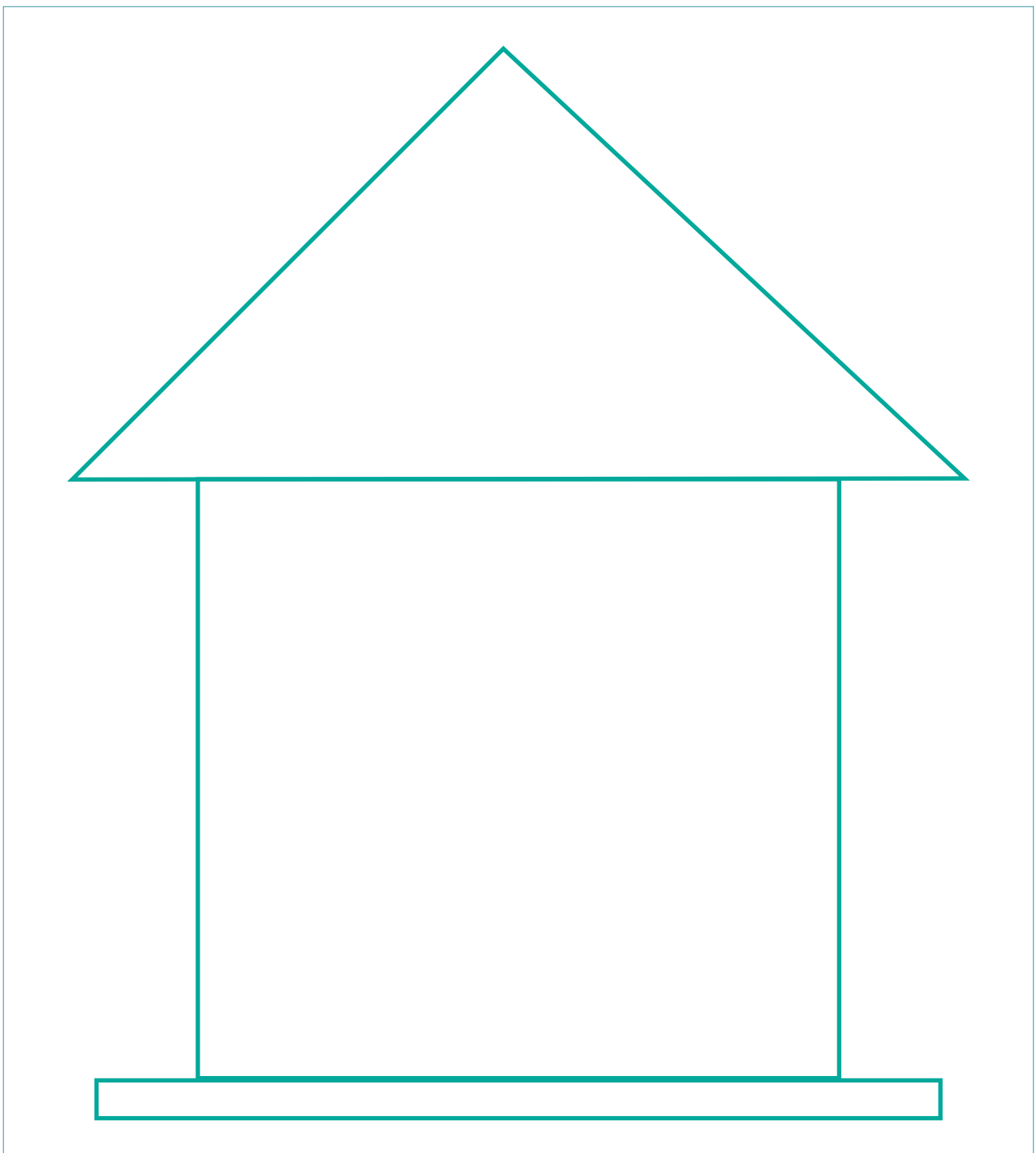
## 18. Understanding Self Care: The Self as a House

The ROOF of your house is your value system to protect and guide you, it shelters you and guides your behaviour and decisions.

The WALLS of your house are your structures and planning – your daily and weekly schedules, your priorities and your strategies to re-charge.

The FOUNDATION of your house is the basics – food, sleep, shelter, human connection

**In the picture of the house below, jot down some thoughts about how you'd like your house to be.**



## 19. Self-care goal-setting

Think of at least 1 goal you can commit to regarding each of these areas. Remember, to select goals that are SMART (ie specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound). Eg a SMART goal for exercise may be that you would commit to 1 minute of planking 4 times a week for the next month.

Area of your life – however you define this, in whatever way relevant for you	SMART goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Body</b> (Eg exercise; hygiene; healthy eating and vitamins; hydration; sleep and rest etc)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Mind</b> (eg helpful self-talk and affirmations vs catastrophic thinking; cutting down on exposure to social media/ the news; journaling; engaging in relaxing or creative pursuits etc)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Soul</b> (Eg prayer, meaningful connection to highest values and beliefs etc)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Relationships with others</b> (Eg giving and receiving support, helping those in need, staying connected, listening, and communicating needs well etc)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Structure</b> (Eg managing your time, routine, space effectively etc)</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Other</b></li></ul>	

## Section D: Strengths and solidarity

*know your self  
know your worth*



### 20. Reflecting on your strengths

Think about the following questions, and then write or draw your strengths in the box below.

1. What strengths and positive qualities do you have that will help you get through this difficult time?
2. Who is the person who most believes in your ability to endure and overcome hardships?
3. What is it they observe in you that would inform this?
4. Think of how you got through previous hardships, what skills, strengths did you tap into to overcome these?
5. How far back can you trace these strengths – what's the earliest memory you have of using them?
6. How do you think these skills and strengths came to be with you, how did they develop or become instilled?

**Draw or write your personal strengths below:**

## 21 Affirmations

Affirmations have an immediate impact on your self-esteem. Having positive self esteem simply means thinking well about yourself. You can choose your thoughts, so why waste mental energy on criticising yourself? Positive affirmations are a wonderful way to improve your self-esteem. Look into a mirror and say something loving and kind your yourself!

**Jot down some positive affirmations in the space below.**



*I am going I make you so proud*

- note to Self



## 22. 1 minute breathing exercise:

Take deep inhales and exhales. On the inhale, imagine you are breathing in all the love in the world. On the exhale, imagine you are sending love out to your community, country, and world.



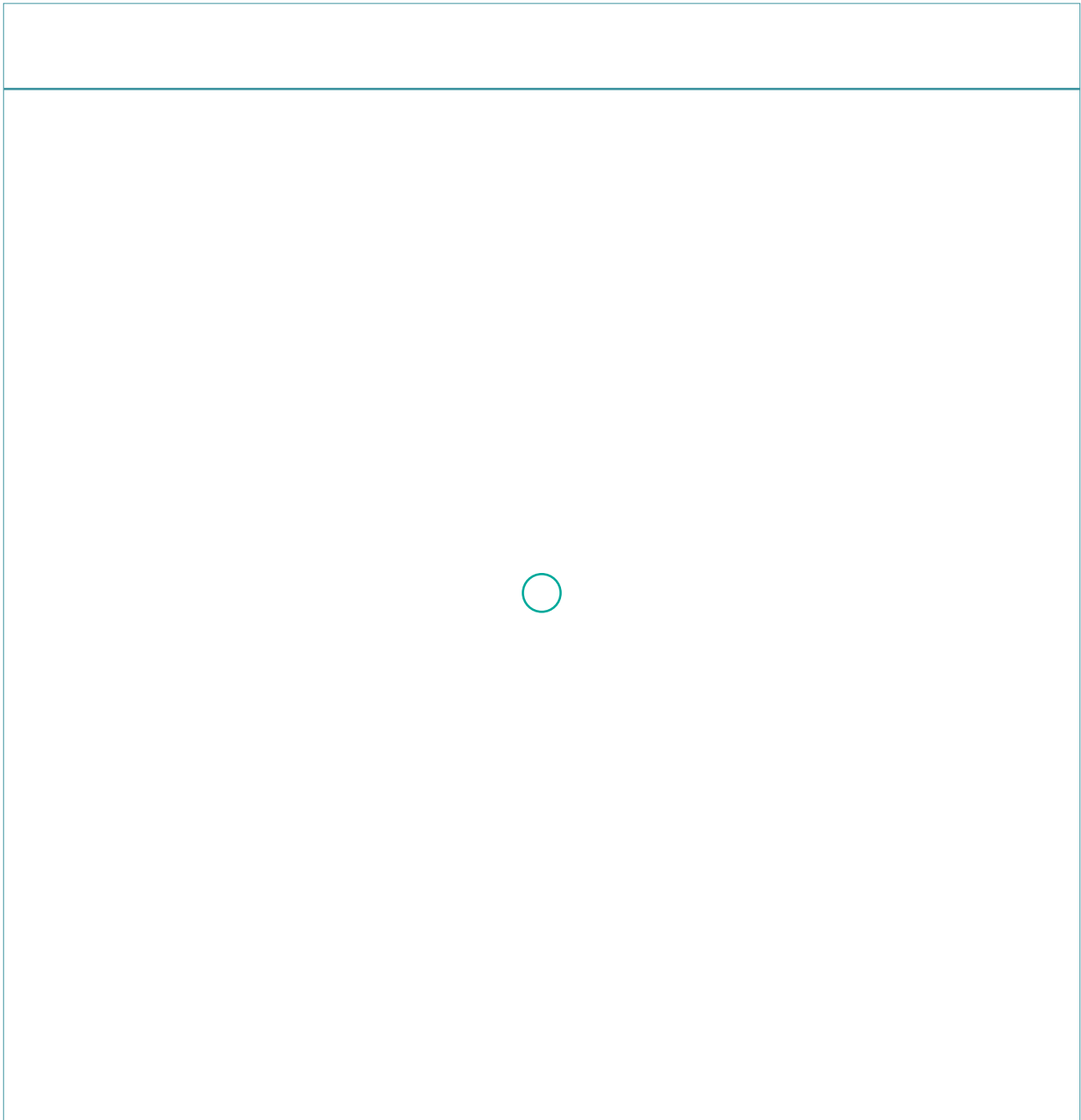
*Breathe it all in, love it all out*



## 23. Solidarity image:

In the circle inside the box below, draw COVID-19. In the rest of the space, draw a picture of people and communities worldwide joining together to overpower this problem. If you feel inspired to incorporate your spiritual beliefs into this image, do so.

Write a brief affirmation/ blessing on the line at the top of the box.



*Together we can  
overcome everything*

## 24. Thinking about others

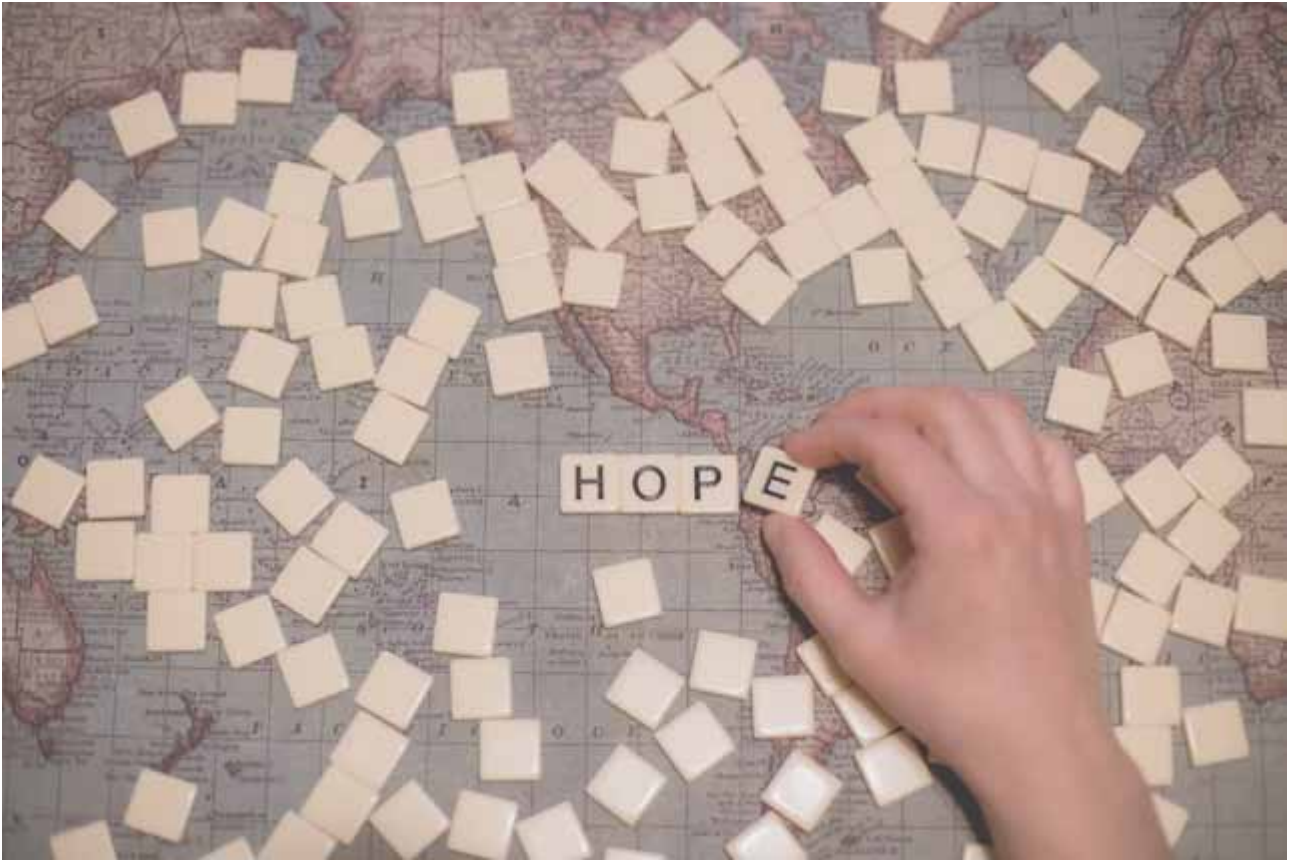
In what manageable way(s) can you be a little more mindful of, and extend support or care towards, those in need?

**Write or draw below:**

*How can I help others?*

## Section E:

### This too shall pass: life after COVID-19



#### 25. This too shall pass

Yes there is loss and grieving. And yet we do not give up hope. This too shall pass.

**Draw a picture or jot down some thoughts of a post-COVID-19 world that you find hopeful and reassuring:**

A large empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for drawing or writing thoughts about a post-COVID-19 world.

## 26. Post-COVID-19 lessons

Post-traumatic growth theory teaches us that grappling with hardship, suffering and loss can yield new growth and deeper wisdom. What can we learn from this global crisis?

**In your opinion, what important shifts might humanity benefit from making after COVID-19 has been contained?**

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*“Hardships often prepare ordinary people for an extraordinary destiny”*

- C.S. Lewis

## **27. Post-COVID-19 future take-outs for you personally**

What meaningful growth do you think you personally would like to take out of this experience when COVID-19 is over? What may you have learnt, what valuable shifts would you like to make and keep?

**In the space below, write a letter to your current self from your wiser post-COVID-19 future self:**

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*“Change is inevitable but personal growth is a choice”*

**- Bob Proctor**

## 28. A vision for the here and now and then

A vision board is about cutting out or drawing images or text of pretty much anything that inspires, excites or just resonates with you, and putting it on a piece of paper or a board (the board lasts longer, but ordinary paper is fine). It works so well because it's a way of letting your inner child express themselves. Set a non-judgemental intention and allow the vision to create itself! When you've finished pasting or drawing images and writing random text, take a step back and allow the final result to speak to you. What does it say? Are there themes emerging?

**Jot them down in the space below:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the user to jot down their thoughts and observations from the vision board activity.

## 29. Wrapping up

Having gone through this workbook, what was helpful? What are the take-outs for you?

**Write or draw them below**

Thank you for engaging with our workbook, we hope you found it helpful! We'd love to hear from you.

**Love from**

*Kerry & Karen*

[consultingkerry.co.za](http://consultingkerry.co.za) & [karenandrewspsychology.com](http://karenandrewspsychology.com)

