



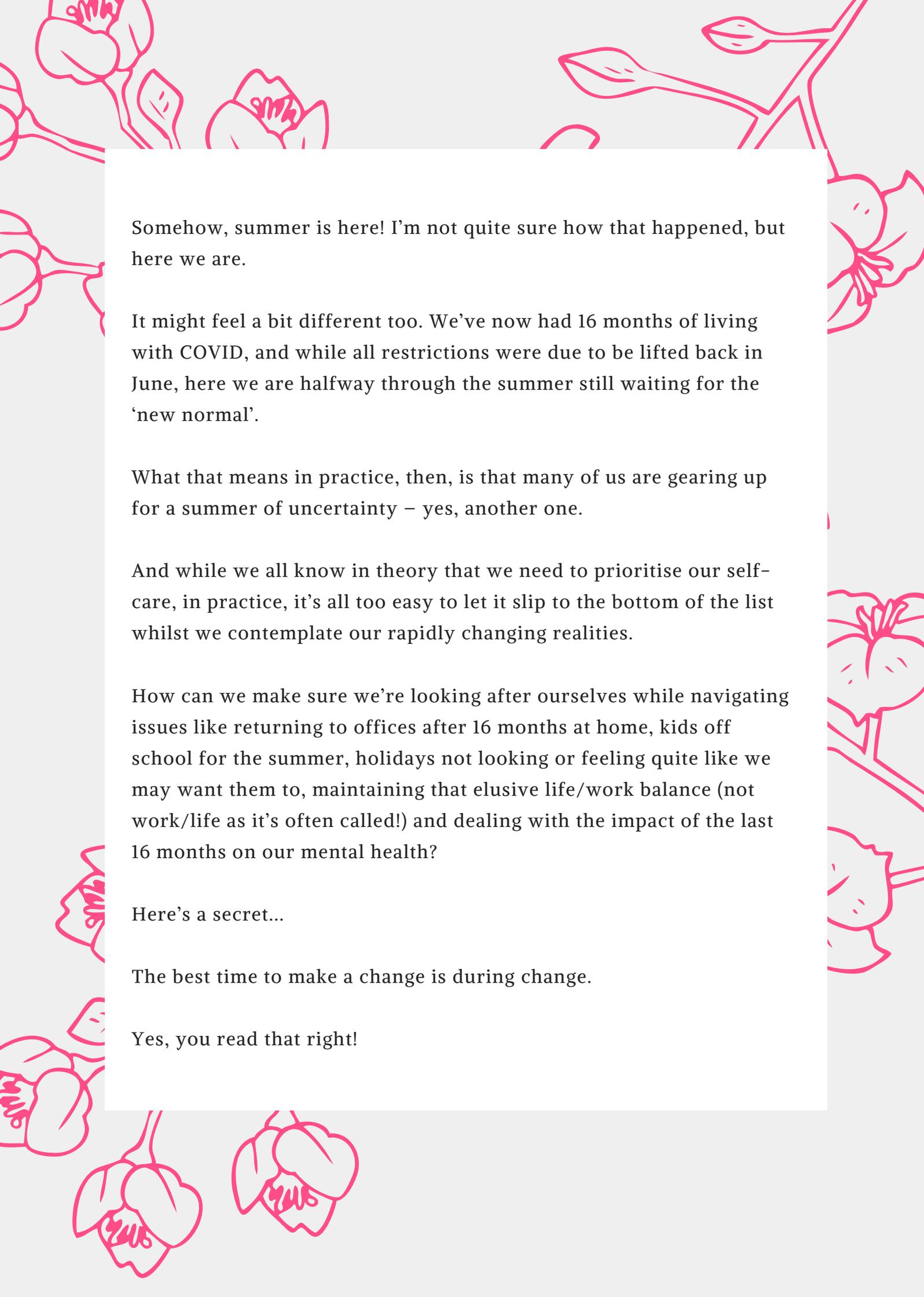
WISHFISH EBOOKLET

---

**SUMMER  
SELF-CARE**

---

JULY 2021



Somehow, summer is here! I'm not quite sure how that happened, but here we are.

It might feel a bit different too. We've now had 16 months of living with COVID, and while all restrictions were due to be lifted back in June, here we are halfway through the summer still waiting for the 'new normal'.

What that means in practice, then, is that many of us are gearing up for a summer of uncertainty – yes, another one.

And while we all know in theory that we need to prioritise our self-care, in practice, it's all too easy to let it slip to the bottom of the list whilst we contemplate our rapidly changing realities.

How can we make sure we're looking after ourselves while navigating issues like returning to offices after 16 months at home, kids off school for the summer, holidays not looking or feeling quite like we may want them to, maintaining that elusive life/work balance (not work/life as it's often called!) and dealing with the impact of the last 16 months on our mental health?

Here's a secret...

The best time to make a change is during change.

Yes, you read that right!

You might recall back in March we looked at change in more depth in my ebook **Ready For Change**.

If you haven't read that, go back and refresh yourself on why change is so hard, and how we can cope with the challenges of change.

So, armed with the knowledge that change is a challenge but one you can face and overcome, let's take this opportunity to reset where we are right now, and take advantage of this latest change to make some changes.

I hope this ebook helps you to navigate summer self-care - courageously, consciously and gracefully.

Love, Debbie.x



## LIFE / WORK BALANCE

If your life/work balance has suffered at any time over the last 16 months, please know that you're not alone.

We've spent 16 months adapting, adjusting and being agile, but we've gone from agile to fragile.

On average we're all working longer – we're more likely to be finishing at 8pm these days – and dealing with around 20% more emails.



Without clear boundaries between work and home life, work is creeping into our every waking hour and many of us are falling victims to an always-on culture that's leaving us with zero brain space.

We may well have set boundaries and upheld them really well at first, but often what happens is the minute something changes, we revert back to our old habits and those boundaries become more porous.

This is why we need to take time to reset.



# LIFE / WORK BALANCE

To reset your life/work balance try these tips:

- Re-establish your working hours and switch that computer off outside these hours.
- Set aside time for 'deep work' – often we're so busy on Zoom calls, answering emails and responding to notifications we don't have the space to dive into the deeper work we need to do. Create time for this – set aside Wednesday mornings, for example, as 'no meetings' zones and close your inbox down so you can concentrate on actually doing your job.
- Minimise distractions – close social media tabs and turn off notifications. Put the washing-up and laundry somewhere not in your eye-line.



- Remember who's in control here (clue, it's you). You are able to control your life/work balance, by setting and holding firm boundaries. Remind yourself of that when you find yourself becoming overwhelmed.
- Ask for help – whether that's from your partner or family at home or support from your boss or manager at work if you're struggling.
- Work smarter, not harder. Create a structure, block out time for you, and make sure you stick to it.
- Use that time for you to do something that fills you up. Exercise, go for a walk, or just have a family meal with no phones present.



## RECONNECTING WITH OTHERS

At the beginning of the first lockdown, many of us talked about having big parties ‘once this is all over’ and how eager we were to hug all of our friends again.

But reconnecting socially may not look and feel as we expected it would all those months ago!

It’s all about being patient, with other people and with yourself.

If you don’t feel like going out and having a big party, then don’t do it!



It’s absolutely OK to still feel anxious about social contact.

This applies whether or not you’ve been vaccinated.

We have spent the last 16 months living in fear of this virus, and we can’t be expected to shake that off overnight.

You may also be wondering what to talk about with other people that isn’t Covid.

There’s nothing to be gained by living in denial. It’s fine to talk about Covid and your experience of it.

Everybody has their own story to tell and sharing these stories is part of what’s going to help us move forwards.



## RECONNECTING WITH OTHERS

Make space for people's stories and tell your own.

It's OK if you had a dreadful time and need to talk about it.

It's OK if you were barely affected and feel awkward about it.

Meet people, including yourself, where they are.

We are all entitled to our own experiences, whatever those experiences have been.

Try to listen non-judgementally and with an open mind and remember, you don't have to fix things for people, chivvy them out of their feelings or encourage them to 'see the positives'.

**Just listen, and as you do so you will connect with values like gratitude, kindness and compassion.**

We could all use a bit more of those!

## RECONNECTING WITH YOURSELF

Give yourself permission to do what's right for you.

If it helps, you can actually write down a permission slip, like the ones we got at school!

Be honest with yourself about how you're feeling and take the time to acknowledge those feelings.

If you're not ready to get back out there yet, don't force yourself. If you're anxious about going back to the office, accept and own those feelings, and make a plan to ask for help.

Take it at your own pace, don't compare yourself to others and absolutely no going on social media and feeling bad that you're not living somebody else's best life.



## SUMMER HOLIDAYS

For the second year running, many of us won't get abroad for a summer holiday this year.

For those who have been really holding on to the idea of a holiday as a post-Covid milestone it can be difficult to adjust.

Even the nicest UK staycation is likely to be different from the sun-soaked Mediterranean beaches you might have been looking forward to and the great British weather, as we have all seen time and again, can thwart the best-laid plans.



# SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Making the most of your staycation...

- Have a plan – and a Plan B – and a Plan C, if necessary. As an example, if you've booked a beach break and it rains, what about taking the family to the cinema or indoor swimming pool instead?
- Or, grab an umbrella and go anyway! On my birthday this year, my family and I booked a trip to London Zoo. We woke up to torrential rain – but we went for it anyway and we had a great day, with no crowds.
- Don't put pressure on your holiday to be perfect, or to measure up to rose-tinted carefree holidays in the past. Concentrate on and accept the holiday you're on, not the one you wish you were on!



- Ask yourself how you can make the best of your circumstances or, if you prefer, what's the worst that can happen? And if things really don't go to plan, don't beat yourself up. Be kind to yourself.
- Look for ways to create fun. If a whole day out feels daunting, how about planning a half day? What have you not done, and always wanted to try – how about one of those high ropes adventure courses, or hiring a kayak?
- Remember you don't need to drive for five hours to make it a holiday! How about camping locally, exploring your local area and searching Facebook for pop-up events over the summer near you? And all without the hours of queueing in traffic jams!



## SUMMER HOLIDAYS

Above all, try and remember how resilient you've been over the last 16 months.

We've all adapted to change, and then adapted again, and again.

As Bernard Williams says:

**‘Man never made any material as resilient as the human spirit.’**

Take the pressure off, and give yourself credit for how far you've come.



## A FINAL NOTE

Hopefully this guide has given you lots of inspiration and ideas for ways you can prioritise your wellness this winter season.

**But if you do find you need extra help and support, don't be afraid to ask.**

Many people find lockdown and life more generally difficult for all sorts of reasons, and there is lots of formal and informal support out there. Samaritans helpline is available 24 hours on 116 123.

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information please contact Debbie, Laura and Gail on 07496 328 745 / 07896 998 136.

Email: [info@wishfish.org.uk](mailto:info@wishfish.org.uk)

Visit: [www.wishfish.org.uk](http://www.wishfish.org.uk)

**Tune in to our Secrets from a Coach podcast via Spotify!**

Listen today!

