KONTERRA RESILIENCE

STAFF CARE RESOURCE

Pause, Reflect, Reset

Intentional self-care for the year ahead

The end of the year is a natural moment to pause. This resource invites you to look back at the past year, review how you are caring for yourself, and set meaningful self-care intentions for the year ahead.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Anyone who wants to be more intentional about their wellbeing, especially people working in demanding or high-stress roles.

HOW TO USE IT

Work through the three steps in one sitting or over several days. Write your answers down if you can. Writing helps turn general ideas into specific plans.

THREE STEPS

1

Look back on your year

Notice what drained you, what sustained you, and what you learned about your stress signals.

2

Review your self-care

Reflect on five areas: rest, body, relationships, play and creativity, and meaning.

3

Set your intentions

Choose your priorities for the year ahead, and think about how you will follow through.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Why pause and reflect?

Most of us know what is good for us. We know that sleep, movement, good nutrition, and time with people we care about help us cope with stress and stay healthier. The hard part is putting that knowledge into practice, week after week, when work and life are demanding.

When we are busy or under pressure, self-care often happens by default rather than by design. We do what is easiest in the moment, and the things that protect our wellbeing are often the first things to go.

It helps to step back every so often, look honestly at what we are doing, and choose what we want to do more of, or less of, on purpose.

A few principles to keep in mind

Reflection is not judgment

The goal is to learn from your year, not to criticize yourself for what you didn't do.

Small is powerful

One small change you keep will be worth more than five big changes you abandon in a month.

Self-care is not the same as self-comfort

Healthy self-care helps us feel stronger, more connected, and more able to face our problems. Self-comfort (such as scrolling, extra alcohol, or overworking to avoid feelings) can feel good in the moment but often makes things harder over time.

There is no single right answer

What helps one person may not help another. Your plan should fit your life, your culture, and your circumstances.

STEP 1

Look back on your year

Start by looking back over the past twelve months. You don't need to analyze everything. Simply notice what stands out.

What drained you?

- What were the most stressful periods of your year?
- What kinds of tasks, situations, or demands left you feeling most depleted?
- Were there habits or patterns that made stress worse?

What sustained you?

- When did you feel most like yourself this year?
- Which people, places, or activities gave you energy?
- What helped you get through difficult weeks?

What did you learn about your stress signals?

We all have early warning signs that tell us our stress levels are rising. These might include trouble sleeping, irritability, headaches, withdrawing from people, or feeling unable to focus.

- What are generally your first signs that stress is building?
- How quickly did you notice them this year?
- What did you do when you noticed them?

> *If this year included events that were very painful or traumatic, you don't need to revisit them in detail here. Focus on what helped you cope, and consider talking with a counselor if those experiences still feel heavy or stir up very difficult feelings.*

STEP 2

Review your self-care

Now look at how you have been caring for yourself across five important areas. Most people find that their self-care is strong in some areas and weaker in others, and that what they do changes when pressure rises.

For each area, read the questions and notice your answers. The ideas listed are examples, not a checklist. Use them to spark your own thinking.

Rest

Rest is how we recover. It includes sleep, but it is more than sleep. We also need rest for our minds (a break from thinking, deciding, and problem-solving), our senses (a break from noise, screens, and constant input), and sometimes from other people.

- Are you getting enough sleep to feel rested most days?
- When do you give your mind real breaks from work, screens, and news?
- What kind of rest do you need most right now?

Ideas to try A regular bedtime and wake-up time; switching off work notifications in the evening; a short screen-free walk; ten quiet minutes alone; protecting at least one day a week with no work.

Body

Our bodies carry stress. Moving and fueling our bodies well helps us release tension, keep our energy steady, and cope better with pressure.

- What sort of movement and exercise do you get in a regular week? How many times?
- Are you eating and drinking in ways that give you steady energy and support health?

Ideas to try A brisk 20-minute walk; stretching between tasks; eating regular meals on busy days; drinking more water; reducing caffeine or alcohol.

Relationships

Connection is one of our strongest protections against stress. Time with people who care about us, and who we care about, is never wasted.

- Who are the most important people in your life?
- Among your relationships, who leaves you feeling the most understood, supported, encouraged, or uplifted?
- Are there relationships you have neglected this year that you would like to reconnect with?

Ideas to try A regular call or meal with a friend or family member; sending a short message to someone you miss; talking through a hard day with a trusted colleague; offering support to someone else.

Play and creativity

Play is how we renew our energy and refresh our spirits. It means doing things simply because we enjoy them, not primarily because they are productive or useful. Under pressure, play is often one of the first things we drop.

- What do you do just for fun?
- When did you last lose track of time doing something you enjoy?
- Is there a hobby or creative activity you have let go of and miss?

Ideas to try Music, dancing, games, sport, cooking something new, drawing, writing, gardening, or making something with your hands. Ideally, choose at least one activity that is not connected to your work or family responsibilities.

Meaning

Meaning keeps us anchored. Things that connect us to our values, our sense of purpose, and a bigger picture can help us hold steady during hard times and give us energy and determination to persevere.

- What parts of your daily life and responsibilities feel most purposeful and valuable to you?
- Are there important sources of meaning and purpose you currently feel disconnected from?
- What helps you keep perspective and stay grounded when things feel draining or overwhelming?

Ideas to try Prayer, meditation, or spiritual practices; time in nature; a gratitude practice; journaling; reconnecting with why your work matters to you; volunteering or contributing to your community.

Making room for feelings

Demanding work and difficult years leave feelings that need somewhere to go. Many of the practices above are also ways of processing what we carry: talking things through, moving, writing, creating, praying, or simply having quiet time to let things settle.

- How do you usually process difficult feelings?
- Which of the areas above help you do this best?
- Are there feelings you have been carrying that need more attention?

STEP 3

Set your intentions

Based on your review, choose a priority intention for each area. This might be something you want to **keep doing**, **start doing**, or **do less of**. A helpful intention is specific and realistic. Use the samples as prompts, then write your own.

AREA	MY PRIORITY INTENTION
Rest For example: — *Keep weekends mostly free of work* — *Stop checking work email after 7:00 p.m.* — *Take a short screen-free break every afternoon*	
Body For example: — *Walk for 20 minutes at lunchtime three days a week* — *Keep going to my weekly exercise class* — *Limit coffee to two cups a day*	
Relationships For example: — *Call or meet one friend each week* — *Keep our family meal on Sunday evenings* — *Reconnect with one person I've lost touch with*	
Play and creativity For example: — *Spend one evening a week on a hobby I enjoy* — *Try a class in something I've always wanted to learn* — *Spend less evening time scrolling*	
Meaning For example: — *Keep my morning prayer or meditation time* — *Spend time in nature every weekend* — *Write down one thing I am grateful for each evening*	

Don't try to change everything at once. If several of your intentions involve new habits, start with the one or two that matter most to you. Add others once those feel more settled.

What will help you follow through?

Think about what will make your intentions easier to keep. For example:

- Reminders, such as calendar alerts or notes where you will see them
- A simple tracker or checklist
- Support from someone else, such as a friend to walk with or a colleague who checks in with you

Check in with yourself

Set a reminder to review your intentions in a month, and again in a few months. Ask yourself:

Is this helping?
Does anything need to change?

Expect to slip sometimes

Everyone falls out of their routines and intentions sometimes, especially during busy or difficult periods. This is normal. It is not failure.

What matters most is starting again, without being hard on yourself.

SUPPORT

When to seek extra support

Self-care is important, but it is not always enough. Consider reaching out to a counselor, doctor, or other trusted professional if:

- You feel exhausted, hopeless, or numb most days
- Your sleep is severely disrupted for several weeks
- Anxiety or low mood is making it hard to work or care for yourself and others
- You are relying more and more on alcohol or other substances to cope
- Reflecting on this year brings up memories or feelings that feel overwhelming

Seeking support is a sign of strength, and an important part of caring for yourself. If your organization offers an employee assistance or resilience program, it is a good place to start.

A final word

You don't need to change everything. Choose one small step today, and build from there. Small, steady changes add up, and taking time to care for yourself helps you sustain the work you do and the people you care about.

GO DEEPER

Want a deeper look at what supports your resilience?

The KonTerra Inventory of Resilience Builders (KIRB) assesses ten key resilience factors and provides a personal profile with practical recommendations.

Learn more about KIRB →

KONTERRA RESILIENCE

info@konterragroup.net | konterragroup.net