

# SELF!SH™

BY STEPHANIE SZOSTAK

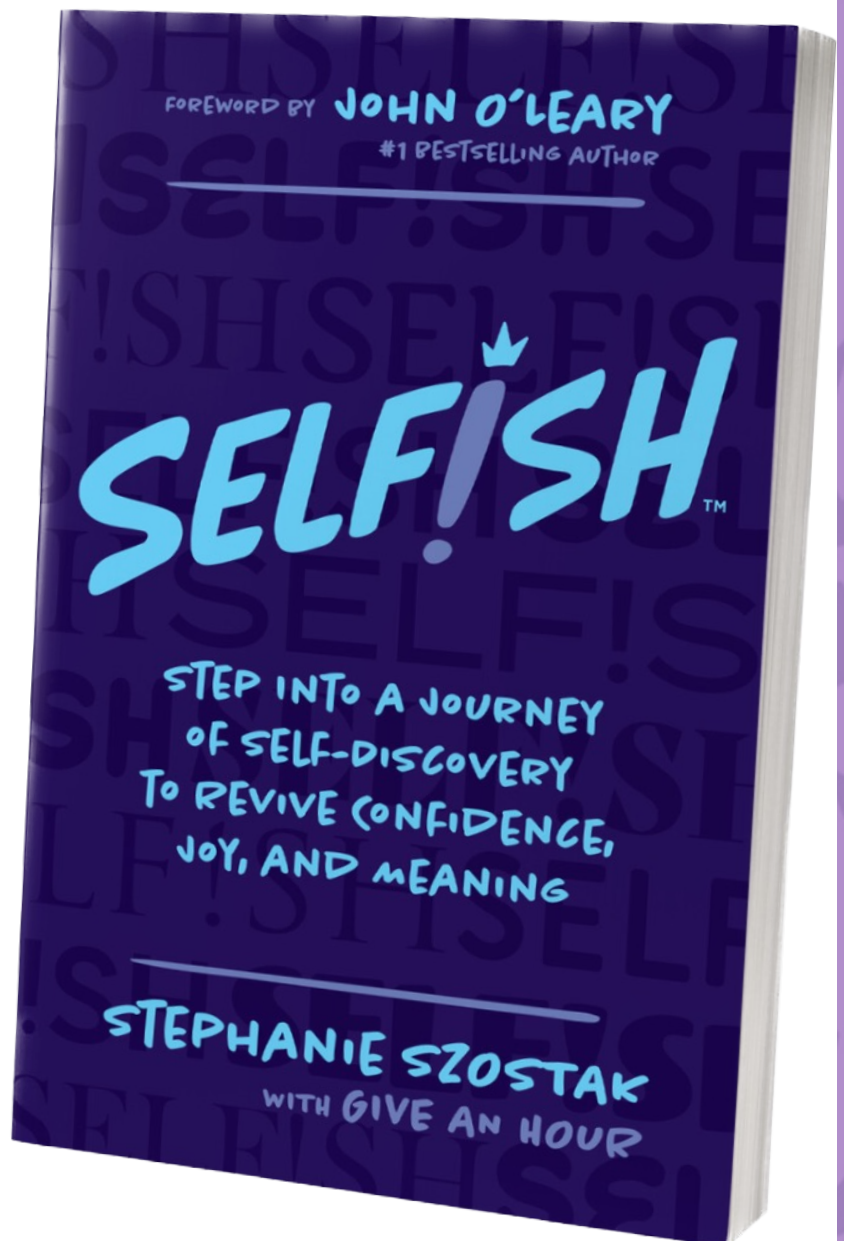
## DISCUSSION GUIDE

**Discussion points before starting the Steps. You can do these before or after reading the Introduction.**

What did you think when you first read the title of this workbook?

Why have you decided to read and complete this workbook? Do you have any hopes or expectations?

What does “Stepping into a journey of self-discovery” mean to you? Is it exciting? Is it uncomfortable?



## Discussion points after reading the Foreword, the Preface, and the Introduction

What is your morning routine? How long does it take before you grab your phone after you wake up?

Our inner dialogues can be so powerful. The author shares her self-talk from a movie set - ***“That sucked. They’re gonna think it sucked. They’re gonna think I suck. I do suck. What am I doing here? I don’t belong here. I’m gonna get fired.”***

Have you ever had a similar experience?

Maybe your inner voice caused you to lose your confidence or convince you that others were rooting against you.

Maybe you were at work, getting ready for an important event, or at a dinner.

Did you find a way to quiet the noise of that negative chatter? Did it impact how you felt? How you acted?

Discuss the following expressions and what they mean to you: **“mind shift”**, **“mindset makeover”**, and **“mental fitness.”**

Can you relate to this quote from the introduction? ***“We are getting really good at being distracted, moving away from good judgment, what we’re working towards, and what serves us well. This is the information age and we are experiencing information overload. We often lose steam, run on autopilot, and, as we face the challenges and obstacles of the day, we don’t always respond in the best way.”***

What do you think of the analogy of the pilot checking his checklist? Does the concept of “mental fitness” as explained in the glossary make sense to you?

What does this quote from Albert Einstein mean to you?

***“If you feed your mind as often as you feed your stomach, then you’ll never have to worry about feeding your stomach or having a roof over your head or clothes on your back.”***

Did you already add a new album on your phone for your Playbook? Or do you plan to create your playbook in a notebook? (If you plan to have it on your phone, what are you waiting for!?)



## Discussion points for each Step.

### Step 1: What Are Your Greatest Achievements?

Did you remember either a win or a loss that you had forgotten about? By remembering and reflecting upon it, did it bring a new perspective to how you related to a specific event in your life?

Did you discover any strengths you have that you weren't aware of?

### Step 2: Who Do You Admire?

Was there a person or characteristic that you listed that surprised you? If so, why?

### Step 3: What Are Your Pearls of Wisdom?

Where did you find those pearls of wisdom? Were they stashed away in a drawer, in a notes app on your phone, or maybe framed around your house?

Do you have Pearls of Wisdom from family members or loved ones that you'd like to share?

### Step 4: What Is Your Impossible Future?

Was this exercise easy or hard for you? Please explain. For example, if it is not easy for you to let go and dream, what did you do to allow yourself to go there?

Did anything surprise you in your impossible future, like the author having a dog?

### Step 5: What Are Your Daily Wins?

Did you watch Randy Pausch's last lecture on YouTube? What did you think?

Before doing this exercise did you have a strategy to help you stay on track, adapt, and respond to challenges?

What is going to be the hardest Daily Win on your wheel to achieve? How can this group help you with that?

### Step 6: What Are Your Narratives?

Were you aware that you had self-talk before this exercise?

Can you share situations and stories when your self-talk does not serve you well?

Did you come up with Epic Thoughts?

### Step 7: How Do You Find and Spread Joy?

What is one thing that brings you joy?

What is one way you spread joy?

### Step 8: What Is Your Life Philosophy?

What is your life philosophy?

How does it make you feel to say it out loud in front of the group?

Does it fit?

Can you write it down somewhere so that you can see it every day?



Today  
I CHOOSE  
joy

## Discussion points upon completion of the workbook.

How do you plan to give staying power to all of the work you have done?

How can you watch your playbook every day?

In the conclusion, the author, Stephanie Szostak, shares her inner dialogue as she was getting ready to play golf with her father. Her playbook helped shift her focus to compassion and humor.

Do you have a relationship that is currently complicated and that brings about unsupportive self-talk?

Is there any way for you to recalibrate by shifting your focus to the qualities you admire (from Step 2)?

Do you think your playbook can help you in a moment of need as it helped the author?

Looking back at all the stories in the book, the foreword by John O’Leary, and all the ambassadors’ stories, which story resonated the most with you? Why?

As you began this book, John O’Leary stated in the foreword ***“You are about to be reminded that although you can’t always choose the path you walk in life, you are free to determine the manner in which you walk it. You are about to rediscover the gift of being in love with life and confident that better days remain ahead. You are about to begin a journey—your Self!sh journey—that reinforces the grandeur of your life and your ability to determine what happens next in your story.”***

Now that you have completed the book, what do you think of this statement?

Do you understand what he meant by **“rediscover the gift of being in love with life”** and **“reinforces the grandeur of your life”**? Explain.

Do you feel confident with your ability to be the author (or at least coauthor) of your next chapter in life?

Thank you for going on this journey with us, your group but most importantly with yourSELF.





**Additional resources provided by Give an Hour.**

- Healthy Habits of Emotional Wellbeing
- Steps to Take When Faced with Disaster
- Dealing with Change as a Trauma Survivor
- Establishing Sleep Health
- Creating Support Systems
- Reinforcing Self Compassion

To see a full list of tools and resources go to <https://giveanhour.org/resources/>.



By taking care of yourself,  
you'll bring more of what you  
cherish and value to the world  
and those around you.

**THAT'S SELF!SH**



# The *Healthy* Habits of Emotional Wellbeing

It is important to recognize when someone is in emotional pain. It is equally important to learn basic habits that keep up emotionally healthy.

What are the Healthy Habits of Emotional Wellbeing? They are habits that everyone can learn, habits that allow each of us to identify and practice that works for us.



## TAKE CARE OF YOU

Eat, sleep, and be active. We don't often think about how important these basic activities are for our mental health -- but they are critical.



## CHECK IN AND GET CHECKUPS

We get check-ups for our physical health. We see our dentist to take care of our teeth. It's time to take responsibility and get check-ups for our emotional wellbeing. Talk with your doctor, a counselor, a faith-based leader....and your family and friends to make sure you, and those you love, are doing well emotionally.



## ENGAGE AND CONNECT WISELY

Pay attention to your relationships. We can't be healthy if our relationships are not.



## RELAX

Learn ways to reduce the stress that we all face -- and practice what works for you: meditate, run, knit, dance, sing, write, love...



## KNOW THE FIVE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL SUFFERING

The Five Signs are change in personality, agitation, withdrawal, decline in personal care, and hopelessness. Someone may exhibit one or more signs. Many conditions can result in emotional pain. If you see them in someone you love, reach out, connect and offer to help.

# STEPS TO TAKE WHEN FACED WITH DISASTER

*When we go through unspeakable pain, it's easy to dip into despair. Even if it doesn't feel like it at the time, you will get through the hurt.*

## ALL FEELINGS ARE OK

Pain, grief, sadness, and anger look different for everyone.

## KEEP THE SAME ROUTINE

Wake up, shower, eat, exercise; keep up with the basics of self care.

## LIMIT INPUT & EXPOSURE

Protect yourself from outside opinions and reliving the event.

## PRIORITIZE BASIC NEEDS

Keep focused on needs and self care. Remember to hydrate and nourish your body. Put the "to do" list aside for now.

## ASK FOR HELP

Reach out to see if others can help with meals, cleaning, driving, dog walking, support, listening, or simply sitting with you. You can return the kindness one day, others want to help.

## WHEN YOU ARE READY

Seek professional mental healthcare to work through & process the events



## REMINDE YOURSELF:

- You are not alone
- There is hope on the other side of pain
- You are allowed to feel all the feelings
- You are resilient

Change is a constant in life that everyone experiences. It is an interruption of a comfortable pattern that has been mentally extended to the future. When the unexpected happens, this can cause feelings of vulnerability and loss of control. Whether it be from an expected or unexpected life event, it is common to feel disoriented and violated when a change has occurred. Change can be activating and may feel risky or unsafe even if it's not. Incorporating ways to navigate forward is crucial.

### **Ground and Anchor**

Focus on the familiar, like a regular routine, your favorite TV show, or comfort. Stay in the present and that will help the past stay in the past.

### **Surround Yourself with Trust**

Is social media aggravating your feelings? Take a break. Hang out with people who understand. Talk to your support person or a mental health professional.

### **Name it**

Acknowledge your feelings. Write them down. Say them outloud. Share them. Denying the change is like fighting the current. Flow with it, look for encouragements in the new direction you are taking.

### **Stick to Healthy Meal, Exercise, and Sleep Routines**

Rebooting and refueling our bodies helps us have the strength and energy to address the rest. Reinforcing the physical-you reinforces the mental-you.

### **Gain Perspective**

Evaluate how much control you have over the situation. Take back the control by focusing your feelings and your reactions. Focus on your values and tell the fear to take a hike. Fight the worry, hate, or despair and remind yourself that you are in charge of your reaction.

Training your brain that change is ok and YOU are ok will help you cope.





# Establishing Sleep Health

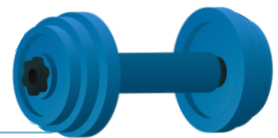
Sleep deprivation leads to poor performance & weakened cognitive abilities. Learning to sleep well in stressful environments and when anxiety is high, although challenging, is possible & can help maximize wellness. It is a skill worth developing and prioritizing.

## DEVELOP SLEEP READINESS

Train your circadian rhythm by implementing routines. Avoid electronic devices, find your favorite pillow, listen to music or take a shower before bed.

## EXERCISE

Work out at least 30 minutes early in the day to fall asleep faster at night. This will help reduce night time awakenings.



## WATCH WHAT YOU EAT

Stop eating 2-3 hours before bed. Limit caffeine, sugar or other digestive stimulants.



## NAP STRATEGICALLY

When predictable nighttime sleep is unavailable, short 30 minute power naps have been found to increase alertness & performance.

## GET COMFORTABLE

You spend 1/3 of your life in bed, so you should be comfortable. Consider upgrading or replacing your mattress and/or pillows.

Good Night !!

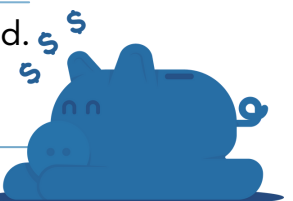


## GO TO BED SLEEPY

If you aren't asleep in 20-30 mins, get out of bed & do something else.

## MAKE SPACE

If thoughts keep you from sleeping, jot them down to relieve your mind.



## BANK YOUR SLEEP

If you're on night shift, plan to get 10 hours of sleep a night for week prior to expected sleepless nights.



## CREATING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Rare Caregivers often feel isolated and find it challenging to connect. 51% report difficulty in maintaining friendships and 53% report feeling alone\*. Since the rare care journey is often emotional and difficult, it is important to prioritize support. Research has shown that supportive relationships have many benefits. These include reducing stress, depression and anxiety; living longer; having higher levels of well-being; and acquiring better coping skills. So how do you build strong support systems? Figure out what kind of support you need then work on building and sustaining them. Yes it takes energy, but you will get so much in return.

### Type of Support Needed

Different relationships check particular boxes. When you have limited time and energy, be intentional about the relationships you build & the people you surround yourself with.



#### *Tangible*

A service or a favor; reinforces that it's healthy to ask for help when needed and accept the help



#### *Emotional*

Acceptance, understanding, reliable encouragement and empathy; reminder that we are not alone



#### *Affirmational*

Feelings that build your motivation and respect your efforts



#### *Informational*

Receiving positive, supportive information or new knowledge; provides support without an emotional connection



#### *Belonging*

Belonging to a community or peer group that understands your beliefs and/or situation

Support Systems Build You UP!

### Tips to Sustain Support Systems

- Respect boundaries
- Accept help
- Be available
- Be honest
- Be patient...it takes time to develop
- Stay in touch
- Reciprocate: support their successes and share appreciation
- Engage when it's healthy



## Reinforcing Self-Compassion

Self-compassion can play a key role in positive emotional health. Self-compassion is the act of treating yourself as you would treat a good friend.

### Three Components of Self Compassion

**Self-kindness:** caring and encouraging yourself as you would to others, rather than being self-criticizing.

**Common humanity:** all humans are imperfect, experience difficulties and pain, and make mistakes. Give yourself a break.

**Mindfulness:** being in the moment, present, open, and feeling emotions while they are happening.

### The Stigma: Self Compassion is...

- A form of self-pity
- Makes a person vulnerable and weak
- Self-centered and selfish
- Creating an excuse

### Benefits of Self Compassion

- Improved happiness
- Good mental health
- A stronger immune system
- The secret to resilience
- Creates strength to face hardships
- Reinforces ability to learn from mistakes



### Practicing Self-Compassion

- Take a compassion break
- Forgive yourself
- Stop competing and comparing
- Practice positive self-talk
- Develop a self-compassion mantra
- Focus on your wins