

FEBRUARY 2022

# SMOOTH SAILING VOLUME 1

*The official publication of Transworld Wellness Pte Ltd*



**TRANSWORLD**  
WELLNESS



*In order to  
carry out a  
positive action,  
we must  
develop a  
positive vision.*

*- Dalai Lama*



## Welcome!

Dear Reader,  
Hello and welcome to the first issue of our newsletter! We at Transworld Wellness are very excited to share this newsletter with you all.

As an introduction to Transworld Wellness, we are an initiative providing mental health and wellness support to seafarers and ship crew! We are a psychology led team of experts dedicated to providing you the support you deserve. Our team is led by clinical psychologist Dr Mithila Mahesh, who completed her training at Newcastle University and was previously working at Cambridge University Hospitals in the UK.

We understand that a seafarer's job is not only physically demanding but also mentally and

emotionally straining. Being away from family, friends, and all the familiarities of home for months at a time impacts on an individual's wellness and health.

Therefore, we would like to bring you this quarterly newsletter with the hope that it provides you with the support you deserve. Each issue will include important health tips, wellness advice, productivity support, brain teasers, as well as enlightening material to ensure you sail forward as smoothly as possible.

As we all know, life comes with difficulties, uncertainties, and troubles, so why not take a moment to put yourself first? Have a read of our newsletter and reap the benefits of it! We promise that the interesting, informative, and enriching content will act as a supportive friend through the tough times.

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## What about the Mind?

**Written by Dr Mithila Mahesh, Clinical Psychologist**

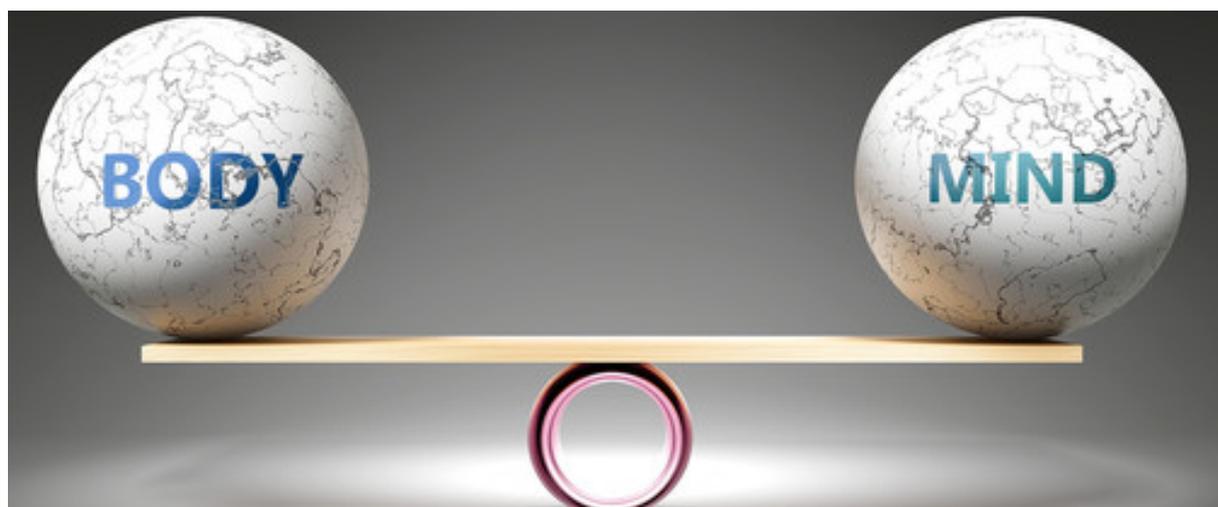
People's understanding of health is often related to the body. A broken arm, a sore throat, a sprained ankle, etc... There are multiple solutions to curing and preventing problems related to your physical health and actual body, but what about the brain and mind?

Our minds play one of the most important roles in our lives. It helps us understand the world around us, learn a new skill, navigate through uncertain times as well as empathize with a friend, family member, or stranger. Without it, we would never learn new lessons, overcome obstacles, and build strong relationships with others.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines the health of the mind or mental health as “state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

Therefore, mental health is essential in our daily living. Then, why do we so often forget about the importance of keeping our minds healthy and safe?

Very often, the concepts of mental health are stigmatised and misunderstood. People with mental health disorders are viewed as violent, unproductive, or weak. These are misconceptions. In reality, they are likely the strongest and most diligent people in the room, trying their best to keep moving forward through tumultuous times.



Mental health problems are often caused by difficult and challenging situations - something that happened in a person's life that has led them to feel sad, anxious, and/or depressed. Hence, the person is struggling to cope with their hardship while also continuing to engage with everyday living. This is an overwhelming task to balance. It would make sense for them to feel tired, sad, and negative given the heavy burden they are carrying.

### **Understanding Mental Health**

Time and again, we are quick to make judgements about people struggling with mental health problems without properly understanding the depth of the pain they must be enduring. Psychologists and mental health experts agree that:

Mental health problems are an understandable response to life's stressors.

Experts suggest that mental health problems should be viewed as an

understandable reaction to increased stress, unfortunate circumstance and/or difficult times. If you can understand why a person feels a certain way, you can immediately connect with them.

Currently, uncertainties and anxieties related to the Covid-19 crisis have drastically increased the prevalence of mental health disorders in the population. An article from the World Bank in 2021 estimated that one billion people live with a mental disorder! Meaning that these problems are becoming normal in society. The increasing tide of mental health problems call for recognition, appreciation, and support.

### **The Power of Kindness**

The importance and power of kindness is often underappreciated. The Mental Health Foundation defines kindness as "doing something towards yourself and others, motivated by genuine desire to

to make a positive difference." Research suggests that it is a key component in reducing feelings of loneliness and increasing well-being and bonding in others. As seen in the definition, when a person is kind, they are spreading positivity.

A misconception is that acts of kindness need to be big and noticeable. This is not necessarily true, small acts are just as important. A listening ear, a helpful conversation, or an encouraging smile of goodwill make more of a difference than we would expect. As we can never truly know another person's struggles, we can never underestimate how much a little kindness can do. Being kind could relieve their stress and sadness, showing them they have a friend in their darkest times. As the Dalai Lama once said "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible."

# Meditation

## 101

Written by Sangeeta More,  
Counsellor

Meditation has suddenly become very popular. Everyone you meet is doing some form of meditation. Is it a fad or is there a scientific benefit of meditation?

Various studies and articles published by reputable institutions have shown a positive correlation between meditation and a person's physical and mental well-being. For example, an article in Forbes magazine in 2015 showed 7 ways meditation changes the brain.

An average person has approximately 60000 thoughts a day, which is one thought per second in every waking hour. Of these thoughts, 95 percent are repeated throughout the day, of which 80 percent are negative thoughts. Ironically, though it is

natural to have negative thoughts, we are not aware of how they impact us. They clutter our mind and leave us feeling stressed and exhausted.

Your thoughts – positive and negative – define your outlook and perceptions of the world. They represent how you think about the world, how you interact with others, how you react to situations, as well as how you perceive yourself. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge and be aware of your thoughts as they have such a fundamental role in your personal growth, development, and well-being.

As it is said in the Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 17, verse 16)

“Watch your thoughts, for they become words.

Watch your words, for they become actions.

Watch your actions, for they become habits.

Watch your habits, for they become character.

Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

### How does Meditation Help?

Meditation is a process that teaches us to become aware of our thoughts and let go. It is an opportunity to practice a new way of responding to thoughts and emotions. It rewires our brain to develop new habits and patterns.

When we meditate, our brain waves slow down and we experience a sense of peace and calm. The pleasure centre of our brain awakens. Happy hormones such as Serotonin and Endorphins are released, which have a positive effect on our mind and body.

Studies show that people who meditate regularly experience less pain and recover faster from illnesses as the mind heals the body.

Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh has beautifully explained this in his book [Silence](#). He uses the term “stopping” to represent taking a moment to step back from a chaotic situation to meditate.

“Stopping brings body and mind together, back to the here and now. Only by stopping can you realize calm and concentration, and encounter life. By sitting quietly, stopping the activities of body and mind, and being silent within, you become more solid and



your mind becomes clearer. Then it's possible to be aware of what's happening inside and around you.”

Thinking is as natural to the mind as hearing is to the ears. Learning to be aware of our thoughts, good or bad, without judgement and letting them go is meditation.

### **Tips and Guides to Meditation**

Have you ever tried to meditate? It is one of the most difficult things to do.

It requires regular practice and patience. In today's world of instant gratification, we expect immediate results. When we don't achieve it, we think we are not fit for it and give up. Our expectations are too high.

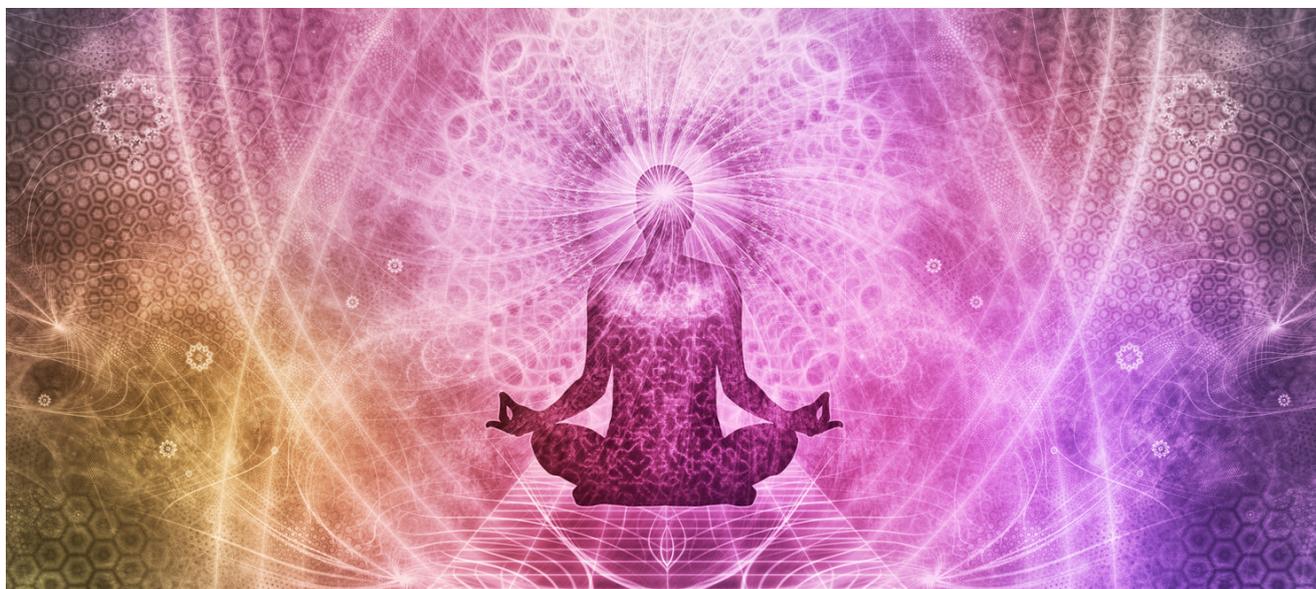
Start with sitting quietly for a few minutes every day. Focus your attention on a specific object, an image, a mantra or your breath. Shifting our focus on something else other than our thoughts is what helps to free our minds from the many distractions that cause stress and worry. Know that like everything else in life, our thoughts are fleeting. If we do not give them any importance, they arise, stay for a while and then float away –

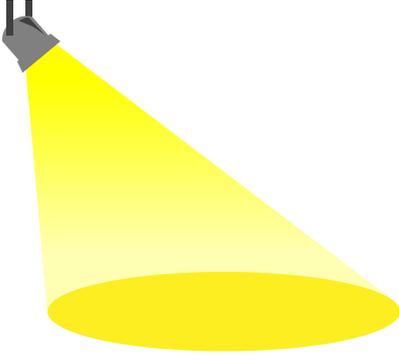
ultimately having no meaning and impact. The idea is to shift attention from our usual racing thoughts and focus our full attention on something in our surroundings, such as our breath.

If you notice that you are having thoughts during meditation, this means you are doing it right. You are gaining awareness into the formation of a particular thought and are able to shift focus away from it.

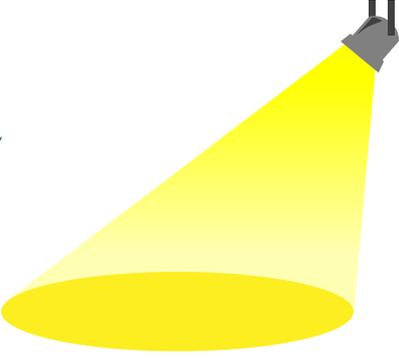
The more we practice, the better we get at it. Slowly the gap between thoughts lengthens, and there is more clarity of mind. We respond to situations with clarity and compassion, rather than reacting with fear and hatred.

With regular meditation, we realise that our happiness and state of mind is not dependent on external conditions – it is within us. When we are in a good mood, it is from the thoughts we have, when we are in a bad mood, it is from the thoughts we have. So our happiness is in our control, not anyone else's. Once we stop trying to control things and situations around us and start working on changing ourselves and our reaction to the world, life becomes more peaceful and happier.



A yellow spotlight beam shining down from the top left corner of the page.

## Spotlight Interview of a Fellow Seafarer:

A yellow spotlight beam shining down from the top right corner of the page.

## Captain Zeeshan Shakil

### **Can you tell us a little about your life story?**

I was born and brought up in Lucknow, the city of Adaab (manners), Nawabs (monarchs) and Kebabs (cuisine)!! I stay there with my family that comprises of my parents, wife and my beautiful five year old daughter who is my best buddy and also my partner in crime. I am healthy, happy and loved and I have a lot to be thankful for, including my work. I've been working in shipping for the past 20 years, 7 years as a Master, and I can admit with pride that I have enjoyed every minute of it. And the joy of it cannot be replaced with anything else in the world. It will always be my life long love! And just like Captain Jack Sparrow says in Pirates of the Caribbean, "Now...bring me that horizon" !

### **How did you become interested in the shipping industry?**

It may sound a little unusual how I got interested in shipping. So, my biggest hero as a child was Popeye the sailor man! I really admired his cool sailor uniform (still do) but more importantly, he taught me valuable life lessons like doing the right thing always no matter what, being your authentic self and always protecting the innocent from bullies. To me, he was the ultimate. That's how the fascination with being a sailor took shape. Later as I grew up, I got more and more intrigued about it, the freedom, adventure, exploration and travel, the idea of meeting new people, and of endless possibilities! Today, it's become my very own happy place!

### **What steps did you take to become Captain of BLPL Trust?**

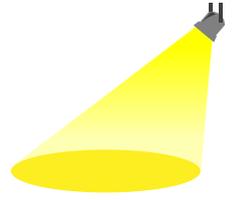
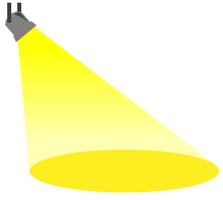
I did my pre-sea course and joined sea as a deck cadet way back in Dec'2001, and after an uphill climb through several courses and exams, I attained my Masters' in the year 2014. Life changed since then, the entire perspective of looking at this job became all the so much better. I joined BLPL TRUST as my 11th ship under command, and it still feels that the journey has somehow just begun.

### **Do you enjoy working onboard ships?**

Yes, I do. Infact, I've tried my hand at various shore opportunities related to shipping, but have always returned back to the sea. Its like, once a seaman, always a seaman.

### **Which parts of your work do you enjoy most?**

The best parts of our work are the sea passages. It's a break from the hustle bustle of everyday shore life, peace and tranquility of the seas, and it goes without saying, the sheer idea of one commanding a freighter at sea, with unparalleled final decision making powers and the responsibilities that come along with it, are the aspects I actually enjoy the most.

**Can you describe aspects of your work that are difficult?**

Yes, speaking in a general scenario, there are the difficult aspects too, the most pronounced ones being inadequate resting hours & sleep patterns, negatively supplemented by lack of connectivity with the outside world, mercilessly tossing the seafarers at the whims and fancies of shore agents and port authorities with absolutely no idea regarding the physical and mental stress on board.

**Do you think other seafarers will have these same challenges?**

Yes, seafarers are and will continue to face the same challenges. The rules are somehow bent against the seafarers, as commercial pressure always tends to find a way to take precedence over welfare & wellbeing on board.

**How do you cope with the above challenges?**

We have a very good support system at the company's end. The owners, the managers and the crewing offices provide total & impartial support to us seafarers and are always available to listen, understand & support. That provides mental relief. Also, compensatory rest, mental counseling, good food, etc. are the other ways we cope with the challenges.

**Do you have any advice for those just starting out in this career?**

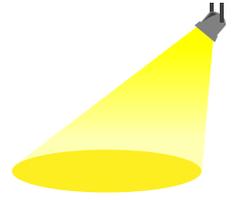
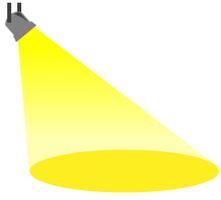
- Merchant Navy is definitely a fruitful & lucrative career option. However, every career option has its own advantages and disadvantages. Seamanship is not an easy job, its for the fittest and the toughest. The ship requires long working hours, but the vacations offered to the professionals are equally compensatory. The vacation a sailor gets is in its purest form, there is absolutely no job stress while you are at home and can fully enjoy time with your family or pursue your passion.
- Never ever do away with your professionalism, as it's what will define you as a leader later on. You'll be viewing the same job with a very different perspective once you come into the management level, and its important to adopt an attitude and an aptitude for progressive acquisition of knowledge regarding your job. Maintain good relationships with all on board. And very importantly, save what you earn, invest and empower yourself now for the challenges in life later.

**What are your views on mental health?**

Mental health issues are increasing and are alarming in almost every part of the world but its still a pretty neglected area. I think it's important to sensitize and educate people about the signs and symptoms of mental illness while also normalizing the idea of seeking support for those suffering from it and also their loved ones. If individuals continue to view mental illness with apprehension and resistance, it will remain difficult for people to seek the support they require due to the fear of being stigmatized, labelled or judged.

**What advice would you give to someone struggling with mental health concerns?**

My advice to anyone struggling with mental health would be not to let the fear of stigma prevent them from seeking help. You should not isolate yourself. Reach out to friends, family or anyone you trust for the



compassion, support and understanding you need.

### **What are your own self-care and coping strategies?**

My own strategy is to have a positive attitude towards life no matter what. Being optimistic about situations and myself. Identify my own areas of negativity and work on it. And practice loads and loads of gratitude!

### **Can you comment on the impact on the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of seafarers?**

Yes, the covid times made several of us face the reality regarding our disconnectivity with the outside world, seafarers on board were worried less for their own safety but that of their families back home. The realization of the fact that immediate repatriation was not possible in case of an urgency at home, did affect the ship's crew moral wellbeing.

### **Can you describe how the pandemic has made things more difficult?**

The industry has itself to blame for the above. The pandemic had asphyxiated things worldwide, but not at the sea. The commercial pressure doubled despite the fact that seafarers' moral wellbeing was at an all time low. The godfathers' hand on the seafarers' shoulders was not available, and the same was realized within the industry but everyone exercised a plausible deniability.

### **Do you feel the pandemic impacted on seafarers' overall well-being?**

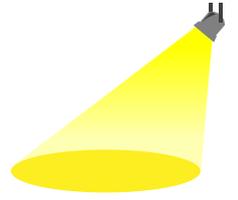
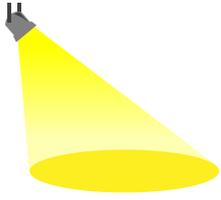
It did, to an extent, but we seafarers are a tough lot. When the going gets tough, the tough gets going. We get back up stronger whenever tossed around. We're here to sustain and to survive.

### **From your experience, what are the current challenges you are seeing for seafarers in the industry in general?**

Seafarers do face some challenges, the primary one being lack of social connectivity with the outside world. Further, the inadequate rest hours, disarrayed work patterns, lack of mental counseling & wellbeing are amongst the few challenges the seafarers are facing in the industry. When a ship interacts with a port, in the amalgamation of two industries at parallel work, it's the shore that has been given all the rule making prowess, with the sea only a mere partisan to the shore. There is absolutely no realization of the fact that whereas the shore personnel work in shifts and have fixed work patterns, the ship's complement is toiled to match the working pattern of all the shore shift, as a single entity.

### **What steps should be taken to improve this?**

The industry needs to realize the importance of its primary work force, that of the seafarers. All we need is encouragement and realization that the industry does care about us. The rules are there, but the blind eye to them to meet the commercial requirements must be rectified. Internet connectivity is another big fish to make the lives of seafarers better. In a world that seems to endure more on social media than physical presence, the provision of unlimited high speed internet on board will be the single biggest step towards mental wellness of all ship's personnel.



### **Do you have any additional words of wisdom that you would like to share?**

I always believe that the sea is a great metaphor for life. It's not always calm, just how life is never always the same. This ebb and flow of the sea could be compared to how our lives can change and move in different directions and things happen that we don't see coming. Last year, with addition to the pandemic, I also suffered an accident that led to temporary blindness and multiple major eye surgeries. But I guess that's okay. We have to take the storms because we also have the chance to experience the calm that comes after.

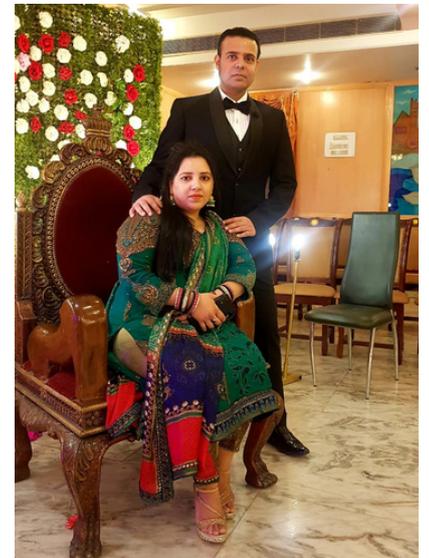
I'm truly grateful to everyone at Transworld, PSM and VR Maritime for being so understanding and helpful, for allowing me the time to recover completely and for never losing the faith in me. Capt.Sanjay Prashar, Capt.Pravin Pillai & Mr.Ravi Nair, I'll always be short of words to thank them enough for the continued support and motivation.

It's the choices you make when the world is colourful, that reap you the fruit when things go dark. My dedication and loyalty were rewarded in the best possible way one can ever expect.

It's my great honour to be part of this beautiful family.

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood;  
And sorry I could not travel both;  
And be one traveler, long I stood;  
And looked down one as far as I could....  
Two roads diverged in the woods, and I;  
I took the one less travelled by;  
And that has made all the difference !!

Thank you :)



# Tiny Steps, Big Goals: How to Build Good Habits

Written by Jouie Lim, Para-Counsellor

Entering a new year is like receiving a brand new journal. There are 365 pages. What would you want to fill in and how do you want your story to flow?

Many start with having New Year's Resolutions. It is a decision you make to do something or stop doing something. What are some goals you have set for 2022? Are they all new goals or perhaps you have some old ones that need more time to achieve?

To be able to reach our goals, we need a method that is effective and efficient. It has to be more powerful than any temptation that may distract or hinder us from our goals. Lastly, we need to be consistent in practising this method as we all know how being consistent could help us complete tasks more easily. Practice makes perfect.

This method is none other than building healthy habits.

You have heard how difficult it is to break a habit.



Likewise, to form a new one requires time and effort.

Here are 3 simple steps that can get you started.

## Step 1: Make Your Habit Bite-Sized

Stanford University researcher B.J.Fogg calls them “tiny habits”. A tiny habit will look like this:

- A behaviour that is done daily
- Requires less than 30 seconds to do
- Demands minimal effort
- Doesn't create pain or bad emotions
- Is connected to the full behaviour

Small behaviours are sustainable and easily achieved. For instance, if you are new to meditation and have a busy and irregular schedule, it will be difficult to build a habit of meditating 30 minutes every day. But if you commit to meditating for 3 breaths, it becomes so effortless to do it daily.

Once you are able to practise this habit for at least a month, you can begin to expand on the habit.

## Step 2: Do Your Habit Before or After a Regular Routine

What are some of the routines you do every day regardless of how you feel? Some examples may include:

- Waking up
- Making your bed
- Using the toilet before bedtime
- Brushing your teeth

Choose one existing habit you have and add in your new tiny habit. You need to be aware that your tiny habit will come immediately before or after the existing behaviour. It will look like this, "After I make my bed, I am going to meditate for 3 breaths."

## Step 3: Reward Yourself

It is important to reward yourself as positive reinforcement speeds up habit formation. Remember this step comes right after you complete your new habit. Your reward can be a praise you say to yourself, telling yourself you did a good job. You can pat yourself on the back, give yourself not one but two thumbs up and perhaps take a victory selfie and post it on your social media account.

## The above 3 steps will look like this:

- **After I make my bed**
- **I meditate for 3 breaths**
- **3 victory claps to myself**

Size can be deceiving. A small behaviour that is done routinely builds a good foundation for bigger habits to be formed. With these 3 simple steps, in no time, you will see yourself maximising your potential every day.



## Additional tips to consider

*Be accountable: ask friends and family to support you*  
Get some support and share your goals with your family, friends and colleagues. A CNN Health article highlighted that having social support and friends to hold you accountable adds value. If you are able to find someone who shares similar goals, you could make plans to check-in daily with them. If your goal is to build healthy eating habits, your family and friends might prepare healthier food choices during the next gathering.

### *One habit at a time*

A self-development writer and entrepreneur, Dean Bhokari, shared that one of the common reasons people fail at reaching their goals is because they "set too many to begin with." We often find ourselves over enthusiastic at the start of the year which results in attempting to build multiple habits to reach our goals. This usually backfires after 2 weeks as there are just too many changes. Relax and go easy. Focus on one habit at a time, this will increase your success rate.

### *Don't let failure get to you*

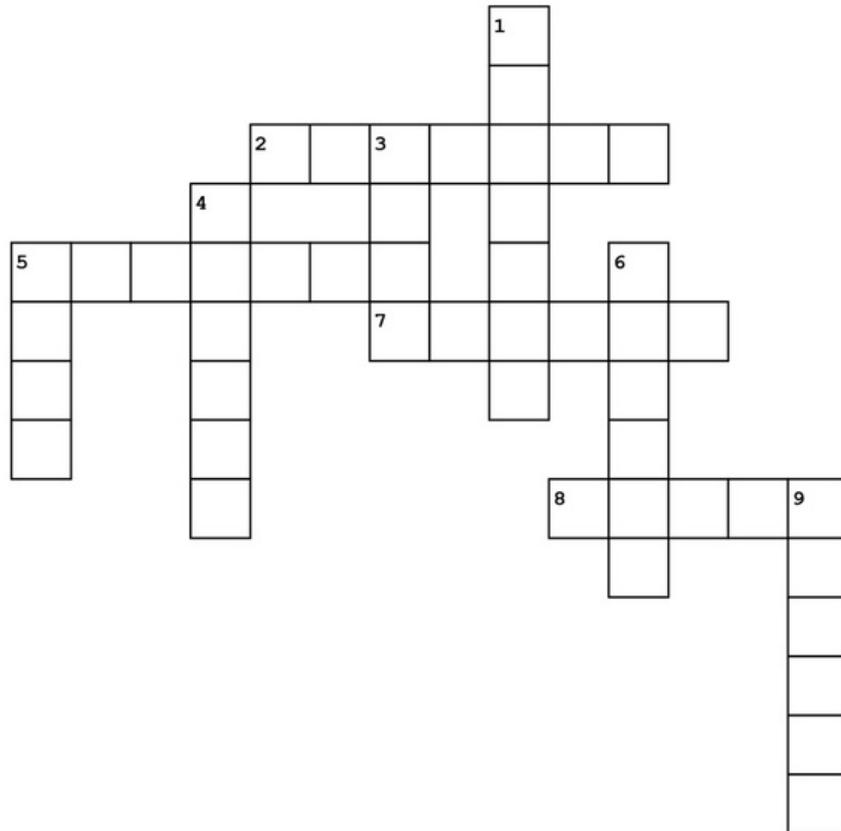
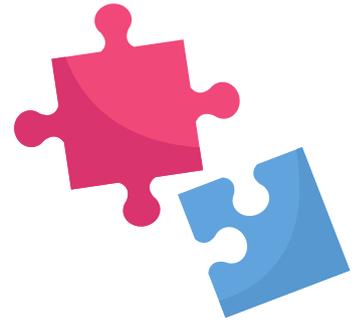
Be Imperfect. Don't expect all your attempts to change habits to be successful immediately. Try your best, but expect a few bumps along the way.

### *Be consistent*

Consistency is one of the key factors to sustain a habit. When you start doing something once every few days, it makes it difficult to transform it into a habit. For example, if you want to start practicing yoga regularly. You are likely to succeed in building this habit if you practice it daily for 5 minutes rather than practicing it for 30 minutes twice a week. In building the new habit, you may want to start small and expand it over time.



# All Aboard: Crossword Puzzle



## Across

2. A high-grade licensed mariner who holds ultimate command and responsibility of a merchant vessel
5. Port of Yangon
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ ship is designed to transport or store liquids or gases in bulk
8. A place occupied by a boat in harbour

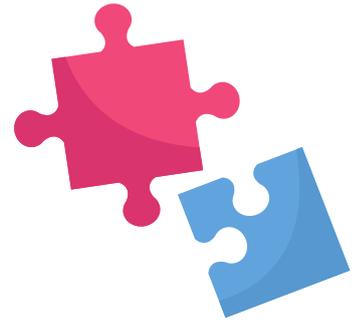
## Down

1. The direction of an object from an observer, measured in degrees true or magnetic
3. Where ships load and discharge cargo and passengers
4. A device, normally made of metal, used to secure a vessel
5. A place where you dine at
6. A large boat or ship
9. An accessory to protect your head

**Answers on Page 18**



# The Wellness Word Search



C D E T E R M I N A T I O N S  
 O H I M Z E C K L J X T B Z T  
 N W B I J S Q Y P G B E M S R  
 T S Z T B P S J T T R G O L O  
 E A R A T E R Q H G A N T K N  
 N V R I H C I Q M X V D I I G  
 T H D N D T Z L X K E V V N J  
 W A C O U R A G E O U S A D P  
 E P B R P S M G N U X S T G O  
 S P D H T J C F V I V X I E S  
 F Y H O T H A N K F U L O N I  
 N E C P R H E L P F U L N U T  
 U N D E R S T A N D I N G I I  
 X M Z S Y T Q W F Y M X S N V  
 O M G R A C I O U S F X R E E

DETERMINATION

MOTIVATION

COURAGEOUS

POSITIVE

UNDERSTANDING

GRACIOUS

RESPECT

CONTENT

HELPFUL

THANKFUL

STRONG

GENUINE

HAPPY

BRAVE

KIND

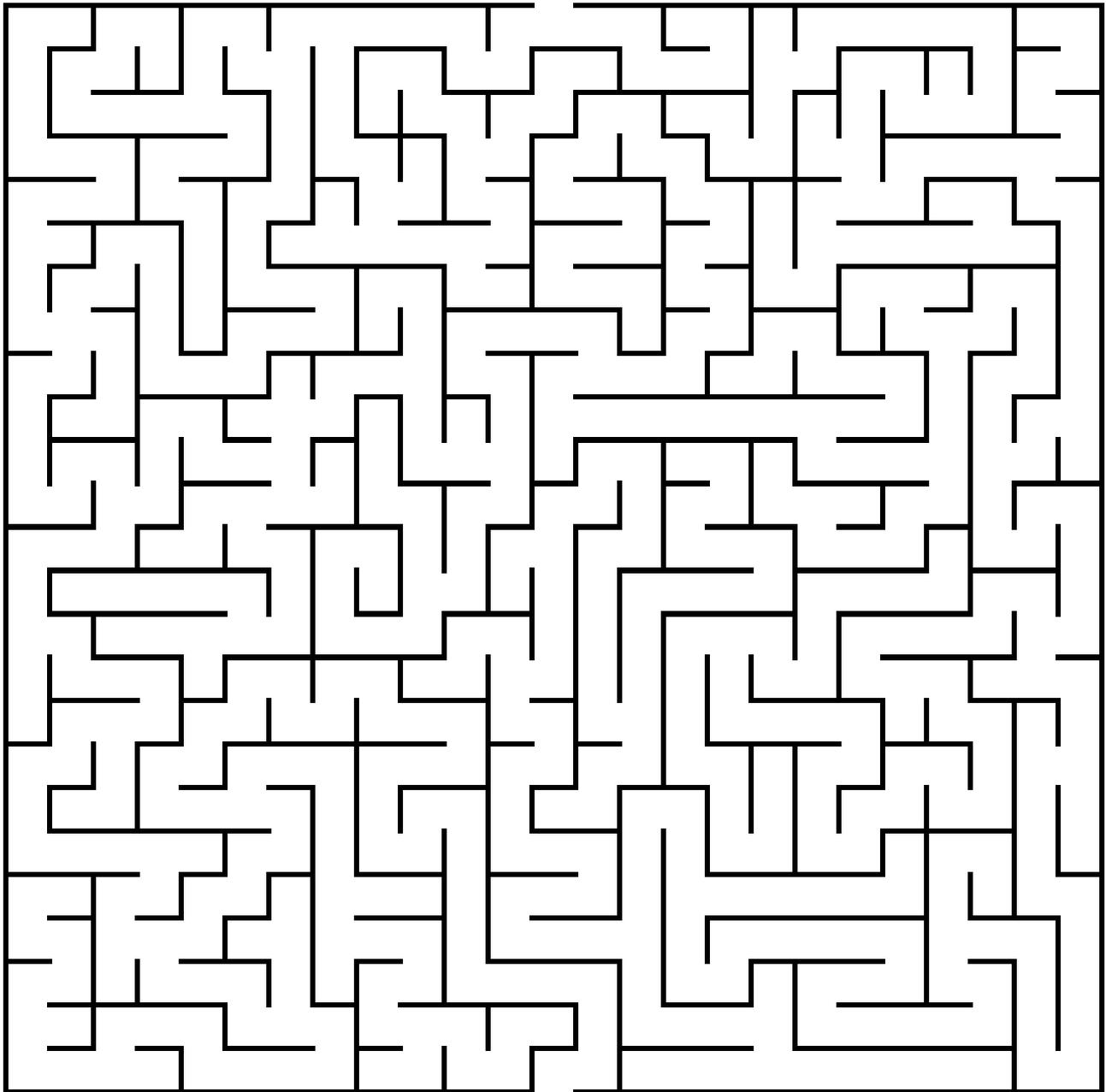
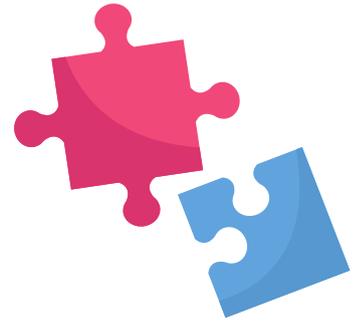
HOPE

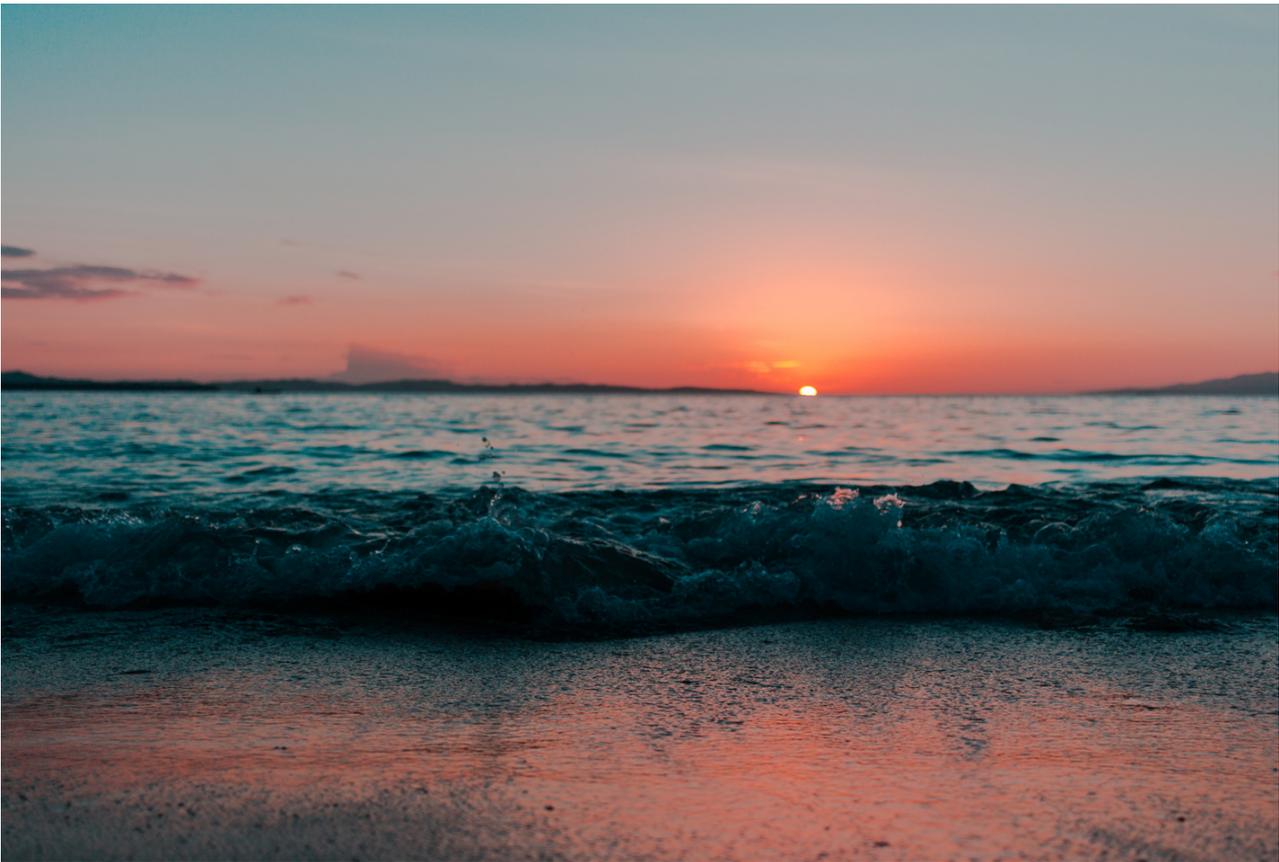


**Answers on Page 19**



# Get through the Maze!





## **Photo Competition**

**Are you passionate about photography?**

**Submit your photos to us and the best entries will be featured in our next newsletter!**

**Email your entries to [info@transworldwellness.com](mailto:info@transworldwellness.com) with the subject title**

**"Photo Competition Newsletter #2"**

# Article References



## Useful mental health and wellness links, resources, materials

What About the Mind? Understanding Mental Health & The Power of Kindness

- [https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/mental-health#tab=tab_1)
- <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/kindness/why-kindness-theme>
- <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/medical-myths-mental-health-misconceptions#4.-Mental-health-problems-are-a-sign-of-weakness>

Meditation 101

- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2015/02/09/7-ways-meditation-can-actually-change-the-brain/?sh=1bf678514658>
- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858>
- <https://tlexinstitute.com/how-to-effortlessly-have-more-positive-thoughts/>

Tiny Steps, Big Goals: How to Build Habits

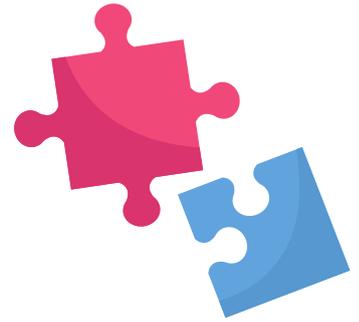
- <https://tinyhabits.com/start-tiny/>
- <https://jamesclear.com/three-steps-habit-change>
- <https://www.deanbokhari.com/form-new-habit/>
- <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/11/29/health/5-steps-habit-builder-wellness/index.html>







# The Wellness Word Search



## Answer Key



- |               |            |            |          |
|---------------|------------|------------|----------|
| DETERMINATION | MOTIVATION | COURAGEOUS | POSITIVE |
| UNDERSTANDING | GRACIOUS   | RESPECT    | CONTENT  |
| HELPFUL       | THANKFUL   | STRONG     | GENUINE  |
| HAPPY         | BRAVE      | KIND       | HOPE     |





**Get in touch with the  
Transworld Wellness Team!**

**Please feel free to contact us with**

questions or concerns

newsletter feedback

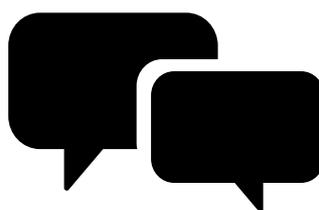
suggestions on article topics

enquiries on counselling services



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