

IT'S A
BLOG!



Self-Care

Ashleigh Boyling, Woman Anchor

FATIGUE.

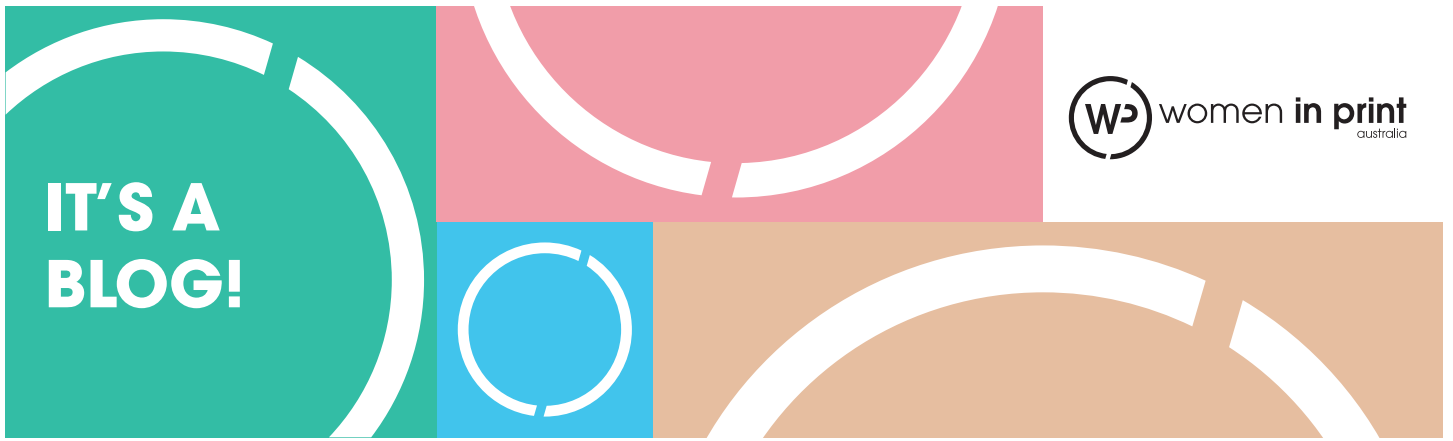
A word I will associate 2020 with for so many reasons. They are reasons that you know all about, so I won't list them off here. But the year is far from over, so we need to start combatting fatigue with some self-care, Women in Print!

What does self-care (SC) look like to you? SC is a fairly broad term and there is no set way to achieve it. Right now, it's Saturday night. It's just after 8pm and I find myself in bed, hot water bottle touching my toes, hot tea on the side table and some trashy television playing while I write. Yes, I am writing this blog! The slight scratch of a felt-tip pen touching textured paper sounds amazing.

This is just one version of self-care to me; alone, writing, with some creature comforts on the side. Another version of self-care is me intentionally avoiding or removing myself from situations, discussions and environments that are toxic to me. This has sadly meant the end of some friendships and the start of others that make me a happier, better version of myself. Sometimes our bodies will manifest emotions and thoughts purely because of the amount of time we spend speaking negatively or critically with others. But the 'company we keep' topic is a big one, so we will explore it more another time.

When was the last time you exercised some self-care? I am scheduling it one evening a week and I say that with zero guilt - I need to! I'm doing it on a Saturday night because Monday to Friday doesn't allow it at the moment, but I still need to do it. So here I am; recharging, reflecting and resetting.





RECHARGE.

Can I just clarify that it is simply not good enough to wait until you are empty before you plug back in for more power? SC is to help prevent burn-out and why consistency is so important. What activities leave you feeling rejuvenated and relaxed? It doesn't have to be costly or extravagant. Massage, podcasts, a long bath with salts – it might even be as simple as a walk, but only you know the things that make you feel better. So start doing them more often!

REFLECT.

There is a reason I choose to write with beautiful writing instruments. The actual act of writing is a process I thoroughly enjoy and a nice pen and textured paper adds to that. But also, it is the time writing takes, that forces me to slow my thoughts and process how I am feeling about things. This is opposed to an eighty WPM type rate, that doesn't allow the brain space to process anything emotional. I write about my day, recurring worries or thought patterns and then try to determine what is causing those thoughts and how I can go about relieving them. I reflect better in isolation, but maybe you reflect better by talking through things with your partner or a trusted friend over coffee? If so, that's brilliant – continue to practise the art of reflecting.

RESET.

Reset is so important because it helps minimise the chance of us continuing the same patterns that are causing us to burn through our precious resources. Sometimes you may reset and realise you need to use the word 'no' more often; that you simply do not have the capacity to do every single thing that you are asked to do or be involved in. Contrarily, you might need to reset by saying 'yes', next time a friend asks you to prioritise getting to a spin class or having dinner with them. You know, all those important things we sacrifice when we become stressed and busy?

So my challenge to you today is simple... If you're not sure what SC looks like for you, **FIGURE IT OUT!** It needs to produce an environment that allows you to recharge, reflect and reset. When you have a plan in place, prioritise some time to make it happen regularly. 2020 continues to present as one tough cookie; but we are stronger. As we continue to work harder and fight to see our great industry out of this, please remember to look after yourself in the process.

About the author

Ash is Program Manager for grassroots Mental Health organisation, Woman Anchor (www.mananchor.com.au). She has a fondness for Women in Print, particularly because she is one of them! She works with business leaders and community organisations to build awareness of Mental Health prevalence and equip them to offer support. Her hope is that more workplaces will adopt policy and practice that promote the mental health of their people.

For more information go to: www.mananchor.com.au