

Dear Kind Patient,

Being a person is hard work.

There is so much to do.

Sleep well for an 8-hour stretch nightly. Eat mostly real food (fruits, veggies, nuts, seeds, beans, milk, lean meat). Replace smoking/drinking/using drugs with healthier coping skills like walking, drawing and connecting with loved ones. Get 40 minutes of exercise 4 days a week. Be in healthy relationships. Use good posture while sitting, standing and sleeping. Drink enough clean water. Brush teeth twice a day. Limit toxic (severe enough to make someone want to give up or die) stress. Avoid pollutants and unnecessary chemicals. Use protection with sex. Get enough fresh air. Take vitamin D3 2000 units a day. Recognize, accept and work with the stress and trauma of childhood and other previous relationships. Use TV 2 hours or less daily. Use a pill box to take your medicine every day. Find at least a minute of time every day to be quiet.

WHOA!. That is a LOT.

Punishing oneself is a common response to this list. In other words, some people think “I’m terrible at all these things,” or “I’ll never be able to do it all, so why bother?”

My recommendation as your doctor is to **take it easy on yourself**. Remember that you are human with human limits. You can make changes. They will take time. The more you rail against yourself for your self-perceived shortcomings, the harder it will be to get where you want to be. In other words, what you resist persists. I will do my best to help us both remember this.

Once we let go of the self-judgement *just a little bit*, we have room for self-love and feeling better. And by ‘feeling better,’ I mean slow, gentle change...one thing at a time.

Just by reading this, you have done something really good for yourself.

I am proud of you for reaching out.

Warmly,

[Provider Name]