



Thanks for attending the book Launch!

I hope you enjoyed it and are ready to embark on your in-depth self-care journey (20 self-care habits), and join Jenna, Jeremiah and Jacob in their journey through The Beckoning Rooms.

The virtual escape room will be free until the 18<sup>th</sup> of July. You can play with your friends and family and act as games master for the day!

In this document you'll get:

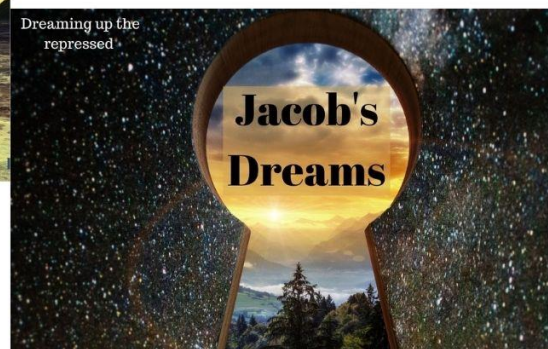
- Dreaming Up the Repressed – Prequel to The Beckoning Rooms
  - Chapter 1 of The Beckoning Rooms
- Introduction Chapter for 20 Self-Care Habits
- Book reviews and endorsements for both books

# Dreaming Up the Repressed

## A Beckoning Rooms Prequel

They were wide awake when they encountered the beckoning rooms, but as they slept their dreams also beckoned.

**Download the complete prequel at  
[karinbrauneronline.co.uk/prequel/](http://karinbrauneronline.co.uk/prequel/)**



# DREAMING UP THE REPRESSED

## Introduction

They'd never had dreams like these before. So vivid, yet so unreal that when they woke up they knew they'd just had one.

Sometimes, they'd even know they were dreaming from within the dream itself! *That might come in handy in their waking hours as well, but that'll have to wait for another day.*

As they all traveled through the different worlds, created by the deepest, darkest, most unconscious parts of themselves, they discovered things that they wished had stayed put where they were originally sent.

Forgotten. Unable to harm them or call them up to experience things they'd long left in the past.

This is the power of dreams. We can't help but dream. It happens to us without much conscious control.

Our unconscious beckons us. The repressed beckons us.

It succeeds in one way or another. Survival depends on what we do with what we uncover.

Survival? For Jenna, Jacob and Jeremiah it feels just like that. In a dream state or an awake state, they're not sure anymore.

The beckoning rooms are there in their waking hours. Their dreams in their sleep.

Dreaming up the repressed will take you on a journey to the most remote areas of these three people's minds.

Will you dream up the repressed tonight?

# JENNA

## Dreaming up Unicorns

*As Jenna fell asleep that first night, she snuggled up to her long lost teddy.*

*Forgetting that she wasn't ten anymore, she did what she always did when she was young.*

*Rocked herself to sleep.*

When she opened her eyes, she noticed that her surroundings had changed yet again.

This time, she'd travelled to a place of wonder.

Bright, pastel colours shining all around her.

Creatures she'd encountered before, some had three eyes and many legs, others just had a distinct colour she couldn't even begin to name.

She'd been here before. But she didn't really know where she was.

It was as if she'd been taken into one of her stories. The ones she used to read to distract herself with from daily life.

She knew she was safe. She especially knew she was safe when, out of the corner of her eye, she saw her favourite mythical creature of all – a unicorn! *How wonderful!* She thought.

Yes, it was a unicorn, but it was a baby one. *Awwwww!* She exclaimed. Taking in all the beauty of this place. The calm she felt was incredible.

She giggled and smiled, like a little child. She felt free here.

As she stood up, Jenna noticed underneath her was something like a cloud. It quickly dissipated as she took a step out of it, into the grassy ground underneath.

*Incredible!* Jenna exclaimed, feeling extremely amused and intoxicated by the shiny brightness and blissfulness of this place.

She wasn't questioning anything, she was just walking around, enjoying herself.

The baby unicorn had now reached her. Their eyes met, and they knew they were friends. They could trust one another.

They both danced and jumped around together for a while. Jenna giggled and cuddled the baby unicorn, like they'd known each other forever.

Then, suddenly, with one single move, the baby unicorn began to run away from Jenna. She chased him for what seemed an eternity.

Panting and stopping to catch her breath, she realised the baby unicorn was nowhere to be found.

She sat down on a purple rock and began to sob. It wasn't fair that she'd lost her friend. Her only friend!

After a short while, Jenna stood up. Gathered herself and continued searching.

She searched and searched, and along the way she found other creatures that wanted to be her friend.

She felt guilty. She couldn't get new friends yet?!

She couldn't betray the baby unicorn, even if he'd left her first.

Walking on, Jenna began to notice behind her, how the other creatures had been following her and keeping her company.

It felt like the start of something new.

But what about baby unicorn? Who'll take care of him?

Somehow she knew he'd be fine. He always was. In her other dreams, they always found each other again.

Maybe in her next dream, he'll be here.

She also knew she'd be fine. She had lots of new fantastic friends around her. they'd help her on her way.

As she thought this, she found a patch of soft grass, and lied down to sleep. She was so tired after all that running.

Jenna woke up, smiling. She loved those dreams! She smiled at the power of her imagination, and got up, unsure of what the day would bring.

# JENNA

## Losing it all

*Jenna wasn't sure anymore if going to bed and chancing a strange dream would be a good idea at this point.*

*The reality of the place she found herself in was, in many ways, just as unsettling.*

*At least in her dreams she could wake up and know it wasn't real...or was it?*

It was summer time and she'd agreed to meet her friend at their favourite coffee shop.

They loved it partly because it was quieter than other places, but also because it was attached to a very fashionable women's clothing store.

Oh how they loved to play dress-up there, with all the fancy clothes they couldn't really afford.

They didn't care. They had become familiar with the shop lady and she was happy for them to try on a few items and take some photos for their Instagram, which gave her some free advertising. Win-win!

Jenna had been early that day, and she was about to order her second mango smoothie when she heard the shop lady come through and tell her all about the new party dresses that had just arrived.

As this was happening, Cynthia arrived, apologising for being late, blowing air kisses as they assumed posh people would do when greeting one another.

They were quite funny together. They didn't care how they seemed to others. They were happy with each other.

The shop lady called both of them over to try on the dresses.

Jenna, usually very careful with her possessions, looked back at her bag on the floor and left it there. A deep sense of trust telling her it would be fine, although the hairs on the back of her neck were telling her otherwise.

They tried on the dresses, Jenna a pink one that made her look like candyfloss; Cynthia a tighter fitting number – she was more daring after all – that made her look like she was about to sing to John Travolta at the end of Grease.

Laughter filled the room, and they were oblivious to the passing of time.

The only thing that had mattered was how much fun they had together.

As they made their way back to where Jenna's bag was, she realised it wasn't there anymore.

She looked around, almost becoming manic now with fear that all her stuff was gone.

Her phone was the only thing she had on her as they were taking photos with it, but her purse, all her ID documents and cards were there.

There was something symbolic about the contents of her bag, that if lost would give her so much more grief than just having to replace them.

*Why did I leave those things there! Why did I go against my best instinct and leave my bag there, easy prey for anyone to take!*

She didn't know why she had done it, but she knew she needed to find it.

Jenna woke up, in a sweat and with her heartbeat racing.

She remembered having had this dream before, and what was going on in her life when she dreamt it.

It took her quite a few minutes to recover and gather herself. To realise it was just a dream.

But what could be taken away from her?

# JENNA

## The end of her world

In her dreams, she'd usually wake up in her bed, mid-morning, feeling rested and hopeful for the day ahead.

This time waking up felt different. The calm before the storm.

Usually the noises outside were of cars rushing past, or children chattering away, as they walked with their mothers towards the local school.

She didn't dare look out the window. She opted for getting herself ready for whatever she'd be facing this sunny summer's day.

*At least it's sunny*, she thought.

As she grabbed her purse and keys, and opened the front door, she hesitated for a moment.

Still looking at the floor, she slowly moved her gaze upward, to see the outside world, expectation of more of the same was there, but an eerie sense of difference was looming in the back of her mind.

School bags on the ground, abandoned as if they wouldn't be useful any longer. Their owners long gone. *But where did they go?*

It was a 20mph road, so cars didn't exactly crash. She would've heard it from her room.

Noticing the two hatchbacks, like rams facing each other, Jenna realised that she was witnessing something big. Something she didn't know how to get out of.

*Where are all the people? What has happened overnight?*

She searched for signs of her neighbours, or the noisy children that often annoyed her out of her slumber.

No sign of either.

What did this mean? What could possibly have happened that meant that she was the only one around?

It had been a strange year for her. Lots going on. Not much she could make sense of. *And now this?*

*What am I meant to do now? I have no idea what to do.* She thought as she wandered around the familiar streets and into the town centre.

In town she found more of the same. Abandoned shopping bags, cars in disarray, as if they'd bumped into each other, their drivers suddenly gone.



*Why me? Why isn't there anyone else around? What does this mean?*

Even though she enjoyed her alone time, she started to feel really lonely without another human soul in sight.

She sat down on a bench overlooking her favourite café. A bench she'd sat on many times before.

She wasn't scared, just confused and troubled by what this meant for her future. *Is there a future?*

As she awoke from her dream, the question lingered in her mind: *is there a future?*

In the reality of her awakening, Jenna struggled to come up with an answer.

Reassured by the children and car noises outside, she took a deep breath, leaving her somnolent state behind.

She'd had this dream before. Many times. Still unsure of its meaning, she'd accumulated a few theories: an alien invasion perhaps, or the Christian harpazo maybe. A third choice, her favourite by far, was that she'd gone to an alternate timeline where the world would be re-populated, one by one. There were others like her but they hadn't crossed over just yet.

Thinking of her theories, she got up and got ready for her day.

# Jeremiah

## Everything I do...

Jeremiah was sitting on that bench.

That same bench he'd sat on every day after school.

It wasn't a favourite spot. Not at all. It was just somewhere to pass time before going back to the place where everything he did was wrong.

Sitting on this bench, he could imagine that he did everything right.

He would forget he was here, and go into daydreaming. His imagination was so strong that he'd feel like he'd been transported to a different place, a different time...

Today he took himself five years into the future.

He's sitting in an office with windows overlooking a city, full of life, concrete skyscrapers and blue skies.

He felt important. Heck, he *was* important.

Jeremiah smiled as he continued to look out the window, in the same way he used to do on that bench outside his school all those years before.

A shy looking girl knocked on the door "hello sir, I've got the CEO on the line, he sounds excited to talk to you".

"Ah yes, Simon, patch him through, thanks Linda."

A CEO calling Jeremiah with excitement? Who had he become?

Was he actually doing the right thing?

The call went well. His boss told him that he was very happy with his work, and was therefore giving him a raise and more responsibilities, which were something Jeremiah was expecting for a few months now.

He did a "yes!" gesture, and reveled in his success.

He was doing things right!

As he came out of his daydream, he felt himself smiling, but he also felt this was bittersweet.

Would this unrealised fantasy become a reality?

Could Jeremiah – the guy that “always gets it wrong” get his dreams to become true?

*Who knows*, Jeremiah thought, picking up his bag and getting ready to face those voices that formed part of his current reality.

He looked at the bench, almost waving it goodbye.

He could always come back here, to the place where his fantasies came alive.

He could still dream.

# Jeremiah

## The Whirlwind

Jeremiah's dreams were pretty strange most of the time.

He preferred to daydream, he could control those a bit more. Last night he had an incredible experience with the second room, and he couldn't shake it off.

He fell asleep out of exhaustion, and woke up a few hours later, sweating and searching for answers. Would he get any soon?

The dream began with Jeremiah sitting on a bench. Not his usual bench outside of his school.

He was familiar with this bench, but at the same time it felt like a complete stranger.

Jeremiah looked around and realised he was somewhere else. Like a scene out of a cowboy film.

*That's odd, I never watch those films. My friend used to love them. I would just play on my gameboy while he watched them.*

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw something move and it startled him. As far as he was concerned, this place was deserted.

As he slowly turned toward the moving object, cautious not to bring any attention to himself, he realised it was a bale of hay.

*Phew! It's not a person coming at me with a gun!* When he awoke later that day, he questioned the fear of a man with a gun, and how that would've worked out in his dream. There was no resolution to the dream so the only thing he could do was fill in the blanks.

He stood up and as he did, the hay bale made its way toward him, barely missing him.

Jeremiah explored his surroundings a bit more, and as he did, the wind seemed to speed up, and with it more hay bales kept coming at him.

*What is this!?* He thought.

As he watched, he noticed that the hay bales weren't ordinary hay bales. They were words!

The intensity of the wind was out of control now, and the words kept zeroing in on him.

As he ran toward safety, making sure to move out of the way so the angry hay bales would pass him and not demolish him, he heard in his mind the words that he'd written on his walls a long time ago.

They were angry words.

They were coming back at him like never before.

Would he be able to defeat the whirlwind that was throwing his own anger back at him?

# Jeremiah

## Mum's Journal

As he lay down to sleep one more time in this strange house, he felt bittersweet, but also still angry...

Jeremiah was sitting in his grandmother's chair. He loved that chair! it brought him good memories of a loving *nan* he'd lost so long ago. It felt like an eternity and it still hurt so much.

He was staring at a book lying on the floor, next to his journal.

Curiosity got the best of him and he picked it up, not realising what he was about to encounter when he opened its pages.

The first page was filled with words he'd never heard out loud.

### **JOURNAL ENTRY, MAY 19TH 1997**

*I love my son.*

*He is wonderful even if he's so angry all the time.*

*Is it my fault that he's so angry? What did I do  
wrong?*

*I've tried my best with him and I don't know what  
else to do. Somebody please help me!*

*I need help. Serious help. I know I'm depressed, but I  
feel if I accept this to anyone else, that will be the  
end of me.*

*I'm scared.*

*I hope he can forgive me one day. The pain is so  
much to take. I just want it to stop.*

This dream was one of those dreams where Jeremiah knew he wasn't awake. He knew this was a dream whilst he was in it.

The words were still hitting him hard. In a good way.

He'd write in his journal, and on his wall, as a way to let all his anger out, but it was overwhelming. It wasn't enough. It was never enough.

*Even if this is a dream, I hope that she does have a journal like this somewhere. I hope that these words are real and that she does realise how hurtful she was when I was growing up.*

He sat there for a long time, reading his mum's words.

Getting to know her in a way he'd never known before. They never spoke about anything but the weather and trivial things.

Most of the time they fought.

As Jeremiah woke up from this very vivid dream, he wiped tears from his eyes.

A sense of relief washed over him as he pondered on those words he'd longed to hear all his life.

The hope that his mum did feel this way allowed him to get up and face another day with The Beckoning Rooms.

# Jacob

## The Flowers

Jacob loved flowers. He was mocked about this as "boys shouldn't like flowers that much".

He didn't care. They soothed him. They helped him deal with the reality of life, which sometimes wasn't great for him.

In his dream in the first night at The Beckoning Rooms house, he spent what seemed an eternity with some very curious flowers.

He sat in the garden, focusing on the beautiful colours and smells emanating from the flowers.

*This is unbelievable!* He thought as he admired each flower individually.

As he did so, in his own introverted way, he noticed that these flowers weren't normal.

*But what is normal anyway. None of this is normal!*

Jacob watched the flowers change colours right before his eyes. From a bright pink to a surreal mix of reds, oranges and blue hues.

One particular flower caught his eye. It had something on it. Little black specs surrounded by light and colour.

He got closer to inspect it.

***YOU CAN DO THIS.***

*What? I can do what? Are they talking to me? What is going on here! I just came here to look at the flowers, not get a message from the beyond, wherever that is.*

This moment in the dream startled him and woke him up. He was sweating, his heart racing.

Would he figure out what this dream, in this strange house reveal the true meaning of the flowers in that garden, or the reasons for him being in this place?



# Jacob

## Videogames or real life?

As Jacob pondered on his previous dream, and his experience in the first beckoning room, wishing he had his console here to distract himself as he usually did. Videogames were his life. That's where he spoke to people. That's where he felt more like himself.

He slowly drifted into a deep sleep, with thoughts of zombies, wars, guns and magical worlds...

Jacob is armed and dangerous. He's ready for battle.

The helicopter that carried him just minutes ago is a small dot in the distance. He can barely hear it. He's now on his own.

All the knowledge he's gained through hours of training will need to kick in now.

Survival.

He sees some movement out of the corner of his eye. He grabs his weapon and aims in that direction.

A distinct sound reaches his ears and he realizes that the shadow is not human.

As he approaches, scared to death but aware of his need to remain alert and in control, he sees a strange creature with many heads, it looks like many different animals he knows – a bear, a lion, a snake, a dragon. It also has many arms, legs.

He stops and ponders his predicament.

He has to be strong. He has to endure to the end.

Channeling Bill, he starts taking deep breaths as he comes up with a plan to destroy this being.

He's alone. *Like Will Smith in I Am Legend.* He thinks to himself.

He's going to have to do this on his own. Bill is not here, his friends are not here. It's all down to him.

As this last thought flashes through Jacob in his dream, he wakes up with a start. He's sweating, alert and aware of his surroundings again.

Will he figure out what's in the next room, so he can go back home, where the monsters are only in his computer?

# Jacob

## Glimpses of the future

Jacob was sitting in a lounge. He wasn't sure whose lounge it was until a few minutes later when his brother walked in carrying beers for both of them.

He didn't understand what was going on. The last time he spoke to his brother they exchanged harsh words and he'd decided to never speak to him again.

*What am I doing here?*

As he was thinking that, his brother spoke: "do you remember when we went to Europe, and took all those trains, visited all those places?"

Jacob replied: "no, I don't remember that, when did we do that? I thought we were not talking to each other."

Puzzled, his brother looked at him and said "what are you talking about, we patched things up shortly after that big fight we had, boy that was silly, it feels like ages ago now."

Jacob sat there, wondering why he didn't remember this. *Mandela Effect?* He thought to himself but didn't dare say it out loud. His brother would think he was insane.

*Have I gone insane, is that what's happening here?*

He continued his conversation with his brother, asking him about where they'd gone – Paris, Berlin, Auschwitz, Madrid, and more. He didn't remember any of this.

Very strange things were happening.

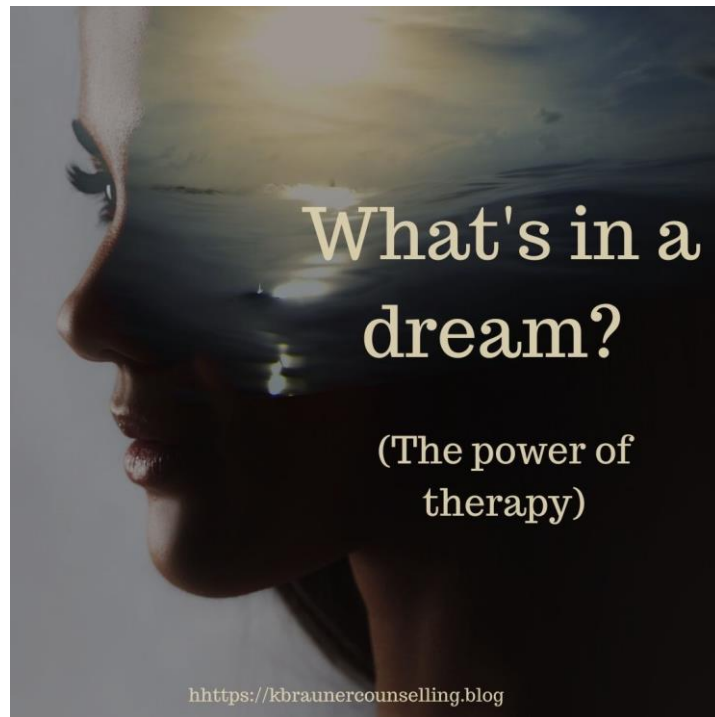
He noticed the pictures on the wall, and there he was with his brother, in Paris, Berlin, and so on. There were also pictures of his brother's family: three young children and a beautiful woman he'd never seen before.

As he drank his beer, he realised he was in a different reality. He shook his head to see if he'd snap out of it. Nothing. He sat and stared at the wall for the longest time...

As Jacob woke up, confused even more than he'd been when he woke up in the beckoning rooms house, he realised he might have just had a glimpse of the future.

# Want to find out more about dreams?

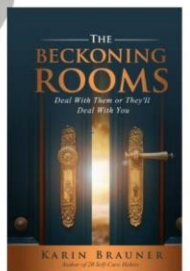
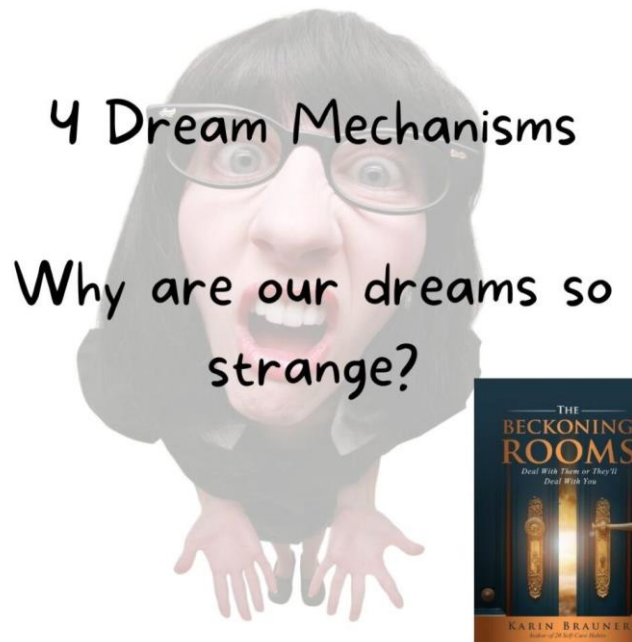
Here are a few blog posts I wrote on the topic, they will also give you some insight into where The Beckoning Rooms novel idea came from.



Dreams hold fascinating meaning, but how do we interpret them?



<https://kbraunercounselling.blog>





— THE —  
BECKONING  
ROOMS

*Deal With Them or They'll  
Deal With You*

KARIN BRAUNER

*Author of 20 Self-Care Habits*

# Endorsements and Reviews

Our past can keep us imprisoned. Dealing with our emotional past is important to move forward in life. In *The Beckoning Rooms*, Karin takes her reader on a journey from hurt to healing.

—Kary Oberbrunner, CEO of Igniting Souls Publishing Agency

Author of *Unhackable*, *Day Job to Dream Job*, and *Elixir Project*

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Understanding the origin of our pain is the start of our personal evolution into achieving happiness. In order to find this light, we need to look no further than ourselves. We are our best friends in this journey. The Beckoning Rooms help us explore this through fictional characters, who are beckoned to search deep within themselves as they go through the rooms.

—Andrea Musso, M.A.

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“To die, per chance to dream...” Famous words indeed. But let us leave the question of dying for another occasion and let us focus on the issue of dreaming.

Everybody dreams, no question about that. But what do we do with our dreams? Some people remember them a little bit but don't do anything with them. Some people remember them and are able to talk about them, with spouse, family and friends, or perhaps with their analyst. Others simply forget them. Others, like S. Freud, write them down, reflect upon them, and try to understand them. In fact, thanks to the genius of Freud and his work *The Interpretation of Dreams*, we now have a better way to understand the nature of dreams.

According to him, the origins of our dreams can be found in events that occurred during the day, or in events occurring in our own Unconscious. Usually, these have to do with

basic impulses that are unacceptable to us, due to our own upbringing, our values, our beliefs and so on. Because of this, we tend to *repress* our dreams, and that is why we forget them. In fact, according to his view, the content of dreams constitutes the basis of anxiety, which is the direct result of the *sinister* (Das Umheimliche), which refers to that which is supposed to remain permanently hidden, suddenly seeking to manifest itself to Consciousness. In fact, in this sense, the *sinister*, that which is frightful, that which is dreadful, usually relates to many things familiar to us since childhood but that have been repressed. This “known but unknown” biographical material (“There is a lot we don’t know that we know,” says Jenna in p.87), returns in our dreams and is then experienced as something strange, as something *sinister*.

This is why, from the beginning, Jenna says to herself: “Maybe I’m not supposed to remember...maybe I am just supposed to figure it out. But with what purpose?” With what purpose indeed! And that is precisely what makes this book worth reading. It will invite us, through the dreams of Jenna, Jeremiah, and Jacob, to face a number of strange situations which will force them to ask themselves very pertinent questions regarding their own inner truth, questions which, I am sure, the reader has also asked himself at some point in life. These are *The Beckoning Rooms*, which, as author Karin Brauner suggests, we either deal with them, or they will deal with us.

Very entertaining reading, with a very important message throughout, which has to do with the quest of self-discovery: “True knowledge comes from within,” she says; “Look inward for knowledge...own your truth...trust your truth...explore it and act accordingly”.

And that makes the book worth reading!

—Luis A. Recinos (Guatemala, January 12, 2021)

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**Excellent! Sort life out, or it will sort you out.**

*The Beckoning Rooms* is a fast-moving work of fiction that had me gripped from the outset. More to the point, the moral of the book is crucial: that problems, even if unpleasant, need to be dealt with rather than hidden from. One way to do this is to examine one’s past: what formative experiences have led you to this point? Are you depressed, addicted, lacking in confidence, etc.? What has caused you to feel this way, and—above all—how do you fix it and move on? How do you become the best version of yourself?

Meet Jenna, Jeremiah, and Jacob, three characters with traumatic pasts who find themselves thrust into an unexpected but very necessary situation. They must now confront their demons in order for life as they know it to resume. I found each of the protagonists to be relatable and unique in voice, especially Jacob (owing to my own experiences of therapy). However, Jeremiah’s story also made me emotional.

All in all, [this book is] definitely a page-turner, and one that—in spite of being the author’s first attempt at fiction—sits finely among my other collection about a troubled adult’s relationship to their tortured ego.

—Andy Beck, musician, multilingualist, and author of *Folk Springs Eternal*

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Reading the Beckoning rooms was quite an experience. Karin Brauner Hollman skilfully draws you into a world, where you're unsure whether the characters are actually living through their experiences or are in a dream world.

I found myself identifying with the characters to differing degrees, and learning new things about myself in the process.

I could sense the influence of the author's counselling background, but she doesn't bash you on the head with it; its in keeping with the flow of the story

A fascinating book, that will speak to ever who reads it.

Highly recommended.

—Tayo Igbintade, BSL/English Interpreter, Parent Advocate, Author of *Adventures at the Seaside: A Children's Book About Sibling Relationships, Empathy, Tolerance and Acceptance of Difference*

**Jenna**



# Chapter 1

## Unfamiliar Surroundings

Jenna woke up feeling refreshed. She hadn't slept like that in a long time. As her eyes adjusted to the darkened room, using the sliver of light coming in through the blinds to her advantage, she rubbed her eyes and tried to focus her sight. The blackout blinds blocked most of the sunlight. Stretching, Jenna thought, *I have to go to the shop today, or I will have nothing to eat, and more importantly, no toilet paper—now that could be a catastrophe!* Attempting to get her still-drowsy self up and ready for the day, she started to get up on the left side of the bed, as usual, but her momentum came to an unexpected stop. "Ouch!" Paralysed by the pain inflicted by the unexpected thump, Jenna managed to refrain from shouting expletives while she rubbed her head.

*What is that doing there?!* Jenna reached out her hand and felt a cold, solid structure before her, which stretched as wide as she could reach. *What? A wall? That's not meant to be there! The wall is on the other side. I better turn on a light, but if my bed isn't in the right place . . . where will the light switch be?*

Jenna cautiously rose from the bed. With one hand in continual contact with the wall-like fixture, she noticed the cold that was radiating from the wall to her hand as she slid it across while searching for the lightswitch. It took a moment for her eyes to adjust when the bright light flooded the room, but she immediately realised she wasn't in the room she went to sleep in the night before. She narrowed her eyes as she looked around, brows furrowed in confusion. Despite not knowing where she was, she felt amazed at how familiar the room looked.

She knew all of the items that were there—some of them she hadn't seen in years. *Teddy! Oh, how I used to love making imaginary tea for you! My old skates, now that brings back memories.*

A bit puzzled by it all, Jenna paused to ground herself. She was confused, but she was experiencing so many feelings and had so many questions. *Why am I here? How did I get here? Am I still asleep right now?* These thoughts bubbled in the back of her mind.

Somehow, though, she wasn't scared at the idea of not knowing where in the world she was.

The familiarity of the long-lost treasures she was reacquainting herself with helped, for sure. But how was this even possible?

*There has to be some explanation for this!*

Jenna looked out the window, hoping to see her lovely landscaped garden that backed to the neighbour's garden, but she was surprised by what she saw: a vast field, nothing else in sight.

*How did this happen? I haven't been drinking, and I wouldn't end up in a completely different part of the country or anywhere but my own home anyway if I had been drinking. I came home and went to bed in my own bed, in my own house . . .*

*Where is this place? And how did I get here?*

Jenna realised as soon as her stomach made an empty grumbling sound that she was going to have to leave that room and find food. *Leaving this room would be an interesting concept, indeed.* She checked herself again and gave her forearm a pinch. *Nope, still not drunk, and ouch! I felt that.* Standing in the middle of the room, Jenna looked around and discovered more and more items she'd sent to the memory bin of her somewhat-uncomfortable past. Touching the objects brought back memories of the good times she'd had with them. A slight smile formed as a tear simultaneously fell down her cheek. *Well, nothing has happened yet, except that bump on my head from hitting the wall.* She reflexively rubbed her forehead again; it still hurt.

The door beckoned to Jenna. She tiptoed over and rested her ear against the wood. Silence.

*Hmm, it might be ok to go out there. I don't know whose house this is, but then again, it's the only place for miles, by the looks of it. I can always replace the food I eat. Whoever—or whatever—put me here had to know I'd get hungry and need the essentials.*

Jenna shook her head and chuckled silently. *Wait a minute, replacing used items is what I'm thinking about? I should be worrying more about how I got here and why I'm here! Maybe there's a letter somewhere for me. Maybe I need to figure this out on my own. Oh my, what did I get myself into this time? Wait a minute. I know I didn't get myself into anything. I went to bed—in my bed—and woke up here. Wherever here is.*

The door propped Jenna up while she spent another few minutes pondering her predicament, considering her options. There didn't seem to be any from her standing point in that strange-but-familiar room.

*I could stay here until night-time, go back to sleep, and hope I wake up in my own bed in the city.*

*Time will pass very slowly if I do that, she thought, and what if there's no way out of here, and I wake up here again tomorrow morning?*

The only immediate choice was to open the door and hope for the best.

When Jenna opened the door, she felt an immediate sense of *déjà vu*. But that phrase didn't quite describe what she was feeling. It wasn't simply a feeling of having lived this already. She felt a sense of remembering, like a "tip of the tongue" kind of thing, but with a whole experience rather than not being able to make a word materialise. She had really been there before.

Jenna wracked her brain, thinking about whose house this might be and when she might have visited. Why did this house seem to be somewhere she spent a lot of time in the past?

*I wish I could find my phone! But would it work in this place? I could ask my mum or dad where I was. But would they be able to tell me? Have I been here with them? Did I have a holiday with friends here? It just doesn't make sense. Why can't I remember?*

Jenna's mind was racing, trying to make sense of her strange situation. *Maybe I'm not supposed to remember; maybe I'm just supposed to figure it out. But with what purpose? What is going on? What am I meant to figure out?*

She paced behind the still-closed door, practically fuming. *This is all nonsense, figuring things out, calling my parents, remembering . . .* Jenna paused with a sigh and turned the doorknob. *Maybe I'll feel better once I've eaten something.*

The dimly lit hallway had little side tables on either side, coated with thick layers of dust. It was obvious that things were missing, as there were less dusty parts of the tables. While Jenna thought it was odd, she kept walking, not able to come up with a reasonable explanation. *Nothing's sensible about this place so far.*

The hallway was also lined with closed doors. Curiosity got the best of Jenna, and she grabbed one of the door handles. Suddenly, she had an overwhelming feeling in her gut—a warning—that told her to be cautious, as she didn't know what might be behind that door. Did she really want to find out yet—or ever?

As she stood there, contemplating the caution feeling, her body suddenly felt weak and frail. She pressed her hand against the wall for support; it felt cold on her hand, just like the wall she'd banged her head on earlier.

What did that mean? Was she supposed to open or not open doors in this place? There was too much to think about and so many questions creeping over her.

She remembered the same feeling in grade school when she was made to feel she shouldn't question what her parents and teachers told her. She felt that whatever she said was either wrong, not quite right, or laughable. The message was: don't ask any questions; just follow the rules.

*Wow! Where did that come from?*

Jenna realised the feeling that she couldn't ask questions made her feel as small as she was back in grade school. It was a debilitating feeling which frustrated the heck out of her. But of course, she had been told not to challenge the adults in her life by any means.

*Awful! How dare they dictate over my life like that?*

Jenna felt exactly that—dictated over like she was unable to decide for herself what was right, what was wrong, or what rules she could choose to follow. She wasn't even clear as a child about what the rules were, and she certainly had no clue what the rules were at this house with its closed doors and no other people to ask or talk to.

*How very bizarre.*

She wondered if there was any tea—that might help calm her down and give her time to think about what she'd woken up to. But where was the kitchen? Jenna remembered having the last teabag the previous night at home, and there wasn't much milk left either. *Ah well, if this isn't my house, maybe it's at least well-stocked.* She stared at the door a moment longer before leaving to find the kitchen.

Inside the kitchen, she found everything she needed, including food for lunch and dinner—no need for her to go to the shop for now. She paused with a sudden realization. *Would I even know where the shop was? There were only fields all around me.*

As she poured water into the kettle and found the teabag, milk, and sugar for her drink, Jenna felt as if in a dream state. She recalled having dreams about unicorns and fantastic lands back in grade school. *Dreaming and daydreaming about fantastic lands really helped me survive that time.* She let her tea brew for a few minutes, patiently waiting for the right colour, well aware of the situation she was in, but at the same time trying to ignore it for a little bit. *Just for a little bit.*

The tea was nice. Jenna pushed away from the table, ready to find the answers to some of her questions. *I need to find something out about this place and why I woke up here.*

As she walked back to the bedroom, the only familiar room so far, apart from the kitchen, she passed the front door. Jenna checked and it. *No way I'm getting out of here with that door locked and no key in sight.* As she continued down the hallway with those mysterious closed doors, she had another memory. This time the feeling was more like when she was going to university for the first time. She had left the comforts of her familiar school—with all her friends and classrooms.

Walking towards the front door of the school, she remembered walking with trepidation, slowly counting her steps as a distraction to what she would find inside.

It was a scary prospect to be the new kid, to meet new people and make new friends.

*But why do I need to make new friends? I like the ones I've had all my life. Oh, right, they're moving away soon to university. Maybe I can see them after my last class. But some might not finish until later or finish even earlier and are already busy with their new friends. Will they forget me? Will they want to meet with me to catch up? This is horrible and exciting all at once.*

Jenna remembered feeling guilty about wanting to meet new people and make new friends. She felt guilty about expanding her horizons, about learning new things about life and in her classes, without the usual bunch of people she'd been doing that with all her life.

A feeling of shame for feeling so scared was also forever present during this time. Jenna could almost hear her parents and teachers—those same ones who told her to follow the rules and look pretty: *"It's time for you to grow up, go to college, and choose what you're going to do with the rest of your life. Go on, just get on with it, will you?"*

It seemed like this time she had to tell herself to *go on, just get on with it*, and it made her cringe. Resentment arose even at the feeling of having to force herself to open those doors, with finding out why she was there, and what she was going to do with the rest of her time there.

Was she annoyed at herself for feeling this way or at the adults in her past who made her think that was the only choice back then? Now, she was thinking as they did—she

couldn't help it and felt powerless even at that moment when nobody was telling her that anymore. Jenna was overtaken by the voices of her past. *Get on with it; you have to get on with it. Everyone does it. Why are you so worried? Just follow the rules!*

More thoughts flooded her already confused mind—thoughts she'd buried deep down years ago. She didn't want to think about these things. *Ugh, too much. Stop that. La la la la. Don't go there. I'll deal with that later.*

As she arrived back in the bedroom, Jenna shook the feeling off; she didn't like them. She focused on the beckoning doors instead.

## Epilogue

What is in a dream? That is the question that I pose to you today. Not as a random question, but as one that would trigger your thoughts and lead you to delve into the exploration of the meaning of dreams and how this relates to therapy and therefore to the unconscious. More importantly, how dreams and therapy relate to the book you're holding in your hands right now – The Beckoning Rooms.

My counselling training has been covered by a blanket of psychoanalytic theories and wonderful tutors that made these theories come alive. I am integrative in practice, but at my core I will always have an analytical mind when it comes to exploring the unconscious and the issues my clients bring me.

Let me take you back to 2003-2004. I started seeing my very first clients at the University clinic in Guatemala, and therefore also decided to start my own therapy process. There were personal and professional reasons for this. I won't go into details as that's between me and my therapist.

I had about a year of sessions with this therapist. She was very traditionally psychoanalytic, so she didn't say much to me, which suited me just fine. The things she did say stick to my mind even now, and have been a great source of comfort to me ever since. That's the power of therapy. At the end of this batch of therapeutic work, I started talking about a particular topic (again, I won't disclose what it was, sorry), and tried to open up about it, but it was still not time. So I "legged" it out of there to never return.

In 2009, I embarked on another counselling course so I could work in the United Kingdom as a therapist - I do believe now, looking back, my counselling training in Guatemala would have been enough to start, but I needed to find my way around the UK way of life and working. Taking on this course meant another batch of therapy, this time for the duration of the course, as a requirement to graduate. That was fine by me as there were things I needed to work on.

There always is something to work on as the unconscious material from our past beckons us. Sometimes gently. Sometimes more forcefully. There came a point where the aforementioned "particular topic" came up again, and it was hard. I believe my words to my therapist were "I really don't want to go there, but here we are, we might as well do it". She checked with me (This one also didn't say much, but what she said is still having an impact to this day): "are you sure you want to talk about that?"

I said yes, probably a crying blubbing mess at that point. What happened during the next few weeks of opening the proverbial Pandora's box, was quite something!

I used to have a recurring dream, where I'd always appear in a house. The house was familiar to me. I wasn't in a strange place or anything. I knew the place I was in. It was either my house or a friend's house. Lurking somewhere in the building, there was always a room, a door that I was weary of.

What made me weary of it was a mystery to me, in the years that I had the dream, I couldn't figure it out! I could never go into that room, or even go near it. It gave me the creeps. I felt really anxious and had a sense of dread about what I might find if I did open that door. I'm unsure of what else happened in those recurring dreams. It felt like I was in the house for a long time. Maybe a normal day, with normal things going on.

It's been a while since I've had that dream. I know what stopped it was talking about "that topic" in therapy. Hence, as I mentioned before, the power of therapy! I've not dreamt that dream ever since those hard sessions, where everything in life felt surreal for a few weeks, but something released.

That unconscious part of myself had lost its power. It had lost its ability to haunt me, in my waking and sleeping hours. I know that there are lots of more things to explore about "the topic" as there always will be - the unconscious is vast, and will strike whenever and however it wants. This is why I find therapy so precious - as a process I've gone through myself - and as a process I support my counselling clients with.

In the story I've just told you, talking through something in therapy made a recurring dream stop. The symbolism in dreams is truly incredible. I've seen it in my own dreams and life, and also in my clients' dreams and lives. What we dream says something about who we are, what we've sent to the repressed bin of our minds, and what we must deal with before it deals with us.

The end of my recurring dream after that batch of therapy led me to write *The Beckoning Rooms*. The idea first came to me a few months after that therapy process.



# 20 SELF-CARE HABITS

DEVELOP YOUR  
STRENGTHS  
USE YOUR RESOURCES  
— *improve your* —  
LIFE AND RELATIONSHIPS



*A practical  
guide to setting  
clear boundaries  
and meeting  
your needs*

KARIN BRAUNER

*Author of The Beckoning Rooms*

*Foreword by Dr. Luis Recinos and Andrea Musso, M.A*

# Praise for 20 Self-Care Habits



20 Habits of Self Care is exactly what it says on the cover – a book about self-care habits and I absolutely loved it. Once I started reading it I couldn't put it down, not just because it was so interesting but also because of how easy it was to read.

After introducing us to the subject of self-care and why it is so important, the author begins each chapter with a quote related to the topic being discussed which immediately got me thinking about the subject and how it relates to my own life. The friendly, natural writing style enabled me to really reflect on how each self-care tip already does, or could, improve my life and the personal experiences she shares throughout the book also helped with this.

Each chapter relates to a different self-care practice, all of which could be easily incorporated into even the busiest of people's lives because of their simplicity. What I really enjoyed is that the author doesn't just introduce us to the concepts of self-care practices but also makes suggestions about how, by using these practices every day, we can experience improvements in both our lives and our relationships. She allows us to think about the importance of putting our own needs in front of those of others and reminds us that saying no isn't a bad thing.

The reflective exercises at the end of each chapter provided me a fantastic opportunity to really sit and think about how when I haven't put my own needs first it has negatively impacted on my self esteem or feelings of self worth and how differently things could have been if I had. Including these exercises meant that I didn't just rush onto the next chapter and by slowing the reading process down in this way it felt like the author was already encouraging me to slow down the pace I normally live my life.

As mentioned previously the author's personal reflections really helped me really reflect on the importance of self care, but not only that they also made the whole idea of self care more relatable to everyday life.

Whether you are new to the idea of self care or an old hand, this book is a light, easy read which flows seamlessly from chapter to chapter. Having already noticed the changes it has made to my life since reading it I highly recommend it.

M. C.



In the opening chapters, '20 Habits of Self Care' makes a bold claim that by implementing some of the activities from the book into our lives, we can expect to lead an improved life. I

was sceptical of this claim at first but by the time I had reached the end of the book I could see how by implementing some of the activities and ideas that most resonated with me, I could expect to see an increase in my mental wellbeing.

Often when we think of self-care, we think of treating ourselves; whether that be to something nice to eat or time doing an activity we enjoy. Whilst this can fulfil part of our individual self-care needs, the self-care habits in this book go deeper than this and are about shaping our overall wellbeing rather than a quick pick-me-up. The 'habits' are ideas that can be implemented into one's life and therefore become the everyday rather than a special treat.

One idea that resonated with me personally was the concept of personal space in relation to technology.

Technology and personal space are not something I have put together before and this has encouraged me to have some downtime from my mobile phone. Perhaps I will have my time away from technology whilst spending time in nature, really focusing on my surroundings rather than hiking through a park with my headphones on thinking that I have 'done' nature for the day.

There is a running theme throughout of improving self-esteem and I would say that this book is ideal for someone who is looking to boost their mental wellbeing and/ or self-esteem. If you are someone that is suffering from depression, implementing some of the activities in this book may well be very useful for you but self-care may begin with fulfilling basic needs such as looking after health and hygiene. In that case, this book may be the next step.

This book appears to be written from Karin's own journey of self-care. A lot of examples are written from her own personal experience which gives credibility and integrity to the ideas that are discussed. I particularly liked the practical nature to this book. It's concise but has many ideas for personal reflection (making it personal to each reader) and practical ideas on how to implement some of habits into your life. Rather than being a theoretical book that is read and then stays on the shelf, I can see how the activities and ideas could become part of the everyday for both myself and my clients.

C. B.



Karin Brauner's recently published book on Self Care is the first and only book you will need to buy on self care. Whether this is the first time you have dipped your toe in the world of wellness and self care or you are well versed on the subject, this is the only book you'll even need. Well written, with easy to follow instructions on how to reframe your life, this is a self care book with a difference.

The author is honest with the reader right from the beginning , she doesn't sugar coat the reality, that living your true life, will require hard work, and dedication to understanding yourself. That is just one of the reasons why this book is different from the rest, she is not offering a quick fix, there are of course little exercises that can be done in times of needs, but she is offering much more than that, she is offering a mindset reset, one that will change your whole life and you'll finish the book knowing yourself better than you ever thought possible .

The book starts out by concentrating on the importance of boundaries in your life and highlights the tools needed to start structuring your own life with boundaries, dealing with 'your mind, body, spirit and relationships'. You will learn how to structure your life in a way that is dictated by your needs and not societal demands.

As you realise that you too are worthy of happiness, the author guides you through the difficult relationships you may have to navigate, by not shying away from conflict, but meets them head on bringing about a new respect for both you and your relationships.

Each chapter has a different theme that you can dip into at any time you are struggling with that particular issue in your life. You are given tips for improving the situation, but more importantly how to reduce the likelihood of coming across these situations again, you will have learned the tools to deal with the next step when needed. Each theme is fully explored, then you will be lead through a series of visualisation exercises and given options for alternative outcomes, it's the ultimate learning tool.

As you continue your journey into self awareness, it will become easier to identify old patterns, and make new behaviours. The author gives you the power to say No, and in a world where saying yes is the only answer, you are helped to take back your power and own your own destiny and regain that control of your life.

Through a series of visualisation exercises, meditations, reframing and life hacks , you will learn how to take responsibility for your decisions. You will end up confident in your identity and living a life that is true to who you are at the core.

You learn how to trust yourself, after all who knows you better than you do, it's time to start listening to yourself and this book gives you the tools to do so.

A.L.



20 habits of self-care is a practical and insightful tool for anyone who wants to make self-care a priority.

The overall message is much the same as other self care books however it is original in the reflection aspect. The think, feel and act sections are good prompts for anyone new to reflection in this sense.

I would say the book is aimed at beginners in self-care, and it is a great place to start. It could be all that a 'newbie' to self-care requires. As someone who has been reading other self-care books and undertaking reflections for over 3 years. A lot of the features were what I have already been introduced to. That being said, the think, feel and act sections did draw my attention to specific areas of reflection that I had not thought of in detail before.

These sections at the end of each chapter have echoes of what a therapist would prompt you to think about, which is understandable as the author is a counsellor. I do believe that the book being written by a counsellor who has experience on both sides of self-care, witnessing others struggles with the subject, has given Karin more insight into the needs of other people regarding self-care.

Many other books are written with the author's experiences and could potentially not have the same wide area of reflection to prompt. The fact that Karin clearly labels each part of the reflection into 'think' 'feel' and 'act' means that a reader can choose which parts of the reflection works best for them and skip to those bits.

The whole book is written with careful words and is laid out in such a way it would not scare off those who class themselves as not being readers. Other books can take a while to get to the point of the chapter whereas this book is precise.

My overall feelings on the book are that firstly I would recommend it to anyone who is new to self-care as a starting platform. In addition, with the reflection aspect it is original and for a new person to the self-care ideology could replace the need for a therapist.

This could be hugely beneficial to someone who could not afford counselling.

On this note, It would be a good book for mental health teams, and NHS counsellors (who only offer 6 sessions) to recommend to people so they can learn to take care of themselves. The impact of this book, if recommended like this could be substantial.

J.T.



This book is exactly what it says it is, different ways to integrate self-care into your daily life. It starts off with an overview of why the author is writing about self-care, giving us an insight into her life.

Some introductions can be patronising but this was not at all, there was no judgment, and Karin suggests that you know yourself best. The book covers 20 different self-care activities ranging from the usual spending time in nature and putting yourself first, to ones we might not find obvious, such as personal space.

I liked that each topic starts with a quote that ties nicely into the chapter and the author uses her own personal experiences to explain each habit, this makes the book feel like your speaking with a friend. The examples are easily relatable, for instance, in putting your

needs first chapter, the example of lending a friend money, makes it easier to see how important your needs are when put in to a perceptible example of money.

The lay out of each chapter follows the same format, and this is something I particularly like a lot! The bullet points of how your life can improve with each habit are clear and concise, making it easy to digest.

I especially liked the reflection time section at the end of each chapter, it's almost like they've reached out a hand and brought you in to the book. It gives you questions to help you reflect on your own personal circumstances and how each habit impacts your own life, as well as prompting you to make changes to improve your own self-care.

Whilst I would not normally read an eBook, the layout of this book was so easy to navigate and read on my phone.

I like the idea of the printable reminders and planners, which are a brilliant addition to this book!

Self-care is over looked so much and isn't something I ever thought about until I started my training as a counsellor. This book makes it so easy to see the little ways in which you can look after yourself without too much effort. I would recommend this book to fellow counsellors, students, clients and family members.

Overall, if you're looking for a proactive book to help work on your self care then this is the book for you!

C.L.



## Preface to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition



Three years ago, I started writing a blog to inform, motivate and encourage people online. It really changed how I worked, and led me to develop an online presence and an online network of like-minded professionals and friends that remains to this day.

The first blog series I wrote was about self-care. As soon as I had finished it, I knew there was a book in there somehow.

I sat and planned. Lots of planning was involved in getting to the writing stages. Once the chapter titles were ready, I set out to find the right stories, quotes and things to be gained from practising each habit.

I self-published that first edition, which is now replaced with a new and improved version, with the help of my publisher and the team, I've managed to make it even more than I ever expected.

As someone once told me, they understood why the first edition was written how it was: I am a very practical person, and the book reflects that. I was pleased with that. Getting awareness of who we are from others might not be the most important, but it does confirm that we're on the right track and being true to ourselves.

In this case, it confirmed that I was being genuine, congruent, and completely myself, in my pursuit of helping others gain the insights about setting boundaries and meeting their needs.

I wanted people to gain those insights by learning from my mistakes, from my stories, from my journey. Some of it painful, but all of it helpful.

I don't fear self-disclosure. It makes me human, and I hope you can see that in this book. I chose the stories carefully, to give you an idea of what you can achieve. We are human. We share similar trends. We might not have the same exact experiences, but we can relate. And that is what makes this book relatable and workable.

Setting clear boundaries sounds simple, but it can take time. It's not a one-stop shop. It's a journey.

Learning to meet our needs in a world that tells us this is selfish, is a hard one to crack – easier for some, harder for others. Once cracked, it opens a whole new realm of relating to ourselves and to others. A realm where there's less resentment, more satisfaction, closer relationships, and so much more.

I hope to connect with you in one way or another – social media, my blog, coaching or counselling sessions, or by attending my online courses and workshops. Some are in development, some you'll see at the back of the book.

# Introduction



## Why this book?

The idea for this book came about from my journey of self-care. I took time getting to know what works for me and makes me happy, as well as what doesn't work for me and contributed to making me unhappy. I hope this book will help you find the same within your life and relationships.

It has been a steep learning curve.

My first attempt at setting boundaries was when I chose to move away from my home country. In this introduction, I won't go into the various reasons for my life-changing decision. I will say that I needed to do it to find myself and to start realising that some of the things I was doing were benefiting others but sometimes – most of the time – hindering my own life.

I wasn't putting my needs first, and neither were others. The benefits of this were temporary. A “thank you” was no longer enough.

But how does one start saying “no” or “not today” or “I'm busy taking care of myself,” when one has become accustomed to being available for everyone at any time? How does one counteract the anger, disappointment and even loss of relationships, when one is trying to do the best for oneself?

Initially, dealing with the backlash of beginning self-care is a hard pill to swallow. It might be difficult to express your newfound boundaries and assertiveness and keep strong as people challenge them – and they will!

I promise you that the more you do it, the easier it gets.

The people that decide to stay while you strive to better look after yourself will benefit from this new you. You will become a person who sets boundaries, knows how to respect yourself and your feelings, therefore



making you more available to nurture those relationships in your life. Those who may have been angry or disappointed who left you during that season of transition might come back. It is possible that no one will distance themselves at all! You could be setting an example for them, and they might be influenced by seeing how making self-care a priority has been beneficial to you.

## **What is self-care and why is it relevant**

Based on what I have shared so far, I hope that you have a basic idea of what self-care means. It is something that some may shy away from, as society often equates self-care to being “selfish” or not altruistic or compassionate to others’ needs. Something that needs to be understood is that we are worthy of getting what we are giving to others!

Self-care is a way to maintain our well-being, our health, and our happiness. There isn't just one way to achieve it. There are many ways and several areas of our lives which require maintenance. It starts with the mind, body, spirit and relationships.

The more we become aware of what we need and what makes us happy, the more we will pursue it. This is easier said than done. Upbringing and other life circumstances may not have led us to be able to execute self-care naturally.

We may have been neglected, abandoned or abused. We may have suffered a trauma that stunted our development or set us back in what we had already achieved within ourselves and our relationships.

Working through these issues is imperative to implement proper self-care. We must find ourselves worthy of being listened to, worthy of others respecting our boundaries and feelings, and worthy of equal, loving and understanding relationships. If I must break it down to just a few words: worthy of happiness.

Self-care is relevant in our lives today. It is especially relevant in a world

where instant gratification is king. A world where we can't wait for anything for fear of missing out or feeling entitled to something. A place where we put ourselves above others without considering how this affects them. We are constantly bombarded with communications and information.

We cannot undo the things that led up to this point in our lives. We can't remove things like technology. It is here to stay and is an essential part of our lives and businesses. We can't tell others how to think or feel or act, but we can start within ourselves. Small steps can make a massive difference!

Self-care can be incorporated in many different ways. Things such as going for a walk, finding a quiet spot to read or enjoying your favourite drink are simple ways of exercising self-care. We must learn to spend time reflecting on what is important to us. Learning to honour our feelings and gaining respect through being assertive are other ways of exercising self-care.

Increasing your level of self-care leads to an improved life and better relationships. I believe that when you start to implement some – or all - of the activities that have been suggested, you will begin to reap the

benefits of an improved life.

## **Structure of this book**

In this book, I want to provide the tools you will need to develop a habit in the areas of setting boundaries, honouring your feelings, learning to be on your own, and improving your relationships. In every topic, there will be a reflection relating to what is being discussed. I will explain what each item means and how your life and relationships can improve from practising these things. I also would like for you to spend some time in reflection. Spend time thinking, acknowledge how you are feeling, and performing actions that go along with what you have reflected upon.

I am not claiming to know everything or be the ultimate authority on self-care. I understand that the best person to know what will work best for

you, is indeed YOU. I have left a space within the tools included for you to create your activity, thought, feeling and reflection. I have also added a pretty printable version of each topic so you can hang it in front of your desk, on your fridge, or wherever you will be able to see it and remember your self-care moments.

At the end of the book, there is a weekly and monthly planner for you to add the self-care activities that you have found useful. I hope that through the suggested activities in this book you will be able to develop your inner strengths, find your resources and use them to improve your life and relationships.

## **How to use this book**

There is no right or wrong way to use or read this book. I would suggest having a read through the entire book to build a foundation for your self-care journey. Then you can choose the suggestions that will work best for you and start implementing them at your leisure. You can also create your self-care activities and write them in the printables for each chapter - provided at the back of the book.

### **Visit my websites to find out more:**

**Resources, Workshops, Courses, Books:**

<https://karinbrauneronline.co.uk>

**Blogsite:** <https://kbraunercounselling.blog/wp>

**Counselling and Supervision:** <https://k-brauner-counselling.co.uk>