



MalleeAble

Bent, but not broken

Version 25.3

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Welcome to MalleeAble

A nature-inspired guide to wellbeing

Bent, But Not Broken

Malleeable is a blending of two words: Mallee (the tree) with malleable (the action of being bent without being broken).

Mallee: *noun*

An indigenous plant of Australia, the mallee is a resilient Eucalyptus tree or shrub, that has a distinctive multi-trunk form stemming from an underground tuber root. The tuber enables this tough plant to regenerate after bushfire or other hardship.



Malleable: *adjective*

Able to be bent, hammered or pressed into shape without breaking or cracking.

Inspiration for this holistic model of growth and wellbeing was taken from the mallee tree, which has many adaptations to help it regrow from hardship and thrive in its difficult environment.

Just as the Mallee transforms after a bush fire, from a single trunked tree to a multi-stemmed bush, you may undergo a transformation during hardship. We know that recovery and self-care activities are hard but they may also provide opportunities for new perspectives and growth.

Background

Wellbeing encompasses multiple aspects of life, including physical, mental, emotional, and social health and includes the presence of positive factors like life satisfaction, resilience, meaningful relationships, and the ability to cope with stress. Health and Wellbeing Queensland's [Wellbeing Model](#) and the [National Social and Emotional Wellbeing framework](#) also incorporate a collectivist perspective that emphasizes the interconnectedness of an individual's wellbeing with their community and society (collective).

Mental Wellbeing :

One component of wellbeing that deserves greater focus in Australia is mental wellbeing. Mental wellbeing exists on a continuum, ranging from *floundering* to *flourishing*. It includes a complex interplay of emotional, psychological, social and environmental factors with broad ranging impacts including how we function in society, life satisfaction, sense of purpose and belonging, social participation, community connectedness, strong relationships and self-acceptance.

Languishing:

Languishing is a state of low mental/psychological, emotional and social wellbeing. If left unaddressed, languishing may severely impact our ability to live well, work productively, and contribute positively to community life (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2024).

Languishing usually results from loss, poor liveability, social disconnectedness and inequity. This impact is compounded when we have exhausted our personal resources: a loss of opportunities, loss of roles, changes in relationships, loss of purpose, experiencing racism or sexism, discrimination, loss of economic means, economic instability, inability to contribute, loss of autonomy, and personal agency. (Queensland Alliance for Mental Health , 2022)

The Productivity Commission Mental Health Inquiry (2020) estimated a staggering 690,000 people would likely benefit from access to psychosocial support services if they were available and as many as one million Australians are missing out (Queensland Alliance for Mental Health , 2022). Keyes (2005) stresses that only 20 percent of the population experience states of flourishing at any one time, making early intervention key to improving quality of life and economic and social participation (Queensland Alliance for Mental Health , 2022). Those who are most in psychological distress were females, younger people (aged 16-24), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people living with disadvantage.

Gaps in existing community supports that were identified in the Wellbeing First report included, difficulties with access to care and skilled workforce particularly in regional, rural and remote locations, and a need for place-based models of care, shaped through lived experience that focus on prevention and early intervention. Whilst

community programs largely addressed consumer needs of managing stressful experiences, the majority of consumers reported unmet needs finding meaning and purposed in their lives, support with re-engaging in meaningful activities, improve relationships, be physically active and eat healthier. (Queensland Alliance for Mental Health , 2022)

Flourishing:

Flourishing is a positive state of high mental wellbeing. Usually, people who experience flourishing states have a high presence of psychological, emotional and social wellbeing strategies that are embedded into their daily lives.

There has been a call to action to prevent states of languishing and improve the mental wealth of the nation (Queensland Mental Health Commission , 2024) (Queensland Alliance for Mental Health , 2022) (Health and Wellbeing Queensland, 2024). Innovative new models of care are needed which build coherence, purpose and meaning in a person's life; improve early access to care through the mindful use of technology; encourage client-led personal growth and self-efficacy through skill development and a coaching framework; and promote a sense of belonging by linking to community and peer support. Furthermore, programs should aim to offer locally responsive, trauma informed and culturally safe care that is recovery and strengths orientated and informed by lived experience. (Queensland Alliance for Mental Health , 2022)

Malleable's holistic wellbeing management:

Malleable hopes to answer this call by delivering on the following mission.

Mission:

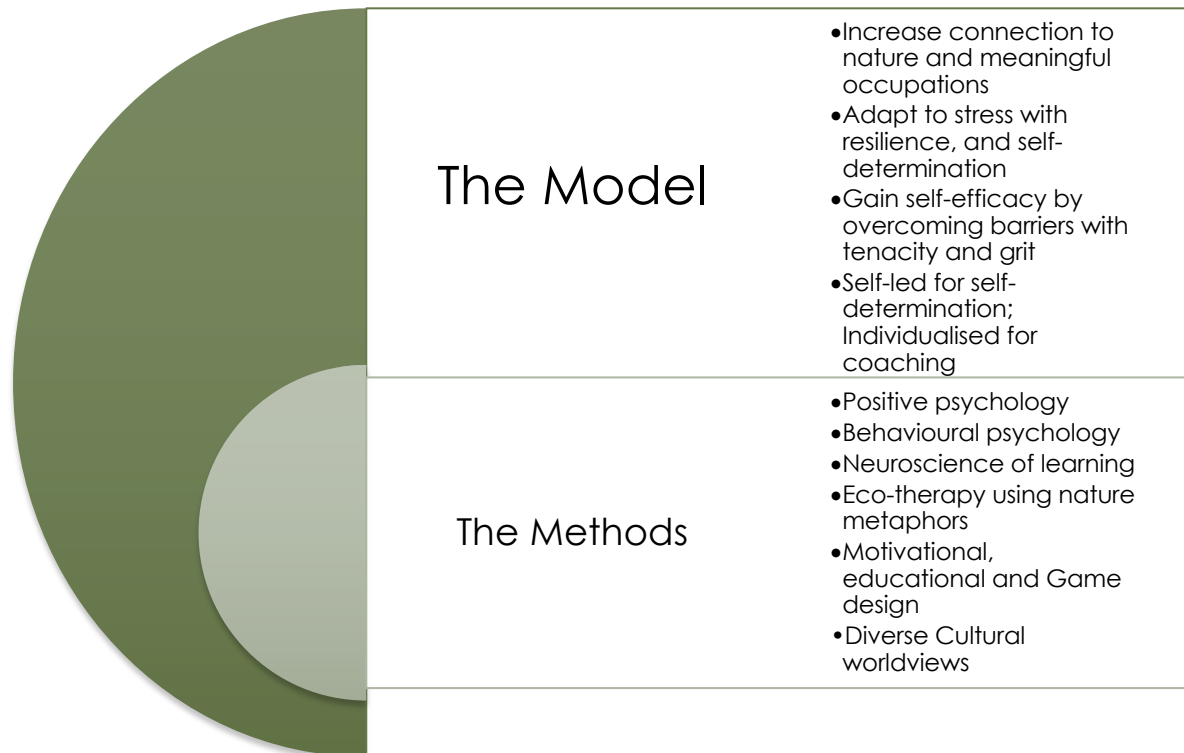
Provide individuals and community organisations with improved access to a holistic model of wellbeing and flourishing that is rooted in our local Australian context and is strengthened by lived experience, diverse cultural worldviews and a deep reverence and connection to nature.

The Model:

1. A caring model that guides you through balanced growth cycles that are accepting of where you are right now. It will start small and add value, following your pace.
2. Increases meaning in your life by reconnecting with nature as well as the people, places, and roles that are significant.
3. Reduces suffering by adapting to significant life changes with resilience, tenacity and grit. Gain self-efficacy by overcoming barriers.
4. An individualised self-determined journey that is engaging and meaningful.

Rather than narrowly focussing on impairments, this holistic model considers a person's broad participation restrictions that may be preventing you from performing your roles optimally. It extends further into motivational design principles that leverage internal

(intrinsic) motivators to help you to engage and self-manage your own journey of new growth. These principles were synthesised from the diverse, but intersecting fields of positive and behavioural psychology, eco-therapy, neuroscience, educational design and game design. All of which have been harnessed with the ultimate goal of promoting your self-determination and confidence to re-grow.



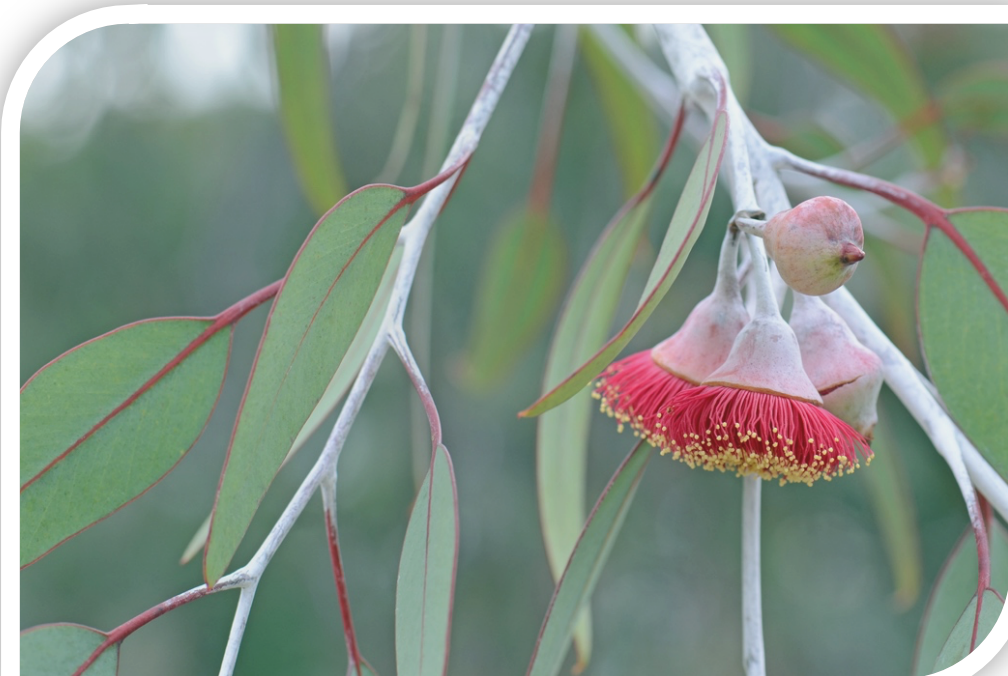
Values:

- **Kind-to-self (Accepting and Self-Compassionate care)**
#Kintsugi, #balanced, #slowgrowth, #wuwei, #seasonal, #cyclical, #focussed, #ikigai (start small), #addvalue.
- **Connected**
#Holistic, #resonance, #kanyini, #rewild, #reconnect, #belonging, #reciprocity, #naturalintelligence
- **Adaptable**
#resilient, #tenacious, #grit, #domoreofwhatworks, #mastery, #humility
- **Self-Determined, self-led care**
#engaging, #meaningful, #autonomous

Dedication

This model of care is dedicated to those who feel overwhelmed or burnt out from the chronic stress and strain of modern life. The source of strain may be from experiencing a loss (of autonomy, meaning, purpose, financial security), feeling disconnected (from supports, community and country), performing a role with unrelenting emotional demands (such as being a carer or parent), or from negotiating the blurred boundaries between work and home roles and managing the competing demands of a busy modern life. These challenges can be compounded by a social situations and disadvantage.

This model adds to the rising community of voices who stand in this ecotone working to reimagine and reconnect us to healthier way forwards for ourselves, our children, and the places we live. We are guided by Nature's Intelligence (N.I.) to solve today's problems in a sustainable way.*



**Ecotone = A transition area between two communities*

MalleeAble acknowledges the Turrbul people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which this guide was produced, and pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Additional Illustrations by Emiliana Walsh

Introduction:

How to Use This Guide:

I invite you to imagine yourself as Mallee. Mallee had experienced seasons of drought and hardship and felt as though they were languishing. They also bore scars from fire that ranged uncontrolled over its land, leaving them feeling lost, unrecognisable and with a great sense of loss. Mallee had been beaten but not broken by life's hardship.

Starting at level 1, *your task will be to regrow your tree.* You should focus on developing broad roots, and a strong trunk core before re-growing new productive branches. It's recommended that you complete the levels in order to give your tree the best foundation. Within each level, you are also able to choose your own *tracks*. Your bird guide has left you the choice of *fast-track* journeys or *walkabout tracks* for those wanting to explore more deeply. However, try not to rush through the early levels too much. Otherwise, your tree may fall over if you have not built a strong and secure foundation of roots.

As you progress through each level you will grow your tree up towards your future vision. The stages of growth are:

- 1) Apex Leader
- 2) Roots
- 3) Trunk
- 4) Tuber
- 5) Branches
- 6) Renewal and Reciprocity

Remember that just like the trunks and branches of a Mallee Gum, your journey may not follow a direct linear course (and often doesn't). It's normal to feel overwhelmed at times and need reassurance and support to follow your path. Recall, you can draw on supports that will be described in level 2: *Roots*. You may, at any time, return to lower levels of the course to reinforce your tree.

Once you progress through all 6 levels and have regrown your tree, you will be rewarded with ironbark as the highest level of resilience.

The Story

I invite you to read this short story about Mallee

Mallee had experienced seasons of drought and hardship and felt as though they were languishing. They also bore scars from fire that ranged uncontrolled over its land, leaving them feeling lost, unrecognisable and with a great sense of loss. Then, the seasons brought a great wet. The storm soaked the ashen ground with rain and Mallee noticed a new leader bud, providing hope for regeneration. It envisioned its future self that it could set about building.



Mallee lived in a grove of gums. They sought help from its Grove who were able to nourish it from their interconnected roots. The grove also offered the wisdom of Legacy Trees, who had come before and guidance from Stormbirds who roosted in its hollows for a season. Importantly, Mallee also drew on its inner character strengths, stored in its root's nodes.

Having broadened its roots, it set out to build taller with a strong trunk. It practised many self-care activities daily to maintain a strong core and set SMART goals and action plans. Inevitably, these plans encountered problems from invading pest insects which were signalled by its leaf oils. With support from Legacy Trees, Mallee was able to ward off each challenge with clever defences. This including its manna gum, which helped it slow down to notice the problem and create solutions.



The Legacy Trees and Storm Bird Guides also showed Mallee how to use its resources wisely. This restraint was a challenge, but it had to treat itself as a friend rather than a slave.

As it achieved its goals, Mallee's branches grew and became more productive, eventually setting fruit and then seeds.

Mallee regrew into a new shape, different from before. Rather than having a single straight trunk, it had regrown many trunks from its underground tuber. Each trunk was a testament to its resilience and strength to survive. Mallee saw the beauty in its new imperfect form which told the story of its journey of recovery. Mallee grew into a resilient ironbark Legacy Tree. Its bark was stronger than before and better adapted to meet the future challenges of its difficult landscape.

Key Characters:

- **Mallee Gum Tree** = you
- **Bushfire** = life altering event
- **Pest Insects** = problems / barriers to recovery
- **Legacy Trees** = Peer supports
- **Birds** = Formal supports such as therapists
- **Root Nodes and Leaf Oil Vapours** = character strengths / helpful emotions

What to Expect: Your Role

This is a self-paced, self-led program where you are in control of your own new growth. Generally speaking, people have best results when they develop a routine most days, no matter how small (*more about this in later levels*).

What to Expect: Our Role

MalleeAble is designed intentionally as a self-led model to preserve your self-determination. You may elect to source your own formal supports such as health professionals to act as your guides and wellbeing coaches. As each recovery journey is individual, this means that your team is unique to your situation. If in doubt, your GP is often a good place to start. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a highly complementary mindfulness based behavioural therapy guided by core values to achieve psychological flexibility. [ACT therapists](#) help you identify your values, and take mindful action based on these.

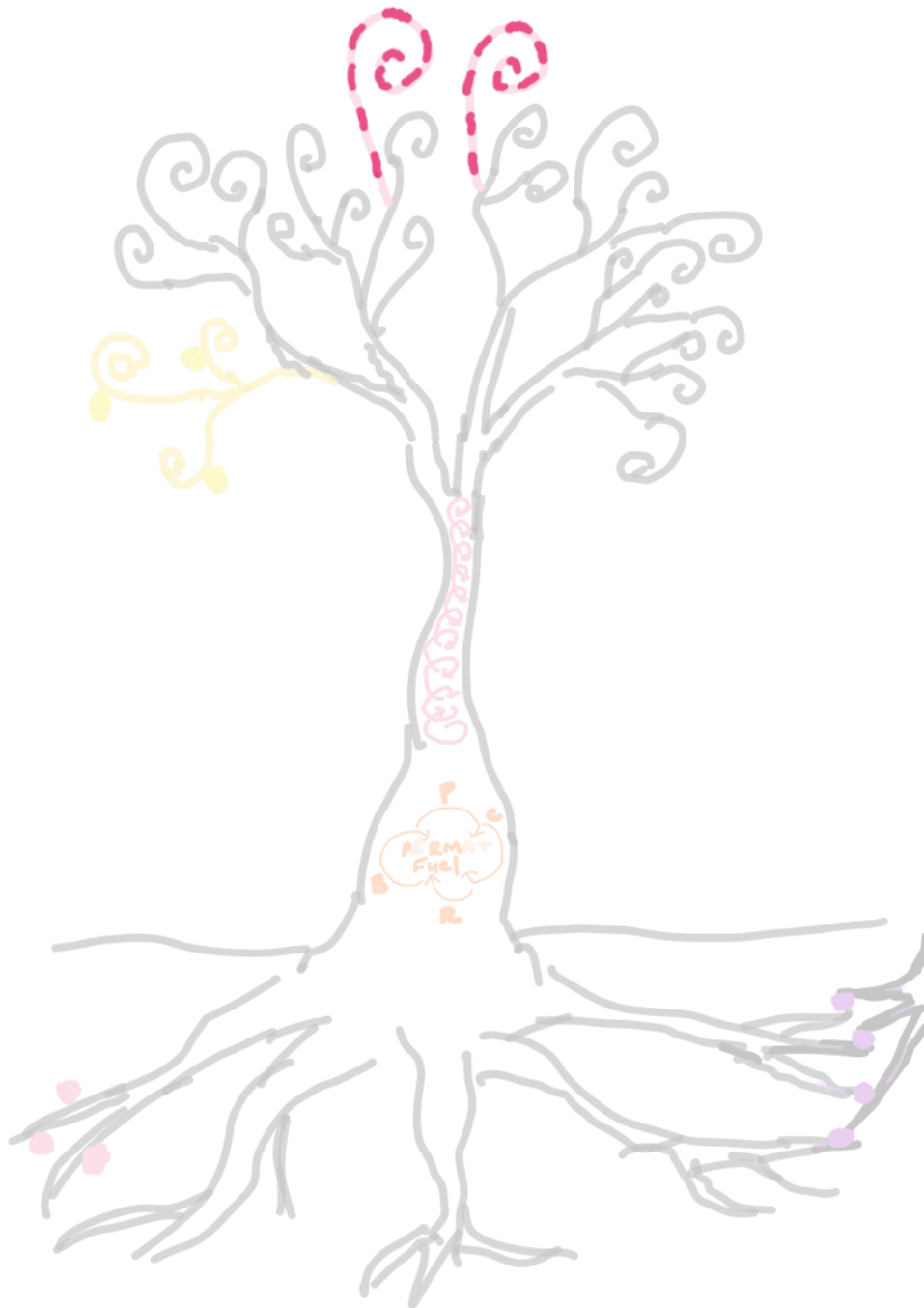


Team

How to Provide Your Feedback:

We are growing too. Thus, we always welcome both positive and constructive feedback about the program so we can continue to iterate. Please provide feedback through our [contact page](#). Thank you.

Level 1: Grow Apex Leader



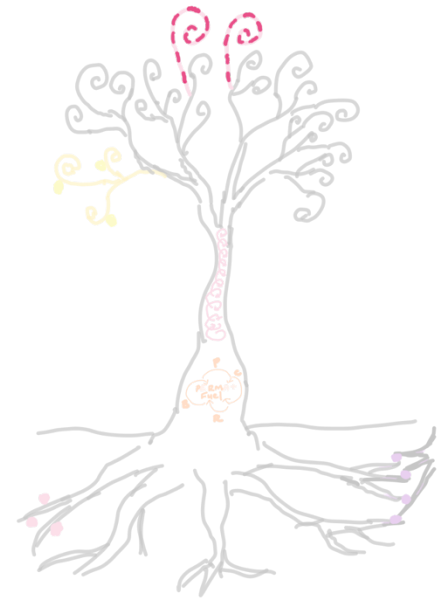
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Level 1: Grow Apex Leader

Grow Leader Apex to Build a Future Vision

Starting a journey can sometimes feel like you're lost with no clear bearings.

By envisioning your leader apex, this level aims to provide a clear path forward. It should help guide your journey with a clear vision and values. Stormbird, your guide, will also be here to help you grow your tree and build a good life.



Essential Fast-Tracks to Level-up!



- **Trace your story:** Use the journey stick to track where you've come from and why you want to change.
- **Envision your future self** and what you want to grow into
 - Guide your journey with a clear vision and values, up to your leader Apex.
 - Define your leader branches with Key values and #mantras

Optional Walkabout Tracks for Deeper Learning:

- Learn How Societal Norms May Have Influenced Your Values



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Your Story: Journey Stick Activity

You're invited to use this journey stick** to share your story of where you've come from, which will help inform where you are heading.



Your Past: Where Have You Come From?

Mark on your journey stick any significant periods of transformation from your past. This could include obstacles (mark as a burl/knot), loss, as well as adaptations (bends in your stick) you used to heal and grow (including strengths, supports and resources):

** Journey Sticks are a visual map used by Aboriginal people in Australia to chronicle a long journey

Design A Vision of Your Future-Self

Knowing and reflecting on your story can help clarify your future direction and core values, as well as identify your key strengths that you can carry into future challenges.

You are now invited to envision your future self, led by the Apex Leader (values) of your tree and with stronger, more resilient bark than before. This may serve as a reminder and motivation when confronted with future challenges in a difficult landscape.

Your Values:

The first step to defining your future vision is to define your values, which will form the Apex Leader of your tree. Values are based on what is important to you and are related to your current needs. Working towards goals that are based on your values will add direction and coherence to your plan and should be more meaningful and intrinsically motivating.

As your life direction changes over time, so may your values. Revisit your values periodically to ensure they reflect what you care about.

Activity: Assess your own values: please choose

- [Values Worksheet](#) from ACT therapy
- [Quick Look at Values](#) from ACT Therapy
- [List of core values](#)

I am rising up towards:

Mantras:

Think of **mantras** to remind you of your vision or values:

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Culture and Values:

Some cultures have placed greater value on individualism and extrinsic motivators such as status or wealth, whilst others value collectivism and intrinsic values such as relationships, personal growth and community development. The Self Determination Theory posits that not all values satisfy our universal basic needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy (in addition to our need for security, safety and physiological requirements).

Their research shows that working towards goals that relate to *intrinsic* values is more likely to result in improved wellbeing than working towards *extrinsic* values. This appears to be true across cultures and provides support for Aristotle's idea of Eudaimonia or "a good life". Sometimes these extrinsic values are referred to as 'junk values', which draws a parallel with modern junk food that doesn't provide essential nutrients.

- Q: Are my values serving my present needs, including competence, relatedness and autonomy?
- Q: Am I living consistently with my values?
- Q: What could I doing *more* of to support these values?
- Q: What could I do *less* of to support these values?



Side track: Learn How Societal Norms Influence Values

Those who are curious how your culture's societal norms and your socioeconomic status may have influenced your values, consider reading Professor Michele Gelfand's book: [Rule Makers, Rule Breakers](#).

You can also take her [Tight or Loose Quiz](#) to see how you fit on the spectrum of tight and loose culture. Tight cultures are defined as having strong social norms and little tolerance for deviance, while loose cultures have weak social norms and are highly permissive. The former are rule makers; the latter are rule breakers. See how countries differ in culture using this [country comparison tool](#). You can also view wellbeing ratings of OECD countries [here](#).

In his "[Little Book of Ikigai](#)", Ken Mogi explores a Japanese framework for finding value and meaning in life that contrasts with a typically Western model. *Ikigai* promotes humility and mastery above achievement and external recognition, improved social cohesion and relatedness, and autonomous intrinsic motivation in its five pillars including: starting small, releasing yourself, harmony and sustainability, the joy of small things, and being in the here and now.

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Summary:

The self-determination theory poses that we have 3 universal psychological needs, including competence, relatedness and autonomy. Intrinsic values are more likely to meet these needs compared with extrinsic values such as status or wealth. Once you've identified your desired values, this will guide the direction of your future goals.

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Chapter Summary Quiz:



Check your understanding

1. Which type of values are more likely to lead to greater wellbeing and a sense of "Eudaimonia" (a good life)?
 - a. Extrinsic values
 - b. Intrinsic values

2. Which are examples of intrinsic values?
 - a. Relationships
 - b. Personal growth
 - c. Community development
 - d. All of the above

3. Values are influenced by societal norms in cultures, but can be changed. True or false?
 - a. True
 - b. False

Answers: 1= b; 2=d; 3=a

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Follow These Songlines

Hope

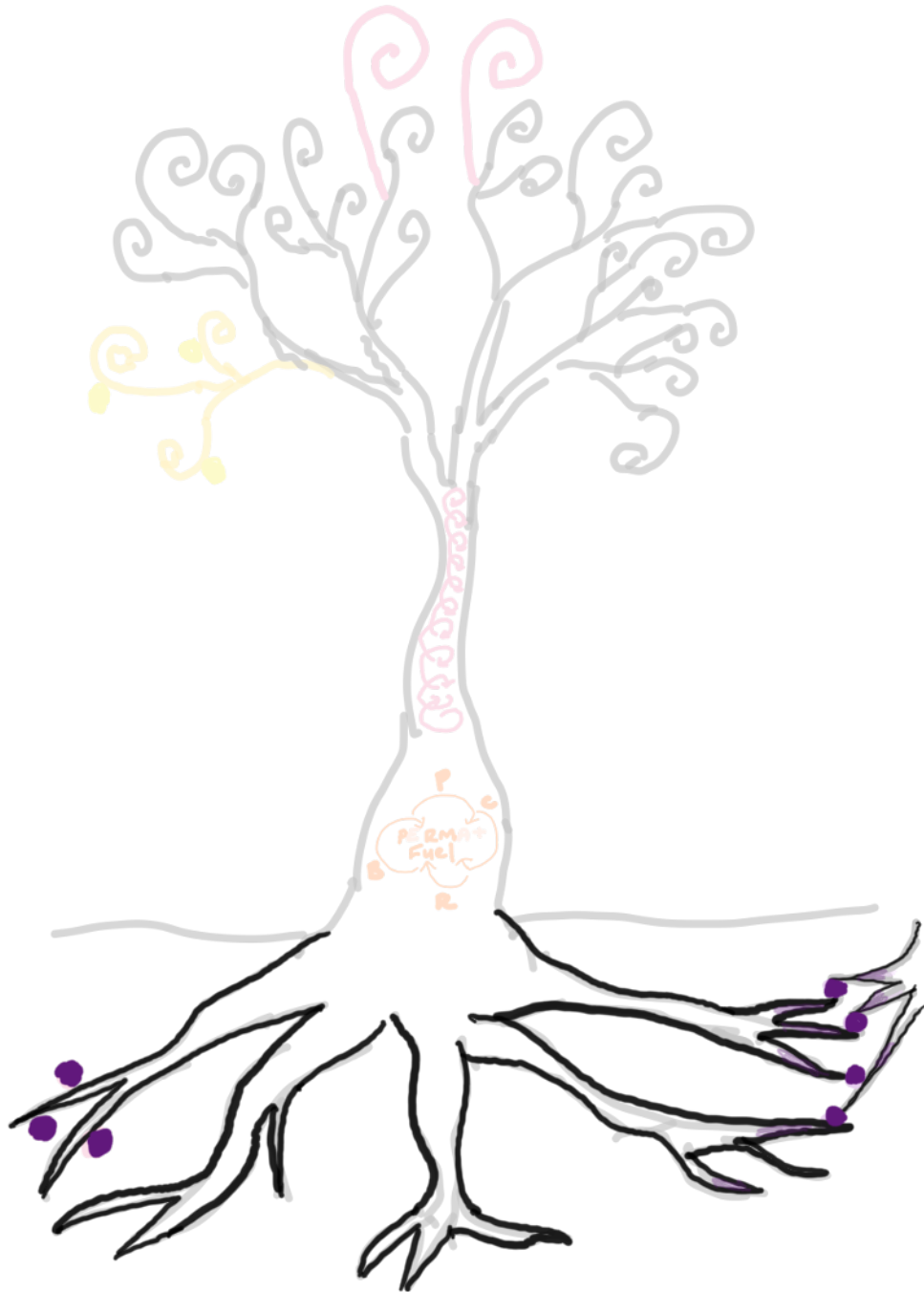
- Archie Roach – Life is Worth Living
- Kev Carmody – From Little Things Big Things Grow
- Butterfingers – Get Up Out Of The Dirt (explicit)
- Amos Lee – Bottom Of The Barrel
- Empire Of The Sun – Walking On The Dream
- George Harrison – Here Comes The Sun
- Sam Cooke or Aaron Neville – A Change is Gonna Come
- Jonas Blue Feat. Dakota Or Tracy Chapman – Fast Car
- The Cranberries – Dreams
- Gabrielle – Dreams
- Jim James – A New Life
- Travis – Sing
- Johnny Nash or Holly Cole – I can See Clearly Now
- Queen – I Want to Break Free
- The Proclaimers – I'm On My Way
- Jimmy Cliff – You Can Get It If You Really Want, Keep Your Eyes On The Sparrow
- Israel Kamakawiwo'ole – Somewhere Over the Rainbow / What A Wonderful World
- Jamie Cullum - Singin' In the Rain
- Creedence Clearwater Revival – Up Around The Bend

<https://music.apple.com/au/playlist/hope/pl.u-6xmFr0N9J>

*Please note: These songs do not represent the views or opinions of Malleeable and are designed for entertainment purposes only.

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Level 2: Roots



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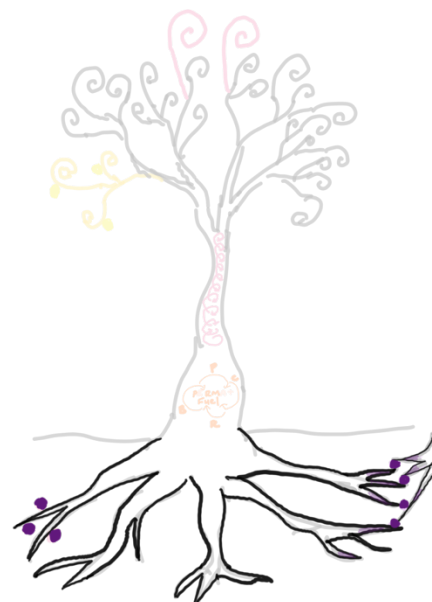
Level 2: Roots

Grow Roots to Restore and Broaden Connections

Set up a solid foundation for growth by identifying inner resources and outer supports. Power up your recovery journey with root nodes that are your inner character strengths, and connect with nature and place to feel restored.

Essential Fast-Tracks to Level-up!: 

- **Gather your grove** of supporters
 - Find a key journey sponsor (Ironbark Leader)
 - Connect with your supportive community and ours (peer support network)
- Power up your recovery journey with **character strengths**
- Develop a **stress management practice** by connecting with nature and meaningful places
- Improve rest and recovery with **sleep hygiene practices**



Optional Walkabout Side Tracks for Deeper Learning:

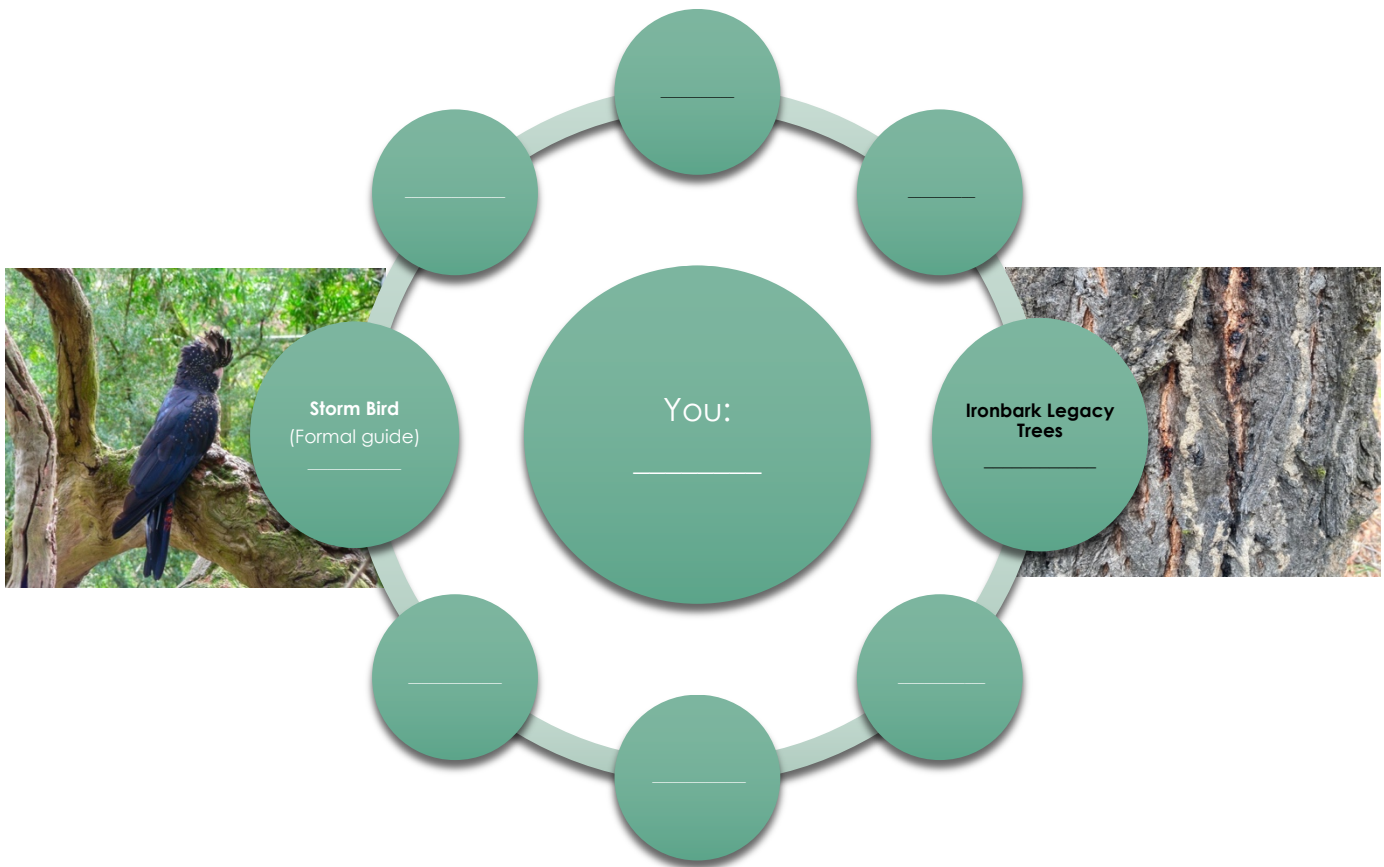


- Learn about lesser character strengths and avoid overdoing key strengths.

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Gather Your Grove:

Support Networks



Your **Stormbird Guide**: _____ (Eg. Formal supports: Therapist, coach, coordinator, GP)

Ph. _____.

Supports:

Kith and Kin

Close, quality relationships are one of the strongest determinants for health, wellbeing and resilience. Supporting each other with trust, respect, kindness and play can help foster quality social connections and increase positivity. Kinship represents social bonds of reciprocity of affection, responsibility and sharing. The charity ["Gather My Crew"](#) may be useful to organize help when you need it most.

Kithship refers to a deep intimacy and belonging with a place, including the landscape and its inhabitants. Adding nurturing places and animals to your grove can assist your resilience also.

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Other Peer Supports:

Throughout your journey, you may like to connect with your community via [external peer support forums](#), where you can solve common problems together.

You can also receive inspiration from the stories of those who've travelled a similar path before. The **Ironbark Leaders** who have previously completed this program are invited to share their journey using "Bark Scribbles" in the *Story Place*.

You can also find inspiration and resonance from the music songline playlists at the end of most levels.

Character Strengths:

Power Up Your Recovery

One of your Tree's many super powers are its root nodes. **Root nodes** represent inner character strengths (virtues) such as love, hope, gratitude as well as others. They **directly** increase your positivity and wellbeing by broadening your attention and building resources to help you stay responsive and resilient when facing challenges that lie ahead.

- 1) Discover what your top 5 signature character strengths are now and enter the results in the table below

Complete this VIA character strengths survey:(www.viacharacter.org).

1		6	
2		7	
3		8	
4		9	
5		10	

- 2) Can you recall a time when you were able to **use your strengths** to overcome a challenge? Describe how your key character strengths helped you overcome a challenge and regrow:

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3) Do these previous strengths need to be polished to use once more? Consciously using your character strengths every day is very important for building resilience.

- Later in chapter 4, you will use character strengths as part of goal setting.
- For now, try this **daily routine** to help you use your strengths: At the end of the day **when I am having dinner**, I will **think of 1 thing that went well**, and reflect on which **character strengths** I used to achieve this.



Side Track:

Mallee Tree discovered that the root nodes may also be overused, turning virtues into vices. To avoid this darker side, you should be mindful to not overfeed or misuse your strengths, and instead seek balance.

If you wish to learn more you can head to the [VIA Institute of Character](#) where you can purchase a *Total 24 Character Strengths Report*. In it, you can find ideas on how you might be overusing or underusing your strengths.

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Stress Management:

As your tree regrows you will learn to develop adaptive stress management practices to help manage this.

Nature-Based Relaxation:

Busy modern life can be stressful because it fractures our attention, and dislocates us from nurturing communities and nature, leaving us feeling overwhelmed or burnt out.

Nature-based relaxation therapies are available in various forms that often aim to restore your attention networks to their default state, and provide an accepting, non-judgemental environment that nurtures people's mental and physical wellbeing. It can also fulfil a spiritual need by providing a feeling of awe and connection with something greater than oneself.

The biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984), poses that humans have an innate tendency to connect with nature. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) have proposed that nature has a unique ability to hold our attention without boredom or effort, which they describe as *fascination*.

Therapies are graded from passive, where you passively benefit from being in nature, to active where you are directly engaging with the environment. Active engagement will be discussed in more detail under leisure (Level 4).

Passive Engagement: includes *experiencing* nature and is generally used for health promotion and/or early stages of recovery where the goal is to provide calm and security. The environments tend to be more natural. Even without the effort of an activity, you may passively receive the benefits of nature.

- **Observing nature:** Viewing the colour green and blue, and scenery that resembles open grassland / parks is especially restorative. The 19th Century Landscape Architect Frederick Olmsted most famous for the creation of Central Park wrote: ***"the enjoyment of scenery employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilises it and yet enlivens it; and thus through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system"***
 - Indoors: pot plants, pictures , screensavers, natural soundscapes/ sound guides etc.
 - Outdoors: Gardens, street plantings, parks, reserves. Revisiting the same "sit-spot" regularly can be a helpful way to notice small seasonal changes.
 - Don't forget to [look up](#) and appreciate the sky, especially during golden hours or at night.
- **Immersion in Nature: Shinrin-yoku** (Japanese practice of forest bathing)
 - Involves slowing down and engaging with all 5 senses to experience a *natural** forest. It is not a fast bushwalk, is aimless / spontaneous, and usually solitary.
 - Sitting and immersing yourself is encouraged. You may read or have tea, but no tech..
 - Your focus is outward on your surroundings, not inward so is not the same as nature-based mindfulness.

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- Forests that release volatile organic compounds (eg. Alpha-pinene and D-limonene) such as the lemon scented gums are favoured for their benefits on immunity. This tends to occur more in warmer months.
- Forests that are optimal for Shinrin yoku have gentle slopes, wide paths, biodiversity, limited air and noise pollution, preferably with a water feature, and a reasonable length.
- **Nature-based mindfulness**
 - Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity and without judgment. It may seem effortful when starting out. This effort can be reduced when completing mindfulness in a natural setting because your attention resources aren't under the same demands.
 - Moving mindfulness – eg. Yoga, walking meditation, or other rhythmic movements (such as canoeing).
- **Green exercise:** Being active in nature.
 - Bushwalking, trail running, and mountain biking are examples. The restorative benefits of exercise are usually greater when done in the outdoors, when your abilities allow.
- **Contemplating Nature: Healing / contemplation gardens and places:**

People may draw metaphorical meaning from nature such as when they observe natural seasons and cycles that are in contrast to the modern idea of perpetual growth.

- **Dadirri* (Aboriginal (Ungunmerr, 1988)):** *inner, quiet still awareness and waiting.*
Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural course – like the seasons.
- **Circular time (Aboriginal):** Seasons also offer a different way of viewing time that is cyclical rather than linear. This more complex view of time has been described as “everywhen” because it connects the past, present and future. Cyclical time can buffer feelings of failure and encourages you to try again as every season will pass. Imagery of expansive landscapes also alter our sense of time and our place in it.
- **Kintsugi (Japanese):** *embrace flawed or imperfect, and the impermanence of all things.* Fully existing within the moment, of non-attachment, of equanimity amid changing conditions.
- **Wu wei (Chinese):** *flowing or swimming with, rather than against currents.*
It promotes acceptance and adaptability to natural processes. Wu wei involves letting go of ideals that we may otherwise try to force too violently onto things; it invites us instead to respond to the true demands of situations, which tend only to be noticed when we put our own ego-driven plans aside.
 - *Eg. The grass must bend when the wind blows across it - Confucius*
 - *Eg. We are to be like the bamboo that bends in the wind or the plant that adjusts itself to the shape of a tree.*
- **Wabi sabi:** *appreciate what is simple, unpretentious and aged.*
Wabi-sabi promotes an acceptance of transience and imperfection by appreciating beauty that is imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. Wabi-sabi aesthetic may include asymmetry, roughness, simplicity, modesty, intimacy, and appreciation of the ingenuous integrity of natural objects and processes.

* Dadirri is from the Ngangikurangkurr peoples of Nauiyu – Daly River Northern Territory

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Incorporating a nature- based relaxation practice:

Both passive and active forms of nature restoration may have a place in your growth and recovery so a combination should often be considered. Here are some examples of daily routines:

- When I **notice feeling tired or stressed**, I will use **a nature break** to help me feel calm.
- At **meal and break times**, I will take a short **nature break** to promote calm.
- At **sundown**, I will **go for a walk and appreciate the sky** to relax before bed.
 - Tip: automate a shortcut on your phone to suggest a walk before sundown each day.
- When I **feel pride in my gardening**, I will **capture / savour the moment** and **share it with others**.

Although many types of nature-based relaxation are solitary, others are social. You can search to find your grove of supporters.



Side Track:

Further reading:

- [Green Care: A conceptual Framework](#) by COST – the acronym for European Cooperation in Science and Technology
- **The Journey of Recovery and Empowerment Embraced by Nature** — *Clients' Perspectives on Nature-Based Rehabilitation in Relation to the Role of the Natural Environment* by Pálsdóttir et al.
- [Shinrin- Yoku: The Art and Science of Forest Bathing](#) by Dr Qing Li
- [Dadirri](#) by Miriam Rose.
- Some other practical examples of Dadirri practice can be found in the book “[The Dreaming Path: Indigenous Thinking To Change Your Life](#)” by Paul Callaghan and Uncle Paul Gordon.
- [The Well Gardened Mind: Rediscovering Nature in the Modern World](#) by Sue Stuart-Smith
- [Plant Therapy](#) by Katie Cooper includes examples of mindfulness

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Self-compassion and Kindness

Kindness towards oneself can help buffer against stress, improve social connectedness and optimism as well as reduce anxiety, self-criticism and perfectionism.

Noticing thinking patterns that are self-critical or reinforce perfectionism, without judgement can be helpful first step towards a more self-compassionate response.

Trigger (who, what, where/when)	I think and feel... (include physical sensations you notice)	So I do... (your current reaction)	Undesirable Outcome (incl. impact on activities / roles)

When you are ready, you may challenge any automatic thinking patterns that aren't serving you:

Trigger (who, what, where/when)	I think and feel... (kind and self-compassionate; based on evidence)	So I do... (your considered response)	Desirable Outcome (incl. impact on activities / roles)
As above			

- For further information on self-compassion and how to challenge these thoughts please refer to Western Australia's [Centre for Clinical Intervention's Building Self-Compassion Modules](#)

Sleep Hygiene:

Why is sleep important:

People's sleep is chronically impacted by the demands and stimulations of modern life. Artificial light can disrupt our natural sleep cycles (eg. Blue light in screens). The brain is constantly stimulated by novel and interesting information (eg. Autoplay on shows, endless scroll of social media). Our busy lives don't allow time to work through disquieting thoughts that may intrude when the brain is allowed to rest and wander.

People are getting less sleep too. Society overvalues productivity, and places relatively little value on rest, even though regular rest will often increase productivity and creativity. People may also stay up later to seek out some time for themselves, however staying up just 1 hour later than normal can have a residual impact for days.

Sleep loss has a pervasive impact on our mental and emotional capacity. Sleep loss causes mental fatigue that impairs cognitive functioning (eg. Insight, processing speed and attention, memory, problem solving and decision making) and performance. Over longer periods, this reduced performance can then lead to reduced self efficacy (someone's perceived ability to overcome challenges). Sleep deprivation can also contribute to emotional fatigue, which is linked to motivation and mood. It reduces your capacity to manage demands, possibly leading to stress,

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impaired immunity, or weight gain. We need sleep to restore our energy and willpower for difficult tasks like self-care, practice and to build further growth. This is why it forms part of the foundation layer of *Maslow's hierarchy of human needs*.

What is Sleep Hygiene:

Sleep requirements vary for children compared with adults. Adults, including older adults usually require 7-9 hours sleep. Many of us no longer get enough sleep due to our daytime behaviours. Sleep hygiene practices are instructions on how to prepare for sleep and also what to do if you wake up overnight.

How to Improve Sleep Hygiene:

It's striking that we need to be instructed on how to sleep, which most think is unconscious and automatic! However, sleep hygiene mistakes are common!

- **Getting to sleep:**

- Difficulty getting to sleep is sometimes the result of stimulants such as nicotine or caffeine, possibly not slowing down in the hour before bed, or not having a restful bedroom environment.
- At night, it's important to set a relaxing scene in the hour before bed. Try to avoid screens, or at least adjust the screen's hue using features such as "night shift" (on iOS), which removes the blue hue that imitates daylight and tricks the body into thinking it's day. Similarly, choose warm white lights or those in the warmer end of the colour spectrum such as red or orange. Smart lights are now able to automatically transition to different hues across the day.
- Some may even embark on an afternoon "worry walk" (a form of green exercise) to help process any thoughts or emotions that might otherwise keep you awake at night.
- Using music / sounds can also help transition to bedtime. Consider the restoration playlist for a relaxing scene.
- *Within an hour of __:__(bedtime), I will go to bed, with a reminder.*

- **Staying asleep:**

- Waking up during the night can be due to the effects of alcohol, the diuretic effect of caffeinated drinks, anxiety or external factors such as children, pets, or noise.
- *When I wake up overnight feeling worried, I will write a journal to clear ruminating thoughts*
- *When I wake overnight and can't get back to sleep, I will repeat my sleep routine and try for sleep in my next sleep cycle.*

- **Napping:**

- There is sometimes no substitute for sleep. While caffeine and other stimulants may assist with some cognitive demands by disguising the feeling of fatigue and improving reaction time, they do not improve all forms of cognitive performance. If rests and pacing have not been restorative, consider a nap, so long as it's done correctly. If this fails, then tomorrow is a new day!
- It's recommended that naps occur early enough so that they don't interfere with your night time sleep. The sleep foundation also recommend keeping naps short (aka the power nap), which is usually less than 30mins, but allow some extra time to get to sleep.

- Refer to Australian sleep foundation factsheets For more information

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Summary:

To ensure a solid foundation for new growth, it is often prudent to connect with and restore our inner and outer supports and resources. Inner resources include character strengths (represented by your tree's root nodes), positive emotions and sleep. Outer resources include connections to place/nature, people and community, which is represented by the interconnectedness of your tree's roots with its surroundings.

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Chapter Summary Quiz:



Check your understanding to level up your tree of life and earn its Roots.

1. Close, quality relationships are one of the strongest determinants for health, wellbeing and resilience. True or False?
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Nature has a unique ability to hold our attention without boredom or effort, which is described as *Fascination*. In this state, our brains are likely accessing which brain network:
 - a. Central executive network
 - b. Default mode network
 - c. Salience Network
3. Nature's restorative effects are available to everyone, even if they don't have direct access to the outdoors or all 5 senses. True or false?
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. There are a variety of ways to engage in nature, ranging from *passive* to *active* engagement. Passive engagement with more natural environments is generally better suited to which stage of recovery?
 - a. Early stages of recovery where the goal is to provide calm and security, as well as health promotion.
 - b. Later stages of recovery when you are ready to introduce purpose into the occupation.
5. The Aboriginal concept of circular time provides a:
 - a. Cyclical concept of time in tune with natural cycles
 - b. Self-compassionate relationship with failure because there will usually be another season to try again.
 - c. Deeper connection to the stories, people and landscapes that are connected through the past, present and future (*everywhen*)
 - d. All of the above

Answers: 1 = a; 2 = b; 3 = a; 4 = a; 5 = d

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Follow these Songlines

Kindness (Recognise the support of your Grove)

- Archie Roach – Reach For You
- Bernard Fanning – Watch Over Me
- The Whitlams – Thank You (For Loving Me At My Worst)
- Never Seen the Rain – Tones and I
- Eric Bibb ('Taint Such A Much)
- Bob Marley – One Love / People Get Ready
- Tina Turner – It Takes Two
- The Four Tops – Reach Out, I'll Be There
- The Jackson 5 - I'll Be There
- Solomon Burke – If You Need Me
- Jackie Wilson – Your Love Keeps Lifting Me Higher and Higher
- Bruno Mars – Count on Me
- Edward Sharpe & The Magnetic Zeros – Home
- Bobby McFerrin - Don't Worry, Be Happy
- The Beatles – All You Need Is Love
- George Harrison – Give Me Love
- Travelling Wilburys – Alright
- Rod Stewart – Forever Young
- Randy Newman - You've Got a Friend In Me
- Ryan Adams – In My Time of Need
- John Gorka – Thirsty Boots
- Loudon Wainwright III & Iris DeMent – Pack Up Your Sorrows
- Chris Smither – Help Me No
- John Farnham – Help
- Bill Withers - Lean on Me
- Starley – Call on Me (Ryan Riback Remix)

<https://music.apple.com/au/playlist/love-and-kindness/pl.u-LLWjCJZoAy>

*Please note: These songs do not represent the views or opinions of MalleeAble and are designed for entertainment purposes only.

Restoration Playlist

Lounge with these downtempo tracks including lofi electronic, blues, roots, r&b, and country

<https://music.apple.com/au/playlist/restoration/pl.u-Bkvjs4Z9or>

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