

# Dancing with Monsters

CHRONIC ILLNESS as CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION

[www.dancingwithmonsters.com](http://www.dancingwithmonsters.com)



## 28 Simple Acts of Self Compassion

I have a friend who's running herself ragged. Work is crazy. She's getting ready for a trip abroad. Her car is cranky and it's winter in Minnesota. Every time I suggest that she take care of herself, she tells me why she can't. This list is for her and for all of us when we think that taking care of tasks is more important than taking care of ourselves.

When I get crazy-busy, I remind myself that ***I am not here to get things done. I am here to love.*** That includes self-love, but that phrase gets me a little squirmy because my mama taught me loving others is more important than loving myself. As a person with chronic illness, I think a lot about "self-care," but that phrase encourages me to add a bunch of exercises and diet changes to my to do list. That may not be a bad thing, but it's not the mood I want to invite. I want to ***be kind to myself as I would be kind to a dear friend.***

1. Close your eyes and envision yourself on a warm beach. The sun is shining, but not beating down. Take 10 slow deep breaths and enjoy the warmth.
2. Get some lotion and give yourself a slow wrist and hand massage. Feel the bones beneath your skin. Use sweeping motions of one hand against another at the end to brush off all your cares.
3. Listen to your favorite piece of music with the lights off and your eyes closed. Lose yourself in it.
4. Go outside and gaze at the sky. Imagine your vision reaching all the way to the next planet.
5. Soak in warm water. Put your whole body in a tub or just your hands or your feet in a bucket. Feel the water within singing to the water without.
6. Get some playdough. Play. (Model your worries and smash them flat?)
7. Eat your favorite food and pay attention while you do it.
8. Visit someplace with great smells (bath and body shop, restaurant, coffee roasting shop, the spice aisle of the natural food store) and inhale.
9. Call a friend on the phone just to talk.
10. Make a list of five things you love about you. Post them where you can see them.
11. Stretch your arms up to the sky and reach. Stretch your arms out to the edges and reach. Stretch your arms down to the earth and reach.
12. Buy some flowers from the grocery store and give one to each person you meet. Bring the last one home for yourself.
13. Blow bubbles.
14. Spend a day hunting a rainbow. Find your favorite shades of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. (It's like birdwatching. You don't have to do anything but notice them.)

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15. Play the drums. Pencils and a cereal box make a fine drum set.
16. Read poetry.
17. Write a kind letter to the child that was you.
18. Write a kind letter from the child that was you to your present self.
19. Light a candle in celebration of you.
20. Put on some fast music and dance like no one is watching.
21. Lie spread eagled on your favorite carpet, close your eyes and take 10 deep breaths.
22. Buy yourself something pretty.
23. Go for a walk while pretending you have a superpower: when you make the secret motion toward people or things, they immediately feel fantastic. (Notice how its leaves perk up when a bush is feeling fantastic?)
24. Write a list of five things for which you are grateful. Post it where you can see it.
25. Watch an animal for five minutes. (Squirrels, birds, visit a park, visit a zoo)
26. Go to bed early or sleep late.
27. Dress up for yourself.
28. Make a smiley heart and stick it on your mirror as a reminder that you are an expression of pure love.