

# Start With Self Love



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“and I said to my body. softly. ‘i want to be your friend.’  
it took a long breath. and replied, ‘i have been waiting my  
whole life for this.’”

- Nayyirah Waheed

## Introduction

Hey there, beauty!

Thanks for joining us in the Start with Self Love Challenge! We're really glad you're here, and so excited to start 2019 with you!

In a world full of media, marketing, and our own inner critic voices telling us that we are not enough, that we need to do more, that we need to be this or that, it's easy to get disconnected from ourselves. Even when we think we are taking care of ourselves and doing the right things, if those actions are motivated by an unhealthy mindset, then they are NOT healthy or helpful for us. As a population, we are grossly lacking in a vital foundation for healthy habits: self-love.

The ideas of 'self-love' and 'self-care' are sometimes misunderstood to mean 'permission to be lazy' but nothing is farther from the truth. True self-love requires full honesty and self-knowledge. It's a way to show up for ourselves, which sometimes means giving ourselves a break, but can also mean giving ourselves a loving push outside of our comfort zone or taking an action that we might not want to do but know is ultimately in our best interest.

If you know us already, then you know that we are both big believers that your food choices are a huge part of practicing self-love. Every time you eat, it is an opportunity to show up for yourself and let love lead the way.

This week, you're going to take a crash course in learning how to truly love yourself. It's the perfect foundation to kick off the new year. When your intentions or 'resolutions' have a foundation of self-love, you're setting yourself up for success.



# Guidelines

Here's how the challenge works: Each day, we give you two activities to help you build self-love and nourish your body; one that focuses on the foundational inner work, and one focusing on the food side of things. We'll be sharing about the daily challenges each day in our own Instagram stories, and we hope that you will too (don't forget to tag us @naturally\_nina\_ and @tarakemp\_ and use the hashtag #startwithselflove2019 so that we can all follow along)! It's pretty simple, but it's pretty powerful, too. You'll be learning the art of loving yourself, and that foundation will pave the way for you to achieve and maintain true health in the new year.





# Day 1

## Journaling

Journaling is an incredible tool for self-exploration. Writing gives us an opportunity to get out of our messy minds and put things down on paper, where the thoughts and ideas are usually much clearer for us to parse through. A journal is a safe space to be honest with yourself, and the writing process helps you to check in with yourself, and over time helps you to build a healthy, loving, and accepting relationship with yourself.



## Daily Challenge I

To set the stage and get a sense of your starting point, today's challenge is a journal prompt. Find a cozy writing space, grab your favourite pen, and open up your journal to a fresh page. Take a deep breath, set the intention to be fully honest with yourself as you document what thoughts and feelings arise (and to respond to all of it with compassion rather than judgement).

Journal prompts:

- Why are you joining this challenge? What inspired you to want to work on strengthening your self-love?
- How would you describe your current relationship with yourself? How do you treat yourself - with love and compassion, as you would a child or best friend? Or with impatience and constant negative critique?
- What are your biggest obstacles? What is standing in the way of you feeling at peace in your mind and body?
- What are your greatest strengths? What skills and tools can you utilize this week to stay dedicated to the challenge and show up fully for what it has to offer?

Share a photo or video in your Instagram story of your journal session. Let's support one another in this beautiful week of growth!



## Mindful Eating

Did you know that how we eat is just as important as what we eat?

Mindful eating has become a bit of a lost art in our constantly busy and stressed lifestyles, yet is such an important part of both our physical health and inner wellbeing. Not only does really taking the time to eat and enjoy our food help us reconnect with our bodies, appreciate the nourishment we are receiving and feel more satisfied after meals, but science also shows that mindful eating significantly improves our digestion, mental health, immune



## Daily Challenge 2

Your challenge today is to pick one meal to practice eating mindfully, through doing the following things:

1. Put your food on a plate or in a bowl and choose a nice space to sit down to eat. This could be a table, a picnic rug, a bench in a park...anywhere that feels right to you.
2. Make sure you have no distractions. Yep, that means putting away your phone, laptop or TV! Just be in the present moment and give your brain a break from constant stimulation and distraction. Talking to others at the table while eating is fine, and can actually enhance our enjoyment of food.
3. Slow down! Begin your meal with three deep breaths to get your body into the 'rest and digest' state. Digestion starts in the mouth, so chewing your food properly makes all the difference. Try to chew 15-20 times before swallowing each bite, and put your fork down in between bites.
4. Savour each bite. Take time to notice and appreciate all the different tastes, colours and textures of your meal. What different flavours can you notice? What does it feel like on your tongue?
5. Take a moment to appreciate your food, how it came to your plate, the effort of the Earth to grow it, the love that went into making it, and the nourishment and fuel it's giving your body to be healthy and live life to the fullest.

Don't forget to share an Instagram story of your mindful eating challenge, and you might like to share what your experience was!

And moving forward, try to keep this new practice in place to make eating an act of self love for at least one meal a day, and expanding to include all your meals when you feel ready.



## Day 2

### Meditation

Meditation has become quite popular in the past few years, and for good reason. It has been scientifically proven to have all sorts of wonderful health-promoting effects, such as reducing stress and anxiety, enhancing self-awareness, improving attention span, improving sleep quality, reducing blood pressure, and much more.

The breath is a bridge between the conscious and unconscious. We breathe all day long, even while we are sleeping, whether we are aware of it or not, but we also have the ability to take over control of this process: For example, we can decide to hold our breath or take long, deep breaths. Better yet, the rate and depth of our breathing communicates messages to our body. When we slow and deepen our breathing, it tells the body, 'I'm calm. I feel safe. I am okay.' For anyone who has dealt with feelings of stress and anxiety (aka ALL of us!), this is huge.



Sadly, many people for whom meditation could be especially helpful often feel like they're 'not cut out for it' Their mind is too busy to try and be still. But that's totally backwards. If you can relate to that feeling, meditation is FOR YOU ... we promise. We used to feel the same way. Our 'monkey minds' as they call it, are always roving. Even now, after years of meditating daily, it still wanders. And that is totally okay! The two big game-changers for us were:

1. Starting small. We had been trying to start with 10-15 minute meditation sessions. That was too big a first step for us, and left us feeling frustrated and like a failure. It's much better to start with 2-5 minute meditations. Even that small amount of time makes a difference! Doing 3 minutes every morning is better than doing 30 minutes one day a week.
2. Seeing it as a practice. Truly - in meditation, you are practicing the skills of awareness and refocusing. Contrary to what your idea of meditation might be, the point is not to sit in a blissful space of nothingness. The point is to build your conscious awareness of your inner world (the thoughts and feelings swirling around inside of you) and to be able to view them from a place of detachment. Your thoughts and feelings are separate from you, and you want to experience that separation and view it all without judgement. When you can sit with this distanced awareness, you can then practice re-focusing your attention back to your breath. Even though you can't fully control what thoughts and feelings arise, you still hold the power.

**'You're always with yourself, so you might as well enjoy the company.'**





## Daily Challenge I

Today's challenge is to do a meditation. If it's your first time, start with 2-5 minutes. If you're an experienced meditator, maybe add a few minutes to your usual time. Sit down in a comfortable position, set your timer, and close your eyes. Bring your attention to your breath, and slowly breathe in and out. If you need help focusing, you can count your breaths (in 1, out 2) up to 10 and then start back at 1 again, or use a mantra such as 'I am enough. I am free. I am calm.' (or whatever feels helpful for you to say and affirm to yourself). When you notice your mind wandering (which you definitely will, over and over again, and that's okay!), don't place any judgement on yourself or on the thoughts. Simply notice that your mind has strayed, and gently bring your attention back to the breath.

That's it. Simple, yet powerful. You've got this!

## Balance

Balance is a word that's thrown around a lot these days, especially when it comes to anything diet and health related. Personally, we've learnt that balance is something that can't be given a broad definition of what it 'should' look like, because it's very individual to each person and what makes them feel their best - in their body, mind and soul.

But one little thing we can do each day (three times a day, to be precise!), is aim to make our meals balanced. Our bodies thrive off balance, and any extremes often lead to imbalances, whether those be mental or physical, such as poor digestion, food cravings and binges, hormonal problems, nutritional deficiencies or low energy levels. That's one of the reasons fad diets never last, our bodies just weren't designed to run off extremes!

Making sure each of our meals contain a good balance of the three energy-providing macronutrients: carbohydrates, fats and protein, helps to truly nourish our bodies to feel and function at our best. Balanced energy levels, optimal hormones, feeling satisfied and satiated, and healthy digestion are some of the 'side-effects' of eating balanced meals.

'You know what's healthier than kale?

Having a good relationship with food.'





## Daily Challenge 2

Your challenge today is to create a balanced meal, ticking off the following boxes, and try to notice how it makes you feel - Are your energy levels more stable? Do you feel more satisfied? Did you enjoy your meal?

1. Carbohydrates - Provide long-lasting energy for our cells to function, move, think, work, breathe, live! Carbs are also packed with fibre, super important for gut health. Here, think potato, sweet potato, quinoa, rice, amaranth, whole wheat pasta, oats, millet, buckwheat...
2. Protein - Helps build and maintain muscle tissue, but also our DNA. It's important for our immune system, hormones, skin, hair, bones and so much more. You might pick beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu or tempeh...
3. Fats - Super important for females especially in balancing hormones, but also our brain function, digestion, hair and skin, and absorbing all the nutrients from our food. Great sources are avocado, nuts, seeds, nut butters, tahini, coconut...

Now add your choice of veggies and condiments, and enjoy! You might like to try one of the recipes in this Ebook, we've included some personal faves. Don't forget to share your balanced meal in your Instagram stories!



# Day 3

## Nature Therapy

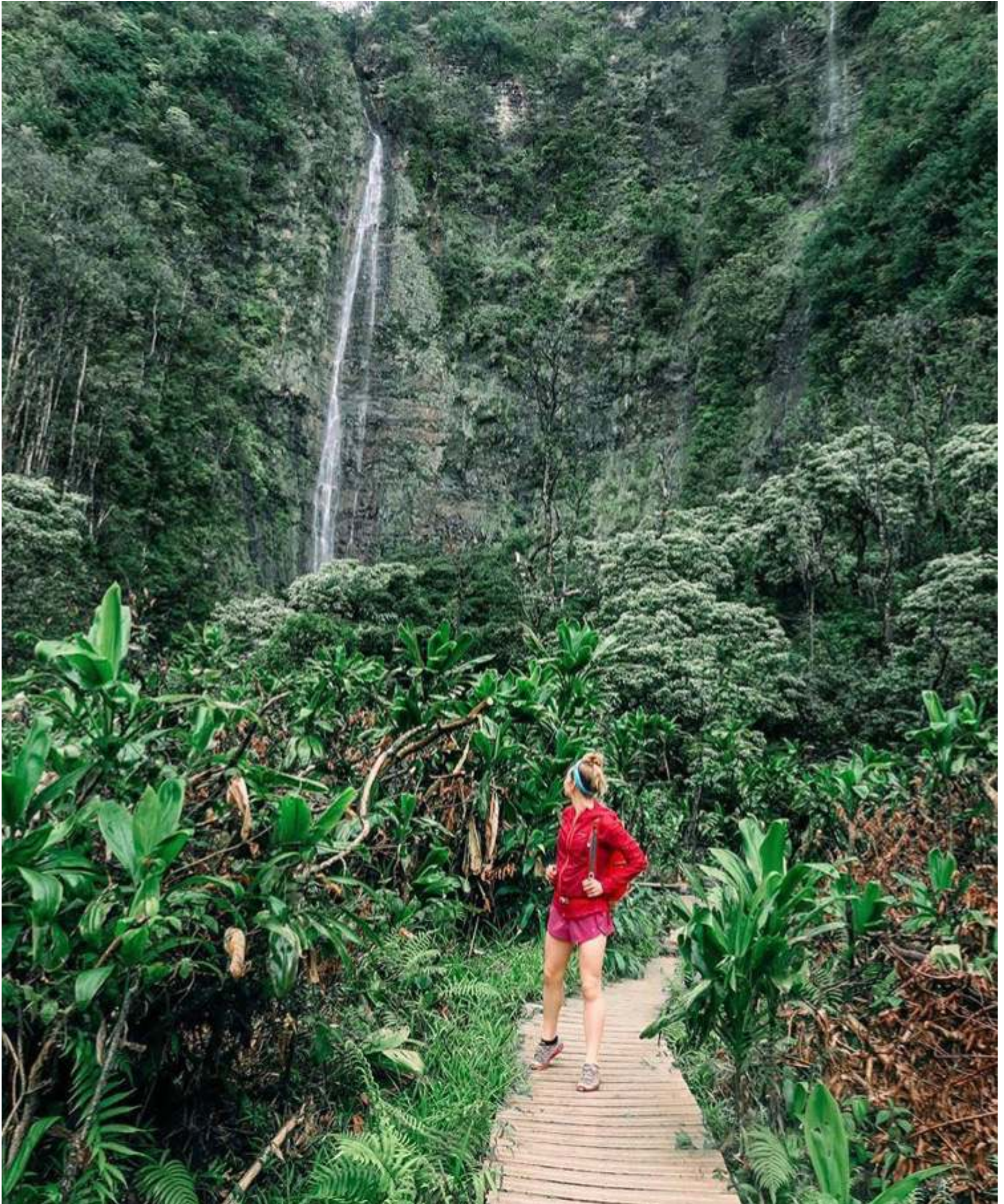
Nature is a reminder of our place in the world. It puts things in perspective. It is a way to connect with something greater than ourselves.

As a collective first world society, we spend far too many hours indoors, away from the open air, fresh water, and green spaces. Spending time in nature is scientifically proven to have beneficial physiological effects such as inducing a state of relaxation and strengthening the immune system. Our bodies were built to be in nature, and it's as if reconnecting with the natural world is a sigh of relief, a peaceful exhale.

In our day-to-day busy lives, it is easy to get caught up in deadlines, grades, 'shoulds' what we think people think about us, and all of the anxieties and frustrations that come along with these things. Spending time outside immersed in nature is a literal 'breath of fresh air'. It allows us to let all of these distractions fall away so that we can see the ultimate truths of what matters to us.

Nature also puts us in the way of beauty. Seeing the sun setting over the ocean, swimming under a waterfall, or climbing to the top of a mountain usually hits us with a feeling of awe; a sense of wonder about the world beyond what we can truly fathom. A moment of awe is yet another route of getting out of our heads. Because mental illness on any end of the spectrum is founded in an inner-focus, this is a helpful healing technique. It is totally counter to any self-focused rumination, because it requires your attention to be focused outward, on the world at large. One study showed that feeling awe is associated with greater altruism and compassion, due to this very effect of shifting the focus outward.







It might sound counterintuitive to practice self love by shifting the focus away from the self, but we promise it all relates. Getting out into nature reminds you of what is truly important to you. It's an act of self care because it helps you to separate from all of the distractions that hold you back from feeling a sense of peace and calm.

Whether you are worried about pleasing your parents, having a flatter stomach, paying off your student loans, or whatever brings a feeling of knotted tension to your body, spending time in nature reminds you that ultimately, all of these things are just details that aren't worth stressing over. We are part of something so much greater (and so much simpler) than this, automatically, always. We never have to do anything or be anything in particular to make that true. We are always enough. And we are part of a



## Daily Challenge I

Your challenge for today is to spend some time in nature. Go for a walk through your local park, ride your bike to work or class, hike with a few friends, or just sit on your porch with a cup of tea and watch the birds go about their business. It can be 10 minutes or 2 hours - just do it. And while you're outside, try to feel your connection to this greater whole. Look for beauty. Make room for awe. Let the distractions fall away so that the peace can come through.

## Eat The Rainbow

The more colour in your meals, the better! Not only does it make them look pretty (and pretty food always tastes better!), but eating a variety of different colours ensures you are getting a range of all of the different vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that our bodies need to thrive.

Purple foods such as purple cabbage, red onion, blueberries and purple carrots, for example, are rich in the antioxidants anthocyanins, which also feed the good bacteria in our gut and strengthen our immune system.

Carrots, pumpkin, orange bell peppers, mango, papaya and other orange foods are high in carotenoids, such as beta-carotene. These have cancer-preventing properties and are known for improving eyesight!

Even cauliflower, which is white, is packed full of amazing nutrients such as vitamin C, vitamin K and a special group of antioxidants called glucosinolates, which are strongly linked to protection from cancer and sulforaphanes, which improve our liver detoxification.

### Daily Challenge 2

Your challenge for today is to build a beautiful, vibrant rainbow meal! Include at least 5 different colours in your meal (remember, the more the better!), and share it with us in your Instagram stories. Check out the recipe section of this Ebook for some inspiration!





‘Health is about more than what you’re eating. It’s what you’re thinking, saying, and believing.’



# Day 4

## Celebrate Your Body

We're all guilty of it. We look in the mirror and see something we wish were different. We look at photos of someone else and instantly make a comparison to ourselves. Well, today is the day that you're going to start shifting those patterns and building new habits.

Some people can't relate to the idea of 'loving' their body. We understand that, but please hear us out. When we talk about loving your body, we are not talking about loving what your body looks like. We are talking about loving your body, period. You don't love your best friend or your little sister for her appearance. You love them just because. True love does not have boxes that need to be checked in order for it to be there - it simply IS. What we are talking about when we discuss loving your body is radical, unconditional love.



You want to build a relationship with your body that is healthy and supportive. Your body is always doing its very best for you, working around the clock to keep you alive and as healthy as possible. It is time for you to join forces and work WITH your body in its efforts. You are a team - start acting like one.

See yourself as a caretaker for your body. Treat it with respect. Honour its needs. Act with its best interest at heart.

Celebrate all that it does for you, and feel the gratitude.



## Daily Challenge I

Today's challenge is to take steps toward making amends in your relationship with your body. Do one (or all!) of the options listed below:

- Body appreciation meditation: Set a timer for 5 minutes. Sit or lay in a comfortable position, and close your eyes. Start at the top of your head and place your hands on your hair. Express love and appreciation for it. Move to your face. Express love and appreciation for it. Then your arms, your chest, your stomach, and down the rest of your body, stopping to cherish each part. Think of what that piece of your body does for you each day, and express gratitude for it. Say thank you. Say I love you.
- Write a letter to your body: Apologize for the times when you have treated it poorly or acted against it. Affirm your love and let it know how you are going to change your relationship and your actions moving forward.
- Building body mindfulness: As you go about your day, pay attention to what your body does for you. Whether it is walking to class, dancing around your bedroom, sitting next to a friend, tasting the food that you eat, or feeling the embrace of a hug, take notice. Acknowledge all of the ways that having a body serves you (all of which have nothing to do with the shape or size of your body and how you look). Send a little love and appreciation for the beauty of it all. What a gift to be alive in this world, and to have an amazing, strong, resilient vessel to live in while you're here!

## Gut Health

What comes to your mind when someone mentions gut health? Is it digestion?

Well, our gut actually is responsible for so much more than just digestion.

Nutrient absorption, skin health, our immune system and most of all, our mental health, are all greatly influenced by the health of our gut and the hundreds of thousands of bacteria that live there (called our microbiome!).

In fact, the gut is often referred to as 'the second brain', and 90% of the so-called feel-good hormone serotonin is produced in the gut! Have you ever noticed that when you are stressed or anxious, your digestion is off? You might be more bloated than usual, experience appetite changes, cramps, or toilet troubles...that's the gut-brain connection. Think back to Day 1 and our lesson on mindful eating.

To keep the bacteria living in our gut healthy and happy, we have to nourish them. And their absolute favourite food is fibre! Fibre is a prebiotic food, meaning it feeds the good bacteria in our gut and it's only found in plant foods. Most people eating a standard diet aren't eating anywhere near enough of it. Studies show that the single most beneficial thing we can do for our gut health is eating a large variety of different plant foods - 40 different plant foods a week to be precise! Now, this may seem like a lot but if you eat a varied diet, with plenty of veggies, fruits, legumes, whole grains, nuts, seeds and spices, you will quite easily get there.

‘Let food be thy medicine, and medicine  
be thy food.’

- Hippocrates



Probiotics are found in fermented foods, which are live beneficial bacteria that have a positive effect on our microbiome, therefore great for digestion and promoting a strong immune system, and are also a really easy and delicious addition to meals!



## Daily Challenge 2

Your challenge for today is to give your gut some loving! Choose a probiotic-rich food to add to one of your meals or snacks, such as sauerkraut, coconut yoghurt (or any other plant based yoghurt), apple cider vinegar, kombucha or tempeh, and share it in your Instagram stories!

# Day 5

## Cultivate Your Community

Building self love is a very personal process. However, we are also naturally social beings, and the relationships that we have play a vital role in this process in a variety of ways.

The people that you surround yourself with have a big influence on you. This is true both for the people you connect with online and those you know spend time with in person. They affect the messages that you receive and by doing so either support or hinder your mental health.

You want to cultivate close relationships with people who see your worth and love you unconditionally - the way you want to view and love yourself. Seeing yourself through their eyes should be a reminder of how beautiful and special you are, and a reminder of how to treat and speak to yourself. Choose friends that inspire you, and who foster healthy habits in their own lives. Spend time with the people who understand boundaries and encourage you to set yours. Hold close the friends who prioritize their own self-care and provide an example of how to be their own caretaker. Find people dedicated to their own growth, and support one another in your individual healing journeys.

In addition, pay attention to the media messages that you let into your awareness - what you watch, what you read, what you see. Where you can, exert your control over what you include in your daily news feed through social media sources such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter. Be honest with yourself about what is not helpful. It's okay to not be ready to see models or fitness inspiration if it makes you feel bad about yourself right now. These feelings can point you toward where you have inner work yet to do, but there's no need to make it harder for yourself in the process. Part of self-care is removing the negative influences in your life that hinder you from healing and living from a place of self-love.





‘Create healthy habits, not restrictions.’



## Daily Challenge I

Today's challenge has two parts:

- Part 1: Pick your people. Take a moment to think about which people in your life are inspiring, loving, and supportive to you and your wellbeing. Also note which people push your boundaries, make you feel less than, or take part in activities or conversations that go against the lifestyle you are trying to lead (i.e. the people who make comments about the parts of their bodies they dislike, the people who put you down for your healthy lifestyle choices, etc). Make a list of the people you can count on to be compassionate and non-judgemental, who seek to understand, who inspire you, who see you in your best light. Spend time with one of these people today, or make plans to see them sometime soon. Honour and cherish these sacred relationships - including these people in your life is a method of giving yourself the love you deserve.
- Part 2: Do a clean sweep of your social media feeds. Set aside half an hour to go through the list of people that you follow on Instagram, and be honest with yourself about which accounts bring positive messages into your life that build you up and help you to grow, and which accounts trigger you to make negative comparisons, engage in unhealthy habits, or feel badly about yourself. Unfollow anyone that follows into the latter category. These people do not need to be bad people. They may be wonderful humans and be perfectly healthy in their eating habits, exercise regimens, body shape/size, or other lifestyle choices such as travel, job, etc. The only thing that matters here is how it makes YOU feel.



## Try Something New

If you're anything like us, then you probably like sticking to the same foods most days and weeks. Because they're delicious, easy and familiar, so why change anything, right?

There's absolutely nothing wrong with sticking to the same foods most days, as long as you're enjoying them and still getting enough variety to meet your nutritional needs, but it's always great to switch things up and try something new! It keeps things exciting and interesting, ensures you don't get bored, and stimulates the senses in a new way (as well as adding to your goal of 40 different plant foods each week like we talked about on Day 3!). Plus who knows, you might even find a new favourite food!!

Think about the foods you eat on a regular basis, compared to what's available from your local grocery store or farmer's market. We bet there's a whole lot you haven't tried....maybe an exotic fruit like papaya, lychee or mangosteen...maybe a less common vegetable like kohlrabi, turnip, bitter melon or spaghetti squash...maybe olives or artichokes or a different grain, nut or bean...maybe a different herb or spice. There's so many wonderful edible plants out there to discover!!

### Daily Challenge 2

For today's challenge, try one food that you've never tried before! It's totally up to you what you choose and how you eat/cook it. Go down to your local store or market and pick something you've never eaten. And don't forget to share your new food experience with us on your Instagram stories - will it become a new staple for you?





## Day 6

### Confront The Inner Critic

There's this strange idea that we need to be our own biggest critic, and that this is helpful. This is yet another lie we have been believing. Our inner critic does not make us stronger or better. S/he holds us back and keeps us small.

Although it may be foreign to you, you also have an inner loving voice. This voice is always speaking with compassion. It seeks to understand. It stands up for us when the inner critic is tearing us down. But you need to give it room to speak. You need to give it a chance to say what it has to say.

Quite often, we don't even realize just how much the inner critic has control of the microphone in our minds. Bringing awareness to the mental conversation going on in our minds is the first step in making a shift to a different pattern.





## Daily Challenge 1

Today's challenge is to pay attention to that internal conversation and start connecting to your inner loving voice. As you go throughout the day, take notice when you find yourself getting caught up in negative self-reflection - telling yourself that you are not good enough, that something is wrong with you, that you 'should' be different, etc. Take a moment to note what the inner critic is saying, and then make room for the inner loving voice to have a turn to speak. If it helps, you can use your journal to write out what each voice has to say.

\*If you're having trouble connecting with your inner loving voice, that's okay. You can start by confronting the inner critic with the simple phrase, 'What if that's not true?' - this opens up the space for another story to be considered.





## Rule Reflection

We want you to take an honest moment to think about your relationship with food, and how you feel about food. Just as important as what you eat is why you do so - your intention behind your choices. Eating should be a form of self-love, not self-harm.

Constantly being surrounded by a culture that's so hyper-focused on fad diets, weight loss, detoxes, 6-pack abs and superfoods, it can be really really hard not to fall into a bad place with food. Feeling like we should be following certain rules like they're a religion. Feeling like we need to count calories, label our food choices, not eat this or that at any costs and definitely not break any of those rules if we want to stay healthy and keep a flat tummy. Right?

Wrong. It breaks our hearts to see the number of girls (and guys), whose minds are consumed with food rules and strict diet regimes and fears. We both know how lost you can feel when everyone seems to preach something different and none of it seems to work for you like it does for them. Trust us, we've been there. Confined in the prison of our own food rules, not able to enjoy ourselves or relax around food, overthinking every piece of food that passed our lips and thinking about food 24/7. Don't even mention breaking any of those rules or eating out at a restaurant, the equivalent of a worst nightmare!

The truth is, healthy eating can become extremely unhealthy when it leads to strict rules, obsessions, stress and anxiety around food. No food in the entire world damages the body, mind and soul anywhere near as much as an unhealthy relationship with food does. Unnecessary strict food rules that come from a place of negativity and self deprivation don't do anything for us in the long run...they lead to disordered eating, social isolation, stress, anxiety, feeling like a failure, possible deficiencies and health problems, and binge eating.





Creating guidelines around what we eat can be healthy. Nourishing your body with minimally processed, primarily plant foods is a form of self-care to heal or prevent disease and maintain a state of health. It's a way to show up for your body - to help it help you. It is also healthy to eat in alignment with your needs and your personal value system. To against what you believe in just to please others is to take a step away from yourself.

Sometimes the best thing we can do to take care of ourselves is to draw some lines. But other times, the best thing we can do is take an eraser and make those lines dotted, or erase them entirely. This takes honest reflection - don't make excuses or stand in denial of where you are with food right now. Only YOU can know your truth. We're trusting you to make the assessment.

It's really important to take a step back and reflect on your relationship with food and any food rules that may exist in your head every so often and ask yourself the following questions:

- How do I feel about the food I eat (or don't eat) and how does it make me feel?
- Are my food habits and 'rules' bringing me to a place of better physical and mental health? Or are they doing the opposite?
- Do they exist for a medical reason (such as a diagnosed allergy or health condition)? Or did you invent them?
- Did you read about them on social media or on a blog and decide to adopt them without really knowing if they are evidence-based or apply to you?
- Does the way I eat and the way I think about the food I eat support and nourish my body, mind and soul?
- Is this food choice an act of self deprivation or neglect, or is it an act of self love and self care?

If your food choices and 'rules' aren't bringing you towards a place of better physical and mental health (and yes, that includes nourishing your soul, especially if you come from a place of a negative relationship with food!), then they aren't serving you in any way, and your life will be so much more free without them. You will be healthier without them. Body, mind and soul. Promise.



## Daily Challenge 2

So today's badass challenge is to rethink your food rules and make yourself a true SELF LOVE meal! It might be tackling a food that you've forbidden yourself to eat for a long time, or it might be making a big wholesome nourishing meal that will help your body truly function at its best. Whatever your body, mind and soul needs in this moment. And make sure you share your step towards food freedom with us in your Instagram stories, because we are there with you every step of the way. You've got this, beautiful!



# Day 7

## Journaling

We're rounding out the week here with another journaling session. After spending the past seven days confronting your relationship with yourself and your relationship with food, it's time to reflect on the experience.

Take some time today to sit down with your journal and write out your responses to the following prompts:

- What insights came to you this week as you went through the daily challenges? What did you notice about yourself? Where did you thrive, and where did you find yourself struggling?
- What did you find particularly helpful in deepening your connection with yourself and coming into a healthy, loving relationship with yourself and with food?
- What activities do you want to continue including in your life moving forward? What intentions do you have to further build your foundation of self-love in 2019?

## Daily Challenge I

Write out your new year's intentions, and write 3-5 affirmations to go along with them. Tell yourself what you intend to do, and then affirm for yourself that you are worthy and capable of all of it. You are.

## Treat Yourself

I couldn't think of a better way to finish up our self love challenge with some extra love for the body, mind and soul in the form a delicious treat!

Let's talk about treats for a minute. We're really not a fan of the word 'treat', because somehow society has made this word into something that needs to be earned or justified, a 'cheat meal' or a 'reward' food. Something to feel guilty over. And that is totally not okay in my opinion.

First of all, food never has to be earned or justified. It is a basic human right and necessity. Like breathing air, drinking water or going to the toilet. No matter what that food is. And you should never ever feel guilty for eating any food (unless you've stolen it from someone else!).

Calling foods 'cheat meals' or 'sometimes foods' initiates a bad relationship with food. It's more rules. It's restriction. It increases feelings of guilty, unworthiness and shame, and it increases our likelihood to binge on these at some point in time (and no, that's not you failing, that's biological. Restriction of certain foods makes our brains focus on these foods, especially if you're not eating enough in the first place. It's a survival mechanism to keep you alive. Pretty amazing actually!).

'Another persons' beauty is not the  
absence of your own'



Food is so much more than just nutrition. It's also pleasure, enjoyment, memories and experiences with loved ones...and if you eat a wholesome diet full of fruit and veggies and all that good stuff for the majority of the time, including some chocolate and other fun foods just because they're delicious is perfectly healthy. Yes, it is healthy! For the body, for the mind, and for the soul.

## Daily Challenge 2

The final challenge is to treat yourself to a food or meal which you love! Pick your favourite, or try a new one! We've picked a few of our personal favourites to share with you that you might like to choose, or you can choose a different recipe to make. Or you could take yourself out to a delicious meal at your favourite cafe, a few squares of your favourite choc, your favourite fruit that you usually don't buy...or anything else you fancy. And don't forget to share it with us on you Instagram stories!



# Recipes





# Green Glow Smoothie

## Ingredients:

- A big handful of baby spinach (or any other greens of your choice)
- 1/2 cup coconut water
- 1 large frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen mango
- A few leaves fresh mint
- 1 tsp spirulina
- 1 tbsp hemp seeds
- (optional) 2 tbsp vanilla or coconut flavoured plant-based protein powder
- kiwi fruit, banana, granola or other toppings of your choice

## Method:

1. First, blend the baby spinach and coconut water in a blender until no green chunks are left
2. Now add in the banana, mango, mint, spirulina, hemp seeds and protein powder (if using)
3. Blend again until smooth and creamy
4. Pour into a jar and add your toppings on top
5. Enjoy!!

## Notes:

- Instead of coconut water, any type of plant milk could also be used







‘You gotta nourish to flourish.’



# Mango Macadamia Nicecream

## Ingredients:

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup frozen mango
- 1/2 cup plant milk or coconut water
- 2 tbsp vanilla plant based protein powder (optional)
- 1 nectarine
- Handful of fresh strawberries
- 1 tbsp macadamia nuts
- 1 tbsp hemp seeds

## Method:

1. Blend frozen fruit, protein and plant milk or coconut water until super smooth and creamy, You may have to stop to scrape down the edges.
2. Spoon into a bowl.
3. Top with chopped fruit, hemp seeds and macadamia nuts.



# Choc Brownie Hummus

## Recipes

### Ingredients:

- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1/3 cup pitted dates
- 2 tbsp cacao powder
- 2 tbsp nut butter of your choice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Dash of almond milk
- 1 tbsp cacao nibs

### Method:

1. Soak dates in warm water for 10 minutes to soften, then drain
2. Peel the chickpeas by pinching them with two fingers so the skin pops off. This step is optional, but it sure makes the hummus so much creamier!
3. Blend chickpeas, dates, cacao, nut butter, vanilla and almond milk until smooth
4. Spoon into a bowl and sprinkle with cacao nibs
5. Serve spread on toast or rice cakes with banana slices or fresh berries, as a dip for sliced apple or simply by the spoonful!

### Notes:

- Store in an air-tight glass jar or container in the fridge for up to 5 days





# Mediterranean Pizza

## Ingredients:

- 1 can mixed beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp dried Italian herbs
- 2 tsp psyllium husk (optional, see Notes)
- Toppings of your choice - some of my favourites are tomato sauce as a base, with spring onion, capsicum, tomato, mushrooms, cashew cheese, and fresh basil of course!

## Method:

1. Preheat oven to 220 degrees Celsius and line a tray with baking paper.
2. In a blender or food processor, puree the beans, garlic, Italian herbs and psyllium husk, then spread bean mix in a circular shape on the baking paper (about 0.5cm thick) to form the base.
3. Bake in the oven for 10 minutes until firm and golden, then gently slice a knife or spatula underneath to loosen the base from the baking paper and flip over. Bake for another 5 minutes.
4. Remove base from oven again and spread with tomato paste, then layer on all your toppings of choice!
5. Bake for another 10 minutes until golden on top. Top with fresh basil, slice and enjoy!

## Notes:

- Psyllium husk helps to hold the base together so it doesn't crumble as much. If you don't have psyllium husk you could also use flaxseed meal or chickpea flour!





# Spicy Lentil Falafel

## Ingredients:

- 200g dry red lentils
- 1/2 onion
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 heaped tbsp psyllium husk
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- black pepper and sea salt, to taste
- 1 handful fresh coriander

## Method:

1. Sauté the onion in a pan. Once soft, add in the red lentils and 2 cups of water
2. Cook, stirring until the lentils are soft. Then keep cooking 10-15 minutes until the lentils absorb all the water and are soft and mushy.
3. Add the lentil mix spices and baking powder into a food processor and blend until smooth
4. Stir in the psyllium husks and the roughly chopped coriander, then allow to stand 15 minutes while the mixture thickens
5. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees Celsius and line a tray with baking paper
6. Form the mixture into falafel patties and place on the baking tray, at least 2cm apart
7. Bake 20-30 minutes until firm and golden. Enjoy!



# Loaded Potato Nachos

## Ingredients:

- 1-2 medium sweet potato
- 1 can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- Pinch of chilli powder
- 1 small cucumber
- 1 tomato
- 1/4 purple cabbage
- Handful of fresh coriander
- 1 lime
- Fresh greens
- 1 avocado

## Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees Celsius and line a tray with baking paper. Thinly slice sweet potato, place on tray and bake for 20-30 minutes until golden and cooked through.
2. Add beans and spices to food processor and puree until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Dice tomato and cucumber, then toss with sliced coriander and lime juice to make a salsa.
4. Mash avocado, thinly slice cabbage and shred greens.
5. To assemble nachos, layer sweet potato 'chips' with refried beans, raw salsa, cabbage and greens, then top with mashed avo. Enjoy!







# Chickpea Tuna Sushi

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup chickpeas
- 2 tbsp hummus (or tahini)
- 2 tbsp capers, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup gherkin, diced
- 2 tbsp fresh chives, finely chopped
- black pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp dijon mustard
- 1-2 tbsp lemon juice
- brown or sushi rice, cooked
- cucumber
- nori sheets

## Method:

1. Mash chickpeas with a fork so there are no whole chickpeas left and the mixture resembles a canned tuna consistency
2. Stir in the hummus (or tahini), dijon mustard, capers, chives, gherkins, black pepper and lemon juice and mix until well combined and the mixture begins to stick together. You may have to add a splash of water if it's too dry!
3. Spread rice out evenly onto your nori sheets, then add a layer of chickpea filling and cucumber sticks down the middle
4. Roll up your sushi tightly, slice up and serve with all your favourite sushi condiments!





# Quinoa Roast Pumpkin Salad

## Ingredients:

- 1 cup (160g) dry quinoa
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 600g pumpkin, diced with skin on
- 2-3 stalks spring onion, sliced
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 3 tbsp Balsamic vinegar
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- Large handful of rocket
- Salt and pepper, to taste

## Method:

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees Celsius and place pumpkin on a baking sheet. Bake for about 30 minutes or until soft and caramelised.
2. Cook quinoa and allow to cool.
3. Mix together lime juice, garlic powder, Dijon mustard and balsamic vinegar to make the dressing.
4. Combine quinoa, roasted pumpkin, rocket, chickpeas and spring onion.
5. Stir through dressing and season with salt and pepper.



# Raw Turkish Delight Slice

## Ingredients:

### Base:

- 1 cup raw buckwheat (or rolled oats)
- 1 cup dates, pitted
- 1 tbsp coconut flour
- 2 tbsp cacao powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

### Filling:

- 1/2 cup pitted dates
- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- 1 tsp rosewater extract

### Topping:

- 1.5 tbsp cacao powder
- 1/2 tbsp coconut butter
- 2.5 tbsp water

## Method:

1. Soak the dates in warm water for 10 minutes to soften
2. Add the buckwheat, oats, coconut flour and cacao into a blender or food processor and pulse until a coarse flour forms
3. Now add in the vanilla and 2/3 of the dates, processing until a dough forms
4. Press the base mixture firmly and evenly into a baking paper lined brownie tin, and place in the freezer to firm
5. Blend the rest of the dates, together with the raspberries and rose water until no chunks are left
6. Spread the filling mixture evenly onto the base and place back in the freezer
7. Combine the topping ingredients, mixing well until smooth, then once the filling is firm, spread the chocolate topping evenly on top
8. Place back into the freezer for an hour to firm, then slice, serve and ENJOY!

## Notes:

- When slicing, use a wet knife to make it easier and stop the slice from sticking
- Keeps well in a sealed container in the freezer for a couple of weeks
- Rosewater extract can be found in the baking aisle of the supermarket, or in Asian/Oriental speciality stores







# Choc Chip Pumpkin Pie Fudge Slice

## Ingredients:

- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 200g raw pumpkin
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tbsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp psyllium husk
- 100g pitted dates, soaked
- 2 tbsp dark chocolate, chopped

## Method:

1. Cook pumpkin until soft.
2. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius and line a tray with baking paper.
3. Puree chickpeas, dates, pumpkin and vanilla until smooth.
4. Add in baking powder, psyllium husk and pumpkin pie spice, then pour into baking tray.
5. Sprinkle with dark chocolate and bake for 25-30 minutes until firm and golden.
6. Allow to cool completely before slicing.







‘Never forget how wildly capable you are.’



## Conclusion

YAY!!! Congratulations - You did it!! Thanks for joining us this week. We hope you had as much fun as we did, and that you learned some new insights and skills to carry forward into the new year.

Remember, wanting to make positive changes in your life is a GOOD thing. But not if your success in achieving a goal determines your value. You have to approach new goals from a place of knowing that you are enough already. Pursue growth and self-development not in order to be able to love yourself, but BECAUSE you love yourself (already! always! no matter what!).

Start with unconditional self-love. Then set intentions and take action from there.

It's going to be an amazing year.

Big hugs and big love,  
Tara and Nina





P.S. - Here are a few gifts we'd like to send you off with as you enter the new year!

## Planting Love Retreat

Come play and learn with us in person this March! Save \$300 on the cost of attending the Planting Love Retreat (March 16-19, 2019) in Topanga, CA.

Learn more [here](#), and enter the code LOVEYOURSELF at checkout to apply the discount.

## Nourish Me Ebook

Nourish Me is your go-to guide for everything food and nutrition! Nina's Ebook is filled with over 100 delicious whole foods plant-based recipes from smoothie bowls and porridge, to nourish bowls, curry, pizza and pasta, to tasty raw treats and baked goods. It also contains a wealth of evidence-based nutrition information, including answers to common nutrition and health questions, a 'Nutrient Bible', sample meal plan, shopping list, budget tips and so much more. A true guide to educate and empower you to nourishing your body, mind and soul! You can find it [here](#), and use the discount STARTWITHSELFLOVE for 15%



## Personal Coaching

Both of us offer personal coaching, and we would love to work with you! For a nutrition consults, a full nutrition analysis and personalised meal plans, Nina is your lady. She works with people of all backgrounds (you don't have to be vegan!) and helps with everything from making peace with food and learning how to best nourish your body, finding your optimal weight and improving health, to weight gain in eating disorder recovery. You can find out more details at [www.naturally-nina.com](http://www.naturally-nina.com). For help with building self-compassion, reducing anxiety, and creating a sense of balance and inner-peace in your life and your relationship with food, Tara is here to help guide you through all of it. Send us a message if you are interested in working with us, and we'd be happy to help!

## Online Mental Health Counselling

If you are struggling with severe depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal thoughts, or any other mental health struggle that is interfering with your daily life and ability to hold a job or maintain relationships, we recommend getting professional help from a certified counsellor or therapist. BetterHelp is an online platform that helps match you with a mental health professional (to do therapy at a distance via phone call or messaging) at an affordable price. Try one week for free [here](#) to see if it is a good fit for you.

Photography by Nina Gelbke, Tara Kemp and [Rae Marie Lifestyle](#).