



The Creative Entrepreneur's Guide to

MENTAL WELLNESS



HoneyBook

| **RISING TIDE**



Mental wellness, mental health, self care.

These are all words you've heard before. However, you may not know what that looks like in your life or how to implement mental wellness practices in your day-to-day to make an impact on your mind, body, and soul. We are here to help.

This month's guide shares about:

- How to know when it's time to seek help and practical steps toward mental health
- Key tips to bouncing back from creative burnout
- Decluttering your mind and mastering your thoughts

Read on and start focusing on mental wellness today.



Table of Contents

1

INTRO AND KEY TIPS

2

MENTAL HEALTH AND SELF CARE BINGO

3

SHARING ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS AS AN ENTREPRENEUR

By Josefina Herrera Sanders

5

HOW TO KNOW IT'S TIME TO SEEK HELP FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS TRUE HEALING

By Brookes Vaughan

8

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU NO LONGER FEEL CREATIVE: PRACTICAL KEYS TO BUILDING CREATIVE RESILIENCE

By D. Michele Perry

11

HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY IF YOU ARE AN ANXIOUS ENTREPRENEUR

By Tara Bixby

14

HOW I DECLUTTERED MY BRAIN, AND YOU CAN TOO

By Kimberly Sundt

18

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND HOW YOU CAN MASTER YOUR MIND

By Celeste Harrington

21

REPROGRAMMING YOUR MINDSET TO PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

By Allison Sugahara

24

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND RECOMMENDED RISING TIDE BLOG ARTICLES

25

OTHER ULTIMATE GUIDES

26

WHO WE ARE

GET FEATURED

We believe in elevating the voices of our community, and we'd love to elevate yours! Submit content for an opportunity to be featured in next month's Rising Tide Society TuesdaysTogether PDF guide. therisingtidesociety.submittable.com/submit.

KEY TIPS

1

REFRAME YOUR MIND: Josefina Herrera Sanders says it best on [page 2](#) when she says: “Mental illness doesn’t make you weak.” If you, today, are struggling with mental health, know that you are worthy of investing in and caring for. Mental wellness begins by reframing your mindset and seeking opportunities for self care and growth. Spend time doing a mental declutter (like Kimberly on [page 14](#)) or establishing new thoughts patterns (like Celeste on [page 18](#)).

2

MAKE MENTAL WELLNESS A PRIORITY: Your mental wellness is only as important as you make it. And let’s just say... it should be a priority, because it is *important*. For your personal self, for your business, for the people you serve. Mental wellness is not just the occasional massage. Instead it’s a daily practice that leads to a whole life and self. If you’re wondering if it’s time to seek help (learn more from Brookes on [page 5](#)), battling anxiety (Tara will share tips of how on [page 11](#)), or struggling with burnout and a lack of creativity (get a boost from Michele on [page 8](#)), now is the time to prioritize your mental health.

3

SEEK A SUPPORT SYSTEM: Building community and connecting with friends and family is key to maintaining great mental wellness. Additionally, seeking support and care from a licensed professional is sometimes the most important thing you can do to bolster your support network. Advocate for yourself, ask for help when needed, and know that there is support all around you willing to lend a helping hand, a kind heart, or a listening ear. At Rising Tide and HoneyBook, one of our core values is “People Come First.” If you’re looking for a support system, we invite you to join [your local TuesdaysTogether group](#) and connect with other members in our [Rising Tide Facebook group](#). Remember, a rising tide truly does lift all boats, and we are here for you.

Manage the effects of the coronavirus on your business

Get tools, contracts and email templates, all in one place, to communicate with your clients, reschedule events, bring in more income—and minimize stress.

[START FREE TRIAL](#)

Mental Health & Self Care

Bingo

Do at least one item to take care of yourself each day this month.
Tag @honeybook & @risingtidesociety when you do 5 in a row!

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| BREATHE SOME FRESH AIR | DELETE 1 THING FROM YOUR TASK LIST - SEE IF YOU MISS IT | GIVE YOURSELF A HIGH FIVE | WRITE DOWN 5 THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR | DECLUTTER YOUR WORK SPACE |
| WORK UP A SWEAT TODAY | GO TO BED EARLY (WITHOUT YOUR PHONE) | HONOR THE EMOTION YOU'RE FEELING | DO SOMETHING THAT UPLIFTS YOU | JOURNAL FOR 5 MINUTES ABOUT WHATEVER COMES TO MIND |
| WRITE DOWN 1 NON-WORK RELATED GOAL | MAKE A LIST OF 3 TASKS STRESSING YOU OUT AND DO THE FIRST ONE | TAKE 3 DEEP BREATHS | SAY "NO" TO SOMETHING! LET YOUR SCHEDULE BREATHE. | WRITE DOWN 3 AFFIRMATIONS AND PUT THEM WHERE YOU CAN SEE THEM |
| TRY A 1 MINUTE MEDITATION EVERY DAY THIS WEEK | PLAN A WEEKEND TO DISCONNECT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA | REACH OUT TO 1 PERSON WITH AN ENCOURAGING WORD | MAKE A LIST OF 3 TASKS STRESSING YOU OUT AND DO THE SECOND ONE | SET A TIME LIMIT ON YOUR MOST-USED APP |
| MAKE A LIST OF 3 TASKS STRESSING YOU OUT AND DO THE THIRD ONE | PHONE A FRIEND | GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO STEP AWAY FROM YOUR TO-DO LIST EARLY TODAY | CREATE AN ENCOURAGEMENT FOLDER FOR ALL POSITIVE FEEDBACK | SPEND 5 MINUTES PRACTICING BOX BREATHING |



SHARING ABOUT MENTAL WELLNESS AS AN ENTREPRENEUR

Josefina Herrera Sanders

It's never easy showing up fully.

As small business owners, we all have that desire to help and connect with others. We want to help others win but sometimes choose to struggle in silence because we don't want to be seen as weak people. There's this silent battle between sharing personal stories and keeping things professional. But what if I told you my platform grew after I opened up about mental illness?

For the longest time, I used my social media platform to share my craft and positive quotes.

On bad days, I would mindlessly scroll on Pinterest, grab a cute quote, and plaster it to a pretty picture. I hesitated to share the truth about my mental health and filtered my way through social media with a painted canvas and surface message.

After experiencing a miscarriage in 2017, I hit depression and anxiety head-on and could no

longer hide behind a pretty picture. I archived all my posts and began sharing my journey. I opened up about our horrible loss, I shared about my battle with depression and anxiety, and to my surprise, my transparency didn't just allow me to connect deeper and help others, but also allowed me to grow my platform and make more sales.

Over the past year, I have seen so many therapists use their online presence to share about trauma and mental wellness. While many people find comfort through others sharing their vulnerabilities, it's still quite a challenge to show up with our mental illness out in the open. And whether you struggle with mental illness or not, we all thrive off making personal connections. I'd love to challenge you to show up in your business entirely, unfiltered and unrefined.

But before doing that, there are two lies I want you to unlearn.

Mental illness doesn't make you weak.

Sharing about your mental illness doesn't mean you're weak.

If you are looking into sharing your truth on mental illness as an entrepreneur, here are a couple of things to consider.

1. Before sharing, make sure you are taking action in your healing. Seek Therapy.
2. Journal first. Allow the words to flow on to your paper and then decide what you'd like to share on your platform.
3. Have someone that you trust look over and edit your writing.
4. Form boundaries. You don't have to share everything. If something is tough to talk about, start by sharing on your Instagram Stories that the day has been a little off.
5. Vulnerability attracts, and perfection repels. People want to see the grit in the journey. Just as people love behind the scenes, they also want to see the human side of the business.

The truth is that many small business owners and clients struggle with mental illness. Remember, people are looking for meaningful connections, community, and support, and they may find it through you.



JOSEFINA HERRERA SANDERS

Artist, Writer, Wellness Advocate @

Love Offering

Tampa, Florida

[@loveoffering](#)

www.loveoffering.co



Photo by Gemma Chua Tran

HOW TO KNOW IT'S TIME TO SEEK HELP FOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH AND PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS TRUE HEALING

Brookes Vaughan

You're a founder. You're pursuing your dreams. You've got vision, mission, goals. You get to set your own schedule. You're a #boss. This is what you dreamed of when you left your 9 to 5 corporate job. Right? Right!!

But guess what? That does NOT mean this isn't hard, nor does it mean that it doesn't take a toll on your mental health.

What perfectly polished Instagram photos and captions don't reveal are the hours of behind-the-scenes work, late nights grinding to get things off of the ground, the financial uncertainty that often comes with running your own business, the onslaught of others' opinions when you do put yourself and your work out there, the fact that it's honestly hard to completely take a vacation without bringing your laptop, and not to mention trying to take an extended maternity leave, paternity leave, or sabbatical. The list goes on and on.

Quite often you think to yourself.. "But I asked for this. I created this. I can't complain or appear to be struggling when I'm supposed to be living my dream."

Did you know that according to recent research performed at the University of San Francisco evaluating mental health among entrepreneurs found that entrepreneurs are twice as likely to suffer from depression, three times more likely to suffer from substance abuse, ten times more likely to suffer from bipolar disorder, twice as likely to have a psychiatric hospitalization, and twice as likely to have suicidal thoughts.

OH. MY. WORD. Could part of this be due to the pressure that comes with being an entrepreneur along with the fact that mental health is often disregarded in a world that tells you to hustle hard, not complain, and stay strong? I don't share these daunting statistics to be a "Debbie Downer," but rather to shed light on a massive problem that is often hidden behind the glitz and glam of entrepreneur life.

Can I give you the freedom to admit it if you're struggling? It starts there, but I'm also going to give you some actionable steps to take towards healing.

SIGNS THAT YOU NEED TO SEEK HELP FOR MENTAL WELLNESS:

1. You experience anhedonia.

This means that the things which typically bring you joy and pleasure no longer do, regardless of how much you try or want them to.

2. You are frequently* unable to perform usual daily tasks due to feelings of overwhelm, fear, anxiety, sadness, etc.

This may include taking your kids to school, leading a meeting, cooking dinner, or answering emails.

3. You experience the metabolic effects of a mental health disorder.

This includes unexplained lack of energy, loss of appetite, decreased libido, or shortness of breath / heart palpitations invoked by stress or anxiety, etc.

If your answer is yes to any of these three, I would encourage you to seek help. However, these are just a few examples to consider. If your answer to these questions was no but you think to yourself often, “I wonder if I should see a counselor or doctor about this?”, the probable answer is YES.

So what's next? How do you start the process of healing? Trust me, friend, this does not and will not take victory over your one beautiful life, but it definitely will take some action on your part.

4 STEPS TOWARD IMPROVING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Step 1: Admit it. Bring it to light.

Don't keep it a secret. I think you will be amazed at just how healing this first step actually is. A favored author, Jennie Allen, says that what is not brought to light often has power over you. We're so afraid that if we admit our struggle, we will solidify it and the monster will rear its ugly head. However, more often than not, the exact opposite is true. Bringing it to light and then seeking the help needed is like cutting the monster's feet right out from under him.

Step 2: Seek professional help.

As a women's health clinician, I honestly recommend seeing both a counselor and a healthcare provider. Seek out trained and skilled professionals, not just your family and friends. Sometimes, there may be an underlying medical concern or a true chemical imbalance that needs to be addressed with your healthcare provider. Studies have also shown that cognitive behavioral therapy (i.e. counselling) is truly invaluable when it comes to true healing.



Photo by Moses Lee

Step 3: Include your support system.

This simply means to include the trusted ones who will love, support, encourage, and speak truth to you. There is power in community, and we truly need each other. This doesn't mean that you have to tell everyone, but it also means that you should not struggle alone. While engaging in step 2 and seeking professional help, your support system will be a crucial element of your healing process.

Step 4: Get to the truth. Flood it with grace. Give it time.

Dig beneath the surface, "pop the hood" in a sense, and really get to the root of what's truly going on. Adjust accordingly. This is done beautifully in counselling and with trusted community. Give yourself so much grace. Realize that healing typically does not take place overnight. It takes time. It takes effort.

Friend, mental and emotional healing is absolutely possible. I hope you fully understand that you are 100% worth the time, effort, energy, AND rest that it takes to be healthy in all aspects of your life.

Be well.



BROOKES VAUGHAN

Founder and Women's Health Nurse Practitioner at
The Women's Health Company
Georgia, USA

[@thewomenshealthcompany](https://www.instagram.com/thewomenshealthcompany)
[thewomenshealthcompany.com](https://www.thewomenshealthcompany.com)

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU NO LONGER FEEL CREATIVE: PRACTICAL KEYS TO BUILDING CREATIVE RESILIENCE

D. Michele Perry



Everyone hits a creative wall eventually. *Everyone.* The time when even your best ninja sidekick can't knock the obstacle out of your way.

Creative blocks come in many shapes and sizes. And sometimes those blocks turn into burnout. It's not imaginary. You're not making it up. Burnout can actually change your brain structure and impact not only your creativity but your problem-solving and working memory too. [1]

But what if I told you there are things you can do right now to build the resilience needed to bounce back even in the middle of crises and uncertainty. That being courageously, consistently, and confidently creative isn't just an Instagrammed daydream. It's the result of a completely learnable skill set called creative resilience.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CREATIVE SIDE HUSTLE MUST NOW PAY THE BILLS

One thing I didn't count on when I became a full-time creative entrepreneur, was that my

creative passion suddenly had to pay my bills. My creativity wasn't any longer a just a part of my personal identity, it became a business asset that had to pull its weight.

Deadlines. Expectations. Pressure. Freedom. Stress. Elation. Fear. Joy. Pinterest wormholes. All the things mixed into a dynamic that regularly got in the way of my creativity behaving itself, especially on-demand.

So the dance began. Create or organize? Yes. Make stuff or build an email list? Again, yes. The more my to-do list multiplied faster than the balance in my bank account, the more overwhelmed I felt. Forget the mythical creature called work-life balance, I couldn't even master work-work balance.

Then the morning came that I stared at the popcorn ceiling in my bedroom and realized I was a creative who no longer felt creative. And I had no idea how to get the "creative" part of my economy back. The harder I tried, the more frustrating and defeating it got. That's what started me researching resilience.



Photo by Gemma Chua Tran

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resilience as, “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress.” The APA goes on to say that resilience is made up of behaviors, thoughts, and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone [2]

Hooray! Resilience is not a trait like eye color that either you have or you don’t. Rather resilience is a state that can be cultivated and woven intentionally into our routines and rituals.

The biggest single predictive factor of resilience was involvement in intentional community that provided support. The other key factor was an engaged creative practice. Turns out, having a creative practice isn’t just for artists. It’s essential for too often stressed-out entrepreneurs as well.

A study in Germany found that adults who created visual art had increased connectivity and structural changes to their brains in key areas involved in emotion and memory that increased

their psychological resilience and ability to handle stress. But the adults in the same study who simply walked around and observed art in a museum had minimal to no changes in these areas. [3]

Hey! Let’s take that as permission to raid the art supply store. To make a mess. Keep a secret sketchbook. It’s good for both your brain and your businesses.

HOW CAN WE BUILD CREATIVE RESILIENCE?

Creative resilience is the ability to build strength and adaptivity into our creative practice, allowing us to embrace our creativity with confidence, consistency, and courage even in times of adversity and change.

Enter the *STRONG™* framework. I spent seven years working in an active conflict zone in Africa establishing and running an international nonprofit. My days were split between different levels of crisis management, caring for children at risk, serving our local leaders, and surviving repeated bouts of malaria. I also blogged daily, handled our photography, and spent one third of the year on planes between continents sharing our story. Caring for my creative soul was a huge part of me being able to handle the enormous stress I faced and still stay present and effective in the middle of it. In those days, my creative space had to fit into a carry-on approved makeup bag.

So when I can say this framework can work anywhere, it really can.

The *STRONG™* framework is a set of insights I first discovered to be helpful on a personal level, then further researched, and now use with my clients to help them strengthen their core creative practices

to proactively build resilience into their creativity, as well as their businesses.

- **SEEK WONDER** | Stay curious. Ask “what if?” Start thoughts with “I wonder...” Watch for the times you are surprised by beauty. Inspiration is all around us when we slow enough to see.
- **TRUST YOUR GUT** | Intuition. It’s the gut sense that we so easily override, but that is increasingly recognized as a crucial part of how key decision-makers make effective decisions under pressure. [4] Make space to get back in touch with your inner voice, your creative flow, your internal knower. One super helpful way is to create intuitive art. No rules or forms. Choosing to suspend judgment about whether we like the result or not until after the work is finished.
- **REFRAME THE NARRATIVE** | Sometimes our ability to bounce back comes from the ability to reframe our perspective. I used to read 800 words a minute with over 80% retention. Enter the traumatic brain injury that still devastatingly affects my words, both reading and writing. It is hard and frustrating, and I’d like my brain back. But the story I’m telling myself is that while I am no longer a speed reader, that doesn’t mean I can’t be a deep reader. Maybe I will gain even more valuable understanding with this new dynamic.
- **OVERCOME WITH INTENTION** | The best time to deal with creative blocks is before they start. I keep an inspiration journal of all the things that inspire me to help reconnect me with my creativity when things get a bit stale. It has been a lifesaver.
- **NOURISH YOUR SOUL** | What brings you joy? Where can you just breathe easier? Make space for the things that pour life into your being. Embrace self-care. Connect with community. Schedule time to just “be.” Our brains must have bored downtime so they can process all the information and surface the creative insight we need. [5]
- **GROW WITH GRATITUDE** | Gratitude has been shown to lower inflammatory markers, reduce the effects of stress, and improve sleep. It is central to both mental and physical wellbeing that strengthen resilience.

I’d love to hear from you what part of the *STRONG™* framework stands the most out for you, and what is one action you are going to take to implement it. Please drop me an email at michele@designedtothrivecreative.com so I can cheer you on!

References

- [1] <https://www.inc.com/melody-wilding/3-types-of-burnout-according-to-psychologists-and-signs-youre-headed-for-trouble.html>
- [2] <https://uncw.edu/studentaffairs/committees/pdc/documents/the%20road%20to%20resilience.pdf>
- [3] Bolwerk, A., Mack-Andrick, J., Lang, F. R., Dörfler, A., & Maihöfner, C. (2014). How art changes your brain: Differential effects of visual art production and cognitive art evaluation on functional brain connectivity. *PLoS One*, 9(7), e101035. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0101035
- [4] Kurt Matzler, Borislav Uzelac, Florian Bauer, (2014) “Intuition: the missing ingredient for good managerial decision-making”, *Journal of Business Strategy*, Vol. 35 Issue: 6, pp.31-40, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.regent.edu/10.1108/JBS-12-2012-0077>
- [5] <https://www.inc.com/chris-winfield/is-boredom-the-ultimate-creativity-hack.html>



D. MICHELE PERRY

Business Strategist, Educator & Creativity Expert at Designed to Thrive Creative, LLC
 Jacksonville
@dmicheleperry
designedtothrivecreative.com

HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY IF YOU ARE AN ANXIOUS ENTREPRENEUR

Tara Bixby



Photo by Jonathan Zerger

Chasing your most audacious goals can be very anxiety-provoking. The constant worries of what if this fails or what if I made a mistake. The anticipation for the future and all the unknowns it holds. You might find yourself in an anxiety spiral as you see followers drop off your social media platforms or email list. Heck, you might even feel anxious just reading this paragraph, and that's okay.

The entrepreneurial world is full of fear, anxiety, self-doubt, comparison, and unknowns, but it's also full of creativity, excitement, passion, and hope. If you're an anxious soul, and your anxiety is keeping you benched, you're in luck because you just scored me as your unofficial anxiety coach. I'm sharing with you tried and true tricks to help you manage your anxiety, so your anxiety doesn't manage you. If you're ready to coexist peacefully with your anxiety, let's get to it!

4 WAYS TO COEXIST PEACEFULLY WITH YOUR ANXIETY AS AN ENTREPRENEUR

Move Your Body

When it comes to exercise, we have it all wrong. What is commonly used as a means to a smaller pant size, is actually the best anti-anxiety medicine you could have. Simply engaging in

20-minutes of [aerobic exercise](#) reduces anxiety faster than popping a Xanax. Crazy, right?!? When you engage in aerobic exercise, you send a signal of safety to your amygdala, which is responsible for activating your anxiety response. Your amygdala interprets that signal as a sign that you escaped danger and will then complete the anxiety loop. Once the loop has closed, adrenaline and cortisol stop dumping into your body, and your symptoms begin to subside.

If you're ready to ditch the uncomfortable sensations of anxiety, step away from your computer, put down your phone, and get moving. All it takes is 20 minutes of increased heart to reduce anxiety. Need a few ideas? Take these for a spin: Jog in place, go for a brisk walk, or bust out some burpees. Heck, you can even blast your favorite tunes and have a solo dance party. Last but not least, If you have an event that you know will trigger anxiety, engage in aerobic activity before the event. This will help calm your amygdala and make it less likely to activate when in the triggering situation.

Get Out Of Your Head And Into Your Life

Are you guilty of thinking: "What if I fail?" "What if no one shows up?" "What if it's too late?" "What if no one buys?" "What if I mess up?" "What if..."

When you engage in “what-if” thinking, you’re essentially saying, “let’s pretend.” Let’s pretend I fail. Let’s pretend no one shows up. Let’s pretend it’s too late. Let’s pretend I make a fool of myself on stage. I don’t know about you, but this is a worry game I don’t want to play, and neither should you. This style of thinking is fuel to your already raging anxiety fire.

The problem with worries is that they are based on hypothetical fears that most likely will never occur. Fears that present themselves as nagging news as opposed to useful information. If you find yourself caught up in the worry game, start by identifying the worrisome thought. Once you have identified the thought, come up with a plan for if that worry happens. Once you have a game plan, move on from that worry. If that worry creeps back into your thoughts, remind yourself of your plan, and move on again.

Another great way to get out of your head and into your life is to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is a fantastic way to pull you out of future-focused worries and plopp you back into



Photo by Jack Douglass

your life. The next time you feel anxious, **ground yourself** in the present moment. What do you see? Hear? Smell? Taste? Feel? By focusing on the present moment, you can live in a state of what is as opposed to what if.

Rest and Reset

It’s easy to get swept up in the whirlwind and excitement of becoming the CEO of your life, but can I tell you a little secret? Hustle without rest leads to burnout, and burnout isn’t sexy. Trust me, I know from experience. So how does an anxious entrepreneur reduce anxiety when they feel they have to be on all the time? Delegate!

Recruit help and assign tasks to ensure you have time to rest and reset. Establish boundaries at work, schedule a digital detox, or, better yet, set a daily time to shut off from work. If you are caught up in the false belief that self-care is selfish or that your business will not run without you, it’s time to shift your thinking. You can’t pour from an empty cup.

Here are a few tips to help you show up as the rejuvenated, less anxious version of yourself. Bust out your Sharpie and schedule some self-care dates on your calendar. Dates, you will not cancel. Set aside time for activities that reset you mentally, physically, spiritually, or emotionally. Designate a daily set time where you will unplug from all technology, work, and that ever-growing to-do list, whether that be for an hour in the middle of the day or an hour before bed.

Make sure you are getting 6 to 8 hours of restful, uninterrupted sleep every night. When you lack deep, restorative sleep, you run the risk of having an amygdala that responds to triggers like a temperamental toddler who just found out they couldn’t have a toy. If you’re the MVP of late-night hustle, it’s time to work on your **sleep hygiene**. By establishing nighttime routines and rituals, you are more likely to shut down after a long day and drift off into deep, restful sleep.

Breathe

Are you breathing? It sounds like a silly question, but it's common for people to hold their breath, or breathe shallowly, when anxious, without being aware they're doing so. To help reduce anxiety, and activate the relaxation response in your brain, you need to breathe.

When you breathe with intention and take long, slow, deep breaths, you activate your parasympathetic nervous system, which is associated with rest and relaxation. This activation acts as a switch, taking your breathing from a state of emergency to a place of relaxation. There are many ways to engage in breathwork, but the secret is to breathe from your belly as opposed to your chest. When you breathe from your belly, your diaphragm pushes on your vagus nerve, resulting in the activation of the relaxation response. A few of my go-to techniques are belly breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, alternate nostril breathing, and square breathing. The trick is, in order to see an improvement in anxiety symptoms, you need to practice breathwork twice a day. No exceptions!

If you want to learn more tricks and tips on how to manage anxiety, so your anxiety doesn't

manage you, be sure to check out [courageously.u](https://www.courageously.u) on Instagram or Facebook. You can also pick

up some best life goodies at [courageouslyu.com](https://www.courageouslyu.com).



TARA BIXBY

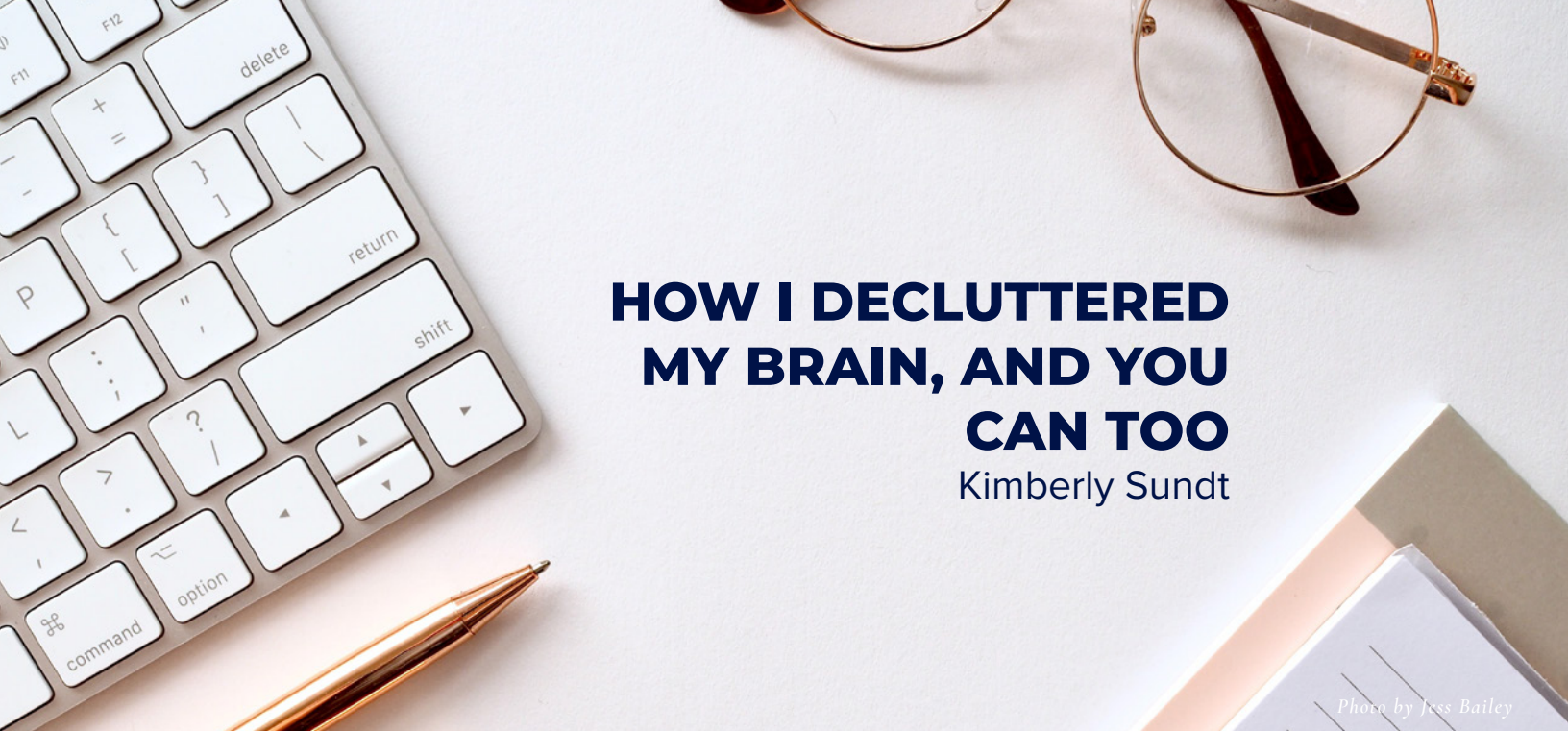
Licensed Professional Counselor at

[courageously.u](https://www.courageously.u)

Nampa, Idaho

[@courageously.u](https://www.courageously.u)

[courageously.u](https://www.courageously.u)



HOW I DECLUTTERED MY BRAIN, AND YOU CAN TOO

Kimberly Sundt

Photo by Jess Bailey

You've heard about - and probably done - a brain dump. That particular term doesn't sit well with me, but the idea does.

Last fall, when I did a personal retreat for my business, my primary goal was to get all the stuff that was cluttering my brain out, so I could actually see it and do something about all of those swirling ideas STUCK in my head.

Seriously, I was stuck in business and in life and I felt like I had so much stuff in my head that there was no room for thinking. So, I created The Brain DeClutter™.

This system:

- helps you get everything out of your brain and into a place where you can deal with it.
- helps you get more organized.
- helps you prioritize.
- helps you feel like you have it together! (don't laugh at this one - it's a real thing!)

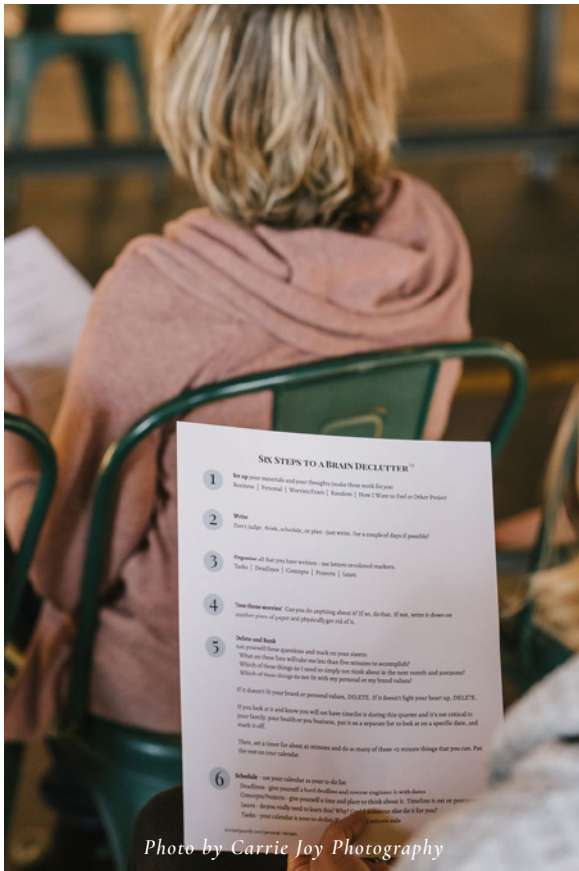
Essentially, what you are going to do is take all those zillions of thoughts in your head, get them out in an organized manner, and then put them in the right places.

You know how Marie Kondo doesn't just say "clean out your closet?" Instead, she gives you a system.

Below is my system for a Brain DeClutter™. I've outlined the steps that I use, but remember, take this advice and create things the way they work for you.

MATERIALS NEEDED TO DECLUTTER YOUR BRAIN AND MAKE SPACE FOR MENTAL WELLNESS

- Kraft Paper or wrapping paper. The 35#-40# kraft paper seems to work best. This is usually what you find if you are buying a roll for wrapping packages you are going to mail, etc.



- Paint-friendly tape. I found that masking tape worked just fine for me, but the blue painter's tape is safe. But always test it on the walls.
- Sharpies or something similar.

STEP 1 | CHOOSE YOUR BRAIN AREAS/TOPICS

These topics are like the categories of your thoughts. In *The Magic of Tidying Up*, you are told to declutter based on topic (clothes, books, photos, kitchen, etc.). This approach with your mind is similar. Here are the categories that work best for my brain, but you might have others.

- **Business**
- **Personal**
- **Worries and Fears**
- **Other Project**
- **Random Thoughts**

STEP 2 | PUT THE PAGES ON THE WALL AND START WRITING

This is the “brain dump” part. **The fabulous thing is, you have things organized from the get-go.**

Write the topic on the big page, and then put these up around the room. Pull out a couple of Sharpies and write whatever pops into your head.

- **Business** - anything related to your business. New ideas, something on your website, find new clients, order new business cards, etc.
- **Personal** - make a doc appointment, clean out the fridge, lose 15 pounds, schedule a date night, send a birthday card, go to the grocery store, etc.
- **Worries and Fears** - anything that you are worried about. I had everything from driving on I-85 (stresses me out) to a loved one getting sick, to not being able to find a password for a credit card account. They are just little (or big) things that bother you - or keep you up at night.
- **Other Project** - I know this one is sort of random. You'll know - if it is something so big like a new start-up, a new ad campaign, a showhouse you're participating in, a three-week vacation that you are planning, etc., give it its own sheet.
- **Random Thoughts** - Things that didn't really fit anywhere: write a book, create a keynote speech, etc. Not things I need to necessarily do, but things I didn't want to forget about.

Don't think about what you're writing down - don't judge - don't plan- just write.

STEP 3 | ORGANIZE EACH ITEM INTO A CATEGORY

Look at all the pages and organize them deeper. You can do this by using different colored markers or by marking each item with a letter that represents one of the areas below - whatever works for your brain. You are looking at all your sheets as you do this. Well, the one exception is your Worries and Fears - leave that sheet alone for now.

Mark every item as one of the following:

1. **TASKS** - These are things that don't take any real thinking, just doing. Answer a simple email. Make or go to an appointment. Go to Target. Pay a bill. Circle all of those with a color or use the letter T.
2. **DEADLINES** - Anything that has a hard deadline. (mail mom's birthday gift; write the article; record the webinar). Circle with a different color or write a D.
3. **PROJECTS** - Things that have several steps. They may involve others. They probably require a timeline. But, you already know what it looks like and you know it needs to happen.
4. **CONCEPTS** - These are new and require some real thinking. You haven't started them. They aren't just out-there ideas - they need to happen - they would be great for your biz or maybe your life. But they need more thinking and more definition.
5. **EDUCATION** - Anything that has a learning curve that takes more than 10 minutes.

STEP 4 | GET RID OF THOSE WORRIES

Look at your Worry/Fear list.

Ask yourself, "can I do anything about this?" If so, it's a task or something to do. If there is something you can do about it, mark it as a task.

If there is nothing you can do about it, you need to let it go - release it.

Okay - an entire sheet is GONE! Let's get back to the others . . .

STEP 5 | DELETE & PRIORITIZE!

You can't do everything that you have written down. So, as you look at your lists, ask yourself these questions:

- What on these lists will take me less than five minutes to accomplish? Mark those <5 (less than five minutes - get it?)



- Which of these things do I need to simply not think about in the next month and postpone?
- Which of these do not fit with my personal or brand values?

If it doesn't light your heart up - DELETE.

If you know you will not have time for it during this quarter and it's not critical to your family, your health, or your business, put it on a separate list to look at on a specific date and move on.

Set a timer for 45 minutes and do as many of those <5 minute things that you can - right now.

STEP 6 | SCHEDULE

Use your calendar as your to-do list. I find this soooooo much more productive than a traditional to-do list.

- **Deadlines** - give yourself a hard deadline and reverse engineer it with dates
- **Concepts/Projects** - give yourself a time and place to think about it. Timeline it out or postpone.
- **Education** - do you really need to learn this? Why? Could you pay for someone to do this for you? Will you use it over and over?
- **Tasks** - your calendar is your to-do list. Block off 30 minutes a day and fill it with your <5 tasks - get them all on the calendar.

Once it is all either on your calendar, or put aside to review at another time, that's it! You will be amazed at how your brain feels once you do this. After the first time you go through The Brain DeClutter™ it takes a lot less time, and can be a tool that you will come back to again and again! Good luck!



KIMBERLY SUNDT


Kimberly Sundt, LLC

Atlanta

[@kimberlysundt](https://www.instagram.com/kimberlysundt)

www.kimberlysundt.com

*Headshot by Cassandra Huggard,
Heartbrave Studios*



THE PHYSIOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO YOUR THOUGHTS AND HOW YOU CAN MASTER YOUR MIND

Celeste Harrington

Photo by Element Five

“Self-care” is officially a household word. When we think of self-care, most people picture a face mask, hot tea, cozying up on the couch with a book, and relaxing. Some will think, “Who has time for that!?” and others may feel guilt or shame for taking time away from work, school, or family to make time for themselves.

The good news is, self-care comes in many forms! Think of self-care as something you deliberately do to slow down and calm the mind.

1. What self-care really looks like.

Self-care is a physical action or task we do on purpose to calm stress and anxiety to realign our mood. Self-care is best implemented as part of your daily routine. Taking care of yourself can look like:

- Getting enough sleep
- Cooking a nutritious meal
- Saying “no” to things you no longer wish to do (responding to email or social media DMs immediately, checking your phone after 10 PM, etc.)
- Doing something just for the joy of it
- Schedule time in your day for you to do whatever you like

- Exercise
- Meditate or deep breathing exercises

These are simple tasks that don’t need to take up a ton of time on your calendar that raise self-awareness and can affect your mental health.

2. Bring awareness to your mental health.

“Mental Health” and “Mental Wellness” are interchangeable and are considered a state of well-being where the individual realizes their own abilities and can cope with the normal stresses of life (WHO). It’s important to note that mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. Everyone has the potential to develop a mental health disorder. 1 in 5 people will experience a mental health problem and anxiety, panic, and depression are the most common.

Taking a few minutes each day to bring awareness to how you are feeling is a great tool to check in with your mind and body. The mind body connection can be witnessed in daily life. When we are stressed, our cortisol levels elevate, suppressing the immune system, increasing the chance of getting sick. Many of us, entrepreneurs included, live and function at elevated levels of stress as a norm. One way to combat this heightened stress is to schedule a time to check-in with yourself - aka self-care.

3. Thoughts cause your feelings

Feeling frazzled? Here's an exercise you can do right now to manage your mind and get back on track.

Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and write (or type) out all of your thoughts you are experiencing at this moment. Get it all out.

Re-read what you wrote and asterisk or highlight the prominent thoughts that light up your brain or send a sensation through your body.

This sensation is also what we would call a "feeling":

For example, I highlighted these thoughts that carried weight for me:

1. I have to send my proposal out today.
2. I can't believe I had a typo in that email to my client.
3. I'm so stressed out right now.
4. I can't get all of this work done.

Re-read each thought one at a time. How does each thought make you feel? Identify the sensation in your body and write the sensations next to each thought.

1. I have to send my proposal out today: *shortness of breath, elevated heart rate, lightheaded*
2. I can't believe I had a typo in that email to my client: *shoulders rounded over/hunched over, heavy*
3. I'm so stressed out right now: *tension, sweating, elevated heart rate, shallow breathing*
4. I can't get all of this work done: *slumped shoulders, frowning, deflated*

Now that you've identified the sensations in your body that those thoughts cause, label each thought with a single feeling:

| Circumstance | Thought | Sensations | Feeling |
|---|---|---|------------|
| Program Proposal | I have to send my proposal out today. | Shortness of breath, elevated heart rate, lightheaded | Stress |
| Email to client | I can't believe I had a typo in that email to my client | shoulders rounded over/ hunched over, heavy | Shame |
| Unplanned meeting with client | I'm so stressed out right now | tension, sweating, elevated heart rate, shallow breathing | Overwhelm |
| I have 8 meetings, 2 calls, and 1 networking event scheduled for today | I can't get all of this work done | slumped shoulders, frowning, deflated | Inadequate |

The Takeaway

Our thoughts cause how we feel. The work we are doing and the circumstances in our life do not cause our feelings, and they do not hold moral value. It's our thoughts about our circumstances that determine how we feel.

Once you highlight the thoughts you have playing in your brain and their associated sensations (or feelings) **you get to decide how you want to feel. You get to change our thoughts.** Any time, anywhere.

How can you change your thoughts so you can feel calm, cool, and collected? You get to pick a new thought, just like you would try on a new shirt or a new pair of shoes.

| Circumstance | OLD Thought | NEW Thought | NEW Sensations | NEW Feeling |
|---|---|---|--|-------------|
| Program proposal | I have to send my proposal out today. | I can't wait to impress the team with my proposal | energized, butterflies in my stomach, | Excitement |
| Email to client | I can't believe I had a typo in that email to my client | Everyone makes mistakes | shoulders relax, weight lifted | Relaxed |
| Unplanned meeting with client | I'm so stressed out right now | This meeting may open new doors for me | light, lifted, muscles relax, posture is upright | Optimistic |
| I have 8 meetings, 2 calls, and 1 networking event scheduled for today | I can't get all of this work done | My life is abundant | light, lifted, muscles relax, muscles in face relax, turn upward | Amazed |

When you start to recognize sensations in your body, like tension in your jaw or shoulders, or you begin to sweat in a meeting, stop and take inventory of what you are thinking at the moment.

This is a great exercise to add to your mental health and self care routine. Keep a journal or an on-going spreadsheet for yourself so you can see what thoughts are creating the feelings you are experiencing. So next time you feel stress, ask yourself, why? Get it down on paper and see what thoughts are racing through your brain.



CELESTE HARRINGTON

Health and Mindset Coach at
Best in Health
Santa Cruz, CA

[@thesquashwhisperer](https://www.instagram.com/thesquashwhisperer)
celesteharrington.com

Headshot by Haley Arrington



REPROGRAMMING YOUR MINDSET TO PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE

Allison Sugahara

As business owners, we know it all too well... heck, we've almost become accustomed to it. I'm talking about the endless nights, lack of sleep, constant head spinning, self-doubt, so much stress that you feel physically ill... Yep, I'm talking about excessive and (seemingly endless) burnout. These days it's too easy to get tangled up in that web of chaos. After all, you're the heart and soul of your company. Who else is going to take care of business?!

The truth of the matter is, as we continue to elevate our standards, it becomes increasingly more dangerous for us to sustain a lifestyle that does not prioritize our Mental Wellness. According to a [study by Michael Freeman](#) (referenced by [TechCrunch](#)), *entrepreneurs are 50% more likely to report having a mental health condition. #ItMe*. This issue has become something we simply cannot overlook or ignore, and oddly, WE seem to be the biggest perpetrators!

An article in [Forbes](#) that caught my attention compared the drive to professional athletes and entrepreneurs in the sense that reaching new heights is kind of embedded into their framework for success. The difference? If an athlete's diminished physical or mental state hinders their ability to perform, it is imperative they take the time to get healthy. They're career

legitimately depends on it. So why is it that entrepreneurs seem to ignore most, if not all, of the symptoms?

YOU CANNOT POUR FROM AN EMPTY CUP.

There are a number of factors that contribute to our mental stress. Some of these include alienation, comparison, imposter syndrome, and financial stress, just to name a few. Take it from someone who has experienced a whole mess of health issues over the last several years... including, but not limited to, unpredictable vertigo, debilitating eye issues, excessive jaw clenching (and eventually TMJ), depression, anxiety, you name it. These were definitely caused by the refusal to address my own mental health issues. When suggested that I should meditate, I argued that I didn't have time. The saying goes, "If you don't have time to meditate for 5 minutes, then you need to meditate for an hour." Easier said than done though, right?

It took me years to prioritize and invest in my mental health until I realized that my livelihood legitimately depended on it. This is probably a great time to remind you that you are not alone and you are incredibly worthy of happiness and success. Take moments to honor your journey

and remember that you are exactly where you need to be. But if you need a little extra guidance, I've got you.

MINDSET OVER MATTER IN MENTAL HEALTH

1. DEFINE YOUR OWN SUCCESS

Success is not a “one-size-fits-all” formula. Take time to consider why you do what you do. Think about the life you truly want to live, NOT the life that society expects you to live. Then determine 3 key points that make up your own definition of success. Write it in your notebook. Speak it into your voice notes. Do whatever you have to do to remind yourself of all the things you love everyday.

3 factors that define my version of success:

1. Spend quality time with my husband, my family, and people I love most.
2. Limitlessly create in whatever capacity I desire.
3. Thrive in a career doing what I love - creating!

2. REPROGRAM YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MINDSET

By standard definition, productivity is “*the effectiveness of productive effort as measured in terms of the rate of output by the unit of input.*” Did you ever stop to consider how much self-care input would increase your rate of output? It's a lot. Google it.

One of the key components in reprogramming your mindset around productivity is through the art of *surrendering*. Ultimately, you know when you are feeling 100% and when you're not. While it's awesome to be a stellar student who never misses class or a homework assignment, it's so important to be kind to yourself and fully acknowledge when you need to take a break.

I was such a perpetuator of excessive burnout that I consequently had very high highs and very low lows. I would feel so drained from the crash, that I physically couldn't get out of bed. The crashes only got more intense as I got older, and when I couldn't find the motivation to work, I would spiral into a dark pit of guilt, shame, and disappointment.

As I started investing in self-care rituals, it became easier to identify burnout and instead of fighting through it, I surrendered. Because I knew the more I took the time to rest, the quicker I would recover. I started to view rest as being productive, and it has been a game changer. We are always going to be “in progress,” and by allowing the space to give our bodies whatever it needs, we are able to show up better for our relationships, our careers, and ourselves.



HOW TO IMPLEMENT SELF-CARE

1. SET BOUNDARIES.

This is so incredibly crucial and 100% necessary. I know it's hard, but until you block out time for yourself and actually honor that time block as if it were your clients', you won't ever feel like you can catch a break. This can be customizable to your days or weeks whether that's giving yourself 15 minutes of each day or 2 hours once a week. Your blocks can change over time, but first things first, lock it down!

2. SELF EXPLORATION

We are all so different and all have our own unique makeup of who we are. Subsequently, we all operate on a completely different system. Not everyone takes the time to explore and understand their basic needs for survival (legit, like water + air).

Go inward and explore. Are you someone that needs to be in nature? Needs to be alone? Needs 8 hours of sleep? Explore every ounce of your being- your personality type, leadership archetype, things that bring you joy, things that don't, things that inspire you... all of it! You want to find the outlets, routines, activities, and rituals that will fill your cup.

3. TAKE INVENTORY.

As you start to gain a better understanding of your needs, it's crucial to do frequent gut checks and take inventory on a regular basis (I suggest daily or weekly). Do this for every aspect of your

life: your time, environment, relationships, social obligations, etc. The moment you tune in, you'll get a sense of where you have energy leaks in your life. You may be surprised that activities (or even relationships) that once brought you joy don't anymore.

My method is this: If it's not a hell yes, it's a no. Period.

4. IDENTIFY YOUR NON-NEGOTIABLES

Create a list of non-negotiables. These are the self-care rituals that you absolutely need to feel whole. When you're able to identify them, it's easy to relentlessly fight for the time blocks you carved out to incorporate them. Choose 1-3 to start. You can always implement more!

It may look something like this:

- Daily meditation
- Restorative Yoga 3x/week
- Facial 1x/month

The journey to a state of improved mental health is one that many of us are on together and, like yoga, is a lifetime of practice. Embrace the process.



ALLISON SUGAHARA

Founder | Creative | Visionary

Polygon Market

Los Gatos, California

[@polygonmarket](#)

www.polygonmarket.com

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** How are you doing? Like, really, how are you doing?
- 2** What is one way you've focused on your mental health and self care in the last month?
- 3** What are your non-negotiables for your self-care and mental health routine? List 3 and schedule them into your calendar for the next month.
- 4** Pick a partner. Set up a plan on how you will check in with them in the next month to offer support and community.
- 5** List 5 things you are grateful for.

RISING TIDE | HONEYBOOK BLOG POST



KELLY BANAS

How to Manage Your
Mental Health in the Face of
Coronavirus Uncertainty



MINAA B.

Why Every Entrepreneur
Should Practice Mental
Realness

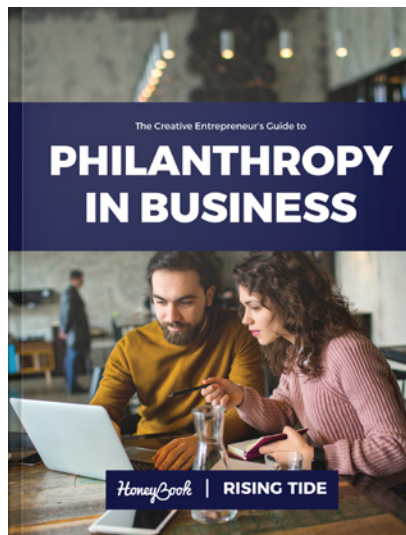
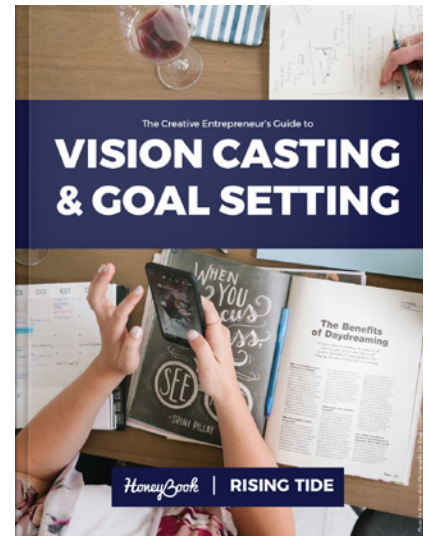
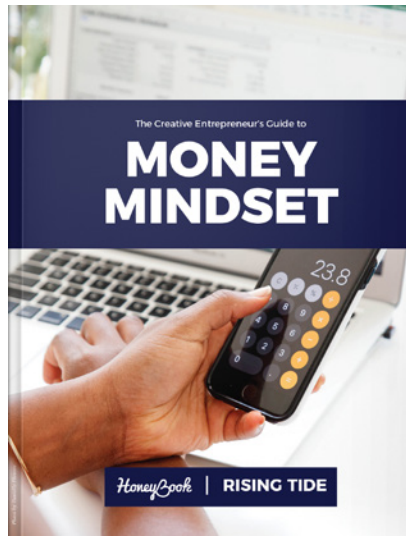


CARLY KLEIN

Raising Awareness
about Mental Health in
Entrepreneurs

WANT MORE CONTENT LIKE THIS?

Check out our other Ultimate Guides to help scale your business.



WHO WE ARE

The [HoneyBook | Rising Tide](#) team believes an empowered creative economy will change the world. By elevating the voices of creatives, sharing their stories, and building a thriving online and offline community, we support creatives in their pursuit of a sustainable livelihood.

Empowerment begins with saving creatives time and money. [HoneyBook](#) helps creative entrepreneurs manage their businesses more efficiently so they can do more of what they love. With [HoneyBook](#), creatives can send brochures, proposals and invoices; create the ideal customer experience; and track payments – all in one place. Equally as important are sharing knowledge and providing support. That's why [Rising Tide](#) is a community and living library of educational resources, including blog content from thought leaders, monthly guides, online summits, and over 400 monthly meet-ups across the world to help creatives succeed in business.

We're also passionate about supporting the communities around us. To date, we've given over \$130,000 to nonprofits including Pencils of Promise, The School Sessions, U.S. Dream Academy, The Birthday Party Project, Thirst Relief and more. We've also partnered with Pencils of Promise to build a school in 2018 funded entirely by community donations through our 2017 RISE Summit.

We believe that magic happens when creatives gather, support one another and are empowered to pursue their passions. We believe in community over competition. We believe in empowering the creative economy to rise together.

