



# The Wee Blether

Summer 2021 Edition



Write to us at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Academy House, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT  
Or call us on 01463 712 791

# **2021 AGM**

**Our AGM will be held by video link again this year!**

We will be celebrating the achievements of our long-service volunteers, giving you the opportunity to ask questions, and hear updates from all our staff and board.



## **Befrienders Highland AGM**

### **Thursday 2nd September 2021**

### **6PM**

If you have any comments or questions for our Board or staff, that you would like to raise during our AGM, please submit them by 13<sup>th</sup> August 21 to [admin@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:admin@befriendershighland.org.uk) or phone the office to leave a message; someone will call you back as soon as they can.

Our Convenor's report & financial statements will be available for prior perusal on our website for anyone who would like to see this information.

If you would like to join us on the night, please get in touch (no later than 30<sup>th</sup> August) to enable us to send you the Zoom link.

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## **Message from Susan White, Executive Director**

“Hello everyone. Can you believe that the summer solstice has come and gone already, when in the last edition I was talking about the first signs of spring?! Either I am getting old, the years are getting shorter or maybe it’s just a sign of how busy we have been at Befrienders over the past 18 months.

I’m delighted to announce that Carol Summers and Alison Campbell have been promoted to Senior Coordinator positions, which means they will be supporting me with management of the organisation as it grows. We also appointed two new part-time colleagues in May; Tricia Norton as our Admin Assistant and Allana Islei as Memory and Carers Coordinator. Catherine Patterson will also be working an extra day a week in Caithness, supported by additional funding from the Coastal Communities Fund from Highland Council.

Our volunteer Zoom meetings were sadly not well attended so, after a review, we are planning a different schedule of social meetings, with some evening slots and more training days for volunteers.

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The first of the training dates for volunteers has now been agreed. Please see Carol's article on page 8 for details. Hope you have enjoyed the Mindfulness, Yoga and Walking Groups in the meantime if you have been able to participate?

Over the next few months my priority is applying to renew existing grant funding with NHS Highland and the Lottery Community Fund and to identify other new funding sources. Demand is certainly growing based on the number of referrals and friendships we support, so securing funding is our main priority for 2021/22 and beyond.

Due to the ongoing situation with Covid, and the risks associated with public meetings, we have decided to have our AGM virtually again this year, with the date set for Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September at 6pm. Please get in touch with us at [admin@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:admin@befriendershighland.org.uk) if you would like to come to the AGM to find out more about what we have been doing in the past 12 months, our plans for the future, and to celebrate the Volunteer Long Service Awards for 2021"

With my very best wishes, Susan



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## Connecting with Nature Word Search

### Nature Words

I	E	I	I	W	O	N	S	S	E	O	E	I	S
M	R	E	T	S	R	E	W	O	L	F	R	N	U
N	S	M	S	N	A	K	E	L	W	Y	T	S	D
M	O	U	N	T	A	I	N	S	R	R	I	L	L
S	T	C	E	S	N	I	V	A	L	L	E	Y	S
L	I	E	U	S	I	S	S	M	A	E	R	T	S
E	T	I	T	R	E	E	S	S	S	N	L	T	S
A	S	T	O	N	E	S	D	R	I	V	E	R	S
V	H	O	T	L	L	O	E	A	R	N	F	S	A
E	S	I	A	B	I	A	S	Y	R	D	I	R	T
S	K	K	L	S	I	S	K	A	W	O	R	M	S
M	Y	E	E	L	R	R	I	E	T	V	E	R	U
A	A	S	N	K	S	N	D	Y	S	I	S	S	B
D	N	I	W	E	I	O	I	S	S	T	F	E	F

RAIN  
SNAKE  
HILLS  
LEAVES  
VALLEYS  
MOUNTAINS  
RIVERS  
WORMS  
SNOW  
TREES  
STREAMS  
INSECTS  
LAKES  
WIND  
STONES  
BIRDS  
FIRES  
DIRT  
SKY  
FLOWERS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/420414/>

Answers on page 21

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## **Message from David Stallard, Convenor**



Hello to you all from me and from all my fellow directors. It's a great pleasure to be writing at a time when we seem about to get some relaxation of the Covid restrictions we've all been having to live with. Although there is still quite a way to go before we can get back to where we were 18 months ago, it's very encouraging to see that we're making progress and that things are definitely getting better.

The isolation which so many people have experienced since last March has really highlighted the importance of services like ours. We've been getting a steady stream of requests for our services and, also, very encouraging numbers of new people coming forward and offering to become volunteers with us.

I've heard a great deal from Susan, our manager, about the understandable distress and anxiety many of you have been feeling and about how much volunteers have been doing to respond to this. I'm also very aware of how many people have lost services they would usually be using and relying on in, for example, home care, support work and day centres. So, I would like to thank you all very much for the many ways in which you have been rallying round to help and support each other during these very difficult times.

It's been very heartening to hear about all the extra things you've been doing to keep each other's spirits up and I am very proud of you all.

Kind regards, David

## **Memory & Carers Update**



Senior Coordinator, Carol Summers, was fortunate recently to attend Dementia Awareness Training with Age Scotland. She found it really useful, not only work-wise but also in her own personal life too. Carol said “The training has given me a greater insight into the lots of different ways that dementia can impact on a person, and also how we can all be more inclusive”. So I am delighted that Julie from Age Scotland has agreed to host two Dementia Awareness Training sessions for Befrienders Highland”.

The Dementia Awareness Sessions are open to anyone who would like to attend and will be hosted via Zoom. However numbers are limited, so If you would like to attend please contact Carol Summers via email: [carolsummers@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:carolsummers@befriendershighland.org.uk) or mobile: 07917 792 883 Also specifying which session you would like to attend.

Please see next page for details.



**We are really looking forward to delivering Dementia Awareness Training to the team at Befrienders Highland.**

The two dates available for training are:

**Tue 14<sup>th</sup> September 2pm-4pm & Mon 20<sup>th</sup> September 6pm-8pm**

Our workshop is very interactive, with a number of activities and we cover the following topics:

- **What is dementia?** An overview of dementia and a quiz which looks at the current dementia picture. We will discuss the main types of dementia and causes.
- **Signs and Symptoms:** We consider the different symptoms people can experience and how this relates to the different lobes within the brain. We also look at how various types of dementia can look different in the early stages and discuss the diagnosis process.
- **Communication and Inclusion:** We will look at how good communication is important and some tips for having a good conversation with someone living with dementia. We discuss how the environment can impact on good communication and how the phone can be more challenging and what we can do to help. Language can affect people with dementia and unfortunately there is still stigma associated with dementia, so we will discuss this and how important it is for people to get post diagnostic support.
- **Reducing risk and living well with dementia:** The last section focusses on looking at risk factors for dementia and what people can do to live well with dementia.

**We hope you can join us at one of the workshops!**

Julie Turner

Dementia Training Officer



## **Introducing our new Co-ordinator Allana**



**Hi, my name is Allana and I am delighted to have joined Befrienders Highland at the beginning of May this year. Having known about the good work the organisation does for some time, I value the opportunity to be a part of the team in my new role as Befriending Coordinator for the Memory and Carers service.**

**In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors in nature and hillwalking with friends. I have been fortunate enough to get involved in a few of the Befrienders Highland walks recently and hope to get along to some more soon.**

**With the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions, I feel this is a great chance to reconnect with people and help make a difference, so I am very much looking forward to getting to know everyone and hopefully meeting and speaking with friends and carers over the weeks and months ahead.**



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## **Mental Health Service Update**

Summer is upon us thankfully! Longer, brighter days which always tend to lift the mood.

We are still mainly working at home, keeping the service going, and we are very thankful for all of our volunteers who have done an awesome job adapting their befriending skills over the last 15 months to help us to do this. We couldn't have supported the Friends in the way we have without their commitment to the service or their willingness to be flexible.

We are slowly and tentatively looking at face to face Befriending again and returning to face to face meetings for those who had them before the pandemic hit. We are also looking at some new face to face matches as well. Obviously, all in line with COVID guidelines and social distancing rules. A bit of normality to look forward to though.

We have seen an increase in referrals over the last year, which was expected, but for all those waiting please be reassured that we haven't forgotten about you and, as soon as we can, we will be in touch.

Finally, just a huge thank you to our Board, Staff Team and all of our wonderful volunteers and supporters. We have all supported each other and kept everyone going throughout this strange time.

We wish you a lovely summer and let's hope we get lots of sunshine to enjoy!!



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## It's Sudoku time!!!!

1	2			3	7			6
3	7			1	6	5		9
		9		5	4		7	1
4		2		6		7	3	8
7	8	1	4	2	3	9		5
6	5		7		9			2
2	3				5	6		7
		6		7	8			4
5		7			2	1		3

	8	4		3			2	9
		7	1		5		8	
6	5		4	9	8		3	7
	7			8	9		6	4
4		8	5		2	3	9	
		9	6	4	1	8		5
	4	5		6	3	9		8
	1	3	9	5		6	4	
	9	6	8		4		5	

	3	2			9			6
	4	7		6		8		5
	1	8		4	7	2		9
	5		1	8		9	2	7
8		1		5	2		6	4
7		4	3	9		5		1
1	8		4	7		6	9	2
2		5		3	1	4		8
4		9		2	8	1		3

		2		5			6	3
3	5	9		2	7		8	1
		8	1		3	7		5
	2	4	7		5	8	1	
	6	3	9	8		2		4
7	8		2	4	6		3	
4	1	6	5	7		3		2
2		7	4	1	9		5	
8		5	3		2	1		7

**These puzzles have kindly been shared with us by the  
Royal Voluntary Service**



**Answers on page 21**

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## Caithness Service Update



A Big *Thank You* to Lisa and Heather, the volunteer tutors, leading the group classes in Thurso Community Café kindly funded by the TESCO 'Bags for Life' Fund. People attending the group sessions participated in art, knitting, weaving or simply a *cuppa* and a chat. It was an opportunity to finally meet others socially in a safe secure environment.

The classes will be taking a break for a few weeks but will resume on a monthly basis, the first Thursday of the month [depending on demand].



The next date is Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> August from 12-2pm. Contact Catherine [catherinepatterson@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:catherinepatterson@befriendershighland.org.uk) if you wish to attend.



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## **Groups Update**

Our weekly Wednesday walking group in Inverness is going well. A big thanks to all those who make it out to join us for a bit of fresh air, movement, and chat. It is always a pleasure catching up with everybody.



## **Fundraising News**

Thank you to everyone who has fundraised for us so far this year!

With summer now here there are lots of ways to get involved in fundraising at Befrienders Highland. Would you like to take part in the Baxters Loch Ness Marathon this October? The event includes the option of the full-length marathon, 10K or 5K with charity places available. This is the perfect opportunity to get fit (or fitter!) and raise money to support the work we do at Befrienders Highland. We have fundraising packs available for everyone who wishes to take part in the Loch Ness Marathon or any event to raise money for Befrienders Highland – this pack includes a running t-shirt and more free items. We will of course give you all the support you need in anything you would like to do.

There are lots of ways you could get involved with Fundraising – this doesn't have to be a running event and could in fact be anything such as Sponsored Swimming, Sponsored Walks and more.

We would also be delighted to work with workplaces who may be interested in fundraising for us – this could involve sponsoring a friendship, corporate fundraising and more.

If you would like to get involved in Fundraising, or know someone who might be interested, please contact me I would be delighted to hear from you.

Best Wishes Margaret

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## My First Ultra (Just)

On Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> of May 2021, I was supposed to run the inaugural Loch Ness Ultra Marathon to raise funds for Befrienders Highland, but it was postponed until May 2022. I wanted to try something special as a training run to commemorate the date, so I toyed with the idea of running a Midnight Mountain Marathon. This idea may have been a little bit far-fetched as I hadn't been training much due to some recent health issues, but a couple of things happened that made me think I should give it a go.



I have never run through the night before, so I was a bit excited, a bit nervous, and, to be honest, a fair bit scared. I wasn't sure how things would go, or whether my body would hold up, so I decided I would do a looped run so I could bail out if I really needed to finish early.

The route I chose was the Meall a' Bhuachaille circuit starting from Glenmore Lodge. To make up the mileage to a marathon I would have to complete 5 loops which would total just over 27 miles.

<https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/cairngorms/meallabhuachaille.shtml>



### MacSween Fitness

30 May 2021 at 00:17 · Cairngorms National Park, Scotland



## Night Run

Distance

27.72 mi

Elev Gain

8,397 ft

Time

7h 37m

Achievements



I drove to Glenmore Lodge, in the Cairngorms, ready to begin my run at midnight but by the time I had faffed about my intended start time had come and gone. I set off tentatively at 12:17, jogging slowly into the darkness. The first loop was the slowest, I think the fear of unknown took its toll on this one, but each of the following loops went

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by with less resistance. I wanted to give myself the best chance of completing the challenge, so I kept it to a slow steady pace, spending the time moving mindfully and taking in the beauty of everything around me. 7 hours 37 minutes later I was back at the car having completed the 5 loops. This total of 27.72 miles is the longest I have ever run and is technically an ultra-marathon. I know in the running world they don't really recognise anything under 30 miles as an ultra, but I am claiming this run as 'My First Ultra' 😊



*Meall a' Bhuachaille summit sunrise (4am) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> loop.*

### **Carpe Diem**

The Friday before the run, I was told my bloods had normalised after several months of elevated inflammatory markers, a plethora of symptoms, and countless medical tests. Finding that out, I felt a wave of relief following the period of uncertainty, this made me think about things, it seemed to be another event that was telling me life is too short to be letting the days pass without making the most of them. That day, I was also speaking to two of our members who were telling me about their exposure therapy and how they were putting themselves in uncomfortable situations to help overcome their anxieties and fears. These conversations inspired me to do something that challenged and scared me. I feel grateful to be able to have these discussions, I am learning so much from all our friends and volunteers. Hearing about the difficulties

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people face, and their determination to overcome them, motivates me to do the same in my own life, so I thank you all.

If anyone wants to support me in raising funds for Befrienders Highland, please visit my page here <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/macswenfitness-myfirstultra>

Thank you so much to those who have already sponsored me for this challenge. As part of my training for this run, I intend to continue to create more adventures that will push me beyond what I think I can do.

All the best, Malcolm

### **Jo Page - Fundraising Walk**

Our Board Director Jo Page is walking the West Highland Way and Great Glen Way back-to-back, fundraising on behalf of Befrienders Highland. That is a total of 168 miles combined!



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Jo has already raised an amazing £1700 on her Just Giving page, but hopes to have even more donations by the time she completes her walk. Her aim was to raise enough money to train and match a new volunteer, and to support a new friendship for a year – she has now surpassed that goal, but wants to raise as much money as possible!

Jo will be starting her walk at Milngavie on 30<sup>th</sup> August, and finishing on 8<sup>th</sup> September at Inverness Castle, after a marathon 30 mile walk on the final day. Maybe some of our walk leaders or walk group members would like to join her for the final stretch from the islands to the castle on the final day?

There is also a prize draw for people who sponsor Jo -

A colorful poster for 'The Wholesome Raffle!'. On the left, a vertical list of categories is presented in white boxes with teal borders: WELLBEING, HEALTH, OUTSIDE, LEISURE, EXERCISE, SELF CARE, ORGANIC, MENTAL HEALTH, and EXPLORE. The background is teal with stylized sunburst and floral patterns in white, yellow, and pink. The title 'The Wholesome Raffle!' is written in a white cursive font on a dark teal banner. Below the title, it says 'Raising funds and awareness for' followed by the 'Befrienders HIGHLAND' logo, which features a yellow sun-like icon and the text 'Befrienders HIGHLAND' in white and yellow. A white box contains the text 'To buy tickets to WIN donate to' followed by the URL 'www.giving.com/fundraising/nessi lass'. At the bottom right, a white box lists ticket prices: '£2.50 a ticket', '5 tickets for £10', and '10 tickets for £20'.

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## **2022 Calendar**

**It's that time again!**

**We are looking for photographs for next year's BHL calendar and have chosen the theme of Historic Highland.**

**Please make sure the images are at least 5MP resolution-somewhere in the region of 3,000 x 2,000 pixels - and the file size needs to be at least 2MB. The image needs be landscape.**

**We need all entries to be submitted to us by Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> September, when they will be judged by a panel of 'experts' to decide which 12 will appear in our 2022 calendar. We are really looking forward to seeing your fabulous pictures.**

**Please submit entries by email to [Tricianorton@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:Tricianorton@befriendershighland.org.uk)**

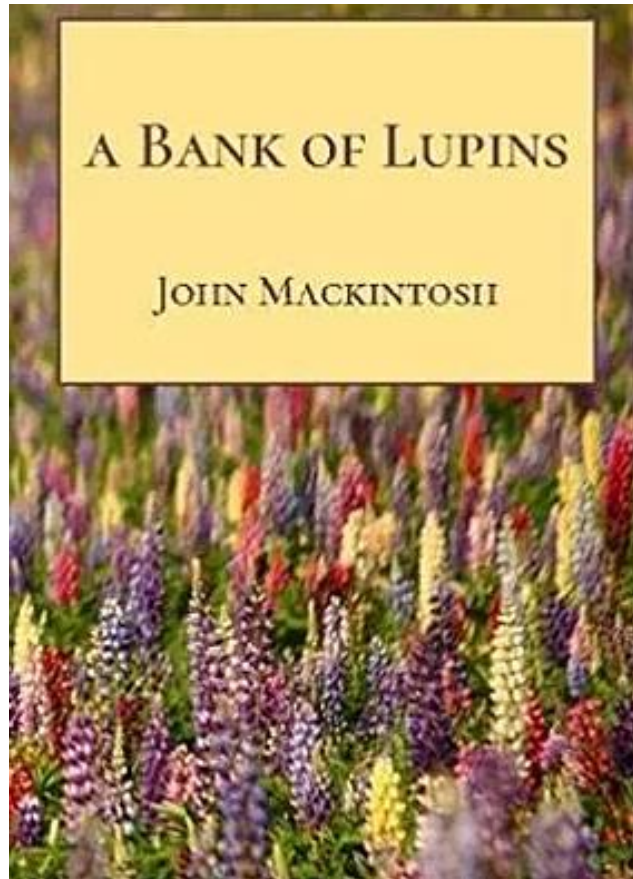


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## **Other News**

Our long serving volunteer befriender, John Mackintosh, has published a book. The book is a story about a young man who has mental health difficulties and is partly inspired by John's experiences as a befriender. It is entitled "A Bank of Lupins" and is available via his website [www.john-mackintosh.com](http://www.john-mackintosh.com).



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## **Introducing our new Administration Assistant**



Hi everyone, my name is Tricia and I joined Befrienders Highland on 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2021 as an Administration Assistant. Before this I worked in schools and in the Third Sector.

I feel very fortunate to have found a role with such a lovely team and have been impressed with the positivity of the team after what has been a challenging time for everyone during the pandemic.

I am married with two children who keep me busy along with a very energetic cocker spaniel who is very much my third child.

I love reading, walking, being outside and have recently taken up open water swimming which I'm really enjoying. I'm looking forward to meeting some of you in the future when restrictions allow.



## **Raising Awareness of Befrienders Highland**

With this edition you will find enclosed a Befrienders Highland Sticker – please display this in your car, caravan, house – anywhere you can! We want to get our name out there to let everyone know what a wonderful service we provide!

If anyone knows of friends, family or businesses who would be willing to display a sticker for us please email [Tricianorton@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:Tricianorton@befriendershighland.org.uk) and we'll send some out to them.



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## Word Search Answers

### Nature Words



RAIN  
SNAKE  
HILLS  
LEAVES  
VALLEYS  
MOUNTAINS  
RIVERS  
WORMS  
SNOW  
TREES  
STREAMS  
INSECTS  
LAKES  
WIND  
STONES  
BIRDS  
FIRES  
DIRT  
SKY  
FLOWERS

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/420414/>

## Sudoku Answers

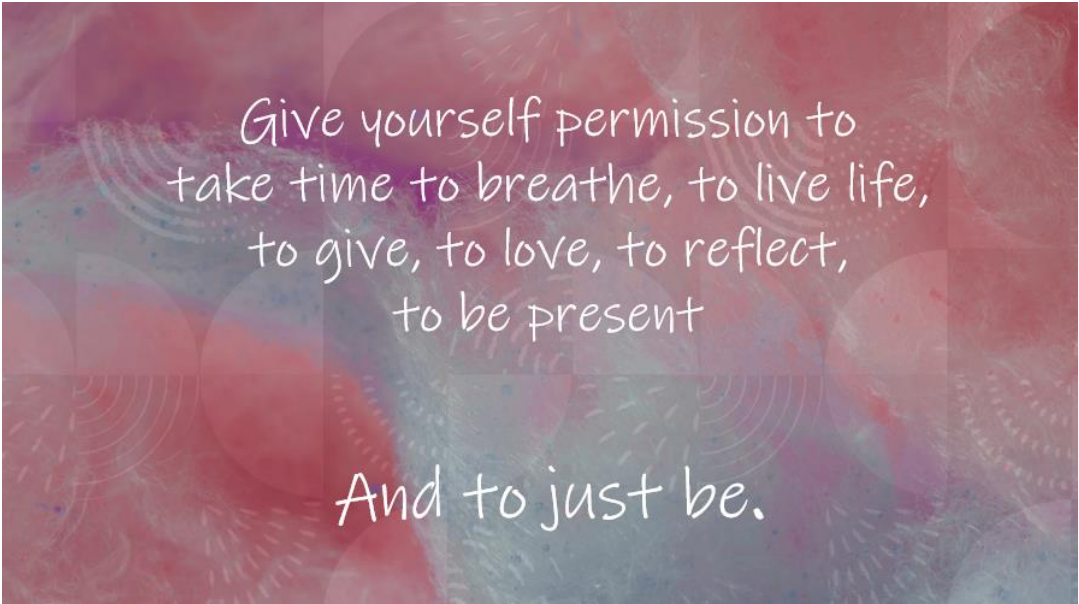
1	2	5	9	3	7	8	4	6
3	7	4	8	1	6	5	2	9
8	6	9	2	5	4	3	7	1
4	9	2	5	6	1	7	3	8
7	8	1	4	2	3	9	6	5
6	5	3	7	8	9	4	1	2
2	3	8	1	4	5	6	9	7
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7	2	4	3	9	6	5	8	1
1	8	3	4	7	5	6	9	2
2	6	5	9	3	1	4	7	8
4	7	9	6	2	8	1	5	3

1	7	2	8	5	4	9	6	3
3	5	9	6	2	7	4	8	1
6	4	8	1	9	3	7	2	5
9	2	4	7	3	5	8	1	6
5	6	3	9	8	1	2	7	4
7	8	1	2	4	6	5	3	9
4	1	6	5	7	8	3	9	2
2	3	7	4	1	9	6	5	8
8	9	5	3	6	2	1	4	7

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Give yourself permission to  
take time to breathe, to live life,  
to give, to love, to reflect,  
to be present

And to just be.

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