



## **Mental Health Matters: On being ‘good-enough’**

My old boss Carrie used to say that ‘the laundry basket is never empty’. She elaborated on



this image by saying: even if you’ve finished the laundry, chances are there is probably a tea towel under the sink that could do with a wash, or a blanket on a bed which you had been meaning to get clean. Her point was that

some tasks are never finished. Rather than seeing this as a bleak outlook, she framed it for me as an opportunity: if some work is unending, if some things will never be ‘enough’, then where do I draw the line and say ‘that’s good enough’?

Of course, Carrie was not just talking about laundry – she was talking about that voice in our heads which pushes us: do more, learn more, give more, earn more, work more. And that other voice saying ‘not good enough until... not good enough unless...’ Working together, these voices or thoughts can drive us into exhausting ourselves as we are constantly under pressure to perform activities as a way to justify ourselves, to say ‘I matter’ or ‘I belong’ or ‘I’m enough’.

So what is the antidote to this? Something which I’ve found helpful is to just be more aware of when I am feeling like I am not good enough. And the next thing I do is to remind myself that actually, I am ‘enough’, just as I am, overflowing laundry basket, unfinished to-do list, unpainted spare room and all. My

worth is not based on what I do, or contribute. I am enough, just as I am and I don't need to justify that.



And then on a practical level, I do something 'nice' for myself – sounds a bit simplistic, but 'self-care' can be a really powerful way to undo negative thinking. There are even free self-care planners out there if you want some ideas, like this one from Blurt:

<https://www.blurtitout.org/product/free-download-an-utterly-useful-self-care-planner/>

I've found Blurt (<https://www.blurtitout.org/>) to be a great organisation that raise awareness of anxiety and depression, offer useful resources and 'buddy boxes' to send to friends in the post. They spread positive messages of hope, joy and support. In an email from them back in December, they talked a bit about 'being enough' too and so I thought I would finish this post with their words of comfort:

*Do not let the New Year, New You brigade suck you into feeling as though you're not enough nor make you believe that you have to craft a list of ways you need to change. You have always been and always will be **enough**. Start dodging the people who make you feel that awful gut-wrench of not-enoughness, they don't deserve your golden magic.*

All good wishes

From Becky Hardwick

One of BradTog MHM's friends

Ps. Do let us know if you have suggestions or offers to make for future postings