



University of
South Australia

Bupa Wellbeing Competition

Fixing my garden: Becoming who I needed

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When I first arrived as an international student, I thought I had stepped into a whole new life. Everything was unfamiliar – the culture, the people, the pace of living. I believed that by crossing oceans, I had left my past behind. But I soon realised that the weight of childhood traumas, friendship betrayals, and a toxic first love had quietly travelled with me. Those experiences shaped me into someone guarded, quick to build walls, and often restless inside.

At first, my new life seemed like a dream. I was blessed with kind friends and a secure, supportive relationship. I laughed, explored, and created beautiful memories. Yet, deep down, my heart was unsettled. The past whispered doubts, keeping me on constant alert, as if happiness was too fragile to hold.

Life eventually placed me in situations where I felt distanced from everyone I leaned on. Standing alone frightened me, but in that solitude, I found something unexpected – a spark of clarity. Instead of asking “Why is this happening to me?” I began asking “What can I learn from this?” That simple shift in perspective changed everything.

I realised that the healing I sought wasn't about running away – it was about looking inward. The first step was forgiving myself: for carrying anger, for letting fear control me, and for not knowing better when I was younger. That forgiveness felt like unlocking a door I didn't know I had closed.

As I reflected deeper, I discovered something beautiful: I had grown into the elder sibling I always wished for – someone who would protect my inner child, hold her close, and guide her towards healing and remind her that she is safe. By showing up for her, I finally showed up for myself. I found the strength to heal.



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From there, I started tending to my “garden”. I prioritised my wellbeing through small, consistent steps: listening to inspiring podcasts, journalling, opening up in conversations, and moving my body. The gym became more than exercise – it became a reminder of resilience and growth. Day by day, I built new habits rooted in self-love and growth. Every action, no matter how small, was proof that I was blooming. I could understand that I am no longer just surviving – I am thriving.

One phrase became my anchor: “Fix your garden, and the right butterflies will come.” And slowly, they did.

Remember, wellbeing is a journey of small, consistent steps. Tend to your inner garden with love and patience.

Fixing your Garden

Growing into my Best Self



Become who you needed.



Forgive Yourself

Let go of the past
and begin to heal



Prioritize wellbeing

Open up,
journal
and move
your
body



"Healing by holding the little me close"

Bloom each day

Nurture
growth with
patience
and
gratitude



Fix your garden, and right
butterflies will come

