You might describe yourself via the roles you carry out, but defining yourself this way can make you think that’s all you are; the product of the labels given to you.

Your personality is far more than a description of your profession or your commitments. When you know who you are, you’ll cope with setbacks without imagining you lose yourself along with the title roles you play in life.

Do you really know who you are? You might describe yourself by talking about your job, marital status, and other roles you play like a parent, sibling, or conservative, but if these factors disappeared, you wouldn’t change. Your roles don’t define you because you exist without them.

Having a sense of identity gives you security. You can tell people you’re an accountant, parent, or describe yourself using another role, and it helps them understand a little about you. But they can’t know you from your description about your job.

Digging deeper can help you form a distinct picture of the real you. Rather than take a cursory glance through the labels society gives you, identify your talents and personality traits. Maybe you’re kind, funny, wild, or adventurous.

Uncover your qualities and you’ll find out who you are.

Further, examine your history. Perhaps you’ve travelled, or come from an unusual family background, or helped people overcome difficulties.

Pay attention to the details of your behaviours and let them show you the inner you. Remember, what you do is not associated with your work or roles. You’ll discover who you are by recognizing that what you do isn’t a responsibility.

When people want to know you, steer questions away from your roles and talk about your aspirations, achievements, and what you love about your life. They’ll see who you truly are and your sense of self will grow.

Losing a significant role in life often devastates people. A divorce, for example, is painful because they believe a major part of what makes them who they are has gone. Challenging life events are difficult, but you’ll be stronger when they happen if you recognize you exist beyond labels and roles.

Discovering who you really are
Health benefits of indoor plants

While you may be aware of the many benefits regular walks in nature have for your health, those trees, flowers, fields, and shrubs you pass by have a lot to do with that general feeling of well-being.

Surrounding yourself with plant life has a positive effect on physical, psychological, emotional as well as spiritual health. Here are some possible health benefits of spending time in a plant-filled indoor space.

Cleaner air - Research has found that plants can remove more than 80% of the pollutants found in indoor air. The number of toxins that can be eliminated depends on factors such as room size, the size of the indoor plants as well as the level of toxicity of the indoor air. Seven medium to large plants are considered sufficient to improve the air quality in a large indoor space.

Better mental health - Plants can have a positive effect on psychological well-being and mental health. A Norwegian study found that patients recuperating in a heart and lung recovery center that included 28 plants, reported greater levels of well-being after a few weeks’ stay than patients in an environment without plants.

Improved mood - Most of us will already have experienced the sense of peace and tranquility that comes with time spent in a natural setting. So, it will come as no surprise that studies repeatedly show improved mood and reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety after test subjects have taken a walk in nature. So bring that nature inside!

Peaceful sleep - Plants can help you get a good night’s sleep by clearing the air of toxins as well as by releasing fragrances that induce restfulness. Studies have shown that the scent released by some plants, particularly lavender and jasmine, leads to improved quality of sleep.

The environment that you live in plays a significant part in your mental and physical health. Surrounding yourself with greenery will have you breathing easier, sleeping more soundly and experiencing the complete well-being that only nature can provide.
Home remedies for cracked heels

Cracked heels, medically known as heel fissures, are a condition affecting men and women of all ages, lifestyles, and backgrounds. Many factors can cause fissures to develop, including nutritional deficiencies.

Fissures occur when the skin on one or both of the soles of the feet crack. The problem may worsen during the winter months.

Although cracked heels is merely an embarrassment for sufferers, many people experiencing the problem may also find the condition painful. In some cases, cracked heels may bleed, cause discomfort when walking, and cause inability to wear certain types of footwear.

When cracked heels occur because of a serious medical condition such as diabetes or skin disorder, it is advisable to get advice and treatment from your health care professional; however, there are some home remedies you can try.

Moisturize your skin
To alleviate cracked heels, the first step is treating the dry skin with the daily use of an oil-based moisturizer applied to the area at least twice per day. Before applying a moisturizer, soak your feet in warm water and Epsom salts for 15 - 20 minutes to soften the skin. Pat the skin dry with a towel before applying a moisturizer.

Change your diet
Since nutritional deficiencies may lead to cracked heels, it is important to evaluate your diet if this is a problem that you’re ready to put behind you. Your diet should be one that is high in foods fortified with calcium, vitamin E, iron, omega-3 fatty acids, and zinc.

Moisturize your skin
To alleviate cracked heels, the first step is treating the dry skin with the daily use of an oil-based moisturizer applied to the area at least twice per day. Before applying a moisturizer, soak your feet in warm water and Epsom salts for 15 - 20 minutes to soften the skin. Pat the skin dry with a towel before applying a moisturizer.

Consider living a simpler lifestyle

The modern world is complicated and stressful. Many people are far too busy. This points towards an important truth: A less complicated lifestyle just might be better.

Many people have chosen to simplify their lives and have been glad of the change. Here are several reasons why you should consider adopting a simpler lifestyle.

Better prioritization
Trying to do everything means doing nothing particularly well. While wanting to achieve a lot isn’t bad, priorities are a necessity. Some things are more important than other things. Ridding yourself of the less important stuff -- whether it’s material objects, habits, or responsibilities -- allows you to truly focus on what matters to you most. You’ll have the time to fully engage in the important stuff, free of a stress-inducing time crunch.

Less spending
A simpler life means fewer material possessions and fewer activities. In turn, this means less spending. That’s important, since most people spend way too much. Living beyond your means is a big problem. It can result in major debt, an inability to handle financial emergencies, and unpreparedness for retirement. A less wasteful, more thoughtful approach to money solves these issues, bringing with it the peace of mind provided by financial security.

Better health
A too complicated lifestyle is not conducive to good health. Being too busy makes it harder to sleep well or to get exercise. Stress, besides being miserable, is bad for health. All of these problems compound upon another: bad sleep can lead to stress, stress can trigger unhealthy eating, and insufficient exercise can contribute to unhealthy sleep patterns. Being in less of a rush also makes it easier to make healthy choices.

More time to think
Most of us could do with a little more time for thought. Racing through life without stopping to think is no way to live. Self-reflection is worthwhile since it is the only genuine path to a true understanding of yourself.

Being over-committed leaves no time to stop and consider the direction of your life, which often leads to unhappiness and self-destructive choices. Personal growth and change require careful, concentrated thought.

Heel fissures may be nothing more than a nuisance for some people, but for others, they’re definitely disturbing, painful, and a disruption to life.

No matter which category your cracked heels problem falls into, these remedies could quickly provide the resolution you seek so that a heel fissure isn’t a problem you deal with any longer than necessary.
The world of fitness is dynamic and ever-changing. Each year brings new developments and innovations to help you keep active, healthy, and work toward peak fitness. Here’s what’s likely to dominate the fitness world in 2020.

**Mind, body, spirit workouts**
Over the last couple years, mental health and well-being have come to the forefront of attention. Fitness in 2020 won’t just be about getting limber or breaking a sweat. Mindfulness practice, meditation, and relaxation techniques will integrate into fitness programs and healthy living regimes across the board.

**Mixing it up for motivation**
Should you lift weights, do cardio workouts, take up a sport, HIIT (high intensity interval training), aerobics classes, or yoga? These questions will no longer be relevant, as mixing it up with a range of different fitness techniques and disciplines will be the thing. Psychological studies show that humans crave variety, and something new helps keep you motivated.

**Hybrid Yoga**
Yoga started in India thousands of years ago and was introduced into the West in the 60s. Its popularity is likely to increase even further, but it’ll also take on new hybrid forms. Traditionally most popular among women, 2020 will see more men enjoying yoga, and yoga techniques will be introduced into HIIT routines, circuit training, and stretching regimes.

**Sleep on It**
Holistic attitudes to fitness aren’t new, but recognition of the importance of a balance between activity and rest, nutrition and workouts, physical, psychological, and emotional well-being is becoming mainstream. One aspect of well-being and fitness that’s received more attention recently is what’s known as “sleep hygiene.” How to get a good night’s sleep is likely to be included in fitness education in 2020. Already several gyms, spas, and health centers teach good sleep practice and even have dedicated sleeping zones where clients can rest after workouts.

Between a more holistic approach to well-being, more personalized and flexible options for training and working out, everyone’s chances of keeping that commitment to fitness will be improved.
Dementia and the holidays

When the holidays arrive, it is sure to bring the noise, laughter and fun it always does. And this does not have to change, even if your holidays include a loved one with dementia.

The Alzheimer’s Association reminds us that while the holiday events may be challenging, with some planning and adjusted expectations, your celebrations can still be happy, memorable occasions.

One of the aspects of celebrating that we may overlook is to prepare family and friends for the change they may see in their mom, dad, uncle or aunt, especially if the diagnosis is recent. The change may be a surprise or even a shock to some.

It might be a hard email or letter to write, but it might help to inform your prospective guests on what to expect. It also may be a great way to get the support you need to ensure a happy time for all.

Remember, your family just wants to help. If the person is in the early stages of Alzheimer’s, relatives and friends might not notice any changes. But the person with dementia may have trouble following conversation or tend to repeat him- or herself.

Alz.org recommends the following:

■ “I’m writing to let you know how things are going at our house. While we’re looking forward to your visit, we thought it might be helpful if you understood our current situation before you arrive.
■ “You may notice that ___ has changed since you last saw him/her. Among the changes you may notice are ___.
■ “I’ve enclosed a picture so you know how ___ looks now. Because ___ sometimes has problems remembering and thinking clearly, his/her behaviour is a little unpredictable.
■ “Please understand that ___ may not remember who you are and may confuse you with someone else. Please don’t feel offended by this. He/she appreciates your being with us and so do we.”
■ “Please treat ___ as you would any person. A warm smile and a gentle touch on ___’s shoulder or hand will be appreciated more than you know.”
■ “We would ask that you call when you’re nearby so we can prepare for your arrival. With your help and support, we can create a holiday memory that we’ll all treasure.”

The stress of caregiving responsibilities layered with holiday traditions can take a toll. Make sure everyone has realistic expectations. No one should expect you to maintain every holiday tradition or event.

Keep workplace holiday stress under control

As the retail preparations begin for promoting the busiest shopping event of the year, it seems as if the holiday season gets longer and longer.

That means the added workplace pressures such as the extra deadlines to make sure jobs are completed before the end of the year are also creeping up on you.

Make it stop! Here are a few ways to not let this time of year get to you from inc.com:

Master the to-do list early.

Well before the holiday season you should be preparing for the tasks you’ll have to complete. Create your list well ahead of time and then add to it as time passes. This will help you feel more organized so when the holidays come around you can hit the ground running instead of getting overwhelmed.

Do your research so you can prioritize.

This will not only give you more tools to decide what can wait and what has to be done, but it will help you anticipate anything that could go wrong; thus helping avoid even more stress in the future.

Don’t take anything too personally.

People are on edge during the holiday season, so the best thing you can do for yourself is try and not take anything personally. If someone has a short fuse, just know that they probably have a lot of stress during this time of year. Knowing this can help you become less stressed because you’ll spend less time worrying about what others think and less time feeling down about the way someone may have acted.

Increase awareness of others work.

You should give compliments and try and notice when others are helping you or helping the company. Whether you’re a co-worker or a boss, this can help lift spirits and help those feeling stressed feel more at ease knowing they’re doing a good job. That’s one less thing to worry about, and it can go a long way.
What to do to think about you

Are you someone who has trouble taking that second cup of coffee to continue staring out the window on a sunny morning? Stop feeling guilty about relaxing. Here are a couple of tips from bemorewithless.com

Explore the guilt.

When you feel bad or guilty about something try writing down all of your thoughts and feelings on paper to examine what’s going on, instead of letting your mind get carried away. Write it down and ask yourself the following questions:

- How can I feel guilty for taking care of myself?
- Why don’t I trust people enough to let them know what I need?
- If a friend needed alone time, would I fault them for it or support them?

Leave your guilt on paper and do what you need to do to take care of yourself. Remember that you aren’t just serving yourself when you set apart time to recharge, but also everyone around you. By taking care of yourself first, you’ll have more energy and attention for the people you love.

Tell people what you need.

“I need some time to be alone” doesn’t mean “I don’t want to spend time with you.” It means, “I want to take care of myself so I can enjoy the time we spend together.”

Don’t apologize for asking for what you need. Let people know if you need some time to relax or would rather stay home while they go out.

Leeks belong to the same family as onions, shallots, scallions, chives, and garlic. Leeks are usually cultivated, but wild varieties, such as the North American wild leek — also known as ramps — are gaining popularity. All varieties of leeks are nutritious and thought to offer a host of health benefits.

Leeks are low in calories but high in nutrients, particularly magnesium and vitamins A, C, and K. They boast small amounts of fibre, copper, vitamin B6, iron, and folate.

The fibre and water in leeks can promote fullness and prevent hunger, which may aid weight loss. Furthermore, this vegetable is very low in calories. One 100-gram serving of cooked leeks has only 31 calories.

Leeks contain heart-healthy plant compounds shown to reduce inflammation, cholesterol, blood pressure, the formation of blood clots, and your overall risk of heart disease.

Leeks are a good source of soluble fibre, which feeds the beneficial bacteria in your gut. In turn, these bacteria reduce inflammation and promote digestive health.

Leeks are versatile and easy to add to your diet. You can eat them on their own or add them to a variety of main or side dishes.

Nail salons can have their share of hazards

It can be one of the more relaxing “me time” appointments women like to keep; the mani-pedi. And while there is nothing wrong with taking an hour or two to spoil yourself, make sure your chosen nail salon won’t end up giving you more than you bargained for.

In Canada, health regulations are the jurisdiction of each province where Ministries of Health enact guidelines, undertake inspections and provide education to help salon establishments eliminate or mitigate the effects of communicable disease.

Where no such legislation exists, salon operators are still responsible for ensuring their business includes disinfection practices that protect their staff and customers from unnecessary exposure to germs and bacteria.

But you need to take responsibility as well. Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

Know when to skip the mani-pedi.

If you have an open wound or even a scab in your foot or hand area, postpone the appointment. And if you have diabetes or a compromised immune system, talk to your doctor first.

Ask your nail technician where they did their training.

Reputable colleges teach proper sanitation practices.

Look for the right equipment.

Tools should be stainless steel and presented in sealed packages. They should be soaked in jars of hospital-grade disinfectant.

Make sure the water is fresh.

Ask for the pedicure basin to be filled in front of you. Avoid salons with jetted tubs, as they’re harder to clean.

Don’t be shy.

If you see red flags like rusty equipment, dirty towels or someone reusing a tool after dropping it on the floor, speak up.

energy zone

Take another look at leeks

Leeks belong to the same family as onions, shallots, scallions, chives, and garlic. Leeks are usually cultivated, but wild varieties, such as the North American wild leek — also known as ramps — are gaining popularity. All varieties of leeks are nutritious and thought to offer a host of health benefits.

Leeks are low in calories but high in nutrients, particularly magnesium and vitamins A, C, and K. They boast small amounts of fibre, copper, vitamin B6, iron, and folate.

The fibre and water in leeks can promote fullness and prevent hunger, which may aid weight loss. Furthermore, this vegetable is very low in calories. One 100-gram serving of cooked leeks has only 31 calories.

Leeks contain heart-healthy plant compounds shown to reduce inflammation, cholesterol, blood pressure, the formation of blood clots, and your overall risk of heart disease.

Leeks are a good source of soluble fibre, which feeds the beneficial bacteria in your gut. In turn, these bacteria reduce inflammation and promote digestive health.

Leeks are versatile and easy to add to your diet. You can eat them on their own or add them to a variety of main or side dishes.