

## HOME

*By Ama Clarke, Talk Therapist, CHC-Lee*

***Home comes in all shapes and sizes. It's where we keep our stuff, where we feel safe and gives us a sense of belonging.*** It can be the room or the flat or the house where we grew up, or the place we return to night after night for rest and rejuvenation.



Home doesn't come easy – we have to make it.

We put our personalities, our taste and the pattern of our lives up against the walls, the windows and the floorspace of the places where we live. We order our steps, the patter of our families and the coming and going of our various routines. We breathe a sigh of relief when we enter, take a last careful look when we leave.

Home is a place of projects, of things we'll get around to and things we are doing to make home even sweeter. We can sit in our favourite chair and admire the intricacies of the feature wall or the way the light bounces back from the front room. We notice when a treasured plant needs a little water, when the shoes in the hallway have escaped their tidy row, or the hum of the contented refrigerator. Home is all the little details about us.

Most of us have busy lives away from home, and are used to spending at least a third of our days away. We are working, at school, running errands, visiting friends and loved ones, worshipping, exercising, commuting, shopping and running around. We do all this, and come home. Get ready for the next thing, go out and return again on a seemingly endless cycle.

Some of us though spend most or all of our time at home. We take care of others, nurse wounds, feel anxious about the world outside or simply count down the days. Home is a refuge, home is a world.

Staying home is a new discipline. We're not used to it. Perhaps we feel bewildered at the prospect, perhaps even a mild panic that the things that make us *us* all take place outside. Who will we be if we are only at home? How will we be?

Will we have everything we need?

How will we put our arms around loved ones, to feel the warmth of their living and

breathing?  
*What are we missing?*

Perhaps being told to stay home feels like a punishment. That our freedom is taken away and we have a sense of confinement. Can we live with this? Or do we feel compelled to break out and do our own thing, regardless of the risk to ourselves or others.

Perhaps home never was a comfy, warm place but instead addled by things that need fixing, too little space or bad memories. What can you do now to remedy the situation? What will need the help of others? What can you make peace with?

Perhaps you are so connected to your external routine that the prospect of not going out makes you resent being home. Perhaps it's the sense that your environment has become smaller. Or that you've run out of things to do. Home is very much a feeling, not just doing.

We may be here for a while: making ourselves as comfortable as possible. Does that mean making it beautiful? Clean? Hassle-free? Removing that pile of clothes/books/dishes and getting it out of your way. You're here now. Feeling safe, relaxed and cared for. You are making it so.



Think about home as not just the four walls but the feeling it gives you. The welcome of your favourite slippers, the ease of your comfy chair or the aroma of a meal you've cooked yourself. The embrace of your loved ones, the quiet presence of a flatmate or the familiar reassurance of your own company.

A place to call your own.

Spending more time at home is spending more time with you. Entertaining your own moods and catching up on some of the things you've been meaning to do. Make friends with yourself again, make friends with home again and fill your environment with things that will nurture you. Visualise the home that makes you feel safe, secure and loved.

*Affirmation: I am grateful for my home.*