



This week...

Canary in a Coal Mine

Once upon a time, many years ago, during a very, very busy time in a leader's life, their coach told them about the ***Canary in a Coal Mine*** notion. The notion goes like this:

We should all identify one or two canaries in our lives that are just for our own self-care or pleasure that we make time for every week or two. Similar to the history of the canary being an early warning sign of low oxygen danger in the coal mines, if we are not tending to our 'canaries', our health and well-being are at risk.

Our canaries are unique and personal to each and every one of us. Your canary does not have to be large – it can just be something small and bright in your life.

Here are some examples:

- Going for a one-hour bike ride
- Playing a board game with your family
- Getting a manicure
- Having a 30-minute call with a dear friend
- Writing in a journal
- Woodworking
- Cooking or baking a new dish

The list is endless. So, what is your passion?

The point is simply this: a canary is something that brings you joy and reprieve, and is important to make it a priority. Start with one canary as a goal and, if you are successful,

add one more. Too many canaries may be too challenging and frustrating to keep up – like a flock of birds – so keep it simple!

Once you recognize your canary, be diligent in making it a routine. Schedule it in your calendar and do not over-book it. Honour it as you would a commitment to a friend or a work colleague. Only cancel the appointment if there is an emergency or something very dire. And if you cancel – don't forget to reschedule.

If you miss your canary two times in a row, stop and assess what is happening in your world. Before all your 'oxygen' is gone, ask yourself: *What needs to change in order for my canary to become my priority?*

So, what is your CANARY?

If you would like to contribute, or have ideas about what you would like to see in the [ReFresh](#) series, we would love to hear from you: contact rochelle@bcpvpa.bc.ca.