

Self-Care Connection and Rituals

Self-care can look different for everyone, but to count as self-care, the behavior should promote health and happiness. It can be inclusive to say that anything you do for yourself that feels nourishing.

There are several different categories of self-care:

EMOTIONAL self-care, such as self-talk, weekly solo time for self, saying “no” to things that cause unnecessary stress, giving yourself permission to take a pause or setting up a date with a friend.

PHYSICAL self-care, such as prioritizing sleep, adopting an exercise routine you can stick with, or choosing healthy and nourishing food over highly processed ones.

SPIRITUAL self-care, such as spending time in nature, meditation, journaling, creating a vision board, incorporating regular acts of kindness or gratitude.

Many common self-care practices have been linked to longevity, depending on abiding by healthy practices such as exercising, not smoking, and following a healthy diet. Embracing a healthy lifestyle all around and paying attention to your unique answers to questions (such as “What brings me satisfaction?”) and then finding ways to get there.

Your physical and mental health needs change from day to day, week to week, as the practices you do that count as self-care need to evolve as well. There is no one size fits all, and it is important to acknowledge that a self-care routine can work until it doesn’t, therefore taking the refreshing steps to adjust your unique routine. Regularly checking in with yourself, your self-care practices, and your ongoing needs, can help boost your health and wellness. It’s important to acknowledge that just because a self-care routine is challenging or difficult in and of itself isn’t a reason that routine necessarily isn’t working. Not every routine that is good for you will be enjoyable, but that doesn’t mean that these practices to stay well are not serving you over the long run.

Healthy self-care means treating yourself like someone you love and want the best for. A self-care routine includes caring for both your present and your future self.

To stick with challenging routines, consider the following:

- 1) Look for moderation. Be flexible with your exercise options as energy and time permits. Healthy eating could be nutritious food 80 percent of the time and being more flexible 20 percent of the time.
- 2) Be an observer of your own choices. Recognize the increased symptoms of not making self-care a priority as potentially hurting your health over the long run.
- 3) Be open-minded. Try something new, focus on the positives. Make it obvious, prepare the night before. Start small with a new habit and master the habit of showing up for yourself. Build a framework that works for you.

- 4) Give yourself lots of options. Test out a variety of choices, try out a self-care strategy three times to see if it is energizing and enjoyable. Questions like, “What feels like fun to me? What makes me lose track of time? What comes naturally to me?”. Whenever you feel authentic and genuine, you are headed in the right direction.
- 5) Just say NO. We have a compulsive tendency to fill our schedules with things that don’t need to be in there. Look at your calendar and review the optional stress inducing and stress busting routines. Change what you can say no to or even ask for help when available.
- 6) Pay attention to how you’re feeling. Acknowledge how you are feeling and allow yourself the permission to try something new or stick with things that are tough, knowing it will pay off in the long run. Keep an open mind to what may provide you with the soothing coping mechanisms needed in the moment you are in.
- 7) Reward yourself! Your brain is a reward detector. Feelings of pleasure are part of the feedback mechanism that helps your brain distinguish useful actions for a habit cycle. Treat yourself in your special way of self as you truly benefit from the daily rewards of self-care.

Positive energy reminders

The three C’s in life: Choice, Chance, Change.

You must make the Choice, to take the Chance, if you want anything to Change.

Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.

Health does not always come from medicine. Most of the time it comes from peace of mind, peace in the heart, peace of the soul. It comes from laughter and love for self. Peace is an ongoing journey.

To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we won’t be able to keep the mind strong and clear.

Loving yourself isn’t vanity. It’s sanity.

Part of courage is simple consistency.

Suggested reading:

Atomic Habits – Tiny changes, Remarkable Results. Author: James Clear

Set Boundaries, Find Peace – A guide to reclaiming yourself. Author: Nedra Glover Tawwab

Wellness through Healthy Choices and Integrative Medicine

- Health is much more dependent on our habits and nutrition than it is on medicine
- Good nutrition creates health in all areas of our existence; all parts are interconnected
- Take every opportunity to be in nature; nature heals
- Have faith in yourself
- Learn to meditate; silence is the birthplace of happiness
- Listen to music that resonates with you to therapeutically balance body and mind
- Notice your thoughts that are creating resistance and interfering with healing, and make the shift to pure healing intention
- Start a gratitude journal. Notice the small pleasures in life that spark joy, from activities with others or solo time. Joy is not cure all, it's something personal to you through times of exhaustion and overwhelm
- Everyday give your life meaning with a word, a line, an affirmation or a prayer such as, "As I embrace life, life embraces me"
- Be kind; the positive effects of kindness on the immune system have been proven in research studies
- The journey to health is about making lifestyle changes and learning how to deal with the ups and downs along the way.

Quote by Maya Angelou-

