



TAKE CARE OF

YOURSELF

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We often get caught up in all that we have to do and be in our daily lives that there doesn't seem to be enough time left over to take care of ourselves and our own needs.

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However, taking good care of ourselves is essential because, if we don't adequately take care of ourselves, we won't be able to take care of the other important things in our lives.

Here are some strategies to help you to nurture yourself and to recharge your batteries:

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Get enough sleep and rest.

While how much is “enough” may vary between people, getting a sufficient amount of sleep (6+ hours) per night is very important to good overall health. Lack of sleep can make a good situation less enjoyable due to fatigue and difficulty concentrating, and can make a bad situation worse for the same reasons.

Spend time with people that you enjoy.

We, as humans, are social creatures, and as such, we often need to spend some quality time with those who are significant to us. Whether we prefer large social settings or hanging out with a few family members or friends, fun social contact can do a lot to replenish us emotionally.

Don't focus on deficits.

No matter what commodity you're talking about (e.g., love, money, sexy, success), there will always be more that you don't have than what you do have. If your annual salary is one million dollars, you can make yourself miserable if you only focused on why you're not earning two million dollars per year. Recognize what you have, acknowledge it, and show respect for its value.

Let go of the past.

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Be a responsible person.

Be responsible for what you do, how you feel, and what you think, and let others do the same for themselves. Do what is right for you, and try to affiliate with others who also practice this healthy behavioral style.



Recognize the good you've done and the strides you've made.

Many people are unhappy on their journey in life because they keep looking ahead at how far they still have to go. They would probably feel better if they occasionally looked behind them to see how far they've come. Acknowledge your progress, your health (both emotional and physical), your accomplishments, and the fact that you haven't given up.

Speak better to yourself about yourself.

Become more aware of what you think to yourself about how you are, who you are, how you behave, and how worthy you are. Many people are prone to think to themselves, "I can't believe I was stupid enough to do that", instead of, "What I did didn't get me the results I wanted". Eliminate the self-talk that tears you down and makes you feel worse.

Take yourself out of damaging situations.

If a situation is full of intense and negative emotions, or if it is escalating into something that is potentially damaging to you, temporarily (at least) take yourself out of it. Walk away from such situations until it calms down and until you can get a better perspective on what's going on. Many people feel pressured into doing things or into making decisions on-the-spot. Few situations require that you make urgent and immediate decisions. When possible, take a little time, step back, and review your options.

Develop a plan for your near-future.

Picture where you want to be (a week, a month or a year) from now, and develop a realistic, structured plan to help you get there. Develop the plan such that you can do something related to it on a daily or weekly basis.



Think about which people are in your support system.

Not simply for stress management but as a life exercise, take a few minutes to quietly reflect on which supportive and nurturing people are in your life. Take some time to acknowledge those people who come to mind, and make a point to spend some amount of time with them and enjoy their company. If no one comes to mind, evaluate some possible reasons why there is a lack of social support. If there is a lack of support, consider meeting new people by engaging in activities that you don't ordinarily do. Also, try getting involved in social or recreational activities, groups, and clubs. The Friday edition of many newspapers has a section on local happenings, concerts, cultural events, and social organizations.

“Selfish” is not always a bad word.

Typically, when a person is seen as “selfish”, he or she cares only about his or her feelings and happiness, not anyone else's. A positive spin is that a person is being “selfish” by taking care of self in healthy and constructive ways, sometimes in the face of opposition from others. In this light, a selfish person chooses to do healthy things despite other people, not at the expense of other people.

Don't always run away from negative feelings.

A common reaction to the experience of negative feelings (e.g., loneliness, anger, fear, or grief) is to avoid them, to distract ourselves so that we can deny or ignore them. Although this can be an effective and necessary coping strategy, at times it may be healthier and more productive to simply let the feelings happen as they will. Keeping in mind that the negative feelings will eventually pass, we develop a means of working through and dealing with negative emotions instead of simply escaping from them.