

5 Self-care Solutions to Transform Your Life

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What IS Self-care and Why Does It Matter?

"Self-care": *An activity that we **deliberately** engage in to take care of our mental, emotional and physical health.*

Years ago, I didn't know what Self-care was and when I heard the term, it always seemed so, well... selfish. I was a stay-at-home mom, doing my very best to care for my husband, children and homestead. **I was MUCH too busy to think about myself!**

As you can predict, this way of living left me **STRESSED, EXHAUSTED and OVERWHELMED.**

Oh? Does that sound familiar? Are you feeling that way right now? Well, I've got good news. I've been in your shoes and I can help.

My Self-care "**aha!**" moment came when our family was sitting on an airplane, waiting for take-off. As I listened to the Flight Attendant drone on about putting your OWN oxygen mask on BEFORE helping others, **the light bulb went off.**

I realized I HAD to take care of my own needs before I could take care of anyone else. Suddenly, Self-care no longer seemed selfish - it became essential!

Another way to see it is to think of yourself as a vessel or cup. **How can you be expected to pour out anything unless you are filled up first?** It's just not possible!

If we want to be our best selves and be able to care for our loved ones, **we must love ourselves first...** that means showing ourselves the same love and tenderness we give to our nearest and dearest, so that our "cup is filled" and our oxygen mask is firmly in place.

Over the years, I have discovered some Self-care solutions that have transformed my life. I can't wait to share them with you!

Please read through the questions and answer honestly. Then, **complete the last page, the "Self-care Plan"**, and share with a friend (or me! I would love to help you on this journey) who will keep you accountable!

-Lori

P.S. If you have any questions or want to share ideas/insights, contact me at:

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Self-care Questions to Ponder

Here are just a few questions to ponder before we get started. Fill them out in the space provided below.

1. The Bible says to "love others as you love yourself". Am I loving myself? Would I dare treat others the way I treat myself?

2. What areas of my life are OUT of my control?

3. What areas of my life are UNDER my control?

4. What brings me joy and contentment?

5. What triggers feelings of despair, helplessness and resentment?

Self-care Solution #1: Get Outside

Never underestimate the power of the outdoors to boost your mood and help you refocus your energy. Be intentional about spending time outside each day, whether it's going to a short walk or simply sitting on a bench for 5 minutes. Take a deep breath. Listen and look. Observe. Remove all distractions, like smart phones or iPods. Be aware of your surroundings and pay attention.

1. Am I doing this already? Is it working for me or not?

2. When/where could I schedule some outdoor time?

Self-care Solution #2: Create Rituals

On those hard days, it's nice to know there is something to look forward to. Rituals are soothing and comforting, and make us feel loved and appreciated. Your rituals can be incredibly simple, such as: preparing a cup of tea in the afternoon, lighting a candle at a certain time of day, reading a book, meeting a friend for coffee, a scheduled date night, or even watching a favorite TV show. It doesn't really matter WHAT it is, as long as you are intentional about it, which means the activity is pre-planned or pre-arranged.

1. Do I already have rituals? If so, what are they?

2. What are some new rituals I would like to incorporate into my life?

Self-care Solution #3: Say "No"

This solution can feel counter-cultural in our society that worships multi-tasking and achievement. We want to prove that we are competent and capable, and surely we are... but our lives become chaotic and crazy because of it. "No" sounds negative, but in reality it's a very positive word. When I say "No" to another activity, it means I'm saying "Yes" to the things that really matter in life. "Yes" to family dinner and important conversations. "Yes" to breathing room and peace. "Yes" to a more balanced, intentional life.

1. What do I need to say "no" to?

2. When I say "no", what am I saying "yes" to?

Self-care Solution #4: Practice Meditation

You can call it meditation or you can call it prayer. Whatever you call it, it's called "practice" for a reason. The practice of sitting in silent expectation and focusing your thoughts on one idea/concept is powerful...yet, it's not easy. Your mind may wander... but that is ok. Every time you find yourself off track, redirect your thoughts back to the central idea. That is the whole point of meditation - exercising and training your brain to focus for extended periods of time. I like to find a verse or passage to focus on. I started by setting a timer for 2 minutes and gradually working my way up to 15 minutes (it's a practice, remember). Try to find a special place where you can be alone, even if it means leaving for work 10 minutes early so you can sit in your car in the parking lot at work! There is no "Goal" for meditation. You might walk away with brilliant insights one day and nothing the next. That's ok! Just like practicing any skill, you'll have good and bad days... but all practice is helpful.

1. Could I find 3 minutes a day to sit in silence, alone?

2. When/where will I meditate?

3. What verse/passage/idea/theme do I want to meditate on?

Self-care Solution # 5: Make Space for Beauty

Actively pursue things that make you feel alive... and then pause to truly appreciate it. This means different things for different people, but here are a few ideas:

- Purchase flowers or plants to bring nature's beauty into your living space (this year, I committed to having fresh flowers in my house every day from May until October)
- Set up a bird feeder where you can watch regularly
- Cook/prepare food and pay attention to its beauty. It nourishes the body and soul.
- Listen to music
- Decorate your home with items that bring you joy on a daily basis.
- Light a scented candle.

1. What makes me feel alive?

2. How could I incorporate these things into my daily life?

Self-care Plan

This plan is NOT designed to add more pressure to your life. Do not beat yourself up when you don't meet your goals. It truly IS the effort that counts. Living with intention means living with awareness, always trying to move forward, instead of sleepwalking through life.

1. GET OUTSIDE: I will aim to spend _____ minutes/hours outside each day. I will do this during the _____ (time of day - morning, afternoon, evening, etc.). My outdoor time will take place in/at _____ (my backyard, the park, my neighborhood, etc.).

2. CREATE RITUALS: I will aim to engage in _____ (ritual of your choice) every day/week/month/year (circle one). It will require these preparations:

_____ (saving for vacation/activities, hiring a babysitter, putting kids down for a nap, clearing my schedule, going to bed on time, avoiding distractions, etc.).

3. SAY "NO": I will say "No" to _____ so that I can say "Yes" to _____.

4. PRACTICE MEDITATION: I will set aside _____ minutes in the _____ (morning, afternoon, evening, etc.) to meditate on _____ (verse, passage, quote, etc.). In order to make time for this, I need to _____ (wake up early, turn off my phone, etc.).

5. SEEK BEAUTY: Since the beauty of _____ brings me such joy, I will seek to intentionally _____ (action plan) so I can revel in it more often.

Self-care requires you to be intentional, purposeful and thoughtful.