

SELF-CARE E-BOOK

Self-Care Is Not Selfish!



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Sometimes You Just Need to Take a Time-Out

Are you feeling anxious, stressed, depleted, or even agitated? Perhaps it is time to give yourself a time-out.

When life becomes unmanageable and we feel overwhelmed by the stressors and cares of this life, it may be time to pull back and take care of yourself. If you are "drowning" how can you expect yourself to help anyone else? Sometimes we have to do the important job of taking care of ourselves. However, we often don't take the necessary time to do this because we believe we would be selfish.

We must love ourselves enough to know when we are no longer functioning in full capacity and to then pursue what is needed to regain balance in our lives. Many occurrences can happen in life that can throw us off balance—illness of a loved one, loss of any type, dealing with dysfunctional loved ones, transitions and changes in life, or any type of reoccurring stressful situation.

You will know that you need a time-out when you experience at least 3 of the following:

1. Fatigue or extreme tiredness
2. Headaches and/or pain in the body
3. Agitation, irritations, and/or anger
4. Feeling overwhelmed
5. Disrupted sleeping patterns and/or restlessness
6. Difficulty concentrating or focusing
7. Feeling flat, sad, or even depressed

This list is not exhaustive, there can be other signs that you need a time-out. Look for consistent changes to your normal behavior and emotions as an indicator it's time to take care of your needs.

We all have needs, emotional, physical, and spiritual. There are times that we get so focused on others' needs (which could be codependent behaviors) that we neglect our own needs. Neglecting our needs is not healthy and can create codependency tendencies to worsen.

Daily Self-Check

Ask yourself the following questions daily: Do I have energy? Am I irritable, or feeling angry? Did I sleep well and do I feel rested? Where is my focus? Am I sad, depressed or feeling anxious?

If you answered the above questions in a negative way then stop and take a mental inventory of how, when and where you began to get depleted.

Next, practice giving yourself permission to take care of your needs. Sometimes you may only need an hour but depending on your needs and how long you have neglected yourself you may need a day or several days to recover. There are times that you have been so depleted that you will need much longer than several days. Ask the Holy Spirit what He would have you to do to take care of you so that you can get back to advancing His Kingdom.

Reflect and Journal

1. Do I need a time-out? How do I know that I need a time-out?
2. What can I do if I need a time-out?

Counselor's Corner: The Importance of Practicing Self-Care While Dealing With Stressors

Self-care is caring for ourselves—physically, mentally, and spiritually. It means giving ourselves the same grace, compassion, and care we give others. The year 2020 brought an abundance of stress into our lives, and if you are dealing with additional stressors such as the death of a loved one or coping with a loved one that is sick the need for self-care is imperative.

Self-care has to be practiced and put into our schedule, as this is not normal for most people to do as we believe we should help others and put their needs above our own. We are no good to others when we are tired and worn-out. You can't give to others when your "cup is empty."

Self-care helps us to recharge and refuel so we can face those difficulties and challenging circumstances in our lives. Without self-care, you are prone to burn-out, exhaustion, and possibly depression. Self-care is not just having a spa day, it is also being able to set boundaries and say, "No" when needed. Practicing self-care requires you to check-in with yourself to see how you are doing.

Ask yourself these following questions as you check-in with yourself:

1. Do I feel tired/fatigued?
2. Do I feel irritable or angry?
3. Do I have a decrease in motivation and/or productivity?
4. Do I feel a general sense of malaise?
5. Do I feel anxious and worrying more than usual?
6. Do I feel sad or depressed?

7. Do I have difficulty falling or staying asleep?
8. Do I have pains anywhere in my body—head, back, shoulders, stomach.

If you answered yes to most of the above questions it's time to practice some self-care. Practicing regular self-care is important especially if you are undergoing any major type of stressors in your life.

What is Self-Care?

- Engaging in self-care is doing the things that take care of your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health. Sometimes our circumstances and feelings become overwhelming, and we need to practice self-care.
- Self-care is engaging in activities that promote well-being, and reduces stress.
- Self-care reminds you and others that your needs are a priority.
- Self-care is not just about relaxing (although you can certainly do that at times), but it is more about finding ways to take care of your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health.
- Self-care is about bringing balance into your life in every area so that you can be the best version of you.

Why is Self-Care Important and the Benefits to Regular Self-Care?

1. **Distraction and Coping:** Self-care can be used as a distraction from your current emotions until you are better able to cope. When your level of distress is too high, you very likely may not be able to handle a situation and may need ways to bring your emotional state down.
2. **Clinically Proven Results:** Engaging in regular self-care has been clinically proven to reduce or to eliminate anxiety, depression, reduce

stress, improve concentration, minimize frustration and anger, increase happiness, and improve energy.

3. **Long-term Benefits:** Better management of diseases and chronic illnesses, prevention of diseases in the future, healthier relationships, and reduction of burnout.
4. **Increased Self-Worth:** Self-care increases your self-worth. The more you take care of yourself, the better you will feel about who you are.

When you regularly engage in self-care practices you not only reduce your level of stress, but enhance your physical health and emotional well-being.

Barriers to Self-Care

1. **Low self-esteem:** Those that are overly critical or have a low self-worth often find it difficult to engage in taking care of themselves. This could be rooted in adverse childhood experiences and can be further addressed in 1:1 coaching or counseling.
2. **Feeling guilty:** Putting others first is common for a lot of people, especially women, Christians, and caretakers.
3. **Time constraints:** Life gets busy, and everything else becomes a priority on our schedules other than self-care.
4. **A lack of understanding:** Many people don't really understand what self-care is, and are not aware of the overall benefits to regular self-care. Self-care is not overindulgence in food, alcohol, TV, or shopping.
5. **A lack of planning:** You have to put self-care on your schedule or it very likely will get consumed with others' needs and desires for you.

Christians and Self-Care

Jesus took time to get away from the crowds and get alone to be with the Father. You cannot serve others effectively for the Kingdom of God if you are tired, grumpy, angry, or resentful. You will be able to get refreshed and renewed as you take care of your needs, so you can in turn take care of others' needs. It is okay and healthy for Christians to engage in self-care so that they in-turn can love and serve others the way Christ would.

How Often to Practice Self-Care?

Aim for 30 minutes a day. However, if your circumstances are more challenging you may need to add more time, such as when you are doing grief work, or have a chronic illness.

Examples of Self-Care

There are no particular activities that are better than others, you will have to find what works best for you. Listed below are a few examples to get you started:

- Cook or bake
- Get a massage
- Take a bubble bath (epsom salt and essential oils)
- Go for a walk
- Take a picnic
- Ride a bike
- Just be in nature
- Play a game
- Read
- Garden/plant
- Take a nap
- Light a candle and listen to worship music
- Journal
- Go out to eat

- Listen to music
- Create/make art
- Watch a comedy or a good movie
- Spend time alone with God
- Be still and listen to soaking music
- Exercise

Takeaways About Self-Care

By taking some time out to recharge regularly you may relieve the pressures of everyday life and reset yourself to getting back to a healthy point. Burning the "candle at both ends" comes with significant consequences that can include burnout, depression, anxiety, and resentment. Self-care is vital for building resilience towards stressors in life that you cannot eliminate.

I hope you enjoyed reading about self-care! Let me know how this e-book helped, and what you are applying to your life.

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In addition, if you may need some extra support through online coaching for women, contact me at the above email or go to my website.

www.stephaniereck.com