



I have read 20 self-help books so I know how to look after myself. I give all my time to people who drain me but it is OK because I eat clean and exercise regularly so therefore I am looking after myself...Sound familiar? Many of us, including myself, don't take an all-round or holistic approach to self-care. We can convince ourselves that one aspect of our life that is positive makes up for the other aspects that are negative. True self-care is feeling secure in ourselves and in all areas of life. When we truly care and love ourselves, we can reach great heights of success and in turn can be a positive guiding light to help others do the same.

These have been my five greatest learnings in self-care for success.

1. Discover Your Emotions

When I wasn't looking after my health and diet, which caused me to be sluggish and overweight I was less productive in my work and private practice. When I became less productive my income began to suffer. When my income began to suffer I found it hard to pay my bills and outgoings. When this happened I began to become stressed and feel down. When I became down I didn't really want to go out and see people and had no desire to give energy to my relationship and so on.

The issue here was that I didn't love or care for myself enough in the first place which led to a series of events spiralling down to a negative level. From my experience, and that of my clients, I have seen that the true cause of lack of self-care is a deeper emotional issue. Why is that we don't want to care for ourselves or neglect to prioritise that part of our life and time? Do we not like ourselves? What happened to make us talk negatively to ourselves?

Be very honest and gentle with yourself through this discovery process and exploration of it. It may helpful to have the assistance of a therapist or coach at this time to help you. When we know why we do something, we can work on dealing with the core issue.

2. Get Clear with the Wheel of Life

The Wheel of Life is a wonderful concept created by Paul J. Meyer that Coaches often use to allow you to get clear and focused. Divide your life into 8 Categories and grade each of these categories from 0 – 10 (0 being the lowest and 10 being the highest):

- Health/Well Being
- Career
- Finance
- Romance/Love
- Family and Friendships
- Personal Development
- Fun and Recreation and
- Physical Environment

This exercise will allow you to assess exactly where your life is now and what areas need more attention and care.

3. Create Stronger Boundaries

Many people believe or are made to feel that if they look after themselves that they are 'selfish'. Often times my clients tell me that they are afraid to look after themselves for fear of letting anyone else down. Why, however, would you let YOURSELF down? Is your personal happiness secondary to someone else's personal happiness?

Saying 'yes' to always please people, spending time around people that drain you and doing things that you don't want to do are definitely not going to make you feel safe and secure in yourself. Obviously, it is important to help others, be of service to the world and be there for people, but in a way that is comfortable to you and once you are giving yourself equal time and attention.

4. Create a Self-Care Practice by Taking Inspired Action

Recently, while teaching a meditation class to a corporate firm one lady told me that she found that trying to meditate seemed like another thing on her 'to do list'. That is perfectly understandable, particularly if she didn't really like meditating. When we take inspired action (action that feels good and realistic to us) we have more chance of actually completing things. For example, there is no point saying that you will look after yourself more by going to the gym when you absolute hate doing exercise in doors! You will not go and then feel bad about yourself as well as potentially feeling guilt. This guilt and bad feeling will lead to other emotions and behaviours and we start the lack of self-care cycle again.

Every one of us enjoy different things and by trying to cultivate a practice that feels great to us, we will be more likely to stick to it.

5. Give Yourself Permission

The final step and biggest way you can create more self-care, be happier and have more success is by allowing yourself to do what you need to do, in a way that is authentic and ethical. Give yourself permission to think differently, change your beliefs, do things that you love and that bring

joy to your life and give yourself permission to believe you deserve to love yourself wholly and completely.