

Workshop VI SELF CARE

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I begin with the basics of self-care: doing more of what already is working well for you to conserve, invigorate, and continually replenish your resources. Your self-esteem depends on it.

Each moment of kindness immediately brings our lives into perspective. Attitudes that you surround yourself with are important. They either sustain you (kindness, pleasantness, niceness...) or they drain you (frustration, anger, hopelessness...). This is important information. You always have a choice, what you choose to do with the information is firmly up to you.

I know that you already have people surrounding you whom are contributing to your mental, physical, and spiritual health (or illness). As I am a counsellor, I will focus on your mental and emotional well-being. I believe we all need to know how to gather good and useful information and then learn how to use it to our benefit. In this issue, I invite you to look at your present life for the details of whom and what brings you good energy.

Who are the people who make you feel better? Sometimes it is that pleasant person at the check out counter or the friendly neighbor across the fence or the nice teller at the bank. Each of these people is your ever so subtle hidden moments of joy and pleasure. When you are living in intensity or a long drawn-out invisible struggle, you need many of these moments of kindness. Remember that without you there is one less person to care in this world: we need you well.

Self-care #1: I urge you to simply notice who brings you energy and who doesn't. This valuable information will help you enormously. You probably are doing it somewhat unconsciously now but here I encourage you to build yourself a healthy foundation so you can continue to care for another without falling apart yourself. So, systematically identify all those people in your life who bring you energy. Record this information somewhere (perhaps in a blank book titled Self-Care. By choosing to be with these people your life will be more pleasant as you conserve and invigorate your energy. Limiting your contact with those who drain your energy (less frequently and/or less time spent) helps too.

Self-care #2: I encourage you to simply notice what brings you energy and/or good feelings. This might be good music, chocolate, pattering about in the garden, a good book, a stroll or run by the ocean... Make up a list of at least 10 activities that bring you pleasure. Record this information in your Self-Care book. By choosing to incorporate at least one of these activities every day, you are replenishing your energy.

Is it that easy? YES and there's more to come! These 2 small pieces of homework underscore how to make your life more pleasurable despite the pressures. You are becoming more purposeful in living your life well as you pursue your caregiving role. And just to let you know, when you treat yourself well, you automatically treat others better too. Everyone benefits.