

Self-Care:

A gentle pace and a nourishing lifestyle accelerate our healing.

Learning to listen to and be gentle with ourselves enables us to heal more quickly and with greater resilience. Enhancing our ability to listen to our bodies and nourish them is a vital part of this. Self-care may be difficult at first but it becomes easier over time as it is habituated. Self-care can become a nurturing habit, and can be a lifelong growth process.

Self-care encompasses nourishing our body, our mind and our spirit. Examples of nourishing our body include healthy diet, regular moderate exercise, and sufficient sleep. Nourishing our mind and spirit can include passion-driven work, positive self talk, fun, play, healthy hugs, supportive relationships, pets, helping others, spiritual practice, time in nature, etc.

A vital component of self-care is learning to listen to our bodies. It's a skill that requires focus. Some examples of listening to our bodies include: Tuning in to physical and emotional sensations (i.e., tension, energy level, temperature, comfort, hunger, pain, etc.).

A key component of self-care is gentleness. Being gentle with ourselves is actually the fastest and easiest way to heal. As contradictory as this may seem, it's actually true. For example, if we believe we are not good enough as we are and strive for that ever elusive state of perfection, we may be buying into myths learned in our childhoods. Inevitably, we fall short in our efforts, which usually leads to feelings of negativity and low self worth and we wind up back at square one having not attained our goals. If we attempt to force healing to happen, we can cause damage to ourselves along the way, which also creates resistance to healing. Whereas if we are able to embrace our humanness and respect the limitations we currently have, then we can approach healing more gently. This creates far more internal alignment. It is similar to the fact that gentle yoga stretching helps someone to gain flexibility faster than trying to force flexibility which actually causes injury. Gentleness helps us to heal much more quickly, easily and smoothly.

Embracing our humanness includes embracing our emotions, even the intense ones. Some fear of intense feelings is understandable but we can allow the fear to move gently through us. Summon the courage within to face our fears and we will discover we are enough just as we are. Self-care is self respect. WE ARE WORTH IT!

Vital Cycle: The more we heal, the better we're able to practice self-care. The better we're able to practice self-care, the more we heal.

Activity: Form a list of current activities and behaviors that represent your current understanding of self-care. If you wish, form a list of activities and behaviors that you would like to add.