

Self Care Assessment

Are you taking care of yourself? Or are you burnt out? I know “self care” is buzz phrase. Do we really need to take time for ourselves? Is it just a justification for selfishness? What about the idea of giving until it hurts? What about altruism?

Self care is not about selfishly putting everyone else on hold while we indulge. It’s not about indulgence at all. It’s about having appropriate boundaries; knowing when to say yes and when to say no. It’s about working and resting each aspect of your life so that you can be healthy. It’s about quality of life. It’s about valuing your temple of a body and replenishing your heart, mind and soul. When you are not taking the time to be filled up then you have nothing to give. When you are not learning, growing, and refreshing your spirit then you are drying and dying. A lack of self care will lead to irritability in relationships, increased stress, spiritual confusion, physical stagnation & inflexibility, and mental burn out.

Assessment: Thinking about these things will help you assess your own level of self care.

Physical: How often do you exercise? Do you suffer from chronic pain? Do you suffer from chronic headaches? Do you feel healthier than you did last year? How much sleep do you get per night? How many glasses of water do you drink per day? How much sugar do you eat every day? Do you fast? Are your shoulders stiff? Are you often ill?

Mental: How often do you feel stressed? When was the last class or seminar you attended? When was the last time you went for a walk? Have you learned any new skills within the last year? How often do you worry about your problems during the day? Are you addicted to your phone, tv, or computer? Did you learn anything new today? Do you like your job?

Emotional: Are you depressed? Are you anxious? How much time do you spend with the significant people in your life? Rate your level of joy? How do you feel about love? When was the last time you felt encouraged? Do you grumble? Are others often critical of you? How often do you smile? Are you addicted to alcohol or marijuana?

Spiritual: When someone asks you to do something for them are you reluctant? Do you tithe? How often do you pray? When was the last time you engaged in a spiritual conversation? Do you go to church? Do you feel disillusioned? Can you name three things you are thankful for today? Do you believe in good and evil? What’s the point of being good? Is God distant or near? Is God good? Is God powerful?

Making a plan for better self- care:

I like to think about self care as a balance (homeostasis) between work and rest in all the aspects of life (physical, mental, emotional, spiritual). You’ll stagnate with a lack of work and burn out with not enough rest. So, when you are making a plan for self care, think about how you can “work out” that aspect of life, and how you can “rest” that aspect of life.

Example:

Physical

Work- Exercise, strength training, active stretching, walk, hike, run, eat healthy foods, body awareness exercises.

Rest- Get enough sleep, soak in the hot springs, restorative yoga, deep breathing, fast from food (giving your digestive system a “day off”), massage, ice & heat, drink water, decrease sugar intake.

Mental

Work- Study something, learn something new, practice skills, go to the museum or gallery, watch nature & history programs, read a book, do the crossword puzzle, refute irrational ideas, be challenged.

Rest- focused meditation, listen to the sounds of birds singing (engage in nature), take a walk or jog, daydream, refuse to worry, refuse to obsess, go on an electronic fast (to disengage from all that distracts your brain).

Emotional

Work- learn the language of emotions, practice emotions and appropriate emotional responses with boundary exercises, inner presence exercises, visualization, and meditation. Engage in relationship.

Rest- practice gratitude, pray. The idea is not necessarily to turn your emotions “off” (though that can be helpful to people who are overly emotional), the idea here is to rest emotions by practicing joy.

Spiritual

Work- bible study, biblical meditation, go to church, practice virtues, give, engage in spiritual conversations, encourage others.

Rest- pray, abide, believe.