

The Benefits of Carving Out Time for YOU



By Gayle Crist,
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As I write this, it's almost Mother's Day—a day to honor the women who raised us; our friends and relatives who are moms; and yes, hopefully ourselves too if we have children. Unfortunately, having coached women of all ages for over 20 years,

I've discovered that honoring themselves is not something women are particularly good at.

We all know that mothers today struggle to carve out time for themselves due to working full time while also raising kids. Their own self-care and time for fun often takes a back seat to all the things they do for and with their children.

Of course, this isn't just a 21st century challenge. Mothers for time immemorial have done the lion's share of childcare and homemaking, especially before they entered the full-time workforce after World War II. So they didn't have much experience with focusing on their own needs and desires.

Sadly, women ignore themselves at their own peril. Studies reveal the adverse physical and mental effects of not taking good care of ourselves.

According to health experts, the consequences of not practicing self-care are:

- Low energy
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Less patience
- Increased headaches, stomachaches, and other stress symptoms
- Difficulty falling and staying asleep
- Binge eating or increase in unhealthy eating habits
- Worsening mental health symptoms
- Burnout
- Difficulties concentrating
- Relationship challenges or strains
- Reduction in work performance
- Less motivation to engage in social activities

I'm guessing that, like many women reading this, you've experienced one or more of these symptoms. If so, I invite you to start today to prioritize self-care—to benefit you, your

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kids, and our society. You're not much good to anyone, at home or at work, if you're burned out, anxious, or hopeless.

The World Health Organization defines self-care as “the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider.”

Self-care is important because it provides you with the power to take control of some aspects of your own health, improving your quality of life today and mitigating or preventing the impacts of diseases or ailments tomorrow. It can also play a role in reducing anxiety, while saving you time and money.

Here are examples of self-caring things I do—and recommend to my clients:

- Sitting down for at least 5 minutes every day to be quiet, read something inspiring or uplifting, and savor your cup of coffee or tea
- Enjoying some daily time in nature
- Making sure to get all your preventive health checkups
- Scheduling fun time with friends at least twice a month
- Pursuing your hobbies on a regular basis, even if the only way to do that is to include your children and/or pets in the activity
- Taking a bath, getting a massage, or pampering yourself in another way that pleases you at least once a month
- Entertaining yourself with the books, TV shows, movies, blogs, etc. that you love
- Eating delicious, nutritious food as often as possible
- Moving your body somehow every day, whether it's walking, dancing, swimming, gardening, playing

with your kids or pets, working out in the gym, or whatever

There's a big difference between self-care and selfishness. It's not selfish to take care of you—it's vital. It's empowering. It's necessary if you're going to have the stamina to be there for all the people in your life.

Self-care offers you countless benefits. Here's what I and my clients have noticed when we regularly put attention on ourselves:

- Feeling more relaxed, patient, and peaceful
- Experiencing fewer stress symptoms such as tight muscles, headaches, or insomnia
- Having more energy—both physical and mental
- Noticing that personal and professional relationships are smoother and more harmonious
- Being able to think more clearly and focus better
- Seeing the “big picture” more easily and having a clearer sense of purpose

How about you? Are you able to carve out “me time” on a regular basis? If so, fantastic! If not, would it help to have a supporter to assist in that effort—to help you organize your time better so your schedule doesn't leave you at the bottom of the list?

With the nice weather and longer days here now, it should be easier to get outside and do self-care activities like walking, biking, and swimming or having a picnic with friends or family. Being in nature is one of the most restorative, self-caring things you can do. So resolve now to plan a hike, bike ride, or a day or weekend trip to the shore or mountains.

If you need a motivator to help you schedule self-care, call me. I've supported people in goals of all kinds—and self-care is a super-important goal! Let's talk soon!

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