

# *Resources for Recovery*

## **The What and How of Self-Care**

In recovery, especially early on, we often put considerable work into repairing the damage that we created while in the problem, and rightly so. Our focus may be on doing this as selflessly as we can, putting our own needs on the shelf as we make amends to our families and loved ones. Sound familiar?

It is not uncommon at this time to be unaware of the importance of making time for ourselves or to completely discount the engagement in any form of self-care, believing that to do so would be “selfish”. In fact it is not selfish at all; quite the opposite. In taking care of ourselves, we are taking care of and honoring our recovery, which as we know, impacts more people than just ourselves.

Recovery is hard work and self-care is essential to a healthy recovery to help us be at our best. But where do we start with self-care?

Well, first, it’s important to make sure that you’ve got the basics covered. These are the areas that pertain to our physical health and provide a solid foundation for addressing issues related to our mental well-being. These include eating properly, sleeping enough, and getting exercise. In other words ensuring we are well-fueled, well-rested and energized.

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Assuming you have those areas covered it can be helpful to build on this by incorporating self-care activities that focus on your mental, emotional and spiritual well-being.

So what *fuels* your mental, emotional and spiritual self? What sustains you in recovery? Some examples may be 12 step meetings, Aftercare, Church, Finding Freedom, other support groups and time with supportive friends and family. It may be reading some self-help books. It may be working with your sponsor or your counsellor.

What allows you mental, emotional or spiritual *rest*? Another way to think about this is to consider the activities that give you a sense of peace. Some examples may be mindful meditation, journaling, praying or taking a hot bath and giving yourself time to reflect. It may even be getting an early night and watching a movie in bed.

And finally it can be helpful to consider the things that *energize* you mentally, spiritually and emotionally. What motivates and gets you excited? Another way of looking at this is to think about and identify the things you are passionate about. This might include hobbies or family time, belly laughs or stimulating conversation with friends. It may be yoga, a sweat, or smudging. It may be a new book or traveling to a new destination.

As you can see Self-care is very personal – it is based on what works for the individual and their life circumstances - the options are many and varied.

Still wondering about what might work for you? Here's a "Top 10" list generated by our clients of their favourite tried and tested self-care ideas which might help you come up with your own:

10 Read a Book, Magazine, Article

9 Listen to Music

8 Watch a Movie

7 Have a Visit with a Friend

6 Take a Bath or Shower

5 Take a Nap

4 Go to a Meeting or Aftercare

3 Spend time with Family

2 Try Meditation or a Mindfulness Exercise

and *Number 1*, as selected by our clients...Get some exercise (gym, walk, workout)

By considering what *fuels* us, provides *rest*, or gives us *energy* we are creating a 'tool box' of options to engage in, not just in a stressful time (when of course they will be needed and effective) but each day as an act of love and care for ourselves. This is the stuff that helps keeps us physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy and we know that when we're caring for ourselves, it is easier to care for others.

So let's move away from seeing this important work as 'selfish' and instead put it at the forefront of our lives, where it needs to be. You deserve it!