

Speak Your Peace  
holistic life coaching

# SELF-CARE FOR RESISTERS AND PROCRASTINATORS

## A Guide to Creating Your Own Blueprint

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## Becoming a Self-Care Architect

Everybody is talking about self-care these days, but relatively few engage in it. Despite the myriad of books, blog posts and social media blurbs extolling the benefits of self-care, people appear more overwhelmed than ever. We acknowledge the importance of self-care in our lives, get fired up about doing it and then...nothing. Even with the struggles we have faced since the pandemic, some feel selfish for even attempting it, while others follow self-care tips that have nothing to do with their real needs. Ultimately, it feels forced and ephemeral at the same time.

If you are here right now, you have probably thought about self-care but had no idea how to start. Well, I believe that **no one can be the architect of your self-care plan except you.** You must create the blueprint because no one else has your life, your dreams, your responsibilities or your challenges. Although this may seem daunting, there is a way to tap into your inner guidance and find what works for you. This involves:

- Exploring your core beliefs about self-care
- Identifying any resistance to it
- Investigating your feelings about it
- Being honest about what really matters to you
- Distinguishing self-care myth vs. fact
- Asking for and allowing support
- Willingness to put your plan in action

In this ebook, I have presented a series of questions (along with some observations) and a couple of exercises that will help you get started. Take as long as you need, and try not to force any answers. As you learn to trust the process, you will create a self-care blueprint that is uniquely your own. So let's start your exploration with a few questions.





## **What Does Self-Care Look Like to YOU?**

Is it even on the radar?

Does the very concept seem foreign or confusing?

What's the first thing that comes to mind?

Don't worry if you come up with nothing right now. If you are like most people in a world where "getting things done" is considered the goal, it may just seem frivolous and ridiculous, not to mention impossible. It's just some intangible concept when there are tasks to be done, kids to be fed and bills to be paid. That to-do list won't take care of itself.

Believe me, I get it. However, if you are reading this book right now, you are already thinking about self-care. Why not take a moment to let yourself dream up some possibilities? And if you can't, keep reading. The questions in this book may help you get clear about those self-imposed road blocks.

## What Does Lack of Self-Care Look Like?

Pushing yourself?

Juggling multiple things without thought?

Considering the occasional mani-pedi or bubble bath a "luxury" and/or the only type of self-care?

Being a human "doing"/exhaustion?

Burnout?

These are just a few possibilities, but you certainly have more! Just remember...



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## **What's REALLY Stopping You ?**

There are certain fears and core beliefs that can keep you from engaging in self-care. However, once you identify them and question their validity, you can free yourself to take the next step. Here are just a few:

### **Resistance to Pleasure**

We live in a society which confuses self-care with selfishness, ego and lack of productivity. Working "harder, faster, longer" is deemed morally acceptable, whereas taking care of ourselves is considered egocentric and suspect. The truth is, the more you partake in pleasurable activities, the more energy you will have to get things done. You can't "go, go, go" unless your gas tank is filled.

### **Another thing to do (more burdens)**

You may find yourself thinking, "You're kidding me, right? I have all this stuff on my plate and now I have to add self-care (whatever that is) to the list? It's too much!" in your life.



## **I'm Not Worthy**

Many people, particularly women, feel they must earn the right to take care of themselves. This belief often stems from early family structures/dynamics and a society that puts emphasis on discernible productivity and measurable results.

I have found this in my own life. Growing up, there wasn't much emphasis on pleasure. In fact, the worse you felt, the more "points" you got. In my home, my mother didn't work, and my father was a workaholic. My mother, a smart, talented and charismatic woman, was completely dependent on my father financially and made herself powerless in many ways. They were both unhappy, and I rarely saw them doing anything that would qualify as self-love or self-care. That said, I ultimately saw my father's productivity as a "superior" way of being, with hard work offering tangible results, not to mention financial gain. I believed that if I didn't work very hard (or was at least accountable for being productive), I would become a powerless victim. I equated doing with worthiness. This created quite a fear-based system that subconsciously ran the show for many years until I questioned it. Perhaps some of you are doing this today.

## No Time



A big belief these days. There are so many time drains, particularly social media where we feel like we're doing something, but it is often an avoidance or *perceived* connection. We often turn to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter rather than tuning in to what we're feeling at the moment. Of course, between work, family and social commitments, time can feel short. Part of that, however, comes from not asking for help when we need it.

## **I'm Selfish and Don't Actually Deserve It**

Please see "I'm not worthy."



## **IF I Take Care of Myself, Nothing Important Will Get Done**

We need to redefine important. Ask yourself, how draining are those "important" things, and how would recharging your batteries make them easier to deal with?

## **I Can't Do It Every Day**

Can't or won't? There are things we do daily for self-care--brushing our teeth, taking a shower. You wouldn't dream of skipping those necessary steps. Other types of self-care can be equally important and just as easily integrated into your day.

## **I Don't Really Believe It Will Make a Difference**

We often have a hard time believing that self-care is something that can change our daily lives. That is mainly because most people don't do it consistently if at all. So how do you know?





## Investigating Your Feelings About Self-Care

To better understand what prevents us from engaging in self-care, we need to identify our feelings about it. When you honestly look at what stops you, what is the feeling or state?

Confusion?

Heaviness?

Hopelessness?

Overwhelmed?

Sadness?

Frustration?

Anger?

Discomfort?

Uneasiness?

If you said "yes" to any of those, it's a sign you are on the right track. Believe it or not, your discomfort is an excellent barometer in determining the need for self-care. The more uncomfortable you feel, the more you become aware of any resistance to taking good care of yourself. As stated by teachers Caroline Myss and Peter Ochiogrosso, "Discomfort is a wise teacher."

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## Cost vs. Pay off

Now that you've looked at what's stopping you and your feelings about initiating self-care, it's time to dig a little deeper. Ask yourself these two questions:

What is the pay off from not doing what gives you joy or energizes you?

What is the cost?

Often, the pay off from not attending to your own needs is appearing like a "good" person or the hero who does it all. Unfortunately, the cost of this external validation is often exhaustion, burnout and general dissatisfaction. Therefore, the pay off is negative and the cost is too high.

What would the *real* pay off be for paying attention to your needs? Don't know yet? Well, a good way to explore this is by listing what feeds you and what drains you. When you identify what actually nurtures you, you may be able to add more of it into your week, and perhaps allocate some of what drains you to others.



## Exercise

Take a notebook and draw a line down the middle of one page or use 2 opposite pages. Label one side "What feeds me" and the other "What drains me." Do not censor yourself or try to be "good" by limiting the things that are problematic. These could include certain friends or family members, your job, financial worries or even an unrealized dream. You won't find those energy leaks unless you are honest with yourself. Let it rip!



## Myths vs. Facts

### Tips for Self-Care Don't Work Because They Are Externally Driven

We've all seen the endless self-care lists on social media, however we don't often follow them because they are not specific to us. And they feel impossible.

### Self-Care is NOT What You Think It Should Be

Ever tell yourself "I should meditate, " or "I should work out" or "I should do yoga?" and then feel guilty for not doing it? Well none of these may resonate for you in the first place. Why guilt yourself by telling yourself this is self-care if you're not interested? Self-care is what works for *you* and can be easily inserted into *your* day, not someone else's.





## New Paradigms

Now it's time to create your own self-care blueprint. This doesn't have to be complicated--in fact, you can start with just one thing that is truly pleasurable and doable. There are a myriad of possibilities, and remember, your self-care doesn't have to look like anyone else's.

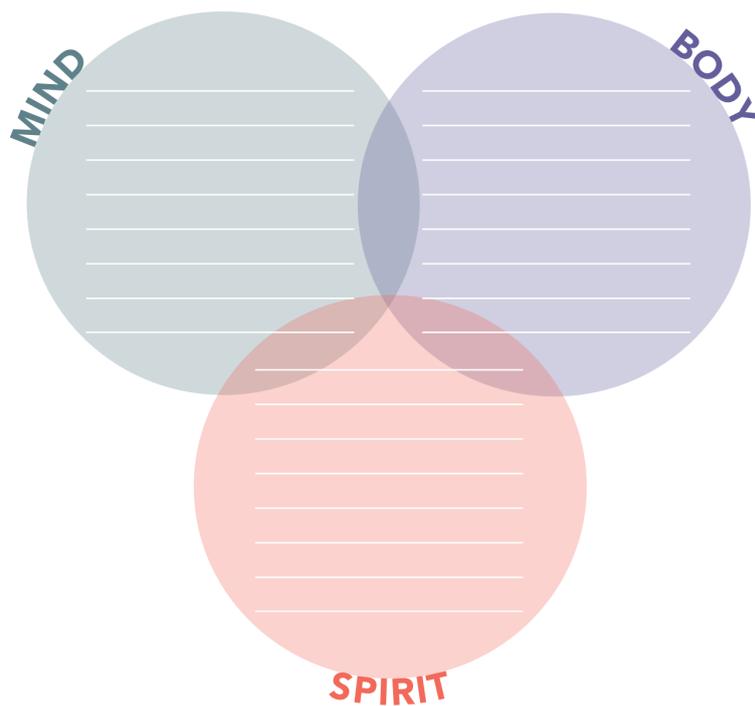
For example, a while back I started listening to a daily 15 minute podcast to learn French during my subway commutes. This may not be anyone else's cup of tea, but it felt good doing something purely for my own satisfaction during time that would normally be a drag. Believe it or not, there can be "time pockets" in your day to slip in a little self-care. And the effects can certainly be cumulative. During that time, my French language skills definitely improved!

Still not sure where to start? Don't worry, you can begin by using the Mind, Body and Spirit Map on the next page.



## Exercise

Put one self-care activity in each circle, and don't worry if you first draw a blank. *This is about inspiration, not obligation.* You can create your own blueprint, in your own way, in your own time. In fact, that's half the fun.



MIND

BODY

SPIRIT



## Really, Why Is Self-Care So Important?

When you feel tempted to skip self-care, please think about these four things:

- You can't be there for anyone else until you fill your own cup.
- Dropping resistance to self-care will actually give you more energy to do what you "need to."
- You will feel lighter and more flexible because you will not be forgetting yourself.
- Self-care is being first on your list and not last on someone else's.

As the poet Audre Lorde wrote:

*"I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self-indulgent. Caring for myself is an act of survival."*



## Accountability

Ugh, no one likes to think about accountability, but it doesn't have to be difficult. Also, by having some kind of daily practice, you will start to miss it if you blow it off. Your day just won't go as well. Remember those "time pockets?" Despite how busy you are, you know you can find them. For example, rather than looking at your phone first thing in the morning, take 10 or 20 minutes to do something that will ease you into your day. I guarantee it will be a lot less jarring than seeing a work email you can't do anything about at 7 a.m. But it might give you a breather and prepare you for whatever work issue is on the horizon. I'm not going to list suggestions--this is YOUR blueprint. I will, however, suggest this exercise:

**Put 1 self-care activity into your phone calendar or daily planner for the same time every day. Do your best not to skip it. If you do, notice how you feel. This is not to guilt you into a self-care practice, but to increase your awareness of what occurs when you don't give to yourself. As you build up consistency, I guarantee your resistance will decrease and you may notice the benefits of self-care not just during your practice but throughout your day. You won't want to miss it.**



## And Finally...

I know you are probably used to taking the wheel and not asking for help. Vulnerability can be tough because you might feel a loss of control, but *please*, don't be afraid to let friends and family pitch in. You might just find those time pockets by asking your partner or kids to clean the kitchen, make breakfast, walk the dog, etc. You can also find a self-care buddy or coach for accountability or support if you need to. This will make it easier to stay on track and not forget yourself. And lastly, please remember:

SELF-CARE IS THE GATEWAY DRUG  
TO A HAPPIER, HEALTHIER LIFE.

**It's time to give yourself permission. You deserve it!**





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