

Learning Self-Care

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A group of women, dedicated to exploring and improving self-esteem, reflected on ways they had learned to care for and value everyone else in their lives but themselves. Recognizing that overcoming lifetimes of problematic learning would require concentrated and intentional new learning, each member of the group made a commitment to practicing basic (and sometime childlike) self-care behaviors in a concentrated way and on a daily basis. Their list of ideas is offered to you, as you embark on your own process of remembering how to take care of yourself physically and emotionally.

Keep in mind, no one of these activities, in and of itself, is intended to represent a cure for low self-esteem. In combination, and practiced regularly, these behaviors remind us of our worth and meet our needs for self-care and nurturing. The synergistic impact can be dramatic. If time, money, or companions are limited, don't rule out self-nurturing behavior; there are many options below that are free/low-cost, quick, and able to be done alone or around strangers. Add to the list, as ideas come to mind.

Self-Nurturing Behaviors

Go to a coffee shop

Take soothing bath (perhaps with bubbles!)

Drink raspberry tea

Listen to classical music

Paint your toenails

Treat yourself to a manicure, pedicure, or facial

Jog

Buy tickets to a special concert

Schedule a counseling appointment

Appeal to your sense of smell: lotions, perfume, or aromatherapy

Enjoy an ice cream cone

Read affirming, self-help books

Read fun books solely for pleasure

Take yourself on a date

Take a nap with your favorite cuddly blanket

Get a massage

Take a fun class through a local university or the county department of parks and recreation

Learn yoga

Play an instrument (even a kazoo!)

Approach self-care with the following in mind:

- ❖ Celebrate accomplishments
- ❖ Acknowledge your limits and your need for a break
- ❖ Translate "wants" into activity (Allow yourself to "just do it")
- ❖ Focus on what you like
- ❖ Be in the moment, enjoy the experience of NOW
- ❖ Stop the process of negative thoughts with a simple, "Stop!"