

THE (NOT SO) SECRET ART OF MEANINGFUL SELF CARE

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Self Care

As helpers and givers, so much of our time and energy is spent 'doing for' others.



Self Care

- Self care isn't only about what you do, its who you are and how you are being.
- While it's important to set aside time to rejuvenate, you can be self caring every moment of each day.
- There is nothing selfish in taking care of yourself; this is about survival.

Self Care

- We have been told and conditioned, to essentially be in everyone else's business.
- Think of the ways we talk about and demonstrate love or caring for others.
- Its presumptuous, and borderline arrogant to assume that others want or need that much of us.

Trauma Stewardship

Trauma Stewardship

Trauma-a distressing or disturbing experience; or the effects of an experience.

Prolonged Stress-the extended experience of feeling overwhelmed, scared, helpless, angry, etc...

What does this look like in your life?

Trauma Stewardship

Take a moment and think about the multiple stressors
you encounter on a daily basis-outside of work

...and now think about those that you encounter while
at work.

Trauma Stewardship

Trauma Stewardship-the task of bearing witness to trauma without surrendering the ability to live fully, and well.

2009 Trauma Stewardship, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Trauma Stewardship

Trauma Exposure Response-the transformation that takes place within us as a result of the exposure to the suffering of others.

The ways in which the world looks and feels like a different place to you as a result of you doing your work.

2009 Trauma Stewardship,, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

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Trauma Stewardship

- It is our responsibility to acknowledge the effects of trauma exposure within ourselves.
- We must learn how to make room for our own internal processing.
- We must create the space within to heal and discover what is needed to continue with clarity.

Trauma Stewardship

How do you know when this room and space has not been created, is not big enough, or is not being used?

Trauma Stewardship

16 Warning Signs of Trauma Exposure Response

Feeling helpless and hopeless

A sense that you cannot do enough

Hypervigilance

Diminished Creativity

Inability to embrace complexity

Minimizing

Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments

Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance

Grandiosity/An inflated sense of importance related to one's work

Dissociative moment

Sense of persecution

Guilt

Addictions

Fear

Anger and cynicism

Inability to empathize/numbing

2009 Trauma Stewardship, Laura van Dernoot

Trauma Stewardship

- Although meaningful self care may not prevent the experience of trauma response, it allows us to acknowledge the response and act accordingly.
- Being at rest slows us down enough to check in and honestly determine how we're doing.
- Allows us to attune to our **felt sense**; which tells us where we are and how we're doing.

Trauma Stewardship



The Secret...

The most important thing we need to practice trauma stewardship is the knowledge of own lives-what we feel, value, and what we need to take care of ourselves.

The Art-Ask Questions

- ☐ Who are you?
- ☐ What is your story?
- ☐ What's important to you?
- ☐ **What makes you feel alive?**

The Art-Affirmations

- Begin by acknowledging that your stresses are genuine and that you are looking for healthier/more productive ways to deal with them.
- Be gentle with yourself!
- Find the strength in your story

The Art-Be Patient

- The feeling of urgency and attraction to a quick fix is a part of the trauma response.
- Slow down
- Cultivate compassion for yourself (and others)

The Art-Be Present

- Breathe!
- Until we slow down enough to honestly assess how we're doing and our current state, we can't accurately know what we need.
- Attune to your ***felt sense***-it tells you where you are and how you feel in the moment.

The Art-Be Present

- When we are attached to the outside, our connection to the inside becomes cloudy.
- Being in the present moment allows us to bring our awareness within.
- Being present is real work.
- We must be willing to introduce new habits to our old and familiar ways. This is the practice.

Personal Practice/Cultivating Neutrality

Find Balance

- Don't underestimate what you can weave into your day to make your environment or experience a healthy place for you.
- Decide that being martyr is a thing of the past.

Practice:

Write down one thing you'd love to incorporate into your day. Now work to do that one thing at least once a week...move to twice a week when you're ready, and move up from there. If you're comfortable, do this with a coworker or friend and offer each other support and accountability.

Breathe!

- Energy must move or else it will become stagnate. Physical activity is good for this, but not always accessible.
- Practice conscious breathing.
- Attention to breathe is essential in maintain a balanced state.

Practice:

Commit to taking a walk, standing outside, or sitting quietly for 5 mins every hour that you're working. During this time just be aware of your breathing, and take notice of the things around you.

Gratitude

- Another way to consciously create a sense of balance is to practice gratitude.
- Allows us to reframe our circumstances through mindfulness.

Practice:

At the beginning and end of your day take a distinct moment to think of one thing for which you are grateful.

Personal Practice-Meditation

Meditation is the state of profound, deep peace that occurs when the mind is calm and silent, yet completely alert.

In this space, the excessive stress producing activity of the mind is neutralized without reducing alertness and effectiveness.

Personal Practice-Meditation

Meditation-the state of thoughtless awareness

- ❑ Not a state of doing
- ❑ More than slowing down or stopping
- ❑ Unrealistic to stop our minds/thoughts altogether
- ❑ Either in the state of thoughtless awareness or are not
- ❑ Can be in meditation regardless of what we're doing or what's happening around us

Personal Practice-Meditation



Personal Practice-Meditation

- Meditation can be hard, as we tend to focus on doing it right...*we are still doing.*
- **Distraction** (falling asleep, flooding thoughts, feeling anxious, etc...)will happen.
- Don't fight the resistance.

Personal Practice-Meditation

Benefits of Meditation:

- ☐ Stress Reduction
- ☐ Decreased Health Care Costs
- ☐ Improved Quality of Life
- ☐ Increased Self Esteem

Personal Practice-Meditation

Meditation enables us to focus on the present moment rather than dwell on the unchangeable past or undetermined future.

There is no right or wrong way to meditate; find what works for you. Be open to this changing over time.

Personal Practice-Yoga

Yoga is a physical, mental, and spiritual practice or discipline which originated in India. This is done through the performance of poses or postures, each of which has specific physical benefits.

- ❑ Creates balance in the body through developing both strength and flexibility.
- ❑ It is a practice, which means your individual experience with yoga as it develops over time.
- ❑ Non-competitive in nature.
- ❑ Can be done anywhere, **by anyone**.

Personal Practice-Yoga

Yoga for Stress

YOGA JOURNAL / YOGA POSES / YOGA BY BENEFIT / YOGA FOR STRESS



Bharadvaja's Twist Bharadvajasana I

This gentle twist is a tonic for the spine and the abdominal organs.



Big Toe Pose Padangusthasana

This pose gently lengthens and strengthens even stubbornly tight hamstrings.



Boat Pose Paripurna Navasana

An ab and deep hip flexor strengthener, Paripurna Navasana requires you to balance on the tripod of your sitting bones and tailbone.



Bridge Pose Setu Bandha Sarvangasana

Bridge Pose can be whatever you need—energizing, rejuvenating, or luxuriously restorative.



Calm Heart Meditation Dhyana

This contemplative meditation can be practiced regularly or whenever you feel overwhelmed, unstable, or emotionally shut down.



Cat Pose Marjaryasana

This pose provides a gentle massage to the spine and belly organs.

<http://www.yogajournal.com/category/poses/yoga-by-benefit/>

Please check with your doctor/health care professional before beginning any physical or exercise program

Personal Practice-**Chair** Yoga

- ❑ Cat-Cow Stretch
- ❑ Raised Hands (Urdhva Hastasana)
- ❑ Forward Bend (Uttanasana)
- ❑ Extended Side Angle (Utthita Parksvakonasana)
- ❑ Pigeon (Eka Pada Rajakapotasana)
- ❑ Eagle (Garudasana)
- ❑ Spinal Twist (Ardha Matsyendrasana)

<http://yoga.about.com/od/yogasequences/tp/Chair-Yoga-Poses.htm>

Personal Practice-Yoga

Resources

www.yogabasics.com

www.yogajournal.com

www.balancedyogastudios.com

www.yogaonhigh.com

<http://yogaenlarged.com/>

Personal Practice-Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy is the practice of using the natural oils extracted from flowers, bark, stems, leaves, roots or other parts of a plant to enhance psychological and physical well-being.

- Essential Oils are believed to stimulate brain function.
- Can also be absorbed through the skin, where they travel through the bloodstream and can promote whole-body healing ***(please be sure to read the indications as some oils are too concentrated to apply directly to the skin, and a carrier .)***

Please consult with a health care professional/aromatherapist to identify any contraindications to the use of essential oils.

Personal Practice-Aromatherapy:

Commonly Used Oils

- ❑ **Patchouli**-helps to relieve anxiety, depression, fatigue, curb addiction, reduce cellulite and bloating.
- ❑ **Peppermint**-enhances mood, sharpens focus, combats irritation and redness, alleviates symptoms of congestion, and aids in digestion
- ❑ **Lavender**-stress-relief, antiseptic, antidepressant, anti-inflammatory decongestant, deodorant, diuretic and sedative.
- ❑ **Lemon**-skin irritation, digestion, circulation problems, a natural immunity booster, alleviates headaches and fever, and is a quick mood enhancer
- ❑ **Eucalyptus**-powerful treatment against respiratory issues. as an antiseptic, antispasmodic, decongestant, diuretic and stimulant; helps fight migraines, fevers, muscle aches, and pains.
- ❑ **Orange**-anti inflammatory, enhances mood, relieves gastrointestinal discomfort.

Personal Practice-Aromatherapy

Resources

www.aromatherapy.com

www.aworldofaromatherapy.com

Personal Practice-Nourishment

- ❑ Often food and drinks are used to help us avoid a situation, circumstances, or feelings.
- ❑ It is our effort get back neutral; but in reality it just makes us numb.
- ❑ Once we're numb, it can be a challenge to return to rest.

Personal Practice-Nourishment

- Eat delicious foods and drink beverages that make you feel good.
- Create an awareness of how your body responds to what your putting into it.
- Ask: *How will this nourish my life?*

Culture of Self Care

Culture of Self Care

Trees and plants communicate and interact with each other through an underground web of fungi that connects the trees and plants of an ecosystem. **This symbiosis enables the purposeful sharing of resources, consequently helping the whole system of trees and plants to flourish.**

- We are all connected.
- We are part of a system, and it is impossible not to be impacted by the world around us.

Culture of Self Care

‘Big trees subsidize the young/smaller ones through the fungal networks. Without this helping hand, most of the seedlings wouldn’t make it.’

Suzanne Simard

(Forest Ecologist, The University of British Columbia)

Culture of Self Care



Culture of Self Care

Being a part of this system, still does not required you to give, and ideally your are not taking.

Being present is a radical act.

When you show up, stand and be present, the system is able to do the work.

Final Thoughts

“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive. And go do that. Because the world needs people who’ve come alive.”

-Howard Thurman

Reference

Lipsky, L., & Burk, C. (2009). *Trauma Stewardship An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.