

THE REVOLUTIONARY POWER OF *Self-Care: Creating Your Plan*

The information provided here is typically done within one or more coaching sessions and supports a client interested in increasing their well-being in creating a self-care plan for themselves. As a gift to all of you, I have included it as a mini-course that will allow you to explore this on your own. It is the first step in moving forward toward a healthier, happier, more balanced life. Normally, this plan can be a foundation for a coaching relationship, or, if the client is motivated, has excellent support systems and strategies to deal with their inner saboteurs or inner critics, it can be enough to make significant movement. No matter what, it can create a foundation for change. If you find this mini-course is effective for you, my request is that you refer a friend to me rather than just share this material directly.



Creating Your Holistic Self-Care Plan

Your success in implementing your plan is ultimately based on the level of genuine commitment you make to your own self-care. This kind of commitment is most possible when you recognize that your own health and well-being are essential and you acknowledge the importance of honoring yourself and your needs. If you find this to be a challenge, then take some more time to explore your reservations. During our talk together, and in the handout provided, there were several questions to consider that helped you to examine your barriers to self-care. If you have not yet examined these questions in depth, it may be important as you move forward to go back and do that. The handout can be found here:

<http://www.coaching-compassion.com/revo-care.html>

*The truth is that your self-care is not only essential to your well-being, but it is also necessary for you to be effective and successful in honoring your professional and personal commitments. When you feel good, everyone else around you benefits. Remember: Self-Care is an act of generosity and commitment. When you care for yourself, you make sure that you are at your best when you support and are with others. The people you love and work with will get much more effective, meaningful, and openhearted interaction from you if you are healthy and strong. Self-care is a **revolutionary** act. Let your dedication to your own well-being be an inspiration to others. So, take a moment, think it over, and then make a personal commitment to your own self-care. **It's time to put yourself first.***

"Self-Care is so important. When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel."

- Eleanor Brown



Preparation

Preparing before you make yourself a self-care plan is important; it helps you to identify what changes might be needed and create the strategies to achieve your goals. Before we can create a plan, it is important to know what you are already doing and what the status of your life is right now. The following exercise is known as The Wheel of Life or The Life Balance Wheel. This tool is commonly used in coaching to support evaluation and awareness. This gives you a snapshot of your life right now, and allows you to assess your level of satisfaction in different areas of life.

Awareness is key to creating a strategic plan. If we do not have a clear picture of what is happening, how can we know what needs to change or be improved and take steps forward?

The wheel also serves as a wonderful illustration of why a holistic approach is important. You may notice that each dimension might contribute to your satisfaction in other sections. We are not defined by just one area of our lives. Our well-being is best supported when we are healthy and taking care of ourselves in multiple areas.

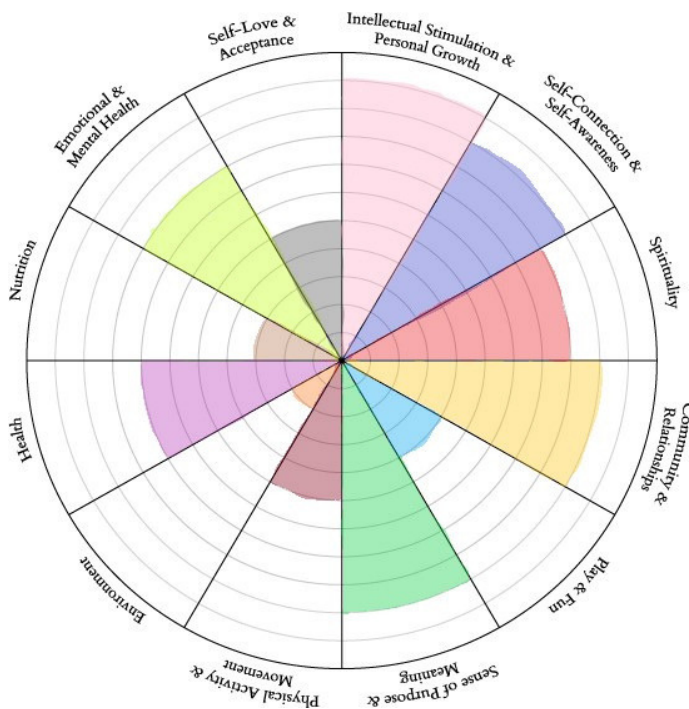
Assessment: The Wheel of Life

Instructions:

- I have adapted this wheel to more clearly evaluate your life from the perspective of self-care. If you feel a section is missing, or unimportant, you can change the wheel for yourself. When considering each section, consider it from a personal and professional perspective.
- 1 Read the statements below for each dimension. Consider your own satisfaction and self-care within each area.
 - 2 Rank your own satisfaction and self-care on a scale of 0-10 within each of the dimensions. With the center of the wheel being 0 and the outer edge as 10.



Once your wheel is filled out, it may look something like this:



In this example, the person has applied different levels of satisfaction for each dimension. For example, they assigned a 9 to Intellectual Stimulation & Personal Growth, a 2 to Environment and so on.

The following are some statements to consider for each dimension as you fill out your own wheel.

Emotional & Mental Health

- I have tools/skills to understand and accept my feelings and someone else's (anger, happiness, sadness, frustration, excitement, fear, etc.)
- I am able to build trust and respect others
- When I experience emotions, I can appropriately express how I feel, even if vulnerable or scary.
- I can adequately manage my emotional response when in an upsetting or challenging situation.
- I seek help from others when I am experiencing difficulties.
- I engage in stress management activities.



Self-Love & Acceptance

- I love and accept myself as I am. I feel good in my own skin.
- To cope with challenges in life, I focus on the most positive aspects of the event or situation (e.g., what I can learn from the event or situation, or what positive consequences may result).
- I am often kind to myself when I make mistakes or when life is disrupted (and when I am not, I recognize it and change my inner tone)
- I do not ruminate on daily activities/interactions and am able to integrate and grow from my life experiences.
- When I look in the mirror, I like what I see, even if I am not perfect.
- I can accept and acknowledge that I have strengths and gifts to contribute to the world.
- I honor my humanity and bring kindness and understanding to myself, as I am, even when life is challenging.



Intellectual Stimulation & Personal Growth

- I regularly engage in activities and learning that grow and expand me (e.g., college courses, certifications, reading, podcasts, etc).
- I engage in stimulating or creative activities.
- I treat my own errors as opportunities to learn and grow.
- I regularly experience living a life that I love and loving who I am becoming.

Self-Connection & Self-Awareness

- I take time regularly to check-in with myself. I honor what I notice in body and mind and take steps to act on what I need.
- I know how to set boundaries and honor them.
- I regularly make time to journal, talk, or process my inner world in a way that works for me.
- I take the time to ask myself what I want and regularly find answers quickly.
- I can recognize the signs that I am not listening to myself and I take steps move back into equilibrium.
- I am able to take responsibility for my behaviors and actions while staying aware of how the other person contributed as well.



Spirituality

- I have a belief system that sustains me and supports me in the ups and downs of life.
- I feel a sense of connectedness with creation and all other living beings.
- I have activities that honor my spirituality that are a regular part of my daily routine
- I live each day in a way that is consistent with my values.



Community & Relationships

- I have a sufficient number of great friends
- My relationships (family, friends, co-workers, peers, partner, etc) nourish and sustain me.
- I am satisfied with the role I play and the level of contribution I have in my relationships.
- I trust the relationships I have.
- I feel as sense of belonging in the communities I am a part of.
- I love and make the most of the time I spend with the people in my life.
- I have created the experience of family in my life, whether or not it is with my biological relatives.
- I have support systems in place – I know who I can reach out to if I need support and feel safe within these systems.

Play & Fun

- I regularly take the time I need to experience play, adventure and relaxation.
- I know what activities renew me and bring me alive and I participate in them regularly.
- I create plenty of space in my life to relax and enjoy myself and others.
- I create fun for myself and others.
- I engage in downtime and/or relaxation that lacks specific goals or focus to recharge my body and brain.



Sense of Purpose & Meaning

- I fully immerse myself in tasks with engagement, focus and enjoyment.
- I am engaged in the unfolding story of my life and approach each day as an adventure.
- I do things that contribute to a larger cause I believe in.
- I feel that my life has a sense of direction or meaning to it.



Physical Activity & Movement

- I am conscious of my body and fitness level and take responsibility for my physical well-being.
- I engage in at least 150 minutes of physical activity in a week (e.g., walking, yoga, cycling, swimming, golf, running, horseback riding, etc.).
- I regularly take breaks throughout the day if I am concentrating intensely on a project.



Environment

- I feel nourished and supported by my home.
- I am surrounded by things that I love and have meaning to me.
- The level of order in my surroundings is appropriate to my needs. (it serves me)
- My wardrobe is a clear expression of who I am. I love being in the clothes I wear.

Health

- I approach my health in a proactive and generative way, rather than crisis management mode.
- I am satisfied with my level of vitality and energy.
- I have support systems and structures in place that allow me to easily maintain my health and well being.
- I know what works for me to maintain my health and I consistently do it.
- I wake up feeling refreshed and rested.



Nutrition

- I know what foods work for my body
- I avoid foods that do not energize or make me feel well, including allergens and also those I have sensitivities to.
- I have spent the time to understand my own nutritional needs and consume the proper amount of vegetables, fruits, protein, etc. for my body.
- I regularly drink the proper amount of water for my needs.
- I know when I am full and do not eat beyond what is needed for my body.
- I eat and drink regularly and do not skip meals or forget to eat.

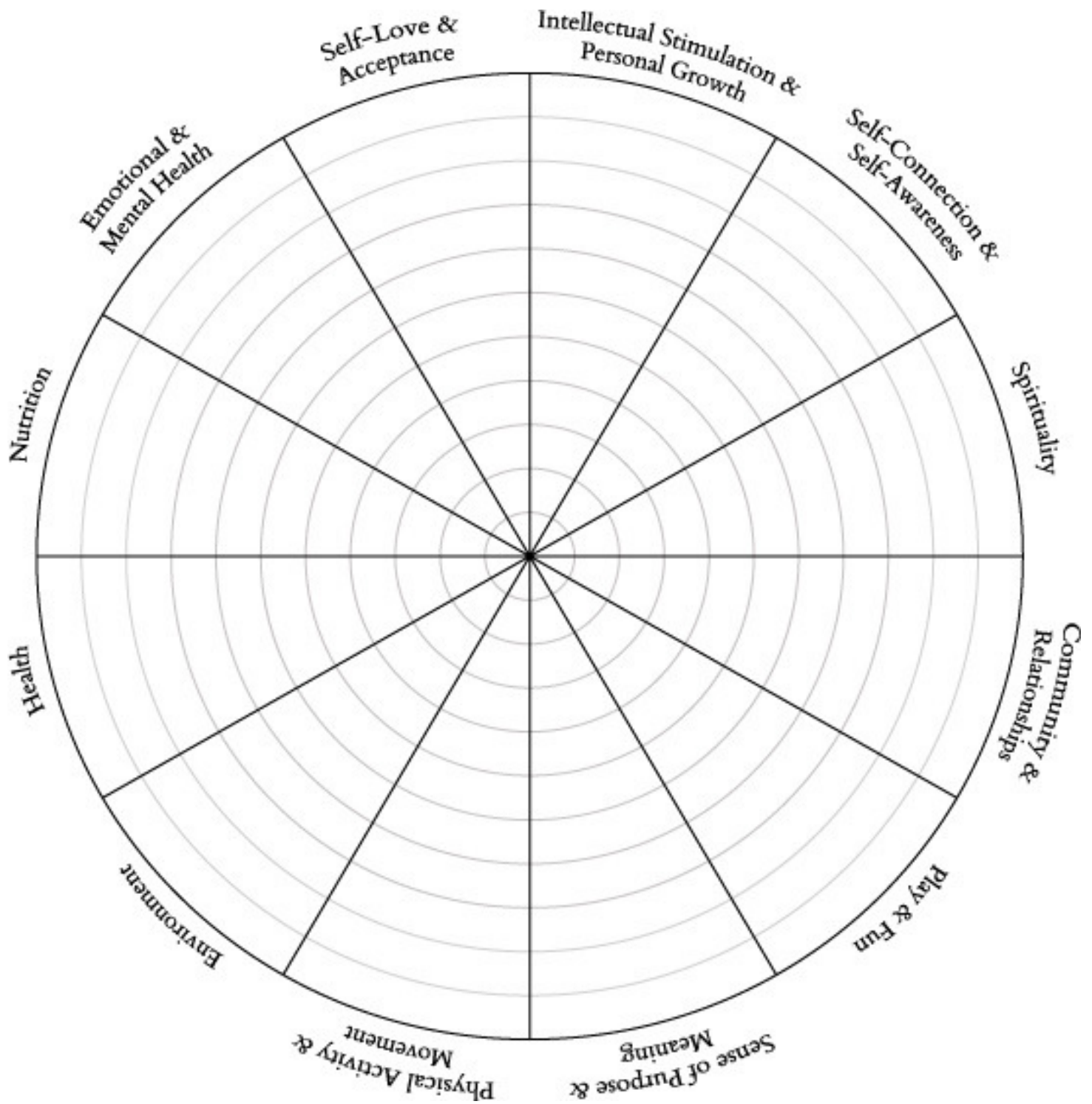


*Consider if there are any other components of these dimensions that feel important to add in and examine. Then, begin to fill out your own wheel, ranking how satisfied you are with each area of your life.

START WHERE

you are

Assessment: The Wheel of Life



Graphic design of Wheel of Life supported and rendered by Vanessa Tezanos

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Self-Care: Find What Replenishes You

Now that you have filled out your wheel, consider: if this was a real wheel, how might your ride feel right now? Would it be bumpy or smooth? One of the great things about this assessment is it allows you to quickly and easily identify any gaps between where you are now and where you want to be.



Find your own way.

As I have shared before, self-care is a highly individualized experience, so creating a self-care plan for yourself is *essential*. No one else can tell you what will serve you best. What works for someone else in your life may not work for you. While it is totally individual, there are certain hallmarks of a good plan. Including:

- 1 Activities that are enjoyable and loving toward yourself
- 2 Activities that replenish and/or nourish your mind, body or spirit in some way

Next, it is time to brainstorm what works for you.

*The final question in the reflection in the handout during our session together was "What **replenishes you?**" Answering this question is essential to creating a successful plan that works for you.*

Take some time and brainstorm what replenishes you in each of the 6 holistic domains: Emotional, Mental, Physical, Social, Spiritual and Professional/Educational Self-Care. As you look at your professional/educational self-care, you may either include how self-care in the other areas might look in your professional and/or educational life, or simply consider it as it's own category.

I have provided a few examples of some of the activities that support each domain below.



Physical Self-Care – physical activities (e.g., walking, yoga, cycling, swimming, golf, running, horseback riding, etc), eating regularly, sleeping enough that you wake up well-rested, drink enough water, etc.

Mental Self-Care – watch a documentary and discuss it with a friend(s), take a personal development course, take time to relax and de-stress, take time to unplug away from phones & internet, mindfulness, meditation, etc

Emotional Self-Care – keep a diary, track your moods, notice how you speak to yourself (use self-compassion and self-empathy), reach out for support, allow yourself to cry if you need to cry, use positive affirmations, etc.

Social Self-Care – schedule regular activities with friends and/or your partner/family, call or go see someone you care about, spend time with an animal you love and that loves you, take time for yourself as needed, etc.

Spiritual Self-Care – make time for reflection, meditation and/or prayer, connect to the experience of awe, be open to inspiration, seek out inspirational experiences or books/art/poetry, spend time in nature, etc.

Professional/Educational Self-Care (optional) – take breaks throughout the day, take time to connect with colleagues or peers, carve out quiet time to complete projects/tasks, set limits with clients or colleagues, get regular supervision or coaching, etc.

I recommend **setting a timer for 2-4 minutes** per domain and **free-writing** the ideas you have for each. Please feel free be creative, and recognize that, when brainstorming, every answer does not have to be acted upon or used. You may notice that some activities you think of show up in multiple domains. Repeat them in categories as often as needed, they may be powerful options to incorporate or keep in your life.

The goal of brainstorming is to be creative, not correct.

Physical Self-Care –

Mental Self-Care –

Emotional Self-Care –

Social Self-Care –

Spiritual Self-Care –

**Professional/Educational
Self-Care (optional) -**

Now that you have your own self-care lists, revisit your ideas and see which you feel most lead to incorporating, and/or which you already use and really enjoy. **Highlight these to use later.**

Be open, too, to recognizing a familiar activity that does not replenish you. Take time to quietly consider - what might be the outcome of doing this? Or how do I feel after doing this? See if your body has any reaction to the idea. Do you feel excited? Curious? Bored? Tired?

Perhaps you have been running daily and you hate it - would you enjoy weight lifting or swimming more? A yoga class perhaps? Are there one or two activities you would like to experiment with first? Sometimes trying something new and checking in with yourself after a few tries can open up opportunities to discover enjoyable and surprising options you would have otherwise not considered!



*"Nourishing yourself in a way
that helps you blossom in the
direction you want to go is
attainable, and
you are worth the effort."
- Deborah Day*



THE REVOLUTIONARY POWER OF *Self-Care: Mindfulness & Meditation*

A note on meditation and mindfulness

As a Mindfulness and Well-Being coach, I am obviously a big fan of meditation and mindfulness, but finding what works for *you* is essential. Not all of my clients are interested in meditation, but mindfulness is always incorporated into what we work on – it is such a huge component in creating self-awareness which is essential to achieving **big goals**.

Mindfulness refers to awareness. A pause. Every moment is an opportunity for mindfulness. At any given time we can notice what is happening. In fact, there is rarely a moment where we do not have the ability to be aware of what is. While we are waiting in line, while we are working diligently, while we are mindlessly surfing social media. Each of these is an opportunity to “*wake up*” and check in with ourselves and notice what “*is*”. What do I notice? Is what I am doing serving me? If so, how? If not, what would be more beneficial? And lastly, if it is not, do I have the choice to do something else or do it differently? If no, can I create space to accept what is?

There are so many kinds of **meditation**. If you have tried meditation and hated it, (or loved it!), consider that there might be other options that serve you differently or better. Meditation is scientifically proven to change the brain, and the type of meditation we do has totally different effects. A meditation which focuses on social and emotional centers, increases our capacity for kindness, altruism, empathy and compassion. A meditation which has us focus on a specific point or idea for a period of time can increase our ability to focus. Although I enjoy many types of meditation, my personal favorites are more active forms of meditations such as walking meditation, as well as loving-kindness meditation which asks us to consider ourselves as part of the whole. Among others.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/alicegwalton/2017/10/05/different-types-of-meditation-change-the-brain-in-different-ways-study-finds/#4121667b1f1e>

The best thing about the changes in the brain that are possible with meditation is that they can begin **with just 5 minutes of practice per day**. Consider that! We all have time for 5 minutes! Imagine having the choice to find a way that could work for you. I often tell my clients who are interested in making changes to try experimenting with, what I call, “*meditation without rules*.” The same can apply to exercise or some other activity you are longing to incorporate more of. I suggest experimenting with blocking out time, but not making a hard and fast requirement for how long you do it. If you sit and meditate for 3 minutes, and you’re unable to continue, you *celebrate* your 3 minutes and do it again the next day, or even later in the same day. Over time, having fewer rules, but doing it daily, has lead many of my interested clients to create a regular, meaningful practice, often building to up to 1 hour a day – **and enjoying it!**

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Self-Care: Goal Setting

Now, it's time to make some self-care goals.

Refer back to your Wheel of Life.

The Wheel of Life is a wonderful assessment to capture where you are at in your self-care adventure. It is a powerful tool that helps you identify imbalances and re-align your life to what truly matters.

What is one area on your wheel you would like to improve? Choose one section of your assessment you would like to **fortify**. The section you choose is totally up to you. It does not have to be the area that you ranked the lowest. Consider what you are already doing that is working in this area. Then, what is one thing you can commit to adding? Refer to the lists you brainstormed and see if any of the highlighted areas might contribute to your well-being and self-care in the section you are looking to make shifts.

To start, create a self-care goal. To increase your chances of success, make sure your goal is **measurable**. Scroll down for some tips to consider as you create your goal(s).

She
MADE A
Promise
TO HERSELF TO
hold
HER OWN
WELL-BEING
Sacred

Goal Setting Tips

Take baby steps – don't overwhelm yourself with enormous changes, pick simple things to start off with. For example, decide to start with committing to 1-2 days at the gym instead of 5.

Make it practical – again, stick to what you know you could achieve if you put your mind to it. Start with a 15-minute walk; you can then increase the time later if you like.

Go easy on yourself – remember when starting something new we all need time to adjust and learn. If you fall off the wagon don't berate yourself, that's not what this is about, every day is an opportunity to start again. Remember to use **self-compassion** (see the handout for more on this).

Listen to your inner coach, not your inner critic – Your inner critic will attempt to discourage you from trying anything new. It's the part of you which is motivated by fear. Begin to listen to the *supportive* voice of your inner coach. For me, it is the voice I hear when I sit quietly with intention- I hear it in my belly or my heart. It's that part of you that wants to succeed and go for your dreams. So turn down the volume on the critic and crank up the volume for your coach. Remember that having an inner critic is totally normal and human. It wants to keep you safe. Kindly let it know you hear it, and *you've got your back*.

Spend some time thinking about what you **value** and what you want to **change**. Is there something you have been longing to try? Your plan might involve stopping smoking or changing eating habits. Or you might choose to increase your social circle, take up painting, look for a new job, or try out therapy, or even choose to try coaching. You could also simply be wanting to add one or two smaller self-care activities you brainstormed.

Imagine how your life might be improved if you made this change. What would be different? How would you feel? Imagine yourself 3 months from now after you have been practicing this self-care activity for a while. How is it to see yourself now? What might she share with you about how life has improved?

Celebrate every step along the way. Want to lose 5lbs? Get excited after every ONE. Want to improve your inner world and relationship with yourself? Notice when you choose self-kindness and celebrate. If it is fun for you, imagine what you will do to celebrate – having a ritual can support you in sustained progress.

Lastly, accountability. **Accountability** is a huge part of what makes coaching work. Ask yourself what supports you need to be in place to succeed. For some, simply committing to themselves is enough, while others need to tell someone, or create systems for reminders and support. A sticky note on your mirror or an alarm on your phone are examples of strategies that support accountability. Some of you may be best supported by a friend who is willing and wanting to commit to working on a similar goal. You might also enjoy letting someone know when you have taken steps on what you agreed to do (For example, if your goal is to begin therapy to support yourself in self-connection, letting a friend know that you took the first step in researching mental health providers included on your insurance might increase your chances of following through).

All of these can increase the likelihood of follow through and success. Think about what works for you. Creativity is your only limit.

Making a Goal

DOMAIN(S):

Self-Care Goal:

Current practice:

New Practice:

How will I know when I have achieved my goal?

What supports do I need to succeed?

Now, commit to making the above shift. Use your support structures and go for it! Remember to re-evaluate to see if your current goal is increasing your sense of well-being.

*Put yourself at the top of your
to-do list every single day and the
rest will fall into place.*



For those who are wanting to take it one step further, make a self-care plan. Go through each domain on your Wheel of Life and consider one thing you can shift. How might you bring your satisfaction number up by just 1 in each category on your wheel assessment? Again, small goals are best. You can always re-evaluate once you achieve your goals. Remember to celebrate the small steps along the way!

Making a Plan

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Self-Care Goal:

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New Practice:

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Self-Care: Intention

Intention is a powerful thing. Once you set your intention, goals become more achievable and the path can begin to emerge. I have been amazed by the power over and over in my own life. Time and time again I have seen my clients surprise themselves with some of the actions they have taken! I have seen people completely transform their lives for the better. Know that you can do that, too.

Now that you've created a plan it is time to put it into action and to keep the momentum going. Keep your plan and your goals in sight. Post them in a planner, schedule reminders on your phone or computer, or create a vision board. Every day acknowledge these plans and begin to integrate them into your daily life. As you make progress, remember to take the time to celebrate and acknowledge the steps you have taken. Don't give up if you miss a step, every day is a chance to start again. Be gentle with yourself and acknowledge how far you have come and where you want to go. You can do it.

Remember the most important thing is to be kind to you!

Please let me know how your new Self-Care Plan is going. I would love to hear what goals you have set and what steps you have taken! It is my vision to support people to enhance their lives and to recognize how valuable they are and how much they matter. If you need help transforming your life, or if you would like to know more about my coaching then please feel free to email me at coachingcompassion@gmail.com or visit www.Coaching-Compassion.com Those who signed up for a Breakthrough Session with me, I look forward to our time together. Also, if you didn't take me up on the complimentary Breakthrough Session when I offered it at the talk and you're now interested, just let me know! I would be thrilled to hop on the phone and chat.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Warmly,

Jaya Manske

*"Self-care is how you take
your power back"*

- Lalah Deliah





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

- Audre Lorde

