

S

ome Days . . . I Need a Hug!

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Sometimes we get so involved with taking care of and doing for everyone else that we neglect our own well-being. This information will help you focus on ways to nurture yourself by adding some of the self-comforting extras to your lifestyle choices. The value of being aware of the need to take the time to stop—or at least slow down—and smell the roses of life cannot be measured.

Each one of us is responsible for our own happiness. Our personal happiness should not depend on other people, circumstances, or even the weather. Each day we decide if we are going to be happy or unhappy. The choice is within us, not outside of us. We must learn not to dwell on the things we have lost, but to focus on the things we still have today.

Most of us suffer at times from overcommitment, juggled demands, and putting too high standards on ourselves to the point that we experience feelings of being frazzled and out of control. We must remember that to be effective through our journey in this life, it is important for us to take care of ourselves.

Activity: Take a minute and close your eyes. Think of the little things in your daily or weekly routine that bring you pleasure or put a smile on your face. Write these things down. Make a mental note to really slow down and enjoy them to the fullest next time—really taste that cup of coffee or tea. Think about the cup it is in. Really look into the face of that loved one. Enjoy the colors of the sunset. Take mental pictures to “save” to recall and enjoy within your mind another day.

. . . Tiny Delights . . .

Harry Gray, the chairman of United Technologies, in a full-page ad in the Wall Street Journal, said:

Most of us miss out on life’s big prizes. The Pulitzer. The Nobel. Oscars. Tonys. Emmys. But we’re all eligible for life’s small pleasures. A pat on the back. A kiss behind the ear. A four-pound bass. A full moon. An empty parking space. A crackling fire. A glorious sunset. Hot soup. A cold drink.

Don’t fret about copping life’s grand awards. Enjoy its tiny delights. There are plenty for all of us.

Personal Outlook

- 1. Physical:** A physically healthy person chooses a variety of low-fat, high-nutrient foods (plenty of veggies, fruits, and whole grains) and exercises each day.
- 2. Mental:** A person who is mentally healthy manages stress, change, and everyday problems with skill and without feeling overwhelmed. He is willing to try new things, is not defeated by setbacks or failures, continues to learn (formally and informally), and sets goals.
- 3. Emotional:** A person who is emotionally well manages and expresses emotions appropriately and has a strong sense of self. She learns to ask people for what she needs, not expecting others to read her mind.

4. **Spiritual:** The life of a spiritually healthy person has meaning and direction. Spirituality may involve religion, morals, ethics, values, or nature appreciation. These individuals have a vision and mission in life as well as a commitment to self and others.
5. **Environmental:** An awareness of environmental health risks and issues is valuable. Strive for a workplace or home environment that is emotionally supportive and a place where one wants to be.
6. **Vocational/Occupational:** This is finding and maintaining meaning in one's work. It means discovering the creative energy of teamwork. This person also shares talents through volunteering.
7. **Social:** Individuals are confident enough to feel comfortable relating to and interacting with others. They have a support system (friends and family) and the ability to manage their lives.

These factors will be different in each of us. Remember, your health is affected by the choices you make every day. You are your number-one responsibility.

Take Care of You

- **Speak well of yourself to yourself.** Give yourself positive self-talk every day for what you do and who you are. Have a positive attitude.
- **Do something for yourself.** When we're feeling low, we tend to reject the very things that would make us feel better. Make a list of things that bring you pleasure. For most people, these are surprisingly simple, everyday activities—reading a good book, visiting with a friend, listening to a favorite kind of music, taking a walk. It could be that the nicest thing you can do for yourself is to do nothing!
- **Nourish your spirit.** Because spirituality is part of who we are and how we cope, feeling nurtured spiritually carries over into all other areas of life. You find this kind of nourishment from places, activities, or relationships that offer you a feeling of healing or contentment.
- **Do something.** Get involved, volunteer, join a class, or learn something new. Go visit someone.
- **Laughter.** Humor and laughter can keep you in balance. Make a collection of “funny” things to enjoy when a laugh is needed. Laughter has many health benefits.
- **Set Goals.** Life is a journey. Enjoy the trip and make sure you plan it for yourself. Do not just drift along. Set goals and plan your own stops along the way. Be in charge, and **ENJOY!**

1997: 10M