



Self-Care Kit

In the book “The gifts of imperfection”, Brene Brown writes that when we are anxious or afraid of something, we also feel impermanent. We are afraid to lose everything we love. Insecurity makes us nervous. Moreover, we then begin to block ourselves from feeling joy and gratitude in order to minimize any possible loss. However, the effect of doing so is the opposite – the lack of gratitude and joy causes us to lose what allows us to survive difficult times. How not to make it happen? Practicing self-care is one of the ways.

WHAT IS SELF-CARE?

THERE ARE MANY DEFINITIONS OF WHAT SELF-CARE IS. HOWEVER, ALL OF THEM INDICATE THAT IT CONTAINS ANYTHING WE NEED TO DO TO TAKE CARE OF OUR MENTAL, EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH. IT IS TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF IN ORDER TO BE HEALTHY, FEEL GOOD, DO YOUR JOB, HELP, AND CARE FOR OTHERS. SELF-CARE IS NOT LAZINESS AND RUNNING AWAY FROM RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE TASKS AND PEOPLE ENTRUSTED TO US. IT IS CONSCIOUS PLANNING OF BEHAVIORS, A CHANGE OF THOUGHT PATTERNS, THAT DOES NOT AFFECT OUR WELL-BEING IN A NEGATIVE WAY. FOR EXAMPLE, IT'S SAYING, “NOW I NEED 10 MINUTES FOR MYSELF TO BE THERE FOR YOU FOR THE NEXT FEW HOURS” WITHOUT FEELING GUILTY.

SELF-CARE IS ABOUT:

- ▶ SETTING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES AND COMMUNICATING MY NEEDS
- ▶ DAILY COURAGE TO SAY WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME, WHAT I NEED, TO STAND IN TRUTH WITH MYSELF
- ▶ VULNERABILITY, BECAUSE ANOTHER PERSON MAY NOT UNDERSTAND MY ATTITUDE, MY NEEDS.

Self-care doesn't mean disregarding other people and their needs. It's the same care we offer to others.

How often, when you see your partner, parent, or child tired, you say "take a break, you've done so much today." And how often do you talk to yourself like that too?

If you feel that you are acting with the last of your strength, instead of saying: "I need a moment for myself today" you say: "No problem, I'll take care of this and that". Does it sound familiar?

WHY PRACTICE SELF-CARE?

Regular and wise self-care benefits not only ourselves but also those around us. There is a long list of benefits. The main ones point that:

- helps to build immunity,
- increases energy levels,
- prevents burnout,
- reduces anxiety,
- strengthens relationships with yourself and others,
- improves mood,
- helps build healthier relationships,
- increases productivity.

When you find time for yourself to rest, you will feel more energetic and will be able to do more – both for yourself and for those around you.

It is also teaching your loved ones, showing them that taking care of yourself and keeping your balance is important and benefits everyone.

THAT IS SELF-CARE INDEED:
IF I DON'T TAKE ENOUGH CARE OF MYSELF,
I WON'T BE ABLE TO DO IT
TO MY LOVED ONES EITHER.

Self-care is checking, asking yourself, "How am I today? What does my mind need? What does my body need?"

Hence, it is clear that self-care is not the same for everyone. It is different because each of us has different needs and different ways to answer them. Moreover, the ways in which we do self-care are not the same all the time. They change because we change, our needs change.



HOW TO PRACTICE SELF-CARE?

- To start, think about these activities that bring or were bringing you joy, energy, balance. Those that you could make at least once per week. Make a list of them.

If you don't have any, look at some ideas below:

- writing daily journal
- listening to a playlist with your favorite songs for good mood/reflection
- meditating
- painting pictures
- going for a walks
- ...

▶ Then, according to the philosophy of small steps choose one activity, this one that you'd like to start with.

▶ Now break your idea into smaller steps.

For example – you chose to walk outside. Think, how often you'd like to do it? At what time? To whom do you need to talk about it? What do you need to prepare for it (e.g. having clothes and shoes ready to put on, the way you'd like to go)? Do you want to just walk or to take a dog or to listen to music, podcasts as well? Do you take water with you? Write each small step of your activity.

▶ Think about how you want to prepare what you need for a walk (e.g. when you'll choose a podcast or music, where you put clothes to have them ready, not to look for them). Write it as well.



- ▶ Then, decide where you put a reminder of your activity. In your phone, calendar, on a piece of paper on the fridge?
- ▶ Think as well about your environment – how others will know about your plan? How can they support you in this?
- ▶ What about plan B – e.g. you want to go for a walk, but at this moment your brother is coming with a visit or the weather is crazy. What will you do then? Write your plan B.
- ▶ Finally, write your own recipe for self-care: what, when, for how long you are gonna do it. Write it using your name, e.g. Ann's self-care is to walk each Wednesday from 4 till 5 p.m. You can also draw it or make an art collage. It's up to you. The most important is that it is your decision and choice about what you want to do, how your self-care is.
- ▶ You can also divide your self-care activities into categories: mind, body, soul. You'll be sure then, that each of those areas is taken care of by you. Maybe some of them can be combined? You can go for a walk and listen to a podcast - you'll do something for your body and mind, at the same time. Thinking about self-care as taking care of all these areas will let plan your activities better and make sure, that you do it holistically.

SELF-CARE TINY HABITS[®] RECIPES



To make practicing self-care even easier, you can use Tiny Habits method. Through the website habitsmastery.com you can sign up for the course and learn how in an easy way implement new habits in your life!

Just to give you inspiration, take a look at some Tiny Habits recipes about self care:

After I start coffee machine, I'll read 3 pages from the book.

After I sit down on the bus / tram/ car, I'll press play on my podcast.

After I eat lunch, I'll take a short walk.

After I finish washing dishes, I'll dance to my favourite song.

After I sit on the couch after dinner, I'll open my gratitude notebook.

After I put my head on the pillow, I'll name 3 things that I am grateful for from the day.

HOWEVER, WHATEVER YOUR DEFINITION OF SELF-CARE AND HOW YOU DO IT, IMPORTANT IS TO ENGAGE IN IT ON A REGULAR BASIS. BUILD ROUTINE, PLAN ACTIVITIES AROUND IT. THIS REGULARITY OF DIALOGUE AND BEING WITH OURSELVES ALLOWS US TO KNOW OURSELVES, OUR NEEDS BETTER. CONSTANT DIALOGUE AND TIME WITH OURSELVES GIVE US THE OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER REACT TO CHANGES AND EVENTS THAT OCCUR IN LIFE.

WHAT HELPS IN PRACTICING SELF-CARE?

What helps in reflecting on yourself, and your self-care activities is to have a “self-care tracker”. It means to leave a sign if you did your self-care activity or you didn’t. To write a short comment about what helped you do it or what stopped you from doing it, as well as, how it makes you feel. It can be a note in the calendar, on the phone, in your journal. This can be also connected with developing your gratitude skills – with this note you can write what you are grateful for this day. Thanks to this you’ll be able to know yourself better, to see what helps you, what doesn’t, what feelings and emotions you have. It will help you to implement changes in your plan if needed.

On the last page, there is a self-care habit tracker for you - use it or inspire and make your own!

SELF-CARE HAS A VERY POSITIVE EFFECT ON YOUR LIFE, BUT IT
REQUIRES YOU TO TAKE TIME. SMALL STEPS – BIG CHANGES.
IT IS YOUR CHOICE IN ORDER TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR WELL-BEING.
THERE’S NO DOUBT THAT IT’S WORTH THE PREPARATION
AND TIME YOU SPEND.
FINALLY, THIS IS ALL ABOUT THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP
IN YOUR LIFE – THE RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU!

SO, ARE YOU GONNA START SELF-CARE?



Self-Care Tracker



DATES

MY SELF-CARE HABITS

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MIND



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