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**DARING  
TO MAKE  
YOURSELF A  
PRIORITY**

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**BALANCE  
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**14 WAYS TO  
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**WE ASKED,  
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ISSUE NO. 4 | JUNE 2019

THE SELF-CARE ISSUE



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THE SELF-CARE ISSUE



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happy june!

Summertime is here which, for many of us, means a pretty major disruption to our regular routine (especially if you've got kids at home.) And while there is certainly a lot to love about the lazy days of summer, one thing I've noticed is that it is a time where many of us start to feel frustrated at our lack of progress towards our goals. There are so many distractions pulling our attention and focus in a million different directions.

And in the midst of it all, it's really hard to make time for ourselves.

That's exactly why in this month's issue, we're focusing on the art of self-care. Because, believe it or not, there really is an art to nurturing ourselves. And what's more, learning to care for our own needs is actually one of the best things we can do to serve the people we love.

And so, we'll start by chatting about some practical steps you can start taking right away to make self-care more of a priority in your life this year (page 4), and we'll also share some warning signs and red flags that might let you know you're getting close to burnout and in need of some self-care (page 12).

We'll also address how to handle the craziness that can strip away our motivation this time of year, as well as get some expert advice on simple ways for recharging your batteries (page 16).

The worksheets in our practical application section will help you reflect on this topic, as well as take action, and our resources section includes some helpful links that can help you make self-care a reality.

If you have time, be sure to also check out this month's recommended reading— *Brave Love* by Lisa Leonard. Lisa is one of my dearest friends, and her book is one of the best I've read in the past year, and one that will inspire you to conquer the bravest love of all—loving yourself. (You may remember Lisa from Episode 36 of the Do It Scared podcast, which was one of our most popular episodes ever!) That said, if you don't have time to read the whole book right now, you can also catch our executive summary on page 10!

Here's to making this your best summer yet!

xoxo Ruth

# THE ART OF DARING TO MAKE YOURSELF A PRIORITY

RUTH SOUKUP

**S**elf-care. It's one of those concepts that sounds like a good idea, at least in theory, but in reality can be a lot harder to pull off. After all, when it comes to taking care of ourselves, whether it be combatting stress or staying healthy or losing weight or caring for our relationships, it's not always easy to admit when there's a problem.

It's even harder to admit when that problem might be caused by something we're doing wrong.

This is a truth I discovered firsthand last year when my husband Chuck and I decided, for the first time ever in our marriage, to attend couple's counseling. At the time, we were both frustrated because it felt like we were just having the same fight, over and over and over again, without ever actually resolving it.

I saw things from my point of view. My husband saw things from his point of view. And that was just it. Perhaps the problem was that we were both just too stubborn to budge, or maybe that we were just so steeped in the reality of our own experience that we just could not find a middle ground.

And so, we went to counseling.

The crux of our biggest argument went something like this—Chuck felt like our life was simply too chaotic, like we have too much going on all the time, and like he just couldn't keep up with all his responsibilities—taking care of our girls, keeping up with housework, laundry, grocery shopping, activities, and all the other things he was responsible for. He was angry with me for working too much, and for wanting to do things like travel and always taking on new projects. He felt like I was purposely creating more chaos in our already chaotic life.

I, on the other hand, didn't really feel like our life was all that chaotic. In fact, I loved our life! I felt like after years of working crazy hours to build my business, I finally got my work schedule down to what most people would consider pretty normal—Monday through Friday, 8-5. I wasn't working on the weekends or in the evenings, and I was even making time to work out every morning. I love to travel, so yes—I was always dreaming about the next place to go, and I hate to be bored, so yes—I was constantly coming up with new home projects on the weekend—organizing, redecorating, cooking, whatever. I like to be busy.

And it was my busyness that was stressing him out, because Chuck felt like we were already way too busy.





But what we discovered in counseling surprised both us.

You see, what we learned is that this argument between couples is actually super common, even though it is normally in reverse.

Our counselor told us that for most of the couples he sees, it is the wife who shares the same complaints that Chuck was sharing—an overwhelming feeling like they just can't keep up, like they are on this treadmill of the endless to-do list—all this STUFF that needs to be done all the time, over and over again, and is never actually finished, and because they are so overwhelmed, they feel like if they have to add just one more thing, they might just lose their mind.

And then the counselor asked Chuck a question that took us both completely off guard.

He said, “How long have you been burned out?”

He went on to explain that the signs of burnout are exactly the ones that Chuck was experiencing—feeling stressed out and irritable, as well as feeling underappreciated, completely overwhelmed at the thought of adding just one more thing, and resentful of their spouse.

We talked about that for a while, but then the counselor asked Chuck a different question.

He said, “what are you doing for self-care?”.

And Chuck, who may be Mr. Mom, but is still a guy's guy in every way, simply scoffed. “Self-care is stupid,” he said. “I don't need any self-care, nor do I have time for it. The problem is that we have too much going on, not that I need to be making time for self-care.”

But, as our counselor explained, everyone needs to make time for self-care. Because if we don't, if we spend all our time running from one thing to the next, or taking care of everyone else's needs, we will eventually get burned out. And when we're burned out, we don't serve anyone well. Not ourselves or the people around us.

Daring to make time for self-care is actually one of the least-selfish things that we can do, because when we make sure we are filling our own tank, we are also giving more to the people around us.

Burnout doesn't serve anyone.


And yet, when we are stuck in that place where Chuck was at, feeling like it is all you can do to just keep up, it is hard to imagine a different way. Taking a step back feels almost impossible—like if you do that, everything might just fall apart.

So how do we master this art of daring to make time for self-care in our lives, and to make yourself a priority? I think it starts with four simple but incredibly essential steps.

## **STEP #1:** UNDERSTAND WHAT FILLS YOU UP

The first essential step is to get clear about what it is that actually fills you up and makes you feel recharged and rejuvenated. When you are stuck on that treadmill of the daily grind, it can be a challenge to even allow yourself to think about what sort of self-nurturing activities are going to actually help refill your tank and not just add to your stress level.

But the reality is that what is super fun and relaxing and restorative for one person feels like pure torture for the next person.



**Daring to make time for self-care is actually one of the least-selfish things that we can do, because when we make sure we are filling our own tank, we are also giving more to the people around us.**

For instance, at my core, I am an extroverted introvert. An ambivert, I think is what it is called. But what that means, and what I have learned about myself, is that the thing that fills me up more than anything else is alone time. I need it and I crave it.

In fact, my favorite day of the week is Monday, because on Monday afternoons Chuck takes our daughters to dance, and they don't get home until a little after 6pm. And that means when I get home from the office around five, I have a whole precious hour all to myself to cook dinner. It's glorious! I put on my apron, pour a glass of wine, tell Alexa to play me some Norah Jones, and revel in this little moment to myself, to chop and saute and get creative with food. I love it.

I just need that little moment.

This need to be alone is something that has taken me a long time to really understand about myself—that I recharge by having quiet space.

In fact, one of my very favorite ways to really recharge is by taking what I call a personal retreat. For 4 or 5 days, I will go away to a hotel all by myself and just read and think and sleep and be alone. I'll take long walks and listen to relaxing music and watch movies while I take long baths. I don't talk to anyone the whole time, and it fills me up in a way that nothing else can.

And if you are an introvert like me, you might be nodding your head as you read this, thinking YES—that's exactly what I need too! I just want to be completely BY MYSELF for a little while—to hole up in a hotel or even just in bed for a day or two days or a week, and just revel in the quiet.

But you extroverts are probably thinking THAT SOUNDS LIKE TORTURE. Why on earth would you want to be completely ALONE for 5 whole days? How can you stand not talking to anyone?



And if that's the case, then it is just as important to understand what fills YOU up. Maybe for you, being around people is what makes you feel restored. Maybe it is having deep and meaningful conversations with your closest girlfriend, or having quality time or a night out with your spouse.

I know for my husband, who is far more extroverted than me, the very last thing he wants is to be alone, especially because as a stay-at-home dad, he is by himself most of the day. He craves conversation and togetherness, and he always wants to spend time together and to do activities together as a family—attending events and festivals and the farmer's market and the Medieval Fair, and he loves having our house be the place where all the other kids come to play.

The thing is—there is no right or wrong answer for this. Me needing to be filled up by alone time is not somehow better or more important than my husband needing to be filled up by togetherness. The important thing is that we both recognize, for ourselves what sort of activities are going to help restore us, and what is going to drain us.

So understand what fills you up—that's the first essential step in daring to make time for yourself.

## STEP #2: CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

The second step is to start having some critical conversations. And this isn't always easy. But once you really start to understand how your own brain works, and what fills you up and brings life back to you, it is YOUR job to communicate that to other people, and to advocate for yourself.

I think sometimes we get upset or aggravated or offended that the people closest to us aren't giving us what we need, when the reality is that we have never communicated what we need. We are expecting them to read our minds, to understand exactly how we feel, when in truth, that is impossible.

I know for a long time, this was a huge source of



conflict for Chuck and I. Because he is an extrovert and I am an introvert, we wanted different things and we craved different things, and he couldn't understand why I just wanted to be by myself—in fact, he would get offended by it—and I couldn't understand why he was always wanting to be together. And the more he wanted togetherness, the more I wanted space! It felt suffocating to me, but my pulling away felt incredibly hurtful to him.

And for us, it finally took sitting down and really talking about it—explaining how we felt and what we actually needed from each other. Because the thing is—he hadn't been trying to suffocate me—he just wanted to spend time together, and assumed that I would too. And I hadn't been trying to hurt him, I just really need to have regular moments of space and alone time, or I start to shut down.

But once he understood that having alone time made me more capable of then enjoying my time together with him, and once I understood how important it was to him to sometimes just have my full attention, things started to improve for us. We both became a lot more intentional about giving the other person what we needed.

Chuck will often take our girls to do activities on the weekends — parades, home depot, the farmer's market, whatever—but I will rarely go. And instead of feeling

bad about it or Chuck being irritated by it, we just realize this part of our personalities. I need space and he needs togetherness — we have communicated what we need.

So have the critical conversations. Stop expecting other people to read your mind. It's your job to tell the people around you what you need. That's step two.

### **STEP #3: GET IT ON THE SCHEDULE**

The third step, then is to actually start getting that time for yourself blocked out on the calendar.

And this is really where the rubber meets the road. Because just like you are responsible for communicating what you need to the people around you, you are also just as responsible for actually making time for self-care. It is no one else's responsibility to take care of you.

This means that if you know that you need time alone—get it on the schedule. Block out a weekend for a personal retreat, even if it is just going to a local hotel for a night or two all by yourself. Schedule a spa day or convince your spouse to take the kids camping or to the zoo for the day, or whatever, so that you can have the whole house to yourself. Plan to spend a whole day in bed watching Netflix. But actually be intentional about putting something on the schedule, and making time just for you a priority.

Same thing applies if you don't need alone time! Maybe your self-care is planning a weekend away with a few girlfriends, or a special date with your spouse. Maybe it's hosting a dinner party or having lunch with a friend.

Once you've figured out what type of activities are going to be most restorative to you, make a point of getting them on your calendar. Try to do something small for yourself at least once a week, and make a bigger effort at least once a month.





For me, that means blocking out time for exercise in the mornings, and also making sure that I have at least a few hours to myself on the weekends to read or work on a project or do whatever. And then it also means scheduling my personal retreats at least a couple of times a year.

So that's step three—get it on the schedule. But there is one more critical step you'll have to take.

#### **STEP #4: GIVE UP THE GUILT**

The fourth step is to let go of the guilt that so often takes over the minute we start putting our own needs first.

And this might be the hardest step of all, especially for women, and especially for moms. Because the truth is that we spend so much of our time taking care of everyone else that there's not usually any time left for ourselves. And so I think that in our minds that we start to believe that if we do make time for ourselves, we'll be taking away from everyone else, and that will make us selfish.

Maybe we can't shake this nagging feeling that all this self-care talk is really just a nicer way of saying be selfish. Put yourself first. Your family doesn't matter. Your spouse doesn't matter. It's all about you baby.

But that's not what self care is. Self care is knowing how to fill your own tank so that you CAN then pour into the other people in your life—your spouse and your kids and your career and all those other commitments. Self care is the fuel that keeps you going.

Without it, you will eventually run out of gas and get totally burned out. Just like what happened to Chuck, and just like what happens to so many of us. Self-care is the opposite of selfish!! It means you care enough about the people around you to take care of yourself and your own needs, so that you have more to give to everyone else. It is putting on your own oxygen mask before you assist the person next to you. Because if you pass out, you can't help anyone!

And that is why we need to stop feeling bad about taking care of ourselves. We need to stop apologizing for it,

stop putting it off, and stop making excuses for why we can't. Because daring to make time for self-care is truly one of the bravest things we can do.


Which begs the question—are you taking care of yourself? Really, truly, and on a regular basis?

If not, why not? What needs to change in your life right now to make regular self care more of a priority?

The thing is, becoming more intentional with self-care in your life means making a pretty big mindset shift. It needs to become a priority, not an afterthought. There's an art to it.

And to master that art of making yourself a priority, the four steps we talked about today are the place to start. First, figure out what fills you up. There's no point in trying to do self-care in a way that works for other people if that is not what is actually restoring to you. Know yourself, your own personality, and what sort of thing will fill your tank. Second, have those critical conversations with the important people in your life. It is your job to communicate what you need. Stop expecting other people to read your mind, thirdly, get it on the schedule. Just like it is your job to communicate what you need, it is also your job to actually make time for what you need, and to make it happen. Stop waiting for someone else to do it for you. And then finally, give up the guilt! You are not selfish for taking care of you.

I promise.



**Becoming more intentional with self-care in your life means making a pretty big mindset shift. It needs to become a priority, not an afterthought.**

MAKING SPACE *for YOU to BE YOU*

# brave love



LISA LEONARD

*Founder of lisa leonard designs.®*





# do<sup>ing</sup> it scared

## book of the month

### *Brave Love* by Lisa Leonard

#### Executive Summary

JESSICA BOWMAN



#### Available in:

Hardcover | Audiobook | Kindle

We've all felt this at some point in our lives...the pressure to be perfect, to be the perfect spouse, the perfect parent, to be the perfect professional.

The struggle with perfection is so real! Many of us feel the strain to be everything to everyone which often results in us putting ourselves last. Lisa Leonard is no exception, and in *Brave Love*, she shares her story about meeting her husband, getting married, having two children—one of whom was born with a severe disability, and founding a multi-

million dollar jewelry company.

Along the way, she realized she was utterly exhausted and her health was suffering. Her love for her special needs son often felt overshadowed by fear and exhaustion. The thing is, Lisa was dying to change. However, there was just one problem—she had no idea how.

So she kept pushing, desperate to prove that she could do it all. But she realized that she had lost herself along the way.

*Brave Love* is a heartfelt memoir that explores what it means to be human, to be vulnerable, raw, and brutally honest. In addition to her story, Lisa includes poems and photos that make it feel like you're getting a peek into her diary—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Her life is not Instagram-perfect, and she shares the messy moments with fearless transparency. You'll wonder how she found the courage to share some of the dark thoughts that crossed her mind, knowing that it couldn't have been easy to be so "real" in this digital age where everyone's a critic and so quick to throw you under the bus for every word that may contain the slightest bit of controversy. In *Brave Love*, Lisa goes there and doesn't hold back. She embraces the bitter as well as the sweet, which makes this story as poignant as it is beautiful.

*Brave Love: Making Space for You to Be You* will make you laugh, cry, and most importantly it will help you realize that when you stop trying to be someone you aren't, you'll love other people better than ever before.

# BALANCE IS OVERRATED

3 TRICKS FOR SILENCING THE VOICE TELLING YOU  
THAT YOU SHOULD ALWAYS BE DOING MORE

RUTH SOUKUP

**Y**ou know the feeling. You're behind on a project at work, you're afraid you're not spending enough quality time with the kids, you can't remember the last time you had an evening alone with your spouse, you feel horrible that you don't have time to make every meal from scratch, and you've got big dreams that always seem to get pushed to the back of the line.

If you've got kids or a family, there's a special name for this feeling: it's mom guilt. Of course, dads get it, too...

The thing is, at some point in our lives, we've all heard this nagging voice that keeps telling us we should do more, love more, nurture more, give more, serve more, be more present, be more spiritual, and be more intentional. And that voice is always there. All. The. Time.

But what if it's lying to us?

Nobody has time to be everything to everyone. In order to focus on one part of your life, you have to turn your attention away from something else. It's simple math: there are only 24 hours in a day.

That means you have to make hard choices. But it doesn't make you a bad person or a failure or a disappointment. It makes you human. You might feel selfish whenever you take the time to care for yourself, pursue one of your passions, or focus on your career, but sometimes we have to be selfish to get stuff done.

Luckily, I've got a few tricks for silencing that voice telling you that you should always be doing more, and you'll find that it's all a matter of stepping back to see the big picture.

## **TRICK #1:** IT'S OKAY TO GET OBSESSIVE

The idea of obsessing gets a bad rap. We're taught to believe that it's not healthy to focus too long or too hard on only one thing, or to pour all our energy and efforts into a single area of our life. We shouldn't work too much or exercise too hard or practice too long.

But greatness almost always come from obsession. The most successful and celebrated CEOs and



artists and scientists and athletes and entertainers have always been people who are willing to make sacrifices and forgo balance in favor of focus in one very targeted area. In fact, I would dare to assert that behind every truly notable achievement is a person who was willing to get obsessive.

As a Christian, I personally believe that we are called by God to use our unique gifts and talents and strengths to the best of our ability. I also believe that those big dreams—the ones that spark that fear and excitement inside of us—are divinely inspired. To me, that means that if we don't get obsessive about using those gifts, pursuing those big dreams, and living out our calling, we are actually going astray. We're not called to balance, we're called to purpose.

### **TRICK #2: NO SEASON LASTS FOREVER**

Have you ever noticed that as humans, we tend to have complete tunnel vision for whatever season of life we happen to be in?

When I was young and single in my 20s, my life revolved around hiking with my dog and hanging out with my friends. As a newly engaged bride-to-be, I lived, slept, and breathed wedding plans. Pregnancy was a whole new season, one filled with anticipation and worry and excitement and fear. Motherhood turned pregnancy into a distant memory, and every season of it has brought its own set of challenges and obsessions. As an entrepreneur I've experienced lots of different seasons as well.

Seasons come and go—in marriage and in friendship, in work and in play, in every aspect of our lives. But no season, good or bad, lasts forever.

And that's important to know and remember, because it highlights the futility of feeling guilty about a lack of balance when the seasonal nature of our lives means that we will always be at least somewhat out-of-whack, depending on what season we happen to be in. Seasons change, and with it, our perspective of what matters most.

### **TRICK #3: IF EVERYTHING IS IMPORTANT, THEN NOTHING IS**


One of the biggest daily struggles we face is the idea that everything in our lives needs to be given equal weight and attention, and that if we are not completely balanced in all areas of our life at all times, we are FAILING.

Oh my gosh, what a horrible LIE we are telling ourselves!

Because the truth is that if everything is important, nothing is important. If we are always trying to give equal weight to all the things, we will never give enough weight to the really important things. Not everything can or should be important all the time. It's not possible, and we will drive ourselves crazy trying to achieve some sort of perfect balance.

Sometimes we SHOULD be failing in one area so that we can succeed in another. Because the alternative is being perfectly balanced in our mediocrity. And who wants that, really?

That means that taking the time to identify your priorities—the things that matter most to you—is absolutely essential. It's an exercise that should be done frequently, and should result with a concrete list of the things that are most important to you. It should be your physical reminder that not everything is equally important.



**The truth is that if everything is important, nothing is important...Not everything can or should be important all the time.**



#### **TRICK #4:** IT'S OKAY TO MAKE ROOM FOR ME TIME

A couple of years ago, I did something I've never done before: I went on a personal retreat.

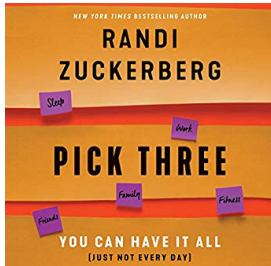
For four whole days, I did nothing but read books, journal, go for long walks and hikes, do yoga, take long baths and lay by the pool. I completely unplugged from work and literally retreated from the world. When I came back, I was completely recharged, revitalized, and reinvigorated.

Your “retreat” doesn’t have to be an elaborate vacation. Some of my best retreats have been at home, when my husband takes our kids camping for the weekend. The point is not what you do to take care of yourself, but that you actually do make time for yourself, without feeling guilty about it.

Because the truth is that taking the time to take care of YOU is better for everyone. When we feel stretched too thin, we aren’t able to give 100% to anyone or anything. Allowing ourselves a little “me” time every now and then is like a release valve for all the pressure that builds up. It results in more energy and less exhaustion, helps boost our immune system, and makes us feel calmer, kinder, and more in control of our emotions.

While it might feel selfish or indulgent in the moment, it’s not. In fact, just like on an airplane, when they tell you to adjust your own mask before assisting others, practicing self-care is actually one of the least selfish things you can do.

# RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



**PICK THREE: YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL** BY RANDI ZUCKERBURG  
**AVAILABLE** AT AMAZON AND MAJOR RETAILERS

In this motivational handbook - both a business how-to and self-help guide - the New York Times best-selling author of Dot Complicated takes on the fallacy of the “well-balanced” life, arguing that the key to success is learning to be well-lopsided.

Work. Sleep. Fitness. Family. Friends. Pick Three.

## **ALOE BUD SELF-CARE POCKET COMPANION APP:**

**INSTALL** THE APP IS AVAILABLE FOR BOTH APPLE AND ANDROID USERS

Aloe Bud is an all-in-one, self-care pocket companion. It gently brings awareness to self-care activities, using encouraging push notifications, rather than guilt or shame. Helpful reminders from yourself, to yourself; saved within Aloe Bud so you can keep doing you! Hydrate, Move, Breathe, Health, Break, Rest, Fuel, Refresh, People, Stimulate, Motivate. What do you need more of in your life today?



## **EPISODE 35 IN THE DO IT SCARED™ PODCAST:**

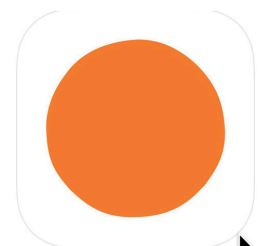
**LISTEN** TO THE PODCAST AT [DOITSCARED.COM](http://DOITSCARED.COM)

Focusing on self-care can feel selfish or self-indulgent, and we can feel guilty for even wanting it. But it's so important! You need to nurture your body and soul, fill up your own tank, and make your own needs a priority. Women and moms, in particular, often put their own needs on the back burner to take care of everyone else. Daring to make time for self-care is one of the bravest and most unselfish things you can do.

## **HEADSPACE: MEDITATION & SLEEP APP:**

**INSTALL** THE APP IS AVAILABLE FOR BOTH APPLE AND ANDROID USERS

Headspace is your guide to health and happiness. It's the simple way to let go of stress and get a better night's rest. Learn to relax with guided meditations and mindfulness techniques that bring calm, wellness and balance to your life in just a few minutes a day. Plus, Sleep by Headspace helps you create the ideal conditions for a good night's rest.





# 14 WAYS TO RECHARGE YOUR INTERNAL BATTERIES

& RESTORE YOUR SANITY

RUTH SOUKUP

**A** couple of years ago, I did something I'd never done before—something I don't think I ever would have even considered, had my husband not suggested and encouraged it. I went on a personal retreat.

For four whole days, I did nothing but read books, go for long walks and hikes, do yoga, take long baths and lay by the pool. I completely unplugged from work and literally retreated from the world.

It was nothing short of incredible, and it was a powerful reminder to me—someone who normally thrives on being busy—that sometimes rest is the most productive thing we can do.

And let's face it—clutter and chaos are the opposite of restfulness. Not only do our homes become chaotic, but our schedules also get full of things we need to do, deal with, and take care of. Life can feel like an endless parade of carpooling, pickups and drop-offs for lessons and activities, and running errands all over the city, not to mention keeping up with all the obligations at work or school or church.

It's no wonder we need a break once in a while!

While these days, many of us use tech to tune out, the reality is that screen time will never leave us feeling recharged and refreshed. Instead, it just makes us feel constantly connected and overloaded with information.

Instead of going to Instagram or Pinterest, or playing a game of Candy Crush on your phone, why not try to find more restful ways to really relax? Taking a break from technology gives us a chance to recharge our own batteries and helps us feel more mindful and aware of our surroundings. This mindfulness leads to a sense of control and empowerment. Suddenly, you feel like you can “do all the things,” when before you would have just felt like checking out.

Believe it or not, our mental “getaway” doesn't need to be an elaborate vacation or expensive escape. Here are fourteen simple ways to recharge your internal batteries—without breaking the bank.

## NUMBER 1: GO FOR A WALK

Probably the simplest and most cost-free solution to relaxation is to slip on your shoes and go for a walk. Just get out there. Walk in the rain, walk in the snow or walk in the sun. While walking with your kids or spouse can be lovely, sometimes it's nice to just go for a walk by yourself (or take your dog).

When you go for a walk, it's not about speed-walking, listening to loud music, or even trying to lose weight (although all of those things can be part of it too, if that's what truly relaxes you). Instead, it's about mindfulness, listening to the sounds around us, and enjoying the scenery. Breathe in the fresh air and really notice what's going on in your environment. Even a ten or fifteen minute walk can give you the boost you need.

## NUMBER 2: DIGITALLY DECLUTTER

This may seem like a strange way to recharge your batteries, but organizing can make you feel so much lighter after it's done. We all have clutter bringing us down, even the thought of the things you need to organize can add extra unnecessary stress to our lives...so take some time to really dig deep into a project.

I know for me, clutter of the virtual type is always weighing on my mind. So take time to finally import all your photos onto your computer, create folders by date, and start putting things in their place. I promise you once your desktop is clean and clear, and all your photos and documents are stored correctly, you will feel recharged every time you open your computer.

## NUMBER 3: GIVE YOURSELF SOME "SPA TIME"

Have you ever treated yourself to a home spa treatment? Years ago I worked in a spa—and I loved it! It was so fun to see our clients come in all excited, then watch them get pampered and enjoy doing something nice for themselves. People are rarely sad at the salon. It's a great way to boost your mood and brighten your day.

You can create that spa day feeling at home! Do something extra special for yourself—use an exfoliating salt scrub, and put on a fluffy robe. Light scented candles or use a diffuser and essential oils.



Keep the lights turned down low, and use a mask or special skin treatment. Whiten your teeth with a little baking soda and hydrogen peroxide. Give your hair a deep condition. I guarantee you will feel lifted!

#### **NUMBER 4:** TAKE A 20-MINUTE NAP

I'm not a huge napper, but the benefits of taking a nap during the day can boost concentration and improve your mood, especially if you're a person who loves naps (or someone who just needs to get a better night's sleep).

Take twenty minutes to cozy up somewhere comfortable and warm. Rather than just trying to catch some winks in a chair or on the couch, try to make your nap something really special. Turn the lights low, wrap up in a soft blanket, and even get a pillow out.

The idea is to make a nap seem like a special luxury and reward, rather than something you feel guilty for "sneaking in." When you're using a nap to recharge your batteries, make it a treat.

#### **NUMBER 5:** GET A LITTLE EXERCISE

If you're someone who enjoys exercise, get your endorphins going to keep you feeling charged up and ready to take on the world. Exercise keeps your heart healthy and can help boost your mood and keep your emotions in check. If you struggle from anxiety or depression, exercise is a natural solution. You don't have to belong to an expensive gym or health club. Simply put in a DVD or look for exercise videos

“It was nothing short of incredible, & it was a powerful reminder to me—someone who normally thrives on being busy—that sometimes rest is the most productive thing we can do.”







on YouTube. If you're committed to going tech-free, lace up your sneakers and go for a walk or run. If all else fails, turn on some music and dance around your living room. It's about getting your heart pumping and your mood-boosting endorphins going. You'll feel the energy.

### **NUMBER 6: COLOR!**

Adult coloring books are all the rage these days. Using pencils or crayons to fill in repeating designs can be just as soothing and relaxing for adults as it is for kids.

You don't need to buy an expensive book to participate in the coloring trend. There are tons of drawings you can print off online, or go ahead and sneak a page from your kids' coloring book. You can even try looking through your own bookshelf. Many books feature simple line-drawn illustrations.

Taking colored pencils to a piece of paper and illustrating color variations from light to dark, or creating a simple drawing of trees or flowers can make you feel calm and refreshed.

### **NUMBER 7: READ A BOOK**

While I love my Kindle as much as the next gal, try to take a break from technology and try opening a good old-fashioned book. Pick something light and relaxing to read, like a biography or fiction.

If you aren't a big reader, skim through a magazine or page through a cookbook for fun ideas. (No frantic searching for a dinner recipe to stress about tonight!)

### **NUMBER 8: WORK IN YOUR GARDEN**

Whether you have a true green thumb or just a brownish-green one, everyone can enjoy getting outdoors and getting our hands a little dirty! Try planting some veggies or lettuce in a planter or pot. If you have existing flower beds, weed and rake the dirt surrounding the plants.

When you're working in your garden, be mindful of the world around you. Notice the smells and feelings you experience in the dirt and grass. Feel the breeze and the sun as it hits the back of your neck. Let the process become a sensory experience to ensure it's much more relaxing than just "weeding the garden."



### **NUMBER 9:** BAKE BREAD

I LOVE LOVE LOVE homemade bread. A good crusty loaf, a soft loaf, beer bread—there’s really nothing better than delicious, fresh bread. Try making a loaf of easy yeast bread or rolls. The very act of kneading the dough, letting it rise, and creating something your whole family can enjoy is very therapeutic.

If yeast bread isn’t your favorite, try making a quick breads like banana, zucchini, pumpkin or carrot. Even if you’d rather not have it in the house, it makes for a great gift for neighbors, and you’ll double the recharge effect by doing something nice for someone else.

### **NUMBER 10:** USE ESSENTIAL OILS

Essential oils are a big part of my life and my family. They’re amazingly useful when it comes to staying healthy. They smell amazing and they can be used in so many applications—from healthy cleaning solutions to diffusion for all sorts of benefits.

Try using lavender to relax, peppermint to energize, or orange to awaken and refresh. You can use the oils topically, so try putting a few drops on a cotton ball or tissue to give you a little boost during the day.

### **NUMBER 11:** CALL A FRIEND

Very few things in the world can recharge our batteries like a conversation with a good friend. Don’t make it a complaint session or even a chance to “vent.” Instead, try reframing your approach to the conversation and make it about uplifting the both of you and truly connecting.

Listen to your friend and talk about the things important to both of you. Make plans for the future and exchange funny or inspirational stories. Sometimes a quick call is all you need to reset your mood and feel renewed.



## NUMBER 12: JOURNAL

At the times in my life when I've most struggled, I've found that writing things out can be immensely helpful, and yes—even energizing. Some of us might not be traditional “journalers,” but jotting down your thoughts, lists, plans and memories in a notebook can help get it off your plate and out of your brain.

If you find you need a chance to reset and recharge your batteries, explore your “whys” in your writing. What’s making you feel drained and what can you do to make yourself feel better? Write it out and you might be surprised at the results.

## NUMBER 13: TAKE A BATH OR SHOWER

It’s amazing what a nice bath or shower can do to reset your levels and get you going. If you really need a recharge, use a soothing shower gel and the “nice” conditioner and shampoo—and go all out. If you like, put on some music or nature sounds to make your shower an experience.

If you prefer a bath, light candles and break out the Epsom salts and bubble bath, of course. Try something with an invigorating citrus scent to wake you up and give you a boost of energy.

## NUMBER 14: GIVE

There’s no better way to recharge your batteries than to think of a way to give to those around you. It doesn’t need to be a grand donation to charity and you don’t need to build an entire Habitat for Humanity house (though both are great ideas). For an easy mood lifter, try simply doing something nice for someone close to you or committing a random act of kindness.

Pay for the next guy in line at Starbucks. Drop off cookies or that zucchini bread to a neighbor. Fix a favorite meal for your kids or spouse. The idea is to do it with intention, awareness and joy.

Recharging your batteries doesn’t need to be an expensive process, and it shouldn’t require you to do something time consuming and out of the ordinary. Pick a simple activity that makes you feel good, and put away your cell phone and technology so you can really enjoy and savor the moment!







Grandi Michelle

# do<sup>ing</sup> it scared

## story of the month

**Y**ears ago, I was a teenage mom who had to give up her child in order to save her from the severe physical, sexual, and emotional abuse I was suffering at the hands of the ‘man’ I was with at the time. I battled severe depression for years and have the deep scars to prove it. And I punished myself for it severely.

Today I am a survivor who has been through some of the darkest times and not only lived to tell about them, but am so incredibly grateful for the life I have now.

For years, I never knew what self-care was nor how to do it. Once I realized what it was, and tried to actually practice self-care, I felt selfish. At times it just felt wrong, like I was betraying my family. But that was a lie I told myself. I used to do that a lot. Lie to myself - to save myself from failure, fear, and even success in some cases.

Understanding that I was lying to myself was difficult to own, but so freeing once I did. I learned that I really could not be fully present and contribute to my family to the best of my ability if I did not take care of myself first.

Those lies I told myself were hard to shake. I was terrified.

But learning to practice self-care saved my life and changed it in ways so much greater than my dreams.

My life today is so far beyond the life I ever thought I deserved or would even live. To look at me today and me 20 years ago, you wouldn’t recognize me as the same person.

Self care can mean a lot of things to different people. For me, it’s watching my daughter dance on stage in her performances, watching my sons play soccer and football, curling up with a good book, watching my Carolina Panthers play during football season, crafting with my Cricut machine, painting, getting my nails done,

taking time away to spend as a family and even having the presence of mind to take a nap or unplug and go to bed when I need to. Not only has practicing self-care been a long journey, but it has saved my sanity, changed my life, and led me to where I am now.

Today, I am married to the love of my life (we met 18 years ago shortly after I left the abusive nightmare I was in). We have 3 of the most amazing and beautiful kids, and I am safe, happy, and completely fulfilled.

My whole life has been driven by sheer determination and fighting to take action through my fears.

Taking care of yourself is not selfish. It is the most unselfish thing you can do for yourself and your family. It literally can change your life and turn your dreams into reality.

It’s the only thing that will allow you to be able to truly focus on your goals and crush them. Our goals for this year? Buy a house. Save more money. Take our kids on trips. We are getting there. Every day is a steady step down that path.

No matter your circumstances and where you came from or what you’ve been through, as long as you have goals and indulge regularly in self-care, you absolutely can accomplish anything - more than you ever thought possible.



# WE ASKED, THEY ANSWERED

## HOW DO YOU PRACTICE SELF-CARE?

RUTH SOUKUP

### TESS MASTERS - THE BLENDER GIRL



I have 5 principles for practicing physical self care that I keep on my bathroom mirror.

#### **PRINCIPLE 1:** HYDRATE

Drink plenty of water or herbal tea; and eat high-water-content raw fruits and vegetables such as cucumber, celery,

tomatoes, melons, berries, grapefruit, lemons, and limes to keep the body hydrated and to flush out toxins.

#### **PRINCIPLE 2:** GRAB THE GREENS

Seize every opportunity to include leafy greens such as spinach, kale, chard, arugula, romaine, collard greens, and bok choy in your diet to increase your consumption of alkalizing minerals to combat acidic wastes. Use raw leafy greens in your smoothies and salads, or shred them to fortify cooked soups and stews.

#### **PRINCIPLE 3:** PUSH THE PROBIOTICS

For gut health and immunity, consume prebiotic- and probiotic-rich foods on a regular basis. Add probiotic powder to smoothies, drink kefir, eat unsweetened natural yogurt, or add 1/4 cup of cultured vegetables (sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles) with every meal.

#### **PRINCIPLE 4:** RIP INTO RAW FOOD

Uncooked fruits and vegetables retain their full nutrient potential, contain enzymes that aid digestion, and mineral-rich water for better health. Enjoy them whole as snacks; throw them into smoothies, juices, salads, and cold soups; use them as crudité for dips; or as toppings on cooked dishes.

#### **PRINCIPLE 5:** MOVE FOR MOMENTUM

Engage in some kind of movement (walking, hiking, running, cycling, swimming, yoga, pilates, weight training etc) every day for 30 to 60 minutes to improve circulation, stimulate the lymph, rev up metabolism, improve digestion, and aid heart and respiratory health.

Beyond this physical self care, I want to stay in a positive mental and emotional state. I keep affirmations on my desk and pick one out of the box every day to prompt my meditation. I find it challenging to completely turn off my mind. So, I practice mindful meditation and use the thought to set my intention for the day. This always helps me stay in a place of gratitude and abundance, particularly when I'm facing challenges and losing my perspective. I call somebody I love everyday to check in with them, and I find somebody to celebrate whether it is a friend, family member, colleague, or stranger. And I always have a personal project on the boil that takes me out of my comfort zone such as learning to play the guitar, horse riding, or ice skating so that I stay thirsty and curious, and I'm always learning something new.



## RANDI ZINN - BEYOND MOM



Self-Care is a bit of an overused term but that doesn't mean it's an overused concept. If anything it's a concept that has become elusive and reactive- we do it when we're desperate and we're not always sure what we even need! For busy women, in particular, we must invest in ourselves at all costs. Most of us are caring for someone: children, partners, relatives, pets, and businesses. If we aren't fueled and healthy both in our body and minds, how can we expect ourselves to be clear, energized, and happy? I'm an entrepreneur, a mother, and a caretaker of some older relatives in need. Life is full.

But here's what I know about self-care and how I've made it work for me:

1- I don't wait until it's an emergency. That's right...I've invested time and research to finding the practitioners and experiences that make me feel grounded, happy, refueled and whole. I have my go-to massage therapist, talk therapist, health food stores, nutritionist, acupuncturist, friends who are the best to talk to, favorite destinations when I need a quiet moment, you get that point. I consider this my tool kit so when I feel depleted or tense or lonely, I know who to call or where to go. Do you have an established self-care tool kit?

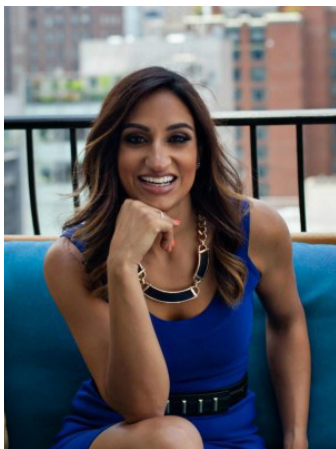
2- Since I have my tool kit, I dip into it so I feel healthier more often than not. This way I'm not reactive about my self-care and it's just a part of my daily life, allowing me to feel healthy and happy more often than not. It's the difference between eating well and taking your vitamins instead of loading up on fresh foods and supplements when you're already getting sick.

A little goes a long way and intentional planning and scheduling of your self-care can make a huge difference as we navigate being the busy, purposeful women we are.

## JUSTIN SCHENCK - THE GROWTH NOW MOVEMENT



There are three things that I do every single day for self-care. Number one, is meditation, I meditate for 10 to 15 minutes, depending on what I need, and I just sit in silence and sit in my thoughts. I also use visualization and so I put my life to a soundtrack, and anything in my potential future has a soundtrack to it. And so I actually visualize, while listening to the soundtrack, of whatever it is I'm planning. And the third thing is actually going to be for self-care, but it's also to help my confidence. And that is I reach out to at least one person every single day to check on them.



**The way that I practice self-care, the number one thing for me is to get a quality, deep, restful sleep. That just makes me feel so good. It's almost a non-negotiable for me.**

**NAGINA ABDULLAH** - MASALA BODY

**I make space to travel and to just be alone, I've been surprised at how much space I need just to function, and also, how when I create personal space, everything else seems to get done.**


**LISA LEONARD** - LISA LEONARD DESIGNS



**Well, first of all, I work a lot, so you need to know that. I love to work, and that is a part of self-care for me. We always make a point of having dinner together every night. We play games when my daughter allows it, because she's a teenager now and it's not very cool to play games with us anymore. Then in the evenings, I play video games, and take a bath. I love baths!**

**JENNIFER MARX** - THE GREAT MAKER SHOW AND TELL



The background is a large, irregular teal watercolor wash. Scattered around the text are eight small red flowers with yellow centers. The text is centered and reads:

Grow  
through  
WHAT YOU GO  
through  
ERIC BUTTERWORTH



# PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Am I using my time **wisely**?

Am I thinking **negative thoughts** before I fall asleep?

Am I living **true to myself**?

**Am I taking anything for granted?**

**Am I waking up in the morning ready to take on the day?**

**Am I achieving the goals that I've set for myself?**

**Am I putting enough **effort** into my relationships?**

**Am I taking care of myself **physically**?**

**Am I letting matters that are **out of my control** stress me out?**



# 6 SIGNS YOU'RE BURNING OUT

## MENTAL HEALTH CHEAT SHEET

Not all stress is bad. Stress can motivate us and move us toward positive actions and goals. If you feel like you're burning out, stressing out or overwhelmed, maybe it's time to step back and take a break. Here are some signs you're pushing yourself too hard. In the "your solution" sections of this worksheet, fill out what would work best for you in each category.

### MIND

#### FEELING OVERWHELMED/STRESSED OUT

**THE SIGNS:** Feelings of anxiety, feeling frazzled all the time.

**THE SOLUTION:** Try talking your feelings out with a friend, coach or counselor. Write down your to-do list and prioritize. Remember to keep things in perspective and look at the big picture—address only the things that truly matter and eliminate or postpone the things that can wait.

**YOUR SOLUTION:**

#### FEELING DEPRESSED

**THE SIGNS:** Feeling down and sad, even depressed.

**THE SOLUTION:** If you feel despair and can't get through it, it may be time to reach out to an advisor or therapist to help you work through your feelings. Don't beat yourself up—it's a common issue and it can be resolved. There's hope!

**YOUR SOLUTION:**

### BODY

#### FEELING OVERWHELMED/STRESSED OUT

**THE SIGNS:** Frequent headaches or a constantly fluttery tummy.

**THE SOLUTION:** Try a restful break: find a quiet space and sip some peppermint or ginger tea.

**YOUR SOLUTION:**

## EXHAUSTION

**THE SIGNS:** Feeling tired all the time or waking up in the middle of the night.

**THE SOLUTION:** Try setting yourself up for a good night's sleep with a cool, dark room, and eliminate screen time before bed. If worries are keeping you up, try scheduling a "time to problem solve" slot during the day.

**YOUR SOLUTION:**

## SOUL

### BAD HABITS

**THE SIGNS:** Engaging in destructive habits from drinking too much to over eating.

**THE SOLUTION:** Instead of letting yourself do something you'll regret later, try to counter with a positive habit (like exercise).

**YOUR SOLUTION:**

### FEELING GUILT

**THE SIGNS:** Feeling like you're "bad" or not good enough.

**THE SOLUTION:** Try to focus on each day as a brand new opportunity rather than ruminating on the past and replaying things over and over. we all make mistakes—move forward and think of things you can do better today. Above all: keep track of things and write it down!

**YOUR SOLUTION:**

Stress happens. Using healthy coping mechanisms and addressing the signs of stress can help you keep it under control! If you feel like you're totally spiraling out of control, please be sure to seek out professional help. It's ok to ask for help!

# 10 SIMPLE HABITS

## TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE CHEAT SHEET

Habits consist of three parts: Cue, Reward & Routine. The Cue is the trigger. The Reward is the feeling you get after executing the habit. The Routine is ensuring the habit sticks—every time the Cue happens. Good or bad, habits require repetition. Once they become habitual, they become automatic: they no longer require extra thought—we simply do them. Embrace these 10 habits to really change your life!

### 1 KEEP YOUR **HOUSE** PICKED UP

This doesn't mean your house must be scrubbed top to bottom every day, but keeping your home generally picked up and in order will help you feel more on top of everything. Make your bed, wash the dishes, do the laundry, tidy up paperwork, and give the house a run-through each day.

### 2 GET A HANDLE ON **FINANCES**

It's hard to feel in control when our money feels out of control. Make good financial practices a habit by keeping a budget, writing down purchases, and paying bills on time. Make saving money a habit by setting up automatic deposits.

### 3 DRINK **WATER**

Staying hydrated is one of the best habits we can adopt! Simply drinking more water and keeping a bottle or glass handy wherever you are will give you more energy, help you avoid headaches, and even ensure your focus is sharper.

### 4 GET UP **EARLY**

Getting up early isn't everyone's favorite habit, but early-risers tend to get more done and feel more accomplished. If you're working toward an earlier wake-up time, set your alarm ahead in 10 minutes increments every few days. Slowly work toward your ideal wake up time.

### 5 SET UP THE **NIGHT** BEFORE

Make it a habit to put together your breakfasts and lunches the night before. Pick out your clothes for tomorrow and take a few minutes before bed to set up tomorrow for success. It's much easier to prepare the night before than to try to get everything done in the morning scramble.

### 6 PLAN OUT YOUR **DAY**

Using a planner and calendar can help you get more done and crush your goals. A planner gives you a visual of your entire day and helps you put your goals and thoughts down on paper. Successful people know the importance of always having a plan. Before you go to bed, check your plan and write out your to-do list for the next day.

### 7 PUT **FAMILY** FIRST

Make it a habit to consider how decisions and changes will impact your spouse and your kids before you say yes. Will a new work schedule, another project or a shift in activities have an effect on those who are most important in your life? Make time for your loved ones and make them a priority.

### 8 PRACTICE **GRATITUDE**

If you want to have a positive attitude and a more optimistic outlook, focus on gratitude. Think of all the things you're grateful for and how others have impacted your life. When we practice gratitude, we automatically shift to the positive and start to focus on the good things in our lives—triggering even MORE good things along the way.

### 9 MOVE **MORE**

You don't have to run a marathon, but moving regularly can have a profound impact on your health and wellbeing. Make it a habit to go for a walk each day or fit in 30 minutes of exercise and movement. Switch it up to find things you like—a yoga video online, a fitness class with a friend, or a hike or dance party in the living room with your kids. Just move!

### 10 GET **REST**

Get in the habit of giving yourself a break! We all need sleep and rest to feel restored and refreshed. When we skimp on sleep time we get cranky and less attentive. Our productivity goes down when we don't get enough rest. Give yourself regular breaks and be sure to get 7-8 hours of sleep (at least) per night. Make your regular bedtime a habit!

With these 10 simple habits you can transform your life, get more done, feel better and crush your goals! Adopt these habits today!