

Health

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Nurture Yourself

While we may know a great deal about nurturing others, advancing our own needs may not be second nature. Whether women work outside the home or not, studies suggest they average more time tending the house and loved ones. They know how to nurture others, but their own needs take last place. For men, our society places great emphasis on getting ahead. That can encourage a single-minded focus on career to the detriment of other activities. In this way, men are discouraged from indulging their nurturing side.

A regular regimen of nurturing helps you achieve a balance in your life between inner exploration and outer involvement, time alone and time with others, work and play. Feeling imbalanced - that things are out of whack in your life - is a sure sign that you need to step back and engage in self-care to regain your equilibrium. Nurturing can refill our depleted well of energy, compassion and kindness, and makes us happier and more effective in our lives. The way we nurture ourselves is personal, very specific to each person and it reflects some of our deepest wants and needs.

Because nurturing is so intimate, it's important to learn to ask yourself, "What is nurturing?" in a way in which you feel comfortable to respond. Many people ask themselves something like, "what do you want?" or some other question designed to get the questioning out of the way. The key to uncovering what nurtures you involves asking yourself good questions and waiting for the answer. Remember times in which you felt nurtured and loved. Create a list of any time or place that you felt nurtured. Gently ask yourself, "What feels nurturing?" Spend a week writing down what feels nurturing to you.

What if you don't come up with anything? Don't give up. Nurturing yourself is important enough to spend some time simply asking the question. You might try evaluating each experience during and after you have had it. For example, you spend 3 hours watching television on Thursday night. Ask yourself, "Do I feel nurtured now?" After you finish, ask yourself, "do I feel cared about, energized and like I took a real break tonight?" Begin to evaluate, for yourself, how you feel on each occasion. Slowly accumulate a list of events, people and things that feel nurturing.

Learn how to nurture yourself by following these 5 steps:

1. Discover what feels nurturing to you - try journaling to remember times in which you felt particularly nurtured. Gently ask yourself, "What feels nurturing?"

2. Resolve any conflicts around nurturing yourself - discuss your goal of nurturing yourself with the people around you so that they support you in your efforts to nurture yourself.
3. Give yourself permission to do what feels nurturing to yourself - create the time, space and energy to nurture yourself by simply giving yourself the permission to do it.
4. Evaluate if something was nurturing or not - spend some time evaluating whether your efforts are working.
5. Be patient with yourself and other people - like anything new, learning to nurture yourself takes time and effort. Be patient with yourself, and your family, as you learn to nurture yourself.

We need to learn how to listen to our internal dialogue concerning discomfort and pain in our lives, as well as our intuition that suggests ways to heal. We must check our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well being and commit ourselves to reducing and/or eliminating internal suffering stories. We must take responsibility for our own healing, and our own nurturing.