

Holistic Self-care...the journey to being fully present

By Julia Balzer Riley, RN MN, HNC

Respirit Reinspire Revitalize

Would you like to learn ways to be fully present with clients to create a healing environment even if just now your head is somewhere else, you are worried, rushed, and tired? If you feel overwhelmed just now, you can do something about it. Self-care begins with self love, yet that seems like an impossible goal when you feel unable to meet your responsibilities at work or at home. Try reversing the order, first begin with caring for yourself, then you can come to feel loveable. We say, first you change the behavior, then you change the attitude. Review this simple list below and see where you can begin to care for your body, mind, and spirit

For your BODY

Love your body...just as it is: It is a beautiful art form, captured on canvas by artists for centuries...go to the library and see paintings by Reubin or Renoir.

Move your body: Turn on the music, twirl, sway, swing your arms, touch your toes, dance.

Pamper your body: Buy peppermint foot cream and use it every night to soothe tired feet...aromatherapy at its best.

Feed your body: Try eating only what a Princess or a Prince would eat, slowly, savoring what you eat, enjoying what you choose to eat. Eat a little of what you crave, rather than a lot of other food.

Rest your body: Create a bedtime comfort ritual and cue your mind it's time to stop.

For your MIND

Stimulate your mind: Listen to an audio-book on the way to work. Choose something you would not ordinarily read, poetry or personal growth...of course trashy fiction is always a welcome escape and still counts! Take a field trip to the library and browse. Commit to a goal of life-long learner to keep your brain alert and alive and well.

Quiet your mind: Take time for silence. Get comfortable in a sitting position...lying down is instant sleep. If any stray thoughts come into your mind, you need not invite them to tea. Just allow them to pass, without judgment.

Open your mind and your heart: Spend time with people you love, people you like, and people you'd like to know better. Take a risk to invite someone new into your life. People bring new ideas and support and get you out of yourself.

Humor your mind: Play on purpose. Put something fun, yes FUN, on your calendar. See a movie. Dig in the garden. Make a picnic and invite a friend.

For your SPIRIT

Soothe your spirit: When you are afraid, remember that fear is just Forgetting Everything is All Right. Think of the quote, "Courage is just fear that has said its prayers." Stop and write a list of all the things for which you are grateful.

Feed your spirit: Read inspirational, spiritual, or religious material to start your day. A routine of 5-10 minutes can make a real difference. Some nurses use Guideposts, a magazine of inspirational stories.

Nurture your spirit: Go outside to find peace in nature. Arrange to see the sunset or sunrise at least once a week. Get to the water. Feel the sand on your toes, the sun on your

face, the surf on your legs. If you can't get to a beautiful place in nature, go to one in your imagination.

Give words to your spirit: Try creating an affirmation of how you want to live.

Remember an affirmation is a centering, calming, statement of what you want as if it has already happened. Try "I am in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing in the right way." or "Centered and poised in the presence of God, I move through this day easily and gracefully." or "I have a forgiving spirit. I look for the good in all people and situations and I find it."

Remember: "As I care for myself, so I care for my clients and families." "As I care for myself, so I care for other staff." As I care for myself, so I care for the people I love."

Set your intention each day when you awaken. Decide how you want to feel and what you want to do this day. A helpful book to guide you in this daily process is

The 15 Minute Miracle. * Pay attention to your breath. Breathe deeply throughout the day to center yourself and focus. Imagine breathing in CALM and breathing out TENSION.

Take care of your body, your mind, and your spirit to love and honor yourself and come centered and fully present to health caring relationships as a whole person.

*Aldana, J. (1998) *The 15-minute miracle*. Los Gatos, CA: Inner Wisdom Publications.

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Julia@constantsource.com and visit her web site at www.constantsource.com

Tel 1-800-368-7675