

Embrace Self Care As Your Primary Health Care in 2008!

“2007 was the best year I can remember!” These words-- music to my ears!-- were spoken last week by my client, called Robert for this article, who has dealt for many years with severe chronic pain. This last year was a turning point for Robert. As he and I worked together in regular wellness coaching sessions, he began to have hope that he could feel significantly better by taking back control over his health.

This feeling of hope grew into conviction as he made many little, and some not so little changes, that added up to big healing. He quit smoking, attended a gentle water exercise class, started practicing mind-body relaxation techniques, met regularly with a support group, learned easy, delicious ways to cook vegetables and generally began treating himself with a greater sense of kindness.

Every aspect of his life is improving because he is practicing the most important form of health care: Self Care. He is creating, by his attitudes, habits and daily choices, improved health and wellbeing that no medicine or surgery or medical system or expert could provide.

Although we live in a time of remarkable medical services there is no health care as important as the care you can give yourself. For the last six years I have had the opportunity to work within a large medical system in Western Oregon. This system offers the very best of “conventional” western medicine, as well as one of the most successful integrative, holistic clinics in the United States. It combines compassion, expertise, high tech and touch tech to offer a marvelous array of top quality health services.

Modern medicine is so miraculous that it is easy to believe that doctors and other experts are responsible for our health. It is easy to believe that our health comes because of something someone does to us. We often go to medical providers to get fixed.

And yet, over and over, I am reminded that the very most important aspect of health care is the one that each of us practices daily, often without even knowing we are practicing health care.

Your most important form of Health Care is Self Care!

Self care is your primary and most important form of health care.

It is the form of health care *you* are in charge of.

It is your birthright. It is your responsibility.

Self Care is daily, lifelong, vital, irreplaceable and deeply enjoyable.

Eleven Reasons to Make Self Care Your Primary Health Care

1. Self Care is your most effective form of health care.

How you care for yourself is the biggest determinant of your health, happiness, quality of life and the way you will age.

2. Self Care is a joyful way of living.

Self care is a way of saying yes to your life on a daily basis.

3. Self Care is empowering!

When you claim self care as your primary form of health care you take back control over your life and your health.

4. Self Care is cost effective.

You will save money and time by practicing self care.

5. Self Care is your response-ability.

Response-ability for self care is an opportunity only you can take. Only you have the ability to respond to your body, mind, heart and soul from the inside out.

6. Self Care is the best gift you can give your family and closest friends.

Do you ever find yourself thinking it is selfish to put self care high on the priority list? Taking great care of your needs is actually one of the most generous things you can do.

7. Self Care has no substitute.

Whether you prefer to use conventional western medical care, alternative practices, or as I recommend, a combination of the two, there is no medical care that substitutes for self care. No surgery, medical procedure, medicine or expert can compensate for lack of self care.

8. Self Care complements and enhances every other form of health care you utilize.

When you commit to daily, positive self care, whatever form of health care you use is enhanced and the benefits are increased.

9. Self Care is holistic.

Self care includes and improves every aspect of your life including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health, relationships, play and work.

10. Self Care starts right where you are, right now.

Whatever the state of your health, whatever your life circumstances, there are many things you can do on a daily basis that will help you enjoy your best health, wellbeing and vitality.

11. Self Care is made up of many little steps and many small changes.

Easy, small enjoyable steps take you to the tipping point away from disease and pain and toward healing and happiness.

If you want to live with your best health and vitality, if you want to create the best year possible, commit now to embracing self care as your primary health care!

Imagine: What if...?

Take a few moments to imagine yourself a year from now. Imagine that you are at the beginning of 2009, looking back at 2008 and consider: how might your life and health be different having taken on self care as your primary form of health care?

Envision: One step at a time.

Then coming back to this present moment, ask yourself:

What one self care step would I enjoy taking now?

Keep it enjoyable and do-able and make sure it's something you *want* to do rather than something you think you *should* do.

Robert is eager to begin teaching his young grandson to fish. This will be a self care practice for him as it is something he loves. A year ago thought he would never do it again. Now that he is feeling stronger and having less pain he can look forward to it and trust his ability to enjoy it without overdoing.

Remember: You are not alone. *Self Care Celebration!* e-zine is here to help and support you all the way, with twice monthly articles, resources and an abundance of inspiration from the front lines of self care living.

Please email me. I would love to hear from you.

How does your life change when you embrace self care as your primary health care?

What are the challenges for you in self care?

What are the small steps you are taking?

What resources would be helpful for you?

May 2008 be your best year!

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