

## **Lesson 6 – Implementing Self-care**

Self-care is like taking care of your phone. We all know that our phone batteries need to be recharged. We have 4 strategies when it comes to recharging our phones:

1. Wait until the battery is completely empty and then go without the use of your cell phone until you find a place and opportunity to recharge.
2. Listen to the cell phone's signal when the battery is low and then recharge it.
3. Recharge your battery regularly
4. Hope for a miracle.

*There is no such thing as life without stress – the question is “Is it manageable?”*

Self-care needs to be done regularly and not just when there is a crisis (medica or other). Self-care enables the caregivers to be balanced so that they are capable of seeing different possibilities, keep fit so that if and when a crisis happens, s/he is ready to handle it and it is central in the prevention and recovery from burnout and compassion fatigue as caregivers are exposed to stressors all of the time.

Self- care is more than a strategy we resort to when we reached a level of such so absolute exhaustion that we need some reprieve from the relentless pressure of our lives.

**It is a way of life.**

## **Making Self-Care a Priority**

In the past decade, self-care has become a buzzword and had been attached to many things that have little to do with caring for the self.

- It has become a way to sell wellness products. For many, this creates a conflict – consumerism vs. minimalism (what do I really need?)
- It has become connected to self-identity and boundaries (“putting yourself first”) creating a confusing resulting in a conflict – “Selfish” vs “Selfless”.
- It has become a way to assess the legitimacy of stress - “My issues are nothing compared to his.” Caregivers often feel that the health issue, or any other issue for that matter, is not as major as that facing the care recipient and is therefore not worthy of the necessary care investment.

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*Care for oneself and know oneself*

*Socrates*

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Maintaining a certain regard for ourselves and engaging in self-compassion and self-care are fundamental to creating a good life for caregivers, their care recipients, and other people they care about.

- When caregivers feel depleted, caregivers have nothing to give.
- Doing what caregivers love recharges them.
- Caregivers lose their real selves in the “do, do, do” mentality.
- Caregivers can drain others when they don’t get their own needs met.
- Caregivers lose themselves to their “critical inner voice.”
- Caregivers fail to practice self-compassion.
- Caregivers stress hurts them and those close to them.
- Driving themselves can impair their performance, both in caregiving and other areas.

From both a Caregiver Coaching and a Medical Coaching perspective, self-care has little to do with salt Baths, chocolates, or spas and a everything to do with listening to the body, making



long-term wellness decisions, bravely letting go, re-strategizing and being honest with ourselves and others about what we need.

It can be messy, ugly and tough to do but it is absolutely essential and that is why we refer to it as PROFOUND self care.

**PROFOUND Self-Care is addressed on 5 levels:**

1. Basic Needs – addressing the current crisis. If you are a Health, Wellness or Medical Coach, this includes medical care and adherence to medication.
2. Physical Needs – listening to the body’s needs regarding nutrition, hydration, rest, movement, and touch.
3. Emotional needs –addressing issues of love, acceptance, authenticity, connection, self-expression.
4. Spiritual needs –addressing vision, purpose, connection to a higher self, intuition, creativity.
5. Social & Relationship needs – addressing choice, connection, boundaries, open communication, support.

In Medical Coaching we use a Metrix template to help the client create or improve his/her self-care routine.

## The Medical Coaching Caregiver Self-Care Matrix

The first step in working on self-care is understanding what self-care means to that person.

<u><b>Level 3</b></u>	Purpose	Spirituality	Personal Development	Mind-Body Connections	Values	Emotional & Social Support
<u><b>Level 2</b></u>	Family Relationships	Relationship with Care Recipient	Medical Team	Additional Caregivers	Finance	Work Related Issues
<u><b>Level 1</b></u>	Nutrition	Movement & Exercise	Rest	Environment	Time & Resource Management	Health

### Level 1:

- **Nutrition:**
  - Create awareness regarding healthy nutrition.
  - Evaluate situation.
  - Evaluate options.
  
- **Movement & Exercise**
  - Create awareness regarding the importance and impact of movement and exercise.
  - Evaluate options.
  - Invite the client to make a conscious choice.
  - Create new strategies.
  - Invite the client to make a conscious choice.
  
- **Rest**
  - Create awareness regarding the nature and impact of rest.
  - Evaluate options.
  - Invite the client to make a conscious choice.
  - Create new strategies.

- **Environment**
  - Create awareness regarding current stressors and challenges in the environment.
  - Evaluate options.
  - Invite the client to make a conscious choice.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Time & Resource Management**
  - Review of current challenges regarding time & resource management.
  - Evaluate options.
  - Invite the client to make a conscious choice.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Health**
  - Create awareness regarding self-compassion
  - Regular follow up on medical and health existing conditions
  - Addressing adherence issues.
  - Creating strategies and actions regarding treatments and doctor appointments.

**Level 2:**

- **Family Relationships**
  - Review stressors and challenges regarding relationships with family members.
  - Clear stressors.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Relationship with Care Recipient**
  - Review stressors and challenges regarding relationship with care recipient.
  - Clear stressors.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Medical Team**
  - Review stressors and challenges regarding relationships with medical teams/medical team/caregivers.
  - Clear stressors.
  - Create new strategies.

- **Additional Caregivers**
  - Review stressors and challenges regarding relationships with additional caregivers.
  - Clear stressors.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Finance**
  - Review current challenges regarding finance.
  - Evaluate options.
  - Invite the client to make a conscious choice.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Work related Issues**
  - Review stressors and challenges regarding workplace relationships.
  - Clear stressors.
  - Create new strategies.

### **Level 3**

- **Purpose**
  - Identify a bigger sense of life's purpose ('for the sake of what' is it important to address your stress and self-care?).
  
- **Spirituality**
  - Reframe spirituality as a self-care resource.
  
- **Personal Development**
  - Identify areas the client would like to continue developing.
  - Explore options.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Mind-Body Connections**
  - Create awareness regarding the "Body-Mind" connections.
  - Identify with the client what it means for him/her.
  - Create new strategies.

- **Values**
  - Create awareness regarding the concept of values and core values.
  - Identify with the client the values around health and self-care.
  - Create new strategies.
  
- **Emotional & Social Support**
  - Identify areas the client would like emotional support.
  - Create awareness regarding the need and added value of social support to self-care
  - Identify specific needs.
  - Explore options.
  - Create new strategies.

***Things to remember when coaching caregivers on self-care:***

1. There is no “one size fits all” formula.
2. Beliefs about the “right way” to self-care can become stressors.
3. Clients might come with emotional issues from experiences of burnout and failure at self-caring.
4. Dealing with self-care can bring up issues of self-worth, insecurity and confidence.
5. Work related self-Care issues usually mirror the personal/home related issues and vice versa.
6. The “Once Removed” approach is very effective when coaching caregiver on self-care

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*“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”*

*Anne Lamott*

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**As I Began to Love Myself**

By Charlie Chaplin

*As I began to love myself, I found that anguish and emotional suffering are only warning signs that I was living against my own truth. Today, I know, this is "AUTHENTICITY".*

*As I began to love myself, I understood how much it can offend somebody if I try to force my desires on this person, even though I knew the time was not right and the person was not ready for it, and even though this person was me. Today I call it "RESPECT".*

*As I began to love myself, I stopped craving for a different life, and I could see that everything that surrounded me was inviting me to grow. Today I call it "MATURITY".*

*As I began to love myself, I understood that at any circumstance, I am in the right place at the right time, and everything happens at the exactly right moment. So, I could be calm. Today I call it "SELF-CONFIDENCE".*

*As I began to love myself, I quit stealing my own time, and I stopped designing huge projects for the future. Today, I only do what brings me joy and happiness, things I love to do and that make my heart cheer, and I do them in my own way and in my own rhythm. Today I call it "SIMPLICITY".*

*As I began to love myself, I freed myself of anything that is no good for my health – food, people, things, situations, and everything that drew me down and away from myself. At first, I called this attitude a healthy egoism. Today I know it is "LOVE OF ONESELF".*

*As I began to love myself, I quit trying to always be right, and ever since I was wrong less of the time. Today I discovered that is "MODESTY".*

*As I began to love myself, I refused to go on living in the past and worrying about the future. Now, I only live for the moment, where everything is happening. Today I live each day, day by day, and I call it "FULFILLMENT".*

*As I began to love myself, I recognized that my mind can disturb me and it can make me sick. But as I connected it to my heart, my mind became a valuable ally. Today I call this connection "WISDOM OF THE HEART".*

*We no longer need to fear arguments, confrontations or any kind of problems with ourselves or others. Even stars collide, and out of their crashing new worlds are born. Today I know "THAT IS LIFE!"*