

LivingIntegrated®

FIFTEEN PRACTICES FOR LIVING THE LIFE YOU WANT

10 SELF-CARE

IN THIS PRACTICE: _____

- Balance in Living and Self-Care
- What is the Basis for Self-Care?
- Self-Care is not Selfishness
- Practice Ten Assignment

Go to <https://youtu.be/yToMZxdQ-DQ> now and watch the introductory video for this Practice.

In Practice Eight (Healthy Patterns to Reinforce Recovery) we utilized the Three Circles tool. Remember the three circles? I didn't mention then that they can be associated with colors.

The inner circle, the activities you want to avoid is the *red* circle. Like a stop sign.

The middle circle is *yellow*, as caution with these behaviors is warranted.

The outer circle are the healthy behaviors you want to use and reinforce, so it's the green circle.

You can think of this Practice as developing your *green* circle.

BALANCE IN LIVING AND SELF-CARE _____

You may be tempted to treat this Practice rather casually, maybe even dismiss it. But I think it is absolutely essential if you're serious about recovery.

Think of your life. Where are you out of balance? Where do you see excesses, taking in or spending or giving out more than is healthy?

Where do you see deprivations, ignoring what you need? We are holistic creatures. All the patterns of our lives are interrelated.

Our problem may be compulsive sexual behaviors, but our underlying problem is an intimacy disorder. That means we have difficulty having a honest and open relationship with our Creator, with others and with ourselves.

“

Moving our lives into a healthier balance will not, in itself, solve our intimacy disorder. But it will significantly help us stabilize our lives so that we can work on substantial issues like our intimacy woundedness.

”

How we see ourselves is reflected in how we take care of ourselves. Do we nurture and care for our lives with kindness and attentiveness? That indicates a high valuing of our lives.

But many of us disregard some of our needs, like a healthy diet. We actively ignore things like recreation and exercise. Our self-talk is harsh and condemning. Our routines are chaotic.

Our care or disregard of ourselves discloses something very important about how we see God, our value of creation, what our lives mean to us and what we think our lives are for.

Have we really thought about our bodies and what they are meant for and meant to reflect?

WHAT IS THE BASIS FOR SELF-CARE?

For a lot of people—and I see this among quite a few Christians—talking about self-care is seen as selfish. After all, isn't one of the teachings of spirituality to deny ourselves? Yes, but what does that mean?

I think 'denying ourselves' means to not let our self-centered, childish ego rule our lives. I think it means not saying 'yes' to our smallish, selfish nature. It means saying 'no' to what is closed off and fearful, and 'yes' to our Creator and living in love.

Remember in the Gospel, it is Christ who bids all of us who feel burdened to come to him.

And he promises to all of us who come to him,

“I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

Recovery (and the truly spiritual life) is not a life of stern deprivation, impossible standards and self-punishment.

Rather, healthy, integrated recovery (and healthy spirituality) is a life of balance and love and light.

One of your primary jobs is taking care of you. That's the essence of being a good steward. Our lives are given to us for a period of time, and our responsibility is to manage them well.

If you are a truly spiritual person, one who believes in God as your Creator and Sustainer, then you must understand that your life is a gift and your job is appropriately, respectfully and lovingly managing that gift.

I think of it this way. My life is not ultimately about me. My life is really about the One who created it and redeems it and sustains it.

And at the same time—and this is a really important part of recovery practice—my life is also about loving and serving others. I think this is true for you, too.

SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISHNESS

Our problem is counterintuitive. When we're living in our addiction, we're living as a selfish people. The Big Book says that selfishness and self-centeredness are the root of our troubles. "We [addicts] are undisciplined people. So we allow God to discipline us."

Self-care, however, is not selfishness. Rather, *self-care is the antidote for selfishness*. You take care of you because you are loved by Another and you want to live a life that is fully responsive to that Love by living a life of health and love and service.

ASSIGNMENT FOR ENGAGING THE TENTH PRACTICE— SELF-CARE

1. Read pp 150-155 in *Ashamed No More*, the three sections on shame, serenity and life in the Spirit
2. Read pp 164-172 in *Ashamed No More*, the three sections on relationships, helping others and handling hardships
3. Identify what positive steps you can engage to take better care of yourself in each of these five areas:
 - Nutrition
 - Exercise
 - Rest
 - Recreation/Hobby
 - Healthy friendships
4. Now develop a plan of monthly and weekly to-do steps for each of the five areas.
5. Tell someone else (your sponsor, a group member, therapist or friend) what your plan is. And tell them when you'll take responsibility to report back to them on how you're doing.

A BIBLE TEXT FOR SELF-CARE

"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge and after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.”

Colossians 3:5-15

PRAYER

Lord, you have created us in your image. You tell us we are fearfully and wonderfully made. You also tell us we are managers or stewards of what you have given us. So please help me to see my life as a gift from You. Help me to take care of my life as my gift to You. Amen.

IN THE NEXT PRACTICE,

we will look at spirituality and prayer.

