

“Refilling Your Cup” -- Karen Wagner

Ways to self-nurture so you can continue to give your best each day without feeling depleted.

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Raise your awareness about creating limitations for yourself: Are you nurturing your potential? Or nurturing your limiting beliefs?

Everything is already inside you. But you may need reinforcement and reminders from time to time about what you already know.

Personal growth and self-care is a practice of repeated healthy habits and mindsets.

Healthy and Helpful Practices

- Raising your vibration: When you get out of bed in the morning, stretch your arms up, stretch your body and then your face as you put on an exaggerated smile and say with great energy (to yourself and the universe), “It’s going to be a great day!”
- The Mirror Exercise: Looking at yourself in the mirror, say, “_____ (your name), I unconditionally love you.” Repeat daily for at least 30 days. You may find this silly, difficult, or impossible. If you can bring yourself to say it authentically, it can change your life raise your self-esteem, and give you more confidence. Give yourself love first and it is easier to love others.
- Drink 2 c. of water upon waking (hydrate your body when it most needs it) and throughout the day (8 c. if you can)
- Simple guided awareness/mindfulness exercise (AKA meditation). Check out YouTube for a guided meditation with music and a voice that feels good to you. Close your eyes, breathe deep, let out your breath with a sigh. Notice sights, sounds, physical sensations. Let everything go with each breath a little more. Connect with the bigger, older, wiser part of yourself that notices everything without attachment of judgement. Even this minimal amount of time can make you more relaxed, conscious, present, and less attached to outcomes throughout your day.

Stress Questionnaire

1. I can overcome stress with self-control. ____
2. Taking responsibility for myself and my feelings reduces stress. ____
3. Teaching is intrinsically stressful. ____
4. My personal stress has no effect on the children in my classroom. ____
5. It is best to avoid difficult situations. ____
6. Wealth reduces stress. ____
7. Technology reduces stress. ____
8. Meditation reduces stress. ____

Think about and consider each one of these and answer True or False.

Consider this:

Is any situation intrinsically stressful? Take the example of two people in their cars during a traffic jam. One is pounding on the steering wheel, swearing, about to have a heart attack. The other just breathes and thinks, "we'll get there when we get there." Which response is healthier?

What reduces stress is letting go of attachment to outcomes, letting go of your expectation that others will behave in a certain way, letting go of acquiring particular possessions. People who have naturally easygoing personalities tend to be much more relaxed. If you are not that person, it is good to have a practice to remind yourself to let go -- meditation, guided meditation, listening to music, or spending time in nature.

If you do not have an easygoing personality and are unable to relax, think about the ideas presented in the TED talk, "[How to Make Stress Your Friend](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RcGyVTAoXEU)"

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In the video, Kelly McGonigal, PH.D. discusses a longitudinal study that shows that how we *think* about stress matters more than the stress itself. If we believe stress is bad for us, then when we experience stress our heart rate goes up and our blood vessels constrict -- the physical symptoms that are associated with heart disease. If we react in this fashion, we are much more likely to die at an earlier age. If we believe stress is helpful, our vessels stay relaxed, just as they do during heart-pounding moments of courage and joy.

Other helpful exercises and practices

Take a blank sheet of paper and put this heading on the top:

“Why I Am Awesome”. Now write down at least 10 reasons why. Include personal characteristics, accomplishments (from grade school to present), kind acts, anything you’re proud of. See if you can add more each day until you get up to 50. Maybe 100!

Between this and the mirror exercise, you will begin to see yourself differently.

Gratitude journal: Write 3-5 things each day that you are grateful for in your life. (Learning to appreciate what you have and make more room in your life for more and more gratitude as things come your way).

Activate the “Law of Attraction”: Energy flows where attention goes and What you focus on expands. Our minds are powerful. Many people believe we create our own reality. We certainly create our own emotional climate.

Use the LOA “T” tool to manifest what you desire. Easier to think of what you do NOT want. Put those things on the left of the T, then put their opposites on the right side. Those are the things to focus on, feel into, manifest.

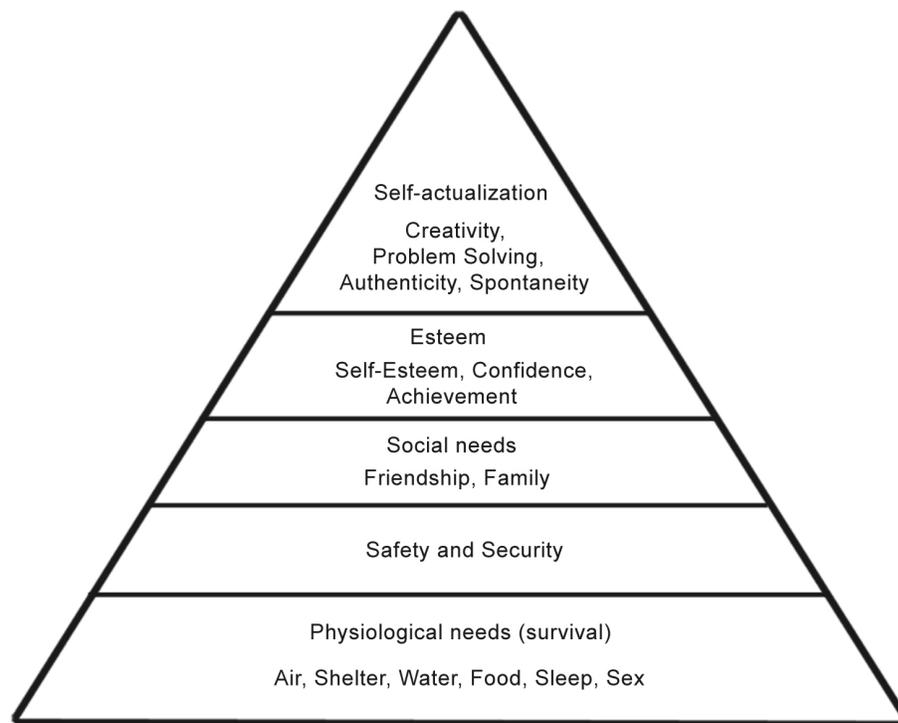
Another manifesting tool is a Vision Board. Both of these tools work with the Reticular Activating System in your brain. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCnfAzAlhVw>

Understanding yourself and others by learning about personality styles can be very helpful. We all look at the world through “me-colored” glasses. Learning about the way others view the world can help us all get along better. Look for the Kiersey Temperament Sorter test at: <http://www.keirsey.com>

As David Kiersey said, “People are who they are and no amount of “getting after them” is going to make them more like you. This is true of your neighbor, your co-worker, your partner, and everyone else you know. So who *can* you change? That’s right!

Maslow's Self-Actualization Pyramid (Hierarchy of Needs):

How can we develop to our fullest potential and who we are truly meant to be? Even if something in our lives causes us stress every day, the thought of change is scarier than continuing to live with the stress. If we take a step towards changing our life and initially feel very uncomfortable, we may pull back. Most of you are probably familiar with the term "separation anxiety" as it relates to young children. Similarly, there may be something in your life that you need to let go of in order for you to blossom, or some needs that must be fulfilled before you can move to the next level. But if you do nothing, you will remain stuck. As Neale Donald Walsch once said, "Life begins at the end of your comfort zone."



When do you have time for all, or any, of this? Make appointments with yourself to slow down, be present, give back to yourself. Sometimes you need to explain to your family, partner, others why you need this time (to exercise, to meditate, to read, whatever) and set boundaries. "I just want you to know I'm not going to be available between 5:15-5:30 because I will be meditating then." Start to embrace it, they will start to accept it.

Brainstorm stress-relievers -- by yourself or with friends, colleagues. What really refills your cup, replenishes you so you can give again? Yoga, reading a good book, a manicure, a walk in the woods, a movie? Exercise is a great stress-reliever. Exercise is a great stress reliever that can lead to fitness, heart health, and lower cholesterol, and it also releases endorphins that lead to a better mood and better sleep.

What is one CONCRETE AND MEASURABLE step you can and WILL make this week toward healthy, self-nurturing habits you'd like to cultivate?

("Get into better shape" and "Relax more" are general, not very measurable goals. "I will walk to the corner and back every day this week" or "I will listen to one YouTube guided visualization this week" are goals that are concrete and measurable. You either did it or you didn't.)

If you are successful with one small step, see if you can try this: Commit to do something nurturing for yourself, however big or small, for the next 21 days. That's how long it takes to form a habit. **In fact, try to think small. Uplevel your life by downsizing.** Meditate for 2 minutes instead of 15 minutes. Ask your partner for a five-minute hand massage instead of an hour full-body massage. Do yoga stretches with the kids in the classroom.

Another Mini: Come up with a Word of the Year rather than your New Year's resolutions. A guiding force and touchstone for your year. Let it come to you. Check out the WORD OF THE YEAR TOOL at: www.ChristineKane.com

Don't have time to read inspiring books like "The Four Agreements" by Don Miguel Ruiz or "The Big Leap" by Gay Hendricks? Here is personal growth at your fingertips:

Google- How do I . . . ? (Type in questions about what you would like to learn how to do, where you can go--real or virtual--to meet like-minded people, how to create an environment that supports you) (Or look up any personal growth titles, and you will probably find short informative articles either by the author or about the book).

YouTube: Similarly, type in the name of a book, an author, a speaker and find information and inspiration quickly. Guided meditations, visualizations, inspiring music, TED talks on whatever topic you would like to learn about.

I find these musical selections inspiring. Find them in video form on YouTube, or audio on iTunes, Pandora, or Spotify:

Firework-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGJuMBdaqIw>

Exactly-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eqZYd2UCfI8>

True Colors-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpN0KF1bqX8>

Unwritten-- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJggyDFfJuU>

Take care of yourself. You deserve it and our children need you.

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