

Self-Care Is More Than Bubble Baths

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As a high achieving woman in her twenties, the words “self-care” are marketed at me pretty strongly. I am constantly seeing ads and posts telling me to purchase products or make appointments at the spa in the name of “self-care”. Tempting as this is, there is an underlying cause for concern here.

As [stress and anxiety increase in society](#), we see an increased demand for self-care. What many companies are offering are mere band-aids to this problem, rather than a solution. This in turn keeps us coming back for more of their products

Why? To make more money off of us, of course.

Although there is nothing wrong with a face mask or bubble baths, where many people get tripped up is in thinking that a little pampering is enough to check “done” on their self-care box.

So what’s missing here? What can we do to help care for ourselves before the stress of life makes us want to pull our hair out?

Here are some real solutions you can add to your self-care routine that may just help you get to the root of your stress, rather than put a band-aid over it.

Setting Boundaries

After being thrust into the real world after nearly two decades of schooling, it's hard for some adults to adjust to a life on their own terms. We're trained to obey the schedules that are created for us, follow the expectations set for us, and to let other people call the shots for how far we can go.

Now that we get to make these calls ourselves, a lot of people are finding it hard to say "no" when opportunity knocks.

Say there is a project at work that could keep you in the office an extra half hour, or a friend that needs a ride just one more time to that event. If these are things that drain your energy- even if it seems like you're only giving an inch- they can quickly find a way to take a mile.

This is why it's essential to learn *not* to equate the time we spent or the effort we put in with our intrinsic value.

You may think the extra hour you spend in the office makes you a better employee, but what does it cost you? What do you give up if you say yes to commitments you really want to say no to?

Learning to set firm boundaries with your time, energy, commitments, and space can be hard at first; especially when it involves the people closest to you. However, the payoff will result in you showing up as a better employee, friend, or family member in the long run.

Regulating Intake and Input

A lot of people don't take full stock of what they are consuming from books, TV, movies, podcasts, and any other type of media. Their miss is not seeing how your input can dramatically affect your self-care routine.

If you're inclined to it, it may be tempting to spend hours watching or reading the news. While no one can fault you for being informed, consuming a lot of negative content regularly can impact have a negative impact on your mental state. Too much news consumption can even impact your nervous system, as laid out in [this article](#) by Very Well Mind.

With the limited amount of hours in the day, it may be a good idea to consciously decide how you want to spend them. Can you balance consuming negative media with consuming double the positive?

For myself, I know I show up at my best if the first thing I consume of the day is motivational or personal development. This means I may have to forgo my true-crime podcasts for some personal development ones at first, but I ultimately know this will benefit me much more in the long run.

Being High Maintenance

I recently came across someone's Instagram post declaring she was a high maintenance woman. It sounded odd to me at first, but I found that the more I thought about this concept, the more I loved it!

When we're younger, we're taught to accommodate everyone and everything. To be a team player, not leave anyone waiting, and rush through our own routines.

Well if being high maintenance means making time for adequate sleep, sitting down to eat your meals, saying no to things you don't want to do, and sticking to your routine, I definitely want to be high maintenance then!

Being high maintenance is absolute commitment to your routines, even if they seem silly or inadequate to other people.

You shouldn't be expected to stop what you are doing at the drop of a hat to accommodate someone else. Cutting into your own self-care does not help you in the long run, but being high maintenance can mean you are much more purposeful with how you show up for those you care about.

Doing What You Truly Enjoy

There is not enough value placed on doing things you truly enjoy. While many hobbies may seem like a waste of time (coloring, reading, designing, making playlists for your different moods) if you make it a point to fully enjoy the time you spend doing these things, how much better off will you be?

I bet one or two things came to mind when this was mentioned. How much more powerful would it be if you put it on your calendar to enjoy these things? To give silly things your undivided attention?

As if this isn't excuse enough, you have to read about [these benefits to wasting time](#)! Not only does it increase your productivity, you could argue it's absolutely essential for it!

With all this in mind, go take that bubble bath! But don't forget the foundation that self-care is built on. From the boundaries you are setting, to the time you enjoy wasting; the first frontier of self-care is mental, not physical.