

How to go about building self care

We hear a lot about what we should do for our self care, but how do you go about building it? Here's some ideas

1. **Build your understanding of how self care works**

When you know how things fit together and have a framework for self care that's behind your actions, it helps. Not only does it give you a map and direction, it increases the effectiveness of what you do.

2. **Be aware of where you are at**

What's happening, what are your immediate needs? Often we have some awareness of this, but are so caught up in our present circumstances and efforts that we can't act on it. Self care awareness often means some degree of separation from what's happening for us, even if it is small. That's why taking that small step back, a pause, a breath, can be so useful.

3. **Take small steps**

The major changes are great if you can do them and sustain them, but often it's useful to have as your foundation small, easy steps. Small steps are actually really powerful for creating change and not only give you an achievable place to start, but also their accumulative effect leads to powerful results. You can start with steps that may not even be the most important thing, but they get you headed in the right direction and get you moving. Or you can look at a key bit that if you take that action then other things will tend to fall into place.

4. **Move towards kindness and caring,**

We tend to forget that self care is about caring. Caring and kindness might be actions and behavior, they might be something you feel towards yourself, or they may be a place you come from. Sometimes the most caring thing I can do for myself is to forget about self care for a while! Just as in life we don't always show caring to get an outcome, likewise self care is also a value, a choice we make, and comes from the heart. We often need to remember to put the caring into self care.

5. **Move towards freedom**

Self care is often about an easing out, greater openness, and increased options. It's a way of gauging if what you're doing is working.

6. **Be curious and experiment**

Self care is not only about change, but where change does occur it's often not linear, and consequential. Often you'll do self care and then be curious about what you'll notice. This can also take the pressure off getting caught up in expectation. Try doing something for your self care as an experiment – I'm just going to try this....., and see what happens rather than having to have a result.

7. Set up a support structure

Set up things around you that help your self care. It may be putting in something, for example the support of others or a routine, or it may be not doing something or taking away temptations and options.

8. Have a plan

Having a plan and checking how things are going keeps you on track. My go to check is a simple two step process of

- What's happening
- Any ideas and thoughts about this

If I then need to problem solve I do this after as a response to the ideas and thoughts. I find this keeps things open rather than jumping to solutions.