

Introduction

Are you feeling tired and stressed with little time to care for yourself? Is your business or workplace going through continuous changes that leave you wondering if there will be any downtime? Are you in the people-helping field or a caregiver to anyone, including a family member? Do you want to know if you can make more effective changes to improve some of your current self-care practices?

With so many changes and challenges underway, it is not surprising many of us are more distracted and fatigued from trying to care adequately for our own needs.

We are in a most remarkable, changing, and uncertain time in Earth's history, with significant changes occurring across every segment of global society. Some changes are positive in adding technological convenience and increased wellness to our lives, while other changes are creating the opposite through fear, losses, trauma, and hardship.

While there may be new job creations in some areas, there are also sudden losses due to fiscal restraints, cutbacks, and job obsolescence due to rising automation. There can also be added changes in our own health and then, the health of our family members, resulting in more of us adopting the role of caregiver to our elderly loved ones.

There are also national and international shifts across the global economic and socio-geo-political landscape that are giving rise to significant systemic changes affecting all of humanity. Add in the increasing magnitude and destructiveness of Earth's climate changes to all of the ongoing global transitions, and we have an unprecedented time on this planet, a time where our levels of concern, anxiety, and stresses are increased. The overall immensity of these global shifts

potentially affects how we perceive ourselves going forward with future plans and also how we are currently able to attend to our own self-care needs.

Focusing on our need for self-care is a loving and respectful thing to do. Giving proper nourishment to ourselves as we are able to, increases our vitality, self-esteem, and self-confidence. It also allows us to give to others we care about from a more energetic and balanced perspective because we ultimately make better decisions about how much we can give. When we are better nourished, we can hear our own inner guiding voice more clearly.

Within my own life, I had many early challenges to overcome beginning at an early age. In part, because of my strong connection to the nourishment found in nature and from being spiritually guided to find the help and direction I needed, I was able to move through those challenges towards greater healing. It was from the grace and wisdom acquired from those difficult, yet transformative experiences that I decided to write my first book, *Spiritual Intelligence, How Your Spirit Will Lead You to Health, Happiness and Success* (2011). All of our life experiences have meaning and purpose.

ULTIMATE SELF-CARE, A Holistic Guide for Strength and Balance in Changing Times, is a unique kind of holistic guidebook that has combined many areas of personal and professional experience and study. For over 30 years, I have practiced as a counsellor, energy healer, social worker, and have held leadership roles across the continuum of health care. These areas include working with people challenged by addictions, mental health issues, abuse, physical disabilities, and many kinds of traumatic life losses through our evolving life transitions. In all of these experiences, I have remained aware of how the energy or spiritual essence of each of us is interconnected with our physical, mind, and emotional selves. Therefore, the focus in this writing has also included this recognition of our human need to address our spiritual needs, whatever that may mean to each of us.

During my career in social work and teaching, I have always tried to be vigilant about my own health. I have also been

concerned about the health and wellness of clients, colleagues, friends, and family. In this regard, I have personally experienced the struggle as many of us have, to care for ourselves in practical, balanced ways – ways that take into account the challenges of our work and our need to continue to embrace many advancing changes while we also deal with the range of our personal life experiences, the joys as well as sudden losses and other stresses that we find in our journeys.

We are in an age of awakening – an age of re-discovering what our ancient ancestors knew – that we are human beings of moving energy rather than just matter and as such, we are actually capable of doing more for ourselves in shaping our lives.

ULTIMATE SELF-CARE, *A Holistic Guide for Strength and Balance in Changing Times* encourages a more holistic approach in the fullness of our humanness in how we can change our lives for the better when we place greater emphasis on our own self-care. This emphasis is not about becoming “selfish or self-serving”, it is about appreciating all aspects of what we truly need to create wellness, strength, and balance in our lives. We can support ourselves more holistically when we understand how to work with all of our energy systems.

When we know more about our own body’s intelligent systems, we can strengthen ourselves by clearing, raising, and protecting our energy. We can become more aware in recognizing situations that have the potential to adversely lower our energy and in doing so, we take preventative steps to maintain our balance and help avoid ill health.

As we care for ourselves and become more fine-tuned with the full range of our natural spiritual senses, we also evolve our appreciation of how we are beautifully holistically constructed and sacredly interwoven in our connection to all of life that surrounds us.

This guidebook looks at many areas of self-care as we attend to our daily routines, at home or at work. Self-care can be a series of small steps – steps that can be managed even in high stress situations – and each step or activity that feels right and doable, becomes important in moving towards our strengthening.

The various sections I address throughout this book are each books unto themselves. My intention is that in your reading, you will feel inspired to explore more of what most captures your interest and assists you to explore it even further.

There is so much information that is coming forward and changing daily that this book's approach and purpose as a "guidebook" will work well. For as much as I have benefitted in my own health by writing this guidebook, I sincerely believe you will also benefit by using its many practical suggestions in the exercises, strategies, and resource links provided.

This book will provide you with information on:

- Understanding your body's intelligent ways of managing energy
- What vibrational medicine is and how it helps us
- What it means to be an empath and how to support yourself
- Using easy ways to clear, raise, and protect your energy at home and at work
- How to have a positive impact on your body's functioning by communicating directly with it and receiving its information
- Breathing and meditation exercises made easy and effective
- Understanding the factors and symptoms that lead to Change Fatigue, Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma and what you and your worksite can do about it
- Setting better boundaries for self-assertion and clearer communication
- Why we naturally "default to the negative" and how it affects our communication
- Factors that build strength and resiliency
- Importance of energy alive nutrition, adequate sleep, pure water, and routine exercise
- How and what colors influence your energy levels
- How to tune into your heart's own intelligent brain

- How embracing compassion, acceptance, and forgiveness increases your energy and brings you inner peace
- How to more effectively co-create, affirm, and manifest a life that is more aligned with your deeper wishes
- How your improved self-care practices positively affect everyone around you – as well as the health of Earth

Each of us is meant to be here during this remarkable time of change in ours' and Earth's history. The importance of truly knowing who we are as holistic beings and what we are capable of doing to improve the health of our lives and of this planet cannot be understated, – for we are at our own crossroads to make important choices – choices that will ripple across and touch many other souls on their paths.

Even in increasingly challenging circumstances that bring us uncertainty, losses, and confusion, we can still stay balanced, healthy, and resilient. We can do this by choosing to open to the deeper knowledge that lies within us and is being made available to us. We can practice nourishing ourselves with more loving kindness, compassion, and appreciation, the same kind of kindness and tender nourishment that many of us offer to others in our lives.

My hope is that this book will provide supportive reminders, practical information, and other forms of guidance that encourage your self-care in whatever way feels right for you.

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