

Leader's Notes for Self-Nurturance

Business

Chalice Lighting

Ask someone to read the chalice lighting found in the bulletin as you light the chalice:
As this candle is lit we notice the candle. It provides the sustenance for the clear strong flame. Flames must be fed to grow bright and strong. Similarly our spirits must be fed to be nurtured. We are called today to make the commitment to nurture ourselves, to provide fuel for the flame of our spirits.

—*Mary Morell*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns (about 2 min. per person)

Silence (3 min.)

Read this to your group:

This is a meditation from the Dalai Lama. Breathe naturally and silently say to yourself on the in breath, “May I cherish myself.” On the out breath, “May I cherish others.” I will end this time of silence by saying: Thank you.

Shared Readings

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening In your rounds of deep sharing and deep listening, pay close attention to the time allotted each person to ensure that all get to share at least once.

Round 1 (about 2 min. per person)

Share some ideas for your self-nurturing treasure chest.

Round 2 (about 5 min. per person)

Share deeply from readings, activities and questions in the preparation material.

Round 3 (about 2 min. per person)

As time allows share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared

Closing Words

The more in touch with yourself you are and the better you take care of yourself, the more you have to give others.—*Savannah Mayfield*

Song

Preparation for Self-Nurturance

This session centers on becoming aware of the need for self-nurturance in our lives. Some describe this as “filling the well” or “recharging our batteries.”

Many of us feel guilty about taking time for ourselves. The very words self-care or self-nurturing sound selfish. We feel guilty and selfish because we don’t understand the difference between self-care/self-nurturing and self-indulgence. Self-indulgence is similar to narcissistic behavior.

—*Sharon Ball*

Women are often thought to be “natural nurturers.” And, though I try to avoid sweeping generalizations, I believe that history lends some credence to this one. Ironically, while women tend to be very much in tune with nurturing the needs of others, they also tend to ignore their own needs. Somewhere along the line, many women internalize the belief that it is “their job” to anticipate and meet the needs of their loved ones (especially children and life partners) and that it is “selfish” or “self-centered” to nurture themselves. This makes as much sense as watering your neighbor’s garden and not watering your own! The truth is, we must love and care for and nurture ourselves first, especially if we want to be able to nurture those we love.

—*Brenda Malone*

Treat yourself to a nourishing retreat. When you make self-nurturance a priority, you actively counter the effects of stress, which can eventually lead to imbalances, burnout and illness. Throughout this retreat you’ll nourish your entire being and cultivate balance through the experience of healing yoga, deep relaxation, breathing exercises, meditation and journaling. Give yourself this precious gift of deeply connecting with yourself.—*Debra Leibovitch*

The more in touch with yourself you are and the better you take care of yourself, the more you have to give others.—*Savannah Mayfield*

Like unwatered flowers that shrivel and fade, we all have needs that go unmet. There are three dimensions to all of us: body, soul and spirit ... I’m talking about small daily gifts to yourself, little ways to feed your spirit, soul and body with beauty and rituals that make you smile and give you pleasure. A tight budget and busy schedule don’t have to keep you from loving yourself. Life consists of many small choices, little things done each day.—*Charlotte Siems*

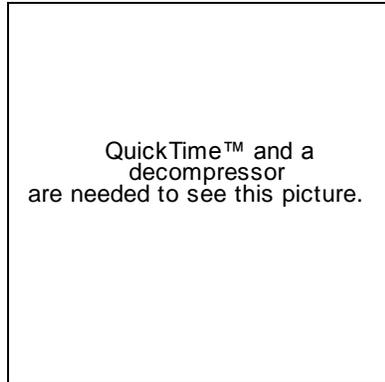
Questions and Exercises to Ponder

1. Create a Self-Nurturing Restorative Treasure Chest. Be prepared to share it with the group.

The treasure chest consists of items that appeal to the five senses: Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch, and Sound ... and they help us to restore ourselves. Find your favorite items and keep them in a box. During times of stress or other emotional triggers, the box serves as another way to self-soothe in place of turning to food or other unhealthy choices. Some examples follow.

Sight: an inspirational photo, a comic strip, a card from a dear friend, meditation book

Smell: potpourri, incense, scented candle, perfume, or a dried rose
Taste: flavorful herb tea bag, a piece of gum or sugar-free candy, or candied ginger
Touch: a rabbit's foot, stuffed animal, squishy stress ball, *Little Fur Family* book
Sound: music or book from a CD or i-Pod, small music box, sheet music, a squeaky toy



My Self-Nurturing Treasure Chest

Sight

Smell

Taste:

Touch

Sound

2. While watching TV, mute the sound during a commercial period. Try this meditation (from the Dalai Lama). As you breathe in, say, "May I cherish myself." As you breathe out, say, "May I cherish others." Continue until the show returns.
3. What self-nurturing activities or techniques have you discovered for rejuvenating or maintaining yourself? Here are some examples. Name some that work for you.
 - Spend quiet time at home alone
 - Listen to music
 - Exercise regularly
 - Chat with an old friend
 - Walk in the park
 - Meditate or do yoga
 - Set aside times for simply relaxing and doing nothing
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4. Nurturing yourself has several components. What do you do to nurture your physical body? Your spiritual connection? Your inner peace? Your mind? Your connection to the earth? Your creativity?

Bulletin for Self-Nurturance

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—*Mary Morell*

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence

Meditation from the Dalai Lama

In breath: May I cherish myself.

Out breath: May I cherish others.

Shared Readings

How you treat yourself is a direct reflection of how you allow others to treat you.—*Rena Hatch*

May my eyes perceive the grace
in petals on a stream

I seek the gentle flow of a lucid
waking dream.

May my lips taste the sweetness
in the lingering honeyed dew . . .

May my heart gather strength
from the roots of the willow tree

As I seek to persevere
rather than to flee . . .

—*Alexandra Villard de Borchgrave*

You can't really take good care of others, or be there for others if you're not there for yourself first. I like to use the metaphor of the oxygen masks on airplanes. The steward/stewardess always tells you to put your own mask on first and then help those around you. And, this is the essence of self-nurturing.—*Linda Gerdes*

I define self-nurturing as having the courage to pay attention to your needs. Nurturing also means empowerment, the power that comes when you stretch and fulfill a goal. And finally, nurturing is celebration, taking the time to applaud being alive, being you.—*Jennifer Louden*

Until you make peace with who you are, you'll never be content with what you have.

—*Doris Mortman*

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Round 1

Share some ideas for your self-nurturing treasure chest.

Round 2

Share deeply from readings, activities and questions in the preparation material.

Round 3

As time allows share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared

Closing Words

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Song**The Covenant**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group.
- to let the leader know if I will be absent or need to quit.
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others.
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time.
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others.
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart.
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, or giving advice.
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.