For families-

Simple Tips to Slow Down
25 Ways to practice self-care



Don’t Be So Hard on Yourself!

This article is to remind you to take care of yourself as you are taking care of your families. Oftentimes we worry about everyone else instead of ourselves- I would like to change that. Fit your own oxygen mask first! You’re no use to anyone if you’re running on empty. Caring for yourself first is often the best thing you can do in order to help others. It isn’t selfish, or egocentric. Below I have listed 25 ways to practice self-care, they are simple yet very effective! You got this!

1) Journal for 20 minutes. Write in a free-flowing stream-of-consciousness style. Notice feelings that are just under the surface.
2) Turn on uplifting music—maybe a song with a strong message you need to hear, some rock and roll song you loved in high school, African drumming, flute music, or a catchy pop single.
3) Write and send a sweet card to someone—a birthday card, a “thinking of you” card, a “get well" card, a "congratulations" card, or a “no-reason” card.
4) Make yourself a nice drink like chamomile tea, hot chocolate, or juice—and sip it slowly.
5) Schedule at least one uninterrupted hour with a close friend—Facetime, a phone call or on Zoom.
6) Color a picture from a coloring book with or beside your child. Take your time.
7) Go on a social media kindness spree—use 20 minutes to post nice comments on people’s social media or through messenger.
8) Make a cozy spot—make a blanket fort with your kids and climb in it with them (resting and hiding and giggling).
9) On a single piece of paper, write down three things that are weighing on you, stressing you, or bothering you; put a dash after each one with a single action-step that may help relieve it.
10) Plan a special one-on-one date with your child—e.g hiking, painting pottery, or cooking.

11) Call a friend or loved one. Say, “I’m having a hard time with this. Do you mind if I talk this out with you?”

12) Go for a walk (preferably in the woods or near water).

13) Download a gratitude app and record what you’re thankful for (e.g., a short commute, a great babysitter, a cozy home).

14) Engage in a small bit of service—e.g. make fudge for your grandma, call your congressperson about an issue of importance, shovel someone’s walk, or get a partner’s car washed.

15) Do a short meditation by closing your eyes, breathing deeply, focusing on your breath, and saying, “All sounds return to the breath, all thoughts return to the breath, all distractions return to the breath.”

16) Do a single tiny household chore that’s been bothering you: empty one drawer, give away one bag of clothes, or clean one shelf of your fridge. Pat yourself on the back for completing it.

17) Sit on the couch and put your feet up and close your eyes—take a catnap or a daydream nap. Notice what shows up when you close your eyes.

18) Let yourself be blue for a bit. Cuddle under a blanket, play sad bluesy music, eat chocolate ice cream, or cry.

19) Get your nails done. Pick an off-the-wall color for your toes.

20) Follow the “rule of three”: always be consciously aware of three things that you’re looking forward to.

21) Write down one goal or intention you have for the week and post it on your fridge. Take everything else (like magnets, pictures, art projects, to-do lists, etc.) off your fridge.

22) Think of one activity you could cut out of your schedule that you wouldn't miss at all. Cut it out of your schedule.

23) Choose something that you're going to savor today—taking a shower, taking a drive, walking, chopping wood, reading a celebrity magazine, etc. "Savor" it instead of just "doing" it.

24) Go somewhere local that you've never been before—a new forest preserve, a new park, a new beach, a different library, a conservatory, etc.

25) Think of one way you compare yourself to others—remind yourself that you rarely see the hard parts of people's lives because they purposely hide them or keep them private.

These ideas have been excerpted from the book *Joy Fixes for Weary Parents*, by Erin Leyba, Ph.D.

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