

77 IDEAS FOR SELF-NURTURING

or How to Treat Myself as Someone I Respect

The media and faculty regularly tell modern-day students about the importance of caring for our bodies by maintaining a nutritious diet and exercising regularly. This emphasis on taking good care of the physical self should not, however, overshadow the need to nurture our "emotional selves".

The demanding duties of study cause a need for refuelling with adequate food, water and sleep. But our "emotional tank" also needs to be refuelled. By taking a little time each day to nurture ourselves, we can be psychologically rejuvenated and, thus, more productive. Creating self-nurturing activities is an individual process based on what we perceive as pleasurable and enjoyable, provided that it doesn't negatively impact our health. Listed below are 77 ideas for self-nurturing developed by the authors and members of a stress-management support group.

Read through the list and give yourself a treat. Make a contract with yourself to select specific activities to complete during the upcoming week. Experiencing the simple acts of self-nurturing on a daily basis can maximise your education and allow you to enjoy the benefits of taking special care of yourself.

1. Listen to my favourite music
2. Enjoy a long, warm, bubble bath
3. Go for a walk
4. Share a hug with a loved one
5. Relax outside
6. Exercise (of my choice)
7. Spiritual prayer
8. Attend a caring support group
9. Practice diaphragmatic breathing
10. Do "stretching" exercises
11. Reflect on my positive qualities: "I am..."
12. Watch the sunrise/sunset
13. Laugh
14. Concentrate on a relaxing scene
15. Create a collage representing "The Real Me"
16. Receive a message
17. Reflect on: "I appreciate..."
18. Write my thoughts and feelings in a personal journal
19. Attend a favourite athletic event
20. Do something adventurous, eg. skydiving
21. Read a special book or magazine
22. Sing/hum/whistle a happy tune
23. Swing/slide/teeter/totter
24. Play a musical instrument
25. Spiritual meditation
26. Work with plants, eg. gardening
27. Learn a new skill
28. See a special play, movie or concert
29. Workout with weights/equipment
30. Ride a bike or motorcycle
31. Make myself a nutritious meal
32. Draw/paint a picture
33. Swim/float/wade/relax in a pool/on the beach
34. Do aerobics/dance
35. Visit a special place I enjoy
36. Smile/say: "I love myself"

37. Take time to smell the roses (and other flowers I enjoy)
38. Imagine myself achieving my goals and dreams
39. Go horseback riding
40. Reflect on: "my most enjoyable memories"
41. Enjoy a relaxing nap
42. Visit a museum/art gallery
43. Practice Yoga
44. Relax in a whirlpool/sauna
45. Enjoy a cool, refreshing glass of water or fruit juice.
46. Enjoy the beauty of nature
47. Count my blessings: "I am thankful..."
48. Play as I did as a child
49. Star gaze
50. "Window shop"
51. Daydream
52. Tell myself the loving words I want to hear from others
53. Attend a special workshop
54. Go sailing/paddle boating
55. Reward myself with a special gift I can afford
56. Take myself on a vacation
57. Create with clay/potter
58. Practice positive affirmations
59. Pat an animal
60. Watch my favourite TV show
61. Reflect on my successes: "I can..."
62. Write a poem expressing my feelings
63. Make a bouquet of flowers
64. RELAX: watch the clouds
65. Make myself something nice
66. Visit a part/woods/forest
67. Read positive, motivational literature
68. Reflect on: "What I value most in life!"
69. Phone a special friend
70. Go on a picnic in a beautiful setting
71. Enjoy a gourmet cup of herbal tea/decaf coffee
72. Participate in a favourite sport/game/recreation
73. Practice a relaxation exercise (or listen to a relaxation tape)
74. Practice the art of forgiveness
75. Treat myself to a nutritious meal at a favourite restaurant/café
76. Participate in a hobby
77. Create my own unique list of "self nurturing" activities

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