Self-Care: Social Guide
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Based on an article by Katherine Hurst 2018

*This **Self-Care: Social guide** is one of six in this Self-Care series, the other five are: **Self Care: Physical & Sensory, Nature, Mental, Emotional and Worldview guide.***

Self-Care: An Introduction

Most people benefit from at least some kind of self-care, although individuals may prefer different kinds. Not all kinds of self-care are for everyone.

Self-care is about cultivating personal resilience, knowing when an individual's inner resources are getting low and it's time to replenish. Self-care is also about the integration of compassion, in individuals and in groups, to prevent burnout. Individuals and groups can prioritise self-care in order to bring more good energy to anything they do, including group activities.

What Self-Care is Not

Self-care is not the same as anything that feels good. Modern societies offer many 'quick-fix' temptations based on unhealthy coping mechanisms that are potentially destructive or harmful long-term: things like drugs, alcohol, caffeine, overeating, gambling, or excessive risk-taking. These provide temporary relief at best, and are not long-term solutions, or foundations of self-care.

Avoiding Self-Care

Someone might avoid self-care for many reasons. Typically, these are based on a personal history where self-care was not encouraged. In addition, the cultural norms in most modern societies tend to favour attributes such as strength, youth, vitality and conversely care or rest can be seen as a form of weakness. This can result in in beliefs such as:

- people in general do not deserve or need self-care, so neither does any specific individual.
- there will be bad consequences for self-care.
- my important relationships will be affected in a negative way.
- it involves too many difficult transactions, and isn't worth it.
- it may help other people, but it is not suitable for me.
- self-care has an 'expensive' cost in money or time, so it is best kept to a minimum.

> **Self-care practices are good for us! Exercise, creativity, rest, touch, social connection, time in nature (to name some examples) have long-term benefits on all levels: physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, and for worldview.**

Self-Care: Social

Social self-care aims to prevent isolation, loneliness, and depression, which have become remarkably common in modern times. Human neurobiology is designed to be social, with a baseline of social engagement (see **Nervous System guide**). Ideally you can avoid increasing superficial connections and social fatigue, focusing instead on practices that deepen relationships and meaningful connections. This can take a little more time than other self-care practices.

Self-Care Benefits: Social

- deepening connections and relationships
- giving and receiving love and appreciation
- re-affirming social identity

Activities

3+ minutes to **reach out** to someone you feel connected to who you haven't talked with in a while. Send them a short message to say 'thinking of you,' or 'I'd love to catch up.'

8+ minutes to **write a review** or testimonial for a local business you enjoyed recently. Strengthening these relationships is a way to invest more in the place you live.

15+ minutes to **research a group** of people who may share your interests. Social isolation can result from simply not knowing there are groups out there. You may have lots in common! Bonus: try joining a group, at least once, online or in-person.

20+ minutes to **write a letter** to someone you care about who is far away. Electronic communications are fine, and there's something special about receiving an old-fashioned paper letter. Bonus: add some art they will like.

20+ minutes to make or find a **birthday present** for someone you care about. As you're making it, try focusing on your good thoughts and appreciation for them. If you find something you think they'll love, even well in advance, save it for their special day. Bonus: use one of Gary Chapman's five *'Love Languages'* that you know they prefer - words of praise, physical affection, acts of service, quality time, or a thoughtful gift.

20+ minutes to **create a podcast, blog, or video** on a new topic you've recently learned about. Summarize the topic so someone else would understand, and share it with your friends, family, or colleagues.

30+ minutes to **hear about someone else's self-care ideas**, ideally someone you trust or respect. Maybe you can support each other, or join each other in some self-care practices.

30+ minutes to **help a friend** or neighbour, or volunteer some time for a charity. Make sure it is truly helpful for them, not inflating your ego, or based on an old habit, or an unhealthy coping mechanism. Helping others in a good way increases self-esteem, a sense of integrity, identity, and interconnection.

30+ minutes to **look after some children** and do some activities, giving their parents or guardians a break. Children are great guides to being in the present moment, appreciation, wonder, and simply playing. Investing in those relationships can lead to meaningful experiences for you and for the children.

45+ minutes to **visit with an elder**, which can be mutually beneficial in several ways. Try asking them questions about their lives, or telling them stories about yours. Elders can have great ideas about problem-solving, prioritising, and preventing unnecessary difficulty. Bonus: if appropriate, involve the elder in a project you are working on.

60+ minutes to have a deep & meaningful or **heart-to-heart conversation** with an old friend. These can be nourishing for both of you, and can have mental, emotional, and worldview benefits.

Aim to stop socialising with those who undermine or disempower you. **Say 'no'** to invitations or activities that no longer serve you. Prioritise your relationships. Invest more time and energy with people who you feel good giving to and receiving from.

Related Inner Transition Resources

Self-Care: Physical and Sensory
Self-Care: Nature
Self-Care: Mental
Self-Care: Emotional
Self-Care: Worldview

Nervous System Guide

References Self-care: Social

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