

When we become parents we need self-care like never before, but often the things we used to do to nourish ourselves can feel inaccessible - we don't have the same time, energy or funds available. We need a whole new self-care toolkit but in our sleep deprived, overstimulated state it is hard to be creative in finding new ways to top up our energy bank and often guilt stops us in our tracks too.

Many of the barriers drop away when we get crystal clear on self-care. Self-care is health care. It is nourishment for the head, the heart and the body. It helps us cope with the challenges of parenthood, it helps us heal and restore after stressful or depleting experiences, it gives us a protective buffer against the next curveball and self-care gives us access to a better version of ourselves.

If we want to raise resilient and compassionate kids, we need to be teaching them the tools of self-care too, even better, engage in nourishing practices together. It needn't take much time, energy and many self-care rituals don't cost a penny! Looks for ways that you can infuse more tenderness in your day and see how the benefits ripple out beyond you.



Having a framework helps bring self-care to life. I created the Vitality Wheel to connect us with something nourishing in the moment. Take a look at the wheel and you'll see eight different ways that we can look after ourselves. The spokes of the wheel are not designed to be distinct and you'll see that an activity like taking a walk in the woods could fall in several categories.

The whole point of it is to help you identify something nourishing and accessible in the moment, because in my experience, when we're feeling frazzled, fatigued and full up, it is hard to put your finger on it! Use the Vitality Wheel for inspiration, thinking of all the activities, rituals and practices that resonate for you and your family, and jot them down on the wheel. Turn to the wheel whenever you and your family need a little nurturing.

#MondayMicroMoment - Live Instagram Session 9am Mondays

Suzy Reading

KEY POINTS

Take the 'micro moments' approach and dot them through your day. A few deep breaths. Savour the scent of your morning coffee. Repeat a mantra. A few minutes of journaling before you go to bed.

Become skilled in the art of curiosity, kindness, compassion and savouring and this transforms the lens through which you see the world. What are you already doing that you can make more nourishing? The way you greet the day, the way in which you dress yourself, how you shower, how you eat your meals, the way you talk to yourself?

If you find it hard to remember self-care, piggyback existing habits with an act of self-care. Every time you drink a glass of water, take the opportunity to stand tall, relax your shoulders and enjoy five deep breaths. Pair another self-care activity to toilet breaks, like using a hand wash with a scent you love. While you're waiting for the kettle to boil take a yoga pose

If self-care keeps getting bumped, make an appointment with you, keep trying and gently make it a routine.

It is crucial to accept help and support from friends and family and talk about how you are feeling to people you trust

FURTHER READING



There is some wonderful self-care inspiration for parents on Instagram - @mumologist, @mothers.wellness.toolkit and @suzyreading.

Empowering books include Anya Hayes' 'The Supermum Myth', 'Stand Tall Like A Mountain: Mindfulness and Self-Care for Children and Parents' by Suzy Reading, 'The Little Book of Self Care' by Beccy Hands and 'Self Care for the Real world' by Nadia Narian.

The Nourish App is another wealth of self-care resources and the Clementine App has some lovely hypnotherapy tools.