



Activity 4: SELF-CARE

Directions: Do something just for you, not anybody else. Because of enmeshment and codependency we all endured in childhood, we don't know how to take care of ourselves in a healthy way. To survive, we provided for our caregivers emotionally. That left us feeling guilty if we pursued doing things for ourselves. I still struggle with the basic human need of having enough food. Growing up, with four kids in the space of five years and all of us being athletes, we ate like a football team. My mom had to make sure there was enough food to last until the next paycheck.

I recall reaching into the refrigerator for some cottage cheese and my mom yelling, "No, you can't have that, it's for the dogs." It was never her intent but what I heard was, "The dog's need for food is more important than yours!" Until I was about 35, I rarely ate. I would chew tobacco and drink Coke non-stop instead. Even now when I go to the store and I see something I want to purchase I hear a little voice that says, "You don't need that." To counteract that, I force myself to purchase the item. To compensate, instead of buying the cheapest version of what I like, I remind myself, I am worth feeding me and it is okay to eat good food. I then purchase the highest quality item. The key to self-care is discovering what fills your tank. What makes you feel good about yourself and does not require others to provide that feeling for you?

Set time in your schedule to begin meeting your own self-esteem versus pursuing your *other* esteem. To heal completely from our Worst Day Cycle, we cannot ignore our body's role in storing all of our pain. For some clients, the most effective form of recovery is body work because we store trauma in us physically. That is all illness and disease which has stored emotional traumas in the cells of our body. The repeated firing of those chemicals break the cells down which then sends a signal to our brain that says, "Hey, we are in pain down here." Yoga, acupuncture, working out and massage can be the most effective way to release the physical storing of our traumas.

1. What activity will you do just for yourself?
2. When will you do it?
3. Are you willing to make it part of your regular routine?