

Mom's Pamper Break

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While watching Oprah on television one day, I heard Dr. Phil McGraw make an impactful comment. He basically said that parents, particularly mothers who have a tendency to martyr for their families, have an obligation to take care of their children's caregiver. As parents, we are duty-bound to spend adequate time tending to our own well being. Not only is it not selfish, it is essential for our physical, mental and emotional health. It is impossible to pour from an empty teapot. If the caregiver stresses out or becomes ill, there is no one left to look after anyone.

Parents are the model of how to manage the adult years. We provide the example of how to be successful women or men and how to create and maintain healthy marriages and family life. We do ourselves and our children a disservice by poorly managing first by our self care responsibilities and second, if married, our primary love relationship. We need to take time out from children focused days to nurture our own identity separate from being Mom or Pop and also take time to cherish our main squeeze relationship.

There are reams of beauty salons, spas, magazines, television shows and books steeped with ideas for self care, pampering and couple enrichment. Who has time to amass all this information? Here are some quick ideas:

Self Care Breaks

1. Write "self care break" into your daytimer and keep the commitment.
2. Do something each day to nurture yourself physically (take a walk), mentally (read the paper), emotionally (call a friend) and spiritually (meditate). Do your chosen activity for a few minutes or much longer.
3. Julia Cameron, in *The Artist's Way*, suggests that we create a personal and special space, even if it is a window sill, where we can come back to ourselves.
4. Nap when you can. Research studies report that napping increases energy and focus.
5. Transform self care routines into mini breaks. Take in a long and appreciative breath as you smell your hair shampoo, feel your undies and taste your favourite breakfast. Change what doesn't satisfy you.
6. Sarah Ban Breathnach, in *Simple Abundance*, encourages us to let nature give us a break from our fast paced living, "Take off your shoes. Feel the earth beneath your feet."
7. Discover what pleases your eyes, ears, taste, social needs and creative needs. Then make space for them. Alice Koller said "Perhaps loving something is the only starting place there is for making your life your own."
8. Light a candle, daydream, write in a journal, soak in a bubble bath or get a massage.
9. Let the answering machine attend to messages.

10. Pay for child care or trade with a friend to free up time for the above.

“Mommy and Daddy Time” Breaks

1. Go on, at least, a monthly “date.” Take turns deciding the outing.
 2. Daily greet each other with hug, kiss and “I’m glad you’re home.”
 3. Regularly have five to 10 minutes pillow talk.
 4. Have one mutually favourite television show to watch while cuddling.
 5. For a high couple enhancement break attend the Banff Couples Conference.
- For more information go to www.banffcouplesconference.com

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