



Dakota Wellness Program

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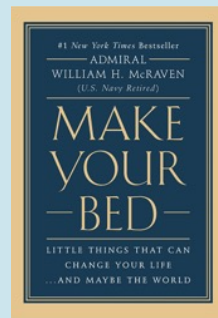
Self-Care: Your Personal Path to Well-Being

In today's fast-paced world, self-care has emerged as a lifeline for those seeking balance in their lives. It's important to clarify that self-care isn't a selfish act; it's a way to ensure you're in the best shape to help others and conquer your daily challenges. Self-care's growing popularity is a response to the rising rates of anxiety and depression. Modern life, heavily influenced by technology, has left many of us feeling overwhelmed and isolated. Self-care steps in as a guide to navigate these stressors.

Self-care covers various facets of health, from basic hygiene and nutrition to stress management and seeking medical attention when necessary. It also includes activities that foster well-being and resilience, such as exercise, mindfulness, and finding a deeper sense of purpose.

What makes self-care truly special is its personal nature. It's about recognizing your unique needs and taking steps to meet them. These steps can take many forms, whether it's pampering yourself with a relaxing bath, committing to a daily exercise routine, or nurturing your spiritual side through activities like attending religious services. The best part is that self-care doesn't have to be extravagant. Even simple acts like savoring a mindful shower or making your bed can count. Research suggests that embracing self-care practices like regular exercise, a balanced diet, quality sleep, and spending time in nature can lead to a longer and healthier life.

Starting a self-care routine is about identifying the activities that bring you joy, starting small, and gradually adding more practices. If you encounter barriers to self-care, don't hesitate to seek support. When approached with intention and commitment, self-care can significantly improve your well-being, promising a brighter and healthier future.



Book Club

Make Your Bed

by Admiral William H. McRaven

Make Your Bed is a book by Admiral William H. McRaven that draws on his experiences as a Navy SEAL to impart valuable life lessons. The central theme of the book is the idea that small, everyday tasks, like making your bed, can have a profound impact on your life. Here is a summary of the key points:

Start Your Day with a Task: McRaven emphasizes the importance of beginning your day with a simple, achievable task, like making your bed. This sets a positive tone and gives you a sense of accomplishment.

Attention to Detail: Attention to detail is crucial in Navy SEAL training, and it's a skill that can be applied to any aspect of life. By focusing on the little things, you can achieve excellence.

Teamwork: McRaven highlights the significance of working as a team and supporting one another. Navy SEALs rely on each other for survival, and this principle can be applied in everyday life.

Overcoming Adversity: The book discusses McRaven's experiences during SEAL training, including physical and mental challenges. He teaches readers how to embrace adversity and not let it deter them from their goals.

Resilience: McRaven stresses the importance of perseverance and resilience in the face of failure. He shares personal stories of overcoming setbacks and using them as opportunities for growth.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **How do small daily tasks, like making your bed, impact your overall mindset and productivity?**
2. **How can attention to detail be applied to your personal and professional life to achieve better results?**
3. **How does Admiral McRaven's emphasis on resilience resonate with your own experiences? Do you have a personal story of overcoming a setback?**

Ask the Expert

Q: What does self-care entail, and why is it important?

A: Self-care encompasses practices that nurture physical and emotional health, involving activities that bring joy or enhance overall well-being. It's crucial as it promotes balance and helps prevent burnout, ultimately leading to better mental and physical health.

Q: How can I start a self-care routine that I'll stick to?

A: To create a lasting self-care routine, begin by discovering activities that bring you joy. Incorporate these activities subtly or as dedicated parts of your daily life. Set achievable goals, seek support from those with similar self-care interests, and remain adaptable as your needs change over time.

Q: What are common barriers to starting a self-care routine, and how can they be overcome?

A: Barriers to self-care often include feelings of unworthiness or being overwhelmed, especially in the face of constant negative news. Overcoming these barriers may involve self-reflection, therapy, and limiting exposure to distressing news, making room for more enjoyable activities and self-care practices. Overcoming barriers to self-care involves understanding any roadblocks and addressing them. Seek therapy if necessary and consider reducing exposure to negative news to alleviate feelings of overwhelm. Remember, self-care should be enjoyable and fosters self-awareness and inner peace, making daily life easier and more compassionate.

Self-Care Tips in the Winter Months

During the winter months, taking care of yourself is crucial for both physical and mental well-being. Seasonal changes significantly impact our emotions, metabolism, hormones, and sleep patterns.

To maintain balance during this season, consider these modern self-care tips:

Adapt Your Routine: Adjust your daily routines to meet the unique demands of winter. Opt for a little more exercise and sunlight exposure by walking part of the way to work.

Dress Warmly: Keep cozy with woolen and flannel clothing to protect against the cold. Always have an extra jacket or cardigan handy for temperature drops.

Embrace Sunlight: Combat Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) by maximizing natural light. Open curtains and blinds to invite sunlight into your living spaces.

Stay Active: Modify your fitness plans for winter. Enjoy activities like skiing, ice skating, or winter hiking. If indoors, try yoga, dancing, or gym workouts to stay active.

Establish Routine: Maintain a regular sleep-wake cycle, even during the holiday season, by sticking to a daily routine.

Cultivate Creativity: Use indoor time to engage in creative activities like painting, knitting, or woodworking. These activities boost mental health and self-esteem.

Flu Vaccination: Prioritize your health by getting a flu shot. Consult your physician to determine its suitability.

Remember, these self-care practices can help you stay healthy and happy throughout the winter. Set a schedule to incorporate one new self-care activity each week and adapt to the season's unique demands. Don't let the cold weather dampen your spirits; take charge of your well-being.



Preventive Health

“Holiday Blues”

During the holiday season, many people experience an increase in depression, known as the “Holiday Blues”. This is due to added stress from various factors such as time constraints, financial pressures and high expectations for the holidays. The “Holiday Blues” are defined as temporary feelings that come from increased stress.

Here are some ways to make the best of your “Holiday Blues”

- Set healthy boundaries with people, including family and social gatherings.
- Spend time with positive caring people who have your best interest at heart.
- Take care of yourself during the holiday season. Prioritize your physical and mental well-being by getting enough sleep, eating nutritious meals and exercising.
- It is important to set realistic goals and expectations in order avoid negative feelings or overexertion.
- Don't overindulge in holiday treats, foods or alcohol. Overindulging can lead to feelings of sluggishness and fatigue. Eat and drink in moderation and drink plenty of water.
- Deal with negative emotions in a healthy manner, by sharing your thoughts and struggles with a trusted friend or therapist.

Zucchini Lasagna

Servings per recipe: 10

Prep Time: 35 mins

Cook Time: 50 mins

Total Time: 1 hour 25 mins

Ingredients:

2 lb zucchini (2 to 3 large)	½ cup chopped fresh basil
1 ½ lb ground beef	1 large egg
1 teaspoon salt divided	2 cloves garlic minced
½ teaspoon pepper	1 ½ cups crushed or pureed tomatoes
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes	1 tablespoon olive oil
15 ounces full-fat ricotta	12 ounces shredded mozzarella
½ cup grated parmesan	

Instructions:

1. Preheat the grill to medium. Cut the zucchini in half crosswise and then use a mandolin slicer to slice no more than ¼ inch thick.
2. Grill the zucchini slices until they are tender and much of the moisture has been removed, about 3 to 5 minutes per side. Remove from grill and set aside. (Alternatively, roast zucchini at 350F in the oven on wire baking racks for about 20 minutes).
3. Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the ground beef and cook through, breaking up any clumps with the back of a wooden spoon, about 7 to 10 minutes. Sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon of the salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes. Stir in the tomatoes.
4. In a large bowl, add the ricotta, parmesan, basil, egg, garlic and the remaining salt. Stir to combine well.
5. Preheat the oven to 350F and brush a 9x13-inch glass or ceramic baking dish with the oil. Lay one third of the zucchini slices across the bottom in a single layer. Spread with one third of the ricotta mixture, then one third of the meat sauce and one quarter of the mozzarella. Repeat these layers 2 more times, finishing with half of the mozzarella.
6. Bake 30 minutes, until bubbling and hot. Remove from the oven and let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Nutrition Facts: Calories: 292 | Total fat: 24.5g | Carbohydrate: 8.2g
Fiber: 1.7g | Protein: 28.5g



Monthly Observances

Dec 5 - International

Volunteer Day

Dec 14 - Yoga Day

**Dec 21 - National Homeless
Persons' Remembrance Day**

**Dec 4-10 - Stress-Free Holiday
Preparation Week**

**Dec 3-9 - National Hand
Washing Awareness Week**

**Dec 4-8 - Older Driver Safety
Awareness Week**

**Give The Gift of Sight Month
Identity Theft Prevention and
Awareness Month**

**Make a New Year's Resolution
to Stop Smoking Month**

**National Drunk and Drugged
Driving Prevention Month**

**National Stress-Free Family
Holidays Month**

**Universal Human
Rights Month**

World Aids Awareness Month

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