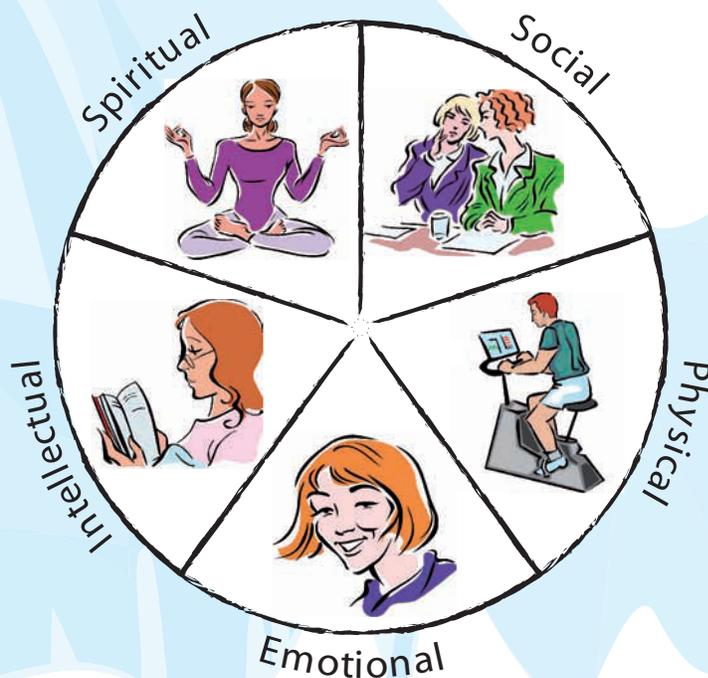


5 for Feeling Fully Alive Self Care for Life

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IMAGINE A VIBRANT YOU

Imagine being fully who you are, expressing all your parts, exploring uncharted aspects of yourself, and discovering new ways to be in the world. Being fully alive, aware and living in harmony allows your spirit to soar. By creating and maintaining a good self care program you will develop proactive stress management tools.

Paying attention to self care enables you to hold a strong vibration in your healing work and in modeling healthy behaviors for others. In raising your individual vibration, you will support and raise our group vibration. As we become healthier and fit, balanced, and focused in our hearts, we will live optimally.

The objective of this article is to develop a process, create a starting point and share resources for balanced living. According to Steven Covey in his book *First Things First*, a life out of balance is a time management issue. Creating the time and space for self care is a daily challenge and practice. His recommendation is to identify your roles and values first, including self care, determine the activities needed, and schedule them into your calendar.

ASSESS YOUR STARTING POINT

Begin by assessing your existing self care practice using the wellness model designed by Anspaugh et al (1991). Using pencil and paper, draw a large circle equally divided into 5 pie sections. Around the edge, label each area: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, and Social.

Write your current self care practices in each corresponding section. Then with a pencil, shade in each section to indicate the percentage of self care you are currently doing in each area.

While models can be great tools, we are working holistically and much of what we do for balance and self care overlaps. Keep this in mind as you are shading and give credit to each area of overlap. When you are finished, stand back and analyze your paper. Where are you proactive in your self care? Which areas call for more balance and improvement? Make note of the areas that will benefit from enhancement.

MANIFEST YOUR VISION

Write or draw a realistic vision of yourself as a well balanced, healthy, fit person with a high vibration. Write your vision by wording it in the present tense as though it is already complete. Then connect energetically and set your intention to manifest your vision. Setting your intention will

encourage you to make conscious healthy choices that are in alignment with your vision, rather than mindlessly moving through life.

5 FOR FEELING FULLY ALIVE

Our 5 favorite choices for self care tips follow for each section of the wheel. Look at your wheel and review the areas that need expansion. As you read the following suggestions, jot down any ideas that look intriguing in the corresponding sections outside of your wheel. Set a goal to gradually incorporate these into your routine.

Robert Mauer, PhD., in his book *One Small Step Can Change Your Life: The Kaizen Way*, shares the Japanese theory of using small steps to make big changes in all aspects of life. Breaking down your ideas into small increments to introduce them into your schedule leads to success.

Social

- Play
- Join clubs
- Volunteer
- Strengthen existing relationships
- Establish healthy boundaries



Social aspects overlap many of the 5 areas in the wheel. In most of the activities that follow, engaging with a buddy or a positive, healthy group increases your success and your joy. Motivation is 90% of the battle in making changes. A buddy with similar or parallel goals and like interests will encourage you while creating accountability and support.

Many research studies have revealed that those who have healthy social interactions live happier, longer and healthier lives. You can feel the life force exchange when you are with others, especially when the relationships have healthy boundaries and are positive, meaningful and supportive. Receiving nurturing from others is as important as giving and must be kept in balance. Similarly, maintaining equilibrium between social interaction and quiet/alone time will sustain your energy level.

- *Boundaries and Relationships*, Charles Whitfield, M.D.

Physical

- Increase movement
- Strength training and stretching
- Enjoyment in activities
- 8 hours horizontal time (sleep)
- Listen to your body



Daily movement is vital to maintaining and improving your health. Physical activities are very grounding, and key to our healing work. By getting more actual steps in your day, you will notice it makes a big difference over time. If you find it difficult to get motivated, commit to moving for 5 minutes. Usually once you start moving you will be surprised at how easy it is to continue.

As you experiment and find activities that you enjoy, you will be motivated to participate in them regularly. There are endless possibilities for finding joy in movement. In addition, remember to dance and have fun with it. Physical activity increases the use of breath which is very balancing and invigorating, or calming depending on its use.

For another aspect of balance, consider scheduling various body work and energy treatments. As you set up your physical program, listen to your body so that you are not driving too hard or over scheduling. Check in with your body often and meet all of its needs, allowing time for 8 hours of rest and sleep. Remember to stay current with preventive health screenings.

- *The Canyon Ranch Guide to Living Younger Longer*,
The Canyon Ranch Staff

Nutrition

- Read food labels
- Follow the rainbow with regard to fruits and vegetables
- Eat mindfully and in correct portions
- Take a daily multivitamin
- Stay hydrated

Read labels and eliminate unhealthy trans-fats and high fructose corn syrup. Eat 5-6 servings of organic fruits and vegetables from a variety of different colored foods to optimize your antioxidant, vitamin and mineral intake.

Making nutritious food choices is one area in your health in which you have ultimate control. Your consumption choices directly influence how you function mentally physically and emotionally. Honor your body with a variety of high quality fuels. Eating 5 small meals a day including breakfast stabilizes your energy level.

Hydration is essential for maintaining vitality and energy. Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day. There is a wealth of information in this area, Consider the following book for more in-depth information.

- *8 Weeks to Optimal Health*, Andrew Weil

Emotional

- Journaling
- Humor
- Gratitude
- Forgiveness
- Live in the present



In *Happiness- What Happy People Know*, Dan Baker PhD. shares, “Most people are so used to being unhappy that they barely notice it.” Being in touch with your emotions is the first step in processing and shifting them. Journal writing or drawing is a wonderful way to get in touch and work through deeper feelings. Laughter is a great way to lighten up.

Try focusing on the positive with a gratitude journal. Practice forgiving yourself and others while letting go of old pain and hurts.

Practice being in the moment...present to what is occurring. If you continually drift to past circumstances and hurts or project into the future, your energy becomes scattered and depleted. Become aware of your limiting beliefs. As you recognize what holds you back, you can change your thinking and open yourself to new opportunities

You can reach new insights and healthy detachment in situations by pulling back and becoming the observer, which allows for other perspectives. Consider exploring the variety of spiritual, and emotional counseling or coaching options available for growth.

- *Journal to the Self*, Kathleen Adams
- *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman
- *The Power of Now*, Eckart Tolle

Intellectual

- Organize /simplify
- Goal setting
- Professional training
- Workshops for enhanced living
- Exercise your mind



Organization is the foundation to maintaining balance. We recommend creating systems to streamline your daily routines and decrease clutter. This will allow the energy to flow around you. Strive to simplify all aspects of your life in small increments. According to Steven Covey in his book *Principle Centered Leadership*, “If you want to change dramatically, change the way you look at things, and change how you see the world.”

From an intellectual perspective, begin to look at your life, write your thoughts in your journal and analyze them. What is joyful to your spirit and what is loathsome? Where can you make changes and where do you need positive reframing? Covey also refers to “sharpening the saw”- keeping your tools fresh, attending professional training/ workshops, continuing your education for enjoyment as well as for mental health.

Working the mind daily with creative problem solving, crossword puzzles, sudoku, board games, and brain teasers will increase positive energy flow to the brain.

- *The Spirit of Getting Organized*, Pamela Kristan
- *Simple Abundance*, Sarah Ban Breathnach
- *Creating Sacred Space with Feng Shui*, Karen Kingston

Spiritual

- Breathwork
- Give back/radiate kindness
- Connect with the rhythms of nature, art and beauty
- Meditate/pray/religious practice/ listen within
- Create sacred space to support your inner peace



There are endless, joyous ways to breathe in spirit, fill with life, reflect, contemplate and connect with something greater. Whatever brings you joy and creates beauty will replenish your spirit. Be sure to take time for quiet meditation, reflection and contemplation to access the quiet voice within. It is the inner voice that will lead you to discover your gifts, your passions, and your mission ...guiding you to live with purpose.

- *The Power of Meditation and Prayer, Multiple contributors*
- *Practice Random Acts of Kindness, Editors of Random Acts of Kindness*

SELF CARE IS FOR LIFE!

Keep your goals in mind, and list the activities that you chose in the corresponding outer areas of your wheel. As you incorporate them into your life, add them to the inner wheel section and increase your shading accordingly. Recognize your progress and note how the changes are contributing to your increased energy level. Experiment with activities at different times of the day to discover when you are fresh and more likely to follow through. Schedule these activities and times on your calendar in pen and don't compromise them.

You are now well on your way to living your vision of a more vibrant, healthy you. Continue to work your wheel on a regular basis, assessing, making small steps and changes. As you work with the process, your energy will increase and assist in keeping you motivated, living in harmony, balance and sustaining a high vibration for life. 

Sue and Ann's Bio:

Sue Kagel and Ann Adams have worked together for years at Canyon Ranch Health Resort, Tucson, AZ where they teach self care daily in their respective occupations. Each practitioner draws from a variety of backgrounds in presenting self care lectures and individual teaching.

Ann's educational background includes a BSN in Nursing, BS in Nutrition, MS in Exercise Physiology and she is a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner. She has formerly combined her knowledge to create and teach in cardiac rehabilitation programs and now works as a triage nurse and patient educator.

Sue has a 10 year full time Healing Touch Practice in which she combines her education in BSN Nursing, Holistic Nursing Certification, and is a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner and international Instructor. She is on faculty for the University of Arizona Program of Integrative Medicine and is a member of the Healing Touch International Board of Directors.

Sue and Ann can be found weekly on the trails of Sabino Canyon in Tucson, using the buddy system to spur each other on physically as they share, create, explore and implement new ideas for living life fully alive.
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