



Making Yourself A Priority Is Essential For Happiness

Do you find yourself putting your needs aside for work, family, or friendships? Do you take on more than you can handle? Do you make everyone else in your life a priority before yourself? We are all guilty of doing this from time to time, but when we do it all of the time we find that we have too much to do, not enough time to do it, and we end up stressed and exhausted.

Do you know why the flight attendant says, “Put on your oxygen mask first, before helping others with theirs.”? It’s because when you make yourself a priority, when you are at your best, then you can be your best for others. It is essential that you put yourself first in your daily life, not only do you feel better and happier but you are better equipped to give to others.

CHOOSE YOU FIRST

When was the last time you intentionally took care of your needs? Making yourself a priority requires a change in the way we think. You must allow yourself to think about your needs knowing that to be the best version of yourself, you have to choose yourself first. I know it may feel impossible with all the expectations of others or even the expectations you put on yourself but it’s the change that has to happen in order to live healthier, be happier, have better relationships, be more productive at work, and be a better caregiver for your loved ones.

So, how do you start? Ask yourself, “What is something that calms me down and puts me in a good mood?” However you like to unwind, whether that means reading for pleasure, watching a movie, going for a hike, or getting a massage. Schedule it into your appointment calendar because “me time” is just as important as anything else. Plus, how happy do you already start to feel when you know you have something to look forward to! Next, make sure your own basic needs are being met. This means that you are eating healthy, exercising, and getting good rest. These three needs are the foundation from which you can build the best version of you. In addition to scheduling “Me Time”, it is also important to schedule time with others. Socializing with others is equally essential to helping you function at your highest level at work and at home, with your family, significant others, or friends.

WORK ON SAYING YES TO YOU

You can take back your happiness when you stop trying to please everyone and do what you want instead. Life is going to happen no matter what and you just can’t always abandon your own needs because you’re trying to take care of everyone else’s needs. Tell yourself, “It’s ok to stop saying yes to everyone sometimes.” It will take time to get comfortable with this and that’s ok. You will have to ask others for help for what you want and need. Many times

others want to help and will be happy you asked, creating an even better connection between you and them. You will have to set boundaries, and you may still feel guilty for saying “no”; so start small and grow from there. Finally, remember that when you are tired or stressed, it’s impossible to be effective. Are there changes you can make in your schedule to make life easier? Even a small change like laying your clothes out the night before or making your lunch the night before can help you start the day less rushed and much happier!

TAKING CARE OF YOU IS NOT SELFISH

If there are three mantras you need to live by, they are, 1. You never, ever, ever have to justify taking care of yourself. 2. You don’t have to take on the responsibilities of others. 3. You should not feel guilty for taking care of you so that you can be the very best for yourself and the people in your life.

So, just to be clear, selfishness is defined as being concerned chiefly with one’s own personal profit or pleasure. That is completely different from carving out time to take care of you. It also doesn’t mean that you should ignore or abandon the needs of others. I’m just saying make time for you too; you don’t always have to try to please everyone.

When we first got married, my husband would always tell me, “Don’t worry about the things you can’t control, just let it go.” It’s a hard concept to learn but I can say from experience, once you learn to “Let it go”; you will be a whole lot happier!

FOSTER YOUR OWN HAPPINESS

Growing up I was taught, if you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything. To foster happiness from within, begin by being kind to yourself. Instead of self-criticism, doubts, and insecurities, have compassion and appreciation for how you feel and what you’re thinking. Life is hard sometimes and it’s ok to feel vulnerable. In a similar fashion, take the time to appreciate the good, too. You deserve it. Equally important to

nourishing the mind is the company you keep. Friendships should lift, inspire, and encourage you. Sometimes we have to move on from relationships that may be causing you to sacrifice your own happiness and move towards those that have a positive impact on your life.

LOVE YOU

You can do anything you want, you have accomplished many things in your life, you can continue to nourish your mind and body. Are you perfect? No one is, but we are striving to be our best. Remember that perfection is defined by YOU and no one else. Acknowledge your strengths and know that you are stronger and more capable than you think rather than dwelling on your weaknesses. Create a plan to make small and steady improvements towards growth and celebrate YOU every step of the way.

SEE YOUR LIFE

Recognizing and reflecting on the small things you are grateful for each day allows you to see the joy in your life. It can shift your mindset from negative to positive and make small moments more meaningful. It’s a healthy habit and a surefire way to put yourself in a good mood!

It’s funny how we can easily see when others need help but rarely do we see it in ourselves. Even taking a few minutes to enjoy a cup of tea, read your favorite comics, or listen to a great song can allow you to recharge because you took the time to do something you enjoy. If you are taking care of everyone else and are feeling irritable, anxious, and exhausted then it’s time to reassess. Making yourself a priority will take time and can feel challenging but it will also make life more enjoyable. You will then have the energy to give more to others. When you treat yourself with respect, others will learn that, too, creating a relationship with a foundation of mutual kindness and support. Start today by doing one thing to prioritize yourself and see the difference it makes!

