**Self-Care - Who cares for the Carers?**

Only we can care for ourselves. Remember, the airlines tell us to secure our own oxygen mask first before helping the person next to us. Many of us are great at giving oxygen to others – but are chronically short of oxygen ourselves (metaphorically)

Self-care means learning about and paying attention to Health. Not just taking it for granted until illness comes along! We each have a responsibility to ourselves to take this seriously. Self-care is not selfishness, it is vital for our long-term health and survival. We can postpone our own needs for a while – but they always come back to us – so it’s better to be proactive.

Health is harmony of **body**, **mind** and **being**. Deviation from health leads us into illness, so it’s worth being pro-active and learning about staying healthy:

Connect,

Be active,

Take Notice,

Learn and

Give

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Nourish your **body** – get high quality sleep, exercise, fresh air, sunlight and great food. A car that you don’t service and put the wrong fuel into runs badly, if at all. Dance, sing or laugh sometimes! High quality nutrition is key. Avoiding maintenance is an unhealthy choice to make, just like avoiding the washing-up in the kitchen is also unhealthy. And remember, choices have consequences!

Learn how to still your **mind** and use it carefully. An overactive, clever mind can drive us into difficulties. Learn mindfulness, reflection or anything else that works for you. Remember: garbage in, garbage out. So connect to beauty and nature, don’t just watch electronic screens devices and screens are tools, not necessarily hobbies. ‘Mindfulness’ is a powerful tool to learn for life.

**Being**. Spirituality is everyone’s natural connection to the wonder and energy of life and the instinct to explore that experience and its meaning. Spirituality affirms that personal development is about the growth of compassion and consciousness, heart and mind. Take time to think about what really matters to you in life: your ‘core values’. If you use these to guide you, harmony can flow. If you try and act in conflict with your values, life will give you a lesson.

And remember: every day is a school day (EDASD). We are all always learning! Even more, Everyone is My Teacher (EIMT). We can and do learn from everyone and everything in life. Every Day has a new lesson – the Unwritten Lesson Plans of Life (ULPL). Our challenge is to recognise the patterns and meaning that are hidden everywhere.

“Where is the Life we have lost in living?

Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?

Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”

Eliot, TS, The Rock

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