



BOUNDARIES AND SELF CARE: PROTECTING VOLUNTEERS FROM COMPASSION FATIGUE

Objectives:

- ***Beware the Dangers of Burnout and Compassion Fatigue***
- ***The Protective Power of Boundaries***
- ***Super-charge your Self-Care***

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Introductions / Survey Results

- How many of you work with volunteer who do mainly tasks?
- How many work with volunteers who work with people?
- Other?

- My experiences with volunteers

- Survey done with our volunteers – 3 Questions:
 - What factors deplete you most as a volunteer?
 - What do your leaders do that is most helpful in keeping you motivated to volunteer?
 - What do you do for self-care?

What factors deplete you most as a volunteer?

- Too many demands in life outside volunteering - 47.13% (41)
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- Feeling inadequate - 32.18% (28)
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- Seeing or hearing about so many people's needs - 21.84% (19)
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- Not being appreciated - 14.94% (13)
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- Lack of training and support - 10.34% (9)

What do your leaders do that is most helpful in keeping you motivated to volunteer?

- Say 'thank you' or show appreciation - 53.49% (46)
- Make themselves available to answer questions - 53.49% (46)
- Offer ongoing training - 31.40% (27)
- Share stories about how my service is making a difference - 24.42% (21)–
- Debrief with me about my experience of volunteering - 15.12% (13)

What do you do for self-care?

- Spiritual practices - 81.61% (71)
- Connect with supportive people - 67.82% (59)
- Adequate sleep - 55.17% (48)
- Hobbies or fun activities - 51.72% (45)
- Regular exercise - 47.13% (41)
- Healthy eating - 41.38% (36)

Breathe, Ground, Relax

- Abdominal (Belly) Breathing
 - Breathe2Relax app
- 3-5-7 Breathing Exercise
 - Inhale for 3 seconds
 - Hold for 5 seconds
 - Exhale for 7 seconds

Burnout Definition

- Merriam-Webster definition: “Exhaustion of physical or emotional strength or motivation usually as a result of prolonged stress or frustration.”
- <https://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/burnout>:
“Emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from a combination of exposure to environmental and internal stressors and inadequate coping and adaptive skills.”

Compassion Fatigue Definition

- Merriam-Webster definition: *medical* : "The physical and mental exhaustion and emotional withdrawal experienced by those who care for sick or traumatized people over an extended period of time. Unlike burnout, which is caused by everyday work stresses (or life stresses), *compassion fatigue* results from taking on the emotional burden of a patient's agony."

- Compassion Fatigue has been described as the “cost of caring” for others in emotional and physical pain. (Figley, 1982) It is characterized by deep physical and emotional exhaustion and a pronounced change in the helper’s ability to feel empathy for their patients, their loved ones and their co-workers. (Running on Empty)

Danger Signs- Discussion

- What do you notice in yourself that are early warning signs of burn-out?
- What do you notice when you are experiencing compassion fatigue?
- Can you tell the difference?

Danger Signs

- Physical tension
- Difficulty sleeping or excessive sleeping
- Exhaustion
- Negative attitudes
- Low self-esteem
- Loss of motivation
- Irritable

and more Danger Signs...

- Impatient
- Blaming others
- Apathy
- Isolation from others
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor self-care

Self-Assessments

- Are You Burning Out?
- Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory
- Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue (ProQOL)

Protective Powers of Boundaries

- What is a boundary?
 - Property line
 - Warehouse or a House?

Internal Boundaries: What's me and not me;
Where I end and another begins

External Boundaries: What I will and won't do

What falls within my Boundaries?

- My feelings
- My attitudes/beliefs/desires/
- My behaviors
- My choices
- My values
- My thoughts
- My limits
- My talents
- My love/trust

Boundary Problems

	CAN'T SAY	CAN'T HEAR
NO	The <i>compliant</i> feels guilty and/or controlled by others; can't set boundaries	The <i>controller</i> aggressively or manipulatively violates the boundaries of others
YES	The <i>nonresponsive</i> sets boundaries against responsibility to love (or to give or to serve)	The <i>avoidant</i> sets boundaries against receiving care from others

Setting Limits Worksheet

- **Right Column:** Identify your difficulties with setting limits
- **Left Column:**
 - Identify the things that only you can do
 - Think about your own needs
- **Middle Column:**
 - Understand what others can do for themselves
 - List those things you can let someone else do
 - List those things you can let go, even if they don't get done.
- Now breathe, and let them go.

Breathe, Ground, Relax

What is Grounding? – Focusing on the present moment and experiencing all your senses in order to detach from feelings of stress, anxiety, or emotional pain.

1. Plant your Feet on the Floor
2. Orient to the date, time and place
3. Notice:
 - 5 things you can see
 - 4 things you can hear
 - 3 things you can feel/touch
 - 2 things you can smell
 - 1 thing you can taste (or think of 1 thing you are grateful for)

Compassion without Fatigue

- Adhere to “Boundaries of Responsibility”
- Follow “Toxic Charity” Principles
- Understand Empathy

Boundaries of Responsibility – Dr. D.R. Green

- **I AM RESPONSIBLE for...**

- how I treat myself
- how I treat others

- **I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE for...**

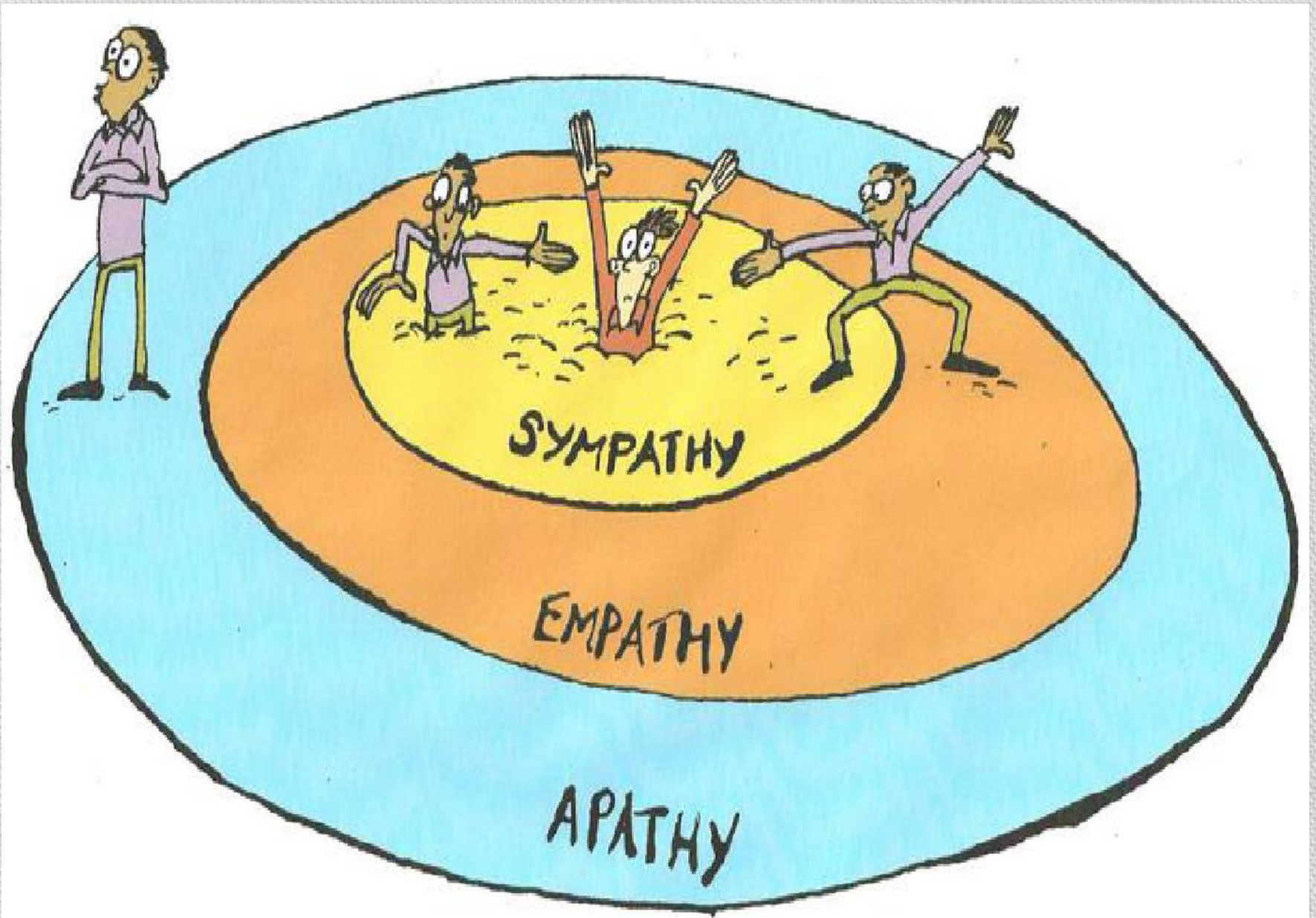
- how others treat me
- how others treat others
- how others treat themselves

- I cannot control or 'fix' another person

Some Principles from *Toxic Charity*

by Robert Lupton

- Serve in a way that preserves the dignity of the other
- Don't do for others what they have or could have the capacity to do for themselves
- Limit one way giving to emergency situations
- Strive to empower others by identifying and building on their assets



Apathy – Sympathy – Empathy

- Apathy –
 - Only care about “What it’s like to be me”
- Sympathy –
 - Can only focus on “What it’s like to be you”
- Empathy –
 - Holds in balance “What’s like to be me and what it’s like to be you”

Image: Morgan-Jones, Tom

(2012). [Http://www.cambridgetraining.org/index.php/alasdair-cant-associates/resources](http://www.cambridgetraining.org/index.php/alasdair-cant-associates/resources)

Super-Charge your Self-Care

- Replenish in the Moment
- Replenish your Health Habits
- Replenish your Mind (read, journal...)
- Replenish your Spirit (quiet & reflection)
- Connect with Replenishing People
- Discover Replenishing Activities

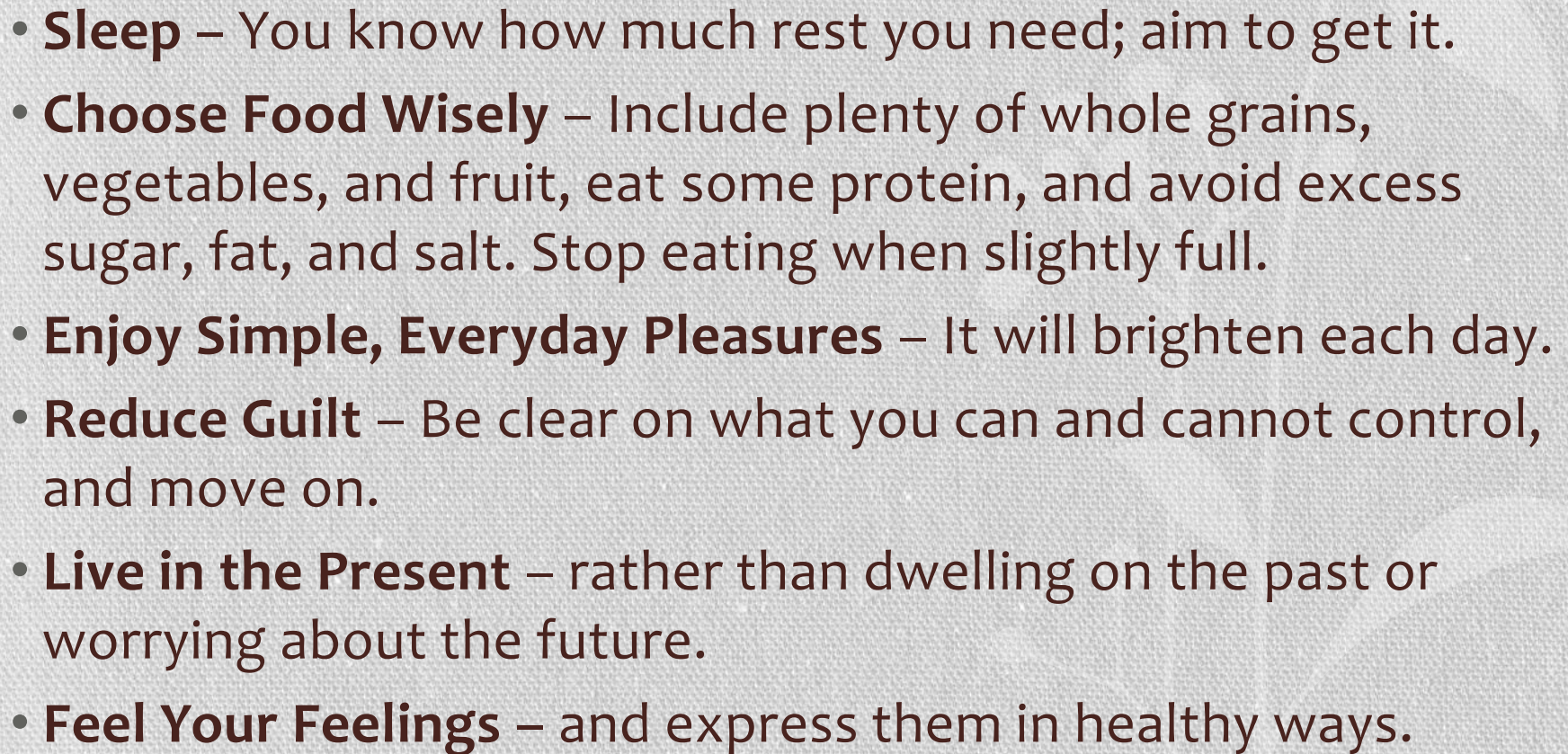
Self-Care Assessment & Plan available at:

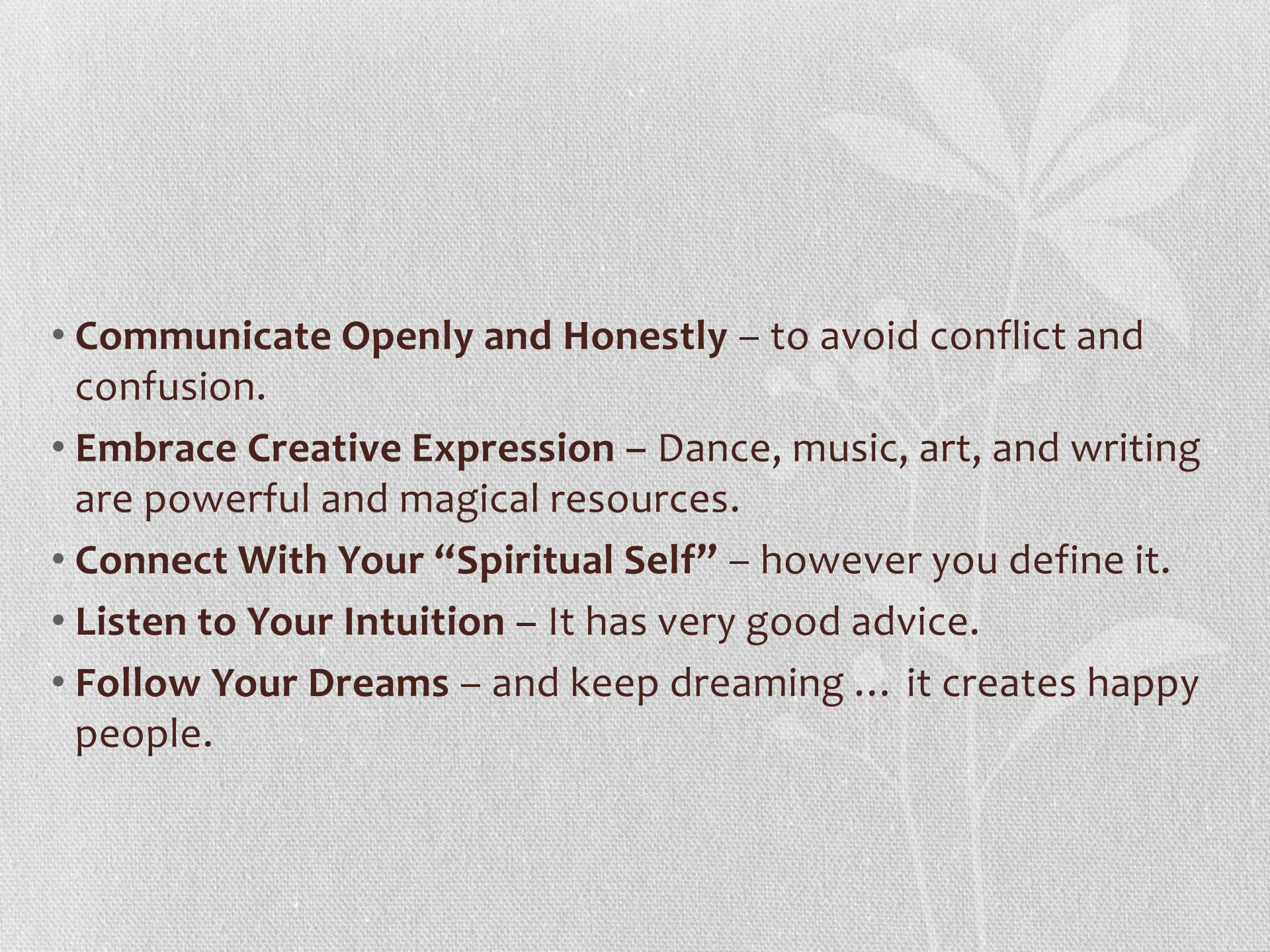
- http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml

Self-Care – Tips for Vitality and Serenity

Adapted from materials provided by the Social Work Department of Roswell Park Cancer Institute. <http://roswellpark.org>.

- **Be Realistic** – Accept your basic personality, utilize your strengths and accept your weaknesses.
- **Appreciate What You Have** – rather than focusing on what you don't have.
- **Say “No”!** – You're no good to anyone if you are exhausted, resentful, and overstretched.
- **Say “Yes”!** – List what you want, and go for it. You'll experience more joy and pleasure in life.
- **Move Your Body** – Stretch, strengthen, and get your heart pumping. You'll look and feel better.

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- **Sleep** – You know how much rest you need; aim to get it.
 - **Choose Food Wisely** – Include plenty of whole grains, vegetables, and fruit, eat some protein, and avoid excess sugar, fat, and salt. Stop eating when slightly full.
 - **Enjoy Simple, Everyday Pleasures** – It will brighten each day.
 - **Reduce Guilt** – Be clear on what you can and cannot control, and move on.
 - **Live in the Present** – rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.
 - **Feel Your Feelings** – and express them in healthy ways.

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- **Communicate Openly and Honestly** – to avoid conflict and confusion.
 - **Embrace Creative Expression** – Dance, music, art, and writing are powerful and magical resources.
 - **Connect With Your “Spiritual Self”** – however you define it.
 - **Listen to Your Intuition** – It has very good advice.
 - **Follow Your Dreams** – and keep dreaming ... it creates happy people.

- **Laugh More** – It's one of the best ways to reduce tension.
- **Keep Hopeful** – A positive attitude helps to create positive outcomes.
- **Try New Things** – Take a risk, keep an open mind, invite spontaneity... it keeps life fresh.
- **Recognize When You Need Help** – and ask for it.
- **Take Quiet Time** – It's important to reflect and contemplate.
- **Remember to Relax** – and breathe deeply.

Breathe, Ground, **Relax**

- Tense and Relax Technique – Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Other Strategies available at:

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/content/dam/socialwork/home/self-care-kit/exercises/effective-methods-for-relaxation.pdf>

References

- Apathy/Empathy/Sympathy Image: Morgan-Jones, Tom (2012). [Http://www.cambridgetraining.org/index.php/aldasair-cant-associates/resources](http://www.cambridgetraining.org/index.php/aldasair-cant-associates/resources)
- Cloud, H. & Townsend, J. (1992) *Boundaries: When to say yes, how to say no to take control of your Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Green, D. R. (2018). Trauma Treatment. Presentation
- Lupton, R. D. (2011). *Toxic Charity*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Helpful Websites & Tools

www.socialworktech.com

<https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>

http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/335673/tool_e_professional_quality_of_life_scale.pdf

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_82.htm

http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/student/sds/self_care_assess.shtml