

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

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Living in our world today can be very stressful. While some stress is actually useful for motivating us, a point can be reached where it becomes very harmful, physically, emotionally and even spiritually. Knowing how to manage and even reduce the harmful effects of stress on a daily basis, of staying balanced and centered as we encounter the many stressors of everyday living, is crucial to our well being. Learning how to take care of ourselves in this respect is also very important for everyone as our experience of stress can and does affect others as well.

Learning how to take care of ourselves involves, among other things, making appropriate distinctions about ourselves, others and life in general. One distinction that is crucial for our well being is realizing how and from where much of our stress is primarily generated. While some of the stressors that we face are apart of what it is to be a human being, much of the stress that we experience is of our own creation. A great deal of the stress that we experience has its origin in our own personal story and the meaning we make about life, in the thoughts that we think. Once we understand that we are truly the cause in the matter, that we are responsible for the thoughts that we create or invent and that it is from these thoughts that much of our stress is generated, then and only then will we begin to be able to manage our stress and have the power to live the life that we want and love. Blaming others or situations for that which we experience will only limit our power, lead to frustration and eventually a great deal of stress.

Becoming present to the fact that we have a tendency to constantly evaluate, blame and judge others, and especially ourselves, is very important. How we conceive of others and ourselves in this respect will make a huge difference in our experience of life. For example, for some much of their life is spent attempting to make others and themselves wrong, wrong for what they think and do, wrong for what we think and do. Once we make another wrong, especially ourselves, anger, anxiety, guilt, frustration and even sadness will follow and with it a great deal of stress. A simple truth is that as human beings we are all doing the best that we can at any given moment. If others or we knew differently we would behave differently.

Another simple truth is that we are whole and complete just as we are. It is our story about ourselves that sometimes does not allow us to truly experience our own completeness. Making mistakes in life does not make us wrong or flawed in some way but only presents us with feedback and valuable opportunities for growth. Becoming present to how we make ourselves wrong, of how we put ourselves down, allows us to realize that we are not what we do or think. Our true self is something much different. Becoming present to our attempts to make others and ourselves wrong in some manner will also create a cleaning or

opening for us to begin to think, feel and behave differently. Once we fully realize that we are whole and complete just as are, we will bring forth into our lives experiences that will truly empower us and others. It will be at this point that we will begin to authentically take care of ourselves. Taking care of ourselves in this respect will necessarily involve us nurturing our physical body, of eating healthy foods, etc. Taking care of ourselves in this respect will also involve taking care of our true self, of unconditionally loving ourselves completely. It is only when we truly love and accept ourselves, as we are, in the present moment that we will be able to do so with others. We always think, feel and behave towards others as we think, feel and act towards ourselves.

One manner in which we can practice being who we truly are is beginning to become aware of the thoughts and beliefs that exist within us including and especially those that are self-limiting. Meditation and other holistic, self-enhancement techniques of this nature allow us this ability and opportunity to watch, monitor and become present to our inner world. Such a process allows us to truly understand that we are not our thoughts and beliefs, that we are something different from, that we are much more. Our thoughts are merely apart of the machinery of being human. Once present to the thoughts and beliefs that quickly, if not instantly, move through our mind also allows us the opportunity to reframe from impulsively acting upon them and as a result to become free from their constraints and potential harm to us and others. Such a meditative process, especially as it applies to the thoughts and beliefs that we have about ourselves, is the key to truly taking care of yourself. Such awareness will eventually allow us to truly experience the fact that we are good enough, just as we are, one that deserves to have a wonderful and powerful life. Once we fully understand this for ourselves it will allow us to grasp it about others, for those that we work with and for those in our lives that we love. The end result of such a meditative process is that much of the stress that we experience, especially that which we create, will simply not exist, allowing us to create or invent the life that we truly want and love and to live it powerfully.