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## ***Extreme Self-Care: A Way to Thrive Not Just Survive***

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For many people just barely taking good care of themselves is often a challenge. With all the demands of a busy life it is often difficult to take a break when you are sick let alone take such good care of yourself you don't get sick in the first place. By practicing extreme self-care you can move from surviving to thriving.

Extreme self-care is a shift in attitude, it is about putting yourself first on your list and expanding yourself by doing what you need to and want to do to be healthy and happy in all areas of your life. Self-care focuses your attention on you, not your family, friends, coworkers or anyone else in your life. How much of our lives are focused on taking care of others and how many times might we feel that wouldn't it be great if someone would take care of us for a change? Well extreme self-care puts the focus where it belongs, on us. It challenges us to take responsibility to begin taking exceptional care of ourselves.

Initially people sometimes think that extreme self-care is selfish. In reality, it is the opposite. It enables us to be more present and of service to those in our lives. It may seem like a paradox, yet the best way to care for others is to take extreme care of us first. This is

evidenced when the flight attendant tells us to put on our oxygen mask first so we can be in a position to help those around us in case of an emergency.

The use of the word extreme is very important. It means having a very high level of reserves. Having enough money to pay your bills every month would provide you with an average level of financial reserves, however, having an abundance of money allows you to buy and do all the things you desire would be an example of having an extreme level of financial health.

The opposite of extreme self-care is like going to the grocery store when we are hungry. When we do, we typically buy more "junk" food and others things that we want in that moment. Also if we start and end our day without time for us to take care of: our physical needs (i.e. exercising); our spiritual needs (i.e. time for meditation or prayer); our emotional needs (i.e. creating affirmations to help us through our day such as "I am not going to take anything personally today") or our intellectual needs (i.e. making the time to read or find activities to expand us) we are more likely to make poor choices, become drained and lose our perspective on what is important to us. So extreme self-care is really about an investment

opportunity. It is about investing in YOU, your most prized asset. It is about making contributions to your personal bank account so you can become stronger and more focused to achieve the things that truly bring you joy and happiness.

The best way to learn about the benefits of extreme self-care is to practice it. Here is a simple exercise to get you started. Begin by making a list of ways that you can take extreme care of yourself. Some items on your list might be small items requiring little time or money commitment and others might be larger and more involved. Areas of self-care might include how to gain more support in your life; how to make more time for you; things that might expand your creativity; learning something new; nourishing your spirit; building reserves; creating stronger boundaries and making time for more fun in your life.

“Shoulds” or “have to’s” have no place on an extreme self-care list. Instead after your list is completed reread it with the words I choose to in front of each item, such as “I choose to exercise”. Challenge yourself to build your extreme self-care muscle by committing to do at least one thing for yourself each day. Make it fun. Take your list and write each item on an individual slip of paper, fold each slip and place them in a pretty vase, a

penholder or even a gift bag and each day gift yourself with one.

You might also find it helpful to find a buddy who is also focusing on extreme self-care to support you in this process. Claim the time and space you need to succeed in your life. Give yourself permission to put you first and make YOU the most important investment in your life. Remember what you focus on expands, so chose to focus on YOU.

### **The Top Ten Ways To Thrive vs. Survive**

1. Change your attitude
2. Give yourself permission to put YOU first
3. Claim the driver seat, direct your life
4. Gift yourself with what is important to you
5. Keep it simple and focused
6. Build your extreme self-care muscle by taking action
7. Get the support you need to succeed
8. Make it Fun
9. Remember its your choice
10. Always Invest in YOU

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***The Coaching Connection is a community-based service connecting you with all that you can be personally and professionally. This service is provided by our local Mount Washington Valley Professional Coaches, Angela Zakon and Cathy Nealon. For further information or support in practicing extreme self-care contact Angela at 447-4337, [www.ZakonGroup.com](http://www.ZakonGroup.com) or Cathy at 383-3639, [www.amazingpossibilities.com](http://www.amazingpossibilities.com).***