

TLC: Tender Loving Self-Care

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We've all heard the advice about the importance of taking care of ourselves, especially if we are caregivers. It's easier said than done. I believe that we can support one another in this endeavor.

Gathering rich resources from top-notch organizations, here are some feasible ideas for adding to your self-care, that are simple and instant practices, no more than 20 to 30 seconds at a time. Choose just one at a time to implement throughout your day to reduce stress and enrich your energy so that you may be your best self.

* **Change everyday activities to moments of intentions**

Mindfulness practices encourage us to have greater awareness of anything and everything. Here's a variation. Take daily actions: climbing a set of stairs, brushing teeth, washing hands, hanging up clothes AND identify a hope with it: reconciliation, patience, unity, love, peace...for others or yourself. When I hang up my bathrobe in the morning, I think of the love in my life and I close the closet door thinking of peace in the world.

* **Add daily gratitudes**

Choose a consistent, specific place to recognize your gratitudes. Let that place jog your memory: your front door, your kitchen sink, your dining room table. There's lots of brain research acknowledging the positive benefits of expressing gratitudes on a regular basis. Just developing a habit of acknowledging your gratitudes can go a long way.

* **Breathe**

Focus on your breath, something we can do anytime, anywhere...it's a matter of remembering to do so! When I do, it helps me to be calm which reduces my stress. Consider taking time during your commute to work, school, or to the store to "breathe".

* **Use the Kidpower® Screen**

Imagine a window screen. "It's meant to keep out bugs, but let in fresh air. Use this image to help you create an emotional screen to filter the information you take in from the news, social media, and even friends and family." For more safety ideas read, "Stay Safe in your Imagination" at <https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/stay-safe-in-your-imagination/> For those of you with young ones at home, consider reading the news, instead of listening to the radio or watching TV.

* **Be present**

This one has been a challenge for me. I've come to the conclusion that I haven't liked surprises so I catch myself wanting to make plans, foreseeing the future. Being aware of this, I now remind myself how often the plans that I have anticipated rarely become what I have imagined. Repeatedly, I'm pleasantly surprised.

