

Let's Start a Self-Care Revolution!

By Ann Douglas

Self-care isn't selfish. It's self-preservation. It's what allows you to function at your best, both personally and professionally. The following questions are designed to get you thinking about self-care in a way that will inspire you to map out a strategy for taking the best possible care of yourself, starting right now.

1. What kinds of thoughts come to mind for you when you think about self-care? Does your mind wander to a particular time, location, or activity? Please take a moment or two to jot down a few of the most powerful words or images.
2. What kinds of emotions do you experience when you think about self-care? Are you surprised by any of these emotions? What can you learn from your feelings about self-care?
3. Think about a time when you felt really good about your ability to practice self-care. When was this? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing? What were you thinking and feeling? What can you learn from this?
4. Think about a time when you felt really frustrated by your inability to practice self-care. When was this? Who were you with? Where were you? What were you doing? What were you thinking and feeling? What can you learn from this?

5. What are some of the biggest barriers that you currently face in trying to practice self-care? What advice would you offer to a friend who happened to be struggling with these very same barriers?
6. What would change for you, both personally and professionally, if you were able to make self-care a regular part of your life? How would your life be different? How would *you* be different? Is this something you want for yourself?
7. What would change in your school (or workplace) if everyone were empowered to prioritize self-care? How might this affect your relationships?
8. How much time can you realistically devote to self-care (a) on weekdays; (b) on weekends? What types of self-care activities are most likely to provide you with the greatest return on investment of time and effort? What steps would you need to take to make these activities part of your regular routine?
9. Think of the last time you were able to make a significant, far-reaching change in your life. What did that experience teach you about yourself? How can you apply this knowledge of yourself to your goal of better prioritizing self-care?
10. What is your self-care action plan moving forward? Please be as specific as possible. Spell out what you intend to do, how often you intend to do it, when and where you intend to do it, who you could turn to for help in honouring this commitment to yourself, how you will monitor and

celebrate your successes, and how you will get back on track after the inevitable roadblocks and stumbles.

Self-care can be transformative. It's a powerful resource that can fuel your life and energize your community. Here's to maximizing that power!

About the author: Ann Douglas sparks conversations that matter about parenting and mental health. She is a bestselling parenting author (her most recent book is *Parenting Through the Storm*) and the weekend parenting columnist for CBC Radio. A passionate and inspiring speaker, Ann delivers keynote addresses and leads small-group workshops at health, parenting, and education conferences across the country. Her website is anndouglas.net and she is [@anndouglas](https://twitter.com/anndouglas) on Twitter.