



Spirited Living with Deborah Roth

“Co-create success and fulfillment in your life, work and relationships while keeping the mind/body/spirit connection flowing”

25 TIPS FOR PRACTICING RADICAL SELF CARE

By Deborah Roth, MA, PCC

When was the last time you did something *really* delicious just for you and didn't feel an ounce of guilt? Hopefully, it was recently, but the sad truth is that many of us are socialized to take care of everyone else first – and we're called "selfish" if we object. The reality, though, is that if we don't place ourselves at the center of our lives, we become increasingly scattered, ungrounded, and miserable. If we don't create space for our self care, we won't be whole enough to take care of all those we love or who depend on us. If our inner core – what I call our “Circle of One” – is weak, we can't support our families, communities, and ultimately our larger visions for the world in the most empowered way possible.

Everything else becomes a little easier, a little less stressful, maybe even more fun, when we carve out time and space for ourselves in the midst of the whirlwind of life. So, how do we start to create an ongoing self care habit? One simple way is to break it down into the four-sided model of mind/body/heart/spirit. What can you do *every day* to support and nurture yourself in each of those areas: to stimulate your mind, nurture your body, honor your feelings and important relationships, and reconnect with spirit? Here are a few ideas to get you started...

BRAIN FOOD

Tip#1 – Read any good books lately? Your morning and evening commutes are a great time to stimulate your brain cells in different ways and learn more about topics that fascinate you... makes the time go faster, too!

Tip#2 – Check out your employer's policy on tuition reimbursement.

Whether it's a weekend seminar on “effective communication” or an evening course at the local YMCA, you might be surprised at what's covered in the name of “stress management” or career advancement.

Tip#3 – Writing down your thoughts, dreams and goals is the first step to getting them out of your head and into the world. Even if you don't think there's anything special up there, try spending 15 minutes each day for a week, writing whatever comes into your mind... no judgments or criticisms. It'll be interesting to see what pops up.

Tip#4 – It's amazing how so many seemingly little things can be big energy drains if they're not handled. Make a list of everything you're tolerating or putting up with. Some of them may



take money to fix, but many are little annoyances that just want a little attention... like greasing the squeaky hinges on the front door, or finally cleaning out the spilled potato chips in the car!

Tip#5 – The next time you have to flush out a new project either at work or home, you might try "mind-mapping"... it's like outlining an idea, only with circles, lines and colors – definitely a visual approach. Check out <http://www.peterussell.com/MindMaps/HowTo> and get your art supplies ready.

Tip#6 – Keeping your memory sharp and your mind clear is critical to maintaining healthy work-life balance, whether it's about remembering your daughter's baseball game, or your boss' meeting schedule. Crossword puzzles, trivia games, or playing "Brain Quest" (www.BrainQuest.com) with a favorite kid are all fun ways to stimulate your "grey matter".

BODY NOURISHMENT



Tip#1 – Combat chronic rushing! Resolve to leave 10 minutes earlier than you normally would to get to any appointment. Leave yourself time to stroll or drive leisurely and notice the difference in your energy level when you arrive. Adrenaline is an energy drainer... creates a great "rush", but with a price.

Tip#2 – Remember to BREATHE! In fact, make a point several times a day -- while you're sitting in traffic, on the subway, holding for someone on the phone -- to take five slow, deep breaths. If nothing else, you'll be re-oxygenating and re-activating your brain cells, ready to tackle the next project, challenge or phone call.

Tip#3 – We all know the benefits of healthy eating, but unless we're forced to change our habits for medical reasons, we don't get to experience the very real change in energy level, focus and well-being that results. Just pick one thing... cutting down on caffeine, switching to whole grains, eliminating sugar... and notice how your body responds. Once you get past the initial "detox" stage, you might be surprised at how much better you feel.

Tip#4 – There is no more powerful medicine than rest. When you sleep uninterrupted for a period of 7-8 hours, your body's natural healing and rejuvenating abilities are free to work, resulting in better reaction time, memory, and productivity. In fact, getting less than 6 hours triples your risk for a car accident... a pretty compelling reason to turn the light out earlier.

Tip#5 – You don't have to be a marathon runner, swimmer or cyclist to reap the benefits of exercise, nor do you have to become a gym rat. The simple act of walking is a great low-impact, cardio workout. Try walking to work, or getting off the bus or subway a few stops early on the way home. Studies show that just 30 minutes of exercise can dramatically reduce the risk of heart disease and other illnesses, and increase your life expectancy.

Tip#6 – Some nutritionists say that 80% of the population are de-hydrated... are you?? Water is necessary for your body to digest and absorb vitamins and nutrients. It also detoxifies the liver and kidneys, and carries away waste from the body. Caffeinated coffee, tea and sodas all cause the body to lose water, which means your blood is literally thicker, making your brain less active and sapping your energy. So replace that ever-present coffee cup with a bottle of water and enjoy the boost!

HEART CARE

Tip#1 – Smell is the most evocative of all of our senses since it's directly connected to the limbic system, the seat of all emotions and memory. Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center found that the scent of vanilla helped to calm patients before surgery. To de-stress your heart, take a whiff of lavender, neroli, melissa, or ylang-ylang essential oils. Or to simply improve general heart circulation, try basil, rosemary, or thyme.



Tip#2 – We all know what we *should* do to protect our time and space, both at home and at work -- close our door when we don't want to be interrupted, not pick up the phone, say "no" to office gossip. Creating firmer, healthier boundaries means enjoying more supportive relationships and having more energy to do what you love. What boundaries do you need to re-establish with your family, friends, and co-workers regarding your time, energy, or personal space? Where would some well-placed "no's" make a big difference in your life?

Tip#3 – It does a heart good to be able to reach out and help someone else, and it doesn't have to cost a penny. There are activities to suit every interest - Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Literacy Volunteers (tutoring adults), Christmas in April (building homes), to name a few. Find out what's available in your area either by checking the Internet or asking a local priest or rabbi. Or, maybe your company maintains partnerships with some volunteer organizations.

Tip#4 – “Freeze Frame” is a powerful technique to use in stressful moments to shift focus away from your racing mind or disturbed emotions to the area around your heart. Pretend you're breathing through your heart to help focus your energy in this area. Recall a positive fun feeling or time you've had in life and ask your heart what would be a more efficient response to the situation, then listen to what it has to say. Check out www.HeartMath.com for more details.

Tip#5 – Cultivating an “attitude of gratitude” can do wonders for lifting your spirits and soothing a troubled heart. Try writing down 3 things you're grateful for at the beginning or end of each day. Better yet, make a point to regularly tell the people in your life – at home and at work – something that you appreciate about them and watch them light up. You'll feel pretty good, too!

Tip#6 – Play a little game. Pick at least one conversation each day where you commit to keeping the other person the center of attention – no offering advice, responding with a story of

your own, or negating their experience (as in "oh, it's not so bad"). Allow yourself just to be with her/him. Appreciate the quality of quiet connection that occurs.

SOUL TIME



Tip#1 – Schedule at least 15 minutes of "creative silence" into your daily routine, particularly if you have a project to tackle or problem to resolve. It may be hard at first to turn off the mind chatter, but gradually that still, small voice of inner wisdom will catch on to the fact that you've created a space for it to be heard and you'll find your intuitive hits will begin to percolate up from the depths on a regular basis.

Tip#2 – Whether it's your kitchen, your home office, or an office cubicle, how excited are you to walk into your workspace each morning? Does it feel like "sacred space"? If not, think of a few ways to en-soul it... maybe adding a water fountain or aromatherapy lamp, creating a mini-altar of meaningful objects, or hanging a special picture.

Tip#3 – If you're feeling completely frazzled in the middle of your day and your attention is scattered in all directions, take some time to re-gather your energy with some intentional breathing. On the inhale, breathe in those qualities you need most (joy, calm, focus, etc) and exhale what you want to release (impatience, anger, negative thinking, etc). Just 2 or 3 minutes will calm your soul.

Tip#4 – We all need a regular dose of play to maintain optimal focus, balance and creativity in our lives. When is the last time you see-sawed with a friend... or even a co-worker?! And yes, it is possible to swing VERY high with a suit jacket on or a skirt tucked under you. How about keeping some jacks or a Frisbee in your desk drawer, or a yo-yo, or one of those little paddles with a ball attached where you bat the ball as often as you whack your head?! Could be just the infusion of silliness you need when you're having a rough day.

Tip#5 – Try putting your dreams and wishes into words by writing short, specific phrases or affirmations, posting them where you'll always run into them, and speaking them out loud each day. It's important to always state them positively and in the present tense -- instead of "I want a job that doesn't drain me", try: "I have wonderful, fulfilling work that nurtures and expands me mentally, emotionally and financially". If you keep stating your desires as "I want", they'll always remain "wants" instead of "haves".

Tip#6 – Our connection to nature is a deep and visceral one – not for naught that she's referred to as "Mother". Whether you work in the middle of the city or in a grassy suburban corporate complex, make sure you spend some time outdoors every day. Rather than eat lunch at your desk, take your sandwich to an urban "green space", or go for a walk through a nearby park. Fresh air and Vitamin D-laden sunlight has a real healing and re-juvenating effect.

Tip#7 – Believe it or not, it’s possible to bring a sense of spirit to your commute. Listen to sacred music on your headphones or car radio instead of the news. Even standing on a bus or subway you can practice a powerful little grounding meditation: breathe into your solar plexis on the inhale and as you exhale, imagine energy flowing down through your legs and deep into the Earth where you can "wrap" it around a hook. Then on the next inhale, draw it back into your solar plexis and anchor it there. Try it 2 or 3 times and by the time you get to work, you’ll be grounded and energized and ready for action.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Creating an ongoing habit of nurturing your body, mind, heart and spirit begins with intention. Add a little creativity, a pinch of moon magic and some seasonal “spice”, and you have the recipe for maintaining a well-nourished Circle of One ongoingly. Now imagine what might happen if everyone you knew made that same commitment to re-connect with and re-energize their divinely-connected SELF-center. What an extraordinary power-grid we could create!



Life/Career Transition Coaching



Relationship Coaching
for Couples and Singles



Deborah Roth



Unique Wedding Ceremonies

Spirited Living™