



Self-Care Reflection, Checklist and Prayer

A refresher on Self-Care & Self-Compassion for program staff and volunteers.

*“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it - you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
(Matthew 22:37-39)*



Self-Care Reflection

Self-care is a thorny concept for those who serve. How can we care for ourselves when we are called daily to place others’ needs higher than our own?

For starters, there is a Jesuit phrase, *cura personalis* – meaning “care for the whole person.” Historically, *cura personalis* reminded priests and caregivers to respect the manifold nature of each person’s life, including spiritual, emotional, and physical elements. Applied to our own lives, *cura personalis* means remembering that even as we serve others, we too have needs (Otto).

We must deny ourselves to follow Christ. Yet it is our selfish desires that we deny, not God-given life and consciousness, from which all good arises. Moderate self-care and self-compassion are surely included in God’s plan for us.

As St. Augustine promises, “God loves each of us as if there were only one of us.” Trusting in this divine concern for our well-being, let us always acknowledge:

- Our basic human needs, such as exercise, nourishment and sleep.
- Our needs for socialization, affection, humor, and friendship
- Our needs for silence and rest in God (even Jesus withdrew at times)
- Our need for daily prayer and meditation (on bread alone man does not live)

Let us thank God each day for His gifts of grace and healing, which allow us to grow in strength and service to our brothers and sisters.





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Self-Care Checklist*

Spend a few moments and check off the self-care habits and beliefs you currently practice:

Physical

- ___ I exercise several days a week for at least 30 minutes.
- ___ I eat regular, well-balanced meals.
- ___ I regularly drink enough water and feel hydrated.
- ___ I get enough rest.
- ___ I get enough sleep.
- ___ My sleep is peaceful and undisturbed.
- ___ I feel well-rested in the morning.
- ___ I avoid using caffeine "to keep myself going."
- ___ I avoid overusing alcohol or taking drugs to escape pressure.
- ___ I avoid smoking as a coping mechanism.
- ___ I have adequate time to maintain my physical appearance.

Intellectual

- ___ I avoid overscheduling my time and energy resources.
- ___ I challenge my mind with new activities outside of my routine.
- ___ I engage in challenging creative pursuits, outside of my routine.
- ___ I have regular periods of non-productivity.
- ___ I take time to think about unsatisfactory areas of my life.
- ___ I am aware of my personal goals.
- ___ I am willing to take risks.
- ___ I talk gently to myself.
- ___ I freely admit my limitations to myself.

Emotional

- ___ I know I am well-loved.
- ___ I am able to calm myself in distressing situations.
- ___ I get my required daily allowance of hugs and physical contact.
- ___ I play regularly.
- ___ I smile and laugh regularly.
- ___ I laugh at myself regularly.
- ___ I have fun.
- ___ I have a sense of realistic optimism.
- ___ I give myself permission to cry occasionally.
- ___ I give myself permission to be angry occasionally.
- ___ I express my anger appropriately.
- ___ I have frequent periods of recreation.

Relational

- ___ I am assertive in expressing my needs.
- ___ It is okay to express my limitations to others.
- ___ I have enough time to be with my friends and relatives.
- ___ I have a friend that I can express my feelings or worries to.
- ___ I have established a good "support system" at work.
- ___ I can say "no" without undue guilt.
- ___ I spend time alone when I feel the need.
- ___ I ask for help when I need it.
- ___ I am able to forgive without holding resentment.
- ___ I generally feel connected with others.

Spiritual

- ___ I feel my life is meaningful.
- ___ I know my life has a purpose.
- ___ I regularly take time to nurture my relationship with God.
- ___ I feel that my prayers are fresh and meaningful.
- ___ I regularly take time to enjoy beauty in all its forms.
- ___ I attend to the dreams and thoughts that pop up in my day.
- ___ I take time to express my creativity.
- ___ I have a core belief system that organizes my life.
- ___ I regularly take time for introspection.
- ___ My daily life includes some form of service to others.
- ___ I have a spiritual director / guide whom I meet with regularly.
- ___ I have a sense that God loves me and that God loves others.



Once completed, carefully monitor the "unchecked" areas in your life.

Remember! Attending to our need for balance is not selfishness, it is stewardship.

- **Selflessness** – the needs of others only
- **Self-care** – balance needs of others and self
- **Selfishness** – needs of self only



*Adapted from the Personal Care Assessment, provided by Pamela J. Firle, MA, LPC

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Self-Care Prayer

This prayer for help and healing was well-known during the lifetime of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and was included in his **Spiritual Exercises**.

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me.
Body of Christ, save me.
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Passion of Christ, strengthen me.
O Good Jesus, hear me.
Within your wounds hide me.
Permit me not to be separated from you.
From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever.
Amen.

Closing Reflection:

C.S. Lewis said, "I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time- waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God- it changes me."

We want to help, yet we are helpless ourselves. Prayer restores this balance. God is the help we need, who will turn the **incomplete self** we worry about into a complete [self for others](#).

