

Take Care of yourself—your Family will Thank-you!

By Patti Teel
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It's important for us to nurture and treat ourselves lovingly--but we may feel as if we're being selfish when we do. But when we take care of ourselves, everyone around us reaps the benefits. And in order to be the loving and supportive mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and friends that we want to be, we need to love and nurture ourselves—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The adage about filling our own cups so that we have something to give to others is very true. It is simply not possible to give from an empty cup. But when our own cups are full, we're likely to have an abundance of energy and love to share.

I can't help but chuckle as I remember the old saying, "*When Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy.*" If you're a mama or a papa, you can be assured that your children are affected by your happiness as well as your unhappiness. And as their role model, taking care of yourself and pursuing your own passions gives them permission to do the same.

But don't mistake nurturing yourself with a self-absorbed preoccupation with improving your image. While it's normal to take pride in our accomplishments and to try and look our best, people who become *obsessed* with their image are not capable of truly loving themselves or others. Their experiences and relationships are greatly limited by a lack of depth. Because they see everyone else through the same superficial lens that they view themselves, they are capable of using and manipulating others in a futile attempt to try and preserve their fragile sense of self. To the degree that one's identity is based on an image, one is not in contact with one's being. When a person loses the ability to know himself, he feels empty inside--with nothing to give to himself or others. And all the looks, accomplishments, and possessions in the world cannot fill the void.

We can become more loving to ourselves and others by nurturing our **bodies, minds, and souls**. By doing so, we strengthen the connection to our higher selves and to the divine. By connecting to the God force, or the universal energy, we tap into an infinite flow of love which we can pass along to others. The more love we receive, the more we can give. And the more love we give, the more we will receive.

Nurturing ourselves and our connection to God:

Take a few minutes to be quiet, each and every day. If you have young children, you might try waking up fifteen minutes earlier, in order to have a few minutes of reflective time to start your day.

Express appreciation and gratitude to everyone you interact with during the day.

Become aware of your thoughts, directing all those that start with "I am," toward positive statements and goals.

Demonstrate compassion and empathy through your actions, words, and thoughts. Look for the good in each and every person.

Take care of your health by exercising and eating healthy foods.

TIME OUT WITH PATTI TEEL

DREAM THE DREAM AND STEP INTO IT

Do the things that make you happy and bring you joy.

Spend time in nature and have reverence for every living thing.

Dubbed “The Dream Maker” by People magazine, Patti Teel is a former teacher and the creator of an award winning relaxation audio series for children. Her book, *The Floppy Sleep Game*, gives parents techniques to help their children relax, deal with stress and fall asleep. She is a popular speaker and presents innovative workshops for parents, children, and health professionals. Get R&R tips and sign up for her newsletter at www.pattiteel.com. You can listen to her online radio show at www.timeoutwithpattiteel.com.