Self Care is the act of caring for oneself and one’s wellbeing and can be done in multiple ways.

I personally like to break down my Self Care Practices into the categories of mind, body and spirit. It helps me to keep track of how I am caring for myself in all areas. If spirit is a triggery term for you, you may want to replace it with nature, or connection to SELF.

Here is a list of self care practices I employ for each. See if you can think of some of your own to add to each list. Remember, sometimes we tend to not be able to keep up with all areas, and that is okay. I have experienced times in my life where I did very little self care and found myself feeling the symptoms of it, which I will describe later on.
It is important to be gentle with oneself and very forgiving in this as feelings of shame and guilt can then compound the other feelings you are already having and it can become a vicious cycle. It is harder to take care of yourself when you don’t “like/love” yourself, when you are bashing yourself, or disappointed in yourself and/or impatient.

Some kind words toward yourself can go a long way...”I’m doing the best I can.” “I intend on doing better.” “I deserve to be loved and cared for especially by me”

Self Care for the Mind:

making sure what goes into my mind is positive, uplifting, inspirational, informative.

For example: I personally try to stay away from the news as much as possible, depressing or very violent movies. It is just a personal preference for me as I am an empathic person and can be affected by a news story or triggering movie for days or weeks.

Pay attention to your self talk. Watch what you say to yourself. Often we can have some really intense and derogatory conversations with ourselves. We are our own worst critic and there is a voice inside of us which can represent different parts of ourselves, or our ego, our inner critic, false self, wounded self. Regardless of what you call it, it is a very scared and wounded part of you and being on alert for when it is pipin can be a true act of self care. It may need soothing, it may need to be told to be quiet, but whatever you do, do not take what it says as “truth”

Play games, yep, give your mind a rest from the constant chatter and play games. There are a few games out there that are actually good for your brain!
Visualize what you want, what you need, a happy safe place..see yourself running, jumping, dancing, having fun..laughing.

Self Care for Your Body

This one can be broken down into a few categories:

Basics

Brushing teeth, two to three times a day and flossing, bathing, moisturizing, eating regular healthy meals, sleeping enough at night, sex, connection and intimacy.

Pampering

Massage, pedicure, hair cut, hair coloring if that’s your thing, facials etc.

Health and Fitness

Taking care of your body through how you eat and moving.

I say move at least thirty minutes a day five to six times a week. Walking, running, swimming. Cleaning the house, dancing, just move and get your heart pumping girl. For you spoonies out there, try ten minute intervals throughout

Finding ways to eat healthy most of the time. I am not a fan of severe limits as they tend to back fire. I think if you can eat healthy most of the time, you may be able to avoid bingeing. if you know nothing is completely off limits. I also think for those of us with food addictions, it is hard to just have two cookies, so we may have to stay away from certain foods and not bring them into our home. Find what works for you.

Tuning into your body’s signals, headaches, back aches, feeling out of body, floaty, can be all signs that your body needs something from you.
Stretching is one of most feel good things you can do for your body, not necessarily for fitness but just to feel good. There are parts of your body that rarely get a good stretch, do a forearm stretch and feel how good it feels 😊

Self Care for your Spirit/Soul (insert your own word here!)

Regardless of what you believe in, even if you are an atheist, bet you believe in something 😊 so I say take time out to connect to whatever that is. I personally love using the words: Universe, Source, God, Spirit, the Divine, the Sacred and Nature. I use them interchangeably. I find that connecting to that part of myself is so important and it fills me. Be it through prayer, or affirmation, a loving kindness meditation, a guided meditation, a walk on a trail, sitting on my deck and just feeling the breeze, light a candle, ringing my Tibetan bell, burning incense, reading a book that is spiritually based...this and more fills me up spiritually. Find what fills you up spiritually and make it part of your days.
Hour of Power

The hour of power concept was first introduced to me by Anthony Robbins. I’ve modified it here for self care purposes, but basically your hour of power is your hour to fill yourself up, to do what energizes and nurtures you. I love it because I can allot twenty minutes for one thing, ten for another, thirty to something else. You can break it apart anyway you like. It is a simple but brilliant concept I think. How would I want to spend an hour with myself is a great question to ask? Also what would be energizing and fulfilling for me?

For example, I’d love to spend some time creating a large piece of art while standing, so I may do that for thirty minutes and just see what I can get accomplished, then go for a thirty minute walk. I could also spend ten minutes reading, 15 minutes listening to music, thirty minutes doing some writing and 5 minutes doing some deep breathing. Look how much you can do with an hour!

Signs your self care is suffering...

The basics are not being met.

You are exhausted most of the time.

You feel like your relationships are one way, with you giving and them receiving.

You do more for others than you do for yourself.

You feel the following most of the time:

You feel unfulfilled.

You feel resentment toward others.
You feel jealous.
You feel depressed.
You feel empty.
You feel anxious.
You feel alone.

Some things you can do to get yourself back on track:

Call on some resources, talk it out with your friend(s), therapist.

Talk about it in your in person or online group if you have one

Look it up (I love Google, so many ideas at your fingertips) get some fresh perspective

Pick one small thing you can do.

Schedule your self care, put it in your calendar, schedule it right before or after something you do every day already. It will get engrained much faster.
Writing

- What are the ways you abandon your self care practices..what happens? How does it go for you. Be really specific about the process. Are you affected by what others say to you or may think about you, or need from you? What makes you say the hell with it when you do?
  - How does it feel when you stop practicing self care?
  - How does it feel when you do practice self care?
- Describe how it is when you are practicing self care, what happens? How does it go?

Really writing about your own process will help you to discover your own patterns and intervene when you need to.
• ART ASSIGNMENT ONE: Two page spread...

First do a rough sketch in your journal or art journal of what it feels like when you don’t practice self care. You are drawing the FEELING. Express those feelings of not caring for yourself. If you want you can choose to paint it as well in your art journal, then on the other side of the page, draw out or paint, what it feels like to practice self care.

You may use an image or series of images or do an outline of yourself.

ART ASSIGNMENT TWO: Write down with markers on poster board, some self care practices you’d like to incorporate into your daily life. then decorate your list with small symbols that mean something to you. Watch the video to see what I put on my list 😊