

Self-Care in Your Wisdom Years

A Primer for Women in Midlife and Beyond

105 Tips to Help You Shift From Burnout to Bliss!



A gift to you from Corrie Woods
author of
*The Woman's Field Guide to
Exceptional Living*

This publication is copyrighted and not in the public domain.

You have unrestricted personal use of this document.

Please feel free to share with others.

This E-book may not be sold to others.

All quotes must be attributed to the author.

Cover illustration by Caren Frost Olmsted, www.cfodesign.com

“Living life without self-courtship has a high cost. We risk losing our sensuality, our senses, precious moments with those we love, our smile, and our joy. When we romance ourselves, it prepares a fertile garden for a profusion of love to bloom in all areas of our lives. We regain passion and now becomes a moment not to be missed!”

– Corrie Woods, *The Woman’s Field Guide to Exceptional Living*

***There's no better way to energize your body, mind, and spirit than
by taking care of yourself - Stephanie Tourles***



It may seem obvious that taking care of yourself is a great thing to do, yet for many women it remains an elusive goal. Self-care is *for the future, a dream far off in the distance* which some of us just never get around to turning into a reality. The fact is that stress, a sense of being overwhelmed, and depression are epidemic with American women.


- Market Research.com reports that two-thirds of women, approximately 72 million, describe themselves as busy and having “not enough hours in the day.”
- Approximately 82 million women (75%), say they experience “a lot” or a “moderate amount” of stress in their lives, according to a survey conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics.
- In addition, nearly 30 million women fall victim to what American doctors have dubbed “hurried woman syndrome” – a condition characterized by chronic stress and exhaustion.

For women transitioning into the new roles, sometimes the new bodies, and the new challenges that arrive in our forties and accompany us through mid-life and into our wisdom years, the opportunity exists to choose *midlife renewal* rather than *midlife crisis*. To do this, awareness is the doorway and self-care is the key



Ask yourself this question:

“What if my very life depended on my taking great care of me?” The truth is that your life *does* depend on the quality of your self-care practices. Your ability to de-stress, to live in balance, to tend to your heart and health and joy, are all interwoven with your level of commitment to taking care of yourself. And here is the good news: it’s never too late to begin! When you clearly identify the benefits – for you, your family, and the world – of taking great care of yourself, it becomes hard to ignore the call. Further, when you identify simple steps to take, acting in self-nurturing ways becomes easy.



What is self-care?

The essence of self-care is being aware of your own physical and physiological needs: you need to identify what brings you joy, what helps you feel rested and balanced, and what contributes to your overall sense of well-being and vibrant health. It doesn't stop there, though. The key (the make or break) is taking consistent action that reflects your commitment to peak self-care.




Why is self-care so very important?

Here are some powerful benefits:

When you take great care of yourself:

- You will likely live a longer, happier, and healthier life.
- You will have the capacity to be a better parent, partner, employee, or employer.
- It is easier to tap into your creativity and your sense of playful adventure.
- People will be drawn to you because you'll be radiating good energy.
- Once-elusive solutions to nagging questions may become clear at last.
- You will master the ability to care not only for yourself and your loved ones, but the world as well.
- You will build a strong foundation from which to live the life of your dreams.



What are some of the signs that you may need a serious dose of self-care?

- You have a feeling of being torn in too many directions.
- You're wearing too many hats. You may be a new mother-in-law or grandmother, newly retired, newly single, or a new caretaker of a parent or loved one. Each new role ushers in change.
- You're feeling an unrelenting sense of responsibility for everyone around you.
- You want to have more fun in your life, but you've forgotten how.
- You've lost your creative spark and are not sure how to feather your empty nest.
- You feel invisible to those around you and to yourself.
- You sense a hunger to do and be more in your life, but have no idea how or where to start.
- You tell yourself, "It's too late in my life to do ..."
- It's impossible to make friends with your hot- flashy, wise-woman body. Though we expect to change on the inside as we age, we imagine we can fight the changes on the outside.

- You can't say "No!" when you're already stretched too thin.
- You isolate yourself from others.
- You face mounting depression and sadness.
- Physical illness shows up, including high blood pressure, insomnia, and countless other issues.

If you recognize one or more of these signs in your life, the tips in this booklet can help. Some ideas may be new to you. Many ideas may be familiar ones that you just needed to be reminded of. You may even come up with your own self-care tips that stretch beyond this booklet.



Before we dive into the tips, here are some ways to use this booklet:

- Read through it and focus on one thing each day in order to step up your self-care. One little shift a day and you are on your way.
- Re-read it often for reminders and inspiration.
- Share it with loved ones to help them understand the importance of your self-care practices and to help them provide the right kind of support and encouragement.
- Give a copy to loved ones who are, themselves, in need to better self-care – perhaps your *girlfriends-in-need*.
- Share it with an organization or company you are affiliated with. With greater self-care comes better health, happiness, and productivity.
- Keep in mind as you read this pocket guide that the more you do, the easier it gets!

105 Tips to Help You Shift From Burnout to Bliss!



Nurture Your Physical Body and Health

- Take time to breathe and breathe deeply. It will enhance your overall health and promote relaxation.
- Stretch with both attention and intention. Whenever you catch your body feeling stiff or tight, identify the area, then literally “stretch to your heart’s content.”
- Slip into a warm bubble bath and stay there as long as you like.
- Practice relaxation until you master the art.
- Exercise several times a week in a way that starts your heart pumping, gets your blood flowing, and renews your energy.
- Tend to your body with loving care by listening to the messages it sends you. Start with simple things, like gently flossing your teeth, taking time to use a lotion you love, or drying yourself with tender care after a bath or shower.
- Tickle your nose with simple aromatherapy. Pluck some sweet-smelling herbs, bake something delicious, and tune into the fragrance filling your kitchen.
- Develop a meditation and/or prayer practice.
- Take steps to ensure you are getting enough sleep by creating a relaxing bedtime routine or catching a nap during the day.
- Eat whole, healthy foods and chew wisely, one bite at a time.
- Identify your comfort foods and, if need be, choose new ones that support your overall health – but still comfort you.
- Pamper your feet with a soothing foot bath or pedicure.
- Look for ways to stay flexible, both emotionally and physically. Stiffness in body and mind do not reflect aging gracefully.
- Feel deeply. The more tuned into your body you are, the better your ability to act in healthy ways.
- Get current and stay current with your health check-ups.
- Get out of your head and into your body by moving it in creative ways.



Creating Moments of Awe and Wonder

- Take some quiet time during the day just for you. A few minutes can make a world of difference.
- Sit outdoors and tune into the natural world around you.

- Make a date with a star-filled sky, and spend the evening outdoors by yourself or with others.
- Look for sources of inspiration: a beautiful sunset, talking with someone you admire, or reading poetry.
- Take time for a personal retreat. Whether it is for a half a day or for a whole week, it can be the ultimate “just-for-you” mini-vacation.
- Keep things fresh by traveling down a new road, to an unfamiliar town or even to a country you have never been to.



You Don't Have to Go it Alone: Massive Support Means Massive Success

- Invite a friend to join you on a walk.
- Create a network of friends, self-care buddies, family members; join a support group as you follow your commitment to take better care of yourself.
- Stop over-nurturing others. It can be a real drain on you and be disabling for them.
- Make it a family affair. Educate your loved ones about your new self-care lifestyle.
- Delegate. You do not have to do everything yourself.
- Connect with an old friend.
- Listen deeply to others. It's a gift you'll be giving to them and to yourself.
- Hang out with positive people.
- Hire a self-care and/or wellness coach to support you in living a self-care lifestyle.
- Look for ways you can change stressful competition with others into rewarding collaboration.
- Invite a friend on a picnic in the country.



Having a Positive Outlook on Life

- Smile whenever you are talking on the phone. It will benefit you and the person on the other end of the line.
- Remember that “a gratitude a day keeps the doctor away,” and come up with one thing each day for which you are grateful.
- Lighten up by being willing to laugh at yourself more often.
- Be willing to receive. We are so often masters at giving and yet find it hard to receive with grace.

- Practice forgiveness towards yourself and others.
- Laugh out loud every chance you get.
- Embrace the understanding that practicing self-care is a lifelong journey, one that rewards you every step of the way!
- Do what you love. Love what you do.
- Take a walk of gratitude. With each step focus on all that you have to be thankful for.



Communication with Yourself and With Others

- Speak with compassionate honesty.
- Tell someone just how much he or she means to you.
- Write a “Let it go” letter about something it is indeed time to let go of.
- Build awareness around the words that lift your spirits and the ones that drag you down by consciously noticing them for a day.
- Ask someone close to you how you can help them. When we extend our love and care to others it nourishes our sense of place and value in the world.
-
- Upgrade your language by catching your disempowering words. Choose one word or phrase that does not serve you, for example, “I should,” and write it down every time you say it.
- Smile at yourself in the mirror and say, “I love you.”
- Ask yourself this question, What if I cared for myself as well as I care for others? Be prepared to respond to whatever may come up for you.
- Get really good at straight talk, saying *yes* when you mean *yes* and *no* when you mean *no*.
- Communicate your needs rather than assuming those around you can read your mind.
- Bask in some self-acknowledgement.
- Change the quality of the questions you ask yourself. Instead of, “Why me?” ask, “What can I learn from this?”
- Underpromise. Overdeliver.



Organize on the Inside and Outside

- Begin to de-clutter your life by cleaning out a closet or a drawer. Less clutter means less stress.
- Complete one unfinished thing that is tugging at your attention.

- Make a “Self-Care Calendar” and schedule self-care dates for yourself.
- Update your wardrobe. Take the first step by clearing out clothes that no longer work for you and passing them along.
- Clean junk food out of your pantry to make room for lots of whole, healthy foods.
- Get your “affairs in order.”
- Begin to do everything you do to completion so you are not tripping up on loose ends.
- Be prepared for emergencies so as to get one more stressor off your list.



Self-Awareness is Key

- Ramp up your self-care awareness by making a list of all the things that get in the way of you taking great care of yourself.
- Nurture your intuition by tuning into your gut feelings.
- Take 100% responsibility for your own actions.
- Get clear about where you are strong on self-care and where you are weak.
- Identify your top three sources of stress and do something about them.
- Be clear about what adds energy to your life and what drains it.
- Identify one regret you have and do what it takes to eliminate it.
- Playfully explore the question, “Who do I want to be when I grow up?”



Little Actions Steps for Big Results

- Unplug by literally turning off the TV for a whole week.
- Stop doing one thing that you know is not in your best self interest: don't take that second helping of food, quit smoking, stop talking about others behind their backs or pushing too stridently to reach a goal.
- Have fun planning your next vacation.
- Take a slow, easy, barefoot stroll.
- Do something on the spur of the moment to keep things fresh.
- Finish the following sentence: “I wish I had more time for ...” and then *make* time for it!
- Define three daily self-care habits and stick with them.
- Do nothing, without guilt.
- Write yourself a love letter. Sound silly? When we love and appreciate ourselves we have a greater capability to practice self-care.
- Play in a garden.

- Have a Stay-in-Your-Jammies-Day.
- Give yourself permission to ...cry until the tears stop, get dirty, take a nap ...
- Take time to follow your fascinations.
- Take one step toward managing your finances in a more responsible way.
- Cash in your pennies from your coin jar and buy yourself a treat.
- Spend some time hanging out with a dog or cat.
- Do something you have always wanted to do, but were afraid. Be bold!
- Update your look, your wardrobe, and/or your hair to reflect an “I’m worth it” attitude.



The Right Environment Supports the Right Self-Care Choices

- Bring a bit of the outdoors inside by adorning your home with flowers or greenery.
- Put on your favorite music, or discover new music, and open up your ears and heart.
- Create a special room or corner in your home as a “getaway spot” and make it your self-care sanctuary.
- Make a “Do Not Disturb” sign for your door and use it when you want time just for you.
- Make your entire home a self-care sanctuary.
- Change your landscape by hanging out somewhere new: as a result you’ll change your mindscape by infusing it with fresh perspectives.



Creativity, Play and Discovery

- Curl up in a comfy chair and read something captivating.
- Invite your creativity out to play in whatever form it takes: draw, paint, dance, sing, write, weave, stitch, whittle, etc.
- Be willing to spend some intentional time outside your comfort zone. Stretching into new experiences may fuel your energy, creativity and sense of playful adventure.
- Create your own “Self-Care Book” by gathering helpful quotations, stories or images.
- Daydream.
- Learn to play music.
- Learn something new each day.

- Sign up for a class you have always wanted to take.
- Create a self-care theme for the rest of your year and plan lots of fun activities to live that theme.
- Read great books on taking great care of you.

The ideas are endless!



What if you tried a few things on this list, just one a day or even one a week? Think of your life as you live it now, and then imagine what your life can be like three months from now by jumping with both feet into self-care.

The benefits are clear and compelling ...

When you are clear about what you need, you can ask.

When you are grounded in self-love and you know you are deserving, you can receive.

And ...

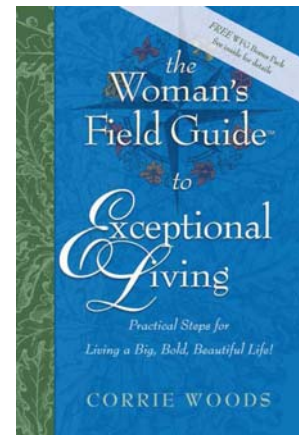
When you are flushed in your self-care, you can give.

About the Author



Corrie Woods is an author, an artist, a women's self-care coach, and a wellness retreat leader. This mini-guide was written from the heart and written to all the glorious women out there in need of a little tender loving self-care!

To learn more about Corrie and to purchase her award-winning book, *The Woman's Field Guide to Exceptional Living, Practical Steps for Living a Big, Bold, Beautiful Life!* visit www.womansfieldguide.com.



Additional free mini-guides available at the website include:

- *Oh My Aching ... Tips For Living Your Best Life While Managing Chronic Pain*
- *Self-Care for the Family Caregiver, Tips to Help You Survive and Thrive*
- *Gotta Book in You? Tips, Tools and Resources to Coax the Writer in You Out of the Closet*
- *Crafting a Personal Retreat*

and more!