



# Pathways to Self-Healing

A NEWSLETTER FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

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## NOTE FROM PAUL

### Self-Care is Not Self Indulgence

Most of us must learn the hard way that self-care is not selfishness—and its not self indulgence. We've been raised in a culture that tells us to work hard and work long, "Idle hands are the devil's workshop," and the like. We learn at mother's knee to give till it hurts and keep on giving, and most mothers are poster children for that motto.

What's the difference between self-care and self-indulgence? Self-care is the art of truly caring for ourselves in a way that nurtures and heals the mind, body and soul. Eating healthful food, meditating, walking briskly in nature, yoga and gardening are ideal forms of self-care. They are all good for us, as well as nurturing to our total being.

We tend to mistake self indulgence--trying to fill ourselves up with addictions, like alcohol and sweets and distractions like TV--for self-care. How many times have I heard someone say: "I felt a little down so I decided to take care of myself by drinking wine and watching TV." These are methods of escape, not self-care: We are apt to feel logy and hung over after this experience, rather than centered, calm and renewed.

### Handling Emotional Depletion

Those of us who over-give are especially in need of self-care--self-nurturance. Women especially are in need of this. "Women are genetically and socially programmed to take care of others," says Alice Domar, Ph.D., author of "Self Nurture." In fact, cutting back on meeting our own needs to take care of other people and tasks, "is like going out in the freezing cold without a proper coat," says Helene Brenner, author of "I Know I'm in There Somewhere." It's a recipe for disaster.

The irony of it all is that we must learn self-care in order to truly care for others, and do a really good job at anything. Even our cars can't run properly without proper care and nurturance, let alone our fragile human nature. Learn what refreshes the soul and do it!

How? Review all of the things you do for fun and relaxation and ask yourself: "Is this really self-nurturing, or just an escape from myself?" Consult a professional, if necessary. You count.

**Paul Sibcy, Editor**

**Pathways website: [www.psh.org](http://www.psh.org)**

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## **STORIES OF HEALING**

*The following is a regular column in Pathways, written by folks like you who are on a healing journey. Most of us discover holistic health because standard care didn't help us with one problem or more. Thus we began our search for healing. If you have a story to tell us, send it in. If chosen, it may inspire others on their journeys.*

## **DISCOVER LIFE COACHING**

*by Keith Wohlberg, Life Coach*

I had been a Physical Therapy Assistant for many years, when something new within me began to stir, some new step or stage in life that kept drawing my attention. Then, as often happens when we are ready for change, I began to feel guided in a whole new direction.

First, I was drawn to ITP, the Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, where I got a degree in counseling, which eventually led me to Dr. Rosie Kuhn, the director of ITP's Life Coaching program.

It was with her during a weekend seminar that I realized I had found what I was looking for, and I haven't looked back since.

### **What is Life Coaching About?**

What I found in Life Coaching is the psychological and spiritual counterpart to the physical work I do in physical therapy: It centers us in our own being so that we begin to live and work from our essence, rather than being controlled by external or internal influences and forces. I've found that it has the capacity to very quickly take a person in the direction that he or she wants to go, without a lot of delving into the past. Counseling is wonderful and very necessary. It helps people to examine their past; while Life Coaching launches us into the future.

Life coaching is a new and rapidly growing field that is fundamentally about change.

Think about your life now; is there anything that you would like to be different from what it is? If so, you will find that coaching will help you get there. We look at where you are, where you want to go, and empower you to get there. It is about living the life that you want; one of fulfillment and achievement of your life's dreams. This is done by uncovering the underlying issues that prevent you from reaching your goals. Coaching helps you clarify what is important to you, identify your goals, discover what underlying beliefs may have kept you from reaching them in the past, and the steps needed to keep you accountable to your commitments.

### **How Coaching Works**

Our actions are based on deeply held beliefs which have been developed throughout our lives. Coaching allows us to expand and change limiting beliefs, identify fears, gain understanding and new insights, and ***take action***. By clarifying what we believe about ourselves and what is possible for us, we can then choose to continue our present beliefs and their subsequent actions, or change them and have a different result. Coaching enables us to see our options with clarity, and empowers us to make choices that are in line with what's important to us and what we want. Coaching may address issues in any area of life that we want to be different from what it presently is. The duration of the coaching may be from one session to several years, depending on the agreement between us. The focus is on generating results, not analyzing problems.

### **Where Coaching Has Taken Me**

Life Coaching is giving me the direction and meaning I was looking for, and I'm confident that it can help anyone who desires more purpose and success in their lives. For more information or a coaching session, contact Keith Wohlberg at 650-965-7376.

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## **EXERCISE STILL IMPORTANT**

An exercise program is still one of the most important things we can do for overall health and longevity, according to a report released August 1 by the American College of Sports

Medicine and the American Heart Association. How much? Five days a week, 30 minutes a day, minimum.

Extensive research over the twelve years since a team of experts published the exercise recommendations in the Journal of the American Medical Association has shown the original ideas to be sound. Exercise works.

“The 30-minute guideline is holding up—it has stood the test of time,” said Professor Russell Pate, who led the original study and is on the current team, led by Stanford’s William Haskell, that put together the new report. While the old report led some to believe that vigorous exercise was not essential, the new guidelines specify that moderate and vigorous activity are complementary for good health. The new report also includes muscle-strengthening exercises.

“What we have learned,” said Pate, “is that resistance exercise provides important health benefits that go beyond strength gain.” Other studies show that older people should do muscle-strengthening exercises, stretching, flexibility exercises, and ones that improve balance.

### **Exercise the Whole Person**

The physical—including good nutrition—is only one aspect of whole-person exercise. Contemporary holistic research continues to demonstrate that ours is an interactive, integrated system of many aspects. Our emotions—positive or negative—are obviously capable of affecting our overall health. The same is true of our thinking, of course, as well as

our spiritual lives, which include meaningful work and loving relationships.

### **How to Begin Your Program**

Start your 30 minutes of exercise five days a week. Learn how to deal with your thinking and emotions, which are the generators of stress. Begin to help others—volunteer. Join a social or spiritual group for connection and support. Discover who you are and how you deal with stress. There is no limit to the actions we can take for whole-person health. Start today.

## **AVOIDING MEAN PEOPLE**

A new study from the Univ. of Michigan tells us that some men and women love to cause others emotional upsets. They know our buttons, and they push them as often as possible when they learn they can get to us. Just as you suspected.

“When a person is teased,” says Michelle Wirth, Ph.D., coauthor of the study, “she responds with a split-second facial expression of displeasure that is impossible to suppress. When someone enjoys those expressions, he has incentive to badger...to see them again and again.” In other words, they get pleasure from our pain.

### **How to Handle Them**

Avoid them, if possible. If you must interact, don't take it personally. The problem is theirs, not yours. Stay cool. Don't give them power over you. Whatever you do, don't engage them. You

can love and forgive them better when you aren't in striking range. Take care of yourself.

## **HOW TO NURTURE THE UNFORTUNATE**

We all want to say the right thing when consoling people, right? We want to be helpful and healing to them, and we know clichés and “fix it” comments are no help. What to say and how to say it?

According to psychologist Dale G. Larson, who specializes in end-of-life care, we should listen more than talk. Listen well. Think of yourself as a sounding board, he says, and let the ill or bereaved express themselves openly, dealing with your own fears privately. “If your friend does express fear, respond with empathy and let her know you love her.”

An understanding and nurturing heart expresses itself without a lot of words. It's not what we say, but how we say it—with deep empathy and profound love. Simple phrases said sincerely are more than sufficient: “I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do?” Love heals. Express it.

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### **A QUOTE FOR LIFE**

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

~ Mahatma Gandhi

