

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Nicole Symcox

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

So, nourishment is something that is putting good things back into your emotional system, good things back into your mind, body, and soul. And you need to do a little bit of self-discovery on what are those things.

Welcome to *Mental Health Remix*, a show for ambitious humans who are ready to feel, think, and be different. If you want to stop struggling with perfectionism, build better relationships, and connect with yourself and your potential, this is the place for you...

Here's your host, educator, coach and licensed psychotherapist, Nicole Symcox...

Hello, my friends. Welcome to episode 41. Today, I want to talk about self-care, and mainly because none of us are doing it. So, it's interesting, in this whole COVID pandemic situation, we have more time on our hands, and yet we feel like we have less time on our hands.

We are more stressed out, not less stressed out. We're somewhere stuck between wired and tired and overwhelmed, underwhelmed, horrified, bored. We are all the things. And I think we're having a hard time landing in one spot.

And so, it's a great example of what happens to us at different parts of the journey. And so, it takes taking a pause and noticing what is coming up for you personally, like, what is happening for you personally on the inside? Where are your emotions at? Where are your thoughts headed? How do you feel on a daily basis?

Because when we feel all the feels and there's too many of them and we're having a hard time landing in one of them, we have to come back to center. We have to come back to ourselves and figure out, where am I in the midst of all of these external stressors?

So, we talked about that in a previous episode, about how stress is either produced internally or externally. And so, we're living in a world full of external triggers, external stressors right now. And so, it's very important

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

that we take time to pause and figure out, notice, and support, how is that showing up for us internally? Like, what is that doing for our internal stress levels, our internal dialogue?

So, when we think about self-care, it's not just bubble baths and chocolate and massages. Those are things that people enjoy. Those are things that momentarily de-stress for a little bit. So, they can be used as these momentary kind of things just to relax and rejuvenate for a moment, but actual self-care has to do with supporting our internal world, filling in those gaps that are happening within ourselves. So, meeting our own emotional needs.

And this is where people get stuck. The truth is, this is where it gets confusing because a lot of us don't know what our needs are. We just know we feel like shit. But we're not really sure what the need is, and so, we don't know how to meet it.

And so, your first step in self-care is figuring out, what is the emotional need that is coming up for me? And some common ones might be, "I feel a need to be heard." Some of these are going to sound really basic, but sometimes, we have a really hard time identifying what it is.

And therefore, if you are feeling like you need to be heard, perhaps an act of self-care would be to meet up with a friend and be in connection with someone who is a good listener, right? So, then it also informs you, who should I be spending my time with to meet this need? And so, that's one example.

Another example, you know, might be something really simple, which is, "I'm exhausted. I've been working a lot. The kids need a lot. There's just a lot." And so, maybe one of those needs that you're identifying is, "I just need sleep." And so, an act of self-care would be making time and space for you to maybe take a nap or to try to get some uninterrupted sleep throughout the night.

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

Or, if you're having trouble falling asleep and staying asleep, maybe you talk to your doctor about that, about why you're having challenges in that area and what you can do about it. But even in those kinds of cases, it seems simple, but sleep is super-basic.

It's a basic human need. We don't get enough of it, we don't really function well. We're not our best selves. And so, while it seems basic, it's also critical; critical to you, to your health, to your mental health, right? But we have to check in with ourselves because sometimes when we're so busy, we think, "Sleep is the last thing I need to be worried about right now. That's just laziness."

No, my loves, no, no, no, we have to have boundaries around things, which is going to bring us right into number three. So, thinking about boundaries. So, maybe a need that is coming up for you is, "I am spending way too much time fixing other people's problems. I'm way too invested in their outcomes and to the point I'm not focusing on my own stuff and it's becoming draining, it's becoming exhausting..." emotionally this time.

We just talked about physical exhaustion, but now for this one, we're talking about now you're feeling emotionally drained. And so, stopping, pausing, and recognizing that that is coming up for you is how you create the antidote, right?

So, perhaps you need boundaries around certain people in your life. Perhaps you need boundaries even on yourself. A lot of times, when we think about boundaries, we're always thinking about other people, but we have to put ourselves in check too. We have to put boundaries on ourselves.

And so, how do you want to handle this person that is draining you? So, maybe you want to put an hour time limit on your phone conversations. Or perhaps you only want to meet with them once a week. Or maybe you need to reframe and do some self-talk around the fact that you can't control anybody.

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

You cannot make or break their outcomes. Every human is in charge of their own lives, whether or not they want to take that responsibility on is another question. But again, that's not your problem. Your problem is you. You need to take responsibility for your own life. And so, allowing other people to take responsibility for theirs.

And so, what is coming up with this friend, since we're using this as an example, that you maybe need to set some boundaries on because you're taking way too much responsibility for the outcome of their life and it's becoming unhealthy for you.

Boundaries, my friends, this is a very small example that I just gave you, but boundaries are expansive. They are the most critical tool that you can learn how to do to manage self-care in your life, actually. Boundaries are key to that because it's a way to protect your emotional needs and honor others. It's respectful on both sides.

And so, we'll do another episode on boundaries coming up here for sure, because boundaries is just a little bit of a deeper topic and today we're talking about self-care. But I want you to be aware that boundaries serve your inner needs and they're very, very important, okay.

The fourth is to recognize emotionally what is coming up for me. This is the one that people hate. This is the one people run from. They don't want to deal with it. And, my loves, it will continue to build. It does not get smaller by ignoring it. It only gets bigger.

So, spending time with yourself journaling, doing art, or processing something in therapy, these are acts of taking care of your emotions. It can be an act of self-care, especially if understanding your needs, understanding boundaries, those are all great things to explore in therapy.

And so, maybe your first step is to just start therapy and figure out, "Well, first I need to identify what my needs are and I need to figure out how to implement boundaries, and I need to figure out how to manage all the anxiety that comes up when I say no to someone."

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

Those are all relevant things that you can start to work on in therapy. But those are acts of self-care because what you've just done, even in that, is you've recognized, "I have a thing I don't know how to fix the thing, so I'm going to get help to fix the thing." That sounded like a Dr. Seuss riddle, but you know what I mean.

So, really checking in with yourself, and that is part of self-care, is knowing, you know, what can I do for myself and what do I need help and support with? You're not designed to know everything. You're not designed to be perfect. No human being is, no matter what their Instagram handle says.

Nobody is perfect. We all have flaws. We're all imperfect and we're all, you know, going through life. And so, we have to learn to embrace and accept our limits. When we do that, it actually increases our strength. It is not the other way around. And so, kind of thinking through that.

Now, another one, consider your personality type. So, there are extroverts, introverts, and there's somewhere in between. So, extroverts, you guys love to be with people. You get your energy that way. And so, knowing that when you are with people, you feel rejuvenated, you feel energized, you feel healthy. You probably almost feel whole because you just love being around people.

Introverts are the polar opposite. Introverts get their energy back by being alone. Now, there is somewhere in between. So, that doesn't mean that all introverts are anti-social and it doesn't mean all extroverts are super-social. This has a huge spectrum to it.

But I think knowing your personality type in there really supports and helps you figuring out what you need to do for self-care, because if you are an introvert and you have been engaging or interacting with lots and lots of people or you've been in an active role at work, giving presentations, or you're in the middle of a launch for your business, you're just interacting with so many people.

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

And active self-care is probably going to be to spend some time alone. And so, depending on where you are in that spectrum of being an introvert will decide how much time you need. Some introverts need an hour. Some introverts need a day. Some introverts need a week. I mean, I don't know, it just depends on who you are and what your needs are.

But this is critically important because it teaches you how you get your energy back. Introverts do not get their energy from people. They get their energy back from being alone. And that doesn't mean that they don't enjoy being with people. It doesn't mean that they're not social. There's plenty of social introverts that are more in the middle of that spectrum between extrovert and introvert.

So, it means they are engaging, they are fun, love the moments when they are being social, but it takes an emotional toll on them to give out that much energy. And so, they have to get it back by reading a book, watching TV, you know. They have to maybe journal or they need to cry or they just need to stare at a sunset. They just need to be alone and decompress and shut their brains off, okay.

This is so, so important because if you try to fit yourself into an extroverted hole, an extroverted square, you're going to be disappointed because it's only going to drain you more. Likewise, extroverts get drained by being alone. They don't get energized that way.

And in fact, I saw an incredible increase in depression symptoms amongst my extroverts when COVID broke out and the shelter in place orders were really, really strict for the first three months where I am. And they're still really strict where I am. But at any rate, at the very beginning of it, I noticed extroverts were struggling the most.

And largely in part because they emotionally were feeling like they were being isolated on an island, you know, and not being energized and supported. And so, some of that loneliness for them really kicked in. And so, if you're an extrovert, you need to make time for social activities.

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

You need to make time for social interaction online, on the phone, I mean, whatever your state of residence is allowing right now, because I have no idea. Everybody's different. So, I have no idea what your state is allowing or whatnot. But just decide for you, like, how do I create a vibrant safe social life that feels really rejuvenating and good for me?

So, you're the opposite. You need to manage how much time you are spending alone. Spending too much alone time can kind of make you feel off, maybe kind of sad and lonely and weepy, right? And so, then you need to be around people.

And so, even you need a game plan for when you are alone. Like, how do you self-entertain? How do you build yourself up if you can't be with people all the time?

And so, anyways, get to know this part of yourself because it definitely helps and informs, when you carve out time for self-care, how are you going to spend it? Because an introvert is probably not going to carve out half the day to spend it with people if they're trying to do self-care and get their energy back. Those are your people that you're going to see on the beach by themselves reading a book, journaling. You know, just thinking, just trying to get their thoughts back.

And lastly, find a thing that really nourishes you. So, there are some people that nature just nourishes their soul. They love water. They love seeing trees. They love the sun. They love the air. They love the salty air, if they're into the ocean, you know, the mountains are really nourishing for them. But I want you to think nourishment.

What nourishes your emotions? Who are the people that nourish you? What are the things that nourish you? And there's a huge difference between nourishment and numbing out. TV serves as a numbing agent. I'm not saying TV is bad, but I'm saying it's not an act of self-care. Most times, it is numbing out, vegging out.

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

And let me tell you, there is a time and a place for that. There are times where we need to veg the fuck out and numb out our lives for like an hour. It has a time and a place. But I don't want you to confuse it with nourishment.

So, nourishment is something that is putting good things back into your emotional system, good things back into your mind, body, and soul. And you need to do a little bit of self-discovery on what are those things. Is it an active practice? Meaning is it exercising?

Is it journaling? Is it talking? What is it? Or, is it passive? Is it sitting back again and watching the sunset or looking at art? There's a lot of different things. Just, like, spending time with your dog. Animals are super-nourishing. If you're an animal person, don't discount how much your dog or your cat or your animal can really provide.

There's a reason why dogs are trained to be therapy dogs. There's a reason why horses are used with sexual abuse survivors. Animals can be very, very healing. And so, just kind of thinking through, just spending time with my pet, just going on a walk with them.

So, some of this is self-exploratory. You're just exploring what works for you and what doesn't because there's no perfect science. But once you find the rhythm for this and you make time and space – and you usually have to schedule it in. Because all of the mind chatter that's going to show up is saying that you're selfish, you know, you don't have time for this shit, you have so many things to do.

But, my love, because you have so many things to do is the reason it is critically important for you to take a time out for self-care. Pay attention to the podcasts you listen to or audiobooks or people you listen to give a Ted Talk or whatever it may be. But be very aware of what you are putting in your brain and notice how you feel afterwards.

There are certain things that are just strict entertainment and there are other things that nourish our mind, body, and soul. When it comes to self-

[Mental Health Remix](#) with Nicole Symcox

Ep #41: The Self-Care You Need

care, we want to look for those things that really support those areas of our lives, especially now with so much going on.

I think we all feel like we're all over the place. We're not really sure where to land. And so, it's critically important to check in with yourself every day and kind of say, "What am I needing right now and how can I give that to myself in a really tangible way?"

Self-care is about supporting our inner needs so that we can keep going. It's not the other way around. It's not, "I'm going to keep going and then I'll just magically make time for self-care." It never works that way; never, never, never. We have to intentionally set it, as it's critically important.

Especially if you're ambitious and goal-oriented, let me tell you, my love, there will always be another goal. There will always be another bullet point on the to-do list, there will always be another check mark. You'll never be in short supply of things that you need to get done, but you need to make time and space for yourself so that you can get all of the to-dos done.

Alright, my friends. I am hopeful that this was helpful to you. And as always, if strong emotions came up for you when you were listening to this episode or any of the podcast episodes, please take it as information that something in your internal world needs support. There is no shame or blame in getting mental health support in your local state of residence. It is probably the best thing that you can do for yourself.

And if you enjoyed today's episode, you can definitely get on my email list and we will let you know about all the things that are happening with me and with the podcast and all the things that we're up to. Alright, I will see you next time.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of Mental Health Remix. If you like what you've heard and want to learn more, go to nicolesymcox.com.

© 2020 Nicole Symcox, All rights reserved

[Mental Health Remix](http://MentalHealthRemix.com) with Nicole Symcox