

TAKING CARE OF US

Advice for Library Staff

Feel like you are running full-throttle? Immobilized during downtime because there is just so much to catch up on? Exhausted and overwhelmed? Here are some tips that can help you take care of yourself:

SLEEP. The dishes can wait. **Everything looks better** after eight straight hours of shut-eye.

EAT FOOD that makes you feel good. Not too much of it. Eat it **mindfully**. Alone or with friends. You will be surprised by what (and how much) you put in your mouth when you really start paying attention to how it makes you feel.

DON'T BE RIGID. Rigidity is the enemy of fun. And I guarantee if you are reading this, **you need more fun.**

DO SOMETHING THAT SCARES YOU, in a good way. Just for you, **not to show off** or to post it on social media.

LAUGH. Don't take yourself too seriously. Or anyone else. Picture everyone who annoys you **wearing a clown nose** à la Bernie Glassman. Or to borrow from Elizabeth Lesser, remember we are all just "bozos on the bus."

MOVE YOUR BODY. A lot. You are less cranky when you walk on your lunch break, or go to the gym and lift weights, or run as hard as you can, or snowshoe with a friend, or play outdoors with your kids, or just use the stairs at work instead of the elevator. Even those of us with mobility issues can find ways **to be active**. Swimming and yoga are great low-impact activities.

MAKE ART. Colour. Dance. Grow things. Get your hands dirty. Play music. **With no agenda**, just because it feels good. Hug someone you love. Let yourself be helped when someone offers. Pet an animal.

BREATHE. When we're stressed or uncomfortable we tend to hold our breath or breathe shallowly. Take some deep, slow breaths. **Right now.** It can be helpful to put a reminder on your phone/desktop/watch every 30 minutes to remind you to breathe and to get up and move around.

RECONNECT with your spiritual or religious practice, whatever that may be. Try going for a walk in the woods and clearing your head. It can really help you **feel grounded** and connected. Or listen to some uplifting music with your eyes closed.

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FURTHER READING

The Art of Extreme Self Care by Cheryl Richardson. Especially the chapter "Let Me Disappoint You."

This is How by Augusten Burroughs. Remember when your people-pleasing nature gets the best of you that "you're not a bottle of Valium."