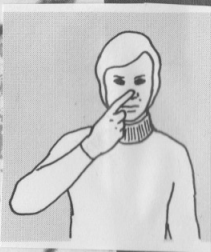


Resources:
find a therapist: goodtherapy.org
selfharm.net
recoveryourlife.com (warning: not pro-self harm)
anything by bell hooks



Thank you for reading.
Take care of yourself <3
questions, comments or for copies send an email to Jeana at
spoongrrrl@riseup.net

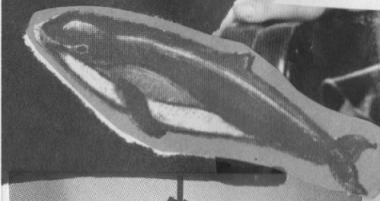


love

yourself,
babe

a zine about self care

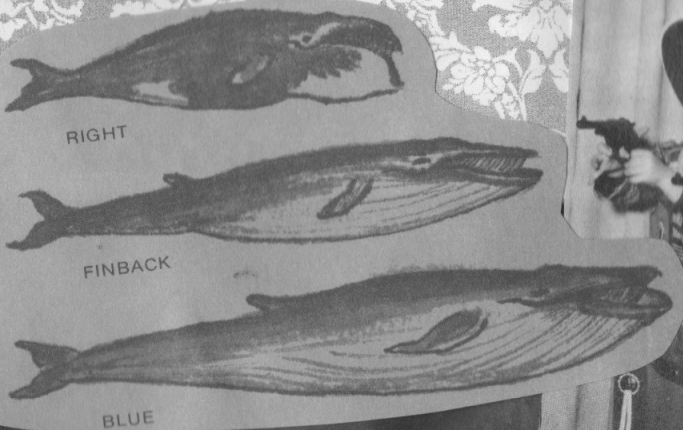
compiled by Jeana Harris



for questions/comments/copies email spoongrrrl@riseup.net

Richard Brautigan - Karma Repair Kit: Items 1-4

1.
Get enough food to eat,
and eat it.
2.
Find a place to sleep where it is quiet,
and sleep there.
3.
Reduce intellectual and emotional noise
until you arrive at the silence of yourself,
and listen to it.
- 4.

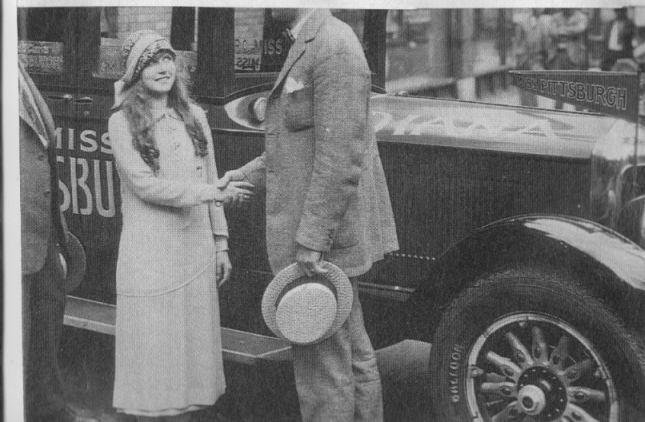


trigger warning: this zine talks in detail about self harm. If you are prone to being triggered, read this in a safe environment or skip the pages labeled with trigger warnings.

11. Quit drinking and smoking. I know it might be a tough one to hear, but calculate the amount of money you spend on cigarettes and alcohol every month. Now, calculate how many hours of work it took you to earn the money you spend every month on these. Is it worth it?

$\$7.25 \times 20 \text{ hours a week} = \580 a month
-\$300 for rent
-\$60 for Utilities
-\$20 for Internet
-\$10 for phone
-\$50 for food (not including \$150 of food stamps)
-\$30 for gas
-\$20 for groceries and incidentals
=\$90 for savings!! (or $90+50 = \$140$ for food without food stamps)

ously this is different for everyone, but this my personal hly budget. If this is too tight for you, or you don't qualify for stamps, consider working 25 or 30 hours.



5. Forget the car payment and purchase a cheaper vehicle instead. Look for reliable cars for anywhere between \$500- 2,000. Check Craigslist and find deals by previous owners instead of dealers for the best prices, or try to find a local car auction. Its possible to find a 1990 Honda for around \$1,000. You'll probably have to invest another \$500 for repairs, but as long as your car is being used casually you'll end up saving a lot of money in the long haul. Or even better, invest in a communal car that will be used by your entire household. Get a bike or a bus pass (these can usually be acquired for free or reduced prices through school or community programs) and use these methods to get around for the most part.

6. Start clipping coupons! Get a copy of the Sunday paper, inside will be tons of coupons. Yes it requires more planning, but one can ultimately end up saving hundreds of dollars.

7. Get on Food Stamps. Most states allow up to \$200 a month for those who fully qualify. Search online for a local Health and Welfare, and try to come early in the week and monday mornings (you might have to wait for over 2 hours on Friday afternoon). Bring your last 2 pay stubs, your ID, your SS number, and your bank account balances.

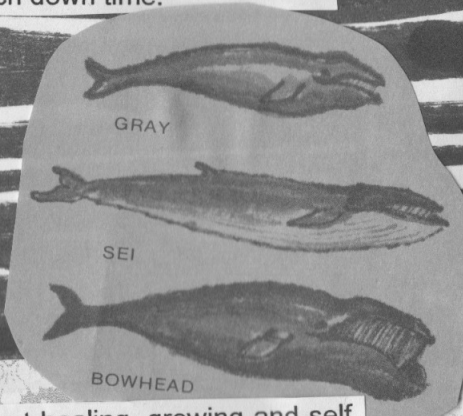
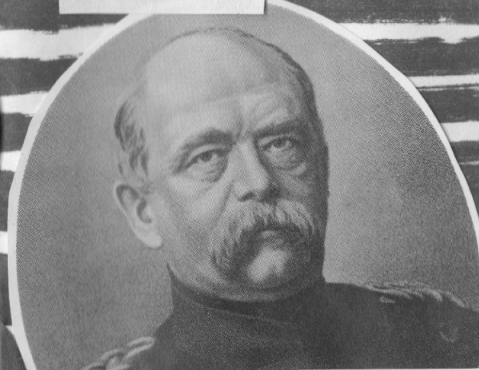
8. Stop eating out as often! Buy groceries and create meals in advance that can be eaten cold or heated up. Invest in a insulated lunch box and bring your meals with you to school or work.

9. Stop buying paper towels, hand soap, body wash, laundry soap, deodorant, tampons and pads, toothpaste, and cleaning products. Invest in multiple dish rags to be kept by the sink to be used instead of paper towels. These can be found at any dollar store. Make your own cleaning products using a combination of baking soda and vinegar (recipes can be found online!). Invest in a Diva Cup instead of using expensive (and environmentally unfriendly) pads and tampons. Create your own body products using recipes made mostly from baking soda, salt and coconut oil (all which can be bought with food stamps!). See the recipes section for more info!

10. Quit buying shit you don't need. You don't need new clothes every month, you don't need a gym membership when you can watch free exercise videos online and jog your neighborhood for free, you don't need a new TV or cable (if you really love TV watch it for free on project-free-tv) or an ipod. Don't you think that being happy is more important than owning those things? And don't you think you'd be happier if you worked less?

"I am that cordless screwdriver that has to charge for twenty hours to earn ten minutes use. I need that much down time."

- Donald Miller



To me, self care is about healing, growing and self reflection. Its the time where I learn about myself, when I reflect on my choices and habits and the kinds of situations I put myself in. When I look back and read my journals from times in my life where I wasn't taking care of myself I'm amazed at my lack of self awareness. Conclusions that seem so obvious to me now were mysteries at the time. I kept people in my life around who habitually treated me poorly and I was too wrapped up in something or other to pull my head out of my ass and set healthy boundaries. Looking back I wished I had been better about spending time loving myself and reflecting on my relationships and lovers. I could have avoided a lot of pain and time wasted on people that would never change.

Obvi
month
food

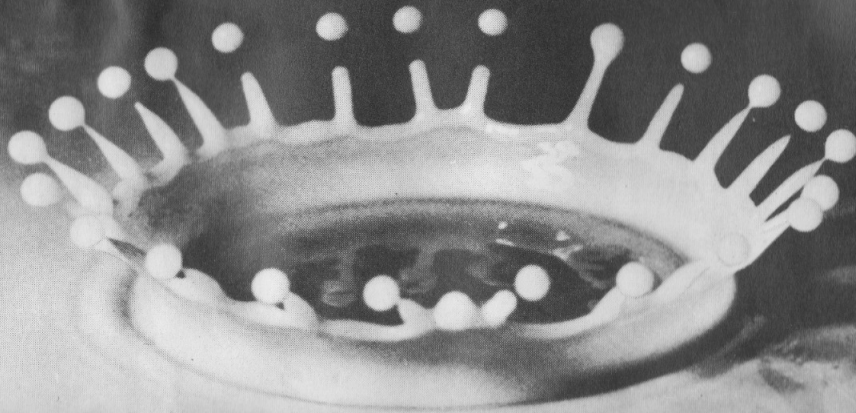
When I am being good about self care, I'm infinitely faster at drawing conclusions about the effect of other people on my happiness and well being. I'm better able to eliminate people from my life that bring me down, and seek out people that bring me up. My self awareness grows exponentially and I am able to recognize patterns within my habits, to draw connections between my childhood and the way I interact, show affection, and enforce my boundaries now.

I spend a lot of time thinking about My Three Columns: What I Want, What I Need, and What I Can Live With. To me, self care is about fulfilling the "What I Need" column and looking for ways to fill the "What I Want" category. What I Can Live With is about compromises I'm willing to make in order to make relationships work or compromise conflicting needs-- for example, I might need to feel good about myself but I also need healthy food. I might not have enough money for both organic veggies and a bottle of shampoo, but What I Can Live With outlines how I can live with homemade shampoo or learning how to cut my own hair to save money so I'm not compromising eating healthy.

I feel the happiest and most centered when I take one or two nights a week for self care. I pull the curtains, close the door, light some candles, pull out my box of vibrators, my journals, my sketchpads, soft music, my favorite novels, my zines, some candy and a tall glass of ice water.

When I write in my journal, sometimes I stop thinking about the next paragraph or sentence or even the next word and I forget about grammar or commas or capitalization and just write the word that comes to mind and I keep writing and writing and writing until something happens and I read back seven pages later and realize how knowledgeable my subconscious can be. I look back and see conclusions and connections that I wasn't even aware of on any cerebral level, and I learn about myself. There is so much about ourselves that we don't know yet.

Self care is also primping time for me. Since I'm a queer femme grrrl I see getting pretty and taking care of my body as valuable time to grow my self confidence and treat myself. I put lotion on my entire body, shave my arms and legs, dye and cut my hair, give myself a facial, exfoliate my legs, deep condition my hair, or experiment with new makeup.



1. Move into a cheaper house. Most of the best deals can be found on Craigslist. Check for new listings every morning, remember that the more rooms a house has the cheaper the rent for each individual will be. If you are currently living alone, consider living with a roommate or two. Look for houses in less trendy areas with bus or bike routes that lead toward your work or school instead of downtown apartments within walking distance; they'll be less expensive. Be patient, it could take a month or more of daily checking until you find something in a great location at a cheap price.

2. Use less water, electricity and gas. Turn off your air conditioner, open your windows at night and keep them open through the morning. Place fans near windows to effectively circulate air throughout the house. The goal is to have a breeze running through the entire house, so open and close some windows based on the direction of the wind. Close your blinds during the hottest part of the day to keep out the hot sun. Freeze bottles of water and place them in front of fans so that the blowing air cools down.

Unplug tv's, phone and laptop chargers when they aren't in use. If you plan on being out of the house for most of the day, try connecting all your electronics to a single extension chord strip so you can easily turn off all your electronics at once when you leave. Instead of putting all your clothes into the dirty hamper after one use, try putting your clothes back on the shelf to re-wear except if there are visible stains. Buy more pairs of underwear so you aren't forced to do an unnecessary load just to wash a few pairs of panties when nothing else is dirty.

3. Try sharing an internet connection with your neighbors. This way, both you and your neighbor split the bill, which you then can split up among all your roommates. Yes, you will sacrifice connection speeds, but waiting longer for a page to load or downloads to finish can help you wean yourself from your internet addiction!

4. Throw away your iPhone and opt for a cheap flip phone. Even if you can't live without a phone with you at all times, you CAN live without a huge data plan or constant access to your Facebook. All you really need is Unlimited texting and a few hundred minutes a month of talk time. Most people assume they need unlimited talk time but in reality, most of their conversations are short or happen at 9pm when minutes are usually free anyway. Get on a family plan with your friends and housemates. Each additional line is usually only \$5 with all the same minutes and unlimited texting. Then split the bill evenly among everyone who's in on it. Your share will be less than \$10 a month.

Guide to living cheaply so you can work less!

So many people I know work 40 hours a week so they can afford their fancy car and iPhone all while draining themselves every day and having no free time for art, hobbies, exercise, relationships and most importantly SELF CARE. This is guide on how to live cheaply so you can work less hours and dedicate more time to taking care of YOU.

Let's assume you're working 40 hours a week making federal minimum wage at \$7.25 an hour*
(*Georgia, Arkansas, Minnesota, and Wyoming have lower minimum wages than the federal rates)

This guide is based on single, childless food and housing costs in Boise, Idaho. Many cities have much more expensive costs of living than Boise, and some cities are cheaper, so keep that in mind.

\$1,116 a month.

- \$400 a month on rent
- \$80 a month on electricity/water/gas
- \$80 a month on internet
- \$60 a month on a phone w/ a data plan
- \$120 a month on a car payment
- \$250 a month on food
- \$60 for gas
- \$66 for groceries and incidentals
- = \$0

CELLO.

13

self
care

self love

is sneaking looks in passing windows
and liking
what I see.

self care is squeezing my own ass in the morning
enjoying the feeling of the fat between my thighs
loving the texture of my stretch marks
smelling my hairy armpits after a hot day and getting turned on
by my own sweaty smell
that nobody could ever bottle

and in the silence of the night
through all the tears
and all the lies
I touch myself and it's alright

and when something fall out of place
I take my time
I put it back
I touch myself
till I'm on track

OUT

self love – bell hooks style

Clementine Cannibal

"love is a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust." – bell hooks

have you ever been in a relationship where you felt neglected or mistreated and when you expressed these feelings your partner

responded with "but i love you"? and have you ever thrown up your hands in desperation and exclaimed that love is not just feeling, it's action?

have you ever demanded that your partner go read some bell hooks and meditate on what love really means? i have. i have gone through this exact situation more than once. and these relationships ended for various reasons and now i am by myself. being by myself is exactly where i need to be. because as much as what i was saying in those arguments with past partners was true (love is action not just feelings and they should go read some bell hooks) i too wasn't ready to love them fully and properly because, fundamentally, i was not loving myself fully and properly. a lot of girls and women write to me asking me advice on how to love themselves. i have tried my best to offer advice and to share my own work on self love. but i have often been left feeling like i don't really know the answer. how exactly do we go about loving ourselves? is self love about looking in the mirror and liking what we see? is self love about caring for our emotional well being? is self love a decision to value oneself? i think it is partially all of these things but none of them answer the question completely.

at the age of eighteen i thought i had finally discovered self love. i had never been happy with the way i looked. i had never considered myself beautiful. i had depended primarily on my sexuality to provide me with the validation of male attention, something that acts as a substitute for self love for a lot of women (this is the equivalent of substituting coffee for sleep – it doesn't work). but at eighteen, thinking i was quite the genius, i thought i'd finally figured it out. i learned how to love myself, hairy armpits, drunken outbursts and all. male validation was still a heavy ingredient in this version of self love i had created, but as my hairy armpits demonstrated, it was not the only ingredient. i could handle male rejection and still love myself and that was definitely an improvement. but it was not enough.

Self injury can be an effective tool for dealing with a variety of issues, especially for people without access to other forms of treatment like therapy and medication, however there is a difference between safe and unsafe self harm. There are a few categories here: intentions and lethality. If you self harm, ask yourself what your intentions are. If they include self hatred, venting aggression or continuing abusive patterns learned from childhood, self harm probably isn't the safest method of coping because it could be emotionally unhealthy or coupled with feelings of self hatred, regret, or anger. People with a low level of self control aren't good candidates for safe forms or self injury because they might not be capable of controlling themselves from harming themselves to the point of death or serious injury.

The lethality and physical health impacts of your self harm is another thing to analyze when looking for safe forms of self injury. For example punching glass objects, headbanging, hitting yourself with a hammer or other objects, cutting yourself with large knives or giving yourself 3rd degree burns are obviously very unsafe forms of self harm.

Two safer forms of self injury are cutting and burning. Using a new, sterilized razor every time you cut yourself is one way to cut down on the risk. Minimizing the depth and length of cuts is another. Stopping before you feeling faint or dizzy and dressing your wounds is one of the most important ways to regulate safer self injury. For burning, a safer form of self harm could be to control the amount of time the hot object is on your skin (set a limit, say 2 seconds, and count out loud). If the burn results in extensive blistering or scarring, reduce the amount of time for the next instance. Never burn yourself with cigarettes, the chemicals cause terrible infections. Safer ways to burn would be heating up something metal in an oven, using matches or candles.

Regulating the number of separate incidences of self harm in a week or month is another way to make self injury safer. Only allowing yourself to cut in one specific area, and only after the previous scars have healed is a way to cut down on the number of times you self harm. Limiting cuts to specific places is important. NEVER cut on your neck, inner thigh, or down your arms or legs. Be careful about cutting on your wrists, always cut horizontally to avoid cutting an artery and use a light touch. Better places are on the tops or outer sides of thighs, waist and hips, horizontally across legs and arms.

About self harm

trigger warning self harm

Self harm, or self injury is a coping mechanism that is negatively stigmatized in our society. However, over the next few pages I will try to explain the ways in which self harm could be seen as a valid method of self care and how to make self injury safer.

There are three varieties of self harm: compulsive, episodic and repetitive impulsive. Compulsive is typically related to obsessive-compulsive disorder and usually include skin picking or pulling out hair. Episodic self harm is rare or occasional acts of self injury that are usually the result of other mental health issues, such as a one-time event of cutting, punching a mirror, etc. This article focuses on the last kind, repetitive impulsive self injury. This is when a person repeatedly cuts themselves, burns themselves, bangs their head against a wall, hits or bites themselves. The most common are cutting, burning and headbanging. However, these acts are only categorized as self harm if they leave skin tissue damage such as scarring. This article only focuses on direct and intentional forms of self harm- excluding things like smoking or alcoholism that ultimately result in self harm but aren't necessarily intended to be.

Self injury makes some people feel better because it induces an immediate psychological reaction of relief. When a strong uncomfortable emotion overwhelms a person, sometimes the emotion is too chaotic, panicky or jittery to be able to analyze or cope with. Self harm relieves that emotional discomfort without completely eliminating the emotion but rather dulling it in way that one can then cope with. It releases serotonin and endorphins much like an orgasm does. To some people, it physically feels good.

some possible motives for self injury:

Escape from emptiness, depression, and feelings of unreality, easing tension, providing relief: when intense feelings build, self-injurers are overwhelmed and unable to cope. By causing pain, they reduce the level of emotional and physiological arousal to a bearable one, relieving anger: many self-injurers have enormous amounts of rage within. Afraid to express it outwardly, they injure themselves as a way of venting these feelings. Escaping numbness: many of those who self-injure say they do it in order to feel something, to know that they're still alive, grounding in reality, as a way of dealing with feelings of depersonalization and dissociation, expressing emotional pain they feel they cannot bear, validating their emotional pain; the wounds can serve as evidence that those feelings are real, continuing abusive patterns: self-injurers tend to have been abused as children, punishing oneself for being "bad", obtaining biochemical relief: there is some thought that adults who were repeatedly traumatized as children have a hard time returning to a "normal" baseline level of arousal and are, in some sense, addicted to crisis behavior. Self-harm can perpetuate this kind of crisis state, diverting attention (inner or outer) from issues that are too painful to examine, exerting a

i developed psoriasis all over my body and i realized that the self love i had developed only applied to a certain self, the self i was with clear skin. my new scaly, itchy, flaky self did not know how to love herself. i realized that self love was a lot more complicated than i had thought. it's about more than being okay with who you are and what you look like at this exact moment because we are not static, we change. self love has to extend into the selves we are becoming and those selves are aging and changing. those selves may develop disabilities. they will get older. they may gain or lose weight. they may undergo surgery. they may get pregnant. they may gain scars. and on and on. can we love those selves too? can our self love be as flexible and changing as our realities are?

i had to learn to love my psoriasis and i did. i learned to love and appreciate my always changing body as my very own physical manifestation on this plane of existence. not simply as a thing to be desired or fucked by men, but as my own self, my way of moving in and experiencing this world. i thought, once again, that

i had arrived at self love. but i see now that my journey was only just beginning.

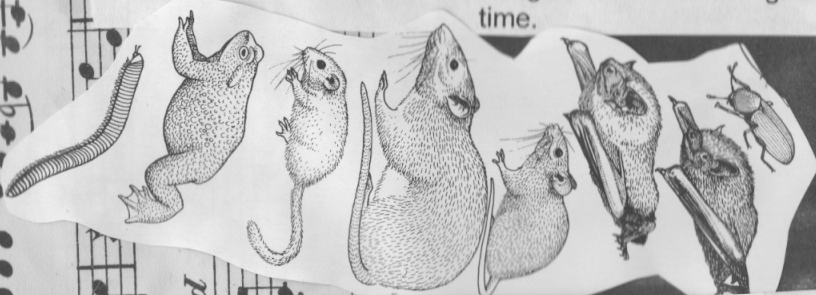
i have consistently turned to romantic relationships, to sex and to alcohol to fill a vast, gaping void in myself. and i have come to realize that the void exists because i don't know how to love myself and i have not taken the time and care to learn. i am now actively meditating on the question. what is self love? well, it's love for the self. so, what is love?

ELUGA (WHITE) WHALE

and this brings me back to my insistence to my ex partners that love is action, not simply feeling and my demand that they go read bell hooks. now, it's my turn to go read bell hooks and to really listen to what she is saying. she says that love is a combination of care, commitment, knowledge, responsibility, respect and trust. have i been caring for myself, committing to myself, learning about myself, taking responsibility for myself, respecting myself and trusting myself? or have i been hoping that a simple feeling of self acceptance and a little dash of liking myself would be enough?

i am now on the journey that will lead me to self love. and for me, this journey involves getting sober, being a part of aa, being in counseling, writing, making art, setting boundaries, taking a break from sex and relationships, working on my integrity and accountability, praying and being spiritually connected, asking for help, eating well and regularly, exercising and being active, getting enough sleep, paying attention to my dreams, developing new habits, noticing and responding to my feelings and getting to know my own sense of ethics. this journey will definitely involve many other things, many of which i probably am not aware of yet.

i have come to understand that simply saying 'i love myself' is not enough. as i have said to many of my ex partners, actions speak louder than words. to truly love myself is a commitment. it takes work. it takes care. it takes changes. it takes learning. it takes time.



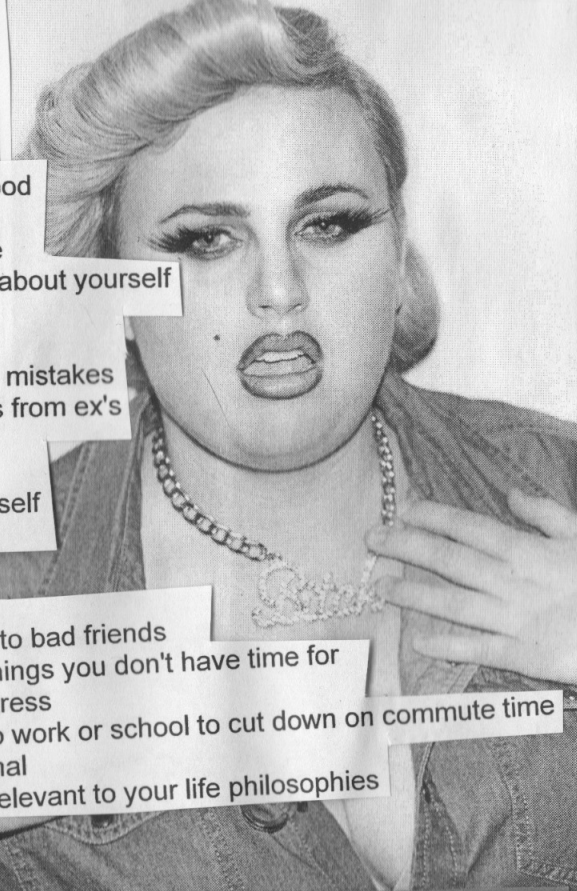
i am finally ready to admit to myself that no relationship, lover or bottle can fill this gaping void inside of me. the only thing that will is self love – bell hooks style.

You are a perfectly acceptable human being right now, this minute. You are just as valid as any other human being, without changing a single thing about yourself. That doesn't mean you're not allowed to want to grow, evolve or improve yourself, or you can't do better sometimes, it just means right now this instant, you are worthy of your own self love. Even if it is hard to love yourself sometimes (and boy, is it!), or you're struggling with some really difficult stuff in your life, you still deserve it.

So dearest you, be kind to yourself, be kind to others, and give the best version of you that you can give, but know that even in the tough times, you are still valid, worthy and deserving of your own self love.



building something out of wood
crocheting yourself a scarf
learn a new skill or language
write a list of things you like about yourself
dancing
paying your bill on time
taking responsibility for your mistakes
burning old letters or clothes from ex's
cooking for just yourself
nature hikes
going to the movies by yourself
admiring your body



yoga
saying goodbye to bad friends
saying "No" to things you don't have time for
taking on less stress
moving closer to work or school to cut down on commute time
writing in a journal
reading books relevant to your life philosophies

meditating
stretching every morning
cuddling with animals
drinking enough water every day
consolidating errands
repeating daily affirmations to yourself
simplifying your life
putting on makeup or going out without makeup

peanut
butter

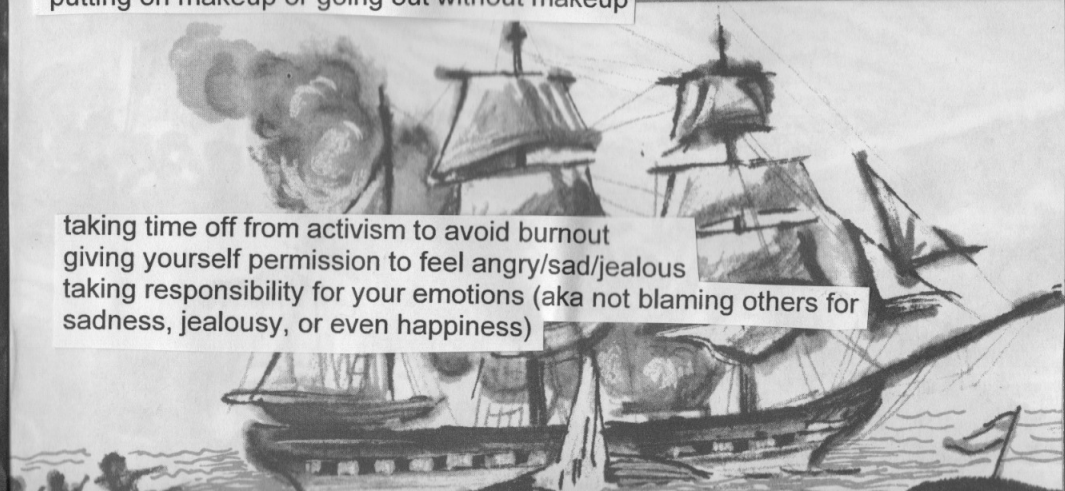
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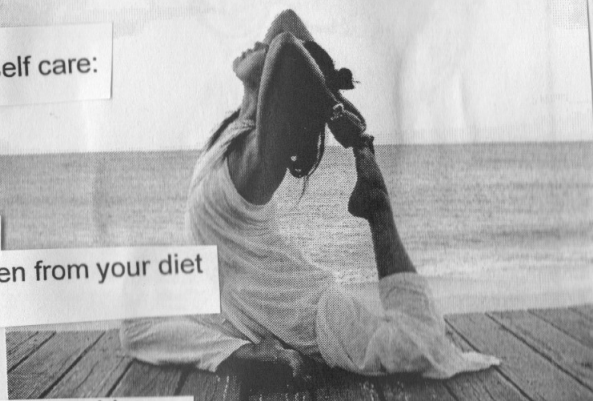
taking time off from activism to avoid burnout
giving yourself permission to feel angry/sad/jealous
taking responsibility for your emotions (aka not blaming others for sadness, jealousy, or even happiness)



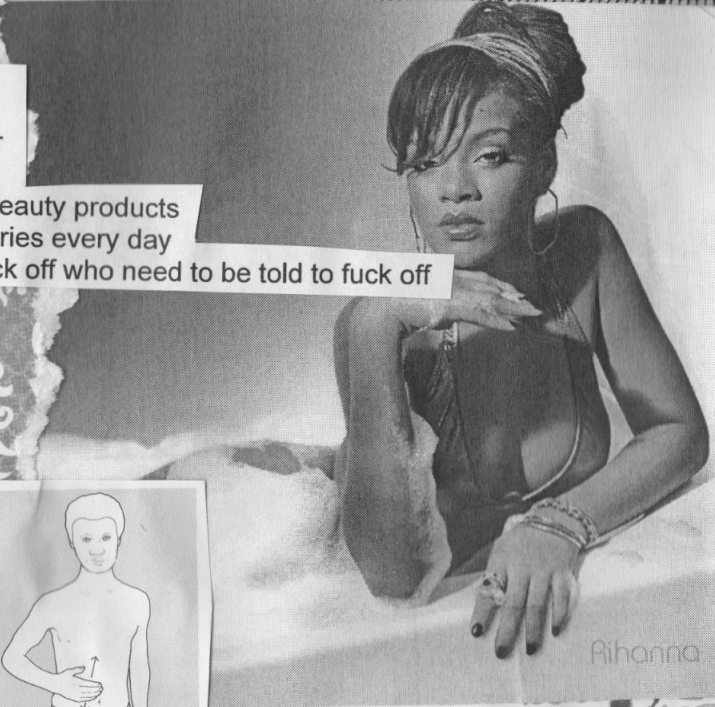
some examples of self care:

eating healthier foods
eliminating dairy or gluten from your diet
taking a bubble bath

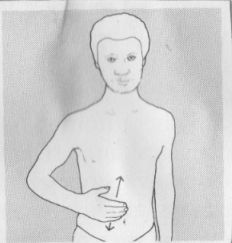
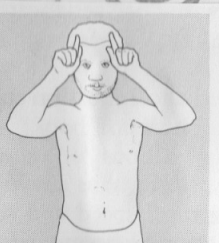
ending unhealthy relationships
sleeping in or going to bed earlier
taking vitamins
sleeping outside
listing things you're thankful for
gardening
fostering an animal
painting
writing poetry
going to sleep, not passing out



listening to music
cutting yourself
cutting off your hair
masturbating
making your own beauty products
eating enough calories every day
telling people to fuck off who need to be told to fuck off

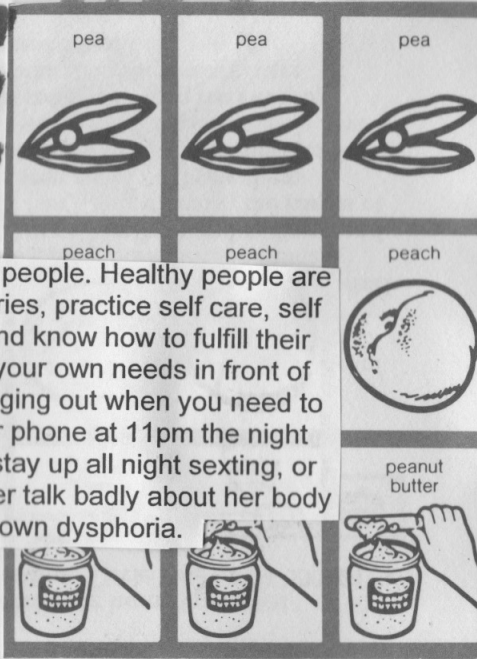


Rihanna



I think its important to remember that self love means different things to different people. to somebody it could mean posting nude pictures of themselves on the internet, and to someone else it could mean saying "no" to a date with someone you're not really interested in but felt pressured to say yes. maybe to you it means ditching your friends to stay home and read a book, but to somebody else it could mean ditching school to hangout with friends. Ultimately its about setting healthy boundaries and fulfilling needs.

So often we're told that "adult relationships" means making compromises and that "love" is when you put your relationship above your own needs. But I think that's a really unhealthy dynamic. How the hell am I supposed to bring anything good to a relationship when I don't have my own needs fulfilled? how can I love someone else if I don't love myself? how am I supposed to fulfill my partner's needs if I can't even fulfill my own?



Healthy relationships start with healthy people. Healthy people are people who have and enforce boundaries, practice self care, self awareness, work towards self love, and know how to fulfill their own needs. Maybe it means you put your own needs in front of your relationship, like saying no to hanging out when you need to spend time alone, like turning off your phone at 11pm the night before a test when you're tempted to stay up all night sexting, or telling your partner you can't listen to her talk badly about her body because its triggering your own dysphoria.



Personally, making the fulfillment of my own needs above a relationship looks like this: Because I have nightmares and trouble staying asleep, I get better rest from sleeping alone, so I only let my partners stay over occasionally when I don't have important things to do the next day. I am often late for plans because I need to run home and take my vitamins or eat because my blood sugar

is getting low, and my partners need to understand this and be patient with me about it. Although my partners might love me to spend every minute with them on my days off, I sometimes decline because I need a night to write poetry and catch up in

my journal. I don't let one relationship dominate my entire life and instead make sure there is a balance between my friends, family and romantic relationships. Even though some partners

could provide good things, if they aren't actively making my life more enjoyable I stop seeing them. Sometimes putting myself first means holding off on all romantic relationships for a while and letting myself be alone.

If my partners can't respect these boundaries or get angry that I'm not putting their needs above my own, its obvious to me that its an unhealthy relationship and I discontinue it.

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation,

and that is an act of political warfare."

— Audre Lorde, A Burst of Light (1988)

self care isn't always easy or fun. its not always as simple as bailing on a friend's party to watch a movie in your bed.

sometimes its about bailing on your friend's party to stay home and write in your journal about the time you were raped and crying your eyes out. sometimes its about teaching yourself to stop compulsively buying stuff you don't need. sometimes its about quitting drugs that cost you money and time, or going to therapy, or breaking up with your abusive girlfriend, or telling your mother that you don't really love her. sometimes self care is about being honest with yourself about your faults, or admitting that you hate yourself and you have a lot of work to do on yourself. sometimes self care is painful and ugly and dirty and traumatic but ultimately it leads to a better you.

self care is actively making your life better.

what self care isn't

self care isn't self pampering or self indulgence. Its not buying things you can't afford, or spending a bunch of money on a pedicure, staying home from work to sit on Facebook all day, or feeding a shopping addiction. Its not enabling your alcoholism or other addictions, it isn't vegging out on the couch with a beer and bad tv. Its not watching an entire season of your favorite show in one night. Not that these are necessarily bad things-- they just aren't self care. Maybe you consider those things hobbies, they help you unwind, or you just enjoy them. But unless they actively make your life better (not just your night better) then they're not really self care.