
Quotation

**"Perhaps the truth depends on a
walk around the lake."**

—Wallace Stevens
(20th-century American poet)

Safe and Unsafe Self-Nurturing

❖ **Safe self-nurturing** means seeking fun, joy, and pleasure in healthy ways and without excess.

✦ **Unsafe self-nurturing** means seeking pleasure in an activity that causes you harm (legal, financial, social, personal, or physical) and/or doing the activity to excess.

EXAMPLES OF SAFE SELF-NURTURING

★ (a) Circle any that you currently do. (b) Check (✓) any that you'd like to add to your life.

- ❖ Taking walks ❖ Socializing with safe friends ❖ Reading ❖ Travel
- ❖ Movies ❖ Crafts or hobbies (e.g., painting, woodworking, puzzles) ❖ Sports
- ❖ Enjoying pets ❖ Participating in a club or organization ❖ Music ❖ Exercise
- ❖ Eating out ❖ Local trips (day trips, weekends away) ❖ Baking or cooking
- ❖ Dance ❖ Visiting museums ❖ Playing games ❖ Taking an interesting class
- ❖ Volunteering ❖ Learning a new skill ❖ Enjoying the outdoors ❖ Writing
- ❖ Religious services ❖ Meditation ❖ Enjoying computers ❖ Warm baths
- ❖ Playing with children ❖ Going to events (concerts, comedy clubs, lectures, etc.)
- ❖ Others: _____

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES THAT MAY BE UNSAFE FOR SOME PEOPLE (WHEN EXCESSIVE)

★ Circle any that are unsafe for you.

- ✦ Shopping ✦ Food ✦ Watching TV ✦ Gambling ✦ Partying ✦ Work
- ✦ Pornography ✦ Exercise ✦ Video or computer games ✦ Internet ✦ Sex
- ✦ Others: _____

HOW DO PTSD AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE RELATE TO PROBLEMS IN SELF-NURTURING?

PTSD. You may be more familiar with pain than with pleasure. You may feel guilty about nurturing yourself (especially if you grew up without much love). To cope with trauma, you may have turned to unhealthy addictions rather than healthy activities to feel better.

Substance abuse. Substance abuse and other addictions are "cheap thrills." They may work in the short run, but in the long run they cause tragedy. They are misguided attempts to give yourself pleasure, and they keep you from finding healthy ways to feel good.

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A Gift to Yourself

- ❖ Give yourself a gift by . . . **increasing safe self-nurturing.**
- ✦ Give yourself a gift by . . . **decreasing unsafe self-nurturing.**

Some ways to do this:

- ❖ Replace unsafe activities with safe activities.
- ❖ Set a structure (e.g., at least 2 hours a day of safe self-nurturing).
- ❖ "Play around"—try a variety of safe new activities to see what you like.
- ❖ Work on it in therapy or with someone else who can help.
- ❖ Write yourself a letter giving yourself "permission" to improve self-nurturing.
- ❖ Explore the emotions that arise when you change your self-nurturing.
- ❖ Listen to your deepest needs.
- ❖ Get back to activities that you enjoyed "way back when" but gave up along the way.

YOUR SELF-NURTURING PLAN

★ Create your plan below, focusing on the week ahead. Be very specific to really make it work! Include any details that are important for you—for example, what activities, how often, during what time frame, how you will make it happen, who you will get help from, how you will remember to do it, and how you will feel if you do it. Continue on the back of the page if you need more space.

My "gift to myself" to increase safe self-nurturing activities:

My "gift to myself" to decrease unsafe self-nurturing activities:

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Ideas for a Commitment

*Commit to one action that will move your life forward!
It can be anything you feel will help you, or you can try one of the ideas below.
Keeping your commitment is a way of respecting, honoring, and caring for yourself.*

- ✦ Option 1: Carry out the "gift to yourself" plan that you wrote in today's session.
- ✦ Option 2: Try one new self-nurturing activity before the next session.
- ✦ Option 3: Make a life plan: What self-nurturing activities do you want to do every day? Every week? Every year? What would it take for you to give yourself these?
- ✦ Option 4: Write a letter giving yourself permission for self-nurturing activities.
- ✦ Option 5: Remember yourself as a child: What activities did you used to enjoy that you've lost along the way? Can you get back to any of those activities now?
- ✦ Option 6: Fill out the Safe Coping Sheet. (See below for an example applied to this topic.)

EXAMPLE OF THE SAFE COPING SHEET APPLIED TO THIS TOPIC

	Old Way	New Way
Situation	Had a conflict with my boss today at work.	Had a conflict with my boss today at work.
★ <u>Your Coping</u> ★	Went home, felt depressed. My thoughts were "Why can't I function like everyone else? This is my third job in 2 years. I can't keep my mouth shut, and I get mad at the slightest thing." I smoked some pot.	Get a video to take my mind off work, make myself a nice dinner, and take my dog out for a run (all self-nurturing activities).
Consequence	Went to sleep early. Woke up the next day and felt worse.	Feel calmer; have more perspective.

How safe is your old way of coping? ____ How safe is your new way of coping? ____

Rate from 0 (not at all safe) to 10 (totally safe)

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