

**TAKING CARE of YOURSELF is NOT SELFISH**  
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Particularly in this age of 24 hour news; we are all at risk of developing Secondary PTS or Compassion Fatigue. I recently attended a seminar and was able to glean the following knowledge regarding self care.

**Emotional symptoms of compassion fatigue include:**

**Lack of emotion, feeling helpless, irritability, experiencing flashbacks and loss of the ability to share the feelings of others.**

**Physical symptoms of compassion fatigue include:**

**Isolation, decreased energy level, insomnia, substance abuse and physical distress.**

**The beginning of compassion fatigue:**

**At a young age we are taught to put others first. This leads to persons feeling guilty if others are not put first. Guilt makes it uncomfortable to let others clearly know where your personal boundaries lie. Without the ability to set limits; a person over gives and doesn't say no. The intense desire to help others becomes justification to overdo well past where your personal boundaries lie. The feelings of responsibility lead to control issues and thoughts that no one else can do this like I do.**

**We need to learn and believe that taking care of ourselves is not selfish:**

**We need to be present in the moment; but don't accumulate moments or take on others suffering. Set boundaries to protect yourself and those who entrust you to assist with their care; and say, "no" more. You must have personal limits in order to keep your giving cup full. If you do not recharge your battery you cannot keep going. Take care of yourself so you can give your best to others. It is like the speech you get on the airplane; put your oxygen on before putting the oxygen on your neighbor in the event of a loss of cabin pressure.**

**Ways to fill our bucket:**

**Focus on solutions and not problems. Help others do for themselves without doing for them; you cannot fix everything or everyone. Look for the silver lining. Limit what negative news comes in. Focus on what we can control; and what brings you peace and joy. These can include things such as: listening to music, dancing, playing a game, sitting quietly, taking a walk, watching a sunset, talking with friends, drawing, exercising, laughing, singing, smiling, gardening, practicing yoga, playing sports, being still, journaling, going for a run, reading a book, snuggling, playing an instrument, cooking, playing with a pet, painting, spending time in nature or taking a deep breath. Have an attitude of gratitude. Be compassionate for yourself.**