



“This Is a Global Pandemic! This Is NOT the Time to Be Thinking of Yourself!”

Yes, “others before self” is the strong implication behind the Golden Rule. But, *context* is everything! There are many times when the greater good calls on us to put others before ourselves. However, as they say on every commercial flight, you have to “adjust your oxygen mask before assisting others.”

Obviously, you’re no good to others if you’re not breathing, yourself!

Extreme self-care is about *deliberate* care of body, mind, and spirit.

It’s about taking breaks and getting rest. It’s about eating well 80% of the time and allowing yourself some indulgences, guilt-free, 20% of the time. It’s about making time to PLAY, be creative, enjoy some indoor hygge, and outdoor exercise. It’s about taking time to be still, to pray, meditate, listen, and create space to make a deliberate choice, every day, about how

you will respond to the uncertainty. It's about choosing to take precautions *while* simultaneously looking for the silver linings.

Extreme self-care is NOT about hinging ourselves to expectations that we cannot possibly meet, OR that are no longer the priority they were just ten days ago.

It's about unhooking ourselves from "super-human" expectations and being okay with "less-than-perfect" performance. It's about evaluating our priorities to make sure we are putting the things that really matter, first. It's about letting go of outside expectations that are not serving us now. Or, perhaps, never did.

Extreme self-care is about leadership to those around us.

In taking care of our whole self, we inspire others to take better care of themselves. In letting go of super-human expectations of ourselves, we give others permission to do so, too.

Extreme Self-Care Is for All of Us

I am speaking specifically to:

...the parents who became homeschool teachers, overnight. Who, like myself, suddenly found ourselves working from home, with the whole crew, having to manage our preexisting life under a whole new set of circumstances PLUS the new role of managing the minute, daily details of our kids' education. *Whoa... even as a teacher, I did not see that freight-train coming.*

...the fiercely dedicated educators, swiveling on a dime to become "virtual" teachers, overnight. (That is a steep learning curve in the best of circumstances!) Many of you are also parents, carrying the role of homeschool teacher for your own family, as well. As a parent, I give you permission to make *extreme* self-care, and your family, your top

priorities. We'll take what you can give us, but we want you to make the most of this time. We want you to come back to school refreshed, not frazzled.

...to our healthcare workers & first-responders who now have added layers of concern on top of their already precarious jobs. They chose this vocation because they value service and because they wanted new challenges, every day. A global pandemic may be more than they bargained for, yet you still serve because they wouldn't do it any other way. Help them take *extreme* care of themselves during the off-duty hours.

...the grocery store saints who are working double-time, exposing themselves to risk, so that we all may remain fed. Two weeks ago, they did not know their work would become so critical. They are the personification of a reluctant hero! Thank them for coming to work every day, putting up with people who are lonely and afraid and taking it out on them because they are isolated from everyone else.

...the truck drivers, warehouse workers, and all support personnel who are managing the influx of inventory and delivery demands. They are all taking care of us, too. They are the unsung heroes that will never get the face-to-face appreciation they deserve. We don't always see them, but we know we need them to keep us rolling.

...the small business owners who have the toughest job of all... to be forced to close or reduce services for the protection of others. To lose their income, face the fear of losing their business, and feel so extremely helpless and hopeless. They need us more than ever during this time.

My prayer for you is that your faith may always exceed your fear, even if it feels ever-so-faint at times. YOU need this time of extreme self-care more than anyone! Meanwhile, hang tight to your prayers and faith; while this is very hard, life always leads us on a

journey that is best for us, if we are willing to see through the terrifying times, to the opportunities that lie just beyond.

I know, I know... easier said than done! But, this is out of your hands. So, instead of focusing on worry, focus on *extreme* self-care.

...the senior students, brides and grooms, retirees, and others who are mourning that their special events have been canceled. In some cases, their “last days” with friends came to an abrupt and jarring end. Without question, they have been robbed of something special! It is hard to witness the sadness and frustration. Their strength will shine and overcome this frustration.

...and to our children, teens, and young adults who are being formed by this pivotal time. They are just learning how to navigate this world; layers of uncertainty and fear can feel overwhelming. Now is the time for them to learn how to put their oxygen on first! Not to be selfish, but to be in an optimal place to give to themselves. We are creating warriors for the future.

Jon Gordon the author of *The Shark and the Goldfish: Positive Ways to Thrive During Waves of Change* states “Faith and fear have one thing in common. They both believe in a future that hasn't happened yet. Choose to believe in a positive future.”

There is hope.

You will be okay.

You will learn from this.

You will grow.

And you will someday use these lessons to build a brighter tomorrow for all of us!