AN ESSAY TO SHARE

The Way Out is Through

A person walking a dog on a trail in the woods

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceTrue Self-Care is Self-Healing and the Foundation for Collective Healing

An essay you can share or copy from and make your own

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# You’re More Prepared Than Most



### A Reluctant Leader?

If you’re reading this, it’s likely that you’ve been a seeker for longer than many people you know. You’ve navigated challenging circumstances, and you decided to try new things and learn from your experiences.

We’ve all tried things that didn’t work out very well, and although society told us those things were mistakes or failures, we might instead find them to be invaluable learning experiences, an irreplaceable aspect of life in the material world.

I hope that you’ve found amazing teachings and resources in your life, but no matter what you’ve found, I presume they ultimately taught you to turn inward. **You’ve come to realize that there’s nothing outside of you that will take away the pain or tell you what is best to do in the moment**. You’ve learned how to tap into the wisdom that is already in you, and how to APPLY IT.

**The bottom line is that you’re more prepared and resourced than many people on the planet to weather the storms of human existence, to serve effectively, and to evolve and thrive under any circumstances.**

**And, therefore, you’re a leader (a reluctant one, perhaps, but a capable one). However, this does not mean you are in control of — or responsible for — anyone but yourself.**

If it resonates for you, keep returning to the deepest truth: No matter what may be arising, you’re a spark of the Divine, an aspect of [consciousness](https://birdseyeview.xyz/research-and-testimony-library/consciousness-ascension-the-science-of-reality-oneness-introduction-overview/about-consciousness-the-collective-consciousness-ascension/)experiencing itself.

When you realize you’re in a state of discomfort or confusion and forgetting the truth that you are infinite and safe, simply return your awareness to the breath moving through your body, and begin to remember.

**Whenever there’s a question of what to do, consider hyper-focusing on self-care**. Making this the top priority and the focus of your existence allows everything else to naturally unfold.

It’s a huge challenge to feel your way through pain, rage or grief, through volatility and purging. And there’s potentially a lot of confusion at times when you consider how best to be of service in the face of a long overdue need for justice and healing on individual and collective levels.

# When You Wish You Had More Support

A picture containing handwear, blur

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For those times that you wish you had more support, here are some considerations.

Before providing the suggestions, I’d like to note that I’m wholeheartedly committed to not wasting my time or yours with baseless assertions, unquestioned opinions, or philosophical mumbo-jumbo. I’m well aware that we can lull our agitated mind into thinking it has it figured out and it tells us we can relax now and return to our same ‘ol habits. In light of our tricky patterns, I try to offer only sound considerations that have practical value even when it’s hard. I hope I’ve succeeded here.

Like you perhaps, I deeply respect experience and practicality. What follows reflects what I’ve personally experienced and observed in many others.

1. The shadow guides the way.
2. True self-care is not pampering or distraction. It’s self-healing.
3. Attempts at being of service that are undertaken from a place of unhealed wounding don’t tend to be effective.
4. Self-healing is the foundation for collective healing.
5. As we tap into our wholeness, the magic heightens and instead of spiraling down and burning out, our actions become ever more effective.

Detailed considerations below.

# The Shadow Guides The Way

A picture containing indoor

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### The Time for Collective Healing Has Come

Humanity and the Earth have been hurting for longer than most people will allow themselves to face. But the time for healing has come. The collective has begun to awaken from an onslaught of dream-like distractions to see the pain that’s been there all along. That awareness is naturally leading toward the darkness that has thrived beneath the distractions of unhealthy cultural norms.

Racism and violence are so dark that many of us would be hard-pressed to think of anything worse. But institutionalized, systemic racial injustice and violence (and more) are indeed darker.

Passionate beings of service have been trying to resolve these deeply dark aspects of human “civilization” for so long, but despite their heroic efforts, the dark practices were simply driven deeper beneath the surface — relegated to the shadow\* of the collective unconscious.

Now, however, distorted institutionalized power that has caused unfathomable harm is being exposed on a wider scale.

The slumbering giant of the collective is finally awakening. From here, the way out is through.

There is an opportunity for distorted systems to finally crumble so that we may rebuild our communities based on fair and humane values. You have the experience and skills to be a leader among the team that is midwifing an organic planetary ascension via the healing of individuals, families and communities.

### \*The Shadow

* The shadow is another name for the unconscious.
* The shadow includes everything that is not conscious — or anything obscure or unenlightened — be it positive or negative.
* The facet of a person’s personality which has been rejected over time is within the shadow. From this perspective, whatever is denied expression is thereby relegated to living in the shadow.
* The shadow is developed in the individual mind in addition to the inherited collective consciousness (the conscious and unconscious material of society as a whole).
* Shadow material may appear in dreams or visions and may be represented by symbols drawn from the collective unconscious.
* In psychotherapy terms, that which is hidden in the shadow and continually repressed is ripe for becoming the source of projection and personality disorders.

# What Self-Care is Not

A person holding a phone

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I’ve found that self-care is a required foundation before we can pursue justice and healing the planet in every way it needs healing. But I’m using the term “self-care” as a code word for activities that help you to heal from personal and collective trauma, abuse and grief, and to regularly regain balance when it is inevitably lost.  (Another aspect of self-care that I won’t focus on now relates to managing our vibrational frequency.)

### It’s Not Superficial Pampering or Distraction

Self-care is not superficial pampering or distraction. In a 2021 email newsletter, yoga teacher [Dianne Bondy](https://diannebondyyoga.com/?vgo_ee=T3zN7zDSKOPqbY8xi%2BMpCA%3D%3D)wrote, “Self-care is often equated with getting a massage or taking a vacation, but is actually about how we incorporate the Five Pillars of Self-Care into our daily lives.”

### And It’s Not Addictive Self-Soothing

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[You are invited to] let go of your delusions of what gives you comfort in order to explore other potential possibilities for a greater sense of inner security. What are your comforts? Do they really serve you? Or are they addictions that mask fear, insecurity and low self-esteem? These are hard questions but the truth will begin a process of getting back into a better balance in your life. And remember that one person’s comfort may be another’s fear. So, stay out of judgment.

– **Lena Stephens**

[**May Forecast 2022**](https://yogateachercentral.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=fba1005cc42866eedee36f543&id=e4468687e5&e=c06dec100e)

The subconscious and ego are wondrous constructs that can convince us of all sorts of delusions such as self-care equaling a bottle of wine after a stressful day.

Not only can the more obvious examples of addictive substances and practices be trickily presented as self-care, every positive concept and activity we can think of has a shadow side and can be distorted.

For example, a person may be regularly engaged in a yoga practice that is devoid of yogic principles and is aligned with their ego’s tendencies. So rather than participating in a self-care practice that helps them deconstruct their unconscious patterns, they’re engaged in a form of distraction, “spiritual bypass” or even something that strengthens unhealthy ego patterns.

When we truly care about authenticity, we’re constantly on the lookout for the ego’s trickery and returning again and again to our higher Self’s direction.

# True Self-Care is Self-Healing

A picture containing outdoor, tree, person

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In contrast to superficial pampering or distraction, consider a few profound perspectives:

* Mara Glatzel frames self-care as **a journey from self-abandonment to self-partnership**.
* Azriel Re-Shel speaks of **“being there” or “holding space” for yourself.**
* Amina Naru and  Pamela Stokes Eggleston discuss the  need for assessing **your individual needs in a “total mind-body-spirit”** approach.
* Carly Ann points out that a lack of self-love (or low self-esteem) can present as an inability to provide adequate self-care.

[Dianne Bondy](https://diannebondyyoga.com/?vgo_ee=T3zN7zDSKOPqbY8xi%2BMpCA%3D%3D)expands on what she calls the Five Pillars of Self-Care:

* **Movement**. Our bodies are made to move. Every day.
* **Intention**. Instead of trying to do more things faster, consider doing each task with intention.
* **Nourishment**. Nourishment is pivotal to self-care.
* **Connection**. Humans need connection but when things get busy, it’s even more critical.
* **Rest**. Rest is about actively relaxing and doing nothing on purpose.

When self-care is thought of as holding space for yourself, more considerations may open up. Azriel ReShel goes deep into this subject [here](https://upliftconnect.com/hold-space-for-yourself/) including these “keys for holding space for yourself:”

* Embracing Your Imperfection
* Saying “No”
* Developing Boundaries
* Communing with Yourself
* Listening
* Reaching for Support
* Being Authentic
* Being a Good Parent O Yourself
* Developing Supportive Rituals

# Self-Healing is The Foundation for Collective Healing

A person and a child on a plane

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### Focusing on Self Before Endeavoring to Serve

#### **Attempts at Being of Service that are Undertaken from a Place of Unhealed Wounding Don’t Tend to Be Effective.**

Many years ago, I came into contact with an organization that was preparing yogis for “sustainable, conscious activism and effective community action.” [Off the Mat Into the World](https://www.offthematintotheworld.org/)is a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 by the skilled karma yogis, Seane Corn, Hala Khouri and Suzanne Sterling. In their work, they delved deeply into the heart of trauma, self-regulation, social justice and activism. And they went beyond espousing thoughtful words. They provided practical preparation and willingly stepped into the fire of trauma to support and serve people who have suffered unimaginable horrors in some of the most devastating situations on the planet.

Shortly after Off the Mat began training yogis, I traveled to Los Angeles to attend their 5-day workshop. I was challenged that week far beyond my expectations. I wish to pass on one of their most fundamental teachings: no amount of trying to fix what’s out there in the world will work if you’re unaware of your own shadow and ignoring your need to heal. (In this [3-minute video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o_N5NYVfySk), Seane Corn offers an authentic and quick introduction to this topic.)

While this teaching is now second nature to me, at the time I found it revelatory because I thought that service and self-healing were unrelated things.

The evidence, however, shows us otherwise. At the collective level, we view a sea of brokenness. And on an individual level, we have learned first-hand that if you try to get out there and “help” or “fix” without having figured out how we ourselves need to heal, then we tend to hit inexplicable brick walls; experience deeper frustration instead of deeper satisfaction; and suffer from compassion fatigue or worse.

A grassy field with trees and mountains in the background

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### The Work of Our Lives

For me personally, being of service has always been the deepest, most insistent truth of my existence.  I can’t NOT serve. But self-healing was something of a chore that I only engaged in because I was suffering.

In my late 20s and early 30s, I began to see that how I was going about my life wasn’t bringing me the results I wanted. Dissatisfaction (suffering) led me to the path of self-healing. Existential pain led me to spirituality. Anger led me to therapy. Illness led me to nutrition and naturopathy. Horror and sadness led me to acupuncture and shamanism. Anxiousness led me to the Tao Te Ching and yoga. Curiosity led me to meditation, astrology and reiki. An emptiness led me to plant medicine. Confusion led me to addiction healing and a myriad of ascension practices.

And now, spaciousness and Love fuel both my ongoing self-care and my planetary service.

Arguably, if you are incarnated on Earth now, it’s a given that you’ve been deeply affected by intergenerational trauma and have a need for healing and ongoing learning and growth.

Self-healing is big work. I’d propose that it’s the work of our lives. And it apparently never ends. My personal experience is that new dimensional realities just keep opening up as we further awaken, providing entirely new awe-inspiring experiences and growth

# Tapping Into Magic & Leaving Burnout Behind

A wave in the ocean

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With each step toward meeting our potential, we get closer to feeling our wholeness and the unity consciousness that is our birthright. We naturally become more capable of being of true service to our family, community and the world.

If we’re fortunate enough to begin to wake up, we turn away from the distractions and face ourselves.

If we’re desperate enough to relieve our suffering, we keep looking long enough to become aware of our traumas, wounds and shadow.

If we’re brave enough, we surrender our egoic delusions to The Force that wants us to heal.

And then the magic starts.

No, really, magic… things that you never thought were possible magically happen now. If you’re on this path, you know this is true. If you’re not, it’s up to you to experience it for yourself.

In our increasing wholeness, we find that the way in which we can be of service unfolds with greater clarity and ease (albeit with perhaps a greater insistence and fear because we are usually guided to work at our outermost edges).

We realize that somehow we can now hold the pain of the world without numbing out or spiraling down. And we find that our efforts come to have more profound effects that we just couldn’t seem to achieve before, no matter how passionate, informed or dedicated we were previously.

We come to have a greater ability to deeply feel the joy of nature and existence, and to control our frequency. We experience dimensional shifts in consciousness that the sages have long promised are there for us.

We’re better able than ever to serve and hold space for others to heal. We find ourselves leading by example, seeing solutions and taking effective actions. We realize that we — with our quirky combination of issues, experiences and skills — are needed, and that it’s our strange and unique wholeness that’s being called to create and implement solutions for the benefit of all beings.

For me, my passion to be of service has never wavered, but it no longer stems from a compulsive reaction to make the pain go away. Instead, it flows from the great well of Joy available to us all.

I’ve always tried hard but my best intentions weren’t always stemming from wholeness or accompanied by a skillful understanding of others and the results weren’t what I wanted. My skillfulness keeps growing and I’m getting far better results. I still sometimes get frustrated or angry or sad, but not nearly as often or to the same degree. My ability to serve my family, my community and the world has grown exponentially.

If this is true for you, too, please pass on your gifts to your students.

Now is the time. There is no other time.