



Before assisting others, place the oxygen mask on yourself

by Elizabeth Sindelar-Loy
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Dear reader, I am forewarning you that this article is going to start out quite disheartening, but I promise if you hang on until the end, there will be a positive message. Promise. I understand completely that it's off-putting to ask you to accept

more negativity on top of what seems to be constant streams of depressing information, but please bear with me. I guarantee this is the eye-opening, hopeful information you're craving.

In a world where there is instant access to almost anything we need or desire, we are drowning under the weight of everything on our "plates" instead of flourishing! Our lives consist of our bodies repetitively being bombarded by stimuli building up unwarranted stress - ultimately constructing a path riddled with chronic illness. In our obstinance to have it all, we have tragically reduced the quality of our lives.

Abetted by the influence of marketing and putting profits over people, society has created a false narrative of what success should be. Burnout and struggling are put on a pedestal as a "prerequisite" to having it all. In turn, the false conviction of this narrative is woven so tight into our thoughts. On the outside, we look like we have it together, yet deep inside we are falling apart at the seams. The energy we never had, to begin with, is given away freely with dire consequences.

Burnout, exhaustion and hormonal disharmony are the new normal. But, they don't have to be. The quality of our lives can change positively by simply slowing down and listening to our bodies. That's right, imagine looking in the mirror in the morning and hearing the words, "Slow down beautiful. Slow down handsome. I'm trying to tell you something."

Our bodies talk to us constantly. Stop berating it. Allow the body to show its signs and symptoms... Pain? Exhaustion? Expanding waistline? Digestive issues? Imperfect skin? Emotional struggles? Loneliness though not alone?

"Ladies and Gentlemen, can I have your attention, please? If in case of an emergency, please secure the oxygen mask on yourself before assisting a loved one."

It's time to officially accept we have reached the emergency warning in our lives. DO NOT DELAY putting the oxygen mask on first before giving your energy to anyone else. Our bodies are screaming "DANGER"! Accept solitude, silence, and stillness to hear the warnings. When you do, positive changes will occur. Sleep will become a welcomed way to recharge. Cooking nutritious meals will be integrated into a daily routine. Full-time work and childcare will become balanced leading to more fulfilling relationships.

The time is now. Give yourself permission to stop letting everyone else, but you, define your quality of life. Self-care is not selfish by any definition. Self-care is as vital as oxygen is to sustaining life. We would be useless to family, work, friends or our communities without placing the oxygen mask on ourselves before assisting them.

Break free from the false narrative depleting our bodies and start living a quality life today.

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