CASAT Podcast Network

Uh, welcome, Trudy.

We're happy to have you here again today to talk about self care and connection for first responder families.

Self care happens to be one of my, uh, favourite topics and is near and dear to my heart.

So I'm really excited to talk with you about this today as we get started.

What are the types of self care that are most important to integrate into a person's life?

So just for ease in of explanation, I usually lump self care into two general categories, and certainly very loosely.

General Category one is what I call foundational self care.

So these are things that you really need to be doing on most of the time a daily basis, if not a regular basis, so that it's in other words, those are absolutely necessary on a day to day basis to be optimised.

The second kind of self care is more or less targeted self care, so it's self care.

We utilise when we have a specific stressor.

We have a certain type of problem we need to solve, or a certain kind of challenge that comes down the pike.

It's unique, and so I'm going to use a specific type of self care that I've decided to match up to that that I'm going to use specifically for that thing.

But I may not use that, but once or twice a year, depending on the situation.

So I'm not having to do it every day and just have to have it ready to be used.

So can you expand on that a little bit?

What would be some of the examples of foundational self care?

I love that, by the way, the separating them, Um, but can you give us some examples?

Were foundational.

Sure, So I would say, you know, beyond anything sleep is needs to be in every single person's foundational self care.

Sleep is essential for us to be optimised just for us to do.

I'm really, really well in life.

Most people don't know this, but most if not all professional sports teams actually have a sleep expert on their staff, and they actually work with the members of the team to make sure that they have all of the things in place for them to do really well.

Like while they're on the road or while they are during their, especially during their season, because if they can get really good sleep, they're actually going to perform better as an athlete.

So it's, it's, you know, it really hits the bottom line.

It's points, it's, you know, it's it's less injuries, that sort of thing.

So it's going to actually work out really well for them and we really are no different than an athlete.

We need sleep to be optimised and we are going to have more problems in life if we don't really protect that sleep.

So it's an important part of our foundation exercises to we are.

Our bodies are meant to move and if we don't get certain enough, exercise, whatever that is, we are going to end up having a lot more problems in our life, just especially as we age.

But interestingly, exercise also gives us another really big boost in that it creates some chemicals that are sort of the anti stress chemicals.

So if we exercise, we actually get this really wonderful effect that I get to stop the production of crappy stress chemicals and start production of really, really good soothing centering chemicals.

So it's a it's a really big win.

I mean, our body likes to do it.

Anyway, um, you're also going to sleep better if you exercise.

I mean, there's a direct correlation in their, um some other ones are things like eating right.

Whatever right is for you and just having a recognition and an awareness in your own body.

What seems to work?

I did a ride along about a year ago, right before Covid hit with an officer, and he had his He had a little like, um uh, you know, a little cooler in the front seat of his car on the floorboards.

And he had a bunch of different food in there.

She says not every single day did he get to eat.

And then at one point, he kind of looked at this really guilty look on his face and reaches over and pulls out a pop tart because I'm sorry, but I love Pop Tarts, and it's not like I'm the pop, you know, I'm the sugar police or something, but I thought it was like he even knew like, this isn't really in my bed, but I love pop, Tarts said.

To me, it's partly it's about like really knowing what's really going to optimise your body in that regard.

And certainly, you know, if we eat really poorly, it's gonna be harder to exercise.

It is going to affect our sleep, and there's actually a lot of really cool new information about how different foods actually affect our moods as well.

And that's getting to be a really interesting new area of research.

And so that's something to be aware of, a couple others that are really important social connection needs to be in our foundation.

It can't be, Yes, we will also use people in our in our in our target is health care.

But social connection needs to be in our foundation that we have to have that established on and we have to be tapping into our social support on a regular basis.

It has to be part of our schedule and then lastly I would say which is like really important, which is an ability to have self awareness and self insight because we're going to need that to help us know what sorts of targeted self care could be useful.

So I need to have that as something I do checking in with myself checking in with myself Awareness of things like, what is my stress level?

Am I hungry?

Um, do I have any pain issues in my body, Any of the different things that that sort of that regular ability to check in with ourselves and get the information from our own Selves about what I need to do next.

I think that needs to be in our foundation because I need to be doing it so regularly that I'm I'm the first one who knows stuff about me.

I'm not the last one like somebody else says, Hey, have you noticed you're really grumpy lately?

It's like, Ah, so we want to be the first one to notice.

Like, Wow, I'm not acting the same way as I normally act Um, so I think that's that's those are the most important things in our foundation.

Awesome.

What are some of the targeted strategies?

So target is self care.

I I use the analogy of, uh actually it's kind of like some people use the analogy of a toolbox.

I personally use the analogy of a storage closet.

Um, that you sort of have this this closet.

It's got all these different shelves and all these different little boxes and cubbies and different things that you're you're storing all of these different things that you, you you need to target this particular issue that's in your life right now.

So that way you can kind of open the closet and search around on the shelves and say What would really be a good match for this thing I'm going through right now.

So there's probably a subset of about three different types of targeted self care that they fit into kind of subcategories.

So you might have, like, I call the emotional shelf.

So all of the strategies I need that will actually deal a lot with things having to do with emotions, social support.

Some of the different types of things we get from social support is another one and practical self care.

Some ideas, so some some examples of each so emotional self care.

These are going to be the skills that help you deal with emotions and also the skills you used to avoid stuffing emotions.

So some examples of that and I'm just putting examples out, and then everybody's going again.

You're gonna have to compile your own closet, your own your own skills because they're going to be unique to you.

It's kind of like your own personal fingerprint on your own life.

What seems to work?

So some some ideas are an emotional self care might be gratitude list and the reason why Gratitude list work really well.

It's a It's a really effective mood regulator, but it also shifts us away from our brain's default.

So our brain actually has a negativity default.

It just tends to look for the negative and things, and I think in particular for first responders.

Their jobs are so largely being exposed to a lot of negative events, too.

So it sort of reinforces that so pulling your brain away from it and actually noticing what's going right in your life noticing what's really good in your life?

Um, the just just even small things all the way to big things.

So if we force our brains to do that every once in a while, it can actually help really regulate and balance out some of that negativity that we get exposed to.

Um, another, Another big one for emotional self care would be is staying really anchored to the meaning in your work.

Usually people will enter any given field with a really clear sense of why they're doing it.

I mean, they absolutely know the why.

But then, over time, in the grind of life, we will sometimes lose touch with that.

So regularly checking in with Why am I doing this or what is really meaningful about it can rejuvenate us in regards to our work and even make us a lot more resilient to the emotional blows that work will end up.

Having to have a tendency to put on us a couple other things is is just as a real practical one, which is using a technique called the mind Dump.

So the mine dump is want something that a lot of people actually add to their sleep hygiene routine, which is the routine you do right before you go to bed.

And they will actually write down all of the issues that are actively on their mind that day.

And it can just be it's a list for you.

It's not a list for anybody else, so you can just do bullet points and you can say odd conversation with Boss um, irritating experience with so and so, um, got to make sure that I call the yard guy because we need to change the day next week.

So all of those little things that are just sort of actively on our minds, we put them all on the list.

We actually physically write them down.

We put them on a on our dresser, let's say, and that way it's a way of disciplining our brain to let go of those things so that you can sleep more soundly, especially if you have a very active mind.

Or if you have a very if you tend towards worrying more anxiety more, it could be a really useful technique.

And then you, of course, the first thing in the morning.

You're picking it up and you're reading it.

It doesn't you don't get relief right away, but over a course of the discipline of it, your brain goes, Oh, she's got this so I don't have to.

I don't have to wake her up in the middle of the night to remind her that she needs to call the yard guy.

It's I'm gonna She wrote it down on the list were good.

And so we just get in the habit of doing that as a discipline as a way of acknowledging that I have these things that I have to do.

I even when I do a mine dump from time to time, I'll even add need to have conversation with so and so or need to talk through X y Z because I don't I want my brain to know.

I know this is important and I'm going to get to it.

I'm not ignoring it, and I'm not stuffing it.

I may not have the space and time right now to deal with it, but I am going to.

I see it is that important?

A couple of just simple ones is, um, is any of the mindfulness techniques and that's a really, really big umbrella under which to stand.

And so there's there's mindfulness of emotion.

There's mindfulness of thought.

Those all of those can be just really, really useful.

And and one of the things that mindfulness, if you can learn some of the techniques around mindfulness that are so good for emotion, is that it helps us have a little bit of distance between ourselves and the emotions.

So we get a lot more curious about it and kind of interested in it, like, sort of like we're We're more amused by ourselves like, Wow, did I overreact to that?

That was interesting, as opposed to what a jerk that I overreacted.

That so judgement has a tendency to shut us down, whereas curiosity kind of opens us up and then obviously will lead us to having possible possibility of many more solutions to something.

I'm also a really huge fan of humour, which I think can be really super healthy as far as an emotional strategy.

In the aftermath of one October, when I was seeing a lot of people during that time frame, um, one of the things I did is right before bed so I would actually get into bed, which I know you're not supposed to be on your phone in bed, but it was I was I would actually pull up stand up comedians, and I would listen to stand up comedians until I started laughing because I was trying really hard to get out of that deep, difficult part of my brain that had been being used all day long.

and I wanted to bring it to a different part of the brain.

And so as soon as I would start kind of smiling, and then I would start giggling a little.

It's like, Okay and go to sleep now because I needed to pull myself out of it.

And it was just a strategy I found to be just, really, really useful.

And then probably the last one I would mention again huge, huge, huge thing to work on is it's really also important emotionally to take a look at some of the stories that we have about ourselves or about life that actually still have pain embedded in them.

And to look at changing the story.

Not that we're going to change the history but actually changing our relationship to it.

It's really the difference between seeing like telling a story, that I'm telling you the story from a place of pain.

And when I'm telling the story, all the person hears his pain as opposed to I'm telling the story of pain and overcoming.

If you really were to sit down and listen to like, let's say you know the really inspiration.

Like Ted talks.

For example, almost all of them are stories of overcoming.

So it's a story of an initial original pain that they tell you the journey that they took to overcome that and the growth that they ended up discovering about themselves and the and the awareness is and how they feel about themselves now as a direct result of having had that experience and almost like this really interesting gratitude that sort of like, Wow, I'm so I don't wish that upon anyone.

But, man, am I grateful for the growth I have and the person I've become?

I like this person and that sometimes we sometimes have to spend some time emotionally, really looking at that story and recognising that there are ways we can start seeing ourselves differently.

That would be so much more helpful and hopeful than the way we have tended to write that original story.

I love that.

I love that.

There's so much to unpack and all of that and and also I think it comes back to.

The theme that we talk about is finding what works for you and what you need.

I like that I have a friend who told me about the mine dump at one point because he had a lot of anxiety and wake up.

And so he keeps it by his bed and would wake up at night.

And he trained his brain that once he does it, he can go back to sleep.

Even though you would think getting up to write something down, turn on a little lighter, something would wake you up more.

It actually helps him sleep better, because then he's not just cycling through it.

And I think that actually you don't hear about that stuff a lot.

What's cool about that is that is, actually in a sense, that's another piece of self care, which is our social support network.

So sometimes what we do, which is kind of a.

That's why our social support is part of our foundational self care.

But it's also very, very much part of our target of self care, because that way we don't have to reinvent the wheel.

So if I have like four or five friends and I can check in with them, it's like, Hey, I'm going through this What have you tried in the past?

What have you tried to deal with that or what?

What do you do?

So, yeah, you have this conversation about my mind is racing at night.

I can't sleep.

It's waking up in the night.

Your friend shares with you about mind, and you say, I'm going to try that out and all of a sudden you have a new you know, a new little.

You have to clear a little spot out in the self care closet and like stick something else new.

And because it's like, cool, this one I'm gonna start using because this is a really good one.

So that's why I think it's so important.

Our social support network helps us share our stressors with them.

They also, And the reason why that's so important is sometimes it helps us normalise our stressors.

Because sometimes we'll think there's something wrong with me that I feel this way or I'm thinking this way and someone Oh, no, I feel like that a lot.

It's like, Oh, cool.

So I'm not I'm not.

I'm okay.

But everyone's well, I've had a friend go.

Oh, no, Trudy, that isn't normally.

What?

Uh, it's some regards that's also helpful, right?

Because then I can go.

Oh, crap.

I need to do a correction here because, you know, maybe I or even an overcorrection, because I am a little off.

So our friends really can help us with reality testing because, you know, and that's why if I if I have things going on, I'm going to run it by a couple of my friends because I want to make sure that I'm on the right track.

So I don't get too far down a path and then have to, you know, put on the brakes and then back all the way up and start all the way over.

That's not really, especially because there are.

Some of our friends are just so much more clever than that, we realise.

And so they have all this really good, you know, stuff that they can share with us.

Um, it's also certainly our friends can can help us practise some skills and then also practise them doing them, but also practise like, um so we can do them and then share them with people I guess would be a good way of putting it.

So some of those that we do in our social support network is I sometimes have to ask for help and help seeking behaviours.

That's a whole skill set, and the best place to practise it is with people that I'm close to.

But then also being a helper, that's really a satisfying thing that can actually fill us up sometimes.

And sometimes that is, the solution is to get out of ourselves and be be generous to someone else, as opposed to being.

Sometimes we get too far up in our own heads.

Self advocacy skills are very often skills that we also learn from our social support network.

But sometimes we're the one modelling it because our friends don't know it.

So again, we get to be helpful in that way, Um, to be able to have deeper and deeper connections with our social support network.

That's a that's.

Those are sometimes even category of things we would call rituals of connection.

So we find out new ways to create a ritual with a friend or ritual with our family that will actually deepen the connections with them, which creates more satisfaction in more safety for us.

Um and then obviously fun gets put in there, so we plan fun, you know, it would be great that if fun just happen spontaneously.

But a lot of times we have to plan to have it.

And we usually have that lot with, uh, about other people.

And then also just having just a regular ongoing evaluating your social support needs, because sometimes we don't realise that we're missing some people.

I discovered that a few years back after one October again, I started a group and I put it out there.

I was doing some workshops, actually for CASATt, and I started this peer support group, and it was because I was missing that I was missing support.

I'm in private practise by myself at the time, and so I didn't really have peers that I could run cases by or that I could just talk like, Oh, this is going on is you know, what do you think?

And so I created that because it was I didn't have anyone in my life who is going to be able to provide that support for me.

So thank goodness, you know.

And that's why sometimes we have to evaluate, reevaluate every once in a while to make sure that those social needs are met and then some.

Just some ideas for practical self care.

Um, a lot of us know this stuff, but it's things that we will have a more or less healthy relationship with.

For example, a practical self care ideas.

Getting more organised organisation can be some people's nemesis, others of us.

It's just our sort of our natural state of being.

And but when we're organised, we always do feel more soothed.

So sometimes the problem isn't the stressor itself.

It's that we're not very organised in our approach to the stressor.

Then as soon as we get organised, it seems like it resolves itself.

Um, anything that we reduced to a habit or routine, which is also is always going to make it easier for us.

So sometimes the problem we are actually having is the thing I'm dealing with on a regular enough basis.

I don't have a habit that really balances that out.

And so that lack of habit or maybe even the opposite I have a bad habit that is causing my stressor.

So I end up having to look at that from time to time and then work on that, um, hobbies can fit into this category because hobbies can be really, really just such an important part of who we are and reflective of our own individual creativity, or are.

Maybe we just really like to pursue something that's very unique and that, um, that just is just We can just go into it and just go into that state of flow that is just and then four hours pass and we just off.

That was so wonderful.

So hobbies can provide us with something.

I'm good also learning what's relaxing to you, because that's also a unique thing.

What's relaxing to one person may absolutely agitate the crap out of another person, so we have to learn.

Like, Okay, I've got to try this and try this and I'll watch what other people do and I'll try it on.

And if it works, it works.

Also might add something to that, but it may not work, and I have to be open minded about that.

Um, and then and then another one is just really learning to have just an overall better relationship with our stressors.

I think there are some stressors we actually could eliminate that we've been a little resistant to doing that because it will maybe be a lot of work or whatever.

But some of our stressors, we really could take a look at and and eliminate.

And it would actually sometimes be very, very much in our best interest.

Um, other of our stressors, we may need to minimise.

So I'm actually going to decrease how often they affect me, for example.

So an easy example of that would be if you have somebody who tends to at work co worker who is just excessively negative and you sometimes we'll get stuck in this conversation with them.

And you just feel like you've just been, you know, all of the energy sucked right out of you.

You could end up finding some really effective strategies to minimise the amount of time you actually have that conversation.

So that would be that would end up making you have actually, collectively, over the course of a day or a week, a lot less stress that you've accumulated.

And lastly, sometimes we do have to work on changing our psychological relationship to a stressor.

And what that might look like would be if you are a person who every time you get on the freeway and you're driving, you've absolutely when people are driving, not following the speed limits or that there going in and out of traffic, or that there's a lot of traffic, you just absolutely become just agitated or even enraged that you start looking at it.

What makes me like that?

What what's going on with me and then to just kind of keep looking at it.

Keep looking at it.

I had one person I worked with and actually what the they actually were a person who actually did have road rage and was getting in trouble as a result of it.

And what they ended up figuring out was, is that the actual problem was time.

They had a problem with being late to things, and they had a habit of underestimating the amount of time it took to get to point a to point B.

So as soon as the time problem was solved, so their psychological relationship to driving completely changed because so now driving became very, very non stressful and then certainly for some people.

But what they need to do is they need to have it be something they look forward to instead of having it be something that's dreadful, like I will frequently listen to podcasts when I drive.

So I always look forward to driving because I get to listen to my podcast or I know people who do books on tape because they have, like, a half hour or 45 minute commute into work.

And so that ends up making it like I can't wait to drive and I can't wait to be in the car so that it completely changes their relationship to traffickers.

Who cares?

I get to listen longer so it ends up being something that ends up changing.

So those are some just some ideas.

And certainly again, I would probably have barely filled one person's shelf with some of these examples.

So doing like what you do, Daniel, and you talk to friends and you observe friends and you do some reading yourself.

You can get lots and lots of ideas, try them on, try them on for maybe a few times and say, Does this really work for me and then keep trying to keep trying until you actually over a period of several lifetimes?

I guess, um, you can fill up those shelves.

And so at the I love what you're saying, Um, I'm taking notes like literally taking notes, not just for like this, but for myself.

And also gonna took a note to look into why people not using their turn signals make me so frustrated.

That's my piece.

But, um, and I do love, I think, from the first responder perspective we talked so much and a lot of the conversation, not just us as around how to deal with the job.

And I think it's so important how to enhance the quality of time you get with your family.

And so I think this is a really important piece.

Are there any other general tips that you have?

I know you've you've listed some out.

Are there any others that could be useful for somebody that's trying to enhance this part of their life?

Sure.

And I think one of the really important ones for all of us is that there is a concept, especially with that targeted self care, is that there?

We really do need to be looking at novelty versus overuse.

So So what I'm saying there is that some self care some techniques that we're going to use for ourselves that by daily use it's going to really just create this really, really good scenario other times over use.

Doing it every single day is going to create a problem for me.

So and there is something to be said about novelty to about like so if I have like, let's say I have an issue that comes on on a regular basis and I always throw the same exact self care at it.

And maybe it's coming up really, really frequently.

Let's say it's stress, work, stress and my solution is I'm going to play video games.

So maybe for the first, I don't know, a couple of weeks.

It seems to help.

I feel like, really relaxed.

It's really fun.

I start looking forward to it.

But then over time I'm noticing.

I'm playing more and more and I'm playing for longer and longer periods of time and before I know at the overuse of that thing that started out what seemed like a really good self care strategy is now going south on me because I've overused it.

So that's one of those ones that we are going to want to look regularly.

Is there anything in my coping repertoire that I'm over using?

One thing, for example, that's directly a first responder thing is that a lot of times avoidance can be a coping strategy.

Now there is healthy avoidance.

I will.

I have no doubt about that.

But usually there's a very specific reason I'm going to be using that kind of avoidance.

And then I'm going to usually circle back around and I'm going to take care of something.

So avoidance is one of those self care strategies that a person can overuse, and we'll have to really look at also novelty, like so, for example, like, Let's say I need self soothing If I did the exact same thing to self soothe every single time, and I needed a lot of self soothing.

It's not gonna work after a while, so, yeah, I want to be able to say, like, Yeah, one day I'm gonna do a bubble bath and then another day I'm gonna take I'm gonna take a really long, leisurely walk around the block with the dog, and then another day, I'm going to call a friend who's really, really funny and we're just gonna shoot the crap over the phone and I'm gonna laugh.

And so I'm gonna have all these different things.

So it's always novel, always novel.

And then the brain really appreciates that novelty.

So it's fresh every single time.

Another thing is, we do have to practise skills.

Sometimes we will try something out one time.

And I have to admit, I've been guilty of this and, oh, that doesn't work.

Um, so we're just simply not going to get the effect of some things without practise.

And we have to learn how to even ask maybe the person who is doing that, like, how long did it take you to practise that skill?

Before you started noticing like it was getting easier, it was really starting to work.

At least you can get maybe a little bit of an idea about how long, so practising them is really important.

And sometimes I think there's some skills we want to practise when we don't need them.

An example of that is time out.

So if you're first learning how to time yourself out, especially in your primary relationship mm excuse me.

It's really useful to practise that that when you don't need it, so practise it at work, practise it with, uh, a friend, or practise it.

Just pretend in your head like I think I'm at a time out right now.

I need to take a little bit of break because then when I actually need it, it will be readily available to me because I've practised the skill when the stakes were low and then I'm able to do it when the stakes are high.

And then lastly, here is that, um, like I said before, anything I reduced to a habit is gonna get easier.

So if I can learn to make some of these things, I practise them enough to become really competent at them.

It's easier for me to do them versus in the midst of something difficult.

I'm trying to pull it out and make it work.

It's very hard then because I haven't practised it, and it isn't something natural to me.

So habits are easiest.

They just are.

And then the last one, like we've been talking about, be flexible and keep trying out new self care.

Care to see what works, because it may be some things I've overused, so I'm going to have to actually truly put them on the shelf for a while, which is what I suggest to people.

So it's like if you're over using avoidance, say I'm not avoiding anything and I'm not going to avoid anything for three weeks.

I'm putting it on the shelf and I'm going to substitute with these other things to break my habit of that overuse and then also forced me to practise some other new skills that I'm not going to care for at first.

But then I'm going to actually have some new ones afterwards.

I'm curious.

Trudy, What are some barriers to self care that you see in first responder families?

And what are some strategies to overcome those barriers?

I think probably the biggest barrier for a lot of folks is time, so they really will have this belief.

And interestingly, time again can be, Hey, I think we tell ourselves stories about I tell myself I don't have enough time for that or I can't do that.

So, you know, and that's actually a pretty typical that I can't.

It's a pretty typical barrier for a lot of people and also this is too foo foo la la for me and, uh so you know, there's a lot of a lot of self care strategies that we can certainly practise in private and then realise crap.

They were right.

This does work.

I have a I actually have a lot of my first responders who are who I taught how to meditate.

And so we've been been meditating.

What's really cool about Some of them have taught their Children, which I think is just an amazing thing and which is just a great universal because because meditation is one of those things, it's a really, really big construct.

It isn't sitting on a cushion and saying home, like a lot of people think there's a lot of different ways that a person can meditate.

There's guided meditations.

There's actually walking meditations that you can do.

And there's also writing writing meditations.

Some people prefer those, and so there's a lot of different ways to go about it.

But no matter what it's about, it's deepens that self awareness, and it gives you more space to make choices, too.

So it kind of is a way of creating, which is obviously like most of us with Children.

We'd say, Wow, that would really be nice if my child had a little bit more space between their thought in their action.

And that's really what that can end up doing for us.

And so which is really helpful, I have to say Gratitude is a Foo Foo la la for me.

It's so funny my reaction to gratitude.

And I've I've always wondered, like, Why do I have this reaction to gratitude?

And I was doing some work with the Bureau of Prisons and, um, we were writing this journal.

And, um, they said, make sure to address weaponising gratitude.

So you should be grateful for X y Z, which happened in my family quite a bit when I was younger.

And so I was like, Oh, this is like, This is why gratitude is so triggering for me because I feel like, oh, I should be grateful, you know?

So ever since I've become aware of that now and I practise gratitude, I have a much different relationship, and I get the benefits that you read in the research.

So just that's a great That's a great and that's a great awareness because it is also to the other thing.

I think that's cool about some of these is is being able to sort of get it to the point.

Where are we go from?

Only noticing tens, which is also a default for first responders, is because they're so used to responding to eight nines and tens in other people's lives.

And so it sort of creates this tendency to see things when they're really big.

So it's easier to see those as opposed to actually noticing things when their ones and twos and threes.

So being grateful for even those little tiny sweet interactions we have with Children or or even just, uh, it was interesting.

A couple years ago, Uh, somebody walked into my office and said, How did you notice that flower blooming right outside your door?

And I went, No, I did not.

So during my next break, I went and I thought, Wow, I'm not even noticing things like this, and it was absolutely gorgeous.

So it's no wonder that somebody else noticed it and brought it to my attention, and I thought, Wow, because that's part of that is like we just get to the point where we're so busy in our lives that we're not even noticing things that could really just bring us even just a teeny little bit of joy or happiness.

And then, just like that was really nice and then move on in our lives as opposed to man, I'm ignoring it all.

So So you're missing out on things, and I think that's where that gratitude stuff comes in.

Is that interestingly?

Because we do know there's actually a lot of research on that related to depression.

So if you make people or ask people as a homework assignment to write three gratitude before they go to bed or three things, they're grateful for three things that they noticed were really good about that day that all of a sudden they start noticing way more good things because I primed you.

You're going to have to write them down tonight, so all of a sudden you're noticing way more than you used to notice.

At first it's like pulling teeth, but that's why it's so useful is that you start you start moving that default brain from all of that negativity to more positive stuff and more joy.

So That's good.

How do we know when self care isn't enough?

Isn't Well, I would say when it is enough, You're really going to notice that you're going to be a lot more energised in your life.

So you're gonna really notice a reduction in just kind of overall daily fatigue because you're just gonna be really in this much better place emotionally, Um, you're going to tend to approach your challenges with a lot more interest and curiosity and energy.

Then you probably have, like, usually when we're not doing really well.

Even the smallest challenge.

Like, you know, you break a shoelace, you feel like you could just curl up on the ground and start crying because I don't know what I'm gonna do now.

Um, you also experience just overall better moods.

So it actually really, really helps with that mood regulation piece, and you're going to have less ups and downs.

You're just more resilient overall.

And even if life feels really full still, you actually feel like you can handle it.

And you have this like sense of personal pride in handling things so well, whereas when you're not doing very good at taking care, of yourself, and I know that a lot of people use that analogy of, like, you know, the airlines you like, like they say, like put the mask on yourself first and then put on others and and really, I think, one of the things that is important to notice for a lot of people, one of the barriers to self care is that they feel like it's selfish.

Well, self care is actually selfless, because if I do a really good job taking care of myself, I'm going to be so much of a better spouse.

So much of a better mom, so much of a better therapist, so much of the better friend.

Everything will improve.

So, really, by extension, it's extremely selfless to put in that regard.

To put that self care first so that you then are more available to others.

You know you're going to be the not cranky mom or the or the not irritated worker to actually have that self care place.

And actually, interestingly enough, most of the time for most people, I really work on this self care peace with its their spouse or their boss that notices it first and they'll point it out to them.

They'll be shocked, like, Wow, I'm really that different.

But they're just they're, like, kind of baffled, like somebody else would notice.

Absolutely.

They notice, because it's a lot of that subtle signalling that we're doing better.

Same thing with when we're subtly signalling.

I'm not doing so good.

And so yeah, others people notice that's I love that.

That's such a good point.

But other people noticing because it is such a gradual change and you almost don't feel it immediately, and it takes a little bit.

So other people are going to notice at first.

And so it goes back to kind of what you're saying about getting that feedback and asking for that feedback to if people aren't volunteering it, right?

Yes, exactly that.

So are do you have some resources?

And I know you do, because you're like the reason you always have good resources for first responders.

Um, so I'm just curious in what some of your resources are for folks who are practising self care or connection.

Um, for first responder families, either Charles, do Higgs book the power of habit, which is actually honestly, quite frankly, my favourite, um, or I would send them to James Clears book the atomic habits.

And the reason is, is that those are to me when you're trying to establish self care, you need to learn how to establish a habit.

If you don't know how to establish a habit, it's going to be very difficult.

And then certainly if you if you input itself, care into any Google search or any kind of search engine, you're going to end up with just millions of hits.

So you can just kind of look at those kinds of things.

But also, Pinterest is another one.

So Pinterest will give you just a whole whole whole whole bunch and some cute, cute, cute, cute graphics to go along with it.

Um, I also will suggest, as far as like, if people were to actually take some action after listening to this, I would really encourage them to do an inventory of the things that you're currently doing and kind of categorise yourself care.

Um, is there enough variety?

So do you actually have enough stuff to choose from, like, sort of like if you were to sort of imagine it on the shelves of that closet.

Does it look kind of sad?

So there's hardly anything there.

Um, do you have just one giant been with just one thing in it that you do over and over.

So you're going to really want to sort of have an awareness like, Ooh, I am maybe missing some stuff and because we do want to have enough to cover life's challenges, we want enough strategy so that we can cover life's challenges.

That's really good.

And I do.

I've I love that book.

I have a an activity in the class I teach for the university where students are given up a negative behaviour or, uh, you know, substance or something.

And so I have them try to, you know, his little steps of, you know, the trigger and the habit and the reward.

And it's It's always interesting how difficult it really is to find the reward.

It's really hard to find.

What am I getting from this bad habit or this mindset or whatever it is?

It's a hard piece, but it's, I think you said it takes practise.

I love that we want to be able to have that that constant re updating, adding something else to that to the shelves and and also just largely, people do need to from time to time, take a look at their general routine, which is like a bigger picture thing.

I've had actually had someone, um, in a class that they would do an hour by hour that you had to keep, like, a log for two or three weeks of hour by hour, how you were spending your time and then to do an analysis on it, sort of psychologically.

And sometimes I was like, Whoa, I didn't want to know this about myself.

And sometimes it is like, Okay, I want to I do want to know that because at least that way I know it.

And then I can decide what I want to work on next, because sometimes we'll just get in a trap and we won't realise that we are.

We do have more time on our hands than we thought, and some of the barriers we put in place to actually doing some good things to ourselves.

Our barriers we've created ourselves that's really good.

It's really good.

What are some action steps that, um, you recommend for folks to take to support self care.

So the ones I just we're talking about would be is important.

And that's and also just as a uh just as an addition to that is, is to really look at any of those any of those over using.

So I would just say, like, take a really deep look at anything you're over using anything you're doing more than, let's say, I don't know couple hours a week and then be able to say, Is this really functional?

Is this really giving me the bang for my buck in my self care that I need and then go in a sense, up from there, if you're doing things for three hours or four hours or five hours?

Obviously, for those people who work out very often, they're working out five or six hours a week, and we can absolutely look at that and say, Functional, absolutely functional.

But like, let's say it is television watching or it is mhm.

It's mm playing video games, any of those kinds of things, and say at what point is it no longer functional?

And to be able to really, really look at that and say I am over using these things.

I'm using them for like in a sense, the reward would be like, let's say, self soothing or relaxing.

Is it working?

Am I really relaxed?

Is there really clear evidence in my life?

I'm relaxed.

What other people say I'm relaxed, and I think sometimes we an example of that.

Just if you know the research about television televisions is some zero, so at least to some zero.

But it's it's in other words, if I go into watching television with 100 units of stress, I will.

I will exit watching television with 100 units of stress.

That's not what's interesting.

Yeah, that's really interesting.

And I I I think this is one of those episodes that people are going to listen to if they're listening to it because it's your self care in their car, they're going to want to go back and listen when they can get a pen and paper and take notes.

There's so much good resources and information in this.

I loved it, Um, and I definitely I'm going to be using some of this.

I appreciate all that you have to bring to this I feel like this.

This one at some point needs to be its own series.

But there's just so much in this, but really, really good.

Thank you so much, Trudy, for this.

Appreciate you appreciate this topic.

And, uh, looking forward to what we have next.

Thanks, Trudy.

Thank you.

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Uh huh.

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