

## ***Self-Care for Caregivers***

### ***Some Useful Exercises from Dr. Carl Totton, PsyD, ABSNP***

1. **The Yes Set:** Just say yes! Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!!!
2. **Bubble:** Take annoying thoughts or physical sensations, imagine you can place them in a bubble, and let them float into the air and **POP!** Let the bubble burst and watch these thoughts just go into the air and disappear.
3. **Thought Stopping:** When having a chronic negative thought, simply say to yourself as loud as you can (in your mind, silently), **STOP!** The thought will momentarily cease and you can then use cognitive reframing, thought substitution, rational disputation, etc. to alter the direction of your self-talk.
4. **Ambience and Mindfulness Meditation:** Ambience is the feeling tone or quality of any room or environment. As you enter any room, simply notice without any interpretation how the room feels to use. Don't even label the feeling, just notice it. Then, as you leave that room or environment, notice the change in the next room. That's it, it will help you remain physically, mentally, and emotionally present at all times, during your daily life, when establishing rapport and the therapeutic relationship with clients, when in stressful situations, etc.
5. **Imagine you can see inside your body with x-ray eyes.** Watch a soothing sensation of total relaxation move from your feet all the way up to your head and down both limbs. Just let go and relax feeling every muscle just melting.
6. **Nature Scene:** Move your awareness to the most beautiful place in nature you can imagine. See it, feel it, smell it, touch it, allow the wonderful calming sensations to completely permeate your body, mind, and breath.
7. **Inner Smile:** Visualize all of your internal organs with a smiley face on them. Then just let those smiles go anywhere you need them, bones, muscles, nerves, blood vessels, tendons, joints, ligaments, every cell on your body. **SMILE!**
8. **Acceptance:** Finally, you are not perfect and don't have to be! Relax, let go, and just accept yourself and others exactly as you and they are. Be – Here - Now....
9. **Breathe:** Slowly and deeply, just watching and noticing your breath. That's it!
10. **Establish a Daily Routine for Self-Care:** We are creatures of habit; make sure yours are positive and beneficial for your well-being on all levels.

**Note:**

***We are all creatures of habit. What we have been doing we tend to continue doing because we identify with it and we have internal patterns and external behaviors which after a time become conditioned responses. So, the only real way to change is to change our habits, change our trajectory. Then, after a time, without “effort” (wu-wei) we simply become that which we practice as it moves along with what has become natural for us. In the Book of Five Rings by the noted samurai Musashi, he says “the way is in the training”. So by practicing or training we discover our way as it aligns with the way of nature, the way of the Tao. It takes attention to each of our “aspects”: Mind, Body, Emotions, Energy, and Spirit. So a 10 Day Practice or Gong might look like this one.***