



Daffodils, tulips, and freesias. Lighter clothing. The green tendrils of baby plants. Longer days filled with more sunlight, more warmth. Spring. The season of stretching ... of awakening ... of pick-me-ups and rejuvenation. How will you refresh yourself this spring?

A reminder to yourself that you count too!

I remember once gazing at the steam rising from a coffee mug, my heart filled with inexplicable joy and wonder at the beauty of this 'ordinary' event.

Yet how often do we fully see and hear and touch and feel the ordinary miracle of our everyday lives? How often are we 'too busy' even to watch the sun set, or listen to the birds sing? How often do we treat today as 'just another day'? How much of our precious lives do we waste in gentle slumbering?

In Hawaiian, the word 'ano' means present moment, seed, peaceful, awe, holy, sacred. In English, it is no coincidence that the word 'present' also means 'a gift'.

The present moment is a sacred gift, and unless we are fully 'present' in this moment, we are not fully alive.

The Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh notes that to live without awareness (for example, to drink tea without *knowing* that we are drinking tea) is to live as a dead person. "Time is not money. Time is much more precious than money. Time is life," I once heard him say. "Spend your time drinking your tea!"

The present moment is our point of power. Now is the only time we can live. Now is the only time that we can change, release the past, or make decisions. The more 'present' we are in any experience, the more we gain from it.

It is rare to have any problems *now*, in this moment (unless a mad dog is ravaging you, or a bailiff is throwing your possessions on to the street).

The vast majority of stress comes from either reliving the past or fretting about possible futures. (If you *must* worry about tomorrow, then at least give worrying your full attention, and get it out of your system!)

When we live in the moment, putting our heart and soul into whatever we are doing (drinking tea, smelling a rose, listening to music, making love, meditating, washing the dishes) we begin to realise our true potential.

Heaven is here and now, in the ordinary magic of this moment.

From Stepping Into the Magic, by Gill Edwards.

MAGIC MOMENTS

*The clouds above us join and separate,
The breeze in the courtyard leaves and returns,
Life is like that, so why not relax?
Who can stop us from celebrating?*

Lu Yu

I Am Here! is a special section of *Family Care* that focuses on personal wellbeing. How do you relax and re-energise? How do you enjoy time out? Share your favourite practical or self-care tips with other readers. We will give a \$20 voucher for every idea we publish! Send your suggestions to PO Box 133, Mangonui, Far North 0442 or email them to us at info@carers.net.nz. Contributions can be anonymous, or you can use a pen name!

RESILIENCE

Bouncing back again and again
Holding onto the opposites contained within,
the whole striving for balance
The ability to be, and to wait
Willingness to accept,
to let go of rigid roles
Being receptive to each other:
affirming, validating, valuing differences
Stretching our thinking powers,
retaining our bounce
Having realistic goals
Breaking out to be carefree
Refraining from assuming, pre-judging ...
allowing elasticity
Honouring ourselves with time out



SELF CARE

How we rejuvenate, fill the dry well, get out the laughing gas!



Take a walk in the sunshine
Eat lots of veges
Swimming, and having a spa afterwards
Creative cooking and hospitality
Going to the movies with a friend
Taking the dog for a walk on the beach
Wining and dining with friends
Outings and potluck meals
Reading thrillers
Taking a moonlight drive
Keeping a journal of ebbs and flows
Enjoying a glass of wine
Having a foot spa
Handwork and sewing crafts
A new hairdo
Positive thinking and self-talk
Playing relaxation tapes
Burning aromatherapy oils
Lighting candles
Meditating and praying
Saying mantras ('nothing is permanent')
Digging the garden
Ringing family and friends for a long chat

SWAPPING MASKS

Wow! What a great midwinter potluck Christmas Nelson carers enjoyed. Sheena hosted and organised a pampering evening, and treated us from top to toe (literally). Yes, there was a foot spa for our tootsies, and the offer of rejuvenating facials. What to do? Should we ... could we ... take off our caring masks and lounge around in facial masks instead, having drinks and nibbles? Should we eat first, was the pressing question. When should we watch the DVD, before or after? Then, which of the five DVDs do we want to see? Diane Keaton's comic romp provided the answer but ... when to have coffee and dessert? Oh, the questions were just too much, but we managed! We chilled out, blobbed out, and slobbed out very well, thank you. Yes, once the carer masks were off and the facial masks were on, we realised there is no such thing as one right answer. Wouldn't it be great if all carers' problems could be solved by putting on a facial mask, passing around the laughing gas and, of course, the chocolate?

All by SF Nelson's *Write It Like It Is* creative writing group for carers, sponsored by Carers NZ





Recently we received a goodie basket of our own from family carer Lyn Cole of Porirua, full of treats and nurturing ideas for family carers. We have sent Lyn a Farmers voucher so she can indulge herself a bit too. Thank you Lyn! Here are some of her suggestions.

Colouring in Sticker books Scrapbooking Blowing bubbles Paint by numbers Jigsaw puzzles Sudoku Crosswords Learning to juggle

PLAYING



COLLECTING

Pens, pins, spoons, hats, fishing lures, bottles, kitchenalia

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Stress balls from the \$2 shop Mood CDs from The Warehouse Theme baskets (coffee, tea, 'smellies', gardening gifts) "I like Scully's Lavender Sleep Aid (\$12) and the Sleep Apothecary Sniff Boxes (Neroli, Lavender, Chamomile and essential oils) that can be bought from chemists. Wonderful for relaxing and good sleep!" (See our Sleep Secrets feature in the ActiveWellness mini-mag, from page 35!)

RELAXING

"I find a Crossword Scratchie and a good cup of coffee or tea for half an hour is a good break too. I've found a new magazine at The Warehouse called Lucky Break that I enjoy. It's full of puzzles, reading ... time out ... and it only costs \$2.80. The Art of Doing Nothing is a great book by Veronique Vienne, suggesting simple ways to make time for yourself. There are so many great self-help books available now and they don't have to cost a lot. You can also find these at the library."

NOURISHING

Easy Cheese Puffs

"One of my favourite recipes, on my own or to share!"

1 cup flour 1 cup grated cheese 2 tspn baking powder 1 egg Splash of milk Pinch of salt
Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix together. Spoon into small muffin tins or larger ones if you like bigger puffs. Bake in a hot oven for five to eight minutes. Enjoy these as a snack, or with a meal.



READER GIFTS!



SPRING CLEAN

Spruce up for spring with Eco Store environmentally friendly products. We have three Eco Store buckets to give away, valued at \$45 each. Find out more about Eco Store at www.ecostore.co.nz or call (0800) 33 55 33.



RECHARGE

If you feel 'hairy', pop one of these fizzy pick-me-ups into a glass of water. Each tablet contains vitamins, guarana and ginseng! Available at pharmacies and supermarkets. We have a three month supply to give away to three lucky winners!

WIN our \$200 spring bath, body, and household cleaning giveaway from Unilever! This reader gift has something for everyone: shampoo, shower gel, toiletries, grooming products, skin cream, and lots more! These products are sold at all supermarkets.



Entry form page 13!

Cruet sets with flip tops from the \$2 shop are ideal for arthritic hands. I also bought a coin purse there that is easy to manage.

I take a child's toy broom with me on my mobility scooter, in case I ever have to clear glass from the path.

I have not had to scrub the shower clean since I sprayed it with Exit Mould.

Every day I tell myself five positive things that make me unique. A happy heart is a healthy heart!

I hope these tips help others.

Sunshine, Napier

I always put my car keys beside my bed at night. If I hear a strange noise, I can press the panic button for my car and the alarm goes off. I have suggested this to others as a way to feel safe.

B Simmonds, Hamilton East

SELF CARE TIPS!

I find if I put a few drops of vanilla essence in my coffee on down days, it gives me a bit of zing. Alternatively a capful of Bailey's Irish Creme in my coffee will definitely give me an oomph!

Doreen Kelly, Te Awamutu

One day I had the music channel Juice on my TV and my lovely puppy was with me and I started to dance. My puppy got excited and joined me, so we both got a bit of exercise, with heaps of laughter on my part. It was magical bonding time.

B Paul, Opotiki

Handheld can openers work more smoothly if you run hot water over them before using. I also find a most effective way to dry feet and scars is to use a hair drier on a low setting.

Judi Subritzky, South Westland

I have found that by covering shoelaces in a little beeswax they remain firmly in place and stay tied. I feel there is safety in this practice.

S Clarke, Te Puke

I'd like to suggest a useful item from \$2 shops, which sell small writing pads with a magnetic strip on the back. I keep one of these on the fridge so I can keep track of all my things to do, or to buy while I'm out shopping. These also make ideal gifts to send to overseas friends with my Christmas cards, as they feature New Zealand scenes. Most of all, these pads are great for forgetful people like me!

Joan L, Auckland

The person I support rarely leaves her room, so we got some glass paint to decorate her windows. We started with smiley faces, but visitors have created masterpieces for us to enjoy. We also have a large whiteboard on which we write inspirational messages. A trouser hanger serves as a mobile ... at present it has origami peace cranes on it. Guests write in a visitor's book and a journal to bring the outside world in.

P Cooper, Avondale, Auckland

Perhaps you do not have much space for a garden, or are unable to dig. Place a few seed potatoes in an eco-bag and cover with compost. By Christmas you will be able to tip out a lovely supply of spuds. They like potash, so I cut up banana skins to mix in at intervals.

N Kaihau, Henderson, Auckland