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Welcome to Just breathe. The podcast focused on transforming the LGBTQ plus conversation and supporting you on your journey with your LGBTQ loved one, you are not



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welcome to just breathe parenting your LGBTQ teen. My name is Heather Hester and I am excited to be with you to transform the conversation around loving and raising an LGBTQ child, wherever you are on this journey. Right now, in this moment in time, you are not



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alone.



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So today's topic is self care. And this is a big one, this is a great topic for all parents. And it is especially good for parents who are going through a challenging time personally, or have a child or children who are struggling. These are all really, really good tips that I'm going to share with you and things to remember to just take good care of you. And I thought that the beginning of February seemed like a really good time for this topic. Not just because it's one of my favorite topics, but because this is about the time of year when our resolutions have begun to fade from the beginning of the new year. And typically, self care and resolutions are very intertwined. So I thought this would be really fun to kind of

take a look at resolutions and the difference between resolutions and self care. According to the US News and World Report approximately 80% of resolutions that just fade by this time of year,



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but they fail.



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And here are a few reasons. And these are the reasons that really set apart the difference between a resolution and long term self care. The first reason is you're treating a marathon, like a sprint, and you're setting a goal that should be a goal and not an instant fixed or something that is going to just change overnight. The second is you don't believe in yourself or you don't believe in the goal that you've set or the resolution that you've set. So it's just something that you spur of the moment, decide that you're going to do decide that you're going to throw out on midnight of December 31. And it's something that you're not really you haven't really bought into. The third reason is that you're thinking or planning too much and not actually doing not taking action. And that's a really, really big one. And really, the fourth one is that you're forgetting to enjoy the process, that this is a process that you know, a resolution a goal. And ultimately what I'm going to be talking about self care. It's a process and part of anything being successful and lasting long term is that you enjoy it. And actually there is one more that I just came to me that is also really important is that the resolutions that you set are not specific to you, you're not emotionally connected to them. It's something that may be the the popular, trendy thing to do and the moment your friend next to you decides that that's what they're going to do. That's their resolution and you jump on board. If you are not emotionally connected to your resolution, your goal, your self care plan, whatever it is, it's not going to work. So how do we shift our mindset around resolutions versus year round self care? Well, the first thing we need to do is define self care. And here is my definition. Self Care is the practice of preserving, protecting and improving one's life and each of these following areas. physical health, fitness, relationships, career, financial, mental health and spirituality. One of the really, really beautiful things about self care is that it looks different for everyone. There is no right answer one right way, one perfect way, creating yourself plan will be completely unique to you. So you don't have to worry about someone else what someone else may do or what someone else thinks you should do or what you think you should do. So this is one of the really, really beautiful things about self care. And before I really, really get into this, I want to share with you how I discovered self care why it is such an important topic to me. Because it's something that I haven't done my entire life, it's something that's

actually rather new to me. And probably one of the reasons I feel so passionately about it, finding it a little bit later in my life.



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About five years ago, one of my really, really close friends invited me to go with her to a self care workshop. And at the time, I remember being really intrigued by the concept, but I had no idea what it truly meant. And I remember sitting that day, in this beautiful room so cozy as the sun was coming in, there were a couple of other ladies there. And it was just this lovely atmosphere. And I remember listening to the presentation thinking, I'm allowed to do this, I'm allowed to take care of me focus on my needs. I mean, really, it was truly life changing. And that may sound silly to some people out there. But I have a feeling that there are others of you out there who are like, yeah, totally tell me more or I to just discover this, and I know the feeling. And I remember, as I was reading over the materials from the workshop, I thought, Oh my gosh, I totally need some guidance on this. And some, some education. And so I reached back out to the gal who led the workshop. And because the universe always has your back, if you let it this self care guru happened to also be a therapist, and she has now been mine ever since. So you know, you all know how I feel about her. And, you know, she has helped me change my life and change myself in ways I never, never knew possible. And it all started out with learning about self care. That was the basis of my my journey, my self care journey. And I can say that I am truly the best version of myself because of our work and because of what I started learning that day. And I just have to share this quote with you, I have this pinned up on my bulletin board on my desk. And I think it kind of embodies really good self care. And it's a quote by Rachel Hollis, she says, I refuse to live as half of myself because other people can't handle all of me. And I think that when we really take great care of ourselves, we realize what our potential is in this world and what we can do and who we are and how we can not only care for ourselves, but take care of everyone and everything around us. So how do we get there? Well, Gandhi taught that health is the real wealth, not pieces of gold and silver. And I really, really love that



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quote, which



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you often see it as a quote and and that teaching because each of us has had the experience of being sick of having the flu or horrible cold. That just completely takes us

out for a few days. And when we're in that space, nothing else matters or can be focused on when we're not feeling well. So to me, it makes a ton of sense that we start with physical health in our self care plan. So I want you to take a moment and really think about your physical health. How are you feeding your body? are you feeding it in a way that it responds well to you? Do you have or do you feel like you have a good understanding of proper nutrition of what nutrients, your, all of your body systems need to operate at peak performance, not just so that you're feeling



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okay, but so that you're really feeling great. Now, let me just say that I am a big believer in moderation, which allows for the occasional cookie. Or, more importantly, french fry and coke. However, that being said, I am also acutely aware of which foods give me a ton of energy, and make me feel awesome. And which ones make me feel lousy, look lousy, and trigger my migraines. So these are the things as you're thinking about what you're putting into your body nutrition wise, really think about these things and start to think if you if this is not something that you do on a regular basis, if this is something that's new to you really start to pay attention to how your body feels based on what you're putting into it. And again, like each of the aspects of self care, physical health is specific to you keep a journal of everything you eat for one week, and then make small changes based on your findings. Small changes work best, when you make a ton of big changes at one time, that's when you fail, you end up feeling lousy about yourself, you go back to square one, I find in my experience, that making small changes one at a time, those are the changes that last because you're able to build upon them and tweak them as you go. There are a ton of different schools of thought out there on what the quote unquote best diet is. And I have tried a number of them and, and researched a number of them without even trying them. And I I have figured out what works really, really well for my body and my health. But that's going to be different for every person out there for every person. So just be gentle with yourself and enjoy the process and be patient Be patient. The other big piece of physical health is medically taking care of yourself. So when was the last time that you had a physical, dental appointment, blood work drawn a mammogram, all of these lovely things that that we need to do to just be proactive instead of reactive, that's really kind of part of this mindset is getting into a proactive mindset, taking charge of your health, instead of having it take charge of you. The second area that I love to talk about with self care is fitness. Now I know often health and fitness are rolled into one category, which I actually find is really odd because they're two very distinct actions. Yes, they do both involve caring for this miraculous human body that we have been given. But one really focuses on how we feed and medically care for our body, and the other on how we move it, keep it fit and keep it strong. So I always have different goals from my health and from my fitness. And so that's why I'm presenting it that way to you. So let's start with how you

rate your fitness level right now. Do you have fitness goals that you are working toward? Are you in tune with your physical body in a way that you are aware of the subtle nuances in the way you feel? Meaning Are you paying attention to how your body feels what may be a weird thing for someone else may be something that's totally normal for you and vice versa. These are the little things and just really knowing your physical body well, so that you can start paying attention. It's part of being aware of what's going on with you internally externally, and how, what you're feeding it, how you're moving your body, how all of these different pieces affect



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you.



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So again, I am just going to cut through the millions and millions of programs and fitness thoughts that are out there and just give you my bottom line thoughts on this, which are, you need to move your body daily period. The benefits across all of your systems, all of your body systems are innumerable really think about what you like to do. Do you like to run? Do you like to practice yoga? Do you like to spin, or kickbox or walk or weight train, whatever it is, when you are moving your body in a way that you enjoy, it becomes less of a have to, and more of a get to, you know what your body responds well to, it doesn't matter what anyone else around you is doing. Truly, for example, my husband loves to run, and he loves to play platform tennis. I love yoga and kickboxing. We've tried each other's fitness passions, and have happily returned to what makes each of our bodies happy. So find yours, and stick with it. It doesn't matter what anyone else around you is doing. The third area that I want to take a look at, regarding and in relation to self care are your relationships, the relationships that you have in your life, and I really want you to take a few minutes and make a list of all of these relationships, your spouse, or your partner, your parents, your children, your friends, neighbors, your employees, or your



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boss,



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etc, you get the idea, all the different relationships that you have in your life. And I want

you to really make note about each person and really think to yourself whether they are an energy giver, or an energy stealer. I asked you to do this so you can become more aware of what you need, and different environments. Because this is real, this exercise is really very specific to thinking about your self care. So what do you need? What do you need to be around? What allows you to just be at your very, very best? Are you able to allow yourself to soak in the beautiful spirits of an energy giver? Or do you need to create protective boundaries when you are around energy Stealers? These are the two things that I really, really want you to think about. And again, this is it's an exercise in awareness as well. Because when you are aware of the different relationships in your life, you will be able to take better care of you. The fourth area that I want to take a look at is your career. And, again, this is a wide spanning, it doesn't matter what I use the word career in a very broad sense. So whether you work full time, part time from home, outside of the home, raising your children, running a fortune 500 company or anywhere in between. If it does not fulfill you or fulfill a need, such as providing unnecessary income for your family, then it is time to rethink what you are doing. And again,



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I bring this up specific to the topic of self care. Self Care is about taking care of you. Being aware of your needs, being aware of your passions, being aware of what lights you up what you're good at doing. And being aware of all of these things pertaining to your work and potentially making either mental shifts, setting boundaries, making some kind of change in your career or working life to create a balance to give you greater fulfillment in that area. That is what self care is about. The fifth area that I want to take a look at are your finances. And again finances are a lot of times teamed up with career but for the sake of specifically talking about self care, I have separated it so kind of Like health and fitness, I separated those. I'm separating finances from career, just so we can be super, super specific. And you can take a little bit of time here to think about just your financial health. So when you think about it, where would you rate it on a scale of one to 10, your personal financial health. And that means not only where it actually is in this moment, but how you think about your finances, and how your finances affect you. These are all of the little pieces I want you to think about. And I want you to take a minute, take a really deep breath, and close your eyes. And the first three financial areas, topics, items that come to your mind when you think of your finances. Those are where your focus needs to be right now, I want you to write those down. And I want you to write down next to them. Whether they popped into your mind because they are a source of comfort, or joy, or a source of stress, I want you to take a moment to really think about why they popped into your mind. So remember, this is about reacquainting or acquainting yourself with self care. What can you eliminate therefore eliminating stress? And what can you focus on that will bring you fulfillment regarding your finances, I know this is a really hard headspace to get into

because finances can take up so much space in our minds and our bots and, and therefore our lives. So the that's the point, be aware of the negativity surrounding your financial mindset. And let go of that adopt a mindset of financial abundance instead of financial lack. And this really requires a mental shift. And it takes practice. So this isn't something that you're going to be able to do right now, in this moment of time, while you're listening to this podcast. This is something that does require practice, but I'm throwing an out there because I really believe and I know personally, this not only makes a huge difference in your stress, and how you perceive your stress, but really letting go of and beginning to change the way you think about money and think about your mind or think about your finances. And there are different ways that you can achieve this, you can achieve this through meditating, you can achieve this through goal setting, you can achieve this through mindfulness and awareness. And most of all, through consistent practice, like I said, so you know, just daily visualizations of where you want to be financially, will open up your creative channels, as well as communicate to the universe that you're ready, you are ready. And the other piece of this that I believe is really, really important to remember. And as part of this as well is being grateful and being aware of what you have, being grateful what you for what you have, right now will help shift from the mindset of financial lack to financial abundance. So the next area that we're going to look at regarding taking good care of yourself and self care is mental health. And by now you know how passionate I am about mental health and knowing that it is an integral piece to your self care. And I want you to really think about how you would rate your mental health on a scale of one to 10. And I think sometimes it's it's really hard to kind of pull that apart and recognize where you are personally a lot time. A lot of times it's easier to recognize, you know, where our kids are or our spouse or our partner or friends or other family members are it's it's really hard to take a look internally and recognize where we are, how we're feeling, you know, emotionally mental health wise. So I did go ahead and make a list



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for you



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of some some areas to kind of pay attention to one of the associations that I really like when I kind of looked to, you know, educating myself and researching mental illnesses, the National Association of mental illness. And this is where I got a list of, you know, a few signs, or symptoms of mental illness or mental struggle, mental health struggles, just areas where, where you may potentially just need a little help or a little to, you know, focus your

awareness. The first one is excessive worrying, or fear. And, you know, it's important that you notice the word excessive, this isn't the occasional worrying, this isn't the fear that pops up every once in a while excessive is the key word here. And again, feeling excessively sad or low, meaning, you know, this is how this is where you live most of the time, and you cannot pull yourself out of it. mood changes, extreme mood changes, and mood changes that you've don't feel particularly in control of avoiding friends or social activities on a regular basis. Trust me, I know, from personal experience, there are times that I just want to be by myself, I just want quiet, I just need a little recoup time regrouping time. That does not concern me. The things that you want to pay attention to is, you know, actively avoiding your friends, actively avoiding social activities on a regular basis, and not really understanding why you're doing it. Another is changes in your sleeping habits, or feeling tired or super low on energy for an extended period of time. So again, it's not you know, the occasional bad night asleep, or the you know, low energy because you've been pushing yourself and pushing yourself and pushing yourself. This is the extended period of time again, when you can't really figure out why there doesn't seem to be a reason. And the final side sign or symptom that I wanted to share with you today, multiple physical ailments without obvious causes, like headaches or stomach aches, or kind of random aches and pains. Again, that happen more often than not, that's something that you really, really want to pay attention to and could point to mental health struggle of some kind. So, you know, this is by no means a complete list. These are just ones that I wanted to point out to you. I have a ton of information on my website. And actually the next few episodes, I will be focusing specifically on mental health. So there will be a lot more specific information, both regarding you and your child. So you can stay tuned, this is an area that is of interest to you an area that you want more information, information is coming. If in this moment, any of these feel familiar to any of these symptoms, the signs that I shared with you feel familiar to you reach out to a mental health professional right away. And that could mean a therapist, or a psychiatrist. And if you do not know or have one of those, ask your general practitioner for a recommendation, they may very well be able to answer your questions, they definitely should be able to recommend someone for you to speak to. So just remember that caring for your mental health is just as important as caring for your physical health because again, these two are intertwined. And one cannot be an optimal condition without the other. They just that's how they work. And so finally, the final area that I want to take a look at is your spirituality, your spirituality and your faith. And this is another topic that I love and another topic that we'll be exploring and really delving very deeply into over the next coming months. I have some very exciting people that I will be interviewing and sharing with you and so I'm just I'm super excited about that but for today with relation to talking about self care. Talking about spirituality and faith are a wonderful book. Cuz I like all of these pieces, they are as unique to you as your fingerprint, your spirituality and your faith are yours, they don't need to look like anybody else's. And that's really, really, really

important for you to keep in mind. It's very personal. It is yours. And whatever you want to call your higher power, whether you call your higher power God, or the universe or nature, or love, that higher power is here to support you, to love you, to comfort you, and to let you know that you are not alone. And there are so many ways that you can access your higher power to tap into that to communicate, to have relationship. prayer, meditation, quiet walks, your yoga practice,



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church, hike. If you haven't already, I want you to take a few minutes right now. Or after you finish listening to the podcast and journal about the following two questions and really think about this. Where are you right now, spiritually? And to where do you want to be? And take as much time as you need, or thinking about this? I certainly did. I took several years actually my faith and my spiritual life. And my practice just hung in limbo for several years and and that time, and the time that I essentially tabled my faith, because what I had been taught and what my soul believed, or so mismatched, I felt really, really disconnected. During that time I had so much going on so many balls in the air and crises and crazy stuff going on. I couldn't even attempt to reconnect, it just seemed impossible. To me, it seemed like something that was out of reach. And it wasn't until I made it a verbal priority that it really became clear to me what I needed and what I wanted. And I had gotten really stuck in this place of trying to reconcile kind of where I had been, where I was in the moment and where I wanted to be meaning kind of where I had been was this fear this hell and damnation and judgment and all these scary things and, and what I knew was out there, which was My God, my God, the God of love, and the God of relationship and the God of forgiveness and the God that that wanted. You know, that said, you are okay, just as you are calm as you are right. So the day that I really just said out loud, that I wanted to dig deeper, truly connect and cultivate that relationship is the day that growth began. And I moved out of that place of stagnancy. Again, remember, as I'm saying, my you know what my higher power is my higher power as God but that that in embodies the universe that embodies nature that embodies love. So please do not I don't want anyone out there to feel alienated by this that you can only believe one way because that that is not the case. And I you know, like I said at the very beginning, this is something that is very personal. And it is very unique to each of you out there. But I have to share that, you know, a few weeks before I kind of made this verbal declaration that this is what I wanted. And this is what I wanted to figure out and this is what I wanted to connect to. A good friend of mine had recommended that I check out Gabby Bernstein for my sister and many of you out there probably know of Gabby and her teachings. I had never heard of her. And and I so I started researching her, you know specifically for my sister and what she needs and needed in that time. And I thought oh my gosh, as I you know, read started reading through her teachings. This is for me to it



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completely embodied love and joy and gratitude and surrender to a greater power which would just blew my mind away this this power that was greater than myself with a focus on being of service to others. And I thought, Oh my gosh, this is exactly what I want. This is the spiritual connection and the faith I've wanted my whole life. It is authentic, I can be messy, and a work in progress and imperfect. It embodies love, and joy. And to me, that is faith, I share that with you, I share my little piece of my journey with you. Because I just I feel like it's important for you to know that this can be messy that it doesn't, you know, everybody's path is different, and it looks different. And perfection is not real, being who you are authentically, and connecting authentically. That is what's real. That is what is love. That is what will bring you joy. And that is what is faith. So aligning these areas, your physical health, your fitness, your career, your finances, your relationships, your mental health, and your spirituality. These will allow you aligning these areas will allow you to be available for your dreams, your daily journey. And then all of those around you, here are a few new ways that you can get yourself aligned. If you can't, these will be in the show notes. So don't worry about writing them down, I will have this all written down for you. But these are really, really good ways to get yourself aligned and stay aligned. And these are really your action steps for going forward. Stay in the present. Practice daily self awareness and awareness of those around you. And really think about small ways that you can fill your cup, keep your cup full. Number two, practice setting boundaries, removing toxicity from your life, saying no and letting go. And number three, practicing mindfulness, meditation, yoga, prayer, a quiet walk in nature, any and all of these are really good ways to become aligned and to stay aligned. So those are my three tips for getting yourself aligned for really beginning your self care journey. Actually, it doesn't matter where you are on your self pro journey to continue your self care journey to hone your self care journey. These steps will really help you no matter where you are, I'm just going to leave you with our usual breathing. That deep belly breath, whether it's as you start your day, or if you're in a moment, and you just need a moment, you always have that breath available to you. The mantra that I want you to take with you this week is the Rachel Hollis quote that I shared earlier, which is again, I refuse to live as half of myself, because other people can't handle all of me. And I want you to really think on that one. It's such a good one and just embody it. This is where I'm going to leave you for today. Thank you so much for joining me as we talked about self care and all of the different areas of self care. And I just wish for each of you to create your own self care plan and to take care of you so you can be the best version of yourself to put out in this amazing world. Remember that I do always have show notes. All of the resources and ideas will be listed on there as well as links to my website where there's much much more and final request to please subscribe to and review. Just breathe I would so appreciate it and be grateful to you for that and to share this with anyone who needs to know

