



## **An Invitation to Self-Care: Why Learning to Nurture Yourself Is the Key to the Life You've Always Wanted**

**Tracey Cleantis**

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*An Invitation to Self-Care*, by Tracey Cleantis, LMFT, explores the true meaning of taking care of oneself. Going well beyond the idea that self-care involves simply indulgences and rewards, the book offers seven principles to guide self-care and asserts that only through regular and sustained self-care can one hope to achieve self-actualization. The seven principles that the book asserts are the foundation of self-care include recognizing that it is a lifelong practice, self-love, taking personal responsibility for one's actions, noticing what matters most, attention and responsiveness, realistic expectations and practices, and finally, recognizing that self-care must happen before self-fulfillment is possible. Combining quizzes, personal stories and interviews into the text, the book offers insight into both self-care and self-sabotage and helps individuals explore their own beliefs and behaviors and how these can be viewed in terms of self-care.

This is not only an informative book, but one that is easy to read and relate to. The author makes use of familiar references, such as the food-guide pyramid and Maslow's hierarchy of needs, to illustrate her points. Her writing is generally down-to-earth and honest, with just a touch of humor. For example, in a chapter about taking care of one's body, she writes, "I'm not going to impart a lot of Thou shalt and Thou shalt nots to live by, especially in regard to eating low-carb, Paleo, wheat-free, meatless, or whatnot."

The message of *Invitation to Self-Care* is a powerful one. The idea that not only is it okay to prioritize taking care of oneself but that it is absolutely necessary in order to care for one's responsibilities and to lead a fulfilled life is liberating. The information and guidance the book offers will help many to start on a healthier, happier life journey.

CATHERINE REED-THURESON (May/June 2017)

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