



Simple, Soulful

Week One Lesson One: First and most of all, take good care of your self

This is the most important thing I tell all my friends, whether they are depressed, been fighting off a bad cold or just had a baby. I tell them this because no matter what successful career they lead, dreams they have, problems they face or healthy children they raise, they forget. Yes, it does seem that no matter where we are in life, we forget to take care of ourselves.

Photography is not only a legitimate act of self-expression, but also an act of love that has the wonderful ability to inspire others as well.

Taking care of yourself is about cultivating a spirit of self-love and accepting and approving of exactly who you are no matter the circumstances. It is about giving yourself the time, understanding and compassion you would give anyone in need of inspiration, rest or purpose, and creating a place where you can retreat to when times get rough - and they will. A place where you will feel safe and loved, and that will remind you again and again, that your voice matters.

There is no right or wrong way to take care of your self. But there is your way. You don't necessarily need to take the day off, travel to foreign countries or schedule a massage at the spa (although if you can afford those, please go ahead and do it!). For example, for me, taking care of myself involves a cup of green tea that my husband and I brought from a weekend trip in Tokyo for our 10-year anniversary, beet salad, a freshly ironed t-shirt, forgiving myself, a few laps at the local swimming pool, wearing something handmade and watching Friends bloopers on YouTube.

Don't forget.

How are you going to take care of yourself today?





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Week One Lesson Two: Making space

Make space for inspiration, new ideas, creativity and adventure to come in.

Make space for what matters most in your life.

Let go.

Whether you decide to go through your drawers and closets and get rid of things that you no longer wear, clear your schedule for a specific amount of time or simply say no (to that annoying friend, to another school field trip, to a not-so-good job offer), the goal here is to let go of something that drains your energy and make room for your best ideas, and for the real, authentic you to find her way back inside your self and shine as it's supposed to.

For me, the hardest thing is not decluttering my apartment. I actually thrive on the feeling of relief and contentedness that bringing bags of clothes that my sons have outgrown to the Salvation Army or cleaning out my wallet gives me. The hardest thing for me has always been to let go. Of guilt, of that obsessive need to arrive and achieve goals, of obligations that I hold onto only because they make me feel important and in control, of life balance (whatever that means).

And yet whenever we make the conscious effort to let go of something, big or small, palpable or in our heads, we are reminded that there is joy (and magic) in acknowledging the things that are important to us, and clearing space around them.

We are making room for new opportunities, for inspiration and for gratitude to lay the very foundation of the fulfilling and creative life we've been striving for.

Today let go of something.

You'll feel lighter and more confident, I promise.

