

Rest.Stop.Ranch Guide Services

guidance for sustainable living and well-being

How to Claim Your Me Moment: Caregiver communication tips for positive self-talk and family-talk

Facts:

- You have one body: one nervous system, one heart, one set of teeth.
- You alone have the power to give yourself the permission to take a breather, to compassionately care for yourself.

Positive Self-talk

Self-talk happens within our heads. Sometimes we voice our self-talk aloud, but it begins first within our minds. Self-talk is the voice we generate and hear within that affirms or discourages our actions. The first step towards compassionate self-care is being in touch with and developing a compassionate self-awareness and gentle voice within which we identify with as being genuinely loving and caring. Below are some examples of positive self-talk.

- I am enough. I deserve my own self-attention, self-compassion and self-care.
- I am my own best friend, my own guru, my own wisdom teacher.
- I know my capabilities.
- I know my limits.
- I am aware of my energy level. Today, I would rate my energy [high, medium or low]. Given my energy level, I'll care for myself today by...(name 1 thing).
- I am aware of my body comfort/discomfort. Given my body awareness today, I know I will benefit from...(name 1 thing).
- I am aware of my mental clarity/tension. One thing that will support my mental health today is...(name 1 thing).
- I am aware of my emotional needs. Knowing these needs, I will care for myself today by...(name 1 thing).
- I am aware of my social needs. I connect to my social supports by...(name 1 thing).
- I am aware of my spiritual needs. Knowing these needs, I will care for myself today by...(name 1 thing).
- Serving my own needs first, I affirm the fullness and completeness of my life as a sacred presence.
- Serving my own needs first, I am better able to be a compassionate care-giver for another.

Positive Family-talk

Family-talk happens with the people who are closest to us: our children, spouses/partners, our parents and grandparents, extended family or friends with whom we live.

Effective family-talk can happen once you have:

- taken the time to pay attention to yourself
- turned the focus towards your own body/mind/spirit
- become aware of your current energy level, feelings & thoughts
- affirmed with positive self-talk your current needs

Below are some examples of positive family-talk. Once you express a need for self-care time, it is often most effective to walk away from your loved one(s), into a pre-determined "private/safe space," in which you find temporary separation from family relationships and are able to focus attention on your own self-care.

With children:

Tip: if you are a primary care-giver for small children, predetermine one or two safe activities that can occupy their attention while you claim your Me Moment.

"Honey, enjoy [predetermined safe activity]. I'll be back in a few minutes."

"Mommy/Daddy needs a Me Moment."

With a spouse/partner:

"Honey, give me a minute/few minutes. I need: a (Me) Moment; some time to myself."

With a spouse/partner who has dementia:

Tip: if you are a primary care-giver for a loved one with dementia, predetermine one or two safe activities that can occupy their attention while you claim your Me Moment.

"Honey, enjoy [predetermined safe activity]. I'll be back in a few minutes."

With an aging parent or grand-parent:

"Mom/Dad/Grandma/Grandpa, give me a minute/few minutes. I need a (Me) Moment; some time alone."

With an aging parent who has dementia:

Tip: if you are a primary care-giver for a loved one with dementia, predetermine one or two safe activities that can occupy their attention while you claim your Me Moment.

"Mom/Dad/Grandma/Grandpa, enjoy [predetermined safe activity]. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Positive Self- and Family-talk begins every Me Moment

As a primary caregiver navigating extended illness, it is difficult if not impossible to remember to care for yourself if you do not nurture a strong inner guide that is aware of and affirms your physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual realities. Listening to your inner wisdom allows you to separate yourself from challenging circumstances, communicate your needs to yourself and those around you, and follow through with meeting your personal needs.

About Rest.Stop.Ranch Guide Services:

The wellness techniques I share are tested by my personal experiences of "what worked" while I was an unpaid primary caregiver. I lived with chronic stress for 24 months of active caregiving. The stress continued after the death of my loved one. I practice "being well" to keep in relative good health. I hold a MA degree in Pastoral Ministry and am a certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher. Be well ~ Mary