3 Powerful Gifts to Yourself for a More Balanced Life

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Celebrate this New Year and new semester by giving yourself something special; something that doesn’t cost a penny yet is priceless. Oftentimes, people come to counseling to regain happiness with the realization that in the process of making others happy, we sometimes lose ourselves and push aside our own needs. If you find yourself in this situation, know that you can reclaim your inner balance by practicing these three powerful tips.

1. Get a good night sleep.

“Sleeping is not time wasting.” Mike Wilson

Research shows that not having enough sleep can affect your emotions and memory. People who are sleep deprived may be more forgetful, easily irritable, depressed, or have a “short fuse.” Notice how your living environment, daily routine, or thoughts and emotions interact with your amount and quality of sleep. Examine your sleep hygiene and create one that works for you. Whether it be taking a hot shower or enjoying a glass of warm milk before going to bed, a rule of thumb is to put away all your electronic devices 30 minutes before bed. To further enhance your sleep quality, you can practice repeating positive or grateful thoughts.

2. Appreciate and accept yourself.

“Let go of who you think you’re supposed to be and embrace who you are.” Dr. Brené Brown

Self-acceptance, a major key to happiness, is to embrace all aspects of yourself—the positives and the parts you see as imperfect. In a fast-paced society, it is easy for us to quickly conclude our experience as either “good” or “bad,” “a success” or “failure,” whereas a wider spectrum and deeper sense of understanding is left uncaptured. Free yourself from the dichotomous world by becoming more mindful and aware of your own thoughts and feelings as they arise without judgment. If negativity appears (or reappears), gently notice it without suppressing the thought or forcing yourself to turn it into something positive. Find a quiet place and devote at least 3 minutes of your time daily to begin this practice. You deserve taking time for yourself and to be appreciated.

3. Make meaningful connections with others.

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” An African Proverb

Having meaningful connections with others benefits our emotional stability. A key to a long lasting friendship is to invest time getting to know someone and to keep in touch even after college. Research findings suggest that you can maintain a quality relationship by sharing
important news and updates about yourself from time to time. This can also help reconnect a lapsed friendship. Try to build a new connection as you take opportunities to sit with someone you don’t know in a class or in the cafeteria, and have a light-hearted conversation.

If you would like to learn more about how to live a balanced life, join us in a series of "Balanced Living Workshops" offered in the Counseling Center this semester with rotating topics on Mindfulness, Emotional Regulation, Self-Compassion, and Interpersonal Effectiveness. It’s going on now on Tuesdays from 12-1pm in the Halladay Student Services Building #204. No registration required.