

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lisa Candra

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility

You are listening to episode 49 of the *Autism Mom Coach*, Self-care is Your Responsibility.

One of my favorite places on Earth is the local Bikram Yoga Studio. This is the hottest of hot yoga, 100+ degrees, 40+ humidity. Heaven. I don't get there as often as I would like but when I do I am always greeted at the door by a sign that says this, 'If you don't make time for your wellness you will be forced to make time for your illness'. And this hits me every time and it brings into such sharp focus all of my excuses.

I am trading time now for time later. And if you are doing this too, if you are telling yourself that I don't have time for myself, because of all of my responsibilities raising my child with special needs then you are doing yourself and your child a disservice. Because the hard truth is, self-care is a responsibility and your self-care is your responsibility. In this episode, I am going to share with you the simplest things that you can do to promote and preserve your own wellness no matter what is going on. Stay tuned.

Welcome to *The Autism Mom Coach*, a podcast for moms who feel overwhelmed, afraid, and sometimes powerless as they raise their child with Autism. My name is Lisa Candra. I'm a certified life coach, lawyer, and most importantly I'm a full-time single mom to a teenage boy with Autism. In this podcast, I'll show you how to transform your relationship with Autism and special needs parenting. You'll learn how to shift away from being a victim of your circumstances to being the hero of the story you get to write. Let's get started.

Hello everyone and welcome to the podcast. I am so glad you're here and I hope you are doing well. Two things, if you haven't already, go over to my website, theautismmomcoach.com and grab my free course, Keeping Your Cool During an Autism Meltdown.

Now, the great thing about this course is that although it focuses on the issue of meltdowns, the framework and the tools that I teach in this course and in my program can be used for any issue that you are having. Because

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility

at its core it is all about how we have choices to make about how we think, how we feel and how we react to the circumstances in our lives.

And I use a cognitive approach in this work but also a somatic one, respecting the fact that we have nervous systems, animal bodies that are getting activated in response to triggers. So that needs to be attended to as well. It's not just a matter of thinking new thoughts and seeing things in a positive light. No, it's a matter of really understanding what's happening in your body when you're getting escalated so that you can find ways to self-regulate yourself in order to show up as the parent you want to be. And this could be during a meltdown or an IEP meeting, it doesn't matter, the same principles apply.

Second announcement. I am offering a time-limited discount on my 12-week coaching program. That will expire on midnight February 14th. This is my Valentine's Day gift to you of self-care. This is your opportunity to invest in you, in your wellbeing, in your wellness, in your ability to show up as the parent you want to be to the many challenges of raising a special needs child. I'm there with you. I've been there. I'm still there and I've got you. So if you've ever been interested in coaching with me, now is the time.

Again, this is a time-limited discount so if you want to get it, go to my website theautismmomcoach.com, click on Work with Me and schedule your consultation appointment.

Alright, let's get started on self-care. So first, let's define it. Self-care are the actions, the proactive steps that we take to promote and preserve the wellness of our minds, our bodies and our spirits. And so what do we know about our actions, the things that we do and don't do? Well, they don't come out of nowhere. If you've listened to episode five, The Think, Feel, Act Cycle or episode six, The Self-Coaching Model, you know that I teach that our thoughts create our feelings and our feelings fuel our actions.

So quite simply our actions are always driven by a thought we are having in our brains that causes a feeling in our body that fuels the actions that we take or we don't take. So when we think of self-care in the context of a self-

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility

coaching model we can see the thoughts and the feelings that are leading us to not make the appointment or go to the gym or drink the water or eat the vegetables or talk to ourselves unkindly, just to name a few. And sometimes the thought is, quite simply, I don't have time for me.

So let's put this in the model. The circumstance is you want to engage in some sort of physical activity for 20 minutes each day. And your thought is, I don't have time for me. And that thought makes you feel discouraged. And when you feel discouraged maybe you don't schedule time for yourself in the day or you do but you're not really committed to it. You don't take the little steps to ensure success like planning out your outfit, exactly what you will do, exactly what time you will do it.

Maybe you spend time scrolling on your phone, that could be spent getting other work done. And then when you don't get that work done the first thing to get crossed off your list is that time for you. Or maybe you think about all the things that you could be doing like the dishes, like the laundry. And the result here will be that you don't make the time for yourself and you reinforce your belief that you don't have time for yourself. And, remember, our brains love to be right, miserable they don't care but right they do like. They want to be right, right feels like safety.

And so we will actually go out of our way to find or create evidence that confirms the beliefs that we already have. And so when you're believing that I don't have time for myself you'll make that come true unless you make a purposeful decision to sort of override that default thinking and that default negativity bias. So let's try this.

What would happen if instead of accepting the thought, I don't have time for me, what if you changed this just ever so slightly? What if you were thinking, it's possible for me to find 20 minutes each day? And then maybe you feel a bit curious. How might you act from the feeling of being curious? Maybe you would scrutinize your schedule. Maybe you would plan out your time differently. Maybe you would start noticing all of the things that you are making time for like scrolling or catastrophizing or ruminating.

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility

And maybe you would say no to things that interrupted your ability to have time for yourself. There are really so many possibilities just from that simple shift. Having time to yourself goes from not possible to not only possible but a little quest or a game to make it happen. It is so important for us to see this and start making these shifts away from telling ourselves we don't have time. Because another hard truth, no one is going to do this for us. The cavalry is not coming to sweep us out of our lives and onto a cruise deck where we can finally relax.

We have to create time for ourselves. We have to commit to ourselves. And here is the thing that I know for sure. You can do it. You can find time for yourself. Here's how I know why. Autism parents are the most resourceful humans I have ever met. We find a way. We make a way. We create a way every day for our kids. So what I am challenging you to do is to put yourself on your to-do list. Treat that time for you as precious and non-negotiable.

The more you do this the more you will interrupt the patterning that is currently telling you that you don't have time for yourself and resulting in you not making the time, feeling burnt out and then guess what, resenting everyone and everything on your to-do list and blaming them for your burnout.

Alright here are some simple suggestions about ways you can take care of yourself that don't take a lot of time or effort.

Number one. Put yourself on your to-do list. Take five minutes every evening to examine your schedule for the next day. And find 20 minutes minimum for yourself. This could be a walk, a meditation, stretching, journaling, listening to music, enjoying your morning cup of coffee or reading. It really doesn't matter what it is, it just really matters that you create the time for yourself.

Number two. Validate your own feelings. This means not ignoring them, not resisting them. Acknowledging them. Acknowledging your own feelings the way you do your child's feelings when they are upset.

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility

Number three. Manage your mind. Notice when you are having a thought spiral, catastrophizing, all-or-nothing thinking and purposefully redirect your brain. This is a form of self-care because these thoughts create a lot of unnecessary and unhelpful stress and anxiety in our bodies. By deciding, no, I am not going there, I am not going to indulge in this you are taking care of yourself.

Number four. Talk nicely to yourself. The way you talk to your child when you are offering them comfort, assurance or validation, use the same words. Use that same voice with yourself. Now, I know this might sound silly at first but here's the thing. It works, our words, our voices communicate safety to our nervous system. And so the tone of your voice, the way you speak really does make a difference. That's why I said, talk to yourself the way you talk to your child, words and affect. This is a simple way that you can take care of yourself.

Number five. Notice the good. It is so easy to overfocus on the negative. I mean this is what it means to have a biologically hardwired negativity bias. Because of this bias, we need to make an effort to notice the good in ourselves, in our children and in our lives. Now, I'm not saying in an I should be grateful because some people have it harder kind of way. I mean from a place of abundance.

Number six. Savor a pleasant moment. Think of a delicious piece of fancy chocolate or your favorite coffee or anything that you really enjoy. What is it like to savor it? You slow it down. You notice it. You feel the sensations and you make it last longer. Do this with a pleasant experience. I like to do this in the morning when I go downstairs and I see my son sleeping and he just looks so peaceful and sweet. And I just love to take that moment in, the whole scene. He still has stuffed animals in his bedroom which I think is adorable. There's his LEGO sets which I think are really sweet.

And I just like to savor that moment before I have to start to tell him to get up out of bed which is always challenging for a teenager. But that's just an example of just taking even 30 seconds to just let a really pleasant experience land in your body.

Ep #49: Self-Care is Your Responsibility

And finally number seven. Laugh. Laughing is medicine. It enhances our mood, it lightens our mood. It makes us smile. It signals safety. It's powerful. So laugh, maybe it's a memory. Maybe it's a back-and-forth texting with a friend. Maybe it's a hilarious cat video on YouTube. Whatever it is, laugh.

And then finally for all of these suggestions it doesn't matter what you do, it just matters that you do something on purpose for you because you matter. Alright, that's it for this week. I'll talk to you next week.

Thanks for listening to *The Autism Mom Coach*. If you want more information or the show notes and resources from the podcast, visit theautismmomcoach.com. See you next week.