

Wellness for Black Girls Podcast

Ep 11 Reflections on Self Care - 9/3/20

[00:00:00] **TaReon Jael:** Welcome to the Wellness for Black Girls podcast, a biweekly podcast that aims to help Black women cultivate a life filled with ease, flow, and calm by sharing holistic health and self care tips. I'm your host TaReon Jael, a Certified Health Educator and Clinical Lab Scientist. For more information, please visit wellnessforblackgirls.com.

While I hope you enjoy listening to and learning from the podcast please remember that it is not intended to be a substitute for a relationship with a licensed healthcare provider. Now let's get into episode 11 reflections on self care.

Thanks for tuning in to today's episode. September is Self-Care Awareness Month. Oftentimes when we hear the word self care. It's often used as a buzzword. [00:01:00] So in this episode, I want us to talk about what self care really means by briefly reflecting on the history of the term, especially as it relates to the Black community. I also want to share eight suggestions along with some resources that we can use on our self care journeys.

The term self care was first coined in the 1950s. Medical doctors used it to describe practices and healthy habits that patients could use to help them care for themselves while transitioning back into their daily lives. After an extended hospital stay. Later, academic professionals began to look for strategies to help workers in high stress professions like social workers and first responders avoid burnout.

They believed that these individuals could not take on the burdens of others [00:02:00] if they did not first take care of themselves mentally, emotionally, and physically.

The concept then picked up steam in the 1960s with the rise of the Women's Movement and the Civil Rights Movement. In her 2017 article for Slate, Aisha Harris writes that "Women and people of color viewed controlling their health as a corrective to the failures of a white, patriarchal medical system to properly tend to their needs.

Entities like the Black Panther Party created free community service programs to make up for the lack of adequate social service programs within the Black community. The Black Panther Party emphasized community care through these programs by distributing food, providing medical care and education, and protesting police [00:03:00] brutality. Dr. Angela Davis stated in a 2018 interview that, "for a long time, activists did not necessarily think that it mattered to take care of themselves in terms of what they ate, mental self care, cultural, self care, spiritual self care..." But some Black Panther activists like Ericka Huggins encouraged self care by practicing yoga and meditation.

when we tap into the spirit of self care, true self care, by learning about the origins and the evolution of self care, we're able to get to the root and power of it. We often hear this quote by writer and Civil Rights activist, Audre Lorde, "caring for myself is not self-indulgence. It is self preservation, and that is an act of [00:04:00] political warfare." In our nation, which was built on white supremacy and continues to perpetuate white, heteronormative, patriarchal systems, systems of oppression, Black people, Black men and women were not meant to survive, let alone thrive. So it is absolutely critical that we, as Black women, practice self care

so that we can thrive in spite of living under these oppressive systems. And that's what makes self care for Black women an act of political warfare.

And we must continue to care for ourselves in mind, body, and spirit, so that we can have the mental clarity, energy, strength, power, and resilience to continue to care and advocate for [00:05:00] ourselves our loved ones and our communities.

How can we take care of ourselves in a way that allows us to do this work? It's more than the luxuries. Sure. The luxuries are a part of it and those things feel nice, but sometimes self care involves things that are uncomfortable. These things are often necessary to grow and thrive. This could mean forgiving ourselves for past actions or forgiving others. This could be asking for forgiveness. It could be something completely different, like fitting in a workout when you don't really feel like it or making that doctor's appointment we've been putting off or creating and sticking to a budget.

So let's go over eight self care suggestions and a few resources. The first is [00:06:00] to set boundaries by this. I mean, we practice setting boundaries. For a lot of us this is a skill that we never learned. So we must make it a practice. One way to practice this is by limiting our time on social media. There are settings as well as apps on our phones that can help us set limits on our screen time.

The next suggestion is to incorporate movement throughout our day. The intention is to exercise for the mental health benefits. These should be activities that we look forward to doing. Some examples include restorative yoga, which is a practice that focuses on slowing down and opening the body through passive stretching. So props are used to support the body while holding the various poses. Some like to go for a run, walk [00:07:00] or dance because they find the rhythm to be meditative and others like strength training. They like moving some heavy weights. For you, you may prefer a combination of all or a few of these types of movements on different days during the week, either in the morning, before the day gets away from you or in small five to 10 minute increments throughout the day.

The third suggestion is to spend time in prayer, meditation, and/or journaling. One app that I've been enjoying lately is InSight Timer. They have thousands of free guided meditation sessions. I've been especially drawn to their Teachers of Color playlist which features various meditation sessions by teachers like Ruth King, Alex Elle, Laila Delia, [00:08:00] and Justin Michael Williams.

The fourth suggestion involves sleep and rest. Of course, we want to prioritize sleep. But it's also important to take time to rest as well. This may look like putting our phones away and spending quality time with people that nourish our soul. Rest is a time to give ourselves a break from feeling like we must constantly be doing something.

The next suggestion is to ask for help and accept help when it's offered. I know that this one can sometimes be difficult to do, so it helps to take some time to figure out why we have trouble accepting or asking for help. And once we get an idea, then we can take small steps to work through that discomfort.

The sixth suggestion [00:09:00] is to stay connected with and seek out community. Many of us are still social distancing. So we want to connect with others virtually. One online group that I've been enjoying is the Balanced Black Girl Podcast Community on Facebook, which is

hosted by Lestraundra Alfred. Les posts intentions for each new month, book recommendations by Black women writers and other discussion topics. So be sure to request to join the group and of course, check out and subscribe to the Balanced Black Girl podcast, if you haven't already. Another podcast that I've been enjoying lately is The World Through Our Eyes Podcast by Mariama Jallow. In each episode, Mariama discusses a variety of sociopolitical issues. She invites guests from a [00:10:00] variety of backgrounds to have discussions that bring light to the importance of holding space for diverse perspectives. In a recent episode, Mariama highlights the beauty of, and brings light to current issues within her home country, The Gambia. Listening to podcasts, such as The World Through Our Eyes helps us stay connected to our brothers and sisters throughout the diaspora by having an awareness of their day to day lives.

The seventh suggestion is to check in with our finances. I found that it helps me to do this at the beginning of the month. So this is the time to review the budget and make adjustments if needed. This could also be a time to choose to donate to an organization or a cause that's doing racial justice work or work towards nourishing [00:11:00] the lives of Black communities, organizations like ImUnique, which we learned about during our previous discussion with Tyrone Beverly or organizations like the Loveland Foundation, which is committed to funding therapy sessions for Black women and girls.

The final suggestion is to do some decluttering. With everything that's going on in the world, it can feel like everything is a mess. So one way to combat that feeling is to take some control over your personal space, as best you can. Choose one space in your home, set a timer and declutter that space. I mean, Marie Kondo that thing. If something in that space does not spark joy, then get rid of it. To keep from getting overwhelmed, try to choose a small space. For example, if your home office [00:12:00] needs some love, then at the end of the work day, set a timer for 10 to 15 minutes and put stray items away.

In today's episode, I hope I was able to share some useful insight to help you gain a better understanding of self care by reflecting on the history of the term. I hope you found the eight self care suggestions helpful, and will look into incorporating some of the suggestions into your self care practice.

Be sure to head to www.wellnessforblackgirls.com and navigate to episode number 11 for show notes with the links to references, resources, and a transcript to the episode. And while you're there, sign up for the free Finding Calm Quick Guide. If you want to keep up with the podcast on social media, you can follow on Instagram @wellness4blackgirls [00:13:00] and you can follow my personal IG page @tareonjael.