

Chapter 17

I's All About Taking Care
of Yourself

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The law of harvest is to reap more than you sow.

Sow an act, and you reap a habit.

Sow a habit and you reap a character.

Sow a character and you reap a destiny.

-James Allen

Much of Recovery is devoted to the development of new skills. No skill that you learn is more important than self-care. Being active in your disease was one long act of self-destruction. As a result, your physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being has greatly suffered. Learning how to take care of yourself for the first time can be more difficult than you ever would have imagined.

Good eating, sleeping, and exercise habits should be the cornerstone of your Recovery. Your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being should become the most important priorities in your life. This means seeking the help of qualified health care providers. Applying HOW—Honesty, Openness, Willingness to your interactions with health care providers is essential.

Put at the top of your list the need for a physical exam. You have been ingesting toxic substances for years. What, if any, damage done to your body needs to be evaluated? Determine the full extent that any risky sexual behavior has had on your physical health.

A dental exam is important as well. Pain associated with teeth and gum problems may become a potential trigger for relapse. Any lingering, untreated problems should be evaluated and treated as soon as possible. When was the last time you had your eyes checked? The older you get the more important it is to take appropriate preventive measures.

There is no one who can't benefit from an evaluation by a qualified mental health professional. It is not uncommon for an individual to experience a co-existing emotional disorder. There are many areas of a person's emotional and interpersonal life that have severe deficits. Psychotherapy is a very effective tool in helping an indi-

vidual fill in the gaps in their emotional and interpersonal development. As well, psychotherapy can be an excellent resource for an individual in early Recovery who needs the support and guidance of a trained professional. Stress management, relapse prevention, life skill development are but a few areas of aid and comfort a qualified health care professional can provide for the individual in early Recovery.

Remember, Recovery is forever. The habits you develop in early Recovery will stay with you for your lifetime. Begin to establish healthy rituals that focus on the proper feeding of your mind, body, and soul to create patterns of behavior that will enrich your life for years to come.

Believing that you're worth the time, money, and emotional expenditure that good self-care requires is perhaps the largest obstacle you'll have to overcome. Developing a level of comfort with asking for help, beginning to believe that you're worth the bother, and having faith that every right step you take has a positive benefit to your Recovery will empower you to overcome any obstacle you create for yourself.

Here's wishing you and your family the best of luck as you start out on the most challenging and yet rewarding time of your life.

G.B.U.

Steve

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- Individual psychotherapy
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- Marital psychotherapy
- Family psychotherapy
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- Relapse Prevention counseling

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