

Date: 09 05 12

Event: United Spinal Association Webinar.

Discovering a Healthy and Active Lifestyle

USA: 866.554.2099

THIS TEXT IS BEING PROVIDED IN A ROUGH-DRAFT FORMAT.
COMMUNICATION ACCESS REALTIME TRANSLATION IS PROVIDED
IN ORDER TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY AND
MAY NOT BE A TOTALLY VERBATIM RECORD OF THE
PROCEEDINGS.

>> Hello. This is Bill Fertig of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association. I wanted to start welcoming all of you to the webinar today. To make sure you're in the right place, we are having Erena DiGonis, licensed national coastal workers, present discovering a healthy and active lifestyle. We'll be starting in just two or three minutes. We want to let you know you're in the right place. Please hold on until a few more attendees join us, and then Erena DiGonis will be joining us for her presentation. Thank you. Hello, everyone. This is Bill Fertig with National Spinal Cord Injury Association. I'll be moderating today's webinar event, Discovering a Healthy and Active Lifestyle.

Our presenter Erena DiGonis, licensed master social worker, will be presenting. She is a licensed psychotherapist and certified health coach that specializes in weight management, stress management, and work life balance. Erena creates personalized one-on-one coaching programs that draw on her diverse training and experience in psychotherapy, food psychology, mindfulness, and holistic nutrition. Our norm diet approach to weight loss also focused on healing unhealthy relationships with food and body image. She's also passionate about providing workshops to low income families and senior citizens throughout New York City and Long Island on nutrition, health, and lifestyle topics. Erena?

>> Speaker: Thank you so much. I just want to thank everyone for attending today's webinar. I'm really excited to be here. I have to say I am loving this webinar format. It's raining pretty heavy in New York where I live, so it's a pleasure to work from home today. So today we're going to talk about what's love got to do with it? Self-care for the body, mind, and spirit.

And I'm going to share my PowerPoint. There we go. So before we start and get into the material, sorry I'm having some technical issues here. Here we go. I want to take care of some housekeeping issues. Okay. So the first thing is to be present with

this call and webinar. I've attended many, many virtual classes and I know how tempting it is to multitask. You can usually see me with my headset emptying the dishwasher. So today I want to challenge everyone that's on the call and for you to really get comfortable and be present with this webinar.

Okay. The second thing is this webinar is for you and about you. I love questions. I love comments. I love an interactive style. So please feel free, don't be shy to ask questions. And at the end, I'm going to give you my contact information and my wellness page on Facebook so we can continue the conversation there.

The picture on the slide, you see a questions box, and this is funny, because I'm not really a computer person to be telling you this, but you can type in the question and then hit send. So I want everyone to practice, and you can just type in hello, hi, and hit the send button. And then Bill, let me know that you're seeing it.

>> Bill: We're getting them pouring in rapidly.

>> Speaker: Wonderful. Okay.

>> Bill: Many, many.

>> Speaker: Virtual woo-hoo on the webinar. Awesome. All right. So who am I? As Bill mentioned, my name is Erena DiGonis and I'm a licensed social worker. I'm a certified health coach in New York. And self-care has been a really important topic to me. First hand, professionally and personally. And I know that it can make life a whole lot easier or a whole lot harder. My personal story, I wasn't sure if I was going to share this, because I'm a pretty private person, is that I've also been a caregiver for the last twenties years. That is a picture of my beautiful little sister, Alexandria. She has many medical issues and happens to be in a wheelchair. And that is a picture of us. I'm giving her the big smooch on the cheek after she won the Hampton classic, the disabled division, and that is her wheelchair filled with trophies and ribbons. And Alexandria has always taught me about courage and all that is possible in the world. And she has been my greatest teacher.

Professionally, I'm also a social worker. So for the healthcare professionals on the phone, I'm sure you can relate to this one. You know, I always perceived self-care to be selfish or I was too busy. I'm a compulsive overachiever, and I never made time for myself. And it was in my twenties in graduate school when I started to suffer from extreme fatigue, panic attacks, insomnia. Not a fun time in my life at all. I was also drinking several cups of

extra large caramel lattes a day. And here's a real confession. This is being recorded, so this confession is going to be in the archives that I probably didn't eat a green vegetable for over a year. I lived on fast food, French fries, and lattes, and it really caught up with me. Even though I was young, I would go my doctor and say I wasn't feeling well, and everything was coming back, quote, normal, but I felt awful. And I cleaned up my diet. That really wasn't enough. There was another component, which was the life care -- lifestyle self-care piece, which we're going to talk about today.

Okay. So what am I talking about? So today we're going to be talking about self-care or self-love. And I will be using them interchangeably. And this is the stuff that's beyond the bubble bath, the manicure. I know we have men on the call, so I'll call it man-scaping, because it's kind of masculine. So you know, it's the deeper self-care. We're going to take a moment and do a poll, and the question is, what is your relationship with self-care? So if you can do that? Is it something that's missing from your life? If something that you do inconsistently? Or is it a nonnegotiable, daily practice for you? And remember, this is the no judgment zone, so just give your honest answer. And then we're going to look at the results of the poll.

I'm going to try to make this as interactive as possible.

>> Bill: Just so you know, Erena, we've had 84% of participants vote so far.

>> Speaker: Fantastic. Again, this is the no judgment zone. Sometimes it's hard to admit that you're not caring for yourself the way you should be. So Bill, did you get the results? Okay. We're going to wait for the results.

>> Bill: I did get some results. Something I need to improve on is the winner with 66%. I nourish myself everyday, 19%. So I think people are being pretty honest there. And huh? What is self-care? 15%. That would have been my first reaction.

>> Speaker: Okay. Thank you so much. So the people who are in the 19% at the end, I'd love to hear some of the things do you for yourself and to inspire the group. The 66% which is the majority, air in the right place. It's not a surprise to me, based on who's on the call. Clients, caregivers, professionals. It's not a surprise that this is an area we need to improve on. And the 19% -- I'm sorry, the 15%, I've got your back. We're going to do this together. Okay? I hope at the end of the call you take a few tips and put it into action. This is not a place to collect mere

information. I attend a lot of workshops and I take notes. I'm a good student, I'm always writing and writing. Then I put it on the bookshelf and I forget about it. I really want to put this into action.

Okay. Also going to be giving you some tools for the self-care toolbox. Again, this is just another tool for your toolbox. Celebrating and sustaining self-care and questions and answers at the end. And again, if you want to add some questions or share something, feel free to type and we'll be checking in with Bill throughout the webinar. Okay.

So where are you now? This is a basic needs checklist. And I'm not going to go through the whole thing. This will be on the website, so you can definitely go back to it, but it just helps give you some ideas. And I'll go over a few of the main ones. Do I usually get enough sleep? And enough sleep is not five hours. Enough sleep is more like seven and eight. And yeah, you know, real life, some nights you're not able to, but when you can, sleep is really important. Do I eat something fresh and unprocessed everyday? I'm a big fan of unprocessed, fresh food, and adding it in, making minor changes, makes a huge difference, and I'm going to talk about that a little later.

Do I allow time in my life to touch nature, no matter how briefly? Nature is huge for me. Just being outside, getting fresh air really helps.

I'll skip down. Do I make time for friendships? Do I nurture my friendships? So again, you can use this checklist just to kind of gage where you are and know where you're showing up for yourself. This checklist will be on the website and it's yours to keep.

So I'm going to return the page. Okay. Some questions to ask yourself. I want to share a story about a client that I'm currently seeing to illustrate some of these questions. I just started seeing this woman who is a mother of four. Lovely woman. She has a very serious chronic medical condition. She's a full-time RN. Works the night shift at a VA Hospital. And her mother-in-law just moved in with her, I guess because she's a nurse and she can better take care of her.

So when we spoke about the importance of slowing down, it was

so much easier for her to take care of everyone else. And she is always at the bottom of her to do list. And I gave her an assignment during -- we see each other once a week, to do one thing for herself. And when she came back the next week, she was like, Erena, I did whatever it was. I took a 10-minute walk, and I realized that it became another thing on her to do list. So I just want to make the point that self-care, and we're going to talk more about what it is and go over some strategies and tools, is not meant for something to be -- another thing on your to do list or a chore. It's really meant to nourish yourself and, you know, I'm not trying to stress you out by adding another thing on your plate. I know you have very busy lives.

So I want you to look at these questions, and I'm going to give you a few minutes to look them over. Okay. And to look at yourself care story. Okay? What word with, and you can type them in the box, comes to mind? It could be guilt, fear of being selfish, resentment to take some time for yourself. There's no wrong answers.

Okay. What stops you from taking better care of yourself? What fears do I have about re-prioritizing? And it's important to explore yourself care story and what's coming up for you. If you're a caregiver, you know, it might be that your loved one is suffering or how dare you make time for a walk or whatever, read a book or go to a workshop when a loved one is in pain or not feeling well, that you're a bad person.

Okay, Bill. Are there any words coming up?

>> Bill: Let me review some of them and maybe you can address generally.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: Some just one-word comments. Time.

>> Speaker: Time, absolutely.

>> Bill: Procrastination. My husband is not the best caregiver.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: Not enough therapy. Focusing on myself rather than someone else. Guilt and feeling selfish.

>> Speaker: Sure. Absolutely. I hear it.

>> Bill: One individual question, it wasn't really a question, it was a comment. The person wrote in and said that they get a massage every three weeks and try not to feel guilty about it.

>> Speaker: Right. Exactly. Well, right. Going for self-care, maybe let's say it's the pedicure while you're on the cell phone

yelling at your credit card company is not real self-care. Or going for that massage. And I thank you for your honesty. That means a lot. And having those guilty feelings kind of negates the act, that 50-minute act of self-care. You know, it's really relaxing into it. And it's hard. This is real life. You have real things going on.

I know when my sister was in the hospital and, you know, in the worst of it, but that was crisis time. That was getting through the crisis. That was not time for pedicures and massages and fun stuff. And that's why I'm talking about self-care beyond massages and pedicures, because when you're dealing with life and Death and blood and guts, that stuff can be kind of ridiculous, you know. Who's going to go for a pedi cure when a loved one is in the hospital and suffering? I mean, it's important to have cute toes, but at the same time, you know, I'm going to be talking about a little deeper stuff that you can just incorporate into your everyday life that doesn't really take more time.

And the one thing about time which comes up a lot is you're actually saving yourself time when you take care of yourself. You're operating in a more efficient way. Think about when you get a great seven hours of sleep or when you get four hours of sleep and you're dragging your behind out of bed and you're reaching for, you know, two cups of coffee. You're not thinking clearly. You're definitely not operating at 100%. So you know, the plan here is to definitely fuel yourself and just be in optimal health the best that you can be.

Okay. Are there any other words that are coming up, Bill?

>> Bill: Making time for myself. No motivation. Lazy. Well, that's being pretty honest.

>> Speaker: Yes. And I appreciate the honesty.

>> Bill: One comment is I walk an hour everyday at lunch.

>> Speaker: Awesome.

>> Bill: Positive attitude. Fatigue from chronic illness.

>> Speaker: Absolutely. I'm going to make a note about that, because I definitely have worked with people who have severe fatigue from chronic illness and I have some tips.

>> Bill: Just one comment if I could.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: We're going to actually address specific questions at the end of the hour, so don't feel your question is being ignored.

>> Speaker: Yes.

>> Bill: I am flagging those questions.

>> Speaker: Okay, wonderful. And another thing is, this is what I do, it's sort of my passion. I'm absolutely available. I'll be giving my Facebook well think page, my e-mail. You can absolutely, if it's a private question, you know, feel free to e-mail me. Okay.

So some questions to ask, I also believe, this is on the handout, and that's something that you can go back to. All right.

So what's love got to do with it? The definition of self-love, and I'm just going to minimize. I'm sorry. Hold on. So loving you so you can love the world more. And I want to add to that. It's also so you can heal your body. Okay? We all have healing to do on different levels, and getting out of your own way allows the body to heal. And you know, when you think of let's say you ride a bicycle and you fall off the bicycle and you have a boo-boo on your knee. Your body begins to scab and heal. Your body wants to heal itself, but you're not going to get back on the bicycle and fall off and drag your knee or pick your scab. Right? You have to get out of your own way to heal.

And I'm a huge believer in just allowing the body to heal. That's its purpose. That's what it wants to do. And self-love helps facilitate that process. Okay.

This is also similar to the oxygen mask theory on the airplane. You have to put your own mask on first. And a few years ago I would have been like, nonsense. That's selfish. Let me get a lack of oxygen and help everybody else first, but you know, again, you're a better person. You're better able and more efficient to help and take care of everyone else when you care for yourself.

And it's starting to shift your thinking, and thinking of it like that as a nonnegotiable rather than being selfish or a bad, quote, bad person.

I love quotes. I have quotes throughout everything. But Lucille Ball, love her. Love yourself first and everything else falls in line. You really have to love yourself to get anything done in this world. It's true.

Okay. So I can talk about this for hours. It was bill to narrow it down to five, but here are some five tools for radical self-care. And I use the word radical, because it's a radical shift in mindset to say, okay, I deserve this. This is nonnegotiable. You know, think of it

like water. It's nonnegotiable unless you're a diet soda lover. You have to have water to survive. What? Three days without water and we perish? So these are nonnegotiable things. And I will reassure you throughout this call that every little thing counts. This is not all or nothing thinking, which is very tempting, you know? A lot of people have that about exercise, you know? Walking out your door and going 10 minutes is moving your body. That's fantastic. You don't have to train for a marathon or workout six days a week, breaking a get and, you know, you can work up to that, but 10 minutes here or there is everything. It's fantastic, especially if you're not.

So my first tool, and I really think my most important, a huge part of healthcare is nourishing your body. Feed yourself healthy, whole foods. The less ingredients the better. Food is meant to rot. Think of the Twinkie. The Twinkie will outlive everybody. It has a very long shelf life. It has all of these mystery ingredients. And why would you eat -- and I don't want to be a Twinkie or Cheese Doodle, although they're good occasionally. That's not what I want to be. And you don't have to become a vegetarian or a vegan. All right? This is about adding in higher-quality foods to your diet.

So for example, if you love cereal, let's say cereal is your breakfast of choice, could you add in a tablespoon of nuts or a handful of berries? I mean, that's not too scary. Or let's say you're an egg lover. You love your omelet. How about some mushrooms or spinach or zucchini? Great cancer protection. So all of those little things really will help energize you.

And sometimes food is not enough, so just going back to fatigue, I'm a huge, huge fan of smoothies. Almost everyone owns a blender. I'm actually just staring at my blender now. And I'll be happy to share some recipes if you're interested. Green smoothies. The first time I drank one, it was disgusting. I'm not going to lie. I thought it was gross. How do these people drink these green swamp juices? And I realized that I didn't add any fruit. It was just, like, kale and water. And it wasn't very tasty. So now I make a green smoothie that's about 60% greens, 40% fruit, and it's absolutely delicious. It tastes like a fruit speech and gives me tons of energy. There's lots of things you can add to your smoothie, like bee pollen. I'll be happy to share all of this with you. It will naturally energize and you it's sustainable. So unlike a cup of coffee or a candy bar or latte where you get that instant jump of energy and you're like, woo-hoo, I'm energized, but then what

happens, you start crashing and then you reach for another coffee or tea or candy bar and you're on the sugar rollercoaster. So these are great ways to naturally energize your body, and it's a nice, steady, sustainable energy jump.

And sometimes food is not enough. If you really are not a sublevel of energy, these green smoothies, juices, soups are wonderful. Grandma knew with all of these broths. Very energizing with vegetables. Very, very healing and will give you great energy. There's no overnight cure or miracle, but over time, in a few weeks you will absolutely notice the difference. And I will be more than happy to share that. I also have some great chocolate smoothie recipes, healthy ones, and you can hide some spinach in there for kids. They'll never know.

So this is a huge part of self-care. And as I said again, simple changes count. And being mindful not only of what you eat, but how you eat. So as a busy social worker in a psych unit for many years, I had, like, little snacks in my pockets. And some kid would try to do something awful and I'm running and I'm eating my lunch. I have my little snack in my pocket and I'm jamming something down my throat. I'm choking on it and I'm all stressed out and I have, like, this lump going down my throat. I gained weight pretty quickly and I'm wondering, oh, but I eat healthy. But my body was always in this very stressed fight or flight zone. So how you eat is just as important as what you eat. And it's not about, you know, the two-hour lunch. It could just be a quality 10 minutes of really just sitting down, stepping away from the computer, shutting off the TV, you know, taking a nice cleansing deep breath before you eat. If you say grace, that's awesome. It also helps to relax you. And taking in your meal. I do a whole workshop on mindful eating, but just really become aware of how you eat. Sometimes that's the missing piece. More energy, really chewing your food, and really just relaxing into your meal.

And again, I can spend hours on that topic, so I just want to make sure we get everything in. Play. Play is my second tool. So many times, you know, in our busy lives, we forget how to play, how to smile, how to laugh. We have hobbies that we used to do. I remember a few years ago, I decided to take a children's oil painting class and I had to get special permission, because I'm an adult. And I had so much fun. I sat next to a five-year-old who painted a jellybean. And I laughed. And after my long, stressful days at work and my own family issues, it was wonderful. It was

really just, you know, it really energized me.

So think about ways that you can play or hobbies that you used to have that you can reconnect to.

I just want to touch base with you. Do we have any questions or comments?

>> Bill: We have several questions right now.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: Would you want to touch on some of those right now?

>> Speaker: Are there food questions?

>> Bill: There are.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: Actually, one is more of a comment but it's a question type of a comment.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: I would definitely like to have some recipes for smoothies.

>> Speaker: You got it. Okay. Let me give -- let me just interrupt and give one right now. I'm all about instant gratification with smoothies. So I'm sure most of you have a blender, and I love yard sales. You can find a brand-new blender in the box for a few dollars. It's definitely not a big investment. I love either a cup of water or a cup of coconut water. And I do about two or three handfuls of spinach, but here's the tip. Start off slow. Okay? Don't fill your blender with greens if you're not used to green smoothies. Okay? I love kale, also. Kale is king of the greens. Tons of vitamins and minerals. Very energizing.

So pick a dark leafy green. Romaine lettuce is okay. It has a very filed flavor. And with the greens again, start off slow. My other trick is frozen bananas. When your bananas start to speckle, take the peel off the banana and throw it in a zip lock bag and throw it in your freezer. You just take the peel off the banana. Learn from my mistake. You're going to have a war with your banana and you're going to lose. So you take the peel off the banana, stick it in a zip lock bag, throw it in the freezer. Once it's frozen, you'll give it a day or so. You use a frozen banana in your smoothie. It gives it an amazing texture, like a soft serve ice cream. And then I'm a big fan of whatever fruit is in season, because it's usually less money. Frozen is fine. Canned is not. If you can't get fresh, you can use your frozen fruit. I love strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, any type of berry. A handful is really all you need and you blend that bad boy up and you have a delicious green smoothie and it's usually all you can eat.

If you put all that stuff on your plate, it's a lot to eat, but you can drink it pretty quickly. It's a great snack. It's a great breakfast. And it's very energizing. And again, the rule is it should taste good, so if you blend that up and it's a little too green or doesn't taste good, you can add a little more fruit to it. Okay? And start off with that one and let me know how you like it.

Okay. Were there any other questions on the topic?

>> Bill: Followup smoothie question.

>> Speaker: Okay. Love it.

>> Bill: Can you use soy has a base for a smoothie?

>> Speaker: Okay. Are you a male or a female?

>> Bill: It's a unisex name. I can't tell that.

>> Speaker: Okay. So soy is interesting. I am dairy free and I've been dairy free for several years. It's really something that's changed my life. It's helped me so much with energy and some female issues that were going on. You know, some people can eat more dairy than others. Again be it's knowing your body and listening to your body, which is so important. Soy for some women who are in child rearing age, pre-menopause, are sensitive to soy. They may get spotting or ovarian pain. Again, it's listening to your body. I don't eat soy. I use almond milk instead. Love it. Men don't seem to have a problem. Also, if you've had any reproductive cancers for women, please avoid soy. But in general, it's just listening to your body and knowing what works for you. But I highly recommend the almond milk.

>> Bill: This was a female, by the way, so your answer was spot on.

>> Speaker: All right. Good. Almond milk, even coconut milk is delicious, and it digests very nicely. This is a very quick digesting good, so it allows your body to heal, you know. Think of eating a steak. Right? It takes three to seven days to digest, depending on the person and how much meat you're actually meeting. The standard American diet we're eating meat all day long. Bacon, sausage, eggs, ham and cheese, pizza with pepperoni and a big hunk of meat for dinner. And that, again, is the standard American diet. I'm sure a lot of people don't eat that way, but your body is always digesting and never healing. So just lightening the load a little bit with something like this is fantastic.

>> Bill: Erena, comment. I don't taste the greens in smoothies. I add frozen yogurt.

>> Speaker: Okay. So frozen yogurt, again, is dairy. If you're someone who can handle some cow milk, that's fantastic, but I

would experiment. Try using, you know, a little almond milk or a little coconut milk instead of the yogurt and see. This is part of play actually. It does go hand in hand, you know? If you're playing with your smoothies, playing with your food, seeing how your body feels, seeing how your energy, is how your digestion is, this is just kind of being light and giving yourself that opportunity to play.

You know, I know my typical morning, I'm racing to work or I'm race to go see a client or do a workshop, and that Ezekiel bread, my English muffin with peanut butter and raw honey. I'm racing, racing, racing, and there's no playful spirit there. It's my rote breakfast. Giving yourself an extra few minutes, maybe on the weekend, to play around and see what works for you is awesome. I love smoothies, if you can tell. Definitely give me feedback on my Facebook page. I would love that. Any other smoothie or food play questions?

>> Bill: Okay. I believe so. We have a lot of interaction, so bear with me.

>> Speaker: Awesome, no. I love it. That's what I wanted.

>> Bill: The majority of the current questions that have not been answered, which we're eliminating the ones that have been answered, the remaining ones, several deal with exercise. What type of exercise? Will you be providing exercise information on the webinar?

>> Speaker: Okay. I'll talk about it very briefly. I'm not -- actually, I'll just jump into that now. I'm not a personal trainer or an exercise physiologist. And another confession: Exercise is an area that I don't fully show up with, but there's nothing wrong with walking or, you know, gentle swimming. My sister loves her therapeutic horseback-riding. Finding something that you enjoy, not something where you're like, oh, you know, I have to work out and dreading it, because that negates the results.

And you know, it could be dancing. It doesn't have to be anything crazy. That all or nothing thinking. But I would say consult with an expert with exercise, which would be a personal trainer, an exercise physiologist, someone who has an expertise. But you know, emotionally, I would say do something that you find enjoyable.

>> Bill: And so everyone knows, let me make this point now, that this webinar, in its entirety, will be archived at The National Spinal Cord Injury Association website, [www dot spinalcord.org](http://www.dot.spinalcord.org).

Www.spinalcord.org. Let our IT person have a few days, a week,

maybe even more, to place all the materials from this webinar, including Erena's PowerPoint that you're looking at.

>> Speaker: Uh-huh. And we have some handouts.

>> Bill: That will be on the Webinar Archive page.

>> Speaker: Awesome. And again, I'm very accessible. If there's something that's not on the site, you can e-mail me. Like some recipes. I'm very open to all of that.

>> Bill: Erena, are you ready for additional questions?

>> Speaker: I'm going to continue. I want to make sure we go over everything, and then we'll jump back into questions.

>> Bill: Thank you.

>> Speaker: Okay. Thank you. So my third tool is connection. Okay? Connecting, reconnecting. And I could have given you 100 tools, but I'm kind of jamming two different things in one tip. Social support and spirituality. And spirituality can mean whatever it means to you. For me it's stillness and some solitude. It's connecting with nature. It's really just quieting myself and centering myself at least once a week. And it's hard sometimes. Let's be real. Sometimes it's really difficult when your mind is racing. You've got so much to do, so much on your plate, but I find that I am a better person and I'm more -- I'm better able to help people when I have that stillness. Very important.

And social support, you know? We're social creatures. It's really important to have good people in your life that bring you up and that give you that unconditional support that you need. Okay.

Unplugging and presence. It's ironic that we're on a webinar, but we are in the technology age, and you know, our phones, our iPads, our iPods, our TVs. It's overwhelming. And it's really important to unplug from the over stimulation of technology, and that definitely helps with finding that stillness and time. Right? How much time do you spend with technology? A whole lot. I know I have to give myself a time limit on Facebook and my e-mail, because it can be many, many hours, and then it's bedtime. Where did my night go?

And then unplugging from society's expectations of you. You know, we are bombarded with all of these messages, you know, that you need to be younger, smarter, more beautiful, rich, clothed in expensive designer we're to be worthwhile. I think it was Dr. Andrew Weil who speaks about this media fast, and it was something that I found really helpful. It's important to know what's really going on, but at the same time to be over stimulated,

watching the news or, you know, just catching up with things right before bed and when you wake up doesn't give you the greatest messages. You know, I love knowing what the weather is and the traffic, but the news is very depressing and, you know, not much has changed. We know that there's murder and economic issues and war. I mean, it's pretty much the same. You're not missing too much.

But keep that in mind. Unplugging from the over stimulation or at least if you, you know, with work, you know, saying on the weekend, I'll only allow myself half an hour or an hour on both Saturday and Sunday to really find that stillness. It makes a huge difference. And you know, try it out for two weeks and see.

Okay. And then compassion. I'm all about compassion. Having compassion for yourself and then also for others. I always say the no judgment zone, because we have a very mean inner critic, and she can or he can be a real witch sometimes. So taking action. Deciding that you're going to put that voice in the parking lot and, you know, let's say you don't do any exercise, that your compassionate voice is going to step in and say, okay, fantastic. We're going to walk 10 minutes a day or we're going to go swimming or, you know, we're going to explore some fitness classes, you know. But again, with the compassionate voice, and just being very mindful of that inner critic.

I know that inner critic, the gremlins in your head, you know, can psych you out of a lot of things before you even start. Okay. So those are some tools.

I do have a recap, so let me do this. So here is your permission slip. I am giving you a permission slip to start taking loving care of yourself and to stop feeling guilty. I thought it was a very cute picture. It's a slipper and jammie day for you. It could be 10 minutes. It could be two hours. It could be half a day. It could be a full day. Whatever it is, it's something. And it's about time that you have it. So you can print that out and put it on your refrigerator as a reminder.

Okay. So a recap of some of the tools for self-care and self-love. My quality nutrition. Really, really important. Again, just to be more energize and had to support your healing and, you know, everything else, all the other endeavors in your life. Your stress. You know, I know if I eat two candy bars and they definitely have

and I'm trying to go about my day, I'm feeling more agitated. I'm sugar crashing. So that's not really sustaining my energy.

Movements. You know, I call it movement, because I always -- when I think exercise, I'm like, five days a week? Move, just move your body to its ability, the best you can, and you know, let go of that all or nothing thinking.

Adequate sleep. So, so important. You know, I have healed myself of the insomnia. I'm a big fan of melatonin. Definitely helped me out with my insomnia. And also unplugging before bed. You know, I would get so riled up, I'm on the computer. I'm on the phone. And then I have the brightest lights on before bed, and then I can't fall asleep. And then that inner critic, you know, why can't you fall asleep? You have to wake up at 6:00 A.M., you know? So really just setting a nice bedtime routine for yourself and to be play and feel to experiment with it and not to judge yourself, you know. Finding something that works for you.

Play, as we said. It could be a hobby or it could just be, you know, making a smoothie for yourself and be playful about it.

Relaxation. This may be something that you need to schedule in your calendar. And that's cool. No problem. Whatever it takes to get it done. Again, relaxation can just be, you know, 10 minutes here or there or the one-minute meditation in your car. Whatever, you know, whatever works for your real life.

Friendships. You know, maybe there's some people that are in your life that are not really working out for you. Time to do a spring cleaning with those friendships and then nourish the friendships that are working for you.

And then the last tip for the recap, compassion to yourself and others. And I love this quote by the Dalai Lama. If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion. It's all about kindness to yourself.

Okay, Bill. I'm going to check in with you. Do we have any comments?

>> Bill: We do have some pending questions.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: You may wish to respond to this one. And I'll just read it off for you.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: My illness takes exercise and my play choice, golf, off the table. Is laughter and music enough?

>> Speaker: Absolutely. Laughter, I work with a lot of clients who are much older, in their nineties. Their physical hobbies are not -- they're not able to fully participate in them, but they're laughing. They're playing. They're listening to music. You know, there's joy in their hearts and they're very vibrant. And whatever makes you happy. If it's standing on your head. It doesn't matter. If it's driving and letting, you know -- singing too loud, out of key. It's all good.

>> Bill: Great. Thank you, Erena.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: There are some more serious questions. You may wish to follow up with some of these folks later on individually, but let me read one to you that stands out.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: And this would be from one of our primary constituents with chronic spinal cord injury. They're seeking suggestions for addressing muscle wasting/weight loss. Buttocks area needs more mass to avoid pain and pressure sores. This is a person who is a wheelchair user full time.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: Over time, lack of voluntary control of the lower extremity muscles has caused weight loss and wasting of those muscles, which provides exposure to other secondary conditions.

>> Speaker: Sure, sure. I will answer the weight loss aspect. Again, I'm not an expert in, you know, the exercise physiology of it or the physical therapy aspect of it, but with weight gain, you know, another great thing are the smoothies, by adding things like avocado, coconut milk. You can definitely, you know, add extra calorie in his a very healthy and natural way. I would be very careful of things like Ensure. I know a lot of doctors recommend it. It's very high in sugar and it has the high fructose corn syrup, which does not make you feel fantastic. There are healthier, more natural ways of gaining weight. And you know, I've heard doctors tell clients to, you know, eat a pint of Haagen-Dazs before bed. Not really the best advice. So I can easily send you some recipes.

There are some male replacements or just using things nature provides us, like avocado or coconut milk to add extra calories to your diet.

>> Bill: Okay. Thank you. I do have a little bit more lengthy one here.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: Let me read it off to you and let me know if any of the areas need to be repeated at all.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: I am paraplegic with MS. The last few months I've had a few medical issues which have caused severe fatigue with my MS. How can I incorporate exercise into those days when I have no energy? That's one question.

>> Speaker: Okay.

>> Bill: And secondarily, how much exercise do I need on those days to be beneficial or what kind of exercise should I do?

>> Speaker: I'm going to avoid the exercise component a little bit, because I'm, again, not an expert in it and I don't want to give anyone, you know, wrong advice, but I will, with the MS, I just saw an incredible -- there's an incredible book and an incredible protocol by an MD. Her name is Dr. Wahl. She had MS and it's a food protocol that she's designed. She is an MD, and she is in remission now. And it's basically a paleo-diet with a lot of greens. I just want to share that with you. It's helped her tremendously. The first thing that she noticed was a lot more energy. She's got a website. I don't know her first name, but her last name is Wahl. And she is now back in high heels and in remission. I like that she is an MD, and so she does have the science, you know, integrated into this nutrition protocol, and you might find some of the things on her website and her book helpful.

>> Bill: Thank you. Speak yes. You're very --

>> Speaker: Yes, you're very welcome. All right. So I'm going to go to this slide. Let's put this to work. Again, I don't want this to be more information that you collect, and I've definitely been there attending webinars and tele-classes and, you know, it's like fun in the moment and you take some notes and it gets stuck on a shelf somewhere. So I really want you to just take a moment and think about something that you can incorporate into your daily life. And again, maybe you need to take one thing off your plate, you know. Taking a real honest inventory of what's going on. But you know, again, if you drink diet soda or soda, you know, adding one cup of water and taking out a diet soda is incredible. It's tremendous. So I want you to think, even the small things in your life. It doesn't have to be a one-hour walk. And the person who takes that one-hour walk, fantastic. Keep it up, but for those that are really just starting out or very inconsistent, think of things. You know, your daily foundations, I call them.

One thing that you can incorporate into your routine. You know,

for me I love animals. I had five dogs. I'm down to two. And my dogs are my everything. Right? So giving them their morning love is myself care. That makes me feel fantastic. My little Willow, I give her belly rub and that's part of myself care. You know, I know I need to drink a certain amount of water. I mean, that's nonnegotiable. I begin to get a headache and I don't feel well. Clean food. I can't eat fast food. It just does not work. It's tempting sometimes, but it's not for me. Laughing, smiling, speaking with friends when I can, you know, having a friend over. So these are things, you know. It doesn't always cost money. It's definitely deeper than a pedicure or man-scaping. So I want everyone to take just a moment and challenge yourself and think about something you can do to incorporate self-care and well innocence your life, then I would love to you type it in and share it with us. And Bill, we'll wait for your responses.

>> Bill: Okay. One comment is I write everyday. Another, watch the news less. Maybe that was a stress reliever in and of itself.

>> Speaker: Absolutely. The news is very depressing.

>> Bill: Go out with friends once a week on a regular basis.

>> Speaker: Excellent.

>> Bill: Be mindful of the moment. Sort of open-ended.

>> Speaker: Oh, I love that. Excellent.

>> Bill: Read a book. Stop coffee from twice a day to once a day and add more time. That's sort of a combination of comments in that one.

>> Speaker: Great.

>> Bill: And learn to love myself.

>> Speaker: Absolutely. You know, in the beginning it's something, with these changes, and I want to keep hearing the list, but it's something you might have to remind yourself of. Checking in with yourself throughout the day. I love myself. It's okay. You have to build a muscle and make it a habit. It may not be easy in the beginning.

>> Bill: Some other comments, Erena, are get rid of stuff I don't need.

>> Speaker: I love that. De-cluttering.

>> Bill: I get a massage once a month.

>> Speaker: Fantastic. Without guilt.

>> Bill: I silence my phone and read for an hour before bed.

>> Speaker: Awesome.

>> Bill: Here's an ah-ha moment. Love my puppy.

>> Speaker: Love that. Puppies are the best, even when they're naughty. They're still great. The phone one, I really like that.

Insomnia has been a major issue in my life, and I realize that when

I'm on the phone checking my messages, I can't sleep. So shutting the phone off or I have a BlackBerry still, that red light blinking. I've actually had to put the phone in another room, because I want to be tempted. Oh, like the e-mail that's going to change my life at 11:00 P.M. I can't sleep and I'm looking at that red blinking light. So for me, it was a lot of discipline to just put it in another room and say, I can wait until morning. So I like that one.

>> Bill: How about, Erena, spend time with people who really care.

>> Speaker: Oh, absolutely. What is that saying? You're an afternoon of the five people you spend the most time with? That's pretty scary. There were points in my life --

>> Bill: Yeah. Something to think about.

>> Speaker: Absolutely. I worked in an inpatient psych ward, and I loved what I did, but I wasn't always around the people that could lift me up. It was something that I had to think about when I was making changes in my life. You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with, so you want to, you know, be around people who can inspire you and love you and support you.

>> Bill: Agreed, actually, if I could add a personal comment.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: In my former life, before becoming injured, I also was in a stressful profession like that, and you do become a part of what it is you're around.

>> Speaker: Absolutely.

>> Bill: Go ahead.

>> Speaker: I was just saying, it's hard to make that decision, but ultimately knowing what's best for yourself, and you've done that already and moving forward is part of making these hard decisions sometimes.

>> Bill: Surely. Another comment, I watch a comedy or romantic film several times a week.

>> Speaker: Love it.

>> Bill: Out loud.

>> Speaker: I love my Netflix and my Hulu. Greatest things ever.

>> Bill: And learn a new skill. Be your own best advocate.

>> Speaker: Uh-huh. Absolutely. These are fantastic. Any others?

>> Bill: Another attendee indicates that they have green tea each afternoon with their afternoon music.

>> Speaker: Wonderful, wonderful. See, these things be it's the simple things in life. Green tea is not, you know, it's not like a trip to Paris, something that you have to save up for and plan. It's a

simple thing, but it brings you peace. And that's really what I'm trying to get at. Incorporating these simple things that really light you up and energize you and that are meaningful. You know, loving your puppy is free. I mean, you got the puppy initially, but you know, these are things that you can do throughout the day. And also, developing that awareness when you need it, when you know you're starting to feel stressed or drained or kind of blah, you know. What can you do to energize yourself emotionally and physically?

>> Bill: Erena, this is a tough, but a question that's on point that I think you may wish to address generally as we reach the end of our hour here.

>> Speaker: Sure.

>> Bill: And it is this. How do I learn to accept my physical limitations as a permanent condition? Still in denial.

>> Speaker: Absolutely. There's no easy answer for that question. It's a hard reality. It really is. It's a slow process. You know, I work with clients who have had injuries from 15 years ago who are still grieving their loss. And you know, they have great days and then they have very bad moments. So I think, you know, the first thing is having compassion with yourself. And it sounds a little cheesy to keep saying that, but to really just honor your feelings and not feel bad about feeling that way. Also finds support. Know you're not in this alone. There are other people who are going through similar experiences and they have some wisdom to share with you, so not to judge yourself. It's a hard reality and to honor, you know, really honor your feelings.

>> Bill: One participant listens to the Beatles.

>> Speaker: Fantastic.

>> Bill: Like my age group, they're giving away theirs a little bit.

>> Speaker: Yes.

>> Bill: The Beatles haven't been around for a little while.

>> Speaker: But it's great music. As we're going through questions, I just want to -- the spinalcord.org, that's -- I'm sorry. Spinalcord.org is the website where you can get additional materials and click on the archives. And this information will be available to you. If you're interested in learning more, I give a 15-minute free let's get acquainted phone session to see if I can, you know, help with anything that's going on, and I use a combination of therapy and coaching and I have a mind/body approach to wellness. I have many clients through Skype or phone and I have a private practice in New York. That is my e-mail. And then the last page, connect with me, again, I am a Facebook junky, so that's my Facebook wellness page. I would love to see you

there. I have tons of smoothie recipes and I'm on my page many times a day. If you need help staying accountable, we can do a 14-day challenge and let me know how it's working for you, incorporating one, you know, simple daily, healthy habit into your day. You know, green tea, a high quality book, hugging your puppy, being around kind people. You know, again, the little things really matter here.

Okay. More questions?

>> Bill: Actually, some of the questions are drying up. Some of them remain questions about exercise in one form or fashion. If I could make a little blurb for our interactive resource center. I'd like to invite people to review the exercise based information at our resource center. You can go to our resource center from www.spinalcord.org, the national spinal cord injury website. Front and center on your page will be a resource center tab. And as you mouse over that tab, the first selection that you'll come to is our resource center, spinal cord central. So you can click on there and review all of the exercise-based therapies that are present there or you can go to our web portal to ask a question and our information specialists would be happy to help you with your questions on -- there was one question earlier that related to pressure sores. Several other exercising with spinal cord injury. And we have a growing body of information available on that site for your use.

>> Speaker: Wonderful. You have wonderful resources.

>> Bill: Erena, I believe that the clock is telling us that we're just about out of time. And we've just about addressed all the questions that were freshly coming in in the view I was. We had a lot of viewers today. If you had one line to sum up your total presentation and that with which you wanted to impart today, putting you on the spot, Erena, what would that line be, would you say?

>> Speaker: That is putting me on the spot. I think mindfulness. Just being mindful about what you need and want.

>> Bill: Thank you. I think that brings us to a conclusion today. Again, a reminder that this webinar, with all of Erena's presentations, will be archived at www.spinalcord.org. And give us a little time to get that on there. A week or so until that is archived. There will be a large archive button selection right from the home page. It should be easy for you to find it on the National Spinal Cord Injury Association site. And representing NSCIA, I would like to thank Erena DiGonis for presenting for us today and for providing a great list of resources and options for our webinar participants today. Thank you, Erena.

>> Speaker: Thank you so much. It's been an incredible pleasure doing this webinar.

>> Bill: Great. And that concludes our presentation for today. Again, give us a week or so, maybe a little bit longer for archived versions of this webinar at www.spinalcord.org. Thank you.

>> Speaker: Thank you.

(Event concludes.)

THIS TEXT IS BEING PROVIDED IN A ROUGH-DRAFT FORMAT.
COMMUNICATION ACCESS REALTIME TRANSLATION IS PROVIDED
IN ORDER TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY AND
MAY NOT BE A TOTALLY VERBATIM RECORD OF THE
PROCEEDINGS.