



Family Caregivers of British Columbia

Care for the Caregiver Creative Goal Setting – How to Value Yourself

Creative goal setting and visualization are positive, inexpensive and helpful techniques to deal with any stressful situation. They can be performed almost anywhere. One has only to take a few minutes, find a quiet/comfortable spot and begin to concentrate on oneself.

Steps to Creative Goal Setting

- **IMAGINE** as clearly and realistically as possible what you want to happen. For example: “I would like a break from my caregiving responsibilities every third weekend.” or “I would like to be more assertive.”
- **MAKE** an affirmation out of this desire by imagining it is already happening or feel it as if it were already true. Put it in the present. “I have arranged my caregiving responsibilities so that I have a break every third weekend.” or “I speak up and express my needs appropriately.”
- **CONSCIOUSLY** turn it over to your higher self, or to the higher power of the universe. Just relax and let the higher force go to work within you to create it. Be sure to be open to growing and changing. You may need to start your creative goal setting with an affirmation like “I trust in the creativity and ingenuity of my higher self. I am open to growth and change.”
- **POST** your affirmations around the house.
- **WRITE** down all the reasons why you think you can't have what you want. For example:
 - I do not deserve so many breaks.
 - He or she will not get proper care.
 - It is my job to care for this person.
 - My friends will not approve.
 - My family will call me selfish.
 - The person I care for will be miserable and make life miserable when I return.
 - Other caregivers will not be as patient or look after his/her particular needs.
- **DECIDE** which of the statements have the most power over you. Write an affirmation to counteract each one. For example: “Others do provide high standards of care. I can let go of wanting to control this.” “I am loved and respected by my family and friends. They support and admire my desire to remain active outside my caregiving responsibilities.”

Like any other new technique, this one too will take some learning. Persevere!! **YOU ARE WORTH IT!!**

How to Value Yourself

- Don't demand perfection from yourself. Set realistic goals that you can and want to achieve. Have the courage to be imperfect.
- Reward, comfort and love yourself. You're OK!!
- You have the right to decide what to do, how and what you want to be without making excuses, justifying or saying "I'm sorry". You are responsible totally for who you are today, and will be tomorrow. So it's your life and what happens is up to you.
- Refuse to be manipulated by other people's greed, helplessness or anger. Set limits. Say "no" when you mean "no". Confront those who try to manipulate you with "you should" and offer guilt-provoking statements.
- Check out your "should's" to yourself. It is something you want? Ok. Something you have to do, like pay your bills. That's reality. But that's not a "should".
- Recognize feelings of inadequacy and guilt for what they are – legacies from your past. You can decide not to feel that way.
- Be constructively selfish. In the long run, doing what is best for you is usually best for everyone concerned. Remember that no matter what you do, someone is not going to like it-so you have to risk being disliked, or even ending relationships, if you are going to function in your own best interests.
- Recognize that there are limits to your power. You really control no more than 50% of a relationship – you're half.
- Don't answer questions you don't want to answer. Questions are often threatening, demanding, manipulative-especially the WHY and WHY NOT questions. Nowhere is it engraved in stone that you must answer questions.
- Stay in the here-and-now and cope with reality. If you blame others or the world for your problems...or if your behaviour is aimed at making you feel better instead of solving your problems – you are defending instead of coping. Every healthy person has problems and you do have the ability to cope with them.

From the Creative Visualization Workbook by Shakti Gawain