Self Betrayal

Do you know that *"If I can care for you, love you, and help you but not at the expense of my emotional, physical, or financial health"* is an important tenet of self-care?

As a therapist, people come to see me stooped from the weight of the relationships they carry on their backs. I sit while people show me each individual bundle they are carrying. This inevitably includes fear, guilt, sadness, and over responsibility. Among the heaviest burden is trying to care for loved ones who don't or won't care for themselves.

In life, knowing how to be healthy in our caring is vitally important; and not everyone is able to learn how to do this before over-caring takes a toll. I hear:

"But if they didn't have me to listen, be there, and help they would have nobody."

"I am their mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, friend, significant other, spouse, neighbor…It is my responsibility."

NO IT IS NOT

If there is a common theme in people who come for therapy, and many who don't but need it, it is neglecting our self-care while we brilliantly care for others.

We think that taking care of ourselves is "selfish". But the lack of care of ourself is a betrayal that will affect your emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual health.

Although we are not taught this skill, we can learn the art of taking care of and caring deeply for ourselves. It is healthy for us and those in our lives to know how to have a healthy sense of boundaries to separate what is our responsibility from what others need to do for themselves. That is our first and foremost responsibility. Not doing so is rejecting our basic needs.

Here are some thoughts on how not taking care of our own selves is a betrayal. Read, ponder, and consider if this is something you need to pay attention to, and maybe get some help with.

How do I betray me? Let me count the ways…

- I betray me when I continue to accept broken promises
- I betray me when I tolerate verbal abuse
- I betray me when I allow myself to be bullied
- I betray myself when I get steered off course by manipulation
- I betray myself when I consistently give more than I get
- I betray myself when I take better care of you than myself
- I betray myself if I let you physically or sexually abuse me
- I betray myself when I let denial cloud the truths that I need to see

- I betray myself when impulsivity wins over judgement
- I betray myself if I am emotionally self-abusive
- I betray myself when I believe your love for me is more important than my love for me
- I betray myself when I don't speak my truth
- I betray myself when to avoid being alone, I spend time with people that are not healthy for me
- I betray myself when I don't forgive myself

Above all, I betray myself when I violate the sacred rite of keeping myself safe, sane, healthy, and joyous by not taking care of me, or I cause myself harm because of my caring for you.