

# uPLifted Series

An Informational Digest of EmpowerM3 by Coach Cindy

## Breaking Free from Coming In Last Choosing Self-Care is for All Brainstyles

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What does it mean to you to come in last? Some would say coming in last is losing, being behind everyone else, being Less skilled or talented than the rest, or just not being good enough.

Could you be training your brain to believe the very same thing every time you put yourself last?

A decade ago, I was sitting in my neurologist's office awaiting news. I had horrible headaches and a slew of odd symptoms that worried me. I had been diagnosed with migraines as a teenager, so headaches were old-hat, but the new oddities were not. They scared me! It was the day of reckoning. I sat across from my doctor dumb-faced when he asked about my self-care practices.



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"Um, what?" He proceeded to ask how I took "care" of myself. "Well," I answered, "I guess I don't really, at least not very well. I eat most of the time, at least when I'm hungry, and I try to brush my teeth every day. I take a shower. I have two young children, you see, and they..." I proceeded to explain why I came last on my own list. I just didn't have enough time or energy left for me after taking care of everything else. On the outside, life looked like it was running so smoothly, but inside, my body was imploding from stress.

I should have been happy. The tests ruled out all the bad stuff. Instead, I felt more deflated than when I had shown up. I left the doctor's office with a 30-day prescription to improve my self-care. "Self-care, that's easy for him to say." He believed my recent symptoms were linked to my constant stress and sleep deprivation. "No sh&\$, Sherlock! I was stressed! What Mother isn't? What mother is getting a "good" night's rest?" He shared that there was recent scientific evidence that improving my self-care and sleep hygiene practices could likely relieve the neurologic symptoms I was experiencing. My headaches could lessen, and my brain fog should lift. At the time, I was not a believer!



Fast-forward to the present day. I know now Dr. Field's 30-day prescription was not long enough to create a habit of putting myself first, but he was on to something. It sounded simple to put my needs first, but it wasn't. I had to retrain my automatic response in how I showed up in my world. Finding my way to the top of my list took focus and mental fitness. Coming in last was no longer an option for me. It's not for you either. It's time to embrace self-love and give yourself the self-care you need to thrive, no matter how your brain is wired.


**"Put yourself at the top of your to-do list every single day and the rest will fall into place."**

**-unknown**

**In Nature Neuroscience, researchers note that stress affects the prefrontal cortex, the same location of the brain affected by ADHD. There, stress reduces neuronal firing and impairs cognitive abilities.**

**(CHADD, 2019).**





Perhaps your life is full of stressors that have grown beyond manageable, or maybe life has always been a storm brewing. I'm here to offer a lifeline offered to me back when I was convinced I must have had a grave diagnosis. Self-care is essential to your health and wellness. This month's uPLifted Series is for all brain types offering three areas to explore so you can place the emphasis back on you, too, finding your way.



## What is Self-Care? Really!

It's time to dispel the myth that self-care is a luxury for the rich and well-off. It's time to let go of the belief that choosing self-care is selfish, self-centered, or narcissistic. Instead, self-care is choosing a way of living that recharges your brain's battery and helps you keep forward momentum. Self-care is essential if you want your brain to function at its best. It is necessary for your quality of life and solely your responsibility. It is not sitting next to sitting like Buddha, hippyish, or woo-woo. To be at your best, you must feed yourself what will keep you winning even when you have life's harshest blows and hardest knocks. Self-care is a daily practice for life. It's not a privilege- it's a must.

**Self-care**  
**IS EMPOWERMENT**

“Caring for your body, mind, and spirit is your greatest and grandest responsibility. It’s about listening to the needs of your soul and then honoring them.”

– KRISTI LING





## How Then?

### **Step 1: Strengthen Your Awareness**

Pausing and slowing down to notice what is genuinely needed can be the most challenging first step. Usually, and especially if you have neuro differences like ADHD, slowing down when there's stuff to do seems like the worst choice. For some, slowing down means doing nothing at all. But pausing is not stopping. Learning to pause and reflect is brain training in awareness. What are your thinking habits? You can't put yourself first without catching your thoughts and actions. Strengthening your awareness moves you from constantly losing to winning.

You will begin to win when you see your values as they appear in your daily choices. What matters to you? Gaining a deeper understanding of your values helps you ask better questions to understand your deeper why? For example, why do you choose XYZ instead of getting to bed? What has you saying "yes" again to that thing you really dread doing? Most often, there is a purpose for everything you choose to do. What matters is what is driving the purpose. And, has it solely been by habit?

Find out your  
character strengths here at  
VIA Character Strengths.

### **Step 2: Assess Your Needs**

How are you meeting your needs now? It's time to break out some old-fashioned paper. Getting clear on your needs is being true to how you are living. Use the following questions to help you identify areas of self-care that need attention. This is a fact-finding mission, not judgment day. So, lay all opinions aside and be as authentic as possible.

Download my Needs Questionnaire to Deepen Your Self-Awareness to help you take a snapshot of your current selfcare habits.

“Self-care  
means giving  
yourself  
permission to  
pause.”

– CECILIA TRAN



*Self-Care:  
A Needs Questionnaire to Deepen Your  
Self-Awareness*



The following questions will help you take a snapshot of your self-care broken into six needs-focused areas. Before you get started, take a deep breath. This questionnaire is not meant to judge good or bad. Instead, use this list to take an honest, non-judgmental look at how you care for yourself now. The majority of the questions are yes/no. Other questions may require deeper thinking. Knowing what you do now lets you choose what you want to do more or less next. Ready! Be curious! Be authentic and honest. This is for you. You are stepping into the light of choosing yourself. Congratulations!

[CLICK HERE](#)



### Step 3: Fit Yourself In!

Where does self-care fit in your day? "I don't have time for one more thing! Not even a half-thing." I bet you've thought this before, or you may believe it now. Time is an elusive continuum that none of us ever seem to have enough of. Fitting in self-care depends on how you prioritize and identify what truly matters. When is your best time of day, and how are you using it? Who or what are you doing all the things for? Taking a really hard look at what you spend your time on is your third.

You matter, too. Here are a few self-care options to play with for charging your battery.



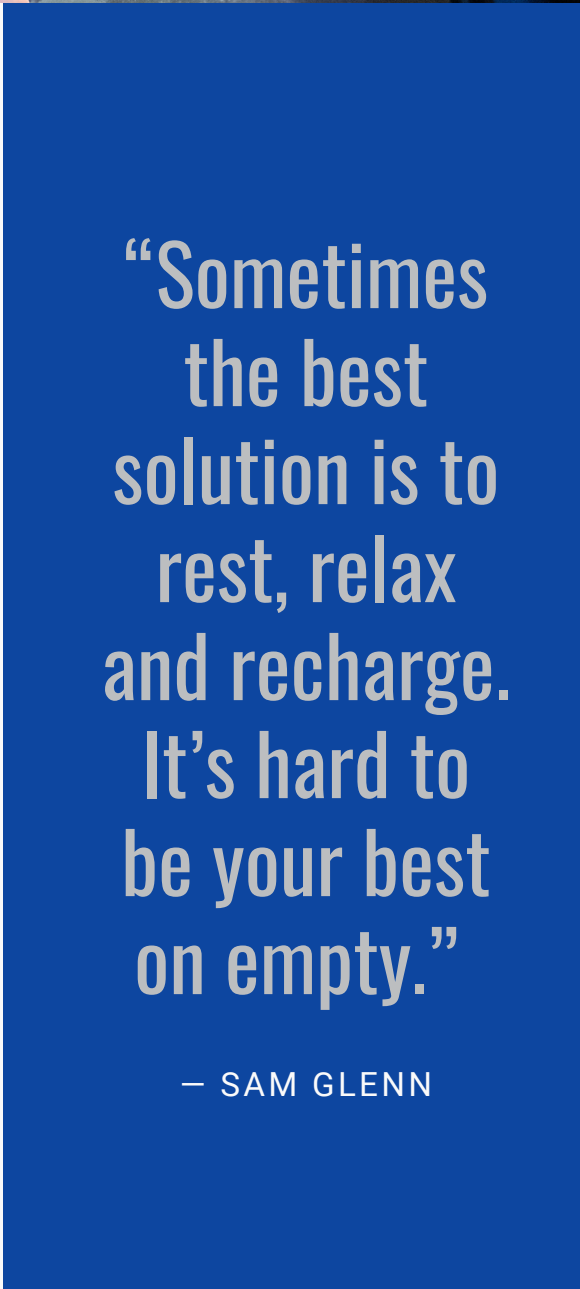
## Let's Plug In A Self-Care Recharge

### Find Joy.

What makes you feel joy in the moment? Happiness is not found in the future or ruminating over the past. Joys are felt in the present time. It takes practice and repetition to stay in the moment.

**Hint:** Create a joy list *My joy list consists of a hot bubble bath, fresh flowers on my desk, reading inspirational quotes, laughing out loud with my people, dancing, singing songs as loud as I can from my favorite playlist, calling my best friend, petting and playing with my dogs, joining up with my horse, watching the birds, noticing birds chirping...*

These are just a few quick go-to ways to create joyful moments that nurture my self-care devotion.



“Sometimes the best solution is to rest, relax and recharge. It’s hard to be your best on empty.”

– SAM GLENN



## Create Connection

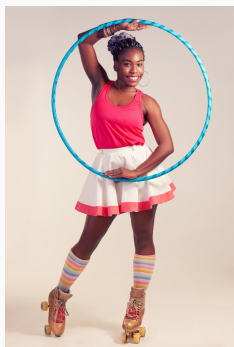


Nurturing self-care with connection can lift your mood and emotional and psychological well-being. Surround yourself with people that support your best self. Are the people around you

lifting you toward becoming your better self or dragging you down? This can be an important area if you are more extroverted and gregarious. Even for introverts connecting with someone regularly can nurture your self-care. Make sure this is in service to you and not an obligation to others. This is a place a high Pleaser might be hiding, so watch your intentions in creating connections.



## Recall Childhood Interests




In childhood, our minds are free from judgment and more self-oriented. What did you enjoy when you were a child? Reflect on this time to see what you might once again enjoy. Feeding your inner child lifts your spirit in a renewed way.



“What one loves in childhood stays in their heart forever.”

— MARY JO PUTNEY





## 10 Ways to Create Strength in Self-Care

1. Become your best friend. Mel Robbins details the "High Five Habit" in her book. She suggests giving a "high five me" every time you win in your day. And the smallest wins count.
2. Implement an intentional habit you want to do every day and will feel good doing. Let it be tiny if starting small matters.
3. Declutter your mental and physical space—both count.
4. Turn off notifications once or more per day to allow your brain to stop the feeling of anticipation.
5. Get into your senses. You can quickly implement this for 10 seconds at a time. Notice your world and smile at something.
6. Move your body. How you choose to move is your choice.
7. Language matters. Find inspiration. Keep your thinking thoughts moving toward growth. The words we think, say, and read matter.
8. Don't let fear or shame stop you from asking for what you need. Connect when you need help.
9. Create healthy boundaries. Saying yes to what you don't really want is saying no to something you do want.
10. Let your brain rest. Manage your sleep hygiene and downtime so you can recharge.

“Your relationship with yourself is the foundation of every relationship you have in life.”

— Mel Robbins,  
The High 5 Habit: Take Control of Your Life with One Simple Habit



**MINDSET**

CHANGING...

“If you can't ask for help without self-judgment, you cannot offer help without judging others.”

— Brené Brown



## Take-away.

Attention to self-care has become more common these days. It's abuzz on social media and splashed on infographics and blog posts. I'm sure someone has asked you, "What do you do to take care of yourself?" The inquiry likely comes after a frazzled moment packed with complaints and judgment of how hard your life is. My first go at self-care felt foreign to me. I took care of everyone else first, making it odd to choose myself. You don't let your phone battery run dry, especially when you know you are going to need it. Why accept letting your battery run dry? You need you in every moment! You get up every day and go at it again. How will you do it again today, tomorrow, or in a week? Let life not become groundhogs' day shadowed by putting yourself last. It's time to live your day nurturing your better self.

Implementing self-care into your life is life-changing. Choosing self-care is choosing to be responsible for yourself. Happiness is created in the moment and collected along the way in memories. We can't always rely on memories, so write them down when you need proof to pick yourself up on another day. Your joy matters. It is time to start making room for yourself. It's not a privilege. It is a choice. What self-care will you choose to be committed to? One small action moves you forward. Being last is not an option. Step into your light today!



**“Remember  
that if you  
really want to  
motivate  
yourself, love  
is more  
powerful than  
fear.”**

— KRISTIN NEFF,  
Self-Compassion: The  
Proven Power of Being  
Kind to Yourself





## *Hello*

Thank you for joining me. My name is Cynthia North, but people know me as Cindy. I am ACC Certified Life Coach with the ICF as a Certified ADHD Life Coach (CALC) and a trained PQ Coach™ member with Positive Intelligence® devoted to partnering with clients to create self-success within ADHD and living life. I work with all ages having a special interest in how the brain affects the outcome. I help ADHDers and stuck people move from crippled in doubt to capable with clarity. I have expanded to offer personalized Mental Fitness Coaching through Shirzad Chamine's Positive Intelligence® Program. New possibilities bloom with deeper self-awareness and through the strength in your mental fitness. I have an innate desire to empower others no matter what difficulties they face with or without ADHD. I believe everyone is worthy of stepping forward out of stuck.

ADHD has touched me personally and professionally.

I know first-hand how ADHD symptoms and behavior can wreak havoc on family dynamics, school, and work success. I chose to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach as well as a member of Positive Intelligence® as a PQ Coach™ because I want others to discover their greatness within ADHD strengths while working with their executive functioning challenges through a positive mindset. I am where I am today because of my two dynamic ADHD children. They both teach me and open my mind to more each day. Their needs were beyond a hug, discipline, structure, or praise. So I sought professional help, ultimately finding a trained ADHD Life Coach. And here I am serving people who want different and deserve ease and flow.

Life experiences have made way for opportunity. I am on a journey to slay stigmas surrounding brain differences. Finding a Life Coach to empower my child led me to become a Certified ADHD Life Coach myself to serve others past their stuck ways and ADHD stigmas. Choosing to strengthen your inner self is where Empower M3 starts. The work is an inside job where your "M3" begins. Connecting your heart and brain with a Coach creates empowerment opportunities. EmpowerM3 - is where the 3 connect to take flight.



There is a more extraordinary tomorrow when your discovery starts today.

**“The one self  
we give away  
is the one self  
we need  
nurture first.”**

**— CINDY NORTH,  
LIFE COACH AND AUTHOR**



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## Disclaimer:

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