

# HOW TO MAKE AUTHENTIC SELF-CARE YOUR LENTEN FOCUS

BY JULIA HOGAN, LCPC



When you think of the Lenten season, what comes to mind for you? You probably think about our Lenten practice of giving something up (like candy or social media), penance, and fasting. Self-care probably doesn't immediately come to mind. However, authentic self-care seamlessly fits with the message of Lent. You see, authentic self-care isn't a selfish or self-indulgent "treat yourself" way of life. It's actually about implementing those things that help you be your best self including your physical, mental, emotional, relational, spiritual well-being.

Lent is about identifying and working to eliminate those things that are getting in the way of your relationship with God. Self-care can help you make changes in your everyday life to eliminate those distractions and things getting in the way of your relationship with God. For example, if you aren't getting enough sleep (i.e. going to bed too late) or having trouble getting up in the morning, you're probably tired, irritable, and have trouble focusing during the day which makes it very challenging to be your best self in the way that God has called you to be that day. A simple form of self-care could be developing a healthy sleep routine and going to bed earlier so that you get more sleep, have an easier time waking up, and feel more like your true self the next day. Authentic self-care can be a powerful tool to help you grow closer to God this Lent.



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Here are a few reflection questions to help you identify how authentic self-care can help you have a better Lent this year:

What is the mission you believe God has given you right now?

What's getting in the way of helping you live out that mission?

If that roadblock were removed, how would your ability to live out your mission be different?

What is one small action you can take to help eliminate or minimize that roadblock?

Write out a specific plan to help you implement this action each day (e.g. What time of day? For how long? What are you specifically going to do? Do you need any special materials? Who can help you stay accountable?)

Remember, authentic self-care are those practices that help you be your best and most authentic self so that you can fulfill the purpose God has given you for your life!



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