



Take Care of YOU

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Plan to be Spontaneous

Do you tend to plan ahead, or do you like to be spontaneous? Does the idea of straying from your routine cause anxiety, or do you thrive on living in the moment?

When we make a plan, it keeps us focused and moving forward, and provides a clear direction for achieving goals. It also reduces uncertainty and helps us manage expectations. However, embracing spontaneity can be equally beneficial, helping us stay flexible, creative, and away from the mundane. Being spontaneous leads to adaptability and a 'go with the flow' mindset, decreasing anxiety in the face of change. Some studies even show that people consider themselves happier when they engage in spontaneity.

Being spontaneous should not be confused with being impulsive. Impulsive actions are often made with little thought or consideration for consequences, whereas spontaneity involves a thoughtful gut check before deciding to act.

If you'd like to incorporate more spontaneity in your day, allow yourself the freedom to enjoy the present moment and stay open to impromptu plans. Try eating at a new restaurant on a whim, exploring a local park without extensive planning, calling a friend without texting first, signing up for a community class that interests you, going on a last-minute day trip, or cooking a meal using only ingredients you have on hand. You can also simply establish blocks of time during which you refrain from making specific plans, and then stay flexible and alert for any spur-of-the-moment opportunities that arise.

As with most aspects of life, finding a balance is key. Let go of the need for rigid planning and be open to new experiences, even if they have a degree of imperfection. If you incorporate both planned and unplanned time into your regular schedule, you may find yourself living a more harmonious and contented life.

How you can be more spontaneous

- Challenge yourself to say "yes" to opportunities or invitations you might normally decline
- Create a spontaneity jar filled with ideas or activities on slips of paper, and regularly choose out of the jar
- Allow for flexibility in your schedule
- Practice activities that require improvisation, such as storytelling or improv performances
- Engage in new activities without doing extensive research
- Practice letting go of overthinking, and trust your instincts when making decisions