

In this chapter we talk about  
taking care of oneself

## Balanced life

There are many areas in which our lives are played out - family, work, health, social life to name just a few. Of different value to different persons, of different levels of satisfaction attained by every person they add up to make each individual life. To see one's own life in such a light, to try to gauge the importance of each of these pieces and the level of satisfaction they bring (or not bring), to become aware of imbalances between these life spheres is an important introduction to self-knowledge and self-care.

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## Self-knowledge, self-distance

The very notion of self-care is based on self-distance and self-knowledge. We cannot take care of ourselves without understanding ourselves first – at least to a certain degree. In fact, becoming conscious of our characteristics and needs, our proclivities, our position in the web of work and life, our way of thinking and reacting and our goals and desires is a crucial first step to reach meaningful self-care. While being uncaring towards ourselves we cannot properly care for others. One of the fundamental realities to become aware of are our hidden negative beliefs. They may concern ourselves (“People do not like the way I am”, “I’m not good enough for that”) or they may concern others (“This work is leading nowhere”, “They cannot be helped”). They are negative and, as long as they are not addressed, they will negatively affect our work.

## Self-care strategy

No action leads to no results. This also applies to self-care. However, this can be misleading since caring for oneself often requires letting go of external action and focusing on taking inner action – which may look like inaction from the outside. Being present and focused on the moment, managing time more adequately, taking better care of relationships and developing interests – all these are examples of the self-care process. In most cases, external action may or should follow, but it would necessarily be based on the awakened sense of reality reached by our inner work.

