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Essential Self-Care for Caregivers and Helpers: Preserve Your Health, Maintain Your Well-Being and Create Effective Boundaries

Howard Brockman LCSW

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Do you often daydream and muse on how wonderful it would be for someone to regularly be attending to YOUR needs? Do you spend a large part of each day helping others to feel better? This book may challenge your old patterns of thinking but following Brockman's Primary Directive to take care of yourself first, your life will start to transform and your health and well-being will begin to shift in a healing direction. Howard Brockman, LCSW has written his second award-winning book, this time emphasizing the importance of self-care for the legions of people supporting and taking care of others. While there are books that have been written about the challenges to professionals such as social workers, nurses and psychologists to becoming burned out, Brockman's book is written also for the millions of untrained non-professionals who are being recruited daily to care for their elderly parents. Do you fit into either of these categories? He describes the many influences that lead to compassion fatigue and becoming "infected" by the feelings of others. This is all about how unconscious empathy can take sensitive caregivers down a never-ending spiral to adrenal fatigue and depression. In Chapter 2, "Characteristics of High-Intensity Relaters," Brockman describes the primary personality of those helpers whose currency is relationship and who easily fall prey to subtle energetic influences that erode their vital force. Externally referencing to others' needs first tends to be one of their traits. Chapter 6, "Prevent Self-Sabotage," is filled with practical ways to stay focused and positive while overcoming old, repetitive and negative inner chatter. Confronting your tyrannizing inner critic is never easy—Brockman tells you how. He identifies different types of "energy drainers" that use our energy to enliven themselves and deplete ours. He does a good job explaining how to create secure and persistent energetic boundaries with difficult and demanding people and other disruptive environments. This is perhaps the most important theme woven throughout the book, for the helper personality tends to not know how to say NO to requests from others. Learning how to establish reliable energetic boundaries is incredibly important for protecting against the interpersonal hazard he refers to as psychotoxic contamination that can become cumulative over time and generate serious long-term health consequences. Dark and heavy energy can settle into and invade the body to wreak havoc with one's health and emotional stability. The good news is that you can effectively create these boundaries and more importantly, learn how to sustain them amidst the ongoing demands of the people you are helping. He spends a chapter on how to use specific energy psychology techniques for emergency self-care, providing fascinating case examples to illustrate how to prevent post-traumatic stress from building up to become PTSD. Brockman spends some time explaining the importance of optimizing your self-care by managing your chi, and how plants, the natural world and flower essences can support helpers to maintain their inner balance and overall harmony. In Chapter 11, "Making It Happen From Within," you will discover well-described and powerful imagery techniques for manifesting positive self-care outcomes for yourself. Brockman then teaches you how to connect to and work with your inner guides for reliable personal and professional guidance. The power of a caregiver's presence is highlighted in the concluding chapter, discussing how "being the blessing" actually creates collective coherence in the immediate caregiver's environment and thus positively affects those who are being cared for. For readers who would like to measure and determine the degree of their own present health and well-being, there are two self-assessment checklists for high-intensity relaters in Appendix 2 that can also be downloaded from his website, www.DynamicEnergeticHealing.com.

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