



# This time, it's about you!

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**So many people find that** simply keeping up with their lives is a real chore, and that

little attention is paid to their own needs. The “work” begins from moment we get up: kids are up or need to be motivated out of bed; there is breakfast to make and lunches to organize; perhaps a spouse to share the car with or a bus to rush out for... By the time you fall into bed at the end of the day it is unlikely that any thought went into your own needs. Well, it is time to invest in yourself. This time, it's about you!

A busy life is not a bad thing. But balance is worth considerably more than we seem to remember amidst the hubbub. Studies show that by making ourselves just a bit more happy and by finding ways to be positive we live longer lives, and better ones, too! Apparently, Bobby McFerrin had it right in the 80s when he sang “Don't worry. Be happy.”

Looking after yourself need not add to your chores. Rather, instead of being a chore, it should come as a welcome moment, a moment of oasis in your day. Let us consider the five parts of “making about you.”

First, think about what is important to you, really important. Is it your children or spouse, your self-esteem, health or friends? Whatever it is, write it down and look at it regularly. Think of it as a grand goal for your life, a mission statement of sorts.

Taking care of your physical self comes next. Start by eating well and getting some exercise. Not sure what to do? Look to *Canada's Food Guide* for the food, and to the *Canadian Physical Activity Guide* for

the active side. And with all that good food and activity, no doubt you will sleep well, and enough tonight. Good.

Pampering yourself is the third part. Start by making time for “not doing”. It may feel wrong to be avoiding “the list” but your little pamper will pay off handsomely when you feel refreshed and strong later. Pampering could be as simple as enjoying a cool drink while rocking in a hammock on the deck, or listening to your favourite CD while soaking in a hot bath.

Looking after your mind counts. Research has shown that self-esteem, optimism and perceived control over one's life all lead to more happiness. Keep things in perspective. Spend time with the people that really matter to you. Have fun. Act happy. Remember to give yourself credit for what you do. Act positive often enough and it will become a habit. Just think: PMA! Positive Mental Attitude.

The final piece is to take care of your spirit. Look beyond yourself to stay connected with family, friends,

your community and nature. Try volunteering for those in need. That could mean an hour or two a month at the animal shelter or

food bank, or maybe getting involved with a seniors' group. Also look at your own spirituality. Are you giving that short shrift?

So, how do you make yourself happy? Start by making a plan —your plan— then turn it into reality. Soon, this accomplishment will start to colour all your other activities and everything will start looking just a bit better. Thank you Bobby McFerrin, I suppose.

***Start by making a plan, your plan,  
then turn it into reality.***