

# AUTISM MOM'S

## 90-Day Self-Care Plan



When you “got no time” and “got no money” this is what you do.

### **Is Self-Care Difficult for You, Too?**

Discover the step-by-step, process that  
SAVED me... and gave me back the life I  
needed... to be at my BEST.

## **A MESSAGE FROM SHELLY:**

Caring for children with intense needs can take an emotional (and physical) toll on Moms like us.

It did on me.

Hi, my name is Shelly Jetsel. I am the happily married MOM of six kids; my two middle sons are diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

I'm kind of shy... and I don't like the spot-light, but I am the motivation and the BRAINS (giggle) behind the "Autism: Thrive In Chaos" program that my husband, Kyle. promotes.

Not sure what that is?

Here's how to connect with us if you'd like:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AutismLaughterTherapy/>

Podcast: <https://anchor.fm/dad-gummit-autism-podcast> For Dad's ONLY

Website: [www.thriveinchaos.net](http://www.thriveinchaos.net)

Anyway...

Quite a few years back, when my kids were quite a bit younger, I started to research... and found some important information about Moms like us raising kids on the autism spectrum. Here's what I learned.

Parenting can be stressful enough under "typical" circumstances, but moms of children on the autism spectrum often must try and manage strain of a different magnitude. Caring for a child on the autism spectrum can become a full-time job — and an overwhelming one at that, if you don't have adequate support.

Without enough help, we may be headed toward caregiver burnout, which negatively affects everyone... ESPECIALLY US, MOMS.

The consequences of chronic stress for moms like us... are real. Studies show that moms with kids on the spectrum, and moms of children with developmental, psychiatric or learning disorders are far more likely than others to experience bad stuff. Stuff like...

Anxiety...

Depression...

Insomnia...

Fatigue...

And... Marital problems.

Whoa... Not good.

According to studies, chronic stress puts us at risk for medical issues as well. This study found that parents of children on the autism spectrum had significantly higher levels of both cortisol, the stress hormone, and CRP, a biomarker linked to everything from colorectal cancer to diabetes to heart disease.

The risks, both emotional and physical, to us, are important to address, for our kids' sake as well as us.

But self-care has ALWAYS been difficult for me.

Sometimes... it even felt... like I was being SELFISH.

I typically find that I tend to prioritize other things over myself... and sometimes my own happiness.

But... I also KNOW... to stay healthy... I need - to INVEST A BIT IN MYSELF.

BUT WHO HAS TIME FOR THAT? RIGHT? RIGHT?

So, a few years back, I decided (this time, seriously) to practice and work on my OWN self-care and individual happiness...

And developed a way to do it... WITHOUT... spending any money (because I didn't have any.)

And WITHOUT... simply running away... and leaving my family and kids to fend for themselves (because that just wasn't possible for me.)

Sound impossible? Yep, it did for me, too. But then... I tried something unique... AND IT WORKED... and I learned something CRAZY.

It was through developing this process and implementing a NEW AND UNIQUE APPROACH to self-care and happiness that I started to see more joy and fulfillment in all areas of my life...

And EVEN better than that...

Was ABLE to SPREAD that joy to others. ESPECIALLY, my family.

Here's what's cool. I didn't have to give up anything.

You're about to learn EXACTLY what I did that resulted in me experiencing a more fulfilled level of self-care and happiness?

Now, there's a few things you'll want to know... up-front.

Even though it's FREE from a \$\$ standpoint, you WILL have to do SOMETHING.

But if you can write (who can't) and you can take action (easy action) you too, can find more joy and happiness in your life by applying my simple "Self-Care" exercises.

Real quick. One final thing I want to share with you before we get started with Self-Care...

A few years back, on the internet, I read something that SHOCKED ME to the core.

What did I read? Check this out.

"If the Devil can get the mother, he can get the family."

It stopped me in my tracks. I decided RIGHT THEN that I couldn't let the issues at the center of my difficulties get the best of me and ultimately the best of my family.

So, I started watching the women around me. Women who are distracted. Women who are stressed-out by all the things on their plate. Women who are always hustling and too busy. Women who are overwhelmed. Women who struggle to be present.

I think sometimes God makes us aware of things going on in other people's lives because REALLY... He is hoping we will notice that WE are doing all those things, too.

Of course, we can empathize and connect with them but instead of JUST THAT... I became more aware of myself and how easily I stumble and get off-track.

I also realized something even more revealing. This is exactly what the Devil wants.

He wants us to be distracted.

He wants us to have too much on our plate.

He wants us to be stressed and overwhelmed.

He wants us to be stuck in the hustle and too busy to pay attention. Because that is how the Devil creeps in.

Into our mental health, into our faith, into our homes, and into our families.

It's no coincidence that in this time, in this day, when the power of women has never been elevated higher, the Devil WANTS US TO... get discouraged... get overwhelmed... get frustrated... grow angry and get bitter.

Why?

Because...

WE. WOMEN... Especially us MOTHERS... SET THE MOOD. We can inspire our families, our husbands and our kids... basically, the next generation as an incredible force.

IF... IF... we set "the right mood."

If we set the "wrong mood"... well... it's NOT good.

So, what did I commit to doing?

I committed to step away from distraction and overwhelm.

I committed to step away from unnecessary stresses we let into our lives.

I committed to set a "good" mood. Even when... ESPECIALLY when... things don't go my way.

And the results have been incredible.

By setting the right "mood" in my home and in my life, I've seen more peace and stillness and felt more power in my heart.

Here's a quote I think is very important for us to remember.

"If the MOOD IS GOOD, things can be chaotic, and everything will STILL work out okay. But if the MOOD IS BAD, it doesn't matter what happens... everything will eventually GO BAD."

I agree... and I hope you do, too.

So... let's get started with our Self-Care. I can't wait to hear your feedback.

Shelly Jetsel

Self-Care Program Start: Are you ready?

Okay, here's how this goes. Each Sunday evening... you must take 10 minutes to focus on, then write and then take an action you must do throughout the week.

You'll want a pen and paper (preferably a notebook JUST for this.) I actually went to the dollar store and got it all, there. But you can write on here as well.

Are you ready?

So, grab a pen... REALLY! Get THAT before you go any further. If you cheat on week one... You're KICKED OUT of the self-care program.

Yep. KICKED OUT!

Sure... like I could do that...

So, do you have paper and a pen?

Okay.

Here we go...

Self-Care Week **One**:

WRITE down... 5 things (or more - preferably 10) that make you happy...

Right now! Yep, now!

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Are you writing? Then STOP READING this and write it.

Are you done? Okay.

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Take one of the items you wrote and see how you can turn it into a daily practice.

How simple is that?

ACTION: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm off to smooch on my husband... gotta go. It's on my list - and it makes me happy.

Self-Care Week **Two**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now. REALLY, do it now.

Okay...

WRITE down... some of the things you do every day - your ROUTINES at home and at work.

Yep, really. Do it!

Routines:

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Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Circle the things that bring you happiness. X-out the things that you don't like. Write down WHY the things you underlined make you happy.

Sometimes we don't realize how many things we do every day that make us happy.

This week... REALIZE!

Have a GREAT week, and I'll see you next week.



Self-Care Week **Three**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Okay...

WRITE down... what you are good at.

C'mon... think about it.

WRITE 10 things you are good at.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Underline the ones you had to "work at" to "get good" at. Now... circle the ones that come naturally.

Are any of them... BOTH?

Just like happiness, it's already in you. It just takes practice to experience it daily.

Got it? Cool. I'm off to do what I do best. Any guesses what that is?

See you next time.

Self-Care Week **Four**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Okay...

You did it, right?

This week...

Sometimes, we can let things grow in our minds that are unproductive. So...

WRITE down... the kinds of THINGS... and THOUGHTS... that put you at peace.

Are you doing this now? If so, by now, you should have 3 previous lists from earlier days and today's (after you're done.)

THINGS... and THOUGHTS... that put you at peace.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Plan thirty minutes this week to do one or a few of the things that put your mind... at PEACE.

I'm off to go play with Legos with all the kids. Can you guess what one thing that puts me at peace? Yep, you're right.

See you next week. Same time, same place.

Self-Care Week **Five**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

You have made some great choices in your life, so...

WRITE down... the best choices you have made in your life... SO FAR.

REALLY. Are you writing this down? That's part of self-care... so DO IT!

The best choices I have made in my life are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Take 5 minutes each morning this week to think about the circumstances surrounding those choices.

Reflect on your list before you start each day.

You have so much to find joy in. Trust yourself.

And have a great week.

Self-Care Week **Six**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

You have tremendous value to others, so...

WRITE down... the greatest compliments and encouragement you have ever been given.

DO IT, now!

The greatest compliments and encouragement I have ever been given are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Re-write your favorite compliment on a sheet of paper (REAL BIG) and tape it to a wall – or even FRAME IT.

I printed mine out in a cool font I liked and framed it.

Look at it every morning to remind yourself to choose happiness and self-love.

Have a great week.

I will...

Self-Care Week **Seven**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Do things you like... for you...

WRITE down... the things you like to do... that DON'T involve technology.

DO IT, now!

The things I like to do (NOT TECHNOLOGY) are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

It's easy to spend a lot of time on our devices. But does that time REALLY make you happy?

The next time you "catch" yourself mindlessly grabbing a device... put it down and do something else you enjoy.

It's now your "happiness practice" time.

This one is REALLY fun for me. I hope it becomes the same for you.

See you next week.

Self-Care Week **Eight**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Things happen all the time... that CAN make you happier, so...

WRITE down... all the things that made you happy "last week."

DO IT, now!

A few things that made me happy last week were...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Cut up some strips of paper and each day, write down on a strip of paper (and put in in a jar) one thing that made you happy.

Keep this jar handy for ALL your family to see... and let THEM participate as well.

You'll be "shocked" and it brings a lot of joy to review random slips with your family

See you next week.

Self-Care Week **Nine**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Luck... is when preparation, meets opportunity, so...

WRITE down... the ways you feel like you have been "lucky."

The times I have been luckiest in my life are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

This week hide something special for someone else to find. Maybe hide a \$5 with a note in an envelope in a library book...

Or... write "you are loved" or "you are beautiful" and slip it in a magazine at the grocery store so someone can find it.

Or even, take some sidewalk chalk and write "we love you" on a friends sidewalk and sneak away.

Your love will bring them that feeling of luck

See you next week,

Self-Care Week **Ten**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

As a child sometimes (most of the time) it was the simple things that made us happy, so...

WRITE down... ten things that made you happy as a child.

DO IT, now!

Things that made me happy as a child were...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Is there anything you used to do as a child that still might be fun? Pick one of those things and try it this week.

Or... tell them the story about it and do it with your kids.

Maybe it's re-reading a few of your favorite childhood stories... or having your Mom or Dad tell them to you. (Mine... LOVE THAT.) And their grandkids – my (your) kids – get to hear it.

Build a fort (maybe even invite your kids...) have a "pillow fight."

Don't limit yourself.



Self-Care Week **Eleven**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Sometimes... it's OTHERS who matter the most to us. Others in your life have had a positive impact, so...

WRITE down... the people who make you feel happy.

DO IT, now!

The people that make me feel happy in my life are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Think about WHY... they make you happy... and then...

EACH DAY.... CALL one of THEM... AND TELL THEM...

They'll be THRILLED... and you'll find yourself smiling from ear-to-ear as you share your memories.

Our lives are filled with great people. Let's THIS WEEK, let them know.

I'm smiling just thinking about it.

See you next week.

Self-Care Week **Twelve**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Those others... that make you happy... how do you think THEY would describe you?

WRITE down... the ways THEY would describe you.

DO IT, now!

The ways my friends (and those who love me) would describe me are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Ask THEM... to describe their favorite things about you.

I know it sounds silly, but don't be embarrassed. They WANT to tell you. And it will make them happy if you ALLOW them to tell you.

Each day, call back a friend and ask...

THEY... and YOU.... Even I... will be glad you did.

Self-Care Week **Thirteen**:

First, did you do last week's task? If not, go back and do it now.

Isn't self-care wonderful?

Hopefully, by now, you've noticed that this WASN'T about "getting away."

It's been about "getting in touch" with all the many blessings that you currently have in your life.

Who knew, huh?

I sure didn't until I completed this self-care program (WITHOUT ever leaving my home) or getting away.

So, now...

WRITE down... some of your most wonderful "aha's" from this self-care process.

DO IT, now!

Some of the most wonderful lessons I learned in the past 90 days are...

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Now...

Here's the ACTION:

Take some time to "ponder" and think deeply about how important you are to those you love... including YOU.

You matter to SO many. You are wonderful...

Now, here's the fun part...

You get to "start over again."

## **IN CONCLUSION:**

In our family, we have adopted something we call, “The GET Philosophy.”

What does that mean? Simply this.

We “GET” to decide how we feel about events in our lives.

Our personal happiness and feelings of success – or failure – depend mostly on our attitude towards the things we face.

Sometimes it can be hard NOT to drop into a victim mentality.

Questions like, why me, or why now, or, what have I done to deserve this can be a common result.

We’ve all done it before. But there’s a problem with thinking that way.

Asking those types of questions means you are THINKING about those types of questions – and it allows the victim mentality to dominate your thoughts. This can sap your energy and rob you of the wonderful experiences you can receive.

This, is in contrast to the “GET” philosophy. Instead of asking, why me, or why now, or, what have I done to deserve this, try asking GET questions like...

### **What do I need to do, what do I need to learn, what can I change, and who can I help?**

These types of questions bring action. They help you create a “GET” plan.

Certainly, different kinds of hardships will require different actions.

If it’s sickness it may require ACTIVE patience. But that’s a plan, right? If someone has done something hurtful to us or our child sometimes the best thing to do is to WORK to forgive those that have offended.

But, that’s a plan, right?

If WE have created the hardship due to something we did (or even the way we think) we should CORRECT our actions or behavior and move in a new direction. That’s a plan, right?

Other difficulties may just simply be a natural part of life and come when we are doing everything as right as we know how. Let’s NOT be discouraged. Let’s be active in our approach to creating a plan.

I think the key here is to have a plan and ACT on that plan. When we have a plan, we no longer feel as if we are managing chaos. Chaos quite frankly – cannot be managed and is depressing. Depression cannot be an option.

A plan – even if it’s hard – creates order and gives us a feeling of control.

My husband, Kyle, tells this story about a friend.

*I once had a discussion with a co-worker whose wife was going through a long period of illness. After a few weeks of this I was getting worried for him because he was starting to look tired and a little – well – a little depressed.*

*Then we had this basic discussion about creating “a plan.” And wouldn’t you know it... a few days later he came back with a different look on his face.*

*His wife was still ill, but he had taken the time to create a plan (not a plan to heal her) but a plan to manage the chaos that was going on in his life.*

*He decided that if she NEVER got well, he had to have a plan to deal with her illness and all that it entailed. It was still hard – but now there was a sense of stability in his life. It was still hard – but now he had more order and a feeling of control. He was no longer a victim.*

Here’s what I have found in my life. When I am able to work a plan, the difficulty is no longer so difficult. I KNOW what to do.

Then I can focus on GETTING everything I can from the experience. This process also allows me the opportunity to THRIVE in difficult situations.

I don’t have to be able to see the end of the trial. There doesn’t even HAVE to be an end to the trial. As long as there is a plan, I can now work at learning and growing and thriving in the situation.

I know it can be hard. I have six kids and two of them are on the autism spectrum.

I’ve seen it (and faced it) all. From the early days of screaming and kicking and biting and hitting... all the way to puberty and when there was violence in our home.

There were times when we COULD NOT LEAVE.

Times where we felt “TRAPPED” in our own home.

The self-care program in this guide “SAVED ME.”

If you’re going to have to go through difficulties... and we all are... we can GET discouraged, or GET frustrated, or GET bitter.

Or... we can GET stronger, GET growth, and GET better so that we can support each other.

I say GET THE GOOD STUFF. I hope you’ll join me.

I pray that this helps you in some small way.

May God bless you and your family.

Shelly Jetsel

P.S.

Oh, and if you're interested in joining our "Thrive In Chaos Insiders" program, click here:

<https://insiders.thriveinchaos.net/special-limited-offer>

It's the fastest way EVER to start lowering stress in your home and building the kind of family we all want.

My husband and I built it over many years of study and learning and it's "fantastic."

AND... it works...