

SOLIDMAN

strong · present · confident

Pillar Three

Group Exercise #12

Question #3: What do I need?

Developing a Life of Self-Care

#12 QUESTION #3 WHAT DO I NEED? SELFCARE

The only thing wrong with you is that you forget; you forget who you are and where life comes from.

What do I need? This question places you in a position to consider what your foundational needs are in order to live a full, healthy and whole-hearted life.

This question helps you to begin the process of becoming responsible for yourself. No one else is responsible for your well-being or for making sure you get what you need in life.

You will have good relationships in your life with people who are concerned for your well-being and who are on your team to make sure you are doing well, but ultimately you are the one responsible to make sure you get what you need.

“Needs” are on the more basic level of what is necessary to make life work well. These are physical aspects of life like good nutrition, sleep and rest, exercise, hygiene and medical/dental check-ups.

Your needs are also in the realm of relational and spiritual life as well. We need good sex and interpersonal connection. It is true you can live your entire life without sex or even a hug, but your soul will shrivel.

We need spiritual connection, therefore meditation, praying and gratitude are necessary for a life of fullness.

Core Practice #3 - Self-Care

Self-care is all about living from a position of strength in order to love others well. It is caring for your heart, for your body and for yourself. Most men think this sounds selfish and not right. That is because you have been trained to primarily please others and so it feels entirely counter-intuitive to care for yourself first.

Solid Man® Integrity Group

Self-care requires that you exercise, seek good nutrition, get enough sleep, develop hobbies you love and overtly talking about what you need and want. It is making connections with men in your life and developing a strong community around you who will support you well through all life tosses at you.

To become a strong, integrated man you must learn to care for yourself with responsibility and self-respect. You will learn to put on your “oxygen mask” first.

Men today have been trained to put self-care is last on the list. But in order to live a life of strength you must answer this essential question, “What do I need?” This may seem selfish, not only will you start to enjoy life more fully, but your woman will also love it.

👉 Self-care is not selfish.

This is the primary way that a Solid Man begins to live with a whole-heart. He becomes responsible for his well-being.

A Primary Pitfall

One of the primary pitfalls of men who struggle with integrity is that they do not care for themselves well. Usually there is more emphasis on pleasing others, making others happy and earning affirmation points by making people like them.

The consequence of this is an un-nurtured life. This kind of lifestyle results with a man without strength, without intention and without the ability to create the life he wants.

He becomes a victim to the whims and desires of others. When we live to please we lose our integrity, because the moods of others determine how we move, what we do and what we believe about our self.

However, the life of a solid man of integrity requires significant intention to care for himself. This means that you will need to listen to what you want, develop a pattern of taking care of what you need and creating a life where your primary needs are taken care of.

Selfish or Selfness

When presented with the idea of taking care of yourself first, most men will identify this a very selfish. Somewhere down the line men have been told (or trained) that taking care of yourself first or developing/strengthening your person is selfish.

Solid Man® Integrity Group

Somehow men have gotten the message that we must sacrifice ourselves for others. If we don't it is seen as selfish and unacceptable. We have been told to "Man Up", which essentially means to put yourself last or "Man-Down".

☞ Man Up actually means Man Down!

For Christian men one place this idea comes from is Ephesians 5; "Husbands love your wives like Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." We are taught that if we do not live in a perpetual state of sacrifice we are being selfish. But this isn't just with Christianity.

Every man in our American culture is also faced with the shift that has taken place for the past 50 years; a shift from patriarchy to feminist ideals. Patriarchy or 'male authoritarianism' is the seen as the evil that has enslaved women for thousands of years. Therefore, men must move in an opposite fashion in order to be acceptable in our society today.

☞ We must pay for the sin of our "fathers"..

We must not be authoritarian, but submit to the needs, desires and dreams of the women in our lives before ourselves. Some call this the "Feminine Imperative" which is now the core responsibility of men.

This is a strange twist to another concept from Ephesians 5 that has haunted women in the past; "Wives submit to your husbands."! We all must find the truth.

Even though this cultural message exists, most women in relationships actually want their men to be strong and present. Most women have no problem communicating what they need and want, is that selfish for them?

OK, so it is selfish, but not in an unhealthy fashion. It is essential to live a whole life to be responsible and care for yourself!

It is not selfish to care for yourself. Classify it as "selfness" and give yourself permission to take care of yourself, first. Selfness is healthy self-care.

Oxygen Mask

This illustration comes from what happens every time you are on an airplane. The flight attendant will say, "In the event of loss of cabin pressure, a mask will fall from the ceiling. **Put the mask on yourself first.** Then proceed to help others with their masks."

Solid Man® Integrity Group

I reacted when I first heard this. “No way, I am going to put it on my wife and kids first!” This feels entirely counter-intuitive mostly because of how we have been trained by our culture, but you must care for yourself first. Otherwise you will be operating out of deficit and no one gets cared for! **Everyone** is sucking for air.

☞ Put your mask on first!

Here’s the equation that the O₂ mask represents; **become the strongest, most powerful man that you can be, so that you can love others well.**

This is not selfish, it is all about caring for those around you. Even Jesus confirms this when he said, “Love God, Love your neighbor as **yourself.**” He assumed you would care for yourself, as he did when he walked the earth.

There are many possible issues keeping a man from taking care of himself; the training that I must care for others first, that it is selfish, guilt that I am enjoying life, Family of Origin roles or rules, laziness, no self-respect, Whatever it is you must get over it.

First, get over the idea that it is selfish. Second, commit to creating an environment where your needs are cared for. Third, stop paying penance for things you have done wrong.

☞ Become the strongest, most powerful man you can be, so you can love others well!

A significant problem is that men do not take care of themselves. So even if you feel like you don’t deserve it (or she doesn’t think you deserve it), you must begin to make sure your needs are met.

Some of our women actually have the problem of pleasing others first as well. If this is the case, commit with each other to beat this by giving each other permission to self-care.

Dr. Robert Glover talks about “Covert Contracts” or the idea that we do things to try to get our needs met behind the scenes or with strings attached. Covertly trying to get your needs met does not work. It backfires every time and leaves you with unmet needs and your woman feeling pressure. Pressure never works to motivate.

So it is important to be “Overt” with your needs. Just say what you need. Assertiveness is just saying what you need. Learn how to be assertive and make it so.

Solid Man® Integrity Group**Group Presentation**

How do I struggle with feeling selfish with my O₂ mask?

What needs/wants am I missing in my close relationship, that I need to talk about?

What are the obstacles to not “Standing Up for Myself”?

How can I care for myself Physically? Medical, Exercise, Nutrition, Sleep

How can I take care of my Soul or Heart? What opens my heart or creates passion?

How can I take care of myself Spiritually and developing my Daily Practice?

What are my hobbies, what have I loved to do in the past?

Often we are “Covert” in trying to get our needs met. How can I become “Overt” with stating what I want and need in my relationships, at work or elsewhere?

What are other ways I need to care for myself?

Books and Resources

Start Here; A Groundbreaking, Scienced-Based Program for Emotional Fitness by Eric Langshur and Nate Klemp, PhD. This is a great book for considering how to become very responsible for your own well-being.

Nourishing Wisdom; A Mind-Body Approach to Nutrition and Well-Being by Marc David. This is a book designed to help you gain a healthy perspective on food and nutrition.

Younger Next Year; Live Strong, Fit and Sexy – Until You're 80 and Beyond by Chris Crowley and Henry S. Lodge, M.D. This is for those who are getting older and you feel it. This book is a great challenge to the common beliefs that you will just get old, so face it.