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Books & Authors

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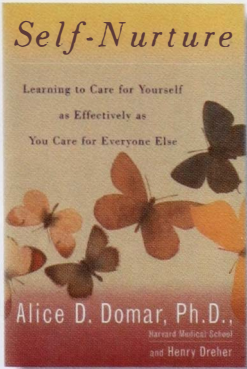
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You Deserve a Break a Today

Alice Domar '80 teaches women that its okay to nurture themselves

By Sally Baker



Self-Nurture

Alice D. Domar '80
and Henry Dreher
Viking, 306 pages

'80 in her newest book, *Self-Nurture: Learning to Care for Yourself As Effectively As You Care for Everyone Else* (Viking, 2000).

Domar, a Ph.D. psychologist who heads the Center for Women's Health, Mind/Body Medical Institute at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, lays out in *Self-Nurture* a variety of techniques women can use to reprogram themselves for self-care. More important, perhaps, she offers to women a clear and compelling rationale for finding ways to put themselves first: their health—and the health and well-being of their loved ones—depends on it.

Domar brings to the task years of experience as a clinician and researcher specializing in women's stress, and her insights should be both familiar and welcome to most women who read the book.

Many women, Domar notes, began life as bold little girls who asked for what they wanted but grew into women who almost always put others' needs before their own. "Why," Domar asks, "do we lose the sense that we are entitled

to joy for its own sake? What happens to our willingness to let others help meet our needs? When do we start to feel guilty about pursuing pleasure and play?"

Domar says parents' examples often are the source of women's attitudes toward self-nurture but that society at large puts a premium on certain kinds of behavior. "Women have been trained . . . to feel guilty about taking time for creativity and leisure. We've been taught to fulfill our roles as wives, mothers, and successful career women, and if there's any time left over, we'd better find something 'productive' to do. 'Productive' doesn't mean painting or singing or taking photographs, and it certainly doesn't mean kicking back with a trashy novel. It means keeping the house squeaky clean, clearing out those cluttered closets, paying those bills, or finding new ways to be certain our loved ones' needs are tended."

Structured as a year-long course (although it needn't be used that way), the book features lessons timed to each season.

"Winter" concentrates on basic techniques of self-awareness, including meditation, structured relaxation techniques and the ultimate self-awareness exercise for women—an examination of themselves as daughters and mothers. "Spring" covers issues such as body image, sexuality and love. "Summer" teaches techniques for encouraging playfulness and creativity. "Autumn" addresses ways for women to find joy in jobs and satisfaction in their spiritual lives.

Domar acknowledges that there is nothing simple about self-nurture. That is underscored by the elaborate specificity of the tasks she sets her readers, from drawing up pie charts of one's day to include things like "relaxation" and "lounging" right alongside "child care" and "commuting" to making lists of "acts of kindness" a woman can bestow on herself.

For a society still struggling with the issues raised when a vast majority of women leave the home for the workforce, *Self-Nurture* seems at once ahead of its time and overdue. ♦

A much-lampooned television commercial of several years ago featured a woman in the center of her kitchen reeling among irritants: a crying baby, the shrill ring of the doorbell, the telephone shrieking from its wall mount, smoke rising over a frying pan. Pandemonium.

"Calgon," the woman wails, "take me away!"

A nice long soak in a tub of Calgon bath oil heads couldn't hurt, but it isn't the answer to everything that ails the stressed-out woman, says Alice Domar

fresh prints

Make Room for Joy: Finding Magical Moments in Your Everyday Life
Susan L. Colantuono '72

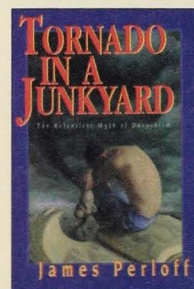
Interlude Productions, 2000

This is a book born of what could have been despair. Susan L. Colantuono, a consultant and educator, endured two years of what could have been spirit-breaking disappointments only to find she had thrived. The book offers her suggestions about how to find joy in everyday life—without winning the lottery or inheriting millions. Colantuono's guidebook shows that life's true rewards are all around us, even in the midst of what society tells us are setbacks. From taking a walk to patting the dog to offering forgiveness, *Make Room for Joy* tells us what we should know but too often do not.

Tornado in a Junkyard: The Relentless Myth of Darwinism

James Perloff '73

Refuge Books (1999)



"Warning: This book may change your life. Are you really the descendant of fish and apes? Examine the growing evidence that is shaking long-held beliefs." That's the back-cover copy on this presentation of the "scientific case against Darwinism, informally written for laymen." Chapter one, "Baby Boomer Tunes Out, Turns On, Bums Out, Burns Out," includes references to Perloff's left-wing,

hippie days at Colby, 1969-73, to establish that the author wasn't raised as a fundamentalist. *Tornado in a Junkyard* was a "new selection" of the Conservative Book Club.