

I spoke about the 8 signs of an abusive mindset. Isn't it a cosmic two-by-four to realize that you can be abusive to yourself?

The first sign is that your self-care is lacking. You put yourself on the back burner and prioritize everyone else's needs before your own. This is suffering by choice, my Lovelies and this mindset does not serve you.

When my children were 13 and 14, I went shopping for some new clothing. The saleslady at the store was quick to point out that I needed a new bra. Why? I was still wearing a cotton nursing bra *and my kids were already teenagers!* You have to make the decision to change this in your life. Look at your schedule and find time, even if it is just a few minutes a day. You are worthy of love, and that includes self-love.

The next sign is you're negative about your hopes and dreams. If someone tells you what a great goal or dream you have, you follow with "Yeah, BUT..." You bury your dreams and find reasons to fail before you even start. Remember, your dreams are no less valuable and important than the dreams of the people around you. If a close friend confided in you that she wanted to run a 5K race at the end of the year, you wouldn't tell her,

"Well, you're probably going to come last; you're too overweight and unfit, and quite frankly you never finish anything else you start, so why bother?" No- you would encourage and support her. Talk to yourself like you would talk to someone you love.

Third, you see others getting past their negativity but you choose not to do the same. We don't even give ourselves the opportunity to visualize who we can become because we have already made excuses about why we can't do it. Celebrate the people around you, and tell yourself "I matter."

Fourth, your protectiveness of your pain becomes more important than your well-being. Your pain may not be completely dismissible, but you also don't have to roll around in it. At some point, you have to acknowledge it, put it into the experience file, and walk away. Yes, it will likely be difficult, even excruciating, but it is a momentary pain compared to the hurt and regret that you will drag through your life until you are ready to let go. Step into the brilliance of who you are. You are intentionally here.

Fifth, you pretend that everything is fine, all the time. There is so much going on inside but you don't talk to anyone about it. Now, I'm not suggesting that you give a

20-minute recap of how awful things are to anyone who asks how you're doing --you may need to be discerning about this-- but you do need supportive people to vent to from time to time. You need to be able to relax and feel safe, vulnerable, understood, and even validated. You need to be part of a community.

Sixth, you dismiss yourself as just the mother, or just the caretaker, or just the...[fill in the blank.] You are fearfully and wonderfully made, and you are a whole woman with a heart, mind, body, and soul. You are more than a name, a label, or a jean size.

Seventh, you isolate yourself. You stay angry and bitter, and this will take you to a place of sheer desperation.

Last but not least -- put on your seatbelt for this one -- you're a complainer and/or "drama llama." It is time to pull the plug- you are polluting your own mind, your family, and your circle. When you make the decision to stop, get yourself into a community where you can be accountable. Your true self is not that woman- that is an angry, bitter, hurt woman.

This doesn't mean that we have to bottle it all up inside, it means that we can be constructive instead of destructive. There will inevitably be bumps in the road,

but the ugly words you say will echo in your loved ones' heads for years to come. Do you want that to be your legacy? There is always a solution when you seek one out.

We can become the vibrant, wonderful women that we were meant to be. You were not put on this planet to be miserable. What you think about- that's what you're going to be spreading. I want to spread love, light, and joy. I want the room to light up when I walk in because I am radiating happiness. What about you?

Let's dump the "Buts.." and start living a vibrant, wonderful life!