



# Self-Care for the Caregiver

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# Light of a Little Girl

*Christina G. Hibbert*

A little girl, in her little world,  
She's bringin' light into this life  
like a butterfly, dancin'  
in the sky with a toothless grin  
She'll make you smile, oh, yeah.

A little girl gives her dress a twirl,  
She's whirlin' hope into today.  
With dreams of dancin' & romancin'  
the handsome prince she'll one day save.

And even fast asleep, her dreams will keep that  
fire alive—  
yeah, she'll shine bright, bright, bright.  
Oh, how this world needs the light  
of a little girl.

An older girl in a mother's world,  
She's breathin' love, creating life—  
an epiphany in her offering  
of nurturing and sacrifice.

And even half asleep, she fights  
to keep that fire alive  
so she'll shine bright, bright, bright.  
Oh, how this world needs the light  
from a mother's world.

No voice can bend,  
no heart can rend;  
no darkness fills the night.  
With the hopes and dreams  
a woman brings,  
There's nothin'--nothin' left but light.

An aged girl in this outgrown world—  
She breathes the end of earthly life.  
Frail, yet wise, with fiery eyes  
and toothless grin to close her life.

Yet, even as she sleeps,  
her fire ignites in others' lives.  
Yeah, they'll shine bright, bright, bright.  
Oh, how this world needs the light...  
of a girl.

A butterfly with a toothless smile  
Oh, how we need that light, light, light  
of a little girl.

Keeping  
*your* light  
bright...



Self-Care

# “What prevents my self-care?”

- Taking care of others
- Time
- Energy
- Trying to “juggle demands of home & work”
- I don't prioritize myself
- I feel selfish
- Motivation

# Modern Mom

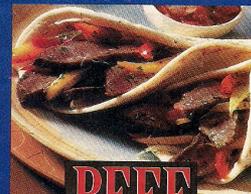


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**The bendable-stretchable-pulled-in-all-directions modern mom.** Go to the game. Go to the client. These days, you have to do it all. That's why you need help from key nutrients. Like the **B vitamins, iron, zinc** and **protein** you can find in beef.

Along with a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle, beef gives you a lot to go on. Look for other nutrition information and beef recipes at [www.beef.org](http://www.beef.org).

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# Women & Caregiving

- Women are (informal) primary caregivers for children, parents, spouses, in-laws, friends, neighbors
- Play many roles: advocate, teacher, health care provider, care manager, companion...

(APA, 2009)

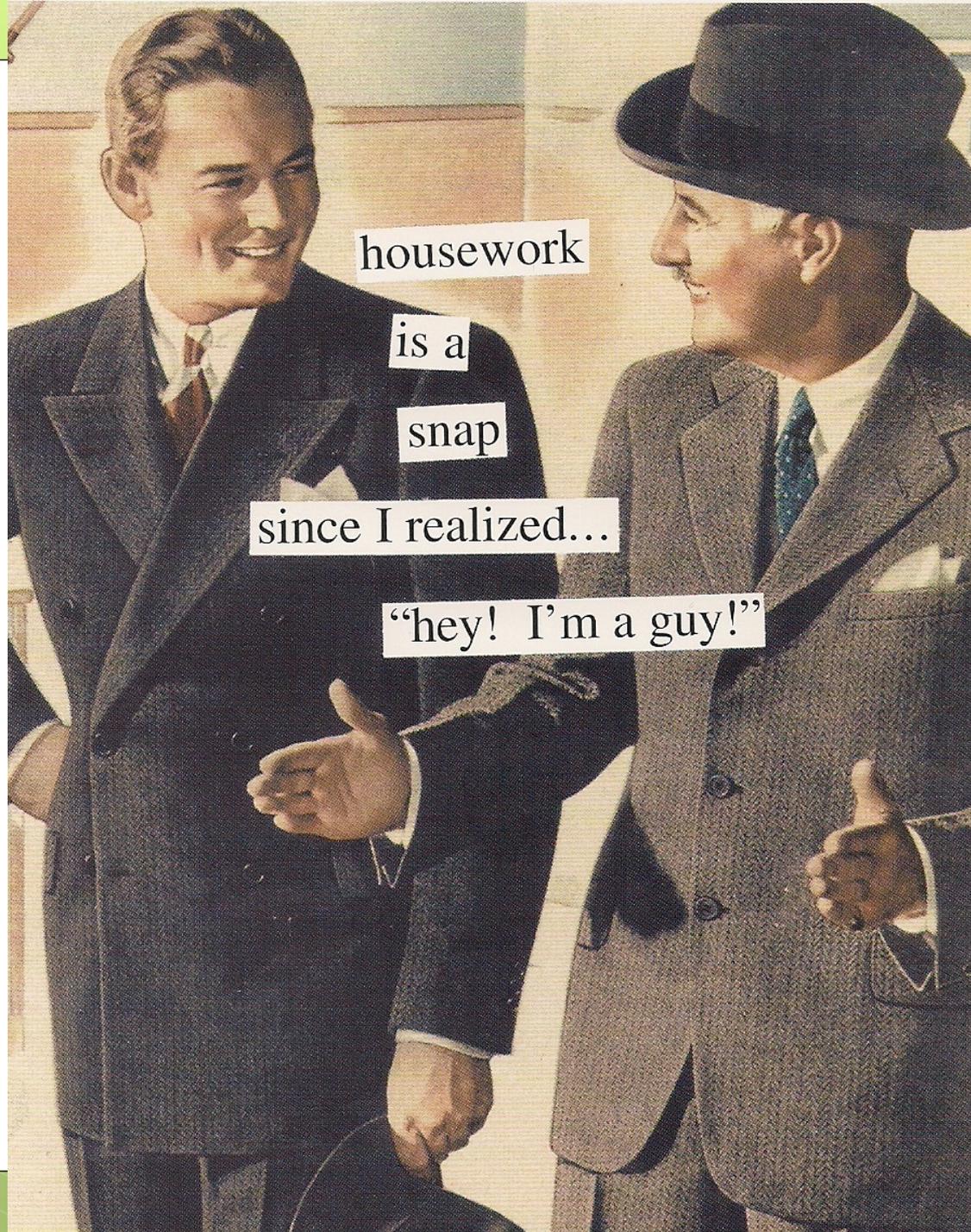


# Women & Caregiving

- 60% of caregivers are women
- Females spend as much as 50% more time providing care than males & provide higher level of care than males

(APA, 2009)





housework

is a

snap

since I realized...

“hey! I’m a guy!”

# Women & Caregiving

- CG can take enormous toll
  - Higher rates of Depression, Anxiety, other mental illness
  - Those who spend 36+ hrs/ week caring for spouse= 6 x' s more likely to suffer Dep/Anx
  - Women experience more psychiatric problems than male CGs
  - Women feel greater hostility/ less happiness after becoming CGs (APA, 2009)

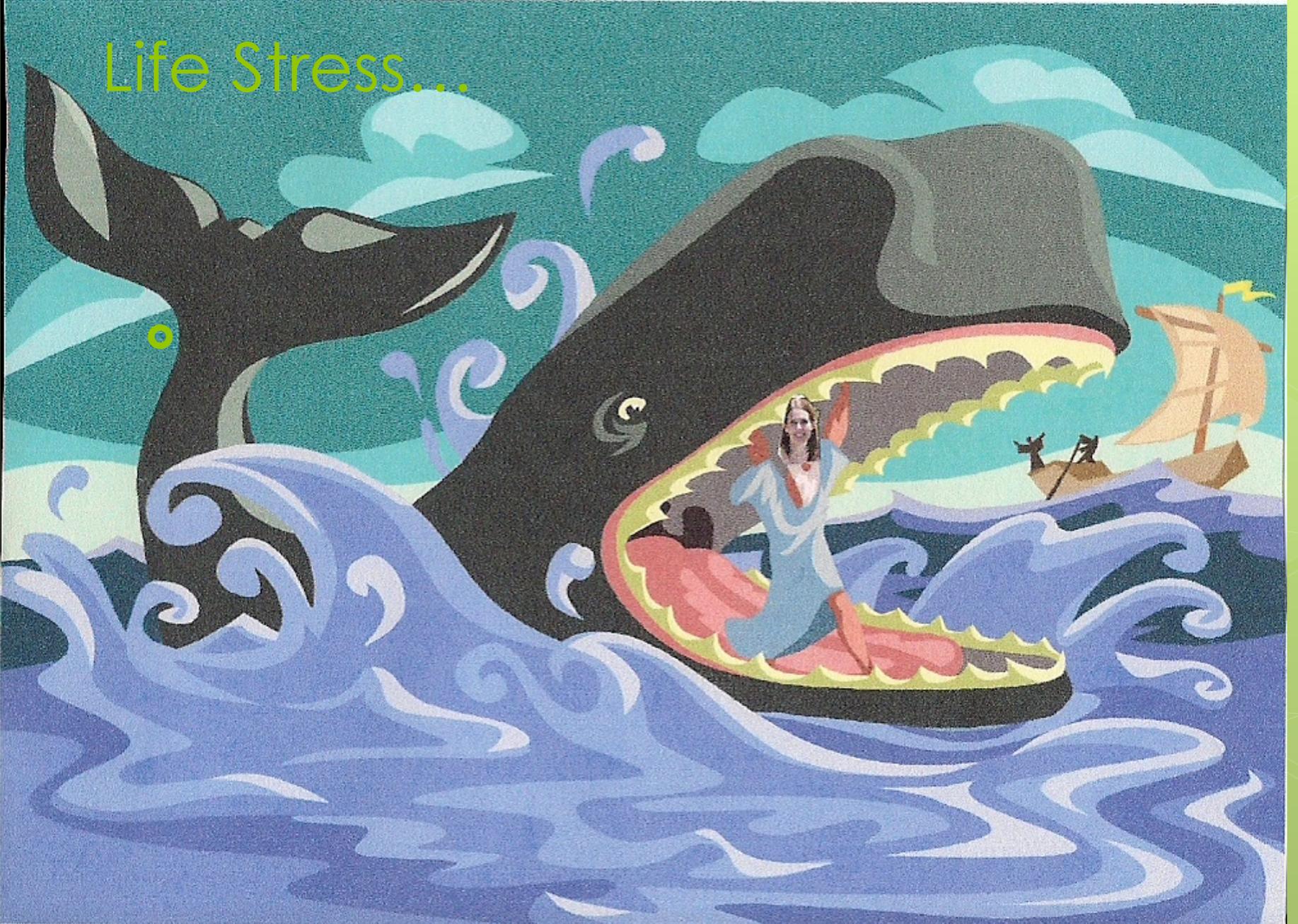
# Women & Stress

- Women more likely to have physical and psychological symptoms of stress
- Stress includes:
  - history of abuse, poverty, feeling powerless, but also all the other life events that occur, such as death of loved ones, learning issues, parenting, losing job, difficult relationships, etc.



(APA, 2009)

Life Stress...



# Caregiver Burnout

“Caregiver burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that may be accompanied by a change in attitude -- from positive and caring to negative and unconcerned.

“Burnout can occur when caregivers don't get the help they need, or if they try to do more than they are able -- either physically or financially.

“Caregivers who are ‘burned out’ may experience fatigue, stress, anxiety, and depression. Many caregivers also feel guilty if they spend time on themselves rather than on their...loved ones.”

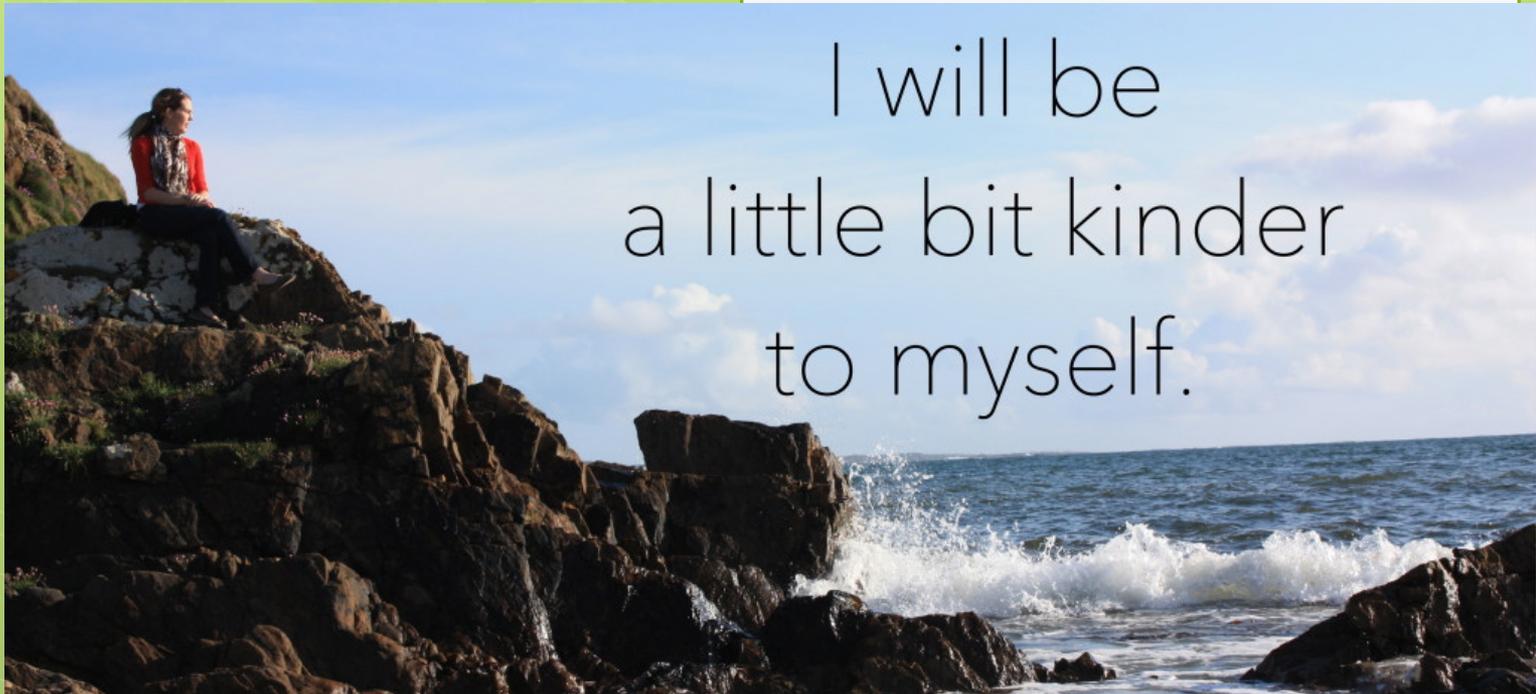
Web MD, retrieved 8/13/14

# Compassion Fatigue

- Also known as **secondary traumatic stress (STS)**.
- Gradual lessening of compassion in helping professionals.
- Symptoms: hopelessness, chronic stress, anxiety, decrease in pleasure, sleep disturbance/insomnia, nightmares, feelings of negativity.
- Can lead to decreases in overall productivity, trouble focusing, and feelings of self-doubt and poor self-esteem.

*How do we  
keep our  
lights shining?*

## Practicing Self-Care



I will be  
a little bit kinder  
to myself.

# “How do I know if I’m not taking good care of myself?”

- “I feel depressed and anxious.”
- “I feel burned out.”
- “I feel tired all the time.”
- “I have no energy.”
- “I get frustrated by the needs of others.”
- “I feel resentful of everyone around me.”
- “I don’t act like my usual kind, caring self.”

# “How do I Evaluate my Self-Care Needs?”

N= Nourishment & Needs

U= Understanding

R= Rest & Relaxation

S= Spirituality

E= Exercise

-From *Women's Moods: What every woman must know about hormones, the brain, and emotional health.* Sichel, D. & Driscoll, J.W.

# THE 3 LAYERS OF SELF-CARE



**"ICING ON THE CAKE"  
SELF-CARE**

**ESSENTIAL  
SELF-CARE**

**ABSOLUTE NECESSITY  
SELF-CARE**

[www.drchristinahibbert.com](http://www.drchristinahibbert.com)

# Absolute Necessity Self-Care

- “Absolute necessity self-care involves doing those things that are absolutely necessary for your health and wellness.” (*Who Am I Without You?* Hibbert, March 2015)
- Includes things like:
  - getting enough sleep
  - eating right
  - exercising
  - Alone time
  - Time with friends/family
- Your absolute necessity needs may change day to day.

# Essential Self-Care

- “Layer two involves making time for things that are important but might not be absolutely necessary, or even possible, every day. These things are essential in maintaining your physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual strength.” (Hibbert, 2015)
- Includes things like:
  - Solitude/quiet/down time
  - time to focus on understanding what you’re going through
  - time to process, learn, and grow
  - forming healthy connections with others

# Icing-on-the-Cake Self-Care

- “The top layer of self-care is the ‘icing-on-the-cake.’ This involves those things you might not always get to do but definitely make you happy when they come around. You might not feel much like having fun, relaxing, or playing, but it’s important to make time for these things. You don’t have to go out and have fun *all* the time, but you do need some play in your life. In fact, research shows play is essential to greater happiness and life satisfaction (Brown, B. 2012).” (Hibbert, 2015)

# How do I practice self-care?

- 1) Change your beliefs about self-care.
  - Self-Care is a daily choice.
  - Self-Care is not selfish.
  - Self-Care makes us better caregivers.
  - Self-Care is self-love, and self-love *precedes* other-love.
  - Self-Care is essential to physical/emotional health, happiness, & love.

# How do I practice self-care?

2) Choose to do it.

- Choose to prioritize my needs today.
- Remember as I care for myself, I'm better at serving others.
- Ask for help.
- Receive help when it's offered.
  
- More resources on this:  
[www.DrChristinaHibbert.com](http://www.DrChristinaHibbert.com)

# How do I practice self-care?

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Fearlessly  
meet  
your  
needs.

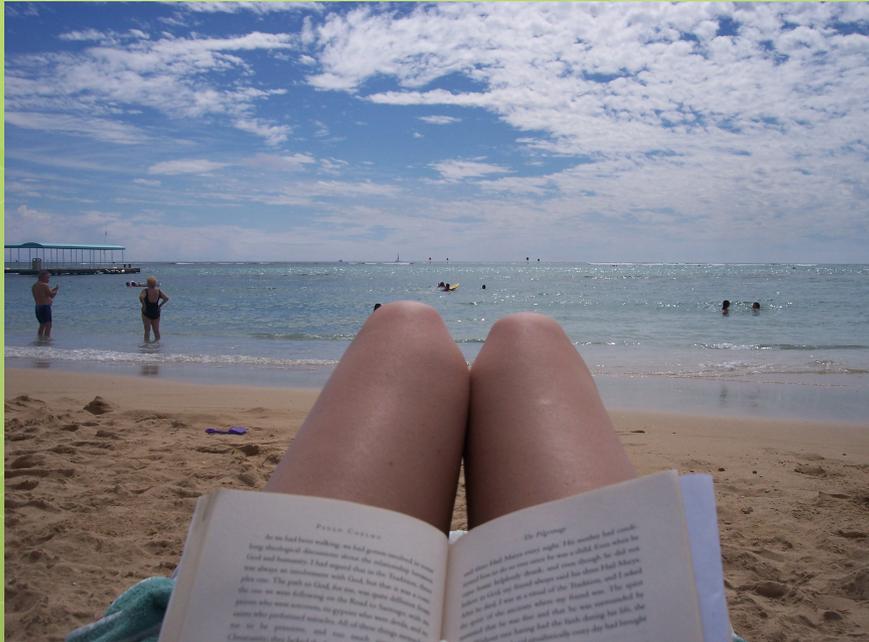
*-Dr. Christina Hibbert*

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# “Better than just ..better”

*Beyond Symptom Relief*



# Resources

- **Website/Blog, “The Psychologist, The Mom, & Me”:**  
[www.DrChristinaHibbert.com](http://www.DrChristinaHibbert.com)
- **Book: *This is How We Grow***  
[www.ThisIsHowWeGrow.com](http://www.ThisIsHowWeGrow.com)
- ***This is How We Grow* Personal Growth Group:** Free, online growth.  
([www.DrChristinaHibbert.com](http://www.DrChristinaHibbert.com))

