Self Care in the Time of COVID

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Self Care and Weight Gain

Are you gaining weight? I heard from one of our comadres the other day via Facebook, and she cried out “Help! ¡Ayúdame! I’ve put on a bunch of weight and it’s really stressing me out. I can’t stand it anymore when I look in the mirror! What am I going to do?”

It was a plea like the ones from the vintage Mexican lonely-hearts comic book, ¡Ayúdame, Doctora Corazón! Only Doctora Corazón helped mend broken hearts.

Our Hearts are Broken

But our hearts are broken, aren’t they? These crises we are living through are some of the worse times we will ever experience in our lifetimes. COVID19 is destroying the lives of thousands of our Native, Latino and Black brothers and sisters all over our land.

Health disparities have come home to roost and it’s a pesadilla of mammoth proportions. Black Lives Matter are taking it to the streets and to our screens. This pandemic is a public health crisis, but racism is a public health crisis too and they have converged.

We hit the boiling point, hermanas. These are hard and distressing times, and many of us are comforting ourselves and our families with food, which is completely understandable. We are consuming fritangas, chatarra, and chicharrones, as if our life depended on it. As if we had no other choice.

And who can blame you? Aren’t you taking care of a bunch of people right now, Super-Mujer? I bet you are! I bet you are bringing home the frijoles, cooking them and serving them up to a multi-generational montón de gente, and to top it all off, you aren’t even getting your nails or hair done.

I speak from experience. You should see my Covid hair! ¡Dios me salve, María! And you know as well as I do that I do not look distinguished, okay? That is a bunch of Malarkey como dice el Tío Joe. I look like I’m 69 years old! (Oh wait! I’m 69 years old!)

But here’s the deal. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again, because at my age I get to repeat myself: Los chicharrones son muy traicioneros! They will turn on you like a bad boyfriend. No matter how simpaticos they look next to your Michelada, they are not your friend. De vez en cuando, like at your cousin’s wedding pos-boda, they’re okay. Delicious! Go for it! ¡Aviéntate! But getting into the habit of overeating in the time of COVID is probably not going to make things better.
Let’s be honest. Are you giving up dieting?

(That’s a trick question. I want the answer to be, “yes.”)

**Change Can Happen**

During disruptive times like these, sometimes good things happen. Like Uber, there can be a disruptive technology. Change can happen. So maybe women will finally give up dieting. Maybe women like you and me, old and young, abuelas, tías, hijas, comadres, hermanas y madrinas will just say, “Ya basta con las dietas,” and start taking care of ourselves in the true sense of the word.

**The Importance of Self Care**

We have been doing a lot of Self Care content on De Las Mías lately because we know how stressful these times are and how many responsibilities you have. Latinas are the hub of our families, remember? We are the sun of the solar system we call familia. Don’t be in denial about that, hermanas! You know who you are! You know that you are working full time, taking care of your mama, and your kids and your Viejo, who refuses to be controlled by you, and your sobrino is dropping out of high school, and you dread for his life. You know these “truths to be self-evident.”

But what if in the midst of this DESMADRE, there is a dawning of a new age and I don’t mean Aquarius? What if the dawning of a new age comes down to Latinas actually engaging in Self Care? What if women like you and me would consider Self Care more seriously than having our hair and nails done? What if Self Care means more than shopping for cute clothes, eating in front of the TV, or going out for a socially distancing happy hour with the girls?

**My Hope For You and Me**

My hope is that Self Care for you and me will mean that we take care of our bodies, our minds and our spirits, that we treat ourselves to good, healthy food, that we celebrate con muchas ganas, without being reckless with ourselves, that we move our glorious bodies and feel joy instead of a sense of duty. That we go back to dancing for the fun of it, biking down tree-lined avenues like when we were girls or going out for nature walks with our families. What if those of us who survived this pandemic, took this crisis and turned it into an opportunity to become truly strong, healthy, and, yes, CHINGONAS? What if we develop the ovaries and the confidence to demand we get paid what we’re worth? What if we stopped believing what the mass consumer market tells us about who we are, what we should look like and how much we should weigh? What if we start claiming our worth?

So, let’s send diets packing and claim our power to be strong and healthy, and yes, PODEROSAS. Let’s tell the truth when we say, “We are strong. We are healthy. We are Latinas.”