

Taken (and adapted) from Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky (2009)

In her book, Laura van Dernoot Lipsky presents “The Five Directions” as a navigational tool in building our capacity for trauma stewardship in the work that we do. It is multi-leveled and we will discuss a basic level here. As you approach your work in helping and dealing with others, take time to consider these five “spaces;”

**1. Creating Space for Inquiry (focusing on the present and understanding our intention in regard to our work):**

- a. Why am I doing what I’m doing? - literally stop each morning and ask yourself this question. Write down your answer(s.)
- b. Gently remind yourself that you are making this choice to do this work.
- c. Is this working for me? - List ways you feel that what you are doing is working. Consider if these are in your best interest or the best interest of those you serve.

**2. Choosing Our Focus (shifting our perspective to rediscover our inspiration and passion):**

- a. Think of a challenging work situation. Write down 3 things that make it challenging. Write down 3 things that you appreciate about it. Look at the lists and ask yourself, “Where am I likely to focus and why?”
- b. For one day, commit to paying attention to the commentary in your head. Are you viewing things as “half full” or “half empty?” How might you reframe your “half empty” thoughts into something more positive?
- c. Look at yourself in a mirror. Notice the first 3 things to come to mind. Are those thoughts positive, loving, or kind?

**3. Building Compassion and Community (creating and connecting to an environment that sustains us):**

- a. Ask yourself how your ancestors or those who raised you healed themselves. How did they move on?
- b. Take time to examine how your outside surroundings connect to your internal state. Are there things you can do in your external reality to achieve a more peaceful and productive internal reality?
- c. Think of someone in your early life who showed you a great deal of compassion. Hold them and that memory in your mind while you remember what it felt like to be in their presence.

**4. Finding Balance (achieving balance and moving energy through; reconnecting to inner strength and honoring change and impermanence):**

- a. Commit to moving for 5 minutes each hour; breathe deeply and notice anything beautiful around you. Breathe that in, as well.
- b. At the beginning and ending of each day, think of at least one thing you are grateful for.
- c. Establish a relationship with a colleague or friend that you can call on regularly. Agree to talk for at least 5 minutes in which one person speaks and the other

listens attentively with a calming presence. Take turns. Say whatever is on your mind and move it out of your system. Repeat frequently.

**5. Daily Practice of Centering Ourselves**

- a. Set an intention for the day
- b. Before going to bed, ask yourself “What can I put down,” “What am I ready to be done with?” Put it down and don’t pick it up the next day.
- c. Set aside a day of rest or Sabbath. If you can’t take a whole day, designate sacred time during some days to rest. Have fun, delight yourself, enjoy.