

21 WAYS TO RESILIENCY



LAUREN MONROE

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🐾 *Lauren Monroe Allen* 🐾



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To Josefine and Lauren

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❧ INTRODUCTION ❧

There are times in life when we have clear direction and purpose, when we feel empowered and inspired. There are also times when we can feel completely disconnected, lost, or out of control.

21 Ways to Resiliency is an introductory guide, a map, of the paths you may take while climbing up into the steep unknown. We all know that life doesn't offer us just one mountain to climb, but challenges us with a lifelong journey of climbing mountain after mountain, some small, others apparently insurmountable. How we ascend and arrive at the pinnacle shapes who we are, how we grow, and ultimately how we become a resilient and happy person.

You may wish to read this book from cover to cover or to open it randomly to a page for guidance or inspiration with a particular issue in mind. You will find insights which can support you to become stronger, more aware, and

INTRODUCTION

empowered. The following pages also include techniques and activities I encourage you to actually try in your own life. Being active and open to heal can bring many gifts of learning. Give it a try and see what happens.

The lists and insights within this book have been gathered throughout the years of my work as a teacher, healer, and advisor to courageous people: men, women, and children who have struggled with and overcome physical, emotional, and spiritual crisis. It is written to serve you in your exploration and journey to heal and grow, and can be read over and over again.

May your days ahead be blessed with many moments of awakening so you can become the powerful and radiant person your soul is ready to be.

— *Lauren Monroe Allen*

RESILIENCY is a moving, breathing state of being.

BEING A RESILIENT PERSON doesn't mean you will never live through tough times, it means that you have the ability to ride the waves of challenge with flexibility and insight knowing that when the wave ends you will return to life wiser, stronger and more alive.

“Take the first step in faith. You don’t have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step.”

— MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

1



NOURISH *Relationships*



*“Sometimes our light goes out, but is blown again
into instant flame by an encounter with another
human being.”*

— ALBERT SCHWEITZER

NOURISH

Relationships



POSITIVE relationships are key elements in a happy life. They are important sources of strength and healing, and can serve as safe anchors when you feel your world is out of your control.

Nurture positive relationships in your life, and allow these special people to give you support and encouragement. Share with them, learn from them, and be grateful for their presence in your life.

NOURISH RELATIONSHIPS

PRACTICE

Leave a secret note of kindness or a token of affection for a person you feel grateful for. Express how much you appreciate them in your life. Put it in a place where you know it will be found, like on the windshield of their car or in a coat pocket. Make it a surprise.

Try doing this each day for seven days. It can be for one person or more.

You'll be surprised at how much joy you can bring by a simple act of kindness and appreciation.

2



STAY *Connected*



“With some people solitariness is an escape not from others but from themselves. For they see in the eyes of others only a reflection of themselves.”

— ERIC HOFFER

STAY *Connected*



BEING together with other people is healing. The more we cut ourselves off from other people and the community, the deeper we can spiral into our own negative thoughts and feelings. When learning how to be resilient, we must keep ourselves connected to the lifeline of others and continue to be in the presence of people who care.

There are times to think and feel our pain alone in private, but be mindful that these times don't become a form of escape instead of a time to heal and move forward. Always follow up alone time by sharing with friends or professionals who are supportive.

STAY CONNECTED

PRACTICE

Set aside one day each week to spend quality time with a person or people who really care about you. You can do this on the phone or in person. Spending an hour of your time to share and feel connected can bring more support and resiliency into your life. Schedule it ahead of time and mark it down in your calendar. Have a topic of conversation in mind before you meet. Try this for four consecutive weeks.

3



SHARE *Your Feelings*



“Pain shared, my brother, is pain not doubled but halved. No man is an island.”

— NEIL GAIMAN

SHARE *Your Feelings*



SHARING our feelings can be one of the most difficult tasks, but our resiliency depends on it. There are many ways to share feelings and they all can play an important role in creating your own resilient life.

Talk to a professional

Counselors and therapists are qualified professionals who are there to help during difficult times. Seeking the help of a professional isn't a sign of weakness, but is a sign of strength and commitment to succeed in your journey of becoming whole again. Actively confronting and accepting your feelings instead of hiding them is a quality of great warriorship.

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

Join a support group

Join a support group that focuses on sharing experiences that are similar to yours. Being around others who are going through difficult times can dramatically change your perspective on your own situation. It may not only give you deeper insight into your own suffering, it may also show you new ways of embracing your situation in a positive light. Being a part of a group that is safe and directed by someone who has skills and wisdom to share, can help you gain the strength you need to believe in yourself, move forward, and grow.

Create a journal

Create a journal where you can express your thoughts and feelings. Journaling is a great way to keep track of thoughts and feelings that live deep within you. It's a creative way to get to know yourself again and can help to

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

cultivate moments of real compassion and clarity. It doesn't always have to be writing, it can be drawing, scribbling emotions, random words or whatever noise that is in your head.

Sharing your feelings doesn't always mean talking about a particular event or situation. There are many situations in family life, work, or in the community where appropriate sharing is necessary for your well-being. In these cases sharing may mean simply saying what you need.

A big part of becoming resilient is being able to honor how you feel during difficult times and to articulate what you need in various situations. Verbalize when you need some space, when you need to be quiet, when you need someone to understand, when you feel frustrated, when you are feeling overwhelmed or confused. Sometimes we are unaware of what we are feeling and can't even begin to articulate exactly what it is. Take time to feel your feelings.

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS

Being able to set boundaries, take care of yourself and respectfully share with others requires, an inner awareness that can be strengthened with practice.

🌀 PRACTICE 🌀

Buy a notebook or journal to write in daily. Give it a title that reflects where you feel you are in your life, such as “On Top of the World” or “In the Middle of Nowhere.” You can write random feelings, draw, scribble, rant, or even write about how you can’t find anything to write about. Keep writing every night before you go to sleep for 21 days in a row. On the 22nd day read all of your journal entries and reflect on your journey. Chances are you’ll want to keep writing.

4



BE *Mindful*



“The key is to be in a state of permanent connectedness with your inner body - to feel it at all times. This will rapidly deepen and transform your life. The more consciousness you direct into the inner body, the higher its vibrational frequency becomes.”

— ECKHART TOLLE

BE *Mindful*



MINDFULNESS is the practice of watching your thoughts and observing the actions and reactions of your mind. When being mindful you use your awareness to observe yourself and others in a conscious and connected way. Most of us spend our time unconsciously thinking about how things were in the past or imagining how things might be in the future. Being mindful brings us into an awareness of what is happening in the present. It allows us to actively engage and participate in what and how we think, instead of being a helpless bystander of our own thoughts. When we are mindful we can alter situations and make choices that can strengthen our ability to be resilient and keep us grounded.

BE MINDFUL

We all have patterns of thinking that we have developed over time. Some are positive and some are negative. It's the negative chatter that can hold us in a downward spiral. Being mindful of these can protect us from ourselves—from our negative thoughts and habitual destructive patterns of misperception. Mindfulness gives us the opportunity to acknowledge negative thoughts with compassion and then choose another point of view in order to move forward.

🌀 PRACTICE 🌀

Transitional times in our day can be some of the most powerful times to practice mindfulness. Mindfulness while driving is one example.

Rather than allowing your mind to drift in thoughts of where you are going or who you were just with, try focusing

BE MINDFUL

on your body and breath. Make sure your breathing is soft and easy, your hands aren't clenching the wheel, and your back and neck are relaxed and flexible as you drive. You'll be surprised how much we miss during our driving time, even on roads we've driven down hundreds of times. Being mindful gives us more room to take in the many details that fly by us when we are busy in our heads each day.

5



GUIDE *Your Thoughts*



“Perhaps all the dragons of our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us once beautiful and brave.”

— RAINER MARIA RILKE

GUIDE

Your Thoughts



T_{HE} role of the mind is to analyze, judge, and compare. This is what the mind does, that's its job. The mind's primary concern is to keep thinking, because that's its function.

Unfortunately, when the mind doesn't receive much parental attention from us, it starts to behave like an unruly child. It shouts over our sense of true knowing and the whispers of our intuition. So it's important that you don't believe everything you think. Your thoughts are not you, nor do they define you. We can't change our thoughts; we can only bring new thoughts into our mind and then mindfully choose these new thoughts instead of our old, negative thoughts. Eventually the old ways of thinking will

GUIDE YOUR THOUGHTS

become quiet and will be replaced by the new thoughts. Your brain will respond, your body will respond and you will have learned a powerful practice of resiliency.

🌀 PRACTICE 🌀

Practice counter thoughts by canceling out negative thoughts with visual imagery and affirmations. The next time you think a negative thought about yourself, immediately say, “CANCEL!” You can say it out loud or in your head. Then replace the negative thought with an affirming thought. For example, if you think, “I’ll never get the job,” say to yourself, “CANCEL!” Then think, “I can get that job!”

6



PRACTICE *Acceptance*



“God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.”

— REINHOLD NIEBUHR

PRACTICE

Acceptance



M^{ANY} of us find ourselves in situations that are out of our control and that we cannot change. Accepting what is can feel like an impossible task, but learning to perceive your situation in a positive light can help you to accept it. Affirmations—positive statements that you repeat to yourself—are a powerful way to begin and continue the process of acceptance.

Here are some positive affirmations you can use:

- * I accept this situation as it is, because I know it is here to teach me somehow. When I perceive it as happening *for* me and not happening *to* me, I am able to have faith that there is a deeper loving meaning behind what is happening in my life. I humbly accept this gift.

PRACTICE ACCEPTANCE

- * I accept this by honoring the divine plan that I am a part of even if I don't understand why.
- * I accept this knowing that pain is unavoidable, but suffering is my own choice.
- * This is a horrible thing that has happened to me and I may never be the same. I accept all of the challenges it brings with an open heart so I may learn and live my life to the fullest, knowing that it is going to be different than it was before.
- * I accept who I am and all of the experiences that I have had. All of my life experiences both tragic and beautiful have brought me to this moment. I accept who I am and all that has happened in my life. I am moving forward now. I am resilient.

PRACTICE ACCEPTANCE

PRACTICE

Choose one of the affirmations from this chapter or create your own. Write it down and tape it to your bathroom mirror for 21 days. Say it out loud or read it quietly every time you look into the mirror.

7



FORGIVE AND *Be Grateful*



*“Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on
the heel that has crushed it.”*

— MARK TWAIN

FORGIVE AND *Be Grateful*



GRATITUDE and forgiveness are the essential acts of a resilient person. When we focus on gratitude and bring our attention to the positive things we have in our lives, we are able to shift our perception of being a victim and move into the world of the victor. When you are sick, for example, focus on the parts of you that are well. Focusing on the strong and healthy parts of yourself with gratitude can increase the healing energy of your body and spirit.

Forgiveness is a choice. It is a conscious practice of compassion where we give up the toxic anger, disappointments, and wounds that we're clinging to. Forgiveness can be experienced as a sacred act of giving when we offer up our pain to a higher power, a love that is greater than we are.

FORGIVE AND BE GRATEFUL

❧ PRACTICE ❧

Write a letter of forgiveness to yourself or another person. Read it aloud or quietly, and burn it in a fireplace or fire-safe area. As it burns, visualize any lasting feelings of heaviness or despair being lifted into the air by the flame and ash. Feel all negative emotions vanishing. After the letter has completely burned, take a moment of silence to feel gratitude, and then dispose of any ashes with thoughtfulness and care.

8



HAVE *Faith*



“The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that its center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.”

— BLACK ELK

HAVE *Faith*



W^{HEN} we have faith in something greater than ourselves we acknowledge the mystery of all that is and what binds us together as one. Having faith in a higher power that teaches through divine love and intelligence helps us to open ourselves to deep and meaningful experiences of learning and healing. This love and intelligence lives within us as we are within it, and is available to us in every moment.

HAVE FAITH

❧ PRACTICE ❧

On an evening when you can see the stars, lie down outside and look up into the sky. Gaze upward in silence with the intention of connecting to the wonder and beauty of the universe and the presence of divine love. Find a star that draws your attention and focus on it while breathing and holding your intention to connect with your faith, a higher power, or divine light and energy. Afterwards, share your experience with a friend or journal about it.

9



MAKE *Healthy Choices*



*“Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”*

— MAHATMA GANDHI

MAKE *Healthy Choices*



M^{OST} of us know how to make basic healthy choices. We have them engrained in us. We know to choose fruit over candy, eat lots of vegetables, exercise, not smoke, limit alcohol, and watch our intake of fried foods. We all know these basics, but the challenge is to actually live in that way. Choosing health can feel like a difficult task, especially when we are stressed and going through tough times.

Making healthy choices is a practice that your rebellious mind will wrestle with. It's up to you to take control. Each time you override your habitual mind and grab the apple instead of the cupcake, or a deep breath instead of an emotional outburst, you are actually retraining your mind.

MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

In time, your body and your habitual thinking will respond and change.

They say it takes 21 days to form a habit and 21 to break one. Take the time you need to make the changes you desire, and strive for making consistent choices. Have your support team at hand, and when you fall off the wagon, get right back on again, remembering to be compassionate with yourself. There isn't one human walking the earth who is perfect. What makes a resilient person stand out from the rest isn't that he or she doesn't have a bad day or make a bad choice, it's that he or she can jump back in the game and still feel inspired. You can do that, yes you can.

Making healthy choices can involve many physical, psychological, and emotional obstacles, addiction being one. Taking the steps and making the effort to select healthy choices might give us the opportunity to make life changing choices that can lead us to profound breakthroughs and very powerful paths of awakening.

MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES

❧ PRACTICE ❧

For one week eat something plant-based, leafy, and green with two or more meals a day. Eat steamed, raw, or sautéed green vegetables or green juice. Green vegetables not only have great amounts of healing and restorative nutrients, they also have energy building properties as well. So instead of coffee for a week try a kale, cucumber, and apple juice! You will be surprised at how much better you will feel.

10



BE OPEN TO *Learning*



“There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.”

— ALBERT EINSTEIN

BE OPEN TO *Learning*



T_{HE} landscape of difficult times is rich with opportunities to grow as an individual and to become a resilient, happy person. Having an open mind to learning new approaches that empower you is very important. We all face difficult times in our lives, some relatively manageable and others completely life-changing. Each day we can acquire new ways to empower ourselves and collect a vast number of tools that we can call upon to help. Be open to learning. Try something new and participate in your life in a different way. In this era there are many groundbreaking new techniques that prove that our body and mind share a powerful healing connection. There are disciplined approaches that are profound, thousands of years old, and are now being researched and approved by science

BE OPEN TO LEARNING

as being effective in aiding with the reduction of stress and anxiety. Be aware of your own fears and judgments, and encourage your growth potential by being open to learning new ways to empower yourself.

PRACTICE

Go to your local library or bookstore and choose a book on a subject that you have never read about but find interesting. Go to a workshop or seminar to learn about something new. Try a new approach to healing and health by having a consultation with a practitioner in a new field that resonates with you, or has been used by friends or family. Below are a few approaches to research and explore.

- * Acupuncture, Acupressure
- * Somatic Therapy

BE OPEN TO LEARNING

- * *Massage Therapy*
- * *Rhythm/Music Therapy*
- * *Yoga*
- * *Neurofeedback*
- * *Subtle Energy Healing*
- * *Breath Work*
- * *Meditation*
- * *Guided Imagery*

11



CREATE *Sacred Space*



“Your sacred space is where you can find yourself again and again.”

— JOSEPH CAMPBELL

CREATE

Sacred Space



CREATING sacred space is an art and a practice that you can develop easily. A sacred space is a place where you are able to feel connected with your higher self and to a higher power greater than yourself. It is a safe space where you can express your feelings, be in silence, focus or rest your mind, and honor your life.

The important factor in creating your own sacred space is that you create it consciously and with deliberate intent. You may choose objects and materials for the space that bring you closer to your heart and feelings, or you may choose to sit in a peaceful place in nature. There are many things you can surround yourself with to help you connect to a deeper healing experience. Here is a short list

CREATE SACRED SPACE

of examples: incense, candles, photographs of loved ones, special mementos, statues or photos of spiritual teachers, bells, natural objects (flowers, stones, water, leaves, sand, shells), aromatic herbs or essential oils that you love. There are many possibilities.

Create an open place where you can stretch and breathe. Find a calming space where you can be in gratitude and forgiveness, where you can consciously be with your pain and suffering with reverence and love.

❧ PRACTICE ❧

Find or create a space in your home that you can call your own sacred space. Spend a day gathering special things and organizing them in a special way in your sacred space. Play relaxing music and burn incense while you set it up, and then take fifteen minutes each night before bed to sit, lie, or stretch there and enjoy what you have created.

12



BE OF *Service*



“Strength of the heart comes from knowing that the pain that we each must bear is part of a greater pain shared by all that lives. It is not just - our - pain but the pain, and realizing this awakens our universal compassion.”

— JACK KORNFIELD

BE OF *Service*



B^{eing} of service to others is one of the highest forms of self-love. Ultimately when we serve another we are serving our own soul. Approaching our own suffering from the perspective of oneness—the sense that we are all connected—can lead us to beautiful acts of kindness in the world.

Service can mean actively serving others in shelters or centers, lending your talents to organizations that serve others, or volunteering to work at charity fundraisers. Actively participating in the world for the sake of another person, animal or the earth increases our ability to become resilient ourselves.

BE OF SERVICE

Another approach to being of service is to quietly serve others as a part of your daily life. Picking up trash on the street instead of walking by it, letting someone go in front of you in the grocery store line, or allowing another driver into your lane when traffic is merging. Such small acts of service create a happier world and keep you in your heart instead of your head.

❧ PRACTICE ❧

Service through intention is a profound practice. It can be created by changing your thinking during your acts of self-care and in daily life. When you are in pain, set the intention that by caring for yourself you are also caring for another's pain, someone who is feeling the same as you.

BE OF SERVICE

Visualize others and see the relief you feel also reaching them and bringing them relief. When you nourish your body with food, feel the intention to enjoy your meal for someone else who is hungry, so that they will also receive the nourishment. Love your children, your family, and your animals with consciousness, knowing that your love reaches others who are alone without love. Service through intent changes consciousness and can profoundly effect our choices and how we relate to the world around us.

13



CHANGE *Your Questions*



“The secret of forgiving everything is to understand nothing.”

— GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

CHANGE

Your Questions



ASKING the question “Why?” can lead us down a path of anger, resentment, and despair. The question, “Why is this happening to me?” may not have a rational answer. If you replay that question over and over in your mind, it becomes a negative affirmation that makes you a victim in your own story instead of a hero.

Avoid trying to understand why a situation has happened and instead aim your focus on why you are feeling the way you do. When you guide your focus to yourself, you place yourself on a path that can lead you somewhere, a path that can give you direction and room to grow from your experience. When we stop focusing on “Why did this happen to me?” and begin looking at “Why am I feeling this

CHANGE YOUR QUESTIONS

way?” we are given the opportunity to heal on a very deep and conscious level.

PRACTICE

Here is a mind-body exercise based on three questions to guide your internal dialogue toward a path of healing. Sit in a chair and quietly focus on your breath. With each inhale draw in healing, calming energy. With each exhale release any confusion or heavy thoughts. Feel your body in the chair and be aware of any physical pain. Direct your inhales and exhales to the places that hurt. Then ask the first question, “Why has_____happened to me?” Bring the words to the front of your mind seeing them written before you. Then, in your mind’s eye, erase the question, like erasing chalk from a blackboard. Then spell out the second question, “What am I feeling right now?” Take note of all you may be feeling emotionally and physically and direct your breath to areas

CHANGE YOUR QUESTIONS

of tension with calming inhalations and exhalations. Pay attention to familiar places that carry pain or discomfort.

Then erase the question and with your mind write the third question, “When was the last time I felt this way?”

Trace your feelings to your last recollection of feeling the way you feel now, and then trace that back to a memory before that, and again before that. Keep tracing back until you reach the earliest recollection you have of feeling the way you feel right now. Hold the memory in your mind and in your body as you breathe in and out, restoring and releasing. Sometimes our memories may take us to a familiar sadness from our childhood, so hold those images close, breathe, and take care of them as if you were taking care of your childhood self. Inhale and exhale with compassion and tenderness. End with a moment of gratitude and write or draw about what you have found and seen.

14





BE A PART OF *Community*





“When you are motivated to transcend suffering, to get out of a difficult situation, and to help others do the same, you become a powerful source of energy that helps you to do what you want to do to transform yourself and to help other people.”

— THÍCH NHẤT HẠNH

BE A PART OF *Community*



W^{HEN} we are involved with our community, our local community or world community, we give ourselves the opportunity to learn and share with others. Being a part of a community gives us a venue in which to exchange ideas, share stories, celebrate and learn new ways of living. It can give us a sense of belonging, courage and support through tough times.

Communities are made up of people just like you, each with totally unique backgrounds and experiences, struggles and accomplishments. We all have so much to give to one another. Choosing to be a part of your community can be a lifeline to inspiration during difficult times and helps to create a solid foundation for resiliency.

BE A PART OF COMMUNITY

PRACTICE

Every Sunday for one month do something to serve others in the community. It can be something for your neighbor or friend, or can be volunteering for a charity organization.

You can plan a big event such as organizing a fundraiser or help in an ordinary way like assisting an elderly neighbor repair something in their home, helping a friend move, or bringing food to a family who may be going through a hard time.

Involve family and friends and create a book of sharing and memories that everyone can contribute to with stories, photos, and art. On the last Sunday, invite others in your community to a gathering so you can share your stories and experiences of the month.

15



MEDITATE AND *Breathe*



“Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless - like water. Now you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup, you put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle, you put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot. Now water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend.”

— BRUCE LEE

MEDITATE AND *Breathe*



MEDITATION is a holistic discipline that you practice to relax the mind and attain deeper states of awareness. It has been a healing and spiritual technique in many religions around the world for thousands of years, and is also practiced outside religious traditions. The various techniques of meditation can be classified according to the object of their focus. Some approaches focus on the self and direct us in mindfulness. Others focus on a specific object, like a candle flame or a sunset, and are called concentrative meditation. There are also moving or walking meditation techniques and feeling-based meditations that focus on compassion and kindness for oneself and others. Meditation can be used for physical relaxation, emotional calming, and awareness, reducing acute and chronic pain and deepening a person's spiritual experience.

MEDITATE AND BREATHE

Just as meditation is used to attain higher states of relaxation, conscious breathing is also used as a calming practice.

Conscious breathing eases digestive problems, can lower blood pressure, increases attention span, and decreases feelings of anxiety and pain. It is amazing how something so simple as breathing can affect not only our physiology but also our moods and our ability to relax. Conscious breathing is a quick, effective way to let go of stress and take care of yourself.

When we exhale carbon dioxide it acts like a mild sedative. A simple slow and prolonged exhale can calm us instantly and diffuse the physical effects of the stress response. There are many breathing techniques used to promote relaxation and to clear emotions and inflammation in the body as well as in the mind. Developing habits that increase your breathing during the day and increase your

MEDITATE AND BREATHE

awareness of how you breathe under stress can change your health and your ability to move through difficult moments with awareness. When breathing consciously with awareness you can connect more deeply to others as well as to your own natural state of calmness.

🌀 PRACTICE 🌀

Choose a time every day for 21 days where you can have at least 10 minutes to meditate and breathe. It can be any time when you can restore yourself and have a quiet moment to breathe and listen to your surroundings.

Practice acknowledging thoughts or feelings that are distracting and with each exhale, release them into the air and watch them disappear.

MEDITATE AND BREATHE

When you get a feel for breathing in and out naturally, and are able to be in a fluid place without a great deal of mental chatter, then move into visualizing your inhales and exhales with golden light. Breathe the golden vibration in and out to clear away any negativity and static energy in your body, mind, and emotions. End with a silent moment of gratitude.

16



LISTEN TO *Nature*



“In some mysterious way woods have never seemed to me to be static things. In physical terms, I move through them; yet in metaphysical ones, they seem to move through me.”

— JOHN FOWLES

LISTEN TO *Nature*



W^{HEN} we bring our attention to nature, our biosphere (our personal energy field) is affected. Our respiration slows and deepens, our blood pressure lowers, our thoughts slow down, and we begin to entrain our frequency to nature's calming organic rhythm. When living in times of stress, nature is truly one of our greatest friends and allies.

LISTEN TO NATURE

PRACTICE

Find a safe place in nature where you can sit quietly, close your eyes and listen. Take 10 minutes to allow yourself to breathe deeply, clear your mind, and simply pay attention to the sounds of nature. The wind, the trees and the birds all have a story to tell. After your 10 minutes of listening, take another 10 minutes or more to write about your experience.

17



CREATE

Calming Rituals



“Any ritual is an opportunity for transformation.”

— STARHAWK

CREATE

Calming Rituals



W^{HEN} we create calming rituals in our home, we bring awareness into our daily lives and develop a routine that relieves stress. A calming ritual doesn't have to be a big production: it can be as simple as lighting a candle while you wash the dishes, cooking food with intention, or deep breathing before bedtime.

Just like your other daily rituals, such as brushing teeth or showering, daily repetition of a calming ritual will turn into a habit that is a part of your life. Attaching healing visualizations to daily chores or activities can change mundane moments into centering and clearing times of awareness. These moments can bring you back into your intention for the day and ultimately your life purpose.

CREATE CALMING RITUALS

Here are a few more examples of calming rituals that take little effort outside of setting our intention and doing the mind work.

Entering Home Meditation

- * **Door Visualization.** When entering your home visualize the door as a healing archway that clears energy. As you walk through it visualize yourself walking through a shower of water or light that will clear away any negative remnants of the day. Breathe, take off your shoes, and take the time to experience your home environment clear and relaxed.
- * **Taking Off Your Shoes.** Take your shoes off before entering the house to leave uninvited energy of the day at the door. Consciously take your shoes off as soon as you come into the house. Keep your shoes in the same place every time you enter keeping in

CREATE CALMING RITUALS

mind that when you are walking into your home, you are entering your sacred space clear of all mental and emotional movement that went on around you during the day.

Daily Life With Intention

* **Preparing and Eating Meals with Intention.**

Washing, cutting and cooking food are great moments to set an intention for yourself or for your family. Simply being conscious and preparing your food with love and kindness can change how a meal can affect the body. Breathe, feel your feet on the floor and think about how you want the food to make you feel. Infuse it with loving nourishment. Before you eat set the intention that the meal you are about to eat will bring health and nourishment into your body and happiness into your heart.

CREATE CALMING RITUALS

- * **Cleaning with Intention.** While doing things such as washing, vacuuming or dusting, visualize that all of the dirt being cleared away is the mental-emotional clutter in your mind, or in your body. Breath in and out with this intention using your exhales to release negative thoughts, feelings or pain while you clean.
- * **Bathing with Intention.** Bathing rituals have been around since ancient times using the power of water to heal and clear energy. Use your intention as you bathe knowing that the water around your skin has the power to wash away emotional stagnant energy. Use essential oils, soaps and shampoos that create clearing and calm such as lavender, lemon and vetiver.
- * **Intentioning Sleep.** Take time before bed to reflect on your day and clear away residual thoughts. Breath and check in with your body observing any

CREATE CALMING RITUALS

tension or pain. Stretch or sit quietly gathering feelings in with your inhales and releasing feelings out with your exhales. Imagine any remaining negative energy left over from the day flowing out of your bones, muscles and cells with every exhale. Lie down and set your intention for a peaceful healing sleep. Begin inhaling deep healing colors like indigo, violet, green or gold. As you breath allow your body to give in to gravity and feel the weight of your bones preparing for sleep. Envision yourself waking in the morning feeling happy, rejuvenated and clear. Continue breathing in and out visualizing calming colors to rest and restore. For more support sleeping, try using lavender, clary sage or sandalwood essential oils. You can place a drop in your hand and smooth it over your bed sheets or use drops of oil in a diffuser to bring additional support for deep restorative rest.

CREATE CALMING RITUALS

Meals, bathing and preparing for sleep are important anchoring moments in our lives. When we attach moments of reflection, prayer or intent to these moments we are sustaining ourselves with a perception of our life as being nurtured and cared for. Affirmations, positive visualizations and conscious positive thinking can help reduce stress and help you create a life of balance and meaning.

🌀 PRACTICE 🌀

Choose one of the calming rituals from this chapter and try it for 21 days. Afterwards write, draw, or share it with another person.

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EMBRACE *Challenges*



“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself - I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.”

— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

EMBRACE *Challenges*



E_{NERGY} follows intent. When we think challenges are impossible, they may turn out to be impossible. A change of thought—even if it is a glimpse of possibility—is a seed that can grow to face every challenge. Hold that positive possibility firmly in your mind and see it as if it were true. Sometimes acting “as if” your desired result has already happened can raise your vibration and alter your perception of a situation from impossible to possible.

We all face serious challenges in life. There will be times of despair and hopelessness for many of us, but only with our consent. We all have the power to choose either to stay in a mindset of despair or to embrace our feelings and then to grow and change. This indeed is a warrior’s task

EMBRACE CHALLENGES

and takes a commitment to practicing mindfulness every day so we can turn doubting perceptions into powerful opportunities of transformation and empowerment.

🌀 PRACTICE 🌀

Take time in a quiet place and visualize your life on a timeline from early childhood until now. Draw it on paper, marking key places in your life where you have overcome difficult challenges. Reflect on each key place, gathering all of your strengths and acts of self-care that you had to put into motion to overcome each challenge. Remember the feelings of relief after you had made it through the worst of times. Write down all of your strengths and healing memories in a list as a reminder of your own power and ability to overcome difficulties. Put this list next to your bed and read it when you feel like the challenges ahead may be impossible to bear.

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LAUGH *Deeply*



“I like it when a flower or a little tuft of grass grows through a crack in the concrete. It’s so f#*in’ heroic.”*

— GEORGE CARLIN

LAUGH *Deeply*



COMEDIAN Bill Cosby once said, “If you can laugh at it, you can survive it.” Our emotions and moods clearly affect our perspective on life. A change of outlook can turn a threat into a challenge, and our ability to laugh can lead the way in guiding our thoughts and changing our emotional and physical responses.

Laughter stimulates the immune system, offsetting the immunosuppressive effects of stress. It gives us a different perspective on our problems. If we can make light of the situation, it is no longer threatening to us, and we disarm its damaging effect. With an attitude of detachment, we can feel a sense of self-protection and control in our environment.

LAUGH DEEPLY

It's sometimes difficult to force a laugh in tense situations. But that's precisely when you need it most. When things are at their worst, surround yourself with people who can help you laugh through it, as well as cry through it, and you can ride the wave of challenge with a deep sense of empowerment.

🐾 PRACTICE 🐾

We all have our own unique triggers that will make us laugh. Sometimes a comedy may do the trick or watching a stand-up comedian, other times we may have to stretch ourselves and do something out of character to strike a laughing chord. Here are a few ideas:

- * Comedy Marathon Night: back to back comedies until you belly laugh out loud.*

LAUGH DEEPLY

- * *Make a dance video with friends. Break out your best moves even if you don't have any! Don't take yourself too seriously, and most important, watch it together afterwards.*
- * *Find an undiscovered version of yourself and dress the part. Go out with friends and show off your spirited side. A wig maybe? Or that genuine Scottish kilt you always wanted to wear? Go ahead and try it while mastering a game of golf, hula hooping, or disco roller skating if you're brave.*

20



CONNECT TO *Your Purpose*



“There comes a time in the spiritual journey when you start making choices from a very different place... And if a choice lines up so that it supports truth, happiness, wisdom, and love, it’s the right choice.”

— ANGELES ARRIEN

CONNECT TO *Your Purpose*



CONNECTING to our purpose may seem like a daunting task when we are confused and unclear as to what our purpose is. To link with our life's purpose is to know our highest self in the moment. Our purpose in life may change depending on what our soul needs, but when we are able to listen deeply to ourselves we can learn how to align ourselves to what our souls need to be happy.

You can find your purpose through what makes you happy, sad, passionate, or even angry. You can find it through the passion you may have about a cause, an injustice, or an experience. Your purpose may be in a role you fulfill at home or in the community. Sometimes the happiest people have found their purpose to be living in

CONNECT TO YOUR PURPOSE

service every day by being a good parent, sibling, or spouse, or leading a successful career. They discover their purpose wherever they are, in everyday living, the extraordinary as well as the mundane.

Connecting to your purpose requires you to trust yourself and hold in your heart an invitation of surrender while standing exactly where you are in the moment.

❧ PRACTICE ❧

For seven consecutive days, start each morning with a reflective question. Ask yourself, “What does my soul need to feel inspired today?” You may need to restructure your day to give yourself some flexibility within your routine to have the space you need. To align with your purpose, make sure that you create the space to connect to what is most important to you. This can be very challenging, especially when you don’t

CONNECT TO YOUR PURPOSE

know what you need, but you know something is missing or needs to change. Committing seven consecutive days to check in each day and ask this question is a great way to start finding your purpose every day.

21



BE *Patient*



*“Be kind whenever possible.
It is always possible.”*

— THE 13TH DALAI LAMA

BE *Patient*



PATIENCE is a skill, a practice, and a gift. It is a breeze of acceptance that may move through us in moments of stress, or it can be a personal quality that we have manifested since childhood. Either way, patience at its best must be evoked and actively used by both heart and mind.

Most of us at heart, want to have patience. We try. We try in traffic, we try while standing in line at the bank when we are late and agitated. We try to have patience with our spouses and families, with life in general. We try to have patience waiting for things to change.

BE PATIENT

The gateway to achieving patience is to guide your thoughts into the moment, ground yourself in your body, acknowledge your stress and your vulnerabilities, and then release them. When you practice this technique of awareness, instead of trying to be patient, you actively engage in the experience of patience.

For many people a softening appears, a steadiness, and inner focus arrives that allows you to expand your view of your situation. When patience is present, an expansion of awareness happens, a slowing down of breath and of worry. And in that moment, you are... patient.

This indeed is a lifelong practice for even the greatest of saints, a constant surrender of self in order to fully be in the moment. Instead of “having” patience, you simply allow yourself to “experience” patience. This is a healing and open state we all can strive for and receive.

BE PATIENT

PRACTICE

The next time you are in a hurry and stuck waiting in a long line, take a moment to look around you. Tune in to the people in front of you and behind you. Know that each person has been somehow orchestrated to be in the very place they are standing, just for you.

Each person has a story about why they are there, each person is carrying some joy and some sadness. Breathe, feel your feet on the floor. See the scene taking place as a message showing you how to love more and be more compassionate with yourself and others. Looking at life with a deeper perception of this reality will not only strengthen your ability to be patient, it can bring you many profound and meaningful gifts. Don't miss it.

“When the heart weeps for something it has lost, the spirit laughs for what it has found.”

— SUFI APHORISM

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She has studied and apprenticed with Christian Benedictine Monks, tribal healers of Brazil, Mexico, North America, and New Zealand and is an initiated minister of Deeksha Healing. She is the creator of the Advanced Energy Medicine Certification Program at the Boulder College of Massage Therapy 1999-2002, the co-founder of the Raven Drum Foundation and creator of Project Resiliency where she teaches and facilitates holistic self-care workshops and empowerment drum circles.

A vocalist, writer, songwriter, and musician, Lauren creates a direct and personal experience of spiritual oneness and healing for audiences and students alike. Her work is an authentic expression of art and medicine that is created for healing and personal growth.



Visit Lauren at www.laurenmonroe.com
Visit Project Resiliency at www.project-resiliency.org

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RICK ALLEN (DRUMMER, DEF LEPPARD)

"When I suffered through my own trauma, I tried to do it alone and most of the time I was unsuccessful. This is the type of knowledge that I would have benefited from. It is so simple and clear in the messaging that it easily applies to anyone that has experienced trauma or difficult times in their own life. I now use this knowledge and share it with others I am trying to help."

JOHN ROBERTS
(EVP. WARRIOR RELATIONS.
WOUNDED WARRIOR PROJECT)