

ESSENTIAL SPIRITUALITY - ROGER WALSH, M.D., PH.D.
THE 7 CENTRAL PRACTICES TO AWAKEN HEART AND MIND
Along with the Exercise practices for each.

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ESSENTIAL SPIRITUALITY - Daily practices and exercises

The seven perennial practices are:

- * Transform your motivation: reduce craving and find your *Soul's* desire.
- * Cultivate emotional wisdom: heal your heart and learn to love.
- * Live ethically: feel good by doing good.
- * Concentrate and calm your mind.
- * Awaken your spiritual vision: see clearly and recognize the sacred in all things.
- * Cultivate spiritual intelligence: develop wisdom and understand life.
- * Express spirit in action: embrace generosity and the joy of service.

These Sacred 'Ways', by themselves, can be an all encompassing
'Call and answer' meditation.

Glide into your zone...

Take a breath and release... - Read the first practice

Take another breath and release – contemplate the meaning of the practice,

While following your calm and steady breath...

Take as long as it takes to follow what ever arises through the inspiration of this practice.

Repeat for all 7 practices.

PRACTICE ONE

**TRANSFORM YOUR MOTIVATION
REDUCE CRAVING AND FIND YOUR SOUL'S DESIRE**

EXERCISES TO REDUCE CRAVING

Free yourself from greed, for greed is itself an impoverishment.

EXERCISE 1: RECOGNIZE PAIN AS FEEDBACK

The great religions therefore urge us to recognize our attachments
so we can begin releasing them.

To do this

Think of some situation in your life that feels painful, or
The next time you feel mental pain - whether it be fear, anger, jealousy, or anything else...
Stop what you are doing and look for the attachment that underlies it.

EXERCISE 2: **EXAMINE** THE EXPERIENCE OF CRAVING

Bringing greater awareness to our experience and behavior is crucial
if we are to understand and change them. This is one reason why
Developing clear awareness is one of the seven practices

Spiritual traditions recommend **deliberately examining the sensation of craving itself.**

To do this

When you next notice yourself captured by a craving, take the opportunity to
Analyze it carefully and to identify the components of the experience.

Stop whatever you are doing.

Then carefully explore the experience. See if you can identify the underlying
Emotions, body sensations, thoughts, feelings, and tensions.

Usually what you find is not terribly pleasant.

EXERCISE 3

REFLECT ON THE COSTS OF CRAVING

Reflection is a fundamental technique in each of the great religions.

It essentially consists of pondering or thinking about an issue or experience

In order to understand it and yourself better

As you will see, it is a vital tool for developing wisdom.

Here you can use it to recognize the costs of craving.

To do this

Find a time and place where you can reflect quietly for several minutes without interruption

Begin by thinking of one of the more powerful attachments running your life

It might, for example, be for pot, booze, nicotine, unhealthy food or a fancy car.

Then consider all the time and energy that go into acquiring it.

Reflect on the effort and money that you sacrifice.

Recall the painful emotions that accompany it, such as anger at people who stand in your way,
depressed when you feel hopeless about getting what you crave
and worry about losing it once you have it.

Simply allow these costs and any accompanying insights **to come into awareness.**

There is no need to force any particular insights to emerge, and there is certainly no need to
judge or condemn yourself for having the attachment.

Self-condemnation and self-attack only leave us feeling more deficient and therefore

More prone to cling to the illusory consolations of our attachments.
The aim of this reflection, and of all reflection, is to understand, not to *condemn*.

EXERCISE 4:

RECOGNIZE UNDERLYING THOUGHTS AND BELIEFS

Beneath the emotions and sensations that accompany addictions lurk destructive thoughts and beliefs, and it is extremely helpful to identify them. Perhaps the most common belief is, “I must have something in order to be happy.” This something can be almost anything: more money, sex, power, a new spouse, or whatever else it is we crave.

A good time to do this exercise and to recognize such thoughts
**Is when you are in the grip of an attachment,
with all the emotional turmoil it brings.**

Take a moment to relax and breathe deeply.
Then take several minutes to see what you are telling yourself about your attachment.
If you find yourself thinking, for example,
“I must have that” or “I’ll die if anyone finds out about this,”
Then recognize that these are just thoughts and are certainly nothing you have to believe.

Once thoughts are recognized as what they really are— just thoughts— another step is possible.

EXERCISE 6:

FRUSTRATE AN ADDICTION

An exercise that complements the previous one is to ***deliberately frustrate an addiction.***

To do this

Choose something you are attached to— perhaps
Cigarettes, pot, booze, certain Unhealthy foods, or mindless television
and decide to go without one for a specific time period, such as a day.

Be sure to select *realistic goals*
that you can be reasonably certain of accomplishing.
It is better by far to decide to go without cigarettes for a morning and succeed
than rashly to decide to quit forever and fail miserably.

During the exercise,
Bring as much awareness to your experience as possible.
You may find it helpful to stop whatever you are doing periodically
so you can explore your experience more deeply.

Carefully observe the sensations, feelings, and thoughts that arise

as you frustrate your cravings. **Jotting some notes down in a diary can be useful.**

In the evening, take time to reflect on the day and what you learned from it.

What feelings did you have, what fears arose?

What new insights and understandings emerged, what surprised you?

FIND YOUR SOUL'S DESIRE - **REDIRECT MOTIVATION**

Always strive for ways to be

Cultivating Higher Motives

EXERCISES TO REDIRECT DESIRES

To begin,

It is helpful to view our lives from a larger perspective.

EXERCISE 7: THINK OF A LONG TIME

Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit where you won't be disturbed.

When settled, relax by following the instructions in the next paragraph.

Begin by taking a few minutes to breathe slowly and deeply.

Allow yourself to relax more and more with each breath.

Notice an interesting thing about breathing:

There is no effort required to breathe out.

You breathe in and then simply let go. As you do, the air falls out by itself, and the muscles around the chest and shoulders relax automatically.

Allow that sense of relaxation to deepen and spread through the body with each breath.

Let it flow up into the neck, out into the arms, and down through the abdomen and into the legs.

If you notice any areas of muscle tightness, see if you can relax them.

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply throughout the exercise.

The ability to relax like this is a valuable skill for dealing with stress and tension of any kind.

It will deepen many of the exercises and meditations presented throughout this book.

When you are calm, read through the rest of the exercise carefully

so you know what to do,

Then close your eyes.

Begin by thinking of a long time, perhaps a period of many years.

Then think of a longer time. Then think of a still longer time.

When you are ready, double the time. Then double it yet again.

Now think of eternity. From this all-encompassing, eternal perspective, look back at your life and ponder the following questions.

You do not need to analyze or try to figure out answers.

Rather, simply allow the intuitive wisdom within you to bring the answers into awareness.

- * What is really important in your life?
- * What really matters?
- * What would you be better off doing more of?
- * What would you be better off doing less of?

Then take a moment to see if there is any other vital information this
Eternal perspective can offer you.

When you feel complete, open your eyes and bring your attention back to your environment.
As with so many exercises, it is helpful to write down your insights in a journal immediately and
then to take a few minutes to reflect.

EXERCISE 8:

DEDICATE AN ACTIVITY TO A HIGHER GOAL

In Tibetan Buddhism **each major activity**
whether it be meditation, eating, or cleaning

Starts and ends with a dedication.

Before beginning meditation, a practitioner will repeat words such as,

“I dedicate this practice to my awakening
in order that I may serve and awaken all beings.”

At the end of the meditation, the practitioner will close by

Dedicating the benefits to others with words such as,

“I offer the benefits of this practice
to the welfare and awakening of all beings.”

EXERCISE 9:

DISCOVER YOUR FUTURE SELF

Mohammad suggested,

“There are as many ways to God as there are created souls,”
while Jewish wisdom holds,

“Each and every human being has a specific task to perform in the world,
a task that no one else can accomplish.”

Fortunately, the task we are called to perform
is one that, in the depths of our heart, we truly want to do.

This meditation is a good tool to use in conjunction with periodic ‘Life Reviews’.
It is a deep meditation that afterwards requires one to take notes and
periodically go back into meditation to review your deep thoughts.

Begin by giving yourself time to relax.
Take some slow, deep breaths to let go any tensions you may be experiencing.

When you are ready:

Imagine yourself as you would most like to be at some future time,
Perhaps a few years from now.

There is no need to struggle or force an image or idea to appear;
Let it arise spontaneously and effortlessly. With these kinds of exercises,
Some people see a clear image while others have more of a felt sense.

Either is fine.

Imagine yourself living where you would most like to live and
Having done the things you most want to do.

See yourself having achieved what you want, having learned what you want to learn,
Having made significant contributions to others, and having healed old relationships
and established satisfying new ones.

As you visualize your future self,
Look to see where you are and what type of environment you are in.
Does your future self look different in any way? What is your posture like?
How do you feel? What emotions are predominant?
What fears are gone? What strengths are obvious?
What new capacities are evident?

Now imagine being your future self and ask,
“Of all the things I have done, what makes **me happiest?**”
Allow a moment or two for an answer to arise from the wisdom in your mind,
and take time to savor and reflect on the answer. When you are ready,
Move on to the following questions and repeat the same process for each one.

Ask yourself:

- * Of all the things that I have done, what makes me most **satisfied**?
 - * What is the most valuable thing I have learned?
 - * What is the best thing I have done to help other people?
 - * What are my most satisfying relationships like?

When you have responses to these questions, then ask:

- In order to achieve these goals,
- * what strengths and capacities do I need to recognize in myself?
 - * in what ways do I need to stop underestimating myself?
 - * What could I do now to begin achieving these goals?

When you are ready, open your eyes and take a moment to reflect on what you have experienced and learned. Writing down any insights immediately is helpful and will make the details of your future vision more vibrant and compelling.

THE HIGHER REACHES OF DESIRE

Practice 2

Cultivate Emotional Wisdom: Heal Your Heart and Learn to Love

THE VALUE OF VIRTUE - THE NATURE OF LOVE - The Search for Love

EXERCISE 1:

MOVE FROM VICTIM TO CREATOR

Take a moment to be aware of how you feel.

Notice the emotions you are experiencing.

Next,

Think of or visualize someone you like.

Then notice any emotions that arise.

Now think of or visualize someone you dislike
and watch the play of corresponding emotions.

Put a smile on your face.

Observe that a gentle wave of happiness follows immediately.

This exercise takes only a few seconds, but those seconds are sufficient to
give a taste of your power.

HEALING PAINFUL EMOTIONS

A vital challenge of psychological and spiritual growth involves

Learning to experience difficult emotions consciously while

Continuing to live life fully and appropriately.

EXERCISE 2:

EXPLORE FEAR

Facing and exploring fear is a powerful means for healing

It that can be tested in this exercise.

Begin by sitting comfortably. Take some time to relax.

Remember to breathe slowly and deeply, relaxing more with each breath.

When you feel calm and comfortable,

Think of something that makes you afraid.
For this exercise, it is best to choose a fear that is
Troubling, but not overwhelming.

Allow yourself to feel the fear and then begin to explore it.
Notice that the actual sensations of fear seem to be located in a particular part of your body.

Where is the fear located? How large is it?
What shape does it have? What does it feel like?
Is it a tingling, vibrating sensation or more like a hard, solid lump?

Now turn your attention to other aspects of the experience.

Is there an image associated with the fear?

If so, what is it?

What is your posture like, and are there particular muscles that are tense?

Can you relax some of these muscles as you continue to breathe slowly and deeply?

What thoughts run through your mind?

Take a few really slow, deep breaths.

Now explore the experience of fear again. Notice its location right now.

What size and shape does it have now? What does it feel like now?

Be careful to explore it carefully this second time, because the experience of fear, like all
experiences, changes constantly. It probably has a somewhat different size, shape,
and feel from those of a few minutes ago.

What about the posture and muscle tension? And the thoughts and images—

Are they different, too?

Now notice something fascinating and freeing about the experience of fear.

When you look closely, none of the sensations, thoughts, and images that
make it up are terribly distressing in themselves. Perhaps the muscle tension or an image is a little
uncomfortable. However, when we actually experience it, fear is usually nowhere near as
devastating as we imagine it to be. Rather, it is our unexamined beliefs and fantasies about it

And our unexplored reactions to it
that lock us into the painful unconscious cycle of automatic contraction and withdrawal.

Notice something else:

When you breathe slowly and consciously, the body and then the mind tend to relax,
and as they do the fear begins to diminish.

You have uncovered an important healing principle discovered centuries ago
by meditators and recently by psychologists:

You can't be relaxed and fearful at the same time.

To the extent you can relax— through breathing, yoga, or any other method— fear dissolves.

Now...

Sit in a firm, erect posture with the back straight and shoulders back.

What happens to the fear?

The mind and body are so closely linked that to change one is to change the other.

If you sit firm and erect, a posture associated with strength and courage,

You tend to elicit these feelings and to diminish those of fear.

This is one reason a strong posture is encouraged in meditation.

EXERCISE 3:

STAY WITH FEAR

da Buddha would recommend:

What ever you are doing when fear comes through your mind - STOP!

Stop in that posture, then whether sitting or standing –

Assume a meditative position

Don't let this fear pass go ' covert' & run amuck in your psyche while being ignored

Work thru what is causing this fear, anxiety, this fearfulness, this loathing, this feeling of Gloom.

You might not be able to rationalize it away, but at least you can

Quickly identify the elements that are to be dealt with

at a time you are ready or at least realize that these 'details' are nothing to fear

Just stuff to work through in a rational Big Mind way

EXERCISE 4:

DO WHAT YOU FEAR AND FEAR WILL DISAPPEAR

The exercise is very simple.

Start by selecting something that you would like to do
but find a little scary.

Then make a commitment to do it during a particular time period—

Perhaps a day or a week— each time you have the opportunity.

Keeping a diary, telling a friend what you plan to do,
and later reporting your experience can be helpful in
Gathering your courage.

EXERCISE 5:

RECOGNIZE THE COSTS OF ANGER

When you next find yourself bristling with anger, find a place where you won't be disturbed.

Then take time to explore your experience.

Take notice of your body as you bristle with rage

Heart beat increasing? Stomach tightening? Mouth Dries?

What ever happens,
**Take notice of so you can identify the
range of body experiences that make up anger.**

Then
Turn your attention to your mind - what are you thinking?
What thoughts are racing around in there?

When you observe anger carefully in this way, its costs become painfully apparent.
You can see how it overwhelms and obliterates positive feelings and
Consumes the mind with thoughts of vengeance.
Physically, you can observe how the body goes into overdrive preparing to attack:
Your blood pressure rises and your heart races.
It's not a pretty sight and the more clearly you see it,
the less attractive holding on to anger becomes.

EXERCISE 6: COMMUNICATE ABOUT ANGER

**The second step in relinquishing anger is to talk to someone about it.
Simply talking about one's anger, not in order to complain or attack, but rather to
Forgive and release, is a surprisingly helpful process.**

EXERCISE 7: RECALL YOUR OWN MISTAKES

**A useful antidote to rage is to recall our own mistakes,
Especially those similar to the one made by the person who hurt us.**

**To do this,
First, recall something you feel angry about.
Next,
Reflect on exactly what the offending person did that hurt you.
Perhaps he or she forgot to thank you for a gift you gave or
Snapped at you when you made a mistake.
When you are clear about the offensive action,
Try to recall times when you made similar mistakes.**

EXERCISE 8: RECALL THE GOOD

This exercise involves recalling or learning about the good things that people have done.

**When you find yourself angry, stop what you are doing.
Then think of the person or people who hurt you.**

**Recall any good deeds they have done, especially any that may have benefited you.
Even just a simple smile...**

**EXERCISE 9:
THINK OF LOVING PEOPLE**

Simply thinking of loving, forgiving people
can begin to loosen anger's stranglehold.
If, when your temper flares, you bring to mind the image of a loving friend or
a kind spiritual teacher, their love and kindness may partly replace your rage.
It can be particularly valuable to visualize a loving person in your situation and
To imagine how he or she would respond.

**EXERCISE 10:
GIVE TO FORGIVE**

If you are having difficulty forgiving someone, give them a gift.
It doesn't have to be big or expensive.
What matters is that you want to let the anger go
and that your gift is intended to help you do so.
It is hard to feel angry at people when you give them a gift.
It is also hard for them to remain angry at you when they receive it.

EXERCISE 11: A FORGIVENESS MEDITATION

For most people forgiveness is a process. When you have been deeply wounded,
The work of forgiveness can take years. It will go through many stages
Grief, rage, sorrow, fear, and confusion— and in the end,
If you let yourself feel the pain you carry, it will come as a relief, as a release for your heart.

Sit comfortably and allow the breath to come slowly and easily.
Let your body and mind relax.
You may wish to imagine that you are breathing in and out
Through the 'Sacred Cycle' of meditation breath

Turn your attention to any memories or areas of your life
where you have not forgiven or been forgiven.
Become aware of the associated feelings,
of any barriers to forgiveness, and any holding of past pain or resentments.

Simply allow the experiences to float through awareness without judging them.
When you are ready,

Begin the process of forgiveness:

FORGIVENESS FROM OTHERS

Acknowledge the ways in which you have hurt others.

To whatever extent you can do so without contracting,

Allow images and memories of times when you hurt others to come to awareness.

Notice that at these times you often felt fearful, defensive, or confused.

There is no need to condemn yourself for your mistakes;

That only adds further fear and defensiveness.

Open to the regret you now feel and also to the possibility that you can now

Release your guilt and pain.

Gently and slowly repeat several times,

“I ask for forgiveness, I ask for forgiveness.”

FORGIVENESS FROM Yourself

We have all hurt, embarrassed and belittled ourselves in countless ways and

Probably still carry much of the pain.

Now you can begin to let it go.

Allow memories of times when you hurt yourself to come into awareness.

As each one arises, regard it and yourself gently and lovingly and

Repeat several times, “I forgive myself.”

FORGIVENESS FOR OTHERS

All of us have been hurt many times by others in ways large and small.

In addition, we have all added to those hurts by holding onto resentments,

Closing our hearts, and seeking revenge.

Now you can begin to relinquish these old hurts and additional self- inflicted pains.

Continue to breathe slowly and deeply.

Allow memories of times when you were hurt to come to awareness.

You might wish to begin with some of the smaller, more manageable pains.

See if you can recognize the fear, defensiveness, or confusion in the

Some old hurts dissolve quickly but some may take time

Be gentle and patient

Exercise 12:

Say Grace or a 'Dedication'

Before, during or after any worthy task

but

Not in a meaningless rush to stuff one's face

Be truly thankful for the many people that did their part to

Help bring this food to your table

When you have bought locally grown food you can
Personally thank the growers and his helpers at farmer's markets.

And as far as imported food goes...

Before you go thanking the folks that make jet fuel & heaps of diesel for shipping shazizel

Of course, thank them, but **HEAVELY CONSIDER BUYING LOCALY GROWN FOOD!!**

**This 'Thanking Process' is much more fulfilling when you can
Personally Thank 'ol Farmer 'Joe' yourself.**

Exercise 13

Recall Helpful People

Glide into your meditative 'zone'...

Recall two or three people that have been particularly helpful to you.

Recall how they've been helpful.

Take a few minutes to remember their kindness and allow feelings of Gratitude to arise.

Exercise 14

A Day of Thankfulness

Think of people you will meet during this time

Find a reason to feel Grateful to each person you meet.

Continue this recollection of gratitude all day.

The Direct Cultivation of Love

Exercise 15:

Recall Loving People

Glide into your meditative 'zone'...

Bring to mind people you know that have been exceptionally loving

Follow your breathing...

Bring to mind the gifts they give

Consider their characters and personalities and behavior.

What qualities make them so kind, helping and loving

Take notice of your mind as you reflect on these people

You may find yourself feeling grateful and loving because,

Simply by directing attention to specific people,

We begin to feel the qualities they express

These wonderful people have powerful effects on us.
Think of Loving People and Love arises.

To Give is to Receive - exercise

Practice Random Acts of Kindness

Start with the gifts of kindness,
that don't cost any \$ and not a physical thing of value
But a flower picked yourself or a
Smile or let someone ahead of you if approaching a line at the same time, or
Let a car merge in on a street that might not many chances to get in.

As you exude these Loving gestures - Take note on how nice it feels...
Consider that person waiting and wondering when they'll get to merge in...
Looking, waiting, scrutinizing, face focused, eyebrows scrunched up...

Then by some 'Divine Miracle' by your grace
A Smile appears, face lights up and an aura glows with happiness

All throughout the day,
Treat everyone you meet like a Saint or Sage
Knowing that every soul contains that Eternal Divine Essence

Exercise 16:

I Will Receive What I offer Now

Glide into your meditative 'zone'...

"I give, so shall I receive.
I will receive what I offer now."

Think of those experiences and qualities of mind that you would like to
Give to others and thereby enjoy for yourself.

"I offer **love** to everyone
I offer **happiness** to everyone
I offer **peace** to everyone
To everyone I offer **healing**
I offer **rest** to everyone"

Say these things in your mind slowly with feeling and meaning
Visualize the people receiving and enjoying these gifts.
Repeat over & over with the focus one follows the breath
If your thought wanders, gently bring yourself back

This exercise can be extended into other tasks of the day,
Like dishes, gardening, watering....
Simply pause, take few slow breaths and begin the sentences for as long as you wish

In a meeting or other sort of group with an intense focus of subject:
With the dynamics of emotions running high while creative results need to be... Created

Take a few moments to get into a quick 'zone' and repeat these lines...

Wishing happiness to everyone in the room and

An encouraging vibe towards creativity and the common solution.

This can transform your feeling and make you a calming, healing influence for others.

Exercise 17:

All Encompassing Love

Put away all hindrances –

Let your mind full of love pervade...The whole wide world

- Above, below, around and everywhere -

Altogether continue to pervade with love filled thought

Abounding, sublime, beyond measure.

da Buddha

Glide into your meditative 'zone'...

Bring your Awareness to a sort of glowing sensation
and feelings of warmth from 'within'...

As you do

Think of someone you love dearly

Visualize this person clearly in your mind's eye

Be aware of any feeling of warmth and love that arise as you see this person.

When you are aware of warm feelings,

Expand your awareness to include people around you.

Housemates, close by neighbors....

Let your feelings of warmth and love embrace them too.

Continue to follow your breath and the golden light energy that cycles...

Next

Visualize a larger circle of embrace to include the whole block

Then the city, the state, country, planet....

Then the universe right up to the

'Edge of the Big Bang' where you will

Embrace nothingness and everything at the same time.

Exercise 18:
Loving-Kindness Meditation

Buddha meditation

Glide into your meditative 'zone'...

Simply repeat short phrases designed to evoke emotional qualities such as
Happiness, peace, gentleness and... Love

like exercise 17 - Focus on one dear one and work your way up to

All beings in All worlds

But at some point, be sure to include **YOU!** ;-)

Phrases like:

May I be happy, kind, loving, and peaceful,

May I be joyful, gentle, calm, and loving

Then progress to:

May **you** be... Then,

May ALL people be...

May All Beings be...

You may start by speaking, then fade to your mental voice...

Don't struggle or force emotion to arise.

Merely allow the words to sink into your mind.

Your task is to relax, repeat the phrases, and

Be aware of whatever experiences and emotions arise.

Like always,

If your mind wanders astray...

Gently bring yourself calmly back to the phrases.

Best to avoid starting with someone you are sexual attracted to

As this may limit the scope of the meditation

This meditation helps cultivate Loving feeling toward yourself

But not a recipe for selfishness, but rather for **SelfLESSness**

Since the ego and selfishness thrive on fear, but dissolve in love

Once you have done this approach a number of times

the next stage is to do this to

Start with someone you really don't care for

Expand that to a few or a number of these types of people

You really don't respect their actions

Even anger, perhaps the toughest of all emotions - Melts in the embrace of mature love
This does not mean you accept their behavior if it is harmful to others
It Does Mean that you are liberating yourself from the self torture of uncontrollable rage

If you start to feel overwhelmed by anger, Stop and return your attention and
Loving thoughts toward people who are easier to work with.

When your feelings of love are again strong, return to your 'enemies'.... With love and Kindness
If the negative feelings this person evokes is too strong to work with successfully,
Then STOP

Don't strain or struggle or try to force the mind to feel something it is not ready for.
Remember, part of this meditation involves accepting and loving yourself
and your mind exactly the way you are.

This is not magic - it is a meditative *exercise*
As such, it will take time to blossom, but with time the feelings will go from
Slightly subtle to an accumulation of real inner Growth.

Speak and act with a pure mind
and happiness will flow your way ... Just as your shadow is...
Unshakable.
Set your heart on doing Good.
Do it over and over again - and you will be filled with joy.

Buddhist call it

'Right Speech' -

Have sensitivity to what you say to others..
Offend no one - Yet speak the truth
Choose words that are clear - but never harsh...
They do not take offense - and they do not give it.

Right Action -

Focus on what is right for everyone - Including Yourself!!

Exercise 1

Reflect on Your Good Deeds

Glide into your meditative 'zone'...

Then recall three contributions or things you have done that you feel good about
As the memories rise in your awareness, allow yourself to save each one and reflect on them.
Notice the feelings they evoke.

Exercise 2

Tell the Truth for a Day

Not like in the movie 'Liar Liar' where he was cursed to only tell the truth
Sometimes the truth got him laid big time & other's just pissed off at him.

So don't say the your deepest, darkest horrible 'true' feelings or even a truth that will hurt
The Goal is to speak Truthfully and kindly as you can.

If you find you are beginning to lie or stretch the truth or over exaggerate

HUMBLE UP

Take notes in 'practice journal'

How often were you tempted to lie or stretch the truth or exaggerate?

The more you do this the less guilt you will incur and
a sense of strength and integrity will subtly fill your 'way'

Exercise 3

Give Up da Gossip

Avoid gossip in the obvious ways of being cruel and mocking some one that is not present.

If there a moral to the story that must be told, try to say it about an anonymous party.

Keep the tale about the moral of the story & not to 'disenfranchise' another.

Avoid gossip

You will be fostering harmony rather than antagonism.

You won't have to carry the guilt or denial of your 'wrong speech'

A sense of integrity and strength come from holding to the Truth

Treating people with respect, and refusing to succumb to hurtful talk

Exercise 4

Do No Harm

Being harmless is a wonderful gift.

It means we are not acting from, and therefore reinforcing anger in ourselves
and that people are safe in our presence,

This allows them to let down their guard, set aside their defenses and pretenses
and feel at peace

This exercise can be done by starting with a time period

To - Try your best not to harm anyone.

Practice 'right speech'
Integrate the practice of treating everyone like a saint or sage
or perhaps
Treat everyone like they are your teacher
Genuinely smile
With gratitude for the lessons they teach
As other ways that would
Inspire you to be More like or less like.

Exercise 5

Communicate to Heal

Right Speech can be remarkably healing
Sharing a painful experience can detoxify it and give new insights and perspectives

Select an unethical behavior,
Either yours or someone else's that still disturbs you.
It should be one that you wish to resolve and wish to communicate
Then –
Select someone you trust to communicate with.
Ideally, this will be someone wise enough to listen carefully and
Sympathetically and, of course, be able to keep a secret. Typically a close friend is fine.
Find a peaceful place where you won't be disturbed
Your job,
Is to talk as openly and honestly as you can about your pain.
It's better not to give long explanations, theoretical interpretation, or justifications.
Simply talk about your personal experience and especially your feelings.
"I feel..." Is a good way to start...

The 'listener' doesn't have to provide answers or solve the problem
Their job is simply to listen until you feel you have completely finished.
At that point, you can both reflect on what can be learned from the experience.

Exercise 6

Right a Wrong

Reflect on any unethical things you have done that remain unresolved.
Choose one you would like to resolve - and decide how to do it.
It is useful to make a time to do this soon because,
Guilt has a way of helping us procrastinate and forget.

da Buddha warns
Be quick to do good - If you are slow
Then mind, delighting in mischief
Will catch you

~ an airport hara Krishna back at moonie-ville flats ~
If a bong has inadvertently become un-vertical
Right the Bong - *before it spills*

~ da Buddha's bro concurs dude ~
~ Confucius Agrees!

If one's **Balance is in question** -
"**Centering**" the bong properly before letting go
is da way ta go bro
Mohammad 'Pipes' in.... "hEERRe"

JC turned tobacco into bud at a wedding reception that didn't allow alcoholic wine

Higher Reaches of Ethical Living

Wish for others whatever you wish for yourself - Mohammad
Do onto others as you would have them do onto you - JC

da Buddha
Our monkey minds are constantly jumping all around
and we only recognize a small fraction this frenzy.

Can you tame your monkey mind?

Visualize a white ring with a white dot on a black background
Try to keep focused for at least two minutes.

It's astounding how much the mind wanders around in a frenzy.

Exercise 1

Do One Thing At A Time

We do so many things during a normal busy day - We are doing those things to remember,
With our 'monkey minds' also going in every direction at once & are not even aware of it.

Commit to a specific time - To doing only one thing at a time.
For each activity you encounter - Focus your entire attention on the task at hand
Don't let your mind wander
Focus on your breath during your task, especially when your thoughts wander.
Do your task in the rhythm of your relaxed breath
Even it requires your full thought power... All in rhythm with breath

When you take restroom break - Make the most of this 5 minute break.

Don't let your monkey mind waste all your precious time & it usually bogs you down with unsettling shaziz anyway.

Take that walk with focus calmness - get into a stride and sync breath nice & easy and full
No, you don't get to daydream about the cute cubical chick or the report due or the ball game or
1000's of trivial monkey shazizal that get your heart racing, your breath short &
'Hyperventilated' like, tummy in a bind, cramped tight muscles in odd places...

All of this is of course happening without us being slightly Aware of it.

- Until Now-

Start your day with a good morning meditation and some yoga stretches

Get ready for your day without a radio or Tv going, just focus on the shower, teeth brushing

Prepare your meal with focus, eat your meal with a dedication and gratitude for your
nourishment

Enjoy the subtle details of the tastes, the textures, the aromas.

Take your time to chew in a non rushed manner, because you have set aside time to eat relaxed

Continue your day as such - Driving without the distractions of the radio

Breathing steadily, calmly focused on all aspects of driving safely and most of all

Enjoy the Ride!

Some people actually get into a sort of zone while they drive... That may too deep as we need to
not let our focus drift of the task of being alert to our task of safely driving

No cell phones while driving unless purpose mounted smart phone for maps only...

Better to learn your route before you head out

But when you do talk to someone on the phone - Give them your absolute full attention
and breath calmly and enjoy each moment,

No rush, but be time efficient with most non personal calls

Later, when we do want to relax with Tv or Music - Then Do JUST that ;-)

Turn on the music at a reasonable level and just sit there and enjoy it as fully as you can
Even close your eyes and watch the 'concert' with your 'mind's eye'... and Breath like a meditation.
Some 'music' or relaxing audio can really take your meditations to Deeper levels, and Get you to
your zone in quickly by helping to focus your concentration and calm your monkey mind

If you need your Tv fix - Pick out a 'quality' show

Get your snack & drinks, dim the lights & breath calmly... when ya can ;-)

If you go to a restaurant, pick a quiet one so you can either calmly enjoy your meal
or be able to enjoy conversation with your dinner friends...

Eat your meals with the single task of enjoying your meal.

Don't eat while you work - This is inefficient for ether task of eating or working.

Don't watch Tv or listen to the radio or even read.

Reading is my biggest pleasures, while I attempted to cram every minuet full of da stuff I'm doing.

Reading kept me from really enjoying my meal.

My mind and body is multi tasking in opposing ways.

When you just simply enjoy your meal, the aromas, the textures, the tastes...

You whole digestive system gets in sync with the eating process,

Your stomach becomes receptive to the nourishment that's coming it's way.

Taking the time to enjoy the aromas, even before the first bite, actually gets the 'juices flowing'

Your mouth waters a bit getting ready to '*grease the skids*' so the food just glides right on down to your stomach that has started to do what it does with the food that comin' on down....

Again - Even a 'Born again Atheist' could appreciate these benefits

While the Spiritualist is Aware that bringing your meditative focus to all tasks at all times is an essential step to Higher and Deeper stages.

Most Spiritualist tend to flow into a "***voluntary simplicity lifestyle***"

Less cluttered by excess activates and possessions,

A life outwardly simple yet but Inwardly rich.

Exercise 2

Transform Daily Activities into Sacred Rituals

The seemingly simple tasks done with a focused awareness can be

A profound 'Awakening' for spiritual growth

This just deepens the perspectives of exercise 1 in that even the simplest tasks of Opening a door - First, take one deep, calming breath, and then in direct calm focus Efficiently open the door, no longer hurling the door open and barging right in.

Those few seconds of focused calmness is just enough to put one into a tranquil groove as you glide into where ever the door has led you

; -)

Driving: - Start by leaving a few minutes earlier!

Open the door like just mentioned, starting with one calming breath

Don't just hop in quickly - Take your time to just glide in efficiently, no rush.

Once setted, take another calming breath... - Then start the motor, do your seat belt & mirrors...

When you're all set to go,

BREATH two or three calming breaths.... Then calmly make your way

Enjoy the ride, be aware,

Exercise 3

Transform Interruptions Into Wake Up Calls

Our days are often filled with numerous interruptions and minor irritations.

During a conversation with another, a cell phone rings or text...or the boss intrudes or...
Then we sort of 'lurch forward' into this un-expectant annoyance semiconsciously.

Interruptions can also be used as a wakeup call

Taking a moment to relax and let go of any annoyance
When an issue or a boss cries out
Allows you to be calm, cool and collect-fully reassuring

Stop to Breath

Numerous traditions use the breath as the most 'centering element' of
Deepest Prayer or Contemplative Meditation.

Exercise 4

Three Breaths

Take Three 'meditative Breaths' - Deeply from the diaphragm, allowing our lower tummy to relax
and expand to bring in the breath to our deepest capacities.

We bring our awareness to the air and Universal Light that begins to waft by the nose...
Down towards our lowest chakra, then visualizing a rush of Light building up from our depths and
washing up the back of our spine like a wave churning white and foamy.

This wave washes all the way up to our shoulders and the crown of our heads.
Building with a gathering intensity, then radiating right out towards the infinite

With daily morning deep meditations, this breathing process can be evoked many times
throughout the day to immediately bring you to your zone.

Breathing in I Smile
Breathing out I relax
This is a wonderful moment
or
In, out
Slow, Deep
Smile, release

Exercise 5

Take Regular Breath Meditations

Plan to take numerous Breath Meditation throughout the day
The Deepest and longest mediation should typically be reserved for the Morning.
When you wake, do a few light stretches and limbering, use the bathroom as needed
Then prepare your heap O' pillows for a long sitting meditation.

For those with a busy day, 20 minutes will do wonders
When you have sufficient time available - keep moving that 'minimum time' longer
Sacrifice an hour of Tv for an hour of Deep meditation
On days you have more time, don't set a limit and see how long you can sustain 'Pure Thought'

The other meditative perspective is to incorporate this Breathing cycle into many opportunities throughout the day... Like mentioned above and any time you get the 'cue' to 'Down shift' and relax for a moment.

By practicing a 'Deep' daily meditation - You will be able to quickly 'Glide into your flow', anytime, anywhere

Several times an hour, when 'shifting gears'... You can Center yourself in the Oneness of the Moment
These short moments will be like the Spiritual Stepping Stones That gets you across your new day and new horizons.

Exercise 6

Sustained Concentration on the Breath

With regard to internal factors, I do not envision any other single factor so helpful as **Appropriate Attention** - da Buddha

Each morning you achieve a Deep meditation for as long as your time available
Once a week, extend this a bit longer
Once a month
Extend this as long as you reasonably can
Once a year,

Find somewhere in nature that calls to you for days of contemplation and Don't expect profound life changing experiences or Immediate solutions to Major life issues you may be facing...

However,
All these things really do typically occur... In their own way & time.

But
Mostly when we are not trying to evoke a specific solution to our life issues
Free your 'Daily mind' with your daily meditation
Free your bigger Weekly issues with your longer weekly & monthly meditations

But
Relish your main yearly retreat in nature or guided experience
With an openness to your Deepest Spiritual Calling
This may be the time to focus on that 'yearly' or Major Life Issue that really does require
Your most Deepest Contemplation
Ideally
or once you reach the point in your life which you are comfortably beyond the

Harsh consequences of... Life
And your daily, weekly, monthly meditation takes it all in stride...
Allow yourself to feel an openness to the
Apparent resonance of the 'Light common to all'
With the opportunity to experience a very Deep Awareness
We seem able to 'bear witness' to subtle but very profound realizations
but one won't find it in words...
Only be looking within

Exercise 7

First Breath, Last Breath

An interesting perspective...
Imagine that you are an infant just born to this world.
Freed from the womb, you about to take your first breath.
Each breath is a new, life giving experience.
Take time to enjoy this fully.
Now Imagine you are at the end of your life. You are dying, and any breath,
This breath right now may be the last.
Give it your full attention, use it to relax and release fear, clinging or concern
With each out breath, simply let go.
This is a good general exercise plus helps one glide into the concept of death.
One day we will be breathing our last breaths.
Peace and stability of mind developed from meditations such as this will be one factor that
determines how peacefully and easily we die.

Sacred Sounds

Meditations on sacred sounds or as a 'sound track' to most any meditations.
Nature has countless organically Sacred Sounds
From the obvious waterfalls, babbling brooks, ocean waves of all types,
and Trees with rustling leaves
Rain
Bamboo Forests -
Lie on your back and look up at the 50 to 100 feet tall Bamboo trunks
Or assume your favorite meditation sitting - Close your eyes
The sounds of the wind gently knocking the giant Bamboo together creates a sound that is
'otherworldly' and Enchanting

Exercise 8

Repeat the Name of God

Before you Glide into your zone - determine the length of this meditation.
For starters 15 to 20 minuets will be good.

After a regular sitting, in time you can increase your focused time.
You can set an alarm if you must be done in time to do your busy day
a Clock that you can take a peek at is good, just don't obsess with watching the clock.
Glide into your zone with your sustained breath meditation

Get deep and relaxed - take enough breaths to be aware of yourself,
Noticing any tight spots - Relax these...
Then begin:
Gently repeat your favorite name of God, first as a whisper
then soon you can just repeat within your mind.
Some folks can take this opportunity to speak the many and various
Names and attributes of God
While at the other end of the 'spectrum' - the One, the Great Mystery, the Universe...

There is no reason to strain or attempt to *make 'something happen'*.
All you have to do is repeat the name over & over, slowly and gently again & again. ..
In time you will discover for yourself that
**"God's name cannot be heard without a response -
Nor said without an echo in the mind**
that calls you to *'remember - which is the first steps to 'Awakening'*

Ramakrishna proclaimed from his direct experience of practicing several religions -
**"Every revealed Name of the One Reality possesses
Irresistibly Sanctifying Power"**

Do this **earnestly - in your own way** that you will **'grow** into'
Let it encompass your entire conscious being.
Let it be - the only thing you desire
Let the 'inner pull' of our soul, sail with Spirit to the One

A variation to this mediation - is to visualize your 'Inner Spirit'
Connect with the essence of your soul - Feel the subtle warmth of your Glow
The same 'Glow' that we feel 'pulled to' and resonate with
Follow that 'Pull' to it's 'Source'
Where the Timeless essentials of our Soul are swept along with Spirit and
Delivered to the only place it can possibly go

Exercise 9 Contemplative Prayer

This technique is almost the same as saying 'God' as above.

Almost any phrase can be used, providing only that it is
Spiritually meaningful and Calls forth

Positive feelings of your heart and mind.

Some folks may choose words like Love, Peace, or Grace.

Others brought up with a 'traditional influence' *may* want to use a line for Sacred text like:
'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me'...

Some non religious folks have trouble with the concept of ***groveling at the feet of a 'lord'***

Although this concept is popular in many traditional ethnocentric religions,

This approach requires modification to 'resonate' with the

'Fully Functional Integrated individual.'

Find your own words that do this for you.

"The Light Within Resonates with the Light beyond"

"The Universal Light illuminates my inner Light"

"God's Light illuminates my inner Light"

"With Grace I see the Light within me, within All"

"The Peace of the One is within me"

"Love glows within me in harmony with the Love of All"

Continue to repeat the " sacred sound" of your words or phrases,

Rather than get caught up in the conflicts that arise.

Just take notice of them, embrace them for a moment, and then let it Be...

and just let the 'sacred sound' return your focus.

Occasionally the mind may become very calm and still, so still that all thoughts, including the
sacred sound, may cease. At this time you have a choice:

You can exert a slight effort of will and gently restart 'the sound'

so that it continues unceasingly throughout the practice period.

Alternatively,

and I seem to resonate with is the TM or Christian Centering Prayer way -

When you have reached a point of 'such calmness',

That no thoughts arise, including the 'sacred sound'...

You then make no effort whatsoever and **simply rest in the silence.**

This ***silence of the mind*** unveils the profound experiences of the sacred

That lie ***beyond*** thoughts and images.

TM describes this as "Transcendental Consciousness" and the

Centering Prayer as "***the presence of God***"

Exercises in Awareness

Mindfulness - Is helpful everywhere - *da Buddha*

So far we've diminished the discoloring effects of wayward emotions, attachments and unethical actions, and reduced the frenzy of our wandering attention.

You have begun to settle and clear your mind.

You will experience how the seven sacred practices interact and support each other.

Now we can add **methods that**
Specifically foster mindfulness.

Exercise 1

Eat Mindfully - Enjoy the Food

- Eat Zenfully –

Treat yourself to experience your meals with full attention

No Tv, no working, no computer, no smart phones, no reading even though it's a Grand pleasure and a luxury of time we just don't have enough of.

Reading kept me from really enjoying my meal.

The mind and body are multi tasking in opposing ways.

When you just simply enjoy your meal, the aromas, the textures, the tastes...

Your whole digestive system gets in sync with the eating process,

Your stomach becomes receptive to the nourishment that's coming it's way.

Taking the time to enjoy the aromas, even before the first bite, actually gets the 'juices flowing'
Your mouth waters a bit getting ready to '*grease the skids*' so the food just glides right on down to your stomach that has started to do what it does with the food that comin' on down....

Eating can be a very spiritual experience -

Bring the tranquility, focus and calmness of meditation to your meal

Say or think some words of gratitude to everyone involved that

Helped put this food on your table.

Say or think a 'dedication' declaring the energy from this food's nourishment will go to Strengthening my body, to clearing my mind, so I can experience the Wisdom within so that I may help others with a Deeper sense of Love and compassion.

Or come up with whatever resonates with you.

When you take a bite - Put your fork down so you are not encouraging yourself to Munch obsessively or compulsively - Take time to chew properly.

There is no need to hurry... Because you've allowed yourself all the time you need.

Pay close attention to every sensation, the main tastes... And then the subtle background tastes...

Enjoy your meal - If, like in meditation, you find your mind wandering -
Just bring your focus back gently to your meal.

It's ok to enjoy anything that arises during your meal, like a painting...
If outside,

Enjoy a bird call, a butterfly fluttering by or even a lazy cloud meandering along...
Then, like a cloud, let these pleasant objects float on by...
And bring your focus back to your meal.

Meditative munching

is recommend to do for any meal you can.

Starting with Breakfast

Meditative munching works in conjunction with the transition of your
Morning Deep meditation and Zen Yoga stretches.

Exercise 2

Mindful Music

Music has a remarkable power to evoke emotions and stir the soul.
When the Jewish prophet Elisha sought Divine inspiration, he cried,
"Get me a musician"

We rarely give music a chance to offer its full benefits.
Rather, we half listen while we drive, do other things.
Both the delights and benefits can be enhanced by Mindful Listening.

Choose an inspiring piece of gentle and soothing music
or Do a search for meditative music,
There are many hours of free 'relaxing, peaceful music online

Sitting in a comfortable meditation sitting
Glide into your zone, but
Soon shift your focus from your breath... To the music
Listen as fully as you can -
Visualize the different instruments you can identify or
Just open yourself to the new '*sound-scapes*' as they arise

•

Meditative music will tend to calm you... and take you away...
If you find your thoughts have drifted away to other thoughts, just smile,
Enjoy the thought for a moment...

Then return to the breath – Deep and slow...
... Back to the sounds... And let it go.
'Let it Be' & Let it Go'

Exercise 3

Become A Good Listener

Listening carefully and attentively as someone speaks is a gift.
Recall the arrogant bastard that continues to multitask while you speak
This repugnant self absorbed character trait is Typically reserved exclusively
For *future* X Bosses & 'ex-spouses'
However, anyone can slip into this 'foo-paw' during a momentary lapse of Mindfulness :-O

Become a Good Listener - Let this be *Your Gift* to all that you converse with
It costs nothing and feels great!
Other people will enjoy your full attention, while you learn more about them,
Train your attention, and sensitize your awareness

Of course, if you are absolutely too busy, then pause what you are doing.
Give the person your full attention and listen while taking a deep breath or two...
then pleasantly remind them of the impending doom you face if you do 'get 'er done' ;-)

Exercise 4

Find Beauty in This Moment

Treat yourself to taking a moment - Two or three times each day,
to look around and find something of beauty.
- It could be anything –
Relish the simple beauty of the clouds, or sunset, or happy child...
then bring your awareness to your 'inner self',
Notice how it feels inside too
Relish these sights and sounds of beauty.
Then bring these feelings along with you into the day's groove.

Exercise 5

Heighten Awareness of Your Body

Honor your body without worshiping your body
Regard your body as your temple and your inspiration is
Less self centered and more of a serving for your Spirit
and the wisdom to help others.

The body can become, in Shakara's words -

"A vehicle of experience for the human spirit"

The body suffers the stresses of life and stores all those sore muscles that
Tense with every flinch of life.

Bringing awareness to one's body, can help identify and then heal.

~~~~~

### **The Buddhist Sweeping Meditation**

Glide into your zone...

Once there - turn your attention to the top of your head, if there are any tensions there,  
Mentally loosen & let 'em go.

If they are really 'glowing' then take a moment to massage your head for a  
moment then gentle return to your breath... and your head...

Then your forehead, then the back of your head, the base of your head. Eyebrows, checks...

Flex your face with a big smile, a big 'O', a big pucker....

Then let 'em all go.

Work your way down your entire body

First, imagine a muscle or body part, then flex or tighten, then release fully.

Work your way all the way down to your toes.

Then,

Allow your focus to universally be at one with your entire body.

Feel it glow, breath.... Feel the calm power of your being

***All is***

***As it should be***

### **Exercise 6**

#### **Mindfulness Meditation**

Designed to enhance awareness through Insight meditation

Glide into your zone and really

Visualize the golden light of the breath's path cycle

Notice the ever changing current of endless sensations that make up the breath cycle.

The more clear and sensitive your awareness becomes,

***the more sensation you can observe in a single breath***

Before long, another experience will catch your attention.

There may be a sound nearby or in the distance,

A tickle in the body, a thought or image in the mind.

Whatever it is, if your mind is drawn to it,

Allow your attention to shift to this experience and explore it carefully.

If it is a sound, try to hear the vibrations. If it is a body sensation, explore it deeply.

Finally,

Try to catch the subtle, feeling, and powerful of all the mind's creations-

## Your Thoughts

They whiz by fast & dissolve quickly... or linger annoyingly.

Simply observe and study them and they will change and pass away by themselves.  
When they do, simply return your attention to the breath and begin exploring it again.

There is no need to struggle with heavy mental calculations and  
Engineering a solution to these thoughts...

Emphasis on simply being open to all experiences without wishing they were different or  
Trying to change them, is a superb method for developing the patience and persistence  
Required to run this race of life

## Exercise 7

### Mindful Speech

**Carefully observe and refine the emotions and motives of your speech**

Are you trying to look good, to impress, belittle someone or defend yourself?

or

**Is your intention to speak born out of a desire to  
Inform, help or heal?**

**Become aware of your intentions before you speak and you will begin to  
Integrate the practices of awareness, ethics, and emotional transformation.**

## Exercises in Sacred Seeing

To recognize the sacred is not so much to see new things,  
as it is to see things in a new way.

The sacred is not separate or different from all things,  
but rather hidden within all things.

To see the spiritual in ourselves and the world is to

**Recognize what is always already present.**

This 'new way' of seeing is an innate gift that needs to be cultivated.

## Exercise 8

### Open to the Sacred in Nature

Plan to put yourself into nature as part of your practice  
Even if it's just a walk around the block, even if you live in the ghetto the sky is beautiful  
Take a bike ride to get out of da hood a bit further that will take you to a spot of beauty.



Find new reasons to pull off the road for a scenic view.  
Treat yourself to the splendor of nature and breath it all in.

There is no need to do much.  
Simply open yourself to the surroundings and appreciate the magnificence of the scenery, the  
varieties of plant and animal life  
Feel how being in such beautiful, naturally soothes and heals.

## Exercise 9 Recognize the Inner Light

Glide into your zone...  
Follow your breath deeply... Release any tensions anywhere.. Then breath some more...  
Now visualize someone you love standing in front of you.  
Take a moment to experience the warm feelings you have for this person.  
Recall their characteristics that inspire you...  
Imagine that an Inner Light is radiating from within this person  
This glow grows in intensity until the body almost disappears

Now imagine  
That standing next to your radiant friend is ***someone you do not like.***  
See the light from your friends illuminating and filling this person  
Until he or she begins to radiate light just as your friend does.

Recognize the same radiance in them both.  
Now begin to feel their radiance illuminating and filling you until your body begins to  
Fade into the background as you also become a radiant source.

In this vision, there is no difference between you, your friend, and the disliked person.  
You have united with them in what Taoism calls "the radiance of the Tao within"  
Yoga knows this as - "The Inner radiance which is free from sorrow."

This radiance may begin to dislodge feelings of anger towards the disliked person.  
Likewise, the feelings of affection for your friend may extend to include  
Both your enemy and yourself.  
When this happens, you can glimpse the possibility of loving all people equally.

As always, end gently, slowly open your eyes and  
Maintain these feelings throughout your daily activities.

## Exercise 10 Surrounded by Saints da Buddha

"If we are to be free,  
We must make each person we meet our ultimate object of reverence"

*Whenever you can*  
View and treat everyone you meet as  
A Holy person or a peaceful, loving compassionate one of Wisdom  
*Naturally with reverence, kindness and delight!*

*Then...*  
*Do this always*  
*RevRaj*

Seeing the Sacred in others,  
Helps us recognize the Sacred in ourselves.

### **Exercise 11**

#### **See Teachers Everywhere**

View everyone you meet as a teacher  
Treat them with '*some amount* of' reverence, kindness and delight  
Not so much that you overly inflate their egos, encouraging them to  
Spout more self centered, non sense.

Set a neutral, but inspiring natural tone, vibe or personality.  
Be aware of the qualities of each person that you like and inspire you to be like more often  
and

Be aware of the qualities that you do not like, but inspire you nevertheless.

**When someone is being an 'asshole' - Just smile and *thank him*,**  
Internally thankful for the real life lesson in person to demonstrate  
How Not To Be!

*PRICELESS!*

#### **The Wisdom of Ignorance**

Recognizing our ignorance in the face of this immense mystery is an  
Accurate reflection of our human condition.

It is actually an enormous relief.

It empties our hearts of pride and prejudice, and open our minds to new possibilities,  
Leaving them clean and empty vessels into which wisdom can flow.

The 'fear of not knowing' is then replaced with awe and delight in the  
Never-ending wonder of life.

This Christian text recommends the following reflection as a means for  
**Releasing old concepts and opening to the sacred.**

*It is best read slowly and quietly allowing the words to work their healing effects.*

Let us be still and instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had,  
and every preconception that we hold of what things mean  
and what their purpose is, of what the world is for....

***We do not know***

### **Simply do This 'exercise'**

Glide into your zone -

Be still and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is:

All concepts you have learned about the world;

All images you hold about yourself...

Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught,

Nor one belief you ever learned before from anything.

Forget this world, forget this course of direction and

Come with wholly empty hands unto your God

The great spiritual traditions collectively advise these top universal paths towards wisdom

***Seek wisdom in these most profound moments***

1 -in Nature

2 - in silence and solitude

3 - from the wise

4 - in Ourselves

5 - from reflecting on the nature of life and death

### **Learning to Know Your Self**

Three techniques are especially important:

Meditation, studying oneself, and self-acceptance.

### **EXERCISES IN WISDOM**

#### **EXERCISE 1: COMMIT TIME TO SILENCE AND SOLITUDE**

Make time for some quiet, introspective contemplation time.

This is also and in conjunction with your daily meditations.

You may, if you wish, Glide into your zone...

or

I recommend finding a comfortable stance to gaze out at the  
endless beauty of the nature you are viewing

If you have more time, move to a relaxed, reclined-back comfy position.

You may seek healing for recovering from a major 'life' event.

You may need to ponder one of life's hard choices.

It's great when 'life' allows us to indulge in the grace of contentment while quietly reflecting the cool things about life that has happened and the prospects of an even brighter future.

## EXERCISE 2: REFLECT ON "THE FOUR MIND-CHANGERS"

Imagine you are

Reflecting on four profound ideas.

These ideas are known as "the four mind-changers" because they help us

Understand the nature of life and

Change our minds and lives accordingly.

*They are reflections on these facts:*

Life is inconceivably precious.

Life is short and death is certain.

Life contains inevitable difficulties.

Our ethical choices mold our lives.

Begin by taking time to relax and quiet the mind.

Then explore one idea

and its accompanying discussion slowly and thoughtfully.

Allow related ideas and associations to come to mind.

If emotions emerge

— such as gratitude for life or fear of death—

Explore them.

Consider what implications the idea has for your life

and whether you wish to make any changes.

Give yourself time to savor the idea and its implications.

When you are ready,

Move on to the next idea.

## EXERCISE 3: SPIRITUAL READING

and **Reflecting on Spiritual writing**

By reading and reflecting on the words of the wise,

Their ideas and perspectives gradually become our own.

**It is the savoring of the text, a leisurely lingering in divine revelation.**

With sacred reading we are seeking insight rather than facts,

Transformation rather than information.

Consequently,

The reading is slow and reflective,

A few sentences or even words at a time.

To begin,  
Choose some writing that resonates with you. It might be an ancient sacred text,  
The words of a modern sage, or perhaps some of the quotations in this book.  
Read from your selection slowly and reflectively,  
Allowing the words to sink into your depths.  
If related thoughts arise,  
Feel free to ponder them; if insights arise,  
Explore them;  
If feelings surface, accept them; if hopes or prayers emerge, pray them.  
Of course, if you become lost in irrelevant thoughts or fantasies,  
Simply return to reading.

Done in this way,  
Sacred reading merges into meditation and prayer.

#### **EXERCISE 4: RECOGNIZE YOUR TEACHERS AND THEIR GIFTS**

Who are the people who have been your greatest teachers?  
They may have been family members, friends, coaches, or even children.  
They may even have seemed at the time to be adversaries or people you disliked.  
As you remember them, write their names down.  
Then list the special qualities that made these people so helpful  
and the lessons you learned from them.  
Next,  
Reflect on the qualities in you that made you receptive to their wisdom.  
Finally, allow feelings of gratitude and appreciation for these teachers to emerge.  
At some time, you may wish to express these feelings to them.  
This will obviously be a gift to them, but it will also be a gift to you, because  
to express gratitude is to strengthen it.

#### **EXERCISE 5: ENJOY THE COMPANY OF THE WISE**

This exercise is very simple. Make a list of those people you know personally  
Who seem wise or who want to learn and become wise. Then consider how you could spend  
more time with them. Could you visit them or invite them to visit you?  
Could you assist them in some way or work on a project together?  
Could you start a group to study this book together and encourage each other to do the exercises?  
Choose an approach you would enjoy, and begin.

#### **EXERCISE 6: DISCOVER YOUR PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE**

Gandhi - "My life is my message."

**"Renounce and rejoice."**

Renounce or **let go of attachments**, and  
Rejoice in the freedom and delight that a life free from craving offers.

To discover your own guiding philosophy,  
First relax, then close your eyes.  
When you feel calm, gently ask, In approximately three words,  
**“What is my philosophy of life?”**

Then allow a response to emerge from the depths of your mind.

There is no need to struggle or try to figure out an answer.  
That would be using the intellect, which is not the deepest part of your mind.  
Rather, simply remain quiet yet alert and patiently trust your inner wisdom to  
Provide a valuable response. When it does,  
You will discover some of the deepest principles guiding your life.

### **EXERCISE 7: REVIEW YOUR LIFE**

Periodically reviewing your life and behavior is widely regarded as  
**Extraordinarily beneficial— and essential for a deep spiritual life.**

Without it

We blunder along ***without*** learning from our experiences or our mistakes.  
“Those who ponder upon their conduct bring much good to themselves,”  
Holds an ancient Jewish saying.

This pondering is best done in the spirit of gentle inquiry  
Aimed at understanding and accepting,  
Rather than judging and condemning oneself.

Self-inquiry should not be confused with self-condemnation;  
Self-examination aims at learning, not punishment.

Rabbi Nachman urged:  
Make sure to set aside a specific time each day to calmly review your life.  
**Consider what you are doing and ponder whether it is  
Worthy that you devote your life to it.**

If you haven't done this for a few years or longer,  
**You should set aside a reasonable amount of time to reflect your whole life.**

Look back on how you felt and dreamed during your life and  
***How those feelings and dreams are now.***

Are you where you expected to be, or...

Are you on the way?...

Perhaps you are at a crossroads of Life... *Again...*

You could be facing an uncertain future...

or

You could be facing the same old boring future that you have endured for far too long...

Either way... It scares you... or at least is very daunting and UN-inspiring.

or somewhere in between...

Everything could be going just fine...

Except for that '*mysterious Inner Pull*'

that is *screaming subtly from our soul* that...

***There must be something more to 'It All'...***

Take some time to casually reflect your whole life.

Being among the up lifting and inspiring places in nature

may help invigorate ye 'ol memories...

After casually reflecting on one's life for a period of time...

Then sit with pen, paper or keyboard and put down your thoughts on:

Where you are

Where do you want to be

and

How are you going to get there.

It may help to sort of 're-create' a diary of your life...

As you recall each 'new' old memory... Others will pop up...

Jot them down in your digital journal of choice.

This deep process of reviewing one's Life,

Helps us understand ourselves more.

Now we can put the many components of our life into a more 'Integrated' process..

Kind of like the Zen-Psy "Big Mind" process.

Once you've got your "Life" down on print,

It's right there in front of you... Nothing scary about your life...

Just a few "To Do" lists...

It's All Good... or at least as it should.

This may take hours, days or weeks. but it is very necessary.

You will now be able to enjoy the 'Daily Reflections'.

It is helpful to have a systematic method.

The end of the day is a particularly valuable time for self-examination, since then we can

Review the full day's activities and their lessons.

One approach is to sequentially review the day from the time you got up.

It is not necessary to recall all your activities; the major events and experiences will suffice.

As each activity comes to mind, simply reflect on it and

See what you can learn from the way you felt and acted.

Jewish tradition calls those who faithfully do this evening review "masters of nightly recollection."

It is crucial to remember the goal of the review, and of all self-examination:

The goal is to

Learn, not to blame; to grow in wisdom, not to fall into guilt;

To appreciate our strengths as much as to recognize our weaknesses.

We can learn as much, and sometimes even more,

from our mistakes as from our good choices

### **EXERCISE 8: CORRECTIVE VISUALIZATION**

When self-examination reveals foolish things we said or did, how are we to heal them?

It is useful to correct as many aspects of the problem as possible.

For example,

If we hurt someone, the first priority may be to apologize.

This will help heal the relationship.

If we damaged or destroyed something, it may be helpful to repair or replace it.

This will heal the loss. It is also important to heal any destructive emotions

or habits that caused the foolishness in the first place.

One useful method for this is

Corrective visualization,

A technique suggested more than a hundred years ago by a Jewish teacher,

and now widely used by psychotherapists.

Here

We visualize ourselves handling the situation more skillfully.

Take a few minutes to relax.

Recall a time when you spoke or acted in a way you now regret.

As vividly as you can, imagine yourself back in that same situation.

Visualize the place you were in and the people who were there.

Recall what you were doing and how you felt. Then allow yourself to watch the scene unfold and

watch yourself make the error and observe the consequences.

Now

Restart the visualization from the beginning and again allow the scene to unfold.

However, this time, see yourself making a wiser choice

and notice how you feel as you do so.

For example,

Perhaps a friend made a hurtful comment and you flew into a rage and lashed back,



Thereby damaging the friendship. In replaying the scene  
You might see yourself taking three deep breaths and then making a joke about the comment.  
If you wish, you can replay the scene several times and try different types of skillful responses.  
Just a few minutes doing this exercise can bring a sense of healing, offer new insights, and  
Begin to establish healthy new habits.

## EXERCISE 9: CONTACT YOUR INNER TEACHER

We have within us, 'remarkable wisdom' that will guide and help us  
If we learn how to recognize and draw on it.

The following exercise is one way to do so.

Close your eyes and relax.

Imagine yourself in a beautiful place, perhaps your favorite beach, mountain, or garden.  
See yourself there and enjoy the feelings this special place evokes.

In just a moment you are going to invite into that place an extraordinarily wise person.

It may be a great spiritual teacher, or

It may be an unknown wise man or woman.

Whoever it is,

This person will embody qualities such as

Great wisdom, love, and complete acceptance of you just as you are.

Think of these qualities and how it would feel, to be in the presents of being.

This being of pure white light, or a Blue Light glow, an aura of one's Higher Self or even  
an image you might imagine to be **you** in your '**Highest**' form.

Invite this wise person into your place of beauty and introduce yourself.

Take time to savor the experience of being in the presence of a person of

Deep wisdom and boundless love.

What does it **feel** like to be with someone who

Understands and loves you completely?

What fears and defenses melt into nothingness in the presence of someone

Who accepts you just the way you are?

Here is an opportunity to learn and get advice about anything that concerns you.

Take a moment to think of the questions you would most like to ask.

Then ask your first question and wait quietly for the answer.

There is no need to try to make anything happen.

Simply relax and allow the wisdom within you to respond.

When you are ready,  
Ask your next question, wait for a response,  
and  
Continue with any further questions.

Next,  
Ask the wise person if he or she has anything to tell you.  
Again, just relax and wait for an answer.  
Then ask if there are any questions the wise person has for you.

Finally,  
Ask the wise person if he or she will be available to you in the future  
At any time you request help or do this exercise.

Then  
Express your thanks for the gifts of this meeting.

**Now**

**Imagine yourself beginning to merge with the wise person so that your  
Bodies, hearts, and minds melt into one.**

**Actually, you already are one,  
Because the sage and the qualities such as love and wisdom  
Are creations and part of your own mind.**

Feel that you have absorbed the qualities of the wise person and explore the experience.

What is it like to be wise?

What does it feel like to be fearless and to have

No need to defend yourself in any way?

What is it like

To feel boundless love and care for all people, including yourself?

And what does it feel like

To accept and love yourself completely, just as you are?

After you have savored this experience,

Gently open your eyes.

Try to make the transition slowly and gently so

You can bring back the qualities you experienced.

Take a moment to reflect on the fact that these feelings

Wisdom, fearlessness, love, and acceptance

Are not new or foreign to you.

They are actually aspects of yourself that you projected onto the wise person.  
True, these qualities are not fully developed or always accessible to you yet, but  
They are available and await your attention to grow and flourish.

This exercise can be repeated whenever you wish to  
**Experience and nourish positive qualities.**

It can also be done when you need guidance with a difficult question or choice, and  
It is especially valuable during times of confusion.

## **PRACTICE SEVEN**

**EXPRESS SPIRIT IN ACTION EMBRACE GENEROSITY AND THE JOY OF SERVICE**

Where there is hate - let me bring Love  
Where there is offense - let me bring Pardon  
Where there is discord - let me bring Union  
Where there is error - let me bring Truth  
Where there is doubt - let me bring Faith  
Where there is darkness - let me bring Light  
Where there is sadness - let me bring Joy  
Because it is in giving oneself that one receives;  
It is in forgetting oneself that one is found.... —St. Francis of Assisi

## **The Spirit of Service**

### **SERVICE AS THE SUPREME PRACTICE**

#### **EXERCISE 1: TURN WORK INTO SERVICE**

Much of what we do each day is already a service.  
Whether it is cleaning, cooking, or accounting, a lot of it is for the benefit of other people,  
whether they are clients, friends, or family.

Whether we do it as a service or drudgery, however,  
Is up to us.

Take a few minutes to think about your daily activities.  
Is there one you would like to do for a day in a spirit of service?

It could be a complex technical task at work or something as simple as shopping.

Choose an activity. Then think of ways in which it helps people.  
Perhaps your work will allow others to get their work done more easily;  
Perhaps the shopping will feed your family and friends. ..

Concentrate on these benefits, then choose to see and  
Do your task as a service to these people.

With practice  
The rewards of helping become increasingly obvious.  
As they do,  
You may wish to see more and more activities

From the perspective of service until it *becomes a natural way of life*.

## **EXERCISE 2: USE THE POWER OF DEDICATION**

By changing our motives, we transform our actions and ourselves.

Pause for a moment before each major activity,  
Whether it be reading or cleaning.

Then,

Instead of simply proceeding automatically with only your own well-being in mind,  
You dedicate the activity to your own awakening so that you can better help and awaken others.

At the end of the activity, you pause again.

This time you offer whatever benefits you have gained from doing the activity  
to the benefit of all people and even to all life.

Remember that what you want for others you experience and strengthen in your own mind.

Give away qualities such as love or patience that you gained from helping or meditating,  
and they, together with generosity, flower more fully.

When you feel ready, experiment with beginning and  
Ending some of your activities with dedications.

One place to start is with your quiet time of reflection, meditation, or prayer.  
Here, in the sensitivity that sacred silence offers, you are most likely to remember

To do the dedications and to be able to feel the benefits they bring.

As these benefits become apparent, you may wish to dedicate more activities—

For example, work, play, cooking, and eating— in this way.

This transforms these activities and also makes it clear that even  
The most humble of daily activities can serve the process of awakening.

## **EXERCISE 3: CHANGE PAIN INTO COMPASSION**

“Downward comparison,” comparing oneself with someone who is worse off,

Is an effective strategy for combating feelings of pain and depression.

It can also be an effective means for cultivating compassion.

### **To do this exercise,**

Think of some difficulty you are having; it could be physical, psychological, or spiritual.

Next, think of people who are suffering even more from the same kind of difficulty or  
Related ones. If you know specific individuals suffering in this way, bring them to mind.

Think of all the suffering your difficulty has brought you.

Then think of all the suffering these people must be experiencing.

Allow yourself to feel their pain. Recognize that just as you want to be free of pain, so do they.

Let compassion for them arise as you hope or pray that they become free of pain.

## **EXERCISE 4: PRACTICE ALL-EMBRACING KINDNESS**

The essence of this exercise is very straightforward:

Simply try to be as kind as you can to as many people as you can during a specific time.

This period of time could be an hour, a morning, or a day.

If you wish, you can extend your help to include creatures as well as people.

**Mother Teresa** devoted practically every waking moment of her life to this exercise and summarized it by saying,

***“Let no one ever come to you without leaving  
Better and Happier.”***

Many of your actions will probably be very simple, such as visiting a friend in need of comfort, smiling at a stranger, or helping a child who has fallen...

In crowded places we can just be pleasant, smile often, exude good vibes and make people feel cared for.

### **Exercise 5**

#### **Awakening Service**

Involves three steps

- 1 - Begin an activity by dedication to a Higher purpose larger than your own satisfaction.
- 2 - Relinquish attachments to your **ideas** of how things **ought** to turn out.
- 3 - Learn from the Process

Do you suffer or enjoy, lament or learn?

Awakening service offers a choice.

A simple way to begin this exercise is by choosing a contribution you are already making.

It is helpful if this contribution is one you make regularly,

So that you have multiple opportunities to learn from it.

By dedicating to a larger purpose,

Looking for and releasing attachments to a particular outcome, and learning from the whole process, you transform your contribution into awakening service.

### **Exercise 6**

#### **Helper's High – Give Anonymously**

Is there a gift you could give anonymously? If so, make it and observe the feelings that arise.

Then, if possible, observe the people enjoying your gift and the

Further feelings this evokes in you.

### **Exercise 7**

#### **Take Time for Awakening Service**

A practice will be much more efficient if a reasonable schedule can be applied and adhered to.

For this exercise-

**Select a time period to devote to this Awakening Service,**

*but not to take away from any other meditation routine you already have.*

- 1) Begin by dedicating the time and all that you do during it.
- 2) Then, wherever you are, whoever you are with, and whatever you are doing,  
Look for ways to help.
- 3) Whatever you do, try to do it in a spirit of service.
- 4) Whenever you serve, try to do it as awakening service in which you  
Learn from each activity while releasing attachments to the way things turn out.

On the surface, your day may seem routine, - Externally not much may seem unusual  
But Inside is a different story. – Now you have a larger purpose for your day and all you do.  
Now, each activity becomes a source of satisfaction, each meeting a spiritual encounter, each  
twinge of fear, or anger – a clue about a lurking attachment, and each experience a welcome  
opportunity for learning.