



The Journey from Ego to Soul

Workbook

By Karen Wyatt MD

Welcome to Your Complimentary Journey from Ego to Soul Workbook!

Congratulations!

By choosing to download this workbook you are taking a step toward transforming your spiritual life and moving from being *ego-driven* to *soul-guided*.

As you complete the exercises outlined at the end of each chapter in the book (and further explained on these pages) I believe you will learn about your own shadow, the obstacles toward your growth, and the healing needed in order to become your highest self.

Take your time with this material and let your intuition guide you whether or not each practice is right for you. You can always return later and complete whatever you opt out of now.

Most importantly remember to have compassion for yourself—healing and growth are challenging and they don't happen overnight.

May you find many blessings on your own Journey from Ego to Soul!

Karen

Tips for Journaling

1. Use an inexpensive spiral notebook or composition book as your journal. It's hard to scribble freely in a special or expensive book and you need to be free to write or draw anything. Save your beautiful leather-bound journal with handmade paper pages as a place to record your favorite poetry or quotations.
2. Keep a special pen with your journal or even a set of colored pens. You can use a color that matches your mood or switch colors to highlight a portion of your journal entry.
3. Have crayons or colored pencils on hand if you enjoy drawing. Some days it is nice to illustrate your journal entries or use a picture instead of words to convey your feelings.
4. Choose a regular time every day for journaling and try to stick with it. Some people like to get up a little early and journal in the morning to set their intention for the day. Others like to write before bedtime and reflect on issues and events that arose during the day. It doesn't matter when you journal, only that you do it consistently.
5. Start with a 90-day journaling challenge. Commit to journaling once a day – even if only a few sentences – for the next 90 days. Once you complete the challenge journaling will have become a habit and will be much easier to follow through with every day.
6. Even if you are very short on time, write at least a few sentences in your journal. The act of opening your journal, recording the date and scribbling a few lines will help you continue your practice.
7. Do a 4-spectrum check-in when you journal: How am I doing right now in Body, Mind, Spirit and Shadow?
8. List all the things you are grateful for in your life.
9. Document your ups and downs in life by recording all the positive things that have happened since your last entry and the things you wish had been different.
10. Set a goal for the coming day and write about how you intend to meet that goal.
11. Reflect on the day that has ended and write about what you have learned.
12. Record any dreams that you remember and write your analysis of the meaning.
13. Keep track of ongoing conflicts you have with other people and reflect on why you have issues with those people and what you might do to make things better. This can help you get in touch with your own Shadow.
14. Try writing in a free-flow style and just record anything that comes into your mind without judging it or trying to make the words sound good. Sometimes amazing insights can arise from this type of writing.
15. Make a list of your grandest goals for your life. What would you do if money and time were no object and anything was possible?

16. Use your journal as a place to ventilate your emotions. Since no one else will read it you can freely let out all your frustration and anger until you feel a release inside. After you exhaust your negative feelings it's a good idea to end the entry on a calmer note and try to come to a positive conclusion about the situation that has been upsetting you. Can you find anything good to say?
17. Draw a picture of your negative emotion: what color is it? What shape does it have? Where does it live in your body?
18. Make a list of the people who have influenced you the most in your life and record what you have learned from them.
19. Record all significant events of your life in your journal such as a wedding, new job, new relationship, loss of an old relationship, birth of a child, travel, illness, award or accomplishment. In the future you will appreciate being able to look back at an intimate record of these special times.
20. Write about the people in your life who have caused you the most frustration. What have you learned from them?
21. Attach photographs to your journal pages that represent significant events to provide an even more memorable record of the event.
22. Write about what you have learned from failure and from success in your life. How have those lessons been similar and how have they differed?
23. Write about the "sentinel moment" of the preceding day. In what moment did you stop for a second and savor life, truly appreciating everything?
24. Use your journal as a place to track your progress when you are working toward a new goal, such as changing your lifestyle or learning a new skill.
25. Write a letter to yourself in the past. Comfort your child-self or explain how things will get better if there is an unhappy memory that still haunts you.
26. Write a letter to yourself in the future. Tell your future self what dreams you have and what you hope to accomplish or learn.
27. Record the small details of life along with the big events. Write about how much you enjoyed eating a fresh peach or watching the sunset or going for a walk.
28. Listen to a favorite song while you journal and write about how the music makes you feel. Where does it take you? Why do you love it?
29. Write a letter to someone who hurt you in the past. Write about your negative feelings but try to reach a place of peace and forgiveness toward that person.
30. Write about your deepest fears and concerns. Look at them courageously and have compassion with yourself for being fearful, but imagine yourself being unafraid.

Getting to Know Your Shadow



Use these simple strategies to help you shine the light on your own Shadow. These techniques will help you as you work to discover the parts of yourself that have been left behind and have failed to grow up with the rest of you. Once you identify these parts of yourself you can begin the gradual process of healing them and reintegrating them into your healthy awareness.

- **Examine conflicts in your work or daily life.** Take some time to think about the most recent conflicts you have been involved in at work or any other group situation. Who do you most frequently clash with? Who pushes your buttons? Consider which characteristics those individuals have in common. The people you have difficulty getting along with often possess some of your own Shadow traits.
- **Review your journal.** Reread your old journal entries to see if you can find common patterns. Are there certain situations that frequently cause you to lose control of your temper, such as traffic jams, losing a contest, or waiting in line? Think about the surface emotions that are triggered by those events, such as anger, and then look deeper for hidden feelings such as humiliation, fear, shame or inadequacy.
- **Scrutinize your blow-ups.** Whenever you experience a major meltdown take the time to record all the details as soon as you calm down. Who was involved, what was happening, where were you, and how did you handle things? Later you can review these notes to get insight into what triggered your negative response and begin to look underneath the obvious for hidden emotions. Does this experience remind you of any event from the past?
- **Analyze your dreams.** Sometimes your Shadow issues will appear in your dreams as your subconscious tries to bring them to your awareness. Record all dreams that you are able to recall and look for symbolic meaning. Once I dreamt that a stranger was trying to get inside the house I occupied. In the dream I frantically rushed to every window and door to lock out the stranger. This is classic symbolism of the Shadow: a “stranger” trying to get inside who causes a response of fear.

3-2-1 Process for the Shadow



Ken Wilber and the Integral Institute have created a module in their Integral Life Practice program that deals specifically with the Shadow. They recommend a simple technique called the 3-2-1 Process that you can do on your own as often as you like to help you manage your own Shadow tendencies. Remember that the purpose of Shadow work is to incorporate a disowned part of yourself (an “it” into a recognized component of self (an “I”.)

The 3-2-1 Process involves addressing your Shadow part first in the 3rd person (it), then in the 2nd person (you) and finally in the 1st person (I). These steps are summarized as FACE-TALK-BE and here’s how the technique is explained in Wilber’s little instruction book, *The Integral Vision*:

1. *First thing in the morning (before getting out of bed), review your dreams and find someone who showed up with an emotional charge, positive or negative.*
2. *FACE that person, holding them in mind.*
3. *Then TALK to that person, or simply resonate with them.*
4. *Finally BE that person by taking their perspective. For the sake of this exercise there is no need to write anything out—you can go through the whole process right in your mind.*
5. *Before going to bed, choose a person who either disturbed or attracted you during the day. FACE them, TALK to them, and then BE them.*

This technique can be used not only with people who bring up an emotional charge, but also with situations and memories that create a disturbance. For example, suppose that you have a dream in which a stranger is chasing you and you are frantically trying to get away. That stranger may represent some information from your Shadow that is trying to come to your awareness, but your conscious mind is fearful of letting the information get through.

- In the 3-2-1 process you would visualize the same scenario as depicted in your dream, but this time you would stop and FACE the stranger.

- Once you do that you will most likely find that the stranger also stops and simply stares back at you.
- Next you TALK to the stranger and ask what he/she wants you to know.
- Continue looking at the stranger until your fear dissipates. You will begin to recognize that there really is nothing frightening about the situation at all.
- If you can, imagine what the stranger might say to you – it will very likely be something like “I’m just trying to protect you” since protection is one of the functions of the Shadow.
- Whenever you feel you understand this stranger, you can begin to imagine incorporating the traits of the stranger into yourself, as you BE the estranged part.

Deep Breathing



The simple practice of deep breathing has many health benefits for the body, mind and spirit. Some of these benefits include:

- reducing stress
- releasing endorphins to help relieve headaches, insomnia, back pain and other symptoms of stress
- helping to clear and focus the mind
- strengthening weak abdominal muscles
- decreasing blood pressure
- improving asthma symptoms

Breathing Exercises

1. Begin by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position. Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of six. Hold your breath for a count of six, then exhale slowly through your mouth for a count of eight. Repeat several times.
2. Again, begin by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position. Hold your left nostril closed while you breathe in long and slow through the right nostril only. Release the left nostril and breathe out slowly through both sides of the nose. Then, hold the right nostril closed while you breathe in long and slow through the left nostril. Release the right nostril and breathe out slowly through both sides of the nose. Repeat this alternate nostril breathing several times to enhance mental clarity and focus, as well as increase relaxation.

Make it a Habit!

Once you perfect the practice of deep breathing while you are at rest, begin using this technique frequently throughout the day. You can practice anywhere, anytime and will soon begin to notice the benefits.

What drives your behavior – the Ego or the Higher Self?

(Adapted from *SQ21 – The Twenty-One Skills of Spiritual Intelligence* by Cindy Wigglesworth)

EGO:	HIGHER SELF:
Acts out of habit or knee-jerk reactions based on old information or experiences	Does not jump to conclusions; maintains an open mind while waiting for more data and considering many possible interpretations
Focuses on what other people have done wrong or how unfair the world is. Does NOT consider what I have done to contribute to the problem	Sees everyone involved as contributing in some way to the problem (including myself)
Sees only the bad things that will come from this. Exaggerates negative emotions such as fear, anger, worry, sadness, hopelessness, revenge, jealousy, etc.	Seeks to see everything on an even keel: the harm and the gifts. Even if the situation is horrible something good might come from it. Contributes positive emotions of hope, gratitude, empathy, compassion, etc.
Wants “justice” in the sense of revenge – even if that is achieved only through bad-mouthing the person or organization rather than causing physical harm.	Seeks to find forgiveness of the situation first.
Action is motivated by anger. The limbic system dominates and higher brain functions are engaged only in service of the anger. Thought processes are NARROW	Recognizes that where I stand in my mind/heart matters. Focuses on healing negative emotions before acting. Brings multiple intelligences to bear on the situation (wisdom, compassion, inner calm). Thought processes are WIDE.
Seeks only data that confirms my dislike of the person or my interpretation of the events. Refuses to see or acknowledge any information that disagrees with how I see things. Gets upset with people who challenge my assumptions.	Actively seeks new information, especially that which might differ from my assumptions and habitual interpretations. Finds relief in breaking through old assumptions and limitations.
Refuses to take responsibility for the problem or situation. It is clearly the other person’s fault or just what happened.	Owns all mistakes and finds relief in taking responsibility for problems. Accepting that I help create problems means that I can choose differently the next time and choose more wisely. Feels gratitude for the wisdom and compassion that come from mistakes.

Life Journey Map



1. Spend a few moments reflecting back on your life as a whole, from your birth (or even your conception) until this very moment.
2. Take a large piece of paper and use colored crayons or markers to draw a map of your **Life Journey**.
3. Show the major detours your life has taken, especially times of difficulty or challenge such as illness, death, relocation, unemployment, betrayal, loss, failure. You might draw them as ups and downs, obstacles, disruptions, tangles, or dead ends.
4. Label each major event with words or drawings so you can easily identify them in the future.
5. You will add to this map in the future as you complete other lessons.

Additional Instructions for Life Journey Map:

TIP: Use different colors or symbols to denote each of the categories on your map. Choose whatever has meaning for you that will help you interpret your map.

1. Draw a “Life Journey Map” showing the majors **detours** your life has taken and where they have led you (keep it simple)
EXAMPLE: The major detours of my life include:
 - attending medical school (a detour with a slight downturn on my map)
 - meeting my husband and getting married (a significant upturn)
 - the births of our two children (significant upturns with small downturns)
 - the suicide death of my father (major downturn in the shape of a spiral)
 - moving to Colorado (upturn)
 - leaving medical practice (ups and downs)
 - my mother’s death (gradual upturn)
2. On your “Life Journey Map” overlay your history of **love**:
 - i. Where and when has the *presence* of love been a factor on your journey (perhaps altering your course or enhancing it) EXAMPLE: meeting and marrying my husband
 - ii. Where and when has the *absence* of love been a factor on your journey (perhaps altering your course or challenging it) EXAMPLE: my time in medical school
3. On your “Life JourneyMap” overlay your history of **unforgiveness**:
 - i. Where have there been experiences when you have not forgiven another? Where and when have you not been forgiven by someone else? Mark these on the map with a label and symbol so you can identify it in the future. EXAMPLE: my father’s death
4. On your “Life Journey Map” mark a time when you had exactly what you needed to get through an experience – when the stars seemed to align and everything worked out perfectly even though it didn’t seem possible. (Mark with a ☆) EXAMPLE: the synchronicity of meeting my husband the first time
5. Study your “Life Journey Map” and see how all of the detours of your path have led you to exactly where you are right now. Write about how one of those detours was the perfect precursor to your current purpose. (Do this in your journal) EXAMPLE: my father’s death led me to work in hospice which brought me where I am now
6. Study your “Life Journey Map” and review especially the detours of your life. Are there some that you are attached to - that you still wish you could go back in time and change? **Circle** those events. EXAMPLE: I would change my memories of medical school and see more of the positive events that took place

7. On your "Life Journey Map" note the major losses that have occurred in your life so far. Is there a pattern? How have your losses shaped your path? What have you learned from your losses? EXAMPLE: my father's death, my mother's death

Self-Compassion Practice



This practice will help you send loving energy and compassion throughout your body to areas where you are experiencing pain, discomfort or emotional distress.

1. Sit in a comfortable position with your feet on the floor. Or you may lie down on your back if you prefer.
2. Close your eyes and place one hand over your heart.
3. Take two long, slow deep breaths as you allow your body to become more relaxed.
4. On the next inhale, imagine that you are breathing in a ray of pure, white light through the top of your head and down into your heart, underneath the resting place of your hand.
5. As you exhale, feel the warmth under your hand as that light energy begins to expand within your heart.
6. After 4 cycles of this breathing in of pure light, begin to imagine that with each exhalation this light of compassion is radiating from your heart to the area of your body where you feel pain.
7. See the light surrounding your pain with soothing, calming energy.
8. Now continue to breathe in the light of love and imagine that you are releasing your pain with each exhalation.
9. Gradually return to normal breathing when you feel ready to end the practice.

Letting Go Meditation



1. Sit in a comfortable position with your eyes closed.
2. Take some deep breaths then focus on your toes. First tense them for a few seconds then let them relax as you let go of the tension.
3. Move on to your feet, calves, thighs, hands, arms, shoulders, etc. and progressively tense each muscle group then let go until you reach the top of your head.
4. When your musculoskeletal body feels totally relaxed shift your focus within. Imagine a ball of fire burning inside you that is causing your pain.
5. As you continue to take deep breaths see a gentle rain shower hovering over the fire and gradually dowsing the flames until only ashes remain.
6. Then with each exhalation imagine blowing away the ashes to let go of your pain until you feel peaceful emptiness inside.

Talking to Your Pain



1. Sit or lie in a comfortable position with your eyes closed.
2. Take 2-3 deep breaths and allow your body to become relaxed.
3. Focus your awareness on the area where you are experiencing the greatest discomfort at this time.
4. Keep your attention on the pain and don't turn away from it. Observe the pain without judging it or feeling emotion.
5. Breathe deeply into the pain, sending your breath and loving energy to that area of the body.
6. When you feel a slight shift in the pain, such as a decrease in intensity or movement to a different location, ask the pain what it wants you to know.
7. Continue to focus all your attention on the pain while you wait for an answer to come to you. Remain in a state of non-judgmental observation during this time.
8. You may become aware of an "answer" to your question, such as an insight into the deeper meaning of this pain you are experiencing. If so, acknowledge this awareness with gratitude and understanding.
9. If you do not sense that there is an answer coming to you, continue breathing into the pain until you feel a release or lessening of the discomfort.
10. Gradually return your breathing to normal and allow yourself to return to a non-resting state.

Fearless Love Meditation



1. Begin the meditation practice with several deep breaths. As your body begins to relax envision breathing in love with each inhale. See the love, like rays of light, entering you and filling in all the emptiness within you, occupying all the space you have cleared by the letting go practice. Recognize that you now have an even greater capacity to hold and carry love because you have released what doesn't serve you.
2. Continue “filling” yourself with love until you sense that you are overflowing with love's light and energy. If you have identified a specific area within your physical or emotional body that needs some healing, focus on breathing love and its healing light into that area.
3. Next allow the love to flow from you like rays of light, radiating out as spirals that form larger and larger circles as they expand. Envision those spirals of light traveling to the people dearest to you and see them bathed in light.
4. See the spirals of light continue to grow and extend farther and farther—to your neighbors, your entire community, your nation, your continent, the entire planet. There is no end to this fluid light of love. You can spread and share it endlessly and it will never expire or be exhausted.
5. Focus the love on specific people or situations that you know can benefit from extra love right now.

Best Self Exercise



(Adapted from the work of Roger Moore, Medical Hypnotherapist)

1. Make a list of your best qualities and imagine how you would behave if you were always acting as the best person you could possibly be.
2. Envision this greater version of you and study everything about yourself: how do you dress, speak, treat other people, spend your day?
3. Write down three sentences that describe your highest self to post on your wall or bulletin board where you can see it every day. Or you might also draw a picture of this self you have envisioned.
4. Remember this best version of you throughout the day and in difficult situations ask yourself: How would the better me handle this?

Ho'oponopono



In the Hawaiian language this word literally means to “put things in order” or “make things right” and originated with the cultural belief that forgiveness of past wrongs is necessary in order to heal sickness.

The beauty of this practice is that it offers something to do, a way to help, when tragedy occurs. But an additional asset of ho'oponopono is the fact that it can be carried out very simply, by repeating four brief phrases. So this technique can be used anytime and in any place to help bring more positive energy and compassion to any situation. Here are the 4 phrases and the deeper meaning behind them:

- **“I’m sorry.”** The process begins by taking responsibility for what has gone wrong. Saying I’m sorry means that you are willing to bear your share of the suffering that is taking place and you are not seeking to blame anyone else. You are opening your heart to the pain that is present in the situation.
- **“Please forgive me.”** Asking for forgiveness means that you want to restore harmony and put things back in order again. It also means that you are willing to forgive yourself and everyone else involved in the difficulty.
- **“I love you.”** Offering your love helps heal the brokenness that exists and strengthens the bonds between everyone involved. It is a sign that reconciliation has occurred.
- **“Thank you.”** By expressing gratitude you acknowledge that this opportunity to heal is a gift for which you are grateful. But you are also giving thanks in a larger sense for life itself, which includes every triumph and every tragedy.

These 4 simple phrases can be used as a mantra or prayer whenever negative emotions or events occur. Ho'oponopono is one practice with a great potential to bring about healing and reconciliation where it is desperately needed.

The 4-View Forgiveness Process



Once a decision to forgive another person has been made, the task of actually accomplishing that act becomes the next challenge. Since forgiveness doesn't arise naturally for most people, it is necessary to actively work on the process over time and intentionally soften the heart and mind toward the one who has done harm.

Remember that forgiveness rarely happens instantly, but takes time to accomplish. Allowing the passage of time after harm has been done is an important step in order to repair some of the damage that has occurred, lessen the pain involved and recover from the shock and numbness that accompanies trauma. Clear thinking, relatively stable emotions and a solid sense of reality are necessary components of the process of forgiveness.

In addition, prayer, contemplation and meditation are useful practices to prepare for the task of forgiving. To actively work toward a state of forgiveness, try following the **4-View Process**, which encourages seeing the situation from every perspective available. Record in a journal all the thoughts and emotions that arise during the steps of this process so you can refer to them at a later time:

1. **Third-person view:** Tell the story of what happened to you as if you were a newspaper reporter composing a column. Focus on the facts involved and minimize emotions and blame.
2. **Second-person view:** To the best of your ability, tell the story from the point of view of the other person. What thoughts may have been going through that person's mind? What feelings were present at the time of the incident and how might that person feel now?
3. **First-person view:** Look deep within yourself to discover feelings that may be hidden beneath your obvious resentment. Does this incident remind you of any other traumas from your past? Are you feeling any other emotions that have not been expressed, such as guilt, shame or fear?

4. **Galaxy view:** Tell the story of what happened from the perspective of your spiritual teacher or guide who oversees your education on this planet. What lessons were contained in this incident for you to learn from? How does this experience help you to grow in wisdom, compassion or love?

Polishing the Window



Polishing the Window is a helpful imagery practice to use while you work on this lesson. Remember that your view of the world around you and of your experiences within that world is influenced by the “window” or lens through which you look outside of yourself.

1. Imagine that you are trying to view an outdoor garden through a dirty, foggy window. You can see outlines of shapes and some movement but everything is grey in color and not at all clear. In order to appreciate the true beauty of the garden you will need to polish the window to see through it without distortion.
2. Recognize that your Shadow issues form the dirt and fog that alter the view through your window. Write in your journal about some of the issues that need work. How are they obscuring your view through the window?
3. Choose one Shadow issue and visualize it as a cloudy area of your “window.”
4. Imagine that you are cleaning the window, a little at a time, so that you can begin to see other people and the events around you more clearly and truthfully.
5. Write in your journal: What do you need to let go of and forgive in order to polish the window?

Embracing the Enemy Within



Embracing the Enemy Within is a simple practice to help you practice self-forgiveness. Whenever you identify an “enemy” outside yourself—someone who annoys you or arouses your anger—remember that this external “enemy” is a reflection of your own inner Shadow.

1. Take a deep breath and contemplate any person or event that has caused you distress in the recent past.
2. Review the details of that event and write about it in your journal.
3. Picture the person you view as your enemy. As you inhale say: “You are not my enemy;” and as you exhale: “You are me.”
4. Repeat this exercise in your mind by visualizing the other person and repeating the mantras.
5. Imagine yourself gradually moving toward the other person until you can embrace them with both arms.
6. Recognize that you are embracing a wounded part of yourself. Write about forgiving this “enemy” within in you in your journal. What have you rejected about yourself? How can you love yourself more?

Mantra for the Present Moment



1. Take 2 or 3 deep breaths and relax.
2. Repeat the affirmations below with each subsequent breath.

I am here.

I am now.

I am love.

We are here.

We are now.

We are love.

There is only here.

There is only now.

There is only love.

Heaven and Earth Meditation



This meditation is helpful for reinforcing self-love and a feeling of safety.

1. Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and take a few deep, relaxing breaths. Let go of your everyday thoughts and put your attention on your breath for a moment.
2. Picture a glowing liquid flame, like lava, in the center of the earth. This is the life-force energy of Mother Earth.
3. Imagine the loving energy of this flame flowing up from the center of the earth to the ground below you. See it entering your body through the soles of your feet. Feel the energy move up through your legs, your pelvis, your stomach, and into your heart. Let the life-force energy of the earth rest in and nurture your heart.
4. Take a few deep breaths and feel your heart for another moment, experiencing this energy filling and expanding it.
5. Now, picture high above you a golden luminous light, like the sun. This is the life-force energy of the heavens above, Father Sky.
6. Imagine this loving, grace-filled light flowing down from above, entering your body through the top of your head. Feel the life-force energy of the sun move down through your head, neck, shoulders, and arms, and into your heart. Let this luminous energy of the heavens rest in and nurture your heart.
7. Take a few deep breaths and feel your heart for another moment, experiencing this energy filling and expanding it.
8. Picture these two energies that are both resting in your heart, merging together into oneness, creating a sphere of radiant golden love. Feel the merged energy of the earth and the sky relaxing and melting your heart open. Let the sphere of golden love expand through your body.
9. Now imagine that your heart is a golden bowl open to receiving all of the love and blessings that are coming to you today. Sit for a few minutes experiencing this openness and love. Know that you are precious and cherished, just as you are.
10. Gently bring your attention back to your body, wiggle your fingers and toes, and then slowly open your eyes.

(Adapted from Marci Shimoff's "Love For No Reason")

External and Internal Goals



1. Start with a daily planner, calendar or to-do list to record your *external goals* for each day, week, month, year, etc. Whatever system you already use to keep track of tasks you need to complete works fine for this exercise.
2. Next, in your journal or on a piece of paper make a list of *internal goals* that you feel would support your journey, such as starting a new daily practice, meditating more frequently, reading inspirational literature, walking in nature, listening to music, etc. Keep these goals simple and make sure you can accomplish them in 15 minutes or less. List anything that you think will help you focus *internally* on the lessons of the Soul we are studying in this book.
3. Now return to your to-do list or calendar and add one *internal goal* for each day. You might specify a time for the goal on some days—like meditate for 15 minutes first thing in the morning. Or you can trust yourself to find time during the day between other activities.
4. Over time you will find it easier to incorporate *internal goals* into your life and will achieve a more natural balance between your inner and outer life. But in the beginning it helps to set aside time specifically for this important internal work.

Bridge Meditation



The **Bridge Meditation** is a practice to remind you to let go of your efforts to control things and accept the flow of life. If you live near water, such as a stream or river, you can do this practice in nature to help you experience the energy of flowing water. But you can also just visualize this entire exercise with your eyes closed.

1. Stand on a bridge that crosses the water and face downstream, so you can see the water flow away from you (or imagine that you are standing on a bridge over water.)
2. Take 3 deep breaths.
3. Imagine releasing all of the things you can no longer control or that no longer serve you into the water. Watch them flow away from you until you feel lighter inside.
4. Then turn to the other side of the bridge and face upstream.
5. Imagine that the water flowing toward you is washing you clean and bringing you new and unexpected blessings to replace what you have released.

Serenity Practice



Serenity Prayer – by Reinhold Niebuhr

**God, Give us the grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed,
Courage to change the things
which should be changed,
And the wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.**

1. Make a list of everything you can think of in your daily life that currently bothers or upsets you. What issues constantly come to mind and cause you to feel annoyed? List them in a vertical column on a piece of paper. (Spend some time at this and really think about it.)
2. Next, review each item on your list and indicate whether or not it is something you can change. If you believe you can change the situation (for example: your haircut, a coworker who constantly interrupts you at work, your diet) write CAN next to the item.
3. If you feel you are not able to do anything to change that issue (for example: the weather, the color of your eyes, your height) write CANNOT next to the item.
4. Review your list a few times and really think about each item you feel you cannot change. Is it totally accurate that it cannot be changed – even if you had unlimited resources or time? Re-label some items if you decide that they were initially marked incorrectly.
5. Next, focus on the items that CAN be changed and circle them only if you truly WANT to change them and would be willing to put forth time and effort to make the changes.
6. Choose a few of those circled items and prioritize them – use this list

to remind yourself to work on productive change in your life.

7. With all of the remaining items on your list, that you either CANNOT change or don't care enough to change, imagine yourself stepping away from that list and withdrawing your energy from those issues. Draw further and further away until the list appears very small and you sense yourself and your energy to be very large.
8. Take several deep breaths as you allow this vision to remain. Feel serenity and calmness surrounding you and filling you as you let go of each of these annoyances in your life.
9. To end the exercise you can either tear up or burn the list or fold it up and put it away somewhere for later reference. Carry with you a sense of completion and resolution.

My Issues	CAN Change	CANNOT Change

What I CAN change and WANT to change:

WHAT and HOW I plan to change:

Death Meditation



Death Meditation may sound morbid or frightening, but it is simply a process to embrace the fact that no one knows when death will come and we should all be prepared for it at any moment.

1. Find a comfortable position sitting or lying down,
2. Take 3 deep breaths and allow your body to relax.
3. Use this simple mantra as you breathe in and out: “I might die today.”
4. Repeat it with each breath and allow this reality to sink into your thoughts and change your perspective.
5. After you complete the meditation journal about some of the issues that have arisen during the day in light of this mantra. For example: I might die today so does the fact that someone took my parking space really matter? Or: I might die today so is it important that the grocery store ran out of my favorite cereal? Let this death meditation help you broaden your perspective on life.

Mandala Practice



Building a mandala (a geometric design inside a circle) of colored sand is a tradition of Tibetan Buddhist monks. They may spend several days creating intricate designs within the mandala, only to sweep it all away once it has been completed. This exercise is to remind them of the transitory nature of all living things.

You can create your own mandala as a ritual to help you let go of attachments and celebrate living in the present moment:

1. Gather a number of objects from nature, such as leaves, sticks, rocks, flower petals. If you are doing this exercise with a group, have each person gather several items to be used in the mandala. You can also use pieces of broken glass, yarn, cloth, or sand.
2. Make a circle of sticks and/or rocks as the outer border of the mandala.
3. Place the other items you have gathered within the circle, creating designs with them. You may want to place just a few items each day so that the mandala grows gradually over time. Have each person involved create their own unique patterns within the circle.
4. After the mandala is complete, spend some time in gratitude for the beauty of the design you have created. Allow time for each person involved to enjoy the mandala.
5. Slowly begin to disassemble the mandala, removing each piece mindfully and with care. Contemplate the fact that everything ultimately dies.
6. Gather the natural objects used in the mandala and scatter them on the ground or in a moving stream – releasing them back to the Earth.

Witnessing

Taking the Galaxy View



This practice will help you find a new perspective on the difficulties and trials of life. Use it when you are contemplating your situation and need to see your circumstances from a different point of view. Or use it when you are experiencing a negative emotion and need to get some control.

1. Sit in a comfortable position, close your eyes and take two deep breaths to help you begin to relax.
2. In your mind's eye, see your current difficulty sitting in front of you – see it as a shape or a figure or even an animal – as if it were a tangible and visible object. See your current emotion as being enclosed inside this object.
3. Imagine that you are taking a step back from this object you see in front of you and then see yourself growing larger and rising up above this object so that you can look down upon it while the object is growing smaller and smaller.
4. Take a few more deep breaths as you continue to watch the object growing smaller. Stay completely calm and neutral in your own attitude.
5. As you study the event or situation that is contained within the object, and now appears very small, see it with curiosity and fascination. Say to yourself “Isn’t it interesting that this has happened?”
6. Recognize that the situation that previously seemed to be large and overwhelming is actually small and rather interesting when you look at it from a bigger view.
7. When you are ready, open your eyes but retain the calmness you felt during the exercise.

Gratitude Practices



Numerous scientific studies in the recent past have shown the value of practicing gratitude on a regular basis. Benefits of a gratitude practice include decreased depression, better physical health, increased satisfaction with life, better sleep, less fatigue, and less likely to suffer burnout, among others. The experience of gratitude has deep roots in the circuitry of the brain and shifts our emotions into a more positive state. A regular practice of gratitude actually has lasting beneficial effects on the brain. Spiritually speaking, gratitude is one of the keys to awakening to higher consciousness.

Here are some common practices that you can utilize to enhance your experience of gratitude:

1. Keep a gratitude journal

Dedicate a specific journal or notebook to your gratitude practice. Each night before you go to bed make a list of 3 things you are grateful for from this day. Research shows that reflecting on those positive aspects of your life before you go to sleep will help you relax and will improve the quality of your sleep.

2. Write “thank you” letters

Using your journal you can write a letter expressing gratitude to someone who has shown you kindness or generosity. It isn't necessary to actually send the letter but you certainly can if you feel motivated. You can also write letters to people from your past who have made a difference in your life.

3. View life as a gift

When you live from a place of humility and surrender you will recognize that all of your life is a gift and your sense of gratitude will be enhanced. Take time in your meditation to contemplate the fact that life is short and you are indeed fortunate to receive each and every day that you are here on planet Earth. Write about the gift of life in your journal.

4. Say “thank you” to others throughout the day

Notice the “little miracles” of your life each day and recognize the people who make life special. Remember to express gratitude freely and frequently every day. Note in your gratitude journal any people you remembered to thank that day.

5. Be grateful even for challenges

As we are learning on the journey from ego to Soul, our challenges are our greatest teachers. Take time to write in your journal how your challenges have helped you grow and learn.

6. Say “Grace” before meals

A simple way to add a gratitude practice to your life is to pause for a few seconds before each meal to experience thankfulness for the food you are about to eat. This will shift your energy and emotions to a positive state before you eat which is good for your digestion and can help you eat more mindfully. Make up your own blessings or use these from the book *A Grateful Heart: Daily Blessings for the Evening Meal from Buddha to the Beatles*, edited by M.J. Ryan:

Let us give thanks for the food we are about to eat.
May there be food for all, abundant and healthful.
Let us have the wisdom to choose to eat only that
which enhances our precious energy
and sustains us through our labors and rest.

- adapted from *An Haggadah of Liberation*

Make a silent prayer acknowledging yourself as a vehicle of light,
giving thanks for all that has come today.

- Dhyani Ywahoo

May the food we are eating make us aware of the interconnections
between the universe and us, the earth and us, and all other living
species and us. Because each bite contains in itself the life of the sun
and the earth, may we see the meaning and value of life from these
precious morsels of food.

- adapted from Thich Nhat Hahn

For more ideas check out **Gratefulness.org** and **Greater Good Science Center**

Also listen to the podcast: **The Science of Happiness**

Lovingkindness Blessing



The Lovingkindness Blessing is a traditional Buddhist prayer that can be spoken for oneself and for others. As a daily prayer, the blessing creates a sense of tranquility, acceptance and peace and calls for the attainment of one's highest potential in order to spread healing and love to the world.

This blessing is very effective during times of anxiety, fear and anger and can help foster a positive attitude and mindset when spoken for oneself.

As a prayer for others, the blessing generates compassion and understanding while encouraging others to be a source of healing for this world.

Memorize this simple prayer and you can use it every day to help you in various situations. The two forms of the blessing (first and second person) are presented here. This is the version I have learned, though there are several other variations of the blessing.

May I be at peace.

May my heart remain open.

May I realize the beauty of my own true nature.

May I be healed.

May I be a source of healing for this world.

May you be at peace.

May your heart remain open.

May you realize the beauty of your own true nature.

May you be healed.

May you be a source of healing for this world.