

Breathe....

All breaths are in and out through the nose and go all the way down into the belly

1. Belly Breathing – practice this deep breathing. In through your nose, all the way down into your belly, out through your nose. If a count helps you focus, count 1 on the inhale, 2 on the exhale...up to 10. Then start over with 1.
2. Box Breathing – take a breath, then exhale for 4, hold for 4, inhale for 4, hold for 4. Repeat. *(This is a technique used in Navy Seal training to reinforce the ability to control one's breathing.)*
3. Relaxation Breathing – return to the in & out breathing, no holding, but do it to a count of 5. So taking a deep breath begin to count to 5 on the exhale, then in for 5, out for 5...

NOTE: *Counting should be about one count per second – if you have trouble with this use the timer on your phone and count along with it, this will help you establish a rhythm.*

Welcome....

1. Continuing to breathe into your belly, in and out through your nose, remember a time, a person or a place where you felt loved and held with compassion. Notice how this feels in your body.
2. Guided Body Scan: Scan your body from head to toe noticing any sensations. Do not judge, just notice.
3. Scan your body again, beginning by asking the question “What in my body most needs my loving attention today?” When a sensation comes to your attention, greet it as a friend, companion or teacher. Focus and sink into the sensation.
Do not try to fix or change anything.
Just notice.
It may be helpful to allow yourself to think “Welcome” on the inhale and “Compassion” on the exhale.

Transform....

1. As you scan your body again, notice if the sensations that come to your attention have shapes, color, temperature or even a voice/personality. Perhaps it is an animal or an acquaintance. Listen to what the sensation has to “say” to you.
2. You may choose to engage in a dialogue by asking questions. The questions may come to you organically, but here are some questions you may consider helpful:
 - Why did you come to me today?
 - What do you have to offer or teach me?
 - Do you have a gift for me?
 - Do you want something from me?

As you listen, hold the feeling/sensation with compassion, as you would a hurting child. Do not try to find solutions or change anything, allow yourself to be present to the sensations.

3. At the end of your dialog say, “thank you.” Reflect on what you have experienced. Say goodbye and invite the sensations to return if there is more to learn.

Foundational Scripture:

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:28-31 *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)*

The Truth by Macrina Wiederkehr

I will believe the truth about myself no matter how beautiful it is:

I believe in my power to transform indifference into love.

I believe I have an amazing gift to keep love alive in the face of despair.

I believe I have the remarkable skill of deleting bitterness from my life.

I believe in my budding potential to live with a nonviolent heart.

I believe in my passion to speak the truth even when it isn't popular.

I believe I have the strength of will to be peace in a world of violence.

I believe in my miraculous capacity for unconditional love.

I will believe the truth about myself no matter how beautiful it is.

The Guest House – Rumi

This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweeps your house empty of its furniture.

Still, treat each guest honorably,
She may be cleaning you out for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
Because each has been sent
As a guide from beyond.

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Rumi was a 13th-century Persian poet, jurist, Islamic scholar, theologian, and Sufi mystic. Born in Balkh, Afghanistan in 1207, died in 1273 in Konya, Turkey.

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