

A note to my dear readers-

This is a collection of some of my writings on self-care and mental health from my very short-lived Patreon in 2018.

Please take only what works for you and discard the rest.

Thank you, brilliant and magical fellow human, for supporting my work!

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Yumi

## NOTES ON MEDITATION & HAVING A DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICE



### NOTES ON MEDITATION AND HAVING A DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

This year marks the ten-year anniversary of starting a daily meditation practice. Why did I start meditating? Long story short: I was severely depressed out of my mind and I had no access to the medication I was taking before. Meditation felt like the only lifeline I had.

So, meditation has completely transformed my life.

I can't imagine having a creative practice now without a daily meditation practice. More accurately, I can't imagine LIVING a full life without a daily meditation practice.

I get asked a lot for advice for artists who are just starting out, artists who are about to graduate from college, general artist advice-- I ALWAYS tell people to meditate.

I never really have the chance to fully expand on the WHY of it, so here are some notes and observations on the importance of a daily meditation practice.

- + I meditate every morning. Because it is important for me to start the day with a sense of openness, stillness, receptiveness. I am acknowledging the empty spaces within me and I am creating empty spaces within me. I am acknowledging the more infinite Self beyond the ego-centric self, that is beyond the limitations of my own imagination.
- + Where would all the good things, new things, divine inspiration, new healing, beautiful coincidences, unexpected magical things come into your life if you don't create space for it? Meditation is my way of creating space and surrendering to a magic, a cosmic life force that is beyond comprehension. Like emptying a full cup from the previous day and starting with an empty cup.
- + If you have never meditated before, start small. Even just five minutes a day makes a huge difference. Even three deep, mindful breaths makes a huge difference. I can't vouch for meditation apps, but i hear HeadSpace and InsightTimer are both great.
- + I always tell people to work your way up to 20 minutes. Something about 20 minutes hits that sweet spot where it is not too long but just long enough that you feel like you are taking a really big dive.
- + Full disclosure: I came upon the arbitrary time slot of 20 minutes because that is how long filmmaker David Lynch meditates, and listening to David Lynch talk about his meditation practice and how that made him a calmer, happier, more creative, more inspired person was one of the biggest inspirations (other than the crushing burden of my ongoing depression) for me to begin a meditation practice. Especially if you are a

creative person (and you are ALL creative people), I cannot recommend enough listening to the audiobook version of CATCHING THE BIG FISH: MEDITATION, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND CREATIVITY by David Lynch.

- + I also highly recommend A NEW EARTH by Eckhart Tolle, which was another book I read during the peak of my depression that radically introduced me to the importance of mindfulness, being present, and detaching from your thoughts.
- + I most certainly did not become an ardent daily meditator until three or four years into my practice. I would go through weeks, sometimes months without meditating. So don't beat yourself up if it is difficult for you to maintain a regular meditation practice. Sitting in silence with yourself observing your thoughts is not easy.
- + After a while, it is easy to have a daily meditation practice. Because for me, there is a huge, visceral difference in how I feel mentally and physically when I meditate and when I don't meditate. When I don't meditate, I feel unfocused, sluggish, cranky, ungrounded. When I do meditate, I feel more clarity, centeredness, openness.
- + There is something so terribly energetically disruptive about checking your phone first thing in the morning. I can't do it anymore. Also, speaking from personal experience, checking your phone upon waking and then meditating as a way to cancel the energy scattering of checking your phone first thing in the morning never works.
- + So okay, you started meditating every day. Great! But I want to remind you (and I am reminding myself) that being mindful and present and open and attuned to your inner silence does not stop after you are done meditating. I see my morning meditation as an invitation to stay mindful and present for the rest of the entire day. LIFE is a meditation. LIFE is an invitation to participate fully in the present moment, to embrace and surrender to the present moment you are living right this moment, no matter what the present moment is offering to you.
- + Meditation has so many health and mental benefits. And in the grand scheme of things, I think one of the deeper aspects of meditation is for me to remind myself of the bigger picture, the greater interconnected web we are all a part of. My inner silence is your inner silence is the inner silence of trees, plants, oceans, all the people who came before me and all the people who will come after me. If attuning to my own inner silence and connecting to my inner stillness brings me more joy and clarity and healing, or rather, connects me to a natural state of joy and clarity and healing that is not hidden by the loud chatter of my inner critic that is not my true self, then I can imagine this peace for everyone, for the whole world. Because I have felt it viscerally in my own body.

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Here is a simple meditation technique that I do throughout the day to anchor myself to a present and open meditative state when I am going about my day.

Maybe do this right this moment as you read this on your phone or computer.

Simply listen to the sounds around you. Really listen to the sounds as though someone had turned up the volume button for hearing in your ear canals. As though it is the most important task in the world. When you are listening, you have no choice but to turn the volume down on the mindless chatter of your inner thoughts and turn up the volume on the sensory sensation of sound.

Listen to the sound, and then listen to the gaps of silence between the different layers of sound, and then listen to the silence itself, and then know that that silence beneath the layers of sound is also within you, has always been within you, and YOU are that silence.



# SELF-CARE FOR EMOTIONAL TRANSITIONAL TRANSFORMATIONAL PERIODS THAT FEEL



## SELF-CARE FOR EMOTIONAL TRANSITIONAL TRANSFORMATION PERIODS THAT FEEL SHITTY

This last year has been a series of transformations and disruptions (mainly-- ending a ten-year relationship, cutting off all contact with a toxic family member, phasing completely out of an antidepressant I was taking for the last year, planning a move out of Los Angeles, to name just a few). I am feeling a lot of grief and sadness over the ending of eras, the upcoming endings that lie ahead, and the transitory nature of everything.

I haven't felt this sad and heavy-hearted in a very long time.

Luckily, I have ten years worth of self-care and mindfulness practice at my disposal. I don't like how I have been feeling, but I have so many tools for accepting the feelings and moving through them.

- + One thing I like to remind myself is to not have secondary emotions over primary emotions. That is-- feeling bad ABOUT feeling bad. For example: getting angry at myself for being stressed. Or, feeling silly for feeling sad about an experience from the past. Or, feeling pressure to get over feeling stuck. I feel terrible, so I am going to feel terrible fully and completely.
- + My favorite audiobook of all time is OUTRAGEOUS OPENNESS by Tosha Silver. (I am sure the book version is wonderful, too. But Tosha Silver has this gentle, lispy, compassionate voice that I want to take a bath in. I can listen to her all day long.) I have lost count of all the times I have listened to this audiobook. It is a collection of essays about surrendering, OPENING to the universe. So I have listening to that and her follow-up book CHANGE ME PRAYERS all day long. To remind myself that difficult situations and emotions can be offered to the universe. To remind myself that a cosmic intelligence that is far more efficient and vast than anything I could possibly try to figure out on my own can work through me and always provide the perfect solution.
- + I remind myself that there is always an emotional ugly duckling period during periods of intense transitions where I feel out of sorts, uncomfortable, unsettled, ungrounded-- or just straight-up terrible. It is the part of the process. You are shedding old skin, you are molting, you are rotting and fermenting. On the other side, there is renewal and the brightness of a new era--but before that shore is reached, there is a lot of uncertainty and the body physically and mentally and spiritually contorting to new shapes, new neural pathways to adjust to the incoming new chapter. So if I am feeling terrible--then am I not doing this totally right?
- + Sometimes, in the process of evolving, old pains and emotional wounds that did not have the safety to express itself before finally rise to the surface, wanting to be felt. This

is how I have been feeling-- old reservoirs of unexpressed childhood pain and sadness thawing like a frozen lake somewhere in my heart, somewhere in my solar plexus. What was once frozen is now melting, what was once numb is suddenly flowing with feeling and movement and motion. It is a visceral shock to the system. I am heavy-hearted and crying a lot--but I have enough trust in the process to know that this is all for a greater healing, a greater integration, a greater cohesion of fragmented parts becoming whole.

+ Also, lol-- is this not what the human experience is all about? The rainbow of emotions, the infinite shades of feeling. What gives me a strange serenity is to remind myself that I signed up exactly for this when I was born into this human existence. To feel terrible on some days, and to feel elation on other days, and everything in-between. To experience the sadness and the heavy-heartedness to make way for a new era of strength and clarity and vision and exciting adventures, and so on, and so on. To always shed and evolve and grow and learn and experiment and make mistakes, take detours, grieve the ending of things, love demons, love the most shameful things about yourself, discover and rediscover untapped reservoirs of potential and power and creation.

I bring up this technique a lot, and I will bring it up again: sometimes I imagine that I am an extraterrestrial visitor stepping into my own body. What is grief? What is sadness? What is the feeling of old pain finally having the space and the freedom to be fully felt. How does it feel in your body? What is its texture, what is its wavelength, what is its color and shape and sound?

Like a pile of heavy river rocks crushing my heart.

Like big swords finally exiting my chest, one by one, each exit reminding me of the pain when they first entered. The heaviness of its exit, the weird lightness of its absence that first leaves me feeling empty and alone, but then feels like an opening for something new.

Like being tossed around in the ocean but knowing that this churning ocean will eventually become a still pond, reflecting the moon in the sky and illuminating the fish swimming beneath the surface.

Like burrowing deep into the darkness underwater in the depths of an ocean at night and discovering a cave and entering the cave and then cutting open the belly of a giant black octopus, crawling into the belly, and then discovering a crying child who feels so lonely and heartbroken and unheard and shameful and sad and misunderstood beyond belief--and realizing that this child is you.

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I am reminding myself in writing this to take my own advice. To remember to not only honor the present emotion, but to also intentionally create space, a new CONTAINER if you will, for the new life era that lies ahead.

What do I want in this new life? What is its texture, its vibration, its color, its shape, its wavelength, its sound?

I am a warrior and a healer.

I am riding a horse galloping across the desert wearing a golden crown.

My heart is a fiery sun. My heart is an echo chamber of elated joy.

I am fireworks bursting in the sky, flowers bursting out of the desert ground, I am the ocean and the serpent on the shore.

I am the volcano, and the lava pouring out of the volcano, and the new land created from the Earth's fiery core meeting the Earth's cooling water.

I am the sound of rainbows, kaleidoscopes, melting glass, hurricanes, earthquakes, snakes giving birth, oceans.

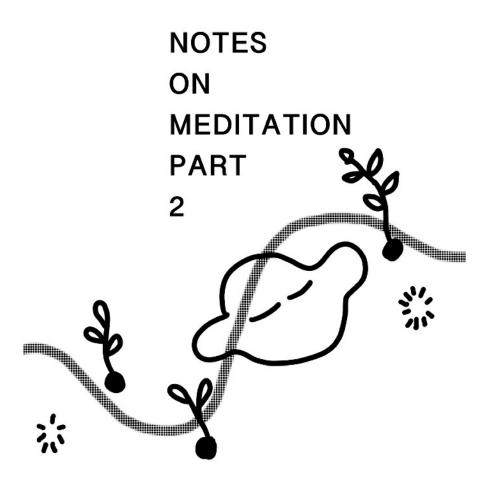
I am the storm and the eye of the storm.

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### **EXPERIMENT**

Make a container in the future within your body for how you want to feel in the upcoming era of your life. What colors, sounds, movements, vibrations, wavelengths would you place within this container? Feel it / see it / touch it in your heart's inner eye as vividly as possible.





### **NOTES ON MEDITATION PART 2**

So what do I do exactly when I wake up in the morning and meditate? I set a timer on my iPhone for 20 minutes. Lately, more often than not, I am still in bed, though sometimes I am able to muster the effort to get out of bed and sit on my couch in my living room. So I set my timer. I close my eyes. I settle into a comfortable sitting position. One of the easiest tricks for me to quiet down my mind is to listen to the background noises. I pay attention to background noises, and the silence beneath the noise, and the inner silence within me emerges. Thoughts pass by. Sometimes I get hooked into my thoughts, sometimes I am able to be the sky as the thoughts that are like clouds pass by me.

What is important is that I am paying attention. To how I feel in my body. To feelings that may arise. To thoughts that are turning in my head. I am paying attention not only with my mind, but with my entire body-- the air against my skin, the clothes against my skin, whatever is supporting my body (a couch, the wall, the bed, etc.), sounds I hear, any sensations or tightness or looseness I feel in my body. I am not DOING anything, I am simply BEING. I am being fully PRESENT in the BEINGness of "doing nothing" which is really not "doing nothing" but a very active dynamic aliveness.

And then the timer goes off and I continue the rest of my morning rituals.

- + In addition to your morning meditation, you can really turn anything into a meditation. Which is why these days, I love preparing meals for myself and making myself homemade ginger tea. Sometimes I am driving on the freeway and even that incredibly mundane activity of being an L.A. person driving in a car can turn into a trippy meditative experience: paying attention to the texture on the road, being mindful of other people in other cars, watching the way light reflects off the surface of the car in front of you, the clouds in the sky, the texture on the steering wheel, the feeling of your hands gripping the steering wheel, the white noise of being in traffic, etc. I say "trippy meditative experience" but it's not really a "trippy meditative experience" -- it's simply "living fully and presently without the filter of your mindless monkey brain chatter."
- + Sometimes I am sitting quietly at a cafe and I make a point to REALLY be present. It's like I am an extraterrestrial visitor stepping into my own body and I am seeing everything for the first time. And it is the strangest sensation: seeing the patterns of wood grain on the table, the way the light reflects off the coffee mug, the surreal mundaneness of strangers gathering in a public place to drink caffeinated drinks -- I wonder sometimes what would it be like if I lived in this state of mind all the time. If we ALL lived in this state of mind all the time.

+ So what is the point of meditation, mindfulness, being present? Why not just numb yourself out with endless internet, endless Instagram scrolling, endless Netflix binging, endless distractions when being present takes so much work?

A MAGICAL LIFE cannot happen if you are living in the past or waiting for the future. True joy is a state of aliveness, and aliveness can only happen if your whole mind, your whole heart, your whole body is present.

Also, when you are rushing for the next thing-- the next great love, the next adventure, the next success, the next adrenaline hit -- you miss out on so much. You miss out on so much. The meal that is right before you. The company of loved ones. The shape of trees. The color of flowers. The ordinary kindness of people going about their day. The beauty of this very mundane day and you being this you this age that will never happen again.

+ What if every waking moment of your day today was a meditation? Do everything one task, one step, one breath at a time.



FAVORITE SELF-HELP BOOKS, AUDIOBOOKS, ONLINE COURSES, ETC.



### FAVORITE SELF-HELP BOOKS, AUDIOBOOKS, ONLINE COURSES, ETC.

Here is a list of my favorite self-help books, audiobooks, online courses, and other resources that have changed my life over the years.

(Some of the audiobooks I have listed do certainly have print versions, but I can only vouch for how much I love the audiobook version.)

### FAVORITE SELF-HELP BOOK OF ALL TIME POSSIBLY

+ THE BIG LEAP by Gay Hendricks. Wow, I love this book so much. A deceptively simple book about how we have the subconscious tendency to self-sabotage ourselves when we are about to expand into higher levels of happiness / love / success than previously experienced, and what we can do to overcome these subliminal tendencies.

THE TWO BOOKS THAT MADE ME WANT TO MEDITATE EVERY DAY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE

- + A NEW EARTH by Eckhart Tolle
- + CATCHING THE BIG FISH: MEDITATION, CONSCIOUSNESS AND CREATIVITY by David Lynch (audiobook)

BOOKS THAT INSPIRE AND CHALLENGE TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT AND TO QUESTION THE TRUTH OF YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

- + THE POWER OF NOW by Eckhart Tolle
- + LOVING WHAT IS: FOUR QUESTIONS THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE by Byron Katie

(Also, you just have to visit <u>Byron Katie's website</u> and watch videos of her apply her fourquestion self-inquiry to complete strangers. It is truly mesmerizing to watch.)

BOOKS FOR SURRENDERING TO THE DIVINE COSMIC INTELLIGENCE, INSPIRING YOU TO ALLOW FOR THE UNIVERSE TO WORK THROUGH YOU AND INTUITIVELY LEAD YOU TO YOUR TRUE SOUL PATH BY OPENING YOUR HEART

- + OUTRAGEOUS OPENNESS by Tosha Silver (audiobook)
- + CHANGE ME PRAYERS by Tosha Silver (audiobook)
- + STEERING BY STARLIGHT: FIND YOUR RIGHT LIFE, NO MATTER WHAT by Martha Beck (audiobook)

BOOKS FOR CONNECTING WITH AND EMBODYING YOUR INNER DIVINE FEMININE INTUITION

+ WOMEN WHO RUN WITH THE WOLVES by Clarissa Pinkola Estés

### ABUNDANCE CONSCIOUSNESS

+ HOW TO BE A BADASS AT MAKING MONEY by Jenn Sincero (audiobook)

OH MY GOD I AM SO OBSESSED WITH THIS CREATIVE HANDBOOK RIGHT NOW, IT'S BY THE SAME WOMAN WHO WROTE THE ARTIST'S WAY, I PERSONALLY GOT BORED WORKING THROUGH THE ARTIST'S WAY BUT THIS BOOK IS CHANGING MY LIFE AND YOU GET TO DO WEIRD COOL CREATIVE EXERCISES LIKE MAKE A DOLL, MAKE A MASK, PRETEND TO BE A PRETENTIOUS ARTIST IN PUBLIC AND I THINK YOU EVENTUALLY COMPOSE YOUR OWN MUSIC OR SOMETHING?!

+ THE VEIN OF GOLD by Julia Cameron

### FAVORITE SELF-HELP PODCAST

+ (I say favorite as though I have listened to countless self-help podcasts-- but really, it's the only self-help podcast I listen to.) THE LIFE COACH SCHOOL PODCAST WITH BROOKE CASTILLO. And possibly most important episode: <u>THIS episode on setting</u> emotional boundaries.

### FAVORITE ONLINE BUSINESS SCHOOL

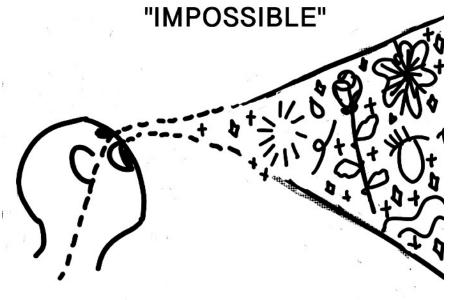
+ The Feminist Business School. Highly recommended for women entrepreneurs who are thinking of or have just started their own business. Really, it's an all-encompassing holistic LIFE school on so many important topics: creating space for your ideas (this is where I got the idea of the importance of creating CONTAINERS for things you want to bring into your life), honoring the rhythms of your body, honoring the slow and intuitive process of manifesting ideas, paying attention to nature, truly feeling into the physical temple of your body, unlearning toxic patriarchal worldview of capitalism which creates a collective trance of scarcity and competition while co-creating a new framework for a holistic, feminine economy of collaboration and abundance (NO BIG DEAL!), etc.

FAVORITE ASTROLOGY BLOG

+ Mystic Medusa



THE DAILY RITUAL
AND PRACTICE OF
HONORING YOUR
DESIRES NO MATTER
HOW SILLY OR
GRANDIOSE OR
PETTY OR



## THE DAILY RITUAL AND PRACTICE OF HONORING YOUR DESIRES, NO MATTER HOW SILLY OR GRANDIOSE OR PETTY OR "IMPOSSIBLE"

I have a little journal dedicated specifically to writing down my desires. They are not goals. (Boring.)

### They are desires.

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I like to write a little bit in it every day whenever I can. My rule for it is that all desires are welcome to be articulated, and there is no shaming about the desires that come to mind, and the desire must have some kind of visceral electric charge in my body.

Like, I get a smile on my face just thinking about it and writing it down.

All desires, no matter how superficial or vain or petty or grandiose or weird or random or silly or epic, are welcomed into my home and paid attention to.

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Does it scare you to give center stage to all your desires?

Maybe you are secretly terrified that if you voice one desire, and then another, and then another, then you will be overwhelmed by a tsunami of unfulfilled desires that will completely destroy you.

But I suspect that the opposite is true.

The more we repress and deny our desires, the more we slowly die inside.

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So here is what you do. You open a page in your journal and you write out whatever desires that come to mind that create a visceral stir in your heart.

It can be the big obvious things-- more money, a nice house, a soul mate, a dream job.

It can be mundane-- a big juicy burger, red lipstick, an afternoon nap, a cool glass of water.

It can be spiritual and abstract -- more inner peace, healing for this planet, a heart more open to giving and receiving love.

It can be embarrassingly vain. Petty. Grandiose.

YouTube fame. TIME magazine cover. A mansion. A rocket ship. A Pulitzer prize. Sex with a former lover. Sex with your celebrity crush. A MacArthur genius grant.

Snorkeling with dolphins. A pack of cigarettes. Pasta in Florence. Adidas tennis skirts. Thigh-high boots.

Never having to work for money ever again for the rest of your life.

Your newly adopted dog falling asleep at your feet. A ranch of llamas. Starting a family. Moving to Miami.

Anything.

Moving to a small town where you know absolutely no one, and writing your play on a typewriter, hating all the racial micro-aggressions but also getting so much good writing material out of them.

There is no pressure to follow up on them.

Sunbathing in New Zealand. Buttered corn on the cob. Quitting your office job and becoming a marijuana plant farmer.

There is no fear of "be careful what you wish for."

A bar of gourmet chocolate. Forest bathing. Waterfall bathing.

Opening a restaurant.

Tea with your grandmother.

Yoga in the desert.

Starting your own philanthropic foundation.

A nice cup of homemade coffee and a plate of steak and eggs.

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See what happens when you write out your desires every day and hold space for allowing them to exist without shame or judgment.

Some interesting revelations might come up. You may notice a common theme in all your desires.

A desire for deep rest, free from the expectations and needs of other people. A desire for stillness and peace. A desire for dynamic action and exciting transformation. A desire for more connection with others.

And sometimes even the mundane and silly and impossible desires are the tips of an iceberg of a greater soul desire that you otherwise would have never realized.

Your desire for a haircut, a backpacking global adventure, a new wardrobe, tango dancing-- may all be pointing towards a deep soul desire to disrupt the mundane predictability of your daily life and to experience things at a deeper soul level, to become a deeper and richer version of yourself that you suspect is buried somewhere under your hardened network of old habits and lifelong coping mechanisms for survival.

The surface desires are oftentimes sign posts for a bigger soul desire.

What is the FEELING you want from all of these desires?

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In the last two years, I desired in new clothes, new lipstick shades, new shoes. Being photographed wearing clothes. Having my face and words in magazines.

Having spent nearly all of my life in shy modesty, having these desires felt strange, dangerous, vain, wrong.

They were the complete opposite of my usual modus operandi: disappear into the background, fit in, don't stand out.

But they gave me an electric thrill, and I had so much fun thinking about them, writing then down, and sharing them with friends.

In retrospect, this all pointed towards an inner North Star that wanted to shed the old childhood anxiety of being seen and being visible, the childhood fear that equates speaking up with being ridiculed or punished.

These surface desires pointed to a deeper primal soul desire to transform these old energies into a new adult me that is so self-loving and so self-confident that I can speak out, share my art at a greater level of exposure, be seen by many people, be unafraid to use my voice as an instrument for change.

I gave voice to my desires, and I honored them. My outward appearance shifted (specifically, the clothes I wear), and gave voice to the inner shifts that have been waiting to happen for years.

In doing so, it has lead to a greater level of comfort in public spaces, public speaking, workshops, and events.

It has stoked my inner fire to become more visible, more influential, more powerful in a way that brings joy to my heart and also more interconnected joy to this world.

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I also love the daily practice of desiring something very mundane, and then fulfilling it.

An ice cold can of LaCroix.

A salty chocolate chip cookie.

Finishing a drawing and sharing it on Instagram.

Going on a long neighborhood walk.

Wearing lipstick.

Lighting candles and listening to music.

How empowering to know that you can have desires and also fulfill them to your satisfaction completely.

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What is the feeling you think you are going to feel when you have these desires?

What are other ways you can feel this feeling?

What is stopping you from feeling this feeling right now?

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### **EXPERIMENT**

WRITE DOWN A LIST OF TWENTY DESIRES YOU HAVE RIGHT THIS MOMENT, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL. THE RULE IS THAT THIS DESIRE MUST CREATE SOME KIND OF ELECTRIC SPARK IN YOUR BODY.

### **EXPERIMENT**

WHAT DO YOU DESIRE RIGHT THIS MOMENT?

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO IMAGINE MANIFESTING THE DESIRE COMPLETELY?

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE IN YOUR BODY?

### **EXPERIMENT**

WHAT DO YOU DESIRE IN YOUR LIFE THAT YOU ALREADY HAVE?

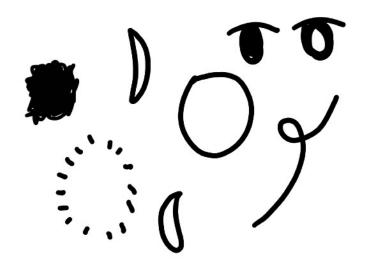
WHAT IS ONE DESIRE THAT YOU HAVE RIGHT THIS MOMENT THAT YOU CAN FULFILL TODAY?

**EXPERIMENT** 

SHARE YOUR DESIRES WITH ANOTHER PERSON



A SIMPLE SELF-CARE PRACTICE: PAY ATTENTION TO THE CYCLES OF THE MOON



### A SIMPLE SELF-CARE PRACTICE: PAY ATTENTION TO THE CYCLES OF THE MOON

A very simple self-care practice I started doing about two years ago is paying attention to the cycles of the moon. Considering that the moon is our closest hunk of rock in orbit to our planet and controls the ebb and flow of the ocean tides, I feel like paying attention to it is the least that we can do as Earthly beings.

If you are into witchy magic, then you may already be aware of the particular energetic recommendations associated with each cycle of the moon. A very, very brief summary:

**New Moon** - the reset of a new lunar cycle. The perfect time to set intentions and goals on new projects you want to initiate, new changes you wish to implement, new habits and energetic patterns you want to introduce into your life.

**Waxing Moon -** as the light of the moon gets bigger, this is generally a good time to do activities associated with working towards a goal, pushing forward the momentum of something towards completion.

**Full Moon** - Peak lunar power! A very good time to cast a spell if you are into that. Or throw a party. Or gather with other magical people. Or magnify an intention you desire to see come true.

**Waxing Moon** - as the light of the moon begins to shrink, this is a good time to think about what you wish to release.

**Dark Moon** - (last few days before the new moon) An especially potent time to rest, recuperate, declutter, be receptive, be intentional about what you want to let go from your life. Slow down in stillness and see what happens when you fully steep yourself in a more Yin state of mind.

So the idea is that in being alignment with the energetic cycle of whatever the moon phase is going through (growing in light, peak light, waning, etc.), if what you are doing is in alignment with that particular phase of the moon, then it will be more energetically supported.

(Of course, certainly, we are always working towards a goal, setting intentions, releasing clutter we don't want regardless of whatever is going on up in the sky. The idea is to be extra-mindful and super-intentional during the particular phases about what you want to create, what you want to release, etc.)

Even if you don't particularly BELIEVE in energetic alignment, nature magic, etc. — regardless, I find aligning myself with the moon cycle to be a very helpful reminder of the cyclical nature of life and how we can't always be growing, striving, working, expanding.

Those periods can ONLY happen when they occur in tandem with the opposite forces of resting, rejuvenating, recuperating, releasing.

So every Dark Moon cycle (it is the dark moon cycle now, with the new moon occurring on Sunday at 11:10AM PST), it is my monthly reminder to really chill the fuq out, moreso than I usually do. Because it is easy for me to forget to rest and rejuvenate and treat myself. I go to a Korean Spa. Sometimes I treat myself to a massage. I block off times of doing absolutely nothing and remind myself that this is just as important as those blocks of times when I am actively working.

And because it is a waning moon, I am making a point of scheduling a day tomorrow when I really clean and organize and declutter my living space and digital files. Because without releasing what no longer serves us — on an emotional, spiritual and physical level — there can be no room for new things to come in.

And when it is the New Moon on Sunday, I will be meditating extra-consciously, moreso than other days, on what new things I desire to bring into the next lunar cycle. Because without setting intentions and planting seeds for new things that have yet to be born, things can become stagnant and outdated.

Without the lunar cycle reminding me of the ongoing ebb and flow of nature and life, I would probably be pushing myself unnecessarily too hard to always be creating, working, maximizing — and feeling unnecessarily guilty for not doing enough.

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### HOW TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE CYCLES OF THE MOON

MoonGiant.com is a good resource for looking up moon phases.

If you are also into astrology, TimePassages is a good app for knowing what astrological sign the moon is currently in.

And the oldie but goodie - look up into the night sky from time to time and see the moon with your own human eyes. Bonus: do it in nature, by the ocean, in the desert, in the mountains.





### VISUALIZATIONS AND ADVICE FOR ENERGETIC PROTECTION

Some notes on energetically protecting yourself:

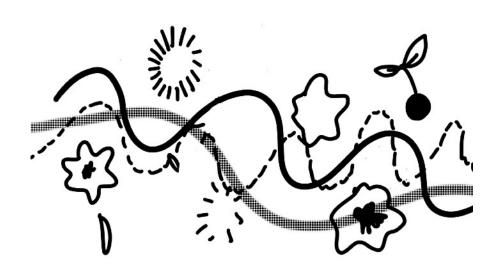
- Whether or not you believe in crystals and their healing properties, I find it comfortable to wear tourmaline (a black stone associated with psychic protection and absorbing negative energy) around my neck.
- A highly sensitive hairdresser friend of mine was recommended by another person to visualize wearing an armor made out of the crystal of her choice before working with clients. So she likes to imagine herself wearing a suit made out of diamonds before doing work with others. Another visualization is to imagine wearing a suit made of mirrors so that whatever energy a person is projecting onto you, especially if that person is negative, it is reflected back onto the person instead of being absorbed by you.
- I love the simple ritual of taking an epsom salt bath for sloughing off negative energy at the end of the day. Extra potent: add 2 cups of epsom salt and 1 box of baking soda to a lukewarm bath and soak for at least 20 minutes during the waning moon.
- Any time I feel overwhelmed mentally, it is important to do things that bring me back to my physical body, especially the lower half of my body. Imagining that my feet are super heavy and being pulled by gravity towards the center of the earth, imagining an energetic cord tethering me from the base of my spine to the core of the earth, doing squats, putting my feet to nature as much as possible.
- Engage in simple act of visualizing your breath and connecting to your breath.
   Imagine drawing up in your inhale all the negative energy in your body as black clouds you are breathing in, letting it circulate your lungs, and breathing it out as healing white light.
- Imagine that there is an energetic cord connected from the base of your spine through the ground and into the center of the Earth's cord. Imagine this energetic cord as a trash chute where you can send down all negative energy that does not belong to your highest good into the Earth's core where it can be burnt up completely.
- Imagine a broomstick sweeping your aura from head to toe of all trash energy that does not belong to you picked up by other people and external environments.

Imagine a giant flower of your choice hovering a few feet across from your face, filtering all energy received so that you are receiving information without the emotional baggage attached. Imagine giving each of your chakras a spin to clear away stuck energy from root to crown. (Thank you to Jenn of Feminist Business School for all of these visualizations.)

- Eating a teeny tiny bit of salt for a little extra grounding. Eating root vegetables. Drinking nettle tea.
- The very self-loving act of cutting out people from your life who are toxic and energy-draining. How does the person make you after you spend time with them? Do you feel energetically uplifted or drained? YOUR BODY DOES NOT LIE.
- A very basic energetic clearing visualization. Imagine an energetic cord from the base of your spine to the center of the Earth. On the opposite end— imagine the star in the sky beaming white light down through the crown of your head. Now imagine a column of white light emanating from the core of the Earth to the star in the sky surrounding you and engulfing you completely, clearing all negative and stuck energy in your body and around your body.
- Sound healing. Ringing a singing bowl or bells around your body to disrupt any stuck energy within your energetic field.
- On a regular basis, consider doing somatic body work as a part of your self-care practice, just as how you would regularly get a physical or dental check up or therapy. Acupuncture, reiki, massage, etc.
- PRACTICE THE ART OF SAYING NO AND NOT FEELING BAD ABOUT IT, TRUSTING THAT THE COOL PEOPLE WHO DESERVE TO BE IN YOUR LIFE WILL ALWAYS GET IT.
- Consciously showering yourself with self-love every goddamn second of your life.



# THE CONSISTENCY OF SELF-CARE



### THE CONSISTENCY OF SELF CARE

Reminding myself that you don't stop doing self-care just because you start feeling stable and good.

Reminding myself that you don't start self care until you start feeling terrible and at the end of your rope; you are practicing self care all the time consistently, like taking a shower or brushing your teeth.

Self care is also important when you are fee great and at the top of the game. You don't "earn" self-care through suffering and feeling overwhelmed/ overworked / burnt out; self-care and self-love are ways you can express kindness to yourself unconditionally all times, no matter what your current state.

Self care cannot occur in a vacuum, in isolation. I can be having bubble baths, massages, yoga sessions, chamomile tea, pedicures, facial masks, etc. — but if I am doing this in isolation and not seeing the people I love, those self care activities can only do so much. (Note: this is the perspective of someone who mostly works alone and can get too isolated if not careful. Alone time may be the healing antidote for those of you who are surrounded by people and / or are active caretakers all the time.)

Sometimes self care is really caring about your goals and working towards them as a self-loving way to express to yourself that your dreams and intentions and creative ambitions matter and should be taken seriously even if others don't understand.

Sometimes self care is NOT working towards goals and setting then aside and doing absolutely nothing because you are precious no matter what.

It is okay to ask for help. Whatever the scale of your difficulty or burden or pain is, We Are Not Meant To Suffer Silently Alone.

This is why we need community. Communities. You would be surprised and humbled by how much the people around you want to help you, want to support you, would be their greatest joy to see you heal and mend and survive and thrive.

Are you open to receiving the support and care and healing your community wishes for you? Can you believe for yourself that you are fully deserving of care and support from the people who love you?



## SELF-CARE RITUALS FOR ANXIETY



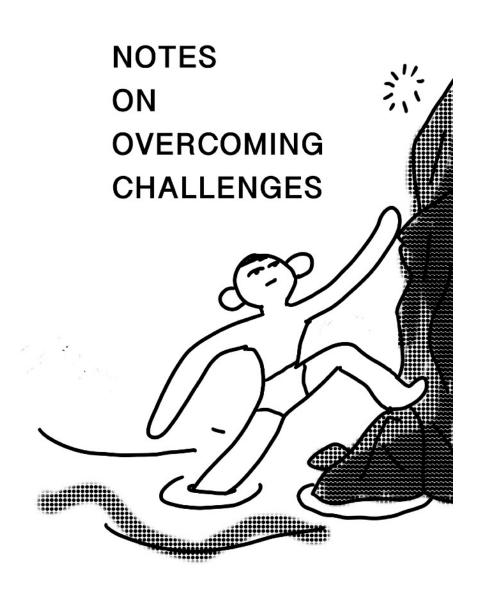
### SELF CARE RITUALS FOR ANXIETY

Something I haven't told too many people about is that I just started seeing somatic therapist. Having gone through several drastic events in the last year and feeling a lot more prone to anxiety than usual about upcoming changes, this current time frame felt appropriate to go back to therapy and emotionally process things in a more formal environment that is not my own deep dive self-reflective journaling / creative exercises or talking with friends.

Here are some new coping techniques I have learned in this recent time.

- + Anytime you feel your thoughts start to spiral out of control in a negative way, focus your brain on a tactile, visceral sensation that feels good to you. Like, your hands touching the surface of carpet or a couch. Or shifting your eyes to a calming color in the room. Or petting an animal, running your fingers through your hair. By shifting your attention to something sensory and non-verbal, this switches the mode of your brain from verbal panicking to nonverbal calming.
- + Similar to the technique above, consciously focusing your attention away from what causes you distress to what gives you a pleasurable sensation, memory, or thought.
- + Have a visual bookmark for a visualization of a space where you feel completely safe and protected. This could be a real location, or a made-up location. I like to imagine a white room with a white bed and cozy white comforters and a dog on the bed. It is an enclosed space (one initial candidate for safe inner space was lying on a towel on a beach in Honolulu, but the wide open space freaked me out), and only loved ones can enter my room with my permission. Anytime I feel anxious or stressed, I can imagine going into that inner safe space and feel completely safe. The more I think about this space, the more I encode into my body the feeling of safety being the norm, not the exception.
- + Carrying rocks in my pocket that I can hold and touch as a grounding tool.
- + Doing 11 minutes of alternative nostril breathing every morning.
- + Something I want to start doing is to start taking regular nightly baths with epsom salt.
- + Cutting caffeine out of my life almost completely (as a coffee snob, this is VERY sad for me), drinking chamomile tea at night.
- + Consciously spending more time in nature and with friends

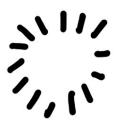




### NOTES ON OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- 1. Today, I want to remind myself of all the challenges I have overcome in my lifetime.
- 2. Maybe it is not so much that I have "overcome" my challenges, but more so that I have allowed for the challenge to transform and transmute me. From an energetic entity resisting the challenge to an energetic entity who surrenders to the challenge. And changed into something / someone who is no longer resisting, and thusly allows to be transformed into something that can flow through to the other side.
- 3. Like turning the hard rock of your insecurities and sadness into water, or fire, or a tree-whatever is most appropriate for the situation.
- 4. When people ask about my origin story as a person who meditates / witch / artist, I find myself repeating the same story about discovering meditation during the depths of my depression when I was working abroad in Japan a year after graduating from art school. Being completely cut off from access to therapy, medication, and friends, I had no choice but to believe fervently that connecting to my inner silence would somehow lead me to a better place. I had to transform the hard rock of my depression into something softer and more open -- a gentle net with holes that could allow in new dreams, new ideas, new ways of breathing and living to flow through what was once an imposing barrier.
- 5. But that's not all I did. I also had to tell my story of how I was drowning over and over again to people I trusted so that people could remind me that this sense of drowning does not have to be a permanent state, that eventually my feet would touch the ground and I would safely be standing on the shore.
- 6. I was also severely depressed during middle school, high school, college. I finally went to my first therapist in college. By speaking out loud all my weird and self-hating thoughts about myself, I slowly changed, molecule by molecule, into a less self-hating person. I did not overcome depression like a mountain or a particularly difficult hike; rather, I transmuted myself bit by bit until I was no longer my depression. But first I had to transmute from a severely depressed person into a depressed person, and then from a depressed person into a mildly depressed person to a somewhat ordinary person with relatively manageable self-loathing insecurities. Transmutation does not occur overnight.
- 7. I am reminding myself to ask myself: what needs to unbecome in order for me to become?
- 8. Spending time with friends is not a luxury, but oxygen.
- 9. Food is for medicine, not numbing.

- 10. Spending time in nature is not a luxury, but oxygen and a means to survival.
- 11. Taking the time to show up and be involved in community is also oxygen.
- 12. I am unbecoming a person who loves alone time and becoming a person who needs people like oxygen.
- 13. I am unbecoming a person who was afraid to ask for help and waited for people to offer help and becoming a person who can ask, without guilt or shame, for help.
- 14. What does my 8-year-old self need? I imagine hugging her. Giving her a mug of hot cocoa and marshmallows, a stuffed animal. She can lie in bed, she can watch T.V., she can do whatever she wants, she can take all the time she needs. She is / I am already enough.



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a
simple
prayer / mantra /
intention
to
begin
the
day
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### A simple prayer / mantra / intention to begin the day

I wanted to remind all of you of a simple intention I sometimes speak out loud in the morning. It is a variation of an intention / prayer author Tosha Silver speaks of in her books OUTRAGEOUS OPENNESS and CHANGE ME PRAYERS. (Both highly recommended in audiobook form.)

Here is the intention:

Divine beloved (universe / Goddess / etc.), I offer this day completely to you. You know better than I do how this day should unfold. I am yours, you are mine, we are one. All is well.

It is a very simple spell, but an effective one.

As soon as I say it, I find little bits of tightness in my heart space and jaw and shoulders loosening, exorcising that stingy hungry ghost in me that wants to greedily hoard whatever illusion of certainty I have about how this day should exactly unfold.

I breathe into the new looseness in my chest. There is more emptiness within me-- not the nihilistic void where everything is meaningless, but an unconditional openness that is brimming with magic and possibility. The uncanny space where solutions beyond my limited ego imagination can come through.

When I lean into that unconditional openness instead of the iron-clad rigidity of my preferences, uncanny synchronicities seem to happen more often. A friend calls out of the blue and invites me to something, completely changing my plans. An unexpected opportunity pops up in my inbox. Uncanny interactions with strangers.

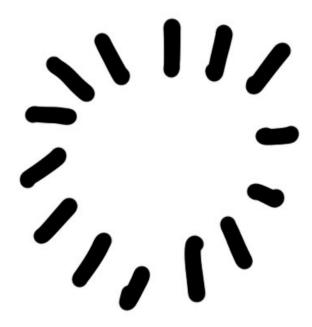
Certainly, one can make the argument that those things would have happened anyway regardless of my intention-setting. But being the energetic superstitious New Age witch that I am, I have to believe that intentions create ripples in the time-space-fabric, and the energy you put out and the space you intentionally create within yourself are in direct relation to what comes boomeranging back to you.

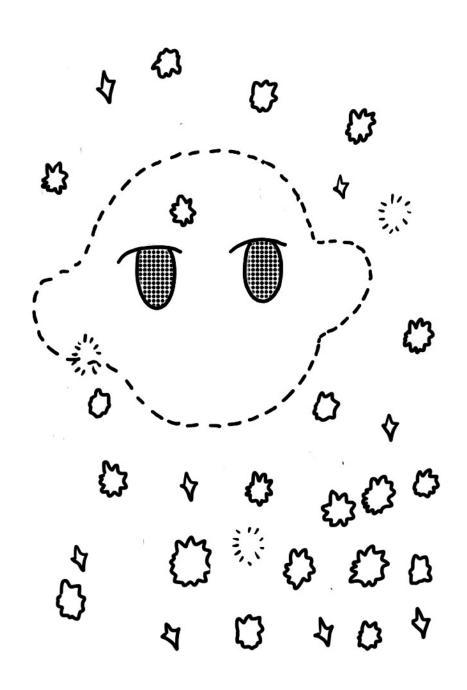
In any case, setting the intention makes me appreciate more and pay attention more to the unexpected solutions and moments of joy that show up, which then expands my experience of it, which then creates a heightened present state of mind within me to fully enjoy the moment-- and isn't that we want at the end of the day? To be fully present and appreciative for the unexpected magic that shows up in our days?

You have nothing to lose in asking for the universe to move through you and unfold the sequence of the events for you for the greatest good, beyond the tunnel vision of your own needs and preferences and expectations.

This is what I wish for all of you, fellow Earthlings. For today and for all the other days that follow.

An openness to magic, and then the space to fully receive them.





### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yumi Sakugawa is a second-generation Okinawan-Japanese-American interdisciplinary artist based in Los Angeles and the author of several books including I THINK I AM IN FRIEND-LOVE WITH YOU, YOUR ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO BECOMING ONE WITH THE UNIVERSE, and THE LITTLE BOOK OF LIFE HACKS. Sagittarius sun, Aquarius rising, midheaven in Scorpio. @yumisakugawa