

THE POWER OF STOIC-HYPNOTIC MINDSET

ACHIEVING BUSINESS SUCCESS
WITH INNER STRENGTH



DR. M. PAULA DAOUST

STOIC-HYPNOTIC
SCRIPTS



INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE SCRIPTS

These scripts are intended for your personal use or in your work with a client. If you record them to give to your client, you must include a statement that they were written by Dr. M. Paula Daoust to be used in conjunction with the book, “The Power of a Stoic-Hypnotic Mindset.”

These scripts will be more useful to you if you complete the worksheets that are available on the same website you downloaded these scripts from. By completing the appropriate worksheets for your issue/challenge, you will have a rich source of information with which to create your personal suggestions.

Recording the script:

- Have your personal suggestions in front of you before you begin recording.
- Read the script, exactly as written.
- Enunciate your words.
- Speak in a slightly slower voice than you would use for conversation.
- If you use a tool such as Audacity (a free download) to record the script, you might consider adding some music. If you do so, choose a slow, peaceful piece of music. If you are going to give the recording to a client, you might want to use royalty-free music.
- Once you have recorded your script, you should listen to it at least once a day, preferably before you go to bed.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

Now, expand your peripheral vision and, without moving your head, see as much as you can – wider and wider, including more and more in your vision while still seeing the object.

Refocus like a laser on just the object, that's right. Once more, expand your peripheral vision and see even more than you did before. Bring your focus back in on the object and notice that your eyes are getting tired with all this exercise.

Now in your imagination, but with your eyes still open, move that object to the middle of the room, halfway between you and the wall. Notice how the object floats in the air. Now, you can bring it even closer, until it's almost at your nose. Explore it up close. Looking at the object so close, your eyes are even more tired. Go ahead and close them now but continue to see the object as if you can see it right through your eyelids. See the detail, the color, the size of the object, that's right.

I'm going to count down from 10 to 1 and when I reach one, you will be completely relaxed and open to growing and learning. 10 – feeling calm; 9 – increasing your sense of serenity; 8 – letting go of all thoughts and worries; 7 – twice as relaxed as before; 6 – feeling a growing sense of tranquility; 5 – peaceful and quiet; 4 – feeling still; 3 – noticing the feeling of relaxation in your hands and feet; 2 – even, comfortable, calm breathing; and 1 – with the muscles around your eyes and mouth at ease, you are feeling more relaxed than you have in a while.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

Imagine that you are standing beside a serene pond. Notice the water's surface, so smooth and tranquil. The pond is so calm that, as you gaze into it you can see your reflection. At the edge of the pond, just beneath you, is a bed of pebbles, stones, and even some rocks. The pond is surrounded by a stand of tall trees. Smell the fresh air and feel the warmth of the sun on your face. It feels so good, doesn't it.

Go ahead and pick up a few pebbles and begin dropping them into the water. Each pebble you drop into the water represents a concern, a worry, or a situation beyond your control. Watch as the ripples spread out from the point of impact, gradually fading away. Just like those ripples, let go of the things you can't control, allowing your mind to focus on the calm waters that remain.

Now pick up a rock. The rocks are the big issues that you are facing. We are all faced with challenges, big issues, tests, and trials. I don't know what these big issues might be for you, but you do. You know what concerns you are carrying with you at this moment.

If something is not as you want it and it is within your power, you can change it. If it is not within your power, let it go. Worrying won't change anything. Responding to these challenges, you can control your thoughts and your behaviors but there is so much you cannot control and worrying about what you cannot control is wasted effort.

Feel the weight of that rock in your hand, how rough the surface of the rock is. Run your fingers along the edges of the rock. Now, go ahead and throw your rock into the pond and notice the bigger ripples it creates. It feels good to throw it away, doesn't it. Watch as those ripples roll further and further away from the center and just as before, as the ripples roll out and fade away, the pond becomes calm and serene again. You are in control of your own emotions and by letting go of what is not within your control, you are relaxed, focused, and able to make good decisions for yourself and for others.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

Listen closely to the gentle rustling of the leaves in the quiet forest. Each sound is a reminder to focus on the things within your control. Just as the leaves sway with the wind but remain rooted, you can acknowledge the external influences but center your attention on the choices and actions you can make.

Focusing on what you can control, you can take actions that allow you to move forward, enjoying your present, letting the past be the past, and allowing the future to be the future. You can be confident that the calm, focused, measured decisions you make today ensure that you will have the energy and wisdom to manage whatever the future brings. There is no need to bother yourself with worries or concerns about what is not within your control because your quiet, cool, composed, and serene approach to what is within your control is moving you toward positive outcomes.

As you stand beside the pond, you can enjoy the warmth of the sun on your skin. Go ahead and pick up another handful of pebbles. With each pebble you hold in your hand, imagine it representing an uncontrollable aspect of your life. Let the pebbles slip through your fingers, releasing any attachments to the uncontrollable. As the pebbles drop to the ground, so do your worries. You can feel the relief that comes from letting go any weight you have been carrying, knowing that now you are focused on those things you can affect. You can be fully present in this moment, letting go of the past and not being bothered by the future.

In this moment, you are in control of your own thoughts and behaviors and that is all that you need. You are making good decisions based on your relaxed assessment of the current situation. These measured, wise decisions that come from being able to calmly assess your situation, are creating a positive future. No matter what comes your way, your ability to focus on the moment and to see what decisions you have available and what you need to let go of, will allow you to create the outcomes you need.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

It's almost time to return to your day but before you do, you can review your special suggestions.

Take a deep breath, open your eyes, and repeat the following suggestions:

[add your personal suggestions here]

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

EMBRACE CHANGE AND CHALLENGES

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

Now, expand your peripheral vision and, without moving your head, see as much as you can – wider and wider, including more and more in your vision while still seeing the object.

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I'm going to count down from 10 to 1 and when I reach one, you will be completely relaxed and open to growing and learning. 10 – feeling calm; 9 – increasing your sense of serenity; 8 – letting go of all thoughts and worries; 7 – twice as relaxed as before; 6 – feeling a growing sense of tranquility; 5 – peaceful and quiet; 4 – feeling still; 3 – noticing the feeling of relaxation in your hands and feet; 2 – even, comfortable, calm breathing; and 1 – with the muscles around your eyes and mouth at ease, you are feeling more relaxed than you have in a while.

EMBRACE CHANGE AND CHALLENGES

Imagine that you are standing on a mountaintop beside a lake. Gazing out, the landscape is breathtaking. The blue of the mountain lake contrasted by the green pine trees and the riot of color produced by the wildflowers on the mountain slope. A storm approaches in the distance and as the rain begins to fall, you raise your arms, embracing the challenge and change that life presents. Just as the storm quickly passes, you find your strength in navigating life's challenges.

You understand that you need to accept and welcome the ever-changing nature of life and you can view challenges as opportunities for personal growth and development. It is only through change that we can grow and become more than we are.

Looking out over the lake, you watch the waves gently rolling against the rocks that line the shore and just as quickly recede. The rhythm of the waves reminds you of the ebb and flow of life. As challenges come, you can imagine yourself stepping into the water, embracing each wave with open arms. The waves might be strong, but your resilience is stronger.

It has been said that change is often not pleasant, but it is constant. It is only when we change and grow, we can see the world we never knew. The past cannot be changed but the future is still yours to determine. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher said that the secret of change is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old but on building the future.

As you stand on the mountain side, you can feel the wind against your skin. You can imagine yourself as a tree, swaying with the changing winds of life. You can embrace the movements, knowing that your roots run deep, providing stability through even the most challenging times.

EMBRACE CHANGE AND CHALLENGES

Even as you are proud of your deep roots, providing stability and strength, you understand that you must cultivate flexibility, being open to change, adjusting to different situations, and not being too prideful to bend so that you can navigate challenges and adversity successfully. You embrace humility and adaptability understanding that paired with strength and determination, you can achieve your desired outcomes.

And as you look down from the mountain, you notice a farmer's field in the valley, and you are reminded of the Taoist story about the farmer.

There was once an old farmer who had worked his crops for many years. One day his horse ran away. When his neighbors hear the news, they rushed to us farm.

"Such bad luck," they said sympathetically.

"Maybe," the farmer said. "It might be bad luck or it might be good luck."

The next morning the horse returned, bringing with it two other wild horses.

"Such good luck!" the neighbors exclaimed.

"Maybe," the farmer said. "It might be bad luck or it might be good luck."

The following day, his son tried to ride one of the untamed horses, was thrown, and broke his leg.

Again, the neighbors came to offer their sympathy on his misfortune. 'Such bad luck,' they said,

EMBRACE CHANGE AND CHALLENGES

“Maybe,” the farmer said. “It might be bad luck or it might be good luck.”

The day after, military officials came to the village to draft young men into the army. Seeing that the son’s leg was broken, they passed him by.

“Such good luck!” cried the neighbors.

“Maybe,” the farmer said. “It might be bad luck or it might be good luck.”

And the story goes, just like life...

Just as the farmer accepted the challenges and changes in his life, you too can accept the challenges and changes in your life. Change is inevitable and good luck or bad luck are transitory – good luck can become bad luck and bad luck can become good luck.

A Chinese proverb says A wise man adapts himself to circumstances, as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it.”

You no longer waste energy on struggling against changes and challenges. There is no growth in the comfort zone, and you are ready now to build your future by embracing the discomfort of change.

EMBRACE CHANGE AND CHALLENGES

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[add your personal suggestions here]

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

PRACTICE RATIONAL THINKING

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

Now, expand your peripheral vision and, without moving your head, see as much as you can – wider and wider, including more and more in your vision while still seeing the object.

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I'm going to count down from 10 to 1 and when I reach one, you will be completely relaxed and open to growing and learning. 10 – feeling calm; 9 – increasing your sense of serenity; 8 – letting go of all thoughts and worries; 7 – twice as relaxed as before; 6 – feeling a growing sense of tranquility; 5 – peaceful and quiet; 4 – feeling still; 3 – noticing the feeling of relaxation in your hands and feet; 2 – even, comfortable, calm breathing; and 1 – with the muscles around your eyes and mouth at ease, you are feeling more relaxed than you have in a while.

PRACTICE RATIONAL THINKING

Imagine that you are in a quiet library, surrounded by rows of books filled with knowledge. Each book represents a different perspective, a different way of thinking. As you open these books and explore their contents, imagine your mind expanding with rational thought. Let logic and reason guide your decisions, just as you would select the right book from the shelf.

Epictetus, the ancient stoic philosopher, taught that people are not disturbed by things but rather by the view they take of them. It is the meaning that people attach to an event, not the event itself that upsets or excites them. Emotions occur instantaneously but we have the unique ability to respond to these emotions with logic. By applying reason and logic to our thoughts, we are better able to navigate life's challenges.

As you sit in the tranquil library, rain begins to fall and you listen to the soothing sound of the raindrops on the window. Just as each raindrop follows a logical path to the ground, you can allow your thoughts to follow a logical course. When faced with challenges, you can choose to listen to the rational voice within, guiding you with clarity and wisdom.

Every race car driver knows, where their eyes go, the car goes, and it is the same with your thoughts. You have the power to choose your thoughts, to choose the meaning you attach to the events around you. When you choose to see a threat, there is more threat. When instead you choose to see opportunity, there is more opportunity. You choose not to be disturbed by the events as they unfold but rather take a positive, rational, logical perspective. Emotions are real but you are not ruled by your emotions. Instead, you apply knowledge, perspective, logic, and rational thought to move past your emotions and make controlled, skillful, measured, well-ordered, and organized decisions.

As you are browsing the books in the library, you discover a book with Aesop's fables. You take the book back to a comfortable chair and randomly open the book and begin reading the story of the Wind and the Sun.

PRACTICE RATIONAL THINKING

Once upon a time, the Wind and the Sun were having a friendly debate about who was stronger. They saw a traveler walking along a dusty road and decided to settle their argument with a challenge.

The Wind said, “I will prove my strength by blowing that travelers cloak off his back.”

So, the Wind blew with all its might, creating a fierce gale that howled and roared. But the harder the wind blew, the tighter the traveler clutched his cloak around him.

The Sun smiled and said, “Let me try. I will show you that gentleness can be more powerful than force.” The Sun began to shine warmly, its rays gradually warming the air. As the traveler felt the gentle warmth, he started to feel hot in his heavy cloak. Soon, he found the cloak too oppressive and willingly removed it.

The wind realized its defeat and acknowledged the Sun’s superior strength.

Gentle and rational persuasion is so much more effective than brute force when faced with challenges or conflicts. Thinking about this story, you understand how important it is to cultivate a rational and thoughtful mindset in the face of challenges. You can achieve your goals through restrained, meticulous, precise logic and rational choices.

As you close the book, you run your fingers over the surface of the cover. Your fingers skim across the front of the book and you can feel the smooth, even, stable, and steadiness of this cover. You are reminded to ground yourself in rationality. Just as you can feel the realness of your fingers, you can engage your logical mind to differentiate between what’s true and what’s merely emotion-driven thoughts.

It has been said that all our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason. As you ponder this thought your commitment to challenging your emotions by choosing the meaning you attach to event is strengthened. It is through rational and logical consideration that you break through to the outcomes you desire.

PRACTICE RATIONAL THINKING

It's almost time to return to your day but before you do, you can review your special suggestions.

Take a deep breath, open your eyes, and repeat the following suggestions:

[add your personal suggestions here]

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR VALUES

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

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I'm going to count down from 10 to 1 and when I reach one, you will be completely relaxed and open to growing and learning. 10 – feeling calm; 9 – increasing your sense of serenity; 8 – letting go of all thoughts and worries; 7 – twice as relaxed as before; 6 – feeling a growing sense of tranquility; 5 – peaceful and quiet; 4 – feeling still; 3 – noticing the feeling of relaxation in your hands and feet; 2 – even, comfortable, calm breathing; and 1 – with the muscles around your eyes and mouth at ease, you are feeling more relaxed than you have in a while.

LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR VALUES

Imagine that you are standing in front of a mirror, gazing at your reflection. As you look into your own eyes, see the person who embodies your deepest values. Let your reflection remind you to align your actions with your values, ensuring that every step you take is a step toward the life you aspire to lead. You recognize that when your actions and choices are in alignment with your core principles, you can live a purposeful and meaningful life, regardless of external circumstances. Values are the standards you follow in determining your life, your north star and when you are living those standards, it is easy to sleep at night and no matter what happens, for you, it is as it needs to be. Decisions become so much easier when you are living your values and whatever the outcome, you are content with yourself. When you are living your values, it's not about what you get, but rather what you become, and you are at peace with yourself.

As you continue to gaze into your mirror, you can listen to the sound of your heartbeat, steady and unwavering. Each beat is a reminder of your core values. Let this sound guide your choices, ensuring that your actions resonate with the values that define you.

Your thoughts begin to wander, and you think about the story of the lost son. Once upon a time, a wealthy man with two sons lived in a small village. The younger son was restless and eager to explore the world beyond the village. He approached his father and asked for his share of the inheritance so that he could venture out and experience life.

Reluctantly, the father granted his request, and the younger son set off on a journey. He indulged in a life of extravagance, squandering his wealth on pleasures and living recklessly. However, as time went on, his money ran out, and he found himself destitute.

Faced with desperation, the young man took up a job feeding pigs, a task considered impure in his culture. He was so hungry that he longed to eat the pig's food, but even that was denied to him. In his lowest moment, he realized the gravity of his actions and the values he had forsaken.

LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR VALUES

Filled with remorse, the young man decided to return home to his father, admitting his mistakes and hoping to become a servant in his father's household. He knew he didn't deserve to be treated as a son.

As he approached the village, his father spotted him from afar and ran to embrace him. Instead of chastising his son, the father welcomed him with open arms, celebrating his return. He clothed him, fed him, and threw a grand feast to rejoice.

The elder son, who had remained with his father, was upset by the lavish welcome his younger brother received. He questioned his father's decision to celebrate someone who had squandered his inheritance. In response, the father explained that his joy came from the return of his lost son and the opportunity for redemption.

As you think about this story, you remember how important it is to live according to your values and not to squander opportunities and blessings. But even as important as this is, you also understand that like the father, you must treat yourself with compassion and forgiveness when you slip up and stray from your values.

And as reminder to treat yourself with the love and caring you would offer another, you place your hand over your heart, feeling its rhythm. Deep in your heart is your unique path and purpose. When faced with decisions, you can allow the rhythm of your heart to guide you towards choices that honor your values. You know that the more your actions are aligned with your values, the more vital, meaningful, and happier your life is.

LIVE ACCORDING TO YOUR VALUES

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Take a deep breath, open your eyes, and repeat the following suggestions:

[add your personal suggestions here]

Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

FOCUS ON THE GREATER GOOD

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

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FOCUS ON THE GREATER GOOD

A mosaic is made up of countless interconnected pieces. Each piece represents life, a contribution to the greater good. As you observe the mosaic, you can feel a sense of unity with the world around you. Just as any one piece of the mosaic matters in the grand design, so does your contribution to the betterment of society.

You understand that we are all interconnected and part of a broader human community. Your actions should be guided by a sense of responsibility and benevolence towards others. You choose to cultivate virtues such as justice, kindness, compassion, and fairness, and make decisions that benefit not only yourself, but also others.

It has been said that when you focus on the good, the good becomes better. That is the world you choose to live in. It is so easy to get caught up in acquiring things and building power, but pursuing these at the expense of others leaves you empty. When you have balance and your decisions are made with the greater good in mind, you can truly enjoy the blessings that come from your effort, determination, sacrifice, and energy. True power exists only in sharing the rewards with those who have supported you and rely on you. Your strength is based on the willingness of others to follow your lead and their willingness is based on their trust that you will make decisions that benefit the whole and not just yourself.

There is an old Sufi story about sharing.

Once, a dervish (which is a Sufi mystic) was wandering in the desert when he came across a small village. He was welcomed by the villagers and offered food and shelter. Grateful for their hospitality, the dervish decided to share a teaching with them.

He said, "I have a precious hone jar that I will give to one of you, but with a condition. You must promise that you will only take one finger's worth of honey every day. If you take more than that, the jar will disappear forever." The villagers agreed to the condition and were excited about the gift. Each day, they would dip one finger into the jar and enjoy the sweet honey. Days turned into weeks, and the jar seemed endless.

FOCUS ON THE GREATER GOOD

However, as time passed, the villagers' greed grew. They began to take a little more honey than they should, thinking the dervish would not notice. As their greed increased, the honey jar began to visibly shrink. Despite this, they continued to take more than their share.

One day, the dervish called the villagers together and asked for the honey jar. When he received it, he looked inside and saw that it was nearly empty. He gently admonished them, saying, "You were unable to resist the temptation of your desires, and now you have lost the precious honey forever."

You understand the importance of making decisions for the greater good by practicing self-discipline and restraint. Desires and greed left unchecked can lead to the loss of valuable resources and opportunities for growth.

As you ponder this story, you might imagine a pebble in your hand, and feel its weight. The pebble is like a small act of kindness or a contribution to the greater good. When you throw that little pebble into still water, it creates ripples that grow and expand. Like the ripples of the pebble, a small kindness or contribution spreads out, touching lives beyond your own.

It has been said, when there is an opportunity, be kind, and there is always an opportunity. This is the choice that you want to make because you understand that what you send out to the world comes back to you and this is the world you want to live in. Your kindness or contribution will touch so many lives in unexpected ways. Although you make these unselfish acts because this is how you want to live, you understand that the universe will return kindness and love to you when need it the most.

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[add your personal suggestions here]

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1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

PRACTICE SELF-REFLECTION

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

Now, expand your peripheral vision and, without moving your head, see as much as you can – wider and wider, including more and more in your vision while still seeing the object.

Refocus like a laser on just the object, that's right. Once more, expand your peripheral vision and see even more than you did before. Bring your focus back in on the object and notice that your eyes are getting tired with all this exercise.

Now in your imagination, but with your eyes still open, move that object to the middle of the room, halfway between you and the wall. Notice how the object floats in the air. Now, you can bring it even closer, until it's almost at your nose. Explore it up close. Looking at the object so close, your eyes are even more tired. Go ahead and close them now but continue to see the object as if you can see it right through your eyelids. See the detail, the color, the size of the object, that's right.

I'm going to count down from 10 to 1 and when I reach one, you will be completely relaxed and open to growing and learning. 10 – feeling calm; 9 – increasing your sense of serenity; 8 – letting go of all thoughts and worries; 7 – twice as relaxed as before; 6 – feeling a growing sense of tranquility; 5 – peaceful and quiet; 4 – feeling still; 3 – noticing the feeling of relaxation in your hands and feet; 2 – even, comfortable, calm breathing; and 1 – with the muscles around your eyes and mouth at ease, you are feeling more relaxed than you have in a while.

PRACTICE SELF-REFLECTION

In your mind, picture a serene garden with a gentle breeze swaying the flowers. As you watch, you can imagine yourself holding a kite. This kite is like your emotions. Feel the tension in the string as the wind picks up, just as your emotions might rise. But, like a skilled kite flyer, you have the power to control the string, guiding your emotions with grace.

By exercising restraint over your desires, emotions, and impulses you can achieve a state of inner tranquility and maintain calmness in the face of life's challenges. This doesn't mean suppressing your emotions but rather, acknowledging them, and then choosing to respond to them thoughtfully and virtuously.

Self-regulation is power. You choose to take back control from external events and you realize that when you choose your response using balanced, coherent, rational, sensible, realistic, and logical thought, you are strong.

You can ask yourself every day, is what I am doing getting me closer to where I want to be tomorrow? The past is gone, and the future is not here but the choices you make today will direct your future. Choosing self-regulation over emotional responses will move you to the future that you desire.

There is the story of the wise man and the rusty lock. The story goes that there was a small village with a very wise man that the villagers often went to for advice.

One day, a young man approached him and said, "Master, I have a hot temper. When I get angry, I say hurtful things and act impulsively. Can you help me?"

The Sufi master nodded and said, "Bring me a rust lock, a hammer, and a bag of nails."

The young man did as he was instructed. The Sufi master handed him the hammer and said, "Now, go to the town square and nail the rust lock to the trunk of the oldest tree. Use all of the nails in this bag."

PRACTICE SELF-REFLECTION

Confused but willing to follow the master's guidance, the young man nailed the lock to the tree. He returned to the Sufi and asked, "Master, I've done as you said. What does this have to do with my temper?"

The Sufi smiled and said, "Whenever you feel anger rising within you, go to the tree, and every time you resist giving in to your anger, remove a nail from the lock."

Days turned into weeks, and the young man diligently followed the Sufi's advice. Whenever he felt anger, he would go to the tree and remove a nail. Eventually, all the nails were gone, and he proudly went to the Sufi to report his accomplishment.

The Sufi looked at him and said, "Now, go back to the tree and remove the rusty lock."

The young man struggled to remove the lock, realizing that the rust had caused it to become even more stuck over time. He returned to the Sufi, frustrated.

The Sufi gently explained, "Just as the rusty lock took time to corrode, so does the habit of anger take time to break. While you can learn to control your reactions, the impressions of anger may remain. With patience and self-reflection, you can weaken those impressions over time, but it requires consistent effort."

Self-reflection and patience are needed to overcome negative habits and reactions. Just as the young man needed to remove the rusty lock, you too need time and continuous effort to change deeply ingrained behaviors and responses. You can be patient with yourself on this journey.

PRACTICE SELF-REFLECTION

You can do what many people do and carry a special stone, coin, or trinket in your pocket as a talisman. This will help you with your practice. When you feel unhelpful emotions rising, you can hold your talisman, feel its weight, and allow it to ground you in the present moment. As you focus on the talisman, you can imagine it absorbing any negative energy you might be carrying. When you place the talisman back in your pocket, you can feel a sense of lightness, knowing you've released emotional weight.

As Angela Mayou said, you may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them. You have the power to make your choices.

PRACTICE SELF-REFLECTION

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[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

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CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

Imagine a field of blooming flowers, each petal representing something you're grateful for. See the field of expanding as your list of blessings grows. Visualize yourself walking through the field, feeling a deep sense of gratitude for each flower you encounter.

Gratitude is a powerful tool for fostering contentment, resilience, and a positive outlook on life. By focusing on what you have and being thankful for it, you can develop a deeper sense of fulfillment and reduce the tendency to always desire more or to complain about what you lack.

As the great Stoic philosopher, Marcus Aurelius advised, "When you arise in the morning, think of what a precious privilege it is to be alive – to breathe, to think, to enjoy, to love."

You can imagine the joyful, genuine laughter of a baby, or a child giggling with delight at the silliness of life. Laughter is a reminder of life's beautiful moments. Let the sound fill you with gratitude, appreciating the happiness that surrounds you.

You understand that while it is fine to want things, you never want to let the things you want make you forget the things that you have. Gratitude grounds you in the present. You know this to be true, when you are grateful for all that you have, you will get more in abundance.

There is an old story about a woman named Kaney who lived in a small village. Kaney was known for her kind and grateful heart. Every morning, Kaney would gather a bouquet of wildflowers from the fields and place them in a basket outside her home as an offering of gratitude to the universe.

One day, a traveler passing through the village saw Kaney's daily ritual and asked her, "Why do you go to the trouble of picking flowers and leaving them in a basket every day?"

Kaney smiled and replied, "These flowers are a symbol of the many blessings in my life. I am grateful for the beauty of nature, the love of my family, and the simple joys that surround me. By offering these flowers, I remind myself to appreciate and be thankful for all that I have."

CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

The traveler was moved by Kaney's words and decided to adopt a similar practice in his own life. He began to gather flowers and offer them as a symbol of his gratitude.

As time passed, the traveler found that his heart became lighter, and he felt a newfound sense of joy and contentment. He realized that by focusing on the positive aspects of his life and expressing gratitude, he had transformed his outlook and experienced positive emotions that he had never felt before.

Imagine folding your hands together, interlacing your fingers. Feel the connection between your palms. As you do, you can be reminded of the interconnection of life. With each breath, let the feeling of gratitude flow through your hands, spreading warmth and positivity.

It's interesting but it isn't joy that makes us grateful, it's gratefulness that brings us joy. When you reach to open a door, you can be reminded that you are opening your heart to gratefulness. Each time you open a door, remind yourself of something you are grateful for, your hot coffee, your comfortable bed, the shirt you are wearing, it's the little things that will bring you joy. Like the traveler, when you notice your gifts and express your gratefulness, you will experience that precious sense of joy and contentment.

CULTIVATE GRATITUDE

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[add your personal suggestions here]

And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

PRACTICE SELF-DISCIPLINE

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

Now, expand your peripheral vision and, without moving your head, see as much as you can – wider and wider, including more and more in your vision while still seeing the object.

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PRACTICE SELF-DISCIPLINE

Picture yourself in a serene forest. As you walk, notice the details around you – the texture of tree bark, the play of light through leaves. Just as you're present in this moment, be mindful of your thoughts and emotions. Observe them without judgment, like an observer in the forest.

Introspection and self-reflection allow you to gain better control over your emotions and actions. You can respond to external events with reason and wisdom rather than being swayed by impulsive or irrational behavior. You can also develop empathy and compassion towards others, recognizing our shared humanity and interconnectedness.

Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing and as Ma Jaya Sati reminds us, when you quiet your mind, your soul will speak.

You understand that it is through mindfulness you can strengthen your self-awareness and it is through self-awareness that you give yourself an opportunity to self-correct.

You can listen to the sounds around you – the distant hum of nature, the rustling leaves. Just as you tune into these sounds, be attentive to your inner dialogue. Listen to your thoughts without attachment, gaining a deeper understanding of your inner world.

You have a wealth of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, insight, perception, and intelligence available to you just below your conscious awareness. Your mother's name is not in your conscious awareness until you are asked for it but once you are asked, you can easily retrieve it. Just as this information is readily available to you, so is all the immense store of insight readily available. Mindfulness practice will calm your mind, allowing you to access this great store of wisdom. You have the capacity to stand apart from yourself and examine your thoughts, your motives, and your actions and when you do, you can see yourself as you are and take control of who you want to be.

You might remember the Hans Christian Anderson story of the emperor and his new clothes.

PRACTICE SELF-DISCIPLINE

In a distant kingdom, there lived an emperor who loved fine clothing more than anything else. Two clever scammers heard about the emperor's obsession and devised a plan to exploit it.

They arrived in the kingdom claiming to be weavers who could create the finest, most exquisite cloth in the world. They claimed that this cloth was so special that it was invisible to those who were foolish or unfit for their positions.

The emperor was intrigued and ordered the weavers to make him a suit from this special cloth. As the weavers pretended to work, they showed the emperor empty looms, and he pretended to see the fabric they were weaving. Out of fear of being perceived as foolish, none of his advisors or officials acknowledged that they couldn't see the cloth.

Finally, the weavers announced that the suit was complete. The emperor put on the imaginary suit and paraded through the streets, and everyone cheered, not wanting to admit they couldn't see anything. It was a child who innocently pointed out that the emperor was actually naked.

The emperor, realizing the truth, felt embarrassed but also enlightened. He had been so wrapped up in his desire for fine clothing and the fear of appearing foolish, that he had lost touch with reality.

You can be mindful and self-aware. It is a choice. Mindfulness is easy, the hardest part is remembering to do it. When you rub your thumb against your fingers, you can feel the sensation of touch. Each touch is a reminder to be fully present. Let the physical sensation ground you in the now, heightening your awareness of the world around you and within you.

PRACTICE SELF-DISCIPLINE

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[add your personal suggestions here]

And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

FOCUS ON THE PRESENT MOMENT

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

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FOCUS ON THE PRESENT MOMENT

Imagine you are standing beside a gently flowing river. It's hot and you take your shoes off and step into the river to enjoy the cool waters. As the water swirls around your feet and your lower calves, you are aware that the river is in constant motion. It is early fall and the tree by the river is beginning to lose its leaves. As you are enjoying the water gently rolling around your feet, you see a leaf fall into the river and another and another. Each one is quickly caught up in the natural current, gently floating further and further away from you. Imagine placing your worries and distractions on the leaves as they fall into the water. Watch as the river carries them away, leaving you with only the present moment.

The past is gone and beyond our control and the future is uncertain. The only moment in which we can have direct influence is the present. By being fully present in the moment, we can better direct our attention and efforts toward what truly matters, embracing the opportunities for growth, virtue, and contentment available.

The great Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, reminds us to "Never let the future disturb you. You will meet it, if you have to, with the same weapon of reason which today arm you against the present."

If you think about it, the present moment is the only time there is. No matter what time it is, it is always now. The wise monk, Thich Nhat Hanh said, "The present moment is the only moment available to us and it is the door to all moments."

When you listen to the ticking of a clock, each tick is a reminder of the present moment, a fleeting yet precious gift. Let the sound keep you anchored in now, freeing you from concerns about the past or the future.

When you recognize that you are anxious or stressed, you might remember the story of the monk and the butterfly.

A Zen master was meditating in a garden when a young disciple approached him, visibly distressed. The disciple said, "Master, my mind is restless and troubled. I can't find peace."

FOCUS ON THE PRESENT MOMENT

The master gestured to a nearby garden filled with colorful flowers and butterflies. He said, "Observe the butterfly among the flowers. It flits from one to another, seemingly without a care. Yet, it doesn't dwell on the past flower nor worry about the next. It is fully present in each moment."

The disciple watched the butterfly for a while, its graceful movements captivating him. Gradually, he felt his own restlessness ease.

The master continued, "Just like the butterfly, your mind can find peace when you learn to be fully present in each moment. Let go of the past and future and immerse yourself in the now."

The disciple nodded, a glimmer of understanding in his eyes. He realized that the key to peace was to embrace the present moment, just as the butterfly danced from flower to flower, fully engaged in the beauty of each one.

Oprah reminds us that living in the moment means letting go of the past and not waiting for the future. It means living your life consciously, aware that each moment you breathe is a gift.

You can gently tap your fingers together, feeling the rhythmic touch. Each tap brings you back to the present, a tactile reminder to fully experience each passing moment.

FOCUS ON THE PRESENT MOMENT

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And one last time, close your eyes and take a deep breath. Now open your eyes and repeat your personal suggestions.

[add your personal suggestions here]

I'm going to count up from one to three and when I reach three, you will be alert and ready to get on with your day.

1 – Noticing the air and sounds around you;

2 – Gently stretching your neck and rolling your shoulders;

3 – fully alert, smiling and feeling optimistic and enthusiastic about your future.

PRACTICE HUMILITY

Let's get started. Take three deep breaths. Enjoy the coolness of the air as you inhale and notice the warmth of the air as you exhale. Inhale calmness, exhale any tension or stress in your body. And one more time, inhale peace and exhale any worries or concerns. As you sit comfortably and relaxed, focus on something on the opposite wall. It can be a picture, a small stain, an ornament, or even the pattern of light from a window. It doesn't matter what you choose, just focus on that thing, exploring it in detail. As you focus, close off any awareness of anything around that object, nothing else exists but you and the object. That's right.

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PRACTICE HUMILITY

Have you ever laid on the ground, gazing at the starlit sky with the vastness of the universe stretching out before you? In that moment, as you gaze at the stars, it's hard not to feel a sense of humility in the face of such immense beauty and complexity. When you allow yourself to experience this you can recognize your place in the grand scheme of things.

Humility from the Stoic perspective involves a balanced and realistic view of oneself in relation to the world. It recognizes your place in the grand scheme of the universe, acknowledging your limitations and imperfections. It helps you to remain grounded, modest, and free from arrogance.

When you listen to the whisper of a gentle breeze, you can be reminded of the world's vastness beyond you. Just as the breeze humbles itself before the expanse of nature, you can embrace humility as a virtue that allows you to learn and to grow.

Humility does not mean you must deny your strengths. It simply means that you can be honest about your weaknesses. Humility builds trust. It's interesting, when you admit to what you don't know, people trust what you do know.

There is a story about two athletes who demonstrated a different approach to their sport, one was arrogant and the other was humble. Their outcomes were very different.

The story takes place in a thriving city, where there was a renowned athlete named Alex who excelled in various sports. Alex was highly skilled and had won numerous competitions, earning fame and recognition. However, along with his success came a sense of arrogance and superiority.

One day, a new athlete named Marta arrived in the city. Marta was also skilled and quickly gained attention for her abilities. Despite her accomplishments, she remained humble and respectful of others.

PRACTICE HUMILITY

Alex, however, couldn't tolerate the idea of someone potentially rivaling his reputation. He openly mocked Marta, boasting about his own achievements, and belittling hers. He even challenged her to a competition, certain that he would win easily.

Marta accepted the challenge with grace and humility. The day of the competition arrived, and a large crowd gathered to watch. As the events unfolded, it became evident that both athletes were skilled and determined.

As they neared the final event, a twist of fate occurred. The weather changed, and rain began to pour. The final event involved a race, and the slippery track became a challenge for both athletes.

Marta, despite the adversity, focused on the race and adapted her techniques to the wet conditions. Alex, however, remained overconfident, underestimating the impact of the rain. As the race began, he slipped and fell, injuring himself.

Marta persevered through the rain, eventually crossing the finish line, and winning the competition. The crowd cheered for her, recognizing her talent and her humility in the face of challenges.

Alex, humbled by his defeat and his own arrogance, had to confront the consequences of his lack of humility. He realized that his attitude had led to his downfall and had cost him not only the competition but also the respect of his peers.

Place your hand over your heart, feeling its steady beat. Each heartbeat is a reminder that you are part of something greater. As you feel the rhythm, embrace humility to connect with the world around you. Humility is a choice, choose wisely.

PRACTICE HUMILITY

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