

Hello from Ishwari



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Sharing News, Inspiration, Tools, Events, Fun

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Inspiration

By Anita Moorjani, author of *Dying to Be Me: My Journey From Cancer to Near Death to True Healing*

"How could I have said something so stupid??"

"That was so dumb of me!! I should have known better!"

"I will never get it right! Why am I even bothering to try??"

"I wish I wasn't so clumsy! Why can't I be more elegant and graceful, like Janet?"

Does any of that sound familiar to you? That was my inner voice, several years ago. That was the voice in my head, constantly nagging, putting myself down, wishing I was different, better, smarter, stronger, more spiritual. Wishing I was anyone but who I am.

The most meaningful lesson I learned from being at death's door is that unless I love myself, nothing else in my life can function at its best. The amount of depth, meaning, and joy I experience in my life is in direct proportion to how much love I have for myself. The amount of love, kindness, patience I have for others is also directly proportional to how much love, patience and kindness I have for myself, because we cannot give others what we ourselves do not have. And, unsurprisingly, the amount of love, respect, support, and compassion I receive from others is also in direct proportion to how much of the same I have for myself.

Many of us are taught from a young age to "love our neighbors as we love ourselves." But what if we don't love ourselves? What if we are our own worst enemy, and our own



harshest critic? If we treat others as we treat ourselves, then are we judging everyone else with the same harsh brush that we are using to paint ourselves? Is this why there are more people on our planet obsessed with trying to condemn anyone who is different, instead of learning to embrace everyone who shares our earth, and rejoice in our differences?

Learning to love others begins with learning to love ourselves unconditionally first. This seems to be a well-kept secret, which no one taught me as I was growing up. On the contrary, I was encouraged from a young age to put myself last, that it is selfish to love ourselves, or put ourselves first. In fact, I used to give and give of myself, without tending to my own needs, to the point that I became so drained it started to affect my health. Continuing in this vein, I constantly believed that I needed to work on myself because I wasn't good enough as I am. So I continued to work on being "better," kinder, more "loving," more "spiritual." I was always judging myself because I never felt I made the mark.

And then I got cancer. In fact, I didn't just get cancer, I nearly died from cancer! But my cancer was the greatest gift I could ever have. Nearly dying taught me how to live. My cancer taught me the importance of loving and valuing myself unconditionally for who I am -- a perfect being of the Universe, who is worthy and deserving of love, without needing to prove myself, better myself or change myself in any way. I became aware that I am someone who has a right to express my uniqueness with abandon.

I now also understand that I don't have to work at being spiritual. Being spiritual is who we are, at our core, whether we realize it or not. It is our true nature, so we cannot not be spiritual! Being yourself and being spiritual are one and the same thing.

Because of my experience, I will never forsake myself ever again. I will never let myself down, treat myself like a doormat, or make myself small so others can feel big. I have learned that this is the biggest gift that I give not only to myself, but also to the planet, because I paint others with the same brush as I use on myself.

My life is much more joyful and meaningful now, and I have much more love to share with others than I ever did before, which I do unconditionally, and without draining myself. But most important, I now understand that if I do not express my authenticity, the Universe will be deprived of who I came here to be.

From huffingtonpost.com.

Tools

I came across the beautiful item below while sorting through a stack of papers on my desk. Thanks to the Internet, I was easily able to identify the writer. I think it's a worthwhile endeavor to attempt to live up to these 12 pledges.

I Pledge Allegiance

by David Ault

1) I pledge allegiance to breaking the self-imposed barriers of my humanness. I recognize that my time on this planet is precious and limited. Every day is a canvas on which I can create. Every day is an opportunity for me to move in the direction of the dreams and the expanded vision I feel inside. By setting aside petty grievances, past mistakes, righteous anger and my broken story, I pledge to move forward and embrace the experience of freedom right here and right now.

2) I pledge allegiance to the expression of my spiritual honesty. I fully own the fact that my presence here in this body and on this earth is a celebration of uniqueness and importance. Creation makes no mistakes. I am a creation of life, of a higher power, of perfection. My reason for being here matters in the grand divine plan. I must be honest with my contract of life and walk the path of my destiny with conviction, purpose and grace.

3) I pledge allegiance to the quiet soldier within. I understand that the championing spirit that is already cellularly alive inside of me, that was already in place at the time of my birth, waits patiently for my current belief about myself to join it in its knowing. I march forward towards a history of my own making, wisely, lovingly choosing the means by which I spread my beliefs and convictions. I never make others wrong for their chosen path for I recognize the innumerable roads that lead to the One.

4) I pledge allegiance to a partnership with divinity. I choose to see others and myself from eyes that already view the wholeness and perfection within. I do not entertain our past damage or encourage us to identify with it for I trust that a grander calling card has been printed for us to distribute in promoting our lives. I champion all of us to celebrate what is working rather than what isn't.

5) I pledge allegiance to wise discernment – knowing when to speak and when to remain quiet, knowing when to comfort and when to leave alone, knowing when to intervene and when to avoid rescuing and interfering.

6) I pledge allegiance to people and projects of substance. I cannot travel this road alone. If there is anything we as a species need, it is each other. I actively choose to support those whose work I believe in with my time, talent and treasure. I joyously give to those whose intention and purpose is for self-empowerment and the awakening of humanity to its personal magnificence. I rally to make others aware of such light bearers and do what I can to support them in furthering their vision.

7) I pledge allegiance to the freedom from comparison. I once and for all lay down my wearisome, stale beliefs of unworthiness and not being good enough. I know that my past does not define who I am. I am forever evolving, growing and learning. I recognize that I am a marvel. I now choose opportunities to let my voice be heard; to let my light shatter the darkness of futility so that every personal dream is explored.

8) I pledge allegiance in knowing that things are not always as they seem. Just because something can't be seen with the physical eye or rationalized by our current mode of understanding does not negate its existence. Understanding the difference between reality and illusion, I move into a fuller acceptance of the non-physical – the mystical, intuitive, soul aspect of living that expands my consciousness and deepens my days.

9) I pledge allegiance to actions that fulfill the greatest good for all. By becoming a gatekeeper of compassion, tolerance and love, I move into a fuller conviction of pure intent with regard to the words that I speak and the choices that I make. I pursue a win-win in all activities of life.

10) I pledge allegiance to those who have gone before me, the ancestral lineage whose courage, sacrifice and conviction still live in my bones. I honor the privileges given to me today because of the sweat from their pioneering efforts and the fortitude of their convictions. I give thanks for my responsibility in creating the same for future generations.

11) I pledge allegiance to a love that has no agenda. I no longer choose to give for what I might get, to manipulate in order to control, to abandon before I can be abandoned, to tolerate because there are seemingly no other options. I choose to love as a way of being. I am content in my choice whether outside circumstances respond or not. In being love, I create fulfillment above and beyond what the human condition can provide.

12) I pledge allegiance to the sacredness of laughter, knowing that the greatest healing force that exists reverberates from the vibration of this holy and irreplaceable gift. I allow humor, joy and eruptions of laughter to make their home in my heart. I let my physical body respond to the sacred stimulus and biological wonder that laughter creates and vow to keep this attribute alive and thriving all the days of my life.



This next piece comes from Meditation Secrets for Women, by Camille Maurine and Lorin Roche. While not all meditation techniques are pleasure-oriented, others - such as Mindfulness and Vipassana - do lend themselves to this comparison. I think it transcends gender and can be delightfully relevant to us all.



Meditation and Sex

The *quality of attention* in meditation is a lot like sex – when you find the way *you* like it. It is a delicate internal meeting, a meandering discovery of what you enjoy, and a gradual surrender into more and more pleasure. And afterward you feel great! You’re a new woman (person), totally yourself; connected, renewed, juicy and relaxed.

The *process* is also very similar in meditation and sex; in response to an inner urge or call, you create the safety to relax. Both meditation and sex are the best when there’s no demand for anything in particular to happen. You simply allow yourself to enjoy and gently unfold. You get interested. You focus on the intriguing sensory details, and, as you pay attention, your senses are turned on. You become present, and you start to let go. Inevitably, just about then, you suddenly find yourself thinking of something else; “I have to do the laundry,” or “Uh-oh, I didn’t call so-and-so back.” You are “away” for a few seconds. But naturally and eventually, the pleasure calls you back (it is a compelling focus), and as you go with the sensations and movement, you let go a little more. There is a slow dilation deep inside, a melting open. You tap into your succulent nature. This cycle happens in waves, deepening in intensity, until you are absorbed in pleasure, taken over by the energy. Currents of life force surge through you, clearing pathways down to your toes and up through the top of your head, revitalizing every cell and balancing everything.

Meditation is a communion with yourself. You are finding what works for you – your rhythm, your body, your emotions. Its gentle, undemanding touch can help to heal any places of trauma, sexual wounding, or inhibition. The secrets you learn in meditation enrich your sensuality - within yourself and if you choose to open sexually with another. Meditative awareness can be a rapturous lovemaking with the universe. This secret awaits you.



Sleeping Well

In my practice, I find that many people have trouble sleeping. It’s sometimes hard to know which comes first – the sleep problems or the other issues that bring a person into the therapy setting. In

either case, sleep is a vital element of health and vitality, and therefore, an important part of the healing and growth that is the desired outcome of the counseling process.

Luckily, I sleep well most of the time. While I do have an occasional wakeful night, I feel rested and refreshed most mornings. However, an estimated 5 to 70 million Americans have sleep or wakefulness issues. I found the tips below on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. For more tips and the complete article, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/features/dssleep/>

Keep A Regular Sleep Schedule

Getting in sync with your body's natural sleep-wake cycle—your circadian rhythm—is one of the most important strategies for achieving good sleep. If you keep a regular sleep schedule, going to bed and getting up at the same time each day, you will feel much more refreshed and energized than if you sleep the same number of hours at different times. This holds true even if you alter your sleep schedule by only an hour or two. Consistency is vitally important.

- Set a regular bedtime. Go to bed at the same time every night. Choose a time when you normally feel tired, so that you don't toss and turn. Try not to break this routine on weekends when it may be tempting to stay up late. If you want to change your bedtime, help your body adjust by making the change in small daily increments, such as 15 minutes earlier or later each day.
- Wake up at the same time every day. If you're getting enough sleep, you should wake up naturally without an alarm. If you need an alarm clock to wake up on time, you may need to set an earlier bedtime. As with your bedtime, try to maintain your regular wake-time even on weekends.
- Nap to make up for lost sleep. If you need to make up for a few lost hours, opt for a daytime nap rather than sleeping late. This strategy allows you to pay off your sleep debt without disturbing your natural sleep-wake rhythm, which often backfires in insomnia and throws you off for days.
- Be smart about napping. While taking a nap can be a great way to recharge, especially for older adults, it can make insomnia worse. If insomnia is a problem for you, consider eliminating napping. If you must nap, do it in the early afternoon, and limit it to thirty minutes.
- Fight after-dinner drowsiness. If you find yourself getting sleepy way before your bedtime, get off the couch and do something mildly stimulating to avoid falling asleep, such as washing the dishes, calling a friend, or getting clothes ready for the next day. If you give in to the drowsiness, you may wake up later in the night and have trouble getting back to sleep.

Create A Relaxing Bedtime Routine

If you make a consistent effort to relax and unwind before bed, you will sleep easier and more deeply. A peaceful bedtime routine sends a powerful signal to your brain that it's time to wind down and let go of the day's stresses. Make your bedroom more sleep friendly.

- Keep noise down. If you can't avoid or eliminate noise from barking dogs, loud neighbors, city traffic, or other people in your household, try masking it with a fan, recordings of soothing sounds, or white noise. You can buy a special sound machine or generate your own white noise by setting your radio between stations. Earplugs may also help.
- Room temperature. The temperature of your bedroom also affects sleep. Most people sleep best in a slightly cool room (around 65° F or 18° C) with adequate ventilation. A bedroom that is too hot or too cold can interfere with quality sleep.
- Make sure your bed is comfortable. You should have enough room to stretch and turn comfortably. If you often wake up with a sore back or an aching neck, you may need to invest in a new mattress or a try a different pillow. Experiment with different levels of mattress firmness, foam or egg crate toppers, and pillows that provide more or less support.
- Reserve your bed for sleeping and sex. If you associate your bed with events like work or errands, it will be harder to wind down at night. Use your bed only for sleep and sex. That way, when you go to bed, your body gets a powerful cue: it's time to either nod off or be romantic.
- Relaxing bedtime rituals to try
 - Read a book or magazine by a soft light
 - Take a warm bath
 - Listen to soft music
 - Do some easy stretches
 - Wind down with a favorite hobby
 - Listen to books on tape
 - Make simple preparations for the next day

Ways To Get Back To Sleep

It's normal to wake briefly during the night. In fact, a good sleeper won't even remember it. But if you're waking up during the night and having trouble falling back asleep, the following tips may help.

- Stay out of your head. The key to getting back to sleep is continuing to cue your body for sleep, so remain in bed in a relaxed position. Hard as it may be, try not to stress over the fact that you're awake or your inability to fall asleep again, because that very stress and anxiety encourages your body to stay awake. A good way to stay out of your head is to focus on the feelings and sensations in your body.
- Make relaxation your goal, not sleep. If you find it hard to fall back asleep, try a relaxation technique such as visualization, deep breathing, or meditation, which can be

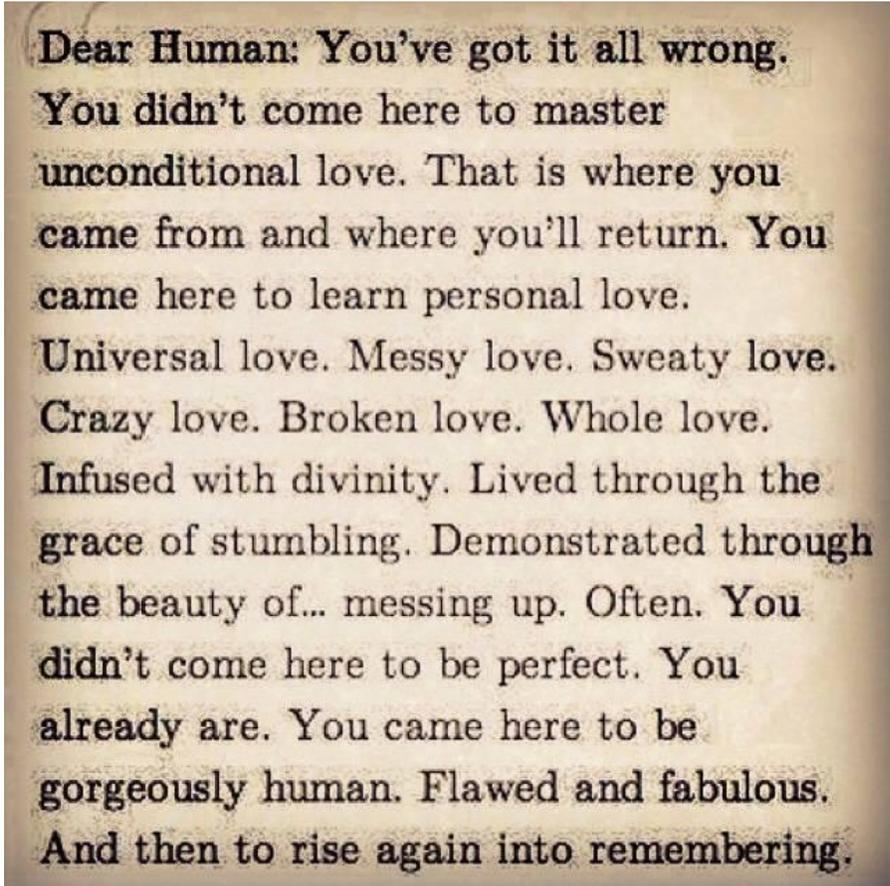
done without even getting out of bed. Remind yourself that although they're not a replacement for sleep, rest and relaxation still help rejuvenate your body.

- Do a quiet, non-stimulating activity. If you've been awake for more than 15 minutes, try getting out of bed and doing a quiet, non-stimulating activity, such as reading a book. Keep the lights dim so as not to cue your body clock that it's time to wake up. Also avoid screens of any kind—computers, TV, cell phones, iPads—as the type of light they emit is stimulating to the brain. A light snack or herbal tea might help relax you, but be careful not to eat so much that your body begins to expect a meal at that time of the day.
- Postpone worrying and brainstorming. If you wake during the night feeling anxious about something, make a brief note of it on paper and postpone worrying about it until the next day when you are fresh and it will be easier to resolve. Similarly, if a brainstorm or great idea is keeping you awake, make a note of it on paper and fall back to sleep knowing you'll be much more productive and creative after a good night's rest.

I hope these tips are helpful. Rest well!

Inspiration

I love this compassionate and grounded reminder of our humanity. I think you might, too.



Dear Human: You've got it all wrong. You didn't come here to master unconditional love. That is where you came from and where you'll return. You came here to learn personal love. Universal love. Messy love. Sweaty love. Crazy love. Broken love. Whole love. Infused with divinity. Lived through the grace of stumbling. Demonstrated through the beauty of... messing up. Often. You didn't come here to be perfect. You already are. You came here to be gorgeously human. Flawed and fabulous. And then to rise again into remembering.

When we Let Spirit Lead Us

by Alice Walker

When we let Spirit lead us
it is impossible to know where we are being led.
All we know, all we can believe, all we can hope,
is that we are going home,
that wherever Spirit takes us
is where we live.



The Guest House

by Jelaluddin Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

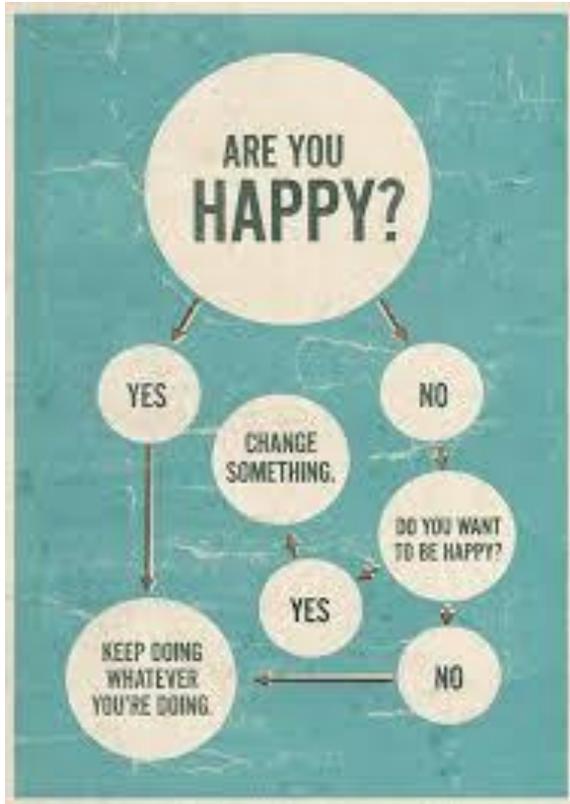
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.



Fun (Good for a Laugh - or at Least a Smile)

“If you always do what you’ve always done, you will always get what you always got.”
Unknown, from *The Artist’s Way at Work*, by Bryan, Cameron and Allen



“The person who says it cannot be done, Should not interrupt the person doing it.”
Chinese Proverb

Q: How do you catch a unique rabbit?



A: You "nique" up on it.
(Hee hee hee)

Laughter is a Survival Tool

It helps us de-stress, learn, cope, transcend, recharge, renew, hope, optimize, enjoy, create, meditate, digest, exercise, connect, engage, energize, oxygenate, release, persist, and persevere. – Christa Scalies

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