An All-In-One Manual for Spiritual Practice
A Message of Support

Our ministry is supported primarily by the freewill offerings of friends like you. Your generosity helps make it possible for us to offer this inspirational booklet. Our desire is to make Unity literature available to everyone who wants it, especially those most in need of spiritual encouragement. Unity is committed to leaving no one out.
Introduction

Survival Guide for the Soul was created to be a compact, all-in-one resource for spiritual inspiration and practice. A compilation of “how-to’s” on all the essentials—including how to pray, how to meditate, how to forgive, how to express thanks, how to know the voice of God and much more—it is designed to be a handy reference tool for staying centered in God and using any of life’s challenges as opportunities for transformation.

The word survival comes from the Latin words super, meaning “over and above” or “high quality,” and vivere, meaning “to live.” Thus survival can mean more than just “staying alive”—in this context, it means “super living” or “living at the highest level possible.”

Living in the world but not of it can be a daunting challenge.

As the poet William Wordsworth wrote:

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!

This booklet offers ideas, suggestions and practices for spiritual growth that have been used successfully for decades. They represent the practical approach to spirituality taught by Unity and, originally, by Jesus Christ himself.

May this booklet guide you to “super living” as a spiritual being having a human experience—living in the world but not of it.
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How to Handle Change

By Robert R. Barth

There is a mighty work to be done by you! Whatever it is, this work will require change. It is said that change is the essence of life. If we don’t move with it, change will happen in spite of us.

One way to work with change is found in Exodus 14:13-15. Here we find several steps that we can take to resolve any conflict, remove any obstacle, or help us adjust to any change. “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord. ... Tell the people ... to go forward” (RSV).

The first step is: DON’T PANIC. As the author of the book of Exodus says, “Fear
not.” This experience will work out. Know that a day from now, a week from now, a month from now, a year from now, this will all be behind you. The real reason not to panic is: God is in charge.

So, second: PUT GOD FIRST. Relax. “Stand firm,” knowing that with God in charge, all will work out for the highest and best good of all concerned. “The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be still” (Ex. 14:14 RSV).

How do you put God first? By seeing “the salvation of the Lord,” by knowing the truth in the situation. Let go of your Red Sea. Define the obstacle, then look beyond the obstacle. Enter into a time of gentle stillness where you can know God, where you trust in the one Presence and one Power at work in your life. Enter into that place where you can listen to the “still small voice.” Then listen to the truth of your being.

**Manifesting Health**

Is your promised land, your goal, perfect health? As you listen to the Lord of your being, you will know that perfect health is yours to claim. God is the perfect life-energy flowing through every atom and cell of your being. Wholeness is being manifested in you, right now.

**Manifesting Prosperity**

Are you seeking prosperity? As you sit in the stillness, you will be assured that God is the source of all of your good. As you put your faith in God, your supply will be guaranteed. Prosperity will flow to you in many ways, through many channels.

**Manifesting Harmony**

Are you seeking harmony in relationships? God’s love is working through you and through all of your
relationships. Love is cleansing any past hurts. Love is actively at work in and through you and in and through others.

Whatever you are seeking, you will find an answer. As you sit in the silence, there will come a moment when God speaks to you, when God guides you. But even this is not enough. There is one more step you must take.

And that is: ACTION. You need to move ahead. You have placed God first. You have prayed, meditated and known the truth. Now it is time to move ahead. There is a right and perfect step to take. Down deep you will know what to do. Do it. “Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go on dry ground through the sea” (Ex. 14:16 RSV). Do as you are guided, and the obstacle will disappear. You will be able to walk right through it.

When you are caught between a rock and a hard place, remember these steps:

Don’t panic. (“Fear not.”)

Put God first. (“Stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord.”)

Take action. (“Tell the people ... to go forward.”)
How to Apply Jesus’ Teachings to Everyday Life

By Allen Liles
Practical Christianity as taught and practiced in Unity has been described as “the teachings of Jesus Christ applied to everyday life.” During his brief ministry, Jesus taught eternal values that still serve today as a practical guide for living. His timeless instructions offer helpful insight for any situation that might confront us.

**Worry**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus counseled his listeners about worry. He advised: “Do not worry about your life ... Can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? ... Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow” (Mt. 6:25, 27, 32-34).

Jesus knew that worry saps the energy of even the strongest person. For example, our economic worries can often seem overwhelming. Most of us have, at some time, been distressed about the lack of a job or job security as well as about
rising debts, future retirement or the need for financial support for ourselves or others.

Yet Jesus promised that God can be trusted to furnish what we need. Perhaps we will not receive everything we want, but God always supplies what we need. Jesus told us not to worry about things, such as food, drink and clothes. He also gave us the secret to not letting worry consume our thoughts and immobilize us so that we fail to take positive action to improve our lives. He did this by reminding us to be free of anxiety about tomorrow—simply to live one day at a time.

**Criticism**

Many people live in a world beset with critical voices. Surrounded by so much criticism in the media and in our daily lives, we allow conflict to become a way of life. Jesus focused on the negative results that come when we dwell on tearing down other people.

Again, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave us a wise bit of practical advice: “Do not judge, so that you may not be judged” (Mt. 7:1). Or do not criticize and you will not set yourself up to be criticized in turn. Jesus taught us to first focus on our own shortcomings before we take the inventory of others. By honestly assessing our own lives, we often find the traits we dislike in others mirrored in ourselves. Accepting our own humanness brings us a less judgmental attitude toward others.

**Decisions**

We make dozens of decisions every day. In his teachings, Jesus used parables, miracles, precepts and actions to give us clear direction on how to shape our daily choices.
In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the younger son disregarded his father's authority. He took his share of the family wealth and left home. Soon his money was gone. Poor choices had caused him to hit bottom—a reality that many of us may confront at some point in our lives. Yet the pain that comes with bad decisions often acts as a catalyst for change, and in this parable the son decided to return home and admit his failings. The father faced a decision when he saw his son approaching. He could have turned him away with an “I told you so!” Instead, he rushed out to greet his son with a kiss and warm embrace. The father’s choice demonstrated love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness and understanding.

In considering the daily decisions that influence our lives, choosing these everlasting values can help keep us on track. As we set about to consciously apply the concept of practical Christianity to making choices, we first turn to the presence of God that dwells within each of us. When we go to God in prayer and meditation, we discover the divine guidance that lights the path to a correct and beneficial decision.

**Stress**

Today’s hectic pace of life has produced a high stress level that touches almost every person. Stress can produce serious health problems and personal unhappiness.

Jesus Christ also faced incredible stress. He dealt with ridicule, rejection and misunderstanding by his closest friends. He endured persecution, trial and crucifixion. How was he able to cope and move forward with an incomparable mission that would forever shape and uplift humankind?

Jesus knew who he was. He was confident of his divine assignment. He believed in his role as teacher,
healer, comforter, way-shower and instrument of God’s grace. Although he was in a stressful world, he was not of it. He was able to detach himself from the pressures and personalities around him and focus on his true destiny. In John 10:30, Jesus said, “The Father and I are one.” He sought always to dwell in a consciousness of pure harmony with Spirit, and in this state of oneness with God, the stress of human life was powerless to deter him from his mission.

By constantly affirming God’s presence and power in our lives, we, too, can experience “the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding” (Phil. 4:7).

Health

Almost all of us have taken a deep breath or said a prayer before receiving the results of a medical examination or test. What pragmatic advice do Jesus’ teachings offer us about our health concerns?

Jesus Christ sought to attune us to the healing power within. He taught that the true source of all healing flows from God. He demonstrated his divine power by raising people from sickness and death. Jesus brought the light and love of God to heal, cure and bless.

In healing the man blind from birth, Jesus told the disciples, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” (Jn. 9:5). The healing light that shines within us to counter any health problem originates from God. But the mending of our physical minds and bodies can also come from God’s reflection—through doctors, nurses, proper medications and state-of-the-art medical procedures and technology. When faith and confidence in our divine connection to the source of all life are united with the spiritual power of prayer, any healing is possible.
Jesus taught his practical methods for living in a loving, direct manner. The mark of any great teacher lies in the ability to inspire his or her students to realize their own divine potential. Jesus Christ succeeded by leaving us a priceless legacy: practical Christianity.

### Affirmations for Applying Jesus’ Teachings

**Worry**
An abiding trust in God’s benevolent promises reduces or eliminates worry in my life.

**Criticism**
Examining myself before I judge others brings me more forgiveness and harmony.

**Decisions**
I have within me the answer to every question and decision, and I can find it through prayer and meditation.

**Stress**
Knowing who I am spiritually alleviates the stress created by the material world.

**Health**
I focus on the spiritual power and perfection of God within.
Prayer is connecting with God. In prayer, you create a sacred space in which you commune with God. Unity teaches the following Five-Step Prayer Process to deepen one's connection with God and to heighten one's awareness of God within:

**Relax**

Set aside time each day for prayer. Begin your quiet time by relaxing your body and opening your mind to an awareness of God. Breathe deeply, knowing that you are in the presence of God and the presence of God is within you. Let go of your concerns and know that all is well.

**Concentrate**

As you close your eyes and release any thought of the world around you, begin to think about God ... about God’s presence in your life. Focus your mind on a single thought or idea or scripture that resonates with you. Repeat this idea over and over, either silently or aloud until it becomes your only thought.
**Meditate**

Allow this focused state of mind to move you into a deeper awareness of God. “Be still ... and know that I am God.” Be still as you connect with this divine presence within you.

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**Realize**

From the depth of your being, know that you are one with God. This knowing, this realization as you experience God’s holy presence is “silent soul communion.” In this receptive state of mind and heart, listen for the inspiration of God, the answers to your prayers.

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**Give Thanks**

Let gratitude be your heart’s joyous response to this experience of communion with God and with God’s infinite goodness. Give thanks for blessings to come, ready to receive your good.

From Unity School of Christianity
Imagine your spouse walks into the kitchen one day and says, “Honey, I’m going to the lumber store. God told me to build an ark.”

Imagine the day Zipporah was cooking over the campfire, and her husband Moses ambles in from the wilderness. “Listen, I was out with the sheep today when I saw this burning bush,” he begins. “So pack up the kids. We’re heading to Egypt so I can lead the Hebrews out of slavery.”

“Sure, Moses! Get washed up for supper.”

Now that thousands of years have passed, it’s easy to believe that God really spoke to the famous characters of the Bible, instructing them step-by-step through the course of ancient history. We don’t question that they heard the voice of God.

But someone making that claim today may be laughed at or locked up. In countless news stories, people have sworn that God told them to perform some ridiculous stunt or even commit a heinous crime.

So we may feel a little uncomfortable telling our friends we are guided by the voice of God, even in these days when stories of angels and near-death visions reach the mass market. We are likely to doubt our own experience of God.
How Do We Know When It’s Really God?

Mahatma Gandhi said, “God speaks to us every day only we don’t know how to listen.”

The Bible makes it sound so easy! Moses had his burning bush. Adam and Eve met God strolling through the Garden of Eden in the cool of the evening. Isaiah had visions, and Samuel heard God calling his name in the middle of the night. Paul was struck blind and heard a voice from the heavens.

Jesus taught that God is within, always present. Clearly, the Bible’s vivid descriptions of hearing God’s voice represent intuition. Moses, Paul and the others might also have had dramatic mystical experiences, but they certainly had an inner knowing, an inner voice.

Yet so many inner voices demand our attention! How do we know which one is God and which are the old tapes? Fear? Ego? Anger? The lonely child?

Mary Manin Morrissey, in her book Building Your Field of Dreams, says we can learn to recognize God’s voice the way we would a good friend’s on the telephone, with the first “hello.”
Here are some ways to test whether our impulses are really divine:

- **God never asks us to harm anyone.** The results are win-win for everyone, working for the highest good of all, even if that isn’t immediately evident. Relationships, jobs and lifestyles may change radically as we follow God’s guidance, but we trust that God wants only good for us and our loved ones.

- **Everything falls into place.** Doors open miraculously. There is no struggle: the universe rushes to support us. This doesn’t mean we’ll see the big picture. Often, the lantern of faith shines only a few feet ahead on the path. But with each trusting step, we can see a little farther.

- **This may not be our idea at all!** Sometimes guidance feels like an assignment, not an option, and many people argue with God. Remember Moses? Who shall I say sent me? What if they don’t believe me? I’ve never been an eloquent speaker!

- Conversely, **we may find ourselves suddenly wanting to do something we never dreamed of.** We are more surprised than anyone by where we end up and how much we enjoy it. Paul, who had persecuted Christians, later read the message of Jesus with the zeal of a convert.

- **We may even be guided to fulfill a lifelong desire, something we never thought possible.**

- **We experience love, joy and Truth.** The path may be difficult—we may wonder whether God is still with us at times—but we experience an inner satisfaction and certainty.

- **We finally stop asking whether we truly heard God’s voice.** The question no longer has meaning for us, because we simply know, even if those around us think we’re nuts.
You Can’t Escape It!

Some people are able to start at this point. Their deep inner knowing, their communion with God, steers them through life, and they trust it completely.

Others experience more doubt and struggle, questioning whether they’re on the right path, whether they’ve heard God correctly. They don’t yet feel the resonance of God’s voice as distinct from all the others.

But here’s the good news: God won’t give up. If we are destined to carry out some divine idea, we won’t be able to shrug it off.

For me, God doesn’t just whisper within. If I’m supposed to get a message, I start to see it and hear it everywhere—books, sermons, television shows, conversations with friends.

I’ve never seen a burning bush, but I believe God communicates through nature too. I have been greatly comforted by sunrises and exhilarated by thunderstorms. Who does not feel hope at the sight of a rainbow?

There’s no escaping divine instructions. We can ignore them, laugh at them or argue with them—maybe for years. But I believe God will nudge us until we build that ark or get those slaves out of Egypt.

In the end, the only choice is to trust. God’s voice may speak to us in a garden, thunder at us on a mountain-top, call our names in the night, or whisper from within. But God won’t go away. And hearing the voice is useless unless we heed it, trust it and step out in faith.
How to Create Affirmations

By Brenda S. Ehret

Many years ago I began a practice of affirming prosperity in my life. For years I affirmed abundance while experiencing no change in my financial affairs. Ultimately, I came to realize that all the while I was avidly affirming prosperity, I was firmly holding the belief that there is not enough money to go around.

When we embark on the affirmation adventure, it is important to shine some light on our core beliefs. In order to actually manifest or actualize our highest good, our core beliefs must be in alignment with the affirmation.

For instance, if I am affirming that I choose prosperity for myself and gladly accept all the good that comes to me, I must be willing to implicitly trust that God is my source and is indeed providing all that I desire in order to manifest prosperity in my life. Only when I changed my mind and released my belief that “there’s never enough” did I begin to experience true prosperity!

The practice of affirmations comes out of a deep desire for change in our lives. When we truly are ready and willing to do what it takes to create change, we are ready to set the affirmation process into motion.
In order to do this, we use a divine law called the “law of attraction.” Basically, this law states that we attract into our lives whatever we focus our attention and energy on.

Typically, an affirmation is geared toward something we want to create in our lives—a circumstance that does not currently exist. A key to creating an affirmation is to begin by claiming the condition in the present tense. For example, if I desire to create better health for myself, I might affirm: I am in perfect health. I choose to exercise daily and to eat nutritiously. It is imperative to begin the affirmation with “I.”

It can be tempting to unwittingly add a future tense to the affirmation. This sets up an unconscious belief that the desired circumstance will indeed remain forever in the future. Note, in the previous affirmation there is no “I am going to” or “I will.” Affirmations are stated in the present tense.

If daily prayer or meditation is a commitment you are willing to make, you can build an affirmation around that desire. I set aside 30 minutes daily for communion with God. Another example might be: Through daily prayer time, I deepen my spiritual life.

Once you’ve created the affirmation that is perfect for you, it is important to instill it in your consciousness daily. A daily walk or daily drive is an opportune time to repeat your affirmations.

If you’re willing to see how affirmations can change your life, commit to practicing affirmations for a minimum of thirty days. I bring about change in my life through practicing affirmations for the next thirty days. Give it a try—you could change your life!
AFFIRMATION

Affirmations are marvelous tools for creating change in our lives. When practiced over a period of time, affirmations become deeply ingrained in our consciousness. They are divine ideas that come from God to us through our highest consciousness.
How to Use Affirmations in Daily Life

By Marge Brown
Affirmations focus our attention so that our thoughts and actions reflect our attention, our mindfulness. Disciplining our minds enables us to become masters of our lives.
Try these affirmations, or design your own!

- **On awakening**: Thank You, Creator, for this day. Guide me in all my activities.

- **When showering**: Let me flow with the energy of this day.

- **On seeing your reflection in the mirror**: I am a perfect child of God. May I see all others in this light.

- **When putting on your shoes**: I step into this day confidently understanding my purpose.

- **When opening doors**: Thank You, God, for the surprises, joys and miracles today.

- **When traveling**: God is protecting and watching over me and all travelers.

- **When eating**: Thank You, God, for this food. I honor all who have helped bring it to my table. May my body be completely nourished by it.
Some suggestions:

- **When stopped at red lights:** Pray for someone.

- **When checking the time:**
  Take time and connect with God, if only for a moment.

- **When relating to the people in your life:** Tell them often that you love them.

- **When exchanging money:** Let go freely and lovingly, knowing God is your source.

- **When enjoying the outdoors:** Give thanks for the sun, moon, stars, wind, water and the Earth.
What causes our need to rush? It’s easy to assume that the cause is economic: We must make enough money to pay for our chosen lifestyles. Sometimes we feel that something is wrong when we are not busy.

But the real cause for our need to rush is a lifestyle that leaves certain basic needs unfulfilled.
By crowding our schedules with “more”—more socializing, more eating, more work, more activity, more appointments—we may be trying to fill the emptiness we feel within.

When you direct your attention and energies outward, you lose a sense of the wonder, beauty and magnificence within yourself—where true happiness, joy and peace originate. By slowing down and redirecting your energies inward, you will not only train your brain to relax, but fill that feeling of emptiness with a new sense of yourself which can ultimately change your life.

One of the world’s leading experts on the brain is Herbert Benson, M.D., author of The Relaxation Response and Your Maximum Mind. He developed relaxation techniques that have improved the lives of countless people.

What Benson calls “the relaxation response” is the body’s ability to enter into a state characterized by an overall reduction of the metabolic rate and a lowered heart rate.

According to Benson, this state of relaxation also acts as a door to a renewed mind and a changed life, a feeling of awareness.

Physiological changes occur when you are relaxed; there is harmonizing or increased communication between the two sides of the brain, resulting in feelings often described as well-being, unboundedness, infinite connection and peak experience.

**Begin the Practice of Relaxation**

1. Visualize yourself feeling relaxed and peaceful.

2. Progressively relax your body, beginning with your toes and ending with your head. Breathe slowly and
deeply and totally relax each part of your body. As you go along, say to yourself, “My toes, feet, legs and so on are relaxed,” until you have gone through your entire body. Then rest for a while in the quiet and silence. Listening to a relaxation or meditation tape also may help you relax.

3. Create a sanctuary within yourself where you can go at any time, just by closing your eyes and desiring to be there. Your sanctuary is your ideal place of relaxation, tranquility, beauty, safety and calmness. Visit your inner sanctuary several times a week, for just a few minutes, and come back more relaxed and peaceful.

4. Look at a picture of a beautiful landscape.

5. Conscious breathing. This is something that the great spiritual teacher and founder of Self-Realization Fellowship, Paramhansa Yogananda, emphasized in all of his books and home study lessons. He encouraged taking a few minutes, several times a day, to breathe slowly and deeply, focusing on your breath. This will calm and soothe you and help you to slow down and get centered.

6. Recite your favorite inspirational quote, passage or affirmation a few times, slowly and deliberately, while giving it your total attention. One of my favorite affirmations is: This day I choose to live in perfect peace.

**Cultivate Calmness**

Although you are taking positive steps to relax, do not feel that you must live your life in slow motion. Your goal is to touch your inner fountain of calmness and bring that calmness
to everything you do. This focused calmness will bring clarity, richness and new energy to your life.

I know of no more effective way of bringing about relaxation, calmness and a slower pace than through meditation—turning within in silence and contemplating your true nature as God created you. The calmness you feel during this daily practice will stay with you in everything you do.

Take time to nurture and protect that calmness by meditating regularly. You’ll find that your life will become more rewarding, you’ll get more accomplished, and you’ll have more fun. Paradoxically, you will have more time to celebrate life when you incorporate meditation into your daily lifestyle.

Take time every day to cultivate calmness, and offer that calmness to everyone you meet. What a wonderful gift to give!

**Slow down!**

1. **Get up early** in the morning so you have time to meditate, relax and start the day off in a calm manner. Contemplate your true nature.

2. **Simplify your life**. Establish your priorities. Let go of the unnecessary.

3. **Create quiet times for yourself** during the day when you can breathe deeply, meditate, relax or simply do nothing and just “be.”

4. **Spend time in nature**—the woods, a beach, a park or other natural setting—at least once a week. Next to meditating, this is the best way to slow your pace, to bring calmness and peace into your life and to help you relax.
How to Meditate

By Martha Giudici
Relaxing the mind and body, going within, finding our spiritual center, achieving a sense of oneness, and bringing that sense of oneness into the outer world—this is the process of meditation. This is the process that can put us back in touch with Spirit.

**Guided and Nonguided Meditation**

There are two primary ways of meditating—guided and nonguided.

In guided meditation, the leader speaks positive, uplifting words or intones sound. As meditators, we let our minds flow with the sound or word in quiet repose to the one source, God.

In nonguided meditation, we allow our thoughts to flow freely with one particular idea to reach new levels of awareness. This is a state where we receive new input about the word or idea without any sense of direction. Another type of nonguided meditation is allowing our minds to flow freely without a thought or an idea being first introduced.

In nonguided meditation, we often use symbols—words, ideas, pictures or phrases—as starting points for directing our minds. When we flow with such symbols, our minds reveal new input from sources deep within us.
Steps of Meditation

Everyone who meditates uses some essential steps in preparing for the meditative process. They are:

**Relaxation**—breathing, exercise, imagery and relaxation for meditation exercises.

**Concentration**—focus the mind. To concentrate, we can use words, mental imagery or pictured imagery.

**Meditation**—when we let our minds flow free, we can let them flow free on different ideas, symbols, colors or spoken words. We can even sing affirmative thoughts.

**Realization**—oneness in the quiet. This is the time of oneness with the Spirit within us. In Unity, we call this time the silence, but we have also named the process that achieves the silence, the silence.

**Thanksgiving**—acceptance of that which has occurred in the silence. At the close of each experience, we take time to give thanks for that which has come to us in renewal, in healing, in guidance and in a new awareness.

At one time, I wanted to know how I could tell that I had reached the silence, and my prayer teacher told me that when there is just you and God and the mosquitoes, you have made a start. When there is just you and God, you have then become quiet. But when there is only God, you have entered the silence.
Tips to Help You Get Started

1. Do not be anxious or concerned about anything that comes to you. If imagery comes, do not repress it. Observe and release it. If you have a hard time concentrating, don’t strain or criticize yourself, but woo your wandering thoughts back to your spiritual center.

2. It is good to spend at least twenty minutes each day in meditation. You may want to begin your day with a short meditation and then take more time in the silence later on. Do not try to meditate close to mealtimes or after eating, because the meditation process and the digestion process interfere with one another.

3. Find a quiet place to sit in a comfortable position. Your spine should be erect but not stiff.

4. If you are sitting in a chair, place both feet flat on the floor. It is best not to cross your legs; if you do, you may find after a time you become uncomfortable.

5. Where you place your hands is a matter of personal preference. Some people sit with their hands upturned so that they feel as if they are in a state of receptivity. Others sit with their hands turned down on their knees. Find the position that works for you.

6. Close your eyes to help quiet your mind. After you have become a practiced
meditator, you can have your eyes open or closed and it will make no difference.

7. Once you are seated with your spine erect but not stiff, your feet on the floor, your hands in the most comfortable position, and your eyes closed, take a deep breath, and then let it out slowly.

8. Feel all tension flowing out with your breath, then resume normal breathing. Let your breathing go in and out very naturally, very slowly. Become aware of your breathing, and feel relaxed with it.

9. Take another deep breath. With this breath, relax even more as you exhale. Let all tension, all care flow out and away from you, then resume normal breathing as you continue relaxing your whole body. Use the process that is most helpful to you to further relax and begin your meditative experience.

Your meditation should be a creative experience. What works for one person may not work for another. You alone will find that which is best for you.

There is much to be gained and much to be learned in the world of meditation, including inner peace, freedom from stress and a renewed joy for living. Be prepared now for a journey into a world that may be entirely new but a world that is creative and fruitful in many ways.
By Mary Katherine MacDougall

It may seem a little far-fetched to think that cutting out pictures and pasting them on heavy paper or cardboard can bring good to us or change our lives. But treasure mapping is a deliberate choosing and working toward good.

There are many kinds of maps. They can be any shape or size. Large ones are easy to see from a distance; small ones can be placed inconspicuously.

Begin your map by making a decision: What is this map for? If you have many desires, choose the most important one—your first good. Approach mapping with pleasure and with humility, for you are using your inner power to think, to decide, to image, to believe, to accept.

All maps should be as simple as possible—with clear, vivid pictures, preferably in color.

Maps need words, for there is power in words—thought, spoken and written. Strong affirmations give strength to expectancy of the pictured good. Biblical promises remind you that you have a rich heritage from God.
Always use a symbol for God—a Bible or a church or whatever signifies to you that God is the one and only source of your good.

Do not forget to add money to your map in some form, if the desired good requires financing. This can be in the form of checks written out in full, or “play” money can be attached to the map to symbolize that all money needed will be provided.

Let God help you all the way through. Pray for help in deciding on the desire. Thank God continually for bringing about the good you want. Show your cooperation by listening and heeding any direction you receive.

Color helps you focus and remember. Use pink when mapping for health, deeper pink or red for love, “money” green for wealth—bringing gold for prosperity, orange for energy, heavenly blue or clear yellow for spiritual unfoldment, lavender for service. Often color pictures are more effective against a neutral or white background.

After you have made your map, expect it to work. While you affirm and picture the good you want to experience, thank God that the good is already created: Thank You, God, for answered prayer. I now accept this or something better for the good of all concerned. This good now comes to me perfectly, completely and in peace.
Picturing an Abundant Life

A treasure map pictures what we want. It has been called “pictured prayer.” Just as a road map indicates the way to a planned destination, a treasure map helps us get what we desire—healing, supply, a job, possessions, happiness. Physically, it is a piece of paper on which we have placed pictures of what we want with statements of faith.

We think, and we form our world after the pattern of our thinking. A map helps us think right so that we can and do create what we want to experience. It keeps us close to God. It reminds us every time we look at it that we are one with God and divine abundance.
Each day brings opportunities to take action, build resources and develop strategies for cultivating serenity and peace. Here are eight serenity suggestions:

1. **Remember one of Jesus’ great promises:** “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (Jn. 14:27). The peace he leaves with us is the peace of experiencing God’s presence. No matter what your circumstances are, claim that gift through prayer by daily affirming the peace and serenity of Christ in your life.

When challenges and traumas emerge, be encouraged by this observation from New Testament scholar Dr. William Barclay, who says that the peace of Christ does not mean the absence of trouble. He writes in his book on the Gospel of John, “The peace which Jesus offers us is the peace
of conquest. No experience of life can ever take it from us, and no sorrow, no danger, no suffering can ever make it less. It is independent of outward circumstances.”

2. **Pay careful attention to your mental and spiritual attitudes.** Are you being guided by fear or by faith? We are what we think. The mind is like a garden, and thoughts produce fruit. Abundant thoughts produce plentiful fruit; meager thoughts produce poor fruit. Review your thinking to be certain that the focus is upon faith and triumph, not despair and defeat.

3. **Use the power of music.** Back in the eighteenth century, German author Johann Paul Friedrich Richter noted “Music
is the moonlight in the gloomy night of life.” Today there is scientific evidence that music can soothe frayed nerves.

At Baltimore’s St. Agnes Hospital, classical music was provided in the intensive care units. “Half an hour of music produced the same effect as ten milligrams of Valium,” says Dr. Raymond Bahr, head of the coronary-care unit. “Some patients who had been awake for three or four straight days were able to go into a deep sleep.” Other studies show that music can lower blood pressure, basal metabolism and respiration rates, thereby lessening physiological responses to stress. To increase serenity during times of high stress, make a point of listening to music that you truly enjoy.

4. Employ the therapy of laughter. “A cheerful heart is a good medicine,” declares the writer of Proverbs (17:22). That biblical wisdom is now confirmed by science. According to W. F. Fry, M.D., a psychiatrist and associate clinical professor emeritus at Stanford University Medical School, humor is a “direct antagonist to the three major negative emotions—anger, fear and depression.” There are times when we should just laugh at problems. Purposely taking time out to watch a television or film comedy not only helps us laugh but helps us look at our challenges from a different perspective.

5. Don’t expect perfection from yourself. Remind yourself that being human means making mistakes. If you make a mistake, forgive yourself and take the necessary steps to reclaim your life. Tone down negative and harsh thoughts of yourself by recalling how God views you: “You are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you” (Isa. 43:4).

6. Live one day at a time. Many people are deprived
of peace of mind because they live with anxiety over the past and with fear of the future. The way to eliminate such anxiety and fear is to take one step after another and live one day at a time.

7. Take care of your soul. Ultimately, serenity and peace are gifts from God. “Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people ... to those who turn to him in their hearts” (Ps. 85:8). Today an increasing number of psychologists are noting the positive correlation between a person’s faith and his or her serenity. Tapping into faith produces spiritual and emotional benefits.

8. Practice the art of taking a minibreak. Life must never be reduced to movement from one appointment to another and from task to task. Jesus is a good example. After a day full of ministry, he instructed his disciples: “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while” (Mk. 6:31). The daily grind of life should be broken by periodically doing something different and pleasant. Go for a bike ride on a quiet road, play a favorite childhood game, visit a local tourist site, or spend a few hours on a beach.
Expressing gratitude through praise and thanksgiving can start in any area of our lives and bring immediate results.

**In the Image and Likeness of God**

According to the Bible, all of us are made in the image of God. Our exercise in gratitude will begin with these words: I praise and give thanks for God’s image in me.

You cannot repeat these words sincerely for long without feeling a flow of energy that lifts your whole being. And perhaps for the first time, you will begin to appreciate who and what you are. Although you may have buried your real self, your identity, in the mire of condemnation and ingratitude, it will soon respond to your words, thoughts and feelings of gratitude expressed through praise and thanksgiving.

For a refreshing approach to praying for others, use the same gratitude exercise in this way: I praise and give thanks for God’s image in you.

The finest help we can give another human being is to recognize gratefully his or her true identity. This exercise in gratitude, performed silently and sincerely, will often change another’s life for the better.
Jesus said that we are the light of the world. Try this exercise: I praise and give thanks for the light of the world that I am and for my expanding ability to let this light shine.

Consistent practice of this exercise will erase darkness from mind, heart, body and affairs and fill your whole being and world with light. It will be easy for you to rephrase this so that you can help in letting light into someone else’s life.

The apostle Paul told us that after we discover our real identity, we stop letting ourselves be pushed around by the world of appearances and become a life-giving spirit.

Here is an affirmation with which to begin: As a life-giving spirit, I praise and give thanks for the power to stimulate all the life and health-distributing centers of my mind, heart and body.

Or: As a life-giving spirit, I praise and give thanks for the power to release this vitalizing energy of eternal life into all that concerns me. I joyously charge mind, heart, body, work, relationships with other people, and my whole world with the refreshing life current I distribute.

And don’t stop with yourself: As a life-giving spirit, you can send a current of energizing life into another’s experience.

I praise and give thanks for God’s image in you.

I praise and give thanks for God’s image in me.
Whether we find ourselves aligned with those who welcome the change an ending can bring or with those who find it difficult to let go, there is a way of saying good-bye that can be positive. It can even be transformative.

There are five aspects of change that lend themselves to successful and comfortable change. If we choose to embrace these five aspects, the transition brought forth by an ending can be smoother, include less suffering, and move us forward in more comfort, even joy.
The first aspect is realization. We need to know an ending is a change. Realization includes the recognition that a change has occurred. It requires our looking at what has ended and at the necessity of letting go of what has passed.

The perception of an ending as a change is more comfortable than anticipating and expecting to experience it as a loss. Realization is the awareness that something is complete, even if it is unfinished in the way we would have liked or was not our choice.

The second aspect of a successful ending is acceptance. Acceptance is a choice. We can know that change is born of endings and that growth is born of change. When we really know this, we are at a place in consciousness where we can accept, as opposed to denying or resisting. We may see the potential good in the change an ending can bring.

The third aspect of a successful ending is nonresistance. Nonresistance allows us to say “Thy will be done” in God’s perfect wisdom, God’s perfect timing, God’s perfect order. Nonresistance allows us to say, “Into Thy hands I commit the outcome of the ending before me, for I know that God is only good and that God is active in my life.” Nonresistance is a beautiful expression of our trust, our faith and our spiritual strength.

Just like realization and acceptance, nonresistance is a choice. It is a particularly wise choice when the ending we face is inevitable. Not choosing nonresistance is an automatic choice for struggle, disappointment or pain.

It is possible to acquire nonresistance even if it is not a familiar response. We have to be willing to practice it. We don’t have to be experts to begin. Through the practice of nonresistance, we can move more smoothly through change.
We don’t have to be rushed into what will be or be forced or yanked or catapulted into what lies ahead.

The fourth part of a positive ending is forgiveness. Real forgiveness has very little to do with the person, relationship or situation being forgiven. It has everything to do with the peace we ultimately find in whatever ending is before us. Forgiveness sets us free from the bondage of circumstance. It allows us to release what has occurred, rather than hold it, and its pain, to us. Forgiveness allows us to try again, to believe again and to love again.

The process of forgiveness is often ongoing rather than a single isolated event. We may discover that it needs to continue well beyond an ending and after good-byes. As long as we have begun and as long as we are willing to pursue it, forgiveness can provide a peace that endures.

Gratitude is the fifth aspect of a successful ending. Gratitude is also a choice. We can feel gratitude even when what has ended was not something that we chose to lose or leave. We can experience gratitude, even at those times we don’t want to say good-bye. True gratitude does not have conditions nor does it ask for promises and guarantees. It is a natural expression of one of our innate spiritual gifts. Gratitude is the offspring of love.

We do not have to feel gratitude in order to choose it. Sometimes we must wait to feel it until after we have consciously chosen it. Gratitude lifts us, empowers us, frees us, and (I believe) has the potential to heal us.
Prayer Support

Sometimes people need help in praying—extra spiritual support when it feels too difficult to go it alone. In times like these, it is comforting to be able to contact a prayer ministry such as Silent Unity®, one of the oldest and largest prayer ministries in the world.

Silent Unity serves people of all faiths, and all prayer requests are treated with reverence and strictest confidentiality and are enfolded in prayer for thirty days.

The work of Silent Unity is based on the belief that true soul satisfaction can only come by knowing God—that experiencing the presence of God is the real need. In other words, God doesn’t have what we want—God is what we want.

Silent Unity helps people know their oneness with God, that they may open themselves to the presence of God and recognize this divine presence in all people and circumstances.

For confidential prayer assistance at any time, day or night ...

    Call: 1-800-NOW-PRAY (669-7729)
    Connect: www.silentunity.org
    Write Silent Unity
    1901 NW Blue Parkway
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