

CORONA YOGA

Staying Sane in Crazy Times

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The word *yoga* means to unite or join together as in a “yoke.” Could the global pandemic of the coronavirus actually be a “crown of union” shining light on the reality that “All related we are...All family we are... All together we are . . .”? We are indeed being called to come back into union, to connect deeply within ourselves—the path of true healing—and re-member our deep interconnectedness with each other, with Nature, and with all living beings. Like yoga, this journey we are all on together can be a path of development, a path of healing and wholeness, and a way of becoming stronger, more resilient, more tolerant. And like all spiritual paths, the way begins inside each of us

*One world is dying,
and another is being born.
Let's tend to both of them with compassion.*

—MARIANNE WILLIAMSON¹

We are immersed in an ocean of global uncertainty, flooded by feelings of vulnerability, confined to “sheltering in place,” physical distancing, or social isolation, while at the same time many of our familiar

escape routes from the usual irritations and frustrations of daily life have been cut off or reduced. As a result, many of us have not been able to avoid coming face to face with the persistent and sometimes terrifying presence of our “inner enemies” parading back and forth through the narrow corridors of our minds.

We are clearly in a time of crisis and disruption. The global CV-19 ordeal has provided countless dangers and opportunities—as the Chinese character for “crisis” implies. While this may be one of the most significant global crises we have seen in our lifetimes it will likely not be the last. The lessons we learn now and the strengths we develop will serve as our wisest investments for the future.

As many of us are seeing for ourselves in such potent and dangerous times, our minds can become our greatest ally or most dreaded enemy. In times of crisis our skill in managing our minds, or lack thereof, can either liberate and guide us in ways that are beneficial to ourselves and others, or debilitate and destroy us and those we are with.

When we (the authors) were invited to develop the once-secret Jedi Warrior Training Program for the U.S. Special Forces, our charter was to teach teams of the most technically sophisticated and well-equipped warriors to “recognize and befriend their inner enemies and stop the war inside.” One of the primary axioms of this intensive six-month full-time immersion training program was “You can only manage what you monitor.” Jedi Warrior grew out of our work with the U.S. Army’s legendary “First Earth Battalion” task-force, which envisioned how a new generation of soldiers equipped with extra-ordinary skills and the ethics of warrior monks would become an Earth-stewarding force-for-good. While this inspiring vision was greatly influential, its potential has yet to be fully realized within the military. These notes are meant in part to enlist *you* in this noble endeavor!

While in decades past, disciplines of personal mastery such as martial arts, meditation, and mindfulness may have been primarily for elite teams or the privileged few, in times of crisis like these, traditions of deep transformational learning are essential for everyone seeking to

maintain their health, sanity, and care for others in order to survive and flourish.

When confronted with the tremendous challenges of leading her people in direct actions to stop the powerful tar sands oil pipeline interests from coming into and polluting the Salish Sea near Vancouver, Amy George, daughter of the great Chief Dan George of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation in British Columbia, inspired her people by saying, “It’s time for us to warrior up!”

Our colleague, Otto Scharmer, a Senior Lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of Management, offers this insight, “We live in a profound moment of disruption. And disruption comes with pain and grief, and also comes with a gift. And the gift is that the moment that disruption hits we can have a glimpse of awareness of what it truly is that is essential for us.”

The following pages offer a guide to essential skills to help you find the courage, capacity, and commitment necessary to “warrior up,” to grow stronger, wiser, and more resilient in the midst of challenge, and to even thrive as we step into a world that continues to change in often bewildering ways. May you take these offerings to heart and find inspiration and strength in weaving these ideas and skillful means into the fabric of your life.

The insights and teachings in this chapter are inspired by our combined 100 years of intensive research and study of the inner sciences and technologies from many modern and ancient wisdom traditions, and informed by our experience as clinicians running pain clinics and stress mastery clinics in large medical centers, as well as our work with leaders, teams, organizations, universities, and communities in many nations around the world. The data make it clear that disciplining the mind is profoundly effective for everyone, particularly those serving in the military and frontline services (medical, fire, police, rescue, etc.) and dedicated caregivers. We all need techniques to liberate ourselves from being dominated by anxiety, depression, grief, vulnerability, and burnout.

We were recently invited to give a special briefing on our Jedi Warrior Program at a special conference at British Parliament on The Vital Role of Mindfulness for the Military and Emergency Blue Light Services. As we listened to the other colleagues and presenters speaking of their experiences living and working in war zones, in ambulance, police, and fire services, it was clear that most of these brave and committed professionals had endured tremendous trauma and had suffered greatly. It was inspiring to hear them speak of how learning to practice mindfulness had helped them find skillful ways to embrace and liberate themselves from being dominated by anxiety, depression, burnout, grief, and vulnerability. Through their own experiences in resurrecting themselves from their own suffering, they had then been inspired and motivated to make this type of training and deep education available for their colleagues and soldiers in arms.

Most people have had very little experience or study in understanding the true nature and potential of their mind and therefore have never really learned to manage their mind very well. To do this we must understand and discover what the mind actually is.

DISCOVERING THE MIND'S TRUE NATURE

The human mind has two primary dimensions and functions. The surface or relative dimension of the mind is related to the activity and contents of the mind, and functions to represent our world through a myriad of different forms in a creative display of thoughts, mental images, perceptions, and feelings. These comprise the energy and information of the mind. Each of the many types or “species” of mental activity is a momentary, impermanent, evanescent experience.

The second dimension of the mind, known as the “nature of mind,” is a deeper, more universal or ultimate dimension that has been described by many terms in both modern and ancient traditions and is related to our capacity for “awareness” and “knowing.” Because this inner knowing has no color, shape, or form, this deeper dimension of mind is so

subtle, elusive, and ungraspable that very few people fully realize the profound significance of this essential dimension of their being in their lifetime. The nature of mind is boundless and clear like the sky, within which the cavalcade of fleeting, impermanent experiences of the relative mind come and go like “clouds” or “winds” arising, dissolving, and passing through the vastness of space. This dimension of the nature of mind is like a domain of consciousness that abides within a quantum realm of reality prior to the manifestation of measurable waveforms that appear in the relative Newtonian universe. It is this dimension of mind that allows us to monitor and manage the contents and creative activity of the relative mind.

Once you develop the capacity to experientially embrace both these dimensions of mind in a unified, integrated manner, your access to the deeper nature of mind opens portals of possibility. Simply put, with awareness you have choice. With awareness you discover that anxiety is an option...reactivity is an option...and, kindness is an option.... With awareness you can channel your creative mind powers away from dominating obsessive patterns of thought into more creative and productive mind-states that empower and ennoble rather than deplete and debilitate.

BEFRIEND AND MANAGE YOUR MIND

During times of crisis, isolation, or absence of distraction, many people default to allowing their minds to spin out of control, perhaps lapsing into incessant worry. Depending on how skillfully we monitor and manage the creative nature of our minds, we can either drive ourselves crazy or move into states of profound well-being and pro-social engagement. David Chethlahe Paladin, a Navajo friend and teacher of ours, often reminded us that “Worryin’ is just prayin’ backwards.” Our creative imagination, if properly utilized, can be a powerful force to find strength, hope, clear direction, and meaning in difficult situations.

In a recent response to the Covid-19 crisis, the Dalai Lama wrote, “I

take great solace in the following wise advice to examine the problems before us: If there is something to be done—do it, without any need to worry; if there's nothing to be done, worrying about it further will not help.”²

One of the best strategies we have found for managing worry is to practice worrying intentionally! How do you do this? Simply set a time each day to devote yourself to worrying. At the appointed time, sit down and call forth any specific worries that come to mind, and give these concerns your undivided attention for 10 to 15 minutes. If during this time any pleasant or positive thoughts come to mind, simply let them go and turn your attention back to your worries. And then, when your time is up, just say to your worries, “I’m terribly sorry, but our time for today is over, and I have many other meaningful things to attend to now. If you are still relevant and need my attention again, I’ll check in with you tomorrow at the same time. Have a nice day.” *Poof!* Then, as you get on with your life, if any worries intrude into your mind-space at other times during the day, simply say to them, “I see you—and you are early for our appointment.” Alternatively, you can simply click and drag that worry into an “I’ll think about this later” file on your mental desktop, and carry on with your life!

For many people this simple mind-management strategy has been a game changer, liberating them from being dominated by intrusive worrisome thoughts.

ONE BY ONE . . .

Another example of a skillful way to harness and direct the creative power of our minds is inspired by a dear, wise, elder friend. An avid explorer of the nature of mind for many decades, Gladys discovered that one of her best strategies for managing the creative activity of her mind during wakeful times in the middle of the night was to pray for her nearly two-dozen grandchildren, one by one. She noted that this gave her peace of mind and ease in her body, and that she seldom made

it through her whole list of grandkids before she drifted back into a peaceful sleep. Consider how you might adapt this strategy in your own life (even if you don't have 24 grandchildren!).

MANAGING THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

Because our bodies respond equally to mental images as to sensory ones, learning to monitor and manage our thoughts is an essential life skill, especially during times of crisis.

A powerful mind-management technique comes from a tribe in Africa that we learned about from our colleague Angeles Arrien, a cultural anthropologist. Angie relayed that from an early age, children in the villages are trained to be mindful of their thinking. If they became aware of a foreboding thought like, "Oh no, what if there is a lion hiding behind that tree waiting to eat me?" they learned first to recognize and then release the thought by saying to themselves, "And this is a story that doesn't need to happen!"

In this day and age this may translate into recognizing thoughts like "I'm going to get sick and die," or "I'll never find a new job," or "my investments will be worthless," or "I won't find any toilet paper at the store today" as "stories that don't need to happen."

This practice is balanced by appreciating that we also have positive stories that come to mind, and that when we are mindful of positive thoughts we can make a mental note of "Ah, and this is a healing story." The children in this African tribe were also trained to recognize and note helpful and reassuring thoughts in this way. Now, for example, when you are mindful of thoughts like "my child or friend is going to recover from this illness," or "the seeds I planted in my garden will grow strong and feed my family this summer," or "my friends will be there for me when I need them," you can smile to yourself and say, "...and this is a healing story."

This mind-management technique is a treasure and so easy to use.

ALWAYS BEGIN WITH GRATITUDE

In times of great emotional or social upheaval, the practice of gratitude is especially essential and effective in helping us, both individually and collectively, to bring ourselves into harmony and balance. Opening our hearts and minds to gratitude helps to dissolve the illusion of our sense of isolation or insufficiency by remembering and affirming how profoundly held, supported, and nourished we are by people around us and by the universe at large.

If you run out of reasons to feel grateful, remember the wisdom of the Zen teacher Thich Nhat Hahn, who reminds us that we can even be grateful for our “non-toothache” (all 32 of them!) as well as for all the other calamities that are not currently present in our lives, families, or community.

In the wisdom ways of indigenous people, and in the annals of medical science, the balancing and restorative power of gratitude is deeply revered. Giving thanks is traditionally the first step for many indigenous communities whenever they gather for meetings or ceremonies. Across the ages and across the globe, the intentional cultivation of an attitude of gratitude holds a central place in the daily practices of a wide variety of people and contemplative traditions.

Many of our teachers remind us that gratitude is an essential practice for living in balance. Some say that when we generate gratitude in our hearts and minds we complete the circle between ourselves and the source we are grateful for. With this sacred hoop of gratitude in place, it ensures that those circumstances causing us to feel grateful will continue to flow in our lives. On the other hand, if we don't generate gratitude for the gifts of our lives, we break this circle and the causes of gratitude will cease to flow. In these ways, gratitude opens our hearts and minds to a deeper sense of connection, the deep, meaningful, and nourishing relationships and dynamic balance that allow us to thrive.

Gratitude infuses us with the strength to open our hearts more deeply in order to touch the vulnerability and suffering that may arise when what

we love, value, cherish, or care about inevitably changes, decays, or fades away from our lives. This recognition opens our hearts to compassion. In this way, our beloved friend and teacher Joanna Macy suggests that if we are seeking to understand and wisely respond to the complex and challenging circumstances in our lives, world, families, or communities that we should always “begin with gratitude.” Beginning with gratitude gives us access to the strengths and resources that we need to embrace the challenging aspects of our lives and world, to see them with our wisdom eyes, and to go forth with greater wisdom, compassion, and effectiveness. Gratitude anchors us in goodness and the precious, though fleeting, gifts of our lives. In doing so, we release our tensions and calm our anxieties and fear. For a brief yet precious moment we can relax and rest in a greater sense of wholeness, harmony, balance, and relatedness.

Gratefulness can be a way of life, a meditation, an attitude, or a practice. Since gratitude is such a direct path to experiencing a more balanced state, we’d like to offer a simple yet powerful practice. In designing and teaching the Mindfulness and Meditation Laboratory program for Google, we found that this meditation was the number-one favorite of the Googlers, because it is direct, simple, can take as much or as little time as you wish to give it, and delivers immediate positive and stress-reducing results.

We teach this practice as a way to remember the many gifts, blessings, resources, and allies of our lives worthy of our attention in the spirit of gratitude and thanksgiving. It has also been shared by circles of friends, families, and communities around the world at times of Thanksgiving, and we invite you to share this practice with your loved ones and friends as well.

Here’s how the practice goes:

As you begin, reach up, touch your heart, and gently smile to yourself with a tender sense of deep connection and deep reflection. Allow the flow of your mindful clear presence to blend with the natural rhythms of your breath, and allow yourself to simply settle into this state of open awareness and rhythmic, flowing sensations.

As you become more fully present now, bring your attention to your heart as you call to mind anyone and anything in your life that you are grateful for. As you inhale, gather whoever or whatever comes to mind into focus in your heart, reflecting upon your gratitude for them. Breathing out, let your heartfelt gratitude flow to them and through them as waves of blessings. Let your mindfulness savor and embrace the imagery, feelings, emotions, and sensations associated with this experience of gratitude for this person or this aspect of your life. Be mindful of how this presents itself to you. Rest in this contemplation as long as you like, and when you feel complete, release your focus on this aspect of gratitude and welcome whoever or whatever else next comes to mind that you are grateful for.... Gather them into your heart and radiate your gratitude, thanksgiving, and blessing back to them.

Let each unique experience of gratitude and blessings be taken to heart, one by one, like counting beads on a mala or rosary. Continue in this contemplation as long as you like, gathering anyone or anything that you are grateful for, radiating your gratitude and blessings to them, one at a time or all together.

You can rest in this contemplation for as long as you like or have time for, allowing each breath to bring to mind a loved one, a friend, or someone who has been kind to you, someone who is teaching you patience or how to forgive.... Allow each breath to shine from the depths of your being through the depths of their being in order to light up their life with your gratitude, love, and compassion.

Taking these many gifts to heart, complete and affirm the circle with gratitude, ensuring that the stream of blessings and deep connections in your life and in the universe will be unbroken. This sense of deep connection and deep relatedness is the primary ground in which balance is rooted.

As we open our hearts to gratitude, we are better able to listen and sense more deeply into the tender dimensions of our hearts. Opening

our wisdom eyes to see, sense, and commune with the deeper, subtler dimensions of our lives, we discern that even within gratitude, there may be overtones of sadness, disappointment, regret, vulnerability, or grief that are all inseparable from our gratitude. Gratitude helps us to embrace the many dimensions of our lives more deeply and gives us the insight and strength to open our hearts more fully to compassion for ourselves, and for others.

HONORING OUR TEARS

*You know that you're close to the truth when you have tears
in your eyes.*

—GOPI KRISHNA,

MYSTIC, SOCIAL REFORMER, ENGINEER

Be mindful of moments when your eyes moisten and honor these moments. Remember that tears flow when we are close to the Truth. Normalize your tears and take these precious moments to heart with gratitude, celebrating these encounters with your humanity! As Joanna Macy reminds us, “Our sorrow is the other face of love, for we only mourn what we deeply care for. . . . The sorrow, grief, and rage you feel is a measure of your humanity and your evolutionary maturity. As your heart breaks open there will be room for the world to heal.”

CLEAR MIND DON'T KNOW

Having the courage to welcome and embrace uncertainty is a profound strength. While most people spend their lives trying to avoid uncertainty, times of disruption and crisis provide a fierce opportunity to embrace and befriend uncertainty. We learned a powerful practice to accomplish this from one of our Korean Zen teachers, Soen Sa Nim. Here's how it works:

Breathing in, silently say to yourself “Clear mind, clear mind, clear mind...”

Breathing out, say, “Don’t know”))))))

Continue on, breath by breath, phrase by phrase, for some time....

Clear mind, clear mind, clear mind... Don’t know)))

Note: In our style of writing))) represents an expansion, extension, a ripple effect.

Allow this practice to help you access and gain confidence, strength, clarity, and courage from your inner clear mind...and to discover the profound human resources of surrender, humility, and creative potential that arise when you embrace uncertainty.

ZOOM FATIGUE

Now that our normal means of connecting in the social sphere and outer world have been curtailed, we are more immersed than ever in social media and the web. Sheltering in place, people are flocking to the internet and stacking their schedules with online Zoom meetings, classes, webinars, family meet-ups, yoga classes, ad infinitum. As a result, many people are suffering from Zoom or web fatigue. In many ways this intensified reliance on the web is drawing us away from ourselves without offering the true nourishment of heartfelt human contact and warmth of meaningful social connectivity, or connection with ourselves.

As people of all ages are “skilling up” to retool and adapt to this new communication reality, here are some novel inner-tech moves and online disciplines to help avoid web burnout and Zoom fatigue:

- Before each online session, pause, take three mindful breaths, listen for your intention, and clarify—what is driving you to get back online? Are you bored and looking for stimulation or distraction? Is there a question, hope, or fear that is leading you to search for information? Are you seeking connection—and if so—

what motivation is driving you to seek that connection?

- If you have a tendency to tumble aimlessly around the web, clicking here and there, set the intention to be mindful of clicking links—i.e., to notice the physical movement and sensation of touching and moving your cursor and clicking. This will help ground you in present-moment awareness and embodied experience.
- Before you send a message or email, or finalize a post, pause to reflect for a moment on the impact you would like it to have in the hearts and minds of the people who open it; and as you click or press “send” or “post” with your finger, transmit the spark of this intention along with your message.
- Whenever you read a bit of news, pause for a moment before you go on to the next bit to be mindful of what feelings, thoughts, and desires have been activated within you through encountering this information. Give it a moment to sink in and digest.
- If you read about individuals, or groups of people who are suffering or who have died, pause for a few moments to let your heart reach out to them like you are shining a lighthouse beam of lovingkindness, compassion, or comfort to them from your heart. Trust that this care is conveyed and received. Do this with the same kind of confidence and certainty of effect and impact as you would have in sending a digital message to an individual or group. In fact, there are thousands of excellent research studies that confirm the reality of these “non-local effects.”
- When you are finished surfing the web, pause for a few moments to quietly return to resting in the mindfulness of the natural flow of your breathing and notice what thoughts, mental images, and emotional feelings are most present and alive within you. Reflect on this web session and be mindful of what was worthwhile, enriching, or worthy of remembering, and what really wasn’t worthy of the precious time, energy, and life force that you invested. Take these lessons to heart and carry them forward with you.

CONNECTING WITH MORE OF OURSELVES

A principle found in various traditions of ecosystem management and self-management is that if a living system is compromised, suffering, or diseased, the remedy will be found by connecting it with more of itself. As we expand our hearts and minds to connect more deeply with the world and the beings around us, our health and vitality will be increased. We can certainly do this even when we are physically isolated, so here are some perspectives and methods to help you to accomplish this.

RECEIVING AND RADIATING

A human being is part of the whole called by us 'universe', a part limited in time and space. We experience ourselves, our thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest. A kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in all of its beauty.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

Just as the relatively small and limited area of an island has a massive yet invisible foundation connected to the whole of the earth, each of us has access to an inconceivable wealth of resources that flow to us and through us from the boundless wholeness that connects us with all things and all beings. Though we may have lived with a delusional self-image that is impoverished in its scope, with curiosity and practice we can widen the circles of our wisdom and compassion to embrace an ever broader sense of our wholeness and deep relatedness to all life. Here is a practice that we have found helpful for cultivating this:

Resting in the easy natural flow of your breathing, reach up, touch your heart, and smile with a tender sense of deep connection and deep reflection. Give thanks for the blessings and opportunities of your life and dedicate yourself to living ever more deeply in the compassionate spirit of balance that you sense is most essential to your true being. Allow your mindful awareness to blend more deeply now with the natural rhythms of your breathing and settle into this state of deep connection and flow.

As you sit here now, envision yourself sitting at this center of your universe, surrounded by all living beings. Holding this image in mind, pause for a moment to remember, invite, or sense the presence of those who have most deeply inspired you with their examples of compassion in action. These may be people you know, teachers, mentors, or family members, or people you have read about in scripture, books, or discovered on the web.

Reach out from your heart, and with your hands, to these beings whose inspiring presence in your life is truly a blessing, a source of renewal, deep information, and strength. Imagine that all of them are right here with you now, surrounding you and shining like a constellation of radiant compassionate suns. Or if you like, envision that these many sources of compassion merge into a single brighter star that shines a radiance of compassion and blessings into your life.

Imagine that with each breath you reach out to them, and they reach back to you. Envision yourself holding their hands; and through your connection with them, sense that you can draw strength and inspiration to deepen your sense of wisdom, compassion, and balance. Notice how the stronger and more sincere your own aspiration, the deeper and stronger the flow of inspiration streaming to you and through you becomes. With each breath receive this light and inspiration, and radiate your gratitude back to each of them. Receiving...and radiating...with each breath.

Imagine now that each of these inspiring people in turn reaches out to hold the hands of those to whom they look for guidance, strength,

and compassion, and that they in turn reach out to those who have inspired them. Sense your teachers reaching out to their teachers who reach out to their teachers, who reach out to their teachers.... Your ancestors, reaching out to their ancestors, reaching out to their ancestors.... Envision yourself balanced within and receiving from this endless cascade of wisdom, compassion, and inspiration as it flows to you and through you from countless inspired ancestors of the far and distant past.

Sense this inspiration flowing to you as the light of wisdom, blessings, or compassion, soaking into you, illuminating and empowering you. It energizes the parts of you where your life force is weak. It balances whatever needs to be balanced and heals whatever needs healing. This light floods, cleanses, and opens the spaces and places within you that are clogged or congested, and nourishes the seeds of your deepest potentials to blossom in your learning how to live in balance. Like sunlight filtering into a deep clear pool, sense these waves of inspiring grace flooding your body-mind-energy-spirit. Every dimension of your being is illuminated, blessed, balanced, and renewed.

With each in-breath you are filled, saying silently to yourself “*receiving*.” Envision that with each exhalation you can *radiate* and expand this circle of gratitude, extending balancing and harmonizing energies with each out-breath. Receiving with each inhalation...and radiating with each exhalation....

Breathing in, imagine the inspiration and blessings flowing into you, filling your heart, infusing your whole body and being. Breathing out, sense, imagine, or feel that your heart is silently radiating balancing and harmonizing qualities of being like a bright, shining star. Effortlessly offer the natural radiance to inspire all beings to live in greater harmony and balance. Allow it to shine out through the darkness within or around you. Allow the light of your influence to effortlessly illumine your inner and outer world. Let this be the light of your presence, the light of balance, the light of peace, the light of goodwill and compassion.

Now, as you sit here at this center of your universe, surrounded by all living beings, envision yourself reaching out to those who look to you as a source of inspiration, guidance, or loving support and imagine each of them reaching back to you. Reach out to your children, to your friends, to your family, to your students, clients or customers, to your patients, and to all those who look to you as they seek greater balance, belonging, or well-being in their lives. Receiving compassion, inspiration, wisdom, and strength from those you draw guidance from, reach out with your hands and from your heart, and allow each exhalation to radiate harmony and balance to those who, in turn, look to you. Let each inhalation bring you inspiration from the sources of strength you are aligning and attuning to, and allow each inhalation to also gather the gratitude that streams back to you from those that look to you as a source of strength and inspiration. Receiving...and radiating...with each breath.

Envision each person you reach out to receiving the harmonizing and balancing influence you offer to them and taking the light of your love, strength, or compassion to heart. Sense that this deeply touches, strengthens, and inspires each of them. As your compassion reaches out to your children, envision them receiving and taking this light to heart and then passing it on to their children, who pass it on to their children, who pass it on to their children and to all whose lives they touch directly or indirectly. Envision your students reaching out to their students who reach out to their students. Imagine that all those to whom you reach out take this light of your qualities of being and compassion to heart, and pass it on to those who will pass it on in an endless cascade of inspiration and blessings that reaches out into the world to help affirm and presence the light of compassion for countless generations to come.

In this way, receiving and radiating, sense yourself balanced in the infinite expanse of “deep time,” surrounded by all beings, reaching out from this fleeting moment where all the experiences of the infinite past and all the potential for the boundless future converge. Viewed in this

light, realize that your real life-work is to truly balance yourself in order to increase your capacity to reach out and realize your connectedness and wholeness, to increase your capacity to gather inspiration, wisdom and compassion, to take it to heart, and to then expand this circle of light, strength, love, and compassion to all beings. With each breath, receiving and radiating, expand your circle of harmony, balance, peace, compassion, and well-being for the benefit of all beings.

MINDFULNESS, COURAGE, EMPATHY, AND COMPASSION

The word EMPATHY is derived from the ancient Greek empathia, which was formed from the words for in and pathos. A century ago, German philosophers borrowed empathia to create the German word Einfühlung, “feeling into,” which was later translated into the English word empathy. Interpersonal empathy describes the capacity that nearly all of us have to include another being into our awareness in a way that enables us to sense what they might be experiencing physically, emotionally, and cognitively. Empathy, literally taken, is feeling into another, while compassion is feeling for another, accompanied by the aspiration to take action that benefits the other. Empathy is often a precursor to compassion and part of compassion, but it is not compassion. Whereas empathy is a good thing in the right dose, I believe that we cannot overdose on compassion.

—JOAN HALIFAX³

As human beings we are biologically designed to be deeply resonant with and attuned to other living beings and the world around us. Learning to read the subtle cues and signals from our environment, from other human beings and other creatures, has been the key to our survival and development for millions of years. While our ability to be empathically

attuned or resonant with others is a precious gift that ensures our success in forming deep bonds and meaningful relationships with others, if we become empathically overwhelmed by the suffering, pain, trauma, and vulnerability that we encounter, we are in danger of experiencing burnout, or what many people in the past have described as “compassion fatigue.”

A wealth of recent research demonstrates that the so-called “compassion fatigue” is actually a misnomer and does not really exist. This condition is more accurately described as “empathy fatigue” or “empathic distress.” The shift from empathy to compassion can be understood by observing the pathways and regions of the brain that are activated when we are empathically attuned to the needs and sufferings of others. These regions of our brain are adjacent to and deeply entangled with the areas of our brain that light up when we ourselves are suffering or in pain. When we shift from empathic resonance to compassionate responsiveness, the empathically attuned regions of our brain quiet down, and a completely different set of neural circuits is activated as compassion comes online. This movement to compassion relieves our empathic distress and activates a visceral sense of well-being, relatedness, peace of mind, aliveness, and prosocial fulfillment.

The good news is that the remedy and protection from empathic distress or overwhelm is readily accessible by shifting into compassion. The emerging research illuminates three essential elements of compassion:

1. Noticing the suffering of others (Mindfulness);
2. Empathically resonating with the suffering or pain of others as a feeling within ourselves (Empathic Resonance); and
3. Engaging in action to ease the suffering and reduce the causes of suffering (Compassionate Responsiveness).

Archbishop Desmond Tutu reflected this wisdom when he said, “Compassion is not just feeling with someone, but seeking to change the situation. Frequently people think compassion and love are merely

sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action!”

When compassion is engaged and embodied in action, it may be expressed by reaching out from our hearts with kindness...offering food, shelter, protection to others in need...speaking kind and helpful words...or reaching out from our hearts with lovingkindness, blessing, or healing thoughts or prayers. These are all examples of being moved into responsive compassionate engagement that can protect us from the dangers of being empathically overwhelmed by the suffering in our lives and world. Given the likelihood that waves of challenging disruptions will continue to escalate throughout the duration of our lives and for generations to come, the current wave of disruption reminds us that we would be wise to develop our capacity to embrace and respond to the challenges and opportunities that our emerging new life and world will bring.

TONGLEN, THE BREATH OF COMPASSION

Compassion is a natural response to the suffering in our lives and world. It is an active response that emerges when we are balanced in the face of suffering and moved to alleviate that suffering. For our compassion to be effective and not create more problems it must be guided by wisdom; and for wisdom to deepen, courage is required—the courage to keep looking ever more deeply into the web of complex, subtle, and meaningful interrelationships that weave the fabric of our lives and world.

The transformative practice that follows is one of the most powerful methods for opening our hearts and minds to compassion—for ourselves and for other beings. This practice, woven on the loom of the breath, fuels this fire of compassion with wisdom, love, and dedication. We call it “the breath of compassion.” This meditation, called *tonglen* in Tibetan, comes from the Buddhist tradition, though it can also be understood as the natural impulse of a mother who, moved by compassion for the fear or suffering of her child, wishes to take in and

transform her child's suffering and give back her love, strength, and healing energy. The word *tonglen* literally means "taking and sending." The practice of *tonglen* teaches us to embody this same natural gesture in working with our own pain and suffering, that of our loved ones, and all suffering beings. It is widely regarded as the ultimate practice for opening our hearts fully to compassion and for dissolving fear and separation. In our work we teach this practice widely, especially for people who work as caregivers or who offer protective services to others.

The Essence of the Practice

As you breathe in now, envision that you can gather the raw energy of any agitation or discomfort you may find in your body or mind, drawing it into the transformational vortex of your heart center like fuel for a furnace—and then, out of compassion, let that suffering fuel the fire of transformation, giving you more light of compassion to radiate. With each breath, breathe in compost and breathe out flowers and fruit. Breathe in fear, and let its energy be released into the radiance of confidence on the exhalation. Breathe in imbalance, and let it too fuel the radiance of your steadiness and resilience. Radiate the light of compassion out on the waves of your breath as a blessing of balance and peace in the lives of all those who share your world.

In this way, with practice, you will begin to understand that as you learn to embrace the difficult, challenging, or painful experiences of your life and work, this actually gives you strength and becomes a vehicle to find the courage, wisdom, and power to open your heart ever more widely and deeply to compassion. When you are faced with fear and suffering, let it fuel the radiance of your compassion for yourself and for others who "just like me" suffer in similar ways. Faced with beauty and the sweetness of life, let it intensify the radiance of your gratitude and joy. Imagine yourself as a light-bearer of wisdom, strength, and compassion illuminating and protecting the goodness of the world. Imagine the silent light of your innermost being blazing with radiant compassion in countless helpful ways. Holding your loved ones and

friends in mind, radiate this light to them. Bring to heart and mind the leaders of the world, the children of the world, the beleaguered nations and species of the world, and radiate your heartfelt compassion and care to them.

Of all the contemplations that we know of, this “breath of compassion” practice is without equal in its universally practical applications and profound implications for learning to live ever more deeply in the flow of dynamic balance. Taken to heart, this practice, which rests in the natural rhythms of your breath, refines the balance of our sense of inner and outer, self and others, me and we, joy and sadness, pleasure and pain, peace and turbulence. The power of this practice helps us expand and affirm our intimate interrelationship with all of life, awakens our generative compassionate capabilities, and activates a genuine heartfelt concern for the well-being of others who, just like you, want to be happy and free from suffering.

More Detail on This Meditation of Tonglen

As you begin, brighten the light of your clear presence with a gentle, heartfelt smile, and touch your heart to activate and affirm your connection with the light of compassion that shines from the depths of your being. Then allow this clear presence and great compassion to move with the natural rhythm, flow, and balance of your breathing.

Resting in the natural flow of your breathing, allow the area of your chest around your heart center to relax, open, and soften, and establish a clear sense of inner spaciousness, like a vast open sky. Imagine or feel yourself as completely open and clear inside, like a big body balloon. Totally open and pervaded with the clear light of mindful awareness, you have a deep sense of being completely transparent inside, that the space within you is continuous with the space around you. It is as though all the pores of your body are totally permeable to the flow of air and currents of energy that pass in and out through you, and you feel almost as if you can breathe in and out of all your pores. Pause and rest here until you can clearly establish this feeling of open, clear, and

unobstructed inner spaciousness.

Then sense that within the region of your physical heart is a dimension of your true, pure, noble heart—your heart center or chakra. Sense or imagine this as a stainless dimension of deep inner strength, purity, and compassionate presence. Classically this dimension is symbolized as the sacred heart, or the pure heart jewel, whose light shines forth with limitless lovingkindness and compassion embracing all beings. In this contemplation you can also envision this dimension of the heart as a transformational vortex, where you can draw in the fire of suffering and turn it into the pure light of radiant compassion and well-being.

One of our teachers, Geshe Gyaltzen, often called this practice “Hoover vacuum cleaner meditation!” Powered by the motivation of compassion, use the “motor” of your inhalation to work like a “Hoover” suction, gathering up and drawing into the transformational vortex of this pure dimension of the heart any pain or negativity that might be present in your physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual continuum. If you don’t feel any particular discomfort at the present moment, simply let your inhalation draw in any seeds or latencies that may be lying dormant in your body or mind—potentials of future suffering that could ripen if conditions became right. You can envision these as heavy, hot energy, or dark smoke.

Breathing in heat or the fire of suffering and pain, let it dissolve into this pure dimension of your true heart, and sense that the suffering is completely dissolved and resolved, and then ride the waves of the out-breath to radiate cooling waves of compassion, comfort, and ease back to where the suffering came from.

As you exhale, imagine that from your heart center waves of clear, radiant, healing light pour forth. Imagine these waves filling your whole body and mind, healing, energizing, and transforming you. Allow the vortex at your heart to function as an energy transformer drawing in negativity, darkness, or pain and transforming it into radiant light and healing energy. For example, drawing in agitation as you inhale, let it dissolve into the pure dimension of the heart, and radiate peace back as

you exhale; drawing in anger on the in-breath, let it dissolve, and radiate patience and compassion mounted on the waves of the out-breath. If you've taken the suffering of *fear in* with your breath, now send back *faith* and *strength* with your *out-breath*. If the pain you breathed in was *tension*, let it dissolve, and breathe back *relaxation*, and so on. "Breathing in hot and heavy...breathing out cool and light..."

Some people find it helpful to visualize a color, texture, image, or sound that carries the feeling of the quality they are sending. Others prefer to simply ripple out a pure clear wave of intention. The key is to allow each breath to deepen and affirm your sense of being capable of this compassionate transformation in the pure dimension of the heart.

Continue in this way, embracing, gathering, sweeping and vacuuming, resolving and transforming, mounted on the waves of the breath, for as long as you like. Remember to keep your breathing gentle and natural, not forcing or holding the breath in any way. As you practice, you may find that the grosser, more noticeable discomforts dissolve or change. As this happens, allow your awareness to be drawn to subtler and subtler messages that call for your compassionate attention.

The *tonglen* meditation is a contemplative analogue of the Saint Francis prayer, which is rich in similar imagery and intent:

*"Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it's in giving that we receive, and it's in pardoning*

*that we are pardoned.
And it's in dying—that we are born into eternal life.”*

—SAINT FRANCIS

The true power of this meditation comes alive as you begin to realize that the radius of your compassion can be vast and limitless in its scope, and that you are able to receive and transform the energies of others who share the larger body of life with you. The larger the field of connection and interrelationship that you acknowledge and participate in, the greater will be the reservoir of resource you have to draw from.

As you deepen in this practice, you realize that just as you wish to be free of the pain in your back, your loneliness, or heartache, so too does the person in the seat or house, the office, village, or country next to you, or across the world. And you also realize that it really doesn't take any extra effort at all as you breathe in to hold the compassionate intention to embrace and transform their suffering at the same time as you're breathing in and transforming your own.

If you are tormented by anger or grief, imagine and affirm that with each breath, as your compassion transforms these energies or feelings within the sphere of your own personal, local body or mind, those same feelings shared by others can be embraced and transformed by your compassion as well. Envision and affirm that the radiance of this compassion emanates out through you to be received by anyone who shares the same feelings, who suffers in the same way, or who even has the latency for such vulnerability or disease in the future. (Note: In an age of current or future pandemics, meditating in this way to reduce the latency for disease can be very powerful.) Whatever the form of distress or suffering you find within yourself, embrace that in others or in the world at large.

When it feels natural, allow the circle of your compassion to expand to embrace anyone else who comes to mind: a friend or loved one, a neighbor or coworker, a whole group of vulnerable people, or

other beings who are living with fear, suffering, disease, or danger. Breathing in, allow your heart to open, to touch, receive, embrace, and transform the fear, the distress, the loneliness, grief, or suffering. Allow these sorrows or distresses to dissolve and resolve completely within the pure, open, limitless dimension of your true heart. As this transformation naturally unfolds, allow the energy of your heartfelt compassion to also dissolve or explode the optical delusion of a separate self, and expand your sense of identity and balance in the larger field of being that includes all life. As you feel the sensations of your out-breath, allow your heart to naturally open to send back waves of peace, patience, calm, protection, lovingkindness, and radiant compassion to all who suffer. Experience the openness and connectedness that awaken as you expand the circle of your active, engaged compassion, caring, and balance in this way.

Continue to deepen into this meditation for as long as you like or have time for, allowing each cycle of breaths to further deepen and affirm your capacity to open your heart and expand the circle of your compassion.

This contemplation can be done in many different situations. First start with yourself, then let the circle of your compassionate awareness reach out to others yearning for the same quality of peace, harmony, and well-being that you're looking for, and keep expanding the circle of your compassion to individuals, groups, or other living beings who come to mind.

Taken to heart, this practice of *tonglen* can become a profoundly integrative practice for living in balance as you move through the world. In the Mahayana tradition it is said that once one begins to sense that their true life, identity, and purpose are intimately related to all living beings, and one begins to cultivate this mode of higher-order relationship and balance in relation to all beings, one's capacity to engage in this meditation naturally and intuitively expands until in the moment of completely awakening to one's true nature and highest potentials, all

that is left is a selfless quality of presence that exists in the mode of *tonglen* for the benefit of all beings.

Once you understand how this practice works, you can weave it into the flow of your daily life. Quietly and invisibly while you are sitting alone in your home, watching or reading the news, walking down the street, shopping, waiting for or riding on public transportation, driving in your car, being present during a particularly tense conversation—know that this meditative mode of being is available to you. This way of being is well suited for living in dynamic balance with a spirit of compassionate engagement in your world. It offers a glimpse of how it might be to become a beacon of inspiring, balancing, and healing presence as you move through the world.

We've taught this practice to tens of thousands of people from all walks of life, and of different philosophical and spiritual inclinations: to medical staff working in clinics and emergency rooms, to Special Forces troops facing untold dangers and fear, to children, corporate executives, clergy, and world-class athletes. For some, this practice makes immediate intuitive sense from what they know of the unobstructed flow of energy and information in the natural world. Others will translate this practice into a deeply personal participation in God's love or the compassionate presence of Quan Yin radiating and extending from the pure, sacred dimension of their heart out into the world.

As we traveled and taught in Asia, we found that this practice of *tonglen* is especially accessible for our Asian students who grew up with a sense of connection to Quan Yin, "She Who Hears the Cries of the World," as the embodiment of universal compassion. For those of us with the faith, intuition, or experience to know that there is a dimension of pure-heartedness within us that is stainless and virtually invulnerable to any sort of discordant energies, the sense of offering the cries of the suffering world to the heart of your own inner Quan Yin can be as natural as breathing in and receiving, and breathing out and radiating compassion to all beings. One beloved Christian colleague

who had practiced *tonglen* for many years wrote a profound sermon for his congregation musing how likely it was that the final contemplation of Jesus on the Cross might have been in the spirit of *tonglen*, taking in and transforming the ignorance and sins of all beings who had “missed the mark” (the original meaning of the Hebrew word for “sin”) and dedicating all his love and compassion to their salvation—be they in the historical time of Jesus, or in future times when his teachings were still present in our world.

The spirit of this practice of “taking and sending” is as universal as the wish of a mother to take upon herself the suffering of her child and to offer all her strength, love, and joy to comfort them. Each of us will translate this potentiality in our own way. In this spirit, we invite you to take this sage advice to heart, practice it in your unique way, and see how it speaks to and lives through you.

Keep in mind that whether you are visibly able to transform the sufferings of others through this practice is secondary to transforming the illusion of your own sense of separateness and the task of dissolving your own fear and narrow self-protectiveness. The real power of this meditation practice lies in developing a deeper experience of kinship with the beings of the world, and in breaking free from our preoccupation with our own personal situation or limited personal identity.

Tonglen is essentially a mind training that empowers our inner access to qualities of balance, and an immense source of compassionate transformational potential. It can awaken the wisdom and compassion necessary to free us from the anxiety, fear, imbalance, and exhaustion that come from trying to vainly protect the illusion of a separate self. It teaches us to live in harmony and balance within a more expansive, generative, and universal view of wholeness, and to honor and deeply respect the sacred mystery of interdependence by seeing how activating compassionate regard for others works simultaneously to heal our relationship with ourselves as well.

INTEGRATION: RECEIVING AND RADIATING COMBINED WITH *TONGLEN*

With practice, you may come to naturally realize that with each breath, you can gather the light, strength, power, blessings of all creation, add your light to that, and then radiate and offer it to all beings.

With each breath we can align and attune ourselves with all the sources of guidance and blessings available in our lives and world, back through endless time, and we then can radiate, offer, and extend those streams of blessings and inspiration to those who look to us, and through them to all who look to them, and through them to all who look to them.

With each breath we can gather into the pure depths of our true heart the pain of all the fires of ignorance, greed, and aggression raging in our world, and we can transform, dissolve, and resolve those raging fires in the deep, clear pool of our heart, and radiate the cool, clear, radiance of compassion, balance and harmony into the hearts and souls of others.

Freed from the ignorance and fear that breeds in the shadows of the optical delusion of consciousness that leads us to sense or view ourselves as separate from the world and all beings, we are ennobled and empowered to open our hearts and mind, our wisdom eyes and pure hearts, to become sacred vessels of transformation capable of embracing and transforming our relationship to the sufferings of the world.

And, in those inevitable moments where the darkness or complexity of our lives or world overwhelms us, we can also reach out to hold the hands, or draw into us the hearts of all the ennobling beings we receive and draw light and inspiration from, and we can blend those streams of empowering light with the torrents of grief, pain, or sorrow that we are tapping into.

Understood and taken to heart in this way, we realize that with each breath, 21,600 times a day we can balance ourselves, stand strong, shine bright, dispel fear, and connect with streams of sustaining and life-affirming strength, blessings, and inspiration, and that we can extend our light, love, and strength out to others. In this way we balance and

weave together with each breath the practices of receiving, transforming, and radiating.

HOLDING LOVED ONES IN OUR HEARTS

*The secret of my song though near,
none can see, and none can hear.
And, oh for a friend to know the sign
And mingle all their soul with mine.*

—RUMI

Some years ago, we had the good fortune to participate in an intensive year-long silent contemplative retreat. As a couple, we lived in separate rooms and had very little contact with each other or with any of the other participants in the retreat. Other than an occasional deep bow, or rare hug on the path to the dining room, we had no physical contact, and we had only a few hours' worth of actual conversation during the entire year. Yet, each day at five o'clock in the afternoon, we had a "date" and would shift our attention from the contemplations that were the focus of our retreat, to hold each other in heart and mind. Merging together like two spheres of light, we would rest in the light of each other's love as if we were two beings sharing one heart and looking out through each other's eyes. It was often a deeply moving and affirming connection that left each of us uplifted and amazed; and honestly, looking back at the depth of connection we felt with each other, it was strangely the most intimate year of our lives together.

In this disruptive time of physical distancing and isolation, when we are likely to be separated from loved ones and friends for long periods of time, this heart-to-heart meditation can be extremely meaningful and profoundly healing. You can either do this practice on your own, merging your heart and mind with a loved one or friend, or you can set a date with a loved one to "meet up" and do this practice together at a specific time each day.

As a couple, when we are physically apart for any length of time, we have continued to set a time each day to sit together and hold each other in our hearts. During this time, we reach out to each other from our hearts and let ourselves merge to share a common heart and core. In a state of deep, intimate connectedness, we rest in the radiance of the love we share. We allow the light of our love for each other to radiate out to others as an offering and a prayer that will strengthen them in whatever they need at that time.

Even though we may be away from each other for some time, when we come back together, we usually feel closer than ever before. When we are home or traveling together, we often make some time to sit quietly together in this way and carry this sense of deep connectedness into our busy day and work in the world. Many people we work with have taken this example to heart and have developed a similar practice that they share with their partners, parents, children, grandchildren, or beloved friends. The results are always inspiring.

GUIDELINES FOR STAYING SANE IN DISRUPTIVE TIMES

Establishing a suite of daily practices can provide a sense of stability, grounding, harmony, balance, and flow to our lives—especially in times of disruption. Though this requires minimal time it can deliver tremendous value to your life. These disciplines will give you a stronger foundation to stand upon in the face of change, challenge, and uncertainty by supporting and encouraging you to be more mindful throughout the day, be clear on your priorities, and make wiser choices.

Begin Your Day in a M.A.G.I.C.A.L. Way

We have created this unique sequence of contemplations as a wonderful way to start each day. Begin with the very first moment of the day that you are “awake” to being awake— ideally *before* you get involved in any way with your devices. This becomes a liberating way of declaring your

sovereignty over your devices by giving priority attention to your primary operating system—the deep nature of your own mind-body-spirit. Here are the contemplations:

Mindful of your Embodiment...breathe in...and out...a few times to feel and affirm your physical aliveness.

Awake awareness! Tune in to this quality of “awake awareness”—the deep ground of your being.

Gratitude. Be mindful of whomever or whatever you are grateful for, taking them to heart, with gratitude overflowing as blessings for these precious gifts in your life.

Intention. Listen for guidance to clarify your personal intention for the day; be mindful how this guidance comes to you—as words, images, feeling, knowing... Add to this personal intention a “Universal harmonic” of that intention in the sense of “for the benefit of all”—i.e., may I be peaceful so that all beings who share the larger body of life with me have access to greater peace...may I be courageous today, so that all beings may have access to greater courage.... Remember this intention throughout the day to help you to “live on purpose.”

Connection. Draw strength from remembering that you live within a seamless wholeness and constellation of all the forces and sources of inspiration that support you. For a few moments simply breathe, receiving and radiating waves of inspiration, strength, gratitude, and blessings with each breath, affirming these meaningful connections.

Awareness. With an “ahhh” relax and rest in clear, boundless, sky-like awake-awareness. Affirm this most essential dimension and ground of your being.

Love. Sensing deeper into boundless awareness, discover that it is inseparable from boundless love extending to and embracing all beings...and let it shine.

Having aligned and attuned to these qualities, carry this on into your day in a “magical” way!

NOTE: This practice can telescope in time, meaning that once you are familiar with how it works, you can do it very quickly or take a longer time to really savor each element more deeply.

Throughout the Day

Be mindful of where your attention goes.

Whenever you notice that you have lapsed into mindlessness and distraction, smile to yourself...reach up and touch your heart... and “re-boot” your mindful-clear-presence by simply softly sighing (((Ahhhhh)))

Then...remember and re-affirm your intention for the day.

With that guidance clearly in mind, proceed to live “on purpose” and bring your mindful, clear presence to whatever you are doing and to whomever you are with.

Repeat this again and again throughout the day.

Evening Reflections

Toward the end of each day, make some time to reflect on your day using the “Four Rivers.” The Four Rivers practice is inspired by the wisdom of the Basque people, who say that if you “swim in these rivers every day” you will live a fulfilled and meaningful life with greater vitality.

Pause to reflect... Where today were you....

- Challenged?
- Surprised?
- Inspired?
- Deeply Moved or Touched?

You can journal with these questions, and also share these with friends or family over a meal, or in a shared social media group each day to inspire and support each other.

SHARING KINDNESS

These times of radical disruption in our lives have the potential to bring out the best in us and the worst in us. Knowing that we have access to skills and frames of reference necessary to embrace the waves of change and challenge and to find opportunities in these changes is a profound gift. Appreciating the strengths and vulnerabilities of ourselves can help us to recognize and honor the strengths and vulnerabilities of others. The simplest and most direct way to put this wisdom into practice is kindness. This excerpt from Naomi Shihab Nye's brilliant poem "Kindness" seems a perfect way to conclude this chapter.

*Before you know what kindness really is
you must lose things,
feel the future dissolve in a moment
like salt in a weakened broth.*

*What you held in your hand,
what you counted and carefully saved,
all this must go so you know
how desolate the landscape can be
between the regions of kindness...*

*...Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,
You must know sorrow
as the other deepest thing.
You must wake up with sorrow.
You must speak to it till your voice
catches the thread of all sorrows
and you see the size of the cloth.
Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,
only kindness that ties your shoes
and sends you out into the day
to mail letters and purchase bread,*

*only kindness that raises its head
from the crowd of the world to say
it is I you have been looking for,
and then goes with you every where
like a shadow or a friend.*



JOEL LEVEY, PH.D., and Michelle Levey, cofounders of Wisdom at Work, are globally recognized pioneers introducing resilience, mindfulness, and contemplative sciences into a wide spectrum of mainstream organizations. They have served as directors of clinical Stress Management programs for large medical centers and faculty for University of Minnesota Medical School. Over the past 40 years their work has inspired diverse audiences in hundreds of leading organizations around the globe including: NASA, Google, World Government Summit, British Parliament, and M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Center. Based in Seattle and Hawaii, Michelle and Joel's published works include: *Living in Balance: A Mindful Guide for Thriving in a Complex World*; *Mindfulness, Meditation, and Mind-Fitness*; and *Wisdom at Work*. Learn more at:

<http://WisdomAtWork.com/MindfulnessPioneers/>

NOTES

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