

# MIND & BODY

NILS HENDRIK MUELLER/GETTY IMAGES

## BREATHE WELL

# How to Breathe to Stay Well

Why nose breathing supports better health, and how to do it

PATRICK MCKEOWN

If the past two years has taught us anything, it's that our well-being matters. As we head toward the end of 2021, more of us are taking proactive steps to stay well.

At the same time, there's a growing interest in optimization and performance. Across sports, fitness, education, and business, we're looking for new ways to feel better and achieve our potential.

But behind these positive wellness trends, the story is a challenging one. Stress is currently a leading cause of illness worldwide, contributing to between 75 percent and 90 percent of all human diseases. And we're still battling COVID-19 and the anxiety caused by related political and economic considerations.

As stress rises, a familiar adage springs to mind. We all need to "take a nice deep breath."

Or do we?

As I explain in my book, "The Breathing Cure: Develop New Habits for a Healthier, Happier, and Longer Life," the advice to take a deep breath is often misguided—if it doesn't talk about how you take that breath. It can perpetuate stress and cause less oxygen to reach vital systems in the body. When told to breathe deeply, many of us take a fast, hard gulp of air through an open mouth and into the upper chest.

Unless you have a respiratory condition, such as asthma, breathing is something that happens in the background.

*Continued on Page 4*

Your body is designed to breathe through your nose. There are several benefits to those who do and consequences for those who don't.



BEARFOTOS/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Can Any Good Come of Our COVID Lockdowns?

For some people, the pandemic has been a chance to realize post-traumatic growth

JILL SUTTIE

The COVID-19 pandemic has wrought havoc around the world. Lives lost, businesses closed, economies in ruins, and a wave of mental health issues. It's hard to imagine that any good could have come of it—and little has for most of us.

Yet, many people have consciously sought out silver linings from their experience,

perhaps helping them to endure during this difficult time. Personally, I've come to value relationships more, reached out to help others, spent more time in nature, and experienced more meaning in life. I've also thought more about how I lived my life before COVID and what might be worth jettisoning in its aftermath.

*Continued on Page 6*

**While no one seeks disaster, we can use it as an impetus for what researchers call post-traumatic growth.**



The lockdowns gave many people more time to connect with their neighbors.

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TRUTH and TRADITION

# A NEWSPAPER ABRAHAM LINCOLN WOULD READ

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Your body is inevitably going to make some cracking, creaking, or popping noises. Should you be concerned? That depends on what else you might be feeling.

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

### What You Need to Know When Your Joints Make Noise

Creaking, cracking, and popping joints aren't usually a concern unless you experience other symptoms

LYNN JAFFEE

A couple of years ago, I had a neck thing going on. Every time I turned my head to the left, I heard a funky, grinding sound. My neck was a little stiff, but not enough to explain the noise it was making. I began to worry that the noises coming from my neck were a sign that something was really wrong.

It turns out that I had something called crepitus, which is a big word to describe any kind of noise coming from a joint. The sounds can be creaky, grinding, crackling, grating, and even popping. Joint noise can be so soft that only you hear it or loud enough to startle a roomful of people.

Crepitus can be caused by a number of structural issues. One of the most common causes of joint noise is air bubbles popping inside the joint. What happens is that gas builds up in the synovial fluid that cushions your joints, and the gas forms bubbles. When a joint is popped or stretched, you can hear the release of these bubbles as a popping sound. An example of this kind of crepitus is when someone cracks their knuckles. It sounds horrible and painful, but it typically doesn't cause pain or long-term damage. Interestingly, if you're a knuckle cracker, you'll have to wait until the gas bubbles reform before you can crack them again.

Another frequent cause for joint noise is when the bones within the joint grind against each other. This can happen from injuries and trauma to the joint, but it's far more common in people with osteoarthritis, especially of the knee. Your joints contain a kind of connective tissue, called cartilage, that acts as a shock absorber and protects the ends of your bones from rubbing together within the joint. Osteoarthritis is a condition in which wear and tear from overuse and aging causes the cartilage to erode and the joint to become inflamed. When your joint's cartilage has worn away, it's not uncommon to hear a grinding or grating noise as the bones rub against each other.

You may also hear crepitus when a ligament or tendon snaps over a bony structure within the joint. This often happens because the ligaments or tendons become inflamed, swell, and don't move as smoothly as they should. Because this kind of joint noise is often associated with inflammation, ligament or tendon crepitus can be painful.

Another structure within your joints that can be the source of noise is the bursa. Your bursae (plural) are pockets of thick fluid that surround your joints to protect them from injury. Trauma or infection can cause inflamed bursae to rub together within the joint, which

you may be able to hear as a grinding, snapping, or popping sound.

Crepitus can occur in any joint. Knees are often some of the noisiest joints. They're a common site of osteoarthritis, but they're also notorious for making a loud crack when an air bubble pops within the knee. The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) that connects your lower jaw to your skull can also be the source of a lot of noise. People with TMJ problems may experience clicking and popping sounds every time they open their mouths. That said, shoulders, wrists, ankles, elbows, fingers, toes, and even your spine can cause crepitus given the right conditions.

**Joint noise that's becoming more frequent or accompanied by pain, inflammation, swelling, or loss of function is often a problem.**

#### Is Crepitus a Bad Thing?

If you're hearing noise coming from a joint, you may be wondering if it's a problem. And the answer is that it depends. Cracking your knuckles or a loud knee pop without pain is just the release of gas within the synovial fluid in your joints. However, joint noise that's becoming more frequent or accompanied by pain, inflammation, swelling, or loss of function is often a problem. The noise may be a sign of joint damage, osteoarthritis, tendonitis, or even a chronic disease.

In addition, crepitus accompanied by joint pain or pain that originates in the joint but travels down your leg or arm may also be a sign of nerve compression from narrowing joint spaces. So the short answer is that if you're experiencing joint noise plus any symptoms, it's a good idea to get it checked out.

In the end, the crepitus in my neck stuck with me for several weeks. I did some stretching to loosen up my neck and shoulders, quit carrying a shoulder bag, and the noise went away. Now when I stretch my neck, I hear the faint sounds of my muscles loosening up, but no grinding sounds or pain, so I'm good to go!

Lynn Jaffee is a licensed acupuncturist and the author of "Simple Steps: The Chinese Way to Better Health." This article was originally published on AcupunctureTwinCities.com

#### Correction

In the article "The Most Important Solar Term of the Year," published in the Dec. 15 edition, incorrectly described the shadow of the sun at midday. Shadows at midday are the longest on the winter solstice. The Epoch Times regrets the error.

## MEDICALLY CORRECT

### The Sometimes Strange History of the X-Ray

Our ability to look inside the body—and understand radiation—continues to evolve

PETER WEISS

Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen discovered the X-ray in Germany in 1895 as he experimented with cathode rays. He used a cathode tube and covered it with a heavy black cloth. Röntgen was astonished to find an incandescent green light projected onto a nearby fluorescent screen.

He called this discovery "X" rays, due to the fact that he had no real idea what these rays were. They were an unknown phenomenon. Intent on his new discovery, he continued to experiment and eventually took a photograph of his wife's hand, revealing her bones. Röntgen won the Nobel Prize in 1901.

The early use of X-rays rapidly became widespread. It was thought to be an exciting discovery with limitless potential. In fact, in the 1930s and '40s, shoe stores offered free X-rays of one's feet so customers could be entertained by seeing the bones in their feet. There were only a few wise scientists who raised some early concerns, such as Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla. That didn't stop anyone, even Edison and Tesla, from experimenting with this new device. Within the first year of the discovery, more than 1,000 articles were written on the subject. This was unheard of at the time.

Studios opened in cities where a bone portrait could be obtained. The medical community quickly adapted the technology for true medical diagnosis such as identifying broken bones. Prior to that, it was only by feeling, or guessing that doctors would diagnose a broken bone, and many fractures were missed. Within a year of its discovery, X-rays were used on the battlefield to find bullets in wounded soldiers.

Soon after the discovery of X-rays, French scientist Henri Becquerel found another source of penetrating rays by using minerals that he found to be naturally phosphorescent. One of the early minerals he worked with was uranium. Marie Curie and her husband Pierre were intrigued by Becquerel's discovery. Marie Curie discovered another similar mineral and named it polonium, after her native Poland. The Curies also worked with yet another mineral: radium. Both polonium and radium were more radioactive than uranium.

Marie Curie promoted the use of radium to alleviate suffering from many ailments. She and her husband shared a Nobel Prize in 1903 with Becquerel. No one really knew at the time the serious consequences of so much radioactive exposure. The symptoms



were gradual and mild at first. In fact, many scientists at the time thought that the exposure to radioactivity may be beneficial. Radium was used at the time to treat numerous medical conditions, including cancer (which actually did some good), lupus, and nervous diseases.

The 1920s and '30s offered a lot of radioactive consumer products that promoted the health benefits of radioactivity. There was Doramad Radioactive Toothpaste, a German brand sold before World War II, which contained small amounts of thorium. The ad for Doramad toothpaste read, "Your teeth will shine with radioactive brilliance."

Another interesting story was that of Radithor, a solution of radium salts, which the developer claimed could provide curative properties to those who ingested it. Industrialist Eben Byers died in 1932 from ingesting it in large quantities throughout 1927 to 1930. As late as the 1950s, Uranium sand houses were popular in New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah. Patients would sit on benches in a round room where the floor was made of mildly radioactive sand. There were spas that started as early as 1906 in the Czech Republic that had guests bathe in radon-infused water; some of these spas still exist today. Those spas in the early years were known throughout the world, as reported by Matthew Vickery for the BBC.

Radiation spas are still in existence today. There is a spa in Schlemma, Germany, in which their bath water contains low levels of radon, which is a radioactive gas formed by the decay of uranium. The belief is that bathing in this "treated" spa water can cure ailments such as rheumatism. Marie Curie died in 1934 from aplastic anemia, most likely caused by her excessive radiation exposure from her work with radium. All of her notebooks are still sealed in a lead-lined box in France due to their radioactivity.

That was then, this is now. The safeguards from current X-ray technology are excellent, however, one must always be aware of what tests are being done and why.

Flying today exposes oneself to natural radiation. A trans-Atlantic flight exposes you to around five times the radiation of a chest X-ray. A mammogram produces about the same as a dozen flights across the Atlantic. CAT scans produce a much greater amount of radiation, which is the simple reason to

get one only when the medical indications outweigh any risks. There are newer CAT scan technologies that are already out, one being a photon-counting CT scanner that will not only give better imaging but cut the radiation by up to 45 percent.

Medical advances in imaging have come a long way since the radioactive baths in the early 20th century. The future is even more promising, but it's good to always think of the possible unintended consequences of the best intentions.

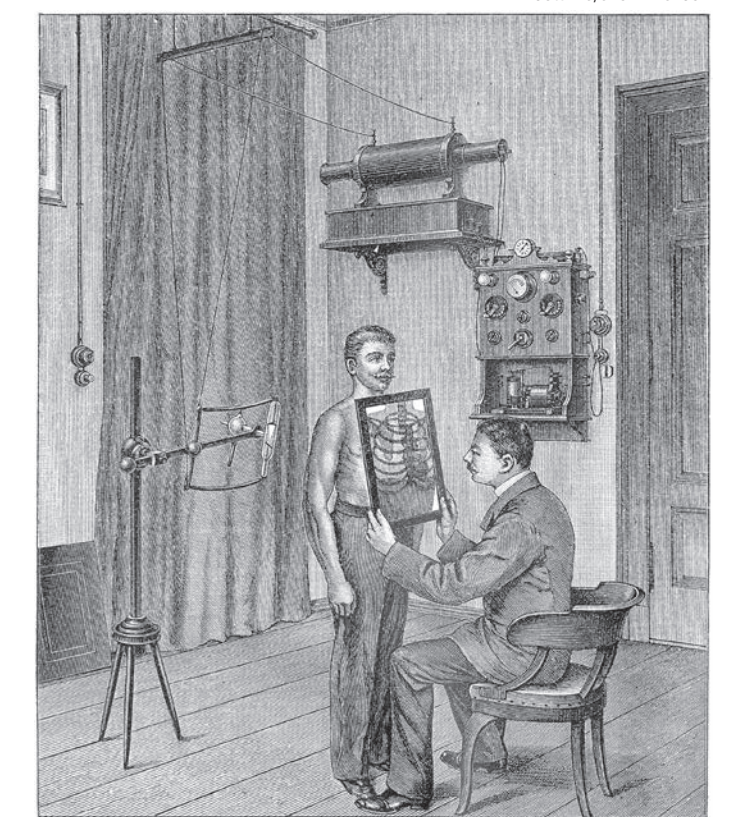
I like to teach the residents that technology should be used to confirm what you suspect, and not decide what you don't know.



Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen called his discovery "X" rays, due to the fact that he had no real idea what these rays were.  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Dr. Peter Weiss has been a frequent guest on local and national TV, newspapers, and radio. He was an assistant clinical professor of OB/GYN at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA for 30 years, stepping down so he could provide his clinical services to those in need when the COVID pandemic hit. He was also a national health care adviser for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign.

**In the 1930s and '40s, shoe stores offered free X-rays of one's feet so customers could be entertained by seeing the bones in their feet.**



Early scientists didn't know the risks of radiation, even as they marveled at its potential.  
HEIN NOUWENS/SHUTTERSTOCK

### Autism Rates Continue to Climb

New research finds 1 in 44 8-year-old kids diagnosed with autism in the US



Autism rates have reached new heights with boys being over four times more likely than girls to be diagnosed.  
DUBOVA/SHUTTERSTOCK

PATTI VERBANAS

The autism rate among 8-year-old children in the United States is one in 44, according to a new report.

Researchers used a new method to estimate the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) among children of various ages at 11 sites in 2018. The rate, a jump from the previous estimate of 1 in 54 children, is the highest estimate to date by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention-Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDMM) Network since its inception in 2000.

For the study, published in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, researchers analyzed information from 220,281 children, including 5,058 8-year-olds with ASD in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin.

Boys with ASD outnumbered girls by 4.2 to one in the study, and differences in prevalence and median age of ASD diagnosis were evident across

sites. Prevalence ranged from 1.6 percent (Missouri) to 3.9 percent (California), while the median age of diagnosis ranged from 36 months (California) to 63 months (Minnesota).

New Jersey's autism rate (2.8 percent) was higher than the network average (2.3 percent) and higher than the 2016 estimate from New Jersey using the new CDC methodology (2.3 percent).

"The 2018 ADDMM autism estimates are based on a new method of case-finding. The overall ADDMM numbers are minimum estimates," said report co-author Walter Zahorodny, an associate professor of pediatrics at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School.

"The revised ADDMM method is faster but less comprehensive and is likely to underestimate the actual number of true cases and may miss children from underserved communities. If autism already affects 4 to 7 percent of 8-year-old children in many New Jersey areas, as shown in our recent study, and 4 percent in California according to the new ADDMM findings, understanding the factors driving the rise in ASD prevalence

should be a public health priority."

New Jersey co-investigator and project coordinator Josephine Shenouda, who also serves as a research study manager at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School noted that race and financial status appear to be becoming less of a factor in ASD diagnoses.

"The new findings show that autism prevalence has not plateaued," Shenouda said "We no longer see as many differences in prevalence by race. Black and Hispanic children have the same ASD prevalence as white children in multiple states, and many ADDMM sites show that autism prevalence is no longer highest among children from affluent communities."

Better strategies to improve early detection of autism are needed, as is new research to identify environmental triggers and risk factors for ASD, according to Zahorodny.

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# Open Hearts Have Open Hands

Generosity doesn't require material riches, but rather a rich heart

DONNA MARTELLI

When we're generous, it's generally something we do to benefit another's well-being, but paradoxically, it increases our well-being as well. Being generous significantly boosts our mental health and sense of accomplishment in life. Besides all that, it feels terrific.

**Generosity Is a Lifestyle**

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines generous as "willing to give help or support, especially more than is usual or expected."

A generous person will give what they can to others, whether in time, resources, or encouragement. Genuinely interested in others, their mindset is one of giving and helping. A generous person has a noble character.

Within our human nature lies the tendency to close our hearts and therefore our hands to the needs of those around us. We may have excess that we enjoy but don't need while we see others who lack the things we enjoy. It can test our hearts to open ourselves to sharing our abundance, but it almost always leaves us with a deeper satisfaction.

How can we be generous people, especially now that many of us are out of work and prices are skyrocketing on everything from food to gasoline to home repairs? It's not a material issue; it's a heart issue.

**The Rewards of Generosity**

Research, including a study published in the Journal of Positive Psychology in June, has found we are happier when we give to someone else than when we spend money on ourselves. Our generosity lights up regions of our brains associated with pleasure, trust, and social connection. That's part of the reason why being generous feels fantastic. We have many opportunities to develop meaningful relationships because our generosity means we are likable people. Thankfulness is a way of life for the open-hearted. Generosity breeds gratitude, which also gives us health benefits, including improved cardiovascular and immune function.

Our sincere and joyful giving encour-



ages others to do the same. Even a simple "thank you" can inspire both us and the one we are thanking to be more generous. Anyone who might be watching or listening could also be encouraged to be more giving and thankful. Generosity keeps on going, helping us and those in our lives to feel happier and less lonely.

When we give something of our time or our resources, it's all but inevitable the blessing will return back to us. It's a system that always works, like gravity. I have seen this principle at work many times in my own life. Of course, one could refuse the blessing or pay no attention to it when it comes, but it will come.

Is it miraculous? Perhaps. Is it spiritual? I think so.

**Our generosity lights up regions of our brains associated with pleasure, trust, and social connection.**

**Generosity and Relationships**

Generosity is necessary to truly healthy relationships. If we genuinely care for someone, our heart is open to them. We want to compliment them not only materially but intellectually and spiritually. What do they need? What do they like? How can we make life better for them?

As iron sharpens iron, we sharpen each other when we share thoughts, ideas, and opinions within our relationships. Our friend's or spouse's interpretation of an issue or situation may be quite different from ours. Still, by openly sharing, each of us will gain more knowledge and perhaps be able to see more possibilities than we would have seen without the other person's viewpoints.

At the heart of all our relationships should be this basic principle: Treat them the way you want them to treat you.

Imagine how relationships would flourish if everyone applied that one principle. Issues arise when one or both parties forget to be generous with the other and aren't treating the other person like they would like to be treated.

Giving is rewarding, and we need to train our brains to focus on it. We can give in ways that provide a positive effect on someone else's life. We need to be thoughtful and intentional in our giving, knowing that we are making a difference, not only in someone else's life, but in ours as well.

*Formerly a professional dancer with the Harkness Ballet of New York, Donna Martelli has written three books, as well as course manuals, book summaries, blogs, articles, and devotionals. She lives in Indianapolis, Ind., and is married with five children and 12 grandchildren. She is the author of "When God Says Drop It" and "Why the Dance."*



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RELATIONSHIPS

# How Deep Listening Will Transform Your Life



Listening is critical to understanding other people and having fulfilling lives

In a world saturated with information, nonstop noise, smartphones, and endless workplace productivity tools, the art of listening is truly on the decline. How can we stop and pay attention to one thing at a time when a waterfall of "noise" is cascading into our minds every second? Our phones, notifications, emails, and texts in the present moment can seem more urgent than the person standing in front of us. Here's a startling statistic for you: After the average person listens to some-

one speak, he or she remembers only half of what the other person said. Listening is critical to not only understanding other people, but also to having fulfilling work and personal lives.

Below are three ways that deep, intentional listening will transform your life.

**1. Change Your Dynamics With Other People**

When we interact with other people, no matter how much we care about

them or how close we are, it's so easy to "listen" while we think about what we're going to say next. For some, this is even a default state when they're around others. It can take conscious, present moment awareness to fully focus on what the other person is saying to us without thinking of ourselves.

You'll find that the deeper you listen to others, the more non-verbal cues you pick up from what they're not saying.

*Continued on Page 14*

## Florida Surgeon General Promotes Nutraceuticals for COVID

There's an increasing amount of research showing the potential effects of vitamin D on COVID-19 outcomes

JOSEPH MERCOLA

Florida's new surgeon general, Dr. Joseph Ladapo, has issued a statewide public service announcement in support of common-sense COVID prevention strategies such as

optimizing your vitamin D, staying active, eating nutrient-dense foods, and boosting your immune system with supplements. Florida Health's HealthierYouFL.org website now urges Floridians to "Talk to your health care provider about how certain supplements or foods containing vitamins and minerals might help boost your immune system, such as zinc, vitamin D, vitamin C and quercetin." These are all well-known supplements that have been shown to have a positive impact on your COVID-19 risk.

The surgeon general also supports the

use of monoclonal antibodies in acute cases, and as prevention in high-risk patients who have been exposed to COVID-19. Available treatment locations can be found on FloridaHealthCOVID19.gov.

**'Physicians Should Use Clinical Judgment'**

Florida Health even highlights emerging treatments such as fluvoxamine and inhaled budesonide. Importantly, Florida Health now states that:



With low vitamin D levels, your immune system will be impaired, making you more susceptible to all kinds of infections, including COVID-19.

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WISE HABITS

# The Power of Courage

Face the pain and expand your range so you can do your meaningful work

LEO BABAUTA

Imagine a woman who has a powerful gift to give to the world, a song to sing that will lift others up. Now imagine she only lets herself give that gift when the sun is shining and she's happy and the moon is in perfect alignment with Jupiter.

The world would be robbed of her song. Her narrow range of when she's willing to offer her gift would be a devastating loss to those she could uplift.

**If we can step outside our experience just enough to see ourselves at that moment, it can lead to a breakthrough.**

Imagine a man who serves everyone around him deeply, so powerfully that they are all filled with their own sense of purpose. But he only does this when he's in the right mood, when he's not distracted by online articles, when he's not tired or lonely, when he's not criticized by those around him, and when his house and office are perfectly clean.

Those he fills with a sense of their own purpose would be less filled. Those he would give his love to would be deprived because he has such a narrow range of when he's willing to push himself to offer his gift to others.

This is how most of us live our lives.

Shrinking from the challenge of focusing on our purpose-filled work because we're tired, sad, anxious, stressed, or because we allow ourselves to be distracted and pulled in thousands of directions.

This is our failing, and it's our opportunity for growth.

When we're "not feeling it," and procrastinate or don't focus on our purpose, it's time to notice how we feel. If we can step outside our experience just enough to see ourselves at that moment, it can lead to a breakthrough. We can expand ourselves. You expand by:

- Opening up your heart in the middle of pain or stress and allowing yourself to fully feel. Don't shrink away, but find the courage to be incredibly present with whatever you're feeling.
- Feeling love for your experience, for whatever is causing you stress or pain, and not rejecting it. Seeing it as your teacher, your training ground.
- Reminding yourself of the gift you need to offer the world. Reminding yourself of your purpose—bringing your open heart to that work.
- Pushing yourself into the discomfort of focusing on that purpose, even if you're feeling sad or hurt or frustrated or distracted. Pushing yourself into the discomfort of saying no to all the distractions and busywork, and just doing what you need to do to offer your gift.

This is your challenge, in every moment. Expand your range by not needing conditions to be perfect; not needing everything to be in order; not needing to have all your messages responded to, all your inboxes and social media checked, all your articles read, all your crumbs swept up before you dive into your purpose.

Expand your range by not allowing yourself to shrink. It's like putting yourself in arctic conditions, in desert conditions, and practicing your art despite the unhappiness.

In fact, you can use the unhappiness and chaos to offer your gift. You take that stress and pain, and you turn it into love. That



We're all here with a mission, though some of us have long forgotten it. For those who haven't, it's time to upgrade your capacity to execute.

brilliance is a part of your gift.

Let's look at some specific practices for expanding your range of conditions so that you're no longer robbing the world of what you have to offer.

**Practices to Expand Yourself**

Once a day (to start with), create a space for practicing. Set yourself some purpose-filled work to do. Then try these practices:

1. Notice what you're feeling. Are you tired, stressed, frustrated, angry, sad, lonely, distracted, hurt, anxious? Then fully feel it. Forget about everything else in the world and just be fully present with whatever you're feeling. Not the narrative in your head about what you're feeling, but the actual physical feeling in your chest, stomach, head.
2. Open your heart to that feeling. Love it. Don't reject it or wish it would go away or try to get rid of it. Just love it. And love what caused it—the work stressing you out, the person who criticized you, the unhappy situation in your life. Love it as if it were the most beautiful thing on

Earth. Which it is.

3. Open your heart in the middle of this discomfort, and then take the first step in doing your work. Do the first small action, the tiniest movement, in the middle of these arctic conditions. See it as training for your heart. Courage training. Hold your heart open as you do it, keeping in mind who you're serving.
4. Love even fiercer as you do the next small step. Don't let your people down. Imagine that you would die for them, do anything to serve them, and that you hold them powerfully in your heart.

Repeat these practices every day. See your range grow. See your gift grow out into the world, unhindered by life's impediments. Sing your song powerfully and courageously, lifting up every soul around you. Then bow in gratitude to your practice.

*Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of Zen Habits, a blog with over 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net*

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