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Week 2

The Antidotes
to Fear

Living **BRAVE**

INTRODUCTION TO WEEK 2 EXERCISES

Our brains are meaning-making machines. The problem is the “stories” our brain makes up are not always based on fact or an accurate representation of what is happening.

EXERCISE #1: Checking Out the Assumptions of your Sh*tty First Draft

Pick an Event that made you feel scared or anxious:

What Happened was (the observable data) _____

When you think of that event - what do you feel in your body? _____

What other emotions came up for you? _____

The story I'm making up is _____

Because I think (your beliefs about yourself and the others involved) _____

What did you do? _____

Now It's Time to Unleash Your Curiosity and Explore the Event through a Purposeful Lens:

1. What more do I need to learn and understand about this situation? (What are the facts in the story? What assumptions do I need to check out? What core beliefs are at play here?)

2. What more do I need to learn and understand about the other people in the story? (What questions might I ask? What clarification might help?)

3. What more do I need to learn and understand about myself? (What's underneath my response? What did I need in this situation?)

4. If I was going to apply one of the 5 Courageous Beliefs to this story, how might I write a new ending?

1. Change is a constant.
2. There is an order to the world.
3. Feelings are our friends.
4. I am imperfect & flawed & still worthy of love & belonging.
5. I am not alone and part of the oneness of the cosmos.

EXERCISE #2 WRITING YOUR OWN MANTRAS FOR WHOLEHEARTED LIVING

DEVELOPING A MANTRA: Think about the 5 Courage Cultivating Beliefs and see if you can develop a Mantra for each one: Write a sentence or two that matches your personal beliefs about each one of these concepts.

1. Change is a Constant. I can't opt out of vulnerability. Stepping Into the places that scare me will bring growth

2. There is an order to the world and a purpose for my life

3. My feelings are the pathway to healing and growth. We have to feel it to heal it.

4. I am imperfect and flawed but still deserving of love and belonging.

5. I am not alone in my struggle.

EXERCISE #3 BREATHWORK

Breathwork is an active meditation and a transformational self-healing practice. Lying down, you focus on your breath and begin to sustain an active breathing pattern *in and out through the mouth* that gently oxygenates your body. The increased oxygen naturally quiets the mind and releases mood boosting endorphins, similar to vigorous exercise.

As the mind quiets, the body begins to open, and you can physically release pent-up stress, anxiety, sadness, anger, and self-doubt from your nervous system. This is far more effective than attempting to change these emotional experiences with your mind.

With these old, stuck emotional energies released, you create space to experience more of your true self and your vibrant, life-force energy flowing through and animating your body.

The Benefits...Every breathwork experience is unique and the effects compound over time through guided and personal practice. Benefits of the practice include:

- Physical- Reduce physical pain, tension and inflammation
- Mental- Release stress and repetitive worry thoughts so you feel more calm and relaxed
- Emotional- Release challenging emotions & feel more present and peaceful
- Spiritual- Connect to your intuition, life force energy and gain clarity and insight about your path and direction

EXERCISE #4: MINDFULNESS

Practice a few mindfulness exercises this week:

Everyday Practices for Mindfulness

Many of us think we just don't have time to devote to practicing mindfulness. Or it seems too difficult. As Sharon Salzberg, Buddhist teacher and author reminds us, "Mindfulness isn't difficult. We just need to remember to do it."

Everyday activities are perfect opportunities to practice mindfulness. Instead of just barreling through one thing to get to the next thing, be fully present with whatever it is you are doing. It just takes a willingness to be aware. Some suggestions to consciously try this week:

- Pay attention to the ingredients as you prepare a meal – the sight, touch, smell of them.
- Concentrate on mundane tasks, such as washing dishes. Feel the soap, warmth of the water on your hands.
- Brush your teeth slowly, notice the taste of the toothpaste, how the brush feels on your gums and sounds in your ears.
- Literally stop and smell the roses. Notice flowers, trees, the sky as you walk. Marvel at their beauty.
- Stuck in traffic? Take it as an opportunity to just sit and breathe in and out, instead of fretting about being late. You are where you are.

Training yourself to be mindful is a continual practice of calling your mind back to what is occurring in the present moment. As you do so, it gets to be a good habit, and you'll find yourself feeling more alive and connected to the world and people around you instead of isolated and lost in your thoughts or negative patterns of responding.

Developing an observing mind that watches your daily experience, notices your automatic response patterns and gently redirects attention to the present moment is the beginning of growing a "mindfulness muscle" to help you navigate the winds of change and stresses in your life.

Mindful Walking

As you walk, pay attention to your experience in the moment.

Notice the feeling of your feet touching the grass or the sidewalk or your carpet

Can you feel the pressure on the soles of your feet when you step? Can you sense how the pressure goes from the heel of your foot to the ball of your foot and then your toes? What is the sensation at the top of your foot as you take each step?

Can you feel the texture of the floor or ground underneath you? Is it rough or smooth?

Pay attention to your arms- are they swaying or swinging?

Notice your legs moving. What muscles are involved in this movement? Do they feel stiff or sore? Are they strong or weak?

Do any parts of you feel cool or warm? Do you feel any air moving around you? Can you feel the sun on your face or your back?

You can adapt this exercise to any activity you are engaged in throughout the day. Helping you stay in the present moment and focused on the here and now.