

"Emily and Amelia Nagoski deconstruct the stress we experience as women, and their compassionate, science-based advice on how to release it made me cry with gratitude and relief. The book is that revolutionary."  
—PEGGY ORENSTEIN

# burnout

the secret to  
unlocking  
the stress cycle

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**A Guide to Using Burnout  
For Therapists**

# Introduction

## General Guidance

- You know best which parts of which chapters are most relevant for any given client.
- Because Burnout is built on the idea of women as heroines conquering the enemy of a toxic culture, it is a particularly good fit for narrative therapy approaches. It also uses “decentering” and “unblending” exercises, making it a good fit with Internal Family Systems and mindfulness-based therapies, including Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.
- The questions offered in this guide are suggestions grounded primarily in Motivational Interviewing, designed to support autonomy and highlight ambivalence, as well as enhance client motivation and confidence.
- Throughout the book, there are activities and worksheets. In this guide, these are identified at the top of each chapter. Additional worksheets and activities are included in the appendix of this guide.
- Throughout the book, we follow the stories of two women (they are composites, not actual individuals in real life), with one vignette per character, per chapter. Sometimes readers identify strongly with one particular character and her overall situation and story arc; sometimes they identify with individual vignettes, even if they don’t relate to a character overall. Each vignette can be a point of exploration, as to the extent that a client relates to a story. (In this guide, we’ll include a quick summary of what each vignette illustrates.)

# Introduction

## General Guidance

- Central themes of the book:
  - Oscillation and cycles: Humans are not built to live in one perpetual state, we are built to oscillate. We oscillate from rest to effort and back, from connection to autonomy and back, and from a deep sense of meaning to disconnection from meaning and back again. Emotions has built-in biological cycles that, when we allow them to complete, let us oscillate from intensity to calm and back again.
  - Connection: Humans are not built to do big things alone; we are built to do them together. When we are struggling, our solution usually lies in our state of connection. Have we gotten stuck in autonomy, the sense that we ought to be able to do everything ourselves? Have we gotten stuck in connection, the sense that we must always be engaged with others and can never connect with ourselves?



# Introduction

## A User's Guide to Burnout

The book is divided into three parts: What You Take with You, The Real Enemy, and Wax On, Wax Off. The first section is about the internal resources each woman carries with her in her body, to protect her from danger. The second is about the sources of danger we encounter in the modern world. And the third is about the daily practices that help us build strength to face those dangers and ultimately defeat them.

### Ideas to Explore:

- Emotional Exhaustion is the key feature of burnout. How do you “exhaust” an emotion? By getting stuck in the middle of it, rather than moving through the natural cycle built into all emotions.
- “Human Giver Syndrome” is the contagious (but false) belief that some people (usually women) have a moral obligation to be pretty, happy, calm, generous, and attentive to the needs of others – these are the Human Givers – while others have a moral obligation to be competitive, acquisitive, and infallible – the Human Beings. In *Down Girl*, moral philosopher Kate Manne suggests these terms to explain sexual violence perpetrated by men against women, but it can also explain a primary reason why so many women get stuck in their emotions; Human Givers aren't allowed to have “needs.”
- “The Owl and the Cheese” experiment teaches us that we can best accomplish our goals when we have a positive idea to move toward “the cheese,” rather than just a negative idea to move away from “the owl.” The “cheese” of Burnout is growing mighty, feeling strong enough to cope with all the owls and mazes and anything else the world throws at you.

# Part 1: Only What You Take With You

## CHAPTER 1

### Complete the Cycle

*“In the Star Wars movie Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back, Luke Skywalker sees an evil cave. Looking toward the entrance in dread, he asks his teacher Yoda, “What’s in there?”*

*“Yoda answers, “Only what you take with you.” What resources does each woman carry with her into the caves and battles and lessons of life? This section outlines three.”*

#### **Activities:**

How to complete the cycle (p. 14)

#### **Vignettes:**

- **Julie** learns that completing the stress response cycle is separate from dealing with the causes of her stress.
- **Sophie** learns that, as a non-exerciser, she can get the cycle-completing benefits of physical activity without having to exercise.

# Part 1: Only What You Take With You

## CHAPTER 1

### Complete the Cycle

#### Ideas to Explore:

- Stress is a physiological cycle activated by stressors – and what works to complete that cycle generally have nothing to do with what works to manage those stressors. (Ask, “*What are your stressors?*” “*What does stress feel like in your body?*” “*What does it feel like when you’ve ‘completed the cycle?’*”)
- We get stuck because our stressors are chronic, because we’re told it’s “socially inappropriate” to express our emotions, because it’s safer not to react, or because we “freeze.” When we unlock from freeze, our bodies may shake or stretch or otherwise activate involuntary and irrational bodily responses, which we call “the Feels.” (Ask, “*What are some times you’ve gotten stuck?*” “*When or where do you feel safe enough to express your emotions?*” “*Have you ever ‘frozen’? Did you experience those ‘Feels’ the authors described? What was it like for you?*”)
- The most efficient way to complete the cycle is any kind of physical movement; other effective strategies include deep slow breathing, positive social interaction, laughter, affection, cathartic crying, and creative self-expression. (Ask, “*When is movement the best strategy for you to complete the cycle? When isn’t it right for you?*” “*What can breathing be right for you? When is it not the right strategy?*” etc., for each strategy.)

# Part 1: Only What You Take With You

## CHAPTER 2 #Persist

### Activities:

Redefining Winning (p. 36)

### Vignettes:

- **Julie** finds that her initial efforts to deal with stress more effectively work... but also they highlight the stressors that continue to cause stress. She has to adjust her expectations to integrate the reality that it is a never-ending process.
- **Sophie** reframes her inevitable extra work as “the black woman in the room” as an opportunity. If they’re going to ask her to do the work, and she’s good at it, why not make it a job?

# Part 1: Only What You Take With You

## CHAPTER 2 #Persist

### Ideas to Explore:

- A little “monitor” in your brain knows (1) what your goal is, (2) how much effort you’re putting into that goal, and (3) how much progress you’re making. And it has a strong opinion about what the effort-to-progress ratio ought to be. When the ratio is too small, you get *frustrated*. (Ask, “*When you’re frustrated, what helps?*” Listen for (1) planful problem-solving and (2) positive reappraisal, as well as maladaptive coping strategies)
- If, because of your frustration, you work harder but still don’t make progress, the frustration escalates to rage... and eventually decides your goal is not obtainable, at which point it pushes you off an emotional cliff into a “pit of despair.” (Ask, “*When you feel helpless or like nothing you do makes a difference, what helps?*” Listen for asking for help, as well as maladaptive coping strategies)
- Between the rage and the despair is an emotion we call “foop,” when you oscillate from frustrated rage to helpless despair, uncertain whether to push even harder or to give up. (Ask, “*When you’re not sure whether to keep pursuing the same goal or quit and try something different, how do you decide?*” Listen for cost-benefit analysis (e.g., writing pro-con lists), asking for input, and listening to your gut.) See “Welcoming Limitations” worksheet in the appendix of this guide.



# Part 1: Only What You Take With You

## CHAPTER 3 Meaning

### Activities:

What is your something larger? (p. 60)

### Vignettes:

- **Julie** finds, again, that improvement in one domain of her life highlights problems in other domain. She soothes herself with TV, but that doesn't help her move forward from her struggles. What helps her move forward is remembering what matters most.
- **Sophie** cosplays as a Star Trek character for fun, but also because engaging with that fictional world with other fans is a way to practice living in a world where prejudice has been overcome. It connects her with something larger than herself.

# Part 1: Only What You Take With You

## CHAPTER 3 Meaning

### Ideas to Explore:

- Meaning in life is important for wellbeing, and it isn't found; it is made by engaging with something larger than yourself. (Ask, *“What is your ‘Something Larger?’”* and *“What does it feel like when you’re engaged with your Something Larger?”*)
- “Human Giver Syndrome” punishes us for engaging with Something Llargers in ways that don't align with our roles as “givers,” or for having Something Llargers that aren't “giving” enough. (Ask, *“How has your family, your culture, the world supported or blocked you, in engaging with your Something Llarger?”*)
- Isolation and helplessness are the opposite of meaning, which is why trauma can seem to drain life of meaning. But our Something Llarger lives inside our bodies, so nothing can separate us from our source of meaning. (Ask, *“Was there a time when you felt life lacked meaning?”* and *“What happened to help you re-engage with your sense of meaning?”* or *“When you’re looking for meaning, where do you look?”*)

## Part 2: The Real Enemy

### CHAPTER 4

### The Game Is Rigged

*“In the dystopian novel *The Hunger Games*, young Katniss Everdeen is forced into a “game” organized by the dystopian sci-fi government, in which she has to kill other children. Her mentor says to her, “Remember who the real enemy is.” It’s not the people the government wants her to kill and who are trying to kill her. The real enemy is the power that set this whole system up in the first place.*

*In real life the enemy is not the men or women with whom we share the world, but the system of bias that makes emotional resources scarce and puts our bodies in danger.”*

#### Activities:

Smashin’ Some Patriarchy (p. 100); “do something” (p. 98)

#### Vignettes:

- **Sophie** frames her daily experiences of discrimination and bias as a game that can only be won by showing her character, rather than trying to “win” any specific goal.
- **Julie** stops “mother henning” and starts “father cocking,” treating responsibilities the same way her male colleagues do. Not everyone loves the shift, but she feels much less exhausted.

## Part 2: The Real Enemy

### CHAPTER 4

## The Game Is Rigged

#### Ideas to Explore:

- Systemic bias against women still exists, and one of the ways it instantiates itself in our lives is by trying to tell us it does not exist. That's "gaslighting." (Ask, "*Does your internal experience match your expectations? Does it match others' expectations?*" and "*What would it take for you to trust your own internal experience over others' expectations?*")
- "Human Giver Syndrome" – the belief that women should give everything they have, including all their emotional energy and even their bodies – blinds us to this bias. (Ask, "*Does Human Giver Syndrome show up in your life? What does it feel like?*" or "*What assumptions do you make about how people will show up in your life, based on their status as 'givers' or not?*" or "*How are you punished for 'violating' your role as a giver?*")
- The "headwinds-tailwinds asymmetry" also blinds us, because the ways we have to work hard make us forget the ways we had it easy. (Ask, "*What headwinds – adversity – have you confronted in your life?*" and then "*And what tailwinds – help and opportunity – have benefitted you?*")



## Part 2: The Real Enemy

### CHAPTER 5

## The Bikini Industrial Complex

#### Activities:

You Are the New Hotness (p. 120); Everybody is the New Hotness (p. 122); “Hi Body, What Do You Need?” (p. 124)

#### Vignettes:

- **Julie** accumulates so much stress that she lands in the emergency room with a fecal impaction. It forces her to confront the ways she has been treating her body like an object rather than an organic partner with needs and wisdom.
- **Sophie** is confronted with the sizeist biases of people who work in a dress shop. She had friends to support her and a deep well of self-confidence that allowed her to turn it into an amusing story.

## Part 2: The Real Enemy

### CHAPTER 5

## The Bikini Industrial Complex

### Ideas to Explore:

- According to the largest scale, highest quality meta-analyses, it's as unhealthy to be “underweight,” according to medical definitions, as it is to be “obese,” and the healthiest weights are somewhere between the high end of “normal” and “overweight.” (Ask, “*What does it feel like, to consider the idea that all that pressure you’ve felt to be thin isn’t really about health, but about conformity or obedience?*”)
- This isn’t just about how we absorb and enact the cultural obsession with weight; it’s about how we dismiss everything else related to our bodies. (Ask, “*How have efforts to conform to the ‘aspirational ideal’ interfered with your recognize your body’s true needs?*”)
- What would it be like if we and the people around us felt the same way about our bodies as we all did on the day we were born? Celebrated and seen as beautiful, no matter what? (Ask, “*What would it look like, if you treated your body with the same loving care with which you would, as your best self, treat a newborn baby?*”) See “Media Nutrition” worksheet in the appendix of this guide.

## Part 3: Wax On, Wax Off

### CHAPTER 6

#### Connect

*“From the Karate Kid, when Mr. Miyagi teaches his protégé karate by having the kid wax his car, paint his fence and sand his deck. “Wax on,” he tells him, rotating one palm clockwise. “Wax off,” he says, rotating the other palm counter clockwise. “Don’t forget to breathe.” Why? Because in the mundane tasks of daily living, we find the defensive gestures that protect us and help us make peace with our enemies.*

#### Activities:

Trust Game (p. 141)

#### Vignettes:

- **Sophie** has resisted having a relationship because she’s a strong, independent woman. When she meets someone who fills her stomach with butterflies, she finds that intimate connection isn’t just about knowing someone else well and trusting them, it’s about knowing yourself more profoundly.
- **Julie** receives connection not just as emotional support but through instrumental support – help with time-consuming but necessary household tasks. Support isn’t just about feelings.

# Part 3: Wax On, Wax Off

## CHAPTER 6

### Connect

#### Ideas to Explore:

- We require connection in the same way we require food: we can literally sicken and even die without it. The need for emotional connection is not a weakness or pathology; it's a normal part of being human.
- The most nourishing connections have two features. First, trust – that is, feeling confident that another person will reciprocate in kind when you give them something. As Sue Johnson says, trust can be boiled down the question, “Are you there for me?”
- The second feature of nourishing connections is connected knowing. Many people – especially women – get to know the world, other people, and themselves, not through analytical ways of knowing but through *connected knowing*, where they suspend their own point of view to explore an idea within the context of the other point of view.
- We call such nourishing relationships “the Bubble of Love.” It's where you go to reconnect, when you need to oscillate out of autonomy. (Ask, “*Who's in your Bubble of Love?*” and “*What do they do that shows you they're trustworthy?*” and “*In what ways do you know yourself better, by knowing them?*”)
- Loneliness doesn't always look like loneliness. Feeling “not enough” is a form of loneliness. Above all, sadness is the beacon; it is the Bat Signal emotion, telling you to reach out for connection.



# Part 3: Wax On, Wax Off

## CHAPTER 7

### What Makes You Stronger

#### Activities:

24/7 Calendar (p. 175)

#### Vignettes:

- **Sophie** earns the neurological connection between rest and creativity, which motivates her to leave an organization that pushes employees to exhaustion.
- **Julie** uses the structure of her physical therapy to recognize and ask for help when she needs it, so that she can rest – which results in her husband recognizing how difficult it can be to get rest.

# Part 3: Wax On, Wax Off

## CHAPTER 7

### What Makes You Stronger

#### Ideas to Explore:

- Our brains are designed to oscillate between a state of active attention and a “default mode” state of mind-wandering or daydreaming, when it explores the past and the future. The better the balance between these two states, the better our mental health and cognitive clarity. (Ask, “*What low-demand tasks facilitate ‘default mode’?*” or “*How does the idea of default mode fit with what you’ve been taught about ‘hard work’ or ‘grit’ or ‘never giving up’?*”)
- Boredom is the uncomfortable state of the brain being an active-attention mode, without anything it can pay attention to. (Ask, “*When you’re bored, what don’t you want to pay attention to?*” or “*When you’re bored, what helps you toggle from attention into default-mode daydreaming?*”)
- Daydreaming or mind-wandering can turn into rumination if it gets stuck reexamining a negative past experience or worrying over a potential future experience. (Ask, “*When your mind-wandering gets stuck in a negative place, what helps you transition into a solution-focused state or a place of gratitude?*” [a.k.a., positive reappraisal].)
- No domain of human life is really complete without sleep; our physical health, mental health, relationships, and cognitive abilities all depend on getting enough sleep. (Ask, “*How much sleep are you getting?*” or “*What relationship do you notice between sleep and your mood/ anxiety/ attention/ other mental health issues?*” or “*How do you feel about sleep?*”)

## Part 3: Wax On, Wax Off

### CHAPTER 8 Grow Mighty

#### Activities:

Get to Know Your Madwoman (p. 192); Turn and Face the Strange (p. 204); Who-You-Have Gratitude (p. 209); How-You-Have Gratitude (p. 210)

#### Vignettes:

- **Sophie's** “madwoman” is funny pop culture symbol of gendered biases. By making her a source of amusement rather than a source of helplessness, she can share her experiences with her partner in a way that bonds them more closely.
- **Julie** recognizes that an inner critic developed when her childhood play at being a woman turned into a sense of obligation to be that imaginary woman.

## Part 3: Wax On, Wax Off

### CHAPTER 8 Grow Mighty

#### Ideas to Explore:

- Each of us has a “madwoman in the attic,” an inner voice that criticizes us any time she notices a gap between who we are and who the world expects us to be.
- The key to dealing with this self-criticism is to turn toward that inner critic with compassion and gratitude – never forgetting that she is mad.
- Self-compassion is difficult because we believe if we stop beating ourselves up, we’ll lose motivation and become complacent or lazy. Self-compassion is also difficult because it is healing, and healing can be painful. It’s also difficult because the result of healing is that you grow stronger, and we might be scared of the feeling of strength and power. (Ask, “*What would happen, if you stopped beating yourself up?*”)
- Self-compassion can be *most difficult* for those with histories of trauma and neglect; receiving compassion, whether from themselves or others, activates a threat response instead of a relaxation response. The solution is to extend care to others, before attempting to care for oneself. (See Lovingkindness Practice in appendix)



# Conclusion

## Joyfully Ever After

### Ideas to Explore:

- Joy and happiness not the same thing. As Brittney Cooper writes in *Eloquent Rage*, “Happiness is predicated on ‘happenings,’ on what’s occurring, on whether your life is going right, and whether all is well. Joy arises from an internal clarity about our purpose.”
- When we can resonate, bell-like, with our Something Larger, that’s joy. And because our Something Larger is within us, no external circumstances can take away our source of joy, no matter the “happenings” around us.
- Joy doesn’t come “from within.” Because a sense of “enoughness” comes from our connection with others, we access joy when we connect with others through shared meaning.

## CHAPTER 2

### Change the Expectancy: Welcome Limitations

Once during a workshop about stress and completing the cycle, a woman in the audience raised her hand and said, “I’m feeling really frustrated by this. Why are our bodies not better equipped to deal with stress? Why does our body fail us?”

And of course the answer is that it’s not our bodies that fail, it’s the world that fails our bodies, but not welcoming the limits of being human.

Emily described the poster she kept over her desk while she was writing her dissertation. It was from [despair.com](http://despair.com) – a “demotivator.” It’s designed to look like the inspirational posters you see in gyms about overcoming obstacles. It has a photo of a penguin waddling away from the camera, and the caption reads:

#### *LIMITATIONS*

*Until you spread your wings,  
You’ll have no idea how far you can walk*

It’s funny because: penguins, but it’s also true.

We all have limits, because we all live in bodies that have needs above and beyond the goals we have for our lives. Sometimes those limits mean we can’t accomplish our goals in the way or at the pace we expect. If we can’t achieve our goals in the way we expected to, that doesn’t mean we have to quit. We can still get where we want to go – even if we have to walk every step of the way!

# Appendix

## CHAPTER 2

### Change the Expectancy: Welcome Limitations

The best plans anticipate barriers and limitations and make space for them. A penguin doesn't plan to get to the ocean by flying; don't you plan to finish your Masters degree by working twenty hours a day for two years. You and the penguin would both land flat on your faces if you didn't welcome your limitations into your plan.

Let's try out positive reappraisal on this quirk of human planning:

*Integrating limitations into my plan may make achieving my goals more difficult, but it's worth it because:*

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Here are ten examples of how you might complete that sentence:

- I will actually achieve my goal!
- The greater effort will probably produce a better result.
- Going slower may not be fun but it's better than burning out.
- My limitations are opportunity for me to reach out to my friends, family, and community, to get support, give and receive affection, and feel more connected to the world.
- For some limitations, I can incorporate challenging those limitations into my plan, and thus grow even stronger, while also moving toward my main goal.
- It means I stay healthier, both mentally and physically, while I move toward my goal.
- It reminds me that the outcome matters more than looking or feeling like I'm working hard.
- Limitations make me more creative! Inventing "workarounds" is a fun game.
- Only if I acknowledge my limitations can I notice when those limitations start to diminish.
- Limitation-based planning makes me to think really hard about whether this goal actually matters enough to me to be worth this kind and quantity of effort. If yes, I'm all the more motivated. If no, I may choose to let it go.

# Appendix

## CHAPTER 5 Media Nutrition

One of the simplest changes we can make is to notice how different media makes us feel about our own bodies and make choices about what to eliminate and what to keep.

For example, women's magazines. Maybe they make you feel great – but if they do, you're the exception, not the rule. One psychology professor we know, who studies mood in women, told us that if she wants to induce negative mood in women, she has them sit for half an hour reading women's magazines. They're that reliable at inducing negative mood.

Over the course of a week – again, it can be the same week or a different week from the previous exercises – note all the television, movies, social media, magazines, et cetera that you're exposed to and put them on a spectrum from “Makes Me Feel Bad in My Body” to “Makes Me Feel Great in My Body.”

Then consider eliminating some of the media that makes you hate your body.

Just like that, you've made it a little easier to live in a body-positive context.

# Appendix

## CHAPTER 5 Media Nutrition

Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

Makes Me Feel Bad  
in My Body

Neutral

Makes Me Feel Great  
in My Body



# Appendix

## CHAPTER 9

### Lovingkindness Practice

Sit comfortably in your chair

With your hands relaxed

And your eyes closed

And take a deep, slow breath in . . .

And release that breath even more slowly.

And another a deep slow breath in . . .

And a slow, slow breath out.

As you're breathing you can be aware of any tension in your abdominal muscles

And in your thoracic diaphragm, right under your lungs.

Just let that relax.

And deep, deep, deep in your core,

Sense your pelvic diaphragm

That runs from your tail bone down in a sling of muscle

Through your genitals to your pubic bone.

Just let it sink right down.

And any unnecessary tension you find in any of those muscles

# Appendix

You can just let go,  
As you continue to breathe deeply and slowly.  
And as you open up all this space  
Inside you,  
You begin to notice a pleasant light  
Glowing deep inside you  
And that warm, pleasant glow  
Begins to grow in that peaceful space you've created inside yourself.  
And the more the light spreads,  
The more you begin to feel your body  
Resonating with a deep, quiet joy  
That expands inside you as you continue breathing  
Deeply and slowly,  
Letting that light spread at its own pace,  
And that joyful light spreads through your whole belly  
And all through your heart, and fills up your whole torso,  
And continues to spread,  
As you breathe deeply and slowly,  
This warm, joyful light filling your arms and legs,

# Appendix

Enveloping your spine,  
All the way up to your skull  
And filling your whole head with this blissful, peaceful, joyful light.  
And as you're sitting here, still breathing deeply and slowly,  
Feeling so filled with peace and joy,  
You know that this is a feeling and a place inside yourself  
That you can return to at any time.  
A safe and peaceful place that you carry inside you always.  
I'd like you to think about your body,  
Your self,  
Here in this room.  
You can allow your whole body  
To be filled with this thought:  
"I recognize the infinity of the universe in myself."  
It's okay if it's not true,  
And it's okay if it is true;  
Just let your whole body be filled with this thought:  
"I recognize the infinity of the universe in myself.  
I am thankful for this vitality.

## Appendix

May I feel love and compassion.”

And while you are holding yourself in your heart like this,

Still feeling that sense of peace and joy, that light,

Think of a person who loves you,

Someone who gives you

Respect and appreciation.

You can allow your whole body

To be filled with this thought:

“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this person.

I am thankful for this caregiver.

May this person feel love and compassion.”

And while you’re holding this person beside you in your heart,

Still breathing slowly and deeply,

Still feeling that sense of peace and joy, that light,

Think of a person you love,

Who reflects back to you

The very best of who you are.

And I’d like you to let

Your whole body

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Be filled with this thought:

“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this person.

I am thankful for this soulmate.

May this person feel love and compassion.”

And while you’re holding both these people in your light with you,

Still breathing deeply and slowly,

I’d like you to think of a benefactor.

It might be a teacher or a supervisor,

Past or present.

Someone who has given you the gift

Of their knowledge,

Time,

Or attention.

And as you’re thinking of this person,

I’d like you to let

Your whole body

Be filled with this thought:

“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this person.

I am thankful for this mentor.



# Appendix

May this person feel love and compassion.”

And while you’re holding this person in your heart with all the others,

And still feeling that sense of peace and joy,

Think of a person you don’t know well,

But whom you meet in your daily life,

Like a checkout clerk or a bank teller or the maintenance person,

And I’d like you to let

Your whole body

Be filled with this thought:

“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this person.

I am thankful for this helper.

May this person feel love and compassion.”

And while you’re holding this person in your heart with all the others,

And while you’re still feeling that sense of peace and joy,

Think of someone you dislike,

Someone who reflects the things

You fear in yourself

And I’d like you to let

# Appendix

Your whole body

Be filled with this thought:

“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this person.

I am thankful for this mirror.

May this person feel love and compassion.”

And while you’re holding this person in your heart with all the others

Still feeling that sense of peace and joy,

Think of an enemy,

Someone who has done harm

To you

Or someone you love.

It can be a personal enemy

Or a political enemy,

An enemy of you,

Or an enemy of humanity.

And I’d like you to let

Your whole body

Be filled with this thought:

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“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this person.

I am thankful for this teacher.

May this person feel love and compassion.”

And while you’re holding this person with all the others,

Think of the whole world,

The entire earth

With its billions of inhabitants,

Countless species,

And infinite variety and complexity.

Allow the earth to be weightless inside you

Let it float like a balloon

Or a feather

Or a mote of dust,

Dancing

In the infinity of the universe.

And let your whole body be filled with this thought:

“The infinite in me recognizes the infinite in this world.

I am thankful for this home.

May we feel love and compassion.”

# Appendix

And as you are holding the earth lightly inside you,

And as you're breathing deeply and slowly,

Allow yourself a gathering awareness of your body in your chair

And of your hands

And your heart

And know that everything that happens from now until you go to bed tonight

Will be touched by the peace and joy you bring with you into this room

As you allow yourself a gathering awareness of your shoulders

And your head

And face,

And aware now of your belly,

And still feeling that quiet, steady joy,

Aware of your legs

And of your feet

And now of your eyes.

And welcome back.