The Practice Workbook

Bring peace into your daily life

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The Practice
WORKBOOK

Bring peace into your daily life

This workbook belongs to:
“Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens.”

—CARL JUNG
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An Overview of The Practice

1. WAKING UP
   - Meditation

2. LIVING PRESENT
   - Sacred Mantra
   - Focused Attention
   - Reading for Inspiration

3. LETTING GO
   - Reflection
What Is The Practice?

The Practice is a set of practical tools that you can use throughout the day to lead you along your spiritual journey; it is a guide for your life. It provides you with a framework around which you can easily structure your day—no matter how busy you are—so that you can take the time to go within and tap into your source of strength, courage, wisdom, peace, and compassion.

The Benefits of The Practice

• Recognize that your everyday life is your spiritual life.
• Remove the obstacles that interfere with inner peace.
• Cultivate more patience and compassion.
• Have more courage when facing fears and making changes.
• Overcome unwanted habits.
• Make better choices.
• Get out of “reaction mode.”
• Reduce negative thinking.
• Ease anxiety and worry.
• See the blessings beneath life’s more difficult experiences.
• Awaken your heart and uncover your true self.
These are some of the changes I would like to make and/or the benefits I would like to experience by following The Practice:

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You may wish to use the Journal Pages in the back of this workbook to jot down any personal benefits you discover as you engage in The Practice.
Using The Practice

Waking Up is the first leg of The Practice. In the morning, you set the intention to be present and to carry with you a peaceful thread throughout your day. You do this by taking time to go within to access your inner source of strength and wisdom (God, Lord, Spirit, Source, Beloved, etc.) before you engage the day. A morning meditation is calming, centering, and empowering, helping you to greet the day from a grounded, nonreactive place.

Living Present is the second leg of The Practice. There are three parts to Living Present, which are practiced throughout the day at no specific times: 1) Repetition of the Sacred Mantra, 2) Focused Attention, and 3) Reading for Inspiration. Each of these aspects of Living Present helps you to strengthen your intention to carry your inner peace with you throughout the day.

By repeating your personal Sacred Mantra and actively practicing Focused Attention (remaining present to what you are doing in the moment), you nurture your ability to respond from your inner source of strength, wisdom, and compassion rather than from your mind’s conditioned behaviors.

Setting aside time to read for inspiration helps you rekindle or strengthen your faith to greet the moments of your life with courage and gratitude.

Letting Go through the act of reflecting is the final leg of The Practice. Reflection is a 5- to 10-minute process of reviewing the events
of your day without judgment. It is done just before you go to sleep, perhaps following Reading for Inspiration. It is a special time for acknowledging the events of your day and your feelings about them.

Through acknowledgment, you can let these things go and make peace with yourself so that you can greet the following day with a peaceful mind and heart. Reflection increases your awareness of how you respond to life, allowing you to set an intention to respond differently in the future if necessary.

The Practice is not a religion. It can be a complement to any religious or spiritual practice, or it can stand entirely on its own. Anyone who is looking to deepen their connection to their innermost selves can incorporate The Practice into their daily lives.

About This Workbook

Each of the activities in this workbook is a powerful adjunct to the spiritual framework provided by The Practice. These additional steps can deepen your experience of The Practice, helping you to find your personal truth and purpose in life.

This is your workbook. Feel free to use the journal pages (and even the margins!) to record your thoughts, take notes, write your Sacred Mantra, or copy down inspirational quotes and passages.
Morning meditation helps you go within and tap into the place that calms, centers, and empowers you. Taking this quiet time prepares you for the day ahead and gives you the opportunity to truly appreciate the beauty of having another day on earth.

### The Benefits of Meditation

- Improves concentration.
- Deepens relaxation and relieves stress.
- Slows breathing.
- Widens your perspective.
- Helps you stay more centered.
- Calms your mind and reduces mental chatter.
- Strengthens your ability to “let things go.”
- Increases your awareness of your thoughts.
- Eases feelings of restlessness.
- Helps you tap into your innermost self.
When to meditate. First thing in the morning, before you engage the day.

Where to meditate. Dedicate a quiet place in your home to practice your morning meditation. A corner, a nook, or even just a special chair or cushion will work.

How long to meditate. Ideally, you will want to sit (meditate) for thirty minutes. But if you have never meditated before, it is perfectly okay to start with just five minutes and build up from there.

Posture for meditation. Sit in a chair, on a cushion, or on the floor with your head, neck, and spine in a straight line and with your back supported.

How to meditate. Once you are comfortably seated, close your eyes. Begin by taking a few deep, cleansing breaths. Silently repeat your Sacred Mantra a few times.* Then slowly focus your attention on your chosen object (for example, your Sacred Mantra, an inspirational prayer or passage, or your breath). When your focus drifts, refocus your attention on the object. Continue until your meditation period is over. Then, silently repeat your Sacred Mantra as you leave the meditation space.

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*Meditation is a personal practice. There is no need to judge whether or not you are doing it correctly or if your meditation session was “good” or “bad.” It is really just about spending that quiet time every day to check in with yourself without judgment or expectations. The results of your meditation practice will naturally reveal themselves to you in how you respond to the ordinary (as well as the extraordinary) events of your day.
Mind Clutter

If you want your mind to be peaceful and present in the moment, you need to become aware of the chatter and learn to clear away all of the mental clutter. Like cleaning out a closet, you cannot do this in the dark. So to shine some light on what is going on in your mind, write down all of your thoughts, concerns, worries, hopes, and expectations in the diagram of the head below. Fit as many as you can! This is not about judging your thoughts as good or bad; it is just about becoming aware of them, so that you can change them if you would like to.
Putting Worries Into Perspective

It is normal to worry, but a lot of the time we end up worrying about things that have already happened, will never happen, or will not be as “bad” as we think they will be. Our minds stir up the worries, and they literally start spiraling out of control, keeping us from living our lives fully.

For this exercise, make a list of things you are worried might happen in the coming week in the space provided below. Jot down the best- and worst-case scenarios. (Use the extra journal pages in the back if you need more room.)

A week from now, go back to this list and review it. Chances are you will discover that seldom, if ever, do things turn out the way you expect. Doing this exercise helps us to see just how much time and energy we waste worrying about things that never materialize. It saps our energy and strength, leaving us tired and drained!
There are three components of Living Present: the Sacred Mantra, Focused Attention, and Reading for Inspiration.

**THE SACRED MANTRA**

The Sacred Mantra is a word, phrase, verse, or prayer with a long history of use that is hallowed or considered holy by the tradition or culture from which it originated that you have personally chosen for your use in The Practice. It is your sacred connection to God, Lord, Spirit, Source, Beloved within.

In the most general sense, to “use it” simply means to say it to yourself in your head. It is a powerful tool that helps you redirect your thoughts, clear your mind, and regain your focus. It can be called upon as often as it is needed throughout the day and is a great source of strength and spiritual support.

There are thousands of sacred words and phrases to choose from in every single tradition or culture. You may already have a specific sacred prayer or mantra that you use. If you do not have one, take your time choosing it. Review the list of Selected Sacred Mantras on page 36.
My Sacred Mantra is:

The Benefits of the Sacred Mantra

• Refocuses your attention on the present moment.
• Reduces anxiety.
• Quiets mental chatter and slows the speed of thoughts.
• Eases negative emotions.
• Soothes nervous energy.
• Facilitates personal transformation.
• Connects you to your deep spiritual source.
• Helps you to be the person you want to be and to live the life you want to live.
• Cultivates compassion, love, and forgiveness.
• Allows you to see others as members of your own family and recognize that we are all one.

Peaceful Mind Peaceful Life would love to hear what happens for you when you start using your Sacred Mantra.
Please visit www.peacefulmindpeacefullife.org and share your experience with us.
What my Sacred Mantra means to me:

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What feelings my Sacred Mantra elicits:

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Sacred Mantra Writing

A wonderful way to use the Sacred Mantra is to write it down. The single-pointed exercise of writing your Sacred Mantra helps you to connect with your “direct line” within to improve your concentration and strengthen your faith and trust in life. It also deepens your intimacy with the words.

To do this activity, choose one concern or worry you have and write it at the top of the following page (as shown in the notebook pages above). Then, begin writing your Sacred Mantra with as much Focused Attention as you can. Go ahead and fill the page! As you write, repeat your mantra in your head, holding the intention of sending loving energy to the situation.

You can perform this activity anytime you or someone you love needs support for a specific challenge or just to send someone positive energy. You can also use it to gain clarity and understanding.
Sacred Mantra Art

A deeply satisfying and intimate way to use the Sacred Mantra is through the creation of artwork. This is much like Sacred Mantra writing and carries the same benefits. However, in this activity, instead of filling pages, the mantra is written within the spaces of a line drawing in various colors. It is like coloring with words. (To give you a better idea of what this activity is all about, take a look at the sample Sacred Mantra Artwork below.)

For this activity, you will need thin-tipped colored markers, gel pens, or sharp colored pencils. Write your mantra in the white spaces in the line drawing on the next page, filling as much of the white space as possible with the words. Repeat the mantra to yourself as you write it. Plan your colors, switching off as necessary to create the look you want.
FOCUSED ATTENTION

How do you make the moments of every day count no matter how insignificant your activities may seem to you? You practice Focused Attention, the second part of Living Present. When your attention is focused, you are present to only what you are doing and you are honoring the moment and the people in it by giving it your all. You experience the moment more fully, which is often accompanied by a greater sense of fulfillment or ease.

The Benefits of Focused Attention

- Increases your energy.
- Improves your memory.
- Helps eliminate negative thoughts.
- Increases patience and efficiency.
- Encourages communication.
- Deepens personal connections.
- Reduces stress.
- Helps you to see your blessings.

Practice Focused Attention as often as you can—wherever you are, no matter what you are doing.

Make a mindful effort to be present. Really see what is in front of you, and place your full attention on whatever it is that you are doing—and do only one thing at a time.
These things interfere with my Focused Attention:

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My attention wanders when:

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This is the pattern I have noticed:

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This is how I plan to regain my focus when my mind wanders:

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Listening Practice

Doesn’t it feel great when someone you are with gives you his or her Focused Attention—that is, you know that when you are speaking to that person, he or she is really listening to you? That is something we would all like to experience and give back to others. But like most things, giving someone our undivided attention takes practice.

To try this listening activity, you will need one or more partners. Each of you will take turns sharing whatever it is that you want to share with the other person or people. It can be anything: something that happened that day, something about your life, or whatever comes to mind.

Each person speaks for two minutes. (Use a gentle timer.) During the two minutes, the listeners simply listen without asking questions. When the timer goes off, the next person goes. After each person has had an opportunity to take a turn, answer the following questions:

How did it feel to give someone my full attention?
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Did my mind wander? _______________________________________________________
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___________________________________________________________________________
Did I feel like I was listening closely? ______________________________________
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When I was the speaker, was I speaking with full attention?
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How did it feel to receive Focused Attention?
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The great benefit of this activity is gaining firsthand awareness of what it feels like to be fully present for another person and how wonderful it feels for another person to be fully present to you! Knowing how it feels to give someone your undivided attention makes it easier to shift your focus back to the present when your mind starts wandering or commenting.

Practice Being Present

The next time you take a phone call, try stopping everything you are doing, sit down, and just be present to the person on the other end of the line. Because multi-tasking is so common these days, you will notice that keeping yourself focused entirely on the call is more difficult than it sounds! The exercise is excellent practice for cultivating Focused Attention while deepening your connection with the caller.
Reading for Inspiration

The third part of Living Present is Reading for Inspiration. This act nourishes your mind with rich spiritual wisdom, encouraging you to act mindfully as you go about your daily routine as well as when things get a little hectic or difficult.

The Benefits of Reading for Inspiration

- Helps you to overcome challenges in your own life by example.
- Gives you a chance to relax your body while exercising your mind spiritually.
- Opens your mind to different points of view and possibilities.
- Nourishes your mind with positive messages.
- Shows you that you are not alone in your trials and tribulations.
- Helps to strengthen your resolve to make positive changes.
- Strengthens your devotion and discipline.
- Helps you feel a real sense of love.

The books on the reading list at www.peacefulmindpeacefullife.org focus on the lives of the masters, mystics, saints, spiritual teachers, healers, and the great religions and spiritual traditions. You will notice that, in almost every case, these books are written by the master, saint, mystic, or teacher themselves.

Read for inspiration whenever you have the opportunity to sit down and be fully present to the words on the page. Reading each day for fifteen minutes may be just what you need to stay connected to your “spiritual friends.”
Choose a book from your personal library that you find particularly inspirational. Read until you come across a paragraph that speaks to you. Copy it down in the space provided on the next page. (If you need more room, use the journal pages in the back of this workbook.)

Below that paragraph, jot down your own thoughts on its meaning. What do you think that great sage, mystic, master, or teacher is saying? Write whatever comes to mind.

As you continue reading this book, identify and copy other inspirational paragraphs as well and continue to add your own commentary. (You can keep a notebook for this purpose.) After a time of doing this, you will find that it is almost as if you are in class with that particular teacher! It is wonderfully uplifting to feel this close to the masters.
“Life is unsatisfactory because it is always changing. It does not have this solid core which we always hope to grasp. We want security, and we believe that our happiness lies in being secure. And so we try to make things permanent. We get houses which seem very permanent and we furnish them. We get ourselves into relationships which we hope will last forever. We have children and hope they may also consolidate this idea of an identity, something which will be constant. We have children, and we love our children, so our children will love us, and this will carry on for a long, long time all through our lives. Our children are our security.”

My Interpretation:
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“Are you always trying to get somewhere other than where you are? Is most of your doing just a means to an end? Is fulfillment always just around the corner or confined to short-lived pleasures, such as sex, food, drink, drugs, or thrills and excitement? Are you always focused on becoming, achieving, and attaining, or alternatively chasing some new thrill or pleasure? Do you believe that if you acquire more things you will become more fulfilled, good enough, or psychologically complete? Are you waiting for a man or woman to give meaning to your life?”

My Interpretation:
“Meditation provides a similar solution to the problems of life: it does not eliminate them, but it gives us a new angle of vision, a new perspective. It takes us above the sphere of the physical world so we can enter regions of peace and bliss. Contact with this inner intoxication is so fulfilling that we no longer look at problems of this world in the same light. They begin to dissipate as vaporous bubbles. We carry this inner ecstasy with us and can tap into it anytime we wish. This inner bliss helps us to become oblivious to our pains and sorrows. We realize there is more to life than this physical world. When we realize that our life in this world is but a temporary stay of fifty, sixty, or a hundred years, and that there is a life beyond, a higher reality, the problems of life do not seem to affect us as much. We recognize that the little idiosyncrasies of other people, the difficulties that bother us in our jobs, homes, or neighborhoods, are as passing storms, and we know that there is a realm of blue, clear skies filled with radiant Light shining above the clouds.”

My Interpretation:

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3. Letting Go
Reflecting on the Day and Making Peace with Ourselves

Reflection is the final exercise of the day. This is an opportunity to scan your day and “officially” let go of everything that happened—all of the ups and downs—so that you can sleep in peace and wake up the next morning in the new day without attachments or regrets. Without yesterday’s baggage, you can begin a new day with a peaceful mind.

The Benefits of Reflection

- Releases any guilt you may have felt as a result of your actions or inactions that day.
- Reveals the blessings and gifts in your daily life so that you can feel gratitude.
- Increases your self-awareness so that you start to know yourself better.
- Changes unhealthy behaviors in the day to follow.
- Begins the new day being present and unattached to yesterday.

Reflect at the very end of the day, after you have done everything you need to do to prepare yourself to turn in for the night.
Take a few deep breaths, repeat your Sacred Mantra, and relax. Then, for 5 to 10 minutes (no more), go through the events of your day. Let the day easily pass through your mind without judgment. Your mind may get stuck on certain events: *Why did I do that? Why did I say that? I should have done or said this instead.* . . . That is the nature of the mind, so simply take notice of the event and gently repeat your Sacred Mantra as needed to get back on track and guide it along.

When you have completed your review of the day’s events, you can seal the process by repeating an affirmation—either one that you come up with on your own or the one provided below.

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**This day is now over. I choose to live in the present moment. I am thankful for having been given this day and the blessing that it has held. I take comfort in now releasing any challenges or successes I experienced today, and I head into a restful sleep with the peace and knowledge that tomorrow is a new day. I am always working towards the person I wish to be.**

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Writing Your Own Reflection Affirmation

When writing your own Reflection Affirmation, the only guidelines are that it be positive (avoid negative wording) and acknowledges your gratefulness for the day and your readiness to let it go. Keep it short if that is your preference or write several lines. Begin by jotting down some thoughts here without editing, allowing your affirmation to come to you naturally. You can edit later.

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Questions for Reflection

The following are some questions you can use when performing your nightly review. When responding to the questions, just observe your answers without judgment. These questions are intended to help you acknowledge and release the day.

Although it is not recommended that you write your answers every night, space is provided here for a written response for one night to give you a feel for how this exercise will play out in your mind on subsequent nights.

Did I give my full attention to the people in my life?
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Was I present for them? Was I patient with them?
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How was my interaction with my family and friends?
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How was my interaction with my coworkers and acquaintances?
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Did I make eye contact with people?
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Did I listen to what they had to say?
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Did I use The Practice in my day? How did it help?
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Did I turn to my Sacred Mantra for support?
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What went well today?
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What did not go well today?
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What are my blessings?
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Selected Sacred Mantras

ARAMAIC

Maranatha—Translation: Lord of the Heart

BUDDHISM

Om Mani Padme Hum (Aum Mah-nee Pahd-may Hum)—
Translation: Behold! The Jewel in the Lotus Within!

CHRISTIANITY

My God and My All—Source: Prayer Words of St. Francis of Assisi
Kyrie Eleison—Translation: Lord Have Mercy
Jesus—Son of God
Hail Mary/Ave Maria—From the Rosary
O Maria Madre Mia—Translation: Oh Mary My Mother;
Source: Prayer Words of Pope John Paul II
Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on Me—
Prayer name: “The Jesus Prayer”
Be Still and Know That I Am God—From the Bible

HINDUISM

Rama (Rah-mah)—Source: Mantra of Mahatma Gandhi;
Translation: Blissful; Pleasing
Hare Rama Hare Krishna—Translation: O Lord Take Away All My Sorrows, Pain and Shortcomings; Give Me Bliss and Joy

Om Namah Shivaya (Aum Num-ha Shi-why)—Translation:
I Bow to Shiva, the Name of Your True Identity; Self

Om Shanti (Aum Shan-tee)—Translation: Lasting Peace

So Hum—Translation: I Am That Self Within

Om Prema—Translation: A Call for Universal Love

Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram (Aum Shree Ram, Jay Ram, Jay Jay Ram)—Source: Mantra of Swami Ramdas; Translation: May the Lord as Light and Virtue That Dwells in My Heart Be Victorious Over All

ISLAM

Allah—Translation: God

Allahu Akbar (Ah-lah-oo Ah-bahr)—Translation: God Is Greatest

Bismallah Ir-rahman Ir-rahim (Beese-mah-lah Ir-rah-mun Ir-rah-heem)—Translation: In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful

JUDAISM

Baruk Atah Adonoi (Bah-rookh At-tah Ah-doh-nigh)—Translation: Blessed Is the Lord

Elohim (e’-lohim)—Hebrew Name for God

Ribono Shel Olam (Ree-boh-no Shel O-lahm)—Translation: Lord of the Universe

Shalom—Translation: Lasting Peace

NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN TRADITION

Sheheena—Translation: Feminine Aspect of God

Wakan Tanka—Translation: Great Spirit
A Message from Barb Schmidt

It is my deep desire to reach as many people as I can with messages of unity, peace, love, and living a meaningful life. I know that inspiring, teaching, and empowering others to live life from within is why I am here.

With that desire and purpose in mind, I have begun the exciting process of writing a book that is intended to deepen your personal understanding of The Practice and to introduce these tools to a wider audience, thereby expanding and strengthening our spiritual community and bringing more peace and love to our world.

My intention is for this guidebook to function as your companion on the spiritual journey, offering continued inspiration whenever you turn to it.

Inside my book, you will find detailed descriptions, instructions, and suggestions for each leg of The Practice, as well as discussions about the nature of the mind and the world, both inside and out. Additionally, I will share with you my personal commentary and experiences to show how The Practice works in action. The book will also include additional exercises and strategies for living life with purpose and meaning.

I look forward to sharing my work with you. Please stay connected with Peaceful Mind Peaceful Life for more information regarding publication and availability.

www.peacefulmindpeacefullife.org
Who is Barb Schmidt?

To learn about Barb, please visit

www.barbschmidt.com

“May today and all the days that follow be full of wonderment and joy. May you always have peace of mind, strength of body and happiness in all that you do. May your travels take you to amazing places and may you always recognize the beauty that surrounds you. May you always find yourself among friends.”

—IRISH BLESSING
Peaceful Mind Peaceful Life is a not-for-profit organization, resource, and community that helps people incorporate into their lives the spiritual tools that promote a peaceful mind and a happy, loving, and peaceful life. Founded in 2011 by philanthropist and lifelong seeker, Barb Schmidt, Peaceful Mind Peaceful Life serves as an ongoing support system, teacher, advisor, and friend to guide people in the community along the path of living from within.

Become a member of our community. We would love to hear from you!

Visit peacefulmindpeacefullife.org and barbschmidt.com to connect with others on the spiritual path.

Sign up for daily inspirational e-mails on our homepage and subscribe to our blog for weekly inspiration. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Pinterest and Twitter. We have so much to share with you and look forward to your contribution!