



ACTION STEPS

PASSION QUEST: MODULE 4

PRACTICE ALTERNATIVE #1: WALKING MEDITATION IN NATURE

Frequency and Duration: *Daily for 6-10 minutes*

Being outdoors and in nature can help us remember our purpose by getting us into a new and inspiring environment and reminding us of our connection to the larger world.

For this practice, you'll do a similar walking meditation to what you did in Module 2, but you'll do it outside. Find a safe place where you can walk without having to worry about getting hit by a car or any other hazards. You can do this in a park, yard, or courtyard, and you can walk in circles if it's a small space.

Start to set aside 10 minutes a day for your meditation. Or, if that's just not doable, increase the time to 6, 7, or 8 minutes. When the time comes, start by closing your eyes and taking a few deep breaths. See if you can let go of whatever thoughts are on your mind. When you feel ready, open your eyes and start walking slowly. This week, instead of focusing on the sensations in your legs and feet, look around you at the natural world—the sky, the earth, and any trees, bushes, flowers, or animals that might surround you. Feel the air or the sun on your skin. Listen to the noises that you hear—wind, voices, birdsong, or anything else.

Same as before, when you notice a thought arise or when you realize that your mind is wandering and you're no longer focused on the sights or sounds around you, simply label the thoughts by saying "thought" to yourself and bring your attention back to your surroundings. Do this as many times as you need to. Remember that there is no way to do meditation wrong as long as you do it with sincerity.

PRACTICE ALTERNATIVE #2: LOVINGKINDNESS MEDITATION

Frequency and Duration: *Daily for 6-10 minutes*

See if you can start to set aside 10 minutes daily for your meditation. If that's not possible, increase to 6, 7, or 8 minutes.

For this meditation, begin by reciting inwardly the following phrases directed to yourself. If it's helpful, place a hand over your heart as you do this. See if you can allow yourself to fully experience being loved.

May I be filled with loving kindness.

May I be well.

May I be peaceful and at ease.

May I be happy.

You can adjust the words or add images that best open your heart of kindness. You may imagine yourself as a child, for example, or being surrounded by a loving and warm energy.

If it's difficult to connect to a feeling of lovingkindness for yourself, don't worry. That's totally natural. Just keep setting the intention and saying the words, knowing that sometimes part of us resists surrendering to lovingkindness, and that no matter how you feel, your heart is opening up.

When you feel ready, gradually expand the focus of your loving kindness to include others. Choose someone in your life whom it's easy for you to love. Recite the same phrases for this person: "May he/she be filled with loving kindness..."

Gradually begin to include others: friends, community members, neighbors, people everywhere, animals, the whole earth, and all beings. Eventually include even those whom it is difficult for you to love.

(Portions of these instructions are adapted from Jack Kornfield's *A Path With Heart*.)

EXERCISE: PURPOSE JOURNAL

Write about the questions on the following page stream-of-consciousness style. Do this by sitting somewhere comfortable and setting a timer for 30-45 minutes. Choose a question to write about, whichever one calls your attention most. Then write whatever comes to you on paper, stream-of-consciousness style, letting your thoughts drift and keeping your pen moving no matter what (even if what you write seems trivial or silly). No matter what happens, resist the urge to edit as you go!

When you feel done with one question, choose another one. You can do this exercise as many times as is helpful, though don't feel like you need to address every question.

After journaling, read through what you wrote and see if you notice any patterns or themes. Also ask yourself: What seems most important in what you've written?

- What do you want to be remembered for after you're gone?
- If you had a magic wand and could make one change to the world, what would it be?
- Which traits or values is it most important to you that your friends or your children possess?
- What types of suffering break your heart?
- If you were to open a newspaper, which types of stories would get you the most agitated or upset?
- Who inspires you? What is it about them that inspires you?
- What injustice infuriates you?
- What types of articles do you find yourself sharing on Facebook?
- What types of suffering did you feel or witness as a child? What have you struggled with that you wish others didn't have to?
- What lifts your spirits?
- What have you done that's left you feeling satisfied and successful?
- What types of stories do you find the most inspiring?
- Whom or what do you love immediately and without thinking about it?
- When have you taken actions or made decisions that in retrospect surprised you or seemed uncharacteristic?
- What actions make you feel peaceful, expansive, excited, or fulfilled?
- What are the three most meaningful experiences you've had?
- What one thing does the world need more of?

OPTIONAL BONUS: LEGACY EXERCISE

Take a moment to imagine your own funeral or memorial service. It's in a beautiful place dear to your heart, and all of your friends and loved ones, all the people whose lives you've impacted over the years, have come from near and far to remember you and celebrate your life.

Imagine that you lived a wonderful, rich, fulfilling life. You realized all your dreams, shared your gifts in important ways, and had a powerful impact on the world.

Write a eulogy or loving speech honoring who you were, what you did, and the legacy you're leaving behind. Remember that the word *eulogy* comes from *eulogia*, the Greek word for praise.

Consider:

- What do you want to be remembered for?
- How did you positively impact the people around you?
- What were the greatest gifts and legacies you gave to those you care about?
- What were your biggest accomplishments?
- How is the world different as a result of your being in it? What are the most important ways you impacted the world?

Read the eulogy aloud after you've written it and notice how it feels to hear it.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Man's Search for Meaning (<http://amzn.to/2I72cUY>) by Viktor Frankl [book]

Viktor Frankl survived the Nazi concentration camps and wrote this amazing book about what makes life meaningful and how to find purpose in any situation.

Let Your Life Speak (<http://amzn.to/IQjW57Z>) by Parker Palmer [book]

Writer, teacher, and activist Parker Palmer shares some hard-earned wisdom in this short and sweet book about how to live a life of purpose.