



Greetings,

In this workbook, I share my healing practice with you. It has nourished and carried me through hard times, especially during the pandemic.

PRACTICING SMALL: MY STORY

Perhaps you can relate. I spent much of my life entangled in fear, negative thinking, and self-criticism. I often felt alone.

One day while I was walking my dog, my mind buzzing with worries, on the sidewalk in front of me, I noticed a dried sycamore leaf curled gracefully upward. I leaned forward for a closer look. Focusing on the leaf's beauty made me feel happy and free of the negativity I'd been carrying. It felt miraculous. And so did this: When I reached my front door, I was still happy.

After that day, I began to look for small moments of beauty, and learned to savor them, so that each one sustained me through a day or two. It's become my healing practice, one that has been nourishing me for several years.

In this workbook you will learn how to experience moments of beauty and connection and sustain the happiness they provide. You will also have the opportunity to reflect upon and/or write about your experiences.

You will learn:

- how to discover a moment of happiness even in the most difficult situations and how to integrate that awareness;
- how to bring your full attention to that moment and hold it;

Day Three

Giving Full Attention

Little things are infinitely the most important.

—Arthur Conan Doyle

We've all looked at or listened to something without paying full attention. That's mainly the way we live these days, when so much competes for our attention—traffic roaring, dishwashers swishing, washing machines chugging, radios blaring, keyboards clicking. Multitasking is the norm. Today, that's going to change for you. Today you're going to learn to look deeply, and for a few minutes devote your full attention to something beautiful. There's pleasure in these simple actions.

PRACTICE

Return to yesterday's small object or choose something else you find beautiful—a painting, a vase, a wooden bowl, a rock, or a piece of wood. Stand before your object in a relaxed posture—relaxing your neck, your torso, your legs and arms. Remember that for the next few minutes you have nowhere else you need to be. Now, take the object in slowly, bit by bit, top to bottom, and side to side. You might even find a smaller moment within your already small moment that captures you. See how much you can discover—textures, lines, shades of color, sheen, reflections, unevenness, contours—about your moment or moment-within-a-moment. What are you discovering?

WRITING PROMPT

What does it feel like when you discover your moment of beauty?

Think Small Instead of Making To-Do Lists

Can you compare your sense of small accomplishment today with the way you usually function?

Nothing is particularly hard if you divide it into small jobs.

—Henry Ford

So many people rely on extensive to-do lists to direct the way they spend time. We've been taught that lists will keep us moving and productive. But long to-do lists tend to discourage people, not encourage them. And because they are discouraging, to-do lists are more often ignored than handled. Thinking small is a much better way to be productive.

PRACTICE

When you wake up today, quickly make a note of two things you'd like to accomplish before dinner. Make sure you are being realistic. While it's much too ambitious to decide you are going to clean all the closets in your house in one day or dust all the bookshelves, it's reasonable to plan on cleaning one closet or one bookcase.

After you complete the first item, check it off and move to the second. Once you've completed both of your chores, you can congratulate yourself on a day well spent, and go on with your day. If you still have more time and energy, add an additional item to your list. And if you're fast enough to get that third item under your belt, add a fourth. However, four to-do's should be an exception, not the rule. It's much better for your mental and emotional health to create shorter lists, which you are much more likely to complete. Smaller lists help you sustain your productivity and happiness over time.