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Women Circle



"Your sacred space is where you can find
yourself over and over again."
– Joseph Campbell

SUPPORTING YOURSELF IN DIFFICULT TIMES

In this lifetime you need to keep in mind these truths:

1. You will feel pain, it is part of the journey of living. In this pain you find who you are, what you stand for and what you are capable of. This pain will test you, and how you show up will be your declaration of who you are and what you are capable of.
2. Pain will only turn to suffering when you get attached to it, when you act and think from pain, when you allow pain to take over and to become who you are and not only how you feel.
3. Strength can co-exist with pain. Strength is always available to you in the hardest of moments. That's because strength is at the core of who you are, it's part of your authentic code, it's your truth. You are capable of so much more than what you think you can do.
4. Being spiritual or aware doesn't mean that you don't feel all the spectrum of human emotions, happiness, sadness, frustration, excitement, joy and loneliness. The journey is in allowing yourself to feel and to sit with these emotions and feel them so you can transform and release them.
5. In any situation you have a choice, to choose how you want to show up, the actions you take, and how you think and feel about each and every situation. It's all a choice that you can consciously make.
6. Do the best you can with what you have now, then be compassionate with yourself if there are things you'd love to do but are out of your control. Because focusing on what you can't control will only make you feel helpless and disconnect you from your inherent strength.
7. Taking care of yourself in times of difficulty is not a luxury, it's a necessity because you are allowed to protect your own energy and because being out of alignment with yourself doesn't help you or anyone around you. Being unbalanced will only lead you to making unbalanced choices and decisions and creating an unbalanced reality for yourself.

Life is a dance between joy and pain...

Life is journeying through all the phases of your life with the awareness that not all of them will be the same. It's the understanding that pain as much as joy is part of this journey and that who you are truly in your core transcends both the joy and the pain.

You are not the joy nor the pain, you are the watcher, the awareness, the energy of pure consciousness watching it all. Through all the changes and ebbs and flows of life there is only one constant and that constant is your awareness watching and experiencing it all.

From this awareness you decide, you choose, and you act.

You are a beautiful web of multiple parts that make you who you are:

- The mental body with all its thoughts, and perceptions
- The emotional body, the physical translation of your thoughts
- The physical body with all its functions and intelligence
- The energy body, the life force moving and pulsing through you

In times of difficulty whether it's doubt, fear, or stress. Awareness of each of these four parts will open a doorway you can access to re-balance and reclaim your power.

From this awareness you can identify the quality of your thoughts and re-direct your focus and attention to healthier and more empowering ones.

You can feel and listen to each emotion giving it enough space to be seen, to be felt, to be understood so that it can be managed and transformed and released.

You can feel into your body and breath and use it as a vehicle to help yourself release stuck energy and re-align.

And through your energy body you can tap into an unlimited source of wisdom that you hold within yourself.

Have you ever heard of the word intuition?

Intuition is an internal guiding system that you hold within yourself that knows the way. That feels with all certainty what is "right" and "wrong" for you. This guiding system is always trying to communicate with you, always waiting for you to listen.

In difficult times this guiding system is there to protect you, to help you re-balance, to bring you back to clarity and to guide you back to yourself.

In this workbook I want to take the information and give it to you in a simple and practical way so you can have as many tools as you can to always find your way back to yourself, in times of joy and especially in times of pain.

HOW TO MANAGE EMOTIONS:

1. **Write them down:** Emotions are the physical expression of your thoughts. Write down your thoughts and empty them on paper and this will help release stuck and stagnant emotions.
 - o Set a timer for 12 minutes and write EVERYTHING that comes to your mind, don't think, or analyze, don't re-read what you wrote. Just write, release, and then rip throw it away.
 - o Download my Emotional Awareness Tool from the free resources section on my website this will help you understand and turn your emotions to action steps of change. (www.saraabiqwa.com)
2. **FEEL them:** We usually ignore painful emotions and that's why they get stored and stuck in the body. We need to feel them in order to heal them; name them and become aware of where you feel them in your body, and then sit with them and give them space to move and be released. (emotions are just energy in motion)
 - o An affirmation you can say to yourself after you name the emotion and feel it in your body: *I see you, I accept you and I feel you, keep repeating this until you feel the energy of the emotion release and transform.*
3. **Physical release:** Use your body to shift and release stuck emotions. (emotions get stored in the body, they're a physical experience that shift and change your chemicals and hormones).
 - o Dance, run, jump, or do any physical movement to help yourself move stuck energy and emotions and help your body release a fresh set of hormones and chemicals. (move for a minimum of 20 minutes)
4. **Take care of yourself and limit your exposure to stressors.** (choose only people who you want to listen to, take time off the screen, take breath breaks and/ or expose yourself to sunlight in the morning)

HOW TO REGULATE YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM?

We are always operating from one of two systems:

- A balanced and relaxed state which is your parasympathetic nervous system ("rest and relax"), or
- A stressed state which is your sympathetic nervous system ("fight or flight").

Our stress response was made to help us navigate stressful situations in the moment they arise and not to become part of our day to day lifestyle and way of existing in this world.

Negative emotions or stress that is not managed activates our fight or flight response. When our nervous system is not regulated, we can't calm down, we can't think clearly, we can't be grounded, and we can't make healthy and empowering choices and decisions. We feel out of balances, overwhelmed, agitated, and overtime we start feeling exhausted and burnt out which will eventually lead to inflammation and illness in the body.

THIS IS WHY OUR PRIORITY IS TO TAKE TIME EVERY DAY TO CONSCIOUSLY REGULATE YOUR NERVOUS SYSTEM.

HERE ARE 4 SIMPLE AND PRACTICAL WAYS TO DO THAT:

1. **Breathing:** You breathe almost 20,000 breaths a day and yet sometimes you're not even aware of one of them. Here are the easiest breathing techniques that you can practice anywhere and anytime that will help you become more present and will activate your rest and relax response:
 - **Box Belly breathing:** Inhale expand your chest and belly for 4 counts and exhale contract your chest and belly for four counts (do this for 5 to 10 breaths)
 - **Slow and deep breathing:** Breathe as deeply and slowly as you can (do this for 5 to 10 breaths)
2. **Physical soothing:** Your body is the home you live in your entire life, and through your journey it stores a lot of trauma and emotions, and it deserves a lot of love and compassion from you.
 - Gently stroke and rub your body with your hands with the intention of giving it love. (Keep doing this until you feel your body relax and calm down)
3. **Closing your stress cycle:** When you go through a stressful situation your stress cycle opens and you go into fight or flight response. If you don't close the cycle (which means release stress to re-balance) stress will get stuck in your body and it will accumulate overtime until you reach burnout. To avoid this all you need to do is **close your stress cycle on daily basis**. The easiest ways to do this are:
 - Do any physical movement for a minimum of 20 minutes a day. (running, strength training, yoga, walking, etc.)
 - Hug someone you love for a minimum of 8 seconds. (Do this standing without leaning on one another)
 - Plus, any of the exercises mentioned above in points 1 & 2.
4. **Grounding practices:** we all have certain habits, actions, or practices that make us feel relaxed and grounded. Sometimes what works for someone else might not work for you. My yoga teacher used to say: "Someone's medicine can be someone else's poison"). So, choose what works for you and take care of your nervous system the way you like to be taken care of. To do that:
 - Start noticing what makes you feel relaxed and grounded and **start writing it in a list in your notes**, with time you will have your own grounding method that is uniquely yours.

HOW TO CONNECT TO YOUR INTUITION:

Your intuition speaks to you all the time, it can be either a hunch, a whisper, an urge, a physical sensation of expansion or contraction, a gut feeling, or an insight. It gets stronger the more you connect to it, listen to it, trust it and act on it.

Connect + Listen + Trust + Act

1. **Ask Questions:** In times of difficulty practice asking yourself questions that will help you in the moment and listen to the messages that come through. When you feel stressed, overwhelmed or out of balance, take a moment to be with yourself in silence, relax your body, place your hand on your heart and ask yourself:
 - What do I need to re-align?
 - What do I need right now?
 - What can I do right now to make this easier on myself?
 - What's my right next step?
2. **Check In:** Every time you want to make a choice or a decision no matter how small practice taking a moment and checking in with your intuition and ask yourself:
 - What feels right for me in this moment?

In the most difficult moments, your power is still there. In the middle of the darkness your light is still shining through. You are a part of a whole and your light is needed for yourself and for those who you can shine it on.

Your voice matters, your actions matter, your emotions matter and your thoughts matter. Listen to yourself and hold a safe space for yourself to be and to feel what you're feeling. Take care of yourself and give her the love she needs, then extend this compassion and love to those around you who need it as well. Taking care of yourself is not a luxury it's your purpose and it's a gift that you can choose to give yourself so you can have something to give to others. We only give what we have and when we fill our cup, our cup will run over, and we will be able to fill other's cups as well as our own.

In every moment you are choosing how you want to lead yourself, and this is creating the reality that you are experiencing in this moment.

And remember, no matter what you're going through, your inner voice of wisdom is always guiding you to what you need in this moment.

Listen, trust, and then act from it.

*Love,
Sara xx*