

JANUARY 2025: STRETCH INTO POSSIBILITIES

GUIDE FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING

SCIENCE OF MIND[®]

STRETCH

Into Possibilities

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DAILY GUIDES

JANUARY 2025 BY KELLY ROBBINS

A FLOWER

does not try to be beautiful. Its true nature is beauty. ... In the same way, when you awaken, you will naturally exude love, compassion, beauty. It is all you, for it is your true self.

— ROBERT ADAMS

Photo by Jamie Joan-Marie



REV. KELLY ROBBINS

This month's Daily Guides are inspired by my love for January and its energetic opportunity to consciously engage the Science of Mind teachings in our lives. Stretching beyond intellectual understanding and into implementation, this time of year allows us to set a new personal boundary for what is possible. The year's first month is often filled with energy and enthusiasm to pursue our dreams and initiate change. I invite each of us to play with our creative tools and stretch beyond what we thought was possible.

Rev. Kelly Robbins is a CSL minister and founder of Spiritual Living with Kelly Robbins. Her multifaceted ministry allows her to facilitate life's significant rituals and turning points with reverence and love. Her joy is officiating weddings and providing the Together Forever premarital counseling program, which guides couples to create a strong foundation for their marriage. She serves the community by honoring loved ones through memorials and celebrations of life, chaplaincy at a local hospital and delivering Sunday talks at various Colorado CSL, Unity and Divine Science churches. Robbins, the author of "Trust Your Next Step: Creating the Confidence to Cut Fresh Tracks," is working on her second book to be released this year.

The secret to change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new.

— Socrates

There is no strain or struggle in the universe. All the actions of life are harmonious, steady, sure and quiet.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 244

Quit hanging onto the handrails. ... Let go. Surrender. Go for the ride of your life. Do it every day.

— Melody Beattie

For God is not separate from what It is doing. The Divine Life is in everyone and everything.

— Ernest Holmes, "Living the Science of Mind," page 195

This first day of 2025 is a day to embrace new beginnings. Centers for Spiritual Living's theme this year — "Rising Higher, Growing Deeper" — brings to mind a visual of a tree. We see the tree trunk and branches growing higher, wider, expanding. What we don't see, which is happening simultaneously, is the growth of the roots, which also are growing deeper and expanding wider to support the growing tree. The roots give the tree the nourishment it needs to grow and thrive, and the stability to withstand the heavy winds and storms it may encounter.

I imagine many of our New Year's Resolutions have this same structure. Growth and expansion in areas others can see, as well as the breadth of deepening inward, where no one can see but you. This first day of 2025, reflect on the goals you set for yourself and take a step back. Did you include space for the roots of your soul to grow?

We often focus on the effect, the outer expression of Spirit. It's usually what others can see, and it often is measurable — losing weight, saving more money, changing careers. However, we often fail to take time to nurture and strengthen our inner selves, the pure expression of God within each of us. These qualities are less tangible and more a state of being, qualities such as love, joy, power or wisdom.

Are you focusing on change that includes your roots so it lasts and will weather the storms that are sure to come?

At the end of each year, I list all the new things I did the previous year. It's become a ritual I love. I am grateful I always have a list of ways I pushed myself, put myself in different situations and grew as a result. Some things I remember without prompting, and most of it I find by scrolling through my calendar. This ritual also gives me an overview of how I have spent my time. Did I live last year as I would like to? What is working and what is not? How do I want to direct my activities differently in the coming year?

Thomas Troward, a New Thought luminary, taught that Spirit is composed of seven basic properties: love, power, beauty, peace, joy, light and life. We are born with each of these beautiful qualities. I find it empowering to focus on the quality of life, asking myself, "Am I truly living?" As spiritual beings, we naturally grow and expand constantly, adding more to life itself.

The dawn of this new year is a natural time to ask ourselves: What areas of my life would I like to breathe more into? How can I bring more life to various aspects of my life? If we aren't growing, we are dying. It's a law of nature.

As we bask in the natural energy of the first of the year, know it is the time of beginnings, endings, transitions and doorways. Lean in and stretch yourself into the quality of life.

AFFIRMATION

I am a powerful manifestor, and I take time to nourish my soul.

AFFIRMATION

I lovingly and passionately embrace the quality of God expressed as more life.

Consult not your fears but your hopes and dreams. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what it is still possible for you to do.

— Pope John XXIII

I know I am now at the threshold of all good, wisdom and truth. All the good I can embody is now mine.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 293

You, yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.

— Buddha

If someone makes themselves receptive to the idea of love, they become lovable. To the degree that they embody love, they are love; so people who love are loved.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 150

Stretching into possibilities requires us to examine our ability to trust. We may have people in our lives we trust and those we learned not to trust. The important question is, do you trust yourself? Do you keep your word to yourself? If you say you will do something, do you? This is an area many of us avoid exploring because the answer to many of these questions is a firm no. I can't count the times I've said I will have only one piece of chocolate or I will exercise every day after work, and then I didn't follow through.

Stretching into possibilities requires us to change. And changing requires action on our part. Can we trust ourselves to follow through? We can begin building trust with ourselves by keeping our word to ourselves. We can also examine our trust in Spirit. Intellectually, we may agree with our Science of Mind teachings of principle and universal law, but do we see these laws unfailingly demonstrating in our lives?

When Jesus spoke, he followed his word with healing. He followed it with a miracle – because he expected it. He understood the law of cause and effect and had complete and unfailing trust in Spirit.

He said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). The late Unity minister Rev. Jim Lewis explained, "This means that it takes only a simple trust, a sincere, unbiased desire to know for the sake of knowing and not for the benefits. It also means a willingness to try, to make the effort necessary."

Most of us set relationship goals, whether in a love relationship, strengthening or healing familial relationships, relationships at work or developing friendships. I invite us today to focus on our relationship with ourselves. Without healthy self-love, there is no other love.

Our very nature is pure love. While love may be difficult to describe, we know it instantly when we experience it. Love expects nothing, demands nothing, costs nothing. Love is unconditional and in harmony with all things.

Love is the energy from which all life flows. Each of us is born with nothing but pure love inside us. Every major religion teaches love. It is the essence of our light, the building block of all we create, live and breathe. God, the Divine, Source, Spirit, Creator, Universal Energy – this is the love inside us. Thinking, acting and being in love is being one with God.

Often, we look for love outside ourselves, in relationships, in our actions, in our achievements and results. What is essential is to recognize we are love, and loving ourselves is the most important thing we can learn in this lifetime. You are an inexhaustible source of love, nothing else. We don't receive love from another, but we can feel the resonance of their love. The key is to experience the love from within. We must love ourselves to truly love others.

AFFIRMATION

Today, I take action to strengthen my trust in myself.
With love and compassion, I keep my word with myself.

AFFIRMATION

Today, I choose to love myself unconditionally, exactly as I am.

Celebrate Your Responsibility

We all have work to do. Our work is in the light.

— adrienne maree brown, "We Will Not Cancel Us"

Ignorance stays with us until the day of enlightenment, until our vision toward the Spirit broadens and casts out the image of a no longer useful littleness.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 184

We all have work to do. None of us made it to adulthood unscathed. As difficult as being an adult proves at times, understand it is a gift to be alive and here.

We are here to heal. Usually, we require conflict so we can see our wounds. As painful as it is, this is how we become aware of our disconnect from oneness with Source. We are all here, alive on this planet in 2025, to do whatever healing is ours to do. We have a responsibility to ourselves and others to do the work.

Within the struggle to heal is where the healing takes place. We gain wisdom in the struggle, allowing ourselves to become compassionate toward others. The struggle deepens our consciousness, as we embody the paradox of light and darkness.

As beings of light, we are responsible for shining and brightening our light for ourselves and others. We are responsible for how we respond to others. We are responsible for our emotions and reactions. We are responsible for our connection with the Divine.

Owning your state of being leads to freedom. You will feel empowered when you own every decision you made and every action you took that brought you to this exact place in time and space. Owning it tells the universe that others will not dictate your life, that you are the one in power.

You consciously created your existence and got yourself to where you are right now through your decisions. From this point forward, you choose where to go next.

AFFIRMATION

I celebrate my life. I powerfully take ownership of the results in my life.

Know Yourself as the Image of God

Peace will come to the hearts of men when they realize their oneness with the universe. It is everywhere.

— Black Elk

No matter what confusion appears at the surface of your life, there is always a place of calm at the center of your being.

— Ernest Holmes, "This Thing Called You," page 75

Today is the first Monday of the New Year, and many of us are back at work after some time off. This often brings us back to routines and situations that don't support the new version of ourselves we imagined with our new year. The truth is, we didn't go to sleep on December 31 as one person and then wake up completely changed on January 1. Stepping back into our old routine can trigger self-judgment and criticism as we feel the difficulty of stretching into our possibilities.

Take this message as a friendly reminder that in this very moment, you have everything you need to be the person you desire. You are one with all creation. You are made of the same substance as the stars and the moon, the air we breathe, the Creative Energy that is the cause of all things. The kingdom of God is within you.

Imagine taking a scoop of water out of the ocean. The cup of water is not the ocean in its entirety, but it does contain the same qualities and attributes as the entire ocean. Each of us is like a cup of the ocean.

The Universal Energy is absolute, unchanging and eternal, the source of all wisdom and intelligence. We are one with this energy, and we allow the substance to flow through us. It expresses through us; it is not ours to create or force.

Now is an excellent time to reflect on this question: What is your image of God?

AFFIRMATION

I relax and let go, allowing Spirit to freely flow through me, in service as needed.

Fear produces courage, which in fact happens in the midst of fear. Despair produces hope, which is born out of the depths of despair. And vulnerability produces creativity, which requires a capacity to get hurt.

— Matthew Fox, "Original Blessing"

Remember that the Power in you is you; It is Itself as you. The more you live, the more completely It is expressed through you.

— Ernest Holmes, "This Thing Called You," page 83

Creating is itself the birthing of God. I'm unsure where I heard that statement, but I find it beautiful. How many of us see ourselves as creators or artists? Many of us don't recognize that we create throughout our entire lives. Each day, we awaken to a blank canvas, ready to add the brushstrokes of our day. Whatever colors we use and whatever medium we choose, there is no right way and no wrong way to express. From the clothes we wear to how loving or generous we choose to be, our presence is an act of creation. It is empowering and essential that we recognize ourselves as a creative force in the universe. The Divine is expressing as us, through us.

Allowing yourself to be vulnerable moves you to a space where, yes, you might be hurt. It can be scary. At the same time, when you are vulnerable, you open yourself to connect, feel and authentically be yourself. Others are drawn to this vulnerable, authentic you because their hearts yearn for it as well.

We stretch ourselves on our human canvas by daring to be ourselves. We become more powerful when we are vulnerable enough and creative enough to be authentic and to live in this place of being unabashedly ourselves. The more we live this way, the more connected to God we are. The more we stretch to embrace the creative expression of God that we are, the more possibilities open for us to live lives of love, generosity and beauty.

Balance is not something you find; it's something you create.

— Jana Kingsford

You are guided by love, inspired by truth, and your future will be what you make it.

— Ernest Holmes, "This Thing Called You," page 30

Creating the life of your dreams requires balance — in play and work, in time creating and time doing the tasks necessary to function, in balancing our time in meditation with our time in action. Our society focuses on action and what we do, which is important, of course. What we may find we neglect is the opposite of action — downtime, the time for reflection and prayer. A balanced life has both. When we live balanced lives, we can experience peace.

Finding the right balance is sometimes innate. Life can hand us times of chaos — unexpected illness, divorce, loss of a loved one. In those times, we most need to find balance. The best way to begin is by defining our values. We typically are not taught to live in harmony with the natural rhythms of the universe, the natural rhythms of our body, family and community, let alone living in tune with our values. Discovering your life's balance is a process of trial and error. Recognizing it is an ever-shifting dynamic, we ride the tide of life's natural rhythms through experimentation, exploration, observance and self-reflection.

Learning to listen to the voice within rather than paying attention to external forces is a skill. It feels counterintuitive when outside forces tell us what to think and believe. Today, I invite you to rate how balanced your life is. What can you let go of or embrace to live in harmony and balance with your values?

AFFIRMATION

My life is art. I honor and recognize myself as the creator.

AFFIRMATION

Today, I embody balance and peace, both within and without.

The Little Way

If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness.

— Thérèse of Lisieux

Compassion is the most gentle of all human virtues, for it is the outpouring of the Divine givingness through all.

— Ernest Holmes, "A Holmes Reader on Practical Wisdom," page 61

Thérèse of Lisieux, a French Carmelite nun in the late 1800s, taught the "Little Way," an approach to spiritual living that does not ask us to be perfect or to judge ourselves but instead to go within. She tells us to talk to God, look inside ourselves and focus on being our best selves.

Lisieux teaches us to see simplicity and love in the ordinary events of life. She does not call it the little way because the tasks are small or menial. She intends that we act humbly as we do all of our tasks. We are little in the greatness of the universe and in the enormity of God. We are closest to God when we know this and act humbly.

She teaches us to do small acts of charity for others, not from our strength and generosity in the moment but out of poverty, powerlessness and emptiness, which allow the energy of God to work through us. In this way, we are not drawing attention to ourselves but to God. Lisieux's little way refers to what's hidden or what we do anonymously. Our act is not a secret, but we who do the act are.

This takes our focus off ourselves and shifts it to how we are as we act. Lisieux teaches us to act with selfless love. Franciscan priest Richard Rohr says that people who follow Lisieux's teaching of the little way tend to be "more humble; are invariably more loving, joyful and compassionate; and have plenty of time for simple gratitude about everything."

AFFIRMATION

I see and focus my attention on being my best self in the smallest of today's tasks, allowing the energy of God to work through me.

Happy Quitters Day

The ultimate measure of man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

If you are filled with fear, refill yourself with faith, for faith always overcomes fear.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Art of Life," page 28

Research shows that people give up on their resolutions for the year by the second Friday in January, which is today. Welcome to Quitters Day.

New Year's resolutions are an interesting concept. In many ways, we don't set ourselves up for success. We pump ourselves up at the end of the year, perhaps from the guilt of indulging throughout the holidays, and dream about the best us we can be. We set unrealistic expectations. We think we will wake up a different person on January 1, magically strong and focused. We believe in this new and improved version of ourselves. Of course, we instead wake up the same person we've always been.

It's easy to be hard on ourselves for not following through on our resolutions. Rather than being hard on yourself, recognize that you are the same person who went to sleep on December 31. Then check your goals. Can you break them into smaller steps? Because we are hardwired to avoid change, examine where you avoid it.

An often overlooked aspect of goal setting is its spiritual side. How is your goal in alignment with Source? What quality of God do you seek to know more about? For example, the goal to lose 20 pounds and to have a more physically fit body may include the spiritual qualities of self-love, health, wholeness and power. What spiritual practice can you integrate to support you in achieving your goal?

AFFIRMATION

I am a being of light and love.
I love myself exactly as I am, first and foremost.

Oneing in Unity With God

It is only in unity with my fellow spiritual seekers that I am anything at all. It is this foundation of unity [this oneing] that will save humanity.

— Julian of Norwich, “Revelations of Divine Love,” translated by Mirabai Starr

In Mind there is no time, no space, no place; there is only wholeness, oneness and eternity.

— Ernest Holmes, “A New Design for Living,” page 194

We all have bad days. Some of us can even name bad years and times when finding a way out of our pain proved difficult. In these times, it seems like no matter what we do or how hard we try, our circumstances don’t change. This place of despair is part of our human experience. It is often in the midst of this pain and feeling stuck that our spiritual journey begins.

Julian of Norwich, also known as Juliana, was an English mystic in the Middle Ages who the church eventually silenced. In her book “Revelations of Divine Love,” she coined the term *oneing*, by which she meant oneness, union and unity with God. Oneing means you and God are not separate. There is no “you,” no “it.” There is only one.

The purpose of spiritual life is to recognize your oneness. My own quest for oneness is an ongoing journey. I constantly analyze my true beliefs and examine my struggles under a microscope. Where is the separation? Where do my beliefs not match what I have been taught about truth? The more I realize and embody this truth of oneness, the more empowered I feel. I let go of effort and force more easily. I allow my higher power to work through me. In this way, I set down my bad experiences and pull myself out of the depths of despair.

The Meaning We Make

I think that the power is in the principle. The principle of moving forward, as though you have the confidence to move forward, eventually gives you confidence when you look back and see what you’ve done.

— Robert Downey Jr.

Everything is continuously being re-created, and it literally is true that the creative Spirit is forever making all things new. We must permit It to make them new for us.

— Ernest Holmes, “Creative Ideas,” page 24

I am a chaplain at a local hospital a few days a week. One time this past fall, the emergency department was extraordinarily busy. Some patients came in with unusual symptoms. After a few days of this, at the end of their shift, a staff member mentioned that the moon was full. Of course! That explains everything. Everyone chuckled and went on their way, knowing the craziness would end soon and the stress would not continue because the full moon was temporary.

Whether the full moon was the reason or not, naming and giving meaning to stressful or unusual circumstances in our lives helps us explain events and make meaning out of things that may be difficult to process or understand.

Part of my role as a spiritual leader is to help folks identify how they see the events. A health diagnosis, the death of a loved one or a change in an important relationship can throw us into turmoil. When the story of our lives takes a turn, the meaning we typically make of our story falls apart or transitions. We often struggle to make new meaning and find ourselves disoriented.

Today, I invite you to examine the meaning you make of events in your life. What does getting divorced mean? What did that health problem mean? Take an in-depth look at areas where you struggle to heal, people you struggle to love. How do you interpret your life’s events and your subsequent actions?

AFFIRMATION

I see, know and feel my oneness with all.

AFFIRMATION

I am a powerful and positive force for making meaning in my life.

Only those who have tried to breathe under water know how important breathing really is — and will never take it for granted again. They are the ones who do not take shipwreck or drowning lightly.

— Richard Rohr

Something in me knows what to do. I joyfully accept Its guidance.

— Ernest Holmes, "Creative Ideas," page 59

Most of us have aspects of our lives we don't like. Perhaps we feel lonely and wish to have quality friendships. We might struggle to have enough money, or we may lack purpose and passion. We may act to change things but become frustrated when we return to the same spot. Our actions do not take us anywhere different. Why is this? Because we focus on our outer world rather than our inner world.

Yes, it's important to acknowledge parts of your life you wish to live differently. To experience different outcomes requires you to change the cause, which is an inner job. This quest to understand cause brought my spiritual journey to me head on. In our teaching, we offer a standing invitation to explore the law of cause and effect. And while many of us understand the concept intellectually, we often fail to put it to use in our daily struggles. Seeing our true beliefs by ourselves can present a challenge, which is why our spiritual journey can benefit from being in community. This could mean taking classes and participating in groups with like-minded people. Therapy is another option that allows us to be with another to reflect on what we may struggle to see.

The best way to see what is cause and what is effect in your life is to start with your problem and continue asking why. Back into it until you can identify a quality of God you don't feel like you are one with — love, power, beauty, joy, peace, life and wisdom. The cause of our disconnect with Source is the reason for any effect in our life. Healing starts on the inside.

A flower does not try to be beautiful. Its true nature is beauty. It exudes fragrance, beauty, perfection, just by its very being. In the same way, when you awaken, you will naturally exude love, compassion, beauty. It is all you, for it is your true self.

— Robert Adams

Freedom already exists, but your freedom is in your own thought.

— Ernest Holmes, "Living the Science of Mind," page 169

What is a truth you know about yourself? What do you really believe? For many of us, our flaws are the first few things we think of as being true. The things we don't love about ourselves are at the top of our minds. That's OK; it's human. Right now, I encourage you to grab a piece of paper and let everything out. Write it all down — the good, the bad, the ugly. And when you are done, please write down and contemplate all the qualities of God you can think of.

Bridging the gap between the two descriptors is our spiritual journey. For me, this journey began with an exploration of what God means to me. Going from Catholicism to atheism to now being a minister with Centers for Spiritual Living, my understanding of myself changed when I formed my own beliefs about the universe and my role in it. My beliefs don't have to be the same as yours. What matters is what your truth is. And if your truth sucks right now, ask yourself, "Is this really true? Would it be different for Kelly than it is for me?"

I became a minister because my life changed dramatically for the better when I began to unravel what I truly believed and how, if my truth didn't support me, I had the opportunity to find evidence I needed to change it. My beliefs do not have to be set in stone. Today's quote by Robert Adams about a flower's true nature is profound and applicable to every one of us. Your invitation today is to understand your true nature.

AFFIRMATION

I am open and honest with myself. I choose to heal fully and wholly and recognize where I do not feel wholeness.

AFFIRMATION

I am one with love and all the amazing and powerful energies of the universe.

Forgive yourself for not being at peace. The moment you completely accept your non-peace ... it is translated into peace. Anything you accept fully will get you there, will take you into peace. This is the miracle of surrender.

— Eckhart Tolle

Life is an eternal givingness, the offering of the cosmic Self to the joy of Its own fulfillment. You and I are part of this joy, and we find fulfillment only as this joy passes through us to others.

— Ernest Holmes, "A Holmes Reader of Practical Wisdom," page 42

Surrender is one of those essential concepts I consistently struggle with, particularly when it's important to me. I. Just. Can't. Let. Go. Acceptance is one way to lean into surrender. Twelve-step programs offer concrete blocks for building acceptance. Acceptance requires us to relinquish control and face reality. If you were lost and looking at a map, acceptance would be marking an X on the spot where you are right now. There is no need to judge where you are, to try to change it or to plead and bargain with it. You are where you are.

When it comes to our lives, where we are on that map is much more than a place. We tend to judge our location as good or bad. Then we attach emotion to our result. Acceptance asks us not to have any attachments to our position.

Does acceptance or the lack thereof impair your ability to change things in your life? Begin by paying attention to your struggles. Ask yourself where you meet resistance. You might not be in control of the situation, but you can realize you have choices. Acceptance does not mean you approve of or are OK with where you are. It means you acknowledge it is what it is.

Sometimes, we avoid acceptance because there is pain involved once we accept. If you notice yourself resisting acceptance, ask yourself if you are trying to change or deny things that can't be changed. Remind yourself that you can't change what already happened. What you can change is your view of that event or circumstance.

It always seems impossible until it's done.

— Nelson Mandela

So far as Law is concerned, It does not know anything about big and little.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 312

There is not much in life that is harder than change. And yet, change must happen before anything new can be birthed. Change is necessary for us to grow and evolve. The birth of anything requires the death of something else. The birth of my first daughter brought the death of my freedom and time as a childless adult. The birth of my spiritual exploration brought the death of a Kelly living in pain and discomfort. The death of responsible Kelly, who had a boring corporate career, was required to bring about the birth of Kelly, the minister and teacher.

We have to let go of things for something new to take its place. And yet, we resist letting go. When we get scared, we tend to grab on tightly, refusing to release what we have and what we are comfortable with. We resist change because it's uncomfortable and unknown.

If you resist change, I ask you to play with the concept of change as the movement of life. If we aren't changing, we are inert. God creates and expresses through us, as us. Our job is to allow that flow to happen. When we resist allowing change because we are uncomfortable or we are scared, we cannot fulfill our purpose as conduits of creation.

Own the fact that you are unique. You express and create beautifully and differently. Every one of us is needed to create as only each of us can.

AFFIRMATION

Just for today, right now, I accept what is.
I let go of all control and know peace and acceptance.

AFFIRMATION

I delight in the sacred process of creation.
I open and release, allowing creativity to flow.

Play With Curiosity

Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. ... It's about learning to dance in the rain.

— Vivian Greene

But even God cannot give us anything unless we are in a mental condition to receive the gift.

— Ernest Holmes, "It's Up to You," page 22

The adage tells us curiosity killed the cat. I say curiosity kills boredom. Curiosity reveals the light bulb. Curiosity leads to self-discovery and personal growth. Curiosity is a state of being — a state of being open and inquisitive. Curiosity requires us to let go of judgment and not push one way or another to suit what we find comfortable. We must be open, even when we don't know what is happening. This can take focus and constant redirection.

Giving ourselves the gift of curiosity can be the one thing that allows us to get through our struggles. Look for the gifts and blessings in life and stay curious about how they may appear. When you encounter something or someone you struggle with, you can check in with yourself and bring yourself to a state of curiosity: How can I make this work? Where is the divinity in this experience? Where is the love here? Both in me and in them?

Because curiosity is an active state, when we are curious, we ask questions with an openness to the answers. When my middle daughter, Bailey, was young, she asked us an unending stream of questions: "Why is it called a hot dog?" "Why is the sky blue?" "Why do I have to make my bed when I'm just getting back in it?" Answering her constant stream of questions all day became a task in itself. As we age, we lose that natural sense of wanting to understand how our world works and why.

Today, I invite you to play with curiosity and explore where and how it can bring you closer to the divine gifts all around.

AFFIRMATION

Today, I choose to be curious. I allow what is unfolding without resistance to change.

Wholly Healing

Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising up every time we fail.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

The Universe is a perfect, undivided whole, and healing can take place only when one is unified with It.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 447

Spiritual leaders throughout the ages taught us to have a daily spiritual practice. That may include meditating, reading or studying sacred works, journaling, praying or any other method that brings you closer to God. There is no right way to engage in this practice. It should be a living practice that changes as you do. The lesson is to build the practice into our daily routine.

When life throws us a curve ball, we often respond instinctively, not having the time or wherewithal to ground ourselves and think through our reactions. Usually in hindsight we see the gift in the trauma. The training we do in our daily spiritual practices strengthens our faith. Just like strong muscles improve your range of motion and enhance balance, a daily spiritual practice does the same. Your range of motion may be the variety of life experiences you are able to stay grounded and balanced in and your ability to be a positive force for yourself and others in traumatic situations.

We are here in this human form to heal. Our daily spiritual practice may not feel like healing. However, this small, daily progress lays the foundation for our path to wholeness. The strength and progress come when we are not in crisis. Just like an athlete training for a marathon, our spiritual practice is our everyday training to meet life's unexpected challenges.

AFFIRMATION

I joyfully embrace my spiritual practice, knowing progress happens every day.

A Day of Vitality

A Day of Love

It is not enough to be busy. So are the ants. The question is: What are we busy about?

— Henry David Thoreau

Our mind must be steady in its conviction that our life is some part of God and that the Spirit is incarnated in us.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 159

Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it. Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it. Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Love is the central flame of the universe, nay, the very fire itself. It is written that God is love, and that we are God's expressed likeness, the image of the Eternal Being. Love is self-forgiveness through creation, the impartation of the Divine through the human.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 478

After the busyness of the holiday season and the settling of returning to work, our enthusiasm often wanes, and we may be blue. Being blue can happen to us at any time, particularly this time of year, amid the long dark days and cold winter. When we feel down, a dose of vitality is the answer. Reinvigorating ourselves with an enthusiasm for life is what our spirit needs.

What connects you with the energizing pulse of life? Rather than wallow in the depths of despair, take time to acknowledge your blues and make a concerted effort to do something that connects you with Spirit.

Vitality is not about being busy just for the sake of busyness. It's about engaging in life-giving activities that feed your soul. We can be busy running in circles, avoiding our feelings and emotions, and using busyness to distract us from what actually ails us.

Today, consciously care for yourself and invite vitality into your space. Embrace a feeling of aliveness. Play some uplifting music. Move your body. Anything from small stretches to an invigorating run will increase your blood flow and get oxygen moving through your body and mind. Not only is vitality a feeling of being healthy and energetic, but mentally, it brings us a sense of meaning and purpose. What one thing can you do to infuse vitality into your day today?

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stood for many powerful things: nonviolent activism, love, peace, oneness. He said, "He who hates does not know God, but he who loves has the key that unlocks the door to the meaning of ultimate reality."

Love is the energy of God. Love is the power to transform, the most potent force in all the universe. Love is the foundation on which all other vibrations build. Today, as we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day in the United States, is the perfect day to infuse love into all aspects of your life, especially those you struggle with.

Where in your life do you want more harmony? Is there an area in your life where you feel paralyzed or stuck? A place where hatred still resides? The question that remains is how to infuse something with love. I believe the answer to this is personal. It's different for each of us.

Bring this topic into meditation and ask: How do I bring love to this situation? How do I harmonize this situation? Be open to what comes up. It may be pictures or a feeling. It may take several attempts before you see how to infuse love into your situation. Know this: You will receive the answers you seek. Choose to see.

AFFIRMATION

I breathe in the breath of life, filling my body and spirit with vital energy and love.

AFFIRMATION

I am surrounded by love everywhere I go. I am love. I radiate love.

It is not natural for us to live without reverence, because that separates us from the basic energy of the soul.

— Gary Zukav, “The Seat of the Soul”

So humans must be created with the possibility of limitless freedom and let alone to discover themselves.

— Ernest Holmes, “The Science of Mind,” page 109

Find your rituals, develop your routines, create those practices that ground and center you. Stick to them, don't apologize for them, treat them, even the small things, like they're big things.

— Rob Bell, “How to Be Here: A Guide to Creating a Life Worth Living”

One of the great difficulties in the new order of thought is that we are likely to indulge in too much theory and too little practice.

— Ernest Holmes, “The Science of Mind,” page 51

When I became a minister, I became Reverend Kelly. It took a little while for me to become comfortable with the title, which means worthy of reverence or deserving to be revered. Aren't we all worthy of reverence? Reverence is showing profound honor and respect for something. What a beautiful way to go through life, showing deep reverence for beings and all the world, not just the gorgeous flowers or our precious children, but even the little things we may struggle to find value in. I'm thinking about the bugs that sneak into the garage or the angry wasps that build nests in my yard and then fight with me while I try to enjoy dinner outside.

We have reverence for our families, the food on our table and the machines that make our lifestyles possible. To have reverence is to have the consciousness that all life is valuable and essential. All is of God, so all is worthy of reverence. Living each moment of the day through the lens of reverence is a beautiful way to acknowledge the presence of God in everything and everyone. It is seeing and acknowledging the presence of God everywhere.

Reverence is a core precept in Buddhist teachings. Teaching mindfulness and compassion allows us to experience peace and reverence for all life. The first of five Buddhist precepts is to abstain from killing. Thích Nhất Hạnh taught this precept as reverence for life, that we all have a duty to appreciate and honor the beauty of life and the obligation to do everything in our power to protect all life.

A ritual is any act done regularly. I have a ritual of drinking a cup or two of coffee every morning. I enjoy doing this before anyone else is up, while the house is quiet and peaceful. This ritual grounds me and allows me to ease into my day by honoring myself first.

Rituals are spiritual acts. They often have a personal and healing value and involve mindfulness. We have rituals for weddings and funerals. The birth of babies and celebrating birthdays are rituals many families engage in.

It's easy to go through the motions of life, even in our daily spiritual practice, without putting much thought or effort into our actions. Rituals ask us to stop, be intentional in our actions and aware of this moment in time. The point of a ritual is to take time out of our day to honor and recognize the passage of time, to acknowledge a beginning and an ending.

As a chaplain at the local hospital, I use the time I take to rub hand sanitizer on my hands before I enter a room as a ritual. I pause, take a breath and mindfully ground myself, anchoring my complete focus on being present in each encounter.

AFFIRMATION

I am a source of reverence for all life. I practice nonviolence within myself, which naturally extends to others.

AFFIRMATION

Today, I use the power of pause to mindfully ground myself in the present moment.

Face the Impossible

Nothing is impossible; the word itself says I'm possible.

— Audrey Hepburn

You must become the master of your own thinking. This is the only way you will realize freedom and joy.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Art of Life," page 23

There have been times when I felt overwhelmed and couldn't see a way out. More times than I can count, actually. Living in fear and feeling trapped, frozen, unable to move because every move seemed to have an even worse consequence, I saw only limited options, leading to despair rather than finding the inner grit to stretch beyond what was comfortable. Feeling like that for long periods is not living. It is barely surviving.

Know this: We are always bigger than our problems. If you struggle to see how you are bigger, I first suggest exploring your spiritual beliefs. What are you made of? Is it this body and mind trying to create change, or is there a spiritual self that can be called on? We are made of the same substance as Spirit. Thus, we are larger than our problem.

When we label something a "problem," we judge it. What happens if we take the judgment out and see it for what it is? An outcome. Living life this way brought me to this point. What happens if I live my life a different way?

I say this not to diminish the horrible things that go on in the world, but to try to help each of us put our lives in perspective, to provide an alternative way to view unwanted events in our lives. We must allow ourselves to see past our pain and misery and begin the forward-thinking process of creating our lives with purpose, intention and motion.

Emptying and Letting Go

God is not found in the soul by adding anything but by a process of subtraction.

— Meister Eckhart

When the greater comes in, the lesser leaves because there is no longer anything to give life to it.

— Ernest Holmes, "Creative Mind," page 32

When I began a deep dive into my healing journey many years ago, I worked with a therapist who spoke with me about identifying my beliefs, about recognizing which voices in my head are mine and which are other people's. She explained this in a way that made complete sense to me and perhaps will make sense to you as well. Imagine all your thoughts are a tangled ball of yarn. Each thought you pull out and untangle allows you to discern whether you agree with it and whose voice is speaking. Is this my mom's voice? My ex-husband's voice? The voice of someone from work?

Discovering your true self and truly knowing your oneness with God works similarly. It's an ongoing process of deciding and evaluating. Is this thought fear, or is it God? Is this thought filled with love, or is this thought destructive?

What is not mine, I can choose to let go of. What is not love is not God, and I can choose to let go of it. All that is love and all that is God is within each of us. In our human experience, we accumulated some things that are not ours to keep, and we can identify them, set them down and walk away, being lighter, freer and knowing our unbreakable connection to the Divine.

AFFIRMATION

Each breath I take brings me courage, compassion and hope.
I know nothing is impossible.

AFFIRMATION

I easily release all that is not mine.

Alone time is when I distance myself from the voices of the world so I can hear my own.

— Oprah Winfrey

But only when the mind is tranquil, like an unruffled body of water, can it reflect the divine images of peace and perfection.

— Ernest Holmes, “Creative Ideas,” page 136

If you want to grow and be free to explore life, you cannot spend your life avoiding things that might hurt your heart or mind.

— Michael A. Singer, “The Untethered Soul”

The Universe is a perfect, undivided whole, and healing can take place only when one is unified with It.

— Ernest Holmes, “The Science of Mind,” page 447

One of my favorite things to do when I am stressed is to go skiing. On a perfect day, the chairlift can be the quietest, most peaceful place. And if a light snow falls, even better. The falling snow absorbs sound, and my body feels the silence. After skiing down a run, which physically moves my energy around, sitting peacefully on the chairlift above the treetops is where I find peace and release whatever is stressing me out.

Our daily lives are busy and filled with noise — noise from the street; noise from the television, podcasts and social media; background noise from the constantly running air conditioner and electricity buzzing through our buildings and homes; noise from other people talking. We call this noise pollution because it overstimulates our senses.

Our body and our spirit relish the opportunity to be quiet and in complete silence. That is the space where we connect with Spirit, where we connect with ourselves.

We have become uncomfortable with silence because we aren't used to it. When we enter silence, many of us automatically fill the space with language or sounds. Physically, silence reduces tension, stimulates brain growth and enhances focus. Our spiritual challenge for today is to be proactive about creating silent time. Where can you go? What must you do to have five minutes of complete, uninterrupted silence? Today, make the time to be in silence.

I was in Las Vegas at a coaching conference, and the leader had us approach people on the strip and ask questions. This was a hands-on activity for our growth and development. Over the course of the four days, I kept crying. I didn't understand why, and I was embarrassed. Right in the middle of an exercise, I was overcome by tears. Eventually, I told the leader what was happening, and he kindly explained that I needed to let the tears out. He invited me to take time to cry when I got home. He asked me to allow everything coming up to flow through and out of me. He explained I needed to heal before I could move forward. I needed to give myself time (but not too much time, he cautioned) to grieve.

It's common for us to avoid facing the darkness in our lives. It doesn't feel good, and we innately avoid what makes us uncomfortable. Because we don't admit our pain, it ends up haunting us. You find yourself crying on the strip in Vegas for no reason. You become the victim of your unhealed pain rather than the healed soul we came here to be.

To heal and be whole, we must embrace the hurt, allowing it to be what it is. We must be present with it and let the grief, the loss, whatever it is, run its course. And then we can release it. In addition to healing ourselves, our pain allows us to understand others who are in pain. We become a source of healing and a source of compassion.

AFFIRMATION

I enjoy silent time with myself.
I love myself and respect the sound of silence.

AFFIRMATION

I know and feel my oneness with the universe.
I boldly face my darkness and heal.

Cultivate Your Inner Bamboo Tree

The possibilities are numerous once we decide to act and not react.

— George Bernard Shaw

We do believe that God is all there is, that God is right where we are and what we are.

— Ernest Holmes, "Ideas for Living," page 75

A Chinese bamboo tree is stronger than steel, acts as an antibacterial, can be used as a deodorant and can be eaten. Tending to this amazing tree requires patience and faith. You have to take care of it and provide water and fertilizer. Even while you see nothing sprouting above ground, it's in development, growing solid roots so it can survive as its future self. While it doesn't break through the ground for five years, once it does, it will grow 90 feet tall in five weeks.

Sometimes, our growth is similar to that of the Chinese bamboo tree. And it can be frustrating, the seemingly endless wait for change in your life. When you are on a healing path, the spiritual path, there will be changes only you can see. Our spiritual journey is personal and unique. You are reading this magazine today, and the odds are, you are on this spiritual journey.

Here are a few tips for cultivating your version of the bamboo tree. Avoid comparing yourself with others, and don't listen to other people's comments and judgments. Focus on your task at hand, which is your spiritual growth. This is uniquely individual and personal. Ask yourself: What do I believe? And how do my beliefs demonstrate in my life?

This individual process of knowing God often takes time, introspection and a questioning of beliefs. There is a depth to building faith, and it is something only you know. Like the bamboo tree, your growth often happens when no one sees it. Suddenly, you will shoot up 90 feet in five weeks. People see the results, not the work that went into the results.

AFFIRMATION

I release any and all outside influences and focus solely on my connection with Spirit. Today, I know only God.

Work as a Labor of Love

Work is love made visible.

— Kahlil Gibran, "The Prophet"

Since no two persons are alike, there must be a unique place for you in the scheme of things.

— Ernest Holmes, "This Thing Called You," page 51

Is work a four-letter word in your life? Is it something you do because you have to rather than because you want to? Most of us have jobs and work to pay our bills. We are responsible citizens and work so we can have time for ourselves and our families. I know many folks count the days until they retire, unhappily putting in their time, going through the motions of life rather than seeing themselves as expressions of beauty and creativity.

I find Kahlil Gibran's poem "On Work" stunning. In it, he asserts, as quoted above, "Work is love made visible." Through his many examples, he offers beautiful ways to bring spirituality to our work. He further invites us to examine how we approach our work. Is it with love? Do we recognize when we work that we are a conduit for the life force that is God? God works through us, and each act is an act of love, not only for ourselves but for others as well.

Gibran writes: "Always you have been told that work is a curse and labor a misfortune. But I say to you that when you work, you fulfill a part of Earth's furthest dream, assigned to you when the dream was born, and in keeping yourself with labor, you are in truth loving life, and to love life through labor is to be intimate with life's inmost secret."

Whether or not you are happy at your job, know that your work is a labor of love of life.

AFFIRMATION

Today, I approach all I do with a consciousness of loving life, knowing I am intimate with life's innermost secret.

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.

— Lao Tzu

My life is in God; it cannot be hurt or hindered in its expression.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 547

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

— John 8:12

As the inner light dawns, it delivers the outer life from bondage. This is in line with the teaching that everything is from within out.

— Ernest Holmes, "Science of Mind," page 485

Trust. This powerful word plays a vital role in our relationships. When we trust, we believe another person without having control over them. Trusting someone makes us vulnerable to them. When you trust, you expect the other person to reciprocate and act in your best interest. Trusting others is something many of us struggle with, and it affects our lives.

A more prevalent issue than whether or not we trust others is that most of us don't trust ourselves. And we don't even know it. This lack of trust in ourselves affects everything, including our spiritual growth. We may pride ourselves on keeping our word to others but not to ourselves. How many times have you vowed to stop eating chocolate? Spend less on impulsive shopping? Work out every day? Be kinder?

Keeping our word to ourselves is a trust we can build and strengthen with discipline. Be aware of what you promise yourself. Keep your promises small, and ensure you can and will follow through. When you speak to yourself, do you know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you will keep your promises? The laws and energy of the universe itself are behind those words.

I find creation stories fascinating. Each religion has a story of creation, and while they vary immensely, one thing remains constant. Each includes the use of light as a symbol of life and a metaphor for God. Creation stories influence how people think about the world and their place in relation to their surroundings.

What is your creation story? Do you know it? How did it affect who you are today? Writing your birth story can help you make meaning, heal, celebrate and process the story of how and why you were born. We each have much to gain from hearing our mothers' and fathers' stories, because each generation has a scientific and political influence on the world.

Were you wanted? Were your parents in love? Did they want a child? Were you a child of a rape? Did your mother die during childbirth? Did either you or your mother fight the odds for survival? Was it a beautiful and peaceful experience? Each birth story is unique and contains extraordinary beauty and mystery. Our stories show us how we understand ourselves and the meaning we make from our creation.

The golden thread tying all creation stories together is light. Your life is a light that was and is needed, wanted and necessary for life on our planet. Regardless of the story behind it, recognize yourself as the light and reflection of God, bringing value to us all.

AFFIRMATION

I reclaim my trust in myself.
My words have power, and I use them wisely.

AFFIRMATION

Today, my light shines brightly. I am love. I am light.
I am unabashedly a powerhouse of God's creative force.

The World Is Upside Down

Your task is not to seek love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it.

— Rumi

We should work, not with anxiety but with expectancy; not by coercion but with conviction; not through compulsion but in a state of conscious recognition and receptivity.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 58

Today is a day to try things outside the norm. Today is National Backwards Day. We can use this day as an opportunity to look at our actions, see what results we would like to change, and try reversing them.

Does seeing our world backward allow us to see life differently? When I struggle with something, I often ask how to turn it around. And, truthfully, I don't always get an answer. However, new questions usually arise when I look at the problem differently and see the situation through a different lens. Different opportunities present themselves. As I was writing these Daily Guides and wrestling with what to share, I moved my starting point to the middle of the month rather than beginning at the beginning. Silly as it seems, doing things my way instead of how I am supposed to do them frees me. It allows me to see my project differently and move forward.

There is a Zen saying, "The world is upside down," suggests that how we have been looking at the world is the opposite of how it really is. The meaning here is more spiritual than doing our day backward. We should focus on love, gratitude, beauty, joy and compassion instead of wealth, status, accumulating things and having the right relationships and lifestyle.

Where in your world are you upside down? What would it look like to turn it right side up? Is there one thing you can do today to begin that process?

AFFIRMATION

I am open. I choose to see the truth in my struggles and turn my world right side up.



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WHAT IS SCIENCE OF MIND/RELIGIOUS SCIENCE?

We honor all people, faith paths and religions. Our sacred focus is creating a world that works for everyone. Find "What We Believe" on page 10.