A photograph of a dense forest with tall, thin trees and a dirt path leading through them. The trees are covered in vibrant green leaves, and the path is a mix of dirt and fallen leaves. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Solitude

A RADICAL-SELF CARE TOOL FOR CHRONIC WELLNESS

Chronic Wellness Radical Self-Study Guide and Course

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SOLITUDE: A RADICAL SELF-CARE TOOL FOR CHRONIC WELLNESS

Solitude: A Radical Self-Care Tool for Chronic Wellness
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Important: If you have access to a printer, please PRINT this book. You'll get a lot more out of it if you're not reading it on a computer. Take it to your favorite coffee shop, park, retreat center, or comfortable chair – Anywhere you can be alone.

There are a number of hyperlinks in the report that lead to more information online. Whenever you're at the computer you can follow each link to read more or check out a resource I recommend, but it's still better to read the report in printed form if you can.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO RADICAL SELF-CARE

Are you a Wellness Hero?

Wellness heroes are people who have taken a challenging situation, whether chronic illness or a high stress, unbalanced lifestyle and decided to do things differently.

They decided to thrive, to be vibrant, to have energy, to love, to excel at being their best in every aspect of their life.

To become a wellness hero, requires right action, right thinking, right support and right accountability.

Are you ready to be a wellness hero?

Let me introduce you to my toolbox. It is made of a good hardwood and is weathered and sturdy. In this toolbox I store the numerous tools that help me create a wonderful, vibrant and dazzling life. Each tool is a practice that keeps my body healthy and energetic, my mind clear and focused and my spirit grounded and serene.

I call this toolbox, my radical self-care toolbox. Why is it radical? When we think of self-care, we think of spa days, pedicures, and other pampering activities. Things we indulge in occasionally. But regular, even habitual, self-care requires us to put ourselves first on a daily basis.

That is a radical idea.

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Putting Yourself First

Too often we rank our physical, mental and spiritual health below our job, family, friends and volunteer obligations. Not with radical self-care. Radical self-care is a collection of practices or tools you use daily (whatever works and is doable) that puts you first and fosters not just wellness but vitality.

Radical self-care is not a selfish concept, as you may think. You use radical self-care when the plane loses cabin pressure. You put your mask on first so you can better help others. When you care for your body, mind and spirit, you are better able to help those you love or work for.

This requires a paradigm shift.

First of which is realizing that there is no such thing as “not enough time.”

Radical self-care creates time. When you are taking care of yourself your body functions properly, giving you more energy, which translates into more time.

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Why Radical Self Care?

Radical self-care is about creating chronic wellness. Chronic means sustain or perpetual and is usually associated with illness. But I don't believe that illness, or its effects, have to be chronic. Through my experience, and that of my clients, I have seen how wellness can be chronic and long-lasting.

Chronic wellness is a way of life in which:

- ✓ We enjoy satisfying, healing food
- ✓ We move our bodies in ways that create a deeper connection to ourselves and the world, and
- ✓ We live meaningful lives free of pain and illness.

Discovering chronic wellness requires self-empowerment. Self-empowerment starts with ditching the belief that a pill will cure us or a fad diet will work. They won't. Only you have the power to make wellness a habit.

How do you become empowered? You are empowered when:

- ✓ you stop blaming your genes and your lack of will power;
- ✓ you choose vitality over managing your condition; and
- ✓ you shift your paradigm from "wellness is too hard" to "wellness is normal."

Cultivating solitude is the first step to empowerment.

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So What's in the Toolbox?

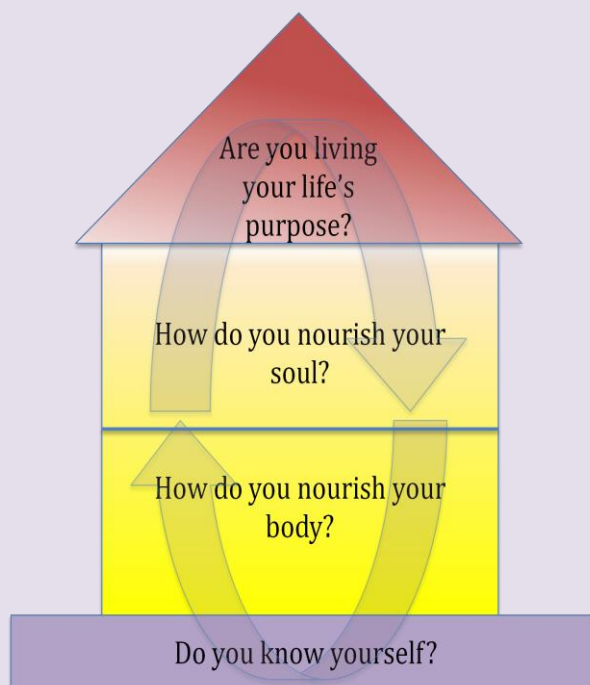
This tool box is a potpourri of self-love. It includes:

- ✓ meditation
- ✓ yoga
- ✓ 8 hours of nightly sleep
- ✓ gratitude
- ✓ an alkaline diet
- ✓ solitude
- ✓ making art
- ✓ journaling
- ✓ self-development
- ✓ self-love
- ✓ green juice
- ✓ throwing the occasional tantrum
- ✓ regular bodywork, and
- ✓ much, much more.

What's in your toolbox?

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The Chronic Wellness House



Although there are numerous tools in my radical self-care toolbox, this book focuses on what I view as the foundational tool: Solitude. Without the practice of solitude, we can't know ourselves. Without this intimate knowledge of who we are and who we want to be, the remaining radical self-care tools will sit in the box, untouched, and chronic wellness and vitality will remain elusive.

I view chronic wellness like a house. The foundation is knowing yourself. That happens by creating the space to listen to our thoughts and hear our soul and heart. It is from the knowledge we gain in solitude that all our actions flow.

Once we know ourselves, we can begin to build upon the foundation to create deep and lasting wellness. The first floor is where we nourish our body. That comes from healthy, life promoting food that is right for our body. It also comes from moving and honoring the beauty of our body.

With a solid foundation and first floor, we then focus on nourishing our soul. Our relationships with loved ones, our community and the world is what nourishes our soul. A feeling of being connected and important is a crucial component to wellness and longevity.

Finally, we come to the top of the house. This is where we have the best view of our life and of the universe. This is where we strive to live – fulfilling our life's purpose. Whether that be raising fabulous children, founding a charity, employing thousands as chief executive officer of a company or volunteering at your church; we are all meant to do something with this one precious life we have been given. But we can't do that fully if the other components of the house are not structurally sound. This course focuses on the foundation of the chronic wellness house.

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As air fills a house with life keeping it fresh and bright, so radical self-care flows through the house of chronic wellness, filling it with love and connecting all the floors. Radical self-care is the loving energy that makes our house a home. The levels of this house are not static. Each level needs to be attended to daily for the house not to crumble into illness. Each day we have a choice to make about how we will act or react. When guided by radical-self care, and a deep sense of ourself, those actions and reactions foster peace, happiness and wellness.

Radical self-care is important for everyone. But it is especially important for those living with chronic fatigue, persistent stress or illness. These circumstances shake the foundation of our perspective. Radical self-care built on a foundation of self-knowledge, helps us travel our journey with dignity, courage and even panache.

USING THIS SELF STUDY GUIDE

Use this guide slowly. Start by reading it in its entirety (that's why I made it short). Then select a week to start with, and work on one section a week. Each section builds on the other, so it is best to start with "Put Your Life in Perspective". But if that doesn't call to you, start in a place that does. Complete each section in any order you desire.

Remember, you will receive weekly emails to prompt and deepen your practice in the order presented in this guide. That's my way of keeping you on task and holding you accountable to yourself.

The healing and empowerment benefits of solitude are strong. So take the work slowly. But do the work. Contemplate each section. Do the exercises. Record your thoughts.

WHAT DOES SOLITUDE LOOK LIKE IN THE MODERN WORLD?

Before you get started, you may wonder, “what do I do while I’m pursuing solitude? Do I just sit there and contemplate?” No, not at all! While contemplation is a part of solitude, there are many activities you can engage in while you’re alone.

Remember, I am not talking forced isolation here. It’s not about being lonely or running away from the world. Rather, solitude as a self-care tool is an exercise in nourishing our psyche to achieve inner freedom and chronic wellness. By spending time in solitude we finally hear our inner voice. That voice tells us what our body and soul needs. That voice brings us peace so we can see beyond the masks we wear for the world and reveal our authentic selves.

Seriously, in the modern world, it is very easy to overtax the brain. You do it whenever you undergo stressful situations, don’t sleep your full 8 hours, drink too much coffee, tea, or alcohol or smoke. All these activities reduce the blood flow to the brain. The result? Your brain can’t work efficiently. Stress releases toxic hormones, which affect your memory centers. Prolonged stress destroys brain cells.

What causes stress? Much of it is subjective and caused by emotionally trying situations or over-committing ourselves. Some common environmental factors include loud noises, air pollution, overcrowding, tobacco smoke, the weather, the clutter and colors in a room, an uncomfortable chair, even the amount of lighting in the room.

Turn the page for some activities to do while taking advantage of your solitude:

Keeping a Journal

Writing a journal is therapeutic and a stress-buster. It also helps you understand yourself because, in a journal, you describe your feelings, conversations with others, hopes and goals, as well as failures and successes.

**A journal is your constant companion,
and the most undemanding one.**

A journal doesn't ask for anything and is always ready to accept. Writing in your journal is like talking to a friend. It could even bring out the talented writer in you. And someday you'll read it again to refresh a cherished memory or go back to a lesson learnt.

Keeping a journal clarifies your thoughts and beliefs. It helps you look at challenges afresh and find solutions. But you must write every week, if not every day, to see its benefits. Journaling also has health benefits. Journaling boosts the function of cognition. It also reduces the severity of asthma and arthritis, as well as other illnesses. And it strengthens the immune system.

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Listen to Classical Music

Much has been written about the “Mozart Effect” and its ability to improve spatial and visual skills as well as reduce the number of seizures in epileptic patients. But we’ll leave that behind and focus on the stress-relieving effects of listening to classical music.

Dr. Rosalia Staricoff, Research Director at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in London, says: “The physiological benefits have been measured. Music reduces blood pressure, the heart rate, and hormones related to stress.”

“Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.”

~ Berthold Auerbach

When stress takes over listen to Swan Lake by Tchaikovsky, Ravel’s Bolero, or Beethoven’s masterpieces while you’re working or about to sleep. You’ll feel the stress melt away!

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Do Some Gardening

Have you ever experienced the pleasures of eating fruit from your own garden? A garden is a perpetual wonder. Every day you can find something new – a tender shoot, a bud, the first blush of sweetness on a ripening apple, or the full bloom glory of a flower. As the gardener, you're responsible for all this beauty!

In addition, you'll experience the sensual pleasures of soil and velvety petals, the burst of flavor in your mouth, the invigorating and tranquil effect of fresh air and the outdoors.

Even weeding can be a pleasure.

“To forget to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves.”

~Mohandas K. Gandhi

You are making room for something more beautiful to grow. A perfect analogy for this journey you are about ready to undertake.

What's more, gardening is good exercise. It's well known that human beings have an innate attraction to nature. Even if it's just a pot of herbs on your windowsill, just yield to it!

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Read a High Value Book

[Click Here for
A High-Value
Reading List](#)

High-value books help renew your love and faith in life. Choose what you read with care. Read books with a positive message or those that teach something valuable. Here are the many benefits of reading:

* Reading boosts your intelligence because it forces you to actively process information quickly and with great detail. It's not a passive activity like watching television.

* Books can teach you how to polish your skills. Think of any skill and there's bound to be a book about it.

* Your stress will be reduced as you lose yourself in a beautiful new world. The constantly changing pictures on television, and especially commercials, only increase your stress.

* Reading improves your concentration.

* By reading high value books, you'll notice a boost in your memory as you learn to remember plot details and characters.

* Books help to furnish your mind with information and engage your imagination on various subjects, which will help your creative quotient soar.

* Reading also makes you more knowledgeable and a better conversationalist.

You'll be able to discover something new and exciting. For instance, read *The Secret Life of Nature* by Peter Tompkins, who wrote the best-selling *The Secret Life of Plants*. If you loved fairytales as a child, you'll be glad you did.

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Cultivate a Hobby

Some people are lucky to have a hobby from an early age. Others find a passion for something constructive later in life. I, for instance, didn't find my love of making pottery until my fourth decade. So if you don't have a hobby already, explore your interests and abilities to find your passion.

A hobby helps you reduce stress, improves your health, enhances your confidence and self-esteem and enriches your relationships

It's easy to see how a hobby can reduce stress. Naturally, with less stress comes better health. Engaging in a hobby is a great way to unwind and rejuvenate. It will feel like an oasis in a desert. Take a break from the daily grind and focus on something you love to do.

You'll also gain more confidence and self-esteem when you discover you're good at something.

As for your relationships with your partner or family, you'll find more harmony and balance. You will also become a more interesting person.

Making someone the center of your life can lead to tension in the relationship, but when you cultivate a hobby, your partner will respect you and admire you even more. This will free them to do the same, and you'll find your relationship becoming happier and healthier.

Today is life – the only life you are sure of. Make the most of today. Get interested in something. Shake yourself awake. Develop a hobby. Let the winds of enthusiasm sweep through you. Live today with gusto.

~ Dale Carnegie

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Meditation

Meditation is not limited to specific religions, but is available to everyone as a self-care practice. Meditation allows you to stop. Stop thinking. Stop doing. When we stop and just be and let our thoughts flow without chasing them down the bunny trail, we cultivate an inner peace and a confidence that transforms our lives.

Meditation has many benefits including: boosting your immune system, helping heal your body by turning on the parasympathetic nervous system, and turning off your flight or fight response. Aaaaah. I can feel the peacefulness already.

Meditation is easy and free. You can do it anywhere. There are tons of meditation resources on the web, but here is a basic meditation technique for you to try:

Sit in a chair with your back supported and your feet flat on the ground. Rest your hands comfortably in your lap.

Set a silent timer. This can be a timer on your watch or your cell phone. Try to start with ten minutes and work your way up to 20 minutes. If you are particularly distractible person, try starting with 5 minutes.

Close your eyes.

Begin by noticing your breath. Breathe normally - don't try to control your breath. Simply notice that you are breathing. In. Out. Notice where in your body that you feel your breath. Does your belly rise and fall? Or do you feel your breath in your chest as it rises and falls? Do you notice your breath flowing in and out of your nostrils?

Pick a point. Where ever it is you feel your breath, concentrate on that

“The man who goes alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready.”

~Henry David Thoreau

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“Meditation brings wisdom; lack of mediation leaves ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what hold you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom.”

~ Buddha

spot and try to catch when each breath starts and when it ends.

What about those thoughts? This is the toughest part about meditation. Many practitioners refer to the constant flood of thoughts that invade this quiet space as "monkey mind."

You can also ask that thought to wait for you until you are done and then release it. The key is to be gentle with yourself. And then return to following your breath.

That's it. Some people find it helpful to write down some of the thoughts that did come up during the meditation. But otherwise, relish the gift of quiet, peace and health you have just given yourself.

SOLITUDE IN ACTION

Week 1: Put Your Life In Perspective

Being in your own company gives you the chance to see where you're heading in terms of your relationships, career, and spiritual evolution. If you spend at least 30 minutes a day looking back at the previous day and analyzing how you lived it, you'll gain some great insights. That's the power of perspective!

One thing you may realize as you self-reflect is that the greatest amount of time and energy spent in an average day goes to maintaining healthy relationships or trying to make unhealthy relationships tolerable. But when you're alone, you can gain the perspective to decide which relationships are worth keeping and nurturing.

Another radical self-care tool is culling those relationships that harm us or bring us down. Remember that a good relationship is one that allows both people involved to grow into better people. Ask yourself whether your relationships follow this wise counsel.

In the same way, consider your career. If you have a career goal, are you heading in the right direction? Have you been in a hopeless work situation for far too long because you're afraid of change? Is there some other profession that you dream of constantly?

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What are your priorities in life? The answer to this question is extremely important. For instance, you might think that nurturing your creative pastimes or your children are more important than your day job. If so, would it make sense to take the plunge and freelance, instead of continuing with your 9 to 5 job, or at least go part-time so you can do what feeds your soul, not just your bank account?

These can be scary questions to ask.

And the answer can induce lots of fears. Don't freak out if upon reflection you discover you want to uproot your life by leaving your partner or your job or some other seemingly scary leap of faith.

Remember, you don't have to act now or ever. Just sit with the thought and see what possibilities it opens up for you.

Sometimes the realization that our current circumstance is not serving us is enough to help us think differently. Thinking differently can change the nature of the circumstance. For instance, you realize you hate your job and want to leave.

But why do you hate your job? Dig deeper. You realize your boss never gives you credit for your work. You have so many options here other than leaving your job. You can talk to your boss about it or seek other opportunities in the organization, or some other creative solution that leaves you happier and more confident.

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Exercise #1

This week, try spending some time alone. Read a high value book. Go to a park. Meditate. Sit with your own thoughts. Take a long bath.

Take one step toward carving out time and space to spend time with your thoughts.

Record what you did and how it felt

Each day this week, contemplate the following:

What are my top priorities? Where am I heading in my career? Where do I want to head? Why? How do I feel about my relationships? Are they satisfying?

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Week 2: Independence and Relationships

“It is easy in the world to live after the world’s opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after one’s own; but the great man is he who in the mindset of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.”

~Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance*

Psychoanalysts say that the capacity to spend time alone is the mark of emotional maturity.

So what is meant by solitude? Well, sitting by yourself glued to your cell phone, or browsing your Facebook account, is NOT solitude.

In fact, in these days of hi-tech gadgets that enable people to communicate with each other regardless of where they may be, it's difficult to find those who actually prefer solitude. But perhaps you will prefer some occasional solitude, once you see the many benefits.

For example, if you can't find a companion to go to the movies, do you still go by yourself? If not, why not? What holds you back? Of course, there's no physical harm in going alone, is there?

You don't have to be in the company of others in order to feel fulfilled and happy.

In solitude, you like your own company!

Being alone often helps you to think deeper about the challenges in your life. And when you're emotionally and mentally prepared, you'll be better able to meet them head on.

It's an empowering feeling to figure things out for yourself. You'll begin to love yourself for your own competence and resourcefulness, and loving yourself is important if you want others to love you!

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“But let there be spaces in your togetherness and let the winds of the heavens dance between you. Love one another but make not a bond of love; Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.”

~Kahlil Gibran

The benefits of solitude and bolstering your independence are many, yet society primes us to believe that interpersonal relationships are the answer to every problem. As psychologists point out, divorce and separation rates are on the rise because couples have to switch from office mode to romantic dinner without any breathing space in between. Does that sound familiar?

You need a break from your great love on a regular basis. Allow her to do the things she wants. Let him spend time with his buddies and his hobbies without complaining. The tighter you hold on to each other, the more hemmed in you'll both feel, which may even lead to resentment and raging outbursts.

You both need your own space to do the good things you desire, so you can put your relationship in perspective. They say that love is blind, but it's crucial for you to be able to see your beloved objectively. This means that you need to appreciate their positive qualities, but also be aware of their negative side.

Any marriage counselor will tell you that couples that are always together are the ones who end up having the most violent arguments.

The arguments may just be a subconscious attempt to get some time alone.

So, if he has his breakfast alone once in a while, while you're still in bed and vice versa, it's absolutely all right. Or if you go jogging alone, that's fine too. Both of you need time by yourselves, but not so much that your lover feels lonely and neglected, of course. Try to find the right balance between solitude and intimacy

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Exercise #2

This week try doing one activity alone that you normally do with others. This could be going for a walk, going to lunch or a movie. How did that feel? Did you feel uncomfortable? Did it feel freeing? What came up for you?

Each day this week, consider the following:

Have I spent some time completely by myself today without being glued to my phone, computer or television? What did I choose to do?

Each day, consider this:

Have you given some space to your partner or are you clinging unnecessarily? What are you afraid of when you cling? Are you okay with going out for a walk and spending time apart from your partner? Why or why not?

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Week 3: Get Those Creative Juices Flowing and Have Fun

Creative minds value solitude. Even people like Mozart and Brahms, who could concentrate on their creations when surrounded by people, could do so only because they were absorbed in their own thoughts.

However, most creative minds require physical solitude. In a special private space created by a lack of distractions from friends and lovers, plenty of growth takes place.

For instance, a creative writer always has the seeds of stories germinating in his brain. These take time to incubate and manifest, and this process requires contemplation. But how can you contemplate when you're constantly with others or enslaved by the telephone and television? And then you might very well complain of the well-known "writer's block!" In creative writing, you need time to be alone and do your research. Doing so will spring more ideas and you'll be able to actually write!

"When I am, as it were, completely by myself, entirely alone, and of good cheer – say, traveling in a carriage, or walking after a good meal, or during the night when I cannot sleep; it is such occasions that my ideas flow best and most abundantly."

~Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Anthony Storr, author of *Solitude*, notes that writers of genius like Tolstoy and Beatrix Potter found their creativity declining when they were enmeshed in family matters and interpersonal relationships.

Storr says: "Creative artists are quite likely to choose relationships which will further their work, rather than relationships which are intrinsically rewarding, and their spouses may well find their marital relations take second place." You don't have to go to this extreme, but be careful of relationships that inhibit your creative gifts.

Remember to use solitude to explore your creative side, even if you don't believe you have one. Everyone creates something. Whether it is creating a home, scrapbooks, art, fabulous dinners, scarves, we are all creative beings. Tap into your creative side.

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Exercise #3

This week take a sketchpad and your favorite writing instrument (pen, pencil, crayon, etc.) and find a quiet place to sketch or write or doodle. Just let the pen flow and move as your body directs.

Let your body speak creatively. Don't judge. Record how it feels to explore your creative side? Awkward? Natural? Were you self-conscious? Whatever you feel, record and examine it.

Contemplate this daily:

What did you love to do as a kid? List the ways you can do that now? Maybe you loved making pinch pots so you can find a pottery studio and sign up for a class. Or you dig out the water colors you haven't touched in years. Why not?

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Week 4: Contemplate and Grow Spiritually

Solitude provides us the opportunity for contemplation and self-reflection – both of which are essential for achieving spiritual peace. The Buddha attained enlightenment after long and intense meditation on the challenges posed by the human condition. Jesus spent forty days alone in the wilderness, struggling with the tempting devil, before he felt ready to guide others.

In the Bible, we learn that Moses regularly left his family and companions to make time for communing with God. Just like your body, your spiritual self needs nurturing, too. Feed it with contemplation and prayer.

In solitude, you can see the being within you – the True Self – that is waiting patiently to manifest itself. Being alone will show you the clouds of doubt and negativity that obscure this self. You will discover the way to dissolve these clouds, and then your bright core will shine through.

Using meditation, prayer, mindful eating or any other spiritual practice you desire, can deepen your connection with yourself and the divineness within you.

Eat a meal alone.

Light candles, turn off the TV, and get rid of all distractions and reading material. Simply eat. Taste, chew and savor each mouthful.

Create an altar. Include candles, stones, crystals, shells, picture of your guru, quotes, whatever speaks to you.

Discovering your True Self fosters self-esteem and confidence. When you know who you are, you are less apt to ignore your needs or serve others while sacrificing your well-being.

“Unconsciousness creates the pain-body (the false Self). St. Paul expressed this universal principle beautifully: ‘Everything is shown up be being exposed to the light, and whatever is exposed to the light itself becomes light.’”

~Eckhart Tolle

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Exercise #4

This week pray, meditate or engage in some other spiritual practice that you have practiced in the past and have abandoned for lack of time. Or try a practice you have always wanted to try. How does it feel? What comes up for you?

Each day this week consider the following:
Have I looked within today and tried to nurture my spiritual self? How can I make time for prayer or meditation every day?

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Week 5: Transform Yourself

Solitude is required to transform your bad habits and negative emotions. Being alone helps you see yourself clearly, forgive your mistakes, and usher in change. Addressing these issues helps reduce stress and makes you a happier person when not going through life under the burden of unresolved past mistakes.

The process begins when you pinpoint your negative qualities and shortcomings. What do you hate about yourself? What do you wish you could change?

The next step is to think deeply about how you have affected others through your bad habits and unbridled emotions, causing them pain.

The final step is to want change and make it happen. If you have a strict and loving spiritual mentor who is honest with you, you are fortunate, because he or she can help you see the things you need to change.

“Solitude is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self.”

~Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude*

Transformation requires a change in mental attitude, which makes solitude indispensable.

When you're constantly in the company of others, there's pressure to conform. For instance, it's extremely difficult for people to abstain from drinking and smoking when surrounded by friends who indulge in these activities. Or it might be your habit to sit in front of the television, drink in hand. Observing yourself objectively will help you become a better person to be around.

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Exercise #5

This week, reflect on your solitude practices over the last five weeks. Look over your notes. Are there any themes? Anything that you are consistently unhappy about?

Each day consider this:
Have I considered transforming myself by getting rid of my bad habits and negative ways of thinking? What would I like to change?

THE NEXT LEVEL

Solitude is the gateway to your authentic self. After working through this course, you will have a better understanding of who you are, the place that you want to stake for yourself in the world, a sense of inner peace and happiness.

As you've seen over these five-weeks, solitude isn't a lonely pursuit at all! Alone time reduces your stress in healthy, enjoyable ways, strengthens your relationships, and, best of all, it helps you be the best you can be. After all, you deserve to live a fulfilling, joyful life!

But what's next?

You are starting to see yourself more clearly. You are starting to see the life you want more clearly. How do you begin constructing the rest of your chronic wellness house? One step, at a time, and with deep breathes in between.

Seriously, chronic wellness takes time. Trust me on this. As someone who tried to have it all at once, that is not a wise idea. Start with your diet. If you are filling your body with junk, your life will be junk.

Find right community. Junky relationships are like junk food for the soul.

Find support. Find love. Find someone to hold you accountable to your vision.

And then watch out for the next installment of the Radical Self Care Tools for Chronic Wellness series.

Until then, be still, be happy, be you.

“I guess whatever maturity is there may be there because I’ve been keeping a journal forever. In high school, my friends would make fun of me – you’re doing your man diary again. So I was always trying to translate experience into words.

~ Anthony Doerr

SOLITUDE: A RADICAL SELF-CARE TOOL FOR CHRONIC WELLNESS

WEEKLY SOLITUDE CHECKLIST

Once you have completed the course, use this checklist to keep you on track and keep the radical self-care flowing through your chronic wellness house.

Put your Life in Perspective

Give yourself the chance to see where you're headed in terms of your relationships, career, and spiritual evolution. Each day, strive to spend at least half an hour looking back over the previous day and analyzing how you lived it. It's important to evaluate your relationships with your loved ones and your colleagues on a regular basis.

Independent and Relationships

Spend some time every day without your cell phone or Facebook friends. Doing so will help you learn to enjoy life on your own. After all, you don't have to be in the company of others in order to feel fulfilled and happy.

Give some breathing space to your partner. Enjoy activities on your own and allow your partner to do the same. Avoid spending too much time away, however. Try to find the right balance between solitude and intimacy.

Transform Yourself

Solitude will help you transform your shortcomings and bad habits. For instance, it will give you the chance to break away from those who entice you to drink, smoke or overeat. You'll be able to see yourself objectively and change for the better. Repent when necessary

Get Those Creative Juices Flowing

No matter what kind of creative person you are, take the time to polish your ideas and projects. Creativity will fulfill you and help you become emotionally independent.

Engage in life-enhancing activities in your solitude: Write a journal, listen to classical music, do some gardening, read a good book, or cultivate your hobbies. Have fun and learn to entertain yourself!

Contemplate and Grow Spiritually

Are you looking for spiritual peace and tranquility? Spend some time alone in contemplation and self-reflection. Spiritual evolution is the goal of every member of the human family, so work toward it and experience the ultimate joy.

SOLITUDE: A RADICAL SELF-CARE TOOL FOR CHRONIC WELLNESS

ARTICLES AND BLOG POSTS TO DEEPEN YOUR RADICAL SELF-CARE PRACTICE

[The Chronic Wellness Manifesto](#)

[Using Tantrums to Discover Your True Self](#)

[The Power of Green Juicing](#)

[Using Retreats as a Radical Self-Care Tool](#)

[Nine Tips for a Good Night's Sleep](#)

[Six Tips to Overcoming Chronic Illness](#)

[An Alkaline Diet as Radical Self-Care](#)

[The Role of Resilience and Adaptability](#)

[Rediscovering Your Passion](#)

ABOUT LAURIE ERDMAN

Laurie Erdman helps busy individuals living with chronic illness, stress or fatigue double or even triple their energy so they can enjoy life again. She tripped upon this calling after overcoming multiple sclerosis, fatigue, and chronic stress. She now inspires and educates others to use solitude, nutrition and stress reducing practices to create a healthier, more vibrant life. Laurie is Founder and Chief Wellness Hero at Chronic Wellness Coaching and is certified by the American Association of Drugless Practitioners.