



Personal and Professional Restorative Practices for Sustainable Leadership

Seeing people commit to a new activity that helps them have more harmony and sustainability in their life is akin to coaching the basketball player who finally masters the left handed layup. All new skills take practice and once learned, flow easily into one's repertoire of 'moves'. I especially like the conversations with people around recognizing their vitality, understanding when it is out of balance, and using a variety of tools to restore it. I have enjoyed sharing these practices that I have used in my years of working inside the health and wellness and women's sports movements and seeing what sticks for people. Read on and see if something resonates for you!

Morning Movement and Message

Move your body in the morning. Yoga Salute to the Sun, working out, or a vigorous walk all help to get your "chi" moving. Include an intention with your movement - i.e. *"I am focused, strong, creative, and moving in the world with grace and ease."*

Gratitude and Manifestation

Before sleep, think about or write what you are grateful for, what is something you want to change about your behavior, and what is something you want to manifest in your life/work? Be as specific as possible.

Harmonizing Actions

Move away from your machines and go talk with someone in person, create time for fun team building activities, and /or reach out to a colleague to share, laugh or sigh about work or life.

Brain/Body Balancing

The left side of the body stimulates the right side of the brain and the right side of the body stimulates the left side of the brain. The right side of the brain is the source of creativity, feeling, 'big picture' orientation, appreciation, risk taking, and imagination. Use your non dominant hand (most people this is left) to text, brush your teeth, deal cards, brush your hair, etc. and stimulate your right brain.

Energize your Surroundings

Choose to be in the company of those who hold a space for you to achieve the joy of maximizing your highest human potential. Make your surroundings a conscious space of love and kindness. Pay attention to the music you listen to, the art you view, even the arrangement of your furniture and flowers—all of it!

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Breathing Mindfulness

Sit quietly. Close your eyes. Breathe deeply. Notice the circle of your breath (inhale and exhale) and the pause in between. Breathe into your feet, legs, pelvis, belly, chest, arms, neck, face, and head. Notice the sensations in the different parts of your body. Consider breathing in words with meaning to you – hope, harmony, magic, integrity, innovation – and exhaling what you want to release – fear, scarcity, tension, stress. This conscious breathing exercise can be done while walking as well.

Take a deep breath and pause before you respond to any challenging question or comment.

Truly experience all things you do during the day. Try to escape the habitual feelings and thoughts you experience and stay in the present moment. Enjoy each of your actions fully. When you notice a 'drift', reconnect to the breath.

My gratitude to the Emerged Leaders of the Women's Funding Movement for sharing the following additions to this list of restorative practices:

- Put a flower on your desk each week to connect with the beauty of Mother Nature
- Get a massage once a month
- Build a community of supportive friends to 'vent' and laugh with
- Use aromatherapy oils to soothe and uplift yourself
- Write in a journal; write or speak affirmations
- Dance! Do deep knee bends
- Do or be around art, textures, photography, knitting