

DO-DO RESCUE

FROM OVERWHELMED TO THRIVING



THE DO-BE-DO-BE-DO-BE

REMEDY

TO FEEL BALANCED IN A
CRAZY-BUSY-WORLD

Louise Lavergne

DO-DO RESCUE:
FROM
OVERWHELMED
TO THRIVING

*The Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be Remedy to
Feel Balanced in a Crazy-Busy-World*

by
LOUISE LAVERGNE

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Before doing any exercise program, please consult with your health care provider. If you are pregnant, some of the exercises in this book may not be suitable or may need modification. **It is advised that pregnant women not hold or suspend the breath in or out when doing any of these exercises.**

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my clients and students who have inspired me to show up, to share, and to go deeper to discover holistic techniques that are helpful and healing to the human body, mind, and spirit. You have encouraged me to create programs, classes, workshops, retreats, and more. Because of your support I was motivated to finish this book and I'm delighted to share, *Do-Do Rescue: The Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be Remedy* with you. More books are on the way—up next, *The Missing Peace*. Stay tuned!

Helping one person in a lifetime is a precious gift. Helping thousands of people is a privilege. Thank you, dear reader, for sitting with me while I share the beginning of my self-healing journey. I pray this book inspires you. Remember, you are the most important member of your health care team. Your power to be well depends on you becoming a mediator, creating a harmonious relationship between your body, your mind, and your spirit. You are precious. I appreciate the gift of you showing up for yourself. By making the effort to show up for inner peace, you are ultimately contributing to world peace. If we all contribute a drop, before long we will have an ocean. This book is an invitation to join me in co-creating a more "joy-full" and peaceful world.

~ Louise Lavergne

To be is to do - Socrates
To do is to be - Sartre
Do Be Do Be Do - Sinatra

~ Kurt Vonnegut

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FOREWORD

by Leslee Parr, PhD

We live in a culture where busyness is exalted. Overwork is admired. Constant connectivity has ratcheted up the expectations placed on us, by others and ourselves. But, chronic busyness takes a serious toll. Forty decades of stress research has shown that when stressors (negative events, chronic strains, and traumas) are measured comprehensively, their damaging impacts on physical and mental health are substantial. Being chronically busy and stressed taxes our nervous system and impairs our brain's functioning.

Stress both begins in the brain and affects the brain, as well as the rest of the body. Stressors have a major influence upon mood, our sense of well-being, behavior, and health. Brain regions such as the prefrontal cortex (higher-level thinking) and the limbic regions (responsible for emotions and memory) respond to acute and chronic stress and show changes in morphology (structure) and chemistry. Stress and other emotional responses are components of complex interactions of genetic, physiological, behavioral, and environmental factors that affect the body's ability to remain or become healthy, or to resist or overcome disease. Research shows that regulated by nervous, endocrine, and immune systems, and exerting powerful influences on other

bodily systems and key health-relevant behaviors, stress and emotion have important implications for the initiation or progression of cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other illnesses.

Perhaps more profoundly, recent research shows that stress actually changes the composition and the functioning of our DNA. A range of recent studies have identified structural changes at specific genes, and throughout the genome, in association with multiple psychosocial stressors in a process called ‘epigenetic DNA methylation.’ As difficult as it may be to comprehend, these changes can actually be passed down to our offspring and on to future generations.

As a genetics scientist and Professor, it is easier for me to summon those words than it has been to take action to mitigate or curtail the siren call of high expectation in my own life.

Knowing full well that life within the academic pressure-cooker was busy methylating my DNA and wreaking havoc on my immune system, I could not bring myself to sacrifice productivity for peace nor success for sleep. I was sure that if I could just make that next grant deadline, and get my next graduate student graduated, THEN I would have time to restart my formerly healthy lifestyle.

This all began to change when I joined Louise Lavergne’s JoyFull Yoga practice. As Louise pointed out to me, taking the time to care for myself *within* the context of my life’s obligations was the first and most vital step. Louise’s guidance in class was masterful and fun. It was easy to follow her cueing on exercises which spanned the range from calming to invigorating, challenging to peace-generating. Louise’s classes pack in an exhilarating combination of yoga, dance, voice and movement meditation, as well as sound healing. Surprisingly, I found myself smiling, chanting, singing, dancing, and occasionally even laughing.

Having been a teacher and a Professor for over forty years, as well as a master mentor to young PhDs for the National Institute of Health, I immediately recognized Louise as a truly gifted and masterful teacher. Research on effective teaching demonstrates that students learn best and retain knowledge and technique most effectively when their learning environment is stress-free and fun. Whether studied or intuitive, Louise creates just such an environment in her classes.

I left Louise's JoyFull studio feeling somehow lighter, maybe even brighter. I left with a sense of empowerment and a smile on my face. Two years later, firmly committed to a journey of self-healing, I still leave her studio refreshed, lightened, more hopeful, and optimistic about my day, my life and, more profoundly, about all life on this earth we inhabit. The demands on my time and the external stressors that surround me have not lessened, but I truly believe that incorporating Louise's techniques and exercises have helped me to feel more grounded and have allowed me to take better control of how I experience and react to life and therefore how I influence the lives of those around me more positively. As Louise says, "*You may not always be able to control external circumstances, but you always have a choice regarding how you meet any situation.*"

I was one of the lucky few. Chance, fortune, and proximity led me to Louise's JoyFull Yoga studio. When Louise gave me the privilege of reading an advanced copy of this, her second book, *Do-Do Rescue: The Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be Remedy to Help You Thrive in a Crazy-Busy World*, I wondered if she could capture in print the clarity and spirit of her live classroom. I am happy to report that she has done that brilliantly. Her gentle, wise voice speaks clearly from these pages. Her light-hearted take on her life's journey helps the reader to keep life's dramas in perspective. More than all of that, this book provides the reader with an in-hand, always-accessible reference.

Woven throughout the techniques and practices that Louise gives to you on these pages, you will find Louise's captivating personal story. Through her life adventures, Louise shows us that although she often seems a 'goddess,' she is in fact a real person who lived through and learned from very real problems. You will learn that it was real life, with more than the usual hard knocks, which paved Louise's own journey to wisdom. When Louise speaks to you on these pages, it becomes clear that she doesn't have unrealistic expectations for you, she knows all about the do-do side of life and the challenges of transitioning to a Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be way of living.

With this book in your hand, you now have an easy-to-follow guide, a 'toolkit' packed with clear directions, effective techniques, and simple approaches for establishing your foundational practice. Here, Louise provides you with small steps easily incorporated into a busy day. She gives you helpful suggestions for transitioning into and then maintaining the Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be lifestyle. This book is a hard-copy catalogue of the techniques, practices, and even a few healthful recipes that Louise has developed over decades of her own study and practice. You will be able to turn to these pages again and again for reference and motivation.

The combined results of four decades of research has made clear to scientists and health care practitioners like myself that the impacts of stressors on health and well-being are reduced when persons achieve high levels of mastery and self-esteem. With this book, you own an easy-to-follow roadmap to mastery, one that will help you to reclaim your authentic power and improve your confidence and well-being in each moment of your life. With this guide, you too can create a harmonious relationship between your body, your mind, your spirit, your life, and the lives of those around you.

Leslee Parr, PhD



*"If you want to live in a peaceful world, start by
creating peace in your own body and in your own life."*

~ Louise Lavergne

PREFACE

If you have just opened this book, it's likely that you have an interest in what you can do to feel better. Most likely, you want more than just a medical protocol to achieve it. I often hear, "I want to do your program because I believe in 'mind over matter.'" For example, a woman named Judy came up to me after one of my workshops, enthusiastic about incorporating Mind/Body practices into her recovery from breast cancer. "I believe in mind over matter," she said with stern determination, as if she was entering a cage to tame her lion-mind. Now, there is some truth in that concept—in that "if you don't mind, it doesn't matter." But this belief can set you up for a tug-of-war between your mind and the reality you are in.

This book and my programs are not so much about mind over matter. Rather, I suggest that instead of fighting the mind (and making it the enemy) that you go into partnership with your mind, your body, and your spirit. Thinking of "your happy place" while your ship is sinking isn't going to save you. It may distract you and help you forget about it for a little while, but the fact is that if there is a leak in your vessel, you have to take time to repair it.

Vacillating between frantic moments of bailing water and pausing to forget about it is exhausting. The fear of your boat going down never really goes away. I'm suggesting that

you take action, moment by moment, that supports you in navigating and repairing your lifeboat while also supporting your intention to be well. I'm inviting you to be motivated by love instead of fear, and to spend time on your most precious resource: you. Put down your bucket and stop bailing. Trying to fix yourself and other people is tiring. Instead, let's take care of the energy leaks in your body and in your life. I'm inviting you to swim to shore so you can catch your breath and begin your restoration process. From there, I will guide you to reclaim a life that supports you, your success, *and* your health.

When it comes to taking a Mind, Body, Spirit approach to wellness, there's often an underlying implication that your mind (your intellectual gift) is a bad thing and that the spiritual part of you is "better" or more important. The fact is that every part of you is important. The process of creating a mind-spirit partnership instills in you a greater sense of respect, both for your intellectual gift (that wants to understand) and your intuitive gift (that wants to feel).

When the mind and the spirit work together, you have an enhanced ability to discern and make supportive choices moment by moment. I want to help you understand the possibilities so your mind can relax, which in turn will help your whole body relax. This is a way for you to experience the Mind-Body-Spirit approach to wellness. This partnership will support you on your holistic healing journey. (According to *dictionary.com*, "holistic" means "incorporating...the idea that the whole is more than merely the sum of its parts, in theory or practice.")

Your mind and your thoughts play a big part in your success. If you think something isn't going to work, you're right. It won't. But if you can practice meeting what is unfolding in your life without judgment and keep an open mind by being

curious about what is possible, then amazing things can open up for you. Spiritual experiences can give you a reprieve from a challenging reality. It can also become an escape rather than a source of healing. Positive thoughts that you “know” aren’t true, can distract your mind momentarily. When reality hits you (your body is not well, you don’t have the money to pay your bills, or your boss didn’t approve your vacation, or fill in the blank) everything that is not working in your life hits you like a bucket of ice water, leaving you feeling more discordant and resentful. Choosing to redirect your mind towards compassion and presence, as well as slowing down your body moment by moment within your reality, creates transitional steps towards transformation. This nurtures an honest and harmonious partnership between mind and matter, spirit, and body that will allow you to have it all. It allows you to sustain a life that is both successful and balanced at the same time. When you stop trying or wishing for things to be different or for you to be something other than who you are, you will find that you have more energy. It’s so much easier to be yourself. Trying to keep up with being something you’re not is exhausting.

It’s equally draining to not be honest about what you are feeling in the moment. Saying, “It’s all good” in times of crisis keeps you in a lie. If you are affirming to yourself and to the Universe that a challenging situation *is* “all good,” then why change anything? Be clear about what you define as “good.” Another way you can get stuck in a lie can come from well-meaning caregivers telling you, “It’s okay to not be okay.” Is it really? Can you tell me honestly that you are happy about your current challenges? It’s not okay that you are suffering *and* it’s not okay to beat yourself up about it. I am deeply sorry for your pain. I want to remind you that it’s more important that you meet your reality with honesty *and* compassion: *“I’m not okay right at this moment ... but I meet myself in this moment*

with compassion. I'm willing to take responsibility and do my part to heal and move toward a solution to feel better."

When things are challenging, it's okay to acknowledge that it sucks. It's equally important that you take steps toward feeling better. Unfortunately, it's sometimes easier to ignore or numb the call of pain. When you are stuck in mad you can't get glad.

"I just don't know what to do to help myself."

If you feel like you don't know what to do to help yourself, it is my wish that you discover reliable, actionable solutions that will move you toward healing and restoring your whole self and your life. It's time to stop the tug-of-war between mind and spirit. In this book, I introduce you to ideas and techniques that will help you to create a partnership that respects your intellect *and* your spirit. Whatever is going on in your life right now matters—but it's not the only thing that matters.

If you think that living a balanced life needs to wait until your life is less busy, or if you think you have to choose between success and a balanced life ... you don't! I have written this book to share with you a viable way for you to have it all: a busy, prosperous, healthy, balanced life that gives you (and the people around you) JOY.

If you want to be happy and live a sustainable, abundant, healthy, and joyful life, this book is a great place for you to start. I hope you enjoy it.

~ Louise Lavergne

Face the unknown with curiosity and
BE open up to possibilites
that support you
and your Higher good.



*Asking yourself deeper questions opens up new ways
of being in the world. It brings in a breath of fresh air.
It makes life more joyful. The real trick to life is not to
be in the know, but to be in the mystery.*

~ Fred Alan Wolf, Physicist

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I want to thank my mother for giving me life and supporting me along my journey—without understanding what and why I did what I did most of the time. She is the one who has made it possible for me to publish this book, as well as her loving husband, my step-dad, Claude. (My mom remarried at age 78.) I love you and so appreciate you both. Merci, Maman, for showing up and being there for my kids when I needed you. Merci, Maman, for inspiring in me the faith of a loving God. Merci, Maman, for teaching me the power of prayer in dark times. Merci, Maman, for reminding me to call in the power of Holy Spirit when I forgot to and was afraid of the unknown. Thank for your relentless prayers for my family and me. Nobody can pray like my Mama prays. This book is here to prove it.

I want to thank my children for giving me the anchors to be here and rise above the challenges. My dear son, you have pushed me to go beyond what I could imagine possible. You continue to inspire me to practice being. I hope you know how much I love you. My dear daughter, thank you for your love and support. Thank you for making it possible for me to do what I do and be who I am. It's not always easy for you to share your mom. I am so grateful for your loving presence and support in my life.

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I have an amazing behind-the-scenes team that makes it all possible for me. Divine Spirit, all the angels, archangels, and ancient sages that work through me, I feel blessed and grateful for your presence in my work and in my life. It does take a village.

With Love and Light,
Namaste,
Louise

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It's easy to get pulled into the demands of our fast-paced world. From the moment you wake up each morning, your mind is standing by, waiting for your cue to get going on something. So many things pull at you to get your attention. You get sucked into the emails, the texts. Next thing you know you're pouring coffee but you forgot the cup. You may buy into the belief that the responsible thing to do is to respond to all external demands. The habit of looking at your phone within the first fifteen minutes of your day, for example, can cost you the ability to discern what is important to *you*. You might have forgotten that you have a choice about what you give your energy to.

“You have a choice about what you give your energy to.”

Do you get swept up in trying to keep up with external demands—like your job or other people's needs? Does everything around you feel more important than your own personal needs? Are you surrounded by drama in your life,

yours and other people's? If you feel that fear and worry are the reasons for your actions and decisions; if you feel like you run from crisis to crisis or from one chaotic event to another, and you find yourself feeling like you don't have enough energy and time in your day, this book was written for you. *Do-Do Rescue* offers you a simple, effective map to guide you to take back control of your day—and ultimately, your life.

In Chapter 2, I share some of my personal story and explain how, in my younger years, I experienced the disempowering impact of not effectively managing the daily stress of my busy lifestyle as a new mother. I share how being creative with my time and obligations allowed me to include spiritual awareness, yoga, and meditation in my every day, crazy-busy reality. Self-care made all the difference—and I was able to reclaim my inner power! I reveal the turning point in my self-healing journey, where I embraced the importance of healing myself before I could be of service to others. Finally, I show you how those pursuits led me to the creation of the Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be Remedy, and how using the remedy rescued me from the trap of overdoing—or what I call, “Do-Do.”

In Chapter 3, I address how you can take care of your whole self, by practicing effective, supportive techniques I call BE Breaks. You'll learn how to connect into your whole being ... from your Belly to your Mind to your Heart. In Chapter 4, you'll find a series of life-changing BE Break exercises, followed by some helpful action items and habits to support you in sustaining and enhancing the benefits of a Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be lifestyle. In Chapter 5, I share three of my most life-changing morning habits to start your day. The information in Chapter 6 is to help you with the end of your day.

Throughout this book, I offer you easy but powerful suggestions that can be a crucial part of breaking out of your unsupportive habits and building confidence and success

with your more supportive ones. I have included some Notes Pages in the back of the book so that as you move through the book, you can write down any ideas you want to begin to include in your day. I suggest you also dedicate a lined notebook (or two!) to your Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be journey, so you can document your progress with each of the practices you want to incorporate into your daily lifestyle. My clients and students have shared with me the activities we have done together that have made the biggest differences in their lives. I have included some of these in this book. I have also included some of my own personal stories as examples of how I moved from a busy Do-Do life into a Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be lifestyle. (Please note that the names and incidents in this book have been modified to protect the privacy of individuals and to accommodate the literary flow of the book.)

I know from experience that when you are feeling constantly out of balance, pushing to keep up with only your external demands, it's a lot like trying to do life standing on one leg. With this book, I'm here to extend a hand, to remind you to stop the habits that lead you into a state of overwhelm. You and only you can stop the insanity of "...doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results," as Einstein is credited with saying. We're living in a time when we have the opportunity to upgrade our quality of life. I'm excited to share with you how you can do that *right now*. It's so much easier to navigate the events of your day when you take time to get both of your feet on the ground. As you learn to practice my "Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be" rhythm throughout your day, you'll begin to create a healing relationship with your body. You'll reclaim your authentic power and improve your confidence and well-being, moment by moment.

An unattended mind doesn't discriminate. It has a simple rule: pay attention to whatever is loudest. You know you

“should” take better care of yourself. With good intentions, you want to, but there seems to be no responsible way and no time to do it. Taking care of external demands first is an easy habit to fall into because outside stressors are the most obvious. If you don’t take out the trash, for example, sooner or later, you see and smell the consequences. Did you know that the same goes for your internal needs? When you don’t clear out your mental trash—worry, fear, negative self-talk, your emotional state—it starts to stink. The negative impact may not be noticeable immediately. But a negative thought over time can be the seed that grows into back pain, inflammation, and other aches and pains. At first, it’s easy to ignore the connection. You might opt for a quick fix—a pill, alcohol, or other socially acceptable numbing substances—that can keep you going with what you have to DO.

Currently, many people seem obsessed, trying to keep up with everything that demands our attention. Your phone beeps ... there’s a new text, an email, a Facebook post. You don’t want to miss a thing. It feels impossible to cut anyone or anything off the to-do list until your body—or your life—falls apart and the quick fixes stop working. Holding on to a negative thought or resentment is a lot like holding a pencil. It doesn’t seem like a big deal at first. What harm can a little pencil (or a little thought) have? But try holding a pencil for an hour, two, three ... the pain can become debilitating. The same goes for a negative thought. American psychiatrist, Dr. Aaron T. Beck, known as the father of cognitive therapy, conducted studies in the 1960’s on the impact negative thoughts have on our health and behavior. Holding on to negative thoughts about yourself, the world, or the future has a profound impact on how you feel, emotionally and physically. Happily, there is a cure: STOP IT! Put the pencil down. In this book, I’m going to show you how you can take out the mental trash—even when you think you don’t have time.

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can change the quality of their lives by changing the attitudes of their minds.”

~ William James

It all comes down to a simple fact: *Living life at warp speed is exhausting.* When you ignore the signals that you and your life are out of balance, when you keep on doing and doing, you end up in what I call the “Do-Do syndrome.” When you are stuck in Doing and Doing, sooner or later your health—and your life—ends up in deep Doo-Doo.

Why is everything (and everybody else’s need) more important than your own well-being? I know first-hand that putting others first is a hard habit to break.

For me, putting other’s needs first started in childhood. When I was nine years old, my parents were going through a tumultuous divorce. My mother’s health was affected by the stress and strain to the point where she could no longer take care of us. My two brothers and I ended up living with my dad. Being the only girl and the middle child, my father crowned me “lady of the house.” I didn’t understand what that meant until I wanted to go to my gymnastics practice. My dad pointed to the laundry and other household chores that needed to be done. How could I be so selfish? My father shamed me for wanting to do something for myself before taking care of everyone else’s needs. I had been selected to try out to qualify for an upcoming competition. My first one. Not going to practice that day meant I was missing my chance.

Saying no to my dad was never an option for me. I accepted that what I wanted was not as important as what needed to be done. I was driven by the fear of the consequences of making Daddy mad. I gave into the tasks, feeling sorry for myself. My

father was used to getting his way. I was taught to not rock the boat, to do “what Daddy says.” I was also motivated by the notion that doing what makes people happy would grant me approval and acceptance. I was driven by my need to create peace in the house. As many of us learn as children, I thought “if I am good and I do what I can to make the adults happy,” that would assure peace in the house, and we would be safe and loved.

This is where one of my shame stories began. These stories shape our belief system; I call them “shame seeds.” This particular one is about believing that tending to my needs before others’ needs was selfish and bad. A good person tends to other people’s needs only. I wanted to be a good girl. Doing for others was also an effective way for me to earn my worth in any situation. If I was a guest in someone’s home, for example, I would quickly jump to help with cooking or the cleaning up to earn my worth as a guest. It always got me praise from the adults.

Do you ever feel guilty about doing something that is “just” for your own well-being? Do you feel guilty and feel that you have to justify taking time for yourself (like when you are sick)? For many of us, this habit is fueled by the need for external approval and validation. Do you believe that what you do is tied to being loved and accepted? Do you qualify self-care time as luxurious or frivolous and not valuable? That feeling is fueled by the illusion that you can trump your self-worth by improving your net worth. This debilitating conditioning is also a common seed of low self-esteem and low self-worth. It was for me. I learned the hard way that I don’t need my body to break down to justify taking care of myself. You don’t either. It was a long road on the self-healing journey that inspired many of my current programs. I feel so grateful to be able to share some of this with you in this book.

You are precious. Please know that honoring the gift of you is one of your gifts to the world. When you take care of yourself, it opens the door for others to do the same. You inspire others to also practice self-care. Can you imagine a world in which everyone shows up feeling their best?

Remember the Golden Rule from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount: *Do to others as you would have them do to you.* Be part of the chain reaction. Give yourself as much respect as you give others and others will respect you. Self-respect includes being respectful of your energy. What are you craving the most from other people? Love? Self-care is self-love. You want to be heard? Start listening more attentively to others *and* to yourself and to your body. You want flowers? Buy yourself flowers. A good way to catch yourself if you are respecting your energy is to write a to-do list. Look at your list. Is it only about taking care of others? Does your to-do list make you feel defeated at the end of the day? Would you expect anyone else to get this much done in a day?

It's okay to be busy. By shifting to a "Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be" list, you will be able to get things done and be able to end your day feeling inspired and energized. It comes down to common sense ... taking care of yourself *within* all of your obligations, while doing what needs your attention. As long as you just keep trying to keep up and keep juggling everything, you will never feel balanced. There is no end to the things that need doing. Have you ever noticed that the more you do, the more there is to do? The extra time you are waiting for—so you can take care of your own needs—never magically appears. As I said earlier, when you are stuck in "Do-Do mode," sooner or later, your health and your life end up in deep Doo-Doo. You are heading for burnout—or worse.

**With the Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be system, balance
can coexist with a busy lifestyle.**

In this book, I share with you my solution to shift your day strategically—out of “Do-Do mode” and into a “Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be” rhythm—so you can end your day feeling more inspired and energized. Imagine yourself smiling at the end of your day. You don’t need to wait for that long-anticipated vacation or for when you have more time (ha, never!). When you consistently balance your “doing” with specific “BE Breaks” on a day-to-day basis, you can still be a busy person and create a successful, healthy, prosperous, balanced, and joy-full life.

The Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be rhythm is an efficient and sustainable way for you to keep up with your external and internal needs while meeting the demands of your day. I’m going to make it easy for you to start creating more balance in your body and in your life, from where you are right now. I know from my own experience (and from the experiences of my high-achieving clients) that balance *can* coexist with a busy lifestyle. My Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be system allows you to flow with all that supports what is important to you and your LIFE:

Love, Inspiration, Freedom, and Empowerment.

Get ready to step out of the Do-Do syndrome and claim the driver’s seat of your life!



THE CALL TO BE A SPIRITUAL SANITATION ENGINEER

During that challenging time of living with my father, I had a mystical experience that propelled me forward on my spiritual quest for peace and balance. As a child, my life experience was often about coping with being afraid all the time. I write about this in greater depth in my upcoming book, *The Missing Peace*. I want to share a story from the book with you because it was this one particular episode that impelled me to help myself and others to restore inner peace and balance. It was my first lesson on the long path to accepting my life's mission to help others as a "Spiritual Sanitation Engineer."

I was alone in the living room with my father. He was in complete overwhelm and was letting me know that he was looking into foster care for us kids. He got furious when I asked that I not be separated from my little brother. I had stepped on a land mine. His anger exploded as he grabbed me. I was terrified. The doorbell rang—my uncle Bob had come by to say hi. I was left alone, upstairs, everyone else was downstairs in the family room. I was crying, feeling helpless, scared. What was going to happen to us? The crying turned into an anxiety attack, I was struggling to catch my breath. I became even more terrified. My arms felt numb, I didn't know what to do. I fell down on the couch. I stopped breathing. The next thing I knew, I felt the fear melt, like ice in fire, and found myself in the most exquisite place. It felt like being home, but in a way I had never experienced "home." It looked like a crystal planet to me, full of light, peaceful.

In that amazing place, I felt a depth of love that is not possible to describe with words. I saw people that, though I had never seen them before, felt familiar. For the first time in my short life, I felt like I belonged, I felt embraced and loved.

All the fear left my body as they reassured me that all would be well, that I was not alone. They were looking out for me. All the stress I didn't know I was holding in my little body went away. I felt peaceful in a way I didn't know was possible. Then, a beautiful lady said in a loving voice that I needed to go back. It wasn't my time to come home yet. I remember not wanting to go back to the drama of my life. But I thought about my little brother and somehow, I understood. They reassured me that when I felt things getting dark, all I needed to do was to connect to God's Light. I needed to breathe in Light and breathe out Light. I knew, deep in my heart, what they meant. The lady said I needed to go back so I could help others remember that the Light is always there.

I came out of this experience changed forever. It was many years later that I realized this was a Near Death Experience (NDE). What I remember most is the deep peace and profound love I felt. It thrust me into a lifelong quest to learn everything I could about how to connect with this kind of Light. It was beyond the peace I felt in my times of prayer. It included the physical experience of peace. I knew it had something to do with my breathing.

When I "woke up," in my child's mind, I didn't understand the full message the spirit people had given me. Years later, I understood what they meant. I was here to help others "find their inner Light switch." I felt a lingering peace in my heart that day. It gave me a strength that continued to help me navigate my life with a grateful heart. I understood somehow that all the challenges in my life were giving me a strength and compassion that would help me to help others and myself get through the bumpy parts of life. I could see that my father was suffering. All I could feel was compassion for him.

My mother was getting better and she arranged for us to have a visiting day with her. I saw that she was well enough for me to tell her about my father's idea of putting us in foster

care. I'm not sure how it all happened, but she talked with my dad and a few weeks later they got back together. Two years later, they were divorced for good. My mom stopped listening to her lawyer. She gave up the fight to keep the house and her struggle for child support. We left everything behind except our clothes and moved away to begin our new life.

I didn't see my father again until my early twenties. But I'd learned from my dad's behavior how stress and overwhelm can turn a loving person into a monster. And I saw how it made my mom so sick that she would leave us. Interestingly, in the last year of my dad's life, over thirty years later, she was by his side taking care of him. I learned a lot about the healing power of forgiveness from my mother.

As human beings, a big part of our journey is remembering who we truly are. When you are stressed out, it is easy to become the worst version of yourself because stress makes you forget who you really are. Stress and fear activate your pseudo-powers that bully you into doing what you know is "good" for you—or else! But it's like going on a crash diet; you only get short-term results. You lose weight only to gain it all back (or more) within a short time period. Your bully powers only give you the illusion of power. Anything you do that is good for you, when fueled by fear-based motives, will not give you long-term results. But when you are balanced, stress and fear are less likely to be the drivers—you will be in the driver's seat. From there, you can access your authentic power.

By remembering to take charge of your breathing, you can begin to regain your power and balance. So, I started to learn how my breathing could impact my physical state of being. By slowing down my breathing, I could access a feeling of peace similar to what I had felt on the crystal planet. I could access a deeper part of myself. I knew nothing about meditation but I knew about talking to God through prayer. I would ask

for guidance from my peaceful heart. I was “taught” how to create a wonderful experience in my physical body and my heart that I called visiting “my home-light.”

In my college years and into my twenties, I was an aspiring actor. I also wanted to learn everything I could about metaphysics, psychology, nutrition, and spirituality. After I graduated from a reputable theatre program, I quickly became a working actor. I soon left my home town of Montreal and relocated to Toronto where an agent wanted to represent me. This was early in my career—it felt like a big deal and worth the move. I was a French-Canadian redhead (still am) so it was hard to get parts in just French-Canadian casting calls. But thanks to my father’s business sense, I’d gone to an English high school and college. In Toronto I was getting acting work in both French and English. My acting work began to flourish with TV commercials and bilingual training videos, and before long it afforded me the time and money I needed to learn all I could about my spiritual gifts.

I have had the great privilege of learning from amazing teachers who showed up along the path on my journey toward wholeness, health, and healing. All of the wisdom of many ancient masters is now part of the practice of integrative medicine. Yoga and color therapy, Reiki and Chi Gong, astral travel and herbs, Ayurveda (an ancient Indian science of Mind-Body wellness) and nutrition ... all have been part of my self-healing journey. The integration of all that I have learned on my path, from overcoming my struggles to creating balance, is what I share with you here. The Do-Be-Do-Be-Do-Be way of life is an invitation for you to embark on your own self-healing journey to create balance from a place that respects and honors who you are and where you are right now.



Balance is what makes feeling good possible. It starts with you being in a harmonious partnership with your body and your mind and your spiritual nature. You (and only you) can create a supportive environment for your body and your mind to be able to do their job efficiently. By setting the stage on the inside, you can accomplish what you want to do and become who you want to be. It's not one *or* the other. Imagine working for someone who is always screaming at you, expressing discontent and frustration. Would you be able to do a good job in that kind of stressful environment? Think about how you feel when someone takes time to listen to you ... without judging you. Your body deserves nothing less. Your body is designed to be well but it needs your participation. It craves love the way a baby does. Each ache you feel in your body is saying, "Please love me." It's more common for us to get mad at a body part like an aching knee or sore shoulder as we struggle with the inconvenience of not being able to do what we used to be able to do prior to the debilitating pain showing up. In this book, you will learn to create a supportive, loving working environment for your body. You will learn

to activate your body's and your mind's superpowers at any time you need them, through (among other things) taking balancing breaks I call "BE Breaks." When you feel balanced, it's much easier to remember where your inner Light switch is when things get dark and challenging. You can remember that eating the whole cake is not a good idea. *With your inner Light on, you can make supportive choices and decisions that move you forward toward your health and personal goals and aspirations.* By reading this book, you will know what kind of BE Break to take any time you need more energy, what kind of BE Break to take for clarity, and what kind of BE Break will help relax you for a good night's sleep. Each type of Break is a practice, which means you don't have to be perfect. Each time you practice a BE Break, it will help you lower your stress levels so you can manage stress throughout your day. This is how you can avoid the pitfalls of overwhelm and burn out.

I have designed each BE Break to help you meet the demands of your busy world without compromising your health and happiness. BE Breaks are like signs along the road, guiding you toward living your life by design, not by default. When you put BE Breaks into practice, you'll start to recognize when fear and overwhelm are in the driver's seat, leading you downhill in the wrong direction—you'll have the power to stop before you get lost, and get back on track. In Chapter 4, the list of BE Breaks offers you strategies and suggestions on which BE Break to use for specific times or circumstances. But first, let's start by understanding how easy it is to let fear and drama take the wheel in the first place.

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