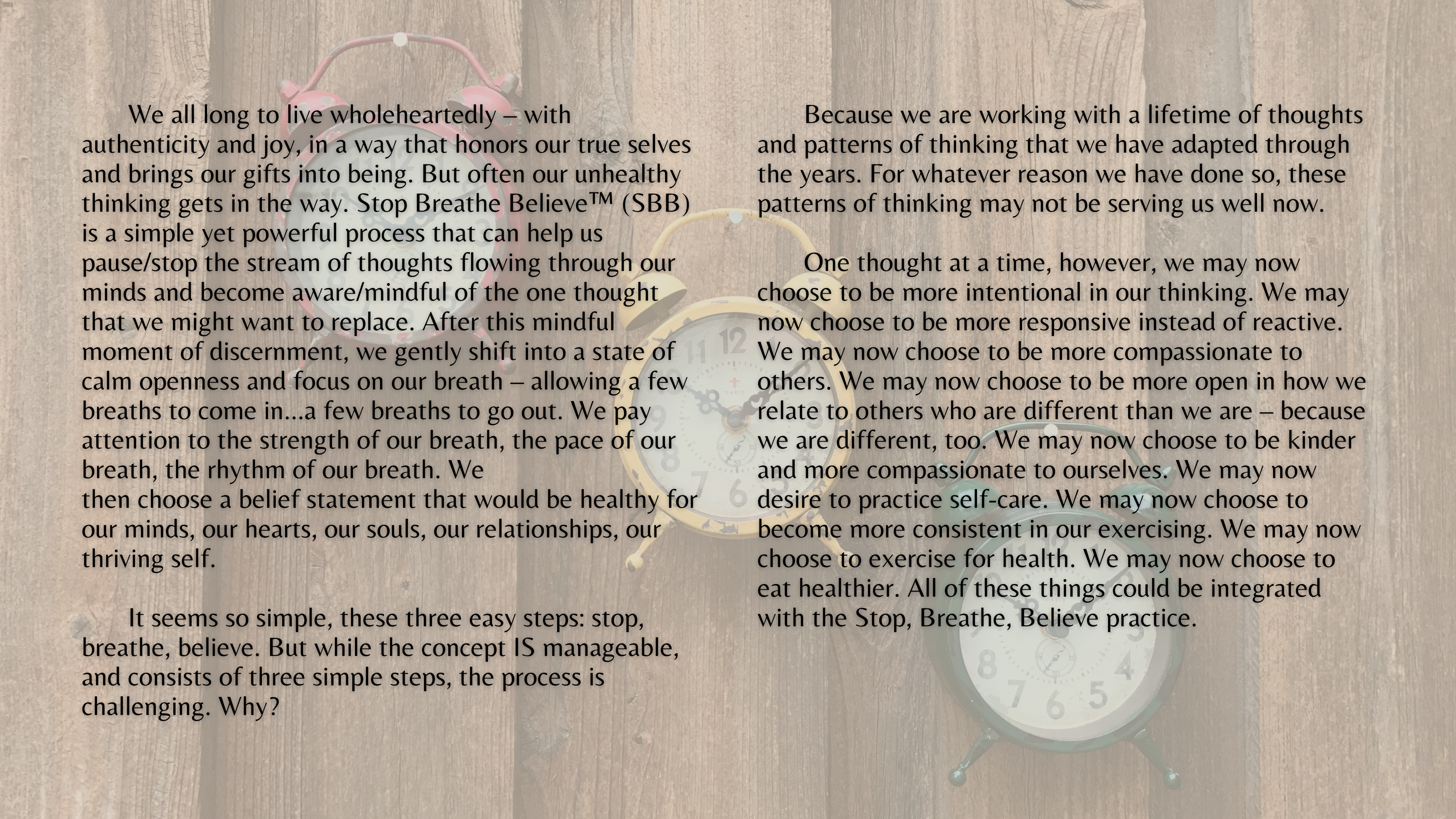


Stop Breathe Believe® &  
Dianne Morris Jones Present



Stop Breathe Believe - The Time  
is NOW for Loving Soul Care

The background of the image is a light-colored wooden surface with vertical grain. Three alarm clocks are arranged diagonally from the top-left to the bottom-right. The top clock is red, the middle one is yellow, and the bottom one is green. They are semi-transparent, allowing the text to be read over them.

We all long to live wholeheartedly – with authenticity and joy, in a way that honors our true selves and brings our gifts into being. But often our unhealthy thinking gets in the way. Stop Breathe Believe™ (SBB) is a simple yet powerful process that can help us pause/stop the stream of thoughts flowing through our minds and become aware/mindful of the one thought that we might want to replace. After this mindful moment of discernment, we gently shift into a state of calm openness and focus on our breath – allowing a few breaths to come in...a few breaths to go out. We pay attention to the strength of our breath, the pace of our breath, the rhythm of our breath. We then choose a belief statement that would be healthy for our minds, our hearts, our souls, our relationships, our thriving self.

It seems so simple, these three easy steps: stop, breathe, believe. But while the concept IS manageable, and consists of three simple steps, the process is challenging. Why?

Because we are working with a lifetime of thoughts and patterns of thinking that we have adapted through the years. For whatever reason we have done so, these patterns of thinking may not be serving us well now.

One thought at a time, however, we may now choose to be more intentional in our thinking. We may now choose to be more responsive instead of reactive. We may now choose to be more compassionate to others. We may now choose to be more open in how we relate to others who are different than we are – because we are different, too. We may now choose to be kinder and more compassionate to ourselves. We may now desire to practice self-care. We may now choose to become more consistent in our exercising. We may now choose to exercise for health. We may now choose to eat healthier. All of these things could be integrated with the Stop, Breathe, Believe practice.

# Stop Breathe Believe - The Time is NOW for Loving Soul Care

**Day 1:** “The original idea for Stop Breathe Believe came to me during a time when I was struggling...a speaker touched the core of my hurt when she spoke on the need to be true to the deep parts of your soul, and not to hide or be silent during conflict. It was a holy moment for me.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Do you struggle with using your voice at times like I do? How can we be true to the deep parts of our soul today?

**Day 2:** “As terms like “wholehearted” and “holistic” have been used to describe everything from diets to vacation packages to parenting techniques, they can lose some of their force. But they mean just what they say: it requires your whole heart, your entire being, to live in a way that honors who you truly are and that brings your unique gifts into being.... Wholehearted people live out of a deep, abiding sense of love and worthiness even in the midst of life’s inevitable tough times.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How would you identify your unique gifts that you have to offer the world? How can we lean into living out of our deep, abiding sense of love and worthiness today?

**Day 3:** “Our thoughts, emotions, and actions are inextricably related. In mindfulness, the idea is to be fully aware of the present moment, with the intention of openness and acceptance, and without judgment. If you can picture a triangle with three points of thoughts, feelings, and behavior, mindfulness is like a sheer curtain over it all that softens the impact of any experience. With mindfulness in place, we can realize that anger, for example, is a feeling that will pass: I am experiencing a moment of anger, rather than I am angry.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How can we be fully aware of a present moment today? How can we have the intention of being open and accepting – towards ourselves and others? How can we be open and accepting without judgment – towards both ourselves and others today?

**Day 4:** “My belief is that every breath we take, no matter if we notice it or not, is a sacred gift. A deep, life-giving breath precedes the first cry we make when we’re born, and our last breath is the consummate herald of our lives on earth. It’s a gift all the way, from beginning to end. Viewed like this, every time you notice your breath you’re acknowledging a gift – you’re bringing a moment of gratitude into your daily existence.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How can I honor my breath today? What does it look like to view my breath as a sacred gift today?

**Day 5:** “Picture a powerful river, deep and wide, with a swiftly flowing current. Yet even the mightiest river can be diverted by a relatively small alteration to its flow. The change occurs one stream of water at a time, as one small rivulet leaves the old path the river has followed for years and breaks off into new territory.... maybe these deep riverbed thoughts have formed neural pathways in our brain...and yet, we have the power to change and heal from deeply imbedded unhealthy thought patterns.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Both water and our thoughts can be powerful... and both can be life-giving...and both can be destructive. What would it look like today for you to pay attention to some of your thoughts as an important and powerful healing choice you have?

**Day 6:** “The real breakthrough for Jackie, a former client, came in noticing the patterns inherent in her red, or unhealthy, thoughts – the repetitive patterns that after so many years, had become those deeply ingrained ‘riverbed thoughts’.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Do you notice any specific patterns in your thinking? Do you ever just get tired of some of those old patterns? What would it look like today to offer a fresh approach to just one of those patterns?

**Day 7:** “The first step in navigating this storm is to identify the self-defeating thoughts at the top of the swirling funnel. Simply naming those thoughts gives you a greater sense of control, and thus alleviates a measure of anxiety. Then, as you’re ready, you make your way layer by layer through the funnel, until you arrive at that still, small point of truth.... ‘By slowing down and paying attention, I’m getting to the diamond of truth, which for me is richer understanding. I sketched out my funnel, going deeper and deeper one thought at a time’.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How could we name a thought today that we would want to pay attention to? Is there a thought that is causing you distress? A thought that is causing you worry? A story you keep repeating in your mind?

# Stop Breathe Believe - The Time is NOW for Loving Soul Care

**Day 8:** “Healthy living and healthy interactions with others start with healthy thinking – with a brain that’s going green! ‘When our brain functions as an integrated whole,’ Dr. Daniel Siegel writes in *Mindsight*, ‘our relationships thrive.’ Going green in our thinking and our living requires a brain that’s functioning as an integrated whole. With what we know regarding neuroplasticity, we know that our own choices, activities and thoughts can enhance or diminish our brains regions’ capabilities.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How can we begin today...to look at our choices? Our thoughts? Our feelings? Our behaviors? What choices, thoughts, feelings, behaviors might I like to begin to change today?

**Day 9:** “You may be familiar with the computer-programming acronym GIGO. If you’re allowing or even actively feeding ‘garbage’ into your brain in the form of unhealthy thinking, you will inevitably produce ‘garbage out’ in the form of unhealthy thinking and actions. Thoughts affect behavior....The good news is behavior also affects thoughts – and that’s the key to transforming trash into treasure. While Garbage In may produce Garbage Out, positive corollaries are equally true. Choose your own metaphor: Beauty In, Beauty Out. Love In, Love Out. Compassion In, Compassion Out. Serenity In, Serenity Out. It’s never too late to change, and with the power of neuroplasticity and the intentional practice of going green in your thinking one thought at a time, there’s no negative thought, feeling, or behavior that can’t be recycled into something useful and even beautiful.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

I am always surprised at some items that can be recycled into something else that is useful and/or beautiful in a new way. What might it look like to begin a recycling bin for some of your thoughts? What thought might you want to recycle into a healthier, more useful thought?

**Day 10:** “We *all* have instances of Garbage Out thinking that need to be transformed. Many people would say that Garbage Out simply needs to be disposed of – let’s get rid of the trash! I understand where they’re coming from, but my view is that everything, even our worst shortcoming or our most shame-filled mistake, is salvageable when it catalyzes into positive change and becomes the raw material of growth and healing. Granted, we can’t get stuck with the ‘trash,’ but we can make efforts to recycle even what at first glance seems the most valueless parts of ourselves. It’s all part of the process of positive transformation, and all worthwhile in the journey to wholehearted living.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

What might the raw material of growth and healing look like for my thoughts? How could that move to a positive change?

**Day 11:** “Lois, a former client, used Stop Breathe Believe as a useful *preventive* technique. Lois rose fifteen minutes earlier and started each day with slow deep breathing and the repetition of her green thought – I am choosing a better way – as a mantra. Intentionally starting the day in a calm, peaceful manner sent a powerful signal to her brain and her wounded heart that she was doing something different and more life-giving. It helped her to continue the day in a calmer, more peaceful manner.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How can we begin a day with calm? What would it look like to start with a peaceful manner? How can we be kind to our wounded heart?

**Day 12:** “Lois used a ‘micro-meditation’ form of Stop Breathe Believe in the midst of tense, high-stress situations. When she sensed a confrontation brewing with her sons or felt that her anger was beginning to spiral out of control, she used Stop Breathe Believe to check herself. Even if the entire Stop Breathe Believe sequence consisted of stopping for a second or two, taking one deep breath, and remembering I am choosing a better way, Lois was learning to respond to her sons in a more thoughtful manner, and she was building new neural pathways associated with responding rather than reacting.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

I often use Stop Breathe Believe as a micro meditation. How could that work for you? What if you chose to use a stop sign or a stoplight as a reminder to do a micro-meditation today...to Stop, pay attention to what you are thinking... Breathe, be thankful for your breath...Believe, be grateful you are being kind to yourself in this moment?

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**Day 13:** “One of the impediments to Michael, a former client’s, journey of healing was all the ‘should’ and self-judgments he was placing on himself: I should be able to figure this out on my own; I shouldn’t be complaining; I’m ashamed of complaining when there are people with much larger problems than mine. In therapy, I so often hear some variations of this very common worry. *What right do I have to complain when atrocities are occurring in the world? My suffering isn’t as great as so-and-so’s; how can I even think of complaining? I shouldn’t feed bad when other people are so much worse off than I am.* Most of us have probably engaged in this ‘comparative suffering’ at some point or another. But other people’s suffering, no matter how great or small it looks from the outside, has no bearing on our particular experience. Green thinking acknowledges that we feel what we feel, period, and that those feelings are legitimate and worthy of attention.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

What am I feeling right now? How have I felt today? Can I honor and name those feelings?

**Day 14:** “Our inner self-talk influences who we are, the choices we make, and how we interact with others. Until my teenage daughter called me out on the harsh and critical manner with which I was speaking to myself – not to mention that I was modeling for her – I had not realized the magnitude of the gap in how I treat others and how I treat myself.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Do I speak with others in the same way I speak to myself? How can I be kinder and more compassionate to myself today?

**Day 15:** “I’d like to offer a wholehearted way of looking at self-care through the lens of the **selfish – self-care – selfless continuum**. Every act towards the self falls somewhere on this continuum. As in so many things, the goal is to find the happy medium, to find the balance between the two extremes on the continuum.... Acts that are *selfish* stop right there: with the individual self. We’re selfish when we’re concerned with ourselves *without regard to others*. When we are in our own, self-centered world, we develop a case of tunnel vision instead of expansiveness of vision. Wrapped up in ourselves, we end up bringing harm to others by neglecting their needs and desires.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Selfish? Self-care? Self-less? I thought at one point that being self-less was the way to go! Self-care is the key to living out of our wholeheartedness so that we can love others well. What would that look like for us today?

**Day 16:** Regarding “selfless” on the **selfish – self-care – selfless continuum**, “[t]here is a sense in which selflessness is used positively, as synonymous with altruism. The firefighter who rushes into a burning building to rescue a person is said to have committed a selfless acts of bravery.’ What I’m referring to is the negative understanding of selfless – when we have no concern or regard for ourselves. Selfless on the **selfish – self-care – selfless continuum** describes a state in which we ignore the needs and desires of our own selves, or when we’re excessively concerned with the needs of others at the expense of ourselves.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Where do you feel that you are on the continuum? Selfish? Self-care? Selfless? I have found this to be one of the most helpful “growth” areas for me...to really take time and observe and understand my intentions behind what I am choosing.

**Day 17:** “The compassionate corrective to staying too far toward ‘selfish’ or ‘selfless’ requires reorienting ourselves to the life-giving truth that *self-care is a necessary practice for ourselves and for others*. I understand self-care as the measures we take and the attitudes we adopt to ensure and enhance our physical, mental, emotional, relational, spiritual and financial well-being.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

What might it look like for us to enhance a self-care practice today?

**Day 18:** “Self-care encompasses acts of self-compassion and self-kindness, and it requires us to let go of the self-judgment and self-criticism that inhibits our journey into wholehearted, joyful living.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How can I be more compassionate and kinder to myself today? It might seem like a simple question, but one with a huge impact for ourselves and those we love.

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**Day 19:** “Self-care is actually a *discipline* that requires time, effort, and intention. It’s a learned skill that requires practice, and it calls for bravery in the face of so many voices and institutions that actively encourage us to neglect ourselves for the sake of goals such as productivity and progress.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

How lovely that we can learn a new skill that moves us toward bravery and wholeheartedness! What might that look like for me to start practicing self-care today?

**Day 20:** “Once space opens up in our hearts due to self-compassion and self-care, then we’ll have more available for others.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

The greater self-compassion I can offer myself, the greater propensity I have to be compassionate to others. What a beautiful reminder of who I want to be!

**Day 21:** “Your body is a habitual truth-teller. It’s incapable of lying, and it’s *always* speaking. Many holistic practices and therapeutic models recognize that our minds and our bodies are intimately related, and that every part of us works together in an intricate, seamless dance.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

When Roger and I were learning to dance together, we would often step on each other’s toes (wearing cowboy boots in our case). That’s a bit what it was like understanding how my body and my mind could be a seamless dance. Integration of mind, body and soul is a beautiful practice worth working on...and I feel that it is a daily practice...not one we master, but a daily practice.

**Day 22:** “Our particular challenge in our noisy, fast-paced 21st century is that so many of us don’t learn to tune in and listen to our bodies, or we ignore its signals because we ‘just don’t have the time’ to listen. You may have heard before that the words LISTEN and SILENT contain the exact same letters. There’s a wonderful clue there: When we become silent, we can truly listen. You cannot listen to your inner self or to your body while always on the run.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

What might it look like for us to take a moment to pay attention to our bodies today? To take time to be silent and listen? What might we hear?

**Day 23:** “The Overwhelmed Pie is a tool that I use with clients – and myself – when life gets uncomfortably complicated and stressful. It’s an easy, effective way to identify and differentiate your sources of stress so you can address them one by one, just like Stop Breathe Believe helps you to identify and address one thought at a time. Few people can sit down and eat an entire pie – and if they did, they’d feel sick afterward. But we can enjoy a pie slice by slice over a reasonable period of time, and it’s far more enjoyable that way.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

What am I feeling overwhelmed about today? What if we could label the pieces of our “overwhelmedness” today?

**Day 24:** “When I have the courage to be vulnerable with others – about my sources of shame, my fears, my hopes, my intentions – I give others the courage to be vulnerable with me. One of the most poignant points that Dr. Brené Brown teaches in her work on authenticity and vulnerability is that vulnerability is not weakness. It takes great strength and courage to be vulnerable enough to share our authentic selves with others, with all our flaws and gifts. As William James said, ‘It is only by risking ourselves from one hour to another that we live at all.’” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Vulnerability...risk, emotional exposure, uncertainty... No wonder we aren’t that excited about being vulnerable. However, what a gift to ourselves and to others when we can be courageous enough to be real, authentic and vulnerable.

**Day 25:** “When we are able to lay down some of our defense mechanisms and the protective walls we put up to shield our hearts, we can pick up the practice of authenticity, and open ourselves to the possibility of greater community. My hope is that we will live life with the courage to be open and vulnerable and authentic with one another.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Our hearts are tender and precious – no wonder we want to protect them! The reality is, at times when we are trying to protect, we are hiding, not allowing our whole selves to be seen. How could we be more open and vulnerable with those we love in our world today? How can we practice being more ourselves in a conversation, in a decision today?

# Stop Breathe Believe - The Time is NOW for Loving Soul Care

**Day 26:** “Living authentically is far more difficult than it sounds, and in fact, many of us hide our true selves, presenting a carefully tended mask to the world much of the time. It can be far easier and less risky to go along with the crowd, or blend into the background, or act in a way that’s aimed to please others, especially authority figures or people we want to impress. Choosing authenticity can be a much harder path than we first realize.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Why would we want to choose risky Authenticity? Courage? I LOVE Brené Brown’s definition of authenticity: “Authenticity is a daily practice. Choosing authenticity means cultivating the courage to be emotionally honest, to set boundaries, and to allow ourselves to be vulnerable; exercising the compassion that comes from knowing that we are all made of strength and struggle and connected to each other through a loving and a resilient human spirit; nurturing the connection and sense of belonging that can only happen when we let go of what we are supposed to be and embrace who we are. Authenticity demands wholehearted living and loving – even when it’s hard, even when we’re wrestling with the shame and fear of not being good enough, and especially when the joy is so intense that we’re afraid to let ourselves feel it. Mindfully practicing authenticity during most soul-searching struggles is how we invite grace, joy, and gratitude into our lives.”

**Day 27:** “A huge part of our life’s journey is coming to know who we really are, and day by day growing into that person. It’s a process made up of daily choices, a beautiful, enriching growth experience that benefits our journey to wholeness and authenticity, and to integration and integrity. It’s also a risky process. Putting our true selves out there is an act of vulnerability, and it puts us at risk for criticism and shame from others.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Our journey of life is huge.... How can we focus on the steps of *today*, the moments of *now* in being intentional in our choices of integration and integrity? What a challenge! What an amazing opportunity!

**Day 28:** “Allow yourself to imagine the possibility of simply being you, rather than pouring so much time and energy into projecting a persona of who you’re ‘supposed’ to be or organizing your life around living up to others’ expectations. And if you’re still wondering why you should risk rejection and why you should endure all the growing pains of become the real you, I have two possibilities for you. One is the obvious reason that you’ll be happier, more energetic, and more fulfilled. The second is because the world needs your unique contribution. There are things you and only you can offer the world.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

You are beautiful! You are important! You are not alone! You are unique! So grateful for YOU! We are in this journey together: with you of ‘You trying to be You’ and ‘Me trying to be Me’.

**Day 29:** “The advertising, fashion, fitness and beauty industries are in the business of selling products – they benefit directly from our collective low self-esteem. The real truth is that when you can access and express your inner, authentic and unique YOU, your real beauty shines through. You become be.YOU.tiful. Authentic, lasting beauty really has little to do with how we look. So instead of stopping at the surface – or letting the surface stop us – what if we learn to live wholeheartedly, offering the world the inimitable blend of gifts, talents, and beauty that is unique to each and every one of us?” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

What is one way we can celebrate our true beauty with another today? How can I encourage another to lean into the beauty he/she brings to the world today?

**Day 30:** “My hope and prayer is that Stop Breathe Believe is a tool for inner transformation for you – not just information, but transformation. The change, the transformation, the journey.... *Stop* and allow yourself to be more aware of your thoughts; *Breathe* deeply and become more present to yourself and your world; And *Believe* the green thoughts that empower your most authentic YOU.” Excerpt from *Stop Breathe Believe: Mindful Living One Thought at a Time*.

Step by step...day by day...moment by moment. May you radiate your beauty and your love to the world. We need you.

# Stop Breathe Believe

Let us—

Stop when we recognize those negative thoughts emerging  
Tell ourselves to pause amidst the rising tide  
Own our ability to shift the trajectory of our internal dialogue  
Practice, relentlessly, at catching those arising red thoughts.

Breathe in, breathe out to cleanse the palate  
Repeat a time or two, maybe more  
Each time, expand and collapse the lungs deeply  
And attend to the refreshment received  
Take this precious moment to  
Head to a new direction and  
Experience the relief of dismissed ruminations. Now—

Believe a truth one knows to be true  
Express it firmly to ourselves and  
Let that green thought flourish and thrive. We'll—  
Intend to grow the green to repel the red  
Every day tend to our thoughts' garden  
Verily, be careful to nurture authenticity and  
Ever strive for all of this, one thought at a time.

By Roger Jones