# Declutter the mind...

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...open the heart



#### Welcome.

Breathe and Just Begin is so excited to share its first Ebook. As a movement wellness company, we teach and promote connection to body and breath to:

- Evict limiting beliefs
- Live in leadership
- Immerse in wellness

We believe in feeling our feelings and processing them, but not letting fear control. Especially because that can often mean that we are not allowing ourselves to align with the true desires of our heart. Instead of being stuck from fear (including, for example, feelings of low self-worth or self-doubt), we encourage you to breathe...and just begin. We know each person's adventure is all their own and that is all part of the beauty of the journey.

We hope that this Ebook will help shed light on ways to quiet the "clutter" of the mind and tap into the authentic feelings that can emanate from an open heart.

Enjoy.

#### DISCLAIMER:

Breathe and Just Begin, Inc. is not in the medical field. The information provided in this Ebook is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, counseling, mental health services, emergency treatment or any other treatment. Don't use this information to diagnose or develop a treatment plan for a health problem or disease. Instead, contact a qualified health care provider. If you're in a life-threatening or emergency medical situation, seek medical assistance immediately.

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## Leaving space for the good.

We often don't think of "clutter" as the essentials or the "good stuff"...the stuff that's sentimental, the stuff that we value, the stuff that empowers us and makes us feel free, the stuff that brings us joy. We might think of "clutter" as the stuff that weighs us down, the stuff that keeps us stuck, the stuff we need to "do something with", the stuff that we might benefit being freed from.

Mental clutter can include persistent stressing, especially about things that are not in our control; worrying about the future; obsessing over moments that have passed; or continuing to play out in your head the same story of hurt, disappointment or pain.

When our mind has too many thoughts and we are constantly in our head, constantly ruminating, it can be difficult to process and focus. Not to mention, it can be mentally, physically and emotionally exhausting. The more we are in our head, the farther we might be from our heart. It's great to have balance, and sometimes that might mean letting our mental intelligence rest for a bit and connecting with heart intelligence.

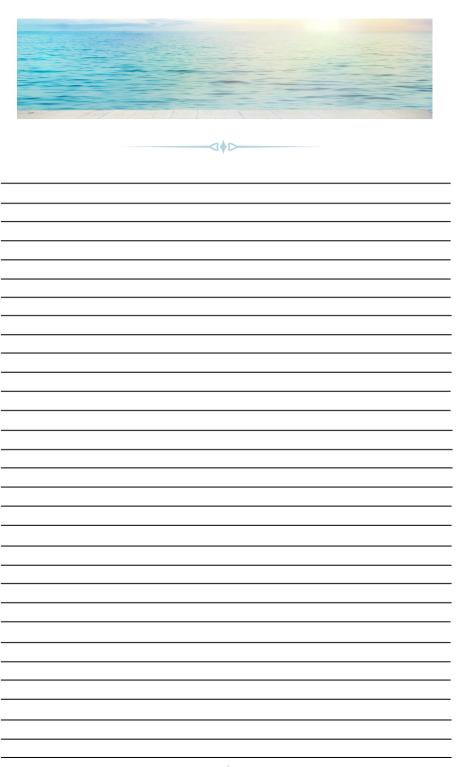
In opening our heart, we invite in awareness and opportunities to become more in tune with our needs and desires. We can be more compassionate with others and with ourselves and might experience more emotional balance and less energetic roadblocks.

Clearing out mental clutter and giving more room for heart opening is a balance that can leave space for overall good in our mind, body and life.

In this Ebook, I share 5 tips that can help with this balance:

- Curbing negative thoughts
- Journaling
- Using words of affirmation
- Engaging in grounding techniques
- Performing heart opening stretches

Feel free to jot down notes, ideas and any personal reflections in the spaces provided.





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## Curbing negative thoughts.

Our minds can be consumed with self-doubt, worrying that something is not going to work out before it even has the chance to happen, or even feelings of doom or impending negativity. These can be unhelpful, especially when they are not true.

We can notice our negative thoughts without letting them take control. We can acknowledge to ourselves that we are having the thought. That awareness alone can be helpful. Taking a step away from being in the mix of the thought to actually notice that you are having it is creating space. From there, to create even more space from being caught up in the thought itself, you might reflect on how the thought arose, where it originated from. You might check in to see how the thought makes you feel. These steps can distance yourself from the thought as you go deeper in to your body, allowing other parts of yourself to be noticed, including your heart, as opposed to your mind just being consumed.

Additionally, if it is helpful, you might turn away from the thought by thinking of something that

goal: how would you feel, who would be around you, what would you hear, what would you say? Not forcing, but noticingif your mind is telling you it wants to be active, you might see if it is open to thinking about something positive instead of something negative.





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## Journaling.

Journaling can have a number of benefits, including, but not limited to, organizing our thoughts, allowing us to self-reflect and record feelings on the go. It's a great way to combine the action of decluttering our mind and opening our heart. We can put to paper what we are thinking, which gives ourselves the opportunity to process feelings...thereby potentially making more space in our minds. Noticing our feelings also gives an opportunity to check in with our heart space.

If you need help on what to journal about, a gratitude list never hurts! Jotting down, for example, ten things that you are grateful for can help connect to positive feelings as you reflect on things you have that you value and appreciate. This can help bring clarity, adjust a mood, and also bring another perspective to statements that might be distorted ("nothing ever works out for me", "I don't have anything good going for me," "nothing good ever happens in my life").

Additionally, journaling can be helpful with goal setting and tapping in to our true desires. We can

take time to journal about how we want to feel, or what we want to achieve. We can think about one step that we might take right then and there to help achieve that goal or desire. In that way, journaling can provide an opportunity to experience a personal "call and response" that can be empowering and motivating.





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## Using words of affirmation.

Words of affirmation can be especially helpful in decluttering the mind. In affirming something for yourself, you are claiming it and declaring it. This not only gives space from being consumed by cluttering thoughts, but this can also help combat them. Affirmations can provide a different perspective than what the thoughts in our mind might be telling us. For example, if we are consumed with thoughts of self-doubt or low self-worth, we can affirm that "I am worthy. My value is high. I am special and unique. I am enough." If we are ruminating about the future, we can affirm that "I possess the qualities needed to be successful. I put myself out there, and support always finds me. My life is filled with exciting new opportunities. I am doing my best and great things are in store for me."

Words of affirmation provide an opportunity to connect with the heart and let it lead. If we give no

other time, this is a great time to think about the desires of your heart without abandonno limits, no holdbacks, no shyness. We can be bold in knowing what we want and declaring it. Words of affirmation are a great exercise for opening our heart more, listening to it and expressing its truth.





## Engaging in grounding techniques.

Grounding techniques, like self-soothing for example, can offer great benefits. Soothing is not just for babies or children. As adults, we can often use soothing to help calm and manage overwhelming emotions. Self-soothing can be especially helpful when we are overloaded with thoughts causing us to experience stress or anxiety.

One way to self-soothe is by reaching stillness in your body, whether in a seated, kneeling or standing position, and placing one hand over your belly and your other hand over your heart (see image below). Your own touch can help bring you comfort and send to yourself energy of unconditional love. Just like cradling can help soothe a baby, cradling your own body can help self-soothe. Some studies suggest that placing your hand over your heart begins to activate the release of oxytocin, the brain's hormone of safety and trust, bonding and belonging, calm and connect.



Another grounding technique is placing a warm face towel over your face, perhaps adding a few drops of lavender essential oil to the towel. Lavender is commonly used to create a relaxing atmosphere and is one of the most popular aromatherapy oils. Some studies suggest that lavender can help lessen anxiety by stimulating the nose to pass signals to the brain. A lavender oil that is safe for the skin would be necessary. Allergies and skin sensitivities may make this option unviable for some.



## Performing heart opening stretches.

Heart opening stretches can do just that...open, lift and expand your chest allowing your heart to be front and center, connected and unlocked. More than just the heart and chest though, heart opening poses can also stretch and help relieve tension from other parts of the body, including shoulders and back. They can also help with posture and strengthening the core. Here are a few that might work for you:

#### Shoulder Stretch



To get in to the stretch, come to a kneeling position. Toes can be stretched and activated if you choose. Clasp your hands behind your back, bring your shoulders back and down and chest forward. Let neck and head fall back. To intensify the stretch, you can gently lift arms further away from the floor and from your back. Hold for three breaths.

This stretch can also be done from positions other than kneeling, including standing and seated cross-legged.



Upward Facing Dog



Ground hands into the mat, including fingers. Feet are pressed in to mat, with toenails-side down. Straighten and externally rotate arms. Engage hips, thighs and knee caps off the mat while pulling heart forward, going through your arms. Head and neck fall back with shoulders lowered away from ears. Hold for three breaths.



#### Cow Face



Slide your knees toward your center line, stacking the right knee directly over the left. Separate your feet and come back to sit between them. Bring your right arm straight up toward the ceiling. Bend the right elbow, bringing the right hand to the back of your neck, right palm facing back. Lift the left arm out to the left side, bend the elbow, and bring the left arm up the center of the back, back of left hand against back. Clasp hands behind your back. Use scarf, towel or strap to help hands connect. See images below for hand placement. Hold for three breaths. Try other side.







#### Extended Side Angle variation



Start standing with legs apart, wider than hip width. Turn left foot to the left, toes facing left. Keep right foot so that if a line were drawn from left heel, it would reach inside arch of right foot. Bend left knee into a side lunge and straighten arms out at side. Lower left side body toward left knee, bringing straight left arm in front of left knee and calf. Left fingers alongside left foot, press into left knee with left elbow. Right arm is straight, right fingers pointing to ceiling or sky. Gaze follows right hand. Hold for three breaths. Try other side.



## The journey is yours.

Your journey is your own...unique and special. Decluttering the mind and providing yourself an opportunity to make decisions for yourself more from an open heart can help bring your steps in alignment with your true nature, your authentic self. While mental clutter might lead us away from our desires, or to deny them to ourselves, an open heart can encourage us to give ourselves a shot. Giving yourself a chance is one of the greatest gifts you can give to yourself. Enjoy your journey and always remember that even when you don't see the entire path ahead of you, you can always still choose to breathe...and just begin.

# STAY IN TOUCH!

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