



February 7, 2021 HGSA Sunday Talk  
Rev. Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Kozlow

### **Our 2021 Spiritual Toolbox**

Many of us may be overwhelmed by the continued pandemic. I am trying to be proactive in combatting spiritual passivity. Now is the time for me to double-down on doing my spiritual practices. I've talked about these four spiritual practices before, and they are: loving ourselves, forgiveness, meditation, and prayer. I think there is a meaningfulness to tackling those practices in that order. I think each practice is actually a process, that each develop over time, and possibly over a lifetime.

Here is why we should think of these practices as loving self first, forgiving second, followed by meditation, and finally prayer. Loving self should come first as it is foundational for the other practices. How can we grow, without first preparing the ground? Next is forgiving of self and others – a possibly difficult and emotional practice—that is best coming from of a centered, healthy, and fertile core of self-love. Forgiving is like clearing and cleaning our aura and from that space we can meditate, which is listening to guidance from a higher source. And finally, the most sacred and direct door to Source through prayer swings wide open. And, of course, we can also practice or implement them simultaneously!

**Loving Self.** I believe that self-loathing is rampant in the world. I don't know about you, but I think on many levels we are taught that it is not desirable to love or even support ourselves. This is, I believe, our core spiritual deficit. How can we love anyone if we do not love ourselves first? It feels like fear of others, fear of the world, and fear of life is the outcome of not loving ourselves. How do we learn to love ourselves? Good question! I ask myself that very question.

**How to Love Ourselves?** Perhaps start with trial and error and with small steps. Some of us might be so far away from knowing how to care for ourselves that we are clueless about what to do. I suggest find that one thing that brings happiness or peace and then go with that. Keep going there. Then, of course, you might forget to take care of yourself for a while and return to a previous neglectful state. Don't worry, just keep walking toward what nurtures you. Making a list of what supports you is a good thing. Putting an alarm on your phone or a daily note on your calendar to do those self-loving things is good. After a while it will become a habit. After a while you will feel the love that you have for yourself. Oh, yeah, and that's what happened to me. When we love ourselves, we *can* truly love others.

The last thing I will say is that my first step in loving myself was taking spiritual healing classes at Harmony Grove Spiritualist Association. That moved out a lot of old energy. That allowed me to start looking at myself kindly.

**Forgiveness.** I feel like I harp on this topic, but I cannot help myself. I read recently on a social media platform that when asked whether forgiveness changed things for the better, that most replied in the negative. I firmly believe that if we forgive correctly that it results in a great release of energy that blocks our development. The foundation is forgiveness is empathy, and empathy is a by-product of self-love.

**Ho'oponopono.** Perhaps you've heard of the ancient Hawaiian forgiveness practice of Ho'oponopono. This forgiveness method is based on saying these words: "I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you. I love you." The story behind Ho'oponopono is inspiring. A Hawaiian therapist, Dr. Ihaleakala Hew Len, came to the Hawaii state hospital many years ago to work with the criminally insane. While looking at his patients' files, he focused on healing himself, which he did by loving himself and the patients. Specifically, while studying the files and without meeting the patients, the doctor repeated "I love you" and "I am sorry." After some months, the patients were healed. Here is a video with the beautiful Ho'oponopono song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJLSkopnxj0>

Here is an example of forgiveness. Consider a relationship that ended badly between you and a friend. Both of you played a part in the dissolution of that relationship. Before saying the prayer, ask yourself, am I ready to forgive? If we're not ready, we need to wait until we are. Using the Ho'oponopono prayer, we say first "I'm sorry" – I am saying that I am sorry for the part I played. Remember the person with empathy and love. If we are truly ready to forgive and imagining the person in our heart, we say "Please forgive me." There should be a distinct shift in our energy and a letting go of our defenses. Feeling that, it is easy to be grateful for this and say, "Thank you." Surrounding self and our friend with loving energy we conclude by saying "I love you." It is easy to see how empathy and love of self are a foundation of the forgiveness process.

Oddly, it is not unusual for bitterness and anger to resurface with a person or situation we have already forgiven! This is fine. We just forgive again when we are open to it. Forgiveness is a process. The magical thing is that we can do this by ourselves. The other person feels and receives the blessing of the forgiveness. We are blessed with a peaceful heart.

**Meditation.** Of each of the four, meditation is the one that is met with the most resistance! Eye rolls, look the other way, change the subject! But once we have cleaned our space through forgiveness, it is so much easier to sit in meditation. Meditation allows us to listen to God, Infinite Source, our Angels, Guides, and Teachers and all the beings of light that bend so close to us, if we would just listen. We have so many loud inputs that counteract this wonderful ability to listen. If we are not good at sitting, we can do an active meditation practice, such as walking, gardening, or jogging. Do whatever quiets your mind so that Spirit can step forward.

Meditation can be thought of as merely sitting quietly for 10 minutes a day. When we are quiet, we can hear. The more we listen, the more we hear! We hear the "still, small voice" of God. This is the best source of knowledge – the knowledge that is specifically for us—our unique information that we need to hear at the perfect time. Often in meditation we learn that one important thing that allows us to take the next step on our spiritual journey. These insights are priceless!

**Prayer.** I still cannot say that I totally understand prayer! But that's okay, I'm good with a mystery. This is what I do know – prayer is a sacred and active space that is created in real time between me and Infinite Source. There is a spiritual communion that occurs during prayer. When I pray, I am tangibly touching God Source. I believe that in prayer my vibration increases. In prayer, anything can happen, including a miracle. I am not sure there is a correct way to pray. But I think you know how. I was

listening to this song about prayer the other day and starting singing along with it. It's a traditional song called "Down to the River to Pray," that you may like:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swOLCLrqBn8>

In conclusion, I hope that if you are not loving yourself that you begin one practice that supports you today. I hope that if you are stuck in the stagnant energy of resentment that you work to forgive yourself or the other person soon. I hope that you will sit down for a short time, even for a minute or two, get quiet and listen. I hope that you will connect with Infinite Source in prayer and let a little of that beautiful sparkly energy rub off on you. And even if you don't do them now, there is always time. There is always time, energy, and the will to fall into a spiritual practice. We always have a choice.

With love and peace,  
Rev. Marilyn



**Rev. Dr. Marilyn Johnson-Kozlow**

Rev. Marilyn has been a spiritualist with Harmony Grove Spiritualist Association since 2008. She is a resident of Harmony Grove, has her mediumship and healing certificates from there, and served on the board of directors for several years. She was ordained as an HGSA Minister in December 2019.

She has enjoyed contributing to church service at Harmony Grove as a healer and medium. She is an approved HGSA Psychic Fair reader and a lifelong spiritual seeker.

She teaches at Cal State San Marcos. In her free time, she works as an artist and astrologer. She lives with her husband and Cha-Cha, their Chihuahua.