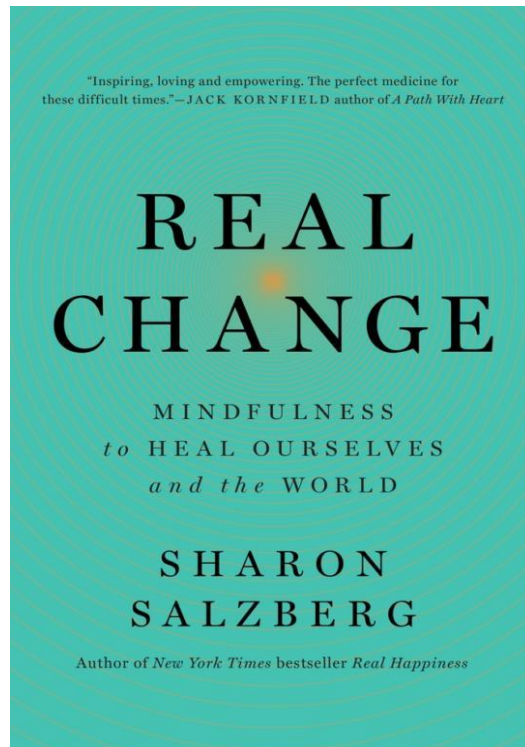


# Contemplative Resilience Tools for Social Change Makers

Participant Course Journal: Week 6

*Cultivating Equanimity & Balance*



Drawing from elements of the Garrison Institute's Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project and from Sharon Salzberg's book, *Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves and the World*, this course invites you to strengthen your resilience and deepen awareness, balance and connection in your work and lives.

**“Be Well, Serve Well”**



# Garrison Institute

Founded in 2003, the [Garrison Institute](#) is a 501(c)3, not-for-profit, non-sectarian organization exploring the intersection of contemplation and engaged action in the world. The mission of the Garrison Institute is to apply the wisdom that arises from contemplation and insights derived from science to today's pressing social and environmental issues to create a more compassionate, resilient future. The Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project is one of the Garrison Institute's signature initiatives, addressing the psychological and embodied dimensions of resilience for professional service providers.

## Real Change

In her eleventh book, *Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves & the World*, [Sharon Salzberg](#) teaches us that meditation is not a replacement for taking action, but rather a way to practice generosity with ourselves and summon the courage to break through boundaries, reconnect to a movement that's bigger than ourselves, and have the energy to stay active.

Consulting with veteran activists and social change agents in a variety of fields, Sharon collects and shares their wisdom and offers the best practical advice to foster transformation in both ourselves and in society. *Real Change* guides us to embody the fundamental principles of mindfulness practice toward greater clarity and confidence, so that we can create a better world.

## Use of the Participant Course Journal

This *Participant Course Journal* is designed as a companion to this course. You are encouraged to have this *Journal* accessible during each workshop and cohort coaching session. Included in the pages of this *Course Journal* are: Weekly Topic Descriptions, Presentation Slides, Social Learning and Personal Reflection Prompts, Practice Resources, and space for notes.

This *Journal* has been set up as a fillable PDF document, so that you may either type notes directly into the *Journal* through Adobe (remember to save your work) or you may print it and handwrite notes throughout.

## Contact

Please direct any questions to the Contemplative-Based Resilience Project team at the Garrison Institute at [CBRProject@garrisoninstitute.org](mailto:CBRProject@garrisoninstitute.org).

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# Table of Contents for Week 6

Week 6: Cultivating Equanimity & Balance	4
Emotions	4
Presentation Slides	5
Mindful Movement	9
Sharon Salzberg: Cultivating Equanimity & Balance	11
Social Learning: Sharon Salzberg & Samantha Novick	12
Meditation	13
Awareness, Balance, Connection	14
Personal Reflection: Awareness Reflection	17
Personal Reflection: Attending to Balance	18
Personal Reflection: Connection: Social Support	21
Practice Resources: Mindful Movement – <i>Active Sequence</i>	22
Practice Resources: Meditation – <i>RAIN Technique</i>	23
Practice Resources: Meditation – <i>Cultivating Equanimity</i>	24
Practice Resources: Garrison Institute Meditation Groups	26
Practice Resources: Care for Caregivers Mobile App	27

# Week 5: Cultivating Equanimity & Balance

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In the way we use the word, equanimity does not mean indifference or not caring. It means balance. It might, for example, be the balance between compassion for ourselves and compassion for someone else, or the balance between a compassionate urge to help and the recognition of realistic limits or boundaries. One manifestation of this balance is a sense of spaciousness within, an ability to be with both joy and sorrow, with our wish to help and the wisdom of knowing that we can't just fix everything.

## Emotions

Emotions provide valuable, relevant **INFORMATION**. They inform us of “what is happening inside me.” Having that information allows us to respond instead of react.

Emotions have an important **FUNCTION**. Emotions connect our body and mind, informing us of our needs and the needs of others in that we can “read” the other through their body reactions.

Recognizing the emotion gives us **POWER**, creating the possibility of “responding” instead of “reacting.” This is our space of liberty.

**How do you recognize different emotions in your body? What sensations do you notice? (e.g. tension, softness, hardness, heat, cold, sweat, breath changes, etc.)**

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**Each of our emotions play a unique role.** Scientific advancements have enabled researchers to identify the psychological functions of each of these 6 basic emotions.<sup>1</sup>

- **Happiness** - Increased activity the brain inhibits negative feelings and fosters an increase in available energy. Physiologically, quiescence allows the body a general rest, and readiness for task(s) at hand.
- **Sadness** - We experience a drop in energy and enthusiasm for life's activities. This introspective withdrawal creates the opportunity to mourn a loss or frustrated hope, grasp its consequences for one's life.
- **Fear** - Blood flows to the large skeletal muscles, readying the body for flight. Simultaneously, the body momentarily freezes and hormones are released to allow the body to be alert to the threat, enabling time for quick safety planning and decision making.
- **Surprise** - The widening of the eyes allows the taking in of a larger visual sweep, permitting more light to strike the retina. This offers more information about the unexpected event, making it easier to concoct the best plan for action.
- **Anger** - Blood flows to the hands, heart rate increases, and a rush of adrenaline generates a pulse of energy strong enough for vigorous action.
- **Disgust** - Our reaction indicates something is offensive in taste or smell, or metaphorically so. The universal facial expression attempts to block the nose of a noxious odor or spit out a poisonous food.

## Presentation Slides

### Week 6 – Cultivating Equanimity & Balance



- Building Community & Intention Setting
- Teaching: Balance & Emotions
- Mindful Movement Practice
- Live Teaching from Sharon Salzberg
- Social Learning: Sharon Salzberg in conversation with Samantha Novick
- Meditation
- Question and Response
- Closing

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: Daniel Goleman. *Emotional Intelligence*, 1994 Bantam Dell



"We can choose not to make an enemy of our feelings, as intense as they may be. Instead, we can expand our awareness and allow those feelings to come up. And we can allow them to move and shift. That space brings the wisdom that keeps us from getting lost in immediate reactivity. That freedom is the essence of equanimity."

~ Sharon Salzberg, *Real Change*



## Finding Balance

"To be present, alive, and effective, we try to live a life with a sense of both necessity and possibility. There has to be a balance." ~ Sharon Salzberg

**Key areas needed in order to maintain wellness and resilience:**

- Physical
- Mental
- Relational
- Emotional

## Basic Universal Emotions



Happiness



Sadness



Fear



Surprise



Anger



Disgust

### Emotions:

- Have value and meaning
- Connect us with others
- Provide valuable information about the world around us

**The ability to recognize and name our emotions empowers us to respond rather than react to the events in our lives.**

**Contemplative practices** offer an opportunity to become more aware of our emotions, allowing us to make a **skillful response**.

## Notes

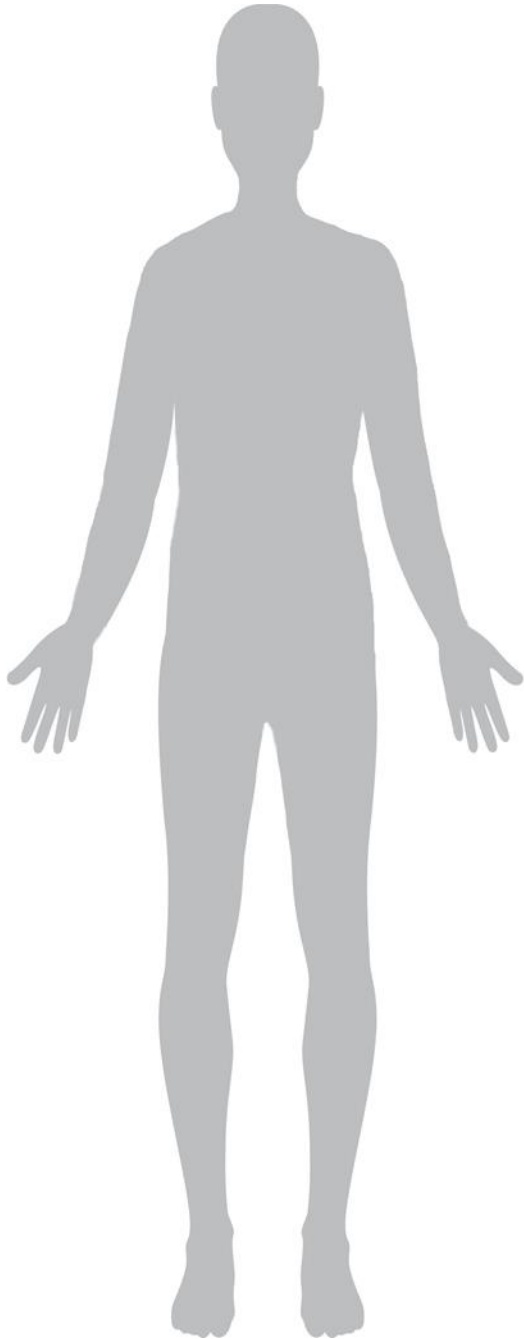
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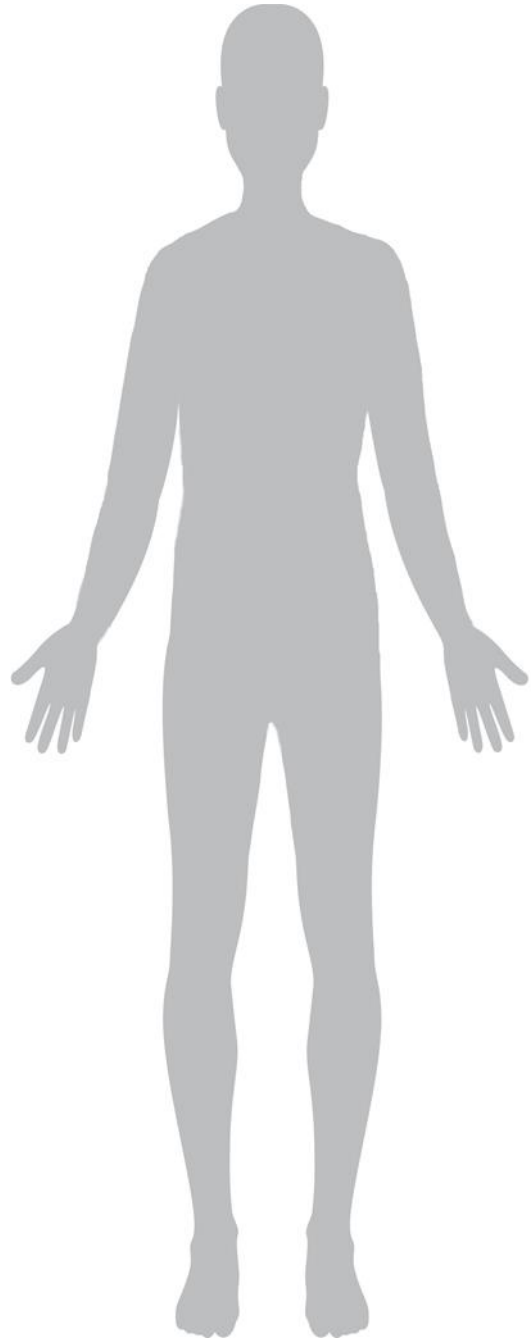
# Mindful Movement

## *Silhouettes*

Before



After



# Mindful Movement

## Notes

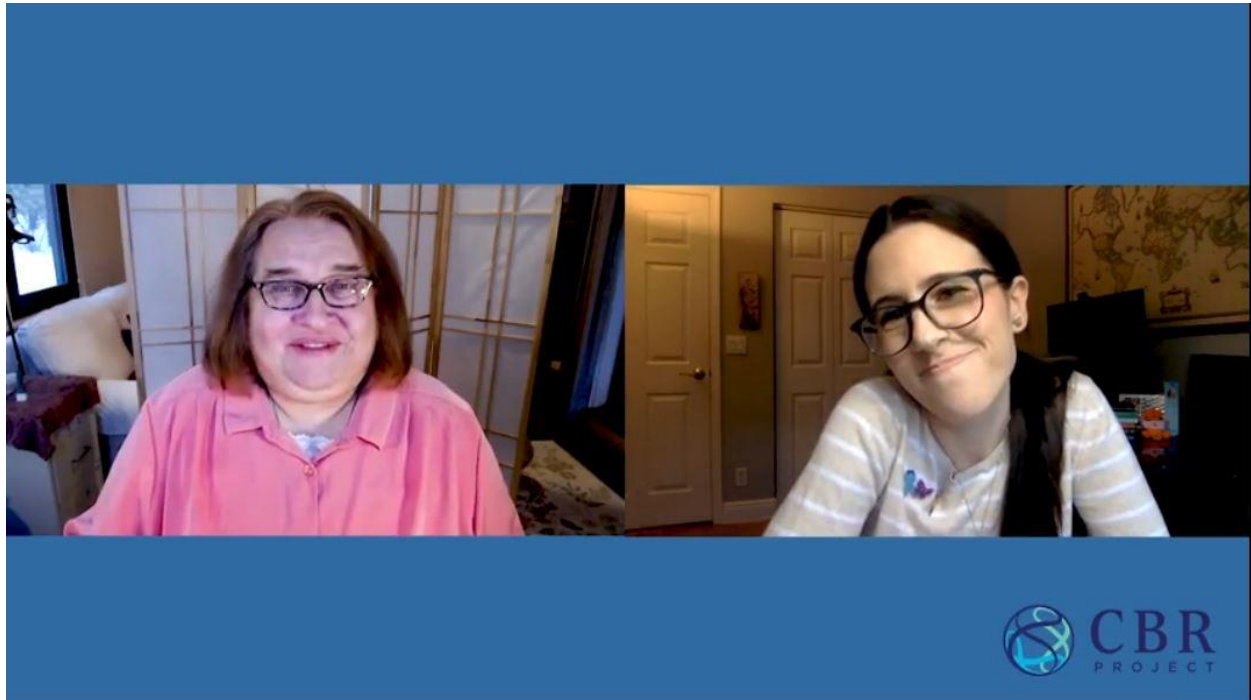
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## Notes

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# Social Learning

*Sharon Salzberg & Samantha Novick*



*“Embracing the fullness of life.”*

To learn more about Samantha Novick and Bridge Therapy, [click here](#).

## Notes

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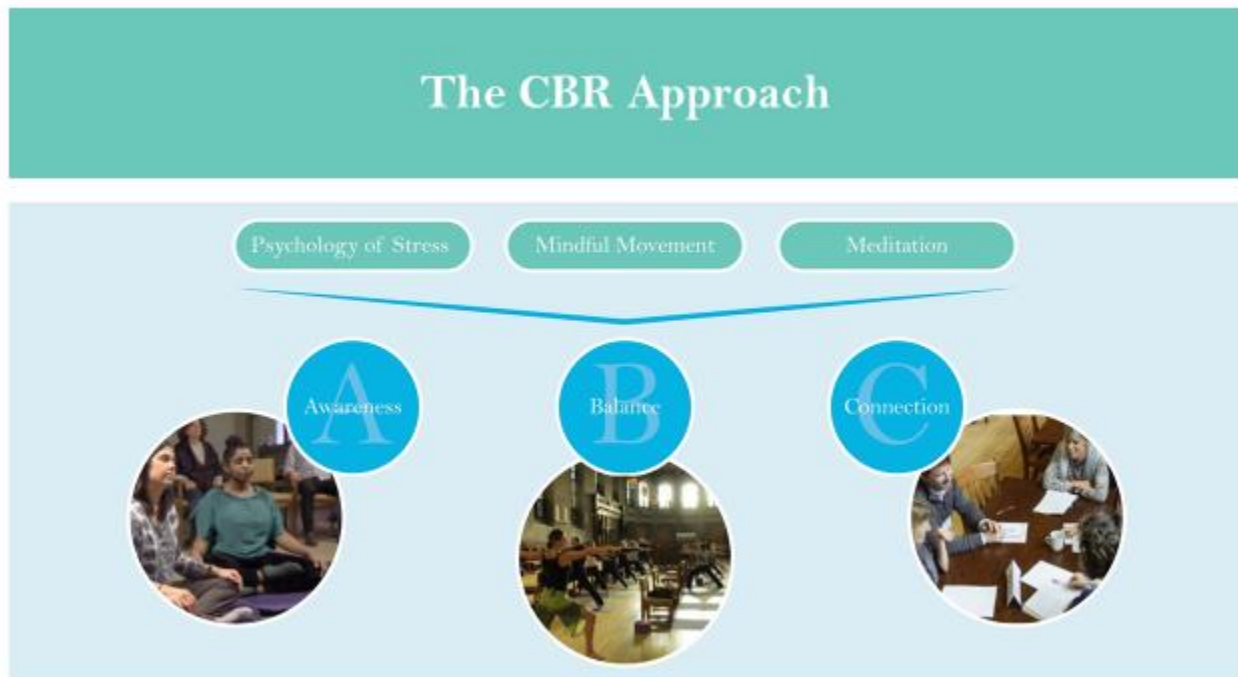
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# Meditation

## Notes

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# Awareness, Balance, Connection



Awareness	Balance	Connection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ What is happening around us</li> <li>❖ How we are feeling (through our bodies)</li> <li>❖ How we are perceiving situations</li> <li>❖ How others around us are feeling</li> <li>❖ How our actions are impacting others</li> <li>❖ The impact of stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Arousal balance</li> <li>❖ Emotional equilibrium</li> <li>❖ Between work and relaxation</li> <li>❖ Between short-term and long-term goals</li> <li>❖ Between our needs and the needs of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ With ourselves</li> <li>❖ With others, including co-workers, our families, friends and communities</li> <li>❖ With our values, aims</li> </ul>



# Characteristics of Resilience & Contemplative Practice

AWARENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better recognition of our emotional states; awareness of our body reactions, thoughts, self-talk; good <b>understanding of the needs for self-care</b></li> <li>Understanding of the natural physiological reactions of stress and relaxation and their impacts on us</li> <li>Recognition of our own capacity to influence our physiological stress reactions (intentionally activation of “rest and digest”)</li> <li>Increase our belief and trust in our own capacity to cope (there is something we can do - about our emotions, our response)</li> <li>Ability to identify our current coping reactions and habits               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; What is helpful</li> <li>&gt; What is unhelpful</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	SELF-AWARENESS  STRENGTHENING YOUR INTERNAL LOCUS OF CONTROL
BALANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application of acquired self-care practices that help to regulate nervous system and restore balance, improve <b>emotional self-regulation</b></li> <li>Consequently, better clarity, better stress mitigation, less impulsivity in deciding ways to address the situation; responding - not reacting</li> <li>Ability to map existing resources, practice curious exploration (potential for identifying more effective, coping or sources of support)</li> <li>Search for new techniques and practices helping <b>restore balance</b>, then replacing less helpful/less healthy habits with the new ones that are more beneficial</li> </ul>	ABILITY TO SELF- REGULATE EMOTIONS  EFFECTIVE PROBLEM SOLVING  ABILITY TO COPE WITH STRESS IN A HEALTHY MANNER
CONNECTION	<p><u>With Ourselves</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better recognition of our own limits and having <b>self-compassion</b></li> <li>Less self-criticism, self-blame, guilt (not helpful emotions)</li> </ul> <p><u>With Others</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conscious shift from empathy to <b>compassion</b>, which leads to more <u>altruism</u> and more <u>connection</u></li> <li>Better management when facing other people's suffering; healthy attitude</li> <li>More recognition of other people's good intentions toward us - <b>gratitude</b></li> <li>More recognition of our interconnectedness and interdependence - <u>spirituality</u></li> <li>Increased expectation of the positive things also happening - <u>healthy optimism</u></li> </ul> <p><u>With Our Values</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice of continuously reflecting upon and updating our long term goals</li> <li>Search for balanced ways to dedicate adequate time to our life priorities, feeling more connected to the things that matter to us and that we want to represent</li> <li><b>Personal Growth</b> - Acknowledgement of difficulties more as challenges, rather than obstacles</li> </ul>	SEEKING HELP   HELPING OTHERS   SOCIAL SUPPORT AND CONNECTION WITH OTHERS   SENSE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE

## Notes

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## Awareness

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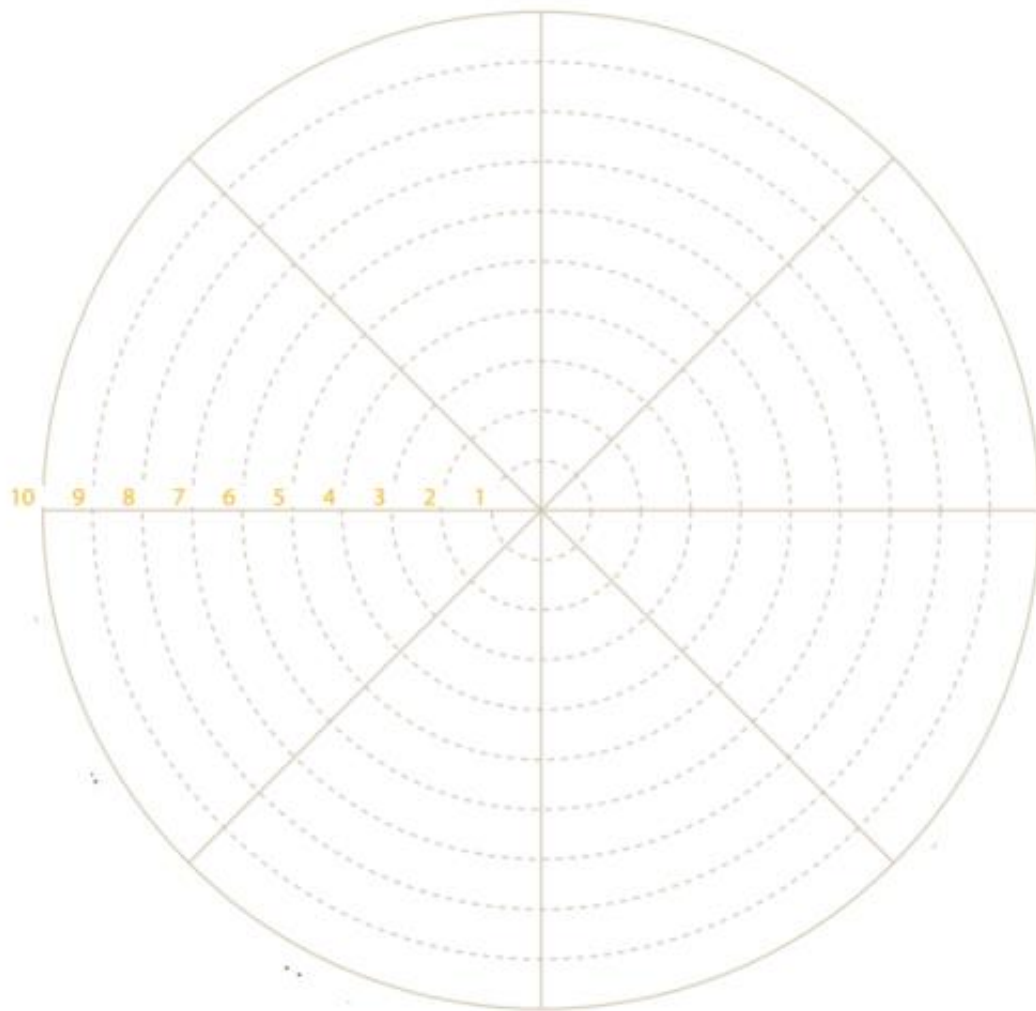
# Personal Reflection

## *Attending to Balance*

The purpose of the Balance Wheel is for the person using it to create a visual representation of how balanced they are in their life at the moment.

Choose eight priority areas that are important to you. Some examples may include, but are not limited to: Family, Friends, Love/Dating/Significant Other, Career, Finances or Money, Health, Recreation, Fun, Leisure or Hobbies, Personal Growth, Personal Development or Learning, Community, Public Service, Spirituality or Religion.

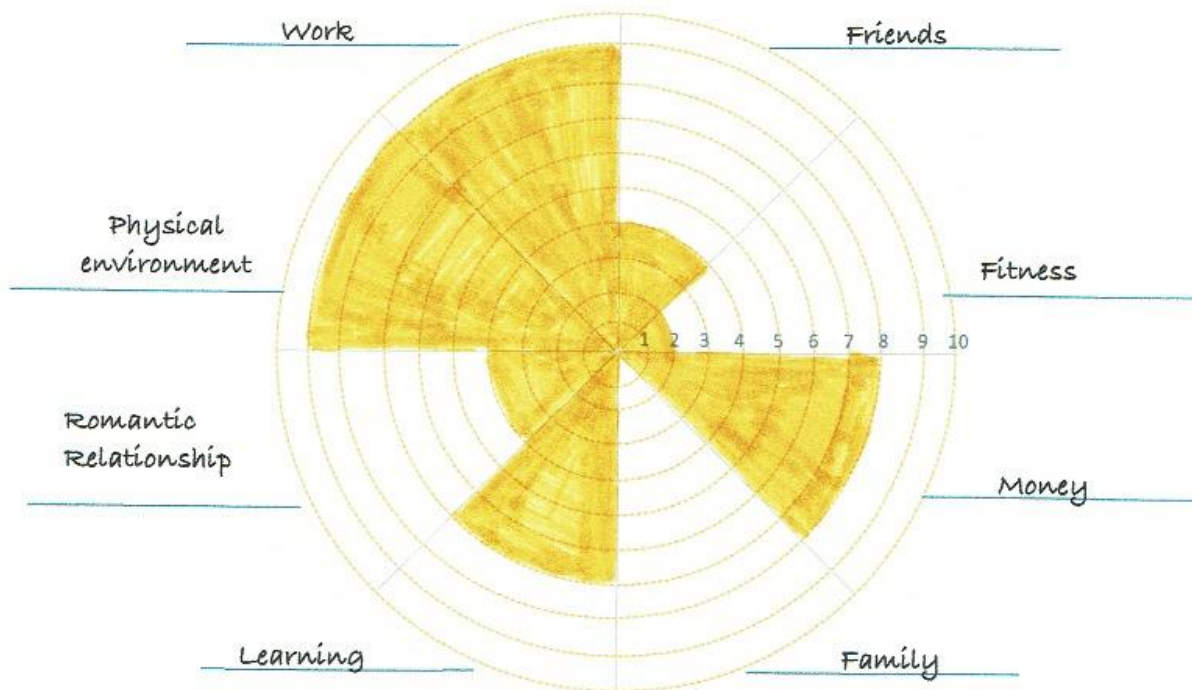
Label each of the eight sections on this wheel with your selected priority areas.



For every section on your wheel, rate the amount of time and energy that you are currently dedicating to this priority. Shade in each area (see example on next page).

**Use the rating: 1 (minimal time and energy) - 10 (most time and energy)**

Below is an example of a completed Balance Wheel. This is for demonstration purposes only. Your Balance Wheel will reflect your individual priorities, time and energy.



Looking at your Balance Wheel, how does it make you feel?

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Does your wheel look balanced? If not, what do you need to do to bring your life into better equilibrium?

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Are there any areas you forgot and would like to include?

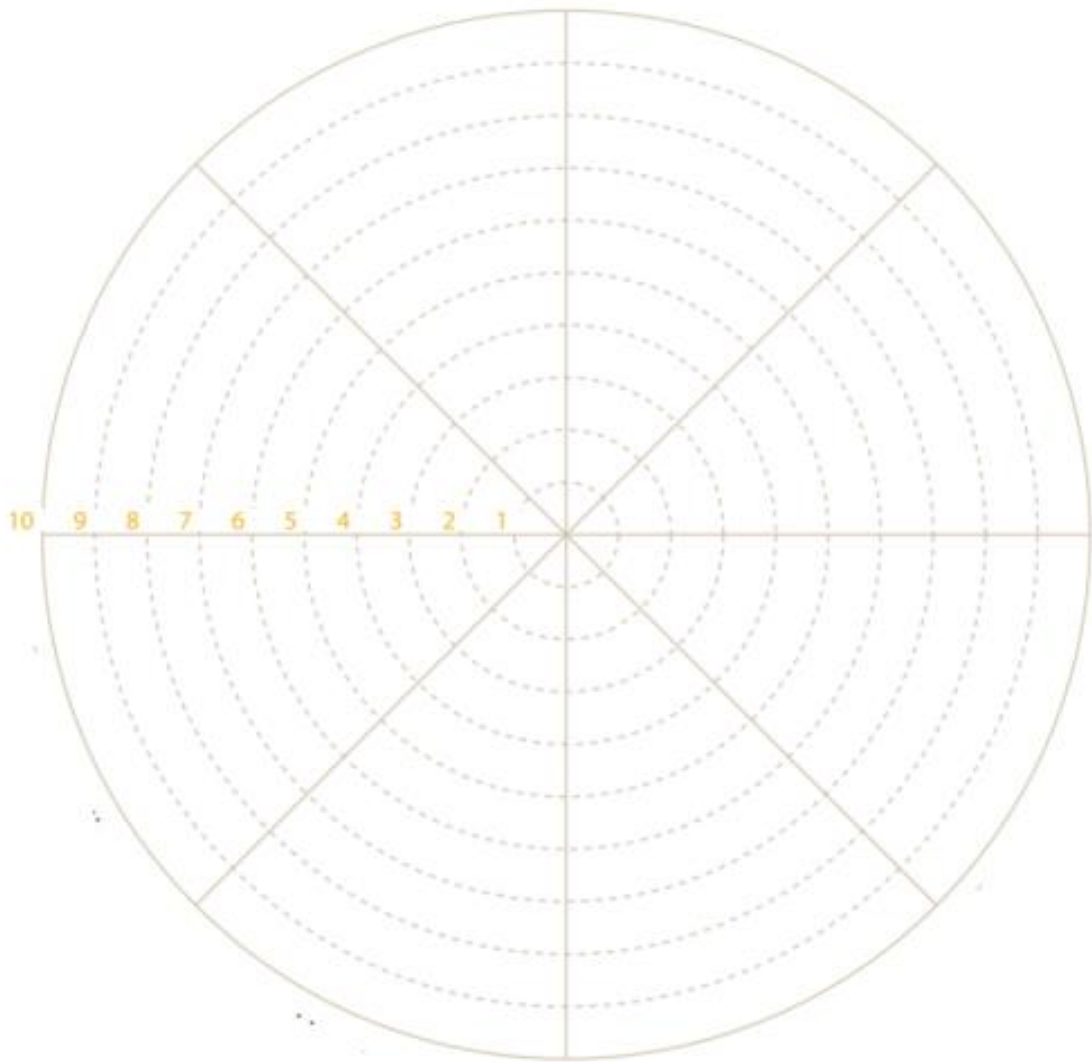
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Consider what your aspirational wheel might look like. How would adjust the time and energy that you dedicate to these priority areas?

**My Aspirational Balance Wheel:**



What might support you in finding the balance you aspire to achieve?

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# Personal Reflection

## *Connection: Social Support*

**Social support** is essential for well-being. Feeling socially safe and connected is a powerful predictor of mental well-being. It also has a direct impact on stress.

**Compassion practices** enhance our perception of our social support and change the quality of our relationships.

Part of resilience is how we perceive and appreciate the social support that we actually have. It's common to focus on lack: what we don't yet have or don't have anymore. Therefore it's important not to overlook small details, such as everyday kindness.

What are some small acts of kindness you have received or witnessed recently?

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Scientists have measured things which induce connection. They have a physiological reaction; they release of oxytocin (the bonding molecule) in the brain. These things all induce connection:

- Touch: including handshakes, hugs (especially long ones), massage
- Social contacts: talking and interacting with other people
- Team sports
- Kindness and friendliness
- Laughter
- Practices of self-compassion and self-kindness
- Practices of loving-kindness and compassion



# Practice Resources

## *Mindful Movement: Active Sequence*

Click to view a video of Gayla Marie Stiles leading a mindful movement practice: [Active Sequence](#)



This active sequence includes gentle, rhythmic movements and mindful yoga, all of which can be safely performed by individuals with varying levels of movement experience and capability. Props are included in this video segment, but are not required if you do not have access to them. All practices included help to ground, balance, and reinvigorate the body-mind.

# Practice Resources

## *Meditation: RAIN Technique*

Click to hear audio of Sharon Salzberg leading a meditation:  
[RAIN Technique](#)

This is an acronym, R-A-I-N, that represents four steps you can take to skillfully work with your emotions and thoughts. These are:

**Recognize** what you are feeling. You can't figure out how to deal with this emotion until you know what's happening. You recognize "this is what's happening right now".

**Acceptance** which can be also called acknowledging. People tend to resist or deny certain feelings, especially if they are unpleasant. But in meditation practice, you open to whatever emotion arises. If you're experiencing anger, that's what you use as a vehicle for mindfulness. If you're experiencing boredom, use that. Don't blame yourself if a troubling emotion comes up. We accept, we acknowledge.

**Investigate** the emotion. Instead of running away from it, move closer, observing it with an unbiased interest. In order to do that, you need to take a moment. Not only to refrain from your usual reaction, but also to unhook from the object of the feeling. The usual pattern when you are caught up in a strong emotion, is to fixate on its trigger or target, rather than examining the emotion itself.

**Non-identifying** with the emotion. The embarrassment or disappointment you are feeling today isn't your whole resume, the final word on who you are and who you are going to be. Instead of confusing a temporary state with your total self, you come to see that your emotions arise, last a while, then disappear. You feel some fear, and then you don't. You're resentful and then you aren't.

These four steps—recognition, acceptance, investigation and non-identification—can be applied to your thoughts and emotions.

The point of mindfulness is to get in touch with the witnessing capacity we all have. You are not trying to eliminate thinking, but rather to know what you are thinking as you're thinking it, not later, after you're taken action. Just as you want to know what you're feeling as we're feeling it.

Mindfulness of our thinking, using something like RAIN, allows us to watch our thoughts, see how one thought leads to the next, decide if we are heading down an unhealthy path. And if so, let go and change directions. It allows you to see that, who you are is much more than a fearful or envious or angry thought. You can rest in the awareness of the thought, rather than be bound up or caught in the thought itself.

# Practice Resources

## *Meditation: Cultivating Equanimity*

Click to hear audio of Sharon Salzberg leading a meditation:  
[Cultivating Equanimity](#)

One of the great poignancies in life is that we are not ultimately in control. Because of that, what we are looking for is the balance between compassion and equanimity.

Compassion can be thought of as the heart's moving toward suffering, to see if we can be of help. Equanimity is a spacious stillness that can accept things as they are. The balance of compassion and equanimity allows us to care, and yet not get overwhelmed and unable to cope because of that caring.

The phrases we use reflect this balance. Choose one or two phrases that are personally meaningful to you. There's some options offered below, you can alter them in any way or use others that you create.

To begin the practice, take as comfortable a position as possible – sitting or lying down. Take a few deep soft breaths to let your body settle. Bring your attention to your breath to begin with.

When you feel ready, you can switch your attention to the silent repetition of the phrases you've chosen. Begin to silently say your chosen phrases over and over again. Feel the meaning of what you're saying, yet without trying to force anything. Let the practice carry you along.

You can call a particular person to mind – recall an image of them or say their name to yourself. Get a feeling for their presence and see what happens as you silently repeat the phrases you've chosen, such as:

*I care about your pain, yet cannot control it*

*I will care for you and cannot keep you from suffering*

*May I offer love, knowing I can't control the course of life, suffering or death*

*I wish you happiness and peace, yet cannot make your choices for you*

And then move on to consider the boundlessness of life, people, creatures, as you silently repeat one or two phrases that express our capacity to connect to, care for all of life and also know peace.

*I will work to alleviate suffering in this world, though I am not in control of the unfolding of the universe*

*May I recognize my limits compassionately, just as I recognize the limitations of others*

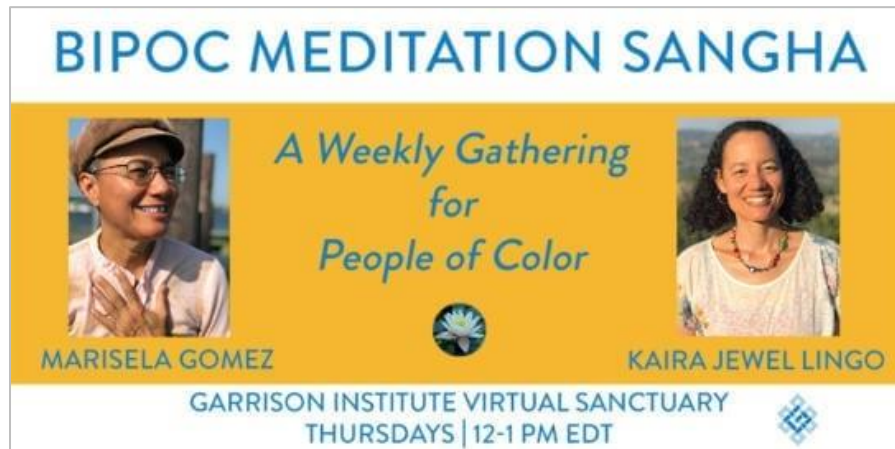
*May I remember compassion as I work to be undisturbed by the comings and goings of events*

When you feel ready, you can open your eyes. See if you can bring some of this sense of spaciousness and compassion into your day.

# Practice Resources

## *Garrison Institute Meditation Groups*

### *BIPOC Meditation Sangha*



The Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Sangha is a weekly gathering of self-identified BIPOC practitioners that provides a safe place to meditate and explore contemplative practices. [Click here to register.](#)

### *Noontime Virtual Meditation Group*



In the spirit of holding space for community and connection, the Garrison Institute offers a Noontime Meditation Group, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Meditators of all levels are welcome. [Click here to register.](#)



# Practice Resources

## *Download Mobile App*

### Care for Caregivers: Skills for Resilience through Meditation & Mindful Movement

**Led by Sharon Salzberg and Gayla Marie Styles**



The Care for Caregivers app provides eight guided meditations that you can watch any time, anywhere, and at your own pace, each between 5-6 minutes long.

**“Nothing has to take a long time. You don’t have to explode your to-do list. Just short moments...will transform your day.”**

**–Sharon Salzberg**

**Be well, Serve well.**

