

# Creating Inner Peace in Troubling Times

## THREE POWERFUL PEACE PRACTICES

1

### Go with gratitude.

Gratitude is a well-researched keystone practice that brings cascading gifts of well-being in body, mind and spirit. With practice positive states become enduring positive traits.

Find one thing you are grateful for from one of these 4 separate domains of experience:

1. Something in the world
2. Something about another
3. Something inside you that you like and respect
4. Something about the culture or people at large

**SIFT:** Notice sensations, images, feelings and thoughts. Place a faint “Mona Lisa” smile on your lips. Hold and enhance the feelings for 60 seconds. Pick a new object and a domain every day. This helps balance the inner and outer world.

2

### Breathe easy to a count of four for two minutes.

Breathing out through pursed lips activates the para-sympathetic nervous system, initiates the relaxation response and opens the doors of perception.

Use a faint “Mona Lisa” smile.

With your hand on your heart, breathe in through your nose four counts or heartbeats, hold for four counts or heartbeats, and breathe out through pursed lips for four counts.

3

### Let your eyes be drawn to beauty.

The effects of the perception of beauty have been well researched. Beauty brings us a moment of rest from the pressures to perform. Beauty represents perfection and the inspiration of what is possible. Seeing something beautiful resizes problems, restores hope, and builds resolve. Find something that takes your breath away.

#### BONUS

Mix the practices together for enhanced outcomes.

## Reducing stress opens the doors of perception

Imagine juggling two tasks. Then gradually add four more. At some point the juggler begins to worry about keeping all the balls in motion. Research shows that experiencing a little stress motivates us to rise to the occasion, to get on target, and often helps us with problem solving.

But on a stress scale from 0 to 10, any “gearing up” much above a 4 level begins to backfire as stress begins to narrow our perspective and limits our choices. If we are routinely over-challenged by life’s demands, our regular problem-solving abilities begin to fail—and our health along with them.

Stress feedback loops lead to anxiety and then depression, slowly canceling hope and imagination. As stress increases, the lens through which we view our life world narrows leading to a hardening of the heart and rigid categories of thought and perception. On the lookout for danger, our brain can cancel out our better selves and drives for actualization. Creating pathways to turn off stress frees problem-solving, creative energies and reignites curiosity.

### Gifts of reducing stress

#### BODY

- Better sleep, energy and blood pressure.
- Improved resistance to colds and faster recovery from illness.
- Reduces cravings and the desire for comfort food.
- Decrease in physical pain.

#### MIND

- More awareness, curiosity and natural interest in others.
- Greater capacity for handling ambiguity and life’s complexity.
- Enhanced learning capacity and focusing ability.
- Bounce back faster in the face of disappointment.
- Raises emotional intelligence.

#### SPIRIT

- Restores and enhances self-control.
- Return of imagination and vision.
- Improved balance and gracefulness in thinking, feeling and action.
- Enhanced awareness of the environment.

## Reducing negative emotions increases emotional intelligence

Not everything goes according to plan. Most of us feel some mixture of anger, sadness or worry, when our dreams are threatened. This ancient emotional warning system generates anger in the neck and shoulders, disappointment in the chest, and fear in the belly. These painful primitive states are mother nature’s messengers to remind us to take meaningful action—to do something positive, to get us back into purposive living.

But these messengers don’t have to shout. We understand the meaning of the message and can easily erase negative emotions, like black birds flying out of a tree. Reducing negative emotions does not mean we have to forgive or forget; it just frees our energies to pursue our heart-based goals with enthusiasm.

### Gifts of reducing negative emotions

#### BODY

- Relaxed emotional zones in the shoulders, back, chest and stomach.
- Decreased emotional arousal of negative feelings.
- Decreased pain in the neck and back.
- Easier and deeper breathing.
- Greatly improved sleep.
- Improved cardiovascular health.

#### MIND

- Increased natural compassion and insight.
- More effective communication.
- Greater resilience over time.
- Improved ability to understand multiple perspectives.
- Complexity of thought increases as hardened categories relax.

#### SPIRIT

- Increased awareness of the world’s interconnectedness.
- Increased self-compassion and generosity to others.
- Increased humility, transparency, forgiveness and authenticity.
- Increased awareness of the positive intentions of others.
- Added growth in Spiritual Intelligence (SI).

# The Peace Pyramid



Underneath all human action is a common intentional structure. Reducing stress and negative emotions creates a graceful, open mind and a natural desire to be of service to others. The gift of taking natural action is peace.

THESE TOOLS ARE PRESENTED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE BY



**neUPATHWAYS**

Conscious control of pain, stress & emotions.