What could it look like to lean into habits of rest and renewal this spring break? This guide can serve as a daily practice to help you do so.

Throughout the week, we'll journey through the following topics:
1. Listening to the Self
2. Entering Rest
3. Self-Compassion
4. Listening to the Body
5. Belonging
6. Renewal
7. Preparation and Dreaming

Each day includes:
- Quotation(s)
- Affirmations
- Meditation/Journaling Questions
- Breath Practice

This guide is not restrictive. Enter it as you need, in the order or timing that you need. You have agency here. You can be centered here. Let these simple rituals of self-attunement ground you over the course of spring break.
The practice of attention to the breath has been shown to decrease heart rates, ground our senses, and reduce anxiety.

To practice the breathing exercises each day—
*Place the palm of your hand on the skin of your chest.*
If you can, *Place your feet on the ground.*
If it feels safe to do so, *close your eyes.*
Feel where you may be carrying tension in your body. *Release what you can.*

Silently name and hold the first phrase as you inhale.
Silently name and hold the second phrase as you exhale.
Use the breath pace that feels right for you. Slowly has added benefits.
Try 5 seconds in, 5 seconds out to start, and adjust to what feels possible and right in your body.
DAY ONE
Listening to the Self

There is in you something that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself and sometimes there is so much traffic going on in your minds, so many different kinds of signals, so many vast impulses floating through your organism that go back thousands of generations, long before you were even a thought in the mind of creation, and you are buffeted by these, and in the midst of all of this you have got to find out what your name is. Who are you? How does the sound of the genuine come through to you?

—Howard Thurman

Affirmations:

I will listen for the sound of me.

To be human is to have needs. I am free to honor mine.

I can become honest about my false selves without punishing myself for them.

I remain near to my true self. I am free to expand.

Meditation/Journaling Questions:

1. What parts of yourself are you encountering for the first time this semester?
2. What is most true of you today? Do you feel safe to live into your true self?
3. How does the busyness or "noise" of the semester affect your capacity to attune to yourself? What parts of you are the first to be silenced?
4. Locate a recent memory of feeling grounded in who you are. Who are the people or practices that help you in this?

BREATHE PRACTICE

Inhale:
I know who I am.

Exhale:
I will listen for the sound of me.
DAY TWO
Entering Rest

I think just the sight of seeing a Black body at rest is radical, is liberating. It’s freedom. It’s shocking… I think seeing that in this culture where Black bodies are looked at as a problem, where Black bodies are looked at as something shameful, something that wants and needs to be ended and the violence of trauma that’s happened to our bodies, to see us in a rest state, to see us relaxing and laying back is really, really powerful.

—Tricia Hersey

Affirmations:
*My rest will not be predicated on apology. I lie down in freedom.*
*I can rest and still be loved.*
*Exhaustion will not prove my worth. I am not a machine.*
*Rest is how we heal. Rest is how we dream.*

Meditation/Journaling Questions:

1. What habits of rest were demonstrated in your household growing up. How did they change in seasons of stress? How has this informed your own practices of rest?
2. Tricia Hersey regularly names that “rest is resistance”. What violent norms are you resisting when you rest? Explore any guilt you experience when walking away from work.
3. What fears does resting rouse in you? What is at risk when you think about resting? What is at risk when you neglect to rest?
4. What boundaries can you set around work this week? In what spaces do you find it difficult to maintain boundaries? Who are the people who will help you to say no?

BREATHE PRACTICE

Inhale:
Exhaustion won't save me.

Exhale:
I am free to rest.
“You do not have to be good./ You do not have to walk on your knees/ for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting./ You only have to let the soft animal of your body/ love what it loves.”

—Mary Oliver

"say it with your whole black mouth: i am innocent & if you are not innocent, say this: i am worthy of forgiveness, of breath after breath."

—Danez Smith

**Affirmations:**

I forgive myself for the parts of me I left behind.
I'm done punishing myself for what I felt I had to do in order to survive.
Shame is a liar. I want more for myself.
I don't have to be perfect to be loved.

**Meditation/Journaling Questions:**

1. How do you tend to handle failure? Is it easier for you to have compassion on yourself or others? How do you view your own shortcomings?
2. Are there hopes you had for yourself this semester that you haven't been able to meet? How has that changed your hope?
3. Who in your life is someone who practices self-compassion well?
4. Explore the tension between wanting to do better and honoring your present.
5. Explore the tension between accountability and forgiveness.
6. What is something you'd like to forgive yourself for in this season?

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**BREATHE PRACTICE**

**Inhale:**
I release the shame.

**Exhale:**
I forgive myself.
DAY FOUR
Listening to the Body

“The body tells the truth regardless of if we speak its language or not...”
— Lama Rod Owen

"In this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it... You got to love it. This is flesh I'm talking about here. Flesh that needs to be loved. Feet that need to rest and to dance; backs that need support; shoulders that need arms, strong arms I'm telling you."
— Toni Morrison

Affirmations:
*Caring for this body is an act of resistance.*
*I deserve to feel safe in my body. I will stay whole.*
*This body is good. I will not abandon it.*

Meditation/Journaling Questions:

1. How does the culture of Cornell compel you to embrace or deny your body?
2. Psychologist and author, Dr. Bessel van der Kolk, says “traumatized people feel chronically unsafe in their bodies”, leading the traumatized to turn away from their selves, and even neglect the body. How have or haven't you sensed this in yourself?
3. What does listening to your body mean? Under stress or in grief, what areas of bodily care are you most tempted to neglect?
4. If you attuned to your body, what would it communicate to you today?

**BREATHE PRACTICE**

*Inhale:* I will listen to my body.

*Exhale:* Let this breath be my resistance.
“Social support is not the same as merely being in the presence of others. The critical issue is reciprocity: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else's mind and heart. For our physiology to calm down, heal, and grow we need a visceral feeling of safety.”

—Bessel van der Kolk

"Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.”

—Zora Neale Hurston

**Affirmations:**

I am worthy of belonging.

I am not a prisoner to loneliness. I deserve to be known.

There is beauty in the collective. I won't get free alone.

I belong where I can breathe.

**Meditation/Journaling Questions:**

1. Do you tend to feel most yourself when you're alone or in the presence of others? How does this affect your habits around community?
2. What are you longing for that can be found in community? Can you trust your community to care for you?
3. Explore a story of your own alienation. How did this form how you approach cultivating friendship?
4. Who do you feel safe around in this season? What bonds in your life could use strengthening? As you look toward the rest of the semester, what relational habits would you like to take up?
“Are you sure, sweetheart, that you want to be well?... Just so’s you’re sure, sweetheart, and ready to be healed, cause wholeness is no trifling matter. A lot of weight when you’re well.”
— Toni Cade Bambara, The Salt Eaters

**Affirmations:**

*I am ready to be well. I open myself up to care.*

*Healing isn't linear. I make peace with my journey.*

*I am not who I was. I can honor my becoming.*

**Meditation/Journaling Questions:**

1. **What renewal do you need in order to end the semester well?** Physical? Mental? Relational?
2. **Sometimes healing and renewal can feel like we are dismissing our own pain.** How can you distinguish renewal from toxic positivity?
3. **Healing and renewal are not synonymous but they are closely connected.** Is there healing you need to remain present to this week?
4. **What boundaries can you set to ensure you are able to protect your peace as break comes to a close?**
5. **Spring can be a helpful season to consider growth and rebirth.** What does that look like for you? Are there parts of you that you'd like to resurrect in this season?

**B R E A T H  P R A C T I C E**

*Inhale:* Healing is after me.

*Exhale:* I receive renewal.
Why do you go away? So that you can come back. So that you can see the place you came from with new eyes and extra colors. And the people there see you differently, too. Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving.

—Terry Pratchett

**Affirmations:**

*Life is not static. I prepare myself for change.*
*I am not a prisoner to sadness. This won't be forever.*
*I give myself permission to dream.*
*I give this dream permission to expand.*

**Meditation/Journaling Questions:**

1. Take account of your body and inner life. How can you maintain a fidelity to self as break ends? What do you still need that you are afraid to name aloud?
2. Do you feel prepared to return to classes? Why or why not? Explore any feelings of anxiety or excitement.
3. Consider your capacity for hope in this season. What are you able to hope for? What are you unable to muster imagination for? How is this affecting you? What would it look like for you to have patience with your hope in this season?
4. What resources on campus do you want to explore when you return?

**B R E A T H  P R A C T I C E**

*Inhale:* I will accept nothing less than dignity.

*Exhale:* Liberation is coming.
The Office of Spirituality and Meaning-Making is located at:
118 Anabel Taylor Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853

Follow us at:
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