

Chapter Three

THE THIRD SACRED RESPONSIBILITY: KNOW YOURSELF

You need to learn to select your thoughts just the same way you select your clothes every day. This is a power you can cultivate.

—Elizabeth Gilbert

And I mean *really* know yourself. Understand every response, every reaction, every part of your body and every part of your life. Know it, own it and implement your plan of thriving in your third act. Know yourself as a Sacred Responsibility. It is our sacred responsibility to know ourselves so that we may thrive in this life by shifting the energy of the things that keep us stuck, so we can shine in the things that make us shimmer with life-force. Knowing our self is self-empowerment.

Let's face it, sisters. Knowing ourselves *is* power. When we know what increases and decreases our life-force we are empowered, and at this time in our lives we are making it our sacred responsibility to increase our life force, not decrease it.

How would you expect to have the best time of your life if you don't even know what you love to do most? How could you have your most open mind if you don't know where you are stuck in judgement? How could you have the most open heart if you don't even know what makes you most happy? How could you take responsibility for fabulous body health if you don't even know what actions make you feel better or worse? Get to know yourself intimately.

Keep the wisdom, toss the judgment

Our thoughts begin in our head, then come out of our mouths and show up in our actions and inevitably express themselves in our bodies. Tending to our thoughts, words and actions like a fascinated explorer makes the journey exciting and decreases self-judgement in the process which is great training ground for not judging others.

Over the course of your exploration, and taking the Sacred Responsibility to Know Yourself, you are going to come to terms with how you have treated yourself in the past. You may be surprised to realize how long you have been active in a behaviour that is on your list of "things that don't make me feel good".

Let's treat it as if we are digging up a buried treasure, let it come up and out. When something comes up for you like this, go ahead and take a moment to ask yourself, "what the hell was I thinking?" But inquire only to know yourself better as you move forward in Self-Care.

The issue with behaviours that are no longer serving us is that we don't know until we know. And we are way too old to be judging ourselves for anything about our past. We are creating our revised third act plan, our vision of how we truly want to feel in our lives.

Living from an old program, our family stories

Sometimes we will carry stories of our family in such a tight grip that it becomes nearly impossible to penetrate the actual origins of the story, "because that is the way we do it in this family." Period. Questioning a family belief rarely even comes to mind for most of us. There is an unconscious agreement we have in our families to protect our story. Then all it takes is one pioneering soul to come along and ask, "why?"

Enter my version of The Pot Roast Story:

A young woman is preparing a pot roast while her friend looks on. She cuts off both ends of the roast, seasons it and puts it in the pan.

"Why do you cut off the ends?" her friend asks.

"I don't know. My mother always did it that way and I learned how to cook it from her."

Her friend's question made her curious about her pot roast preparation. During her next visit home, she asked her mother, "How do you cook a pot roast?"

Her mother proceeded to explain and added, "You cut off both ends, season it, put it in the pot and then in the oven."

"Why do you cut off the ends?" the daughter asked.

Baffled, the mother offered, "That's how my mother did it and I learned it from her!"

Her daughter's inquiry made the mother think more about the pot roast preparation. When she next visited her mother she asked, "Mom, how do you cook a pot roast?"

"Well, you prepare it with spices, cut off both ends and put it in the pot."

She asked her mom, "But why do you cut off the ends?"

"Well, the roasts were always bigger than the pot that we had back then. I had to cut off the ends to fit it into the pot that I owned."

The "why" of the family story was that simple...

Knowing Yourself in Relationships

Until we make knowing ourselves a priority, to really look at what lifts us up and what brings us down, we will keep on doing the same things to exhaustion. When the plan is to rock our third act, we need to clean house in all areas of our life and it is not always going to be pretty. Occasionally we are going to open a jar from the back of the fridge and gag. But don't forget that there was a point when that festering jar of slime mattered to you, which may be a metaphor for some old relationships too.

If we can get really honest with ourselves and deeply compassionate, it will be much easier to see when we are bringing an outdated family belief into our third act relationships. I watch many couples (and close friends) struggle in their relationships because they don't realize they are fighting for a

certain belief that came from a passed-down family program that most times doesn't even apply to their modern experience.

Let me put it this way: have you ever thought for a moment, "oh my God, I'm my Mother!?" Then you have more clarity in this area of how we naturally mimic the ones who raised us, including the beliefs that were passed down to them while they were being raised.

Knowing Yourself as a Sacred Responsibility is the key to freeing yourself up to live your own interesting life and living richly within your relationships. Get to know what your belief is, and what is someone else's belief you have unconsciously adopted.

Rebranding in Relationships

Anyone who knows me knows that I find kindness hot! I prefer rebranding in relationships that seem to be stuck, and I love the power and maturity that can be found in getting through something that seems like it is a deal breaker. No one really wants to hurt another person and when we get hurt it is more likely that we have a past pain rising up and inserting itself into the situation. Know yourself, know what you truly believe and know what comes from an old program.

It is a natural way of the mind to continually scan all of our past experiences and apply them to our current experiences. We could look at it as the way we can find our equilibrium in our lives, how we make sense of things, to understand our relationship to our environment. Our mind will search in our stored data and present it as evidence.

If we are not willing to enjoy and cultivate our own growth, change, and maturity, we will have a hard time seeing the opportunity to do this in our relationships, and it will become very difficult to maintain a healthy, honest relationship. We absolutely must take sacred responsibility to get to know the areas where we need to grow, mature, and make changes so that we can thrive in fulfilling relationships. There is absolutely nothing that can bring us more happiness than fulfilling friendships.

Go ahead, try and think of something else more fulfilling than your relationships with others, then think about that thing without anyone to share it with, ever. A fiery and fabulous woman in her third act honours her relationships like the treasures they are. Go for it, ladies! Bring your most loving, honest, kind and vulnerable self to your relationships and enjoy each other fully. People are beautiful, people are sacred, and always remember people have feelings. Be kind, it's hot!

You: Then and Now

I have a pair of white baby boots hanging just above my coat closet at home and every day I see them. They have been there for years. My mom gave them to me one day and I didn't find any significance in the boots at the time or for many years after. But there did come a time, not all that long ago, when I saw them in a whole new light.

I began to see those boots as a symbol of my growth and maturity. For so many years they were simply a cute reminder of me as a baby. As the story goes, I walked very early on so the shoes would give me a laugh when they caught my eye, reminding me that I've been on the move right from the start.

Now when I look at those boots, I see my potential. I see endless possibilities for myself and they remind me now that there is so much more to come. The amount of life experience I've had since the time those shoes fit is quite incredible to me. The places I've been, the people I've met, the things that I have learned and all the rich experiences I have had in this life so far shine from those shoes.

It is exciting for me to be reminded that I am no longer that person. I'm not the eight-month-old child walking for the first time but a wise and loving woman who has left thousands of footprints over many parts of the world. The shoes have been with me for so many years and wherever I lived I have always hammered a nail above the coat closet and hung these baby boots there.

Originally, they were a funny symbol pointing people to the coat cupboard, but as I've matured their symbolism has matured with me. They now represent so much more, and I think I have an understanding now why people bronze their baby shoes!

A very easy way to start this process of getting to know yourself and understanding your growth is to look at a pair of shoes or a piece of clothing from your childhood. If you don't have anything like that available to you, look at a childhood photo. If you are unable to find something of your own, use something that you still have from your children's past.

You can see quite clearly that the shoes or sweater no longer fit, that the writing in a birthday card a child made for you is not the way they write as an adult. And we don't force them to wear the old shoes or sweaters that no longer fit. We let ourselves and others grow up.

With that in mind, can we stop holding ourselves and others so tightly gripped to past stories and experiences? We are not that person anymore, but we can certainly enjoy the journey that we have made to this point and feel excited about the journey ahead, filled with our infinite potential still as a creative force in our lives. Make space to know yourself by watching how you create your new stories, not relive your past ones.

Know yourself and how you respond to life

Let's face it, giving our happiness as much consideration as we give our disappointment is going to take an overhaul of the way we think. It calls for a complete 'renovation' of the quality of our thoughts, words, and actions from this moment forward, starting with how we respond to life.

When living in sacred responsibility we take on the joyous task of being responsible for our happiness, for our joy, for our connection to others, and for our gratitude for the absolute treat it is to be alive.

We no longer point fingers and blame others for our dissatisfaction in any areas of our life, even if we believe it is their fault. We no longer *make* it anyone else's responsibility to make us happy because we do that for ourselves. Let us be open to the notion that when we shift our thoughts, words, and actions towards greater clarity and happiness, we may just inspire those closest to us to do the same. We take full responsibility and we rise to the occasion, much like a Phoenix from the ashes, because we are both fiery and fabulous.

The mythology of the Phoenix rising from the ashes is a great symbol to inspire us and to use as a template for seeing ourselves overcoming adversity—even the death of something that we loved or deeply identified with. This Greek myth tell us that the Phoenix is a bird that had a life span of hundreds of years. At the conclusion of this long life, the Phoenix with its fiery plumage returns to its

nest, where both bird and nest are reduced to ashes in a fabulous show of flames. And, from the ashes the new life is born. So, it is a story of change, rebirth, liberation, and new life.

A Change of Perspective

A hard truth: the people who we want to blame for our lack of joy, the ones who said or did something (or many things) to disappoint us are usually the ones who need more understanding, more patience and more love. And, many times we have to be more understanding, patient and loving from afar. While we are taking responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions, we are beginning to gently and lovingly liberate ourselves from our life's sorrows that can bury themselves deeply into our cells and keep us from living fully and passionately. Part of knowing ourselves and of living passionately, is fully feeling all that the experiences have brought us.

Little by little we find the wisdom in the sorrow, we begin to tell the story differently and we trust that our happiness does not depend on anything but our choice to see things differently, for our own peace. In that, it is an act of loving-kindness for all involved. *A Course in Miracles* (Dr. Helen Schucman) teaches us that a miracle is a change in perspective. That seems so empowering to me and a beautiful message of taking Sacred Responsibility for the way we see things.

Getting to know the new you!

Sometimes the first stage of becoming the next great version of ourselves is by recognizing the parts of us that we no longer identify with. I was having lunch with a girlfriend and she was saying how her husband was going on about how great she was at being on top of everything, and how she can take care of business better than anyone he knows and on and on about how fabulous and efficient she is.

How nice to receive all of that praise right? Yet she found her response to his enthusiasm over her ability to multitask, read the fine print, and cook Super Bowl chili all at the same time was, "I'm not that person anymore."

He said, "Oh sure you are; you are so good at..."

And she said, "Honey, look at me. I am not that person anymore, that was 25 years of being that, and I am happily not that person anymore." She said it calmly and kindly.

She said he paused and said, "Wow, ok yeah, I can see what you are saying."

Fabulous lunch conversation for a woman who is writing a book on rewriting our story! I share this because I loved that she didn't need to stomp her feet and scream about how she wants things to be different at this time in her life. She didn't have to blame anyone for holding her to a life she now considered a memory. She simply stated that she is not that person anymore in a kind way and had no feeling she needed to make any excuses or explain herself.

She took sacred responsibility for her leaving her "old self" to great memories *and* she expressed to her husband that she was operating a new way now!

I did ask her, "Well if you are not that person anymore, who are you now?"

She thought for a moment, laughed, and said, "I haven't decided yet."

The ultimate in "being okay" with not knowing yourself while you are getting to Know Yourself!

I am always so happy to hear the stories of women who are transforming their lives in a way that gives them and those around them peace and in ways that maintain their energy levels. It's hard to be a fabulous Phoenix rising from your nest of ashes if someone douses your flames with a lack of understanding that you have a desire to shift or change something about yourself.

I love this story for many reasons, but something else that stands out is that the things she said "she was not" anymore, were things that are great attributes; these things were compliments and her partner's observations of how fantastic he thought she was. I loved the power in choosing not to be "that person" anymore even when "that person" is awesome!

Change because it excites you

Sisters, I want us all to lean in on this one and really hear it. We do not have to choose to change because we don't like something in our lives, we can choose to change because we are happily complete with something in our lives. We can choose to change because it excites us.

Can you hear it in that way? I do not need to leave my job because I hate it, I can leave my job because I created a more fitting opportunity elsewhere. I don't have to stop eating junk because it is well...junk. I can stop eating junk because I have discovered other yummy things that raise my energy. I do not have to move across town because I hate my neighbours. I move across town because I found more like-hearted neighbours in another area.

I bring these examples up because we are starting to live from an energy of wisdom now. We do not have to wait until we are frustrated and angry with something in our lives in order to make a change. When we take sacred responsibility for our happiness, we see the signs long before a situation gets so big that we find ourselves "hating" a part of our lives. We are so tuned into what raises our energy and what depletes it that we see the red flags. We see the signs that change is our best choice well before it gets to a point of hate.

This is one of the blessings of life over fifty. We change things in our inner and outer environments because we love to, not because we "have to". That is an old way of connecting with change and we take sacred responsibility for our change, which in itself makes us happy. We are prepared to be challenged at times, and we are building our resilience for just those times, because change will come whether we plan it in advance or wait for it to smack us upside the head. Change is a guarantee.

Ladies, I see our sacred journey together to be exciting and filled with change and growth, and that has very little to do with changing because we dislike things in our lives, or about ourselves. Occasionally things like that will rise to the surface. Heck, we have been living this life for some time now, so some of the dust bunnies are bound to come out from under the couch and we can thank them for their dusty wisdom and burn them to ashes.

Moving forward together, we steer our hearts in new directions, into the mystery that living from our most authentic self will surely reveal.

Know Yourself, Challenge Your Negativity

It baffles me how easily we can loop into a negative spin, sending ourselves down a rabbit hole of disappointment. Going from a moment of ease just walking down the street to utter disappointment in the blink of an eye, or more fitting, in the shift of the mind.

We are amazing human beings who can go from joy to disdain in the snap of a finger and we do it with gusto! And then we get really into it and before we know it we have decided everyone is against us, no one can be trusted with our hearts, and we are not worthy of respect. Top that off with your wallet dumping all of your change on the ground at the bus stop and it's a perfect human storm of total disappointment. And it's not even lunch time yet!

What I will propose to all of us using this book, *The Eight Sacred Responsibilities* is that together, we challenge ourselves. Challenge ourselves to observe, from a renewed perspective of sacred responsibility, those shifts in our mind that take us down the rabbit hole of disappointment, and rewire our operating system so that more often than not we are coming from a place of balance. I will warn you—it's not going to happen overnight.

If I handed out guitars right now and said, "We are all going to play *Stairway to Heaven*", most of us would need some practice time. We would have questions, need to organize ourselves a bit (or a lot!) but it wouldn't happen with a snap of a finger. We would need a bit of time to get into harmony with each other.

So, we can look at the areas in our life where we have a desire to shift, change and grow as a learning experience just as if we are learning to play a complicated song on a guitar. One note at a time, that will turn into a chord, turning into a second chord, with each step becoming a satisfying thirst for doing things differently.

And yep... occasionally it will get complicated because change is made of rubber. It stretches us and then we bounce back to our original mindsets. Then it stretches us a little further and when we bounce back we don't go quite as far into our old stories. We are setting ourselves up to thrive in a brand-new story, one that is so interesting it is like we are reading a fascinating novel about a strong woman explorer. But instead of reading about her we are becoming her.

And the exciting part is that we never complete the journey. Just when we think we have hit our stride and we are indeed a shining example of a fiery and fabulous woman in her third act, and that our lives couldn't get any better...BAM! We hit the next level of richness in our lives and we start again from this new stage. As the universe continues to expand we, too, expand with her.

A self-empowered life

When we really get rolling forward living from this new place of freedom that comes to us in our third act, it seems to take on a life of its own. Our new way of living and taking full responsibility for our health and happiness is in our hands and we are now gliding on the energy of a self-empowered life. No one is going to live our life for us, and we wouldn't want them to. As a matter of fact, fiery, fabulous women won't let anyone live their life for them! So, sacred sisters, let's get to it!

All of your choices—good and not so good—were your choices and they served you in some way at the time, so be proud of how you have lived your life and the things you chose to give your time and attention to. I know that because you are reading this book you are past choosing things for

yourself that don't increase your life force. So, tossing out the vile jar of slime will be an easy choice to make.

Keep the wisdom, toss the judgement.

You are now creating space for yourself to breathe and move and enjoy your life and to fully get to know yourself again. I am finding that for myself it has been like meeting someone for the first time that seems very familiar to me, a bit of a *déjà vu* experience. Even though I can feel my new self is alive and thriving I also still feel that part of me that has a heart of fire, the wild part of me that continues to burn with passion for life and it made me think about that term "young at heart". In my 30's and 40's that applied to me for sure and, as much as I thought it still did, it actually doesn't. I'm on to the next stage and young at heart is too lightweight for me now.

As the years go by and more of the wisdom I now walk with reveals itself, a more fitting thing to say about myself and women thriving in their third act is, "hearts on fire". There are many things that catch the eye and the interest of women over fifty. We are making it a priority to let the things that we are passionate about be the things that turn our smoldering embers into flames. We are no longer "young at heart" but women with hearts on fire. Which may explain those hot flashes!

Let's get into creative play mode now and start the Know Yourself process by playing the lottery game. Perhaps you have played this before, it's called, **"Everything I would do if I won the lottery."**

If this is your first time playing, I welcome you to the fun! Now go ahead and take a few breaths and start to imagine yourself as the lottery winner, and for the sake of some semblance of rules to this game, let's all play as if we won the same amount say, **Sixty Million Dollars**. This was inspired by the amount of a big lottery draw that happened last night. Let's go with this amount since it is real to someone out there today.

Begin with how you feel as you look at your ticket and the moment you realize the sixty million is yours. See yourself at the lottery office receiving your cheque. Now see your bank account with sixty million dollars in it. Yes, it is perfectly alright to have a huge smile on your face right now. *We are* practicing feeling like we have won the lottery. Smiling would most certainly show up in the handbook on, *"What to do when you win the lottery."*

Go ahead and let a big-ass grin take over your whole face right now. Heck, you can even yell out, "I won!"

Get into it, ladies. It is our game, our imagination, and we can get as far into it as we are willing to let ourselves go.

Now begin to feel how your heart and mind accept that you are able to do any and all things that make your heart sing. Feel it and trust it as truth. Begin now to play-plan the way you will spend your money. This is the fun part because with sixty million dollars you can do anything in your wildest dreams. You can just put the book down for 5–10 minutes now and dream away.

Welcome back from your imaginative journey of absolute freedom. Did you spend all of your money? Did you give it all away to your favorite people and places? Did you really get into it? Did you see yourself having a great time? Did you get into humanitarian projects bringing fresh drinking water and education to communities without these things in place? Did you hire someone to drive you around everywhere you wanted to go? How far did you go into imagining yourself swimming in the absolute freedom sixty million dollars could bring you?

Did you find that you began to create limitations where there were none? Did you start to think about who you wouldn't share with? Did you take more time planning how you would save, invest and hoard your winnings than choosing all of the things that would increase your health and happiness?

How we respond to a game that lets us play with the idea of absolute freedom, and what we would do with that freedom, gives us a good indication of how much freedom we believe we are allowed to enjoy. As well it's a great indication of what actually does bring us joy.

What was the first thing you thought of? To take a luxury trip to a destination you have dreamed of? Well now you know you walk with the spark of travel in your heart. So, write in your journal or in the margin here "I love to travel."

Who did you bring with you? Write the names of those people down, too, because they are the ones you desire to share your time with. The next time you are making your way (traveling) to visit a person or a place you have never been before, think about how much you love to travel, and that you have an adventurous spirit even if you are simply taking the bus to a new part of the city. We can start to see that our lives are filled with more everyday adventure when we open our minds up to unlimited thinking.

Did you hire a personal chef with your winnings? I always do! So, in my journal it says, "I love eating well!"

You can go ahead and make a few notes also of the places you held yourself back. Did you run out of creative ways to spend your sixty million dollars? Did you spend more time plotting how you would get someone else to collect the winnings for you so certain people in your life would never find out you were crazy rich? Write their names down, too. These folks are likely the ones who will challenge your growth process.

If intuitively you know that you need to hide your good fortune from someone in your life then you will eventually need to look at rebranding, restructuring or releasing those relationships. We can do that directly with the person or we can do it without them if we shift the way we perceive people and the way we react to our more challenging relationships. Many times it is enough to shift the whole relationship into something beneficial for everyone. Remember we are taking responsibility for our happiness and ninety percent of our happiness comes by choosing it.

This is all just information; we are trying to get to know ourselves more intimately and this is all part of the unearthing of our current state of being. Our hearts and minds are full of rich and interesting information. For many of us this will be the first time we were able to see that we have been holding ourselves back and keeping our imaginations small. I play this game quite often.

Go ahead and choose on a scale of 1-10: How free did you feel during the Know Yourself exercise? 1 being not very free at all, but more stuck and 10 being so free to enjoy the game that you could have happily played on.

Circle your position on our scale now.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Add this game to your practice, play it occasionally or often as you want, and begin to observe where you are in your life and how that effects the freedom of your imagination and your ability to see yourself completely free from worry and complaints.

Harvard's Grant Glueck Study of Happiness

Activist Melanie Curtin wrote a fantastic piece where she gives us a clear picture of the results of the *Harvard Happiness Study*, conducted over a 75-year period. I highly recommend reading her full article (link is in the Resources section), but I will give you a few of the highlights from it here to whet your happiness whistle.

Robert Waldinger, director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development says, "The clearest message that we get from this 75-year study is this: Good relationships keep us happier and healthier. Period. It's not just the number of friends you have, and it's not whether or not you're in a committed relationship. It's the quality of your close relationships that matters."

The Pursuit of Happiness

Imagine if you will, that we are in the pursuit of happiness together. That you understand and truly feel that what we are doing is, instead of moving forward like explorers of land and sea, we are diving inside of ourselves, deep into the well of happiness that is within us. Our practices are our physical, emotional and spiritual road to travel. We are walking inward towards the layers of happiness, fulfillment and understanding that we have been cultivating for over fifty years. We have a foundation of wisdom within us, a foundation of street smarts that is acquired solely due to the number of days we have lived.

We have a foundation of happiness within us that we are stepping up onto like a stepping on the stage of our life well-lived. As we continue breathing with focus each day, we will be taken deeper into ourselves. The journey is inward and often confusing because we have been programed to look outside of ourselves for most things in this life.

I want to honour that part of our journey also, that accumulation part of our journey where we have collected houses and cars and furniture, as well as letters after our names, awards and respect for our work of raising families and raising ourselves into an incredible expression of who we are. Now we stand strong on all of those foundations and we breathe.

Then what happens is that we become calmer. More at ease with ourselves. We become interested in ourselves, not simply just more accepting of our current state, but truly interested in all of the experiences that got us to this point and interested in where we may go from here. We become well practiced in being in the present moment.

Take a Magical Moment breath right here, right now. The only thing you need to bring focus to is:

Inhale, retain, exhale, pause...

Inhale, retain, exhale, pause...

Inhale, retain, exhale, pause...

That is the Magical Moment breath we give ourselves every day. Choose when you can fit it in and do it.

Our Third Sacred Practice

Our Daily Statement

Today I open myself fully to living a sacred life, I call in now the people, places and things that lift me up, light me up and hold me up as the accountable, responsible and authentic woman I am here to be. And so it is.

The Know Yourself Imagination Practice (Imagining/Thoughts)

Your imagination practice is the game “Everything I would I do if I Won the Lottery.” (NOTE: This is a condensed version of the game you just played above.)

How fun! A creative game of liberating your mind and heart from restraints and old programs.

Play as often as you like and keep an eye on how your scale of 1-10 shifts when there are changes in your life and your attitude.

This is not only a fun practice, it is also very serious to me. I use a similar one in my meditation groups. It is serious to me because of its ability to expose the truth of where we are mentally as well as emotionally in our lives. It can show us where we are around trust and help to free us from living programs that belong to other people, or that are now outdated for us.

Imagine now that you are checking your lottery ticket and you realize you have won.

Feel winning flood over your body.

Now go ahead and take a few breaths and start to imagine yourself as the lottery winner and of **Sixty Million Dollars.**

Begin with how you feel as you look at your ticket and the moment you realize the sixty million is yours. See yourself at the lottery office receiving your cheque. Now see your bank account with sixty million dollars in it. Yes, it is perfectly alright to have a huge smile on your face right now. *We are practicing feeling like we have won the lottery. Smiling would most certainly show up in the handbook on, “What to do when you win the lottery.”*

Go ahead and let a big grin take over your whole face right now. You can even yell out, “I won!”

Get into it. Ladies. It is our game, our imagination, and we can get as far into it as we are willing to let ourselves go.

Now begin to feel how your heart and mind accept that you can do any, and all of the things that make your heart sing.

Feel it and trust it as truth.

Begin now to play-plan the way you will spend your money. This is the fun part because with sixty million dollars you can do anything in your wildest dreams. You can just put the book down for 5–10 minutes now and dream away.

Go ahead and chose, on a scale of 1–10, how **free** did you feel during the Know Yourself imagination exercise? 1 being not very free at all, but more stuck

10 being so free to enjoy the game that you could have happily played on.

Circle your position on our scale now.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Keep doing a check-in with your scale of 1-10 on how free you feel doing this exercise, until you feel so free that spending sixty million dollars is a piece of cake to you!

If I could get my point across in this book in two words and an exclamation mark it would be - Have Fun!

Because this is the point now.

The Know Yourself Breathing Practice (Breathing/Words)

Do this exercise from a seated position.

Inhale, retain, exhale, and pause.

Continue to breathe from the four parts of your breath.

Now we use a simple variation of alternate nostril breathing to balance our mind and bodies as we become more acquainted with ourselves and how it feels to be more relaxed and live from a deeper place of calm.

Take your thumb, using the tip of your thumb to cover your right nostril so you block air from entering this side.

Inhale deeply on your left side, then retain your breath.

While you retain your breath, switch your thumb to cover your left nostril.

Now exhale out of the right nostril.

Pause.

Keep the left side covered, inhale deeply on your right side.

Retain your breath.

Switch and cover your right-side nostril.

Exhale deeply on the left.

Inhale left side.

Retain your breath and switch.

Cover left and exhale right side.

Keep this going, switching back and forth, slow and steady for a full minute.

Pause, then do another round if you'd like.

Really enjoy the pause after this practice, luxuriate in your breathing and in the space once you have completed the practice.

The Know Yourself Physical Practice

(Physical/Actions)

This is a balance posture to get to know ourselves. A physical balance practice also helps us to understand the levels of balance in our lives emotionally, and mentally. Take your time, use a counter or a weighted piece of furniture to hold on to on days you need help with balance.

Level One: Begin by gently rolling through your feet a time or two, putting all your weight into the toes then the heels, toes then the heels. Begin to feel grounded in both feet equally.

Now shift your weight side to side, all your weight to the right foot so the left foot feels slightly lifted.

Shift all your weight into the left foot with the right foot feeling slightly lifted.

You can do this for a few breaths, even up to a full minute.

Tip: Bend your knees slightly as you do this, you are in a flow. Do not lock your knees. That is too stiff for what we are going for here.

Continue side to side and when you feel that you're balanced and connected well into your feet and the flow, begin to raise one knee up.

Shift and raise the other knee up.

Gently moving with your breath, side to side

Bring the knees up as high or as low as you prefer.

Level Two: Tree pose. A traditional yoga posture for balance, strength, and self-reflection.

Shift all your weight into your right foot and bring your left foot off the ground.

You have a couple of options:

You can keep your left toes on the floor and simply put your left heel to your ankle;

Or you can lift your foot up and place it between your ankle and your knee;

Or you can bring your foot right up between your knee and your hip; you'll need to use your hand to help lift your foot into position.

You may want to use the wall, a table or a solid chair to help you learn to maintain your balance.

Your hands are at your heart in prayer position, palms together at the heart. Breathe deeply and balance. If you like, raise your arms up over head and wide.

You could take them low and wide if you have any tension in your shoulders, or any variation you like. Try many!

Hold for as long as you can do it comfortably then gently switch sides, and repeat. Your breath is a smooth and even; inhale, retain, exhale, and pause.

In balance postures we're not only cultivating physical balance but emotional and mental balance too. Observe your thoughts while you balance, especially on the days when you're falling out of your posture. See if you can find humour in that, instead of judgment. Slow and steady, one day at a time, cultivating balance in mind, body, and spirit and really getting to know yourself.