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### Topic: Knowledge Center

## 10 Tips for a More Peaceful Life

By Dawn Reiss

**Belly Breathe.** As you inhale, stick your stomach out to make your profile like "Santa Claus." Make sure you feel your stomach expanding out. If you feel your chest rising up instead of out, you are "shallow breathing," which will not help you calm down. Belly breathing helps the lungs fully expand, allowing oxygen to circulate through your body, thus releasing carbon dioxide. The result, "an internal massage" for your organs that will help you feel relaxed and calmer. Some say this helps with digestion, blood flow and your ability to ward off bacteria.



**Meditate.** It's hard, especially for type-A personalities who always like to be on the go. Know that it's okay just to be. The purpose of meditation is to help the mind go into a deeper state of relaxation and awareness. It's about letting the mind go so you focus only on breathing. By doing this, you become more peaceful and can have clarity in your life after you finish. Meditation helps reduce stress so you can sleep better and feel healthier.

**Laugh.** As the saying goes, laughter is the best medicine. Life is short. Life is simple and complicated. Life is beautiful. Having a sense of humor to laugh at oneself and at the things that happen to us and around us helps everyone. In a recent phone conversation with celebrated poet Dr. Maya Angelou, she told me "a cheerful spirit is good medicine." In the last 10 years, it has been found that a cheerful spirit allows the factories in the body to create more endorphins that are healing blocks in our DNA, and we just do better. Physically, we are more complete.

**Be thankful.** Every day, when you wake up in the morning and before you go to sleep, say and/or think about at least one thing you are thankful for. It can be simple: "I'm thankful I had spaghetti tonight or I'm glad I had a chance to take a 10-minute shower this morning with clean water." It can be profound: I'm glad I had a chance to say goodbye to my (grandmother, father, friend etc...) before they died. Being thankful helps us to be positive, which helps create a better outlook on life. Positive energy attracts positive people.

**Give back.** It's not just about donating money. When we focus on helping others by volunteering, we are less self-centered and our problems don't seem quite as imposing as before. Everyone has a gift. Share your talent. Show someone how to balance a checkbook, plant a garden, play a sport, sew a button, craft a sentence, negotiate a contract, pitch a tent, navigate the legal system or read a book. Such efforts can have a far greater impact than you'd ever imagine. It will do as much for you as for the person or group you are helping.

**Do something physical.** Even someone who is bedridden can still perform simple exercises, even if it's only fluttering their eyes. But most of us are capable of walking, riding a bike or going for a swim. Give your routine variety. Try something new, like a rowing machine, one of the best all-around workouts, or take up yoga. Try a variety of new things until you find something that is right for you. Trying a new activity doesn't require a lifetime contract. Try a variety of activities and see what's best for you long-term.

**Simplify and de-clutter.** Having more does not always bring happiness. Not being able to find anything makes your life more stressful. The less time you spend looking for things at home, in your office, in your vehicle or even in your handbag, the more time you can spend enjoying life.

**Be mindful while eating.** It goes without saying that drinking more water and eating more fruits and vegetables are healthy changes. More importantly, be aware of each bite of food. Taste it slowly. Discover its texture. Know what it smells like. The more pleasure you take in each bite, the less you will need and the more fulfilled you will become. Focus on the food and conversation. Eating while reading or watching television isn't healthy because you tend to ignore just how much food you are consuming, plus you lose track of the pleasurable sensory experience.

**Take time for yourself.** Even if you have to lock yourself in the bathroom for 10 minutes, give yourself a few moments of peace and quiet. Take an Epsom salt bath. Two or three cups of Epsom salts in a warm tub will help detoxify your system and will physically relax your whole body. Drink a cup of tea or do something else you enjoy for a few minutes of relief.

**Set goals.** Create your own "bucket list." A bad plan is better than no plan at all. Even if it is just a list of dream places you'd like to visit, you will feel better about yourself once you have direction. It will give you a sense of accomplishment, and that will help calm your nerves. Envision what you want so you can go after it. When I go on a vacation, I like to research where I'm going so I know the available options. I may change my original plan several times, but having options keeps me spontaneous. It's like earning a college degree – having background knowledge helps open doors so you can explore more.

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