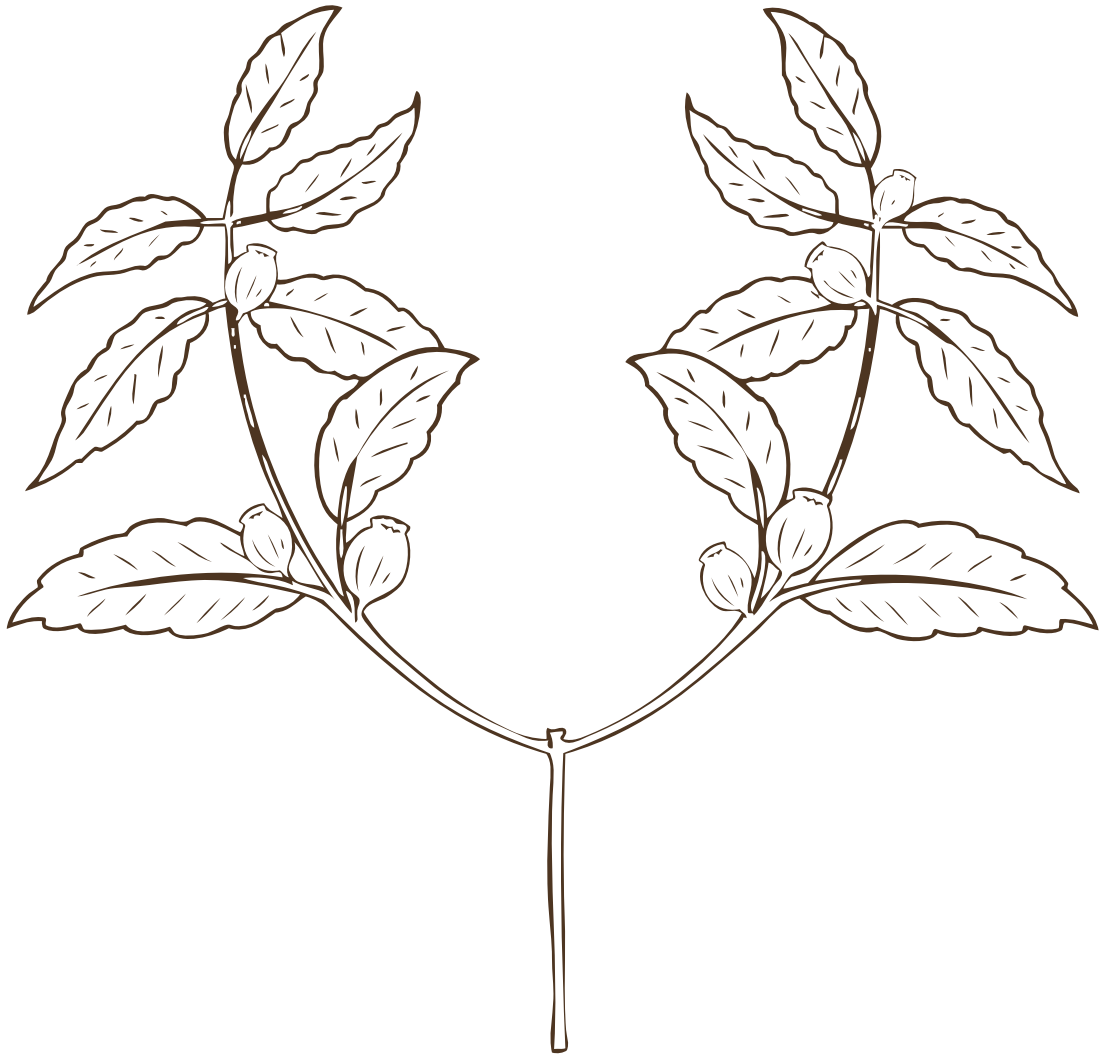


Work as a peace practice



Guided self-reflection
for finding your way to calm through work

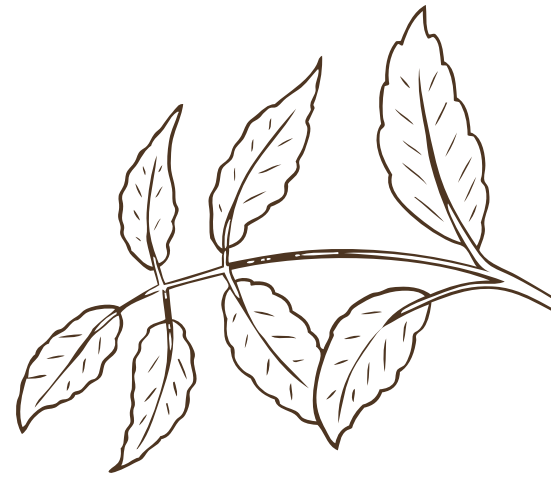
HI, FRIENDS!

This is thick time we're in. The information coming at us is more than human scale. We are grieving losses while, at once, having to create new systems, new habits, new ways of being, new lives. Our neural pathways are rewiring and our nervous systems are firing. It is a lot. It is uncomfortable. It is, at times, painful. And so very much of it is hard to accept.

To be with the deep of it, I'm exploring a new-old personal practice: Work.

For the purposes of this conversation, I'm referring to "work" as anything one does while concentrating with purpose. This isn't about a job or a service, necessarily. I mean work in a more expansive sense than that. Our own unique *doing-while-being*.

I also want to be clear that this isn't about colonial-capitalist ideas of productivity. The last thing the world needs right now is more people pressuring themselves to produce. It also isn't about avoiding our feelings through distraction. What I want to talk about is the work we can do that *companions* what's present. And in that kinship between moment and response, finding a centeredness, a primal calm. But, put another way, I just mean that doing the right work right now can help us relax, possibly in ways nothing else can.



THIS GUIDE'S INSPIRATION

Author and Research Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Psychology Dr. Stuart Shanker shared a [brief video](#) with exactly the message I needed for this moment. His body of work is about self-regulation — bringing personal awareness to everyday stressors (environmental, social, mental-emotional, systemic, and so on) and learning how to return our stressed brains and bodies to a state of calm.

"Working towards a moral vision of the world is calming and builds resilience." - Dr. Stuart Shanker

Dr. Shanker shared that one way he is finding calm right now is in *concentration with purpose*. He is finding calm in doing his work. And for him, that work is bringing about a more just society. It prompted me to reflect on my ideas of work, purpose, my vision of a just world, and my place in it, in this moment. And I thought others might want to examine work as a calming practice with me too.



GUIDED SELF- REFLECTION

You already have all of your answers. These exercises may help you to access them.

Respond quickly, intuitively, and remember that you're not determining your Life's Purpose here, but, rather, more simply, your purposeful, calming work for right now.

WHAT DO YOU VALUE?

Circle all that apply.

Acceptance Accountability Achievement Advocacy Appreciation
Autonomy Balance Benevolence Beauty Boldness Calmness Care
Challenge Cheerfulness Cleverness Community Commitment
Compassion Connection Cooperation Collaboration Consistency
Contribution Creativity Curiosity Daring Decisiveness Dedication
Dependability Diversity Empathy Encouragement Energy Enthusiasm
Ethics Excellence Expressiveness Fairness Family Friendships
Flexibility Freedom Fun Generosity Grace Growth Flexibility
Happiness Health Honesty Humility Humour Inclusiveness
Independence Individuality Innovation Inspiration Integrity
Intelligence Intuition Joy Kindness Knowledge Leadership Learning
Love Loyalty Mercy Mindfulness Optimism Originality Passion
Performance Quality Quiet Recognition Safety Security Service
Solitude Spirituality Stability Peace Playfulness Power Preparedness
Relationships Reliability Resilience Resourcefulness Responsibility
Responsiveness Security Selflessness Simplicity Stability Teamwork
Thankfulness Thoughtfulness Understanding Uniqueness Usefulness
Versatility Vision Warmth Well-Being Wisdom

Something else:

SHOW UP.

Do not feel you have to wait until you come up with The Idea for this. There is no The Idea. There is just the showing up with purposeful concentration.

Let this practice be light.

We are all experiencing this time differently. Some of us are lonely and bored; some of us are overwhelmed with responsibilities and housemates or coworkers. You may have the whole day to fill or you may not know how you will find a spare minute. Decide what's manageable. Be compassionate with yourself.

This is a season for prioritizing rest.

Work a little less than you think you should, even as a restorative practice. And be well, friends.



This guided self-reflection was written by Carrie Klassen.

I've been a professional writer, ghostwriter, and communicator for two decades. I'm also a city girl who grows calendula, harvests purslane, and feels most understood by the wild phlox that sprang up in her backyard one summer. I help people take care in finding the words for hard, beautiful, and important things. And I help people use intentional language to deepen relationships with nature, ourselves, and each other.

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