



Ride the Storm: 3 Practices for Awareness and Positive Personal Change

SARAHBRASSARD.COM

Table of Contents

01 Practice 1

Safe Haven

02 Practice 2

Alternate Nostril
Breathing

03 Practice 3

Meeting the Four
Elements: Body,
Mind, Heart, and
Spirit

+ Bonus

The Storm and the
Observer





Welcome!

Practices to Regain Balance in the Face of the Storm

This resource is meant to serve as a practical guide to implement practices in a moment of stress or overwhelm. These practices and the supplemental guidance provided with them are mostly based on my book *Inside: A Guide to the Resources Within*. The primary content are three practices you can implement in the moment when things get tough. As a bonus, I've also included a section of essay-style content as well as supplemental practices that can help you build the understanding, skills, and inner power to not only pull yourself back from the brink but to stay in that calm, centered, empowered place more consistently.

I hope these practices and bits of wisdom provide you as much healing and nourishment as they have for me.

May you find peace on the path,
Sarah Brassard

01

Practice 1

Safe Haven

Fear puts a blanket over all that makes us feel safe and secure. This practice puts us back in relationship with that security and gives us the courage to take the next steps needed to heal. Think of it as a hopeful starting point, a place you can return to when your healing path becomes challenging and less clear. When we have security—through the love of another person, a physical location, or a place in our mind that soothes us—we have a valuable tool to move ahead and meet whatever challenges appear.

After the loss of my parents, everything changed in my life. There was an estrangement from the most familiar parts of my life, and I was left feeling very unsafe. This loss invoked tremendous fear in me. I was challenged to find something that offered me security. When I came across this simple practice, it not only helped me feel safe in my environment; it also encouraged me to look more deeply into my sadness and fears.

01

Practice 1

Safe Haven (cont'd)

You may have a reference point for safety and security that you can build on (for me it is a wooded knoll on Cape Cod that overlooks the bay), or you may need to spend time creating one. Be patient—it will come, and when it does, it will help you to create a foundation for the work ahead. You might try picking up a magazine and flipping through the pages. Notice how various pictures make you feel. When you find a picture that makes you feel at home, happy, and peaceful, remember it and use it for this practice.

Safe Haven

DO THE PRACTICE



1. Find a quiet place in your home. Sit on a chair or a supported seat on the floor. (If you are on a chair, make sure your feet can touch the ground.)
2. Lengthen your spine and take three deep breaths.
3. Visualize your breath coming in from the ground below you.
4. Feel yourself drink in the energy of the earth through your feet. (If you are on the ground, feel this same energy come through all parts of your body that touch the ground.)
5. Now close your eyes and visualize in your mind's eye a place that brings you comfort.
6. With your eyes closed, pay attention to the details of your safe haven. Allow this experience to be all yours. Let your imagination grow your safe haven's beauty, and blanket yourself in it.

Notice:

[ACCESS THE GUIDED MEDITATION](#)

- The color of the sky
- The temperature of the air
- How you feel physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually
- The vibrancy of the foliage around you. Are there trees, plants, and flowers nearby? What color are they? Do they have a fragrance? Are there birds, butterflies, dragonflies, or any other animals with you? What else is there?

02

Practice 1

Alternate Nostril Breathing

Alternate Nostril Breathing brings awareness to the flow of air that moves through each of our nostrils at any given time. This may seem insignificant, but it actually is very important. Breathing through each nostril brings a different benefit. The left nostril encourages relaxation and calm, the right nostril energizes our overall system, and alternate nostril breathing is helpful in balancing the two hemispheres of the brain, improving sleep, bringing on clarity of thinking, and returning overall balance to the body.

Alternate nostril breathing is a beautiful preparation for meditation.

Here are some other benefits of this potent breath:

- Calms the nervous system
- Regulates the cooling and warming systems of the body
- Quickly energizes the body, mind, heart, and spirit
- Helps counter insomnia
- Brings awareness to feelings and emotions in the present moment

Alternate Nostril Breathing

DO THE PRACTICE



1. Find a quiet place in your home. Sit on a chair or a supported seat on the floor. (If you are on a chair, make sure your feet can touch the ground.)
2. Lengthen your spine and take three deep breaths.
3. Visualize your breath coming in from the ground below you.
4. Feel yourself drink in the energy of the earth through your feet. (If you are on the ground, feel this same energy come through all parts of your body that touch the ground.)
5. Now close your eyes and visualize in your mind's eye a place that brings you comfort.
6. With your eyes closed, pay attention to the details of your safe haven. Allow this experience to be all yours. Let your imagination grow your safe haven's beauty, and blanket yourself in it.

Notice:

- The color of the sky
- The temperature of the air
- How you feel physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually
- The vibrancy of the foliage around you. Are there trees, plants, and flowers nearby? What color are they? Do they have a fragrance? Are there birds, butterflies, dragonflies, or any other animals with you? What else is there?

03

Practice 3

Meeting the Four Elements: Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit

The object of this practice is to learn a different way of relating to yourself in which your body, mind, heart, and spirit begin to feel familiar and safe to you. To do so, rather than looking at yourself from the outside in, you'll start to relate to yourself from the inside out. From there, you'll bring your attention to each of the Four Elements. You may not be in the habit of thinking deliberately about your body, mind, heart, and spirit, but opening yourself up to this level of self-awareness can be transformative.

Each element will send you information to help you understand how to make your life more comfortable. Begin this practice today and continue every day for the next month. Do your best to do it for the full month; otherwise, the changes may not set in. Set the practice to memory, and try to perform it in the same place and at the same time of day. Note that you can access this practice to help feel grounded during intense situations.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue robe over a dark top and pants, is performing a yoga pose (Warrior III) in a field of tall grass. She is balancing on her right leg with her left leg extended back and her arms outstretched to the sides. The background is a vast, open field under a soft sky.

Meeting the Four Elements: Body, Mind, Heart, and Spirit

DO THE PRACTICE

1. Find a quiet, private place, sit down, and get comfortable. Have a piece of paper or a journal and pen available.
 2. Take a deep breath in and out. Then inhale awareness, exhale judgment.
 3. Say out loud or in your mind (whichever feels more comfortable), “I am open to experiencing myself from the inside out.”
 4. Take another deep breath. Say the name of the First Element: “Body.” Take a deep breath. Repeat a second and third time.
 5. Say the name of the Second Element: “Mind.” Take a deep breath. Repeat a second and third time.
 6. Say the name of the Third Element: “Heart.” Take a deep breath. Repeat a second and third time.
 7. Say the name of the Fourth Element: “Spirit.” Take a deep breath. Repeat a second and third time.
 8. Ask your body how it feels. Sit quietly and open yourself up to an answer. Write down anything important that comes to you. Do your best not to judge or reason away any answer that appears. Trust the first feelings that come to you.
 9. Repeat by asking your mind how it feels.
 10. Repeat again by asking your heart how it feels.
 11. Repeat once more by asking your spirit how it feels.
- Close the practice by thanking the messages that appeared.



Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

I have lived my entire life in New England, so I have had many opportunities to watch storms roll in. What starts as cloud cover soon turns into dark skies, high winds, and some form of powerful precipitation. A storm is an extreme example of energy that wields a huge amount of power over our lives and environment. Storms devour the shores with wind, high tides, rain, and cold, and then lift and clear just as suddenly. They knock down trees, rip out electric lines, blow ships onto the shore, and wash out roads.

In just a matter of minutes, there can be incredible destruction and even loss of life. It can happen so quickly and disappear as abruptly as it arrived, but the damage can last for a lifetime.

+

Bonus

The Storm and the Observer



I was much like a storm before I cultivated a practice of self-care. Out of a clear blue sky, I could be seized by panic or anger, and without a safe haven to observe these emotions, they would flood in, making me feel fragile and unsafe in my own life. I would get caught in all that was before me and react to the circumstances rashly, which would inevitably bring embarrassment, regret, and sadness in the aftermath. Relationships would be harmed, lovely plans destroyed, and my body would ache from the stress of it all.





Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

Like the extreme energy unleashed by a severe storm, my whole life would get stirred up by my fury, despair, panic, and fear. Rather than learning how to take care of myself in these moments, I tried to lock my emotions away, which caused further destructive behavior, like a hurricane erupting into a life that was calm and peaceful just moments before. Later I could see that these storms were indicator lights guiding me to pay attention to my body's energetic system, which had fallen out of balance.

Connecting my emotional outbursts to the weather gave me the perspective I needed. When I watch a storm blowing in from the ocean, I have two choices. I can watch it from the safety of my home while assessing what will need to be taken care of later. Or I can go outside and try to manage the damage as it happens, putting myself in danger of being tossed around by the wind and rain. I was always at the mercy of the unpredictable weather of my emotions, and I needed to find a way to seek shelter and deal with the after effects of the storm.





Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

DETECTING THE STORM INSIDE US

When panic is triggered, adrenaline rushes into our body, alerts our mind, and has us reacting to an event, consciously or subconsciously, in one way or another.

Sometimes these events are worthy of immediate reaction, but oftentimes they are not. It only takes a millisecond of an anxiety response to throw the world into a tailspin. In this case, the storm is happening inside your own body, mind, and spirit. Your emotional storms might involve saying something you wish you had never said or doing something to someone that you now regret. Or maybe your history of rash decisions in the heat of the moment has caused all sorts of problems for you and others.

When we become the storm, we put ourselves and those around us in emotional jeopardy. It feels out of control because it is.

You know you're in an emotional storm when:

- You take the actions of others personally
- You are constantly overwhelmed but don't take steps to do something about it
- You are afraid of difficult conversations, so you aren't truthful about your feelings
- You can't believe how much anger certain events trigger in you
- You avoid certain people and situations because you do not know how to put healthy boundaries around your relationships
- You feel lost and frustrated with your life but take no action to change anything





Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

BECOMING THE OBSERVER

When a storm rips through your emotional life, don't just go through the motions: scrutinize the causes and effects by becoming the observer. Unlike the weather outside, we can stand back and decide whether we'll become the storm or be the observer of the storm.



After the storm has settled, notice what you do. Is it your tendency to pick up the pieces by blaming others for your

anger? Or do you take complete responsibility for your actions? Whatever the case, every storm requires some damage control, and how you handle it matters. If you recognize and regret your actions, you are already instinctively moving in a direction of self-healing.



Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

BECOMING THE OBSERVER



Reflecting on the disorder instead of deflecting it is a powerful step in the right direction.

This is a step toward accountability and healing your life. You are becoming the observer, the person who reads the signs and pauses before reacting to the situation. You rest in the deepest parts of your being and watch the storm from a distance before going in to try to resolve whatever has been stirred up.

Becoming the observer means being aware of how we think, what we say, and how we react to the circumstances of life. Becoming the observer diffuses the anxiety in any situation and helps us respond in a way that makes us feel safe and strong.



Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

BECOMING THE OBSERVER

When we can step away from the emotional experiences of life, just for a moment, shifts of awareness happen. These shifts allow us to be more generous in our actions. We begin to see our thoughts through a different lens, a more compassionate one that nurtures nonjudgment and allows us to be accountable. From there, we respond to life in a thoughtful and deliberate manner.

At first, becoming the observer will help you realize that a storm is happening, and over time you will naturally begin to notice how you feel when the storm is present in your life. You will get better at detecting when a storm is gathering.

This awareness alone will make room in your life to make choices that weren't possible before. And soon you will be able to prevent those storms from wreaking havoc on your life. You will read the signs and take precautions to make yourself feel safe and you will channel your energy into healthy awareness instead of unleashing storms of anger, blame, or panic.





Bonus

The Storm and the Observer

BECOMING THE OBSERVER

You become the observer when:

- You find a strong self-care practice that nurtures your strengths and weaknesses
- You know how to find your center in the most difficult situations
- You learn how to breathe mindfully and use your breath throughout the day as needed to respond to stressful situations
- You find compassion and forgiveness for other people's shortcomings and see the situation from all points of view
- You create safe perimeters around difficult people and situations in your life
- You do not get sucked into stress-filled interactions and instead keep a healthy perspective





Bonus Practice: Seeing Life through the Observer Lens

DO THE PRACTICE

At the beginning of the day, identify situations that might allow you to step back and observe what is going on in a different way. You do not have to physically step back; just try to observe and listen with a new level of awareness.

In your moments of quiet reflection, begin viewing your life as though you were watching it on a movie screen. Instead of responding to what you see, hear, and feel with judgment, be in the moment with what is before you. Notice the details of what's going on and allow the information to flow through your senses instead of getting tangled in opinions about what appears. Be curious.

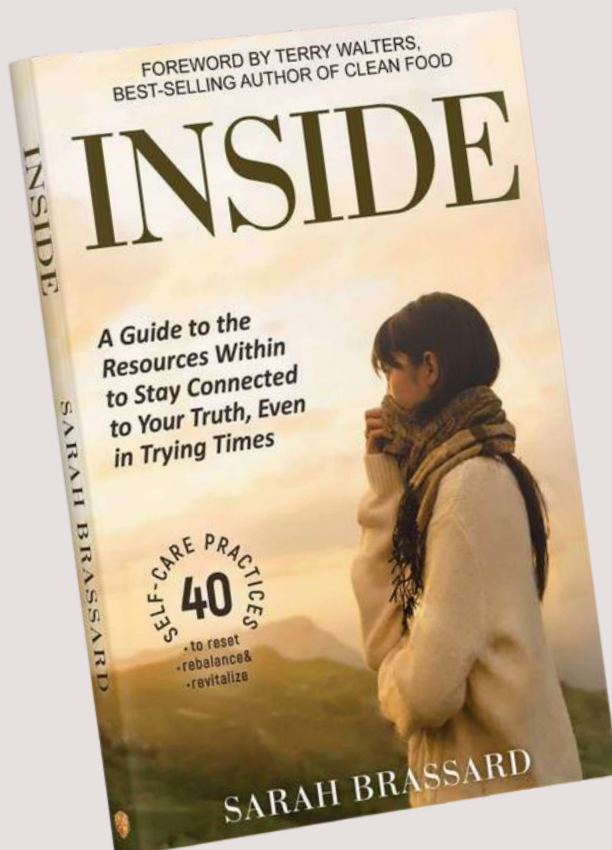
When the “movie” is over, do you like what you have seen? How would you add the most value to the situation? Take time to journal your feelings about what appeared and how it felt to look at life in this way. How did it feel to let the events flow through you instead of analyzing and having an opinion on everything that happened? What surprised you or provoked some other emotional reaction?

When you see your life through the lens of the observer, you start to feel like you are in partnership with the universe. That is the truth of our lives. We are never alone, but anxiety, fear, and suffering can absolutely make us feel that way. So now instead of battling off what life brings to you, how about turning toward that ever-present energy and understanding that you are the common denominator in it all?

MY BOOK

INSIDE: A Guide To The Resources Within

If you liked this ebook please check out my
book and companion workbook



SCAN ME FOR DETAILS!



[SARAHBRASSARD.COM/BOOK](https://sarahbrassard.com/book)

the end

Thank You!

copyright

© Sarah Brassard LLC

