

## My Right Mindset Routine

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START EARLY. WORK HARD. FINISH. ®

A friend asked me to write about my morning meditation routine. “Meditation” isn’t the right word because my routine includes more than meditation. I’ll call it my “Right Mindset Routine.”

I developed this routine over time. I began it in college to relax, after reading *The Relaxation Response* by Herbert Benson and Miriam Klipper. I added elements from *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain and *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale. I studied karate for more than twenty years and the routine incorporates lessons from that journey. The routine includes concepts learned in therapy and elements of self-hypnosis. It also relies on ideas from the educational discipline known as General Semantics.<sup>1</sup> I studied symbolic logic in graduate school and, strange as it may seem, I often use logic in the "reflection" segment of this routine. The routine even includes concepts from physics.

I am no self-help guru and claim no expertise in that. This routine works for me. My friend liked it and encouraged me to share it. If it works for you, I’m glad.

Some parts of the routine may not be relevant to you because they pertain solely to my issues. I include them so you can see what I do with my issues. Remove them and replace them, if you like, with something meaningful to you.

I enjoy this routine early in the morning, but that’s not critical. What is important is that you make it a routine. That’s why I call it a "routine." Strive to do it daily. There is comfort in routine. Daily practice is important in correcting the bad habits and false beliefs that cause many of us to suffer unnecessarily. You brush your teeth daily to take care of them; do the routine daily to take care of yourself.

I encourage you to read this entire paper before trying the routine.

Parts of the routine may feel a bit “touchy feely” or “New Age.” Believe me, it’s not easy for an analytical guy like me to tell myself things such as “the universe is made of love.” But give it a try. Our thoughts can influence our body chemistry and behavior. And the universe might be made of love. We don’t really know. The truth is we don’t know shit. Five hundred years ago

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General\\_semantics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_semantics)

most people believed the Earth was flat. Einstein did not publish his paper on Special Relativity until 1905. History is filled with examples of humans thinking they understood the universe – and of them being wrong. We live in an age where we place a high value on science and reason, but I'm open to the possibility that there are realms other than the physical world and to the possibility that there are phenomena we can't presently explain given the current state of our science. It's arrogant to think we know it all.

It normally takes me about forty minutes to complete the routine, but I sometimes omit portions to save time or because I just don't feel the desire on that day. You could easily cut it to ten minutes if you want to.

I wrote this paper in the first person, as if I were doing the routine. When I do the routine, I do not speak the words out loud, but say them to myself in my mind.

I've included notes in *italics* where they might be helpful. I've included footnotes where they might be helpful. Or just because I felt like inserting a fucking footnote. To paraphrase Leslie Gore, "It's my paper and I'll insert a footnote if I want to." I've also included a reading list at the end of the paper.

My routine includes six segments. These segment titles are somewhat arbitrary. I don't think of the routine as separated into six segments when I do it, but it is helpful to organize it that way in a paper explaining it. The six segments are:

1. Breathing and Relaxation.
2. Big Picture.
3. Gratitude.
4. Affirmations.
5. Reflection.
6. The Closing.

For purposes of this paper, I have broken some of those segments into sub-segments.

### **The Setting**

Sit in a comfortable chair in a quiet place where there will be no distractions. Mute your phone. Leave the lights off. Sit up straight. Plant both feet firmly on the floor.

I play soft music in the background. I listen to *Green Daydreams* by Janalea Hoffman, which is metered to fifty beats per minute.<sup>2</sup> There are many similar tracks available, some for free,

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.rhythmicmedicine.com/cd-deep-daydreams.html>

on sites such as YouTube. Metered music can help in reducing your blood pressure, breathing rate, and heart rate.

### **Dealing with Intrusive Thoughts**

If you have no experience with meditation, almost as soon as you begin the routine, a thought will pop into your mind. Maybe an argument you had with a colleague. Maybe that check engine light you've neglected. You may immediately think, "Man, I suck at this. I can't even keep these thoughts out of my head and focus on this routine." This is normal. Thoughts pop into your mind. That's what thoughts do. That's why they are called thoughts.

Many of us have learned to be critical of ourselves and we get down on ourselves if we think we are less than perfect. That's one of the harmful beliefs I use this routine to eliminate. If a thought pops into your mind, don't get down on yourself. Just acknowledge the thought, visualize it fading into the distance until you can no longer see it, and resume the routine. You can even visualize the thought in the palms of your hand and then gently blowing it away until it is gone.

"If you think you are not doing meditation correctly, you're probably doing it correctly."

### **Beginning the Routine**

Close your eyes.

Breathe in through your nose.

Exhale through your mouth.

Do that several times until it feels like a pattern.

### **The Routine – 1. Breathing and Relaxation**

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

I breathe in through my nose.

I exhale through my mouth.

Every time I inhale I am filled with love and calm.

Every time I exhale I release tension and negativity.

I am relaxed from my head to my toes.

## A. This is my time segment.

*Many of us are so busy that we don't take care of ourselves. It's important to realize you have the right to take care of yourself. In fact, you can't effectively care for others if you don't first care for yourself. This segment recognizes that you have the right to take this time to care for yourself. It's time to put yourself first rather than last.*

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

- This is my time.
- This is my time to check in with my body and to heal my body. *Take a moment to notice what you feel in your body. Do you have muscle aches? Dry mouth? Gas? Become aware of what is going on in your body. Articulate what you are aware of by silently saying it. For example, "I am aware of the soreness in my calve muscles."*
- This is my time to clear my mind.
- This is my time to eliminate false beliefs about myself and life.
- This is my time to eliminate faulty conclusions.
- This is my time to eliminate thoughts that no longer matter.
- This is my time to eliminate thoughts that no longer serve me.
- This is my time to eliminate my mental junk files.
- This is my time to defrag my mind.
- This is my time to reflect on what is on my mind today. *Take a moment to ask what is on your mind now. What are the life issues and recent events on your mind? It's good to be aware of these and acknowledge them. Articulate what you are aware of by silently saying it. For example, "I am aware that one thing on my mind today is my fear of not having enough money." Nothing good ever comes from ignoring what is on your mind. That does not mean you let it control you, but you must acknowledge it to deal with it.*
- If a thought comes into my mind, it will not distract from my time. I will simply acknowledge it, let it go, and watch it fade into the distance until it is gone.

## **B. Awareness segment.**

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

My memory is powerful.

My reasoning ability exceptional.

My senses are acute.

I am present and calm.

I am supremely aware.

I am aware of the lighting in the room.

I am aware of the room temperature.

I am aware of the music in the background.

I am aware of the ambient noise.

I am aware of my posture.

I am aware of the texture of the chair and the carpet.

I am aware of the smell in the room.

*What else are you aware of in this moment? Try to state what you are aware of. Being aware of what is going on and how you feel is a good way to be in the present.*

## **C. Breathing segment.**

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

I follow a specific breathing pattern in my life. This pattern is always present whether I think about it or not. It's automatic. And that pattern is this. I always breath in through my nose and out through my mouth.

### **Inhaling**

- Each time I inhale I am filled with love.
- Each time I inhale I am surrounded by love I can feel and see. *Visualize it. I tend to see it as a colorful fog of mostly yellow, orange, and red.*

- Each time I inhale I am filled with love toward the entire universe and all creatures and things in it.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with love toward myself and all my younger selves.
- Each time I inhale I am reminded that I am a tiny part of a vast universe and my presence here in this body is temporary. So, I am humble.
- Each time I inhale I am reminded that I tend to view the universe through this body rather than trying to view the universe objectively as if I were above it watching it.
- And, though I am a small part of the universe, the universe is made of love and I am made of love. My very existence is a miracle and is proof that I am lovable and loved.
- Nothing I do, say, or think can change the fact that I am loveable and loved.
- Nothing anyone else does, says, or thinks can change the fact that I am loveable and loved.
- I don't have to be special to be loved.
- I don't have to be perfect to be loved.
- Each time I inhale I tell myself that I love myself, and I believe it.
- Each time I inhale I tell myself I don't need a partner to have value because I already know that I am loveable and loved, and I already love myself.
- Each time I inhale I tell myself I don't need a partner to be complete because I am already complete.
- Each time I inhale I tell myself I don't need a partner to feel secure because I am an accomplished man and I can take care of myself.
- Each time I inhale I tell myself I don't need a partner to have status because status is not important to me. All that matters is that I am happy with who I am and true to my own values.
- Each time I inhale I imagine that I grew up with parents that loved and respected each other.
- Each time I inhale I remind myself the only way I can have a successful relationship is if I don't need the woman for any reason, but just love her altruistically.

- Each time I inhale I accept my sexuality completely. I accept my masturbation, my fantasies, and my sexual desires, and I understand none of these impact my lovability or my masculinity.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with compassion for all creatures and things.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with compassion for myself and my younger selves.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with joy and light. Joy and light radiate from within me. *Visualize joy and light radiating out from within your body.*
- Each time I inhale I am filled with gratitude. I have so much to be grateful for.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with humility. I recognize I am a small part of a vast universe. I recognize that all my success is just the result of the gifts I have been given, good luck, and the hard work of others.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with patience. Not everyone has my physical or mental gifts or experience, and not everyone will be able to do certain tasks as quickly as I can. In the end, a small delay won't impact me.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with forgiveness. I forgive every person that ever hurt me or tried to. *Sometimes I think about kids that picked on me when I was little and I try to have empathy for the unhappy lives they may have been living. If you want, you can articulate forgiveness to specific people. For example, silently saying, "I forgive Bob Smith for picking on me in the seventh grade."*
- Each time I inhale I am filled with optimism. Things will be OK.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with good health and energy.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with enthusiasm and encouragement. It feels good to help and encourage others.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with lightheartedness.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with calm. All my muscles are calm. Every cell in my body is filled with calm.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with serenity.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with inner peace.

- Each time I inhale I visualize myself as a duck resting peacefully on the ocean waves. The waves will rise and fall, and there is nothing I can do about that, except rise and fall with them.
- Each time I inhale I remind myself that all things are temporary.
- Each time I inhale I am filled with supreme confidence, but it is confidence without a trace of ego; confidence that comes from knowing I have been given many gifts and have acquired tremendous experience.

## **Exhaling**

- Each time I exhale I shower the world with love, kindness, and forgiveness.
- Each time I exhale I send love healing energy to those who need it. *If there are specific people in your life that are suffering now, you can silently say something like, “I send love and healing energy to Lisa to help her win her fight with cancer.”*
- Each time I exhale I release and expel negative self-labels. *Take a moment to think about what labels you apply to yourself that may not be accurate. Think about the language you use with yourself. Be careful about applying any form of the verb “to be” to yourself. For instance, to say. “I am fat” is not accurate because you are not the same thing as fat. Instead, use neutral language such as, “I presently weigh fifteen pounds more than what I think my ideal body weight is.”*<sup>3</sup>
- Each time I exhale I release and expel false beliefs about myself and life. *Take a moment to think about what false beliefs you hold about yourself and about life.*
- Each time I exhale I release and expel all self-doubt.
- Each time I exhale I release and expel or hate and anger.
- Each time I exhale I release and expel all anxiety and tension.
- Each time I exhale I release and expel all hurt and pain.
- Each time I exhale I release and expel all fear and worry.
- Each time I exhale I release and expel are shame and guilt.
- Each time I exhale I release and expel all illness.

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<sup>3</sup> There is a form of English known as E-Prime that advocates elimination of all forms of the verb *to be*. See, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-Prime>

## **D. Body segment.**

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

### **Blood pressure**

My blood pressure is falling down, down, down. *Imagine a blood pressure cuff around your arm and a digital read out.*

128 / 88

126 / 86

124 / 84

122 / 82

120 / 80

118 / 78

116 / 76

And there it stays whether I think about it or not. If it starts to rise above that, my body automatically detects and gently corrects.

### **Heart rate**

My heart rate is falling down, down, down. *Imagine a digital read out.*

66

64

62

60

58

56

54

52

50.

And there it stays whether I think about it or not. If it starts to rise above that, my body automatically detects and gently corrects.

*By the way, you can download a free app called Heart Rate Monitor by REPS and check your heart rate before you start the routine and after you complete it. I have been able to get my heart rate as low as 47 beats per minute.*

### **Relaxing the body**

- My entire body is relaxed. It is a wonderful feeling to be relaxed.
- My scalp is relaxed.

- My forehead is relaxed.
- My temples are relaxed.
- My eyes are relaxed.
- My nose is relaxed.
- My cheeks and cheekbone are relaxed.
- My ears are relaxed.
- My mouth and jaw are relaxed.
- My neck and throat are relaxed.
- My shoulders are relaxed.
- My arms and hands and fingers are relaxed.
- My chest and back are relaxed.
- My stomach and sides are relaxed.
- My organs and lungs are relaxed.
- My hips and groin are relaxed.
- My thighs are relaxed.
- My calves are relaxed.
- My ankles, feet, and toes are relaxed.

### **The orange liquid**

And now my relaxed body begins to fill with a very warm, sparkling orange liquid.

First it fills my toes and feet. I can feel the warmth and the bubbles. *Visualize the liquid filling your feet and feel the warmth and the fizz.*

Now it fills my lower legs. *Keep visualizing.*

Now it fills my up legs and hips.

Now it fills my torso.

Now it fills my arms and hands.

Now it fills my neck and head.

Now it fills every nook and cranny of my body.

And this magical orange liquid instantly soaks up and absorbs all negative self-labels.

It soaks up and absorbs all false beliefs about myself and life.

It soaks up and absorbs all self-doubt.

It soaks up and absorbs all hate and anger.

It soaks up and absorbs all anxiety and tension.

It soaks up and absorbs all hurt and pain.

It soaks up and absorbs all fear and worry.

It soaks up and absorbs all shame and guilt.

It soaks up and absorbs all illness.

And now I can rid these things from my body forever simply by draining the liquid from my body through my fingers and toes.

So, I drain the liquid from my head until it is clear, highly polished, and brilliant.

Now I drain it from my neck and shoulders.

Now I drain it from my arms and fingers, and I can see the liquid coming out the tips of my fingers, taking all the bad stuff with it forever.

Now I drain it from chest and back.

Now I drain it from hips and groin.

Now I drain it from upper legs.

Now I drain it from my lower legs.

Now I drain it from my ankles and feet, and I can see it coming out the tips of my toes, taking all the bad stuff with it forever.

Now the liquid is completely gone and I sit here as a crystal clear, highly polished, shining version of my best and highest self. *Be sure to visualize this in your mind.*

**Happy, healthy, terrific, and calm**

Every day, in every way, I am getting better and better.

Every day, in every way I am becoming more and more the person I want to become – happy, healthy, terrific, and calm.

*Inhale.* I am happy. *Exhale.*

*Inhale.* I am healthy. *Exhale.*

*Inhale.* I am terrific. *Exhale.*

*Inhale.* I am calm. *Exhale.*

### **Leaving baggage behind**

I place all my baggage in suitcases behind me. I can look over my right shoulder and see the suitcases there. *Visualize the suitcases with labels on them such as “Guilt,” “Anger,” etc. Visualize all those suitcases on the corner over your shoulder as you walk away and they fade into the distance.* Now I walk away from them and leave them behind.

### **The invisible field**

I am always protected by an invisible field that protects me from negativity, danger, and illness. The field is always there even if I am not thinking of it. *Visualize a field that extends about two feet from your body in all directions.*

The negativity of others can’t bother me because it can’t reach me. It will simply hit my field and fall harmlessly to the ground.

Other people sense this and don’t even try to antagonize me.

Even danger and illness leave me alone.

I am bulletproof.

### **The Routine – 2. Big Picture**

*My big picture routine breaks down into four sub-segments that I will call (1) the universe, (2) my body, (3) my physical goals, and (4) my other goals. You may notice some repetition here of things above.*

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

#### **A. The universe.**

I am a tiny part of a vast universe, so I remain humble.

I am aware that I tend to look at things through my eyes rather than from the viewpoint of an objective observer watching the universe from outside it. *Think about something that is a concern for you. Now imagine what it might look like to an objective observer on the edge of the universe. For instance, if I am worried about money, that can seem daunting to me. But to an objective observer on the edge of the universe, Mark's problems with money are trivial. Thinking of things this way can give you perspective.*

The universe is made of love and I am made of love.

Nothing I do, say, or think can change the fact that I am loveable and loved.

Nothing anyone else does, says, or thinks can change the fact that I am loveable and loved.

I don't have to be special to be loved.

I don't have to be perfect to be loved.

And just as a newborn baby does not know shame or guilt, I realize nothing that has taken place since my birth makes me any less lovable.

I am a good man. I am smart. I am fit. I am kind. I am funny. *Say good things about yourself.*

I deserve to be happy.

I trust that the universe will provide for me.

I stand here with open arms ready to receive the gifts the universe gives to me.

I know that all things are temporary, including my own life. *One cause of suffering is expecting things that are temporary to be permanent and worrying that they might not be.*

I am a duck on the water. I rise up and down with the waves. It is futile to try to change to try to fight the waves.

## **B. My body**

All of the systems and organs in my body are working perfectly and in harmony.

My heart is working perfectly.

My lungs are working perfectly.

My liver and kidneys are working perfectly.

My thyroid is working perfectly.

My digestive system is working perfectly.

I feel great.

### **C. My physical goals**

I weigh 197.25 pounds.<sup>4</sup> *Visualize that on scale.*

I have a 34-inch waist. *Visualize that on a tape measure.*

I am in great shape. Others remark on how fit I am.

I drink two quarts of water each day.

I eat only foods that are healthy for me. I eat only proteins, nuts, fruits, vegetables, healthy carbs, and dairy.

Before I put any food in my mouth I stop and ask whether it is something I allow myself to eat and whether it will help me achieve my desired weight and waist measurement. *Visualize a STOP sign.* If it is not on my list, or it won't help me achieve my goals, I don't eat it.

### **D. Other goals**

I earn \$300,000.00 per year.

I am a sought-after speaker.

My books are best sellers.

I am debt free.

I own my own home.

I have a wonderful relationship with a great woman.

### **The Routine – 3. Gratitude**

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

I am grateful for my life and my health.

I am grateful for my dog's life and his health.

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<sup>4</sup> That's how much Leon Spinks weighed when he beat Muhammad Ali.

I am grateful for all the animals I had in my life and I wish I had done better for them.

I am grateful for all the animals on the planet and I wish we would do better for them.

I am grateful for this planet and I wish we would do better for it.

I am grateful for my children and their health and the joy they have given me. *I take a moment to think about each child and my fond memories of them. I might say something like, "I am grateful for Natalea and health and the memories she has given me. I want her to know I love her and I believe in her. I want her to believe in herself. And I want her to be safe and trust her judgment so she doesn't put herself in dangerous situations."*

I am grateful for my brother and my mother, and I send them love and healing energy. And I send healing energy to everyone else that needs it.

I am grateful to my parents that took care of me and tried to give me a good childhood.

I am grateful to my parents who worked hard to provide me with an education.

I am grateful for my education. *Take a moment to remember some of the great teachers you had.*

I recognize I have an obligation to use my education to help others.

I am grateful for my life experiences and the wisdom I gained.

I recognize I have an obligation to use this wisdom to help others.

I am grateful for the times my life was spared.

I recognize I have an obligation to use these second chances to help others.

I am grateful for my friends at every stage of my life. *Take a moment to think about all the friends you have had through the years.*

I am grateful my time in the Air Force. I am grateful for the friends I made, what I learned about organizations, and what I learned about leadership and writing.

I am grateful for my time in karate. I am grateful for the friends I made, what I learned about self-defense, what I learned about meditation, what I learned about relaxation, and what I learned about goal setting.

I am grateful I was born in a relatively free and wealthy country.

I am grateful I grew up in Denver.

I am grateful I live in a beautiful place now.

I am grateful for all the doctors, medicines, and counselors the helped me.

I am grateful for my law practice and my ability to earn a good income.

I am grateful for my home, my laptop, and my SUV.

I am grateful for the sunshine, the water, the mountains, and the air.

#### **The Routine – 4. Affirmations**

*I borrowed some of the this from the Boy Scouts. I left out “obedient,” as I don’t consider that a virtue. Here is a link to an article about that: <http://www.cohenslaw.com/blog/116338/20589/>*

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

I am trustworthy

I am loyal

I am helpful

I am friendly

I am courteous

I am kind

I am cheerful

I am thrifty

I am brave

I am clean

I am reverent. *(You don’t have to believe in God, you can just be in awe of the universe).*

I am grateful.

I am forgiving.

I am patient.

I am optimistic.

I am humble.

I am healthy.

I am energetic.

I am encouraging.

I am light hearted.

I am perceptive.

I am objective.

I am present.

I am calm.

I am serene.

I am tranquil.

I am filled with inner peace.

I am a duck on the water.

I am supremely confident without a trace of ego.

## The Routine – 5. Reflection

*In this part of the routine, I look back on key events in my life and acknowledge how they influenced me. I also take time to reflect on current events in my life. By doing this you can begin to see patterns and identify false beliefs that have caused you to suffer. Many of my life issues relate to sex and relationships, so you'll see a lot about that here.*

### A. Getting More Relaxed

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

I am standing at the top of five beautiful steps.

I am going to slowly walk down the steps one step at a time.

Each time I take one step down I will become much more relaxed.

My body will be more relaxed.

My mind will be more relaxed.

My senses will become sharper.

My reasoning will become clearer.

My memory will become better.

All my negativity will disappear.

I will become more in harmony with the universe.

And by the time I reach the bottom I will be incredibly relaxed, more than ever before.

5. Very relaxed.

4. More relaxed.

3. Deeper.

2. Now very relaxed.

1. Almost there.

0. Totally relaxed.

## **B. Reflecting on My Life Chronologically**

*Now I begin to reflect on my life chronologically and acknowledge how events impacted me. This is great time to use logic to see if the conclusions you reached when you were young are actually valid. I am going to go into quite a bit of detail about my own life so you get the idea.*

I think back to when I was born. I did not know shame or guilt then. I was aware I had parents, that there were two genders, and that I was dependent on them.

My being born was a miracle. If a different egg had been fertilized, I would not exist.

I became aware early that my parents did not love each other, but I mistakenly thought that meant I was not lovable. This shows a very early tendency to put too much blame on myself.

I have compassion for my parents and what they were dealing with. They had very different backgrounds and lived in a time when there was a great stigma associated with divorce. Women were financially dependent on men.

I was alone a lot. My father worked and my mother did chores and watched TV. I remember looking out windows and playing alone in the back yard. I wanted more attention.

I did not get praise from my parents.

I did not get much affection from my parents. My mother may have had mental issues and might even have been abused as a child.

At the age of four, I dreamed my parents locked me out of the house. But now I am sixty years old and can take care of myself. I don't have to worry about being abandoned. And to my parents' credit, they did not abandon me. I don't need to worry about that because I am grown and can care for myself.

At the age of six I created a beautiful piece of art in school, but then I purposely messed it up. I see now I did that to get attention. I wasn't getting attention from my parents, and so I did something outrageous to get attention. I know now I don't have to seek attention to be loved or valuable. The only reason to seek attention is when you must for safety's sake, or to promote a worthy cause, or to teach or entertain.

I remember moving to New Jersey at the age of six. I remember my parents fighting. I remember being picked last for sports. I remember getting poor grades. I remember feeling like I did not fit in because my father was Jewish and my mother was not. I remember staying in my room and reading to be away from their fight, and I see the beginnings of my introvert tendencies and my tendencies to hold my feelings inside. I see that I liked my animals more than people.

I am grateful the fire I started did not cause any harm.

I am grateful I was not hurt when I was playing by the train tracks in Morris Plains and a train came rushing by.

I ask for forgiveness for throwing that rock at a boy and breaking that window, and for lying about it. And I forgive myself.

My dad did not give praise unless I achieved something. One time in Little League I hit a triple. His response was, "Mark, that would have been a home run if you had put more of your body into it." I mistakenly thought that I did not deserve love unless I achieved. I know my dad did this to help me be successful in life and I forgive him.

I remember getting older and feeling tremendous guilt about masturbation and sexual fantasies. I did not have guilt when I was born, so I had to learn that from someone, most likely my mother and grandmother. I forgive them. I have great empathy for my younger self who suffered so much unnecessary guilty and shame.

I see that I often dreamed of the future. When your present sucks, you dream of the future. I wanted the opposite of what my parents had, so I dreamed of a day when I would have a good relationship. I felt that someone else - the perfect partner - would solve all my problems and make all my pain disappear. I know now that I cannot be dependent on anyone else to make my pain disappear.

I go off to college, but I don't date much because on some level I think I don't deserve love because of my masturbation and sexual fantasies. I have empathy for my younger self. I realize now I was no different than anyone else, and when I did share my fantasies, my partners were accepting. There is no such thing as rejection in any event because nothing anyone else feels about me can change the fact that I am loveable and loved. There might be many reasons for a woman to decide she is not interested, and perhaps she even thinks she is not good enough for me.

I am grateful to all the partners I had.

I see now a pattern of falling in love and then losing that feeling, which I called "falling out of love" at the time. Even when my partners accepted me, I did not accept myself and eventually needed a new thrill to feel good about myself. I apologize to all my partners and ask forgiveness.

I think about my two marriages. In both cases, I don't think the failure of the marriage was anyone's fault. I tend to think we probably should not have gotten married. I was so eager to get married that I did not ask the right questions. I am grateful for the lessons I learned from each.

## C. Lessons learned

Parents and people in authority are not always right.

I tend to accept too much blame for bad things.

I am not always wrong.

I am entitled to my feelings, and I trust them.

All the guilt I put on myself over masturbation and fantasy was unnecessary. People masturbate all the time. Teen boys masturbate. Grown men masturbate. Grown women masturbate. It doesn't affect how smart I am, how kind I am, my income, my weight, or anything else. Neither do fantasies. I can't even control my fantasies, and it is stupid to feel bad about something I can't control. But it is important to recognize a pattern of using sexual arousal, sexual fantasy, and romantic fantasy to escape pain and numbness. It's now time to lean into that pain and acknowledge it.

When I hide my sexuality from others, I am confirming the false belief that something is wrong with me.

### **The Routine – 6. The Closing**

*Say each of these things to yourself in your mind:*

I am grateful for this time today to have been able to relax and reflect.

I will now count to three.

When I reach three, I will slowly open my eyes, feeling refreshed, relaxed, better than before, ready for a great day and a great week ahead.

One.

Two.

Three.

### **About the Author**

Mark Cohen has 35 years of experience as a lawyer. He earned a B.A. in Economics at [Whitman College](#) and earned his law degree at the [University of Colorado in Boulder](#). He earned an [LL.M. Agricultural and Food Law](#) from the [University of Arkansas](#), where he also taught advanced legal writing. His diverse legal career includes service as an Air Force JAG, a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, a prosecutor, a municipal judge for Boulder, six years on the Advisory Board of [The Colorado Lawyer](#) (including one as chairperson), and service on the Executive Board of the [Colorado Municipal League](#).

Mark wrote six articles in the Am.Jur. *Proof of Facts* series, including the seminal article on piercing the corporate veil.<sup>5</sup> He has written numerous articles and book reviews for [The Colorado Lawyer](#). In 2004, he won 2nd prize in the SEAK National Legal Fiction Writing Competition. He wrote two mysteries published by Time Warner, and his first mystery, [The Fractal Murders](#), became a Book Sense® mystery pick and was a finalist for the Colorado Book of the Year. His non-legal articles have appeared in magazines such as *Inside Kung Fu*, *Camping & RV*, and *Modern Dad*. He is a member of the Institute of General Semantics and the [Mystery Writers of America](#). He writes a regular column for the Nederland [Mountain-Ear](#).

Mark's practice focuses on drafting and reviewing legal documents including contracts, corporate documents, real estate documents, employment documents, intellectual property documents, motions, pleadings, and briefs. He also litigates cases arising out of poorly drafted documents. He enjoys helping businesses and other lawyers improve their legal and non-legal documents by translating them from Legalese into plain English. Learn more at [Plain English Consulting](#).

<http://www.cohenslaw.com/areasofpractice/plainenglishconsulting.html>

Mark holds a black belt in karate and serves on the board of directors of [Dart, Inc.](#), a Boulder non-profit that offers training in personal safety, violence prevention, and appropriate dating relationships.

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