



FINDING *peace*

IN THE DARK CORNERS OF YOUR LIFE

By Wendy Leeds | [TinyBuddha.com](https://www.tinybuddha.com)

It's easy to feel peaceful and positive when the sun is shining and life is going your way. It's a different matter when you're alone, afraid, sick, or so tired you have trouble getting out of bed in the morning.

As a three-time cancer survivor, I know something about getting through difficult times. I know what it's like to feel exhausted and hopeless, but I've also learned it's possible to find moments of peace and light under the most difficult of circumstances. You can, too.

Here are six techniques that help me find the light when things are tough. I hope they bring you the same sense of peace and ease they bring me.

1. STOP PRETENDING EVERYTHING'S OKAY.

If things aren't going well, acknowledge it. Stop judging yourself for feeling tired, anxious, or miserable. Instead of yelling at yourself for not being upbeat in the face of trauma or trouble, speak to yourself with the same understanding and respect you'd use to support your friends and family.

Tell yourself you have every right to feel the way you do right now, but that feelings are like the tide. They come and go. And while things are tough today, you're tough, too. You've been through hard times before. You'll get through this, and tomorrow will be a better day.

Peace, page 2



COUNSELOR CORNER

Lindsey Kringlie
MS, LAPC

The Village Business Institute

Q: Why is it so hard for me to feel content?

A: When I hear the word "content," I think of the word "peace." When we strive for peace, we strive for true happiness. There are many factors that play a role in why we experience a lack of peace.

Here are few of these factors and what we can do about them.

Belief system: What we focus on intentionally becomes what we focus on automatically. Our belief system dictates how we view everything. We need to ask ourselves if our belief system is accurate and uplifting. Oftentimes from clients I hear shame and disheartening beliefs that are complete lies that leave no room for peace. We crave

Continued on page 2

COUNSELOR CORNER CONT.

acceptance and fear rejection. However, we oftentimes reject ourselves which means we won't feel content. Our mindset tends to fall into, "I'll be good enough when/if X, Y, and Z happens." For example, "I'll be good enough when I lose 10 pounds." Or, "I'll be good enough if I get that job promotion." We need to change our inner dialogue to, "Because I am loved and accepted, I am going to continue personal growth in these areas."

Solitude: There is an unbelievable amount of noise and movement in our world. Our mindset can be wired to seek noisy distraction as silence may uncomfortably invoke areas of pain. It's important to grant ourselves permission for solitude and find little moments of stillness.

Connection: We are wired for authentic vulnerable connection to others. These connections should be with people who authentically accept us as we are, yet still respectfully hold us accountable for our actions that don't promote inner peace.

Emotions: Ask yourself, "What am I doing with my emotions? Do I identify and process them accurately?" Sometimes we displace them on other areas and don't focus on the root issue(s). Sometimes we stuff and internalize our emotions. These can be stored as physical ailments such as a dull pain or muscle tension.

Balance of needs: Our needs shift from time to time. Checking in on what we need regularly helps wire our brain to automatically reflect on what is, and what is not, in balance. I recommend a holistic approach of reflecting on physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental health needs regularly. Also ask, "What attachments am I holding onto that are not allowing for a healthy life balance?"

Lastly, please be gentle on yourself. It is OK to not be OK. There is so much chaos in our world and to feel uneasy is normal. If you would like to talk with someone about these feelings, please call The Village EAP at 1-800-627-8220 to schedule an appointment.

Peace, from page 1

2. GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF LIVING ONE HOUR AT A TIME.

Here's how it works: Let's say it's 1:15 p.m. Focus on doing the best you can until 2 p.m. That's it. You don't have to worry about what's for dinner tomorrow night. You certainly aren't going to worry about that appointment you have next Tuesday, or how you're going to replace your old car.

You just have to make it through this one hour, secure in the knowledge that the next hour, and all the hours after that will take care of themselves.

3. FOCUS ON LOVING YOURSELF.

This is a time to treat your body and spirit with fierce, loving self-care. Listen to your body and give it what it needs to stay healthy. Get enough rest. Eat well, but don't beat yourself up if you overindulge. Move often. Take an afternoon off and do something that soothes your heart, like taking a walk or reading a book. Remind yourself all day long of how many reasons and ways you have to love yourself.

4. GET BUSY.

Don't just sit around worrying, do something. Even if you don't have a lot of energy, you can still find something small to do to make your life better. Clean out a drawer or a closet. Read something. Learn something. Start a project, finish a project. Knit, tinker, build, garden, write, explore, give, share.

5. BE GRATEFUL.

Take some time every day to focus on all the wonderful things you already have in your life. When you start looking for, and talking about, things you're grateful for, you'll begin to welcome more of those wonderful things into your life.

6. LOOK UP AND BREATHE.

Finally, when you're anxious, depressed, or at your wit's end, all you have to do to instantly feel better is look up. Simply raise your gaze to the sky or ceiling or whatever is over your head. Take a moment to feel a connection to the universe.

Draw a breath deep into your belly. As you continue to breathe deeply, feel a sense of relaxation begin in your shoulders and work its way down your spine. Feel your muscles soften as a sense of ease fills your body.

With your next inhale, repeat the phrase, "I now fill my body with peace and light." As you exhale, repeat to yourself, "I let go of the weight of fear and worry." Repeat until you are completely relaxed.

Then take that sense of peace into your day, knowing you can repeat this technique as many times as you wish to bring this



sense of peace into your heart, no matter what is going on around you.

It may not be possible to avoid the dark days in life, but it's always possible to bring some light into that darkness and peace into your soul, by choosing acceptance, gratitude, focus, and love.

Wendy Leeds is a psychotherapist and a cancer survivor. Learn more at her website, wendyleeds.com. Article republished with permission from tinybuddha.com. You can find the original post at <https://tinybuddha.com/blog/finding-peace-in-the-dark-corners-of-your-life/>