

How to Spring Into A Place of Peace in 2021

By Stephanie K. Starks, LISW-S

Let's be frank. The last year has been surreal. Our lives were turned upside down in a moment. We were all given this unpredictable deck of cards and were all forced to play by new rules. Rules that we did not have say in creating. Rules that changed moment to moment. How did we ever survive?

The American Psychological Association defines Trauma as an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, assault, natural disaster or indeed a pandemic. Secondary trauma is defined as indirect exposure to trauma through a firsthand account or narrative of a traumatic event. Whether you have experienced trauma first-hand, or have witnessed it via the news, social media, or by watching those close to you endure it, there can be long lasting effects. How do we begin to heal? March 20th marks the first day of Spring. Spring represents the start of something new, an awakening, a rejuvenation. As Springtime is fast approaching, take this time as an opportunity to refresh and cleanse your mind, body and spirit. Here are some tips to help you Spring into a better state of being:

Get Moving:

Studies show that exercise is a natural anti-depressant. Your body releases endorphins, which help to improve your mood and energy.

Create an Attitude of Gratitude:

Research shows that people who find things to be grateful are generally happier and less depressed. Find 1 thing per day to be grateful for.

Walk Into the Light:

When the sun hits your skin, your brain is triggered to release a hormone called serotonin. Serotonin is associated with boosting your mood and helping you feel calm and focused. Seek to get at least 20 mins of continuous sunlight per day.

Re-Fill Your Cup Daily:

Do 1 thing each day to care for yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. It does not require a lot of time. The goal is to be INTENTIONAL and CONSISTENT in caring for yourself.

Stay Connected:

Humans have a natural need for social connection and like feeling valued, cared for, and supported by others. Do what you can to stay connected with those you love, even if it is via FaceTime.

Extend Yourself & Others Grace:

Be kind to yourself and others. Know that you will not always be perfect or do everything right. Nor will others. Put yourself in another's shoes, if only for a moment.

Smile:

Smiling regularly helps to reduce stress levels, because of the neurotransmitters that the body releases when you smile. The body often releases endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine, all of which improve your mood and help to release negative emotions. Don't feel like smiling? Fake it until you make it! Your brain won't know the difference.

Doing these few things with intention and in honor of YOU will help you to bounce back and to show up happier and healthier than ever! ■

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