

Stay Awake Journal Prompts

During our final live Q&A, one of our classmates, Ashlea, Skyped in and explained how the work and discoveries from our class woke her up. She asked how we could stay awake and avoid falling back into that numbing and “not enough” coma now that the course is over.

I had already thought about sharing some journal prompts with you, so when the Twitter feed went crazy with the hashtag #STAY AWAKE, I thought, “That’s it. We’ll share some Stay Awake journal prompts to keep us thinking and conscious of our choices until we meet again for Part 2!”

On page 1 of *The Gifts of Imperfection*, I write, “Wholehearted Living is not a onetime choice. It is a process. In fact, it’s the journey of a lifetime.” The following Stay Awake prompts are questions I’ve found helpful on my journey.

Use your journal to reflect upon the following questions and ideas. Do one a week, several a day or whatever works for you in your process. You can write your thoughts out, draw them, collage or use photographs. And, it goes without saying, decorate your reflections to your heart’s content!



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1. On page 3 of *The Gifts of Imperfection*, I talk about breaking my “Dig Deep” button, the one I used to “suck it up” and “push through” when things got tough. Now I try to get **D**eliberate, **I**nspired and **G**oing when I’m feeling depleted and down. Pushing through and sucking it up are costly to our bodies and our souls. If you could draw, collage, describe or photograph a loving, gentle DIG Deep button—one that would remind you to take care of yourself and walk away from the to-do list every once in a while—what would it look like?
2. On page 19, I offer a definition of connection. Does it resonate for you? Who comes to mind when you read that definition? Have you taken time to thank them for seeing, hearing, and valuing you? Do it now!
3. One of the hardest things I learned from the research is the idea that we can never really offer judgment-free help to others when we judge ourselves for needing help. Ask for help, even if it’s for something small. Write down how it feels. What messages did you hear or see growing up about what it means to ask for help?
4. On page 24, I write, “Worthiness doesn’t have prerequisites.” Do you have an if/when worthiness list? If so, write it down. (I’ll be worthy if/when _____.) We can’t change this list until we own it. Once you write it down, start thinking about how your life would be different if you crossed out every one of the items on your list and wrote “I am worthy NOW” next to the line. Then, do it. You don’t have to believe it yet, but it’s true.
5. Craft your own definition of love. You can do it alone or you can sit down with someone and work on it together. Then, read the bell hooks quote on page 27. What does it mean to you, and how do you put those beliefs into action? In other words, what do loving behaviors look like?
6. On page 28, I ask a very difficult question: Can you love someone else more than you love yourself? Like most people, I wrestle with that question. I don’t think we can, but I wish I were wrong. What do you think?
7. On page 42, I tell a story about experiencing shame and wanting to shame back! I’ve since learned that when I start practicing mean things to say to someone or start having hurtful conversations in my head, *I feel hurt* and vulnerable. What’s your vulnerability red flag? What un-awake thing do you do that could be a helpful warning sign to practice self-compassion and be thoughtful about your choices?

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8. When we feel shame, we use strategies of disconnection (page 46), and we have a tendency to do one of three things: move away, move toward or move against. What is your go-to disconnection strategy? Do you use different strategies in different situations?

9. My definition of authenticity is on page 50. It's long because I had to include everything I've learned from the research. I want to issue a fun challenge. *SMITH Magazine* started a great movement called the Six-Word Memoir. How would you describe your authentic self in six words?

10. I define spirituality on page 64. Now it's your turn! Finish these sentence stems in your journal:

- a. Spirituality is _____.
- b. Faith is _____.
- c. Hope is _____.

11. On pages 79 and 80, I talk about the differences between joy and happiness. Do you think they're different? If so, how and why? What brings you happiness? What is the foundation of your joy?

These last four prompts are art and journal prompts.

12. What does your intuition look like? How would you collage or draw it?

13. What is your favorite page in your journal? Why? What does it mean to you?

14. What color is faith for you? Dedicate an entire page to the exploration of faith as a visual thing? For many of us, there are traditional symbols of faith. Sometimes those resonate, and sometimes they don't. What moves you to believe in mystery?

15. On the very last page of your journal, write a supportive and loving letter to yourself that you commit to reading one year from now. What are you learning about yourself? What do you hope to keep learning?