

MEDITATION GUIDE

28 days to a meditation practice

PRACTICE MEDITATION REGULARLY. MEDITATION LEADS TO ETERNAL BLISS.
THEREFORE, MEDITATE, MEDITATE. ~ SWAMI SIVANANDA





a note to my readers

A lot of thought and love went into the making of this booklet. I have had a wealth of experiences over the last 30 years of meditating, much of which has been included in this work. Wherever I am able, I have given credit to original sources of information and inspiration. And where I am not able to specifically give credit, my sincere gratitude goes to those that shared their experiences with me.

This booklet is not intended as medical or mental health advice. **Spirited Practice** recommends consulting with a licensed mental health care provider if you have needs other than the desire to meditate. PLEASE BE AWARE THAT YOUR LIFE WILL CHANGE IF YOU DO THIS PROGRAM. You are responsible for any consequence of your use of any suggestion or procedure described in this booklet.

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congratulations!

I realize that you might be excited and a little scared. Yay! You have made an amazingly wonderful and healthy decision. We are going to support each other on an awakening journey filled with clear and peace-invoking choices.

my story

I'm grateful that you chose me to guide you through creating your home meditation practice. I came to meditation 30 years ago. It's hard for me to believe it. I had actually tried to meditate before then but was unsuccessful. I was unfocused, young, living in a cloud of smoke (literally) and couldn't sit still for one minute.

My intention was to get my life together. The thing I didn't have was a teacher and it wasn't until I had a teacher, that things started to shift. After I went through an emotional stage, which consisted of a year of crying and feeling very uncomfortable in my body, I was able to sit quietly for any period of time. I began to feel the benefits of meditation.

I received guidance from various books, clergy, and friends. We didn't have easy access to the multitudes of information on the Internet at that time. I tried Transcendental Meditation, mindfulness, creative visualization, mantra meditation, I spent time in the Hare Krishna temple, and all of it led me to where I am today.

Eventually, I made my way to vipassana (insight) meditation, which is similar to mindfulness, and did my first 7-day silent retreat. My practice took off under the guidance of Pujari, We would sit for 45 minutes, take a break and then walk for 45 minutes. I never knew I could take my practice into movement. I also didn't know that I was in a similar state of meditation and mindfulness when I was painting, singing or practicing yoga.

It was at this stage in my life that I realized my life at completely changed as the result of my practices-yoga, chanting, and meditation. People had been telling me for years that I had changed, but now I embodied the change. It was who I was. I have spent 30 years trying different practices, finding the ones that work for me and my students, and practicing daily, sitting, observing, contemplating. I still have much to learn, and I am excited to share what I know.

Luckily, you don't have to try lots of different things. I offer you 4 main types of meditation. From my experience, one of these will most likely suit your needs. If not, there are others I can share.

Don't be frightened. Know that you are in good hands and with a good heart. Om shanti. Peace.



set your intention



Begin your journaling experience by listing your goals. You may not be used to writing, yet you will find it extremely helpful through this habit changing process. It will help you to remember where you were AND where you want to go.

Mark the time on your calendar to be alone or with those you find comforting. This is the time to take care of you.

Sit quietly and focus on your breath for a few minutes or listen to the Intention Recording I sent with your packet.

LIST YOUR 3 MAIN GOALS FOR THE NEXT MONTH. STATE YOUR GOALS WITH POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS AS IF THEY ARE HAPPENING ALREADY. In Sanskrit we call this a sankalpa.

i.e. I intuitively know how to handle situations that baffle me. I know this because I have handled every situation in my life to the best of my ability. Or I sit for 10 minutes each morning and feel quiet and peaceful.

MAKE SURE TO PUT A DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THIS WOULD LOOK LIKE TO YOU.

1.	
2.	
3.	

POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF MEDITATING:

Increased energy, vitality, clarity, focus, calmness, creativity, intuition and productivity, improved immunity, better sleep, let go of stress, and more.

Get in the habit of writing in your journal now. You can use it to track your progress and your emotions. Writing is a great way to release toxic ideas from our mind and to keep track of what's happening.



journal entries

So you've decided to begin a meditation practice. Why?							
I want to meditate because							
I need							
I am afraid that							
I am excited about							
My goal for meditating is to change							
ould like to meditate for minutes each day							
preparation							
Read through this entire packet before embarking on your meditating journey.							
Look at this first week as the beginning time to connect with your true self. Time for yourself is as important as all the things you do. Instead of "doing" all of the time, imagine the possibility of being! The only limitations we have are those that we create. Visualize your life transforming in a way that allows you to love yourself more deeply.							
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 □ Schedule 5-10 minutes each day into your schedule (more time if you'd like) □ Say NO-when possible to distractions □ Candles, soft music, comfortable clothing 							



Take a breath here. Don't let yourself get overwhelmed. Do as much as you can, and it will be enough. This time is a gift, not a punishment.

Are you ready for meditation? The answer is yes if you are

- willing to use your mind in the healing process.
- reasonably stable and have a sense of humor. LOL-don't worry.
- committed to a minimum of 5 minutes each day on your practice.
- want to change how you feel and the circumstances of your life.

What you can expect from me?

Up-to-date, factual information booklet (the one you're reading)
3 weekly emails for inspiration
Prompt answers and honest feedback to your questions and comments via email
A new video and audio recording each week

How to know if the practice is working?

- You will notice less anxiety and stress
- You will feel lighter and less burdened
- Your relationships will improve
- Symptoms you have (high blood pressure, sleep disturbances, hypertension) will reduce
- You will start to feel more intuitive and creative
- You will know how to act in situations that were challenging in the past

How to know if the meditation practice isn't working?

- You feel more stressed
- Your symptoms increase or new troubling ones appear
- You feel more blocked
- Your relationships deteriorate

Keeping track of your experiences daily will help you to know.

Create a sacred space (desa)

Spend some time to find and prepare **space for** meditation. Look around your home. Where can you sit undistracted for a short period of time? Make sure that the space is pleasing to you, uncluttered and comfortable. You may like an altar of some sort in your space. Choose your space. Journal.



querencia

(n.) a place from which one's strength is drawn, where one feels at home; the place where you are your most authentic self

Pronunciation: /ke' aensi ə/

Choosing a Time (kala)

Pick a time of day that you will be able to practice your meditation each and every day. A big part of the practice is the discipline. Choose a time that suits your needs. Plan for 5-10 minutes each day for the first 2 weeks. For weeks 3 and 4, you may want to move to 15-20 minutes or you may want to stick with your 5-10 minutes. Traditionally powerful times are dawn and dusk.

I like adding a new habit to an existing one (i.e. meditate right after brushing your teeth in the morning or in the evening).

Choose your time. Journal.

Remove Distractions

Turn off cell/home phones, let family know you're not to be disturbed, take care of any pets, and set an alarm with a gentle tone to let you know when time is up if you are not using a guided meditation.

If you are using a guided meditation, have your computer or whatever you are using to listen to the meditation set up and ready to go. We'll discuss distractions of the mind later.

Set the Stage (Ritual)

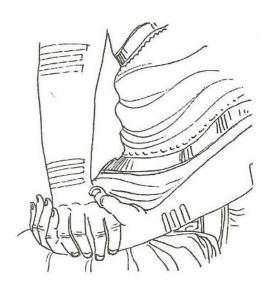
- · Sound or no sound
- Light or no light
- Choose a ritual to repeat each sitting (light a candle, incense, place a flower on your altar)

What is your ritual? Journal.



Set Your Intention

You'll hear me talk about a SANKALPA, which is a vow, commitment or strong intention. We say these in the present tense as if they are already happening. We call them affirmations in English. A sankalpa is stronger than an affirmation because it's our heart's deepest desire for us and we are dedicating our practice to it. Write your sankalpa in your journal.



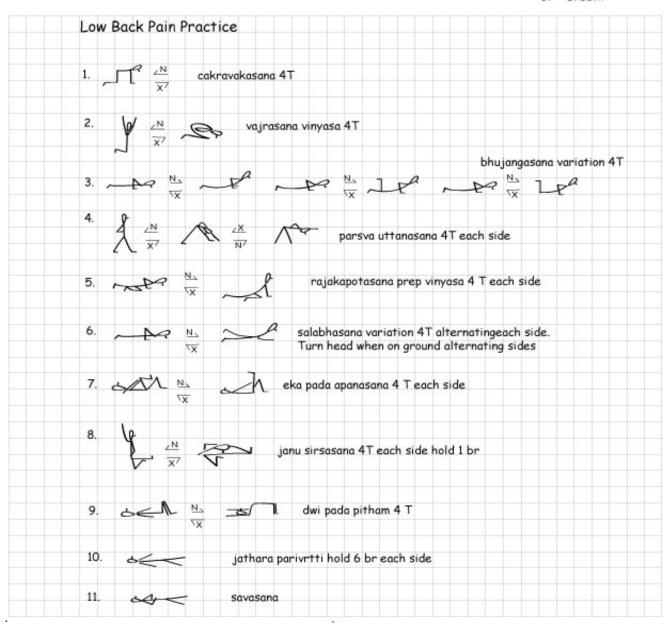
In **sankalpa mudra** the left hand crosses the midline (heart energy center) and rests palm open (receptive mode) on the right thigh. The right hand goes over the left with the right palm facing down in a grounding mode.

When we bring our hands together with the palms facing one another, it connects both hemispheres of the brain. All aspects of us--body, mind and spirit hear the commitment and can work together to make our resolve happen.

Prepare to Sit- Journal about how your body feels before, during and after your practice



n = inhale x = exhale T = times Br = breath



"It is through the body that you realize you are a spark of divinity."

— BKS lyengar



Set up Your Seat

Posture is important to consider when meditating. The spine needs to be erect and the body needs to be comfortable. We want nothing to distract us.

You can sit cross-legged, kneeling or with your legs straight out. You can also sit on a straight-back chair. I suggest a cushion or blanket under your bottom for comfort. I will show traditional meditation cushions in video 1.

You might place a pillow or blanket under your hands so your hands and arms are propped up and there is no tug on your shoulders. Here are some common meditation seats.

Signs your practice may be working:

- ✓ You're happier.
- ✓ Sleeping better
- ✓ Your mind is clear.
- ✓ People say you're nicer.
- ✓ You feel good.
- ✓ You're more productive.



v-shaped cushion on zabuton



meditation bench



meditation bench in use



zafu on top of zabuton



Close your eyes.

Relax your jaw so that there's space between your teeth. Soften the tongue.

Notice how the head feels on your shoulders.

What can you do to feel more comfortable?

Now it's time to focus on the breath.

Breathing (Pranayama)

For the purpose of ease, we will focus on a simple breath, breathing in and out through the nose attempting to keep your inhale and exhale even. You may start by counting your inhale and matching your exhale count to the inhale. This can be a very satisfying beginning meditation practice that you can do anywhere, at any time. It will immediately start to calm your mind and body down. As you get used to this calming breath, you will automatically return to it when you return to your sitting practice each day.

Journal about your breath.

MEDITATION

Meditation is concentrating until you are able to focus on one thing; one-pointed focus. That thing might be your breath, an object, image, word, sound, my voice, etc.

When we direct our mind to one thing, it has a tendency to want to do something else. At that point we are thinking about something besides what our focal point is. This is where we begin to **NOTE.** An example would be: "I'm focusing on my breath. My mind remembers that I have to buy some meat for dinner. I say to my self, "oh, I note that I'm thinking about meat," then I return my attention back to my breath.

Many times it may take us some time before we realize we have gone off track. That's okay. Just bring yourself back to your focus once you realize you have strayed.

Meditation is connected to many religions; it is also considered it's own spiritual practice. I invite you to infuse meditation into your religious practices or to keep it completely separate.

Don't allow yourself to get hung up on outside ideas. Our point over the next four weeks and beyond is to develop a regular, personal meditation practice.



types of meditation we'll be using

1. Guided Meditation- is a form of meditation where an individual is verbally guided into a state of consciousness either by a person's live voice or by a recording of a voice. A guided meditation may or may not contain music or other sounds besides voice.

Guided meditation can take on any focus the guide would like to bring to you-moving toward a goal such as sleep or stress reduction, focus on an image or feeling, focus on the breath. When choosing your guided meditations, make sure that the guide's voice is pleasing and that you don't get caught up in the languaging. You can also record your own guided meditation. I will include transcripts of the guided meditations that I do, in case you want to record your own in your own voice.

2. Visualization – is when you picture something in your mind (i.e. an image, idea, word). In Sanskrit, we call this a bhavana. You can picture something as it is and contemplate attaining the qualities of the object (brilliant like a star) or picture some as you would like it to be (I picture myself at peace while I'm telling my boss I can't work in my job any longer.)

When we focus on light, we become like light.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra 1.36 <u>vishoka va jyotishmati</u> (click to hear it)

- **3. Mindfulness** is a meditative practice where you focus on what is around you and whatever it is you are doing. It can be done while sitting, walking or doing some other activity. The practice is to be in the moment focused on whatever is in front of you.
- **4. Mantra Meditation** is a mediation practice that uses sound as the primary focus. An example would be repeating a sound or group of sounds over and over. An example might be the sound "Om." Om is the most common sound used in yoga and meditation because it is considered the primordial sound. It is said to contain all the sounds of the universe.

Whether a mantra is repeated silently or aloud, its effects are felt in and around the body and mind. Sound is a form of energy. We use sound to change our energy.

Sometimes a mala (108 strung beads) is used to keep track of the number of times.



Be sure to journal about your experiences each day so you can look back on what works for you, what doesn't work as well as how much you have progressed!



I will take you through each of these practices with the audio and video that are included each week of this program.

Closing your Practice

When you complete your practice, bring your hands to your heart center. Thank your body, mind and spirit for going through the practice and offer any benefit you receive from the practice to be shared with he world, planet or a specific person. Bow your head to heart and your heart to the Earth.

Journaling

Be sure to keep your journal by your side. After you complete your seated practice, write down any thoughts, feelings or insights that occur to you. Journaling is important to help you recognize how you are growing and changing.

Helpful Hints:

- Make sure you are comfortable, warm and have taken care of things that might distract you.
- Let people around you know what you are doing so they can support you or leave you alone.
- Sit with a friend or family member.
- Share your experiences with someone close to you, your journal or with me.
- The mind's job is to think. Don't beat yourself up when you think. (refer to **noting** on top of page 10)

REMEMBER: THIS REFLECTIVE TIME IS A POSITIVE CHOICE BY YOU—FOR YOU!!

Benefits of Meditation:

- 1. Increases self-awareness
- 2. Stress reduction
- 3. Increases serotonin
- 4. Decreases cortisol levels
- 5. Decreases heart
- 6. Lowers respiration
- 7. Increases red blood cell production
- 8. Improves relationships
- 9. Feel better
- 10.Be happier
- 11. Feel calm
- 12. Decreases blood pressure





- 13. Lower hypertension
- 14.Lower blood sugar
- 15. Increase immunity
- 16. Sleep more deeply
- 17. Reduces anxiety
- 18. Increases energy
- 19. Increases productivity
- 20. Develops your intuition
- 21. Know how to handle situations that used to baffle you
- 22. Enhances healing
- 23. Improves performance (mental and physical)
- 24.Heal faster
- 25. Controls weight
- 26. Increases creativity
- 27. Reduces aging
- 28. Thinking more clearly
- 29. Decreases anger and aggressiveness
- 30. Promotes wellness and well being
- 31. Helps with addictions
- 32. Improves attitude
- 33. Changes perspective
- 34. Builds confidence
- 35. Ability to visualize more easily
- 36. Feel more comfortable with who you are and your situation in life
- 37. Increases ability to deal with all situations
- 38. Reduces fear
- 39. Requires no materials
- 40. Once you learn how to mediate, it's free
- 41. Reduces pain levels
- 42. Increased focus
- 43. Increased ability to concentrate
- 44. Builds compassion for yourself and others
- 45. Greater job satisfaction
- 46. Relax more easily
- 47. Feel a greater connection to the planet and the beings on the planet
- 48. Transform your life
- 49. Transform your body
- 50. Transform your relationships

Notice any changes that are happening in your body, your mind, your relationships, and your life in general as you go through this meditative process; add these to your journal.



meditation in relationship to yoga



Patanjali was a sage some 2,000 years ago who wrote down the Yoga Sutras, which were a series of 195 aphorisms about what yoga is, its benefits, and the obstacles of yoga. Meditation covers the last 3 of the 8 limbs of yoga (Ashtanga yoga).

- 1. Yamas (ethical standards)
- 2. Niyamas (self-discipline)
- 3. Asana (yoga poses)
- 4. Pranayama (breathing practices)
- 5. Pratyahara (withdrawing from the senses)
- 6. Dharana (concentration)
- 7. Dhyana (meditation or contemplation)
- 8. Samadhi (a state of bliss or ecstasy)

According to Patanjali, we should be accomplished in other practices in order to be able to move into a place where we can fully concentrate and meditate fully. Some of us, though, work in a different way and this is all right. We start where we are and we work on what we need most. It's hard to be fully aware and to treat people poorly. No matter where we start, if we stay on a thoughtful path, we will eventually make our way through each step.

obstacles of the mind in meditation



Besides all of the obstacles we have in our every day lives, such as work, family, pets, and other obligations distract us, we also have distractions of the mind. Of course, meditation is training the mind. Your ego does not want to be trained.

Patanjali tells us in Yoga Sutra 1.30 that the main distractions of our mind will be "Disease-mental or physical, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensuality, false perception, lack of perseverance and slipping from ground gained." These distractions of the mind are the obstacles we must overcome to develop a regular meditation practice. Let's look at each one.



Disease

Meditation is not a substitute for therapy. If you have some thing going on in your life or your mind that feels overwhelming, seek professional help. If you have physical pains, injury or illness, seek medical help. While meditation enhances and speeds up the healing process, it does not replace medical advice.

Dullness

When feeling slow, tired or lethargic, note that you are feeling this way and continue with your practice. One of the reasons we sit during meditation is to help us to remain alert.

Doubt

Doubt has come up many times for me regarding my practice. I have doubted whether the practice was beneficial, if I was doing the practice correctly and if I really needed to meditate. Be gentle with yourself. Know that these thoughts are natural and normal. I was instructed to sit no matter what and share the results in my journal and with my teacher. The results were that my practice deepened each time I broke through a new layer of doubt.

Carelessness

Impatience, haste, things are happening fast enough or how you thought that it should, so you give up.

Laziness

Sometimes laziness shows up as making something or someone else more important. Sometimes we just can't add anything to our plate. There's a saying, "if you have time to meditate, sit 5 minutes a day. If you don't have time to meditate, sit 20 minutes a day." Watching TV, while it may help you decompress, it's not meditating.

Sensuality

Feeding pleasures of the flesh through sex, food, electronics or other things not in a pleasurable way but in an addictive way, this is what Patanjali refers to as sensuality.



False Perception

It's very easy for us to see things as we think they should be or want them to be or how our memory tells us they were. Meditation helps us to break through false perception. We can truly begin to see who we are and see those around us more clearly as well.

Lack of Perseverance

When we give up and say I can't do it, we are saying I don't care enough to follow through or to commit and get it done.

Slipping Back

This is where we take 2 steps forward and one step back. We seem to be moving ahead in our practice and then we have a set back. Some of us at this time give up and some of us persevere through it. One thing I know after 30 years of practice is that no two meditations are the same. I can do the same practice over and over and each time I learn some thing new.



frequently asked questions

Can meditation hurt me? No. As long as you listen to your body.

Is meditation addicting? No. Meditation does change your brain chemistry, but it is not physically addicting. I have met people who over time want to spend more time alone that with people.

Why do I need a teacher? We want someone who's been there before us so they can help us to understand what we are going through.

How often and for how long should I meditate once I get used to it? Each person will find their own way. I sit for 20 minutes each morning and some times in the evening as well. Sometimes I sit for up to 60 minutes depending on the day. When my children were young, 5 minutes was all I could do. It's important to pick a time and discipline yourself to sit for that long.

Can I do meditation incorrectly? No.

There are so many kinds of meditation. How do I know which one is right for me? You try different ones and find out which one works best for you.

My feet get numb when I sit cross-legged. What can I do? Move them. Try a different position.

My knees hurt when I kneel. Is it causing damage to me? If something hurts, you change your position. Sometimes the mind will play tricks on you. Listen to your body.

What am I supposed to feel? Each experience is different. I don't wan to put ideas into your head.

Why is this so boring? Boredom is a state of mind. Find a focus you connect with.



THERE IS NO WRONG WAY TO DO MEDITATION!



meditation planner

Saturday	1.	8.	15.	22.
- Cataraay				
Sunday	2.	9.	16.	23.
Monday	3.	10.	17.	24.
Tuesday	4.	11.	18.	25.
Wednesday	5.	12.	19.	26.
Thursday	6.	13.	20.	27.
Friday	7.	14.	21.	28.



notes

resources

Books

<u>A Path with Heart,</u> Jack Kornfield, a guide through spiritual life <u>Creative Visualization</u>, Shakti Gawain, practical meditations <u>Heart of Yoga: Developing a Personal Practice</u>, TKV Desikachar, developing a yoga practice

<u>Living in the Light</u>, Shakti Gawain, a guide to personal transformation <u>Loving Kindness</u>, Sharon Salzberg, loving kindness meditation <u>Meditation as Medicine</u>, Dharma Singh Khalsa, MD and Cameron Stauth, using meditation for healing

Mindful Yoga, Mindful Life, Charlotte Bell

One Dharma, Joseph Goldstein, a map of spiritual path

Peace is Every Step, Thich Nhat Hanh

Reflections on Yoga Sutra of Patanhali, TKV Desikachar

Start Where You Are, Pema Chodron, just what it says

The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho, my favorite feel good story

<u>Thrive</u>, Arianna Huffington, a great book on letting go of electronics and a busy life

Yoga for Meditators, Charlotte Bell, using yoga to support meditation



what people are saying

Your unconditional acceptance that everyone is where there are on that day or moment is so respectful and kind and frankly something I have trouble giving myself. It's helped me, especially as I age, be kinder to myself. Also in your classes I have learned to breathe - on a couple of levels. Yoga breathing has also allowed me to expand my overall fitness capacity. I could not ever run with any success in the path until I learned to breathe through yoga.

I also think that when I started yoga - with you in 2005! - that I didn't know if I can do it- if I could have the strength or grace to do the poses. But I have learned that I can and it makes me want to do more. This is a bias, maybe, but that you are close to may age is helpful. There is a reason our capacity for compassion grows as we age... JLD

I think the most profound gain from working with you was having the chance to practice self-love/healing in a space that was completely inviting to do so. Additionally, you "armed" us with the proper tools to cultivate that awareness and care of self. I think it's easy to take to stance of "it's too much" or "it's too overwhelming" to try something new. You made the experience seem very inviting and manageable. AND you gave us permission to "fail," so to speak. I loved that the expectations weren't black and white and that the focus was on growth, NOT perfection. And I can't wait to do it again! Corinne

I have loved the knowledge I have gained from taking your classes, chanting and doing the cleanse. I feel that your yoga classes are different from any other yoga classes I have taken because the addition of chanting and the special focus. I really enjoyed the water class and although it was difficult for me I enjoyed the sun class as well. The cleanse helped me more than any other cleanse I have done because of the addition of your menu ideas and your expanded teaching, handouts etc. Marga

I especially enjoy the health and spirituality information you infuse in practice. You are patient, kind and caring and have a great sense of humor. My mind has become clearer and my body doesn't hurt. Cole







Jacqueline began practicing yoga and meditation in her late teens in an attempt to quiet her mind. She has practiced yoga since that time and has taught various yoga practices for over 15 years. She has been influenced by many wonderful yoga and life teachers, her main studies and teaching are in the tradition of Krishnamacharya.

Jacqueline is a 500-hour ERYT (Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher) certified in the Tradition of Krishnamacharya, a CYT (Certified Yoga Therapist) through Body Balance Yoga and Jenny Otto, and is a professional member of the International Association of Yoga Therapists. She is also a certified Health Science Educator. She is a licensed wellness coach, nutritionist and a Desire Mapping Facilitator.

Her time is split between learning about and teaching yoga and wellness, raising two very active boys and traveling through life making music, chanting, cooking and writing.

One of her life's goals is to inspire harmony in the world through sound and silence.



are you ready for more?

Email me to set up a free 20-minute Wellness Clarity Call. Jacqueline@SpiritedPractice.com

Spirited Practice Packages

Dip into the wisdom well to transform your body, mind, habits, health, attitude and relationships.

- Look and feel younger, lighter and more energetic
- Decrease stress
- Create healthy lifetime habits and routines
- Connect to your passionate, sexy self
- Deepen your relationship with yourself and others
- Achieve and maintain your ideal weight
- Firm and tone your body and mind
- Sleep better
- Naturally soften and smooth your skin
- Tap into your creativity

6-or 12-Month VIP Programs

Add-ons

Face-to-face pamper and primp day
Whole foods cooking classes-learn how to make delicious healthy food yourself
Homemade Natural Beauty and Skin Care Classes
Guided Outdoor Activities-to gain comfort hiking and exploring nature

Email with questions and to set up a free 20-minute Wellness Clarity Call. Jacqueline@SpiritedPractice.com