

# gifted quest



**TOOLKIT**

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This toolkit is intended to help you become more aware of what's happening inside of you and to start exploring mild to moderate (1-4 on a scale of 1-10) challenges, emotions, beliefs, and thoughts. To work through moderate to strong ones (5-10 on a scale of 1-10), particularly those related to trauma, it's recommended to seek the guidance of a trained professional.

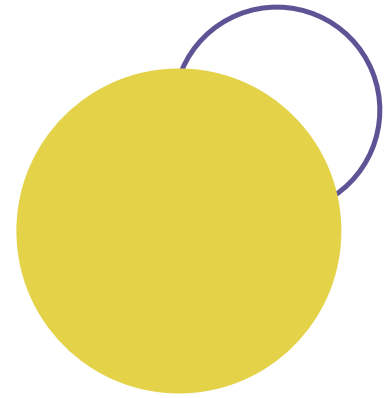
The toolkit combines my favorite simple exercises that have been more or less widely shared within the somatic communities. They draw from a variety of my preferred expert sources such as Peter Levine (Trauma), Stephen Porges (Polyvagal Theory), Jonice Webb (Childhood Emotional Neglect), Gabor Maté (Compassionate Inquiries), Richard Schwarz (Internal Family Systems), and Scott Kiloby (Kiloby Inquiries). These experts have themselves combined ancient traditions and their own professional experiences into their respective frameworks.

The more profound and complex experiences and exercises that I developed for my 1:1 coaching and somatic therapy sessions are adapted to better suit the needs of the gifted community.

*The information and resources provided below are for educational purposes and are not intended to replace medical advice or treatment. It is recommended that you consult with your healthcare provider before beginning any exercise or wellness program. Any use of the information provided is solely at your own risk, and I shall not be held responsible for any injuries, damages, or losses that may result from such use.*

## MY 8 FAVORITE LIFESTYLE PRACTICES AND 70+ FAVORITE SOMATIC EXERCISES FOR HEALTHY AGEING AND A REGULATED NERVOUS SYSTEM

# 8 DAILY LIFESTYLE PRACTICES



For the past few years, I've been rockin' a holistic lifestyle that's all about keeping it simple(r), staying mindful, and getting in touch with nature. It's all about being in tune with my body, mind, and soul, and making conscious choices that help me live my happiest life. Plus, it keeps my stress levels in check, boosts my resilience, and helps me feel more content and at peace.

Just a heads up though - this is what works for me. There's no one size fits all. Additionally, this lifestyle didn't happen overnight. It took a solid two years to get to where I am now. Don't expect dramatic changes in the blink of an eye - building new habits takes time! On average, it can take anywhere from 7 to 28 days for just one small new routine to really stick. But trust me, it's worth it! **You ARE your magic pill - though remember: your magic pill is unique, and will look different from mine!**

- **Move regularly:** I engage in daily physical activity, combining walking, strength training, and yoga, to promote circulation, flexibility, mobility and strength.
- **Get enough sleep:** I prioritize getting at least 8 hours of sleep each night and established a regular sleep schedule to support my body's natural sleep-wake cycle (circadian rhythm). I also sleep with mouth tape on, to encourage nasal breathing. This prevents respiratory infections, reduces snoring, and improves oxygen intake. Additionally, it activates the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and better sleep quality.
- **Manage stress:** I incorporate daily practice of stress-reducing techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, and spending time in nature to lower my cortisol levels and promote relaxation, as well as physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Practice hot and cold exposure therapy:** I take ice baths and expose myself to heat (infrared sauna), to train and stimulate my autonomic nervous system and improve resilience. I alternate between hot and cold days.
- **Practice mindfulness:** I cultivate awareness and presence in the moment through practices like meditation, mindful breathing, mindful movement and expressive art.
- **Foster meaningful social connections:** I prioritize a low number of genuine relationships and social connections to improve my mental health and emotional resilience versus previous more numerous superficial relationships.
- **Engage in self-care:** I consciously set time aside each day for my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health through practices like tapping, (self)massage, acupuncture, floating tanks, self-compassion exercises or journaling (if you're not a journaling fan, try it with your non-dominant hand as a way to access your subconscious mind and bypass your logical, conscious mind)
- **Nutrition:** I eliminated all processed foods, all carbs and refined sugars, and all artificial ingredients.

# 70+

## TOOLS & EXERCISES

Unlock the power of your nervous system with these tools and exercises designed to help increase awareness, and help you regulate your mind, body, and soul. Reconnect with the present moment, your hidden truths, and take control of your experience, as you step towards feeling amazing, connected, and alive!

### 13x breath work

#### Calming breathwork

*This type of breathwork involves slow and deep breathing techniques that activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps to calm the body and reduce stress and anxiety.*

- **Deep Diaphragmatic breathing:** to reduce stress and anxiety. Sit or lie down comfortably with one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling up your belly with air. Exhale slowly through your mouth, letting your belly relax.
- **4-7-8 breathing:** to calm the body and reduce anxiety. Breathe in for 4 seconds through your nose. Hold your breath for 7 seconds. Exhale through your mouth for 8 seconds.
- **4-8 breathing:** This exercise is similar to 4-7-8 breathing, but with a longer exhale. Breathe in for 4 seconds through your nose. Exhale through your mouth for 8 seconds. You can start with 2-4, and then lengthen over a couple of minutes to 3-6, then 4-8.
- **Three-Part Breath:** to reduce stress and anxiety. Lie down on your back with your knees bent and feet on the floor. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Inhale deeply through your nose and fill up your belly, then ribcage, and then chest. Exhale slowly through your nose, releasing your chest, ribcage, and belly in that order.
- **Humming Bee Breath:** to calm the mind and nervous system. Sit or lie down comfortably. Cover your ears with your hands and place your index fingers over your eyes. Inhale deeply through your nose. Exhale slowly while humming like a bee.
- **Ocean Breath:** to calm the mind and improve focus. Sit or lie down comfortably. Inhale deeply through your nose, filling up your lungs. Exhale slowly through your nose, making a "ha" sound.
- **Lion's breath:** to release tension and negative emotions. Sit cross-legged with your hands on your knees. Take a deep inhale through your nose. As you exhale forcefully through your mouth, stick out your tongue and make a "ha" sound.



## Energizing breathwork

*This type of breathwork involves faster and more vigorous breathing techniques that stimulate the sympathetic nervous system, which helps to increase energy levels and alertness.*

- **Skull Shining Breath:** to energize the body and clear the mind. Sit comfortably with your hands resting on your knees. Inhale deeply through your nose. Exhale forcefully through your nose, pulling your stomach in towards your spine.
- **Breath of Fire:** to stimulate digestion, release toxins from the body, and energize the mind and body. Sit in a comfortable seated position with your spine straight and your hands on your knees. Take a few deep breaths to prepare. Begin to breathe rapidly through your nose, with equal emphasis on the inhale and exhale. Both your inhale and your exhale should be strong, forceful and active. Continue for 1-3 minutes, then take a deep breath in and hold it for a few seconds before exhaling slowly.
- **Bellows Breath:** to increase energy and alertness, improve concentration, and calm the mind. Sit in a comfortable seated position with your spine straight and your hands on your knees. Take a few deep breaths to prepare. Begin to inhale deeply through your nose, then exhale forcefully through your nose, drawing your belly in towards your spine. Your inhale should be passive and your exhale should be active. Continue for 20-30 rounds, then take a deep breath in and hold it for a few seconds before exhaling slowly.

## (Re)balancing breathwork

*This type of breathwork involves using specific breathing patterns to regulate the nervous system and promote overall balance and harmony.*

- **Equal breathing:** to balance the nervous system, calm the mind and improve focus. Sit or lie down comfortably and inhale for a count of four. Exhale for a count of four. Repeat for several minutes, gradually increasing the count to six or eight.
- **Alternate nostril breathing:** to balance the nervous system and calm the mind. Sit comfortably with your eyes closed and your left hand resting on your left knee. Use your right thumb to close your right nostril and inhale deeply through your left nostril. Use your ring finger to close your left nostril and exhale through your right nostril. Inhale through your right nostril and exhale through your left nostril. Continue for several minutes, alternating nostrils.
- **Box breathing:** to reduce stress and anxiety. Sit comfortably and inhale for a count of four. Hold your breath for a count of four. Exhale for a count of four. Hold your breath for a count of four. Repeat for several minutes.

## 8 x Meditation

*Train the mind to cultivate awareness, concentration, and relaxation.*



- **Body Scan Meditation:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position and bring your attention to each part of your body, from head to toe or toe to head, noticing any sensations or tension. Release any tension and relax each area as you focus on it.
- **Breath Awareness Meditation:** Focus your attention on your breath, following it in and out. Notice how it feels as it enters and exits your body. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to your breath.
- **Loving-Kindness Meditation:** Sit quietly and bring to mind someone you love. Repeat to yourself phrases such as "May you be happy," "May you be healthy," "May you be at peace." Gradually extend these well-wishes to include yourself, friends, and eventually all beings.
- **Gratitude Meditation:** Sit quietly and bring to mind something you are grateful for. Focus on this feeling of gratitude, allowing it to fill your body.
- **Chakra Meditation:** Focus on the energy centers in your body, known as chakras. Starting at the base of your spine, visualize each chakra and its corresponding color, and imagine energy flowing freely through each one.
- **Walking Meditation:** Take a slow, mindful walk, paying attention to each step and your surroundings. Focus on your breath and the sensation of your feet touching the ground.
- **Body Movement Meditation:** Move your body slowly and mindfully, paying attention to each movement and sensation. You can do this with tai chi or qigong movements or simply by stretching and moving in a way that feels good.
- **Body Appreciation Meditation:** Sit quietly and bring to mind something about your body that you appreciate. Focus on this feeling of appreciation, allowing it to fill your body and mind.





# 9x Visualization

*Use the power of the mind's imagination to create mental images that can elicit specific emotions, sensations, and experiences*

- **Safe space visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Imagine a safe and comforting space, such as a beach or a forest. Visualize yourself in this space, feeling calm and secure.
- **Body scan visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Scan your body from head to toe, noticing any areas of tension or discomfort. Visualize a soothing light or energy flowing through these areas, to help release any tension or pain.
- **Healing light visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Visualize a bright, healing light surrounding your body. Imagine this light entering your body and filling you with warmth and healing energy.
- **Inner child visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Visualize your inner child, imagining them in a safe and comforting space. Talk to your inner child, offering comfort and reassurance.
- **Future self visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Visualize yourself in the future, feeling happy, healthy, and fulfilled. Imagine what it feels like to have achieved your goals and dreams.
- **Inner strength visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Visualize a symbol of your inner strength, such as a lion or a mountain. Imagine yourself embodying this strength, feeling empowered and resilient.
- **Gratitude visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Visualize all the things you are grateful for in your life, such as loved ones, accomplishments, or moments of joy. Feel the gratitude in your body and mind.
- **Forgiveness visualization:** Lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Visualize yourself forgiving someone who has hurt you, or visualize someone forgiving you. Feel the release and peace that comes with forgiveness.
- **Manifestation visualization:** Visualize yourself manifesting your goals and dreams, imagining them coming true in vivid detail. Feel the excitement and motivation that comes with manifesting your desires.

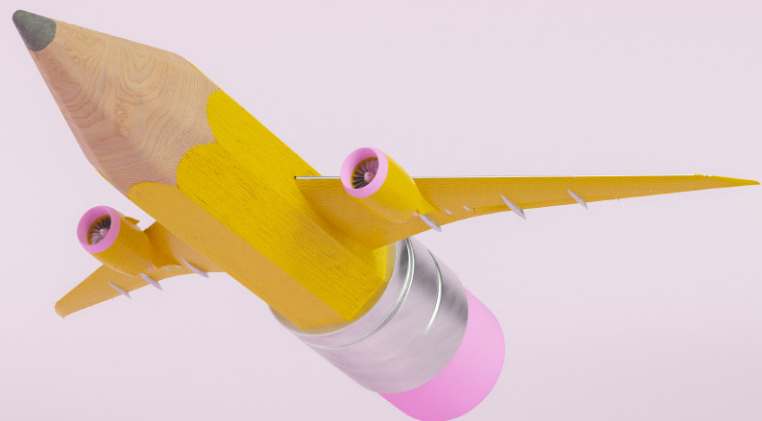




# 11 x Inquiries

*Gain a deeper understanding of oneself, including one's thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors*

- **Welcoming:** Sit quietly and welcome whatever sensations, emotions, or thoughts arise in your body and mind. Allow them to be present without trying to change or fix them.
- **Experiencing emotions:** Allow yourself to fully experience and express your emotions, without judging or suppressing them. This can help promote emotional regulation and self-awareness.
- **Investigating emotions:** Investigate your emotions with curiosity and non-judgment, asking questions such as "What is this feeling telling me?" or "What do I need right now?"
- **Investigating sensations:** Focus on a specific sensation in your body, such as tightness in your chest or a knot in your stomach. Investigate it with curiosity and openness, noticing its qualities and sensations.
- **Identifying core beliefs:** Identify core beliefs or narratives that may be holding you back or causing suffering, such as "I'm not good enough" or "I'm unlovable."
- **Tracing beliefs to childhood experiences:** Explore how these beliefs may be connected to childhood experiences or traumas, such as experiences of rejection, abandonment, or neglect.
- **Recognizing defensive patterns:** Notice how you may be defending against painful feelings or experiences, such as through self-criticism, avoidance, or addiction.
- **Challenging negative self-talk:** Challenge negative self-talk or limiting beliefs with evidence-based reasoning or counterexamples. This can help you reframe your perspective and cultivate self-compassion.
- **Embracing imperfection:** Embrace your imperfections and mistakes as part of your growth and learning process. This can help you let go of self-judgment and shame, and cultivate self-acceptance.
- **Exploring duality:** Explore the duality or paradoxical nature of beliefs or emotions, such as "I want love but I'm afraid of intimacy" or "I want success but I'm afraid of failure."
- **Investigating attachments:** Investigate any attachments or expectations that may be causing suffering, such as the attachment to a particular outcome or relationship.





## 3 x Working with Multi-Brain Parts

*These exercises are based on Internal Family Systems (IFS), a therapeutic approach to help individuals better understand and communicate with their different parts in order to achieve inner harmony and healing*

- **Getting to Know Your Parts:** This exercise involves identifying and getting to know the different parts of yourself. The purpose is to become more aware of your internal experience and develop a relationship with your different parts. To do this, you can start by sitting in a quiet place and focusing on your breath. Then, bring to mind a part of yourself that you want to explore. Ask it questions and try to understand its feelings and motivations. IFS identifies 3 main parts: exiles (younger parts of the self that hold painful and suppressed/repressed emotions and memories), managers (protective parts that try to control and avoid situations that may trigger painful emotions or memories) and firefighters (reactive parts that attempt to distract or numb the self from painful emotions or memories. You can have tens if not hundreds of parts!
- **Unburdening a Part:** This exercise involves working with a part that is carrying a burden or holding onto an old experience or emotion. The purpose is to help the part release its burden and experience relief. To do this, you can start by sitting in a quiet place and focusing on your breath. Then, bring to mind a part that is carrying a burden. Ask it what it is carrying and what it needs to release its burden. Offer it support and reassurance.
- **Parts Meditation:** This exercise involves using meditation to connect with your different parts and promote internal harmony. The purpose is to help you develop a deeper understanding of your internal system and cultivate self-compassion. To do this, you can start by sitting in a quiet place and focusing on your breath. Then, bring to mind a part of yourself that you want to connect with. Imagine sending that part love and compassion, and visualizing it becoming integrated into your internal system. (exiles).



## 5 x Polyvagal activation

*Regulate the autonomic nervous system, which includes the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and promote feelings of safety and connection*

- **Vocalizations:** Using vocalizations like humming, chanting, or singing can stimulate the vagus nerve and activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps to promote relaxation and reduce anxiety.
- **Movement:** Certain types of movement, such as rocking or gentle swaying, can also stimulate the vagus nerve and promote feelings of safety and calmness. Yoga, dance, and other forms of gentle exercise can also be effective in regulating the autonomic nervous system.
- **Touch:** Gentle touch, such as a hand on the back or a hug, can help to stimulate the vagus nerve and activate the parasympathetic nervous system. This can help to promote feelings of safety and connection, which can be particularly helpful for individuals who have experienced trauma or are struggling with anxiety or depression.
- **Breathwork:** Focused breathing exercises, such as deep breathing or diaphragmatic breathing, can also help to stimulate the vagus nerve and promote relaxation. This can be particularly helpful for individuals who are experiencing panic attacks or high levels of anxiety.
- **Mindfulness:** Mindfulness practices, such as meditation or body scans, can help to regulate the autonomic nervous system by increasing awareness of bodily sensations and promoting relaxation. These practices can also help individuals to develop a greater sense of self-awareness and emotional regulation, which can be helpful in managing symptoms of trauma or anxiety.





# 10 x Self-Compassion

*Cultivate a kind, caring, and non-judgmental attitude towards oneself*

- **Write a self-compassionate letter to yourself:** Take a piece of paper and write a letter to yourself, as if you were writing to a dear friend. Show yourself kindness, understanding, and support.
  - **Practice mindfulness:** Take some time each day to simply be present in the moment, without judgment. Focus on your breath, your body, or your surroundings through meditation, visualization or breath work
  - **Practice gratitude:** Write down three things you're grateful for each day, no matter how small they may seem.
  - **Practice self-care:** Do something nice for yourself every day, even if it's just taking a few minutes to relax.
  - **Challenge your self-criticism:** When you notice yourself being self-critical, ask yourself if what you're saying is really true or if you're being too hard on yourself. Would you be as hard on a friend?
  - **Practice self-compassionate touch:** Put your hand on your heart or give yourself a hug, and offer yourself comfort and care.
  - **Take a self-compassion break:** When you're feeling overwhelmed or stressed, take a few moments to offer yourself kind words and support.
  - **Set healthy boundaries:** Learn to say no to things that don't serve your well-being, and set boundaries to protect your time and energy.
  - **Practice self-forgiveness:** Recognize that everyone makes mistakes, including yourself. Forgive yourself for past mistakes and move forward with kindness and compassion.
- **Connect with others:** Spend time with people who are supportive and caring, and share your struggles and successes with them.



# 10 x Expressive Art

*Facilitate self-expression and promote emotional healing and personal growth through various forms of art*

- **Mindful drawing** - Sit comfortably and choose an object to draw. Focus on the lines, shapes, and details of the object as you draw it.
- **Doodling** - Doodle aimlessly on a piece of paper, allowing your hand to move freely. Don't worry about the outcome, just focus on the process. Try it with your non-dominant hand too.
- **Mandala drawing** - Draw a mandala, using repeating patterns and shapes. Focus on the process of creating the mandala, rather than the outcome.
- **Zentangle** - Draw abstract patterns using a combination of dots, lines, and curves. Focus on the flow of the lines and the patterns that emerge.
- **Coloring** - Choose a coloring book or print out a coloring page and color it mindfully. Focus on the colors and the feeling of the markers or pencils in your hand.
- **Collage** - Cut out images and words from magazines and create a collage that represents your feelings or intentions. Focus on the process of choosing and arranging the images.
- **Found object art** - Choose an object from nature or your surroundings, and create art with it. Focus on the texture and shape of the object as you create.
- **Painting** - Use acrylic, oil, or watercolor paints to create a piece of art. Focus on the colors and the texture of the paint as you create.
- **Sculpture** - Use clay or other materials to create a sculpture. Focus on the shape and texture of the sculpture as you create.
- **Photography** - Take photos of things that inspire you or capture your attention. Focus on the composition and the colors or textures in the photo.





## 6 x Movement

*Use physical movement and expression to promote emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being*

- **Dance** - Choose music that you enjoy and dance freely, allowing your body to move in whatever way feels natural. Focus on the feeling of the music and the movement of your body.
- **Yoga** - Practice a sequence of yoga postures, focusing on the breath and the movement of your body. Choose a sequence that feels comfortable and accessible to you.
- **Walking meditation** - Take a slow, mindful walk, focusing on the feeling of your feet on the ground and the movement of your body. Breathe deeply and allow your thoughts to come and go without judgment.
- **Qigong** - Practice a series of slow, flowing movements, focusing on the feeling of your body as you move. Follow the instructor's guidance or create your own routine.
- **Trance dance** - Dance to music with your eyes closed, allowing your body to move spontaneously. Focus on the feeling of the music and the movement of your body.
- **Authentic movement** - Allow your body to move spontaneously without music, without planning or judgment. Focus on the feeling of your body as you move and breathe deeply. What does your energy want to do?



# CONSENT / DISCLAIMER FOR SOMATIC THERAPY

Welcome to Gifted Quest! Before beginning your Self-Innovation Program or Somatic Therapy Sessions with me, it is important that you carefully read and agree to the following informed consent/disclaimer.

In Somatic Therapy sessions, we investigate the beliefs and perceptions that you have about yourself, others, and the wider world as well as the feelings, sensations and nervous system responses that underpin those beliefs.

By inquiring directly into the nature of your present experience, beliefs, patterns, and conditioning often unravel and profound changes can occur. However, I do not offer or guarantee specific results or outcomes.

As with other mindfulness-based practices, I do not give advice, nor do I attempt to change or manage your beliefs or behaviors. I do not give advice around medication or medical issues.

My Somatic Therapy approach (encompassing techniques from Embodied Processing, Kiloby Inquiries, Internal Family Systems, Compassionate Inquiry and more) and its facilitators (including myself) are not physicians, therapists or licensed health care professionals, and are not a substitute for, nor are they offering, medical or psychiatric support or care. I cannot and will not diagnose, treat or cure any disorder, condition or illness.

This is not psychotherapy. It involves an investigation of your direct experience. This process can be intense at points and by signing this disclaimer you acknowledge that you are aware of this possibility and are willing to explore difficult feelings.

Sessions provide a safe, non-judgmental space in which any information or feeling can be shared. If at any time during a session you feel discomfort about the process or you wish to stop, please let me know. We will continue only if you wish to do so.

It's essential that you're in a stable emotional and psychological state. Please check out the Global Assessment of Functioning Scale. I work with those self-rating between 61-100.

If at any time you are considering suicide or any other form of self-harm or harm to others please discuss it with me.

Everything that you share in sessions is treated with the strictest of confidence unless you or someone else is at immediate risk of harm or mandatory reporting laws apply.

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