

Step Into Joy! Claiming Your Walking Practice Week #2

"If you are in a bad mood go for a walk. If you are still in a bad mood go for another walk."

- Hippocrates



PART A: Pre-Walk conversation:

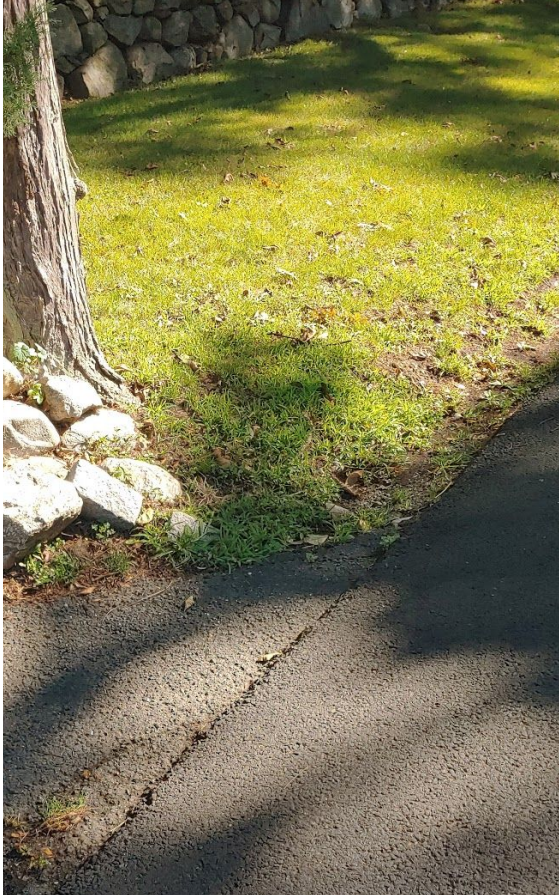
Find a friend, family member, co-worker, or friendly (mask-wearing) person at the grocery store, and ask them:

What inspires you to get out and walk?



See if you can find three different people to ask. Then, keep asking until you find an answer that surprises you.

Write down any responses you hear, and then write down if any of their own inspirations gave you new inspirations to start this week's walking practice.



"But the beauty is in the walking. We are betrayed by destinations."
- Gwyn Thomas

PART B: Walking with a Problem: Your Walking Practice Inspiration

How is your walking practice going so far?



Let's backtrack...

How is your week, your day, or this moment going for you?

Is there a problem you are currently trying to solve, an issue, dilemma or conflict?

This week, let's use our walking practice to approach the big, the little, and the "in-between" issues in our lives.

Step 1: Write your worry list

Find a comfortable place to sit where you can be with your thoughts in calm, quiet stillness.

Have a piece of paper and pen handy.

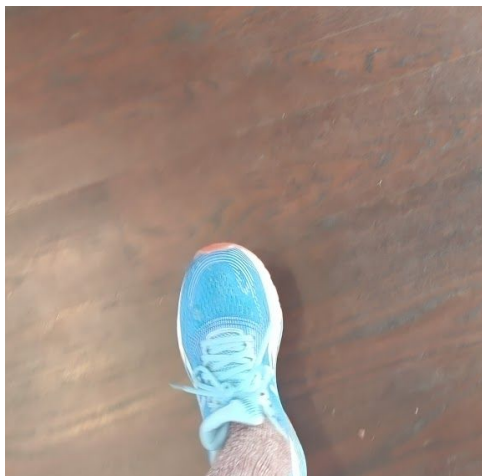
Have you heard of a worry box?

Everything on your mind, your to-do list, nagging questions, or possibly anxiety-provoking thoughts, set a timer for five minutes and allow yourself to write everything down.

After five minutes of writing your worries, put your pen down.

Fold the piece of paper up, and leave it in this space.

Now, let's go for a walk. Start wherever you are. Me? I started indoors.



Step 2: Breathing Away your list

As you take your first steps, notice the physical distance you are creating for yourself away from this piece of paper. Feel your breath expand with each step.

With each step, allow yourself to breathe deeper, and care less about your list.

Create a walking mantra for yourself:

“With each step, I am _____ in relation to my worry list”

Examples: creating distance, walking away from it, zooming out, forgetting about it...

What is your worry list walking mantra?

Think of this as being good to your brain. You’re giving it a vacation from what is weighing it down with worry.

Your list is written down, and waiting for you in a different location.

Now, all you have is your breath.



Play with measuring the length of your steps based on how big, shallow, or quick your breath is. Imagine you are a puppet, and the puppeteer is your inhale and exhale. How does each breath control how your feet are moving right now?



Step 3: Walking to make space from worry (Miracle spotting)

Now that your breath and steps have creating space and distance from your worry list, take a “miracle vacation” as you walk.

- Notice the smallest details as you walk.
 - Look up. Can you notice the tiniest color change in the sky?
 - Look down. Can you notice the slightest texture change on the ground?
 - Stop and look right in front of you. Pause for a good minute.

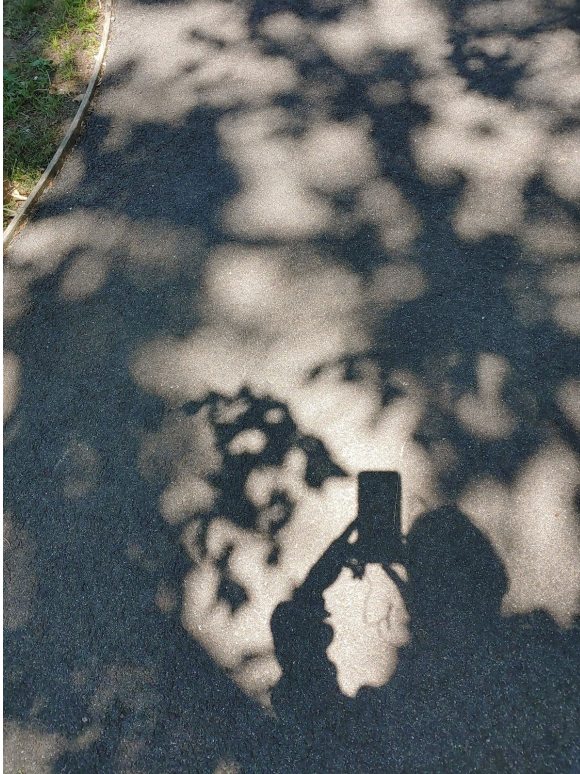
Allow your eyes to adjust to wherever you are. Wait to notice something you might have ordinarily just walked by.

The great part about taking a vacation from worrying, is that you allow yourself to notice these things.



Here's what I noticed:

This was just a shadow of a branch like the many other branches I passed.



But when I put my to-do's aside, I allowed my mind to get playful and look! **Do you see a little person or puppet in this shadow?** (well...I did.)



Breathe in the fresh air. When we open our hearts to the beauty all around us – when we stay aware and present in the moment – we can connect to the person we are without our worries blurring up that picture!

PART C: Walking with Issues

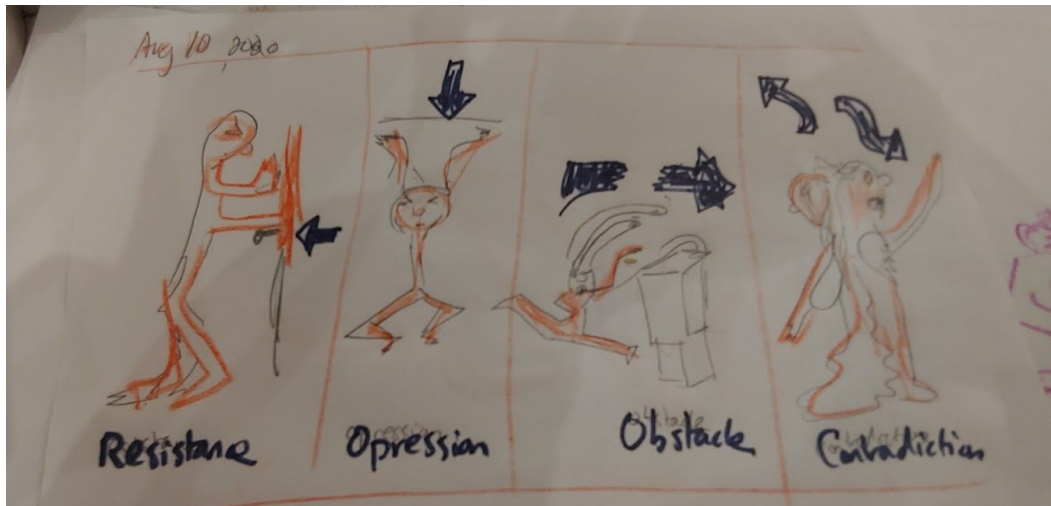
Yes, now we are going to go back to that worry list. But still leave your paper at home!
We are just going to think about anything this week that may be troubling us.

This week, take a walk somewhere you usually go.
Start with observing your breathing.

Keep walking, and now...start to think a bit.

Pick one of these words:

- Resistance
- Contradiction
- Oppression
- Obstacle



While you are walking, observe your internal life with this word in mind.

Keep walking, keep observing your internal life, but now, notice what you notice in the outside world as you walk.

Now, go back to that "word issue." RESISTANCE/OPPRESSION/OBSTACLE/CONTRADICTION...

Is there a problem you are facing, or a decision you have to make?

1. Keep walking.
2. Let your mind wander.
3. Look around you, and find anything that grows.
4. Nature invades. It can make a life anywhere.
5. Notice how natural life is making its way through your walking path. Is grass growing through the pavement? Is the sound of rain coming through the noise of cars honking? Can you see the sunlight over a large towering building?
6. ZOOM IN:

Find one small detail on your walking path that strikes you.

When you find something, walk reallllyyy close to it. Observe tiniest details. See any patterns, shapes, textures? Notice every detail.

7. ZOOM OUT:

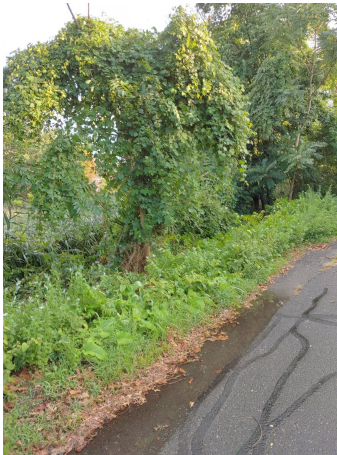
Now, slowly step back so you can see the bigger picture.

What's in the environment around you?

Take a few moments to observe a zoomed out perspective.

8. ZOOM IN AND/OR OUT:

Remind yourself to zoom in or out whenever you're stuck.



PART D: Walking Reflection – Measuring Time and Space

"Walking . . . is how the body measures itself against the earth."

Rebecca Solnit

How does the ability to physically move through a space help you expand your own view of what constrains you?



I personally like walking because I can get my own perspective of large, small, short, quick – my own perspective of time. I can see the little things and the big things with a new frame.

Minutes are numbers that don't have a personal connection to my own heartbeat, and inches are a number that has nothing to do with the size of my own steps, which is why I would never use a pedometer or try to track how far I walked. *It's not about that.*

Watch the TED talk about an artist who created a walking practice to discover what a distinct measure of time means to her:

https://www.ted.com/talks/sara_morawetz_walking_in_search_of_the_metre_jan_2019

Artist Sara Morawetz embarked on a journey to find out — walking for 112 days along the length of the Paris meridian — retracing the historical journey that defined the metre as a fraction of the planet's size.

She walked to measure, carrying a big black and white sculpture, taking pictures at different points, to “walk and measure the distance in a metric that became her own.”

What do you want to measure?

This week, think of a measurable amount that you would like to examine for yourself. The guidelines for measurements in society are not the measurements that always align with our bodies, our minds, or our souls.

What measurement do you want to personalize? An hour? Three yards? See how with the power of your own body and breath, you can expand that for yourself.

Create your own rules for measuring as you walk.

- Are you measuring the distance of your walk by the amount of cracks in the pavement?
- Are you determining the length of your walk by the number of times you hear a woodpecker?

As you walk, play with size and scale, always in relation to your own steps, body and breath.

When you come back, journal about your observation. Draw, sketch, or record your own measurements based on what you discovered.

Before the written word, before numbers, we only had our bodies and breath and our relationship to the space we are in to measure with.

Walking Resources:

Your inspiration this week:

1. Read about Thoreau's art of walking:
<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/11/17/thoreau-walking/>
2. Watch how the everyday art of walking can bring you inner peace:
<https://youtu.be/MsoPZQR3v4I>
3. View a visual gallery exploring the freedom (or not) of walking as an Odissi dancer in the city of Delhi: <https://walkingart.interartive.org/2018/12/manishikha>

Find more resources at <https://www.amyoes.com/walk> and posted in our Step Into Joy Facebook Group - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/walk2discover!> Join our zoom call this Sunday 4-5pm EST for more interactive activities, stories, discussion and sharing. I'll be sending you the link this week, so subscribe at www.amyoes.com/walk!

You can also share your discoveries on social media - whether it's a sketch you've done, a map, photographs you've taken using the hashtag
#stepintojoy OR #lovemydetour