

**YOU HAVE 4 MINUTES
TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE**
**Simple 4-Minute Meditations to Make Every Day
Calmer, Happier, and More Energized**

By Rebekah Borucki

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OVERVIEW

“I don’t have time to meditate.” “Isn’t meditation for new age people or Buddhists?”
“Meditation is weird; I’m just a normal, everyday person.”

These are just a few of the objections I hear from my email, YouTube, and social media followers on a regular basis. *You Have 4 Minutes to Change Your Life* is for them – women like me who are leading stressful lives with very little time to take care of their own needs. Using easy, accessible, and impactful 4-minute meditations – some from my YouTube channel and many brand new – readers can better navigate a variety of the issues that modern women face, such as weight gain, stress, anxiety/fear, poor self-esteem, relationship problems, and a broken heart.

Chapters will include stories from my own life and how – after years of therapy failed to heal my depression, panic attacks, and the pain of my past – I discovered my own home-grown method of meditation that not only healed me, but helped me to thrive.

I will include my own meditation method, which each individual can use as a basis for creating and adapting her own unique way of meditating without the need for any hard, complicated rules. *You Have 4 Minutes to Change Your Life* will show women, through reading about my own struggles, that even if they’ve failed at meditation in the past, they can learn to use it – in a way that works for them – to create a happier, more peaceful life.

My approach to meditation and healing is truly simple, practical, and no-nonsense. It requires nothing of the reader but the willingness to be still for just 4 minutes a day – 4 minutes that can bring life-long transformative results. I’m the living proof.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebekah “Bex” Borucki is the founder of BEXLIFE™ and the BLISSED IN™ wellness movement. She is a fitness and yoga instructor who features her 4-minute meditations on her popular YouTube Channel with 135,000+ subscribers and 19+ million views.

Television

In November 2011, she was selected as one of 16 trainers from around the world to be part of YouTube’s Next Trainer program, and she made the transition to television on seven episodes of “Rock Your Yoga” with Sadie Nardini that premiered on the Veria Living television network in May 2012. She has also taped several episodes of “Yoga Sutra Now” with Jai Sugrim for the same network and has appeared on several national talk shows, including “The Lisa Oz Show” and “The Better Show” with Rebecca Budig.

Bex was invited by Veria in October 2012 to be an expert “Veria Voice” for a series of info-spots, and she got her live TV “sea legs” acting as co-host on “Over the Hump Live.”

She has now completed three seasons as the TV host of her own show, “Got Zen?,” on the Veria Living network. “Got Zen?” showcases Bex’s talents as a meditation and healthy living coach and a motivator of women of all ages and backgrounds.



Print Media

Bex has also been a featured columnist, contributor, or interview subject in several online and print magazines, including *Fitness Magazine*, *Huffington Post Live*, *Positively Positive*, *Philadelphia Magazine*, and *Mantra Magazine*. She has made professional appearances for many major brands, including MPG Sport, Paragon Sports, and Lady Footlocker and was a paid spokesperson/ambassador for ALDI supermarkets, Delta Labs Supplements, Tyent USA, and Listerine.

Speaking Engagements

Bex travels extensively as a speaker and presenter to share her love of meditation, fitness, and yoga at exclusive workshops, luxury retreats, and public events.

Besides meditation and fitness, Bex's areas of expertise include stress management, personal training, yoga, natural parenting, natural pregnancy and childbirth, and vegetarian/vegan/raw diets.

Personal Background

After suffering from years of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts as both a child and an adult, Bex took control of her mental and physical health by establishing a rigorous fitness routine that quickly evolved to include yoga and her own regular, home-grown 4-minute daily meditation practice that combines mantras, affirmations, breathing techniques, and bodywork techniques she learned in anti-anxiety therapy.

A mother of five (one a brand new baby girl), Bex lives with her husband, flock of backyard hens, and three baby goats on their 8-acre homestead in New Jersey.

ABOUT THE MARKET

College-educated women between the ages of 18 and 34 are my core online audience (according to Alexa.com), but through constant feedback in the comment sections of my videos and social media posts, it's clear that women in their 40s, 50s, and even into their 60s are interested in turning to meditation for the first time. My YouTube channel subscribers are also 20% male, but I believe the book will mostly appeal to women, particularly those who read *O The Oprah Magazine* and who have been intrigued by meditation but feel skeptical about it. The majority of them will have had little to no exposure to Eastern philosophy and spirituality, and they might take a yoga class now and then for stretching but little else.

They are desperate to find “me time” and moments of peace in their busy lives. They're struggling to let go of the pain they experienced in the past, whether from a difficult childhood, loss, or divorce. Many of them are dealing with depression and anxiety, and they aren't sure how to get through the challenges that life puts in their path.

They need an approach to healing that is actually doable rather than confusing and time-consuming. They have felt alienated by many modern-day gurus and are looking for someone who looks and talks more like them – someone who speaks to exactly how their lives look at this moment in a relatable, approachable way, like a fellow mom, sister, girlfriend, or neighbor.

AUTHOR'S PROMOTION AND PUBLICITY PLAN

I will actively seek ways to promote the book online on my own website, social media, and YouTube channel; through my email list; through articles and guest blog posts on other websites; and through book signings, speaking engagements, and interviews.

I will launch social media campaigns similar to my 21-Day Mantra Challenges that use unique hashtags, feature giveaways from aligned brands, and are promoted by “friends of BexLife” (other prominent authors, wellness personalities, and health and fitness experts, such as Tara Stiles, Terri Cole, Jessica Ortner, Erin Stutland, Alexandra Jamieson, Michael Perrine, John Joseph, Brett Hoebel, Sarah Dussault, Sara Haley, Cassey Ho, and Alisa Vitti).

I will create videos for my YouTube channel to correspond with the meditations in the book, and I will also have expert guests and celebrities on my YouTube channel to discuss the book and meditations.

Below are my current online statistics:

WEBSITE - <http://BexLife.com>

14,000+ unique visitors each month (source: Google Analytics)

EMAIL LIST (called "Bliss Notes" and mailed weekly)

18,000+ subscribers

average 1000+ new subscribers per month

(grown organically from website and video links)

YOUTUBE - <http://youtube.com/BexLife>

135,000+ subscribers

19 million+ video views

average 100-125 (net) new subscribers per day

(The YouTube channel audience is nearly 80% percent women.)

FACEBOOK - <http://facebook.com/BexLife>

23,500+ likes

TWITTER - <http://twitter.com/BexLife>

7100+ followers (14:1 followed/follow ratio)

INSTAGRAM - <http://statigr.am/BexLife>
11,000+ followers (23:1 followed/follow ratio)

KLOUT SCORE - <http://klout.com/BexLife> – 73

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CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter 1: Getting Started – Meditation *Your Way*

I will start this chapter with my own “meditation story” of how I stole a copy of *Be Here Now* from a used bookstore when I was 15 years old and discovered meditation in the process. I will explain why I have a meditation practice and how I developed my “You Have 4 Minutes for Meditation” videos.

This chapter will include a brief rundown of the types of traditional meditation, as well as the basic science behind meditation – i.e., why and how it works. I will then discuss what has worked for me over the years to make meditation my own and create a practice that serves me in my current circumstances.

The next section in this initial chapter will be a brief tutorial with pictures of seated meditation postures and mudras, as well as breathing cues and techniques, suggestions for props, tips for getting comfortable, and ways to make the practice easy. I will offer my reader suggestions as to how she can use the tutorial to develop a meditation practice that works for *her*.

The last section will be called “Meditation Isn’t For Me Because...” and will include the most common questions and objections that I have crowd-sourced from my followers. These include:

Is it okay to lie down during meditation?

Do I have to have total quiet to meditate?

Do my eyes have to stay closed?

What do I do if my body starts to hurt?

Is it normal to cry during or after meditation?

How do I know which meditation to start with?

Chapter 2: 4 Minutes to De-Stress Your Life

Who doesn't have to deal with stress? In my case, I suffered with anxiety and panic attacks for years. At age eight, I started having violent outbursts and was hospitalized and treated with psychiatric drugs. I continued to take medication and receive traditional therapy for anxiety, depression, suicide attempts, and panic attacks off and on until I moved out of my childhood home soon after my 17th birthday.

After struggling to keep my head above water for more than ten years, I took my healing into my own hands and joined a gym. That led to a yoga practice and a deeper meditation practice, which turned out to be the ultimate fix for me. I won't dwell on the dramatic aspect of the story in too much detail, but will quickly move toward the positive changes that a meditation practice can provide, using my life as a powerful example.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. I am like a boat on the ocean. My faith is my anchor that holds me steady. My thoughts are like waves. I allow them to roll under me, sometimes rocking me just a bit, but not carrying me away. I am anchored faithfully in the here and now.
2. It is not my job to be in control. My purpose is to be at peace and to be happy with who I am in this moment, to be loved, and to inspire love.
3. When I'm feeling anxious, it's about future events. When I remain in the moment – when I'm here now – I rid myself of all anxiety. I acknowledge the responsibility that I have to my heart and to my body to live in the present where I am safe, healthy, and at peace.

4. Anxiety is the result of living in the future. Sadness is a result of dwelling on the past. In this moment, I focus my attention on what's real. The only thing that's real is the light inside of me and this moment.
5. What surrounds me does not dictate my moods, movements, or decisions. Even when my current situation would not be considered ideal, I can find peace and personal bliss.
6. "Difficult," "stressful," and "overwhelming" are only opinions. Today, I choose to change the language about my circumstances. "Easy," "peaceful," and "manageable" are gentler words. I've changed my mind and my words and, therefore, my experience.

Chapter 3: 4 Minutes to Fulfill the Dream of Great Self-Esteem

In this chapter, I will talk about my recovery from low self-esteem. I was crippled by social anxieties, imagining that everyone saw me as stupid or silly or ugly. I was so disempowered and weak, in fact, that I frequently placed myself in dangerous situations. I was almost date-raped and entered into a physically abusive relationship at 15. I drank and used drugs excessively without regard for my physical safety and eventually entered into a verbally and emotionally abusive marriage, where I remained for a decade.

I will quickly turn the dramatic story into a positive for the reader, showing how I learned how to cultivate self-respect and self-esteem, which led to better decision-making and positive actions. I will show how I used meditation and specific affirmations to build up a sense of self-worth after feeling worthless for so long. As a result of this work, I'm now a successful woman in a beautiful marriage with five children.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. I take care of myself. I love myself in a way that inspires others. I love myself in a way that teaches others to love me fully and appropriately, that welcomes the touch that I want, the support that I want, and also tells people to leave me alone when I need my space.
2. I say “no” when I don’t want to. I say “yes” when it feels good. I have relationships with people who love me as I am.
3. I trust and believe the people who love me most, who appreciate me, who respect me, and who look at me every day and think I’m wonderful. When I think otherwise, I dishonor myself and those who love me most. I am loved and appreciated.
4. When I’m caught up in the negative ideas and opinions of other people, I disconnect from my truth. I am in control of my thoughts, my actions, and my life. Knowing this gives me power and insight and allows me to love myself openly and freely.
5. I am love. I am purpose. I am possibility. I was made with divine intention.

Chapter 4: 4 Minutes to Courage, Confidence, and Success

In this chapter, I will describe my journey from a painful childhood and abusive marriage to starting my own business and putting myself “out there” online. I will focus on fear and how it gets in the way of power, courage, and success. I will discuss the perils of perfectionism and how it holds us back from fully experiencing life. I will also talk about how fear prevents us from hearing our own wisdom.

Through my story, readers will understand how I was terrified but “did it anyway,” taking the risk to express myself and do what I felt called to do. Besides the meditations, I will suggest

that my readers make small steps toward alleviating fear and stepping into their own power, including speaking their truth in situations in their lives where they have been afraid to do so.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. Fear is a teacher bearing gifts. It allows me to see that I'm not quite there yet, but I will be with a few more steps. I will cultivate an open heart and a change of mind.
2. I am always connected to the wonderful and pure light-filled part of my inner self – the part of me that is perfect and loved by the Universe. I am infinitely loved and unique, just as I am. No circumstance or person has permission to make me feel less than that.
3. I grow most effectively and fully when I am true to my purpose and myself and when I speak with my own voice. I speak the truth as I know and feel it. I don't try to protect others from my heart's true feelings. They will feel loved by my truth.
4. I don't need anyone to tell me what to do. I have all the answers inside of me. I just have to get quiet and listen to my heart.
5. I will not say, "I can't do this." Instead, I will say, "At this moment, I'm struggling with this." When I create possibility and room for success, I step easily into the role of a successful person.
6. The road to success is paved with simple intentions and tiny tweaks. I will not overwhelm myself with lofty goals. I am only committed to making one small change today.
7. The key to living a perfectly healthy and successful life is paying attention, not doing everything perfectly. My mistakes, my faults, and my less-than-perfect decisions have all been in service to my journey toward enlightenment.
8. Today, I will put myself out there – unafraid and knowing that I already have everything I need to be a success. There is no doubt that the magic will happen.

Chapter 5: 4 Minutes to Discover True Happiness

What is happiness? The misconceptions are rampant. I will let readers in on my “secret to happiness.” In my experience, happiness can happen anywhere at any moment, no matter the circumstances. It’s a choice – we have to *decide* to be happy; we have to allow it.

Happiness, peace, joy, and contentment can happen even in the midst of chaos. We don’t have to leave an unhappy marriage or lose weight or get that dream job to be happy. In fact, happiness is what helps us meet those goals and finally attract the things we want.

In this chapter, I will show the reader how the Universe rewards us with blessings when we truly decide we’re ready for them. I will use examples from my own life to show how this universal law works.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. I have all the power within me to influence everyone and everything around me. I am a radiant and beautiful light. With each inhale, I take in all the air and energy that surrounds me. This energy is cleansed by my light and my loving intention. As I exhale, I send filtered, clean energy into the space around me.
2. I wish to be free from judgment and the negative opinions belonging to others and myself. I am protected by my own positive and powerful thoughts. When I change my mind, when I think different thoughts, and when I form different opinions, I also change my circumstances.
3. I don’t seek the light. I *am* the light, and I drown out all the darkness around me. I am immune to negativity.

4. My body, my job, my past – none of these define who I am. I am perfect in this moment.
My circumstances are perfect for my spiritual growth and my journey to happiness.
5. I have the power to create happiness by managing my reaction to my circumstances.
6. Peace is not only found in perfection. That’s a huge misconception that I release in this moment. Peace can be lived in the midst of chaos.

Chapter 6: 4 Minutes to Accept Your Body

PLEASE SEE THE SAMPLE CHAPTER.

Chapter 7: 4 Minutes to Heal Your Relationship or Attract the One You Want

In this chapter, I will tell the story of my broken heart after my divorce and how I found true love after an abusive relationship. I will offer tips for finding a partner, including the cultivation of greater self-love, which attracts a stronger love and healthier relationship. One of the ways I developed more self-love was through my meditation practice, and my readers can do the same, whether they are currently in a relationship or wishing for one.

I will discuss my relationship with my husband, including how we make it work on a daily basis with a full house of five kids.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. I love myself properly so that others may learn how to love me.
2. I am a complete, whole, and worthy person deserving of love. I give abundantly and without expectation of reward. I give all of myself, never stopping at halfway. When I love unselfishly, I receive pure love in return.

3. I love myself so fully and so deeply that the love I receive is just icing on the cake. I need nothing to feel whole. When I share love with my partner, we create something new and wonderful. There is no need to complete each other – only the pleasurable and exciting task of seeing what new miracles are born out of our love.
4. I attract what I believe about myself. I attract who I am. My desires reflect my deep love for myself. My partner gives me what I desire based upon the strength of my self-love.

Chapter 8: 4 Minutes to Ease Grief and the Pain of Loss

Everyone has dealt with loss and grief, but too often, we trudge forward without dealing with our feelings. My story in this chapter will focus on the loss of both my parents in the same year (2013) and how that experience changed my perspectives on loss, gratitude, and the life/death cycle. Readers will be able to apply the lessons I learned to the loss of a job, a relationship, a phase of life, or anything else.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. Today, as I let go of something wonderful, I prepare myself for something new and exciting that is guaranteed to come. I celebrate this time as a place to let go, to move on, and to accept the cycle of life and death. With each inhale and exhale, something begins and something ends, and it's a blessing every time.
2. Attachment breeds sadness. Detachment allows for peace. Letting go does not mean a lack a love. I let go to release the sadness and allow room for knowing that peace is always my ultimate and final state.
3. I release my need to be in control of every circumstance. I am ready to receive my lessons. Loss is an opportunity to let go of what can no longer serve me fully. I know this

is true even though I sometimes feel hurt or confused by the loss. New beginnings bring new excitement and wonder. It is my job to be open to newness and find the silver linings.

4. I release my need to be in control of relationships and people. Everyone is on a path to greater happiness and purpose. Letting go allows us all to achieve our own personal greatness. Letting go is a gift to myself and to those I love.

Chapter 9: 4 Minutes to Finally Close Emotional and Physical Wounds

In this chapter, I will touch again on recovering from my divorce, as well as my journey to health after a diagnosis of Lyme disease. I will briefly talk about what I went through and how I used meditation to bring me out of these challenges to a better, healthier life.

I believe these stories will inspire my readers to feel hopeful about their own struggles with both emotional and physical wounds. They will learn how meditation can help them deal with a host of problems in their lives – even those that have manifested in the body.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. As Bishop T.D. Jakes and Mark Nepo have said, the blessing is in the breaking, and there is light in the broken bottle. There is opportunity and love in my broken heart. The pieces of my shattered soul are blessings, and they are beautiful. Miracles can be found among those pieces.
2. I am able to send light and healing energy straight to the part of me that needs it most. At the top of every inhale, as I hold my breath, I do my healing work and let the light do its magic. As I exhale, I release all pain, illness, and heartache from my being. I am safe and in perfect health.

3. No matter where I've been, who I've been, or what I've done, this moment is mine to make everything brand new. I am not defined by my past. Regret can never serve me. I am energized by the potential in every new moment.
4. Every person I meet is a teacher, and my life is a constantly changing classroom. I pass through this life meeting new teachers along the way and letting go of those from whom I can no longer learn. I am okay with letting go of relationships and people, even though it might hurt. I know that the lessons I've learned will continue to make me better, and I can be a better teacher to the people still in my life and in the new relationships I will create along my journey.

Chapter 10: 4 Minutes to Cultivate Gratitude, Abundance, and Service

We can't *get* unless we're willing to *give*. In this chapter, I will talk about growing up in poverty in a dysfunctional family. Our house was always dirty and infested with roaches. We didn't always have money for enough food or school clothes, let alone birthdays. Again, I will not dwell on the negative but will quickly show my readers how I shifted from an attitude of poverty and pessimism to one of abundance and optimism. One of the main ways that I did this was through cultivating an attitude of gratitude, which I use in my meditation practice.

A key part of this chapter is the story of my business. I never approach projects with a financial goal in mind, but instead, I focus on how I can inspire or be of service to others. The truth is that everyone has the power to be of service, and we all have unique gifts to share. For the readers who don't have faith in their ability to start a business or contribute to society in a valuable way, I will show that this is just a mindset of low self-esteem that has nothing to do with reality. Through gratitude and service will come abundance.

I will end the chapter on a positive note of inspiration, showing my readers that they can create the life they want through just spending 4 minutes each day focusing on removing the obstacles that are in their way and cultivating the positive energy that will bring about great change.

The meditation inspirations for the 4-minute meditations included in this chapter will be:

1. I am so blessed, so healthy, so happy, so joyful, so ready to take on the world, so equipped with everything I need to be successful. I am ready to receive love, to give love, to have love, and to be a radiant and remarkable person for myself and for the people around me.
2. I am so grateful. I am ready to share my gifts. I am ready to surrender all that I have and all that I am so that others may prosper and find joy. I am a source of joy and inspiration for the world.
3. The Universe gives lovingly and abundantly when I speak words and think thoughts of abundance. I believe that what I already have is all I need for success, and this belief attracts a gentle and generous power. I have all that I need to be here now in peace and prosperity.
4. My smile welcomes blessings. I am a lightning rod for positive energy.
5. Today, I will be a conduit for energy, joy, insight, and miracles. I will keep that in mind every time I meet someone. My smile and loving spirit spread awesomeness.

Additional Material:

Quotes and testimonials from BexLife fans/followers/viewers

Illustrations of my favorite mantras (Bliss Notes) with links to download sets of affirmation/mantra graphics online

Links to online videos (especially for the tutorial section)

Tweetable mantras in every chapter

Examples of graphic sets that could be replicated in the book or for marketing purposes:

- **5 easy meditations:** <http://bit.ly/bex-meditation>
- **Eat Move Love:** <http://bit.ly/eatmoveandlove>
- **21-Day Mantra Challenge:** <http://bit.ly/blissedin21>
- **21-Day Mantra Challenge - Part 2:** <http://bit.ly/blissedin21-2>
- **Hand-drawn Bliss Notes:** <http://bit.ly/bex-draws>

SAMPLE CHAPTERS

SHORT SECTION FROM CHAPTER 1

Seated Meditation Postures

If you are just beginning a meditation practice but have practiced yoga in the past, you may already be familiar with many of the postures in this chapter. But even if you've never taken a yoga class, I'm sure you'll be able to achieve a perfect meditation posture just by following a few easy cues.

Each meditation will begin with a "preparation" section, where you'll find directions on which position – or posture – that I feel best complements that particular meditation. Postures need to serve you during your practice, though. They won't serve you if the position is uncomfortable for you. Pain is an indication that something is wrong, so don't sacrifice your well-being in an effort to have a "perfect" posture.

You may find, however, that the more you practice, the easier a once-awkward posture will become. Continue to check in with yourself to see if you're experiencing only minor discomfort or true pain. Some discomfort can be normal (as long as it doesn't hinder your ability to relax and concentrate), but pain must never be tolerated.

I encourage you to try all of the seated positions in this chapter. If you find that the recommended posture distracts your practice, feel free to substitute another posture that is more comfortable for you.

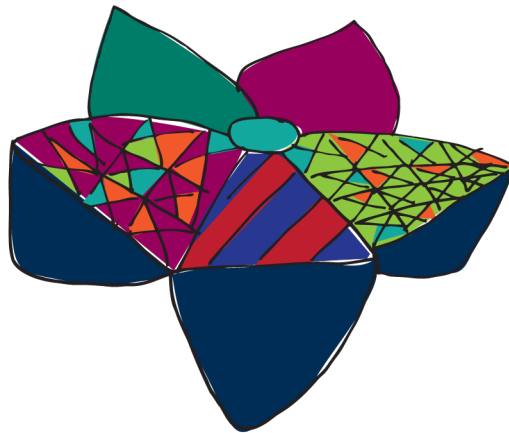
I will also discuss the use of props that can provide increased comfort and support for you, helping you to maintain proper physical alignment. Don't worry about having to buy expensive equipment, however. Almost any fancy meditation prop can be replicated easily with normal household items like simple blankets and pillows.

Each chapter will include more than one meditation. You might wish to read through all of them before you start in order to choose the one you like best. Then, you can proceed with all of them if you like.

Easy Seat / Sukhasana

Most of the meditations in this book will require you to sit in your “Easy or Comfortable Seat” – Sukhasana in Sanskrit. If you have ever sat in a circle on the floor in school, you already know the basics of this posture. You’ve been doing it since kindergarten.

Easy Seat can be practiced anywhere you feel comfortable and supported. I practice on a buckwheat-filled lotus pillow (like the one in the illustration) on the floor, but you can sit on the couch, on your bed, or wherever you can sit up straight with enough space to cross your legs. Practice with a pillow is recommended because it allows for proper physical alignment. If you don’t have a firm pillow, you can also fold a thick blanket until it’s about 4-6 inches high.



How to get into your Easy Seat

1. Sit on the front edge of your pillow or blanket, allowing your legs to stretch out in front of you.
2. Cross one leg over the other at your ankles.

3. Draw your knees outward as you move them closer to your torso. As your knees draw toward your torso, each foot will find its way under the opposite knee.
4. There should be space between your pelvis and your shins, and there should be no feeling of strain in this position. If having your legs crossed is uncomfortable, place one foot (or shin) in front of the other with the outer edge of each foot resting comfortably on the floor.
5. Sitting up tall, imagine each of your vertebrae stacked one on top of the other.
6. With a big inhale, lift your shoulders up toward your ears. On exhale, roll your shoulder blades down your spine. This will leave your shoulders broad and your chest open.
7. Now, imagine that a string is attached to the crown of your head, and it's being pulled toward the sky. Make sure that your chin is parallel to the floor.
8. Your hands may rest on your thighs or knees with palms down, or you can turn your palms upward during meditations that are meant to energize you.



CHAPTER 6

4 Minutes to Accept Your Body

Women tell me all the time, “I’m working really hard to love my body, and it just isn’t working. What’s wrong with me?”

There’s no denying that loving your body is a difficult task these days. The images of “perfect” bodies are everywhere – on the sides of buses, at the grocery store checkout line, on television, on Facebook, in website ads. They’re relentless. Even though we know these photos of models and actresses have been Photoshopped, it’s hard not to compare ourselves to them ... and come up short.

Yet, somehow, we’re supposed to counteract all of these pictures of thin perfection and love our bodies no matter what. At least that’s what the endless well-meaning memes that fill my Facebook page tell me: “Love your body,” “Your body hears everything your mind says, so stay positive,” “Every body is a bikini body.” (That last one usually shows up right next to an ad for a product promising to get me bikini-ready within two weeks.) Not only are we bombarded with impossible standards of beauty, but we’re also told it isn’t okay to dislike our bodies.

We beat ourselves up for not looking perfect ... and then we beat ourselves up for beating ourselves up. A whole new anxiety is born, and the last thing women need is another source of anxiety.

Whether the message is negative or positive, we stay preoccupied with how we look ... or how we feel about how we look ... or how we feel about how other people feel about how we look. It’s an epidemic that has made us hyper-aware of appearances. Sometimes, I just want to scream, “Enough!!!!!!”

Have you ever felt like that? Can you relate?

Well, here's your ticket off that hamster wheel: *I give you permission to hate your body.*
That's right – it's okay if you don't like the way you look. (Did you just exhale?)

Now, don't get me wrong. I would never tell you that it's *good* to feel *bad* about yourself for a prolonged period of time, but I *am* telling you that the road to loving your body is not paved with denial about your true feelings. We've been taught that feeling bad about ourselves is abnormal. If it's abnormal, there may not be a normal person on the planet!

If you're anything like me, there are days when you just have to say, "No, I can't love my cellulite today, and you can't make me do it!" Some days, I just want to feel like it's okay to feel bad about myself for a little while. That's the truth of the moment, and trying to pretend it away does nothing but sweep it under the rug. (If I'm not careful, I can end up with a big pile under that rug!)

Rather than hide the negativity from myself, my strategy is to work toward *accepting and allowing it*. "Today, I hate how I look." There it is. That's the reality. The liberation is in the allowing!

Start from where you are without judgment. Approach the thought with curiosity instead of disdain. Try simply observing it: "Hmmm... I hate how I look today. I wonder why. Am I feeling bad about some other aspect of my life? Am I stressed out about work, my relationship, or lack of a relationship? Do I feel like I have to look like a model in order to be lovable?" Just ask the questions and see if any answers come. If there are no answers today, let that be okay, too. Embrace where you are now without the need for instant change. *Right now, in this moment, it's all good!*

Remember that your negative thoughts don't have to go anywhere; you just need to add positive thoughts to the mix. Yes, the positive mantras might feel silly at first. You might feel

uncomfortable saying, “I love my body,” because in truth, you don’t – not in that moment. But there’s value in repeating mantras over and over. As you have already learned, the word *mantra* translates to “instrument of the mind,” and this instrument is used as a tool of protection. The act of saying the words drives out the negative thoughts without conscious effort on your part. At the same time, you open the door to the possibility of the new thought becoming your truth. By accepting that you might not believe the mantras right away but that there’s value in repeating them, you make space for the positive mantras to take hold and become more dominant than your negative thoughts.

During your time in meditation, simply begin to entertain the possibility that the negative thoughts about your body are false. That one little thing is all you have to do today. You will build on that – I promise. “I’m learning to love my body just as it is” will eventually become “I love my body just as it is.”

Don’t forget that you can release the negative thought out loud. “I release the belief that my body isn’t good enough. My body *is* good enough.” If you really don’t believe that last statement today, let yourself laugh. That’s okay, too! As they say, fake it until you make it! When the mantras are repeated enough, your behavior and your body will become a natural reflection of your new beliefs. I know many living, breathing examples who have proven this to be true.

Honoring and Respecting Your Body

I'm going to give you another break: You don't have to think your body is beautiful, and you don't have to "love" your body – ever. If the word "love" works for you, use it. If you cringed at the thought of using the word "love," honoring, respecting, and accepting your body might be easier. You can substitute those words for "love" if you prefer.

As women, our bodies go through so many changes throughout our lives (certainly more than most men). It's an astronomical task to love your body through every stage! After all, you can be satisfied and content with your life without feeling jump-up-and-down happy and joyous all the time, so you don't have to be in love with your body 24/7 either. Just as I respect my family and friends despite their imperfections, I can *honor and respect* my body without thinking it's beautiful. I can acknowledge what I perceive as imperfections without those imperfections affecting my acceptance of my body.

It just makes sense to me to honor this vessel that gets me where I need to go every day, whether or not I like the way it looks. This body allows me to live my life, so it deserves some appreciation.

I have found that when I honor my body as it is without focusing on how it looks, my choices reflect that honoring. "Does this plate of food honor me? Does this relationship honor me? Does this decision honor me?" If I answer those questions honestly, I can't go wrong.

How On Earth Will Meditation Help Me Lose Weight?

Well, this isn't a weight loss book; it's a meditation book. The truth is that meditation may or may not help you lose weight. But I know for certain that weight management is an inside job that manifests itself on the outside. We focus so much on the external – counting

calories and inches, checking in with our apps, reading books, and looking for low-calorie recipes – that we don't take the time to check in with ourselves. What's going on inside? Weight loss is less about counting calories and depriving yourself than about honoring yourself with food choices that nurture you.

No, you don't have to love your body every day, and you don't have to get rid of all of those nagging, nasty thoughts. But here's the truth of the matter: You will never maintain a healthy weight for you unless and until you change your mindset. Yes, you really do have to move toward accepting your body as it is right now.

Tweet this: The body I want will not be available to me unless I do the inside work – period.

So, it isn't that all of those Facebook memes were wrong. They just made you feel like you had to get to your destination without any kind of roadmap.

Meditation became *my* roadmap to honoring, respecting, and accepting the body I have. I believe it can do that for you, too, whether you need to lose weight or whether you have an eating disorder that makes it hard to eat at all. (Of course, if you are struggling with disordered eating or exercise habits, please seek medical attention immediately!)

The truth is that eating too little or eating too much are really two sides of the same coin. They're both about a lack of control. Many people even flip back and forth between over-indulgence and deprivation. When we feel out of control about our weight, we tend to take extreme measures and become obsessive in an effort to regain control. But *real* control comes only through honoring and respecting our bodies and our emotions – even the negative feelings.

I learned this the hard way. I was in a terrible space when I was pregnant with baby number four. I worked out obsessively and compared myself to other pregnant women. “Why am I so much bigger at 30 weeks than that woman over there?” I exercised to the point that I was

unable to walk. I became frightened that my pregnancy was ruining my body. It felt like my body was under attack, and I couldn't control what was happening to it. I loved my baby and wanted to care for her, but at the same time, I fought every pound I gained. I had an unhealthy reaction to what was perfectly normal.

I had a meditation practice before that pregnancy, but I let it fall by the wayside. As a result, I injured and abused my body. When I returned to my meditation practice, I began to honor my body again with healthy choices.

If you aren't at a healthy weight, and you don't have a medical condition that prevents you from losing weight, you have to accept that your actions have led you to this place. But don't use that knowledge as an excuse to beat up on yourself! There's a difference between blaming yourself and taking responsibility for what has prevented you from healthy eating and exercise.

Blame is a judgment that keeps you stuck. Responsibility, on the other hand, empowers you and allows you to take action – to move forward. Responsibility removes the obstacles to your goal because there's nothing outside of you that can stop you from getting what you want. It begins and ends with you, and that can be exciting. Accepting responsibility is a gift, an opportunity.

Again, just allow for the possibility that you can move from blame to responsibility.

Allow!

Can You Honor Your Body With ... *Cake*?

In 2013, my mother passed away ten days after a sudden massive stroke and only seven months after I had lost my father. One day not long after Mom's death, I was standing in a local deli with my 14-year-old son ready to have a special lunch date – just the two of us.

There in the display case was a Jewish apple cake, something I had never seen in a deli in that part of South Jersey. Since I had spent that morning and the night before thinking a lot about my mom, I smiled to myself when I saw the cake. Jewish apple cake was one of her few specialties, and she made it often. I took that cake as a sign, maybe even a “hello” from her.

After ordering our sandwiches and potato salad, I gave in to the urging of the universe and my longing for a taste of my mom’s cake. I ordered a slice for each of us and got more excited for it with every bite of my sandwich. I couldn’t wait to taste it again. It had been so long.

There’s generally not much room for cake or refined sugars of any kind in my diet, but eating that huge piece of cake was in total alignment with my purpose. That cake wasn’t meant to cover a pain or fill a void. It wasn’t a decadent treat or a cheat on my otherwise pristine diet. That cake was a warm hug. It was a reminder that life’s beauty (and my mom) is everywhere. It surprised me in the deli case much like my mother would stop by unannounced with her own cake, still warm from the oven and sprinkled with powdered sugar, ready for us to devour in one sitting.

Sometimes, when we ask, “Does this serve and honor me?” and we’re asking from a place of genuine love and respect for our purpose, the answer surprises us. More often than not, a yoga class or a giant kale salad will get a resounding “YES!” Other times, we’ll get a “yes” to a piece of cake or playing hooky or watching a marathon of our favorite reality show instead of going to the gym.

Only you can know when you’ve been truthful with yourself or when you’ve fooled yourself. If you do fool yourself or find yourself binging, remember to look at your behavior with curiosity instead of judgment. “I wonder why I felt the need to binge. Was I stressed out?

Was I afraid about something? Did I feel like I'd failed and needed to be punished? Was I just sad?" Maybe you simply had a premenstrual craving. Whatever the reason, just make note of it for future reference. Allow yourself to say, "That's interesting" as you would about someone else.

The "Weighting" Game

Tweet this: If I keep my mind in shape, it will help me keep my body in shape – forever.

Meditation is how I keep my mind in shape, but it's far from a quick fix.

While you might feel better in general after a meditation that focuses on your body, you won't see any difference in the mirror – not yet. Meditation is the positive, loving solution to a problem you've dealt with for a long time, so it will take a while to see results. Nevertheless, the entire course of your weight loss journey can be redirected in *just one* meditation session.

Meditation helps you focus your awareness on self-respect – even on those days when it's the last thing you really feel ... or maybe *especially* on those days. If you're moving mindlessly throughout your day, you aren't being careful to honor yourself.

That's why your whole day changes when you start your morning with a meditation – just 4 minutes to set a tone for the day that's about self-honoring. It will help you remember throughout the day to ask that important question, "Does this serve me?" Meditation will help you *want* to take good care of your body without counting calories or depriving yourself or avoiding the bakery counter at the grocery store. I have found that honoring my body has become an effortless result of the inner work I do every day.

I'm not saying that meditation has rid me of my problems, but it's a great tool that helps me manage my feelings and stress level. Even when I abandon my practice for a day, I feel the difference in the way I act, react, and feel.

Just taking the 4 minutes to care enough about yourself to sit down and say, "I release this belief that I'll never love my body" is a step toward self-love – yes, even on the days that the negativity won't let up.

You're on a journey toward relaxing the hold that the negative thoughts have on you, and each day that you meditate, you take another step on that journey. Careful, compassionate mindfulness for just 4 minutes will help you counteract those media images and open your heart – a little bit at a time – to yourself.

Meditation for Body Confidence

Preparation/About This Meditation

"Having the body you want starts with loving the body you have." Before you throw your hands up in the air in defeat, meditate on those words for just a moment. What are they really saying? What do they mean? I saw a motivational quote on Instagram once that really stuck with me: "I don't work out because I hate my body. I work out because I love it." *That* was an "aha!" moment for me. What if accomplishing my goal is about improving an already good situation instead of running from a bad one? What if honoring and respecting the body I'm in right now is the key to *wanting* to take care of this body? And what if, in the process of that, my body ends up looking better than it ever has?

I wrote this meditation in the spirit of happy beginnings. When you start from a place of honor and respect, it can only be expanded upon with healthy choices.

This is meant to be a meditation of protection, as well as one to increase confidence and power. You will be called upon to express new attitudes and opinions about yourself during your meditation. Remember that repeating these words – even if they feel silly or untrue at first – will begin to make them your own.

When? Do this meditation first thing in the morning or in the early afternoon. It might energize you, so I recommend avoiding it in the evening or before bed. While it isn't designed specifically to increase energy, you could feel a powerful emotional response while repeating the mantras, and that could certainly wake you up.

Where? You can practice this meditation absolutely anywhere – in bed first thing in the morning, on your floor pillow, or seated at your desk at the beginning of your workday. Don't concern yourself with making your environment completely distraction-free. Because you're repeating mantras, your mind will naturally rid itself of many distractions, both inner and outer.

Position? Place yourself in your comfortable seat. Your hands, with fingers outstretched, should be upturned on your thighs or knees to receive positive energy while you repeat the mantras offered. Follow the alignment cues found in Chapter 1 for a Seated Meditation.

Your eyes may remain open and focused softly on a space or object in front of you. If practicing on your own, you may choose to keep your eyes closed during the whole meditation, or you may open them after each cycle of breaths to check in and read the next instruction. Choose whatever allows you to feel most focused and at ease.

You Have 4 Minutes to Love/Honor/Respect Your Body

Start by focusing your attention on your breath. If you're practicing this meditation first thing in the morning, you may not be fully awake, so be careful not to slump in your seat. Your breath needs a straight and easy path to travel so that it can carry energy throughout your entire body. Soon, you will begin to attract positive energy from all around you with your thoughts and spoken mantras. Create a clear path for that energy to flow.

The mantras below are an offering to your heart – a gift from you to you. They are an affirmation of your strength, purpose, and beauty. Choose one of the three mantras (or any individual sentence from each mantra) for today's practice.

1. Without manipulating your breath, observe how it feels in your chest – your heart-space. Feel your lungs fill with air, warmed by your body. Feel your chest fill and lift with this warm air. Observe how filling your chest as completely as you can causes you to sit up even taller in your seat. As you exhale slowly, feel your lungs empty and the air pass through your throat and out through your mouth or nostrils.
2. If you have chosen to keep your eyes open, it's time to close them for just a bit. Continue this chest breathing, with your eyes closed for 10 cycles of inhales and exhales. Observe how your breaths deepen and lengthen during this time in darkness. At the end of the cycle of breaths, you may choose to open your eyes again or keep them closed.
3. Your posture has attracted positive energy. You're sitting up tall, and you appear confident and strong. Even though you are fully relaxed, your mouth has revealed a tiny smile. Your shoulders are broad, and your chest is opened wide to the space in front of you. Your whole body appears to be smiling. Your open chest is a

portal for positive energy to enter your body on the inhale and return to the outside world on the exhale.

4. Your deep, long, and smooth breaths will continue to warm your body and fill you with energy. As this energy flows to every part of you, warming your arms to your fingertips and your legs to your toes, imagine the warmth as light. Imagine your body filling with light until you become a glowing, radiant being.
5. For the mantra portion of this meditation, you will continue to breathe as you have been for 7 more full cycles: Inhale fully, filling your chest with energizing, warming air. As you exhale, repeat your chosen mantra.

Mantra 1

I think loving thoughts about my body. I am compassionate toward my body. I am always mindful of my thoughts. My body hears my thoughts and responds well when I am loving. My thoughts about my body are forgiving and kind.

Mantra 2

My words are gentle. I speak gently about myself to myself and to others. I use words like “beautiful,” “strong,” and “healthy” to describe my body. I choose the words. No one may speak poorly about my body.

Mantra 3

I am strong. I am healthy. I am powerful. I am filled with radiant energy. I am a vision of beauty and confidence to all who see me. My body serves me well, and I am grateful for it. My body is a beautiful, miraculous machine and a sacred vessel for my soul.

The meditation continues...

6. Your mantra has taken root, and your heart has already started to believe its truth. As you move through your day and interact with family, friends, and strangers, they will see what you have already begun to believe. You are sitting up taller now, and you are radiating positive energy. If you could see your energy, it would look like warm shining light – a glowing orange light originating at your heart's center. Close your eyes for just a few breaths – 2 or 3 cycles of long inhales and exhales that fill your chest – and imagine yourself completely absorbed by the light. See the colors swirling and churning around you like on the surface of the sun. You are a powerful sun in the center of your universe.
7. You will recall this sun image throughout your day, and it will lift you energetically and physically. You will stand taller, walk more purposefully, and feel warmed by this protective shield of vibrant light. It will attract all the energy you need to continue to carry yourself with confidence. You feel powerful and purposeful, but above all else, beautiful inside and out.

Meditation for Weight Loss

Preparation/About This Meditation

If you are reading this meditation, you're probably trying to lose weight or maintain prior weight loss. Losing weight may be one of the most stressful and daunting physical efforts you ever attempt, so it is my hope that this meditation will create a space of ease and comfort for you.

You're not alone if workouts sometimes leave you feeling defeated or if hopelessness follows your every new attempt at dieting. You have been promised the body of your dreams time and time again, but in the end, you're still trapped in a body that just won't shrink. You're constantly battling your weight, you have made food the enemy, and your spirit has become a tragic casualty. This meditation can heal all that has been wounded in this fight. You can shrink your waistline and your worry in just 4 minutes.

When? You may practice this meditation at any time, and it's actually most useful practiced in shorter form many times throughout the day.

Where? Pick a quiet space for this meditation. You will be prompted to ask yourself questions, and it's important that outside distractions do not interfere with your ability to hear the answers. They may come in the form of an inner voice, a feeling, or an image. Be patient! During my time in meditation, I sometimes see words on a page. I call this my "inner instruction manual." Other times, I visualize a teacher in a classroom setting. I ask "The Teacher" questions, and she answers honestly and objectively. In reality, The Teacher is just my inner voice, free from distraction or judgment, but picturing her as someone separate from me allows me to act out the question and answer scenarios more easily. Visualizations and "play-acting" can be powerful tools for your own meditation practice.

Position? Find your comfortable seat. Because you are calling on your intuition for answers during this meditation, you may want to place your hands on your thighs or knees and your fingers in the Bhudi Mudra position. You can find alignment cues for a Seated Meditation and instructions and uses for all the Mudras in Chapter 1.

You Have 4 Minutes for Weight Loss

1. Sitting up nice and tall, with your eyes still open and focused softly on a single space or object in front of you, start to bring attention to your breath. Be careful to allow your breath to flow in and out with ease. Don't try to change it. If you're restless, your breath might become quick and audible, so try not to create any unnecessary noise with your breath. Allow it to slow down. The point of this exercise is to make your environment as quiet as possible.
2. After you have quieted your breath, it will soon be time to close your eyes in order to remove all visual distractions from your meditation space. If you've practiced this meditation before, you may keep your eyes closed and practice on your own. If this meditation is still new to you, feel free to check in after each section or cycle of breaths for further instruction.
3. Close your eyes. Your world is now completely dark, and you are seated comfortably in a quiet, peaceful space. This environment is ideal for receiving wisdom. Messages will travel undisturbed from the sender directly to your heart.
4. Begin to fill your dark space with objects from a classroom. Desks, chairs, and a blackboard will start to appear around you. The classroom is warm and cheerful with colorful decorations and big windows that look out to a beautiful landscape.

5. Picture a teacher standing in front of the classroom. Your teacher has a friendly and inviting face, and you feel completely comfortable in his/her presence. From this point on, all of your questions will be directed toward your teacher, and answers will be returned swiftly. Every answer will be true and will be in complete service of your mission to become healthier, happier, and stronger.
6. Direct each question to your teacher, either silently or aloud, and wait for the answer to come to you:

“How may I eat today to honor my body, my mission, and my heart?”

“How may I move today to honor my body, my mission, and my heart?”

“How may I speak today to honor my body, my mission, and my heart?”
7. You will receive your answers immediately. Your teacher – your inner voice – will tell you exactly what to do to honor yourself today. The instructions will be easy for you to carry out, and you will see no obstacles between you and doing all you can to treat your body and your spirit well.
8. After you have received your answers and have accepted them into your heart as the absolute truth, seal your meditation with 10 more breaths. With every inhale, you feel more joyful and determined. With every exhale, you release any remaining worry about making healthy choices.

For the remainder of the day, you can reactivate this meditation by taking 3 full breaths and asking yourself one question: “How does this honor my body, my mission, and my heart?”

Ask this question before every meal or snack, before entering a potentially stressful exchange with another person, or before making the choice between the elevator and the stairs. Frequently throughout your day, take a moment to slow down and check in. When you are

completely honest with yourself in these times of quiet, careful contemplation, your answers may surprise you as often as they are completely predictable. Like I've said before, sometimes a brownie can honor you as well as a yoga class. Receive each answer to your question in the spirit of non-judgment, know that the answer is true and in service to you, and enjoy the nourishing moments that follow.

Meditation for Body Acceptance

Preparation/About This Meditation

In your *Meditation for Body Confidence*, I asked you to repeat mantras that may not necessarily be true for you in the moment. These little fibs that that you tell yourself during meditation are actually just glimpses – predictions – of what can and *will* be true for you in the future. Through constant repetition, what once felt impossible will slowly become believable. And once you believe something, you will begin to see it showing up in your life for real. I know this may sound a little “woo-woo” to a lot of you, but this is one of the principle rules of manifesting. Imagine what you could do if you truly believed that nothing could get in your way.

Body Confidence teaches you to be gentle and kind to your body. This meditation teaches you to be gentle and kind to your *feelings* about your body. What does that mean? You now have permission to feel not-so-nice feelings, to not feel guilty about not loving what you see in the mirror, and to finally have a “fat day” without feeling like you're letting down all of womankind. A practice of acceptance of both your body (in all its changing shapes and stages) and your thoughts about your body will allow you to move closer to your goals. You will no longer be the obstacle getting in the way of your own progress because you won't waste time fighting your own feelings or shaming yourself for having them.

You may notice that I use the words “not love” in place of “hate” during this meditation. A lot of you might hate your body, and I told you earlier in the chapter that it’s okay to feel that way. But during your time in meditation, your goal should be to reframe both the thoughts and the words you use to talk about yourself. Even during a practice of accepting non-positive feelings, I think it’s important to use gentle words. You may feel like you hate your body (or parts of it) today, but how can you change your words during meditation to be more compassionate toward your body and your feelings about your body?

Eventually, what you practice during your meditation time will start to spill out in your regular life. You’ve probably heard of the concept of taking your yoga off the mat and into the world. Well, I want you to take your meditation off the pillow, and I’ll show you how to do that in a bonus “moving meditation” at the end of this chapter.

Meditation may be new to you, but soon, you will be able to create your own meditations. As you move forward with your personal practice, please consider these inspirations for meditations on body acceptance:

- I allow all thoughts – whether so-called “good” or “bad” – but I only speak words that are loving and kind. I will think lovingly about myself. I will be compassionate toward myself. I will think loving words. I will look at my reflection and give thanks for this beautiful, miraculous machine that has been gifted to me.
- Are my words kind? How do I speak about myself to myself and to others? What words do I allow in my vocabulary in reference to my body? These words are negative: fat, weak, ugly. These words are positive: beautiful, strong, healthy. I will speak in loving terms about my body.

This meditation is a sort of supplement to *Body Confidence*. All those positive thoughts and words in that meditation are pure, clean nourishment for your journey. But like a food diet, where a craving for a cupcake sometimes wins over a green smoothie, there will be days when the negativity just won't be squashed by positive thoughts. Vitamin supplements fill the holes in your *almost* perfect diet, and this meditation supplement will help balance your *almost* perfect positive thinking practice.

When? This meditation is appropriate for any time of the day; practice it when you need it most. I recommend that you practice this one with your eyes closed. After each section of instruction, gently open your eyes to read and receive your next set of cues.

Where? I always prefer that you practice your meditations in places that allow for the greatest amount of comfort. If you're feeling physically uncomfortable, meditation can be difficult, and feeling self-conscious about being heard or seen while you meditate can be particularly unsettling. This meditation may bring up a lot of intense feelings, so I want you to be sure you're in a space that allows you to let go of your innermost vulnerabilities without fear or apprehension. Your bedroom may be the perfect spot. Climb into bed, surrounded by your favorite pillows and blankets, and prepare yourself for meditation.

Position? Find a seated position that is most comfortable for you and allows your chest to remain broad and open with ease. If an open-heart posture is difficult for you to maintain while sitting up without back support, a reclined position may be a better choice. If this is your preference, refer to Chapter 1 for instructions on Reclining Bound Angle (*Supta Baddha Konasana*) or Corpse Pose (*Savasana*) with bent knees. These reclining postures are perfect for a practice of acceptance and surrender. As illustrated in the posture instructions, your arms will be

lying beside you, with palms turned upward and fingers outstretched. If you are sitting up, place your hands upturned on your thighs or knees.

You Have 4 Minutes to *Not* Love Your Body

1. Feeling not so great about how you look or how your body is serving you can cause anxiety as well as depression. These feelings can drag on, come and go, or switch from one to the other. Honor where you are in this moment by taking just a little bit of time to check in. This time doesn't need to be longer than the length of a few breaths.
2. With your eyes closed and your body resting comfortably in your chosen seat, place your attention on your breath and its characteristics in this moment. Count 5 inhales and exhales while observing the length, depth, and smoothness of each breath. Your breath may be short or long, shallow or deep, rattled or smooth – none of these characteristics are better or more correct than the others. Your job in this moment is to observe, not to judge.
3. As you continue to breath, recall the biggest thing that is bothering you about your body (or your behaviors relating to your body) right now. What brought you to this meditation today? You may feel embarrassed about your answer because you think being unhappy with a part of yourself is a sign of failure. Let's release that right now.
4. Inhale as deeply as you can, feeling the air fill your chest and then your belly until it's big and round. As you exhale, allow every muscle in your body to release and to feel as though it's melting into the surface beneath you.

5. Inhale once more. Exhale, and say aloud (or silently if you're in a public place), "I release the idea that it's wrong to not love everything about my body all the time." Alternatively, you may say, "I release the idea that I have to love everything about my body all the time."
6. Continue to repeat this mantra 4 more times for a total of 5 times. If it feels unnatural, even after the fifth repetition, you may continue for 21 total breath cycles. There's no need to move on to the next mantra – save it for another time. But if you're ready to move on to the next step, let's set up your personal mantra for today.
7. Fill in the blanks in the following mantra with the appropriate body part or body-related behavior that you're struggling with: "I accept that I do not love my _____ today. I release the idea that my thoughts about my _____ have to be positive all the time."
8. Continue your pattern of deep, body-filling inhales and long, muscle-relaxing exhales for 5 full breath cycles. Repeat your Personal Mantra on each exhale. The words of release with each exhale allow your body to sink more deeply into relaxation, melting you even further into the floor beneath you.
9. Fill in the blank for your final mantra: "I can be unhappy with my _____ and still love and accept my body." Repeat your second Personal Mantra on each exhale for five more full breath cycles.

These are your personal mantras of love, acceptance, and release. They are your protection from self-defeating thoughts that get in the way of your progress. They may teach you to accept your non-positive thoughts about your body, but they also teach you how to love

(honor) your body as it is in this moment. *Loving (honoring) the body you have allows you to have the body you want.*

Bonus “Moving” Meditation for When Cravings Strike

With regard to self-esteem, grief, or any other topic covered in this book, there’s a way to avoid the main triggers that cause your distress. With food, though, you’re confronted with your triggers constantly. You have to eat, and food is everywhere. So, how can you live normally when stumbling blocks are in front of you several times a day, every day?

Sitting down in lotus position in the middle of a busy café probably isn’t the best way to contemplate whether or not the chocolate croissant calling you from the display case is a good idea. What you need is a moving meditation – something that can be practiced on the go with a set of mantras in the form of questions and affirmations to help you make loving eating decisions throughout your day.

The result of this type of meditation is instant. You ask the question, your earlier pillow-work is recalled, and you make the perfect eating decision for that moment. You may struggle with the answers at first – mostly over how truthful they are – but they will come. How well the answers serve you will change with time. There will be times that the truth comes swiftly and without effort, and there will be whole chunks of time that you’re giving yourself the green light to foods that would be better left alone. This practice is as much one of self-examination as it is one of self-love. You have to constantly check in with yourself to make sure you’re being truthful.

Mindfulness about how you eat is the foundation for maintaining correct eating habits. When you take the time to think about how each of your eating decisions serves you *before* you take that first bite, you will naturally eat more appropriately and begin to lose weight.

Eventually, all of your eating decisions will become easy. The questions will come automatically; you won't even notice you've asked them. The answers will appear as pure knowing with no waiting time whatsoever. Constant intentional practice becomes habit, and your eating will be completely intuitive.

Moving Meditation

1. Take a breath before you taste to avoid making a decision in haste. Then, ask:

How does this [food] serve me?

How will I feel after I eat this [food]?

2. Affirm what is true – your eating decisions should be worthy of you:

I will eat foods that bring me pleasure. I will eat without regret or judgment.

I live actively and eat real food. The body I have is the one I'm meant to have...
and it's beautiful!

Junk food is for junk bodies. I treat my body like a temple.

What I choose to nourish my body with is a clear indication of how much I love myself. I eat with self-respect.

When I come from a place of self-love and not from denial or punishment, all eating decisions become effortless and worthy of me.

I treat myself by making loving food choices.