**Writing Prompts**

**(you don’t have to write, you can just think or draw or whatever)**

1. Write the ways your brain sort of malfunctions when under the influence of stressful emotions (follow details below). The purpose of this step is to motivate you to learn how to de-stress your brain.

* Write ways you’re thinking goes out of balance when your brain is running on emotion. Can't think? Obsessed? Lost in the past? Lost in future? Useless or harmful thoughts about yourself or others?
* Write the ways your behaviors go out of balance when your brain is running on stressful emotion: eating, drinking, sleeping, moving, smoking, working, spending, etc.
* Write the ways your boundaries (interactions, communication, relationships) go out of balance when your brain is run by stressful emotions: people please? bully? isolate? cling?
* Write the ways your body goes out of balance when your brain is being run by stressful emotions (cravings, hunger, appetite, pain, illness, disease, other symptoms, etc.)
* Write the ways your emotions go out of balance when your brain is being run by stressful emotions: unmanageable sadness, fear, anger, guilt? Numbness?

1. Write a list of ways you can be calm from the outside in: De-stressing distractions like a hobby, instead of “distressing distractions” like overeating. Examples of calming from the outside are: breathing, nature (water, fire, earth, air, plant & animal kingdom), movement/dance, sleep/rest, healthy food/drink, sing/chant/hum, imagining something or someone calming, seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching something calming, support, reading, painting, crafting, etc. Write as many as you can think of that work for you.
2. Write a list of things that are bothering you that you need to run through the inner process (below), things that when they come to your mind, some sadness, anger, guilt, or fear gets stirred up. If these come up during the day, keep a running list. At first, it's not always possible to address them as they arise. You can list them by texting yourself or writing a note to get it out of your head. As you practice, you'll be more able to process emotions on the spot.
3. Write what helps you find your center (being, awareness, aliveness, presence, inner peace). Examples could be feeling your breath, body, senses, sensations; or some word, image or thought that helps you find your way back to your center. Anything else from section 2 that goes beyond being a nice distraction or relaxation and helps you find your center of calm/inner peace. This can include all forms of spiritual practice including prayer & meditation if they help you connect you to your "center."
4. Take 1 thing at a time from #3 WHEN you have calmed and centered enough that you can approach your feeling and not get swept away by it, like standing at the beach with your feet in the sand (that’s your being), and you are able to stay present for a wave of emotion from the ocean of emotion (in your heart or elsewhere in your body).
5. Get centered, then meet and greet the feeling… in your heart. Usually sadness, anger, guilt and fear come as a little “team” so try to look for each of those feelings on each toic. Stay with this step until the feeling calms because it’s been greeted by your peaceful presence, your calm center. There is a sense of accepting, allowing, admitting, acknowledging the feeling. If your feeling overwhelms your center, return to step 2 or 3 until you’re more centered again.
6. That was the hardest part! Once you can meet and greet your feeling (sad, mad, fear, guilt) …. and it feels a little calmer (smaller, less overwhelming, more manageable, dissipated) … then you have a calmer brain, and a calmer brain gives you better thoughts, better actions, better interactions, and better body reactions. This is how you gain wisdom; your thinking brain literally has more energy at this point.
7. Now that your brain is less stressed, write down what newer, truer thought appears or a wiser action to take or interaction to have. The more you do this inner process, the more presence you gain and the less stressful emotions you carry around, allowing the possibility for healing of your beliefs, behaviors, boundaries & body.

It's work that works!