

Inner Strength

By Terra Canova

Welcome to Moments to Nourish. I'd like to talk to you about inner strength. We spend time exercising our bodies for physical strength but how often do we spend time building up our resilience? What actions do we take to build up that quality and why does it matter? With so much going on in our world today both from a world overview and in our personal lives, our resistance is challenged often daily. And for some of us that means we react quicker. In the course of our days someone or something may happen that shocks us, upsets us, triggers us or angers us. We get thrown off by a comment. Maybe we cannot even respond. It could be something beyond our control or a person we cannot really talk to. Those of us who feel deeply often replay what happened over and over and over not realizing we are tensing up. That energy carries in you and spills over. It takes us away from our true nature if we linger in it for too long.

I want to run through a short exercise with you to explore working with these feelings. You may wish to have a journal and pen handy. Find a place you can settle in and relax. Please know this is a brief technique I use. It is something for you to try out and explore to see if it helps you. Sitting down in a place where you feel safe, I want you to recall a situation that triggered an emotional response. But let's start with something light. Something that does not go too deep or is too personal, but it was just enough to interrupt your day. Think of what happened. What did they say? How did it make you feel? Re-live that situation in your mind. And now I want you to notice how are you feeling? Are you tensing up? Where are you holding that tension? Is it in your neck? Maybe you're gritting your teeth. Become aware of how you physically respond to triggers. Realize that the tension you're feeling stays and has a residual effect on your body as well as your emotions.

We are going to do a short muscle tension release to help us reset so that we can reflect from a calmer place. So, I want you to set the situation that you just relived aside. Literally act as if you are putting it in a box and setting the box down. Having done that, I want you to focus on your body. Take a deep breath and as you do make a fist with your hand. Tense it up. Be careful not to tense to the point of pain, we just want to hold tension in the fist. Now pause your breath for a moment while holding that fist and notice the tension and tightness that you feel. And then exhale and release, relaxing the hand. Take another breath. And once again tighten your fist but also tighten your forearm. Your arm may want to rise up as you do this. And then pause at the tension point, tense and tight and then exhale again releasing the forearm and the fist and the hand into relaxation. Sit quietly. Notice how your hand and arms feel. Did you notice the difference between holding the tension and releasing it? And how your hand feels after? Take some calming breaths and let this relaxation ease the muscles elsewhere in your body. Muscle tension relaxation techniques are something you can do with your full body that can not only help you release the tension you are feeling, but also train you to notice it when it comes up during the day so that you can take action to release it as it happens.

You may wish to pick up your journals next. I want you to try to look at the situation that you set down from an observation perspective. Name how it made you feel. Don't go into the blaming aspects of who did what rather say, that made me angry. That upset me. That crossed my boundaries. I acknowledge my emotional response. Whatever feels right for you. Either say it out loud or write it down. Take a few calming breaths. Having acknowledged the emotion, we now want to bring in awareness. Why did it bother you? Is there something deeper that this hit on? Be curious about your response to it. Often when we share something that has happened with others or we write it down in our journals, we can feel as we are talking or writing, what comes up strongly for us. So pay attention when that happens. Make a note of what you feel strongest about because that will help you to explore it even further. Please note, if something is very deep and it brings things up that feel like they are too much for you, please seek out someone who can help guide you through this. This brief exercise is only meant as a starting point to help us with lesser intense situations and to just become aware of how we respond to things.

And now I want you to pause and realize that there will always be things beyond your control that can upset or anger us. We need to be aware that we are responsible for taking care of our emotions. The other person is responsible for their own behavior. It's not up to us to fix them or to change it. There will be times when we cannot even say anything to the other person, so we truly need to focus on ourselves and take care of our own emotions. Nurture yourself. Be proud of when you handle an unreasonable situation with grace. It matters that you do. Because the more you can support yourself in the face of trying situations the stronger you become on the inside and the better you are able to navigate challenges. And one day you may even reach a point where you are able to be in a situation that triggers you, but you find that you are processing your response so much faster. And instead of holding on to the tension and anger and ruining your mood, you can release it and stay centered in your own authentic self.

There are many other releasing techniques and ceremonies you may wish to explore which includes Qi Gong, sound healing and cord breaking. Feel free to explore what method works best for you. Your energy is valuable and the more we stop giving it away to others the more we free ourselves and give our time and attention to what truly matters to us. Wishing you peace and ease. Thank you