

COMFORT ZONE:

**Finding Peace and Encouragement
in Every Life Situation**



KALYCA DUBOSE

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“In the middle of every difficulty lies an opportunity and quote.”

-Albert Einstein

“The first step towards getting somewhere is to decide that you are not going to stay where you are.”

-Anonymous

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I wrote this book to be a source of positive inspiration for those who may feel discouraged and stuck in their life situations or who desire to make profound changes in their mind, body, spirit or in certain aspects of their life. I am writing this for those who may be stressed out and feel burnout, maybe just from something that happened today, or maybe from their job, their relationships, their health, etc. I am also writing this for those who feel amazing and fulfilled in life, but who

interact with people who do not. As a nurse, I often come in to work feeling great, but I often need to uplift patients or family members who are feeling down. I sometimes find myself at a loss for words. I hope that this little book can be used as a quick resource to find those words, whether for yourself, your loved ones, your patients, or their families.

I find it most encouraging that, for every obstacle, tragedy, downturn, crisis or upset that we face in life, we can control our attitude and, subsequently, our response to stressors. We can modify our mindset and response to any given event and, thus, adjust our attitude about it. These things may sound very difficult, but this can be relatively simple if we are only willing to open our minds in order to receive this truth and to do the mental work required to achieve this. I firmly believe that it is our attitude about ourselves, others, the world at large, and the degree to which we are empowering ourselves on a daily basis that determines the nature of our response to life situations, and even the outcome of major aspects of our lives. Free your mind. You can do it!

ANXIETY/PRESSURE



Anxiety has a few root causes. It typically comes because we feel out of control of a situation or fear a significant loss. We can become prone to anxiety due to lowering of our stress threshold (in other words, it takes minimal stimuli for us to feel stress) or repeatedly engaging in maladaptive behaviors in reaction to perceived stressors (e.g. reaching for the nearest wine bottle instead of a water bottle). In fewer cases, anxiety can be due to side effects of an illness or medication. It is critical to establish a solid self-care routine in order to raise your stress threshold. In other words, making your personal well-being a top priority enables you to more effectively handle life-events and less likely to view something as stressful or anxiety-provoking. Also, establishing healthy reactions in response to stressors makes you more effective

at dealing with future events. Feeling anxious? Try this: inhale deeply through your nose for seven seconds. Hold your breath for a couple seconds, then fully exhale all air out of your lungs from your mouth. Repeat for a total of 10 breaths. Feel the immediate change! Besides breathing exercises, other healthy stress-reducers include: yoga, guided-visualization, meditation, aromatherapy, journaling, exercise, and spending time in nature. Feeling pressure to meet deadlines, expectations, quotas, and other obligations, whether personal, family, career, business, or community can be tremendously worrisome. In these cases, I find that preparation, research, and communication, reducing unnecessary responsibility, and learning to say no can go a long way in helping reduce stress. How can you create calm in your life?

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“Every time you are tempted to react in the same old way, ask if you want to be a prisoner of the past or a pioneer of the future.”

– Deepak Chopra

“P.S. You’re not going to die. Here’s the white-hot truth: if you go bankrupt, you’ll still be okay. If you lose the gig, the lover, the house, you’ll still be okay. If you sing off-key, get beat by the competition, have your heart shattered, get fired...it’s not going to kill you.

Ask anyone who’s been through it.”

– Danielle LaPorte

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PAIN

Pain is often an essential part of birth and growth. Just as an athlete must tear down muscle in order to build it up, in a similar way, a person must often go through difficult, demanding, or traumatic experiences to obtain inner growth. However, sometimes our pain, whether physical or emotional, is a warning sign. It can let us know what we may have neglected, what needs to be eliminated, or what needs to be remedied. Other times, pain can be self-inflicted. In this case, it can let us know where we need to grow. Where is your pain telling you to focus?

“*If no pain, then no love. If no darkness, no light. If no risk, then no reward. It’s all or nothing. In this damn world, it’s all or nothing.*”
-Glennon Doyle Melton

“Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.”
-Khalil Gibran

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SORROW

It is usually the people and things who have given us the most happiness who can cause us the deepest sadness. The other side of this coin, is that when we examine our lives, we may see that the greatest sources of our sorrow have also served as the greatest sources of our joy. Loved ones who have passed away, children who have disappointed us in some way, partners who have neglected us all can serve as potent inspiration for cultivating inner lasting happiness. I encourage you, when you are ready, to find the joy that lies outside of the pain and to find the lesson within the loss. What did you gain from this person or experience that will always remain with you? How have you grown from your grief? What steps will you take to reclaim your joy?

“*When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight.*”
— Kahlil Gibran

“*Don't grieve. Anything you lose comes round in another form.*”
— Rumi

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ANGER



Buddha said, “Anger is like holding a candle flame in your palm and expecting the other person to get burned.” Holding on to anger for too long does nothing but breed bitterness and resentment, and make you old, tired, and grumpy! There are healthy, productive ways to deal with feelings of anger.

1. Take time to calm down. Things said and done at the peak of anger are almost never beneficial or productive.
2. Figure out why you are angry. Sometimes anger has nothing to do with another person or situation, but everything to do with your mental state, learned responses to stressors, or dissatisfaction with your own life.

3. If needed, address the offender in a healthy way, make your feelings known, and allow them to make amends.
4. Understand the situation from the perspective of the offender.
5. Understand that, in your lifetime, you have offended someone and caused someone to be angry. Try to have some empathy.
6. If your offender is not apologetic and/or is unwilling/unable to make amends, recognize that some people are not far along enough in their personal growth to offer true remorse. It is up to you to continue your OWN growth, to “walk your talk”.
7. If you are angry at a societal situation (e.g. environmental pollution, corporate corruption, violence), do not confuse your anger with action. Find ways, no matter how big or small, that you can be a positive force of change. Simultaneously, perform a self-assessment to determine if these issues are present in your personal life. For example, if you are angered by crude political discourse but have conflict within your own household, then actively address this issue.

Hatred seems to fall along the same emotional spectrum as anger, hostility, selfishness, and being overly critical. It can result from viewing the “other” as somehow “less than” you: less lovable, less equal, less intelligent, less perfect. Learning to see aspects of yourself in others goes a long way in healing hatred. What are the feelings beneath your anger? How will you give and receive love?

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“Forgiveness isn’t just the absence of anger. I think it’s also the presence of self-love, when you actually begin to value yourself.”

— Tara Westover

“In times of great stress or adversity, it’s always best to keep busy, to plow your anger and your energy into something positive.”

— Lee Iacocca

“Mind is not a dustbin to keep anger, hatred and jealousy. But it is the treasure box to keep love, happiness and sweet memories.”

— Buddha

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SICKNESS

Sickness and disease are part of life, if not yours, then someone you know. This can cause great distress, yet sickness can be used as a tool for healing. Illness, whether your own or that of another, can be a catalyst to get closer to your loved ones, as well as become more intimate with your own body, mind, and spirit. If you are sick, it may be time to reach out to others, as well as reach deep within yourself to access your innate healing capabilities. Take a few minutes to watch videos with testimonies of people who have overcome your problem or illness successfully. Sometimes, an illness or injury may be chronic, permanent, or progressive. In this case, it can be encouraging to know that there are many aspects to health. Focusing on mental and emotional health along with the health of your personal relationships can be incredibly rewarding. What actions will you take today to support your health?

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“For every ailment under the sun, There is a remedy, or there is none, If there be one, try to find it; If there be none, never mind it.”
— Mother Goose

“Everything will be okay in the end. If it’s not okay, it’s not the end.”
— John Lennon

“Every day may not be good, but there is something good in every day.”
— Unknown

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DEATH



Matter is neither created nor destroyed but, rather, transformed. Therefore, death, although unavoidable, is not a destroyer. We all continue to exist and make our mark on this world in one form or another. Therefore, you and your loved ones continue to exist. But, while you are here in this form, live your life completely, enjoy fully, and love entirely! How will you celebrate life today?

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“What we have once enjoyed deeply we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”

— Helen Keller

“We all die. The goal isn't to live forever, the goal is to create something that will.”

— Chuck Palahniuk

“Grief can destroy you --or focus you. You can decide a relationship was all for nothing if it had to end in death, and you alone. OR you can realize that every moment of it had more meaning than you dared to recognize at the time, so much meaning it scared you, so you just lived, just took for granted the love and laughter of each day, and didn't allow yourself to consider the sacredness of it. But when it's over and you're alone, you begin to see that it wasn't just a movie and a dinner together, not just watching sunsets together, not just scrubbing a floor or washing dishes together or worrying over a high electric bill. It was everything, it was the why of life, every event and precious moment of it. The answer to the mystery of existence is the love you shared sometimes so imperfectly, and when the loss wakes you to the deeper beauty of it, to the sanctity of it, you can't get off your knees for a long time, you're driven to your knees not by the weight of the loss but by gratitude for what preceded the loss. And the ache is always there, but one day not the emptiness, because to nurture the emptiness, to take solace in it, is to disrespect the gift of life.”

— Dean Koontz, *Odd Hours*

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DESPAIR/HOPELESSNESS

One of the most comforting things about life is that with each breath comes new opportunity and, literally, new inspiration. Each moment gives an opportunity for us to become more fully ourselves. You may ask, “What’s the point in trying?” The answers: Because people care about you, because you are beautiful and deserving, and because, more importantly, you are powerful. You may ask, “How can I create change in my life?” The answers: Because you are a living, breathing human being at this moment, you have almost infinite potential. Just like energy, potential needs to be harnessed in order to be useful. Take a small step TODAY to dig yourself out of despair. That small step will provide the momentum that you need to continue through the tunnel until you see the light! How can you create your own light?

“*Only a man who has felt ultimate despair is capable of feeling ultimate bliss.*”

— *Alexandre Dumas*

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

— *Maya Angelou*

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LONELINESS



Loneliness often comes from feeling a lack of love. For those that may be alone and feel friendless, there are people that care, even if they are strangers. For example, as a nurse, I can say with certainty that there are many patients that I have taken care of over the years that I cared deeply for. I shed tears for them, came in early to work on their behalf and spent extra time with them. Not because I had to, but because I choose to. Similarly, I have come to believe that love is a choice and an intentional action. You can be your own best friend. Sometimes, you may feel lonely because you have not shown true love to yourself. You might not have given yourself intentional self-care, self-devotion, self-respect. Or you may feel lonely because you feel a lack of connection to others. This is when you need to reach out to others for

connection. Volunteer, call a friend or family member, join a virtual or live group, attend an event and make a goal of exchanging contact information with someone you meet. In dating, they say “There is somebody for everybody.” In life in general, I believe that to be true. No matter what your lot in life, there is someone who can meet you wherever you are! How will you connect with others today? How will you be your own best friend?

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“You cannot be lonely if you like the person you’re alone with.”
— Dr. Wayne Dyer

“The possibility for rich relationships exists all around you – you simply have to open your eyes, open your mouth and most importantly, open your heart.”
— Cheryl Richardson

“Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

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STUCKNESS



Stuckness is a term that I use to describe lack of progression between where you are now versus where you say you want to be in life. It is inertia or stagnation. I will admit, there is a false sense of comfort that occurs when re-reading the same page over and over again. When we memorize the same lines, we already know what will happen. However, by not turning the page, we cannot fully realize and live our story. Let it go, and turn the page! Have you been talking about getting in shape, writing that paper, reading that book, getting that degree, or starting that business for the past few weeks or even years?? How do you get “unstuck”? I have found that all you need to do to get out of any rut is to create a little momentum. You don’t need to take huge leaps and make elaborate plans to get started. You only need to make

very small, daily progressions to get started. For example, if you aren't exercising AT ALL, no need to make plans to hire a top personal trainer as soon as you can afford it. START NOW and do 15 jumping jacks...maybe 15 seconds running in place. Tomorrow, do more. Next day, do a little more. It really is that simple. You owe it to yourself to show up for yourself every day! How will you "unstick yourself" at this very moment?

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“If you continue to dig the same hole in the same place in your life, eventually you will be standing in a grave.”

— Shannon L. Alder

“Our self-respect tracks our choices. Every time we act in harmony with our authentic self and our heart, we earn our respect. It is that simple.

Every choice matters.”

— Dan Coppersmith

“Growth is painful. Change is painful. But, nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you do not belong.”

— N.R. Narayana Murthy

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