

# Build Your Desired Reality

Before I started holding Vision Board workshops, I did a lot of research on the topic so I would be best equipped to share valuable techniques with the participants.

At some point in the research, I stumbled upon a video featuring the multi-talented [Patti Dobrowolski at a TED talk](#) she did in Rainier several years ago. If you have 10 minutes, I recommend checking out the powerhouse in this video where she shows us simply how to draw our own desired future.

It is really so simple: first get clear on your current reality. If you are working for someone else who does not value your contribution to the team, or if you have an non-ideal relationship, or even if you just want to find friends with whom you can “have more fun,” envision your life void of soul-crushing situations.

Next: Draw out your current situation. Then draw your ideal, desired reality. Once you have those two basic drawings, Dobrowolski outlines the (simple) three bold steps you must take to step into your desired reality.

1. See it.
2. Believe it
3. Act on it.

It is seriously so simple. Know what *specifically* you want to have in your future. Drawing it helps you to visualize it. Even if your people are stick figures, those sticks are powerfully representative for your mind.

As any good Law of Attraction student, you know that if you step into your desired self from time to time, that desired outcome is more likely to happen.

Know what you want and it shall come to you. The more specific

and descriptive (colorful) you can be with the image of your future self, the more likely you will manifest all your desires.

Take time to watch the video, then get ready to draw all your desires!

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## Slow Wins the Race – 7 Tips to Win at Being Bored

It might be my age, but probably has just as much to do with the age in which we live, that sometimes I just want to slow down, take a breath, and soak up all that is going on around me.

Before my eyes, my baby grows into an adult. There is so much to do for him, to teach him, to learn from him.

In the midst of helping to raise the next generation, there is so much information out there for us to take in and so many people to interact with. Educational, child rearing, career building, shopping, or even gossip, searching can be quite consuming, not to mention most of us have a day job!

We *all* need a break from the bombardment to all senses. No wonder the meditation industry is booming as people seek out ways to slow down. We are all so busy, like [Omid Safi writes](#), that is almost too difficult to make playdates for our children. The need to be busy actually [drives some people to therapy](#).

Our children get easily “bored” and can we blame them that they feel that way? It is the way society operates. We all have a golden voice within, a voice that has all the answers,

but we are so distracted by the movement around us that we continue to look outward for answers.

Find your inner voice. Listen to it. Hear it. Feel it. Embrace it.

Here are some ideas to help you slow down today:

1. Sit on your couch or comfortable chair for 15 minutes every day. But don't watch TV, don't look at your phone, don't put on any music, don't read or eat. Just sit there and allow yourself to *be* with your thoughts. Being bored while sitting outside is ok, but truly take the challenge to do this in a very normal place so you aren't "entertained."
2. Make (and live by) with a daily schedule for when you check your email. Also make times for emailing replies and drafting new correspondances. Keep to your schedule and don't waiver.
3. Turn off pop-up notifications on your computer. Seriously, the info can probably wait. Make a list of what you want to check and then make a schedule if it is really important to you.
4. Remove the FaceBook app from your phone. Schedule time(s) each day to check in via computer. And Log off the site when your allotted time has passed.
5. Walk slowly from one destination to another. After you park the car, walk with slow intention to the grocery store. When you are inside, engage your senses to see more colors, smell more fragrances, and hear more sounds than you do when you are rushing to get items to check off your list.
6. When you are outside, just look up at the sky. This one takes almost no effort whatsoever.
7. Live with plants in your home. Take care of them. Talk to them.

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# What Can You Do For Your Community? Organizations that Help you Help Others

Have you heard that expression “The more you give, the more you get”? I think it is a phrase that just doesn’t get said enough or practiced enough in our society. Collectively we are becoming more selfish, more entitled, less considerate, and generally disrespectful of each other’s needs.

When we take an hour (or more!) each week to give back to the community, we take back the power to be good to each other. Some of us may have to put in a few additional hours to offset the negative impact of the selfish in society.

Fortunately volunteering has recently been seen as a *good* thing, which provides a huge relief in this age of people seizing opportunities.

With the increasing rate of hungry and homeless people, there are that many more opportunities to serve locally. But you don’t just have to work at the homeless shelter. You can connect with troubled youth, homebound elderly folk, non-English speakers, provide service cleaning up nature, hosting exchange students, serving in schools, donating blood, or building houses.

Giving money is one wonderful option people choose to help their community, but I believe that by getting your hands dirty and sacrificing your even more valuable time is a way to truly give. Here are three sites that will help you find a place to start volunteering:

[Just Serve](#) is an online service organization that helps link up volunteers with like minded organizations. While this site is organized by Church of Latter-day Saints, it works with all types of organizations, from food pantries to senior centers to libraries.

[Volunteer Match](#) allows you to search for just the right fit via location. You can search your hometown for opportunities to serve, or you can look at your next vacation destination to see if there are chances to help for an hour or two. Non profit organizations list their needs and you can find just the right match.

[Habitat for Humanity](#) allows you to learn while you give. Habitat for Humanity works with volunteers to build homes for families in all 50 United States and in 70 countries around the world. Habitat homeowners work alongside volunteers to build their homes and pay an affordable mortgage.

You can also find apps to log and track your volunteer hours. These are useful for youth who are building up service hours, for non profit organizations to track how much work individuals are doing for them and reward them as such, and for those who find a reward system makes them inclined to do more good.

[Reward Volunteers](#) provides a great tracking system, as do [Track it Forward](#) and [Volunteer Mark](#).

Collectively we can do so much good in the world, we can overpower the negativity. Finding the goodness in volunteering, in helping others, seeing the positive change we can make in the world makes the good stronger.

With just one it is 10 hours. With hundreds doing the same, it becomes thousands, and then millions. Let us join hands to help one another as best we can in order to make our society collectively stronger, better, and more full of love.

If you already serve, please share your experiences below.

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## Vision Board as Inspiration

There is power in your vision. It sets the course of where you will go. You can determine the outcome of your life if you just allow yourself to see it. A vision board provides a physical reminder daily (or hourly depending on where you place your vision board) of what you want in life.

It should come as no surprise that successful people create and use vision boards to help manifest their destiny.

To make a board, people typically cut images and words from colorful magazines and paste them to a board which they then pin to the back of a closet door, or on the wall next to the bathroom – somewhere they will see the board once or twice a day. The idea is that every time you look at your board, you are reminded to visualize your ideal life.

It is important to be centered and focused when you create your vision board. It helps a lot to be gathering nice magazines in the weeks prior to assembling your board so you have plenty of options to choose from.

But what is even more important is to take time to consider what do you want in your life. Who do you want to be? What do you want to do? What do you want to have? Before you answer, remind yourself to dream, and to dream big.

This is your chance to imagine yourself living on the beach, flying a plane, running an empire, *or* winning an award. Envision the most amazing dream life for yourself and put it on your board.

Vision boards come in various forms. Mostly they are on 20×24 inch white poster board, but can also come much smaller, put on canvas frames, or one amazing vision board I saw was made into an accordion fold-out that sat on my friend's desk.

Your vision board is *yours*, so you should make it uniquely your own. If that means decorating with paint or glitter glue, or even printing stock photos since you can't find just the right thing in magazines, then go for it. You may end up writing out the words or phrases you just can't find in magazines.

You should strive to make something so beautifully inspirational that you will want to see it often throughout your day and even allow others to share your vision.

Give your vision the power it deserves. Give it focus and attention by creating a vision board. Set your intention to succeed, or get fit, or have love, or whatever it is you seek; as you should have it. It is there for you, you just need to show yourself the way to it.



## **Create Your Vision Board**

**14 page step-by-step guidance on making your Vision Board**

[Download ebook](#)

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# **Speak, Think, and Act**

# Truthfully

There are a couple “hiding spots” where police cars sit in my town, presumed taking radar. I’m one of these people who follows the speed limit signs, and I dare say this lesson is ingrained in me because I know police are lurking around any corner.

Do I drive the speed limit? Yes, of course I want to follow rules for the sake keeping my city safe. But I also know police have certain “hiding” spots. Other drivers are in a perpetual hurry and/or could care less about the rules of the road. Do they worry about getting caught?

The other day it occurred to me that the only reason police cars are in their hidden spots is to keep people honest. Seriously, that’s really how we’re motivated. We are good when people are watching, but not always so when the cameras are off and judgmental eyes are closed. It is as if we need each other to keep ourselves in check.

One of the virtues of Indian religions is *Satya*, the Sanskrit word for truth. One should be truthful in thought, speech, and action. *Satya* is one of the five *yamas* in Yoga. It asks practitioners to restrain from saying or even thinking falsehoods and to not distort reality.

*Satya* teaches us to be true not only to ourselves, but to each other. Being truthful means that we must know and accept ourselves and our intentions. This interesting article in [Psychology Today](#) explains that, as a society, we are 20% dishonest. We lie to each to make ourselves look better, or smarter, to avoid accusations, and just to keep the peace. Sincerity is not always easy when we are concerned with how others perceive us.

If you can be true to who you are, and consider the effect of what you say has on others, you will probably be more honest



in general.

Being true to yourself is even more important than being truthful with others. If you can't look at yourself and be honest about your mistakes and inadequacies, then how can you be honest with others? When you can learn from your mistakes in a non-judgmental way, you can help move the world forward.

When you know someone has lied to you, you have a hard time trusting them again. And what's worse? That distrust reflects onto completely different people. How can I possibly trust Sally when Mary spouts lies daily? It is sad, but true. And the more the cycle is perpetuated, the longer it takes for us to be truly truthful.

Honesty can give you an almost unimaginable lightness. Truth means you don't have to hide behind anything. You can live guilt-free, knowing that you are an open book. Chances are if you radiate with honest intention, you will end up surrounding yourself with other truthful beings.

Celebrate your Satya with some truthful jewelry:  
<https://www.satyajewelry.com/>

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## What We Can Learn from Sri Anandamayi Ma

If you don't know about this amazing woman, this Indian Saint, a Sage, some say a Guru, I am very happy to be the one to share a little about her with you! Anandamayi Ma was born in 1896 in East Bengal to highly spirited parents who named her Nirmola Shundori (Immaculate, Beautiful Goddess); her mother

is said to have had frequent dreams of gods and goddesses during pregnancy and her father was a devotional singer.

As a young girl, her cheerful disposition inspired people around her to nickname her *Hari Ma* (Mother of Smiles) or *Khusir Ma* (Happy Mother). Anandamayi means “Joy-permeated” in English. She was sensitive and religious as a child and was prone to ecstatic feelings when she heard the sound of religious chanting.

Throughout her life she maintained these traits and people began to hear what she was saying as incredibly profound. She remained celibate during her marriage and her husband eventually became her devotee. She was not trained to be a guru, but because of her ecstatic states, she was seen as such. She didn’t claim to be a guru, but rather said, “I am the same” woman later in life as she was as a small child.

Anandamayi Ma spoke about detachment from the physical realm and from specific religious devotion. Through her travels from town to town, she provided guidance and comfort to those who came to see her. Always welcoming everyone, she radiated bliss and acceptance. She inspired her devotees to serve others and to see themselves as divine beings.

Too bad such inspiring people are so hard to find these days. Someone truly accepting of everyone, who radiates with unlimited love and light, and inspires us to do well onto others. We could use more of these leaders in our world.

I hope you will follow these links to learn more about Anandamayi Ma and will dedicate a meditation or more to her wise life and light.

[The Children of Ma Anandamayi Foundation](#) works to give impoverished children in India a chance to learn and be part of a spiritual community. The link here provides more information on Anandamayi Ma.

[The Essential Sri Anandamayi Ma](#) is a great book that gives a wonderful history of her life, and includes many incredible photographs of the Indian Beauty.

And, if you can spare 30 minutes, here is a tracking-challenged documentary on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2aCc6i-TkM>

And finally a couple quotes:

“To find the Beloved is to find my Self, to discover that God is my very own, wholly identical with myself, my innermost Self.” ~ Sri Anandamayi Ma

“Realization must be all-comprehensive, all-embracing, and one must recognize one’s Self in everything.” ~ Sri Anandamayi Ma

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## Trouble Sleeping? Try the 7-4-8 Breathing Method

I don’t usually talk about this, but after I was unexpectedly fired from my job of 18+ years, I felt the stress.

Where will I come up with the money for the mortgage? How will I find a job locally that will pay the same as I was making? Will I be able to make it?

It isn’t surprising that I was losing hair and losing sleep.

During that time, I tried several techniques to help me sleep, and the need for trying was serious as on many days I was waking up at 4 in the morning and just couldn’t get back to

sleep.

One of the methods I tried, and I found worked best for me, is the 7-4-8 breathing method. Simply put, you breathe in while counting to 7, then keep your breath in for 4 counts, and finish by slowly breathing out for 8 breaths.

It takes some practice to go slowly but then you can absolutely reap its benefits.

This method was apparently pioneered by Dr. Andrew Weil, who recommends exhaling completely before you start and make a “whoosh” sound from your mouth as you do so. Then close your mouth and breath silently 7 inhalations, keep the breath in for 4 counts, and then 8 exhalations. Do this 4 times total, or repeat until you fall asleep.

The movement of your body will send a signal of relaxation and calm to your mind. The regulation of your breath also helps relax your muscles as oxygen fills the lungs deeply.

Being truly focused on the three part count means your mind can't get distracted by our daily burdens such as bills to pay, mouths to feed, or lessons to teach.

Using this method, I find that by concentrating on the count that my body feels heavier and if I can be really still, I start to perceive my mind moving in rhythm to my breath and then fade screen.

This breathing technique has been shown to provide calm for overly anxious people.


**When exposed to a triggering situation, anxious individuals can benefit from slowing down their breathing to help them keep focused on, well, nothing.**

At least hopefully not whatever was making them anxious.

Some people say if you are using this for anxiety (and I guess

when you are alone!)), that each time you finishing exhaling to blow out your mouth so that your lips flap and make a fluttering sound. I haven't seen why this is suggested, but my guess is that it gets the anxious energy out all the more fully.

If you are experiencing difficulty sleeping, try this method and see if it helps you fall asleep more quickly.

Download Heather's free 15-minute guided meditation to help you sleep! 

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## 10 Reasons Why I Run; Running is Just a Fast Walk

There are so many wonderful things about running, or in my case jogging, and I count myself lucky that I have free use of my body. I've always loved to walk around to explore the world around me. Before I got into running, I was doing a lot of fast walking. It wasn't crazy power walking, but I was trying to make the most of the movement.

Once I realized that I could run (seriously, I was one of those people who couldn't run a block!), I stopped walking, though I do love to hike, and really enjoy earth's treasures that abound. I wanted to share a few reasons why I love running so much, and I hope I inspire some of you to pick it up. My guess is you'll like it, too!

1. Gives me a chance to not think

With many activities taking my time, tasks to accomplish, and calls to make, it is nice to just leave it all back at home (or upstairs on the days when I run on the treadmill). When I run outside, I enjoy not talking, not typing, not looking at the computer. I could probably do the same by just sitting on the back yard patio chair, but running sort of puts me in a trance that allows me to let go of any deadlines or other stresses. Sometimes I try to push away thoughts of work or family to keep a clear mind, but often that time away from my desk allows me to think things through to gain clarity on my next step (pun intended) on what I should do in a situation.

## 2. I sleep more soundly

I'll admit it. Running is a challenge. It isn't a power walk, though power walks are *also* great for your body and mind. Running knocks me out when I do it right. I relax more and have more restful nights. I find especially when I'm training for a half marathon that I sleep better because I've really exhausted my body and it takes the opportunity to shut down at night.

## 3. I am happier

I'm not sure if it is because I've pushed myself out the door (or into the basement) and powered through whatever distance was on the agenda, or that I have given myself enough unburdened time to do it, but my day is always brighter after a run. Maybe the sweat build up inside me being let out is where the noted release of endorphins come from (wink).

## 4. I can do it alone

My schedule allows me to run during the day and I am glad that

I can run by myself. I can't always find others to run with at that time, and while I do like to run with my other mother runners and of course my partner Matthew, I love that I have the freedom to do it any time. I don't need a pass, and I'm not bound to start at a particular hour. Usually the miles fly by much more quickly when you have someone at your side!

#### 5. It makes me stronger

When I get going and maintain a steady practice of running, I see that it makes me stronger in other areas of my life. There is a psychological aspect to running in terms of having to get over a challenge. As I count down the percentage (actually, it is usually fractions) of what distance remains on my run, I get over the seemingly insurmountable and that gives me strength to power through at the end and go for a negative split.

#### 6. It is great for my heart

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggest that adults ages 18 to 64 do at least 150 minutes of a moderate exercise or at least 75 minutes of high-intensity physical activity each week, with a recommendation of added muscle strengthening exercises. Scientists have shown that running can help prevent obesity, type II diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers, heart disease, stroke.

#### 7. I believe it'll make me live longer

I've read enough studies on heart longevity that show that running or even walking will extend your life. I am pessimistic about how our society is advancing, but I still want to live to the ripe old age of 99. And so, I hope to be

walking until then.

#### 8. It boosts my metabolism

I mean, for real. This is probably why most people run. Running burns fat and it burns calories. If you aren't a pig during the week, you will slim right down. One of the huge benefits of running is not having to "diet." I eat as healthy as I can, but I don't worry about eating a little more if I'm hungrier that day, as I know my metabolism is running strong, even when I'm sleeping.

#### 9. It relaxes me

You'd think that sitting on the couch would be more relaxing than going for a run. But seriously, after I get over having to put on the sports bra, I'm 98% of the time happy, ecstatic even, that I made the effort. After the tension of 3-6 miles and a shower, my muscles are relaxed and my mind feels refreshed. This is heightened by the path I jog... trails increase relaxation tenfold.

#### 10. Gives me confidence

If you would ask me, Heather, are you an athlete? I would laugh, as I feel far from it. While I've been running for 3 years, I'm no faster than when I started. Though I've never considered myself an athlete, I own more running pants than jeans or any other pants! The confidence that I gain from running doesn't just come from my steady waistline, but from knowing that I can do a very hard and at times uncomfortable thing to sustain a healthy mind and body. It is why I most recommend running to others.



I would love to hear the reasons why you run. Please share below!

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## **Simplify your Life (Your living space is a reflection of your mind)**

There are a few times each year that I feel the need to really clean my house. I am starting to see a natural cycle in my cleaning. Sometimes the motivation manifests itself as a need to get rid of clothes I haven't worn in too long and take them to the local women's shelter, other times the need is directed at removing the stringy cobwebs populating the ceiling... Over time, if not also tied to moving, I've also noticed that I tend to rearrange the furniture in a room every couple years, which always helps uncover old "treasures." Interestingly, as we get older we can start to see these patterns; one reason I'm grateful to age.

In my recent "spring clean" (in the dead of winter, at the early point of a continual 2 weeks of sub-zero temps), I thought of something I wanted to share. I've often thought of the state of my desk as a reflection of my mind. I've had moments when I look in dismay at all the papers stacked, interspersed among a pile of books, my laptop, and bills to pay, among uncapped pens, floating post-it notes, receipts, and who knows what else waiting to be put in its place. At these times, I usually look at my desk and say to myself, "How am I ever going to get out of this mess?" If I have some presence of mind, I can see that at these times I am usually

scatterbrained and not as effective as usual.

It is hard to stop for a moment, especially when you are under a deadline or have multiple demands, to tidy up a bit. But really it is so simple... just take a few moments each day to clean up the mess. Just like any other good habit. Sometimes when I recognize the messiness of my desk (if I can even function, because truth be told, because sometimes the mess just shuts me down!)... I give myself a 10 minute break. I step away, take a few moments to breathe and take in the disarray. Before I get back into the sometimes overlapping deadlines, I recognize that the mess will not subside and I take even just 2-4 minutes to sort through some of the mess. If I don't challenge myself to clean up the whole mess, I find that I can make just enough calm in the storm to be more effective as I tackle the next impending project. But as soon as a deadline passes, I see my relief in getting down to the bottom of the stack... knowing all the bills are paid, and forms are filled out and filed. Then when I tackle my next task I do it with a much clearer head and tend to work more efficiently. Amazing how decluttering can help bring on a sense of calm and even greater production. Embrace the organization and time it takes to achieve it.

Don't allow the external mess to drive you to what you perceive as an ensuing internal chaos. Just take a few minutes to put things in the proper pile. The small bits add up and especially if you can make it a habit. The key is to see it and know that you will get it, and do your best to not let it distract you until you have some moments to make a dent. I find for me it helps to remove unnecessary distractions. Books tend to pile up on my desk (wow, there is so much knowledge out there, am I right?!) so from time to time I have to put them back on the bookshelf. I love to be surrounded by all that great information, but sometimes it gets to be too much.

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# What does Om mean?

Om, or rather Aum, is a mantra. Saying it causes a vibration in your body that, if done properly, can provide a deep feeling of relaxation and even bliss. A simple translation would be 'source' or 'universal consciousness.' But Om is really a sound, one that was originally used to describe how a rishi, or sage, felt during deep meditation. The sound causes precise sound vibrations in your body so that as you chant om, your body is providing a calming awareness on all levels: physical, mental, emotional, *and* spiritual.



If you've never chanted Om out loud for at least a minute, you should really give it a try. Like right now. Use the great description below from Yogapedia as you move through one Om. Then say it again. In fact, say it a few times. Keep your eyes closed as you say it, back erect, ideally with your palms facing upward. As you make the sound, recognize how your body feels; from how your throat sounds to the sensations felt throughout your sitting body in this present moment.

- **A (aahhh)** – This syllable represents the origin of all sound, connecting us to our individual selves, or egos. This resonance should come from the back of the throat where the tongue finds its root in our physical being.
- **U (oooh)** – This syllable represents the energy of the mind and the universe. This vibration invokes balance and clarity as it passes from the back of the tongue toward the lips.
- **M (mmmm)** – This syllable invokes the sensation of

oneness between the corporal body and the universe. Practitioners close their lips around the sound to experience the vibration throughout their head and body.

- **Anagata (silence)** – This significant phase of the Om invites yoga practitioners to fully experience the blissful state of silence and the sense of unity it transmits.”

<https://www.yogapedia.com/definition/4957/om>

Now wasn't that refreshing? If you really observe your body as you move through this unique sound vibration, you might recognize that the vibration starts in your chest, moves through your throat, and reaches your head. The silent sound at the end allows that vibration to continue up and out into the world. The thought of that makes me smile. All of us giving our calm vibrations out into the world, to all people.

In Sanskrit, the lower curve represents the dream state, the upper curve represents the waking state, and the middle curve represents deep, dreamless sleep. The crescent shape above stands for the veil of illusion (“maya”) and the dot represents the transcendental state. When your spirit passes through the veil and rests in the transcendental, you are liberated from the three states.

The symbol of Om represents Brahman, the source of all manifest existence. Brahman is incomprehensible, so a symbol helps us identify or recognize the Unknowable. The symbol is recognized to represent the Trimurti, the trinity of supreme divinity in Hinduism, which is typically recognized as the gods Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Shiva (the transformer).

Om's vibration gives us empathy with the cosmic vibration, which allows us to be connected universally. Furthermore, when we say Om along with a group of others, the vibration is felt even more deeply. Imagine a time when everyone gives their

best without any desire for something in return. Om reminds us to be our best, and have high regard for others, because it provides a naturally centered, calm, relaxed effect on your body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

I encourage you to bring chanting Om into your daily practice. No equipment needed, just your dedicated attention and an open heart will reap you many benefits for time to come!