

STAND

tall like the tree

FLOW

like the river

SHINE

like the sun

Caring for the Woman Within

Judith Waldman and Marilyn F. Clark

Piney Creek Studio

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Stand Tall Like the Tree



A tree stands in the forest, straight and graceful. She has seen and experienced a lot in her long life. Her strong core and solid roots are what have given her longevity. While strong and steady, she can bend and ease in the wind. Seasons change; she changes and yet stays balanced. You, too, can stay focused and in a state of balance even when your life is being blown around by strong forces over which you have little control. Self-care practices help to send your roots deep and strengthen your core beliefs in yourself.

In this chapter, we address your attitudes toward yourself. Unconscious behaviors, thought patterns, and old beliefs about yourself can limit your potential and make you feel unsure of yourself. When you give yourself positive messages and think about yourself with love and compassion, your old negative patterns will melt away.

Like the tree, you can sway with the forces of change while staying rooted. By being flexible and strong, you help your sense of self-empowerment grow. You will grow to appreciate your own worth. You stand tall. This is tree. This is you.

It's a challenge to really go out there and face fear as a woman and to stand tall and to say, "I can do it; I can do it!" And have that determination within yourself. You can overcome a lot of stuff. You can overcome mountains!

—Joyce

In this chapter:

Changing Attitudes and Behaviors

Letting Go

Moving Forward

Mental Rehearsal to Prepare for Challenges

A Change of Attitude

Redirecting Your Thoughts

Gathering “Wows!”

Positive Self-Talk

Daily Messages to Yourself

Daily Letting Go

Setting a Daily Intention

Affirming Yourself

Anchoring a Positive Message

Developing Inner Strength

Your Self-Empowerment Story

Positive Possibilities

Giving Voice and Being Heard

Obstacle Course

Your Self-Care Action Plan

Flow Like the River



The river is always flowing, always changing. It creates its path with constant movement. When it is strong and full, it moves with power. When rains are few, it becomes a slow trickle. Your life energy is like the flow of a river. At times you feel you are really in the flow. Life is good. You feel connected, creative, and happy. Other times, you may feel depleted, bored, or uninspired, or that you are going against the flow, meeting with resistance, and having difficulty expressing yourself. There are times when the flow is almost too intense or tediously slow. Like the river, you can allow movement, spontaneity, and adaptation to change. Like the river, you can travel with a rushing expression of speed, enthusiasm, and emotion, or you can drift slowly over the pebbles of your thoughts.

In this chapter, we focus on enjoyable ways of moving your body with conscious flow and the expression of creative energies.

In the “Body in Motion” section, we give you instructions for simple movement processes. When you pay attention to stretching and strengthening your body, you will feel rejuvenated. You will also find several ways to increase the flow of your breath, an important step toward healthy living.

☞ I take care of myself by not giving up the creative aspect that is always burning in me. I paint for me, not for anybody else, and it is wonderful. It's kind of telling the story of my heart in different ways.
—Danute ☞

In the “Creative Flow” and “Flowing with Music” sections, you will find suggestions for simple creative processes. These can help you clear your own river dams that keep you from enjoying the expression of your creativity. Let yourself flow with spontaneity and pleasure as you free your spirit through art, music, and writing. Allow your expressive abilities to come forth, and experience the joy of flowing freely. With these processes, you can find en-

joyment, confidence, and insight.

Before starting any of these activities, you may want to take a slow, deep breath and anchor a message such as “I can relax and let my creativity flow.”

Look for these icons in this chapter:

 This icon tells you that you can find this process on our website: www.StandFlowShine.com. Movement processes are shown in video clips. Relaxations and meditations are recorded and can be listened to through your computer or downloaded to your MP3 player or mobile device.

 This icon indicates that this process can easily be adapted for group use.

You will be introduced to more group processes in the Circles of Sharing chapter.

In this chapter:

Body in Motion

Easy Flow

Energizing Flow

Flow of Deepening Connection

Creative Flow

Free-Form Drawing and Poetry

Drawing a Mandala

Nature Sculptures

Making Collages

Flowing with Music

Draw with Music

Journal with Music

Musical Improvisation

Shine Like the Sun



The sun's glowing journey is a constant in our lives. It warms us when we are cold. Its consistent presence is reassuring. After days of clouds, we long to see it again. Its rising in the morning promises new energy, a new day. Its setting in the evening marks the slowing down of energy and the return of time to rest. Imagine that you can take the glow of the sun and put it inside you. Now imagine you are glowing from the inside out. From this center of light, move into your day.

This chapter on your self-care journey is all about letting your inner glow shine. You will be introduced to meditation, relaxation, guided imagery, and journal writing. These practices will increase your ability to focus, to create a relaxation response, to rediscover your imagination, and to connect with yourself in a new way. It takes a while to learn how to concentrate on an internal process and to see results. Be patient with yourself. When you take the time to set up your comfortable place and clear your calendar for just 20-30 minutes, you have already done something really terrific for yourself.

In this chapter:

Guided Relaxations

Relaxing and Easing

From Sensation to Relaxation to Healing

Mindfulness Meditations for Relaxation and Self-Care

Sitting Mindfulness Meditation

Walking Mindfulness Meditation

Meditative Breathing

Meditation of Connection and Gratitude

Reflections

Relaxing Musical Journeys

Journal Reflections

Morning and Nighttime Writing

Feelings Check-In

Everyday Gifts

Nurturing Yourself

Five New Comfort Activities

Treating Yourself with Kindness

An Interview with Yourself

Places of Reflection

Circles of Sharing



Imagine a smooth stone gently dropped into a still pond. The ripples circle out, one after another. That stone is your commitment to your self-care. The ripples are the expanding positive effects that reach you and others you meet on your journey. As you feel your own center strengthening, you can connect with other women, and your caring spreads out to the wider circles each of you touches.

In this chapter we introduce you to a model for starting your own women's group: *a sharing circle*. We also suggest several activities that can be done in any group. A sharing circle can provide many positive benefits. These include getting personal support, having help focusing on your goals, finding a safe place to express concerns, and having fun. You may deepen existing friendships and develop new friendships based on caring, compassion, and encouragement for your self-care journey.

In this chapter:

Sharing Circle

Nurturing Activities

Ask For What You Need

Showered With Love

Encouragement

Playful Possibilities

Name Game

Spaghetti Knots

Group Juggle

Self-Care Suitcase

Group Empowerment Improvisation



WOMEN'S STORIES

Women's Stories



At each stage of a woman's life there are challenges and joys, struggles and accomplishments, loves and losses.

Throughout this book, we included comments from women we know who have walked this journey of self-care. They come from many different backgrounds and range in age from a high school senior to a centenarian.

When we interviewed them, we invited each woman to share her life journey, particularly how she has taken care of herself throughout her life. We asked what she feels is unique about women and what she wants other women to know. In the following pages, you will find a few of their stories.

Although all the women we interviewed shared wonderful, inspiring stories, we could not include each one here, and the stories that are here are slightly edited for length. You will find the stories of all the women we interviewed on our website: www.StandFlowShine.com. We are grateful for their deep and thoughtful reflections, their humor, and their candidness. We celebrate them, their life journeys, and their generosity in agreeing to be part of this self-care journey adventure.

As one of these beautiful women said, "I wouldn't want to be anything but a woman. Deep fullness and caring...nobody else can take a woman's place, and that's what I believe. Who else but a woman can do what a woman does?"

Celebration and Advice

We asked all of the women we interviewed what they celebrate about women and also what advice they would give to other women. Many of those wise and delicious words are included in the preceding section, but we want you to have the benefit of sharing the celebration and advice that each woman has to share with you, even if we couldn't include her full story.

Marge, mid-nineties, retired psychiatrist

I think there is something very special about women. In my experience, women have been so much easier to talk to and find it so much easier to express themselves. They *love* to talk to each other and can be easily more intimate with other people. Women want to know how relationships work. With a good woman friend, you can be so much more intimate.

My advice to other women is to keep busy, have intimate relationships, love, and work. Find things to do that interest you. Fight for your rights. Be strong! Fight for what you want! I admire this kind of strength. I would advise women not to withdraw but be strong. If you go to a party and you don't know a soul, go up to someone and say, "My name is this and I do that and what is your name?" Be socially aggressive as well as career aggressive.

Danute, early seventies, dancer and artist

I celebrate women. There is a sisterhood. There are just some women that I feel really comfortable and close with, and it feels good. It is a totally different relationship than with the guys. It's more intimate.

My advice for other women is to have interests. If something interests you, go for it. I was lucky that I had interests when I became alone. I had dance class, I had tennis, and I loved to read. Those things didn't leave me shut up in the house. I had actual schedules to attend to, and I would see people. There were good relationships associated with those activities.

Who We Are



Judith:

I have many wonderful years of experience as a psychotherapist, workshop and retreat leader, and national trainer for workshop facilitation. I am so happy to lead Women's Wisdom Journeys and Stand, Flow, Shine Workshops. My joys are nurturing and empowering women, using our inherent wisdom for health and healing, and finding peace within. I love sharing self-care processes with other women, both in Maryland and in the Northwest.



Marilyn:

I am a licensed counselor and a trainer and facilitator of the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music. My work is focused in the field of holistic healing and therapy. I believe that with a little encouragement women can learn to make time for themselves in their busy lives. I love helping women identify their strengths, express their creativity, and experience moments of pure joy. I live in Baltimore where I have a private practice and enjoy storytelling and writing.

Find out more about the authors and the Stand, Flow, Shine workshops at www.StandFlowShine.com