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Lighting Your Way

Be of Service

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Table of Contents

Be of Service.....	3
Self-Care.....	3
Serve Yourself	4
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	4
Daily Practice.....	5
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	5
Shine Your Light	6
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	7
Doing What You Love is Service.....	8
The Greatest Service	8
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	9
Dance with Life.....	9
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	10
Go on a Treasure Hunt.....	11
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	11
Service with a Smile	12
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	12
One Woman’s Joy – A Very Short Story.....	12
Having an Attitude of Service	13
Making a Difference.....	13
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	14
Love in Action is Service.....	15
Your Spiritual Toolbox.....	15

Be of Service

Light your way by being of service.

The love of Source expresses through you as your authentic self. As you live in alignment with your authentic self you express the love of Source through you and into the world, lifting the whole through love. When you live in alignment with your authentic self you live with an attitude of service, always asking, “what can I offer?” Rather than asking, “what can I get?” in each situation in which you find yourself.

What we do in our daily lives matters. Each prayer, each meditation, each loving action, each small act of kindness or support can make a difference.

Self-Care

As you are in service, to God, to the world, to others, please remember that you must also serve yourself. For without self-care there is soon nothing left to give. Fill yourself up first and give from the overflow.

When you are full with self-care and self-love, expressing your authentic self, you can give without expectation or agenda. You can give from your heart with love. That is true service, because that is service motivated by love, offered by your essence, your authentic self.

So, how do you do fill yourself up? Let's find out.

Serve Yourself

“You will find that when you start your day by serving you it will not be challenging to serve others.”

[Red Feather*](#)

For many, caring for others comes first, often at the expense of caring for ourselves. Over time this leads to exhaustion, overwhelm and resentment on the part of the caregiver. Most of us have been there at one time or another. It just seems easiest to respond to the loudest demand and then the next and the next after that, rather than making the effort to balance with time for nurturing ourselves. We think we can make time for ourselves later. Yet somehow later doesn't happen because later is filled with meeting other's needs too.

What is the solution here? We can only feed others for so long if we do not also feed ourselves. Giving yourself permission to serve yourself is not selfish, it is essential. Aircraft safety instructions recommend first putting the oxygen mask on yourself in the event of depressurization of the cockpit if you are traveling with young children. Why is this? It is so that you can be conscious enough to then put the mask on your children. As a caregiver making sure to take care of yourself makes it possible for you to continue to care for others. The same is true with any demanding life situation. It is essential to care lovingly for yourself first so that you may serve with love.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

Today, take Red Feather's advice. Structure your day so that you have time to care for yourself first thing in the morning, or as soon as possible thereafter. Give yourself permission to serve yourself in whatever way feels nurturing to you.

Red Feather goes on to say, *“Attend to yourself with a good breakfast, maybe some meditation or inner peace, some movement.”*

It does not have to be a long time. Just knowing that you have a routine of self-nurturance every day is supportive in the most loving way.

*Red Feather is a channeled Spiritual Master. A compilation of his teachings channeled by my late, dear friend and spiritual teacher, Ortaia Shoshana Rogers, are available in the book *Mystic Pearls of Red Feather*. For more information please visit www.redfeatherwisdom.com.

Daily Practice

“Every morning when I wake up, I read a little spiritual passage, I keep them next to my bed. I just pick one up and start the day reading a little quote or something like that, and it starts me remembering what the game is about, it reminds me.”

[Ram Dass](#)

Most of us have some sort of daily home maintenance routine. Washing the dishes, doing the laundry, preparing food, that sort of thing. Most of us have some sort of daily personal care routine, whatever that may be for the individual. These routines allow us to function in our lives with an environment that supports us. But how many of us have spiritual care routines?

These are short, daily practices that support us to be in alignment with our spirits, reminding us of what’s important. Maybe, like me, you do have spiritual practices that you use only sporadically when you remember them. Or perhaps, also like me, you start a spiritual practice only to forget about it when things get busy.

This time, let’s decide to serve ourselves with simple, daily spiritual practices, so easy that we have to go out of our way to avoid them! Let’s choose practices we enjoy and make a commitment to serve ourselves in this way. As we do so we fill ourselves giving us what we need to be available to serve others.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

What can you do for yourself today that supports you spiritually?

Choose something that takes no more than 10 minutes, and do it first thing in the morning. If you make it something that is part of your bedroom environment it will be even easier to remember. Here are some ideas:

Frame an inspiring quotation and hang it where you will see it first thing in the morning. Read it to yourself every morning before you even get out of bed.

Choose an inspiring spiritual picture that reminds you of the love of Spirit. Hang it where you will see it first thing in the morning when you open your eyes. Rest quietly allowing yourself to feel that love.

Memorize a favorite prayer or positive affirmation and repeat it with the support of mala beads that you keep in sight on your bedside table.

Commit to serving yourself in this way every day for 21 days. As you do so you will form a positive habit of spiritual practice aligning with your spirit first thing in the morning.

Shine Your Light

“Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”

[Matthew 5](#)

I attended a spiritual retreat with eight other women. At the beginning of the weekend we met as a group and were asked to express our intention for the retreat. Participants spoke of fun and laughter, connection, spiritual community, nurturing, self-love, and more fully embodying the soul self. It was as if each one spoke a piece for the whole group. My intention was spiritual rejuvenation and re-energizing. What I received was all of that and something more.

On the first, full day of the retreat, participants received individual energy work/channeling sessions with each of the facilitators. The sessions, following one upon the other, combined to create more than the sum of their parts. My sessions catalyzed a new understanding of my inner child.

It looked like this. Throughout my personal development journey of many years, I have focused attention on healing the wounded child within. She and I have come a long way together. I love and cherish her now in a way I could not have imagined many years ago. Yet, in all this time I forgot that other inner child, the child before the wounding.

She is that spunky little one who expressed my soul openly. She felt enthusiasm for life, enjoying every day.

My nine-year-old granddaughter recently stayed overnight with us. We awoke early in the morning, 5:30 AM. Neither of us was ready to get up and she came and snuggled in bed with me. After a few minutes I asked her if she was ready to get up now. She said, “Yes!” and jumped up, full of morning cheer. I sat up, pulling the covers up around my shoulders and sleepily said, “I’m not sure I’m ready.” She answered with deep wisdom, “If you don’t get up, you’ll miss all the fun things that are happening today!” We hadn’t planned to do anything special, but her enthusiasm made that day special for all of us.

That’s who my inner child used to be, the one who most fully expressed the joyous light and love of my soul.

For me, spiritual rejuvenation looks like getting back in touch with that part of myself and allowing her to more fully express through me. Expressing the part of me that is filled with enthusiasm for each day. That part of me is energized and connected with my inner being. She is happy, and when she is not, she doesn’t hold back. She expresses whatever it is she is feeling. I have to go quite a way back in years to get in touch with her because she learned early to mask all that light and energy.

The question now is, how do we get in touch with that part of ourselves, the child we were before the wounds, the child who freely expressed the pure energy of our inner being? How do we remove the covering basket, reignite the flame, and allow our light to shine for all? For surely, even one shining light makes a difference.

During the individual sessions I received at the retreat the subject was approached in two ways. The first was about balancing my energy, and giving special attention to the particular areas that needed it. This felt like caring and nurture for my inner being as stuck energy was moved and my system balanced. The second session focused upon getting in touch with my younger inner child, the one before the wounding. What came up first was the name that I was christened with, a name I haven't used for years, Hollis. Then, activities that I particularly loved to do as a child, bike riding and expressive dancing.

Today's Spiritual Toolbox is all about applying these ideas in your life and getting in touch with the joyous, loving being you truly are; the being whose shining light can make a difference in our world.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

Here are several ideas for getting in touch with your joyful inner child and encouraging her to express more freely in your adult life.

Young children are highly aware and sensitive beings. You can see their soul selves looking out through their eyes and hear them in their bubbling laughter. Young children know what they like and don't like. They know what feels good, what is fun and joyful, and they know what comforts and nurtures them.

Remember back to a time when you felt comforted and nurtured as a child. Perhaps you were playing in a warm, bubble bath, or getting tucked into your cozy, soft bed. Maybe you were eating your favorite snack, or getting a hug from a loving adult because you skinned your knee. Now, find ways to include elements of that cared for, nurtured feeling in your adult life. Using the examples from above, you could make warm, bubble baths a regular part of your self-care routine. You could make your bed extra cozy with a billowy, down comforter and soft, fluffy pillows. You might allow yourself your inner child's favorite snack as a regular event. You could love and nurture yourself with your thoughts and give yourself an 'inner hug' whenever you skin your metaphorical knee.

Next, think about those activities that you loved to do as a young child. What felt like free expression of your inner self? What activities felt joyful and brought delight? What did you do just because it was fun and felt good?

As a young child I loved to twirl and dance. I used to spin with arms outstretched until I was so dizzy, I fell down. Other times I'd freestyle dance because the movement just felt good. Then there was bike riding. It was a central part of my childhood, riding all around the neighborhood, exploring and adventuring. Do I dance or ride a bike now? Not yet, but I'm going to.

What did you love to do as a child that would add joy and fun to your adult life?

Listen for the yearnings of the child within you. Her clear light speaks from your inner being. She'll tell you how you can shine your light brightly so that others may be inspired to shine theirs.

Doing What You Love is Service

Your authentic self is the love of Source expressing uniquely through you. That means no one else can express the love of Source into this world exactly as you do. The way that you express your love through creativity, through laughter, through caring, through kindness, and countless other ways; all of that is individual to you. You are Source's particular exploration of the specific energetic combination that is your authentic self. That is why it is so important for you to express your authentic self in this world.

This is your unique ability to offer service to the world through expressing yourself authentically. Expressing your particular mix of Source energy through love, joy, excitement, pleasure, creativity, happiness, appreciation, and more. When you do what you love, you express your authentic self, your unique expression of the love of Source.

Why is this service? Because as you live in full alignment with your authentic self you express the love of Source into the world. This lifts the whole through love, and all because you are expressing what you love.

Let's explore what this wonderful idea might look like in daily life.

The Greatest Service

"Your own Self-Realization is the greatest service you can render the world."

[Ramana Maharshi](#)

The snow had been falling heavily all night. Waking at 6 am I took my tea to sit before the window. I looked out at the bird feeder that I had filled just yesterday, now covered with snow. My thoughts turned inward even as my eyes remained watching the snow sifting down upon the feeder.

How, I wondered, can I continue to pursue my individual quest for spiritual development, benefiting only myself, when I want to be of service in this world? I want to be of service now, not in some abstract future time when I have somehow finally achieved enlightenment. As always, my questions became prayers and I asked God.

The snow blew past the window, a beautiful, wintry scene. A small gray and white junco landed on the feeder. I was surprised to see him there because they are naturally ground feeders. He hopped about, then chose one spot and scratched the snow away, revealing the seeds underneath. He scratched and the snow flew off. He ate. He sat for a long while undisturbed and

fed. Deep in my ponderings I took note of his activities with mild interest. He flew off, leaving the safety of the feeder. Shortly after he left, a chickadee flew in, grabbed a seed from the hole the junco had dug, and flew off. Then, another chickadee did the same. A tufted titmouse followed suit, taking one seed and flying to a nearby branch to eat it. Then a white-breasted nuthatch flew to the edge of the feeder, hung upside down for a moment, clambered over the edge, took a seed and flew off. The birds kept coming, one at a time, each taking a seed from the space cleared by the junco.

How interesting, I thought, just by doing his own thing, the junco has provided a service for others. The lights went on inside with a feeling of excitement. The junco knew instinctively how to dig for his food, as he did so he cleared the way for the others.

We too can dig deep, opening to Spirit, and thereby make the nourishment of Spirit accessible to others. We too, in doing what our hearts need and love to do can be of service.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

God/Spirit is always available to answer your questions. When you have a question turn it into a prayer and ask for clarity and guidance. Then relax and have faith that your question will be answered. Stay alert, guidance comes in many different forms. It may even come as a symbolic message encoded in what is going on around you, like a small junco at a birdfeeder.

Dance with Life

"To dance is to be in tune with the steps of life."

[Sasha Azevedo](#)

The natural rhythms of the creative energy are slower and more focused than the rhythm of life we are taught as Americans. Watch the animals, they are finely attuned to the natural rhythm of the creative life force in Nature. They have to be, it is how they survive. The animals take time for focused effort, focused play and focused rest. They do one thing at a time. If they are distracted from that for whatever reason, then they wholly focus upon the distraction.

Watch a small child at play, you will see the same focus. No hurry, just focus. It is as if there is nothing in the world but what they are doing at that moment. I've tried to hurry my 3-year-old grandson through what he was doing so that we could move on to something else. It was an exercise in frustration. He knew where the flow of energy was in what he was doing. I didn't, and I just had to be patient while he finished up. At three years old my grandson has yet to be acculturated into the rhythm of life here in the United States. In this country we go, go, go, work harder, play harder. We feel like time's a wasting, and rest only when absolutely necessary. I could hope that he would never have to unlearn what he innately knows.

The natural rhythm of the creative life force is like a gentle music that surrounds us. We are swimming in an ocean of energy. The energy has rhythm just as the ocean waves do. Our bodies are naturally attuned to this energy. We often are not consciously aware of the rhythm

because we have been trained out of it. Our bodies have not been trained out of it however, and are very much aware of it. We are influenced by the rhythm whether we know it consciously or not.

Have you ever tried to dance to music where you couldn't quite get the rhythm? I have, it was hard work. I couldn't get my feet to follow the rhythm of the music. The steps I was doing were too slow, the music was too fast. I felt frustratingly out of step as I stumbled along. When you dance off the beat, you not only have to do the physical work of the dance, you have to do the work of competing with the rhythm. But when you get it right, when you dance on the beat, the rhythm of the music moves you along, carrying you. Your body flows through the physical work of the dance.

Living in self-imposed rhythm rather than flowing with the rhythm of the creative life force energy is hard work. It is like dancing off the beat. You have to do the work of living itself and you have to compete with the natural rhythm of the creative life force. Life is exhausting this way. It is no wonder that as our lives become more technologically advanced with society valuing achievement above all else and always the pressure to go, go, go, there is an increase in illnesses of exhaustion like Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and auto-immune disease. We are forcing ourselves to work against what our bodies know to be the natural rhythm of the creative life force energy. Why do we want to work so hard at living?

It doesn't have to be this way. You can choose to learn again how to listen to and dance with the natural rhythms. You knew how to do this as a child. You can remember. There is ease and relief when you flow with the natural energies of the creative life force. It is like turning your canoe to flow downstream.

As you live within the flow of the creative life energy you have a positive effect on others. We are all of us linked like a circle of dancers. One dancer, dancing in rhythm affects those dancing nearby. Those nearby will be pulled onto the beat. They in turn will affect those near them and it ripples outward from there. As each of us dances to the beat of the creative life force energy, allowing it to support and carry us within its flow, we support others to do so.

May you dance with joy!

Your Spiritual Toolbox

What is required to live within the flow of creative life force energy is your intent and willingness to focus fully upon one thing at a time. When you give what you are doing your full attention, you slow down, you connect with the creative life force energy. It doesn't matter what you are doing. What matters is how you do it.

Today, do whatever you do with fully focused attention. Make whatever you are doing the most important thing you can do for that moment. That means that you do what you do without any resistance; you are totally focused on what you are doing. As you do what you do

fully, with focus and without resistance, the creative life force energy will carry you and you will experience increasing ease, flow and grace with each day. What's more you become an energetic catalyst for others to do the same.

Go on a Treasure Hunt

"Flow is being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz."

[Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi](#)

Daily life may be lived as a treasure hunt, finding one gem after another. It is not a matter of what you are doing, it is the attitude with which you approach what you do each day.

Yesterday, instead of doing what I previously assigned myself on my to-do list, I chose to do the jobs that were foremost in my mind, the ones that had been niggling at me to get done. When I wanted a break, I took a break. I tended to alternate physical activity with mental activity. My intention was to be fully involved in each thing that I did, whatever that was. I pulled my mind away from thinking about the next job, or from thinking about how much else I wanted to get done. I encouraged myself to focus on what I was doing at the moment. When I finished one job, I moved to the next job that attracted me. By the end of the day I got more work done than I would have otherwise and felt emotionally energized by the process.

I was following the energy, allowing myself to be carried by the stream. This takes a lot less energy than swimming against the current. When you assign yourself jobs that must be done and force yourself to do them, you are swimming upstream, pushing yourself against the energy. This depletes your energy.

A day spent following the energy from activity to activity becomes a day of discovery, a treasure hunt discovering the gems of flow in each activity that you choose to do. Flow is attained when you are wholly involved in what you are doing. Mind, body and emotions are flowing together to create what you are doing. It is a state of Love. You become a channel of loving energy, both giving and receiving. You feel energized. Whatever you are doing becomes imbued with that loving energy. As a channel of creative energy, you serve others as you serve yourself, literally bringing more love into the world.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

Today, try focusing upon the jobs that you want to get done, one at a time. What is the first job that comes to mind? It might be the one that has been bothering you. It might be that report you've been putting off, or the packed closet that's been driving you crazy, it might be the cookies you promised to bake for the school fair. Whatever it is, do that job. While you are working stay as focused on the job as possible. If the job is worth doing, it is worth giving it your full attention. Allow yourself to relax into the energy and flow with the work.

When you are finished with that job, take several deep breaths and thank yourself for your good work, feel appreciation for your effort, and the completion of the job. How do you feel now? Do you need a break? Take it. You are following the energy of your body as well as that of your attention. Does another job come to mind? That's the job to focus on next.

Treasure is to be found as you give your full attention to what you are doing. That is where you will experience flow. As you do you become a channel of love into the world.

Service with a Smile

"Work is love made visible."

[Kahlil Gibran](#)

Cooking is more than a necessity for me. It is more than a hobby or an avocation. Cooking with love is part of my spiritual practice. Cooking is one way to bring more love into the world.

There is something special about donning my apron, putting on flowing music, clearing the sink and counters, gathering ingredients from pantry and refrigerator, and setting the scene. It starts to bring me into focus.

Then the food preparation and cooking presents a banquet for my senses, all the colors and shapes, the smells and textures. A crisp bite of juicy red pepper, the green smell of fresh kale that wafts upward as I slice it for salad, the deep flavors and aromas of chocolate, vanilla and almond, all vying for my attention demanding that I focus upon them. It is a sensual experience that narrows my scattered thoughts, pulling my attention away from worries over past or future and brings me to a place of serenity and flow.

I believe anything done with love is a spiritual practice. Just imagine spending an entire day flowing from one activity to another, each one a spiritual practice of gentle focus and attention, channeling more and more love into the world. It is my aspiration. For today, however, I'll start in the kitchen. The kale is calling me.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

Is there something that you do frequently that is naturally meditative? Something you enjoy doing that asks for your full attention? A favorite hobby is a perfect place to start.

Today, set the scene. Clear the area you will be in, put on inspiring music, gather your materials and give the activity your undivided attention. Go for the flow. As you do so you are channeling more love into our world.

One Woman's Joy – A Very Short Story

The woman, still wearing her pajamas, stood back and looked with pleasure upon the mud room area she had just installed on the garage wall. Two white benches with chrome shelving underneath for shoes and boots fit nicely into the space next to the door leading to the kitchen. Two shelving units hung securely above and to the right with hooks for jackets. Green plastic bins

lined up along the shelves for hats, gloves and scarfs. She had even hung a couple of pretty pictures on the left side of the wall over the benches balancing the shelves.

“It looks great!” She said aloud, though as far as she knew she was the only one in the garage. “Good job You.”

She then made several trips back and forth into the house collecting armloads of shoes, boots, jackets, hats, gloves and scarves and put them away neatly in their new home. Taking a last satisfied look at her completed project she walked back into the kitchen ready for a cup of tea and a sit down.

I wonder, she thought, as she held the steaming cup in her hand and looked out the patio doors into the backyard, how it is that I get such pleasure from organizing and decorating my home? She thought back over the last four months and how much time and effort she had put into making her home attractive and welcoming. Shouldn't I be doing something more important with my time? Something that makes a difference for others?

She allowed her thoughts to drift, enjoying the warmth of the cup in her hands and the soothing aroma of chamomile. She thought of the friends who frequently came to visit and the enormous birthday party they had put on for a friend, the Christmas and Easter celebrations. She thought of her grandchildren playing happily in the yard. She thought of the family from near and far who so often filled her home.

She realized that the love she expressed in her home was rippling outward and benefiting others. With a smile and a contented sigh, she understood that what is joyful *is* our path of service.

Having an Attitude of Service

When you live in alignment with your authentic self you live with an attitude of service, asking, “what can I offer?” in each situation in which you find yourself.

Here we discover that what we do in our daily lives matters. Each prayer, each meditation, each loving action, each small act of kindness or support makes a difference. If you could see the energy of it you would be amazed. Think of a pebble thrown in a pond, the ripples moving outward encompassing each thing in their path, then reflecting back again.

As you express your authentic self, the love of Source flowing through you, with each small action you channel the love of Source into our world, lifting the whole.

Making a Difference

“We rise by lifting others.”

[Robert Ingersoll](#)

Goldie, my yellow lab, and I, along with several other dogs, visited a Life-Skills class awhile back, so that disabled young people might have the opportunity to get comfortable with dogs.

One particular young man in the class approached her cautiously, hooded eyes focused on her intently. His Life-Skills instructor stood off to the right and asked him, "Steve, what's the first thing you have to do?"

He shifted his eyes to look at me, round face serious as he struggled to form the words. "May I pat your dog?"

"Sure!" I answered, "Goldie loves to meet people."

Goldie sat in front of him, her tail wagging, doggie smile on her face and ears sweetly back as she gazed up at him. He slowly reached his fist down toward her to smell, as he had been taught. She gave his hand a sniff and looked at him for what else he might offer, tail wagging. He opened his fingers and gave her a tentative scratch under her chin, then turned his hand over to stroke the top of her head. To my right I heard a sudden intake of breath.

"That's the first time he has been willing to touch a dog!" said his instructor in an excited whisper. Goldie lay down then, sniffing at Steve's sneaker-clad feet, her attention focused on him. His hand followed her down, a smile on his face, and he continued gently stroking her head and then her paws.

"Goldie likes gentle pats just like you're doing, Steve. Good job!" I said.

"He's smiling, right?" asked his instructor quietly.

"He is!" I said. That's why Goldie and I were there. That day we made a difference in someone's life.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

You don't need to have a friendly dog in your life to make a difference for others. There are so many ways to reach out, to be of service. Volunteering for whatever non-profit you believe in is one way to get involved and make a difference. Or, if you'd rather, you don't have to formalize it in this way.

Making a difference is an attitude first, then an action.

It doesn't take much. Stay alert to ways you might make a difference. Sometimes all it takes is a kind word or a smile, letting someone know they matter.

When you have an attitude of service the pay back to you is big because it feels great. With each small action, you make our world just a little kinder, a little more loving.

Love in Action is Service

"Prayer in action is love. Love in action is service."

[Mother Teresa](#)

Service is about being a channel for the energy of love into our world. Compassion, beauty, patience, support, generosity, faith, trust, all these and more are expressions of love.

Creating a home that welcomes and evokes love is service.

A mother, enthusiastically admiring a six-year old's umpteenth building blocks rendition of something with wings, is service.

A friend's wondrous gardens, filled with love, are service.

My sister-in-law's paintings, each created with love, are service.

My husband's giving of support to others for no reason other than that he is able, is service.

My soul sister clearing out all the old fears so that her authentic self may stride forward is service.

Giving someone your full attention when you speak to them, rather than listening with, 'half an ear,' is service.

A ministry filled with love for God and congregation is service.

A smile and a "thank you" of real appreciation for the clerk at the store is service.

Any thought, word or action carried on the energy of love is service. Service is the act of living each day with love. In so doing, love is channeled through you into our world.

It can be a single thought or a mighty deed. It is all service.

Your Spiritual Toolbox

As much as possible today, be of service by doing whatever you do with love. Understand that your attitude makes all the difference. Approach what you do asking yourself, "How may I serve as I do this?"

Here are some ideas:

Slow down. Breathe.

Fully focus your attention on what you are doing in each moment. Stay present.

Feel appreciation for any aspects of what you are doing that you can. Focus your thoughts upon those positive aspects to the exclusion of anything that you find less attractive.

Pay attention to those people with whom you interact. Really listen to them. Focus on those aspects about them that you appreciate. Express gratitude and mean it, out loud when you can or when you can't, in your thoughts.

Even with those people about whom you feel more negative than positive, it is possible to be of service by mentally offering that person a blessing.

This works wonders for maintaining your own equilibrium with that snippy waitress, or the cranky person behind you in line. For example, thinking, "May you be blessed with peace," or wisdom or compassion, whatever feels appropriate at the moment. It's OK to give yourself a blessing too!

Slow down. Breathe. Be fully present. Feel appreciation. Express gratitude. Be a blessing to others and to yourself. These are the tools of love in action.