

Doing The Work: From the blog post "Do Black Men Have Safe Spaces"?

Here are some Affirmations (mantras) to repeat to yourself daily

Repeat after me:

- * My Feelings Matter.
- * What I have to say matters.
- * Expressing myself matters.
- * I Matter to myself even if or when I feel like I don't matter to others.
- * I am my first priority.
- * I must take care of myself [first] in order to be truly effective for my loved ones
- * I deserve to be and accept myself fully which includes my right to express and feel the full range of my emotions

Write these down. Put them on a Postit. Put them up on a wall so that it is something that you see and recite every day until it becomes a part of yourself, your thinking, and the way you feel about yourself.

Self Inquiry

1. What would change in my life if I believed my feelings mattered?
2. What can I bring or add to my circle of friends to facilitate and create a safe space to have the kinds of conversations that we should be able to have with each other?
3. How do I usually show up for myself (care for myself, my feelings, etc.)?
4. In what ways can I start to show up for myself?
5. Who do I have in my circle, that I already trust, that is a safe person to start doing the work with?

Suggestions (tips)

1. If you have a car, try sitting alone in silence (no phone or radio) before leaving work or before going in the house. Listen to what is coming up for you in that silence. *This can also be done on public transportation.
2. Pay attention to how your body feels before approaching certain places. How do you feel when you are about to reach work versus how do you feel when you are about to approach your home?
3. Identify the places in your body that feel tense and the places that feel relaxed and also when and where you feel each of these sensations.
4. Give yourself some outside time (time in nature). Not everyone is an outdoors person (I get it) but nature has the remedy for everything if we're truly paying attention. If you aren't naturally a nature person, start by being intentional with the time you do spend outdoors. When leaving your house and before getting in to your car, take a moment to pause.
 - * Close your eyes.
 - * Take a couple of deep breaths in and allow yourself to release any heaviness that is attempting to travel with you.
 - * Then express gratitude for the life that you have in your body and anything else that comes to mind. Do this every time before traveling.
5. Be intentional with your use of water for its spiritual, nourishing, cleansing, and healing benefits. Use your shower time to be alone with yourself and to process your thoughts and feelings. Drink more water if you aren't drinking enough. As you drink, think about how it is cleansing and nourishing your body. Give thanks for all the qualities that water possesses. Drive to the nearest body of water where you live. Sit by it. Take in the air around the water. Allow yourself to experience the calmness and soothing that water has to offer. In moments of stress, take some water and cup it in your hands and splash your face in it.

Note: This is very important. Listen to water when it is calling out to you. You ever have a deep urge to take a shower right now, even though you don't feel like it? You ever have the deep urge to wash your hair or immerse your full body in water? That is water calling out to you. Don't ignore the call. Remember, nature has the remedy for everything.