SAA of New York City

Workshop Handout

Garment District
Sunday April 17th, 3:00 pm

By Daniel W.

SELF-PITY TO SELF-PAUSE:

Using the quarantine backdrop to rewire your own thinking.

NOTE: SAA in NYC does not endorse, finance or oppose any of the above non-SAA material. The views reflected on this document are the ones of the SAA member who presented the workshop. The SAA member who presented the workshop does not speak for SAA.

SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

Self-**pity** gets you more of the same. Every time someone confirms your misery, you see **yourself as** more of a victim.

It's **like** a vicious cycle. You **look** for sympathy because you feel so horrible, you get it, and then you feel worse about **yourself** so you go out and **look** for more sympathy.
All self-pity is rooted in people taking themselves too seriously. – Tom Robbins
Of all human emotions, perhaps the most useless and destructive is self-pity.
"Talking about our problems is our greatest addiction. Break the habit, talk about your joys".

There is "power" in a pause—a lot of power.
But first, let's look "wallow" a bit more….
We learned self-pity when we were young. We're all – in theory – dead against it.
Self-pity is deeply unattractive because it reveals egoism in its most basic form,
a failure to put our own suffering into proper perspective against the larger backdrop of human history.

It shows how easily our own stubbed toe might matter more than
a million dead in a far-off land.

Sound topical?

Gustave Courbet, *The Desperate Man*, 1845

SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

No one is likely to own up to feeling self-pity. And yet, if we are honest, in some shape or other it lingers for a long, long time, and that's understandable. It reflects the paradoxical necessity of having to look after ourselves, of having to be on our side, even though we are not necessarily always the most deserving or the most pitiable candidates.

Whether you've been rejected by a love interest or you're overwhelmed by a looming deadline, throwing a pity party won't help. In fact, feeling sorry for yourself can be downright self-destructive. It makes overcoming adversity difficult—if not impossible—and it keeps you stuck.

SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

Mentally strong and serene people refuse to allow self-pity to sabotage their goals. Instead, they use life's inevitable hardships as a way to grow stronger and become better. Here are 9 ways to avoid the trap and look for the "12 STEPS interwoven into action bite-sized morsels :

1. They Face Their Feelings

Mentally strong and serene people allow themselves to experience emotions like grief, disappointment, and loneliness head-on. They do not distract themselves from uncomfortable emotions by questioning whether their problems are "fair," or by convincing themselves they've suffered more than those around them. They know the best way to deal with discomfort is to just get through it.

2. They Recognize Warning Signs of the Downward Spiral

When you focus on everything that is going wrong, your thoughts become exaggeratedly negative, and those thoughts will negatively affect your behavior if you dwell on them. The combination of negative thinking and inactivity fuels further feelings of self-pity. Mentally strong and serene people recognize when they are at risk of becoming caught in a downward spiral and take action to prevent themselves from living a pitiful life.

3. They Question Their Perceptions

Our emotional state influences how we perceive reality. When you feel sorry for yourself, you likely focus on the bad things going on in your life, while overlooking the good. Mentally strong and serene people question whether their thoughts represent reality. They ask themselves questions like, “Is my luck always bad?” or, “Is my entire life really ruined?” Such questions allow them to recognize when their outlook isn’t realistic, and to create a more realistic perception of their situation.

4. They Turn Their Negative Thoughts Into Behavioral Experiments

Mentally strong and serene people don’t allow negative thoughts to turn into self-fulfilling prophecies; they perform behavioral experiments to prove those thoughts wrong. When they find themselves thinking things like, “I could never put on a presentation as good as this one,” they respond with, “Challenge accepted!”

5. They Reserve Their Resources for Productive Activities

Every minute you dwell on self-pity is 60 seconds you delay working on a solution to your problems. Mentally strong and serene people refuse to waste precious time and energy on their misery. Instead, they devote their finite resources to productive activities that can improve the situation.

6. They Practice Gratitude

It's hard to feel self-pity and gratitude at the same time. Self-pity is about thinking, "I deserve better." Gratitude is about thinking, "I have more than I need." Mentally strong and serene people recognize all that they have to be grateful for in life—right down to the fresh air to breathe and clean water to drink.

7. They Help Other People

It's hard to feel sorry for yourself when you're busy helping those who are less fortunate. Problems like demanding customers or declining sales don't seem so bad when you're reminded that there are people who lack food and shelter. Rather than ruminate on their own inconveniences, mentally strong and serene people strive to improve the lives of others.

8. They Refuse to Complain

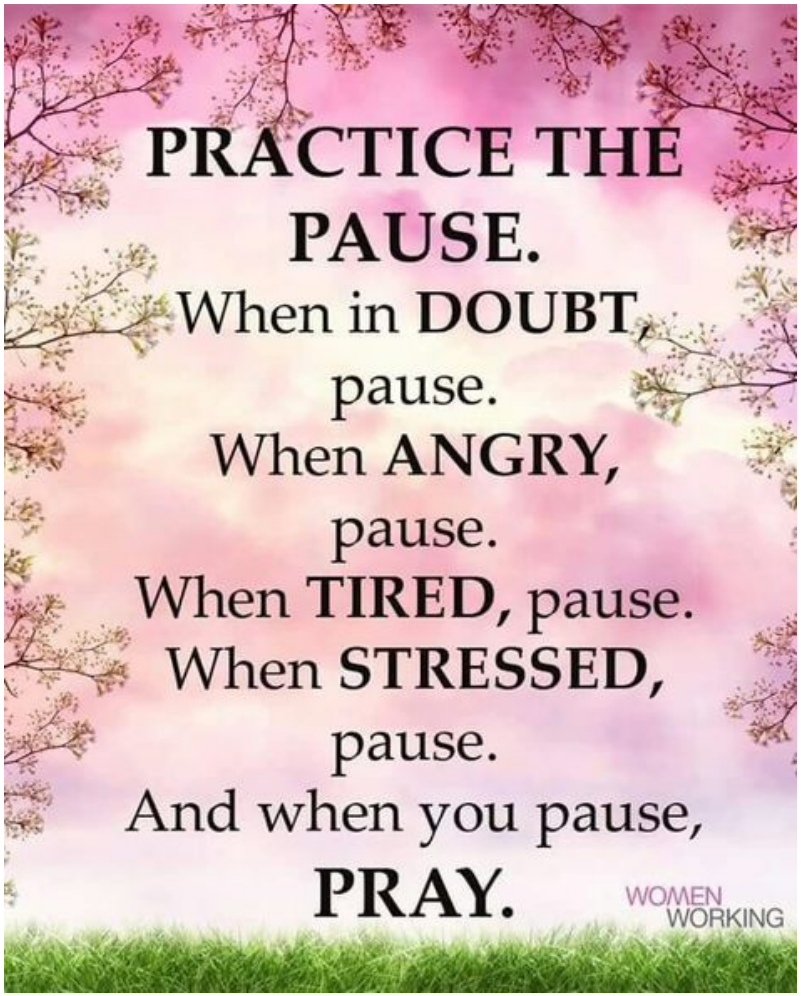
Venting to other people about the magnitude of your problems fuels feelings of self-pity. Mentally strong and serene people don't try to gain sympathy from others by complaining about their difficult circumstances. **Instead, they either take action to make things better, or accept the situations that they cannot change.**

9. They Maintain an Optimistic Outlook

Some of life's problems cannot be prevented or solved. The loss of loved ones, natural disasters, and certain health conditions are problems most of us will face at one time or another, but mentally strong and serene people keep an optimistic outlook about their ability to handle whatever life throws their way.

Build Mental Strength

Developing mental strength is similar to building physical strength. If you wanted to become physically strong you would need good habits, like lifting weights. You would also need to get rid of bad habits, like eating too many sweets. Developing mental strength also requires you to have good habits—and to give up destructive ones, like self-pity. By developing an increased ability to regulate your thoughts, managing your emotions, and behaving productively despite your circumstances, you will grow stronger and become better



SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

There is power in a pause—a lot of power.

When asked why he played so well, piano virtuoso Artur Schnabel responded, “I handle notes no better than many others. But the pauses; that’s where the art resides.”

A pause is simple, almost invisible. What does a pause do and how can we cultivate the fine art of pauses? What could a “pause” look like for you in a uber practical way? What’s a baby step that’s doable on a daily basis? **Less is more.**

SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

What does a pause do and how can we cultivate the fine art of pauses especially during a time of vast uncertainty?

UNDERSTANDING THE 'PAUSE'

A pause is a conscious slowing down—a space-maker between stimulus and response. Pausing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which helps us become calm. When our nervous systems are calm, we have more capacity to avoid reacting out of habit, and instead, to choose a response that is more satisfying, effective, and attuned to the situation at hand.

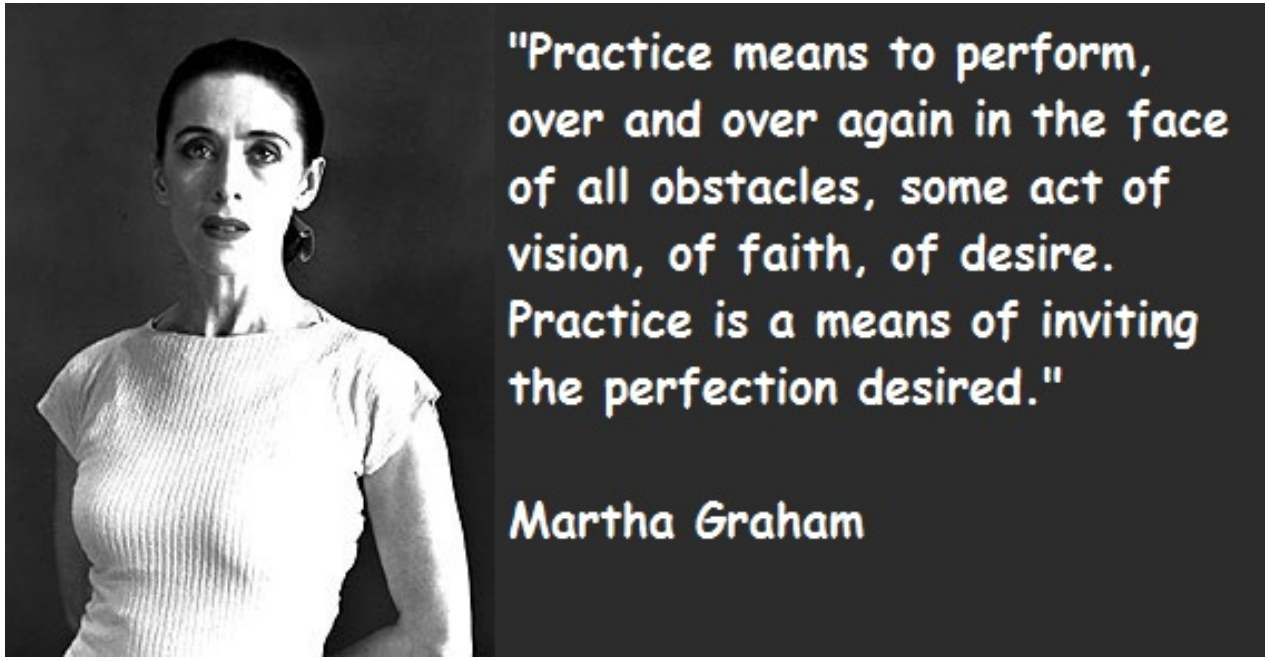
PAUSING AS SELF-CARE

Learning to pause is also a personal gift of self-care. Pausing briefly throughout the day reduces tension. More space and less anxiety and rush make much-needed room for pleasure and wonder. We can then work harder while being happier and more relaxed.

SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

The pause created by taking three breaths allows for a little clearing and a chance to make room inside for the next thing right thing to occur.

When we are moving too fast, or when we don't take time to pause, we can easily misuse power because our habitual reactions overtake our ability to choose a more considered response. we tend to react to an issue with an immediate idea of how to fix it. When we take three breaths before responding, We can make room for a more **creative and inclusive unfolding of the resolution**.



SELF- PITY TO SELF-PAUSE

DANIEL W.
917.304.4270

It's now
Time
for
SHARES!