

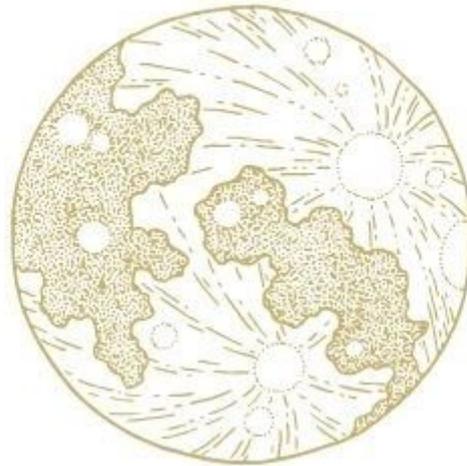
"A POWERFUL GUIDE FOR FULLY AWAKENING  
INTO YOUR INSPIRING LIFE."

# AlwaysChoose

A TRANSFORMATIONAL  
APPROACH TO LIVING

FREE EBOOK EXCERPT

KIRSTY MACDONALD & JON MACDONALD



# AlwaysChoose

By Kirsty Macdonald & Jon Macdonald  
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[www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com)

# Because You Are Here...



In reading this book, you can know that you are already much further along the path to the life you wish for than you may realise. That you are reading *these* words in *this* particular moment is significant in a way that only you can know over time. And so, we invite you to read with an open, playful curiosity as to what it is you are being pointed towards by this particular alchemy of these words at this time in your life.

Once you begin to search for a more fulfilling life, very quickly you find that what is needed to guide you into your next steps is presented to you. The best of these will point you toward the inescapable truth that you already know so much of what you need to know but have long forgotten. How to remember and how to then move within this world from this remembering is the key, whilst acknowledging that our societies are in the early stages of learning how to do this. All that is needed is a pointer, perhaps a particular turn of phrase, or an approach, which helps you unlock the possibilities which are here for you, so you can take your next step.

This excerpt from our ebook - part of a more comprehensive book coming soon - sets out reminders of this for you. Reminders of what you already know but which are perhaps forgotten. Reminders of the collective wisdom that is deep in all of our hearts, of everyone across the world, across all time. That which is hidden and wants to be rediscovered so that we all can thrive.

We point to the collective wisdom that we all share by choicefully using the word 'we...'. Perhaps expressed as 'we begin to remember...', 'we discover...' or 'we learn...'. This is our way of sharing with you, our inspired reader, the wisdom that we have remembered. You can find more of what we share on our website

[www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com).

We wish you enjoyment in your remembering and pleasure through your discovering.

With love,

Kirsty & Jon

# Welcome to the AlwaysChoose approach to living

*“To always choose is to be life affirming in every single moment.”*



At the heart of the AlwaysChoose approach is making the choice, in each and every moment we are alive, to open and move *into* whatever experience is present for you, whatever life is bringing, and whatever you notice yourself thinking, feeling and doing. And from here you steer your life from your place of deepest wisdom - what we call your Direct Knowing - guiding yourself towards the life you really want.

Why do this? Why AlwaysChoose? Because our life, here, now, is everything we have. And it really can be quite magnificent, if that is what we choose.

The AlwaysChoose approach guides you towards your life of joy, success and freedom, and releases the commonly felt maladies within which so many are living. For many who discover the simplicity of this way of living it is a relief. Not more to know or to do, but instead letting go and carrying less. Not work, but play. This doesn't mean life is painless, or without the human experience of feeling. All experiences are allowed to flow and be, and not to fight with. Those who go deeply into this approach find that even the most difficult circumstances are a route into a more enlivening freedom. In fact some of our wisest teachers are the ones who have had the life experience which many would label as excruciatingly difficult but that they themselves are grateful for. And when we start to inquire into people's lives and stories, we discover that everybody has these moments of suffering that when faced into, can all be portals into great opening and growth.

Whether we are aware of it or not, in each moment we are faced with this one singular decision - to open and move into our experience - to be life-affirming, or not. We make this choice in this moment, and this one, and this. The AlwaysChoose approach is to see this and to choose a resounding *yes* to life in this moment. To move yourself into *this* experience. And now *this* one. It is to open and to dive deeper into the life which is presenting itself to you here and now, rather than closing to it, withdrawing, contracting, constricting or defending.

This does not necessarily mean a physical movement, nor an unboundaried movement. It means moving your presence towards, into, closer, to a more intimate

and joyful way of living your very own life no matter what the starting point of this moment is. It means opening to all of your experience as fully as you can, whether it is pleasurable or painful. It means to look at what is really here in every moment, with conscious awareness, rather than veiling it and looking away.

Why do we need the AlwaysChoose approach? In asking this we begin to notice that through our lives we have an endless collection of experiences. It is through this that we learn what it is to feel, one of the most basic expressions of being a human. As young children we openly express our feelings, both pleasure and pain. Feeling flows naturally and openly, without restriction - joyous laughter or a screaming tantrum expressing through movement and noise. We can feel life force flowing naturally and expansively.

But when we are young we are often trained into the belief that we are too much, too loud, too joyful, too angry, too expressive. We learn to close down our feelings so that we can be, from the perspective of us as children, accepted and loved, and in doing so we close to the expression of life and the expression of ourselves. We become more and more skilled at this closure as we move through our teenage years, where fitting in with our chosen group is a deeply primal instinct. We learn to refine this skill in our adulthood where we find that working environments generally don't reward excessive expression of feeling and of life force. We become highly skilled at closing rather than opening, at choosing to be life-denying rather than life-affirming, for seemingly sensible reasons. We become so skilled that our choice to close becomes an unconscious action we make moment by moment. We don't notice we are making it. We are always here with our fist closed tightly around our life force, squeezing it into society's acceptable shape.

Different demonstrations of closure manifest in all the different forms. We see them showing themselves as suppressed laughter or a block on an urge to sing or dance, and in more extreme ways as addictions, depression, anxiety, stress, relationship difficulties and all the other ways that we are all familiar with in our lives. They show themselves at times quite subtly as lethargy, lack of purpose or direction, a sense of missing something deeper or feeling unsupported or trapped. Maladies of modern living mean we choose to numb and turn away from life. We choose to close in order to feel better. Perhaps more accurately we choose to close to feel less. We often shut down to cope with the lives we find ourselves living.

The belief that we created at a young age, where we see ourselves as being too much, too loud, too joyous, too angry, too expressive, becomes a story we carry through all of our life. We have many stories, and stories are a unique part of what makes humans incredible. We have inspiring mythological stories centuries old that are passed down from generation to generation. However many of the personal stories we tell ourselves are ways that we use to choose to close and look away.

To AlwaysChoose is to see this and to know that our stories are ways we have used to protect ourselves, and so at some level they make sense. The challenge is to actively spend our life making up stories that we choose and that lead us into a life that feels inspiring and life affirming rather than painful.

For a time it may seem better to feel numb and create strong beliefs and fixed stories rather than to feel pain. And we recognise that our storylines really are quite compelling and magnificent. Even when they are tales of days gone by that may have been painful and hurt us, we acknowledge that we like to retell them. They are our epic adventures and we carry them around, nurture them and feed them as if they are still an active part of us. We begin to see that they create more closure, but even so we bring them in closer, holding them ever so tightly. And we see that we have made up so many stories and beliefs to stay safe. Who we are, what we can and can't do, where we should live, who we should relate to, what we should like or dislike. Stories about the past and stories about the future. Some work for us and some really don't. Some hurt and some heal. Constant and compelling, these stories keep us looking away. They keep us from what is actually here right now and block our view to freedom.

All this is very human and to AlwaysChoose to be life affirming is not to close down to these aspects of ourselves but instead to start to explore them. The game is to embrace and love all of ourselves and this often crazy life even when it can be overwhelming in its complexities. Knowing that the humanness of it all is the same in all of our experience, we learn that in fact we *can* choose how we approach our lives, and that we can step out of the stories that hold us back. And in many of us making this individual choice, a collective life affirming movement begins, one which replaces our society's often life negating way of living. In doing so we all thrive. Personal thriving becoming radical action that heals the world we live in.

The choice is, in every moment, to look, to open, to learn to numb a little less, to start to breathe again, to play more, to open our hearts and to laugh a little more fully. To find a flow in our lives and begin to learn that it can all be held more lightly, and that we can forgive the times we hold it tightly. In this, we grow, we find pleasures and gifts, we celebrate and we become curious about all the new possibilities that arise.

We have carefully distilled six elements of exploration for you in our sharing of the AlwaysChoose approach to life which many people have found to be transformational. These range from having an Open Heart to choosing Inspired Action. Each alone can be a lifelong exploration and bring such wealth to you and your experience. Together they can super-charge your moment by moment experience in a way that it has done ours and many other people. You can dive gently into these areas and see your life change for the better, or you can make a strong dedication to the AlwaysChoose approach and see your life transform in ways you could not have imagined.

Your most incredible life is so much closer than you may think.

To find out more, you can explore [www.AlwaysChoose.com/Always-Choose](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/Always-Choose).

# Setting Sail

*“Those who flow as life flows know they need no other force.”*

Lao Tzu



The six elements of the AlwaysChoose approach are Open Heart, Calm Mind, Devotion to Self, Personal Compass, Body & Breath, and Inspired Action. These are not singular concepts to be worked through step-by-step, but intertwine as a whole for fully experiencing the self and realising the full potential for your life.

This is an ebook excerpt and introduction to this approach - part of a more comprehensive book coming soon. Our website [www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com) also has more information as well as many videos, writings and recordings being added to all the time. But this ebook gives you an overview. It sets out a place where you can begin. It provides signposts, thought points and resonances, and will begin to awaken long forgotten parts of you. Once this starts there is much more you can explore with us either in groups or individually. We offer the AlwaysChoose approach to you in person, online, in group or in one-to-one sessions and in further reading on [www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com).

Depending on where you are in your life right now, and what perspective you currently have, once you have read more about the AlwaysChoose approach to living, you will likely feel drawn to starting with one aspect as a focus and bringing others in as you go. Trust this. One area may even call to you because it feels the least appealing. It is often what initially repels us that points the way to our most significant growth. Knowing this, we can explore our life from a different perspective. Not one of comfort, but one of curiosity, stretch and challenge to our current worldview.

There are thought points and practices to explore. All paths lead to one place. To the ocean of your freedom. The fearless explorer will receive gifts far beyond imagining. Be prepared to let go in order for them to be delivered. Be prepared to step outside the confines of what you currently believe to be true. You could hold on tight or you could turn, opening toward the warmth of the sun and set sail for new lands of exploration within.

It is always *your* choice.

# Open Heart

*“Whoever has heart’s doors wide open, could see the sun itself in every atom”*

Rumi



The element of Open Heart guides us towards letting go of being in conflict with different parts of our experience and open ourselves to the acceptance of everyone and everything, including ourselves. We experience this as moving into life, with our own boundaries clear and strong. We learn to embrace the beauty we see, as well as the opposite, the chaos and brutality of life. We begin to see that we have a tendency to accept some people, places and things and reject others. We become increasingly able to release this propensity to accept only some of what we find ourselves experiencing in this world and denying the rest. We notice the distinct difference in the physical sensations in our bodies when we accept compared to when we deny, and we explore this difference with intrigue and fascination, knowing it leads us into our wisdom.

As we learn to love others for who they are, we begin to see them as a person like ourselves. We are able to see beneath the behaviours and not fight with what’s here. We recognise that they, like us, are a person with moments of peace and with moments of anger. A person expressing life-force in the best way they know how. We hold strong boundaries in our opening, recognising what is best for ourselves and recognising that like us, others have life lessons to see and solve. In doing so we recognise that there are times to move towards as well as when we need to be patient and still, simply sending love, and allow others to fall and pick themselves back up in their own time and in their own way.

Having an Open Heart does not mean rescuing. It does not mean putting ourselves in the way of harmful behaviours. Instead it means that we create space in ourselves for people to be who they are, without judgement. They may have views we disagree with, or act in ways which are incongruent with our beliefs, but nevertheless they are still simply being human, in the same way as we are. We learn to celebrate others as we celebrate ourselves. We send gratitude to others. Setting a boundary at times when it is needed, but in staying open hearted we send love to others, whether they act with love themselves or whether they act from a place of fear and separation. In doing so we become more compassionate towards others, expanding our life into

one of generosity, joy and deep connection. And in doing so we find also that we become more inclusive and intimate with ourselves.

We begin to recognise that we can be with *all* of what is here, rather than only the parts we desire. We can know that 100% of the time, unhappiness lives when we are in conflict with what is here, now. And how willing we are to be with what's here is directly proportional to how much joy we are able to access in any given moment. So by moving towards and into the experience, we have a more enriched life. It may not always be enjoyable in a traditional, learnt sense, but in it we are more enlivened. You become deeply in the life-force of this moment. Of *your* moment. You let go of conflict, get into your senses, exhale and allow this just to be. The experience of being all that you are in this moment. And now this one. And this.

To remain closed can take such effort but we become so habitualised to it we often don't notice until things become so uncomfortable that we are eager for change. Getting into connection with what is happening now with Open Heart can be felt as such a tremendous relief. That you don't have to wait for circumstances to be beautiful, or calm, or 'right' or neat to open your heart means there's no conditionality. You can, in every moment, make a practice of opening more fully into what is. And give yourself permission to find the joy, success and freedom within each of these moments, here, now.

We have an Open Heart practice for you to consider and dive into below. You can find out more about Open Heart, and discover some other powerful practices by exploring [www.AlwaysChoose.com/openheart](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/openheart).

# A Practice for Open Heart

## ***Awareness***

One of the first places to start is to know what it feels like in your body and your mind, when you are experiencing Open Heart or not.

First find a quiet space to sit and reflect.

Perhaps remember a time where clearly you experienced Open Heart. And one where clearly you didn't.

Get to know the texture of one and then the other, the different feeling, how you act and relate in these different experiences, how you stand or sit, how you breathe differently. Notice what words you use out-loud and in your mind in each experience, what you see yourself doing, what the processes are that you commonly follow when your heart is open and when it is closed.

Once you have a greater awareness of these experiences, keep that awareness open as often as you can and just be in the noticing of your responses to different people, places and things in your everyday life.

Nothing to do or adjust, just notice. And send love to those parts of you that open and also to those parts of you that close, knowing that both of these experiences are very much part of what it is to be human.

## ***More Practices***

You can explore more practices at [www.AlwaysChoose.com/openheart](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/openheart).

# Calm Mind

*“Leave your front door and your back door open. Allow your thoughts to come and go. Just don’t serve them tea.”*

Shunryu Suzuki



Our thinking mind is a great gift. With it we solve problems, we create amazing structures, develop scientific solutions and have fascinating interactions with others. However as a culture we have prioritised thinking over everything else and we fail to see it for what it is. Whether we experience ourselves as our thoughts, or go to a deeper level of experience, ultimately, calming and finding peace from the constant chatter of our thoughts is the first place to start on the journey into Calm Mind.

Through the practice of Calm Mind we find that we are able to take action in our life from a place of greater stillness, clarity and confidence. This action comes from being able to hear our deepest wisdom, what we call our Direct Knowing, far more clearly, where it’s no longer clouded by all the thoughts that run through us each day. Over time, Calm Mind allows us to begin to be less and less involved and invested in our thinking and ultimately gifts us the incredible freedom which comes from seeing our whole belief system is made up.

In developing our capability to turn the volume down on the thoughts we experience moment by moment, and in breaking the apparent link that exists between thoughts and our actions there is a depth to life that can open up. With some dedication you can often enjoy the experience of a genuinely silent mind, free of thoughts. In this the beauty and bliss of your existence shines through you and the world. You can see through the nature of thought, our shared reality, and fall into the magic that follows.

We are taught many things from a young age. To walk, to talk, to ride a bicycle, and to read. We are taught that to be clever is to think. We are taught that the more skilled we are at thinking the more intelligent we are. In fact we pay attention to our thoughts so much, whether positive or negative, that we identify with them as ourselves. This is a problem for many of us because if we were to run these thoughts on a movie screen and watch them through objectively, we would notice that of the thousands of thoughts that a person experiences throughout the day, too few are of the positive and supportive kind. In fact most people wouldn’t pay to go to watch that

particular movie as it would be far too depressing and often filled with a constricting or fearful storyline.

It stands to reason that if we spend our time watching and listening to a low budget and often at best, mildly depressing movie - and when we take it seriously as we do - we begin to feel constricted and fearful and live a lower quality of life than we know to be possible. The well-known phrase 'Cogito, ergo sum' by René Descartes, typically translated into English as 'I think, therefore I am', perhaps should have read 'I think, therefore I am in pain', as it is in thinking that we create the problem.

As we watch, we might notice our movies have particular themes to them. Perhaps the lead character doesn't believe in themselves, constantly planning for a scary future or is forever looking to escape a troubled past? These themes are like lenses we interpret our world through. They are birthed from our childhoods, the cultures we are born into and the beliefs of our parents, alongside all our past experiences. And they limit our lives. At best, an unreliable measure, thoughts can be seen as getting in between us and our most amazing experience of life. Ultimately we come to see that 'I' am not my movie even though I've been playing the exhausting parts of actor, director and producer.

We see that our movies and our thoughts misguide us from having an amazing life. If we want to explore them more we can go to certain therapies and gain understanding of where they originated for us. This can be a fascinating process, and in the interim, very helpful, but when it is seen clearly that we make it all up, this becomes more of a fruitless exercise. In learning how to turn the volume down on these thoughts, placing them more in the background, and paying more attention to our deepest wisdom, our Direct Knowing, rather than our chattering mind, we begin to find freedom from their constricting and fearful nature.

With Calm Mind we begin to learn to de-construct our movies and replace them with more wholesome, expansive and fulfilling ones. We realise that we are always looking through some form of lens. We are always creating some form of movie. In fact everything we have said here is the creation of another movie. One that we can skillfully use to take us into a deeper and different exploration of what it is to be alive and then one that can also be dropped when the time is right.

Once we stop taking our thoughts so seriously, we have the opportunity to spend time paying attention to our actions. In doing so it can be amusing to notice that actions seemingly tend to follow thoughts very quickly and without question. Knowing that many thoughts are unhelpful we begin to realise that, unsurprisingly, taking unquestioning action from them is detrimental to our lives.

The alternative, with Calm Mind, is to experience a pause, however briefly, that allows us to make a choice. In cutting the apparent cord between thoughts and our actions, we begin to find we can choose how we act moment by moment. We can

consider whether we agree with thought, based on our Personal Compass. This is our guide to living life fully and completely from an ethical and loving perspective, which we explore later in this ebook excerpt. We can decide whether we want to act as the thought is suggesting we do, based on having an Open Heart. We make more life-affirming decisions. When under pressure we act less impulsively and with more consideration. When faced with someone else's anger or frustration we find we have more resilience to this and can act more from kindness for ourselves and for them.

There is such depth to exploring Calm Mind, and it provides one entry point into discovering the most deep realisation of who you are.

We have a Calm Mind practice for you to consider and dive into below. You can find out more about Calm Mind, and discover some other powerful practices by exploring [www.AlwaysChoose.com/calmmind](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/calmmind).

# A Practice for Calm Mind

## ***Thought Observation***

Sit for half an hour. Allow thoughts to flow.

Notice whether you chose to have those thoughts or whether you are being 'thanked'?

Notice whether, generally, are the thoughts and the stories they tell helping or hurting?

Now that you know you didn't actively choose any of your thoughts, in what way is that going to change your actual life? How could you step back from the thinking mind a little more and create a pause between the thought and the actions you take? What would be different if you did?

If you were to AlwaysChoose to no longer pay so much attention to your thinking, how much calmer might your mind be?

## **More Practices**

You can explore more Calm Mind practices at [www.AlwaysChoose.com/calmmind](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/calmmind).

# Devotion to Self

*"It's not easy being green"*

Kermit the Frog



In having true Devotion to Self we come to deeply know that we are perfect just as we are, despite all our human frailties and mistakes we have made. We discover that because of this we can deeply and completely relax knowing that we are enough.

We always are, always were and always will be.

We learn to remind ourselves of this as often as we can irrespective of how others view us. We celebrate our uniqueness and individuality, our past and our future. We celebrate being ourselves.

In Devotion to Self we remind ourselves each day that we are perfect. You are perfect simply in the awesomeness of being alive, in breathing, in moving, in relating to the world, and in the many other aspects of living that happen each day. Importantly this includes appreciating being *all* of the person we are, with all of the multitude of thoughts, emotions and feelings that flow through us. With all our joys and pains. With all the times we were able to be loving, kind and compassionate, and also all the times we weren't.

We learn to recognise, when we judge ourselves for not being enough, that this is a common human trait, and that in doing so we are simply demonstrating our raw humanness, and that this is all ok. We choose to quieten these self-judgements whilst at the same time we do not criticise ourselves for this judging. We realise that we are all being exactly what it is to be human, with all our imperfections, and that this is enough. Everything about us becomes welcomed by ourselves as a unique expression of what it is to be us, alive, here, now. In recognising this in ourselves we are then able to see it also in others and from here we can relate to people and the world around us with an ever increasingly Open Heart.

From our place of Devotion to Self, through self-love and self-forgiveness, we build a foundation of relaxed confidence in our ability to be the best version of ourselves. We look at the times we were life-affirming and celebrate these. We look at the times we were perhaps less so, perhaps life-denying, where we were rude, abusive or

harmful to others, and we acknowledge that we are human, and at times this is what humans do. We learn that when we do this it is because we have forgotten who we are deep down and we forgive ourselves for this, making amends as best we can. It is from here that we grow.

We learn how to fall into the simple beauty of being human, of being ourselves, of being alive, and to reside in this, in the knowledge that we are completely perfect as that.

We have a Devotion to Self practice for you to consider and dive into below. You can find out more about Devotion to Self, and discover some other powerful practices by exploring [www.AlwaysChoose.com/devotiontoSelf](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/devotiontoSelf).

# A Practice for Devotion to Self

## ***Who is the self you are devoted to?***

When we say Devotion to Self, what do we actually mean? What comes to mind for you? What is your Self?

Take some time to write down all of the roles you perform. All your 'Selves' as you see them. Perhaps, mother, or father, teacher, friend, dancer, lover, artist, yogi, employee, manager, cyclist, writer, housekeeper, shopper, teacher, singer, etc...

Journal on which of these you love, which do you find more difficult, which flow for you, which constrict? Are some more serious to you or more 'grown up'? We tend to give different roles different value judgements. What are yours?

Now spend some time in reflection, appreciating all that you are and all that you do. All of these aspects of you and your life. All of your 'self'. How could you gift yourself more awe and respect for all of these many roles you perform? How could your moving as all of these and between them become more pleasurable? How could this become your work of art? How could you bring a lightness into the dance of it all? And what else?

Maybe there are things you notice here that need some attention. Maybe there are roles or parts of these roles that you are holding tightly that could be loosened a little. Often, as we play and go deeper into this, we begin to notice that underneath, each is the same juice from the same carton, and that one of them no longer has to be constricted, held more tightly, or taken more seriously than another. And that across the board, more play can be brought into them all somehow.

What would this mean for your world?

## ***More Practices***

You can explore more Devotion to Self practices at [www.AlwaysChoose.com/devotiontoSelf](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/devotiontoSelf).

# Personal Compass

“Death is not the biggest fear we have; our biggest fear is taking the risk to be alive - the risk to be alive and express what we really are.”

Don Miguel Ruiz



Have you ever had an experience where you just knew something was right or wrong for you? Have you ever walked on a beach, or somewhere else in nature and experienced an insight or inspiration, perhaps in answer to a question you had?

Many of us have had these types of experience but not recognised them as your deepest wisdom's guide. This is what we call your Direct Knowing, and it is one of your most powerful tools in life. We may experience this as a very clear insight into what direction we should take our lives, or as a quiet whisper which gradually becomes louder and louder if we ignore it. However we experience it, we begin by becoming more attuned to hearing what it has to say.

We learn to pay closer attention. In clearing the path with our intentful practices and our awareness, we can listen more clearly to our Direct Knowing. We discover that there is a collective wisdom available to us all that spans across all time. It is the place from which our greatest artists, philosophers, scientists and leaders have sourced *their* insights and inspiration.

One of the ways we harness our Direct Knowing in our day to day life is by using it to set our Personal Compass - our guide to living life fully and completely from an ethical and loving perspective. Our Personal Compass is a focused intent, sourced from the wisest place, on how to fully approach the life we are experiencing now. It is never fixed, but is alive and is breathing into all that we do. We discover that by exploring this powerful guide we know what is wanted or needed to take us deeper, to get us through, to allow more joy and find our own version of expression and success no matter where we find ourselves.

We may find that it's as simple as the words "truth' or 'courage', or perhaps 'self-love' or 'connection', which to use as a lens on our life experience and the aperture through which to step through into all that we are. Or it may be more behaviorally directional, such as 'I always put my own health first', or 'I am a person who listens when others speak'. Over time, and with a personal commitment to deep

listening, it will re-express itself in support of where you are now at and what you need.

Because our self-chosen Personal Compass is genuinely meaningful to us, we begin to experience it as a pillar of strength to support us in all our decision making, especially in challenging times. It helps us re-commit to who we are on a daily basis and supports us in navigating our lives.

Expressed clearly, and with Inspired Action, it delivers us all that we need to know to live fulfilling lives, and build thriving relationships, families, societies and cultures.

It is a gift to us personally and to all of humanity.

We have a Personal Compass practice for you to consider and dive into below. You can find out more about Personal Compass, and discover some other powerful practices by exploring [www.AlwaysChoose.com/personalcompass](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/personalcompass).

# A Practice for Personal Compass

## ***Your sense of what is life-affirming***

We have a deep wisdom available to us all. This Direct Knowing is innately life-affirming. It is, however, not something that we generally acknowledge in our society. In this practice we start by beginning to know what it is to understand and work with our Direct Knowing.

Choose a particular day when you will be interacting with many people. perhaps at work, or at a social gathering. Even time with your family can work here.

Go about your day as normal, without changing anything in particular in how you act or what you say. Bring more attention than you would typically do to what other people do or say. In doing so, see if you have an instinctive reaction to this, as either being a life-affirming act by them, or a life denying one. For example, talking kindly about someone would be life-affirming, whereas gossiping about someone would be life denying.

See if you can notice a deep sensation, or feeling, which comes from their action. For many of your interactions you may not notice anything. For some, where the person has been life-affirming, you may simply notice that you leave the interaction feeling uplifted. For others, in particular if someone is doing something clearly life-negating such as stealing or hurting someone, you may notice an immediate instinct or feeling which points to this.

Simply notice your reactions and see if you can bring them more into your awareness.

This practice is a first step into your Direct Knowing, from which you can build your Personal Compass. It helps you begin to tap into your instincts more easily, from which you can begin to discern then from the usual chatter of your moment-by-moment thoughts and emotions.

## ***More Practices***

You can explore more Personal Compass practices at [www.AlwaysChoose.com/personalcompass](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/personalcompass).

# Body & Breath

*“The rhythm of the body, the melody of the mind, and the harmony of the soul create the symphony of life.”*

B.K.S. Iyengar



Nature gifts us with the most amazing home in which to live. One to be deeply loved and appreciated as it is the only one we have. Our body provides us with the awe-inspiring ability to explore our life, our majestic world, and all that these offer. When we truly recognise the immense beauty of what nature has provided us with we become transformed. When we dive into Body & Breath as a practice we have access to all of the ways our exploration of this can happen more effortlessly than we may imagine.

The vitality we experience in our body is directly proportional to the input received in the form of nourishment from many things including our food, environment, sleep and of course the quality of our breath. All of this is critical to the amount of life force our bodies have. In focusing on Body & Breath, we learn to see the relationship between this and the quality of our experience of life. We find that, from our Body & Breath practice, we can more often perceive what is happening around us with clarity and sharpness. Our senses are clearer. Our body is more able to experience all that is around us through touch, movement, and exploration.

We begin to learn that our breath is what brings our body to life, and that it is our one constant through the entirety of our existence. We see that having a deep, relaxed and even-paced breath greatly improves our body's health and resilience, and powerfully supports us in maintaining an Open Heart and Calm Mind. From our practice of focusing on Body & Breath, and in them dancing together, we enjoy an uplift in our quality of life in ways we could not have believed, but now are able to enjoy as something which is always here available to us.

When we start from a place of Devotion to Self, or any other of the AlwaysChoose elements, we find that the ways we look after our body and the way we breathe changes. It becomes more simple to connect to the vitality that our bodies desire to experience. Not as something to get to but as a place to start from.

In the simplest form we learn to remember these four elements.

To move.  
To breathe well.  
To intake healthy energy.  
And to have nourishing sleep.

Human bodies are designed to move, to eat alive natural foods and to rest well. Life-force flows when this is happening and when our bodies are breathing well. Our societies over-prioritise productivity and under-prioritise life force and vitality. We have created our societies in which we are spending more and more time being still and sitting, eating foods that are not food, being overstimulated and being unable to rest well. Bringing awareness to changing just one of those things makes a huge difference. Addressing them all over time can be truly transformational.

Just because our bodies are incredibly resilient and tolerant to this does not mean we have to accept this as a way to live. Just because we can, doesn't mean we should. We live in ways that are disconnected from the natural world and from what we need to thrive. Evolution hasn't yet caught up with this and yet we wonder why our health feels poor.

The way life is set up for the majority of people in our world is far from the healthy ideal. Having begun the movement a few hundred years ago out of smaller, connected, rural communities, and into cities, the majority of people in our world are natural creatures now having a non-natural experience. Our supermarkets are full of foods that are no longer alive, or indeed never were. We breathe recycled air inside concrete buildings, are exposed to growing amounts of electrical activity, and spend a great amount of time indoors. If we eat dead foods we no longer have access to the vitality that alive foods give us. If we spend our days sitting under fluorescent lights, we miss the vitality of the sun. If we exercise indoors in repetitive ways our bodies become conditioned into restricted movement and suffer in old age.

A rabbit in the garden will do its rabbiting. We will see it eating the juicy green grass and hopping in the evening sun. If you were to give it some potato chips it might take a sniff and try one, but quickly hop away back to enjoying its grass. Maybe if there was no grass it might eat a few. But if it were to eat the whole bag it would most likely die. How are we different from rabbits? We have less and less grass and more and more potato chips. Less and less of the natural world, and more and more factory created, built environment, computer screened, indoors living.

Given that this is where we are at the choice is how do we react to this? We choose to remember who we are, how incredible our bodies are for the way they allow us to explore our lives, and how simple it can be to step away from the societal norms into a much increased vitality of experience. Movement, breath, good food, good rest. So simple. So powerful.

In practicing Body & Breath we don't need to push our bodies, instead we worship them. We don't need to punish ourselves for being in this place, instead we bring loving awareness, focus and attention to choosing different and taking positive action. Exercise practices that are nourishing, rather than punishing, that are healing and life-giving rather than depleting.

The fundamentals of having enough sleep, rest, eating well and exercising are easy places to focus to set you up for success.

Going back to basics is the best place to start and reminding ourselves that if it feels life-affirming it's probably a good choice.

We have a Body & Breath practice for you to consider and dive into below. You can find out more about Devotion to Self, and discover some other powerful practices by exploring [www.AlwaysChoose.com/bodyandbreath](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/bodyandbreath).

# A Practice for Body & Breath

## **Self-Care Audit**

In our Body & Breath practice the notion of self-care arises. In this context, when we say self-care, what does this mean to you? Taking time out to pursue something that energises you? Enjoying a bubble bath? Choosing your friends carefully? Self massage with beautifully scented oils? Eating nourishing foods? An early night? Giving yourself time to be by yourself?

What else?

Does your self-care inspire you? Have you even brought conscious attention to it?

When you think of what you do to care for yourself, do you feel energised and happy, or slightly let down, or worse? Is it mediocre or wonderful? Is it an obligation or inspiring? In all of the things of your life that you allocate resources to, in both time and money, what's your budget for looking after yourself?

If you were to up the standards of your self-care to inspiring levels, what would you begin to do differently that would allow your whole body and mind to light up in gratitude?

## **More Practices**

You can explore more Body & Breath practices at

[www.AlwaysChoose.com/bodyandbreath](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/bodyandbreath).

# Inspired Action

*“For we have not come here to take prisoners,  
or to confine our wondrous spirits.  
But to experience ever and ever more deeply  
our divine courage, freedom, and Light!”*

Hafiz



In working through the AlwaysChoose approach to living, we begin to connect to a clearer flow of life from which Inspired Action becomes possible. More and more we experience being ‘lit up from the inside’ as a way of moving in the world and creating from a place of deep inspiration and wellbeing. It is as if our bodies become a clear vessel for expressing all that we are and all that we can be. And as we increasingly sweep away the distractions of what is no longer needed, we find our clearly stated intentions become reality far more easily and with increased pleasure.

We recognise that action without inspiration and Direct Knowing is foundationless, often misdirected and sometimes misguided, and that inspiration without action is beautiful stillness where little happens. For the deepest form of success we need a balanced equation. Both Inspiration + Action (Inspired Action) = Success. The result is transformational in ways you might expect, in many ways that might surprise you, and is the foundation for freedom.

We have come to know what beautifully unique individuals we are. We have an increasingly unshakable knowledge that no one can express themselves in the way that we can, as the particular person we are. Nobody else is here to create, impact, love and to be as you are in this world. Only your particular set of cells, beliefs, challenges and skills, only this unique alchemy of you, can do what you can do.

When we move with Inspired Action we find a place in ourselves, in each other and the world of a great personal power that when followed opens up far more than our thinking minds allow us to know. Like a bright balloon soaring into the blue of the sky, our inspiration rises up higher the more we allow it. The more we do this the more we can, and the more benefit we experience. By allowing Inspired Action to come to the fore we are already in the creation of it all. Action starts with belief 100% of the time. And inspired beliefs change lives, including your own.

And as we increasingly allow Inspired Action to be the way we move in the world, freedom for, not freedom from becomes the norm. Freedom to choose, to play, to experience, to love - because why wouldn't we? And the presence that comes from an inspired place is felt by everyone more deeply and positively. After all, it is very hard not to be life affirming when you're guided by your Direct Knowing and moving from a place of Inspired Action.

And this freedom reminds ourselves that in moving with Inspired Action, we are holding our direction strongly, but also holding onto any expected outcome or result lightly. It is a beautiful paradox to explore, in moving in the world purposefully with Inspired Action whilst also knowing that it is the action itself, the movement itself, which carries the meaning, the beauty and the art, rather than the outcome.

And so you inspire others just by being you. All of us giving each other permission to live our fullest life. More and more we realise that this becomes the only way we want to move and eventually the only way we know how. Inspired Action, not as a bypass to difficult feelings or situations, and all that life brings, but as a way in and through. To shine a torch into the centre of what needs to be seen through your actions creates a lightness that changes our perspectives and feeds back into the other practices that we continue to explore. A beautiful positive feedback loop. Ever evolving, ever changing. Always inspired in its intentions and actions.

And so, in times when the actions seem less than inspired we learn to bring ourselves back to all of the elements for re-examination. How can I open my heart further? What more can I know about my Devotion to Self at this moment? Where is my Personal Compass pointing? And all of the other elements that hold us and remind us. All of the practices that we know and will come to know that guide us.

We have an Inspired Action practice for you to consider and dive into below. You can find out more about Inspired Action, and discover some other powerful practices by exploring [www.AlwaysChoose.com/action](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/action).

# A Practice for Inspired Action

## ***Inspired Relationships***

Take some time to sit quietly in reflection. Perhaps light a candle. Have your journal ready.

Relationships can be challenging and rewarding. Many people experience either a few individual relationships in their life as particularly challenging, or specific areas of otherwise healthy relationships that are difficult.

Choose and write down three relationships in your life that you find challenging in some way and take some time to reflect on why this is.

On looking at these, notice if there are any commonalities between them. Any similar patterns or complaints. Maybe there is, maybe there isn't. Just notice.

Then, taking each relationship individually:

What is it you actively resent or dislike about this person?

What is it you can actively love about this person?

What is it you actively resent or dislike about this situation?

What is it you can actively love about this situation?

What else is important to see, hear or experience about it that means you can begin to create a more inspired and heart-felt relationship to this situation?

And finally, remembering you can only directly affect your experience, not that of others, what is the Inspired Action you could take in each of these situations that, independent of any desired outcome you may wish for, could be the most healing, opening or refreshing? What does your Direct Knowing guide you towards that could, for you, begin to take that relationship out of habitual into healthy?

Only you get to decide if this is appropriate and something you actually want to do. Sometimes Inspired Action looks very still and is about the changes that awareness and intention brings us.

## ***More Practices***

You can explore more Inspired Action practices at [www.AlwaysChoose.com/action](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com/action).

## Our Invitation To You...

We hope you enjoyed this ebook excerpt and introduction to the AlwaysChoose approach to living. It is part of a more comprehensive book coming soon.

It is our pleasure to be able to share our writing and practices with you. Our intention is that there will be something here that helps you remember the incredible and unique human that you are, and inspires you to experience the insight and confidence to step into possibility. To step into the life that was always here waiting for you is always a choice you have, in every moment. Your choice, right here, right now.

The website [www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com) has more information as well as many videos, writings and recordings being added to all the time. There is much more you can explore with us either in groups or individually. We offer the AlwaysChoose approach to you in person, online, in group or in one-to-one sessions and in further reading on [www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com).

Find out more at [www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com) or by emailing the authors at [enquiries@alwayschoose.com](mailto:enquiries@alwayschoose.com).

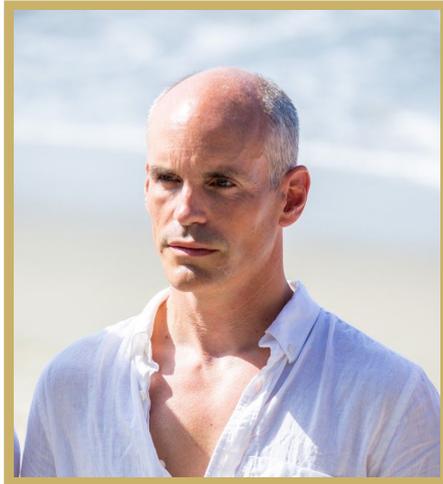
## About the Authors

AlwaysChoose was founded by Kirsty & Jon Macdonald.  
They teach extensively around the world in person and also online.  
For more information and for press enquiries go to [www.AlwaysChoose.com](http://www.AlwaysChoose.com).



# Jon Macdonald

Jon is a writer, teacher and guide who shares his insights and wisdom on how we can all find our most incredible and deepest sense of self and live a majestic life from that place. His passion is for every man, woman and child to have access to the world's greatest wisdom teachings in a way which is simple to understand, practical to engage in, and which can bring all of us great joy, success and freedom.



His deep heart and grounded presence, combined with his clarity of vision, inspires those who choose to explore life with him. His complete acceptance of everyone exactly as they are, his calm way of being, and his ability to create a place of trust opens people into finding their deepest wisdom and moving into the life that calls for them from that place.

He has spent much of his life dedicated to creating an approach to living for everyone, based on his own experience and deep investigations of life, and on the best of what our greatest spiritual masters have offered. Together with his wife Kirsty they have combined their wisdom to create the AlwaysChoose approach to living. They write, teach and guide those who want to have their most amazing life.

Jon spent much of his professional life in the corporate world of financial services, and his most recent role was as a board director of a complex \$150bn business. In his various executive roles he subtly and persistently shared deep truth, insight and wisdom. He would shine a light onto ways to be more peaceful, compassionate and equanimous, and on how to move away from the corporate world's deeply ingrained fear-based approach to success and achievement.

His own personal transformation has been gradual, at times incredibly joyful, and at others deeply painful. From a young age he was often alone but never felt lonely. Thoughts would come and go, however he knew instinctively that they should be ignored and a deeper knowing was available to guide him. Fear was a constant and painful experience for him and life always appeared dream-like. Learning how to understand and escape these experiences became his addiction. This led him into years of exploring and deeply understanding buddhism, zen, toltec teachings, advayata, yoga, and many other wisdom teachings. Using his decades of meditation experience he dived into his passion - the enquiry 'who am I?' This led him to drop more and more of his sense of self and experience deep knowings about the nature of existence and reality. This path took him to a point of him having peace, joy and

compassion as a constant underlying experience of life throughout much of each day, where there was no sense of self present in experiencing life.

His last decade of enquiry has been that of exploring the fullness, colour, richness and ruthlessness of life. This opened for him an embodied understanding of the relationship we each have with ourselves, with each other, and with the intent of existence which lies behind the surface reflections of our world. He continues to explore our collective and never-ending enquiry of how to live from a place of our deepest essence, of compassion and action, of love and of presence.

In 2017 Jon formed Infinity Rising Ltd and together with his wife Kirsty, they have combined their wisdom to create this, the AlwaysChoose approach to living. They write, teach and guide on this way of life to those who want to live their most inspired life.

You can contact Jon at [enquiries@AlwaysChoose.com](mailto:enquiries@AlwaysChoose.com).

# Kirsty Macdonald

Kirsty is a gifted teacher, therapist and guide who has worked with and inspired thousands of individuals on their path towards self-realisation. She has a gift for seeing the deepest essence of each individual and holds a powerful space that encourages you to step into the fullness of your own existence.

From a young age Kirsty experienced powerful insights which lead to a curiosity about this world and our collective and individual experience. This journey has led her to many transformations in her own life as well as a powerful ability to help point others towards their deeper knowing.



Before the foundation of AlwaysChoose, Kirsty ran a highly successful practice in Harley Street, London. Originally working with NLP, Cognitive Hypnotherapy and coaching, she has supported thousands of individuals on their journey. Kirsty now works with a wide range of modalities focussing on unconscious mind change, body energetics, performance, breath, spiritual awareness and life performance.

Personally, Kirsty has undergone a huge journey of the mind, the body and the spirit and has worked with some of the world's leading practitioners and teachers, which has powerfully informed her work with clients and her writing and teaching.

In 2017 Kirsty and Jon formed Infinity Rising Ltd and together they have combined their wisdom to create this, the AlwaysChoose approach to living. They write, teach and guide on this way of life to those who want to live their most inspired life.

You can contact Kirsty at [enquiries@AlwaysChoose.com](mailto:enquiries@AlwaysChoose.com).

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AlwaysChoose - A Transformational Approach to Living

First Edition

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