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SURRENDER™ to  
Passion

Worried to Wonderful in 28 Days

Rev. Criss Ittermann

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***Better Spoons excerpt  
References  
&  
Chapter 8  
for  
#PluralPWC  
pluralevents.org  
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**Rev. Criss Ittermann:**

## SURRENDER™ to Passion

Worried to Wonderful in 28 Days

Some proceeds from the purchase of this book go to agencies or non-profits that educate the public about child abuse, or help abused and neglected children. Please spread the word.



At this time there is no official acknowledgment of chronic distress or burnout as a syndrome or disorder. This book is the product of research into literature related to stress later transformed by inspiration and perspiration into this guide to handling chronic stress from a spiritual and holistic perspective. I am an Interfaith minister with a Doctor of Motivation and Doctor of Metaphysics, a shamanic practitioner, an energy healer, a long-time student of psychology, spirituality, and I also possess a wealth of knowledge through self-examination. This book and the exercises contained herein do not constitute medical advice. If you are depressed or suffering more than ordinary (di)stress, you may need the help of a medical or psychiatric professional.

I designed the exercises in this book to be as accessible as possible to hopefully accommodate a wide range of people, and complementary to medical advice, however if you need help modifying exercises to fit your circumstances please contact me at <http://surrendertopassion.com>. The information we discover together may help others as well.

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To my children, Una Marie & Hector. And to  
your children.

*What you love is a sign  
from your higher self  
of what you are to do.*

— SANAYA ROMAN

## 8

# ENERGIZE

When you live a life of panic, you have a tremendous amount of energy at your disposal in the form of expending your *Jing* or adrenal gland energy. The problem with doing this is that your *Jing* energy is not infinite. As you expend *Jing* in a state of panic you are literally burning the candle at both ends, and in terms of Chinese medicine you are shortening your life span.

You can experience extreme *Jing* depletion, the equivalent of a syndrome that is a focus of medical controversy called “adrenal fatigue.” This happens when you have damaged the body’s ability to produce adrenaline (epinephrine).<sup>1</sup> This is the point in the panic cycle in which you flatline —that point of “total burnout” where you don’t have the energy or motivation to do much of anything at all—whether or not your burnout can be medically diagnosed.

Just keep in mind this golden rule about monitoring your state of mind: Panic is “What if...?” or “If only...” and peace is “What is.” Passion is “What is possible!” If you get to the point of “Whatever” or “Who cares?” that could be complete burnout. You’re still in panic mode, but you don’t have enough *Jing* or core energy left to be motivated or moved by anything.

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<sup>1</sup> I could cite a dozen websites, but the Discussion page of Wikipedia’s “adrenal fatigue” article is the most thorough and has the best cited references of both current and past medical acceptance of “adrenal fatigue” as of November 12, 2010.

The next step is to move into cutting off one of our common cultural pastimes that drains us of both time and energy nearly every day (Day 22). Then we ensure that we take frequent breaks for peace's sake (Day 23) and finally we plug in to the greatest external source of energy in the universe (Day 24) so that we're not running our lives purely on our own biological and hormonal energy. If you don't believe in the Divine, go through the exercises anyway; if you look at it from a purely biological or medical perspective you're changing from running your life on panic chemicals aka "stress" with all its detriment to your health, to running your life on love chemicals—a healing and sustainable mental and emotional resource.



## Day 22 - Refuse

*M8: Keeping a positive attitude and filtering out "bad news" will actually both improve your outlook and free up time in your day. It might even save you money.*

*Movement Meditations*



It's hard to be in a good mood if you get out of bed feeling well, but then you emotionally and mentally torment yourself with non-stop bad news all day.



Society has our happiness and sense of well-being trapped between the morning news show while shaving, the newspaper over breakfast, the radio news on the drive to work, regurgitating the bad news of the day around the water cooler and at lunch, then listening to radio talk-show gripe on the commute home followed by the evening news just in time to make sure you have bad dreams. World news brings world-wide disaster to our doorstep. It rarely features any of the good going

on in the world, so the only way to balance this is to shut the news out to any extent possible.

I don't have network TV of any type, the only radio news I hear is the local news between songs, and I take a very very quick

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breeze through a local business paper every week looking for articles that are upbeat, educational, or those which are written by or feature my colleagues. I ceremoniously cut out items of interest and recycle (“reject”) all other “news” as unworthy. I directly attribute my sanity, upbeat outlook, and peace of mind to rejecting so-called newsworthy stories.

I’m not asking you to keep your head in the sand exactly the way that I do, but I am asking that you step back and take a break as often as possible, otherwise you don’t even realize the effect that the mass media has on your energy. The media is very skilled and practiced at convincing us that they are an absolute necessity, because having a large audience pays their bills. Even if your job requires that you imbibe some amount of news every day, weed out all news that is not absolutely necessary and see whether you feel better. I’m not requesting a permanent change, although I hope it will be.

So our exercise today is to watch out for sources of “bad news” that bombard you daily. *The 4-Hour Workweek* (Ferris, 2007) recommends getting all your news stories from the grapevine; if there’s really something that important going on, someone will be happy to fill you in. If there’s a world-wide news story that you absolutely must know more about, check it out from a more impartial source such as WikiNews<sup>2</sup> or the Associated Press.

**Keep it going** Fire the news. Refuse to listen to news, surf news websites, read newspapers for a 30 day period, or longer if you find you like it. During this trial period, call your newspaper delivery service and suspend service for a month. Get all of your news from hearsay & word-of-mouth.

Be careful about feeding into or encouraging bad news in any way. When someone starts griping about anything don’t feed it. Just be polite and say “That’s interesting,” and either find a “good news” topic or disengage from that person. With the time you recover while avoiding the news, add some stretching exercises to your morning, take a few minutes out to meditate, bless your meal and be mindful while eating, perhaps take in an audio book, your favorite music, or listen to a terrific highly-rated inspirational recording on your commute home. If you really want to veg in front of the TV before bed, just watch something you enjoy. Dust off some of your favorite movies, borrow some from the library, or spend your newspaper subscription money

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<sup>2</sup> [wikinews.org](http://wikinews.org)

on a movie subscription (just make sure to avoid “thrillers” and high-powered anxiety-provoking “who stole my child?” dramas!). If you “fall off the wagon” and catch yourself watching a news program or reading a newspaper, forgive yourself, turn it off or toss it in the recycle bin, and get back on the wagon. Guilt is only for people in a state of fear and panic. Just keep up a spirit of friendly self-competition by trying to beat your last record.

## “! ” Day 23 - Design

*A8: The Fires of My Desires* What do you do if you have the midday doldrums, you don't want to have a snack, it's too much effort to hit a cash-machine, and you know you should (there's that word!) be getting back to doing something “more productive”? You have to do something to “shake it up.” You need something quick, handy, cheap, and frankly lazy, that you can do to change your energy state and regain your focus. Everyone needs a burst of healthy energy in the middle of the day in a lunch blood-sugar ebb, when we have a bad phone conversation, when we are leaving work and reluctant to face rush hour, when we're waiting at the doctor's office, and when a cabbie splashes rainwater on our expensive shoes.



This is a very personal exercise. What works for some people won't work for others. Start to design a cheap, easy, quick list of 10 or more ways to instantly decompress when you realize something has gotten to you.



These are your personal energizing techniques that you can use throughout the day. In particular the list you make right now will be your “quick fix list” of feel-good energy catalysts that you turn to when things are just a little off. Look for things that are portable, inexpensive, fast-acting, chemical-free, and can be done almost everywhere. I provide a starter list of ideas below, but feel free to experiment with things that aren't on the list.

One big hint, though, is to be specific. The list below gives you some categories for activities, but don't say “quick exercise break” because when you're sapped of your energy, frustrated after a call, or bored at the doctor's office you're not going to get creative about “quick exercise

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break”. Say you like jumping jacks and don’t care if the person in the next cubicle thinks you’re nuts—write down “10 jumping jacks”. Even when you’re tired you can squeeze out 10 jumping jacks, right? No? Then 5. Whatever you think is so easy you’d always be able to give it a try. Instead of “Happy thoughts” write down your specific happy thought. Here’s mine: “I’m writing my Second Book!” wow that makes me so happy. Just thinking about it gives me a lot of energy. Maybe your happy thought is “Band practice is at 7!” or “I have six beautiful grandchildren.” Here’s some other ideas for you:

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- |                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • quick exercise break           | • favorite healthy snack                  |
| • relaxation break               | • stretch                                 |
| • happy thoughts                 | • sun or moon salutations (yoga)          |
| • read loving poetry             | • talk to someone                         |
| • songs                          | • think about people you love             |
| • dancing                        | • gratitude journal                       |
| • visualizations                 | • read a chapter of an inspirational book |
| • meditations                    | • tweet your happy thought                |
| • walk                           | • prayer                                  |
| • splash cold water on your face | • deep breathing exercise                 |
| • health drink                   |   |
| • smoothie                       |   |

... Martial art katas, stretching, shaking out.

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I know that not everything on your list will be possible at all times, but maybe you’re not aware that your imagination is very very powerful. You don’t always have to DO the actions you list—when you find yourself in a situation where it would be awkward or impossible, you can just picture doing one of your techniques. For example, you can picture singing rather than singing out loud, or remember what it feels like to do a series of yoga postures. Using your imagination works best if you actually have done the technique many times already so that you can imagine yourself doing it and feeling it without effort.

**Keep it going** As you go about your daily routine, think about what decompression techniques *could* work in your current environment or situation. Make sure you have an arsenal of tools always ready for you to use in different environments.



## Day 24 - Rekindle

*Much of our reluctance to do any given task is that we've forgotten or set aside why we chose to do it in the first place and gotten caught up in the actual doing rather than maintaining a connection to why we're doing it. It's necessary to reconnect with why so that we can gain back the energy that inspired us to action. We need this energy to complete the task. Sometimes we don't even know why we accepted the task, and this is the time to find a reason that we really want to do it.*

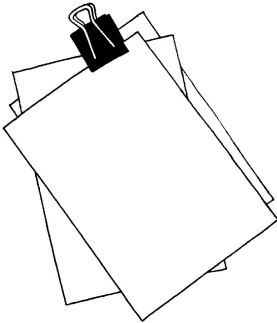


Here's a little illustration of this exercise:



V8: *Stoke  
the Fire*

The sneaky negative ego-rich voice in my head says, “Why am I writing this book? It’s too much work to write a book. It may not sell anyway. Now I need someone to foreword it. And I need to index it. Don’t I have anything better to do with my time?” And the answers start out with the equally ego-driven banal, “Because I said I would and I should keep my word.” Oh, there’s that “should” word again.



I can chase that thought further, but I know there’s a *burning desire* in there somewhere, and it has nothing to do with keeping my word. “Because Spirit said to.” Well, that’s a little better but still ego-driven. Spirit did not tell me to write a book; Spirit told me to share this insight. “Because it might help people.” Well, that’s much closer, I can tell, because my heart seems to make a jump when I think about that. “Because I want to change people’s lives.” Getting closer. “Because I want to help people, and this stress stuff is hurting everyone.” Pretty darn close to the mark. “By sharing this gift I am creating a tool that can help people open up to their own gifts, their own unique message for the world. I know all my skills and interests through my life have led me to this point. I want to step into this destiny and help people.”

When I write this chapter clearly with my purpose in my heart, it takes no energy to put the words on paper, no thought to create what I am typing. It’s like someone else guides my hand, it’s like I’m a vessel of energy being over-filled, spilling over. It takes me no energy to write, re-read, edit, or even index. This is destiny. This is why—perhaps one of many reasons why—I had PTSD leading to pervasive anxiety, a dissociative disorder, basically took myself from broken and trigger

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happy to brave and pretty darned functional. This is why I burned out of so many jobs, this is why I took the college courses I have taken, and this is why I'm here right now writing this book. No one else on Earth could write this book for you. There are many other places that the everything I am will take me and in this moment it's taken me here, now, this moment in reality and pouring these words out for you to read later.

## Finding your “Why”

Everything you've been through, everything you've done, every event whether appreciated or not, has brought you to this moment when you're reading this paragraph. If anything however big or small had changed in your life, you might not be doing this exercise at all. Let's take that realization to you to do list.

When you step into this exercise take a higher perspective. Raise your game. Get out of pretty reasons and ego-tripping. You want to connect with your purpose for doing the things that you do. Mopping the floor is not something most people get a kick out of. However, being the defender of your family's health is something most people can get behind. Heck, you can even picture yourself as a super-hero, defending your family against grime and a bad rap with the neighbors. The point is to feel awesome about what you're doing. Be both a kid and a grown-up, whatever serves you the best, while you do this exercise. It doesn't matter if it's silly if it feels right!

First, pick something easy to feel great about doing. For me, it's why I raise money for charity. Easy! I firmly believe not one more child should be abused, but in the meantime there are still children being abused. These children need comfort, healing, someone to help look out for them and their rights, so I support the CASA organization in my area (Court Appointed Special Advocates<sup>3</sup>). I want these children to know that not everyone is bad, not everyone wants to hurt them—that there are good people in the world and that people really care. It makes it SO easy to run my fundraising events—it takes no energy, it feels like it takes no time from my schedule. The event invites roll off the press, the phone calls are easy, the events run smoothly.

So pick your “easy” to-do item or project and figure out your “why”. Once you understand what a really “why” feels like, when you find the passion that you're following so easily, you can apply the same technique to other tougher areas of your life.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.casaforchildren.org](http://www.casaforchildren.org)

## Your Sacred Cause

It is important to be a motivator of change and good within your community. I've always been the type to volunteer, to march for causes, to call and write to legislators, and now I serve as a member of the board of directors of an important—and LARGE—non-profit organization that provides over 30 services in up to 9 counties in my area.

But, as I have said before, I am a *burnoutaholic* and in 2009 I was suffering from another case of burnout even though I didn't realize it at the time. In August I had my SURRENDER™ experience (p 13), but I was still receiving more and more information from Spirit for many months, faster than I could record it.

In the midst of my writing and researching on burnout I chose to be on Andrew Harvey's call "Becoming an Unstoppable Force of Transformational Love" (MaestroMonth, October 1, 2009) in which he led us through an exercise to find our sacred cause. This was an intensive 1-hour focus on an exercise mentioned briefly in his new book *The Hope* (2009, p125-126). This exercise opened me up to the importance of the work I do for CASA and for abused and neglected children. Try this exercise to open yourself up to a deep and profound relationship with the most important Why in your life:

1. Choose a quiet and uninterruptible time, the best time is at 3am. You want to set an alarm so you wake from sleep in a state of mind that has not been influenced by the media. [I did the exercise while on the teleconference and it was fine.]
2. Meditate to clear your mind, pray to reach your spirit out to the universe. Pray or sing something that opens your heart. Do this until you are peaceful and in a calm state of personal power.
3. Now ask yourself: "What is ailing the world?" Think about all the tragedies of the world one at a time. Feel the pain. Feel as the pain opens you up emotionally.
4. Then ask: "What breaks my heart the most?" Go over all of the world's tragedies until one stands out amongst them as the one that "breaks your heart the most." This is your sacred cause.

When your heart is broken open, you are the most open to the Divine. When your heart is broken open, your ego has vanished. When your heart is broken open, the flood of love of the Divine can reach you. Remember that the direct attention of the Divine is painfully pure, is overwhelmingly tender, is overbearingly strong. You break open, and like a vessel, your ego pours out and Divine attention pours in. There is no room for worry, for guilt, for fear—only room for Divine

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compassion, Divine love—when you are working with your sacred cause.

You may cry during this exercise, or perhaps you may laugh—I think I did both! But stay with it. Because the next part is the most important part:

### Think Global, Act Local

Take your sacred cause and find a way to apply it to your local community.

Perhaps the best way to talk about this is to illustrate it for you:

When I did this exercise I thought of animals becoming extinct, of the world in terror of war, of wars taking place, of people starving, of the ecological devastation, of the climate crisis. I thought of children starving across the world. But when I thought of children, I felt my heart open farther, so I kept going down that path and came to children being abused and neglected—indeed betrayed—by the adults that are supposed to be caring for them and protecting them. That was it for me—I’ve experienced childhood abuse, sexual abuse, neglect. I hit upon that group and felt my entire body & soul light up, my heart pouring forth in a geyser of energy, and I shared my experience with the people I could talk to on the call. The amazing thing was I already was involved with this cause, and just that week I’d been wondering if I had the energy to do my usual volunteer work at all, or whether I would back off from it to preserve myself and heal.

The next day, I called the woman I partner with to raise money to help our local children, and I said “We’re doing another fundraiser!” It now no longer costs me ANY energy to champion my local version of my sacred cause. If I feel any ego getting in the way, I just reach out to the Divine and open up my heart, the energy is there for the asking. It hardly takes thought, it takes so little time to do the tasks involved that I don’t notice myself doing them. I don’t need bells & whistles or to-do lists to remind me of what needs to get done for our next event—they come to my attention, I reflexively carry out the task, and it’s done before my ego is back online and I’m thinking again.

But I’ve also taken it a step farther: Around the same time as doing this exercise, I was asked to consider being on the board of directors at Independent Living, Inc., a cross-disability services & advocacy organization. I had recently published my own coming-out autobiography



regarding being self-actualized and celebrating personal authenticity in spite of mental illness (which was caused in part by aforementioned childhood abuse and neglect). In thinking about working with this organization, one thing that constantly comes to mind is that children with differences (“disabilities”) are abused and neglected more often than so-called “normal” children. It is easy for me to champion for persons with differences because I can still tap into my sacred cause energy to champion raising awareness and acceptance of people with differences—it may prevent more children from becoming abused and neglected!

You want to find a way to put your newfound sacred cause energy to action, and you will want it to be immediately to hand—something you can do in your own community. If everyone on earth found their sacred cause and carried it out in their own community, the whole world would become a place of Divine Love & Joy. For more information on people working with their sacred cause see the Institute for Sacred Activism.<sup>4</sup>

Your sacred cause is also there to serve as your internal compass for your best volunteering opportunities. Start phasing out activities that are unrelated to your sacred cause because they usually tax your energy most. Stick with activities related to your sacred cause and your activities will be most effective and cost you far less personal energy as long as you open up and tap into the energy of the Divine.

Following your sacred cause is an excellent example of “Following Your Why”. Once you recognize your sacred cause it should be easier to recognize your true “Whys”.

## **The Monster in the room**

Now pick a “Monster” to-do item or project that you aren’t willing or able to get off your plate. One of the ones that is a thorn in your side. For me it’s helping organize a conference. It sucks up huge amounts of my time for about 2 months of the year—knocking out almost 1/10th of my annual income. This year for the first time I used this step and found my Why. While the work may have taken the same number of hours, it was done without the same level of emotional anguish, stress, energy loss, burnout, ego, what have you. I love when people are learning. The conference helps so many local businesspeople, I wanted it to go on successfully. My why was a picture of a successful conference and people learning and changing their lives and businesses for the better. I was able to fully get behind it without resentment. Even if it took the

<sup>4</sup> [www.andrewharvey.net/sacred\\_activism.php](http://www.andrewharvey.net/sacred_activism.php)

same time to do the work, I spent less of my remaining time griping and in avoidance tasks, as well as less time in decompression activities. The net energy loss over the work was far less, because I didn't spend any energy on negative reactions, resentment or griping.

Dig for a deeply energizing why. It may take several attempts, and you might have to ask why for each of your excuses. Don't give up until you feel the power behind your "why". Whenever the project or task is dragging on you, "Remember your Why". There's a reason that the monster task is on your plate, so go hunt it down.

**Keep it going** Use this deeper "Why" exercise to find and maintain your connection to "why" you're doing something. If it doesn't give you the energy boost you need, go for a deeper Why. Don't forget other exercises for testing whether you are the "right" person to be doing the task—you might not want to jump to this exercise if the task is one that can easily be removed from your plate.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

This book is a labor of love of Rev. Criss Ittermann.

Rev. Criss grew up with substantial anxiety issues first in an abusive household, then as a teen she was diagnosed with multiple personalities (or Dissociative Identity Disorder). Although she was in therapy for a few years, she never chose to undergo integration therapy. Later, as an adult, she decided to get healthier on her own and plowed through countless self-help and recovery books. Through working on her own issues, coaching other multiples, facilitating special interest and support groups, studies in holistic medicine and methodologies, becoming ordained, and studying for a degree in Psychology, Rev. Criss gathered up the background materials she would need to understand a vital portion of the human psyche.

Throughout her adult life, Rev. Criss also worked in small business. She worked in an unusual number of positions but always with computers and technology. And these jobs always caused her to burn out, to the point that she calls herself a “burnoutaholic”. In the summer of 2009, she burned out again but this time something was different. She had a brilliant and insightful life coach, and by getting to the brink of another breaking point, she was able to look at the cycle with new eyes. SURRENDER™ was born.

One of the events leading up to that bout of burnout was the stress

around publishing her first book: *The Crissing Link: Poetic License - a poetic journey through the labyrinth of multiplicity* which can be found at <http://thecrissinglink.com>.

Rev. Criss lives in Upstate New York with her boyfriend, son, and four cats. She runs her own consulting & coaching business, writing, giving workshops & teleseminars, volunteering at local non-profits and holding events that help the local business community.