

The Daily Jedi Journal
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THE DAILY JEDI JOURNAL

365 MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS
ON BEING JEDI IN THE REAL WORLD



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This book The Daily Jedi Journal was created by a Star Wars fan in recovery. The purpose of the publication is to share a practical tool that uses Jedi Philosophy in a way that is beneficial and can lead to positive and productive lives.

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INTRODUCTION

A Jedi is a fictional character created by George Lucas in the science-fantasy mythology of Star Wars. Most people know the Jedi as the type of warrior-monk who fights with a Lightsaber and travels through hyperspace across a “galaxy far-far away”. Jedi use the “Force” to wield amazing powers that move objects and influence others. They are the peacekeepers of the Galaxy.

The Jedi are also a growing community of people in our own real world. They are everyday people who have become inspired by the fictional Jedi to become a better version of who they are. Jedi Philosophy has evolved over the course of two decades through the growth of Jediism* and Jedi Realism online. Today the tenets of Jedi Philosophy offer people a formula for living that is pragmatic and practical as well as spiritual. The end goal of Jedi Philosophy is “World Betterment through Self Betterment”. Every person can make a difference in the world by seeking to be a better person.

This is a practical journal to help those who wish to practice the tenets of Jedi Philosophy in daily living. Each day presents its own challenges and often all that is needed is a counterweight to help guide us on the path to being Jedi. This book has been developed to help you accomplish your goals in living a more mindful and fulfilling life through personal reflection.

Whether you consider yourself a Real-World Jedi or someone who is only seeking to improve every day I hope this book can serve you in some small way. One does not need to be a Star Wars fan to benefit from Jedi Philosophy.

*Jediism is the name of the real-world religion inspired by the fictional Jedi.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is a daily journal to record your journey to being Jedi and reflect on your daily progress. Every day starts with a simple quote taken from the Star Wars Universe and a short meditation on a central theme of Jedi Philosophy.

Space for writing is included for you to journal every day for 365 days. The first day is Day 1. You may start any day of the year. The journal progresses through weekly cycles. Each week has a theme which is central to Jedi Philosophy. You may wish to add additional notes and pages to expand on your writings. You may use this book as a primer for a more in-depth personal journal.

You are invited to use the space provided to enter in a simple gratitude. By starting the day with a simple thought of gratitude we acknowledge the day and give it the respect it deserves. There will never be another day like it therefore we should acknowledge it with a moment of gratitude. It could be our last.

A short contemplation may be written in the morning. What do you hope to accomplish during the day? Do you have a specific goal, or do you wish only to demonstrate virtues such as courage, patience, or honesty in dealing with others or expected situations? You may also write down a theme for the day expanding on the quote at the beginning of the page or the results of your own personal meditation.

In the evening sit down and reflect or meditate on the day. How did it go? What went well and what did not? Reflect on where you can improve without berating yourself. Remember that every day is an opportunity to learn from mistakes and tomorrow is a chance to improve. Keep the focus on the present.

At the end of the week, you will undertake a review on the previous week and assess your performance against five primary criteria for being a practicing Jedi. Every Jedi should aspire to

practice meditation, physical exercise, diplomacy, awareness, and self-discipline daily, if possible:

Meditation: Did you meditate daily or as often as you could? How would you rate the practice in your opinion? Most guides recommend a session of meditation of at least 20 minutes a day however even a few minutes of sitting or moving meditation is beneficial. If you are new to meditation seek resources online. There is a plethora of guided meditations on You-Tube to get you started.

Physical Exercise: Did you exercise during the week? A healthy body is as essential as a healthy mind. The frequency and intensity of exercise will depend on the individual. Most texts recommend 30 minutes of light cardiovascular exercise a day. Strength and conditioning exercises should be performed 3-4 times a week for 15-30 minutes. Consider seeking advice from a health and fitness professional before starting a new exercise regimen.

Diplomacy: Reflect on your interactions with people during the week. Were they constructive and positive? How did you handle disagreement and conflict? Were you polite and civil in the face of hostility? What would you do definitely? Remember, even a negative experience can teach something. We can always improve. Set yourself as an example for others.

Awareness: Were you mindful during the week? That is, did you pay attention to your inner as well as your outer world? Were you aware of your emotions and able to moderate your reactions to them? Did you allow emotions such as anger, resentment, jealousy, arrogance, or fear dictate your words and behaviour? Were you able to recognise self-defeating and destructive thoughts and attitudes in yourself and others and not allow them to dictate your decisions and choices?

Self-Discipline: There are many ways to practice self-discipline. Being committed to the daily practices is an example. We may have the intention to eat right and exercise but lack of self-discipline results in intent not being translated into action. Self-discipline is following through and challenging yourself. For example, you can decide to omit a food item from your diet which you enjoy or try fasting one day a week. Resisting the urge to answer an insult in kind is also an example of exercising self-discipline. Thinking about doing something difficult is easy however applying the self-discipline to do it is what makes a Jedi.

Take some time to record and assess your performance in all these areas through the week. You decide how that is done. If you feel you have struggled in one area determine how you plan to address it in the following week. For example, if your meditation practice was a non-starter do not begrudge yourself. Plan short sessions of meditation into your following week. Start slow and build on progress incrementally. Pushing yourself too hard in the beginning will only lead to frustration and possibly lead you to quit before you have found traction.

In addition to the five daily practices above I also incorporate my own personal daily goals. Through application of the daily practices my goals are usually also met in some tangible way. My daily goals are simply:

1. Meditate: At least 20 minutes per day I close my eyes and focus on my breath. I try to clear the noise from my mind by allowing thoughts and images to simply pass through like clouds in the sky. This is one of the most basic styles of meditation as is repeating mantras or counting breaths.
2. Exercise: 30 minutes or more of exercise a day. This usually includes a variety of bodyweight exercises or a run. You might try anything from Yoga to Bodybuilding.
3. Study: I read books daily for at least 30 minutes. Sustained reading is becoming rarer as the internet and particularly social media eats at our time and erodes our attention span.

4. Creativity: the human need to create is hard wired in us. Whether it is a work of art, a culinary dish, a blog article, or some planting and pruning in the garden we are shaping and creating something and fulfilling that human need. Find some outlet which you can practice your creativity.
5. Service: Doing something for someone else. This can include helping around the house, doing voluntary work, charity, or holding a door open for someone. A lot of people also forget that their job is a service. By doing the best job we can for the pay that we get we are being of service to our employer and customer. We are contributing to society through our labour and the taxes that we pay. Service gets us out of self by focussing on others.

Your personal goals may be different. You can use my goals, borrow from the goals of Jedi Philosophy, or create your own list. The important thing is that you demonstrate the daily practices in some tangible way. Please also use this journal to record how you have demonstrated your goals through the week.

I believe that unless we determine what our purpose is life can seem pointless. The mindless pursuit of hedonistic pleasures and distractions may kill time and bring fleeting satisfaction, but they do not bring a sense of enduring fulfilment and happiness. You probably agree with this statement otherwise you would not be here reading this. The idea of journaling would probably not grab those who live only for the sake of the moment.

Journaling is an excellent way to track your progress on the path to self-improvement and self-discovery. Keeping a journal also allows you to express your ideas, thoughts and hopes. The General and Emperor Marcus Aurelius kept a private journal in the tradition of the Ancient Stoics. The writings reveal a personal practice of daily reflection and contemplation in the Stoic tradition. We know this book today as “Meditations”. It remains a leading source of inspiration in people’s lives 1700 years after it was written and serves as an example of how powerful journaling can be. Try it yourself.

WEEK 1 REFLECTION

“In a dark place we find ourselves, and a little more knowledge lights our way” – Yoda

Why are you here? What do you want from life? Where do you want to go? How do you plan to get there? These are often the questions we ask ourselves as we face a New Year. We reflect upon the last year. Some of us take time to count our blessings and successes as well as failures. We assess what went well and identify where improvements can be made. We take inventory.

If you are about to start a daily journal the chances are you are seeking to change. That change may be specific to your relationships, career, health, or finances. You may be unhappy where your life is currently at and you want to make broad and sweeping changes. Perhaps things are generally going well but you want to do better in some or all areas of your life.

Self-reflection and introspection are a powerful act which can guide us on a path to enlightenment. The exercise is not meant to be self-absorption. We are not using it to think of ourselves only in a selfish or self-centered way. The goal is not to garner a spirit of self will or to blame others. Self-reflection is to realize our goals and understand where we are in relation to those goals. This leads to self-knowledge. With self-knowledge comes the freedom to change once we decide to act.

Take some time to reflect on your life. Consider the past year and go back as far as you want to. List your achievements for the last 12 months. Highlight your successes. Now do the same for the last 5 years and if you dare go back as far as a decade.

The milestones of your life may be anything you consider significant. It may include finishing school and university, academic achievements, career highlights, military or

community service, business achievements and financial growth. List the things that make you proud. Include your family milestones and relationships with partners, family, friends, and associates.

List all your key attributes that you feel describe you in a positive way. Words might include trustworthy, humble, funny, determined, intelligent, kind, considerate and compassionate.

Now list where things have not gone so well in your life. List the areas you regret, or wish could be improved. Inventory your faults to others as well as your flaws and failures. Be honest but do not self-deprecate yourself in the process. Confronting our mistakes and failures are essential if we want to move on and improve our lives.

List your character flaws and faults which you identify as negative or unproductive. These might be impatient, compulsive, obsessive, aggressive, resentful, demanding, inflexible, bigoted, and dishonest.

Take the time to meditate on this exercise. Self-reflection can be a confronting as well as a rewarding experience. Unless we know who, we are and come to terms with it, we cannot hope to move forward.

Self-reflection requires a lot of honesty and introspection. We must be completely honest with ourselves and realistic in the way we look at ourselves. A mirror must be held up and we must confront who we are and where we have come from. We must face the good with the bad to make the change we want to be. This can be hard but persevere we must.

DAY 1

“What will I find?” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 2

“Only what you take with you” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 3

“It’s a chance for you to make a fresh start.” – Mon Mothma

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 4

“Search your Feelings” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 5

“To be Jedi is to face the truth, and choose” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 6

“A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 7

“Use your time. You’ll find one day that you have too little of it.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 2 RESOLVE

“I want to learn the ways of the Force and become a Jedi like my father” – Luke Skywalker (A New Hope)

In a tragic scene which has become one of the most iconic in cinematic history Luke discovers his Uncle and Aunt murdered by the Empire, their bodies outside the ruins of their homestead. Grief quickly turns to fear and hate and in that dark place he finds his resolve and answers the call to adventure.

In Week 1 we reflected on where we had come from and where we wanted to go on our Journey. We used self-reflection to evaluate our strengths and weaknesses. Through that, we recognized that in order to change we must have resolve. We cannot rely solely on others and must be active in our own transformation. Others can act as guides, mentors, or coaches but you are the author of your own change. You are the protagonist in your own “Hero’s Journey”.

Once you have decided to do something it is important to clarify in your mind why you are doing it. We are often tempted to pursue a new goal and set off before we are prepared or even willing. New year’s resolutions are an example. We give ourselves an ultimatum to change and improve our lives but fail to commit. We lack resolve. As a result, we stumble aimlessly forward without a well-defined plan or even any objective. We then falter and abandon the prize we had set ourselves. A goal should always be articulated in a way that it defines the “why” and “what” you are trying to achieve before racing off to achieve it.

A study conducted through Scranton University and reported in the Journal of Substance Abuse found that only 19 percent of individuals follow through with New Year’s Resolutions. The main reason is resolutions fail is because they lack the resolve,

the commitment and the “why”. The main reasons alcoholics and other addicts fail to recover is because they fail to admit they have a problem in the first place. We desire change, but desire alone is not usually going to get you far. Resolve and commitment will.

The *transtheoretical model of behavior change* states here are six stages people go through on their journey to recovery. This is equally applied to any change in pattern or behavior that requires concerted effort and commitment.

Precontemplation: Denial of a problem contrary to the opinion of others and apparent evidence.

- *Contemplation*: Admission of a problem. Exploration of the costs and benefits of change.
- *Preparation*: You become mentally prepared to change through acceptance. Surrendering to the process.
- *Action*: Doing the Work. Demonstrating the change, you wish to see even if you have to “fake it till you make it”.
- *Maintenance*: Taking steps every day to ensure that the change becomes embedded over time.

Relapse is the sixth stage. Almost everyone who has attempted a change has slipped into old habits or suffered a setback. True failure is quitting while there is still the chance to continue the journey. On the path to being Jedi you will meet many obstacles and challenges. The temptation to fall off the path and quit will sometimes be greater than the effort required to pick yourself up and stay the course. Relapse should not be a failure unless it is terminal.

If you had zero problems in your life and everything was perfect, there would have no reason to change anything and no point in being here. Likewise, if you are not ready to admit you have a problem or are not fully prepared and committed to change then the change you seek will not happen. No magical date will change that. Whether you start on January 1 or any

other day makes no difference if you do not have the resolve to start with.

So why are you here? Why Jedi Philosophy? What are you seeking to change or improve about yourself? Do you really want to change or does the idea appeal to you more than the work? If you can arrive at answers to these questions, then you admit you have a problem and are willing to change. You resolve to improve. Preparation and action usually follow. For some people this may be self-evident, for others it may be harder to define or articulate. Often, it is easier to keep it simple.

Write down one thing you would change about yourself this very moment. Then ask yourself “Why” five times writing down the answer that comes to mind under each line. Dig deep to get to the “Why” to uncover hidden emotions and motivations and become more self-aware. I had a deep-seated habit of catastrophic thinking. This affected my relationships and I needed to address it. In the end I had to confront that the way I reacted to adversity was essentially based on fear of punishment or loss that stemmed from a traumatic childhood.

What do I want to change?

I want to stop overreacting

Why?

Because it makes me anxious and upset.

Why?

Because I think the worst possible outcome.

Why?

Because I have no control.

Why?

Because I let the fear and anger dictate my reactions.

What upset me was not the problems I faced but how I perceived them. I can choose to allow every single bump on the road trip me up or I can accept that things will not always go as I plan. I can decide not to let it affect me that way. The reason I needed to change was because my behavior was affecting my

relationships. I wanted to achieve a higher degree of peace and serenity responding to life in a mindful way rather than reacting to it. By conceptualizing it that way I became more invested in addressing that fault and more willing to change.

Without having resolve, change is unlikely to be enduring or meaningful, “half measures avail us nothing”. You need to care passionately about the goal and be single-minded about it giving it the focus it deserves. Accept the odds and do not let people dictate them to you. Have a plan in mind and a destination but do not cling to either as plans change and goals may be unattainable. You need to accept that change is not easy and must be prepared to endure the obstacles, challenges and setbacks that will get in your way.

In order to start on the Hero’s Journey, you need to accept your call to adventure. You need to leave the “Ordinary World” behind and venture into the new world. To do that you need a reason to be here. You need to answer with full conviction the “Why”. You need to have Jedi Resolve and be prepared to change despite the part of you that fears, and resists change. This is your “call to adventure”. Do you answer that call as Luke did?

DAY 8

“It was my duty! It remains my duty!” – Jocasta Nu

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 9

“Training to become a Jedi is not an easy challenge. And even if you succeed, it's a hard life” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 10

“The road lies before you, Anakin Skywalker. Will you walk it alone?” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 11

“Remember... you always have a choice to be better. You always have a choice to... to pick the right path. Even if that choice comes a little late” – Asajj Ventress to Quinlan Vos

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 12

“I shall do what I must, Obi-Wan” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 13

“There is always hope, my friend, though it often comes in forms not looked for. The key is knowing how to see it and seizing that opportunity” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 14

“I want to learn the ways of the Force and become a Jedi like my father” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 3 INTENT

“A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack.” – Yoda

The first thing most people imagine when they hear the word Jedi is Luke Skywalker or Obi-wan Kenobi with Lightsaber in hand rushing towards an enemy as they deflect laser bolts. The image of the warrior is prominent in people’s mind. It is true that the fictional Jedi are armed with Lightsabers the same way Monks of the east and west were armed with staffs and martial arts to defend themselves. To imagine the Lightsaber as a weapon of offense is an error in fact it was a symbol of the Jedi principle of protection and defense. The intent of the Lightsaber was defense not offense. It was only used as a weapon as a last resort and never in anger.

With every decision we make there is always an intent, a purpose. Why do we make the choices that we do? What is our intent? When I first approached the Jedi community and revealed I wanted to train in Jedi philosophy I was asked to spend some time thinking about “Why Jedi”. What was the intent of my choice? Would it sustain my practice past a few weeks or months? Did I realize it was an internal path and one I would have to keep largely to myself? I found that being able to reason rather than rationalize my intent before doing something was more likely to align it to who I am and want to be.

The second step and virtue on the Eight-fold path of Buddhism is “Right Intent”. Intention is more than resolve. Through resolve we decide to do something, but it is not enough on its own. We must have “Right Intent” in order to stay the course.

Resolve and Intent are two different things and of course they work in tandem. Both must stay as strong as the day we set off for the duration of the journey. There are days when you will stagger and fall but intent keeps us moving forward even when

resolve falters. We strive for outcomes but must also accept what is in our control as well as what is outside of it.

Intention is flawed if our intent is:

- To draw something to ourselves for selfish gain.
- To force something away through ill will.
- To do harm to ourselves or others.

To counteract flawed intention, one's intention must:

- Be based on *renunciation*. We must be willing to let go of the causes of our suffering. Desires and clinging attachments to people, places, things, circumstance, and flawed ideas tightly held all lead to suffering as they are impermanent and transient. Addiction is a form of rampant attachment. Luke Skywalker casting his Light Saber aside was a renunciation of attachment to old strongly held beliefs.
- Derived from good will. When we do things, we essentially seek to serve others before ourselves. Caring for others is a corner stone of many philosophies including Jedi Philosophy.
- Inherently harmless. The Hippocratic Oath compels Doctors to "*primum non nocere*", first do no harm. Compassion and responsibility for our own actions is a Jedi trait. Jedi are accountable for their actions.

Right intent is expressed through thought, words and actions. Being mindful of intention is important. We should consider the impact of our choices on self and others. The potential consequences either immediate or delayed should be considered. We may do something with the best of intentions but not realize the consequences. By contemplating our actions and looking beyond outward far beyond ourselves we become more mindful of the reach of our intent. Always ask what your intent is and whether it serves or not. Intent is the key.

DAY 15

“No! Unfortunate that you rushed to face him... that incomplete was your training. Not ready for the burden were you.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 16

“I will be the most powerful Jedi ever. I promise you. I will even learn to stop people from dying.” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 17

“I'm not Resistance. I'm not a hero. I'm a stormtrooper. Like all of them, I was taken from a family I'll never know. And raised to do one thing. But my first battle, I made a choice. I wasn't gonna kill for them. So, I ran.” – Storm Trooper Finn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 18

“Right or wrong, this is my movie, this is my decision, and this is my creative vision, and if people don't like it, they don't have to see it.” – George Lucas

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 19

“Stay afraid but do it anyway. What’s important is the action. You don’t have to wait to be confident. Just do it and eventually the confidence will follow.” – Carrie Fisher

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 20

“If you make decisions out of fear you are more likely to be wrong” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 21

“Truly wonderful the mind of a child is.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 4 JEDI METHOD

“A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.” – Yoda

Continuing from the theme of Intent it is important to understand the “Jedi Method”.

The Jedi Method is a formula used to apply mindfulness into our actions. Our desire is for an outcome which aligns with our values. The Jedi Method states:

$$\text{Intent} + \text{Action} = \text{Outcome}$$

If our Intent is right and our actions follow suit than there is a high likelihood, while never guaranteed, that outcome will agree with action and intent. Action and Intent is applied in a world in which we do not exercise supreme control over all external factors. We cannot foresee the future or account for every single possible variable. Our Knowledge is incomplete. We only have what we control (Intent and Action). Outcome is not always in our control.

1. Ask yourself before committing to an action “*Could this action lead to suffering?*” If the answer is “yes” reconsider it after applying ethics and your personal value system to a decision.
2. During the action ask, “*Is this action causing suffering?*” if so, then reconsider the need to continue or make adjustments that correct the error.
3. After the action consider “*Will this action lead to suffering?*” if so, then seek to remedy, learn from it, and avoid repetition in the future.

“Ends do not justify the means”. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions”. These are aphorisms that hold true. Remember these.

To be Jedi is to be mindful of intent, action, and outcome. Always ask do my intent and actions align with my values and principles as a Jedi? Do they agree with the Jedi Code? Will the outcomes be something that will benefit others as well as myself?

Remember that the answers to these questions will often depend on your viewpoint and motivations. Human bias ensures that the individual will interpret their actions as better intended than others. Human tragedies have often resulted from the “best of intentions”. If unsure, ask someone you trust.

We live in an imperfect system and everyone makes mistakes. All that one can reasonably expect is that we take due diligence in our actions. We are accountable and responsible for the choices we make. If our intent is challenged, we can defend our actions with conviction and without hesitation.

DAY 22

“Focus on what you can do, instead of what you can't.”
- Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 23

“Few things of worth were accomplished in life without risk.” -
Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 24

“Acceptance doesn’t guard you from regret.” - Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 25

“Sometimes we must let go of our pride and do what is requested of us.” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 26

“An affinity for combat was a necessary evil, but one that could be tolerated only when a Jedi held himself back and used it only to defend people. Seeing the line between offensive action and defensive was, at the best of times, difficult.” - Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 27

“That’s good. You’ve taken your first step into a larger world.”
– Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 28

“A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 5 FOCUS

“Always remember, your focus determines your reality” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Focus determines your reality. If you focus on wrongs you energize anger, resentment, and frustration. If you focus on forgiveness you energize patience, tolerance, and compassion. Focusing on fault leads to accusation and fails to lead to resolution. Shifting attention to finding a solution energizes action.

It is better to say “things are tough right now, but it will get better with hard work” than “Why me? Life is not fair! Nothing I do seem to matter”. The attitude that you bring will determine your focus. Your focus will set the color of your day and ultimately the tone of your life. Unhappy people generally have unhappy lives.

Focus on the negative and we energize it. Throw a positive light on anything and we give it life. Always focus on where you want to go. Focus on what is in our control as opposed to what is not. What we focus on and energize ultimately determines our life. Our thoughts, concerns and moods shift continuously rarely remaining static for long. Emotions change through the day in response to internal and external stimuli. One minute we feel content and happy, the next we are in a self-made drama clouded with anger, fear, or sadness. Much of the time we are largely oblivious to why.

We are slaves to the very tool we need to master to achieve equanimity, peace and serenity, the mind.

Meditation is one of the best ways to improve your focus. A minimum of 20 minutes a day should be undertaken to focus the mind on the breath, a mantra, music, an object, or visualizations.

Breathing exercises like the Wim Hoff method is another good way to center and focus the mind.

Sustaining focus through the day is harder. Mindfulness sounds easy but takes extraordinary effort. One of the hardest mental exercises I have ever tried is the “seven-day mental diet” as suggested by Emmet Fox. The exercise takes extreme focus and attention on our moods, emotions, and thoughts. You have to apply mindfulness to every moment of the day. Verry quickly you soon begin to realize that the mind is like a tree of chattering monkeys. We barely have control over the mind.

“For seven days you must not allow yourself to dwell for a single moment on any kind of negative thought. You must watch yourself as a cat watches a mouse...you must not under any pretense allow your mind to dwell on any thought that is not positive, constructive, optimistic, kind.” – Emmet Fox.

The “seven-day mental diet” is an experience in mind control. To achieve even a day of the diet is an outstanding achievement of effort. To go the entire seven days without entertaining a negative thought or emotion is truly a feat. A Jedi would be hard pressed to achieve it for that amount of time.

The key of course is focus. Images, thoughts, and impressions drift in and out of consciousness all of the time. Some are passive like passing clouds and others are intrusive demanding attention and response. It may not seem like it at times but what we choose to focus on is entirely within our power. You have the potential to rein in your mind and harness its potential.

Take the seven-day mental diet. Give it a go and record your progress over the next seven days. Your ego will hate it but you will be astounded by the effect it has on you. I agree with Emmet Fox that it is one of the most truly outstanding things you can do. To summarize this is how it works:

1. Set a day and time to commence the diet. Any day or time will work however it is best to start in the morning as you rise fresh. Prepare mentally the night before.
2. For seven days' pay very close attention to where your mind is at. Focus on where your thoughts are leading. The goal is to immediately put out any negative train of thought. The diet is to refuse energizing any negative thoughts or emotions.
3. Any self-defeating, self-deprecating, attacking, or negative thoughts that enters your consciousness must be immediately silenced before they elicit an emotional or behavioral response from you. Do not struggle with the thought, simply let it go.
4. If you can avoid situations or people you are sure will get the better of you. The diet most often fails early. The longer you can go the easier it will be.
5. Be honest. If you get angry at someone cutting you off in traffic or harbor resentment for even a moment you have fallen of the diet. You must start again. Take a few days and when you are ready start afresh.
6. Note: If you are unsure if you have broken the diet just ask yourself did this thing or person cause you to invest negative emotions? Did you focus on it? If so, you have broken the diet. If still unsure look inward, your heart will reveal the truth. Fleeting thoughts and emotions do not count if you arrest them before they take hold.
7. Journal each day on the diet. Like progression in any exercise, you will find the more you do it the better you will get. Don't get frustrated (that's a failure) just learn from where you went wrong and try again. After a while it gets fun and you learn a lot about yourself as you are paying close attention to where you focus yourself. You are your own observer for a week.
8. Keep it to yourself. Do not tell people what you aim to do. I find that boasting a project or plans to friends and family can render it to the "later" pile or guarantee failure. Stephen King himself said he would never discuss a planned book with anyone until it was written. If you

attempt the seven-day mental diet and succeed by all means share your experience.

An audio of Emmet Fox's pamphlet "The Seven Day Mental Diet" can be found [here](#). The piece was written in the 1930's but remains as relevant today as it did during the Great Depression.

If the Seven Day Mental Diet is too great a challenge you can also try the Wim Hoff breathing method for 30 days. Note how your focus and overall vitality improves. Download the Wim Hoff app by visiting the web site [here](#) .

DAY 29

“Focus on what you can do, instead of what you can't.”
- Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 30

*“In a dark place we find ourselves, and a little more knowledge
lights our way.” – Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 31

“Anakin, this path has been placed before you. The choice is yours alone.” - Shmi Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 32

“As a Jedi. If you'll show me the way.” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 33

“Easy to break (the wall) if you have the will.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 34

“A great leap forward sometimes requires two steps back”. –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 35

“Always remember, your focus determines your reality” –
Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 6 ROUTINE

“Training to be a Jedi is not an easy challenge, and even if you succeed, it’s a hard life.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Life is hard and so is being Jedi. The Jedi Code, doing daily practices, applying principles, and proactively working on self-improvement all take effort. Change was never meant to be easy. It can be hard. Sometimes it can take everything you have.

The Jedi had a training program which included years of Temple Study in Lore, Ethics, History and Diplomacy as well as intense physical and martial arts training. There were long hours of meditation and Lightsaber practice. The Jedi student was assigned to a Jedi Knight who acted as mentor and teacher. The apprenticeship lasted until the Padawan was ready to be a Jedi.

There were dangerous trials the Jedi student had to pass. Training then continued for life and Jedi rose in rank as they demonstrated mastery and skill. A Jedi also knew that despite years of dedicated training they had not learned everything there was to know.

We do not know everything, and we never will. There is always more to learn, even the wisest and most experienced Jedi Master never stops learning. To claim “complete mastery” over any subject and announce that there is nothing more to learn is fool hardy at best, dangerous at worst.

So how do we approach our training? A good first step is to create and maintain a routine which will ensure that you stay on path in your journey to competency and after many decades, mastery.

This journal can serve as one small act done daily forming a routine and a habit that has beneficial outcomes. As a Jedi we should be doing our daily practices *daily*. This means every day, without fail, no excuses (unless you are too ill to move). We

exercise, meditate, apply mindfulness in our interactions with the world, practice diplomacy and demonstrate self-discipline *every day*. Unless you incorporate the practices into some sort of routine you will fall well short of the mark.

My daily routine is a simple one, but it does take effort. The benefits cannot be understated. Very often what we most need is a routine and a set of goals to work towards. The best way to set goals is to break them down. With simple and achievable targets that challenge you, you will progress. Over time you ratchet up the effort a little. Always start slowly but be consistent and work to improve.

My daily routine comprises of practices I have adopted from the Jedi Path and the Stoics and adapted to my needs. Feel free to come up with your own program and stick to it for a while, then modify if required to suit your lifestyle, limitations and needs.

Morning

On rising, practice a short period of gratitude. Remind yourself of one or two or more things you are grateful for as you come into this day. Record them in the journal. This will put you on a good grounding. Avoid jumping straight on to your social media account to check missed posts and likes. Start with a fresh mind.

Welcome the day. A new day means new opportunity. Be thankful for it. Every morning try to greet the sunrise in its splendor. Otherwise take a quiet moment and imagine the sun coming up over the horizon. Take a moment to contemplate the grand scale of the cosmos and infinite time and to remember that this day is unique and will never be repeated. You only get one shot at it. You can take this time to meditate for 15-30 minutes if you prefer to meditate in the morning.

Spend a moment in contemplation. You can journal your thoughts on any topic or on the Jedi quote provided for the day. Grab a mental theme for the day. It can be anything taken from a quote, a line from a book or your own inspiration. Set in your

mind or on paper three things you aim to achieve today and work towards it.

Consider the things that may go wrong. Remind yourself that through the day you will encounter people who are rude and obstinate, that your plans may get derailed. Tell yourself you will face obstacles and difficulties and how you react will reflect on you. Resolve not to let the things you cannot control affect you in negative ways.

During the Day

You will apply diplomacy and mindfulness throughout the day frequently checking in your inner world by simply asking yourself “how am I feeling right now?”.

Take time out from your responsibilities to simply focus on the breath. Go for a walk and notice things around you, the sky, trees, birds, and people. Take the time to really notice the taste of your food and drink rather than scoffing it down mindlessly. Spend some time surrounded by nature each day, even it is only the local park. Enjoy a moment of solitude and silence if you can find it.

Do one act of kindness, a service, every day for someone. It can be anything, random or predetermined; an offer of assistance or help to someone struggling with a load, giving up your seat on the bus to someone who needs it more, a simple courtesy such as opening the door. A smile or kind word or an act of charity.

Deny yourself something nice or practice some form of denial to remind myself not to get too attached to comforts and ease. I practice periodic intermittent fasting on occasion. In addition to reminding myself that food is a precious resource not to be taken for granted. Many people find that occasional fasting makes them feel better (Check with your Doctor before intermittent fasting). You might decide to leave your jacket at home on a cold day. Run the occasional cold shower! Sleep on the floor occasionally if you are adventurous.

Take a moment to undertake negative visualization. Consider a realistic scenario that might occur which could ultimately change your life or at least make it unpleasant. This could include ill health, unemployment, poverty, ridicule or hate from others, betrayal by friends or colleagues. This should be done without attaching emotion. Imagine you are watching it play out in a movie. See yourself dealing with the situation and overcoming it; visualize yourself practicing acceptance and equanimity.

Do at least 30 minutes of exercise or physical training (this can also be in the morning or evening). Remember to have rest days to avoid over training (Stretch / Yoga on off days). However, do some form of physical activity every day even if it is only a short walk or some light stretching. You can also practice breathing exercises like the Wim Hoff method.

Evening

Spend at least 20 minutes in meditation (this can also be during the day or in the morning). Review the day, what went right, what went wrong and consider how you can improve. Journal your thoughts. Take some quiet time to relax and enjoy your free time any way you like. Thank the Force for another day.

Self-Discipline is the key to a healthy and productive routine that achieves outcomes. The only person who is accountable to you is you. No one is going to force you to do this. There is no Jedi Knight pushing you to excel yourself. You will have to be the one who does that.

Aim high but forget about achieving perfect practice. Perfection is an ideal. In the real world we can only do our best. There will be days you skip the routine, days when you are too tired or do not feel like it. These are the days that will best demonstrate where your commitment is and how far you have come on the journey. Every moment you have a choice. *Do or do not.*

DAY 36

“Good is a point of view, Anakin.” — Palpatine

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 37

“The longing you seek is not behind you, it is in front of you” –
Maz Kanata

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 38

“Remember the Force will be with you always.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 39

“Close your eyes. Feel it. The light...it’s always been there. It will guide you.” – Maz Kanata

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 40

“Many of the truths that we cling to depend on our point of view.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 41

“Do. Or do not. There is no try”. – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 42

“Training to be a Jedi is not an easy challenge, and even if you succeed, it’s a hard life.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 7 SELF DISCIPLINE

“Do. Or do not. There is no try” – Yoda

Self-Discipline is often the one single element that determines success in life. The act of self-control is the ability to move in a direction despite internal resistance. Self-discipline provides the momentum and drive to keep going and to follow through on the promises that we make to ourselves and others.

When others are not looking or directing us to do something it is self-discipline that we draw on. We may not want to get out of bed in the morning to shiver in the cold, the thought of working when we could be resting might not appeal, yet we do it. The only thing preventing us from making the wrong or most preferred decisions and taking the easy option is Self-Discipline.

The benefits of self-discipline extend into all aspects of your life and lead to success in virtually every endeavor. Self-disciplined individuals are more focused on their task. They are committed to achieving desired outcomes and will stick with a task to the end. Being driven they will often lead from the front.

Self-disciplined people are less impulsive and more in tune with their emotions, they are less likely to lose their temper or panic. Being motivated and mission orientated means more efficiency and productivity; time wastage is reduced. The self-disciplined often seem to have more free time and are less stressed and more in control of their lives than those that are ill disciplined. Besides being successful, those with self-discipline are also happier and more content with life.

Self-Discipline is the ability to conquer one's self and to hold that fort indefinitely. It is about owning yourself and taking charge of your thoughts, words, and actions.

Self-Discipline is a key Jedi Trait. Without it a prospective Jedi would be unable to complete the rigorous training and character

formation required to be a Jedi Knight. Luke Skywalker lacked self-discipline when he first met Obi-wan Kenobi on Tatooine. He was impatient and impulsive and highly idealistic.

By the time Luke met Yoda on Dagobah he was no longer a young and inexperienced farmhand, but he still required training in self-discipline. Luke had been through some adventures and had lived through some close calls. Among other things Luke had destroyed the Death Star during the Battle of Yavin. Quickly ascending the ranks of the Rebel alliance Skywalker continued to see action including a decisive battle on the frozen planet of Hoth. Despite his military rank and war experience, Luke still lacked self-discipline until Yoda began to train him on Dagobah.

Although some people have inherent self-control, self-discipline is generally inspired and taught by others. We see the benefits through positive example and with guidance from good mentors we learn the art and skill of self-discipline. A Karate instructor for example will teach his students self-discipline through constant positive reinforcement, mentoring and instruction. The students observe the instructor and through example and encouragement begin to apply the skills in their training. With time and practice the skill translates into other areas of life such as study, work, and relationships.

Anyone can be disciplined through threats or rewards. Self-discipline is different as it comes from the individual and is not imposed. Self-discipline is a virtue that takes time, practice, and a mentor to become ingrained in the individual.

Being self-disciplined is being able to self-regulate. No one need for anyone to look over our shoulder and check what we are doing. The assumption is that a person with self-discipline and integrity can be left alone to do their task or fulfill a promise.

Once you develop self-discipline, you find you are able to do things that previously you were unable or unwilling to do without being pushed or forced to do. The mental barriers that

prevent us from our goals start to fall as we apply ourselves and follow through with our commitments. Self-discipline becomes the engine for positive and continuous change in your life. Self-discipline then equals success.

Challenge yourself to being more self-disciplined. Using this journal every day and doing the Jedi Practices takes self-discipline but it is not for everyone. There is no excuse not to try let alone not to “Do”.

Even for a few days try one or some of the following if it is not already part of your routine. See if you can make it a habit. These are daily activities that you can start and stick to by applying the Jedi principle of Self-Discipline:

1. Exercise daily: Do 30 minutes or more of exercise within your physical limitations. This might be a brisk walk, a jog, a fast-paced run or a strength or endurance-based activity in the gym or at the park. You decide, the key is to get moving especially when you do not feel like it. Just Do it.
2. Meditate: Sit for 15 minutes or more. Focus on the breath. If your mind wanders to stray thoughts or you are distracted gently return to the breath and continue. There are free meditation apps and podcasts as well as guided meditations on Youtube to assist. The Jedi Living channel has excellent guided meditations. It takes self-control to sit for more than 5 minutes without being distracted by the “monkey mind”. You can also do breathing exercises like the Wim Hoff method.
3. Fast: Cut one temptation from your life for a period of a week. It may be junk food, soda, alcohol or tobacco or another food item you have been wanting to cut back on. A weeklong sugar fast may be one that will challenge you. Try extending it longer. Intermittent fasting also takes self-discipline however before you start fasting a day or two a week or change your diet speak to a health professional and listen to your body. Health and Safety first.

4. Shut it Down: Social Media (Face Book, Twitter, Instagram) is distracting and can be a huge time waster as well as introduce toxic energy into your day. The news media is another source of negativity that demands our attention and emotional response. You may find taking time out from Face Book and switching off the news when it comes on reduces potential anxiety or anger. Leave the TV switched off and leave your cell phone on silent for a day. The world can still function without you being tuned in 24 hours. You won't miss much media-fasting for a week.
5. Don't Wait: Have you been putting off a health kick for a while waiting for the right time? Are you thinking about starting martial arts but have been making excuses and keep passing up the "try before you buy: three free lessons" offer at the local Krav Maga class or Karate Dojo? You bought a guitar but don't seem to ever be in the mood to pick it up and start learning? Well, just start, stop procrastinating and do it. These things will not happen by themselves; you have to decide and act accordingly.

Yoda reminded Luke Skywalker that it was entirely up to him whether he chose to succeed or fail as a Jedi. Luke had been taught much by the Jedi Master and was shown the path that he needed to take to fulfill his destiny. It was now up to Luke to decide how to act. Self-discipline was going to be the virtue that took him there.

What will you do?

DAY 43

“For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 44

"The longing you seek is not behind you, it is in front of you" –
Maz Kanata

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 45

“The greatest teacher, failure is” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 46

“It’s a chance for you to make a fresh start.” – Mon Mothma

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 47

“In my experience there is no such thing as luck” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 48

“A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 49

“Do. Or do not. There is no try” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 8 MEDITATION

“You will know (the good from the bad) when you are calm, at peace, passive.” – Yoda

When we think of the Buddha, we imagine a spiritual person sitting in a lotus position meditating. There is a serene expression on his face. The image captures a sense of peace, calm, and equanimity. Nothing could disturb that state. Meditation is like a peddle in a pond but it also a rock in a sea of chaos. By sitting you clear your mind of the noise and pollution of the day. Meditation allows us to unify body, mind and soul for a short time. You are unified with your true state of being.

To Jedi the practice of meditation is more than a daily practice or a discipline. The Jedi use meditation and contemplation to better understand the nature of the Force and to seek connection with the Force that resides within.

The fictional Jedi are often presented in the state of meditation. Yoda levitating above a forest floor, Obi-Wan Kenobi cross legged with eyes closed and head tilted slightly forward, his back straight and hands cupped before him is how we imagine it. Yet meditation need not seem mysterious or mystical. It is not the sole domain of Monastics, Warrior-Monks and Mystics.

Meditation is not about escape or withdrawal from life it is about being completely in engaged in life. It is about knowing yourself. The reason to meditate is to bring body, mind, and soul to the present moment and to who you truly are.

Meditation is not zoning out as some would believe. It is being completely aware of what is going on inside and outside of yourself. You are allowing your body to sleep while the mind is completely awake, present, and engaged without being distracted. Meditation is an active process of focus and attention in the present moment.

Meditation is a personal practice. Each person will find a different way to sit in meditation or contemplation. It can be done lying down, sitting, in a lotus position or even walking. Lying down may bring on sleep and the lotus position can be painful. You can use a straight back chair and sit with both feet on the floor and hands crossed on your lap. With head tilted slightly forward, get comfortable and take three deep breaths to clear your mind. Now close your eyes and commence a mantra or listen to a guided meditation. Otherwise relax your eyes and focus on an object a few feet away. Allow your awareness to expand outward, growing larger with every breath.

Now allow yourself to relax completely and scan your body from feet to head. Linger at each body part imagine a white light there enveloping it and glowing softly. As you work your focus upward feel each body part releasing and relaxing as the light spreads. With the end of the body scan return to the breath or the mantra or continue to allow the guide to take you through the meditation. If thoughts start to form in your mind, simply let them go imagining them to be like clouds passing in the wind. Allow any body distractions such as itching or aches to gently dissipate without getting distracted. Shift your body slightly or scratch the itch if required and resume focus without breaking attention. As the time comes allow yourself to gently exit the meditation. Look around you and see how everything appears clearer and sharper.

You can meditate to music, a meditation chime or simply by following the breath. Some people use a mantra to help them focus. You can use “*calm, at peace, passive*”, each word follows the other with the breath. “*I am one with the Force and the Force is with me*” is another mantra that can be used. You can meditate indoors or find a quiet and secluded place. An accomplished practitioner can meditate anywhere.

How and where you meditate is up to you. You will get the most benefit if you practice daily for 20 minutes or more. The benefits are emotional and spiritual balance and stability. Meditation leads to peace, harmony, and serenity.

DAY 50

*“Remember, concentrate on the moment. Feel, don’t think” –
Qui-Gon Jinn*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 51

“Your eyes can deceive you; don't trust them.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 52

“The Force is neither light nor dark, master nor slave, but a balance between extremes” – Lanoree Brock

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 53

“For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 54

“a Jedi can feel the Force flowing through him”. – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 55

“Use the Force, Luke let go” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 56

“You will know (the good from the bad) when you are calm, at peace” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 9 PHYSICAL FITNESS

*“Run! Yes. A Jedi’s strength
flows from the Force...” – Yoda*

A Jedi must be physically fit to accomplish their mission. Jedi Philosophy is one of the few practical philosophies eastern or western outside of the martial arts which have a strong emphasis on the importance of physical fitness. Most other philosophies focus on the mental and spiritual state of the individual and overlook the holistic nature of the being which must also encompass the body. Jedi Philosophy considers spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being. A holistic approach is taken that focuses on each element. To focus on the spiritual or the mental without training the body is counter intuitive to the Jedi. The elements are treated as one.

For obvious reasons physical fitness was important to the fictional Jedi. The physicality of the Jedi trials was an example of the level of fitness required to be a Jedi. Lightsaber combat drills and the ability to move quickly and with instinct were all part of Jedi training. The Jedi had incredible endurance. If we compared the physical fitness of a fictional Jedi to the real world we would have to look to professional athletes or top tier elite special force operators to come even close to it.

Obviously, very few of us are going to aim for a supreme level of fitness to the level of an elite athlete or a SF operator. For a start most of us do not have the time to dedicate to that level of training. We also do not have professional instructors, nutritionists and allied medical professionals like physiotherapists and exercise physiologists to support our progress. That is no excuse though. Many of us sitting on the couch right now or eating a doughnut in front of the computer know we can do something to improve our health and fitness.

The problem many of us have is motivation. The body may be willing, but the mind makes excuses. If you can get your mind willing, the body will follow. However, your goals need to be realistic or you will soon become discouraged and quit.

I can share my fitness regime but it's not for everyone. Most of what I do is a mixture of Army PT meets Street Workout. I run once or twice a week up to 5 miles and train most days doing body weight exercises. Occasionally I do free weights in a gym or a session of high intensity interval training which is a series of exercises followed by kickboxing on a heavy bag. The regime works for me. It provides me strength and conditioning.

How you choose to keep fit is up to you. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends a minimum of 5 days of moderate intensity aerobic exercise for 30 minutes or more such as walking or light exercise. More vigorous or intense aerobic exercise should be undertaken 3-4 days a week for 25 minutes.

The AHA also recommends 2-3 sessions a week of strength building activity. These are guidelines and individual programs will vary depending on your age, overall health, and personal fitness goals. If you plan to run a marathon your fitness goals and training will differ to starting a weightlifting regime to bulk up or lose fat and build lean muscle.

Exercise allows us time to process our emotions and clear the mind. Endorphins are released and we feel better. Our mood starts to improve, and life becomes more enjoyable and fun. Team sports or group classes are a great way to socialize. Park Run* is an example where running brings both fitness and social benefits and it is completely free. You can meet people and have fun. The aim is to get moving. How you do it is up to you.

The health benefits of physical exercise cannot be understated. Exercise will not only change your life it might even save it and give you decades of quality life to look forward to.

*<https://www.parkrun.com>

DAY 57

“..But beware of the dark side. Anger... fear... aggression...” –
Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 58

“...The dark side of the Force are they...”– Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 59

“..Easily they flow, quick to join you in a fight...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 60

“...If once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny, consume you it will, as it did Obi-wan’s apprentice...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 61

“Is the dark side stronger?” – Luke

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 62

*“No... no... no. Quicker, easier,
more seductive.” – Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 63

“But how am I to know the good side from the bad?” – Luke

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 10 AWARENESS

“You will know when you are at peace, calm, passive...” – Yoda

Mindfulness is defined as “The practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.” Mindfulness is the practice of being present in the here and now. In other words, being mentally right here in this present moment as you read these words.

The journey into a philosophy for life begins with awareness of the ability to analyse our own existence. Awareness is nothing more than knowledge and mindfulness of one’s personal thoughts, biases, beliefs, feelings and place in time and space. Consciousness of self is awareness of one’s inner existence and the effect the self exerts on the world.

A Jedi has acute awareness. She will sense every quiver, every sensation and emotion in her body without reacting to it. She will allow distracting thoughts to pass like clouds without engaging them. A Jedi is completely aware of what is happening inside and outside of her with each passing breath. The Jedi is aware and focussed in the present moment without concern for the past or future. A Jedi uses observation, reason, and objectivity in becoming aware of a situation and determining a course of action and when making a judgement.

When Obi-wan Kenobi sat meditating before he fought Darth Maul he was clearing his mind of all distracting thoughts and emotions. Luke cleared his mind of all doubts and fears before taking the fatal shot that destroyed the Death Star. The Jedi relied on awareness to connect with the Force and harness the presence and power to accomplish their goals.

Awareness practiced as mindfulness is no mystery. In fact, it is part of our natural makeup. The Eastern and Western

philosophies and spiritual traditions have advocated mindfulness and the power of living in the Now for millennia. Despite this we are led to believe that we require rigorous mental training with the aid of instructors, gurus, books, and apps. Nothing could be further from the truth. All you need to do is start.

Being aware is being fully engaged in life. It is taking time to smell the roses, appreciate the sun on your face, the wind in your hair. It is stopping to pet the cat you encounter on the street. Being aware is acknowledging your thoughts and emotions but allowing neither to dictate your reasoned actions.

Meditation is a mindfulness exercise. You can practice mindfulness anywhere, anytime. Being fully aware while driving a car, brushing the dog, washing the dishes, listening to music, playing with the kids and in fact doing just about any activity is an exercise in mindfulness. It is simply paying attention to what you are doing.

Commit your mind to the task with intent. If you are washing the dishes you are only washing the dishes and nothing else. Feel the water on your hands, the hardness of the porcelain and cutlery. Hear the sounds it makes. Use all your senses. When you eat an apple experience the apple, observe its shape and colour, notice the taste and texture as you bite into it.

When you enter a room stop to look around. If there are people in the room take the time to notice them. Form a general impression from your surroundings wherever you go. Never blunder along with your face buried in a smart phone oblivious to what is happening around you. This is an all-too-common sight in society today. People are barely aware they are alive.

When you sit, allow mental intrusions to pass without engaging them. You can focus on the breath, the rise and fall of your chest or abdomen. If thoughts distract you, simply return to the breath.

There is a saying that when an old man sits, he only sits, there is nothing else going on; this is the essence of mindfulness.

DAY 64

“To be Jedi is to face the truth, and choose ...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 65

“...Give off light, or darkness...”– Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 66

“..Be a candle, or the night.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 67

“To know the dark side is merely to stop lying...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 68

“...Stop pretending you don't want what you want...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 69

“...Stop pretending you don't fear what you fear...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 70

“...Half the day is night.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 11 DIPLOMACY

“I am a member of the Imperial Senate on a diplomatic mission to Alderaan” – Princess Leia

“You're a part of the Rebel Alliance and a traitor. Take her away!” – Darth Vader

The Jedi were trained in diplomacy as much as in Lightsaber combat. Violence was a last resort. Physical force was used proportionate to the threat and only as far as necessary. In all cases a Jedi would seek diplomacy as a way of achieving a mutually beneficial outcome, if possible. Skills in negotiation and communication were paramount.

The Republic was dependent on the Jedi being able to persuade allies and potential allies and build strong friendships. Adversaries could also be negotiated with. Jedi were often sent by the Republic Senate as diplomatic emissaries for this reason. Diplomacy was used to secure trade agreements, treaties, free hostages and avoid or resolve conflict. The Jedi recruited across the galaxy from all worlds and could easily bridge any cultural or linguistic divide by assigning the right team to engage in negotiations or provide a protocol Droid to provide impartial advice. A Jedi could also be excused if they used subterfuge, half-truths, or deceit in difficult or deadlocked negotiations. The “Jedi Mind Trick” was a tool to achieve a goal without resorting to violence. Sometimes being dishonest is justified if bloodshed is avoided and lives can be saved.

In many ways the Jedi resembled the professional diplomat of Earth, with one key difference. The Jedi only acted in the interests of the Republic and never for personal gain. Jedi were also warriors albeit “warriors for peace”. A Jedi who rushed blind into the fray with Lightsaber drawn was a liability. A Jedi who could not use diplomacy over force was not a Jedi.

This is not to say the Jedi were pacifists who objected to violence in all its forms. Violence when required was used without emotion or haste. A Lightsaber was never drawn in anger and never used in hate or as a tool of revenge or murder. The Lightsaber was a symbol of control, purity in strength and the cutting edge of diplomacy. At least that was the intent and purpose of the Jedi Code.

Diplomacy is learned behaviour, a skill and an art. Learned, because as children we observe our parents and peers and learn from their interactions. What is acceptable behaviour is adopted sometimes through trial and error and sometimes through guidance. The skill of diplomacy is using tact, reasoning, communication, and negotiation in a manner that recognizes one's opinions, beliefs, ideas and biases as well as those of others. Challenges are skilfully navigated towards arriving at a desired outcome. The art of diplomacy is more refined. It is the mark of a true Jedi because it demonstrates effortless use of the Jedi Code in dealing with others with the desire for achieving beneficial outcomes for all.

Language is important.

The words that you choose and the way they are spoken can either persuade and influence or disillusion and alienate people. Be mindful of your language. Without surrender, use tact in your delivery. Always be clear and avoid ambiguity or misleading statements. Be sensitive to cultural mores around communication. For example, in some cultures yelling and being animated in negotiations is acceptable, in others it is frowned upon severely.

Patience is a virtue.

Never rush into negotiations. Think things through before speaking or remain silent. If possible, have a plan on how to proceed with discussions.

Compromise, but never on principles.

Negotiations should never force you to compromise or betray your own principles regardless of the cost.

Be assertive yet agreeable.

Getting your way does not mean you need to force it. At the same time betraying weakness can quickly work against you. Hold on to your ground and only concede when it advantageous to do so. Treat others with the same dignity and respect you would want for yourself. Be firm but nice.

Face to Face.

Negotiation is best done person to person rather than remotely through email, messaging or phone. Much in communication is lost when facial expressions and body language is absent from negotiations.

Listen and Learn.

Active listening is essential to effective communication. Strive to listen, engage with questions to clarify and really try to understand what is being said. Show interest and avoid appearing absent or distracted. No one likes an incessant talker, but everyone likes a good listener. Best of all a listener will learn something new while a talker will only repeat what they already know.

Empathy and understanding are the way.

Selfish motivations and biases will cloud negotiations. While we hear the concerns, demands or grievances of another party we are filtering them through the lens of our own needs and biases. By understand where the other person is coming from and putting yourself in to their shoes, you can start to see the world and their issue through their eyes. With empathy comes arrival at a place of mutual understanding.

Widen your horizons.

Anyone who has worked as a Diplomat will reinforce the need to understand who sits at the negotiating table. There exist cultural, religious, historic, and linguistic differences between people and to bridge the gap it helps to understand them. Any smart Diplomat will study closely the culture of the country they are working in and make efforts to learn the rudiments of the language and otherwise seek the services of a local to act as advisor and interpreter.

You don't have to like the guy, just work with him.

Rapport and honesty are important but not crucial. World leaders will meet and agree on crucial issues of national and global importance. They may not like each other but for the sake of diplomacy will find rapport to arrive at successful negotiations. Honesty is a facet of trust which is requisite for agreements however an honest Diplomat will concede that the real world is more complicated than that. One must use their discretion. Every day we must negotiate with people whom we love, like and dislike including family, friends, work colleagues, clients and random people we meet in normal life. If you deal honestly and have rapport you are likely to run into less problems getting your way. While there is honesty and honour in most people there can also be dishonesty, trickery and deceit.

Diplomacy can appear to be a hard to acquire skill, but it need not be. The four golden rules to remember are listen actively, respond respectfully, make your case clear, apply your principles.

This week let us recognize three great Diplomats from the Star War universe who were as skilled as their Jedi counterparts in diplomacy. In the search for peace, they ultimately paid with their lives. The world could learn something from them. Satine Kryze, Padmé Amidala and Princess Leia Organa.

DAY 71

“You were right about one thing, Master. The negotiations were short.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 72

“I presume you are acquainted with the collection of half-truths and hyperbole known as Obi-wan Kenobi?...” – Satine Kryze

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 73

.... *“Your Highness is too kind.”* – Obi-Wan Kenobi
“You’re right, I am.” - Satine Kryze

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 74

“You call this a diplomatic solution?” – Anakin
“No, I call it an aggressive negotiation” - Padmé Amidala

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 75

“War is intolerable. We have been deceived into thinking that we must be a part of it. I say the moment we committed to fighting, we already lost.” - Satine Kryze

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 76

“Just because I'm a pacifist doesn't mean I won't defend myself.”
- Satine Kryze

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 77

“What this war represents is a failure to listen. Now you're closer to the Chancellor than anyone, please, ask him to stop the fighting and let the diplomacy resume.” - Padmé Amidala

“Don't ask me to do that.” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 12 THE JEDI CODE

“World betterment through self-betterment” – Opie McLeod
(K.S Trout)

“Much to learn... you still have” – Yoda

Over the next six weeks we will revisit the Jedi Code. For anyone familiar with the Jedi, the Jedi Code is no mystery. The Jedi Code represents an ideal. Through training, application, and effort the Jedi would arrive at a state of peace, serenity, harmony, knowledge, and conscious connection to the Force. Ultimately the Jedi sought to bring balance to the Force and transcend to it, to benefit all living things. This is the reason why you are here, to improve yourself so that you can help improve others and ultimately create a better world for all.

The Jedi Code was inspired by the Star Wars movies and books, particularly in “Empire Strikes Back” where Yoda teaches Luke Skywalker to be a Jedi. The Code was also mentioned in the “Phantom Menace”. It first appeared as a “Code” in role playing games and was embraced by the online Jedi Community and over time underwent an evolution. Originally the Jedi Code contained four lines and then a fifth was added. The final version as widely accepted is the Jedi Code:

There is no Emotion; there is Peace

There is no Ignorance; there is Knowledge

There is no Passion; there is Serenity

There is no Chaos; there is Harmony

There is no Death; there is the Force

The Jedi Code represents the foundation of Jedi Philosophy as described in the books “Jedi Circle” and “Exploring the Jedi Lifestyle” by Kevin Trout (Opie McLeod).

Today the Jedi Path is alive and well and is best represented at its purist and simplest form by the Jedi Code. The Jedi Code as it exists today bridges the divide between the fictional world created by George Lucas and the real world which we all live daily, with our human needs, desires, hopes, fears, strengths, and faults.

The Jedi Code provides the foundation for a philosophy, a recipe for thought and action that can be applied regardless whether a person is religious, agnostic or atheist, gay or straight, rich, or poor. Regardless of race or social status. All that is required is a simple willingness to learn, study, train and apply and most of all to change.

Like many tenets of Buddhism and Taoism application of the Jedi Code can over time bring change to the way a person thinks, speaks, and acts and lead him or her to self-betterment and ultimately world betterment.

Take the week to familiarise (or refamiliarize) yourself with the Jedi Code. Really study the lines of the code. Ask what they mean to you right now and how can you apply them in your life. Over the coming weeks we will explore each of the lines in turn. They will form part of the foundation of the coming weeks and months meditations and training. Jedi Philosophy ultimately returns to its core, the Jedi Code.

Never stop studying, never stop learning. You will never learn enough.

DAY 78

“There is no Emotion; there is Peace”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 79

“There is no Ignorance; there is Knowledge”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 80

“There is no Passion; there is Serenity”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 81

“There is no Chaos; there is Harmony”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 82

“There is no Death; there is the Force”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 83

“You still have much to learn, my young apprentice.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 84

“Much to learn you still have” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 13

PEACE

“There is no Emotion; there is Peace” – Jedi Code

The underlying message of the mantra “There is no Emotion; there is Peace” is *equanimity*. Emotion is a part of being human and to fully experience life one must embrace the full spectrum of emotions whether perceived as negative or positive.

The Buddha said that in life “there will be 10,000 joys and 10,000 sorrows”, that everything in life is essentially impermanent and transient. To grasp to anything, to build attachment, leads only to suffering. This includes emotions.

To achieve deep inner peace, one must be able to allow emotions to be as they are. To fight emotions such as fear, anger or grief is to give it life. What you resist persists. By being able to observe our emotional state, being aware of it and not letting it dominate our lives or dictate how we react to situations is the key to achieving inner peace.

The image of a Jedi calm in the face of adversity and completely at peace as a storm of fear and violence rages around him is in essence what this line teaches us. Think of Qui-Gon Jinn facing Darth Maul in the final scenes of the “Phantom Menace”. Before the duel, Qui-Gon Jinn meditates despite the danger he faces and finds inner peace. Decades later when Obi-Wan Kenobi met his former friend and apprentice on the Death Star he also confronted the peril with equanimity.

Embrace our emotions as the divine gift that they are, but do not let them rule us. Be “calm, at peace, passive”.

DAY 85

“The winding path to peace is always a worthy one, regardless of how many turns it takes.” – Dooku Captured (The Clone Wars)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 86

“Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 87

“He who seeks to control fate shall never find peace.” – Ghosts of Mortis (The Clone Wars)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 88

“If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 89

“These are not the Droids you are looking for.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 90

“How can you look so calm at a time like this?” – Anakin

“I just hide it better than you Anakin” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 91

“Comfort was always easier to steal than to earn, peace easier to break than to keep.” - Leia Organa Solo

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 14 KNOWLEDGE

“There is no Ignorance; there is Knowledge” – Jedi Code

The underlying message of the mantra *“There is no Ignorance; there is Knowledge”* is *humility*. Through objectivity and rejection of illusion we see the world as it is. We recognize our delusions for what they are. We seek the truth and self-knowledge above all. In doing so we arrive at humility.

Pride and vanity cloud our judgment and obscure the truth and is the antithesis of humility. We learn to accept that we do not know what we do not know and that the truth behind all things is hidden. We then leave ourselves open like a vessel to inquire, question, to acquire knowledge, to never stop learning.

Ignorance is bolstered by pride, but fear keeps us there. The truth is that no-one in this world knows everything and can ever know everything. To believe different would be arrogance in the extreme. To be arrogant is to be ignorant and to turn away from learning is to deny growth. The human spirit wants nothing more than to grow. Arrogance and ignorance are born of fear and it is fear that keeps us from growing to our full potential.

Humanity now stands at a crossroad in its history. Society has harnessed the technological know-how to end all life on this planet as we know it. A mere virus of our own making can bring society to its knees. We are at the mercy of nature and worse, we are the victims of our own ignorance and hubris.

Humanity now stands on the brink and while the intellect exists to create technology and power, we also lack the wisdom to yield it for the benefit of all. It is ignorance and arrogance that will ultimately hold humanity back from achieving its highest purpose. It may also destroy all life on Earth. The Ego ultimately kills the Ego.

The human species has been around for a quarter of a million years as a sentient being able to think, reason, contemplate, judge and make conscious decisions. We have free will and the ability to exercise it. One would think after so many thousands of generations we would have learned a thing or two and not be making the same mistakes, the lessons would be written in our DNA.

We have all the power to change but at this nexus of collective human history we stand at the edge of a chasm. Beyond that precipice resides eternal darkness. Conscious thought, at least on Earth, will no longer exist. All knowledge ends when ignorance prevails. This should not be the future for humanity.

Consciousness of self and the gift of self-knowledge is granted to each person. It is up to you to “know yourself”. Each must find the path that separate ignorance from knowledge and false ideas from facts. This is done by identifying values, defining principles, realizing passions and interests, setting personal goals and understanding your strengths as well as your weaknesses. You may arrive at each through a guide or make the journey alone. When you know your life goal and purpose, you have arrived at true knowledge of your place in this world. At this place you leave yourself open to self-actualisation, individuation and transcendence to a state of higher consciousness. You become who you truly are, Self.

The wonderful reality is that we can transcend to the next level of knowing, a place where science meets spirituality and where we no longer need to live as un-evolved beings. Knowledge of the truth reveals the beauty and order in the universe and the divinity within all life and the oneness of all things. This state is pure consciousness, knowledge and enlightenment. It is the essence of the line “*there is no ignorance, there is knowledge*”.

DAY 92

“Suspend your judgment, and every being has something to teach you” – Qui-Gon Jinn.

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 93

“Those who seek to make fools of others are fools themselves.” –
Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 94

“The path of ignorance is guided by fear.” – The Clone Wars
“The General”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 95

*“Who’s more foolish, the fool or the fool who follows him?” –
Obi-Wan Kenobi*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 96

“You don’t want to sell me death sticks.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 97

“A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 98

“Not if anything to say about it I have.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 15 PASSION

“There is no Passion; there is Serenity” – Jedi Code

The underlying message of the mantra *“There is no Passion; there is Serenity”* is *acceptance*. It is important to understand that passion is not a negative emotion, it can be a virtue. However, passion can also become an obstacle to serenity if it is not controlled.

Passion is a wonderful gift and provides the drive and creativity in all human endeavours. Without passion in the world, we would see a stale and soulless world. Society could simply not exist. Imagine a world without art or music any other forms of human expression. There would be nothing, no creation, only a grey world devoid of colour and life.

I believe that the expression of passion is the expression of nature and the divine. But passion can also be destructive. Anakin had great passion for his love and his desire to be Master; however, his passion consumed him and overwhelmed his humanity. His passion became an obsession as he attempted to control others, the order of the galaxy and life itself. Anakin struggled against the Force, the natural order of things.

When we are passionate to a degree that it enriches the lives of others and brings us closer to our true inner self is when we achieve true serenity.

The purpose in life is to live to be whoever we choose to be and to fulfill our higher purpose as we define it. This can only be achieved by living in the *now* and enjoying life as a moment-to-moment experience rather than to feel regret or longing for a past that is gone forever and fear or false hope for a tomorrow that never comes. The universe does not revolve around us, but we are

all a part of the universe and have a right to be here. Life happens in the now.

We see the Jedi and they look serene yet focussed, nothing much seems to get them upset. They appear to be in a state of equanimity and non-attachment. This does not mean that a Jedi is an empty shell devoid of passion. Jedi do not get too excited about what they can and more importantly what they cannot control.

To experience serenity is enjoy the beauty in all things and take wonder in the simple things, the flight of a butterfly, the intricate design of a snowflake or a seashell and the immensity and mystery of the star filled sky. To accept things as they are not as we would have them be. To be present in the Now.

The serenity prayer best encapsulates the message behind the mantra “*There is no Passion; there is Serenity*”. Feel free to replace the word God, with “Force” or whatever you wish. The message is to learn to differentiate between the things that are in our control and things that are outside of our control. Therein lies the key to the good life.

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can, and
The wisdom to know the difference.*

DAY 99

“Acceptance doesn’t guard you from regret.” – Qui-Gon Jinn.

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 100

“Searching for the truth is easy. Accepting the truth is hard.” –
Moral “The Clone Wars – Senate Murders”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 101

“Contempt often veiled bruised ideals.” - Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 102

"It's all Obi-wan's fault. He's jealous. He's holding me back!"
– Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 103

“Strike me down in anger and I’ll always be with you.” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 104

“Anyone can handle a weapon. Reason is much more difficult to wield.” – Luminara Unduli

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 105

“The Sith rely on their passion for their strength. They think inward, only about themselves.” – Anakin

“And the Jedi don’t?” - Palpatine

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week. How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 16 HARMONY

“There is no Chaos; there is Harmony” – Jedi Code

The underlying message of the mantra *“There is no Chaos; there is Harmony”* is *perception*. At times everything around us seems in utter chaos. Thoughts and emotions can run amok and cause us to act in ways that we later regret. The way you respond to things out of your control remains within the power of your control.

You can choose Chaos or Harmony. That is in your control.

We know that the world can seem chaotic yet viewed from a distance the planet appears in order, calm and peaceful, in harmony. Even if your world seems to be falling apart there is more working in the world than not. The water, electricity and telecommunications systems are still running. There is still food on supermarket shelves. Harmony resides behind the chaos.

Whether in full glory or behind a mask of clouds, the sun will rise in the morning. Harmony cannot exist without chaos no more than day can exist without night. The sun never really rises, and it never sets, that is only a perception. Yet we do not feel the world turning beneath our feet.

When we centre ourselves and look at a situation outside of the lens of our own reactivity it often looks very different. To paraphrase Epictetus, “it is not the thing that harms us but our perception of it”. Chaos exists within you but so does harmony.

By grounding yourself you can sort through the chaos and find inner harmony. The world may fall apart but that does not mean that it should also cause your mind to do the same. You have a choice how to perceive a thing and how to respond to it.

Buddha stated that in fact there is nothing. Nothing we perceive is as it appears. Everything is an illusion. Yoda tried to explain this to Luke Skywalker and demonstrated that power when he lifted the X-Wing out of the swamp on Dagobah with his mind.

Quantum physics demonstrates how little we understand matter and energy. All matter is in fact packets of energy and essentially comprised of nothing. This sub-particle concept is incredibly mind-boggling but illuminating. Consider that an electron can exist in two different points in the Universe at the same time. It can be here and there at the same time.

When Yoda said “*we are luminous beings, not this crude matter*” I believe that George Lucas was alluding to this convergence between science and the spiritual. Harmony cannot exist without chaos. The Force binds everything together and pervades everything like the Tao. Where chaos and harmony meet and balance, we find the Force. Is Life, the cosmos not both? The universe is a perfect union of chaos and harmony.

To ground yourself be mindful of your thoughts and emotions by regularly checking in on them. Ask yourself, “*What am I feeling right now*”. Observe, impartially, the emotions that stir within you. Explore them with a curious mind, without becoming attached to them as if observing them from a distance.

Observe your thoughts in the same way; ask “*What am I thinking right now?*” Dissect your thoughts without judgement resisting the urge to attach to them. You only need to decide if they are reasoned and serve you. Let go what does not.

Anytime you feel yourself disconnected stop for a moment. Just breathe, focussing on the air entering and leaving your lungs. Close your eyes if you wish. Open them and look around. Feel the earth beneath your feet. Open your senses to the world. Seek out nature whenever you can. The natural world will centre you and restore harmony. Be at peace, calm, passive in the world.

DAY 106

“We are luminous beings, not this crude matter” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 107

“Fear is the path to the Dark Side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 108

“But Master Yoda said I should be mindful of the future.” –
Obi-Wan Kenobi

“Not at the expense of the moment.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 109

“Uh, everything’s under control. Situation normal.” – Han Solo

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 110

“I sense great fear in you, Skywalker. You have hate, you have anger, but you don’t use them.” – Count Dooku

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 111

“I shouldn't have done that, Chancellor. It's not the Jedi way.” – Anakin (after executing Count Dooku)

“....It wasn't the first time, Anakin. Remember what you told me about your mother and the Sand People” – Palpatine

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 112

“Standing in the middle of the chaos, a vision of calm and foreboding, is Darth Vader.” – A New Hope (Script)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 17

FORCE

“There is no Death; there is the Force” – Jedi Code

The underlying message of the mantra *“There is no Death; there is the Force”* is *self-realization*. You are more than a persona, a physical being with an ego. Within all people resides the potential of infinite higher self. The true goal in life is to come to knowledge, understanding and realization of that true nature.

The Jedi accepted that death does not exist. Death is an illusion like time or matter. Life is seen as a manifestation of an eternal state that transforms between the physical and the spiritual which is eternal.

Some people describe the eternal essence as the spirit, the inner divine and Chi, Prana, Baraka. The Jedi describe it as the Force.

Death does not exist, only the dissolution of the physical state and the ego. What is left, call it the spirit, returns to the Force. This true inner self was always connected to the Force and always one with it; it just did not know in its physical state and was disconnected. This is the illusion of separation.

The concept of enlightenment is the return of oneness with the source, the loss of duality and self-realization. Some call this enlightenment or transcendence. It is also known as “God-Realization” and “Nirvana”.

The Jedi aspired to reach this level of awareness and Obi-wan Kenobi, Yoda, Anakin and Luke Skywalker achieved this state of becoming “one with the Force” through their physical deaths.

Arriving at self-realization can take years or decades. Sudden enlightenment can also occur through a profound spiritual

experience. People who have had traumatic experiences, hit rock bottom, and visited hell speak of a sudden and overwhelming spiritual realization. Some psychedelic experiences have also left a permanent mark on people through a transcendent episode.

For the most part self-realization of our true nature evolves slowly and gradually through meditation practice and application of training. Over time we come to different levels of awareness and realization on our life journey.

Self-awareness is an awakening to our potential. We come to a spiritual awakening that reveals our ignorance and the path before us. This is the beginning of the spiritual Hero's journey for many. Luke Skywalker's accepting the call to adventure on Tatooine was the realization of this stage.

Self-exploration follows. Awoken to the possibilities we begin to seek answers to the questions that matter; "who am I?", "what is my purpose". We begin to change the way we live and adopt practices such as meditation and study to deepen our understanding. We are looking for jewels.

Luke Skywalker's time with Obi-wan Kenobi and with Yoda on Dagobah gave him the opportunity to seek knowledge of his life purpose.

Self-discovery is experienced through insights as our consciousness begins to expand through the practices. We are finding jewels through our efforts. The seeker becomes the finder.

On Dagobah and then on Cloud City Luke was forced to confront his shadow and dark personal truths. Along the way, he came to deep insights.

Self-understanding is the beginning of self-knowledge at a deeper level. In Jungian terms it is the process of individuation

of the true self. Knowledge of the ego self, the inner anima and animus and acceptance of the shadow are part of the process.

Self-love is acceptance of the whole of one's being and forgiveness of one's faults. This acceptance and forgiveness is extended to others. The presence of the inner divine is heightened at this point. Luke was here in "Return of the Jedi".

Self-transformation is the realisation of the archetypes in our lives. Through inner awareness and life experience we put aside old habits and ideas that no longer serve. The personality undergoes a death and rebirth as the ego begins to be eclipsed by the true (individuated) self. One can be said to be reborn. Luke Skywalker arrived at this nexus when he refused to kill Vader.

Self-mastery is the full realisation of individuation. The whole personality is born, and the ego is mastered. The emerging archetype resembles the Jedi Master who is calm, at peace, passive. Obi-Wan Kenobi on Tatooine had arrived at Self Mastery when he met Luke Skywalker.

Self-transcendence is the flowering of the individual potential in this life. Short of being "one with the Force" it is the highest level of awareness possible. This state is being in constant conscious contact with the divine. Life becomes a meditation. Very little will upset or ruffle the feathers of someone at this level. Imagine Yoda on Dagobah as he neared his physical end.

Self-realization is the conscious union of the self with the soul. Enlightenment has occurred. The illusion of suffering, separation, duality, and the ego has been dispelled. The true nature of all things comes in to focus as the veil is finally removed removing the last veneer of separation. There is no longer self, there is all. There is no death there is only the Force. One can now be said to be "One with the Force".

This is the Jedi journey.

DAY 113

“The Force is an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together.” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 114

“Remember the Force will be with you always.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 115

“For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 116

“Close your eyes. Feel it. The light...it’s always been there. It will guide you.” – Maz Kanata

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 117

“Mysterious are the ways of the Force.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 118

“Death is a natural part of life. Rejoice for those around you who transform into the Force.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 119

“A Jedi’s strength flows from the Force.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 18 JUSTICE

“I have brought peace, freedom, justice, and security to my new empire”- Anakin

The Jedi were Guardians of Justice. As representatives of the senate they avoided political affiliations and were dedicated to promoting justice and peace in the galaxy. The Jedi did this by applying a code that was ethical, moral and balanced. In other words, they used the “Jedi Method” for dispensing Justice.

Despite their best intentions the Jedi ultimately failed in their mission and were at times a source of injustice in the galaxy. The Jedi were not loved everywhere they went, far from it. As the Republic began to unravel to its end the Jedi found themselves making difficult choices which conflicted with the Jedi Code. The Jedi were complicit in the erosion of the democratic rights of citizens. Their action betrayed the very principles they stood for hastening their final demise. The foundations of justice on which the Republic was built were compromised. The failure of Justice led to the rise of Palpatine and the final fall of the Republic.

The Jedi lost sense of who they were. Along the way they compromised their principles for power, prestige and influence. The Jedi became political pawns and were eventually eliminated by Palpatine under Order 66. It was an ignominious end to a shining beacon of freedom and justice in a chaotic galaxy.

Justice is a moral virtue that is as hard to define as it is to achieve. Justice is rarely universal or perfect. For every Justice done there is always a grievance left in its shadow. The scales will tip in favour for one party at the expense for another.

In a perfect world, every decision made in the name of Justice would serve everyone equally and no harm would result. We

know this is rarely the case and one person's gain will be another person's loss. As hard as it can be to grapple with the outcomes, we should all strive toward "Justice for all" but be aware that mistakes can and will be made. Spend a day in the criminal or family courts to see this how Justice often plays out.

Humans are born with a sense of justice and become conscious of it at an early age. Children know intrinsically when something is unfair. They recognise compassion and empathy and carry an innate natural wisdom. As children age, they are influenced by parents, peers, teachers and the environment. Personal prejudices and biases creep in as the ego flowers. We never lose our divine sense of Justice; it only becomes shrouded.

No two people will have the same answers because everyone holds a different set of values which they define as stated principles. Each person has a varying outlook and idea on how Justice should be dispensed and appear at any given time for any issue. Every person has their unique set of preferences, bias and prejudices known and unknown. These vary and change over time with knowledge and experience. The exception is those that are told what to think. Without further thought or reasoning they blindly accept dogma and dare not stray from it.

Jedi used their sound judgement and reason. They were flexible enough in their thinking to not fall into traps or follow orders without question. Dogma was avoided. Jedi would at times question the sanity or the morality of decisions made. At the same time the Jedi were sworn to the order and were expected to follow orders. This conflict between personal judgement of what was right versus duty would plague many Jedi.

A real-world Jedi must confront the same questions and grapple with the same inner conflicts. Real-world Jedi are diverse, they are every race, colour, creed, gender, political leaning, sexual orientation and opinion. There is no diecast Jedi with a "typical" appearance, character or set of ideas. People in general are no

different. Regardless of who you vote for, the causes and issues you follow be they social or environmental how you define “Justice” in every instance may differ from that of others.

So be careful when you demand “Justice”. Things may not be as black and white as they appear. Bias and prejudice will only further cloud judgement. Be mindful of hidden agendas, ulterior motives and a natural desire for restitution or revenge. Justice should contain none of these things.

You must ask if your sense of justice correct? You can seek advice but decide you must, what is right. It may help to ask three important questions before you dispense Justice:

Is it ethical? The question to ask yourself here is “Would you do something that you would consider wrong or questionable if it were done by someone else?”. If you cannot satisfy this test, then the thing should not be done.

Is it moral? Ask yourself before making a decision “Will I be able to sleep soundly tonight? How would I react if I were on the receiving end? Will I be judged harshly in return?”. Remember that each judgement that you pass carries consequences, for others and for yourself. Accept that.

Is it balanced? You must determine if something is fair. Does it respect the rights of others? Is it equitable (equity)? Is there also a degree of impartiality? Does it recognise the arguments and grievances of all sides equally (equality)? Is it fair?

So, the question you have to ask are “*what do you value? What are your principles and finally, how do you define Justice? What is your blind side, and do you know your own biases?*?”. Are your decisions around Justice based on fairness, compassion and wisdom?

Finally, does it agree with the Jedi Method?

DAY 120

“What if the democracy we thought we were serving no longer exists, and the Republic has become the very evil we’ve been fighting to destroy?” - Padmé Amidala

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 121

“Don’t you see? We don’t have to run away anymore! I am more powerful than the Chancellor, I... I can overthrow him! And together, you and I can rule the galaxy! Make things the way we want them to be!” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 122

“I have the High Ground.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 123

“To answer power with power, the Jedi way this is not. In this war, a danger there is, of losing who we are.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 124

*“So this is how liberty dies. With thunderous applause.” –
Padmé Amidala*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 125

“Popular rule is not democracy, Annie. It gives the people what they want, not what they need.” – Padmé Amidala

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 126

“I have brought peace, freedom, justice, and security to my new empire”- Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 19

ACCOUNTABILITY

“It is a rough road that leads to the heights of greatness.” –
Moral (Clone Wars: Storm Over Ryloth)

To err is to human to forgive is divine. But are you accountable for your mistakes? Do you inspire people?

Today there is an accountability crisis. People avoid being held accountable for their actions. When they do or say something wrong, they avoid taking ownership. Blame is allocated elsewhere. Fault can always be assigned. The status of “victim” or a person’s identity can be used to excuse the behaviour or justify it.

We live in a world where the consequence for bad behaviour and poor performance are routinely avoided, argued away, and dismissed.

This should not be the way. When a mistake is made, we should owe up to it and commit to doing better. If at fault, we should accept it and the consequences that it carries. We should learn from our mistake and use it to avoid a repeat. You can own your feelings and mistakes.

No one is perfect. At times everyone thinks, says, and acts in ways that they are ashamed of or regret later. By being accountable we learn to accept that we are only human and have the right to make mistakes and learn from them. We learn that we made mistakes and are not a mistake.

By owning and learning from mistakes we build a value system from an early age. We earn our place in the family unit, social group, community, and society by being accountable. Being accountable is to be a social creature made to work with others, a human being.

So why is it so hard for so many people today to face up to their mistakes, own feelings, admit wrong, apologize to others, and make amends? The Jedi and Sith provide an answer:

A Jedi is fundamentally different from a Sith in that she will always be accountable for her conduct. This is because a Jedi is self-reliant, self-assured, and grounded enough to know that shirking accountability and blaming others betrays their inner system of values. Most of all it hurts others as well as themselves. A Jedi is gracious enough to quickly admit a mistake, seek to make amends and resolve not to do it again. A strong sense of self and self-discipline will help turn out thoughts of denial, blame, resentment, and self-pity.

A Sith by comparison is a narcissist who is unable to show and feel empathy. They display a grandiose disregard for others and care only for themselves. A Sith is never at fault, other people are the problem, not they. Mistakes are never made unless they are caused by others. Blame is always deflected. Where a Sith perceives a wrong done, he will seek restitution or revenge. Being narcissistic, a Sith personality will fly into rage and will bully, threaten, and accuse others of wrong. The Sith relish in the failings of others and use it to prop their egos up.

The Sith, like narcissists everywhere are weak and fragile self-loathing people who hide their true selves by projecting their faults on to others. They instil fear, anxiety, and self-doubt in other people so that they can maintain a level of control. The chaos and insecurity they create is debilitating to those around them.

There is a Jedi in all of us and there is also a little bit of the Sith. The next time you find yourself on shaky ground after an emotional outburst or a mistake will you own it, or will you be like a Sith refuse to take accountability? Will you work on being accountable and set an example to others? Will you inspire fear or greatness in others?

DAY 127

“I seek a great warrior” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 128

“Wars not make one great.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 129

“Away put your weapon. I mean you no harm.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 130

“In the end, cowards are those who follow the dark side.” -
Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 131

“You are responsible, Ahsoka. These men are depending on you, and this time, so am I.” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 132

“You don’t have to look tough to be tough”. – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 133

“You don't have to carry a sword to be powerful. Some leaders' strength is inspiring greatness in others.” - Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 20 PATIENCE

“A great leap forward sometimes requires two steps back” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Patience is a virtue. How many times have we heard it? The times we want to jump the gun and rush headlong into something without a second thought. We cannot stand waiting for anything we think worth having now. It can take real presence of mind and self-discipline to take a step back and patiently wait.

Patience is what we exercise when we listen to people when we want to speak. It is being able to sit when we want to stand. Being patient is willing to wait for our turn and graciously letting others go before us. Patience is accepting that things often happen in their own time and we must allow for that

If you have made it this far in this journal you have a degree of patience. You have put the work in and applied self-discipline. Every day, or as often as possible, you have done your daily practices. This means you have put aside time to meditate, exercise, read and practice mindfulness and awareness.

The rewards for the effort you have put in may not be visible or even apparent to you. Trust me, you have changed in subtle ways that may not be obvious to you, but they will be to others. A downpour runs off while a long gentle rain soaks in.

You may have noticed that along the way you have become more patient with yourself and as a result more patient with others. The things that used to bother you about your loved ones and friends may no longer be such a big deal. You may also notice that you have started to accept things much easier than before.

Patience is not only a virtue it is rare asset to have these days. For a Jedi it was a professional necessity. Jedi training and advancement took decades. On missions, Jedi were expected to be prepared for action, but they were also expected to endure long periods of waiting and preparing to move. The Jedi were skilled in choosing the right moment to act even if it meant conceding gains to the enemy. The Jedi always took the long view and resisted acting on impulse. This required patience.

The fiery impatience of Anakin reminds us that decisive action is sometimes needed but often patience is the best course to take. Anakin was a brilliant tactician but lacked the patience to make decisions that were not affected by his own personal bias and coloured by his subjective emotions like anger and fear. Obi-wan Kenobi would admonish Anakin to slow down and be patient, something which his friend and apprentice resented.

Luke Skywalker inherited his Father's impatience but with time learned to take a breath before acting on his impulses. The word patience comes from the Latin "to suffer". Every time Anakin or Luke showed impatience for their situation, they suffered.

Why should you suffer from impatience? Be patient with your progress. Improvement will come if you apply effort.

Be patient with others, they may not be at the same stage in their life as you and deserve the same regard that you would expect for yourself from those farther along than you. We all share the same path; we are just at different stage of the same journey.

Be patient with the situation you find yourself in, whatever it might be. We are mostly impatient with the things we cannot control. Remember to distinguish what you can control with what you cannot. Focus on the things you can control.

Most importantly, be patient with yourself. You also have the right to falter and make mistakes. Identify, rectify, and improve.

DAY 134

“Patience my young Padawan.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 135

“I cannot teach him. The boy has no patience.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 136

“The boy will learn patience.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 137

“Patience Master! Patience!” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 138

“Patience, Anakin. There's more than one way to skin a womp rat.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 139

“I say . . . patience.” - Anakin

“Patience! That's your plan, is it?” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 140

“A great leap forward sometimes requires two steps back.” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 21 CHARACTER

“World betterment through self-betterment.” – Opie Macleod

How would you imagine a Jedi to be if you met one in the street? Would that person be polite, attentive, calm, and friendly? Would that person keep a level head when things became stressful? Show courage, commitment, and loyalty to her cause? Would he or she show compassion to others as well as empathy?

I believe a Jedi would also be attentive of their manners and their appearance as well as their demeanour. A Jedi would show courtesy, respect, humility, good humour, and decorum. In short, a Jedi would display character befitting the title of Jedi.

What set a Jedi apart was character. The Jedi were selected for their character as much as for their force abilities. Although one had to be force sensitive to be considered suitable, character was crucial if a Padawan was to survive and succeed in training.

A Jedi had to be humble yet confident, aloof yet approachable. When required a Jedi had to be tough but without losing the gentle touch. A Jedi had to be obedient but also able to question decisions and use common sense and initiative.

The Jedi in their role as peacekeeper, warrior and advisor also showed decorum. A Jedi could easily assimilate with a squad of clone troopers or mix with dignitaries and senators at an intergalactic meeting. Jedi were comfortable and confident anywhere they found themselves by virtue of their character.

You may have an endearing personality. Your identity and persona may be shaped by your religion, race, ethnicity, and life experiences. These are important but character is the true measure of who you really are. When things get tough is when your character, good or bad, shines through. Who are you?

DAY 141

“Strength in character can defeat strength in numbers.” –
Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 142

“When destiny calls, the chosen have no choice.” – Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 143

“Only through fire is a strong sword forged.” – Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 144

“Who a person truly is cannot be seen with the eye.” – Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 145

“Our actions define our legacy.” – Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 146

“Who we are never changes, who we think we are does.” –
Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 147

“He who faces himself, finds himself.” – Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 22 EMPATHY

“Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is essential to a Jedi's life” – Anakin Skywalker

Anakin Skywalker is one of the most misunderstood and tragic characters in the Star Wars saga. From the beginning the boy Anakin was destined to be the chosen one who would bring balance to the Force, yet his destiny was to fall to the Dark Side and he would become Darth Vader. Anakin was an enigma of character and a contradiction.

Anakin was a deeply emotional man inside a hard shell. Despite his training he wore his heart on his sleeve. A turmoil of emotions churned within him often to extremes. Anakin suffered the loss of his mother deeply. He loved those close to him intensely. Values and principles were non-negotiable to Anakin.

Anakin was also one of the most empathetic and compassionate of the Jedi. He cared for the downtrodden and fought for their rights. In battle he would willingly risk his life for others. Anakin expected the same from those around him. Many Jedi were benevolent in comparison with a detached and impartial attitude to the suffering they witnessed. Emotion was shunned.

Anakin was unable to be impartial or detached to suffering around him. He carried the suffering of others within him as a personal burden that he had to bear. Anakin wanted nothing more than to end all suffering and death in the Galaxy because he too had suffered. He only wanted his suffering to stop.

Darth Sidious recognised the strong empathy that Anakin carried and used it against him. When Anakin confronted the scene of Mace Windu standing over a defeated Chancellor Palpatine his empathetic nature kicked in. Anakin saw an old and withered man being tortured. Confused and tormented by the injustices and hypocrisy he had seen Anakin turned on the

Jedi Master to save Palpatine, whom he saw as the victim. Destiny was set, the Rubicon was crossed, and Anakin was lost.

Empathy is a trait that we see more often in small children and animals than we tend to see in ourselves and others. When we feel “sorry” for someone, we are not really feeling empathy. We do not really share or understand their pain or loss.

People confuse empathy with sympathy or pity, yet it is none of these things. Empathy is a deeper and more spiritual sense that recognises the intrinsic bond between people. To empathize is to understand the suffering of others in the way they understand it without judgement. It is to see the world through the eyes of others, to feel what they feel and to “walk a mile in their shoes”.

Empathy is a Jedi trait because without it there is only room for judgement. Suffering becomes an object, a symptom that can be treated with kind word and acts of charity. Empathy creates a partnership between you and that other person. Sympathy reaches down to help while empathy lifts the person up by sharing the load. Its why facial expressions and body language are so important in conveying true intent and concern for others.

Empathy carries compassion and a desire to sacrifice for the sake of another. It is more than platitudes but moving from sorrow to action. Empathy carries momentum. Compassion builds on empathy and leads to altruism. Was it not empathy and compassion that guided Luke Skywalker when he refused Darth Sidious and chose to spare and redeem Darth Vader, his father?

Anakin is one of the most misunderstood and tragic characters in the Star Wars saga. The character is sometimes treated with sympathy and at times with pity but rarely do people feel empathy for Anakin. That is a shame because the character is a tragedy worth understanding. Anakin serves as a warning but also a reminder that with empathy and compassion redemption is always possible. Try walking a mile in Anakin’s shoes.

DAY 148

“Are you allowed to love? I thought that was forbidden for a Jedi.” - Padme Amidala

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 149

“Why do I get the feeling you're going to be the death of me?” -
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 150

“Don't say that Master... You're the closest thing I have to a father... I love you. I don't want to cause you pain.” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 151

“You are strong and wise and I’m very proud of you.”
– Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 152

“None of the stories people tell about me can change who I really am.” - Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 153

“Don’t confuse refusing help with not needing it.”
- Leia Organa Solo

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 154

“Attachment is forbidden. Possession is forbidden. Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is essential to a Jedi's life. So you might say, that we are encouraged to love.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week. How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 23 GRATITUDE

“I’m thinking – I owe you one” – Han Solo (deleted scene,
“Return of the Jedi”)

Imagine coming home to find your home has been looted and burned to the ground. You see the devastation and wander in mute shock through the ruins. Disbelief, anger, and grief kick in. Then you remember that everyone close to you is OK, that you are alive, and you still have two hands and a will to rebuild. Property was lost but the things that truly matter remain.

In every grave situation we find ourselves there is cause for sorrow but there is also cause for gratitude. It is often not until we are faced with calamity and loss that we realize this fact. When you pause and count your blessings despite your losses you experience nothing less than a divine sense of gratitude.

Star Wars is full of acts of gratitude. The heroes in the story suffer defeat and loss yet are always able to count their blessings in the presence of their friends.

In “The Return of the Jedi” Luke travels to Tatooine where he rescues Han Solo and Princess Leia and finally defeats Jabba the Hutt. Later Han expresses his gratitude to Luke via a comlink as they are departing the planet for separate destinations. In a deleted scene Han expressed his thanks in person. It is a touching and heartfelt moment between the two great friends. Han needed to express gratitude for their friendship to Luke.

A daily practice should include a period of self-reflection and gratitude. That is why the first exercise of the day is to pause for a minute and write down what it is you are grateful for this day. It could be that you are enjoying success or have landed a new opportunity that you worked hard to get. You may have finished a project or completed a test. Having a job, earning an income,

having food on the table, a roof over your head, being healthy and alive in the moment are all things we often take for granted.

We can take steps to re-frame our problems. Every negative has a positive if we look hard enough. Life does not have to be about reactivity. Meditating on the negative aspects of life can help in understanding them in context. Is it such a big deal? Would we be much better off if the problem did not exist? Does the problem present opportunities?

Acceptance is a way to resolve our issues. We have a choice, we can either do something about them or not. Sometimes it is better to act, sometimes it is better to wait and at times, no action is the answer. Denying that the problem exists is no solution as eventually it will force us to face it, possibly under worse conditions.

Once we have accepted our problems, we need to commit to doing something about them now, later, or never. Decide and stick to it. Adjust and calibrate if needed but resolve to see things out. Act to resolve the issue. Act mindfully understanding that our actions may have unwanted consequences.

List five things to be grateful for. Make it a habit every day to remind yourself that there are always five things you can name which you can be grateful for. List them in your journal or meditate on them.

The ancient Stoics would rise early in the morning and greet the rising sun. It was an act of self-discipline to get out of a warm bed when others were still asleep. The majesty of the sunrise and the fresh air more than compensated for it. As the sun rose in all its splendor the Stoics would contemplate their own mortality and insignificance in the universe and experience nothing less than gratitude for being alive and being able to witness the birth of a new day. Today is a gift. Use it.

DAY 155

“I wasn't strong enough to save you, Mom. I wasn't strong enough. But I promise I won't fail again. I miss you...so much.”-
Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 156

*“I know wherever you are, it's become a better place.
You were the most loving partner a man could ever have.
Goodbye my darling wife, and thank you.” – Cleig Lars*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 157

“Well, if there's a bright center to the universe, you're on the planet that it's farthest from.” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 158

“I'm ready for the trials. I know I am! He knows it too But he won't let me move on.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 159

“You were my brother Anakin. I loved you!” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 160

“Never give up hope, no matter how dark things seem.”
- The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 161

“I’m thinking – I owe you one.” – Han Solo (deleted scene)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 24 SELF-HONESTY

“Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you?”—
Yoda

One of the hardest things people find to do is to be completely honest with themselves. It is better to “whistle in the dark” than to look in the mirror and peer deep within ourselves for the truth of who we are. Self-Honesty is a hard-won virtue because it is extremely difficult to do all the time and with rigor. Even when you think you are self-honest you are only kidding yourself.

As a Jedi self-honesty is an essential part of who you are. Without being honest with yourself you cannot progress and become a better version of yourself. Luke Skywalker had to face many truths on his journey. In the Cave on Dagobah he faced his inner Dark Side, his shadow, and his deepest vulnerabilities. On Cloud City he was forced to face the truth of who he really was when he confronted Darth Vader. Had Luke been unable to be self-honest with his flaws, faults, short comings, mistakes and who he was, he could not have transformed into the Jedi who went on to defeat the Empire and redeem Darth Vader.

Self-Honesty is not about beating yourself up. Self-flagellation and beratement is not productive and never goes anywhere. The goal of self-honesty is to take a step back and put aside your ego for a moment by taking a long hard look at yourself. That is all it takes. You judge people from a distance all the time and highlight their faults and shortcomings. How often do you shine the spotlight on yourself and see yourself for who you are?

Keeping a daily journal provides you with the opportunity to conduct a daily self-assessment. This requires self-honesty if it is going to be effective. The morning meditation is undertaken to plan for the day ahead. You can list your goals and activities

that you hope to achieve. How you want to conduct yourself throughout the day as a person can also be written here.

The evening contemplation provides an opportunity to reflect on how the day went. You undertake an honest evaluation and assessment of your performance. Mistakes, faults, and flaws are listed as well as achievements. Take the time to identify opportunities where improvements can be made, where you can do better next time. If mistakes were made and you need to resolve them, commit to doing so. Where an apology is due, or amends are needed also commit to them. Avoid procrastinating amends because its uncomfortable. Be honest with yourself everyday not just when things become so uncomfortable and you have dug yourself in to a deep hole that you are forced to.

The weekly review is a self-assessment of your commitment to undertaking the daily practices. Because self-improvement is usually self-directed there is rarely anyone looking over your shoulder instructing you on what to do and how to do it. You are accountable for yourself and your own self-discipline. No one is going to be reminding you to do the work and push harder, that is up to you. By evaluating your performance through the week, you identify the areas that require more work. Have you skimped out on meditation or physical exercise? Have you fallen on your face in diplomacy by being rude and dismissive of others who deserved more respect? Only you can answer that, and it takes self-honesty to be able to move forward.

No one expects perfection and you should not expect it from yourself. If you were perfect all the time, there would be no need for any of this. You would not require Jedi philosophy or any other philosophy as you have it all figured out and have mastered the art of living. The truth is you will never be perfect, not as a person and not in your practice. That is a good thing because it means there is always room for improvement and growth. Because this a journey you do not know what tomorrow will throw at you or how you will adapt or act. That is good.

DAY 162

“This is to be a test of your knighthood. You and your companions must make your own way through the difficulties you will encounter.” –Arca Jeth

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 163

“The trials are difficult. Many try and fail, so I advise you not to be complacent.” – Satele Shan

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 164

*“Adventure. Excitement. A Jedi craves not these things,” –
Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 165

“Let there be truth between your heart and the Force. All else is transitory.” – Surenit Kli'qiy

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 166

*“Things are changing and sometimes the line between friend
and foe is blurred!” – Obi-Wan Kenobi*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 167

“When 900 years old you reach, look this good you will not.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 168

“Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you?”—
Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 25 ERUDITION

“You must unlearn what you have learned.”— Yoda

Erudition means to acquire knowledge through learning. This means by reading, taking notes, asking questions, seeking clarification, and digging deep into a subject until you have firmly grasped it. It is not enough to read a book and have a shallow understanding. It is also not enough to hold one view while discounting or ignoring a counter view. Erudition is more than learning it is being able to wield and use knowledge like a Jedi Master wields a Lightsaber. Erudition is an art and a skill.

Whatever you have been taught and despite how much you think you know; you will never know everything and can never know even a fraction of it. This is a good thing because it means that you never need stop learning. A Jedi should always be actively seeking to study, learn, experience, practice, and pass on knowledge. A Jedi should also be agile enough to avoid dogma.

Never be satisfied with a simple answer to a complex question. Avoid falling into the trap of accepting dogmatic principles without challenge. Always be prepared to question your own set of beliefs, assumptions and biases no matter how noble or perfect they seem to you. Understand that with new knowledge come changes to your thinking and how you perceive the world.

Therefore, be prepared to unlearn what you have learned. Be willing to let go of old ideas and beliefs and replace them. Yoda challenged Luke to let go of his doubts, biases and beliefs that held him back. Until Luke became an empty vessel ready to *let go* and receive knowledge, Yoda could not hope to teach him.

Whether it is through seeking knowledge through books, a mentor or master or by way of experience the important thing is to grasp every opportunity to learn. *Never stop learning.*

DAY 169

“When I left you, I was but the learner; now I am the master.” –
Darth Vader

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 170

“You must learn the ways of the Force if you're to come with me to Alderaan” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 171

“I cannot teach him. The boy has no patience.” – Yoda

“He will learn patience.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 172

“Hmmm. Much anger in him, like his father.” - Yoda

“Was I any different when you taught me?” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 173

“You still have much to learn, my young apprentice.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 174

“You still have much to learn, Anakin.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 175

“You will learn to let go of everything. No attachment. No thought of self. No physical self.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

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Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 170

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Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

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Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

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Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 173

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Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 174

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Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 175

“You will learn to let go of everything. No attachment. No thought of self. No physical self.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 26 MENTOR

“Always pass on what you have learned.” Yoda

Jedi act as mentors to others. Through guidance, instruction, and example they mentor those who wish to be Jedi. Each Jedi is at a certain point along their journey. They recognize that they have come so far and still have a distance to travel to complete their training. There are those that are behind them on the path and those who are ahead. The Jedi will look to those who are further along for mentorship and will in turn provide guidance to those who are behind. In this way there is an endless passing of a torch that extends from the most seasoned Master to the most junior Padawan. The link is unbroken and moves forward without end.

The Jedi to Padawan and Master to Jedi relationship can be thought of as a type of active mentorship. The Padawan has spent many years learning the ways of the Force and applying the skills and code of the Jedi. Following successful completion of the initial trials and crafting of a Lightsaber a Padawan may be deemed ready to step into the wider universe and embark on missions with a Jedi who will help further develop them into eventually becoming a Jedi. The Jedi in turn has a Master who serves as a mentor continuously honing their skills and connection with the Force until they too are ready to become a Master and in turn guide a Jedi to the next level of their personal and professional development.

In our practice we will often find opportunities to assist others to become better versions of themselves. It does not matter if these people identify as Jedi or not. Any opportunity to impart knowledge and experience to those that ask should be embraced. You may know something that they do not, and they may benefit in that knowledge and experience. For example, meditation may seem easy to you, but it may not be for someone

you know. Sharing your skills and experience in meditation is a form of mentorship. Providing sound advice and suggestions on fitness to someone who is starting on a fitness journey to providing philosophical insights to those who ask are also examples of mentoring.

A Jedi only provide guidance. Mentoring is not telling someone what they should do or how to do it but simply answering questions and making suggestions. A mentor might observe and highlight areas for improvement, but they stop short of being a teacher. That is not the role of a mentor. A mentor acts as guide when needed. They have no vested interest in whether the person being mentored succeeds or fails in their aspirations. The mentor's job is not to carry the student but only to act as support and a role model when needed.

There are mentorship programs at the professional level, in sports, youth and academic circles. The challenge is matching the mentor with a mentee. A poor match can be disastrous and lead to animosity, disillusionment, and disappointment.

Obi-wan Kenobi was an excellent mentor to Luke but the match up with Anakin was a poor one. Qui-Gon Jinn accepted Anakin as he saw great potential in the boy as well as a shadow. After Qui-Gon Jinn fell in battle with Darth Maul, Anakin passed to Obi-wan Kenobi. Yoda realized too late that the match was ill conceived.

Anakin saw in Kenobi a brother, father, friend, teacher, rival, and a threat and finally as an enemy. Kenobi failed to see the demons that lurked within Anakin. The relationship was mismatched and could only end badly. Paradoxically, the mentor-student relationship between Ahsoka Tano and Anakin worked well probably because they disagreed on everything, challenged each other, and clashed openly on contentious issues. The pair always found common ground and held a deep affection for each other. They formed a formidable relationship,

but war and betrayal would eventually drive them apart. Ultimately Darth Sidious become the false mentor that drew Anakin to his destiny.

The meeting between Luke and Obi-wan Kenobi and later with Yoda on Dagobah was the meeting of the inexperienced novice with the mentor who will guide him to become the Hero he is meant to be. The appearance of the mentor is an important step in the Hero's Journey. Without being guided to his mentors Luke would have never embraced his call to adventure, he would have failed to arrive at his destiny and complete the Hero's Journey.

The mentor does not only pass on experience, feedback, skills and knowledge but also helps form a human being. Wisdom is the most important gift a mentor can give. With it the mentee can find their path to self-actualization and individuation. This is ultimately the choice of the one being guided. They can embrace or ignore what is offered. You carry the message, not the pupil.

These days there are few people willing to be a mentor. Positive role models are scarce especially for young people. Being a mentor is a big responsibility. A good mentor is attentive and available as well as committed to their role. Therefore, it is a challenge that is not for everyone as it takes time and effort to invest in someone without any personal gain. The only reward is helping another human being become a better version of themselves.

Being a mentor is a good way to give back. You can spend years training, learning, taking in and growing but what comes in must eventually flow on to others. You have a responsibility to share what you have learned to someone who wants what you have. Always pass on what you have learned.

DAY 176

“Master Yoda says I should be mindful of the future.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 177

“But not at the expense of the moment. Be mindful of the living Force, my young Padawan.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 178

“Mysterious are the ways of the Force.”

*“Did you just make me stand on my head for two hours because
I was annoying you?”*

“Very mysterious.”

Luke Skywalker and Yoda (Dagobah training scene)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 179

“Obi-wan informs me that running through a ship shouting ‘who’s up for a fight?’ doesn’t technically qualify as a briefing”
– Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 180

“We are what they grow beyond. That is the true burden of all Masters.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 181

“If you end your training now, if you choose the quick and easy path as Vader did — you will become an agent of evil.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 182

“Always pass on what you have learned.” Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 27 COURAGE

“A Jedi must have the deepest commitment, the most serious mind.” –Yoda

The word courage is derived from the Latin word for heart “*cor*”. Courage was one of the cardinal virtues of the Stoics. A Roman was measured by not only his courage in the face of combat but also in his response to everyday adversity. A Stoic approached suffering with equanimity and acceptance. The courage shown in the face of uncertainty, pain and death were the only things that truly mattered.

The Jedi also had courage. The rigors of Jedi training, the trials required it in abundance. Without courage a Jedi could not hope to survive the many ordeals that would confront her in a lifetime.

Life is suffering. Every day you face a degree of uncertainty in your life. With experience you come to understand that plans and expectations rarely match outcomes. What we hope will transpire is often dashed by reality. We have all heard of “Murphy’s Law”. Expect the unexpected and always at the worst possible time. Life is fraught with unknowns, adversity, trials, and challenges not to mention disappointments, failures, and tragedies.

It is in the act of getting out of bed and facing the world that you demonstrate a measure of courage. With every heart break and loss that you endure, each disappointment that you accept and all the challenges that you face and overcome you show courage.

Courage cannot exist without fear. It is perfectly normal to feel fear. Some people are terrified of public speaking. Others find the challenge of leaving the house with trepidation. Many of us

will feel fear for reasons we cannot articulate or do not understand. For example, the world is in a state of turmoil. The media bombards us with a constant stream of bad news and despair. Humanity seems to be in a state of chronic fear. The fear is not a tangible thing. It does not exist outside of our mind.

Fear is a normal human response; it is necessary to our survival. Courage is not the absence of fear but being able to act despite those fears. Courage is the person terrified of public speaking who stands in front of a crowd and delivers their speech. It is the person who walks out of their home to face a hostile world. Courage is choosing to face your fears despite every fiber in your being that screams at you to turn back. Courage is the very essence of being human because without it, humanity could not have survived in a world that was constantly trying to kill it. Fear and courage are brothers.

Star Wars is a saga of trials, tragedy, loss, hope, struggle, and redemption. The virtue that pervades the story is courage. Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia are idolized as morally virtuous characters because they showed courage in the face of fear and evil repeatedly. Han Solo despite his faults and shortcomings showed amazing courage and was willing to sacrifice his own safety for the ones he cared for. Each of these characters had their own fears and doubts but they overcame them and did what was needed despite every reason to seek safety and refuge.

The “Hero’s Journey” is an act of courage. Courage is what differentiates the mere traveler to the hero on the journey of life. One simply follows the path and arriving at challenges and obstacles chooses to turn back, stay put or go around because of fear. The traveler is not necessarily a coward, he simply lacks courage and will stick to what is familiar, safe, and expedient. The Hero on the other hand overcomes his fear by confronting the challenge head on at the expense of what is safe, secure, and expedient. Through that act the Hero is elevated from one level to another.

To show courage:

- Choose to act, despite the fear. Answer the call to adventure whatever it might be.
- Follow your heart despite the risks and the naysayers who tell you to abandon your dreams.
- Persevere in the face of adversity, keeping your eye on the prize. Keep going and never give up.
- Stand up for what is right to you. Speak up!
- Face the unknown. Embrace the suck. Eschew comfort and familiarity. Welcome adversity as an opportunity.
- Face suffering with acceptance and equanimity. Say “This too shall pass”. Mean it, whatever your concept of Faith.

Through the catharsis of suffering the Hero has gained where the traveler has not. By falling, failing, and then persevering through one challenge after another the Hero lives the virtue of courage. It is through these efforts that the Hero achieves her goals and returns home transformed.

Over the next seven days use the daily journal in the morning contemplation and evening reflection to explore your fears and how you can use courage to overcome them. Remember that reality is divided into the things that we can control versus those that we have partial or no control over. In life you have very little control over the things that are external to you. You do control how you perceive those things which harm you. This is an invitation for you to ask your fears to come out and play.

You know why you are here and why you are here. Your mountain is there in front of you waiting to be conquered. Only fear holds you back. The challenge is on you. Only you can muster the courage to go out and get what you want. Have courage and send your fears packing.

DAY 183

“Courage begins by trusting oneself.” – Moral

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 184

“This battle is inevitable. You can stand by your beliefs but let us stand by ours.” - Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 185

“The Force may not have a Light or Dark Side, but we do... and we must choose.” - Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 186

“Every generation has its challenges to face, its own battles to win. Why should yours be any different? Running away from your responsibilities won’t solve anything.” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 187

“Impossible to see ... The Dark Side clouds everything. But this I am sure of, do their duty the Jedi will.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 188

“A soldier’s most powerful weapon is courage.” – Moral

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 189

“When all seems hopeless, a true hero gives hope.” - Moral

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 28

DUTY

“Impossible to see ... The Dark Side clouds everything. But this I am sure of...Do their duty the Jedi will.” – Yoda

Jedi philosophy is a practical philosophy for life that is *defined* by the actions of its practitioners. To paraphrase the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, the goal should not be to explain your philosophy but to embody it in your everyday actions. Duty is what is expected of you. Your duty defines your relationship with yourself, others, and society. Your duty may be to rise early in the morning, make yourself presentable and attend to your place of employment where you are compensated for your time and effort. You may have a duty to serve your clients, customers, family, and friends. Duty may also require that you fulfil a promise or contract. It can also be argued that you have a duty to be a good person to others and to yourself. Your first duty is to be a human being, a citizen of the world.

Duty means that you take responsibility for your own physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional health. Taking responsibility means living in accordance with your principles and values. It also means considering the duty you owe to others and to the community.

There are no specific duties that you must attend to practice Jedi Philosophy. How you achieve each of the Jedi Goals of service, defence, proficiency, creativity, and inquiry (study) is up to you. Your work may provide you the opportunity by which the goals can be practiced, as can your studies and involvement in social, environmental, or political causes that you identify with. Duty is not what others owe to us more than what we owe to others.

The Jedi Goals define duty as actions that lead to world betterment through self-betterment and service to others:

Train diligently

Right effort is required to arrive at desired outcomes. What you put in will ultimately determine what you get out. This means dedication and consistency in application. Self-discipline is the key to improvement whether in meditation, physical fitness, or the martial arts.

Render Aid

Jedi provide aid to those in need when it is requested of them. Your personal circumstances will determine what you give and to whom and why.

Provide Support

Support can be many things. It can be as simple as emotional support to a friend in crisis. Working to support a family is a duty for some. Attendance at a protest demonstrates support to a cause as does giving donations. Voting at elections shows support not only for a political party but democratic rights.

Defend those in Need

Advocacy means representing that which does not have the means to self-represent. This means taking the side of the disadvantaged or the oppressed and seeking justice in some way. The cause may involve human rights or environmental protection. Which cause, will ultimately depend on the individual. Advocacy is always through lawful and peaceful means.

Study the Force

Each person will define the Force in their own way. One way to define the Force is wisdom. The pursuit of wisdom is a Jedi goal. Meditation, reading and application all lead to wisdom. Wisdom itself leads to unbiased judgment, compassion, experiential self-knowledge, self-transcendence and non-attachment, and virtues such as ethics and benevolence.

Whatever you do today, do your duty first.

DAY 190

*“Hmm? What he was doing. Hmph. Adventure. Heh. Excitement.
Heh. A Jedi craves not these things.” – Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 191

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned from you, master, it’s that following direct orders isn’t always the best way to solve a problem.” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 192

“Anakin, my allegiance is to the Republic, to democracy!” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 193

“If you're not with me, then you're my enemy.” - Anakin
*“Only a Sith deals in absolutes. I will do what I must.” – Obi-
wan Kenobi*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 194

“Luke, I’m not going wait for the Empire to draft me into service. The Rebellion is spreading and I want to be on the right side -- the side I believe in.” – Biggs

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 195

“Today we fight for more than the Republic. Today we fight for all our brothers back home.” – Captain Rex

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 196

“I did my duty as a citizen.” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 29 SERVICE

“A great service to the republic, you have done.” – Yoda

“I did my duty as a citizen.” – Ahsoka Tano

“Not as a Jedi?” – Yoda

The purpose of the Jedi was to serve the Republic. The Jedi cannot be compared to real world services such as the military, the diplomatic corps or law enforcement but they had elements of each. The goal of each is to serve the government which may or may not act on behalf of the people. The Jedi were no different however they were sworn to serve and protect the Republic which had been built on the precepts of democracy and rule of law. Each Jedi existed to that end. Without a Republic to serve there was no reason for the Jedi to exist.

Adopting Jedi philosophy carries with it an expectation of service and a sincere desire to serve others. To be Jedi is by nature to avoid selfishness, self-centredness, and self-serving behaviour. Jedi take the focus off themselves and place it on others. This requires a degree of selflessness and self-sacrifice.

Most people think of service as being employed directly in the military, police, or in emergency services. Service may also be voluntary and unpaid by giving time to worthy causes and charities. It might be providing support and aid to those in need through disaster or crisis relief. Donating clothes, blankets, money, and blood is also an important form of service.

Many people also find it hard to dedicate themselves to service to others. Finding the time and opportunity to commit to worthy causes may not be for everyone. This should not preclude anyone from finding ways to be of service to others. Small everyday acts of kindness to others can be as important as dedicated service. Holding open a door, offering to help someone carry a heavy load or complete a difficult task, checking in on a friend, bringing groceries to those who are

unable to leave their home are services in themselves. Doing your job to the best of your ability is also an act of service.

The benefits of service to others are obvious. By helping others you help yourself. Research shows that people who volunteer in worthy causes are generally happier and more satisfied with life. Volunteers feel a sense of purpose and community as well as a deeper sense of gratitude for what they have.

Service was a duty of the Jedi. Even those who failed in their Jedi training went on to serve the Republic in the Jedi Service Corps. The work was hard, demanding at times dangerous and always thankless. Being Jedi is not providing service for the thanks, recognition, or reward but because it is what is done. It is a duty as a citizen.

“Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world” – Howard Zinn

DAY 197

“Fame, recognition—a Jedi does not seek these things. It was enough to serve and have good come from that.” - Plo Koon

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 198

“I have lived long enough to see the same eyes in different people.”– Maz Kanata

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 199

“I only wanted to do my duty.” – Fives

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 200

“This one a long time have I watched. All his life has he looked away... to the future, to the horizon. Never his mind on where he was.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 201

“We can learn from others, but we must also learn from our own experiences and our own mistakes.” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 202

“Heroes are made by the times.” – The Clone Wars (S1 E8)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 203

“A great service to the republic, you have done.” – Yoda
“I did my duty as a citizen.” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 30 DEFEND

“For thousands of years, Zygerria supplied slave labor to the galaxy. We prospered. Our customers prospered. Then the Jedi came.” – Darts D’Nar

“Jedi try to protect others if possible, Jedi are peaceful warriors. Jedi are also aware that being prepared and trained gives them the advantage if they do have to protect themselves and others. Most Jedi know at least one form of martial arts or self-defense.” - 33 Jedi Traits (Author Unknown).

The Jedi were a humanitarian movement. During the centuries of conflict in which the Jedi participated they were often rushing to defend one oppressed group or another. These efforts were limited only by the reach of the Jedi. Anakin and his mother were sold as slaves to the Hutt Clan by a slaving Empire run by the Zygerrians. Anakin carried the stigma of slavery with him, it burned like an old wound. The wound cut deep, and Anakin vowed to stamp slavery out.

One of the five goals of Jedi Philosophy is “Defend the Weak”. Some real-world Jedi work as police officers or serve in the military. Others are in emergency and medical professions. Aid and humanitarian workers and volunteers are also represented. Defenders of the animal rights are also among the Jedi. There are Jedi who work at the vanguard of environmental activism and others who try to advocate for sustainability and conservation through science, management, and education.

“I am a sheepdog; I live to protect the flock and confront the world.” – LTC Dave Grossman (ret)

Not all of us can find ways to “Defend the Weak” through our jobs. Those of us who volunteer our time do what we can. There are many ways you can defend or advocate for the defenseless.

When we see someone being treated unfairly, we speak up. Often the weak and the vulnerable are easy targets for ill treatment. By looking the other way, we would condone such abuse, so we say something. We intervene mindfully and use moral judgement. There is rarely any reason to resort to violence other than in self-defense. We show where our principles reside.

“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen” – Winston Churchill

Courage is a virtue. Sometimes it takes real courage to stick to principles and act them out. By defending others, you are also showing selflessness and empathy. Avoid exploiting or abusing others. Never play the oppressor whatever the reason. This means being fair and diligent.

You would not short-change a customer or be silent if you were over charged. We would not push in ahead of others or use our size to intimidate people. You would not grow impatient and hurl abuse at a waitress doing her job on minimum wage. On a crowded bus you would willingly give up a seat to someone who needs it more. You would not bear silent witness to a person being victimized or bullied in the workplace or in public. You would speak up and defend the rights of that person.

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.” – Mark Twain

The Jedi path teaches that we are not the center of the Universe. There are other people in this world who are just as deserving of respect and dignity as you are. Also recognize that we depend on our environment to live. Clean living shows us the value of unpolluted air and water and the beauty of nature.

No one is watching you or knows you as well as yourself. You know what is in your heart. In the face of injustice, you can choose to look the other way and walk, or you can act.

DAY 204

“I can't believe there is still slavery in the galaxy. The Republic's anti-slavery laws...” – Padmé Amidala

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 205

“You're...a slave?” - Padmé Amidala
“I am a person! My name is Anakin.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 206

“I had a dream I was a Jedi. I came back here and freed all the slaves...have you come to free us?” – Anakin

“No, I’m afraid not...” – Qui-Gon Jinn

“I think you have...why else would you be here?” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 207

“He deserves better than a slave's life.” – Shmi Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 208

“You’re no longer a slave” – Qui-Gon Jinn
“Now you can make your dreams come true, Annie. You're free!” – Shmi Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 209

“Those who enslave others inevitably become slaves themselves.” – The Clone Wars (S4 E12)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 210

“For thousands of years, Zygerria supplied slave labor to the galaxy. We prospered. Our customers prospered. Then the Jedi came.” – Darts D’Nar

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 31 PROFICIENCY

“You must unlearn what you have learned.” - Yoda

Epictetus said, “It is impossible for a man to learn what he thinks he already knows.” Most people confuse ability with proficiency. People will overestimate their level of skill and knowledge. They may have reached a level of competency, but have they reached proficiency? Proficiency is a point on the journey where use of a skill is attained short of mastery. The proficient is the unconscious competent.

The Jedi understood and applied the levels of competency. The order was a meritocracy where outcomes of effort were recognized over the individual. Anakin never became a Jedi Master because while he may have been powerful with the Force and advanced in his skills with a Lightsaber and a Starfighter he failed to demonstrate full proficiency as a Jedi. The Jedi Council considered Anakin to be an asset and a liability at the same time and not ready to be a Jedi Master. Anakin lacked the attributes needed to be a Jedi such as patience, calm and objectivity. Ignoring the Jedi, Palpatine sought to have an ally in the council and had Anakin appointed to it despite protests from the Jedi.

Politics and proficiency often contradict each other. We see it all the time in the real world and ask, “how can this person be in a position of authority”? How can someone be proficient unless they had done the “hard yards”? People cannot instantly be considered proficient at something they have barely committed time and effort in to. We are skeptical of so called “experts”.

Rey had a degree of wisdom and survival instinct born from being a scavenger in the wilderness of Jakku. This served her well in subsequent adventures against the “New Order”. What Rey lacked was a mentor and training which are hard gained on the “Hero’s Journey”. Luke also struggled until he had

completed his training and achieved proficiency as a Jedi by undertaking the trials and overcoming his own weaknesses over many years. By doing so he also redeemed his father Anakin by freeing him from slavery as Darth Vader, saving the Galaxy.

Proficiency is a journey that you should share on the path you walk. You learn to crawl before you can walk, you learn to walk before you can run. Unless you are truly proficient in what you claim to be, you still have a lot to learn before you can claim true mastery. Never claim for a moment that you achieved the rank of a Master. This is the first sign that you are far from it. There are five levels of development to proficiency on your journey. Where are you? Where do you need to work?

1. The unconscious incompetent: this is the Novice who is an expert after five minutes. The person simply does not know what he does not know. Under some circumstances the person can be a hazard and a liability especially when their actions impact on the safety and security of he and others.
2. The conscious incompetent: The Novice has begun to realize the gaps in his knowledge and experience and is aware of the long journey ahead.
3. The conscious competent: The Novice has transitioned to a level of competency where training has been assimilated and is accumulating experience to integrate that training. Training and development are still far from over.
4. The unconscious competent: A high level of competency has been achieved. The person is now considered proficient. Skills, experience, and knowledge are assimilated to such a degree that they are second nature. This level is ready to teach and mentor the novice.
5. The Master: A peak level of proficiency has been achieved to a level where now the master must seek the rare person who can continue his training to a higher level. The Master can mentor and teach others who are also proficient. The role of the Master is to instruct and pass the torch on by passing on his knowledge to others.

DAY 211

“Anakin Skywalker, we have approved your appointment to the council as the Chancellor's personal representative.” – Mace Windu

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 212

“Allow this appointment lightly, the council does not. Disturbing is this move by Chancellor Palpatine.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 213

“You are on the council, but we do not grant you the rank of master.” – Mace Windu

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 214

“What? How can you do this? This is outrageous, it's unfair. I'm more powerful than any of you. How can you be on the council and not be a master?” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 215

“Take your seat, young Skywalker.” – Mace Windu
“Forgive me Master” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 216

“I've been waiting for you, Obi-Wan. We meet again, at last. The circle is now complete. When I met you I was but the learner. Now, I am the master.” – Darth Vader

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 217

“Strong is Vader. Mind what you have learned. Save you it can...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 32 CREATIVITY

“This is my creative vision.” – George Lucas

The Force is expressed in humans through their creativity. Human are driven to create and manipulate the world around them. Creativity makes us human and reflects the divine within.

The daily routine of personal improvement for a Jedi should include a brief period of meditation or contemplation, physical exercise, study, service to others and a creative pursuit. The way a Jedi will undertake all these activities will vary as much as the individual. Creativity could include writing, blogging, painting, drawing, sculpting, gardening, building, coding, photography, making music, singing or anything where something is brought in to being by your efforts. Thanks to the creative energy of George Lucas, we have the Star Wars universe to enjoy.

Have you ever wondered why some activities like art are so relaxing and fulfilling? It is because your mind is engaged in the act of creation. You are forming something with your mind and bringing it into reality in a way that you and others can appreciate. Your mind is drawn from the noise and confusion of life for a short time and is engaged and focused on one act: creation. The act of creation brings you closer to who you are.

The musical note is created by the silence that exists on either side. All that exists was once absent and came in to being through the transfer of energy and the manipulation of matter. In the beginning there was void and at the end there will be void and between that vast emptiness resides creation, including you.

You could say that to *be* Jedi is to be creative. The Force compels you to express yourself through its creative energy because you *are* the Force. You are a point of reference in an infinite stream of consciousness that binds all things together in the Force, constantly creating itself. You were created to create.

DAY 218

“Nothing is lost where the Force dwells, and the Force is everywhere.” - Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 219

“I am part of the Living Force.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 220

“It’s (The Force) an energy field created by all living things. It surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together.” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 221

“Luminous beings are we, not this crude matter.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 222

“Belief is not a matter of choice, but conviction.” – Moral

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 223

“The best confidence builder is experience.” – Moral

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 224

“I’m one with the Force, the Force is with me.” – Chirrut

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 33 CURIOSITY

“Truly wonderful the mind of a child is.” – Yoda

To have the mind of a Jedi it is necessary to have the mind of a child. A child’s mind is in tune with her surroundings and open to input. The child is constantly learning, exploring, and discovering new things about the world around. A Jedi too is an open vessel constantly exploring, asking questions, and learning in the same way as a child. The Jedi has a curious mind.

Albert Einstein wrote, *“The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives”*. Yoda echoed these sentiments when he said, *“Truly wonderful the mind of a child is”*. Einstein and Yoda shared a common sense of wonder at the Universe and the mysteries that it held. Their inner child drove them to think, question and explore for answers.

Be curious. Explore and discover. Find and cultivate a sense of adventure. Be calm, passive and at peace but also restless and thirsty for knowledge. Have an inquiring mind. Find out what exists over the hill and beyond the horizon. Many people would prefer that we did not seek such answers choosing to accept dogma and what is and nothing more. The greatest explorers and discovers like Galileo were not satisfied with dogma and “what is”. They wanted to know more and so should you.

If you are reading this it is likely that you are an ardent fan of Star Wars. You enjoy discovering fantasy fiction and cultivating your imagination. The innate mythology that resides within you wants to explore and discover. You are living the “Hero’s Journey” in your own way. This is the inner child which resides within all but is fully awake in only some of us.

What are you waiting for? Free your inner child. Chase the dream. Find what you are looking for and never rest till you do.

DAY 225

“Clear your mind must be, if you are to find the villains behind this plot.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 226

“Much to learn you still have... my old padawan. This is just the beginning!” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 227

*“Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you?
Hmm? Hmm. And well you should not.” - Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 228

“Yes. Yes. A flaw more and more common among Jedi. Too sure of themselves they are. Even the older, more experienced ones.”

– Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 229

“Whats in there?” – Luke Skywalker
“Only what you take with you” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 230

“Hmm. To a dark place this line of thought will carry us. Great care we must take.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 231

“If so powerful you are... why leave?” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 34 HUMOR

“Foreplay, cuddling a Jedi craves not these things.” – Yoda

Jedi are serious people, but they don't take themselves too seriously. Jedi like to make people smile and laugh, especially in bad situations - (33 Jedi Traits)

There is a saying that goes if you are laughing, you cannot have your mind in a dark place. Much of life is spent ruminating on the past with all its regrets or projected into the future with all its fears and hopes. Laughter puts you in to the present moment. When you laugh, you cannot be anywhere but in the here and now.

The Jedi are often depicted as the epitome of the stoic monk warrior; humorless, serious, and void of emotion. Jedi had a sense of humor and believed in the healthy display of emotions, they were serious about their work, but not themselves.

The Jedi knew the value of humor. Obi-wan Kenobi was one to often use irony and wit to refocus Anakin or defuse a situation from turning violent. Yoda laughed often and turned to humor and playfulness to make light of a situation, teach students, or disarm opponents.

The Jedi would respond to insult through use of dry wit and humor. There is nothing more disarming to an unpleasant or abusive person trying to insult you than to have their insult responded to with laughter and a joke. Why get angry and upset by hurtful words? Your mind is your own and you can take it as you want. Be offended or be tickled by an insult. Laughing off an abusive insult with a joke not only deflates a bully, it wins the respect and the laughter of bystanders. A sense of humor is like owning a suit of armor.

The Jedi Masters often saw humor in the most unusual places. It kept them centered and lightened the mood when hope appeared

lost and defeat seemed certain. Yoda and Obi-Wan often reverted to wit and “tongue in cheek” under stress. They saw no point in getting worked up about the situation; they dealt with the issue as it presented itself and used humor to help others cope.

Without a doubt one of the tools in your tool bag is humor. It is indispensable. Use it and use it as often as you like. People may not always appreciate your sense of humor but who cares? Laugh anyway if it is not at anyone’s misfortune. Always use your humor and wit to help not hurt.

How humor helps:

1. Fear and depression are disarmed as laughter reminds you that they are impermanent and will pass.
2. Humor releases endorphins and relaxes tension. Laughter feels good.
3. Laughter is used to treat pain and promote recovery.
4. Humor increases immunity by promoting immunoglobulin.
5. Stress hormones are reduced through laughter.
6. Humor cultivates optimism. If we can laugh something off we suddenly feel positive in the face of adversity.
7. Humor deescalates tension and conflict.

DAY 232

“When nine hundred years old you reach, look as good you will not” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 233

*“Lost a planet Master Obi-wan has. How embarrassing” –
Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 234

Yoda: *“Mysterious are the ways of the Force.”*

Luke: *“Did you just make me stand on my head for two hours
because I was annoying you?”*

Yoda: *“Very mysterious.”*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 235

“Why, you stuck-up, half-witted, scruffy-looking nerf herder!”

– Princess Leia

“Who’s scruffy looking?” - Han

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 236

“Boring conversation anyway...” - Han

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 237

“How you get so big eating food of this kind?” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 238

*“I don’t know where you get your delusions, laserbrain.” –
Princess Leia*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 35 HUMILITY

Jedi are humble and believe that they can always work on improving themselves. - (33 Jedi Traits)

“Judge me by my size, do you?” - Yoda

The words by Yoda to Luke Skywalker on Dagobah well summed up the Jedi Masters assessment of his apprentice. Yoda recognized so many faults and shortcomings in Luke but also much hope. Yoda’s fear was that Luke would fall into the same emotional traps that undermined and overcame Anakin such as impatience, impulsiveness, fear, anger, uncontrolled rage and finally a fall to the dark side. Humility conquers pride.

Yoda recognized that Luke needed to be trained from zero as a Jedi. Obi-wan Kenobi had not had enough time to coach Luke. Yoda also realized that all of Luke’s perceptions, his biases and beliefs needed to be challenged and ultimately replaced with those that served him better as a Jedi.

The Jedi were humble, but they were also confident and self-assured. A Jedi was not in the habit of self-deprecation. Humility does not mean a lack of self-esteem. On the contrary to be humble is to have a healthy self-respect and knowledge of one’s own limitations and failings as well as strengths. A humble person may still think highly of themselves. They appreciate they may be better than others in some respects but not put themselves above others.

How often have we heard of someone at the top of their game let success get to their head? They become arrogant. Ultimately, they stumbled and fell. The damage to pride was felt more than any physical harm or financial loss.

Humility comes from the word “humous” or soil. From humility other virtues grow. Humiliation is the bitter pill that people

swallow when hubris and pride get in the way and life then pulls the rug from under them. Life has a habit of reminding us to be humble or risk humiliation.

Yoda, Obi-wan Kenobi, Qui-Gon Jinn, Princess Leia all showed humility yet strength of character. Combined the traits conquer pride and hubris, overcome arrogance and gain respect and admiration from others. They went further than that. Through humility each of the characters were prepared to sacrifice themselves for a cause greater than themselves. Self-sacrifice and humility are not only great virtues but the mark of a true leader.

The Jedi Order was overthrown by a plot executed by Darth Sidious. The Jedi had long betrayed its humble roots for power, prestige, influence, and position. Pride, politics and finally hypocrisy and hubris left the order hollow and ready to be exploited by the Dark Side

“Don’t get cocky” – Han Solo

It is easy to “get cocky” and confident as things go well. But what happens when they do not? Where is that “cockiness” now? Anakin let his self-confidence grow to arrogant pride and finally hubris leading to his fall to the Dark Side.

To be Jedi is to be humble and willing to sacrifice. The path is not an easy one. Those that are not humble and willing to sacrifice ease, comfort, conceit, arrogance and what is expedient are likely to fail.

Your focus should be on acknowledging that you still have a lot to learn and can always work on improving yourself. The journey never ends, and you never stop learning, if you are humble enough and willing to do the work.

DAY 239

“Arrogance diminishes wisdom” – The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 240

“The ability to speak does not make you intelligent.” – Qui Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 241

“Smaller in number are we, but larger in mind.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 242

“There is always a bigger Fish.” - Qui Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 243

“If you strip away the myth and look at their deeds, the legacy of the Jedi is failure. Hypocrisy, hubris.” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 244

“Without humility, courage is a dangerous game.” – The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 245

“Humility is the only defense against humiliation.”– The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 36 COMPASSION

“Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is essential to a Jedi’s life.” – Anakin

Compassion is central to a Jedi’s life. We need to have love and compassion for ourselves first and foremost, and then let that compassion gravitate outwards to the whole creation - (33 Jedi Traits)

Metta is the Buddhist practice of “Loving Kindness”. Buddhists believe that compassion for all living things is vital as all life is precious. With compassion and loving-kindness, the karmic consequences from past lives can be reversed and the Adherent can become a Bodhisattva, an “awakened one”.

The Bodhisattva postpones their transcendence to Nirvana for the sake of compassion for all life. Imagine that, to willingly seek to take on all the worlds suffering. These Buddhists feel compassion for all life. Like Yoda, they take the “passion” out of “compassion” and replace it with loving kindness.

The word compassion means “with passion” or “to suffer with”. Anakin and Luke both felt uncontrolled compassion for others and allowed that emotion to cloud their judgement. This misguided compassion ultimately led Anakin to the Dark Side and almost destroyed Luke as well as he attempted to rescue his friends on Cloud City.

Mindful compassion and empathy on the other hand allowed Luke to put aside his passion and spare his Father. In an instant Luke was awakened to the fact that he did not need to have conflicting passions. Luke chose to understand the suffering of Darth Vader and put an end to it. Luke refused to feed the fear, anger, and hatred that Darth Sidious demanded. Through loving kindness, he defeated the Sith Lord and redeemed his Father.

During his captivity under the *Zygerrian* Slavers, Obi-wan Kenobi was almost broken. Obi-wan suffered from a crisis of compassion. The more he tried to help his fellow slaves the more they were punished by their captors. As he rushed to intervene to stop an act of cruelty, a guard would rush in and take a whip to him and then punish the slave even more.

The cruelty to others was too much for Obi-wan, he suffered because he could not help and when he tried it made matters worse. Eventually the other slaves shunned Obi-wan telling him to keep away. After the second battle of Christophsis, Obi-wan also suffered the emotional toll of having so many friends killed around him.

Obi-wan had a compassionate heart, unlike Yoda he was not always able to see clearly beyond his concern and anxiety for the suffering of others. The fall of his student and friend Anakin on the lava flows of Mustafar almost drove Obi-wan to despair such was his overwhelming compassion and grief. Being overanxious for others does not help anyone, least of all ourselves. Yoda had compassion and serenity without attachment. Yoda did not suffer for the sake of others.

You can react with blind compassion, to do so can ignite an emotion, often raw and irrational. To respond with empathy is to use one's heart with a brain attached. By acting with *Metta* you combine heart, soul and mind together in a mindful way.

You recognize the suffering of others and willingly take that suffering from them. Instead of attaching your emotions, you let it go. This leads to healing. Use empathy and mindful action to make a difference. You can stand in a storm of tragedy and chaos and not let it affect your serenity.

This is the true nature of Jedi compassion. Embrace it.

DAY 246

“Attachment is not compassion” – The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 247

“Attachment is forbidden.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 248

“Possession is forbidden.” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 249

“Compassion, which I would define as unconditional love, is essential to a Jedi's life” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 250

“You might say that we are encouraged to love.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 251

“The Sith rely on their passion for their strength. They think inward, only about themselves.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 252

“There is no passion; there is serenity” – The Jedi Code

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 37 SIMPLICITY

“Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose” – Yoda

Jedi work on ‘letting go’ of their attachments and train themselves on this. The fear of loss of one’s attachments leads to the dark side, so a ‘letting go’ and ‘trusting in the will of the Force’ attitude needs to be developed gradually to overcome this fear of loss. Everything really belongs to the Force anyhow, so we need to trust the Force, and not be so attached to people and possessions. - (33 Jedi Traits)

Buddhists believe that the fundamental cause of suffering is attachment. The premise is not solely with one religion. All the mainstream faiths warn followers of becoming overly attached to earthly possessions, title, bodies, relationships, and beliefs. With attachment comes the fear of losing what one is attached to.

People forget that all the things that are valued; all that is taken for granted and cherished is impermanent by nature. Any or all of them can be removed at any time. Nothing lasts forever and all things must change and eventually end. Everything ultimately returns to the Force.

Grasping attachment and the fear of losing what was most dear to him ultimately led Anakin to the Dark Side. Not happy to simply accept things as they were, Anakin wanted to control the Force to his will and claim ultimate power, the power over life and death. In his fear Anakin lost everything that was dear to him and became a tortured servant of the Dark Lord.

The Fictional Jedi were expected to follow the precept of non-attachment. For this reason, they were not allowed to marry or have children or carry on as normal Galactic citizens might have done. Their commitment was like being in a Monastic Order or perhaps even the Army of some countries. Personal possessions

were eschewed as were other attachments that the rest of us take for granted. A Jedi's possessions were usually limited to a robe and undergarments, a utility belt and lightsaber and enough credits to complete the mission and live frugally.

Allegiance to the Jedi Order demanded simplicity and purpose. By living simply, the Jedi were never distracted from their primary purpose of service to the Order and the Republic. The Jedi also kept their internal world well-ordered and simple. The Jedi demonstrated equanimity and dispassion as a result.

Being Jedi does not mean one should give away all your possessions away and start to live the life of a Monk. Being Jedi also means being reasoned and rational. Most sane people are not prepared to just hand their world possessions over and become a Monk, walking away from family and job. One can still own wealth and possessions as well as possess title and fame. But are you dependent on these things? Can you loosen your attachment to them? Can you contemplate and ultimately accept their loss? Do you really need your life to be full of clutter anyway? Can you simplify and minimalize?

List all the things that take up our time and attention. What do you enjoy doing? Are you doing things which take up time but bring you no joy or return? Decide which you would be better off without and drop it.

Review your consumer patterns. Take a shopping list with you or decide on what you are going to buy and then buy it. Avoid making purchases on impulse and ask yourself whether you need it or just want it. Remember, wants are not needs.

Go through your wardrobe and garage. Do you really need all the clothes hanging up? One way is to turn all your clothes and shoes to face one way. Every time you take something and put it back have it facing the opposite direction. After a year take all the items that were not moved and donate them to good-will. Take all of your horded clutter out on to the lawn and divide

them into categories based on their utility and purpose. If you have stuff sitting there for years which has not been used, donate it if it may be of use to others or throw it out.

Occasionally review your life and take stock. Not just where you are financially, in your career, or on the journey to achieving your goals; review your internal values system. Are your values consistent with who you are and who you want to be? Ask what you care about, what is your purpose and what do you want out of life. Decide whether your values match your principles and agree with your goals. *Remember that values define you, principles are the way you express them, and goals are where you want to take your life.*

Life can be lived from one day to the next mindfully or we can spend it in anxiety ridden anticipation of loss and catastrophe. We can spend our days clutching on to our money, possessions and life or we can loosen the bonds that tie us to this world a little. Do we hold a Dove in hand so tight that we squeeze the life out of it, or do we hold it gently and loosely and willingly let it go when the time comes?

You do not lose what you let go, it all belongs to the Force anyway.

DAY 253

*“Attachment leads to jealousy. The shadow of greed that is” –
Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 254

“Easy isn’t always simple.” – The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 255

“Easy is the path to wisdom for those not blinded by ego.” – The Clone Wars

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 256

“I don’t know, Chewie... fly casual!” – Han Solo

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 257

“If there’s one thing I’ve learned from you, master, it’s that following direct orders isn’t always the best way to solve a problem.” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 258

*“For 800 years have I trained Jedi. My own counsel will I keep
on who is to be trained! A Jedi must have the deepest
commitment, the most serious mind.” – Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 259

“That is why you fail”– Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 38 SOLITUDE

“Until the time is right, disappear, we will. Master Kenobi, wait a moment. In your solitude on Tatooine, training, I have for you.” – Yoda

The Jedi were peculiar. Most Jedi could easily mix in a crowd and feel at ease in social settings. They could stand out without drawing attention to themselves. A Jedi could command attention from those around without needing to raise her voice. They could remain in the shadows and observe or stand in the open and take command. A Jedi did not avoid the company of others, but they understood the value of solitude and silence.

Are you comfortable on your own? Can you sit by yourself and feel at ease in your own company? Do you crave and need the company of others? Do you prefer the peace of the countryside and nature or the noise and hustle of a large city? Can you stand more than a few hours of silence and solitude?

“In Silence there is eloquence.” – Rumi, Sufi Poet

Monks, mystics, philosophers, and warriors have long sought solitude to contemplate and meditate in silence. Some were seeking commune with God. Others sought the answers to the questions at the core of the human experience. The Australian indigenous practice of “Walkabout” required young men to spend months wandering the vast wilderness alone so that they could connect with the land and the spirits of ancestors. Transcendence and awareness of one’s true self is found in solitude and silence.

The Jedi also recognized the benefits of cutting themselves off from others to strengthen their connection with the Force. Solitude also conditioned the Jedi to the rigors of Jedi Service and cultivated the self-discipline needed to practice non-

attachment. Master Jedi Voolvif Monn was a recluse who shunned company and spent much of his life in solitude.

Following the destruction of the Jedi Temple and the purge of the Order by Emperor Palpatine, Obi-wan Kenobi and Yoda both spent years hiding in solitude. In their isolation they kept busy planning for the return of the Jedi. Both achieved enlightenment during their reclusion.

To be Jedi does not mean you must isolate yourself from others. Being Jedi does not mean being anti-social though many Jedi were asocial and preferred spending time alone in deep study and meditation.

In the real world few people are solitary creatures although many people isolate themselves due to anxiety or depression. Jay Gatsby would feel lonely and alone in the lavish parties he threw. A person on social media may have tens of thousands of friends and no meaningful relationships with real friends in reality. Such a person is lonely and probably unhappy.

Solitude is not Isolation. Seeking solitude is seeking a place where you can be by yourself to re-calibrate, re-charge and become centered.

Solitude allows you to discover you, to feel your breath and the wind against your face. The sounds of birds, running water, waves at the beach, wind and rain become real and vital. To be in solitude is to marvel at the wonder of nature and the mystery of creation and feel the spark of the divine within. Life becomes simpler and answers to problems start to surface.

The things that are pursued in society no longer seem to matter, there is no conflict, no disagreement. One cannot gossip, cheat or lie or steal when truly in solitude and apart from fellow humans. Senses become keener and every cell within vibrates with the essence of life. You should never feel selfish for giving yourself time to be alone.

“I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude.” — Henry David Thoreau, Walden

Most people cannot just drop everything and reside in a cabin near a lake like Thoreau did for a year. You can still seek solitude through time alone with a book, a walk through the park or sit in solitary meditation. Disconnect from social media for a day or a month. Ignore the noise emitting from the constant stream of 24/7 news and information. Switch off the TV and computer. Find a place you can go to be alone and in silence be it the beach, a lake, or a mountain. Rise early and welcome the sunrise alone. Whatever you do, make sure you commit to it every day. Seek out silence, close your eyes and breath even if for only a moment.

Isolating is to distance from people and responsibilities; solitude is to reconnect with the Force and who you truly are. Solitude is to be taken when needed, like medicine, it is a balm to the body, mind, and soul.

Do you choose blissful solitude, or do you choose to isolate?

DAY 260

“Control, control, you must learn control!” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 261

“None of the stories people tell about me can change who I really am.” –Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 262

“Anyone can handle a weapon. Reason is much more difficult to wield” - Luminara Unduli

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 263

“Finding him was the will of the Force. I have no doubt of that”
– Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 264

“Remember, concentrate on the moment. Feel, don't think. Use your instincts.” – Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 265

“Smaller in number are we, but larger in mind.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 266

“The road lies before you, Anakin Skywalker. Will you walk it alone”– Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 39 REALISM

“Many of the truths that we cling to depend on our point of view.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Pause and assess where you are on your journey. Do outcomes match expectations? Are you pleased or disappointed with your progress? Are you converted or disillusioned? Do your initial prejudices and perceptions match up with reality?

It is often easy to start something and once it becomes too hard doubts begin to set in. How things were imagined do not become reality and we lose sight of the vision that spurred us to start in the first place. You are only human and will make mistakes and wrong calls. There is also no such thing as perfect progress.

If you came into this expecting perfection you will be disappointed. Eventually you will be let down. Sometimes by others but mostly by yourself.

Now is the time to take a reality check. After months and years of walking the Jedi Path it is easy to lose sight of reality. Jedi philosophy is rooted in pragmatism and realism. If it had no real world use it would have no purpose.

The Jedi understood the chaotic nature of reality. They appreciated the randomness and unpredictability of events. To achieve their purpose, they sought to balance the Force within themselves. Emotions were kept in check but not repressed. Opinions mattered but were not accepted as absolute truth. Absolutes were rejected and ideas welcomed and judged by their merits and not by prejudice or preconceived notions.

Behind the chaos of reality was the duality of the Force, the energies emitted by the light and dark sides of Ashla and Bogan. The goal of the Jedi was to seek balance within themselves

through the Force. By achieving balance they could come closer to bringing balance and harmony to the Galaxy.

Those that achieved balance with the Force were united with it. Through transmutation of the physical to the Force they became one with it and achieved enlightenment. This is the Star Wars depiction of transcendence to perfection. It may be fiction, but it is inspired by eastern and western philosophies and traditions that you can use in your own spiritual journey.

Star Wars is a fictional fantasy made for entertainment after all, but the stories and archetypes serve as modern surrogates to the symbols and myths which are part of the human makeup. The Jedi do not exist however the fictional order provides a model which can be used for self-improvement. Star Wars can be an inspiration as much as the Greek myths or Arthurian Legends.

Were the heroes of the ancient myths and legends perfect? Did they sometimes fall on their faces and crawl before they finished what had been started? Luke Skywalker did and with regularity. No hero, national treasure or legendary figure historic or contemporary was perfect and without fault.

In the beginning on Tatooine, Luke Skywalker gazed out at the setting suns and dreamt of a life as a fighter pilot in the Rebellion. Luke soon discovered that a life of adventure and heroism was not what he expected. There would be many failures along the way, and he would encounter his shadow, doubts and many fears. In the end he would face and overcome them all.

Later Luke would realize that the Hero's Journey does not start and end once in a lifetime. Life is a constant struggle and it rarely turns out the way we hoped but it often turns out the way we need it to. The journey comes to an end in ways that can not be imagined. The question is how will you face it when it comes?

Be hard on yourself but be kind at the same time. The Buddha rejected a life of luxury and spent years pushing his body to the

limits through self-deprivation only to discover the Middle Path was the path to enlightenment. The Buddha taught that rejecting extremes and taking a realistic path will lead to insight which leads to wisdom, calmness and finally nirvana.

Be realistic with yourself and others. Do not expect things to always turn out as planned. Flexibility is a trait of the resilient person. Change is inevitable and you can either resist and fight it or adapt and live with it. Those that are resilient choose the latter. Progress will be slow, but it will happen if you are patient.

Obi-wan Kenobi, Yoda, Anakin and Luke Skywalker all transcended to the Force. Obi-wan Kenobi and Yoda lived the Middle Path and transcended effortlessly. Anakin and Luke realized the truth more dramatically, but it was their final acceptance of reality and surrender to the Force that led to their transcendence and enlightenment. They also chose the Middle Path.

By taking a pragmatic and realistic approach to Jedi practice and be extension, to life you will find the Middle Path and live the Jedi Code. Realism brings about peace, knowledge, serenity, harmony, and the Force.

DAY 267

“Your eyes can deceive you; don’t trust them.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 268

“The Force will be my guide.” – Je’daii Lanoree “Into the Void”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 269

“Luminous beings are we. Not this crude matter.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 270

“No longer certain that one ever does win a war, I am.” –
Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 271

“Enter our Temple unbidden, you have. Leaving it will not be easy, you will find.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 272

“Most powerful is he who controls his own power.” – Moral
“The Clone Wars – Lair of Grievous”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 273

“Truth enlightens the mind, but won’t always bring happiness to your heart.” – Moral “The Clone Wars – Hidden Enemy”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 40 THE TRIALS

“I am ready to face the Trials.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

On a journey you must sometimes take a rough path through a dark forest. In that dark place you will at times be forced to overcome fears and confront your Shadow. The Dark Side is not a physical destination but a part of who you are. There is no denying that every person harbors a Dark Side deep within. Most will never meet their Shadow, but it is a necessary part of becoming integrated and realizing one’s full potential in life.

The Trails were a part of Jedi Training. They tested the physical, mental, and emotional limits of the Jedi as well as their command of the Force. The Trials also forced the Jedi to confront their arrogance, weaknesses, and self-doubts and overcome them.

On Dagobah, Luke Skywalker was sent into the Dark Side cave where he came face to with his Shadow. Yoda knew what darkness resided within Luke and feared that Darth Vader would exploit that to bring him to the Dark Side. Luke had to overcome that challenge by recognizing what lay within him.

What lies within you? The Jedi were required to undertake the five trials of Skill, Courage, Flesh, Spirit, and Insight to reveal the answer and prove themselves ready for Knighthood. There were nine elements to overcome: teamwork, isolation, fear, anger, betrayal, focus, instinct, forgiveness, and protection. Each drove the Jedi Padawan to the brink and forced them to confront themselves as well the challenge they faced.

Over the remainder of this journey, you will be forced in to the dark unknown and challenged. You will explore your darker side and ask yourself important questions. You will be required to look hard in the mirror and confront doubts, fears, and weaknesses. Layers will be peeled back as you begin to discover who you truly are. Are you ready to venture into the cave and peer in the mirror?

DAY 274

“This is to be a test of your knighthood. You and your companions must make your own way through the difficulties you will encounter.” - Arca Jeth

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 275

“What’s in there?” – Lue Skywalker

“Only what you take with you” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 276

“And he endured an atrocious Trial of the Flesh at the hands of Count Dooku.” – Obi-wan Kenobi (speaking of Anakin)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 277

“I’m...I’m sorry for my behavior, Master. It is not my place to disagree with you. I am grateful you think I am ready for the trials.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 278

“You have been a good apprentice. You are much wiser than I am, Obi-Wan. I foresee you will become a great Jedi Knight..”

– Qui-Gon Jinn

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 279

“I am ready to face the Trials.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 280

“I'm ready for the trials. I know I am! He knows it too. He believes I'm too unpredictable...Other Jedi my age have gone through the trials and made it..I know I started my training late... but he won't let me move on.” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 41 ARROGANCE

“The acceptance of others is not a guarantee. Like everyone else, a Jedi is accepted or not based on his behavior. The Jedi who believes that he is more important than others only demonstrates that his opinion is to be ignored.” – Count Dooku

“Conquer arrogance” – Jedi Academy Training Manual

Arrogance is a character flaw that most undermines people. It is a product of excessive pride in self and is to be avoided. Unfortunately, it existed in the ranks of the Jedi and was the downfall of many. Hubris which is a form of rampant arrogance led to the fall of the First Jedi Order and the Republic.

Unfortunately, arrogance exists in the real-world Jedi community. Many people who join the community seeking to improve and contribute are treated with arrogance or witness enough of it to force them to leave. This is unfortunate and does not help the movement.

The Sith prized arrogance because it conferred on them superiority over others. All life was beneath the Sith and therefore to be subdued, dominated, and used or, if they could not be forced to submit, then destroyed. The Death Star was a symbol of that.

Arrogance led Anakin to embark on one reckless endeavor after another it was a flaw that held him back. Without Obi-wan Kenobi, Ahsoka Tano and Padmé at his side to moderate his actions Anakin would have fallen sooner due to his own hubris.

To *be* Jedi you must *conquer arrogance*. Never overestimate your ability. Avoid being too loud or brash. Do not feign expertise as you will be forced to prove it and be left humiliated. Bragging will draw unwanted attention to yourself. Eventually others will grow tired of you and leave. No one can stand arrogance for long. Those that do linger are not there for the pleasure of your company. Conquer arrogance and find a measure of humility.

DAY 281

“Sometimes we must let go of our pride and do what is requested of us.” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 282

“Great Kid! Don’t get cocky” – Han Solo

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 283

“If you strip away the myth and look at their deeds, the legacy of the Jedi is failure. Hypocrisy, hubris.” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 284

*“My powers have doubled since the last time we fought,
Dooku!”* – Anakin Skywalker

“Good! Twice the pride, double the fall!” – Count Dooku

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 285

“You want to go home and rethink your life.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 286

“And in my hubris, I thought I could train him (Ben Solo); I could pass on my strengths” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 287

“Don’t be too proud of this technological terror you’ve constructed. The ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to the power of the Force.” – Darth Vader

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 42 RECKLESSNESS

“It is not necessary to always strike the first blow, to provide the first solution, or to reach a goal before anyone else does. In fact, it is sometimes vital to strike the last blow, to give the final answer, or to arrive after everyone else.”— Jedi Master Wiwa

“Conquer Recklessness” – Jedi Academy Training Manual

Recklessness can be a trait that carries benefits. Risk takers sometimes bet more than they should and put everything on the line without regard for the consequences if they fail. Luck turns in their favor and they win big. People admire them for their “Devil may care” attitude and “living on the edge” attitude to wealth and success. If no one gets hurt what is the harm?

The Jedi who charges into the fray Lightsaber flashing as it deflects laser bolts might come out alive and succeed in the mission but was the act selfless bravery or reckless? Obi-wan Kenobi was always in control and measured in battle as well as fearless but unlike Anakin he was never recklessly rushing in. Combat was the last option for Kenobi, and he chose his battles.

A Jedi Master who is present and calm in a sea of chaos will avoid reacting and rushing headlong into a situation without first deciding whether the course of action is the right one. Intuitive people tend to listen to their gut and react to instinct. The course of action “felt right” at the time is often heard. Feelings are feelings and nothing more. They may be right, or they may be wrong. Impulse to act may be powerful but the smarter choice may be to hold back, observe, evaluate, and assess and then act.

The former Navy Seal, writer, and motivational speaker Jocko Willink believes that a good leader will push to the extremes, be aggressive and rush forward to meet the enemy without being reckless. The reckless fail to plan and the smart plan to win. Live life with purpose and intent. Conquer recklessness, put down the Lightsaber but always keep it in easy reach.

DAY 288

“Reckless he is. Matters are worse.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 289

“I don’t mind flying but what you are doing is suicide” – Obi-wan Kenobi to Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 290

“Why do I think you are going to be the death of me?!” – Obi-wan Kenobi to Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 291

“You're reckless, little one. You never would have made it as Obi-wan's Padawan. But you might make it as mine....”–

Anakin (to Ahsoka Tano)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 292

*“Adventure. Heh! Excitement. A Jedi craves not these things.
You are reckless!” - Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 293

“So was I (reckless), if you remember.”— Obi-Wan Kenobi (to Yoda)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 294

“If you end your training now — if you choose the quick and easy path as Vader did — you will become an agent of evil.”—

Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 43 PERFECTIONISM

“That is why you Fail.” – Yoda

There is no such thing as perfect practice. Perfection may be possible in the Star Wars Universe, but it does not exist in our world. It may be a noble goal and a target to aspire towards but anything and everything can be improved upon. In your practice you should strive for progress not perfection.

Perfectionism can undo all your work and best effort. The price of perfectionism is disappointment and failure. Failing to reach perfection you eventually grow weary and despondent and give up. Some people never start because they are held back by perfectionist goals. Rather than fail in their attempts they choose not to start.

Anakin was a perfectionist. When his demands for flawless performance, unconditional love and perfect obedience did not transpire he became unhappy, frustrated, resentful, and angry. Impatient with himself and others he demanded his ideal be realized. The Jedi Order would not recognize his mastery in all aspects of training. Anakin sought not only to be a Jedi Master but to go beyond perfecting his control over the Force and all life by becoming the most powerful force in the Galaxy. Perfectionism was his downfall because it was extreme and toxic.

Luke Skywalker sought perfection in his training and wanted everything to go his way. Failing to achieve a level of perfection in his training he would convince himself that it was impossible. The perfectionist mindset became the stumbling block which prevented himself from letting go of unrealistic expectations and settling for the best that he could do.

Luke Skywalker was impatient and frustrated with his lack of progress on Dagobah and decided to depart his training before he was ready. His mistake realized, he let go of his desire to become

a Jedi Master only to later demand perfection from his student Ben Solo. The unrealistic expectations he placed on his student ended with disastrous consequences. Punishing himself for failing, Luke abandoned his duty and exiled himself, descending into self-pity. Yoda would later show Luke where he had failed. Perfection is not the goal to being a Jedi, only progress and consistency matter.

Transcendence leads to perfection through enlightenment. Yoda, Qui-Gon Jinn, Obi-wan Kenobi, Anakin and finally Luke Skywalker all become one with the Force achieving perfection in the spiritual realm.

Star Wars is Fantasy. One might go a long way in their training and achieve a high level of competency maybe even mastery in their practice, but you will never reach transcendence and enlightenment.

In Buddhism it is believed that anyone who claims to be enlightened is not. Those that claim perfect practice also miss the mark.

What is perfection anyway? It is an abstraction, an illusion and a state that is impossible to achieve. No two people will agree on what represents perfection. Perfectionists are never happy. You must set your own goals and expectations and strive for progress not perfection. Be happy with the best that you can do, nothing more, nothing less.

DAY 295

“Let go of your conscious self and act on instinct” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 296

“Your eyes can deceive you. Don’t trust them” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 297

“Trust in the Force” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 298

“I don’t believe it” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 299

“No. Not yet. One thing remains. Vader. You must confront Vader. Then, only then, a Jedi will you be. And confront him you will.”- Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 300

“The greatest teacher, failure is.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 301

“I have failed you, Anakin. I have failed you!” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 44 OVERCONFIDENCE

“Your overconfidence is your weakness.” – Luke Skywalker

As there is no such thing as perfect practice one must also be prepared for failure. Overconfidence is a form of arrogance and is a character flaw. You may be confident in everything you do but remain realistic and humble. A healthy sense of knowing the limit of your skills is important to being Jedi.

Defeatism is the opposite of overconfidence. While the latter will almost always lead to failure the former guarantees it. The problem with perfectionists is that they are often overconfident in the beginning. They honestly believe that they can exceed their own expectations and those of everyone around them. They do not take a realistic and pragmatic view. As a result, when failure occurs, they take on a defeatist attitude. The blow to the ego is such that they abandon any further attempt because it did not go well the first time.

Being confident is being realistic and pragmatic. You know your limits and how far you can go. You are not afraid to say “no” not because you lack confidence but because you realize that an attempt is futile or too risky.

Special Forces operators such as SEAL Team 6 are given an option of whether to take part in a mission or not. Operators are expected to be highly skilled and confident but never overconfident or “cocky”. Overconfidence is seen as a liability in the Teams as the Operator is likely to be reckless, arrogant and a danger to his teammates and the mission. Commanders prefer if their men are honest about their limitations or concerns about a mission before final preparations are made. There is no shame in saying “I can’t do this Boss, I’m out” when you know you cannot.

In Star Wars “The Last Hope” Luke Skywalker is inexperienced, impatient, idealistic, and naive. Obi-wan Kenobi is there to guide

and mentor Luke and teach him the fundamentals of being a Jedi. The Jedi Master had taught Anakin and could see the fiery spirit in Luke. Obi-wan sensed Luke's overconfidence which he tried to temper by teaching him to sense and use the Force. Obi-wan was trying to ground Luke so that he could act using his mind instead of his heart. Han Solo saw it more simply when he reminded Luke "don't get cocky".

How often have you thought "I got this!" only to fall flat on your face? The rush of confidence and caution is thrown to the wind, the excitement of expected success and then the bitter fall. Everyone experiences it. No one has ever got on a bike the first time and not fallen off. Great accidents and catastrophes from the sinking of the Titanic to the Great Depression and major military defeats were the result of overconfidence. The battles of Salamis, Agincourt, the Spanish Armada, Napoleon, and Hitlers invasions of Russia are classic examples of overconfident commanders. The Jedi were so confident Palpatine was able to build the clone army, mastermind a war and overthrow the Republic without being noticed. Their overconfidence led to the fall of the Jedi.

Do you consider yourself to be confident and competent? Would you rate yourself better than the average person? Do you practice self-reflection and introspection? Do you honestly evaluate your performance? Are you, always right? Would you say you are honest with yourself? More than 90% of people consider themselves above average in ability which is statistically impossible. Being Jedi is finding the middle path between defeatism and overconfidence.

Being Jedi is about being able to be honest with yourself and with others. This means honestly about your shortcomings as well as your abilities. Self-examination and appraisal are important in knowing your limits and identifying when you are wrong as well as right. You must have the courage and humility to accept what you know and what you do not. You must also be willing to accept reality and learn from your mistakes. You cannot learn what you think you already know.

DAY 302

“Let the Force flow through you” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 303

“Do or do not, there is no try” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 304

“Overconfidence is the most dangerous form of carelessness.”
– Moral (Clone Wars: Cargo of Doom)

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 305

“Strong is Vader. Mind what you have learned. Save you it can.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 306

“Strong am I with the Force, but not that strong.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 307

“If no mistake have you made, yet losing you are... a different game you should play” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 308

“Blind we are, if creation of this clone army we could not see.”
– Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 45 BIAS

“Every Jedi, in every task, should prepare for the possibility of failure.” – Yoda

Overconfidence leads to bias which leads to blindness. Unable and unwilling to clearly see all sides of a situation you are at an immediate disadvantage and more likely to fail. Always be aware of your own prejudices and biases. In the real world there is no dark side or light side, there is only shades of grey.

Society is highly polarized. People more than ever choose their sides. Echo chambers exist that people can retreat to be with their tribe. People no longer want to engage in reasoned debate with contrary or opposing views. Dissenting opinion is longer tolerated. The culture war is in full swing and it is driven by bias.

It is easy to be drawn into dogma because there is no need to think. Free thought and reason can be dispensed with. All the answers are conveniently packaged. When views and evidence is presented that challenges the narrative it can be dismissed and attacked and suppressed.

The Jedi Order had a code which provided guidance for conduct. Jedi were expected to exercise a high level of self-discipline. A hierarchy based on seniority and merit existed. Dogma was generally avoided. Even Jedi stalwarts like Mace Windu were gate keepers of tradition more than religious zealots demanding blind adherence to dogma. Jedi were encouraged to think for themselves, to be free thinkers and to use the Force and the Jedi Code to guide them. This freed the Jedi to avoid being blinded by bias and to use reason and logic in decision making.

Of course, reality was far from perfect. The Jedi Council had biases as did the Jedi that were part of it. The mission of the Jedi was to serve and protect the Republic. The function of the Jedi was diverse, but it became increasingly entrenched in politics and

power plays. As a result, it became influenced by the machinations of power. Biases were formed and dictated decisions within the Jedi Council. In the end the Jedi became a tool and plaything for Palpatine's pleasure. The Chancellor was able to manipulate their biases to his advantage and schemes.

If Anakin were a real person he would be viewed as inflexible, intolerant, narrow minded and extremely bias in his views. Anakin hated the Tuscan Raiders and it is a wonder he did not seek to have them wiped out when he became Darth Vader. In battle Anakin could be merciless and would stretch the boundaries of the Jedi Code. On more than one occasion he let his extreme prejudice dictate his actions leading him to commit summary executions in the field. Anakin was always careful to frame his actions as justified and in the interests of the Republic.

Darth Vader was the ultimate manifestation of Anakin's shadow. Darth Vader was not evil he was blighted with extreme bias that refused to entertain any view contrary to his or his Master's. As a result, Vader was capable of the most extreme atrocities.

Be mindful of your own biases. Always apply reason, logic and your own personal principles when making decisions. The Jedi Method is a tool you can use to help you remain impartial and objective. Avoid judgements that are grounded in bias. You know what is true and what is false. Search for the answer in your heart if you are unsure.

Always seek to understand others. Never dismiss any argument or idea without consideration. Value the opinions of others even if you disagree with them. All people have a right to be heard and treated with dignity and respect. You may disagree vehemently but that does not excuse poor treatment, disrespect, or violence.

Remember that everyone forms their own biases. You are welcome to challenge their beliefs and reason with them but should never seek to cause them harm. You can have your biases but never allow them to control your actions. Use the Jedi Code.

DAY 309

“Much to learn, you still have.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 310

“Who we are never changes, who we think we are does.” –
The Clone Wars “Bounty”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 311

“Obi-Wan. Now there’s a name I’ve not heard in a long, long time. A long time” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 312

“Who’s more foolish, the fool or the fool who follows him?” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 313

“Luke, you’re going to find that many of the truths we cling to depend greatly on our own point of view.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 314

“The truth is often what we make of it; you heard what you wanted to hear, believed what you wanted to believe.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 315

“Only a Sith deals in absolutes” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 46 CHARITY

“Don’t confuse refusing help with not needing it.” - Leia Organa Solo

Service is a fundamental part of being Jedi. The Jedi Order was formed to serve the Republic. Jedi would render aid and provide support where needed. The Jedi were also very mindful that the best way to help others was to help them to help themselves.

Ultraism is a human virtue. Without ultraism society could not function long as people would be divided into the haves and have nots and eventually all resources would flow in one direction. The sheer inequality would eventually lead to upheaval and chaos. Not everyone is born equal or with the same opportunities. This will never change in the real world, but it is the responsibility of society to ensure that everyone’s basic needs are met.

To render aid is to provide people with the resources to help meet their needs during a time of crisis. Support is providing the means by which others can help themselves. This is done through service and charity by giving time, goods (food, medical supplies, building material etc.) and money without expectation of payment in return.

Non-Governmental Organizations and charities exist for a vast array of causes. These are dedicated to ensuring that resources are allocated where they are needed in the most efficient and effective manner. You can donate money to many organizations or volunteer your time and skills.

The Jedi Order was not a charity. Jedi did not travel the Galaxy looking to alleviate poverty or intervene militarily to stamp out injustices such as slavery where it existed. They did provide aid and support to oppressed populations and individuals where they were able. During the Clone Wars the Jedi coordinated military and humanitarian support to many worlds that were under

embargo or military assault from Separatist forces. The aid was not charity, however. There was a political and military advantage in the assistance. By helping beleaguered populations help themselves the Jedi were able to garner support for the Republic and build resistance against the Separatist Confederation.

Charity can be both a blessing and a curse. Many countries in Africa and Asia have excessive levels of debt. Vast amounts of money have been borrowed to impoverished nations to help alleviate poverty without having much effect other than burdening them with crippling debt repayments. Desperate to remain solvent countries sell off their natural resources to the highest bidders with devastating environmental and social costs.

Force for Change is a charitable organization that was founded and is run by Lucas Films to collect donations for solutions to global problems. Actors such as Mark Hamill and Harrison Ford make public appearances to help support the charity. Corporations routinely sponsor charities and undertake philanthropy. Anakin also believed he was making a difference.

The old adage “*give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*” should always be the preference. Handouts create a culture of dependency that erode accountability and self-sufficiency. The adage “*beggars remain as beggars, but a shoeshine boy can become President*” also rings true.

Being Jedi is about being mindful in intent and action. When choosing to act charitably always do so asking if you are helping or perpetuating a problem. Is giving money to a homeless person on the street going to solve his problem or allow him to buy another drink or hit? Would it be better to buy that person a meal and put them in touch with an outreach program? Is it better to treat the symptom rather than the cause? Does charity perpetuate injustice or help to solve it? Is charity even wanted? Rarely is it clear cut and this is where ethics and principles applies. Apply your conscience and the Jedi Method when helping others.

DAY 316

“Mysterious are the ways of the Force.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 317

“Passion yet serenity” – Jedi Code

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 318

“General Kenobi. Years ago you served my father in the Clone Wars. Now he begs you to help him in his struggle against the Empire..” – Princess Leia

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 319

“Help me Obi-wan Kenobi. You’re my only hope” – Princess
Leia

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 320

“Sometimes, accepting help is harder than offering it.” –
Clone Wars “Legacy of Terror”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 321

*“Don’t confuse refusing help with not needing it.” - Leia
Organa Solo*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 322

“I have brought peace, freedom, justice, and security to my new empire.”- Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 47 OBSTINANCE

“Never tell me the odds!” – Han Solo

Being stubborn can have both positive and negatives. Stubborn people often get things done and achieve their goals because they refuse to give up. Refusing to compromise on principles and values can also be a virtue because it means you are less likely to betray them. For example, you can be stubborn in your refusal to betray friends or cheat in a game.

Obstinance on the other hand is being stubborn to the point where it is counterproductive and actually harmful to you or others. You may refuse to bend to a certain rule or are inflexible in making demands or in your expectations of others. Being stubborn with yourself may also be harmful. For example, you may push yourself or others to the limit physically or mentally not settling for anything less causing harm or injury. Perfectionists can be obstinate, and we know that perfectionism can also be a flaw.

The Jedi could be stubborn, but they were rarely obstinate. To get through Jedi training a Padawan had to have perseverance, persistence, commitment, and stubbornness. A Jedi had to be stubborn when required but also remain agile and flexible with changing circumstances. Failure to quickly adapt with change could have severe consequences. A Jedi that blindly followed orders or protocol could find themselves quickly overcome in battle or unable to make decisions on the fly.

Anakin could be stubborn in his convictions especially on matters that he felt were important to him. This stubbornness extended to his feeling towards others. Anakin's love and devotion for Padmé was undeniable as was his loyalty to Ahsoka, Obi-wan, and his troops. Anakin's stubborn nature was his undoing. The Force had to be bent to his will. Others had to submit to his demands. Unable to let go and let things be as they are, he insisted on control. In the end that stubborn nature fed the madness that consumed him.

DAY 323

“You were right about one thing, Master. The negotiations were short.” – Obi-Wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 324

“A Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 325

“Be mindful of your thoughts, Anakin, they betray you.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 326

“The Sith rely on their passion for their strength. They think inward, only about themselves.” – Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 327

“Don’t you see? We don’t have to run away anymore! I am more powerful than the Chancellor, I... I can overthrow him! And together, you and I can rule the galaxy! Make things the way we want them to be!” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 328

“I will be the most powerful Jedi ever. I promise you. I will even learn to stop people from dying.” – Anakin Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 329

“Something’s happening. I’m not the Jedi I should be. I want more. And I know I shouldn’t.” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 48

FEAR

“Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering. I sense much fear in you.”
— Yoda

Fear is one of the strongest emotions a human can experience. Fear is as primordial as life on Earth and ingrained in our biology. An element of fear underpins much of what we do and motivates us into action that ensures survival and well-being. Without Fear you would not be motivated to care for your health, seek out food and shelter or defend yourself against attack. You could not survive without the “Fight and Flight” response which fear elicits when it ignites the adrenal gland and fills the body and brain with adrenaline. Fear can be beneficial, but it can also be devastating.

Imagine being at the mercy of another human being. You live under constant fear of being punished and abused physically and mentally any time. Your loved ones are held in ransom and routinely abused in a similar way. You have no idea of what will happen and have no control over your life. Imagine being a slave living in Fear. It would be terrifying and soul destroying.

The child Anakin was a slave and grew up in an environment that was brutal and cruel. Anakin was not allowed to have a childhood and had to work to earn his keep and avoid punishment. Fortunately for the young Human he was intelligent beyond his years and already a skilled pilot before he was ten. Anakin’s owner, Watto, was able to profit from the boy which bought Anakin a measure of freedom that other slaves did not enjoy.

When Yoda met Anakin, he sensed the Fear and an emerging darkness in the boy. The Force was strong in Anakin but so was the fear he had grown up with. Fear can reside deep within for decades. With time it grows and shapes like a cancer. Life becomes haunted by fears both real and imagined. Fear manifests itself in poor choices, anger, resentments, aggression, ignorance,

and hate. It did so with Anakin, as Yoda feared it would and Fear consumed him utterly.

Myths and legends remind humanity of the consequences of giving in to Fear. Most of the fears that are experienced are imagined. You fear an idea, an illusion, a nightmare, or a thing not yet realized rather than reality. People are terrified to leave their homes convinced that they may fall victim to crime, terrorism, or a virus without considering the actual risks. They suffer in their minds more than in reality, in anticipation of something that will likely only ever occur in their imagination.

The Hero overcomes fear by confronting it. She will throw open the door on which fear beats and find nothing there. The Hero will stop running from fear and turn to face it. What was tangible, insurmountable and undefeatable turns out to be a harmless illusion that quickly fades away. The Hero realizes at the end that the greatest challenge is overcoming one's own fears. True courage is not the absence of fear but the ability to continue on despite it. The Hero's Journey is all about overcoming your fears.

Fear is a natural response to a threat. Sometimes that threat is real and sometimes it is exaggerated or imagined. Fear is sometimes the correct and appropriate response. More often it is an unnecessary mental burden which creates unnecessary barriers to progress. Fear will prevent you from taking risks worth taking, from making the changes needed to live a better life. Fear more than any other emotion will stop you being the person you were meant to be. The only choice you have is to "Do. Or do not".

There is no shame in being afraid. Cowards are those who are unwilling or unable to face up to their fears. They choose to give in to fear and allow it to control them without concern for others. Anakin gave in to his fears by betraying everything dear to him for the illusion of security and control. To be Jedi is to acknowledge the presence of fear but train the mind to let go of everything you fear to lose. Never be a slave to fear. Be brave.

DAY 330

“If you make decisions out of fear you are more likely to be wrong.” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 331

“I used to be afraid, all the time. Then I realized that a decision based on fear is usually the wrong one.” – Ahsoka Tano

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 332

“Named must your fear be before banish it you can.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 333

“Hmm. In the end, cowards are those who follow the dark side.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 334

“I felt a great disturbance in the Force, as if millions of voices suddenly cried out in terror and were suddenly silenced.” –
Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 335

“I’m not afraid.” – Luke Skywalker

“Oh you will be. You will be” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 336

*“Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose.” –
Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 49 ANGER

“Strike me in anger and I will always be with you.” – Luke

Have you ever felt real anger? Has rage burned inside of you demanding to be released? Did you pour your angry venom out? How did it feel? Was it justified? Did it make things better? There is no emotion that is so intoxicating and overwhelming than anger. There is no other emotion that is so reckless and dangerous.

Seneca wrote *“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured”*. Anger leads you to say and do things you soon regret. It is an impulse that abandons reason and rational thought. Anger may spur action, but few good decisions are ever made in anger. It is normal and even healthy to get angry when it is appropriate, but anger should never determine how you react.

The Jedi were not above anger. All Jedi utilized it to their advantage by being able to control the emotion. Yoda demonstrated anger in his confrontation with Count Dooku and Darth Sidious however it was measured, and his aggression was controlled. Yoda did not fall into rage. When Obi-wan confronted Anakin on the lava flows of Mustafa he found his friend angry. Anger clouded Anakin’s ability to see the truth. All he could believe was Obi-wan had turned Padmé against him, that he had been betrayed by the Jedi. Anakin’s anger boiled over as the two friends fought in the inferno. As rage consumed him as he lay wounded, he was overcome by the Dark side and filled with hate.

Rage is uncontrolled anger and is a grievous state and serious character flaw. To witness rage in action is frightening. Rage is like a tornado running its course and destroying everything in its wake. The consequences of rage are never beneficial and always harmful. For this reason, “wrath” is one of the seven deadly sins in Dante’s “Inferno”. The setting of Mustafa in “Revenge of the Sith” was perfect in capturing the very essence of a hell filled with

fear, anger, and hate. Mustafa would become the spiritual base for Darth Vader, a place of fire, chaos, and violence. Mustafa was an analogy of Dante's "Inferno", the place where Anakin finally fell to the seventh level of hell and became everything he had stood against as a Jedi. Anakin died on Mustafa and Darth Vader rose.

To live in anger is to be a slave. You are the slave and anger the Master. Over time anger corrodes and stains every aspect of life. Anger is rooted in fear and manifests itself in mistrust, paranoia, lies, deception, resentment, aggression, and revenge. The world is an angry place, and the effects are obvious. War, environmental destruction, religious and ethnic violence, political conflict, and the constant online rage that dominates the news and social media. Watch two angry people argue. Are they communicating, actively listening, and understanding by yelling at each other and hurling insults? Is it helpful? Anger and rage soon become hate.

To be Jedi is to recognize anger as a normal human emotion. It has a very bad reputation because of its primal baseness but humans are equipped with anger because it still serves an evolutionary purpose. In daily life anger should only be used where appropriate and to serve as a tool to express displeasure or disappointment. Anger should be used in defense and never as a means of attack. You should avoid using anger as a justification to offend or otherwise harm someone. Anger should always be justified and pass scrutiny. Was it appropriate to the situation? Did it promote justice rather than harm? Was the intent honest and transparent? Was your anger proportionate to the situation?

People who get triggered in to anger for the smallest slight or trivial reason lack perspective, self-reliance, and maturity. Instead of being prepared to voice concerns and have reasoned discourse with opposing views people become enraged and shut down debate and silence dissent because it makes them angry. Do not fall into the culture of rage which is rampant in society and infests social media stifling free speech and reasoned discourse. Avoid reverting to anger when in disagreement with others. Do not carry the acid of anger inside you. Be calm, at peace, passive. Be Jedi.

DAY 337

“He is too old. There is already too much anger in him.” –
Mace Windu

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 338

“Contempt often veiled bruised ideals.” - Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 339

“The most dangerous beast is the beast within.” – The Clone Wars “The Zillo Beast Strikes Back”

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 340

“Yes, afraid. Hmm, surprised are you? A challenge lifelong it is, not to bend fear into anger.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 341

“If you define yourself by the power to take life, the desire to dominate, to possess...then you have nothing.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 342

“Remember, a Jedi’s strength flows from the Force. But beware anger, fear, and aggression. The dark side are they. Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 343

“Strike me in anger and I will ALWAYS be with you” – Luke Skywalker

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 50 HATE

*“The boy you trained, gone he is. Consumed by Darth Vader.” -
Yoda*

Hatred is a powerful emotion and uniquely human. No other animal displays hatred. Unlike anger, which is a transitory emotion eventually burning out, hate will endure the test of time and be as potent as the day it rose. Hate is a disease that eats away at the soul and spreads far and wide covering everything in darkness.

Hatred flows in the blood. Hate is a living thing; it is passed on like a curse from one generation to the next. Wars, ethnic genocide, religious violence, terrorism, and oppression are all forms of Hate. In its purest form hate is devoid of emotion or passion. There is no anger or pride. The very emotion removes all humanity and commonality with the object of one's hatred. To Hate is to separate.

Yoda saw Hate as the final descent into the Dark Side. Hate eclipsed any flicker of hope. The door has been slammed closed to the divine nature of the Force. There is no light, only darkness. Hate is the complete absence of love. There is no chance of mutual respect, cooperation, and trust where hatred exists. Redemption is impossible.

Anakin was driven to the Dark Side through the hatred that grew within him like some insidious tumor. The fire of Mustafa ravaged his body, but hatred utterly consumed his soul.

Anakin's Grandson, Kylo Ren, suffered the same affliction. Ren's hatred was so deep that he became a psychopath. Hatred had driven Luke to almost kill his nephew Ben Solo. Believing himself entitled to Justice Kylo Ren derived sadistic pleasure and satisfaction in hunting and murdering those who had been close

to him, who had hurt him. Hatred spurned him on but as it grew deeper it consumed him.

Anakin driven to insanity and complete loss of identity with his transformation to Vader suffered deeply. Vader was tortured physically, mentally, and spiritually with every breath. The Hatred was complete and transformed itself into raw power. The Shadow Form, the Dark Side dominated him. Vader no longer hated anyone or anything other than himself and his Master. In Vader lay no festering ordinary hatred. There was only a will to dominate and control all that is within a closed fist of absolute power. All of Vader's will and intent was directed there.

Children learn to Love before they learn to Hate. Within our true self resides unbounded Love. That is why when we carry Hate we know that it is not who we are. It feels unnatural and heavy like a sickness within us. The feeling of "righteous indignation" and anger it gives us is shallow and leaves us feeling hollow and in conflict with who we truly are.

When we open our eyes to the illusion of Hate, it becomes exposed for what it is. Hate is a wall that separates us completely from our inner divine more than any emotion. Hate separates us from our true nature and from other people. Like a cancer it grows and ultimately it destroys us from the inside out. If you strike with hatred in your heart it will stay with you forever like a dark stain.

Love conquers Hate. It was an act of Love that redeemed and saved Anakin from his living hell. Love stayed Luke's hand from inflicting a fatal blow on Ben Solo. Luke invited Kylo Ren to strike him down but warned him to do so with Hate would afflict him forever. Love was the final act which finally saved Kylo Ren and brought order to the Force.

There is enough Hate in the world. Do not add to it. Conquer Hate and never give in to it.

DAY 344

“Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 345

“To answer power with power, the Jedi way this is not. In this war, a danger there is, of losing who we are.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 346

“Oh. Great warrior. Wars not make one great..” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 347

“Padawan, thousands of Jedi once there were. Then came war. In our arrogance, join the conflict swiftly we did. Fear, anger, hate. Consumed by the dark side, the Jedi were.” -
Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 348

“If you strike me down, I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 349

“You have hate, you have anger, but you don’t use them.” –
Count Dooku

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 350

“I Hate you!” - Anakin

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 51 THE DARK SIDE

“When you look at the dark side, careful you must be. For the dark side looks back.” - Yoda

Everyone has a Dark Side. To never encounter your own Shadow and come to know it is to never become fully integrated as a human being. Most people are too afraid to peer into the dark recesses of their psyche. They do not want to know what dark secrets exist there. They remain strangers to themselves as a result. When the Dark Side does come out in force it is overwhelming. Sometimes you have to invite the Dark Side out to play, to look deep within and stare it down.

Star Wars is a saga of Heroes and Villains. There is conflict, struggles to overcome and the ever-present tension between the opposing sides of the Force. There are those that follow the Dark side who oppose those on the Light side of the Force. The story of epic struggle between light and darkness, good and evil is as old as time. The Epic Gilgamesh was the earliest tale of where a man embarks on an adventure where in the end, he finds peace and redemption by overcoming his darker side.

The Greek legends, Beowulf and the Nordic sagas all share the same theme of the struggle of the hero to not only overcome the monster, tyrant or evil before him but also the darkness in his own heart. Overcoming his struggle, the Hero returns home redeemed and reborn. In the ancient world the Gods played out the eternal saga of birth, death and rebirth as the sun bought life and hope with Spring, rose to fully glory in Summer and then was dragged to the underworld to battle with dark forces over Winter only to arise anew in the following Spring.

Always the struggle between light and dark. Darkness tries to snuff out the light and eclipse it from existence. Fear and despair prevail. Light shines forth and beats back the darkness bringing hope and salvation. A cycle, until, like Ragnarok, the end of days.

The Star Wars prequels presented the fall of the Divine Child, the promised one, into darkness. The original trilogy introduced a New Hope. This time the dim flicker of light would prevail against the darkness and not falter. The Dark Side would be beaten back into the shadows. Darth Sidious would be cast down, Anakin redeemed, and Luke Skywalker would bring balance to the Force...for a time. Every story ends is a new beginning.

Like the seasons the story repeats in the sequel trilogy. The light has dimmed, the Hero has grown old. The sky darkens and hope struggles against despair. A new Hero steps forward and holds a candle to the darkness once again. The forces of Light always prevails in myth. They have to. The myth gives hope to the living.

Yoda said, "Fear is the path to the Dark Side. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering". Despite his warnings Anakin succumbed to the Dark Side. Luke overcame the temptation to join his Father and submit to the Dark Side (in an alternative ending to "Return of the Jedi" by Lucas, Luke does take up the helmet of Darth Vader and surrenders to the Dark Side). In a moment of folly and rage Luke fails his nephew Ben Solo who turns to the Knights of Ren embracing the Dark Side.

Were they evil? No. Did they suffer? Yes. The Sith claimed that the Dark Side gave them freedom and power to control natural laws and life. The Sith did not claim to be evil but believed that the means justified the ends. Morality was relative and open to debate. Is nature not cruel and indifferent to suffering? Is evolution not evidence that the weak must perish and the strong prevail for the benefit of life? The Sith offered the Galaxy safety and security in exchange for liberty and justice. No surprise they were met with resistance. No one wants to be a slave to darkness.

What is your Dark Side? Have you faced it? Do you recognize your Shadow? Are you willing to accept that it exists, that you are capable of horrible and dark things? Life is a struggle between the Dark and Light sides of your nature. Which side prevails is the question you must resolve in your own personal Hero's Journey.

DAY 351

“Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 352

“The dark side clouds everything. Impossible to see, the future is.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 353

“Joined the Dark Side Dooku has. Lies, deceit, creating mistrust are his ways now.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 354

“Remember, a Jedi’s strength flows from the Force. But beware anger, fear, and aggression. The dark side are they. Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 355

“To be Jedi is to face the truth and choose. Give off light, or darkness, Padawan. Be a candle or the night.”– Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 356

*“In a dark place we find ourselves, and a little more
knowledge lights our way.” – Yoda*

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 357

“Strong is Vader. Mind what you have learned. Save you it can.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

WEEK 52 THE HERO

“That’s good you have taken your first step into a larger world.”
– Obi-wan Kenobi

Life is a journey. To be Jedi is to seek to live the Hero’s Journey. Over the last year you have taken your first steps into a wider world and began to walk the Jedi Path. The Jedi Path has no ending unless you choose to leave it. This means that being Jedi is a mindset as well as a philosophy for life. It is something that you may pick up and put aside after months, years or decades or continue for the rest of your life. If being Jedi adds value to your life, provides a useful and beneficial framework for solving problems and leads to continuous improvement then is it not worth holding on to? If you find something better, take it.

Marcus Aurelius, possibly the closest example of a Jedi Master to be found in history, wrote “If, at some point in your life, you should come across anything better than justice, truth, self-control, courage—it must be an extraordinary thing indeed”. Even today 1700 years later, those words are applicable. What could be better than having virtues such as courage, self-discipline and doing what you know to be right. Philosophy is not a book on a shelf to be pulled down to memorize quotes for reciting to friends in a café. Philosophy is expressed through virtues, principles, and practices that are demonstrated daily. A philosophy that has no practical application is useless because it is meant to be a moral compass with which you navigate life.

Carl Jung’s archetype of the Hero in analytical psychology led Joseph Campbell to the monomyth and the Hero’s Journey. Symbols, myths, and archetypes are present in every culture throughout history. All of humanity share a common experience that we all recognize intuitively. George Lucas took the monomyth and created Star Wars capturing the Hero’s Journey in a way that broke into popular culture like never before.

Luke Skywalker was the Hero in Star Wars. He is a young farmer who dreams of adventure. The plans to the Death Star come to him through R2D2 which had also been the Droid belonging to his father, Anakin. Fate leads him to Obi-wan Kenobi who becomes his guide. Through tragedy he accepts the call to adventure when his uncle and aunt are slaughtered by Imperial Troops. Luke experiences many challenges and finally arrives on Dagobah where Yoda trains and mentors Luke in becoming a Jedi. On Dagobah he is forced to confront his shadow and integrate it. Luke enjoys victories and suffers setbacks learning from them. On Cloud City he confronts his nemesis and discovers that Darth Vader is his father plunging him into a dark existential crisis, hitting rock bottom, from which he is reborn and returns stronger. In “The Return of the Jedi” Luke finds atonement by redeeming his father and defeating the Dark Lord. The Force finds balance and Luke completes his journey reuniting with his friends and returning home carrying the prize of his adventures.

The Hero’s Journey is the process by which the Hero archetype achieves individuation, the overcoming of the ego persona and the full realization of the self. Luke Skywalker arrived at his destiny by embarking on an adventure into the great unknown. This required sacrifice and suffering. To arrive at the destination and become completely whole, one must embrace both the light and dark sides of the self. This brings the Force in to balance.

Within every person is a need to grow, to learn and expand. In each there is a desire to enter the unknown and find themselves there. Humans are driven to seek, explore and work to arrive at a place of self-knowledge and self-actualization. When they are prevented from doing so, they struggle and suffer. Every person deserves to strive to reach their potential in life. This is the Force.

It is unlikely you will ever reach enlightenment. Perfection is neither realistic nor possible. To practice the Jedi Code for 24 hours is hard enough. But each 24 hours is a chance to build on the previous day. The journey is to know thyself. No one knows how much time they have. Your job is to use that time wisely.

DAY 358

“Luminous beings are we... not this crude matter.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 359

“Difficult to see. Always in motion is the future...” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 360

“On many long journeys have I gone. And waited, too, for others to return from journeys of their own. Some return; some are broken; some come back so different only their names remain.” – Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 361

“You think Yoda stops teaching, just because his student does not want to hear? A teacher Yoda is. Yoda teaches like drunkards drink, like killers kill.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 362

“I was not strong enough to defeat him. Like his master before him, be destroyed, he must.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 363

“Through the Force, things you will see. Other places. The future... the past. Old friends long gone.” - Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 364

"I am neither a scientist nor a philosopher. I'm a Jedi. I don't have to explain reality. I just have to deal with it." - Mace Windu

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 365

“Soon will I rest, yes, forever sleep. Earned it I have. Twilight is upon me, soon night must fall.”- Yoda

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

DAY 366

“The Force will be with you... always.” – Obi-wan Kenobi

Today I am Grateful for:

Morning Contemplation

Evening Reflection

WEEK REVIEW

Reflect on your daily practices and personal goals for the week.
How did you do? Where can you refocus your attention?

Meditation:

Physical Exercise:

Diplomacy:

Awareness:

Self-Discipline:

JEDI PHILOSOPHY

Jedi Philosophy is a practical philosophy for life inspired by the archetype Jedi characters in the Star Wars Fiction.

Jedi Philosophy is not a Fan Based ideology or an alternative new age religion. There is no specific doctrine or dogma attached. Jedi Philosophy is a simple and pragmatic way of living life in accordance with your own personal values. The Jedi Code provides a point of reference:

The Jedi Code

There is no emotion; there is peace.
There is no ignorance; there is knowledge.
There is no passion; there is serenity
There is no chaos; there is harmony
There is no death; there is the force

A Holistic Lifestyle

Jedi Philosophy emphasizes a holistic approach to life. Each person is made up of body, mind, emotion, and soul. Therefore, being Jedi approaches each element of the person in equal portion. That is, in Jedi Training there are usually components of:

- Meditation
- Physical Training
- Martial Arts
- Study and Application
- Mindfulness
- Service

To *be* Jedi is to embrace the whole and train the Body, Mind, Heart and Soul.

Jedi is a Verb

Being Jedi is about action, not appearances. To consider one's self Jedi one must act that way consistently in all their affairs.

How do you imagine a Jedi would act if you met one in the street? Would that person be polite, attentive, calm, and friendly? Would that person keep a level head when things became stressful? Would he or she show compassion to others as well as empathy? I believe a Jedi would also be attentive of their manners and their appearance as well as their personal health. A Jedi would also be active in the community and help where he or she is able to.

No one introduces themselves as a Jedi and expects to be taken seriously. However, one can *be* Jedi as much as he or she can choose to practice Stoicism, Taoism, Zen, Humanism, Epicureanism or Objectivism. It is a Philosophy for Life, not a title or a badge.

The Daily Practices

To assist in personal growth and development, Jedi Philosophy recommends a set of five daily practices. The amount of time and effort you will apply to each will depend on you, but even moderate daily practice will bring benefits. Practices such as Awareness and Diplomacy can be incorporated as part of your daily activities and interaction with others. The goal is to develop virtue and self-sustaining habit over time.

Self Discipline relates to doing what you have committed yourself to.

The Five Daily Practices are:

- Physical Exercise

- Meditation
- Awareness
- Diplomacy
- Self-Discipline

The Jedi Goals

Real World Jedi do not exist as part of an organization. There is no recognized Jedi Order. You will not find a group of people calling them selves Jedi walking the halls of the United Nations or brokering for peace in the Middle East.

Real World Jedi however do have goals. The premise is that through self betterment, we arrive at world betterment. If I become a better person and try to help people or the environment, in a small way I am also making the world a better place.

Each Jedi must determine what his is her values are and then act consistently in accordance with those values. They then determine how they want to contribute to the lives of others, what their cause is, what their mission in life is.

The Jedi Goals are:

- Train Diligently
- Render Aid
- Provide Support
- Defend those in Need
- Study the Force

The Jedi Circle

The Jedi Circle provides a framework for students of Jedi Philosophy. Practiced consistently through training, the Jedi Circle will lead to improved physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being.



The Jedi Circle (Courtesy Opie McLeod “The Jedi Circle”).

Further Reading:

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Opie McLeod (2020). *The Situational Jedi: A Jediism Guide for Life*. Amazon.

Visit Jedi Living (www.jediliving.com) for more information.

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