

A RESTFUL MIND

Daily Meditations for Enhancing Mental Health

Mark Allen Zabawa



[HAZELDEN MEDITATIONS]

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DAILY MEDITATIONS
FOR ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH

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hazelden.org

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On your journey ahead you will find yourself discovering limitations that you will grow to accept and possibilities far reaching your imagination. You will learn to accept and cope with your illness and realize that it does not define you as an individual, but rather it is one part of your true being.

—MARK ALLEN ZABAWA

• F O R E W O R D •

Recovery from mental illness is a process. It means taking care of ourselves each and every day—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It means actively working to make change. It means making health and stability a priority. Although we each recover in our own way and on our own schedule, we all need help, and help comes in many forms.

Some of us go to therapy, for example. Many of us use prescription medication under the care of a doctor. Some of us attend regular support group meetings and work with mentors or sponsors. These and the many other ways we take care of ourselves are sometimes called the *tools of recovery*. We choose the ones that work best for us.

Millions of people in recovery from various illnesses have used a tool called bibliotherapy, which means reading to promote growth and understanding. A meditation book, like this one, is a common form of bibliotherapy. Because it can help with immediate issues, it works like an aspirin. Because it promotes psychological and spiritual growth, it works like a vitamin. Like other recovery tools, it works best when used on a regular basis.

A Restful Mind is a testament to experience, strength, and hope. Its daily meditations speak to all of us, regardless of our diagnosis. Topics include having setbacks, reducing anxiety, taking medication,

asking for help, experiencing inpatient treatment, and being gentle with ourselves. Each one-page meditation has three parts: a reflection, a question to promote awareness, and a thought for the day. It helps to read each meditation more than once.

We read a meditation book like this one for many reasons. It can offer reassurance. It can help us feel normal. It can help us see where we've been and where we want to go. It can help us think more clearly and understand ourselves better. Though not every topic may seem to apply to our situation on any given day, we can still gain new insights and perspectives on mental illness from the ideas and experiences of others.

Like doing anything new, reading this book might feel strange at first. Be sure to give it a fair chance. Use it to start your day or end your day. Or carry it with you and read it when you have time. The idea is to make reading this book a daily ritual on your recovery journey. The goal is growth, support, and understanding.

Reading a meditation is like listening to someone who knows us and accepts us even though we have never met. With time, may *A Restful Mind* become a comfort, a companion, and a touchstone for you.

—Tim Mc, author of *Today I Will Do One Thing*

A RESTFUL MIND



JANUARY

• J A N U A R Y 1 •

A NEW YEAR, A NEW BEGINNING

As the new year begins, we may be tempted to look back and focus on what we fell short of accomplishing, rather than looking at all that we have accomplished. We may sense failure for not completing every task we began. Or we may feel let down because some of what we wanted to have happen did not.

Let us be gentle with ourselves, however, for this is a new year and a new beginning. Let us look to our past for wisdom and guidance rather than failure and someone to blame. Let us look at what we achieved rather than at what failed to happen.

As we begin the new year, let us move forward with faith, courage, and the willingness to learn from each of our experiences. Let us focus on opportunities. But most of all, let us be true to ourselves and our recovery.

Am I stuck on last year or can I begin the new year today with faith and an open mind?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Today is a new beginning.



• J A N U A R Y 2 •

MENTAL ILLNESS IS NOT A WEAKNESS

Mental illness is not a moral or psychological weakness. We are not weak-willed, defective, or underdeveloped. Mental illness is a biochemical illness that can affect anyone at any time.

As we continue our journey, it is important to remember that our illness has nothing to do with our character, personality, economic status, willingness, nor any other mythological cause.

Today, am I clear about who I am and the source of my illness?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

I have an illness, not a weakness of the mind or soul.



SUCCESS

We often think that success is based on how much money we have or what we possess or our status in the community. But for those of us with a mental illness, success is more often defined by our ability to cope with our illness.

Many of us have turned what seemed an impossible situation into a new way of living. Some of us have returned to work. Most of us have gained a better understanding of ourselves. Many of us have achieved some goals and dreams.

On our journey we will have many opportunities for success. If today we have begun to manage our illness and take back our life, we have already tasted it.

Today, do I realize that success is already a part of my life?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

I can succeed day after day by learning to cope with and manage my illness.



OUR LIVES CAN CHANGE

Our lives can change if we let them. Once we have been lifted from the depths of despair and are no longer prisoners of our illness, we will have opportunities to achieve things we once thought impossible. We will find the courage and strength to cope with each day. Hopelessness will be replaced with hope and faith. We will learn that we are not alone and that others are willing to help us. We will come to know ourselves and accept ourselves as we are—not merely for what we think we should become. We will know serenity and become at peace with the world around us.

Do I believe my life can change today? Am I willing to let positive changes happen?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*Sometimes positive change is an act of will,
and sometimes it's just letting good things happen.*





FEBRUARY

SELECTIVE LISTENING

Knowingly or not, some of us with a mental illness have developed selective listening. We hear what we want to hear and sometimes twist others' words to match our desires. For example, if we were told that we would have to take our medication for a long time, we interpreted that to mean we would be able to stop taking it whenever we felt a little better. Selective listening may give us some short-term comfort, but in the long-term it is dangerous.

As our recovery progresses, we need to learn to listen to what people say to us, not to what we want them to say. This may be difficult at first. Truth and reality can be painful. But our recovery will go nowhere if we base it on anything other than the truth.

Do I practice selective listening today or do I listen with an open heart and mind?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*As painful as it may be,
the truth always supports my recovery.*



H.A.L.T.

When we find ourselves too hungry, too angry, too lonely, or too tired, we put ourselves at physical, emotional, or spiritual risk. Our body's chemistry changes and we can lose our balance.

For someone with a mental illness, this can have serious consequences. We need to restore our balance.

When we are hungry, we can eat. When we're angry, we can ask ourselves why, cope, and, if necessary, make a change. When we're lonely, we can reach out to others. When we're tired, we can rest.

Do I take care of myself today when I am hungry, angry, lonely, or tired?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

H.A.L.T. is the formula for balance.



NO MATTER WHAT, WE'LL BE OKAY

If we remember nothing else from our journey thus far, let us always remember in our hearts that, no matter what, we will be okay. That no matter where we may fall, or how often, we'll be okay. That no matter how many times we may have to start over, we'll be okay. That no matter what material possessions or amount of money we may lose, we'll be okay.

We may not have what we would like or what we think we should have, but we'll be okay because we have another chance. And most importantly, we still have our Higher Power and we have ourselves.

Today, do I know that, no matter what, I'll be okay?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

When I remain true to my Higher Power and to myself, I will always be okay, no matter what.



EACH DAY A NEW LESSON

Each day is a new step on our journey, with new lessons to be learned. Lessons for emotional and spiritual growth. Lessons in moral character. Lessons that lead us to acceptance and teach us that judging ourselves and others is not our job, but the work of our Higher Power. Lessons that teach us about our illness, help us heal, and help us cope with our illness, one day at a time.

Today, am I willing to learn any lessons that are given to me?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

*Let me learn the lessons of today
so I am prepared for tomorrow.*



Mark Allen Zabawa is a counselor and patient monitor for a large hospital. He suffers from bipolar disorder and has led dozens of support groups for those with mental health problems. He is the author of *Living with Chronic Pain One Day at a Time*.

Hazelden, a national nonprofit organization founded in 1949, helps people reclaim their lives from the disease of addiction. Built on decades of knowledge and experience, Hazelden offers a comprehensive approach to addiction that addresses the full range of patient, family, and professional needs, including treatment and continuing care for youth and adults, research, higher learning, public education and advocacy, and publishing.

A life of recovery is lived “one day at a time.” Hazelden publications, both educational and inspirational, support and strengthen lifelong recovery. In 1954, Hazelden published *Twenty-Four Hours a Day*, the first daily meditation book for recovering alcoholics, and Hazelden continues to publish works to inspire and guide individuals in treatment and recovery, and their loved ones. Professionals who work to prevent and treat addiction also turn to Hazelden for evidence-based curricula, informational materials, and videos for use in schools, treatment programs, and correctional programs.

Through published works, Hazelden extends the reach of hope, encouragement, help, and support to individuals, families, and communities affected by addiction and related issues.

For questions about Hazelden publications, please
call **800-328-9000**
or visit us online at **hazelden.org/bookstore**.

When struggling with depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, or another condition, it can be difficult to maintain a sense of balance—not only physically, but mentally and spiritually as well. Therapy and medication can help, but we must also look for other ways to focus our thoughts and feelings back to a state of equilibrium.

The daily readings featured in this yearlong meditation collection address issues unique to those of us with mental health disorders. By engaging in this inspirational book for just a few moments, we can begin or end each day more at peace with ourselves and the world, achieving the mental rest and self-acceptance needed for a positive, healthy mind and a peaceful life.

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