



# **Calming, Reflecting, and Regulating**

A guide for caring for our spiritual selves and  
our nervous systems leading up to the 2024  
election

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## Welcome!

As the 2024 election nears, I am noticing more people commenting on how difficult it is to remain grounded, calm, and regulated. The stress of this election is very real, and this study from the American Psychological Association tells us that we are not alone: [APA poll: Future of nation, economy and presidential election top U.S. stressors.](#)

Everyone has an idea about what we should do, what we should read or listen to, how we should volunteer...and I trust that if you are reading this and feeling this stress, you are already well aware of the stakes and the importance of individual and collective action.

The purpose of this little guide is simple: we benefit ourselves and one another when our nervous system is regulated. In times like these, we must do this with intention, gentleness, and love.

This practice guide is not to provide any information about candidates or voting. It is not to emphasize the importance of action or the urgency of our times.

Rather, this guide is designed to provide ideas for practicing regulating our nervous system, grounding ourselves in our faith, and engaging spiritual practices to help us weather the week ahead.

I hope the ideas contained here serve as springboards for mindfulness, for joy, for relaxation, for awareness of the larger Love that holds us all.

Each day has several activities: a body practice, a poetry reading practice and opportunity for reflection, a link to music, and some resources for parents and children to engage in conversation and nervous system regulation together.

Thank you for sharing these practices with me - putting this together was an exercise in my own nervous system regulation. We are in this together.

With love,

Rev. Laura

Tuesday October 29, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Physical signs of stress are a normal and healthy way our body lets us know about the challenges and stressors we are experiencing. However, stress can also activate the body's fight or flight response. While this is very helpful when we are getting chased by tigers, it is less sustainable when we are dealing with long-term stressors - like today's news cycle and a stressful election season.

There are some simple things we can do to help our body through the fight or flight response. Movement can be particularly helpful in releasing endorphins, decreasing physical tension, and interrupting thoughts. Any simple and intentional movement can be helpful - activities like running, walking, a silly dance party, tai chi, or yoga are wonderful, as is just moving your body with intention, paying attention to how it feels to move.

Another intentional movement can be shaking - literally "shaking it off!" Check out the videos below (one is standing and the other is seated) for some ideas and information about shaking to calm the nervous system.

- [\*Shaking to calm the nervous system \(youtube.com\)\*](#)
- [\*Seated shaking to calm the nervous system \(youtube.com\)\*](#)

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

Note: you can watch and listen to Elizabeth Alexander read this poem at President Barack Obama's inauguration here: [Inaugural Poem: "Praise Song for the Day" \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v1111111111)

“Praise Song for the Day” by Elizabeth Alexander

Each day we go about our business,  
walking past each other, catching each other's  
eyes or not, about to speak or speaking.

All about us is noise. All about us is  
noise and bramble, thorn and din, each  
one of our ancestors on our tongues.

Someone is stitching up a hem, darning  
a hole in a uniform, patching a tire,  
repairing the things in need of repair.

Someone is trying to make music somewhere,  
with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum,  
with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.

A woman and her son wait for the bus.  
A farmer considers the changing sky.  
A teacher says, Take out your pencils. Begin.

We encounter each other in words, words  
spiny or smooth, whispered or declaimed,  
words to consider, reconsider.

We cross dirt roads and highways that mark  
the will of some one and then others, who said  
I need to see what's on the other side.

I know there's something better down the road.  
We need to find a place where we are safe.  
We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.  
Sing the names of the dead who brought us here,  
who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges,

picked the cotton and the lettuce, built  
brick by brick the glittering edifices  
they would then keep clean and work inside of.

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the day.  
Praise song for every hand-lettered sign,  
the figuring-it-out at kitchen tables.

Some live by love thy neighbor as thyself,  
others by first do no harm or take no more  
than you need. What if the mightiest word is love?

Love beyond marital, filial, national,  
love that casts a widening pool of light,  
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,  
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.  
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,

praise song for walking forward in that light.

### *Music*

Take a few minutes to listen without interruption to this song: Loosen  
Loosen by Aly Halpert.

[Loosen - Aly Halpert \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

What thoughts, feelings, needs or desires arise as you listen? How can  
you respond to them with love?

*Lyrics:* Loosen, loosen, baby  
you don't have to carry  
the weight of the world in your muscles and bones  
let go, let go, let go

Holy breath, & holy name  
will you ease, will you ease this pain?

### *For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the  
music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they  
thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Review this article from PBS Kids: [How to Talk to Children About Politics |... | PBS KIDS for Parents](#) . Use some of the questions they suggest to start a conversation about civic engagement and about your values. Bonus points for bringing in our Unitarian Universalist value (visual below for reference!)



Wednesday October 30, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Take a comfortable breath and bring your body into a position that feels comfortable or easy for you. Notice where there is tension or pain and where there are places of no sensation or places of ease. Name the emotions or sensations that are present for you. For example: “there is pain in my knee” or “there is a flutter of anxiety in my chest” or “there is tension in my jaw.”

If it feels right, place one hand on your heart and one hand on your belly and take three intentional breaths.

After these breaths, take a moment to notice what, if anything, has changed.

Return to this practice as needed throughout the day.

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?



Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

*Election Promises* by Mark Belletini

I hear the polls  
are going to be open on Tuesday.  
All day.  
Good. I certainly intend to go to them.  
I certainly invite you to go to them and vote too.  
But today I say the polls  
are not just open on Tuesday.  
I say they are open every day.  
Every hour. Even here. Even now...  
I'm going to vote, right now,  
for the right to dream of a world  
where the word politics  
doesn't stop me in my tracks,  
and where the word honor still  
has a few good meanings left.  
I'm going to vote right now  
for the power of free people  
to actually be free,  
no matter who they are,  
no matter who has abandoned them,  
no matter who hates them.  
I actually am going to vote for love,  
I am going to vote for truthfulness as the norm,  
not the exception.

I'm going to vote for a world  
that doesn't vote for killing, control and swagger,  
I'm going to vote for you.  
I'm going to vote for me.  
Right now. Right here. Silently. But for real.

### *Music*

Take a few minutes to listen without interruption to this song: [“A Little Peace”](#) by MILCK.

What thoughts, feelings, needs or desires arise as you listen? How can you respond to them with love?

Lyrics: ...Why do we turn away from each other?  
'Cause we all make mistakes, we all suffer  
From the fear, from the shame that we harbor  
Let us lay down our armor

Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh, all I need  
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh, is a little peace  
Oh-oh-oh, oh-oh-oh  
All I need is a little peace  
A little peace

### *For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Enjoy this story (or get the book from your library!)

[Read Aloud: Grace for President by Kelly DiPucchio | Stories with Star \(youtube.com\)](#)

- And watch this video together: [Electing a US President in Plain English \(youtube.com\)](#)

## Thursday October 31, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Find a comfortable position for your body and take an easy breath. If it is comfortable and feels right for you, place one hand on your chest and take another breath.

Ask yourself the question *what do I need? Or what would feel just right?*

Maybe the answer is something practical: a glass of water or a snack.

Maybe the answer is emotional or mental: hope or joy.

Whatever the answer is, be sure to offer yourself the kindness of filling that need with intention and love.

Return to this practice as needed throughout the day.

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you

use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

Note: you can listen to Ada Limón read this poem here: [In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa | Poet Laureate Projects | Poet Laureate | Poetry & Literature | Programs | Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

*In Praise of Mystery: A Poem for Europa* by Ada Limón

Arching under the night sky inky  
with black expansiveness, we point  
to the planets we know, we

pin quick wishes on stars. From earth,  
we read the sky as if it is an unerring book  
of the universe, expert and evident.

Still, there are mysteries below our sky:  
the whale song, the songbird singing  
its call in the bough of a wind-shaken tree.

We are creatures of constant awe,  
curious at beauty, at leaf and blossom,  
at grief and pleasure, sun and shadow.

And it is not darkness that unites us,  
not the cold distance of space, but  
the offering of water, each drop of rain,

each rivulet, each pulse, each vein.  
O second moon, we, too, are made

of water, of vast and beckoning seas.

We, too, are made of wonders, of great  
and ordinary loves, of small invisible worlds,  
of a need to call out through the dark.

## *Music*

Take a few minutes to listen without interruption to this song: [DeJ Loaf, Leon Bridges - Liberated \(Official Video\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

What thoughts, feelings, needs or desires arise as you listen? How can you respond to them with love?

*Lyrics:* If you feel free then you should lift your hands  
Wanna shake it, baby (wanna shake it, baby) like I know you  
can  
So many things in this world I don't understand  
I won't judge who you love, or your brown skin  
People gettin' liberated

Hey, get up on your feet if you got the feeling  
(You got the feeling)  
You can be free  
Get up on your feet  
Say, people gettin' liberated  
Get up on your feet if you got the feeling  
You ain't gotta worry no more  
Get up on your feet

*For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Review this article from Common Sense Media and engage your children in a conversation about how to be thoughtful consumers of media

[How to Help Kids Spot Misinformation and Disinformation | Common Sense Media](#)

## Friday November 1, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Choose to eat one of your meals mindfully. This just means paying attention to the experience of eating or cooking - noticing the way things taste or the sounds they make in the pan.

It might feel like too much to eat your entire meal mindfully, but even just a few moments can change your attention. Maybe make a cup of coffee and pay attention to the sounds and smells as it brews. Take one mindful sip.

You can try eating with your non-dominant hand, to bring careful awareness to your meal.

Turn off your TV and put your phone away while you eat - even if just for the first part of the meal. Notice if and when you feel like returning to those activities.

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a



moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

### *Gate A-4* by Naomi Shihab Nye

Wandering around the Albuquerque Airport Terminal, after learning my flight had been delayed four hours, I heard an announcement: "If anyone in the vicinity of Gate A-4 understands any Arabic, please come to the gate immediately."

Well—one pauses these days. Gate A-4 was my own gate. I went there.

An older woman in full traditional Palestinian embroidered dress, just like my grandma wore, was crumpled to the floor, wailing. "Help," said the flight agent. "Talk to her. What is her problem? We told her the flight was going to be late and she did this."

I stooped to put my arm around the woman and spoke haltingly. "Shu-dow-a, Shu-bid-uck Habibti? Stani schway, Min fadlick, Shu-bit-se-wee?" The minute she heard any words she knew, however poorly used, she stopped crying. She thought the flight had been cancelled entirely. She needed to be in El Paso for major medical treatment the next day. I said, "No, we're fine, you'll get there, just later, who is picking you up? Let's call him."

We called her son, I spoke with him in English. I told him I would stay with his mother till we got on the plane and ride next to her. She talked to him. Then we called her other sons just for the fun of it. Then we called my dad and he and she spoke for a while in Arabic and found out of course they had ten shared friends. Then I thought just for the heck of it why not call some Palestinian poets I know and let them chat with her? This all took up two hours.

She was laughing a lot by then. Telling of her life, patting my knee, answering questions. She had pulled a sack of homemade mamool cookies—little powdered sugar crumbly mounds stuffed with dates and nuts—from her bag—and was offering them to all the women at the gate. To my amazement, not a single woman declined one. It was like a sacrament. The traveler from Argentina, the mom from California, the lovely woman from Laredo—we were all covered with the same powdered sugar. And smiling. There is no better cookie.

And then the airline broke out free apple juice from huge coolers and two little girls from our flight ran around serving it and they were covered with powdered sugar, too. And I noticed my new best friend—  
by now we were holding hands—had a potted plant poking out of her bag, some medicinal thing, with green furry leaves. Such an old country tradition. Always carry a plant. Always stay rooted to somewhere.

And I looked around that gate of late and weary ones and I thought, This is the world I want to live in. The shared world. Not a single person in that gate—once the crying of confusion stopped—seemed apprehensive about any other person. They took the cookies. I wanted to hug all those other women, too.

This can still happen anywhere. Not everything is lost.

### *Music*

Take a few minutes to listen without interruption to this song by the Resistance Revival Chorus: [This Joy \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

What thoughts, feelings, needs or desires arise as you listen? How can you respond to them with love?

*Lyrics:*

*This joy that I have  
The world didn't give it to me (oh, oh, oh)  
This joy that I have  
The world didn't give it to me (don't you know that)  
This joy that I have  
The world didn't give it to me  
Ooh I said, the world didn't give it  
The world can't take it away*

*For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Review this resource from the Fred Rogers Institute about talking with children about politics: [Talking with Children About Politics \(fredrogersinstitute.org\)](https://www.fredrogersinstitute.org/talking-with-children-about-politics)

The last page says “Probably what children need to hear most from us adults is that they can talk with us about anything and that we will do all we can to keep them safe in any scary time.” - Fred Rogers

Is there a conversation you and your children need to have? Something they’re wondering about? Something they might be worried about? In Our Whole Lives programming, it’s called “being an askable parent”...Mr. Rogers says to be a parent to whom “anything is mentionable.”

- Have a conversation about joy! What brings you joy, how do you find joy when life feels difficult?

## Saturday November 2, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Find a comfortable place for your body, and then take an easy breath.

Starting at the top of your head, imagine relaxing from the top of your head....slowly working through each body part all the way to your toes. Remember to relax your jaw, allowing your tongue to fall to the bottom of your mouth. Relax your shoulders. Let go of the tension in your hips.

This link has a number of practices of different lengths, starting with a one-minute breathing exercise. Check out the one that feels best for the time you have available: [Stream UCSD Center for Mindfulness | Listen to Short Mindfulness & Compassion Meditations playlist online for free on SoundCloud](#)

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

Note: You can watch Amanda Gorman reading this poem here: [WATCH: Amanda Gorman reads her poem, 'The Miracle of Morning' \(youtube.com\)](#)

*The Miracle of Morning* by Amanda Gorman

I thought I'd awaken to a world in mourning.  
Heavy clouds crowding, a society storming.  
But there's something different on this golden morning.  
Something magical in the sunlight, wide and warming.  
I see a dad with a stroller taking a jog.  
Across the street, a bright-eyed girl chases her dog.  
A grandma on a porch fingers her rosaries.  
She grins as her young neighbor brings her groceries.  
While we might feel small, separate, and all alone,  
Our people have never been more tightly tethered.  
Because the question isn't if we will weather this unknown,  
But how we will weather this unknown together.  
So on this meaningful morn, we mourn and we mend.  
Like light, we can't be broken, even when we bend.  
As one, we will defeat both despair and disease.  
We stand with healthcare heroes and all employees;  
With families, libraries, waiters, schools, artists;  
Businesses, restaurants, and hospitals hit hardest.  
We ignite not in the light, but in lack thereof,  
For it is in loss that we truly learn to love.  
In this chaos, we will discover clarity.  
In suffering, we must find solidarity.  
For it's our grief that gives us our gratitude,  
Shows us how to find hope, if we ever shall lose it.  
So don't ignore the pain. Give it purpose. Use it.

Read children's books, dance alone to DJ music.



*For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Everyone from Mr. Rogers to Daniel Tiger talks about looking for the helpers. Who are the people you see doing good work in your community? What about in the country? Who are the people in politics who share your values and live them clearly and out loud? Can you learn more about the work those people are doing?

## Sunday November 3, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Turn on your favorite song and have a dance party. By yourself or with others, seated or standing or lying down, wiggling and moving to the beat of the music is a fantastic way to release stress and tension.

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

*'I am broken by the revolt exploding inside me'* by Minal Hajratwala

Your rage is pomegranates spilling open on ice, is the flute's thin silver seam, is a volcano spitting rivulets of fire to wash clean these corrupt lands. Your rage is solidarity before after & during the hashtag. Your rage is the angel of karma before after & during the video. Your rage throbs tight in your chest against symbologies of sticks & stones & chokes that break



ligament & bone. Your rage is the fulcrum of your desire, chimaerae busting out of cages, heart-sparks flying. Your rage gets shit done & it is no joke. Your rage is the luminous gold truth of sunrise, what you sit with long enough to dissolve your fear. Your rage is a checkmate to your compromise. Your rage is heat from a magnifying glass, focused, bursting into flame. Your rage is a cool blue spotlight circling the empty stage. Your rage is the dog who won't lie down for the wrong master, fierce hen who won't be moved till her brood is hatched, moth who unbinds her cocoon & lifts her body toward light. Your rage is a lesson & you learn it as you breathe. Your rage is this holy sword slicing through stone walls. Your rage is a sentence that says what it must, full-stop. Your rage is our dream of a sweeter brighter world. Your rage is this oar treading the sea to steer this ship this gorgeous fucking hot mess goddamn revolution.

### *Music*

Take a few minutes to listen without interruption to this song: [SENDING YOU LIGHT by Melanie DeMore performed with Julie Wolf \(youtube.com\)](#)

What thoughts, feelings, needs or desires arise as you listen? How can you respond to them with love?

*Lyrics:*        So I am sending you Light, To heal you, To hold you  
                      I am sending you Light, To hold you in Love  
                      I am sending you Light, To heal you, To hold you  
                      I am sending you Light, To hold you in Love

*For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Listen to this book together: [The President of the Jungle by Paula](#)

[Desgualdo, Pedro Markun, André Rodrigues - YouTube](#) and talk about what they have seen or heard recently that sounds like the election process playing out in our country. Use it as a starting point to talk about your values in the upcoming election.

## Monday November 4, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Take a comfortable breath and sit or lay in a way that feels comfortable to your body.

After your body focuses and settles, draw your attention to:

Something you can hear.

Something you can see.

Something you can smell.

Something you can feel.

Something you can taste.

Don't worry if one or more of these senses aren't accessible to you - move your attention to what you notice. Can you go through the list, mindfully calling your attention to each of these things, one by one? Can you go through the list a second time, noticing new things? A third time, noticing still more newness?

### *Reading and Reflection*

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, read the poem silently to yourself. What sensations do you feel in your body as you read it? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the poem aloud - to yourself, to a loved one, to a pet. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, read the poem one more time (either aloud or silently). What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you from this poem? How will you

use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Maybe you write your word or phrase on a post-it note and put it somewhere where you will see it regularly over the next few days.

*Blessing of the precious mess* by Anna Bladel

darling one—  
you precious mess—  
you exhausted, grieving, hollowed, hallowed, hallelujah of a human—  
today, if even for a moment, may you feel:  
your own beating heart  
your own courageous coeur  
your chest rising and falling with breath  
which is spirit  
which is lifeforce  
keeping pulse  
marking time  
finding space—  
regardless of how you are feeling  
no matter what you are capable of  
or not—  
and, just for a moment  
may you find rest  
a bit of ease, held  
in that sacred rhythm  
that cannot be  
without you  
because you, you precious mess,  
have breath and heart and lifeforce  
pulsing through you, yet.

## *Music*

Take a few minutes to listen without interruption to this song:

 [Raye Zaragoza feat. MILCK - Joy Revolution \(Official Music Video\)](#)

What thoughts, feelings, needs or desires arise as you listen? How can you respond to them with love?

*For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- Have a dance party to the song above, and then practice returning to the body practice exercise. What is different about that practice after a period of activity? Is it easier? Harder? About the same?
- Talk about the fact that tomorrow is election day. It is likely that your kids are picking up on what you are carrying emotionally. Name what you are feeling and why in developmentally appropriate ways. Ask them how they're feeling, and create a plan for tomorrow together.

## Tuesday November 5, 2024

### *Body Practice*

Ask your body what it needs. Is there a movement or an exercise you have done this past week that felt particularly restorative or tender? Review the exercises from the past week and do the one that is calling to you.

Today might be a good day to revisit several of these exercises!

At some point today, be sure to ask yourself what you are feeling. It might be helpful to sit with the feelings wheel. Be sure to ask yourself *what else?* as you are likely experiencing more than one emotion. After identifying each feeling, tell your body *thank you*.

### *Music, Reading, and Reflection*

Our music and reading and reflection are all one today: *Plowshare Prayer* by Spencer LaJoye.

First, center yourself with a breath. Then, listen to *Plowshare Prayer* here: [Plowshare Prayer - YouTube](#) . What sensations do you feel in your body as you listen? What emotions? (You can reference the feelings chart in the resources at the end of this document).

Then, read the words to this song (below) aloud or silently. What do you notice as you read this poem again? What words or phrases stick out to you?

Finally, listen to the song one more time. What word, phrase, or feeling are you carrying with you? How will you use it to inform your day? Can it serve as a touchstone for you in a moment of stress or anxiety? Is there anything you need to add to this prayer?

Dear blessed creator, dear mother, dear savior  
Dear father, dear brother, dear holy other  
Dear sibling, dear baby, dear patiently waiting  
Dear sad & confused, dear stuck & abused  
Dear end of your rope, dear worn out & broke  
Dear go it alone, dear running from home  
Dear righteously angry, forsaken by family  
Dear jaded & quiet, dear tough & defiant  
I pray that I'm heard  
And I pray that this works

I pray if a prayer has been used as a sword  
Against you & your heart  
Against you & your word  
I pray that this prayer is a plowshare of sorts  
That it might break you open  
It might help you grow

I pray that your body gets all that it needs  
And if you don't want healing  
I just pray for peace  
I pray that your burden gets lighter each day  
I pray the mean voice in your head goes away  
I pray that you honor the grief as it comes  
I pray you can feel all the life in your lungs  
I pray that if you go all day being brave  
That you can go home, go to bed  
Feeling safe  
I pray you're forgiven. I pray you forgive  
I pray you set boundaries & openly live  
I pray that you feel you are worth never leaving  
I pray that you know I will always believe you  
I pray that you're heard

And I pray that this works

Amen on behalf of the last & the least  
On behalf of the anxious, depressed & unseen  
Amen for the workers, the hungry, the houseless  
Amen for the lonely & recently spouseless  
Amen for the queers & their closeted peers  
Amen for the bullied who hold in their tears  
Amen for the mothers of little Black sons  
Amen for the kids who grow up scared of guns  
Amen for the addicts, ashamed & hungover  
Amen for the calloused, the wisened, the sober  
Amen for ones who want life to be over  
Amen for the leaders who lose their composure  
And amen for the parents who just lost their baby  
Amen for chronically ill & disabled  
Amen for the children down at the border  
Amen for the victims of our law & order  
I pray that you're heard  
And I pray that this works

I pray if a prayer has been used as a sword  
Against you & your heart  
Against you & your word  
I pray that this prayer is a plowshare of sorts

*For families, parents, and people of all ages:*

Engage your children or youth in the body practice above, and listen to the music together. Ask them how the song made them feel, and what they thought the message was. Share your feelings and thoughts, too.

- VOTE! And take your kids with you so they can experience the



process!

- Take breaks throughout the day to re-regulate together - through mindful snacks, breathing breaks, dancing or physical activity, or checking in emotionally.

*Election day extras:*

[All Shall Be Well / Another World \(youtube.com\)](#)

[You Are Who I Love by Aracelis Girmay - Poems | Academy of American Poets](#)

# Resources

## Feelings Wheel:

Use this wheel to help identify how you're feeling. Start in the middle with the broad category of emotion and work your way outward. You may be (you likely are!) experiencing multiple emotions. Check in with yourself a few times, asking the gentle question *"what else is here?"*

