

## Week 1 Lesson 2: Releasing

***Releasing what no longer serves you is an act of ferocious compassion.***

Dear heart,

Now that you have given yourself time and space to answer the questions from the beginning of the week, bring your journal, your list and your heart to this releasing practice.

Remember that sometimes even things that we have loved or enjoyed in the past have “served their time” and can become burdens after a while. Doing something just because it’s the way you have always done it is almost never a good enough reason all by itself. In pursuing a deeply compassionate life, we want to live consciously with intention. All the things, people and events you allow into your life are all intentional.

### Releasing Practice

*All great spirituality teaches about letting go of what you don't need and who you are not.*

-Richard Rohr

In yoga, there is a practice called *Ishvara pranidhana*. It means to surrender and it is believed that this is a crucial step on the path to enlightenment. So think of this letting go practice as a way of surrendering. You are trusting that you are ready to step into something more and new by releasing and surrendering.

Of course this is not something that can happen all in one day or one meditation practice, but every moment you spend consciously letting go is a step on your path to enlightenment.

Letting go also teaches us how to be present. You become aware of when you are holding onto things and also of when you are creating space for something new.

So take the list that you have been making this week and choose one or two things that you have underlined in red to remove from your schedule for now. Begin to consciously practice letting go. Write them down on a small piece of paper. Get a candle and a metal bowl. Find a quiet space and make yourself comfortable. Set your journal, candle and bowl in front of you and light your candle.

Begin by noticing any resistance.

Then offer conscious acceptance.

Do you find yourself wanting something to be different from how it is? Spend a moment accepting it as it is.

Offer honor to the thing/person/commitment that you have written on your paper.

You can even offer thanks for the place it has had in your life. And for what it has taught you.

Become aware of any feelings or thoughts you are having. Spend 5-10 minutes in this awareness. Watch them arise and flow by as if you were watching a river. You are not getting in the river and flowing away, but just watching the currents pass.

Continue in this meditation for as long as you like, but take at least 10 minutes.

Offer yourself compassion. You can do this by audibly saying "I offer myself compassion." Or you can hold your hands out to receive the compassion you are offering.

Remind yourself that surrender is ongoing and that you can hold compassion for yourself as you fumble toward your goals of letting go.

Ferocious compassion will be the heat that melts attachment. Your heart warms and you are able to let go with love.

Now, if you feel ready, go ahead and consciously release whatever you have written on your paper by saying it outloud.

"I release \_\_\_\_\_."

Then go ahead and dip the edge of your paper in the flame of the candle and drop it into the bowl to let it burn. If you like, you can scatter the ashes to the wind outside.

Through letting go, we become ready to receive, to tap into abundant possibility.

Continue to use these same steps through the weekend in meditation and conscious surrender.

After you do this ritual spend a moment with the following **journaling questions**:

1. What have you identified this week that you want to have more of in your life?
2. How can you use the space you have created in letting go to intentionally have more of what you love?
3. What is one action step that you can take now to plant a seed of intention towards what you love? If you want “more time with friends,” can you schedule a lunch date? If you want to spend more time with your art, can you join a class or block out an art date with yourself?
4. Remember that all the things, people and events you allow into your life are all intentional. So look at your list again. How can you approach each item that you allow to remain as an intentional part of your life? You might want to just choose 2 or 3 items to specifically address this question. For example, if you have doing the laundry on your list and you don't plan to release doing the laundry (which is also an option!), you might consider how you can make this “chore” into an intentional part of your life. How might you bring Ferocious Compassion to something as quotidian as laundry?