



Soul Matters

Living Love Through The Practice of **Repair**



**Companion Resources
November 2024**



UNITARIAN
UNIVERSALIST
CHURCH OF
JACKSON

Welcome to the Practice of Repair

When the cracks come, who doesn't desire - even demand - to restore what once was?

Nothing is more human. We all long to reverse the damage. We all hold tight to the humpty dumpty hope that everything can be put back together again.

But, as our faith teaches us, transition and change dictate the flow of life. The current of time is just too strong for us to swim back.

And so the repair offered us is not that of returning our lives to their original state but working with what remains to make something new. The shards are not pieces of a puzzle waiting to be put perfectly back together, but building blocks waiting to be molded into a yet to be imagined form.

All of which means that there is freedom in the breaking. The cracks, if we can widen our view, become conduits for creativity. That's not to minimize the pain involved. And it's certainly not a way of justifying tragedy as "part of God's plan." Rather, it's a call for us to perceive the broken pieces of our lives as more than just a pile of ruined rubble. "Look closer!" whispers the wisdom within. "That ash, if worked with, can give birth to a Phoenix."

So, what piles of rubble in your life need revisited? What longings for what was do you need to let go of, so a new story can begin?

And how might you break open even further? Because that's part of this too, isn't it? "Your broken pieces are more than rubble" is not the only counterintuitive thing that life wants us to learn about the practice of repair. It also says to us (even though we can barely stand to hear it): "Crack wider!"

As difficult as it is to absorb, it seems we were made to be broken, [broken open](#) to be exact. Remember what the Canadian sage said, "Cracks are how the light gets in."

Broken hearts hurt but they also let in and allow us to connect with the pain of others. Protected hearts may seem safe, but our armor only ends up being a straitjacket. It's one of the most important but paradoxical spiritual truths there is: Broken people end up bigger people. Because of the cracks in our heart, it becomes capable of expanding. Because we've been torn, who we are no longer ends at the barrier of our own skin

It seems this is what it really means to be repaired and made whole.

Calendar Connections

November 2024

Click on the links below for more information or inspiration about each event.

Interfaith

- [Diwali: Festival of Lights](#) (Hindu) - Tue, Oct 29, 2024 - Sun, Nov 3, 2024
- [All Saints Day](#) (Christian) - Nov. 1 (more [here](#))
- [All Souls Day](#) - Nov. 2 (more [here](#) and [here](#))
- [Samhain](#) (Pagan/Wiccan) - Oct. 31 - Nov. 1 (more [here](#))

Unitarian Universalist

- [James Luther Adams](#) birthday - Nov. 12 [[more](#)]
- [Francis David](#) died in prison on Nov. 15 (1579) (more [here](#))

National Holidays & Cultural

- [Native American Heritage Month](#)
- Alzheimer's Awareness Month
- [Dia de Los Muertos](#)/Day of the Dead - Nov. 1-2
- U.S. Elections - Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024
- James Weldon Johnson & J. Rosamond Johnson composed "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing" - Nov. 6, 1900
- [Veterans Day](#) - Nov. 11
- [Remembrance Day](#) (Canada) - Nov. 11 (observed Nov. 12)
- Birthday of Elizabeth Cady Stanton - Nov. 12, 1815
- U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation on public buses was unconstitutional - Nov. 13, 1956
- [Transgender Day of Remembrance](#) - Nov. 20
- [National Day of Mourning](#) / [Thanksgiving Day](#) - Nov. 28, 2024
- [Origin of Species](#) published & [Evolution Day](#) - Nov. 24

For Fun and On the Fringe

- "Sesame Street" first aired on PBS - Nov. 10, 1969
- Birthday of Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky - Nov. 11, 1821
- World Kindness Day - Nov. 13
- [Buy Nothing Day](#) - Nov. 29
- Charles Schulz B Day - Nov. 26 (1922) (more [here](#) and [here](#) and on his [spirituality](#))

Try a Meditation Technique

Meditation techniques help countless people repair every day. For many of us, though, it just never felt like “our thing.” This month, why not give it another try?! Below are a handful of different meditation techniques for you to try out. We suggest you take a week and try out one each day, but feel free to sample them in any way that feels comfortable. If you find one that resonates with you, spend the remaining time this month researching and trying it with different leaders. Here’s our suggest list (click on the hyperlinked titles to access them):

- [Centering Meditation](#)
- [Mindfulness Meditation](#)
- [Loving Kindness Meditation](#)
- [Shaking and Dancing Expressive Meditation](#) (watch [this introduction](#) first)
- [Five Senses Meditation](#)
- [Bee Breath/Humming Meditation](#)
- Vagus Nerve Reset: [HERE](#) & [HERE](#)
- [Box Breathing](#)
- Meditation for Sleep: [HERE](#) & [HERE](#)

Meditations, Prayers & Blessings

Practice Repair *

Rev. Dave McFarland

Bless generously, curse rarely; practice repair.

Read a book or a blog or watch a movie about something or some situation or someone beyond the ability to relate; practice repair.

Lean into comfort zones, strengths, and inklings of bliss; practice repair.

Pause to ask whether words are both skillful and absolutely necessary; practice repair.

Sing full-throated songs that create and recreate beloved community; practice repair.

Let go of stubborn self-righteousness, and have mercy; practice repair.

Honor the ancestors who could not have imagined our lives or even our very being; practice repair.

Smile; practice repair.

Multiply joy, divide sorrow, practice repair.

With the tools at hand; practice repair.

Perhaps I have tools you could borrow, perhaps you could lend me from yours, and together, we can practice repair.

Prayer for Peace and Healing *

Rev. Marta I. Valentin

Full prayer found in [A Long Time Blooming](#), a Soul Matters [Common Shelf](#) book

Spirit of Life all around us

You have gathered us together

in a swirl of healing wind...

Invitation to Arrive and Rest

Rev. Shari Woodbury

Out of the din of the city
Away from the noise of the crowds
We come
To rest in this moment
In this place.
Set apart from the never-ending to-do lists
Embracing the seventh day, a day of rest,
We come
To the warmth and stillness
Of this sacred hour.
Remember, you have chosen to be here
Something in your life led you to arrive here, now.
Whatever tasks and cares await you
Now, for this brief time, simply rest.
Allow your soul to be nurtured,
Let the waves in your mind and heart gradually subside
As you come home to yourself,
Holy, and whole

Beannacht / Blessing

John O'Donohue

Full prayer found at <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/beannacht-blessing/>

On the day when the weight deadens on your shoulders and you stumble,
may the clay dance to balance you.

And when your eyes freeze behind the grey window
and the ghost of loss gets into you,
may a flock of colors, indigo, red, green and azure blue,
come to awaken in you a meadow of delight.

Mending

Atena O Donner

Full piece found in [Incantations for Rest](#), UUA worship resource & Soul Matters "[Common Shelf](#)" Book

...My fabric has a lot of holes;
I'm grateful for the stars I can see through them,
the sunlight warming my blood.
I mend some, I leave some...
patching in remnants of steel wire and
my own voice: "You deserve."
"It will be okay."
"Keep going keep going keep going keep sewing."...

Even This Is Enough *

Rev. Vanessa Southern

Full meditation at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/prayer/even-enough>

If your body won't do what it used to, for right now let it be enough.

If your mind won't stop racing or can't think of the word, let it be enough.

If you are here utterly alone and in despair, be all that here with us.

If today you cannot sing because your throat hurts or you don't have the heart for music, be silent...

The world won't stop spinning on her axis if you don't rise to all occasions today.

Love won't cease to flow in your direction,

your heart won't stop beating,

all hope won't be lost...

A Survival Meditation *

Rev. Nathan C. Walker

Full piece found at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/meditation/survival-meditation>

breathing in

i am aware of my pain.

breathing out

i am aware that i am not my pain.

breathing in

i am aware of my past.

breathing out

i am aware that i am not my past...

A Blessing for Risk-Takers and Failures*

Rev. Robin Tanner

Full piece at <https://www.uua.org/worship/words/blessing/blessing-risk-takers-and-failures>
[Permission Source](#)

Today we share in a blessing for losers, risk-takers, all failures far and wide...

Blessed are they who make giant mistakes, whose intentions are good, but impact has injured, who know the hot sense of regret and ask for mercy, for their hearts will know the gift of forgiveness.

Blessed are they who have seen a D or an F or C or any letter less than perfect, who are painfully familiar with the red pen and the labels as "less than," for they know the wisdom in the imperfect.

Blessed are they who stop running the race to help a fellow traveler, who pick up the fallen, who stop for injured life, for they shall know the kindness of strangers

Your Question

This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. How you answer them is often less important than the journey they take you on.

So, read through the list of questions 2-3 times until one question sticks out for you and captures your attention, or as some faith traditions say, until one of the questions "shimmers."

Then reflect on that question using one or all of these questions:

- *What is going on in my life right now that makes this question so pronounced for me?*
- *How might my inner voice be trying to speak to me through it?*
- *How might Life or my inner voice be trying to offer me a word of comfort or challenge through this question?*



1. Who first repaired you by not trying to fix you?
2. If you could have repaired one of your parent's wounds, which would it be?
3. What loss is still waiting for you to grieve it fully?
4. How would your life change if you committed to giving yourself a dose of joy once-a-week?
5. Is your body telling you it is no longer interested in hiding the pain? Or the fear?
6. Think back to a time when someone repaired you by reconnecting you to pleasure and/or play. If you were to thank them, what would you say?
7. How might your efforts to repair a social ill or injustice be trying to repair you?
8. What joyful, courageous or healing childhood memories repair you over and over again? Are any of them trying to speak to you today?
9. What is your relationship with self-inflicted wounds?
10. Have you been running on empty for so long that you no longer notice?
11. Are some things better left broken? Does everything need to be repaired?
12. Have you ever lied about or swallowed your grief because others were uncomfortable or unwilling to make room for it? What would you say or do now that you weren't safe to say or do at that time?
13. Is there anything in your life that is longing to be fixed rather than thrown away?
14. Are you pretending that an old injury hasn't left a mark on you?
15. Nature repairs us. What part of the healing earth is calling you to come back?
16. Are you sure it's not ok to trust them with your pain?
17. **What's your question?** Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to find it.

Recommended Resources for Personal Exploration & Reflection

The following resources are not required reading. Instead they are here to companion you on your personal journey this month, get you thinking and open you up to new ways of embodying the practice of repair in your life.

Word Roots & Definitions

Repair comes from old French, in which “Re” means back and “parare” means to make ready, which means repair can be a way of making ourselves or parts of our lives ready for what comes next.

Others also point out that the French verb *reparer* is used today in a narrow context, referring to animals burrowing or going to their dens, which suggests the idea of “returning to one’s home or shelter.”

Wise Words

Then it hits me. Maybe we’re the pieces. Maybe that’s it. With what you were talking about before, *Tikkun olam*. The world being broken. Maybe it isn’t that we’re supposed to find the pieces and put them back together. Maybe we’re the pieces. Maybe, what we’re supposed to do is come together. That’s how we stop the breaking.

[Rachel Cohn and David Levithan](#)

If there happens to be a multitude of griefs upon you, individual and collective, or small and large, add equal parts of these considerations: that perhaps love can only be as large as grief demands. that grief is the growing up of the heart that bursts boundaries like an old skin or a finished life. that grief is gratitude. that water seeks scale, that even your tears seek the recognition of community. that the heart is a front line, and the fight is to feel in a world of distraction.

[adrienne maree brown](#)

She taught me it is enough to sit with someone who is grieving—
to sit and listen with your whole body
as if eyes could hear as well as ears,
as if a person’s silence is as essential as her words.

[Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer](#)

Have you ever noticed how beautiful a person is after they’ve wept? It’s as if they are made new again by the baptism of tears. Indeed, when something stuck can be released through grief, we are freeing up a greater capacity to love.

[Toko-pa Turner](#)

If I could sum up all my years of clinical training and research in one statement, it would be this: We heal when we can be with what we feel.

[Hillary L. McBride](#)

violence is not special pain is not holy
suffering... abuse defines no one you are more
than the things that hurt you you are more than
the people you have hurt do not make an altar
to your woundedness do not make a fetish out
of mine... tell me about the joy you keep in the
hollow spaces between your bones tell me
again how you laughed when you realized that
you were not wholly unlovable... i will sing you
a litany of reasons to be alive i want to know the
songs you wake up for in the morning...beneath
the skin of every history of trauma there is a
love poem waiting deep below

[Kai Cheng Thom](#)

the places in our heart
where the world took bites out of us
may never fully heal
and will likely become
wide open spaces
be careful to not fill them
with just anything or anyone.

[John Roedel](#)

I find that I meet activists on a regular basis who will tell me, I’m so tired. I think that sometimes we’re working so much because we know that if we slow down, then we’ll have to look at how heartbroken we are about the conditions that we’re in.

[adrienne maree brown](#)

Let us not rush to the language of healing, before understanding the fullness of the injury and the depth of the wound.

[Dr. Yolanda Pierce](#)

This is what I know: the demonization and erasure of grief are really strategic tools of oppressive powers. After all, if you are reduced to positivity—if you are less capable of sensing pain and injustice—whom does that benefit? There are people and systems that have everything to gain from our numbness.

[Cole Arthur Riley](#)

Think about the word destroy. Do you know what it is? De-story. Destroy. Destory. You see. And restore. That's re-story. Do you know that only two things have been proven to help survivors of the Holocaust? Massage is one. Telling their story is another. Being touched and touching. Telling your story is touching. It sets you free.

Francesca Lia Block

When others mess up, we blame their character. When we mess up, we blame the context. No relationship gets mended until we grant others the same grace we grant ourselves. Until we widen our view and notice that there are circumstances wounding us both, the painful gap between us will never heal.

Rev. Scott Tayler

If you see what needs to be repaired and how to repair it, then you have found a piece of the world that God has left for you to complete. But if you only see what is wrong and what is ugly in the world, then it is you yourself that needs repair.

Lubavitcher Rebbe

Character is determined by how we repair it.

Carson Anekeya

It's not forgetting that heals. It's remembering.

Amy Greene

What I've learned is that we do it bit by bit. If everybody does a little bit, we can make the world better... I believe in that. Every day, little by little.

[Kyoko Morgan](#)

Nobody escapes being wounded. We all are wounded people, whether physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually. The main question is not "How can we hide our wounds?" so we don't have to be embarrassed, but "How can we put our woundedness in the service of others?"

[Henri J. M. Nouwen](#)

The times are urgent; let us slow down.

[Bayo Akomolafe](#)

When the reverberations of shock subside in you,
may grace come to restore you to balance.
May it shape a new space in your heart
to embrace this illness as a teacher
who has come to open your life to new worlds.
May you find in yourself a courageous
hospitality
towards what is difficult, painful and unknown.

[John O'Donohue](#)

Videos & Podcasts

Nick Cave on Loss, Yearning & Transcendence

<https://onbeing.org/programs/nick-cave-loss-yearning-transcendence/>

Be Kind (small acts of repair that mean so much!)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eKoOoOTvgk&t=16s>

These Three Natural Things Can Repair You...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXPLbcsDOJQ>

The Museum of Broken Relationships

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMNdTZhQ1TU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6Q731asMtg>

How Trauma Lodges in the Body

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnKxZqObIWk>

Related Video [HERE](#)

Related book [HERE](#)

A New Approach to Reparations

<https://airtable.com/appFzjQs5ggMjoeBU/shrs2E8EnuEMRHlbp/tbl1yqljjggKmMWne>

Repair & Needlework

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EITLA0fvx0I>

On how mending and stitching the clothes outside us repairs what is torn inside us.

Visible Mending

<https://psyche.co/films/a-whimsical-ode-to-the-reparative-power-of-knitting-rendered-in-wool>

Two more needleworkers and knitters testify to creativity's power to help us repair and heal.

Stitching Our Wounds, Andrea Gibson

<https://www.tiktok.com/@andreagibsonpoetry/video/7242840039527386414>

The Nutritionist (aka The Madness Vase)

Andrea Gibson

<https://www.tiktok.com/@buttonpoetry/video/7312585097776123182>

Find the text [HERE](#)

trigger warning: mentions depression and suicide

Articles

A Slower Urgency

<https://www.bayoakomolafe.net/post/a-slower-urgency>

"In 'hurrying up' all the time, we often lose sight of the abundance of resources that might help us meet today's most challenging crises..."

Grief is Healing in Motion

<https://toko-pa.com/2019/07/24/grief-is-healing-in-motion/>

"Grief plays an essential role in our coming undone from previous attachments. It is the necessary current we need to carry us into our next becoming..."

The Sounds of Grief

<https://mariandrew.substack.com/p/the-sounds-of-grief>

Might repairing from grief be more about the sounds of grief than the famous five stages?

Want to Fix Your Mind? Let Your Body Talk

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/magazine/somatic-therapy.html>

Books

[My Grandmother's Hands](#)

[What It Takes to Heal](#)

[On Repentance and Repair](#)

[My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry](#)

[Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies](#)

Movies & TV

[When They See Us](#) (Netflix)

[Origins](#) (Hulu)

[Severance](#) (Apple TV)

[Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind](#) (Amazon)

[Captain Fantastic](#) (HBO)

[Descending the Mountain](#) (Vimeo)

Music

Click [here](#) for our Spotify playlist on Repair.

Click [here](#) for the YouTube playlist on Repair.

Remember! Our playlists are organized as a journey, so consider listening from beginning to end and using the playlists as musical meditations.

Meditative Music

- Inner Peace by Beautiful Chorus:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hS-Y8dYD-Bg>
- Find a Stillness, #352 in our Hymnal:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dv6jFqiNsuU>

Contemporary Music

- "Hold Everybody Up" by Melanie DeMore
- "Ordinary Love" by John Legend
- "Light" from Next to Normal by Brian Yorkey and Tom Kitt
- "No Love Dying" by Gregory Porter
- "Time Will Tell" by Gregory Alan Isakov
- "Change" by Big Thief
- "Fearless" by SonReal

Find Daily Inspiration on the Monthly Theme...

on our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/uujxn>

on our Instagram Page: <https://www.instagram.com/uujackson/>



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SHARING CIRCLE

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