

# Self-Care Practices for Empaths & Sensitive People



## TOPICS COVERED:

- Self-Soothing & Pampering Techniques
- Protection Practices including Meditation and Shielding Techniques
- How to Set Healthy Boundaries
- How to Deal with Co-Dependency
- How to Create Your Own Sacred Space
- Finding Fulfilling Work
- Healing Trauma & PTSD
- How to Deal with Depression & Attract Hope

**BASED ON DR. JUDITH ORLOFF'S BESTSELLING BOOKS [Thriving as an Empath](#), [The Empath's Survival Guide](#), [Emotional Freedom](#), [The Power of Surrender](#), & [Positive Energy](#)**

# Self-Soothing and Pampering Techniques

## Self-Soothing Techniques: 8 Ways to Prevent Overwhelm

Many sensitive people have not learned how to self-soothe if they are upset or when life gets intense. Like many children, perhaps you didn't have the kind of parents that held you and let you know that everything was going to be okay. If your parents were anxious they also may have transmitted their anxiety to you. Sensitive children can absorb this and may unknowingly carry it around as an adult.

To take charge of your emotions, practice the self-soothing techniques below to prevent getting overloaded by the stress of the world or your internalized stress. Using these strategies from my book *The Empath's Survival Guide: Life Strategies for Sensitive People* each day will help you stay calm and centered.

1. *Use Conscious Breathing*

As soon as stress hits, immediately take a few deep, slow breaths. Breathing helps you expel tension so it doesn't lodge in your body.

2. *Engage in Positive Self Talk*

Tell yourself, "This is a transient situation. I will find the best way of handling this. Everything will be okay." Do not let negative, fear-based voices get in the way of consoling yourself with kindness.

3. *Develop a witness state*

You are larger than fear. You are larger than anxiety. When you notice yourself getting stressed or overwhelmed tell yourself, "I am not this emotion. I can center myself. I can lovingly detach from my state of overwhelm and lovingly witness the feelings I'm experiencing. Realizing you are larger than the feeling, will relax you and offer you a perspective.

4. *You are not responsible for the karma of others*

Keep reminding yourself that everyone deserves the dignity of walking their own path. This will help you avoid feeling inappropriately responsible for what others are going through.

5. *Visualize*

Picture divine white light coming through the crown of your head and darkness flowing out the bottom of your feet. This reduces overwhelm by keeping energy flowing out of your body.

6. *Use lavender essential oil.*

Inhale lavender essential oil or put a few drops midway between your eyebrows (on your third eye) to calm yourself.

7. *Place your hand over your heart*

Just as mothers console their babies by patting their chest, you can put your hand over your heart to calm yourself. The heart chakra is the center for unconditional love. When you touch it, love will be activated and start send blissful biochemicals called endorphins throughout your body.

8. *Practice self-compassion.*

Your thoughts make a difference. Be sweet to yourself whenever possible—avoid beating yourself up. Remember to show yourself compassion when you're stressed or emotionally distraught. Replacing negative thoughts with positive ones enhances your well-being.

Being an empathic, caring person leaves you open to a wide range of feelings. When you sense love and joy, you will experience well-being. However, picking up negative emotions can be agitating. As part of your self-care, you want to keep yourself as calm as possible. Using the techniques which I discussed will help create more equanimity and peace in your life.

## **Pampering Techniques**

I looked up pampering on the Internet and there were over a million references! The difficulty is, both sexes often consider pampering an excess of our consumer culture or only worthy of a rare "indulgence." I define it as a sensual, energy restorative pleasure other than sex, self-care which can include both manicures and watching Wimbledon. In this state, you don't give to anybody else; you only take energy in. Pampering is the opposite of stress and sensual stinginess. The purpose is to relax, enjoy, and relieve exhaustion. This rich surrendering can, at times, put you an altered state that triggers the visionary. It also penetrates the recesses of your being, and irons out energy blockages.

### Make Changes Now. Experiment with Pampering

- *Soak in hot water in bathtubs, Jacuzzis, or natural springs*

Throughout history, across cultures, water has been linked with magic and healing. The therapeutic value of mineral baths was mentioned in Sanskrit in 4000 BC. Babylonians, Egyptians, and Tibetans used water therapy even before the famous Roman baths. Hippocrates, the Greek father of medicine, prescribed the sea's healing properties for patients, and also boiling water before drinking, purifying advice way before its time. Edgar Cayce, renowned for medical intuitive readings in the 1940s, recommended immersion in mineral waters.

I urge soaking in baths or Jacuzzis as easy-to-do form of pampering, an often taken for granted treat. (Mineral springs, though less accessible, offer a more direct connection to the earth's elements). Water is very giving. It comforts, infuses our

weariness with life force, cleanses the body, and flushes negative vibes from our energy fields, especially useful for intuitive empaths.

Make a ritual of the act of bathing. Some of my patients burn incense and light candles. Others love bubbles, an inner child's heaven. You can also use bath salts. Or add essential oils; these constitute the immune system of plants--lavender is a traditional relaxer. While in water, try touching your intuitive center between the eyebrows. Then just lay back; see what visions come. Such deep relaxation and opening to instinctual forces fortify energy.

- *Get regular body work or beauty services*

A good massage calms the mind, un-tenses the body, can even transport you to an altered state. The object is to get energy flowing through your subtle system; this opens chakras, may prompt visions, memories, or release pockets of blocked emotion. Healing proceeds by letting it all come through. The wonder of massage is that eyes shut, you're under a covering but exposed, more open and less armored, poised to yield to pleasure. This dramatic consciousness shift is particularly relevant for my hyper-cerebral patients. Like them, you might find a massage gets you out of your head, into your body. It's also a succor for those not in a romantic relationship, an opportunity to be touched by caring hands.

It's best that your practitioner knows how to work with subtle energy, though some do so naturally without knowing it. How do you find out? Inquire about a masseuse's training. Many take courses on Energy Medicine and chakras during massage school and afterwards. Or, if you're booking an appointment at a spa, read the brochure: acupressure, shiatsu, and Reiki, for instance, are described in terms of energy whereas a sports massage focused on muscle release and injuries, may not be. When practitioners lack a feel for energy, massage can become mechanical; hands are moving, but aren't transmitting healing vibes. For me, this takes most of the fun out of it.

When seeking a bodyworker always evaluate:

- Do I prefer a man or woman?
- Does he or she work with subtle energy?
- Do I like deep or light pressure?
- How long a massage do I want? A half hour? An hour? More?
- Do I prefer silence? Or calming music, and/or some talking?
- Do I want to socialize before and after? Or have only a minimal exchange?

As I tell my patients, a massage is just for you. It's not about pleasing the practitioner, or putting up with unnerving vibes, including sexual. It is about conveying to the practitioner the amount of pressure you like, and other terms that make you most comfortable. For a seasoned masseuse, this is expected.

Along with massage, I'm also a proponent of pampering yourself with a range of beauty services: manicures, pedicures, bodywraps, aromatherapy, mudbaths! They all feel divine, feed your body and energy field.

## **Allow Yourself to Veg Out or Pursue Non-Mind-Stressing Activities**

Vegging out means turning off your mind and becoming as vegetable-like as possible. Vegetables are colorful, shapely, and nourishing, but they're not known for their brains. Thank God, we have the ability to emulate them. To me, the occasional veg-out is a spiritual state because it restores energy. I might watch trashy television instead of CNN. Or stay hunkered in bed all afternoon with the phone unplugged, doing absolutely nothing "constructive." One of my patients calls this type of break her "mental health" day. Taking one every now and then does wonders for her energy and attitude.

Nothing to feel guilty about. It's healthy to temporarily forget about the world's woes and your own. Sometimes when I've had it with everything and everybody, I veg out for a while. Even a few hours is freeing, quickly renewing. I highly recommend this no-brainer form of pampering.

### ▪ *Splurge on Treats*

I define splurging as an expansion of energy, a generosity of spirit and attitude which allows for periodically lavishing yourself with something special. It's not emptying out your children's college funds to buy a Ferrari or the compulsion of shopaholism. But it does include spending more on energy boosting extras that won't bleed you dry.

I'm all for being practical and keeping within your budget. But constantly skimping holds energy too tight, a kind of constipation. Splurging enlarges your universe and aura, gets life force moving, a fun way of pampering yourself.

## **Experience the Replenishment of Retreat**

Balance your daily hustle and bustle with intervals of such inner replenishment. Finding your own right rhythm of worldly involvement and withdrawal is crucial. What constitutes a retreat? It's a stepping away from phones, paperwork, and small talk to seek a stillness in your being; a reconnecting with Spirit and/or nature; a conscious nourishing of your energy so you can re-enter life reanimated. Retreats differ from social vacations, which are excitement and outer-oriented; these replenish in a different way, fulfill more gregarious needs. You can take retreats at home for hours, days, or longer, or plan extended stays at a retreat center or spa.

What matters to me is that you take this opportunity to bask in the replenishment only going inward brings. I promise: it's easier than you think.

### **Take Retreats at Home**

Home can be a place of retreat, not merely a stop off point where we plop ourselves on the bed after work, stare at the TV, inhale a fast-food dinner; then the next morning we stagger up and out the door again.

There are various options for home retreats.

- If you live alone create your own: pick a time, get coverage for business or other concerns, turn off the phones, and dive into whatever replenishes.
- With a mate, you can plan a joint retreat, a deep and quiet intimacy. Together determine the length, preferred activities, and how you want to design it. My boyfriend and I meditate, write, or read in different parts of the house for many tranquil hours without conversing. Your retreat may be spent separately or with one another.
- If you're comfortable with your mate being at home but not participating, agree on parameters: How long is your retreat? Are you going to interact? Be silent? Would you prefer the TV off? The phone unplugged in specified rooms? No knocking on your door? Negotiate and observe these terms.
- If your mate can't or doesn't want to take a home retreat, go solo. Choose an agreed upon period when he or she is out. Sensitively, say, "This is a time to recharge myself. It means so much to me that you respect this." Then, to avoid intrusions, set a specific point to rendezvous later. Some mates will understand; with others it's a process of gentle education.
- If you have young children, a home retreat is a much bigger challenge. For you to have peace, they must be out of the house, so you'll need to arrange for child care. Otherwise you'll always have an ear open for them. Also, like some of my exhausted parent-patients you might find you fall asleep during this lull. That's fine too; think of it as a period of hallowed replenishment.

Home retreats take household planning and good communication with family. The effort is well worth it. Retreats are a merciful pardon from the daily grind. They spare us the schlepping of travel and provide a geographically desirable strategy to cultivate energy in a frenetic world.

## **Protection Practices including Mediation and Shielding Techniques**

### **Self-Protection for Empaths: 12 Strategies to Combat Toxic Energy**

My patients want to know, "How can I tell if my emotions or symptoms are mine or someone else's? And if they're not mine, how do I let them go?" The answers are key to becoming a happy, energized person.

Here are some basic strategies to turn to if you're absorbing the stress or symptoms of others and you need ways to release the negative energy. I practice these strategies in my life and teach them to my patients and workshop participants. Experiment. See which ones work best for you. Use them in situations where you are feeling ill or upset and suspect you're sensing someone else's physical or emotional

distress.

### **Strategy 1. Ask yourself, “Is this symptom or emotion mine or someone else’s?”**

A tip-off that you’re absorbing someone’s energy is to notice if you experience a sudden change of mood or physical state around that person. Most likely, if you didn’t feel anxious, depressed, exhausted, or sick before, the discomfort is at least partially coming from him or her. If you move away and the discomfort dissipates, it is definitely not yours!

Sometimes, though, the emotion or symptom, may be both yours and another person’s. Feelings are catchy, especially if they relate to a hot button issue for you. For instance, if you have unresolved anger at your father, you’ll soak up other people’s anger at their fathers. Or your fear of chronic illness will make you susceptible to absorbing the symptoms of others’ chronic illnesses too. *You are more prone to take on the emotional or physical pain that you haven’t worked out in yourself.* The more you heal issues that trigger you, the less likely you’ll be to absorb emotions from others. You might sense them but they won’t cut as deeply or drain you. Then, you can focus on the positive energy people give off and really enjoy it!

### **Strategy 2. Breathe and repeat this mantra**

When negativity strikes, immediately focus on your breath for a few minutes. Slowly and deeply, inhale and exhale to expel the uncomfortable energy. Breathing circulates negativity out of your body. Holding your breath or breathing shallowly keeps negativity stuck within you.

As you breathe, I suggest firmly repeating aloud this mantra three times in a tone that conveys you mean what you’re saying: *Return to sender, return to sender, return to sender.* The power of your voice can command the discomfort out of your body. Your breath is the vehicle that transports it back to the universe.

Also, while saying this mantra, you can specifically breathe toxic energy out of your lumbar spine in your lower back. The spaces between the lumbar vertebrae are conducive to acting as channels for eliminating unhealthy energy. Visualize the discomfort exiting through these spaces in your spine. Declare, “I release you” as it leaves your body and blends with the giant energy matrix of life.

### **Strategy 3. Step away from what’s disturbing you**

Move at least twenty feet from the suspected source. See if you feel relief. Don’t worry about offending strangers. In a doctor’s office, movie, or other public place, don’t hesitate to change seats. If you’re sitting next to a noisy group in a restaurant, you don’t have to stay there and feel uncomfortable. Feel free to move to a more peaceful table.

These are strategies I use to take care of myself. It's fine to lovingly say "No," to certain energies. Giving yourself permission to move is an act of self-care.

Here's what my empath-friend did at a noisy graduation party. He told me, "I had to leave for a while because the noise and crowd were too intense. Dinner hadn't yet been served but my ears were ringing, and I was on edge. So I sat in my car for an hour with my book of poetry in quiet reflection while the group enjoyed dinner and dancing. I told my friends that I needed to take a break and rest which they understood. In the end, they had fun at the party, and I had some quiet time to center myself before I returned."

Empaths often find themselves in overwhelming social situations. If that happens to you, be sure to take breaks to replenish yourself. Then, if you want to return to the gathering you can be in a more serene place.

#### ***Strategy 4. Limit physical contact. Hugs are a choice!***

Energy transfers through the eyes and touch. If you're uncomfortable with someone, limit eye contact and touch, including hugs and hand-holding. Though hugging a loved one in distress often benefits you both, if you are wary of taking on their stress, make the hug short. You can keep sending them love from a distance.

Out of respect, many healers who understand energy ask people they first meet, "Is it okay to hug you?" You can ask permission too. It's also fine to nicely say "no" to a hug request. I sometimes tell people "I don't hug," if I'm not prepared to share energy with them. Or until you're fully at ease with someone, you can give "half-hugs" --the kind where you pat a person on the back--rather than a full one. When you feel safer in the relationship, you can transition to a complete hug and feel good about it. *You have a choice about the kind of physical contact you participate in.*

#### ***Strategy 5. Detox in water***

A quick way to dissolve stress and empathic pains is to immerse yourself in water. Empaths love water! Epsom salt baths are divine and also provide magnesium which is calming. My bath is a sanctuary after a busy day. It washes away everything from bus exhaust to long hours of air travel to pesky symptoms I might have taken on from others. You might want to add a little lavender essential oil to your bath--it is calming after a long day. The perfect empath getaway is soaking in natural mineral springs which purifies all that ails you.

#### ***Strategy 6. Set limits and boundaries***

There's no way around it. To survive and thrive, you need to set limits with people. If someone is draining, don't be a doormat. Control how much time you spend listening to the person. *"No," is a complete sentence!* It's okay to tell someone, "I'm



sorry, I'm not up for going to a party tonight," or "Let's discuss this when you're calmer. I can't tolerate yelling," or "I need to meditate and be quiet right now," or "I can't talk more than a few minutes unless you want to discuss solutions." Sometimes changing communication patterns with friends is a retraining process, but being consistent with setting kind but firm limits will protect you from energy vampires.

### ***Strategy 7. Visualize cutting a cord between you and another person***

If you feel you are too connected with someone's physical or emotional state, visualize a cord of light extending from your belly to theirs. Then lovingly set your intention to cut the cord with their pain or discomfort--you're not severing the connection with the total person. Next, visualize taking a pair of scissors and cutting the cord between you and the aspect of the person you want distance from. This is a technique my patient, Terry used to separate herself from her mother's anxiety yet still maintain a loving bond with her.

### ***Strategy 8. Create alone time to regroup***

Empaths need alone time to reconnect with their power. If you've picked up unwanted energy, be sure to take some alone time to center yourself. For a few minutes or more, quiet everything. No noise, bright lights, phone calls, texts, emails, internet, television, or conversations. It's sometimes important to just feel your own energy without anyone else around. You are being your own best friend which is a way to nurture yourself. By decreasing external stimulation, it's also easier to clear negativity. To counter any stress, I've taken on from others, I get very quiet and go inward to connect with my own energy and to my heart. When I'm in my center, others people's negativity doesn't cling to me.

### ***Strategy 9. Spend time in nature and practice Earthing***

Empaths love nature and feel at ease there. Being in a fresh, clean, green environment or around water clears negativity. The Earth emanates healing. Try lying in a meadow and soaking up its energy in your entire body. This feels sublime! Earthing means going barefoot and feeling the earth's power through your feet. I love being barefoot. In fact, I have never really liked wearing shoes unless it's cold or I'm not home. To shed other people's energy, feel the grass between your bare toes, walk in the sand or the soil. Sense the nurturing medicine of the earth coming through your feet to ground you--a beautiful experience.

I feel strongly about the importance of taking personal retreat time away from the world at least once a year. This is a planned break to decompress in nature or a calming spot where you can recalibrate your system. I offer a yearly weekend retreat for sensitive people at Esalen Institute by the gorgeous redwoods and ocean in Big Sur,

California. It's a time for participants to slow down, tune into their intuition, and connect more deeply to their spirits. I also take a few personal retreats each year in nature to get off the grid and restore myself.

### ***Strategy 10. Get Extra Sleep and Take Power Naps***

Sleep is a healing balm for an empath's body and soul. It calms your nervous system. When you're tired, you're more open to absorbing negative energy. That's why it's crucial to get enough sleep. As a self-care rule, honor your sleep-time to replenish yourself every night. And, if you're especially feeling the stress of the world, plan on getting extra sleep and take short power naps during the day. Sleep can heal you like nothing else can. For me to feel at my best, I need eight hours of sleep a night.

A calm, peaceful period before sleep when you meditate or listen to soothing music is also important. Get offline. No internet, social media, paying bills, or intense conversations. No violent TV shows or news reports. (Some people believe the bedroom is just for rest, sleep, and sex. They don't even allow televisions there). This reduces your stimulation level so you can sleep better and travel to different realms in your dreams. Easing into sleep and not rushing your way there is healthy for empaths. Waking up slowly is also ideal rather than bolting out of bed.

Allow yourself to remember your dreams in the morning and let your bed be your healing temple. One empath joked, "I like my bed more than I like most people." I can relate. I love my sleep and dream-time. If I don't get enough of either, my system feels off and I'm more apt to absorb other people's stress.

### ***Strategy 11: Take breaks from being online***

You need regular time-out from technology that inundates you with too much information. Online media that triggers your emotions—such as Facebook groups, Instagram, violent news feeds--can impair your ability to fall sleep. It's easy to pick up energy in the virtual world, so make sure you spend time in nature, meditating, or participating in other off-line activities that restore you. A complete technology-fast once in a while will do wonders for your sense of well-being.

### ***Strategy 12. Special Clearing Tips for Traveling***

The stress of traveling (for business and pleasure) can expose you to toxic energy that may not normally enter your everyday life. You're dealing with airports, cramped planes and trains, strange hotels, and new people. How can you travel more comfortably and not get overwhelmed by crowds and close quarters?

## How to Stay Centered in Airports and Planes

Airports can be especially difficult for empaths because they're noisy, crowded, rushed, and there are all kinds of crude, hard-to-take energies swirling around. To deal with traffic and crowded airport parking structures, stay within your personal energy bubble. Instead of focusing on the harried people around you, focus on your heart energy to self-soothe. When waiting for a plane, I'll often put my purse and papers on the seat beside me to create a circle of personal space. If someone needs to sit there, and I'm uneasy with his or her energy, I'll pick up my things and move. No excuses necessary. But I do this with love, not anger.

Being on a plane may induce sensory overload too. The closeness and density of people in such a confined space can provoke anxiety in empaths because there is no escape. Some tips to make your flight easier include:

- Check your luggage so you don't have to fight for overhead bins.
- Choose an aisle seat so you get out easily and take refuge in the bathroom if necessary.
- To avoid the masses boarding the plane, wait until other passengers go in, then casually walk on to take your seat.
- Bring clothes to stay warm; the air conditioning can be chilly.
- Bring water to stay hydrated.
- You can try wearing an air purifier around your neck that generates negative ion to purify the stale recirculated air.
- Noise canceling earbuds are great to use when listening to positive music or uplifting audiobooks.
- Avoid draining conversations with others (strangers tend to tell their life stories to empaths). Unless you are drawn to talk to someone, create a cone of silence around you that communicates "I'm not available."
- To center yourself on a flight, practice meditating.

During turbulence, to stay grounded, place your attention on your feet, rather than your fear. Your feet contain many powerful reflexology points and acupuncture meridians that center you, even when you are thirty thousand feet in the air. Simply concentrating on them will divert your anxiety from your head into your feet, which know how to release it.

## How to Stay Centered in Hotel Rooms

To clear the energy left behind by previous guests in hotel rooms, I suggest spraying rose water or lavender essential oil (or both) to purify the space. I also practice the 3 Minute Heart Meditation (described in "Recommended Meditations" section) to remove negative energy. For years, I used to change hotel rooms frequently to find the

one with the best energy. However, my Daoist teacher advised me that it's more empowering to stick with the room I was given and practice clearing the energy myself.

When traveling, always be sure to stay hydrated and eat regular protein meals for grounding. You can get into trouble if you skip meals, binge on sugar, and don't get enough rest--choices which weaken your defenses and set you up to absorb unwanted energies. If you're taking on stress from others, practice breathing it out. If you start feeling overstimulated or drained, meditate to re-center yourself wherever it's convenient--on park benches, under a tree, or even in bathrooms.

With all these options available, you can feel more at ease to have fun on your travel adventures--which is the great reward of self-care. Enjoy the new cultures and terrain. Feel. See. Sense. Learn. Revel in the benefits of being an empath!

## Shielding Technique

### Shielding Visualization

Shielding is a quick way to protect yourself. Many empaths rely on it to block out toxic energy while allowing the free flow of positivity. Call on it regularly. The minute you're uncomfortable with a person, place, or situation, put up your shield. Use it in a train station, at a party if you're talking to an energy vampire, or in a packed doctor's waiting room.

Allow at least five minutes for this exercise. Find a quiet, protected space that is still and nurturing. Make sure that you're not interrupted. Loosen your clothing, find a position that's comfortable, perhaps sitting cross-legged on the floor, or upright on a chair. Begin by taking a few, deep, long breaths. Breathe inward, really feeling that inhalation, then exhale really letting out a big exhalation and feeling the sensuality of it, the connection to prana, the sacred life force.

Let all thoughts drift by like clouds in the sky, returning to your breath over and over again to find your center. Feel a core of energy running from your toes, all the way through your body and up to the top of your head. Focusing on this will keep you centered.

Now, as you're breathing, visualize a beautiful shield of white or pink light completely surrounding your body and extending a few inches beyond it. This shield protects you from anything negative, stressful, toxic, or intrusive. Within the protection of this shield, feel yourself centered, happy, and energized. This shield blocks out negativity, but at the same time, you can still feel what's positive and loving. Get used to the sensation of the shield protecting your body. You can erect it in any moment when you suspect you're absorbing someone else's energy. Then, inwardly say "Thank you," for this knowledge.

Finally, take a long deep breath in and out and slowly open your eyes. Come back to the room. Be in your body one hundred percent.

## Recommended Meditations

### Grounding and Earthing Meditation

When you feel overloaded, create some quiet alone time to lower your stimulation level. Being alone and being left alone to recharge will help you decompress. Practice this visualization to return to your center. I use it for at least 5 minutes daily and teach it to my patients.

As with all of the meditations I present in the book, you may find it helpful to read the directions into a tape recorder with appropriate pauses. Then, when you're ready to enjoy the meditation, you can simply play it back for yourself and relax into it.

Close the door. Turn off the computer and phone. Then, sit in a comfortable position and take a few deep breaths to relax your body. Start to feel still and at ease as tension melts away. Nothing to do. Nothing to be. Just breathing and relaxing. If thoughts come, let them drift by like clouds in the sky. Do not attach to them. Focus only on slowly inhaling, then exhaling. Feel stress leaving your body as you connect to a sense of serenity.

In this tranquil inner place, visualize a large tree with a strong trunk extending down the center of your body from head to toe. Take a few moments to feel its power and vibrant energy. Then visualize the tree's roots growing from the bottom of your feet, rooting down into the ground, making their way deeper and deeper, a wonderful feeling of solidity. Let the roots anchor into Mother Earth, stabilizing and centering you. They provide an inner strength that will keep you safe and protected when life gets overwhelming.

### The 3 Minute Heart Meditation

To counter emotional or physical distress, act fast and meditate for a three minutes (only!). You can do this at home, at work, in the bathroom at parties, or on a park bench.

Take a short break to get out of the immediate toxic situation. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths and relax. Then place your palm over your heart chakra in the middle of your chest. Focus on a beautiful image that you love: a sunset, a rose, the ocean, a child's face. Feel the love building in your heart and body. Let this loving feeling soothe you. Toxic energy leaves your body as you become purified with love. For just three-minute bursts throughout the day, meditate on the loving-kindness in your heart, feeling that energy clear stress.

You can send this loving-kindness to other areas of your body too. My most vulnerable point is my gut. If I sense that I've taken on someone else's symptom, I place my hand over my belly and send it loving-kindness. This dissolves discomfort. What area

is your most sensitive point? Is it your neck? Do you get bladder infections? Headaches? Be prepared to send these areas loving-kindness to clear toxic energy so it doesn't lodge there. (Note: It's sometimes easier to meditate on the wellbeing of someone else than on yourself. You can do this if you're having a hard time meditating just on you.)

## Loving Your Empathic Body Meditation

Your body *is* a temple that houses your spirit, so it's vital that you regard it as a friend, a sacred place, and a receptor for intuition--something to cherish—rather than the enemy. The following meditation will help you make a commitment to fully inhabit your body so you can be more present and joyous.

1. Find time for solitude in a beautiful space. Don't force the mind to quiet, but rather shift channels. Take a few deep breaths and feel the inhalations and exhalations. Slow yourself so you can *be* more aware of your body. Let any negative thoughts float by as you return to your breath--the sacred prana. Feel its motion bring you into your deeper self. Settle your energy within the bounds of your body your cells, your organs. Nothing outside.
2. Become aware of your toes. Wiggle them and note the beautiful feeling awakening the feet evokes. Next, bring your awareness to your ankles. As you continue breathing, move your focus up your legs to your knees. Now bring it to your strong thighs that keep you grounded and note how they feel. Inwardly thank them for holding you. Then raise your consciousness to your genitals and pelvic area where many women experience clenching. You can say, "I recognize you; I'm not turning my back on you anymore. I'm going to learn about you and love you. You are part of me."
3. Move to your solar plexus. Are you holding any tension, burning, discomfort there? This is the seat of the third chakra where we process emotions. Soothe and heal this area. Bring loving awareness to your belly.
4. Focus on your chest and breasts, your heart chakra--the center for unconditional love. Make it your friend so you can be loving to yourself--a shower of positive energy coursing through your body. Return here often to feel the nurturing energy. Now, move to your shoulders, arms, wrists, and beautiful hands, feeling and moving each finger.
5. Next bring your attention to your neck--your communication chakra is in the mid-throat area. Notice any tension that stops you from expressing yourself. Send love to that area too.
6. Now, bring your awareness to your head, feeling your beautiful face, your ears, mouth, eyes, nose, and the third eye, which is between your eyebrows. This is the center for intuition. Swirling purple colors may come from the third eye as you tune in. Finally bring your attention to the top of your head. This is the center for white light, the connection to spirit. Feel the inspiration that emanates from there.
7. To conclude, inwardly say "thank you" for the experience of present in your body. Affirm to yourself, "I am ready to come into my full power as an embodied empath."

Take a few deep breaths. Then slowly and gently open your eyes. Return fully to your environment, more aware of your body than ever.

### **The Jaguar Protection Meditation**

I recommend the following meditation to call on the power of the jaguar to protect you. I use it when I need extra protection, especially if too much negativity is coming at me too fast. The jaguar is a fierce and patient guard who can keep toxic energy and people away.

Find a quiet environment where you can't be interrupted. Sit in a comfortable position. Take a few, deep breaths to center yourself and let go of stress. Coming back to your center to ground yourself.

In this calm state, from your deepest heart, call on the spirit of the jaguar to protect you. Feel her presence enter. Then, visualize this gorgeous, powerful creature patrolling your energy field, encircling it, protecting you, keeping out intruders or any negative forces that want to get through. Picture what the jaguar looks like: his or her beautiful, fierce, loving eyes; sleek body; the graceful, purposeful way the jaguar moves. Feel secure in the circle of this jaguar's protection.

Give inner thanks to the jaguar. Know that you can call on her whenever there is a need. Feel the power of that. Then slowly, gently open your eyes. Orient yourself to current time and space. Completely return to your own body and be alert, aware, and present in your environment.

## **How to Set Healthy Boundaries**

### **“No” is a Complete Sentence!**

It may sometimes be awkward to set healthy boundaries with negative or draining people, but it is an important skill to learn. If someone has unrealistic expectations of you or unable to respect your feelings remember “No” is a complete sentence. A key to setting boundaries is to come from a centered, unemotional, place—not to be reactive. For example if someone has been saying disparaging comments about you, from a heartfelt center say, “Please don't talk about me to others. It's inappropriate and disrespectful.” Then refuse to argue about it, even if your buttons are pushed.

Here are some additional tips from my books, Emotional Freedom and Positive Energy to help you set boundaries, especially when it feels really awkward.

### **Dealing with an Emotional Drainer**

If you meet someone and your energy starts bottoming out, don't think twice about politely removing yourself from this killing interchange. One of my favorite foolproof lines is, “Excuse me; I really have to go to the bathroom.” Even the most

intrepid vampire doesn't have a counter-argument for that. It's important that you move at least twenty feet from beyond the person's energy field. Whenever your well-being feels at risk around certain people, make a tactful and swift exit. In a spot, physically extruding yourself is a sure, quick solution.

### **Dealing with a Constant Talker**

The secret to dealing with a constant talker is knowing they don't respond to nonverbal cues. You have no choice but to make your needs audible. Tone is especially critical with these vampires. They're hypersensitive to rejection, which provokes them to ramp up their verbiage. So, with a constant talker try to be caring--these are wounded people--but stay definite and neutral. Then, from a heart-center, set the parameters of your dialogue. Then you won't be left limp, resentful, or forced into rudeness. You can politely say, "I'm a very quiet person, so excuse me for not talking a long time," or "I feel left out when you dominate the conversation. I'd really appreciate a few minutes to talk too."

### **Dealing with a Criticizer**

If an intimate or co-worker keeps telling you how to deal with something, politely say, "I value your advice, but I really want to work through this myself." You may need to remind the controller of your position several times, always in a kind, neutral tone. Repetition is key. Respectfully reiterating your stance over days or weeks will slowly recondition negative communication patterns and redefine the terms of the relationship. If you reach an impasse, agree to disagree. Then make the subject off limits.

### **Dealing with a Complainer**

The moment you sense a complainer revving up, take a slow, deep breath to center yourself. Breathing is a wonderful way to quickly reconnect with your life force so their in-your-face intensity won't sear into your energy field and cause burn-out. Keep concentrating on your breath. Tell yourself you know what's happening, and you can handle it. As I remind my patients: you have power here. I know how easily we can lose it. But, when beset by this overheated drainer, you need to own that moment. Do so by letting your breath release tension and ground you. This will keep you from getting caught up in their story. Then lovingly tell them, "Our relationship is important to me, but it's not helpful to keep feeling sorry for yourself. I can only listen for five minutes unless you're ready to discuss solutions," or "I'm really sorry that's happening to you." Then, after listening briefly, smile and say, "I'll keep good thoughts for things to work out. I hope you understand, I'm on deadline and I must return to work."

If you feel like you are being overwhelmed by a difficult person here are some strategies to help you gain control and become centered again.

- When you feel attacked break eye contact to stop the transfer of negativity.



- Use the breath to retrieve your life force. Let it function like a vacuum cleaner. With each inhalation visualize yourself power-suctioning back every drop of energy that's being snatched from you. Keep inhaling until the job is done. Do this in the presence of a vampire or later on.
- Exhale negative energy and stress out the back of your lower spine. There are spaces between your lumbar vertebrae, natural exit points for energy. Touch the area; get a feel for the anatomy. When toxicity accumulates, expel it through these spaces. Envision dark gunk leaving your body. Then breathe in fresh air and sunlight, a quick re-vitalizer.
- Jump in a bath or shower to clear negativity and prevent further drain. If you are feeling particularly drained add Epson salts or sea salts to the water. If you are in the shower you can rub sea salt on your skin and then wash it off. Drink plenty of water to flush toxicity from your system too. Also you can burn sage where this vampire has been to purify every nook and cranny. (This works well in hotel rooms when a prior guest's left-over energy feels uncomfortable, but use only a little so you don't trigger the smoke alarm!)

### Watch this video for tips to combat energy vampires



### Learn How to Stake Out Your Personal Space

#### 1. Intuitively map out your physical comfort zone.

Pair off with a friend and start by standing twenty feet apart. Then slowly move closer to each other--nineteen feet, eighteen, seventeen...notice at each increment how it feels. Ask yourself: Is it comfortable or closed in? The point at which you get uneasy is the energy border of your personal space. This may need to be enlarged when out in the world.

#### 2. Family Pointers

Plan regular mini breaks from children and mates. Personal space needs must be negotiable with loved ones. One patient's husband had a harrowing bumper-to-bumper freeway commute home from work. Every night he'd march in the door tired and irritable, which led to spats. Family contact made him crankier. His solution? Taking twenty minutes to decompress alone in the bedroom where he'd listen to jazz, nap, or meditate. Afterwards, he had much more to give to his family.

We get crazy when we feel trapped. Many of us don't realize that even a brief escape will keep us sane. Five minutes in the bathroom with the door shut so the kids can't intrude. A stroll around the block. Reading in a separate room if you're mate's frustrations are weighing too much on you. Of course, with babies, there's less flexibility to break, though it can be done. As children get older, though, learning about boundaries is a form of healthy modeling.

### *3. Experiment with Creative Living Conditions*

The traditional personal space rules for co-habitation must be revamped to make relationships palatable for energy-sensitive people. For instance, I've never liked sitting too close to people in public. At movies, I'm always the one in the back far corner. In doctor's offices I'll pile my purse and folders on the seats beside me to keep others away. Conversations, scents, coughing, movement, and the energy field of another overlapping mine feels intrusive. Even if someone's vibes are pleasant, at times I'd rather not feel them. Personally, this is more than a princess and the pea indulgence; it's about maintaining my well-being in the world and if I live with someone.

What's worked for me is to have my own bedroom and an isolated office area where I can't hear a peep out of a co-mingler. I also can see the beauty of separate wings or adjacent houses if that's affordable. I'm inspired by how two of my friends who've had a long, close platonic relationship, have divided their living structure. It has a common entryway with independent apartments on either side, a brilliant design decision. If I'm traveling with a companion, romantic or not, I'll always have adjoining rooms with my own bathroom. I'd go mad if I'm stuck with anyone in tight quarters, no matter how much I adore them.

I want to give you permission to explore your personal space requirements. Your mate might need to be educated, but get the discussion going. Create a life that makes sense to your energy needs in terms of how you utilize square footage. I've seen this save marriages, and make ongoing intimacies feel safe. Honoring your needs can allow more love in.

## **How to Cut an Unhealthy Bond with Someone**

Many of us instinctively want to take away another person's pain, especially a loved one, but that can be unhealthy for those who soak up their negative energy.

I've learned to be present for my patients but not shoulder their discomfort. Since I frequently give workshops and speak in front of hundreds of people at a time, it's essential that I ground and protect myself. Then I won't absorb the suffering of the participants (suffering is present in all humans), which is amplified in large groups. This allows me to do the teaching I love and not get worn out by excessive stimulation.

One strategy I teach my patients and workshop participants to help them maintain healthy relationships is a cord cutting visualization technique. My patient, Terry, realized she had been absorbing her mother's anxiety since childhood. She has a big heart and was unconsciously taking on her loved one's emotions. However, once Terry became aware of this dynamic, I taught her to set boundaries by visualizing cutting an energetic cord between herself and her mother's anxiety. This technique from my book, *The Empath's Survival Guide* allowed Terry to create a healthy boundary and still remain a caring daughter.

### **Practice a Partial Cord Cutting Visualization**

If you feel you are too connected with someone's physical or emotional state, visualize a cord of light extending from your belly to theirs. Then lovingly set your intention to cut the cord with their pain or discomfort--you're not severing the connection with the total person. Next, visualize taking a pair of scissors and cutting the cord between you and the aspect of the person you want distance from.

Sometimes though you might attract a specific type of negative person because of the mutual emotional issues you both need to heal. This can lead to entering into an unhealthy "wound mate relationship" where you keep repeating the wounding process with each other. There's an odd psychological comfort to this because it's what you both know, what you're used to. You become attached to a toxic person and can't let go. This keeps you stuck in a painful cycle. For instance, your low self-esteem attracts people who criticize you, and the criticizer attracts people whom they can belittle because their parents belittled them. Be careful not to perpetuate wound mate relationships. Instead, let these people, whether they are friends, coworkers, spouses, or anyone--spur you to develop self-awareness and heal the initial wound. Then you can grow out of these relationships and find more fulfilling ones.

Some energy vampires, such as a narcissist, are so toxic you'll need to stop all contact with them. To end this type of relationship (or anyone with whom you want a complete break), go cold turkey. Keep moving and never look back. In addition, use this strategy also from my book, *The Empath's Survival Guide* to help you completely cut an energetic cord with them.

### **Practice a complete cord cutting visualization.**

In a calm state, picture cords of light connecting both of you. Inwardly say "Thank-you," for what you've learned from the relationship even if the lessons were

hard. Then firmly assert, "It's time to completely break our bonds." Next, visualize taking a pair of scissors and cutting each bond completely so you're free of any mutual energetic ties. This will help you release this relationship and also remove lingering energy that you feel from the person.

Have honorable closure. This shamanic technique lets you release a relationship, particularly if you keep thinking about the person or sense that they're thinking about you. Go out in nature and find a large stick. Look at the stick and declare, "This relationship is over." Then break the stick in half, leave the pieces on the ground, walk away, and never look back. This finalizes the ceremony of closure.

Learning to set healthy boundaries, or if necessary complete breaks with those who drain you will protect your sensitivities and enhance your well-being.

## How to Heal Co-Dependency

It's important for you to learn to be authentic in relationships about your empathic needs. Also, for some women, empathy can turn into codependency: they have such big hearts, they get caught up in caretaking roles, attending to others more than they attend to themselves. A balanced female empath knows how to set boundaries with time and energy. She learns to give and receive in a balanced way, a powerful combination. Famous sensitive, empathic women include Nicole Kidman, Jewel (her famous song Sensitive is about empaths), Winona Ryder, Alanis Morissette, and Princess Diana.

### Are You a Fixer-Upper?

Empaths have a big heart and can easily become a fixer-upper. When this happens, they can begin to feel like they're a therapist. As a fixer-upper you receive calls from family members and friends desperate to have their problems fixed. As an empath you want to comply, but their conundrums are endless: "How can I get my boyfriend back? Why am I so fat?"...yada, yada. You participate with the intention of "caring," hoping to lessen their pain, not wanting to abandon a friend, a compassionate impulse gone overboard into codependent giving. This type of empath may have lacked the parental support to develop self-worth so in order to feel valued they over-give.

Some fixer-uppers can want to take someone on as a project and a confusing intuitive phenomenon can occur. They have a compelling deja-vu connection with someone, but he doesn't reciprocate. Instead of knowing to read this simply as potential, they assume the relationship is meant to be. So, they set out to convince him (a type of fixing), or put their life on hold until he "comes around," a choice I advise against. Even if you're intuiting an authentic tie, it can still remain unrealized. Maybe the person can't or won't respond. Try to accept what is. To retain your energy and time, don't get lost in the limbo of unrequited longing. Find people who can love you in return. There's more than one soul connection possible in a lifetime.

If you're a fixer, you're genuinely looking for a loving bond, yet refuse to accept people as they are. Your pipe dream is, "If I help \_\_\_ change, our relationship will be happy." The outcome of that saga? Years go by. He doesn't budge. You're left tired and brokenhearted.

## **Identify Your Codependency Issues and Distance Yourself with Compassion**

It takes two to play the fixer-fixee game. To disengage from such codependency, realize these immutable truths.

- Others must take responsibility for their own lives
- It's none of your business to try to fix anyone
- As a fixer, you'll ALWAYS end up with your energy drained
- A mutually loving relationship can't grow unless both people are working on it.

If you're susceptible to fixer-uppers, try to mercifully understand what ropes you in so you don't repeat this going-nowhere pattern. Ask yourself: Am I motivated by the desire to be liked? To feel wanted? To control? Guilt? An inability to say "no"? Perhaps as a child you got kudos for playing the caretaker role, had needy parents. But, to sustain your day-to-day energy level, these patterns must evolve. When a fixer-upper appears, start by setting the ground rules of how you interact: offer emotional support without compulsively spewing solutions. If you're consistent, many will be dissuaded from calling; others will be spurred to rely more on their inner wisdom and/or an appropriate health care professional. Along with this, here's an exercise to practice.

### **Visualization: Distance Yourself with Compassion**

When obsessing about how to fix someone in any shape or form it's important to compassionately withdraw your energy from them. Put your hand on your heart center and inwardly say to the fixee, "I honor your spirit and wish you well." Then feel your energy receding from him and re-materializing in your own body. Visualize your energy field as completely distinct from the problem-plagued person. You're a luminous orb. He is too. But there's no overlap with one another's energy. The gist is to keep your heart open without compulsively intervening, a healthier stance than being a "fixer."

## **The Victim**

Energy vampires with a victim mentality drain empaths with their "the world is against me" attitude. They don't take responsibility for the problems that happen in their lives. Other people are always the cause of their distress. Empaths often fall into the compassionate caretaker role with "victims," trying to solve their list of problems. Of course, empaths will become drained. Victims will typically respond to any possible solution with, "Yes, but..." So you may get frustrated and end up screening emails or calls or purposely avoiding these people. You want to be supportive but their barrage of

complaints is too much for sensitive people to take. Empaths must learn to assert boundaries with victims and be careful not to turn into a co-dependent or their therapist.

### Protect Yourself from Victims

- Set compassionate, clear boundaries. People can hear you better when you're not being snippy.
- Use The Three Minute Phone Call. Listen briefly, then tell your friend or family member, "I support you, but I can only listen for a few minutes if you keep rehashing the same issues. Perhaps you need to find a qualified therapist to help you."
- Say "no" with a smile. For instance, with a co-worker, smile and say, "I'll hold positive thoughts for the best possible outcome. Thank you for understanding that I'm on deadline and must get back to my project." With friends and family, briefly empathize with their problem, and say "no" with a smile by changing the subject and not encouraging their complaints."
- Set limits with body language. This is a good time to cross your arms and break eye contact to send a message that you're busy.

## How to Create Your Own Sacred Space at Home and Work

### Sacred Space at Home

Scout your home for a location for which you feel an affinity. Your choice may be obvious, or require some imagination. If you're not sure, audition locations for privacy and comfort. See how they feel. You don't have to make this a big production: start with a candle; light it; close your eyes. Then sit quietly focusing on your breath. Or, as you've learned, actively meditate on opening your heart. Even five minutes can lessen frustration or fatigue, but you can stay longer. After meditating in the same spot, a vortex of positive energy builds. All that heart percolating in one locale. Some of my patients also use this space to think out decisions, mull the day, or write in their journals. You can try that too. Gradually bring items there that spiritually uplift, beautify, or contain meaning: flowers, shells, a photo of your dog or other intimates, or holy talismans and symbols, conventionally religious or not. (I read of an astronaut, a child of Holocaust survivors, who brought a mezuzah--a symbol of blessing--with him into space.) A concrete step you can take to build energy, this exercise will remind you of the sublime, and honor the great Mystery.

My sacred space, a corner of my second bedroom/office, is very simple. It consists of a small wooden table that I used years ago in my Venice Beach apartment. I like that the table has part of me in it, reflects my history. As a covering, I selected a material with Asian women on it dressed in blue kimonos. On top are two candles, a clay incense holder, a bowl of fruit, a photo of me with my parents, and a porcelain statue of Quan Yin, the far-eastern Goddess of Compassion--all symbols of sacredness, of what's important to me, and who I am. I try to meditate in this space daily. When my mother was dying, many nights I'd sleep there for the consolation offered. Beholding the

luminous Quan Yin, often through my grief, enabled me to stand fast to truths I'd long worked to make my own, and to begin the next day energized.

When your life gets busy or for ongoing energy refreshers go to your sacred space. Think of it as a vacation spot. No matter how stressed you are or how your mind is reeling, sitting in this atmosphere of stillness slows everything down and is centering.

## Sacred Space at Work

You must be comfortable in your work environment to feel healthy and happy.

A workplace that suits your temperament and is energetically nourishing can inspire you. It also puts you in a creative zone and boosts your energy and passion. On the other hand, a negative work environment can suck the life out of you and trigger a cascade of emotional and physical symptoms in response to stress, lack of downtime, and emotional overload. This is especially true for empaths or sensitive people who thrive in the right type of work and environment

Since we're typically at work for many hours, it's crucial to feel at ease there most of the time. Three major factors play a role in your comfort level: the meaning you get from your job, the energy of the physical space, and the energy of the people around you. See where you currently stand with these factors and begin to envision how you might improve your situation.

Every building, every office, every stairwell has a subtle energy of its own. Some spaces feel uplifting; others don't. I suggest that you tune into the energy of your workplace to make sure it feels right. Sometimes there is leftover energy from previous occupants which may be positive or negative. If the energy feels off here are 3 ways you can shift the negativity from my book, "[The Empath's Survival Guide](#)":

### **1. Purify the energy of your workplace**

You can purify the air by spraying rose water in the room. (Burning sage, though a good idea, might set off smoke alarms and disturb coworkers who don't know about energetic cleansing rituals and may be uncomfortable with them.) Also, you or a group can meditate in the location to infuse it with heart energy which removes any negativity or stagnant feeling. In addition, you can enlist the help of a Feng Shui expert, who specializes in creating a harmonious environment by optimizing the energy of a space through the placement of furniture, plants, mirrors, and objects.

### **2. Set healthy energetic boundaries.**

If you are in an open space or chaotic office, surround the outer edge of your

desk with plants or family and pet photos to create a small psychological barrier. Also sacred objects such as a Quan Yin statue (goddess of compassion), the Buddha, sacred beads, crystals, or protective stones can also set an energetic boundary. Also take bathroom breaks for relief, or walk outside in fresh air if possible. Noise cancelling ear buds or headphones are useful to muffle conversations and sound. In addition, visualize a luminous golden egg of light surrounding your entire work station that repels negativity and only lets in positive energy. You are safe and protected within the golden egg. There is nothing to worry about. Using all of these strategies creates a cocoon of protection to rely on.

### **3. Learn to cope with draining people**

The energy of people in a workplace strongly affects how a setting feels. Negative people generate negative energy. Positive people generate positive energy. Your co-workers, bosses, and colleagues can make or break your comfort level in a job. Sensitive people in particular have a lower threshold for noise, conflict, office politics, feuds, and back-biting. The drama at work, which might simply disturb someone else, can drain empaths and make them anxious. In chapter 5 of "[The Empath's Survival Guide](#)" I discuss various types of vampires include narcissists, rageaholics, victims, passive aggressive people, chronic talkers, and drama queens or kings. I have one patient who advises, "I survive by just doing my job and walking away from anyone who wants a pity party, drama, or is a backstabber or complainer." Learn strategies to cope with these types of draining people and apply protection strategies such as setting boundaries, shielding, and meditation.

Though you can't control everything about your job environment, you do have the power to shift the energy in your immediate vicinity. If you focus on the safe space you've created rather than on the surrounding noise and confusion, you can minimize emotional contagion. Then your work experience will feel more pleasant and protected.

## **Finding Fulfilling Work**

Some jobs are more satisfying and less stressful for empaths than others. For us to excel in and enjoy our work, we want to make the most of our sensitivities, our intuition, our thoughtfulness, our quietness, and our creativity rather than trying to be someone we're not.

### **The Best Jobs for Empaths**

I am often asked which careers and working conditions are ideal for empaths. Traditionally, they do better in lower stress, solo jobs, or with smaller companies. They are usually happiest working part or full time at home, away from the office frenzy, noise,



politics, and nearby energy vampires. (They're easier to deal with by email, text, or phone because they're at a distance.) In such a job, you can plan your schedule and plan regular breaks to decompress.

Many of my empath patients prefer being self-employed to avoid the drain and overwhelm of coworkers, bosses, and packed schedules. Empaths tend to do better on their own time than with the frequent team meetings that are required in large businesses (unless the team is unusually positive and cohesive). One empath patient told me, "I started a home-business after many failed attempts at trying to function in offices. I feel much more energized and happier being my own boss." Another empath told me, "I'm a seamstress working from home. I could never be in an office forty hours a week. The smells, sounds, and lights make me ill."

If you're employed by a business, it may be feasible to arrange a part time home office situation and do your work virtually, with ongoing access to the Internet, emails, texts, and Skype. Increasingly, people don't always have to be tied to their office to do their job well, a perk for empaths that allows them to have more choice in their work location. One empath who set up a "location independent" business offers this advice to sensitive people: "I used to work for a corporation and was drained by office politics. Now I work by Skype and it's fantastic. Think about what you love to do and where your skill set is. Then see if you can find a way to share this via the Internet. It's the way the new workplace is going."

However, if you work at home or alone in an office, be careful not to become isolated or to push yourself too hard. Balance your alone time with "people time" among colleagues and friends. Some of my empath patients have found that working part-time from home is ideal. You can break up the isolation by scheduling outside meetings. All these options may be preferable to the sensory overload of driving in heavy traffic to work or staying in an office eight or more hours a day. Time management is key.

How do these considerations translate into real world jobs? Empaths do well being self-employed business owners, writers, editors, artists and in other creative professions. Many actor and musicians such as Claire Danes, Alanis Morissette, Scarlett Johansson, and Jim Carrey have admitted to being "highly sensitive."

Other good jobs include: website and graphic designers, virtual assistants, accountants or lawyers with home offices, or independent electricians and plumbers who can set their own appointments. Being a real estate agent or roving business consultant can be fine too, as long as you establish good boundaries regarding when you can be reached and don't overschedule yourself. Landscape design, gardening, forest ranger work, or other employment that puts you in nature are wonderful for empaths as are jobs preserving the earth and her ecosystems.

Many empaths also go into the helping professions because of their big hearts and desire to serve others. They become physicians, nurses, dentists, physical therapists, psychotherapists, social workers, teachers, yoga instructors, Chinese medical practitioners, massage therapists, clergy, hospice workers, life coaches, or volunteers or

employees of non-profit organizations among other heart-felt jobs. Working with animals, animal rescue, dog grooming, as well as veterinary medicine are gratifying choices too. But, to thrive, empaths in the helping professions must learn how to stop taking on the stress and symptoms of their patients and clients. However, jobs such as being a police officer or fire-fighter, though often heroic, may be too stressful for an empath because of the high sensory stimulation and ongoing physical and emotional trauma inherent in these careers.

Empaths can excel when they use their intuition and compassion to contribute to the well-being of others. One empath patient told me, "I'm a good college teacher because I can feel when a student needs extra help." Empaths receive great satisfaction from helping others--but they also tend to over-give and become caretakers which puts them at risk for burnout. Even so, if they practice self-care strategies, those in the helping professions can have wonderful careers that improve the lives of many.

Empaths are valuable to all kinds of careers. However, you need to find the right work that supports your skills, temperament, and gifts. An empath's attributes may not be as appreciated in places such as corporations, academia, professional sports, the military, or government. A better match may be the helping professions, the arts, and organizations with more humanistic awareness. So, when you're considering a job, use your intuition to sense if you are a good fit with their mission and shared goals, the people, the space, and the energy of the environment. Just because a job looks good on paper doesn't mean it's right for you. It has to feel right in your body and gut too.

## **Jobs to Avoid If You're an Empath**

One of the best ways to take care of your energy is to choose work that enhances your unique empathic gifts and avoid draining jobs.

What jobs are best to steer clear of? Sales is high on that list. Not many empaths enjoy being salespeople, especially if they're introverted. Dealing with the public takes too much out of them. One patient who worked in technical support said, "I was too sensitive to constantly deal with angry customers, even if they were right." Also, empaths pick up people's emotions and stress which can make them sick. Whether it's selling cars, diamond rings, or advertising, empaths don't generally feel well having to "be on" all day.

Of course, if you love what you do, whether it's sales or anything else, the situation might be different. Passion for your work can motivate you to overcome obstacles.

Other stressful careers for empaths include public relations, politics, executives who manage large teams, and being a trial attorney. These high intensity professions value extroversion, the ability to engage in small talk, and aggressiveness rather than being thoughtful, soft-spoken, sensitive, and introspective. You're typically required to respond to hundreds of daily emails and many phone calls, which can be overwhelming and anxiety provoking for empaths. Jobs such as teaching preschoolers or childcare workers who must cope with the chaos and noise of crying babies and toddlers can also be draining, not to mention being a middle school vice principal.

The mainstream corporate world is problematic too. The “this is how it’s done” corporate mentality is difficult for empaths, including myself. This response has always frustrated me since there’s nowhere to go with it, and it clearly doesn’t value an individual’s needs. Empaths are independent thinkers and question the status quo at work if it doesn’t feel right. They like to know the reasoning behind a decision so they make sense of it in their gut. Plus, regular team meetings and power-hungry team-mates are draining for empaths, who function better on their own.

Many empaths prefer not traveling for their jobs because of hectic airports, strange hotels, and crowds. But if travel is part of their jobs, they need to practice self-care. If you need to fly for work, you can get a pair of noise canceling ear buds.

Even if your job is not ideal--and you can’t leave--you can improvise to find solutions that make your situation more comfortable. One empath told me, “As a bus driver, I’m bombarded by energy from the public. So, I play music on the bus and sing along with it. Music makes me happy and shields me from the stress I pick up from passengers. I also send them silent blessings to increase the positive energy. Before my shift, I walk up and down the bus with prayer bells to clear any negativity left over from previous trips.”

## **Working in Healthcare and Other Helping Professions**

Empaths are naturals for entering the helping professions from medicine to teaching. These jobs feed their giving nature and provide opportunities for them to tap their sensitivities to offer others healing and insight. As a psychiatrist, it has been enormously fulfilling for me to work with patients, many of whom are empaths, and watch their anxieties lift so that they can love their lives without guarding their hearts. Numerous empaths in the helping professions share the gratification I experience and have greatly benefited from devoting their careers to service.

Unfortunately, many also burn out. Empaths and others healers can experience compassion fatigue, a stress-related condition in which they care so much for so many people, they feel as if they have nothing left to give. How does this happen? You over give. You take on people’s pain. You try to fix them. You feel too responsible for the progress of your patients, clients, or those whom you’re guiding. You take it personally if someone doesn’t improve enough, gets worse, or leaves treatment. (For instance, empathic substance abuse counselors can feel responsible if a client relapses.) You schedule appointments every hour, year after year, without centering yourself by meditating or resting between meetings. You overbook your free time and don’t play enough or recharge yourself outside work. When empaths aren’t skilled at radical self-care, it’s hard to survive in the helping professions, let alone feel the joyousness of giving.

Here are some self-care suggestions to practice in or out of work. They will prevent you from absorbing people’s stress, emotions or physical symptoms and protect you from compassion fatigue.

## **Tips for Healers and Helping Professionals to Prevent Burnout and Compassion Fatigue**

*Plan breaks.* Take regular five-minute meditations breaks, rest periods, or short walks between appointments. Be careful not to schedule clients back-to-back which will burn you out quickly.

*Don't overbook yourself.* If possible, limit the number of clients you see to what feels right, though some jobs may not allow that flexibility. When you're busy, try not to squeeze in new appointments if you can reschedule them to a lighter day.

*Eat well.* Don't skip meals and make sure they include protein, which grounds you. Grazing on protein throughout the day keeps my energy and blood sugar stable. Avoid carbohydrates, candy bars, cookies, sodas, or other sugar sources, or fast food as a quick fix if you're hungry. Bring healthy snacks and stay well hydrated with water, a green or antioxidant smoothie, or other nourishing drinks. (See Chapter 3 for additional food suggestions.)

*Create a serene workspace.* Have a peaceful office (or at least a peaceful desk if you are in an open space arrangement) with inspirational sayings and sacred objects all around you.

*Practice regular deep breathing.* This clears any negativity that you might have picked up.

*Fill your office or workspace with heart energy.* Once or more daily, take a few minutes to focus on your heart chakra in the middle of your chest. (See the 3-Minute Heart Meditation in Chapter 2). Feel that loving energy flow through your body and balance you. By doing this, love will also overflow and fill the room. Heart energy feels like fairy dust sprinkled everywhere. It imbues a location with warmth and positivity. (I've used this technique for years to create a loving atmosphere for patients in my office.) When visitors enter your space, they will relax, even smile without knowing why.

*Set clear boundaries at work.* Firmly and kindly say "no" to energy vampire coworkers. Protect your time so you are not drained.

*Shield yourself.* In stressful situations or if you are picking up someone's emotions or symptoms, picture a shield of white light all around you which protects you from draining people and situations but lets in positivity. This works well for all health care professionals, including massage therapists, physical therapists or other body workers who are vulnerable to absorbing their patients' pain through physical touch. One dentist told me he uses this to protect himself from absorbing his patients' high anxiety about a procedure while they're in the chair. Shielding doesn't reduce your sensitivities or ability to connect with those you're helping. It simply stops their stress and anxieties from affecting you.

*Detoxify in water.* Take Epsom salt baths or shower after a long day to wash away the stress and pain you might have absorbed.

*Have fun outside work.* Allow regular time for play and “re-creation.” Walking in nature while you enjoy flowers, plants, birdsongs, and the natural world can revive your joy. Rather than thinking of your patients or obsessing about job-related problems, be fully present during your play and “re-creation” time.

The more you utilize these strategies, the more energized and less prone to burnout at work you will be. Then, you can really feel the passion and thrill of helping others. Along with the above strategies, check out my audio program [Becoming An Intuitive Healer \(Sounds True\)](#) which is specifically designed to train helping professionals practice self-care, set boundaries, and protect their empathic sensitivities from draining clients, co-workers, or other negative elements in their jobs.

## Healing Trauma and PTSD

### 7 Strategies for Empaths to Heal Trauma & PTSD

Empaths and sensitive people often experience some level of post-traumatic stress. This is, in part, because they’re on sensory overload for so many years their systems are flooded with adrenaline. Other reasons include early neglect, abuse, or simply that they didn't feel "seen" or have their sensitivities supported in their families. I've written about this topic in my new book [“Thriving as an Empath”](#).

Early trauma can come in many forms. Possible sources include:

- Hearing your parents or siblings frequently argue
- Being repeatedly yelled at
- Physical and/or emotional abuse
- Being shamed or blamed for being “overly sensitive.”
- Being bullied

Even experiencing intense ongoing household noise and chaos can feel traumatic. An empathic child’s highly sensitive system can absorb more stress than others would in these situations.

When empaths are exposed to early trauma or abuse their young nervous system may develop without healing making them hypervigilant. They can become exquisitely attuned to their environment to ward off threats and ensure they are safe or enter a state of hyperarousal. This hypervigilance is extremely draining for empaths.

Your past can still affect you now. When you are exposed to a similar stimulus as an adult such as a disagreement with your partner, you may have an exaggerated emotional response because you are flashing back to the original trauma. (This is

similar to a veteran who misreads a car backfiring as an exploding bomb.) With post-traumatic stress, your system can't fully return to its calmer state before the upset or even the initial incident. You are never quite at rest and remain aware of protecting yourself from further threats.

Empaths are often mistaken for being aloof or snobbish, but others don't realize that the distance you seem to keep is because you're focused on protecting yourself and ensuring that the ground is solid. The Buddhists say, there is always a groundless ground there to support you. Even when you are inundated with excessive stimulation, the groundless ground is always there.

To find your solid ground follow these seven strategies from "Thriving as an Empath" to help heal your past trauma.

## **7 Healing Strategies**

1. **Journal about your early traumas.** Then you can be aware of them. None are "too small" to count. This is the first step to freeing yourself from the past.
2. **Retrieve your inner child.** In a quiet moment, think back to when the early trauma occurred. How old were you? Where did it take place? Then picture yourself returning to the house or other location where it happened and retrieving your wounded inner child who has been stuck there. Tell the child "I am sorry you were hurt and I will never allow that to happen to you again." Then take the child home with you to care for with love.
3. **Emotional Release.** As you heal, many emotions will surface: anger, fear, depression, self-doubt. Let yourself feel and express these emotions—a supportive therapist can create a safe environment for you to do this.
4. **Set Clear Boundaries.** Learn to stick up for yourself. Don't be a doormat. If someone isn't treating you well, say in a firm, neutral tone, "Let's discuss this when you're calmer" or "It hurts my feelings when you say...I'd appreciate it if you would stop." Also remember that "No" is a complete sentence. Sensitive people are often afraid to disappoint others but it's essential to get in the habit of saying "no" when something doesn't feel right.
5. **Conscious Breathing.** When your old traumas are being triggered take a few slow deep breaths to calm your system before you respond.
6. **Meditate.** Regular meditation calms the mind, body, and soul. It decreases sensory overload and keeps your system in a peaceful state.

7. **Practice Self-Compassion.** Shower yourself with love and kindness as you go through the healing process. You are a caring person who deserves to be loved.

It is often helpful to consult a therapist to work through the original trauma. Useful techniques for clearing trauma include EMDR, the Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and somatic awareness. Since trauma often lodges in the body it's also useful to get regular massage or energy work to clear any remnants that are hanging on.

Give yourself time to heal. Be patient and loving with yourself. Mourn the losses you experience. Allow yourself to experience your feelings and memories without any judgement. Healing is an exercise in loving yourself.

The great news is that past trauma can be healed. In that process, you will become more at ease with your empathic abilities and learn to protect your sensitivities using the strategies I suggested. As a result, you'll be able to relax more. The world will feel like a safer place to inhabit.

### **SET YOUR INTENTION**

I will identify my early traumas. I will notice how my reactions to them may be repeating in my relationships today. I am capable of healing from these wounds.

## **The Effect of Early Trauma on an Adult's Sensitivity**

As a psychiatrist, I've observed how childhood neglect or mistreatment can affect your sensitivity level as an adult. Some empaths I've treated have experienced early trauma such as physical or emotional abuse, or they were raised by alcoholic, depressed, or narcissistic parents. This could wear down the usual healthy defenses to ward off stress that a child raised by nurturing parents develops. Because of their upbringing, they typically don't feel "seen" by their families and perceive themselves as invisible in the world.

An angry environment can especially impact an empathic child. Recently, for instance, University of Oregon researchers found that infants become agitated around argumentative, angry voices and that ongoing exposure to arguing can make them more reactive to other kinds of stress and sleep disturbances. Parents must realize the effect of anger and yelling on their baby. They must learn to calm themselves and address anger in healthier ways. Infants are totally dependent. They can't walk away from your anger and must suffer the toxic consequences. This study also revealed that dire stressors like abuse and mistreatment can significantly alter a baby's brain development, a sobering eye-opener.

I recommend that all empaths who've experienced neglectful or abusive parenting get help from a therapist or guide to start healing the wounds. I also suggest repeating the following variation of The Serenity Prayer to release the past as well as

any expectations that your parents will change. Saying it protects you from harboring toxic resentments and pain from your upbringing. It will help you find more peace, humor, and acceptance for your life's lessons, no matter how limited your parents were. The fewer resentments you hold, especially about your family, the better it is for you.

*Please grant me the serenity to accept the parents that I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference*

## Let Go to the Healing of Tears

Tears are your body's release valve for stress, sadness, grief, anxiety, and pain. You also have tears of joy, say when a child is born or tears of relief when a difficulty has passed. I am grateful when I can cry. Wish I could do it more. It feels cleansing to purge pent up emotions so they don't lodge in my body as stress symptoms such as fatigue or pain. To stay healthy and release stress, I encourage my patients to cry. For both men and women, tears are a sign of courage, strength, and authenticity.

Research has shown that tears have many health benefits. Like the ocean, tears are salt water. They lubricate your eyes, remove irritants, reduce stress hormones, and they contain antibodies that fight infection. Our bodies produce three kinds of tears: reflex, continuous, and emotional. Each kind has different healing functions. For instance, reflex tears remove noxious particles from your eyes when they're irritated. The second kind, continuous tears, keep your eyes and nose lubricated. The third kind, emotional tears, stimulate the production of endorphins, our body's natural pain killers which help us recover from trauma and excrete stress hormones through crying. Interestingly, humans are the only creatures known to shed emotional tears, though elephants and gorillas may do so too.

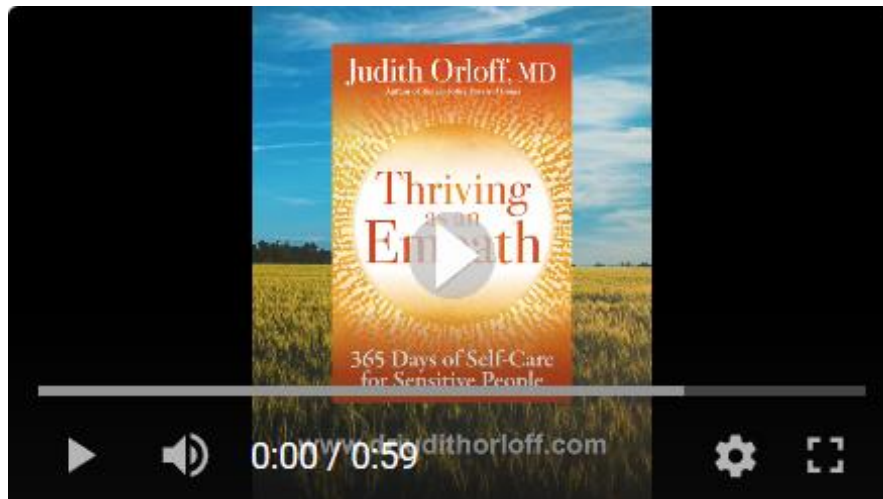
Crying makes us feel better, even when a problem persists. Along with physical detoxification, emotional tears heal our broken hearts. You don't want to hold tears back. Patients sometimes say, "Please excuse me for crying. I was trying not to because it makes me feel weak." I know where that sentiment comes from: parents who were uneasy around tears, a society that tells us we're weak for crying--in particular that "real men don't cry." Also, we may feel that it's too painful to cry, that flood gates of anguish might open that couldn't be closed. I reject these notions. The new enlightened paradigm of what constitutes a powerful man and woman is someone who has the strength and self-awareness to cry--and if necessary, the willingness to seek support to deal with overwhelming feelings. These are the people who impress me, not those who put up some macho front of faux-bravado.

Try to let go of clichéd conceptions about crying. Crying is necessary to work through grief. When waves of tears come over us after we experience a loss, they are helping us process the loss so we can keep living with open hearts. Otherwise, we are leaving ourselves open to depression, bitterness, or physical symptoms (emotional pain can morph into dis-ease in our bodies) if we suppress these potent feelings. *The point*



*isn't to get consumed by emotional pain but to resolve it.* When a friend apologized for curling up in the fetal position on my floor, weeping over a failing romance, I told her, "Your tears blessed my floor. There is nothing to apologize for." Thank God our bodies can cry. I hope you too can surrender to your tears. Let them purify suffering and negativity.

## Watch this video on Empaths, Trauma & PTSD



## Heal Energetic Scars

Old traumas simply aren't a memory; they lodge in our fields forming energetic scar tissue which can block our life force. Traumas must be retraced and healed for energy flow to resume.

Breaking the Trance: Don't let traumas fester. For stubborn ones, it's wise to seek psychotherapy (energy-oriented is best) or anger workshops. As you recognize traumas, also keep breathing them out of the body. Visualize them exiting from a stuck place--say the stomach--with each exhalation. In addition, I often advise that patients have sessions with a massage therapist. Working with a masseuse who's savvy about subtle energy can unbind energetic blocks in the body. Sometimes we physically armor ourselves to keep painful memories at a distance. A masseuse's goal is literally hands-on: to melt muscular tension. Then repressed emotions can more easily break through. A trauma's source, when psychically and muscularly located, helps an energetic scar to dissolve.

## How to Heal Depression and Attract Hope

What is depression? We all have low periods, but depression is a *persistent* sense of feeling down, pessimistic, and self-critical, whether minimal or consuming. Compared to sadness, which you may also feel when depressed (though sadness often stands alone and is more transient), intense depression has profound physical effects. You may have disturbed sleep, brain fog, no sex drive, fatigue, heightened sensitivity to pain, or a

hopelessness that can make life seem not worth living. During a major depression, sadness clings to you, in contrast to passing sadness about a painful event. In this state, even a rose can seem to have no beauty. Sometimes it may be hard to get yourself moving. As an empath, I've also experienced how depression manifests in my body: lingering stomach ailments or back pain alert me that this emotion may have physically burrowed into vulnerable spots.

Though I'm against coddling depression, this emotion is more than a bad mood to "snap out of". To tell a depressed person to "pull yourself together" is like telling a snail to go faster. Transforming depression requires a more compassionate understanding of this emotion's symptoms.

Empaths need to use medications discerningly. If you're an empath who needs medication, I suggest working with an integrative healthcare practitioner who understands subtle energy so you can find the best dosage for your body. Be sure to share with your doctor how your body responds to the dose of medication you are given so you can regulate it if necessary. Most important, speak up if you are uncomfortable. Remember, the point of taking any medication or taking part in any therapeutic intervention is to focus on your healing!

### **Emotional Action Step. Take This Inventory to Lift Depression**

<u>Source of Depression</u>	<u>Old Dead End Pattern</u>	<u>New Hopeful Behavior</u>
1. Hyper-critical parents	I emphasize the negative in myself	I'll affirm my attributes
2. A rage-aholic mate	I withdraw emotionally	I'll begin healthy limit setting
3. Financial stress	I catastrophize the future	I'll focus on making positive changes in the Now.
4. Romantic betrayal	I avoid intimate relationships	I'll take baby steps towards trusting a friend.
5. Verbal or physical abuse	I'm afraid to express my needs	I'll practice speaking up with safe, supportive people.

Completing this inventory lets you clarify what's depressing and squashing your spirit. Hope comes from functioning in more expansive ways. Begin by focusing on one emotional pattern you've identified. Then, over the next few months, practice substituting it with a freeing behavior. When you've achieved a level of success that you're comfortable with, you can begin shifting another pattern. No rush. Give each one as much time as you need to make progress. Developing new behaviors reconditions your psychological response to depression.

### **Are Depression and Hope Contagious? How to Stop Absorbing Other People's Negative Moods**

Since depression and hope are both energies, you can potentially "catch" them from people without realizing it. If you're an empath, it's vital to know how to avoid taking

on an individual's depression or the free-floating kind in crowds. Another twist is that depression can turn non-empaths into emotional sponges by wearing down their defenses. Suddenly, they become hyper-attuned to others, especially those with similar pain. That's how empathy works; we zero in on hot-button issues that are unresolved in ourselves. From an energetic standpoint, depression can originate from several sources. What you're feeling may be your own; it may be someone else's; or it may be a combination.

### **Emotional Action Step, Attract Hope, Release Depression**

To detach from depression:

- First, ask yourself: Is the feeling mine or someone else's? It could be both. If the depression is yours, gently confront what's causing it on your own or with professional help. If not, try to pinpoint the obvious generator. For instance, if you've just watched a comedy, yet you came home from the movie theater feeling blue, you may have incorporated the depression of the people sitting beside you; in close proximity, energy fields overlap. The same is true with going to a mall or packed concert.
- When possible, distance yourself from the suspected source. Move at least twenty feet away; see if you feel relief. Don't err on the side of not wanting to offend strangers. In a public place, don't hesitate to change seats if you feel a sense of depression imposing on you.
- For a few minutes, center yourself by concentrating on your breath: This connects you to your essence. Keep exhaling depression, inhaling calm; practice the grounding and breathing meditations you've already learned. Visualize depression as gray fog lifting from your body, and hope as golden light entering. This can yield quick results.
- Depression frequently lodges in your emotional center at the solar plexus. Place your palm there as you keep sending loving-kindness to that area to flush depression out. For longstanding depression, use this method daily to strengthen this center. It's comforting and builds a sense of safety and optimism.
- Look for hopeful people and situations. Call a friend who sees the good in others. Spend time with a colleague who affirms the bright side of things. Listen to hopeful people. Hear the faith they have in themselves and others. Also relish hopeful words, songs, art forms. Hope is contagious, will lift your mood.

The energy of depression is begging for release. Along with the above suggestions, I strongly recommend doing some crying. It's the body's way of purging

stress and unhappiness--yours or what you've assimilated from another. Crying makes you feel better, even when a problem persists. Like the ocean, tears are salt water. Protectively they lubricate your eyes, remove irritants, reduce stress hormones, and contain antibodies that fight pathogenic microbes. You don't want to hold tears back. It is good to cry. It is healthy to cry. This helps resolve depression. In my life, too, I love to cry. I cry whenever I can. Wish I could more. Thank God our bodies have this capacity! I hope you too can relish the experience. Let your tears flow to purify depression and negativity.

Releasing the energy of depression makes room for hope. Igniting hope releases depression. Practicing each refreshes your system instead of letting despair accumulate. I still recall what a prison inmate once told me. "I can really relate to the importance of transforming energy. Being where I am, one must make the best out of nothing every day not to give up. Hope's the only way to get by." We can all learn from him. Hope sustains. Free and open hearted, we can transform depression.

## How Medication Affects Empaths

Empaths must be discerning about any medications they take.

Since many new empaths are experiencing chronic sensory overload, anxiety or depression, conventional physicians often send them to psychiatrists for medication.

Many physicians go straight to antidepressants and anti-anxiety medications when treating empaths, but I try not to use them initially with such sensitive souls. Sometimes, my patients just need to be kinder to themselves and make small adjustments which make their lives easier. For instance, Jane came to me experiencing intense anxiety when driving the Los Angeles freeways.

The multiple lanes of cars and huge trucks whizzing by in both directions overwhelmed her and made her light-headed. Some empaths, including myself, have this aversion to freeways. The massive amount of traffic going at high speeds, and erratic, upset drivers are just too much stimulation for some of us to process. I haven't driven the freeways for years!

Although Jane had practiced deep breathing exercises before getting in the car, and took shorter freeway trips to get used to driving, these strategies were insufficient. Her physician had suggested anti-anxiety meds, but she wasn't comfortable taking them. I presented Jane with a simple alternative. Instead of continuing to make herself crazy trying to "get over" her driving anxiety, she could give herself permission to avoid freeways when possible and take some wonderful side streets across the city, as I do. Jane felt tremendous relief with this solution. She simply allowed for more travel time to her meetings. I also urged Jane to stop pressuring herself to "be like other people," a mistake many sensitive people make. You often have special needs that must be respected--and these needs are okay. You're not failing or copping out by finding ways to be kind to yourself. The softer, easier solution to a problem can be a merciful way for you to resolve anxiety without having to turn to medication.

However, if empaths have been chronically depleted by trauma or stress, they may require medication for depression and anxiety to re-balance their biochemistry. I prescribe these mainly for the short term. Interestingly, I've observed that many empaths require a much lower dose than other people to get a positive effect. For instance, a sliver of an antidepressant can work wonders for my highly sensitive patients. A mainstream physician might write this off as a "placebo response." I disagree. Empaths are just more sensitive to everything, including medications. We often can't tolerate the usual doses that conventional medicine deems effective.

In addition, I'm also fascinated by new research about how pain medications can inhibit empathy. Ohio State University researchers recently found that when participants who took Tylenol (Acetaminophen) learned about the mishaps of others, they experienced less dismay than those who didn't get the drug. So, if you have a conflict with a family member and you had just taken Tylenol, this research suggests that you might be less compassionate. Knowing that Tylenol decreases empathy is important since 52 million Americans take a substance containing it every week!

[Watch this video to learn how to thrive as an empath](#)

