

# 12 Habits for ALL of US

The Playful Path to Oneness – A Sillybus



12 Habits **4** All of Us



THE **12** HABITS  
OF **U**NITY

Narelle

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Peace and Unity...  
one habit, one person, and one month at a time.  
Steve Bhaerman | Elaine Parke | Kurt Griffith | Swami Beyondananda  
...and You

# Introducing the 12 Habits of Unity

In **JANUARY**, I offer my habit to...

## HELP OTHERS

*Extend your Holiday giving spirit year round*

Month 1

Gentle Aqua

In **February**, I remind myself that...

## YOU COUNT

*Everyone has 1,440 minutes every day to count*

Month 2

WOW! Fuchsia

In **March**, I strengthen my habit to...

## RESOLVE CONFLICTS

*Go out like a lamb in relationships and weather*

Month 3

Peaceful Dove Gray

In **April**, I nourish my habit to...

## Take Care of Our Environment

*Celebrate Earth Day, clean up and recycle*

Month 4

Spring Green

In **May**, I cherish my habit to...

## Be Grateful

*Honor Mothers, Veterans, Teachers and all helpers*

Month 5

Grateful Pink

In **June**, I discover my habit practice to...

## REACH HIGHER

*Dream refresh & renew. Start something for you*

Month 6

"JOLT" Orange

In **JULY**, I honor my habit to...

## Become Involved

*Model our forefathers, volunteer where you can*

Month 7

Patriot Red

In **August**, I reflect on my habit to...

## KNOW WHO YOU ARE

*Take time to reflect on a healthy life for you*

Month 8

Thoughtful Blue

In **September**, I practice my habit to...

## DO YOUR BEST

*Launch into a "do your best" attitude & stay with it*

Month 9

AWARD Gold

In **October**, I pause for my habit to...

## BE Patient and Listen

*Really "Listen" to others, be patient with yourself too*

Month 10

Slow-Down Lavender

In **November**, I find joy in my habit to...

## Show a Positive ATTITUDE

*Think positive thoughts about yourself and others*

Month 11

SUNNY Yellow

In **December**, I love my habit to...

## Celebrate COMMUNITY, FAMILY & FRIENDS

*Holiday emphasis on people more than things*

Month 12

EVER-Green

**The Path to Intentionally Evolving our Human Community  
...one month at a Time.**

*"Excellence is an art won by training and habituation.  
We do not act rightly because we have virtue  
but we rather have virtue because we have acted rightly.*

*We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an art, but a habit."*

– Aristotle



## A Message from Steve Bhaerman

**In the last chapter** of our book, *Spontaneous Evolution: Our Positive Future and a Way to Get There from Here*, Bruce Lipton and I wrote, “Heaven on earth isn’t a destination, it’s a practice.”

In other words, rather than wait for some external savior – Jesus, friendly ETs, or the god of technology – we humans are now called upon to consciously evolve as a species. At the moment, it doesn’t look good for the home team. We seem to be collectively stuck in fear, anger, divisiveness, unable to cooperate to save our lives – literally. As the Swami tells us, we have moved beyond rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic – the two sides are now throwing those chairs at one another.

In the midst of this polarization, there is a longing for unity, particularly as we recognize we need to act coherently as a species, not from some top-down directive, but through a bottom-up awakening. Martin Luther King said, “Those who love peace must learn to organize as effectively as those who love war.”

That is our evolutionary challenge.

The field of the “taker” consciousness – exploitation, extraction, and domination – has established itself over millennia as “the way it is.” If we truly want the Golden Rule to overrule the rule of gold, if we want to evolve from a parasitic to symbiotic system, we have to get off the old battlefield of one vs. the other, and onto a new playing field of “intentional mutual benefit.”

But, how? How do we evolve evolutionary theory into evolutionary practice?

In February of 2022, I met a remarkable woman, Elaine Parke, who has been quietly turning the Golden Rule into practical actions for over 30 years. Using her background in persuasive marketing, and her penchant for turning the pie-in-the-sky ideal into a feet-on-the-ground real deal, Elaine developed the **12 Habits** concept as a way to turn the practices of self-knowledge, kindness, and mutual benefit into HABITS – things we unconsciously do while doing other things.

Working with a small group of individuals in Western Pennsylvania looking to benefit their community, she “crowd-sourced” 12 habitual practices, one for each month, that literally

change the world at large, by impacting “the world at small.” Her system was adopted by the Pittsburgh school system, and a follow-up study indicated a higher honor roll, and fewer detentions. As one youngster put it, “I am now nice to people I used to be mean to.”

She also brought her program to Rwanda, while that country was still mourning from a genocidal civil war. The Habits of Unity helped Rwandans heal from their trauma. She has now updated the Habits into a *conscious, intentional evolutionary practice* – an intention experiment, if you will, where we express “heaven on earth” through our thoughts, words, and deeds. Elaine has co-branded a habit with each of the months.

Why? First, *it takes between 21 and 30 days to integrate a new habit*, perfect for one a month. Secondly, having groups and individuals across the globe focus on the same practice at once, creates a field of coherence.

Participating in this “experiment” helps us focus on that which we all want, together. It doesn’t eliminate our conflicts; it just puts them in perspective. As the Swami says, “the heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.” By focusing on unity and coherence, we leave the divisive duality of the head for the loving unity of the heart.

Elaine asked me to join her campaign, and I enthusiastically agreed. The Swami and I are fully enrolled to bring humor and evolutionary perspective, and I am looking to bring on board as many evolutionary communities and awakening individuals as I can to join this year-long practice.

It costs nothing, and will take a few minutes of your time each day to set the context for mutually beneficial actions. You’ll be able to join a community of “peer partners” ready to evolve evolutionary theory into evolutionary practice, starting “officially” January 1, 2023. Of course you can join any time you’re moved to. Every moment is always *now* – that’s always the best time to start anything!

Along with our introductory video, our monthly habit videos, and Swami’s cosmic comic take on each of the 12 Habits, we are providing this Sillybus for two purposes –

The “serious” purpose is to outline, contextualize, and summarize each monthly habit of unity, and offer as many ways as possible to help our peer participants hold the intention, and find their own ways to practically practice the habits.

The second purpose reflects the “silly” part of the Sillybus – reminding us that when it comes to evolutionary change, fun is fundamental!

*Steve Bhaerman*

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## Swami Beyondananda on the 12 Habits of Unity Let's Go for Heaven on Earth Just for the Hell of It!

*It has been said that crisis precipitates evolution, and if we look around at the global – new word – “shituation” -- we see that the chances of precipitation are about 100%. So much upheaval, not to mention down-heaval. And ... compared to down-heaval, upheaval is the lesser of two heavals.*

*Meanwhile, we have a deeply-divided body politic. Half the people believe our system is broken, and the other half believes it is fixed. And the two sides are engaged in a dangerous tug-of-war that is tearing us apart, when what we need is a tug of peace where we all pull together at the same time in the same direction.*

Humanity has been ruled by the lowest common dominator for the past 5,000 years ...and the Golden Rule has been overruled by the rule of gold. You know the rule of gold rule – doo-doo unto others before they can doo-doo unto you. This has left us with a lot of resi-doo-doo to metabolize. We now face the evolutionary question, can we undo the doo-doo that has been done, or will the done doo-doo be our undoing?

We have been practicing the habits of war and separation for so long that we call it the human condition. I say it's the inhuman conditioning.

We must release the habits of domination, and inhabit the new habits that will truly build a new habitat for humanity – where we achieve our humanifest destiny and become an evolved species – humankind, where the currency is human kindness.

Now I know what you're thinking. The Swami is proposing a sane world. He must be crazy.

Actually, I am asking you to commit yourself to a sane asylum, and an exciting new practice ... campaign ... and intentional evolutionary experiment ...where we can all go sane together!

That's why I am thrilled to introduce you to the **12 Habits of Unity** – a way that all of us together can move way beyond evolutionary theory to evolutionary practice. Yes, habits

can be habit-forming ...and the habits we inhabit today will determine the world we inhabit tomorrow.

*Every month*, starting in January, we will practice together one Golden Rule habit a month, so that we turn the pie-in-the-sky ideal into the feet-on-the-ground real deal. You know all that inner peace we've been cultivating? Time to let it all out! And declare all-out peace. Yes, I know anger is all the rage. But instead of giving someone a piece of your mind, why not give them the peace of your heart?

Yes, it's time to bring left and right front and center to face the music and dance together – to turn the funk into function and leave the junk at the junction. I say when things come to a head, head for the heart. Remember, beliefs lie in your head, truth lives in your heart.

In these times of the Great Upwising, it's time to wake up to the illusion of separation, and wise up to the truth of love, unity, and coherence. Yes, coherence ... and we are so close. I am here, you are here, we are all here together ... we are co-here ... and if that's not coherence, I don't know what is.

Folks, if we want to turn the world right side up, we have to do it from the inside out ... time to get off the old battlefield, and onto a new playing field ... thrival for each and all, what we call "intentional mutual benefit".

And for those who can't wait to get to heaven, I have a tip for you. The quickest way to get to heaven is start there ... the 12 Habits of Unity are how we can PRACTICE heaven in the here and now instead of waiting for it in the there-and-then.

I invite you to join the upwising ...join our intention experiment and practice with us the 12 Habits of Unity, so we can heal the world at large by impacting the world at small – the people we encounter every day.

Now I must confess I am a FUNdamentalist ...accent on the fun. And while there are those who say heaven is up there, we FUNdamentalists say heaven is where you make it

So, why don't we go for heaven on earth – just for the hell of it! Remember, we are not here to earn God's love – we're here to SPEND it.

## **Join the Upwising!!**

**Join our "coherence intention" experiment.**

Sign up at [12habits4allofus.org/upwising](http://12habits4allofus.org/upwising)

Visit and post at [facebook.com/groups/12habits4allofus](https://facebook.com/groups/12habits4allofus)

Visit and view at [youtube.com/@12habits4allofus](https://youtube.com/@12habits4allofus)

**ALSO... Share the monthly 12 habits posts with your friends and network**

# THE 12 HABITS OF UNITY

## The 12 Habits of Unity – An Idea Whose Time Has Come, and Just in Time!

*“Now is the time – because it’s too late to do it sooner!”*

*-- Swami Beyondananda*

**In these times of crisis and evolution**, many awakening individuals are asking, “What can one person do?”

Good question. But maybe the better question is, what can ALL OF US do TOGETHER?

Those who are aware that our species is at a moment of evolutionary destiny, want to find ways to participate, to make a difference, to help bring about what Charles Eisenstein has called “the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible.”

Of course, individual awakening is a key – a society cannot become “enlightened” without enlightening striking a critical mass of the heretofore uncritical masses. People intentionally meditating, all focused together, has produced measurable results. You are perhaps aware of the experiment in the 1990s, when TM meditators descended (or is it ascended?) on Washington, D.C. during the month of August – always a high-crime month – and actually reduced crime by 23.3%.

Others who recognize our burgeoning global crises, have doubled-down on activism, working on whichever issue they have determined is most important. And ...these issues are usually on the “battlefield” of idea vs. idea, when the real breakthrough will come from addressing the issue that is at the bottom of our planetary dysfunction and existential crisis – the illusion of separation. Underneath every issue of peace and justice, truth and transparency, honoring the web of life and the web of love, is this fundamental unconscious habit boils down to “when push comes to shove, it’s you OR me.”

In order to release the grip of domination, exploitation, extraction – and for that matter, extinction – we must come together in a seemingly paradoxical way: individual freedom in the context of community wellbeing.

Simply earnest individual meditation won't get us there, nor will activism, working on one issue at a time.

That's why we have developed the **12 Habits of Unity**, so that our internal awareness gets aggregated into coherent intention, AND we collectively bring this conscious intention into practice in our daily lives, in the world at large and the world at small. Imagine ...every month an "intentional community" of individuals and resonant organizations focusing on cultivating ONE HABIT for the entire month. Remember, it takes about a month of steady practice to integrate a habit.

These 12 Habits are each based on some aspect of the Golden Rule – the recognition and celebration of our being connected, each of us cells in the super-organism called Humanity. Again, this is not some top-down imposition of some "new world order" where experts who "know better" have decided on "what's good for us." This is a from-the-ground-up realization that heaven on earth (or if you prefer, conscious evolution) is a practice, not a destination.

By joining our community, you are now part of an intentional experiment to practice the habits daily and monthly, and then note and record how your life changes, and the impact you have on the world.

What one person can do, and what we can all do together now become the same.

***Welcome to the upwising!***



# The 12 Monthly Habits



## January – Help Others and Be of Service

January's Color is Gentle Aqua

The goal for the month is

**To lift our spirits and the spirits of others by caring, sharing and giving.**

*We extend the holiday giving season by making it a practice habit to begin the New Year.*

*“This is the ultimate self-help practice to shift from selfishly helpless to helpfully selfless.”*

— Swami Beyondananda

**We begin the new year** with the Buddhist mantra that echoes intentional mutual benefit – May all beings be happy. “All beings” includes you – and me. In practicing intentional mutual benefit, now is the time to make the first move. Serve others, intentionally.

Ask, how can I be helpful? Particularly if you've helped yourself to a heaping helping of self-help (and are still selfishly helpless), put another's wellbeing first. Bottom line: Helping others puts intentional mutual benefit into practice.

It is fitting we open the year with the practice of Help Others, because that is the essence of intentional mutual benefit ...instead of waiting for “heaven” or for change to come from out there, help others is a pre-emptive blessing to set the field. We tend to focus on the things we can least influence. What if we focused on what we can influence, moment to moment, starting now from wherever we are, whoever we are?

In other words, to paraphrase the song, “Let there be heaven on earth, and let it begin with me.”

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Help Others” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire:

1. What does it mean to be of help?
2. Who or what has been most helpful to me during my own life crises, or as I was determining my life’s purpose?
3. How have I been most helpful to others in my life, particularly recently?
4. What does the term “service” mean to me, and when have I served in this regard?
5. How can I help others help themselves so they don’t end up helpless and dependent?

**Practice:** Meditate on and begin each day with the question, how can I be of help to another today? End each day with the question, how did I practice intentional mutual benefit today?



## February – You Count

February's Color is WOW Fuchsia.

**Our GOAL for February is to know that you count, and to believe it.**

**More importantly, believe in yourself and in others.**

*Every person is valued, honored and respected for who they are.*

*“Everybody counts. Each of us has been given a special gift just for entering...*

*So, you are already a winner.”*

*– Swami Beyondananda*

**February is the month of love** and what better month to love thyself and love thy neighbor? Each one of us counts. Each of us makes a difference. In these evolutionary times, we need all hands on-deck. That means your hands. So don't wallow in self-unimportance. You are as important as your purpose and practice. Remember every day that you count, and remind others they do too. Every person is valued, honored and respected for who they are.

In the dance between the individual and collective, we tend to place importance and agency outside ourselves, “out there”, on those who are more powerful and “important” than we are. However, in these times of awakened awareness, there is a place for everyone to contribute and benefit, based on their individual gifts and talents, purpose and passion.

At the opposite end of that spectrum, there are those who are so focused on their own work and importance, that they fail to recognize and honor the gifts of others. Each of these ego trips – ego too big, or ego too small – put our attention on ourselves, not the world out there where we can have an impact. Remember, each of us is a “sovereign soul-proprietor”, a one-of-a-kind, with a unique gift, and purpose. Use February to celebrate yourself and others.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “You Count” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during February:

1. In what ways do “you count” – measurable differences you have made in the world and the lives of others?
2. Have you ever felt you didn’t count? How did you grow past that feeling?
3. Who in your life needs to be reminded that they count?
4. How can you reinforce that?
5. What are some new ways you can make a difference?

Mediate on and ask yourself at the beginning of each day, how can I make a difference today, and review at the end – how did I “count”?

**Practice:** Send a note to someone who made a difference – in your life, they counted! Make a list of all the ways that YOU have counted – and the difference you’ve made in the lives of others.

# RESOLVE CONFLICTS

## March – Resolve Conflicts

**March's Color is Peaceful Dove Gray**

**Our GOAL for the month is to patch up a relationship with at least one person.**

*This is your invitation to get off the battlefield of conflict,  
and on to the playing field of collaboration.*

*"If war is a necessary evil, then we must replace it with  
peace as a necessary good."*

— Swami Beyondananda

**March comes in like a lion**, and goes out like a lamb, so what better month to get off the battlefield? "Resolve conflicts" doesn't mean pretend they don't exist. It means coming together at the heart to look at the source of the conflict together. That's getting off the battlefield.

Now you're ready for a new playing field ...intentional mutual benefit. Even if you disagree on certain beliefs, you can minimize that dissonance by amplifying your resonance. From there you can get to the heart of the matter – which is the matter of the heart.

If the primary issue for humankind right now is the illusion of separation, what an opportunity March provides to release the habit of separation, and intentionally heal a relationship where you have been "separated" from another. In these times when beliefs are in conflict, perhaps the breach occurred because of a political or religious difference.

Perhaps there has been a misunderstanding that has rigidified into silence. Sometimes there is a perpetration or a wounding that needs forgiveness. To forgive doesn't mean to forget, or to condone. Even if the other person is no longer on the planet, forgiveness liberates us from the prison of the past.

As the Swami reminds us, "To not forgive is unforgivable."

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Resolve Conflicts” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during March:

1. Are there any relationships in your life where conflict or disagreement has caused a breach? What is your responsibility in the matter? How can it be healed?
2. Can you think of any time or times when conflict was beneficial? How has conflict helped you learn about yourself and set boundaries?
3. Are there those you don't wish to reconcile with? Can you still bring forgiveness to that relationship?
4. Are there any conflicts you are having with yourself that need to be resolved?
5. Could some of these conflicts have been prevented – or healed – through clear communication?

**Practice:** Make a list of those relationships where a conflict has created dissonance. One by one, reach out to those individuals with a call to unite around the “heart” even as mental beliefs divide you. Hold the open space of unity in love without uniformity of belief. Equally important, notice where you are in conflict with yourself. Is there an incongruence between what you believe in your heart and how you have acted? Bring yourself into harmony.



# Take Care of Our Environment

## April – Rebirth the Earth – Take Care of Our Environment

April's Color is Spring Green

April's personal GOAL is to select an environmental project, even as simple as planting a tree in your own yard.

*“Hey, if we lose the Earth, there goes our GDP.  
We need to be caretakers, not careless takers.”*

— Swami Beyondananda

Isn't it funny – or seriously tragic – that we are so focused on artificial intelligence and yet so out of touch with real intelligence? The real intelligence of nature – which is cosmic wisdom. This is the month to love nature, love the natural world, be present in it. Bring it into your life. Grow your own food, or visit a local farm where your food is being grown. Invest in Community Supported Agriculture. Ask yourself, what can I habitually do to remember and practice love of nature?

Earth Day began because of an iconic photo I'm sure everyone by now has emblazoned on their consciousness – the first photo of the Earth from the moon. Through one image, all of humanity could see – literally – the big picture, seeing our planet as our one home, our only home, what Buckminster Fuller called “spaceship earth.”

It's been more than half a century since the founding of Earth Day and yet we are now in what scientists are calling “the sixth great extinction” as our own species now sits atop the Endangered Species List. Our indigenous elders talk about making decisions looking seven generations back, and seven generations forward. That begs the question, how do we bring our species from degeneration to regeneration?

Maybe through re-veneration. To allow ourselves to love nature, so nature can love us back, and we can reweave ourselves into the natural world, the web of life, and the web of love. To paraphrase, President John F. Kennedy, “Ask not what nature can do for you, but what you can do for nature.”

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Rebirth the Earth” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during April:

1. Meditate on how has nature been a part of your life – or not?
2. When have you felt most connected to nature and the web of life?
3. What habits have you already developed that connect you to the natural world?
4. What new habits can you effortlessly cultivate to remind you of nature’s bounty and beauty on a daily basis?
5. How are you reconnecting with other humans, face-to-face, in the post-COVID world?

**Practice:** Bring nature and love of nature into your daily life. Do you have a garden view? A bird feeder? Can you spend time in the sun? Are you familiar with “earthing” (no, not the same as sunning, and certainly not the same as “mooning”)? Plant your feet on the earth and feel how it feels.





# Be Grateful

## May – Be Grateful

May's Color is Grateful Pink

May's Goal is:

**In addition to appreciating others, take time to appreciate yourself – do something you always wanted to do.**

*Gratitude invites grace.*

*“The more you appreciate what you have,  
the more what you have will appreciate.”*

— Swami Beyondananda

**One of the most underestimated gifts** of life is gratitude. The Buddhists have a prayer: “Thank you for everything.” Yes, we want to be grateful for our blessings – and our challenges as well. Our blessings give us comfort and peace of mind, and the feeling “all is well.” Our challenges call us forth to be better, to be wiser, to risk rather than play it safe. It’s going to sound like the old cliché law of attraction, but it’s true. We get more of what we focus on. Gratitude is an affirmation of what we want more of. The more we immerse in gratitude, the more others will look at us and say, “I’ll have what THEY’RE having.”

Many great wisdom traditions define gratitude as the most important quality to cultivate because when we have a grateful outlook, we appreciate what we do have more than we fret about what we don’t. And while the so-called “law of attraction” has been dismissed as “magical thinking”, there is some demonstrable truth to the idea that we attract more of what we put our attention on. Gratitude expert Robert Emmons calls gratitude an **affirmation of goodness**.

Practicing gratitude also has numerous positive effects, both on our body and psyche -- de-

creasing symptoms of depression, reducing pain and inflammation, lowering cortisol and blood pressure, while triggering the release of mood-regulating neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, serotonin, norepinephrine, and oxytocin.

Practicing gratitude also increases emotional resiliency, generosity, and optimism. Studies have found that keeping a gratitude journal for just three weeks boosts one's immune system, quality of sleep, and compassion, while reducing blood pressure, loneliness, and isolation.

That should certainly make us grateful for gratitude!

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put "Be Grateful" front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during May:

1. Meditate about what in your life you are most grateful for?
2. Who in your life can you express gratitude to, today?
3. Remember a time when grace followed gratitude, when something unpredictably magical happened in a moment of gratitude and appreciation.
4. Remember a time when someone expressed gratitude for something you'd done, or a way you had been. How did that feel?
5. What challenges or difficulties do you now feel grateful for?

**Practice:** Begin each day reflecting on what you are most grateful for, and end each day recounting the blessings that manifested each day. For "extra credit", note the challenges you would be grateful for if you knew they would accelerate your growth. Now, accept that those challenges WILL indeed help you become more of who you really are. How does THAT feel?



## June – Reach Higher

June's color is Jolt Orange

June's Goal:

**Break free of procrastination. Stretch yourself to do the important task you have been putting off for too long.**

*Reaching higher isn't only about achievement. It is about reaching for the higher love, higher thought, and Higher Power.*

*"Q. Swami, how do we get our children to reach higher?*

*Put the cookies on top of the refrigerator."*

*— Swami Beyondananda*

**The 12-Step folks recognize** that when faced with the deepest challenges of life, we need to turn to a Higher Power that is bigger than the solutions our smaller mind has fixed on. A well-known "hit bottom" mantra is "all my best thinking got me here."

In contrast, when we are being "pulled forward" by higher purpose, it becomes easier to overcome blocks like procrastination. So ... what is your unique purpose? How do you need to "stretch" yourself to realize it? Remember ... now is the time. Because it is too late to do it sooner.

June is the month to break free of limitations and insecurities that may have been holding you back from working towards your dreams and desires. It is so easy for we humans – particularly when dealing with the challenges of "contemporary insanity" – to fall back into familiar, comfortable patterns, and in the process, put off or even forget about our most compelling dreams and desires.

What is procrastination but fear of the unknown, as we hesitate to begin a project without being assured of success? And ...think of all the risks individuals have taken with new ideas, new inventions, new frameworks (like the 12 Habits Path!) that have given us the wealth of experience and resources we enjoy today. What if the Wright Brothers had listened to the discouraging words, and had given up? We'd all be "grounded"!

Remember that reaching higher in your life, often takes time, courage, and that big achievements happen in baby steps and in making good use of your time.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put "Reach Higher" front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during June:

1. Think of a time you "stretched yourself" to tackle an unfamiliar path, speak your heart to an individual you cared about, or learn a new skill outside your skill set. Are you grateful you did?
2. Also consider a time when you didn't take a step, or hesitated and missed an opportunity. What did you learn?
3. Is there a life mission or purposeful vision that has been on your radar, but you haven't fulfilled? What can you do NOW to get started?
4. Is there a task or communication you've been procrastinating about? What's in the way? How do you do it anyway?
5. Imagine it's a year from now. Looking back, how did "reaching higher" improve or even transform your life?

**Practice:** Ask yourself, and meditate about "How will I stretch out of my comfort zone this week?" and then make a plan to do so. Give yourself "permission" to move ahead without excuses, rationalizations or "yes, but's". Forget "but" entirely. This is the month to "kick but", particularly your own. At the end of the month, evaluate. Did I stretch? What happened? Was it worthwhile? What did I learn?



# Become Involved

## July – Become Involved

July's color is Patriot Red

July's Goal:

**To create a world of abundance, get off your buns and start dancing.**

*It's not enough to be evolved if you're not involved.*

*"We need to declare our independence from the battlefield where we all lose, and step onto a new playing field where everyone can win."*

*-- Swami Beyondananda*

**Following up on June's habit** of reaching higher, July is where the karma meets the road. In July, Americans celebrate Independence Day, honoring those courageous individuals who risked life and fortune to bring the idea of inalienable, sovereign rights to the world. Did you know for example that Ho Chi Minh, whom we fought against in the Vietnam War was an admirer of Thomas Jefferson, and hoped that the United States would support his country in their revolution?

Considering that America's founders were in a minority and risked execution if they failed, what are YOU willing to risk to stand up for the world you know is possible? Where are your talents and gifts needed? What are you waiting for? Remember, being involved is not the same as being "entangled." When your actions spring from your purpose and desire to promote intentional mutual benefit, involved and evolved become one and the same.

In July, you can be inspired to become involved as our founding fathers did when they risked everything to be free of domination. We love our "Bill of Rights" and are still fighting for equal rights for all Americans. However, have you ever wondered what our country would be like today if the founders had also written a *Bill of Responsibilities*?


President John F. Kennedy wisely asked Americans, "Ask not what your country can do for

you but what you can do for your country.” This is the spirit in which the 12 Habits path enters July -- the month to Become Involved.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Become Involved” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during July:

1. Reflecting on June’s habit of “reaching higher”, how can you stretch yourself to become involved – in your community, your family, the world, in a higher purpose?
2. When have you “become involved” in the past? What happened? How did you feel?
3. How has becoming involved contributed to your own personal evolution?
4. What’s stopping you now from stepping up?
5. What steps can you “step up” that will help you step up now?

**Practice:** Is there a way you KNOW you can be helpful? Is there an area where you could be involved, and yet have put up a barrier of “I’m not getting involved”? Is there a way you could inform a divisive political issue by NOT being on the battlefield? If so, Uncle Sam NEEDS you!



# KNOW WHO YOU ARE

## August – Know Who You Are

August's color is Thoughtful Blue

August's Goal:

**Write down your own values about family, children, personal behavior, work performance, and your role in your community.**

*A congruent life weaves the ideal and the real deal.*

*"Each of us is totally unique, just like everyone else."*

— Swami Beyondananda

**Know thyself.** Aeschylus ...Socrates ...Plato all ascribed to this aphorism. The month of August, when many in the Northern hemisphere celebrate summer and timeless vacation time, what better time for self-reflection? Know thyself, know who you are, can apply to your purposes, your talents, your aspirations – and even your limitations. Without acknowledging and appreciating those limitations, we set ourselves up for disappointment and sometimes tragedy.

And ... for our purposes, the most important thing to know about who we are, is that as part of the Oneness, we are each an agent of universal love. August is the month to open our "agency" so that we are prepared for September!

August is a time to find some quiet moments, perhaps in nature, to review our lives and how we spend our time. Do we see ourselves, not at the center of life, but as a contextual and contributing member of our larger global community? Are we spending our time on the things that matter to us, our family, our purpose, our health and our happiness?

Remember that each of us – regardless of how healthy, wealthy or wise we are – have the same 1,440 minutes to spend each day. No more, no less. During this month, ask yourself if you are spending these minutes wisely. Do your time expenditures reflect your highest

values, gifts, and purpose? In a certain way, “Know Yourself” is a higher octave of the February habit, “You Count”, because you are now focusing on your unique way of making a difference.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Know Yourself” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during August:

1. Reflect on your priorities, your direction and your values. Do you allocate your time to support what is important to you?
2. Are you walking your own talk or just “following the herd” and playing it safe?
3. What have you learned about yourself over the past year? The past five years? The past ten years?
4. How are you different from a year ago?
5. Now that you’ve reflected on knowing your “true self”, how will the coming year be different?

**Practice:** Hindu mystic Ramana Maharshi initiated this inquiry among his disciples. Who am I? That was the question, a very open-ended one. This is a fundamental question that will cut through all the “identities” you’ve created for yourself. On the more mundane level, and in keeping with the knowledge that you are the Creator’s creation, created to create, what do YOU value? What are YOUR gifts? What is your overarching, underlying purpose?





# Do YOUR BEST

## September – Do Your Best

September's Color is Award Gold

**September's GOAL:** Pick a task, even a small one and give it all you got.

*The best you can do is the best you can do, and that should be sufficient.*

*"We cannot expect to triumph without at least a little trying and umphing."*

*-- Swami Beyondananda*

**Do your best.** We have all heard that, and some of us have taken it as a challenge, while others have resisted it, because it smacks too much of competition, one against the other. Actually, if we go back to the ancient Greek, the original meaning of the word compete was to "strive together."

So, in the original Greek Olympics, the purpose wasn't to "defeat" the other competitors but use them as "pace cars" to help us do our personal best. This concept of all of us striving together is the ultimate win-win-win. When you do your best, you hurt or hinder no one, and may inspire others to do their best as well. Talk about intentional mutual benefit!

September is a seasonal transition month, a good time for taking the time to re-energize and re-commit ourselves to excellence. No matter how seemingly menial the task is, our higher power is asking us to lovingly give each task our full attention and devotion. Mahatma Gandhi, a celebrated leader striving for peaceful change, was known to maintain his own personal balance with daily spinning. He spun every day for at least an hour and he encouraged everyone to spin thread daily.

Gandhi elevated spinning to a focused meditation, so that a simple task done daily becomes a pathway to spiritual awareness and excellence. Our civilization is so focused on external achievement – fame, fortune, and power – that we forget that the real things we use every day and enjoy in life are brought to us by a series of simple tasks done well.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put "Do Your Best" front and center in your

awareness, and your repertoire during September:

1. Think of a time when you truly “did your best”. How did it feel? What were the results?
2. Think of another time when you don’t feel you did your best? How did that feel? What were the results?
3. Keeping in mind that “doing your best” is not only about tangible, measurable activities out in the world, can you think of times when you did your best to grow spiritually? What was the situation? What happened? How did you feel?
4. It’s been said that “*What you are is God’s gift to you, what you become is your gift to God.*” How can you best express this gift NOW?
5. Ask yourself, “How can I begin the practice of excellence in my life now?”

**Practice:** Pick one area of your life where you’d like to do better – or see better results. Without falling into shame or blame, identify the blocking force. Is there something you could DO BETTER that would bring better results? Is there a daily or weekly habit that would move the dial? Are you willing to do it? Then, DO IT! And assess results.



# BE Patient and Listen

## October – Be Patient and Listen

October's Color is Slow-Down Lavender

October's Goal:

**Find the patience to be present for cherished moments in your life.**  
*If you can't stop to smell the roses, at least slow down to look at them.*

*"If you bring the past tense to the present tense,  
you will make the future tense as well."*

-- Swami Beyondananda

**As the old Supremes song says, "You Can't Hurry Love"** – or for that matter, anything else worth having. In our hurry, scurry, worry world, we too often miss being present for the most important moments of our lives. Often, we get so attached to outcome – not to mention income – that we rush into things without taking the time to scrutinize, consider ... and listen, not just to other people but to our own true calling.

I've often said that life is like a bag of M&M's – moments and memories. The more present we are in the moment, the more vivid and vital the memories.

This is the month where, in the midst of doing our best, reaching higher, becoming involved, we seek – and find – the peace that passes all understanding. The reason it too often "passes understanding" is that those who are fervently pursuing happiness run past it! There's a classic joke, "when God gave out patience, I got tired of waiting in line, so I didn't get any."

This is the month we stop ... look ... and listen, particularly listen. When we make a concerted effort to listen to others, it takes our attention from the thoughts spinning around our head "in here", and focus on how we can be more helpful "out there." It's about taking "timeless time", stepping out of the limitations of those 1,440 minutes each of us gets each day, to experience "the Universe beyond the world."

And ... the rewards for being patient and listening are many, particularly coming off of a very achievement-oriented September, focused on doing our best. October is the month to allow the Universe to respond to our actions, and to make adjustments based on the feedback we get. Perhaps the best mantra for October is “be present”. Be present with what the Universe presents us.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Be Patient and Listen” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during October:

1. Are you a good listener? Or are you formulating your response while the other person is talking, to the point that you cannot remember what they said?
2. Have you ever been in a conversation where you felt the other person wasn't listening? How did that feel to you?
3. Patience. How patient are you? How have you practiced patience? How can you instill / install this new habit?
4. When things get tense, do you remember to breathe – breathe slowly, and relax yourself by extending the exhale? How can you remind yourself to breathe through a challenging situation?
5. Are you a regular meditator? If so, how has this contributed to your life? If not, how can you bring mindful silence to your busy life and mind?

**Practice:** Remember that commercial about “the pause that refreshes”? If this cue give you pause, then good! Practice pausing ... regularly during the day. When you feel you are rushing off somewhere, stop – for just a moment, long enough to take a few long, deep, relaxing breaths. Then, stop, look, and listen. Allow this pause to put you on nature's time, not your own.

# Show a **Positive** ATTITUDE

## November – Show a Positive Attitude

November's Color is Sunny Yellow

November's Goal: On every excursion, wear JOY in your smile.

*A positive attitude can be habit-forming.*

*"Just say NO to negativity."*

— Swami Beyondananda

**Oh, no you say. Not a smiley face!** Should I be forcing a smile even when I'm feeling down, or downright grumpy? That doesn't feel very evolved. Shouldn't I be being myself? Well, yes. And that depends on which "self" you want to be – the temporarily grumpy self, or the you that you truly are, a child and agent of love and joy?

Science tells us that when we uplift the corners of our mouths in a smile – even if we aren't "feeling" happy – just the movement of those muscles causes the secretion of feel-good hormones. We don't smile because we are happy, it turns out. We're happy because we smile. So "showing" a positive attitude might very well create one.

Says Swami's slightly- more-serious alter ego Steve Bhaerman, *"Since playfulness and humor are the shortest distance to a positive attitude, my life as Swami Beyondananda has essentially been dedicated to inspiring positive attitudes everywhere. Now this isn't about denial, or pretending bad things aren't happening when they are. Heart-opening, mind-expanding humor is about transmuting the energy of a frustration, a hurt, a disappointment, and using it to find insight, healing, and joyful laughter."*

*"I've been blessed to be able to see funny, even when the situation isn't funny at all. I remember some years ago being extremely frustrated and angry about a political issue. I was just about to go onstage to perform – with a need to transform my mood big time – when this joke came to me: 'We have a deeply-divided body politic. Half the people believe the system is broken. The other half believes it is fixed.' Well, it made me laugh, and has been one joke I have used over the years that gets a big laugh from all audiences, regardless of where they are on the political spectrum."*

Full-spectrum humor! When you lighten yourself by showing a positive attitude out there, the feedback you get helps you develop one “in here”.

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Show a Positive Attitude” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during November:

1. Have you ever allowed yourself to smile in spite of how you were feeling? What happened? Did your mood change?
2. Have you cultivated a sense of playful humor? Have you ever lightened a heavy moment with a joke, laughter, or just a smile? Have you ever seen anyone else do it?
3. November is also the month of Thanksgiving. Take some time to dwell on your blessings? Did THAT bring a smile to your face?
4. What have YOU done in the past to successfully shift from “below the line” to “above the line”?
5. How can I do more of that this month, and in the future?

**Practice:** Start each day by lovingly laughing in your own face. Look in the mirror and laugh. Fake it till you make it. If looking at your own face first thing in the morning evokes horror, pretend you’re looking at someone else. That should make you laugh! Then, during the day, see if you can find ways to make others smile. Meditate on your successes as you get ready to fall asleep at night.



## December – Celebrate Community, Family and Friends

December's Color is EVER-Green

**December's Goal:** Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

*Happy New Year always begins with happy old year.*

*"It's time to evolve from children of God to adults of Good ... because the one thing that will save humankind is human kindness."*

*-- Swami Beyondananda*

**In the USA**, the holiday season traditionally begins with Thanksgiving, where we officially acknowledge our blessings. And among the greatest riches we have accumulated in our lives, are the loving relationships, friendships, family and community ties that allow us to share both joys and sorrows with others we care about. Regardless of wealth or status, those who cannot share their wellbeing with others are bereft indeed.

Love has sometimes been defined as putting another's wellbeing ahead of our own. How are we doing in this regard? In our relationships of "give and take", are we giving or taking more than our share? Do we need to have more balance? What is needed to "complete" this year with our loved ones? Are there any undelivered communications? Any friends or family members you need to communicate with, or just say hi to? Do it this month, and this year!

The song for the month of December is "*Let There Be Peace on Earth and Let It Begin with Me*", a modern-day hymn written in 1955. This song is the epitome of the practice of the 12 Habits, because each of us is the single point of light that points us toward a new year and a new world. The "me" it begins with is naturally attuned to Universal love and practicing the Habits all year has brought us to this point, where we have given and received abundant gifts.

So, consider, what gifts have you received through the practice of the 12 Habits? What gifts have you been able to give abundantly, and freely? Have you noticed how many of these “best things in life” are free? When we freely give what is needed, when we serve whatever “scene” we are in, using our talents and capacities and passions, we are living life fully. There’s an old saying, an unexamined life is not worth living. Well, it’s just as true that the un-lived life is not worth examining. As we close out the year with a season of celebration, celebrate the life you have fully lived this year, and acknowledged the un-lived and undelivered gifts, as your first order of business for making next year even better.

Celebrate with family and loved ones, celebrate with community, and experience “communion” – which the Swami calls “calm union.”

Integrating each monthly habit requires both intentional focus, and practical practice. Here are some daily meditations / inquiries to put “Celebrate Community, Family and Friends” front and center in your awareness, and your repertoire during December:

1. Count your “human blessings”. Note the people you most cherish in life. To paraphrase the song, have you told them lately that you love them? Tell them NOW.
2. How willing are you to receive appreciation from others? Silently call forth that appreciation, and see what happens?
3. How have the 12 Habits made a difference in your life this year? Which specific habits have now become “habitual”?
4. How do you plan to celebrate this holiday season LIKE NEVER BEFORE?
5. If loved ones are physically absent this holiday time, how can you feel fully embraced by the web of love?

**Practice:** Instead of the usual presents, this holiday season give your loved ones a gift of your “presence.” How can you “be” with each of the important people in your life, so that you are more present than ever before? Can you “listen” with a deeper listening, and see that individual like you’ve never seen them before? Can you accept that same intimate gift from them as well? Remember, when we leave this world, we leave those presents here. It’s the presence we take with us.





## 12 Habits “Out-vocation”

Often at the beginning of a book or a project, there is an “invocation” to initiate involvement with the material, a dedication if you will.

We have found it equally important to have an “out-vocation” at the end, to inspire you to apply your vocation and newly-cultivated habits “out there” from here on out. Keep in mind the 12 Habits are a two-fold practice. First, it is an internal practice of intentional focus on cultivating one habit each month, practiced in an “intentional community” of peer participants.

As the TM meditator experiments some 30 years ago demonstrated, a critical mass of individuals focusing coherently on one idea can actually show measurable results. And ... there is another step. When we move our inner consciousness into the outer world, and actually shift our behavior, we literally change the physical field in tangible ways. The practice of kindness, for example, radiates out into the world at large from the world at small. This can, and will, change lives in ways we cannot know.

Something we hope you take away from this webinar and Sillybus is that “heaven on earth” isn’t a destination, it’s a practice. Until now, we humans have worked on our own improvement and enlightenment while hoping that some savior will come and make things right in the world. Time to get off “hopium”, and be the change you wish to see in the world.

As Swami tells us, the best way to get to heaven is to start there. So ... what if you started each day with the intention to bring heaven to earth?

We also want to encourage you as one of our “peer participants” to – participate!

***Join the Upwising!!***  
**Join our “coherence intention” experiment.**

Sign up at [12habits4allofus.org/upwising](https://12habits4allofus.org/upwising)  
Visit and post at [facebook.com/groups/12habits4allofus](https://facebook.com/groups/12habits4allofus)  
Visit and view at [youtube.com/@12habits4allofus](https://youtube.com/@12habits4allofus)

**ALSO...** Share the monthly 12 habits posts with your friends and networks

**Share triumphs and challenges**, best practices and missteps too, on our website or with our Facebook group. Share them at our monthly Zoominar calls. Involve your friends. Keep a journal. You will be pleasantly surprised how your life will change in a year!

Are you particularly passionate about one of the Habits? Become a “cure-rater” and / or Content Sponsor for one of the months, and deeply involve yourself in that intentional community.

Share this experiment with your friends, family and community. Remember, when it comes to bringing happiness to the world ... the more the merrier.

Here’s to heaven on earth ... one habit at a time.

Elaine Parke

Steve Bhaerman

Kurt Griffith

12Habits4allofus.com Home Team

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