

Embrace the Struggle

Quick Practices to Stop the Dark Side in Its tracks:

- Do a Dark Side Fling & Stomp (*see instructions below*)
- De-energize with a deep breath
- Place your hands on your heart and breathe
- Stride walk for three minutes
- Do a quick centering practice
- Get a message from your Spiritual Self

When you have more time:

- Recycle
- Listen to an inspiring visualization, such as the Spirit Guided Path or I Am That I Am
- Write the Dark Side messages on a piece of paper and tear or stomp on it, claiming your power
- Do something you love that builds your resilience
- Reach out for support
- Feed your Dark Side some helium as it speaks to you ... it's hard to take it seriously when it squeaks like Donald Duck 😊
- Truth & Lies exercise

Dark Side Fling & Stomp

Close your eyes. See your Dark Side in front of you, composed of all your negative patterns. Check in now and see what it is saying and doing. Call out the messages that your Dark Side is telling you!

Now throw your Dark Side on the floor, and say out loud, "I know you are not me. I am not my patterns" and **stomp** it. Check it out now. Have you got its attention? Maybe it needs more stomping. Go ahead and stomp it some more. **Now look, your Guide is handing you a rope.** Take the rope and tie it around that squashed Dark Side. Hold on to the free end of the rope and start whirling it around in the air – around and around and around. Now just let it go! Take a deep breath and feel your strength.

*National award-winning slam poet Caira Lee speaks on **the power of radical self-love:***

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEHEMqmqz_qg

Truth & Lies: The Practice of Discernment

Remember when you gathered the bits of paper after the Dark Side ritual and tossed them into the fire? The words spoken currently are, *“The Dark Side told me I am __. That’s a lie! I am __!”* This is a powerful and transformative affirmation to remember. Listening to and giving credibility to the Dark Side voice can sabotage our growth by creating an inner state of shame and/or arrogance.

The Spiritual Self calls us to wholeness, to connection, to love. With the compassionate mindfulness of your Spiritual Self guiding you, there is the possibility of seeing, without shame or malice, what gets in your way, what creates separation, reactivity, inauthenticity, etc., so that you can take action towards a more joyful, loving, resilient, presence in life. There can even be a lightness in looking at patterns at times, an ability to laugh kindly at this human condition we all participate in.

However, the Dark Side voice can be so harsh or cruel, so absolute and damning, that we defend by denying our patterns and turning a blind eye to those places we need to strengthen. The compensation of our false self, our mask, gets more rigidified, and we can become defensive or arrogant. Or, we can go another direction and crumple with self loathing and shame, rendering us hopeless and paralyzed.

Learn to discern the Dark Side voice from your inner guidance that speaks truth. Take an area where you are struggling and look with compassionate honesty at your strengths and your weaknesses that are reflected in this situation. You might draw a line down the middle of the paper and write “truth” at the head of one column, and “lies” at the top of the other and write the messages under each heading. Discern the guidance of your Spiritual Self about skills that need strengthening, or awareness you need to build, from the condemnation and absolutism of the Dark Side. For example, in looking at your relationship, a truth might be that you need to build your communication skills, practice listening, cultivate compassion, be sensitive to where the other is in the moment, speak from the “I” and so forth. The Dark Side lie, which will undermine healthy awareness, might say something like, “No one understands you. No one listens to you. You’re not loveable. It’s hopeless. It’s always like this. Give it up! It’s too late, etc.”

