

The background of the entire image is a soft, light blue gradient. In the lower-left foreground, two hands are clasped together, with fingers interlaced. The hands appear to be of a light skin tone. The person's arm and a portion of their dark hair are visible at the bottom left. The text is overlaid on this background.

H E A R T  
O P E N E R S

*The practice of living engaged and aligned*

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M A N D Y R E I D

F O R W A R D



*“The wound is the place where the light enters you.” -Rumi*

In the past few years, I have become well acquainted with the art of numbing out. It became easier to sever the root nerve lying deep in my spirit, than to sit in surrender amidst the hard things.

Numbing out manifests itself in a million distracting ways- accomplishing exactly what we chose for it to do. Author Brené Brown says, “We cannot selectively numb emotions, when we numb the painful emotions, we also numb the positive emotions.” Plainly, our numbing out doesn’t just numb the pain in our lives, it numbs everything else along the way.

The realization of the entirety of my being numbing out, was when I confessed to a friend how I couldn’t remember the last time I had laughed until I cried. My numbness ran deep, and it manifested itself in excruciating psychosomatic back pain which lasted years. The irony of the situation was I was numbing in order to not feel pain. But in reality, I was inflicting far more pain than my numb heart could presently comprehend.

One evening, after my children were tucked in bed, I rolled out my yoga mat and began my Holy Yoga practice. I moved from asana to asana, finding my breath, and setting my intention. But, as I moved into a deep heart opening Urdhva Dhanurasana (Upward Facing Bow or Wheel Pose), something cracked in my heart. There was a loosening; a release of emotions in this heart opener I felt I could barely handle. My breath shortened and I started to panic. Even in this deeply uncomfortable space, my heart was beginning to open. It was the beginnings of freedom.

This space of heart opening is holy ground. When we drop our guard, and choose to open our hearts in surrender, a beautiful exchange takes place. Is it easy or comfortable? No. Is it absolutely essential to our freedom? Yes. As we open our

hearts in vulnerability, we are opting into the hard places of the heart. But, hear this loud and clear, friends: The hard places are landscaped with beauty; covered and immersed in grace and unfathomable love. There is no question: Jesus' love carries us through the land of desolation and pain as we open our hearts.

We can bravely and boldly lay our heart bare before Jesus. We know this because His love will never fail to cover us and carry us through.

Ephesians 5:14 (NLT) says, "...Awake, O sleeper, and rise from the dead; and Christ shall give you light."

This verse is my prayer for you as you bravely open your heart in the next five days. My prayer is The Spirit will move across your heart, as it is cracked open at the foot of The Cross. I pray that The Father would tenderly scoop you up in his strong arms, and bring comfort and reassurance that he has you in these deep waters.

Today we open our hearts. Today we experience freedom.

**-Mandy Reid**

*M-HYI*

HOW TO USE THIS  
DEVOTIONAL



This devotional consists of five readings, and two video yoga practices. You can do them consecutively for five days, or choose to ruminate on each one for however long you like.

My suggestion is to read the devotional as your intention, and then move to your mat to practice and worship. At the end of each devotional there are journaling questions to help you navigate and mark what you learned in your body, mind, and spirit after the entirety of your practice.

The video yoga practices consist of a Slow Flow and a Power Flow. If power vinyasa is not in your practice, do not fear! Feel free to modify as you see fit.

Hence the name of the series, there will be quite a bit of heart opening poses. My advice would be to give yourself copious amounts of bounding grace and be patient with your heart and body as you learn to open your heart. Those of us who hold trauma or numbness in our bodies may find heart openers to be quite challenging. The good news is there is no HAVE TO in these practices! You are in the safety of your own home practicing, and you are free to move and proceed at your own pace. Opening your heart is a journey, not a destination.

Who God has created me to be in Himself, acknowledges who you are created to be in Him.

*Namaste.*

DAY 1

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*“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me— watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”*

— **Matthew 11:28-30**

The importance of vulnerability comes into play when we open our hearts. Heart openers require an organic rawness and receptivity as we open up the most precious part of our beings. This heart space may be tight; especially if we have been wounded. Trauma hangs around in the back sides of our hearts, and we learn to over compensate by numbing and closing off this crucial space.

As uncharted and frightening as heart openers may feel- in this space we are held by the very one who created our hearts. The corners of our souls, badly burnt out from the burdens of life and religion, he restores and makes new. I love how the message speaks of “unforced rhythms of grace.” There is no striving, no muscling through. In this space, all that is required of us is showing up and surrendering.

Today, friends, let’s choose to show up. Let’s show up in our brokenness and in our grief. Let’s lay our trauma and our wounds at the foot of the cross, as His grace and unfathomable love washes over us.

This practice is about creating space, so that the Lover of our souls can move and mend, restore and renew.

**Mantra / Intention:** “Open your heart.”



# Journaling Reflection

1.) What areas in your heart and life are you burnt out?

2.) Are you closing off your heart space? Physically? Emotionally? Spiritually?

3.) What did you notice happen in your body on your mat today?

4.) How did Jesus meet you on your mat today?

DAY 2

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*“For here’s what I’m going to do: I’m going to take you out of these countries, gather you from all over, and bring you back to your own land. I’ll pour pure water over you and scrub you clean. I’ll give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I’ll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that’s God-willed, not self-willed. I’ll put my Spirit in you and make it possible for you to do what I tell you and live by my commands. You’ll once again live in the land I gave your ancestors. You’ll be my people! I’ll be your God.”*

— Ezekiel 36:24-26

There is a holy exchange which happens when show up in vulnerability, offering our hearts. As we open up to His majesty and glory, something holy begins to shift. Our hearts are transplanted with hearts that are God-willed. We no longer are slaves to protecting our heart space. The one who hung on a tree for our redemption and freedom is the shield for our wounded hearts. Even when troubles, and trials, and trauma finds it’s way into our lives, He continues to soften our hearts, as we release what is not ours to hold on to.

By definition, to “release” in the English language means to “allow or enable to escape from confinement; set free\*.” So, when we experience release, we are literally allowing our hearts to escape confinement and set free to worship Jesus with all our bodies, minds and strength.

**Mantra / Intention:** Relinquish. Allow him to soften the hard places, as you make room with your breath.



## Journaling Reflection

1. Is vulnerability a hard concept for you? How so?
2. How has vulnerability injured you in the past in broken relationships?
3. How has lack of vulnerability effected your relationship with those around you? With your relationship with God?
- 4, Was there release on your mat today?

DAY 3

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*“My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you’ve been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You’re deeply rooted in him. You’re well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you’ve been taught. School’s out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving.”*

— Colossians 2:7

As yogis, we know the vital importance of engagement and alignment. If we try opening our hearts without first connecting to our source (Jesus), and aligning and engaging ourself in His mercy and love- we are highly likely to injure ourselves.

So, when we come to our mats, we first seek The Truth. We root ourselves in what He has spoken to us; through His word, and through His spirit. When we root ourselves in His truth, we are tuned into His frequency of love- which in return allows us to not be afraid to open our hearts to Him.

Once we are rooted (engaged) in truth, secure in His love, we then align ourselves to what He is asking of us. Can we release the tension of fear of fear and worry? Can we allow his Spirit to move through us, making a clean sweep of brokenness, as we deepen our breath?

**Mantra / Intention:** Rooted and aligned, we then begin to move in love.



# Journaling Reflection

1.) What Truth has he spoken in your life (currently or in the past)?

2.) How can you root into that truth?

3.) What is He currently asking your to align yourself with?

4.) In your practice, how is his love spurring you on to move?

DAY 4

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*“My response is to get down on my knees before the Father, this magnificent Father who parcels out all heaven and earth. I ask him to strengthen you by his Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in. And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.”*

— Ephesians 3:14-19

Clearly, I remember the night The Lord spoke to my heart about love. I was serving at a Holy Yoga Instructor retreat, and under a black diamond velvet sky, I heard Him speak in the corners of my heart. My question had been why I struggled so deeply with fear and anxiety. His response was simple, piercing, and profound: You wouldn’t fear if you knew how much I loved you.

What truth that is! No one can move into freedom from ANYTHING until they know how much they are loved. Love is what is greater than fear. Love is what propels us forward. Love is what opens our weary, broken hearts. Love is what hung on a tree.

In this practice, can we “experience the breadth”, “test the length”, and “plumb to the depths” of this scandalous love for us?

**Mantra / Intention:** Let love lead.



## Journaling Reflection

1.) In your relationship with the Lord, where has religion and rules overtaken love?

2.) What is the deep struggle laying in the dark corners of your heart? What would this struggle look like if you experienced the fullness of God's love for you?

3.) Take a few minutes to meditate on Jesus' love for you. Record here what he speaks to your heart.

DAY 5

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“So, what do you think? With God on our side like this, how can we lose? If God didn’t hesitate to put everything on the line for us, embracing our condition and exposing himself to the worst by sending his own Son, is there anything else he wouldn’t gladly and freely do for us? And who would dare tangle with God by messing with one of God’s chosen? Who would dare even to point a finger? The One who died for us—who was raised to life for us!—is in the presence of God at this very moment sticking up for us. Do you think anyone is going to be able to drive a wedge between us and Christ’s love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture:

*They kill us in cold blood because they hate you.*

*We’re sitting ducks; they pick us off one by one.*

*None of this fazes us because Jesus loves us. I’m absolutely convinced that nothing—nothing living or dead, angelic or demonic, today or tomorrow, high or low, thinkable or unthinkable—absolutely nothing can get between us and God’s love because of the way that Jesus our Master has embraced us.”*

— **Romans 8:31-39**

If we open our hearts to allow Jesus’ love to lead, we expose all the hurt, the shame, the guilt, and the fear inside of our souls. The Message paraphrases Romans 8 so beautifully by saying he “exposed himself to the worst.” In other words, He elected into the hard spaces, because love for you and I led Him to do so. Likewise, we can also surrender our fear and open our hearts, as we elect into the hard places where love leads us. Because of who He is, we can follow love. His character has never failed us, and it never will. Will we understand and reconcile everything on this side of Heaven? No. But, we can rest assured- His love is carrying our broken pieces.

Healing takes time, and cannot be rushed. We must sit in brokenness; fully rooted in TRUTH knowing HE IS COMING FOR US. Our broken hearts are not the end of the story. The worshipful crescendo of our hearts aligned and made whole is on its way- whether it be on this side of eternity, or the next.

**Mantra / Intention:** Open your heart to His mystery and to healing.



## Journaling Reflection

1.) What emotions or thoughts does the concept of exposing your heart before Jesus invoke?

2.) What is the most important thing that has surfaced in your heart over the last five practices?

3.) What is The Lord asking of you next?

# EPILOGUE



Well done, friends. You have bravely shown up, embracing all the brokenness and humanness of what it feels like to expose your heart to The Lord. I pray this is the beginning of a new found freedom, and a new openness to fully engage in living a life of love crescendo, right into eternity when He takes you home.

*Namaste.*

ABOUT THE  
AUTHOR





Mandy Reid is a Master Holy Yoga Instructor who lives and teaches in Tennessee. Mandy also teaches **online yoga video practices**. When she isn't teaching, she's writing on her blog **mandyreidyoga.com**, and is Editor in Chief for the online yoga publication **Mind Full Collective**. Mandy is married to her best friend, and is mama to two wildly beautiful, adventurous girls. She enjoys organic green smoothies, homemade donuts and whiskey.

