

52
PRESCRIPTIONS
FOR
HAPPINESS

A YEAR OF INSPIRATION
for the BODY, MIND, AND SOUL

FEATURING THE
BREATHTAKING IMAGERY OF
52 VISIONARY ARTISTS

Mali Apple & Joe Dunn

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Contents

A Year for Happiness

- 1** Come from Your Center—Connect with Your Source of Personal Power
- 2** Free Yourself—Lighten Up by Letting Go
- 3** Create a Shortcut to Your Source—Instantly Connect with Your Higher Self
- 4** Feel the Essence—Tap Into Your Energetic Connection with Everything
- 5** Loosen Up! If You Don't Need It, Relax It
- 6** Go Through the Magic Door—The Ultimate Cure for a Bad Hair Day
- 7** Free Your Inner Filter—Kiss Your Assumptions Goodbye
- 8** Give Yourself Permission—It's Okay to Be Human!
- 9** Turn Off Your Autopilot—Activate Your Body and Brain
- 10** Look for the Life—It's All Around You
- 11** Resonate! Connect with the Feeling of Sound
- 12** See the Full Spectrum—Brighten Your Life with Color
- 13** Open Up Some Space—Make More Room for Life in Your Life
- 14** Let It Shine! Light Up from the Inside
- 15** Play with Patterns—Feel Them with All Your Senses
- 16** Try Not Knowing—Ignorance Really Can Be Bliss
- 17** Make Nature Your Meditation—And Feel Its Perfection in You
- 18** S-t-r-e-t-c-h Yourself! Stay Flexible for Life
- 19** Take a Personal Energy Inventory—And Invest Your Life Energy Wisely
- 20** Listen for the Music—The World Is Your Symphony
- 21** Feel the Love—Celebrate the Memory of Someone Special
- 22** Move into the Slow Lane—See What You've Been Missing
- 23** Feel Into the Beauty—And Find It in Yourself
- 24** Release Your "Stuff"—Simple Practices for Letting Go
- 25** Open Up to Your Intuitive Voice—It Has Something to Tell You

- 26** Challenge Your Body—Stay Strong for Life
- 27** Sense the Temp! Enjoy the Stimulating Sensations
- 28** See Your Path as Perfect—Even If It's a Zigzag
- 29** Widen Your Horizon—Gain Insight by Seeing All Sides
- 30** Be Tactile—Tune Into Your Largest Sensory System
- 31** Love Your Body—And It Will Love You Back
- 32** Uncover the Connections—The Insights Will Surprise You
- 33** Ease Up on Expectations—And Experience More Appreciation
- 34** Be Like Water—Flow with Ease and Serenity
- 35** Turn Up Your Sensory Radar—Switch Off One Sense to Amplify the Others
- 36** Rejuvenate! Give Your Body the Gift of Touch
- 37** Conduct a Thought Experiment—Expand Your Perspective
- 38** Reframe Your Experience—And Watch Irritation Dissolve
- 39** Take It Easy—Lighten Your Approach to Life
- 40** Open Your Heart—Make a Connection with the People in Your Life
- 41** Free Your Inner Artist—Let Creativity Flow
- 42** Focus More on How You Feel—And Less on How You Look
- 43** Sing Out! Open Up Your Voice
- 44** Engage Your Inner Senses—Feel Yourself from Within
- 45** View Your Life as a Movie—Appreciate the Perfection in the Connections
- 46** Savor the Flavors—Season Your Food with Awareness
- 47** Listen to Your Body—It Knows What It Needs
- 48** Reflect on the Light—Brighten Up from the Inside
- 49** Just Add Gratitude—A Recipe for Happiness
- 50** Challenge Your “I Don’t Like” Beliefs—And Enhance Your Sensory Experience
- 51** Harness the Energy of Intention—Get the Most from Every Experience
- 52** Play with Synesthesia—Heighten Your Sensory Sensitivity

A Year for Happiness

Welcome to *52 Prescriptions for Happiness*. Each of the “prescriptions” in this book is a week’s worth of simple practices to open up your body, expand your mind, and nurture your soul. As you incorporate these practices into your life, you’ll feel more connected to yourself, to others, and to the world around you—and just plain happier overall.

Happiness Prescriptions to Open Up the Body

The practices designed for the body will have you feeling healthier, stronger, more grounded, and more relaxed. You will discover

- quick and easy practices to relieve stress, keep your muscles and bones healthy, improve flexibility, and speed healing.
- simple techniques for releasing endorphins, those “feel-good” hormones that decrease pain, lower blood pressure, boost immunity, and slow the aging process.
- natural ways to promote circulation and deep breathing, putting more oxygen into your bloodstream and energizing both your body and brain.
- mini-meditations that calm the body and enhance the immune system—no mantras or special positions required!
- fun and intriguing ideas for opening up *all* your senses, including those beyond sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

Happiness Prescriptions to Expand the Mind

The practices designed for the mind will free you from negative thought patterns, increase your self-confidence, and enhance your creativity.

You'll explore

- a mood elevator that instantly makes you feel more positive and optimistic.
- exercises that promote imagination, quiet negative self-talk, and raise self-esteem.
- the “Magic Door” that propels you from self-doubt into self-confidence.
- thought experiments for finding peace in stressful situations and gaining new perspectives and insights.
- a personal energy inventory that will inspire you to invest your life energy wisely.
- powerful processes for releasing regrets, resentments, and guilt.
- mini-meditations that quiet your mind, improve your attitude, and relieve anxiety and stress—all in just a minute or two!
- techniques to slow age-related memory loss by stimulating your brain in new ways.

Happiness Prescriptions to Nurture the Soul

The practices designed for the soul will bring more ease into every aspect of your life: at work, in your home, and with your friends and family. You'll encounter

- heart-opening ways to connect with the people in your life and the world around you.
- practices for increasing self-love and opening up to your full potential.
- a powerful tool to instantly access your inner wisdom.
- a simple technique for coming from your center, your source of personal strength and power.
- mini-meditations that will leave you feeling centered, refreshed, and recharged.
- an effective method for recognizing and developing your intuition.
- visualizations to give you helpful insights into events and situations in your life.

The Visionary Artists

The artists featured in this book were chosen not only for their stunning images, but also for the spirit and intention with which they created them. We encourage you to give yourself a few moments to quietly contemplate each piece.

In their personal statements, many of the artists speak of dreams, meditation, music, or intuition as being integral to their creative process. Others are inspired by periods of prayer, visualization, or deep self-exploration.

Many of the pieces feature symbolic imagery from various traditions. Some celebrate the beauty and rhythms of nature, the seasons, and the earth. Others are intended to be used as meditation and healing tools: some of the artists mention working with the healing power of color or intentionally channeling healing energy into their work. Several talk about allowing the creative force to flow through them and simply being a witness as the images develop.

The intention behind all of the artwork is to uplift and inspire you, the viewer. You may find that the images offer encouragement to you on your own path and help you sense your connection to yourself and the world around you. They may inspire wonder, transformation, gratitude, serenity, joy—and, yes, happiness!

If you find yourself moved by the images, we encourage you to visit the artists' websites and support the work they are doing. They'll be happy to hear from you!



Come from Your Center Connect with Your Source of Personal Power

Martial artists in China call it the dantian. In Japan, they refer to it as the *hara*. This special place, an inch or so below the navel, is considered to be our body's source of *chi*, or *qi*—our life energy. Martial artists are taught to center their minds in this place and to make their movements from here.

Other people focus their attention a few inches above the navel, in the solar plexus. This area is known in Hindu, Buddhist, yoga, and other traditions as the third chakra. This chakra, or energy center, is believed to be the center of our power and autonomy. Still others think of the heart as the center of their being.

Wherever your center is, when you are away from it—such as when you're worried about what someone else might be doing, saying, or feeling—you will feel uncomfortable or uneasy. For example, the moment you immerse yourself in fearful thoughts about what your lover is thinking or allow yourself to speculate about their motives or intentions, you

disconnect from yourself and instantly feel uncertain or insecure. In other words, *you feel off balance when you're not in your center.*

This week, take some time to find your center. Standing with your feet firmly on the ground, shut your eyes. Now rock gently from side to side and back and forth, feeling for where the center of your body—your center of gravity and balance—seems to be. Don't worry about where martial artists or yogis believe the center of the body is. Find the spot that works for you.

Then, practice moving from your center. When you're walking or exercising, put your focus on that spot and envision your movements originating from there. Throw a ball, imagining that the energy you're using to throw it is coming from the center of your body. Try coming from your center when doing something that requires a burst of effort: focus on that place and let your actions arise from it. Also use this technique while riding a bike, roller-skating, or standing on one leg—anything that requires balance.

When you find yourself too much in your head, drop your attention down into your center. If you're thinking too much at night and can't fall asleep, or if you have to do something that you feel nervous or frightened about, calm yourself by focusing your attention in this place.

Coming from your center is a source of personal strength and power. Knowing how to come from your center is useful in all kinds of situations—anytime you're feeling scattered, afraid, jealous, envious, worried, ungrounded, anxious, or distracted. The discomfort you feel when you're uncentered can be your reminder to close your eyes, direct your attention to your center, and reconnect with your place of personal power.



Cristina McAllister, *Sacred State*

www.GypsyMystery.com

I am a self-taught artist and writer. My quest to infuse my work with meaning led me to explore the fascinating world of symbolic imagery, and my influences include art nouveau and art deco, tribal design, Celtic knotwork, and traditional art styles from all over the world. My art combines decorative design, sacred art, and symbols from diverse cultures around the globe into harmonious designs intended to inspire mindfulness, reverence, and celebration.



Free Yourself Lighten Up by Letting Go

Without knowing it, many of us continue to drag with us the heavy weight of things we did in the past. We often don't realize we're carrying these burdens until we happen to think about those particular events or get triggered by a similar event. To be able to let go of this psychological weight, it's essential that we forgive ourselves.

Slowly read through the list below. For any item that resonates with you, take a moment and see if you're ready to let go of blaming yourself for this past behavior. Ask yourself, "What have I learned from this experience?"

Know that forgiving yourself for something you did in the past doesn't mean you're condoning your behavior. On the contrary—it might inspire you to make amends in some way. Also understand that, given who you were at the time and the situation you were in, you did the best you could at that time.

Now say to yourself, "I'm ready to take my lessons from this and release the burden I've been carrying." Here are some suggestions for things you might forgive yourself for. And if none of these applies to you, reading them will get you in the state of mind for finding some that do!

This week I forgive myself for...

- Making a mistake
- Not doing enough or not doing it fast enough
- Being afraid
- Saying the “wrong” thing
- Getting frustrated
- Wasting money
- Being selfish
- Saying something unkind
- Being late
- Being stingy or petty
- Asking a “dumb” question
- Not feeling attractive enough
- Not feeling smart enough
- Not feeling good enough
- Making a bad decision
- Not accepting myself
- Not being a good friend
- Not being a good parent
- Getting impatient
- Wearing the “wrong” outfit
- Being thoughtless
- Not loving myself
- Being dishonest
- Not knowing better
- Getting upset
- Being lazy
- Being pushy
- Betraying someone
- Judging myself
- Not exercising
- Not eating well
- Not taking care of myself

As you go through your week, continue to watch for these and other self-blaming thoughts, and gently let them go.



Christopher Beikmann, *Full Moon Lakshmi*

www.chrisbeikmann.com

According to Hindu legend, Lakshmi was created at the same time as the moon during the great churning of the milky ocean. A central goddess in Hinduism, Lakshmi is celebrated during Diwali, The Festival of Lights. In Bengal, she is worshiped during a night in autumn when the moon is full, the brightest night of the year. It is believed she showers wealth on this night.

I consider myself a very spiritual person, but not bound to any one specific belief system. With my art I try to share my own exploration of world religion, mythology, and metaphysics. I hope my artwork inspires others to travel, learn, and discover the many cultures, people, and spiritual belief systems in this beautiful world in which we live. You may discover we're more alike than different in every way.



Create a Shortcut to Your Source Instantly Connect with Your Higher Self

Most of us have moments when we experience a deep sense of peace, awareness, or inspiration, or times when we feel in touch with our inner source of passion and wisdom. When we feel this deep connection to ourselves, we can put our attention on our current challenges and desires and receive clear guidance about how to best approach them.

A few people seem to live this way most of the time, while many of us feel connected to our higher self sporadically or only when we consciously give ourselves time to slow down, meditate, or connect with nature. At times we can feel cut off from this deep connection to ourselves—what some would call our higher self, our inner wisdom, the source, or the divine—for so long that it feels like an entirely separate entity to us.

Naming or associating an image with our higher self can help us find our way back to it when we're feeling stressed, confused, or otherwise challenged. A name or image gives us a very personal, direct connection with

our inner wisdom. The name or image can be anything, such as a mountain, an ocean, an eagle, or the wind.

- Lydia named her higher self Athena. “Athena is this beautiful, badass female gladiator,” Lydia explains. “I really relate to her strength and her wisdom.” When she’s feeling out of sorts, unsure, or worried, Lydia calls upon her inner gladiator and takes another look at the situation—through Athena’s eyes.
- The image of a fountain allows Sarah to instantly connect with the source of her creativity and passion. Sarah says, “Even if I’m not in touch with my fountain at times, I know that it is always accessible to me.”
- When Leon envisions his majestic “inner tree,” he immediately feels grounded and reunited with the source of his strength and personal power.
- Naomi sees her inner guide as an old, wise woman who offers compassion and guidance—a woman who looks at Naomi with love and understanding. “This image of myself as a loving grandmother instantly connects me with my own answers,” she says.

Naming your higher self will allow you to quickly reconnect with its essence and summon its strength when challenging times and situations arise. As Derek says, “When I feel ungrounded or unsure, I just feel for that ‘mountain energy’ inside me.”

Take some time this week to contemplate what image or symbol embodies *your* higher self. Then practice summoning that image or symbol anytime you could use the sage guidance of your inner wisdom.



Ragen Mendenhall, *Believer*

www.ragensart.com

I hope that everyone can find the thing that they most love doing in life and have as much fun doing it as I do. I have had a passion for making art for as long as I can remember. As a child, drawing and painting was completely natural to me, and now I know it to be a large part of my life's purpose. It is a ritual that reconnects me with a sense of reverence for being alive.

I hope that my work will strike a chord in people. I feel that art can serve as a mirror, and if we allow it to guide us, the emotion and beauty in art will reunite us with a more enlightened part of ourselves.



Feel the Essence Tap Into Your Energetic Connection with Everything

Think for a moment of all the places, people, or animals you've felt an energetic connection to, a connection you can't necessarily understand or explain. Now imagine how you might energetically connect with the playfulness of a puppy, the passion of a performer on stage, the peacefulness of a sunrise, or the serenity of a sleeping baby.

This week, experiment with connecting energetically with the world around you. Can you "feel" the smoothness of a mirror, the texture of a wood table, or the prickliness of a cactus without actually touching them? Can you sense the life and warmth of a candle flame? The effortlessness of a bird soaring overhead? The stillness of an overcast sky?

What energy do you experience when you watch the surface of a lake or the ocean, just feeling for the motion of the water? Can you feel the lightness of dry leaves as they're blown around by the fall wind? Are you able to feel into the energetic essence of a flower? Can you reach out energetically and sense a connection between you and a tree?

To increase your ability to energetically connect with people, it helps to let go of any ideas you might have about what you will experience. Think of how it feels when you gaze into an infant's eyes: the space between you is so clear that you can look deeply into this little being, and he or she seems to look just as deeply into you. What gets in the way of experiencing this with adults? *Our ideas about each other.*

When we approach someone with a lot of ideas about who they are and what we're going to see, we end up only being able to look *at* them. When we approach them with an open mind and heart about who they might be, we can look *into* them.

So this week, practice looking at the people you encounter while letting go of all the ideas you might be carrying about them. You might gaze at them with an intention to feel their essence. This can be especially rewarding with older people. Look into their faces with receptivity and openness, and you will likely feel a depth of life, a rich history, and the wisdom and experience that come from a lifetime of living.



Shawna Erback Studios, *Firefly Fairy*

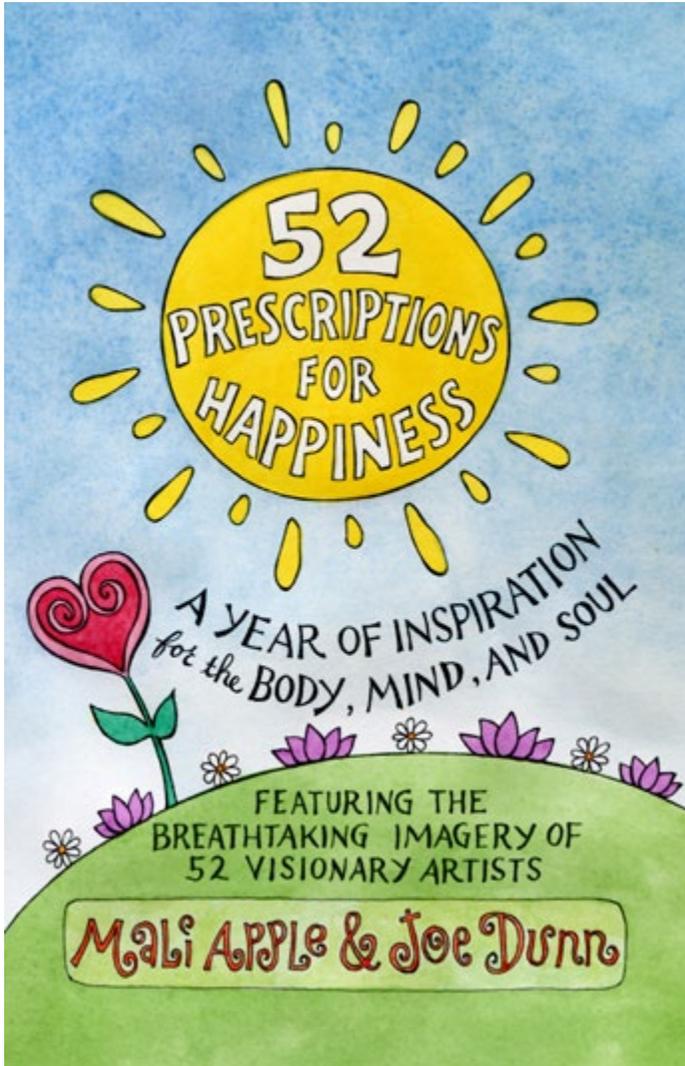
www.shawnaerback.com

I started painting when I was a child, but started my journey to becoming a professional artist the Christmas of 2003, a month after the death of my father. My collectors have followed the journey of a little girl through fantastical fields and forests, past sad, lonely moons and on the backs of giant turtles and fairy peacocks. They have met my special friends, like my faithful heart pet, grand giraffes and majestic lions.

I offer a unique style of dreamscapes, blending together surrealism and fantasy with gothic or whimsical tones, depending on where my mood takes me. With each stroke of my brush, I weave together a story. I draw the viewer into my world where we can sit together for a while and share a moment.

52 Prescriptions for Happiness

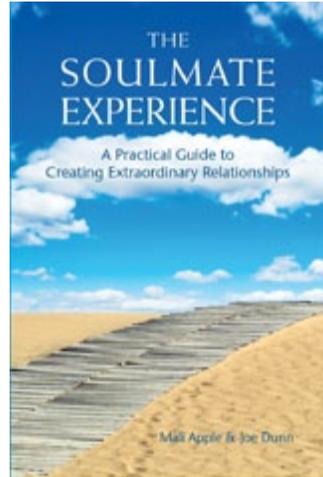
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Also by Mali Apple & Joe Dunn

The Soulmate Experience: A Practical Guide to Creating Extraordinary Relationships

Winner of the 2012 International Book Awards Gold Medal and the 2012 Living Now Awards Silver Medal, *The Soulmate Experience* has been called “A relationship guide masterpiece” and “A catalyst for transformation in life, relationships, and self.” Countless people are using the transformational ideas in this book to find and sustain relationships that are profoundly connected on every level—emotional, intellectual, sexual, and spiritual—or to simply add more “soulmate experience” to the relationships they already have.



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Mantras for Making Love

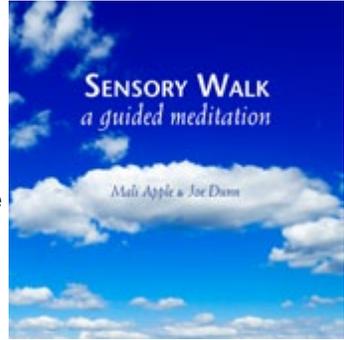
This 17-minute mp3 of soul-opening mantras and affirmations will inspire you to create a space for profound intimacy. By using these heart and soul opening statements, you will infuse your lovemaking with more connection, more passion, and more pleasure. You can use them to relax when you're feeling nervous, to heal limiting beliefs about yourselves or your bodies, and to deepen your connection and intimacy. Whether you're single or in a relationship, listening to the mantras will inspire you with new possibilities.



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