



## The Unexpected Tool That Healed My Body



S E L F - C A R E

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I'll never forget the moment I realized that my thoughts directly affected my body. I was 25 years old and I hadn't had my period in 4 years. I had seen every doctor you can think of, from OBGYNs to Gastroenterologists, to Allergy Specialists, to Nutritionists and Acupuncturists. All of which thought they knew why my period had stopped and how I could get it back.

I did all of their treatments which included several different diets, pills, herbs and exercises but none of it worked. Each time a treatment would fail to bring my period back, I would fall deeper into depression. My mind was flooded with negative thoughts about if there was something really wrong with me and if I would ever be able to have a baby.

One morning, I drove to the park to go for my daily run. I parked in an empty lot overlooking a green field. I sat in my car as I did most days, trying to psych myself up because running had become something I loathed during that time.

But this day, instead of jumping out for a run, I walked into the field and sat in the grass. I closed my eyes, felt the air on my skin and began to cry. It was as if all of the pressure of the last 4 years came down on me in that moment. I couldn't do anything. I was done trying. I was tired of hating myself.

I don't know how long I sat there but when I got up, something had shifted. My mind was no longer filled with negative thoughts about why I wasn't enough or what I should be doing. It was just peaceful. That day, I stopped trying to fix my body. I stopped worrying about my period, my future or how people perceived me. I stopped letting my mind tell me I was broken and instead I started living again.

Three months later, my period came back.

It was that day that I realized that I had been trying to heal my body all those years when really I

needed to heal my mind. I believe that my stressful thoughts had affected my body by shutting down my menstrual cycle. No pill, no diet, no exercise was going to bring it back. The work needed to be done emotionally, not physically.

Becoming more aware of my emotional wellbeing helped me tremendously through preparing to conceive, pregnancy and new motherhood. Although it wasn't always easy to remember to check in with my thoughts, when I did, I was able to process them better and get to the root of my problem with ease.

Working with Expectful, I've watched so many women's lives transformed by becoming aware of how their thoughts affect their health, relationships and overall happiness. Noticing the importance of this, I came up with three tools to enhance your emotional state so that your body and mind can be as healthy as possible.

1. **Gratitude Is Everywhere:** A few years back I was walking through a busy part of New York City when I saw someone holding a sign that said "Free hugs." When I looked up at the person holding it I saw a young man with a warm smile and arms stretched out wide. I didn't even think, I went in for the hug and felt a surge of love from this stranger. It was so simple, but creating that connection ignited so much positivity in me for days to come. A few months after that day I started a gratitude practice every morning where I visualize the people I love in my life and give them each a hug. This allows me to start each day feeling connected, supported and thankful for everyone in my life. This particular practice really helped me throughout my pregnancy because it allowed me to feel closer to my baby before she was even born. Visualizing giving her a gentle hug each morning filled me with love and confidence. Now as a new mom I get to give her real and "mind" hugs every morning.
2. **Expressing my feelings:** Halfway through my pregnancy I found myself feeling very disconnected from my husband. Whenever he would come home from work, I picked a fight with him, sometimes for no reason at all. It took me weeks to realize that behind all my anger was the fact that I felt unattractive and scared to lose him. Once I realized this fear, I sat him down, apologized and told him what was going on in my head. This realization allowed us to have an open communication about what he could do to help me feel more desirable and what I could do to not take out my frustrations on him. Having conversations like this and being honest about my thoughts and struggles has allowed me to not internalize my stress and has made me a healthier mom and wife emotionally and physically.
3. **Getting sensitive:** When I get angry I always describe it as "my blood is boiling." Mainly, because that's exactly how my body feels inside when I begin to have this emotion. My heart starts to beat faster, my body becomes tense and I feel a powerful flow of energy going through me. Although my husband often makes fun of my description, I look at this as my first indicator for checking in with myself. It's taken me years to become aware enough to catch my anger in action but the more I become sensitive to the signs my body tells me about my thoughts, the more I can catch myself before I react out of emotion. This practice of noticing the feelings in my body has allowed me to sit in stressful situations through pregnancy, birth and motherhood in ways I never could have imagined.

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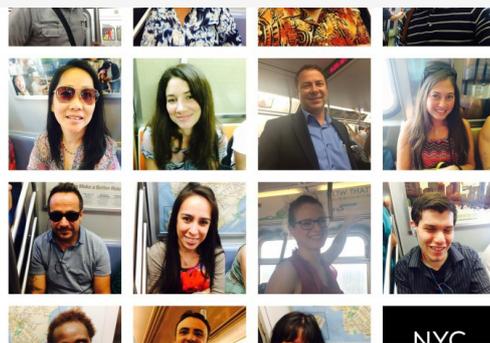


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