

294: Creating Sacred Space for Yourself



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Jen Riday

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You are listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast. I'm Dr. Jen Riday and in this episode, we're talking about creating sacred time and space for yourself. Stay tuned.

Hi, I'm Jen Riday. This podcast is for women who want to feel more vibrant, happy, aligned, and alive. You'll gain the emotional, physical, and spiritual tools you need to get your sparkle back and ensure that depression, anxiety, and struggle don't rule your life. Welcome to the Vibrant Happy Women Podcast.

My friends, are you languishing? There is an article that you may have read in The New York Times all about languishing. It's a state that is unique to the pandemic or at least written about most recently in regards to the pandemic. A state of feeling stuck in a level of uncertainty that leads to depression, and anxiety, and a lack of motivation. So let me ask you again. Are you languishing? Our nervous systems, our brains do best when we have some level of certainty. When we can predict what is going to come, when we can anticipate a pattern that is predictable.

And as you may have experienced during the pandemic that has been tricky. I have friends who have been in and out of lockdown six times in Melbourne, Australia. I have friends who have been in and out of lockdown that many times in the US. I happen to be in one of those counties. We have been in almost a continuous mask mandate. And so, the uncertainty is strange and different. And you might be languishing. You can know you're languishing if you find yourself scrolling endlessly on social media, or if you find yourself binge watching your latest Netflix series, or something on Hulu.

Nothing wrong with those things because these are numbing behaviors, something we can control in this state of feeling like nothing is predictable. We can control that we can click play on that next episode. It's mindless. It's comforting. It's soothing. But at some point, we hit a desire to stop

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feeling stuck and to gain some clarity again. And that happened to me recently. In fact, it's been happening to me for a while. Last May I almost left for two weeks to go to Montana. And you may have heard friends saying, "I want to move."

You may have talked to friends who want to change their careers. All of this is really at the subconscious level our brain's desire to create more predictability, more certainty in our lives. We want to flee this state of uncertainty. Well, I personally asked to move to New Zealand no less because New Zealand, they haven't had a lot of lockdowns. And that sounded great. My husband unfortunately said no and so did my kids because their friends are all here. But my subconscious brain wanted to create a new state that would feel better than this state of languishing.

Well, last May I thought the next best thing would be to run away. I felt this incredible urge to run away, and I was going to go to Montana because a friend of mine lived there. And it had beautiful mountains. And it just looked earthy, and calming, and my brain wanted that. I didn't leave.

Instead, we went on a trip to South Dakota which really, really helped. I created a space, a container where I could relax, and be close to nature, and get in touch with how I feel without the pressures of everyday life and responsibilities. It was fantastically healing even though I did it with my family. Well, we came to the month of September, my kids were back in school, and my longing came back, this longing to be alone, to heal, to bring the stress levels of my nervous system down.

And lucky for me I had an online event I needed to attend that was a weeklong or so. So, what did I do? I scheduled, I booked a hotel stay for myself that was even longer than the event. I spent a week alone, blissfully alone in Chicago while I attended the online event. Far enough away that nobody from home could ask me for anything, two hours from Madison, Wisconsin. But also close enough that I didn't have to book flights or

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anything else. And let me tell you, I needed that time alone. It was even better than being with my family in South Dakota.

We need time to heal, not just time but we need a space where we are totally safe from unpredictability, and uncertainty, and people needing, and wanting, and asking. A space for quiet, and safety, and healing, and solitude. So, I believe in these spaces. That is why I teach people to have a morning ritual, hopefully alone, getting up before the kids, doing it in your minivan. I love to teach women to take time away for themselves every month, maybe quarterly to go on a longer trip. And it doesn't have to be alone, sometimes it might be with friends who uplift you.

But these moments where we separate from being mom, and from being wife, and from being employee, and friend, and everything else we are, and just being us. Finding us again, identifying what we love, what we want, how we want to feel. They are healing. So, if you've felt like you've been languishing this episode is for you.

I have gathered three friends who have attended the Vibrant Happy Women retreat several times to create such a sacred space in their lives. And we're going to talk about what that means for them, what it means and why they take this space and what they hope to gain from doing this again in this coming February, especially doing it after a pandemic. Now, for you, you may or may not be attending the Vibrant Happy Women retreat but I encourage you to find a space to be alone, or a space to be with friends who uplift you and help you to heal and get that clarity.

Set the intention now to create a sacred space and time apart from your regular life just for you. Now, my guests today are Beth Wellday, Maria Paz, and Kristen Pierce. Maria is from Chicago. Beth is from the Detroit area. And Kristen is from Phoenix. I met them all at the Vibrant Happy Women retreat as I said, and I love them. I adore them. There is something

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beautiful about not only creating these sacred spaces to heal and to find clarity, but doing it with people who are likeminded, who are like us.

There is a synergy that comes from holding this sacred space in the presence of other women doing the same thing. So, I love these women because I've experienced this sacred space, holding and healing with them. Well, they're going to share their thoughts about this, and I hope it's helpful to you. Listen to the words they use when they talk about creating these sacred healing spaces, especially when they attend the retreat.

Notice the healing you hear in their voices, the excitement to be among likeminded women. The clarity they receive, the sparks as you'll hear Maria talking about. These spaces for ourselves are essential regularly, every day, every month, every quarter, getting what you need. So, without further ado let's go ahead and dive in.

Jen: What do you think right now, people are struggling with right now?

Maria: I think isolation. I mean coming out of this time, being in this virtual world, just being with other humans again is, it's still kind of iffy, it's still kind of scary. So, I think actual human connection, being in a room with other people I think is something.

Jen: Yeah. So, loneliness. Have you guys heard of the languishing thing from The New York Times?

Maria: No.

Jen: So, there's been some phrases created. There's this mental state of where you're in this unknown space, it's kind of halfway between normal

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and depressed where the uncertainty of not understanding your future is just exhausting to the brain. And so, it's a lack of motivation. It's depression. It's anxiety but it's also caused by the state of what's next, I can't predict anything in my life. So, I think people are struggling with that. I'm curious, personally what do you all hope to get out of the retreat this year besides friendship?

Maria: For me personally more than ever I think that I'm going to need your support and the support of the group. And I think this group has been amazing to me, like I told you, I will forever call you my happiness goddess. And the group is just how can I explain it? Like a strobe light in a party, or a disco ball. Every single one of the ladies in the group are that little ray, one of those rays that are sparking me, and giving me the energy, and the knowledge, and the will to change my life and to be truly who I am before the world, before life corrupted me.

And to go back in there and just putting all these little sparks, all these little rays of light in me that are making me. The first time we met in Florida, I can tell you, meeting Michelle, just her jolliness and her beautiful hair color that she has all the time. Meeting Lisa McGrath and her faith, meeting Danielle and her spunk and her dancing. Those are little sparks that they gave me. Mama bear, Michelle.

Jen: Yeah, [crosstalk].

Maria: And the last one I think, Natalie, who said, "Everything that you need is within you." It was that little spark. And I think I told you the last time I thought I need to get healthy. I need to take care of my body physically, emotionally. And when she stood up there in front of the group and was talking, everything that you need is within you. It's not outside. I think it was Courtney that also spoke about nurturing friendships. And she spoke about intimacy with yourselves. And all of those, like I said, little sparks, meeting

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Kit, I mean and interacting with her. Again, her little rockstar spunk is just amazing.

Jen: So, it kind of sounds like Maria, that part of it is kind of finding who you were before life kind of dragged you through the mud and getting back to your true self.

Maria: Absolutely.

Jen: Beth, how about for you, what are you hoping to gain from the retreat this year after the pandemic?

Beth: Yeah. I mean for me I think it's a reinvestment in myself. Typically, my job takes me out and about. I get to meet with people. I get to be in an office. And now I'm in my home by myself. And the engagement is just so much different than it used to be. And so that's brought some tough times just in terms of, I think, connection with people. And so, I guess that would be one of the things that I'd say is the connection. I remember the first year that I went. And I was so nervous going by myself. I remember even texting Jen saying, "I'm so nervous." Just to even go to this first dinner.

And then from that first moment at the first retreat, you just connect to people. And I think why I come back, this will be, I think, my fourth one, right, Jen? So, I just feel like it's my place to recharge. And I think the retreat really pushes me a little bit outside of my comfort zone in terms of I'm not the person to go on a vacation by myself. This is the only one I've ever done by myself. But the minute you get there you don't feel like you're by yourself anymore.

And you feel like you're in a safe environment where it's different than the rest of the world where I feel like if you went into a room with 50 other women you might feel judgment and you might feel, like you wonder what everybody's thinking about you. And in this environment, it does not feel

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like that. It feels like whether I got the chance to sit and talk to somebody at the retreat or not, you just feel this level of support from all these other women. It's a safe environment. And it just feels like somewhere where you can just be yourself and you can open up.

And so when I think about what do I want this year? I don't exactly know. I'm not sure that I'm going to come into it with a preconceived idea of what I want it to feel like. Because I just have a lot of trust in you, Jen, honestly, that the last three times I've been it's brought me exactly what I need. So, I just trust the process. I feel like I try to meet new people and I kind of go with the flow a little bit. I'm not the first one that wants you to turn on that music and get dancing, but I do it. And then I feel so much better after I do it. It just changes your energy level.

So that's what I have learned too is just kind of trust you really know how to put us in the right frame of mind to really think and invest in ourselves too. It's a common theme you probably bring for all of us. But based on whatever we're bringing to the table that year, it feels really different.

Jen: Thanks, Beth, I appreciate that. And how about for you Kristen, what are you hoping to gain from the retreat this year after a pandemic?

Kristen: I'm definitely looking to get some me time. I think in the pandemic and working from home, and I'm just looking to take a little break from all of those things and get away. And just focus on me for a few days. I do it at home as well, but I feel like it's easier to do when you get out of your normal routine and situation. When you remove yourself from your house, your home office, your daily routine, your family, even though I love them dearly, just to get away and focus on myself for a few days to rejuvenate and refresh.

I'm looking to have some fun. I had a lot of fun when I went before. Some of the ladies and I, we went dancing at the club in the evenings. I haven't

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done that since my 20s. That was awesome. I had to take ibuprofen after but still. And just eating and conversing, I think the food was great. I am a big fan of food. So just having kind of that buffet style of eating whatever I want. I don't have to cook it. I don't have to clean it. I can just show up and load up my plate. Somebody else will pick it up. It's all great. So just having that fun and strolling around the resort.

And it's a beautiful location. And sitting in some of those loungers and looking out at the water and the palm trees. Even when it was raining, coming from the desert, for me rain is exciting. So just changing, a change of scenery, a change of pace, focusing on myself having some fun. The women are amazing. And I think like Beth said, that we're all there for the same purpose. So, when you walk into that group you may not know anyone, or you might know a couple of faces. But there's no judgment.

There's no really that mean girl worry about what are they going to think if I say this thing, if I cry? Because we're all there for the same reason. And we're all vulnerable together and trusting. And so just raising our vibration together with the dancing, or with the workshops, just kind of getting that refresh. So, I'm really looking forward to spending that time, to giving that gift to myself of replenishing my own resources, to go back home and do all the things again.

Jen: Yeah, cool. Replenishing I heard you talk about. And I heard about, Maria said getting sparks from the other women. I love this. I agree. I'm looking forward to it even though I'm leading it. There's something energetic about just being in this healing, safe space with other women that I get just as much, if not more, as you guys. I'm a big proponent of us all taking space like this for ourselves regularly. So, in my life I try to go to a hotel for a solid few days at least once a quarter by myself. I find in that solitude a lot of clarity.

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So, while at a retreat like this we might not be alone. I would be curious, what kind of clarity have each of you received from past retreats, just thinking of maybe one, maybe two top things you came away with, of things you learned about yourself just from having that space away? So, we'll go in order again, Maria, Beth then Kristen.

Maria: For me I think it was learning about boundaries. I mean boundaries with my family, with my spouse, with my kids, boundaries at work, putting myself first. Realizing what I am willing and what I am not willing to accept going forward. That was huge for me. And I can only control my decisions, what I want, what I need. And I can't control anybody else. And I will set my boundaries for my own mental clarity, mental state. And if another individual whoever it may be cannot accept those, there's nothing I can do. Which is what I've done all this year and part of last year.

And I've tried one thing and I've tried another, and it hasn't worked so I've got to take the next step.

Jen: That's powerful, boundaries are huge. Once you learn them your life changes so much, yeah.

Maria: Absolutely.

Jen: And Beth, how about you?

Beth: Yeah. What's funny is, Jen knows I'm a journaler. I like art, that first one I brought post-its, and crayons, and markers, and all this. And it's funny because probably about three days ago I pulled out one of my old journals that was one that I had brought with me. And it had so many great notes and some of the questions Jen had asked to think about. And so just funny that you would text now, Jen, and ask about it because it was all kind of top of mind. But one of the big things was that I'm worth it. And whatever it is, whatever it is I'm worth it.

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I often put myself last or think of other people first, or whatever it might be. But just knowing that I'm worthy of the attention of the whatever it might be is a part of it. And then a big piece that I remember in the last one that we were in was that love is abundant. That you can always come from a place of love and that your life just changes when you do that. So, this last year I've gone through a divorce. And that has kind of been a bit of a mantra for me is that I could really be in this very, very kind of negative space especially with my ex-husband and it wouldn't help me.

And so, I just have really truly come from this place of I want to be the best person that I can be, and I want to do the right thing so that I can feel proud of it. And to me that all stems from this place of love and knowing that if I give that love it doesn't mean I'm taking it from something else. I think I remember us doing that and just kind of standing there and giving love and thinking about all the people who we wanted to give it to. And that it didn't mean that it meant we didn't have it for ourselves and for whatever we needed, that it was kind of like this endless supply of love.

And so, I think that's really, really helped me in this last year is instead of coming from hate, or fear, or whatever it might be, it's just made maybe my journey a little bit easier this year coming from a place of love.

Jen: Well, that's powerful, thank you, Beth. I had forgotten that exercise. I want to do that one again.

Beth: Yeah, that was great, it really was great.

Jen: And Kristen?

Kristen: Yeah, I think it kind of it's a combination of those things. I think definitely the boundaries, I am worth it, I deserve it. I deserve to give myself this time and space, that I am enough just as I am today. I feel like my clarity from the last retreat was really wow, I've come a long way in the

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couple of years since I had joined the club and started doing the personal work and putting the effort into loving myself and accepting myself. So, for me getting to the retreat was really kind of a point of clarity, like wow, I've come a long way for myself.

Jen: Yeah, and to celebrate the growth and we don't do that very often in our lives.

Kristen: Yeah, so it was. It was a gift to myself. It was kind of a milestone birthday that year, so I gifted it to myself to come. But I think there was a lot of that, I deserve this. And doing it on my own and giving myself that time and trying to work that into the rest of my life, just kind of keeping that thought that I am enough, and I deserve this, and I've come a long way.

Jen: Nice, I love that. Well, I appreciate this. And we can't always be at a retreat. We can create these special containers of time where we get this really big blast. I am curious how each of you try to replicate that sacred, soulful, grounded energy more regularly in your lives that you felt at the retreat, Maria?

Maria: I remember a call that I had with you that, you know, where I felt my heart. And you asked me to imagine feeling from my heart what it looked like for me to be in a different place or what it was that I wanted for myself. And I envision just what you're saying, this place filled with serenity, and filled with peace, and tranquility. And I've had that image in my mind and that's where I am headed towards right now. Hopefully soon I will have it because like I said, in the past few months I haven't had peace. I haven't had that space because of the issues and situations in my life.

But I'm ready to take that next step and to create that for myself and not wait for anybody else to create it for me.

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Jen: So, for you it's getting clear what you do want and holding the vision of that in your mind and with your energy?

Maria: Absolutely.

Jen: Law of attraction at work too. You're bringing it by focusing on it, yeah.

Maria: Yes.

Jen: Thanks, Maria. Beth?

Beth: For me initially when you asked that question, I thought, well, I think it is like that journaling and really trying to just stay present in a moment, kind of block out the world. I can get into a vibe where I just watch a Netflix series. And I can watch eight shows in a row and never really think throughout any of that. But that doesn't feed my spirit. That doesn't feed my soul. So, turning all of that world off and jumping into a journal is really helpful to me. But even more than that, after I went a little deeper is I've been surrounding myself with people like the people I've met at the retreat.

So, I really have, first of all I have a lot of friends from the retreat that I've trusted with some of the hard stuff in my life in this last year, that I can't trust everybody with. It's a special circle of people. And so, I would say that I think, especially over these last few years is I've felt that people enter in our lives and they're all in our lives for different reasons.

But being able to really kind of protect the close circle around me, to be with the people who really feed my energy and make me feel good about the person I am today. And that I can do anything and accomplish anything I want in the future, they're few and far between to find people that are that awesome. But I have the pleasure, I guess, of being around a good enough group of people that I have a handful of people that I think those people when I get to spend time with them are pretty awesome.

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Jen: I love that. Journaling's great but there's something safe energetically from being with others who lift us up in that way. I feel the same. Well, that's a great point, Beth. Kristen?

Kristen: Yeah, I think I've really made a point to create sacred time and space for myself every day with my morning routine, or a variation of that if I can't get the whole thing in, but at least spending a little bit of time for myself each day either journaling, or doing some yoga, or stretching, or running through some of my mantras, things like that. So, I really do make a point of spending a little bit of time for myself every day. And I'm trying to work on also building more white space into my calendar.

So, I've really been making an effort the last six months or so now to get things off of my plate that I don't need and not take on new projects that people are reaching out to me with new volunteer opportunities and things. But I'm really making a point to try to say, "No, thank you." So, I can spend more time on the things that I want to keep on my plate but not feel so pressured, and rushed, and pushed all the time. So, I can have a little more space in every day and every week for myself.

And trying to schedule in some fun, to remember to have some fun time with my daughter, with my husband. So really trying to make a point of scheduling those things for myself and keep them sacred is what I've been trying to do to kind of keep that fun, to keep that energy up. And just fill up my cup on a daily, on a regular basis. So, I think it's that, yeah, I think it happens in nature.

Jen: That's cool, yeah, nature. And for me sometimes when I go to these bigger events, not just the Vibrant Happy Women retreat, I like to attend events just for myself. I get a taste of how great it can feel. Then like you're saying, I try to schedule time to recreate that in my daily life and create that space again. Thank you, that's a great, great example, Kristen.

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Alright, you guys got me excited for the retreat now. My gosh, just hearing you.

Beth: It was really funny, Jen, that I seriously pulled out that journal the other day and I was like, “Oh my gosh.” Because I don’t know if you remember after that first year, I took an extra day. And I then kind of just put it all in my head. And I am, I’m super excited about it, I really am.

Jen: I am too. And I remember, Beth, you were at the very first one and I was nervous to come and join you all for dinner. And then when we sat down, I’m like, “Oh my gosh, these women are cool. These are the people I would want to be best friend’s with.” And we’ve been in touch ever since in a private little Messenger group, so yeah.

Beth: And I remember sitting next to Jen that day and saying, “Oh my God, I’m so nervous. I’m sitting next to a celebrity.” Do you remember that, Jen? I was so nervous. I was like, “Oh my gosh, this woman is so amazing, and I get to sit next to her at dinner personally.” Now she’s my buddy. Now she’s my buddy. I love it.

Jen: Yeah, now we’re buddies, yeah, same. And Maria, and Kristen, I think you guys were there the second year.

Kristen: Second, yeah.

Maria: Yes.

Jen: Oh my gosh, I mean and then to get to keep building this friendship year after year. I just love you guys.

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So, there you have it. That was Kristen, Beth, and Maria, sharing that like me, like probably all of you listening, we all need space to hear ourselves think, space where nothing is required of us, space where we feel safe, and held, and nurtured. Space where we can heal in that sacred space. So set an intention now to create some of that sacred space for yourself, not only through a morning ritual and spending time alone, but lengthier time.

In my experience when I spend three, four, five, sometimes seven days away, each progressive day releases yet another layer of the onion of stress, yet another layer of the emotional baggage, yet another layer of the resentment that can build up. And then I get back to my core self, to the real Jen. So, if you've been longing to get back to your power, to heal, to release, to relax, to recharge, create that space for yourself. You're in charge of your life and it's up to you to create and go after and invest in that sacred space and that time for you.

In my experience I always come back more motivated, happier, excited to be around my kids, laughing, dancing and it's to the point where my family will encourage me to go when I get away from that rejuvenated version, that real version of who I am. And I'm grateful and lucky for that. Now, it wasn't always that way. When I started taking these sacred space trips and retreats for myself, I had to take it. No one was telling me to go.

I had to say, "I'm doing this. Here is what the kids will need while I'm gone. I'm doing this. Good luck with your homework. I won't be reachable except by emergency." I had to set the boundary. I had to value and love myself enough to ensure that I could go back, clean up, declutter all that emotional stress and baggage and become the most radiant, true, real, happy version of myself. This is our work. We model this for everyone. We give all women permission to do this when we set the example. So set that intention, create that sacred space for you.

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And if you'd like to do that at the retreat you can learn more and sign up at jenriday.com/retreat. We have a few spots left. My friends, I love you. I want you to be happy. You deserve that. Go grab it. And I'll see you again next time. Until then make it a vibrant and happy week. Take care.

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