



FROM MEDITATION TO MUSHROOMS

Nikki Mark's Toolkit of Alternative Healing Modalities

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AKA: "Magic Mushrooms." The ritual and ceremonial use of psilocybin dates back to pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. Today psilocybin is used underground for seriously deep healing and transformation.

Dear Friends

The day my son passed away, my head froze, my heart cracked open, and I was desperate to find a way to survive for my younger son in this world and honor my older son in the one beyond. The task seemed impossible.

One of the first people I turned to for help was a psychologist who told me, "Your head is fine - your heart is what's broken." So off I went to heal my heart.

The problem was that when I searched for more help, I didn't like what I saw.

I didn't want to pay for weekly therapy sessions for the rest of my life. I also didn't want to spend thousands of dollars a year numbing myself and becoming dependent on prescriptions. Given the alarming rise of depression, anxiety, mental illness, and prescription addiction across the country, I had no faith in them.

So, tapping into my 20+ career building start-up companies, I took an entrepreneurial approach to healing and transformation. I searched high and low for alternative healing modalities and tried the ones that spoke to me, for whatever reason - a friend's referral or a gut instinct.

Like a rogue scientist on a mission to heal a broken heart, I deeply researched and rigorously tested. After devoting thousands of hours to trying anything and everything to help me and my family persevere, I identified treatment options that work faster, cost less, and quite frankly, are a lot more fun.

Five years later, I now share with you my top ten favorite healing modalities - from ancient to alternative. Explore what resonates with you.

I hope that this guide will serve as a touchstone resource to help you heal your own wounds, transform into your highest self, and lead a more heart-centered and fulfilling life that will in turn help heal our world.



With love,

Nikki

P.S. Of all the modalities I have tried, "being of service" has healed me the most. In that light, freely share this guide with friends and family who you think will find this valuable by directing them to NikkiMark.com/resources to download their own copy. If you would like to learn about the power of "Ancestral Healing" - complete with my personal experience and resources - visit the same page.

To get all the riveting details about Nikki's experience, consider *Tommy's Field: Love, Loss, and the Goal of a Lifetime* as your next read. For additional resources and weekly articles about healing our hearts, be sure to subscribe at NikkiMark.com.

HEALING MODALITY #1

Meditation

Why I Tried It

I was desperate, that's why. The woman I was five years ago rolled her eyes at anyone who mentioned the "M" word. But when tragedy struck and I personally experienced the true meaning of words like "PTSD," "Anxiety" and "Depression," I surrendered.

My First Experience

My first meditation class was a "sound bath." When I arrived, I promptly laid down on a mat, closed my eyes and did whatever the instructor said, which was basically nothing. She played her crystal bowls that emitted beautiful sounds and vibrations for the next forty minutes. She said the vibrations of the bowls "clear our subconscious, strengthen our immune system and raise our individual frequencies."

I had no idea what she meant by "frequencies" but it sounded promising. I did very little "meditating" that day, but when I left, I felt enormous gratitude for the instructor and other attendees who were not overly woo-woo and for the most part were regular people like me working on transforming themselves.

I also felt hopeful that this ancient practice I once dreaded was a key to a brighter future.



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The Benefits

According to author, lecturer and – in my opinion - compelling thought leader Dr. Joe Dispenza: when we meditate our brain waves slow, our bossy thinking brain goes off-line and we are able to tap into our subconscious operating system, aka: the autonomic nervous system.

The autonomic nervous system knows how to heal our bodies from pain and stress better than our conscious minds. Meditation gives our subconscious the chance to rewire thought patterns causing mental and physical stress, and it opens up space for healing and change. “Silence is food for our nerves,” a spiritual teacher recently told me.

Whether we meditate by standing, sitting, moving or lying down, a meditation practice has been shown to improve attention, memory, creativity and focus, while reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, addiction and insomnia.



Personal Results

My experience tells me it does all that. After my free two-week trial ended, I started meditating almost every morning and evening for at least three years straight. I experimented with a variety of classes and after three months, the thick grief clogging my head began to release; unexpected messages started dropping in during sessions; and symbols started projecting like movies on the backs of my eyelids.

I had never experienced anything like this before. Beyond all the magic (which I now crave by the way) **the practice eased my suffering and calmed my nerves.**



Some Tips

Start by carving out time at the beginning or end of your day – or even during your lunch hour – so you get into a regular rhythm. At first, you may feel bored, silly, frustrated, or all of the above, and want to give up too soon. You may not be able to stop your “monkey mind” that loops with your to-do list. Just stick with it. Like anything, the more you practice, the easier it gets, and the sooner you will drop into your subconscious to experience the overall benefits.



Want to Try?

Reading about it is a start but to really understand it, you have to experience it for yourself. In Los Angeles, [Unplug Meditation](#) offers a variety of classes both in person, online and via its own app. [Dr. Joe Dispenza](#) offers some very popular guided meditations on his site and for free on YouTube. [Kristina Joy \(Vibe Alchemist\)](#) offers very popular and soothing sound baths online. [Mindvalley](#) offers a number of meditations of varying lengths by excellent instructors, and [Insight Timer](#), [HeadSpace](#), and [Calm](#) are the best apps I know. Plus, there are online meditation courses (that give you a framework on how to meditate), like [this one](#) from Mountain Cloud Zen Center. **Once you start exploring this practice and get comfortable with it, you can meditate on your own wherever and whenever you want.**



Top Takeaway

It's life changing. And it's progressive, meaning: The more you do it, the more benefits you receive from it. There is no one way to meditate. Find one that works for you.

HEALING MODALITY #2

Breathwork

Why I Tried It

When I first tried breathwork, I knew nothing about it and wandered into a class down the street to see what it was about. I quickly learned it is a powerful technique that circulates energy through the body, removes stuck energy, and helps heal the mind, body and spirit from the inside-out.



My First Experience

The instructor started with an inspirational speech and then taught a specific yet simple breathing technique. I was pleasantly surprised when he turned up music in class to provide a rhythm for our breath and keep us engaged. We breathed in a specific pattern for approximately thirty-five minutes before finishing in silence for another five minutes. I found that the deeper I breathed, the more I felt energy racing through my body, opening up my chest and making my hands, feet and crown of my head tingle. It was very emotional. Tears poured out of me. I literally felt my breath moving grief through – and out of my system.

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Breathwork

The Benefits

Author James Nestor says in his book, Breath, that breathing is so important to counter our body’s response to stress that “Before automatically diagnosing ourselves with mental illness associated with issues like anxiety and panic attacks, it would be a lot less expensive and far more prudent if we first tried learning how to breathe.” Practicing and making adjustments to how we breathe can also improve athletic-performance; reduce snoring and asthma; and even rejuvenate our internal organs.



Personal Results

I now know how to use my breath to calm my nerves when I’m feeling stressed and to relax my brain when I wake up in the middle of the night and can’t fall back asleep. I have found breathwork to be the fastest and most effective ‘medicine’ for getting through my worst moments of grief.*

Meet a
Healer

 **WATCH THE INTERVIEW**



**CHRIS
PLOURDE**
BREATHWORK COACH

* I wrote an article entitled [Breathing through the Andes](#) if you want to learn more of the surprising benefits I experienced by practicing this modality.

Breathwork



Some Tips

Breathwork classes can be found online, as well as in many yoga and meditation centers. Many teachers also offer group classes on their own in private locations, including the beach.

While Breathwork is “work,” practicing it with others is not only motivating but creates a powerful “network” of energetic healing. **Once you learn a few different breathing techniques, you can always set a timer, put on some inspiring music with headphones and do the practice anytime and anywhere.**

Want to Try?

Read James Nestor’s book, [Breath](#) if you want to learn more about transforming your lungs and your life. One of my favorite instructors is [Chris Plourde](#) because he’s practical about it, not overly woo-woo, and sometimes offers a donation-based zoom class once a week. [Unplug](#) in Santa Monica, California also offers a variety of great breathwork instructors both in person and on its app. Also the [Insight Timer](#) app offers some fantastic, short daily breathwork courses with membership.



Top Takeaway

Beyond improving stamina and being a powerful stress reducer, breathwork is the foundation for getting the most out of all healing modalities. It activates the parasympathetic nervous system, interrupts the “fight / flight / freeze” cycle that we tend to live in, reduces anxiety and calms the mind.

HEALING MODALITY #3

Yoga

Why I Tried It

While yoga is now fairly mainstream, I turned to it for survival. Emotions manifest into physical symptoms. Research confirms it, and I have lived it. A week after my son passed away, I felt stabbing pain in my back, my breathing was labored, and I couldn't eat or sleep. I knew I had to move my body and circulate energy through it before the pain intensified and I became sick.

My First Experience

I went to the gentlest and closest yoga facility I could find where people were not overly concerned about technique. Just being there, moving through the poses and breathing was all I could manage. "We progress further as a community than we do alone," an instructor once said to my morning class. I felt like he was speaking directly to me.

So, multiple days a week I got out of bed and made my way to yoga. Partly to reconnect with my body and calm my nervous system. Partly to be surrounded by a community. *And partly to get through another 60 minutes of my day.*



Yoga

The Benefits

Yoga not only improves our strength, balance and flexibility, but it uses the breath to circulate energy and release toxins from the body. Author and doctor Bessel Van Der Kolk writes in his book, The Body Keeps the Score, that research shows that “ten weeks of yoga practice markedly reduced PTSD symptoms of patients who failed to respond to any medication or to any other treatment.”

Personal Results

My experience supports his conclusions, and five years later, I still practice yoga a number of times a week. It has become a form of active meditation for me. As I pace my movements, my mind expands, my body opens and deeper insights sometimes drop in out of nowhere that help guide my life.

For many people yoga is purely exercise. For me, it’s a spiritual practice that supports mindfulness. I notice whenever I stop practicing yoga for a few weeks, my head becomes busier and the deeper insights come less frequently.



Meet a
Healer

 **WATCH THE INTERVIEW**



**JOAN
HYMAN**
YOGA PRACTITIONER

Yoga

Some Tips

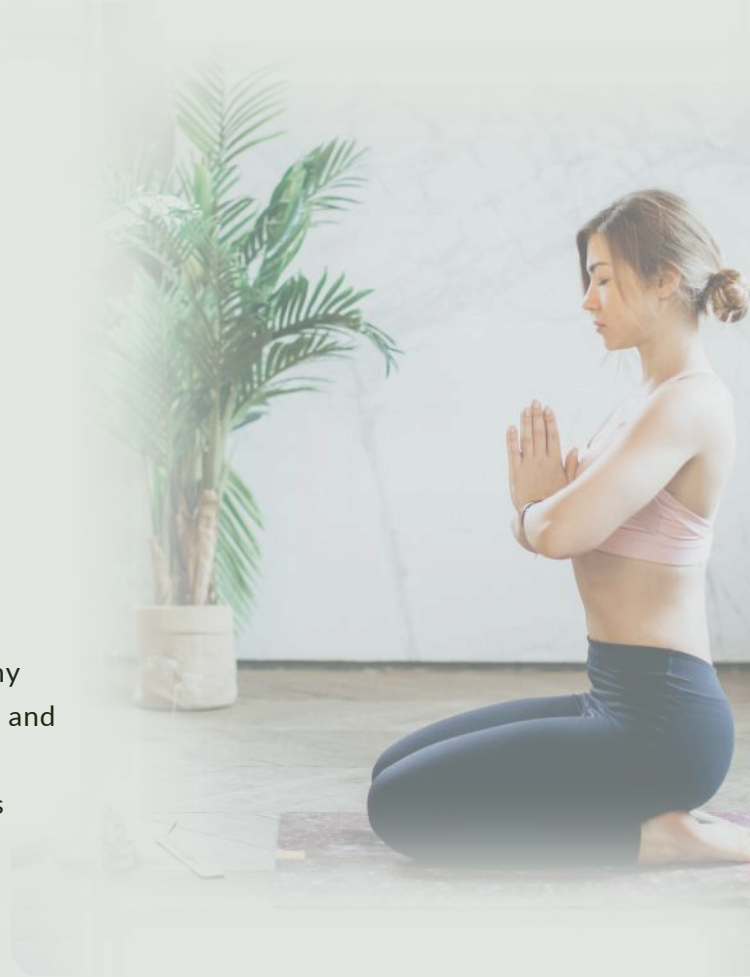
Don't be overly serious about it, unless you want to be. Enjoy the experience of taking care of your mind, body and spirit all in one swoop, and try a handful of classes before judging it. The more you do it, the more your body craves it.

And if you're feeling shaky, try calling on a loved one you may have in spirit to help ground you in the pose. I know it sounds crazy but it's a fun experiment and it actually works for me!

Want to Try?

There are classes everywhere, even online for free. One of my favorite instructors is Joan Hyman, who offers classes online and in person, and travels the world teaching yoga at all levels. Jennifer Greenhut is a popular local instructor in Los Angeles who gives private and semi-private lessons in person and via zoom, also works with teenage athletes and infuses every session with positive healing energy of her own.

Core Power Yoga has locations in more than twenty states, and offers a variety of classes (including heated), with and without weights. It also offers an extensive library of classes online and is a very inclusive and forgiving environment, which I particularly like at this stage of my life.



Top Takeaway

Beyond the physical benefits of stretching and strengthening, it's an active meditation that declutters the mind and strengthens the mind-body-spirit connection.

HEALING MODALITY #4

Psychic Mediums

Why I Tried It

The morning my 12-year-old son unexpectedly didn't wake up, something deep inside me felt like he was still here. I wondered in that moment if a regular person like me with no prior psychic abilities could learn to connect with his spirit. Not knowing if spirits really existed and whether it was possible for anyone to communicate with them, a close friend scheduled an appointment with a well-respected medium for me to find out.



My First Experience

My first session with a medium was by phone. I wanted to believe, but wasn't sure I would. The medium began by explaining how she worked. She told me that when she asked for validation about something she said, I was to keep my answers short, preferably to Yes or No, and not lead her in any direction. When she started her reading, the first thing she asked was whether I had lost a son. I said, "Yes." She told me he was there with us and then proceeded to spend the next sixty minutes giving me intimate details about his personality and life, as well as personal messages he wanted me to receive.

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The Benefits

Medium and former U.S. Navy commanding officer, Suzanne Gieseemann, says in her memoir Messages of Hope that mediums not only serve their clients, but serve “the spirit world just as much.” The idea that my son’s spirit might be benefiting from the experience as much as I was filled me with hope that love really is eternal and can continue growing.

Renowned medium James Van Praagh says that when he relays a spirit message to a loved one, “A person’s life is usually changed forever.” Most of the people I know who have seen a good medium, agree.

Personal Results

This reading did change my life, and the trajectory that followed. Sixty minutes flew by like ten. My soul devoured every single second. When I got off the phone, peace washed over me and I felt lighter. That was the day “feeling lighter” became my personal gauge to determine whether a healing modality was right for me.

Over the past five years I have worked with four different mediums, cross-referenced messages, and tested the validity of this practice. Exploring this modality with an open mind and heart, as well as approaching it like an experiment in search of “data” has not only been a lot of fun but has also taught me that there is a lot we don’t know, and that this world can be as magical as we want it to be.

Meet a
Healer

▶ **WATCH THE
INTERVIEW**



**ANTHONY
MROCKA**
CELEBRITY MEDIUM

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Some Tips

If a deeper knowing aligns with what feels true, trust that and don't allow your head or anyone to convince you otherwise. If your instincts tell you a reading is off in any way, trust your gut. Please note: You do not need to see a celebrity medium – most are booked for years anyway. Find a legitimate one through your network. Just because people don't talk about it doesn't mean they haven't tried it!

Want to Try?

Unlike traditional therapy, which is often a weekly expense for many years, a reading with a medium is typically a once in a lifetime cost unless you decide to talk to one more regularly. Some people do annual check-ins. Others schedule readings during more difficult times of the year, like on a loved one's birthday.

Rebecca Rosen is someone I've seen both in a private and group context and highly recommend. Anthony Mrocka is another. You can also get more familiar with this modality and see if it resonates with you by reading books, articles, newsletters and social media posts written by well-known mediums like James Van Praagh, John Holland and Laura Lynn Jackson. You can really get a sense of their personalities and styles even through their written word and if you can't wait to get to the next page you'll know this is for you. You can also watch a popular Laura Lynn Jackson reading [here](#).



Top Takeaway

Psychics are not mediums because they do not connect to loved ones in spirit. Most mediums, however, are psychics, and can connect to your loved ones and help foresee the future. Even if you haven't lost someone close to you, you'll be surprised what one reading from a medium can do for you and how healing and comforting (not to mention fun and soothing!) it is to learn that we are not alone and all have a support system in the world beyond.

HEALING MODALITY #5

Acupuncture

Why I Tried It

I received acupuncture regularly during both my pregnancies, and appreciated the way it boosted my energy and strengthened my immune system. So, when many years later a friend introduced me to another acupuncturist she recommended, I was open to seeing if it could help move energy through my body and release some of the grief that had manifested into physical pain in my chest and back.

My First Experience

This particular acupuncturist combined Chinese medicine with energy healing and science to offer an “integrative approach.” During my first treatment, she was gentle with the thin needles and educated me on the connection between my organs and emotions before focusing on specific channels and pressure points to open my heart and lungs, release grief and help me ground. She lit candles, played soft music, and once the needles were in place, she faded into the background and let them do their thing for an hour.



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The Benefits

The National Institute of Health says that acupuncture is a reasonable option for those wanting to pursue natural, non-medicated treatments for conditions like chronic pain, headaches and depression.

The modality is increasingly used by athletes seeking treatment for physical ailments and improved circulation and energy, and you might be shocked to learn how many other health issues an experienced acupuncturist can help resolve – everything from hormone imbalances and fertility issues to nervous system regulation, insomnia and certain mental health concerns.



Personal Results

Some people see a therapist every week, I see my acupuncturist. Acupuncture calms my nerves and instantly lifts my energy. Sometimes the needles are applied to help me release stuck grief in my lungs and open my heart. Other times, the practice grounds and connects me with my higher intuition. Healing and transformation is a lifelong journey for me, and acupuncture not only grows with me, but also provides the weekly tune-up that my system needs.

Some Tips

Find an acupuncturist who incorporates different schools of thought and is able to adjust treatment depending on your specific needs. I personally prefer acupuncturists who merge eastern and western philosophies and are constantly modernizing and seeking ways to improve this ancient craft.



Want to Try?

Acupuncture typically costs much less than a traditional doctor's visit. One treatment may provide a boost of energy or begin to address a particular ailment or sickness, but to really receive the benefits it typically requires at least four to six visits. Also, I'm a believer that healing should feel good. The right acupuncturist will get creative and modify for you. I'm a fan of [Sheila Marie Campbell's](#) acupuncture treatments. She also offers a variety of unique courses for the "spiritually curious" who are interested in healing from all kinds of physical and emotional trauma.



Top Takeaway

Depending on what you are seeking, give acupuncture the recommended number of treatments before determining whether it's for you. And don't worry about the (tiny!) needles. Close your eyes, enjoy the silence or use a headset to listen to a meditation or soft music, and then allow the healing energy flow.

HEALING MODALITY #6

Astrology

Why I Tried It

When a friend I trusted told me that an astrology reading might support my healing journey, I laughed and thought about all the bad astrology forecasts I had read in magazines growing up. But when she explained that “full natal astrology” is based on a complex system of mathematical and astronomical calculations and has been used for thousands of years to understand the world and our role within it, I decided to give it a try. I wanted to compare my birth chart with those of my other family members, and see if the planets and stars could explain the trajectory of our lives together. I honestly had zero expectations that this ancient practice would be anything more than fun to try.



My First Experience

I was shocked by how accurate my first reading was, and by how much I learned about myself and my family simply based on our time, date and place at birth. This astrologer compared my chart to that of my eldest son's and then went on to describe why I'm the way I am, why he's the way he was, and what we both came here to do both separately and together. **I could feel the truth in many of her words.**

She also brought up cycles in my life that I had never considered and helped me understand certain lessons behind them. Then she compared my chart to that of my younger son's so I could better understand how to mother him and support his own journey of growth. What resonated, ultimately stuck, and has been incorporated into my life ever since. What didn't, I simply forgot.

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The Benefits

Astrology teaches that we are all designed at birth in a particular way, and that our individual wiring is neither good or bad. It just is. When we remember that we are all wired differently, we can better appreciate our relationships and modify our choices and behaviors accordingly.

Astrology helps explain why we are the way we are. Yes, we can change. Yes, we have freedom of choice. But we also have a unique life purpose and important lessons to learn along the way, and astrology can help those who seek more clarity on both.

Personal Results

The first astrologer I spoke to explained my eldest son’s chart. “He came into this world to have an intense physical life, touch a lot of people and then transition quickly around this time. There was no way to save him.” She assured me that “Nothing went wrong.” While my head may never understand or fully accept this, my soul felt the truth in her words. As for my own reading, the astrologer showed me that according to my natal birth chart, my planets were perfectly aligned with my eldest son’s the week of his passing and that we were meant to go through our transitions together. She explained the primary ways his life would impact mine moving forward and how to best apply the gifts I would be receiving from his life. “Life is a continuum,” she told me. “This lifetime is just a pit stop.” This resonated with me and helped change the way I viewed life. I received so much wisdom from this reading about myself and everyone in my family that I immediately booked two other readings to test the validity of this modality. The results were the same, not to mention magical, illuminating and fun.



Meet a
Healer

 **WATCH THE INTERVIEW**



**GAHL
SASSON**

EXPERT ASTROLOGER

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Some Tips

The cost of a reading depends on the astrologer's level of experience and length of each session. I recommend a 60 minute reading, or 90 minutes if you are comparing your chart with a family member's. Evaluate the cost in the context of this being a one time experience, unless you seek additional readings at critical times in your life. A reading may cost what a traditional therapy appointment does, but it requires no follow-up appointment. Most astrologers will record the session for you, which is very helpful because readings are packed with information and go by very fast. I find it helpful to relisten to old readings because I learn something new from them every time. By the way, this is a GREAT gift for the friend who has everything – super fun and nothing to fear.



Want to Try?

Check out [Rose Theodora](#) who offers unique classes, a regular newsletter and really special private readings. [Alejandra Sophia](#) is another favorite of mine who is highly intuitive and brings a lot of warmth to her readings. [Gahl Sasson](#) is very experienced, direct, and often weaves history, politics and other worldly events into his readings in order to explain repeated patterns in your life. If you prefer to understand the nitty grit of it, I recommend Jan Spiller's book, [Astrology for the Soul](#).



Top Takeaway

I'm not saying Astrology will heal your deepest wounds, but this ancient practice might help explain some of them. Doctors and medical professionals only know so much about the human body. Who's to say that the planets and stars when studied accurately don't know a thing or two themselves. Astrology is fun. It's informative. And it's timeless. **I have found there is something to learn from every experience, including a good astrology reading.**

HEALING MODALITY #7

Energy Healing

Why I Tried It

There's talk therapy, and there's soul therapy. Energy Healers and Soul Coaches come with all different titles and unique healing techniques. While some are licensed psychologists who have infused eastern medicine and philosophies into their practice, others are not medically trained and simply come with ancient wisdom, intuition and tools that bypass the mind and speak to the soul. I tried a Soul Coach because traditional talk therapy wasn't speaking to my broken heart and a friend suggested that a Soul Coach she knew might.



My First Experience

I had one session with a traditional psychologist and another with a Soul Coach, and immediately knew the latter was for me. The traditional therapist asked how she could help me after hearing my story. I honestly did not have the mental capacity to even answer that question. The Soul Coach heard me better than I heard myself and reached beyond my human brain to teach me about the ways of my human spirit.

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HEALING MODALITY #7

Energy Healing



The Benefits

Please understand that it's very difficult to put words to this healing modality, but let me try... When we look outside for healing support, it's typically because we are going through a challenging situation that upsets us and we don't know how to handle it. No matter how smart we are, our minds simply can't figure out a solution and it can take us years, if ever, to truly move forward.

Soul Coaches and Energy Healers believe real healing is energetic and takes place at a soul level. We are all made of energy so when we find ways to clear out stuck negative energy from our systems and in turn raise our individual frequencies, our thoughts and beliefs begin to change, as does the reality we are experiencing.

Healing is an inside job. Soul Coaches and Energy Healers don't heal us. They give us more tools and perspectives to heal ourselves. They examine our lives from a soul perspective. They explore what it means to "feel" and be guided by our truth. And they teach our ancient souls how to operate in this modern world so we manifest the life we truly desire.

Meet a
Healer

 **WATCH THE INTERVIEW**



**PAM
OSLIE**
AURA EXPERT

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Want to Try?

Soul Coaches and Energy Healers often don't come with degrees and their wisdom can't be ranked. But they are becoming very popular and their wait lists are getting longer. Most cost less than traditional therapy and do not require weekly, monthly or even annual appointments. You go back when you feel like it. Reiki is one increasingly popular type of energy healing technique conducted through a practitioner's hands.



But there are so many different types of Energy Healers practicing in unique and fun ways. Start asking around and you will find the right one for you. Erika Alaura is one of my personal favorites. She is dedicated to the evolution of the soul, and she channels healing energy to remove blocks and trauma so we not only connect more deeply with our truest selves, but release subconscious and ancestral patterns getting in our way. Nicole Sheier is an extremely talented Soul Coach who I can't recommend enough. Working with children, teens and adults facing all kinds of personal challenges, Nicole has an amazing ability to speak to the soul and teaches us how to better understand and rewrite our own life stories. Nicole offers both in-person and online sessions.

Please note that whenever friends ask me for a Healer reference and they are becoming spiritually curious for the first time, I always refer them to an Energy Healer / Soul Coach because this modality speaks to the soul and grounds us in this physical world at the same time.



Top Takeaway

Soul Coaches and Energy Healers provide the perfect balance between the body, mind, and spirit. They often come with a variety of self-made titles and incorporate difficult-to-describe energy healing techniques. For those of us who thrive off of experiencing the inexplicable, just exploring these two types of healers can be healing in and of itself!

HEALING MODALITY #8

Shamanic Healing

Why I Tried It

Two different friends from completely different circles in my life told me to contact the same Shaman in New Mexico. “I can’t explain what she does,” they both said, “but she’ll help.” My son had passed away two weeks prior and I had no idea where to turn. A Shaman was as good a choice as any.

My First Experience

When I called this Shaman on my way to my first meditation class (ever!) and told her that my son passed away, she said, “Pull over. I’ll start working on you today, but I need some information first.” She proceeded to ask me a few questions about what happened to my son, and then advised me to be still for the next couple of hours. “It’s hard for me to locate your energy and chakras when you’re moving around.”

I had no idea what a chakra was so she explained these energy centers in our bodies and how they work, and then told me she would be evaluating mine and sending each of one of them shamanic energy. This would help me move through my grief, she said, and not get stuck in it. I stayed at the meditation center for two hours while she did her thing.



The Benefits

Shamans are believed to have supernatural abilities and use them to perform a variety of meaningful and healing rituals. Shaman Durek, a current well-known 6th generation Shaman, says: “A shaman is a mediator; one who’s here to bridge the gap between the spirit world and the physical world.” Shamans use their unique abilities to address physical, emotional and mental imbalances in the body and to help us navigate relationships and challenges in this lifetime by accessing a higher intuition and guidance from beyond.



Personal Results

My first session with a shaman ended with her advising me to “grieve” and “get it out of your body.” I was only a few weeks into my healing journey and had not heard that before. A few days later, to my surprise, I felt a little lighter and more hopeful that I could survive my suffering. Given the severity of grief I was enduring, I considered that reaction a win. A few years later, I was introduced to another shaman who connects with the spirit realm to cleanse ancestral lines. I had learned that my great grandparents had lost a son during their lifetime who was the same age as mine. This cycle of losing children in my family was one I decided I would end. This shaman helped me understand that we all have cycles in our families that get passed down through generations. Few of us, however, wake up to see it. Through her connection with the spirit realm and very specific rituals that I performed per her instructions, she cleansed my family line, forwards and backwards. By the time our work was complete, I not only understood my ancestors better, but also felt deeply connected to them. The process was incredibly awakening and healing, not to mention crazy, indescribable and fascinating.

To get all the riveting details about Nikki’s experience, consider *Tommy’s Field: Love, Loss, and the Goal of a Lifetime* as your next read.

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Some Tips

Shamans may have a unique expertise but at the end of the day, they are still people like you and me. They are not gurus. They are not perfect. And the real ones will never try to dictate or override your life. As Shaman Durek likes to say, “Be your own damn guru.” He also says there are different kinds of Shamans. Some deal with root and plant medicine. Others with animals and water elements. Spirit shamans, like him and the ones I have seen, “Don’t rely on medicine, or plants, or on any earthly tools to do our healing. We go directly to the source. We got to the spirits themselves.” Still, listen to your intuition. Take what resonates and throw the rest out.



Want to Try?

Shamans are in our midst and usually come from a family lineage of powerful, healers. I do not know any who advertise and have found them by word of mouth. Read Shaman Durek’s book, [Spirit Hacking](#), to benefit from his modern approach to Shamanism and to learn more about how this type of healing may support you or someone you love. If you visit spiritual destinations like Sedona, Arizona, or countries in South America, you may easily find one.



Top Takeaway

Don’t search for a Shaman. When one drops into your life that piques your curiosity, consider it a sign that you are ready. Until then... it’s likely not your time.



HEALING MODALITY #9

Emotion Code System

Why I Tried It

A close friend recommended an Emotion Code System practitioner as a way for me to address subconscious thoughts and emotions that might be impacting my ability to heal and transform. I wanted to experience this energy healing modality, even if my human brain couldn't make sense of it.

My First Experience

Over the phone, the practitioner began by asking me what I wanted to work on. I told him about the loss of my eldest son and my desire to continue healing my heart and that of my other family members. He proceeded to guide me through a series of questions, muscle testing my answers with his own fingers to determine where emotions were trapped in my subconscious mind and body. Each question led to another, unlocking specific memories associated with old emotions hiding in the deepest layers of my body. By simply acknowledging and sometimes examining them, I felt lighter and lighter upon releasing each one.



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The Benefits

Trapped emotions in our bodies can impact how we think, the choices we make and the level of success and abundance we are able to create. The Emotion Code System helps us understand that we all carry around old wounds and that sometimes the emotions associated with these wounds linger in such a deep and subconscious way that they silently disrupt our lives and impact our physical and emotional well-being. Some wounds are ancestral. Others are from this lifetime. Either way, by acknowledging and releasing them, we help heal ourselves and our entire family line.



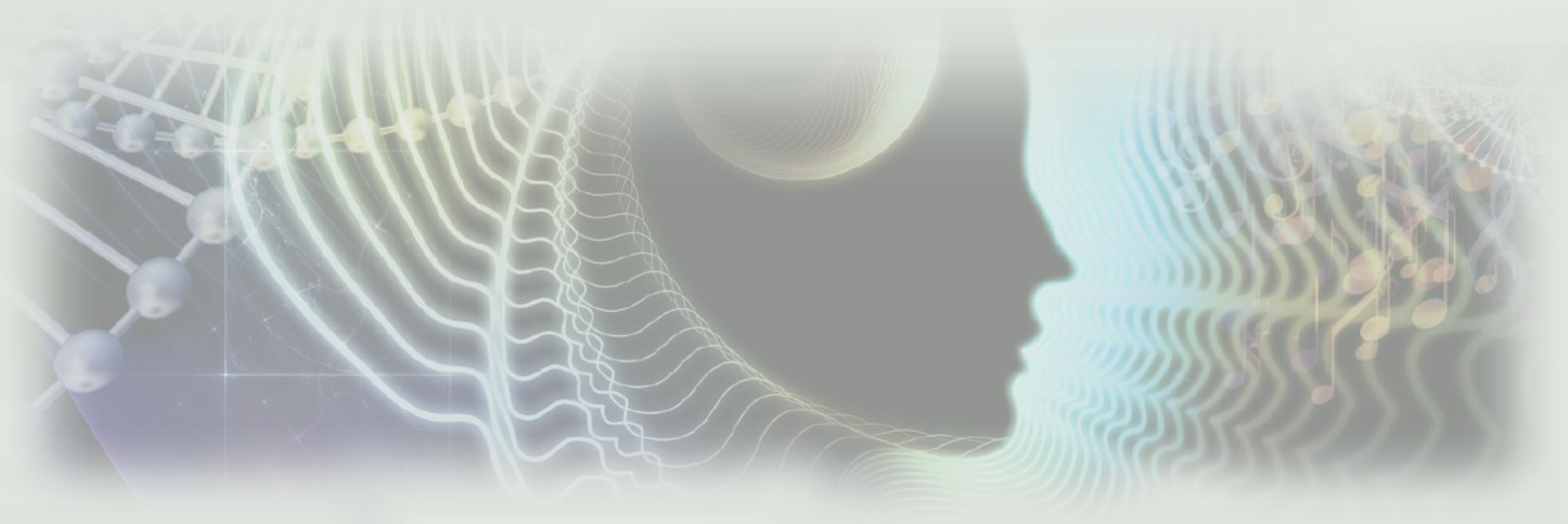
Personal Results

Emotion Code Therapy forces me to evaluate the choices I've made in life and recognize their impact on my subconscious operating system. I leave every session feeling lighter, more clear-headed, and more open to the idea that by recognizing our wounds we can all rewrite our stories and live healthier and more present lives.



Some Tips

Energy work is subtle and cumulative, and this specific type of energy healing requires that we be extremely honest with ourselves and willing to accept that sometimes it's healthier and more effective to release what we don't understand than to spend our entire lives searching for answers and accountability.



Want to Try?

Do your research and find a certified Emotion Code practitioner who is not only talented and experienced, but also someone you like. One session may be all you need, or you can go back for more as often as you'd like. The speed and trajectory of your healing is completely up to you. Read Dr Bradley Nelson's [The Emotion Code](#) if you want to understand more about how this modality works. I've had a great experience with [The Life Changer](#) and continue to experience more Emotion Code benefits the more I try it. The investment to try this modality is fairly low. You will know from the very first session if it's for you or not.



Top Takeaway

It's insightful. It's interesting. Tony Robbins is a fan. And it's a pain-free modality you can use on yourself and your children to clear stuck energy and release ancestral patterns that are impossible for the conscious mind to identify and comprehend.

HEALING MODALITY #10

Psychedelic Therapy

PSILOCYBIN (AKA: MAGIC MUSHROOMS)



Why I Tried It

After my son passed away, the tragedy was on a constant loop in my mind every minute of every day. I was so desperate to take a break from my own self that when a friend mentioned that Magic Mushrooms were a type of Psychedelic Therapy that had dramatically helped her on her own healing journey, I immediately decided to give it a try. At the time, I had no idea what it was. I don't smoke. I hardly drink. And I do not self-medicate beyond a couple Tylenol twice a year. But I liked that the medicine is plant-based, and not synthetic. I was comforted to learn it has been used for thousands of years for sacred ceremonies and rituals for both healing and celebrations. And I trusted the psychologist my friend recommended to administer it given her extensive experience integrating this sacred medicine into her healing practice.

My First Experience

We began with an intention-setting ceremony and non-religious prayer. Candles were lit, music played, and then the facilitator gave me mushrooms in the form of a chocolate. We talked through my grief until at some point she told me to close my eyes to connect with the medicine and let it do its magic. Boy did it. The two of us got deep for six hours, and the next morning I woke up with a deeper understanding of my life and connection to it. She then spent two hours helping me process my experience so that I could integrate it moving forward.



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HEALING MODALITY #10

Psychedelic Therapy

PSILOCYBIN (AKA: MAGIC MUSHROOMS)

The Benefits

The prefrontal cortex of our brain, aka our “thinking brain,” never shuts off. * Given it processes 70,000 thoughts a day on average and 90% of them are repetitive, it’s extremely difficult to get “a few moments of relief from the voice in our heads.” ** Psilocybin is one type of plant medicine that switches off our prefrontal cortex and gives our thinking brain a much needed break so that we can examine life and the repetitive stories we tell ourselves with fresh eyes.

Michael Pollan’s [How to Change Your Mind](#) is a popular book on what psychedelics can teach us. [Stealing Fire](#) provides examples of how this modality is used by some of the sharpest and most inventive minds and personalities of our time, and as the authors so deftly write: “By periodically losing our minds, we stand a better chance of finding ourselves.”



Personal Results

I have treated myself to this modality a handful of times over the past five years. While each experience was unique, they all opened me up to a deeper spiritual connection and exposed subconscious layers of myself that I didn’t even know existed. **The result seemed equivalent to multiple years of effective “traditional” talk therapy.**

* *Stealing Fire: How Silicon Valley, the Navy Seals and Maverick Scientists are Revolutionizing the Way We Live and Work*, Steven Kotler & Jamie Wheal

** Dr. Fed Luskin at Stanford University

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HEALING MODALITY #10

Psychedelic Therapy

PSILOCYBIN (AKA: MAGIC MUSHROOMS)

Some Tips

This modality is not legal in most states and many parts of the world. Rumor has it, however, that some type of psilocybin therapy for medical purposes will be FDA approved in a few years. If you decide to try it, make sure to have someone you trust holding space who will review your medical history, thoroughly prepare you for the experience, and remain available to help you integrate it into your life in the days, weeks and months that follow.

Want to Try?

Most practitioners and healers in the United States will not advertise. If you want to try it, start by getting a personal recommendation from someone you trust. (Don't run off to the jungles of South America or pick someone randomly you find online.) Always speak with the practitioner first to get an understanding of their backgrounds, experience and approach. Some only do large groups, which are much more affordable than private and semi-private sessions, but with group therapy of any size it is important to make sure you are surrounded by like-minded people and the intention is healing and transformation.

Important: If you are on medications, talk to your doctor first about whether it is safe for you to try. While Psilocybin is considered non-addictive and has helped people wean off of their anxiety medications and antidepressants, it should never be taken alongside other medications without consulting your prescribing doctor or medical physician.*



Top Takeaway

As Shaman Durek says in his book [Spirit Hacking](#), "Plant medicine exists to show us what is possible when we engage beyond the false limitations that we have allowed to shape our reality. But plant medicine is only an entryway; it is not a place to hang out." In short, it's incredibly enlightening and deeply fulfilling, but not a party.

* An experienced and well-trained facilitator will never administer any kind of plant medicine or hallucinogenic without reviewing your health history and evaluating your list of current meds.

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BONUS HEALING MODALITY

Play

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BONUS MODALITY

Play

Why I Tried It

After my son passed away, I thought I'd never play again. But the very day he left, it became crystal clear to me that he had mastered the art of play in his full 12 years of life. I never fully appreciated the importance of play until the moment he was gone. He learned about himself through play; he grew a diverse community through play; and he prioritized all the laughter and joy that comes from play despite being told by many adults in his life, including me, that play was something earned and that he should take life more seriously. In my earliest moment of grief he taught me that life is supposed to be fun, and I then committed to honoring his spirit of play by sharing it with others. When I focused on serving, I unknowingly began healing. I also began writing. Writing became a new form of play for me, and it continues to be a critical part of my healing journey every day.



My First Experience

After setting up the TM23 Foundation to build Tommy's legacy, my husband and I, with the support of a community we didn't even know we had, raised over a million dollars to build an athletic field with lights in a nearby Los Angeles public park. "Tommy's Field" would be a place where children and adults of all backgrounds would engage, unite and transform through play.

Very early on in the fundraising process, a friend of my husband's offered to host a comedy show and contribute all the proceeds to our foundation for the benefit of this field. He asked us to first come watch one of his shows. While my mind thought, "This sounds awful, I'll never laugh again," a deeper voice dropped in and reminded me that my son "laughed more than anyone. To laugh is to honor him." So I went to that comedy show and when the first laugh escaped my mouth, I was shocked when grief released from the bottom of my gut. The moment made me realize that I would not only serve my community and honor my son through play, but I also would heal through play and benefit from more of it myself.



The Benefits

In the midst of that first laugh, I lost all sense of time. For a couple of seconds, I forgot about my circumstances and lightened up. When guilt suddenly turned on and asked how I could possibly be laughing after losing a son, I heard my son's laughter and then understood that laughter is a bi-product of play and has the power to heal what divides us. According to recent research, play is essential for survival. It literally changes our brain. It helps us discover and develop innate skills and talents. And it teaches us about this ever-changing world and how to adapt to it.

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Personal Results

For me, writing and creating have become new ways that I like to play. Play demands that I stay in the moment. It clears my brain of needless thoughts and has the power to transmute my darkest emotions into laughter, hope and new possibilities. Different forms of play have opened up new interests, expanded my community, and opened me up to a greater creative energy that flows through me both during and after play.

Some Tips

If you are bored or life feels dark, add more play. If you feel stuck and don't know which way to turn, play. If you want to attract new relationships into your life or improve existing ones, play play play! Even if you are as grief-ridden as I was five years ago, try and take a few minutes a day to tap into some form of gentle play. It doesn't matter what you play: sports, cards, paint, crack jokes, garden, or explore the world by going on a hike, visiting a museum, or swimming in the ocean. Play is unique to all of us, and the key is to be aware of how it makes you feel.

Want to Try?

Get curious - what does play look like for you? What puts you in the present moment? What brings you so much joy, peace or curiosity that you get lost in time? Play can be silly, competitive, artistic, adventurous and even imaginative. Make time for what inspires you, and drop any guilt around not being "productive." You will know what play means to you by acknowledging what moves your spirit. The trick is to honor yourself and those you love by doing more of it.



Top Takeaway

My son's life reminds me every day that life is one big game and games are supposed to be fun. Stuart Brown, the Founder of the National Institute for Play says, "Play is called recreation because it makes us new again, it re-creates us and our world." I can vouch that play has been at the forefront of my recovery. Brown also says, "When the going gets tough, the tough go play." I have learned that the inverse is also true: when we play, we open up and come alive. Life wants this for all of us.



So there you have it!

...the summary of my top 10 (okay, 11!) favorite modalities from the last 5 years of deep research and exploration into the world of healing.

I would LOVE to know what resonated, and certainly get in touch if you'd like to share your experience if / when you try some of these. (Email me at dearnikki@nikkimark.com)

And stay in touch by subscribing to my (mostly) weekly newsletter, where we gather to reflect on heart-centered stories and experiences at NikkiMark.com.

We're building an amazing community of people that want to heal the world from the inside out. And I think this includes - YOU!

From my heart to yours,

Nikki

P.S. It's worth repeating that "being of service" has helped heal me the most. In that light, freely share this guide with your friends and family who you think will find it valuable by directing them to NikkiMark.com/resources to download their own copy.