

A COACHING GUIDE

GRIP

Beginning the Day with Intention

Gratitude · Relax & Release · Intention · Purpose-Full

Diane Mitchell-Miller

*“Pay attention to what you pay attention to.
Where your focus goes, your energy flows.”*

— Diane Mitchell-Miller



Get a GRIP on Your Day

Most mornings, I need something to steady me before the noise takes over. Years ago I began experimenting with a simple practice that changed everything. I call it GRIP — a way to get a grip on my day before the day gets a grip on me.

GRIP stands for Gratitude, Relax & Release, Intention, and Purpose-FULL living. It is both grounding and energizing, both inward and outward. Some mornings I move through it quickly while making coffee. Other mornings I linger with it in my journal. However it looks, this ritual reshaped my mornings and, over time, my life.

The power of GRIP is that it doesn't stop when I leave the house. It's something I return to throughout the day — in the middle of a hard conversation, while waiting in line, even before I fall asleep at night.

Slow Down to Get Ahead

Think of driving a stick shift. Sometimes you have to downshift to gain more control. Slowing down isn't weakness — it's how you let the road meet you. Stay in high gear all the time and you burn out the engine. Downshift and you regain traction, steadiness, and presence.

John Mark Comer calls hurry “a form of violence on the soul.” I feel that in my body on the mornings I skip GRIP and dive straight into the day. I move fast but feel shallow. Reactive. Brittle. The antidote isn't a better schedule — it's a practice of intentional pausing.

Our world is living in a rat race to nowhere — constantly rushing, constantly striving... and yet deeply exhausted. The epidemic of distraction is real. We scroll, we swipe, we rush, we wait for the latest notification. And our souls grow thinner.

That's why GRIP isn't just about productivity — it's about presence. It's about cultivating what Comer calls a non-anxious presence. Gratitude roots me in the moment. Intention keeps me from drifting. Purpose shifts my focus outward. Together, they slow me down enough to actually inhabit my own life.

The Hebrew word shalom — often translated as peace — actually means whole, complete, lacking nothing. It encompasses well-being, security, soundness, and flourishing. To step into shalom is to step into wholeness. GRIP is my daily step into shalom. I breathe. I notice. I write. I pray. In those simple acts I take back the morning and remember who I am before the world tells me what to do.

“Slowing down at the start of the day isn't wasted time. It is how we become grounded in our body and centered in our soul — how we learn to move through the world not as hurried, anxious, scattered people, but as people of presence.”

— Diane Mitchell-Miller

The GRIP Framework

<p>G</p> <p>Gratitude</p> <p><i>Root yourself in what is already good</i></p> <p>Name what you are grateful for. Spot a glimmer — a small moment of safety, ease, or connection.</p> <p><i>What is present that deserves my attention?</i></p>	<p>R</p> <p>Relax & Release</p> <p><i>Let go of what you were never meant to carry</i></p> <p>Breathe. Identify what you are holding and consciously set it down. This is a daily practice, not a one-time act.</p> <p><i>What am I gripping that is gripping me back?</i></p>	<p>I</p> <p>Intention</p> <p><i>Decide who you want to be before the day decides for you</i></p> <p>Choose one word — peace, courage, patience, presence. Let it become your compass for the next 24 hours.</p> <p><i>What one word will guide how I show up today?</i></p>	<p>P</p> <p>Purpose-Full</p> <p><i>Shift your focus from receiving to contributing</i></p> <p>Reach out to someone. Offer a note, a text, a call. The fullest life is found in giving your best self away.</p> <p><i>Am I using my gifts to impact the people around me?</i></p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

G Gratitude

Root yourself in what is already good

Gratitude is not just a mindset — it is a state shift. It softens you, reframes difficulty, and unlocks presence. When life is going well, gratitude magnifies the goodness. In discouragement, it brings hope. It is one of the most powerful ways to begin a day.

“If you want to get the most out of your day, do your most important work — your ONE Thing — early, before your willpower is drawn down.”
 — Gary Keller

How you begin the day sets the tone for everything that follows. By anchoring your mornings in gratitude, intention, and purpose, you navigate challenges with more clarity and more joy.

What Gratitude Does

- Reframes — shifts your focus from what is missing to what is already good.
- Builds resilience — even in hard seasons, gratitude helps you find meaning and keep going.
- Strengthens relationships — expressing thanks deepens connection and trust.
- Improves health — grateful people sleep better, stress less, and live with more vitality.
- Cultivates mindfulness — slows you down long enough to savor the small joys.
- Inspires generosity — grateful hearts are generous ones, and generosity creates its own ripple.

Gratitude and Spotting Glimmers

Gratitude shifts our attention from what's missing to what's present, from scarcity to abundance. And woven into this practice is something I've added more recently: spotting glimmers.

A glimmer is the opposite of a trigger. We all know what it feels like to be triggered — a word, a tone of voice, a memory can set off stress and activate our fight-or-flight response. Glimmers do the reverse. They are tiny moments that bring calm, ease, or a sense of connection. When we notice them, our nervous system shifts into regulation — the parasympathetic state tied to safety, rest, and relationship.

The word glimmers was coined by therapist Deb Dana in her work with polyvagal theory. She describes them as small cues to our nervous system that we are safe and okay. Glimmers are not about denying pain or pretending everything is fine. They are respectful of our suffering while reminding us that we are also wired for joy, safety, and connection — even in micro-moments.

These glimmers are everywhere if you slow down enough to notice them:

- A moment in nature when sunlight filters through the trees.
- The warmth in a loved one's voice or a kind gesture from a stranger.
- A memory stirred by a familiar smell — bread baking, coffee brewing, a favorite perfume.
- The soft weight of a pet resting beside you.
- A piece of music that stirs something deep in your soul.

Gratitude and glimmers work together. Gratitude deepens your connection to these micro-moments, infusing them with meaning. Glimmers expand your capacity to feel calm, safe, and connected in the middle of everyday life. Once you begin to notice them, you will see them everywhere. What we focus on expands.

“Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos into order, confusion into clarity.”
— Melody Beattie

Reflection

- At the end of today, write down three glimmers you noticed and one sentence of gratitude for each.
- What is present right now that deserves your attention?
- See how naming these moments shifts your attention and your energy.

R Relax & Release

Let go of what you were never meant to carry

Many people live a limited version of their lives because they are filled with emotions from the past that were never released. Anger that never found a voice. Grief that went underground. Resentment that quietly calcified into something that feels like personality but is actually just unclaimed pain.

Developing a daily ritual of releasing creates space — for healthier relationships, for growth, for joy. Sometimes I write out what I'm carrying and tear the page up. Sometimes I light a candle and imagine the flame burning away what I no longer need to hold. Sometimes I simply breathe and picture myself setting down the weight.

Keep in mind that letting go is genuinely hard. It helps to know why:

Why Letting Go Is Hard

- Attachment — we form strong bonds with people, places, and routines. Letting go can feel like losing part of our foundation.
- Identity — sometimes what we're holding is tied to who we believe we are. Releasing it can feel like erasing a part of ourselves.
- Habit — nearly half of our daily lives run on autopilot. What is familiar, even when unhelpful, feels safe.
- Hope — we often cling to the possibility things might still improve, even when they haven't.
- Emotional weight — letting go may require us to feel grief, regret, or fear — emotions we'd rather avoid.
- Comfort in pain — ironically, even pain feels safe when it's familiar. Letting go means stepping into the unknown.

Specific rituals help. Tearing up paper with negative thoughts. Burning a candle. Exhaling what no longer serves you. These embodied acts train the body to release what the mind keeps returning to.

The question I often ask myself in challenging moments is: "Is what I'm doing or how I'm living helping or harming me?" It is a simple question. And it is one of the most honest ones you will ever ask yourself.

Comparison, complaining, and criticizing are like a slow leak. Releasing them — again and again, because this is not a one-time act — makes room for something better. Not forced positivity. Actual space.

Letting go is not weakness. It is the most sophisticated form of strength there is. It requires you to feel what you have been avoiding, name what you have been carrying, and consciously choose to set it down. Not because it did not matter. Because you matter more than your grip on it.

*"Comparison is the thief of joy."
— C.S. Lewis*

Reflection

- *What are you carrying right now that you were never meant to hold?*
- *What am I gripping that is gripping me back?*
- *What would change if you set it down, just for today?*

I Intention

Decide who you want to be before the day decides for you

Intention is not just a morning practice. It is a life philosophy — the connective tissue between who you are and how you show up in every decision you make.

Without intention, the day happens to us. We drift from one demand to the next, reactive rather than responsive, present in body but absent in will. I don't want to drift through my days. I want to decide.

Each morning I ask: What really matters today? Who do I want to be in the meetings, the conversations, the choices that will come? I choose a word for the day — peace, courage, patience, presence — and let that word become my compass. When I feel the pull toward reactivity or distraction, I return to the word. It is a small thing. It changes everything.

Mindfulness and intention belong together. Mindfulness keeps me present in the moment I am actually in. Intention keeps me oriented toward the person I am actually trying to become. One without the other is incomplete.

A Practice for Intention

After your gratitude practice, close your eyes and visualize how you want your day to unfold. Choose one to three intentions:

“Today I intend to approach challenges with curiosity. Today I intend to listen more than I speak. Today I intend to be fully present to the people in front of me.”

Reflection

- *What really matters today?*
- *Who do you want to be in the conversations and choices ahead?*
- *What one word will guide how you show up today?*

P Purpose-Full

Shift your focus from receiving to contributing

Gratitude and intention root me in the moment. Purpose pulls me outward. This is the move that transforms soul care from self-absorption into service — because the danger of a rich interior life is that it turns inward and stays there.

Abraham Maslow placed self-actualization at the top of his hierarchy. But later, influenced by Viktor Frankl, he added something above it — self-transcendence. The fullest human flourishing is not found in becoming your best self. It is found in giving your best self away.

David Brooks draws a distinction worth naming: resume virtues versus eulogy virtues. Resume virtues are the skills and achievements you bring to the marketplace. Eulogy virtues are what people say about you when you're gone — whether you were kind, whether you showed up, whether you made the people around you feel seen.

I practice this daily — reaching out to four or five people with a note, a text, a call. Sometimes saying simply: if it wasn't for you. Belonging and mattering are universal longings, and giving voice to them costs almost nothing. The return is extraordinary.

Resume Virtues vs. Eulogy Virtues

Resume virtues are the skills and achievements you bring to the marketplace. Eulogy virtues are what people say about you when you're gone — whether you were kind, whether you showed up, whether you made the people around you feel seen.

Both matter. But which one are you building most intentionally?

Consider the people you've spent the most time with in the past three months. Do they inspire you? Do you inspire them? Jim Rohn said, "You are the average of the five people you spend the most time with." Choose well.

Purpose is not found by asking what you want from life. It is found by asking what you can give. That single shift — from receiving to contributing — is where the deepest aliveness lives.

"I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy."

— Rabindranath Tagore

Reflection

— *What is one specific act of service, connection, or contribution you could offer today?*

- *Am I using my gifts to impact the people around me?*
- *How can I contribute to the lives closest to me today?*

Living GRIP

GRIP begins the day. But it doesn't end there. The power of this practice is that it is portable — I return to it throughout the day whenever I feel scattered, anxious, or off course. Gratitude brings me back to joy. Releasing frees me again. Intention reorients me. Purpose lifts me outward.

This practice isn't about perfection. It's about remembering. Starting again, each day, with open hands.

Closing the Day

In the evening, return to the same four anchors and close with these questions:

Reflection

- *What am I grateful for today — what glimmer did I catch?*
- *What did I let go of? What am I still carrying that I can set down now?*
- *How was I intentional today? Where did I drift and where did I decide?*
- *How did I give today — how did I live out my values and make a difference?*

Your GRIP Practice

Questions to Sit With

- Which of the four anchors do you most need right now — and why?
- What would change in your mornings if you gave yourself 10 minutes before reaching for your phone?
- What are you carrying into each day that the R in GRIP is asking you to release?
- How do you want to answer the evening question: what did I give to the people around me today?

“Your days are your life in miniature. As you live your hours, so you create your years.”

– *Robin Sharma*