

# vari mckechnie

## *Ready, Set, Flow*

A simple morning routine framework to  
raise your vibration, activate your magnetism  
and intentionally set the tone for your day.

By Vari McKechnie

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## **Mornings are overrated.**

This is what I used to think. I was never a ‘morning person’. And I didn’t aspire to be. I was much more comfortable identifying as one of those tired-eyed night owls, in a flock of good company with other ‘very serious design types’, burning the midnight oil as I worked on ‘very important design projects’.

When I became a mother, my life was turned upside down and inside out in all ways, but most significantly, I, my friends, was now a reluctant morning person.

I figured that if life, for the foreseeable future, was going to involve me peeling myself out of bed at a time that started with a 6 (or sometimes a 5) I might as well **try** to make this more easeful.

That was 13 years ago. Here’s what I’ve come to know.

## **A morning routine is undoubtedly a good idea.**

In my quest to become more morning’ish, I struggled with finding the sweet spot between a routine that felt **short and sweet enough** to easily commit to a regular practice, and also being **long and deep enough** to feel a real sense of alignment before I stepped into my day and the world.

At times, I’ve ‘called done’ at a speedy 10 minute meditation and swift gratitude list. But it felt like cheating – kinda like putting your activewear on and calling that ‘exercise’, without *actually* doing anything that remotely resembles exercise!

I’ve also been a proud member of *The 5am Club*. I’d frantically propel myself out of bed when the alarm went off at 4:55am and, after a quick trip to the bathroom and splash of water on my face, I’d launch into the day.

- 20 minutes physical exercise  
(this was typically a snappy little HIIT session found on *YouTube*),
- 20 minutes of meditation then...
- 20 minutes spent journaling or reading.

By 6am I *should* have been ready to start my day, but the reality was that I often felt like I wanted to get back into bed! If not immediately at 6am then **most definitely** at 3pm when I couldn't keep my eyes open.

So, after years of trying and testing different methods, routines and frameworks, I've settled on one that feels both **simple** and **impactful**. It's an easeful way for me to start my day that feels **intentional** and **joyful**, even when there are a few additional things on my calendar or when I'm travelling.

And I think **that** is the missing part.

We want to start our days with things that *feel* **light** and **joyful**, not heavy with obligation. It's about setting the tone for the day, starting as you want to finish, beginning as you want to go on.

The framework that I'm sharing here is just that, a framework. It's for you to take and make your own, in a way that feels **light and joyful to you**.

Whenever I'm learning to integrate a new idea, concept or tool, my attention sparks on hearing the delightful phrase '*let me give you an example*'. So I'll share how I apply each step of the framework in my own life. Feel free to use this as a launch pad to then tweak and refine as you get more dialled into what feels good to you.

#### — A note on movement

It feels more easeful for me to build in movement and exercise separate from my morning practice. I learned from my stint in *The 5am Club* that I can only give 50% at best when it comes to exercise at that time in the morning! Also, going to the gym or taking a class is part of my connection time, not my solo time, so my exercise is typically early evening with lots of other people around and very loud music!

## // Duration //

Decide how long you want to carve out for your daily morning practice.

There is no right or wrong - you want to find **your** sweet spot.

You might want to begin with 20 minutes or dedicate a full hour. It's entirely up to you. Just choose what feels fun and allow yourself some wriggle room to adjust in the coming weeks.

*My practice: I set aside 25 minutes each morning as soon as I wake up. This is broken down into a 15 minute meditation and then 10 minutes of writing.*

## // Location //

We want to make it **as easy as possible** to create consistency, rhythm and an element of certainty in our morning practice.

With that in mind, I suggest taking a broader perspective on location as opposed to being very tight and specific.

For example, having a 'special chair' in a specific room with an exact view means that there are a lot of external circumstances that have to align for you to have your location set. In my experience, this level of detail makes it trickier to stay consistent with your practice when you're on holiday, travelling or in some way out of your typical routine.

You want to set a location that has broad margins - cross-legged on the floor of the room you woke up in, on a seat or a chair by a window, lying on the floor next to a plant.

These very loose locations are achievable in almost any situation, which helps us to cultivate **a sense of home**, regardless of where we find ourselves in the world.

*My practice: I sit cross-legged on top of the covers of the bed I woke up in, pillows propped up against the wall.*



## // Meditation //

This step alone could be a whole framework in and of itself. Don't allow yourself to get overwhelmed or sidetracked with this. The quest to find the perfect meditation technique only results in people feeling lost and hopeless - sometimes for decades! **Simplicity is often the key to unlocking joy.**

### You might choose:

- a guided meditation (search for 15 minute morning meditation on *YouTube* and save it as a favourite)
- a meditation app (pick one, download it and job's done!)
- a binaural beats or white noise track (again, *YouTube* is your best friend here)
- a silent meditation (set the timer on your phone with a gentle tone to ring when you're done and pop your phone on to 'Do Not Disturb' mode, or use the mindfulness bell on the [Plum Village Meditation App](#) - it's free and simple and awesome.)

I tend to lean towards **clarity** rather than **consumption** for my morning meditation. This is a time to ground and centre our energy and cultivate spaciousness. Oftentimes, a very heavily guided or overly activating meditation first thing can have us feeling like we're already behind in our day before we've even brushed our teeth.

*My practice: I listen to [this 15 minute white noise meditation on YouTube](#) with my AirPods in. I've got YouTube Premium so I have it downloaded and can listen offline. Perfect for when I find myself in some tropical and remote corner of paradise! (or in my local supermarket car park where the reception is sketchy!)*

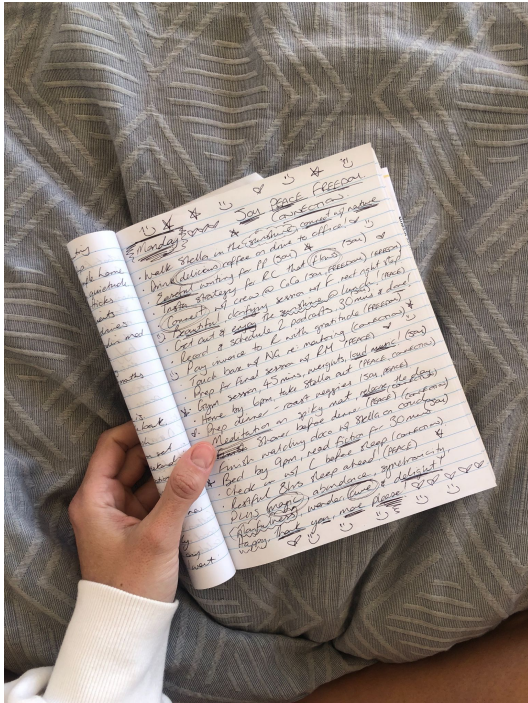
## // Writing //

As with meditation, there are lots of different writing or journaling practices you can do. Remember, the intention of this daily morning practice is to raise our vibration and get into alignment. Leave any shadow work or inner child work for later in the day. Use this time to write the story of your day **as you intend it to unfold**.

- Write a list of all the things you GET to do, not HAVE to do.
- Write the words joy, freedom, peace over and over again.
- Write a journal entry from the end of the day about how magical and flowing the day was.

This is writing time to **spark** imagination, **engage** creativity, **sync up** with magic. Use emotive words, excessive exclamation points! Draw stars, love-hearts, smiley faces. Circle words, underline phrases, highlight things that excite you!

*My practice: I follow the Abraham-Hicks method of 'segment intending' my day. Knowing what's on my schedule for the day, I bullet point how this day is going to flow in perfect alignment with my guiding words: **joy, peace, freedom**.*



## // Anchors // (scent and sound)

Weaving the anchors of **scent** and **sound** into my morning practice has, without exaggeration, transformed my life. It has created magic and momentum in every area - work, health, money, relationships. If there existed a secret key to happiness, THIS would it!

Crafting your morning routine with multi-sensory elements means that you can much more easily integrate these emotions and *feel* them, as opposed to just *thinking* about them. It allows what's in your **head** to drop into your **heart** and **flow** through your body.

### — Scent

We process the sensory information of scent differently from all our other senses. Scents bypass the thalamus - where our hear, see, taste and touch senses head first - and go straight to the brain's smell centre, known as the olfactory bulb. The olfactory bulb is directly connected to the amygdala and hippocampus, which is believed to be the reason that the smell of something can so immediately trigger a detailed memory or an intense emotion. *Source: <https://www.discovery.com/science/Why-Smells-Trigger-Such-Vivid-Memories>*

Also, our bodies cannot differentiate between **thinking** about a memory of the **past** versus **thinking** about an imagined scenario in the **future** - neurochemically, it's the same. Source: <https://drjoedispenza.com/blogs/dr-joes-blog/back-to-basics>

**Armed with this knowledge, we can use it to our advantage when it comes to living into our future with intention!**

Choosing a scent as an anchor for your practice helps your body to become familiar with the reality that you want to create. It allows us to orient ourselves to the future as opposed to simply repeating our past.

I'm teaching my body what the future **feels** like and **smells** like before it's even happened. Which makes it infinitely more likely that I'll create from my intention.

*My practice: I like to use two essential oils for my morning practice. The first is Balance by doTERRA - I pop this on the soles of my feet and take a few deep breaths of it before my 15 minute meditation.*

*After meditation, I use Elevation by doTERRA. A few drops in my hand, I rub it on my chest and neck. I love the little whispers I catch of it throughout the day.*





## — Sound

Anchoring a particular piece of music to your morning practice helps strengthen the familiarity of the future in the present moment. We've taught our bodies what this intended future **smells** like, now it's time to define what it **sounds** like too.

I play the same piece of music while I do my post-meditation writing.

Remember, this is a time to **raise our vibration** and **activate our energy systems**, so keep this in mind when you're deciding on your sound anchor.

*My practice: I love this piece by Ludivoco Einaudi called, Earth Prelude for a few reasons. It is the perfect length at 5 minutes and it's really emotive. There are long, steady base notes with a sprinkling of higher notes placed on top. When I listen to this it helps me feel into the place of **groundedness** and **stability** with an **eagerness** for what little sparks of magic might make themselves known to me. It's a beautiful way to frame the day ahead.*

*I've been listening to this same piece of music in the morning for years now. I've developed a pretty intimate relationship with it.*

*Intentions that I set to this piece years ago are now in my reality. I got to experience what my future sounded like before I got here and now I'm here.*

—

That's it!

That's my morning practice. When I finish writing, I get up and get on with my day.

Carving out this 25 minutes and making it a priority in my day means **everything is easier** and **flows more smoothly**.

Here's the thing, life is going to happen. There are going to be situations and circumstances that unfold in our days. But rather than reacting to them and getting **angry, upset** or **frustrated**, we're much more likely to **pause, observe** and **respond**.

We can often get caught in the illusion of not having enough time. When we frame our morning routine as a way to make us **more** efficient, **more** effective, **more** productive, it makes it much easier to commit to.

My suggestion is that you take this framework and commit to following your version of it for 30 days.

If, at the end of 30 days, your **life**, **energy** and **creativity** aren't flowing more freely, then scrap it and go back to how life was! There's nothing to lose!

But...

- What if this was the beginning of you feeling like life is **flowing more in your favour**?
- What if this was the start of a future that felt **intentional** and **easeful**?
- What if this was the one degree shift that **changed everything** for the better?

Sending love,

Vari x

## About the Author



Vari McKechnie is a [coach, mentor, writer](#), and [podcaster](#) based on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, Australia.

As a [coach and mentor](#), Vari helps her clients cultivate more ease, joy, freedom and intention in how they create their lives.

She works [privately with clients](#) and also has a home study program called [Peacefully Productive](#) where she teaches you how to reclaim your time, dial up your joy and revolutionise the way you get things done.

She has written articles for *Mamamia*, *Marie Claire*, *The Huff Post* and *Hello Sunday Morning*.

In 2018, Vari quietly quit alcohol and more recently decided to do the same with social media. All with the view of creating more space and intimacy for what really matters in her life.

Originally from Glasgow, Scotland she now lives by the beach with her two sons and their adorable staffy, Stella.

**You've made it to the end! Thanks for reading!**

Here are a few thing you can check out:

- I'm not on social media. I choose to share my work via my [newsletter](#). I encourage my readers to reply and chat. If you send me an email, you'll get a personal response. It feels intimate and connected and friendly. It's the way I want to move through the world. You can subscribe [here](#).

<https://varimckechne.com/newsletter>

- You can take my home study program – [Peacefully Productive](#) – any time you like. It's all about reclaiming your time, dialling up your joy and revolutionising the way you get things done.

<https://varimckechne.com/peacefullyproductive>

- Curious about working with me as you coach? Get all the details [here](#).

<https://varimckechne.com/mentoring>

- I host a podcast. It's called [The Vari McKechnie Podcast](#). I talk about things like simple living, peaceful productivity and adding more joy and play to our lives.

<https://podcasts.apple.com/au/podcast/the-vari-mckechne-podcast>

*But all of that can wait. Pop your phone on charge, pull the laptop closed and get outside. Look at things and wonder about them. Let your mind take you to interesting, curious places you've long forgotten or perhaps never visited before. There's magic out there waiting for you to meet it.*

V xx