

## Walking the Houses

(or, how to create a magical life  
one small step at a time)

Like you, I've undergone many transformations.

One chapter of my journey looked like four rounds of aggressive cancer, homelessness, deep addiction, and suicidal depression – a lot of human struggle. Years later, I'm a successful healer and teacher living in a beautiful home in the redwoods with the love of my life and our kind white cat, surrounded by beautiful community, and live a fully magical life. How did that happen?

That rich transformation came about through a lot of initiation, listening to spirit and my intuition, and the 'simple' practice of **Walking the Houses**.

Walking the Houses is great tech, whether the starting place is a robust life change, or a simple desire to happily mosey towards an ideal life. In both cases, I notice that I can either nurture seeds of dissatisfaction, or that a major life trajectory shift wants to birth and blossom. There can be overwhelm. 'Where do I start? How do I transform all of my challenges with a snap of my fingers, to become that beaming bright person we've all met and admired – the person whose inner light is a deep joy to be with?'

At first, my mind might go a-boggle over the laundry list of things to change. When I peek under the sweet rock of who I truly want to be in the world, I might see physical health, emotional well-being, spiritual discipline, professional career, travel plans, family, community, service, mental acuity, hobbies, finance, self-growth, daily errands, housekeeping, and relaxation. It's quite a litany, right? This is where I might want to throw in the towel before I even begin – who can even name all of those life arenas, much less bring them into an alignment that makes the heart sing?

**How do I become that beaming bright person whose inner light is a deep joy to be with?**

It's possible, and we can do it together. It may seem like a bit of a tall order to break free of what we've created, like wild intrepid butterflies, when we're feeling like small, overwhelmed larvae with

a lot of problems, ten pounds to lose, that yoga practice to get to, and a bill to pay by Monday. Still, our hearts whisper to us that there is a way (*it's why your spirit has led you to this article*) and still, we get curious.

The first magic key is naming and acknowledging that the miracle of living a magical life is possible. With that seedling of joy tucked firmly under our arms, we can turn our attention to how that alchemical process can happen for us via a series of small, gentle steps rooted in curiosity, wonder and love. Every time our hearts nudge us to make a change – miniscule or mammoth – we're experiencing an act of love. We're honoring our own gorgeous inner landscapes, our constellations of beloveds and dreams, our capacity to be great and generous and tenderly violable and brilliant in the world.

**Every time our hearts nudge us to make a change – miniscule or mammoth – we're experiencing an act of love.**

The second magic key is that *small* changes, nurtured with love, transform us into beings of joy and fulfillment, where we are happy, feel loved, and know our purpose. Our spirits perk up here in a great, collective YES!

So...how do we do this? How do we create a magical mecca within?

We **Walk the Houses**. It's a 'simple' daily practice that's capable of moving heaven and earth, of healing challenges with gentleness and grace, and bridging hope and peace in the heart. It can seem deceptively small, like how a tiny seed can seem a trifle, but in the same way the smallest acorn can grow to the most glorious oak tree, the smallest changes can create the most magical life. Ready? Let's do this!

**In the same way the smallest acorn can grow to the most glorious oak tree, our smallest changes can create the most magical life.**

**STEP 1: NAME YOUR HOUSES.** Let's hit the pause button while you grab a piece of paper so we can start to daydream, and doodle the architecture of your magical life together...

Now that you've got a paper full of possibility in front of you, and your antennae are atwiddle with curiosity, go ahead and write the names of the life areas ('houses') that matter to you. For me, the big ones are:

- Physical house (How is my physical body? How is my health?)
- Mental house (What's the quality of my mindful presence?)
- Emotional house (How am I really feeling today? How's my heart?)
- Spiritual house (How's my connection to spirit? Am I in service?)
- Financial house (Am I honoring myself financially?)
- Romantic house (Is my love life juicy and thriving and fun?)
- Friends & Family house (Am I feeling connected? How am I showing up?)
- House of fun (yay!) (Do I feel joyful, excited? Is fun on my horizon?)

These are my main 'houses,' and they'll change over time. Depending on what your human experience is bringing you, you might add a house of grieving, a house of pregnancy, a house of adventure – the list is endless. Your heart is your guide here, and a gentle suggestion is to listen with no judgment to what feels important to *you*. If the house of fast food needs to dance today, great! Maybe it's the house of pampering, of knitting, of language, or the house of anger. It's all welcome – they're your houses, and it's your one wild and precious life.

**STEP 2: GO FOR A WALK & CHOOSE A LENS.** With the houses that matter to you written down (great job!), go ahead and trundle outside on a walk that makes your heart smile just thinking about it. This is a gentle walk, not a marathon – it's the literal, physical representation of the metaphoric houses you're 'walking through.' This walk reveals to you what beautiful, small shifts will start seeding the magical life you love, and are proud of.

**This is a gentle walk, not a marathon.**

Setting off on your physical walk, in the woods or through the neighborhood or along the shoreline, go ahead and cheerfully decide what kind of lens you'll use to examine what's going on in your life with a fresh and loving perspective. I've found it helpful to focus on a small landscape - here, you might call in the experience of yesterday and today, or even just today if that feels more comfy and workable. That's consumable enough for a nibble, right?

**STEP 3: NAME WHAT'S GOING ON.** Start in your first house. For me, that's the physical house. Now, it's just me on this walk with some trees and a friendly piece of paper, and I can get really honest and vulnerable in a comfortable, sincere way. So, maybe yesterday I ate some spectacular fast food and missed out on physical exercise, and then took supplements and had a great salad and some superfood snacks.

There's some things there I'm not hugely proud of there, and some that I am.

There will be days where a particular house looks like a hungry tornado whirled through it, where we might cringe with shame and notice a dialogue rising up that stops us in our tracks. There will be days where we puff up with pride, and pat ourselves on the backs. Great! It's just our houses, this walk, and us in the fresh air, and we know that shame, that great crippler of progress and kidnapper of hope, can't exist in the calm light of acknowledging what's actually going on.

So...we name what's happening for us – this is a raw ingredient for real, lasting change. With gentle bravery, we name that we feel angry, we feel shamed, we feel hopeless, we feel afraid. And in the naming, those things begin to shift. Magic has begun. We are engaging in a courageous act, and all we've done is make a list of what areas we care about, what happened in one of them yesterday and today, and how we're feeling about it. Bravo!

**Magic has begun. We are engaging in a courageous act.**

**STEP 4: ONE SMALL STEP...** Onwards! You're doing great! After naming what's going on in the house you're working with, you identify ONE LITTLE CHANGE that you'll be proud of when you walk your houses again tomorrow.

Maybe in the physical house, the teeny change I want to make is that I'll stretch for 5 minutes – and hey, I'm already getting some physical exercise just by walking the houses, and I can celebrate that with some cheerful optimism. 5 minutes of stretching is pretty attainable, and tomorrow I can add this to my positive practices that I feel shiny about – by then, I'll have a walk in the woods AND have a wee stretch. Yes!

I engage this process for each house that I've chosen, and by the end of my walk (this usually takes about 30-45 minutes for me, depending on what's going on), maybe I've decided I'll stretch for 5 minutes (physical house), take a deep breath when I notice I'm mentally arguing with someone I feel angry with (mental/emotional house), draw some tarot cards (spiritual and fun houses), leave my beloved a surprise post-it note of love in his sock drawer (romantic house), and invite one of my girlfriends to a movie on Friday (friends & family and fun houses). These are all little, deceptively 'simple' things, but if I do them, I've built strength and capacity for when I walk my houses tomorrow, and each meaningful area of my life has already improved, just by:

1. Identifying what areas of life really matter to me right now – my 'houses'
2. Deciding what time frame to look at (today, or today and yesterday, take it small and slow)
3. Taking a physical walk, and 'walk' through my chosen houses as I go

4. Naming what is with no judgment, and curiosity
5. Looking at what a small, happy-making shift is for each house
6. Making those little changes (*teensy steps!*)

**NOTE: ‘WARE THE UNDERTOAD!** I’ve seen a thing happen for folks who get excited about Walking the Houses, and it makes perfect sense when it happens. In the beginning of this ‘simple’ practice, I’d get a great woohoo under my sails and go overboard in a big, enthusiastic way. I’d think, all bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, ‘well, if I can stretch for 5 minutes, I can do some yoga. And make some bone broth. And take a bath. And drink some detox tea. And...” Whoa! All of a sudden, I’d have gone cattybonkers in one house with all the changes I *could* make, and huge change can be rough for anyone’s system. Wild enthusiasm is super, but the real magic of this practice is in how powerful a series of consistent microchanges are, in a variety of meaningful life arenas. So, if you find yourself sinking into the sneaky quicksand of more than one tiny change per house per day (the undertoad!), rein it in, friend. Start small. It’ll plant miracles.

**I’ve built strength and capacity for when I walk my houses again tomorrow, and each meaningful area of my life is improved based on my little steps today.**

If we look at a huge ocean tanker cruising along, it’s got some serious momentum and trajectory, yes? The notion of moving it on a new course – taking a 90 degree turn, say – is pretty daunting and would take a really tremendous amount of energy. That kind of catastrophic course change isn’t how an ocean tanker turns – it happens through a small series of steps that gradually move that behemoth on a whole new course. The smallest change at the origin point makes a huge change further down the trajectory line, yes?

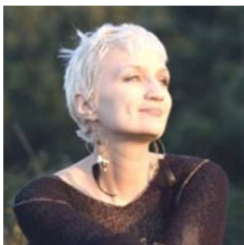
A story from a dear friend comes to mind. Her mom had been having some physical troubles – she smoked a few packs of cigarettes a day, watched tv on the couch for the majority of her time, was carrying a lot of extra weight, and had some serious health challenges. When my friend went to visit, she offered to make her mom a green smoothie, and was met with ‘there’s no point – look at all the bad things I’m doing. No smoothie is going to change all of that.’ My friend replied, with such compassion and deep love, that even a small positive step in the middle of what feels like dark disaster is a victory. That sharing has stayed with me for years, when I’ve been in some rough places. Even one wee victory is still a victory, and when these accumulate, they can change or create the entire landscape.

In this moment, I invite you to check in with your body, that magnificent healthy vehicle that's holding your bright life spark. Do you feel interested? Did your antennae waggle and perk up? Are you feeling a wee seedling of hope?

**No matter where you begin, you can start walking the houses and changing your life in the most majestic ways imaginable.**

You can do this. No matter where you begin – if you're homeless and ill and alone and have lost every shred of faith, or if you're happily reading in an extravagant mansion – you can start Walking *your* Houses and change your life in the most majestic ways imaginable. Let's hop into our magic time machine, and travel forward to a year from now. Let's say you've Walked Your Houses every day (or even a few days a week) for a whole trip around the sun. Imagine how wondrous and empowered you'd feel after making hundreds of 'tiny' changes that you feel proud of, and that bring benefit. In that moment, which is coming up to meet us faster than we think possible, you've done it...you're living your magical life.

I celebrate you. I celebrate your challenges and your inquisitive open mind that's led you here. I have absolute faith that you can create a magical life that you're vastly proud of, and it all begins with naming what matters, naming what's going on with honesty, and choosing one small step that makes your heart smile. Ready? Set? GO!



*Anna Dorian is a shamanic and reiki teacher in the San Francisco Bay Area. For the last 13 years, she's been anchoring community and teaching folks how to live a magical life using the technologies of joy, laughter, hope, and meeting folks with devotion exactly where they are. She can be found around the country at various trainings when she isn't quilting, singing, snuggling with her rescue cat, adventuring with her beloved, or walking her houses in the woods. Visit her at [VibrantReiki.com](http://VibrantReiki.com)*