

Book Study
Companion Workbook

MIDLIFE
calm

An Alternative to
Midlife Crisis

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Thank you for choosing this Book Study which compliments *Midlife Calm: An Alternative to Midlife Crisis*. The Intention and Dedication page of my book reads:

“This book is dedicated to the part of each of us bubbling up from within. It was written with the intention of creating curiosity in individuals, sparking conversations, cultivating new paradigms, shifting cultural norms, and healing our world. All of which happens one person at a time.”

You are the person I wrote this book for! As partners in this Midlife Calm movement, your intention is important too. I invite you to consider why *this book* and why *now*? What do you hope to gain from reading Midlife Calm?

That is the first of many invitations to come – both in my book and this study companion. As you begin, I have a few suggestions to create a rich experience.

- 1** First, I recommend having a journal or notebook as you move through this book study. Although there is room for notes here, give yourself space to dig in and put all your notice moments, feelings, and intentions down on paper.
- 2** Second, come with a beginner’s mind. Give yourself permission to be open to new perspectives, whether your own or someone else’s. The very fact that you are reading this means you are invested in a life of learning and growth, so you get to trust that this message is exactly what you are meant to explore now.
- 3** I believe in experiential learning. Experiences shift intellectual knowledge to a richer, deeper type of knowing. For that reason, my third recommendation is to share the process of this book study with another person or group. There are places throughout this study that guide you to ‘*Share your story now*’. If you are working in a pair or group, look at one another as you share whenever possible. This can be done in person or via a plethora of video resources available. It is supportive to set a specific amount of time to ensure each person gets to share. The phrases ‘*And what else?*’ and ‘*Tell me more*’ are beautiful ways to be curious and open to the person sharing if they find themselves hesitant to use their time. Otherwise, simply give the gift of listening. No responses are needed. If you are working individually, the ‘*Share your story now*’ can be used as a prompt to journal.

- 4 Throughout the book and this companion workbook, bubbles separating text are meant to serve as reminders to breathe. I invite you to use these as signals to set the book down and marinate in what you just read. I am proud that I wrote a relatable and easy read, however, there is no prize for completing first! Practice slowing down.
- 5 Within each chapter, I pose questions to support you in absorbing the message. This book study offers complimentary questions which allow you to more deeply experience the book. Choose the questions in either the book or this study that stretch you the furthest. If you do not know the ‘answer’ – explore that question! As you may have guessed, you are not at risk of sharing the wrong answer since there are no right or wrong answers! This is your journey. Create your calm whatever way best serves you!
- 6 Finally, you will notice I have denoted a few questions throughout this study as ‘Ponder Questions’. These are meant to encourage you into the practice of *not answering*, rather simply standing in curiosity and possibility. Allow yourself to reflect on Ponder Questions over the course of several days. Notice what comes up immediately. Notice what evolves after a few days of pondering.

As you embark on this journey, I will share an exercise which can also be found in Chapter Eight. I invite you to be open to the possibility that unfamiliar experiences do not always equate to uncomfortable experiences. Give this a try and repeat whenever necessary to remind yourself that you are equipped and capable of shifting into new ways.

Open both your hands so your fingers are stretched open. Place your hands a foot apart, with your palms facing one another. Fold your hands together and allow your fingers to interlock. Now, unlock your fingers and pull your hands apart so there is a foot between your two palms again. Quickly repeat this action of clasping your hands together and reopening them, then back again a dozen times.

On the last time, keep your hands clasped together and notice where your left thumb is located. Is it on top of or below your right thumb? I am willing to bet it was in the same placement the first eleven times you clasped your hands together.

Repeat this exercise. This time, place your left thumb differently...if it was on the bottom the past dozen times, place it on the top. If it was on the top, place it below your right thumb. Quickly clasp and pull apart your hands a dozen times with your thumbs in the new position.

This is a simple exercise of shifting from one way to a new way. It feels different. Not bad, just different. This is the way of transition. It is surprising and exciting to recognize how quickly we adapt to and embrace new ways.

This is also true for midlife calm. It may at first seem challenging, especially when midlife calm feels forced upon you. Or it may feel awkward like the clasped hand exercise. In either case, aligning to your inner intention – your inner truth – is the compass that guides you through moments of discomfort. It truly is possible to create a new way forward.

Midlife Calm is for you and with you. I stand firmly grounded in my intention when I say that the work does not begin and end with reading a book or completing a companion workbook. Once you complete these two steps, that's when the fun begins! I sincerely hope you accept the call to action at the end of this study.

Here we go....



Did you know that the only difference between feeling nervous or excited is your mindset? Both emotions show up the same in your body – increased heart rate, butterflies in your stomach, perhaps sweaty palms. What matters is whether your mind is focused on a positive or a negative outcome.

Think about times when you felt excited or nervous. Reflect a moment on how the emotions showed up in your body.



Now narrow your scenarios down to a situation or two when you chose to leap before you thought or felt fully ready. What happened? What were your results? What example do you have of a time you leaped and the result was better than you imagined? Share that story now.



Have you noticed you can find data to support whatever topic you choose to champion? I found this to be true when digging into the concept of midlife crisis. After reading this chapter, do you believe midlife crisis is a predestined part of life or a convenient catch phrase? What piece of history caught your attention, perhaps even surprised you?



We are early in this journey, and I use the first few chapters to lay foundation before fully revealing the concept of Midlife Calm. With two chapters under your belt, I am curious which topic are you drawn to champion – midlife crisis or midlife calm? What do you notice when you shift your perspective about midlife crisis for a moment or more?



Ponder Question

Why would altering your course, exploring a new endeavor, or pursuing something that makes you blissful be labeled a crisis?

three

Later in my book, I talk about the interconnectedness and beauty created by duality. So, let's take a moment to explore what midlife crisis means to you.

Have you ever said you were having a midlife crisis? How did it manifest? Even if you are skilled at shifting and embracing the empowering interpretation, use this opportunity to conjure up a moment in your life that someone may have labeled a midlife crisis. Share that story now.



Now, take a deep breath and give yourself a moment. I invite you to notice yourself without judgment. Connect with yourself. As you share your story of midlife crisis, how do you feel? What do you notice?

Ponder Question

Do you experience yourself as a human doing or a human being when you share this story?



four

This chapter dives into the language and stories you speak. Did you pause for ten minutes to reflect on the three questions posed in this chapter (see page 34)? This is a great journaling opportunity.



Your beliefs, thoughts, and words are wickedly powerful. And they are *your* beliefs, thoughts, and words which means *you* are wickedly powerful! Take a moment to notice the language you have become accustomed to. How does your language limit you? How does it serve you? What is possible if you shift your language?

Now, return to a time your language elicited fear, confusion, and scarcity. How could you have leveraged language to empower yourself? Share your story now.



Ponder Question

How often are you creating resistance, self-doubt, and judgment of and within yourself through the language you use and stories you tell?



Dance! This is strategically placed in my book. It's less of a lesson on how to dance and more of a message about how I got my groove back. Science supports the benefits of dance on physical, mental, and emotional wellness. Laughter, singing, creative expression, and connection offer similar benefits. Dancing is simply my way of highlighting how my inner flame faded and reignited.

I am curious about you! What have you always loved that you lost along the way? What causes your inner fire to burn bright? Share your story now.



Ponder Question

What would it look like to be silly and gently move your body in a way that surprises and delights you?



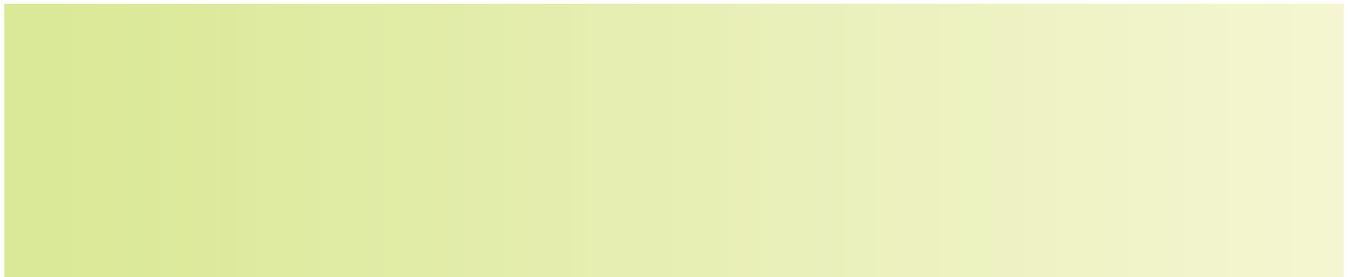
A story of how expectations play out in a person's life is told on page 47 and beyond. How did that land for you? What could you relate to within that story?



This chapter is ripe with perspectives on midlife calm. I invite you to reread this chapter. Allow the ideas to sink in. The first reading likely tickled your intellect. The second read through enables the idea to marinate within your being. Will you honor my request to reread this chapter? Don't do it for me though....practice stop – listen – choose – act to determine if you read Chapter Six a second time.



Midlife calm is synonymous with alignment. Personal alignment – living from the second set of questions – cultivates calm. Just as there are billions of people on planet Earth, there are countless ways calm can be experienced and expressed. From the perspective of midlife calm, how do you define calm? How do you experience your variety of calm?



Share your experience playing with one of the following concepts or tools provided in this chapter:

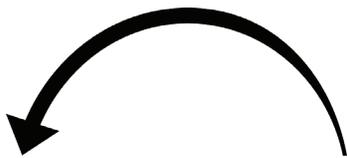
- Living from the second set of questions. *(Page 49 – 50)*
- Practicing the four-step process: Stop. Listen. Choose. Act. *(Page 51 – 52)*
- Noticing and embracing your rhythm of life. *(Page 64 – 65)*



seven

One of the final sentences of this chapter asks, “Are you interested in aligning with your human beingness as much or more than your human doingness?” Oh, how I hope your entire mind, body, and spirit respond with a resounding, “*Yes!*”

Reflect on the equation shared in Chapter Seven:


$$\mathbf{Intention} + \mathbf{Mechanics} = \mathbf{Results}$$

Similar to the exercise in Chapter Four, I invite you to journal on the questions posed on page 75 of your book. Being in relationship with intention is a practice, so we get to being in earnest now.



With an intention to propel you out of your comfort zone, I invite you to practice requesting and receiving support. Ask five people (include yourself as one of the five), “*What are the qualities/characteristics you love about me?*” Listen. Take it in. Write it down. These are clues about who you are, how you show up, and perhaps your life’s purpose!

Use one of the following tools. Share how it supported you in stepping closer to your intention.

- Leaping out of your Comfort Zone. (Page 76 – 77)
- Wheel of Life. (Page 81 – 82) (Google ‘blank wheel of life template’)
- Listening and trusting your wise, inner voice. (Page 85)
- Engaging your senses. (Page 85 – 87)



There is a difference between a freely chosen midlife calm and one thrust upon you. It is common to want to seek safety, security, and comfort when you feel as if life is happening to you, not for you...when you feel like you do not have a choice. Even the complicated topics deserve consideration as the notion of midlife crisis is dismantled, or at the very least challenged.

Let's start with a few deep breathes. Breathing in through your nose, fill your lungs as you quietly count to four. Hold that for a moment. Now, with a five count, release your breathe through your mouth. Slow down. Repeat this breathing exercise two additional times.



Sink into your heart and recall a time in your life that was once – or always – deemed a crisis. How do you get to use the tools of the rewrite or tell this from the lens of a mountaintop as well as the valley? Share your story now.

Give yourself permission to heal and to be supported. Give yourself permission to go all the way in creating the life that lights you up. Revisit your discussion or notes from Chapter Six. How do you define calm? When you are your own version of calm, how does your body feel? What expression is on your face? How do you interact with others? Take a moment to picture being in a state of calm. Share this story – this space you are holding now – as you give yourself permission to practice and play with embracing your calm.



Breathe, my friend. You are not alone.

Ponder Question

What do you notice within yourself when you read or hear,
“You are not alone”?



If I titled my chapters, Chapter Nine would be called Escalate the Calm. In the spirit of accelerating and intensifying this experience, I have a challenge for you. It's a slightly mind bendy exercise – I know you're up for the challenge!

Return to the version of the story told on pages 106 – 109. Read this out loud. Here's the twist...I want you to read it in first person, present tense. That means, every time the word "you" appears I want you to change it to "I". For example, the first two sentences will be read aloud like this:

I am born. I grow up with all I need and much of what I want.

And so on.

Okay...go!



How does **that** incredibly personal story land for you? What variations do you choose (flowing from the steps of stop and listen) to incorporate (aka: act)? Stories are powerful, you know...and so are you! Share your full life story of calm now.

A large, empty rectangular area with a light green background, intended for writing.

This chapter summarizes thirteen strategies to build and escalate your calm. These are not all inclusive, rather simply a starting point to support your evolution to calm. Which of these do you already practice? How does it influence your life? Which of these are you willing to stretch into and pursue? What is your intention as you practice each of these concepts?

- Notice without judgment or comparison
- Language speaks loudly
- Your stories are powerful
- Be a person of vision and intention
- Look for clues
- Stretch beyond your comfort zone
- Operate from the whole
- Trust your inner voice
- Valleys and mountaintops
- Learn from others
- Your five senses
- Consistency and committed action
- Dance!

A few final thoughts...

Thank you for reading this all the way to the end. I trust you did the same with the book and delighted in hearing about some of the very special humans in my life. Midlife calm is going all the way, so let me invite you to ponder a few more questions.

If you wrote an acknowledgement that covered the story of your life, who would you list? What would you thank them for? Sometimes a two to three sentence note in the mail is all it takes to support someone you love to realign with their own calm. Life is now. Thank your people.



Then there's the 'About the Author' page. Admittedly, I got hung up on this a couple times in the process of editing my book. The low energy of the first set of questions caused me to doubt that anyone would want to read several paragraphs about my past accomplishments...or that those accomplishments were worthy of mention.

Equipped with tools to interrupt those questions, you will read that I chose to play big and share a page and a half about myself! I am proud of who I am and what I've been up to in life. I'm willing to bet by now you know where I am going with this...*you* get to be proud too!

What would your one page (or several) say about you? What have you caused and created? Who have you been to make it so? Take a stab at an 'About the Author' for yourself. Indeed, you are the author of your life.



Finally, the last page of my book is an introduction to Vitality Cincinnati. As you step into the work of recalibrating and aligning within, who do you choose to be on your team of life? Where are you practicing your new ways and standing in contribution? Whether in your family, your work, your community – get connected. Be open to possibilities and new people joining your team of life at every twist and turn. We are beautifully interdependent, and we all get to grow together.

Call to Action

I have a vision of midlife calm being a conversation that inspires people to recalibrate – to align within. Now that you have read *Midlife Calm: An Alternative to Midlife Crisis*, I would like, I would like to invite you to join me in making this intention a reality. Let's start a midlife calm movement!

My primary call to action is to share your story of midlife calm, and invite others to do the same. Specifically, please visit PotereCoaching.com/midlife-calm. This is the platform where you can share your experience in whatever medium inspires you. Your voice – your story – is vital to creating this movement.



Let's be honest, I have over a dozen call to actions whirling around in me! I acknowledge and embrace that we all approach life in different ways, so I will list several actions for your consideration:

- Share your story of midlife calm at PotereCoaching.com/midlife-calm.
- Contact me at Krista@PotereCoaching.com if you are not yet clear about your story of midlife calm.
- Gift this book to someone.
- Facilitate a book club.
- Write a blog. Host a podcast. Allow midlife calm to be a conversation and option for everyone!
- Engage me in a conversation about how I can support you/your organization.

Will you join me? Will you discuss, share, shift, and support me in creating a midlife calm movement?

Create your calm...the world is ready!