

# A Beginner's Guide to Inner Work<sup>®</sup>



BetterUp

# Breakthroughs happen when you take a break.

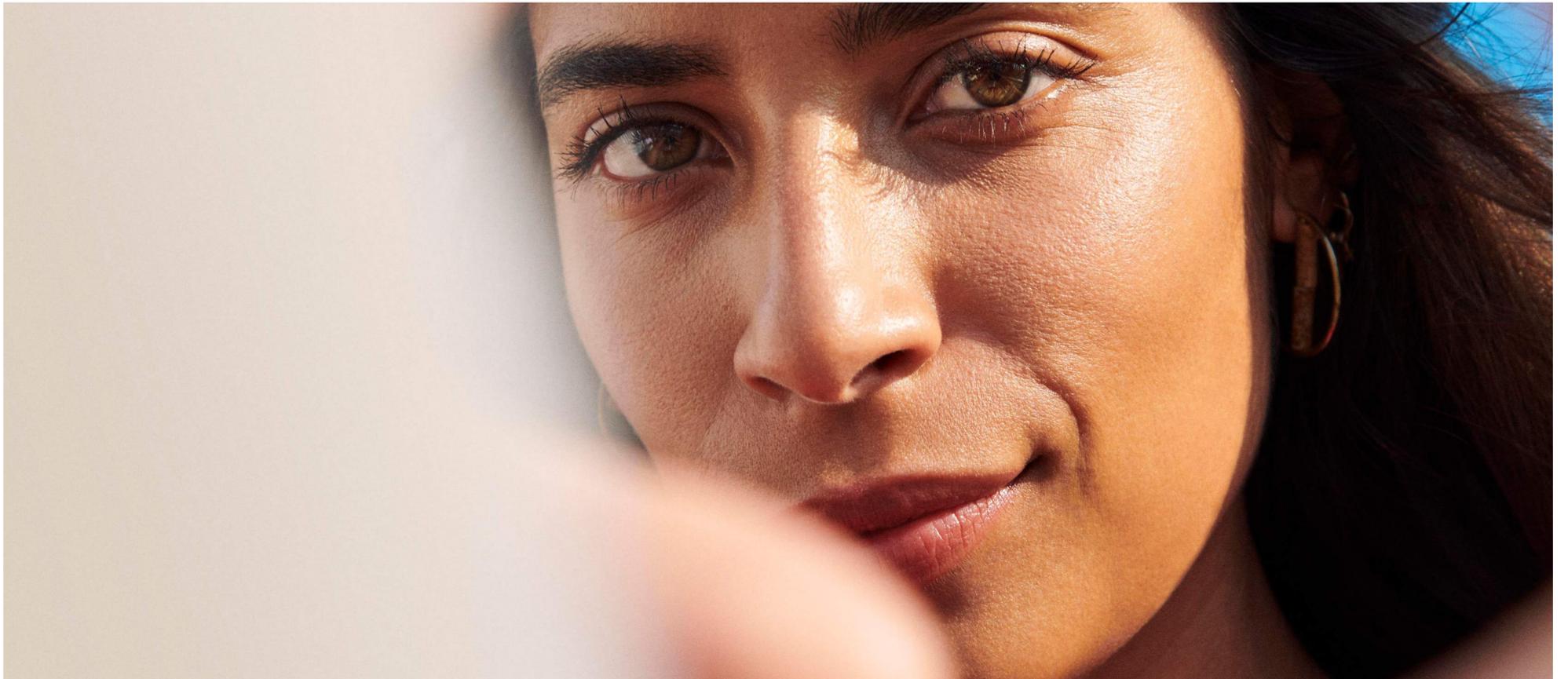


In the hustle and bustle of a busy schedule it can feel impossible to make time for yourself, and even harder to know where and how to get started.

This guide outlines 5 science-backed ways to practice Inner Work<sup>®</sup> that are easy to try and can fit into even the busiest of schedules.

# Start with your values

A great place to start on Inner Work® is identifying your values. Values act like an internal compass for how we make decisions, build relationships, prioritize our time and energy, and essentially, how we live our lives. But so many of us have never intentionally sat down to identify our values.



## How to get started

Write down 4-5 values that are most important to you right now. If you need help thinking through this, check out this [values exercise](#) from BetterUp Studios.

**Then, reflect on how you are living out your values.**

- 01 How do I fulfill my values in my work and my personal life?
- 02 To what extent am I currently living out my values?
- 03 Are there areas in my life or at work where I'd like to be living out my values more?

What values are most important to you right now?

Take Our Exercise



# Practice gratitude.

Practicing gratitude feels wonderful. But did you know that there's science behind why gratitude increases our well-being and improves our mood?

Expressing what we're grateful for counteracts our tendency to focus on the negative. Happiness researcher and BetterUp Science Board Member, Shawn Achor, says that when we search for reasons to be grateful, we are training our brain to scan the world through a positive lens.

## Got 15 minutes?

*Try this now.*

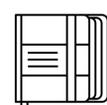
Make a list of the people who have positively influenced you, either professionally or personally, and how they made an impact on your life.

### Take it one step further by ...

- 01** Calling someone to surprise them with your expression of gratitude.
- 02** Sending a handwritten note to someone who has made an impact on you.

## Looking for more?

*Start a 21-day gratitude challenge.*



Write down 3 new things you are grateful for each day, for 21 consecutive days.

Research shows that people who complete this challenge not only become more optimistic but they retain this optimism for 6 or more months.

# Walk with purpose

Millions of people around the world started walking as a coping strategy during the pandemic lockdown. It not only boosts physical health, but helps calm your mind and uplifts your mood — clearing up more mental space to think strategically and creatively.

## How to turn your walk into Inner Work<sup>®</sup>

First, clear distractions — no checking your email, texting, or talking on the phone. Then, pick a purpose for your walk:

- 01 Make it a mindful walk** by focusing on what you are seeing, hearing, and smelling. You will likely notice things that you have walked by hundreds of times but overlooked.
- 02 Focus on a problem** you are grappling with. Let your mind wander and consider many possible solutions. You will likely find yourself furiously writing down all your ideas at the end of the walk.
- 03 Reflect on a mistake** you've made. If you feel haunted by a mistake or a moment of failure, use your walk to reflect and learn. A simple framework of asking yourself What? So what? Now what? can help you grow from any experience.

## Reflect after your walk

Did you gain clarity or generate new ideas while on your walk?  
How would you compare your energy before and after the walk?



# Dream about the future

Nobody can predict the future but did you know that the ability to envision the future is a uniquely human capability? People who spend more time thinking about possible futures and the paths to get there are more hopeful, less likely to become depressed, and more satisfied with their lives.



Think about a major career or personal goal you would like to accomplish in the next 2-3 years.

## Consider these scenarios:

- 01 The best case scenario**  
Imagine you didn't just achieve your goal, you crushed it. What did you do to get there? What were the optimal conditions for your success?
- 02 The likely scenario**  
Imagine you barely made your goal. It wasn't easy but you did it. What challenges did you encounter along the way?
- 03 The worse case scenario**  
Imagine you didn't achieve your goal despite trying really hard. What derailed you and what would you do differently?

## Then, reflect on your future outlook.

How optimistic do you feel about your future now?

Did this dreaming spark any new motivations or actions? Are you more satisfied with life?

# Get creative and make something

Have you been thinking about trying painting, pottery, knitting, or making that succulent garden you saw on Pinterest? Learning something new that requires hands-on engagement and complete focus can help you enter states of flow. This helps focus the mind, boost happiness, and promote positive mental health.

Grab a few supplies, a how-to video online, and set aside 30-45 minutes to give it a try.

Getting creative is a popular Inner Work<sup>®</sup> topic for our team here at BetterUp<sup>®</sup>



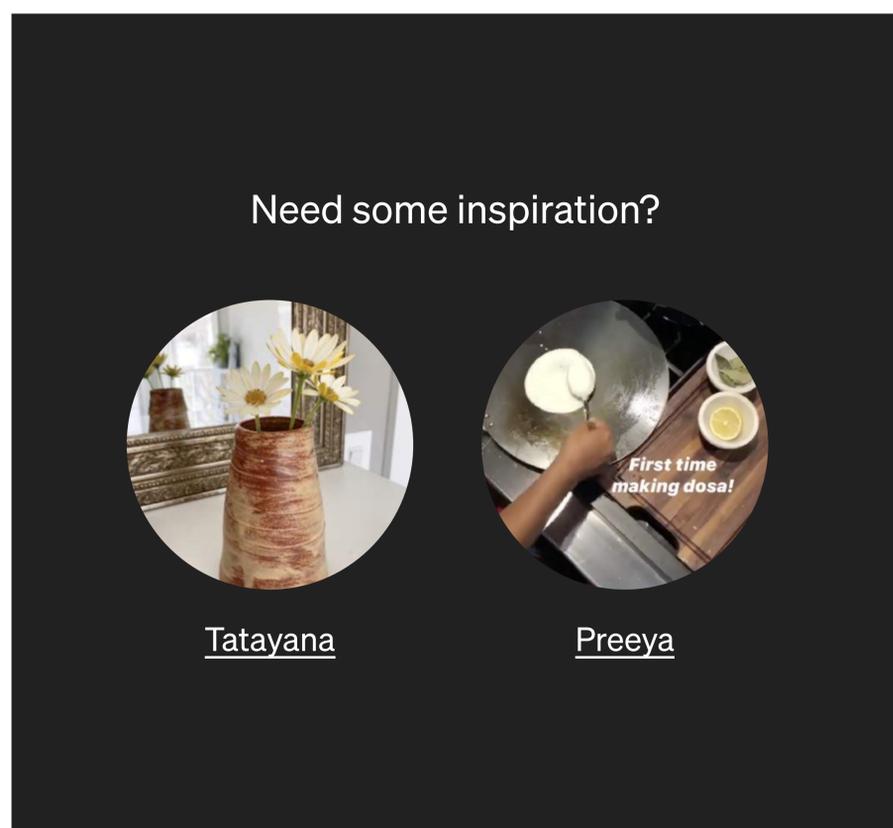
Here are some examples if you need some inspiration:

- 01 See how [Tatyana](#) finds focus and perspective with pottery.
- 02 Learn how [Preeya](#) spends time growing as a cook to let go but also feel more deeply connected to her roots.

Then, reflect on the learning experience.

How did it feel to be learning something new with your hands?

Did time go by fast or slow?



Share your  
Inner Work<sup>®</sup>  
experience  
with us

