

August 2021 (Happy *Playbook*-iversary!) Issue 13

The We Turned Out Okay Playbook

by Karen Lock Kolp, M.Ed.

Doing what works for you and your family...

Instead of treading the conventional path. Let's jump in!

How to Get a Miracle

Welcome to Issue 13 of the *We Turned Out Okay Playbook*!

I hear you: “Is – is she nuts? Right now, gearing up for the busiest time of the whole year, Karen wants me to think about getting miracles?”

Yup!

Getting miracles is about slowing down and paying attention. It's about being present in the here and now.

Some of the most beautiful miracles have happened for me in the busiest times...

The two that I'm thinking of happened while driving my son back and forth to his carpool drop off point. This was pre-Covid, and my tendon disorder was acting up. I wasn't sleeping well; I was worried about everyone in my life – instead of simply loving them, I was telling them what to do – and I continually placed myself last on the list.

My energy was, in a word, low.

Ben and I had recently begun spending time together in the park each weekend. One Sunday, Ben shared with me his theory that “the devil is on your shoulder in plain sight. But the angels... They *hide*.”

Now, time in the park with Ben is always a high energy time for me. I look forward to it. I know that it will be a time with warmth, and love, and no judgment from either of us for each other. It felt so good to have those few hours a week, when the rest of the time was busy and frazzled and anxiety-filled.

Something in me shifted when Ben told me his devil/angel theory. Suddenly I saw the world in a whole new light, and I began to wonder. Were there angels hiding in plain sight and I was just missing them?

2 How might I see them? I set the intention of being open for if and when an angel popped up.

(A confirmation of terms here: I'm using the word “angel” in a completely secular way. A synonym for this word might be, again used secularly, “miracle.”)

After our conversation that Sunday I jumped back into the week. I dove into the slipstream of who-needs-to-be-where-when, leaving everything in the road for everybody else, telling myself to grit my teeth and keep going. I came from a place that was pretty rough! Maybe it sounds familiar to you...

But I had that little “look for the angels” intention in the back of my brain.

It was just enough space for the creation of a miracle.

Parked at an intersection, biting the inside of my cheek with worry that we might be late, I happened to look just ahead and to the left. At a parking lot and building that I had looked at many times, but I'd always missed the miracle. Until now, when the clouds parted and the sun shone on the biggest and most beautiful tree I had – have – ever seen. It took my breath away. There were no leaves on it as it was early spring yet, and this tree was just HUGE. The sort of thing you look at and wonder how you could

possibly have missed it all this time. (I had been driving my son back and forth to this carpool drop off point for a year by then.)

Fortunately – I can't believe I'm saying that! – the traffic was sufficiently awful that I had like five minutes to gaze at this incredible tree. This miracle. Surrounded by pavement on all sides, it was in a small park-like square and had clearly been well tended. It had also faced some challenges. I could see where branches had been cut off, some of them quite big. The tree had seen a lot over the years! But it overcame all those challenges to be simply incredible.

In those minutes, I no longer felt stuck in traffic. Instead I felt as if one of the secrets of the universe had been shown to me. As if there was a voice in my head saying "be here, now, and get a load of this!"

I began making extra time in the car, so that I didn't have to worry about traffic delays and instead could sit in this traffic jam and just love looking at my tree. It became something my son and I could share and look forward to on the drive.

For me that was the mindset shift. The tree showed me that I could choose. That I could either harass and shout at my kid for being late, or I could take the initiative and get out the door a few minutes earlier. My role modeling of positivity, and understanding the realities of traffic, changed the behavior of my child as well. I no longer harass him to get out the door. Instead I simply go wait in the car until he's ready. He is ready a lot faster, possibly, probably, because I don't stand there looking at him and pressuring him.

After that first one, miracles started to show themselves much more frequently. That spring I first noticed a huge bank of my favorite flower, forsythia, on the way to the carpool drop off point. We are talking forsythia that takes over three backyards in a row, and climbs up into the woods in a beautiful, sunshine-filled glade of yellow.

What a gift, to see that.

And it all had to do with slowing down, being present, and being open to the nature around me.

Recently I've been wondering, why must we learn these lessons again and again?

I've been feeling somewhat burned out and when that happens, I become less conscious of the miracles that are hiding in plain sight.

So I've committed myself to alone time in my favorite park each week. Because I know that, no matter how busy it is, and right now it's pretty busy!, I still need that time.

Also my family needs me to get that time. They need the role modeling, and they also need a less-stressed mom and spouse.

We'll audit our energy this month, seeing what happens when we focus on stuff that fills us with energy and eliminating stuff that drains us with energy.

We get present and open up to miracles hidden in plain sight.

It's more important than ever in these busy times, and that's why we're making time for it.

Let's dive in!

August 2021 At-a-Glance & Calendar Expansion

Miracles, being present, doing more of what energizes us. That's what August is all about! You'll spend your time:

- Remembering that “self-care isn't selfish”
- Thinking critically about what drains you of energy, and what energizes you
- Understanding the connection between presence and miracles
- Opening up to the possibility of everyday miracles

Happy August – Enjoy!

6

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1. Live in... Presence	2. What is self care for you?	3. Document it...	4. Document it...
8. Live in... Breath	9. Energy Audit!	10. What energizes you?	11. What zaps your energy?
15. Live in... Play	16. Coming to present	17. Practice being present...	18. Practice being present...
22. Live in... Creation	23. Everyday Miracles	24. Thinking on miracles...	25. Thinking on miracles...
29. Live in... Love	30. Reflecting back...	31. Looking forward!	S1

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Ideas
5. Doing the self-care...	6. Doing the self-care...	7. Doing the self-care.	
12. A question about energy drains	13. A question about energy creators	14. Energy Audit check-in	
19. Practice being present...	20. Practice being present...	21. Energy Audit check-in	
26. Thinking on miracles...	27. Thinking on miracles...	28. Energy Audit check-in	
S2	S3	S4	

Let's jump into August 2021!

August 1: Live in: Presence. We kick off each week this month living into a key value or characteristic. Starting off with presence... Sit comfortably. Allow your eyes to close. Inhale deeply through your nose, feeling your belly expand; exhale completely through your mouth, feeling your belly relax.

Repeat at least three times, many more if you can do it.

On what you decide is your last exhale of the exercise, open your eyes and check in.

You may find that you feel more present, and in the moment. That's what we're going for!

Today I invite you to live in presence.

8

Week 1: Self-Care isn't Selfish

August 2: What is self care for you?

Take a moment to think carefully on that, and map out just below anything that comes to mind. (I like to call this sort of doodling/drawing/writing a "mind map.")

August 3: Document it. Today, go back to the mind map you started yesterday. What else is self care for you? If yesterday's were mainly indoors, perhaps today you could mind map about some outdoor types of self-care, or vice versa.

August 4: Document it. What else is self care for you? Today, return to the mind map above and add anything in that you have thought of since beginning the mind map.

August 5: DO it. For these next few days choose a kind of self-care and do it! It doesn't have to be for a long period of time; it doesn't have to be complicated. Whatever you do today, come back and share about it in this space:

9

August 6: DO it. Just like yesterday – choose a kind of self-care, do it, and come back and share about it here:

August 7: DO it. What sort of self-care are you getting today? Do it, and then come back and share about it...

August 8: Living in... Breath. Each Sunday this month you have the opportunity to “live into” a value or characteristic. Today, I invite you to live into your breath! Once, or more than once today, slow everything down and focus on your breathing.

Deep breath in through the nose; deep breath out through the mouth.

(Or if you’re standing in line at the grocery store and don’t want to draw attention to yourself, deep breathing in and out through the nose is absolutely wonderful :)

10

So much of ourselves and our emotions are connected to our breath. Take a moment today to honor that, and remember to say thanks to your body for this incredible thing it does for you every moment of every day.

Week 2: Energy Audit!

August 9: I’ve been waiting and waiting for this week :)

The concept of an energy audit, for me, has been life-changing. (I first heard about it from a wonderful coach named Rich Litvin.) I’ve been auditing my energy for a couple weeks as I write this, and I’ve learned so much about myself.

Let’s see what you learn over this week as you begin your own energy audit!

August 10: What energizes you? Where you get your energy from? Go to the Playsheet on page 21 and write down anything that occurs to you that gives you energy.

August 11: What zaps your energy? Write anything down that occurs to you on the Playsheet on page 21... and remember, don't worry about self-editing! One of the items on my energy draining list: "Your call is important to us." It represents so much about the modern world that challenges me and drains me of energy.

August 12: How to move away from the energy drains... Consult your list of energy drains on page 21. Then, return here and mind map on how you might get less of the energy drains into your daily life.

Taking my example of "Your call is important to us," something I've done – and it has worked! – is seeking ways to move the daily business of living away from gigantic corporations, and onto a more human scale.

One example, I have had my website hosted by a huge corporation since starting it 6 ½ years ago. When the website recently broke, and broke really hard, this corporation didn't do a good job with fixing it. Not only that but trying to communicate with anyone there was nuts!

So I hired a great technical problem-solver recommended by a dear friend... And it turns out I have another dear friend who is taking over the hosting! I feel a million times better going with people I know and trust. It's awesome!

How can you get rid of your energy drains? Utilize this next space to mind map about it all.

12

August 13: Today, consider the question “how can I get more of what energizes me into my life? Consult your list on page 21 and come on back here to mind map about it all:

August 14: Energy Audit check-in, Week 1... Saturdays during the rest of August I invite you to check in and see how you're doing with your energy audit!

How did it feel to focus on energy drains and energizers in your life? Anything you will keep in the coming days, that this energy audit taught you? Share about it all right here...

August 15: Living in... Play. My belief about play is that "Whoever you are, if you don't have play in your life you are not really living." How can you play today?

Share about what you did, and any other details you'd like, in this space:

13

And now let's pause for a...

Mid-Month Check-in

Looking back over the last few weeks, what strikes you about anything you've written so far? Are there any common themes or patterns that you recognize? Share about them in the space below, whether in writing, drawing, or doodling:

Common themes, patterns, other insights...

Week 3: Presence: a Precursor to Miracles

August 16: You'll spend this week coming to present, even if just for a few minutes each day.

There is a connection between presence and miracles. As you're getting present, keep your eye out. There may just be a huge, miraculous tree that you've never seen before – despite the fact that you have driven by it many many times :)

Today go to <https://mobile.va.gov/app/mindfulness-coach>, and put the Mindfulness Coach app from the American Veteran's Administration into your phone or tablet. You will use this app each day during the coming week (unless you've got a favorite mindfulness app already. I invite you to try this one, which is my favorite... But you get to choose.)

August 17: Practice being present... If you chose the VA Mindfulness Coach app, give 1 minute of Seated Practice a try. Once you have gone through the intro and the actual Seated Practice, click "Next," then "Log Exercise." You can start a streak by logging in your mindfulness practice two days in a row – or if that idea does not appeal, simply do your mindfulness practice and go about your day :)

August 18: Practice being present... If you're using the VA Mindfulness Coach app, you may enjoy Awareness of the Breath, an 8-minute exercise with one of my favorite phrases in the whole app: "If you get distracted 100 times, that's okay... Bring yourself back 100 times." Give it a try today!

August 19: Practice being present... Another favorite of mine in the VA Mindfulness Coach app is "iRest Freedom from Worry 5-min." I've almost got it memorized, and use it multiple times per week, every week. It really does help me feel free from worry! If you try it, maybe you will find it helps you too.

August 20: Practice being present... If you have the time, there is a wonderful 11-minute mindfulness exercise in the VA Mindfulness Coach app called Awareness of the Senses. Sometimes, especially when I'm having trouble settling down for sleep, this is the one I will use. I invite you to give it a try today!

August 21: Energy Audit check-in, Week 2... Saturdays during August I invite you to check in and see how you're doing with your energy audit!

How is it feeling to focus on removing energy drains and adding in energizers? Anything you will keep in the coming days, that this energy audit taught you? Share about it all right here...

August 22: Living in... Creation. The great coach Steve Chandler offers the idea that when problems come up we might ask ourselves “what can I create?” It can give a feeling of empowerment to know that the solution to our problems lies in what we create. But there’s other reasons to think about creating something – sometimes it is just fun! Creating a pair of knitted socks, or a yummy smoothie, or lots of giggling with a silly game or pillow fight. What can you create today? Share about it here...

Week 4: Miracles

16

August 23: Last week we looked into presence; this week we look into miracles! I’m offering out a statement on miracles each day, with the invitation for you to draw, write, or doodle about that statement, a miracle you’ve seen, or even a miracle you hope to see.

Here is today’s: “Every moment is a miracle.” – Bo Sanchez

August 24: “Out of difficulties grow miracles.” – Jean de la Bruyere

August 25: “Anyone who doesn’t believe in miracles is not a realist.” – David Ben-Gurion

August 26: “Miracles happen to those who believe in them.” – Bernard Berenson

August 27: “Miracles happen every day, change your perception of what a miracle is and you’ll see them all around you.” – Jon Bon Jovi

August 28: Energy Audit Check-in, Week 3... Looking at your lists of what energizes you and what drains you of energy on page 21, what have you learned or noticed in your energy audit? Will you keep going with energy audit check-ins after the end of this month? Why, or why not? (It’s truly your choice, no judgment either way :)

August 29: Living in... Love. Love is a peculiar emotion, gentle as well as fierce. Sometimes it takes me by surprise in how strong I feel it.

During the last few months I have chosen to open myself up to the full range of emotions – I didn't even know I wasn't doing that, and it's been an interesting experience. I've noticed that this opening has allowed me to more fully live in love. How about you – what would it be like to live in love? Do you do it already? Either way try it today, and share about your experience here!

18

August 30: Reflecting back. What has resonated with you this month, whether in relation to the *Playbook* or in other areas of your life? What didn't resonate? Is there anything you'll return to in this *Playbook*, and revisit after the end of August? Share about it all in this space:

August 31: Looking forward!

End-of-the-Month Roundup

What will you use and remember, from this epic month of parenting? Share your thoughts in the box below:

I will use and remember...

And get ready for September's *Playbook*! It's going to be a great month!

Ask the ~~Human Development Expert~~ Life Quester

19

Author Byron Katie has a series of four questions that she poses to herself in any challenging situation. The first one really resonates with me, and it's the question I'm thinking about here:

"Is it true?"

Is the story that I'm telling myself about any given situation true? Or is it just that, a story? More and more – and I wish it was not this way – I can look back and realize that something I took to be true, was not. How about for you? I invite you to share about your experience with this question just below. Cheers! – Karen

Playsheets

If you know me, you'll know I'm not a fan of worksheets. But I really wanted you to have a place to collect your thoughts in a worksheet kind of way, so I developed these Playsheets instead!

Playsheet 1: High/Low/Hero/Funny... In each issue of the *Playbook* we play this family game, where everyone shares about the best thing that happened to them that day, the toughest thing about that day, and who was a kindness hero for them that day – and/or, what entertaining or funny thing happened?

We play this game each and every month so you can enjoy looking back on your child's highs, lows, heroes and funnies over your *Playbook* subscription! This gives you a record over time so you can see how they change and grow.

20

Family Member	High	Low	Hero	Funny

Playsheet 2 – Energy Audit time!

What energizes me?	What drains me of energy?

Hello from The Dream HQ

The column where each month we visit a wonderful place for mindfulness and relaxation: Karen's Dream Headquarters.

We step into the glade of the Dream HQ, and we take in the view:

We arrive standing on the shore of Long Lake. It is nighttime, a beautiful starry night.

The temperature is perfect, there's a light breeze bringing the delightful scents of nature to our nostrils, and we feel a sense of safety and comfort standing on the beach.

22 Looking around us we see two lounge chairs on the beach. They are set up for sky viewing. One is occupied by the larger-than-life figure of Joy, one of the two Dream HQ residents.

On the other side of the empty chair stands the winged horse Honey – the other year-round Dream HQ resident – in all their strength and beauty. Both Joy and Honey are turned to look at us, a welcoming smile on Joy's face, and neighing sounds of welcome from Honey.

We head over to them. As we get closer we see that the lounge chair between them has been personalized for us: its upholstery and pillows welcome us by name. What fun!

Joy welcomes us with her beautiful, luminous eyes. Honey neighs softly and nudges us in a loving way. As we get comfortable in our chair we notice both of our friends have turned their eyes to the sky.

As we relax and settle back, we understand why.

There's a light show going on above. It takes up the entire vast sky, from above the North Woods, east over the Big House, and all the way west past Long Lake.

There's the incredible Milky Way – that catches our eye first. It's such a beautiful band of stars! We then begin to notice the shooting stars. Joy and Honey communicate to us that we've arrived on a fortunate evening, just at the beginning of an amazing meteor shower.

It's breathtaking. We spend as much time as we wish oohing and ahhhhing over the glorious display above us.

At some point we realize there's a table next to us, filled with the perfect snacks and drinks for stargazing. Now, we nibble the most delicious fruits and other treats, and sip what feels like the perfect beverage as we watch.

Finally, the meteor shower ends.

We feel a sense of sadness, it was so beautiful. But Honey notices – and quickly points out to Joy and us – there's a new constellation in the sky!

Just between the constellation in the North which says "Everything's going to be okay" and that in the South which says "All shall be well," directly in front of us in the eastern sky we can now see the bright and shining words:

"Come to present"...

What a lovely reminder and gift from the sky.

We enjoy this moment, this gift, this time with our friends.

We know, as well, that we can always return here and regain this feeling of love, warmth, safety, and wonder.

All we need to do is close our eyes and step into the Dream HQ.

What's coming up in the September *Playbook*?

It's been said that "September is the *real* beginning of the year," a better time even than New Year's for future-building.

So that's what we're going to do in September. You will take a small step each day toward building the future that you want to see, putting something playful, exciting – something just right for you – into the world.

Let's envision the future that you really want, and then get started building it!

Coming soon, right into your mailbox...

Have a great August and we will see you next month!

24



Terms & Conditions

Copyright 2021 by Karen Lock Kolp. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever, whole or in part, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means or in any form (electronic, mechanical, or other), without the express written permission of the publisher, except for the use of brief quotations in a review.

The material in this publication is intended as educational information. The material does not take the place of diagnosis and/or treatment by a qualified therapist or health practitioner. The recommendations given herein cannot be guaranteed either expressly or implied, nor can liability be taken. Please perform your due diligence before beginning any course of action.

I reserve the right at any time and in my sole discretion to remove any subscriber from the *We Turned Out Okay Playbook*. I reserve the right to amend these terms and conditions at any time. By continuing to subscribe, you agree to be bound to and abide by all terms and conditions.