



The Road to Rediscovery Wellness Alignment Series

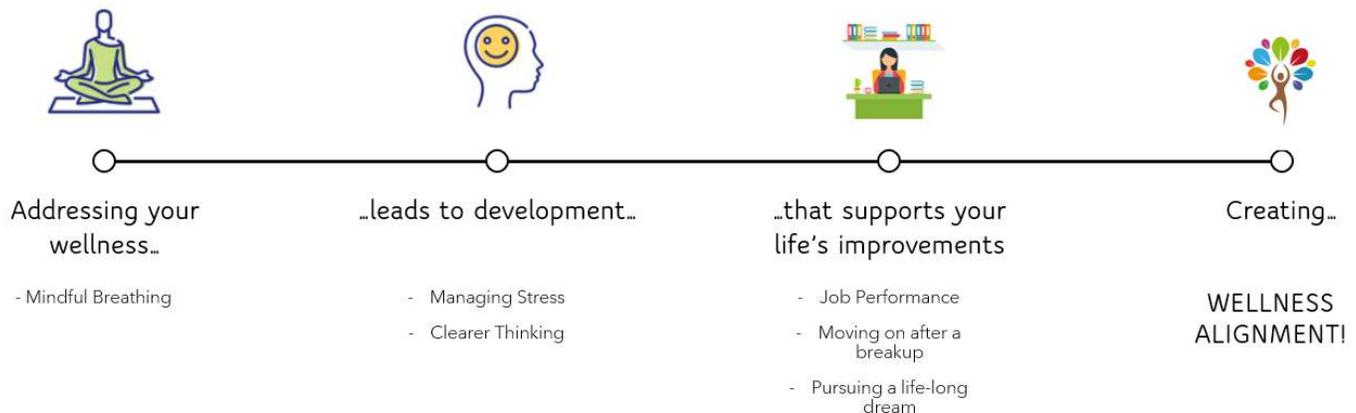
The Road to Rediscovery is about reflecting on life's lessons, to learn and grow, and to help others who are struggling through dark times.

Part I: Mindful Breathing & Meditation

I am happy to bring you the FIRST of a 3-part eBook series called “The Wellness Alignment Series”. But before we start, I want to lay the disclaimer that **I am no professional practitioner of wellness**, I’m just a simple guy sharing with you some wellness practices that I have built into my daily routine where I’m starting to feel a positive difference, enough to share with you.

Now, you’re probably asking “Aubrey, what do you mean by ‘wellness alignment’? Good question! In a nutshell, I’m referring to doing what’s necessary to align your wellness to your self-improvement goals. For instance, let’s say you have an improvement goal of losing weight; but you also have anxiety, uncertain if you have the discipline to do what’s necessary to lose weight. In this example, I believe you must address the anxiety and uncertainty *first* – to give you the best opportunity to lose weight; and you address it (anxiety & uncertainty) with wellness. This will be the foundation for self-improvement.

Some of you may think, “well Aubrey, isn’t working on our wellness considered improvement, in and of itself? Yes, it is; but in the alignment of these two, we’re going to talk about practices that support your wellness (meaning your physical, and mental states) so these can be the foundation for building life’s improvements for your finances, relationships, career, and more – thus creating ALIGNMENT.



As I mentioned earlier, this is the first of a 3 part series. Today, we’re going to chat about the wellness practice of mindful meditation and breathing. Exercise and Laughter are parts 2 and 3, respectively, and will be covered in separate eBooks.

So lets begin. Its one thing to say things like: 'take ownership of your actions', 'reflect and learn from past mistakes', and 'face the obstacles and barriers in your life’s journey'. But what good is it to say these without offering the TOOLS to equip you to do them?

Part I: Mindful Breathing & Meditation

Here's what I mean: Let's say I drove my car to the top of a mountain and saw the most beautiful sunset, glistening over the lake, hills, and tress. The next day I give you my car and say 'You've GOT to go up this mountain and see this beautiful sunset over the land! Here, take my car!' - but I don't give you the keys. I just suggested where you should be, but didn't give you the tools to get there. Sure, I loaned you my car, but you don't have the keys.



The same applies to reflect, learn, and grow from your past. You can't just "do it", you need the TOOLS that will optimize and equip you to do this effectively.

We're going to talk about what I believe are some foundational & practical things that will set you up for success in reflection, growth, and other 'calls to action' like holding yourself accountable, and exercising patience, humility, and respect for others.



Mindful breathing and meditation are among these foundational activities. According to *scientificamerican.com*, mindful breathing and meditation brings overall better health.*

Breathing has special power over the mind. The publication goes on to suggest that when patients have breathing difficulties that can be sporadic and acute, they can trigger panic attacks. The faster, inconsistent breathing can launch a vicious cycle in causing fear, which then results in more faster breathing, and so on, and so on.

Speaking aside from an actual, physical impairment that prevents one from properly breathing, it explains that mindful breathing involves the monitoring and regulating of how we inhale and exhale. Practicing this on a regular basis can reduce stress & anxiety, improve your control of emotions, prevent insomnia, stabilize your heartbeat, and more. So, based on these benefits, the practice of mindful breathing can truly help put your mental state in "a better place" foundationally, making it more feasible to do things like reflect on past experiences, holding yourself accountable for mistakes, and *leveraging* that accountability for learning and self-growth.

* Article: [Mindful Medicine](#); Scientific American (Sept. 2011) Michele Solis

Part I: Mindful Breathing & Meditation

While I'd never claim mindful breathing as the ONLY tool for promoting wellness, I will say that it can serve as that proverbial bridge you build towards self-improvement. And this is how I visualize the alignment between wellness and self-improvement! Using a tool such as mindful breathing can strengthen your wellness (i.e. your physical & mental state). And a solid physical and mental state are like the strong roots of an oak tree; allowing you to focus on self-improvements like:

- Getting over a broken heart
- Improving your financial situation
- Pursuing a new career or dream
- And yes, helping others navigate through their dark days of despair. After all, its often been said that before we can heal others, we must heal ourselves first.

It is very difficult to make these types of improvements with physical & mental states that are wavering, erratic, and unstable.

My final suggestion is not to take my word for it, but go ahead and give yourself a 7-day mindful breathing



challenge. Spend 5 minutes for 7 mornings in a room with no distractions, close your eyes and simply breathe. Center your mind around your breath – meaning your entire focus is on the inhale and exhale of your breath through your nostrils, the soft sound of air travel, and the coolness as it passes. Breathe like this at a steady, even pace for 5 minutes each morning, and at the end of the 7th morning, see how you feel. Do you feel more ready, or less ready to apply for that job than you did 7 days ago? How

about your recent breakup - what is your perspective on it now?

Again, I do not claim to be a wellness professional. I'm simply sharing my experience and observations from practicing it myself, hoping to articulate my perspective to you as clearly as I can.

Thanks so much for reading part I of the Wellness Alignment Series! Please make sure to download part 2 of the series, *The Wellness of Exercise*. I'm really looking forward to sharing it with you!

The Road to Rediscovery Wellness Alignment Series

A man in a dark jacket and cap is running on a road. The road is paved and has a metal guardrail on the right side. The background is a clear blue sky. The man is running towards the camera.

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Wellness Alignment Part II: Exercise

Thank you for continuing on the Wellness Alignment journey. In part 1, we talked about meditation and mindful breathing. For part 2, we'll talk about the virtues of exercise. And once again, I want to preface by saying that I'm not a certified fitness professional, I'm just sharing some practices that I have built into my daily routine where I'm beginning to see and feel a positive difference.

Also as a reminder, these practices support your wellness (your physical and mental states) so these can serve as a foundation for pursuing those life improvements for things like your finances, relationships, career, and more – thus creating ALIGNMENT.

While there's a vast number of psychological benefits to exercise, a Doctor from Walden University sites 5 primary mental benefits that we're going to cover in this episode:*

1. Decreases depression & anxiety
2. Decreases stress
3. Increases self-esteem and self-confidence
4. Improves sleep quality
5. Give you a 'brain boost'

Okay, let's start with **number 1, decreases depression & anxiety...**

Physical activity, even as moderate as an even-paced walk brings up your endorphin levels. This “Feel Good” chemical is produced by our brain and spinal cord, and gives you feelings of happiness and euphoria. The results are so powerful, some doctors may even recommend their patients try this *first*,



before prescribing medication. A year ago, I released an episode that discusses being loneliness versus just being alone. That episode was inspired by a dark time I endured in my late 20's. A key contributor for me getting through those days was a consistent exercise routine. Now, I must say those dark times were “self-inflicted” by way of immature patterns and poor decisioning (truly a topic for another episode), but in those times of being lonely and very, VERY blue, exercise was something I could do alone, so I did; and over time, I started to

mentally feel better, to the point where I began to “see the forest from the trees”, meaning those deep, dark feelings were no longer so heavy that they overshadowed the truth that I needed to do something about my situation. In short, exercising helped put me in a better mental state to address my personal issues.

Part II: Exercise

Number 2 is decreasing stress. The levity of stressful events can often overcloud the ability to think and reason. The increasing heart rate from exercising stimulates the production of neurohormones. This stimulation improves your mood and cognition. I've had many stressful events where I've felt overworked, or I'm worried about the outcome of something, or worried about someone's response to bad news. In these cases, I realize I'm just too absorbed in the source of the stress. So I just step away, and have a workout. Afterward, I not only feel less stressed, but able to think MUCH clearer. Again, more equipped to return to, and address my situation.



Okay, so let's talk about **increased self-esteem and confidence.**

The vast majority of us can agree about the excited feeling we get when we start to see physical results of exercising: A lower weight number, clothes fit better, muscle tone - these are just a few things we notice with consistent workouts (and might I add, a sensible diet). A boost in self-esteem and confidence can also be seen in your posture and how you walk. It's one of those things that people see in you, as a result to how you feel. It makes them say things like "Hmm, there's something about him that is different. I can't pinpoint it, not sure what it is. but it's something different...". The people I've talked to in gyms often tell me they exercise to clear their heads and blow off steam, and seeing their physical results is what they call a "beautiful by-product". Also, I would propose the beautiful irony that increased self-esteem and confidence can serve as the foundation to, AND the result of transformation. In other words, consistent workouts can yield muscle tone & better health, which can yield an increased confidence to run that marathon, apply for that promotion, or start that business you've always wanted!



Part II: Exercise

And then there's **Better Sleep**. Okay guys, admittedly, this is one I have no answers for, or at least no personal examples. I'm a nightowl, and I'm still trying to figure out the best time to workout. I've had friends who tell me they sleep better after an evening workout, I've had others tell me they can't fall asleep after



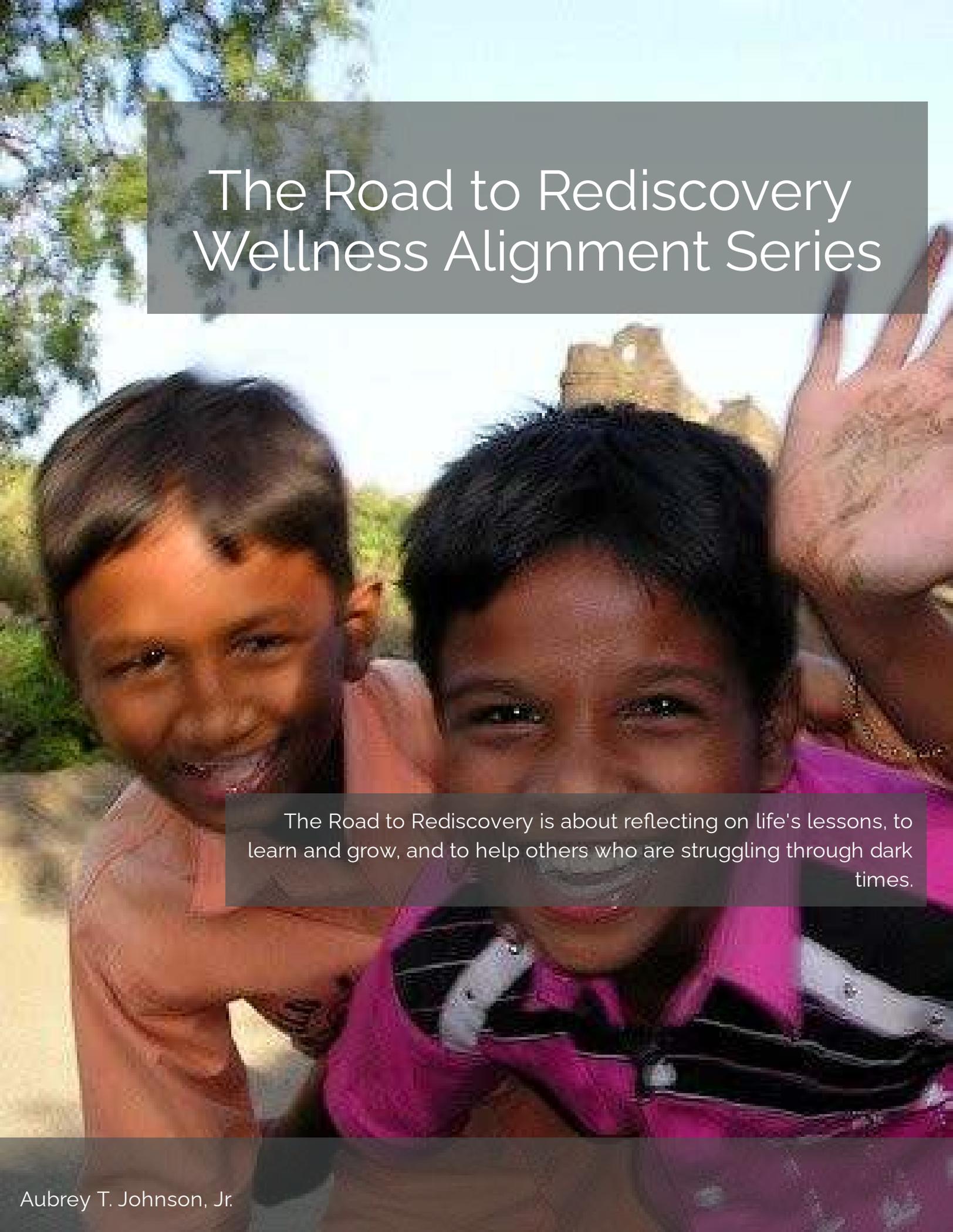
exercising in the evening. I don't seem to have a problem with an evening workout - I'm just trying to find a consistent time for it, and admittedly, I just don't get enough sleep due to being a nightowl. We have something in us called the circadian rhythm - this is your bodies "alarm clock". Exercise can help regulate this, telling us when we are tired, and when we are alert.

Finally, there's **Brain Boost**. There have been studies on mice and humans that indicate cardiovascular exercise creates new brain cells, also known as neurogenesis. This helps you formulate your thoughts and words more clearly, it helps you remember better (side note: how many of you went to a different room in your house, and when you got there, you forgot why you went in there?). Well, the hippocampus is the part of your brain that is responsible for your memory and learning. As we age, the memory naturally deteriorates, but exercise can not only help slow that down, but can also spark inspiration and creativity!



So there you have it - just FIVE of the many mental benefits we can yield from exercise. To quickly recap, we have 1, it helps depression and anxiety. 2, Decreases stress. 3, Increases self-esteem and confidence. 4, better sleep. and 5, it can give you a brain boost. We all have our own reasons for exercising, and we love the way we feel after a good workout. Imagine how much better we feel when we recognize the "by-products" of our labor: the better sleep, the better memory, the pep in our step, and more!

This concludes part 2 of the Wellness Alignment Series. Make sure to download part 3, which tops off the series with Laughter. I'm a BIG fan of laughing, and can't wait to share that one with you!



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Wellness Alignment Part III: Laughter

Welcome to the 3rd part of the Wellness Alignment Series.

We've been discussing some wellness practices that can help us align with our self-improvement goals. In part 1, we talked about meditation and mindful breathing. In part 2, we chatted about the wellness benefits of exercise. And today for part 3, we're going to discuss the wellness virtues of laughter! I am a HUGE fan of laughing. In fact, I'm not above going out of my way to find a laughing moment. For example, while most television commercials are annoying to people, I find the humor in them, breaking down the detail of each one.



When it comes to humor, one characteristic I've noticed about myself is my ability to have an open mind, and consider the humor outside of my demographic parameters. For example, I not only laugh at things that are funny to a 51- Year old man; I truly find laughter in things that are even funny to a 7 year old boy. I'm not ashamed of laughing out loud at things most people my age would consider "goofy". I've always been wired this way, and speaking of childhood laughter, Dr. William Fry, a Stanford University psychiatrist, noted that children

laugh more than **four hundred times a day**, whereas adults laugh only about a dozen times a day.*

In Author and Political Journalist Norman Cousins book, "Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient", He sites laughter as "inner jogging", due to the workout a good-hearted belly laugh actually gives to each system in the body.*

Heals the Brain

For people suffering from chronic depression to the point where nothing is funny to them, and they feel no reason to laugh, Laughter actually reverses this by triggering the release of feel-good chemicals like endorphins and dopamine. This is especially helpful for people dealing with chronic illnesses. Furthermore, there are pleasure pathways in the brain that researchers believe that laughter activates for us.

Boosts the Immune System

Psychoneuroimmunology is an area of research that has found that depression suppresses the [immune system](#). Epinephrine and cortisol are the stress hormones that have the potential to increase with depression. These hormone levels actually decrease during and following laughter.

Wellness Alignment Part III: Laughter

Medical students at the Loma Linda University School of Medicine watched a series of comedy videos. These students had a significant increase in T-cells (cells that circulate through the body and eat up germs). Additionally, people with allergies have been known to have fewer allergic reactions after watching humorous films.*

Perks up the hearts

And when it comes to the heart, quite simply, laughter makes it happy. The result is an increase in heart rate and circulation, much like an aerobic workout.

Laughter makes the heart happy!



Laughter heals you!

So, there you have it: from Mindful breathing, to exercise, to laughter, we've wrapped up our 3 roads to wellness alignment series! I really, really hope you find value in at least one of these practices. As we said in the beginning, I truly believe that before we can pursue improvement in various aspects of our lives, we must first address our wellness. Aligning our wellness will provide the optimal condition for our mental and physical states, giving us the best opportunity for personal improvement and growth In our relationships, finances, careers, and more.

You can connect with Aubrey on:

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- or visit road2rediscovery.com

Thank you SO MUCH for taking this journey with me, and here's to aligning your wellness.