Health & Wellness audiobook scripts

30 practice scripts from VO Journey Academy. Free to record, free to use in your reel. Download the PDF to mark up in the booth, or print it straight from here.

To the Corner and Back

Walking, starting small · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

I am not going to ask you to walk five miles. I am going to ask you to walk to the end of your street and back.

That is it. Put on whatever shoes are by the door. Go to the corner, look at whatever is there, and come home.

It will not change your life. It might change your afternoon, and afternoons are what a life is made of.

Lights Low

Sleep, winding down · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

About an hour before bed, I walk through the house and turn off the big lights. Just the lamps stay on.

Nobody told me to. I started the winter my husband worked nights, because the house felt too bright for one person.

I cannot promise it will do a thing for you. I only know that when the rooms go soft and yellow, something in me gets the message. The day is closing. I am allowed to stop.

Just One Pot Tonight

Cooking, simple suppers · Mature (55+) · Southern US · 30 seconds

You do not need a recipe tonight. You need one pot.

Put an onion in it with a little oil. While that softens, look in the refrigerator and see what needs using up. A carrot. Half a pepper. The end of a chicken. In it goes, with some broth or a can of tomatoes.

In half an hour you will have supper, and the kitchen will smell like somebody lives here. Somebody does.

The Chair by the Bed

Caregiving, small moments · Adult (40–55) · Neutral American · 30 seconds

In my mother's last year, I spent a great deal of time in the chair by her bed, and for months I thought I was supposed to be doing something in it.

Fluffing. Fetching. Fixing.

One afternoon she put her hand on my arm and said, sit still, you are making me tired.

So I sat. We watched the birds at the feeder. It was the most useful thing I did all week, and it looked exactly like nothing.

Four O'Clock at the Kitchen Table

Stress, worry · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

My grandmother had a saying. Worry all you like, she told me, but do it at the kitchen table at four o'clock, and not in my hallway.

So when something starts circling at ten in the morning, I write it on a scrap of paper and tell it, four o'clock. Then at four I sit down with a cup of tea and the scraps.

Here is what surprised me. About half of them have gone stale by then. That sorted itself out, I think.

The other half are still real, and they deserve the table. If yours never leave you alone, though, please talk to your doctor. That is what they are there for.

Nearest Wins

Habits, making it easy · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

If you want to do something every day, do not start with willpower. Start with furniture.

Look at where things are in your house. The walking shoes in the back of the closet, under a box. The fruit in the bottom drawer of the refrigerator, where fruit goes to be forgotten. The book you meant to read, upstairs, while you sit downstairs.

Now move them. Shoes by the front door. Fruit in a bowl on the counter. Book on the arm of the chair.

You have not become a more disciplined person. You are exactly as tired and distracted as you were this morning. You have just made the good thing the nearest thing, and most days, nearest wins.

Somebody Made the Stairs Taller

Aging, humor · Mature (55+) · Midwestern US · 45 seconds

Somebody has been making the stairs in my house taller. I cannot prove it, but I have my suspicions.

I am seventy-three. For a couple of years I was angry about all of it. The knees, the reading glasses on a string.

Then my granddaughter, who is six, watched me get up out of a low chair. It took a while. There were sound effects. And she said, very seriously, Grandpa, you are good at that.

I laughed until I had to sit back down.

But she was right. I have had to get good at it. Nobody tells you that getting older is a skill, and that you are allowed to be proud of how you manage.

Sunday Soup

Cooking, cooking ahead · Mature (55+) · Midwestern US · 45 seconds

Every Sunday afternoon I make a pot of soup big enough for a church basement, and there are only two of us.

It started the year my husband was laid up and I was running back and forth. So I cooked once.

Monday we eat it as is. Tuesday it goes over rice. By Thursday a jar goes to the fellow next door, who pretends he does not need it.

I am not telling you it is good for you. I am no dietitian. I am telling you that on a hard Wednesday, I open the refrigerator and supper is already there, and it feels like a kindness from somebody who knew I would be tired.

Let It Wait Its Turn

Habits, mornings · Young adult (18-25) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

Here is a small experiment. Tomorrow morning, before you pick up your phone, do one thing.

Open the curtains. Drink a glass of water. Stand at the window and see what the weather is doing with your own eyes, instead of reading about it.

I am not against the phone. I love my phone. But I noticed that for years, the first voice in my head every day was somebody else's. A headline. An email from work. A stranger being angry about something.

So now I get the first five minutes. Five minutes where the day belongs to me, before I hand it over.

You can keep the phone by the bed. Just let it wait its turn.

Tuesday Is a Door

Caregiving, asking for help · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 45 seconds

When you are looking after someone, people will say, let me know if you need anything. And you will say, thank you, we are fine.

You are not fine. You are too tired to think of an answer.

So let me give you one. The next time somebody offers, say this. Could you sit with Dad from two until four on Tuesday, so I can go to the grocery store by myself?

Be that specific. A day, a time, a task.

People want to help. But most of them are standing at the edge of your situation, not knowing where the door is. Tuesday is a door. You are not asking for a favor. You are letting them in.

What Is This Room For

Sleep, the bedroom · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Walk into your bedroom and look at it the way a stranger would. What is this room for?

For most people I talk to, the honest answer is everything. There is a laundry basket that never empties. A laptop on the nightstand. A treadmill wearing three sweaters.

I am not here to tell you a tidy room will fix your sleep. I do not know your sleep, and if it has been bad for a while, that is a conversation to have with your doctor, not with a book.

What I can tell you is what I did. I took the work out. The laptop, the charger with its little blue light. I carried it all down the hall and shut the door on it.

The room got quieter, even though none of those things had been making a sound.

Now when I walk in, there is only one thing asking for my attention. It is the bed.

Walking With Louise

Walking, friendship · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

For eleven years, I have walked with Louise Tanaka at seven in the morning, and we have never once called it exercise.

We met when our dogs did. Her dog has since passed on, and so has mine, and nobody suggested we stop. Past the school, around the pond, up the hill she complains about, and back.

We are not fast. A man with a cane passed us in April and we have not gotten over it.

What we do is talk. Some of the hardest things I have said out loud, I said looking straight ahead at a duck.

That is the secret, I think. You can say almost anything when you are both facing the same direction.

My doctor is pleased that I walk. I let her think it is for my health. Really, I go because at seven o'clock, Louise will be standing at the corner, and I would not dream of leaving her there.

One Dropped Plate

Habits, starting again · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

So you missed a day. Maybe you missed a week. The walking, the journal, the going to bed on time, whatever it was. You had a good run going, and then life came through like weather.

A small, unhelpful voice is going to say, well, there is no point now. Might as well wait until Monday. Or January.

Do not wait. That voice is not being sensible. It is being tidy. It wants a clean starting line, and there is no such thing.

A woman in one of my classes, Bernadette Osei, put it better than I ever have. She said, when I drop a plate, I do not go and smash the rest of the cupboard.

One missed day is a dropped plate. Sweep it up.

Then do the thing today. Badly, briefly, at the wrong time. It does not have to be a fresh start. It just has to be a next one.

The Kettle Rule

Stress, pauses · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

I have a rule in my house, and it is the only wisdom I can claim to have invented. While the kettle is boiling, I am not allowed to do anything else.

It began as a joke. I used to fill the kettle, switch it on, and then fly round the kitchen. Unload the dishwasher. I would come back to find the water had boiled and gone cold, and I had made a cup of nothing.

So one morning I simply stood there. Hands on the worktop. I watched the steam come up. I looked out at next door's cat sitting on the shed.

It takes about three minutes. Three minutes in which nobody can reasonably expect anything of me.

I have tried meditation, and I spent the whole time composing a shopping list.

I recommend it. Not as a cure for anything. Just as a small door in the day that you are allowed to stand in.

Set the Table

Cooking, eating alone · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

After my wife died, I ate standing up at the counter for the better part of a year. Crackers, mostly. Whatever did not need a plate.

I could not see the point of dirtying a pan for one person.

My daughter noticed. She did not lecture me. She mailed me a single place mat, with a note that said, Dad, set the table.

I felt foolish the first night. One place mat. One fork. I made an omelet, and I sat down in my own chair to eat it, and I put the radio on.

It was the first meal I had tasted in months.

I am not going to tell you what to eat. That is between you and your doctor. I am only going to tell you what my daughter told me. You are still somebody worth cooking for. Even on a Tuesday. Even if the only one at the table to say thank you is you.

The Job Sheet

Caregiving, getting organized · Adult (40-55) · Midwestern US · 1 minute

When Walter Brzezinski's wife came home from the hospital, she came with a folder an inch thick, and Walter, who had been a machinist for thirty-eight years, read every page twice.

It did not help. Appointments, phone numbers, instructions from four different offices that did not seem to have met each other.

So he did what he would have done at the shop. He made a job sheet.

One piece of paper, on the refrigerator, in block capitals. Who to call, and for what. Which questions were for the doctor, so he would stop trying to answer them himself at two in the morning.

Walter was not a man who talked about being frightened. But he told his daughter that the folder had made him feel stupid, and the list made him feel like he had a job he knew how to do.

Sometimes that is the whole difference. Not less to carry. Just a handle on it.

A Bedtime for Grown-Ups

Sleep, routine · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

When you were small, somebody gave you a bedtime. A bath, a story, the light out. But somebody else was in charge of ending your day.

Then you grew up, and the job passed to you, and nobody mentioned it.

So now your day does not end. It just runs out. You fall asleep on the couch, or you scroll in bed until your arm gets tired.

Give yourself what that grown-up gave you. Not a rule. A routine. Three small things, in the same order, every night.

Mine are dull. I lay out tomorrow's clothes. I wash my face. I read four pages of something with no bad news in it.

I am not promising you perfect sleep. Nobody honest can, and if sleep is a real struggle for you, please talk to your doctor.

A day deserves an ending. You would do it for a child. You are allowed to do it for yourself.

The Bench Halfway

Walking, pacing yourself · Mature (55+) · Southern US · 1 minute

There is a bench about halfway around Pruitt Lake, and for the longest time I would not sit on it.

I was sixty-eight years old and too proud for a bench. I figured if I sat down, that was the beginning of the end. Next thing you know they would be bringing me soup.

So I would go by it at a march, breathing like a freight train.

One morning it was a fellow about my age, with a thermos. He said, you know, the lake looks the same from here, and you get to actually see it.

I said I was fine.

He said, I did not ask if you were fine. I asked if you wanted some coffee.

Well. I sat.

His name is Earl. We have had coffee on that bench most mornings since.

Turns out the bench was not quitting. It was just the part of the walk I had been skipping.

An Hour Called Held

Stress, protecting time · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Take out your calendar for the coming week and find one hour with nothing in it.

Now do a strange thing. Write in that hour. Give it a name, so that it looks like an appointment. I call mine, simply, held.

An empty hour does not stay empty. Somebody asks, are you free Thursday at three, and you look, and you are, so you say yes. You were not free. You were just unguarded.

A school principal I worked with, Tomas Reyes, told me he had not had an unplanned hour since his kids were born. When he blocked one, he sat in his car in the driveway and did not know what to do with it.

That is fine. You do not have to do anything with it.

The point is that once a week, when someone asks if you are free, you get to look at your calendar and honestly say, no. I have something.

Enough Broth

Cooking, learning late · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I learned to cook at thirty-four, and I learned from a woman who had been dead for six years.

My mother never used a recipe, and she never let me help. When she died, I got her knife and a tin box of index cards that turned out to be mostly grocery lists.

There was one real card. Chicken and rice, in her slanting hand, with no amounts on it. Some onion. Enough broth. Cook until done.

I made it nine times. I stood there and said, enough broth, Mom? Enough for what?

Around the sixth try, I stopped measuring and started watching. I smelled when the onion went sweet.

And on the ninth night, I took a bite, and there she was.

She had not left the amounts off to be difficult. She had left them off because that was the lesson. You have to stand there. You have to pay attention. That was always the recipe.

The Good Enough Day

Habits, expectations · Adult (30-45) · Australian · 1 minute

Let me guess how your plan looks. Up at five. A run. A green breakfast. A tidy inbox, in bed by nine-thirty with a book.

Lovely. And how many days has that actually happened?

Right. Me neither.

The trouble with the perfect day is that you can only fail it. One sleep-in and the whole thing is in the bin, and then you reckon, well, I have stuffed it now, pass the biscuits.

So I keep a short list called the good enough day. Three things. Go outside. Eat one meal sitting down. Ring or message one person I like.

On a shocker, when the car will not start and the dog has eaten something, I can still tick off three.

I am not making big claims. But I go to bed most nights having kept a promise to myself, and that is a nicer way to turn out the light than a list of everything I got wrong.

What My Hands Remember

Aging, loss and what stays · Mature (55+) · Neutral American · 1 minute

I cannot open a jar anymore. I start there so you do not mistake this for a cheerful chapter where getting old turns out to be a gift.

Some of it is plain loss. My hands were strong, and now they are not, and I miss them the way you would miss a friend.

My doctor and I have talked it over, and the medical part stays with her.

What I want to tell you about is the piano.

I had not played in thirty years. My niece's old upright ended up in my front room, and one evening I sat down.

My fingers were slow. But they knew where to go. A hymn from when I was eleven came out of them, and I did not have to think at all.

My hands have forgotten jars. They have not forgotten everything. There is more of me still in here than I can see on a bad day.

Two Men in Pajamas

Caregiving, exhaustion · Adult (40–55) · Neutral American · 1 minute

Nobody tells you about three in the morning.

When my father moved in with us, I had a plan for the days.

I did not have a plan for the nights. He would wake up and not know the house. I would hear him in the hallway, and we would stand there, two men in pajamas, and I would tell him where he was.

I did that for five months before I told anyone I was not sleeping. I thought being tired was the price, and that a good son paid it without mentioning it.

It was my own doctor who caught it. She asked how I was, and I said fine, and she put her pen down and waited.

I will not tell you what we worked out. Your situation is different, and you need your own people.

I will tell you the sentence she said. You are also a patient in that house. Act like it.

The Carrots Do Not Care

Stress, patience · Adult (40-55) · Neutral British · 1 minute

I took on the allotment the spring after I was made redundant, so that I would have somewhere to be at nine in the morning.

I made a spreadsheet. I sowed three rows of carrots and went back the next day to see how they were getting on.

Nothing, of course. I stood over bare soil like a manager waiting for a late report.

The old boy on the next plot, Mr. Adeyemi, watched me do this for a week. Finally he leaned on his fork and said, it will not come up any faster for being supervised.

For thirty years I had believed that if a thing was not happening, I was not pushing hard enough.

Carrots do not care. You water, you weed, you wait. Your worry is no use to them.

They came up in the third week, by a clock that had nothing to do with me.

I deleted the spreadsheet. I kept the plot.

The Photograph Drawer

Aging, family memory · Mature (55+) · Southern US · 1 minute

On the first Sunday of every month, Odessa Marlowe, who was eighty-one, took one photograph out of the drawer in her hall table and telephoned a grandchild.

The drawer held some sixty years of pictures, and she had come to understand that she was the last person alive who knew who was in them.

So she would choose one. A man on a porch step with a guitar. And she would call, and say, get a pencil, I am going to tell you about your great-uncle Cleve.

The grandchildren were polite about it. Then they started calling her. Is it Sunday yet, Grandmama? Which one did you pull?

She wrote the names on the backs as she went, shaky handwriting and all.

Folks kept telling Odessa she ought to rest. She saw no reason to. She had a drawer full of people who needed introducing, and she was the only one left who could do the honors.

A Plum in My Pocket

Walking, noticing · Adult (30-45) · Neutral American · 1 minute

There is a way of walking that I see a lot of. Head down, arms pumping, eyes on a watch.

If that is working for you, wonderful. Carry on.

But if you have started to dread it, try this. Tomorrow, leave the watch at home, and give yourself one small assignment. Find three things you have never noticed on your own street.

I tried it on a block I had lived on for nine years. I found a house with a blue door I would have sworn was green. I found a brass plaque on the church wall, and a plum tree hanging over the sidewalk, heavy with fruit nobody was picking.

Nine years. I had been walking through my own neighborhood like a commuter through an airport.

I cannot tell you how far I went, or how fast. I only know I came home in a better mood than I left in, with a plum in my pocket.

The Year I Stopped Fixing My Sleep

Sleep, letting go · Adult (40–55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

For about two years, I treated my sleep like a broken appliance.

I bought things. A special pillow, then a different special pillow. Curtains thick enough to stop a searchlight. A little machine that made the sound of rain, and another that made the sound of a fan, in case rain was the problem. I read articles at midnight about why I should not be reading articles at midnight.

And every evening, around nine, I would get nervous. I would lie down like someone sitting an exam.

You can guess how that went.

What changed things was not a product. It was a conversation. I told my doctor the whole saga, pillows and all. She listened, asked sensible questions, and checked a few things that needed checking. I would urge you to do the same if you are where I was. Do not spend two years guessing.

And then she said something I have kept. You cannot make yourself sleep. Nobody can. You can only stop standing at the door looking for it.

So I quit keeping score. I kept the plain habits, the regular bedtime, the dim lamps. But if I was awake, I was awake. I would sit in the armchair with a dull book, and go back when I felt like it.

I still have the odd bad night. Everybody does.

The difference is that now it is only a night. It used to be a verdict.

Eleven Lamp Posts

Walking, after a setback · Mature (55+) · Neutral British · 90 seconds

After my operation, and I shan't bore you with which one, the physiotherapist asked me what I wanted to be able to do again.

I said, I want to walk to the shops and carry my own bag home.

It is four hundred yards.

She did not laugh. She wrote it down, and she set out what I was to do and what I was not, and I did precisely as I was told. I would say the same to you. Whoever is looking after you knows your case. I do not.

What I can tell you about is the lamp posts.

There are eleven between my gate and the shop. The first week I was allowed out, I walked to the second one, touched it, and came home. I felt ridiculous. A grown woman, patting a lamp post.

The next week, the fourth. Then the sixth, where there is a low wall just the right height for sitting on.

It took most of the spring. I am not a patient person, and I complained a good deal, mainly to the lamp posts.

Then one morning in May I reached the shop. I bought a loaf and a newspaper. And I walked home with the bag in my hand, quite slowly, past all eleven.

I did not tell anyone. I put the kettle on. But I shall tell you. It was one of the proudest mornings of my life.

The Thursday Table

Cooking, the family table · Adult (40-55) · Neutral American · 90 seconds

For most of a year, the Okonkwo-Hale family did not eat a single meal together, and nobody could have told you when it stopped.

There was no decision. There was a new job with a late shift. There was soccer, then band, then a teenager who preferred her room. Dinner became something each person solved alone, out of a different container.

It was the father, Ray, who noticed. He realized one evening that he did not know the name of his son's best friend.

He did not call a family meeting. He announced that on Thursdays, he was cooking, and that anybody who was home at six-thirty could have some.

The first Thursday, it was Ray and a pan of burned enchiladas. The kids took plates upstairs.

He did it again the next week. And the next. He never once complained about who was missing.

By the second month, his daughter had started drifting down early, to tell him he was chopping the onions wrong. By the third, his son was bringing the best friend, whose name, it turned out, was Mateo, and who could eat four enchiladas without visible effort.

Ray will tell you he is not much of a cook, and he is right. The food was never the point.

He set a table once a week, and kept setting it, and waited. Sooner or later, a family will usually come to see what smells so good.

The One Doing the Holding

Caregiving, looking after yourself · Adult (40-55) · Australian · 90 seconds

If you are caring for someone you love, I would like to talk to you for a minute. Not about them. About you.

I know. You have not got time. I looked after my mum for six years, and if someone had handed me a book about self-care, I would have used it to prop up the wobbly table.

So I will not tell you to take a bubble bath. I will tell you three things I wish someone had said to me.

First. You are going to have days when you are not kind. You will snap at someone who cannot help what is happening to them, and afterwards you will feel like the worst person in the country. You are not. You are a tired person. Say sorry, and carry on.

Second. You are allowed to still want things. A weekend away. Wanting your own life does not mean you love them any less.

Third, and this is the one I really need you to hear. Keep your own appointments. The dentist. The check-up. I cancelled mine for two years running, because Mum's always came first, and my doctor was not impressed.

You are holding somebody up. But the one doing the holding has to stay standing.

Nobody is going to give you permission to look after yourself, love. So I am giving it to you now. Go on. Ring and make the appointment.

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