Rehabilitation

No longer stumped

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MORE ONLINE

Audio

Listen to Marjorie Jacobs
read this poem

[NPub.org/Stu2w6](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6022226/)

The demo crew tore down our shelter
board by board, brick by brick
sledge-hammering, jackhammering.
They discovered in the gut
of this subterranean site
a cracked yew stump,
thick twisted roots
clinging in darkness
to a past so strong
it broke two chainsaws.

Giving up was not an option.
With an auger they drilled,
extracted the tree
exposing dark secrets long suppressed.
Daylight brought hope
from a pile of rubble and soil.
A new life was rising
with a fresh foundation,
wide beams, open spaces,
bay windows and a skylight
capturing stars,
sunrises, sunsets and
a sturdy roof over our shoulders.

Now feeling safe
we begin the work
rehabbing our interior spaces
without a hardhat,
wood, or nails.
Every day we practice singing
to memorize a mantra
seeding a positive mindset.
We practice meditating:
In... *Long and slow*
Out... *I smile and let go.*
In... *Deep and slow*
Out... *Acceptance I sow.*
In... *Deep and slow*
Out... *Acceptance I know.*

The mantra takes root
flowering in the brain's trellis
crowding out, weakening
distressing thoughts.
Calm, we can observe
old habits: catastrophizing
polarizing, personalizing
jumping to conclusions
mind-reading.
Our clinician urges us to take our time
to dismantle and reframe the old—
word by word
thought by thought
step after step
emptying our mind
of *not* and *never*
should and *should've*
until it no longer turns backward
and against itself
nor jumps forward
body trembling, heart banging.

No longer hammering
drilling, or grilling,
we let the energy of possibility
propel us forward.

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