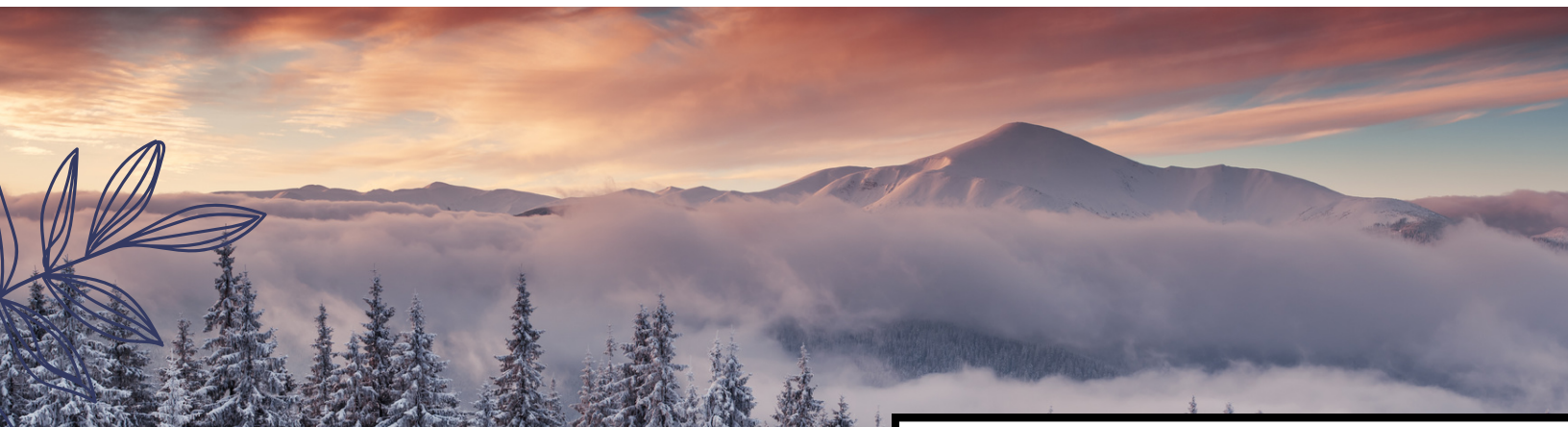




# Xenia

## Monthly Newsletter



# December

*Welcome back to another issue!*

*We are super excited to share what we have going on!*

## Mindful Moment

*One of the most basic body functions is breathing, and when we are trying to ground we often need some clear direction on how to get the most of that function. Take a min and try the below exercise!*

### 4 Square Breathing:

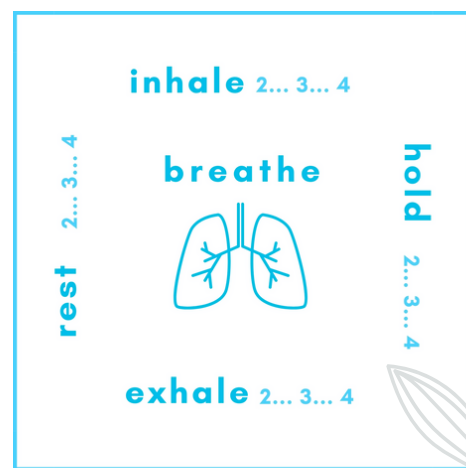
Follow the below image, starting at the top.

*Inhale for a count of 4,  
Hold your breath for a count of 4,  
Exhale for a count of 4,  
Rest for a count of 4.*

Repeat the cycle for about 5 rounds, do more if you feel the need. Make sure your counts are not rushed, are even spaced. Use a metronome or follow the hands of the clock to do 4 even seconds.

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# Book of the Month

December's Book of the Month is...

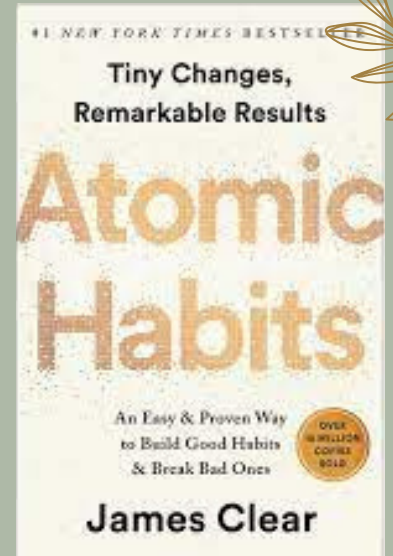
## Atomic Habits

### *Tiny Habits, Remarkable Results*

by James Clear

*As we are preparing for a "new year, new you" we are always on the lookout for healthy processes to help us achieve the goals we find important to our improvement. James Clear does an AMAZING job as helping us break goals down to smaller units, and allows us to build habits to support those things we are working towards. When we are able to see progress, no matter how small, we are able to reinforce the idea that we are capable of positive growth, and that helps propel us to continue that process in different areas of our lives.*

-Hailey Maire, LCSW



## Therapy Insight

*In this section we want to help our clients understand the different therapy types out there!*

*We focus on a new type to help you understand*

*(1) what your therapist is talking about and*

*(2) if you find a type you're interested in, you can bring it up to your therapist to try out next session!*

This month's therapy insight is on:

### EFT



Emotion Focused Therapy (EFT) was pioneered by Sue Johnson (author of *Hold Me Tight* which we reviewed in the newsletter in September,) and Les Greenburg. Both developed a similar, yet unique approach to individual and couple's therapy around the importance of recognizing, regulating, and respecting others' emotions. Some basic steps of EFT are learning coping skills so you aren't overwhelmed or hijacked by emotions. Learning to recognize emotions and what they mean. Some emotions are "primary emotions," meaning they happen as a result of things we experience while "secondary emotions" are what you feel about your feelings. EFT helps people learn to distinguish between the two.

For example, you might feel angry that you're hurt, or guilty because you're sad. Understanding the difference between primary and secondary emotions helps you understand yourself and your relationships better. Once you can identify your own emotions and cope with them you'll be better able to identify others' emotions and empathize effectively which will help you overcome most any obstacle in your relationship!

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# The Benefits of Premarital Counseling

Marriage is often considered one of the most significant milestones in a person's life. It involves making a conscious decision to legally bind oneself to another person and wholeheartedly accept them for who they are, embracing both their strengths and imperfections. This commitment signifies a merging of two lives, with the hope and intention of spending the rest of one's days together.

## **Marriage entails various responsibilities and challenges.**

Couples embark on a journey of creating a shared home, which involves managing household tasks, making financial decisions, and creating an environment where both partners feel comfortable and supported. Additionally, there may be a desire to start a family, raising children and instilling values and traditions that reflect their union. Moreover, marriage often signifies the blending of separate families, integrating different backgrounds, customs, and relationships into a cohesive unit.

## **The Stresses of Marriage**

While marriage is a joyous and fulfilling experience for many, it can also be a significant source of stress and adjustment. The transition from singlehood to married life brings about a multitude of changes and demands, requiring individuals to adapt and navigate unfamiliar territory. The legal attachment and increased commitment can be both exciting and overwhelming as couples face the reality of sharing their lives intimately and responsibly.

To navigate this new world and set a solid foundation for their marriage, many couples find premarital counseling to be a valuable resource. Premarital counseling offers a dedicated space for couples to explore and discuss various aspects of their relationship in a safe and supportive environment. It provides an opportunity to delve into important topics that often influence the dynamics of a marriage.

## **Communication Skills**

Through premarital counseling, couples can enhance their communication skills, enabling them to express themselves openly and honestly, fostering a deeper understanding of one another. By learning effective communication techniques, such as active listening and constructive feedback, couples can navigate conflicts and disagreements with greater ease, promoting harmony and unity.

## **Addressing Potential Challenges in Marriage**

Premarital counseling also allows couples to address potential challenges and identify areas of potential conflict early on. Discussions may encompass topics such as finances, career aspirations, division of household responsibilities, and expectations regarding intimacy and personal space. By acknowledging and addressing these subjects, couples can establish shared goals, manage expectations, and develop strategies for overcoming obstacles that may arise throughout their married life.

## **Strengthening Commitment**

Furthermore, premarital counseling helps couples strengthen their commitment to one another. By actively engaging in counseling sessions, couples demonstrate their dedication to investing in their relationship and acquiring the necessary skills to weather the storms that may come their way. This commitment and proactive approach can foster a sense of security and trust, providing a solid foundation for the journey they are embarking upon together.

In essence, premarital counseling offers couples an invaluable opportunity to prepare for the challenges and joys of married life. It equips them with effective communication tools, problem-solving skills, and a deeper understanding of one another, helping to build a resilient and fulfilling partnership. While it is not a guarantee of a successful marriage, premarital counseling provides couples with valuable insights and resources to nurture a strong and thriving relationship throughout their lives together.

To find a premarital counselor in your area today go to [www.xeniacounseling.com](http://www.xeniacounseling.com) to find the best match for you and your partner. And remember beautiful things are to come with just a little help.





# November Book Review

## Gaslighted by God

I find myself struggling to know whether one page is helpful for a book review when we care about the messages of these books so much.

Should we break our format so we can review the book in greater depth, share more excerpts? Or is sharing this much helpful for those that haven't read the book a good amount to entice them to read it?

Either way, this month's book is *Gaslighted by God*. One of the chapters I want to highlight is geared towards people who believe in a higher power that doesn't act:

*"The uncomfortable reality is that many of us built our theologies on a prosperity gospel merely rebranded under a number of different titles: the 'Christian political agenda,' #blessed, the purity movement, or any of a dozen other doctrines that we somehow conflated with the gospel.*

*Even though we may reject the notion that we are operating under a 'seed faith' or health and wealth' theology, the fact is that many churches have presented the Christian life as an if-then proposition: If you follow this acceptable formula for your life, then God will bless you. Even though the 'deal' might not be tied to literal prosperity, the principle is the same:*

*"If you guard your virginity until your wedding night, then God will give you a healthy, conflict-free marriage.*

*"If you pray hard enough, then God will deliver you from your painful circumstance*

*"If you work hard, then God will reward you with success."*

The second excerpt I want to share is near the end of the book-

*"All these concerns lead to the troubling issue of spiritual abuse, also called religion abuse or religious trauma, and it is here that spiritual gaslighting can be the most damaging because it directly impacts the way people perceive their relationship with God. That is certainly not to say that anxiety always stems from spiritual abuse, but the two very often go hand in hand.*

*This type of abuse is broad category generally classified as distress or damage done to an individual in the name of religion, for the sake of control, manipulation, or ideological dominance. It includes everything from sexual misconduct and abuse of power to psychological and mental manipulation through authoritarian systems that discourage dialogue or healthy questioning -- and it is not limited to churches.*

*While that is the most common place for spiritual abuse to happen, it can also occur in other faith-based organizations such as nonprofits, ministries, schools, or companies that claim to operate under 'Christian principles'; it can even occur within personal relationships if religion is wielded as a means of manipulation or humiliation."*

If you have experienced something like this, please don't hesitate to reach and ask about trauma work for what you've been through, we're here for you!

-TAYLOR MADSEN, LMFT-S

