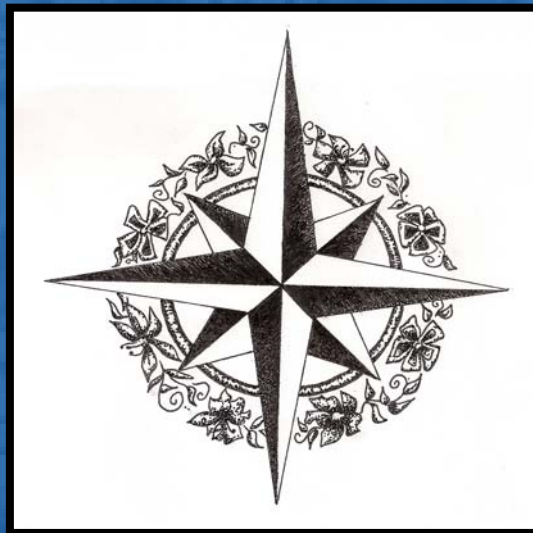


# Crafting a Personal Retreat



A Woman's Field Guide™ Discovery E-Book

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A Note from the Author
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I have written this short guide entitled "Crafting a Personal Retreat" as a way to support and inspire people in taking special time just for themselves. It is one of the most powerful ways I know to experience rest and renewal and to gain clarity. Too, by filling your self-care cup to overflowing you will have more to give to others and to the world and you mentor a powerful skill to those you love.

It is written both as an invitation and as a fill-in the blank template for crafting a retreat each step along the way. You may think a retreat is a great idea, but actually doing it is another thing. As I challenge my Life Coaching clients to take their first retreat, I often hear the following kinds of responses, "A what? Are you kidding? I could never give myself that time." Always, the response I hear after the fact, when they are basking in memories of their time in retreat, "Why did I wait so long? I can't wait to do that again!"

Follow the prompts in this booklet and you will be on your way!

I hope you find this helpful. Please feel free to share your personal retreat stories with me.

Let us inspire each other.

With warm regards – Corrie Woods



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## Crafting a Personal Retreat

*Retreat: a place and time for you to get reacquainted with you, the ebb in ebb and flow, a solitary sanctuary for renewal, safe haven, snug den, safe refuge*

### My Call for Retreat

My call for retreat began when I was very young, though at the time I did not name it as such. My first recollection of heeding the call came when I was eight or nine. Though I lived in a suburban setting, just a working man's train commute from New York City, the woods behind the home we had just moved into called. It was like a siren's call and without thought I found myself wandering, meandering. One brave adventure I embarked on was an arduous trip through the woods to a magical spot called Surprise Lake. Truth be told, it was probably a block away, but in my world and in my memory I was the sole explorer in a vast wilderness. Did I wander each day or just take a few memorable journeys? I cannot say. I remember only this: I went alone on those walks and yet I never felt lonely. I felt exquisitely at home.

As I grew my passion for both being outdoors and in retreat spoke up. Perhaps it was stomping through mossy Carolina woods along my grandparents groomed trails only to find myself seated in the quiet and solitude of the old, nearly lost graveyard. Perhaps it was a contemplative walk to school and the momentary retreat beneath the wisteria trellis where heavy blooms were so profuse they made me dizzy. Perhaps the moments as I ventured deeper into the woods with backpack, trail mix, wonder and awe. I have found retreat sitting on the crest of a mountain

peak in the Wind River Range and have savored it just as deeply while sitting in my vegetable garden knee deep in blossoms, dirt and weeds. I have found retreat on a blanket staring up at a shooting star evening and while wandering coastal mud flats at sunset with a cast net in hands.

Retreat is both an experience and a state of mind. It can be a time of journaling and deep contemplation, of simply being and seeing what comes up, or of a deep connective experience in nature. As creative as my mind can be, so too are my retreats.

Is a personal retreat a weekend away from the family and friends or 30 minutes created with care in the middle of a busy day? It can be both. There are no time limits. A personal retreat is crafted and defined by you. Do you long for mini-retreats sprinkled throughout your week? Does a day or weekend away from the familiar call to you? What about an evening retreat under starlight or in the glow of candlelight? Maybe you are scratching your head and thinking, I have never even considered gifting this kind of time just for me.



## Why retreat?

Let's back up a bit and consider the question, why take a personal retreat? There are countless reasons women are called or compelled to nurture themselves in this way.

- During times of passages or celebrations, stepping away from our routine can allow us to deeply experience and embrace a pivotal time in our lives.
- When profound change thrusts us into transition, a retreat can provide an opportunity to create a positive climate for navigating that change
- When we find ourselves longing for a break, timeout, a few minutes by ourselves, a retreat is just the thing to foster rest and renewal.
- When we find ourselves asking, "Who am I" the opportunity to connect with our authentic selves may reveal itself.
- When the words, "I am stuck" come muttering out of our mouths, a fabulous way to grease the wheel for forward motion and clarity comes by leaving the ordinary and venturing on retreat.
- Perhaps we are longing for a delicious window for creativity, for quiet, and for inspiration.

All these reasons and more have *bask in a personal retreat* written all over them.  
Take a few minutes and ask yourself, "What is calling me to retreat?"

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*Retreating alone at home (even if others are around) I make space to retreat for a few hours. Time spent looking inward and reflecting. I give my self total permission to just BE in my home and enjoy the love and warmth that surround me without judgment about what I **should** be doing. It is a glorious gift to self. On these retreats I always include the outdoors (with journal) either with a walk or winter snowshoeing in the woods with my dog. The inspiration that follows is always magnificent!*

*Judy Geiger, Retreat Coach, Personal Life Coach*

[www.flyingchange coaching.com](http://www.flyingchange coaching.com)

## The Snags

What might get in the way of you taking time for retreat? To hear retreat calling out to you is one thing; to actually make it happen is another. I think we can all relate to the more common snags. They go something like this:

- I could never take the time out of this insane schedule just for me.
- It would be selfish to take time off.
- I have a family and responsibilities.
- I can't justify the cost of being away from home and not contributing on that front? No way.
- I can't remember the last time I was alone for five minutes. It sounds great, but more than that, it sounds scary.
- My family and friends will think I am crazy!
- If I take this time, I may actually have to face some things that come up, that I may not want to.
- Yes, it's a great idea and I'll get around to it when...

What rings true for you? When you sit with the idea for a bit, what might get in the way of you taking a personal retreat?

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## Permission is Granted!

So you want to go and you have identified snags that might stop you in your tracks. What next? We could delve into strategies here, but let's not. Let's just agree there are potential barriers that may get in the way. Let's also agree that you will decide to put retreat dates on your calendar and deal with the barriers as they present themselves.

To really lock this in I have provided you with the critical ingredient you will need to manifest your retreat: permission from YOU!

### A PERMISSION SLIP TO ME

I hereby give myself permission to design and to take a fabulous retreat. I can take care of all my family and work responsibilities and make time to nurture myself. In fact, the better I take care of myself, the more vitality I have to give to everyone and everything in my life.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are the top three things I will take care of to ensure everything on the work and home front are in good shape for me to set off on retreat.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Your intention

As you approach planning a personal retreat there is one element, one critical ingredient to consider: what is your intention? A clear intention serves as an invitation beckoning an extraordinary experience. Ask yourself, what do I long to experience most while on retreat? Define a simple statement that reflects that longing. It could be simple like, "I want rest and renewal." It could be along the lines of, "I want to emerge with more clarity about \_\_\_\_\_." As you make your plans, keep that intention close to your heart.

***My Intention is:***

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## When will you retreat and for how long?

Will a half day suit, or would a weekend or a week off in retreat be best for you? In order to have a meaningful retreat I will take:

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(the amount of time) on the following day/days:

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(specific date/dates).

Now, before you have time to wander your way out of this in your head, get up and go to your calendar and block out this time! Let whoever needs to know about this know and then sit back and smile. You are on your way!

## Where to retreat?



The next question might be, where to retreat? Choose a place that feels nurturing and safe, a place in which you can breathe deeply and relax into your most comfortable self. Choose the best ecosystem. By that I mean, think about what your intention is for the retreat and choose a location that supports that intention. Be creative! Are you longing for reflective time? What about a picnic by a lake or stream? Is getting clear about something at the heart of your desire to retreat? Find a location with a vista, a view.

If you want to create mini-retreats throughout your week, think about crafting a special space within your home just for you. It could be a corner with a comfy chair and some personal treasures sprinkled about or a room dedicated just for nurturing you. The key is bringing your heart into designing this sacred space and clearly communicating its purpose to family members.

With a creative retreat hat on, list 5 great spots for retreat. They could be in your home, just around the corner, down the road, or far away.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Now take it a step further – pick one for location for this upcoming retreat.

\_\_\_\_\_

Right now, take whatever steps you might need to in order to ensure the location is suitable and available for the date(s) you have chosen.

## What will I do, what to take, what to expect on retreat?



Mix a bit of creativity with your intention and see what unfolds. Maybe you will find yourself sitting in a rocking chair simply being; filling a journal, walking along a trail; lying in the grass watching clouds; howling at the moon; watching an ant hill; playing a new game; stretching your body or digging a hole into which you can lay things to rest. Perhaps what occurs will all be a surprise!

There are some things I label “not to be done on my retreats.” This list looks like: no cell phone use unless I want to check in, no watching TV, no reading a 500 page novel, no working on work. I am painfully aware, distractions of all shapes and sizes can short circuit my intention for retreat all together.

## What things are on your “not to do on retreat” list?

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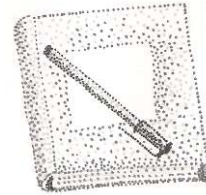
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## What to take on retreat?

This brings up the all important Retreat Kit. Craft yours to suit. Mine includes:

- A journal that is beautiful and inspires me to fill its pages
- A stack of blank paper and some stationary (it can be a great time to write notes of gratitude)
- A few pencils and pens
- A book of poetry and/or of inspiring words
- Plenty of fresh, clean water in the event my retreat location does not have any
- Comfy clothes to accommodate the location and my mood – for sitting all the while, hiking a trail, making sand castles, venturing out in a rain shower
- Healthy and simple munchies and food



Optional items include: a camera, a special object that inspires me or reflects my retreat intention, candles, music, nurturing self-care items such as bath salts or flowers.

## What will you include in your Retreat Kit:

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## What not to take?

A carload of stuff! Travel light when on retreat. Answer the following:  
Though I may be tempted, I will leave the following items behind:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Don't be surprised if . . .

So you've got you've heard the call, have your intention clear, location set, and Retreat Kit packed. Some stage-setting may be in order regarding the interesting and surprising voices that, at times, may whisper in your ear once you have begun. Your inner voice may come disguised in many shapes and sizes. It may sing in one instance, *I am in heaven*. In the next it may appear like the fog bank, obscuring what lies just to the other side. It may declare, *I never want to go back*, only to coax you in the next moment to call it quits and go home early. The voice of fear may say, *You are not worthy of this act of self-love and of letting your light shine*. Then the voice of love may curl around you like a warm, fuzzy blanket to remind you how glorious you are. You may delight in the words, *I am alone* or you may murmur in this solitude, *I am lonely*.

## Invite it all!

Be curious, open and willing to be surprised. Sometimes we need to allow our inner voice to chatter a bit before it settles down. By allowing all the observations to come up and flow by, we flush out the insecurities and soothe the nervousness that can arise when we first give this unfamiliar gift to ourselves. In the moment, journal your retreat or feel your way through your retreat. Express it, move with it and experience it down into the very depths of your soul!

*A retreat is moving  
consciously and by my  
own choice into a space  
where I can be alone with  
the Divine.*

Marian Woodman,  
Ph.D.

## Feel your way through your retreat

Notice ...

Your breath ... and breath deep

Your body - how does it feel, what is it telling you?

Your energy – is it high or low or all over the map?

Your heart – is it closed up or wide open?

Just notice ...

## Celebrate!

Upon the closing of your retreat and/or your arrival home, take time to CELEBRATE! Wow! You made it happen. How great is that! Take time to notice what you are taking away from the experience. Take time to savor the experience. Call up a friend to share news of your journey, bring a treasure home from the retreat location to remind you of the adventure, and the greatest form of celebration: put the date for your next retreat date on your calendar!



## Here is how I am CELEBRATING my Retreat:

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*Last week I spent Friday night alone at a local B&B. I know my best retreats happen when I physically separate myself from home and family. I headed out there around 3pm. Since we're kind of between seasons in our beautiful mountain town, I practically had the place to myself. Just what I needed - a lovely house filled with peace and quiet with the creek outside singing to me. I walked down to the water's edge. There was a lovely hammock with a plush pillow. I made myself at home and just listened to the sounds around me. My thoughts drifted...my body relaxed, held by the hammock, suspended not just above the ground, but in time. "Real" time was going on without me. Here I could let go and sink down into my True Self, create the time that honored me. Allow what really matters to float to the surface, where without distractions; I could give it my full attention. Listening to the laughter of the creek, skipping over rocks, I could feel a release in me, a lightening. Things came into clear focus for me. Once again, I was home with my Soul.*

*Victoria Fitts/Milgrim, True Life Coach*

*[www.truelifecoach.net](http://www.truelifecoach.net)*

## In Closing

When you communicate and express a resounding YES to your self-care through personal retreat time, you take the steps to reveal a path to your authentic self. The ripple effect of incorporating retreat time into daily life is far reaching. It enhances the quality of your relationships, infuses your life with renewed energy and enthusiasm, and brings greater focus and clarity to each moment. With a creative spirit always invited into the mix, look for ways to bring retreating into your daily life in simple ways. Have it become a playful and nurturing facet of your new commitment to practice extraordinary self-care.

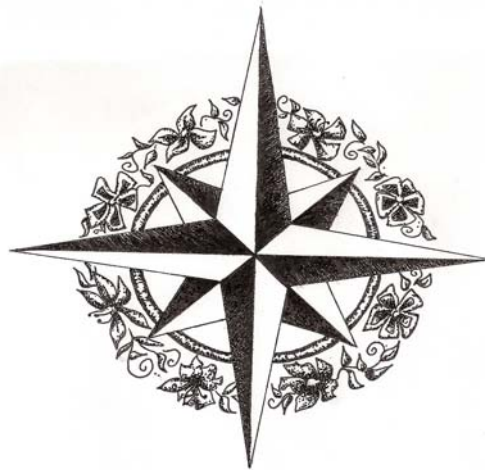
To Continue Your Journey Visit . . .

[www.womansfieldguide.com](http://www.womansfieldguide.com)

At the website you can:

- Purchase the book, *The Woman's Field Guide™ to Exceptional Living*
- Sign up for our free monthly e-newsletter, packed with tips and ideas for living a life you love
- Explore the potential of a One-of-a-kind Life Coaching Partnership
- Browse free articles and resources
- Learn about upcoming Retreats and Workshops
- **Contact Corrie**

In addition, to go on retreat with some of the world's finest Retreat Coaches visit:  
***The Retreat Coach Network.***





## About the Author

Corrie Woods is an Author, Professional Life Coach, Speaker, and Women's Retreat Leader. As advocate, partner, collaborator, and "way-outside-the-box" thinker, Corrie challenges her clients to see the possibilities, to shift from negative to positive priority living, and to become vitally engaged in life. Working in collaboration with clients to dramatically expand the view of what's possible in living a fully-

expressed and fully-loved life is Corrie's passion.

A bit of her professional collage

- Graduate, CoachU Coach Training Program .
- Member, International Coach Federation .
- Member of the ***Retreat Coaches Network*** .
- Certified *Seasons of Change* Facilitator
- MBTI, Myers-Briggs Personality Indicator administrator



## About the Illustrator

Learn more about Caren Frost Olmsted at [www.cfodesign.com](http://www.cfodesign.com).

**We'd love to hear from you** ... please share your experiences in taking personal retreats with us. It is in the sharing of our stories that we inspire each other. With your permission, we may even include your personal retreat story in our upcoming book, **The Women's Field Guide to Exceptional Living, Notes from the Field**. Just [click here](#) to share.