

WEEK SIX/DAY SEVEN

Theme: *Gratitude*

MORNING EXERCISES

(About 30 minutes)

One of the gifts of experiencing The Exercises “in slow motion” is to pay attention to how the subtle movements of the heart and soul are impacting daily life experiences. The following Journal Exercise questions for the end of the week are an opportunity to record and express gratitude for the gifts of The Exercises:

- How have The Exercises enhanced your awareness to live in a spirit of gratitude?
- How/can gratitude influence life’s more challenging experiences?

1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Take a few moments to quiet your mind and welcome the following teaching.

Looking back on the Exercises of Week One, we have explored the subtle movements from un-freedom to freedom. But the fruit of this ‘work’ is that you begin to notice more that, when you’ve come to freedom you are also in a state of gratitude. You’re grateful for having looked at your un-freedom because you don’t look at it alone, you look at it from a Divine point of view, which is a place of total love and acceptance. So you’re even free from having to get rid of it. That means you realize that you’re powerless over the unfreedoms in life but you are not helpless. In this state we can make choices to be loving that always lead to a sense of wellbeing and gratitude; we are open and grateful for ‘just the way it is for us.’

Jack Kennedy

2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCERNMENT

Consider journaling for today by noting ‘what arises in you’ as you consider any of these questions for discernment:

- Consider the times you naturally experience gratitude.
- Return to the teaching, ‘You become more free when you’re even free from having to get rid of it (the unfreedom).’ Do you find this a source of consolation or relief?
- How are you experiencing what it is like ‘to not be alone’ in looking at the disorder in your life? Has your experience of God or the Divine shifted during this first week?

3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT

Simply observe how the following Enneagram insight complements today’s teachings.

The Sufi poet, Rumi, often quoted in ancient Enneagram teachings writes: “You are not a drop in the ocean. You are the ocean in a drop. Can we bear that much freedom?”

4. ENNEAGRAM AWARENESS

Spend a few minutes with today's Enneagram insights; consider making a journal entry which you could return to at the end of the day.

Return to the ESSENCE of your Ennea-style (in the Enneagram Chart of Characteristics; cf. Enneagram References #1) and re-read the AFFIRMATIONS of your type in the Enneagram Transformations (cf. Enneagram References #3).

How could you more mindfully celebrate your ESSENCE today?

5. DEVOTIONAL REFLECTION: *Begin and end with gratitude*

Choose one of the following passages and one of its points for reflection as a way to enter into a period of prayerful intention. This is not so much a time for analysis but for reflection. Choose whatever form of devotional prayer or meditation you like to complement the passages. Always end your reflection time with a moment of gratitude and 'savoring.'

SCRIPTURE OPTION A

From the Hebrew Scriptures: The Beloved is my shepherd and I shall want for nothing. I am offered green pastures for rest and lie down to in peace besides still waters. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are always with me. Psalm 23: 1-6

REFLECTION POINTS:

- Consider a time when you felt deeply nurtured and cared for?
- Recall a time when you had to 'walk through the shadow of death' but found the courage to keep moving through the fear?
- Offer gratitude for a time when you were accompanied by a Love that is greater than you can explain. Savor the experience.

POETRY OPTION

From the Sufi Poet, Rumi: If you put on shoes that are too tight and walk across an empty plain, you will not feel the freedom of the place unless you take off your shoes... at night before sleeping, you take off your tight shoes and your soul releases into a place it knows. Dreams glide deeper than any fear of death. On Freedom

REFLECTION POINTS:

- How/does Rumi's metaphor of tight shoes describe what it means to be free.
- Consider how falling asleep is a place of ultimate surrender. '
- Offer gratitude for a time when your dreams took you behind the tight places of everyday life circumstances. Savor the experience.

6. INTENTION FOR THE DAY

Make an intention to be aware today of moments for which you are grateful—from big to small things. Try to just notice.

MID DAY EXERCISES

(5-10 minutes)

1. MINI-EXAMEN: HOLY NOTICING

Take a few quiet moments to remember your intention for the day

-Is there an observation from the morning worth noting?

-Renew your intention for the remainder of the day:

Continue savoring a day of grateful awareness.

2. GRATITUDE

Identify at least one experience so far today for which you are grateful

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." Ignatius of Loyola

-Breathe a prayer of gratitude for a few minutes. Consider the spiritual breath practice of inhaling on the count of three and breathing out on the count of six. Try this for about one minute.

END-OF-THE-DAY EXERCISES

(About 20 minutes)

1. THE EXAMEN

The daily Examen is the heart of the Spiritual Exercises. This is an opportunity to take a long, loving look back over your day where, 'We recognize the Beloved in the nitty gritty of life and we bring the nitty gritty back to the Beloved.' This exercise is an examination of consciousness (clear awareness) NOT an examination of conscience focused on faults and failings. By being faithful to this practice and journaling your insights, patterns will emerge over thirty days including awareness from your unconscious that would normally have been missed in everyday activity.

-The EXAMEN should take about fifteen minutes. During this reflection time, you can use the following five R's to help guide your time:

REQUEST the presence of Spirit (however you imagine it) to lead you through the review of the day

RELISH the moments that went well and gifts received today

REVIEW (walk back through your day) using the suggested focus questions as your guide. What would it be like to 'talk to God about this'? Or you might choose the memory of a beloved friend.

FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR TODAY'S EXAMEN:

- Looking over the day (with God or someone beloved by my side)
I ask for the grace to be aware of all the gratitudes in my life--
big and small.
- I ask myself, what especially today am I particularly grateful for?
Why does this fill me with joy and gratitude?
- Turn your gratitude into a prayer of thanksgiving.

REPENT for any mistakes or failures by simply acknowledging them without drama or self-loathing. If you feel called to *at-one-ment* with another, the Beloved or yourself, note that desire for whenever an appropriate time arises.

RESOLVE with a concrete intention to live tomorrow consciously and freely.

2. DISCERNMENT JOURNAL

Without a daily journal it would not be possible to track the sometimes subtle spiritual movements in every day experiences. Spend a few minutes making entries that reflect today's experiences and learnings. Here everything belongs, both the gifts and the challenges.

3. POINTS FOR TOMORROW

The Spiritual Exercises recommend that, before retiring, we consider the spiritual geography for the next day. As we settle into deeper rest we prepare our unconscious for the next day's exercises. This is not a time for study and analysis but a gentle pointer towards our next movement and direction.

WISDOM FROM IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY:

Cherish what is simple and be in awe of what is great. The Exercises

ENNEAGRAM TEACHING:

Don't be the rider who gallops all night and never appreciates the horse that is beneath you.
The Spirit is so near