
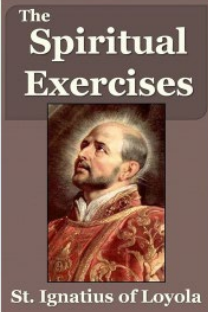



# MONTH SIX WEEKLY EXERCISES



**THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES**  
Ignatius of Loyola



St. Ignatius of Loyola

**"Spirit always brings light out of chaos."**

**HOLDING DARKNESS & LIGHT**



Month Six of The Exercises correlates to the final month of Movement Three:  
**DISCERNMENT, SUFFERING & THE COST OF LOVING**

The intention of our exercises this month is to repeat the same pattern for each of four weeks: **TO EXPERIENCE THE POWER AND POTENTIAL IN HOLDING TOGETHER DARKNESS AND LIGHT– trusting that SPIRIT ALWAYS BRINGS LIGHT OUT OF CHAOS.**

This aspect of The Exercises draws together all of the major themes of previous months and practice. The ultimate goal is to articulate a sacred or courageous question which the soul may have been incubating for months or even years!

Allow yourself to repeat the same pattern of exercises each week in order to 'test the spirits' of your sacred question. Note that Sundays this month offer a 'sabbatical day' from The Exercises... so begin Day One on Monday.

## DAY ONE/MONDAY

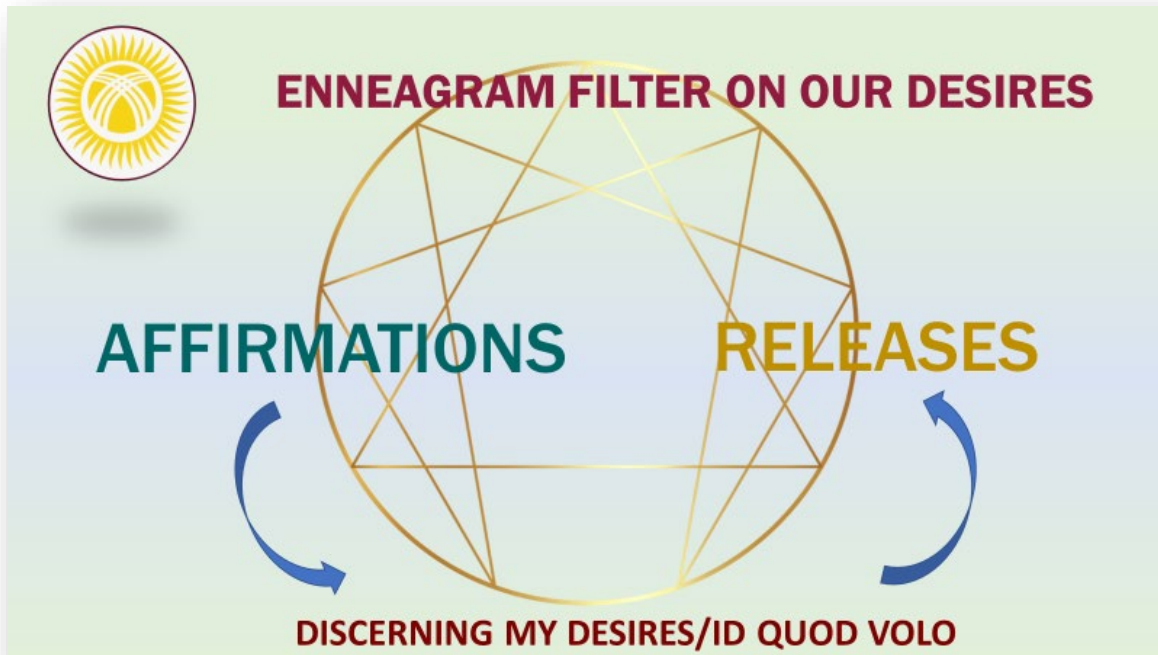
### Getting in touch with our Strongest vs. Deepest Desire



Set an intention at the beginning of the day to notice what kind of (significant) desires may be arising in the ordinary course of the day. At noontime, note your observations. At the end of the day, make a list of your **STRONGEST DESIRES** (note they can be several) vs. what you consider your **DEEPEST DESIRE**. You do not have to come to conclusions on Day One... allow this exercise to unfold in the weeks ahead. Trust that implied in your **STRONGEST DESIRE**, may be the seed of your **SACRED QUESTION**.

## DAY TWO/TUESDAY

### An Enneatype Filter on our Desires



As you continue the process of discernment between your strongest and deepest desires, return to the **AFFIRMATIONS** and **RELEASES** of your **ENNEATYPE** on The Spiritual Exercises Website (Doc E#3 under General References/Enneagram Resources).

Notice how both aspects of your personality may be influencing your desires—in both affirming and challenging ways. How might these insights impact your discernment regarding your **DEEPEST DESIRE**?

Remember that your strong desires are not necessarily negative. The work is to sort through them and notice/identify that which is most deeply being desired (id quod volo) in our heart and soul.

## DAY THREE/WEDNESDAY

### Standing in our Tragic Gap

As you deepen into the discernment process regarding your soul's Sacred or Courageous Question, it can be helpful to identify where/if there is implied a Tragic Gap within our strongest and deepest desires. Often these gaps have overtones and experiences of DESOLATION when desires evade us and CONSOLATION when we consider that/how they could manifest.



**STANDING IN LIFE'S TRAGIC GAPS**

A GAP BETWEEN  
THE WAY THINGS ARE  
AND THE WAY WE KNOW  
THEY MIGHT BE...

— Parker Palmer



**WHY STAND IN A TRAGIC GAP?**

If we want to live soulful, nonviolent lives, we must learn to stand in the tragic gap, faithfully holding the tension between reality and possibility in hopes of an emerging third way — Parker Palmer



## PRELUDE TO A COURAGEOUS QUESTION

IN YOUR LIFE, WHERE DO YOU FIND YOURSELF  
“STANDING IN A TRAGIC GAP,” — THAT PLACE WHERE  
THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WAY THINGS  
ARE AND THE WAY YOU KNOW THEY COULD BE.

OR— THE WAY YOU INTENDED THEM TO BE WHEN YOU  
COMMITTED TO THIS WORK, RELATIONSHIP,  
COMMUNITY, FAITH TRADITION, PROFESSION, ETC.?



## WORKING WITH YOUR TRAGIC GAP

- ◎ What is a tragic gap in your life?
- ◎ What are the assumptions and stories you tell yourself about this gap?
- ◎ What do you gain from these stories?
- ◎ What do these stories cost you?
- ◎ What would it feel like to simply allow the gap to exist?
- ◎ Could you imagine a ‘third way’ solution?

Today, consider your **STRONGEST** and **DEEPEST DESIRES** both at the beginning and end of your day. Use the framework of the **TRAGIC GAP** as a way to further “discern between spirits.” Note and journal any insights that might help to clarify your various desires and sacred question.

## DAY FOUR/THURSDAY

### An Ignatian Meditation on Dark & Light



Plan your day to include a significant period of time (no less than 20 min.) for your experience with the following **LIFE REVIEW EXERCISE** inspired by The Spiritual Exercises. You could try this at the end of the day as an **EXAMEN** or both at the beginning and end of the same day for comparison. You might consider playing some background meditation music to support your meditation. Make sure you have an uninterrupted space and time for this.

There are five couplet questions under the headings: **HOLY DARKNESS** and **HOLY LIGHT**. Read each of the two questions in order (i.e. starting with #1: *Where have I most found love in my life* (then pause and write your response) and then move to: *Where have I least found love in my life?* When you are ready, move to the second couplet questions.

Take plenty of time to reflect on each aspect of these invitations. At the end, see if you discover a thread in each of the **HOLY LIGHT** responses. If so, name it as your: **WORD OF LIGHT** following your reflection. Then, do the same for the **WORD OF DARKNESS**. Consider the 'divine paradox' that might be implied in your exercise.

# **LIFE REVIEW EXERCISE**

**Based on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola**

## **HOLY LIGHT**

**[1] Where have I most found love in my life?**

**[2] To what/whom have I most given love in my life?**

**[3] What consistently gives life to me now?**

**[4] What is the deepest hope for my future?**

**[5] What new life is appearing on the horizon of my life?**

## **HOLY DARKNESS**

**Where have I least found love in my life?**

**To what/whom have I least given love?**

**What consistently is taking life from me?**

**What is the deepest fear about my future?**

**What needs to die at this time in my life?**

**WORD OF LIGHT**  **WORD OF DARKNESS:**

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*“Die before you die...so that when you die, you will not die.”*

## DAY FIVE/FRIDAY

### Considering Your Sacred Question



Plan your day to include a significant period of time (no less than 30 min.) for your experience: **ASKING A COURAGEOUS/SACRED QUESTION**. Go back over your experiences of the week and see what may be revealing itself to you. Following the Ignatian Tradition, strictly follow the following four ‘rules’ when formulating your question (i.e. while you should not use “I” (meaning EGO), the pronouns: me, mine, myself are ok, Remember that you will have the opportunity to return to this same cycle of exercises over the course of the next month. Ignatius encourages us to see how your question may morph over a period of 30 days (or four weeks in our case).

It is important to keep a journal regarding the state of your Sacred Question. This aspect of The Spiritual Exercises can be an important guide for the next stage of your soul’s journey.

