

DAILY EXERCISES
WEEK FOUR/DAY SEVEN
Theme: *Holy Indifference*

In Week Four of The Exercises we considered the Ignatian Principle of Holy Indifference. The exercise of our power to allow contradiction rather than judge it, teaches an important tool in the art of discernment.

Hopefully after a month you have begun to find your own rhythm with The Exercises as well. Conclude your week by observing how each of The Exercises slot together to create a container for your soul's growth. Continue discovering your own rhythm of how each of The Exercises could become an attractive pattern for your daily life. Include these observations in your end of the day journal.

JOURNAL REFLECTION ASSIGNMENT

At the end of each week, you were asked to reflect back on your experiences with a simple journal summary about where The Exercises were useful and where they might be challenging. At the conclusion of this fourth week of the month, you will also collate and email your four weekly journal notes in one reflection paper.

Know that your paper will only be read by an assigned SALC team mentor as a way to support your inner journey and offer insights where they may be useful. The intention for your reflection is not academic but spiritual in nature. The Exercises will become increasingly valuable as you are able to look back and track your own spiritual geography.

Here are a few guidelines for this week's journal notes:

-Please respond to these two focus questions in terms of the past week with NO MORE THAN one simple paragraph per question:

How/were The Exercises insightful for you this week?

Where could I use support/guidance?

-For your email journal notes please copy from the previous weeks and date your notes accordingly

-Feel free to share whatever you like in a meaningful way but if you would like to request a more personal conversation with your mentor, please indicate that in your paper.

-Email your summary reflections to: maryhelen@sacredartofliving.org.

-She will track the papers received and forward them to a mentor who will offer an email reply in return

Deadline for submitting your first monthly reflection paper is Saturday, 11 October

MORNING EXERCISES

1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Take a few moments to quiet your mind and welcome the following teaching. Before starting your morning exercise, it is best to spend a few moments getting grounded through a favorite meditation practice or, consider using the simple breathing exercise described on R2 of your online site resources.

A prerequisite for healthy discernment is what Ignatius calls holy indifference. Indifference doesn't mean I don't care, it does mean that I remain open to going in the direct opposite of the direction in which I might really want to go this moment. This requires a spirit of openness. Indifference is a disposition that creates a state of heart that remains open to discernment especially in major life decisions. But the Exercises are not only about discerning big decisions, they are more interested in discerning our interior movements underneath our decisions and listening to which ones I trust. For example, do I trust (and therefore act on) the guilt that I'm feeling? Without making any decisions, I can listen to what the guilt is telling me. So, a good question for discernment might be: From where does the guilt in this case arise? For example, someone who's grown up with being shamed all my life, discerning where the shame comes from and what does it do to me would be important. If decisions are made which are shame-based, discerning (catching) this predisposition can be liberating and will change my behavior even if it does not change the decisions I make.

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 what 'holy indifference' would look like/feel like regarding a decision you are considering.
- Identify an 'interior movement' underneath a decision you are considering. How could The Exercises support you in exploring more unconscious dispositions like guilt, fear and shame?
- How might the teaching that "I am being momentarily created" speak to your experience in times when you are anxious and fearful?

3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT

Simply observe how the following Enneagram insight complements today's teachings. In terms of discernment, the Enneagram asks, how can we maintain soulfulness in the presence of that which we seek to avoid? The Enneagram teaches that when we

regularly notice our outer habits (also called: addictions or lenses) and recognize them as distortions of the Truth, we can become free to do something different. In this place we wait for God and encounter the spiritual freedom necessary in order to prepare for the discernment we seek.

George Gurdjieff

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.

-Read both the AFFIRMATIONS and RELEASES of your Ennea-Style in Enneagram Transformations (cf. Enneagram References #3).

-Identify how both your strengths and weaknesses manifest in times of challenge and change. Today, consider a particular situation where you are tempted towards self-hatred (as found in the RELEASES of your Enne-type). Then notice that you possess strengths and virtues equal to your challenge in the AFFIRMATIONS of your type. You are BOTH/AND and not EITHER/OR!

5. DEVOTIONAL READINGS: *Deeply listening*

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: When my soul grows weary, lead me away from dead end paths; may I come to know the ways that lead to freedom and peace.

Psalms 119: 29-30

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

-Recall a time when your soul was weary? What were the circumstances?

-Recall a time when choosing a 'deceitful path' caused you or another suffering?

-Offer gratitude for any place in you that is presently free and at peace; savor the experience.

POETRY OPTION

Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this too, was a gift.

The Uses of Sorrow, Mary Oliver

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

- Recall a time when you received a 'box of sorrow' from someone you once loved.
- How/did you come to discover that the sorrow, too, was also a gift?
- Offer gratitude for a deep sorrow that also became a blessing. Savor the experience.

6. INTENTION FOR THE DAY

Make an intention to notice when the voices of DESIRE or SELF DOUBT arise in the small particulars of life. Try just to notice and not judge.

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:
Where can you detect the voices of judgment instead of Holy Indifference in your daily activities. Try just to notice and not judge.

2. GRATITUDE

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

- Breathe a prayer of gratitude for a few minutes. Recall that it takes a moment of silence to hear the whisper of the Divine Voice within.
- You might try a traditional 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. Consider what it would be like to talk with God about this or even a loved one who has died.

FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR TODAY'S EXAMEN:

- o Walk back through your day identifying emotion by emotion.
- o Choose the strongest emotion of your day and consider the way you responded to that emotion. Review the impact that emotion had on you. Did you even acknowledge the emotion at the time or were you unaware of it?

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 reflecting on how you are experiencing the rhythm of The Exercises making entries that reflect today's experiences and learnings. Here everything belongs, both the gifts and the challenges.

3. POINTS FOR NEXT MONTH

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.

MONTH TWO THEME:

The Ignatian tradition of contemplation

WISDOM FROM IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY:

***Cor ad Cor loquitur* (Heart to Heart conversations)**

ENNEAGRAM TEACHING:

Uncovering your truest self through a dimension of contemplative awareness can be discovered through your specific Ennea-type

