

Wholeness, Gratitude & Expectancy

"The ancient Irish had a mythic notion about times when the center cannot hold, when the world falls apart, leaving everyone and everything caught in various states of conflict and despair. The old story advises that when the problems of life become huge and overwhelming, then the time has come to seek for the missing center again. According to the myths, the wholeness of life cannot be destroyed; but it can become hard to find. It's a simple enough story, as much a parable as a myth; yet there is a truth within it that ancient people did not wish us ever to forget. We may each feel tiny, frail and insignificant in the face of overwhelming problems; yet we are each secretly woven to the center of the whole thing..." Michael Meade



Photo Credit: Ronna J. Biggs
"Rasar Wild Rose"

When things fall apart or become extremely difficult there is a tendency for most of us to want to turn away and distract ourselves from the deep discomfort of uncertainty. I even notice this tendency when things really aren't even that bad, just difficult enough to make me want to put distance between me and wherever the discomfort is. However, avoiding, denying and distancing actually don't work because ultimately we cannot selectively avoid, deny and distance; and so we end up feeling disconnected and disempowered from everything!

This week spend time practicing staying very present, even with discomfort. Look deeply for the thread of hidden wholeness that connects you to all of life. Two practices that will help you stay grounded and present are the daily practice of gratitude and the mental attitude of expectancy.

This week, before going into your day, mentally take time to become aware of what you are thankful for. Once you have your gratitude strongly in mind, look into your day with expectancy, that inner preparedness for something wonderful about to happen.

One of my dearest spiritual mentors, Brother David Steindl-Rast, has a simple but lovely TED talk to assist in this. You will find it with this link: https://www.ted.com/talks/david_steindl_rast_want_to_be_happy_be_grateful

I am thinking of you every day!

Dr. Andrea

This week's assignments:

- 6 Days a Week: Do ten minutes or more of spiritual practice.
- 6 Days a Week: Read the daily passages from Mark Nepo's *"The Book of Awakening"* - Dec. 8-14.
- Listen to Brother David Steindl-Rast's TED talk.
- Consider joining a weekly spiritual discussion group to share your experience with a small group of like-minded others. Contact us if you would like to be part of one of them.

"Mindful"

Every day I see or hear something that more or less kills me with delight, that leaves me like a needle in the haystack of light.

It was what I was born for - to look, to listen,
to lose myself inside this soft world -
to instruct myself over and over
in joy and acclamation.

Nor am I talking about the exceptional,
the fearful, the dreadful, the very extravagant -
but of the ordinary, the common, the very drab,
the daily presentations.

Oh, good scholar, I say to myself, how can you help
but grow wise with such teachings as these -
the untrimmable light of the world, the ocean's shine,
the prayers that are made out of grass?

~ Mary Oliver ~