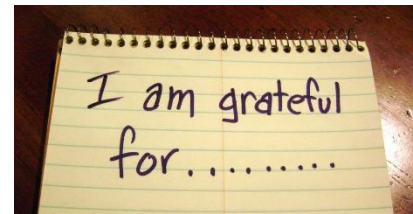


8 Spiritual Practices (a JNAP gift)

Spiritual practices provide intentional times for individuals to work alone or with others. They create soft places where we allow ourselves to be open to God's presence. These spiritual practices were provided by the JNAP (Joint Needs Assessment Process) Team for you to explore your spirituality.

#1 – Gratitude Journal

Once a day sit quietly, reflect and journal three things you are grateful for. These are personal and can range from the blue sky, the smiling child, some light in my darkness. Consider what your life would like without these blessings. Give a prayer in thanks.



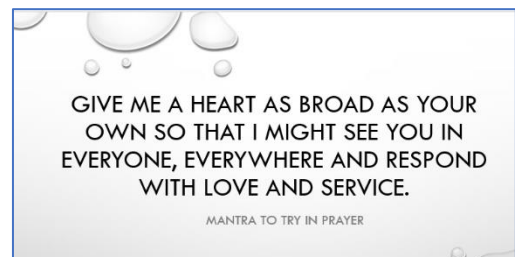
Try sharing your gratitudes with a friend. Just share, no need to comment. This can be very motivating and rewarding.

#2 – Reflections on Prayer

Prayer links us to life beyond the everyday and is an opportunity to have a deeper relationship with God. Prayer starts simply with an open honesty which will shape you and your soul. Prayer is not a sign of how holy you are, nor a request for God to change life events.

Prayer is about asking for the:

“strength” to do what you are meant to do,
“courage” to meet life’s challenges,
“endurance” to go on when nothing changes
and knowing that the spirit is with us to do what must be done, whether we succeed or not, we are not alone.



Try finding a quiet space to breathe deeply and open your heart to God. Start with something simple that will allow you to live as Jesus lived. Prayer can be as simple as a thank you.

#3 - Reflection through Breathing

The word Yahweh which is the Hebrew word for God, was created to use the least effort in the speaking of it. Yah-weh, two simple syllables. Sit quietly and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and slowly into your belly, filling your body with breath. When you breathe in, say the word (yah) within your breath; when you breathe out say the word (weh) within your breath. Breathe in the very name of God.

The breath of God has made me,
the breath of God gives me life.

Find a quiet space to breathe deeply and try to open your heart to God.



#4 - Silence

Silence – there are many ways to include silence into your day as a spiritual practice. Spend the first five minutes of your day in silence. Go to your window, or sit in your favourite chair. Look out on the day before you, and notice, listen, and be still. Notice what beginning the day this way feels like. No words are necessary; your prayer is your silence.

Spend the final five minutes of your day in silence. Close your eyes, notice your breath, and be still. No words are necessary; your prayer is your silence.



#5 - Being Present**

BEING PRESENT defines both being present, as in here in attendance and the spiritual practice of “being present” with full awareness of being in the here and now, at this very moment in time.

Taking the time to slow down and just “be in the moment” is hard. Life continue to pull us in every direction taking us away from the gifts around us and defining moments that strengthen ourselves spiritually.

When you find yourself constantly reacting to your experiences in one of these ways, when you always want to be otherwise and elsewhere, it is time to be present.

Breathing in: Be Here . . .

Breathing out: Now



*Each second we live, is a new and unique moment of the universe
a moment that never was before and never will be again.*

Pablo Casals quoted in Full Esteem Ahead by Diane Loomans

**Source: Spirituality & Practice (<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/>)

#6 – Hospitality

Hospitality is derived from the Latin word hospes meaning host, guest or stranger. In ancient cultures hospitality involved welcoming the stranger and offering him food, shelter, and safety. Hostel, hospital and hospice all come from this root word, hospes. Hospitality is not about entertaining. Rather, it is about caring. In our Christian tradition, it is about relating to others as Christ did, regardless of social boundaries, class, gender, ethnicity, religion or race. Living Christ's hospitable grace is a spiritual practice that balances a tendency to be critical of others. It builds a trusting attitude toward the world. This way we live more fully and abundantly as life Jesus promised.



Daily Reminder: Each doorway can be a reminder to extend hospitable relationship to those you meet during a day. Give thanks for those who offer the hospitality of care for you.

#7 – Daily Examen



Daily Examen – is a prayerful reflection on the events of the day. Your concern is not with the good or bad of actions or feelings – rather your concern is with how the Holy Spirit is moving deep within you. Each evening linger over two questions like the following and if you wish, record your responses:

For what moment today am I most grateful?

For what moment today am I least grateful? or ...

*When did I give and receive the most love today?
When did I give and receive the least love today? or ...*

*When today did I have the greatest sense of belonging to myself, others, God and the universe?
When did I have the least sense of belonging? or ...*

#8 – Connection

Separateness is an illusion. Everything is interrelated — in time, space, and our very being. Spirituality can be defined as the “art of making connections”. The one is made up of many. Everything is related to everything else. One thing leads to another.

You can practice connections by finding the link between yourself and others. By realizing that the small things you do are connected to bigger things. We are all parts of a whole. Pause and reflect on the connections you can make, already have and how we are all intertwined.

Source: <http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com>



“Our ancient experience confirms at every point that everything is linked together, everything is inseparable.”

– Dalai Lama XIV