

Conscious Being

Exercise One: Unharmable

The moment-to-moment choices we make in our daily interactions with each other are what create the kind of world in which we live. By choosing to express compassion and understanding in the face of another's pain or struggle, rather than judgment or impatience, we change the emotional climate of the world. Every situation is an opportunity to open up or to close off. One of my favorite definitions of a spiritual experience is "a profound alteration in our reaction to life." Actually, I would change that to "a profound alteration in our *response* to life."

Releasing Statement

I am now willing to release judgments of myself and others.

Affirming Statement

I am essentially whole and perfect.

Simple Meditation Practice

This module's meditation is a contemplative meditation. We invite you to find a comfortable place to sit. Set a timer for 10 minutes. Before you start the meditation read this quote three times: "Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity." During these 10 minutes, simply contemplate the quote. See if you can get in touch with a deeper understanding of the quote. What does it mean to you? How does it relate to your life? How might this change your awareness?

The following exercises are based on the 7 spiritual truths:

1. **There's nothing "wrong" with you:** Write about the following questions, or discuss with a partner if you are in a group:

- In what ways have you been judging yourself as "defective" or "wrong?"

- Where did those beliefs come from?

- Are they true?

- What wholeness or perfection have you been denying?

2. There's only one of us here: Think of 2-3 people who trigger or irritate you and then think about about what specifically annoys you about them. Answer in writing below, or if you're in a group, get with a partner to discuss the following questions:

- Was there ever a time you acted that way yourself?

- What was going on for *you* when that happened?

- Now, when you think of the person/people does it change the judgment?

- What are you thinking and feeling about the person or situation now?

3. **God is within you:** Write answers to the following questions, or discuss with a partner if you are in a group:

- Growing up, what did you learn about God?

- What is your definition of God now?

- If you could create any idea or image of God what would it be?

- Write out your current conception of God:

- What would you like God to be?

- Compare the lists and spend some time in the silence reflecting on this.
Now write about your observations:

4. The only prayer is “thank-you:” Write down 5 things for which you are grateful and 5 things that you are struggling with or that are challenging for you. Discuss the things for which you are grateful with a partner, or re-read to yourself if you are alone. Notice how that feels. Then share (or re-read) the challenges and notice how you feel. Is there a difference? Is there something for which you can be grateful about those challenges? If you have a hard time identifying anything, ask your partner to help you. If you're on your own, ask a friend or loved one.

5. Nothing outside of you needs to change: This can be written out if you are alone or shared with a partner if you're in a group.

- Who or what have you been seeking outside of you that you already are?

- What have you made the source of your happiness?

- Are any of those future-oriented? (e.g., "I'll be happy when ____")

- What could you choose to be happy about right now?

- What do you need to let go of in order to experience that happiness?

- What would allow you to access the happiness that is already inside of you?

6. **Everyone is perfect, just as they are:** Write answers to the following questions, or discuss with a partner if you are in a group.

- Who or what have you decided needs to change before you'll be happy?

- What does that create for you?

- In what ways do you make your happiness contingent on someone changing?

- In what ways do you know happiness is an inside job?

- What would it take for you to *really know* happiness is an inside job?

- If you were to choose happiness right now, what would you choose to *be* or *do* that's different?

7. We're not here to get good...only to become real: Write answers to the following questions, or discuss with a partner if you are in a group.

- What does being "good" or "perfect" mean to you?

- What does being "real" or "authentic" mean to you?

- What is the difference?

- How do those feel in your body?

- In what ways do you find yourself hiding or cutting off parts of your authentic self in order to appear perfect?

- What else is possible?
