

A Call for Connection



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APPENDIX 2

Journal Prompts & Meditations and Practice

The Delusion of Separation: We Were Never Separate

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What does belonging mean to me? To whom or what have I felt I belonged or not belonged in my life?

What is evoked for me by the idea that we are not separate?
What about the idea that we are not the same?

What margins or centers do I occupy? When and how did I understand these social locations?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

If you have a meditation practice, please continue. If you are new to meditation, at least four times this week, take ten minutes to sit in a comfortable posture and simply be with your experience in stillness and silence. Set a timer. Feel free to use an app or a guided meditation. Notice how this is for you.

Domination: Fueling the Fire of Not Belonging

JOURNAL PROMPTS

List memories of comparison or competition in your life (gold stars, contests, trophies, weighing yourself, grade point averages, test scores, sales rankings, performance evaluations, etc.). How have these impacted you?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

Continue cultivating a daily meditation practice.

When you are in a public place where you can watch people (e.g., café, park, or subway) notice how you categorize, compare, and/or compete with others. What evaluations are you making: greater than, less than, equal to? Remember, *mana* is with us until the end. We are simply loosening its most tenacious and egregious forms. See if you can let go of any shame or blame for the thoughts that mirror the hierarchy and domination of our society.

Ground Yourself

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Stop three times each day (e.g., at noon, end of workday, and just before bed) and ask yourself the following questions (take brief notes to notice patterns):

How connected am I to my body in this moment?

How can I tell?

Any other observations about this?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

In your meditation practice, notice: What sensations are pleasant? Unpleasant? Neutral? Explore staying with these experiences without a need to grasp or reject anything. What do you notice? For five minutes, pay attention only to what is easeful or pleasant in your body. Bring your full awareness to this ease. Allow yourself to savor this pleasure.

Explore what brings you pleasure throughout the day. Allow yourself to savor sensations and experiences that bring you pleasure.

DANCE! Put on a favorite song, go to a dance class, or go dancing with friends. How long, where, or when does not matter. Just dance.

Know Yourself

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Where are your people from? What do you know about your ancestors? If there are gaps in your knowledge, is there anyone you can ask? If not, can you do a little research about the general information you have (e.g., if you are adopted, research your country or culture of origin and learn about the beliefs and practices of the place)?

How would you describe yourself to a new friend? To a new colleague? To a stranger?

What parts of yourself do you see? What parts of yourself do you not want to see?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

In your daily meditation practice, pay attention to your particular patterns. Where does your awareness tend to go: to the future or past, to worry or obsession, to planning or control, to fantasy or dreaminess? No need to change anything, just notice the patterns.

Love Yourself

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What messages did you receive about what is good or allowable about you? What was considered bad or not allowable? How were you encouraged to be? What was rewarded? What was discouraged? Did you accept these messages? Did you internalize them? Did you rebel against any of them?

Notice your inner committee today. Who is sitting on it? What do they have to say? Do you believe them?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

Start a gratitude practice. Every day write down three things for which you are grateful—try to include things about yourself from time to time. Use a journal or start a message chain with one or more friends.

Connect Yourself

JOURNAL PROMPTS

What can you disconnect from? What is absolutely necessary? What do you hold on to out of a sense of obligation/guilt/decorum/fear? What are you willing to drop? And what happens when you do? To whom and to what do you connect when you make space?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

Take a break from all technology! Here are some suggestions:

Don't bring any tech into your bedroom at night (get a "real" alarm clock) and don't go online until after you meditate in the morning. (This is a personal favorite!)

Designate certain times of the day when you and/or your family are off all tech: mealtimes, family outings, walks in nature. (You can get selfies at other times.)

Create a weekly Tech Sabbath—an entire day where you do not go online.

Put your Wi-Fi on a timer (like those used for lamps when you go on vacation) and have it go off one hour before your bedtime and on one hour after you wake (another personal favorite).

A stand of aspen trees is actually one large organism where the roots are a single life force. From a standing position, imagine all the people and beings currently in your life as a field of aspen trees. Locating yourself among this field, sense your feet rooted into the ground and connecting with a root system that connects you to all of the other trees. Now imagine that this root system is connected not only to those you know and love but to every single being and entity known and unknown. Stand tall. There is air and space around you but everything is connected underneath, within. Can you feel space and contact? Can you feel independent and connected?

Be Yourself

JOURNAL PROMPTS

Can you allow yourself to open to the mystery of you? Your everyday life? What stops you? Are you too rushed? Are you too busy to appreciate with wonder and awe those flowers by the window?

What inspires awe in you? Can you allow yourself more opportunities to witness a sunset from start to finish (and when does it start and when does it finish?)?

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE

Do less. I dare you. Saying no, letting go of obligations, cancelling appointments, staying off social media—these can feel like revolutionary acts. They often are. Try it.

Appreciate the miracle of this moment. That you are sitting/standing/lying here right now, breathing, pulsing, reading, understanding. And that millions of years of evolution led to right now. What does that feel like? What do you notice?