

Week beginning 19th July - Don't miss the moment

In these reflections on the spiritual journey, I asked myself many questions. Am I totally committed to the surrender of my life to God? Am I dedicated to becoming aware of the immense possibility for personal transformation in every moment and in every place? . . . I am referring here to the everyday experiences of such common activities as looking, breathing, moving. . . We need to realise the frantic speed of our lives and change it in order to be; we need a different life-rhythm if we are to notice and feel each physical and mental movement, each expression of emotion, each silence. We need to practise awareness so that it becomes a kind of second nature to us. Some kind of habitual change in the way we perceive our environment must happen if we are ever to be attentive to the ordinary and the unusual, to the hundreds of small miracles we take for granted, to the sacrament of the present moment. . .

It is important, wherever we find ourselves, to create fine channels of connection between the life-giving sources of each day. . . The function of life is to lead us to its own rapture. We are called to create our own reality. Because we have God's presence in our bodies, God's energy in our minds and hearts, the only limits set out are those we draw out of our own fear. How often do we really feel our soul, with its passion for the possible? How often do we find, with the poet, an invincible summer at the heart of our winter? How often are we suddenly surprised by the courage of our capacity, not just to suffer tragedies, but to grow and blossom through them? . . .

True awareness is a rare gift, yet it is accessible to all. It is regarded as the grace that transcends the ego, the blessing that transforms our level of self-acceptance and, consequently, our self-esteem. It is the litmus paper that reveals the life-long pattern of our insecurity, our anxiety and fear, our anger and resentment, our envy and jealousy, our critical and blaming habits. It is an extraordinary kind of skill, or aptitude, or facility, to begin noticing our spontaneous reactions, to catch our split-second, off-guard emotions in the face of some sudden happening, to be attentive to our body movements and tensions at any given time for whatever reason, to watch the unflinching way we respond, at a compulsory, driven level to certain kinds of people, stimuli, behaviour, information. Life is happening all the time; our awareness is often absent. And, as we have considered already, once we are aware of what is going on within us, the healing and wholeness naturally and supernaturally follows, without any extreme efforts or desperate strategies on our part. (Travelling Light pp139 -142)

Follow-up - If you would like to explore mindful meditation, try this simple daily praxis:

Today, try to get your various energies flowing together in the following way. Vigorously rub your hands together and place them on different parts of your body. Stimulate your face and scalp, tweaking, pinching and kneading your eyebrows, your ears, your cheekbones, your chin-line, the side of your nose. All of these spruce up your skin and affect all kinds of organs and their functions throughout your body. Do this gently and lovingly. And talk to the places you are touching. Thank them for their loyal service to you. It is not silly to do this. We often stay stuck in mediocrity because we fear the comments of cynical acquaintances. . . Your body is your best friend throughout your life; it is also your faithful and portable home. Now rub your hands together again, to generate more energy, and slap yourself briskly all over – back, buttocks, front, up and down your legs. Notice your breathing. Place your feet together and move your hips in a pelvic circle . . . Imagine you are keeping a hula-hoop spinning at waist level. Breathe as normally as you can. Sit down now and feel the energy radiating within and around you. Slowly make the Sign of the Cross, or some other 'closing gesture' to bring it all together and to complete your salutation to your body, to God and to the new day.

(Travelling Light p143).