

Catch your breath...

Upon waking...in the morning...

I don't know about you, but I can often wake up with a worry or concern on my mind. Rather than simply say to myself don't worry, I find it helpful to replace those thoughts with something else. Reading this poem by John O'Donohue is a great way to wake up ...read before you even get out of bed...or during breakfast...or on your transit commute...

"On Waking

I give thanks for arriving
Safely in a new dawn,
For the gift of eyes
To see the world,
The gift of mind
To feel at home
In my life.
The waves of possibility
Breaking on the shore of dawn,
The harvest of the past
That awaits my hunger,
And all the furtherings
This new day will bring."¹

Or try these words from *Seven Sacred Pauses* by Macrina Wiederkehr,

"Some mornings I choose to choose life. There are mornings when I remember that it is not only the shining in the eastern sky that is rekindled at dawn. I remember that I am part of the shining. The spark of light in my own soul is rekindled, and I begin my day in glory."²

To say this to ourselves is both grand and humbling. We recognize that we too are part of this great cosmos, how grand! Humbling also because we recognize we are a speck of light within the vastness of the web of life and possibilities. Either way, grand or humbling, we belong to something much bigger than ourselves....we belong.

¹ *To Bless the Space Between Us* by John O'Donohue pg. 94

² *Seven Sacred Pauses: Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day* by Macrina Wiederkehr pg. 48

On days when we are pulled in lots of different directions and days when we have more time than purpose these questions can help us live mindfully through the day. Spend a few minutes or more with each question.

-What is rising up in me today?

This is about becoming aware of what you are thinking about and how you are feeling about the things going on in your life and the world. You don't need to judge or solve or plan (you have the whole day for that!) but just let yourself become aware of what is going on in you.

For example, "I have lots to do today...drive kids to school, go to work, grocery shop, drive kids to dance class, I am wondering how it will all get done?" "I realize I have lots happening right now."

-What needs to rise in me today?

"Morning is a call to our own resurrection, and so we reflect on what needs to rise in us. On some days we may need to awaken to joy. Or perhaps we need to pray that a positive attitude for our work will be resurrected. Sometimes it is compassion for a co-worker, an aging parent, an alienated spouse, a troubled teenager, or a colicky child that is needed. If you prayerfully look into your heart, you will probably know what kind of resurrection needs to take place to honour the Awakening Hour." ³

-What is my intention for this new day?

By taking a moment to ask this question we allow some time and space to make our intention for this new day. This question has surprised me the most. One day I made the intention to "do things today that are good for me." Later in the day when faced with lots of decisions my intention surfaced and making decisions became easier. My intentions change from day to day, but often previous intentions come to mind when needed.

-You are done the morning practice... have a mindful day...have great day!

I have used the morning practice from *Seven Sacred Pauses* with a poem from *To Bless the Space Between Us* to offer a simple way to start a daily spiritual practice. Use what speaks to you and add to it if you like...you can start now and have everything you need. Enjoy!

³ Wiederkehr pg 49

I would love to hear about your experience with this. Try this for a week and next week I will add an evening practice. If you have any questions or would like to share your experience please contact me at minister@sauc.ca or phone 604-939-5513.

Blessings,
Julie Lebrun

Book Review: *Seven Sacred Pauses* by Macrina Wiederkehr.

This is an excellent book that offers an easy and accessible way to start the Christian spiritual practice of Praying the Hours. In this book Wiederkehr takes the spirit of this centuries old spiritual practice and puts it into words that are easy to understand and do. It is helpful to anyone who wants to do what the sub title suggest, "Living Mindfully Through the Hours of the Day." She points out in the introduction that today people often associate mindfulness as a Buddhist concept...and in fact the Christian practice of praying the hours has the same goal of "living awake and ready to embrace the gift of the present moment."