

Integrating Our Relationship To Gratitude & Mourning

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The focus of this exercise is a deeper integration of inner and outer dimensions of experiencing. The particular emphasis will be on directly exploring two kinds of experience: gratitude and mourning (grief). As in any experience there is the outer aspect, an event or stimulus that occurs in life. And there is the inner response to the outer event. When there is a reaction to the outer event, we focus on our inner reaction in a way that keeps us separate from the person or phenomena. When we judge or evaluate the outer event (“positively” or “negatively”) we are in tension or resistive energy in our experience. There is restricted or no flow or openness. This is an example of an un-integrated mode of experiencing.

Instead, here we will explore a more integrated mode of experiencing. *To prepare, bring to your awareness an experience of gratitude or celebration; and another experience of mourning or grief.* When we experience gratitude there is the outer event or action that we feel grateful for. In a celebration there is a fulfilled need or value and there is the accompanying inner experience. The same for mourning/grief. In mourning there is a loss (unfulfilled need/value) and the inner experience that is linked to it.

The exercise that we will explore is an experiential inquiry into two questions:

1. What is precious in you in your gratitude?
2. What is precious in you in your grief/mourning?

Here are the exercises:

What Is Precious In You In Your Gratitude?

1. Name something in the outer world (an event, something someone did, something you observed) that you are grateful for.

2. Name what you are feeling emotionally, your body energy, and the value or need fulfilled.

3. Feel/experience the precious longing or quality (need) that is awakened in you. Feel it, dwell in it.

4. Encompass, hold both the inner experience and the outer experience together.

What Is Precious In You In Your Grief/Mourning?

1. Name something in the outer world (an event, something that someone did or said) that was not in harmony with what you value/need.

2. Name what you are feeling emotionally, your body energy, and the value/need that was not fulfilled.

3. Feel/experience the pain. Disheartenment sadness, etc. that resonates in this experience.

4. Allow the full feeling of mourning in sadness to come to you.

5. In this experience of loss, what are you longing for?

6. What is precious in your longing? What is the precious need/value?

7. Enter into the full feeling and dwell in the fullness of what is precious in you and absent in the experience of the outer event.

Other Key Elements

- Integrating a full living involves grief/mourning *and* gratitude.
- Mourning/grief is essential to a spiritual life practice.
- The principle of *impermanence* is inherent in the nature of full living.
- Relationship to all of life is a continuous flow of the endless coming and going, arising and falling away of experience.