

THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE

MINDFUL SILENCE

Ancient Tools for Growing Seasons

Welcome and Series Intro

Welcome to this films series featuring Phileena Heuertz and her book *Mindful Silence: The Heart of Christian Contemplation*.

Stop. Take a minute to breathe, and look around. We don't have to look far, not even past our own way of being to notice the busyness of the world. When is the last time you recognized you were breathing? (Did you actually stop to breathe when prompted just now? If not, go ahead, in fact, take three deep breaths, we'll wait.:))

Welcome to the present moment, we are glad you are here, as your presence is essential.

The human condition in much of the world is hurried. Distracted. Disoriented. Disconnected. We spend much of our waking days in the past or the future, leaving many of us vacant to what is right before us. Living in this state, over time, we grow in disillusionment and dissatisfaction because we aren't really all the way here. Our lives begin to feel the lack of meaning and purpose, we come up empty, body, mind, and soul.

It was when Phileena navigated her own inner turmoil—the “deconstruction of her identity, worldview, and faith”—that she met one of the great teachers of contemplative spirituality and began her journey into the practices of stillness, silence, and solitude. Her book and these films are a threshold into a new type of presence and a new type of action, something the world so desperately needs.

**“NURTURING THE CONTEMPLATIVE MIND THROUGH SPIRITUAL PRACTICE
HELPS CREATE BETTER CHRISTIANS, BETTER HUMANS.”**

—PHILEENA HEUERTZ, MINDFUL SILENCE

This is her offering to us: the wisdom of the ancients, the desert mothers and fathers, and the modern day mystics. *Stop. Breathe. Surrender. Be still, and listen.* We must wake up from our hurried existence, from sleep walking through the gift of our life, and reconnect and re-member with God, ourself, and one another. We are all essential to the solution needed here and now, and contemplative practice is the threshold to understanding and healing our inner universe so that we project and work effectively toward an outer existence that is more aligned with the heart of God.

We hope you find the time listening through these films, prayers, practices, and discernment, a mini life-giving pilgrimage for you. We are grateful for Phileena's work, and honored to walk alongside you.

A Few Notes to Consider

Discernment vs. Debate - More than right or wrong answers to be conjured or debated, the hope of these mini film journeys is to provide space for personal and communal deep listening. It's not about whether one agrees or disagrees with a speaker, it's where we are led. Again, the intention is spiritual discernment not intellectual analysis or doctrinal debate (in general of course). Healthy wrestling and mid-rash stirs the imagination, but we find circling in the land of who is right or wrong doesn't necessarily create a soil that nurtures discovery and transformation.

Individuals - For deeper listening consider simple but fruitful practices like journaling as thoughts rise up while listening through films, passages, prayers, and questions. Finding a way to take a short walk before or after a session can be a fresh wind as well. And, even just putting your feet on the ground and taking in a slow, deep breath with a long, slow exhale can be reorienting. Every time.

Groups - If you're working through this series as a new group, consider opening the first session by having participants share a little bit of their faith journey and what brings them to the space. The connectedness created by the vulnerability of folks sharing just a little bit about their story with others goes a long way to nurturing the soil of deep listening.

A word about sharing, and responding to others in a group discussion. Be present as possible, and consider responding to others' sharing by sticking with "I" statements. Try to not overdo it with "advice-giving" to others. :) Instead of offering correction, try to "hear each other into deeper speech."

Also for groups, if possible, consider having participants take the session film and discernment questions in before the group meets. Living with the content a bit ahead of time creates the potential to make for a richer conversation since folks might be sharing and responding from a deeper, marinated voice.

Spiritual Practices - Throughout this guide there are a few prompts to take a deep breath. We don't breathe enough as it is, and it helps you to fully enter the current moment. At the end of each session, you will find a suggested practice from Phileena's book. Feel free to work with it, modify it and make it your own. If you are part of a group, perhaps this is a point you can connect over throughout the series.

Series Session and Info

This series includes six sessions:

Session One // Sleepwalking
Session Two // Withdrawing to Engage
Session Three // Finding Liberation by Discernment
Session Four // Discovering Darkness Is Light
Session Five // Exploring a Deep Well
Session Six // Dying for Life
Session Seven // Unknowing to Know
Session Eight // Waking Up

Find the series on TWOTP here:

https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/film_series/mindful-silence

Purchase Phileena's book *Mindful Silence* here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/40059222-mindful-silence>

SESSION ONE // Sleepwalking

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from 1 Thessalonians. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**SO LET'S NOT BE ASLEEP, AS OTHERS ARE—
LET'S BE AWAKE AND SOBER!**

— 1 THESSALONIANS 5:6

Session Intro

In her book, *Mindful Silence*, Phileena Heuertz writes, “it’s difficult to stay connected to our soul in daily life, amid a myriad of competing demands, needs, and responsibilities.” Sleepwalking is a spiritual pandemic, we have all been effected, and no one is immune. We simply have too much going on inside and outside of us to even really be paying attention to what’s going on inside and outside of us. It’s a cyclical problem.

‘Doing’ isn’t necessarily the problem, we can do a lot of great things, we can even do a lot of good. What many seem to find, is that even doing good can become a way to numb out if it doesn’t come from a centered way of being, a connection to something greater than ourselves. To connect to the greater humanity and all life around us we need to process through our own humanity. It’s through our inner world order that we will then emerge to truly connect and co-create with the outer world order.

On to the film...

Watch Sleepwalking Video

Take in the film and try not “analyze” it :) Take note of what rises up for you. Make a note so you can revisit it.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/sleepwalking>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don’t expect yourself to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear.

What word, phrase, truth, or idea stood out to you from the film?

With the benefit of your current awareness, how would you describe yourself or the feeling of times in your life when you are sleepwalking?

What sort of fallout happens when you aren’t present to your life?

Do you remember waking up? What happened?

What came alive in you? What did you learn?

How has this changed how you are in the world?

Did you have to let go of something? What was it? What was it like to let it go?

Phileena describes the spiritual practice of centering prayer (an approximate twenty minute sit that includes focused breathing, and a desire and willingness to let go of our thoughts and attachments so that we might listen) as one way of decluttering our inner world and the benefits of being more present and having more God has in our daily life. What practice or rhythm have you got going that helps you get or stay clear and reminds you that you are connected to all things now?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening though the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?

Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you were supposed to hear. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing / Moving Forward

As a closing prayer and presence practice, try this practice of being still taken from Phileena's book, as taught to her by Father Richard Rohr from Psalm 46:10.

To begin, find a quiet place, gently close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths.

Prepare to pray the psalm in five consecutively diminishing sentences. Either aloud or to yourself, say the words. "Be still and know that I am God." Then take a couple deep breaths and pause between each of the following phrases:

"Be still and know that I am."

"Be still and know."

"Be still."

"Be."

When you feel ready to move on, pray, "Amen."

This prayer can also be prayed with a group. The facilitator leads with each sentence and the group repeats aloud after each consecutively diminishing phrase.

The pause between each phrase can be lengthened depending on your need or the needs of the group.

Take this practice with you throughout the week. Let us know how it goes.

SESSION TWO // Withdrawing to Engage

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from 1 Thessalonians. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**RIISING EARLY THE NEXT MORNING,
JESUS WENT OFF TO A LONELY PLACE IN THE DESERT
AND PRAYED THERE.**

— MARK 1:35

Session Intro

In her book, *Mindful Silence*, Phileena Heuertz writes, “we must *withdraw to engage* if our interaction with the world is to bear any fruit that lasts.”

Withdrawing from the whirl of life is a challenge, because (at least here in America) we are encouraged to be doing people in and for a doing culture. In all our doing (even well intentioned doing) however, we miss out on being connected to God, our self, and others.

We cannot even know our self past how we have identified with the success or failure of our doing unless we take a step back to observe our actions and motivations with fearless honesty. Withdrawing is the practice that guides us into being, into noticing if our actions are in alignment with our beliefs, with our truest desire, with the flow of God to us and through us.

Withdrawing offers us the sight of the gift we are made to be. To the willing, it leads to greater understanding and acceptance of ourselves and guides us to a more genuine way of being in the world.

On to the film...

Watch Withdrawing to Engage Video

Take in the film and try not “analyze” it :) Take note of what rises up for you. Make a note so you can revisit it.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/withdrawing-to-engage>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don’t expect yourself to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear.

What word, phrase, truth, or idea stood out to you from the film?

What is your manner of doing?

How do you take care of your mind, body, and soul? Do you resist self-care?

What, in all honesty, is the most daunting part of withdrawing?

What, in all honesty, is the most liberating part of withdrawing?

How can you incorporate the practice of withdrawing daily? Weekly? Monthly? Yearly?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening through the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?
Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you were supposed to hear. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing / Moving Forward

As a closing prayer and presence practice, try this practice of being still taken from Phileena's book, as taught to her by Father Richard Rohr from Psalm 46:10.

To begin, find a quiet place, gently close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths.

Prepare to pray the psalm in five consecutively diminishing sentences. Either aloud or to yourself, say the words. "Be still and know that I am God." Then take a couple deep breaths and pause between each of the following phrases:

"Be still and know that I am."

"Be still and know."

"Be still."

"Be."

When you feel ready to move on, pray, "Amen."

This prayer can also be prayed with a group. The facilitator leads with each sentence and the group repeats aloud after each consecutively diminishing phrase. The pause between each phrase can be lengthened depending on your need or the needs of the group.

Take this practice with you throughout the week. Let us know how it goes.

SESSION THREE / Finding Liberation by Discernment

Preparing to Listen

You may find it helpful to prepare and pray (pre-pray?) to open (and/or close) a session. Consider journaling your way through. It nurtures focus, learning, listening, retention, attention span, and creativity. It's science!—just sayin'.

Stop. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the passage. Listen to any words or phrases that may stick out to you. Write it down, maybe? Keep listening :)

**AND WHEN YOU TURN TO THE RIGHT AND WHEN YOU
TURN TO THE LEFT, YOUR EARS WILL HEAR A VOICE BEHIND
YOU SAYING, "THIS IS THE WAY—WALK IN IT."**

— ISAIAH 30:21

Session Intro

In her book, *Mindful Silence*, Phileena Heuertz defines discernment as “uncovering the presence and action of God in one’s life, and growing in the ability to respond to that presence and action.” In other words, we are listening to how we can get in on God’s movement.

Discernment is listening, and listening with a willingness to be obedient to the answer. We aren’t just asking for a pathway to what we want, or what gives us all the feels. We are asking for alignment with and into the will of God. The challenge continues to be finding the inner and outer silence so that we can have clarity around what we are asking, and can later hear what we are to hear.

As we continue to develop silence, stillness, and deep listening practices, we will be moving toward an inner and outer shedding that releases us from the constructs that keep our essence imprisoned and blocks the flow of our connection to God. This will help us in our becoming more mature and secure when it comes who we are becoming and how that informs us as to what we are to be doing with our life.

On to the film...

Watch Finding Liberation by Discernment Video

Take in the film and try not “analyze” it :) Take note of what rises up for you. Make a note so you can revisit it.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/finding-liberation-in-discernment>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don’t expect yourself to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear.

What word, phrase, truth, or idea stood out to you from the film?

What is your process of discernment?

What is it you are currently asking God for guidance about?

What is it you are looking for?

What is God up to in your life?

What are the ways you hear, notice, see the movement of God?

What is yours to do to get in on what God is up to?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening through the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?
Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you were supposed to hear. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing / Moving Forward

As a closing prayer and presence practice, try this practice of being still taken from Phileena's book, as taught to her by Father Richard Rohr from Psalm 46:10.

To begin, find a quiet place, gently close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths.

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"Be still and know that I am."

"Be still and know."

"Be still."

"Be."

When you feel ready to move on, pray, "Amen."

This prayer can also be prayed with a group. The facilitator leads with each sentence and the group repeats aloud after each consecutively diminishing phrase. The pause between each phrase can be lengthened depending on your need or the needs of the group.

Take this practice with you throughout the week. Let us know how it goes.

SESSION FOUR // Discovering Darkness is Light

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from Psalm 139. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**“IF I SAY, ‘THE DARKNESS WILL HIDE ME,
AND NIGHT WILL BE MY ONLY LIGHT,’
EVEN DARKNESS WON’T BE DARK TO YOU;
THE NIGHT WILL SHINE LIKE THE DAY—
DARKNESS AND LIGHT ARE THE SAME TO YOU.”**

— PSALM 139:11-12

Session Intro

“Darkness is necessary if we are to realize we are in God and God is in us—and nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from God (Romans 8:38). Most people associate darkness with sin or evil. But, darkness serves to purify our faith and deepen our trust in God.” (Mindful Silence, page 76)

There are any number of things that can cause us to shift from a more balanced state of being into a period of darkness, or as Saint John of the Cross calls it “A Dark Night of the Soul.” This is a transformational time in life where we are buried to our old ways, wants, beliefs, and identity, and if we are still willing after all the previous parts of the process, made to walk anew.

Regardless of how you come to be in a dark period, the tools needed for the path are courage, faith, and trust. One way to strengthen these attributes is to practice them is through spiritual practices that teach us to let go into God. To practice

dying to self. Let's just agree from the start that practicing won't make you immune to pain or the dark times. What it does do, however, is build faith that God doesn't leave us at any point in the process.

Watch Discovering Darkness Is Light

Stop. Breathe. One or two deep breaths to open the heart space. Become receptive, become curious. When you're ready, click play.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/discovering-darkness-is-the-light>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don't force any relation to any of the questions, and don't expect yourself (or the group if that is the case) to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear while letting your life speak.

Considering the paradox of dark and light. Read the following three conversation or writing prompts and work on one at a time. Feel free to spend as much time as you want on each prompt before moving on. It can be anything, don't hold back. Include as much as you want. This can be a list, an interaction, a memory, a belief or faith shift, a trauma or celebration. Just let loose for some time letting things rise up for you to notice.

- Free think, talk, or write about how you were taught to associate with the dark and the light.
- Free think, talk, or write what people in your current community associate with the dark and the light.
- Free think, talk, or write about what you believe about or associate with darkness and lightness.

What is there to appreciate about the darkness you experienced? What did you learn in the dark?

What illusions, shadow or false self, or character defects presented themselves to you in the dark?

Have you ever felt you lost God in the darkness?

Who is someone who has held you in a dark time? What was comforting about this person?

Considering your path for the past few years, what could God be birthing into the world through you?

Do you have any contemplative practices that help you learn to trust in the letting go?

How do you walk into what God is birthing through you rather than return to sleepwalking? What is a next right step opening up to God rather than contracting around your pain?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening though the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?

Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you rose up for you. Hold it with curiosity over judgment if possible. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing / Moving Forward

Lectio Divina is an ancient monastic prayer practice used to deepen a person's experience of the material. It is a sacred reading that works like a layering or an

unraveling, depending on which way you are headed. The process is well explained on pages 93-94 of *Mindful Silence*:

1. Take a few deep breaths and let yourself grow aware of the present moment. Acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit.
2. During the first reading of the text you've chosen, take in all the sights, sounds, and textures of the text.
3. During the second reading, listen for a word or phrase that stands out to you.
4. Read the text a third time, and share your heartfelt response to God.
5. During the final reading, rest in your experience with the sacred text.

Practice this method using the following translation of the poem *Dark Night of the Soul* by Saint John of the Cross:

A Death to Awaken

It was Love that drew me into a total eclipse;
a dark born to heal me—a death to awaken me.
—O, the grace of Love!—
I cannot say how I went,
but I left who I thought I was lying content.

Secure in the unknown, I chose, alone,
to go deeper into my disguise,
—O, the grace of Love!—
into the dark where things go to hide
all while my dying body lie.

On that miraculous night,
I traversed unseen, blind to all things
with no light, no guide
except for the passion of my heart burning inside...

And, its shine did surely lead me, more than any man-made divinity,
to the presence of the No-thing, the Am, the All
—my first familiarity, the Always Been—
and all else I ever was, all I ever knew, would fall.

Oh enlightening emptiness!

A void that brings greater life than possessions.
A nothing that brings oneness;
and enjoins God and what God loves,
and transforms the beloved into the Lover.

Love flowers from my heart
which I keep for God and God alone
where Christ resides inside, sleeping—where I hold No-thing and All
and all I thought, like wind, went breezing by.

I am blown apart! Seen through..
I touched Love, and Love in all its gentility
ended me.
Whatever was left of me, gone—
fully expressed into all that is.

And, there I remained, suspended in the vast
My identity laid unto the Beloved,
with nothing left to cling to, but us,
I abandoned my past
leaving all my old worries and ways in the dust.

SESSION FIVE // Exploring a Deep Well

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from John 7. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**“FROM THEIR INNERMOST BEING
WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATER”**

— JOHN 7:38

Session Intro

“Presence of mind and heart is the doorway into divine presence. Presence is intimate and vulnerable, this it requires a certain degree of maturity. The more present we are, the more capable we are of searching the depths of self, truth, and meaning. Once established in the present moment, we are poised to wake up, open our eyes, and begin to see or perceive more clearly. *Perception* is the next critical component to contemplative spirituality. Perception is *how* we see.” (*Mindful Silence*, page 102)

We are responsible for welcoming ourself back to life. To do that, we have to wade through layers of amnesia, illusion, pain, blockages, conditioning, and perceptions that keep us from touching the essence of who we really are.

It's through pursuing our essence that we see what we have been consumed by and are free to choose to let go of who we aren't so we can embrace who we are: the Beloved of God. We are each and every one of us securely and divinely connected, and absolutely approved of just for being who we are. Our contemplative practice

is the map we use for the journey, to guide us beneath the surface and deeper “into.”

It’s how we learn to silence ourselves enough to ask for and receive more God for our healing and the healing of the world.

Watch Exploring A Deep Well Film

Stop. Breathe. One or two deep breaths to open the heart space. Become receptive, become curious. When you’re ready, click play.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/exploring-a-deeper-well>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don’t force any relation to any of the questions, and don’t expect yourself (or the group if that is the case) to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear while letting your life speak.

Having started to awaken, what are some of the things you find yourself struggling with in your faith? What have you been “chewing on for a while that you’d like to spit out?”

What do you turn to when you are seeking depth?

What do you turn to when you are avoiding depth?

What parts of yourself play into the illusion of separateness? What hinders your receptivity to God?

What are the needs for God that you recognize? What can God do for you?

What are some starting places of limitation, conditioning, tradition, religion, family of origin values that you know of that shape your false self identity? That are the filters of your perception?

Do you believe its okay to be yourself?

What makes you feel alive? What brings meaning to your life?

What is one thing you know that you know that you know you are made for?

What are commitments you can make to withdraw and to be present and to move into acceptance of who you are (even baby steps!)?

What is something you believe you believe in, but you don't live out?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening though the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?

Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you rose up for you. Hold it with curiosity over judgment if possible. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing / Moving Forward

Moving forward, you might consider a labyrinth walk. Walking the labyrinth is a silent prayer practice done by mindfully winding your way from the outside of a maze-like pattern into the center, and back out again. You can also do a smaller-scale labyrinth journey by printing out a pattern and tracing it with your finger, or by purchasing a hand or finger labyrinth. If you want to find a labyrinth near you, you can search the worldwide labyrinth locator at www.labyrinthlocator.com.

Whichever type of labyrinth you choose, you can follow these guidelines taken from Phileena's book, *Mindful Silence* on page 115, or visit www.gravitycenter.com/practice/labyrinth:

- Stand at the entrance of the labyrinth with reverence. You may prefer to place palms at your heart and gesturer toward the center with a bow. You may also choose to remove your shoes as a way of acknowledging the sacredness of the prayer practice.
- Ground yourself by taking a few deep breaths and state your intention or desire
- Begin your walk, find your pace.
- Continue to walk, practice letting go of distractions, practice being in the moment, practice breathing.
- Pause at the center. Notice, reflect.
- Exit the center by walking back through the labyrinth until you arrive where you began. Express gratitude.

SESSION SIX // Dying for Life

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from John 7. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS,
UNLESS A GRAIN OF WHEAT FALLS ON THE GROUND AND DIES,
IT REMAINS ONLY A SINGLE GRAIN;
BUT IF IT DIES, IT YIELDS A RICH HARVEST.**

— JOHN 12:24

Session Intro

Death to your false self is a necessary stage in the journey of transformation. And life will deliver exactly what you need to help you make this courageous passage of death and resurrection. Contemplative practice aids the process...contemplative spirituality is “practicing for death.”...Contemplative spirituality supports our Creator’s mysterious work of awakening, healing, liberating, and transforming us. Through contemplative prayer, at ever deepening degrees, our defenses are dismantled and the burning flame of God’s love breaks through our consciousness. That in-breaking is what Jesus called “the kingdom of God.” In the kingdom we realize that we are safe, loved, and have no need to fear. —Phileena Heuertz, Mindful Silence, page 122-123

In this film, Phileena leads us through the contemplative’s path of dying to live. Letting go of one’s need for safety and security, power and control, affection and esteem is not easy path work (one of our basic instincts is to survive at all cost)

however, it is necessary for our growth and transformation to learn to let go of the finite in order to be open to and receive the infinite—we must die to live.

Let's listen to what she has to say...

Watch Dying for Life Film

Stop. Breathe. One or two deep breaths to open the heart space. Become receptive, become curious. When you're ready, click play.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/dying-for-life>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don't force any relation to any of the questions, and don't expect yourself (or the group if that is the case) to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear while letting your life speak.

Have you had a glimpse into your false self?

What are some of your false self's characteristics?

What needs to die? What is the grip that makes these characteristics so challenging to let go of?

Have you had a glimpse into your true self?

What are some of your true self's characteristics?

What is your fundamental need? What needs to live?

What helps you to see and understand the motivations of your false and true self?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening though the questions take you?
Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?
Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?
Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?
How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?
Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you rose up for you. Hold it with curiosity over judgment if possible. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing

Use this time to bring closure to your reflection and remind yourself what you especially want to hold on to as you reenter your regular living and loving.

There are many ways to do this, but in alignment with this chapter in Phileena's book, *Mindful Silence*, you could also consider praying the Welcoming Prayer now and throughout the week. Here's an excerpt from pages 136-137 on the method:

The method of the welcoming prayer includes noticing the sensations, emotions, and thoughts in your body, welcoming them, and then letting them go. Practicing the welcoming prayer offers one the opportunity to make choices free of the false-self system—responding instead of reacting to the present moment.

The purpose of the welcoming prayer is to deepen one's relationship with God by consenting to God's healing presence and action in the ordinary activities of daily life.

When you have an overly emotional experience in daily life, take a moment to be still and silent and follow these steps.

- 1. Focus. Feel and sink into the feelings, emotions, thoughts, sensations, and commentaries in your body.*

2. *Welcome God in the sensations, emotions, and thoughts in your body by saying, "Welcome," to each of them.*
3. *Let go of each sensation, emotion, and thought, and finally repeat the following sentences:*

"I let go of the desire for security and survival."

"I let go of the desire for power and control."

"I let go of the desire for affection and esteem."

"I let go of the desire to change this sensation/emotion/thought/situation."

For more information visit gravitycenter.com/practice/welcoming-prayer

SESSION SEVEN // Unknowing to Know

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from Paul's letter to the Philippians. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU
WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS.**

— PHILIPPIANS 2:5

Session Intro

Many of us were raised up in a system of intellectual knowing of God. We were taught what to believe and told to believe it and defend it at all cost. Today's Christian faith model doesn't leave room for doubt, for the blank spaces that can't be filled in with facts, for the mystery of God, and there is a great fear that comes with any attempts to walk past the bounds of the collective, systemic, dualistic belief structure.

What happens, though, as we progress through life and have all sorts of experiences that challenge the construct of our faith and what we believed was true is challenged, is we feel ejected into an abyss and a lot of times feel as if we are facing the end of our faith. But this quite possibly is the beginning of it. We are out growing the structure that has held us and being called out beyond what we have known into the unknown of God, stepping out of all of the answers into the questions and letting God hold us all the while. This is transformational faith.

Let's listen to what she has to say...

Watch Unknowing to Known Film

Stop. Breathe. One or two deep breaths to open the heart space. Become receptive, become curious. When you're ready, click play.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/unknowing-to-know>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular “rise up” from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don't force any relation to any of the questions, and don't expect yourself (or the group if that is the case) to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear while letting your life speak.

Have you encountered something in your life that caused you to doubt what you were taught to believe with certainty about God? What happened?

What was your taught belief before the experience? Coming through the experience, what was lost and/or gained?

How did God reintroduce itself to you?

How do you know God? What is God like to you?

How do you notice God, orient to God, step into God?

How has that changed your way of being in the world?

How does your new knowing lead you back into the world?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening through the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?
Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you rose up for you. Hold it with curiosity over judgment if possible. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing

Use this time to bring closure to your reflection and remind yourself what you especially want to hold on to as you reenter your regular living and loving.

There are many ways to do this, but in alignment with this chapter in Phileena's book, *Mindful Silence*, you could also consider Centering Prayer now and throughout the week. Here's an excerpt from pages 158-59 on the method:

Unlike other prayer practices, in centering prayer we are not looking for an insight, impression, takeaway, or any other experience. This is a non-conceptual prayer practice and therefore very different from most other forms of prayer we've experienced. It is a Christian form of meditation, a practice in letting go of thoughts, feelings, and sensations...

The focus of centering prayer is the deepening of our relationship with the living Christ...To practice centering prayer, follow these steps:

- 1. Sit in an upright, attentive posture in a way that allows for a straight spine and open heart. Place your hands in your lap.*
- 2. Gently close your eyes and bring to mind your sacred word, image, or breath as your symbol to consent to the presence and action of God within you. Your sacred symbol is intended to be the same every time you pray. It helps to ground you in the present moment. It allows you to give your undivided, loving, yielded attention to God. Choose a name for God or an attribute of God like love, peace, and so on. You may prefer a sacred image instead or simply a mindful breath.*

3. *Silently, with eyes closed, recall your sacred symbol to begin your prayer. As you notice your thoughts, gently return to your sacred symbol. Do this however many times you notice thoughts, feelings, or sensations.*
4. *When your prayer period is over, transition slowly from your practice to your active life.*

It is recommended to pray in this fashion for a minimum of 20 minutes, two times a day. Start out slowly with initial prayer periods of five to ten minutes, then work up to the desired length of time.

For more information visit **gravitycenter.com/practice/welcoming-prayer**

SESSION EIGHT // Waking Up

Preparing to Listen

Use this time to get ready to listen to and watch the film.

Stop. Quiet yourself. Take in a deep breath and let it out slowly. Take in the following verse from Matthew. Maybe speak it out loud to yourself or ask a reader or two to read it if you are part of a group, letting the words lead you. Repeat the verse a few times to let it resonate. Write down what you want to take with you. Keep listening :)

**THEREFORE STAY AWAKE
FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW ON
WHAT DAY YOUR LORD IS COMING.**

— MATTHEW 24:42

Session Intro

“It’s time to wake up and nurture unitive consciousness through contemplative practice. Through contemplation we realize our potential for reflecting our divine heritage. Meditation practice helps us access greater capacity within for love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)—all virtues readily available to us when we are awake and signed with the divine. Now is the time to wake up. Now is the time for more healers, liberators, and peacemakers (see Matthew 5:1-11).

“The awakening and renewal of the human family, the very body of Christ, begins with each of us. To the degree *I* am healed, free, and at peace, the *world* is healed, free, and at peace.” (*Mindful Silence*, p. 170-171)

The world needs each and every one of us to wake up. To show up and pay attention. To listen and take loving action. To move toward and through with honesty, humility, right confidence, and courage for there is much to mend, much to heal.

The way of Jesus is to descend before the rise. To sink down into before being sent out. To follow him, we must traverse the inner world of ourselves beneath the layers of world/cultural systemic belief and personality/ego to touch our own essence and be reminded that we are all the paradox of being more and less than who we think we are. That we are both made of and subject to a presence greater than ourselves. That our being effects all being, and our healing effects all healing.

Phileena wraps up her discussion on living a life that includes contemplative practice (a way of being that includes *seeing, observing, and taking responsibility for our lives through meditative practice* (Mindful Silence, p. 173)) and loving action with a call from her true self to ours.

Let's listen to what she has to say...

Watch Waking Up Film

Stop. Breathe. One or two deep breaths to open the heart space. Become receptive, become curious. When you're ready, click play.

<https://www.theworkofthepeople.com/waking-up>

Discernment / Discussion Questions

Read and listen through the questions below. Does anything in particular "rise up" from the questions? Maybe something from the film not listed that stood out for you? Don't force any relation to any of the questions, and don't expect yourself (or the group if that is the case) to respond to every question. Listen deeply to what you are supposed to hear while letting your life speak.

What do you need God to do for you that you cannot do for yourself?

How does the illusion of separateness play out in your life? How would waking up to our oneness effect those areas of separateness?

What is love to you? How does your belief system effect how you love and how you know you are loved? Where do you notice true love?

What is burning you out in your lifestyle? Where is your life in a rut? Where is your life in flow?

What do you need to be willing to let go of to get in the flow of God already happening in your life?

Are you ready?

More questions to listen through to stir your imagination and memory :)

Where did the video or listening though the questions take you?

Did listening lead you back to an experience in your past?

Was anything there that gave you a new lens to view a story of your past through?

Did listening help you hear any call of your own inner voice?

How did anything change the way you view the story to your life?

Did anything leave you with a challenge for your life, possibly changing the way you want to walk in the world?

Deeper Listening / Responding / Sharing

Journal what you rose up for you. Hold it with curiosity over judgment if possible. (Remember note-taking is science!) For group discussion, share with others what you are hearing and/or respond to a question or two. (Please don't respond to them all :))

Closing

Use this time to bring closure to your reflection and remind yourself what you especially want to hold on to as you reenter the world you live in. How will you live an awakened life?

There are many ways to do this, but in alignment with this chapter in Phileena's book, *Mindful Silence*, you could also consider choosing one of these suggestions from the Practice section titled Be and Do on page 174:

- *Make a practice of turning off podcasts and music when you are driving. Listen to the silence.*

- *Choose one day a week to unplug from all digital devices. Practice this simple form of solitude and being present.*
- *Make regular time to get out i nature. After a walk or bike ride, sit on a park bench and soak in the sights, sounds, and smells. Sink into stillness.*
- *Adopt a puppy from a local rescue. That little creature will teach you everything you need to know about contemplation and ultimate reality.*