

Cultivating Reverence

This is another great practice for cultivating appreciation throughout your day as you experience any type of pain.

1. Using your presence practice, get still and present. Anchor on your breath. Let the mind quiet as much as it will.
2. Smile slightly to encourage warmth and receptivity.
3. Attend to what is arising in consciousness with a kind and gentle attitude.
4. Be receptive and allowing of your experience. Let it come, let it be, let it go.
5. Affirm to yourself, “This belongs.” Or “This is sacred.” Or, “This is as it must be in this moment.”
6. Say a profound “Yes” to your experience, to Life just as It is in this moment, to whatever is arising, meeting it with a humble acknowledgment of its necessity. Say “Yes” to everything, including any judgments or aversion you experience. Say “Yes” to any feelings rooted in hatred for yourself or others. Say “Yes” to it all, renouncing any judgement or rejection of your circumstances, of others, or of your experience. In this practice, you are renouncing judging the judging that arises in your mind as well as any other unwholesome states.
7. Practice this as a humble act of worship for the Reality of this moment exactly as It is.
8. Let pain be and belong. Let pain be just as it is. Affirm its necessity in this moment. Embrace it as an essential part of the sacred whole of things.

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Make this practice a moment-to-moment life habit. You won't be 100% present and consistent with it immediately. See how many times you can catch yourself in negative judgments of Reality, or rather your brain's construction of Reality. Note that you are picking a fight with What Is and return to this simple practice. As you get this under your belt, you will be able to condense this practice to the simple phrase, "This is sacred."

This is a very powerful practice. It cultivates an open, loving, acceptant heart. It cultivates equanimity. It dissolves the suffering of negatively judging Reality (or God, if you like). It also positions you to respond intelligently with love rather than to react out of hatred and aversion; ironically, you will be much more effective at triggering positive change with this practice than with judgment and aversion. This practice allows you to endure necessary pain rather than avoid pain, thereby allowing for a metabolism and healing of pain.

One poem I love really speaks to this practice with a reverent, humble, and surrendered attitude. It is called "Prayer" by Galway Kinnell:

Whatever happens. Whatever
What is is what
I want. Only that. But that.

This prayer is a beautiful practice for cultivating our reverence for Reality, exactly as It is, apart from our preferences, our pain, and our dislikes.

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