

AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

THE GUIDE TO BE A SPIRITUAL LEADER IN YOUR
COMMUNITY

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FLOWERING HEART CENTER



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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
1. Who Am I to Be a Leader in My Community?	1
2. I Am a Spiritual Leader. How Did That Happen?	11
3. Nothing in Nature Is Linear, and Neither Is This Journey	19
4. Setting up Your External and Internal Environment for Success	25
5. Learning the Basic Principles of Working with Others	51
6. Embodying the Leader Now	75
7. Getting into Action by Gathering Your Group and Holding Events	129
8. Using Feedback Loops, Based on Your Group's Dynamics	151
9. Garnering Support and Prioritizing Self-Care	173
10. Being Alert and Immediately Addressing Issues That Can Polarize Your Community	191
11. Preparing for the Unexpected	211
12. The End Is the Beginning	219

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	225
<i>Appendix A: Multi-Viewpoint Exercise</i>	227
<i>Appendix B: Viewpoint Exercise</i>	229
<i>Appendix C: Process for Releasing the Energy Behind the Charge</i>	233
<i>Appendix D: Resentment Processes</i>	237
<i>Appendix E: Embodying Resisted Behaviors and Transmuting Energy</i>	243
<i>Appendix F: Alternate Nostril Breathing and Witness Meditation</i>	247
<i>Appendix G: Evening Meditation from Oneness</i>	251
<i>Appendix H: Integrity Process</i>	253
<i>Appendix I: Art of Listening</i>	255
<i>Appendix J: Relationship Process</i>	257
<i>About the Author</i>	263
<i>About Difference Press</i>	265
<i>Other Books by Difference Press</i>	269
<i>Thanks for Reading</i>	273

*To all the brave pilgrims who have walked the El Camino
You led the way contributing to my transformative journey,
and*

*I am forever grateful to have followed in your footsteps
To my Flowering Heart Center Community who graciously
allowed me to learn to lead a Spiritual Community
To my Shematrix Community who trained me to lead with
humility, compassion and equanimity.
To my Oneness Community who stretched my leadership
skills with facilitating large events.*

FOREWORD

It was back in 2003 when I felt the most powerful, undeniable, divine inspiration to move to Chicago and start a spiritual center. I had just completed my master's at a seminary and had been grappling for a while on what to do next.

The guidance felt so clear that within thirty days I packed up the home, loaded up the car with my husband and two dogs, and drove to Chicago. I was so clear on my mission that I felt unstoppable. And indeed, it was magical how things effortlessly fell into place. It felt easy and it was fun.

People seemed to just come out of the woodwork, pulled by the vision. They came from the suburbs from the south side, from the north side. It was organically growing all around me in the most amazing way. Money was pouring in and everything

we needed appeared exactly when it was supposed to. When we officially opened on November 23, 2003, there were almost 150 people in attendance to support the birth of the Chicago Center for Spiritual Living.

I was the spiritual leader, director, minister, teacher, fundraiser, and at times the janitor of this center – for eleven years. They were the most fulfilling, most fun, and hardest years of my life.

I learned on the field how to be a leader. I struggled with the growth happening so fast with what felt like no structure to support it. I struggled with getting and keeping volunteers, hiring, growing, nurturing, and at times firing staff. I worked with the board of directors, taught classes, spoke on Sundays, as well as helped organize all that went into the weekly production (and it was a big production). And I struggled with being in integrity and out of integrity, and in then out, and in then out.

This was like a doctorate-level training program for how to be a leader. And I will tell you the truth. If it were a real doctoral program at a university, I would have failed many of the classes – multiple times. But I never quit. And for as many time as I fell down, I got back up.

To be a new leader in front of a growing group of people is a humbling experience to say the least. It's like they were watching my every move. I thought they expected me to know everything I needed to

know. And so I acted like I did. Without realizing it, I made the decision that I couldn't be human or show any vulnerability, even though everyone could clearly see I was far from perfect and surely would have expressed compassion; I didn't know how to let them.

Unknowingly, I fell into the persona of "the perfect leader," or at least I was pretending to be. The problem was that the more I tried to be perfect, the harder and harder the job became. There were good times, for sure. And there were lots of uncomfortable times. I often said my growth trajectory was like climbing straight up Mount Everest with no time to ever stop.

By the grace of God, just when I was heading for a crash, I attracted an amazing mentor, and counselor, and other teachers who started supporting me. I am certain this was not of my own making, as I didn't know what I even needed.

These people, my inner circle, loved me and asked me how I was doing and really cared about how I was doing. In hindsight, I give full credit to this circle of people who helped me let go of perfectionism, and become an authentic leader.

The magic that was so big in the beginning, and had seemed to disappear, flooded back. The more authentic I was, the more things really started to grow. The more I encouraged my staff to be authentic, the more connected we became.

It was hard, don't get me wrong, because the Western world tells us to not be authentic, especially in leadership. The corporate (and non-profit) world tells us to put aside our heart and soul and "just do the job". Don't feel. Don't get emotionally involved, and don't let anyone see your weaknesses. Yuck, right?

That culture is collapsing and dying and thank God for that. The new era which we are in requires leaders to lead with their hearts. We must also help others bring their hearts and souls to the game and understand they are safe to do so. It's time to balance the head and heart, and that requires courage, vulnerability, and uncertainty.

That is authentic leadership.

An authentic leader is willing to share what they are thinking and feeling.

An authentic leader knows that everything about their experience is not only important, but it's also necessary.

What I have found is that people love being around an authentic leader. They feel more alive, seen, and appreciated. They are more willing to tell their truth, share their opinion, and disagree. As a young, inauthentic leader, I didn't want to hear opposition because I was too insecure. As an authentic leader I discovered that everything gets better when all ideas, feelings, doubts, fears, even anger is welcomed.

Authentic leadership requires us to be forever on our growing, and vulnerable edge. It's uncomfortable – a lot.

My hope for you is that you become comfortable being uncomfortable because that's when you will discover so much gold (great ideas) inside of you.

Authenticity is a never-ending expansion and there's always more to be revealed and experienced. Well, maybe there is an end point, but honestly I kind of hope not.

So if you are called to be an authentic leader, if you're holding this book written by Kristin Panek in your hand, what I want you to know, and what I believe is absolutely true is that you are guided. You are guided by whatever you call it – higher-self, higher power, the divine, God, spirit, life, love. There is an intelligence within you that has brought you to this moment, to this role, to this opportunity that was created just for you.

Believe this because it will get you through the dark times. When your mind screams, "Ahh!" remember that you are guided, and it is in your authenticity where all your answers lie.

I've known Kristin Panek for more than ten years, and she is the poster gal for authentic leadership. I don't think she could possibly do it any other way. She is patient, thoughtful, caring, and, yes, authentic. You want to become an authentic leader? Then

you'll want to study with the best. That is Kristin, for sure.

Blessings to you,
Mark Anthony Lord
Spiritual leader, teacher, and author

WHO AM I TO BE A LEADER IN MY COMMUNITY?



Annie walked through the door of Flowering Heart Center (FHC) with the weight of the world on her shoulders. She barely made eye contact as she dropped her belongings on the bench and took off her shoes. After a few moments, she exhaled deeply, looked around the space and her face lit up. She looked almost suspicious – “Why am I feeling better? What do you do in here?”

I laughed and told her to come in and find out for herself. I have seen this many times – people walking in the door and stopping dead in their tracks. Something feels different. They feel the welcoming, peaceful energy and the busyness of their day is already receding.

I watched Annie try to reconnect with her worldly worries for a moment before sighing and

letting it go again. She took her seat and allowed herself to join in with the circle of people from all ages and backgrounds gathered in the space. After the meditation and blessings, she seemed peaceful, and her face was glowing. I took her aside to find out more about her.

Annie turned fifty earlier that year, and she realized that it was time to attend to her next phase of her life as an empty nester. She didn't know where to begin. Her youngest child, Maggie, was in college now and her son Charlie was in his fifth year hoping to graduate with a business degree in the spring. He was excited about his job prospects and becoming more independent. Maggie was studying art, music, and dance. She was following her heart, determined to build a life that inspires her. She was worried about making a living in these ways and was looking for jobs that would give her flexibility to pursue what she loves. Annie wasn't sure where her daughter got the courage to follow her dreams. Watching Maggie's journey awakened the distant memory of a desire deep inside of Annie. She tentatively asked herself, "What do I love to do?"

Working and raising kids was so consuming she never allowed herself to dream. She was afraid that her life would fall apart if she investigated it too closely and as a result, found it lacking. Years of suppressing desires left her feeling as if she was walking in a desert with no oasis in sight. Her rela-

tionship with her husband had lost its passion. All of his energy goes into his work and then he golfs on the weekends as his form of therapy. Since Annie doesn't care for golfing she feels left out of his world. They are friends. Annie would like something more, but she can't find the passion in herself.

I was happy she found her way to us and suggested that she keep showing up every week and see if she could discover what would give her life more meaning. As Annie attended events consistently, became more light-hearted and reconnected with some of her old interests in gardening and volunteer work. Over the next year or two, Annie developed a strong relationship with her inner Divine and felt fulfilled in her life.

When her children were younger she attended church in order to expose them to some religious teachings and to fulfill the moral obligation she felt from her parochial school training. While Annie found solace in that space, she never fully connected with the priests there. She didn't have time to join community gatherings and that left her feeling like an outsider. Since finding FHC and adopting a regular meditation practice, she began to feel the magic of relating to the Divine within her. Everyday occurrences became extraordinary as her eyes opened to the beauty and the synchronicities happening around her. As she felt more fulfilled she

wondered how she could contribute to her community. She wanted others to feel this way.

The internal inquiry began in earnest. “What’s my purpose? I’ve been a mother and an office manager and have been successful at both. But what do I have to offer the world now? Who am I? Where do I fit in?”

Meanwhile, the pandemic started to take hold in the world at large and she witnessed people struggling with fears about their health and their futures. These concerns often erupted into arguments within her larger sphere of friends. She could feel their pain and wanted to help. “What can I do?”

She came to me in earnest with her questions. I listened and reflected back to her the unique gifts she brought to this community – the ones that come so naturally and easy to her that they were invisible. She de-valued them because she didn’t have to work for them. She is able to listen to others, nurture them and inspire them to move forward in their life. I pointed out to her that these are exactly the characteristics that allow her to effectively reach out and support others.

Annie felt encouraged and hopeful. I told her that I was looking for spiritual leaders to help grow and nurture this community. She was skeptical. “Who am I to be that spiritual leader?” “Who are you not to be that?” I reminded her of the quote from Marianne Williamson “Our deepest fear is that we are

powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, ‘Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?’ Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking.” Your standing in the truth of who you are gives permission for others to do the same.

While she understood she was still gripped by fear. The only thing that she could imagine was worse than facing that fear was doing nothing. She had already repressed her dreams while focusing her efforts to serve her family for thirty years. Since they no longer needed her in the same way, she realized that playing small meant contracting herself or shrinking from life. The pain of not doing anything now eclipsed the pain of doing something.

Often that pain is the motivating force for many community members. When it comes to showing up in a bigger way in the world, most of us deny our light. I see this especially true in the spiritual worlds where we look for teachers or gurus to show us the way.

I have spent years in India sitting at the feet of an enlightened master, soaking in that incredibly expansive energy and growing in consciousness. I didn’t see that I was projecting my light onto him so I couldn’t see where I had that too. Fortunately, this master gave us a warning – there is a time bomb

built into this path, and someday the path will drop you. I didn't understand this teaching at the time. I thought that the quickest way to enlightenment was to get it from the Master, and I wouldn't leave until I had reached that point. He was right. One day on the full moon in May, I was complete with that journey. In gratitude for all that I had received from more than ten years of that work, I struck out on my own, relying completely on my inner guidance. I expected to feel a bit lost without the umbrella of the Master to show me the way. Instead, something inside shifted and my heart opened wider. My growth started to take off again. I couldn't look outside myself anymore. No earthly being can give me enlightenment. I went deeper inside, cultivating a more intimate relationship with my inner Divine.

My FHC community is taking that journey with me. Our goal is for people to fully own all of themselves – their shadow and their light, to experience the Divinity inside of them and to become sovereign beings. Annie was denying her brightness. One way out of that is to take action. She agreed to work with me and to share what she had learned with others. Annie started with a small circle of her own and within just a few short weeks, she saw significant growth in her group. She even began to celebrate her own tremendous leaps in growth. Her work is about helping others to more fully accept and love themselves, to deeply connect with their Divine, and to be

safe harbors for others in their world. Her group is so excited to have this sacred space and to be able to help their friends and family, especially those who are paralyzed with fear in the face of this pandemic.

If Annie can do it, so can you.

If you feel a desire to help others, you might initially question it. Who are you to support others to shift consciousness to become happier in their lives? Tune in to see where this desire is coming from. Spirit is nudging you to contribute in a bigger way. Trust that you are ready, or you wouldn't be receiving this message. There are many ways to lead. You might form your group, train to be a spiritual leader in a center, share your experiences on social media or see a need in your community and begin to fill it. Every action you take to help others, brings more joy into the collective consciousness. Everyone is positively impacted.

As a species we are transitioning into a new age – the Golden Age or the Age of Aquarius. We are moving from an era of competition and divisiveness into one of cooperation and living in harmony with all beings and the environment. We are also moving toward collective decision-making and shared leadership. The time of the lone prophet or guru has passed. The type of leadership I'm describing here is fully participatory – it requires being both the student and the teacher. Any failings you believe have to be addressed before you can lead, can be

worked on alongside your group. You will never feel ready. Your particular journey, including dealing with your current issues, is an inspiration for others. You'll draw the people that need your particular set of life experiences. It's time to step into the leadership role now. The world needs your particular mojo.

For our human race, it's time to evolve, releasing the old ways of injustice toward each other and the earth. As I mentioned in my last book, *My Family Needs My Leadership Now*, the first step in transforming is to take a time out and see our reality as it is. Our society has been unexpectedly placed in a time-out due to the 2020 pandemic. The issues around the virus have highlighted the systems that are no longer working for us. The recent deaths of George Floyd and others have highlighted the extent of racial injustice in our country. People have taken to the streets in cities across America saying they want to do things differently. Even months after the initial triggering events, these peaceful protests are still happening, reminding us of our deep desire for equal opportunities for all of us. We are at a new level of consciousness where our society is capable of creating and sustaining social structures and policies that would promote harmony and equality. The energies of this golden age will reinforce that.

I am hopeful for our future, but we will have to work for it. There are many who are suffering during these times who don't have the tools to do it differ-

ently, and they need our support. This is the time to listen to that calling in your heart to serve. Step into a leadership role to actively work toward an inspiring vision for our families, communities, nations, and the world. You showing up as authentically who you are and sharing your gifts will motivate others to do the same.

“We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone. And as we let our light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

— MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

Close your eyes for a moment.

Take three deep slow breaths.

Contemplate your current relationship to leadership.

Breathe slowly for a few breaths.

Who in the world do you most admire for their leadership?

What compassionate or Spiritual leader do you find extraordinary?

Bring that person before you and look into their eyes.

What quality do you most admire in them?

Receive their transmission of that quality.

Feel that in your body.

Release the other leader.

Drop inside and ask your Divine to help you see all the places where you have exhibited that quality.

Fully embody that quality now. Intensify it.

Breathe.

Say to yourself. I am that (quality).

Offer gratitude for this gift.

Anchor it in.

Open your eyes.

It's time to take action.

I AM A SPIRITUAL LEADER. HOW
DID THAT HAPPEN?



Deciding to gather and lead a small group through spiritual teachings didn't come easily to me. When I look back on my years of working in a large corporation, I remember one moment in particular when the executive director of HR pulled me aside and said, "Your career has been about making your boss look good and then riding on their coattails. At some point you need to come out from behind them and be the one visibly in charge." At the time I was upset and confused. How did he know that? What did he mean, "I need to be the one in charge?" I am in charge as a director managing a large group of people. I appreciated his honesty and I felt the sincere desire to help, so the message sunk in. I was afraid. To me, a leader was a target for workers who

were either discontent or wanted to excel and take their boss's job. I was perfectly happy keeping my head down and working hard. My plan was to find a leader whom I admired and support them fully. I did not fully own that quality of leadership and power in me, despite being promoted to high levels of management. The HR director's truth, lodged deep in my consciousness, eventually bore fruit.

I didn't set out to become a spiritual leader or to create a community. I looked for someone with experience, to facilitate a group with me, so I could happily continue this pattern from my working days. The one person in our area who could lead this work moved out of town unexpectedly. Spirit put me in the perfect place for my next phase of learning. I had to be the leader and follow my deep desire to help others. I came home from a Oneness course in Fiji still glowing from my experience and inspired to share. I formed a small group of people to offer blessings and basic spiritual teachings, partly because I wanted to be in that energy myself. I did it in the best way that I knew, using my strong intellect and finding courage in my heart. Fortunately there was so much grace flowing that I almost couldn't get it wrong, especially in the beginning. With commitment and consistent effort, my mind began to loosen its grip and my small circle grew into a large community. There were many trips back to India over the

years, sometimes six weeks at a time, to deepen my experience of the teachings. In 2014, we incorporated Flowering Heart Center as a not-for-profit.

As you gain experience, and self-responsibility, your visibility into your conditioning and sabotaging patterns increases. You begin to more clearly see where your issues disturb the space you are holding. Even if the format is the same, each event is different. Consciousness is growing and anything out of alignment surfaces to be released. Because you are a leader it escalates more quickly and loudly until you face it. As you meet those challenges, share your insights and process with the group. They will love hearing about them, and you will gain even more insight through the step of sharing with them. Sometimes this is the only way to receive the full meaning of your experience. It's humbling and often surprising, unsettling and highly rewarding. It's actually a relief to be your authentic self.

This experience is like walking into a labyrinth with the goal of getting to the center where you might receive an answer to a troubling question. I remember being surprised my first time. Instead of heading toward the center, it moved me sharply to the left and zigzagged around. Just when I thought I was getting closer to the center, the path sent me all the way over to the other side, where I meandered again. Just when I had given up on getting to the

destination and finally started enjoying the journey, it deposited me unexpectedly into the center. The contemplation had been working on me through every step along the way. In the center I receive insights or may feel as if a burden has lifted, I leave a gift, release the contemplation and then start the journey back, offering gratitude with each step.

This is the nature of this path too. Don't expect your progress to follow a particular pattern. It's full of unexpected twists and turns and as long as you stay connected with your Divine, the way forward is clear. You may only know the next step or two. You can't see the whole path laid out before you, but you can see enough to continue walking forward. Take those steps and trust.

As a leader, supporting others in their journeys, I feel as if I learned as much or more from other people than from the teachings. Together we found our truth, grew in awareness and started to more fully embody ourselves and our Divinity. Others on this path were quick to point out when I was off-track, and I appreciated it. The real value of what I had to offer was the way I brought the teachings to life through sharing my experiences. I had to become a clear observer of my behavior so I could continue to bring that to the group.

For a long while I wrote out what I wanted to say so I wouldn't go blank during the session. Eventually I was able to let that go and allow the worlds to flow

within the structure already created. Then I learned to let Spirit flow and let go of the structure. Our weekly groups grew to as many as fifty people. My learning curve was steep. I took a few weeks out each year to go work on my growth in India or with other teachers so that I could continue to hold space for these large groups. I needed support.

When I started offering weekly Facebook live videos, the old fears returned as I learned to speak in a new way. I was afraid of staring into a cold lifeless camera lens and going blank. In the beginning, I scripted those calls choosing relevant topics based on issues that were arising within myself or the community. I needed to prepare ahead of time so I could get used to talking without seeing the reaction of the audiences. Spirit supported me in this endeavor by dropping the topic and content to me a few days early. I noticed after several months of weekly broadcasts, Spirit was giving me less and less time to prepare. I started to receive a download in the shower that morning. I'll never forget the first time I sat down in front of the camera with no idea what I was going to say. I was having a passionate conversation with my inner guides. "Are you kidding me? I'm going to look like a fool." There was nothing I could do but go forward with it. I figured I could delete it afterward. The topic was about the cost of holding too tightly to your position. When I was complete, my husband said it

was clear and coherent. I was shocked because I thought I was meandering all over the place. Then I realized my mind was doing exactly that while trying to grab control. Apparently I had successfully ignored it.

At FHC, I offer a series of courses on various topics, including Relationship Healing, Ancestral Clearing and Bonding with the Divine. Each course has a specific structure and a set of foundational principles. The content is always evolving based on more recent experiences. I am continually teaching from my current level of awareness, and there are always new insights. Either I know the examples I want to include, or my Divine gives me a set of experiences in the week before the class. I stopped teaching the weekly version of the Relationship course because every week the relationship we were addressing would blow up in my life. I had to be ready for a new level of growth in myself to offer it. Fortunately, I was aware of this dynamic and didn't blame my spouse or my mother for the upsets. Instead, I turned inside to heal the source of pain in me. In this way, the teachings were alive, and the students received a transmission, not simply knowledge. This is what we are striving for. In school, we are trained to repeat information we have received in books or lectures. Here we need to create the space for people to become more aware in their lives. By sharing experiences in sacred space, they are able to

see for themselves how these teachings apply to them.

The journey to becoming a leader is humbling because you are sharing your humanness, which includes your pitfalls as well as your successes. This level of authenticity requires trust in Spirit and plenty of courage. The reason why so many teachers are needed is this: my experiences will resonate with specific groups of people. Yours will resonate with other types of people. We need a variety of voices out there to reach a vast array of personalities, and types of people. This book will support you in finding the leader inside of you and allowing him or her to more fully emerge.

Along the way, I have helped many women and men who were already leaders in their fields, design and deliver workshops based on their content. I could see they had a powerful message and simply needed support with creating the space for learning to occur. I have supported them in being that impactful leader who inspires others to follow them. These are skills I have learned through much trial and error over a long period of time. I am still learning.

This is the book I wish I had had when I started forming my groups, which later evolved into large weekly gatherings. It would have been helpful to know the kinds of obstacles I might encounter and how to deal with them. Much of the time I was oper-

ating on faith, praying that I was doing the right thing. This book will support you in stepping into that leadership role or in taking your skills to the next level. If you feel that spark of desire to help others, then step into the labyrinth with me.

NOTHING IN NATURE IS LINEAR,
AND NEITHER IS THIS JOURNEY



This book is a spiral. Nothing in nature is linear, and neither is this path. You may find yourself going from Chapter 7 to Chapters 5 and 6 again and then jumping to Chapter 10. You will need to circle back through all these chapters at various times while working with this book. Ask your internal guides for their support. This journey may also send you back to my previous book, *My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now*. There are no rules here. Your years of training as a student may not help you on this journey, other than to stoke the flames of curiosity and give you strength to keep going.

Invoke the beginner's mind over and over again. Let go of expectations and what you think you know and allow yourself to be led through this journey of self-discovery. Ultimately, when we think we are

helping others, we are helping ourselves. Holding a place of gratitude in your heart for those that allow us to help them will keep you in this space of beginners mind.

If we must have a beginning, middle, and ending, then we'll start with preparations, move into action, evaluate what is happening and bolster your support network. If you are already leading a group, you'll find these first steps are also a feedback loop for you to gain more clarity on how your groups or clients are functioning and how to enhance your results.

The preparation begins with the outer environment, creating both a home and workspace with the appropriate energies to support you – inspiring, calming, creative. You decide. Finding physical objects to represent these energies and then maintaining these sacred spaces can support you in unexpected and delightful ways. Once your external space is organized, you can focus your attention inward, discovering your life purpose and how your intentions align with the organization in which you are working. Then you'll evaluate your level of commitment to your intentions to serve in this way.

We'll cover some basic principles for working with others. Even if you have worked with groups for many years, you'll find it worthwhile to stop and evaluate the interpersonal dynamics using these concepts. Finally we'll create the experience you want to have around interacting with others and

fine-tune the quantum field that exists between you and your group. You can both influence that field and receive energy from it. Depending on the group, they can actively participate in its unfolding.

Next, you'll tune inside to see how fully you are embodying a set of values as a spiritual leader. It's a lifelong process to deepen in these qualities, but taking an honest look at where you stand right now will allow movement in those areas. You'll be leading yourself through the introspective processes regarding these values before you take the step to lead others.

In the following section, you'll move into action and gather your group. First you'll structure your offering, and then you'll create a safe and inviting space that allows your group members to tap into their own truths. You'll lead by example, embodying the values of the group.

You'll find that your learning is greatly accelerated by working with others, which can be both exciting and intimidating. You'll learn to receive feedback in a more light-hearted way, to accelerate your growth as a leader and deepen your groups' experience. You'll uncover areas within yourself to investigate further. Quite often we are receiving feedback from our groups and suppressing what we don't want to hear. Mostly this is because we are busy, afraid, or don't know an efficient way to deal with it. Once your mind realizes the importance of

addressing issues as soon as possible, it will start to relax, and you'll save yourself a lot of drama. Chapter 8 will be a huge support for you.

With all this feedback you'll need to make sure you have a reliable support network for yourself and that you have some nurturing routines. Chapter 9 will help you create the type of support that will help you feel like you have an army of people working with you. You'll recognize the importance of taking classes yourself in areas of interest to you. Seemingly unrelated studies may turn out to inform your leadership skills in creative ways.

The larger your group grows, the more you'll need to do your inner work. If you are aware that you are holding larger events or expect a large increase in your group size, then Chapter 10 will cover a powerful process for smashing through obstacles. Just as a tree puts roots deeper into the earth when it extends its canopy, you too need to follow this natural law, by deepening your inner work. This chapter also highlights potential issues to look for in your community and how to handle them quickly.

As you gain more experience and trust in this whole process, your personal relationship with your Divine will deepen and grow. You'll start to appreciate how much grace is flowing and feel buoyant in it. At other times you might feel like you are groping in the dark, not knowing where to turn. Either way

you'll learn to develop more trust in your inner guidance and through that process, support others to do the same. It's truly a magical journey and one that requires courage and fortitude. Believe me: you already have those qualities. You would not be drawn to this book if that weren't the case.

In summary, you'll learn how to:

- Create an environment that inspires you
- Learn basic principles of working with people from all backgrounds
- Develop and more fully embody key leadership qualities
- Get into action supporting people and handling your fears
- Use feedback loops to grow in your leadership capacity
- Identify five key issues that can polarize a community and learn how to avoid that

This book is a reference book. The chapters are in a recommended order for your first time through. You also can tune into your guidance and choose an order that works for you. We are always cycling

through preparing to act, acting, and reviewing actions. Depending on where you are in that cycle, you are welcome to jump in.

Embodying authentic leadership is a co-creation with Spirit. You are dependent on Spirit for guidance and Spirit depends on you to be its arms, legs, and voice in the world. If others had not been courageous enough to express their voice in the world, we would not have access to so many spiritual teachings and healing modalities. It's not your job to evaluate what is flowing through you. It's your job to clear all the obstacles in the way of that flow. It's your job to empower others to do the same.

“Keep remembering that wherever you are on the journey, you are also a beginner. Get curiouser and curiouser.”

— LEWIS CARROLL, *ALICE IN
WONDERLAND*

SETTING UP YOUR EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT FOR SUCCESS



You are embarking on a journey into unknown territory. As with any journey, some preparation is required. You'll begin with looking at the environments in which you live and work. These have a big impact on your state of well-being. Then you'll explore your life purpose so that you can be clear where your work is in alignment with an organization or the people you are serving. Finally you'll look at your level of commitment and how to deepen it.

TUNING INTO THE FREQUENCY OF OBJECTS AND YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Even if you are not working at home you generally spend a great deal of time there (even if only sleeping). Let's get to work. Take a moment from where

you are sitting now, reading this book, and look around the room. Notice which objects stick your attention to them. Now look more closely at those. Do you feel uplifted or do you feel a drop in energy? The object that drops your energy might be a gift from an old friend with whom you fell out of favor. Remove it. If it's something you want to keep for some other reason, then work on the charges you have from that relationship before you put it back in plain sight. (See "Process for Releasing the Energy behind the Charge" in Appendix C).

Your reaction to objects in the room happens quickly so don't dwell on it too long. Just take note of where you feel uplifted in the room and where you feel a drop in energy. Corners of the room tend to have stagnant energy so you might want to send positive energy to those spaces in the room or physically sweep them with a duster.

If you are having trouble noticing any reaction to the objects in the room, practice with objects you know you are attracted to or repulsed by. Train yourself to quickly pick up on your body's responses. Then take a walk around your home with a notepad and feel where you are magnetically drawn and where you want to move away. Make a note of the areas that need addressing. You can also hire a feng shui specialist to help you with the flow of energy in your home.

When you get to the rooms where you spend the

most time, be ruthless in your assessment of what inspires and what drops your energy. If you are not sure, pick up the objects or clothing that you believe have a lower energy for you and put them in a box out of sight for a week or two. Then notice if you feel differently in those rooms of the house.

SACREDNESS

Once you have cleared the spaces in your home and office that detract from your energy, it's time to call in the energies you would like to support you in your life. Since you're on a journey to be that spiritual leader for yourself, your loved ones and your community, set the intention for your space and the objects in it to specifically support you in that intention. Pick at least one space in the house in which to create an altar. If you don't have room for a dedicated table, simply mark off a space on a shelf in your office, a dresser in your bedroom or a sideboard in your living room. Now decorate it with sacred objects to raise the energy – e.g. pictures of the Divine, Ascended Masters, or Angels. Decorate with crystals, statues, or other sacred objects. When you feel complete, it's time to power it up. Place a candle on the altar along with incense and fresh flowers to create a sensory experience that brings you to a space of reverence as you connect with the Divine. This is a great space to have conversations with your

Divine, meditate and write your to-do lists. I also keep papers on my altar with lists of people that I am praying for and lists of my intentions. Think of this as a working altar. It will help you develop a much deeper relationship with the Divine, and it has the added value of becoming a power spot in your home. It will shift the energy in the entire house. To keep this power spot functioning and increasing in its capacity requires daily maintenance – refresh the candles and flowers, stop and talk to your Divine. If you go on vacation you can always let your altar know that you are leaving and energetically let it close down.

If you have a workspace in your house, place sacred works of art on the walls, and objects with high energy on your bookshelves and desk. You may want to add essential oils and a candle. The intention for the energy in your workspace may be different than the rest of your home. Here you may be calling in productivity, creativity, focus, et cetera. Be clear with what attributes you want to call in for yourself here. Add pictures of your Divine or inspiring messages in several places to remind you that you are co-creating with your higher self in all of your endeavors. As you plan your group events or contact clients in this space, the energy is transmitted to them and they may feel more at ease or inspired.

If you have an office outside of the home, you may be more limited in what you can create. Start

with clearing the energy in your space and the whole room with prayers, blessings, and, if possible, chanting, music or chimes. Again remove objects that lower your energy if possible. If that can't be done, ask your Divine to help you in shifting the energy there. If your space is fairly public there are still ways to cultivate high-frequency energy. You can display a picture of sacred geometry in the space. Place crystals or sacred photos in your cabinets. One of our community members was fearful about going back to work and wanted a discrete altar for her desk. As a group project, we fashioned altars out of small metal filing cabinets. On the outside, it's nondescript, but when you lift the lid, it's full of life and uplifting energy. This supported her tremendously in her transition to work, especially on stressful days. You can also use sound vibrations to create inspiring or productive energy in your office space. Play mantras at a low volume, so no one can consciously hear them. This will still affect the energy of the space. Keep those mantras going all of the time.

Another community member works in recruiting for a big company in Chicago. She keeps a mantra running in her office at a level that is somewhat audible. When potential clients come in for an interview, she notices their relationship to that energy – are they disturbed by it or do they resonate with it? It's one of many variables she uses to screen candi-

dates. She believes it has significantly increased her success rate.

Now that your external environment is inspiring and supports your journey, let's turn inward. The next step is to clarify your life purposes.

MY PURPOSE: WHAT AM I HERE TO LEARN?

Whether you are searching for a place to help others in your community or you already have a job somewhere, take the time now to discover and define your life purpose. Whether you are working for yourself or in a large corporation, this step is important for bringing you a sense of fulfillment. In order to align yourself with another organization and their mission, you need to know what you stand for – what you are here to teach. If you find that your mission is not aligned with your company, it may be a signal to look for another job.

I used to dread corporate meetings regarding their mission, vision and values. We nicknamed these meetings visions on valium and suffered through it year after year. I dismissed it as a waste of time, "I'm here to work and get a paycheck. Why do I need to know all of this?" It wasn't until much later in life that I understood the value of these meetings. It took me many years to internalize this process and consider the question – what is my purpose beyond being successful at my job and raising my kids in the

best way possible? By then, my kids were grown and gone.

Despite my lack of interest in pondering any internal questions of that sort, I managed to leave my corporate job for one that was much more aligned with my purpose. The universe made it easy – Ameritech merged with Southwestern Bell and I received a lucrative buyout. I didn't intend to work again. I certainly never expected to join or create spiritual communities, but I was drawn slowly in. This process started with the Shematrix Mystery School, followed by trips to India and then creating FHC. Every phase of that journey, including the difficult ones, has been fulfilling. I soon realized that I no longer needed to strive for that next level executive position to stay motivated.

The experience of moving into such a radically different vocation initially left me somewhat confused and conflicted inside, especially since my self worth was tied to financial and career success. My family had instilled that in me from a young age. Had I searched inwardly for my soul's calling, and contemplated my life's purpose, I might have come to peace with it sooner.

This is one of the gifts arising out of the pandemic we are currently experiencing. The new people attending our online events are grappling with this question of their life purposes. After sheltering in place for months with only their minds for

company or with their families constantly around, they are re-evaluating their lives. Does this job fulfill me? How can we juggle expenses so I can continue to work from home and have more free time? How do I decide?

The set of questions below will help you get in touch with your purposes so take your time to carefully consider them. As you complete this exercise you'll start to appreciate your uniqueness and how it can be of service in the world.

Indigenous cultures have long known the value of identifying and utilizing the gifts that each member of the tribe carries. They use ritual and ceremony to tune into each new member, proclaiming and celebrating their uniqueness. They may even choose a name consistent with these gifts. This process gives the community members a sense of their place in the world – self-confidence. In our western culture such ceremonies are rare. Instead we tend to focus on what the individual can accomplish or how they can perform versus what gifts they inherently carry. Rather than honoring and developing natural talents, the individual is encouraged to compete in the job market and to look outside themselves for approval and reinforcement. At this point in time, the planet needs everyone's gifts and for sovereign individuals to contribute from a place of groundedness and centeredness. The old structures are collapsing, and new ones are forming. We are creating this together.

This is your foundational piece. Knowing your purpose is a key ingredient for knowing where and how to serve our newly emerging society and for experiencing a more joyful life.

CONTEMPLATION ON WHAT I AM HERE TO LEARN

Close your eyes and tune inside for a moment.

Take three deep slow conscious breaths.

Bring your attention into your heart area.

Gently breathe into the heart and let it open.

Into that space powerfully invoke the Divine.

Allow yourself to soak in this presence.

Ask your Divine for support in seeing what you are here to learn.

Breathe

Going back to childhood, allow yourself to be shown the series of challenges in your life and the insights you have received from those.

What challenges repeat for you?

What have you learned?

Receive these images, thoughts or feelings without trying to control or direct them.

Breathe

What are the underlying themes?

Breathe

What else have you learned?

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Open your journal and write down anything that has come to you in this meditation. If the mind blanks, just start writing and fill two to three pages.

Look over your notes, clarify what you have learned and complete the sentence below.

I am here to (learn) _____ so that_____.

There is a purpose to learning and that is what the second part of this statement addresses. For example, “I am here to listen with an open heart, loving whatever life brings, so that I can act compassionately.” What you are learning is then contributed back in some way to complete the cycle. Don’t worry about getting it perfect. Write what is in your consciousness right now and then observe your life over the next few weeks and see if this still fits for you.

MY GIFTS

Each of us comes into this world with many talents. Sometimes we don’t see some of them because they come so naturally to us. If your gift is making people feel welcome and safe, you might think that everyone can do that. For you, it may be easy. In fact, it’s a useful skill that not everyone carries. In a culture where we reward heroic efforts and hard

work, it's easy to overlook or devalue what flows through you into the world. It's precisely because you don't have to struggle that you should honor it. These gifts were given to you to help others. Once you have an awareness of it you can more fully own and develop it.

I have been part of Shematrix Mystery School for twenty years now, an environment in which we receive training in holding sacred space. One of my friends recently asked me if I had always had this extraordinary ability to hold space for people no matter what they were experiencing. My first response was that I've been trained in this for twenty years. Then I stopped and took the question to heart. A memory arose from the beginning of my journey with the mystery school.

My first time assisting at one of the Shematrix events, a woman took me aside and said she kept seeking my eyes in the crowd because she felt I was right there with her through her whole journey. She felt a lack of judgment, calmness and a freedom to be who she was, and she was so grateful for my presence.

I was so surprised because I was new to this and there were many women who were more skilled than me. I didn't realize until my friend recently asked that question that I naturally had that ability. Because I wasn't aware of it or trained to expand that capacity, it wasn't fully used. The mystery school

supported me in honoring and nurturing that gift. Now I know that my presence makes a difference especially when someone is going through an emotional time.

I learned about one of my other gifts in a similar but surprising way. Although I love to sing, I've never been able to carry a tune. In high school, the choir director once told me to leave her choir and switch to speech class. I was crushed, but I knew that's where I belonged. Then one day in my forties I was at a conference that involved chanting mantras. During the break, a lady sought me out and said she loved sitting in front of me because of my extraordinary voice. I literally turned around to see who was standing behind me. She couldn't possibly be talking about me. It was me, but I still couldn't believe it. I told myself, "She must have me confused with someone else." That comment stuck with me until years later when I saw the truth. In my yoga classes, I realized that I had a great voice for chanting mantras. I have a way of chanting that interlaces or harmonizes the sound from everyone into a more powerful cohesive sound. Now I consciously use that gift to help the chanters access a sound current that can have a powerful effect on their subconscious minds. Chanting was a gift that was inborn, since I had had little experience with it until late in life.

You may not see your gifts, or you may be in

active denial that you have a certain talent. When we don't fully own our gifts, the world misses our full expression of them. Let's look more closely at what naturally flows through you.

CONTEMPLATION ON MY NATURAL GIFTS

Close your eyes and tune inside for a moment.
Take three deep slow conscious breaths.
Bring your attention into your heart area.
Gently breathe into the heart and let it open.
Into that space powerfully invoke the Divine.
Allow yourself to soak in this presence.
Ask for support in seeing your gifts.
Relax and breathe.
Accept any impressions you get without judgment.
Look at the complements you've received over the years.
Where have people pointed out a skill and you replied – it's nothing?
What inside of you has pulled you through challenges in your life?
What brings you joy?
Relax and breathe.
Ask your Divine if there is anything else for you to see.
When you are ready, open your eyes.

Write down the insights you received in the meditation or whatever is coming through you right now. Take ten to fifteen minutes and let it flow as you write. When you are complete, look through your list and circle the gifts. These are meant to be used in service to others. How will your gifts support others?

Complete the following purpose statement about what you are here to offer and what that does for others.

My purpose is to (gifts) _____ so that _____

Don't worry about getting it right. Put down the first thing that comes to mind. It can be embellished later. Here is an example from my work: "My purpose is to hold sacred space, welcoming everyone's truth and inspiring us all to co-create a new life vision that is in harmony with all beings and Mother Earth."

MY PURPOSE: WHAT I'M HERE TO TEACH

Now that you are clearer around what you are learning and what gifts you bring, what are you here to give or to teach?

For me the learning and the teaching are very much in synch, and they have to do with communication. It started as a child with two older siblings who never let me get a word in, and they later

became lawyers. Since I could never hold my own in conversation, why would I try to defend my viewpoint? It wasn't worth the effort. Every time I tried I got beaten down in a hurry, so I learned to keep things to myself. I find it interesting that I ended up working for a communications company – Illinois Bell Telephone for twenty years. It was not until I was part of the Shematrix Mystery School that I found my voice and was able to help others do so.

What we are here to learn and to teach are often related and that can be challenging. You may ask yourself, “Who am I to help someone else find their voice if I’m still working on mine?” Well, I discovered that the process I went through to claim my voice is precisely what can help someone else. If it had come naturally to me, then I would probably be less effective helping those who are quiet and inwardly focused yet still want to express themselves. I know what it’s like to be silenced to the point of not communicating. I can meet others with this experience where they are and step them through the process of reclaiming their voices.

Let’s tune into what it is that you are here to give.

CONTEMPLATION ON WHAT I'M HERE TO TEACH

Close your eyes and tune inside for a moment.

Take three deep, slow conscious breaths.

Bring your attention into your heart area.

Gently breathe into the heart and let it open.

Into that space powerfully invoke the Divine.

Allow yourself to soak in this presence.

Ask for support in seeing what you are here to give.

Breathe.

Let go of any preconceived notions.

Let yourself be shown.

In what ways have you naturally reached out to help others?

Where have you stepped in to help even when it was not your "job?"

Breathe.

Look back through your work, family, and community experiences over the years. What do people come to you for when they need help?

What type of advice are you offering them?

Where do you volunteer your services?

As you look back over your work experiences, what things that are consistent across your jobs?

Breathe.

Ask the Divine what else you naturally offer to others.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Write down your insights and anything that is coming through you now. Take your time and let the words flow for several minutes.

Now look back at what you wrote and formulate your purpose:

My purpose is to (what I am here to give) _____ so that (what this does for others) _____

Again don't try to get it perfect. Write what comes to mind and then let that sit for a while. Come back to it later and adjust as needed. Read it to yourself and see if it inspires you. If not, continue to work on it.

The purpose of this program is to support you in embodying a spiritual leader and helping others. Now that you have more clarity on your purposes, you can write a specific intention for yourself around being that leader. What is your purpose in stepping into this role?

My purpose as a spiritual leader in my community is _____ so that _____.

This is your north star when it comes to working with others.

Take a few minutes to look back through all of your purposes. See if they inspire you. If not, keep working on them. Put the current versions on a piece of paper on your desk so you can look at

them each day and remind yourself why you are here.

These purpose statements will not only empower you but they will help you make decisions. Does this course I want to take serve my purpose? How does my job serve my purposes? Does the community I'm currently supporting align with my purposes? Look at their mission, vision, and values and look at your statements. Is there a fit? Is there a way to align to both purposes? If there is too much of a gap you may want to look elsewhere or create your community.

COMMITMENT

Now that you have setup supportive work and home environments and realized your purposes, it's time to make a commitment to yourself and this journey. You are here because you want to serve. The more you grow the more obstacles will arise. On this dense physical plane of existence, we grow by meeting resistance and moving through it. In those times of challenge, knowing your mission (what you are here to give) can be a powerful grounding rod, if you are committed to serving in the world.

In working with hundreds of people, I have often heard groans erupt when I bring up commitment. It's such a charged word in our society. I believe most, if not all, of us have broken commitments we may not want to look at. Perhaps you promised your

elderly mother you would take her on a day trip to see the autumn leaves and work intervened. Or you promised your kids they could go to Disneyland this year and the pandemic made that impossible. They don't understand why you can't take them. You might be afraid of making commitments because you believe you won't keep them. Maybe you see commitment as a cage that limits your freedom. If you could instead see how the lack of commitment is draining your life force energy, you might feel differently.

I started creating my community from a small circle of four to eight people. At first I couldn't commit to meet on a particular day each week. That felt too constricting. I periodically sent out notices for the upcoming meetings. I realized that the group wasn't growing and there was confusion around dates, so I committed to Monday nights, twice a month. I couldn't bear the thought of tying up myself for more time than that. What might I miss out on? I saw some growth in attendance, but it was not what I expected. There was confusion on which Mondays I was holding the meditations, so I finally committed to weekly gatherings. To my surprise, it was easy for me to work around a weekly event. My fears around commitment had no substance. I began to feel more energy and excitement around the meditation evenings, and they grew quickly. My commitment to a weekly event was the game changer.

Broken commitments or the inability to make commitments drains our energy because the mind keeps honing in on those as ammunition for self-criticism. This repetitive thinking consumes energy. If you can fully commit, the mind chatter diminishes, there is no drain of energy and magic happens. The commitment is the container that supports the group you are forming.

I learned a big lesson in commitment when I agreed to walk the El Camino. When my friend Dawn asked me on her sixtieth birthday to walk it with her, “yes” flew out of my mouth. I was so shocked because I wasn’t in shape and was hindered by chronic knee problems. While I had the desire to do it, I thought it would have to wait until next lifetime. I said yes in that moment, and it was a full commitment. In my last book I recounted the miracles that occurred to help me during the training walks. Three weeks before I left for the trip, two tendons in my knees became inflamed, and I had to swim for exercise and quit walking. Ten days before I left for St. Jean Pied de Port, I published my first book.

It was with some trepidation that I started walking over the Pyrenees on an incredibly steep trail. Downhill was much worse than uphill and on that second night in Roncesvalles, I was in so much pain that I couldn’t lie down or fall sleep. What could I do? I finally messaged one of the spiritual

masters who offers events annually at our center and asked him for healing. I put away my cell phone at one o'clock in the morning after texting him, and a wave of peace instantly washed over me. I was blissfully asleep within minutes. In the morning I asked Dawn to go ahead because I wasn't sure that I could walk the fifteen miles to our next destination. I needed time to gather myself. I pulled out my phone and the spiritual master had replied, "Sent healing. You will walk." Yikes. I had to walk now. To delay or get a ride was to refuse the healing. With trembling knees, I renewed my commitment, gingerly headed out the door and walked fifteen miles, one step at a time.

There were many times along the trail where my knees were particularly painful – usually after a steep descent, and always there was someone there to help me. I received a full cupping treatment by the side of the road after one downhill. It cleared the inflammation and gave me the relief I needed to finish the day. The El Camino path through northern Spain goes through long stretches of rural countryside. The mind looks around and says, "It's impossible to get anything I might need out here." Yet, Spirit never failed to provide.

In the middle of one rocky, long descent, a beautiful South African woman stopped to talk with me. She noticed my swollen knee and offered a full Reiki and massage treatment by the side of the trail. It was

such a blessed relief. When she disappeared down the trail a few minutes later, I was wondering if she had been an angel. This healing gift enabled me to make it to my destination for that night.

My commitment was solid to walk that path. I did my part of putting one foot in front of the other. I didn't lose energy by questioning whether I should be doing this walk at all. I prayed for the strength to continue at each church along the way. The rest was up to the Divine to provide the miracles to get me over those mountains and across the long wide-open plains. I made it all the way to Santiago de Compostello and was surprised by the people who weren't there. Some of the younger, more physically fit pilgrims burned out in the middle. One heavysset, cheerful European woman with legs that must have hurt more than mine made it all the way. To me, some key indicators of success were commitment and connection to the Divine.

Don't underestimate the power of your commitment. It coalesces your energy so it can all be directed toward your goals and strengthens your will power to move through obstacles.

I once worked with a client who kept procrastinating working on his music because there weren't enough hours in the day. He perceived time as his enemy and complained about it often. After we worked intently on his commitment to music, he started connecting with other musicians for jam

sessions. Suddenly he found that he had the energy he needed and time was no longer the issue. He tapped into his creativity in a new way. Happiness was flowing through him so abundantly that he just lit up a room when he walked in.

What could you joyfully accomplish if you made this type of commitment to your dreams?

COMMITMENT CONTEMPLATION

Have your journal and your purpose statements nearby.

Close your eyes and tune inside for a moment.

Take three deep, slow conscious breaths.

Bring your attention into your heart area.

Gently breathe into the heart and let it open.

Into that space powerfully invoke the Divine.

Allow yourself to soak in this presence.

Ask for support in seeing how commitment is currently operating in your life.

Breathe.

Ask to be shown any places where you have unfulfilled commitments.

For each one, decide if it's appropriate to still complete it and, if so, then recommit.

If it doesn't feel appropriate, then make a different commitment or make a note to talk with any other person involved and decide if you can drop it.

Breathe and focus inside.

Have you made any commitments to people who have passed away?

Find the resolve in you to complete those commitments.

Breathe and tune inside.

Look at the places you have resisted making commitments.

Recommit to those or decide not to and handle any loose ends.

Now, breathe.

Open your eyes and read aloud each of your purpose statements with the energy of commitment.

From one to ten, what level of commitment do you feel?

Ask your Divine for support to bring it to a ten.

Read them aloud again.

What level of commitment do you feel?

If less than ten, ask your Divine with support in removing the obstacles to commitment.

Take a deep, cleansing breath.

In your journal, write down the following:

Unfulfilled Commitment:

Actions needed (recommit, renegotiate, or let go)

Unfulfilled commitments to those who have passed away.

Recommit and do everything in your power to fulfill.

If you still can't complete that commitment, take this into the ancestor process in Chapter 9.

Commitments you know you need to make but are resisting:

Actions needed (Commit, redefine, or let go)

Other new commitments:

For all commitments on your list:

Assess your level of commitment (one to ten with ten being the highest level).

For commitment levels eight and nine, ask for support from your Divine in moving those to a ten. The energy leaks at these levels are still substantial and can drain your motivation.

For commitment levels below eight, take it through Chapters 7 and 8 from the book *My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now*.

After doing the work on your commitments, notice if you get an energy boost from this. Fear often arises in the face of making commitments. Face that fear, let go of resistance and allow the energy behind it to release. Fear is a constant companion in this journey into the unknown. Learn to move forward with it rather than trying to banish or run from it.

Take some time today to honor your purpose statements and your commitment to them. No two people have the same ones. Celebrate your uniqueness and your willingness to embody them and contribute to the world in this way. Go out for

dinner, take a luxurious bath, schedule time with friends.

We've covered a lot of territory already. You've upgraded the energy in your home through creating altars and eliminating low energy objects. You've recognized some foundational purposes to guide you going forward. Through commitment, you've set up an internal driving force to support you in serving from your strengths and natural talents.

Now that you are sitting more solidly in yourself, let's look at what it takes to work with others.

LEARNING THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH OTHERS



Upon returning home from my first visit to India, I was in a blissful state, overflowing with gratitude and wanted to help others. My intention was to gather a group of people who wanted to feel like I do, and help them feel that. I was also inspired by the mission of Oneness University to awaken sixty-four thousand people by 2012 so we could move into the Golden Age and wanted to do my part.

I quickly learned that people loved the energy, and they didn't need my support to "get anywhere." They had real life problems and didn't see how working with spiritual concepts would be useful. Others were happy to tag along hoping to get some relief from their psychological hurts from failing relationships and other burdens. I thought I had a lot to

offer, but in fact, I had a lot to learn. Over time I began to see one of my underlying motivations for helping people was to gain some significance through helping them grow. I wanted to feel good about myself through their successes. This meant my worth was tied to the number of people coming to our groups, which led me to focus on the wrong thing. Consequently I wasn't satisfied or grateful for the experience in front of me.

Now I laugh looking back at all of those agendas and at my striving for significance in that way. Today, I appreciate the people who trust enough to accompany me on a journey of self-discovery. It's a co-creation. I meet them where they are and walk with them down a road I have traveled many times. As their guide, I help them navigate obstacles and offer tools so they can build trust in themselves and their internal guidance. Any time I believe that I'm responsible for their success, it disempowers them and undermines my purpose. I revert to looking outside myself for approval, instead of holding space, observing their process and celebrating their wins. I can help you avoid some of these pitfalls. I'll take you through seven key principles of working with others, and the six needs of the mind that can cause trouble when not satisfied in a conscious way. Then I'll help you tune into a quantum field that exists between groups and how to lean into that for support.

PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH OTHERS

Having an orientation toward working with people makes all the difference. The old authoritarian paradigm of dispensing knowledge is no longer empowering or serving. Yogis used to work with masters for many years before receiving one secret mantra or one practice. Information was power. In this current age, “secret” information and practices are readily accessible and often hidden in plain sight. With so many tools at our disposal, the key to growth is a consistent practice and experiential learning. Information alone won’t support us in the level of uncertainty we are currently facing and in the new world we are creating. We need to consistently tune into our innate intelligence or our heart intelligence to help us navigate life in a more meaningful, more satisfying way.

When working with others, dispensing spiritual knowledge will not support them. If you yourself don’t have experiential understanding of the concept you are teaching, it can distort another’s understanding and delay their growth. For this reason, always speak from your experiences of any teachings you are offering. In this way, the concept becomes a transmission and the other can feel how it relates to them. This is the essence of experiential learning. Being a good student is the first principle of being a good leader. Since you’ll be sharing your life experi-

ences and insights, you are at the same time becoming an alert student of your life experience.

Perhaps there are spiritual truths you may not have yet fully experienced but still want to share. In these cases, offer the teaching and explore its meanings together with your group. Don't try to explain what the teaching means. Let each person discover it for themselves. Listening to spiritual truths from a sacred text or from enlightened beings may provide a helpful roadmap and can accelerate our spiritual growth. For example, this core enlightenment teaching from Sri Bhagavan, a master teacher in India: "When the self disappears, suffering ends. When cravings drop away, including the craving for enlightenment, you are enlightened." Simply hearing this truth can start a process inside of the recipient. Let them have their own experiences with it.

Working with others is about holding space for them to gain experiences and then helping them see what they have learned and where they feel they need to go. The second key principle in working with others is to meet them where they are at. To do this requires deep listening, humility and an ability to step into their shoes.

Everyone is constantly experiencing reality in their own way, based on their life conditioning. Beliefs they hold about life filter out information that doesn't fit their views. We are bombarded with

content at accelerating speeds, stressing our brains to search for relevant pieces. I heard recently on a podcast that the amount of information we receive in watching sixteen movies is equivalent to the amount of information that humans received during their entire lifetimes just a few hundred years ago. You can't possibly be aware of everything that our consciousness takes in, so your mind processes only the content that aligns with your beliefs, building more evidence for your viewpoint. I go into more detail about this in my previous book (Chapter 7 of *My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now*). Since each person is filtering out different information, their view of the world is different from everyone else. This is why witness testimony at the scene of an accident can vary markedly between witnesses.

You have to get curious about your clients' world-view and can't assume anything. Meeting people where they are requires a deep level of listening, an ability to observe their actions without judgment, and connection to your intuition. From that place you can step into their shoes and feel what it might be like there. You can get a sense in your body of what they are feeling in theirs. Once you feel connected, you can then more easily guide them toward where they would like to go. This means you have to be accepting of all world views. If you resist the one they are clinging to, you can't step into their

shoes and guide them. In those moments, be aware of your resistance and ask your Divine for help. You'll likely feel an immediate relaxation and openness in your body. From there you can listen and respond appropriately. If this happens for you, take some time after your interaction to explore your attachment to your own world view. When you believe others should have the same view, you are stuck in positionality. As a spiritual leader, you can't afford this luxury. Positionality activates the mind, closes the heart and makes it hard to relate to others. It also drains your energy.

Similarly, if you resist certain behaviors such as arrogance or neediness, then you will avoid feeling and won't be able to meet people in those places. This is why the shadow work in Chapter 8 from the previous book is so important. Take each feeling that you are resisting through the Resisted Behaviors Process and then through the Process to Transmute energy in Appendix E of this book. The third key principle is to welcome all that each person brings. This means you have to be able to accept all aspects of yourself. Every human being embodies the whole range of emotions in some mix. Unfortunately most of us have been trained to avoid certain aspects of ourselves – anger, jealousy, and meanness and to cultivate the socially acceptable parts of ourselves – laughter, joy, and kindness. When you disown or

resist anger for example, it doesn't magically disappear. In fact, suppressed anger can lead to depression. Some people keep ignoring it until they explode at some point, hurting their loved ones. Suppressed anger can also leak out in unconscious ways through passive aggressive behavior. Anger is not the issue; rather, our resistance to anger is. Anger has some useful traits – it can pull someone out of apathy and into action. Anger's strong energy can be channeled into something creative if you are aware of it and willing to redirect that energy. If you resist your anger, then you can't help an angry person, and you'll likely escalate the situation instead of neutralizing it.

The last time someone in my group exploded into anger, I leaned into it and protected the space so she could say whatever she needed to say. In that moment, there was a part of me that was alive, alert, and engaged. I could see other group members wanting to intercede to protect or recoil and shrink out of sight until it was over. I energetically created a space around her and didn't allow anyone else to speak. Amy had been sitting on some painful relationship issues for a long time, and she needed a safe place in which to express them. What started out as accusations turned into a series of confessions about herself. As she completed speaking, she felt relief; everyone immediately exhaled. Had I been triggered

by her anger, she would have continued to project it onto others rather than feel into the source within herself. It would have quickly escalated out of control.

To welcome all that the other brings, we need to welcome all that we ourselves bring. When you find yourself stuck in this area, revisit the shadow work in Chapter 8 of *My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now*. In that program you'll look for the places where you are triggered by a client and use that to resolve it in yourself. This is a powerful feedback loop. Remember that welcoming all that your clients bring, doesn't mean condoning inappropriate behavior. If you are not in resistance to their anger, you can address it head on and move it toward resolution. If you are judging their anger, any response you offer is likely to escalate the situation.

Perhaps you are welcoming and accepting, but you end up feeling drained after spending time with your group members. The next key principle is to keep your own space clear, so you don't take on their stuff. Many of the people I encounter who want to support others were the sensitive ones in their families. Perhaps your family members weren't able to deal with their feelings and you absorbed their suppressed feelings. Perhaps you find yourself needing to take breaks to detox from other people's emotions.

This is a place where a mentor or a group of peers

can support you in learning to be with others without taking on their stuff. You can do it in a way that doesn't require shutting down your feelings. If you do that, you've disconnected from your internal guidance and from your client. There are several approaches to effectively work with this, and I'll cover a couple of them here. Before you meet with your group, connect with your Divine and ask for support with being a clear, open vessel. Surround yourself with white light and then visualize a reflective shield around the white light. Place the intention for this shield to return any unwanted energies back to the sender. While in conversation with the others you can consciously breathe and visualize the energies moving through you and into the earth for grounding. Energy follows your thoughts.

Similarly, you can picture yourself as a screen where energy can flow straight through the body on the breaths. You can also breathe the energy into your heart and transmute it with love. Regardless of your preparations and intentions, sometimes you may unconsciously take on their stuff.

One effective solution to this problem is cutting cords. These are energetic cords that attach to various energy centers in your body and are connected to someone wanting something from you. Connect with your Divine; then, take your hands and slice them powerfully through the air next to your body with the intention of cutting any cords between

you and others. Do this across all parts of your body and above your head. Taking hot baths with Epsom salts is another great way to release unwanted energies. Find what works for you. The more you keep your vibration high and stay connected with your inner Divine, the clearer your energy field will be. The more you work with your group to be accepting of all aspects of themselves, the less energy you will consciously or unconsciously take on.

The next key principle is to adopt a neutral stance. You have your view of the world and their story is coming at you through their filters. In your world their actions may not make sense or may need to be redirected, but in their world, it's the best action they could take. You have to be clear about your preferences and when they are being overlaid on the situation. If that happens, take a breath, connect back in with the Divine and reconnect with the person you are helping. Seek to see the world from their viewpoint. Let go of your preferences or your value system and see what creative responses flow from your inner guidance. Trust those responses. They are not what you would suggest for someone like you, and that's the point.

I was once locked in a struggle with a manager who thought the new events I was creating for one of my communities were not serving the organization. Every time she spoke her concerns, I would shut down and then change the conversation. I continued

offering these events, which were well-received and created new energy in the community. One day I asked myself why I couldn't resolve this situation, and then I realized that I never listened to her point of view. I was looking at where the energy was arising in my community and nurturing that. She was looking at the details of the event through the lens of policy and what could go wrong. Once I realized this, I was able to soften my stance and have a real conversation.

Leading others puts you right up against your issues and your value system. The more you become aware of the motivations behind your thoughts words and actions the more effective you will be. In other words, the better student you are, the better teacher you will be. Once you have established the ability to meet them and come from a neutral space, the next principle is to lead by example.

If you want them to share openly, then you need to do that first – especially when working with communities. Therapists may have limitations here, but they can still come from this an open stance. In order for us to lead by example in working with others, we have to step out of any old concepts we have about leadership.

Your ideals of leadership are likely based on your experiences growing up. Your parents are your first models during your time in the womb. Since our culture is one that is authoritarian, your parents and

teachers most likely exhibited those traits. Your natural tendencies will lead you that way in a leadership role. One of the traits of an authoritarian style is to offer directions and information as needed. If the new currency is experience rather than information, the new paradigm for leaders is to provide experiences rather than just delivering information. This requires you to experience in your feeling body what you are directing them to do.

As a leader you must embody what you want the other to become. If you want them to be more authentic and loving, then model that. Parents are aware of this – children follow what the parents model, not what they say. Here we are taking this skill to the next level. You'll need to be a skilled observer of your behavior and motivations while you are working with them. Then you can both step into your client's shoes, meet them where they are, and still embody where you are inviting them to go next. If you can simultaneously view the situation from above (through the eyes of the Divine), you'll keep the higher perspective. This skill takes practice. Set an intention to focus on this skill and then practice with the Multi-viewpoint Exercise in Appendix A. You may be embodying various different emotions, personalities, and ways of speaking. It will likely take you out of your comfort zone. If you have any preconceived notion of how a leader shows up, you may have resistance to this approach and you won't

be able to lead in a way that the other can follow. You are taking charge in the sense that you are holding the possibility or vision for their success. You have traveled the terrain they are entering. You are solidly holding a vision for them, but you are not telling them what to do and sending them off. You are walking alongside them. Your authority comes from your experience. Your love for them and your vision for their highest possibility is your guiding principle. Look at them through the eyes of your Divine self and see their magnificence.

You'll learn through practicing these skills while working with people. If you can have sense of humility and a beginner's mind, you can enjoy it. This book points the way, but you have to jump in with both feet and experience how leadership moves through you.

SIX NEEDS OF THE MIND

Now that we have the key principles of working with others, it's helpful to understand the needs of the mind that often drive everyone's behavior. I learned about these at Oneness University, and it has helped me be more aware of what is motivating my actions. We'll look at them now from the perspective of spiritual leadership. Keeping these basic needs in balance will be helpful for you to remain clear and to see where your clients need support.

The first need of the mind is certainty. When you are meeting with someone you need to be certain about the time and place. Uncertainty in these details creates unnecessary stress. On the other hand some people are experiencing too much certainty today by being stuck inside during a pandemic. They believe today will look like every other day with nowhere to go. This can lead to boredom and shutting down the life force energy. Therefore, variety or uncertainty is also important. Right now many people are experiencing too much uncertainty or worry about the future, which can lead to anxiety and fatigue. We need a balance between certainty and uncertainty.

Significance is another basic need we all carry. There are at least two ways to work with this need of the mind. You can keep turning over the desire to your Divine, anytime it arises. That's ultimately where recognition belongs. If you are stuck on this one and still seeking recognition for the work that you do or for who you are, then simply ask for it. Otherwise, you may go looking for it in unconscious ways, through attention-seeking behavior. Simply ask: "Tell me what you love about me." When this request comes from a sincere place people will happily give it to you. Or you can set up a group exercise where each person tells the others what they love about them. They need significance too. When it's unconsciously sought through manipula-

tion, then people will withhold it from the seeker. Significance is an important need to monitor. If you try to get significance from working with people, you will start looking for approval from them. If you do so, you will have just stepped out of the leadership role. Your ability to help them diminishes and it can derail their progress. One of your goals as a leader is to create sovereign beings, grounded in their truth. If you start asking for approval, then you are not modeling sovereignty yourself and are instead reinforcing an authoritarian culture.

All of us have a basic need to give and receive love. Spiritual leadership requires a strong connection to the Divine, which is the source of unconditional love. Too often we seek it from others and then feel disappointed when it's not forthcoming. It's important to soak in the presence of your inner Divine. That love bathes you and the other, effortlessly. If you think you are flowing love to your group, then it's likely coming from the mind and can be draining. Love is a state of consciousness that arises from a deep connection to the Divine. If you can keep your consciousness level high, then love is naturally present. If you feel disconnected, tell your inner Divine so and ask for help. You'll feel a shift immediately. The awareness of what state you are in (connection versus disconnection) is vital to holding a space in which love is revealed and transformation can occur. Love is your natural state when the obsta-

cles are removed.

Growth and contribution are also important needs. Growth is natural. Either you are growing, or you are dying. There is no such thing as a steady state. Tune in right now to see how you feel. If you are feeling drained, then your energy is likely spiraling down into a more dense, conflicted state. As soon as you become aware of this, you can start to shift into an upward more inspiring state. If you are too attached and the energy is not shifting, ask your Divine for help. You can also play music, dance, chant mantras or go for a walk in nature. These are quick ways to move stuck energy. Your state of consciousness is critical to your experience of life and your ability to help others. Monitoring that state is one of your most important jobs.

Contribution is critical to the cycle of life. When we feel fulfilled we naturally give back to others and to society. We give our time, money, and talents to people or organizations whose causes we believe in. You are reading this book because you want to give back. Even when you don't feel like it, contributing to the well-being of others inspires you. When you encounter periods of discouragement along the way, call ten successful people and tell them what you admire about them. Notice how you naturally start feeling encouraged again as you acknowledge others. Contributing in the area in which you want to receive help is most effective. In the example above

you would complement ten people for being successful in the area in which you are feeling discouraged in yourself (leadership, speaking ability, compassion). In my India experience, the monks shared a story about a man with a serious eye disease that would leave him blind within a year. Sri Bhagavan told him to pay for the eye operations of everyone in the local hospital and his eyes would heal. This man was wealthy and did exactly as he was told. His eyes recovered.

Contribution is important not only to support others but also to keep us in a more inspired state. I often hear people say that they are drained from helping others and need to withdraw and take care of themselves. Most of the time, it's their resistance to giving that is draining them, not the actual giving. Notice when you are contributing if you are doing it from your heart or from a place of duty and obligation. See if you can find what you love about contributing and let go of the depleting energies of obligation. As a leader, you can easily fall into this trap. Keep awareness on what state you are in and stay connected with your Divine.

Everyone's mind has these six basic needs that they seek to fulfill, in both conscious and unconscious ways. You can support your group in being more conscious around it. Your connection to the Divine is what can help you transcend these needs.

THE FIELD

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I’ll meet you there.”

— RUMI

There is a quantum field of energy between groups of people and working with that field can uplift and support the group. In the last chapter, you worked with creating sacred spaces in your home and workplace to shift the energy. As I mentioned previously, these altars need to be maintained regularly so the energy continues to grow. You are allowing the Divine to create an energy field in your home through this process.

For almost ten years our spiritual center was in our home. People would walk through the front door and sometimes stop and look around suspiciously.” What’s in here?” As they walked down the steps to our event room, the energy would be so strong that some people would literally sit down on the steps and take it in before moving all the way into the room. Whatever burdens they were carrying before they arrived, seemed to lighten up or disappear altogether, even before the event started.

This is the power of an energy field of Divine

grace cultivated lovingly and consistently over time. I had a similar experience with a piece of artwork at our new center in our commercial space in Wheaton, Illinois. One of our community members, Wendy, created a five-by-five-foot embroidered canvas called the Supreme Light. She hung it on the back wall. When I walked in the front door, I could feel such strong energy from over thirty feet away, and I sat down inside the front door shocked. The art piece seemed alive and conscious. Wendy explained that she had chanted a mantra with every stitch, and there are countless stitches in this large canvas. She co-created with her Divine a work of art that is so alive it impacts consciousness by simply sitting in front of it.

We've all had experiences of energy fields in certain spaces such as temples and cathedrals. You might notice it as a peaceful space that brings you solace in times of distress. There is also an energy field between groups of people, especially those who are close, such as families. After years of work in consciousness I would still come home to my nuclear family and after two to three days find myself behaving like I did twenty years ago. The only difference from previous visits is that I am more aware of it. I watch myself join in the dynamics that causes pain to others and me. As I'm doing it I know I will pay for it. Sometimes I can't stop myself. Why?

There is a quantum field, an influencing field, that has built up over time that contains all our family dynamics – the power structure and rules about how we show love. The set of possible actions arises out of this field. Under the influence of my family field, there weren't many choices for loving responses. It's more about quick-witted responses and competitive arguing.

When you are deep in meditation (See Appendix F), you may start to see that thoughts arise out of a field. They are not your thoughts. If they were, you could stop them. David Hawkins describes thoughts as arising spontaneously out of a field of potentiality. The field out of which it arises is your consciousness field. There are many levels of consciousness, with different possible responses available to you in any given moment

At a lower level of consciousness, the set of potential actions when someone hurts you are limited to various ways to hurt back. At a higher level of consciousness, the thought that arises when someone hurts you is: "That hurt; I can't stop thinking about it. I know I should forgive him or her." At another level, you see that they couldn't have reacted any other way and you naturally forgive them. At a still higher level, you feel their pain and you might respond with "How can I help?" or "I'm sorry." The person at the lower levels of conscious-

ness would never have access to this kind of response. Depending on which thought you follow, you will experience reality differently.

This consciousness field contains a set of potential responses. When I'm with my family, the field between us is more influential and starts to limit my normal set of possible responses. I might hold my own for the first day or two but by day three, the family field has taken over. I watch myself respond out of the old patterns and seemingly can't help myself.

Once you are aware of these fields, you can influence them. Wherever two or more are gathered, a super consciousness arises – the field between us. It has more potential responses than just your field. As you begin to work with others, you can consciously seed values in it that you want the group to experience. Start with the purpose or intention behind working with this group and get agreement with them. If there is agreement on how to work together and on shared values, then all can support in uplifting the whole group through embodying these values.

Ask your Divine for support in cultivating these values within yourself and within the field. Then every interaction you have with the others will be feeding that field among you. You will be more conscious of what you want to feed it because your

set of responses from working with that person arises out of that field. Keep praying and consistently send high energy into this field. You and your group are not only feeding that field, you are also being nourished by it. Visualize Spirit flowing into that field and bringing the energy supporting your intentions. Also envision the things that need to be released flowing out of that field. Just like the altars at home, it needs maintenance. You are unconsciously feeding it, so take a few minutes every day to tune in to that field and send it the energy you want to experience in your interactions with your group. It's a quantum field that can powerfully support and inspire you while working with others. The more support you can get from them to also feed this field between you with aligned values in thought word and deed, the more robust it will grow.

Working with this field can get quite interesting as the number of people grow. Since people are used to the concept of praying for others, you can get them to send energy into this field. Periodically tune in to the group, assess the qualities you feel are in that field, and adjust accordingly. By putting your attention on this you'll cultivate an energy field that can support and uplift all of you. I believe we are being asked to work together in a more cooperative way in this new age and that we will directly work with these influencing fields. When we view our

actions as affecting not only ourselves but all those in the group, the level of self-responsibility increases. We are more motivated to work consciously with each other.

This quantum field can be further supported with agreements between each other around how you want to work together and how you want to treat each other. Written agreements can go a long way toward strengthening this quantum field. They create a structure within the field that will eventually manifest if the commitment is there to nurture these shared values.

I saw the power of being aware of this field when we signed the contract to rent space for our center. I had started to sign when one of our board members stopped me. “This is not just a contract. This is the foundation for your whole relationship and experience in that building. What do you want to create?” I was so grateful for her clarity. In that moment, I had shifted into business mode and forgotten all of my other skills. Together we created and visualized the experience FHC members would have in the space and the relationship we would have with the other building occupants. When I finally signed that document, I was bringing all of that energy into it. We’ve had an extraordinary relationship unfold with the building manager and other occupants since that day.

Now that you have key principles for working

with others and understand the motivations (six needs of the mind) and know how to work consciously with the energy field between your groups, you are ready to look more closely at how to embody leadership.

EMBODYING THE LEADER NOW



My mouth hung open in shock as I was told that prospective parents should prepare for a whole year before conceiving a child. My only preparation at age twenty-eight was to decide to conceive and it happened that night. I remember sitting in a classroom in India thinking, “I’m not sure how well this is going to play in America.” I was being trained to facilitate conscious parenting classes. Since my own awakening started much later in life, my children didn’t get to experience this type of parenting.

I returned my attention back to the teacher, listening carefully while I received a visual transmission of a fetus in the womb. As the bone and tissue were forming, this new being was also absorbing the patterns, emotions, and thoughts of its mother and father. He or she was experiencing the energies of

the environments that the mother was moving through, as well as all of the hormonal changes. Both parents were unconsciously transferring much of their conditioning, beliefs and habits to the growing baby.

I saw how our most persistent sabotaging patterns stem from this time -conception through birth. The preparation for conceiving a baby includes dedicated consciousness work in addition to physical conditioning and healthy living habits. It's about becoming more conscious around living our values.

Few if any of us have had this type of parenting focus before we were born, and fortunately, there are solutions for us. I have worked with countless people in our center, taking them back through their birth process. They receive startling insights and begin to feel old patterns loosening their grip. In some cases, they experience physical healings. You might be wondering, "What does this have to do with leadership?"

You're spending a lot of time here in preparation for working with others so that you become more conscious of your unconscious behaviors. This doesn't mean you need to clear all of your sabotaging patterns, to be perfect or wait a year to begin. It's more about the depth of preparation and your willingness to see the truth about yourself. It's about understanding the importance of awareness practices or becoming a student of your own behavior. Addi-

tionally, you are transmitting experiences to your group. Their consciousness is taking in your words, feelings, and actions as they grow, and you want to be internally aligned.

Awareness is the most important tool that you have. As Sri Bhagavan says regarding consciousness, “Awareness is the first step and the last step.” In between, there are infinite levels of seeing, so this is a continuous practice. You are placing your attention on what is happening inside constantly, even while you interact with others. You’ll also be tuning into your state to see if your energy is spiraling down into density or expanding out into inspiration. You’ll start naturally adjusting to the internal feedback you’re receiving so you can stay present and effective. It takes a high level of commitment and a willingness and humility to see the truth.

LEADERSHIP VALUES VERSUS FAMILY VALUES

Embodying a leadership role means embodying a set of values that are important for creating a space for others to grow. In this chapter, we’ll take some time to dive deeply into six important values and offer suggestions for monitoring these in yourself. You can always add to this list as you go forward. We are starting with the values of balance, equanimity,

truth, compassion, surrender, reverence for life, and healthy relationship to power.

I'm sure you will agree that these are great values and perhaps you see how you already carry them to varying degrees. Issues can arise when they conflict with family values that were instilled in you from before birth and through growing up. For example, in my family, education was highly valued, especially for the young women. My father was progressive for that time in this area. He was determined that his daughters would be independent and not need to rely on a husband for their financial success and happiness. My parents grew up during the Depression and remembered the pain experienced by those who couldn't provide for their families. When I first told my dad I was getting married, he asked, "What about your MBA?" I was confused – of course I was finishing school. What did that have to do with marriage? In my dad's worldview, they were connected. My sister and I were both hard working and highly successful in our respective careers. But when I stepped out of the corporate world and into the spiritual realm I had to unlearn or release attachment to some of my family values – pursuit of knowledge, success, and independence. When I applied the skills that had made me successful in the corporate world to this new world I fell flat on my face. It took me years to learn to shift from a competitive mind-set to a cooperative one, from

independence to interdependence, from acquiring knowledge to gaining experience. I'm still learning.

While I would have agreed that these family values are important, I could never have foreseen how the values instilled in me, programmed into the fiber of my being, would become obstacles. Those values served me well through my late thirties, and for that, I'm grateful. My successes provided the means to fully dive into the spiritual world. It's not about devaluing success, financial independence, and education; it's about seeing how they are currently operating and whether they serve now. It seems we are currently going through this as a society in the form of peaceful protests. The value of equal opportunity for all is becoming stronger and overriding the values some people hold around safety and protection. We seem to be shifting our focus from winning to working more cooperatively. We'll see how this plays out in the longer run. In the meantime, let's look at your life and the values that you've inherited from family and your culture.

CONTEMPLATION ON FAMILY VALUES

Close your eyes and tune inside for a moment.
Take three deep slow conscious breaths.
Bring your attention into your heart area.
Gently breathe into the heart and let it open.

Into that space powerfully invoke the Divine.

Allow yourself to soak in this presence.

Ask for support in seeing your family values and how they are currently operating in your life.

Relax, breathe, and bring your attention back to when you were a young girl or boy (around five to six years old).

What did your parents praise you for?

As you grew older, in what ways did you receive approval from them?

In what ways did you seek approval?

What types of jobs did you get when you first started working?

What were you rewarded for there?

What types of things about your life do you share with your parents?

What did you hide from them?

Now that you are on your own, what does the voice in your head tell you? Is it your mom's or you dad's voice?

Did you adopt values that modeled your parents or out of resistance to them?

What values did you pass onto your children?

When you are ready, open your eyes.

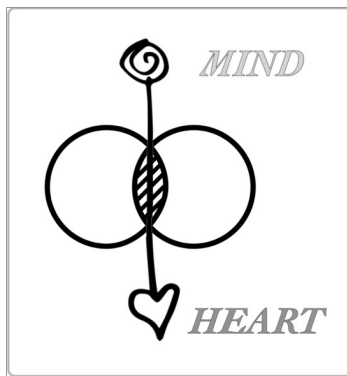
List in your journal the values you received from your family. How have these served you? How might they hinder or help you now?

Now that you have a sense of what values you've

been cultivating, let's take a closer look at how to deepen certain leadership values.

BALANCE

Balance in all things, or the middle path, can be a useful approach. At least you need to be aware of when you are operating in the extremes. I've been there. I'd like to bring the focus here to the balance between the left (logical, analytical) and right brain (creative) and between the mind and the heart.



For the first forty years of my life, I nurtured and honed my left-brain skills by receiving the education from top universities and working in business research. My first job out of college was as an Assistant Manager of Econometrics working for Illinois Bell. This was just before AT&T divested the operating companies (including Illinois Bell), and

our mathematical models were critical for estimating the potential new revenue streams for services staying with Illinois Bell and for those going to AT&T. I was working long hours and so deeply into numbers that I started developing an intuition for finding issues with the underlying data. I could spot discrepancies in huge datasets fairly quickly. I didn't value or nurture that intuition until I left the corporate world twenty years later. I entered the Shematrix Mystery School, which required a radical shift in my focus from rational thinking to experiential learning and emotional intelligence.

I kept running into brick walls. Every strategy that made me successful in the business world tripped me up here. I kept wondering how did I go from being so smart to so dumb? I'm amazed I stuck with it, but somewhere inside, I knew there was gold here. I saw the organic intelligence of the women who were facilitating this work and wanted to experience that. It took me ten years to unlearn everything I had previously learned. But then I went too far the other way. I set up my mind as the enemy because it kept getting me into trouble. I disowned my intelligence so completely that recently when my husband said, "You're the smartest person I know," I was shocked. I had forgotten.

When I started our spiritual center, I mistrusted my business skills. I didn't do any market research, review statistics on our web page, or focus on the

financial statements. These skills came with strategies that had a lot of political positioning attached to them. I didn't know how to bring that part of me forward without moving back into a more dysfunctional state. I purposely let go of those skills and relied heavily on the Divine. Many miracles occurred but it was a rough ride, partly because dropping the analytical skills was unnecessary.

In the last few years, I have been consciously integrating the two, and the result is that I've been able to write two books while helping people grow in consciousness. I am able to not only experience spiritual truths but also articulate them. I needed my left brain to work with the right brain to accomplish this goal. While working on my purpose statements recently, I had a powerful insight. This particular type of balance is both what I'm here to learn and what I'm here to teach. My Spiritual Purpose is to align the mind to the will of the heart to bring them into balance and full embody Source.

If we return to the brain, the intersection of the right and left hemispheres, or the place of connection between them, is where the creative juice and the ability to bring it into the world of form lies. These points of connection harness the whole brain to bring forward what you need in any given moment. In this place resides the energy that inspires the heart and informs the mind. As a leader

in service to a group, aligning mind with the heart brings balance.

Tune in to see where you are with this attribute. Do your strengths lie more with left-brain characteristics of logic, analysis, and knowledge, or do they lie more with intuition, creativity, and emotional intelligence? If you live more in one side than the other (as most of us do), then set an intention for developing the other.

One indicator of where you predominately reside is in how you make important decisions. Do you drop into your heart and ask for guidance? Do you research the issue, review pros and cons, and then decide?

The balance point, depending on the decision, may be to research the issue thoroughly. If you feel drawn to making lists of pros and cons, then do that, too. Before you decide, drop into your heart, connect with your Divine and ask for guidance. Feel into which path forward brings you more energy. If the way is still not clear, it may not yet be time to decide. Let the answer reveal itself.

Balance shows up in other forms too. If you notice you are stuck in a viewpoint, see how it invites the other person to take the extreme opposite stance. The mind, since it is based in duality, is quick to respond this way. Refer to the Viewpoint Exercise in Appendix B when you notice you are too attached to your viewpoint. As you learn to sit in multiple

viewpoints, other solutions arise that may not otherwise be available to you. Generally these are superior solutions because they consider multiple views. In this way, balance is about holding the opposites without being in opposition and allowing a clear path to emerge.

Balance between structure and freedom is another consideration. As a leader in a spiritual community you want to serve from the heart, responding to what is happening in the moment, yet at the same time, you need structure to be productive. Freedom to respond or create usually lies within some sort of container. For example, a painter has the canvas to define his or her working space. As a leader you'll develop a program outline for your group. During the event, you may need to change tactics on the fly to deal with what is arising. Perhaps the group has an unusual perspective that might invite more inquiry.

Once you've become conversant with your structure, you may feel like you are completely free-form in your approach. This is because the container for it is already established in you. At a certain point in your relationship with the Divine, you can drop your thoughts about structure altogether. At that level of consciousness every action is arising from the Divine.

One of my clients, Jackie, is creative and loves to be in the flow. In the spiritual world, flowing with

the Divine is a great asset. However, she uses that ability to escape from doing the work that she needs to find a job. She rebels against any kind of structured workday, afraid it will interfere with this flow.

After I worked with her to see that structure is required for her to send out job applications and make contacts, she reluctantly agreed. To her surprise, she started receiving job interviews after only two weeks of working within this new structure. She also discovered that her creative flow had showed up in her communications and methods of reaching out. It was supporting her in the goal. Her flow or freedom had a structure within which it could flourish.

As I switched from the corporate world to spiritual work, I brought structure to every event that I facilitated. I was afraid to allow myself to be creative within it because I didn't yet trust my capabilities. As I gained more experience and developed my intuitive connection with the Divine, I was able to release my attachment to structure. Then Spirit threw me into the deep end. I organized and facilitated an event with teachers from India for three hundred participants here in the United States. I planned an hour with the group before we turned it over to the monks for the morning session. Just before the doors opened, I was told that I wasn't allowed to start with the yoga session we had planned. I sat down in my chair shocked and had

them hold the doors shut for a few minutes while I gathered myself. I had to get up on stage and talk for forty-five minutes instead of the fifteen I had originally planned, and I had no idea what to say. My mom and son were in the audience along with some spiritual teachers from large churches in the city. I was under tremendous pressure. I stood up on stage, prayed and opened my mouth. Somehow the words flowed, and I filled the time with meaningful sharings. As a result, I learned to speak in front of audiences without preparation.

After a lot of experience with weekly Facebook live sessions, I can now show up in front of a camera and deliver a twenty-minute teaching and contemplation without any preparation. Since the structure is there in my consciousness from repeated experience, I can now fully relax into the flow.

The balance we're exploring here is between left brain and right brain, heart and mind, freedom and structure. If you value either one to the exclusion of the other, you lose out on a more enriching experience. You may need to step out of your comfort zone and experience being too far in the opposite end of the spectrum from what has been your natural state. From there, you can more easily find your center point.

In this contemplation you'll explore a several areas where balance can support you to lead more effectively.

BALANCE CONTEMPLATION

Close your eyes.

Take three deep, slow breaths.

Connect with your Divine.

Allow yourself to soak in this presence.

Ask to be shown the places in your life where you are operating in the extremes and need to adjust toward the middle.

Take a few moments to look into your childhood.

What were you rewarded for as a child?

What were you scolded for?

Were you encouraged to speak up more or to listen?

Were you encouraged to develop more thinking skills or were you encouraged to follow your creativity?

Did you spend more time in left-brain versus right-brain activities?

Do you need to bring this area more into balance?

Let the answer reveal itself.

Breathe and let that go.

Ask the Divine to show you where you relax into structure or rebel against it.

Where do you look for more freedom?

Relax and let yourself be shown.

Do you lean more toward structure or freedom in your life?

Do you need more balance here?

Breathe and let that go.

As you look at your present circumstances, do you seem to be more willful or more willing?

Are your words and actions creating more connection or more control?

Are you able to share leadership and importance with others?

Do you need to surrender more or to step into your power more?

Ask the Divine to show you what you need to see regarding your leadership style.

Breathe.

Ask to be shown how you make decisions. Do you create lists of pros and cons and then choose?

Do you simply tune in to your intuition?

Do you use both?

Take a moment to review your process with recent decisions you have made.

Which decisions in your life were the wrong decisions?

What process did you use to decide?

What were the consequences?

What decisions were successful for you?

How did you decide in those instances?

What were the ripple effects?

Ask your Divine where else do you need to bring more balance in your life – in health, relationships, finances?

Relax and allow yourself to be shown what you need to see.

Breathe.

Offer gratitude to the Divine.

When you are ready open your eyes.

Write down any insights in your journal. See if there is an intention you would like to create for yourself in relation to balance.

GROUNDING/EQUANIMITY

I learned more about grounding from walking the five-hundred-mile El Camino path through northern Spain. Those innumerable repetitive foot-steps for many hours every single day brought me to a deep connection with Mother Earth. Everything that was not essential in the moment vibrated off me as the rocks crunched under the weight of my feet. I could feel how the pilgrims who came before me had released their worries, concerns and fears onto this path. The earth grounds all of these petitions and transmutes them, supporting the walker to feel a renewed sense of hope, freedom, and joy. It's the natural cycle – birth, growth, death, and those nutrients from the death feed the new birth. I felt this cycle of life over and over again and experienced the beauty of each stage.

In our society, unlike nature, we honor and reward continued growth. The measure of a healthy, thriving economy is constant growth, and we've seen

the cost. It leads to over consumerism and depleting of our natural resources. It flies in the face of the natural world and our cyclical nature. Grounding for me is the remembrance of this. I need to periodically go out in nature, take my shoes off and put my feet into the dirt or the grass and feel the energy. When my kids were young and couldn't sleep, I would get them out of bed, take their shoes off, and walk with them outside in the yard even in the cold weather. They thought I was crazy, but it worked. Their minds had been churning over the events of the day, depleting their energy and sending anxiety through their bodies. Walking in the yard, discharged that energy into the earth, calmed them down, and allowed them to sleep. Grounding is needed for our health and to reconnect with our deepest nature.

One of my clients walks in the woods every day on his lunch break from work. I encouraged him to take his shoes off and walk barefoot. His experience became so magical that he continues to do this even during the cooler weather. It has changed his whole perspective. He feels a true intimacy and companionship with nature.

Nature will also teach you to let go of your unnatural thought patterns – the expectation to continually succeed. This causes you to resist “failure,” which is a natural part of some cycles and fertile ground for learning. When you revisit an old wound that you think you have forgiven, you might

berate yourself thinking, “I thought I had dealt with this. “ You are cycling back to a deeper level of the hurt and looking at it from a different level of consciousness. You are not simply repeating the same experience. You will continue to cycle back until you’ve learned all that you need to from that experience. Each time you do so, you are a different person. Grounding for me is connecting with earth energy that is stable, centered and cyclical. In this place I can face whatever comes my way with equanimity and humility. The earth has seen it all, and it’s still vibrant and alive. Other civilizations have died out and Mother Earth is still growing and evolving. Come back to the ground of your being and connect with the elements that make up this physical body.

SENSORY MEDITATION FOR GROUNDING

Gently let your eyelids fall closed.

Stay alert to the sounds around you. Pause.

Bring your total focus there.

Listen for a sound that is far away from you. Pause.

Breathe.

Now shift your focus to the smells in your room.

Pause.

If you don’t notice a scent in the room, then smell your hair or skin.

Bring your total focus to it.

Now shift your focus to the points of connection between you and the chair.

Feel your feet on the floor. Pause.

Visualize roots growing down from your sacrum into the core of the earth.

Visualize roots growing from your feet to the heart of Mother Earth.

Feel the stability of connection

Draw a breath from the heart of the mother through the roots into your heart.

Exhale back down to her heart.

Take two more breaths this way.

Inhale from her heart to yours. Exhale from your heart to hers. Pause.

Feel the groundedness, stability, centeredness.

No matter what storms rage across her surface, stability lies deep in the ground.

Exhale.

Now reach the sun with your attention and inhale the energy of the sun into your heart. Exhale it back out to the sun.

Take two more breaths this way.

Inhale from the sun into your heart. Exhale from your heart to the sun. Pause.

Feel your upper body uplifted and opened toward the sun.

Feel your groundedness and stability.

Now in the center of your heart invoke the Divine.

Let the presence envelope you.

Feel the expansion and relax into it.

Feel the groundedness and stability. Pause.

Take a look at the places in your life where you feel a strong commitment to something.

Where has your commitment been tested?

How did you respond?

Where did you persist through some of the challenges?

Feel that strength in you.

What is it that knocks you off center?

What type of person, situation, or comment throws you off?

Breathe.

Return to feeling your groundedness and expansiveness.

Bring to mind a situation where you were thrown off center or knocked down.

Imagine the scenario unfolding now and walk slowly through the experience.

When you get to the part where you were thrown off center, experience it from this place of groundedness and feel your response.

Maybe you are jostled by strong winds but not thrown down.

Maybe you are knocked down but get up right away.

Maybe you take an action that diverts the energy, leaving you untouched.

Notice your response. Breathe.

Rewind to the beginning of this experience and walk through it using the new response. Pause.

One more time at a faster speed. Walk through your experience with the new response. Breathe.

Offer gratitude for this experience.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Make notes of any insights in your journal.

Note down the people, situations and comments that throw you off center.

How often on a scale of one to ten (where one is never and ten is all the time) do you get knocked off center in each situation?

If your answer is above a five, write down actions you can take on a regular basis or when faced with those situations. Rerun this meditation with each circumstance to reprogram it in your system. When you recognize you need more grounding in your life, take walks in nature, dance, laugh, garden, or take salt baths.

As a leader in a community, every time your group increases substantially in size or your responsibilities grow, it's time for another level of grounding. In the spiritual world we love to feel expansive, especially when gathering in large groups. If we don't balance that experience with deeper roots we may lose touch with reality. Mother Earth keeps us real and present and humble. Go outside and dig your bare feet into her soil.

TRUTH

“Truth is Divinity expressed in a form comprehensible by man.”

— DAVID HAWKINS

By its nature, truth is life-affirming, dis-arming, and vulnerable and requires humility and a reverence for life. Truth is life. Falsehood is an illusion or something that doesn't exist. The natural world doesn't produce false plants and animals. By definition truth is existence. Loving truth is loving life. Truth and love are two sides of the same coin.

As a spiritual leader, you are a student of truth, for its own sake. Learn to cultivate a reverence and love for truth or for that which is alive. The mind likes to filter out truths that don't fit its belief system. This means it only searches for evidence that fits the image we already carry of ourselves. For example, if you want to be seen as a kind and compassionate person, then the mind will continually filter out the instances where you are not. A commitment to the truth will help you see where you are not kind and compassionate. This keeps you humble and able to serve in a more compassionate way. It seems paradoxical, but experiment for yourself. When you see that you're not kind on the

inside, you'll start to express more kindness on the outside. Truth allows you to grow into the leader you want to be. Just don't strive toward an image of any kind. Allow your authentic path as a leader to unfold.

Our self-image comes into existence as a toddler, as soon as the psychological self is born. When that self-arrives, it looks at the world in relationship to itself. You can often spot the exact point at which a toddler switches from exploring the world to manipulating adults to get what it wants. While it's a necessary step for the toddler, to look at the world from the viewpoint of what it can do for me, it's not helpful in an adult. The self continues to act in a selfish way, unconsciously, until you become aware of the truth. As soon as you see the strategies protecting your self-image, the process stops. By seeing and owning your self-centeredness you naturally become more selfless in your interactions with others. Your childlike self will continue to run the show until you see it. If you see the selfishness and disown it (rather than accepting it) then this behavior persists and unconsciously disrupts our relationships (review the contemplations in Appendix E). While it may be confronting to see the whole truth about yourself, it's necessary for effectively helping others. As you gain experience with it, you'll be able to hold yourself more lightly and find the humor in it.

A commitment to being that leader in your community is a commitment to truth. As soon as you face the truth, your heart opens and you're able to connect more deeply with the Divine. David Hawkins's quote speaks powerfully to that: "truth is Divinity expressed."

To see the whole truth, you must also see the lies the mind tells on your behalf to support the image you're holding. You might tell a lie that is harmless or even seems necessary. For example you might say to a friend, "I can't talk with you right now because I'm busy." In this case, the truth may be that I just don't want to talk to her right now. The mind kicks into high gear generating thirty more lies on the inside to support that lie on the outside. "Of course you are too busy. Look at your to-do list." "It's okay. You can call her later." It keeps going until you've told yourself many lies to protect the one lie you spoke out loud. This is where the damage is done. These internal lies are an effort, to conform to an ideal image. Thinking "I am a good person" is one example. If instead you ignored that thought, saw the truth and said to yourself, "I am lying," the mind activity would stop, and you'd feel peaceful. Attaching to the thought that I am a good person creates the opposite because the mind is trying to ignore the evidence that you just lied to your friend. A good person wouldn't do that. To see the truth is to see the images you are holding on to and smash

them. They will trip you up every time. Make it a game – how bad can I be on the inside? Find the humor in your humanness.

I'm not advocating always speaking your truth externally yet. There are many levels of truth and until you become adept at that, you can cause unnecessary trouble. Sometimes community members courageously find their voice and start speaking their truth to their family members. It might even look self-responsible to them. For example when Tracy said to her sister, "You hurt me when you shut me out for two years." Can you see how that statement feels like an attack? It may be true that Tracy was shut out and felt hurt, but truth that is spoken shouldn't be done in a manner that hurts the other. It's about coming from a place of vulnerability and confession. For example, she could say instead: "I miss being connected with the family. I have not had the courage to talk with you until now. Please forgive me for any way I've hurt you. I value our connection." While the other may have been the one to shut Tracy out, she has also shut them out because she was hurt. As long as Tracy continues to blame them for starting the cycle, she remains in pain. By acknowledging and forgiving her own part in it, there is an opening and a peacefulness in her heart. She was so grateful when she finally understood this dynamic and spoke her truth.

It could be a step in the right direction for

someone to say it the first way, “You hurt me when...” Maybe it’s the first time they’ve used their voice, and they’ve needed to stand up for themselves. It’s great to acknowledge that courageous step. Recognize, however, that this approach will likely escalate the conflict. It doesn’t create connection or bring peace, instead stimulating defensive behavior by the other. When speaking truth, you want to speak the truth that lies underneath the hurt and accusation. Until you can do this, you may create more disconnection with your loved ones.

Let’s explore different levels of truth using a simple example. Your consciousness level at any given time determines which response is available to you. Imagine someone hurls an insult at you. Here are some possible levels of responses:

1. They hurt me. I want to hurt back. I yell something back at them, or I yell internally at myself for not responding.
2. They yelled at me. I want to forgive, and I’m trying to do so. I have to calm down first.
3. They yelled at me. I can see that based on their conditioning and circumstances, they had no other options. It was the best they could do at the time. I’m triggered, but I walk away and work on my charge.
4. They yelled at me. I feel their pain. I

forgive them. I'm not triggered. I forget about it.

5. They yelled at me. I feel their pain. I want to help and connect with my Divine for the appropriate response. It might be, "I'm sorry" or "How can I help?" It might be silence.
6. They yelled at me. They are me. I feel only love. A spontaneous response arises, and it can be anything or nothing. It's not possible to predict.

The response available to you as you choose to speak your truth is based on your level of consciousness. If you are feeling depressed when this happens, only number one may be open to you. If you've just come off a spiritual retreat and are feeling expanded you might have options four to six available to you.

Speaking truth to others is a highly valuable skill, and if you can master it, your life will be magical. At a high level of consciousness it's natural. The monks in India have said that the one who speaks truthfully is taken care of by the Universe. They tell a story of visiting such a man in India at lunchtime. There was a knock on the door, and a dog arrived with three bags of food in its mouth. Every day food is brought to the man in some way, including enough for any guests. Because of his high integrity, he is taken care of by the Divine working creatively through others.

It is important to speak your truth within the groups you are leading, and we'll talk more about that in the next chapter. For now, bring your focus to the words you say to yourself. We'll start with releasing attachment to images you are holding about yourself. The payoff for seeking truth is that you touch Divinity and feel that love.

CONTEMPLATION: SMASHING THE IMAGES

Close your eyes.

Take three deep, slow breaths.

Connect with your Divine and ask for support in seeing the images you hold of yourself. Breathe and relax.

What traits do you carry that are you most proud of?

Are you hardworking, clever, creative?

Choose your favorite qualities.

Contemplate when they were formed.

What messages did you receive as a child?

How old were you when you decided to be that?

In what ways were you rewarded for it?

Take a closer look at this self-image.

See how you tried to conform and to continue living up to this image.

See how you tried to get others to buy in to it.

What did you do when others challenged it?

How did you protect this image?

See how your attachment to this image is draining your energy.

Now see this image of yourself as a mirror in front of you.

Take your fist and smash the mirror.

Breathe

Now, let's look at an image you resist.

What image does your family or someone else hold of you that irritates you?

What do they say to you that brings up that irritation?

How do you respond?

See what the mind does to avoid that label or image.

What image do you try to replace it with?

Breathe

See that image of yourself in the mirror in front of you.

Take your fist and smash that mirror.

Breathe.

Now look at the places in your life where you have exhibited that quality or image that you are resisting.

Say to yourself, "I am that."

Breathe and let that go too.

Keep releasing thoughts and images.

Connect with your Divine.

Rest in the emptiness.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

Take out your journal and note any insights from

this meditation. What images do you hold most dear? See the internal cost of holding on to it. See how others project images onto you. See the cost of resisting those images as well.

Now that we've created more space in your internal world, let's move into a contemplation around seeing levels of truth. See the example below.

CONTEMPLATION: FINDING THE DEEPER TRUTH

Let's start by shining a light on areas you may not have investigated before.

What's true for me in this moment?

Maybe the response is "I feel tired."

One way to get at deeper truths is to ask what is underneath that.

What's the truth underneath that? "I am resisting a conversation with Bob

What is the truth under that? "I'm scared of rejection"

What's the truth under that? "I want Bob to like me."

What's under that? "I want to love and accept myself."

That feels like the deepest truth in this example.

As long as you need someone or something

outside of yourself to change, then you haven't yet reached the deepest truth. It's at the point you go inward and feel what you need for yourself that it arises. Don't skip to that point. Go through each truth that arises so you can see the progression. Take out your journal and go through this process with the questions below.

Choose one of these starting questions and then go through above process:

- What am I hiding? Continue with "What's the truth under that?" Keep asking this question until you feel you have reached your deepest truth.
- What am I avoiding?
- Where am I blaming another?
- Where am I lying to myself?
- What is my current truth?
- What did you notice as you went through these processes? Write down any insights in your journal.

As soon as you catch your mind in the act of telling a half-truth or lie, it stops. You'll start to feel more freedom in your life. One way to see the mind in action is to notice when it starts justifying some-

thing. Stop and investigate the lies and see the attempt to change your inner world. When it starts to blame someone else, stop and investigate. I highly recommend the Integrity Process in Appendix H as a practice to further develop these skills.

Opening to the truth opens our heart and naturally leads to more compassion for yourself and others. Let's explore compassion and see how it's currently operating in your life.

COMPASSION

The meaning of compassion is to be with the other (sitting next to) and facing the issue.

Megan Watterson uses the definition "to bear witness to someone else's pain."

What can be said about this topic? It happens on its own, and the best you can do is to create the conditions for it to arise. If you try to be compassionate when you are not in that state, the other can feel the dissonance. Any interactions may feel awkward or cause issues. The best approach in that situation is to simply see you are not compassionate in that moment and ask your Divine for help.

Since this quality is so important as a leader, let's begin with setting an intention to be more compassionate. Feel your commitment to that intention. Below are some exercises to prepare yourself for the possibility of being in this state and actions you can

take to relieve suffering. The tonglen meditation is particularly powerful tool for opening the heart, reducing the ego and releasing attachment to your own pain, allowing compassion to arise.

I used to think that compassion was primarily a state of being and the action I would take is to pray for others to be happy and well. In other words, I saw it as a more passive state. What I know now is that it is an active state. To be compassionate is to actively relieve the suffering of others.

There are many different ways to be in action. For example, if someone yells at me in the parking lot, I can stop and tune in to what need that person is trying to address through their behavior. It might be that they want to be heard or acknowledged. I breathe into my heart the energy of that need to be heard and acknowledged. I have that need too, so I tune in to that. I let the heart transmute the energy into love and send that out to the person. If someone is attacking others in a meeting, I feel where that person is coming from and transmute the energy. I may also speak out in a strong but respectful way to stop the attack or support the others who are being attacked. I have to stay closely connected to my internal guidance to find the words that may diffuse the situation. In each case, I am seeking to relieve suffering.

More recently I have had other spontaneous reactions. A friend was angry with me for leaving her

alone with nothing to do as I was catching a cab for the airport. I could have easily attacked back and intended to say, “What can I possibly do about that?” All of a sudden I felt her loneliness and found myself saying, “I’m sorry.” I was truly sorry for the pain I caused even though it wasn’t “my fault.”

I had a similar experience while responding to an angry comment from my husband. I was about to yell back when suddenly I felt his pain and was horrified. Again I simply said, “I’m sorry.” In both cases this response eased their suffering because it was coming from a deeper truth – the pain of separation and the need for connection.

Below is a set of contemplations regarding when you are in compassion and when you are not. Grab your journal and come from a quiet meditative space as you respond to these questions without judgment.

COMPASSION EXPLORATION

Is my highest intention to wish everyone to be happy and well?

If not, who would you exclude and why?

If you find someone not worthy of your wish for happiness, then take them through the next three questions below.

1. When I’m listening to the other, am I feeling what they are in or am I:

- Understanding and analyzing the issue
- Preparing what to say to them
- Giving advice
- Being triggered by the story
- Seeing them as less than (or in need of my help)

2. If I can't feel the one not-worthy of happiness, am I:

- In my heart
- Connected with my Divine and asking for help
- Listening without agenda or judgment
- Feeling what is arising in me

3. If I can't feel the other or myself, tell my Divine and ask for support.

- Where do I find it hardest to have compassion for myself?

- Pretend it is another that has this problem. Visualize them struggling in this situation. Can you find compassion for them?
- Visualize the other person with this issue as a small child. Can you find compassion for him or her?
- If you can't find compassion, ask your Divine for help.
- You can also take this situation through Chapter 8 of my last book or the Resentment Processes in Appendix D.
- Where do I find it hardest to have compassion for others?
 - Use the Finding Compassion Contemplation exercise that follows.
- What beliefs are keeping me from being in compassion?
 - For example: "They should know better."
 - Write down as many beliefs as you can find

- Look at this list of beliefs through the eyes of your Divine.
- What do you notice?
- Take the stronger beliefs through the Resentment Process in Appendix D.

The following contemplation is powerful to use with people for whom you have trouble accepting. If you find it hard to complete this exercise, then start with someone for whom you can feel compassion and then repeat for more challenging people. If you are still having trouble, practice the Tonglen meditation below regularly to support the unfolding of compassion in your life.

FINDING COMPASSION CONTEMPLATION

Close your eyes.

Take three deep, slow breaths

Bring your attention to the heart area.

Relax the area around the heart.

Very gently breathe through the heart allowing it to open.

Connect with your Divine in the heart center.

Bring before your mind's eye an image of the type of

person for whom you are unable to wish happiness and well-being.

Say silently to yourself:

Just like me this person has thoughts and feelings.

Just like me, this person has conflict inside.

Just like me, this person experiences physical, emotional, and psychological pain.

Just like me, this person is trying to find relief from suffering.

Just like me this person is learning about life.

Just like me, this person is seeking happiness

Just like me, this person wishes to be loved

Just like me, this person is navigating their life the best they can.

Breathe gently into your heart and allow it to open even further.

Say silently to yourself, I wish this person to be happy and well.

When you are ready, open your eyes.

TONGLÉN MEDITATION

This ancient Tibetan practice connects our suffering with others who are also suffering and sends them joy or peace. Having compassion for others in pain, requires you to be sensitive to your own pain and not resist it. As you open your heart to allow the pain, you experience a softening that naturally makes

you more loving. It dissolves your protective armor so that you can connect.

Begin by focusing on someone you know who is hurting. Breathe in their pain and fear and as you breathe out, send them whatever you feel would bring relief and happiness. Sometimes it helps me to picture their pain as black smoke. I take it into my heart on the inhale and send golden light to them along with my wish for their freedom and happiness on the exhale.

If you are not able to do this because of your pain, anger or fear, then do tonglen for what you are feeling and include all others feeling just like you in that moment. Breathe in that emotion for you and all people feeling that. Breathe out whatever might provide relief for yourself and others. This practice awakens compassion and reminds us of a larger view of reality.

CHANTING AND ACTS OF KINDNESS TO SUPPORT THE UNFOLDING OF COMPASSION

Chanting is a powerful way to cut through the mind chatter and open the heart. You can chant anytime, anywhere. I like to start with several gentle breaths through the heart. Into the center of the heart, I invite Quan Yin, the goddess of compassion.

Use a mala, which has 108 beads for counting.

Chant “Om Mani Padme Hum” 7, 21, 49, or 108 times.

After the last recitation, inhale and hold the breath. Release. Sit in silence for as long as you can with your attention on your heart. During the silence after chanting is when the mantra penetrates more deeply into the cells of your being.

Compassion in action also includes acts of kindness in your day-to-day life. Who can use help? While you’re shopping for groceries or walking through your neighborhood, who can use a hand? Can you go sit with a friend who is having a rough day? Ask how you can serve. Having a sense of curiosity about people and what they are going through, will lead you to the places where you can actively relieve their suffering. And if you are sitting with a friend or neighbor, Megan Watterson recommends to “listen without having to react or explain your part in their suffering. Just perceive the pain they are in. Hear your cries of despair without having to judge or justify.” The world can use more good listeners.

Cultivating more compassion for yourself and others helps deepen your relationship with the Divine, and allows you to lead from the heart. This is especially important when you’re asking your clients to be open and honest.

POWER

A healthy relationship to power is critical. As people you are working with grow and transform, they may shower you with lots of gratitude and compliments. Of course the ego loves this and wants to hear more. If you are in an expanded state you won't attach to it. You'll recognize it's the Divine's work, not yours.

If your ego attaches to this then you may start to spiral down in consciousness. Left unchecked, you'll want more because that egoic mind is insatiable. There is never enough praise or power to satisfy. There is a natural tendency to unconsciously seek praise, because one of the needs of the mind is significance. If you are not getting significance at home or from your job or hobby, then you may be asking for it here. If on some level you need reinforcement from your group, you may be stealing their sovereignty. That's because this dynamic of pleasing the teacher is so ingrained in our culture. The other will readily step into the identity of pleasing. You'll be the one receiving the praise, but when it comes from this place, it won't feel fulfilling. It's disempowering for the one doing the pleasing.

The best way to avoid this trap is to keep offering the praise to Spirit. This doesn't mean allowing false pride to take over: "I didn't do anything," "Don't mention it." You want to fully receive the compliment and not push it away. It feels good for the

person offering praise if you accept it gratefully. Internally offer it all to Spirit. Sometimes you need to say it externally too: “Thank you. My Spirit guides are awesome today.”

The purpose of your leadership role is always to empower the other to live through their direct connection to Source. If they are becoming overly reliant on you, then that is a signal that you not supporting them in finding and following their guidance. It’s a fine line to walk – to offer teachings and then to support them in finding their truth. One way to do this gracefully is to always speak from your experience and invite them to share theirs.

To work with others is a sacred contract. The Divine needs your help to be the arms, legs, and voice in the world. You need the Divine’s help for guidance. Keeping that channel open and clear will support you in not falling into power trips. We’ll talk more about the abuse of power in Chapter 10. The following Power Contemplation will point out various ways you may be caught in the power game in the spiritual world. The way out of this game is to stay connected with your Divine and keep recognizing that everything that flows through you is a gift. The minute you think you are the one transforming the other or that you have special powers, you fall into trouble.

POWER CONTEMPLATION

After a conversation with a friend or working with a group, use this contemplation.

Close your eyes.

Take three deep, slow breaths

Connect with your Divine and ask for support in seeing where you are seeking power.

For each of the questions below, relax, breathe, and let yourself be shown. Feel free to take notes. If you do so, stay in a meditative state during this contemplation.

In your interactions with the other, where were you:

- Needing to give advice
- Needing to demonstrate what you know
- Giving them answers rather than asking questions
- Being positional
- Trying to influence the other
- Wanting to feel special or make yourself look good
- Approval seeking

- Manipulating or nudging them toward a viewpoint
- Withholding
- In judgment
- Checked out
- Encouraging them
- Empowering them
- Appreciating them and their situation
- Trusting the Divine

Ask your Divine for support to see this while it's occurring so you can more quickly adjust. Make a commitment to be more present and connected in your life, especially while interacting with others.

SURRENDER

Surrender involves letting go of your preconceived ideas of where the other should go or what you should share with them. There is a constant surrender to Spirit, as previously mentioned, which requires humility. You may have your favorite processes, teachings, or teachers. See if you can let

go and continually tune in to see what Spirit wants to offer now.

This is where the agility to move between structure and freedom will support you. When I am preparing to work with a client or a group, I usually tune in ahead of time. I'll often receive insights regarding potential issues and what processes might be needed. I'm prepared in advance with all of my tools. After connecting in my heart with the Divine, I start the session, set everything aside, meet the person where they are, and go from there. At times, I have gone into a session expecting to take them through a forgiveness process, and I end up facilitating inner child work. I have started with one modality and watched as it morphed into another one. If you're attached to structure, you may cringe at that. I am committed to following my guidance. There are times when someone comes to me for a specific piece of work such as Byron Katie, and I will stick to that modality for the whole session. Normally I follow the energy, and some creative and effective new processes have arisen out of that freedom. I surrender to Spirit, and it's magical every time.

Develop your skills in the modalities you offer and become capable with those, before you bring more freedom into it. Then show up to the session with no expectations, ready to receive guidance. Notice when you start to take control back from Spirit and let go

again. Sometimes this happens out of fear. It takes trust to sit with a client or group and not know where you are going next. Your mind may kick in to say, "I have to look like I know what I'm doing." The client will feel held and supported as long as you stay connected with Spirit and present with them. They will still receive what they need even if you don't say anything. Your presence as a clear vessel for Spirit is most important.

CONTEMPLATION ON SURRENDERING VERSUS CONTROL

Close your eyes.

Take three deep, long breaths.

Bring your attention into the heart area and connect with the Divine.

Allow yourself to soak in this presence.

Let your mind drift back to your earliest joyful memories as a child, playing outside.

See yourself running, skipping, grasping at butterflies.

The sun is warm on your face.

Your whole body is engaged in whatever you are doing.

Be in that energy, fully experiencing for a few moments.

See how that child follows wherever she or he is led.

Feel the joy and freedom.

Breathe.

And now move forward in your life to adulthood.

Feel how it feels in this body.

Notice your interactions with your family and friends.

See the ways in which you try to control your environment, your movements, your responses, your emotions, your family.

Feel the rigidity in your body.

Feel the constriction in you and how it drains your energy.

See the futility of trying to control your external environment or anyone else.

Breathe and release.

Now recall a time where you surrendered control to the Divine.

Maybe you were at a low point and had no other options

Perhaps you consciously chose to let go.

Feel what that was like.

Ask to be shown the ways you tried to regain control.

Did you let go again?

Did you create contingency plans?

Breathe and release.

Now pick a situation where you are ready to surrender control to Spirit.

If you don't have one, visualize yourself leading your group.

First, bring to mind your inner child – the one who freely followed her or his hearts delight.

Soak in that energy for a few moments.

Now visualize yourself in your situation in your role as a leader, allowing Spirit to flow through and to make the decisions.

Feel the relaxation in your body as you move with Spirit

Keep letting go of the minds tendency to take back control.

Relax and let it unfold.

Breathe.

Keep surrendering to Spirit and feel the joy.

Offer gratitude.

In a society that honors independence and thinking, surrender is resisted. You might find yourself in surrender only when you're feeling helpless and have no other options. You have to retrain yourself to allow surrender, which takes vigilance and a commitment to your Divine. When you start to see the creativity and magic that is unleashed as you let go and trust, you'll be more motivated to continue. For me surrender is a continual letting go of the need to control, desires, agendas, et cetera. One practice that can support you with this is to choose to surrender to your Divine each thought and feeling as it arises.

Practice this consciously for an hour or a day and note how the day unfolds.

REVERENCE FOR LIFE

A reverence for life will naturally arise when the other values are operating. You start to experience the magnificence of every human being and the joy of working with Spirit. You start to see how everything is interconnected and that reverence for one life means reverence for all. You will be less likely to turn your back on your neighbor simply because they have different political views.

This is where life becomes extraordinary. Experiencing the sacredness of life puts you in a space of gratitude, wonder, and appreciation. This leads to more miraculous experiences. As your reverence for all creation expands, you may stop killing spiders or bugs in your house; instead you'll catch them and place them outside. You may stop using weed killers and other chemicals because you're more sensitive to the toxicity and their impact on your family and the environment. The level of interconnection of everything starts to reveal itself in magical ways and your behavior naturally shifts.

I experienced a profound reverence for the land as I walked the El Camino. Although many times there was no one within sight, I never felt alone. Every time I questioned Spirit if I was still on the

right trail or if I was lost, a sign would appear within several steps. One morning I felt particularly brave and walked out of my hostel while it was still pitch dark. This happened to be the one time where I felt confused about the streets and where the path lay. I walked out in the dark anyway, trusting. Amazingly within ten steps, a woman wearing a headlamp appeared and crossed the street in front of me. I followed her all the way to the path. Thirty minutes later I came to a crossroads and couldn't see the yellow arrow. I stood there asking silently for help when another woman appeared from the other direction wearing a headlamp. She pointed me toward the path. In the thirty minutes I had been walking, I hadn't encountered anyone else. They arrived as if on cue, exactly when I needed them, in the middle of rural Spain. How did the Universe orchestrate this? In a state of awe, profound gratitude and reverence for this journey, I praised Spirit and walked on.

One way to cultivate reverence is to embrace the mystery of life. The mind is quick to conclude, "I know." As soon as you buy into that thought the magic disappears. As long as you stay in the space of not knowing, the ordinary becomes extraordinary. For example, look at the shirt you are wearing right now. The mind quickly concludes that it's an ordinary cotton shirt and then moves on to something else. Take a moment and be present to that shirt and see how it comes alive for you.

T-SHIRT CONTEMPLATION

Observe your shirt carefully for a few moments.

Slow down your breathing.

See something you haven't seen before in your shirt.

Get curious.

Let's extend our viewpoint.

Read through this slowly and visualize each step:

Imagine buying this shirt from a store. Someone priced it and placed it on the shelf. Someone else received your payment and put it in a shopping bag. How did it get to the store?

This shirt was in a warehouse. Someone had to pick it and pack it. Someone else loaded it on a truck.

That trucker drove many miles across the country, through wind, rain, and hot sun. He stopped for gas and then finally arrived in your city where it was unloaded into another warehouse. Someone scanned it and either stored it or loaded the shirt onto another truck that drove to the store where you purchased it.

What happened before that?

It was stitched together by machines. A design was printed on it. Someone else designed that screen print. Another person chose which style of shirt to be created and how many.

Let's go back further. Somewhere cotton is growing and being tended to by people and machines. The

plants are watered and cared for. The soil is fertilized. The sun is shining as the cotton grows and matures. A picker gathers cotton and puts it into a cotton gin to separate the lint from the seed. It's then processed to become cotton material of a certain quality.

Go back even further. Cotton plants have been cultivated for many centuries. Fragments of cotton fiber have been found dating back to 3000 BC. They have since been genetically altered to make it easier to process. Scientists have studied this plant to figure out how to alter the genes.

There is a whole universe involved in creating this shirt that you can buy at any local store in the country.

Look at your shirt again.

Maybe there is a little more wonderment and appreciation. More reverence.

Can you look at this cotton shirt in the same way ever again?

Everything is alive and changing all the time – even this shirt. Some of the fibers are already starting to breakdown on a microscopic level. It has a life cycle. It was created, and now it's in the process of disintegrating back into the earth or transforming into something else. Maybe it will become a rag.

Take a look around the room you are sitting in.

Everything is alive. Feel how the ordinary becomes extraordinary through the lens of reverence.

Offer gratitude for this experience.

Embodying the values of balance, grounding, truth, compassion, surrender, reverence for life, and empowerment will create a culture for others to thrive. It will continue to inspire you as well, since others will begin to value what you are embodying.

One of our community members and a spiritual teacher, Theresa, recounts an impactful experience of speaking her truth in a safe, compassionate space.

“I have been a member of the Flowering Heart Center community for almost a decade. Kristin has led me on the deepest and most introspective path I have ever taken. At the core of the path is the concept of inner integrity. Being authentic and brutally honest with myself is one of the hardest things I’ve ever done. I remember at one particular process, I came to the painful realization that my desires for my daughter’s happiness were rooted in my desires. With Kristin’s deep compassion and unyielding support, I was able to see how my apparent passion for my child’s well-being, was rooted in my desperation to perceive myself as a good mother. After having a good cry while being enveloped in energetic “acknowledgment” hugs by Kristin, I was able to forgive myself for my selfishness and appreciate myself for having the courage to be deeply honest. This honesty is taking my life to a new place. Loving, accepting, and modeling it, I see

it being reflected by my beautiful daughter in her ability to be honest, compassionate, and self-accepting. I have no doubt that a chain of inner integrity will follow with generations to come thanks to Kristin's generous and wise leadership."

GETTING INTO ACTION BY
GATHERING YOUR GROUP AND
HOLDING EVENTS



You might feel after that last chapter that embodying a leader is a tall order and you're not ready to share your gifts with the world. You might feel you need more time to work on yourself. This is what keeps countless people immobilized and watching their dreams wither away. This journey of growth is infinite. No one is ever ready. The fact that you are reading this book means something inside of you is ready to contribute to the world in a bigger way. There are seven billion people on this planet and just as many paths to enlightenment. We need a vast variety of people sharing their truths and holding space for others on their journey of discovery. You will attract the people that need your particular mojo. Who you attract is not up to you. Your job is to put yourself

out there, to be the voice of the Divine in the world. The rest is up to Spirit.

Let's get into action. You might already have a group that you can support or a place to share your gifts. If you have the freedom to choose your group then contemplate who you want to serve and what problem you are solving for them. Perhaps you believe that most people need what you have to offer, and you feel resistance to limiting your group to a particular segment. While that may be true, your outreach message needs to feel personal and from the heart – as if you are having a conversation with an old friend. Choosing one specific person as your target will also enable you to transmit the energy in a powerful way. Describe that specific person to whom you are reaching out. What do you want to help them with? This is an important motivation piece. If you can help them solve a problem that is important to them, they are more likely to join your group.

Recently an FHC community member felt called to support people who were feeling suicidal. He had worked through that issue in his life and felt that he could be an effective support. He also wanted to support people who have lost their jobs and are feeling directionless or hopeless about finding a new one. He is crafting a message to reach people who need a job and don't know where to turn. This is

something many people would value highly. While he will help them with the skills for job hunting, his underlying intention is to deal with the hopelessness and to guide them toward a happier state. The result for his clients will be a job that fulfills them. His program will be a spiritual program with a practical application, which may be offered at our center.

CONTEMPLATION: WHO AM I SERVING AND WHAT PROBLEM AM I SOLVING?

Look at your purpose statements and read them to yourself

Have your journal nearby and write down answers to these questions. Stay in a meditative state as you are writing.

Close your eyes.

Take three deep conscious breaths

Connect in your heart with your Divine.

Ask for support in seeing who you are serving and what problem you are solving.

Look through your life – where have you reached out to help others?

What did you do for them?

What do your friends come to you for?

What are your hobbies or passions?

What does your family rely on you for?

What challenges in your life have you overcome?

What issue do you want to help others with?

What is the profile of the person you want to help?

Describe their physical characteristics and their life situation.

What result can you give them?

Write an intention that includes the person you are serving, the issue you are solving and the result.

Now, choose your method to share your message. Do you want to form a group that meets weekly? Do you prefer to search for speaking engagements, offer webinars, start a blog, create YouTube videos? Pick one of these or another channel to start sharing your experiences. If you already have a Spiritual community, then speak to them and find out how you can help members in that organization. Whichever approach you pick, I can suggest a basic structure to support you in getting started.

Look at your purpose statements and your specific intention for this work, tune inside, and ask your Divine what topic would serve right now that is aligned with the intention. Trust whatever impression you receive. Create a flyer, using the language of the person you want to help, and post online or at local coffee shops and grocery stores. Let your friends know about it. Don't worry about the strategies behind any of this right now. Your priority is to

gather a group any way you can. This is your time to learn through helping others. Also, don't get lost in the details planning the event. It's more important that you get the word out and find some people who want to join your group or webinar.

I had a strong desire to offer workshops for years but kept delaying because I was focusing on creating the perfect content. I became discouraged. One day I arrived home from a spiritual retreat in Fiji inspired to offer guided meditations. Fortunately, I was still in the afterglow of the event, so I quickly created a flyer and posted it at the local yoga studio before I could back down. I had been a student there for years, so they graciously allowed me to use their space for the event. Once I posted the flyer, I was terrified. I hoped no one would show. Several times I almost took it down. Who am I to offer guided meditations? Despite my internal conflict, several people responded yes. They managed to show up for the meditation class despite all of the energetic blocks I placed in their way. Two days before the event started, the meditations started coming into my consciousness, and I quickly wrote them down before they disappeared. They were my lifelines. If I didn't know what else to say, I could just go into the meditations and pray. I carefully wrote down everything I wanted to say because I was afraid I would freeze in the moment in front of the group. I didn't

have the benefit of a mentor to help me with laying the foundation and preparing myself for working with others. I clung to my paper at the event and managed to speak coherently. When I guided them through the meditations, the words flowed beautifully, and everyone had a good experience. I was so relieved.

The fear of sitting in front of a group of people and sharing my experience has never completely gone away. I've learned not to banish it or give it any power. I trust that my Divine will come through for me. I've also learned how to set myself up for success. Below are some guidelines I use for that.

Start with your topic and gathering the participants. Even if you have only two people, be grateful to Spirit and enjoy the experience of learning. While the guidance in this section is focused around working with a small group of people in person, many of the principles apply to online classes.

STRUCTURING YOUR GROUP EVENT

A few days before the event you may have a sense of who is coming, and you can start to outline your topic. You are welcome to use the structure I've outlined below or create your own.

At least an hour before the people start arriving, be sure to check the energy in the room. Even if it's neutral you'll want to amp it up. Shift the energy

through smudging, drumming, bells, singing, praying, dancing, and lighting incense and candles. If you are meeting in your home or a spiritual center, lighting candles, invoking the Divine and praying for your group may suffice. If you are in a more public space or rented space, it's important to visit the event room and check the energy ahead of time. I've held events in hotel ballrooms where I've had to use more powerful energy by engaging the whole team to chant, dance, sing and drum,, in addition to using smudge and incense You'll have a sense of the high energy you want to create from maintaining altars at home. Start noticing the field of energy generated by your home altars, so you can create similar environments elsewhere.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Grounding Meditation

I almost always start with a grounding meditation to bring everyone present and to consciously invoke Spirit for guidance. Invite the group to take at least three slow, deep breaths and then connect with the Divine in their heart center. You can also guide them to tune in to the beautiful moments from the day, reexperience them, and from that place offer gratitude. This quickly raises their vibration and

relaxes the body. If this is a weekly group, guide them to look back through their week to see ways they've grown, or notice challenges they encountered. Pause for a while and then have them tune in to their intention for today.

Whatever instructions you are offering, be sure to follow them yourself. The more you can sink into the presence and feel what you're inviting them to feel, the easier it is for them to do that. While you are focusing your attention inside during this time, remember to also place some of your attention out on the group. That way they will feel as if you're speaking to them and they will feel more of the energy. Practice this skill of keeping attention inside yourself and on the group, until it becomes second nature.

Check-In

Ask them to state their name and the intention they are holding for themselves in this experience, and possibly what drew them to the group.

Connecting with Them

Start speaking in a way that meets them where they currently are sitting in their life or in themselves. Perhaps it's a stormy day and you can complement them for their tenacity to attend despite

the weather. If you know something about what this group is going through, start with that. “You might be feeling a little unsettled right now with the chaos that is happening in ...” If your talk is about the issue you’ve outlined above then speak about that issue and challenges related to it. “Have you ever felt..?”

Teaching or Content

Offer your group teachings that solve the issue you described above. If this group has specifically gathered for exploring spiritual truths then share a spiritual teaching. Speak from your knowing of it, sharing your personal experiences. Relax and let Spirit inform your speaking as much as possible. Often, an experience you may have forgotten will come forward. Share it. Let the words flow. This is where the Divine transmits the essence of a teaching through you. I remember one of the monks from Oneness University speaking at our center. He said his master teacher told him to sit down, open his mouth, and shut up. He was a clear channel through which Spirit transmitted powerful experiences to the group.

Connecting with Divinity is tapping into truth. When you courageously speak your truth, people can more easily relate, and it creates a space that allows others to more easily find their deepest truth.

Choose a spiritual teaching that is operating in your life so you can be clear in your speaking. If you choose a teaching that is not experiential for you, it may create confusion for them and delay their understanding. There is a caveat to that rule. It's always helpful for people to hear teachings on enlightenment or from sacred texts. It provides a roadmap and an understanding of what is happening when they touch into those moments in high states of consciousness. Just hearing these truths can have an impact on their consciousness. In this case simply read the passage or play a video and offer to explore it together with the group. Don't try to interpret it for them. Instead, approach it like a student.

Sharing

Invite the group to share whatever came up from them around the content. Help them find specific examples in their life. If you are open and receptive, they will be more likely to open up and share freely. If you have concerns about this happening or if you have people who like to tell stories, you can set some parameters for this sharing. This is especially helpful if you have members of the group who like to expound on theories instead of speaking about their experience. Once someone gets into this mode, the whole group goes to sleep. Truth is what keeps the conversation alive. You can include sharing parame-

ters such as speaking in present time without offering advice or referring to another's speaking. You can also time the sharing or include a confidentiality agreement so people can feel safer. In events that I run, I occasionally use parameters. It depends on who is there and what I'm trying to accomplish. If there is a highly charged situation, they are helpful in keeping the sharing relevant and on track.

Communicate any parameters you are using and get the group's agreement before sharing. Learning to hold a group within parameters and to correct them without shutting people down, is another level of skill that comes from training and experience. A mentor is recommended to learn this skill.

After everyone has spoken, you can acknowledge them by saying how their sharing brought up different ways to work with this teaching.

Blessing

Have everyone participate in sending blessings to the group and to trouble spots in the world and to the earth. If you have time you can guide them to send blessings to each group member individually. People love receiving this energy and they can use it to empower their intention, by visualizing it while the blessing is flowing. There are many ways to offer blessings. You might, for example, have them deeply connect with their Divine to send energy from their

hearts or visualize golden light flowing into the people you are blessing. However you choose to do this, guide them through the process and close with gratitude.

Gratitude

Offer gratitude to Spirit for all that has happened here. Offer gratitude to the group for their offerings.

Call to Action

Offer the group practices or homework to complete before the next meeting. Speak about upcoming events or any outreach efforts to expand your group.

Other Considerations and Potential Issues

This structure is simple and will open a space where people can freely explore the teachings for themselves through everyone's speaking. Be clear on the timing for each segment so you stay within the timeframe you communicated to them.

As a leader you'll need to set the example in sharing. If you want them to be vulnerable and share how these teachings touch their lives, you'll need to model the behavior when you introduce the sharing. The more you expose your personal struggles and

how you have worked through them the more the group will trust you and be willing to share their own issues. As a leader, it's helpful if you can fully participate alongside them. You are leading them by setting a direction and inviting them to discover truths within themselves. You are providing encouragement. Just like the rain, sun, and fertilizer provide a rich soil for plants to grow, you are creating a space for them to thrive.

Empower them by helping them find their own answers to questions they are asking. Gently guide them with that. You may be excited about giving advice and showing what you know but that can be disempowering. This practice can also easily lead you into a place of feeling special and then the ego can take hold and begin a downward spiral.

Practice the art of listening when others are speaking. Consciously slow down your breathing. Listen to them while also listening to what is happening in you. Connect with your internal guidance to see if there is an appropriate response. This practice will support you in all of your relationships. See Appendix I for a full review of the Art of Listening.

If you are continuing to work with this group regularly, then consciously tune into the quantum field that connects them. Start with creating a purpose statement or intention for this group. Decide what values you would like to empower in

them and how you want to interact with each other. You can consciously work with your Divine to set an energy field infused with these values and support others to do the same. If you are meeting for a set amount of time (say six weeks), craft an agreement that everyone signs that includes intentions regarding how interact with each other. At some point you can include a teaching on the existence and characteristics of the energy field. Explain how it helps everyone grow faster and get them to participate in feeding the field (review Chapter 5).

Periodically seek feedback from the group about what is working for them and where they can suggest improvements. If you would like to accelerate your growth, you might ask members who you think would tell you the truth to give feedback on your leadership qualities (the ones from the previous chapter). Wait until the group is well-established.

HANDLING GROUP DYNAMICS

How you handle arguments that arise within the group can either make or break it. After a period of time, disputes are inevitable – especially if they are familiar with each other beforehand. Old patterns may need to surface to be released. When that is happening they may project on one of the group members and lash out at them. If you have safety parameters in place, you can point to them to keep

things on track. Either way, you need to intervene fast and refocus their attention inside themselves. Ask what is going on for them. Walk them through handling the charge (See Process for Releasing the Energy behind the Charge in Appendix C). Bear in mind that whatever arises, it's never about the other.

One of my community members used to get angry with me periodically and for no apparent reason. My behavior hadn't changed toward her in years. I was able to be present in those situations and let her vent. She worked on this anger issue during our meditations and received some relief, but it kept returning. Finally she saw that I represented her mother who died early in her life from hard work. She would get triggered when she would see me working hard but not realize it was coming from a fear of losing me. Once she saw that pattern, it released. I haven't encountered that same experience with her since that realization .

When you are a leader, people will often project their own issues onto you, and it may arise as an outburst of anger, as in this example. You'll need to stay grounded and centered in yourself so the other can more easily feel what is happening. If you react on a personal level, then it becomes about you, and they miss out on seeing the true cause, which is internal. Not taking things personally is vitally important and especially in the midst of hot tempers being ignited. If you've created a safe space by being

grounded and compassionate yourself, the other can more easily be directed back inside themselves to work on the charge there.

I have a particularly fond memory of a group session at FHC where two community members flared up and started yelling at each other with no warning. “She always gets the attention!” I bolted up, thrust out my hands, and asked them to stop. Then I invited each one to feel inside and share their truth responsibly. The issue resolved. You have to be quick. If you’re not, the issue can escalate beyond the point of anyone being willing to deal with it effectively.

During your session, watch the energy in the group. One person may be sitting in something, not sharing and not engaging with others. You can feel a dense energy in that part of the room. Left unchecked, this energy can start to affect the whole energy field and bring others down too. Don’t be tempted to ignore this too long. Go right at it. Ask the person from an open place inside of you to share what they are experiencing. Come from a place of curiosity to keep your heart open, otherwise it may feel like you are launching an attack. If they don’t want to share after a couple of tries, you might ask why they are there. Depending on the circumstances you might want to take a break and check in with them one-on-one. When people return you might

put on some music and invite everyone to move their bodies.

Movement is effective for shifting each person's energy and also for raising the level of energy for everyone in the room. Be sure to include dancing or other type of movement periodically in your group sessions so that you have that tool available when you need it to shift the energy. Another great use of movement is before a meditation if the group feels sluggish or low energy. They need to be alert for meditation, so you can put on a dance piece first. Movement raises the energy in the field even if only part of the group dances. If you have people with physical constraints, they are welcome to either move in their chairs or sit still and meditate. The fact that some people are moving lifts everyone in the room. You just want to make sure that those who don't want to dance feel comfortable not doing so.

Complaints about others in the group may happen outside the group meetings. These have to be stopped in their tracks. If someone is speaking to you about another group member, point them back to that person or ask to meet with the two of them and help them sort it out. This contributes to creating a safe space in which people feel they can be candid without repercussion. Trust is in your leadership and each other builds a foundation on which people can do the deep internal explorations needed for growth.

You might also decide to set boundaries around people contacting you outside of group meetings. Sometimes, they are so happy to have someone who is capable of deep listening that they want to call you for extra support or just to talk. There are times when reaching out for support is appropriate, but you might want to set up an agreement ahead of time to limit these calls to what is truly necessary. Some people may seek to take advantage of your openness and call you frequently or try to engage you in long conversations.

If your group is meeting online, all of these recommendations still apply. In this case, be especially conscious about the energy field, before, during and after the call. Quantum fields aren't limited by space and time, so you can clear the space and energize the field as if you were preparing a physical space.

SUMMARY

As you can see, serving in your community requires commitment and dedication to your own growth. Keep bringing more awareness to all that is happening, including your motivations and reactions, and regularly clear your charges. Believe me; this path is not for the faint of heart. You have to walk your talk to play in this arena. To stay centered and connected, I recommend developing a powerful gratitude prac-

tice, keep praying for yourself and others, and commit to a meditation or breathing practice.

GRATITUDE

Gratitude is the best antidote for most of your predicaments. Your own sabotaging patterns seemingly get louder as your level of seeing expands. You start to become more aware of the ego games and mind tricks. It's easy to criticize yourself and spiral down into a victim state. Learn to celebrate your new levels of awareness. Remember, the mind typically tends toward negativity, searching the horizon for potential threats in order to keep you safe. There are always psychological threats to the ego and this is especially true when you walk this path. The mind, which is trying to keep you safe, is the issue. Keep your energy high so it's easier for you to access positive programming. A daily gratitude practice can support you here. As soon as you slip into judging yourself, find ten things you are grateful for. Find the gift in whatever challenge you find yourself in and thank Spirit for that insight. You'll immediately feel a shift. To increase the benefits of your gratitude practice, reexperience the moment for which you are grateful and, from that place of appreciation and joy, offer thanks. You'll feel even more expanded and inspired. And, there is still another level of gratitude. Imagine all that had to happen for Spirit to deliver

that delightful synchronicity, and from that place of wonder and amazement, offer gratitude. You'll experience a deep level of peace and a sense that Spirit is taking care of you. Gratitude elevates your energy by turning on your positive programming and relaxing the physical body.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Place the names of the people in your group on your home altar and pray for them daily. When you have some challenging personalities in your group, don't pray with the intention to change them. That can be a form of manipulation. Instead, put yourself in their shoes and experience their pain. From that place ask the Divine to help them. You can also tune in to what they may be needing for themselves and use the tonglen meditation to send relief, or bring the energy into your heart and transmute it. Love them as they are. Pray for them and then release it to the Divine.

COMMIT TO A PERSONAL PRACTICE

A daily meditation practice is critical for keeping your space clear and for deepening your connection with the Divine. The type of meditation can vary. Commit to at least twenty minutes, twice a day, and preferably an hour. If you connect in at your altar the

first thing every morning, your guidance system can more easily support all day long. The evening is a great time to release the day, clear your energy field, and prepare for sleep. I recommend the Evening Meditation in Appendix G. This meditation guides you to release charges, forgive anyone who hurt you, and bless everyone who crossed your path that day. This covers many of the basic ongoing practices required when working with people: gratitude, forgiveness, clearing your energy field, praying for others.

To get started, decide on your personal practice for the next thirty days. Write down your commitment below:

I commit to meditating _____ minutes _____ times a day.

You might want to include the specific meditations you plan to do this week. You can change those as needed, but it's important to have a starting point. I recommend always including a gratitude practice or the Evening Meditation.

It's also important to periodically review the contemplation questions for each of the leadership values from the last chapter. Acknowledge and celebrate any growth that you observe, and note if there are other values to add to your list. Write down your commitment to review these values below:

I commit to revisiting the value contemplations

in Chapter 6 _____ (monthly or however many apart weeks).

List any other personal practice commitments here: _____..

Now that you have some clarity and structure around gathering and working with your groups, you are ready for the next stage of learning.

USING FEEDBACK LOOPS, BASED ON YOUR GROUP'S DYNAMICS



You can't impact others without being impacted. Let's bring awareness to the areas in which you are being impacted as you courageously express your truth in the world. First take a moment and celebrate that you have come this far. Most people who have the desire to help others become immobilized in the face of fear. You have taken action steps despite your fears. To share your experience and transmit the essence of spiritual teachings takes courage and commitment. Take a moment to honor your service.

In this chapter, you'll consciously observe the people working with you and use these insights to fuel your growth which will in turn, help your groups grow. You'll learn to spot ego games and other types of self-deception that can interfere with your connection to source and your guidance.

WHOM ARE YOU ATTRACTING?

You may have noticed while working with others that certain types of people are drawn to you. When I first started doing this work I kept attracting clients or community members that were more left-brain oriented. Their strong minds would analyze and question everything. They wanted proof that these spiritual concepts were working for them. I could see myself in every one of them, remembering my struggle to achieve balance between cultivating my intuition and feeding my mind. I was effective in supporting them since this journey was familiar. Some gave up and resumed their eternal quest for someone outside themselves to give them relief from their mind's activity. Sometimes they would return after realizing they had no choice but to do the inner work.

Recently I've had clients who don't trust their visualizations because they monitor their thoughts so closely. The mind tells them that it's just imagination and disregards the visual messages they were already receiving from their higher self. This triggered a memory for me. In India, I remember hearing the monks say, "You can't progress if you don't receive visions in our processes." This is probably not exactly what they said, but it threw me into fear and completely shut down that capability in me. I was

afraid I wouldn't awaken and that I would fail as a spiritual leader. As I became more skilled in releasing fears and trusting myself, I was able to see my logical mind cutting off the visualization as soon as it started. Then I was able to work with that, allowing the mind to release its grip. Now, I'm able to help people through that stage of visualization. When this issue appeared in a recent client, I asked myself, "Why is this coming up right now? I dealt with this many years ago." Then I looked at the advice I was giving her of approaching things from curiosity and saying, "I wonder." I realized, that's my message too. I was two days away from writing my first draft of this manuscript and I realized that I needed to approach the project from the stance of "I wonder." I was then able to relax into the process and let it flow.

The first feedback loop is to look at who is being attracted to your work. What tools or teachings are you offering them? Do you also need those tools right now? Look across all of the people who have come your way. Is there a theme – a particular type of person or a consistent set of issues? Helping them through these issues naturally brings you more insight. Where do you have similar issues yourself and how can you address them? Keep a journal specifically for these feedback loops. As you continue working with people, you'll notice different sets of issues or different themes. It's useful to pay atten-

tion, note any insights and create an intention to address them.

At one time we had a series of empaths joining our community. With the deep emotional work everyone does in the space, I expected them to become overwhelmed or to leave. But they discovered that community members at Flowering Heart Center were responsible in owning their issues and emotions. These empaths didn't have the usual reaction of absorbing other peoples' emotions and feeling drained. They were intrigued and happy to have a place they could safely do their work. It was great for us hear their experience and we added this message in our marketing outreach. I imagine that many empaths never make it through our front door because they're afraid of being in an emotional washing machine. This experience helped me appreciate the value of what we were offering and it allowed me to encourage them to join us.

CONTEMPLATION ON WHOM YOU ARE ATTRACTING

Write down any insights in your journal as you contemplate these questions.

Take three deep, conscious breaths.

Connect with your Divine and relax into the presence.

Ask for support with compassionately seeing what you need to see.

Take a look at the group you are leading.

What issues do they bring?

What personalities get activated in the space (neediness, the know-it-all, the cheerleader)?

What is the most consistent theme across this group?

What issues did you observe in the people who didn't stay with your group? (They may not have gotten what they needed.)

Look at your answers above and see yourself in everyone.

Note any areas for you to work on or material to add to your presentations to allow those certain personality types to feel more at ease.

PART 2: REVISITING THE FIELD

Now relax, widen back, and feel into the quantum energy field of this group for a few moments.

What qualities are present in the field?

What qualities are group members embodying?

How are people treating each other?

How are they treating themselves?

How are they responding to your guidance?

Go back to your original intention for this group and to the qualities you seeded in the field.

Rate your group as a whole on the intention and each quality on a scale of one to five (where one is completely aligned and five is completely unaligned).

How aligned is your group across all categories?

Are there other values showing up that you want to add to your list?

What needs to be released and what needs to be empowered in the field?

For those qualities that need releasing, ask your Divine for support. First handle any issues you have around those qualities. If you have a resist on a certain personality or behavior, take it through “Embodying Resisted Behaviors” in Appendix E.

Look at the qualities that need empowering in your group. Find each quality in yourself. Or search for a photo of a teacher that strongly embodies one or more of the qualities. Look into their eyes for a few minutes and consciously receive their transmission. Close your eyes and fully embody those qualities now. Intensify them, and anchor them more deeply in yourself. Ask your Divine for support.

Consider engaging the group in a discussion around these qualities. Ask them to help cultivate these values and to release behaviors that don’t serve, in all of their interactions. Create a ritual to release what’s not serving and to reinforce the preferred values.

Remember to feed this field with these energies

on a daily basis, even for just a few minutes. Ask your group to do the same if you feel they would comply.

Complete this process with a list of things you are grateful for in this process.

SELF-DECEPTION

Self-deception occurs when we buy into the mind's strategies and then disown them by projecting on others. The first place to look from a leadership perspective is where you are asking others to do things that you yourself don't do or haven't done. For example, if you are asking the group to meditate ten minutes a day and you are not meditating, they are receiving mixed signals. I love the story about Gandhi where a mother brought her son to him. He had some illness and needed to stop eating sugar but didn't want to do so. The mom told Gandhi to tell her son to stop eating sugar. Gandhi told her to come back in a month. When they returned, he simply told the boy to stop eating sugar. The mom said, "Why did you make us come back? You could have told him that last month." Gandhi said that last month he was eating sugar. He could not tell him to stop.

Look at where self-deception is operating for you. If you are asking the group to meditate and you're not doing it yourself, then that is a more authori-

tarian approach and is not leading toward empowerment. They will likely not do it or not receive benefits. This doesn't mean you have to do everything that you are asking everyone else to do. Instead focus inside to see where integrity requires you to take action. This is the same issue as explaining teachings for which you don't have an experience. It interrupts the transmission.

Remember that the outer world is a reflection of the inner world. The group dynamics are rich territory for uncovering areas of investigation within you. I have had a series of people come through FHC that weren't willing to contribute financially to the center. We have one homeless man who comes to the Center occasionally, and he always puts a few dollars in the bowl. If he attends a workshop, he is determined to pay the full amount, and he works hard to gather the required money. I have offered him discounts, and he refuses. I have learned a lot from him about integrity. I also realized that it's not about having enough money but about the spirit of generosity and trust in the Divine. In the face of others not contributing, I had to see where I was not giving money to organizations that inspired me. I am getting better at that and more people are contributing at the center.

Review the following list of questions to see where you might want to focus your attention:

GROUP REFLECTIONS CONTEMPLATION

Get your journal. Take three deep, conscious breaths and ask your Divine to help you see more clearly.

Ask yourself:

For what are you blaming or judging the people coming to you for?

Where do you do that yourself? Relax and let yourself be shown.

Accept any impressions you get without judgment.

Release the energy behind any charges that are triggered in you.

What challenging situations repeat for you in people with whom you work?

Be clear and specific.

What belief might you have about yourself or your work that would create that type of challenge?

If you are having difficulty with this question then relax and use your imagination.

Ask yourself what someone else would have to believe to create these challenges in their life.

Look at that belief and use the Resentment Process in Appendix D.

Whom in your life do you feel has abandoned you or your group?

Work on the charges around the situation and then reach out to connect with them.

If they don't respond, pray for their happiness and

well-being or do the tonglen meditation in Chapter 6.

What types of personalities or situations that arise in the group tend to annoy you?

Compassionately find those personalities in yourself. Release the energy behind any charges that arise.

Where in your own life do you experience similar situations to the ones that annoy you in the group?

Release the energy behind any charges that arise.

If you feel a strong reaction to these questions, run the Embodying Resisted Behaviors Process in Appendix E.

What expectations or self-images are you holding about yourself right now?

Do several minutes of tonglen meditation on yourself and all others like you

Where in your group interactions do you try to be special or take credit for their growth?

Compassionately see the one in you who is needing significance.

If this need is particularly strong, do a few minutes of tonglen meditation.

Apologize to Spirit for taking ownership of something that is not yours and then give gratitude to Spirit for this amazing work.

Ask for help to turn the need for significance over to Spirit.

Make a note to talk about that experience in your group next time so they can see how you are also

being authentic and working with the teachings yourself.

Take a look at the person in your group with whom you have the most difficulty. Go through the Relationship Process in Appendix J.

Ask your Divine if there is anything else you need to see right now.

Relax into the loving presence and allow yourself to receive the Divine grace that flows when you are open to this level of self-honesty. Trust that it is there even if you can't feel it right now. Hold the intention for receiving and breathe slowly for a few minutes.

Offer gratitude for this level of seeing.

These are all areas where we deceive ourselves into thinking the other person needs to change." They" have the problem...if "they" would just listen to me and do the work they would progress. Then I would feel like I'm making an impact.

The ego is insidious. The more you grow, the more it uses your spiritual knowledge to trip you up. Even Jesus was tempted in the desert.

EGO GAMES

It's helpful to become familiar with the games frequently played by the ego to keep itself alive. We'll look at these from the view of a leader, so

you'll be able to more easily spot unaligned behavior. At Oneness University, we learned six games, and it's always a lively session when I introduce them to people. They immediately act out one or more of them in the process of saying how they don't play them. Watch out because you may get drawn in that way, and then it's hard to extract yourself and get the group back on track. These are called "games", but don't let that fool you; they are playing YOU. If you engage, you lose.

1. Domination

You like people to behave the way you expect and usually that means under your control. This is called friendship. If your friend says no to a request then your ego feels like it has lost control. Your leadership training may say great – they are owning their power. But your mind wants to win back control so tread carefully. Look to see if you stop interacting with them as subtle punishment.

The ways we dominate are either direct or indirect. With direct domination you may know the right words to put them back under your control. You also use gestures – eye rolling, raising eyebrows, or the volume of your voice. With indirect domination you use skill or philosophy. For example, "I know this because I went to India. I'm awakened because this guru told me I was. You should listen to me."

Another way is through guilt. “You didn’t come last week. Too bad, that was the best class yet.”

Look at how you use direct and/or indirect domination to control others. You may tell yourself you are doing it in the name of consciousness. But this implies that “the end justifies the means,” a stance that calibrates at a low level of consciousness.

2. Refusal to Be Dominated

As Byron Katie says, defense is the first act of war. The defender is also the aggressor. If you don’t want to be told what to do – especially by someone who should be learning from you, then you’ve just closed your heart. If you can’t dominate outwardly then you are internally boosting yourself and criticizing the one in control. Where do you have someone strong in authority over you and how does this play out? How can you step out of this game? How can you gracefully respond when your group points out where you are out of alignment? I’ve learned to pause, breathe, and thank them for their courage. If I’m in a good mood, I’ll laugh and acknowledge them.

3. I Am Right

Suppose you offer a teaching about relationships, and your group member goes home and has a big

fight with her spouse. She comes back and says that your teaching doesn't work. You know it works, but instead of arguing that she implemented it wrong, ask for details. Have her share what happened and guide her through it. Don't rely on the fact that this is a high-level teaching so it must be true. "I am right." This often happens for new group leaders who don't have the experience and are afraid of looking like a beginner. The easiest way out of that is to simply tell them you're a beginner. Group leaders often claim authority from somewhere else – quoting a master teacher for example. Watch for this temptation and don't do it. Instead, look at this situation with curiosity and see how everyone can learn from it.

4. You Are Wrong

Someone in your group may be doing a great job with their practices and experiencing the teachings. They may be growing quickly on their spiritual path and as a result, you yourself start to feel less significant. You may look for something they have done wrong to gain back authority. You may keep questioning them until you find something and then jump on it, "Right there. See where you went wrong?" Don't do this. Instead, celebrate their wins with them. You're not adding value by trying to find

something to fix. All of us can use more acknowledgment. Be generous with yours.

5. Survival

Anything born on this planet wants to grow, including your ideas (your ego). You start identifying with your ideas and become attached. If they are questioned or shown to be a problem you either fight for them or give up and feel defeated. The idea is making use of you, causing this emotional roller coaster. Watch for attachment to your positions and ideas. This will lead you into defending them (numbers three and four above), and you may be cycling through all the games. For more details on how we get attached to our ideas, refer to Chapter 8 in my previous book.

6. Cover Up

If you get caught in a lie, you may become philosophical, and say, “That’s your reality. Not mine. Everything is perfect. There are no accidents. Both of us are right in our own ways.” You are using these spiritual concepts to get out of experiencing the embarrassment of being wrong. As a leader you might think you should be correct all the time or at least, most of the time. Your ability to cop to a mistake is

one of your most important attributes. That will keep you honest and humble, build connection and allow for everyone to learn in a safe environment.

You might begin to see how you can cycle through all of these games like someone playing Whack-a-Mole – trying to escape responsibility for your words and actions. The ego does not like to be wrong. Watch for this with your groups, and then you can teach them these games.

You might notice as you go deeper into your experience with these games that whole personalities are associated with them. Look at the one in you who wants to cover up. This may be your five-year-old who got caught stealing cookies (I was three years old then) or your teen who got into trouble for speaking back to parents. When you observe the identity that is associated with the “cover up” game, then go into the charges from that time in your life using the Process for Releasing the Energy behind the Charge in Appendix C. You can also take your five-year-old or teenager through the Parent Process in my previous book and give her a chance to say what she needs to say. You can acknowledge her and give her a safe harbor.

The Dominator might be the big sister in you who treated your younger siblings harshly out of fear that your parents would punish you if your siblings were out of control. Again, sit with that one and

work through the charges. Put him or her through the relationship process.

You might start to notice all these different personalities arising within you engaging in these ego games and see how they start running the show. This is where your unconscious patterns are wreaking havoc in your life by escalating conflicts. Normally, we are a dance of personalities that arise as needed and fall away if we allow them to do so. You might consciously choose the Dominator in a threatening situation and engage that personality for your protection. You don't want that personality to end up using you, causing you to kick your dog and yell at the family after a bad day at work.

If there are personalities that consistently get the better of you, then look at who in your life has those personalities. Run the relationship process on them and keep working on it until they loosen their grip on you. This will make you more aware of those personalities and allow you to consciously step in and out of them. You can't afford to have these personalities take over when you are running groups. Although, if it's a spiritual group though, you can name them responsibly when you see it in yourself. It's a good teaching for all.

SELF-FORGIVENESS

“Letting go of the hurt is forgiveness.”

— SRI AMMABHAGAVAN

As you can see from this long list of games and deceptions, you can easily wind up judging yourself and spiral down into a more conflicted state. When you take these games seriously it shuts down your growth and you become more at their mercy. Choose instead to lighten up and bring humor to the situation. Reflect at the end of the day on the personalities that arose in you and caused issues. See these as cartoon characters or superheroes and watch the scenes play out. Exaggerate the actions of everyone to the point of laughing. When you’ve lightened up a bit, take it through the Evening meditation in Appendix G, where you feel the pain you gave the others and ask for forgiveness. If there is an action step needed to resolve the situation with others, then commit to taking that step.

Remember to keep giving yourself a break when you need one. According to David Hawkins, we are unconscious 24 percent of the time even when we think we are conscious. This is why extreme sports are so dangerous – if that unconscious moment appears when you are supposed to pull the ripcord, it

can be all over. Thankfully, I quit sky diving when my parents went on strike and said they wouldn't watch my kids anymore. They apparently understood the risks better than I did. This means that, despite your best effort to be aware of what is happening inside you and with the group, your mind is likely to check out periodically. Your potential set of actions arise out of the field, so if you are in a higher state of consciousness, your actions will be in alignment during those checked-out moments. Lighten up on yourself, release your expectations, and lean into the Divine as often as possible.

As you become more playful, you'll start to appreciate the humor in the personalities that are playing out in your group. When you see it happening everywhere, you realize you are not at fault. Forgiving yourself starts with seeing that you were at their mercy of these cartoon characters inside of you. Accept that you did the best you could at the time. Release the charges. Ask your Divine with support in loving your humanness. A few minutes of the tonglen meditation will release the hurt and bring you back into compassion for yourself and others.

RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY

The quality of your life depends on the quality of your relationships. As a leader, your ability to clear

the hurts in your relationships is critical, especially since you'll be supporting your group with their charges. Take a few moments to investigate the current state of your relationships with this inventory.

On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate these relationships in terms of the level of hurts you carry? One is clear. Ten is full of hurts:

Relationship to:

- Your Divine
- Yourself
- Your family
- Your groups
- Your peers
- Your boss
- Your purpose
- Your intentions
- Leadership

For any of these that are five or greater, go back through the Relationship Process in Appendix J.

Feedback loops are by their nature circular, so keep looking at patterns and referring back to the appropriate processes to clear them. This is how you grow in consciousness. Keep these worksheet answers in your journal for future reference. When a particular relationship or personality cycles back into trouble, you may start to notice a pattern. You may find that these challenges arise monthly, seasonally, or annually. This information can help you prepare and reduce or eliminate their impact.

Working with others brings you more clarity around aspects of yourself that need investigation. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes community to develop a leader. What might take you years to learn about yourself in your normal life, takes only months when leading groups. Knowing that you will be receiving this constant feedback, be prepared to meet it with lightness and humor. Keep the vibration high in your home and workspace to help with buoyancy. It's harder to spiral down in that energy. Nurturing your body, mind, and Spirit becomes a necessary addition to your routines. You can begin to see why Jesus had twelve apostles. You can create your team of twelve or more.

In the next chapter, we'll look at how to increase your current level of support.

GARNERING SUPPORT AND PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE



At times you might believe this leadership role is overly demanding. You are courageously finding your voice and learning to trust that the insights from Spirit will flow. If there are group dynamics, it's up to you to bring them into harmony again. You may be holding space for this group in between meetings as well as during them. Even if you are sharing leadership among the group, you are holding space for each leader to succeed while being a good student at the same time. Given this level of holding, creating a support system for yourself will keep you persisting through the challenges and more effective in your role. It's helpful to participate in different circles of people for receiving and providing support. We aren't meant to take this journey alone - we are meant to lift each other up.

The variety of possible support systems is limited

only by your imagination. I'll mention just a few ideas here, such as creating a group of advisors, surrounding yourself with people who will tell you truth in a compassionate way, letting Spirit do the heavy lifting, working with ancestors, and scheduling time to nurture your physical body.

ADVISORS

You can create an informal group of advisors or a mastermind group. Who do you know who is doing similar work? Whom do you admire? Whom do you know is a good sounding board? Start to make a list of possible support people and what qualities they bring. Then, when you're in the midst of a challenge, without the free attention to look for help, you'll have your list ready. Simply maintaining a list will bring your attention to these people and you'll naturally connect with them more often. In those challenging moments, they will be there for you.

ADVISOR LIST

Get your computer or journal and create your list of at least fifteen people, including:

- People doing similar work
- People coaching others in a different line of work

- People who are good listeners
- Creative people who think outside the box
- Visionaries
- Someone who is good with structure
- A compassionate person to hold space for your process
- Someone more skilled than you from whom you can learn
- Someone with less experience than you who might need your support
- Someone who has a high functioning team
- Someone who is easy to reach and happy to receive spontaneous calls
- Someone who likes to go for walks
- Someone who likes to brainstorm
- Someone with similar views
- Someone with different views on life

- Other possible forms of support?

Keep this list updated and easily accessible. It's important to get multiple viewpoints on situations so that you don't get stuck thinking there is only one way to accomplish something. You might find that you want to create a structured support group that meets regularly to share experiences and help each other grow. There are materials on the internet that explain how to run a mastermind group, or you can use them to create your process. Once you decide on the form of your advisory group, then set a specific intention for yourself:

I create an advisory group of ____ people who convene ____ (monthly) to _____ by ____ (date).

Whether your advisory group is structured or informal, make sure to create an environment where people feel safe and encouraged to tell the truth. You'll find as your commitment to truth grows, your advisors will need to be people who can meet you in that way. If you discover someone is not interested in that level of truth or exploration, then before you write them off, look in the mirror. See where you are resisting truth in your life. Recommit to a higher level of truth within your thoughts, words, and deeds. Then update your intention to invite people who will hold you to that high standard.

When I work with someone who is outspoken

about beliefs that differ greatly from mine, I remember Abraham Lincoln. He filled his administration with people of widely diverging viewpoints (a “team of rivals”), which created a lot of lively and passionate arguments. Because he wasn’t drawn into divisiveness and taking sides, he was able to glean the best course of action from the variety of ideas and views presented. He allowed everyone to fully speak their minds. While I admire this model, my introverted self finds that type of confrontation challenging. Whenever there is dissention and controversy, I remember that story and find new appreciation for my situation. A diverse set of viewpoints brings the possibility of a superior solution that transcends polarities and serves the highest good for all. You might prefer a group who can speak their truths in a more compassionate way. Whatever approach you decide is best for you – consciously create that. Be willing to stretch yourself in the process.

DECISION-MAKING

Sometimes hard decisions have to be made. You’ve contemplated, prayed, and asked for support. No one else can make the decision for you, but you may still need support. The optimal path may not be clear because you are resisting a certain outcome. Sometimes, I know what I prefer and realize that I can’t

trust my own reading of my intuition. In these situations it's helpful to use other tools.

I might pull tarot cards for each potential choice. This often gives me additional insights and sometimes a clear answer. Before I ask a specific question, I have to be willing to follow the guidance I receive. I only ask when I am ready to act. I don't keep asking. By asking the question once, you've already changed reality. However, circumstances can change, and I might ask the question again several days or weeks later. Don't ask again just because you don't like the result or because you didn't "hear" it the first time.

Sometimes I use a pendulum if I'm not overly attached to the outcome. When we downsized from a large home to a townhouse, I realized I couldn't possibly keep all of my books. As I looked at each one I just wanted to keep it. I decided to let Spirit tell me which books would be of use to me going forward. I laid them all out on my floor and used my pendulum to decide which books to keep. Then I quickly boxed up the ones that didn't pass the test and gave them away before I had a chance to salvage them.

As a general rule I prefer not to rely on tools for decision-making. I want to get clearer and more connected with my internal guidance. However, when used appropriately, I find them useful.

LETTING SPIRIT DO THE HEAVY LIFTING

When you are in action, forming groups, sharing teachings and supporting participants' growth, you'll notice more grace flowing through your life. This is a natural occurrence. The more people you are helping, the more resources you need, and the Divine is happy to deliver. Since you are carrying out the work of Spirit in the world, you can take bigger risks and rely more heavily on the Divine to deliver.

My first big risk in this regard was choosing to focus on developing and growing the community in the face of our finances dwindling. Our house had been on the market for a few years and we weren't getting any activity. Unfortunately we had timed it with the market crash of 2008. Since our community met in our home, I was conflicted around letting the home go. I felt our community was not yet strong enough to handle a move. Financially, there seemed to be no other option but to sell. During this time, a friend from out of town stayed with us. He knew nothing about our financial situation but had seen the For Sale sign out front. As he meditated in our event room, he was inspired to pray that we keep the house. I was so surprised when he apologetically relayed that message. I told the Divine, if we are supposed to keep that house, then please help us pay the bills. We took a leap of faith, pulled our home off the market, and managed

to survive another ten years before selling it. A series of miracles allowed us to continue, but it was a wild ride. My mind was terrified and screamed at me every time I looked at the bills. Somehow we kept going. Through this process I not only developed a deeper relationship with my Divine, but I also learned to let the Divine figure out how to make things happen. I needed to do my part and focus on the community and give up control of the finances.

This is the same level of faith that allowed me to keep walking the El Camino trail through northern Spain despite chronic knee pain. Each morning as I walked out of the hotel, I prayed I would make it the full fifteen miles to my next stop. Sometimes I sat down in the middle of wide-open fields with no one in sight and cried. Somehow I found the strength to get up and keep going. I received what I needed when I needed it.

At one point I heard a woman's voice behind me. "He says it's fine. Stop worrying." I turned around. "What did you say?" "The baby you almost had." "Wait, are you referring to the first one I lost or the fourth one that I wasn't sure was there? The one I said empathically No to?" "That one." In wonder I thought, so I was pregnant. Wait a minute – how did she know I was thinking about this? "His name is David. He wants you to know he is still there with you, and he is happy." I felt this wave of peace wash

over me, my load lightened, and there was a spring in my step.

Before I even asked, the Divine was helping me, yet again.

For us to trust Spirit enough to take risks, we need to remember all the ways that we have already been supported. Often we rush right over a synchronicity, forgetting it happened. Acknowledging and offering gratitude for the Divine hand in our lives is important for us to develop trust and to strengthen that relationship.

CONTEMPLATION: THE DIVINE HAND IN YOUR LIFE

Stop for a moment and take three deep, conscious breaths.

Bring your attention to your heart and connect with the Divine.

Bring to mind the synchronicities, insights, and grace that have flowed in your life.

Take your time reviewing and reexperiencing each of these beautiful moments from a place of gratitude.

Notice how strongly the Divine operates in your life. Remember the times when Divine guidance saved you from a difficult situation.

Remember a time when someone intervened and helped you at a critical moment.

Offer gratitude for all of the miraculous ways the Divine has supported you.

Now bring to mind the times where your inner guidance was nudging you to do something and you didn't.

What were the consequences from ignoring this guidance?

Where in your life are you currently feeling inspired to take a risk but are hesitating to do so?

What are you waiting for?

Perhaps you can't see beyond the next step and you want assurances?

Can you commit to taking that step anyway?

Can you trust?

How much power are you willing to give to your inner Divine?

Make a commitment with your Divine that will support you in moving forward.

Breathe.

Offer gratitude for this Divine presence.

If you feel inspired to take a risk but want confirmation, ask your Divine for a visible sign about whether to go forward. My sign for taking the house off the market was a friend telling me he felt compelled to pray we keep the house.

When asked about walking the El Camino, a big "Yes" flew out of my mouth. I knew that wasn't me speaking and that I had to follow through. I

committed on the spot. When you receive a sign, take action before the mind paralyzes you by listing all the reasons why action is a bad idea. When you courageously act, the Divine meets you and starts opening doors. This is the same stance you need to take when working with your clients or group members. They need to meet you halfway. You can't want it for them more than they do. It doesn't work. The Divine works in a similar but more powerful way. For each step you take toward the Divine, you might find the Divine takes a thousand steps toward you. When you experience the grace flowing, offer thanks to your Divine. Gratitude is the fuel that keeps you going.

ANCESTORS

Your ancestral relationships, just like your other relationships, need nurturing. I used to think that once someone passed, my relationship with him or her was completed. I believed they continue living in another form, but I didn't realize I could still connect with them.

In my Oneness training in India, I learned that it's my responsibility to pray for the liberation of my ancestors, to help them move to higher realms. That was quite a revelation for me. Why would they need my help? There are many levels of existence beyond the earth plane. Souls may experience delays in their

journey after death, especially if they die suddenly. They can become stuck if they have attachments to property or people in both positive ways (worried about someone) and negative (wanting revenge). Unresolved hurts, and unfulfilled dreams, can also cause issues. We can reach our ancestors through intention and prayer and support them to move on.

I was intrigued by this concept. After being trained in India, I offered many ancestor processes at FHC, and community members received extraordinary results. For example, people often report seeing certain birds or animals that were the favorite of their relatives. Some experienced a healing within their family relationships and others experienced more abundance in their lives. I have also received many signs from my ancestors, including lost photos turning up and people suddenly giving me things that belonged to distant relatives.

Over the years one of the more striking stories involves a friend of mine who had a poor relationship with his mother-in-law. The day she passed he called and said, "The witch is dead." She undoubtedly heard that. People stay close to this earth plane for about ten days and usually at least until their funeral, so be careful what you say. Before his mother's death, my friend had always had good-paying jobs. After speaking about her in this way, he couldn't hold a job for the next several years. I didn't

put that together until I was in the midst of one particular ancestor process and the light went on. I made it a point to relate my insights to him and was shocked that he believed me. He is not generally into spiritual concepts, but he had had some other major incidents happen where he believed that she was involved. I asked if he had made peace with her, and he said yes. I notice that he has kept his job since that happened.

It's important to speak kindly of someone who has died and to support them with prayers or lighting candles and offering forgiveness. During their transition time, they go through a life review where they experience all sides of every life incident. For examples, they might experience what their partner felt when they yelled at them. At the end of the review, many souls feel chastened and want to make amends by reincarnating into difficult situations. If instead they ask for liberation, it's given. We are our own judge and jury. How you have treated others in this lifetime will impact how you treat yourself in these crucial moments of choosing your next steps. This is why it's important to clear as many hurts while you are living as you possibly can and to proactively forgive yourself and others.

If someone you know is passing, pray for their liberation. Talk to them and tell them they can ask for liberation. Encourage them to forgive themselves. Also, offer forgiveness to them for any way they have

hurt you. Ask forgiveness for any way you have consciously or unconsciously hurt them. Continue this process for the first ten days while they are close by.

You might be wondering, “How else do our relationships with our ancestors impact us and how do we know we are helping them? What does this have to do with leadership training?”

As you might deduce from my friend’s example, challenges in your life can be the result of issues with your ancestors. These don’t have to be your issues. If your grandfather was upset with your father, and that was not resolved between them, you’ll also experience challenges in your life. You are closely connected to your lineage. Your financial stress or health could be related to such unresolved conflicts. Remember though, that honoring our ancestors is not meant to be for our gain. Praying for their liberation must come from a place of sincerely wanting to help them. As your ancestors ascend to higher realms, they experience more freedom and joy. That would naturally affect you through your connection with them.

A simple ritual will have a big impact. Find their photos or write their names on paper, and place it on your altar alongside or below photos of your Divine. Light a candle and incense. It’s great to have an offering of fresh flowers or food that they like.

ANCESTOR CONTEMPLATION

Close your eyes.

Take three deep breaths.

Drop into your heart and powerfully invoke the Divine.

Allow this presence to envelop you.

Take a moment to strengthen this bond by reviewing each beautiful moment over the last few days, reexperiencing that moment, and from there offering gratitude.

Set a clear intention for liberating your ancestors.

Tune in to see which ancestors want to be a part of the journey and write their names. If you don't know the name just write their relationship (e.g., great-grandmother on my mom's side).

Check to see if there are any others who want to be a part of this experience.

If you bring an ancestor to mind and they appear to be sad, include them.

If you know of anyone who died unexpectedly, with unfulfilled dreams or commitments, include them.

If any of them committed suicide, include them.

If you have any unfinished business with any ancestor, include them.

Try to keep the number around twelve or fewer so you have time to focus on each one.

When you feel complete with your list, pray to your Divine for their liberation.

Focus on each name.

For each one ask for forgiveness for any way you have consciously or unconsciously hurt them.

Forgive them for any ways they have consciously or unconsciously hurt you.

Thank them for all they did while here on earth

Tell them their work here is done, and it's time to ascend to the higher realms where there is more joy

Visualize golden light around them and see them ascending.

Do this for each one.

For those with whom you have unfinished business, write down any actions you need to take to clear it.

You can ask for a sign from your ancestors, if you would like.

Put on a piece of music and dance to celebrate their liberation.

Put out the candle.

Place any food from the altar outside for the animals.

Leave your list of names on the altar.

Repeat this process daily for eleven days.

Take notes after each day if you received any signs from them or noticed any shift in your life from doing this process.

You may find through this focused attention on your ancestors that there is someone in your lineage

you feel more drawn to. Continue to connect with them and develop that relationship. You may be able to ask for support in some specific area. I have asked various ancestors for support in dealing with issues with current family members. Those relationships miraculously start to lighten up.

Continuing to honor your ancestors creates another level of support. It feels like they are there with you. You may feel less like you are alone. It's worth putting in the effort. You can also help members of your group or community support their family members who pass away. Let them know these teachings, light a candle for their family member and pray for them.

SELF-CARE

An area that many people in service to others forget or make a low priority is self-care. I also struggle with carving out time for this. When I do so, I see that I show up with more energy to serve. The healthier our physical bodies are, the easier it is to hold higher energies and the better we can serve others. Put some attention on the types of diet, movement, and sleep patterns that give you energy. As a spiritual leader, these are important for your integration process. With this new level of self-awareness comes a lot of information. As your capacity to process information increases, your mind

needs periods of silence to integrate what you have learned. In addition to the daily meditations that are part of your practice, taking whole days in silence is important. This means disengaging from electronics. Whenever you naturally feel more drawn to silence, honor that. I also find that floating in sensory deprivation tanks brings me a deep sense of peace and a profound relaxation and nourishment for the body. Another important self-care activity is spending time out in nature. Nature not only has a deeply healing impact, it's also our teacher. We're currently living in a world built on technology or on the well-honed skills of the intellect. Right now we are seeing the impact of relying too much on technology at the expense of the environment. The way forward from here is a better balance or harmony with the planet and with each other. We have much to learn from nature about how to proceed. In order to bring more balance into your life, take walks or meditate outside.

Now that you have created your support system, and addressed self-care, you have the inner strength to address any obstacles that might arise in your community.

BEING ALERT AND IMMEDIATELY
ADDRESSING ISSUES THAT CAN
POLARIZE YOUR COMMUNITY



Obstacles or difficult situations that appear in your groups or community are likely ones that reside in your life too; remember, the outer world is a reflection of the inner world. As the size of your groups or community increases, so does this reflection. Perhaps you are beginning to see what it means to be a self-responsible leader. You may want to go back to the last chapter for more self-care before you tackle this one.

The good news is that you can prepare. When a big expansion occurs in your group, take time out for some deep integrity and clearing work. Just as trees grow stronger, deeper roots before they extend their canopies, you'll be called to turn inward. One of the most effective and powerful processes for internal work is a three- to five-day dark room process. If you are not able to do that, then be sure to revisit the

earlier chapters in this book to assess your relationships and how you are currently embodying your values and aligning to your purpose. If you need to do more relationship work, go through Chapter 7 of my previous book. If you need to work on your values, go back through the worksheets and contemplations in Chapter 6. If there are qualities showing up in you that are causing issues, go through the processes in Embodying Resisted Behaviors Process in appendix E.

We'll go through the dark room process in more detail next. Then I'll address potential issues that may arise in your community that need immediate attention, such as competitiveness, gossip, and psychic attacks. These can create major obstacles in your work, but with preparation you can keep the community whole. Take a deep breath and connect with your inner warrior for strength and your inner child for curiosity; you may need both traits.

DARK ROOM PROCESS

When I first started offering guided meditations, Spirit prompted me to offer a series of meditations in the dark. I found this work intriguing. It was the middle of winter, and darkness was having a toll on many people around me. Students signed up who were either afraid of the dark or new to this experience. The insights and healings they received from

doing the process astounded me. The ones who were afraid of the dark, made their peace with it and began to enjoy it.

Byron Katie's perspective on darkness is powerful: "The *Tao Te Ching* says that the source of everything is 'darkness.'"

"Darkness is our source. In the end, it embraces everything. Its nature is love, and in our confusion, we name it terror and ugliness. All our stress results from what we imagine is in the darkness. We imagine darkness separate from ourselves, and we project something terrible into it. But in reality the darkness is always benevolent."

Darkness is needed for light to shine. This showed up for me literally in my three-day darkness meditation. I knew something needed to shift in my life, and I looked forward to what this process might bring. I was not prepared for what occurred either during or afterward. During those three days, I was in great physical pain down the back of both of my legs, preventing me from sitting or lying down comfortably. I was shocked since I don't normally experience this type of pain. Then I remembered that during the deeper processes in the temple in India, my quads felt like they were on fire. Much of my processing pain was physical, as opposed to the psychological pain some of my friends experienced. The vision I had of blissfully meditating for three days in the dark with no interruptions was

completely destroyed. After two and a half days the pain subsided enough for me to sleep. I had many visions during that time and experienced light in the room occasionally. I felt like I was in another dimension, walking around a lighted room that looked similar but different from my home. The real process started when I came back out into the world. Bombs went off in various areas of my life where there were integrity issues or unresolved conflicts. I could no longer avoid them. I went through a period of three difficult months as I dealt with the consequences of many of my past actions. At the end of that period, my growth started taking off again. Despite the challenges I had encountered, I was hugely grateful for the healing and the new level of freedom inside.

A dark room process should never be taken lightly. You are placing yourself in the hands of the Divine to move through any obstacles to love. You might have intentions for your process, but the higher self is in charge. When you are ready for it, you can use the following basic structure.

Prepare the room so no light gets in. if the room has windows, you can use black foam boards and black tape ("gaffers tape" works well) to cover and seal them light-tight. Make sure you have access to a bathroom, bed, drinking water, and preferably a mini-fridge. Keep electronics out of the room. I recommend that someone stays home in case you need support during the process or at the least you

can arrange for someone to stop by daily to unobtrusively check on you. These arrangements will settle any fears your mind may have around safety. You can also ask them to open the door when your three days is up because you'll have no way of knowing what day or time it is.

Start a juice fast at least five days before the start of your process. During that time you can meditate, have conversations with the Divine, look at the issues in your life and set intentions. You can prepare juices in advance for your three-day experience and some light snacks if you feel you might need them. Remember, it will be pitch dark during the process, so you won't be able to see what you're eating. If you can stay with the juice fast, that's optimal.

Use these full three days to surrender to the process your Divine is taking you through. The challenges might be physical for you, so stay with them even if you have pain. On the other hand, your challenges might be more psychological. There really is no way to predict the experience, so surrender to whatever is happening for you. When the process is complete, take the time you need to integrate and come slowly off the fast. Then be prepared to meet whatever challenges may appear in your life with the knowledge that by doing this process, you called this in for your evolution. This thought supported me through some difficult times. Keep a journal of your

insights and experiences for a few months afterward. Offer gratitude for all that you receive.

COMPETITIVENESS

Your internal work will help you become clearer and more centered within yourself so you are able to more effectively deal with difficult community dynamics. Be alert for competitiveness or gossip among the group. Within your groups, people may compete for attention. Pointing this out when you see it and making light of it as a group usually handles this. Reorient the group towards cooperation and explain the pitfalls of competitiveness in relationships. Remember this from the ego games (in Chapter 8 above); both parties lose when they engage. These games are often the root cause of competitive behavior. Encouraging those involved to focus on the health of the entire group or that of the quantum field in all of their interactions, will naturally move people towards a more cooperative stance.

Gossip is very destructive, so be alert when participants start complaining to you or others outside your group gatherings about fellow members. Stop them right away and ask them to go talk directly to the other or listen to them and then guide them to go inside and see where this behavior is coming from. The other may be reflecting some-

thing they don't want to see about themselves. Ask what's it bringing up in them. Guide them through seeing and releasing the charge; this will often resolve the issue for them. These issues may keep coming up repeatedly until the root issue is uncovered, so continue to monitor it.. Perhaps the person involved would be willing to share their insights at a group meeting, which can be very useful to others. As the group becomes more aware of the interpersonal dynamics and more skilled in handling their charges, their individual growth will accelerate. Be mindful not to engage in side discussions with fellow group members about others. These types of conversations undermine the community and create divisions.

Remember that we are all human. If you find yourself falling into this trap, go back to the person whom you talked with and apologize for colluding in these behaviors and tell them what you learned from that experience. Then go to the person the two of you were colluding about and share with them also. This takes true humility, heart, and skill but it is well worth the effort. Pray and ask for assistance from the Divine with this. It's a great learning tool for everyone involved - especially in a society where talking behind someone's back is commonplace.

If you discover that others in the community are gossiping about each other, then you'll need to intervene immediately. In such a case, it helps if you have

advance agreements within your group on how to interact with each other. Then you can remind them. Otherwise, you can revisit the original intention for this group and show how these behaviors are out of alignment with it. Do this with compassion. Remember that everyone craves significance and that one of the mind's ways to get it is through putting others down. It takes practice to stay clear in this way. If you can be alert to this behavior and stop it as soon as it starts, you will be creating a field around that group where this type of behavior simply won't continue to arise. It won't be one of the potential actions that can arise out of the quantum field of that group.

Approval seeking is another behavior that often arises in these groups during spiritual growth. This is also usually easily handled by pointing it out lightly. Where you might get tripped up is where your own ego locks on and uses that to feel significant. Watch for this in yourself.

DIVISIVENESS

Gossip and competitiveness are often way that divisiveness arises within a group, but these behaviors are so ingrained in our current culture that they require their own discussion. We currently live on a polarity planet so there is always a pull between two opposing forces. We forget that there are a multitude

of options between dark and light or right and wrong. The mind based in duality is programmed to swing from one side to the other and to ignore the territory in between.

Nowhere is this so obvious as in our current political system. There are now two choices for which party to belong to – Democrat or Republican. Rarely is there a third viable party. When you identify as Democrat, people immediately assume a lot of things about you. You are liberal, want to get rid of guns, want socialism, et cetera. Notice how even the descriptions themselves are extreme: for example, if you want affordable healthcare for all, you must be a socialist. When you pin a whole set of characteristics to someone's party affiliation, you've lost touch with the real person. You just see a Democrat, and if you are Republican, they are the enemy. I've seen neighbors lose friends because they belong to the other party. We are relating to a whole set of beliefs rather than to the real person. Maybe they are conservative Democrats, or truly compassionate Republicans. We'll never find out if we simply cross them off our list. This is exactly how the mind operates; it's more comfortable jumping to conclusions than sitting in the unknown. Remember, the mind is constantly assessing threat levels to protect you from harm. It is reluctant to stop and evaluate carefully. To avoid this trap, you need to train yourself to say, "I don't know" and "I wonder" about each person.

Notice the places where you have strong positions or stances on an issue. When you harden your stance, learning stops. The mind has concluded and doesn't need to investigate or even consider further evidence. Furthermore, you've just invited divisiveness. As soon as you sit solidly in a position – “I don't like these rules” you've invited the other to take the opposite stance – “without rules we would have a mess on our hands.” Even if the person might normally agree with you in this case, they are simply responding to your positionality and taking the opposite stance. By taking a solid stance, you have invited it. You may have had that experience of arguing with your partner while knowing full well you agree with his or her point. Become aware of this tendency. When you take strong positions, it can create polarization in the larger community. When controversial issues arise, this tendency toward polarization can create a rift with people choosing sides. As a spiritual leader you need to embody equanimity.

Taking positions and creating divisiveness requires constant monitoring because it's a natural tendency. If you are in a particular stance, your group members may not voice their opinions because they don't feel they should compete with you. They don't feel free to speak their truth. Divisiveness also implies there are only two possible positions which precludes your ability to find other stances that are

superior to both viewpoints. Offer your opinion and visualize laying it on the table without attachment, to let others view it. Invite many different viewpoints. Listen and seek to understand them all before you pick a course of action. Train your group to do this as well.

The opposite of Divisiveness is Oneness. One way to look at this duality is to remind yourself that there is only one variable with infinite variety, not two. For example, darkness doesn't exist. The one variable is light; either there is little light or a lot of light. Focusing on the one variable allows us to more easily examine various different choices. It's the difference between an on/off switch and a dimmer. There are many gradations to choose with a dimmer switch. With almost every pair of seeming opposites you can collapse them to one variable with many different gradations of that variable. Good versus Bad could be reframed as one variable - the degree of desirability. Instead of choosing one side, start looking for the one attribute behind two seeming opposites.

I often keep a six-sided cube on my desk or a twelve-sided one. If I'm contemplating an issue, I keep turning the cube to find different viewpoints. This is a great exercise when you are stuck in positionality and inviting or tolerating divisiveness within a group.

INSENSITIVITY

Insensitivity is a block to growth, since it shows up as lack of concern about the other. For example, I can become insensitive when I focus on the numbers of people attending events in order to evaluate my own success. I might run over others as I try to persuade them to attend, so that I feel better about this. Or, an authority figure might ask you to enforce a rule that simply doesn't work in your group. Rather than work with the authority figure, you might just enforce the rule and simply say, "It's not my fault. I was told to do this." Another way insensitivity shows up is when you're deeply involved in your work, and you don't take the time to stop and listen when someone starts talking to you. Perhaps you are looking at your phone instead of really listening.

Where insensitivity can do major damage is when it is pointed toward specific people and not addressed. Left unchecked, it can spread like a virus. If you believe you can close your heart to one particular person or situation without consequence, you are fooling yourself. The insensitivity you have towards one person will slowly seep into all other relationships, including community members and your Divine. Make it a personal practice to face the issues in these challenging relationships that you want to avoid. Works with your group members to do the same.

Insensitivity may show up when you are low on energy. Be aware when this is happening, reconnect inside with your Divine and ask for help. You are holding space for your group to connect more deeply with their Divine and with each other. Carry that desire for connection into all of your interactions with others and inspire them to do the same. Don't talk to someone while looking at your phone. They will keep talking and prolong the conversation simply because they are not being heard. This will end up taking more of your time than it will if you just stop what you are doing and listening.

Our current world is so fast paced that we make excuses for this behavior: "I can't be late. If I don't finish this right now, it won't get done, and I'll get in trouble." The pace is inhuman and oppressive. We are trying to keep up with technology that is always faster than us. What can we expect to happen when AI (artificial intelligence) occupies more jobs and we have to interface with them? Will we become more robotic and less sensitive? Or will we demand they entrain to us?

Your group members may not have any other place in their lives where they can simply slow down and sense the world around them. If you can support them in valuing this behavior, they can find ways of bringing more sensitivity into their work or home lives. The grounding meditation in Chapter 6 is a powerful one for reconnecting to your sensory body.

FEAR

Fear itself is not a problem; fear of fear is the real issue. Psychological fear doesn't mean that you are headed into trouble. Sometimes people view fear as a sign to pull away from something. Fear is your constant companion as long as you are walking forward into unknown territory. The spiritual path is by definition unknown. Spirit doesn't conform to any rules of the mind. Expect that fear will show up, don't let it stop you and don't try to stop it. Make friends with your fears and keep walking forward anyway. When it catches you by surprise, train yourself to lean into it, and you'll experience that fear is actually insubstantial. It always retreats when confronted.

HANDLING ATTACKS

Psychic attacks often come with this territory. People may open up and talk about issues or experiences that they haven't shared with others before. Sometimes there is a backlash from the mind, and they blame you for it. Ill wishes can be unconscious, but they have an impact on your energy field, which can affect you physically and psychologically. Curses are a more conscious form of attack and also more damaging. How do you know if you are under attack?

You might have suspicions based on the behaviors of a group member. Trust your instinct on this. If you believe that someone has wished you ill, then do some clearing of your own energy field. You might start with a chakra clearing meditation; then tune into your Divine, ask about this person, do some forgiveness work, cut the energetic cords, and ask for any remaining energy be released.

If you have been verbally attacked in your space then also smudge the space to release any remaining energy. If the attack continues, seek out an energy worker to help you release it.

Since this is a common occurrence for people on this path, I would recommend a daily protective practice. In your morning meditation or before you work with an individual or group, visualize yourself surrounded with white light and a reflective shield. The purpose of that shield is to send any negative energies back to where they came from. At the end of the day or the end of sessions, remember to cut the energetic cords. Remaining connected to others after sessions can drain your energy.

ABUSE OF POWER

Since significance is a basic need of the mind, you'll have to continue to monitor it. As your community grows, so does the amount of grace flowing through you. This can feel quite powerful at times. If you

forget that this power is not yours, trouble begins. If you look across the history of large spiritual movements, abuse of power eventually shows up in almost every one of them. The consciousness level of a guru or institution might be quite high when it starts out, but if they are caught in the glamor of it, their consciousness level drops, and abuse of power becomes a possible behavior.

When you are in the space of giving teaching and helping others, the Divine is flowing through. People are naturally attracted to you because of that. The more you grow, the more grace flows and the more susceptible you are to believing it's your power, leading to potential abuse. This is one reason for doing a round of deep integrity work each time you experience more growth.

Take a moment to contemplate the following questions to see in what ways you tend to abuse power. This will help you spot the behavior more quickly and refocus your attention on the higher values of love and connection.

RELATIONSHIP TO POWER CONTEMPLATION

Take a few moments to center and ground yourself so you can receive a clearer picture of how power is operating in your life:

Close your eyes.

Take three deep breaths.

Drop into your heart and powerfully invoke the Divine.

Ask for support in seeing the ways you have abused power so that you can be more conscious going forward.

As you contemplate these following questions, look into all areas of your life – family, work, friends, and spiritual community. Write down your answers, while staying in a quiet meditative state.

Where do you pressure others to do something that you want them to do?

In what ways have you taken advantage of others?

Do you believe that you know better than others what's good for them?

Are you empowering your group, family or subordinates at work, or are you instead making them more dependent on you?

In what ways are you using your influence to get something you want from others?

In what circumstances have you decided that the end justifies the means?

Where are you keeping people tied to you for their own good or in the name of consciousness?

Where are you breaking the rules because you can get away with it at your level of authority or position?

Where else in your life do you feel entitled?

Are you promising something you can't give your spiritual group (such as awakening) and stringing them along by saying that one more class with you will do it?

If someone has abused their power with you, in what ways have you retaliated?

Where have you not spoken up to help someone because you might get into trouble?

Where have you kept silent while others are abusing their power?

Close your eyes again and feel all that has arisen from seeing your relationship to power. Be present to your feelings for a few moments. One at a time, bring them into your heart and transmute them to love. Pause.

For each one of these following statements, feel it, bring it into your heart and transmute it with love: Love the one who wants something from others. Love the one who is seeking love and approval. Love the one who feels righteous or justified. Love the one who is scared.

Focus on your heart and ask your Divine for healing. Pause.

See golden light flowing through your crown into every cell in the body. Pause.

Ask for support in empowering others and developing a healthy relationship to power yourself. Offer gratitude for this experience.

You might be tempted to look at some of these questions and say, “That’s not worth worrying about. It’s not a big deal.” This is a red flag that your ego is trying to hold on to power in an area. If it’s really not important, then it will be easy for you to address it. Even in small doses, abuse of power can have a damaging impact on your community. People will lose faith in the process and leave.

If you remember to work hand-in-hand with your Divine you will see when you start to veer off course and gently bring yourself back. We currently live on a polarity planet, so the more light you shine, the more darkness can creep in. Keep your heart open and love that darkness too.

TAKE CLASSES

I’m saving the best recommendation for last. Take classes in any area that gives you joy. You’ll find the time because these classes will give you more energy. You’ll not only feel nurtured, but you’ll experience other forms of leadership from a student’s viewpoint. While may not be the focus of your attention in the class, you’ll likely gain insights that will make you a better leader. You may be surprised that whatever course you are inspired to take, will dovetail with other projects and experiences in your life.

TIME-OUT

Take time out before you are forced into doing so. You might love the work you are doing and find yourself working endlessly without a break. Even if you are taking time for self-care, days of silence and working with advisors, you can still use time away to gain perspective. I recommend two to six weeks a year in at least two week intervals. During this time you might travel, visit family and friends, or attend a retreat. When you return you'll have renewed energy and a new outlook on your work.

PREPARING FOR THE UNEXPECTED



Embodiment of leadership values, being aware of ego games, and using feedback for your growth can seem overwhelming. It's helpful to remember that you've been receiving this feedback all your life, often nonverbally from family, friends, and co-workers. Stepping into a leadership role increases the level of feedback and opportunities for inner work, but it also brings increased freedom and joy. Up until this point in your life,, many of your patterns may have been invisible to you, and they have used your energy to sustain themselves. As you look inward you can see how you were struggling with these issues all along. Regardless of your path, life continues to throw challenges at you. You can choose to learn from them or not. Helping others in the spiritual arena brings this journey into

sharper focus for you, increases your motivation and accelerates your learning curve. While it might seem like you are dealing with more issues as a leader, you are in fact, simply becoming more aware of them.

The growth never stops unless you give up or give in to the downward spiral. It can be tempting to check out for a while. When the pain of ignoring your inner knowing exceeds the pain of doing nothing, you'll choose to come back in. You can understand why people might give up and decide not to fulfill their calling of spiritual leadership within their communities. They might spend too long in the planning stages and never publicly offer events or gather their groups and then become discouraged. They might make it past that first step, see their unconscious patterns causing issues, and then feel like a failure and give up. Of course, it's not a failure, but their conditioning causes the mind to label it that way. Perhaps this is not the blissful experience they were expecting, and they choose to take a different path. Others might create their groups and successfully grow their community, only to find themselves going down in a ball of flames from abusing their power in interesting ways. Had they followed the feedback loops in this book, this could have been avoided. How many of us have the fortitude and persistence to stick to a plan without some help?

If you've read this far through this book and completed the exercises, then you are ready for the next step to embody authentic leadership and to continue your growth. It requires the humility to let people help you along the way. We've gone into great detail around the myriad obstacles you might face in working with others or in the community. The biggest obstacles may be those in your internal world that stop you from doing the necessary work on yourself to keep going. Your advisory group or mastermind group can be helpful here.

It may seem like there isn't enough time and you might be tempted to skip the feedback loops or the deeper inner work. Doing that will cost you time in the longer run. Time may not be the real issue. Remember the client who experienced time as his enemy until he started doing the work he love – creating music., Then he not only made time for jam sessions, but he created inspiring videos, and even picked up a side project based on his passion for recycling. If he had remained on his own, he might have let the frustrations of work overtake his desire and ability to create music.

Another community member, Carol, was dominated by her family, felt disempowered and helpless, and couldn't get in touch with her desires. After a few short weeks of mentoring she found her inner strength and started working toward her goals. Carol

was so happy that she started looking for specific ways to give back. Now she is on this journey too.

You can't do this work on your own as you have noticed from all of these recommendations. It's a lot to process and integrate. A common temptation is to not do the self-inquiry or the feedback loops, but instead to keep focusing on working with others. Your mind will tell you that you don't need to do all that introspection; you are fine. Or you might find yourself doing the work all in your head instead of writing it down or dropping fully into the contemplations and processes. Since the mind is the issue in this case, just thinking about the exercises won't help. After a while you may find you've veered off into self-deception.

The dangers of falling for the mind's increasingly clever tricks are many. Others can often spot our patterns and strategies more quickly and clearly than we ourselves can – especially someone else who has been there before. Your advisory group may be of some help around these issues. However, they don't take the place of a mentor. I highly recommend one whether you choose me or someone else. They can point out the pitfalls and help you see where you are still allowing divisiveness or significance to get in your way.

You are entering a hall of mirrors. At every turn the outer world is reflecting your inner world. When you are leading others in this work, the reflections

are many and strong. When self-deception is allowed to run unchecked, it can ultimately lead to the dissolution of the group.

While you require all of this support, ultimately you walk alone with your Divine on this journey. Welcome to the set of paradoxes that arise at this level. You'll have to discern with the help of Spirit when to ask for help and when to go it alone.

There are times where you still may feel you are grasping in the dark even though you maintain a deep connection to Spirit. You may be struggling with decisions and not receiving answers. This may mean that it's not yet time to decide. It may be a test. There is no way for you to know if it is. I have been tested in this way many times. I could not figure out why our house didn't sell when gurus in India were blessing it. I had to keep putting my effort into the community while not knowing how I was going to get the resources to pay my bills. When my mom fell sick, all of my attention needed to be with her for several months. Had we moved during that time, I could not have provided that level of total support during her illness. Once she passed, her townhome became ours, and we could finally move. The timing was in fact perfect, but for years I couldn't understand why my prayers weren't being answered. I had mentors who supported me, so I could keep going forward, trusting that it would all work out.

I often see my clients hit such a testing phase periodically where none of their usual strategies are working and sometimes they think it's a sign to give up. Their mind offers words of discouragement about their performance or their character. It might even offer a shiny new option for them to pursue and they leave this path altogether. I help them lighten up and move through the blocks, toward their goals. Debbie, another FHC member, was seeing lots of growth, but she couldn't seem to find her passion for life. At one point we discovered that she had been avoiding sending an email for over a year. The act of suppressing what she knew needed to be done was cutting off her life force. With encouragement she was able to write the email and her creativity and passion soon started flowing again. We often need help seeing what we have been suppressing.

Someone who has walked this labyrinth before and who knows the importance of staying true to your guidance can be a welcome support. Also, someone who has walked this path knows when it is time to step back and allow you to continue alone. There are some life passages where you simply need to drop every form of support except that connection with Spirit and find your way through.

The payoff from this journey is more joy and more freedom than you can imagine. I wake up most mornings and go to sleep most nights laughing with my partner. Walking this path and using these

processes to fuel your inner growth is incredibly rewarding. Helping others can be the highest calling. Developing the skills to give and receive support while becoming more conscious is critical to our evolution during these challenging times. The world at large needs our commitment to help it evolve toward a better future. We need to solve the problems from a higher level of consciousness than that which created them. Many people right now are frightened about an uncertain future. They are wasting their energy fighting with fear or giving in to limitations. Your willingness to reach out and your influence on them might just benefit the world in unimaginable ways. There are many people with creative solutions and much-needed skills. They may need your spiritual leadership to hold space for them to claim their inner strength and realize their own magnificence, so they can offer their much-needed gifts to help the world. This is why I celebrate when people step into leadership roles, serving with open hearts. I know they are impacting mankind.

I have had many mentors along the way. They usually appear when I'm at a crossroads or feeling stuck in some way. I've noticed this pattern so I'm alert to their appearance and willingly accept their support. Each one arrives exactly on time to take me to the next stage. I am so grateful for all of the beautiful beings who have lightened my load and helped me face the parts of myself that I had trouble accept-

ing. Without their love and encouragement I wouldn't be enjoying my life nearly so much. Take the support while you can. Ultimately on this path you have to let go of every form of support. Your mentor is Spirit. It's a journey of faith and trust.

THE END IS THE BEGINNING



Honor that calling or that still small voice inside that tells you to get out there. Remember that no kind act of service, no matter how small, goes unnoticed in the Universe. All that you have done and continue to do to help others eventually comes back to you.

To take that service to the next level and consciously do your inner work requires great courage and trust. It's a huge gift to the world and you'll benefit tremendously with more lightness in your every step and more joy inside. There is no such thing as failure on this path – there is only learning. The only failure would be ignoring that impulse to help others and stuffing it deep inside your unconscious. Lighten up and enjoy the journey.

Step into the labyrinth and meander around,

retrace your steps. Just when you think you are getting somewhere, let the path take you clear to the other side for more zigzagging. The path folds back in on itself over and over. You'll get to revisit old patterns from a new perspective. Curiosity keeps you going. Remember that there is no right way to be in this.

Let this book be your companion. Check in with Spirit to see which chapter will serve you best in whatever state you are in. It's all here – starting with your external environment. Does your home feel like a sanctuary (or whatever energy you called in)? Does your workspace feel productive and inspiring? Are your altars being maintained?

Your life purpose statements, developed in Chapter 4, are your guideposts. Clarifying what you are here to learn and to teach is a good reminder of why the feedback loops are so important. Recognizing and celebrating your gifts help you see all the ways that you are already contributing in the world. These gifts, invisible to you because they are so natural, are given to the world through embodying your true self. If you do nothing else but sit in front of your group members fully present, you are influencing and supporting them. Your very presence matters. You can be that silent mirror for them, or you can share your experience.

You have become aware of the leadership values

you are embodying and also the importance of influencing the field that exists between you and your group. Upholding these values lifts everyone up through their connection to the field.

You have a basic structure for working with others, and Spirit happily fills in the content, giving you life experiences to share or reminding you of past experiences that are applicable. When shared from this place of authenticity and connection, these insights create an experiential learning process for your group. Its members receive a transmission that encourages them to look inside themselves in a similar brave manner. You are holding the highest vision for their growth and creating a space where they can thrive.

All the while, you are working on removing obstacles between yourself and the flow of Spirit that wants to be expressed in the world. The feedback you receive from working with others helps you do this more effectively. The result reveals even more love.

The pitfalls are many, especially with each new level of growth. Many people fall into the trap of thinking they are getting somewhere, or they become enamored of receiving praise from others and start craving more significance through their service. As you observe these tendencies the mind gives way. Sharing your humanness with others

completes the circuit. The lighter you become with these behaviors, the more permission you give others to be themselves.

Through this journey you will have gained clarity around your purpose in life. You will feel fulfilled because you are putting action behind your intentions. You'll start to see that the issues that you thought made you unfit to be a leader will support you in helping others. You can share your process of dealing with these situations. You don't have to wait until your life is cleaned up. That's a delay tactic the ego uses. Sharing your journey will help your clients see that they too can be leaders for others in their lives. The cycle continues.

The world needs all of our gifts right now. It's time to create a new future that allows for us to live in harmony with each other and with the earth. This process requires us to be more conscious of how we are working together and how we can support each other to be better human beings. We are moving into the Golden Age – a time of connecting to our Divinity and to the Divinity of everyone and everything around us.

On my way out of a labyrinth, with each step, I release any requests and whisper words of gratitude to Spirit, Mother Earth, and all beings. On your way out of this book, release to Spirit all you think you know. Let go of the title of leader and any ideas you

have around it. Let go of who you think you are. Whisper words of gratitude to your inner guidance, your community, your support system, and your family.

And when you are ready, begin again.

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APPENDIX A: MULTI-VIEWPOINT EXERCISE

1. Find a small object on your desk and focus all of your attention on it for three to five minutes. Memorize it. Close your eyes and visualize it for as long as you can, looking at it in your mind from different angles.

2. Think of a person you know. What opinion do you have of them? Find as many different viewpoints as you can. What might their partner think of them? Their mother? Co-worker? Child? Friend? If you are having difficulty, use your imagination and play with various different opinions and viewpoints. When you have exhausted all viewpoints, repeat the exercise with another person. Continue for at least seven minutes.

3. Have a conversation with someone. As you are

talking with them, have some attention on what you are feeling and also feel what they are feeling. As you are feeling yourself and them, listen to how your speaking sounds from their point of view. Continue for three to five minutes. Then add a third viewpoint – the observer. This is someone who is viewing both of you in the conversation from a little distance away. Continue focusing on yourself, the other and the observer for three to five minutes. Keep switching between viewpoints.

4. Have a conversation with someone. As you are talking with them have some attention on what you are feeling and also feel what they are feeling. Continue for three to five minutes. Now embody what you are wanting them to become – your highest vision for them. For example, it might be a strong and compassionate leader. Feel yourself, feel what they are feeling and embody what you want them to become simultaneously for three to five minutes. Add the observer point of view for three to five minutes.

APPENDIX B: VIEWPOINT EXERCISE

This exercise is reprinted from Chapter 7 of My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now for your convenience. For background information on these, please refer to the book.

Relax. Slow down the breathing.

Connect in your heart with your Divine.

Ask for support with seeing your parents more clearly.

Bring to mind the parent you are working with. Meet their eyes.

Feel the connection. Breathe.

What aspect of this relationship or what quality do you find challenging?

Bring to mind a situation where you experienced that challenging aspect.

How old are you and what was happening?

See without judgment and without trying to change anything.

Simply see it.

Take a deep breath and let that go.

Look at your parent through the eyes of your partner.

Notice what qualities your parent holds in their eyes.

Trust any impression you get without judgment.

See and feel those qualities in your parent.

Take a deep breath and let that go.

Look at your parent through the eyes of one of their friends.

Notice what qualities your parent holds in their eyes.

Trust any impression you get without judgment.

See and feel those qualities in your parent.

Take a deep breath and let that go.

Look at your parent through the eyes of your other parent.

Notice what qualities your parent holds in their eyes.

Trust any impression you get, without judgment.

See and feel those qualities in your parent.

Take a deep breath and let that go.

Look at your parent through the eyes of your children.

Notice what qualities your parent holds in their eyes.

Trust any impression you get without judgment.

See and feel those qualities in your parent.

Take a deep breath and let that go.

Pretend you are the doorknob. Observe your parent.
What do you see?

Breathe. Let it all go.

Open your eyes and journal the various qualities that
arose for you from those different viewpoints. Note
any surprises that occurred.

APPENDIX C: PROCESS FOR
RELEASING THE ENERGY BEHIND
THE CHARGE

This process is reprinted from Chapter 7 of my previous book: My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now for your convenience. For background information on this process, please refer to the book.

This process is simple, but it requires attention and focus.

Close your eyes. Take three deep slow breaths.

Connect in your heart with your Divine.

Ask for support in releasing charges.

Find an interaction from today that hurt you.

It doesn't matter how small the incident.

Place yourself in the situation as if it is happening now.

As it unfolds, let go of the stories in the mind and place all of your attention on whatever feeling arises.

You will likely feel this somewhere in the body.

Place your focus there and stay present with it.

Keep opening into the feeling without making it bigger or holding onto it.

Breathe.

Keep releasing any stories your mind is producing.

Keep focusing your attention.

You may receive an old memory or a belief.

See that memory or belief and keep feeling.

You'll know when the energy behind it starts to release.

Stay with it until it is complete.

Give gratitude to the Divine for the support.

This is a great way to end each day. Look for any pain you've received from interactions with others and release the charges.

APPENDIX D: RESENTMENT PROCESSES

These processes are reprinted from Chapter 8 of my previous book: My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now for your convenience. For background information on these processes, please refer to the book.

PROCESS TO FIND THE SOURCE OF RESENTMENT

Close eyes. Breathe. Connect.

Bring to mind a situation that still triggers you.

Feel the hurt.

Let go of resistance.

Be with the feeling.

Keep your attention there.

Let go of any stories that are arising.

Keep breathing and keep feeling.

Follow this feeling by moving in the direction of the most pain.

It may lead you back through other life situations.

Keep feeling.

Stay with it.

Go all the way back. How old are you?

What's happening?

Can you see the belief you took on?

What are you saying to yourself?

Breathe.

See it and release the energy on the breath.

Breathe in self-forgiveness.

Release anything left from this experience on the outbreath.

Offer gratitude to the Divine for this experience.

Write any insights in your journal. You might begin to see more places where this belief or this experience has impacted your life. Practice this one as many times as it takes to get comfortable with the process and to see the truth. As Sri Bhagavan says, "To see is to be free."

RESENTMENT PROCESS

Take out your journal and draw yourself in the middle of the paper. Put your issue there. For me, it was an issue with my partner where he dropped the ball and it landed on my plate. Now, start drawing on the paper all the places in your life where this shows up: at home, work, with friends, current timeframe, in your earlier years, et cetera. Write as many instances as you can using words, stick figures, or other images. Take up as much of the paper as you can. (Note, if you are starting with a belief such as "They should know better," then write down all of the places that belief shows up.)

Connect inside for a moment. Slow down your breathing.

Ask to be shown other instances where this issue is showing up in your life.

Draw those on the paper.

Keep tuning in and drawing more instances until that feels complete.

Breathe and take a look at everything you have drawn.

Then close your eyes.

Breathe.

Connect with your Divine and ask, “What is the underlying belief?

(In my case it was, “It’s all up to me.”)

Accept whatever you get, even if it appears unrelated.

Write it down.

Now let’s take this process a step further.

Look at your paper.

Close your eyes.

Connect in your heart with your Divine.

Bring the issue to mind.

See all the other situations where this issue has arisen.

Ask to be shown where else this shows up.

Step back and see the whole landscape:

All the places, people, and situations that are related to this issue.

Recognize that you are feeding it energy, keeping all of these situations alive.

What is the payoff you are receiving from keeping it alive?

Accept any answer without judgment.

What is it you are really wanting (freedom, love, etcetera)_____?

In the name of (freedom, love, etcetera) _____, I choose to release it.

See it disappear.

Consciously connect with the Divine.

Experience the (freedom, love, etcetera) _____.

From this place, look at the situation again and see if there is any residual stickiness or resistance, then ask your Divine to help you let it go.

Breathe and relax even more deeply into the Presence.

This is the space where anything is possible.

In this space, create a new intention for this situation or relationship.

Offer gratitude.

Keep that connection to the Divine alive as you open your eyes.

Write down your new intention.

APPENDIX E: EMBODYING RESISTED BEHAVIORS AND TRANSMUTING ENERGY

These processes are reprinted from Chapter 8 of my previous book: My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now for your convenience. If you are doing the Resisted Behaviors Process, also do the Process to Transmute Energy. For background information on these processes, please refer to the book.

EMBODYING RESISTED BEHAVIORS PROCESS

This is a great exercise to do with a coach, but you can play with it on your own. First connect with your inner child that is curious, playful and open to learning.

Tune into the behavior – jealousy.

Exist for a moment as jealousy.

Let go of any resistance and fully embody that energy.

Let it speak through you in the first person.

Listen to what jealousy has to say.

If you have a coach, they can write down the messages.

If not, you can record it and take notes later.

PROCESS TO TRANSMUTE ENERGY

Close your eyes.

See this behavior or jealousy that you have resisted in its wholeness.

See its useful purpose in this situation.

See how it can also be destructive.

Feel the energy of jealousy.

Breathe it into your heart.

Open your heart as much as possible.

Allow the heart to transmute this energy into love.

Breathe in the jealousy and breathe out liberation or freedom three times slowly.

Breathe and let go.

Connect with your Divine and breathe in self-forgiveness.

Let your heart fill with the love that is present.

APPENDIX F: ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING AND WITNESS MEDITATION

These meditations are reprinted from Chapter 9 of my previous book: My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now for your convenience. If you are doing the Witness Meditation, it's recommended to start with the Alternate Nostril Breathing. Read through both processes before you begin. For background information on these meditations, please refer to the book.

ALTERNATE NOSTRIL BREATHING PROCEDURE

Sit in a comfortable position with your back straight and feet on the floor.

Place your left-hand palm face-up on your left thigh.

Bring the index finger of the left hand to the base of the thumb.

Open your right hand, palm up.

Bring the index and middle finger down onto the palm,
keeping your ring and pinkie fingers extended.

Keep both hands in these postures for the duration of the breathing exercise.

Lift the right hand towards the nose.

Exhale completely and then use your right thumb to close your right nostril.

Inhale through your left nostril and then close the left nostril with the fingers of your right hand.

Open the right nostril and exhale through this side.

Inhale through the right nostril and close this nostril.

Open the left nostril and exhale through the left side.

This is one cycle.

WITNESS MEDITATION

Read through this process so you are clear before you start.

Close your eyes and take three deep slow breaths.

Begin alternate nostril breathing for five minutes to turn the mind inwards.

Now, for five minutes, focus on the flow of breath as it comes in through the nose, to the lungs, and back out again.

Bring your total attention there. Keep releasing thoughts. Follow the flow.

For five minutes, bring your attention to the gap between the inhale and exhale.

Notice how you have shifted from flowing with the breath to watching the breath.

Now, move through that gap between the inhale and exhale into the background.

Your breathing is in the foreground

Widen back.

You are aware of the breathing.

Notice your awareness.

You are aware of thoughts.

If you notice you are thinking, bring your attention back to awareness.

Instead of watching thoughts, become aware of your awareness.

Continue for as long as you can or for at least ten minutes.

APPENDIX G: EVENING MEDITATION FROM ONENESS

This meditation is reprinted from Chapter 11 of my previous book: My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now for your convenience. For background information on this meditation, please refer to the book.

DECHARGE AND CAPTURE THE BEAUTY

1. Capture and review the magic moments of the day.
 - Invoke the presence and stack your memories with all the good and great experiences of the day. See them, feel them, associate to them, and feel gratitude.
2. Ask yourself if you gave pain to anyone today.

- If so, invoke the presence, feel their pain, and ask for forgiveness by bringing the image of that person before you.

- Invoke the presence.

- Affirm the truth. “All pain is not in the facts, but in my perception of the facts.” The pain is not outside, it’s inside. Changing it, blaming it, or distracting yourself from it will not eliminate the source of your pain.

- Feel the pain. Stay with it until it becomes forgiveness or joy.

- Invoke the presence. Bring before you images

3. Ask yourself if you feel any pain from your interactions with others.

4. Bless all those who have touched your life today.

APPENDIX H: INTEGRITY PROCESS

This process is reprinted from Chapter 12 of my previous book, My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now, for your convenience. For background information on this process, please refer to the book.

INTEGRITY PROCESS

Set an intention to see the ways the mind manipulates, lies, covers up, and isolates you from seeing the truth.

Ask for support from your Divine.

Sit for forty-nine minutes and go back through the day.

Find all the lies the mind has told you. You will be amazed.

If you do this process for twenty-one days, your awareness of the mind's activities will increase significantly, and you can start to avoid some of these obstacles.

APPENDIX I: ART OF LISTENING

Reprinted and expanded from Chapter 11 of my previous book, My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now, for your convenience.

There is an art to listening. It includes being fully present with others in the community and simultaneously listening to what is happening within you. Much of the time, we are either completely over in in the other person's space, vacating our body and wisdom, or we withdraw from them because we are wrapped up in our thoughts. Listening means to stay fully connected inside while listening to them. Ask for guidance and your response will be what is needed in the situation. Below are specific steps for listening given to us from Oneness University:

1. Realize you and the other intrinsically have the same needs.
2. Invoke the presence and take an intent to connect to the other.
3. Keep looking in the other person's eyes.
4. Slow down your breathing and become conscious of what is happening within you.
5. From this state of awareness, respond with a desire to help.

APPENDIX J: RELATIONSHIP PROCESS

This process is reprinted from Chapter 7 of my previous book, My Family Needs My Spiritual Leadership Now, for your convenience. This Partner Process can be used for any relationship in your life. If you are not familiar with it, I highly recommend reading Chapter 7 before running this process. If you are working with a parent relationship, then please re-read Chapter 7 and use the Parent Process in that book.

A powerful practice is to look in that mirror your partner holds and work on your charges. Then, you can respond to them in a loving and appropriate way. This powerful process creates healthier relationships.

You can do this before bedtime while you are lying down.

First, write an intention for how you would like your partnership to be. For example, “My relationship with my partner is open, loving, light, and inspiring.”

PARTNER PROCESS

Start by slowing down your breathing. Take three deep, slow breaths.

Move into your heart area and consciously connect with your Divine.

Remember that your Divine runs the process, and your job is simply to be open to whatever arises.

Start with gratitude to the Divine for specific ways it has helped you.

This creates a deeper bond.

Ask for support with healing of the partner relationship so you can experience the intention you wrote above.

Bring an image of your partner before you and look into their eyes.

Notice how much of your life force energy is moving towards them.

It might be a trickle, garden hose, or fire hose.

Just get a sense of it. Breathe and let that go.

Keep looking in your partner's eyes.

If any charges or strong feelings are arising, be with those until they release.

When complete, move to the next step.

What aspect in your partner challenges you or what do you complain about the most?

It's challenging for you because you carry that quality too and haven't owned it in yourself.

Let go of any resistance that is arising in you.

Ask the Divine to show you where you embody that quality, where you have treated others the way you blame your spouse.

It might show up a little differently.

He might dominate you with words or physically and maybe you do it in an email.

Relax as much as possible and let yourself be shown.

Most of your pain comes from hiding from this.

Freedom comes through seeing.

Once you see where you have treated another in this way, put yourself in the other's shoes.

Feel the pain you caused that other person with that behavior.

Breathe and release.

Look at your partner's eyes again.

Can you accept them for who they are without trying to change them?

Breathe.

Now step into your partner's shoes.

Can you feel what your partner is feeling?

Use your awareness and invite yourself to feel the tensions in your body that they feel in theirs.

Feel their feelings.

Feel where they lack feeling.

Feel the rigidness of their beliefs, the limits of their trust.

Feel their successes and their failures.

Feel their hopes and their dreams.

Fully open to all that this one is experiencing.

See that they are doing the best they can.

Breathe.

Come back to yourself and meet their eyes.

Notice how much of your life force energy is moving towards them.

Breathe and drop into your heart.

Offer gratitude to them for being on this journey with you.

Bless them for all that you want them to have.

Now tune in to receive their blessing.

Open your heart.

Thank them.

Open your eyes.

Write your experience in your journal.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kristin Panek is the founder and spiritual director of the Flowering Heart Center, a not-for-profit organization that creates sacred space for community healing and transformation into higher states of consciousness. She offers meditation, counseling, and spiritual workshops for this community of more than 500 members. She is an ordained interfaith minister of the Seraphic Order of the Flowering Heart.

She is a heart-centered, spiritual empowerment

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Kristin is also a licensed guide with Shematrix, a collective of women who sponsor transformational events for women and men that involve a rite of initiation into the Divine Feminine. She has been a part of their mystery school for twenty years.

She is an Avatar Master and delivers training on a series of tools for managing consciousness and creating preferred realities. She is a sixth sensory practitioner, licensed by Sonia Choquette, and a facilitator for The Work of Byron Katie. Kristin has been an Advanced Trainer for Oneness for more than twelve years. She has taken groups to India and has been there twelve times to receive teachings and various initiations. Kristin is also a meditation guide, a certified yoga instructor, master herbalist, and reiki master.

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THANKS FOR READING

Thank you so much for reading *Who Am I to Be a Spiritual Leader?* If you've made it this far, I know one of two things about you. First, you are more ready than ever to be the type of leader you admire and aspire to be. And second, maybe you also start at the end the book before diving in. (I've done that too.) You might be surprised that the end of my book is also a beginning.

Whether you are at the beginning or end of my book, I would love to hear more about your journey. As a thank you for buying this book, I'd like to offer a free thirty-minute session to support you with any aspect of leadership. Please feel free to email me at KristinPanek@Gmail.com to schedule a session. I look forward to hearing from you.

