

USG SGM ~ Embodiment ~ August 2019

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements
www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Chalice Lighting

The Paradox (by Sarah Kay)

When I am inside writing,
all I can think about is how I should be outside living.

When I am outside living,
all I can do is notice all there is to write about.
When I read about love, I think I should be out loving.

When I love, I think I need to read more....
I spend most of my time wondering
if I should be somewhere else.

So I have learned to shape the words thank you...

Full poem found at: <https://news.sunybroome.edu/buzz/the-monday-poem-the-paradox-by-sarah-kay/>
Hear Sarah Kay read it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=StE7b5mRWHk>

Check-in *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

Introduction

We spend so much time in disappointment. We worry we're missing out. We long for something better. Focused on how imperfect or incomplete our current situation is, we hunger for elsewhere. And if not embodied in disappointment, we at least try our best to live in that place called "on our way." We tell ourselves that the current situation is only temporary; we're really better than this and meant for something bigger. This current embodiment is only a stepping stone.

And, of course, any good psychologist, smart life coach, or savvy talk show host will tell us that, by doing this, we're missing out on peace. Striving for that "perfect life," we miss out on the solace of the present moment. It's a good message to pay attention to. But religion wants to push us a bit harder. It wants us to see how we are out of touch, not only with the present moment, but also gratitude itself. The way back into real embodiment, it says, is not just through the skill of attention but also as poet Sarah Kay puts it, the skill of "shaping the words 'thank you' with our first and last breath."

Embodied living is not simply about being grateful for the unnoticed gifts in front of us; it's also about noticing that every moment and every context -- no matter how imperfect, messed up and incomplete -- is trying to talk to us! The reason to stop trying so hard to change our current circumstances is not simply to "be here now;" it's so that our current circumstances will finally be able to get a word in edgewise about where *it thinks* we should go! Then that elusive gift of embodiment will be ours: that sacred sense of being exactly where we are supposed to be!

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

Definition

em·bod·i·ment: a tangible or visible form of an idea, quality, or feeling.

"She seemed to be a living embodiment of vitality."

Synonyms: personification, incarnation, realization, manifestation, expression, symbolization

"The body is a sacred garment. It's your first and last garment; it is what you enter life in and what you depart life with, and it should be treated with honor." - *Martha Graham*

“In my theology, the doctrine of (the) Incarnation shouldn’t be ‘outsourced’ to the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Living into a consciously embodied life IS the incarnation.” - *Chela Sloper*

Spiritual Exercises

1. The Question We Embody

Courtney Martin wonders, “What is the question that I asked as a little girl and have never stopped asking? How has asking that question defined, even if unconsciously, the choices I’ve made, the things I’ve created, the legacy I will leave behind?” She sees our lives as embodiments of our “first big questions.” This exercise asks us to take that proposition seriously. Spend the month figuring out and articulating your “first big question” and identify one way it has shaped you and one way it is calling you to change or deepen. So... What question have you been trying to embody your entire life? What is the question that you asked as a little kid and have never stopped asking?

2. Right Where You’re Supposed To Be?

The introduction challenges us to see that embodiment is not simply “being present”; it is also about engaging life with the sense that “this is right where I am supposed to be.” This exercise is about having that experience. So... pick a day and center on the words “This is right where I am supposed to be.” Before the day gets going, get yourself in the mind frame of this sentence. Meditate on it. Write it down and pin it up by your desk. Say it out loud to yourself throughout the day like a mantra. Do whatever it takes to ensure it shapes your attitude and perspective. . See how that works for you. As a way of saying thank you, write a paragraph or two about why this particular day of yours was “exactly where you were supposed to be.” Come to your group ready to share your note and your experience.

Questions

Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a community of embodiment means for you and your daily living.

1. What family legacy are you embodying and living out? Is that legacy a blessing or a burden?
2. When was the last time you felt that “this is exactly where I am supposed to be!”?
3. When was the last time you listened to your body? What is your body saying right now?
4. When was the last time you “found God” through your body and senses?
5. Do you embody (embrace) or deny your pain? Your joy?
6. Have you allowed yourself to become embodied in and swallowed up by stress?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention.*

Reflection and Gratitude *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Singing

What If God Was One Of Us - Joan Osborne <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Gx1Pv02w3Q>

Extinguishing the Chalice

“Don’t explain your philosophy. Embody it.” - *Epictetus*