

USG SGM ~ Nurturing Beauty ~ May 2022

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

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Chalice Lighting This a wonderful day. I've never seen this one before. - Maya Angelou

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.*

Intro: The Greek word for the beautiful is [kalon](#), "which is related to the word *kalein*, which includes the notion of 'call.' Suggesting that there is something about beauty, wherever we find it, that tugs at us, pulls at us, draws us into the divine."

A second Greek word for beauty is *hōraios*, from *hōra*, meaning "hour." Beauty was thus associated with "being of one's hour". Thus, a ripe fruit (of its time) was considered beautiful, whereas a young person trying to appear older or an older person trying to appear younger would not be considered beautiful.

Spiritual Exercises Option A: The Beautiful Thing You Carry

The philosopher Blaise Pascal wrote, "In difficult times, carry something beautiful in your heart."

These are indeed difficult times. They require courage, commitment, hope and self-love. And all of these are sustained by beauty. We find the courage to fight after falling in love with a beautiful vision to fight for. We maintain our commitment only by finding the beauty that nourishes us. We hold on to hope because experiences of beauty remind us that something in the universe is on our side. We withstand dehumanization when rooted deeply in the beauty of our own dignity. It's one of the most important secrets to successful social change and social survival: When we carry beauty, it carries us.

So this month, *literally find something to carry with you, for weeks on end!* A pebble, poem, torn piece of paper with a quote on it. Might even be a quote from this packet. You'll likely carry it in your pocket, but maybe it will be in a necklace or wallet instead. The goal is to find a reminder about beauty that will carry you through as you carry it.

Spiritual Exercises Option B: The Story of Our Most Beautiful Thing

When was the last time you thought about the most beautiful thing you ever saw or experienced? For this exercise, simply remember it and bring the story of it to your group. Why? Because sharing our stories of beauty helps us hold on to them. And sharing it with others helps them hold on to theirs.

Quotes for Inspiration

The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen. - Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

One of the huge confusions in our times is to mistake glamor for beauty. - John O'Donohue

At some point in life the world's beauty becomes enough. You don't need to photograph, paint or even remember it. It is enough. No record of it needs to be kept and you don't need someone to share it with or tell it to. - Toni Morrison

Beauty always has rules. It's a game. I resent the beauty game when I see it controlled by people who grab fortunes from it and don't care who they hurt. I hate it when I see it making people so self-dissatisfied that they starve and deform and poison themselves. - Ursula K. Le Guin

When we approach with reverence great things decide to approach us. When we walk on the earth with reverence, beauty will decide to trust us. The rushed heart and the arrogant mind lack the gentleness and patience to enter that embrace. Beauty is mysterious, a slow presence who waits for the ready, expectant heart. - John O'Donohue

Under the spell of beauty, we experience a rare condition called plenitude, where we want for nothing. - André Aciman

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 people who Nurture Beauty means for you and your daily living.

1. When were you first healed by beauty?
2. When were you first protected by beauty?
3. When did beauty first teach you something?
4. What makes a beautiful soul? What do you do to beautify your own soul?
5. What parts of life have grown more beautiful as you've aged?

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 rather than thinking about what you will share.*

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 or conversation on Nurturing Beauty

Reclaiming UGLY as an Act of Queer Pleasure

<https://queerhealingjourneys.com/vanessa-lewis/> *A must listen!*

The Inner Landscape of Beauty - John O'Donohue: On Being Podcast

<https://onbeing.org/programs/john-odonohue-the-inner-landscape-of-beauty-aug2017/>

"No conversation we've ever done has been more beloved than this one. The Irish poet, theologian, and philosopher insisted on beauty as a human calling..."

Extinguishing the Chalice

There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others. - Mandy Hale