

SEASONS OF OUR LIVES
MONTH TWO – OCTOBER 2023
Track Assignments
October 14 to November 11, 2023

NATURE QUEST:

Go out into nature, alone, prepared with what you need (i.e., water, appropriate clothing, journal, pen, blanket, snack, etc.). Go with an open mind, an open heart, and an open spirit. Allow yourself to be guided to a place where you can sit and ‘just be’. This could be a favorite spot or perhaps somewhere you have not been before. Settle in, both with your body and your inner being. Be a quiet observer of what is happening around you – what you see, smell, feel and even taste – and notice what is taking place within you. Do not judge. Just be present, receptive, and aware. Consider staying between one and three hours. Take your time. Before you leave, give thanks for what you have received during this time.

RESPONSE TO YOUR NATURE QUEST:

Reflect on your time in nature. You may decide to journal right away, or you may like to take some time to be with your experience. When you are ready, creatively respond to your nature quest. Some examples include writing a poem or psalm, journaling, creating a picture or a painting, making something out of playdough or clay, creating a collage from magazine photos and/or from things you collect in nature. Be creative!

Take a photo of what you create. This can be used to share with others, with your mentor and as a memory of this year.

As you reflect on your experience, allow a Courageous Question to emerge in you.

READINGS:

Anam Cara: A Book of Celtic Wisdom (John O’Donohue).
Chapter 5 – Aging: The Beauty of the Inner Harvest

The Nest in the Stream: Lessons from Nature on Being with Pain (Michael Kearney, MD)
Seven Stories of Nature: Story No 6 – The Tree of Life, pages 117-128

The Circle of Life: Season of Autumn – Circle of life (pdf)

AUDIO:

The Circle of Life: Season of Autumn – Circle of life (MP4 - will send by WeTransfer)

VIDEOS:

Soul and Science - Lesson Five: Transforming Pain – 8 min (Michael Kearney)

IMovie – Autumn Musings (Debbie Doornbos) (will send by WeTransfer)

YouTube – A Grateful Day with Brother David Steindle-Rast - 5 min

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zSt7k_g_gRU

MUSIC:

Vivaldi: The Four Seasons Violin Concerto, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra

November F Major, Op.8 No3, RV 293 'Autumn': II Adagio Molto, (2.58 min)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jYotxnJKJc>

George Winston: Thanksgiving

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJm364gRtQE>

George Winston: Autumn

Colors/Dance

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksv27Jytk0A>

TO FURTHER ENRICH YOUR EXPERIENCE:

Bernadette Noll - "I Want to Age Like Sea Glass"

Joyce Rupp – Gratitude

Psalms 104 – Psalms for Praying, Nan Merrill

Martha Postlethwaite – Clearing

Asking a Sacred Question



ACTIVITY: Autumn Activities with Leaves

- Go for a walk and gather some autumn leaves (or draw or paint them).
- Let each leaf represent some part of your life's journey where you had to let go of someone or something in order to grow (a child leaving home, a change of attitude, loss of a job, an illness, a death, etc.).
- Give a name to each of these leaves, one for each of your significant autumn experiences. Drop each leaf into a basket, calling out its name as you do so.

- Keep the basket with you for the season of autumn. Look at it often, remembering how each of these autumns required you to lose something in order to gain something new for your growth.

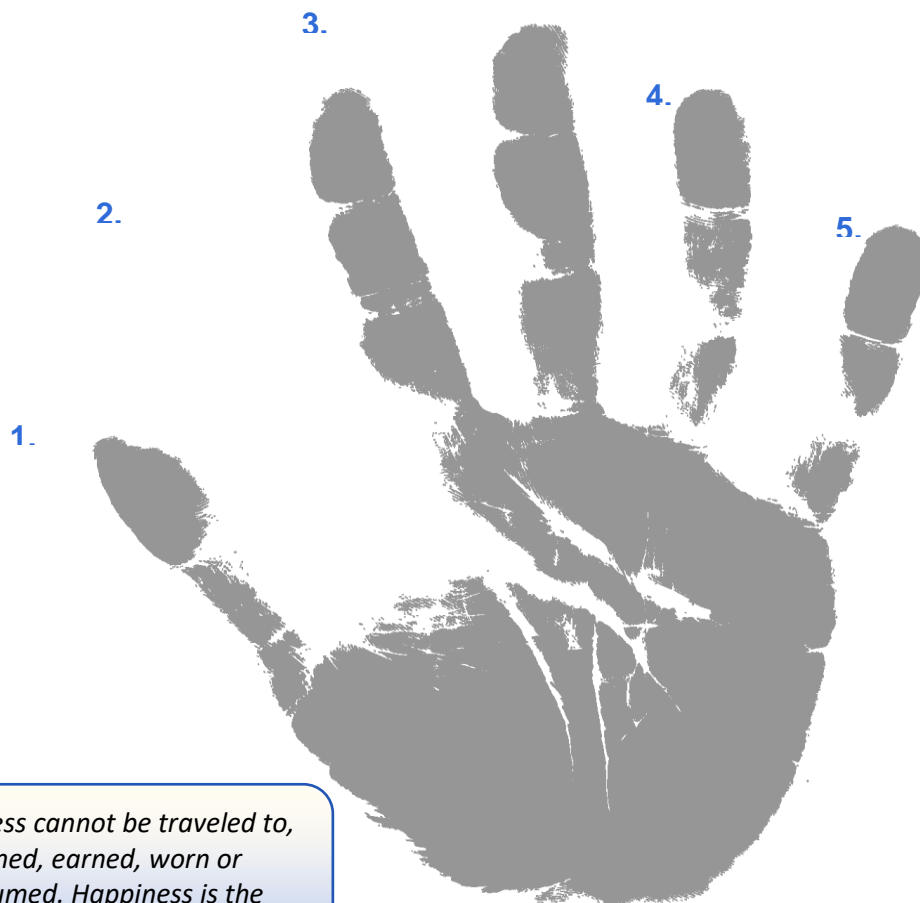
ACTIVITY: 5 Things Gratitude Tool – The “Do Anywhere” Gratitude Exercise!

BACKGROUND: There are many scientific studies that prove that **gratitude** makes us happier and healthier. And while gratitude, like any emotion, can't be forced, we can *cultivate* our thoughts so that **gratitude** is more likely to arise. And actively *practicing gratitude* helps us create a *habit* where we focus on the positive in life.

Here's how to use this "5 Things" Gratitude Tool

This tool can be done at any time, anywhere! Create a habit where you do it regularly eg. on waking up, before you go to sleep, on the bus home PLUS whenever you're having a challenging day!

1. Print this page out. **Tip:** Spread the gratitude by printing a few copies and giving to friends/co-workers!
2. Now think of **just 5** things to be genuinely thankful or grateful for and write them on the hand below. Can't think of 5? Look around you and think smaller and smaller until you *can* come up with 5 things.
3. Now that you have this tool, the easiest and most environmentally friendly option is just to count on your fingers! To wrap-up, ask yourself, "How can I make this a regular habit?"



*Happiness cannot be traveled to,
owned, earned, worn or
consumed. Happiness is the
spiritual experience of living every*