

**The Art of Letting Go** Meditation and Message Rev Brigid Beckman 7-31-22

As we come into our time of meditation, feel free to close your eyes if that's comfortable, or simply let your gaze soften.

Sense the places where the back of your body rests wherever you are sitting and let your body surrender into that support...

I invite you to gently bring to mind a situation in your life that is calling you to let go, calling you to release the grip of your ruminating...

Take a deep breath in... and exhale fully... and again... breathe in... and out... and letting go even of expectation of finding the solution NOW, set an intention that this time in meditation will bring you spaciousness to feel the power of God holding you

Deeper and deeper and I surrender... there is nowhere I have to go... no one I have to be.... nothing I have to do but gently breathe...

I breathe in as the wind blows and I let go  
I breathe out as the wind blows and I let go

I breathe in as the river flows and I let go  
I breathe out as the river flows and I let go

Deeper and deeper and I surrender... there is nowhere I have to go... no one I have to be.... nothing I have to do but gently breathe...

Breathe in the breath of God... breathe out the breath of God...

and come gently back into this space, maybe with your grip loosened just a bit! :-)

**What does it mean to LET GO? What simple, easy to release things-- or life altering things-- have you let go of in the past few days, or weeks-- or over the years??**

I have let go of clothing that doesn't fit or isn't my style anymore. Let go of books I passed along to friends. Let go of my high school dream of working at the UN as a translator. I've let go of coloring my hair and wearing high heels. In the hard years before I let go of my married life, my son took me indoor rock climbing one night and I learned with trepidation growing into courage to let go of one finger hold, one toe hold at a time, trusting that the next would be there when I needed it. The embodied exercise in trust became a metaphor that helped me relearn to trust that "all is well" and it's an image that still resonates with me today.

***"Do not let your hearts be troubled."*** If I find myself ruminating over a concern or a weighty decision, I release its grip on my attention by letting go and letting God."

Divine timing! Before I went on retreat, Roger and I looked ahead to set the theme for this week and next, and in that wonderful way that the message of "LET GO, I'VE GOT YOU!!" is always timely, this week I was especially blessed with a lesson in what it means to go with the flow. Of what it means to keep a long view perspective. What it means to lean into gratitude. What it means to feel the overwhelm when it comes, and not bypass that, but also to not stay there.

Because let's be clear-- when I woke up to an inch of water on my bathroom floor, and water spewing out of that hosing-- calm letting go is NOT where I started!!

And that was before I went downstairs and saw the water gushing into my kitchen through the ceiling, before I knew just how extensive that the damage would be from that flowing water.

And yet, once I was calm enough to release my grip on my panic, I could tap into the steps I needed to take-- and I could reach out for help. The voice of divine mind, the voice of God, calmed my beating heart and my hot tears, and I called a friend who had a similar flood a few years back. I called my insurance company. I called my brothers. I called mom and dad to PRAY (and eventually, to bring me food :-))! I reached out to the human expressions of God's love and grace that fill my sails-- my tribe of friends and family.

We all face these moments when it feels like the rug has been pulled out from under us. Part of my long view perspective this week, with my rugs pulled out of the house and drying in the garage, is thinking about the families in Kentucky who have lost everything-- including family members who died in the raging flood waters.

Keeping some perspective doesn't require me to ignore or stuff my own experience or feelings-- it simply gives me space to lean into gratitude, it lets me recognize the grace that still upholds me. I feel the grace of having taken time away on retreat to renew my reserves. Time in quiet, time in prayer, time steeped in the voice of God whispering in my soul-friend Sue's voice, in the sound of wind and birdsong in the trees-- what a powerful reminder I've had of how vital it is to my wellbeing to not only take "big time" with God, but to step into that surrender each day. That is the ONLY way my life can be a prayer...

As part of our retreat, each morning Sue and I began with morning prayer, facing the lake as the sun came up across the mountain. She brought "Prayers with the Earth" by John Phillip Newell, and I taught her the Sufi body prayer that I've mentioned here before.

## **A Sufi Body Prayer**

(From “Spiritual Practices” by Rev Diane Berke, One Spirit Interfaith Seminary)

***“I step into the embrace of the Beloved...”***

Take one step forward with the right foot, then bring the left to meet it.

***“...to receive and to give...”***

Cup hands in front of heart, then extend forward as in a gesture of giving

***I put behind me all worldly concerns and egoistic thoughts...”***

Bring hands back, palms facing forward, at shoulder level, elbows bent

***“...I open my heart...”***

Place hands over heart center

***“...and offer thanksgiving and praise...”***

Lift hands and arms upwards, while also looking up

***“...I surrender to You...”***

Bow at the waist, sliding hands down the thighs to knees

***“...that I may do Your will...”***

Drop to knees and touch forehead to the ground

***“...now and always...”***

Sit up and back on heels, hands resting on thighs

***“...at one with You.***

Touch forehead to ground again

Stand and take one step back to original starting place

Repeat the entire cycle three times

Ever since then, as I’ve incorporated this into my practice again, I’ve been contemplating what it means to call this “God as Principle ” *my Beloved*? What does it mean to me to say I step into the arms of the beloved when the Beloved is also me? I don’t know!! I haven’t ruminated an answer yet... all I know is this-- I have let go of needing an answer for now. I am stepping into trust that God is

everywhere present and wherever I am, God is. What does it mean to *you* to live a life of trust in divine mind, in the ever present goodness of God? How do *you* fill up your well?

I'll leave you with a prayer poem I wrote inspired by the Sufi body prayer. This actually almost wrote itself during an afternoon of silence on my retreat at the end of my first year at One Spirit. May we open our hearts to trust the grace that supports our every step.

***My Beloved*** (*inspired from the Sufi Body prayer*)

I step into the embrace of my beloved  
And here in this moment is all I need  
Receive, receive first, receive  
Love, grace and again, Love  
Love to give back now to my Beloved  
Love enough to release my fear and  
worry

Pulls me    invites me    loves me  
Into Surrender  
My will becomes Thy will  
Yes and Yes and Love  
Always    (MBB 6/2015 and  
5/2016)

and smallness

Love enough to open my heart  
Where can I run from your Love?  
My lips    my eyes    my limbs    my  
joyful  
Dancing feet carry me to yes and yes  
Yes says my heart, yes, and I reach in  
Pluck out the final shard of glass  
Offer it  
To my Beloved and surrender  
To the light, radiant light  
That spills out of this tender fissure  
In my heart