



Spiritual Practice Week 2

Theme: Paying Attention - Listen

3 Wondering Questions:

What happens when I really listen to someone else?

What happens when I really listen to myself?

How/where do I notice God when I listen?

Reverend Emily Meyer, Director of [The Ministry Lab](#), invites you to wonder through contemplation and movement. Please note, this content is also available as an audio recording on the website: www.uccmn.org.

Tips for this week's Spiritual Practice:

*You may listen or read.

*There is no "wrong" way to participate: whatever is appropriate for you in your context is "right".

*Non-judgmentalism is key: be kind and forgiving to yourself and others. This is called a "practice" because it is never "perfect".

*If safety and health protocols allow, let this be an excuse to get out of the house, away from screens, and into the out-of-doors.

*in this practice, each "directive" is followed by silence, during which you are invited to "take as long as you like..." Recorded silences last 15-30 seconds. To stretch the silences, push pause on your player; push play when you are ready to proceed. There is no "proper" length to this: what is right for you and/or any Littles who may be practicing with you, is right.

*That being said, don't be afraid to stretch the silences a bit further over time: extended time can help deepen our connection with the Divine and has the delightful side-effects of developing patience, non-judgmentalism, creativity, compassion, and attention spans!

*This practice concludes with an invitation to journal and reflect. Both are highly beneficial and are highly recommended. You may want to bring paper and writing/drawing materials with you so reflection can follow as part of the practice. If this is not possible, you might return home in mindfulness and journal and reflect there.

*If circumstances prevent all forms of reflection, please be kind to yourself and others by moving slowly from the practice back into "normal" life: the jump from silence to normal-volume life can be jarring.

*Take your time. Listen....

Work out the Wiggles If you're going outside, go ahead and step out the door, but before you leave your front porch or sidewalk, let's work out the wiggles to help our bodies, minds, hearts and souls get ready. Let's do a silly dance: go ahead and squiggle and wobble and twirl a bit to shake out any wiggles that will get in the way of listening well.

...

Stretch: Now let's invite our body, mind, heart and soul to settle into the practice by stretching.





Take a moment to reach to the sky and stretch out all your fingers. If you can, stretch all the way up onto your tippy-toes. Think of energy shooting out your fingertips and toenails, into the sky and down through the ground.

Then curl all of those stretched-out parts back in and drop your body forward. Say, “Hello!” to your toes, and give them a little tickle.

Slowly roll your torso back up and take a deep breath.

Name Your Intent: Today, we are going to use just one word to remind ourselves what this time is about. Naming what we are doing - and why - can help our body, heart, mind and soul know that this is different from just “going out for a walk” and remind us to stay focused.

Naming our intent also helps us remember what it is! Our intent today is to LISTEN: to ourselves, to others, to the world around us, and to God. Let’s say these words to ourselves as we breathe:

Breathe in: Listen...

Breathe out: ...to my True Self.

Breathe in: Listen...

Breathe out: ...to the world around me.

Breathe in: Listen...

Breathe out: ...to the voices of others.

Breathe in: Listen...

Breathe out: ...to God.

Practice: I invite you to jog or run for a bit. As you run, listen to your own breath. Notice the different sounds when you breathe in, and when you breathe out. Listen for the sound of your breath in your nostrils. Listen for the sound of breath in your throat. Listen for the sound of breath in your lungs. Listen for the sound of breath in your belly. Run for as long as feels comfortable; as you run, listen to the sound of your own breath. *Take as long as you like... [from 1-5 or more minutes].*

Let your body slow down a little bit and walk awhile. As you walk, listen to the world around you. Notice how many different sounds there are. Notice how many different creatures and people and parts of creation are making noises. Notice how your movement creates new sounds. As you walk, notice all the different sounds of the world around you. *Take as long as you like... [from 1-5 or more minutes].*

Let’s get active again: you might skip, hop or dance for a while. As you skip, hop or dance, listen to your feet: notice the sounds your feet make as you move. Notice if that sound changes if you are on different types of ground or pavement. Notice the rhythm your skipping, hopping or dancing makes. Skip, hop or dance for a while and listen to the sound your feet make. *Take as long as you like... [from*





1-5 or more minutes].

Take a deep breath... and let yourself rest. You might sit on a park bench, a log, the side of the road or even lie down in the middle of a field: whatever is safe and comfortable as a way to rest for a bit. As you rest, you might place one or both of your hands over your heart, to help your whole body listen to your

heart. If it's comfortable and safe, close your eyes. Focus all your attention on listening to your heart. Notice the sound of your heart as it slows down. Notice the rhythm of your heartbeat. Notice any other noises your body makes and let them happen without judgement. As you rest, listen to your heart. *Take as long as you like... [from 1-5 or more minutes].*

Rest: I invite you to wiggle your toes and fingers; gently roll your head or shoulders...

Take a few deep breaths: in and out...

And rest for a moment.

Take as long as you like - from 10-30 seconds or more.

Reflect: It can be really helpful and fun to reflect a little bit on what you experienced while listening. You can do this by writing in a journal, drawing a picture, doodling, or talking with someone who moved and listened with you. To help you start writing, drawing and/or talking (because some people find it helpful to do all three!), here are some questions to consider:

Where did you notice God as you listened to your breath?

Where did you notice God as you listened to the world around you?

Where did you notice God as you listened to your feet on the ground?

Where did you notice God as you listened to your heart?

Some people like to keep all of their writing or drawing in one book or place. After many days, weeks or even years, looking back over these writings and drawings helps people see where God has been in their lives and in the world, and helps them notice God in new ways. It's a way to write or draw your own personal story of God.

Bless: You might end your writing/drawing/chatting time by taking a final deep breath in, letting it out slowly, and saying a single word or phrase of closure or blessing, like "Amen"; "Blessed Be"; "Thank you"; or "We walk in peace"; etc.





Then, walk, skip, jump, run or hop yourself home or into the rest of your day!

