

Week 4: Settling and Soul Serving **Settling and Settling In (Resting, Surrendering, Creating and Serving)**

Love Poem

Love is not putting on
straight jackets of robotic action,
fear-filled gestures
to prove something.
Love is boundless,
soaring to the stars,
moments that take us
out of suffering minds
and into the waterfalls
of play and joy,
where guilt and shame stutter
and bow down in final sighs
and might melts into heart freedom.

Tina Karagulian

Poem by Wendell Berry, from This Day: Collected and New Sabbath Poems

*I go among trees and sit still.
All my stirring becomes quiet
around me like circles on water.
My tasks lie in their places
Where I left them, asleep like cattle
...
Then what I am afraid of comes.
I live for a while in its sight.
What I fear in it leaves it,
And the fear of it leaves me.
It sings, and I hear its song.*

Settling and Settling In

Know the difference between settling: settling for something that is limiting us, and settling in to what the Divine or your inner creative self wants you to become or be.

Many times we have an experience to teach us where something needs attention, or where our wounds are, so we can heal them. Yet the experience may be a moment to empower us to speak up, to create a courageous change, and not to endure or remain when our time of learning is passed. If we stay too long and *settle* for the wounding by others in our outer world, we are denying more of what our soul may want for us. It takes courage to forge a new path. You are worthy of what the Divine spark within you has offered as a blueprint for your life.

Take a moment and write down where you are settling right now in your life.

There are times your soul asks you to give more beyond your fears,
and it may open your heart more to another:

Where are you stretched to grow within you to love others or yourself more?

Yet there are also times you can hold yourself and another in a new balance—still creating with someone yet your soul is nudging you to include your human needs more, too. (Empty nest moms know this!) There are times your soul asks you to open your heart more to your human self, to know when to step away from giving that feels like an automatic obligation and your heart is not present and open. It may be a giving that is not being received or respected, or it is not helping another to grow in the way he/she/they need to grow. In a wonderful way, letting go of settling for an old way of giving is also a deep form of love that wants to anchor within you. It is a deeper trust and a deeper love, by letting someone grow in a new way without your human intervention. That doesn't mean you cut someone out of your life. You hold them differently, looser, allowing the inner spaces in your prayer and meditation time to create a sacred space for a new foundation to be within you and to fill you. It will be a space for others as it needs to, on its own, in organic time. You can still stay connected yet in a new way. How you give your time and energy may need a slight or larger tweak. For example: caretaking for a family member and continue family visits, having the courage to **ask other family members to help you; or not giving in the same way so another can learn to care for themselves.**

***How can I tweak my giving
so that I honor my needs and growth, too?
Where is my soul asking me to stretch yourself in some way?***

You may be asked to breathe through the discomfort of using your voice in ways you do not normally do or take action that may be bold for you, and it may not always be understood or welcome by others.

I remember as a teenager when my uncle was struggling with his cancer diagnosis, many of our family members were praying for him to recover, and little did we know, after two years, this was putting a strain on him. I had a flash of a prayer that came to me, one I didn't expect, that we needed to pray for **the best outcome** for him, and what was implied in that was to **be open to any outcome**, even if it meant his dying. As a young woman, I initially didn't know how my mom would react to this information, since she was so attached to her brother. It was a bold move my soul asked me to take, for at other times my truthful perceptions were not always welcome. I did tell my mother and she heard me. We all began to pray that different prayer. I felt my uncle was waiting for his sister to give him permission to let go. He soon passed away, and I felt his heart lighter, free and healthy.

As an adult, whenever I have had a similar attachment to someone or an outcome, I have had to ask myself if it indeed it is the best outcome and to ask for that instead. Where I was pushed to learn was that being open to any outcome, even the outcome of loss, is actually an aspect of deeply loving someone. If you are willing to let someone go, or let go of the way you have been communicating or connecting with them, you allow for a deeper flow and trust to take over. Sometimes you are being nudged to grow in new ways with someone, and the leap into the unknown will forge a new and more grounded connection with them, if both choose to take that step. We all have that choice. **You serve a deeper love when you ask for the best outcome for yourself and another person: if there is a loss that follows, or a coming together in a new way, you allow for all possibilities with an open heart.**

*Where am I settling, holding onto something
that is finished or not flourishing within me or outside of me,
and my soul is asking me to take an action?*

*Where can you ask for the best outcome for yourself and/or another,
anchoring a deeper love in the present moment that allows for flow,
service, and your authentic presence to come together in a new way?*

MEDITATION (you may want tissues on hand for the breath exercise!):

Alternate Nostril Breathing:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFXvhPALFAc&list=UUV1KnNQqMDISAJhq86OFEhg&index=8>

Relax the hands.

Go deeper into the center of you. Keep breathing there.

Sit in silence. Breathe into places you *settled* for what was not what your soul wanted for you. Let it expand.

Let go of what was a limitation and invite new ways to see things, allow more opportunities...let yourself be open to what your soul wants to show you.

How does your soul want you to create, grow, or be through you?

Breathe that in.

Allow. Be. Rest.

Settle into the stillness of your own heart.

Breathe deeply here for a few long deep breaths.

If you feared what your soul was asking of you,

breathe into that fear.
Look with love at your fear.
Imagine you are hugging or holding yourself.
Feel the steadiness underneath you, with you, surrounding you.
Settle down into the real you.
Notice that. Follow that.
What wants to be known to you in that bending, allowing, being?
What does your Soul/Holy Spirit/Higher Self want you to know?
How can you best serve for your soul's path?

Create a collage from that meditation time, from your own guidance.

Allow images to come to you as you create your collage—images of what ***settling into the real you*** looks like or feels like. Take moments of rest and stillness as you create, allowing words and images to emerge.

After you create your create, spending time and just look at it. Close your eyes. Sit in silence with it. Slow down your breath. Then open your eyes. Soften your eyes. Look again at the collage. What do you see?

Journal Questions (pick one or two that resonate for you now):

SETTLING: Dryness

- 1. Take a moment and write down where you are settling right now in your life. Where are you holding on to something that is finished or not flourishing, and your soul is asking you to take a bold move for you?**
- 2. What feels dry and done in how I express my time and in how I am with others?**
- 3. In what areas of my life have I settled and not grown emotionally or spiritually?**
- 4. Where have I given up, lost my spark, held back my voice?**
- 5. What do I fear would happen (worst case scenario) if I stepped into my soul or soul leadership?**
- 6. Where in my life can I ask for the best outcome for yourself and/or another?**
- 7. What is being grown and developed in me during this time?**

SETTLING IN: Go Within, Pause, Surrender, Create / Serve

- 1. How can I tweak how I give or communicate so that I honor my needs and growth, too? List what you have learned or where to go to deepen that learning.**
- 2. Describe in my body what it feels like to experience the stirring and the quiet deep within me? List all the ways that this season of my life has settled me into my soul more.**
- 3. What do I know to be true for me when I settle down and just be, without outward grasping, reaching?**
- 4. What is true for me when I pause and listen to my own body wisdom first (what is a yes and no for me now)? List what comes.**
- 5. How does my soul want me to create/serve that deeply nourishes me within yet may also feel uncomfortable doing, yet feels right for me?**
- 6. What is my part and can I allow the Divine (Life, God, My Higher Power, The Universe, etc.) to do the rest? Where can I surrender more?**
- 7. Is being in my stillness all I need right now, or am I ignoring a nudging to bring my presence or intergrated wisdom and experience with others in a new way (as a teacher, mentor, volunteer, caretaker, etc.)? What skills am I being nudged to learn that may be out of my comfort zone (take a class in or make weekly time for creativity such as art, writing, or movement)? What clues have shown themselves to me? Breathe through the discomfort of using your voice in ways you do not normally do or take action that may be bold for you.**