

Numbing, Nourishing, and Unwinding: Practices for Real Life





Making Camp

Eating

Staying hydrated

Resting

*Taking time to listen:
God will show you the way.*

Remember Elijah

1 Kings 19(ish)

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree.

He asked that he might die, "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors."

Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep.

Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again.

The angel of the LORD came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there.

Then the word of the LORD came to him...



LASTS FOR
HOURS
NUMBS IN MINUTES



Numbing * Nourishing/Nurturing * Unwinding

The Quotidian Mysteries

Kathleen Norris, P. 39

Our culture's ideal self, especially the accomplished, professional self, rises above necessity, the humble, everyday, ordinary tasks that are best left to unskilled labor. The comfortable lies we tell ourselves regarding these "little things" - that they don't matter, and that daily personal and household chores are of no significance to us spiritually - are exposed as falsehoods when we consider that reluctance to care for the body is on one of the first symptoms of extreme melancholia.

Shampooing the hair, washing the body, brushing the teeth, drinking enough water, taking a daily vitamin, ground for a walk, as simple as they seem, are acts of self-respect. They enhance one's ability to take pleasure in oneself and in the world.

At its Greek root the word acedia means "lack of care," and indifference to one's welfare can escalate to overt acts of self-destruction and even suicide.

Care is not passive - the word derives from an Indo-European word meaning "to cry out," as in a lament.

Care asserts that as difficult and painful as life can be, it is worth something to be in the present, alive, doing one's daily bit.

It addresses and acts on the daily needs that acedia would have us suppress and deny.

Practice of the Presence: a revolutionary translation

Carmen Acevedo Butcher

Nicolas Herman,
Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection
Spiritual Maxims

Everything is possible.
Work gently.
Humble and Authentic
Je ne sais quoi:

"...a something indescribable, gentle, peaceful, spiritual respectful, humble, loving, and very simple that carries the soul and nudges her to love, respect, and embrace God with a tenderness that cannot be expressed, and that only experience can conceive." p51

Like a straw fire:

"...it's important to remember that this conversation with God takes place in the deep center of the soul. Here the soul speaks to God heart to heart....Everything that takes place outside the soul is like a straw fire that goes out as soon as it ignites, and hardly ever, or very rarely, disturbs this inner peace." p52

How to practice:

"The first way to develop presence is in living each day with great simplicity." p. 53

Faith, hope, love:

"By turning inward with a glance to God and practicing the presence...the soul becomes so familiar with divinity that the soul spends practically all its life in continual acts of love, reverence, contrition, trust, gratitude, giving, asking help, and all the best habits...I know that few people reach this degree of presence." p55

Sharp Notions: Essays from the Stitching Life

“The Art of Being Alone”, The Reverend Rob Leacock

Grieving is the deep practice of being alone. I spent four years readying myself for the moment when my father's condition would worsen, as the doctors predicted it would.

Every goodbye in the nursing home was the last. He and I were under no illusions...I never felt so alone as I did when my father died. Grief is trying not to fall apart, trying not to unravel yourself. My father died, and I grieved. And I knitted. Trying to keep it together - or trying to outpace the sometimes constant unravelling. I still grieve; I still knit... p266



Everything Happens with Kate Bowler, Substack

*“Nostalgia, You Sneaky Thing:
a summer practice for remembering who
you are”*

(June 10, 2026)

[Nostalgia] hijacks you. It says we are the same people we were at fifteen, and right now we are going to prove it.

Past Forward: How nostalgia can help you live a more meaningful life

Clay Routledge, Intro

Nostalgia doesn't get in the way of building a better future for ourselves and others. Nostalgia inspires personal growth, social and community engagement, and human progress and flourishing. When we engage in nostalgia, we are not moving toward the past. We are bringing the past to the present to help us plan for the future. Nostalgia pushes us forward not back.

Numbing Nourishing/Nurturing Unwinding

How does memory put us back together?

What pain needs attention?

What needs to rise to the present or the future?

What practices help us avoid getting *stuck* in the past and unleash our imaginations for the future?

How can our memory be an antibody to the stories we tell ourselves?

How do our stories (individual and communal) give us hope for the future?

Where is God's love, grace, mercy in our story?

Psalm 139: 1-18

From love: a guide for prayer

- ❖ 12 significant events of my life from birth until the present time.
- ❖ How has God's love been present and revealed to me at each of these events?
- ❖ Focus on one event: remember the time and imaginatively re-create and enter into the scene:
- ❖ Where are you? What kind of day was it? What did you feel? Who were the people involved. Let the feelings that you experienced be present to you now.
- ❖ Pray psalm 139: let the words wash over you; open yourself to receive God's love; allow God's present to enter and fill you. Thank God for being present within your history. Close with the Our Father.

John 21: I'm going fishing

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

Of skinny dipping, lonely nights, charcoal fires, absolution, loads of guilt, breakfast, bucketfuls of projection, and forgiveness (a longish reflexion on the last chapter of the fourth gospel)

readings from the book of exile, poems by Padraig O Tuama

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability – and that it may take a very long time.

As I think it is with you; your ideas mature gradually – let them grow, let them shape themselves, without undue haste. Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time (that is to say, grace and circumstances acting on your own good will) will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be. Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you, and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete.

Resources

- Jacqueline Bergan and Marie Schwan, love: A Guide for Prayer
- Kate Bowler from Everything Happens, “Nostalgia, You Sneaky Thing...”, substack June 10th
- Carmen Acevedo Butcher, translator, Nicolas Herman, Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection, Practice of the Presence
- Edwin H. Friedman, A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix
- Roberta M. Gilbert, M.D., The Eight Concepts of Bowen Theory
- Godly Play, Lesson 12, The Exile and Return
- Ann Hood, editor, Knitting Yarns: Writers on Knitting
- brother Lawrence, the practice of the presence OF GOD
- Rob Leacock, “The Art of Being Alone,” Marita Dachsel & Nancy Lee, Sharp Notions: Essays on the Stitching Life
- Pádraig Ó Tuama, readings from the book of exile
- Kathleen Norris, The Quotidian Mysteries