

Professional Development

The Role of Retreat

Do not seek the light.
See it.
Do not look for beauty.
Be it.
Do not search for Self.
Know it.
Let the birdsong teach you.
Let the sunrise break your heart open.
Let every breath remind you of sudden miracles.
— Jeff Foster

To see the light, be the beauty, know oneself, speak the language of the birds, allow the sun into the dark of your heart and to know miracles — I believe these are miracles born of deliberate discourse with the *silence within*.

Generating a relationship with the silence within requires that we dedicate ourselves to a practice of inward experiencing, inward looking and connecting to our sacred, authentic nature. I think this practice of going inward is part of a spiritually disciplined life — a requirement for the one who wishes to embrace a life of truth, beauty and goodness. I think this journey is essential if we want to bring these elements into our professional practices.

A retreat offers you focused time to celebrate and nurture the Spirit within you, to tap into the deep well within

and bring forward newness with which to continue your personal and professional practice. A retreat is more than a vacation where you take time and space away from your life and look differently at the world. In a retreat, you are looking through new eyes, calling forth the intentional lenses of nurturing and deepening your relationship with your body, your mind and your Spirit. A retreat is filled with disciplined, focused and intentional personal work that requires you to look beyond your ordinary life and then integrate this personal work into your professional offering.

Consider the primary pillars of your spiritual and professional work: your body, mind and unique connection with Spirit. I invite you to go on a retreat, be deliberate in your deepening with Spirit through these pillars and dive deeply into the practice of becoming a strong, spiritual being.

The following offer some suggestions for a retreat to help you deepen, shift your perspective and refill the well that feeds you and your professional practice.

Your sacred body

Your sacred body includes both the physical and emotional aspects of your physicality. The body is your sacred vehicle, your temple, the container for your sacred life and the beautiful gift of you embodied.

You can use affirmations to support repatterning your physical and emotional energetic templates. Repatterning is a very specific type of work used in the energy system. It allows you to literally replace or refine a new template for your physical body (or emotional or mental bodies). Because the energy system holds the patterns that inform what the body will become, this repatterning creates the pathways to change. Affirmations are messages spoken aloud, repeated mentally or written down that provide new energies to positively support the health of your body. You can also look into the more physical aspects of nurturing your physical body — resolving to eat delicious, healthy foods and making a commitment to intentionally rest your body.

Your sacred mind

Your sacred mind requires both active study and active silence. The mind is the home of the logical, the seat of our ability to know the world and process our experience. For this reason, the mind needs to be nurtured, not escaped from, on your retreat.

Bring with you inspiration — recorded lectures or new information that will open up new questions to ask your-



self. Inspiration can also come from within. It will allow you to move beyond your current ways of knowing the world, allowing you to open to new ways of thinking and imagining. Embracing new wisdom, like planting new seeds, allows you to bring it into your own practice of introspection and spiritual work, and watch the new ways of thinking grow within you over time.

In your retreat, there is also the necessary cultivation of a practice that moves you beyond the distracted thoughts of the busied, preoccupied mind. You can try this by sitting in quiet meditation to bridge your mind and open heart. As you work with the practices of strengthening your mind, acknowledge that there is both wisdom beyond you and wisdom within you. Both aspects require nurturing to be brought forward into your practice.

Your Sacred Spirit

Your sacred Spirit is the aspect of you that is Spirit itself. This is the sacred being in you that longs for a deep and integrated relationship with your life on earth and your healing work.

To support your sacred Spirit, you can first practice meditation to quiet the mind and connect with space that is rich and dense with the intermingling of your Spirit and the Great Spirit (whatever you conceive this energy or consciousness to be). From here, you can invite some intentional space for active contemplation, which I define as a listening practice with your heart. These contemplative moments allow for questions to surface around the next steps of your spiritual deepening. These moments also

allow for asking in prayer (not bound to a specific faith) for additional wisdom to come forward.

Retreats require both a receiving and an active intentional practice that includes all these dimensions of body, mind and spirit. After a retreat, the space and wisdom that exists now in us support us on our path of conscious ascension.

Many times in a retreat, the deepening is not only about being present and listening, but is also about honoring the reflection and cultivation of new practices for deepening your spiritual experience. So many people think of a retreat as the time spent in a location challenging (lovingly) the current orientation of one's life. I believe that if you go deeper in how a retreat can serve you, it becomes less about the moments in the retreat and more about the new practices and deepening that materialize from the retreat.

A retreat can help you deepen your spiritual practice. Explore the gifts received in your retreat and reflect on how they might be incorporated in your healing practice. €



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