



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Breath

For breath is life, and if you breathe well you will live long on earth.

- *Sanskrit Proverb*

Breath is the bridge, which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts. Learn to practice breathing in order to regain composure of body and mind, to practice mindfulness, and to develop concentration and understanding.

- *Thich Nhat Hanh*

Chalice Lighting

As we light the chalice, let us be thankful for each others' presence.

Breathing Exercise

Deep Breathing

Opening Reading

Mondays are meshed with Tuesdays
and the week with the whole year.
Time cannot be cut
with your weary scissors,
and all the names of the day
are washed out by the waters of night.

No one can claim the name of Pedro,
nobody is Rosa or Maria,
all of us are dust or sand,
all of us are rain under rain.
They have spoken to me of
Venezuelas,
of Chiles and of Paraguays;
I have no idea what they are saying.
I know only the skin of the earth
and I know it is without a name.

When I lived amongst the roots
they pleased me more than flowers did,
and when I spoke to a stone
it rang like a bell.

It is so long, the spring
which goes on all winter.
Time lost its shoes.
A year is four centuries.

When I sleep every night,
what am I called or not called?
And when I wake, who am I
if I was not while I slept?

This means to say that scarcely
have we landed into life
than we come as if new-born;
let us not fill our mouths
with so many faltering names,
with so many sad formallities,
with so many pompous letters,
with so much of yours and mine,
with so much of signing of papers.

I have a mind to confuse things,
unite them, bring them to birth,
mix them up, undress them,
until the light of the world
has the oneness of the ocean,
a generous, vast wholeness,
a crepitant fragrance.

- *Too Many Names by Pablo Neruda*

Breathing Exercise

4/7/8

Centering Thought

To listen well, is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well,
and is as essential to all true conversation

- *Chinese Proverb*

Sharing/

Check-In	<i>Take two or three minutes to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. You can speak or you can pass. We want to know how you are in this moment.</i>
Break	
Sharing/Deep Listening	<i>Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to go deeper into the topic.</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often are you consciously aware of your breath? • Have you ever engaged in any deliberate study or effort to work with your breath? If so, what were your results? • Some cultures believe the breath is the link between the mind and body. How do you feel about this belief? • Have the various breathing exercises we've explored this evening affected you at all? If so, how? • How do you breathe when you are angry? Happy? Anxious? Relaxed?
Breathing Exercise	Group Breathing
Discussion	<i>This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.</i>
Checkout/ Likes & Wishes	What did you like about this meeting? What would you like to see change at future meetings?
Closing Reading/ Extinguish Chalice	<p>Don't say that I will depart tomorrow -- even today I am still arriving.</p> <p>Look deeply: every second I am arriving to be a bud on a Spring branch, to be a tiny bird, with still-fragile wings, learning to sing in my new nest, to be a caterpillar in the heart of a flower, to be a jewel hiding itself in a stone.</p> <p>I still arrive, in order to laugh and to cry, to fear and to hope.</p> <p>The rhythm of my heart is the birth and death of all that is alive.</p> <p>I am the mayfly metamorphosing on the surface of the river. And I am the bird that swoops down to swallow the mayfly.</p>

I am the frog swimming happily
in the clear water of a pond.
And I am the grass-snake
that silently feeds itself on the frog.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin and bones,
my legs as thin as bamboo sticks.
And I am the arms merchant,
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve-year-old girl,
refugee on a small boat,
who throws herself into the ocean
after being raped by a sea pirate.
And I am the pirate,
my heart not yet capable
of seeing and loving.

I am a member of the politburo,
with plenty of power in my hands.
And I am the man who has to pay
his "debt of blood" to my people
dying slowly in a forced-labor camp.

My joy is like Spring, so warm
it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
My pain is like a river of tears,
so vast it fills the four oceans.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can hear all my cries and my laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.

Please call me by my true names,
so I can wake up,
to the breath of my own heart
and feel it beating
in rhythm with yours.
the door of compassion

- *Please Call Me by My True Names*, by Thich Nhat Hanh