

SESSION 5
NURTURING A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE TO
ENHANCE MY VOCATIONAL JOURNEY

1) **Brief check-in** at the beginning of the meeting – focused on these questions.

Focus Questions:

- a) *Do you have any thoughts or reflections related to the discussion we had in our last session?*
- b) *Can you identify practices in your religious tradition or in your own personal spiritual life that nurture a reflection on the presence of God in your life?*

2) **Quiet reflection** – Meditative Reading

Dance Like No One's Watching
Author Unknown

We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married, have a baby, then another. Then we are frustrated that the kids aren't old enough and we'll be content when they are. After that we're frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with. We will certainly be happy when they are out of that stage.

We tell ourselves that our life will be complete when our spouse gets his or her act together, when we get a nicer car, are able to go on a nice vacation, when we retire. The truth is, there's no better time to be happy than right now. If not now, when?

Your life will always be filled with challenges. It's best to admit this to yourself and decide to be happy anyway. One of my favorite quotes comes from Alfred D. Souza, He said, "For a long time it had seemed to me that life was about to begin – real life. But there was always some obstacle in the way, something to be gotten through first, some unfinished business, time still to be served, a debt to be paid. Then life would begin. At last it dawned on me that these obstacles were my life."

This perspective has helped me to see that there is no way to happiness. Happiness is the way. So, treasure every moment that you have. And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time...and remember that time waits for no one.

So stop waiting until you finish school, until you go back to school, until you lose ten pounds, until you gain ten pounds, until you have kids, until your kids leave the house, until you start work, until you retire, until you get married, until you get divorced, until Friday night, until Sunday morning, until you get a new car or home, until your car or home is paid off, until spring, until summer, until fall, until winter, until the first or fifteenth, until your song comes on, until you've had a drink, until you've sobered up, until you die, to decide that there is no better time than right now to be happy....Happiness is a journey, not a destination.

Thought of the day: "Work like you don't need money; love like you've never been hurt; and dance like no one's watching."

List of today's readings - Over

Readings:

Dennis Hamm, "Rummaging for God: Praying Backward Through Your Day," *America*, May 14, 1994

Margaret Silf, "Discernment of Spirits," *Inner Compass, an Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality*, Loyola Press, 1999

L. Patrick Carroll, S.J. "Prayerful Decision-making, Some Practical Steps," *Northwest Jesuit*

Thich Nhat Hanh, "Mindful Breathing," *Anger: Wisdom for Cooling the Flames*

3) **Discussion and sharing** – issues or thoughts that the readings stimulated in you or other items you want to talk about. Below is a series of quotes and focus questions taken from the readings for the day which may serve as reminders. Review these quotes and focus questions and respond only to those which strike a cord in you. Open sharing. (60 Min)

A) Dennis Hamm in "Rummaging for God" points to the four places where the Christian tradition says we can hear the voice of God: Creation, scriptures, church, and our own personal experience.

Focus Question: *Which of these, if any, is most revealing of God to you?*

B) Thich Nhat Hanh in "Mindful Breathing" states "When we embrace our joy and our compassion with mindful breathing...they will be multiplied ten or twenty times. Mindful breathing helps us sustain them for a longer time and experience them more deeply. Therefore it is very important to embrace our positive mental formation like joy, happiness, and compassion when they arise, because they are a kind of food that helps us grow."

Focus Question: *What has been your practice in past for dealing with negative feelings of fear and anger? How might breathing exercises help you?*