

Lifespan Faith Development for Adults & Older Youth “at home” or “on-the-go”

For May 28, 2017

Theme of the Month: EMBODIMENT

Curated by Mary B. Collins, Director of Lifespan Faith Development, curated from Soul Matters



ARTICLE : The Shared Experience of Built Sacred Spaces by Sarah Smarsh - What does your church space embody? Even on a humble patch of flat grassland, there’s a recognizable energy field inside a place designated for speaking with God. How could there not be in a building that has contained so many prayers and songs, so many tears over dead farmers in open caskets, so many smiles at crying babies with holy water running down their cheeks?...

<https://onbeing.org/blog/when-the-physical-becomes-secondary-the-shared-experience-of-built-sacred-spaces/>

QUOTES:

“The purpose of life is not to transcend the body, but to embody the transcendent.” - *The Dalai Lama*

Between the World and Me

Here is what I would like for you to know: In America, it is traditional to destroy the black body – it is heritage.

Enslavement was not merely the antiseptic borrowing of labor – it is not so easy to get a human being to commit their body against its own elemental interest. And so enslavement must be casual wrath and random manglings, the gnashing of heads and brains blown out over the river as the body seeks to escape. It must be rape so regular as to be industrial.

There is no uplifting way to say this. I have no praise anthems, nor old Negro spirituals. The spirit and soul are the body and brain, which are destructible – that is precisely why they are so precious.

And the soul did not escape. The spirit did not steal away on gospel wings. The soul was the body that fed the tobacco, and the spirit was the blood that watered the cotton, and these created the first fruits of the American garden.

- *Ta-Nehisi Coates, from Between the World and Me*



How Trauma Lodges in the Body –On Being Podcast

Human memory is a sensory experience, says psychiatrist Bessel van der Kolk. Through his longtime research and innovation in trauma treatment, he shares what he’s learning about how bodywork like yoga or eye movement therapy can restore a sense of goodness and safety.

<http://www.stitcher.com/podcast/on-being-with-krista-tippett/e/bessel-van-der-kolk-how-trauma-lodges-in-the-body-49386808>

The Dress by Jessi Klein- *The Moth podcast* - What do you do when the wedding dress you are pressured to wear doesn’t embody the values you hold dear? <https://themoth.org/stories/the-dress>



MOVIE: Gleason -An emotionally rich documentary about a former NFL star and his wife finding ways to embody a rich life despite the debilitating caused by ALS.

https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/gleason_2016

Review: <http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/films/reviews/view/28237/gleason>

BOOKS : Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking by Susan Cain

A call for introverts to embody their needed version of leadership! Leaders needn’t be the loudest. Leadership is not about theater. It’s not about dominance. It is about putting the lives of others before any other priority. <https://www.amazon.com/Quiet-Power-Introverts-World-Talking/dp/0307352153>



SONG: Right Here Right Now - Watching the world wake up from history...*Jesus Jones*

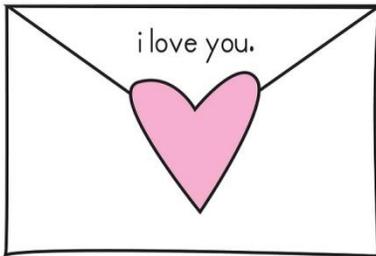
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwpjsToHzAE> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kA_oAccWMCm

And wait there’s more (a love letter...)

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE: A Love Letter To Your Body

Deep Breaths are like little love notes to your body. - Anon

In a vulnerable and insightful [essay](#), Christine Valters Paintner asks, “How many of us treat our bodies with the lavish attention they deserve? What does it mean to treat our bodies like the temples they really are? What is the damage caused by the endless messages we receive each day about our bodies' inadequacies? What if for one day we could put to rest the damaging stories we tell ourselves about how our bodies don't measure up? What if we could bring our full presence to our bodies' needs instead of endlessly ignoring them?...What if our bodies truly were an "inexhaustible source of sanctification" and we treated them as such?”



She goes on to challenge us to “write a love letter to your body, offering both gratitude and forgiveness. Instead of using words, offer it in food, in warmth, in touch... Instead of rushing from place to place until you crash into bed exhausted, allow holy pauses to breathe deeply, take a long bath as an act of offering, lavish yourself with oil. Prepare a nourishing meal for just yourself. Eat chocolate, but make sure it is the deepest, darkest, richest kind you can find and eat it with as much attention as you can summon. Make an appointment for a massage and receive some loving touch imagining that you are being anointed for blessing others.”

So there you have it. Paintner lays out this exercise plan and simple:

“Write a love letter to your body, offering both gratitude and forgiveness. Instead of using words, offer it in food, in warmth, in touch... “

If you find yourself struggling with what this might mean for you or if you want to go take this further, consider another simple blessing or love letter.

Spend a morning or evening completing the following list of sentences:

1. To my **mind** I say thanks. It has helped me hold on to memory, dream bigger dreams and correct the sometimes confusing and confused voices in my head. ***I especially thank it for the time it...***
2. To my **eyes** I say thanks. They have helped me perceive life more widely and anew. ***I especially thank them for the time they...***
3. To my **ears** I say thanks. They have helped be take in beauty, new ideas and the wisdom and pain of others. ***I especially thank them for the time they...***
4. To my **throat and voice** I say thanks. It has enabled me to speak into existence the me that is truly me. It has helped me bravely speak out, offer soft words of comfort to others and sing myself back into joy. ***I especially thank it for the time it...***
5. To my **heart** I say thanks. It has been broken, allowed itself to mend and was brave enough to trust again. ***I especially thank it for the time it...***
6. To my **body's sensuality** I say thanks. It has helped love and feel loved. It has allowed me to know intimacy and experience a self that extends beyond the limits of my own skin. ***I especially thank it for the time it...***
7. To my **hands** I say thanks. They have allowed me the gift of good work. They have held others and allowed me to hold on tight to those I needed most. They have also been brave enough to let go. ***I especially thank them for the time they...***
8. To my **feet** I say thanks. They have led me on adventures and helped me stand tall. They have allowed me to dance and feel every ounce of my joy. They have made me move forward when my heart wanted to run in fear. ***I especially thank them for the time they...***