

# A SEASON FOR NONVIOLENCE



carry the vision

January 30—April 4:

64 days of  
Reflections & Actions

**By Susie Leonard Weller, M.A.**



GANDHI-KING-GYATSO

January 30 - April 4

## SEASON FOR NONVIOLENCE

### *History of the Season for Nonviolence*

The annual 64-day Season for Nonviolence was launched at the United Nations in 1998. Since then, peacemakers from over 67 countries have participated in this educational and grassroots campaign.

It was co-founded by Gandhi's grandson, Arun, and the Association for Global New Thought (AGNT). The season spans these two memorial anniversaries: Mahatma Gandhi (January 30<sup>th</sup>) and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (April 4<sup>th</sup>).

For more resources to support being a peacemaker, visit the Association for Global New Thought at [www.agnt.org](http://www.agnt.org)

### *The intent of this booklet is to:*

- 1. Support personal reflection and application of the principles on nonviolence.*
- 2. Promote group discussion.*
- 3. Strengthen commitment to take action as peacemakers.*

Peace begins within and radiates outwardly to create a more just and compassionate world.

Centered in the Spirit that unites us all, imagine what we can create together!

***"May there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me."***

# Focus for Day 1, January 30: I AM COURAGEOUS

*"Be the change  
you wish to see in the world."*

**Mahatma Gandhi**

The word "courage" means full of heart and spirit. When I take a deep breath and relax my body, I tap into an inner courage. My heart opens to trust an inner wisdom and to release my fears.

Gestalt psychotherapist Fritz Perls explained: *"Fear is excitement without the breath."* Breathing deeply transforms fear and unleashes new possibilities.

I choose courage to guide my response, rather than anxiety.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What encourages me to trust that I am capable enough to courageously act upon what I know?
- ❖ How will I overcome any doubts or fears?
- ❖ What strengthens me to act--full of heart and spirit--within the world?

## Action Step:

***I breathe deeply to transform fear into excitement. I will act more courageously, especially when: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 2, January 31: I SMILE

*"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."*

**Dalai Lama**

The book, *One Smile*, by Cindy McKinley, describes the power of a girl smiling at a discouraged, unemployed man sitting on a bench.

Her tiny gesture of caring started a positive chain reaction with far-reaching effects.

Based on the movie, *Pay It Forward*, one smile inspired a positive change--one face at a time.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ If 70% of communication is non-verbal, what does my body language typically express?
- ❖ What would it take to turn my attitude around to smile, even at strangers?
- ❖ How could I start a positive chain reaction by changing my non-verbal messages?

## Action Step:

***I pay it forward and make a point to smile warmly at:***

---

# Focus for Day 3, February 1: I APPRECIATE

*“Being grateful calms our body  
and strengthens our well-being.”* from  
the staff at [heartmath.org](http://heartmath.org)

Researchers from the HeartMath Institute discovered that being appreciative can positively alter heart and brain rhythms.

Their *“Shift & Shine”* technique uses four steps to help shift my attitude:

1. **FOCUS** thoughts by placing my hand over my heart.
2. **BREATHE** slowly while thinking of something I am thankful for—a person, pet, place or thing.
3. **EXPAND** this feeling until I notice a positive shift in my mood.
4. **SHINE** this appreciative energy toward others.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What helps me to appreciate “what is” with greater ease?
- ❖ When circumstances are challenging, what supports me to shift my focus in a positive direction?
- ❖ How will I consistently express an attitude of appreciation?

## Action Step:

*I will write a gratitude list of five things I appreciate about my life. They are:*

---

# Focus for Day 4 , February: I CARE

***“Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.”***  
**Dalai Lama**

Jesus summed up all of the Laws of the Torah and the Prophets when he said: *“Love God with your whole heart and soul. And, love your neighbor as yourself.”*

How can I truly love my neighbor, or God, if I am unable to truly love and care for myself?

Self-care is neither selfish, nor self-centered. I fill up, so that I am not running on empty. When I nurture my well-being, I have more to give to others.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How will I care for myself with the same loving kindness that I want to show to others?
- ❖ What is my body communicating to me about the type of care it desires?
- ❖ How does my self-care nurture my ability to support others without burning out?

## Action Step:

***I care for myself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually by: \_\_\_\_\_***



# Focus for Day 5 , February 3: I BELIEVE

*“Watch your thoughts, they become words. Watch your words, they become actions. Watch your actions, they become habits. Watch your habits, they become character. Watch your character, it becomes your destiny.” Anonymous*

Here is an acronym to “watch” how thoughts can become habitual beliefs:

**W** = Watch

**A** = Actions

**T** = Thoughts

**C** = Character

**H** = Habits

Although I cannot always curb which ideas will enter my head, I can decide if I will make a home for them to become beliefs.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How will I “watch” my thoughts more carefully to choose the habits and beliefs I want to strengthen?
- ❖ In what ways have my thoughts rippled out to become positive or negative beliefs?
- ❖ Which beliefs am I ready to release because they no longer serve me?

## Action Step:

***I watch my beliefs. I choose to let go of this negative belief: \_\_\_\_\_ and to replace it with this one: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 6 , February 4: I SIMPLIFY MY LIFE

*"The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary, so that the necessary may speak."*

**Hans Hoffman, an abstract artist**

*The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up* by Marie Kondo is an international best-seller. She suggests we take each item in our hand and ask: "*Does this spark joy?*" If the answer is "No!"-- then, get rid of the item.

I stop justifying hanging on to things because I might need them in the future, it was a great bargain, or it reminds me of a loved one.

Kondo invites me to see an uncluttered home as an oasis of calm. I can take a photo of important memorabilia to anchor the memory and then let go of the object.

To simplify life, I designate a place for every item. I put things back after using them. I buy less and donate what is not being used.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What clutters up my life?
- ❖ What are the things that I continue to save but I have not used within the last year?
- ❖ What would it take to simplify how I live and to streamline my belongings?

## Action Step:

***I will de-clutter my home by donating these three things:***

---



# Focus for Day 7, February 5: I EDUCATE MYSELF

***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”***

**Nelson Mandela**

The Latin root for the word “to educate” includes two definitions. “*Educare*” is the training or molding of character. “*Educere*” means to lead or to draw out.

*Educare* preserves and passes down important values and knowledge to the next generation.

*Educere* prepares a new generation for the changes that are coming. It primes them to be ready to create solutions to problems that are yet unknown.

Education includes intelligence plus character. Both teach our young to act wisely when faced with new challenges.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I support the training and molding of character within myself and in younger people?
- ❖ In what ways do I prepare myself, and others, to think critically and creatively to solve new problems?
- ❖ How will intelligence plus character empower me to act wisely—especially to solve conflicts in nonviolent ways?

## Action Step:

***I will educate myself to strengthen my character and to become a wiser leader about: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 8 , February 6: I HEAL

*“Forget your perfect offering. There is a  
crack in everything. The crack is  
where the light gets in.”*

Lyrics from *“The Anthem”* by Leonard Cohen

Healing does not mean the hurt never happened; it means that I am willing to explore an unexpected gift from it. I refuse to allow past pain to define or to control my life.

Similar to the formation of a pearl, the very grit in my oyster can create a beautiful gem.

I reflect on how this painful experience could possibly serve me. By shifting my attitude, I heal how I experience it.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How are life’s irritations inviting me to transform them into pearls?
- ❖ In what ways do I allow past pain to define and control me--and how could I release it?
- ❖ What might be a possible “pearl” or a gift of healing from a painful situation?

## Action Step:

*A “pearl of wisdom” that supports my healing is:*

---

# Focus for Day 9 , February 7: I DREAM

***“Without a vision, the people perish.”***

**Proverbs 29:18**

God often speaks to people through their dreams. Rather than feel inadequate to carry out my vision of what could be, I listen to my inner longings.

In his inaugural address, Nelson Mandela said: *“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. You are a child of God; your playing small does not serve the world.”*

I will face the fears that keep me small.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Out of false humility, how do I “play small”?
- ❖ If I had no fears of being inadequate, what would I be thinking or doing differently?
- ❖ Who or what supports me to follow my dream?

## Action Step:

***I allow myself to dream about creating a life I love. One step I will take to turn my dream into a reality is: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 10 , February 8: I AM FAITHFUL

*"Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase."*

**Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Thomas Merton wrote:

*"My God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. The fact that I think I'm following your will does not mean I'm actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you, does in fact please you."*

Sometimes all I can do is act on my best intentions and trust that is sufficient. I hope I will have more insight tomorrow than I did today. But until then, I act in faith today on what I *do* know.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Where is Spirit stretching me to trust and be faithful—even when I have doubts?
- ❖ What nurtures my faith when the way feels unclear?
- ❖ What choice will I make today to strengthen my faith?

## Action Step:

***I act on what I know. I will demonstrate my faith by:***

---

# Focus for Day 11 , February 9: I CONTEMPLATE

*"What we plant in the soil of contemplation,, we shall reap in the harvest of action."* Meister Eckhart, 13<sup>th</sup> Century Christian Mystic

Taking time for daily contemplation connects me to the Source of my being. It deepens my awareness of God's grace and presence within my life.

From this centering, I notice that a *"pause-ability"* strengthens my *"positive-ability"* to trust that all is well.

Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power of Now*, describes contemplatives as anchoring the frequency of the new consciousness on this planet. He calls them *"frequency holders."*

By taking time to contemplate, I increase the power of positive frequencies in my life, and in the world.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I consistently create a quiet space to pause and listen to Spirit's guidance?
- ❖ When I get distracted, what helps me to re-focus my attention?
- ❖ How does my contemplation support being a positive frequency holder in the world?

## Action Step:

***I take time to pause and contemplate —even if it is only for five minutes today.***



# Focus for Day 12 , February 10: I AM GROUNDED

*"They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."*  
Jeremiah 17:8

Instead of feeling scattered and rootless, like a tumble-weed, I become firmly grounded, like a tree.

I take my time to respond, rather than to react. I avoid being blown around by worries or every new fad. I discern what resonates within me.

I tap into the groundwater of my being to drink deeply and to nourish my spiritual roots. From this grounding, my branches bear delicious fruits.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When I feel scattered, what grounds me?
- ❖ What nourishes my roots to maintain a strong foundation and to bear healthy fruit?
- ❖ What helps me to discern what is true and when to prune the rest?

## Action Step:

*Instead of reacting, I take a moment to breathe deeply and to ground myself before responding, especially when: \_\_\_\_\_*



# Focus for Day 13 , February 11: I AM CREATIVE

*"We come from the Creator with creativity. Each one of us is born with creativity."* Maya Angelou, Poet & Activist

People often complain: *"I am not creative"* because they limit their definition to only include the arts. Let us expand the definition by seeing creativity as adding magic and spice to the ordinary.

Discover simple ways to claim, nurture and express creativity:

- Incorporate beauty by setting the dinner table with flowers and leaves from the yard.
- Make everyday chores fun by turning them into a game.
- Cook a new recipe with a novel ingredient.

## Reflection Questions:

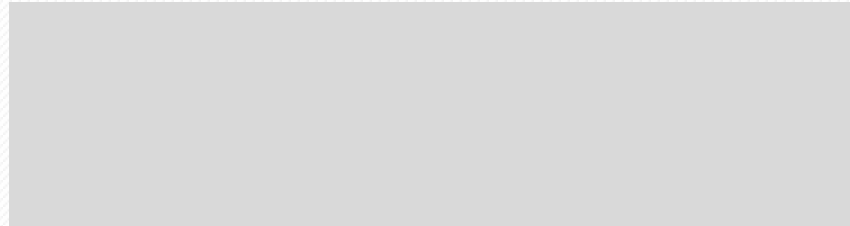
- ❖ What do I take for granted that others appreciate within me as being creative?
- ❖ What helps me to claim and nurture my ingenuity?
- ❖ How could I add pizzazz, or an original touch, to daily activities?

## Action Step:

*I commit to expressing my creativity today by:*

---

# Focus for Day 14 , February 12: I AM HUMBLE



The word “human” comes from the word “humus” or earth. To be human is to enjoy an earthy humility. After death my body will return to nourish the soil.

None of my material possessions nor accomplishments will matter. What will matter is how well I loved, received love and did whatever I could to help the earth be a better place.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What reminds me to celebrate the “earthiness” of my humanity?
- ❖ When I have felt humbled by a situation, what helps me to accept my humanity without judgment?
- ❖ What keeps me grounded in humility, rather than in ego?

## Action Step:

***I humbly accept my  
humanity, especially when:***

---

# Focus for Day 15, February 13: I AM REVERENT

*"I can do no other than be reverent before everything that is called life. I can do no other than to have compassion for all that is called life. That is the beginning and the foundation of all ethics."* Albert Schweitzer, M.D.

Developing a reverent attitude towards life means taking time to be awed by beauty. I cultivate this awe by sitting in quiet contemplation to enjoy a spacious stillness.

I am invited in Psalm 46:10 to *"Pause awhile, be still and know that I am God."* From this well of silence, I feel connected to all of life. I am inspired to treat everyone and creation in a sacred manner. I revere life's mysteries.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What encourages me to pause and to be awed by beauty?
- ❖ What do I revere as sacred?
- ❖ How do I treat myself, others and creation with greater respect and reverence?

## Action Step:

***I take time today to revere all forms of life. I especially enjoy being awed by the wonder of:\_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 16 , February 14: I AM GRATEFUL

*"In daily life we must see that it is not happiness that makes us grateful, but gratefulness that makes us happy."*

Brother David Steindl-Rast,  
Coordinator of [www.gratefulness.org](http://www.gratefulness.org)

New research proves the old proverb, *"A merry heart does good like a medicine."* Increasing Vitamin "G" or gratitude, can actually improve my health.

The challenge is to practice gratefulness in the midst of challenging times. The poet Rilke asks, *"From what experience have you suffered most? Even what tastes most bitter, can be transformed into sweetness."*

The willingness to practice gratitude in the midst of crushing sorrows can release qualities of courage and compassion that are formed under duress.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What reminds me to develop a grateful heart and stop taking my resources for granted?
- ❖ How can gratitude transform what has tasted most bitter into a sweetness?
- ❖ What strengthens my ability to be thankful even in the midst of challenging circumstances?

## Action Step:

*I increase my daily level of Vitamin "G" by being grateful for my life and resources, particularly for:\_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 17 , February 15: I LIVE WITH INTEGRITY

*"Always do right—this will gratify some and astonish the rest."*  
Mark Twain

Although it is tempting to tell a "white lie", I pay a high price when I do not live with integrity.

My body tenses up, fearing I will be caught. I lose the trust of those around me when I do not quickly own up to my mistakes. My spirit shrivels when I do not walk my talk.

The process of how I reach the goals is just as important as the result I am seeking. Justifying an inappropriate means diminishes the noble intention I began with.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Where does my life feel out of integrity?
- ❖ In what ways have I rationalized that the "ends justify the means"?
- ❖ What actions are needed to restore my integrity?

## Action Step:

***I listen to the nudging of my conscience. I will act today to restore my integrity by:***

---

# Focus for Day 18, February 16: I ENJOY FREEDOM

*“Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.”*  
**Mahatma Gandhi**

Janis Joplin sang the phrase:  
*“Freedom is just another word for having nothing left to lose.”*

I enjoy greater freedom when I release my attachments to any agendas. I surrender needing specific outcomes to feel happy.

I let go of any shame or doubt and learn from my mistakes. No matter what happens, I can enjoy an inner freedom.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What am I hanging on to that limits my freedom?
- ❖ What will it take to release my fear of making mistakes so that I can live with greater freedom?
- ❖ When do I feel most free and how will I expand that experience?

## Action Step:

*I give myself permission and the freedom to try something new, such as:*

---



# Focus for Day 19, February 17: I ACCEPT

*"Who would you be with out your story? .  
.. Love what is."*

Byron

Katie, Founder of "The Work"

I feel challenged to accept what is, let alone to *love* it. Byron Katie invites me transform my story by turning around my judgments.

I accept the mirrors in my life who reflect back my judgments towards them. By journaling answers to Katie's provocative questions below, I accept that when *"I spot it, I got it."*

1. How do I react when I believe those negative thoughts and feelings?
2. Who would I be without that thought or feeling?
3. Am I willing to turn everything around that I just wrote—as if it were written about me?

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree am I willing to love and accept "what is"?
- ❖ What encourages me to accept the mirrors in my life who reflect back my judgments about them?
- ❖ How would my life be different if I truly accepted that whatever annoys me can be turned around to become a valuable teacher?

## Action Step:

*I accept and work with what is, specifically:* \_\_\_\_\_

# Focus for Day 20 , February 18: I FORGIVE MYSELF

*"Forgiveness makes room for miracles to happen. The secret ingredient is the willingness to forgive, even when you don't feel like it."*

**Colin Tipping, Author of *Radical Forgiveness***

Forgiveness often happens in layers, like peeling an onion. At first, I cry. I make amends as best I can. Then, I forgive myself as much as I am able.

Later, if I am re-triggered by that painful memory, I know that I have more layers of pain and shame to release.

I am not truly free until I have forgiven myself completely. That last little bit is my invitation to accept a deeper level of inner healing and forgiveness.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What would it take to be *willing to begin* the process of self-forgiveness?
- ❖ What helps me to heal and release self-blame and judgment of past mistakes and to move forward with my life?
- ❖ What step will I take today to accept my imperfections and forgive myself at a deeper level?

## Action Step:

*I forgive myself for: \_\_\_\_\_. I journal about the hurt, speak it out loud and burn the paper as a sign of releasing old pain and shame.*

# Focus for Day 21 , February 19: I AM INSPIRED

*"If I am only 11 and I can help, imagine what everyone else can do."*

**Natalie Achenbach, Student**

Natalie heard about the plight of Syrian refugees through her school. Sad that children like her were forced to leave their homes, she wondered how she could help.

She began selling her chicken's eggs to benefit Syrian refugees. So far, Natalie has raised over \$800 for World Relief in Spokane, Washington. She has been amazed that: *"When you start something, everyone else is excited to finish. You just need to get them started."*

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Who or what inspires me?
- ❖ What is my catalyst for getting started and making a positive difference in the world?
- ❖ How could I join in with others to turn an inspiring possibility into a reality?

## Action Step:

*I am inspired by \_\_\_\_\_.*

*I commit to practicing this quality today by: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 22 , February 20: I LIVE MY MISSION

*"We really are the one we have been waiting for. We create the quality of our lives by how we are **BEING** on the inside."*

Rima

**Bonario, Jane Simmons and Kelly Isola**

Rev. Deidre Ashmore, Minister at the Unity Spiritual Center of North Idaho, describes the qualities she wants to be and her mission as:

*"One with my spiritual community, prayer is my path, faith is my star and love is my journey."*

Her statement is like an internal GPS guiding her decisions.

So, how do I recognize the **4 P's of Purpose** and my unique mission?

**P = Pleasures:** What do I most enjoy doing?

**P = Pains:** What have I learned?

**P = Passions:** What do I most care about?

**P = Pathway:** What possibilities are unfolding that point toward my purpose?

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How am I living the qualities to become the one God has called me to be?
- ❖ How has pleasure, as well as pain, become a pathway to discover my passion, and unique purpose?
- ❖ In what ways does my personal mission support a larger purpose to make a positive difference in the world?

## Action Step:

***I will write out my mission statement. One step I will take to live my purpose more fully is: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 23 , February 21: I PRAY

*"Time for reflection is for me a lifesaver; it is not just a nice thing to do if you have the time.*

*It is the only way you can survive."*

Margaret J. Wheatley,

Leadership Consultant

Author &

I feel more centered when I take time for daily prayer and reflection. Sometimes, when I am really busy, I am tempted to give God a "rain check" with a promise for future quiet time.

The days I have done this, I notice being off-kilter during the day. Things don't go as smoothly, and I do not handle situations as gracefully as I would like.

In a 24/7 world, unless I carve out regular times for prayer and reflection, they will not happen.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What keeps me so addicted to busyness that I neglect to pause and take time to pray?
- ❖ What encourages me to set aside time for daily reflection?
- ❖ How could I "pray without ceasing" throughout the day?

## Action Step:

*I begin and end my day with prayer. I pray daily for world peace and to become a more effective peacemaker.*



## Focus for Day 24 , February 22: I SUPPORT HARMONY

*“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing, and rightdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there.”* Rumi, 17<sup>th</sup> Century Sufi Poet

Increasing harmonious relationships includes meeting the underlying needs that often fuel behavior. Relationship expert, John Gottman, Ph.D., shares these four specific tips to strengthen harmony:

1. Stop complaining.
2. Turn criticisms around to become concrete requests.
3. Show respect verbally and non-verbally, rather than contempt.
4. Share what is going on, instead of stonewalling feelings.

### Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Which of Gottman’s tips would be the most helpful to increase greater harmony within my relationships?
- ❖ What would need to shift to stop complaints, criticisms or contempt?
- ❖ How will I get beyond the “wrongdoing” to meet others in a more harmonious field?

### Action Step:

*I increase inner and outer harmony by showing more respect—both verbally and non-verbally. In particular, I commit to stop criticizing: \_\_\_\_\_*



# Focus for Day 25 , February 23: I AM FRIENDLY

*"A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words."* Unknown

Author

Strangers are possible friends I have not yet met. I will take the initiative to introduce myself to someone I do not know.

Rather than stay in a comfortable clique, I open my circle to include new people. I welcome them and make a point to get acquainted, as well as to help them meet others.

I deepen and expand my friendships to be a mutual source of growth and support.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What helps to release my fear to make new friends?
- ❖ How can I extend a warm and friendly spirit to those I do not know—at school, work, church or with the retail clerk?
- ❖ In what ways will I reach out to include new people within my circle of friends?

## Action Step:

***I will be the first one to initiate being friendly to those around me.***

# Focus for Day 26, February 24: I AM RESPECTFUL

Follow these 3 rules from the Dalai Lama:

1. "Respect yourself.
2. Respect others.
3. Take responsibility for all of your actions."

Respect for all is the foundation for relationships. The challenge is: how do I show respect to those I dislike, disagree with, or when they do not show respect toward me?

Rather than reacting harshly, I commit to responding in a respectful manner.

- I listen to understand the other's perspective.
- I set appropriate boundaries.
- I talk in ways that maintain, or restore, a safety zone of respect.
- I make amends when I have been disrespectful.
- Instead of using an irritated tone, or withdrawing in silence, I state what is true for me.

Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How will I show more respect toward myself?
- ❖ What is one thing I am willing to do to show more respect towards others—particularly those I disagree with?
- ❖ How will I restore a safety zone of respect when it has been violated?

**Action Step:**

*I will demonstrate more respect for myself and others by: \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Focus for Day 27, February 25: I AM GENEROUS

*“There are enough resources in the world to meet everyone’s need, but not enough for everyone’s greed.” Mahatma Gandhi*

Most spiritual traditions promote being generous to share time, money and other resources with those in need.

True generosity is a gift without strings attached. I give freely because it increases my well-being to give abundantly.

Since we are all God’s children, I am called to be generous with my most vulnerable brothers and sisters—both locally and internationally.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When do I observe being attached to my possessions, time or energy or feel reluctant to be generous?
- ❖ In what ways do I notice Spirit nudging me to consistently share, or tithe, whatever I have with others?
- ❖ How does being generous increase my well-being?

## Action Step:

***I commit to a regular practice of being generous with my time, money and resources with others by:\_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 28, February 26: I LISTEN

***“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” Stephen Covey, Author***

Covey writes in the *7 Habits for Effective People*: “First, seek to listen and to understand.”

One tip to strengthen my listening skills is to set the timer for 1 minute. Whomever is the most upset, speaks for the first minute without interruption. The listener sums up both the facts and the feelings to demonstrate understanding before they get their turn to speak. Repeat as needed until both feel fully heard.

When I take the time to practice deep listening, I create a bridge of respect for mutual understanding.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ I have two ears and only one mouth. What reminds me I should listen twice as much as I speak?
- ❖ How do I let others know that I understand and respect what they said--even when I disagree with them?
- ❖ How will I be the first to initiate listening to build a better bridge for understanding?

## Action Step:

***I seek to understand by choosing to listen without interrupting, especially with:***

---

# Focus for Day 29, February 27: I FORGIVE OTHERS

***“An eye for an eye, and soon the whole world is blind.”***

**Mahatma Gandhi**

Felicia Sanders survived the massacre at the Mother Emmanuel Church in Charleston, N.C. She said she chose to forgive because: *“If you don’t, you’re letting evil into your heart. You’re the one suffering. You’re the one hating. You have to forgive. For you.”*

Despite the pain cracking their voices in the courtroom, the survivors and their families chose to speak the language of forgiveness. Their attacker, a white supremacist, intended his killings to provoke a race war. Instead, Charleston erupted with grace.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Who, or what, do I struggle with the most to forgive?
- ❖ In what ways do I suffer when I continue to hate?
- ❖ What would be a first step for me to start the process of forgiveness?

## Action Step:

***I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_  
so that I can move forward  
with my life.***



# Focus for Day 30 , February 28: I MAKE AMENDS

*"It is the highest form of self-respect to admit our errors and make amends for them."*

Dale E. Turner, Actor & Musician

Gary Chapman, author of *The 5 Love Languages*, has written a sequel called: *5 Languages of Apology*. He suggests we use "code words" to signal a desire to repair a relationship.

Making amends can take various forms such as:

1. Express **Regret**: *"I'm sorry."*
2. Accept **Responsibility**: *"I was wrong."*
3. Make **Restitution**: *"Ask—What can I do to make this right?"*
4. Genuinely **Repent**: *"I commit to not do that again."*
5. Request **Forgiveness**: *"Will you please forgive me?"*

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I signal, in ways that others understand, that I am ready to make amends?
- ❖ Which love language or code words would be the most appropriate to repair the relationship?
- ❖ How do I let others know that I accept their intent to make amends?

## Action Step:

*I will take the first step to make amends with: \_\_\_\_\_*



# Focus for Day 31, March 1: I PRAISE

*"The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is to celebrate."*

**Oprah Winfrey**

Praise is a form of affirmation and encouraging others, as well as ourselves.

John Gottman, Ph.D., a relationship researcher, suggests we use a 5:1 ratio to give at least five positive comments for each negative one.

Whatever I focus on, increases. So, why not choose to celebrate what is going well?

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How well do I affirm and encourage myself, as well as others?
- ❖ What is my current ratio of positive to negative comments?
- ❖ What reminds me to praise what is going well, rather than to focus on what is not?

## Action Step:

***I will encourage others today by giving at least five sincere comments of praise.***

# Focus for Day 32 , March 2: I AM PATIENT

*“Patience is not the ability to wait, but how you act while you are waiting.”*

**Joyce Meyer,** Christian Author & TV Minister

It is often challenging to wait and be patient. Like a two-year-old throwing a tantrum, I want my needs met--right now!

The key to developing patience is trusting that the deepest desires for my Highest Good are being met. However, I need to let go that it might not be in my preferred time-line, nor in the form that I expected.

Life's challenges are ongoing invitations to practice more patience.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What supports me to grow in patience?
- ❖ How could I deepen my trust that all is unfolding for my Highest Good-- and release my time-lines or agendas of how I think things should go?
- ❖ What reminds me to see life's challenges as opportunities to practice more patience?

## Action Step:

***I slow down and practice being more patient, especially with:***

---

# Focus for Day 33, March 3: I ACKNOWLEDGE

*"You can't change what you don't acknowledge."* Dr. Phil, TV Host

Conscious living experts, Gay and Katie Hendricks, discuss the "*Rule of 3*" in their workshops on co-creative relationships.

When something happens once, it may not be a big deal. However, when it repeats a second time, consider it a wake-up call. A third occurrence, often signifies an ongoing pattern.

I have a choice to pay attention and acknowledge what is. Or, I can avoid and dismiss it. It takes courage to live consciously.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I acknowledge the blind spots that limit my ability to see what is really happening?
- ❖ How will I acknowledge recurring patterns and respond more effectively to life's wake up calls?
- ❖ What helps me to face and accept a current reality that I have been avoiding?

## Action Step:

***I choose to live consciously by acknowledging what I have been avoiding, particularly: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 34, March 4: I LOVE

*"I don't do great things. I do small things with great love."* Mother Teresa of Calcutta

Love, the glue that bonds us together, is expressed in tangible ways by being fully present.

Maralyn Cale, a life coach at <http://realizingrichrelationships.com> nurtures juicy partnerships with ourselves and others by strengthening **RICH** relationships.

**R = Respectful:** I revere others by honoring their unique gifts and I let go of controlling them.

**I = Intimate:** I demonstrate trust by being open and undefended.

**C = Courageous:** I live with integrity, celebrate what is and I am curious to learn from all.

**H = Human:** I honor our humanity when we do not live up to our ideals.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What will encourage me to do small things with great love, such as being fully present?
- ❖ How will I nurture juicy partnerships by strengthening **RICH** relationships?
- ❖ In what ways will I demonstrate increased respect, intimate trust, and courage, while also honoring human frailties, as I grow in love?

## Action Step:

*I commit to being a more loving person—towards myself and others, particularly: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 35 , March 5: I UNDERSTAND

*“Peace cannot be kept by force. It can only be achieved by understanding.”*

**Albert Einstein, Physicist**

Understanding is different from agreement. It means that I am willing to let go of my agendas about what I think I know about you.

With an open heart, I commit to truly “getting you”. I practice seeking to understand others even when it appears we have little in common and I am in conflict with them.

Understanding is based on developing empathy for another—an ability to imagine what it would be like to walk through life in their shoes.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When do I get stuck seeking agreement, rather than understanding?
- ❖ How will people know that I understand and respect their viewpoint, even when we disagree?
- ❖ What helps to increase my empathy to promote better understanding?

## Action Step:

***I seek to understand another's experience. I will practice more empathy with:***

---



# Focus for Day 36 , March 6: I AM MINDFUL

*“Mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment with intention, while letting go of judgment as if your life depends on it.”* Jon Kabat-Zinn,  
Stress Management Researcher

Being mindful means to live as fully as I can in the present moment.

As a result, I let go of thinking about the past or focusing on the future. I enjoy what is without hanging on to it, nor fearing it will always be this way.

As meditation teacher, Amit Ray, says: *“Life is a dance. Mindfulness is witnessing that dance.”* I put on my dancing shoes to live well, love well and to let go of the rest.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree am I mindful throughout the day to live as fully as I can?
- ❖ What supports me to stay focused on the present moment, rather than the past, or the future?
- ❖ How do I enjoy dancing with life in a mindful way?

## Action Step:

*I pay attention to living in the present moment. I practice being more mindful about: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 37, March 7: I AM GRACIOUS

*"She was courageous enough to make mistakes, wise enough to forgive herself for them and gracious enough to overlook those same mistakes in others."* **Cindy Ratzlaff, Author & PR Consultant**

Entrepreneur Kevin Daum says a gracious person and leader demonstrate these 5 qualities:

1. Shows empathy and respect
2. Is discrete and thoughtful
3. Listens and pays attention
4. Expresses appreciation and gratitude
5. Forgives and recognizes our common humanity.

May we be leaders in graciousness.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I express a kind and courteous spirit towards others?
- ❖ What reminds me to be gracious when I am tempted to be rude?
- ❖ How will I lead others with more graciousness?

## Action Step:

*I will be more gracious today, such as holding the door open, speaking politely to service staff, or by: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 38 , March 8: I AM KIND

*“View your life with ‘KINDSIGHT.’*

*Stop beating yourself up . . Ask a kinder question:*

*‘What was I learning?’”*

**Karen Salmansohn, Oprah Columnist**

I struggle to be kind, especially to those who have hurt me.

Yet, a wise voice invites me to consider what I could learn from what happened. What would be a kinder response—even a tiny step in a positive direction?

Like the small seed, a tiny kernel of kindness can expand and blossom into a big and beautiful sunflower.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How would my life be different if I viewed myself and others through kindness instead of judgment?
- ❖ Whom do I need to be kinder to?
- ❖ How will I show more kindness today in what I say, how I say it as well as how I behave?

## Action Step:

***I will practice kindness by speaking to myself, and others, with a kinder tone. I will be kinder to: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 39 , March 9: I DIALOGUE

*"In true dialogue,  
both sides are willing to change."*

**Thich Naht Hahn, Buddhist Monk**

Marshall Rosenberg, founder of the Center for Nonviolent Communication (NVC), suggests that deep listening with empathy opens the door to dialogue.

There are four major parts of NVC:

1. **OBSERVE**: Notice, without judgment, what the other does or doesn't do that affects me.
2. **FEEL**: Recognize how I feel about this behavior and what need is triggered.
3. **IDENTIFY THE NEED**: Recognize the underlying desire. Common needs include: connection, physical well-being, autonomy, play and purpose.
4. **REQUEST**: Ask specifically (not demand) what I would like, rather than focus on what I do not want.

To open more dialogue, practice this example:

*I see that \_\_\_\_\_. I am feeling \_\_\_\_\_. I am needing \_\_\_\_\_. Would you be willing to: \_\_\_\_?*

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree do I practice deep listening and clarify what is desired, without judgment?
- ❖ How will I recognize and explore ways to meet the underlying needs that open the door to dialogue?
- ❖ What reminds me to state clear requests about what I would like, rather than to make demands?

## Action Step:

***I practice nonviolent communication to open the door for mutual dialogue, especially with: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 40 , March 10: I PROMOTE UNITY

*“Christian, Jew, Muslim, Shaman, Zoroastrian,  
stone, ground, mountain, river, each has a secret  
way of being with mystery—  
unique and not to be judged.”*  
Rumi, Persian Poet & Sufi Mystic

Each of us is like a unique tree. Our branches are how we express our individuality and differences. By nourishing our roots, we discover that we are watered by a common underground river.

The mystical tradition bonds believers together from a wide variety of spiritualities. We are invited to tap into a larger mystery that unites us all. In this universal experience, we celebrate what unites us, rather than what divides.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What encourages me to discover the common underground river that nourishes our individual roots?
- ❖ How do I recognize and celebrate unity in the midst of diversity?
- ❖ In what ways will I promote greater unity within my family, work, community and in the world?

## Action Step:

***I look beyond outer differences  
to celebrate what we share in  
common, especially with:\_\_\_\_\_***



# Focus for Day 41 , March 11: I AM OPEN

*“The mind is like a parachute. It works best when it is open.” Dalai Lama*

Nothing with God is impossible. When I am open to allowing the Spirit to flow through me, I am blessed and powerful beyond measure.

My mind does not distinguish between what is real or vividly imagined. By actively rehearsing how I want to behave, I create new brain pathways. This opens up new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree am I open to considering feedback from others as well as exploring new possibilities?
- ❖ What increases my willingness to be a clear conduit of God’s grace in the world?
- ❖ How will I open myself up to new ways of thinking and behaving?

## Action Step:

***I am open to possibilities. I consider other points of view, especially about: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 42 , March 12: I AM ACCOUNTABLE

*I am not a product of my circumstances,  
I am a product of my decisions."*

**Stephen Covey, Author of *The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit***

Partnership experts, Gay and Katie Hendricks, invite me to accept 100% response-ability for my life—how I think, feel and behave. I make decisions throughout the day that either support accountability, or blame others for what I am experiencing.

In addition to accepting response-ability for myself, I am also accountable to our global village. I am linked to others through our shared economic, political and ecological realities.

Local decisions can create an international ripple effect. Therefore, I expand my circle of accountability to think globally, while acting locally.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree do I accept response-ability for my life?
- ❖ How will I bridge any lapses in being totally accountable?
- ❖ How do I expand my circle of accountability—both locally and globally?

## Action Step:

***I accept 100% accountability for my thoughts, words and actions. I will make amends to bridge any gaps by: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 43 , March 13: I AM UNIQUE

*"Be yourself;  
everyone else is already taken."*  
Oscar Wilde, Playwright

Each of us has unique gifts—not just competencies-- that contribute to making a positive difference in the world.

Lissa Boles in her "soul mapping" work asks: *"What is the lesson I was put on the earth to teach?*  
And, *"How am I meant to heal and serve the world through my gifts?"*

I am willing to be of service by using the unique gifts I have been given.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What is the distinct lesson I was born to teach?
- ❖ How am I using my personal history and natural gifts to express my unique calling?
- ❖ In what ways am I fully sharing my gifts as an individual expression of God's Presence in the world?

## Action Step:

*I share my unique gifts by:*

---

# Focus for Day 44 , March 14: I COOPERATE

*“Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperating with good.”*

**Mahatma Gandhi**

I am my brother's and sister's keeper. What happens to one, affects all.

We are all stakeholders in our inter-connected global world. Our survival and the health of our planet depends on all of us working effectively together.

Dr. King's "Beloved Community" is a global vision. He hoped all people would share in the wealth of the earth's resources, as well as in the protection and stewardship of them.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How will I cooperate more effectively as a member of the Beloved Community?
- ❖ In what ways does my livelihood support respectful labor and environmental practices, both locally and internationally?
- ❖ How do I support buying things at fair market value—instead of trying to get the best deal at the expense of others?

## Action Step:

***I cooperate with others to support common goals, especially by: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 45 , March 15: I SUPPORT MASTERY

*“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear.” Mark Twain*

To “master” something requires willingness, commitment, time and practice.

Four stages towards mastery include:

1. **Unconscious incompetence:** I have a blind spot. I don’t know that I don’t know.
2. **Conscious incompetence:** I am aware of what I do not know.
3. **Conscious competence:** I commit to practicing new skills, despite the frustration and the effort it requires to get better at it.
4. **Unconscious competence:** I have mastered the skill because I am able to do it effortlessly. It is integrated as a natural part of me.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I begin the process toward mastery by recognizing my blind spots of unawareness?
- ❖ When I feel frustrated, what supports me to continue practicing new skills?
- ❖ How do I bridge the gap between what I know and what I am effortlessly able to do?

## Action Step:

***Rather than give up in frustration or fear, I commit to practicing a new skill until I master it, such as:***

---



# Focus for Day 46, March 16: I AM COMPASSIONATE

*“Compassion for others begins with kindness towards ourselves.”* Pema Chodron, Buddhist Nun

The Avatar Compassion Card Project has distributed 10 million cards in over 72 countries to support compassion.

The cards invite me to view others as being just like me:

- They are seeking happiness in their lives.
- They are trying to avoid suffering.
- They have known sadness, loneliness and despair.
- They are seeking to fulfill their needs.
- They are seeking to learn about life.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What increases my compassion and loving-kindness, toward myself and others?
- ❖ When I am tempted to judge others, what reminds me to remember that they are human, just like me with similar needs?
- ❖ How will I treat everyone with compassion, especially those I dislike?

## Action Step:

***I will demonstrate more compassion towards myself and others by:***

---

## Focus for Day 47 , March 17: I AID DISARMAMENT

*"It is useless to dream of reforming society without a corresponding deep change in our inner lives."*

**Dom Helder Camera, Brazilian Catholic Bishop**

When people asked what was expected of them, the Biblical prophet Micah replied:

*"Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly."*

Justice without mercy is vengeful. And, without humility, it is easy to become self-righteous.

I practice disarmament every time I support a just peace—both in how I treat myself, as well as others.

### Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Which situations particularly challenge me to act justly, love tenderly, and to walk humbly?
- ❖ How well am I walking my talk to practice disarmament whenever I interact with others?
- ❖ What action is needed to repair any breaches of respect, justice, integrity or compassion?

### Action Step:

***I support global and interpersonal disarmament. I will aid disarmament in my life by: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 48 , March 18: I AM ECOLOGICAL

*"The first law of ecology is that everything is related to everything else."*

**Barry Commoner,  
Co-founder of the Environmental Movement**

Although mysteries remain, Commoner describes five basic laws of ecology:

1. Everything is connected to everything else.
2. Everything has to go somewhere.
3. Everything is always changing.
4. There is no free lunch.
5. Everything has limits.

Humankind is only one member of a larger ecosystem. We are part of a diverse, inter-dependent living community. I respect our ecology.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I respect that I am interconnected to a living ecosystem?
- ❖ What am I willing to do to be a better steward of the earth's resources?
- ❖ How will I reduce my carbon imprint and support international policies that protect the environment?

## Action Step:

***I will be more ecological and reduce, reuse and recycle more consistently by:\_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 49 , March 19: I HONOR

*"Be strong.*

*Live honorably and with dignity.*

*When you don't think you can, hold on."*

James Frey, Author of: *A Million Little Pieces*

To show honor means I demonstrate respect and appreciation. I recognize and affirm the unique gifts and contributions in myself and others.

Behaving with honor includes upholding high ethical standards of integrity while also treating others with dignity.

I maintain honor by not shaming others and keeping their reputation intact. I am thoughtful about what I say and post on social media and the internet. I honor other's privacy.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How will I honor and show respect for who I am?
- ❖ In what ways will I honor others by treating them with dignity?
- ❖ How well do I uphold high ethical standards of integrity and protect other's reputation?

## Action Step:

***I demonstrate honor by showing respect and appreciation. In particular, I will honor: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 50, March 20: I CHOOSE

*"You can't stop the waves,  
but you can learn to surf."*

**Joseph Goldstein, Co-founder of the Buddhist  
Insight Meditation Society**

Although I cannot change others, the past or situations beyond my control, I can change me!

I can choose how I think, feel and behave. I do what is within my power to make the best of challenging situations.

By focusing on how I want to behave, I create new pathways in my brain that support changes in my behavior.

Since my mind doesn't distinguish between what is real or vividly imagined, I choose to actively rehearse and practice positive habits.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When am I feeling the most stuck and unable to see that I have any choices?
- ❖ How does my language reinforce the power of choice, rather than the victimhood of: "I *have to*" or "I *should*"?
- ❖ What would it take to choose to "surf" the waves, rather than to complain about them?

## Action Step:

***When I feel stuck, I stop and discover what I DO have choices about. I choose to:\_\_\_\_\_***



# Focus for Day 51 , March 21: I ADVOCATE

*"All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing."*

**Edmund Burke, Political Philosopher**

Martin Niemoller, a German pastor during World War II, described what happens when good people are silent and do not advocate for others.

*"First, they came for the \_\_\_\_ (socialists, trade unionists, etc.) and I did not speak out because I was not a \_\_\_\_.*

*Then they came for the \_\_\_\_ (Jews, Muslims, etc. ) and I did not speak out because I was not a*

*\_\_\_\_\_ . . .*

*Then they came for me and there was no one left to speak out for me."*

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Who are the "despised" people today that are often targeted in hate crimes?
- ❖ When has my silence allowed bullying or evil to triumph?
- ❖ How will I support those who are treated with contempt and have no one else to advocate for them?

## Action Step:

***I speak up and advocate for myself. I am an ally and an advocate for those most despised, such as: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 52 , March 22: I SUPPORT EQUALITY

*"I speak not for myself, but for those without a voice. . .for their right to live in peace, their right to be treated with dignity, their right to equality of opportunity, their right to be educated."* Malala Yousafzai, Pakistani Activist and Youngest Nobel Peace Prize Winner

Throughout history we have continued to justify inequality. We rationalize not treating others with the respect and the dignity they deserve because we view them as "less than," or not equal to us.

We make these judgments on the basis of skin color, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, economic status, education level or political beliefs.

Any time we treat others as a "them" we de-humanize our brothers and sisters .

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What helps me to recognize my blind spots when I view others as less than my equal?
- ❖ Who are the "thems" in my life that I treat with disrespect by limiting their rights and access to opportunities?
- ❖ How will I advocate for all people to be respected with equality and dignity?

## Action Step:

*I notice when I think I am better than others. I commit to treating others as my equal, particularly:*

---

# Focus for Day 53 , March 23: I TAKE ACTION

*"If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in my heart."*

Lao Tzu, Chinese Philosopher

Rather than wait for someone else to make the first move, I take even a small step to create the change I want.

To avoid feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed by so many needs, I listen within to clarify what is mine to do. I make a conscious choice about the best way for me to respond.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I clarify what is mine to do?
- ❖ Without becoming compassion-fatigued, how will I work effectively for change?
- ❖ What action(s) will I take to benefit the common good?

## Action Step:

***Good intentions are not enough. I take action to promote peace and non-violence by: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 54 , March 24: I GIVE

*"Give better back."*

*Mona Barbera, Ph.D.,*

*Author of: Bring Yourself to Love*

Be generous in all things, but particularly in relationships. When someone has offended me it is tempting to treat them badly in return.

To *give better back* means that I pause, breathe and respond with greater respect than I received.

Rev. Rich Henry, reminds me to bless others when I would prefer to curse them. His form of "giving better back" is to pray: *"Bless them; change me."*

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How do I offer support to those I find it difficult to give to?
- ❖ What helps me to give freely without strings being attached?
- ❖ When offended, what will remind me to pray: *"Bless, them; change me"*?

## Action Step:

*I commit to giving better back, especially to: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 55 , March 25: I AM RESPONSE-ABLE

*"Do what you must to keep your heart open, for a closed heart is like a blocked birth canal."*

Dorie Cameron, Author of: *Why Did I Do That?*

Sometimes being responsible feels like a burden. Like a blocked birth canal—no life can flow through.

When overwhelmed by responsibilities, I practice the **SNAP** tool developed by Rima Bonario, Th.D., and Q Effect co-founder, to be able to respond better.

**S = Soothe** and calm my body.

**N= Notice** my thoughts and feelings.

**A= Accept** the gift from this situation.

**P= Practice** being the change I want to see.

Being response-able empowers the opening of my heart for creativity. If weighed down by responsibilities, I remember to **SNAP** out of it!

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ To what degree do I accept full response-ability for the life I am living?
- ❖ When I feel overwhelmed by responsibilities, how will I use the **SNAP** tools to respond?
- ❖ What action would open my heart to support new creativity flowing through my life?

## Action Step:

*One way I will open my heart to be more response-able is:*

---



# Focus for Day 56 , March 26: I AM SELF-SUFFICIENT

*"Freedom is the greatest fruit of self-sufficiency."*

**Epicurus, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Greek Philosopher**

Self-sufficiency, or self-determination, is one of the principles honored during the African tradition of Kwanzaa. Celebrated between December 26 and New Year's Day, Kwanzaa is based on 7 African principles.

These include: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

Self-sufficiency is balanced with partnership. Together, they empower an inter-dependency that creates a more just world.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ When have I relied upon others inappropriately because I lacked the confidence, or the skills, to do things on my own?
- ❖ How could I practice greater independence and self-sufficiency to enjoy greater freedom?
- ❖ What helps me to balance self-sufficiency with inter-dependency?

## Action Step:

***I practice a new skill to feel more confident to do things on my own, such as: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 57 , March 27: I SERVE OTHERS

*"I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. . . I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!"* Jesus, (Matthew 25: 35-40)

It is easy to help people who are polite and express appreciation for acts of kindness. But am I willing to support the "hardest to serve" populations? You know, the really annoying ones.

My service might appear small, such as leaving a student or staff lounge cleaner than I found it. Or, I welcome a refugee into my community. Acts of service, both big and small, add up to enrich our world.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How can I be of service without being patronizing? Or judgmental?
- ❖ How open am I to serving others, especially those who annoy me?
- ❖ With a generous heart, what are simple ways I can be of service within my daily life?

## Action Step:

***I will volunteer at least one hour this week to be of service, especially to: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 58 , March 28: I AM A GOOD CITIZEN

*"There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept responsibility for changing them."*

**Dennis Waitley,**

**Author of: *The Psychology of Winning***

Rather than complain about the darkness, I light one candle. I do what I can. I commit to be a caring citizen who makes a positive difference wherever I am. I trust that even small actions will add up.

In addition to looking out for the welfare of my extended family, I broaden my empathy to include those in my region, country, as well as globally.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How consistently do I vote and actively participate in the democratic process?
- ❖ How do I initiate being a catalyst for positive change?
- ❖ How will I extend my compassion to be a responsible global citizen?

## Action Step:

***I will call, or write, my elected leaders to advocate for issues that promote greater peace and respect for all, including the environment.***

# Focus for Day 59 , March 29: I INTERVENE AS NEEDED

*“Being an effective bystander means choosing to intervene, speak up, or do something to stop acts of power-based personal violence.”*

**The Green Dot Strategy Activists**

Picture red dots on a computer-generated map symbolizing individual cases of violence, spreading like an epidemic. Each red dot is a choice to tolerate, justify or perpetuate an outbreak by choosing to do nothing.

Now, visualize green dots as a strategy to stop violence. How? Engage bystanders to intervene and to speak up. Harness the power of peer influence and the choices of bystanders to create a cultural shift.

Together, we make our world safer-- one green dot of intervention at a time.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ As a bystander, in what ways am I a part of the problem or part of the solution?
- ❖ How will I be like a “green dot” to reduce acts of violence by creating safety zones of support?
- ❖ What empowers me to discern what is mine to do and to have the courage to speak and act upon it?

## Action Step:

***I accept and use my power as a bystander. I intervene to stop bullying and to keep others safe, especially by:\_\_\_\_\_***

# Focus for Day 60 , March 30: I AM A WITNESS

*“Every time we witness an injustice and do not act, we train our character to be passive in its presence. . .”* Julian Assange, Editor of WikiLeaks

I vote with my feet by standing with those who are the most vulnerable. My presence is a witness that they are not alone.

I participate in civic actions to be a witness against crimes against humanity. I speak out publicly on unpopular issues to bear witness for those who have been harmed, or unable to advocate for themselves.

I also am a witness for myself. I affirm what I know to be true.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ Who is calling me to witness on their behalf?
- ❖ How will I stand up and speak on behalf of others who are being hurt?
- ❖ In what ways do I need to be my own witness?

## Action Step:

***I am a supportive witness for those who are the most vulnerable. I stand with others by: \_\_\_\_\_***



# Focus for Day 61 , March 31: I AM PEACEFUL

*“Spiritual Intelligence (or SQ) is the ability to behave with compassion and wisdom while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of the circumstances.”*

**Cindy Wigglesworth, author of “SQ 21”** (21 skills for Spiritual Intelligence)

It is easy to feel peaceful and content when things are going fine. However, how well am I able to maintain a peaceful spirit when I am in the midst of troubling situations?

I am inspired by St. Paul’s experience of being in jail when he wrote he had learned to be *“content in all things, no matter what.”* (Philippians 4:11).

I strengthen my Spiritual Intelligence whenever I expand my capacity for inner and outer peace—regardless of what is happening.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What is the source of my inner and outer peace?
- ❖ How do I nurture being able to feel peaceful regardless of the circumstances?
- ❖ What supports me to behave with compassion and wisdom in the midst of challenging times?

## Action Step:

***I will expand my capacity to experience inner and outer peace, especially when:***

---

# Focus for Day 62 , April 1: I AM COMMITTED

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*  
Margaret Mead,  
Cultural Anthropologist

I am imperfect and I do not always keep my commitments. However, there are consequences when I do not follow through on my word—to myself and others. I betray trust.

I resolve to learn from my mistakes. I re-commit to working more effectively with others to create positive change.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How will I make amends to repair any broken commitments?
- ❖ What will I do differently to be the person others know they can trust to follow through?
- ❖ How will I engage with others, rather than act alone, to support positive changes in the world?

## Action Step:

*I commit to acting on behalf of compassion and nonviolence. One step I will take is: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Focus for Day 63 , April 2: I RELEASE

*"If you love somebody, let them go, for if they return, they were always yours. And if they don't, they never were."*

**Kahlil Gibran, Author of *The Prophet***

Jesus' disciples were frustrated that people were not open to hearing his message. He replied: *"Shake the dust off your sandals and move on."*

Instead of lingering longer, trying to convince someone of my point of view, I let go. I release any attachment to proving that I am right and they are wrong. I bless them and release my agendas.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ What helps me to recognize when I am stuck and I need to let go?
- ❖ When have I crossed the line from sharing information to trying to convince someone the validity of my position?
- ❖ What helps me to release and move on?

## Action Step:

***I release any attachments to proving I am right, especially when I am talking with:***

---

# Focus for Day 64 , April: I CELEBRATE

*“Encourage me to maintain my sense of humor; guide me to find joys. Celebrate my successes, even small ones.”*

**Brene Brown, Sociologist & Author**

Life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved. Pausing to celebrate refreshes me to enjoy what is.

Jack Gilbert’s poem, “*A Brief for the Defense*” reminds me to focus on what I WANT, not what I am against.

*“We must risk delight. We can do without pleasure, but not delight. . . We must have the stubbornness to accept our gladness in the ruthless furnace of this world.”*

May we learn to cultivate joy, even in the midst of challenges.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How does pausing to celebrate nourish working towards the larger vision?
- ❖ How well do I integrate the paradox of celebrating what is completed, and also feel motivated to complete what is not yet finished?
- ❖ How do I express a “stubborn gladness in the ruthless furnace of the world”?

## Action Step:

***I celebrate even the tiny steps I have taken during the last 64 days to promote peace, particularly: \_\_\_\_\_***

# Closing Focus for April 4: I PRAY FOR WORLD PEACE

***“When our actions are inspired by our spiritual nature, then every step we take leads us in the right direction.”***  
**Rev. Jane Simmons, Ph.D.**

Jane Simmons and her husband Gary, who are co-ministers and authors, invite us to expand our “reconciliation consciousness” day-to-day. Their “Q-Process” teaches how to *“live with nothing and no one against us.”*

Peace is not the absence of conflict, but the willingness to embrace what discord can teach us. From a spiritual perspective, disputes can become a transformative part of our journey. Rev. Gary describes conflict as our “spiritual midwife”, stretching us to adapt, yield and let go.

## Reflection Questions:

- ❖ How does my spiritual journey inspire me to be a better peacemaker?
- ❖ What helps me to view conflict as a spiritual midwife for my growth?
- ❖ How will I practice on-going reconciliation as part of my daily prayer for peace?

## Action Step:

***I pray daily for world peace. I plant seeds of respect through my daily practices to cultivate a new culture of well-being for all humanity and creation.***



**Feeling shattered is not the end of the story.  
Being a peacemaker is the willingness to be “cracked open”  
and praying for the Light to flow from the inside, out.**



***“Expansion”* Bronze is sculpted by Paige Bradley. Photo by Victor Lefar.  
Visit Paige’s website at [www.paigebradley.com](http://www.paigebradley.com) for more details.**

# *Centered in Spirit, Peace Radiates from the Inside, Out-- Creating a World that Works for All*

*"We must learn to live together as brothers (and sisters) or perish as fools." Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Scars from personal, social, educational, economic, religious and political wounds can escalate violence.

In these challenging times, practicing the principles of nonviolence becomes even more vital to heal conflicts personally, locally and within our global family.

The future of humankind depends on our ability to find peaceful ways to solve conflicts. Together, we can create a better world that respects the needs of *all*.



Susie Leonard Weller, M.A. is the author of this reflection booklet.

She is a Life and Spiritual Coach, Certified Thinking Styles Consultant and author of: *Why Don't You Understand? Improve Family Communication with the 4 Thinking Styles*.

**For more resources:**  
visit Susie's web site at:  
**[www.susieweller.com](http://www.susieweller.com)**  
or email her at:  
**[weller.susie@gmail.com](mailto:weller.susie@gmail.com)**