

The Welcome Prayer

This is to compliment your daily quiet time in silent prayer (contemplative prayer); and can be used the 23 other hours of the day. :)

When you experience stress, or triggers, or negative emotions (actually, can even be used when we experience positive elation; and celebrations too)-but mostly when you experience and recognize interior reactions, coping mechanisms, and behaviors in response to triggers; something that happens, or something someone says, etc....you can practice the Welcome Prayer. You may even have body sensations that come with events(i.e.: heart palpitations, hot or cold flashes, headache, neck tension, etc) in response to the trigger.

When you sense these things as you become more and more aware of your interior responses; you begin to understand that the triggers all relate to one or more of our basic fundamental core needs:

The need for Security and Survival
The need for Affection and Esteem
The need of Power and Control

The step we take in the Welcome Prayer Practice is what we call saying "yes" or giving CONSENT to the Holy Spirit's presence and action in our lives to allow us to fully feel the emotion, acknowledge it, sense the physical responses in our bodies; Welcome the emotion; and welcome God, Jesus, Spirit into the event-and then Let GO- or "unload" it to Him.

Over time, it allows you to respond in love (to others; but also to yourself in kindness and compassion) -rather than react. You learn to continually turn and return to the indwelling Spirit of God in faith and trust with that situation or person. It will transform you; and give you increased spaciousness and freedom in your interior world.

This has probably been one of the most profound practices in my life to bring healing to my interior life and responses.

Thomas Keating says of the Welcome Prayer: "The practice is a way of letting go into the present moment in the ordinary routines of daily life. It is used when your needs for security, affection, and control are frustrated or gratified and cause emotional reactions. It is a way of turning everything over to God."

You will grow, as you practice this; in your contemplative life, have an increase awareness as you pay attention to your body sensations, and reflect on your triggers.

The Welcome Prayer

The practice:

1. Focus, Feel, and Sink Into what you are presently experiencing in the event or trigger:

Notice the emotion, sensation, thought, and commentary going on. Observe it, pay attention to the particular feeling, emotion, body sensation, thought commentary, etc. Feel what is happening in your body. Sink into it-do not resist it (some people try to push down and deny what is happening because of their perception that it is "bad" or "negative"). The reason we pay attention to our bodies, is that we know that negative emotions impact our body physiologically-so we can notice where we are carrying tension and stress-so you have to sit and do sort of a body scan.

2. Step two is to literally say: "Welcome" This is a sacred word-that symbolizes our intention for consent to the presence and action of the Spirit. Not just tolerate our emotions, but to embrace them. Say either out loud or interiorly: "Welcome!"

3. Step 3 is saying the "Letting Go" phrases:

"I let go of the desire for security, affection, and control."

"I let go of the desire to change this feeling/situation. "

Please notice that you do NOT have to figure out which of the core needs your trigger is related to. You are not to judge your emotions or try to figure out which of your core needs were violated or threatened. You voice ALL 3 in the prayer!

This is a VERY simple practice; (after about 30 days of using it; you will have it memorized) and as you begin to do it; you will notice that it can happen in just seconds. Until you learn it; you can write it down on a post it and put it at your desk, your mirror, your car dash, etc. Wherever you can access it when you need it. (I considered getting it tattooed on my wrist!) :)

You notice a trigger- you acknowledge your feelings, & you say "Welcome"

a. To the situation and emotion

b. And WELCOME to God/Jesus/Spirit to enter in. (Remember you are giving consent to His presence and Action!)

I typically whisper "Welcome Jesus Welcome".

And then state the Letting Go phrases!

God will use this to dismantle your false self and helps you to live in your True self, as God's beloved. It is Surrender! Consent "on the go" turning to God in love and open to His presence and action! It is Incarnational Prayer!