

OYTL Class 2, Feb 4, 2016  
Dominie's General Notes

Standing in a circle:

Bow in-Noel

Poetry: Pat Young-a self created poem, Ina Robbins-Mary Oliver poem

Soft belly & soft gaze meditation-Douglas

Dominie-

- I feel called to set our ground in a way that some indigenous peoples do,
- which is to first lay down a bed of sweetness & strength, upon which to take our seat.
- Some ancient clans actually laid strong grasses, cut near river beds on their meeting ground to cushion their purpose for sharing,
- According to the I Ching the Ancient Chinese, placed any heavy load or when meeting for council and deep conversation created a bed of willows to rest and meet upon.
- I had the joy of attending an Inca indigenous ceremony gathered by Naya Devi of Indigenous Alchemy, Kitty Edwards of The Conscious Living and Dying Institute and Laurel Lewis. They began our ceremony with a strong base with a sweet round circle of sugar, fat and wine to which other things are added.

**In our contemporary context with our *One Year to Live***

I feel there are 3 practices, which are both strong and sweet, that we can rest upon, to both fiercely flourish & and embrace our One Year to Live at every turn, whether we tend to feel more afraid to live fully and/or more concerned about dying fearlessly. In the Death and Dying field, it's not uncommon to find studies that suggest there are a fair number of people who fear living fully over dying.

- **The First strength & sweetness is a Wisdom practice in accordance with our own beliefs.**
- **The second, is a Compassion practice.**
- **Both wisdom and compassion practices will be explored in future classes.**
- **The third sweetness & strength is Gratitude. The dictionary suggests that gratitude is defined by:**
- **A feeling of thankful appreciation, a warm appreciative response to kindness. Thankfulness.**
- It's said "that a grateful heart can't be broken". And when we practice gratefulness for what IS SO, and for what is actually arising within, research suggests we become more insightful and relaxed.
- Revealing our gratitude to ourselves appears to be a Truth that sets us free..
- It appears in research and in my own experience in seminars, that contemplating endings really do make us more grateful.
- When we visualize our own death, gratefulness for the life we currently lead increases.
- I'll be placing in web portal 3 or 4 research articles about the power of gratitude.

- **Our February class is about a grateful heart, as this is the time of year when there is collective attention on HEART.**
- **More to the point of our study together,**
- **Gratitude as a strong and sweet basis now, prepares us with resiliency for next months exploration, as in MARCH, we focus on LIFE REVIEW.**
- **In my experience, Life Review can illuminate not only our joys but also our REGRETS. The root of the word regret meaning: sorrow and remorse for things done and left undone.**
- **In April, Kitty Edwards of Living and Dying Consciously Institute will be our first guest teacher and share the NO Regrets Project, and we'll focus on forgiveness and compassion.**
- **In this first hour together we begin with two experiential processes: the first acknowledging that we will die.**
- **The second, building our home of gratitude in living fully and with resiliency.**
- **When we take our seats, Douglas will guide us in honoring Stephen Levine's life share highlights of our Levine reading & practicing SOFT BELLY.**
- **He will answer questions about your homework chapters.**
- **We will respond to questions you may have about the course.**
- **We will join and share with our clan groups and then gather back into our large group hearing the highlights of your discoveries.**
- **And bow out.**
- **How does this sound?**
- We begin in this way: choose a partner to one side of you. And stand facing the center of the circle.
- Douglas and Ina, please come into the center and offer your daily practice.
- Turn toward your partner and practice this with each other.
- Mill again and find a new partner and face them.
- Now that we've laid the strong and sweet grasses on the ground, let's consider building our home.
- I love how Clarissa Pinkola Estes in her WRW mentions building our home on the best solid earth of our life rather than on more shaky ground of our insecurities and feelings of inadequacies. It's from our sturdy ground that we can bear witness, befriend and transform the more shaky ground of our fears, reactivity and ignorance, to increase our real estate of more safety and security.
- I invite you to participate in a process developed by Joanna Macy, Eco activist & Buddhist scholar and featured in her book, *Coming Back to Life*.
- She draws upon the 4 heavenly abodes or homes, of loving kindness, compassion, joy for another's joy, and equanimity.

- Douglas and Ina will you repeat your practice so that we can say it again. Notice if anything changes from the first time you shared this to now when you share it.
- And come to a place of silence.