
Help for those who long for peace and freedom in their souls

by Chaplain Joy L. Smith

Below is a list indicating what will help a seeker reach a plateau of peace and freedom:

- ❖ Learning to forgive (release) what is held against others;
- ❖ Learning to forgive (release) what is held against our selves;
- ❖ Coming to find our connection with The Other, who is God. This is The One who created us; we can learn to hear the Creator's voice within our hearts, and from holy writ, the voice and writings of discerning others . . . and through the magnificent truths displayed within nature;
- ❖ Learning through our listening . . . and growing within that listening. This makes it possible for us to advance within freedom of the soul. This is a freedom that sees us releasing our self-defeating thoughts, habits and attitudes;
- ❖ Creating and maintaining a strong and loving connection with caring family members, friends, associates, and coworkers;
- ❖ Seeking to be a peacemaker within interactions with others;
- ❖ Examining personal faults and seeing what is beneath them. Identify your concerns about yourself that you can see most clearly. Submit these to God, asking for help to overcome them, while learning from life's experiences.
- ❖ Learning from mistakes. Being patient with ourselves speeds the process.
- ❖ Balancing ambition with spiritual growth.
- ❖ Conquering greed. There is no guilt in having nice belongings as long as: 1) we pay for them; 2) we are not neglecting the needs of our families; 3) we are sharing a portion of what we have with those who are less fortunate; and 4) we are not neglecting those who minister to us, and provide what is needed to promote our spiritual advancement.
- ❖ Gaining purpose through understanding why we are here on planet earth will see us identifying our own call to help others, i.e., family, and friends through the use of our gifts. This is how we discover the depths of personal worth.
- ❖ Experiencing our call to grow in our talents and abilities.

Why do this work?

Our souls need healing. It has been said, "When the student is ready a teacher appears." God will open a doorway to the one who can join your journey and help your soul heal. Be open and

watch for this to happen. Then say "yes" by stepping up to the plate and acknowledge, "I need healing." This help will be worth whatever time and money you will need to spend. All of us need healing; even those who are doing healing work. Staying connected and invested in avenues of healing, with the help of the teachers and mentors to whom we are led, is essential. In this way, we can reach full freedom within our souls. We can be free from the fear that binds us and robs us of living a joyful, loving life. Reaching this freedom includes being set free of anxiety, and in many instances lifts depression. This is a freedom that sees us relinquishing habits that oppress ourselves and others.

A good spiritual mentor will know if and when a medical professional is needed. Often, with a physician's help, a chemical imbalance can be corrected, or greatly decreased. A good spiritual mentor knows when to advise a person to see a physician for help with depression and anxiety. It is the role of the spiritual director, or mentor, to walk alongside as a person shares her, or his, journey, witnessing and validating the healing of that soul as the process unfolds.

A spiritual caregiver knows the importance of learning to forgive, which advances our ability to grow and to trust. Trusting others, while discerning who is trustworthy, evolves within our process of growing to truth about ourselves. Meanwhile, we notice what our heart wants.

Noticing what is felt is a major element in coming to know and understand ourselves. Once our gut feelings are easily identified, and valued, our emotions can lead us to the truth of who we are and what we need. Identifying and valuing our feelings strengthen our ability to have boundaries with the people around us.

This work teaches us to trust God as the loving Father/Mother of our souls. We find that we can trust life to be a wonderful experience, although it carries trials and troubles. Through this work of the heart, we come to trust that all experiences are treasures, even if they feel bad to us at the time, for we are learning more and more about life, about ourselves, and about God within each experience. We come to know it is safe to love others. We grow in trust of God. And, we come to trust that if we don't awaken the next morning, God will enfold us into God's very arms and carry us into what is to come. Of this, we can be confident.

This work takes patience, effort, and time. Scripture provides truth for the journey. We are told to "Let patience have [its] perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (James 1:4).