



## Relevance

The third gate to living now is **Relevance**.

Dressing up the present to look like the past might make it look familiar, but don't be fooled. This moment has never been before. Thus, it is so important to discover what the needs are in the moment. What in your world is calling for attention, for healing, and for a deeper love? We must cross through the gate of relevance to fully realize our time is now.

Even though the problems in our world, much less our own individual lives, may seem at times insurmountable, there is nothing like being willing to address what is before us with fresh eyes, focused minds, and willing hearts.

I love something the great Religious Science minister Linda McNamar said:

*"Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone around the globe had a comfortable place to sleep and food to eat? Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone had medical attention when needed, a safe place to raise their children, and shelter from the storms of life? Such a world is possible and it begins right here with you and me. It begins with what we think, what we believe, what we say and do. Because we are one in consciousness with spiritual reality, you and I have an effect on the way the world is today and on what it can become. If we want our world to change, either globally or locally, we need to turn to the nonmaterial realm of consciousness. As we establish peace within our hearts and minds, we will act peacefully in our personal lives. As more and more personal lives are lived with serenity it*

*will spread around the globe. We can empty our minds of the divisive beliefs which created the world's challenges in the first place and replace them with the knowledge that we are all one life and one consciousness. It is from this unity that we make personal choices which create a world which experiences a global heart of peace."*

Perhaps the way each of us can be most relevant to our lives and the struggles in our country and our world today, is to know that we have within us what is needed to address these challenges.

## Key Points for the Week

- Relevance means not being in denial about the challenges of today. It means being aware of the past, without making it absolutely precedent for the present.
- Our lives have relevance when we cultivate and find meaning in the present moment.
- We can add relevance to our lives by living with greater intentionality

## Quotes for the Journey

*“Talking about helping others can easily sink into soggy sentimentality, even sanctimony. But the most important counterpoint is that reaching out to try to help, especially when we do it as a social activity, isn’t a Gandhi-style sacrifice. It’s a source of fulfillment, even joy. Over the past couple of decades, a growing stack of evidence has shown that social behavior—including helping others—improves our mental and physical health and extends life expectancy.”*

– Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

*“Every age has its own collective neurosis, and every age needs its own psychotherapy to cope with it. The existential vacuum which is the mass neurosis of the present time can be described as a private and personal form of nihilism; for nihilism can be defined as the contention that being has no meaning.”*

– Viktor Frankl

*“The time has come for all of us, including our leadership, to turn toward our higher nature, to bring out the best in ourselves in order to lift our anchor out of the negative polarity and re-sink it into the positive so that we may work together to create connection and community with enhanced sense of purpose and mutual cooperation.*

*To quote a Hawaiian saying, ‘We are all in the canoe together, and if we keep paddling in the right direction and we keep bailing, we’ll reach the island.’”*

– Hank Wesselman

*“How many of us go around clinging to the dead corpses of yesterday? How many of us ruin the possibility of the freedom we might enjoy tomorrow by dragging the past into the present. Yet we cannot overlook the fact that out of the past come the great lessons for the present. We should retain in the present and carry into the future the memory of those things which we desire to perpetuate in our experience. All the good and all the beauty that existed yesterday is worthwhile today, and will be worthwhile tomorrow. But we should deliberately disconnect ourselves from the lack, the limitation, the fear, and the morbidity of yesterday. We should not allow ourselves to think about the unhappiness of yesterday. Any resentment which causes the mind to continue to resist, any memory entertained by a spirit of unforgiveness, is bad not only for the health but for the morale of the individual.”*

– Ernest Holmes



## Discussion Questions

1. What is most relevant in your life today?
2. What are your thoughts on Ernest Holmes comments on the dangers of *“clinging to the dead corpses of yesterday?”*
3. Do you think there is a way to address the problems facing our nation today that transcends partisanship, tribalism, fear-mongering, and demonization? What are some ways we can do that as citizens?



## Optional Process

### Option 1

#### The Unending Conversation

This can be done as a contemplative process with journal close by, or as a meditative process with option to journal or share thoughts after.

The thinker Kenneth Burke shared the idea that all of us are a part of “*The unending conversation.*” “*We enter that conversation when we are born, spend many years learning what it’s about, and then may take part in it as active participants. Then we die and leave it. But the conversation continues.*”

Burke invites us to:

*“Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally’s assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.”*

What do you feel is yours to contribute to the unending conversation? What do you have to say about love, about relationships, about what matters most?

When it comes to people you care about, what do you want them to know about you and what you believe?

When it comes to the people you care about in that they are so opposed to your own ideals or values—what do you have to say to them? Can you say it with civility, or perhaps even with love?

What do you have to say about the most talked about issues of our day spiritually or socially?

Is there a God and does she care? Is life eternal?

What about how we need to address this ongoing pandemic? What about how guns should be regulated? If a person has the right to take his or her own life or a loved one who wants them to do just that? What are the criteria for when a woman can terminate a pregnancy? Have we evolved enough in racial equity in our country or evolved at all?

What say you?

And lastly, how can what you say now, to contribute to what is said when you no longer have a “*voice at the table?*” Does your voice have a legacy?

**(Group sharing may not be necessary for how people answered some of these questions, but this is certainly a good exercise to reassert the sharing guidelines.)**

## Option 2

### Setting our Intentions

Make a list of things you will be doing this week. They could be special, important things, like going to the dentist or taking a short trip. They could be everyday things like putting your child to bed, or driving to work.

(Give three minutes)

Relevance can occur, not just when we plan what we will do, but how we will do such things.

Try setting an intention for HOW you will do the things you have planned this week.

(Give five minutes)

#### Example:

Going to the dentist	I intend to arrive to the dentist centered and prayed up.  <i>And with the mantra "There is one life, that life is God's life, that life is the dentist's life, that life is my life now."</i>
Putting my child to bed	I will make sure my child and I share a moment of silence together. No matter how hectic the day, I will take this moment to give thanks.
Driving to work	I will listen to educational and inspiring talks this week, instead of repeating news coverage.

Let the group when they have just a minute or so left, then invite them to share in pairs or groups of three. When you come back together, perhaps near the close of the group, invite each group member to share on thing they are to do and the intention they claim about how they will do it. If time, ask the group if they see the connection between living with intention and relevance in their lives.



## Weekly Prayer

I recognize the power of the Almighty Source. This Power is invisible yet it expresses in the world of form. Omnipresent, yet it's present here and now. Timeless and yet I am never late to center myself in it.

I seek not to escape or run away, but stand firm in the truth that the Almighty God moves through me, I am confident that I am doing my best wherever I am.

I am accountable for my responsibility as a co-creator. I take my place remembering that I am here for such times like this. I am worthy, available and capable to move beyond all appearance while embracing each moment as it comes.

There is a wisdom within me that has no expiration, but the time to open it, is always now. I don't wait anymore for tomorrow, today is the day the rest of my life depends on. I choose to wake up and I don't go back to sleep. Amen.

## Affirmation

I give thanks for this day and I know living my life NOW is all I have to do for the rest of the day. I allow the Divine to be driver of my life and I am always in perfect time.

## Next Week-

Our topic next week is "*Realness.*"

In the 1990's one of the first ever reality shows was introduced on MTV called "*The Real World,*" and it quipped, "What happens when people stop being polite, and start being real?"

First, I think you can do both. However, are you aware of ways of behaving, that keep you from being real? That perhaps you think protect you or how someone else is feeling, that might in turn be hurting, or holding back meaningful growth for you and others?