

2023
SPRING
RENEWAL



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Wisdom

of the
Heart

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Introduction

Facilitators

This book is a facilitators guide. It is designed for facilitators and you are at choice to encourage your group members to download it from milehichurch.org.

Group Times and Members

Groups should be at least one hour, but no more than an hour and a half. Ideally, each group should have no more than ten participants, including the facilitators.

Opening and Closing Blessings

A brief blessing should start and end each group session. Ideally, a facilitator will do an opening blessing, as trust grows in the group, it might be beneficial to invite a participant to say a closing blessing.

Key points

These key points sum up what we intend the participant to understand in each week's session. You can choose to share these points with the group, or use them as your own guide for how to use the curriculum effectively.

Discussion Questions

These questions are designed to create meaningful sharing in your group. You can choose which, if any to ask.

Processes

These meditations, worksheets, and experientials are designed to assist the participants inner exploration of the weekly topic. In some cases, more than one process may be available. Choose the one that you feel will be most resonant with your group.

For Next Week

At the end of each session an idea to contemplate or suggested practice leading into next week's theme is suggested.

Sharing Guidelines

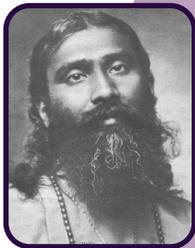
It is recommended that you review these guidelines in your first session and refer back to them as needed.

Sacred Listening – When someone is sharing I do not just listen, but do so with the intention of not judging or trying to solve and with a loving heart.

Sharing from Personal Experience – When I share, I do so from my own personal experience, recognizing that what may be true for me, may not be true for others. I do not speak to other's experiences outside of how they resonate in my own.

Confidentiality – What someone shares in class I will not share about outside of class unless it is with the consent of the person who shared it.

Authenticity – I will be sincere with my sharing by holding myself to the present and not the past, not to someone else's, but my own vision of myself, not the role's I play but who I really am.



“To an angelic soul love mean glorification. To a jinn soul love means admiration. To a human soul love means affection. To an animal soul love means passion. One need not fall in love, one must rise through love.”

- Hazrat Inayat Kahn

Heart wisdom is that intuitive presence within us that helps us rise in love above traps of thought that might leave us in judgment or ego, rise in love above challenging feelings such as fear and grief, and rise above the perspective that sees only in duality, to a deep-seated oneness with Life.

The wisdom of the heart may not always appear to be logical, but it does reveal there are greater ways of the spirit that are more important than the mundane.

Our heart and mind are intimately connected—but certainly they can conflict—and contradict each other...

Our heart dwelling in the possible, our thinking insisting the possible as impossible.

Our heart of faith, our thinking filled with doubt.

Our heart saying yes, our thinking clinging to no.

And this is why so often, we come to those parts of life where it is as if life demands us of us: “Are you going to choose your heart’s desire or your fear? Which is it? Who are you?”

This group material is here to assist us better access and apply the wisdom of the heart.

The Intelligence of Heart

To live from heart is to live from a place of deeper intelligence than just the thinking mind. It's to live from grounded truths within you, truths that inform your decisions based upon values like love and courage, instead of more egoist drives like survival and fear.

The intelligence of the heart can bring us into balance with the spirit of our lives.

The intelligence of the heart doesn't just connect us with love, but joy, and a presence to fully appreciate our time on earth.

There is a story about a strict mother, an eccentric father, and two children. Each child was made to practice the piano every day. Neither children enjoyed it much, as few children enjoy anything they "have" to do.

One day, after months of torture, the boy came to his mother and sister, shouting "Look outside." They all ran outside to see a raging fire. The cause of that fire...the piano. There watching the fire was their father, looking calmly. He turned to his families faces and said, "I want my children to know that if it ain't fun, don't do it."

Key Points of the Week

- The heart is not just a source of feeling, but of wisdom.
- Living from the heart can help us find resolution and healing where thinking cannot.
- The more you access the intelligence of the heart the more it grows.

Quotes for the Journey

"Life moves at a deeper level than the objective and the data of our senses. We are most alive when we are brought face to face with the response of the deepest thing in us to the deepest thing in life."

- Howard Thurman

"The soul is dyed the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny — it is the light that guides your way."

- Heraclitus

If we would become as emotionally aroused over our ideals as we become over our dislikes, we would ascend to the plane of our ideal as easily as we now descend to the level of our hates.

- Neville Goddard

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker:

1. If I had a free hour a day for the next year to spend on one thing what would it be?
2. Review the story of the piano in the introduction to this week's session. Considering this how would you define the wisdom of the heart?
3. Which statement is more true for you: I've spent too much time trying to be who I am not (or) I've spent not enough time trying to be who I really am?



Optional Process:

Meditation by
Dr. Michelle Medrano:

I take this moment to breathe deeply and become still. With every breath I am becoming more and more still, centered, and at Peace. I watch my

breathe without forcing it and feel how easily my body breathes and that I can let it continue and have no need to force it, or control it. I let my breath be and simply observe it and feel grateful.

As I feel centered and allow myself to bring into my awareness a condition, situation or relationship in my life that I would like to have more wisdom about, or solve. In the past, I may have thought a lot about this situation. However, today, I am going to HEART a lot about this situation. I turn my awareness to my chest, the place where my heart is beating and sense my own heart beat and heart space. I remember the warmth there when I am feeling connected, soft, loving and open to a situation or person and consciously intend to meet the situation I am seeking greater awareness about with that same open, soft space.

How does my heart feel about this situation? I may even choose to write down what shows up, or may feel great Joy, or tears of sorrow. Whatever response comes forth, I simply accept it and continue to breathe through it. How would my heart prefer to feel about this situation? What does my heart want me to know about how to get to how I would prefer to feel? Let the wisdom flow.

When it feels as though the message is clear and/or complete, I give thanks to my heart for its intelligence and continue to breathe as I step out of this process, and take time to reflect and write what I have just experienced.

Take five minutes to journal any reflections from the meditation and invite participants to share what they wish with the remaining allotted time.



Weekly Affirmation:

Heart wisdom is always available to me. This moment is an opportunity to act from heart.

For Next Week:

- Responding with love.
- Love may not always be our reaction to a circumstance, but it can always be our response.
- This week, when a negative emotion arises, acknowledge it, but do your best to respond with love.
- Try this mantra: I experience fear, but I practice love. I experience anger, but I practice love. I experience grief, but I practice love.

The Heart is What it Wants

A key to spiritual living is learning that what the heart longs for is not what it does not have, but what it most deeply wants to express. Can we learn not to look outside for something to complete us, but live wholly and completely in every area of our lives?

Consider the following:

I don't have to find love I just have to overcome the obstacles to love within myself.

I don't have to receive anything outside of myself to be whole, but learn to reveal and cultivate the wholeness within me.

I don't have to search for what is divine and sacred—in fact, I just have to stop searching, and be right here.

I have truly arrived at my destination, when the whole of me rises to the level of the heart.

Key Points:

- There is a major shift when we realize that our heart longs not to receive something it doesn't have, but to express that which it does.
- A sense of wholeness and completeness comes first and foremost from within.
- To know the heart has what we want, we must achieve emotional freedom, by transcending negative thoughts to freely feel what is present.

Quotes for the Journey

"It may seem strange that the law which now holds you in bondage can as easily give you freedom. But this is the truth. There cannot be two final powers in the universe. If there were, one would destroy the other. There is only One Power—use it!"

- Ernest Holmes

"Faith is an oasis in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking."

- Kahlil Gibran

"We have to continually be jumping off cliffs and developing our wings on the way down."

- Kurt Vonnegut

Discussion Questions

1. How did you do responding with love this week?
2. Do you see fulfillment more as a state of affairs, or a way of being? How does this show up in regards to your own sense of fulfillment?
3. Are there such things as negative feelings, or are negative experiences of feelings more likely? How can we best respond to challenging feelings with heart?

Optional Process: (Handout)

Are You Emotionally Free?

Are you able to cultivate positive emotions and compassion without having negative thoughts dominate your life? This test will help you assess your current level of emotional freedom at this time. Choose the option that most corresponds to how seldom or often you experience these reactions.

	Not True	Sometimes True	Mostly True
1. If I'm angry with someone, I'll breathe and center myself before I react.	0	1	2
2. When I'm filled with self-doubt or fear I treat myself lovingly.	0	1	2
3. When stuck in traffic or if something doesn't happen on my timetable, I have patience.	0	1	2
4. After a hard day, I focus on what I'm grateful for rather than beating myself up for what has gone wrong.	0	1	2
5. I rarely get snippy or cop an attitude if people frustrate me.	0	1	2
6. I feel connected to a sense of spirituality, however I define it.	0	1	2
7. I check in with my intuition—my gut feelings—when making choices.	0	1	2
8. If I'm blamed for something, I rarely lash out and say things I regret.	0	1	2
9. I fall asleep quickly and don't worry about tomorrow's "to-do" list.	0	1	2
10. If my heart gets broken I don't give up on love.	0	1	2
11. I'm a positive person, and don't make small problems into big ones.	0	1	2
12. I don't seek revenge if someone treats me poorly.	0	1	2
13. I'm not jealous of other people's success if it surpasses mine.	0	1	2
14. I quickly let go of negative emotions and don't brood on them.	0	1	2
15. I'm not easily crushed by disappointments.	0	1	2
16. I don't compare myself to others.	0	1	2
17. I have empathy for others but I don't become their therapist or get drained by their emotional pain.	0	1	2
18. I live in the Now, rather than dwelling on the past or future.	0	1	2
19. I feel happy with my life, not that it's just passing me by.	0	1	2
20. I am good at setting limits with people who drain my energy.	0	1	2

How To Interpret This Test

To calculate your emotional freedom score, total the numbers corresponding to your responses.

- A score of 30-40 suggests that you're experiencing a considerable level of emotional freedom in your life.
- A score of 15-29 suggests a moderate level.



- A score of 14 or below suggests a beginning level.
- A zero score (and it takes courage to admit that) indicates you haven't found emotional freedom yet, but the good news is that you can start discovering it now!

Whatever your score, be compassionate when you identify areas you'd like to improve. Realize that we all have a ways to go. Emotional freedom isn't some place you arrive at and just stay there. It's an ongoing blossoming.

This quiz is excerpted from Chapter 1 of Emotional Freedom by Judith Orloff MD

From a place of non-judgment and sacred listening, go through each question with the group and when complete ask participants how they feel about their score. Is there a particular area they are proud of, and what are one or two where they'd like to grow?

Affirmation:

I live from the completeness of my heart, fulfilled now in Sacred embrace.

For Next Week:

Take some time to review your relationships this week. Are they centered in heart and based on love, or is it something else? Transactional, obligated, superficial?

Listen to your life and report back next session.

Love: The “Why” of Life

The great mystic Meister Eckhart was once quoted to have said, “Love has no why.” In other words, the desire to love comes beyond just material exchange, but is born of a spiritual desire in each one of us. Love we might say, is the why.

As important as love is, it is easy to forget when living a busy life. We perhaps don’t stop soon enough to realize that if we are unhappy, or melancholy, or feeling unfulfilled, the solution is a simple one: get back to love being the “why” of your life.

Key Points:

- Heart wisdom means making love the key “why” in your life.
- Coming back to love is a key to healing and forgiveness
- When you don’t know why, choose love, and the why will reveal itself.

Quotes for the Journey

“It doesn’t interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart’s longing.”

It doesn’t interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.”

- Oriah Mountain Dreamer

When we journey to the heart, we realize that this is where our power is.

- Dr. Roger Teel

“Love should come first, it should be the beginning of, and the reason for everything.”

- Gerald May

Discussion Questions

1. Reflecting on last week's invitation, how many of your relationships feel centered on love? Is this acceptable to you?

2. In Neale Donald Walsh's "Conversations with God" the question is asked "What Would Love do Now?" Can you identify a current conflict, or uncertain area of your life? When you ask yourself "What would Love do now?" what is the answer?

3. How do you interpret this story from Elizabeth Gilbert? *"I have a friend, an aspiring musician, whose sister said to her one day, quite reasonably, 'What happens if you never get anything out of this? What happens if you pursue your passion forever, but success never comes? How will you feel then, having wasted your entire life for nothing?' My friend, with equal reason, replied, 'If you can't see what I'm already getting out of this, then I'll never be able to explain it to you.' When it's for love, you will always do it anyhow."*



Process: Coming Back to Love Meditation

Invite group members to get comfortable. To quiet their minds, rest their eyes, and embrace their physical being as is, allowing their attention to become intimately aware of their breathing.

Gerald May once wrote:

*“There is a desire within each of us,
in the deep center of ourselves
that we call our heart.
We were born with it,
it is never completely satisfied,
and it never dies.
We are often unaware of it,
but it is always awake.*

*It is the Human desire for Love.
Every person in this Earth yearns to love,
to be loved, to know love.
Our true identity, our reason for being
is to be found in this desire.*

*Love is the “why” of life,
why we are functioning at all.*

*I am convinced it is the fundamental energy
of the human spirit. The fuel on which we run,
the wellspring of our vitality.*

*And grace, which is the flowing,
creative activity, of love itself,
is what makes all goodness possible.
Love should come first, it should be the
beginning of, and the reason for everything.”*

*I invite you to remember a time recently where
you experienced something other than love, and
acted from anger, or fear, or just not your best
self. (facilitator may choose to briefly share such
an experience)*

*What would you have done differently if you
acted from love? (facilitator may choose to
briefly share such an experience)*

*Remember a time when someone responded
to you with something other than love. What
happened? (facilitator may choose to briefly
share such an experience)*

*What if they were to act from love instead...
what could this person have done to make you*

feel loved at that time and how might that have changed the situation? (facilitator may choose to briefly share such an experience)

Now is an opportunity, in this very moment...to come back to love.

This does not happen however, if we are unable to acknowledge a hurt, or anger, or fear, or loss.

Often, we hold back this difficult feeling in a judgment, or a story, or a resentment.

But if you are willing to now, declare as truth, that love is who you are, and that love is what you want. You can now come back to love.

Say:

There is enough love in this present moment.

I have all the love I need to love the one's I care for.

I am opening to receive all the love that others have for me.

I choose love

I come back to love from fear and anxiety

I come back to love from anger and resentment

I come back to love from loss and depression.

To close with some words from Ernest Holmes:

*"In this peace that holds me so gently
I find strength and protection from
all fear or anxiety.*

*It is the peace of God in which
I feel the love of a Holy Presence.*

*I am so conscious of this love, this protection,
that every sense of fear slips away from me as
mist fades in the morning light.*

*I see good in everything, God personified in all
people, Life manifest in every event."*

Create time for written reflection and or group sharing.



Affirmation:

Love is my reason. Love is my choice. Love is my why.

For Next Week:

Practice conscious acts of love this week through listening, honoring, and caring for others. What difference does the practice of love make in your life and in the life of others?

The Mystical Heart

Of course we all have a physical heart, but in spirituality, the heart is just as much a metaphor for the center of our being, a center we all share. A center where we are one. Coming to know this heart, is to come to know the value of, and perhaps eternal life itself.

Key Points:

- The mystical heart is a metaphor for a divine connection in all of us.
- By increasing awareness of the wisdom of the heart, we deepen our experience of the eternal.
- Jesus was a great teacher of the mystical heart.

Quotes for the Journey

*“Blessed are the pure of heart;
for they shall see God.”*

- Jesus of Nazareth

*“For if you love only those who love you,
what credit is that to you: don’t even the tax-
gatherers do the same? But love your enemies,
and give, expecting nothing in return.”*

- Jesus of Nazareth

*“Let the eye of your heart be opened that you
may see the spirit and behold invisible things.”*

- Ahmed Actif



Optional Process One:

Heart Parables of Jesus

How do you interpret the following parables and teachings of Jesus and what does it tell you about the wisdom of the heart?



Hidden Treasure
Matthew 13:44

- “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

(Why would the man hide, versus dig up and keep the treasure? Could it be that it is a kind of treasure that is “within” and can’t be dug up?)



The Mustard Seed
Matthew 13:31-32

- He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

(Is the mustard seed a good metaphor for the heart? We can’t see it so it may appear small, but when we believe in it, it has the largest of impacts on our lives.)



From the Sermon on the Mount
Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

(We often don't shine our light because it makes us feel vulnerable, when the truth is when we shine our light it makes us stronger.)

Optional Process 2: Heart Sharing

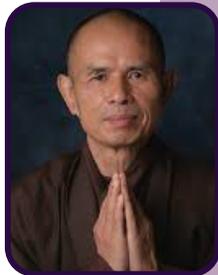
Invite each student the week before group to share something that connects them with love.

- It could be a food they love passed on from their ancestors.
- It could be a favorite love song.
- It could be a family picture.

Each student should take up to five minutes to share not only that which inspires them but the story of why.

Affirmation:

I am anchored in the heart of love.



“When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blame has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change.”

-Thich Nhat Hanh