

Week 7 Practice

We are now seven weeks into these months of listening. First, we slowed down and simplified. Then, we began to face who we've become in order to be loved. Now, we enter the most difficult weeks of listening, which will include attending to the pain and shame that arise when we get still and seek to unbecome who we are not. Eventually, we will begin to listen for the voice of grace within us, but first, we must attend to the clamoring of our pain, until eventually it quiets down.

In other words, getting mentally still is even more complicated than getting physically still. Once we have achieved some physical stillness and have attempted some mental stillness, we will become more aware than ever of the ceaseless activity of our mind. This is okay. Not a problem at all. Rather, the real problem is, ironically, our attempts to *stop* our thoughts and suppress our pain, which just create more thoughts and more pain.

Instead, spend this week observing your thoughts. Visualize them as a river, constantly flowing. Let them flow past, and watch them. In the same way that when you sit beside a river and watch the water flow past, you know you are not the river itself but rather the observer of the river, begin to become aware that you are not your thoughts but rather the observer of your thoughts. In other words, a thought cannot watch itself. Something else must be doing the watching. Something bigger than thinking. Something wiser than thinking. Something more peaceful than thinking. This something is your soul, your truest self. When you practice watching your thoughts, you are practicing inhabiting your soul. The experience of this can and will eventually change everything about your life, while not really changing anything at all.

This is the promise of your pain. To relate to it properly, you must learn how to observe it, and as you learn to observe it, you begin, for the first time, to fully inhabit the soul within you that is doing the observing. This week, begin to inhabit your soul once again.

Welcome home.