REFLECTION SHEET · SPIRIT OF EQ

The Imprint of Presence

A companion to "I Would Have Cleaned the Window."

Dr. Heidi Miller kept starting our mornings in the body, because "the locus of discernment is here." Not in the head. This sheet is built around the prayer she gave us, and around the harder thing underneath it — that presence is not a task you can complete, and that most of us have a lifetime of practice at wiping away the evidence that we were ever in the room. Go slowly. Nothing here needs to be finished.

A Practice to Begin

Give yourself three minutes and a position that actually works — standing, sitting, on the floor, facing away from anyone. Acknowledge the gift of your body. Notice where you are carrying tension or pain. Ask: what does my body want me to know? If it feels comfortable, put your hand on that place. Remind that part of your body of belovedness. Then find the rhythm of your breath right there. Breathe in belovedness. Pause. Breathe out the tension. Do not try to achieve anything. That is the whole instruction.

Reflection Questions

1. What has my body been telling me that I have not been hearing?
2. Where in my life do I leave no trace — and when did I learn that leaving no trace was the responsible thing to do?
3. Whose fingerprints have I wiped off the glass? Who learned from watching me that theirs had to go too?
4. What do I believe I have, that in fact has me? Name it as plainly as the Armani jacket.
5. If presence is a way of being rather than something to achieve, what would I have to stop doing before I could be present at all?
6. What would I have to grieve if I slowed down enough to be present to it?
7. Who told me I was not already beloved and free? Not in theory — who, specifically, and when?
8. Where do I need to say: not closer, not right now — I will watch from over here?

An Invitation for the Week

Find one mess this week that is actually an imprint, and leave it. Dishes in the sink after people you love have gone home. A drawing on the refrigerator that has been there too long. Mud by the door. Do not clean it, do not explain why you are not cleaning it, and notice what rises in you while it sits there. That rising is the thing worth paying attention to.

"Presence is not something to be achieved. Presence is a way of being." — Dr. Heidi A. Miller