**Chapter 10, Spiritual Nourishment**

**In the Cathedral**

Where is your cathedral? It might be a physical place. A community place of worship. It might be in your heart. It might be in the cathedral of nature – the grove of old growth redwoods or stand of evergreen trees just outside your town.  Or the expanse of wild sea and rocky shoreline that extends for miles just beyond your neighborhood. It could be reflected back to you in the eyes of all those you serve at a homeless shelter or pop up soup kitchen in the city. Our common humanity reflected back to you, lifted up and supported by your loving hands and caring heart.

Visit your cathedrals regularly for inspiration and support. We can’t always be with the physical locations that bring us home to ourselves, or be with the communities that support this, but we can easily visit our heart and come back to our breath. Use the daily practices suggested here to uplift your heart, mind and body. Plan regular visits to the places, community and friends that nourish your spirit and bring perspective.

**Nature** – Is a universal cathedral, a temple where many of us find great peace, our first feelings of spirituality, our home. Nature is free of imposed beliefs, human made culture and human made things. In nature we can find a great sense of peace, well-being and health. There is an abundance of research now showing how spending even a little bit of time in nature each day, can lead to dramatic improvements in physical, mental health and happiness. If you grew up in a city and didn’t have much daily exposure to nature it may feel a little foreign to you or even uncomfortable to spend much time in nature – whether at a park, camping, walking by the ocean or lake. Titrate the amount of time you spend at first. Start out with small amounts. Go out with a friend or a guide such as a naturalist or ecotherapist to get comfortable. Consider a tour or planned hike, then linger behind to enjoy the silence and direct connection to the nature around you. Nature is a great healer and balancer for many of my clients. It is one of the nourishing activities many of them go to regularly, to quell and disappear a misdirected desire to eat, when what is really being called for is the deeper nourishment.

***Nature- Awakening on a Moutaintop - A personal story.***

When I was seventeen years old, on the last day of a backpack trip, I climbed up to the top of a mountain top in the Sierras. Comfortably seated at the top, with an incredible panoramic view, my perception and experience suddenly shifted profoundly. The world suddenly opened to me as a numinious, sacred, perfect, alive place of incredible beauty and harmony. I experienced everything as in a perfect balance and order. The peace was overwhelming. The deep interconnected nature of all of reality became clear. (Some might call this a religious or mystical experience). I knew at that moment, that whatever I did with my life, it needed to be in service to this, to helping others know and access this place. A deep sense of purpose was born at that moment, connected to the desire to serve.

During that moment on the mountaintop, I knew in a flash what the great mystics, poets, artists were trying to communicate. I didn’t know what my medium would be at that time, but my purpose in life to help bring this knowing to others became a clear guiding light inside of me that has always lit my way. That path continues to enfold with teaching. speaking and working individually with people from all over the world. For all I am grateful, including the opportunity to share further with the publication of this book.  I was forever profoundly changed by that experience and my meditation, spiritual practices and daily connection keep this alive.

While grace can open the door at any moment of your life, regular practices are so important. Practices help open you to your spiritual body and regularly connect thereafter. The door can be kept open wide, even if only a crack at times, by attention, intention and practices. Sometimes all you may feel is the warmth and glow of love on the other side of the door, not connected to any particular thing or person.

When you know this place, you don’t need to search blindly outside of yourself for meaning. The world becomes a place that you want to honor and take care of. You naturally want to take care of and honor yourself too as part of this great miracle and the gifts you bring to share. You have a part in this unfolding. But life can get in the way, and you can forget to nurture the spiritual body. Mindfulness and daily practices are so key to support the continued unfolding.