

Discernment

A way of life *and* a spiritual practice

To choose... to distill, to sift through

- Not necessarily between right and wrong, good and evil but subtle choices.
- Not seeking 100% clarity
- Life is inherently ambiguous.
- Discernment is not trying to fix that.

KEY: Not the process or the end result but a desire for God.

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." — Frederick Buechner

Foundations for discernment:

Assumptions about God:

Assumptions about human beings:

To the Christians (Wm Blake)

I give you the end of a golden string;
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall....

"The Way It Is"

There's a thread you follow. It goes among
things that change. But it doesn't change.
People wonder about what you are pursuing.
You have to explain about the thread.
But it is hard for others to see.
While you hold it you can't get lost.
Tragedies happen; people get hurt
or die; and you suffer and get old.
Nothing you do can stop time's unfolding.

Prompts For Journaling:

- My soul has made a vow to...
- I feel most alive when...
- I am standing at the crossroads of...

A Voice through the Door
Rumi

Sometimes you hear a voice through the door
calling you, as fish out of water
hear the waves, or a hunting falcon
hears the drum's Come back. Come back.

This turning toward what you deeply love
saves you. Read the book of your life,
which has been given you.

A voice comes to your soul saying,
Lift your foot. Cross over.
Move into the emptiness
of question and answer and question.

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Suggestions for transition

- Take the time you need. Notice the quality and energy of the transition.
- You are moving from one sacred place to another.
- Pause to give thanks for the spaciousness of time and the gift of discernment.
- In a word or phrase name a gift and a commitment that you are making.
- Move your body... walk, dance, stretch, shake it out...
- Is there a gesture or movement that can mark this in-between time?
- Is there something you want to let go... to let come?

Consider the prayer by Ignatius of Loyola:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.
Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.