

The Physics of Attention

First comes the sitting. You should be relaxed
but comfortably straight as you align
your head and torso, shoulders, neck and spine,
your legs right-angled: soles are roots, feet flexed.
In this position you will find your head
afloat, not heavy. Rest there. Now begin
attending to your breathing, out—and in—
the street noise there but filtered, edited.
Quiet the voice that asks: That's all? Just sitting?
Just being there and breathing? Breathe. Align
your body with the earth, your flitting mind
with all that flies, and welcome, in the One
in whom you live and move and have your being,
things as they are: this chair, this you, this time.

MARY O'CONNOR

MARY O'CONNOR, R.S.M., has taught literature and writing
in the San Francisco Bay Area and in South Dakota. She now
conducts writing retreats.

Listen to the Deepening Places

If today you hear God's voice . . .

Learn to listen! The voice inviting you is voiceless. Most ancient of all voices. Enticing voice without words. Listen from within the cells of your being. From the marrow of your bones, listen. From the deepest source of your life, listen. A holy vibration, a gentle movement, a persistent tugging—summons you into the deepening places.

Learn to go deep! Like waves of the sea you are being pulled back into the depth. Embrace the depths. *Deep calls unto Deep*. There is a depth in you to which you must return. Most silent of all calls. A voice without words calls you to the deepening places.

Learn to abide! Remain in Christ as Christ remains in you. Be like a sponge. Soak up the Word of God. Absorb it. Make the Word your home. Live in the Word. Abide. Dwell. Inhabit. Reside. Trust the deepening places.

Learn to be silent! Silent as the leaves that fall, silent as the blossoming flowers, silent as the moment before dawn. You are being summoned into the temple of silence. Practice silence, for this voiceless voice can be heard only in the shrine of silence. You are being chosen for the deepening places.

Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, *Abide*

Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, is well known for her creative spiritual writings and retreat ministry. She makes her home with the Sisters of St. Scholastica in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

- What connects you most with God?
- Who encourages you in a life of spiritual awareness, prayer, meaning and compassion?
- Who and what are the most annoying people and situations for you, and what can they teach you?
- What do you believe robs you of joy and peace of mind and heart?
- How much of your day would you say you “live in the present...in the now”?
- What are you living for, and what do you believe prevents you from living that way?
- When do you feel most alive and least focused on yourself?
- What are the situations when you are prone to be “mindless” rather than mindful? How could you deal better with these?
- What happens when you observe yourself starting to rush and hurry? What helps you to stop, take a deep breath, live in the present and change your attitude and your pace?
- Can you “let go” easily? If not, why not?
- Are you caught up in always “doing”? Can you just “be”?
- How much do you think habit determines your daily life? Anything you can do about this?
- What part does being spiritually mindful have to do with your relationships with others?
- What practical ways can you encourage yourself to be spiritually mindful at home, work, church and during leisure activities?
- How do you determine if a desire is a call from God or comes from inordinate self-interest, self-doubt, peer pressure or cultural values?
- In what ways are you seeking to be more open and receptive to God’s voice in all the experiences of your life, interior and exterior, those that are familiar and those that are unfamiliar?