**Deepening into Life – Darkness and Light**

***So, winter is upon us as we launch into month 4 of our 6-month community programme. Darker nights outside are perfect to explore the darkness within! Gulp. And of course the light. I do hope you enjoyed exploring the subjects of Gratitude, Grace, and Joy from last month. I know I did.***

***I am aware some of you have struggled to keep up with the demands of such a deep and intense spiritual programme (and please know you’re in very good company!). The main thing is to approach the work with self-compassion and simply commit and re-commit to do what you can, when you can. It helps if you can set aside a set time each day for your work. I find early mornings the best time for me. The main thing is to keep going and not give up. (The ego loves that).***

***As always, any questions about this month’s work that arise in you, please make a note, and bring them to the online Zoom session.***

***SUNDAY 4th DECEMBER, 10.30am-12pm***

***DATE FOR YOUR DIARY –Wednesday 21st December\* 18.00 -19.30 ON ZOOM.***

***\*Please note this is a different date from the original option.\****

***Do check our private Instagram page regularly for updates on events. I encourage you to also contribute with photos and comments to stay connected within our community. @deepeningintolife***

***And now it’s time for us to dive deep into the depths in order to shine a light on to the more dark and shadowy aspects of our being.***

***Deep breath now and let’s go…….***

***In love and service,***

***Donna xxx***

***Radical Commitment* and Self Respnsibi**

**Personal Enquiry:** Personal enquiry is a personal and spiritual development tool to support people in enhancing their understanding of the human condition and shedding light on theirs and others psyche. In questioning our habitual thoughts, feelings, reactions, judgements, and behaviours, we can begin to move beyond our ego led living and drop into the deeper dimensions of Life. All the spiritual traditions include periods of quiet contemplation and reflection in some form. Specific time set aside in silence and solitude to meditate on the chosen subjects and related questions. For how can we possibly know and connect to a Higher Power, if we do not take the time to know and connect to ourselves? How can we begin to deepen, without questioning all that we ‘think’ we know?

These personal enquiry questions are starting points for you to deepen into Life. To spend time over the coming weeks and months contemplating each of the questions and how they relate to you and the wider world. I encourage you to add further questions of your own choosing to go deeper still. The suggestion is that you spend at least 2-3 hours per week contemplating and journaling on these questions. This might be broken down into 20-30 minutes each weekday or in one chunk of time at the weekend. Whatever is most manageable for you. Where possible return to the questions throughout the whole month to continue adding further insights and reflections as they arise. Take these questions with you on your walks, in the shower or bath, as you drink your coffee, cook, eat, clean or go about your day (keep your journal close by). Allow the questions to open, elevate and deepen you, and in turn impact how you choose to live your life.

**Questions:**

**Shadow/Darkness**

* Where in my life am I still hiding? What aspects of my darker nature (Negative shadow) am I trying to suppress or deny? How does my negative shadow leak out of me? Who do I project my shadow on to and in which ways?
* Where in my life am I still denying my greatness? (Positive shadow). What am I scared of in owning these aspects of my being/greatness (beyond egoic stories)? Who do I project my positive shadow onto and in which ways?
* Where in my life do I avoid the darker dimensions (including darker emotions) of life? What impact does this have on me personally and the wider world?
* How will I begin to acknowledge and integrate both my negative and positive shadow?
* Why is shadow awareness and integration so important for those on a Spiritual path?

**Spirit/Light**

* What do these words mean to me? How do they show up in my life?
* What is the difference between Spirit and Soul?
* What does it mean to live in ‘spiritual bypass’? How does this relate to me?
* Do I give as much attention to my light as I do to my darkness? How can I create more balance here?
* What does it mean to me to live a Spirit led life? How does this include Activism?
* What are the connections between Joy and Light? Grace and Spirit?
* How might I spread more light in the world? What actions do I need to take? How will I hold myself accountable?
* When and how do I make time to listen for guidance from my own spirit?

**Ego**

* What are the differences between healthy and toxic ego? How does this play out in my life?
* How does my (toxic) ego operate in my everyday life?
* In what ways does my ego keep me lazy and/or ‘asleep’? Perhaps this also relates to your engagement (or lack of it) in this programme?
* In what ways and circumstances does my ego inflate or deflate? Where in my life do I believe I am better than/entitled or less than/underserving? (Go deeper…)
* How might I begin to notice when my ego is leading the way?
* What are the connections between ego, vulnerability and authenticity?
* How does my ego sabotage my spiritual connection?

**Daily Prayer Practice:**

The suggestion is for you to continue to pray twice a day, first thing in the morning and last thing in the evening. Try to ensure you include the 3 core dimensions of prayer – gratitude, celebration/worship & requests. If you already have your own prayer practice, then feel free to continue with that. The main thing is that we all commit to pray consistently every day.

**Ritual:**

Create a visual image/object/photographs to represent both your darkness and light. Be creative. Paint/draw/sculpt/write a poem/song/take a photo that encapsulates both sides of the human condition. Dare to share it with the DIL community via our private IG page @deepeningintolife

**Word of the Week:**

The suggestion is to have one word as your focus for each week of the month. As you encounter life moment by moment, allow this word to guide you in your thoughts, words, conversations, and choices. Take these words with you wherever you go. Write them on post it’s to remind yourself. Add them to your altar, pop them into your pocket or purse and carry them with you. Allow them to guide you as you deepen into life.

* Anger
* Ego
* Projections
* Integration

**Book of the Month:**

Each month during our time together in community we will be reading a book related to the subjects of our enquiry for that month. The suggestion is that a different member of our community takes a turn each month to volunteer to organise an online book club, whereby those who wish to can also attend to share and discuss the book and its key messages. (Please DM me if you wish to volunteer for this role).

The book of the month: **The Dark Side of the Light Chasers – Debbie Ford**

For returning DIL members I offer: **Shadow Dance – David Richo**

**Service & Acts of Kindness:**

Each month identify a specific way to be in service in some way in the world. The suggestion is to identify a person or cause that is important to you and then find a way to offer meaningful support. A minimum of 1 hour per month (ideally this needs to be on top of anything you already do). In addition, consciously find/create opportunities to be kind that involves an element of sacrifice on your part. (so not just giving money away as an example). Ideally a minimum of 1 act of conscious kindness per week, large or small. If you can remain anonymous, even better.

**A Weekly Date with Wonder:**

Once a week (or more if you can), for at least 30 minutes, head out by yourself with your eyes and heart wide open. Take a small notebook, pen, and camera if you wish. (turn phone on airplane mode if using the camera). Head to the woods, sea, park, a museum or simply sit and watch the world go by. Wherever calls to you. Slowly and mindfully take in all that you notice – look up, down and all around. Marvel and wonder at the minute details and miracle of it all. Notice the smells, sounds, colours, textures and sensations of the whole experience. Touch what you can. Reconnect with your Wonder & Awe. Give thanks. This too is a prayer.

**AUDIO/FILM RECOMMENDATIONS**

Shadow Work Library – Jessica Depatie

<https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/shadow-work-library/id1498822118>

J P Sears - How to be ultra spiritual

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kDso5ElFRg>

Charlotte Donachie – I’m so spiritual

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBwjUIcXtew>

Peaceful Warrior

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Peaceful-Warrior-Nick-Nolte/dp/B01MR4YOQ9>

If you have any recommendations for films/podcasts etc to offer our community, please DM/email me and I will share with our community via Instagram.

**Spotify Playlists:**

Our DIL member Abigail Wilmore has kindly put together 2 new playlists to support us all. One playlist is for those of you who wish to dance your prayers, activating and opening your heart to spread more Love and Joy in the world. The other is music for more meditative, prayerful times, perhaps when you are journaling on your personal enquiry or to listen to before/after you pray.

Movement/Flow/Dance:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3tj3FbRxE6iSaF7FJK9eZY?si=lpaNeHoEQGmzQIJAiwwGWg>

Prayer/Meditation:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/70TCLScHzjqJEEQFAEymuG?si=4gkwwvVuQluuAUIU9GC5Kw>

I encourage you to listen to both playlists completely at some point during the month.

Wishing you a wonderful month of dancing with both dark and light.

Donna Lancaster – Founder of Deepening into Life

**Missed the live Session?**