SESSION 6

CHOOSE GOODNESS, SHOW THE REAL YOU

BEAT 6:
THE WAY OF RIGHT MOTIVE
BEFORE THE SESSION

TASKS:
- Send encouragement and reminders to participants
- Decide who will lead various session activities
- Print session 6 hand out (Or remind participants to bring their Ninefold Path Notebook)
- Set up space
- Gather supplies

SUPPLIES:
- Ninefold Path Notebooks or Session 6 Hand Outs
- Nine Beats to the Bar album (recommended tracks: *In Recovery, Purgation, Illumined, Towards the Sun*)
- Television or video projector (if you plan on showing slides and video)
- Name tags (optional)
- Light refreshments (optional)
- Candle
- Matches

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THE NINEFOLD PATH
SESSION 6:
THE WAY OF RIGHT MOTIVE

CHOOSEGOODNESS — SHOW THE REAL YOU

LAB PRACTICES

**Journal:** Divided no more. Think about situations in your life where you feel divided between what your heart says, and how your mouth speaks. Write yes and no as two headings on a piece of paper. Now think: when do you say yes when you want to say no, perhaps because you’re afraid of disappointing others? When do you say no when you want to say yes, perhaps because you’re afraid of losing control? What new boundary or commitment could you make so that what you say or do and what’s in your heart are in better agreement?

- When during the week are you going to reflect on your mouth and heart agreements? Put it on your calendar and set a reminder now.

**Daily habit:** Held in the light. Self-awareness is a useful step towards right motive. Try this prayer practice for ten minutes each day. Light a candle, turn out the lights, and sit with your eyes closed. Focus on your breath. Pay attention to whatever body sensations, thoughts, or images arise in your mind – and then let them go. Consent to the creator seeing your thoughts and feelings right now, trusting this loving and compassionate gaze. Imagine yourself held in the light. Whisper the words, ‘Search me, God, and know my heart.’ Notice how this shapes your awareness of yourself and the Divine each day.

- When and where are you going to try this daily prayer practice? Do you need to buy a candle? Set a reminder now.

**Experiment:** Do good in secret. Knowing that why we do things is as important as what we do, Jesus often encouraged his listeners to keep their acts of goodness and devotion a secret. This week, take a conscious step to do good. Make a gift to a charity. Volunteer. Take a homeless friend for dinner. And don’t tell anyone about it. Don’t post on social media. Don’t drop hints. The practice of secrecy can help you do the right thing for the right reason.

- What good do you feel inspired to do in secret? Decide now what and when you will do this and put it on your calendar.
GATHERING PRAYER (2 minutes)

Gather everyone and invite the group to move through the ninefold path prayer postures. Have someone read each beatitude and then have the group respond by saying, “Lead us in the way of…” while adopting the appropriate posture.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Lead us in the way of TRUST  
(Open hands)

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
Lead us in the way of LAMENT  
(Head in hands)

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.  
Lead us in the way of HUMILITY  
(Bow with hand on heart)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.  
Lead us in the way of JUSTICE  
(clinched fists crossed)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.  
Lead us in the way of COMPASSION  
(Make heart with hands)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.  
Lead us in the way of RIGHT MOTIVE  
(Jazz hands)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.  
Lead us in the way of PEACEMAKING  
(Reach out to embrace, clasp hands)

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Lead us in the way of SURRENDER  
(hands lowered and crossed)

‘Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.  
Lead us in the way of RADICAL LOVE  
(Extend arms in posture of crucifixion)
PRACTICE CHECK-IN (25 minutes)

In the last session you invited everyone to commit to three practices. Divide into groups of three and have each person spend 5-7 minutes responding to the following questions about the practices. (It can be helpful to set a timer). If you didn’t all follow through on one of the practices you committed to, spend some time reflecting together on the internal resistance or external obstacles that you encountered. If viewed properly our struggles and “failure” can be tools for learning and growth.

Journal: Let go. Where are you in the process of forgiving others and yourself?

Daily habit: Positive speech. When was it difficult to keep your promise? How did this practice help you be more compassionate?

Experiment: Eyes of compassion. How did this practice disrupt your normal way of seeing and evaluating people? What intentional choices did you have to make in order to avoid judging and measuring?
BEAT 6 INVITATION: The Way of Right Motive
(10 minutes)

Read the following or show the Beat 6 video invitation from the slides.

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.”

A young child cannot hide what they are thinking and feeling inside. You know immediately when they are afraid, excited, sad or surprised. But over time we learn not to show our real thoughts and feelings. There comes to be a divide between what is in our hearts, and what we are willing to show to others. We experience our separateness and become fearful and divided. We hide behind a mask or a persona. What would you think if you really knew who I am inside?

Whatever is inside of us eventually comes out, no matter how hard we may try to cover it up. Put your hands over your face, and consider this question:

What masks do you wear? What’s important to you about how you present yourself to the world? (pause to allow each person an opportunity to share)

We wear masks for a reason. Not everything inside of us is what we would want it to be. But hiding or denying our mixed motives doesn’t make them go away. Neither does shame help us change, or cynicism help us heal.

With this beatitude Jesus invites us to show our true selves, and to believe in the possibility of our own goodness. If our idea of the Divine is rooted in disapproval, it’s hard not to hide. But a God who is love, sees us truly and calls us on to integration, and wholeness of heart.

Purity of heart is being honest about what’s inside. You give up trying to be perfect and show the real you. When we are honest with ourselves, with others, and with God, we step out of the shadows and into the light. And light transforms everything it touches. It reveals, heals and purifies.

Hold your hands up in front of your face again. Now move your hands away, so that you can be seen. Show the real you.

What’s inside of you is seen and held with tenderness. We are invited to step further into the light, to be authentic, wholehearted, and divided no more.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

So today we drop our masks. We show our true selves. Standing in the light, we choose goodness, and we walk in the way of right motive.
Further Wisdom about the Way of Right Motive (optional)

If it's helpful for your group, have someone read these texts aloud.

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.” (Proverbs 4:23)

“Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” (Luke:18:17)

’Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.” (Matthew 23: 25-28)

“Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them… Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.” (Luke 15:10-11,17-20)

“There is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.” (Luke 8:17)

“A good [person] brings good things out of the good stored up in [their] heart, and an evil [person] brings evil things out of the evil stored up in [their] heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” (Luke 6:44-45)

“God is light; in [God] there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with [God] and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as [God] is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, [God’s] Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:5-9)
GROUP EXERCISE: Examen (15 minutes)

The Hebrew story of Adam and Eve illustrates our human loss of innocence or naivety. They ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. When they realised they were being seen, becoming aware of their separateness, their impulse was to cover up and hide, as if they could escape the light of Divine presence. In this story it is the humans that pull away while the Creator continues to pursue relationship. “Where are you?,” the Creator asked, expecting to walk with Adam and Eve in the garden. They made God their judge and enemy, and began living under the illusion that they could cover up what was happening in the heart.

There are thoughts and attitudes we might try to hide from others or ourselves, but God sees all. A woman named Hagar gave the God of Israel the affectionate name El Roi, which means, “The God who sees me.” Since ancient times seekers have cultivated intentional practices of examen, inviting the divine presence to search the mind and heart, trusting that the maker of all things sees us with a tender, loving gaze.

“Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Turn down the lights in the room, light a candle, and invite the group to close their eyes and sit in silence. Check your watch or set a timer for ten minutes.

We’re going to try this kind of examen together for ten minutes. Find a comfortable way to sit, and focus on your breath. Hold a posture of ‘jazz hands’ to indicate your desire to be seen and noticed, held in the light of Divine presence.

Consider the possibility that the Creator of the universe is closer to you now than your very breath, living at the very centre of yourself. You are not separate but intimately connected to the source of all life. Consent to the Creator seeing your thoughts and feelings right now, trusting this loving and compassionate gaze.

What does your heart most deeply long for? What are the thoughts, feelings, needs and longings that are in your heart right now?

Silently whisper the words, “Search me, O God and know my heart.”

Pay attention to whatever thoughts or images arise in your mind, and observe them without judgement. If you find yourself being overwhelmed by thoughts of guilt or shame, consider whether those come from the authentic voice of God or from the distorted images of God you have rehearsed. The real Creator knows all that’s inside of you, holds it with tenderness, and invites you to step further into the light, to be whole hearted and divided no more.
TURN AND TALK After doing this activity, turn to the person next to you and use the questions below to reflect on your experience.

- How did it feel to consciously allow the Creator to search your heart and mind?
- Do you find it easier to conceive of God’s gaze as harsh and accusing or compassionate and loving? Which impression is more accurate to reality?
INTRODUCING THE LAB PRACTICES (8 minutes)

In this session we’ve begun to explore steps how to live in the way of right motive. Reality is that whatever is inside of us is held with tenderness, which frees us to be more fully honest about ourselves. I’m inviting you to take on three practices this week that will help you deepen your experience of the way of right motive.

Journal: Divided no more. Think about situations in your life where you feel divided between what your heart says, and how your mouth speaks. Write yes and no as two headings on a piece of paper. Now think: when do you say yes when you want to say no, perhaps because you’re afraid of disappointing others? When do you say no when you want to say yes, perhaps because you’re afraid of losing control? What new boundary or commitment could you make so that what you say or do and what’s in your heart are in better agreement?

When during the week are you going to reflect on your mouth and heart agreements? Put it on your calendar and set a reminder now.

Daily habit: Held in the light. Self-awareness is a useful step towards right motive. Try the examen practice we did as a group for ten minutes each day. Light a candle, turn out the lights, and sit with your eyes closed. Focus on your breath. Pay attention to whatever body sensations, thoughts, or images arise in your mind – and then let them go. Consent to the creator seeing your thoughts and feelings, trusting this loving and compassionate gaze. Imagine yourself held in the light. Whisper the words, ‘Search me, God, and know my heart.’ Notice how this shapes your awareness of yourself and the Divine each day.

When and where are you going to try this daily prayer practice? Do you need to buy a candle? Set a reminder now.

Experiment: Do good in secret. Knowing that why we do things is as important as what we do, Jesus often encouraged his listeners to keep their acts of goodness and devotion a secret. This week, take a conscious step to do good. Make a gift to a charity. Volunteer. Take a homeless friend for dinner. And don’t tell anyone about it. Don’t post on social media. Don’t drop hints. The practice of secrecy can help you do the right thing for the right reason.

What good do you feel inspired to do in secret? Decide now what and when you will do this and put it on your calendar.
PRACTICE COMMITMENT (5 minutes)

The practices this week could be really transformative, so take a few minutes now to make a concrete plan, and commit to your right motive practices.

Journal: Divided no more. When during the week are you going to reflect on your mouth and heart agreements? Put it on your calendar and set a reminder now. Bring your list to the next session.

Daily habit: Held in the light. When and where are you going to try this daily prayer practice? Do you need to buy a candle? Set a reminder now.

The experiment: Do good in secret. What good do you feel inspired to do in secret? Decide now what and when you will do this and put it on your calendar.

CLOSE: Ninefold Path mantra

The way of right motive is a step on the ninefold path. We are seen and held with tenderness, and free to live undivided. Read this expression of intentions together, assuming the posture of each beatitude as you speak it.

Today I want to:
- Live with open hands
- Mourn what's broken
- Serve with self respect
- Use my power for good
  - Look with compassion
  - Walk in honesty
- Reach past difference
- Suffer for love
- and live fearlessly
following the way of radical love
TEAM EVALUATION: (5 minutes)

- What went well and what did we each do well?
- Where did the group have the most energy?
- When did the group struggle?
- What can we do differently to make the next session stronger?

SEND A FOLLOW UP MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANTS. On the day after this session, send an email or message to each participant reminding them of the three practices. You may want to send additional encouragements and reminders via text messages throughout the week.

Hello,

In this session we explored the divide we often experience between what’s inside of us and what we show to others. Reality is that what’s inside of us is seen and held with tenderness. We are invited to step further into the light, to be authentic, wholehearted, and divided no more. We each committed to doing three practices before our next session.

Journal: Divided no more. Think about situations in your life where you feel divided between what your heart says, and how your mouth speaks.

Daily habit: Held in the light. Sit for ten minutes each day allowing your thoughts and feelings to be seen.

Experiment: Do good in secret. Take a conscious step to do good and do it secretly.

Setting aside the time to do these practices is essential to this learning journey, so we encourage you to calendar when you are going to do each one and set up reminders.

All the best!