

Session 13 Guide
Deepening Practices and Questions
Getting Real and Staying Real
Integrating Our Journey through
A New Republic of the Heart

This guide prepares us for our final course session on Wednesday, November 28th, “Getting Real and Staying Real”.

At its core, *A New Republic of the Heart* offers hope and excitement about our shared future — and a sense of how we can actually make a difference. This is a time to integrate its many lessons and inquiries. We can reaffirm our relationship to “what time it is” on our planet, acknowledging what we fear and emerge joyful and energized. This is an appropriate moment to bear witness to the countless good works and projects in action around the world, and to affirm our power, our right, and our responsibility, to create a life of deep meaning and purpose, even under chaotic circumstances.

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Deepening Question:

1. As we complete the final chapter, I hope you have many insights and opportunities opening up, including ideas about practical projects you can undertake. But let’s focus right now on using the we-space we have built up, and see if we can go deep together.

Consider these twelve sequential insights, internalizing each one in turn — cognitively, energetically, emotionally, and motivationally. I suggest you read each of the twelve points, then pause and breathe and feelingly metabolize its implications before moving on to the next. I’m suggesting we engage these statements as an experiment in embodied *samyama* (Patanjali’s “yoga of consideration”) treating them as a profound question that must be answered in awareness and via one’s energetic body and “way of being” rather than a cognitive idea-complex that can be analyzed and known abstractly by the mind:

- 1) Among the deepest points of instruction from the world of organizational leadership is a simple principle: We have no control over the outcomes of our efforts, but we have control of and responsibility for *how* we show up for the events of our lives. If we become radically faithful to this principle, we realize we can for sure live our values. Then fear doesn't disappear, but it becomes non-binding, radical commitment becomes possible, and a certain kind of essential success is assured.
- 2) What most often determines life outcomes seem to be accidents or synchronicities — “luck”. Ben Hogan said, “the more I practice, the luckier I get.”

Our commitment to change our consciousness, behavior and relationships shows up in a life of practice. It's effects might create luck — personal and collective.

- 3) Waking up and finding a way to be true — to consciously inhabit a new paradigm, one unsupported by our “objective” cultural surround, is something that can only be done by trying. Then, it's not a problem if we fall short; it's inevitable. As long as we keep trying — again and again as many times as necessary. Only in this way can a radically new pattern be set in motion.
- 4) An impressive body of scientific evidence is cited for the healing effects of prayer. These results are disputed in skeptical quarters, but regardless they're an indisputably intriguing metaphor worth contemplating as a source of inspiration: simple life forms planted in petri dishes over which people prayed were found to grow significantly faster than those that didn't receive prayer. Might the whole human race learn to pray, *effectively*, for the health of the larger body of Gaia, down to plankton and primordial life forms, and even including the atmosphere?
- 5) We don't know what the future will bring. Amazing disruptive emergences and black swan events are quite likely to reshape everything — radically expanding the vocabulary of experiences, with which we can do our imagining and forecasting.
- 6) We live in, and are adapted to, a civilization far-gone in overshoot of our living planet's capacity, a terminally unsustainable civilizational system. We know no other way to live our lives except inside this system. We've learned only to walk and explore and navigate the multifarious sections and decks of this ship, this system, even though it may be the Titanic. This is where our life of practice has begun.
- 7) Here, in this very situation, we have begun to have a forbidden conversation. We gather, choosing to see if it is possible to break through to being true, to obey a higher law, and to explore how. And yet we are cultural creatures, shaped by a culture that has mutated from original human ways, and much of how we live reflects our profoundly un-lawful, mutational context. We choose to attempt to be true anyway.
- 8) Grace may the only way to square this circle. Can we learn how to allow ourselves to be a channel, a vehicle — inspired, lived and inhabited, and powered by a greater power, one capable of orchestrating newly emergent evolutionary leaps?
- 9) We also inherent much wisdom. Humans have learned a lot about awakening, living with excellence, integrity, generous mutuality, courage, sincerity, and care — intelligently, wisely and wholesomely, as distinct from desperate, cynical, shrewd and crafty. Countless ecovillages, sanghas, activist organizations and other living experiments are trying to live that out in one way or another. We have many fellow students of an emerging new pattern no one can yet see in full.
- 10) Every one of our perspectives, ways of being, experiments, ideals, philosophies, methods, communities, and initiatives are profoundly true in certain ways, and

yet critically partial in others. Unless we are in conversation with a critical mass of other people and perspectives, we are inherently blind to much of reality.

- 11) Our culture and habits (and perhaps morphogenetic fields) make possible an amazing range of patterns of communication. They define the ways we know how to engage each other. Even so, now something *radically new* is necessary.
- 12) In this course, we have taken a journey through the pages of a book, in order to be able to feel all these facets of this moment, here and now. Now we can turn to one another and can ask: can the words we ARE capable of speaking be used now to transcend every conversation we have ever had? What might that look like? What can we say to each other? What can we hear and absorb? (This is where the course ends, and your opportunity begins.)

Write in your journal or record a voice memo in response to the final questions in #12. Or have a deep conversation. It can be exhilarating to have a serious conversation based on these insights, principles and injunctions. But it is extremely demanding. If we take the exercise seriously, we are required to do our *very very* best. But we need not worry about failure. We cannot fail if we do our best and persist. Because it is also okay to begin the process by speaking honestly, openly and humbly even when the task seems to lie far beyond our reach. We can become friends in the process of building the capacity to engage this question with some, then more, and then ever more authenticity, integrity, success and efficacy. And there is great self-validating beauty and dignity in the sincere attempt, even if the task remains sorely incomplete.

Group Practice:

- 1) Begin your book group with *brief* hellos & checkins. Then take a moment for a guided process and arrive together, fully present, open to the Mystery, bringing yourself full in to the group as a sacred space.
- 2) Take turns reading the list of insights in the deepening question above. Pause and breathe and feel after each one.
- 3) Then speak spontaneously for the rest of your time, as provoked by the deepening questions .
- 4) Towards the end, take 10 minutes to speak spontaneously, popcorn style, completing the open sentence, "What WE are experiencing now is..."
- 5) Then, five to ten minutes before your end time, take turns sharing about your experience of this process of evolutionary dialogue in we-space.
- 6) Optional: Take this exercise and conversation further in a second meeting.

Personal Practice

Continue to engage in daily practices:

1. Continue to pay attention to your “Moments” practice, sometimes practicing mindfulness, sometimes adjusting your posture, sometimes dropping more deeply into contact with the heartbreaking intensity of evolving life, sometimes remembering to recognize the Mystery of existence, sometimes breathing to and from the heart in random moments throughout the day, and remembering and enjoying the radical “okayness” of existence.
2. Continue to practice and refresh your “Mornings” practice. Include, if possible, at least 10 minutes conscious movement and 10 more minutes of conscious stillness (meditation).
3. Please consider continuing to engage with this deepening question and exercise on our Facebook page.
4. Continue to consider and integrate your relationship to effective change-agency. Focus on some of the most high-leverage ways you can make a meaningful contribution to a healthy future through “around-the-system” activism (and/or in- and against-). *How can you “follow your heartbreak and your genius with your friends”?* Act in whatever ways are clear to you. Find initiatives with which you can join, such as the new nonprofit [New Republic of the Heart](#). Journal and dialogue if you are not entirely clear, and clarify grounded ways you can make a positive difference. Is there something new you can DO? Defy your habits, at least as an experiment.
5. Keep restoring your unreasonable happiness. Appreciate yourself for engaging these inquiries as a practice. If you become anxious or overwhelmed, remember to sincerely appreciate yourself risking your equanimity in the quest for more authenticity, integrity, transformative depth, and authentic citizenship and leadership. And trust the process of your life and our time.