

The Five Invitations

by Frank Ostaseski



End in Mind

1. Forgiveness has many benefits. The author suggests that it's like "setting down a hot coal we have been carrying by hand." What have been the obstacles to forgiveness in your life?
2. How has the contact with the precariousness of life helped you appreciate its preciousness?
3. "Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing." Discuss the difference between acceptance and resignation. How do they feel different in your heart? What are the sensations you associate with each in the body? What is one self-image you have stopped worrying about in your life?
4. When we over-identify with a role, it defines us, confines us, and reduces our capacity for conscious choice. It sets up an expectation about how life is supposed to proceed. What roles do you still carry that you no longer need?
5. Even when we've devoted our life to compassionate action, we will at times become overwhelmed by suffering. How do you restore yourself and compassion in your life?
6. We can be addicted to being busy, to multi-tasking, and productivity to the point of exhaustion. Explore the counter-intuitive question, "What's right about being exhausted?" Share a moment when you have felt calmness in the midst of chaos.
7. Discuss a moment when you had the courage to share your vulnerability.
8. When our minds are made up, it can narrow our vision, obscures our ability to see the whole picture, and limits our capacity to act. How did you respond to a surprise today? Were you flexible or inflexible?
9. There's an old tradition in Japan of Zen monks and others writing short death poems. They often express an essential truth discovered by one's life. Take a moment to write a four-line death poem.