

Embodied Spirituality, Parts I & II

Body Prayer of Surrender

Body prayers are wonderful, holistic ways to connect to God because they involve the body, mind, and spirit. These practices bring a better sense of calm and connectedness to God and to oneself. The act of surrendering while using meaningful gestures that physically reflects one's intent (i.e. outstretched hands to symbolize surrender) creates potential congruence, peace, and freedom within one's body and soul.

The capacity to listen—when “I don't know”—is the time when I can be the most open to hearing God. I am not clouded with thoughts, prejudices, or spiritual clichés. The archetype for this form of surrender is Mary, mother of Jesus.

How To: (from Thomas Atum O'Kane's "Retreat on Resurrection")

Repeat the movement, speaking the words aloud two or three times (body), then repeat the movement and mouth the words two or three times (emotions), then do the movement and hear the words inside (spirit). Finally, rest in the not knowing until the prayer feels complete.

First Stage--acknowledging condition of confusion, not knowing

1. **Bow Forward and Down--Hands on heart.** Give up the struggle to know, expectations that I should know, judgment that not knowing is bad. Sigh, let go. Push air out of rib cage and belly. **Words to accompany movement: “I do not know.”** [Acknowledgment]
2. **Rise Up--Hands outstretched waist level.** Become like children, fully receptive, waiting, wanting to receive. **Words to accompany movement: “I am open to receive.”** [Open, waiting]

You have moved through the not knowing into openness.

Second Stage--placing your trust

3. **Bow Forward and Down--Hands on heart.** This time the “I do not know” is an act of humility, even freedom. This stage trusts that the soul knows the way, even when the ego doesn't. **Words to accompany movement: “I do not know.”** [Freedom]
4. **Rise Up--Hands outstretched upward.** I place my trust, myself in the hands of God, Holy One, Christ who knows the way. Some greater knowing, deeper knowing is at work.

I trust that my soul knows the way, that there is something unfolding in my life, that I am being guided on my journey. **Words to accompany movement: “*I put my trust in You.*”** [*Trust*]

*Often in this place of NOT KNOWING we will receive, not the larger picture or a complete vision, but the next piece, the next step on our journey. We have to follow the path as it unfolds

Body Prayer

Julian of Norwich wrote, "The fruit and the purpose of prayer is to be *oned* with God in all things." In this body prayer, take a few minutes to let your heart and mind's attention sink deeper into your body, to remember your inherent oneness through these simple words, postures, and intentions.

AWAIT (hands at waist, cupped up to receive): Await God's presence, not as you expect, hope, or imagine, but just as it is in this moment.

ALLOW (reach up, hands open): Allow a sense of God's presence (or not) to come and be what it is, without meeting your expectations.

The ALLOW piece can also be an "emptying" or "surrendering," releasing of the ego and control.

ACCEPT (hands at heart, cupped towards body): Accept as a gift whatever comes or does not come. Accept that you are not in charge. Accept the infinity of God's presence, whether or not you are aware.

ATTEND (hands outstretched, ready to be responsive): In this stance of openness, attend to the action(s) that God invites you to take.