



Deepening Circle

Prayer and Reflection Guide

Fall, 2025

Spirituality of Embodied Presence

Wild Geese

Mary Oliver

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world
(your body) offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

The practice is one of tasting the moment, to sense what arises in the present and to learn to extend our sensing to lean into it, to savor it.

We simply experience what is as gift, despite apparent limitations, physical or emotional. We meet the present fully! With awakened somatic intelligence, our presence can dimensionally extend to become a co-creative participant in every moment, in every encounter.

Our simple practice: Maintaining living contact with our inner body—landing into ourselves again and again. Return to your embodied presence (not an object) again and again.

We eat and drink the Mystery; we breathe and dwell in the Mystery. "You live in me; I live in you." Until one day we realize, "I, too, am the Body of Christ."

I have dignity and power flowing through me in my own sacred embodied Presence! A bodily awareness of this sort is enough to saturate and empower our whole life.

Merely saying the words will never give us the jolt we need to absorb the Divine desire for us to become a healing embodied presence in our world—to live as the Body of Christ, to realize the sacred gift we can bring into the miseries of our world.

Richard Rohr

Your body is a supremely responsive and alive feedback system. When you begin to encounter it as an immediate presencing, rather than as an "object," your body opens up its song to you, and you become not only the music but also the instrument and the player.

The word "somatic" comes from the Greek root soma, for "body. The conventional use of the word "body" in English implies an *object* observed from the outside. It is a "third-person" image of ourselves at a distance. That's why I use the term "soma" to refer to how we sense the unfolding of life from within ... A first-person, here-now, all-at-once, embodied intelligence—how we sense, feel, and know ourselves—from the inside out. This is what we are in our fullness in contrast to a "third-person" image of ourselves at a distance.

Why is this gift of embodiment so important? Because the feedback we receive through being born into a human body on this Earth provides us with the perfect learning environment to unhook from our misidentification with "object" reality and awaken to the infinite consciousness that we are.

If we know ourselves as Beloved, as an embodied presence of love, giving and receiving we are no longer striving for self-improvement through efforting. We simply want to live the fullest expression of who we are.

Risa Kaparo, Awakening Somatic Intelligence

The heart of the world beats in me now. The light of the world shines through me. The song of the world sings through me now.