

LIVING IN THE HEART

AN EXPLORATION FOR THE CURIOUS SEEKER

NATHALIE JACKSON

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Welcome to the Living in the Heart Exploration for the Curious Seeker!

I want to take a moment to acknowledge how precious it is at this time in our collective history that you are taking time and space out of your busy life to nourish yourself and your heart. Never before has there been such a need for deep compassion and heart wisdom. It is time to be rewriting history to include Her-Story too. And I acknowledge your part in this new story, just by your willingness to explore and heal.

For years I've held space for others to do their healing work. At some point, for everyone, we are asked to look into our heart of hearts, to see what's stored and locked away there, to find new ways to explore gratitude, and to learn to find new meaning and connection by opening up to loving one another more fiercely. This journey can be painful at times as we are invited down and into wounds of the past, and at other times joyful as we emerge with new wisdom gained from the old stories. It's always REAL. Meaning you'll probably feel something. And when you do, you'll know you're on the right path.

For me, the exploration of opening up my heart began by developing a loving practice of gratitude. I started being more and more grateful for all that I already had in life. I see this happening for so many on their journey - as soon as they start looking for all the good that has already shown up, more good continues to surface. It's like we become a magnet for blessings.

The following little ebook is a bite-sized exploration of the heart - from my heart to yours. Start with gratitude. From there begin to notice the emotions moving in and around your heart. I call this place The Sacred Cave of the Heart. Notice what your sacred cave is telling you. Notice how it feels. With loving-kindness, you can begin to grow this awareness as you continue your journey of exploration.

And finally, begin to build your awareness of your interaction with the world around you. Learning to live your life fully in your heart means being IN the world and not running or disconnecting from it. The awareness here lies in your ability to tune into who you are as a beautiful daughter or son of this Earth. Know you have a place here and it's good and kind and loving. And the more you open your heart to the truth of your inner world, the more the outer world will respond with more to be grateful for...

Enjoy the Exploration...

Begin With Gratitude

The practice of sourcing Gratitude from deep within has been invaluable to me in my life. I find that the times I've been at my lowest coincide directly with my omission of this powerful and simple practice.

Can you find 20 things to be grateful for today? Explore the many nuances of Gratitude - this may include what about yourself that you love. It may also include simple gifts such as a warm bed, food in your belly, the presence of a person who cares about you. Living with Gratitude need not be a complex experience. The more simple the reasons you have to express your Gratitude, the easier it is to find new wonders to be grateful for.

Can you look at your body and find 20 things you love about it? Can you look at your life achievements and find 20 things you're grateful for? The challenge is to continue to grow these lists. Contemplate for a moment your loved ones...Can you find at least 50 things about each of them you're grateful for? This might feel like a stretch and from my experience it's a worthy one. Each practice grows on itself the inner muscles and skills to see with new eyes.

The more you express your Gratitude for the big wonders of your life, the more you'll begin to notice the small wonders; the miracles that surround you each and every day. Look at a blade of grass - the fact that it grows is truly one of life's great mysteries.

Can you be grateful for the big and the little mysteries all around you?

The Sacred Cave of the Heart

Learn to listen deeply to the song and voice of your heart. Your heart is as wise (if not more) than your brain. Did you know that you have more neurotransmitters in your heart than in your brain? It's true. The same thing applies to your gut...So what does this mean? It means that your heart has immense depth and wisdom within it. Learning to access this wisdom is different than accessing the wisdom of the brain. It requires new skills and muscle development. And most of all, it requires gentleness and kindness. It's not one of those skills you can muscle your way into. It cannot be forced. It comes with stillness and softness. As you slow down and begin to tune into the vibrations and the language of your heart, the accessibility increases organically. It's essentially about you learning how to hear the language your heart has been communicating all along.

The invitation here is to explore a certain quality of the heart called the **Sacred Cave of the Heart**.

Imagine for a moment that you are taking an elevator ride down from your brain into your heart. This may seem a little strange at first, but go with me here. As your consciousness travels down from your brain, you 'see' as it passes behind your eyes, nose, mouth, throat, sternum and then lands safely in your heart. Imagine that there is a cave here. It's a cave that only you can enter. One that holds incredible secrets held only for you. This, for many, is regarded as a safe haven, a **sanctuary** from life's daily struggles. Take a moment to explore this cave and see what it has to offer you.

You may begin to notice certain images or memories appear as you explore this sacred spot within you. Emotions may begin to swirl around. There may even be discomfort as you touch on emotions that may have been locked away for some time. **Be gentle with yourself** as you explore your Sacred Heart Cave.

Spend a bit of time here while asking yourself **what is it your heart likes or dislikes?** What qualities stand out about your Heart's Cave? What songs does it like? What smells, tastes, sensations are **life-giving** to it? If you have a pen and paper nearby, write down some of these qualities. All that you discover here is valuable information as you continue your journey of awareness and heart-centered living.

I like to carry around with me a '**What My Heart Knows**' tiny pad of paper. As I go about my day, I begin to notice (when I'm paying attention!) that my heart loves certain practices, songs, foods, activities, hobbies, people. I write these down in my little book so that I can refer back to it as a loving reminder to do the things my heart loves. **This is where my joy is.** My little book acts as a reminder of this joy, especially when life throws a curve ball my way.

What is your heart telling you today?

What is your heart's joy?

Are you willing to follow your joy today?

Taking Your Heart Out Into the World

Your heart is a tender part of you. We're so often taught to protect this most tender place. 'Don't let anyone in. Don't love too hard. Don't risk too much'.

I'm going to say the opposite. I believe that there is great strength in your vulnerability. When you can express your greatest fears and your grief freely and unapologetically, your capacity to connect with the world around you and with all those you come into contact with, grows exponentially. As you express your emotions and feel all that lives within your tender heart space, you begin to mend the tears and the breaks and rewrite the stories of your past.

With this comes **INCREDIBLE POWER**.

You are no longer tied to the stories of your past once this begins to happen freely. They no longer bind you into becoming the person you believed you needed to be because that's what others said, or that's who your limiting beliefs told you to be. You begin to notice with each new tear cried and each new fear challenged, that **you are courageous and strong** and **NO ONE** can take that from you - **EVER**. Herein lies the paradox - **in your greatest vulnerability lies your greatest strength**. Feeling to heal, as we always say in the healing realm.

As you continue to become more and more aware of your heart song, begin to listen to its subtleties as often as you can. One practice that I love to partake in is **Deep Body Listening**. Upon awakening in the morning, notice your body in relation to the bed you lie upon. How does it feel where it makes contact with the mattress? Notice any physical sensations happening just beneath the level of the skin at each point of contact. The sensations at times may be pleasant or you may feel discomfort. The skill to master here is non-judgement. See if you can name the sensation just as a sensation, without attaching any thoughts around "This feels good or bad". You might notice it feels breezy or fluttery or cool or tight.

Remember now to tune into the wisdom in your Sacred Cave of the Heart. How does it feel about the physical sensations you're paying attention to? Can you feel the sensations of the heart AND of the points making contact with the bed? If so, well done! This can be much more challenging at times. The more often you take the time to stop and become aware of these subtle movements, the more tuned in you become to the language of your body and your heart.

Notice how the air feels as it enters your lungs. How does your body feel when it hears the sounds going on around you? How do your feet feel as they caress the Earth beneath them?

Listen with gentle, non-attached curiosity and you may be amazed at what you discover in these hidden, glorious places.

A Challenge for you, the curious seeker...

See how many times during the day today you can become aware of your whole being as it interacts with the living Earth around you. Notice your emotions and your Sacred Cave of the Heart as your hands touch all they come into contact with today. Notice what makes you feel energized and alive and what makes you feel dull and asleep.

What happens when you gravitate more and more towards what is life-giving? How does your heart respond?

Enjoy each moment of this precious journey we call Life. Live it with everything you've got. Breathe in every inch of its beauty. Even when it doesn't look beautiful, breathe it in. When it looks really beautiful, breathe it in even more.

May your Sacred Heart continue to inspire and guide you onward...

*All my Love
Nathalie*



The Call

Nathalie Jackson c2013

I heard a call
Deep within my very bones
To be all I'm here to be
Through synchronicity
Sublime divinity
& Profound creativity
I leaped
I stepped
I kept
Moving~Growing~Becoming
The Earth She beacons me
She's captured me
She lures me
In the heart of Her heart
I hear my own rhythm
Ancient bones that are my bones
Ancient blood that is my very life force
Ancient rhythm
That calls forth my very Beat
The path laid out for MY FEET ALONE
The whisper that screams, "LEAP!"
Do I move?
Do I groove?
Do I lose myself in the swale of mystery?
The choice is MINE ALONE
To get lost to COME HOME
To find a Beat to call My Own
To know I'm never, ever alone
Prayer-filled humbling
Powerful becoming
Ecstatic awakening
I CHOOSE YES