Aspiration

The world's major religions honor certain transcendent values, such as love, compassion, joy, equanimity, peace, kindness, patience, generosity and humility.

Working with an aspiration is how we bring transcendent values into the hurly burly of daily life.

Having a clear aspiration (an intention or guiding principle for our life) is essential if we wish to experience the fruits of meditation. Lacking the support of an aspiration, our motivation waxes and wanes, practice is on and off, we are easily discouraged and distracted; as a result, the peace and freedom we would like to see in our life does not arise.

Look for an aspiration that can guide your life, that makes sense to you in your present situation. Sitting in meditation, stabilize the attention in the body and the breath. When the mind has settled into present moment awareness, ask "How do I want to manifest in this life?" or "What is my deepest wish for my life?" These questions can also be asked before you go to sleep.

Remind yourself each morning of your aspiration. Begin each period of meditation by reciting your aspiration. Each night, before you go to sleep, review your day, considering whether your activities were aligned with your aspiration. Renew your commitment, telling yourself, "Yes. This is what I really want."

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Be willing to share your aspiration with someone who cares about you and will support you—a partner, close friend, teacher. If you have a prayer life, ask for help in realizing your aspiration.

As your practice gains momentum, and your understanding deepens, your aspiration may change. But always be clear, and be able to clearly state, what your aspiration is. It is best if you express your aspiration in one simple declarative sentence.

Your aspiration might be to cultivate one of the transcendent values listed above. Here are some others for your consideration:

My aspiration is…

- to establish a daily meditation practice. **(Highly recommended if you don't have a regular practice**.) ☺
- to free myself from a particular emotional affliction or habit that does not support well-being in me.
- to bring understanding and compassion to my relationships.
- to live fearlessly.
- to understand suffering and its causes.
- to stop creating suffering.
- to awaken to my Original Mind, my True Nature.
- to live for the benefit of all beings.