

Resilience: Purpose

Self-Facilitated Retreat Guide

*Part 3 of 3 in the
Resilience Self-Guided Retreat Series*

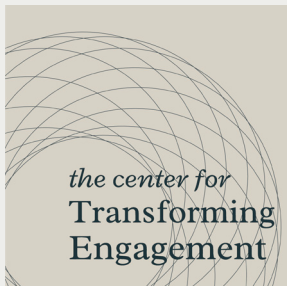


the center for
**Transforming
Engagement**

This self-facilitated retreat was created by the team of the Center for Transforming Engagement, which exists to leverage the power of relationships to equip leaders and teams for positive social change through developing personal, social, and ecological resilience.

This team is composed of individuals who are diverse in training and occupation (pastors, counselors, educators, gatherers and relationship facilitators), generation, ethnicity and culture, family configuration, and gender identification.

Learn more about our frame for resilience through [The Resilience Report](#). Discover more about our offerings and team at transformingengagement.org, and follow on instagram [@transforming_engagement](#) to be the first to know about free resources and new releases.



© 2022 THE SEATTLE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY & PSYCHOLOGY

Groups and their facilitators are independent of The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology. Therefore, The Seattle School of Theology & Psychology cannot be held responsible for any harm incurred by participation.

All scripture from The Message, NavPress, 2014, modified for gender-neutral pronouns for the divine.

Welcome

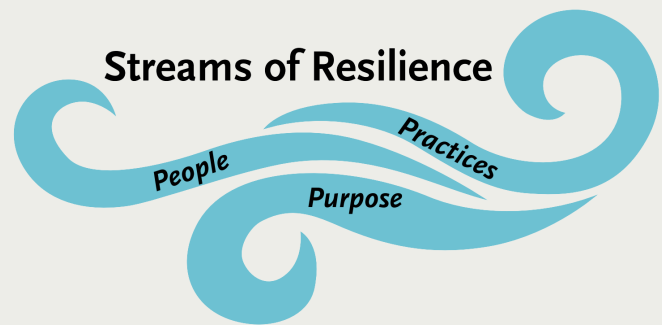
When you invest in your personal resilience, you are also building the resilience of the communities around you.

It can be hard to take the time to step back from everyday responsibilities to engage in the deeper questions of life — but it's vitally important. Engaging a sense of meaning helps your wellbeing and the wellbeing of those who rely on you. Stepping back to reflect and make changes allows you to step back in with more vitality to serve and more clarity of purpose.

This retreat is focused on “Purpose,” one of the three streams of resilience. Purpose is essential to resilience because it helps us know that our work is worth doing even when it is a struggle. Many people conflate their purpose with their paid work. While paid work is a part of purpose, purpose is built from many different activities, including hobbies and relationships.

What ties these activities together is a sense that you are making a contribution to the world and that you are doing so in a way that is congruent with your identity and life story. As Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians: “Make a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given, and then sink yourself into that.”

Purpose connects your individual story with the communal, ancient, and divine narrative of God's work in the world. This connection reflects intimacy with the God who knows your unique story and invites you to participate in God's redemption of all things — even the pain and grief in your own life.



When we have a sense of purpose, we feel:

- Able to imagine a hopeful future
- Participation in God's story and work in the world
- Redemption and blessing from suffering and pain
- Increasing convergence of our gifts and experiences in our roles
- Endurance for the mundane tasks of life
- Passion and energy; humility and humor

As you explore the purpose stream of resilience through this retreat, may God animate you with God's own life and breath, igniting your imagination with hope that endures.

“Turn your wounds into wisdom.”

– Oprah Winfrey

How to Use This Retreat Guide

Though this is a self-guided retreat, you don't have to do it on your own. We have offered prompts here for both of these options: (1) Personal Retreat and (2) Retreat with a few friends. If you're doing a personal retreat, we suggest using "Questions to reflect and write on." If you're with others, we suggest using "Questions to discuss." That said: You are welcome to mix and match as meets your needs.

This retreat is shaped like a liturgy, following the pattern of Gather - Transform - Send. This Resilience: Purpose guide is the third in a series of three; the others focus on Practices and People. Though this guide is designed to stand on its own, you might consider setting aside time for the other retreats in the coming season.

What You'll Need for This Retreat

- 1-2 hours
- Journal or paper and pen, for each participant
- A timer, or a clock with a second hand
- *Optional:*
 - *Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers*
 - *Candles*
 - *Food and drink to share during conversation, if meeting with others*

Gather

Embodiment is one of the most important parts of being a person, yet we often lose touch with the connection between body and spirit in the midst of everyday stress. So we invite you to begin this retreat with a reunion between body and spirit. Focus your attention on the present moment. Prepare for the possibility of encountering the divine with us in new ways. Start with a body scan, then take some time to practice a statio divina, and then transition with a prayer.

I Body Scan

- Get in a comfortable position, feet on the ground.
- Take a couple of deep breaths, feel the breath down into your center and exhale slowly.
- We are going to breathe through our body beginning at the top of our heads, breathe in and imagine your breath filling your head, your brain, your scalp. Exhale.
- Next breathe in and imagine breath filling your eyes, your ears, your nose, your throat. Exhale.
- Breathe in and fill your neck, shoulders, and arms with your breath. Notice if there is any tightness, and breathe into any place that feels constricted or tight. Exhale.
- Next, breathe in and fill your lungs, feel your chest, your heart, your waist, and your stomach. Again, notice any places that feel tight, breathe into those places. Exhale.
- Breathe in and fill your legs and your feet all the way to the tips of your toes with your breath. Noticing any place that feels stretched, tight or constricted. Exhale.
- Take a final breath in, count to four, hold it on the count of four, and exhale slowly on the count of four.

Gather

I Statio Divina

“Statio is a monastic practice of stopping one thing before we begin another. It is the time between the times. In monastic spirituality it is common for the community to gather in silence before beginning prayer.”
— Joan Chittister

Statio Divina is Latin for “divine stillness.” So go ahead and pause for 2-5 minutes to:

- quiet your heart, mind and body
- sit in gratitude to consider where you are and what you are about to do
- recognize your connection to the larger the body of Christ.

I Prayer

After the Statio, we invite you to conclude with prayer.

*Gathering in this space I pray for the grace to let go of what I was just doing,
the conversations that continue in my mind, the work that needs to be done.
For this time, I thank you for your endless goodness and mercies that are new
every morning. Thank you for the skills, talents and gifts you have given.
I pray for wisdom and insight as I open my heart and invite your Spirit to be
present and guide through this time.
Amen.*

Transform

Without a sense of purpose, we become stuck: we may have enough capacity to keep pushing through our workload, but without any real desire to continue. We find ourselves bereft of the imagination to adapt our roles to our gifts, the drive to increase our capacity, the courage to risk. We can't see the big picture of how our story connects to our community's story or the divine story.

In contrast, a sense of purpose reminds us why our past selves pursued this work, grounds our present work, and calls us into generative action for the future. Purpose helps us feel that our work is worth doing even when it is a struggle.

When it comes to purpose, the aim is not to find the perfect job or role that eliminates struggle from life. Instead, we invite you to look for work that is worth the struggle because it adds meaning to your life as you see how your work is valuable to the world - to those around you or to future generations. This work will be worth doing because it relates to your larger life story, whether healing, redeeming, expressing, or reconciling your past experiences. Pursuing a meaningful life is an act of faith, hope, and love. It is the choice to plant our lives through seeds of action and anticipate their growth and future fruit.

Transform

| Lectio Divina

“We have to learn to listen to Scripture. And we have to learn to listen to life around us.”
— Joan Chittister

Read through three times. You may want to use a [Bible Audio App](#) so that you can simply listen.

The first reading, *listen for a word or phrase that speaks to you.*
Reflect for 2 minutes. You may want to write down responses.

The second reading, listen again. *How might God be speaking to you through that word or phrase?*
Reflect and write for 2 minutes.

The third reading, listen yet again. *How might God be calling you to act in response to that word or phrase?*
Reflect and write for 2 minutes.

| Ephesians 2:7–10

Now God has us where God wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all God's idea, and all God's work. All we do is trust God enough to let God do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. God creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join God in the work God does, the good work God has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.

Transform

I Questions to reflect and write (Individual)

After the third reading, allow extra time for reflecting on the below questions.

- Use the word or phrase you heard as a prompt for a stream of consciousness written reflection. Where does that word intersect with your life story? What might that word be calling you to next?
- St. Paul the Apostle, in this letter to the church in Ephesus, writes that “We neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving.” If we can trust that God is in control, and will intervene for goodness, what would you no longer need to do? What would you do instead?
- Paul says God creates us to do “the good work God has gotten ready for us to do” — what might your good work be? What would contribute to a sense of meaning that heals a wound you’ve experienced in your life, or a wound you see in your community?

Transform

I Worksheet (Individual or Group)

One way God invites us to live into our purpose is through our desires. Complete the included worksheet, Locate Your Desire, to explore how specific moments in your life may reveal the themes of your purpose.

I Questions to discuss (Group)

Meaning-making, like ministry, always occurs in a particular time and location. Context gives rise to meaning. For example: Offering a free lunch to students in a wealthy suburb might be a nice thing to do, but offering a free lunch to students who experience food insecurity at home takes on a different meaning of generosity, service, and generativity.

- What are the needs in our local community that need to be addressed? What wounds need to be healed?
- What do we hope and desire for our community? What are the gifts to be grown?
- What might your meaningful role be in meeting the needs in your community? How can we partner to create purposeful service?

Locate Your Desire Worksheet

Purpose: To build/discern a life-work narrative from specific, concrete moments and to notice themes that connect those moments.

I Make Two Lists

First list: Write a list of story-moments from your life where your desire was sparked, your creativity engaged, or you felt the Spirit saying yes to your creativity — the sense of the world meeting you in the work and opening doors for you. Don't write the whole stories, just sum up the story on the list as if it was a chapter title. What drew your love, attention, joy? What was your favorite thing to play? What did you want to become when you grew up?

You might consider writing each one on a post-it note so that you can order them chronologically, building the narrative.

Example:

- *Age 8: Group project diorama about ancient Egypt*
- *Age 16: Playing violin in the school Jazz Band*
- *Age 28: Leading planning team for church taize retreat*

Second list: Write a list of chapter titles about moments you felt shamed, your efforts failed, or as though the world was saying no and closing doors around you. Where have you felt pained or disillusioned with your work? Where was your joy mocked, betrayed, devalued, or blocked?

I Reflect

Now look over your "chapter titles."

- What themes connect your desires? Contexts you like working in, populations you like working with, subject matters that draw your attention? With the above example, we might notice that 2 of the 3 are about music, or that all 3 are about working with groups.
- What messages did you internalize about your desire and creativity?
- What messages, positive and negative, did you learn about yourself ("I am ____")?
- What desires are under the feelings of shame or failure?

Send

To prepare for parting into the journey of our lives, we pack the key learnings from our conversations as we orient ourselves towards hope. The below practice can guide your reflection on the dark valleys and green fields you have visited together in these reflections, to take those thoughts and feelings into your evening and your life — sustenance for resilience in the days ahead.

Visio Divina Instructions

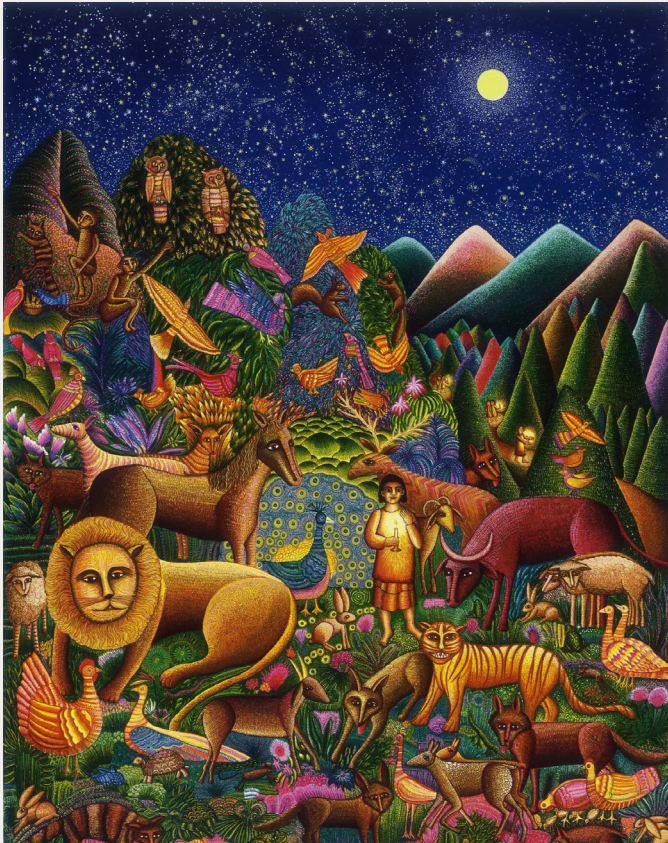
“Visio divina invites us to see and explore the entirety of an image in God’s presence and to go beyond our simple first and second impressions to a deeper place where we can be surprised.”

— *Therese Kay, in Meeting God through Art*

Vision divina is latin for “divine seeing.” Visio Divina is a method of praying with images or other media. You will listen to Psalm 23 while meditating on the art (use a [Bible Audio App](#), or there are readings on YouTube). After each reading, pause so you can reflect on and write down what you notice:

- What do I **see** in this image?
- What does the illumination make me **think** about?
- What does the illumination make me **wonder**?

Send



The Peaceable Kingdom (1994) by John August Swanson

Psalm 23

God, my shepherd!
I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.
True to your word,
you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through
Death Valley,
I'm not afraid
when you walk at my side.
Your trusty shepherd's crook
makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner
right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head;
my cup brims with blessing.

Your beauty and love chase after me
every day of my life.
I'm back home in the house of God
for the rest of my life.

Send

| Prayer

After the visio, we invite you to conclude with a prayer.

Christ Has No Body But Yours - St. Teresa of Ávila (attributed)

*Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which God looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which God walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which God blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which God looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
Amen.*

Gratitude

Thank you for spending this time to grow your personal resilience. We hope that you have a renewed vision for your work in your life and a plan to deepen the Purpose stream of your resilience. It's this kind of reflection followed by action that leads to positive personal transformation, which leads to community transformation.

If you enjoyed this guide, we also have self-guided retreats for the People and Practices streams of resilience at transformingengagement.org.

If you'd like to go deeper into your Purpose, join us in [Career & Call](#), an online course with occasional community opportunities. To be the first to know about community opportunities and other new resources, follow us on instagram [@transforming_engagement](#) and sign up for the emails at transformingengagement.org.

We'd love to hear your experience of this resource! Email us at transforming@theseattleschool.edu with "Resilience Retreat" in the subject line.



/ transforming_engagement