

# Soul-care

What is the greatest gift?

....That you have a soul - your own, no one else's -  
that I wonder about more than I wonder about my own.  
So that I find my soul clapping its hands for yours  
more than my own.

Mary Oliver

Living soulfully means  
Being rich towards God  
choosing life  
letting heart speak to heart  
living from the depths.

Wisdom is knowing that where the action is for me - e.g. increased feeling, energy levels (up or down), heightened awareness - there God is. It will also mean a richer sense of "otherness" - of connectedness with your sisters and brothers. It will mean that we realize that we are persons-in-relation. **"I cannot be me without you, and we cannot be us without them"**.

And knowing that whatever is going on for me, there will be a difference between the God I live with and the God I believe in!

Julian of Norwich is helpful here:

*Some of us believe that God is all-powerful and may do everything, and some of us believe that God is all-wisdom, and can do everything, but that God is all-loving and wishes to do everything, there we fail.*

Get in touch with something in your life at present which causes you to get stuck - and picture God looking at you and feeling something. Part of me simply wants God to be all-powerful and fix me up - but imagine God not only loving you but wanting to do everything good in you and for you and with you.

*Soul-care touches our deepest desires, our long-held dreams. It will not set a higher value on never being hurt than on life itself. It will face the underlying reality of "unreconciled pain and unexhausted compassion, the history of men and women and the history of God with us".*

Rowan Williams

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**This is an opportunity to stay with your pain –  
or the pain of another –  
or the pain of the world (be as particular as you can) –  
and imagine God’s “unexhausted compassion”,  
or God’s “inexpressible closeness”, or God’s “cherishing presence”.  
Stay with this for some time,  
holding together the “wound” and the “promise”  
...let be...and let God.**

Caring for the soul draws out from us what is most true and deep within us. Without soul we are life-less. Soul charges us with energy to reach out beyond ourselves in self-transcendence. It makes sense of our deepest longings.