

## Clearing a Space with Rumi's *The Guest House*

- First, make sure you are comfortable. If you like, close your eyes, or lower and soften your gaze, and bring your attention to your body... and to your breath.

Let your body be light as you breathe in and fill with fresh air.  
Then let it be heavy as you breathe out and sink into your seat.  
Breathing in and feeling lightness, breathing out and feeling heaviness...

relaxing into this moment when there is nothing else to do but BE,  
just taking a few moments to simply breathe and allow your body to come to stillness.

- Now listen to the poem **The Guest House** by Rumi, as a template for how you will be invited to enter more deeply into stillness and to clear a space inside you.

Notice as you listen to the poem what moves within you:

### **The Guest House**

*This being human is a guest house.*

*Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still treat each guest honorably.*

*He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.*

(Jalaluddin Rumi, translation by Coleman Barks, *The Essential Rumi*)

- With eyes closed, and gently holding whatever was moved inside you by this poem, use your imagination to picture yourself as the host of your inner guest house, imagining what the guest house is like and where you are in it as you await today's new arrivals.
- Take some time now to allow whatever is standing between you and "feeling good" to surface. These are the visitors to your guest house today.
  - Imagine yourself going to the door of your house and opening it to one of these visitors – perhaps an emotion that it has been hard to feel and make space for, or a relationship that is weighing on you.
  - As you welcome this visitor, notice what they look like or feel like to you.
  - If your visitor elicits a strong negative inner response from you, **ask inside if it is ok to be with this visitor. If the answer is NO, simply ask that visitor to stay out on the porch at a distance that is comfortable for you....(do the same with any other visitor that might arrive)**

- If it is ok to be with this visitor, ask yourself “Does this visitor have a name?” “What might this visitor look like?”
  - Invite this guest to occupy the space in your house that feels good and comfortable to you, at just the right distance from you.
  - Take some time to acknowledge and welcome your guest in whatever way feels right to you, **making sure not to merge with them.**
- Now take some time to repeat this process with whatever else arises in you.
    - Each time you become aware of another guest, something that stands between you and feeling good, go to the door to welcome them in. Try to identify them, imagine them, and invite them to occupy the appropriate space, just the right distance from you.
    - Take as long as you need for this, and let me know when all your visitors have been welcomed in, by simply saying “OK” or raising your hand.
- Now go back to the door and imagine that one last guest has arrived there – the background feeling you have about yourself, that vague feeling of being *you* [or *insert name here*]. Invite this guest to come in, picture and perhaps name them, and invite them to occupy the appropriate space in your house.
- Notice now what it feels like inside you to have acknowledged the presence of all these guests, and to have offered them space and hospitality. Notice that you are not these feelings; you are bigger than

they are. You are the gracious host and you are the spacious guest house for all the experiences and feelings that pass through you. Notice any sense of inner space you have created by acknowledging your guests, and savour that spaciousness for a while.

- Now it's time for your guests to leave. Take some time to show them to the door, one by one, and notice if, on the way out, a guest might want to whisper something in your ear – perhaps a word of wisdom or encouragement.
- **OPTION 1: If leading on to focusing...** Before you show your guests to the door, notice if there is one guest that most needs your continued loving attention. [etc.] (Continue with focusing flow from here)
- **OPTION 2: If used as a stand-alone meditation.**
  - [Let me know when this process feels complete by saying “OK” or raising your hand.]
  - Now, as we come to an end, hold the spaciousness inside you, for you will bring it with you [and gently allow your thoughts to turn towards your day and everything it holds]. With your eyes still closed, slowly become aware of the physical space you are in.
  - Then, when you are ready, gently open your eyes...

*This facilitator protocol was developed by participants in a Companioning training program sponsored by The BioSpiritual Institute.*