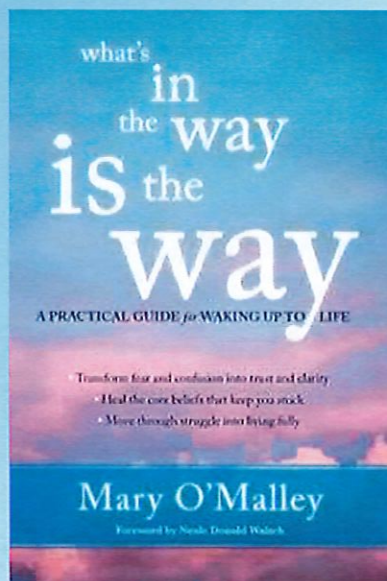


"Waking Up to Life"

Study Guide & Journal

Based upon the book:
by Mary O'Malley



UNITY OF BELLEVUE



I want to personally invite you to take part in a group study process during our Spring series of lessons, based upon the book, *What's in the Way, Is the Way* by Mary O'Malley.

As we actively engage in this new series designed to transform daily activities into opportunities for spiritual awakening, we will find new insights, personal growth and deeper understanding in the weekly lessons.

Whether you choose to participate in a study group or on your own, we believe you are in the right place, divinely appointed for greater good to unfold through this experience. In either context, you can deepen your spiritual understanding, however it is the group experience which offers opportunity for meaningful conversations and connections with people who share this path with you.

The study guide and the group discussions will provide prompts to open your mind and heart and promote a personal experience of the topic. Each week's outline will contain key ideas from the text and quotes for the week that reinforce the theme. There are **Questions to Ponder** on your own and/or discuss in a group. There are practices to put these ideas into use in your life, and there is space for journaling so you can reflect on these important life questions and write about the insights and aha's that will arise in you.

I truly believe you have the right seed and soil to grow your soul during this divine appointment that calls us together. Enjoy this journey of transformation, and know that I am with you every step of the way.

Namaste,
Rev. Denese

Suggested prayers to begin and close your group experience.

Opening Prayer

Precious spirit we open ourselves in this moment to what you have in store for us this evening. Taking a deep cleansing breath and releasing...reminds us that in every moment we can begin life again. As we acknowledge what this day has been for us, we bless it as the path that has brought us to this now moment. We let it go. We release what feels tight or bound in us now. We let our shoulders drop. We let go and relax, and become fully present in this moment, in this room with these people.

We know you have called each of us here. We say yes to this divine appointment with you and each other. We are here to pay attention to what you would reveal to us individually and collectively.

We sense your love and we are comforted. We are open to your wisdom and all of its expressions gathered here tonight. We let your spirit go before us as we share with one another. We are as generous in our listening, as we are eager to be heard. We share the one big heart that unites and harmonizes us. We thank you for an inspirational evening that draws us closer to You and closer to one another. So be it. Amen

Closing Prayer

We thank you precious Spirit for being in the midst of our time together tonight. We have sensed your presence in the circle, in the words, and in the silence. We acknowledge that each of us is a work in progress, all in the process of healing and growing into our wholeness. We bless each person for their courage, their vision, their vulnerability and willingness to step up to the higher mind and greater awareness. We celebrate every little or big step in understanding who we really are. We take the insights of tonight and make them the new ways of tomorrow. Because we have enlarged our hearts and expanded our faith in this circle, we shall find courage and strength to reach higher ground this week.

We savor the connections that have brought us closer to you and each other. Thank you for guiding and directing us as we go forward from this place, enfolded in your love. So be it. Amen

Group Circle Covenants

What is shared in the circle, stays in the circle.

- ♥ To ensure a safe environment for sharing experiences and feelings.

We speak from the heart,

- ♥ With respect for the circle.
- ♥ Briefly and to the point so all have a chance to share.
- ♥ One at a time, we speak only for ourselves.
- ♥ We offer our feelings and experience, not our advice in a positive manner that encourages dialogue.

Listen from the heart,

- ♥ For understanding and with compassion.
- ♥ As allies, and are open to new ideas and being transformed.
- ♥ Without judgment, in order to hear the wisdom from each speaker.
- ♥ We take responsibility for our own experience and impact on the circle.

Stay in circle,

- ♥ Respect for the circle calls upon each of us to be present.

All meetings begin and end on time

Our group meets on _____ from _____ to _____.

I make every attempt to be present each week. If I'm unable to attend, I'll call the home host at: _____.

X _____
signed

Introduction to our 5 week Spring Program

“Waking Up To Life”

You are invited to participate during the next five weeks as follows:

- ♥ **Read the book, *What's in the Way, Is the Way*.** Specific reading suggestions are given in this guide for each week of the series.
- ♥ **Attend Sunday services** - If you have to miss, watch the YouTube recording so you can hear the Sunday lesson
- ♥ **Ponder on your own, or discuss with others, the Discussion Questions.** Contemplate/meditate on the questions to bring forth your deepest truth and insights.
- ♥ **Apply the suggested practices for each theme.**
- ♥ **Write in your journal** any thoughts and feelings that arise during the week as you work with these ideas.
- ♥ **If you are in a group, keep the agreement to be there every week,** participate fully and support others in their journey of spiritual growth.

Shared Practice

For Each Week's Group Gathering

A very special part of our 5-week program includes the deep friendships and connections that we make in our small groups. Each week we come together to share our individual insights and experiences from the previous week's reading. We also create a powerful bond with one another as we pray and interact as a collective group of souls on the spiritual path.



By Kay-D on Flickr
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At the beginning of our weekly gathering we have the opportunity to share a prayer, a special ritual, or a collective experience. The intent is to help center and ground us in the theme for the week. These opening shared practices may be organized by your facilitator, or the group may want to designate a different person each week to take responsibility for leadership of the shared practice.

THEME: The challenges of your life are for you. They are the yellow highlighter of Life showing you the clouds of your reactive mind so that you can thin them with the sunlight of your own attention and thus rediscover the meadow of this moment.

EXCERPTS TO PONDER OR DISCUSS:

"You have a storyteller in your head that talks all day long and doesn't recognize this okayness."

When you live in the clouds in your head, you live tight and small—disconnected from your heart.

As your clouds clear, you begin to recognize the five qualities and to live from them.

To enter the flow of Life by being open to this moment—no matter what it is bringing you—is to learn how not to hold on to wonderful states or push the difficult ones away.

2. Thinking of those five elements of the meadow flow spaciousness, light, love, and stillness, when have you experienced those things? What was happening?

3. How does it feel to be in the meadow of well-being and do you have a practice that can help you get in the flow?

Reflect on the preceding excerpts to ponder, or simply write about the thoughts and feelings that have arisen during this week's focus of awareness.

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Sunday Talk: “Fear is nothing to be afraid of”

THEME: Fear comes from our storyteller and that we have been deeply conditioned to fear Life. But we also recognize that fear is always happening within the greater space of the meadow of well-being. Life knows what it is doing, and it is safe to open to its flow.

SUGGESTED READINGS: Ch. 3—"Fear It's Nothing to Be Afraid Of" & Ch. 4—"You are Not Alone."

EXCERPTS TO PONDER OR DISCUSS:

What fuels the struggles of the storyteller in our heads? There is one simple word that sums it all up: fear.

...get to know fear, because within this knowing lies the possibility of not being controlled by fear.

"Mind-made me" is ...the "me" you think you are ; is just a collection of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs based on fear.

As you allow fear the space to be, it can then pass through you, opening you again to the meadow of well-being.

The clouds of struggle (deeply held beliefs, the author calls "spells.") that fill your head keep you cut off from the meadow of your well-being and the truth that you are not alone.

In order to discover that you are not alone, it is important to explore the whole concept of God.

God is a verb. It is not a being or thing that can be defined, rather it is Being expressed in and through and as everything, including you.

Turn the challenges of your life over to Life—over to that which is bigger than you and has been

WEEK TWO
FEAR—NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF
& YOU ARE NOT ALONE

*orchestrating the dance of Life for billions of years.
Then be willing to listen, for Life is talking to you all
the time.*

Questions: *What systems have you used to deal with
psychological fear? Think about addictive or driven
Behavior, busyness, retail therapy. Get to know your
unconscious coping strategies when they show up.*

*Get to know your fear as well. What does that mean?
And how do you do it? How do you get to know your
fear? Then Rainer Maria Rilke writes: “Perhaps
everything that frightens us is in its deepest
Essence, something helpless that wants our love.”
Just imagine dealing with all of our fears that way.
How did or would that show up in your life? How does
compassion enter into the healing of the fear? And how
can we widen our containers for fear to move through
us?*

MY JOURNAL PAGES

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WEEK TWO
FEAR—NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF
& YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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Sunday Talk: “How Do you Spell Transformation?”

THEME: The paradox in our healing journey is that not looking at unpleasant (storyteller) beliefs strengthens them while facing them diminishes their effect. *Fully experiencing Life without the filter of our storyteller is what we all deeply long for.*

Ch. 5 – “The Healing Power of Curiosity & Ch. 6 – “Directly Experiencing Life.”

The mind resists Life by creating problems and then trying to fix them. Once it solves one problem, it comes up with another.

You can learn how to use your mind to be curious about Life rather than trying to control it.

The more you become curious about what is going on right now rather than always trying to change things, the more you will get to know your clouds and the more they will thin.

Freeing up what has been bound up is about showing up for your life rather than always trying to make it be what you think it should be.

Your discomforts are not here because something is wrong. They are here as your guide through the clouds of struggle and back into the meadow of your being.

Questions: 1. what is one belief that you have that is casting a spell on your life? Is it foundational operational or hidden?

2. Describe the time when you woke up to the fact that you are immersed in the storyteller's spin?

WEEK THREE
THE POWER OF CURIOSITY AND
DIRECTLY EXPERIENCING LIFE

3. How do you differentiate the story from the Storyteller?

4. What does the phrase "Trying to control Life Cuts us off from experiencing it" mean to you and do you have an example of how this happens?

MY JOURNAL PAGES

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WEEK THREE
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WEEK THREE
THE POWER OF CURIOSITY AND
DIRECTLY EXPERIENCING LIFE

WEEK FOUR
ALL IS WELCOME HERE & ALL IS WELL

Sunday Talk: "Experiencing Life"

THEME: We have the capacity to be with life, no matter what arises, and we develop this ability by opening our heart and beholding how life is for is.

SUGGESTED READINGS: Ch. 7— "All is Welcome Here & Ch. 8—" All is Well, Come Here."

EXCERPTS TO PONDER OR DISCUSS:

To be fully open to Life, you need to be open to whatever is going on inside you.

Your heart is ... a lover of what is. It includes rather than excludes. It accepts rather than rejects, and it can weave every single part of you back into the whole that it truly is.

When your heart begins to open again, you discover the healing power of not resisting what you are experiencing. This brings you to the phenomenal healing power of "All is welcome here."

...the most powerful way to open bound-up energy is with your attention, for when your attention and your immediate experience come together, bound-up energy begins to move.

By learning how to turn toward your experience rather than away from it, you access the powerful healing force of your own heart.

You are not alone. The Intelligence of Life has been with you every step of the way. The more you access it, you also discover you are not the one in charge of your healing.

Questions: 1. What does it mean to you, to be a tightness Detective?

2. So if you use your body as a spell detector, what kind of feelings, what kind of Sensations would be the indicator for you that you're reacting in some way that you're under a spell?

3. What's one area in your life? You experience resistance and as you think about that, what spell do you think might underlie that situation? Then describe a time, you did a u-turn.

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Sunday Talk: "All is Welcome Here"

SUGGESTED READINGS: Ch. 9—"Life is for You" & Ch. 10—"The Song of the Heart."

Because you don't recognize the Intelligence at the heart of Life, you believe you are separate from Life. Believing you are separate, you buy into the illusion that you must control it.

To get even an inkling of what we are exploring here will allow you to let go of the grip of control enough that you can begin to feel the magic of trusting Life.

As you are able to more quickly do the you-turn, you truly begin to trust Life. You know that difficult situations are for you. You see that just as the body cleanses itself of foreign viruses and bacteria, your being will cleanse itself of the old spells.

"Let Life" is the art of turning your challenges over to Life and allowing the Intelligence of Life to support you every step of the way.

"Let it be" is all about not fighting what you are experiencing, so that in spaciousness you can explore what is going on, bringing it the healing of your heart.

In "Let it go," you come to a place where you can simply let go of many of your spells when they arise.

In "Let go," you relax into Life, allowing it to flow through you.

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1. share your understanding of the phrase, "the Mind tries to solve things, the heart dissolves them" and describe a time when your heart was able to dissolve something that the mind was unsuccessful in solving.
2. Why do you think the author writes "transformation happens in an atmosphere of listening and accepting"?
3. How does the heart release our inner characters from their prison of resistance?

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Celebration Service 10:30 am
Meditation Service 10 am