

Transforming Gratitude...and You

Many of us have lost the roadmap to deep and transformative gratitude—a core component in building your individual presence. I have a 10-minute exercise to get you back on track.

COVID-19 and a year of rancid political maneuvering has many of us on edge. The frightening acceleration in virus cases underscores just how dangerous the risks of gatherings may well be. At the same time, the vehemence of political vengeance corrodes the soul of society—and the individuals within that fabric.

Triviality Suffocates Your Capacity for Gratitude

In all of this, it's hard to find the capacity for gratitude, even with the great scientific achievement of developing safe, effective vaccines in less than a year. But long before the tragedies of 2020, the giving of thanks—for any holiday or family/tribal gathering—had declined to a rather perfunctory and superficial busy-ness of cooking, eating, shopping and the traditional resurrection of old family wounds. We blindly, but avidly, participate in that triviality. And it kills our capacity for depth, for true gratitude, and for the presence and confidence we all pretend we want.

Triviality stops us from growing, from becoming better human beings. Triviality stops us from feeding our Being, our spirit, our soul, our anima—whatever you want to call that essence of our individual life-spark. And without that essence, we stop being human and reduce ourselves to talking animals.

If you're with me so far, bravo! Here's a piece of music that can resurrect the soul out of the prison of our indifference. If you choose, this music and exercise can re-ignite the journey toward becoming the larger you that your soul knows you can be.

Richard Strauss, *Tod und Verklärung* (Death and Transfiguration), Berlin Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan conductor, Deutsche Grammophon, 1971

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W6M3NdqyXNc> START at 18:30



We'll skip the first 18½ minutes of "death" and begin our journey with the last 8½ minutes—that's the Verklärung (Transfiguration) part. It starts very quietly, with very low rippling gong-like reverberations. This music is slow and it grows slowly. That's because it's in a more planetary, cosmic timeframe. (FYI, emotional, intellectual and Being-depth don't happen if we can't control our frenetic busy-ness.)

This music is large! This music is powerful! This music is much, much bigger than any of our little lives!

So don't recoil or shy away from it. Instead, let the sound saturate you. Make it as loud as you can. Let it "shake you to your core." Let it resonate and vibrate throughout every cell of your Being.

Exercise: Sit with your eyes closed. **Turn that phone off!** Breathe slowly and deeply. As the low, quiet introduction builds both in volume and pitch, imagine that you are slowly standing up. When the music reaches a long-held high note in the strings, your imaginary you should be standing.

The first major theme of the music now starts. And with it, imagine that you are slowly, reverentially walking forward on a profound journey to meet the god-force of this planet.

Feel solid footing with each step. Feel a visceral connection to the life energy rising from the Earth into your feet, up your legs, and filling every part of you as the vibrations of this powerful music shake off your smallness—leaving you ready to be embraced fully by the immense glory of life on Earth.

As you slowly proceed toward the transfiguration encounter with the god-force of the planet, see the glory of Earth—every mountain, valley, river, forest, pounding waterfall. See the great diversity of nature: tundra, desert, jungle, arctic icesheets, amber waves of grain—anything and everything. Whatever you "see" with your closed eyes, go with your imagination!

And always feel wonder and awe.

Feel profound gratitude that you are blessed with the privilege to participate in the beauty, power and divinity of life on this planet. As you imagine standing and seeing the brilliance and glory of nature all around you, you can extend your vision to the planet's participation in the even larger life-spark of our solar system, galaxy and universe.

Watch out, though! We've invested a lot of time and energy in our busy smallness. (We all have it, except perhaps the Dalai Lama.) Smallness won't like this music, and it certainly won't like this exercise! Our smallness will feel disturbed and will label this whole exercise as silly. If you already have a good "friendship" with your Being, spirit, soul, anima or core, then you'll probably love this music!

At the end of the music, say a silent "thank you."