

How Can I Let Go If I Don't Know I'm Holding On?

1. Why Am I Stuck?

1. Is there a situation in your life where you feel stuck?
2. What are the signs and symptoms of this kind of inertia?
3. What kind of courage is required to pursue self-reflection?
4. Anais Nin once penned these words: "And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom. . . ."What do you think she meant?
5. When does the risk to remain stuck become more painful than the risk of letting go?

2. Why Do I Need to Let Go?

1. To which camp do you belong—those committed to continuing growth or those with a tendency to stagnate?
2. What are some recognizable signs of growth and stagnation?
3. Can you think of examples in your life of physical letting go? Psychological letting go? Spiritual letting go?

3. Why Am I Afraid to Let Go?

1. Can you identify one thing that keeps you in the status quo, unwilling to risk?
2. Which of the puddlefish types do you identify with most strongly? Why?
3. What would you lose by taking a risk?
4. At this point, what do you think is your greatest resistance to letting go?

4. Letting Go

1. Have you ever felt a "hunger for God"? How does the hunger manifest itself?
2. What seems to cause your spiritual restlessness? What are your usual ways of quelling that sense of dis-ease?
3. Describe a time when you have felt the "nudge" of God. What change, if any, resulted from it?
4. What changes would you need to make to release more control of your own spiritual process to God?

5. Letting Go of People

1. Think of a time when others have been "God with skin on" in your life. What did they do that nurtured you? Are there people in your life to whom you could minister in the same way?
2. How do you process emotional upheaval? Do you talk about your feelings rather than feeling them?
3. What relationship in your circle of family and friends needs healing or letting go of hurts?

6. Letting go of Personas

1. What are your prevalent personas? Which represent the “real” you?
2. Name a mask you wear frequently; what payoff do you get from presenting its characteristics?
3. Think carefully about the automatic assumptions you make about others. What group of people carry specific personas in your mind? Is there some individual that you have pigeonholed? How might you release that judgment?
4. Has your image of God changed through the years? How and why?

7. Letting Go of Perspectives

1. Did you grow up with an image of a demanding God who wanted you to “get it right?” How has that affected your religious faith?
2. How do you experience the difference between flexibility and adaptation? To what extent do you rely on others to tell you who you are?
3. What perspective seems to be thwarting or distorting your spiritual journey? Is there a belief that keeps tripping you up?

8. Letting Go of Patterns

1. Which of these patterns seems to be the most prevalent in your life experience? Can you name the sources of these repeated behaviors?
2. Examine the questions posed in the section on anger (“I Am So Upset”). Answer them as honestly as you can. What is your anger teaching you?
3. What are your major sources of worry? What can be done to convert pointless worries into constructive caution?
4. Is your external clutter resulting in internal confusion? What steps are you willing to take to alleviate that situation?

9. Letting Go of Plans

1. Are there events or people in your past to which you are still clinging? Is it time to let them go?
2. How do you react when there's a change in plans? When you don't get what you want? What internal movement might help you to be more accepting and flexible?
3. What was your dream for your life? Does it need to be modified or let go?
4. What is the primary barrier that keeps you from a sincere surrender to God's will in your life?

10. Awareness

1. Honestly examine your prayer life. Is it mostly asking for things? What might you do to develop your skills in listening to God?

2. Meditate on the Scripture, “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10). Take five minutes for each of the following:

- Be still and know that I am God
- Be still and know that I am
- Be still and know that I
- Be still and know
- Be still
- Be . . .

Journal about your insights to each phrase as you listen to God.

3. Do you recall your dreams? Are there recurrent themes? If you wish to pursue dreamwork as a spiritual tool, try keeping a pen and paper next to your bed so that you can record your dreams when you first wake up.

11. Availability

1. Choose a Bible story that intrigues or inspires you. Read it slowly twice, seeing yourself as one of the characters. Spend some quiet time in meditation, making yourself available to the personal wisdom it may hold for you.
2. Is there a situation in your past where circumstances made you available to the wisdom you needed?
3. What is one activity or situation you might choose that would facilitate your ability to access the information or inspiration you need?

12. Action

1. What creative outlet piques your interest—makes you lose track of time?
2. What messages do you tend to give yourself? What is the level of your negative self-talk? Are your thoughts peppered with shoulds, oughts, and musts?
3. How might you learn the skill of harnessing a negative thought and letting it go?

13. Allowing

1. What is your relationship with your body? How does your body register stress? In what ways does your body participate in your prayer?
2. Compose your own breath prayer. Base its content on your answer to the question: What is your deepest need? Pray it often for a few weeks, attaching it to your breath, inhaling and exhaling. Allow God to inspire your prayer.
3. What nature setting seems to have a calming effect on you? Have you experienced any moments when you felt God’s presence? How might you revise your schedule to permit more time in a natural environment— even if it’s just a solitary walk in the park?

14. Acceptance

1. Think of one person for whom you harbor resentment. Imagine how it might feel to be free of that negative energy inside you. What are you gaining from holding on to the feelings?

2. What steps might you take specifically to enhance your feelings of gratitude?

Perhaps you might write five letters to people who have made a difference in your life, telling them how grateful you are for them.

3. Think of a situation in your life that has been difficult for you to accept. Devise a ritual to symbolize your intention to let it go.