

7 Steps to Transformation Through Journaling

By Diane Eisenman, M.Div., MFT

The meditations and questions of The Samaritan Woman Retreat as created by Almita Bey-Carrión and published by Sr. Judy Rinek in her book *Conversation and Conversion by the Well* (Trafford Publishing, 2006) contain within them a means of changing lives that allows participants to move ahead in their life with a newfound joy and confidence in making choices that will help them live in harmony with God's will for them. I have looked at the steps taken through this program, and how they lead to a new birthing. Take your own journey now as you journal through these seven major steps woven within this retreat, enabling you as well to make major changes in your life and your relationship with God.

I. A State of Readiness

What brings you to this opportunity? What are the questions you want to have resolved? What is it that you seek to gain from your work here? How passionate do you feel about participating in the program? What about the program did you find attractive? **Step up to the plate, and say in some way, "I want this. I am ready.** I am open to the lessons and experiences I will receive during this time." It is important that you are aware of these questions and your answers before beginning. Without this step, there is no energy or drive to complete the process, nor to reach deeply into your inner space to find that divine relationship within. This step actually happens before you make the commitment to begin the journey. And it is revealed as your journey begins.

II. A Review of Who You Have Been

Begin at the beginning of your journey into this life. **What events have brought you to this place now in your life? What are the spiritual challenges and highlights you have experienced so far?** These spiritual aspects of your journey relate to the deeper motivations and learnings that have given you the richness of character, the blocks to moving forward, and the opportunities for sharing in the world. Writing your story gives you a chance to see yourself from a more objective place, and to identify patterns of thoughts and behaviors which you may not have noticed, but which in noticing, may open up a pathway to desired change.

III. Awareness Outwardly and Inwardly

Identify what your life looks like right now. **What is this moment in time that all other moments before have led up to?** The question requires you to open your eyes and become aware of all of the parts that make up your life today. In the process of answering the question, you become much more conscious of what is currently happening, both the good, the not so nice, and the ugly. You can't change something unless you can see and identify it, so this is a crucial step toward self-mastery.

At the same time, **expand your awareness inwardly through your imagination**, describing your own image of Jesus. Already the new enters the picture, as your imagination is activated to open up new possibilities for change and growth.

Many of us have forgotten to use our imaginative skills that we learned as children, nor do we recognize their potency. Someone once said, "What we can imagine, we can create." Often we need to relearn how to imagine, and how to describe verbally what we are imagining. **Began to picture yourself in a better place**, and speak to the spiritual teachers that often communicate to you through the imaginative side of your being.

IV. Letting Go/d

Let go of what you no longer need, of what gets in the way of inner listening to your spiritual teachers, and of what prevents you from living a rich and happy life. **Look at the well**, the place of your habits and addictions, the place from which you hold on to life as it is. See your fears, doubts, resistances, your behaviors, and ultimately your refusal to allow Jesus into your life. Further deepening, you discover your basic motivations for going to your well. **What is it you "thirst" for?**

Suddenly, as the story progresses, Jesus asks you for a drink. A total shift in perspective is required here. Perhaps there is another way to look for your needs to be met. As you become aware of the foundational beliefs that hold you back from a life of satisfaction and joy, a new possibility also emerges as you wonder why Jesus would require something from you. Haven't you always been taught that you should look to Jesus for help? **Have you thought about helping Jesus?**

Let the awareness of your well grow, and also the possibilities of freedom through the new image of a fountain leaping up. Allow your emotions to speak to you as you look at the depth of your well in contrast to the power and joy and beauty of an upward streaming fountain. Once the core issue within the well is at hand, having been seen and heard, it is ready for release. Doing that, a resolution is called forth through the power of compassion and love.

The story continues with Jesus' revelation that you have no secrets from him. **There is nothing to hide. There is no point to hold on to, or hold out, from yourself.** This is the moment of power where letting go is possible and is a natural consequence of all that has come before. **Releasing your secrets to Jesus, they become enveloped in love**, and ultimately dissolved into fresh energy for a new creation.

V. Creating a New Vision

Imagine a new way of living. Ask to be shown significant changes you need to make. Jesus reveals himself as a prophet, one who can assist you in creating your best new vision. You have successfully uncovered the inner voice that is ready to help you whenever you ask. Trust in this new vision created from your inner spring of living water, from the truth about yourself. You are not only asked to think about it, but to actually **feel the living fountain of water pulsing through you.** Your new vision comes from your core spiritual being, and is revealed to you through physical, emotional, and mental experiences.

Two other concepts are introduced here – being “authentic” and worshipping. Accept the truth of who you are, and from your own story, **move to a place of gratitude**. A sense of gratitude opens you to the new visions for your life. Being in love with God, Jesus, and all the gifts that you were created to share, brings a new appreciation for who you are, and a renewed commitment to work with Jesus as your guide.

The next segment of the story brings to light your truly greatest vision for your life. From your “Messiah,” you have access to all of the answers you need. **Bring to your mind your most profound dreams and desires**. And **surrender all that you are to a greater power**, who can work within and through you as love and wisdom. **See yourself without the well that you created to contain yourself**, and enjoy the vision of a renewed life of freedom and choice.

VI. Making a Plan

Review where you have come on this journey so far, and look at your new relationship with Jesus. Allow your **dialogue with Jesus to reveal specifically what it is you are to do** in the world. Your feelings are of most importance in this meditation – feelings of God, your well, the fountain of living water. See plans start to grow for your future. **Decide ways to bring the living waters into your life**, and prepare to pass through barriers along the way. Call forth to Jesus, and ask him any questions that remain in your heart.

Finalize your plans. Take a look at the role God is playing and will play in your life from this time forward. **Make resolutions and choose the changes you want to implement now**. Ask the all-important question of mission and purpose here, and reflect about your place in this new life. **Set goals, and implement the changes you desire** with the help of your guide Jesus.

VII. Taking Action

Seeing yourself in every aspect of God’s creation, you understand that we are all one. **Look at how you are like all of the elements in the story**. Or, conversely, **see how all of the elements in the story reflect parts of your own self back to you**. **Go out into the world and share your story, your love, and God’s love**. Reflect on the specific changes you have made, and where you will go from here. **Write your own ending to the story** of the Samaritan Woman, which is also your story. You have become a messenger of love and joy in the world through your own stories, talents, challenges, and successes. Be constantly nourished by the living waters, and your ever-growing relationship with Jesus. Inner foundations have been put in place that will help you overcome obstacles placed before you, and the clarity and focus of your mission makes you unstoppable. **Be passionate and committed to your chosen path**. Maintain an open line of communication with Jesus, your deepest source of wisdom and love, and receive a constant outpouring from the fountain of living waters.

Publicly declare your new life in a culminating ritual. Bring your inner revelation together with action in the world, just as the Samaritan woman brought her excitement and passion to her community.

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