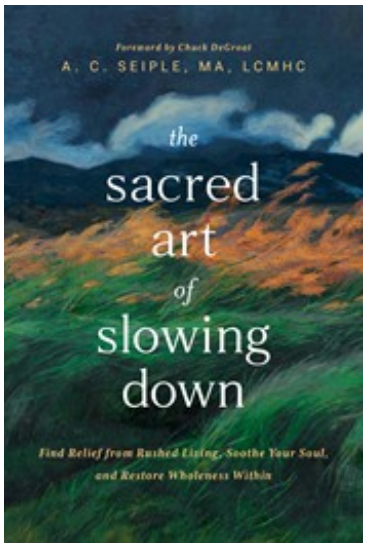


Reflection Questions

Prompts for Individual Contemplation and Group Discussion

Although you could certainly come up with one- to five-word answers for each question below and move through them quickly, I encourage you to take your time with these, following a rhythm such as the one outlined below. If possible, I encourage you to work through them with another person or a group.

1. Before starting to review the questions, take three deep breaths.

2. If you're in a group, have someone read each question aloud. After hearing or reading the question, hold silence for thirty to sixty seconds to create space to notice what's happening inside and connect your internal stirrings with your thinking brain.

3. Notice what is happening in your body. For example, when answering a question about roadblocks that keep you from connecting with your body, you might sense a tightness in your gut. This might prompt you to reflect, *Just reading this question, I have a tightness in my gut. It doesn't feel good. I want to push past the question and not really feel this. I think I feel nervous, like I might not get this right, or I might stumble across something I don't want to feel, and it just feels a bit risky to explore.*

4. If you're in a group, allow space for responses from different perspectives each of you might hold inside. Resonate and join in the bliss of saying "Yes!" or "Same!" when you feel what another is expressing. At the same time, honor and explore curiosity with the things you can't resonate with and don't understand. Instead of trying to fix people or correct them, consider asking questions or expressing statements like these:

"I hear you saying _____. Would you be comfortable sharing more about that? I'd like to understand your experience better."

"What is that like? I'd love to better understand what happens in your internal world."

"Thank you for letting us witness _____."

"Thank you for sharing that part of you with us."

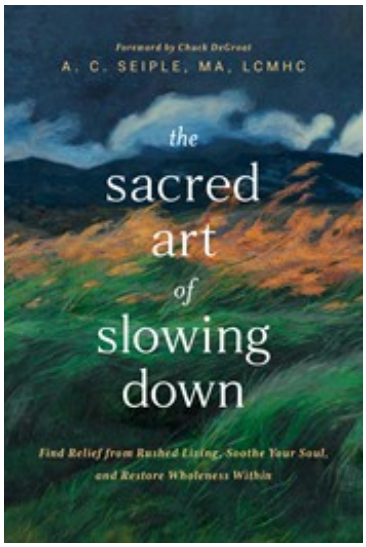
Chapter 1

1. What is your gut reaction to the idea of knowing something in your body in contrast to knowing something in your thinking brain?

2. What kinds of thoughts or reactions happen inside when you let yourself sit with this idea of your body knowing things?

3. In what ways does the idea of parts making up the whole of you feel natural, strange, or a mixture of the two?

4. What are your associations with play?



5. Do you feel permission to play with new ideas or practices? If not, what do you sense prevents you from doing so?

Chapter 2

1. What about the idea of slowing down feels enticing?

2. What about the idea of slowing down feels unappealing?

3. What in your life stands most in the way of you slowing down?

4. What do you fear might happen if you moved through life at a slower pace?

5. What beliefs about slowing down have you been taught (e.g., don't be slow or lazy)?

6. What cultural influences most impact how difficult it is to move more slowly through life?

Chapter 3

1. What roadblocks stand in the way of your feeling comfortable connecting with your body?

2. What are the most difficult emotions for you to feel in your body?

3. What fears come up when you consider being more connected to your body?

4. What stands out to you about the psalmists' body-connected language?

5. What messages have you received about your body?

6. What messages about your body popped up while you were reading this chapter?

Chapter 4

1. When you think about the story of the kitten crying in a dark room, how does that feel relatable to or disconnected from the stirrings that live inside you?

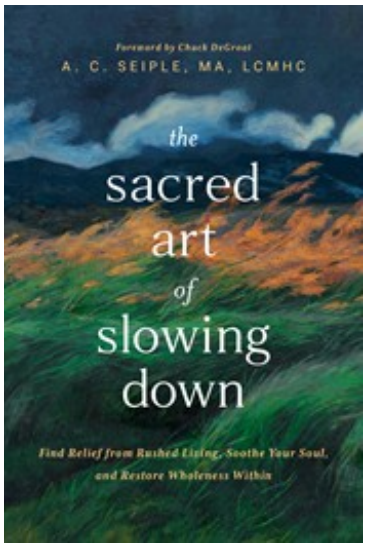
2. In what ways does it feels risky to explore the parts of you that are metaphorically shut in a dark room?

3. Who are the parts of you that you've been told are bad?

4. What have you been told (implicitly or explicitly) to do with the parts of you that are bad?

5. What concerns do you have about viewing these parts of you differently?

6. How do you wish you viewed all parts of you, crying kittens and all?



Chapter 5

1. How do you experience the gas pedal in your body?

2. How do you experience the brake system in your body?

3. What are your favorite ways to speed up and move quickly through life (e.g., going for a run or a bike ride, playing games or sports, dancing)?

4. What are your least favorite ways to speed up and move quickly through life (e.g., rushing to work, working out, going for a run)?

5. What are your favorite ways to slow down (e.g., taking a nap, going to bed, watching a movie, sitting in a park)?

6. What are your least favorite ways to slow down (e.g., being "unproductive," being sick, sitting stuck in traffic)?

Chapter 6

1. How much of your life do you spend in a state of safety?

2. How much of your life do you spend in a state of stress?

3. How much of your life do you spend in a state of shutdown?

4. How do you experience a sense of safety, or a lack of safety, in spiritual spaces?

5. How do you experience stress in spiritual spaces?

6. How do you experience overwhelm in spiritual spaces?

Chapter 7

1. Which protective strategies were most relatable? How do you see yourself and others move through these in life?

2. How do you think the logic and goals of protective strategies shift the way that we engage with others? For example, when a part of us is activated into a fight response, how do we see people and the world around us?

3. What high elevations of stress are you used to climbing?

4. What deep sea depths of overwhelm are you used to drowning in?

5. How do you envision a life that is grounded at sea level, allowing you the flexibility to hike and swim through the stressors of life, while able to connect back to your anchor? What might the literal anchors in your life be that ground you at this baseline?

Chapter 8

1. What feels most difficult about extending curiosity toward yourself?

2. In what ways does it feel easier to extend curiosity toward other people? Why do you think this is?

3. What's an example of a critical reaction that tends to pop up inside of you (e.g., something you say to yourself or think when you feel you've messed something up)? How might a curious approach look different from this reaction?

4. What's an example of a critical reaction you have toward yourself that you would never have toward another person?

5. How does learning a person's story change your perspective?

6. Do you think story is powerful enough to move us from criticism to curiosity? Why or why not?

Chapter 9

1. What toys or pets would you reach for, hold, and pull close as a child?

2. What, if anything, do you reach for, hold, and pull close now as an adult?

3. Who were the people available for you to reach for, hold, and pull close as a child?

4. What has it been like when you have not had someone available to reach for, even though you wished you had?

5. Which of the movements described in the chapter—yield, push, reach, hold, pull—feels riskiest to explore?

6. Which of the movements described in the chapter—yield, push, reach, hold, pull—feels most exciting to explore?

Chapter 10

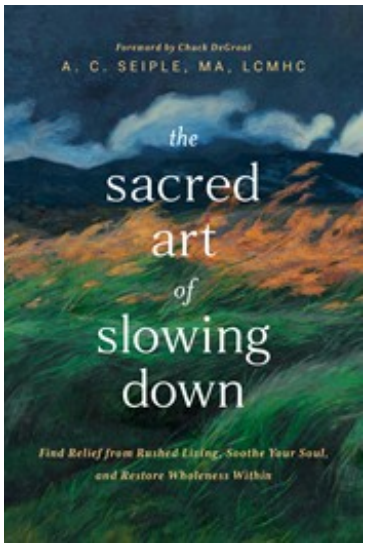
1. In what ways do you resonate with feeling uneasy about fully yielding into safety?

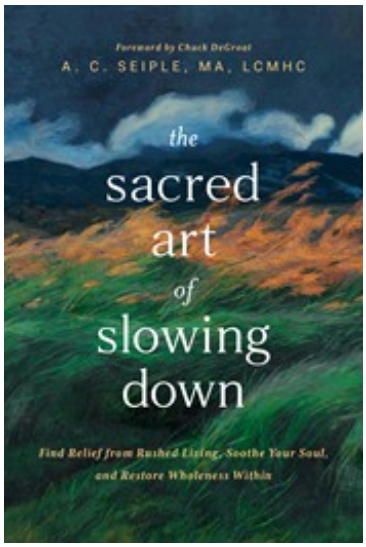
2. How would you describe your internal dialogue when your body is scanning for threats and won't let you fully rest?

3. What feels most risky about fully sinking into safety? Do you feel this generally or specifically (e.g., in friendships, romantic relationships, group settings, at work, with family)?

4. What aspects of safety do you most long to savor and embrace?

5. What do you suspect you might need to feel safe enough to take vulnerable risks, internally or externally?





Chapter 11

1. What do you most frequently give your face and presence to each day (e.g., your computer screen, phone, coworkers, family, friends, animals)?

2. Who offers their face and presence most freely to you (e.g., family, friends, coworkers, animals)?

3. Does it feel paradoxical to imagine offering your face and presence to facets of your own being? How comfortable do you feel imagining offering your face and presence to a part of you? If you would like spiritual integration, continue on with the following questions. If not, continue to the next chapter's reflection questions.

4. What comes to mind when you imagine God's face and presence?

5. Do any parts of you feel overwhelmed or scared by the thought of being in God's presence or experiencing attunement with God's face? If so, which ones?

6. What do you think about the intersection between language used in ancient Hebrew to describe God's face-presence and what neuroscience is teaching us about attunement? How does this change the way you think about connecting with God or about us connecting with others as God's image bearers?

Chapter 12

1. What kinds of movements help you feel most connected to your body?

2. What kinds of movements have you always been interested in but never given yourself permission to explore (e.g., a type of dance, sport, outdoor adventuring, or some form of artistry)?

3. In what ways do you think the intensity of your walks or workouts might express something that is stirring within?

4. How do you think your past experiences shape your idea of what will happen in the future?

5. How easy or difficult is it for you to imagine a hypothetical scenario that you've never experienced happening in the future?

6. If someone you love were a garden that you were tending, how would you care for that garden? How would that look different from when the garden being tended is you?

Notes