

# Spiritual Practice for the month of October

## The Examen

One spiritual practice that many find helpful is called "The Examen." Here is how it works for me.

Every night (ideally!) before I fall asleep I identify significant events of my day, including prayer, conversation, people I met, time spent out of doors, etc. I try to notice what comes up as I recall these -- what do I see, hear and feel.

Then, I ask myself a pair of questions:

- When did I feel most alive today?
- When did I most feel life draining out of me?

Here's another way to phrase these:

- When today did I have the greatest sense of belong to myself, others, God and the universe?
- When did I have the least sense of belonging?

This practice usually leads me to pray for myself and others as I see them through the lens of the Examen. I always try to end this practice by giving thanks for my day and God's presence in both the "good" and the "bad."

The power of this practice for me is that over time I become more able to discern patterns and behaviors that hinder or allow the Spirit's movement in my life. It helps if I keep a record of my reflections in my journal.

The Examen can also be done on a weekly basis rather than every day. Want to learn more? I'd recommend [Sleeping with Bread](#), by Dennis and Matthew Linn and Sheila Fabricant. It's a short, simple book with charming illustrations.

--Teresa Di Biase