

# CONTEMPLATIVE LEADERSHIP: WITH HEARTS WIDE OPEN Personal Situation Worksheet

## Before you begin:

It can be challenging to live and work with an open heart. In this exercise, you're invited to explore a current or recent situation, without judgment, in order to notice how you are listening and responding.

For example, we often listen and respond from our ego. Someone makes a remark that threatens our identity or harms us in some way and we respond out of the emotion of hurt, anger, betrayal, fear, or another strong emotion. Whether or not we "edit" our remarks to the other person, our response may still be coming from the ego.

Sometimes we may listen and respond from our logical, thinking mind. We consider the facts analytically and seek to offer a rational response. This way of listening and responding is frequently taught and rewarded in many organizations.

In the audio session, we talked about bringing compassion to our contemplative leadership. To offer compassion requires that we listen and respond from the "mind-in-heart."

To listen and respond from your ego or from your logical mind is NOT WRONG! Because listening and responding from the "spiritual heart" is at the core of contemplative leadership, we will be focusing on this practice.

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**Note:** I am grateful to Tilden Edwards, Shalem's founder and senior fellow, for his more thorough explanation of the distinctions I am using above. For further information, you can refer to his article, "Which Glasses Are You Wearing?" via the link provided in the Resources section on the website you are using today. You may also be interested in the six-week, online program by Tilden Edwards, "Living from the Spiritual Heart." More information about this course is available at [www.shalem.org](http://www.shalem.org).



## Personal Situation Worksheet

Begin by sitting quietly. Let a recent or current leadership situation come to mind—one dealing with one or more individuals that may still feel unresolved, troubling, or confusing.

**Now describe the situation as neutrally as you can**, leaving out judgment about right and wrong, good or bad:

Without judgment, see if you can continue to flesh out the situation a little more.

|                                          |                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>My intentions were:</b>               | <b>What reasonable intentions could others have had in acting the way they did?</b> |
| <b>How might it have felt to others?</b> | <b>How did it feel to me?</b>                                                       |

**Personal Situation Worksheet (cont.)**

|                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Do I notice any ways in which I am/was listening and responding from my ego?</b></p>             | <p><b>Do I notice any ways that others are/were listening and responding from their egos?</b></p>                 |
| <p><b>Do I notice any ways in which I am/was listening and responding from my rational mind?</b></p>   | <p><b>Do I notice any ways in which others are/were listening and responding from their rational minds?</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Do I notice any ways in which I am/was listening and responding from my spiritual heart?</b></p> | <p><b>Do I notice any ways in which others are/were listening and responding from their spiritual hearts?</b></p> |



## Personal Situation Worksheet (cont.)

Now take time to hold the situation gently in your spiritual heart. This may take five minutes; it may take five weeks. For today, try to spend at least 10 minutes in this quiet, prayerful space.

**Begin by sitting quietly**, relaxed, your hands in a gesture of openness. Take a few long, slow breaths.

**As you open to your spiritual heart**, see if you can:

- Let go of any judgment about what *should* have happened.
- Simply acknowledge feelings as they arise, without holding on to them.
- Hold an intention to open to compassion for others involved in this situation.
- Hold an intention to open to compassion for yourself in this situation.

**Continue to sit in silence, simply open and present....**

**As this time draws to an end**, listen to see if anything might be invited by the Spirit. Don't try to figure anything out. Simply notice what seems to come to you.

- Is a new way being offered?
- Are you being asked to speak the truth in love?
- Are you being asked to let go of this situation and move on?
- Are you invited to simply continue holding this situation in prayer?

**As you close**, you might offer your gratitude for this time and then gently release the situation into God's care.

Notice if there is anything you'd like to write down for future reference and take the time to do that now.

