

# **The Five Invitations of Frank Ostaseski: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Mindfully**

## **The Five Invitations of Frank Ostaseski\***

1. Don't Wait
2. Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing
3. Bring Your Whole Self to the Experience
4. Find a Place of Rest in the Middle of Things
5. Cultivate Don't Know Mind

### *Don't Wait Exercise*

- Close your eyes\*\* and imagine that you will die in a few days, or that your spouse or your child is going to die soon.
- Now let the emotions come into your awareness and be with them (few seconds is okay).
- Then open your eyes, take a deep breath, and tell yourself that you don't want to wait till these events actually happen to live life mindfully (means with awareness, kindness and gratitude).

### *Welcome Everything, Push Away Nothing Exercise*

- Close your eyes and say, "I welcome you" (whether it is pain, sadness or joy).
- Keep your eyes closed and say, "I won't push you away" to whatever you are experiencing (e.g., pain, sadness, anger).
- Then open your eyes and smile (a sad smile is okay)

### *Bring Your Whole Self to the Experience Exercise*

- Close your eyes and say, "I am strong and there is no need to protect myself by bringing only a part of myself to this relationship or this experience"
- Take three conscious breaths to gradually allow all of yourself to come into the experience.
- Open your eyes and smile.

*Find a Place of Rest in the Middle of Things Exercise*

- Close your eyes and say what Thich Nhat Hahn has suggested, “Breathing in, I relax my body. Breathing out, I smile” or some similar phrase that is personally meaningful and relaxing. Visualizing a soothing place or reading from your favorite poem is also fine.
- Keep doing it for at least a minute.
- **Open** your eyes and get back into the world in a more relaxed state.

*Cultivate Don't Know Mind Exercise*

- Close your eyes and say, “Not knowing is okay, I am comfortable with not knowing.”
- Keep your eyes closed and let the words sink in. Breathe in the words and breathe out the anxiety or fear that may arise.
- Open your eyes and resume what you were doing with a smile.

\*Frank Ostaseski. *The Five Invitations. Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully*. 2017. Flatiron Books, NY.

\*\*Keeping eyes open and focused on something is also fine.