

Compass Devotions

Week 1: The East: Radical Gentleness



We begin navigating in the East. Why?

The symbolism and meaning of the cardinal directions dates back to ancient times and continues through present day. The East represents the Sun and a new day, a new beginning. Themes include dawn, hopefulness, and options. The energies of the East inspire our personal divinity (that of God within us), wisdom, and spiritual potential.

Each day as I enter my prayer and meditation time I “call in” the directions to bring this energy into my energy and prayers. So, we begin in the East, as a sign of our new beginning together. The Eastern point on my compass represents Radical Gentleness.

What do I mean by Radical Gentleness? This is a trait and action I would like to cultivate as I navigate life as a person of faith. According to the dictionary, we have these concrete definitions of these terms:

Gentleness: “the quality of being kind and tender” or “softness of action, or effect; lightness”

Radical: “(especially of change or action) relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough”

To me, this means that I would like to have the quality and action of gentleness thoroughly change me, and my approach to the world around me. I want to be and respond in kind and tender ways to bring about thorough and far-reaching change for peace and justice in our relationships and world. In her essay on gentleness in Quaker Life, Emily Provance states that cultivating and acting out of gentleness may just be the most radical thing we can do. I agree. And I like that. A lot.

I hope you'll continue navigating these concepts with me over the month of February. How do we cultivate Radical Gentleness? How do we live it? Are there spiritual practices that help me get there? Practices that are, well, practical? Let's explore together. Tomorrow, we explore Gentle Approach and Gentle Response. See you then?

A Prayer for Radical Gentleness

God of All That Is,

Remind me continually that being a part of your wondrous world means living with and treating everything with kindness, tenderness, respect, and lightness of being. I am most thankful that this is how you approach me – with a great love. Help me to spread this wherever I go and to whomever I encounter. This is who you created me – indeed, all of us – to be. Amen.