



## Reflection from the Edge of Death<sup>1</sup>

Ignatius Loyola recommended meditating upon our lives from the vantage point of our deathbeds as a way of helping us better discern what is called for in our lives now. This follows the prayer of Psalm 90:12. *So teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom....* This exercise is one way to let awareness of death be a spiritual discipline.

1. Sit or lie down quietly, imagining that you have been told you are about to die. Seek to notice the difference between your dominant self-image's<sup>2</sup> fear of loss, and the confidence of your larger identity in God that rises as you relinquish the dominance of that self-image. Try to note the difference between a loss of continued ego self-image, and a trust in the abidingness of your identity in God.

2. Open your memory to God. You may choose to focus on recent months, or you may want to open to anytime in your life.

(a) What rises when you ask: "How have I been a blessing for others?" Give thanks as these moments pass by. Note how your larger identity in God touched into those times. Continue for [several] minutes....

(b) What rises when you ask: "In what particular ways and times have I clung to ego self-image as my ultimate self, and with what consequences for my life and others?" Especially note any times when there seemed present an invitation and freedom to release this clinging, yet you willfully continued. As these moments appear, release them to God's merciful, reconciling power.

3. What rises when you ask: "If I am granted further life here, how am I called to be present to God and others?" You may want to write down whatever comes in order to aid your memory.

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<sup>1</sup> From Living in the Presence: Spiritual Exercises to Open Our Lives to the Awareness of God by Tilden Edwards, page 89-90.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards uses "self-image" and "ego self-image" as others use "false self." It's the image we create for ourselves early in our lives as a means of survival (or so our minds believe) and which wants to be recognized and let go if we are to find our true selves in God - the one whom God sees as God looks at us; our most basic, beloved, selves; God's child.