



The Examen

There is a wonderful, simple little book called *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life* by Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, and Matthew Linn. It explores a process called the Examen, with which many may be familiar from St. Ignatius' *The Spiritual Exercises*.

Here is this lovely, essential process, as the Linns describe it:

Preparation: You may wish to light a candle. Do whatever helps you to experience unconditional love. For example, imagine yourself in a favorite place with someone whose love you trust, such as a friend, Jesus or God as you understand God. Put your feet flat on the floor, take a few deep breaths from the bottom of your toes, up through your legs, your abdominal muscles and your chest. Breathe in that unconditional love, and when you breathe out, fill the space around you with it.

1. Place your hand on your heart and ask Jesus or God as you understand God to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are *most grateful*. If you could relive one moment, which one would it be? When were you most able to give and receive love today?

Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so special. Breathe in the gratitude you felt and receive life again from that moment.

2. Ask God to bring to your heart the moment today for which you are *least grateful*. When were you least able to give and receive love?

Ask yourself what was said and done in that moment that made it so difficult. Be with whatever you feel without trying to change or fix it in any way. You may wish to take deep breaths and let God's love fill you just as you are.

3. *Give thanks* for whatever you have experienced. If possible, share as much as you wish of these two moments with a friend.