



Opening to Inner Peace

**Faith in Action
2021**

Based on

**“The Voice of Knowledge”
by don Miguel Ruiz**

Small Group Workbook

Spiritual Life Center

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All quotations are from don Miguel Ruiz. "The Voice of Knowledge." Apple Books.
<https://books.apple.com/us/book/the-voice-of-knowledge/id365546022>

Welcome to “Opening to Inner Peace”

We all have stories.

When we are born, the world is a blank slate, and we see and tell stories from the eyes of purity and love. We have stories about ourselves, others, and the world around us. Then, somewhere along the way, we are taught to name things and begin making up stories.

Many of those made-up stories do not serve us. Often those stories are self-limiting, turn against us and frustrate our personal and spiritual growth. However, we can question those stories or at least edit them at any time. When we challenge those disempowering stories, we may be rocked at our core because we've let them become part of who we are.

This year's Faith in Action Program is based on don Miguel Ruiz's book, *The Voice of Knowledge*. His text will give us ways to regain the authenticity and purity of our stories, so we live from our true identity as children of God, and reclaim our inherent inner peace.

I look forward to traveling with you on this adventure as we deepen our joy for living.

Peace and Blessings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Trapp".

Rev. James Trapp
Senior Minister of Worship

Study Group Shared Agreements

Purpose: The purpose of shared agreements is to create a safe and healthy environment for the group. It is important that the group reviews these guidelines and that there is consensus before beginning any spiritual group.

Confidentiality: Everything shared by group members is confidential. What is said here, stays here.

Compassion: Group members come from a place of unconditional compassionate acceptance of one another as human beings. Judgmental comments, and even unspoken thoughts, threaten the group process.

Truth and Integrity: Group members are encouraged and supported by the group to honestly and authentically be who they are. Speaking the truth involves risk and can only occur safely in a compassionate environment.

Respect: Group members show respect for each other and the group by avoiding interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone time to share their thoughts and ideas with the group. We practice sacred listening and refrain from giving advice or trying to fix or solve others' problems.

“Listen to others with inward stillness, without opinion, assent or dissent,
without criticism; hearing through the words into the soul of the other.”
Rudolph Steiner

Sharing Time: Group members demonstrate respect by avoiding interrupting others, arriving on time, and allowing everyone time to share their thoughts and ideas with the group.

Participation: Group members agree to participate in discussion and group activities; however, each person has the right to ask to sit out or to modify his or her participation.

Conflict: Whenever people come together and speak truthfully the potential for hurt feelings, misunderstanding and conflict exists. If such a situation arises, group members agree to address it within the group process or one-on-one with the facilitator. Unresolved conflict is toxic to the whole group and not just to the parties involved.

I accept these shared agreements as the foundation for a successful study group.

Sign: _____ Date: _____

STUDY GROUP PRAYERS

Suggested Opening: The Co-Creator's Prayer

Loving Presence, with grateful hearts we join together as co-creators and friends. We come together to support each other as we learn, share, and explore how to live life more intentionally. We open our minds to receive your wisdom. We open our hearts to express your love. We open our souls to radiate your light.

May each of us hear what we are meant to hear and speak as you direct us. Now may each of us speak your intention or prayer for this gathering.

(Intention or short prayer from each who wishes to speak them.)

We now enter into sacred agreement with each other to honor our intentions as we support each other in our spiritual growth. We listen to others with inward stillness, without opinion, assent or dissent, without criticism; hearing through the words into the soul of the other.

Thank you, God, for your loving presence with us and within us; may all we say and do be in harmony with you. Thank you, God!

Suggested Closing Prayer

Thank you, God, for your loving presence that has guided and directed us in this session. We honor each person in this group and trust in the process of each other's unique spiritual journey. We hold in sacred trust the personal matters we have shared in this gathering.

We go forward in positive expectancy of ever-increasing good as we remain ever mindful of your presence, power and love within us.

We thank you, God. Amen.

Faith in Action Weekly Colors

SLC uses Chakra colors each week as we journey toward greater awareness and aliveness.

Chakras, as an ancient spiritual system, show the path of integration of mind, body, and spirit leading to enlightenment.

The SLC community joins together during this seven-week period and wears the color of the week on Sundays to show their commitment to the journey.

On the next page, you will find the weekly affirmations ready for color printing to cut out and post at your desk, refrigerator, mirror or anywhere else. These are reminders of the current stage of this book study journey we are all taking together.

Blessings!

WEEKLY AFFIRMATION CARDS:

Your next page can be printed out in color (on cardstock if you like) as a means to create affirmation cards for each week of the Faith in Action program.

Print this page of FIA Affirmations in color, cut out weekly, and enjoy:

Week One	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to my authentic Self: I speak only Truth about myself. I AM worthy, whole, and holy.
Week Two	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to who I AM: Artist of my own life, the images I create are mine alone. I AM a holy work of art.
Week Three	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to infinite perfection: I AM an instrument through which the Divine expresses.
Week Four	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to my true story: Author of my own life, when I change my story, I change my life. I AM awake and aware.
Week Five	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to my feelings: When I speak from the integrity of my Spirit, I AM impeccable with my Word.
Week Six	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to transformation: I allow knowledge to collapse and create a new story based on Truth. I AM a ritual of Love.
Week Seven	Faith in Action 2021	Spiritual Life Center	slcworld.org	I open to inner peace: The reality of Truth and Love permeates my being. I see the world through the eyes of love. I AM Love.

Opening to Inner Peace

Faith in Action Fall 2021

The Voice of Knowledge

By don Miguel Ruiz

“You are dreaming your life in this moment.
You perceive not only your own dream,
but the dream of the supreme artist
reflected in everything you perceive.”



Faith in Action Song

Look to the Beauty

By Paula Mandella

Everybody has a story, unique and all their own
Points of perception, feature characters and roles
When we start to name it, and as we learn to play it
Tumbling from the heavens feeling all alone

These voices live inside my head, the storyteller's lies
Dreams of illusions flowing back to ancient times
Picasso like distortions, bending what is true
Starry nights and moonlit skies are calling out to you

Look to the beauty all around and inside you
Know the truth of who you are
Every being, all creation, we are a part
Reflections of the One Light, with Love from source
Straight to your heart

There are no wrong emotions, what you feel is real
All is perfection seeking to reveal

x2

Look to the beauty all around and inside you
Know the truth of who you are
Every being, all creation, we are a part
Reflections of the One Light, Love from source
Straight to your heart

repeat w lead ad lib

Starry nights and moonlit skies
Reflections of the One Light

Look to the Beauty
Look to the Beauty

For Week One:

Introduction, Chapter 1
Please read: *Pages xi -13*

Week One: The Tree of Knowledge - The Tree of Life

Introduction, Chapter 1 Pages xi - -13

Chapter 1: Adam and Eve

The Tree of Knowledge is the structure of everything we believe. Every concept, every opinion, forms a branch of that tree, until we end up with the whole Tree of Knowledge.

In the retelling of the story of Adam and Eve, don Miguel shifts perspectives. He asserts that we are not “born in sin,” in perfection. Then Knowledge is transmitted to us. We are introduced to guilt and shame, and we begin to believe all the things we are not.

1. What does *knowledge* mean to you? How does this differ from don Miguel’s definition?
2. According to Toltec teachings, we each live in a dream of our own making. In the context of this chapter, what is the difference between the dream of heaven and the dream of hell?
3. Knowledge is equated with fear in this first chapter. How does that make you feel?
4. Knowledge, as used here, keeps us from knowing our authentic selves. We are so busy believing everything we have been told, but we still get glimpses of who we really are. If you are comfortable, share how this happens in your life.

Week Two: An Artist's Point of View

Chapter 2 Pages 15 - 27

Chapter 2: A Visit with Grandfather

Grandfather really laughed at that and said, "The truth is that you have no idea what you really are, but you know what you are not."

As this story unfolds, we see a young man move from desperately trying to impress and be accepted by his grandfather, to realizing that he writes his own life, his own story. He begins to learn to stand in his own truth.

1. Describe some of the ways we can tell if we are standing in truth or believing a lie.
2. Humans have a great capacity for making even the simplest things complicated.
 - a. How do you complicate your life with the stories you tell yourself about situations?
 - b. Where do these stories come from?
3. We write the story of our lives by choosing what to believe and have faith in. We can only change our story if we understand where we are putting our faith. The following exercise is one way to awaken to the stories we are creating.
 - a. Make a list of five things "I am not."
 - b. Make a companion list of five things "I am."
 - c. Discuss how it felt to create each list. Which one felt like the truth? Why?
4. Truth can only be experienced, perceived through feeling. In what ways can this be described?

5. We are storytellers with our unique point of view, which means that story is only true for each of us. Why do we then try to impose our stories on each other?
6. What steps can you take to become a conscious artist of your life?

Notes:

Week Three: The Illusion of Perfection

Chapters 3 & 4 Pages 29 - 55

Chapter 3: The Lie of Our Imperfection

When I finally understand the language, almost everybody begins to tell me what I am. The way I learn about myself is by hearing the opinions of the storytellers around me.

From the time we are born, we are taught what we are not – and we begin to name everything and ourselves good or bad, right or wrong.

1. According to the book, how is the image of perfection introduced into our minds?
2. When and why do we agree with this image of perfection?
3. What are some of the different images you project in different circumstances? Are any of them the authentic you?
4. What do you think of the idea that God is perfect and everything in creation is perfect, *except* humans?
5. What is the difference between accepting yourself as you are, and simply giving up and labeling yourself a failure?

Chapter 4: A Night in the Desert

You are dreaming your life in this moment. You perceive not only your own dream, but the dream of the supreme artist reflected in everything you perceive.

1. Explain what don Miguel means when he says that the mind dreams when the brain is both asleep and awake.

2. Based on the reading, how would you describe yourself as an artist?
3. Becoming quiet to transcend thinking is a way to experience truth. What are some of the ways you do this?
4. If you are comfortable, share a time when you felt inspiration flowing into and through you.
5. If the art of living is ongoing creation, how can we ever feel complete?

Notes:

Week Four: The Stories We Tell

Chapters 5 & 6 Pages 57 -101

Chapter 5: The Storyteller

The truth is that we only know what we know, and the only thing we really know is our story.

As we become aware that everything, including our whole life, is a story that we build from Knowledge, we start to use Knowledge as a tool to write a beautiful story for ourselves.

1. Explain how Knowledge can be used as a *tool* for communication.
2. What contaminates Knowledge?
3. You are the main character in your own story:
 - a. How do you show up in your private story?
 - b. Explain how you change yourself to fit into someone else's story.
 - c. How do others try to change you to be their secondary character?
4. Who are your favorite secondary characters?
 - a. What do you project onto them to make them fit into your story?
 - b. How well would they fit into your story if you stopped projecting your own story onto them?
 - c. What do you do to change your secondary characters?

Chapter 6: Inner Peace

The voice of knowledge is telling you what you are and what you are not. It's always trying to make sense out of everything. I call it the voice of knowledge because it's telling you everything you know. It's telling you your point of view in a conversation that never ends.

1. *Rule 1* is “Don’t believe yourself.” Explain how you can function in the world if you choose not to believe what you think you know.
2. What is the difference between listening to your story and believing your story?
3. *Rule 2* is “Don’t believe anyone else.” Explore how you can function in the world if you cannot believe what anyone else says.
4. What is the difference between believing others and simply listening to them?
5. Discuss what the movie, *A Beautiful Mind*, teaches us about taming our thoughts so that they become quiet, allowing us to write our story in an aware and conscious way.

Week Five: Faith: A Force of Creation

Chapters 7 & 8 Pages 103 -141

Chapter 7: Emotions Are Real

Everything you perceive causes an emotional reaction – everything

1. What was your first reaction to the idea that emotions are real?
2. Discuss the idea that we punish ourselves because the voice of knowledge continues to tell us what we did from the *same point of view as when we first did something*.
3. According to the book, what are symptoms of being abused?
 - a. What is hate?
 - b. Why does don Miguel say that hate is not “bad?”
4. Explore the idea that every emotion you have comes from your integrity.
5. What is love? Why can't we *learn* to love?

Chapter 8: Common Sense and Blind Faith

When it comes to common sense, there is no difference between the Toltec tradition, the Egyptian tradition, the Christian tradition, the Buddhist tradition, the Islamic tradition, or any other tradition, because all of these philosophies come from the same place. They come directly from human integrity. The difference is in the story.

1. We use symbols to help make sense of everything we experience. What are these symbols and how do we agree on what they mean?
2. Describe a time when you used story to transcend superstition, thus bringing yourself back to common sense.
3. What does don Miguel mean when he says, “faith is a force that comes from our integrity”?
4. Explain *attention* in the context of this chapter.
5. List some ways that we can release our faith from lies and recover our free will.

Week Six: The Dream of the Second Attention

Chapters 9 & 10 Pages 143 -187

Chapter 9: Transforming the Storyteller

The way to transform what you believe about yourself is to unlearn what you have already learned.

1. The Four Agreements are don Miguel's favorite tool for changing your story: Explain how each Agreement addresses and dissolves the lies of knowledge.
 - a. *Be impeccable with your word.*
 - b. *Don't take anything personally.*
 - c. *Don't make assumptions.*
 - d. *Always do your best.*
2. What is the dream of the second attention?
 - a. How does using your attention a second time bring your story into alignment with truth?
3. Describe what happens when you practice the Four Agreements and open your spiritual eyes.

Chapter 10: Writing Our Story with Love

To live in love is to be alive again. It is to return to your integrity, to what you were before knowledge.

1. How does seeing yourself as the artist of your life help you live in love?
2. An additional agreement you can make is to respect your Self. Discuss how cultivating self-respect transforms your relationship with the world.
3. Explore the steps toward improving your relationship with yourself so you can live in love.
 - a. How do you go about accepting yourself?
 - b. Describe some rituals of love as explained in the book.
 - c. What place does communication have in expressing our love?
4. What is the miracle that happens when you open your heart completely to love?

Notes:

Week Seven: Through the Eyes of Love

Chapters 11 & 12 Pages 189 -228

Chapter 11: Opening Our Spiritual Eyes

There are many realities that exist, but we only perceive the reality where we focus our attention.

1. The thread that runs through this book is that something is only real to us if we *experience* it. Describe something that you only understood intellectually until it “happened to you.”
 - a. How did this experience change your own story?
 - b. What happened to your perception of other people who have had similar experiences?
2. Try the exercise of imagining that humans have been blind for hundreds of years.
 - a. What is it like to open your eyes and see for the first time?
 - b. How does this exercise help you realize that what you see and experience is a *reflection* of the emotion that comes from every thing?
3. Discuss why you see the manifestation of life in your physical body, yet cannot see yourself.

Chapter 12: The Tree of Life

The voice of knowledge is loud; it's not silent. The voice of your spirit is silent because it doesn't need to talk to you.

1. We are all angels, all messengers. What message do you deliver to yourself and to others?
2. If you recognize “fallen angels” in your life, those who tell you lies, how do you bring yourself back to truth?
3. List some ways you can uncover the force of life in yourself, and put your faith in that truth to become fully alive in your authentic story.
4. Truth is in the power of creation, not in the story itself. Share three ways you intend to use your second attention to make your life a magnificent work of art.
5. What does it mean to you, to see through the eyes of love?

As Faith in Action comes to a close:

Remember that your life, even now, is a magnificent work of art. The tools you have gained in this study will help you uncover the lies in your story so you can rewrite it consciously and with the love you deserve. Imagine, if you can, a magnificent work of art made even more wonderful thorough conscious, intentional love. It is an amazing process. You can do this.