Reflecting on the Year Past to Strengthen Us for the New Year*

1. **Remember**
   Think back over your past year – what were some events that shaped the year for you (trips, life changes, etc.)? What are some things you did?

2. **Notice moments of hope and love**
   When do you notice you moved toward hope and love? Ask yourself one or all of these questions (they are different ways of getting at a similar thing). Give yourself plenty of time and write down thoughts as they come.

   - *For what moments this year am I particularly grateful?*
   - *When did I give and receive love this year?*
   - *When did I feel really alive this year?*
   - *When this year did I have a sense of belonging to myself, others, God and the universe? When did I feel connected?*

3. **Savor the times of love**
   Take time to feel grateful for these moments. Imagine yourself breathing in God's love as you sit with gratitude for these times.

4. **Notice the moments that moved you away from hope and love**
   As you go through this step, seek to merely notice things, not to judge or condemn yourself. Ask yourself one or all of these questions (they are different ways of getting at a similar thing). Write down thoughts as they come.

   - *For what moments this year am I the least grateful?*
   - *When was I closed to giving and receiving love this year?*
   - *When did I feel my energy draining out of me?*
   - *When did I have the least sense of belonging to myself, others, God, and the universe? When did I feel disconnected?*

5. **Remember God's presence here as well**
   Be gentle with yourself and take a minute to remember that God's love is with you in these times, too.

6. **Reflect and notice patterns**
   *"What we feel grateful for in a day is generally something that has an energy we need, and what we feel not so grateful for generally involves a frustrated or unmet need."***

   *"The will of God is that we give and receive more love."***

   Do you notice any patterns in the times of love you remembered from the year? Do they have anything in common? Do they give you a sense of what you *want* to do going forward (not just what you feel you *should* do)?

   Gently look at the hard times and notice if you see any patterns there. Do they have anything in common? Do they give you a sense of what you *want* to do going forward (not just what you feel you *should* do)?

7. **Close in whatever form of prayer you would like.**
   You might pray the Lord's Prayer or simply thank God for this time.

**Based on the Ignatian Examen, which has been practiced and developed since 1548. This particular version is adapted from* Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*, by Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn and Matthew Linn, 1995.*
*** Sleeping with Bread* by Linn, Fabricant Linn and Linn, 1995*.*
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