

The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully

1. Don't Wait

- a. "Our lives are not solid or fixed. Knowing this intimately is how we prepare for death, for loss of any kind, and how we come to fully embrace constant change." (p.26)
- b. "We are not just our past; we are becoming. We can release grudges. We can forgive. We can free ourselves of resentment and regret before we die." (p.26)

2. Welcome everything, push away nothing

- a. "Accepting life as is means that we make peace with things as they are rather than trying to force them to be the way we want them to be (and getting frustrated that we can't)." (p. 85)
- b. "Love is the human quality that allows us to welcome everything, not just what we prefer most...In love there is no separation...Love breeds love." (p. 114)

3. Bring your whole self to the experience

- a. "To be whole, we need to include, accept, and connect all parts of ourselves. We need acceptance of our conflicting qualities and the seeming incongruity of our inner and outer worlds." (p. 116)
- b. "Wholeness does not mean perfection. It means no part left out." (p. 116)
- c. "With acceptance, what emerges is a deep trust in what is. We release ourselves completely from the comparison, assessment, and rejection of the inner critic. We stop blaming ourselves for having desires and wants, and instead accept these desires as a flavor of love, one that expresses our hearts' deepest longing for what is true and real." (p. 148)

4. Find a place of rest in the middle of things

- a. "Finding a place of rest isn't about adding another task to your already too-long to-do list. Nor does it mean napping more during your workday (though this may prove helpful)." (p. 184)
- b. "Rest is a choice—a choice to be alert, to bring your attention to this moment." (p. 184)
- c. "Resting in this open awareness, we release ourselves from the habits of managing our circumstances and striving for control as ways to avoid pain and gain pleasure. We have more space, more freedom from reactivity. We are not denying, justifying, or rationalizing; we are allowing." (p. 189)

5. Cultivate don't know mind

- a. "The 'don't know' mind is not limited by agendas, roles, and expectations. It is free to discover. When we are filled with knowing, when our minds are made up, it narrows our vision, obscures our ability to see the whole picture, and limits our capacity to act. The wise person is both compassionate and humble and knows that she does not know." (p. 234)
- b. "This moment right here before us, this problem we are tackling, this person who is dying, this task we are completing, this relationship we are building, this pain and beauty we are facing—we have never experienced it before. When we enter a situation with the 'don't know' mind, we have a pure willingness to do so, without attachment to a particular view or outcome. We don't throw our knowledge away but we let go of fixed ideas. We let go of control. Don't know mind is an invitation to enter life with fresh eyes, to empty our minds and open our hearts." (p. 234-235)

by Frank Ostaseski ¹

¹ [Summary: The Five Invitations by Frank Ostaseski \(waiyancan.com\)](https://waiyancan.com/), (accessed and adapted December 2, 2022). Note: *The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully*, by Frank Ostaseski is available at Amazon and other booksellers.

Storytelling in small groups or personal reflection. One by one, each person shares their answer to the first prompt below. Then go to the next question and so forth. A person can pass.

- 1) Share what stirred inside you as you heard *The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully*?²**
(1. Don't Wait 2. Welcome everything, push away nothing 3. Bring your whole self to the experience 4. Find a place of rest in the middle of things 5. Cultivate don't know mind)
- 2) Tell a story about how your parents or grandparents have lived, or lived, the last ten years of their lives. How did they embrace any or all of the Five Invitations?**
- 3) Share how you would envision beginning to try out any or all of Frank Ostaseski's Five Invitations in the months ahead. What might this open up for you in your life? What would you need to let go of?**

Check out and download more small group storytelling reflections and prompts at:
<https://lifesjourney.us/storytelling-in-small-groups-menu/>
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² Frank Ostaseski, *The Five Invitations: Discovering What Death Can Teach Us About Living Fully*, (Flatiron Books, New York, 2017). Available at Amazon and other booksellers.