

## Additional/Alternative Spiritual Exercise for May

# Our Welcomed and Unwelcomed Guests

The Guest House is a beloved poem by the Sufi poet Rumi. It's a powerful reflection on this month's theme of thresholds. Here's how it begins:

*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.  
Welcome and entertain them all!*

In this time of Covid-19, we are all too familiar with unexpected and unwanted guests crossing our thresholds. Depression and meanness are only a few of the things we've been forced to let into our lives. Uncertainty. Sickness. Fear. Job loss. New routines. Isolation. These things don't knock politely and ask permission to enter. They just come. We are hosts whether we want to be or not. But that doesn't mean we have no choice at all. We can always choose what kind of hosts we want to be. Ultimately Rumi's is a call to active not passive ones.

With that in mind, this exercise invites us to be more active and intentional with those unexpected guests that have crossed our thresholds recently. Here are your instructions:

Start by asking yourself these two questions:

1. What "unwelcomed guest" are you struggling with the most these days?
2. What "welcomed guest" has most blessed you during these times of pandemic?

After you've identified your two "guests" embrace and lean into your agency by asking yourself two more questions:

1. What aspects of your relationship with your "unwelcomed guest" do you not have control over and what aspects do you have control over?
2. How can you make more room for the new "welcomed guest"?

And finally, once you've identified the ways in which you have agency, figure out a way to keep that work front and center. Physical objects make great reminders. So find an object to symbolize your unwelcomed guest and another to represent your welcome guest. Then place those objects somewhere near where you cross the threshold into each new day: on your bed stand, or dresser or bathroom sink.

Let them serve as a daily reminder of how much choice you still have in these days that can feel so out of control.

*p.s. As inspiration make room to watch and listen to this video meditation of Rumi's poem:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMcuZfUqGO>