



A Practice: Moments of Transcendence

By Jilleen Westbrook, Ph.D.

According to psychologist and executive director of the Thrive Center, Pamela Ebstyne King, transcendent experiences are emotional responses, often profound, that inform how individuals see themselves in relationship to God, others, and the world. Transcendent experiences give our lives meaning, and shift our focus from ourselves, connecting us with something more – whether that be God, other people, or nature. These experiences often elicit changes in people's identities and behaviors, and motivate people to live more coherently in alignment. Transcendent experiences are life-giving and sources of peace, awe, gratitude, joy, and love. It is important to note that experiencing transcendence can occur in smaller moments of seeking God's love, reflecting on experiences of God's love, or offering God's love to others, enabling transcendent love to bring about changes in our lives.





Transcendence Practices

Explore something that is beyond-the-self (e.g., through the Divine, human connectedness, or nature) by engaging in one or all of the following:

- **Focus on Breath:** Breathing and focusing on your inhale and exhale. Engage daily in a mindfulness practice, centering prayer, or reading sacred texts or scripture (such as Lectio Divina).
- **Attune to Divine:** Sitting in silence or walking in nature, opened and attuned to the possibility of connection with the Divine.
- **Attend to Beauty:** Observing nature, singing, paying attention and experiencing beauty and awe and dancing.
- **Access Wisdom:** Traditions hold deep knowledge. Join a faith or spiritual community in worship, participate in the sacraments, engage in rituals, or even practice yoga.
- **Connect to Others and to our Deepest Selves:** Connecting to others through fellowship, such as communal meals or acts of service contribute to moral elevation. Paying attention to our emotions and how they show up in our bodies provides insight into what matters to us. Our most profound sources of joy, and our deepest laments, often dance together to make meaning in our lives.

