



# Questions to Promote Love, Meaning and Purpose

*Pivot from anxiety to meaning to discover yourself and your purposes. Find a trusted friend or small group and work through these questions.*

*By Dr. Pamela Ebstyne King*

## **Thinking through paths out of anxiety and fear:**

If it rings true for you that you need to train your brain to tone down anxiety and/or discover more about yourself – your sources of love and mattering, and your purposes – find a trusted friend or loved one or a small group and work through some of these questions together.





## Getting in Touch With Love

Before we begin our training on patience, take a moment to reflect on the following questions. There are no right or wrong answers. This exercise is a personal assessment meant to stimulate your thinking about patience. Be as specific and detailed as possible with each answer you provide.

1) What are your fundamental beliefs about being loved—for just who you are? Not what you do, but just who you are now?

2) Pause. Close your eyes, take 3 slow breaths—imagine God is looking at you and beholding you. What does God see? What are God's yearnings for you right now? How does God desire for you to experience that you are God's wonderful creation (Psalm 139)?

3) When do you tend to feel most loved and alive? What kind of pace and space do you need for more of these experiences?

4) Who makes you feel more loved and alive? How?





5) Who do you sense that you make feel more loved and alive? How?

6) What gets in the way of you feeling loved and living as if you are deeply loved and treasured?

7) What does this tell you about your life?

## Taking Stock of Anxiety

1) When you slow down and get quiet, do you feel or sense anxiety in your body? When you tune into it and allow yourself to feel it, what is it telling you?

2) When or where does anxiety show up? What gets you spinning?





3) Are you particularly afraid of disappointing others? Why do you think that is so?

4) Do you avoid rocking the boat? Upsetting certain people? What is the specific fear? Name it.

5) Do you avoid situations where you might fail? Again, name the fear.

6) Do you hold on to beliefs and stories that keep you anxious or stuck?





## Growing Forward

1) Do you take time for rest and sabbath? If not, how can you create space for rest?

2) Are you able to set aside time to consider your needs and desires? If not, what practices can you put into place to make time? We recommend the **5 A's** or the **Examine Prayer** for starters.

3) Do you have safe spaces where you can be yourself without pretending?

4) Is this a season to seek out someone who is a safe space for you to share life with? Who might that be? A friend, parent, sibling, pastor, mentor, **therapist**? How can you deepen a relationship with someone who would understand and care for you—your needs, desires, and vulnerabilities?





5) Who needs your support? Do you let people know that they matter to you?

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6) When disappointments occur, do you take time to make sense of them in terms of your beliefs and values? What practice could you put in place to make meaning out of disappointments?

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7) What do you value most in life? Is your life aligned with your values?

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If fear and anxiety seem to be especially pertinent to you, or are getting in the way of you finding spiritual health and thriving, we recommend that you seek guidance from a spiritual director, pastor, counselor, or therapist. In addition, you can find further resources online at the Henry Nouwen Society. They offer five meditations on moving from fear to love.

