

Opening *the* Heart:

An exercise from
**Dancing with
your Dragon**



THE ART OF LOVING
YOUR UNLOVABLE SELF

Shaeri Richards

~ PRACTICE ~

Opening the Heart

Many esoteric teachings tell us that the heart is the doorway to the Divine. It is through the heart that we begin to access many uplifting spiritual frequencies, including unconditional love, compassion, and trust. The key to this practice is cultivating the quality of acceptance. From acceptance, it is a short but wondrous leap to unconditional love.

Because our hearts provide a direct connection to the feeling realm, opening them may require us to feel emotions that we experience as painful or unpleasant as well as those we find pleasurable.

Pain and pleasure are simply labels that we place on the movement of energy within our various bodies. Pain tends to occur when we resist, block or stop the energetic movement of a sensation, thought or feeling. When we accept all of the sensations, thoughts and feelings that come our way, (noting them and allowing them, but not acting on them) the heart begins to open to the most delicious vibrations of Divine unconditional love.

The Persian mystical poet known as Rumi explains it so beautifully that I have decided to include his words here. Simply reading them and allowing them to touch you will begin the process of opening your heart. The practice will follow.

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 all!

*Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture, still treat each guest honorably.*

He may be clearing you out for some new delight.

The dark thought. The shame. The malice.

Meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from the beyond.

This simple meditation can be practiced over and over again, particularly before going to bed or upon arising.

It is helpful to read the exercise all the way through once before you try it.

- *Sit or lay in a comfortable position with your back straight and your eyes closed.*
- *Take a deep breath and begin to relax your body. Start with your feet, and move up through your ankles, calves, thighs, buttocks, and so on until every part of your body has been given the message to relax. Find a gentle rhythm with your breath, and on each out breath allow your body to drop deeper and deeper into relaxation without allowing yourself to fall asleep.*
- *When you feel relaxed, bring your attention to the area around your heart. Many people find it helpful to bring one or both of their hands to their heart, allowing them to gently rest there. Others find it easier to experience the subtle vibrations of the heart without the pressure of their hands. Experiment a little and find what works best for you. The important thing is to be able to bring your attention to the heart and keep it there.*
- *As you continue the soft rhythm of your breathing, (expanding your chest on the in breath, relaxing and releasing on the out breath) allow yourself to notice any tiny movements of energy that may be happening around your heart. Whatever you notice*

simply allow it to be, no judgment, no condemnation, no trying to stop it or make it different. Whatever it is, just notice it and allow it to be.

- *As you continue breathing and holding your attention at the area of your heart, you may notice that your mind wants to wander. Each time it ventures away from the heart, notice that your attention has gone elsewhere and gently bring it back to the heart without judgment.*
- *Often the mind feels compelled to wander when you begin to touch deeper layers of energy that have been protected and hidden from your conscious awareness. If you happen to touch a layer of feeling, let the energy of those feelings pass through you. Allow them to move, but don't hold on to them—just keep breathing and allowing.*

You can experience the frequency of your heart by putting your attention in the field around your body and relaxing into it.

You can also experience the heart by putting your attention deep inside your body and noticing what you find there. Play with both types of awareness and simply notice what you experience.

Whatever arises inside of you, just accept it and allow it to pass through, without letting yourself to get caught in any particular thought or feeling. Notice it and let it move on while you come back to your breath and your heart. The heart is a natural unifier. By bringing presence and awareness to this part of your being, you are developing the ability to accept and allow for all parts of yourself to come into wholeness and love. Practice until you feel relaxed and complete.

