

The Scandalous Mystery of Internal Gardening: Physical Practices, Emotional Health, and Spiritual Wholeness

Risa Tillman— Independent/ Public Health

Project Advisor: Dr. Shirley Kilpatrick

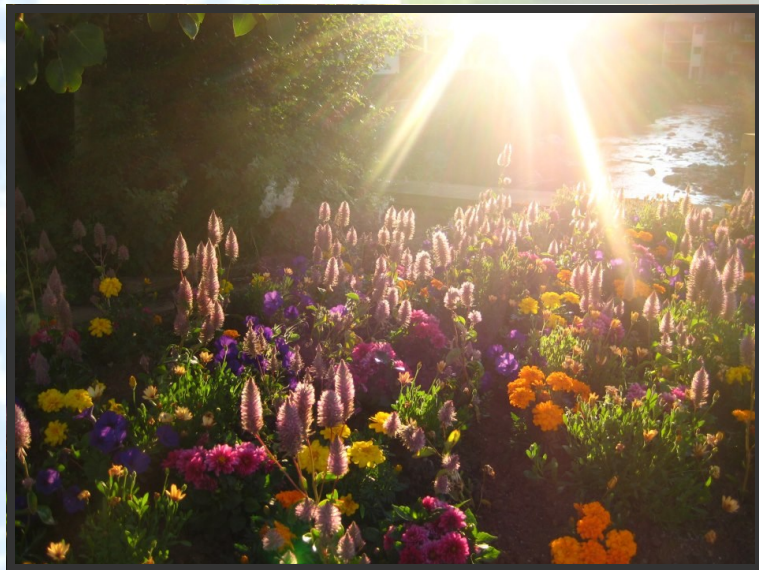
This project integrates concepts from Biology and the Humanities to holistically understand the cultivation of emotional well-being.

MAJOR POINTS AND VOICES:

- Emotions influence the total health of an individual
- Emotional health requires cultivation:

“[Human beings] must be trained to feel pleasure, liking, disgust, and hatred at those things which really are pleasant, likeable, disgusting, and hateful.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man*



Photos by Risa Tillman

- Our culture models a host of destructive emotional tendencies:

“When the modern world says to us aloud, ‘You may be religious when you are alone,’ it adds under its breath, ‘and I will see to it that you never are alone.’”

-C.S. Lewis, *Membership*

- Everyday chores can be mysteriously transformative:

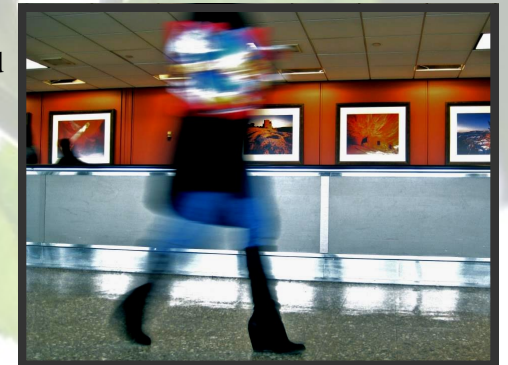
“It is a paradox of human life that in worship, as in human love, it is in the routine and the everyday that we find the possibilities for the greatest transformation...the joke is on us: what we think we are only ‘getting through’ has the power to change us, just as we have the power to transform what seems meaningless—the endless repetitions of a litany or the motions of vacuuming a floor. What we dread as mindless activity can free us, mind and heart, for the workings of the Holy Spirit.”

- Kathleen Norris, *The Quotidian Mysteries*

- The arts also provide spiritual and emotional renewal:

“The arts are a glorious gift from God; and in the process of creation lies the joy of God’s creative heartbeat. Thus you will find in the creative process freedom and release; you will find joy and a measure of gladness.”

- Makoto Fujimura, *The Extravagance of God*



CONCLUSION:

The tasks of our lives, both menial and extravagant, provide opportunities for emotional reflection and physical obedience through a direct response to the cultural mandate.

This weeding and tending of our emotional gardens allows us to hear God’s ever-approaching footsteps in the soil of our hearts and respond with a cordial “yes”, walking forward in the new beauty of His bright, merciful morning.

soli Deo gloria



Risa Tillman



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