

Based on the book "An Altar in the World" by Barbara Brown Taylor  
Week Three Reading - Chapters 5 & 6

### Week Three Discussion Questions

*"I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see." - John Newton*

1. Take a few minutes to see if anyone had an aha or insight when engaging the homework practices from week two.
2. Taylor begins chapter five by pointing out the "predictable path" cows take. She adds, "soon I found myself following those same tracks". She goes on to say, "I am convinced that this is normal human behavior, which means that something extra is needed to override it." (P. 70). Are you aware of a worn, predictable cow path in your life (or thought patterns) that may serve to keep you safe or comfortable, but is also keeping you in a rut? What helps you "override" your default thinking/acting and engage in a more deliberate manner?
3. Taylor shares personal stories and Bible stories about loss and getting lost, even when you know where you are. She uses this as a way to arrive where "you know how to say thank you and mean it." Has being lost helped you exercise the muscles needed for developing radical trust? Has it taught you to say thank you and mean it? Has it helped you develop empathy for others who are lost? Why or why not?
4. Taylor opens chapter six by sharing, "I was at least thirty years old before I learned that I am an introvert." Being an extrovert or an introvert isn't about being outgoing or shy, it's about where you draw your energy from and how your recharge - alone or with others. Are you an introvert or an extrovert? When did you learn this about yourself?
5. Rabbi Sacks claims "the supreme religious challenge is to see God's image in one who is not in our image," for only then can we see past our own reflections in the mirror to the God we did not make up. (100) Have you ever expanded your view of God by encountering someone unlike yourself? Please discuss.
6. Please read aloud the first two paragraphs on page 93 and discuss how it relates to you at this time in your life.

## Notes:

### Week Three Practices

1. "Lost really has two disparate meanings. Losing things is about the familiar falling away, getting lost is about the unfamiliar appearing." - Rebecca Solnit
  - Carve out time this week to "get lost" and notice what appears - within and without.
  - Recall a time you felt lost and journal about your feelings and your discoveries. OR Write "7 Tips" you would give a child (whom you love) about *what to do* when they feel loss and lost.
2. Pick one day this week to practice deep listening. Be fully present in your exchanges and conversations; fully focused on what the other person is saying. Avoid splitting your attention or allowing your mind to formulate a response. Listen and know you are holding sacred space for them to share. Notice what happens within you and between the two (or more) of you. Reflect afterward.
3. Pick one day this week to practice "holy encounters". Be mindful and deliberate in engaging every being / interaction/ encounter as a holy encounter. Notice your energy level and what that feels like for you.

Reading for week 4 - Chapters 7 and 8  
"An Altar in the World" by Barbara Brown Taylor