



Growth & Ideals Meditation

Time: 1st meditation on Die Day

Length: 20-25 minutes

Speaker: youth or young adult

Purpose: Pre-evangelization. The speaker presents him/her self as a friend, on par with the candidates, going through the same experience at this time in their lives, as they pause to sort out what makes life worthwhile and what they hope their lives will become.

This meditation is to help put into perspective all the personal struggles going on in the minds and hearts of the candidates.

- to make them aware that they are not alone in what they are experiencing at this time in their lives
- to disarm them in the sense that the young person giving this meditation takes them into their confidence as they reveal the innermost secrets of their heart
- with the hope that this trustful sharing may evoke a reciprocal trust in the candidates, allowing them to open up themselves to their group as well
- to make them aware that we do not intend to present them with prefabricated solutions to their present dilemmas
- so as to start a reflective process within them as they begin to examine their own personal struggles with the hope of finding meaning within them

Setting: God and religion are not mentioned in this mediation. It is the only meditation that does not begin with a Scriptural quotation. The speaker simply asks them to reflect on the drift of their lives and focus on the values which they (consciously or unconsciously) hold most dear. While their ideals are still in development, they are asked to identify those things they have come to see as close to the heart of their lives.

This meditation is designed to initiate a reflective dialogue that is honest, sincere, and vulnerable. The speaker is asked to share the intimate secret of who they are at this time in their life.

The candidates have a certain amount of fear and some may even have a feeling of not wanting to be involved in a spiritual process in their lives. Now they find themselves in their small group and are expecting a "religious" talk of some sort. They discover that the person who is going to share with them is a youth like themselves, from their world, who touches life as they live it, and who speaks to them as a friend to friends.

An 'ideal' is a growing awareness, a conviction, that emerges out of our life experiences as to what is of primary importance in our lives. The ideals we choose can imprison us by making us selfish, and hinder our growth, or they can be liberating from selfishness and aid our growth.

What should emerge from the over-all impression of this talk is that it is possible to find meaning in their life sometimes in spite of adverse circumstances beyond their control. The speaker should evoke a

sense of hope in the candidates, that tensions and difficulties are part of life and one can come to a deeper meaning of life by working through them.

Although we may never fully achieve our ideals, they are fascinating images our creative personalities project as to whom we would like to become. Hence, they are very important, especially as we are in the process of sorting through life and deciding on the kind of person we would like to be. This talk focuses on the process through which we sort out our many ideals and decide which ones are heart wishes.

Outline:

1. **Speaker shares their background:** briefly sketching his/her family. In the process of mentioning the members of the family, they should share something of interest in their relationships.
2. **I find myself in a time of transition:** I find myself at this time in life moving from my familiar world of childhood, and even High School, into a whole new experience in life. It is a good time for me to reflect on where I have come from and where I hope to be going. This weekend is that 'pause that refreshes', giving us a chance to sort out in life what is of great importance to me; what I hope for in my life.
3. **Tensions and Decisions:** For the first time I am asked to assume full responsibility for my life. I have discovered that I do need other people to help me sort it all out.
4. **Need to clarify my ideals:** When I speak of my ideal, I speak of something very close to my heart. My ideal self is my best self, or what I hope will be the best human person I can become. My ideal is how I envision life, how I find meaning in life.
5. **Looking back we know that our ideals grow with experience and age:**
 - a. Child: games, toys, dolls, cowboys (relate some ideal you once had, probably some person whom you idealized)
 - b. A few years ago when I entered high school: I now recognize that my attitudes towards life and what I thought important have changed significantly.
 - c. Sports, way of dressing, being in the 'in group'. Give an example.
 - d. The last two years have caused me to reflect much more deeply on which ideals I wish to live my life around. What is worth investing my best efforts into. Recall some incident that caused you to think about this.
6. **Ideals must be worthwhile and attainable, ideals and goals are different:** Goals are concrete actions we take to realize our ideals. Ideals are our heart wishes. Goals are the practical decisions we must make to build our ideals into life. For example, a person could want to be a medical doctor to make a lot of money, or to be of service to others. The goal is to become a doctor, the ideal is the heart wish that motivates it; how I can help other human persons.
7. **Ideals can be positive or negative:** Positive-honesty, sense of justice, courage, self-control, respect, value of suffering. Negative-just want to be good looking or have a good physique, to be popular, to get my own way, sex, booze, and pleasure.
8. **Discerning our ideals:** We have to ask: What are my heart wishes? Four heart wishes inside every human being are:
 - a. **How can I learn to love?** I have found that friends are family are very important to me (give examples). No one of us can live in a vacuum, we are designed to be part of a community.

- b. **How can I be loved?** I have found that my love circle in life is very important to me. Persons who love me each make me aware of a different value in my life. The question we sometimes find ourselves thinking about is: Who am I? The answer to that question might be found in another one: To whom do I belong? (give example).
 - c. **How can I blossom out and be all I can be?** I am constantly discovery new abilities that I never knew I had before. I know that I am capable of great things if I put my heart to the task. My ideals are what motivate me to be willing to sacrifice to achieve my goals. I want to make a difference in life (give example).
 - d. **What is the meaning of life?** Life is a tremendous gift as it opens up before us. My values, or my ideals, will determine how I will live it. What do we hope for in life? Share your hopes briefly
9. **Conclusion:** I am not interested in knowing your ideal. What really is important is that each of us knows our own ideal. If you want some indication of what your ideal is right now, ask yourself these questions. You will find them in your journal and we would ask you to spend a few minutes in silence as you think about them.
- a. **To whom do I belong?**
 - b. **Where will I be next year at this time?**
 - c. **What kind of person do I wish to become?**
 - d. **What are my heart wishes?**