

Prioritizing Your Life

List the activities of your everyday life that nurtures your soul. Write down as many as you can think of, going to a blank sheet of paper if necessary. Some examples may be “It nurtures my soul when I take a hot bath,” or “when I play with my children.”

1) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

2) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

3) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

4) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

5) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

6) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

7) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

8) It nurtures my soul when I _____.

Write as many soul-nurturing statements as you wish.

For each of the activities that nurtures your soul, calculate how much time you actually spend doing this on a weekly basis. Also estimate how much time you would like to be doing this weekly or monthly. Use the worksheet below. Again, continue on a new blank sheet as necessary. Answer these questions for each of the soul-nurturing activities you recorded earlier. Experience your inner truth regarding any activities that reveal a significant gap between the way you live now and your ideal.

Amount of time I do this weekly or monthly:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

Amount of time I would like to do this weekly or monthly:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)
- 8)

Guidelines for setting life priorities:

- 1) Give yourself at least one full hour each day of the year to do activities that nurture your soul. Take something from your list, or feel free to add to your list if you wish.
- 2) Write down here what you plan to do during that daily hour for the next three to six months. Make this a personal commitment.
- 3) Each week, celebrate a Sabbath day. On this day, take a minimum of four hours – alone or with your family and loved ones. The purpose of this time is to engage in spiritually nourishing experiences, such as being in nature, reading inspirational literature, listening to gentle music, going to synagogue or church, looking at the sky, contemplating, or meditating.
- 4) Write down here what you plan to do on your Sabbaths for the next three months: _____

_____.
- 5) One week each year, devote yourself to some method of committed spiritual practice in a retreat setting, either alone or with a group. Reflect, be quiet, and nurture yourself. With careful preparation, you can do this at home – or you can go somewhere conducive to your practice.
- 6) Write down the month in which you intend to take a weeklong retreat during the next year: _____.
- 7) Take an envelope and mark it with the words “Open on...” (pick a date six to nine months from today). Make a copy of this exercise, place it in the envelope, and mail it to yourself. Open and read it at the appropriate time to see how well you have done with your promises and priorities. (If you have not done too well, do this practice again and again, slowly building the will power and confidence to follow the program you have set for yourself.)

Rabbi David A. Cooper