

The Thriving Rhythms Project...

...challenges us to move with thoughtful purpose toward a deepened sense of identity—that we are spirited, creative, and connected people, called to be present, grateful, generous, and missional with our lives. We're exploring what it means to intentionally live into this particular series of life rhythms, which help us bring some good to each moment, something better to each day, and our best to each other as we encounter the world around us.



We are ... Connected

As image bearers of the Divine, we are connected human beings called to explore generative, healthy, life-giving relationships with others. We thrive as connected people by nurturing healthy interactions, practicing intentional acts of kindness, and showing hospitality to create trust and build respect that sustains the community.

WELCOME | CHECK-IN |

Questioner: "How are we to treat the others?"

Ramana Maharshi: "There are no others."

—attributed to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi (1879-1950),
Hindu sage who established an ashram at Arunachala in South India.

CENTERING | CONNECTED Thriving |

Jacob Collier is a spectacularly talented English musician. His music incorporates elements from many musical genres and often features reharmonization and close harmony. He is also known for his energetic live performances, where he often conducts the audience to sing multiple-part harmonies or percussions.

Thrivers, please set aside just over 7 minutes of your life today to enjoy how Collier connects hundreds of people to thousands of musical moments to create countless ways to celebrate how we're all connected. Turn it up, turn it way up!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsppYGz-Z1s>

- From your perspective, how does Jacob create connections?
- What does Jacob do that creates a connection with complete strangers?

ANCIENT WISDOM | 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 [The Passion Translation]

Body of Christ

¹² Just as the human body is one, though it has many parts that together form one body, so too is Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we all were immersed and mingled into one single body. And no matter our status—whether we are Jews or non-Jews, oppressed or free—we are all privileged to drink deeply of the same Holy Spirit.

¹⁴ In fact, the human body is not one single part but rather many parts mingled into one. ¹⁵ So if the foot were to say, "Since I'm not a hand, I'm not a part of the body," it's forgetting that it is still a vital part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear were to say, "Since I'm not an eye, I'm not really a part of the body," it's forgetting that it is still an important part of the body.

¹⁷ Think of it this way. If the whole body was just an eyeball, how could it hear sounds? And if the whole body were just an ear, how could it smell different fragrances? ¹⁸ But God has carefully designed each member and placed it in the body to function as he desires. ¹⁹ A diversity is required, for if the body consisted of one single part, there wouldn't be a body at all! ²⁰ So now we see that there are many differing parts and functions, but one body.

²¹ It would be wrong for the eye to say to the hand, "I don't need you," and equally wrong if the head said to the foot, "I don't need you." ²² In fact, the weaker our parts, the more vital and essential they are. ²³ The body parts we think are less honorable we treat with greater respect. And the body parts that need to be covered in public we treat with propriety and clothe them. ²⁴ But some of our body parts don't require as much attention. Instead, God has mingled the body parts together, giving greater honor to the "lesser" members who lacked it. ²⁵ He has done this intentionally so that every member would look after the others with mutual concern, and so that there will be no division in the body. ²⁶ In that way, whatever happens to one member happens to all. If one suffers, everyone suffers. If one is honored, everyone rejoices.



STORY | Everyone Belongs to Everyone. No Exceptions

The 16th-century mystic Saint Teresa of Avila provides a clear challenge for what it means to live in community with one another:

"You are the presence of Christ in the world—who has no body now but yours; no hands, no feet on earth but yours—yours are the eyes through which Christ looks with compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which Jesus walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which God blesses all the world. You are here to reach across the gap – across the chasm into the life of someone in need. You are here to be the hands, the feet, the eyes—the body of Christ because Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

When we invest in relationships and work at deepening and widening our connectedness to one another and others, those relationships are strengthened, and the community grows. When we nurture healthy relationships with our attention, kindness, and compassion, the usual rhythms of personal interactions *hum* differently.

When we pay attention to the lives of others, noticing their needs, hopes, joys, and sorrows, the rhythms of healthy connectedness begin to impact the lives of everyone around us. Likewise, when we practice intentional acts of kindness and compassion, the usual rhythms of relationships take on a different vibe and create a different kind of health within those relationships.

When we go out of our way to show hospitality, we create a new kind of trust that builds respect. And when we do that, we create a new kind of community that knows what it's like to thrive.

Connected CONVERSATION

- We are connected human beings called and equipped to explore ways of integrating into healthy, life-giving relationships with others. Describe one of your best friends. What, specifically, drew you into a relationship with this person? How is your relationship healthy and life-giving? What do you think this friend would say YOU bring into THEIR life through your relationship? What equipped you to be a good friend to this person?
- We thrive as connected people by nurturing healthy relationships, practicing intentional acts of kindness, and showing hospitality. Share about someone in your life that you would describe as "nurturing" and "hospitable." What are some particularly nurturing/hospitable things that they have done? What could you use from their example to nurture healthy relationships? Share about a time that you were on the giving or receiving end of an intentional act of kindness or hospitality.
- We thrive as connected people by ... creating trust and building respect, which sustains community. Share about someone you respect. What specifically do you respect about them? How did they build respect? How do you build trust and respect in your relationships? How do you rebuild trust and respect when it's been lost? Besides trust and respect, what else sustains the community?
- Re-read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26 slowly and deliberately. What word or phrase stands out to you? Share about why that word or phrase is meaningful to you. Are there people in your life you find it difficult to connect with?
- Re-read the challenging words of Saint Teresa of Avila. What word would you use to describe how her challenge makes you feel? Share about something you have seen recently with Christ's compassionate eyes. How might (or did) you walk to do good or reach out to bring blessing in that circumstance?
- Recall Ramana Maharshi's response to the question, "How are we to treat the others." Who do you sometimes think of as "the others?" Share a story about when you were involved in an "us" versus "them" situation. Share a story about a time you felt the interconnection of all things.

- As a group, brainstorm practical ways to thrive as a connected person. Share and celebrate the ways you are currently thriving as connected people. What is one idea you can take away from this conversation to help you grow as a connected person?

A CONNECTED MANIFESTO

We believe that we are connected to all living things. We believe in the profound impact of meaningful relationships and actively seek generative connections with others. We believe that investing in the community around us in ways that don't exclude but bring people together allows everyone to thrive. We believe nurturing healthy relationships, practicing intentional acts of kindness, and demonstrating extravagant hospitality create trust and build respect, ultimately sustaining our community.

MANTRA

"I am called and equipped to explore ways of integrating into healthy, life-giving relationships with others."

INTENTION

Gracious God, we are your connected people; you have called and equipped us to explore ways of integrating into healthy, life-giving relationships with others. As we nurture healthy relationships, increase our capacity and courage to practice intentional acts of kindness. May the hospitality we show others create trust and build respect that sustains the community.

BLESSING

May you thrive as deeply connected, relational people who bear the Creator's image as you move through the days ahead. May you find deep satisfaction in practicing intentional acts of kindness with those you know and those you do not know. May you experience the power of showing the kind of hospitality that creates trust and builds respect. And may you experience the level of connectedness that sustains the community we all share.

BONUS

Here is one more link to some of Jacob Collier's magic. Enjoy!

[This Audience Choir in Vienna made me cry.... - YouTube](#)