

Joyful Surrender

Colette Lafia

10 Tips for Greater Self-Acceptance and Trust

Many of us struggle with surrender because we see it as defeat or giving up. It scares us. But ***true surrender is a path to freedom and inner peace.*** Surrender is a grace we open up to receiving, as well as being a practice—one that must be nurtured and cultivated through the choices we make, how we think, how we act, and what we hold in our hearts.

- 1.** Surrender happens in our daily life, the one we are actually living. It's not a spiritual ideal for saints and holy people, but rather a living and dynamic force that moves in and through us. **Surrender is an invitation to find contentment and peace right here and now, to open ourselves to trusting life beyond the limitations that our fears, our expectations, and our disappointments impose upon it.**
- 2.** Surrender is neither defeat nor resignation. Surrender is the spiritual aspect of acceptance, inviting and allowing us to hold our experiences and lives with grace in every moment. It calls us into a deeper relationship with mystery, with the Divine, and the force of creation.
- 3.** Our everyday encounters create the platform for surrender. **Throughout the day, we can bring the qualities of surrender—trust, acceptance, compassion, and release—into the way we respond to life.** It's our relationship to what's happening that forms the cornerstone of our experiences.
- 4.** The essence of surrender is trust, but it can be difficult to find at times. It requires us to stop holding on to our lives so tightly, and let the Divine carry us, which can feel so hard to do. Although—in the midst of a painful experience—we may land in surrender's lap with a thud, kicking and screaming with resistance, it is, in fact, a soft landing pad. **Surrender offers us an embrace, a way to move from grief to grace.**

5. Every day, we are being asked to surrender: in work, in love, in faith, in relationships, in the body, and in every breath we take. **Letting go, yielding to what is, and releasing what we are clinging to, takes great courage. It is not easy. But when we do, we invite acceptance, trust, and Divine love into the center of our lives.** In that embrace—in that sacred place where our joys and sorrows meet and heaven and earth touch—we are drawn, despite all our resistance, toward the sweetness of surrender.
6. Recognize the call to surrender everywhere: in your daily relationships, in how you handle your limitations, in your work challenges, in the ways you care for your family, and even in the simplest of things, like how you step into a cool swimming pool and plunge into the water.
7. **Trust that listening to your inner voice is a sacred and holy process, creating the receptive ground for surrender.**
8. We must also remember that the surrender journey is a deeply personal one. At times we need solitude. We need to be alone in order to settle into the story of our lives. **As we sink into a more interior level, we find comfort, compassion, and strength from our relationship with the Divine, with our deepest self, and what we hold most sacred.**
9. Surrender is an intimate journey, and we must honor the time we need. It's a period of discernment and reflection, which can bring us closer to ourselves and to God, who is, as I learned from Brother René, our constant companion.
10. Living and surrendering are intertwined. **I have found that the more we surrender to what is difficult and unwanted, the more we can open up to what is beautiful, profound, and abundant.** We stop wanting our lives to be something other than what they are and begin to recognize the sacredness of what is right in front of us, the life that is truly our very own.

I invite you to be more aware throughout the day of opportunities to surrender, and to pay attention to what the experience is like—whether any resistance arises or not, and how it transforms your relationship to what's happening in your life.

To learn more about the power of surrender, check out my book: [Seeking Surrender: How My Friendship with a Trappist Monk Taught Me to Trust & Embrace Life](#)



Colette Lafia is the author of *Seeking Surrender: How my Friendship with a Trappist Monk Taught me to Trust and Embrace Life* and *Comfort and Joy: Simple Ways to Care for Ourselves and Others*, which was named one of the best spiritual books of 2008 by Spirituality and Practice. A San Francisco-based spiritual director, educator, and part-time children's librarian, Colette has led spiritual and self-care workshops for many organizations and groups, including the Archdioceses of San Francisco, Mercy Center, the Institute for Health and Healing, and the San Francisco Unified School District.

Colette is passionate about awakening people to the love of the Divine and helping them connect more deeply with the presence of the sacred in their daily lives. To contact Colette, learn more about her offerings, and find out how she can work with you or your group, please visit her website at www.ColetteLafia.com.

Seeking Surrender:

How my Friendship with a Trappist Monk Taught Me to Trust and Embrace Life

In *Seeking Surrender*, Colette Lafia challenges our notion of surrender, inviting us to see it as a path of opening to the fullness of life. Her spiritual companion, a Trappist Monk from the Abbey of Gethsemani, encourages and guides her towards deeper trust along her journey in a series of letters shared over years. A beautiful and honest book.

—Fr. Richard Rohr, O.F.M.

Colette Lafia's palpable openness and warm storytelling lead readers through the same compassionate process that led the author to accept herself, find peace with life, and strive for an ever-deepening relationship with God.

Readers will find simple exercises and profound advice for living a more conscious and intentional life, ultimately discovering a new attitude of acceptance and letting go.

