

ANAMCARA APPRENTICESHIP YEAR TWO
2023-24 Study Tracks & Mentors



OVERARCHING THEME: LIVING INTO THE CELTIC WHEEL OF THE YEAR

PROCESS DESIGN FOR CEILI DE GROUP SESSIONS: Caryl Casbon

Primary Mentor: Sister Fionntulach

Honorary Mentors: Mary Groves and Sean O’Duinn, OSB*

- a. Spiritual Practices from the Ceile De Tradition
- b. Anamcara discernment for individual and group practices
- c. Celtic Body-Mind-Spirit Healing Practices

*Indicates a mentor who has died however, their recorded wisdom remains an integral part of the track.

1) THE ART OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT: *The Practice of Sacred Relationship*

Primary Mentors: Richard Groves, Eileen Heaton and Jack Kennedy

Honorary Mentors: Gerald May and Mary Groves*

“Although secular psychology addresses a great deal about how we come to be the way we are and how we might live more effectively, it offers little in terms of why we exist or how we should use our lives. In this sense psychiatry and spiritual guidance complement each other but ultimately diverge.” Gerald May, MD, PhD, Care of Mind, Care of Spirit

The core of every great spiritual tradition is about how love and compassion are practiced in the real world and in everyday relationships. The art of this practice is called spiritual direction. In the recent past, few persons had access to formal spiritual companionship. For the modern ‘anamcara,’ this relationship is the heart of the soul’s journey. This track draws from the wisdom of the ages in terms of learning how to discern life’s most challenging issues through the skills of ‘holy listening.’ While respecting differences in belief and culture, participants will discover marvelous common ground for the perennial quest of the human spirit. By distinguishing the roles of psychiatrist, pastoral counselor and spiritual director, each relationship is appreciated without confusion of roles or relinquishing the primacy of the soul’s secrets for healing and transformation. This track will benefit both those who are interested in becoming spiritual directors as well as offering invaluable insights that can support every primary relationship at home, at work and in the larger community.

PRIMARY LESSONS:

- An Inter-spiritual Training and Certification Course for Spiritual Directors
- Special applications for Helping Professions and Everyday Relationships
- Wisdom of how the Enneagram becomes an invaluable tool in spiritual companionship
- Comparative World Religions Study motif/Global Mystical Traditions

PRACTICES/SKILLS

- In-depth study of parallels between depth psychology and the classical Ignatian tools for spiritual discernment
- Discovering and applying various archetypes for spiritual direction and how they help or block spiritual growth
- Unique skills for relating the art of discernment for every life venue—secular and sacred
- Applying the skills of spiritual discernment for group processes and community life

2) THE ART OF SPIRITUAL ELDERING: *Aging Gracefully*

Primary Mentors: Rabbis Nadya & Victor Gross, Maryhelen Zabas

Honorary Mentors: Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, Richard Rohr, Viktor Frankl*, Ram Dass* and Gene Cohen*

“For all the earlier phases of my life, I had models to inspire and guide me, but when it came to growing old, there were no good models, codes of behavior, scripts, or social expectations to shape and give meaning to my life.” Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, *From Age-ing to Sage-ing*

Successful aging is a challenge in 21st Century America. Although increasing numbers of the over-sixty-five population are planning creatively how their eldering years will be spent, our society does not as a whole have a model and provisions for how to grow old. Unlike indigenous populations who placed their elders in a leading role in their communities, we have yet to seriously consider how American elders can effectively influence succeeding generations by sharing their wisdom and experience.

This track will provide materials to dispel common myths regarding the aging process, will introduce tools which have been used successfully to engage older adults in the eldering process, and will address the most predominant spiritual issues confronting older adults as they approach the end of life.

Apprentices who select this track will be encouraged to use these tools in their own lives and with older adults in familial or congregate settings who will help validate this path toward successful aging.

PRIMARY LESSONS:

- De-mythologizing age-ing
- Tools for ‘harvesting’ the second half of life
- Appreciating the 3rd movement of the Symphony of Life
- Claiming one’s responsibility as an Elder
- Making peace with our mortality

PRACTICAL SKILLS:

- Learn various methods for conducting life reviews
- Develop techniques for story catching involving spiritual pain
- Experience meditation practices which enhance the healing of memories
- Discern and create practices for conveying wisdom from generation to generation
- Teach what has been learned to others who are aging

3) SOUL OF WELLNESS: *Who are you? What do you want?*

Primary Mentors: Dean Sharpe and Marlis Beier

Honorary Mentors: Miranda Macpherson, Frank Ostaseski, Brene Brown PhD, Dan Siegel MD

“Everything changes and ends. Not everything goes according to plan. Life is not fair. Pain is part of living. People are not always loving and loyal.” David Richo in *The Five Things We Cannot Change: And the Happiness We Find by Embracing Them*

M. Scott Peck said. “Life is hard, hard work, complex, and always changing”.

Parker Palmer wrote, "We all live in a tragic gap between what is and how we know it might be and that this gap can never be closed".

Years ago, our answering machine message played: "You have reached the Sharpe/Beier question machine and there are only two questions...Who are you? *and* What do you want?". Lest you think these trivial questions, most people go to their grave having answered neither one." The book The Wisdom of the Enneagram suggests, "Psychology without spirituality is arid and ultimately meaningless, while spirituality without grounding in psychological work leads to vanity and illusions". We have found great value in combining the work of interpersonal neurobiology, personal growth wisdom and universal spiritual teachings. Lest we descend in this exploration into ompheloscepsis (navel gazing), we explore these topics against the very real issues of spiritual suffering in daily living.

And still...we rail against the Universe and create suffering for ourselves. If healing is "coming to right relationship with what is" or "regaining our lost connection", why is it so hard? In our track, we will use lecture, reading, poetry, music, journaling, visualization, working individually and with partners using holistic inquiry, and group process. We explore that everything in our lives we have created, promoted or allowed and that "it is never about the other person".

PRIMARY LESSONS:

Looking at multiple psychological models changes awareness in our lives: accountability, the comfort zone, intention and attention, the interpersonal gap, the ABC model, awareness model, communication and listening models, mind traps, resilience, visioning, ends vs. means and stages of change. It's a journey of becoming conscious.

Living a human life is like kayaking a river. We don't get to decide where the river is going - just how we paddle, whether in the dark, cool, calm canyons or wild rapids or even going over tumultuous falls. Much of the suffering in our lives is self inflicted and these small ripples can easily be worked through using psychological models. However, we are all faced at some times with big changes or losses, which are rougher rapids when we often get thrown out of the boat. This suffering inherent in life requires a spiritual approach of surrender. Any illusion of control is gone. Victor Frankl said that finding a "redeeming attitude in the face of great suffering requires grace". And yet grace is always present if we are open and available to the possibility.

The intention of the course is joint exploration, journeying together, and support in an adult learning model . Videos and reading between meetings are necessary to understand the sessions. Assignments are to practice the skills we study during your daily life. You'll want to journal. Each month, we want a reflection paper of your experience, discoveries, perplexities, and questions, and we will both respond to each of you. Midway between sessions, we have an optional open house for unrestricted conversation about the material. We share a journey with you to find and relax the obstacles that block us from peace and accessing the grace always available. We finish the class living with a deeper sense of who we are and what we want.

PRACTICAL SKILLS:

1. Use the connections between relational neurobiology, psychological knowledge and spiritual wisdom to learn about how we think and behave
2. Begin to understand the origin of our sense of separation, creating our personality and reactivity
3. Let go of the shame story we developed at a young age
4. Understand the difference between shame and guilt, addressing core issues of worthiness, lovability and respect
5. Learn an easy to use inquiry practice when we find ourselves reactive to allow self-compassion
6. Develop mindfulness and dual awareness
7. Develop greater self compassion and compassion for others

8. Develop the ability to be aware and to articulate what I feel, I think, I want
9. Acknowledge where our sense of victimization blocks accountability
10. Understand and recognize the inevitability of miscommunication in relationship and ways to heal the disconnect
11. Develop the ability to coach/facilitate self and others with suffering
12. Have an experience of forgiveness that can heal the most difficult hurts
13. Come to peace with the truth that everything ends
14. Learn how to be present at our own death and the death of others
15. Find resilience and hope in times of confusion and vulnerability, finding more tolerance for the wobbliness before transformation
16. Experience moments in community of deep peace, love and connection
17. Join a community of other seekers who want to support your journey

4) HEALING PRACTICES AT THE END OF LIFE: *Honoring Life's Sacred Transitions*

Primary Mentors: Kevin Dieter with Stan Tomandl & Ann Jacob

Honorary Mentors: Joan Halifax, Ira Byock and Dame Cicely Saunders*

"I once asked a man who knew he was dying what he needed above all in those who were caring for him. He said, 'For someone to look as if they are trying to understand me.' "Indeed, it is impossible to understand fully another person, but I never forgot that he did not ask for success but only that someone should care enough to try." Dame Cecily Saunders 1918-2005. Founder of the Modern Hospice movement

This track will help apprentices translate Anamcara principles into practice. The human life journey has numerous challenges and thresholds. We offer practical spiritual skills and awareness tools for use during end of life and other transitions. Apprentices will have an opportunity to explore more deeply coma communication, story and metaphor, spiritual health assessment and other specific practices. We will teach through lecture, resource materials, journal writing, experiential exercises, and time for questions, supervision and collective learning discussions. Enriching our ability to be direct, compassionate, clear, attentive and connecting to another's nature and needs, you can expect to work with real life situations, heartfelt experiences, and the potential for furthering deeply meaningful and relieving care, as an Anamcara Apprentice. The content will have value for professional and lay caregivers

PRIMARY LESSONS:

- Weaving together the medical, psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of care
- In-depth mentorship for communicating with people in altered states of consciousness
- Developing our anamcara presence with persons during all major life transitions

PRACTICAL SKILLS:

- Facilitating conversations about death and other essential real life situations
- On medications: Learning when enough is 'enough' and when is 'more' better.
- Skills for working more effectively with family systems and cultural diversity
- Enhancing communication using non-verbal signals. How to read positive and negative feedback, find insight in delirium, follow and respond to end of life breath patterns
- Interact usefully during communication dilemmas by learning to use your personal reactions, intuitions and synchronicities in service of the spirit in the moment.
- Specific practices using 'nature to connect with human nature.'
- Utilize narrative medicine skills to facilitate end of life healing as well as self care for caregivers
- Recognizing sacred space when attending to the dying
- Attending to mystery, wonder and awe as guideposts in understanding the dying process

5) THE WELL OF GRIEF: *Sacred Work of Loss and Sorrow*

Primary Mentors: Elizabeth Johnson and Marv Klassen-Landis

Honorary Mentors: Tom Golden and Wendy Howard

“Those who will not slip beneath the still surface on the well of grief... will never know the source from which we drink...” David Whyte in “The Well of Grief”

“When we fully honor our many losses, our lives become more fully able to embody the wild joy that aches to leap from our hearts into the shimmering world.” Francis Weller in *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*

In this track we gain understanding of many kinds of grief and the varying ways people experience and express loss. We learn healing practices and skills for helping ourselves and others. We explore and share our own journeys with individual and collective grief—through silence, storytelling and listening; through reading, writing and discussion; through ritual, nature and the arts. We not only learn *about* grief, we also experience powerful ways to personally draw water from the well.

When we lose a person, a place or a community we deeply love, we experience the sensation of the ground opening up beneath our feet and we fear falling into emptiness. We may feel pressure to deny this and move on from loss. But if we enter into our grief and honor our losses, in time we find the well, the source of love and life—even “wild joy.

PRIMARY LESSONS:

- Through a wide and deep-hearted exploration of the human and spiritual dimensions of grief and loss, we will provide safe channels for grief and grow our resilience and capacity for companioning ourselves and one another.
- We can be equally spacious and grounded when navigating our own and others’ grief.

TOPICS:

- Sources and types of grief: bereavement, anticipatory, ambiguous, disenfranchised, complicated, collective, eco-grief, etc., especially through the lens of Francis Weller’s five gates to grief: “everything we love we will lose, the places that have not known love, the sorrows of the world, what we expected and did not receive, ancestral grief.”
- Impacts of the pandemic on our grieving processes.
- Grief experiences of children, parents, partners, veterans, victims of injustice and violence.
- Effects of social/cultural expectations (gender, familial, culture/community) around grief.
- Grief rituals from a diversity of cultural and spiritual traditions.
- The power of storytelling and writing in healing.
- The role that spirituality and religion can have in grief work as supports and/or deterrents to healing.
- Paradoxes of grief: Loss/Gratitude, Absence/Presence, Pain/Healing, Disintegration/Reintegration, Sorrow/Joy.
- The role of the Anamcara in supporting others in grief and loss.

SKILLS/TECHNIQUES/TOOLS:

Practice with somatic awareness tools for maintaining embodied contact with one’s grief experience and the grief of another.

- Explore ways to care for ourselves to maintain equilibrium when personally navigating grief or companioning another—mindfulness, prayer, contemplation, arts, nature, movement, growing confidence.

- Use interactive tools and develop Code of Care practice: active and embodied listening, healthy boundaries, compassionate presence, confidentiality.
- Meet people where they are in the moment.
- Find or create rituals that work for us and those we work with.
- Learn writing practices for individuals and groups.
- Share prompts (aka “third things”) to initiate journaling and/or personal sharing.

“Long after the initial loss has passed and the period of grieving has ended, an unattended sorrow lingers within us accounting for a host of physical, emotional and spiritual maladies... by courageously confronting this sorrow with mercy and compassion, we can travel a smoother path to healing the heart.” Stephen Levine, from *Unattended Sorrow: Recovering from Loss and Reviving the Heart*

6) LIVING CELTIC MYTHOLOGY: *The Wisdom of Story, Symbol & Archetype*

Primary Mentors: Phil Larkin and Margaret Brady

“A myth is a story so full of truth that the real world can’t hold it”

From the earliest times, we have learned wisdom from stories. Our stories help us to understand who we are, and this is just as true of the stories that have survived for thousands of years in our oral traditions as it is for depictions of our contemporary lives. In this track we will dive deep into the world of Celtic myth, using the image of a tree to illustrate the different levels on which myth can bring healing and wisdom. Having already been exposed to some of the myths and stories from the Celtic Tradition, this track offers a chance to engage and connect with these stories more personally.

The Tree of Mythic Learning

- **Root:** Myth connects us to our deep ancestors and the wisdom of our cultural lineage.
- **Trunk:** Myth helps us understand our lives now and find the strength to live bravely.
- **Branch:** Myth helps us find our way into the future and grow into our personal and spiritual potential.

In each monthly session we will be engaging with a myth, identifying a mythic theme or archetype present in the story and inviting you to consider how these patterns might show up for you in your own life. We will be inviting you to consider your own life as a mythic journey and to explore what your own mythic task might be. Dream listening will form a consistent part of the course, as you increase your fluency in the language of symbol and intuitive knowing. You will work closely with an Anam Cara partner to offer deep listening to each other’s ongoing journey throughout the year. Creative engagement and expression will be encouraged.

Primary lessons:

- Recognising the strengths and challenges, wounds and healing of your own cultural and individual ancestral paths
- Developing the mythic imagination in everyday life.
- Engaging creatively with myth/symbol/dream/archetype as a means of spiritual growth.
- Engaging with the earth as a source of wisdom and healing

Practical skills:

- Learning to locate yourself within a lineage, (symbolic) ecosystem or cultural myth
- Learning to look beneath the surface of myth and story to engage with the language of symbol and metaphor
- Exploring symbol, nature and creative expression as a spiritual path
- Working with dreams as a readily available source of wisdom and growth

7) THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES FOR LIFE: *Ignatian Wisdom for Today's Anamcara*

Primary Mentors: Martina Breen and Elizabeth McCrory

Honorary Mentors: Jack Kennedy & Richard Groves

"The practical wisdom hidden in the simple words of the Ignatian Exercises is one of the most fundamental developments of (contemporary) spiritual theology." —Karl Rahner, SJ

Nothing is more important than finding the Beloved
Than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way.

What you are in love with,
What seizes your imagination,
Will affect everything.

It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning,
What you will do with your evenings,
How you will spend your weekends,
What you read,
Whom you know,
What breaks your heart,
And what amazes you with joy and gratitude.

Fall in love
Stay in love
And it will decide everything.

—Pedro Arupe, SJ

The Spiritual Exercises for Life is a gift for today's Anam Cara or for anyone desiring to deepen in spiritual awareness and intimacy. The anamcara relationship is a journey alongside into the story of another in a manner that acknowledges the sacred in this life and beyond.

This track offers an opportunity to dedicate nine months of your life to the inner work of discerning life's biggest questions. Live and online teachings are grounded in Ignatian, Jungian and Celtic Traditions. On this track, you will be offered daily spiritual exercises in the form of reflective questions and simple practices. According to the famous spiritual theologian, Hans Urs von Balthasar, "choice" is at the center of The Exercises which makes them relevant to everyday decision making.

The Four Movements of Ignatian spirituality are: Freedom, Imagination, Discernment and Transformation. Ignatian spirituality taps into our deepest desires. The whole purpose of The Exercises is about gaining spiritual freedom. Spiritual freedom involves the whole person—penetrating the biological and psychological spheres of our existence as well as our spiritual selves. *Spiritual freedom is to discover the freedom not to have to get rid of our unfreedoms.*

PRIMARY LESSONS:

- Exploring the interior movements of Consolation and Desolation
- Living into the movement of change in our lives: learning to trust the YES-NO-Yes of Life
- Engaging with Life's most important Sacred Questions
- Cultivating a relationship with soul and our ability to learn from the wisdom of darkness.
- Weekly reflections and practices for discernment in everyday life

PRACTICES:

- Monthly support with an Anamcara Spiritual Companion
- The art of contemplation through the EXAMEN practice: an ancient tool that helps us see the hand of God/the Divine/the Other at work in our whole life experience.
- COLLOQUY meditation: using the power of imagination to actively engage with the Divine through over words, images, and ideas.
- The Practice of Discernment underlies the Exercises. We notice the interior movements of our hearts, and discern where they are leading us
- Creating a personal Vidui (a Living spiritual Will)
- Journeying with the spiritual wisdom of the Enneagram as a way of trusting that ‘everything belongs’

8) SEASONS OF OUR LIVES: *Nature is our Teacher*

Primary Mentor: Debbie Doornbos Special Presenter: Michael Kearney

Support Mentors: Patricia Hallahan and Joanne Friedt

The *Seasons of Our Lives* track will delve into the seasons of nature as a metaphor for our lives. As we explore the seasons from different perspectives, we will see that each season has something to teach us about ourselves and our interior life when we pay attention, develop curiosity, observe, and listen more deeply. Together we will address questions such as ‘*How are you within?*’ and continue exploring what it means to “*Die before you die so that when you die you will not die.*”

In this track Anamcara Apprentices will develop a deeper understanding and awareness of the rhythm of the ‘seasons’ of our own lives, enabling us to accompany ourselves and others more soulfully and skillfully during times of transition – both our many life transitions and the end-of-life transition.

We will gather in this track to allow the seasons of nature to open us to a greater awareness of our inner teacher, and to letting our soul speak to us through nature, art, poetry, psalms, reflection and in community with others. It will invite us to listen deeply and observe... What are the seasons of nature teaching us? As we open ourselves to the transformation that this can bring, we can then take this out into the world and be part of the change the world continues to yearn for.

Dr. Michael Kearney will be a special guest presenter leading us in nature-based guided meditations and teaching us more about resilience and deep security. This will be a deeply contemplative track that challenges and invites us to take seriously the invitation to spend regular, quality time in nature. We will learn much from other cultures and traditions about the wisdom of nature such as Celtic, First Nations, Christian, Buddhist perspectives. We look forward to journeying with you on this adventure of the soul.

PRIMARY TEACHINGS:

- The seasons are a metaphor for our lives
- Nature is our teacher
- How to nurture awareness and connection between the seasons of nature and the seasons in our own lives

PRACTICES:

In addition to inspiring readings, participants will be invited to spend meaningful time outdoors each month to listen, observe, become curious and allow themselves to be affected by their time outdoors. Reflections on this time will be captured through a variety of creative exercises: a poem, writing a psalm, embodying experience in a ritual or creating something artistic with paint, crayons, clay, mandalas, etc. Each month’s experience will lead to asking an Honest, Open, Courageous question which will be shared with a mentor support person. Small gatherings once a month will offer time to share reflections and receive honest, open questions about them (like engaging with mini Clearness Committee experiences).