

Week 2: Mindfulness of Emotions

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.

Be grateful for whatever comes.
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

-- Jelaluddin Rumi,
translation by Coleman Barks



"The Guest House" – Questions for Reflection

How do you **currently** respond to unwelcome or unpleasant emotions? Try to identify at least five responses (e.g., *"when I get really mad at someone, I want to yell and then I feel bad for being so angry."*)

What would it be like to greet every emotion as a welcome guest? (Can you try it for one week?)

Which emotions are the hardest for you to entertain? Which ones most "violently sweep your house"?

Can you think of a time when a nasty emotional spell swept out your house, but prepared you "for some new delight"? Reflect on a time when you have learned from your guest/emotion.