



## **GROWING EDGE Conversation Starter—December, 2020**

### **Episode 28: In Praise of Delight**

#### **A Conversation with Ross Gay**

In our December podcast, Parker and Carrie sit down with prize-winning author Ross Gay to talk about finding delight in daily life as a spiritual practice. Here are a few questions for your own exploration, journaling, and (we hope) conversation with others. For group purposes, we encourage you use Zoom or some other online meeting software. Please protect public health.

1. In this era of widespread suffering, do you find it possible to delight in moments of your daily life? If so, how do you remain open to it? If not, are there inner obstacles blocking the way, and how might they be removed?
2. For some people, the natural world—walking in a local park, gardening, or contemplating a houseplant—evokes wonder and a sense of connection. Does nature, large or small, bring you delight?

3. Our bodies are sources of delight in many ways, some unexpected. People sometimes have the experience of “seeing” a parent when they look at their own hands or facial expressions, which connects them to their ancestors. How might you be more open to the delights of incarnate life?

4. If nothing delights you at the moment, what merely draws your attention right now? Take some time to inquire into *why* it called to you. Might understanding the “why” reveal a delight that was previously hidden?

5. In dark times, what might it mean to understand joy and gratitude as “an act of resistance”?

SUGGESTION: For one week, at the end of each day, write a bit about something that delighted you. Get on the phone (or email, text, or Zoom) with a friend shares this practice and read your reflections to each other. At the end of the week, decide whether you’d like to continue doing this, taking it a week at a time. You might be delighted with the results!

### **Some Approaches to this Month’s Questions**

You may want to explore the podcast and Questions of the Month privately, through journaling and silent reflection. But we urge you to consider gathering online for an exploration with one or more family members or friends. If that idea appeals to you, look into using Zoom, Facetime, Skype or some other video platform or talk with each other while practicing safe social distancing.

If you aren’t familiar with **Zoom**, it’s easy to learn and has proven a wonderful way to host “face to face” conversations during the pandemic. A full-featured Basic Plan with unlimited meetings is free. There’s a 40 minute time limit on conversations among three or more, but you can log right back on for another 40 minutes. If the technology baffles you, check for online instructions, or get on the phone and ask any middle-schooler you know!

For group explorations, we first listen to the podcast individually or together. Then, before you meet, review the **Circle of Trust Touchstones** from the **Center for Courage & Renewal**. They’re designed to create safe space for open-hearted dialogue on a wide range of topics.

As convener, read the Touchstones aloud—or ask others to read them aloud—and let people comment on them if they wish. Remind people of how important it is to make sure everyone gets ample time to speak and be heard. Then take a moment of quiet before inviting people to speak.

Begin the conversation by reading the Questions of the Month, then inviting people to respond whenever they are ready. No “forced marches” around the circle! As the Touchstones advise, listen to what people have to say without any cross-talk. Ask honest and open questions to help them say more, if they wish, but avoid trying to “fix, save, advise, or correct each other.”

We need to find every way we can to reweave community during these hard times—and one of those ways is gathering online for conversations about things that matter. Give it a try!