



How Is Your Heart Doing?, by Omid Safi

In many Muslim cultures, when you want to ask them how theyâ€™re doing, you ask: in Arabic, *_Kayf haal-ik?_* or, in Persian, *_Haal-e shomaa chetoreh?_* How is your *_haal_*?

What is this *_haal_* that you inquire about? It is the transient state of oneâ€™s heart. In reality, we ask, â€œHow is your heart doing at this very moment, at this breath?â€• When I ask, â€œHow are you?â€• that is really what I want to know.

I am not asking how many items are on your to-do list, nor asking how many items are in your inbox. I want to know how your heart is doing, at this very moment. Tell me. Tell me your heart is joyous, tell me your heart is aching, tell me your heart is sad, tell me your heart craves a human touch. Examine your own heart, explore your soul, and then tell me something about your heart and your soul.

Tell me you remember you are still a human being, not just a human doing. Tell me youâ€™re more than just a machine, checking off items from your to-do list. Have that conversation, that glance, that touch. Be a healing conversation, one filled with grace and presence.

Put your hand on my arm, look me in the eye, and connect with me for one second. Tell me something about your heart, and awaken my heart. Help me remember that I too am a full and complete human being, a human being who also craves a human touch.

I teach at a university where many students pride themselves on the â€œstudy hard, party hardâ€• lifestyle. This might be a reflection of many of our lifestyles and our busy-ness â€” that even our means of relaxation is itself a reflection of that same world of overstimulation. Our relaxation often takes the form of action-filled (yet mindless) films, or violent and fast-paced sports.

I donâ€™t have any magical solutions. All I know is that we are losing the ability to live a truly human life.

We need a different relationship to work, to technology. We know what we want: a meaningful life, a sense of community, a balanced existence. Itâ€™s not just about â€œcleaning inâ€• or faster iPhones. We want to be truly human.

W. B. Yeats once wrote, "It takes more courage to examine the dark corners of your own soul than it does for a soldier to fight on a battlefield."

How exactly are we supposed to examine the dark corners of our soul

when we are so busy? How are we supposed to live the examined life?

I want us to have a kind of existence where we can pause, look each other in the eye [â€¦] and inquire together: Here is how my heart is doing. [â€¦]

How is the state of your heart today?

Let us insist on a type of human-to-human connection where when one of us responds by saying, â€œI am just so busy,â€• we can follow up by saying, â€œI know, love. We all are. But I want to know how your heart is doing.â€•

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