

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2022, I finished a series of speaking engagements in Utah and I was tired of hearing myself talk. After hours of public speaking and preaching, I didn't know what I really wanted to say anymore, or if I had said all I needed to say.

After giving it some thought, I was tired. Tired of directing my conversation with God, always seemingly choosing the pressing topic of the hour and asking for specific guidance about a certain problem, or inspiration for a particular scripture. I did not want to do that anymore. I wanted more conversations with God where I wasn't leading. Not that God wasn't answering my prayers, but I felt that my voice had taken over the conversations. I wanted God to speak to me when God wanted, on whatever God wanted to talk about.

I yearned for the time to wait on listening, to come back to myself and hear the Divine within me. I needed to take a small hiatus from my self-directed divine dialogue. Step back from preaching and teaching. So, I decided to be quiet — a holy hush.

I began this practice of holy hush by telling those around me that I would not be accepting any preaching,

speaking, or teaching assignments for the next little while. I was honest with them about both my fatigue and my season of wander and wonder.

As it turns out, God is loquacious. It seems that when I got quiet and started listening, I could hear God's running dialogue with me.

Within the first few days of relative self-quiet, I fasted and prayed that I could hear God with more clarity and understand what seemed to be the new twists and turns of my call. Pretty quickly, I began to be flooded with what I now affectionately call "love memories." Memories of all the ways I experience an abundance of love.

It looks like Holy Spirit wanted me to begin at remembering. It is profound to me that the Holy Spirit is described both as a comforter and one that helps us remember.¹ God sends us a divine memory aide. When God got to talking to me, it was in memories.

Many seasons ago, I received a blessing that quoted Luke 12:48: "Where much is given, much is required." This line always made me uneasy, because I felt it overwhelming to think about what could be required of me. Yet here I am now pondering, "What if what I have been given is love?" If this is the case, then according to the scripture, I am required to move in love in the ways it has been abundantly bestowed upon me.

1. "But the *Comforter*, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26, emphasis added).

This book is simple. It is an account, my account of love and being loved. And, in turn, what love doth require of me.

By writing this book, sitting in my love memories, I slowly developed a practice that allowed me to sink into the memories, the work of love memory. First, I tried to make myself present to the memory. I did that by imagining questions around my five senses — what did love taste, smell, feel, sound, and look like? Then, as I allowed the memory to settle, my soul traveled back. Look for the workbook/journal to accompany this book, offering a deeper dive into the details of this practice, and inviting you to join me on this journey of reflection into your own memory.

As you read this book, you will find some memories sound and read different than others. For so many of these memories, if the person in the memory was still living, I contacted them, first, for permission and second, to see if they remembered things the way I did. We almost always never remembered the same moments. In fact, this part of the practice — reaching out to a fellow memory bearer, is what I call *memoryscale*. And it was one of the biggest blessings and surprises of this project.

Memoryscale is a living memory work, where an experience is shared. Together, with a fellow memory bearer, you travel back and simultaneously fill in the memory for each another. *Memoryscoping* with loved ones allowed me the additional opportunity to express gratitude for those who have walked well with me, those who have diligently taught me about love and held me in the best of ways.

For some of these stories I share, my fellow memory bearer is gone. I could not call them up, hear their voice, nor relish in the shared memories. For those stories, the reader may notice that there is a different feel to the writing and reflection, perhaps less color and contrast. People hold memory with us and sometimes they even hold the memory *for* us. When our memory bearers transition, that memory goes with them. Sometimes you find that you are the only one left holding that memory and while I cherish it, it is not the same feeling as the collective or shared memory. I discovered that part of my grief for that person was that I was the only one holding our shared memories. Especially when I am all that is left of that memory, I am so deeply grateful to hold these memories close and have the privilege to record them.

These love memories built me. They contain some of the greatest people I have had the blessing to know. I am truly the product of a good love.

At the end of most of my vignettes, I hold up a phrase which allows me to complete this practice. It loosely follows that scriptural text, “for where much is given, much is required.” Indeed, because I am given so much love, much love is required of me. Below is the remix to that scripture, composed in rhythm to the work of my love memory.

LOVE SHOWED UP AS _____ AND SHOWERED ME
IN _____. AS A RECIPIENT OF THIS ACT OF LOVE

ABUNDANT, I COMMIT TO _____.