

## What Participants Say About Their Novena Experiences

The Novena process has made a deep difference in my life in that it has brought a focus every day (because of the 9 day novena focus) of how Divinity, especially the Divine Feminine, moves in me, through me, and through all of life. Because of this lens of focus, my awareness of this movement has gotten sharper and I can immerse myself in the grace of this to help me move through the tough times. Trusting in Grace and understanding life as a process, with each day opening like a petal with it's gifts and challenges, I have a new understanding for myself that the challenges are the gifts, to heal, to release, to bless and to move on, instead of staying stuck. Also, I have really deeply enjoyed the seeds of grace that Sheila has dropped into our lives for our consideration as we move through our days. Even though the day may be stormy, I open my email to a "seed of grace" and this moves me into a more expanded and "graceful" awareness of what is possible in each moment. There were many surprises for me. One of the biggest one's was how I did not allow nurturing time for myself in each day. I've been so busy taking care of everyone else and not me. Now, I take the time to meditate and feed my own spiritual growth. A part of each day is spent in this awareness. And as time has gone on with this process, the "meditation" can become the whole day. And now, truly, I can take care of others better, because I started with myself first

~ Elena, Colorado

The power of focused intent is magical and so is this year-long workshop. I loved the coming together of different women, different voices, all carrying a little of Mary herself. Taking time out for nine days in a row was a great self-validating process; like taking a mini -retreat with the love and support of partners and the group, we wound our way back to our heart shrine where Mary awaited us with open arms and unconditional love. The collective energy intensified as the year went on, as did the connectedness. What surprised me most was how incredibly easy it was to talk to Mary and feel her presence, how essential it was to surrender, and how powerful the practice was to my being. This is a gift you give yourself and in so doing, the others around you benefit as well.

~ Gena, France

Living Grace Fully brought me into relationship with a community of women who are seekers on a spiritual path. Brought me into communication with my Self. Brought me into communication with the Divine Feminine. Taught me to dialogue with the Divine: give information and receive information. Taught me to slow down and notice and watch for signs before getting into action. Taught me that dialoguing with the Divine is a process and a process that I forget to do. Taught me to love myself, be gentle with myself, have empathy for myself as I struggle to understand me.

~ Pat, Massachusetts

The living gracefully process has reconnected me to a women based, open spiritual community with whom I share much, with a wise and loving guide. This has opened up my thinking and my emotions. I feel calmer and more able to laugh at myself and life. Living gracefully is helping peel back the layers of the onion. Getting me back to things I have always known and let slip out of mind; I'm the only one getting in my way and my patterns and blockages are the same as they were ten years ago. I see myself more clearly, and am working on accepting myself more completely. How lovely and intimate a group telephone call can be. It's a protective cocoon, so sharing feels safe. The partnering piece was an uneven experience, and difficult to make happen in our busy lives. I did better with nine days of structured interaction, which I did with one partner. I'm surprised at myself for not being able to keep things going for nine days. How lovely and intimate a group telephone call can be. It's a protective cocoon, so sharing feels safe. I'm surprised at myself for not being able to keep things going for nine days. How lovely and intimate a group telephone call can be. It's a protective cocoon, so sharing feels safe.

~ Elena, Pennsylvania

Since starting the Living Grace Fully course I've been both challenged and amazed. I'm starting to see that what arises in daily life all around me is a manifestation of the inner guru as well as a ready-made altar for surrender and conscious growth. By connecting with this sacred circle of women I am held in unconditional love; together we have created a space of possibility and trust.

~ Nicole, Australia

Being in the Living Grace Fully vessel helps me say YES. Yes I am willing to open my eyes, my heart, to mySelf. And when I do I am witnessed by compassionate women, and bathed in so much love I feel safe seeing and feeling anything that comes up. The Novenas allow me to go as deep as I want, to explore, to try something new or something I have thought of for a long time. I feel held - held to the fire by myself and held in embrace by the other women. And I see Grace when she shows up. And She does.

~ Jette, Massachusetts

I am loving being with women in the Temple Vessel once again. While everyday life provides the necessary lessons for growth, being in this vessel turns up the alchemical fire and Grace is there in each moment.

~ Nancy, North Carolina

I really love this group. The depth of devotion to TRUTH, the trust and safety I feel, and the level of communication among the women in this group is beyond anything I have experienced with anyone. I am ever grateful. My heart overflows with gratitude for this vessel and the women who fill it and rest in the spaciousness of it. I have been using the Samyama Principles as Novenas since Jan. 1st of this year. I am understanding, knowing, and feeling, more and more that everything is Grace, and Living Grace, is "being willing" to spontaneously move with the sacred rhythm of what's happening "now".

~ Krishna Kamini, West Virginia

Our group has been a strong grounding vessel for me. It keeps the fire going in my heart and helps in the continual deepening of Awareness, my True Nature. I find I can hang out for much longer periods in that Sacred Place. Sheila is always offering fresh ideas and tools to go deeper. I am truly grateful for this precious community of sisters.

~ Patti, Pennsylvania

I have been very grateful to be in this group! It has allowed me to have a safe vessel to continue my Samyama and heart-work with women whom I trust to be honest and hold my feet to the fire in a very loving way. I really have been grateful for Sheila's ever-loving presence and understanding, for it has helped me to stand more gently in my heart, for myself and with others. What has been also very helpful is that it is not time-demanding or expensive, so it is my gift to myself to participate.

~Annette, Maryland

I am so very moved and in marvel at the Novena process that takes you successively deeper into your own being, helping to shine the light of love... wiping away layers of guilt, decay, despair... Mary is the very essence of love, our connection to ourselves and to ALL of life. The Novena acts like a soft cloth of understanding and compassion that when applied to the soul makes it reflect back the light of our very being, full of grace; and to share this process with another is both enriching and transcending. A perfect gift for the self.

~Gena, France

After many years of being in a circle of women with Sheila and then moving away for a bit, I have found coming back into the circle via the teleconferences the perfect sacred vessel for doing my own work. I cannot do it alone - I think we have all learned that. This is a perfect safe container in which to share my journey, be witnessed, learn from amazing women all different from myself and yet One.

~Lucy, Maryland

I am once again reminded that for me, grace is found in the moment. When I think too hard about whether it was destiny or fate that I be a daughterless mother, I get caught up in the questions, the why did it happen, what could I have done to stop it from happening, what did I do to make it happen, and on and on. this time of year I can start with reliving all of the accident and hospital stuff too. For those of you who do not know, Leah was in a automobile accident almost 11 yrs ago on her way to school, she was 17. she was in the hospital for 5 days before she died. The ONLY way I have been able to make it from that day until this one is through Samyama and being willing to enter the present moment and feel what is here.

~ Nancy, North Carolina

Grace means so many things for me. It is a state I aspire to and one I enjoy. It is a little like dancing - being in the flow and not tripping, or even when I trip, if I am living gracefully, I turn it into a new step. It is having confidence in Source and knowing from deep down that I and everyone around me is right where we are supposed to be. It is an unfolding, it is being okay with what is, it is seeing with eyes of compassion and love and experiencing soulful joy. It is acknowledging and even greeting the shadow for its light and the light for its shadow... it is the permanent state of all trees and something you are all teaching me as well... it is finding beauty in my own resources and calling up those of others... among other things. With grace and gratitude,

~ Gena, France

It is difficult to articulate in two dimensional language how powerful the process of the Writing Novena has been to me. The practice of writing is wonderful, in and of itself, as a powerful mechanism for accessing one's True Voice. Yet when coupled with the Presence of a Sacred Witness, this writing novena experience creates a vessel for transformation unlike any that I have experienced. I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. Pregnant with transcendence.

~ Susan

The timing felt perfect for the writing Novena, being witnessed and connected felt really important when I was feeling so fragile, helped me see, allow, feel, felt safe to be me. Thank you.

~Willow

I LOVE to write, and have fallen off the wagon of regular writing more times than I can name. Being in a novena circle holds me accountable to write at times I might not otherwise. AND - - diving in has taken me places I did not foresee and has bridged healing to not quite forgotten wounds. I am grateful for precious support from the circle and writing partners.

~ Dena

The writing novena helped me find my own authentic voice, and the process of sharing the writing with a partner was validating. My partner reflected things that I didn't realize were there (without any judgments), opening up new opportunities for exploration and discovery. I feel as if this writing, which has been going on for about four months now, is proving to be alchemical. Change is happening very subtly and gently. New perspectives are emerging. This body/life piece is seeming to bring into being processes that have been stirring. I'm feeling as if I don't have language for the specifics, except to say that greater gentleness towards myself, more wisdom in general, and surprising moments of loving Bob more deeply are all appearing. The writing, and the ability to review what I've written provide me with a sense of grounding I haven't had before. I can go back and look through what I've written and be reminded about the processes that have moved me to this place. That makes the shifts simultaneously less magical and more magical.

~Linda

When I began this novena process, I could not begin to imagine (and I have a pretty wild imagination!) the deep healing, profound transformation, and incredible love that would continue to unfold in my life. Who knew that by accepting this invitation so much grace would be waiting?

~Susan