



Practice Spotlight | DISCERNMENT

featured sculpture of Eoín Burke from the
Champion | Peace Artist Series

Founder's Welcome

Any noble vision must be accessible. If a big idea is not able to be approached or accessed it will remain just another good idea (and how good is it really, if you can't apply it?). There are a bunch of good ideas and intentions that remain in the space above the clouds; these good things seldom reach the ground of our lives and their promises remain unrealized. Talk of peace is often in the clouds. Talk of peace can be grandiose rather than grounded in our real lives. This is a problem because peace is possible. Peace can be practiced.

Through the monthly spotlight we will focus each new month on the featured practice. In the course of 2021, the monthly spotlight will feature the twelve sculptures that Eoin Burke created as Peace Right Here's first artist in the **Champion | Peace Artist Series**. We have used Eoin's work to teach peace at Yale University in a lecture series and also at Baylor University in a semester-long course. Many have been inspired and blessed by this unique collaboration and we hope the same is true for you.

In the next seven days you will be invited to observe a sculpture, ask questions of it, and consider your own responses to the figure. Along the way you will hear from the sculptor, Eoin Burke, to learn more about his intention for each sculpture. Additionally, certain days you will have questions and ideas to contemplate. Other days, you will have an activity or exercise to put into action. At the end of these seven days you will have three questions which will allow you a chance to reflect on the practice at hand and decide what the respective practice might look like in your life as you go forward.

Blessings and peace,

Paul Gorrell
Founder | Peace Right Here

DISCERNMENT



DISCERNMENT | Introduction

The practice of discernment is complex. We discern to understand. We discern to make decisions and take action. We discern to feel and relate. A robust practice of discernment will permeate much of our lives. Of course, it is possible to move through life without such an intentional practice of discernment; however, any growth in wisdom is likely rooted in growth in the practice of discernment.

It seems that a big part of discernment is in the gathering of information. So where do we get the information we need to be able to practice discernment? Some common information sources are past experiences, stories, statistics, intuition/gut, feelings, faith traditions, professional opinions, and Google search results. What complicates this practice is that when we compile information we can discover that it does not all harmoniously agree. Sorting through all that life brings and dealing with diverse and often divergent pieces of information is no easy task.

In the practice of discernment we can experience the strain or tension from a variety of sources. Some of the sources of tension may include: managing multiple visions, navigating heightened emotions, taking inventory of the past, leveraging limited resources, pressures from others, pressures of time, and the pressure to do the right thing. With all of these tensions and pressures it is easy to realize how stress can develop in our lives as we seek to discern important matters. It is worthwhile to communicate that the practice of discernment is not all about tension, pressure, and stress.

Through the practice of discernment we can experience greater levels of community, freedom, encouragement, and personal growth. The practice of discernment can be a transformational and clarifying journey that can enable us to move from thin understandings to thicker understandings. The practice of discernment is the work to not just do something but to do the right thing. Through the practice of discernment we can build substantial and strong relationships.

DAY 1 | The Sculpture & You

First observe the sculpture. Here are some questions and ideas to consider as you take your time getting new perspectives on the sculpture. Feel free to record your own ideas and ask any other question that seems fitting.

- What is this figure doing?
- What emotions do you believe the figure may be feeling due to the position they are in?
- From toes-to-head, consider the experience of each body part (toes/feet, legs, core/stomach, arms and hands, and head).
- What do you think any of the answers to the questions above or any other thoughts you have about this have to do with the practice of discernment?

DAY 2 | Artist Notes

Watch the following video where Eoín Burke describes the features of this sculpture and how it makes sense of the practice of promising. As you watch this video consider Eoín's rendering of this practice and work to see his perspective while also making room for your own perspective and ideas on this practice. Below the video will be some key takeaways from Eoín's words on discernment.



- In the practice of discernment you are working things out; often times internally.
- As you discern you can invite others into the process.
- With discernment there is a sense of unraveling a complicated situation.

DAY 3 | Contemplation

Think of a time when you had to make an important decision that resulted in a profound change in your life. As you pull this memory forward try to remember the pressures that you encountered, the people (if any) who supported you, the areas of need you had that were unmet, and any other factors that came in to play for you.

- What was the decision you made and how did it change you?
- Who supported you and how did they give their support?
- What information sources did you engage?
- At that time, what needs did you have were not met? How did you deal with this?
- Did any insights on discernment come to the surface? If so, describe the insights.

DAY 4 | Action

Inviting others into the process of discernment can make a big difference. Make a list of the people in your life that you trust enough to walk with you through times of discernment. Next to the name of each person write out the positive characteristics of each person that relate to how they would be able to help you.

DAY 5 | Contemplation

It is valuable to realize that your role in the practice of discernment may be to assist others as they navigate their own matters. You may need to listen to someone else's situation. You may need to help them come to an understanding, make a decision, or take some action. Consider the role of listening in the process of discernment.

- Why is listening an important feature in discernment?
- What are the downfalls of not listening well to a friend or family member in their practice of discernment?
- On your best day, what makes you an excellent listener?
- What areas of growth can you locate to develop as a listener?
- Who is the best listener in your life and what makes them so great at listening?

DAY 6 | Action

Discernment can be a two-way street. We can invite others into our process of discernment and we can join others as they engage the process, too. Look to involve someone else in your process of discernment or be open to help a friend, family member, or co-worker as they discern something in their life. As you consider inviting others into your practice of discernment don't be afraid to tell them in what ways you need their help and realize that they may or may not be able to be who or what you need. Expressions of assistance to others may include: listening, providing resources, offering acceptance, not trying to solve their problem, and asking plainly what they need.

The practice of discernment can build community; however this is only possible when we allow our lives to intersect with the lives of others. There can be a laundry list of reasons why we keep people away from our practice of discernment. Some of the reasons we don't involve others is to protect ourselves from harm. As you move forward with this invitation be aware of the importance of maintaining healthy boundaries that keep you safe.

DAY 7 | Reflections & Going Forward

Question: What has this practice looked like in your life up till now?

Prompt: Describe something from the past week that you have learned or something that has been meaningful to you, regarding this practice.

Question: How would you like this practice to be a part of your life going forward?