

After you read the selection below, stop for a few moments and the questions at the end of piece.

### **The Vacation**

I imagine I retire to a lonely place  
to give myself the gift of solitude,  
for solitude is a time when I see things as they are.

What are the little things in life  
that lack of solitude has magnified unduly?

What are the really big things  
that I find too little time for?

Solitude is the time to make decisions.  
What decisions do I need to make  
or reconsider  
at this juncture of my life?

I now make a decision  
about the kind of day today shall be.

Will it be a day of *doing*?  
I list the things I really want to do today.

Will it also be a day of *being*  
--no effort to achieve,  
to get things done,  
to gather or possess,  
but just to be?  
My life will not bear fruit  
unless I learn the art of lying fallow,  
the art of "wasting" time creatively.

So I decide what time to give to play,  
to purposeless and unproductive interests,  
to silence, intimacy, rest.  
And I ask myself what I shall taste today,  
and touch  
and smell  
and listen to  
and see.

Anthony de Mello, *Wellsprings*

Keeping an open-mind with yourself, address the following and record your reflections in a journal or log.

- 1) What do I notice in my body as I read this piece—warmth/coolness, tightening/opening?
- 2) What questions about 'taking time' 'solitude' and the like come to mind for me personally?
- 3) What does 'the art of lying fallow' mean to me at this point in my life?
- 4) What 'right action' will I take as a result of reflecting here today?