The Latin word for grace is the same as the word for gratitude: grata or gratia, which means "a given gift." In moments of grace, there is an awakening to the realization that everything has originated as a gift and blessing, and that grace is not earned, but given. It is the nature of grace that it comes to you freely, yet, paradoxically, you can't go after it either. Instead, through you, grace is passed on to others. Just as grace is abundant and often present, the landscape of the soul and her gifts are always available to be received and treasured, if we only stay receptive. Yet, just like grace, you can't demand the soul to make an appearance. Many of us lack access to our own interiority due to inattention or a scarcity of places safe enough for this inner quest, even within our churches and spiritual communities.

—from the introduction to A Geography of Grace, a curriculum for those who have experienced one or more Courage & Renewal retreats and want to bring the approach home to their community

### Grace...

**FROM A Christian PERSPECTIVE**

The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. Nothing can ever separate us. It's for you I created the universe. I love you. There's only one catch. Like any other gift, the gift of grace can be yours only if you'll reach out and take it. Maybe being able to reach out and take it is a gift too. — Frederick Buechner

**FROM A Buddhist PERSPECTIVE**

The idea of karma is that you continually get the teachings that you need to open your heart. To the degree that you didn't understand in the past how to stop protecting your soft spot, how to stop armoring your heart, you're given this gift of teachings in the form of your life, to give you everything you need to open further.

— Pema Chödrön

**FROM A Jewish PERSPECTIVE**

חן (Chen) isn't a reward; it is reality. God’s grace isn’t limited to what we want to happen or might like to happen. God’s grace is what is happening whether we like it or not. In short, God’s grace is the giving of all to all.

— Rabbi Rami Shapiro

**FROM A Hindu PERSPECTIVE**

Grace is not something outside of you. In fact, your very desire for grace is due to grace that is already working in you. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to know its existence.

— Ramana Maharshi

**FROM A Muslim PERSPECTIVE**

None amongst you can get into Paradise by virtue of his deeds alone...not even I, but that Allah should wrap me in His grace and mercy.

— Muhammad, Book 039, Number 6764

**FROM A UU PERSPECTIVE**

To feel the presence of God we first stand at a distance, feeling our separation; then we turn and move into relationship, opening our hearts to other people, to the earth, to sounds of music. In turning we feel a mutual contact, the reciprocal meeting of the fullness of life between one active existence and another; we call this experience grace. In this experience of grace we rediscover God.

— Roger Fritts, Unitarian Universalist Minister (inspired by Martin Buber essay, Distance and Relation)

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**A Geography of Grace** is a **Courage & Renewal Alumni Institute** designed for those who have experienced one or more Courage & Renewal retreats and want to bring the approach home to their spiritual community.

Learn more at [www.CourageRenewal.org/grace](http://www.CourageRenewal.org/grace)