

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

IF I WERE BRAVE

27 OCTOBER 2008

(Elizabeth Hudetz, playing guitar, sang "If I Were Brave," by Jana Stanfield, with Judy Holding Wilson as backup singer and Keith Hancock accompanying on djembe drum.)

Any truly creative process begins with a sense of infinite possibility. That's often how it is when we touch something spiritual in our life. I know that's how it is for me. There's a wonderful opening and a sense that anything could happen. We could live forever! We could come back in another lifetime! Maybe we think, the way I feel today, I might just ascend from this earthly plane. Have you ever felt something like that?

As any creative process unfolds there is an experience that could seem like a disappointment. We find out that what is in store for right now is *not* going to be every wonderful possibility that we could imagine. The sky isn't the limit. It's going to be this one thing that's happening right in front of me now, along with what is happening in my own mind and heart right now. What a comedown! In this present moment the creative process is not infinite possibility. It's *this*. And, in fact, it is *this* this.

There is a poem from Longfellow that puts it this way:

*Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small;
though with patience He stands waiting,
with exactness grinds He all.*

Do you ever feel a little ground up? There is some grinding that's going on in the creative process. Seemingly, the sense of infinite possibility is the spiritual part of the journey, and if you want spiritual transformation in your life, you open yourself up to that infinite possibility. You feel the wonder of that, and feel, "Wow, I'm being transformed."

But we are not yet transformed until we get to the part of the creative process in which the mills of God do the transforming. That's the part where we get to find out whether we are

the grinder or the grindee. If it feels like we are being ground up, there is an opportunity even in that. We can check what we're identified with in the creative process. Are we identified with the transforming spirit that's creating everything, including this present moment? Or can we notice that we are identified with the substance that's getting transformed?

There's a widespread experience in humanity of feeling ground up. That is the root of resistance to the creative process. And you hear it all over the place: "Stop the world, I want to get off. Stop the creative process." In some way, so much of what human beings say is exactly that.

Particularly for people who see themselves as being spiritual, we might like to hang out in the infinite possibility for a while longer. A person may think that it would be a lot nicer if we could dream and vision a little longer together, and talk about how wonderful it might be one day, and talk about the wonders of God and the wonders of heaven.

There's something about the creative process as it lands in form that seems *so* unspiritual. At times there is even hard work that comes into our life, and that certainly doesn't seem spiritual! Sometimes the work that's required of me asks me to go beyond my comfort zone. And when I take on a project, I may have an expectation of doing a certain amount of work; but have you noticed that the creative process often ends up being more work than you thought it would be? At least that's how it works for me. I was up for this much, and now I'm being asked to go beyond that into some land of I-don't-know-what, and I don't really know the resource to handle it all. I knew I had enough spiritual reserve to do this much, but now I've got to do *this* much. "Maybe I'm going beyond my substance," a person might say.

Elizabeth's song is so appropriate for what I'm feeling in this day: "If I were brave..." I think courage has to do with letting something land in form and letting it be what it is. We have the evenings of our life, literally and figuratively, where there is a chance to reconnect with the loveliness and the ease and the comfort of the spiritual reality that is behind all things. But there is also the heat of the day, when we're called upon to truly be a creator and to land something. That does take our courage.

"If I were brave..." Elizabeth, as you sang those words, I thought to myself, if I were brave I would say yes and I would say no. Landing something in form requires that, because if you land *this* thing, it won't be *that* thing—not here, not now. Creation requires that we're willing to say yes and say no, that we exercise the capacity to make a choice and let that choice be what is born in the creative process, knowing that, for this moment, that excludes all the other possibilities that might be out there.

We could take some comfort in the fact that this world that we live in has both time and space. So all the other things that are being excluded from this present moment could happen later and they may have happened before. They could be happening somewhere else. So

there's still infinite possibility in that way. But in the heat of the day, when *this* is what is being born, those thoughts probably aren't a lot of comfort. This is what is happening now.

Here are some words from the prophet Malachi: "Prove me now herewith..." (*Malachi 3:10*) The word "herewith" means "in this." Prove me now in this thing, in this which is landing in form now—prove it! We are called upon to prove it. I think all of humanity is, and particularly spiritual people. I observe that spiritual people tend to talk a lot about all kinds of wonderful things, all kinds of spiritual things, all kinds of wonderful possibilities for ourselves and for the world. We have hopes and visions and dreams, and I think what we hear back from life, if we're open to hear it, is "Prove it!"

It is the proving that brings life. The talking brings hope and excitement and inspiration, but I don't know that of itself it brings life.

We get to face something else if we take that on, something that Elizabeth also sang about in her song: "If I could make a mistake and still be proud...."

So unless your life is very different from mine, I can promise you that if you *are* brave, and you accept your responsibility for creating the one thing that's happening now in your life, you will make mistakes. You might even make some whoppers. But you will make mistakes. I make mistakes. If we were not brave, we would never land what is looking to be born now because we might make a mistake.

In Rudyard Kipling's poem "If," he speaks about meeting triumph and disaster, and treating those two imposters just the same. They don't look like imposters when you meet them. They are the same, though, in that whatever is happening is what's happening, however you judge it. And therefore it deserves the same care and attention and follow-through from us as anything else, whatever our judgment is about it. It is a circumstance, like any other, looking for somebody to see things all the way through—all the way through to their ultimate victory.

"The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small." That grinding has to do with all that is unwholesome in our experience. Anything that's not truthful in our vision and understanding, anything that is unwholesome in our heart, is ground exceedingly fine by the creative process. The process of landing something in form changes us. If we're proactively involved in the process of creation, if we're playing our part as a creator-being to let land what is looking to land, it changes us profoundly. It takes what is solid and in chunks—even the good spiritual chunks—and grinds it up and makes it available for something else.

If you follow out the analogy, a mill grinds kernels of wheat into flour. But it doesn't stop there, because the flour gets made into bread, which sustains life. Bread is a symbol of life. That is the purpose of the mill: to bring the bread of life. So all the good ideas and all the

unwholesome things in the heart have to be milled for that bread to be made. Often the milling doesn't seem very spiritual.

Both in the Full Self Emergence Work-Study Program and in our Leadership Program, we are embarking on an in-depth consideration of the creative process. This week we were considering what's portrayed on the Third Day of Creation in Genesis, which is all about this process that brings living form.

“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

“And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

“And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.” (*Genesis 1:9-11*)

Here is a picture of the creative process that brings forth living form. It's good to consider together just how that process works, and what it asks of us, and what is it of life that we have to bring here this morning.

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28 September 2008

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