

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

CREATIVE THINKING AND MUTUAL PRAYER

28 APRIL 2008

“And I cannot teach you the prayer of the seas and the forests and the mountains.

“But you who are born of the mountains and the forests and the seas can find their prayer in your heart.”
(from *THE PROPHET*, by Kahlil Gibran)

“We are stardust, we are golden.” (from *Joni Mitchell’s “Woodstock”*)

Many people talk about prayer, and state “Well, I pray and I don’t hear anything.” Of course, we don’t live in a world where God sends e-mails. We ARE stardust, we are golden. This is our word. We have in our heart the forests and the seas and that kind of reality. We learn how to listen to the truth in our heart by paying attention to what is most precious to us.

I was talking with a friend about parenting recently. I asked him, “What are the important things you wanted to teach your children?” He said he wanted to teach them respect, and he wanted to teach them how to think. Listening to him, it became clear to me that creative, attentive thinking is prayer. And when you actually are willing to think, that’s when you hear the answer to your prayers. That’s when you hear the answer to your questions. That’s when you hear what you should do next.

If you are teaching a child how to do this, you are teaching them how to really observe—how to look at what’s in front of them, how to look at the risks and the options. What talents do you have? What are you capable of? Who’s with you? Who’s not with you? Who values what you value? Who doesn’t? That’s creative thinking in this adult experience. If you can live your life thinking that way, children will learn how to do that just because they’re with you. I can’t think of a greater gift to give a child than the ability to think creatively about what’s next in their life.

Oftentimes people come to this lectern with a script. We’ve seen people stand here and resort to reading their notes. They can’t get their eyes off the script. It’s understandable because to think creatively in this place—where you have to be open to perceive the creative impulse coming out of the invisible and at the same time read the atmosphere in the room—takes some training. It’s sometimes a lot easier to have a script.

I know people who have said, “Well, I had a lot to say, and I stood up here, and something else came out.” They decided to think creatively. They utilized what was in the room, what was in their head, what was in their heart, and what was really required in the moment. I had someone tell me once that they stood up here

and hadn't realized they'd be driving a hundred-mile-an-hour train. That current is available when we say yes to life, and it gets magnified here.

So what is the mechanism that allows you to perceive what is the right choice for you, what is the answer to your prayer? For example, how did you get into the room today? Did you get a note in your mailbox, inviting you to come? You make decisions based on the compulsion that you're paying attention to. Some decisions may be forced upon you. There may be young people who are here because of their parents. But for the most part, I know you are here because there is nowhere else you would rather be.

I remember the story of Abraham in the Bible. He decided that to truly show his love for God he would sacrifice his son. For years, to me that story seemed to be about a test. I had a belief that I was always being tested by God. "See if you can be good in THIS situation, Jane." A trying situation would show up and I had to see if I could stay good and then be worthy of God's love. So I believed the message in this story was "If you really love Me, you'll be willing to take your son's life." A test! I see that differently on this day. In speaking about what it really means to pray, I believe Abraham was paying attention. In his mind, and in his culture, prayer was about giving what was most precious. What you truly loved, what was most precious to you, you put on the altar and offered up in sacrifice. The finest lamb was slaughtered, the finest calf. And what did Abraham love most? He loved his son.

I can imagine what it was like to get through to his consciousness. Can you imagine the Lord saying, "How can I get through to Abraham and get him to stop? This is NOT what's required in our friendship"? Eventually Abraham heard another answer, a new possibility. Because of the openness of his heart and his creative thinking, something stopped his hand. He went from believing that this is the way I show my love for God to this is how I will love and pray today. I will sing praise and thanksgiving instead of sacrificing that which is precious to me. I don't need to give away what is precious as a sign of my love. There are so many circumstances in which people believe this. They believe they have to forsake what is precious to them.

There was a time in my life when I was dating a man who told me, "You are everything I've ever wanted, so I can't date you." Seriously! He said, "You're independent, you're not financially needy, you're funny, you're attractive, you're Italian, you're passionate." And he said, "I know I can't date you because I need to suffer and learn in a relationship." That really happened, and I was flummoxed. I understood that it was a pattern of belief on his part. Good things can't happen because I'm not good enough; I'm not ready.

I knew an elderly woman years ago who fell down the stairs. She was seventy-five years old. She stood up at the bottom of the stairs, and the arthritis she had had for ten years was gone. She was shocked. Immediately, she convinced herself she was not worthy of that miracle. Within two weeks the arthritis came back. She had been pain-free for the first time in her life, and felt unworthy.

I sometimes wonder how many blessings are trying to come our way, but we don't receive them because we've forgotten how to pray. We've forgotten how to think, how to be open, and how to see the gift that is right in front of us. David Karchere recently said unconditional love means unconditional openness. You have to be present to receive blessings. You have to be available.

I just had a conversation with a friend this morning in which it looked like there was no way through her

dilemma. I suggested, “Let’s just hold this. Let’s think creatively about the next step. Let’s hold the people involved; let’s hold the circumstance.” Because thinking together is part of what unconditional love and friendship is about.

Have you ever looked brilliant in front of other people because you were in a process of real thinking with them and, because of that, a fresh, creative idea just came to you? Chris and Greg Bullock were talking a couple weeks ago about the creative experience they had when Michele Christie was here. Being together with another mind, another partner, another open heart, new things came to them. Creative thinking results because of mutual interest, valuing the same things, loving the same things and saying, “This is a new day because you’re here, so what can we see today?” What’s new today?

Have you ever had to change your mind because you had previously made a choice that no longer worked? You may have thought to yourself, “I can’t do it this way anymore.” You may sometimes feel like a failure because you believed it should work today the way you thought it should work two weeks ago. If you are open to see what is happening, you may make a change and realize “Thank God! What was I thinking?” Before, other options seemed unreasonable. But now, with my new creative thinking, my higher surrendered thinking, my collective thinking, my mutual prayer, a new way has appeared.

Mutual prayer. What does it mean to mutually pray? The word “mutual” has to do with sharing something in common with others. It can also refer to something that is characterized by intimacy. How do you pray with someone? My experience is that I find someone who values what I value, first. Find out what it is you value and find others who do, as well. How do we pray now? How do we see that we have limitations based on our culture and the way we learned how to be? I know how I was parented. I know my parents loved me and raised me to be a certain kind of person, but I’m not that person anymore. I’m not ten. I’m in my fifties, and I have to take responsibility for clean prayer, clean power, and unconditional presence now. I no longer can think of the story of Abraham and Isaac as I did as a young girl when I learned that story.

Recently, two close friends of mine who had been distant for a long time shared in the kind of mutual prayer I am speaking about. After years of being out of touch, they reconnected here at Sunrise Ranch when one invited the other to join him in prayer in our Little Chapel. I know that the depth of that experience initiated much in their relationship and in their work together.

So how do I think on this day? I find the people who value the magnification of the creative spirit on earth, who value life. I find those who value unconditional love because it’s not oppressive and doesn’t devalue anyone. I find people who value the unfolding pattern of the divine, and the grace and control that is available to us in that unfoldment. I find people who hold that safe and say yes to the emergence of human beings in the emerging divine pattern. When we say yes to that ourselves, we have the opportunity to hold a space for other people who are hungry for that too.

In our program, we talk a lot about agreement, and we talk a lot about divine control and design. But, really, what it comes down to is friendship. That’s what it comes down to for me—holding a place of unconditional love for my friends, for my friends’ victory, my friends’ coming forth. It is a bonus that others get to see and experience true friendship by being with me and my friends. In that friendship, we see the new opportunities life is bringing to us.

When I was in chiropractic school, my mother and father came to my graduation. They walked into Integrity House, which was the place we had for chiropractic students associated with the Emissary program. My mother walked in and said, "This isn't normal. People don't treat each other this way." I said, "It might not be common, Mom, but it's normal. We've chosen to live this way. We've chosen to have respect and care for each other above our own personal wishes. We've decided the atmosphere in the house is more important than how we happen to feel on a given day. We chose it."

We shine on our own path and on the paths of those sharing that friendship. And so we see more, we think more clearly, and we're more creative; and more is possible, more is born. And we are beautiful.

We think creatively about what it would be like to sustain this with larger and larger groups of people, because it is the natural state. We may think of it as miraculous. We think of life and health and blessing and true friendship as a miracle. It is normal. And it can be increasingly common. It is the place where we choose to live.

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