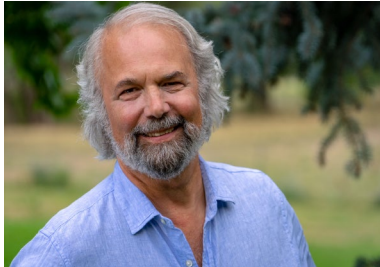


IGNORANCE AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

PULSE OF SPIRIT

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DAVID KARCHERE is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

Ignorance is a significant spiritual practice for anyone. Of course, the word *ignorance* comes from the same root word as *ignore*. The root of both words includes the meaning *to take no notice of, pay no attention to*.

When you ignore something, it doesn't mean you're not aware of it. It doesn't mean you don't see it. It means that you deliberately choose not to focus on it. The ability to ignore what deserves to be ignored is the important spiritual practice.

The flip side of the practice of ignorance is the practice of magnification. If we choose to ignore one thing, then our attention is available to magnify another in our own awareness. And naturally, what is magnified becomes bigger in the eyes of the beholder.

These two practices—*to ignore* and *to magnify*—and how they are applied, become pivotal in human experience. Properly applied, they lead to joy and creativity. Improperly applied, they lead to disaster.

What so often happens in the world in which we live is that the things that ought to be ignored are magnified, so that they get bigger and become overwhelming for the person. And then the things that ought to be magnified become ignored. And so, the very source of the creative power for a person, and the intelligence that is within them to be accessed, is to no avail. And just as with the negative things that we see and choose to ignore, I don't believe there's anyone who is totally unaware of the creative power and wisdom that's within them. In both cases, ignorance is not a total lack of awareness. In some part of our consciousness, we are aware of the enlightening, empowering source within us. It is present. But for some, they've been ignoring it so long that they forgot where they put that awareness. It's hiding out someplace in some corner of consciousness that's being totally overlooked. And so, you could truly say that person is ignorant because they are ignoring something that is present someplace in their awareness. Instead of

being magnified, it has shrunk into insignificance for them in their lives.

So, what is it that ought to be ignored? Probably all of us have witnessed other people becoming obsessed with things—things out of their past, things that other people are doing, things that they want but don't have, things that they are afraid of. All those things are becoming magnified for the person who is not letting these principles work out properly. They don't understand the spiritual practice of ignorance.

Sometimes we become more objective witnessing others, and so it is easier to see what is happening for them. But if you are like most people, you observe those tendencies in yourself, and, at least to some degree, you have learned to ignore what would otherwise become an obsession.

What deserves to be magnified? It is God-Reality by whatever name, the Invisible Source of our own life and of all Creation. And while we say that it is invisible, it ends up manifesting in all of what is visible. What's invisible are the seeds of creativity and wisdom, the pattern of reality that is available to us in consciousness. At its very source it is that creative stream that is unchanging in its steadiness, unchanging in its availability, unchanging in its presence.

In human experience, it seems so easy to believe that physical things are real and substantial and important. And so, we tend to

treasure those things and attempt to create stability in our life based on what we can see, feel and touch; the things of the world in which we live. Those things become so very real. And then the things that have yet to manifest seem ephemeral. Of course, if they're magnified in consciousness, those seeds of possibility are soon not just invisible. They become a manifest world—a home, a community, or even a child. They become the fruits of the garden of consciousness.

But if our human awareness becomes focused on those fruits, as if they're the ultimate reality, and we forget where the fruits came from, we are right back into magnifying something with which we are obsessed. Perhaps it looks good in the beginning. But what happens to fruit? It is eaten, or it spoils. That's the way of fruit. That's the way of form. It ripens. It's beautiful. It has its day. It changes. And it fades away.

I love revisiting the often-ignored teachings of Jesus. In our churches, we often put him up on a cross, we celebrate his birth and grieve his crucifixion, while often ignoring the brilliant and practical spiritual teaching that he gave. In the plainest, simplest way, he shared magnificent truths. He said this about what should be magnified in human awareness:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand....

(Matthew 7:24-26)

The rain descended, the floods came and the winds blew upon both people. But the wise man had found what ought to be magnified in his experience. The rock. What is constant is invisible, even though it can be manifest in the visible.

The shifting sands are the changing circumstances of our lives. If we build our house upon those shifting sands, we are soon asking, *Who moved the cheese?* Something changes. Of course! Life circumstances are always changing in ways large and small. We are called to find what is *changeless over earthly changes*.

The person who magnifies what should be magnified—what is stable and what undergirds our human experience—finds that they themselves become a rock in the world. In the middle of a world that is changing in so many ways, there is a point of reference to what is stable and what is true. It is then present in form and in the garden of consciousness. That is what spiritually awake people are devoted to being—not because we

somehow try to become strong and endure through human strength but because we ourselves magnify our spiritual centering and what comes to us out of our centering.

When we do that, we are *Becoming a Sun*, as my book by that title describes. We are becoming on the outside what is already present on the inside. So we bring the qualities of the sun into our world: we bring warmth, we bring light. And we bring something else, which is gravity. We bring the gravity of the sun. This has been spoken of as the Law of Attraction. Much was made out of it in the movie *The Secret*. The truth is that we bring the gravitational pull of the sun, holding in our orbit all that belongs in our own personal solar system, and inviting what needs to be drawn close to us and what belongs with us. It happens through this power of the gravity of the sun when that is magnified for us and we have learned to ignore all of the distractions around us.

This is a very practical teaching for anyone, expressing a very practical truth that is relevant in every dimension of a human life, including community. Without the Law of Attraction working in community, no community. Centrifugal force has us flying in many directions. When we have become a sun, there is an invitation. There is the drawing, attractive power of Creation that's operative in our human experience.

I found a French hymn. Here is the title and the first line:

À moi, les coeurs braves!

Here is the English translation:

To me, brave hearts!

That is the Law of Attraction at work when the drawing power of the sun is radiating from the Invisible, and then through a person in whom that drawing power is magnified. *To me, brave hearts.* This is how the rock of reality is built in community, and no other way. There have to be those who allow that rock to be present in the garden of their own consciousness. It has to become magnified; the awareness of it must become large. Then the power of it begins to work through thought and feeling and through the energy field of people.

If we believe in oneness, we believe in One Reality through all of humanity. When you are that person and I am that person who magnifies the source within us, there is One Reality operating through us both that is drawing what belongs in community. *À moi! À moi!*

Having lived in intentional community most of my adult life, I know the joys and pleasures and the pitfalls of community. One of the pitfalls is a small-town phenomenon, where everybody is in everybody else's business. Being close on that basis isn't very much fun. There is a certain social closeness that happens in intentional community—but there is the opportunity for that almost anywhere.

The significant factor is what's happening in the garden of consciousness. Is the community of people coming together in the garden of consciousness? Is there spiritual intimacy in this intentional community? Social intimacy without spiritual intimacy is a recipe for hell, if you haven't found that out already. For me, and the community where I live—Sunrise Ranch—the whole point of community is spiritual intimacy. Someone has to invite that closeness. *À moi!* There's a right proximity, a right closeness, and a right coming together in spirit and in heart.

I did a search in my King James Bible. I was looking for these words: *Come near*. That's how *À moi!* was said throughout the Bible. It popped up on my search, chapter after chapter: *Come near. Come near. Come near.* I don't think they were talking about all of them necessarily coming together physically, although there can be a benefit to physical proximity.

Do you feel that urge from within you, expressed to others? You may have whatever social tendencies you have; you may be an introvert or an extrovert; you might throw parties or you might avoid them. But I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about the creative urge within us to invite other people to come together spiritually, to come together around the One Reality that we are knowing when our spiritual centering is magnifying Reality, and that Reality is saying to us, and through us, *Come near unto me.* We're inviting other people into one place.

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As the motto of Martin Cecil's family went, *One heart, one way*. One Reality. When that is experienced through people in spiritual community, there is a rock. There is something solid, protected, and strong. It is the Rock of Reality. If that's not going on, it's simply people milling around. There is nothing of any great significance happening for us as human beings. There is no Law of Attraction at work to bring people together.

Something else *is* happening for many of us. We hear the call of Reality through our friends, and through ourselves:

*À moi, les coeurs braves!
To me, brave hearts!*

May we continue to magnify what deserves to be magnified. And yes, we are aware of all kinds of factors of what's happening in our immediate world, with other people, and in the larger world around us—and we can be deliberately ignorant in the sense of ignoring all those things as a cause for what we ought to do. The cause of what we have to do is who we are, and it is beautiful. Let us embrace this cause and let it be the profound motivation for our lives.

Let us fully learn the spiritual practice of ignorance.

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