

LIFE IS NOT A PERFORMANCE

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.

Life is not a performance. Our existence is not to make an appearance for others, or even for ourselves. We are not here to meet performance criteria. A human life is fulfilled when a person dares to be fully themselves. And then express and embody who they are in all they say and do. That might look like a performance from the outside. But for the individual whose life it is, it is only being authentically oneself.

Life is not a performance.

In the public forum, emphasis on performance is prolific. Every year, we celebrate athletes who break sports records. We adulate rock 'n' roll stars, cinema icons, and “reality TV” winners.

The United States of America now has a reality TV show president. He, and many in the country, have become profoundly separated from factual reality. Even our government can become a performance,

lacking credibility, effectiveness and personal integrity.

Performances can be convincing and inspiring, at least to some. But of itself, a performance is *not* reality.

The same issues constellate for the individual who seeks to make the forms of their life match the expectations of others. The more independent of us attempt to match our own expectations, only to find that performance alone—even if successful—doesn't create happiness or fulfillment.

Performance orientation breeds competition, and winners and losers. It urges people to see life as a zero-sum game. If someone is to get ahead, others must be disadvantaged.

One of the problems with a performance-oriented life is that even if the performance

goals are met, they are profoundly unfulfilling. So perhaps newer, more ambitious goals follow until a person gives up altogether.

A performance-oriented life breeds envy, which is a desire for the forms of life we see others possessing. If a person is not themselves, what else is left? What else, but to look at the lives of others and attempt to have the outer form of what they have?

The truth of being oneself is far more than settling on certain personality traits and attempting to embody them consistently. Truly being oneself means that a person embraces the higher dimensions of their being. It is knowing the Highest Love and having the courage to express and embody it in life consistently. It is surrendering to the Highest Truth of oneself and letting it guide you in all you say and do.

Is that extraordinary? In our current culture, where so many have settled on an existence that is performance-oriented, it seems extraordinary. Yet, when we meet someone who is an authentic human being, living out of the highest dimensions of who they are, we sense integrity. We feel their goodness as a human being, and perhaps even our own goodness. We might even feel the inherent honor and dignity of humankind.

Whenever we, ourselves, open up to the wonder of the higher realities of who we

are, there is magic. There is delight. It is uplifting when you find a way to share the Highest Love in you with other human beings—when you put it into words or show it by your actions. It is enlightening when you open to your own higher wisdom and find yourself inspired by new insights and visions.

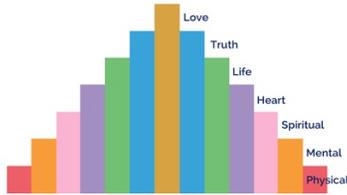
This simple diagram illustrates the fact that we are multi-levelled beings.



Certainly, we are having a physical and a mental experience. That is the world of form. The higher levels of our being are designed to shape, guide and empower the forms of our physical and mental experience. But performance without regard to being has us employing our mental faculties to decide what the form of who we are in the world should be. And without reference to the higher dimensions of our being. That kind of performance is false and shallow, and ultimately disastrous, personally and collectively. Isn't that what we are witness to in the current culture?

The following chart illustrates that the higher levels of our being permeate the lower ones. This is a principle that has great significance for how we live our lives. It

suggests that the art of living is not performance. It is welcoming the higher dimensions of who we are, to be received into our thoughts, feelings, words and actions.



The higher ranges activate our human experience. They are the causal levels that inspire us, empower us, and bring us wisdom. To be genuinely ourselves—to be authentic—is not to take the forms that we see around us, physically or mentally, and then to try to reproduce those in some improved way in our own experience. That’s imitation. That’s the realm of competition and envy. We can never be ourselves that way.

There are indeed times in a person’s life, particularly for children or in a learning process, when imitation can be part of learning. Rote learning is sometimes put down, but rote learning has a place in the educational process. But it’s only a step. Education often begins with simply copying the form of something. The hope is that, in copying the form, we will tune in to wisdom that transcends the form. All true learning and all true teaching are about that. As a teacher, we may show the outer form of something. But in doing so, we are encouraging the person to tap in to the

deeper wisdom within themselves around that realm of form, and allow a Higher Truth to flow through their minds and to guide them.

And so it is with Love. We attune to a Higher Love, not just seeing something lovely that we try to copy off somebody else but to touch Love inside ourselves.

This is the spiritual crisis that we face in the world today. It is a crisis of authenticity. It is a crisis for every human being on this planet. The religious institutions of the world may be in trouble, but that’s not what I’m talking about. I’m talking about a spiritual crisis in the heart and soul of humanity.

We look out at the world today and ask ourselves, *How could that happen? How could we have come to this juncture?* This is a crisis of authenticity versus performance. And if we’re to regain the integrity of our own souls and the soul of humanity, there has to be authenticity. Authenticity is allowing the higher ranges of who we are to be known in and through all of us. Authenticity is real integrity.

That’s different than hanging out in our physical experience and appealing to something spiritual that is seemingly separate from us. It may be above us, but it’s also *in* us, and it is *through* us. And this is what we’re here to know ourselves. This is the knowledge that we’re here to share with

our world. God, by whatever name, is not only *up* there and not only *in* here—it's *through* all of who we are, as we face what we face, as humanity and as individual human beings.

There are many issues for humankind in this day—forest fires, hurricanes, a global pandemic, and corrupt government officials, to name just a few. There are causative factors that created what we are facing today, which have been at play in the recent past and which have their origin from long ago. And there are issues with how they are being handled today.

Behind it all, humankind is facing a crisis of authenticity. It is one that has been millennia in the making. And here we are, watching the culmination of that crisis.

People lurch about for an answer in the world of mental form—ideas, beliefs and ideology. And in the world of physical form—the way things look and perform. Or perhaps there is a spiritual practice or religious institution that could bring the answer. And yet no answer comes. Meanwhile, we lurch around in so many different directions.

The answer is with each one of us. It was named *Emmanuel: God with us*.

In the middle of whatever is happening, we could also name that answer as *Universal Love*. And so often, the response is, *What?!*

It's what?! You mean, in the face of all this that we have going on—a pandemic, an economic crisis, and everything else—the answer is Love? That's nothing! That's the attitude.

The answer is the Light of Truth. *Really? Truth? Whose truth?* So often, Truth is thought to be a mental form. *Truth, as a reality of one's being?*

Truth is not a form, even though it can *take* form. It is not a mental form, and it is not a physical form. It is a reality that transcends all that, even though it can be expressed *through* it all. It is a wellspring of wisdom from within a person. It is the yet-unformed essence and source of human intelligence.

So what sense does it make to appeal to something that's just an essence—that doesn't have form yet at this level of experience?

These are the first two of the higher levels of reality: Love and Truth. The next one is Life. Here it gets a little bit more real, doesn't it? Dr. Bill Bahan said that if you were held up and the robber demanded, "Your money or your life!", you'd be pretty clear what was more valuable. So when we speak of Life itself, maybe it gets a little bit more real for people. It is Life itself that has meaning, and without it, there is no meaning. And yet, if we meditate more deeply, what is Life without the reality of Love? What kind of answer for the world is there without Love—Love for our fellow

human beings, Love for this planet, and Love for ourselves? What kind of world could we create that has any meaning that isn't based in Universal Love?

But what is Universal Love? We can talk about all the ways it can be embodied, because Love interpenetrates everything else. We have the opportunity to express and embody it. But Love is not defined by all the ways that it is embodied. It is an essence that is something of itself, that is higher than all the ways that it is embodied. And so, we have to relate to the reality of Love in worship.

I am not using that word *worship* in a religious way, but saying that we relate truly to Love because we open to it, we honor it, we serve it, and we surrender to it. We realize that it's higher than our immediate human experience. And yet, in our humility, we don't forget that we have this remarkable opportunity to allow it to penetrate all of our human experience and then be expressed through the forms of our life—through our words and actions, through what is, otherwise, just performance. When the actions we take carry the vibration of the Highest Love, it's wondrous. It's beautiful for us who have the honor of giving expression to the Highest Love in our Life. It's an honor to witness it in each other.

Truth is the guiding wisdom for human life. It, too, can be embodied in all that we say

and do, and in all that we allow to form between us. All that is mutable and evolving in our life can be an ever-unfolding embodiment of Truth. And yet, Truth is the essence of something higher than all those forms. It's higher than our thinking; it's higher than our beliefs; it's higher than the forms of our Life.

I woke up this morning knowing there was something that I wanted to say but not knowing quite what it was. It astounded me how the Spirit of Truth started talking to me and telling me what to say. Many of us have that experience. We are finding that there is a deeper wisdom that tells us things. There is a guidance system from within and above. And when we get in touch with it, our lives begin to make sense. They have a natural order. And when we know that together, it forms patterns of community and creativity. It constellates patterns of relationship that carry the vibration of Love.

We relate to Truth through surrender, through worship, opening ourselves to it, with the goal of knowing and expressing it ever more clearly in the living of our lives.

Truth is not something I use to make demands on someone else. It is a reality that sets the pattern of my life.

I believe it's rare in the world to find an individual who knows these things and practices them. It is stunningly beautiful, powerful and compelling when someone

does. Now the things that have seemed ephemeral and otherworldly are not just spiritual. They're in the flesh. There is a performance, but it's the performance of a higher reality that is expressing itself, *being* itself in human flesh. And if it's rare to find an individual who knows and expresses these things in life, it is even rarer to find a community of people who know this together.

It could seem like what I am saying here is make-believe or imaginary. That it is nothing. I say it's everything.

This is humankind's spiritual crisis, and here is the answer to it. And what is that answer?

Life is not a performance. It is the authenticity of a man or a woman, and then it is the integrity of people, knowing this together and sharing it with the world.

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