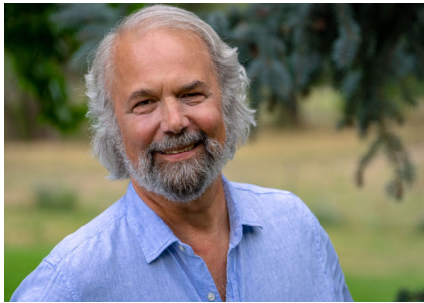


A FOUNTAIN OF GRATITUDE AND ENTHUSIASM

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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As is often the case, the *Pulse of Spirit* this week was born out of a transcription of my words at the Morning Service offered online via Zoom and Facebook from Sunrise Ranch this past Sunday. This week, I noticed I was in high spirits, doing my best to encourage and inspire people to let the fountain of life flow through them. I have sought to preserve the tone of my enthusiastic oratory in this *Pulse of Spirit*. Please receive the words in the spirit I offer them, born out of my passion that we all live life to the fullest and burst through anything in ourselves that might block that from happening.

The fountain's flow that comes to us from out of the world and rises within us is opened by gratitude. The flow of the fountain that falls down upon us from its source opens with our enthusiasm.

The fountain of life flows because we stand in its current and delight in it. We welcome the flow

of the fountain as it rushes to us, and we lift it up in joy. The fountain flows because of gratitude.

Often, what comes to us from the world, from other people, and even from our own human capacities is challenging, full of difficulty, and even ugly and destructive. What do we do with that? Should we be grateful?

I see people struggling with how to handle such things. Should you really be thankful for them?

Sometimes people say you should be thankful *in* all things, not necessarily *for* all things. And perhaps that helps. Moving beyond spiritual

aphorisms, what is going on here? What is the truth of the fountain of life and how it flows?

Would you say that within all people, at their core, there is something good and wonderful? I would. I believe that all people are created out of the power of the universe, universal love. As the Bible teaches, humankind is made in the image and likeness of God. Of course, that's not all that is going on. There is human culture and tendencies that alter and even corrupt the divine blueprint for us all. But the blueprint is there, and the core of universal love is there. How do I know? Because there is no other power for human experience than the power of the universe.

Gratitude is not only the general gratefulness for being alive and present. It is appreciation for the flow of the universe—the fountain of life—that is coming to you now. Yes, it might have elements that are challenging, full of difficulty, and even ugliness and destruction. The art of living in the fountain is finding the clear water of life at the core of what comes to you and receiving that. Anything destructive can be placed on the compost heap of life to be recycled, broken down, and become fertilizer in the future.

The pure flow within the circumstances that come to us is vitalizing, even though the form in which it comes might not be. So gratitude is simply the joy and exhilaration of receiving that flow. It is not the counter-intuitive mental challenge of trying to appreciate the

outer form of something ugly and destructive.

Our expression of faith is having gratitude for what comes, however it looks, knowing that inside what comes is something vitalizing. The flow of the fountain of life that comes to us from the world is stimulating and invigorating. It is powerful. However, that flow isn't meant to stop with us. It flows through us to the larger field of power from whence it came. It joins the larger field of universal love born from the God of the Universe, whose power it is. The flow ascends through us to that larger field. This is the ecstasy of gratitude as the flow of the fountain moves to the headwaters of its origin.

Do you walk around in your local town on the main street or in the subway in the city and see people filled with gratitude and praise for the flow of the fountain of life? My guess is, *maybe*. But oftentimes, in the world in which we live, it just gets dark and difficult for people because there is not an attitude of exultation in life itself and the flow of the fountain of life. The person doesn't like the form in which that flow comes to them out of the world. And so they end up rejecting the form, and in the process, rejecting the flow. When that happens, the human body, which is meant to be the fountain of life, becomes like the stone structure of a fountain without any water flowing through it.

If a person is not exalting in the flow of the fountain of life, they are probably doing something else. The common word for it is complaining. They are entering an experience of feeling victimized by the circumstances that contain the flow of the fountain that is returning to them.

Welcoming the flow of the fountain that comes to us, we make ourselves available for the ecstasy of life. We become invigorated and activated at exponentially elevated levels. We experience joy, which is many times more than for a person who lives in victimhood. We have to be available for that ecstasy or go bumping along in life with our fountain running dry. We have to be willing to be in ecstatic gratitude, joy, and praise for life itself and the source of it.

Gratitude opens the flow of the fountain of life. The flow coming to us and ascending accelerates. The creative flow coming into us from above—from the headwaters of the fountain—increases.

There is a word that might be out of fashion: *enthusiasm*. I am thinking about it because on two occasions within the last week, I had someone say to me, “You are so enthusiastic!” I feel like asking, “And you aren’t?” If you are not enthusiastic about life and its opportunities, if you are not willing to live into the ecstasy of life, then what is happening? A person’s life pattern goes to complaint. Perhaps it doesn’t become a state of clinical depression. But they feel

depressed, down, worried, and anxious. I would much rather be in the enthusiasm of the fountain of life.

I looked it up. You may know that the word *enthusiasm* is from Greek. The origin is simple: *en-theos*. *En* simply means “in,” and *theos* is the Greek word for God. And so, it has to do with being “in God.” My etymology source talks about being possessed by a god, rapt, and in ecstasy. The origin of the word means to be divinely inspired, to have fervor and zeal.

Gratitude brings us into conscious participation in the fountain where there is enthusiasm—where we feel the uplifting current of appreciation, and praise for the source of it all—for God, by whatever name. We experience that reality coming into us and feel enthusiasm. We have the power of the fountain moving in our body and in our entire human experience. We have the zeal to carry forward.

Nothing much gets created without zeal and enthusiasm. Creation occurs when there are elevated levels of ecstasy sustained over time. There is a rhythm to the fountain’s flow, just like there is a rhythm to our heartbeat. So there are certainly times of higher and lower intensity. But the flow never stops when a person has gratitude and enthusiasm, just like the blood never stops flowing as long as there is life in the body.

Gratitude is not work. And neither is enthusiasm. These experiences are not powered by our human soul. They are powered by the source of the fountain. Gratitude and enthusiasm come easily just because we are open to let the fountain flow.

In some social situations, it is not polite to be enthusiastic. You might disturb other people, particularly if there is a tendency in the group you are hanging out with to just stand around. If everybody is standing around and you are enthusiastic, you are shaking things up. Well, I say, *Shake 'em up!* Because if you are not willing to be enthusiastic, you start to die in slow increments. If the fountain of life is not allowed to rise up in gratitude, and flow out in a mighty river through you with enthusiasm, it is because you are cutting it off. You are not activated. You are not creating.

I believe we are all here to create. We have great things to do in our life, at whatever age we are. But those great things are never accomplished without enthusiasm.

We might come from a reserved culture that criticizes enthusiasm. So wisdom might demand that we take care not to offend anyone any more than we have to. But that cannot stop our enthusiasm.

Picture a fountain with a great basin or cup filled with water from above. When the cup is filled, it overflows. The human soul is like that great cup. When we are living with

gratitude, we are lifting up all that comes to us to the source from which it came. And in that lifting up, we are also opening ourselves to receive the flow from above. We are being anointed with the oil of love on our forehead, preparing us to receive the flow of life. We find that life is pouring down upon us. If you do not turn to the source of the flow with gratitude, you do not get filled. If you turn yourself to face upward like the cup, you become the fountain.

Most fountains do not just take the cup filled with water and dump it out. Water fills the cup to overflowing. And like that cup, we are not meant just to dump out the water of life that enters us. We are not meant to become exhausted and depleted. We are meant to overflow, constantly being filled, continually overflowing, bringing enthusiasm to our world. This is the secret of the fountain and the secret of life and life more abundantly.

Exactly how full is the fountain of life supposed to be? How full is the flow supposed to be from you and me and from us together? And do you think we have a pattern of expectation that is realistic about the possible? I wouldn't set any limit on it.

A cup cannot overflow if it leaks. So we are not here to be a leaky cup as an individual. We are meant to overflow with what is being given to us—not just to let it leak out by bad habits of expression and behavior.

Altogether, we are not meant to leak. And how does our collective cup leak? Because of the gaps between us created by all the petty little things we might think, say, or do. That is the state of the leaky cup. So if you have got petty things going on, you are participating in the leaky cup. We are not here to be a leaky cup. We are here to be a cup that holds water to overflow. So we are here to lock arms and know a communion of the heart so that we can be a cup that does not leak; so that our collective cup can be full and we can live in joy and overflow, and know the enthusiasm and ecstasy of life.

Do you think the people in your life need the overflowing waters of your fountain? They do.

Do you think this world needs the overflowing waters of our fountain? It does.

There is no question in my mind—or in yours either, I imagine—as to the spiritual needs of the world in which we live. The question is whether we will be a fountain of gratitude and enthusiasm, overflowing with the answer to those needs.

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