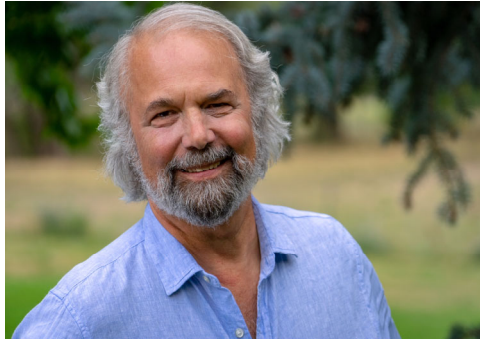


Th FAITH IN YOURSELF, FAITH IN OTHERS

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.

What do you do when you meet an extraordinary person? Someone who, for whatever reason, knocked your socks off, and you said to yourself, *Whoa, this is different! Unusual! Out of the ordinary!*

If we are lucky, we might encounter someone extraordinary in person. But then again, we could learn of them secondhand, through the media, or from history.

We are approaching American Independence Day. A key figure in that story was George Washington. He was an extraordinary person.

American schoolchildren learn about him. He didn't lie about chopping down a cherry tree, and he was the father of our country. As I read about him as an adult, I found that he was an even more remarkable man than what we were told as a child. (And this is not to be oblivious to his faults.)

In the winter of 1777-78 at Valley Forge, under deplorable conditions and with the colonial treasury bankrupt, he vowed to “share in the hardship and partake of every inconvenience” with his troops. He wrote:

Washington rode through the camp every morning to talk to soldiers, witness problems firsthand, and communicate to the soldiers that he cared. He vaccinated them from smallpox during a terrible outbreak throughout the colonies.

His wife, Martha Washington, brought baskets of food and socks to the soldiers who needed them most.

Writer Hank Burchard describes Washington at Valley Forge this way:

...he was, simply, a Great Man, one of those semi-mythical conjurers who can make bricks without straw, inspire self-

sacrificing love, and shape the future by force of will. He'd been repeatedly defeated, was desperately short of everything and was distracted by an effort to replace him as commander-in-chief, but held it all together by the power of his personality and the awe inspired by a dignity so natural that he could, and often did, take a turn at bat in camp cricket games without anybody being in the least danger of mistaking him for one of the boys.

This is a story of leadership at a low point, when conditions are at their worst. The rest of the story is that Washington trained his troops at Valley Forge, and they went on to win the War of Independence.

What do we do when we come across an extraordinary person? Do we recognize them? Sometimes, people are afraid to acknowledge the remarkable nature of what they have encountered. It is disturbing in some way; it changes your life, or at least it could. So you could look away, not pay attention, pretend it did not happen, or pretend they are not there. Then again, you could adulate the person, even idolize them, but remain unchanged yourself.

When I first heard The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, they rocked my world. I was eleven. My sister was two years older and had a sleepover that night. I was in the next room when I heard girls screaming at the top of their lungs. *What is going on?*

I'd never seen anything like it. And there certainly was a lot of idolizing of The Beatles in the years following.

Their music blew me away. Over the years, I've asked myself, *Why? What makes their music so compelling?*

To start with, The Beatles were, as Paul McCartney said, a really good band—tight, with Ringo driving the beat.

They sang and played with passion. And they had a classically trained producer, George Martin.

Lennon and McCartney were great songwriters. They reached high levels of collaboration and challenged each other to be their best. Perhaps more than anything, what astonished me was the way their music constantly evolved. They kept reinventing themselves and surprising their audience, from “Love Me Do” to “Michelle” to “Across the Universe,” and so much more. And it was all original and evocative.

It inspired me as a songwriter. I want to be that great. I want to write lyrics that are that engaging, fresh, and new. I want to write melodies that capture the heart.

I was not content to idolize them. To me, they were extraordinary people, and even more outstanding as a group. I wanted to learn from them. And honestly, not only in my songwriting. I learned things from them that affected my poetry. They affected me as a writer and speaker. From them, I learned to open to a creative flow and let it keep flowing.

I learned so much of what I know as a creative person from John, Paul, George, and Ringo.

I am talking about this because it is vital in a spiritual context. What do we do when we

encounter somebody who is having a remarkable *spiritual* experience? We could idolize them. We could repeat their words. Maybe it is someone from the past and we read about them in the Bible, so we quote the Bible.

If we quote or reference such a person, perhaps we feel the extraordinary nature of the person and what they said and did. And so, for us, maybe there is great resonance with them and their message. You might quote somebody who you know is extraordinary, and you feel it reverberating through you.

But then you might be in the position with someone else of pointing to that extraordinary person you quoted. *Listen to this! Here is someone great!*

If someone does this, they are pointing to something outside of themselves and outside the person they are speaking to. And that's what happens when you idolize someone.

A recognition of the specialness of someone else can be the beginning of a path of discovery and learning. It can lead to personal empowerment. But what happens when recognition is stuck in idolization?

I believe we ought to be able to be profoundly affected by another person. I know I have been. I could give you a long list of names. They are people from many walks of life. Not necessarily perfect people but exceptional, and I'm grateful they have been in my life. I've learned from them all.

Something begins to happen when we have faith in what is within ourselves. When somebody inspires us, we make the

connection that *I am not exactly the same as them, but still, what is inspiring about them is within me.*

At first, the capability within us seems puny; inconsequential. The Bible calls it a "still small voice." And that is how it seems—like almost nothing. But here is the point—it is within *you*. It is *yours*. It is significant, and it is profoundly creative.

Our faith in the profound nature of what we have touched inside ourselves—perhaps inspired by another person—is what allows it to grow. Our faith gives it space to reverberate within ourselves. It is not just a quotation from the Bible or from some other person, or an idea from somebody else. It is not just the presence or the talent of another person. We begin to feel the creative vibration within ourselves. We give it credence, even if it seems small and unimpressive.

This is what can happen to people. They think, *What do I have to say? It is such a small, insignificant thing, and compared to this person or that person, who cares what I say?*

It is the simple truth of what you know for yourself that gives you power. And the more you give it credence, the more it grows. It has power for you, and if somebody else can see it and resonate with it and then find that truth in themselves, it empowers them.

This is a critical issue for our spirituality and for all kinds of spiritual paths globally. The world does not let itself be changed by extraordinary people because they end up idolizing them. It is an immature way to respond to an extraordinary person. It could be the beginning of something. But it shouldn't be the end of it.

Look at any spiritual path or religion world-wide, and you can see these patterns. It is not unique to Christians, but the impact of the idolization of Jesus Christ is plainly evident—it is stamped on Western culture.

I will start with the extraordinary nature of the man. He was a being of Love. The record of his life is full of the essence of that Love.

He was a man of extraordinary faithfulness. He didn't just express the Love he knew once. He *always* did, no matter what people around him did or did not do.

His teaching of Love was extraordinary. His gift to humankind was immeasurable.

Even from the standpoint of his own divine nature, he was not your average angel. When you tune in to who he was and is, you can feel how extraordinary and precious he is as a Being.

So, shall we idolize him?

Even though many Christians around the world do, here is the thing. He, himself, invited people to find the reality he brought inside themselves. He prayed that people would share his experience.

Here are a few quotes from the gospels:

*...that where I am, there ye may be also.
(John 14:3)*

It is a simple statement but unmistakable.

*...love one another, as I have loved you.
(John 15:12)*

Not with a different Love. With the same Love and in the same way he loved.

*I am the vine, ye are the branches....
(John 15:5)*

The last I looked, the branches of the vine are part of the vine. So he was not inviting people to be something other than who and what he was. He was, perhaps, indicating that he had found the tap root, the core, the golden stream at the center of Reality, and inviting people to participate in it.

Here is perhaps the most emphatic teaching he gave, instructing people to find the reality he was talking about within themselves:

*The kingdom of God cometh not with
observation:*

*Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo
there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is
within you. (Luke 17:20,21)*

These are subtle matters. Think of a vacation slideshow. When one person shows one, it becomes dull as dirt. You feel like they are saying, *You really missed it. Too bad you weren't there.*

When another person presents their vacation slideshow, you feel like you *were* there. You feel the essence of the place and all the excitement of being there.

That's the difference between idolization and a shared experience. It can be subtle. But that subtlety makes all the difference. Both people are showing the slideshow. And two people might reference the same extraordinary person. But in one case, it might be

disempowering, while in the other it instills confidence and self-knowledge.

When it comes to sharing a profound spiritual experience, the critical factor is faith in the creative urge within yourself. If you have that faith and live by it, you will tend to have faith in the Creator within someone else. If you don't have that kind of faith, all that is left for you to offer is idolization.

If we truly have profound faith in the source of life, creativity, and Love inside ourselves, it is easy and natural to look at another human being and know that they are just like us, and so to have faith in them. And no matter what they have done or what other people say about that person—and if you have not noticed, people say things about each other—if you have faith in yourself and in the creativity of spirit within yourself, when you

relate to that person you know that it is within them too.

For us at Sunrise Ranch and for Emissaries of Divine Light, I want to be that. I certainly want to be it myself. And I want us to be that. I think that we shoot ourselves in the foot if we do not have faith in ourselves; because if we do not, how can we ever have faith in another person and point them to the truth that lies within themselves?

If you have faith in yourself, you have it to give to another person. If you do not have faith in yourself, it is hard to do anything but idolize someone else or put them down.

I have faith in the Creator within you.

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OF DIVINE LIGHT

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