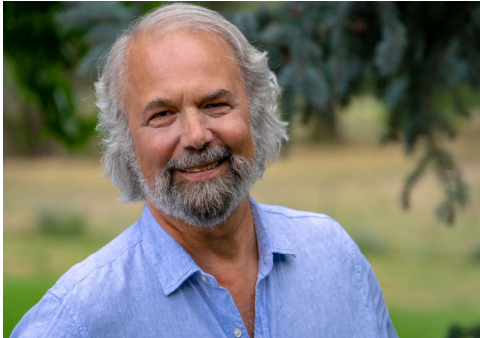


SHARE YOURSELF

PULSE OF SPIRIT
FEBRUARY 28, 2024



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.

The Atlantic magazine just published “Why Americans Suddenly Stopped Hanging Out,” an article by Derek Thompson. It includes this reporting and commentary:

From 2003 to 2022, American men reduced their average hours of face-to-face socializing by about 30 percent. For unmarried Americans, the decline was even bigger—more than 35 percent. For teenagers, it was more than 45 percent. Boys and girls ages 15 to 19 reduced their weekly social hangouts by more than three hours a week.

There is a direct correlation between the lack of “hanging out” and deteriorating mental health, especially for teens.

Citing a Harvard study, Thompson says that *the “simple and profound conclusion” of their work was that good relationships are the key to happiness.*

What is happening?

People are seeing friends face-to-face less. Attendance at churches and temples is down. Employees are working remotely. Volunteering is less than it has been.

And why?

There are some apparent causative factors: COVID-19, obsession with social media, and fear of criminal activity.

As a teenager, I used to hitchhike. I hitchhiked to the local beach. I hitchhiked from Connecticut up to Maine and back. Friends of mine hitchhiked across the country. And we weren’t the only ones.

Do you see anybody hitchhiking today? We are afraid of what might happen to young people if they did.

What might be behind the more obvious factors that drive our social isolation? And how do we find a creative way through this social trend that profoundly affects world culture?

I live at Sunrise Ranch, a spiritual community in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado. The community “hangs out” together for meals and twice a week in worship services with people attending from the surrounding area. For people who live around the globe, we make our services available online.

The physical proximity of the people in our worship space facilitates something else—spiritual intimacy—an experience of a collective heart and a shared field of consciousness. That experience extends to people online.

Physical proximity can facilitate spiritual proximity. But not necessarily. You can feel very alone in a group. A sense of aloneness can be accentuated in a social situation without emotional and spiritual connectedness. So, we want to use physical proximity to create something else: a spiritual convergence.

The prophet Elijah said to the people of his day, *Come near unto me*. He knew that there was something that needed to happen that couldn't happen without proximity. And he offered himself as a rallying point for that. *Come near unto me*. We don't get the impression from the story of Elijah that he was lonely or needed more friends. There was the miracle of life to know among a group of people, and it wouldn't transpire without spiritual closeness.

We have a vision for the future of humankind. It is based on who we are as a race and in our shared destiny. It is a vision of oneness, peace, justice, and prosperity for all people and the planet.

How is this vision fulfilled?

You may have a vision of well-being and harmony in your own life. How is that fulfilled? Realistically, where do you start? What steps do you take?

Oneness is a beautiful vision. But as a friend once said, nothing is happening as long as all you have is oneness. For dynamism—for Creation and manifestation—you need at least two.

Sece Foster recently commented that for there to be harmony between one person and another, there has to be harmony within the individuals, especially between their mind and heart. That happens when the thoughts of the mind and the emotions of the heart are open to Spirit. That's what brings them together and establishes the basis for harmony internally. And it is what sets a person up for creative social interactions.

Jesus of Nazareth taught how this works:

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18:20

He was speaking of Divine Presence and perhaps of his own Presence. It is a spiritual statement. I don't think we expect to see a man in robes suddenly appear in the room when we hang out with another person. But his spirit could.

When a person feels and knows the Presence of Spirit, the heart and mind come together, and these two human capacities find they have gifts to give each other.

The mind has the gifts of understanding, forgiveness, and sight. And when we begin to see what's happening in our own heart and see it from a place

of non-judgment and acceptance, the heart can relax. It feels good when we stop tormenting ourselves with self-judgment.

Shouldn't have done that. Shouldn't have those memories. Shouldn't have those feelings.

When we come to a place of acceptance of ourselves and our own emotional state, the heart begins to relax. The flow that is natural to the heart can then flow to the mind. The heart offers empowering energy. It discloses the information it carries. This is what sets a person up to have successful social engagements.

I could declare that we are all one. But that might short-circuit how we come to actualize the experience of that truth between us. There is something that has to happen for us to know oneness.

I could tell you, *You should know oneness*. Does that do any good? There's a path that brings an experience of oneness. It is a path of communion. It is a path of gift-giving, spiritually speaking. It is having the generosity, curiosity, and courage to give the gift that is yours to give. And then it's being willing to deeply receive the gifts that other people bring, even if they're not conscious of them. It is appreciation expressed for what you are already receiving.

One of my favorite songs, "Leather and Lace," tells of gift-giving between a man and a woman. It's sung by Don Henley and Stevie Nicks and contains these lyrics:

*Give to me your leather,
Take from me my lace.*

The words are first sung by Stevie (a woman). A similar message could be sung by a man, even though it wouldn't go well with the rhythm of the song:

*Give to me your lace,
Take from me my leather.*

It's a bit of poetry, with lace as a symbol of femininity and leather as a symbol of masculinity. The song is about the gifts between a man and a woman. But to me, it has a larger meaning. And I know of no other song that states it so explicitly. Any two people brought near to each other by their openness to Spirit enter into an opportunity for gift-giving.

Give to me what you've got, whatever the gift is.

You have gifts to give—spiritual gifts that are life-giving to the people around you. Don't hide them.

Hang out. And then, through your openness, let yourself be brought into spiritual proximity with another person so those gifts can be transmitted. Those gifts may be gifts of feeling, ideas, inspiration, life energy, or simply the encouragement of another person. *Come on, go for it!*

Then there's the gift of receiving what comes from another person, taking it in deeply. When you do that, you are drawing it out of them. You are perceiving the pure nature of the gift and welcoming it, even if it has become obscured by them in some way.

*Give to me your leather,
Take from me my lace.*

There is a reciprocity of gift-giving. It doesn't work unless there is reception. There is a gift of the heart to give, and when gifts of the heart are given back and forth, they provide a medium through which Spirit shows up. And what is Spirit? It's Presence. It's creative power. And it is creative wisdom.

Somebody has to bring people together to experience spiritual intimacy. Someone has to be Elijah and invite others to come near. And if there is to be spiritual intimacy, another person has to respond to the invitation. Someone has to draw close spiritually and truly give the gifts they perhaps didn't even know they had. And receive the gifts of another.

For me, this *Pulse of Spirit* is a way I give of myself. There is a certain amount of external effort to write it, but I am not referring to that. This *Pulse of Spirit* contains the creative essences of my soul. How would you like to receive it? What would you like to be your gift in return?

Here are two simple opportunities. Share yourself by writing your thoughts and feelings in response to this article at the bottom of the page [here](#). Or share your appreciation for this series of articles by offering a donation to this work [here](#).

Let us not fall prey to the global trend that is creating social isolation—that is stopping people from hanging out and knowing a life-giving spiritual interchange. Have faith that there are creative essences within your own heart and soul that would be a gift to other people. Find the gifts of the people around you and receive them deeply. Get back in touch with the urge within yourself to hang out and share yourself with others—all of you, perhaps not all at once, but over time.

The ultimate gift is who we are.

Let the gift-giving begin.

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