

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

ALL-IN

FEBRUARY 25, 2013

This quotation is from Teddy Roosevelt, Nobel Peace Prize Recipient, leader of the Rough Riders, conservationist and 26th President of the United States:

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

(from a speech given April 23, 1910)

These words encourage anyone who reads them to be all-in in their life. Being all-in doesn't necessarily mean that we're on horseback, saber brandished high. Being all-in means totally owning and being totally engaged in what is happening in our life. And when I say "engaged" I don't mean all enmeshed. I just mean that we are fully present, fully here.

There is no way to unthink a thought or unfeel a feeling or undo what has been done. You can't unsee what you have seen. The crucial factor is whether we are seeing from the standpoint of

someone who is fully engaged in their life; someone who is all-in. That is related to the vantage point from which we observe and how we relate to what we see.

In Teddy Roosevelt's time, as in our own, the tendency to stand on the sidelines of our own life as the distant critic is epidemic. The critic attributes the cause of things to other people, and applauds or criticizes from a distance. In the media, this is a popular sport. Personally, I seldom enjoy movies the film critics praise. And I've always had a secret desire to become a movie-critic critic—to write a column critiquing other people's movie reviews. But really that has only passing interest, because being all-in, in my own life, is too important to me.

The point is that when we fully own our lives, something kicks in that cannot kick in any other way. There are forces and energies and there is wisdom that kicks in when we are one hundred percent "in" that doesn't kick in at ninety-nine percent. So it is more than the courage and valor, which is so much a part of Teddy Roosevelt's spirit, that kicks in. I'm all for courage and valor, but there's more to life than that. There is wisdom that kicks in; patience and endurance that kick in. There is sight that kicks in when *we* are *all-in*.

Being all-in in our life does mean giving all of who we are. As it's said in sports, it is "leaving it all on the field." But this is not about burnout, because if we're fully committed to our life we can't afford burnout. We are not here for burnout. We are in for the long haul. If we are fully committed to the creative process that we are in the midst of, however it is manifesting, we are there to enjoy the fulfillment of the cycle. That is something very different from the short burst, making a good show of it, looking valiant in one moment and then passing out from exhaustion. Really owning our life is owning its fulfillment and being committed to doing our part in whatever phase of the cycle we are in.

What does it mean to be all-in in relationship? It includes the ability to protect the heart of another person. Our human anatomy tells us a lot about this. We have a physical heart, perhaps the most vital organ in our body. It is closely connected to our emotional body. Notice where the heart is. Some people are said to wear their heart on their sleeves, but of course that is not actually true in a physical sense. Your heart is in a very special place, surrounded by your rib cage and your breastbone. It is in a protected place, as well it should be.

This demonstrates something that ought to be true for us as a human being, that our own emotional realm is in a protected place. It is a good place to be, where it's not necessarily subject to every passing thing. It has a place to be that is protected, where the tender essences of the heart can thrive, and therefore deepen and vitalize our own life and the lives of other people.

Can we be the breastbone or the rib cage for the emotional realm of another person, so that we are keeping safe what's happening there for them? So that we are keeping out the impact of words and energy that could make it difficult for the emotional realm to be at peace? Sometimes we're called on to be the protection of their heart when there are soft and delicate essences that are growing in them. There are realities that need to emerge through the heart that need a place to grow, away from the harsh things of the everyday world.

This is about being a warrior of the heart; a warrior for the protection of the gentle things that can grow there. When a person performs that function for themselves or another person, the heart has many gifts to give back to us. One such gift is the gift of warmth and encouragement. The protected heart has that to give to us as we are about the work that is ours to do in the world. The protected heart energizes us to truly be all-in. It is hard to have the courage of a Teddy Roosevelt if your own passionate heart is not behind your presence in the world. To be all-in, your heart needs to be behind you and encouraging you. And for that to happen, you must be its protection, its breastbone and rib cage.

These dynamics can play out creatively between people. In conventional society—in an *Ozzie and Harriet* reality—the man has been the warrior in the world and comes home to protect the woman from the perils of the world at large. There can be something beautiful about a dynamic between a man and a woman, in which the man protects the heart of the woman and the soft and gentle things that can be born through that heart, and where the woman offers her encouragement and support for the man's work in the world. If he can't offer that kind of protection, she may never find a protected place for the gentleness of her heart to emerge. Or at least he'll never get to see it. But if, in that scenario, there is protection for the heart of a woman, she has the opportunity to be an encourager, to say, "I'm with you, I'm behind you—you have my heart."

This dynamic can be at play regardless of gender—among women, among men and between men and women. When it is, reciprocity is beginning to occur. The heart of one person reciprocates by offering encouragement when it receives the protection of another. When receiving encouragement, a person can reciprocate by protecting the heart of the one who encourages. But full reciprocity takes people beyond an experience of fixed roles. It carries them into an experience of taking the role that the other person has been in. For example, the man who has been protecting the heart of a woman finds that she is then protecting his. And the woman who has been giving the warmth and enthusiasm of her heart to a man then finds that he is giving his warmth and enthusiastic heart to her. If someone has protected your heart, aren't you inspired to protect theirs, to be a champion for them, to make a safe place for their heart to open up?

This is part of what it means to be all-in. When it comes to relationship, being all-in doesn't necessarily mean that you have a lifelong commitment. It means that you are fully present and committed to whatever kind of relationship this is meant to be. It may be a life partner; it may be a business partner. It may be a friend or a brother or a sister. Being all-in changes any relationship.

These words from David Whyte's poem *The Truelove* speak of being all-in, in relationship.

*There is a faith in loving fiercely
the one who is rightfully yours....*

Part of *loving fiercely* is protecting the sacred things of the heart that are present for other people. Those sacred things need a home in which they can grow and flourish.

So who is the one that is rightfully yours, or the one that is rightfully mine? It is whoever is in your life right now. Life is best lived all-in.

David Karchere
dkarchere@emnet.org

© 2013 by Emissaries of Divine Light

*To receive a weekly e-mail with *The Pulse of Spirit*, send an e-mail to emissaries@emnet.org
Donations to Emissaries of Divine Light are welcome.
To make a contribution to assist in our work, please visit www.emissaries.org*

100 Sunrise Ranch Road ♦ Loveland, CO 80538
970.679.4200 phone 970.679.4248 fax