

FACE THE HEADWINDS AND FLY

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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I feel like we are a powerful jet, hurtling down the runway and taking off. Not being a jet pilot, the closest experience I've had to guiding such a craft is as the skipper of a sailboat. That's as close as I've come to flying an airplane.

The sail is an airfoil similar to an airplane wing. Imagine that you are sailing close to the wind, heading into the waves, cutting through the water with a good stiff breeze, the water splashing up into your face. You can feel the prow of the boat moving through the waves. There is such excitement in cutting through the water that way. And even though you are heading into the wind, it is propelling you forward.

In a similar way, a jet plane cuts through the air on takeoff. It heads into the wind, not *with* it, using the headwind for lift. It accelerates down the runway and finally the wheels leave the ground and it becomes airborne, heading for its appointed altitude and destination. That's a symbol for us in our current cycle.

Do you have any headwinds in your life? Anything that is offering resistance, challenging you perhaps? There can be an instinct to turn the other way around; to turn your back on the headwind, thinking it would be easier to just go with it. The only problem is, if you do that you don't take off.

There's a need to face the headwind—to face the issues that are up head-on. And there is a way to face them with the right attitude, and the right adjustment of the flaps. There's a way to face those issues where we take off and we find ourselves ascending, so that we are moving to a place that's higher than the issues that we're facing—higher than the resistance, higher than the challenge. We put ourselves on a trajectory that's taking us to where we want to go. And while we may be facing into the wind on that takeoff, we fly high enough to enter the jet stream. Then we are carried along with the air currents that are natural to this planet, and we reach our destination.

There are many dimensions to this analogy that I believe are relevant to us. Feel yourself as an aircraft, or perhaps as a bird facing into the wind. Feel the wind streaming past you, blowing through your hair. Feel yourself taking flight, gaining altitude, knowing that you're heading to an important destination.

There are so many things in our human life that are important for that to happen creatively. For one, we have to be able to keep our balance. On that takeoff we no longer have the balance that we had on the ground. We have a different kind of balance. We're navigating through the air. And if we don't keep our balance, what happens? We lose lift. We come crashing down to earth. As we face the headwind, we need to keep our balance so that we don't enter some kind of death spiral.

So we have to keep our balance as we face the headwind, so that we stay aloft and keep ascending. Balance is poise and centering as we face into the wind.

Our own structural integrity and strength is important. As it's heading into the wind, the aircraft has to have enough structural integrity that it can take off without fear of losing a wing. So we have to call upon our strength as we face the headwind, and know that we have the strength to fly. We were made to fly. We're not going to come apart. Sometimes you may have that thought in an aircraft. You encounter turbulence, the plane rattles, and you think, *The plane is coming apart!*

We have to rely on our structural integrity as we take flight. We have it. But we have to transcend

our fear and call upon our strength as we are taking off.

There are tremendous variations of pressure during takeoff and in flight. We're going to higher altitudes. If we were not going to fly high, we wouldn't have to worry too much about it. But we are going to a great height. We have to be concerned about the equalization of the pressure on the outside and the inside. We can't do too much about the pressure outside, so we have to create the balance of pressure *inside*.

I took an Assembly with Martin Cecil in 1979, which was an intensive spiritual training for four weeks. He was addressing the issues around pressure and made the statement that no matter what we are facing, we need to generate as much internal pressure as we need in order to face the external pressure. Because if we don't, we will be squashed. If the pressure of circumstance is more than the creative pressure of your own spiritual expression, you end up feeling crunched. And if our internal pressure is too much, we explode.

Have you been feeling any pressure recently? What's the answer to that pressure? It is for me as it is for you. The answer is the pressure of me coming forth; the pressure of my spirit, my love, and the light I'm bringing into the world. That is larger than the pressure I'm facing externally. We have to equalize the pressure. We have to bring our own pressure and allow the forces within us to meet the forces outside us. We have to let those internal forces flow through us and meet the world, so that there's a balance of pressure.

Sometimes jets fly in formation. Or we might think of birds, or geese flying in a V. In *our* function together, we have to think about how we fly in formation. We're all in a process of going down the runway, taking off together.

In a V of geese, there is a goose right at the head of the V. But that goose isn't doing anything different from any of the other geese, is it? They're all flapping their wings, they're all facing into the wind, they're all ascending, and they're all going for their destination. If one goose starts looking over at the other and getting distracted—"Are you beating your wings hard enough over there?"—that goose has lost orientation. That's not what is happening with the geese. All of them are doing the same thing, and if they do it together in a V, there is an aerodynamic benefit. They're bringing each other along in that process, and they're certainly not colliding with each other.

Comparison is an enemy of flying in formation. Knowing that we are all doing the same thing and we all face the same challenge, if we face it together we will take off. If we're in disarray, if we don't know what the challenge is, we're waddling around on the runway, feeling perturbed.

We have a chance to face the wind and take off—to rise up. When we do, we see the world around us from a different perspective. And every headwind that comes causes us to rise higher.

In any given formation, if you are the lead goose, what is your role? Most essentially, it is to take

off and fly high—to ascend. You can't be worrying about all the other geese at that point. Hopefully they come along. And hopefully other people are willing to be the lead goose from time to time. But if you're the lead goose and you don't take off, what happens? Probably none of the rest of the geese do either, and you are all just waddling along on the runway. And that's not much fun when it's time to be taking off, when it's time to be airborne.

Think of some of the people down through history who have taught this and lived it. We have this remarkable quote from Jesus:

And I, if I be lifted up...will draw all men unto me. (John 12:32)

We might think that is exclusively about Jesus. But it's also true of you as well as me. There is something uplifting about someone who has taken off, is there not? If you are up there in the jet stream, it's an invitation for others to take off and be there too. Of course, everyone has a conscious choice in the matter. It is a conscious choice to gain altitude. And then there are things to learn about staying aloft and flying in formation.

Facing the headwind is about being relevant in the world in which we live. There is so much negativity happening in our world; so much that seems disturbing. There is a plague of narcissism in America today—a constant looking in the mirror. *How am I doing?* Self-obsession. And so a person loses track of reality and lives in a world that is not based in fact but only in the perpetuation of their own narcissism. They are not paying attention to what's happening for

everybody else or what's happening in the world as it is.

What are we to do in the face of that? Run away from it? No, we're flying right toward it and up over it. There are so many problems like that in our world. We have a chance to face them head-on, not to battle with them but to bring something relevant to the world in which we live—to have a personal answer: *No, I'm not here to be self-obsessed or narcissistic. I serve something higher than my human personality. I am in service to what's higher than me, and in being of service to that I am in service to my world.* That's the remedy for narcissism. *I'm not going to dodge the issue. I'm going to live the truth that is the answer to the issue. I'm going to speak the truth. I'm going to go right into the headwind, take off and gain altitude.*

There are so many things in our world that are like that. We have something relevant to bring—a much needed answer to the world. Where I live at Sunrise Ranch, we are not escaping the world. We are a teaching and demonstration site for the world. The same opportunity is open to anyone. And when we bring what is relevant, we find that we're facing into the headwind and we're taking off. We're gaining altitude. That is happening. This is not just an attempt at inspirational writing. This is what's happening for you and for me. There are headwinds in our life, are there not? And we're either attempting to run from them or we are facing the headwinds and we're taking off. Which will it be?

I say there is wisdom to be had about all this. Let's be wise. Let's take off together. Let's not be all in a dither on the ground, wondering

what's going on. Let's fly in formation. Let's feel the wind coming through our hair and take off. In doing that, we are drawing the world to us.

So to keep it real, not only is it true for each of us that we are facing a headwind, but it's also true for us that we are taking off, and the ascending forces are at work in our life that want to draw us up. Be willing to be drawn up. We *are* ascending. Don't lose poise, don't lose balance, don't be crashing back to earth. Stay aloft. Keep moving. This is really happening. The higher you go, the further down it is. Let's not be going to a great height, only to lose orientation, to lose structural integrity. Let's stay in flying formation so that we don't find ourselves stalling and spinning until we crash.

When we ascend into the jet stream, we are drawing the world to us. We had about ten thousand people here recently for the Arise Music Festival. On Sunday, September 23rd, the service at Sunrise Ranch will be broadcast as part of Unify's seventy-two-hour livestream celebrating the UN's International Day of Peace. People from around the world will be joining us for the livestream. *We invited the world, and the world came.* It is happening.

And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men and women unto me. We are flying high and there are people coming to fly with us. Are you ready for that? Do you want to be in flight? It is happening. Again, this is not just an attempt at an inspirational essay. This is what is happening. Let's be with what's happening. Let's play our part in what's happening.

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There is something exhilarating about sailing a boat close-hauled with a good stiff breeze. There's something joyful and freeing about flying high. And while we enjoy the comforts of home (and there's a time to be snuggled into our warm beds), there is also something exhilarating about flight. And when it is time to be flying, let's fly. Let's allow ourselves to be lifted up.

Sometimes they don't let planes take off, particularly in high-altitude airports with mountains around, if they're carrying too much ballast—too many passengers or too much baggage or too much fuel. They have to discharge a little fuel so they can make it over the mountains. If *you* are carrying too much ballast, it's hard to take flight. You have to let go.

And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men and women unto me. That is true for me and it's true for you; it's true for all of us together. It is the remedy that the world is looking for. We're not looking

to take flight just so we can look down at human beings, like little ants down there, and say, "Nah nah nah nah nah; we're flying and you're not!" Our flight is an invitation: *Let's fly. Let's all fly together.*

The flying serpent is an ancient symbol of human consciousness aloft in the air of the spirit, connected not only through sight to the earth but also connected to the heavens. This is not the serpent who crawls on its belly through the dust of the ground, but the winged serpent. That is rightly our consciousness. That is where we belong. We are air creatures by nature, meant to walk between worlds. So let's let go and allow ourselves to be lifted up, and be that winged serpent. Let's face the headwind and fly.

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