

LIFE LOVES YOU

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT
NOVEMBER 17, 2014



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I've been thinking of something we all know: that our perspective, our attitude and our thinking alter the way we experience our life and all that comes to us. I recently became aware of something that I know for sure, and in the knowing of it my life is completely altered. I know that Life loves me. Universal Being, God, Source, Creator—by whatever name—Life, the animating force of the cosmos, loves me. And that completely alters my experience and my perception of all of life.

Like everyone, I've had challenges in my life, but none of them have been able to sway me from that heartfelt knowing. No one and nothing can convince me that it's not true. And of course, Life loves you too.

But do you know it, fully and completely? Do you feel it in the depths of your Being? Do you remember it when you need most to remember it? There's grace in that. And by holding that belief,

by thinking and feeling through that awareness, grace is available to me and to you in everything that we do.

I've noticed that not only have challenges not swayed me from that belief, but I think somehow they've actually strengthened it. Hardships have miraculously increased, not decreased, my ability to experience joy, to be full to overflowing with deep blessing. Because through all adversity is grace. There's always grace. And with grace we develop a transcendent awareness of that which is greater than any circumstance that we're facing.

In the experience of adversity, I figure we have two choices: constriction or expansion. We can become self-absorbed in our suffering; we can focus all of our thoughts and energy on ourselves and what is happening to us. We can see the world as being there for our pleasure, and be justifiably unhappy when it doesn't please us. Or we can

expand through adversity and hardship. We can bring the highest and finest of ourselves to each circumstance, and create into that circumstance—create from the possibilities that exist in the invisible realms that are available to us when we align with spirit, with the truth of who we are. Through expansion, we stay grounded in our own beingness and we bring our true spirit to everything we do. We open our hearts and minds and we invite others into a place of possibility and wonder.

While watching a movie last week, I learned something I didn't know, which I find quite interesting. Apparently, when you grow grapes to make wine it's best if you don't give them enough water. Then the vines struggle, and that struggling magnifies the richness of the flavor of the grapes. If the vines are too comfortable—well watered, well fertilized, weather just right—they become lazy; and a lazy vine produces grapes that make lousy wine. There's a message in that for us, I think.

In David Karchere's soon-to-be-published book *Becoming a Sun*, he encourages us to bring gravity to our world. One of the most important ways we bring gravity is in bringing the wholeness of who we are into our hardships, into the circumstances that are the most challenging. In that way we strengthen our core. We develop unwavering strength. We become centered in true Being. And that's how we become an anchor for the people around us. That's how we bring gravity to our world.

If everything were smooth and easy all the time,

how different would we be? How different would you be? Can we bless the circumstances that have come to us for our upliftment? Can we bless the opportunities to grow and stretch beyond what we thought we were capable of doing? And when we find that we did it, can we celebrate that we're a different person as a result?

In the midst of hardship it's so important to love ourselves, to care for ourselves, to bring a spirit of blessing, understanding and compassion for ourselves. And when we do that, we are more likely to bring a spirit of blessing, understanding and compassion for others in their suffering.

I am deeply moved and inspired by my courageous friend Derik Lane. Derik is grieving for the loss of his beloved fiancé, Kristen. And as I've watched him in wonder, I've seen that he has no fear. He courageously feels, deeply and completely, all that there is to feel—all the sadness and all the loss. And in the midst of that, he magnifies his feelings of love for Kristen. He remembers who she has been for him, and he celebrates their love. And not once does he ever attempt to escape from the painful feelings. Not once does he ever stuff them. What power in Being! What valuable lessons my friend teaches me in the midst of his suffering.

We cannot grow if we suppress our feelings. We cannot stretch if we're not willing to experience *all* that life brings. We are human *and* we are divine, and we must immerse ourselves completely in being human and experiencing fully all that that brings. But we must transcend suffering at the same time. We must transcend suffering

with our divine, higher vision—a vision of possibility. And only then do we become a whole person. Only then are we holy.

We must allow ourselves to be transformed by life, to be transformed by love, so that we may be a more true and accurate expression of love. Love transforms us so that we might serve love. In the words of Kahlil Gibran:

*When love beckons to you, follow him,
Though his ways are hard and steep.
And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
Though the sword hidden among his pinions
may wound you.
And when he speaks to you believe in him,
Though his voice may shatter your dreams as
the north wind lays waste the garden.*

*For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify
you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for
your pruning.
Even as he ascends to your height and caresses
your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,
So shall he descend to your roots and shake
them in their clinging to the earth.
Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto
himself.
He threshes you to make you naked.
He sifts you to free you from your husks.
He grinds you to whiteness.
He kneads you until you are pliant;
And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that
you may become sacred bread for God's sacred
feast.*

*All these things shall love do unto you that you
may know the secrets of your heart, and in that
knowledge become a fragment of Life's heart.*

*But if in your fear you would seek only love's
peace and love's pleasure,
Then it is better for you that you cover your
nakedness and pass out of love's threshing-
floor,
Into the seasonless world where you shall
laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep,
but not all of your tears.*

We can get lost in emotions, especially intense emotions, when the only support that we have is on a physical or mental basis. We need to access our spiritual capacity so we can bring possibility. It's through our spiritual capacity that we have access to divine wisdom, our own deep knowing; we have access to divine power and divine love. In those moments when you are experiencing confusion, fear or despair, I invite you to sit with the part of yourself that is eternal. Sit with the part of yourself that is not challenged by anything. And as you commune with that One, know that undoubtedly the Universe is unfolding as it should, and it always has, and it always will.

Pain can only really be healed by love. When we are in the midst of suffering, we need love. We can open to and receive the love that others offer us. But more importantly, we can ourselves love, because as love moves through us in the expression of it, that's the best remedy. That's the best medicine. If you're feeling sadness or grief, love more. If you're feeling resentment, anger or fear,

love more. Regret, guilt, despair, hopelessness—just bring more love. It's the ultimate medicine for everything.

So I know that Life loves me and Life loves you. And in the remembering of that, I know that we have access to all that is possible, all that our own beautiful divine Being can bring, all that is available in the heavenly dimension for us to partake of.

I made some commitments for myself that I want to share with you. Please consider if there's something that you would like to commit to for yourself.

I am loving and forgiving.

I am compassionate and understanding.

I live my life consistent with what I value most.

I am masterful in using all of my capacities, including my emotions, to serve my world in generative and life-giving ways.

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