

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

SECONDHAND KNOWING

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Yesterday I attended a very insightful Creative Field Day. During the day I found I was going into new territory, territory that I hadn't quite looked at in quite the same way before. I find that it's important to be open as we explore together and discover new elements of spiritual expression and understanding. I was thinking as the day ended that some years ago I found myself in what I describe as a "spiritual trap"...and the "spiritual trap" was thinking that I knew a lot about spiritual matters. Now, I had some beliefs and I knew some principles. I had attended numerous lectures, talks and classes, so I thought I knew something and I was only too pleased to tell other people what I knew. I then sometimes wondered why they didn't seem to receive my pearls of wisdom that I'd learnt in all these classes and lectures. For example, if there was an opportunity to use a biblical quote in conversation, I would be tempted to mention it and give an interpretation about it.

That was my experience at that time and at some point I had a look at it. I started to realise that I was confused in my "knowing," because a lot of what my "knowing" was is what I now call "Secondhand Knowing." I knew what I'd heard from other people, as opposed to what I call "Firsthand Knowing," which is based on my own spiritual experience, my own spiritual exploration; finding answers to my own questions, my own discovery. This knowing is based on what it is to be in spiritual expression. Having been guided by, and been resonant with, others who have generated spiritual atmosphere and had some spiritual understanding, I found my own knowing.

I remembered a discussion some time ago when I was talking to one of my sons and I said, "You can know all about girls, but it's different when you go on a date." In this light, one can know all about spiritual principles, spiritual thoughts, spiritual concepts, spiritual beliefs, but it's different when you're actually living a life inspired by spirit, with the expression of love and the clarity of truth. This is because there has to be integration between what my

principles, theories and beliefs are and what I'm actually expressing and proving out in my creative field. As love, caring and honesty are expressed by me, they have an impact on my creative field. If all I am doing is spouting some theory that I've heard from some teacher or spiritual leader, there are huge limitations as to what impact I will have on my creative field. The principles and theories are very valuable, but they have to be put into expression and practice. Putting it into practice also implies a level of resonant communion with that which is higher and finer.

So it requires a different set of skills—skills that I could say that I've found out by learning on the job. I have had to test out and bring into manifestation some of these principles, teachings and understandings. I've had to explore and find out what they mean in my life. Now, as I said above, there was a trap. The trap was thinking that I knew based on a theoretical understanding. So I thought, how can I find a release from being in that trap? I discovered that this release is based on vulnerability, spiritual vulnerability. At some point I had to be open to something new that is beyond just a secondhand spiritual understanding, and it actually was a matter of the heart. It relates to a matter of being open, of re-exploring what I knew to make it fresh and make it real. The stretch was to find out what it takes to be loving, even in difficult circumstances; to know what it is to be truthful in an open, honest and clear way, as opposed to pretending everything is okay. These are things that I found needed to be looked at, and it takes some strength and assurance to begin to explore. I found that to some extent I used my "theoretical knowing" as a defense mechanism. I knew how to protect myself from going into new spiritual territory by pretending I have the answers. I had this strong defense system, so if ever there was a problem I would think of a concept or something I'd learned in the past. I thought at the time that I didn't need to hear anything new from anyone else because I knew a lot—but what I knew was theories and what I needed to do was to go into situations where I was open.

Sometimes the most unexpected sources revealed themselves to be the next step in spiritual growth. There were times that I was in a seminar or class, and inside that class or seminar that wall of belief and principle and knowing still had to break down. There had to come a point where I was open to what was being offered—and really open, not just on the surface...being all calm and relaxed and in my head, and appearing to be on top of it...but actually saying to myself, "Gee, maybe I don't know as much as I thought I did and maybe I've got to start being open to new inputs. I have to be vulnerable in opening my heart to new experience." Realizing that it is not enough to just talk about truth, but actually being honest with myself—really honest—which I found takes some strength to do. I was beginning to be honest and becoming aware of the kind of impact that I'm having on the world around me, on the people that are closest to me, and asked how could that be transformed in some way?

So this is spiritual work that over a number of years I've had to do and continue to do. I thought that some of this trap was that I had climbed the first step and thought I was at the top of the stairs, but actually I had just reached the plateau of the first step; there are more

steps to climb. Some of the first step was learning from others, receiving new ideas, teachings and concepts, being open to new input, even if it for me was “Secondhand” learning, receiving teaching, guidance and mentoring from those who did have “Firsthand Spiritual Experience”; otherwise I did not know what the next step could be, what was possible in moving to “Firsthand Knowing” in applying those teachings and concepts. I realised that in climbing that next step I have got to put to one side the knowledge of that first step, so that I am actually open to something new.

So I found, in doing that, I had to realise that it required something of my exploring in vulnerable territory. To begin that exploration requires self-belief. I had to know it was okay to go into new territory. If I didn’t, the defense mechanism of concepts just stayed in the way. I may have thought that the defensive wall I had built looked impressive to others, but actually I don’t think anyone was fooled, and it didn’t get me to “Firsthand Knowing.”

I was recently reading a book called *The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth*, by John C. Maxwell. There was a reference to a baseball scene in a “Shoe” cartoon. There was the pitcher and there was the catcher, and the catcher was advising the pitcher: “You gotta pitch the ball with self-belief,” to which the pitcher replied, “What I really need is belief in myself—and in the area of belief in myself I’m an agnostic.” Clearly, regarding self-belief, the pitcher was experiencing some skepticism. That very often is the case for people.

There have been times that required some verifying evidence before I believed in myself and believed that expressing love could be valuable. Usually “belief” applies to “Secondhand Knowing,” whereas “Spiritual self-belief,” “Spiritual Knowing,” is based on actual spiritual experience and expression. Spiritual exploration requires self-belief. It requires being willing to go beyond a “Secondhand Knowing” into “Firsthand Spiritual Expression” and experience. It is not just a matter of believing what I have learnt from what leaders and teachers have said, even though what they had to say was very valuable and showed the way forward. It also required experiencing a spiritual transformation myself.

Having a sense of self, of spiritual knowing of myself, was to know that I can bring love into any situation—I can always do that. Bringing love actually generates strength of spiritual identity. I know the experience of orienting in something higher, to which I am connected. I can bring divinely inspired love, no matter how challenging or how exposing the situation is. I know that I have a central higher reference point that gives me a sense of self and allows me to open up into new territory, allows me to explore what I know to be true in a new way. I then find there is a lot more to discover and experience spiritually.

There’s always more to know and discover and express, and vulnerability is that little key that opens the situation up. Sometimes it’s actually the key that I don’t want to turn in the door, because I know that when I open that door it will lead me into the more vulnerable places and I don’t know quite what the territory is going to look like. I could say it’s a lot safer on this side, where I am relying on what I know from the past. But it is actually essential

that I use that key of vulnerability if I am actually going to move forward into something fresh and new. It is the process of discovery of what it is to have a “Firsthand” experience of Spiritual Expression and Understanding.

Laurence Gawronsky
lgawronsky@emnet.org
Gatehouse, Cape Town, South Africa
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100 Sunrise Ranch Road ♦ Loveland, CO 80538
970.679.4200 phone 970.679.4248 fax