

THE DANCE OF RECIPROCITY

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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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.

From February 6 to 10, nineteen of us shared in a four-day course—*Becoming a Sun: Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence for a Happy, Fulfilling Life*. We had a remarkable time together. It was, by the nature of the event, a course, and yet it was something more than that. We came together for an experience of learning, growth and development. But it was also an experience of being together in power as a group of people. When we sat in our circle, we could feel the strength of our togetherness. Beyond oneness, there was unity.

In the creation of our curriculum—the series of courses that we have launched and then the curriculum in each course—we have laid down bread crumbs that guide participants through the creative process as it unfolds in the human experience. The result is a profound experience of grace—the joy and fulfillment of the creative process.

This is about the unfoldment of things over time—process. Understanding of process is a huge gift. Potentially, it is a terrible pitfall as well. For instance, this course, *Becoming a Sun*, was conceived to be an introductory course. And then we have a series of four *Primal Spirituality* courses that follow. After those courses we have a *Leadership Program*, and then other more advanced courses and events. It can lead to a psychology of waiting: *When I finish this course or the next course, then, then I will come into grace, I will come into enlightenment. I will become a sun one day.*

And yet the magic of the creative process is that when we come into grace we are bringing grace now into everything. Creation does unfold over time. But it doesn't unfold over time in a good way for us as human beings unless we show up now and take full advantage of the opportunity to be in victory in our lives

THE DANCE OF RECIPROCITY

now. We are compelled to embrace the victory of our mission *now*, the victory of being activated spiritually *now*. The victory is living in grace through all things. Then the psychology of waiting is over. We are here now.

In the depths of the human soul, we are wired for spiritual activation. That is our primal spirituality. In our heart of hearts, and in the deepest parts of our soul, we are looking for what has true meaning and true significance. And life. We are looking for what excites us and exhilarates us. We are looking for what we could respond to, open to and surrender to, and in surrendering be empowered to be an instrument of that to which we have surrendered.

There is a kind of surrendering that makes us weak. We can surrender to our victimhood. We can surrender to people who put us down and make us small. We can surrender to a culture all around that is oppressive and disempowering. That kind of surrender does make us weak. But surrendering to what activates us spiritually makes us strong.

Are you looking for what is spiritually activating for you? Have you found it? And if you have, have you surrendered to it? Have you given your life to it? Have you become activated?

It would be lovely if we could do this

process of spiritual activation without respect to other people. We could avoid all the pitfalls of human beings, and all their imperfections, and all the ways they don't do it right. The reality is that spiritual activation involves other human beings. Are you looking for other human beings who are spiritually activating for you in your experience? I am. It is far better than being with people who are spiritually suffocating. When I reflect upon it, all of my most powerful experiences of spiritual activation happened in relationship to others. How about you? Yes, something profound opened up inside me. But there was always someone else in the picture.

There are so many facets of the activating power of Spirit, and so there are so many ways that we can become spiritually activated. Personally, I have looked for people who represented to me what was noble and true, what was powerful, wise, loving and liberating. And when they brought it to me, I could not deny it. Some of those people were terribly imperfect. Part of the wisdom of being spiritually activated is knowing that it happens in relationship to other people, but it is ultimately something that happens within yourself. So in surrendering to the process of spiritual activation, you have the opportunity to throw out all that is worthless and embrace the value of what you find. You take the goodness of that and you

embrace it. You embrace it in yourself, you embrace it in that other person, leaving the rest behind.

A weak person is looking for perfection in others, because if there was a flaw it might deter them, it might overcome them, it might limit them. A strong person knows that they can take the goodness of what is present in another person; and whatever guilt trip, whatever limitation, whatever condescension, whatever flaw they have, they can discard it. In the process, there is a powerful activation that transpires. That's the gold.

Are you looking for people who bring the opportunity for spiritual activation in your life? My belief is that deep inside every person, they *are* looking for that. Do you *know* you are looking for it, and are you *finding* it? And if not, why not? Are you truly looking, in earnest? And are you honest enough to meet it and embrace it when you do see it and find it?

When we find it, what do we do? There is the dance of reciprocity that brings exhilaration and life. It is the dance of surrender and response to spiritual activation. It is the dance of doing something about all that we are receiving; first of all, actively appreciating what we have received, and expressing that to people who are instrumental in that. It is the dance of giving back, first of all to those people. And then it is the dance of

paying it forward, taking what we have received and, in the ultimate act of gratitude, giving it to another, and giving it to our world. That is an act of appreciation, fulfilling the debt of gratitude for what we have received.

We live in a world that is so often not in the dance of reciprocity. It is in the dance of oppression and victimhood. With oppression comes violence of all kinds. When indigenous peoples are oppressed and stripped of their primal spirituality, they often become violent. That violence can be turned inward against their own culture, their own families, and against themselves in the self-sabotage of addiction.

But it is not just indigenous peoples for whom that happens. We live today in Western culture in an oppressive society. There is the oppressiveness of our culture in so many ways—the oppressiveness of corporate culture, the oppressive nature of our media, of our politics, our economics and our system of finance. And there is a dance of oppression that commits emotional and vibrational violence against other human beings. Sometimes that violence turns physical; there can be domestic violence, black eyes and all the rest. But it is not always physical. Sometimes it is simply verbal—it comes out as some kind of putdown or condescension that is oppressive. That is not a dance of reciprocity. That is a dance

THE DANCE OF RECIPROCITY

of oppression. The shadow complement to oppression is victimhood. And then in that dance of oppression, if we have been oppressed and we have not liberated ourselves, we ultimately end up oppressing others, one way or another. Victims become oppressors.

Oppression and victimhood, at any level, is the enemy of spiritual activation. It is the enemy of coherence between us. It is the enemy of agreement. It is the enemy of liberation. It is the enemy of oneness and unity. Oppression is an entirely different thing than the dance of reciprocity.

Where someone is liberated, they are liberated to bring their spiritual activation to the world and to other people. Not to oppress other people, not to condescend, but to bring the activation of the spirit that has activated them, and let it live in the world, knowing that the world needs that. Certainly, the world needs the activation of the seven virtues that we speak about and experience in our courses: *Blessing, Understanding, Taking Action, Fulfilling Mission, Enlightened Thinking, Courage and Grace*. It is our destiny to bring that activation. When we have received it and taken it in, and let it change us, we have it to give. Not just the idea of it, not just the teaching of it—the real power of spiritual activation.

When you pour the highest love into the

heart of another person, it activates feelings of love. It is not just an idea; it is not just a theory. We say it is a virtue, but it is not just an attempt to be good. That is a concept from the dance of oppression. It is the release of an activating power. It is not just an idea; it is not just a teaching. When you truly bring *Understanding* to another person, it is like giving them oxygen. It changes them. And so it is with all the activating power that we have to give as individuals.

So are we in the dance of reciprocity together with anyone else who wants to be in the dance with us? Do we know who is in the dance with us?

I notice that people have a fear of obligation. *Will I end up having to do something I don't want to do? Will I feel a responsibility that I don't want to take on?* Important questions. My question is this: *Who is in the dance with you, and do you want to be in the dance?* I don't know how to be in the dance of reciprocity without the sense of responsibility to be my brother's and my sister's keeper—without the sense of responsibility to give back and to make my contribution to the dance.

If you are called to the dance of reciprocity, can you say no to playing your part without losing your own soul? If you see somebody struggling, can you just walk by them? If you see someone

THE DANCE OF RECIPROCITY

carrying a heavy burden, can you just ignore it?

There are wealthy people in the United States who have decided that they don't have to participate in the dance of reciprocity. And so, in this nation today, the concentration of wealth is reaching new extremes. Some of the people who are hoarding that wealth don't seem to notice the great injustice they are creating.

Studies of human culture tell us that where concentration of wealth gets extreme, culture breaks down. No reciprocity, no healthy culture. There are the obvious ways in which reciprocity breaks down in terms of wealth, and then there are the less obvious ways that reciprocity breaks down. If you see somebody with a hurting heart and you just ignore them, is that reciprocity? Reciprocity is at *all* levels, including the level of the heart. A closed heart is a lack of reciprocity, because real reciprocity is in everything. It is total life expression.

Can you see how afraid we are of real oneness? We talk about oneness. But then we are afraid of the dance of reciprocity, and knowing that we are responsible for giving *our* gift in that dance and for playing *our* part. We are afraid of seeing that we are not only responsible for ourselves and our little bit but we are actually responsible for the whole, for

noticing how that whole is going, for having a care about that. Truly, we are responsible not only for looking after what we need but looking after what the dance needs from us.

In truth, this is liberating. The culture in which we live tells us it is not. It tells us to stand up for ourselves and to serve ourselves and to get what we need, and not to pay too much attention to the needs of the person next to us, never mind down the block. Then you will be free. How is that working? The dance of reciprocity sets us free. We are totally free to give the gifts that we have to give. And we find that, in giving our gifts, there are remarkable gifts that are given in return. There is a dance of reciprocity that invigorates and enlivens us all. All that we are looking for—all the love, all the community, all the wealth, all the productivity, all the enjoyment—is available in that dance.

It is nice to have the spiritual love and espouse the idea of oneness. But for that spiritual, universal love to come out for real in us as a human being, it has to activate the heart. If your heart has grown cold and stony, let it be activated! Open it up! Somehow, somewhere, expose it to the activating power of the highest love. Seek it out. Your heart wants it. Know that it wants it. Let the longing of your heart take you to it, and *find* it. Are you finding it? And what are you doing when

THE DANCE OF RECIPROCITY

you do? Are you surrendering to it? Are you letting it overtake you, warm you up, activate you, so that pouring out through you is that highest love? If it could circumvent your heart, it probably would. But the Wonderful One Within us all created our emotional body for a reason. It is required to let love out.

You can put it off to the future. It is getting harder for some of us—less future to put it off to! And there are all kinds of reasons why we don't reciprocate. "Oh, I haven't had a lot of experience with that." "Oh, I haven't taken the course." "I'm not too good at that." "No one asked me to." "I'm really not that kind of a person." "Somebody else does it better." "I feel awkward." "I feel shy." Do we have more reasons? "I've stumbled before." "I'm too young." "I'm too old."

In the mid-90s I came into leadership with some others, and all the while there was the talk that we were too young to be leading—green, untried and inexperienced. I heard that talk for several years. And then one day somebody said, "We're getting too old." I remember thinking, *When was that magic moment when it was just right? How did I miss it?*

The magic moment is *now*. Time messes with our mind: *It was so good then. Or I'll do it later.* The magic moment is now. It is now or never.

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