



Interfaith Inspirer

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The Purpose of Relationships

by Annie Kopko

*"Everyone has something to teach me.
We have a purpose in being together."*

This is one of my Favorite quotations from Louise Hay, longtime New Age spiritual teacher who lived in California. She is an author of many books, with a great following. I think she has it right when she affirms that as we heal spiritually, we heal physically.

So keep this idea in mind, how do we heal spiritually? First of all, we have to remember there is nothing to heal because we are not sick. We never have been and we never will be. Simultaneously, however, our spiritual selves have indeed chosen come forth in bodies and explore this amazing world we share with each other. And a huge part of this exploring includes our ego mind, which gets us into deep trouble, but also is instrumental in creatively allowing our individual consciousness to express itself for the healing of ourselves and of our world.

Our bodies are not meant to be perfect, only to continually reach for perfect balance, and it is fully equipped to do this, hopefully without too much interference. Realistically we do eventually interfere, because we allow ourselves to become quite profoundly out of balance. And we continually interfere with the natural needs of the body in living the generally unnatural lives we lead, having fun driving around in cars and eating foods from all over the planet. We are meant to live in both joy and sorrow, expanding and contracting physically and energetically according to our wants and needs. We are also meant to remember that we are spiritual beings having a human experience. Alas, we forget.

Back to this quotation from Louise Hay. Our best and most challenging opportunity for learning, healing, and change comes from being with other people. And we are not always choosing our favorite people because our least favorite people teach us more. If you have met homeless people begging for money, you know what I mean. Our family members, close by and far away, teach us more. Those people closest teach us the most. If you have ever had a parent, partner, lover, roommate, etc., you know what I mean. They can bring the most angst or the most pleasure to our lives in an instant. We are not meant to lose ourselves in another persons emotions, but we usually do.

I try to welcome all who come into my presence and my consciousness, and be aware of any disparaging and negative thoughts I may be having. Each one has something to share and deserves my respect. My job is to be welcoming and to be aware of what I may be thinking and feeling.

How can we ever expect our lives to become our highest vision of ourselves if we are not willing to confront our own fears? First we have to be willing to notice whenever we are afraid. Fear comes in many forms; anger, avoidance, dislike, upset stomach, tiredness, excuses of any kind, anxiety, stress, sleeplessness, etc. Fear hides in many of our feelings and actions. Our job is to be aware, and not to judge ourselves for our thoughts and feelings or others for their thoughts or feelings.

How do we handle all of this? Awareness first, then compassion, for both ourselves and another, then understanding and allowing. We can choose to allow ourselves to experience all of our possible range of emotions without getting lost. At some point we may become aware of our own "divine witness" which is the part of our own being that is aware of, but not experiencing, our humanity, only our divinity. Like most of us, I have experienced a lot of drama in my life. By some miracle, I have also met my witness, who can say: "There I go again." "I see what I am doing and I will not judge, but make a better choice in the future."

Last week I had occasion to remember a saying from long ago. "How you do anything is how you do everything." So how can this idea help us with our fears? It is helpful to identify our fears and the actions that we usually take when confronted. Of all the forms of fear, did I mention computer and video games or other addictions? Anger, aggression, and avoidance, are all expressions of our fears. We need to remember we are not our fears. We are spiritual beings having a temporary human experience.

How we choose to deal with our fears is important because we get to experience a fearful life or a peaceful positive life. I try to remember to breathe deeply. I give my fears a lot of space. I witness my fears, I do not fear them. I remember I am not what I think, I am a spiritual being.

When we deeply and frequently remember who we are. Life is good. Be Well. Enjoy the perfect Fall weather.

Ministerial Miscellany

By Rev. Annie Kopko

Welcome to Fall! It seems like it is here, even though it's almost another month till Fall. The mornings seem wet and cold compared to a month ago. It feels as if the weather is in perfect balance for a change. Speaking of balance, if the way you get your exercise these days is running late, flying off the handle, or jumping to conclusions, try something like going for a long walk. It is so good for your heart as well as your head. Nature is the best teacher of all the things we really need to know, and it seems to bring out the best of our natural wisdom. If you go walking later in the day, after dark, you can see the bats flying around after those pesky mosquitoes. There are some amazing-sounding frogs at night. I have no idea what they look like. I have never seen them, but I love to listen to them. Watch out for butterflies and hummingbirds around the flowers in the daytime. Let yourself be astonished by the wonder.

In between your forays out into our great Mother Nature, there are some great events for you this month. Everyone is welcome! Always, check the website for more details. I don't always have all the necessary information when I write this.

Every first Tuesday is Death Cafe. It is a very lively and confidential group discussion about death....anything we want to talk about death, any questions, anything to share. 6:30 to 8:30PM. People come with amazing stories and thoughts. Annie Kopko and Susan Thompson are coordinators. (no charge). You may come early for potluck: 5:45PM

Sat. Sept. 7 at 1PM we will have a Memorial for our dear friend John Causland, who passed away in mid-August. He was such a beautiful light. We miss him. Be sure to check out the memorial on the chairs in the Sanctuary where he always sat.

Sunday, Sept. 8th we have our yearly ceremony of the Gathering of the Waters. If you have a small jar of water from somewhere near or far, you can pour it in with all of our water and tell us where it is from. It is a very powerful way to share our stories.

Saturday, Sept. 14th you can dance the night away to Timbao Bravo at Cafe704, door opens at 7:30, concert at 8PM. \$8 donation.

Very Important: QCC on Sept. 22nd. Every 3 months we gather to decide how we want our community to move into our future, make plans, and express our gratitude to each other for our presence. We have lunch by donation.

On the 29th Jim Phillips will be our speaker and will follow our service with a 2 hour workshop on Egyptian Spirituality. The following Saturday, Oct. 5th, he will have a longer workshop on Egyptian Spirituality from 10AM to 4PM. Our website will have the title and more information.

Thank you for being a vital part of our community!

Blessings to All, Annie

Community Member

of the Month

Marvelous Marice



By Jaclyn Morrow

We're giving thanks this month for Marice Clark.

Marice is here to make a positive difference. This is evident in every aspect of her life, from her career to the energy she puts into her family. She has a strong love for dogs and her first career was as a professional dog groomer. She showed Salukis, her favorite dog breed, for 20 years and she took that love into a career as a Vet Tech. She continued to follow in the flow while getting a degree in finance and eventually working with computers.

Marice has been part of the Interfaith Community since its beginning. She was raised Catholic and loved the celebration of Catholicism but struggled with the message. Eventually she left the church because women were not seen as equals and because she was drawn to concepts that the Catholic Church did not embrace. She moved on to the teachings of Unity Church and once she found Interfaith, it seemed a perfect next step. She loved that Interfaith incorporates more than Christianity with its message that "all paths lead to one". So, let's just say she read the books, did the homework but then, in an act of deep awareness, she stopped reading all the time and focused on the doing. She focused on living the life that can experience peace even while going through struggles. She focused on simple acts of service. Her impact at Interfaith is tangible.

"I volunteer at Interfaith because it helps me feel connected to the community. The small acts of service that I perform such as decorating the altar and bringing flowers create a little visual beauty that can bring joy to those who see it. This joy enhances the flow of energy which helps to uplift the spirits of all who contribute to the flow. I receive an energetic boost that sustains me throughout the week and reminds me to focus on experiencing more peace and joy. This energetic circle of like-minded energies attracting each other helps all of us experience more peace and love in our daily lives.

Being a part of this community is very important to me. When I plan a party and decorate the hall or lead a meditation, or sing in the choir, I am sharing a part of me in hopes it will inspire happiness, peace, and/or joy in the hearts of all who are touched by my simple acts of service.

"One person can make a difference- make it a positive one."

So, keep an eye out for this one. She's making ripples and when that's not satisfying, she creates waves! She has plans, ask her about them and keep an eye out for Studio-Saluki.

Thank you Marice!

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Volunteer Coordinator Corner

By Bob Hopkins

This space will be used to identify volunteer needs and appreciation as of August 12, 2019

We regularly need to add to our pool of people who help to set-up and clean-up for potlucks – See Ted

We want responsible people to set up and tidy up the sanctuary before or after the service – See Annie

We can always use treats for after Service – See Ted or just bring them in

We could use a person at the Welcome table on the fourth Sunday of the month – See Bob

We would like testimonials from people who have gained from their volunteer experience -- see Bob

We need people to help with transportation –see Donald, the Transportation Coordinator.

APPRECIATION

THANKS TO: Rob Fagerlund for his flexibility in stepping in as a greeter on any occasion

THANKS TO: Margie Hough for maintaining her second Sunday greeter role despite other commitments.

THANKS TO: All the people who gathered to make the July yard such a smashing success, including: Marilyn Alf, Delyth Balmer, Dave Bell, Judy Bell, Sue Booker, Craig Brann, Mark Charles, Lyriel Claire, Lorri Coburn, Randall Counts, Vicki Davinich, Rob Fagerlund, Janet Fry, Diane Gledhill, Craig Harvey, Anna Marie Henrich, Heide Kaminski, Annie Kopko, Darlene MacLeod, Mike O'Shea, Tommie Parker, Jan Peacock, Joy Pendleton, Catherine Powers, Esther Reilly, Jack Richards, Rod Rodriguez, Linda Rykwald, Ann Schejbal, Sally Searls, Mary Seibert, Susan Thompson, Mary Alice Truitt, Nancy Willoughby and Tracy Worcester.

September Music

- 1 Paul VornHagen & Aron Kaufman
conga drummer
- 8 Water Ceremony service

- 15 Shekinah Errington
- 22 Tom Voiles
- 29 Mark Maxwell (Saxophonist and
Sound Healer)

September Birthdays Happy Birthday!!!

- 5: Connie Snow
- 6: Amy Advey
- 9: Michael O'Shea
- 11: Laurel Beyer
- 21: Sue Booker
- 23: Mary Seibert

September Talks

- 1: Imam Kamau Ayubbi "Returning to Unity Oceans"
- 8: Gathering of the Waters Ceremony
- 15: Dolores Rubio Turtle "Group Consciousness"
- 22: Erik Nowakowski "We Are One: Time & Eternity"
- 29: James Phillips "Secrets of the Mystics"

CORN SPIRIT AND CORN MOTHER

By Peggy River Singer

Corn and other grains are so vitally important to humankind that it's only natural that different cultures would develop unique ways to honor and work with the living spirit of grains. Many cultures have elevated that spirit to the status of a god or goddess.

Who is Corn Spirit?

Corn Spirit seems to be unique to Great Britain, where "corn" means any kind of grain. According to Francis Melville's Book of Faeries: "Corn Spirit is a deva, one of the ruling nature spirits. We depend on her for the fertility of the grain and a successful harvest each year. The better we treat the soil, and the more respect we show the Corn Spirit, the more vital and nutritious the crop [will be]."

Who is Corn Mother?

Corn Mother, the Goddess of Grains, is known in some form around the world. The Romans called her Demeter or Ceres; the Greeks Persephone or Kore; the Celts Cerridwen, Cerealia, Brede or Bridget. Among Native American peoples, she is known as First Mother, Corn Maiden, Corn Spirit Woman, and more.

The Three Sisters

Native Americans know corn as one of the Three Sisters crops: corn, beans and squash. They are traditionally planted together, with the beans growing up the corn stalks and the squash growing between the corn hills. When corn and beans are eaten together or within a few hours of each other, they make a complete protein; this allows Native Americans (and others who eat grains and beans) to be less dependent on animal sources of protein.

What can Corn Spirit and Corn Mother teach us?

Corn Spirit and Corn Mother share common themes: the bounty of the Earth, its healing capabilities and its nurturing nature, energy, fertility, harvest, grounding, and strength. And above all: appreciation of Nature/Gaia, and respect for all that is offered and all that makes up the natural world.



My Experience of “Awakening 2 Love”

By Eric Novakowski

From August 31st - 6th, 2019, I had the opportunity to join with Living Miracles at their monastery near Duchesne, UT for the Awakening 2 Love (A2L) retreat with David Hoffmeister. As a testimonial to the realization of Divine Orchestration, I've been guided to share my profound experiences with you in a 3 part series.

Part 1

The Journey There

It began in February with the violent impact of metal on metal, a car accident. Little was I to know the greater implications of this seemingly disastrous event. The silver lining of this event will be shown in a bit, but for now, let's get back into what led me to Utah.

With the car accident came injury and recovery. With this recovery time, I really had more time to devote to spiritual practice and specifically the teachings of A Course in Miracles (ACIM). I found that what the course was saying in many ways, I already knew to be true, based on a revelatory / mystical experience, I had when I was 17.

A big part of this deep “calling” I was experiencing was the teachings of David Hoffmeister and the whole Living Miracles community. From his website: “Internationally renowned spiritual teacher David Hoffmeister is a modern-day mystic, author and a living demonstration of the non-dual path of A Course in Miracles.”

Following Prompts from Spirit

I've always been inspired by music. With this dive into the world of ACIM, I had discovered a musician named Erik Archbold. The songs really moved me, and so it was a very pleasant surprise when an opportunity appeared on Facebook:

“From now until the end of May, my friend Tamra Youngblood and I (Erik Archbold) will be traveling throughout the U.S. and Canada, fully available to You! We will be traveling where invited, offering gatherings, concerts, and retreats based on the teachings of David Hoffmeister and the Living Miracles community. If you have a desire to Awaken, we are right here with you!!! ...

We are open to visiting you along the way, anywhere in the U.S. or Canada. Our purpose is to extend Spirit's Love by our own practice of Inner Listening and Following—letting the Holy Spirit guide and direct our feet (and car) to whomever and wherever He wishes us to be.”

The tentative route posted had them coming right through Michigan. I felt the prompt, made the call and worked out the details with Erik. The whole process felt

very natural, even Divinely Orchestrated.

During their stay, the topic of A2L came up. I had already written off attending because of budget concerns and a seemingly full summer schedule. Then Erik suggested the possibility of volunteering. This felt like another prompt coming in to reconsider my plans, so I did.

I worked it out with my wife (Thank You Jaclyn!) and had the green light regarding family obligations, but still couldn't justify taking that time off work and spending the money to fly out to Utah. So I gave it over to Spirit. I knew if I trusted that if I was supposed to go the money would fall into place.

That car accident that happened, well, the big silver lining was that it involved a settlement with my insurance company.

I had been stressing a lot about money previously and as soon as I made a decision to relax and place my trust in the Holy Spirit. That very day, the insurance adjuster started talking settlement. Within a couple weeks we had settled. I saw this as an obvious sign that A2L was meant to be.

Volunteering

Living Miracles offers what they call devotional stay opportunities. Their process includes an application with a question: “How long would you like to stay for your retreat or devotional stay?”. There are check boxes: “2 weeks”, “1 month”, “length of scheduled retreat.” I choose the length of schedule retreat, and wrote in offering to arrive 2 days before and stay 1 day later.

So I'm feeling good about the situation. I have it all figured out, right? Umm, it's pretty funny how our egos try to pull us away from Guidance in the name of common sense.

From an email received May 31st “I've received your application form for A2L - it looks and sounds very good! ...

Greg or Susannah will connect with you a bit more around the details ...”

Moving forward according to my (egos) plan, or so I thought...

Talking with Greg on the phone: “We've been spending a lot of time praying and seeking guidance about the retreat and the volunteers, and it's come in that Spirit would like all of the volunteers here 2 weeks early” (paraphrasing)

I would have had to take a 4 week sabbatical off work with 2 vacations stacked together. My ego mind is like “2 Weeks! No way that will work, say no now!” I didn't say no, though. I had enough willingness to have patience and pray about it.

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Within the next couple of days some signs came in that it was not to be. One of these was a dear friend who lives in Singapore was going to be in town. While he was here, someone on Facebook in a band fan group offered up \$200 worth of tickets for the Michigan Brewers Guild Summer Festival (my friend is a writer and writes about beer). So this person I've never met emailed me the tickets and, it turns out, also works in the town where I grew up. Total synchronicities extending affirmation.

So back to the story, I decided to decline to volunteer, but instead of the money I would be spending to fly out there, I would just buy a ticket, and drive. I offered the room in my car to anyone who wanted to join me on this adventure. I felt that there would be someone coming with me.

I called and shared with Greg my inspiration. I also offered to help while I was there if they needed a hand with anything. Greg thanked me for my willingness, but said that I should just focus on being a participant and indicated how volunteering there was an intentionally different experience.

Alright, who's coming with me? As things unfolded, the plan became picking up two of David's friends in Cincinnati, Cindy and Nelda. They were planning on coming to volunteer and help in the kitchen.

Things changed, after one of them couldn't make it. I felt prompted to offer my assistance again. So I messaged David, "feeling a little torn on the whole participant vs volunteer thing at A2L. The distinction between the two was emphasized, I do feel I want to offer to help again because Cindy said she wasn't able to come now. I did work for a caterer for 3 years in high school / early college. but I also feel that I've been designated a participant because I couldn't come 2 weeks early. No private thoughts. What says your intuition?" (No private thoughts is a key practice within Living Miracles & the play on Intuition was intentional).

My offer was accepted. At this point, I'm working on the food team and riding out with Nelda who also is working on the food team, or so I thought. I talked with Nelda for over an hour about the trip and getting to know each other. Everything felt in alignment. Then things changed again. She couldn't come.

This is how two ended up being one, which ended up being none ... which ended up being one. You may be thinking, "Wait, what?" Well, I did have some anxiety regarding travelling alone. This disappeared once I remembered, we can never be alone, for Christ (Spirit) is always there.

The Drive

Ready for the "solo" drive, I hit the road Monday July 29th. I saw some amazing clouds / sunbeams that leg of the journey. On Tuesday, I had the notion that I would stop somewhere to get out and stretch, take a break, you know, standard road trip stuff. Along with that I decided to ask Spirit, "Where?"

Now may be a good time to provide some background. Historically I have not related to a personal relationship with divinity in terms of talking with God, as God is like us. I have always related to God as Limitless Creation or all that is. So this idea of having a personal, conversational relationship was / is new to me.

However, a reply did seem to "come in". It was "cemetery". It wasn't a voice that I heard, it came in a thought that intuitively felt "right". I thought, "Ok lets see". I looked up cemeteries along my route and then picked one of the results, Saint Patrick's Cemetery in Neola, IA.

I proceed to the cemetery. As soon as I turn on to the dirt road this place is on, there are hundreds and hundreds of Painted Lady butterflies. It was very beautiful. I travel around a corner and up a hill, and what was at the top of the hill sitting in the middle of the road? Two turtle doves who proceeded to fly alongside me for a bit before I lost track.

Once I get to the cemetery, I decided to look around a bit and then sat down underneath a tree to pray / meditate. After a few minutes, sitting with my eyes closed, I felt something small land in my lap. It was a chunk of dirt about as big as a dime. Where did that come from? I don't know. Moments later, 2 doves flew up. Same birds? Perhaps.

Anyway, I don't claim any specific message or meaning in these signs. I do see them as signs though. I took these as positive affirmation as to the truth found in following Guidance.

I continued on my way. My destination for the evening, Denver, CO to stay with a dear friend whom I am grateful to for his gracious hospitality. Along the way, more sunbeams. There were more butterflies too, all through Iowa. The next day, more sunbeams peeking through the clouds. Travelling with Spirit, Sunbeams and Butterflies saw me through to Utah and the Living Miracles Monastery. I had arrived.

(to be continued)

Youthful Spirits



STRENGTH IN NUMBERS AND TEEN GROUP UPDATE



CRUSH ONE CUP? NO PROBLEM!



TEEN JAMES ARCHER PREPARES
A LESSON ON DIVERSITY AND
INTERDEPENDENCE AND THEN
TEACHES HIS FINDING TO THE
REST OF THE GROUP.



CRUSH A WHOLE BUNCH OF
CUPS? STRENGTH IN
NUMBERS!



*Love, Light, and Laughter
Heide, Kellie, Tommy, Dawn,, and the Youthful Spirits*

CONSTRUCTION OF A PRAYER

- PART TWO

By Robert Hopkins

O Creator of the Universe Who was manifested in Jesus Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Gandhi, Quimby, Moses, Mohammed, Bah Allah and Rumi. This is how the prayer I say five times daily begins. What (you may say) is the significance of this and the significance of these nine names in particular? That is the subject of this and the next installment of the Construction of a Prayer.

The opening phrase goes back to the rekindling of my relationship with my Higher Power. It followed close upon a period of about four years of agnosticism. Perhaps, some of you can relate to an agnostic. In that period of my life from 1977 until late 1981, I had lots of questions and lots of doubts. I had forsaken Catholicism in the wake of my first divorce. To paraphrase an old Groucho Marx line, I was not about to be a member of a religion that would not have me as a full member. But Catholicism had been my bedrock. I had completely bought the party line that Catholicism was the one true religion. So when I gave it up I had nowhere to go. Thus, my agnosticism was born. However, a friend convinced me that I had thrown out the baby with the bathwater. She helped me to acknowledge that God was bigger than any one religion. She was unhappy with her own religious upbringing as well and together we found Unity of Madison [Wisconsin].

Soon thereafter, I realized there was a

need for prayer in public situations. There was a formal blessing before meals on special occasions, for instance. Part of my awakening to renewed spiritual conviction was the Star Wars movie series. I could really feel a kinship with the FORCE. However, this did not seem an appropriate way to begin a prayer: O Force. Thus, O Creator of the Universe was born. It became a good way to open any prayer, anywhere. No one could find fault with the language and I could believe every word of it.

Who was manifest in Jesus Christ came hard on the heels of the Creator wording. Identifying as a Christian at that time, by means of Unity, it seemed an acceptable reflection of the divinity that is found in Jesus. Almost any Christian would recognize this – even if one was convinced that Jesus was the one and only manifestation of the Creator. These words would be indisputable and give no offense. “O Creator of the Universe Who was manifest in Jesus Christ” became and remained the opening of my private and public prayers for many years to come. This period lasted from sometime in 1982 or 1983 until the founding of Interfaith in the winter of 1997-98.

The question arises, who are the rest of these people and why did they get tacked on to this salutation? The answer to that question, will be forthcoming in the third installment of this series.

Grocery Card Fundraiser ("Scrip" program) Update

Background:

This is a way for local food stores to contribute to Interfaith about 3-5% of whatever you spend at these stores. It costs you nothing more, and it really does help the Center. The only place that still requires actually buying cards at the Center is Peoples Food Co-op. For questions or to buy cards you can find Craig Harvey in the social hall after service, or phone Craig at 734-971-8576. And here are the details about each store's program (Kroger, Busch's, Arbor Farms, and People's Food Co-op).

Kroger shoppers:

Please look at the bottom of your Kroger receipt and verify that it includes the following notice. If it doesn't, then please sign yourself up!

****Kroger Community Rewards****
At your request, Kroger is donating to
INTERFAITH CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

To link your Kroger-Plus account to Interfaith just go to:

<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow/>

Look at the "Community Rewards" section of your account info and edit it as needed to make the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (#82808) your preferred organization. Whenever you go shopping, just do your usual swiping your Kroger-Plus card or entering your phone number to identify yourself to the system. It may take a couple weeks for you to be fully in the system, after which the bottom of your receipts will always mention Interfaith.

Busch's:

If you don't have a Busch's MyWay account, you first need to do that at <http://buschs.com>. Then connect your MyWay account to the Interfaith Center using their "Cash for Education" feature.

- To enroll in Cash for Education log into your MYWAY* account and select Cash for Education from the dropdown menu underneath your name.

- Choose up to four organizations that you would like to support per quarter.

- Be sure to use your phone number at checkout.

Reminder: You must have a valid email address and opt-in to receive emails to participate in this program. Please also note that participants will need to re-enroll on an annual basis (easier after you have your MyWay account).

Arbor Farms:

No cards or phone number to worry about! All you need to do is tell the cashier that you want to credit the Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth (or just say "Interfaith Church" which they recognize more easily). You just have to remember to **mention it every time you shop**.

Peoples Food Co-op:

Buy \$50 or \$100 card(s) from Craig at Interfaith. When you use them up, buy more of them at the Center. You can pay with cash or check made out to the Interfaith Center (or just "ICSG").