

# *Wisdoms from the Journey*

*(Volume V ... May thru Dec 12)*



*...a few of the in-Sight-full sayings  
& inspirational images that  
I have been blessed to gently gather  
while wandering along my Way*

*via Scaughdt*  
an (i)am publication

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*“Any fool can know.  
The point is to understand.”  
~ Albert Einstein*



*"Kindness is more important than wisdom,  
and the recognition of this is the beginning of wisdom."  
~ Theodore Rubin*

*"Without courage, wisdom bears no fruit."  
~ Baltasar Gracian*

## *An Introduction to what Follows*

Everyone ends up collecting something as they journey through Life ... For me, I simply ended up being drawn – while searching for “the truth” – to collect Truths.

Now, ideological “truth” is a funny thing; slippery according to circumstance and very hard to pin down once captured ... As such, it is very unlike Wisdom, which is constant -- obvious and tangible and plain and unchanging.

Indeed (in-deed), even though we have been taught that Truth and Wisdom are “kissing cousins”, in actuality they couldn’t be more different. “Truth” is conceptual, while Wisdom is verifiable ... “Truth” is knowledge – a noun, while Wisdom is the setting that knowledge into harmonious motion – a verb ... “Truth” ponders & theorizes & hypothesizes, while Wisdom simply identifies what functions ... “Truth” might delineate our choices, and yet it is Wisdom that guides us towards making good ones ... “Truth” is intellectual; accumulating information and defining meanings. Wisdom is practical; making “facts” (and therefore Life itself) Meaning-full ... “Truth” changes over time – contracting as old information is found lacking & expanding as new information is found to bear “Good Fruit”, while Wisdom remains the constant bellwether through which those evolutions ensue ... “Truth” is a powerful tool – one that is utterly useless (and even drastically dangerous) unless skillfully used in harmony with acquired Wisdom ... In essence, as one scholar once put it: “Truth is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is knowing not to put tomatoes into fruit salad.”

As such, it is the former – “Truth” – that I have gently abandoned as “false”, and it is the latter – “Wisdom” – that I have repeatedly rediscovered to be True. And so it is that while I do most humbly and most publicly now declare that I most certainly do *not* have access to anything resembling “*the Truth*”, I most certainly *have* acquired access to a set of principles & values that – to the degree that they are courageously applied & enlivened – always prove to be Wise. And it is these same principles & values that are represented by the words & images contained in the pages that follow ...

May you each receive much Peace while reading them &/or gazing upon them, and may at least a few of them inspire you to go forth and know the Bliss that only comes to those who choose to put their Goodness into motion.

Amen ... Let it be so.

*Scaughdt*

December 8, 2014



*Blossoming into You ...*  
(05/01/2012)

There was once a great king who had three sons, and he wanted to choose one to be his heir. It was very difficult, because all three were very intelligent, very courageous, and very kind. Unable to choose between the three, he asked a great sage, and the sage suggested an idea ... The king went home, gathered his three sons before him, and gave them each one bag of flower seeds. After doing so, he told them that he was going on a pilgrimage and would be away for many years. "This is a kind of test," the King said. "Whosoever protects their seeds best while I am gone will become my heir." And he departed.

The first son chose to lock his seeds in an iron safe — because when the father returned he wanted to give them back exactly as they were. The second son thought, "If I lock them up just as my brother has done, these seeds will die." So he went into the market and sold the seeds and kept the money, thinking, "When my father comes I will go to the market, purchase new seeds, and give him back better than the first." The third son looked at his bag of seeds for a moment, smiled, and then went to a bare plot of earth in his father's garden and scattered the seeds all over the place.

After three years, the father returned and gathered his sons before him once again. "Well my sons, how goes it with your seeds?" The first son opened his iron safe, and his seeds were all dead, moldy & stinking. The second son rushed out of the room to the market, purchased new seeds, and returned, saying, "These are your seeds. They are too fresh for planting, but will be soon be just as good as the ones you gave me years ago." The father sighed and turned to the third son. "And your seeds?" he asked. The third son took him back to the back corner of the garden where there were millions of plants blooming, millions of flowers all around. "These are the seeds you gave me, father" he said. "Soon I will collect the seeds from these flowers and give them to you. Right now they are getting ready to be collected."

The father smiled and with a sense of deep contentment said, "You are my heir. This is how one should behave with seeds."

(story source unknown)

Yes, the seed is protected as long as it doesn't bloom. It's hard shell keeps it safe from harm and its small size keeps it hidden from most dangers. And yet if it doesn't choose to bloom, it will die the greater death — the death of a life unfulfilled.

Similarly, as long as we remain mired in fears for our own safety &/or desires for our own “wealth”, we too will remain “wasted seeds” – mere kernels of the vast potential to do the Meaning-full Good that we have been given.

Great courage is required to reach out to others; great courage is required to be kind to strangers & to forgive our enemies; great courage is required to blossom into who we truly ARE ... And yet, even if we do so for only one day — even if we give just one glimpse of that greater Beauty, our lives will take on more meaning and worth than the “lives” of millions upon millions of seeds.

**LOVE** means opening up to others ...

**LOVE** means setting aside personal desires & reaching through personal fears in order to be Kind ...

**LOVE** means — even if only for a few minutes each day — choosing to bloom into the deeply Caring person you deeply truly are.

So .... got **LOVE**?



*“And the day came when the drive to blossom forth in Love became more powerful than the desire to remain hidden tight in a bud.”*

*~ inspired by Anais Nin*



## *Winning Life ...* (05/03/2012)

There is the “love” of “healthy boundaries” that strives to get its “fair share” of intimacy. Funny thing is, even when you “win” this game — while you are indeed safe from harm, you remain separated from everyone & everything around you ... In “winning” this game, you actually lose.

And then there a far deeper **LOVE**, one that knows only giving; that strives only to open up to those in need; that doesn't care what happens as a consequence. And the funny thing is, even when you “lose” this way — even if you are hurt or “used” or persecuted in the process, you immerse yourself fully in your world ... And so in “losing” this game, you actually *WIN*.

**LOVE** remembers that we are all in this together. **LOVE** remembers that the only way to truly *WIN* in life ... is to *choose to “Lose”*.

*“Loving people live in a loving world & hostile people live in a hostile world – and yet it is the same world.” ~ Wayne Dyer*

*“Our sense of victory just means that we guarded our heart enough that nothing got through ... Whenever this happens, the armor around our wounded heart becomes more fortified, and our world becomes smaller.” ~ Pema Chodron*

*“Real love is a pilgrimage. It happens when there is no strategy, and yet real Love is very rare -- because most people are strategists.” ~ Anita Brookner*



## *Tending the Garden ...* (05/04/2012)

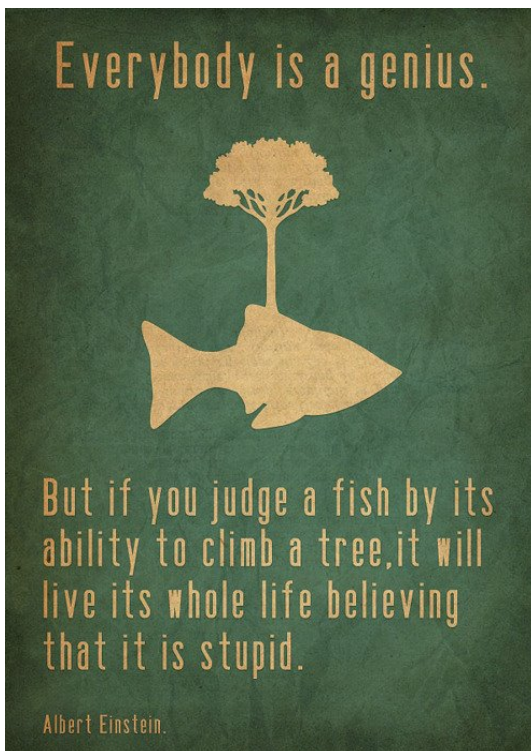
We are not here to “help” others with our “constructive criticism” (there is no such thing). Rather, we are here to look for those who are down & out – to look for those who feel sad or defeated or broken -- and build them up again ...

We are not here to find what is “broken” in others and try to “fix it” (even if we could find it, we can’t repair anyone but ourselves). Rather, we are here to look for the Good in others and emphasize it — compliment it — announce to the world that we, at least, *SEE* the beautiful being who is before us.

We are not here to tell other people how they are to live or behave or believe (all literally none of our business). Rather, we are here to unconditionally & jubilantly support them by cheering them onward — regardless of the lifestyle & the beliefs & the Life Mission that they have chosen to live or believe or follow.

Simply put, everyone you meet is a genius in one way or another. There is something truly important that you can learn from every person on this planet (If you look for it, you will find it). Even more importantly, there is also a Great Good in everyone you meet — a Great Good that you can help to blossom if you but have the humility to See it, and the courage to call it forth with an act of radically enthusiastic Kindness.

For plants to grow, their seeds must be watered, and for their flowers to bloom fully, those plants must be tended with Care.



Your **LOVE** is the pure sustenance of every friend, stranger & enemy you meet ... Your **LOVE** is what reawakens them to who they truly are ... Your **LOVE** is their water, your Compassion is their soil and your Kindness their sunlight.

Indeed, your life is your Garden, and you are your Universe’s greatest Gardener ... So have fun tending that Garden today, my Friends.

## *Through the clouds ...* (05/05/2012)

*“I am not sure how clouds get formed. But the clouds know how to do it, and that is the important thing.” ~ an anonymous child*

It always happens — no matter how we strive for a life filled only with Light, darkness always follows. No matter how we claw and scratch for a life filled with excitement & fun, boredom & drudgery always follow. No matter how dedicated we are to filling our lives with relationships that are perfectly loving, disappointment always follows ... *And yet* this does not have to be the case.

The solution to this conundrum lies not in finally obtaining the “right light” or the “better fun” or the “perfect love”. No, as long as we are fighting for our own happiness, we will indeed remain destined to reap the suffering & the meaninglessness that are natural consequences of such struggles ... And yet, there is an alternative: We can continue to revel in the “good times”, of course, and -- when the “bad times” do eventually arrive, we can choose to make them Purpose-full ... with expressions of gratitude as well as with acts of Love.

*“Thunder is a rich source of loudness.” ~ another anonymous child*

So, if the clouds are gathering in your life today — if the boredom has you staring into space or the pain is getting to be too much or the frustration has reached the point where you just want to scream, take a deep breath ... and remember. Remember that you are alive ... Remember that Beauty is always all around you ... & most important of all, re-member that every act of Caring you do while “in the darkness” sends a ray of Light so powerful that it directly pierces the gloom of another. Just a bit of eye-contact, just a light touch on the shoulder, just a gentle smile -- each are enough to lift the clouds from another’s life ... and thereby lift them from your own.

**LOVE** is not bathing in life’s sunshine, as much as it is bringing the Sun’s warmth to another ... So -- got **LOVE**?

*“I will radiate cheer to everyone I meet today. I will be mental sunshine for all who cross my path.” ~ Paramahansa Yogananda*



## *Standing up for God ...* (05/06/2012)

*“Going to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car.” ~ G. K. Chesterton*

Recent surveys show that almost 75% of the American population considers itself to be “Christian” in one form or another, with around 100 million of those folks attending a Christian church and listening to a Christian sermon from a Christian preacher on any given Sunday ... Now, there’s nothing wrong with that, of course. Freedom of religion is one of the founding pillars of the United States, and there is indeed much Good to be found in the Christian faith. Each person’s religious choice is there’s alone to make, just as each person’s spiritual journey is there’s alone to walk.

That having been said, it might be helpful for Christians and non-Christians alike to realize that much of what is relayed in the average Christian church each Sunday has very little to do with the actual teachings of Jesus Christ found in the Bible ... And it might be equally helpful for Christians and non-Christians alike to realize that Jesus himself really didn’t give a flying flip about what religion people chose — and that he most certainly didn’t want people to make a new religion out of himself. Rather, he quite clearly stated in the Bible that he wanted us to “follow” him — for us to courageously *emulate* the radical Way of Love that he so courageously lived. (see Mark 10:18, though there are hundreds of other verses also showing this to be the case)

By all indications, Jesus was one of those rare men & women who had the courage to truly walk Love’s unconditional talk, dramatically showing us all not only that Loving our enemies, Forgiving our trespassers, and Caring for the poor are “right things to do” — but also that when we do actually exude the Courage necessary to put such pure *Love* in motion, it actually works ... Of course, deep down, you already know this to be True. But heck, don’t take my word for it ...

**Go and see for your Self!**

*“And this is my sole Commandment: Love one another in the same way I have Loved you.” ~ Jesus Christ (John 15:12)*





## *Pulling the Plug ...* (05/07/2012)

*“The era of manufacturing consent has given way to the era of manufacturing news. Soon media newsrooms will drop the pretense, and start hiring theater directors instead of journalists.” ~ Arundhati Roy*

We aren't going to bring about any real change in our communities by using the same means that co-created our “mess” in the first place ... and mass media is one of the prime culprits in this regard.

I've got some news for you: “the news” these days is *NOT* here to keep you informed. Rather, it is here to keep you distracted (a.k.a. “entertained”) – it is here to keep you afraid of your neighbor — it is here to keep you believing that you are “too small” to make a difference — it is here to keep you feeling that you need protection from the “powers that be” in order to survive ... Essentially, it is here to keep you from remembering the only Truth that holds any worth anymore: the Truth that *you are still free to re-create your community*; that you are still the one truly “in control” of your life; that no one can ever stop you from reaching out to Care.

Want some proof that you are still running your own “show”? Try the following: Get up right now, walk over to your TV, and unplug it. Now simply go one week without plugging it back in again and see what a *HUGE* positive difference that simple act makes in your life ...

If you stop allowing yourself to be spoon-fed the “truth” that those “in power” want you to believe, you just might look around and see that there is another Reality waiting for you; another Reality that knows that people are actually amazingly Wonder-full -- that every one of your acts of Kindness is not “small” at all -- that you actually *CAN* make a huge difference in your neighborhood -- that we actually *CAN* come together and make this world a fantastic place in which to live & learn & Love ... And it all starts with the guts to simply reach out & pull the plug.



So ... got some GUTS?

*“It is necessary for all of us to awaken in ourselves this spirit of cooperation, for then it will not be a mere plan or agreement which causes us to work together, but an extraordinary feeling of togetherness, the sense of joy in being and doing together without any thought of reward or punishment.” ~ J. Krishnamurti*



*“Getting it” ...*  
(05/12/2012)

A Yogi walked into the Zen Pizza Parlor and said:  
... “Make me ONE with everything.”  
(get it?)

The proprietor later returned with the pizza, smiled at the Yogi, and said:  
... “Here, you are.”  
(get it?)

The Yogi smiled as well and gave the proprietor a \$20 bill for the \$12 pizza. The proprietor looked at the Yogi’s outstretched hand, smiled again and said: ... “Change must come from within.” Both of them then proceeded to laugh.  
(get it?)

We can only be truly ONE with everything while we are acting accordingly ... just as we can only “make it” to where we already Are. Real change is not a mental phenomenon, my Friends. Real change comes when we actively *become the change* we wish to see.

For most of us, Kindness is that change, and NOW is the time to show it.

So, if you understand this Truth ... if you “get it”,  
... then please go forth and **BE IT!**



## *Waking UP ...* (05/13/2012)

*“The very essence of life is change ... If we did not regard objects or states of existence from the standpoint of possession or selfish enjoyment, we should not feel in the least troubled by their change or even their disappearance.” ~ Lama Anagarika Govinda*

Each second in your life is unique & priceless & filled with Beauty ... So pause right now and take a look around you ... Allow a deep Gratitude to rise up from your Heart ... & enJOY!

*“The possession of knowledge does not kill the sense of wonder and mystery. There is always more mystery.” ~ Anais Nin*

If you think your life is “normal” ... or boring ... or tedious ... or repetitive ... or run-of-the-mill ... or just plain “plain” ... If you wake up some mornings & feel like you are still super sleepy but there’s no cool water to splash in your face ... If you go to bed some nights feeling like this whole “life” thing just doesn’t have much purpose & just doesn’t make much sense ... then pause for a moment and *THINK AGAIN!*

And, once you have taken an instant or two to look around — to really *LOOK* around you; once you have the guts & the gumption to open up and *SEE* it all anew; once you have the humility to open up to the Joy-fully amazed Caringness that is who You truly Are in this phenomenal adventure that is your Life -- Once you have done that ... well, then I suggest that you simply rise and climb out of your prior darkness. I suggest you climb up into the light of the Wonderful ... I suggest you go forth immediately & do something crazily radically fantabulously Kind with your newly re-found You.

My dear Friends, there is absolutely nothing at all that is “normal” about your one-in-a-gazillion conscious existence ...

Please act accordingly today.



*Pushing the River ...*  
(05/14/2012)

To be truly Happy, we must choose to revel in our time ... And to truly revel in our time, we must choose to serve others ... And to truly serve others, we must choose to do the Good Deeds that are already available to us ... And to truly **Do** these Good Deeds, we must cease striving for what could be “better” — we must cease waiting for services that are “important” or “interesting” to someday come to us, & simply reach out to perform those that are already sitting right in front of us.

In essence, in order to get where we are meant to Go — in order to Be the Change we wish to See, we’ve got to quit complaining about what “could be” and fighting for what “could be” and instead choose to fully & Care-fully embrace what already IS.

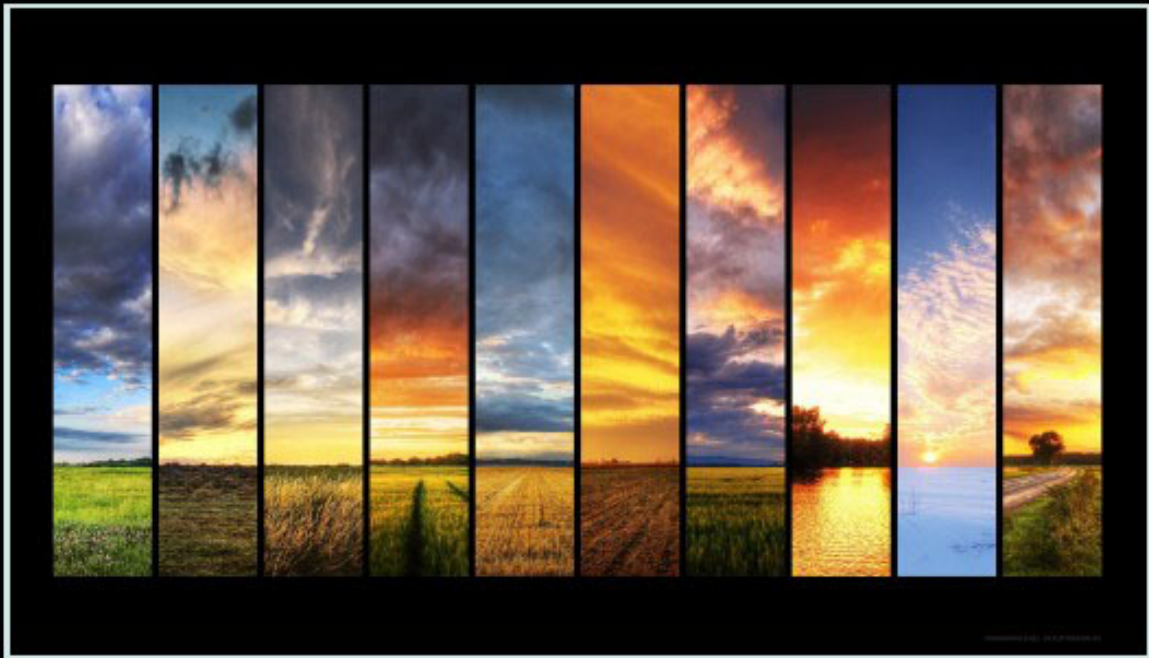
**Love** requires having the humility to quit banging our heads against the Sumo’s belly ... It requires that we bow to him instead.

So, ... got **Love**?



*Shining ON ...*  
(05/15/2012)

*“Hoping the cool night  
finds you in full amazement —  
simply living,  
... & Loving.  
... & moving onward.  
Miracles in every moment.”  
~ Heather Peroni*



**LIVE PURELY.**

Do your work with mastery. Like the moon,  
come out from behind the clouds...Shine. Buddha



*To a man of LOVE ...*  
(05/16/2012)

*“Someday we’ll find it, the rainbow connection.  
The lovers, the dreamers, and me.” ~ Kermit the Frog*

Twelve years ago today, Jim Henson passed away ... For those of you who don’t know, Henson was not only one of the founding fathers of Sesame Street, but he also created The Muppet Show (still good for a laugh or two — or a dozen or two) and “The Dark Crystal” (a film of pure genius & deep insight) ... Just as importantly as what he created, however, was what Jim Henson believed in, for by all indications, Jim Henson believed in Giving — specifically in giving laughter & in giving Kindness. (Reportedly, whenever he didn’t like an idea, Henson refused to criticize it, instead simply pausing and uttering a soft “Hmmm” ...)

Personally, I think Jim tapped into a Great Truth of Living: that in order for our most profound dreams to truly come True, we must choose to dream in Harmony with our surroundings — we must choose to dream differently — we must choose to dream much less about getting, and much more about Giving.

So I send great thanks to Jim Henson today — for giving me so much laughter in my youth, and for inspiring me to Care with so much Kindness today.



*“The world has dreamers & the world has doers ... Of course, what the world really needs is dreamers who DO.” ~ inspired by Sarah Ban Breathnach*

*“I’ve got a dream too, but it’s about singing and dancing and making people happy. That’s the kind of dream that gets better the more people you share it with.” ~ Kermit the Frog*



*Crossing anyway ...*  
(05/17/2012)

*Master: "There are people of the fog, and there are people of the sun."*

*Student: "I'm still not sure which kind I am."*

*Master: "Fog will do that to you."*

Fog people don't know which way is best, so they wait until they can "be sure" before setting forth ... Sun people don't know which way is best, yet they act anyway. Even though they cannot see the other side of the bridge, Sun people walk on across, steadily & surely, step-by-step ... Even though Sun people cannot be sure that their acts of Kindness will be received or ever "do any good", they choose to be Kind anyway.

Each and every one of us is both a "fog person" and a "Sun person", and each & every one of us gets to choose which of the two we will be in every moment of our lives ...

Yes, it is reasonable to be afraid when faced with the unknown ... Yes, it is reasonable to want "the best" for you & yours ... And yes, it is reasonable to only be nice to those people we like or to those who will receive our gifts joyfully.

And yet, *Life is so much more than what is merely reasonable.*

Choosing to live in the fog of fear (with "carefulness", "safety" & "prudence") is fine, of course ... And yet we've only got this one life to *LIVE* — we've only got this one chance to cross that Bridge.

So why not take a step today? ...

Why not choose the Sun?



*You too are Loved ...*  
(05/18/2012)

*“Though we have not yet met, I know you still, for your thoughts reach out through space & time to where your hopes and hurts are a part of me, and we are one together in a world unbounded ... There, my essence will you find in every growing leaf. For we are no more alone than the Sun in its heaven.”*  
~ Fred Lansford

**LOVE** does not need to “know someone” to deeply Care, just as **LOVE** does not need to “be friends” to reach out with gentle empathy ... Indeed, **LOVE** does not need anything at all other than the opportunity to Love.

So, even though most of us have never met — even though we do not yet “know each other” & may not yet ever become “friends”,

... know regardless today that **YOU ARE LOVED**.



## *Wandering with Purpose ...* (05/20/2012)

*“A pilgrim is a wanderer with purpose.” ~ Peace Pilgrim*

Exactly one year ago today I completed my 40 day, 900+ mile Peace Pilgrimage from Chattanooga (Tennessee) to Pompano Beach (Florida). I did so “on Faith”, traveling the entire distance without using any money whatsoever and never once asking anyone for either food or shelter. Needless to say, it was quite the experience, and might one day make a great book ... And yet, that is not why I am writing today ... Today, I am writing to let you all know that each and every one of you are already walking a Pilgrimage with just as much potential — that each and every one of you are already living lives of great Power & great Meaning. Indeed, it is not necessary to walk hundreds of miles “on Faith” to inspire others ... It is not necessary to give up all your possessions or to dedicate every waking moment to Love in order to become a potent Force for Good.

You see, every moment of your life is itself a Pilgrimage; every instant is filled with immense Power into which you can tap. Every meeting with another person is an opportunity to set forth towards the greatest of all destinations — unconditional **LOVE**. And it doesn't take 40 days of difficulty to get there ... All it takes is the guts to reach out and openly Care.

*“We never touch others so lightly, that we do not leave some trace.” ~ Peg Millin*

Every time we look away — every time we refuse to take this very short yet all-powerful Journey, we contribute to what is “wrong” with the world. And yet every time we have the Courage to reach out to another human being — especially when it is difficult to do so (i.e. to life's strangers or to our enemies), we gently shake the Universe ... And so, my dear Friends, I leave you today with the fondest of fare-wells; wishing for you all the deep Peace & unbridled Joy that only come to those who choose to take the shortest and yet grandest of Journeys ... the Journey to radical Kindness.

*“May your travels be safe, but not cautious ... And though it not be that for which you ask, may you receive compassion. May you encounter challenges and conquer their reservations, and may those difficulties strengthen your faith. May your steps evoke seeking ... and may your words inspire Love.” (~ with Katie Kasch)*



*Some real Righteousness ...*  
(05/22/2012)

*“Our job is to Love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody’s business. What we are asked to do is to Love, and this Love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy.” ~ Thomas Merton*

When others tell you that radical Kindness won’t work ... when they scoff at your acts of forgiveness to the “wicked” and criticize your acts of generosity towards the “undeserving” ... when they openly nay-say your Loving efforts with a loud “That’s impossible”, choose to hear what they are actually saying.

Remember that what they are really doing in such moments is making an admission – they are admitting that they do not understand how the Universe truly works – they are admitting that they have chosen to champion fear over Courage & self-protection over Community – they are admitting that they have sided with what is broken instead of helping with mending the world.

This is fine, of course. Everyone has a right to choose whether they are going to support what already is (fear) or to further what is soon to become (Love). Simply remember that choosing the latter is not an obligation ... it is a privilege.



So, my Friends, when you choose to be Kind & your Kindness is rejected or ridiculed, remember to send gentle Compassion to your scoffers ... and then **KEEP LOVING THEM ANYWAY.**

Remember that positive change isn't impossible — positive change is inevitable.

And remember that real **LOVE** isn't impossible ... real **LOVE** is that change!

*The Communi-tree ...*  
(05/23/2012)

*“With the passage of days in this divine isolation, my heart grew calm. It seemed to fill with answers ... Everything – where we came from, where we are going, what our purpose is on earth – struck me as extremely sure and simple in this God-trodden isolation. Little by little my blood took on the godly rhythm ... I saw the world as a gigantic poplar, and myself as a green leaf clinging to a branch with my slender stalk. When God’s wind blew, I hopped and danced, together and one with the entire tree.” ~ with Nikos Kazantzakis*

Solitude allows us to come to remember our Oneness ... Solitude, ironically, reminds us that we are here for others & not for ourselves ... Solitude awakens us to the Truth that we are One with all our brothers & sisters ... And solitude calls us to act accordingly.

So find a place of Peace today & sink into it slowly, with gratitude & reverence ... and after doing so, choose to return to your Life Power-fully ...

... by re-turning to Life to **LOVE**.





*Patience with Persistence ...*  
(05/24/2012)

“One of my most favorite examples about the power of persistence is the story of an Asian species of bamboo that even after five years of watering, weeding and fertilizing is barely visible. Then -- in a span of only about six weeks -- it grows two and a half feet a day until it gets to be upwards of 90 feet tall. It grows so fast in that time that you can literally “hear” it growing. The question to ask ourselves, then, is: Did the bamboo grow 90 feet in six weeks, or did it grow 90 feet in five years?” ~ Vic Johnson

The answer to Vic’s question is, of course, “YES!” ... The bamboo grew 90 feet “slowly” over five years, AND it grew very rapidly to 90 feet in six weeks. Without the extended period of dormancy, the rapid growth spurt would not have occurred, AND the growth itself was indeed quite rapid. As such, both statements are equally true.

Very similarly, even though you might not think you are ready to let your True Self shine, rest assured that your True Self is indeed Ready – that it has been building up its vast [potential ever since you were born, and that it will sprout forth jubilantly the instant you summon it forth.

Now your ego will try and tell you that you still have “lots to learn” before you can step boldly out onto the Path to Peace. The Truth of the matter is, however, that your Soul has been gestating “in the ground” for quite long enough, and that it is high time for you to sprout forth who you truly Are instead ... It is indeed high time for us all to grow forth powerfully -- by being Kind when least inclined.



## *Swimming in The River ...* (05/24/2012)

*“There is a river flowing now very fast — so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold onto the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly. We must come to understand that the river has its own destination, one that will not be swayed. And so we must let go of the shore. We must push off into the middle of the river, while keeping our eyes fully open and our heads above water. And then, we must remember to look around and see who is in there with us ... and celebrate.” ~ Hopi Prayer*

Though there is only one River, within it flows channels infinite — each one flowing ultimately to the same sea; the Sea of Peace ... And yet to know this Peace, swim the River you must. It is not enough to stand on the banks and admire its crashing rapids ... It is not enough to sit and wonder what awaits those who brave its waters ... It is not enough to merely dip your foot in its coolness; and it is even not enough to wade in up to your neck and then return to shore. No, in order for us to receive the River’s priceless gift, we must give It our lives — we must give it everything.

Yes, for the River to carry you where you need to go, you must abandon all hope and dive completely in ... You must release all fears and swim to the middle ... You must let go of all that you desire and let the current take you where it will. This River isn’t “success”, nor is it “salvation” or even “happiness” ... The River is Caring for the uncaring, forgiving the unforgivable and being Kind to strangers ... The River is serving our enemies and giving to our communities, especially when we have almost nothing left to give. The River, my Friends, is **LOVE** ...

Its waters may seem cold at first, and its rapids may seem deadly, and yet it is the only way Home, and it waits to carry you there ...

**LOVE** is the River, my Friends — so dive in!

*“The place God calls you to is where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” ~ Frederick Buechner*



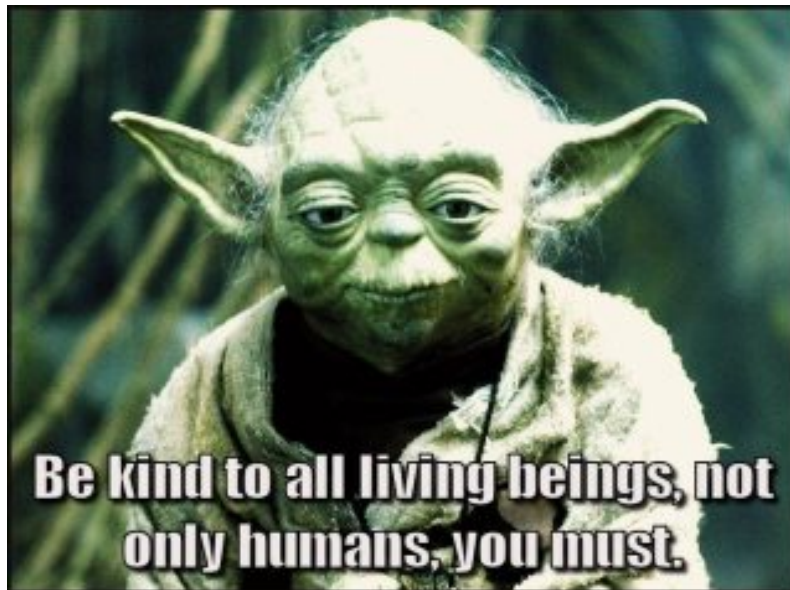
*Meaning in Living ...*  
(05/25/2012)

Frank Oz, co-creator and original voice of Yoda, turns 68 today (Happy Birthday, Frank!) ... And while the statement in the image below was not actually uttered by Yoda himself, I'm pretty sure that he would support its sentiment. Yes, the younger, CGI Yoda was indeed sometimes a bit overly aggressive, and yet as he aged (and became Oz's Muppet), his understanding of The Way of Oneness obviously blossomed.

Just like the rest of us will at some point before we die, Yoda finally got it — he finally understood that we are all One, and that our lives only have real Purpose when we choose to act accordingly.

So, for your enlightenment, your inspiration & also your enjoyment, I offer the following Yoda wisdoms (compiled with Purpose ahead of chronology):

*“Powerful you have become, the dark side I sense in you ... Grave danger you are in ... Ohhhhh, great warrior. Wars not make one great ... You must unlearn what you have learned ... Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering ... Train yourself to let go of everything you fear to lose ... Your weapons, you will not need them ... Do or do no; there is no try.” ~ Yoda*



*[Yoda:] “Size matters not.”*

*[Luke:] “I can’t believe it.*

*[Yoda:] “That is why you fail.”*

*The Good Man ...*  
(05/26/12)

*“A man is good when he finds Joy in serving others, and considered evil when he takes joy in harming them. He is virtuous when he finds Peace in a selfless life, and considered sinful when he takes pleasure in a self-centered one. Hence, the things we are choosing to serve in any given moment are in effect telling us exactly who we are choosing to be.”*  
~ inspired by Thomas Merton

We have many choices in each moment, and therefore many different manifestations of self in each day. And yet through it all, we remain the same perfect, Caring Being for all of eternity ...

Today is a great day to re-member this Truth.





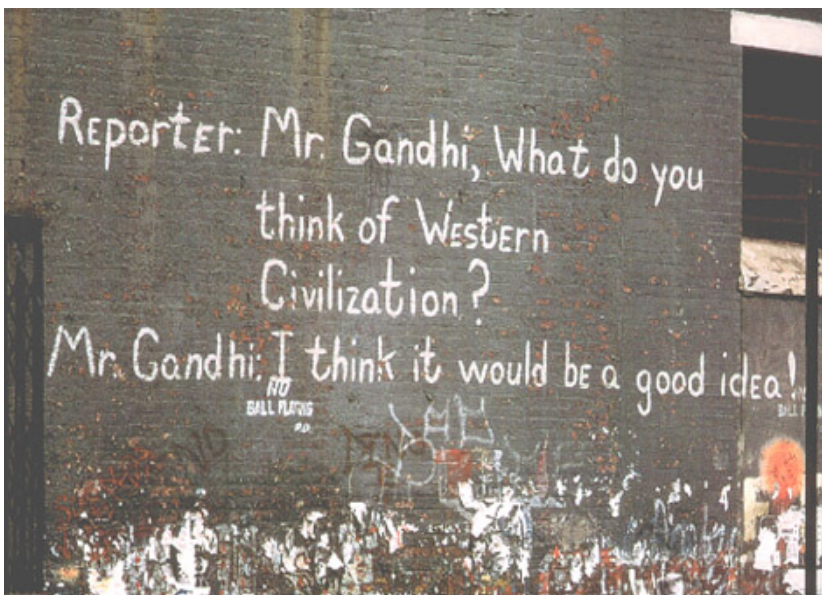
## *Becoming civilized ...* (05/29/2012)

Having a superior intelligent is one thing; becoming deeply Civilized is quite another ... Yes, we humans are indeed an advanced, highly intelligent species. And yes, we can communicate verbally, make & use complex tools, innovate technological machines and color coordinate our clothes ... And all of these are truly great accomplishments (especially the latter), and yet -- even though these traits do indeed make us “smarter” than the other sentient species on Earth, they do *not* make us more Civilized. In essence, while it is true that we are human, we are still far from Humane – we are still far from being truly Civilized.

Civilized species do not kill (or even condemn) each other over their religious beliefs ... Civilized species do not take more than they need from their planet ... and Civilized species forgive their trespassers and share with those in need – all characteristics that we humans still for the most part fail to exhibit.

And please realize that it is *far* more important to be Civilized than to be smart; that it is *far* more important to be Kind than it is to be “powerful”; and that it is *far* more important to be a humble servant than it is to be a “powerful ruler”.

We may be pretty clever, we humans, and yet we have a *long* way to go before we qualify as truly Civilized. It is a very high peak with which we are collectively faced, and it is a peak – if we are to survive as a species – that we must soon begin to climb ... And that long climb starts with *you*, and it starts *today*. Indeed, every step you take gets us a bit closer to waking UP -- every anonymous deed of Kindness you do for a friend, every gentle smile you give to a stranger, every sincere forgiveness you send to an enemy, all bring us that much closer to becoming what we were put here to become; namely, Caring Caretakers of this glorious planet.



Every act counts — Every act is significant.

**LOVE** is the true civility, my Friends ...

... got **LOVE**?



*The shoulders of Giants ...*  
(06/02/2012)

A good Friend of mine passed away yesterday morning. His transition came as no surprise, as he had been chronically ill for many months previous, and yet the loss was palpable all the same ...

Death is an interesting phenomenon for us humans. In lives overflowing with choice and free will, it is truly our only inevitability -- the only thing that is certainly certain about our future. And yet we all seem to avoid any focused thought as to its slow & steady approach – often engaging in behaviors essentially meaningless and often dealing with others with a most callous whim. Indeed, most of us show no signs of concern whatsoever related to death's inevitable approach. In essence, even though we are all destined for death, most of us still choose to live as though we will never die.

And yet this makes a bit of sense, for if we were to wake up each morning and force ourselves to consciously remember that we are already dying; that today could very well be our last day on Earth; that life is truly as precious as it is fleeting, then we would be equally compelled to live accordingly ...

... and this would require a drastic change in how we fill our days.

For if we were to regularly pause and remember our own mortality, we would not only stop at least once every hour to wonder over the immense Beauty that gently enfolds us in every smile & every sunrise, but we would also set forth each morning to make that priceless day a truly Meaning-full one ...

We would spend a lot more time Caring for others and a lot less time caring about what we have to spend. We would strive to be successful, of course, and yet a truly Success-full day would be one in which we did something Kind for another for which we received nothing in return. For when we stop for even one instant and rally think about it, *these* are the only things that truly matter — *these* are the memories that will bring others Joy & therefore us, Peace.

Shakespeare once wrote that, "*Cowards die many deaths ... The valiant taste death but once.*" And when I think of this quote, I like to think that Shakespeare knew what cowardice & courage truly are — that cowardice is not running from a fight, but rather being presented with the opportunity to reach out to a stranger but choosing to look away; that Courage is not going fearlessly into battle, but rather being too tired or too afraid or too busy to reach out to a stranger ... and yet reaching out to them anyway.

I like to think that my departed Friend had been Brave in this sense while he was alive ... I like to think that he had filled his life with Meaning-full moments before he lay down for his final rest ... I like to think that he could lay in peace on his deathbed and calmly reflect in deep Contentment upon a life truly well-lived.

Personally, I knew him as an exceptionally Kind man, and I feel honored to have known him. His life was a beacon of laughter, and yet it is his death that I honor today — a passing that reminds me that my life too is priceless; that I too have only a few days left upon which to make my mark for Goodness; that I too must live today as though it is my last — that I must live today for **Love**.

Thank you for that, Horst ...  
Rest in Peace, my Friend.

*“When the commonplace ‘We must all die’ transforms itself into the acute consciousness ‘I must die—and soon,’ then death grapples us, and his fingers are cruel ... Afterwards, he comes to fold us in his arms as our mother did, and our last moment of dim earthly discerning becomes like the first.” ~ George Eliot*



(in loving memory of Horst Boss,  
who passed onward yesterday  
after 79 years of Love & Laughter)

## *The Glowing Door ...* (06/01/2012)

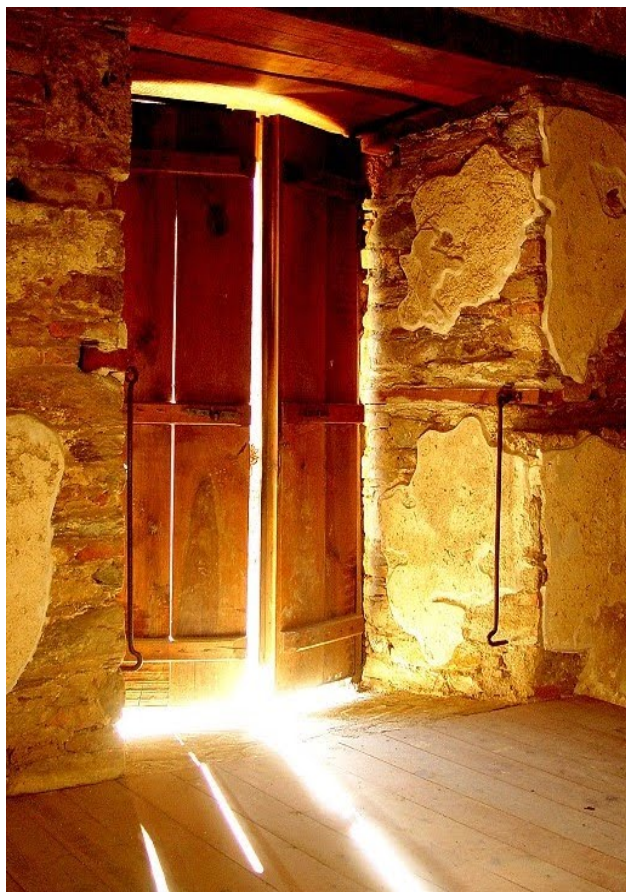
In all the religions there are primarily teachers. They teach you about subjects of which you cannot truly know, and they ask you to simply believe them because there is no way for you to bring their truths into your objective reality.

On the other hand, radical Kindness is not a mere believer's world; it is not for those of mere faith. Rather, it is for those daring Souls who can drop all belief, unbelief, doubt, reason & mind, in order to enter into their lives fully ... It is for those who refuse to care about what happens to them, while they simply choose to Care ... It is for those who refuse to worry about what their Love will or will not effectuate, while they simply choose to **Love**.

And yet even though there are no guarantees here, such a lifestyle does indeed bring tremendous transformation. While others are involved in worship or philosophizing, those immersed in radical Kindness are involved in a real metamorphosis — in a profound reawakening to who they truly are and who they always have been — in living lives that are filled with deep Meaning; filled with a selfless Love that changes them from the base metal of fear & yearning into the pure gold of Peace & Joy.

And yet to experience this Truth, the language of deep Caring must be truly understood — not with the intellectual mind, but rather with the loving Heart. After a time of courageously venturing forth into living **LOVE** as a verb instead of thinking of it as a concept — after a time of making Kindness real in your life (even while remaining unsure that Caring for another selflessly is “effective” or even “right”), there comes a moment when you suddenly feel the Peace which has been eluding you for your entire life previous ... There comes that moment of perfect Harmony when you feel a complete Oneness with this glorious life and everything in it. Suddenly, just as Buddha said, your Heart's “eighty-four thousands doors” open wide and it deeply connects with everyone & everything around you ... Such a Life of Meaning is waiting patiently for you behind a gate that is ever-unlocked.

So go ahead, Friend ... open UP!  
(~ inspired by Osho)



*Love laughs anyway ...*  
(06/05/12)

*“Humor is when one laughs despite it all.”*  
~ *Otto Bierbaum*

*“Humor ist, wenn Mann trotzdem lacht.”*  
~ *Horst Boss (1933 – 2012)\**



(\*Horst was often heard quoting this particular wisdom ...  
... always while laughing, of course.)



*Seeing the Truth ...*  
(06/07/2012)

If you are going to criticize others' behaviors or judge their beliefs, you are going to go your entire life without truly *SEEING* anyone at all ... for if you want to really *KNOW* another person, you are going to have to do a lot more than merely look at their actions or listen to their words ...

... You are going to have the Courage to look a lot deeper.

And if you do happen to look that closely and still don't find any Goodness residing within, it doesn't mean that Love isn't there ...

... It means you haven't looked deep enough.



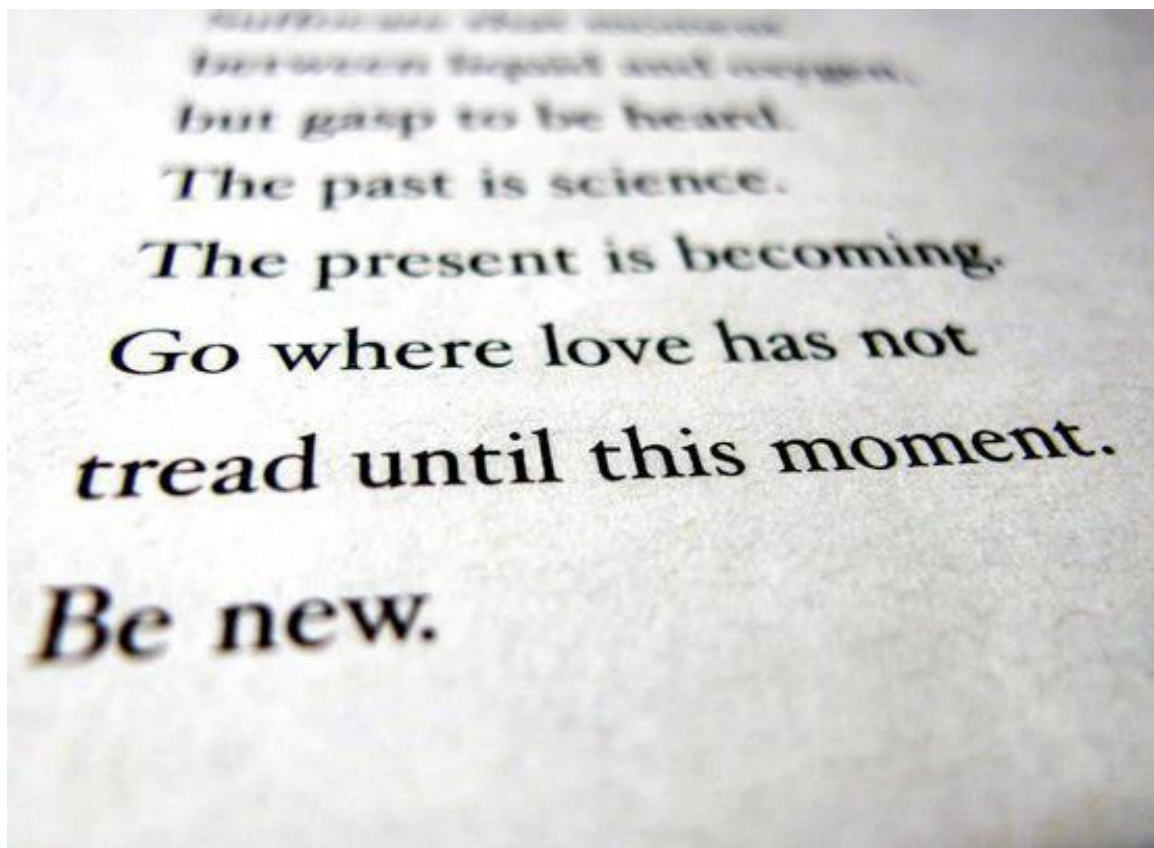
(pic quote from Antoine de St. Exupery)



*Finding real LOVE ...*  
(06/12/2012)

“Go where Love has yet to tread” is a bit misleading ... for Love the noun is always everywhere.

What is most often missing is *LOVE* the verb ...  
That’s the one that can’t show up unless *we* do the showing.



## *Waking Up to Love ...* (06/09/2012)

*“Two men, a philosopher & a mystic, were lost in a forest on a very dark night. It was a very dangerous forest, full of wild animals, very dense, with darkness all around. Suddenly, there was a storm, a crashing of the clouds, and great lightning. In fear, the philosopher looked to the sky, while the mystic calmly looked at the ground around him. In that moment of lightning, the path was illuminated. The philosopher had looked instead at the lightning, wondering what was happening, and thereby missed the path.” ~ inspired by Osho*

We are all walking in a forest denser than the one in this story. With our primitive senses and still-infant scientific understanding, it is impossible to deeply comprehend our lives, much less know which way to go to reach real fulfillment. It truly is as though we too are walking in the darkness ...

And yet, sometimes for us as well there is a flash of lightning. Sometimes there is a spark of wisdom that lights The Way before us. It is often a flash that speaks of the unthinkable; that encourages raw Courage; that startles us with its brilliance. Jesus was lightning ... Lao Tzu was lightning ... Buddha was lightning ... Rumi was lightning ... Gandhi was lightning ... Peace Pilgrim was lightning. When our nights are darkest, these and those like them flash the lightning of their Wisdom upon our respective Paths.

And when this illumination does arrive – and arrive again it will, look not to the heavens; look not to the source of that brilliant glow ... for that’s like studying for years what it means to dance, without ever setting foot on the dance-floor; without ever swaying to the music. After all, if you analyze the source of the Light, you will miss your chance to see that upon which it shines.

If you look for the lightning — if you loom for the radiant Truth of unconditional Love that resides within every religion’s storm-cloud of dogma -- if you look for it, you will merely glimpse shadows of its Beauty; a Beauty you will not find in the darkness; a darkness that will then close about you once again.

No, if you use those waning rays to look for the Light itself, you will miss The Path upon which it briefly shined.

No, when the flash of Truth comes to you, look not to the heavens; look instead to The Path it sets aglow.

For the Light does not come for you to marvel at its Beauty, the Light comes to show you your Way ... For the Light has not come to be loved by you, the Light has come to show you where you can Love ... For the Light shines not upon your future; it shines upon your life — right here; right now — in this one priceless handful of forever.

So set aside your lightning-chasing ... Set aside your search for “truth” and “wisdom” and “salvation” and “happiness”. Look around you instead. Look for those in need of a smile or a gentle hand ... Look for those yearning for a warm greeting or a warm cup of tea. For *they* are your Path; a Path upon which all the Great Ones have already walked — a path they are all gently urging you to follow.

My Friends, the next Great Storm has arrived in your part of the wilderness ... The next lightning bolt is even now illuminating your Way.

Don't look up — look around you instead!  
Right now ... look around your life and See your Path.  
See your Path ... and then, even into the depths of the renewed darkness, set forth boldly upon it.

*“When you start really living, ordinary things are transformed into extraordinary Beauty ... Life consists of many small encounters, and yet when you bring the quality of intense, passionate Caring to them, they are transformed — they become luminous.” ~ inspired by Osho*



## Remembering The Walk ... (06/10/2012)

*“For in hearts doth Nature stir them so  
Then people longing to pilgrim go  
And palmers seeking foreign strands  
To distant shrines in sundry lands.”  
~ Geoffrey Chaucer*

3 years 7 months & 9 days ago, I completed my first Camino de Santiago; walking for 40 days from the French Pyrenees all the way to the northwest coast of Spain. It was one of the more amazing adventures of my life; a Journey that seemed to take me much further within myself than the 555+ miles my feet carried me ... It is a journey I still enjoy incorporating into my current life; a journey I still enjoy sharing with others.

For those who don't know, the Camino is a pilgrimage route that has been used consistently for well over 1000 years. I find it amazing that this Path remained so constant despite the volatile changes that repeatedly swept over Europe during the past 12 centuries.



And this is especially remarkable to me when I consider the fact that folks have been drawn over & over & over again to walk its length from all corners of the globe and for all sorts of different reasons — to test their faith, to find God, to find themselves ...

I have traveled all over the world and I have visited quite a few “sacred spaces” while doing so, and yet for me the Camino remains in a class all by itself. Simply stated, it is one long ribbon of Transformation ... It seems safe to say that those who walk its length cannot help but be touched by the Divine; that to walk it humbly & earnestly is to be truly reBorn.



*“Pilgrims are poets who create by taking journeys.” ~ Richard R. Niebuhr*

Of course, not everyone in the world will make it to Santiago, which is perfectly fine. Each one of us is walking a Pilgrimage with even greater transformative power — the Pilgrimage of Life. You certainly do not need to go to Spain to rediscover your True Self ... You can do that anywhere.

And yet, there really is something to traditional pilgrimage; there really are some places on this Earth that seem to assist one’s journey of Self-Discovery. Some of you might be interested in making the Camino a part of your own awakening; some of you might hear It whispering on the wind; calling you to come and go for walk ...

To honor this interest (and to honor the Camino itself), I posted 499 images from my journey on Facebook, and then later released a Camino “travel journal” in pdf format to some Friends per email. It felt good to let folks “walk with me”, even though I had long-since returned ... Recently I felt called to make the Camino available to everyone, so I’ve updated each entry — resized images, edited text and added some quotes, and the finished product is now online.

So, whether you plan on walking the Camino or not ... enJOY the Trip!

<http://inspiringthealtruisticmoment.com/blog/?cat=1265>

*“Stripped of all its outer encrustations, spirituality emerges as a science, as scientific as any other, as verifiable in its results. Let any seeker take it up and let him create in the laboratory of the soul the conditions that are prerequisite; and as sure as the day follows the night shall he rise into the Kingdom of God.” ~ Sant Kirpal Singh*





*Again as a Child ...*  
(06/11/2012)

When I first read in the Bible Jesus encouraging us all to “become again as a child”, I really wondered about his sanity ... I mean, I’ve worked with thousands and thousands of children over the years, and if there is one thing that is almost certain it is that most of the time children exude some pretty self-centered views on Love. For example:

*“My mother says to look for a man who is kind. That’s what I’ll do. I’ll find somebody who’s kinda tall and handsome.” ~ Carolyn, age 8*

*“How do you get a boyfriend? I shake my hips and hope for the best.” ~ Camille, age 9*

*“How do you get a girlfriend? I guess one way is to take the girl out to eat. Make sure it’s something she likes ... French-fries usually work for me.” ~ Bart, age 9*

*“Love will find you, even if you are trying to hide from it. I have been trying to hide from it since I was five, but the girls keep finding me.” ~ Bobby, age 8*

Come to think of it, lots of adults I know are still advocating very similar beliefs — trying to find the Love “they deserve”, trying to find a partner who will “love them as they are”, even hiding from Love so they won’t get hurt again. They still worry far more about the Love they can get than they wonder about the Love they could be giving.

Of course, a little research will unveil that Jesus actually encouraged us to become as *infants*, not mere children, which makes a lot more sense. You see, infants know about **LOVE** ... They see the world as continuously Wonder-full, they Forgive their trespassers on a dime, and they fully **LOVE** others “all-IN” — all three traits that I highly recommend adopting if you are interested in living a life of deep-seated Joy & Peace & Meaning.

That having been said, just as some of us adults “get it” when it comes to Caring for others without condition, so do a few of the children in our midst... With that in mind, feel free to allow the deeper meanings of the following statements to inspire you to go forth and **LOVE** all-IN today as well:

*“Don’t say you Love somebody and then change your mind.  
Love isn’t like picking what movie you want to watch.”  
~ Natalie, age 9*

*“Love is when you go out to eat  
and give somebody most of your French fries  
without making them give you any of theirs.”  
~ Chrissie, age 6*

*“Love is when your puppy licks your face  
even after you left him alone all day.”  
~ Mary Ann, age 4*

*“Love is what’s in the room with you at Christmas  
when you stop opening presents and listen.”  
~ Bobby, age 7*

*“If you want to learn to Love better,  
you should start with a friend who you hate.”  
~ Nikka, age 6*

*“Love is foolish ...  
but I still try it sometimes.”  
~ Floyd, age 9*



*Letting the Fortress fall ...*  
(06/15/2012)

*“The fortress that I’ve painstakingly constructed all these years is fundamentally ruptured ... Love is beaming through the cracks. And my Love for everything around me is beaming right back.” ~ Heather Peroni*



We’ve been building fortresses against pain & disappointment all our lives. We’ve been surrounding ourselves with material comforts & superficial pleasures & “our kind of people” in order to keep ourselves safe from harm ...

And yet the very castles that we have built to protect us from pain are the very walls that are keeping us from knowing real Joy ... The very stones we have used to keep out enemies at bay are the very boulders that are keeping us from knowing real Companionship.

It takes a lot of guts to tear those walls down ... and yet until we do we’ll never really know anything about the glorious Life that awaits us on the other side.

We haven't been put here to "get rich" or "be successful" or even "find happiness" ... Instead, we've all been given the opportunity to do something courageous with our time. We've all been given the chance to make this ride a truly Meaning-full one.

And it all starts when we have the guts to open up and "step outside" — to give to friends in times of lack; to greet strangers as friends; to offer the cruel & the greedy a sorely needed blast of Kindness.

**LOVE** is taking apart your fortress by building a bridge to others ...

So ... got **LOVE**?



*"Without courage,  
Love is but a whisper on the wind."  
~ anonymous*

*"Courage is the willingness to be afraid  
and yet act anyway." ~ Robert Anthony*

*"I wanna make a jigsaw puzzle that's got 40,000 pieces.  
And when you finish it, it says 'go outside.'" ~ Dimitry Martin*



## *The Power in Grief ...* (06/18/2012)

“Grief can destroy you, and grief can magnify you. You can decide a relationship was all for nothing if it had to end in death, *OR* you can realize that every moment of it had more meaning than you dared to recognize at the time; so much meaning it scared you — scared you so much that you just went through the motions of Caring; that you just took for granted the love and laughter you shared together; that you just didn’t allow yourself to consider the sacredness of your Connection with the departed.

And yet, when your friend or lover or partner or family member does die — when it’s over & done and you’re alone without them, you can also begin to see that it wasn’t just talking together or watching sunsets together or washing dishes together or playing games together or taking walks together; that it wasn’t just celebrating life’s successes together or being concerned together over life’s tough times ... No — if you pause long enough to step back from your sadness, you will see that *it was everything*; that your Connection with them was the very *why* of life; every event and every precious moment of it.

And when you do so, you realize in that moment that the answer to the very mystery of your existence is the Love you shared with such folks (though sometimes imperfectly) ... And when you allow your loss to awaken you to the deeper Beauty of it all — to the sanctity of Life and the Joy of Living — you can’t help but let out a deep sigh; you can’t help but allow a huge smile to spread across your face as a most amazing wave of Peace wells up from within you ... and you are driven to your knees, not by the weight of your loss, but by a deep & gentle Gratitude for all the times that preceded it ...

... and then become inspired to stand up and go forth to honor that greatest of Gifts -- by renewing & cherishing the relationships you still have left.”

(inspired by Dean Koontz)





*Roses & Thorns ...*  
(07/14/2012)

Some folks complain that roses have thorns;  
others are thankful that life's thorns have roses ...

I, in the other Heart, follow the "narrow path";  
I SEE the two as one ...

I see the prick of the roses' thorns giving their petals a deeper  
magnificence; and the courage of that embrace carries me past the pain.

**LOVE** always remembers, regardless of challenge or happenstance, that life  
is allWays Good ...

... and **LOVE** remembers to act accordingly.

So ... got **LOVE**?

(inspired by Alphonse Karr)



*Life before death ...*  
(07/15/2012)

The important question is not whether life exists after death.

The only consideration of any real consequence ...

... is whether you choose to truly *LIVE* before you die.

(inspired by Osho)



*Kindness is a verb ...*  
(07/16/2012)

*“Philosophy consists very largely of one philosopher arguing that all other philosophers are jackasses. He usually proves his case, of course ... and thereby proves that he is a jackass himself.” ~ H. L. Mencken*

An objective “Meaning of Life” is about as ever-nebulous a concept as it gets. It is something that simply cannot be found, no matter how hard we search or strive. And yet – if we are willing to let fear go and get up and *DO* something for another – great Meaning in *living* is there for us all.

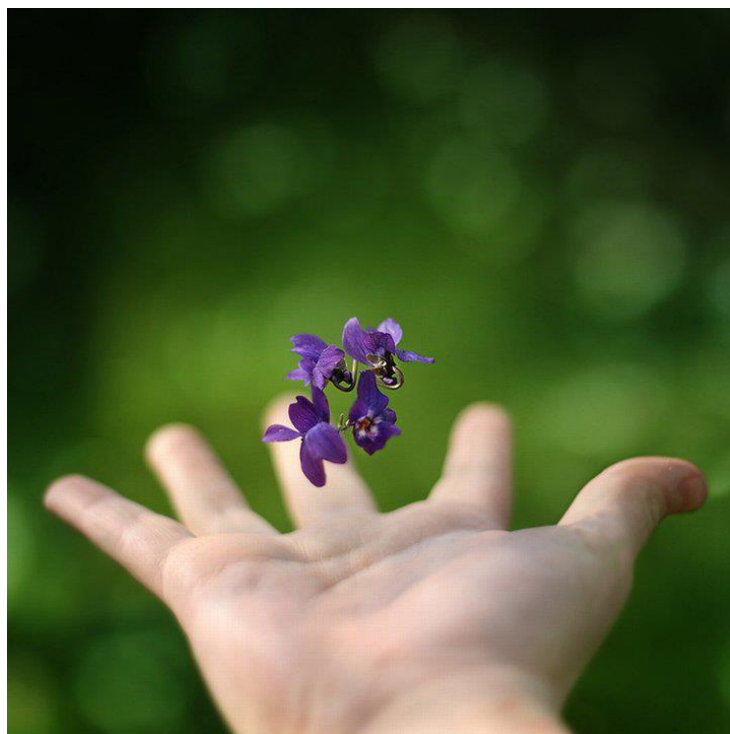
*“What counts most in each of our lives is the difference we made in the lives of others.” – Bert Schouten*

As such, it is high time we quit wondering about what is “right”, it is high time we ceased searching for what is “true”, and it is high time we stopped debating & discussing the “best way” to solve our society’s challenges.

It’s not rocket science, folks.

Kindness is the answer ...  
... and Kindness is a verb.

*“The first step towards getting somewhere, is to decide you’re not staying where [or how] you already are.” ~ Hayley Darby*



*Reaching the Top ...*  
(07/17/2012)

*“Ever since Happiness heard your name,  
it has been running through the streets  
trying to find you.” ~ Hafiz*

We’ve been told that Salvation comes after we die ...  
We’ve been told that Enlightenment requires disciplined time & effort ...  
We’ve been told that Awakening is a slow and steady process.

We’ve been told that finding “true Happiness” is a long staircase that we must climb one step at a time; only someday reaching “the top”; only someday coming to know a real and lasting Contentment.

We meditate and we go to church and we donate to charities and we spend “quality time” with our friends and we do yoga — and we end up only marginally happier than we were before we started. All the “self help” gurus and New Age pundits tell us that this is “just the way it is” — that we can attain “the next step” if we but stay the course and persevere; that we can one day “become enlightened” if we do after buying their next book or attending their latest seminar ...

And we heed their advice and believe that we are making progress. And yet when we do so we aren’t really climbing life’s staircase at all — all we are really doing is marking time on a step upon which we had already long-since arrived.

Well, as depressing as this all sounds, I’ve got some *very Good News* for you; namely this: Everything you’ve been told by these “spiritual leaders” about progress and Grace and faith and persistence simply isn’t the whole Truth ...

In essence, my Friends –  
... *YOUR LIFE DOESN’T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY!*

Yes, life **is** a staircase of sorts — It is indeed true that we *will* grow and “progress” and learn over time. *And* it is also true that *every single step* on that staircase is perfectly Beauty-full; that *every single step* on that staircase has its own portal to Heaven; that Salvation & its ensuing sense of “Enlightenment” are here for every one of us — right here & right now — right where you already are in this very moment; right on the step upon which you already stand.



Indeed (in-deed!), the true Awakening of our True Self comes upon us every time we willfully sacrifice our own desires to satisfy the yearnings of another; every time we set aside our own fears to soothe the angst of another; every time we are exhausted or ill or injured, and yet choose to reach out and carry another's burden anyway.

For it is *these* actions and those like them that allow us to realize that, while Heaven might very well wait for us “on the other side” after we die; and while we might very well “become enlightened” someday, the Heaven of the Soul *IS ALREADY UNDER OUR FEET!*

Indeed, we -- each & every one of us -- are all already fully Enlightened “angels” already walking its Ways ... And to fully awaken to this Truth – and to feel the unbridled Bliss that accompanies such an awakening -- all we have to do is act accordingly.

*“Peace is not something you wish for; It’s something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away.” ~ Robert Fulghum.*





*Just EAT it ...*  
(07/19/2012)

To the ego, going “out of your way” to Care for another looks unpleasantly inedible (if not even downright disgusting), and yet this “entree” is not only super-nutritious for the Soul; it is actually quite tasty as well ...

So bon appetite, my Friends ... Eat UP!

## WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE



STORY AND PICTURES BY MAURICE SENDAK

Terry Gross: Can you share some of your favorite comments from readers that you've gotten over the years?

Maurice Sendak: Oh, there's so many. Can I give you just one that I really like? It was from a little boy. He sent me a charming card with a little drawing. I loved it. I answer all my children's letters—sometimes very hastily—but this one I lingered over. I sent him a postcard and I drew a picture of a Wild Thing on it. I wrote, “Dear Jim, I loved your card.” Then I got a letter back from his mother and she said, “Jim loved your card so much he ate it.” That to me was one of the highest compliments I've ever received. He didn't care that it was an original drawing or anything. He saw it, he loved it, he ate it.



*Alive is more than enough ...*  
(07/19/2012)

“I would rather be a flower which blooms in full glory and then dies,  
than be a shrub that lives for centuries yet never blossoms ...

I would rather be a spark that blazes brilliantly for but a moment, than  
be a glimmering bulb that pulses for years, yet is too dim to illuminate the  
Way of Love ...

I would rather be a sparkling meteor which shines its radiant Beauty  
but for an instant, than be a cold & sleepy planet ...

I am born to LIVE ... not merely to exist. I shall therefore not waste  
my days in trying to prolong them ... I shall use my time ...

... I shall **LOVE**.”

(inspired by Tayyiba Iram)





## *Our one River ...* (07/20/2012)

“Buddha claimed no copyright on his teachings ... Shakespeare received no royalty checks. We have been enchanted by music, paintings, architecture and crafts of many cultures, from time immemorial. We have received a treasure house of traditions as a free gift. In response, we offer our work as well -- our creativity, our arts and our crafts as gifts to generations present and future.

In such times, when we are motivated by such a selfless spirit, then our work is never a burden ... It is not a duty ... It is not a responsibility. In such times, we are not even the doers of our work ... Work flows through us and not from us. In such times, we do not own our intellect, our creativity, or our skills ... We have received them as a gift -- and we pass them on as a gift.

It is like a river that keeps on flowing. All its tributaries together are what make the river great, and we are one of those tributaries -- adding to the Great River of our particular time and culture; adding to the Great River of Humanity.

If tributaries stop flowing into the river, if they become individualistic and egotistical, if they put terms and conditions on their entry before they join the river, then they will dry up -- and the river will dry up as well.

To keep the river flowing, its tributaries must come together willingly — with Joy, and without condition.”

(~ inspired by Satish Kumar)





*Seeing one World ...*  
(07/22/2012)

Seeing past others' behaviors to their innate Goodness within allows Joy to flow up from within you as well ...

Instead of letting external circumstances entrench your fears by labeling others as “strangers” or “villains”, remember instead the greatest of Truths:

... that we are *ALL* members of the same Family.

The natural result of adopting such “water logic” is the Peace that comes from the Compassion; from the Forgiveness; from the acts of Tenderness that naturally follow.

(inspired by Lao Tsu)



*We are Starshine ...*  
(07/22/2012)

*“Her eyes were of different colors, the left as brown as autumn, the right as blue-gray as the wind. Both seemed alive with questions ... By her own account she spoke with Angels and could hear the thoughts of the animals and the trees. She was passionately kind to all living things. She was a beam of starlight trapped in flesh; patiently awaiting the moment when it could continue on its journey into forever.” ~ Tim Willocks*



Each one of us is a similar sliver of starshine riding around in a fleshly machine we call “the body”. And yet for each of us there is no need to patiently wait for that machine to release us ... Indeed, we each set forth into eternity every time we reach out to Love the unlovable; every time we give to those deemed undeserving; every time we gently bless those who have harmed us or others; every time we set aside our criticisms & complainings in order to See the world as the innately glorious wonderland it always is.

Though our own eyes might not be of different colors, they do see two very different realities ...

The “brown eye” within us sees the troubles of the world and complains about them; sees life’s perpetrators and yearns to inflict them with “justice” ... It sees everyday things as “boring”, unattractive things as “ugly”, and inappropriate things as “bad”.

Our “blue-gray eye”, however, sees the same Reality very differently ... For this eye, the world’s troubles become opportunities to Care; our enemies, priceless chances to Forgive ... With this vision, nothing is “boring” or “ugly” or “bad” — everything we see is Seen for the first time; everything we see is new and amazing and full of promise & Beauty.

In every moment of our precious lives we each have a choice as to how we will See the Life we have been given ... And how we choose to See that moment will determine what we then choose to Do (or not Do) with it.

*Love* sees as the wind; ever-flowing & ever-giving & ever-amazed.  
So ... got *Love*?

*“At any moment, you have a choice  
that either leads you closer to your Spirit –  
... or further away from it.” ~ Thich Nhat Hanh*



(P.S. Our ability to See is almost as important as our ability to choose.  
It’s an amazing world out there, my Friends. Please choose to SEE it ...  
... and then please choose to act accordingly.)

*LOVE is all we need ...*  
(07/23/2012)

Actually, if your *Love* is a verb, then Love *is* all you need.

## 7 Steps to Happiness:



(Remember: It is *LOVE* that truly Appreciates, *LOVE* that truly Does, *LOVE* that truly Accepts, *LOVE* that truly Listens, *LOVE* that truly Smiles and *LOVE* that truly Feels ... As such, there is no real happiness without real *LOVE*.)



## *The Gate to Heaven; the Gate to Hell ...* (07/24/2012)

A warrior came one day to Hakuin, a Zen Master. The warrior was a samurai, a proud soldier of no small reknown, and he asked Hakuin, “Is there any Hell and is there any Heaven — and if there are, where are their gates? How can I avoid Hell and enter Heaven instead?”

Now a warrior typically knows of only two things -- life and death. His life is always at stake; and he is always in some way gambling against death or preparing to do the same. And this warrior was of the same mold – he had not come to Hakuin to learn any complex spiritual doctrine. He simply wanted to know where the gates were so he could avoid Hell and enter Heaven ... And because Hakuin was aware of this, he replied in a way that any warrior could understand ... He said, “Who are you?”

Now it was a thing of much pride to be a samurai in Japan. It meant being a perfect warrior, a man who would not hesitate a single instant to give his life for the cause. So the warrior replied, “I am a samurai; indeed, I am a leader of samurais. Even the emperor pays respect to me.” ... And yet instead of responding with the appropriate expressions of reverence, Hakuin actually laughed gently and said, ” You, a samurai? In this moment you more resemble a beggar.” ... Upon hearing this, the samurai’s pride was severely wounded and he temporarily forgot what he had come for. Instead, he instinctively unsheathed his sword and moved in to kill Hakuin.

And yet in this moment Hakuin laughed once again and said, “You have found the gate to Hell ... With your sword, with your anger, with your ego; here opens the gate to your own damnation.”



This was language that the warrior could understand. He paused ... He listened ... He heard ... He understood ... And then he bowed and put his sword back into its sheath.

“And now”, said Hakuin, “You have also discovered the gate to Heaven.”

(~ inspired by an unknown source)

## *Peace has priorities ...* (07/26/2012)

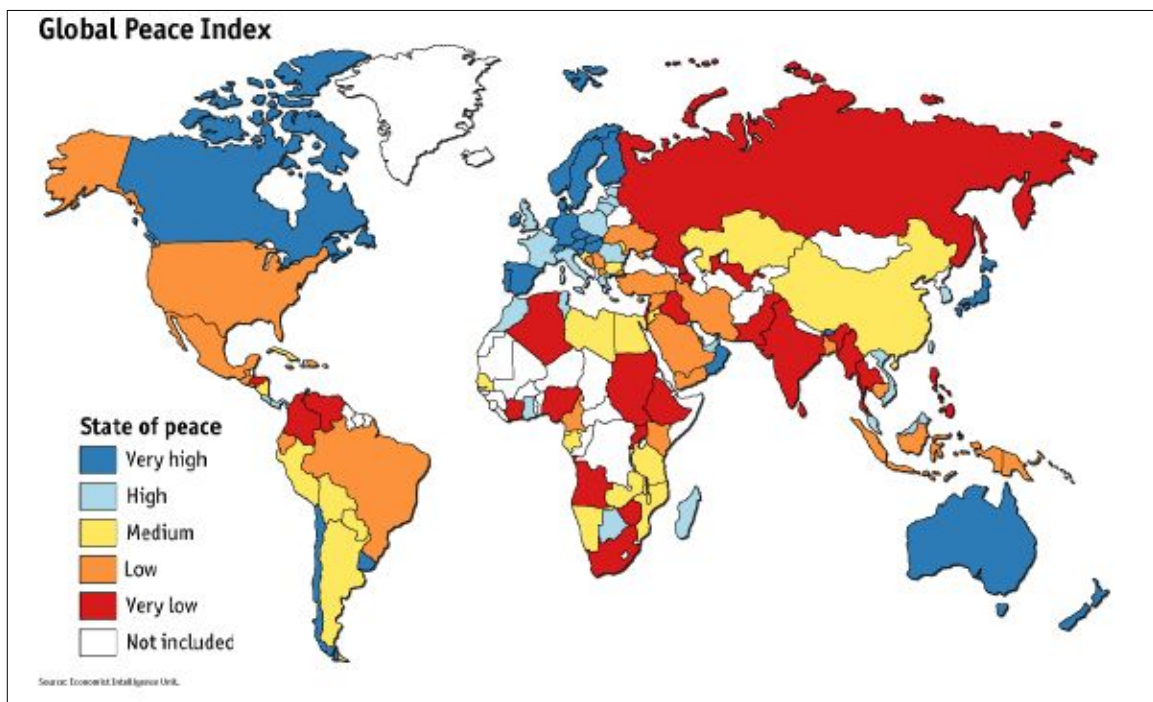
*“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, from those who are cold and are not clothed.” ~ Dwight D. Eisenhower*

We cannot remove the evil from others’ hearts while choosing to see them as “flawed” or “evil” ... Jesus himself said it best when he reminded us to remove the beam from our own eyes before we fight to remove the splinter from another’s ... That “beam” is our arrogance that judges those splinters to be “evil”; it is the hubris that would have us correct others and thereby neglect our own atonements.

Indeed, the only way to remove the “splinter” of evil from others is to remember that the same are not innate character flaws — but rather are fearful responses to deep-seated wounds. After all, we do not attack a cancer victim and attempt to correct them. We recognize their illness and exude them gentle Compassion.

This is the only way to effectuate lasting Peace with the spiritually &/or psychologically “ill” folks that our egos would incorrectly judge to be “evil” ...

Please consider this wisdom gently ...  
... and then please go forth and act accordingly.



*No small acts of LOVE ...*  
(07/30/2012)

And once you've risen above the gloom of regret & parted worry's fearful fog, you will remember that it is LOVE that matters, and only Love ... and you will remember that the LOVE that matters is the Love that is a verb ... and you will remember that the most powerful LOVE might only give "a little",

... but it gives that "little", a lot.

*"Raining down a deluge of food & drink,  
may I dispel the wants of thirst and famine.  
And in all ages marked by scarcity and want,  
May I appear to others as sustenance."  
~ The Way of the Bodhisattva*



## *Befriending Dragons ...* (07/26/2012)

*“We know all too well that we have a God who shows mercy on evil-doers, for if He didn’t, we’d all be in very big trouble.” ~ Shane Claiborne*

It is important for us all to remember that all evil comes from malice,  
... malice, which is nothing more than crystallized hatred,  
... hatred, which is nothing more than crystallized anger,  
... anger, which is nothing more than crystallized fear,  
... fear, which is nothing more than crystallized greed,  
... & greed, which is nothing more than crystallized selfishness.

Simply put, what this means is that every time you choose to be selfish yourself, you are actively supporting “evil” ... For example, every time you look away from a homeless beggar because you feel uncomfortable or afraid, you are supporting “evil”,

... and every time you rationalize “taking care of yourself first” so that you might someday thereafter care for someone else, you are supporting “evil”,

... and every time you gossip about another person behind their back or criticize them to their face, you are supporting “evil”,

... and every time you watch a crime show on TV or an action film in the theater and celebrate the death of one of the “bad guys”, you are supporting “evil”.

*“To lose your Soul doesn’t mean you someday die to go to Hell. Whenever we don’t enliven who we truly are, we are already in Hell; seeking fulfillment in the wrong places and finding it in the wrong ways.” ~ Dalton Roberts*

This is kind of a shocker, I know, and yet please remember that — even though we have all done one or more (or all) of these things in our recent lives — this doesn’t mean that we are “lost” or “primitive” or “bad” or even “evil” ourselves ... It simply means that we all still have some “Waking UP” to do. It simply means that we all have certain situations in our lives where we continue respond with cowardly fear instead of courageous Kindness.

Some would say that this is simply the way of things; that we are all “only human”. I would offer a different Truth: namely, that even though we will indeed be forever tempted to respond with callousness over intimacy & selfishness over generosity & fear over Love, we are *not* now – nor will we ever be -- “only human” ... For the Truth of the matter is — *WE ARE HUMAN(e)!!!*



That's right ... Every person out there who can read these words has a functional neo-cortex inside their head, and if your neo-cortex is functioning, then the power of choice is still available to you.

This life does not require you to behave like an animal when things get rough ... You are not required to “unleash the inner dragon” whenever you are tired or hurting or afraid. In fact, you are much, much, much more than your primal, selfish, judgmental, instinct-driven ego would have you believe.

Indeed, you have received a priceless Gift — a Gift that arrived at your conception — a Gift that remains yours even if you have never opened its package before now — a Gift that will remain within you for the rest of your days ... This Gift is *THE ABILITY TO CHOOSE*; specifically, the ability to choose how you respond to fear.

Now, I will freely admit that giving radical, selfless, unconditional **LOVE** to strangers and enemies (and dragons) alike is quite difficult. To this I can personally attest ... And yet this option *is* always available to you, and in those moments when you do choose to follow its path, it is a choice that will indeed allWays brings great Peace.

*“Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are really princesses waiting to see us act, just once, with some beauty and some courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, simply something that is itself afraid — something helpless that wants our Love.” ~ Rainer Maria Rilke*



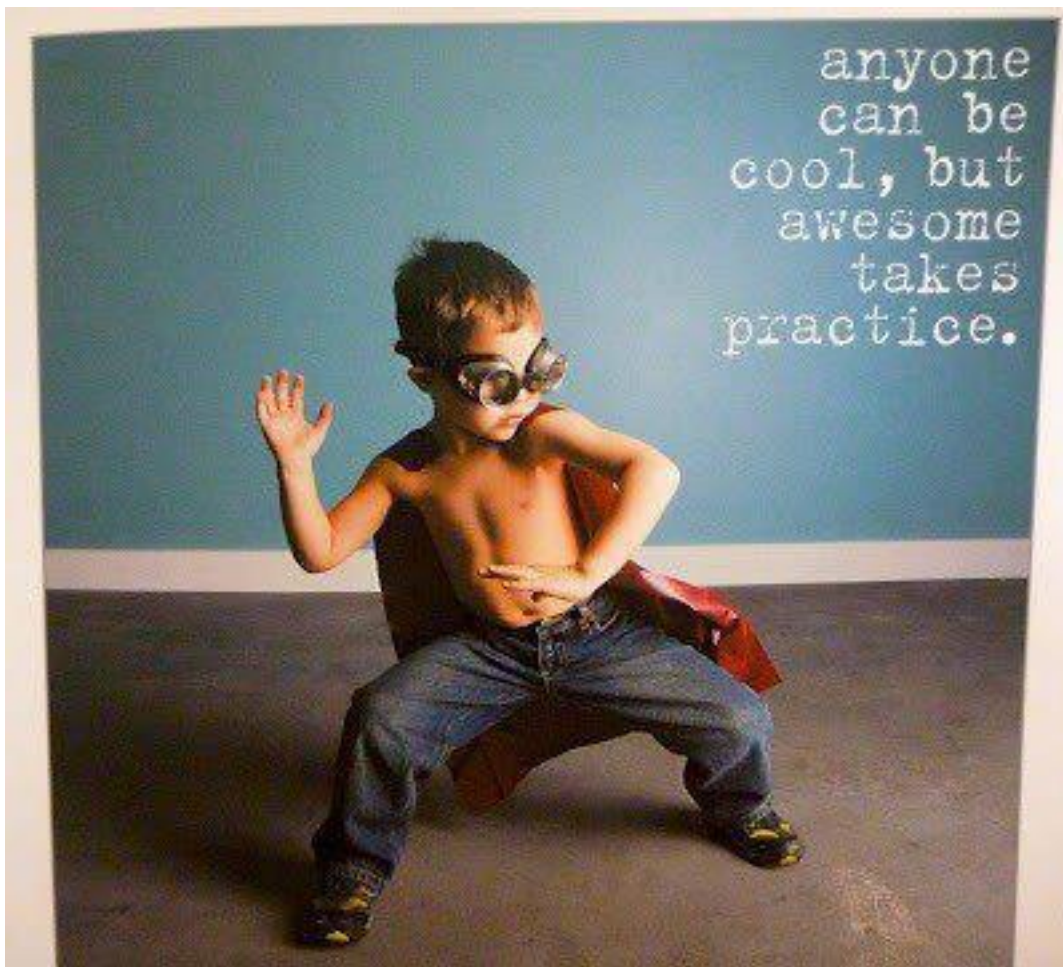
*Becoming Awesome ...*  
(07/29/2012)

*“What is not sought in the right way,  
will not be found.” ~ I Ching*

If you are looking for your True Self — the part of you that is Peace-full & Loving & Kind, you won't find it by surrounding yourself with “good people” or “taking care of yourself” ... You will only find your True Self when you start acting accordingly — when you start being Peace-full & Loving & Kind.

And once you do so, that is when you start being who You truly Are — who you actually always have been ...

... That is when you start being truly *AWESOME*.



*What are you waiting for? ...*  
(07/29/2012)

*“The only way to get where you want to be, is to choose to really BE where you already are ... Great Joy comes from nowhere (now here).” ~ Nanja Naisah*

Before we can re-member who we truly Are (and actually, who we have always been), we must first have the Courage to let go of who we were ...  
... to then be able to get out there and radically *BE* again.

We've got to BE the Love ...  
We've got to BE the Forgiveness ...  
We've got to BE the Compassion ...  
We've got to BE the Amazement ...  
We've got to BE the Joy.

Your YOU is waiting for you, my Friends ...  
... So what are you waiting for?





*Love never ends ...*  
(07/31/2012)

*“Though I fear her never coming to me, and fear her leaving me once she arrives, I am not that fear. Though I yearn to be by her side and desire to see Love for me dance in her eyes, I am not that desire. I am Love and I Love her ... She will choose what she chooses, and – whether this choice brings her near or carries her far away, I will thank God that my Love will always join her there.” ~ anonymous*

If our Love for another ends, then it never really began.

Relationships come, and relationships go ... That is the way of things. And yet, no matter what happens in our relationships, when LOVE arrives, it never leaves ...

... That is The Way.

*“While the music lasts,  
you are the music.”  
~ inspired by T. S. Eliot*





## Clarifying Clarity ... (07/31/2012)

“In the 20th century Albert Einstein predicted that humans would require a new manner of thinking in order to survive as a species. When I read the same, I thought something else ... I thought that humanity will require a renewed commitment to gaining Clarity if we are to *thrive* ... After all, despite what the ‘powers that be’ show us on television, our extinction not a foregone conclusion. If we can gain some Clarity — and then *ACT* on it— we really can turn this thing around.

So what is Clarity — What is it on our lives that needs to be clarified?

Clarity is freedom from obscurity ... It is Light ... It is truth — not an objective “universal truth”, but rather your own personal authentic Truth; the Truth that reveals itself to you when you willingly question (and then dispel) any darkness or shadow that has been shrouding any part of your life – anything that has been inspiring your disappointments or bringing out the personal weaknesses you often project onto others.

Each time you clarify such a “darker” part of your life, you come closer to your authentic Self and the bright Bliss that resides therein.

And the Good News is this: this kind of pure Clarity is just as close to you as your current lack of clarity is. Both are equally available right now in this very moment ... If you want greater Clarity (and the Peace that comes with it), you are simply going to have the Courage to set your old judgments and criticisms and blames aside --- and choose *Love* instead.



Enlightenment does not come from the mind; it comes when you confront the fearful side of your nature ...

... and bring it into the Light of Love.”

(~ inspired by Maureen Moss)

## *Waking Up to Living ...* (08/03/2012)

*“Don’t ask yourself what the world needs; ask yourself what makes you come alive — and then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who are alive.” ~ Howard Thurman*

He saw her sadness, looked away, and walked past ...  
He stopped, turned back to her, and offered to help.  
She looked down, embarrassed — possibly humiliated, and refused.

As she stood there, with her bedraggled clothes, bare feet and tear-stained cheeks, he was at a loss. What could he do when she had turned him down already? What could he give that would not make her feel further ashamed? Maybe he should just move on ... And he started to walk away again — but he did not.

He turned to her once more, took off his shoes, and placed them at her feet ... Then he gently touched her shoulder and, when she raised her eyes to his, he told her that she was Loved.



This actually happened ... And things just like this are continue to happen every day all over the world ... And this, or something like it, is what **you** can actually do as well — today ... This — and only this, is what will bring You back to Life; what will allow you to return fully to the Land of the Living.

So, my Friends, choose to Joy-fully walk through the doorways of Caring that open before you today ... They are everywhere in every moment. Every hour, choose to pause at least once to really look around — not to see where you are going or to remember all the “important things” you have to do, but rather to really *See* – to See where you can be Kind; to notice the ways you can lessen another’s burdens or to recognize the ways in which you can add to their Joy.

And when you do so — when you see those brilliant chances, avoid looking away, choose to *ACT* instead ... Choose to give that other just one moment of Happiness — just one instant when they can remember that someone else Cares.

This is what it means to be truly truly Human ...

This is what it means to be truly *ALIVE* .

*“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt [and then given] with the Heart.” ~ Helen Keller*



*The tastiness of LOVE ...*  
(08/04/2012)

A RECIPE FOR AWAKENING YOUR TRUE SELF

\*Start with who you truly ARE ...

*“Studies of our biological constitution make it increasingly clear that we are social creatures of meaning, who crave a sense of coherence and purpose.” ~ Cal Tech neuroscientist Steven Quartz*

\*Add a dose self-responsibility & heat with Love ...

*“You’re not going to find the meaning of life hidden under a rock written by someone else. You’ll only find it by giving meaning to life from inside yourself.” ~ Robert Firestone*

\*Stir gently with acts of selfless service ...

*“I understand how a man who has nothing left in the world still may know bliss, be it only for a moment: in the service of [another]... Happiness cannot be pursued; it must ensue.” ~ Victor Frankl*

\*EnJoy this Enlightenment regularly for the rest of your life ...

*“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, ‘I used everything you gave me.’” ~ Erma Bombeck*





*Dear God ...*  
(08/05/2012)

*“If you want your prayers to be powerful, then you’ve got to pray in harmony with God’s gentle will ... and you’ve got to pray with moving feet.” ~ anonymous*

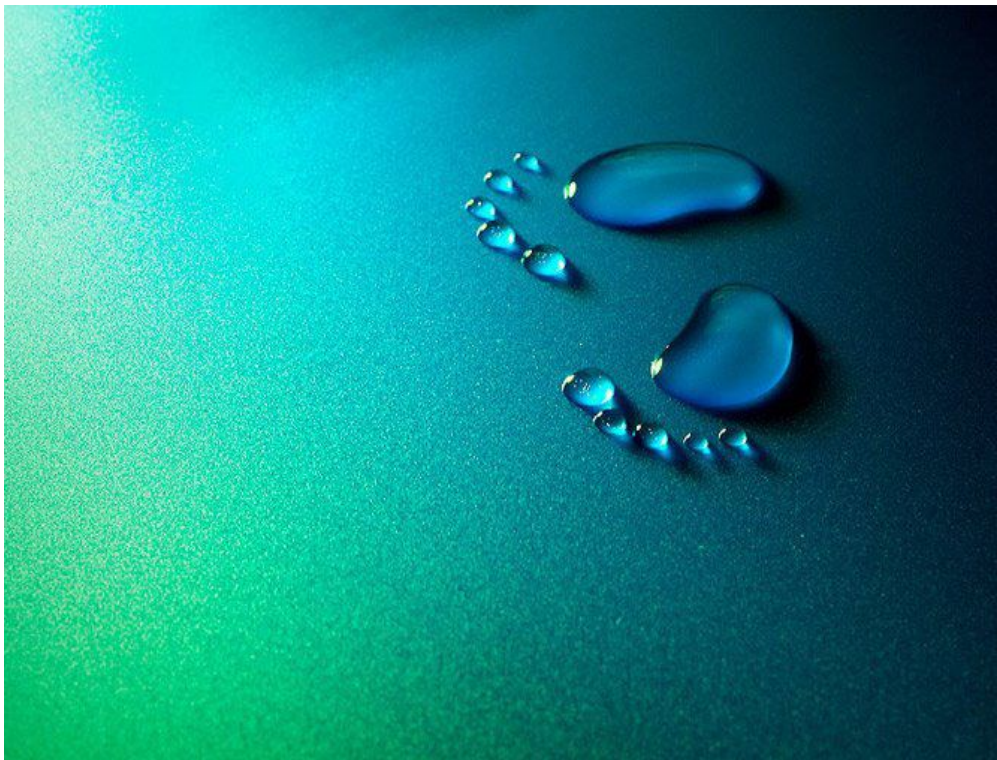
Dear God, I sometimes feel deep sorrow and mourn ... In such moments, please inspire me to be thankful for my glorious life.

Dear God, I sometimes desire to gather riches or protect myself from harm ... In such moments, please inspire me to open my hands and open my Heart.

Dear God, I sometimes am afraid and tremble over the future ... In such moments, please inspire me to stride boldly forth into the Now as a shining beacon of your unconditional Love.

Amen ... Let it be so.

*“The questions that I came with  
I have found no answers for.  
And yet, along the Way, I am finding answers  
to questions I never knew I had.”  
~ Mayela Redando*



*“Love is this  
sacred pool.  
Take off your  
shoes, my Friend ...  
... and wade in.”  
~ Rumi*

*Celebrating Life ...*  
(08/06/2012)

Note: the most powerful way to Celebrate your life,  
... is to make another's life your own celebration.

**LOVE** turns selfless service into a party ...  
So ... got **LOVE**?



*Brightening the Darkness ...*  
(08/07/2012)

If we go into a darkened room, we cannot see where we are walking, and it doesn't matter if the room has been dark for a day, for a week or for ten thousand years – we are just as blind.

And yet, if we light but one candle, we are no longer lost ... If we light but one candle, we can see again ... That one tiny flame is enough to make the darkness flee.

And this is the way of things with light and darkness ...  
And this is the way of things for each of us as well.

It doesn't matter how long we may have been stuck in fear. It doesn't matter how long we have clung to a belief in our supposed limitations. Once we engage our capacity for Love; once we have the courage to reach out into the gloom to comfort another; once we remember that this is why we are here -- our Soul's Light shines forth once again.

It beams out brilliantly and warms the shadows around us ...

It illuminates our Way once more.

(~ inspired by Sharon Salzberg)



*Persistence is The Way ...*  
(08/06/2012)

*“We either make ourselves miserable,  
or we make ourselves strong.  
The amount of work is the same.”  
~ Carlos Castaneda*

It is true that we are to avoid “pushing the river” ... Namely, when our efforts to do a certain thing in a certain way (or be with a certain person in a certain way, or create a certain life in a certain way) cause us repeated experiences of pain and frustration, it *is* indeed wise to let them go and do something else (with someone else and with a different intention) ...

And when God’s Will (or “the flow of the Universe”, for all you New Agers — or “dramatic happenstance”, for all you secular humanists) repeatedly conflicts with your personal goals, it *is* indeed a very good idea to change the latter and align your intentions with what IS -- as opposed to what you think “should be”.

That having been said, we humans – especially when the going gets tough – have an uncanny knack for quitting far too soon:

\*We “Love an enemy” once, and then shun them anew when they don’t respond with immediate Kindness.

\*We forgive one who has wronged us, but then turn away from them when they choose not to accept that forgiveness.

\*We make ourselves vulnerable to another, only to close our Hearts the very next time we are hurt.

That is *not* how real **LOVE** works, my Friends ... For any real change to come — both to us as well as for others nearby, we must *PERSIST* in our Loving. After all, Big Change just doesn’t happen right away. Indeed, it is impossible to erase decades (if not eons) of fear with a few moments of bravery ...

And yet if we have the courage to calmly continue to swim in that river — even if the going is slow, we *will* get to Peace ...

... We *will* become agents of Change.



Yes, I know, the water is freezing at first, and you will probably not be able to see the bottom. You might even struggle against the current and feel like you are going to drown ...

*AND YET*, if you keep simply putting one arm in front of the other — if you remain calm and simply keep on Loving, you will find that you can actually swim quite well, even through these rougher waters ... You will find that, at least for those who have the guts to truly **LOVE**, things really do turn out OK.

So come on in, folks, the water really is fine.

*“I am not what happens to me;  
I am what I choose to become.”  
~ Carl Jung*



*Reaping to sow ...*  
(08/07/2012)

*“Whatever God’s dream of man may be,  
it cannot come true unless man cooperates.” ~ Stella Mann*

Traditionally witnessed, the scene pictured below would have us think that the woman has encountered wealth; that she, like the rest of us, has awoken to the Truth that she is surrounded with an abundance of riches.

Fair enough ... Such abundance does indeed fill all our days. Some of us might live in circumstances where it is a bit more difficult to see than others, and yet wealth surrounds us all nonetheless. We all have more than enough blessings in our lives to be deeply and profoundly grateful every day. That is something worth remembering, to be sure ...

**And yet** there is a deeper Truth being shown here as well ... This woman might also very well have tapped into *real* Wealth — the Wealth that knows that the riches of sustenance and pleasure (and beauty and fun and money and influence and friendship and comfort) become infinitely more potent when we not only collect them, but when we then choose to use them to lighten the burdens of others.

You see, true Abundance is not sowing appreciation to God in order to reap Peace for ourselves, nor is it sowing “friendliness” to those around us in order to reap our own “happiness” in return ...

No, my Friends -- true Abundance is nothing more than reaping your own life’s Joys & Wonders ...

... in order to sow them back into the garden of another.

*“If you don’t see God  
in the next person you meet,  
there’s no use looking any  
further.” ~ M. Gandhi*



*LOVE over fear ...*  
(09/03/2012)

Your friends are more Important than your fear,  
... your associates are more Important than your fear, &  
... your enemies are more Important than your fear.

And, in those moments when you act accordingly,  
... *YOU* become more Important than your fear as well!



*Courage is not the absence of fear, but  
rather the judgment that something else  
is more important than fear.*

AMBROSE HOLLINGWORTH REDMOON

*Today is the Day ...*  
(08/08/2012)

*“I used to be indecisive;  
... Now I’m not so sure.”  
~ W. C. Fields*

Sometimes we get to choose to rise up out of our sloth to serve others; to rise up out of our daily humdrum routine to do something wonderful; to rise up and take the hand that is putting food into our own mouth and use it instead to reach out to those in greater need ... Actually, we are free to make this choice in every moment of our lives – to Care for others whenever we wish.

And yet, as we begin to awaken to a few oft-forgotten facts, we will slowly come to realize that these two options (take care of ourselves vs. actively Care for others) actually meld into one ...

\*One day, we will wake up to the fact that our societies are patently unjust and that our politicians will *NOT* ever work to solve our lives’ biggest challenges.

\*One day, we will wake up to the fact that we are collectively damaging our Earth to the point that She will soon respond in cataclysmic fashion — and that our ” world leaders” are actually personally invested in seeing such a tragedy take place.

\*One day, we will wake up to the fact that punishing criminals and killing off enemies is completely counterproductive, and yet that “those in charge” see this evil option as the only way — a way that actually encourages “criminals” to continue to steal and that ensures that “enemies” will to continue to hate.

\*One day, we will wake up to the fact that, unless we start actively Caring for each other, our species quite simply will not survive.

Well, *good morning*, my Friends — for today is that day!

After many centuries of ignorance & neglect , we have finally come to the precipice of our demise; we have finally arrived at our point of no return, the point when we get to finally accept the fact that we only have one choice left: either we can transcend our selfishness & our cowardice ...

... or we will indeed perish.



As a species, we've been collectively "parked" in apathy and hollow excuses long enough — far too long, actually. And yet all hope is not lost ...

\*Even without the help of our governments, *WE CAN* feed the hungry and house the homeless ... Even without the support of our "leaders", *WE CAN* clean up our neighborhoods, consume half of what we currently "need", and recycle the rest ... And even without the law telling us to do so, *WE CAN* forgive those who trespass against us — and we can do so with acts of Kindness more than mumbled words.

It's not too late, my Friends ... We still have the power to change things, and change them powerfully. We still have the ability to choose -- It's just that courageously Caring for others nearby is simply the only Good Choice that remains.

*LOVE* chooses to Care, and *LOVE* knows that our Caring has to be radically active & purely selfless in order to BE.

So ... got *LOVE*?

*"It is not because things are difficult that we do not dare;  
it is because we do not dare that they are difficult."* ~ Seneca

*"The only true Happiness comes  
from squandering ourselves for a purpose."* ~ William Cowper

*"It is only when we truly understand that we have a limited time on earth, and that we  
have no way of knowing when our time is up,  
that we will begin to live each day to the fullest,  
as if it was the only one we had."* ~ Elizabeth Kubler-Ross



*Why we yell in anger ...*  
(08/10/2012)

There was once a gentle Saint who was visiting the river Ganges to bathe. He waded out a ways and then joyfully submerged himself, feeling deep gratitude and completely at Peace ...

And as he then rose from the cool waters, he noticed a group of family members on the banks nearby, shouting at each other. He was initially saddened by their plight, and yet his frown soon turned to a calm smile, and he turned to his friends who had come with him that day and asked, “I wonder, why is it that people shout at each other in anger?”

His friends pondered this for a while in silence, until one of them said, “It is when we lose our inner calm that we shout.” The Saint smiled again and responded, “But then why do they shout when the other is right there next to them?” The friends thought about this earnestly, and several looked as though they wanted to respond — yet and none of them offered an answer.

After a time, the Saint spoke softly and said, “When two people are angry at each other, their hearts become greatly distanced, and to bridge that separation they must shout to make themselves heard. The angrier they are, the greater the gulf between them grows, and the louder they must shout for their hearts to hear each other.” The friends listened to this intently and then sat awhile in silence, and considered it.

And then after a time, the Saint continued: “What happens when two people Love one another? They don’t shout at each other at all, but rather speak softly. They do so because their hearts are very close. The distance between them is very small ... And when they Love each other even more, they do not need to speak at all, the distance between their hearts is almost nonexistent, and they only need to whisper as their Souls get closer & closer in Love ... Finally, they move so close to each other that they don’t even need to whisper — they simply look at each other with appreciation, and then into each other with Love ... In these moments, they have become One. They hear each other perfectly, and they feel that they are respected and heard — so there is no more need to shout.”

He looked from his friends to the angry family, and back again, and then he said, “So, my dear ones, when you disagree with another, avoid letting your hearts grow distant. Remain calm and utter words that are soft and Kind. Only this will keep the distance between you close enough that the other can one day find the Way back Home.” (~ inspired by anonymous)



*“Anger is an acid that does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” ~ Mark Twain*

*“Defeat anger, stop using it as a shield against truth, and you will find the compassion you need to forgive.” ~ Glen Beck*

*“Compassion crowns the soul with its truest victory.” ~ Aberjhani*

*“Learn to love someone when they least deserve it, because that is when they need Love most.” ~ Rodolfo Costa*



*To Awaken ...*  
(09/06/2012)

*“Your vision will become clear only when you decide to look with your Heart. Who looks with the eyes, dreams ... Who looks with Love, awakens.” ~ inspired by Carl Jung*

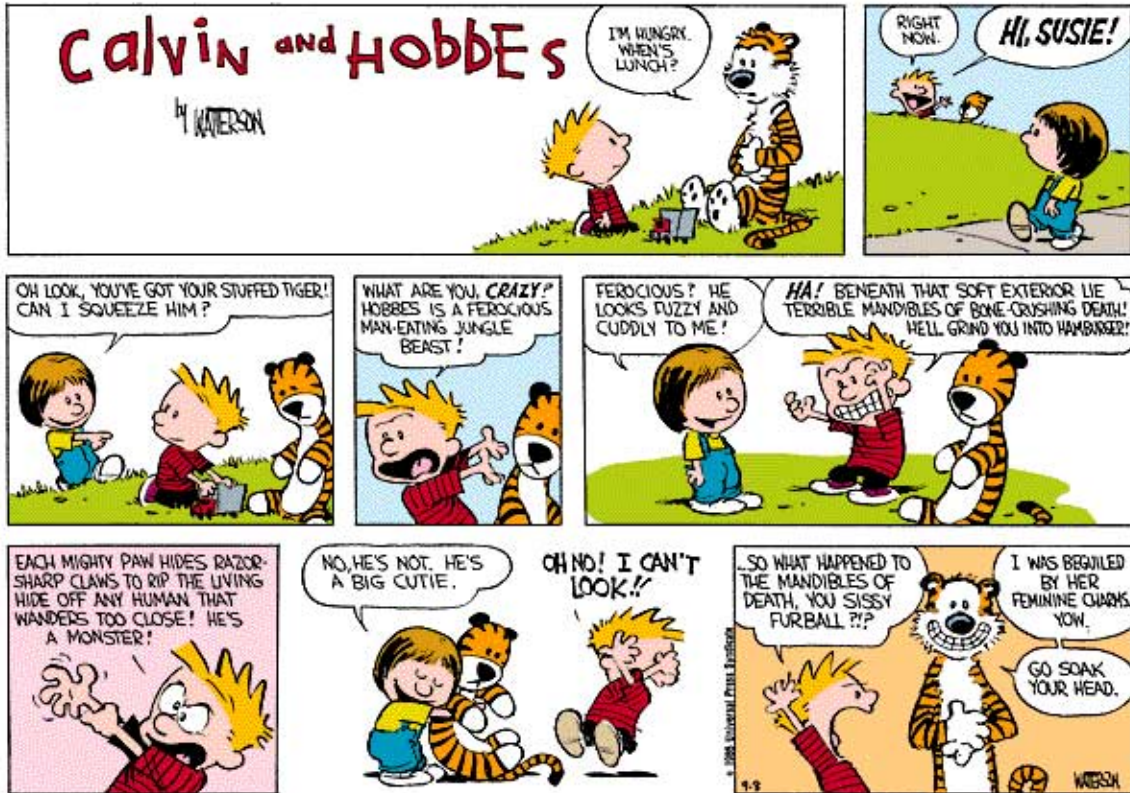
... and to Look with Love, **LOVE**.





*The softness of Self ...*  
(09/13/2012)

You are your True Self within –  
... a Self that understands that gentleness is your greatest Strength;  
... a Self that comprehends that Kindness is your greatest protection;  
... a Self that realizes that softness is your greatest Power.



*"A man once told the Buddha, 'I want Happiness'.  
The Buddha said, 'First remove your 'I',  
and then remove your 'want' ...  
All that's left will be Happiness.'" ~ unknown*

*"Love finds a way,  
through paths  
where wolves fear to prey."  
~ Lord Byron*

*"Before a man can become free,  
he must choose freedom."  
~ Jeff Knaebel*

*Master & Disciple ...*  
(09/17/2012)

“The master moves towards the disciple, and the disciple moves towards the master. Sooner or later they are going to meet ... It is inevitable. And yet their meeting is not of the body; and their meeting is not of the mind. Their meeting is of the very Soul, as if suddenly you were to bring two lamps close to each other, where the lamps remain separate but their flames meld and become one.

Between two bodies, when the Soul is one, it is very difficult to say that it is a mere relationship. It is not, and yet there is no other word that comes close enough ... Language is simply too weak to describe it. The closest we can come is when we say that, when those two finally come together — they both know the other as the Self ... They each primarily feel for the other; and in this way they literally become ONE.”

(~ inspired by Prem Sagar Gupta)



*Living on Holy Ground ...*  
(09/20/2012)

*“To touch the Soul of another  
is to walk gently on holy ground.” ~ Steven Covey*

... and please remember: Kindness is the only hand  
that can truly make such a Connection.



*LOVE is a River ...*  
(09/21/2012)

*“The river is everywhere at the same time, at its source and at its mouth ... in the ocean and in the mountains. It is everywhere, and only the present exists for it — not even a shadow of its past, nor a shadow of its future.”*

*~ inspired by Herman Hesse*

The same is True for your Soul,  
... the same is True for your True Self,  
... & the same is True for your LOVE.

No matter the time or the season; no matter the object of your Kindness be friend or foe ... You only have *this* moment to wake UP to who you truly are.

You only have this moment to truly **Care**.





## Making The Leap ... (09/26/2012)

*“So live your life that the fear of death can never enter your Heart ... Seek to make your life long in its purpose in the service of your people. In this way, you prepare a noble death song for the day when you pass over the Great Divide.”*

*~ Chief Tecumseh*

*“The tragedy of life is not death, but rather what we let die inside of us while we are still alive.” ~ Norman Cousins*

*“Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked — there is no reason not to follow your Heart.” ~ Steve Jobs*



The only way to fly on Love's wings is to make the first (and ultimately only) Leap of Faith: namely, to be Kind when you are least inclined.

Set your FEAR gently yet firmly aside, my Friends ...

... & **JUMP** into **LOVE!**

*Becoming un-Lost ...*  
(09/27/2012)

*“I think that many people become depressed because they feel stuck; their lives have become static, where no progress is being made in any direction; usually because the path they desire the most is the one most unavailable to them. And even though the way they want to walk is closed, they are unable to accept that they can – and indeed they must -- choose another path. And the truth is, there is always another path — there is always an alternative way resting right beneath our feet. So stop worrying, and just get up and do something you CAN do, rather than grieving uselessly for what you can’t.” ~ anonymous*

One is Wise who does not force what “should be” upon what actually IS ...

If we keep focusing on where we want to go — where we think we will get the most happiness or pleasure, then we will always eventually reach a dead end (literally) — and we will end up getting nowhere at all.

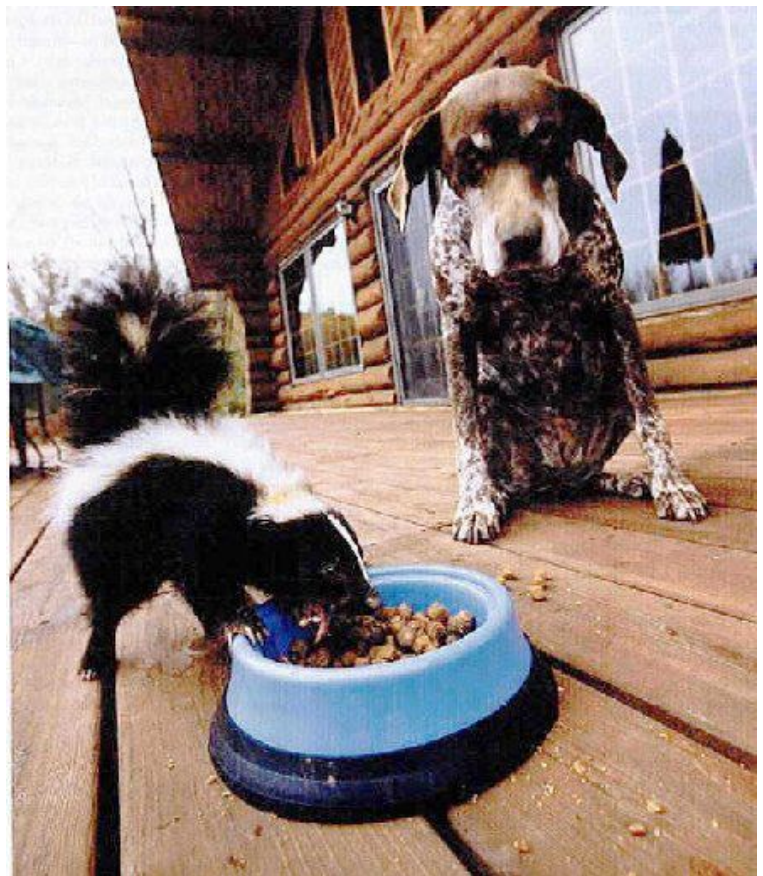
And yet, in every moment of our lives — right at the center of every one of our difficulties and right at the core of every one of our conundrums, there is an alternative route; a route that is always open; a route that always leads to Peace.

It is Kindness shown to others  
that is always this option ...

It is Kindness shown to others  
that always opens its arms ...

It is Kindness shown to others  
that is the way to Peace ...

It is Kindness shown to others  
that is The Way.



*True Power ...*  
(10/07/2012)

*"I cannot say that I know how to be perfectly & constantly happy, and yet I HAVE indeed known how it feels to receive true & lasting spiritual Power, at least to the extent that I have willingly & joyfully lost myself in selfless service ... Indeed, for any human being to experience real & potent Power there is no substitute for a repetitive review of our motives -- there is no alternative to making absolutely certain that we desire that very Power solely to bring Peace to others after receiving it."*

*~ inspired by Dalton Roberts*

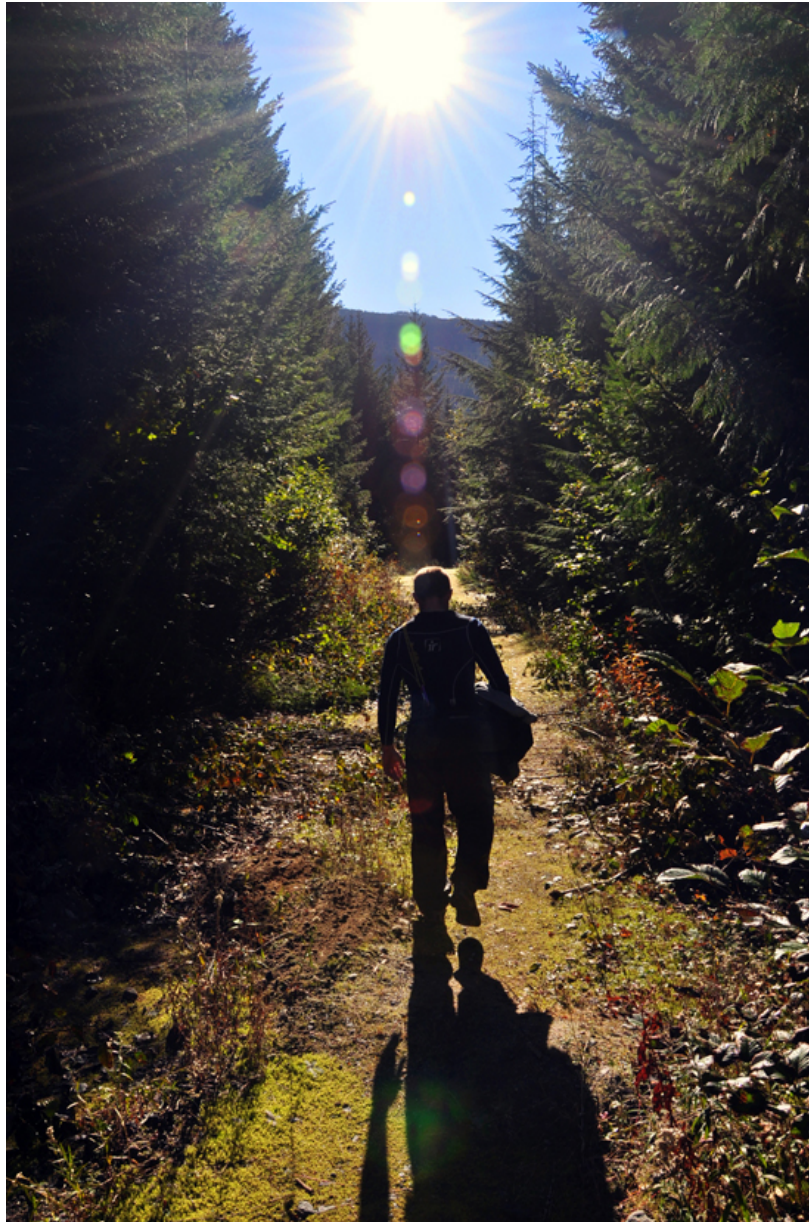




*Awakening to LOVE ...*  
(10/19/2012)

*“Let your Love be like a moving sea between the shore of all Souls ... Let the winds of Heaven dance between you and every stranger ... Wake up at each dawn with a winged Heart and give thanks for another day of Love. Give your hearts, and yet not into another’s keeping, for only the hand of the Divine can fully contain you ... And at the end of each day, fall softly into sleep — with a prayer for the beloved in your Soul ... and a song of praise upon your lips.”*

(~ inspired by Kahlil Gibran)





*Lessons from a Pilgrim ...*  
(10/19/2012)

*“I have lived an entire life in one long walk ... I chose to walk because there was no better way to get to know myself than by completely unplugging my life from my life. I was alone for most of the time, which finally allowed me to see how deeply we are all Connected. We all deal with the same basic set of challenges ... We all have relationships in crisis, we all have bodies that are steadily deteriorating, we all have finances that are as unstable as time itself. In the depths of my solitude I finally realized that there is no ‘me’ and there is no ‘them’ ... I realized that there is only US.”*

(~ inspired by Kurt Koontz)



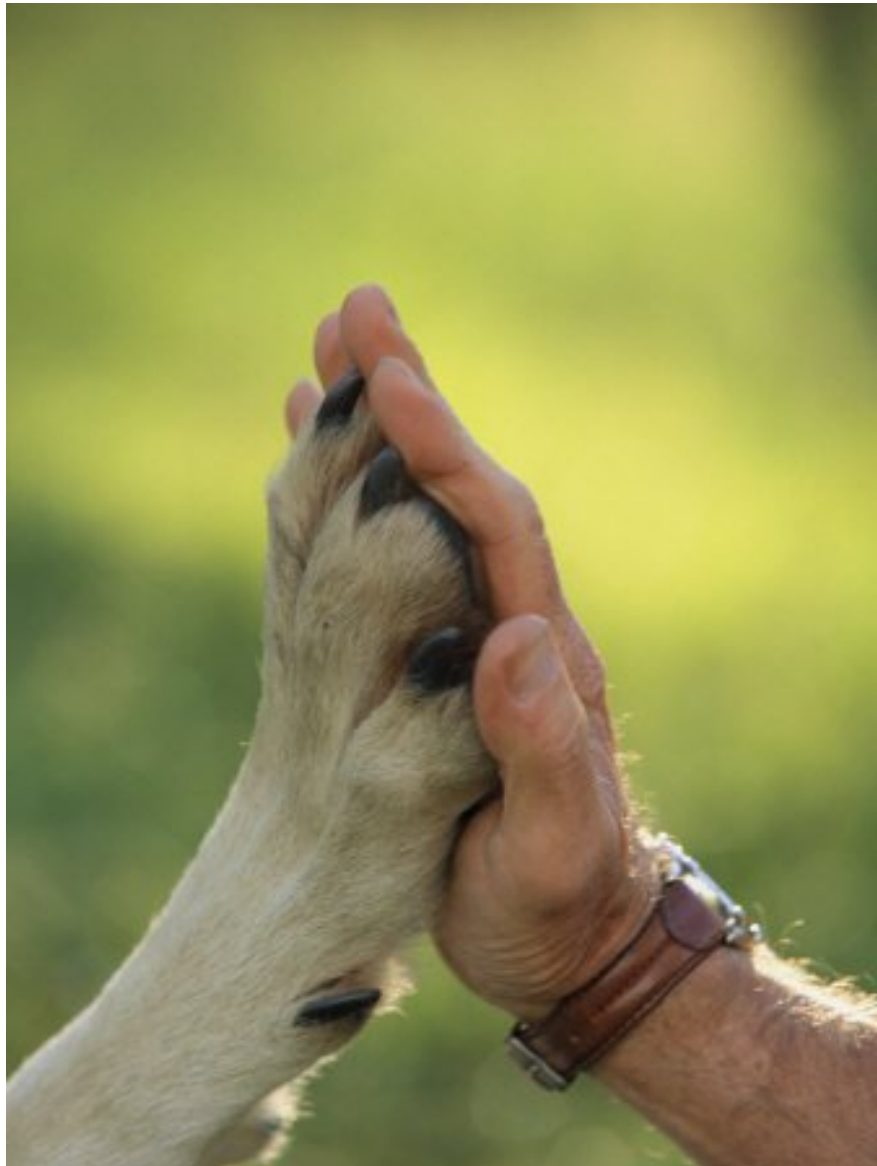
*Hearing the Wise Ones ...*  
(12/02/2012)

*“We give dogs time when we can spare it, space when we can spare it and love when we can spare it. In return, dogs give us everything they’ve got to give. It’s the best deal humankind has ever made.”*

*~ inspired by M. Acklam*

Of course, the more we Awaken, the more we realize that it is the dogs that are getting the better end of that deal ...

... and that we are more than free to do likewise.



*What we truly Are ...*  
(12/03/2012)

*“Love is an undulating energy that moves through you, that resides within you; it is a force that actually forms the foundation of your entire being ... And this Love is immensely powerful. In fact, it has the power to change everything in your life for the better — instantly & completely.*

*Of course, it can only do so once you display the Courage to allow its light to shine upon others.” ~ inspired by Bartholomew*





*Becoming truly Free ...*  
(12/04/2012)

“True & potent Freedom is accessible to me when I make the transfer of power from ego to Soul, when I stop to behave out of fear and cease being attached to results. I do what my Soul tells me, even if I am afraid. I concentrate on the means instead of the end.

There is a direct relationship between consciousness and action and “enlightenment” and Happiness. When I listen to my ego and its unquenchable thirst for security, I remain imprisoned, the slave of my needs, habits, desires and beliefs. True freedom and invincibility, on the other hand, are the direct result of my listening to the advice of my internal True Self — my Caring conscience ... and then courageously doing what it tells me to do.

This is a new, mysterious path that seems quite deadly to the ego, and yet, most ironically, it is the only path that does not lead to a dead end. True & potent Freedom is not something I can buy; rather, it is an internal state of Being that is chosen ... No law can guarantee it, and no body or being can remove it from me. It is already in my possession – and in my possession it will ever remain.

All I need to do is to rediscover it ...  
... by actively re-Membering it.”

(~ anonymous & unknown)





*Living like a Lion ...*  
(12/04/2012)

*“As a bee seeks nectar from all kinds of flowers,  
... seek your teaching everywhere.*

*Like a deer that finds a quiet place to graze,  
... seek seclusion to take in all that you have gathered.*

*And then, like a Loving Madman — beyond all limits,  
go wherever you please, and boldly enliven the new Truth that resides within you.*

*Choose to live like a gentle lion,  
... completely free from fear.”*

(~ inspired by Namkhai Norbu)



*To get Attention ...  
(12/05/2012)*

*“Don’t do things  
like wear smelly, green sneakers.  
You might get attention,  
but attention ain’t the same thing as Love.”  
~ Alonzo (age 9)*



***LOVE** doesn't desire attention ...  
... **LOVE** does the attending.*

*Every perfect Day ...*  
(12/06/2012)

*“Days can become rubber stamps — relentlessly pounding out the same impressions upon our lives; the same alarm clock jarring us awake to experience the same old outlook on the same old things ... And yet, it is also possible to remember the AWESOME that always resides at the center of everything familiar ... It is still always possible to make our days mysterious and magical and memorable.*

*So instead of staying home and watching the same old life pass us by, why not run headlong into the world? ...*

*Set forth and catch the wind in the sails of our Soul!”*

(~ inspired by Dalton Roberts)



(The more I gratefully immerse myself into my “normal routines”, the more I come to realize that there is absolutely nothing “normal” about them.)



*Eternal Living ...*  
(12/06/2012)

*“The reason why the universe is eternal is that it does not live for itself. Rather, it continually gives life to others as it repeatedly transforms.” ~ Lao Tzu*

Make today about **LOVE** ... Make today about Giving to everyone & everything around you ...

... and become eternal thereby.





*Proper Greetings ...*  
(12/06/2012)

*“Fear knocked on the door.  
Love answered ...  
... and found no one there.”  
~ unknown*

To greet another person’s person,  
... you must first walk through the door of verbal courtesy.

To greet another person’s Soul,  
... you must first walk through the door of emotional Caring.

And to greet your own Soul,  
... you must first walk through the door of active Kindness.



*Into Bliss ...*  
(12/07/2012)

*“No one can reveal to you anything but that which already lies within you. Truth rests merely half-asleep in the dawning of your knowledge.”*  
~ inspired by Kahlil Gibran

Enlightenment is nothing more than the choice in any given moment to enLiven your Life’s deepest Meaning; to reach out and -- even if only for one instant -- to quench another’s deepest desire: the desire to be Loved.

Remember, even though there is in-deed a *HUGE* gap between merely wanting to courageously Care for another and actually doing so, this gap is only as wide as one small-yet-selfless Leap of Kindness.

So, as you go forth into the grand adventure that is today, avoid merely standing motionless on the edge of your Awakening ...

Go ahead ... JUMP!



*Courage to Care ...*  
(12/07/2012)

*“I hope the people will open their hearts now ... That is what is so needed. If we could just look at each other, very deep, then we would know we are all basically the same. And if we could remember this, we could all fall in Love with everyone.*

*I can even fall in Love with myself when I give such Love to others ... It really isn't that hard at all.*

*We make it seem hard because we are afraid.  
... But we don't need to be afraid anymore.”*

~ inspired by Doug (age 10)



*Miracles abound ...*  
(12/08/2012)

“We have isolated ourselves from the transcendent. If we get sick, we go to a doctor. If we need food, we go to a store and buy it. We don’t allow our neighbors to share their sustenance, and we no longer allow our bodies to heal of their own accord. Some would say that this is a sign of “progress”; that our expanding intelligence has exposed the ignorance that used to have us believing in errant myths & hollow miracles ... I would like offer a different perspective: namely, the Truth that our myths are still full of Wisdom – we simply choose to ignore them; and that miracles still occur every single day – we simply choose to look away.

You see, by removing acts of courageous intimacy from our everyday lives -- the flagrant Faith that used to allow the miraculous to caress us regularly, it is *WE* who have discarded the amazing from our thoughts and the wondrous from our lives.

And yet the fact remains: as long as *LOVE* exists, miracles will remain.

Indeed, the ability we each have to Care for strangers (& even our enemies) transcends both instinct & ego ... Some would say that such a choice transcends even science itself. And it is this *LOVE* unconditional that is the true wonder of being Human. It is this ability to be Kind even in our darkest hours that gives our lives deep Meaning.

This is the *LOVE* of the child that walks on the water of our Souls ... It is this *LOVE* that is nothing short of a miracle. And how wonderful it is that this miracle will always be right beside us, waiting just beyond barely-closed doors ... waiting patiently to sustain us and guide us and heal us.

Of course, no food can nourish unless it is first placed on one’s table ...

... and no doctor can cure unless she is first invited into one’s Home.”

(~ inspired by Shane Claiborne)





*Seeing the Self clearly ...*  
(12/10/2012)

*“It is the obvious which is so difficult to see most of the time. People say ‘It’s as plain as the nose on your face.’ But how much of the nose on your face can you see, unless someone holds a mirror up to you?” ~ Isaac Asimov*

The only mirror in which you can see your True Self clearly is the act of Kindness you do for another ...

The shocked face of your Cared-for enemy and the misty-eyed smile of the Given-to stranger are the only reflections of your Self that are Real.



*The Celebration ...*  
(12/11/2012)

*“Banish the word ‘struggle’ from your vocabulary. All that we do now must be done in the sacred manner of celebration ... For we are the ones we have been waiting for.” ~ inspired by the Hopi Elders*

Radical Kindness is the Celebration that will be our species’ ultimate Salvation ... So c’mon, my Friends;

The Party is **ON!**



*Cleansing myths ...*  
(12/11/2012)

*“It is a very healthy endeavor now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted.” ~ inspired by Bertrand Russell*

... & where shall we start hanging those question marks? How about on the following beliefs:

**Belief #01:** “It is both right & effective to punish “evil people” for their crimes” ... This one is simply not True. Condemning “evil people” by saddling them with their “proper punishment” only serves to encourage them to repeat their crimes again in the future.

**Belief #02:** “You have to take care of yourself before you can effectively care for others” ... This one is not True either. In fact, the only time your **LOVE** is truly potent is when you give it to another *while* you are feeling “crappy” &/or *before* you take care of yourself.

**Belief #03:** “You are powerless and cannot make any real difference by yourself” ... You got it — this one is patently false as well. What we choose to do (and why we choose to do it) always has a **HUGE** impact on other people’s lives.

Please choose wisely, my Friends ...

Please choose Compassion ...

Please choose Kindness ...

Please choose **Love**.



*The Friendliness of enemies ...*  
(12/12/2012)

*“Our Friends give us the courage  
to lift the veils from our hearts ...  
and our enemies give us  
the opportunity to do so.”  
~ anonymous*





*The Banquet of LOVE ...*  
(12/12/2012)

*“Wash your hands of all desire,  
and come to the table of LOVE.” ~ Rumi*

True **LOVE** (i.e. Caring for those who are not Caring for you) may not look very appetizing, and yet it is absolutely *delicious*,

... once you start chowing down.

Bon appetit, my Friends!



## *Getting back UP ...* (12/13/2012)

*“Confidence is the food of the wise man  
and the liquor of the fool.” ~ unknown*

We can't know real Peace in our lives as long as think we “have it all figured out” ... Life is far too unpredictable for our confidence, and far too powerful for our pride. Indeed, no matter how well we are walking through our days, one thing remains truly certain — we will indeed fall. Our successes will be followed by failures, our victories will be followed by defeats and our pleasures will be followed by moments painful.

And yet we need not fear our next tumble, for the ability to rise from defeat is what makes life so amazingly powerful. After all, we are not here to merely “be happy” or “have fun” or “know good times”. We are here to right ourselves after we slip — to try again after we fail — to rise again after having been beaten down.

... And we are here to help others do the same.

So if you happen to be doing well, be grateful that you are standing ...  
If you happen to have fallen, simply choose to get back up.

And if you happen to see another take a tumble, remember to reach out a Loving hand — and help them stand again.

