

Self-Empowerment

Spring 2004

The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

Vol. 11, Number 3

A publication of  Agape Interfaith Ministries

THIS PRECIOUS MOMENT

People seek what they believe will bring forth great feelings of peace, love, and joy in their lives. However, the way that people seek these good feelings is quite varied. One person's idea of peace often does not match their neighbor's idea of peace, let alone love or joy.... For example, while one person may not be able to feel peaceful unless everything is going well in their significant relationships, another person may feel most peaceful when alone, not under the pressures of the compromises that seem to be part and parcel of intimate relationships. Feelings of joy for some people may spring from activities such as gardening, watching a movie, sipping a cold drink, sky diving, composing a symphony, listening to a special song, playing a game, etc. The diversity of responses to these or any particular activity can range from elation to revulsion, or from fear to boredom.

Similarly, the emotions that arise from our responses to each others' differences can range from attraction to dislike, curiosity to condemnation. It can be quite difficult in the midst of our differences, especially during conflict, to see our deeper connection and ultimate unity. Yet, the answer to issues of diversity are to be found in the depths of this precious moment.

Islands

Imagine, if you will, masses of land that appear to be islands, but are connected way down deep below the ocean by a single large planet of land-mass. Each "island" demonstrates its individuality in its terrain, yet is part of one whole. In similar fashion, the drives and behavior of our human family are aspects of a whole, but perceived as separate and different from various superficial points of view. When viewed from a perspective that highlights the separation and differences, it is difficult to imagine the deeper connection. From that viewpoint it seems easy to judge others as right/wrong, good/bad, sane/crazy, smart/stupid, beautiful/ugly, etc., depending on your frame of reference. Everyone "out there" appears to be a foreigner when, in reality, they are actually giving expression to a part of ourselves.

The spiritual journey is the deepening of consciousness to experience that wholeness and connection that lies below the surface of sensory data. *We are one* is not a trite slogan but a deeper truth that can be experienced directly. Yet, while we are still subject to the appearance of separateness, what can we do to open our capacity to glimpse the greater connection?

Let's examine the "terrain of the islands" first – that part of us that is sticking up out of the water, so to speak, appearing as

the separate individualities that we are. The personality is the form of our separateness.

The Personality

Descriptions of the motivations and behavior patterns of personality are helpful in cultivating understanding of ourselves and others. Understanding can be a first step toward compassion, acceptance, and love.

There are various systems that describe the human personality, of which the Enneagram is one. The Enneagram of Personality is taught through books, audio/video tapes and live workshops. When studied as a psychological system the Enneagram is a valuable tool for change. Individual and couples therapy can be enhanced greatly by Enneagram coaching. When utilized as a spiritual path, the Enneagram can be a powerful catalyst to a deeper recognition and embodiment of essence.

Enneagram study establishes points of reference from which the observation of self and others can yield great leaps of understanding, insight, forgiveness and compassion.

Each of us has three centers of intelligence: Head/thinking, Heart/feeling, Gut/doing. As we grow up, one of the three centers is wounded and feels unsafe. Depending on whether the wound is experienced as abandonment, betrayal, or isolation, the corresponding intelligence center seems unreliable and will then be underused. The imbalanced way in which the other two centers are used becomes the basis of personality.

Exploring beyond the water's edge

Whatever system you are drawn to, curiosity combined with self-observation will expand your ability to travel to further boundaries of the metaphorical island's terrain. The exploration can then be expanded to going beyond the water's edge.

Utilizing the *power of now* and *turning toward the altar* are two ways to describe the movement toward the deeper experience of life, sort of like wading into the waters and finding out there is a supporting surface under there.

The Power of Now

Now. Right now. *This precious moment*. Can you experience *this* moment, or is there "interference" from the past, played out through personality, holding your thoughts hostage? Can you be free to really experience yourself, your being, your surroundings? Or are you hypnotized by the

conditioning of your past to filter everything through the matrix of personality?

We are asleep to our own true nature. We practically sleepwalk through our days, on an automatic pilot of well-placed habits of personality. Instead of being here now, we participate in the world's version of perception and projection, attack and defense, comparison, competition, conflict, criticism, condescension and condemnation. We are at war, from within and from without. Playing this no-win game results in an unempowered position of mental slavery to the past.

Meditation, or quieting the mind to allow the present to be experienced more fully, is the antidote to what is described as "monkey mind," a chaotic avalanche of repeating conflicted thoughts.

Eckhart Tolle has published material in both book and audio form that is helpful to many who have forgotten how to quiet their frenetic and imprisoning mental activity. His gentle focus on the power of now brings into our awareness the "I" that gets lost in erroneous identifications. By separating the thinker from the thoughts, the witness from what is being witnessed, we open to a fresh new moment that is rich and alive, unlike our normal sleepwalk trance of daily living. By "watching the thinker" we begin to experience a presence who can be freed from habitual thoughts. You are not your thoughts. Experiencing that truth directly is liberation, enlightenment. Enlightenment is not as other-worldly as some might imagine, but is a conscious presence to what is, without resistance.

The beauty of this is the recognition that chopping wood and carrying water, or whatever your daily tasks are, can continue to be what you do, yet become infused with the power of conscious presence that allows the direct experience of the kingdom of heaven here on earth.

Turning Toward the Altar

Let us return to the previously described image of islands connected way down deep below the ocean by a single large planet of land-mass. Each island has within its foundational base that point of connection with all-that-is. By turning our attention toward that point of connection, consciously in the present moment, a miracle can happen. Some have called this point their Higher Self, Spirit, God, Creator, Source of our Being, Guidance, Angel, Saint, Universal Mind, etc. Turning toward the altar is the equivalent of spiritual humility. It is the little willingness that is needed for Spirit to infill us with the peace that passes human understanding, with inspiration, with wisdom, with a broader perspective. For this is the point where our wholeness is held in trust for us while we dally with the ego/personality. You see, the personality is simply an incomplete description of ourselves, believed to be the whole of us until we awaken to our wholeness. By turning toward the altar, a channel is cleared for receiving the more complete direct experience of our wholeness and unity.

Throughout our lives, we may have been missing much of the beauty and perfection of this precious moment because of our interpretations of past experiences, seen through layers of personality traits that were put in place as a system of defense

from the perceived wound(s) of our past. In reality, however, our personality's defense patterns keep us far removed from the peace, love and joy of the present. They are a wall that keeps love out.

The work of Eckhart Tolle is a lovely introduction to the Power of Now. If you have an opportunity to hear any of his spoken words on tape or CD, there is an added bonus of a very meditative quality of his voice that is powerfully deepening.

For those who are interested in learning more about the Enneagram of Personality, there are classes and study groups being formed that you might consider. Check the AgapeInterfaith.org website or contact me for more information.

As we free ourselves from the interference of past and future thinking, experiencing the power of now and turning toward the altar, each of us can establish a link to the wisdom of our Creator and the riches that are found in this precious moment.

May this Spring be a time of empowering renewal for you. May you enjoy this Precious Moment, always!

Blessings, Love and Hugs!

Your fellow traveler, *Rev Jill*

To see the world in a grain of sand and
heaven in a wild flower
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and
eternity in an hour

William Blake

Agape Interfaith Ministries on the Web

Visit the Agape Interfaith Ministries website at www.AgapeInterfaith.org for updated information about classes, workshops and study groups, and other supportive information.

A Course in Miracles study group

Open your mind and heart to the consciousness and experience of miracles. Share in the peace and joy that result from changing your perceptions.

When: **1st & 3rd Sundays, 7:30 - 9:00 pm**

Where: **1100 Friendship Street**

Corner of Friendship Street & Algon Avenue,
4 streets south of Cottman Avenue (Route 73)

Cost: No fee

For info call Rev. Jill Sabin Carel at 215-742-0552.

Daily Word

One with God and all people,

I am a link in the circle of divine humanity.

In a time of quiet communion with God, I rest in the silence and gently allow myself to become aware of my vital connection with God.

I also recognize my connection to God's human expressions worldwide. Real or imagined differences in people melt away as I realize we are all one in the family of God.

We may have different customs and languages, but our hearts' desires remain the same: We all want inner peace, loving relationships, prosperity, and health.

Shifting my focus from myself to the worldwide family of God, I desire the best not only for myself, but for all. I deepen my connection with God and with all on Earth. Through a growing awareness of our oneness, the people of the world are coming together in a circle of divine humanity.

The Daily Word, Unity Village, MO 64065. One year subscription \$10.95. Customer Svc: 1-800-669-0282.

GIFT OF LIFE By Pattie Chiaffa

November 23rd was a very special day in my life.

My son and his wife had their first child together, a baby girl, Kaitlyn Elizabeth. I am forever grateful to my daughter-in-law for allowing me to share, along with her husband and parents, the intimacy of the delivery. I was present to welcome my beautiful granddaughter the moment she entered the world!

Tears and cheers and hugs filled the room. The grandma mindset hit like magic and I was snapping photos of the baby and of everyone holding the baby. Within hours of her birth, thanks to 1 hour developing, everyone I knew saw pictures of the cutest baby on earth. I have a new, higher level of connection with my son, in-laws, and with anyone who agrees to look at my grandma's brag book. Since her birth, I have babysat and held Kaitlyn for hours at a time, delighting in her angelic and, oft-times, comical faces while enjoying every sweet cooing sound uttered.

I have also had time to reflect upon the incredible mystery of birth. As an observer to the process, my perspective was notably different from when I was the one having the baby. I was filled with a renewed sense of reverence for the female body. I felt blessed to be a woman. We (women) were created in a special way to participate in co-creation. God entrusted life to women! Women are designed to give birth to divine life.

A woman doesn't need to give physical birth to a child to participate in this special creative role. At a recent conference for women, presenter Johnette Bendovic spoke of a spiritual maternity in which our Creator impregnates the wombs of our hearts with his Holy Spirit so that we may lift up our world. We are meant to carry this Divine Presence into every relationship and event of our daily lives. We are

pregnant with Divine Potential. We need to pay attention to and reflect on what we give birth to. We can choose to bring forth divine ideas and transform the world. Every moment of our lives can be life giving and grace-filled.

As if that awareness didn't fill me with awe, I was re-acquainted with a Scripture verse which touched me to the core. Ephesians 1:4 states that God "chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in His sight." Take a few minutes to ponder that quote. Before the foundations of the world were laid in place, God determined that he would give you, give me, life! Our Creator knew us completely! Our Father knew precisely the person He would give life to on a specific day and time! He knows us by name. We are children of God and *nothing* can diminish that truth. There is no circumstance or situation, nor mistake, that can rob us of our profound value and worth. We are loved completely and unconditionally.

We are created in God's own image and likeness. We are made by Him, for Him. We are made to be holy, to be full of love, to give glory to the one who indwells us. We are expressions of God, made for union with God and one another. While we are all capable of holiness and sin, we need to trust Spirit's presence within each person. We also need to accept our identity to truly align with God's tremendous plan for us. It is only in remembering the Divine in me that I can recognize the Divine in you.

Seduced by society's measures of happiness – beauty, fame, wealth – we often find ourselves void in heart and soul because temporary satisfactions foster passing contentment. Disconnection from our Source diminishes our sense of aliveness and happiness. Prayer plays an integral role in restoring and maintaining our connection to God. It opens us to grace. Grace is a powerful energy that moves us to a place of interior clarity, surrender, and peace. Prayer restores and strengthens our faith. Faith in a higher power can heal our emotional wounds and physical ailments and restore us to the wholeness we are as sons and daughters of God.

We are really something worth celebrating! So, let's be certain to give thanks to the Giver of the gift of life each and every day.



Trash / Slavery or Freedom

By Margery Larrabee

Walking along on the sidewalk,
I see much litter around the trash container at the bus stop.
I glance at the trash.
I marvel at people's messiness, the lack of beauty and order.
I am filled with criticism and judgment.
I walk on. Clearly this is not my responsibility.
I didn't create this mess. I don't clean it up.
People will have to put up with this trash.
I feel proud I have not gotten caught up in my compulsive taking-care-of habit.
I am clear about my boundaries.
I know that you and I are separate.

Walking along on the sidewalk,
I see much litter around the trash container at the bus stop.
I look hard at the trash. I wonder about it.
What made this mess? People pressed for time?
Windy weather, lack of caring?
I am aware of the pull of my compulsive taking-care-of habit.
But I do want to be a part of a cooperative effort to keep the environment clean and orderly.
Conflicted, I pick up the trash, grumbling and fussing.
I do act in spite of my feelings and according to a larger reality. I jam the trash into the trash container.
I have chosen to step over my boundaries, even while protesting.

Walking along on the sidewalk,
I see much litter around the trash container at the bus stop.
As I stare at the trash, the spirit stirs in my heart and I am startled to see myself in this mess.
A still small voice whispers: It is your trash, too.
I feel an upsurge of love and compassion for my brothers and sisters.
I am mindful of the painful patterns we all get caught in.
I want to be part of realizing God's beauty and order in this world.
I shift from chronos time to kairos time.
I am aware of the old compulsive taking-care-of habit.
But it no longer has the power to drive me.
Now I freely decide to act out of love.
Gleefully, I gather the trash, and stash the trash in the trash container.
My clear firm but flexible boundaries yield to a redemptive oneness with others.
I bless this place and go on my way smiling and silently greeting that of God in whomever I meet.

Two Realities

By Dena Marchiony

I slip into the warm cocoon of slumber – to have it spit me out into the hard, cold world again.
I dance in the dark with a stranger, the magnetic pull of the poles upon us as we part and say “till then”.
I am creative, organic, rich and textured living matter.
Evolved and evolving into something even greater, but I don't know how, what or when.
I am the dot on an “i”, a lovers first sigh, a question asking why, a babies first cry, the betrayers final lie, the wind rushing by.
I slip into my human skin and have the day begin again – but so much more “I AM”.
You see there's two realities, the one you see. The one you breathe. Don't let the outer world deceive – you into thinking that's all there is.
Outside is just a place to play – this human life designed that way. Can you find your balance in the sway... of a leaf, on a tree on a blustery day.
The circumstances matter not – that's not the way it seems. The dramas of our daily life release to deeper dreams.
Something yearning deep inside, a voice that's thirsting to be heard, and you can hear it – if you try – your spirit's loving words
So good it is to realize, I'm not the things that I despise – there's more to me
Than all of that – no matter how I go.
You see there's two realities, the one you see. The one you breathe. Don't let the outer world deceive – you into thinking that's all there is.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Self-Empowerment is published quarterly (4 issues/year)
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Web: www.AgapeInterfaith.org
Cost: Donations welcome anytime. Annual fundraiser in Spring.
To be added to the Self-Empowerment mailing list, call or send your clearly printed name and address to Agape Interfaith Ministries, 1100 Friendship St, Phila., PA 19111. Donations may be sent with request.
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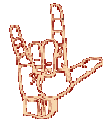
The mission of Agape Interfaith Ministries is to encourage, support and inspire a deepening conscious relationship with Divinity for the greater experience of wholeness, abundance, love and peace. We serve to elevate consciousness through individual and group educational activities, and community service.

How to say "I love you" in many languages

Afrikaans - Ek het jou lief
Albanian - Te dua, Une Te Dua
Arabic - Ana behibak (to male)
Arabic - Ana behibek (to female)
Armenian - Yes kez sirumen
Bulgarian - Obicham te
Cambodian - Soro lahn nhee ah
Cantonese Chinese - Ngo oiy ney a
Catalan - T'estimo, Testimo Molt
Cheyenne - Ne mohotatse
Chichewa - Ndimakukonda
Chinese - Wo Ai Ni
Creol - Mi aime jou
Croatian - Volim te
Czech - Miluji te
Danish - Jeg Elsker Dig
Dutch - Ik hou van jou
English - I love you
Eskimo - Nagligivaget
Esperanto - Mi amas vin
Estonian - Ma armastan sind
Ethiopian - Afgreki'
Farsi - Doset daram
Filipino - Mahal kita
Finnish - Mina rakastan sinua
French - Je t'aime, Je t'adore
Gaelic - Ta gra agam ort
Georgian - Mikvarhar
German - Ich liebe dich
Greek - S'Agapo
Hawaiian - Aloha wau 'ia 'oe / Aloha no wau 'ia 'oe
Hebrew - Ani Ohev Otach (by a male to a female)
Hebrew - Ani Ohevet Otcha (by a female to a male)
Hindi - Hum Tumhe Pyar Karte hae
Hopi - Nu' umi unangwa'ta
Hungarian - Szeretlek
Icelandic - Eg elska tig
Indonesian - Saya cinta padamu
Inuit - Negligevapse
Irish - Thaim In Grabh Leat
Italian - Ti amo
Japanese - Aishiteru / Ai Shite Imasu
Korean - Sarang Heyo
Latin - Te amo
Latvian - Es tevi miilu
Lebanese - Bahibak
Lithuanian - Tave myliu
Malay - Saya cintakan mu / Aku cinta padamu
Malayalam - Njan Ninne Premikunnu
Maltese - ien Inhobbok
Mandarin Chinese - Wo ai ni
Mohawk - Kanbhik
Moroccan - Ana moajaba bik
Navaho - Ayor anosh'ni
Norwegian - Jeg Elsker Deg
Persian - Doo-set daaram
Pig Latin - lay ovlay ouyay

Polish - Kocham Ciebie
Portuguese - Eu te amo
Romanian - Te ubesk
Russian - Ya tebya liubliu, Ya Lyublyu Tyebya
Serbian - Volim te
Sioux - Techihhila
Slovak - Lu`bim ta
Slovenian - Ljubim te
Spanish - Te quiero / Te amo
Swahili - Ninapenda wewe
Swedish - Jag alskar dig
Swiss-German - Ich lieb Di
Tagalog - Mahal kita
Taiwanese - Wa ga ei li
Tahitian - Ua Here Vau la Oe
Thai - Chan rak khun (to male)
Thai - Phom rak khun (to female)
Turkish - Seni Seviyorum
Ukrainian - Ya tebe kahayu
Urdu - mai aap say pyaar karta hoo
Vietnamese - Anh ye^u em (to female)
Vietnamese - Em ye^u anh (to male)
Welsh - 'Rwy'n dy garu
Yiddish - Ikh hob dikh

Also, in American sign language, a combination of the initial letters of the sentence, **I Love You**.



Tell someone you Love them.

Introduction to Enneagram course

Course description: Rev Jill Sabin Carel leads an introduction to a very rich spiritual and psychological system, rooted in the work of Gurdjieff. Through the study of nine "points of view" we gain access to mental and emotional patterns which are at the base of our human personalities and motivate our behavior and defenses. Insights from Enneagram study lead to greater understanding, compassion and forgiveness of ourselves and others, as well as the potential to loosen the hold of our habit patterns. The Enneagram is a useful tool for counseling and coaching. Course includes lecture, workshop exercises and resources for further study.

Dates: March 23 and 30, 2004 (2 Tuesday evenings)

Time: 7:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Location: Circle of Miracles, Jamison Campus
2370 York Road, Jamison, PA

Cost: \$70 tuition , plus \$5 materials fee

Registration required: Circle of Miracles

215-598-8002 www.CircleOfMiracles.org



IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER

By Erma Bombeck

If I had my life to live over, I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded. I would have eaten the popcorn in the "GOOD" living room and worried much less about the dirt when someone wanted to light a fire in the fireplace. I would have taken the time to listen to my grandfather ramble about his youth. I would never have insisted the car windows be rolled up on a summer day because my hair had just been teased and sprayed. I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage. I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains. I would have cried and laughed less while watching television and more while watching life. I would have gone to bed when I was sick instead of pretending the earth would go into a holding pattern if I wasn't there for the day. I would never have bought anything just because it was practical, wouldn't show soil or was guaranteed to last a lifetime. Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment realizing that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle. When my kids kissed me impetuously, I would never have said, "Later. Now go get washed up for dinner." There would have been more "I love you's" and more "I'm sorry's" but mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute...look at it and really see it ... live it. And never give it back.

Erma Bombeck (1927-1996) passed away at age 69 from a kidney transplant failure.

SPRING FUNDRAISER



Each Spring I remind my readers that it is time for the financial support of this newsletter. Readers are encouraged to send a voluntary contribution to help cover the cost of publication.

This is a golden opportunity to say "yes" to the Power of Now. Take a minute *right now* to write a check payable to "**Agape Interfaith Ministries**" or feel free to send a book or two of postage stamps, which also give great support.

Your help truly does make a difference. Whether you send \$5 or more, every bit of support makes this sharing of inspiration possible. **Thank you!**

Reader Response Coupon

___ Thank you, *Agape Interfaith Ministries*, for sharing this publication of *Self-Empowerment*. Here is my contribution of \$_____.

(Make checks payable to *Agape Interfaith Ministries*)

___ Thank you, but I am not able to contribute at this time.

Please keep me on your mailing list.

___ Thanks, but please take me off your mailing list.

___ Other message:

Name _____

Address _____

Mail contributions to Agape Interfaith Ministries,
1100 Friendship St., Phila., PA 19111-4202

Thank you for your support!