

Self-Empowerment

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The newsletter dedicated to nurturing personal development

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PRACTICING SELF-LOVE

There have been many teachings that offer to help us love ourselves, and there are many glowing testimonials for each of them. They may all have their usefulness for different people in various circumstances.

Affirmations

For many years I have appreciated affirmations, those powerful statements of self-love. They are powerful because they point me in the direction of recognizing that I am more than my circumstances, personal history, or even my physical body.

I love and approve of myself. ♥ I love myself exactly as I am. ♥ I am healthy, whole, and complete. ♥ May I be at peace. ♥ Even though I have [this problem, fear, guilt, whatever], I deeply and completely love myself. ♥

Speaking affirmative statements is very helpful for many of us who recognize the need to offset negative self-talk such as “How in the world could I have been so stupid or careless as to do that, miss that, choose that, or whatever....”

But what about the thousands of negative self-attacking thoughts that arise in mind at a pace that we cannot fully counteract with our affirmations? How do we support ourselves while we are still learning the art of self-love?

To Floss, or Not to Floss

I have been told that I should floss my teeth daily, but I often made excuses and promises to do it sometime in the future. I experienced much guilt over not doing what I thought I *should* do. I was having an internal war over my apparent unwillingness to take “good” care of my teeth.



Inner Wisdom

Since Wisdom can shine the light of clarity on any topic, I checked in with my Inner Wisdom about my flossing conflict. I have found that no question is too big or too small for checking in with Inner Wisdom.

The first answer that I received was that the act of flossing my teeth is a symbol of self-love. I can certainly see how that is true for me.

That led me to two other questions: one practical and one philosophical.

Question #1: How can I overcome my resistance to the self-loving act of flossing?

Question #2: Who’s in charge, making the decision whether to floss or not? (See page 3.)

Extending Love to Thoughts of Resistance

I am grateful for the many paths and resources that lead to the experience of self-love. I enjoy sharing them through this newsletter and other avenues.

One extremely valuable tool I have learned and practice often, taught by DavidPaul & Candace Doyle (TheVoiceForLove.com) is the practice of “extending love” to my thoughts. This technique is the practice of relating to my thoughts in a gentle, compassionate, accepting way, as if they are small children.

As a result of extending love to my thoughts, I have embarked on a marathon of self-love and a feeling of peace that surpasses what I thought was possible. When I extend love to my thoughts, I am no longer at war with myself. I befriend many of the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and sensations that arise in my awareness. Non-resistance opens a space for stillness, inspiration, guidance, and peace. It is really a very simple easy-to-learn technique that can become a life changing habit.

I tried an experiment on my resistance to flossing. I extended love to the thought “I don’t really want to floss right now” on several occasions. The results –

either the resistance melted away and I did floss, or I felt at peace with the choice to not floss at that time. The inner war has ended, and I no longer feel guilty about my choice to floss or not. When I dropped the self-attacking guilt, I actually began to floss more often.

I want peace and wisdom to be available in the day-to-day circumstances of my life; that way I can deeply and completely love myself more and more.

Extend love to your thoughts. See what happens.

Your fellow traveler, *Rev Jill*

Finding My Life Purpose in a Cabbage Patch

By Scott Kalechstein

Many of us are searching near and far for a sense of purpose, a set of unmistakable marching orders from the Divine or how we are to make a meaningful difference in the world with our unique set of gifts and talents. I found my life purpose one evening in 1992 while serving cabbage in the parking lot at a Grateful Dead concert. Allow me to elaborate.

I had always been meaning to see the Grateful Dead. I'd heard stories about how the parking lots at their concerts became something of a commune, a hippie flea market, complete with psychedelic colors, flowing tie-dye clothes, and all kinds of items, legal or not, for sale. Having been four years old in 1967, I was more than a bit curious to experience a time capsule of the Summer of Love. When the Dead passed through my neck of the woods on a rare weekend I was in town, I jumped at the opportunity to go.

I arrived wearing the only tie-dye shirt I possessed, and began to stroll through the parking lot, mesmerized by the sights and scents- the abundance of colorful people, clothes, creative artistic offerings, as well as all kinds of incense and other pungent smells in the air. The mood of celebration was obvious in almost everyone. I enjoyed talking with different people and just making contact. One woman caught me totally by surprise. She looked dreamily into my eyes and then whispered in my ear, "Are you an angel-in-training?" What a question! I searched for an honest reply, delicately seeking a balance between humility and self-esteem. "Yes," I said simply, with a warm smile to back it up. She took my hands and began jumping up and down, beckoning me to do the same. "He's teaching us!" she exclaimed joyously. "He's teaching

"Are you an angel in training?"

us all!" She bounced away, leaving me startled and delightfully dazed. What a character!

After some time had passed the temperature began to cool down. I made my way to my car and found a warm and cozy sweatshirt, one that had the words Pinecrest School on it. Accepting that I would be slightly out of uniform, I covered over my tie-dye with the establishment look, choosing comfort over adhering to the standard dress code of The Dead.

Right away I noticed a change in the way people were relating to me. They glanced at my shirt and quickly looked away, not wanting to make eye contact. After twenty minutes of this treatment, I felt confused and frustrated. I went over to a cart where a woman was selling food. Her sign, a humorous replica of the

book cover of Be Here Now by Ram Dass, said 'Eat Here Now'. I asked if she knew why people were avoiding me. "You're dressed like a cop," she said nonchalantly, as if it should have been obvious to me. "Oh, shit", I replied. At least the mystery was solved. I asked her for some of the raw cabbage that she was using to stuff falafel sandwiches. She filled a plate with cabbage, charged me two dollars, and I walked away noisily munching and seriously contemplating my predicament. What to do? I didn't want to appear threatening to people in this festive atmosphere, but I wasn't willing to brave the cool temperature without my sweatshirt.

I decided to practice emanating loving vibes into my environment....

I decided to practice emanating loving vibes into my environment, hoping that the intentions of my heart would override the suspicions that my wardrobe aroused. Pretty soon I noticed people were not looking at my clothes as much; their eyes had found something much more attractive to gaze on- my cabbage! Pairs of hungry eyes met my plate of food and more than once I was asked, "Hey, brother, where'd you get that? Can you spare a piece of cabbage?" I decided to extend the plate to anybody who showed an interest. A collection of brothers and sisters joined me in the happy percussion of cabbage munching. After a few minutes the plate was empty. With enthusiasm I made my way back to the Eat Here

The gift is the love, the Spirit that is communicated as me and through me while I do my thing.

Now cabbage patch and ordered a re-fill. I went back numerous times over the course of the night., filling up and dispensing the goods, building trust and community around me, and having a grand time of it all.

That evening the people whom I served labeled me a 'Cabbage Angel'. While I was immersed in my new expression it struck me quite suddenly that I was fully engaged in living my life purpose. It dawned on me that my life purpose had little to do with music, writing, or public speaking, my usual forms of livelihood. I had been confusing form with content, the gift -wrapping with the gift. The gift is the love, the Spirit that is communicated as me and through me while I do my thing. That night I realized that I could put down my guitar, walk the land with my cabbage, and be giving a gift every bit as powerful as the music and inspiration that I share in my present career.

After that experience my work changed. I knew more deeply that each song or message I offer is like an empty cup. If I am going to reach people on the heart level, I have to pour my heart into that cup. While in the

past I was primarily concerned with communicating wise and clever words or being musically on pitch, now I was more interested more in infusing the words and music with my soul. I stood before audiences less polished and more intimate, less guarded and more vulnerable, less concerned with being perfect and more concerned with being loving.

I had been singing and speaking professionally for eight years, enjoying every minute of it, thinking all the time that those forms of expression 'were' my purpose. What I discovered that evening as an angel-in-training was that career and life purpose are not the same thing. I also discovered that the pain of being judged (or seen as a cop) can be put behind me when I make the decision to be on purpose, giving love.

And I learned that if I ever get tired of singing and speaking, a lucrative career in cabbage awaits me....

Scott Kalechstein is a modern day troubadour, a lighthearted miracle mischief maker, and a friend and guide to those making the transition from fear to love. He travels the U. S., Canada and Europe, speaking and singing at conferences, churches, and wherever people are open to humor and playfulness merging with truth and wisdom.

Visit Scott at www.scottsongs.com

INNER WISDOM MESSAGE: WHO'S IN CHARGE?

Blessings, Dear One. Thank you for your question, "Who's in charge?"

One answer to this question poses another question to you: "Whose leadership do you choose?" The one you choose will appear to be in charge for as long as you are choosing that one as your leader.

Metaphysically speaking, there are "seemingly" two leaders – love and fear. Although on a deeper level of Truth, there is only One, and that is Love, your experience gives you the appearance of there being two from which to choose. Having an imaginary leader called fear, and putting fear in charge, will give you a set of experiences that include individuality, independence, separateness, guilt, suffering, and many forms of vulnerability. For some, this experience is so real that they cannot imagine a different way.

There is, however, a way in which the mind can be engaged in a love-based leadership. When one chooses love as their leader, as their teacher, as the one in charge, they receive guidance, inspiration, joy, peace, intelligence, clarity, and a sense of connectedness with a greater whole.

The fear-based thought system, known as the ego,

suggests that if you choose love as your teacher and guide, you will be at risk in a more dangerous way than with rugged individualism. It will suggest that you will disappear, that you will be no more. This suggestion can be believed or not. When you believe this suggestion, your mind will find justifications for living in a defensive way, in a way of self-protection, a way of fear.

When instead, one goes within and connects with that place within themselves where love abides, it may be seen as a heart center or simply a place of peace within or a place of stillness, there arises in mind the conscious awareness of not being vulnerable. This is not to say that there is a foolish belief in one's invincibility, but rather one has the knowing of oneself as being greater than a physical body. That intelligence takes into account the intelligent care of one's body without a defensive state of mind. When love-based intelligence is in charge, decisions are made that take into account a larger perspective than fear-based thinking.

When you awaken in the morning, before you begin your morning rituals, it would be well to stop for an instant and choose your Love-Intelligence to be in charge for the day. Set your intention for the experience of being in the world with Love in charge. Notice the difference that it makes throughout your day. Become aware of the gratitude that naturally follows the experience of a love-based leadership. Notice the joy that follows and notice the peace that follows.

When you ask the question, "Who's in charge?" recognize your power to choose who's in charge and what the joyful outcome of that decision can be.

Blessings, Dear One. Amen

Inner Wisdom inspirational messages are shared with you through Rev. Jill Carel who has been sharing messages of comfort, healing, and guidance in private counseling sessions. She now offers group workshops and individual lessons to teach others to access Inner Wisdom for themselves.

A Course in Miracles study groups

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

NE Philadelphia 1st & 3rd Sundays, 7:30 - 9:00 pm

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(Re-starting in NJ on April 27, 2009)

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

SPRING FUNDRAISER



Hello, Friends! Happy Spring!

Many of you have responded generously to our annual Spring Fundraiser. This is the time of year that our readers are encouraged to send a voluntary contribution to help cover the cost of publication.

For the cost of just one meal at a local restaurant, you can make a huge difference in supporting the ongoing work of this publication.

This is a golden opportunity to say "yes" to the cycle of Giving and Receiving. Take a minute right now to write a check payable to **Agape Interfaith Ministries**, donate online, 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 for your support!
Blessings to you!**



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*The doors of wisdom
are never shut.*

Ben Franklin



Daily Word

One with God, I experience the fullness of life.

Life is filled with journeys, and some of my first journeys were learning to walk, talk, and related to people and my environment. I am grateful for those who helped me through these passages and for the freedom to continue to grow and learn.

I also have journeys of the heart in relationships with family, friends, and even animals that come into my life. Each one helps me grow and experience the fullness of life. The most important journey of my life is my journey with God. Moving ever forward, I satisfy the needs of my soul and understand myself and others better. I have come into a new awareness of God as my constant companion in every passage of life.

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*Rev. Jill Sabin Carel
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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.