

Being Love

**26 Keys to Experiencing
Unconditional
Love**

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26 KEYS TO EXPERIENCING UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

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*ISBN: 978-1-4620-4774-1 (sc)
ISBN: 978-1-4620-4775-8 (hc)
ISBN: 978-1-4620-4776-5 (ebk)*

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011914650

Printed in the United States of America

iUniverse rev. date: 09/23/2011

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Foreword

Spontaneous Journey

It was a fairly dull Friday afternoon in California, and I'd just finished an exhausting week of work when the phone rang. The familiar and friendly voice coming through it told me I needed to be in Austin, Texas, for a writer's workshop that started that evening. She sensed that I would wind up meeting someone special. Because I was a single man who had painfully ended many unsuccessful relationships over the years, I assumed "someone special" meant a woman, perhaps one who could meet the lofty standards of the worn-out list I had been carrying in my wallet for several years. Graciously, I let my friend know that I appreciated her invitation but was heading to the beach to relax and take a nap. I also reminded her that as a discount shopper, I'd never purchased an airline ticket the day of travel and that there were likely none available, because it was such a busy airport. She called back ten minutes later and let me know that there was just one ticket left for a flight scheduled to depart in two and a half hours. Somehow, my steely logic was overridden by a soulful knowingness that getting on that plane would be a consciousness-expanding step, one that seemed to be needed after many trials and errors, broken hearts, and too much time alone. With curious amazement, I soon found myself in Austin.

The next day, besides being intrigued by what Julia Cameron, famous author and facilitator of the workshop, had to say, I was moved by the presence of a woman named Charlene who was assigned to the small group I was in. She too had arrived for totally illogical reasons, including the fact that she wasn't even a writer. Later that weekend, we shared some profound transformational ideas and experiences, but when the workshop ended, we said our farewells without exchanging contact information. As

fate would have it, my return flight was delayed for two hours, and while sitting in the airport, I noticed Charlene walking by. After some further moving conversation, we exchanged business cards, and over the next several months we deepened our friendship. Inspiration and relationship ideas always seemed to be part of our phone calls, even though a few thousand miles separated us. One day while we shared ideas about what fulfilling relationships required and how love is a verb more than a noun, we tried to convince each other to write a book about it. Little did we know of the impact, the joy, the extreme challenges, the growth those simple words would set into motion.

During the next seven years, I listened to valuable feedback from Spirit, life, and clients who worked through their relationship issues during and after personal coaching sessions with me. Slowly I began dictating and digesting the learning into my life and growing relationship with Charlene—sometimes gracefully, other times after much resistance. The journey toward unconditional love has never stopped, especially after Charlene and I took the leap of faith to join in marriage and later have a son together. Along the way, there have been many personal tests and lessons; hours, days, and nights of prayer; moments of struggle and surrender; and breakthroughs with clients and with groups during numerous relationship workshops. *Being Love* is the outcome, which records my own deepening discovery of what works and what, if ignored and uncorrected, makes relationships difficult and painful: physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

It's been said that wisdom is the study of differences—differences that raise our awareness of what's possible and give us the power to make more resourceful and rewarding choices. It's also been said that we tend to teach best what we most need to learn. The following pages record the methods and results of my life-long yearning to experience unconditional Love. Some of the words will seem familiar to you, like a friend you haven't heard from in years and are glad to reconnect with. Others may appear curiously unusual, like food you've never tried but sense will nourish you and expand your life experience in a satisfying way. Several may challenge you in unsuspected ways.

Although the book was written through my voice, every chapter was synergized and experienced with Charlene. She has been my muse, devoted spiritual partner, compassionate listener and feedback-giver during hundreds of phone calls, meetings, dinners, late nights, emails,

and full weekends together. She has also been a patient teacher of her own example of love and has contributed to the framework for many of the exercises at the end of the chapters. Without her beautiful light, devotion, and contributions to our family, this book would not have been written.

Since the chapters are alphabetized by topic, you may find yourself turning to a specific one to meet your current need, reading and applying one chapter per week as a focused way to work on yourself and your relationships, or reading the book straight through. Whatever way you are drawn to read and use *Being Love*, I want to thank you for standing for yourself and those you love. May you enjoy and be strengthened and blessed by your journey!

Chapter 6

Celebrate

Life is given to us not only for spiritual growth but for our enjoyment. It's also about knowing where you are going and why and not forsaking meaning and depth for speed and activity.

Celebrate Divinity

Do you take time to celebrate what you've experienced, learned, created, contributed, and accomplished in your life? The first story in the book of Genesis illustrates that our Creator took an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on what had been created and accomplished. Many of us are familiar with the account of the seventh day of creation, when God rested from all that He had made. Yet, it was on the sixth day that the acknowledgement and celebration began. After heaven and earth were finished, we are told that, "God saw every thing that He had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). This story says so much about the spiritual way to live. First, let the spiritual light of the ideas unfold; next, bring those ideas into manifestation; then acknowledge and celebrate what Divinity has accomplished; and finally, rest in the joy of it. Imagine how such a practice could help you and your relationships.

With Divinity as your designer, you have uniquely wonderful qualities and talents to appreciate and share with others. David's psalms recognize the tender specialness with which all of us are made: "For [God] created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139:14). You may have formed a belief that says you do not measure up to others, are not

rich or successful enough, or don't have something worthwhile to share. From the vantage point of your spiritual identity, these limiting beliefs are simply not true. You will never be enough as a personal ego. Yet, the authentic you is enough because Divinity is enough and has created you to be enough. With this understanding, actively celebrate your own spiritual qualities and talents, and those of others.

It's the nature of divine Love to celebrate all that is positive and good in us and to encourage us to live and share our highest attributes with others. Celebration is a way to allow these qualities to unfold and become more brightly expressed. One of the great ways to demonstrate love and devotion to the Supreme is to praise Its nature and activity in and all around us, especially when we're having a hard time seeing it. Devotion really has to do with being dedicated to removing what's in the way of, and thereby magnifying, divine Presence.

Reenergize Yourself

In ancient Greece the definition of happiness meant using one's powers in the direction of excellence. To achieve success, many alpha personality types focus on driving hard and achieving at whatever cost, often to the point of exhaustion. When one achievement is completed, they are off to the next task, with little time to enjoy anything. They're always on the move while never really arriving at a place of fulfillment. Yet success includes achievement and fulfillment.

Sometimes we get so busy with details and problems that we lose the sense of what is truly meaningful. Achievement without a sense of fulfillment will likely feel empty. Besides being an opportunity for spiritual growth and contribution, life is meant to be celebrated! The Source of life is also to be celebrated, along with the work that Divinity enables us to do. If we celebrated our completed work more often, giving gratitude to the divine Creator who gives us the hands to do the work, we would be better motivated and energized to begin the next project. It's been wisely said that we should enjoy our achievements and not just our plans.

Several years ago I knew a married couple who owned a business. They had agreed that whenever they met a business or financial goal, they would reward themselves. They did this by going to their favorite Hawaiian island, taking a relaxing cruise, or staying in a luxurious five-star

hotel for the weekend. They made a point of physically, emotionally, and financially celebrating their wins.

I used to wonder how much time and money this must have cost them. Now I realize that their victory parties were major energizing times that supported and motivated them to continue to succeed. Eventually they became happy millionaires. It seems my friends knew the importance of acknowledging and appreciating all that God had given them and what they had achieved in order to fully restore themselves before beginning something new. The kindness and generosity they gave to themselves allowed them to be their best to expand their business and enjoy the journey. Your own happiness will be proportionally related to doing what gives you lasting joy and fulfillment, and not doing (or undoing) what doesn't.

Celebrate Others

As a boy, I played football, basketball, and baseball. Through the years, I participated in many team successes and won many trophies. But, to this day, I've saved only one—the one that was awarded to me in the sixth grade. At that time I was not tall or exceptionally athletic, and I was never picked for basketball teams at recess. One day while feeling discouraged, I walked over to a newly built obstacle course on the far side of the playground. The course had monkey bars to swing on, a wall to scale, tractor tires to run through, uneven parallel bars to get across, and a pole to climb. I decided to challenge myself, so for several weeks I went there alone and worked out during recess. Later I learned that the contractor who had donated and built the course announced a timed competition that was to be held soon. When the day of the competition arrived, all of the best athletes showed up, along with most of the other students, teachers, and administrators. I was an athletic nobody, so it seemed miraculous to many of them that I won the obstacle course contest by defeating some of the same boys who had refused to pick me for the basketball games.

To my surprise, the contractor handed me a two-foot-tall trophy. I will always remember the way my mom celebrated my victory with me when I got home. She was so proud of me and was amazed that I had received such a big trophy. The celebration, accomplishment, and recognition I felt have stayed with me. Those few moments of celebration helped to anchor my developing identity as one who is able to overcome obstacles in

life. My mom taught me what it feels like to be lovingly cheered for one's accomplishments. Her acknowledgment made all the difference to me, my athletic career, and, more importantly, my life.

Remember how it felt for you to be recognized for who you are and what you contributed. This may help you be more conscious to see what's important to another. Is there somebody in your life who would feel inspired by your celebration with them? You could be the one who impacts his or her life for years to come. Praising another has the power to shift focus off of your own limitations and problems and to expand your horizons.

Raising children may feel so demanding to you and the details so constant that there seems to be little time left to celebrate meaningful things and magical moments. Yet, celebrating can actually give you more energy and motivation to meet all of those demands. Everybody has a need to know that she's special and valuable. When you applaud the good that somebody does, you will contribute to both your own and her happiness. You will also support her self-esteem and ability to grow and be a giver.

Support Life

About twenty years ago, I heard the story of a tiny village in the mountains of the Far East. The people there reportedly lived very long lives. It was not unusual to find several people in that village who were older than one hundred. Scientists studied them to find out what was unique to these people. Was it the good mountain water or air? Their conclusion was probably not, because there are other places in the world that have pure mountain water and clean air but don't have people who regularly live that long. Was it their food? No, there are many people on the planet who have more nutritional diets.

To feel more joy, move where you are celebrated instead of devalued; toward those who support your priorities instead of undermine them.

After many other factors were eliminated, the scientists concluded that what was unique about these people was they had no greed. When one of their members accomplished something, they all celebrated together. When someone suffered loss of any kind, everyone compassionately grieved as a unit. There seemed to be no competition and no sense of lack. Everyone celebrated each other's wins and achievements without rivalry

or a sense of scarcity. They apparently operated with the understanding, based on true caring, selflessness, and celebration, that there was enough for everyone. Celebrating may or may not give us a longer life, but there is no doubt that it can improve the quality of the precious days and years we have been granted.

You have something special to contribute through the expression of your spirit and inner beauty, the way you communicate, and your unique talents. When you celebrate yourself and others, you are supporting the very nature of infinite Love's creation. One of the most spiritual things you can do on Earth is to live in joy—to love life. Think about how much more fulfilling your life and self-esteem would be if you rejoiced in a way that truly recognized and encouraged yourself and others. Feel what it would be like to see more of the Divine—to be more connected with the flow of life within and all around you. Today and every day you have the opportunity to acknowledge the qualities and successes of your intimate partner, business associates, friends, and children. For some people, nothing is a miracle; for those who are inspired, many things are; for the enlightened, everything is. Which approach do you intend to live by?

Practice Celebrating

- 1) **Celebrate Source:** Take time each day to acknowledge and give gratitude to Divinity as the Source of all of Life. Be thankful for the ways that you are guided and for the multitudinous ways your needs are met. Keep a daily gratitude journal to specifically acknowledge the nature and activity of infinite Love expressed through and around you. Fill your mind and heart with praise and delight when you exercise, pray, work, talk, or sing.
- 2) **Recognize Your Uniqueness:** Actively focus on all of your God-given attributes and skills. Write them down on an index card, carry it with you, and refer to it often, especially if you ever feel insignificant. Let go of self-criticism and the false belief that you are not good enough and claim that you are enough because the completeness and Presence of Divinity is expressing itself as you in a beautiful way. Show forth your amazing uniqueness in what you think, do, and say.

- 3) **Reward and Restore Yourself:** Remember that life is about fulfillment, not just achievement. Take yourself out for a nice dinner, schedule a massage, enjoy a good nap, or plan a luxurious trip. Reward yourself for the discipline, perseverance, and commitment you have demonstrated to grow and get things done. Pick a tangible way to celebrate your qualities and accomplishments and notice if you feel more motivated and energized before you begin the next project.

- 4) **Celebrate Others:** Start to notice the unique qualities and accomplishments of your spouse, children, friends, and coworkers. Actively celebrate what you see. Acknowledge the unselfish long hours your husband or wife puts in at work, the determined effort your child puts forth to learn something new, or the way your friend actively stays in touch with you. The act of celebrating can be as simple as a phone call or a kind note or email. Let the impulse of love move you to act in a timely way and notice how much more meaningful life becomes.

Chapter 11

Forgive

Forgiving brings strength and buoyancy, because it includes giving up that which weighs us down.

Context and Compassion

Perhaps all of us have had family members or others who have said or done things to us that seem unforgivable. Can you remember a circumstance when you spoke hurtful or hateful words and later recognized that you did not really mean them? The context of your life affected the content of what you said. Perhaps you were feeling tired, afraid, angry, stressed, or hurt. In that moment, you just had to defend yourself, get some space, work through anxiety, or vent some frustration. If people had fully understood how you were feeling emotionally, mentally, and/or physically at the time, they could have more easily forgiven you, right? Likewise, if you understood more about the people who offended you, you could more easily forgive them. Picture someone specific before you right now and ask him to tell you what the context of his life was like at the time he offended you. Listen to what he says. What you hear may radically alter your desire and ability to forgive him.

When we go to the theater and watch a feature-length period film, we may make some judgments about it. The leading actor did a decent job, but the cinematography and screen writing didn't make sense, and the movie was a letdown. We believe our perceptions are well informed and accurate. We always seem to be right about how things look to us—at least more right than anyone else! We think our truth is the Truth, and that's where the problem lies.

If we watched only two minutes of the film instead of the whole feature, we'd be substantially less informed. In judging others, we often base our perceptions and reactions on a very short piece of their "life movie"—the limited and interpreted part that affects us. So, our judgments may not be as wise as we believe they are. We don't know every desire and fear they've entertained or every decision they've made. We don't know what they needed most for spiritual development or how much they were influenced by various people and environments. How can we possibly know everything about another's past and all that determined the context of their life? Perhaps that is why the great beings throughout history, such as Jesus, taught that true judgment belongs only to God, because our judgment simply does not see or experience the full picture. It's not as much that we shouldn't judge others as we're simply not equipped to do so. There is so much that we really don't know about the movie of another's life or, as some believe, another's *lives*. If we saw the private journals of our foes, we might read about their inner struggles and suffering and walk away with a more compassionate sense of who they are and why they are that way.

What if you understood that based on a person's spiritual level of consciousness, human limitations, genetics, beliefs, and past choices, he probably could not have done things any differently at that moment? Is it possible that if you'd lived that person's entire existence for him, you may have done exactly as he did?

If we not only watched an entire movie, but also learned about the making of the film; the screenwriter's, director's, and actor's backgrounds and intents; and the entire history of the era in which the movie takes place, our perceptions would shift, and our understanding of the movie's context would expand. We would naturally have more insight and compassion. That is what understanding filmmaking brings. The same principle applies to understanding another person and her life movie. Being compassionate with others based on expanded understanding is the key to opening the door of our hearts to forgiveness.

Most people are simply unaware of just how unloving they seem at times or how their negative actions impact us. Maybe it is easier to find forgiveness when we connect with the climatic words Jesus spoke while his body was being tortured and crucified: "forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34 LAM). For someone who has been killing your spirit, your words might be, "The man had no clue," or

“I see now that she did not have the awareness or capacity to do it another way at the time.”

When you closely examine some of your own repeated poor choices, mistakes, and verbal offenses, you can be just as gentle with yourself by understanding your own context. You did the best you could at that moment until you progressively learned to do it better. Awareness and compassion lead to acceptance of what was and what is without resentment. It is like your heart says, “Of course it happened that way; now I understand.” With this higher wisdom, you no longer have to fight the past as if it shouldn’t have been. Coming to such a realization may not be a painless process; it may be challenging and require radical humility, a deeper search for the truth, and emotional healing. Nonetheless, if you

“... to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little”
(Christ Jesus, Luke 7:47).

check in with the results, you may find that this pathway is easier than continuing to lug around the heavy weights of hurt, anger, and resistance that keep you stuck and deplete your life energy.

Forgive Yourself

True forgiveness will free your own life energy and support your expansion of consciousness. Yet, until you see your own life with compassion and acceptance, you will find it difficult to be gentle and compassionate with others. You may feel tempted to reject yourself for many mistakes and shortcomings. You may not like the way you look, how smart you are, how much money you earn or save, or what kind of parent you are. You may not like what you have made of your life so far. Perhaps you are unhappy about your morals or laziness, how muffled you are in speaking the truth, or several less-than-perfect choices you have made. If you are like most people, you have had feelings of guilt, shame, remorse, or self-judgment that followed your unproductive behaviors or errors. Nonetheless, if you focus on your shortcomings, life may feel self-defeating. So how can you find a more supportive view of yourself?

Everything you did, said, put up with, or failed to say and do happened within a context of how well equipped you were at that time spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically. You were born human and fallible, not completely animallike or angelic. Perhaps you are on a journey, moving from a survival-based mentality and toward one that knows Divinity at a

deeper, experiential level—as the true and only reliable life support. When you consider your capacities, environment, genes, and background, you probably did the best you could with what you had. Forgive and accept yourself for what you have become so far. If you do, you will be in a much better place to move forward. If you don't, life will seem more difficult, because you'll be dragging around past regrets. You are love expressing itself in the best way you know how at this time. In some, the light of love shines through more brightly, but this light and potential comes from the same Source and is fully available in everyone.

Does something about you still seem unforgivable? You shouldn't have done something or said something or allowed something. Right? Is that really true? Perhaps the fact that it happened is proof that it *should* have happened. In fact, you should have done everything you did to bring you to this point in your experience. It couldn't have happened any other way to get you where you are right now. Understand that you did it the way you thought would benefit you at the time.

We all tend to do what we think is best for us in the moment in order to gain pleasure or avoid pain. This is as true for the heroin addict as it is for the brain surgeon. In order to live more fully and freely, we need to accept ourselves where we are. If we don't, we will continue to have the same life we now have, only with more accumulated lead weights of self-rejection and criticism in the future. How does your future look so far? Do you think being easier on yourself would make your life look more dazzling?

There is spiritual wisdom in the Lord's answer when he was asked by a disciple how we should pray: “. . . forgive us our offenses, as we have forgiven our offenders” (Matt. 6:12 LAM). This wisdom also applies when we have trespassed against our own integrity and values. All of us feel some level of guilt when we violate what is most important to us, but being stuck in self-rejection is no pathway to freedom. It is just another trap that will hold us in a pattern of self-destructive bondage. The way to greater freedom is through simple, honest regret, and a recommitment to actually live our values in our daily lives, followed by demonstrated action.

If you went to buy a couch for a thousand dollars, and it was the last one of its kind available, how would you feel if the salesperson wanted to charge you another thousand dollars before allowing you to leave the store? And what if you decided to go ahead and pay double the originally expected amount to secure your purchase, only to find out that you still

wouldn't be allowed to drive away with your couch without paying another thousand dollars? Sound bizarre? Most of us have done something similar. We've kept ourselves locked up in an ongoing storehouse of negativity over past mistakes, errors of judgment or omission, and indiscretions of character. Part of us wants to move forward, and another part won't let us out, because it demands that we pay not just three times but hundreds of times for our mistakes. No wonder change feels difficult. Awareness of this pattern provides a saner choice.

To forgive yourself allows the opportunity to experience a fresh start, so you can walk ahead freely. Stop spending your energy in regurgitating the past like some old pasture cow chewing its cud. Instead, use that energy to take meaningful action toward what you truly want. At any moment, you have the choice to focus on what you want to create or on what you don't want (which, many times, is more of the past). Which choice would best serve you right now?

Imagine waking up tomorrow feeling forgiven for all of your past mistakes and disappointments, no matter how big or small. For a few moments, let yourself know that you deeply and completely love and accept yourself. If there is a mirror nearby, look deep into your eyes while doing so. Meditate and live from this place of freedom, and you will more likely bring resolution into your experience. Whatever dominates your thoughts will tend to manifest, so why not focus on what you most want to experience and take action toward that? Before healing someone crippled by self-guilt, Jesus would often say, "Your sins are forgiven." Once you have a humble, heartfelt regret, you can also be treated this way by the Christ within you. The question is this: are you are willing to treat yourself with such love?

"He has showed you, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you, that you shall do justice and love mercy and be ready to walk after the Lord your God"
(Mic. 6:8 LAM).

Hidden Gifts

Mistakes have consequences. How much agony and frustration have we felt resisting this fact? If we would just accept, learn from, and deal with the consequences, then we could live a higher quality life. This doesn't have to be a big process, either, unless we resist it. Mistakes are an inherent

and major part of human existence, and we've all messed up hugely at times. That is how we learn to do things better.

Christ said that he came to call “sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17). Perhaps sin isn't as mysterious or complicated as many people and institutions have made it out to be. From its historical root, sin simply means “to miss the mark”—like an archer whose shot does not hit the bull's-eye. In ancient times, the ring just outside the center of the archer's target was called the area of sin. The target in our lives might be something of a higher purpose, such as to live a life of honesty and love, raise healthy and happy children, achieve excellence in a field of endeavor, or make a positive difference with everyone we know. The goal seems simple enough, but then life happens, and for something that seemed like a good reason at the time, we forget about our life mission or intention; we sin, miss the mark, forsake the high prize, take a detour, or screw up. What we make that to mean and what we do next are the important things.

A man once called me to say that he felt like he'd ruined his life. His feeling was based on a high school test that he'd shown up late for decades earlier, which later affected his inability to follow a family-chosen career path. Together we were able to redefine the meaning of that missed exam, which included his ability to follow an artistic career path, the one that his heart preferred. He forgave himself based on a revised perspective, and he is now a successful filmmaker.

There will be many times when your thoughts and actions will feel off target from your ultimate purpose and values, or less than truthful and loving. So what will it take for you to get back on target? Simply adjust your stance (what you're standing for), aim (what you're going for in life), and follow-through (with purposeful action), like a developing archer.

What about this repentance stuff? True repentance isn't just feeling bad about a goof-up; it includes changing our ways. Entrenched patterns of missing the mark tend to lead us to painful and fearful places. Repentance is recognition that our aim is off plus the willingness to correct it. The movie *Groundhog Day* (Sony Pictures, 1993) masterfully illustrates how actor Bill Murray as TV weatherman Phil Connors had a new day to do things differently, which he didn't do for many repetitive days, until he finally began to actually change. First he made surface changes in order to manipulate people in his environment, but he hadn't really changed his narcissistic motives. Ultimately, he had a real change of heart and wanted to be of true service to others. You too have a new day today, but

if you don't remind yourself of your real target, correct your aim, and follow through with action, you could leave something undone and have to repeat life lessons in one or more of your own Groundhog Day-style experiences.

Part of the required learning is for us to make amends whenever possible. This may impel seemingly impossible action, such as finding some long-lost person we have offended or resolving an issue with a family member who has passed on. Nonetheless, in humble prayer with God, anything is possible if we are deeply willing and committed.

Once I heard the story of a man who had a severe conflict with his father who died shortly thereafter. The man felt there was no way to reconcile things with his father, and he couldn't forgive himself for leaving the relationship where he had. As father and son, they had played a lot of baseball together when he was growing up, but times changed, and the man later ached for the closeness that he'd once felt. After the funeral, he was led to write his dad a letter in which he poured out his heart, asked for forgiveness, and told him how much he loved him. He had repented, changed his ways, and felt a huge release from the guilt that had been burdening him. The next morning when he opened his front door, he looked down, and to his awestruck surprise, he saw an old baseball sitting there for him.

Life gives us constant feedback. Missing the mark is one of the main ways we learn to hit the bull's-eye. You have been granted a new day today, so what will you do differently? Mistakes can be your best teachers and greatest hidden gifts, *if* you receive the learning they hold for you. The patterns of your repeated choices can reveal a lot about you. Those patterns often expose core issues that need the real attention, such as issues about how you've linked up pain or pleasure with an experience or interpreted the meaning of it (which may not ultimately be true) and what beliefs and behaviors are truly serving you and others. They also show what vehicles you use to get love, avoid rejection, and navigate fear. If you have enough courage to expose the patterns and their results, you may uncover what truly needs to be forgiven, healed, or changed. Then your life no longer needs to be defined by your mistakes but by who you are becoming through learning from and overcoming them.

Forgive Others

You may think you are hurt by what someone said or did, but if you look more closely, you may find that what really hurts is how someone did not become what you think they should have or by what they didn't do. "They should have been more considerate, unselfish, kind, or honest! They should have understood my needs and been there for me. Dammit, they should have been more evolved, right?" Well, maybe not, if we understand that people actually can't be at a different place in development right now than they are. We get hurt (and then often angry) by the other person's underdeveloped lovingness or wisdom or integrity, at least according to our perception and expectation at that time. And, without knowing it, we assume we know everything in the universe all at once, so we're experts on where that person should be. Sure we are!

The story you've told yourself ever since that momentous event (whatever *it* was) is built on your perception and the meaning you chose from that experience. "She didn't call or email when she said she would, so that means she doesn't love me." Is that really true? Is there a rare possibility that there was another valid reason (or ten other reasons) why she didn't contact you? Is it possible that her electricity or cable service went down, or someone came to visit her unexpectedly? Our interpretation, no matter how justified or evidence-filled it seems, has to be hugely limited and skewed. Often just asking the person for a reason is enough to rewrite our story.

Do you know why there is that piece of dust on your coffee table today? Of course! It's because you left the window open last night or because your roommate forgot to clean the living room last Saturday. Amazingly, scientists have calculated that there are well over 100 million reasons why that dust particle is there, including the entire evolution of the universe up to now, give or take a few millennia. Not so sure about your story any longer?

Your story and the meaning you assigned to it, together with the unrealistic expectation that someone should have been different than they were then, could be the very source of the energy you waste and the hurt you feel. Are you absolutely sure you know why they did or didn't do what they should or shouldn't have done? Could they have been more loving or truthful or smart than they were at that moment? Remember that piece of dust before answering.

When we see with new eyes, the world around us becomes new too. The observer affects the outcome. Our view of another affects the way he or she interacts with us. When we see the formerly unforgiveable person within an expansive and compassionate context, we don't have to *try* to forgive him; there is simply nothing left to forgive. If we ask, Holy Spirit can shift our perceptions and recontextualize what happened so that we don't need to change what happened in order to find peace.

How would it feel for you to be denied forgiveness for one of your misdeeds with no hope for resolution or opportunity to make things right ever again? Do you think that someone who offended you may feel the same way? All of us have wanted and needed a second chance, a new beginning. What will it take for you to give that other person one? Granted, it may take courage, persistence, and compassion to work through your emotions in order to forgive someone who has caused you pain. It may even take professional support. There are hundreds of pathways and many qualified healers of emotions ready to help if you're willing and committed to find who and what works for you. You have the gift within you to remove your own self-guilt for not giving another person the opportunity to make things right with you. You can give them an opportunity to be different if they choose.

In the act of forgiveness, you are not implying that the action against you does not matter. Actions have consequences. You're not discounting divine Justice either. But, you can say, "I choose to forgive so that *I* can heal. I want my freedom to be my best. I'm tired of feeling dead inside, guilty, weighed down, and imprisoned by the past. I want to live life fully with new possibilities." Your soul urges you toward forgiveness, because it is ultimately in your own and the other's best interest to go there. It is a powerful way to find peace and renew the life and love within you. Shakespeare poetically put it this way in *The Merchant of Venice*: "The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed—it blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

Why are certain people in your life? Who you are and the spiritual trajectory you've chosen tends to attract people into your experience who will best help you grow, both spiritually and emotionally. Some people and experiences may seem extremely difficult to deal with. They may stay with you for months, years, or even decades. All of them are there for your learning and ultimate freedom. In personal transformation work, it is not

uncommon for a facilitator to say to a struggling participant, “The only thing keeping you from having what you want is the story you keep telling yourself about why you can’t have it.” What’s your story—the reason your life can’t be better than it is—and is there a better version waiting to be written by you?

Whether an experience was difficult or not, what if you accepted what happened, knowing that it was the perfect thing to help you grow? Would such a meaning feel more empowering to you than your original version of the story? It has been said by enlightened beings throughout the ages that there are no accidents in this perfect Universe. What if you are going through things with people for perfect reasons (even if you do not currently understand all of them)? Could this perspective make the rest of your life a whole new story, one that gives you a greater sense of love, freedom, and peace?

These are big questions. You still have the choice to become resentful, bitter, or defeated from difficult people and experiences. Millions do, but those who seek truth, compassion, forgiveness, and wisdom will persevere until they find the answers and growth they need. They will benefit spiritually, no matter what they have gone through. Saint Paul recognized this when he wrote to encourage the struggling Corinthians, “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 Cor. 4:17). Paul’s momentary troubles included being unjustly beaten, being put in prison, being dishonored and called an impostor, getting mobbed in a riot, going without food, and having sleepless nights (2 Cor. 6:4-8). He must have had a powerful meaning to help him endure those things without getting bitter or giving up.

Resistance makes life seem like hard work; acceptance makes it easier. If you truly understand that offenders come into your life to bring you a gift of teaching, you will be able to receive them with less resistance. Jesus taught his followers to “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). Have you ever wondered why he challenged us to such lofty ideals? Could it be that these types of people, these enemies, bring us perfect teaching for our own spiritual growth? Recognize how persistent your persecutors are until you get the lessons. It may take many layers of courageous self-honesty, courageous action, humility, and emotional healing before you do.

Once you receive the teaching that your offender brings to you, you'll be in a better position to offer inspiration, healing, and support to others going through such trials. Imagine coming to the point where you willingly accept your enemies and actively bless their appearance in your life. Think about how difficult it would have been for you to evolve thus far without such individuals. See how much they have caused you to dig deep within yourself to find fortitude, resourcefulness, and trust in your inner Self-knowing. Recognize how they stretched and pushed you like a relentless coach. Is there now a glimmer of hope that you can actually love them for all they have given you?

You may have the opportunity to bless them back. Forgiveness is a gift that allows oppressors to change too. Your freedom becomes an invitation

“Great Spirit, help me never to judge another until I have walked in his moccasins” (Sioux Indian Prayer).

for theirs. It is not up to us whether they actually do change. That is between them and their God. Your job is you. To win a game, you first have to know what game you are playing. The spiritual growth game seems to be all about forgiveness, truth, and love. Christ Jesus gave us a master example for understanding this big picture. He lived the limitless Love that forgives unconditionally, because he had an enlightened understanding of his purpose, identity, and relationship with Divinity. Because of his supreme goodness, nobody else overcame the amount of injustice that he did while maintaining an egoless, forgiving heart. The blocks to our own pure Christlike heart can be progressively removed through this same understanding and through divine Grace, as we're willing. If you are feeling pain, anger, remorse, or guilt, time is ticking. How much longer will you suffer and make those around you suffer?

Come Back to the Present

For our learning and joy, the most important moment is always now. If this moment doesn't feel like infinite possibility, something or someone may still need our forgiveness.

All of us are learning and evolving, and our pathways are rarely linear. They are more like ascending circles. We learn and relearn some of the same lessons over and over, and one day we really get it. Then, to our surprise, we learn the lessons again at yet a higher or more refined level.

Some people learn faster than others. Does that really matter in the eternal scheme of things? If we don't feel compassion, we can pray to Divinity to enable us to feel it. Holy Spirit can help us to learn what we need to learn from the past and reframe it, instead of being imprisoned by it. We could pray, "Show me what I need to learn from what happened. I am willing to own my part in it, make amends, and receive the lessons that I need. Free me from the burden of my mistakes and soften my heart in view of others' mistakes." After such a prayer, receive what you need as answered prayer before doing anything. Then your action will more likely be timely and wise.

There is always a way to let go of the pain, resentment, and self-judgment of the past in order to live in the present, where life is unfolding before your eyes in beauty, splendor, and wonder. With an uplifted vision, you can see that people in your life are expressing love in the best way they know how right now. If you stay open for divine Grace to soften your heart and heal your emotions, burdens can be removed from the other person and you. Forgiveness always has multiple blessings. Isn't it time to set your love free?

Practice Forgiving

- 1) **Feel the Cost:** Focus on a person or circumstance that has been calling for your forgiveness. It might be the misbehavior of a partner or spouse, an unsupportive parent, a friend who let you down, an ungrateful coworker or child, the driver who cut you off in traffic, or your own shortcomings. No matter how big or small the incident, recognize how your body feels when you focus on it. Do you feel tight, anxious, or emotionally drained? Perhaps you feel sadness, anger, or hurt. If left unhealed, all of these reactions will cost you energy and affect the quality of your life. Write in a journal the emotional ways you have been paying for this lack of forgiveness. Next, write about the payoffs (i.e., the false sense of protection, benefits, or satisfaction) you've been getting by remaining unforgiving. Look over your list and ask yourself if these payoffs are good investments in the quality of your life.

- 2 **Divine Forgiveness:** Recall some of the life lessons you've had to learn over and over. Imagine how patient and forgiving Divinity has been with you during those times when you just didn't get it. How would you describe the nature of divine Love, which has readily forgiven you? Whenever you are struggling to forgive another, meditate on and feel this loving nature that has continued to love you unconditionally. Notice if you feel a change of heart.

- 3) **Forgive Yourself:** List two or three of the biggest mistakes you've ever made in your life. What judgments about yourself or negative emotions are you still holding onto around these? Ask Holy Spirit to show you what you need to learn from these mistakes, what you need to do to make amends, or how you can see these events in a more empowering way. Find deeper acceptance of yourself by resting in the thought that everything you did was perfect to bring you to this point in your spiritual consciousness. Recognize that you did the best you could until you learned to do it better. If judgments about the past come to mind, be gentle with yourself by understanding the total context of your life movie, including things you may be unconscious of.

- 4) **Forgive Others:** When someone behaved in an offensive way, that person actually believed that it was the best decision at that time. That person's actions may have been due to stress, fatigue, fear, cultural programming, past choices, or selfish desires. His capacity for love was filtered by the context of his life at the time. Remember, if you would have walked in the offender's shoes for his entire existence, you may not have acted any differently than he did. Understanding this can build a bridge that leads to forgiveness. Write a letter *from your offender to you* describing what it was like to be him—what fears, desires, pain, and needs he was focusing on then; why he did what he did; or why he didn't do what he should have done. Read it in that person's voice. You may receive revelations and changed perceptions from what you read.

Chapter 20

Feel Restored

*Instead of fearing or regretting the darkness, use
all that you are to share light.*

Loss Restored

If you're over age thirty, there's a good chance you've experienced an irreplaceable loss in your life. In fact, you may have experienced loss even if you haven't reached the age of thirty yet. The loss may have been a loved one, marriage, home, business, investment, physical capacity, or a dream that you've given up on. What has been lost may have taken years or even decades to create. Those years may now seem wasted or gone forever. You may feel that there's no way to replace what's gone, especially if you've lost a family member or close friend. The biblical Job must have felt that way for multiple reasons. In a short time he lost his entire family, home, business (livestock), wealth, health, and reputation. One can hardly imagine how devastating that would be. Somehow Job was able to survive and keep hope alive. Amazingly, during his trials, he never lost gratitude for God. Perhaps it was Job's way of being that enabled him to trust and stay open to restoration. It is written that eventually Job was given twice as much as he had lost in every area (see Job 42:10). His example proves to us that the sense of loss can be overcome by raising our consciousness above the level of limitation and problems; that grief is a healable emotion, not an eternal condition; and that in a new approach to life we can be made new too.

Restoration is a law of Spirit that we too can understand, access, and experience. Ancient scripture reveals that divine Love constantly maintains the capacity to "restore the years the locust has eaten" (Joel 2:25). Back

then, if a locust destroyed a family's crop, they could be devastated economically, which then led to many other disastrous ramifications. The locust that flew into your life may have had a different form, but the law of restoration can apply to you as fully as it did to Job. Let's take a closer look at how this law operates.

What Needs Restoration

After a loss or setback, it seems that people, places, or things need to be brought back. If you find yourself stuck in grief, it may be that your sense of meaning, connection, and spiritual consciousness are what need to be restored beyond material things and people. Restoration may include your sense of hope, joy, possibility, supply, purpose, right activity, resourcefulness, contribution, and love.

Fear often underlies grief and loss, yet there is a way to align one's consciousness in moments with a divine Reality that knows no lack or fear. Job must have found a way to rest in the awareness of the totality of divine Presence in order to feel safe, cared for, guided, and strengthened. How easy it might have been for him to become engrossed and remain stuck in grief, self-pity, or resentment. Instead, he found a way out and focused on what was possible instead of what was tragic or insurmountable. Perhaps his spiritual sense was restored long before his material world was. He must have had an empowering focus. We tend to move in the direction of our focus, and we alone choose that focus, whether it's filled with light or darkness, possibility or negativity, or something in between.

Often restoration comes through unexpected ways, so we need to stay open to new possibilities and forms. Only then are we in a position to receive all that we need in the timely way of ideas, people, and things. Also in order to recognize that which is enduring, we may have to lose our trust in what we've been feebly holding on to. During an emotionally rocky time when my marriage of fourteen years seemed to be collapsing, I made some unwise financial decisions that caused me to lose more than twenty-five years of work, savings, and investments. This, along with the uncertainty of a shaky marriage, was devastating to my psyche as well as my emotions. Concurrently with this, I found myself without a job or savings, in huge credit card debt, and separated from the home, spouse, and friends that I had known for so long. Fear, depression, and feelings of being overwhelmed engulfed me. It seemed there was no way I could

dig myself out of this sink hole. Since my teen years, I'd worked up to one hundred-hour weeks, saved with discipline, and invested profitably. Now it appeared to be all for nothing. During restless nights, I wondered how doing so many things well for decades could be undone so quickly and how such sacrifice of time and energy could be regained? More importantly, how could my sense of home and relationship both become restored?

For months I strongly resisted what had unjustly happened to me; I could not seem to stop the downward spiral I was in. My self-identity was in crisis, and I floundered in grief, fear, and loneliness. Then came guilt, because I felt like I'd let myself and others down. Motivation and meaning were disappearing fast, and I didn't know where to turn. Meanwhile, my credit card debt, which was increasing with each passing month, only added more anxious pressure to my mind and emotions.

In this state of consciousness, my health began to fail as well. Many days I struggled just to get out of bed, and soon I was in no condition to work or even look for work. When I reached a dark bottom, I made a decision to quit looking back, to start being grateful to be alive, and to focus on capacities that had not been lost. If Job could get out of his black hole with divine help, so could I. Resourcefulness was one quality that I had always expressed and developed throughout my life. Through up-and-down times, I was able to receive interesting ideas and take action in the face of the unknown with courage.

With this realization, I felt hopeful and strengthened. My health began to improve immediately. Sure, I had moments and days of doubt and fear, but I began to make steady progress mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. One day I felt strong enough to go to an interview for a sales position, one that later helped me to start paying off my credit card debt and meet other bills. Within a year, I was promoted twice, had paid off my debt, and was even able to start a savings account again.

During that same time, my former wife and I went through marriage counseling, and we found a sense of amicable completion with a divorce; afterward, we maintained a friendship. A few years later, I found a stable sense of home at one of my favorite beaches and met wonderful new friends. With a revitalized sense of possibility, several great investment opportunities were realized. Through a change in focus and meaning, and because divine Love's resources are so amazing, abundant, and infinite, my former financial picture was more than restored in just three years.

None of this mental and tangible progress happened until I moved beyond grief and resistance by looking at resources that were still within instead of looking back at the content of what had been lost. Also, I began asking more powerful questions such as “What can I do today to improve my situation?” instead of a question such as “Why did this happen to me?” More energy was then available for me to feel what was possible with Divinity than I’d felt while hypnotized by the dismal circumstances. The turning point was when I’d reached what felt like a critical point of no return. It became clear that I could either attract worse health and relationship troubles and more financial failure or could start realizing some of the abundant resources of infinite Love, knowing and feeling that they were already fully present within me. The Presence of these ideas and resources just needed to be revealed and acted upon with faith, courage, and persistence. Those qualities had never been lost. By recognizing and nurturing them, health and prosperity began to steadily flow again.

“He restoreth my soul ...”
(Ps. 23:3).

What We Resist and Why

What have you lost that you are still grieving over or are upset about? Your home, a sense of belonging, a significant other, a job or promotion, health, success, purity, or self-respect? Perhaps you’ve lost a sense of purpose, direction, or self-confidence. At the time of my losses, I reacted with grief, guilt, and fear. Perhaps the impact of your loss feels more like resentment, anger, or despair.

Emotions usually exist to show us that we need to change either our perceptions or our actions. They are there to serve us and give us clues as to what we truly need to see or do differently. The bottom line is that we’re either moving forward and receiving the abundance of possibility or resisting what happened in the dead past and wasting our energy staying stuck in what could (or should) have been. The past is done and cannot be changed. Really, the past only exists as a memory, based on our own unique interpretation of what happened. Moreover, our memory is linked to a chosen slice of time, and by either expanding or contracting that time frame, we can change the context of what happened and thus change the meaning of what happened and how we feel about it. A loss

in the short-term could become a gain in long-term growth, depth, and compassion.

Meaning also changes when we unconsciously add or delete information in contrast to what actually happened. We tend to remember only the information that supports our viewpoints. The human mind is an expert at filtering and distorting our experiences. It helps to look for more empowering meanings. Perhaps the loss happened to us so that we can help others through such conditions, become more compassionate, or honor the person who has passed on by making the most of our precious days on earth.

The Love of Divinity is able to restore your sense of health, mental and emotional soundness, family, home, career, connectedness, and self-esteem. With openness and trust in the fullness of this Presence, there is perfection in the way and timing for these things to be healed and restored.

It may serve you not to be attached to the form that restoration must take. There will likely be new forms and priorities. Someone may have lost his home to a flood or fire. That form of home is gone, and yet the same qualities that were represented in that home can be expressed somewhere else. An even higher sense of home can also be experienced. Restoring the essence is more important than recovering the contents, especially because none of us will take any of the contents with us when we leave here anyway. Essence has to do with the inherent and indispensable qualities expressed by something or someone. The essence you loved can show up again, even if a specific individual or treasured belonging does not.

Focus on the essential qualities of Divinity and witness how they are being expressed by others and you. Notice the joy, vitality, intelligence, creativity, variety, and beauty around you. By connecting with these qualities and feeling their aliveness, you'll be expanding your capacity to receive, experience, and share them. Your experience is largely an expression of your quality of consciousness. Where you hang out in consciousness

“I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess”
(Martin Luther).

gives you a range of possibilities or potential experiences. Take some time each day to feel what it would be like to already have the restoration you are seeking take place; then receive, speak, and act from this state of being. In those moments, you'll be contributing

to your own restoration by accessing what is actually ever-available to you. Remember, Divinity's resources are infinite, perfect, and ever ready to be received.

Unreasonable Love

Myopia is a defect in vision where the focus of images is solely on the front of the retina, thus distorting the view of distant objects. A person with a myopic view doesn't perceive most of what is going on around them. At times all of us are myopically focused on our own worrisome concerns, thus distorting blocking our view of what exists around us. We may not know everything about how Job was able to move forward into abundance after his catastrophic losses. Scripture does give us one big clue though: "And the Lord restored to Job all that he had lost, when he prayed for his friends" (Job 42:10 LAM). What Job did was totally illogical and unreasonable! At his greatest time of need, when he had every right to focus on himself, his losses, and his unjust conditions, he instead expressed love for his friends and prayed for them.

Is that what you would do at a time of personal crisis? Job likely had greater needs than his friends at that time, yet his captivity was lifted when the eyes of his world expanded beyond his own self-focused troubles and losses. Later, Job wound up with a new family and home, abundant herds, a healthy body, and wealth greater than ever in his life. When Job was ready to receive it, the Lord gave him "twice as much as he had before" (Job 42:10). Job had not failed to love, even unreasonably, which made him able to recognize and accept Love's provision.

In your darkest times, you too can find comfort in expanding your vision, giving love, praying for your family and friends, and living unselfishly. In looking to give to others during unreasonable times, you may be in a better position to see and be lifted above your own problems. Perhaps it is easier to feel the great Comforter when we're comforting another. Expectantly holding to the spiritual law of restoration will better enable you to receive what you really need in order to fill any void you may be feeling. This can happen in a way that you may have never imagined. Remember, the goal is not to physically replace what seems lost but to restore your spiritual sense of what is always available. This inspired, expanded vision then gives you access to abundant supplies in new forms from a limitless and loving Source.

It's important to remember that divine supply shows up continuously and yet only one day at a time. Receive today what you need at this new point in your experience and quit worrying about five years from now, which is just an unreal projection anyway. It has been said that no man or woman crosses the same river twice, because each day both they and the river are different from the day before. Things show up in your life for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Be grateful for each one.

Resurrecting Deadness

Just about everybody has experienced personal loss in the form of a family member, a loved pet, or something inside them. Possibly a lifelong dream you've earnestly strived for is gone for good, or your once life-filled marriage has hit the metaphorical feeling of when death did you part. Perhaps the thing that has always gotten you by in life—money, charm, or good looks—cannot be relied upon as much as before. Maybe you had a job or circumstance that felt ideal, and it suddenly disappeared. Possibly things were stolen from you, you were another type of victim, or your childlike trust and innocence were violated. Or, you experienced a decline in emotional or physical health. Any of these experiences can leave you feeling like you need a resurrection to bring back the life and energy you once felt. Some have felt dead inside for so long that they've lost nearly all hope and meaning and are living a slow, passive suicide or quiet resignation.

If life has become lifeless to you, there is a way out of apathy, negativity, and darkness. There is a reliable way to feel passion for life again. Give life your passion, and you'll feel life giving it back to you! Connecting with, feeling, and living your own expression of divine Love and Truth to the best of your ability can help resurrect your life. In doing so, the transforming power of divine Grace can help you to feel greater hope, meaning, and strength.

The master example of how to prepare for resurrection was given to us by Jesus on the cross. While suffering from brutal torture, bleeding to death, and slowly suffocating, he still loved in three distinct ways: 1) He cared for his husbandless mother who stood at the foot of the cross by telling John to take care of her (see John 19:26); 2) He gave hope and encouragement to the convicted criminal hanging on the cross next to him (see Luke 23:42-43); 3) He poured out his heart in forgiveness to

the ones who had crucified him and misunderstood his life mission and goodness (see Luke 23:34). At the peak of his apparent suffering, Jesus, like Job, lived unreasonable love, and this resurrecting consciousness helped him to experience victory. The Presence of Divinity within him restored him! Although our trial or cross may not be as extreme, we still have the opportunity to love unreasonably and feel the supporting supremacy of restoring Love. In doing so, new life, purpose, and strength are available to us.

By feeling, being, and sharing love, you can regain the will to give, trust, be courageous, receive intimacy, be creative, and live passionately again. Love is the remedy for dark times, and when times get darker, you may be called to love even more. As difficult as your life may seem right now, the resurrecting process does not start with your self—your limitations, circumstances, past hurts, losses, or mistakes. It begins with the infinitely abundant, immensely powerful, bountifully blessing nature of the supreme Self within and all around you. You don't have to grasp all of God's activity and nature. Even a moment of connection is enough to start rejuvenating you.

Take a few moments right now to feel Divinity's Presence, power, comfort, abundance, direction, healing, and wisdom expressing itself as you right now. Feel inspiration and light pouring into and radiating out from your heart. Let nothing stand between you and your God-created capabilities. Inspiration literally means "the breath of Spirit." Its warmth, radiation, wisdom, and intelligent energy may be revealed to you through the voice of a child, a

"Don't you know by now that the everlasting God, the Creator of the farthest parts of the earth, never grows faint or weary? ...

He gives power to the tired and worn out, and strength to the weak"
(Is. 40:28-29 TLB).

letter from a friend, a billboard, a radio program, a hug, an idea in the shower, a timely phone call, or the practical words of teachers, saints, and enlightened guides. If you unwittingly try to prevent Spirit from getting through one way, it will easily find another, like sunshine poking through multiple openings in clouds. There is simply no limit to the forms in which inspiration can be communicated to you. Feel directed rather than aimless, confused, or apathetic. The wise part of you knows what to think

and do. Your transformed perceptions, attitudes, and willingness to act will lead you to your restoration.

At times of experiencing another's death, I believe there are angelic energies that come to our aid: some reveal divine Strength, and others communicate divine Love. Years ago, my outdoor cat Cookie appeared to have eaten some poison. She came home writhing in agony and foaming at the mouth. Her eyes rolled back, and then she was gone. Cookie lay lifeless before me. With powerful emotions of rebellion against the belief that death could steal her from me in this way, I yelled "No!" at her spirit with all my might, and held to the fact that life cannot be taken. I felt divine Strength surge in my body, and I persisted relentlessly for ten to fifteen minutes even though the evidence before me hadn't changed. Then life returned to Cookie's form, and her eyes sparkled again. She got up and walked normally, and peace and joy filled our home. Months later Cookie went into the guest room where we had an electric blanket plugged in. Without us knowing it, she had chewed through the cord and was electrocuted. When I found her, she again appeared to be at death's door. This time I felt the ministering Presence of Love filling the room, and I just picked up Cookie and loved on her for several minutes until she started moving. Within a few hours, she was fully recovered again.

Share the Light

"... those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint"
(Is. 40:31 NIV).

You may have a friend or loved one who currently needs restoration. That person might need to be reminded of her gifts, receive ideas you have to share, have her fears reframed in a more resourceful way, or be given the gift of understanding and time together. She could be greatly benefited by your selfless encouragement, vision, and energy. If she feels your uplifting influence, she might be able to rise above her loss and begin to find life again in new ways. Ask Spirit what you can say or do for this person. Then listen for the answer and follow through from your heart in a timely way. Even a seemingly little word or deed could bring her a sense of new life, hope, and meaning. Your willingness to serve as a vehicle for love can awaken that person's sense of restoration.

Anyone who has a resurrecting experience is transformed. He is blessed with more depth and compassion, which are major assets for inspiring and supporting others. Now Divinity may be calling you to do your part. A spiritual momentum is building that is helping all of us awaken to the fullness of life—a consciousness that spiritually perceives that all good is already present and fully restored.

Practice Feeling Restored

- 1) **Identify Resistance:** What circumstance in your life have you been resisting or grieving? Perhaps it is the loss of a relationship, a job, or your health. As you think about this situation, notice how your body feels inside. Is it tense, anxious, stressed, angry, sad, or depressed? Where in your body do you hold these feelings? Recognize the cost to the quality of your life and health when you resist situations in this way—a life that still can be filled with joy, love, opportunity, and happiness. What will it take for you to move forward? What do you really need to let go of, and when do you intend to do so?

- 2) **Accept the Loss:** In order to move beyond a misfortune, we have to be willing to accept what happened. Otherwise, the consequences can keep us trapped. When we accept a circumstance for how it is in this moment, life flows through us more easily, and we experience less suffering. Find a comfortable position. Feel the energy inside your body. Now bring to mind what you have lost. Imagine what it would feel like to fully accept this situation for how it is; and for a few moments, act like you do accept it. Next, turn your focus to Divine Presence. Feel the nature and activity of infinite Love restoring all things with power and light, including your health, resources, emotions, opportunities, and the essence of relationship. Remember that there could be new forms. Feel your current situation as if it is already restored. Live today from this conscious feeling of what spiritually already is and see what is revealed to you.

3) Give Unreasonable Love: This week, look for ways to practice unreasonable love. Like the examples of Job and Jesus, move your attention and vision off your problems and instead look for ways to cherish Divinity and give comfort to, pray for, and benefit others. Trust that as you express and share your love and gratitude, your uplifted consciousness will help you feel that the Universe is giving back to you through the reliable law of restoration.