

DECEMBER 2024: STICKING THE LANDING

GUIDE FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING

SCIENCE OF MIND®



DR.
Jean
HOUSTON

2024 SPIRITUAL HERO

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REV. DAVID ALEXANDER, DD

Foreword by Rev. Kevin Ross

Afterword by Bishop Yvette Flunder



E-BOOK

PAPERBACK

With keen insight, Rev. Dr. David Alexander gives us a comprehensive analysis on how to participate in spiritually grounded social justice activism from a place of faith, not fear. This book serves as a tapestry of the past, an anchor for the present and beacon for the future.

It calls us up from complacency and calls us out of complicity to actively engage in ushering in the Beloved Community. It is well worth the read.

— REV. DEBORAH L. JOHNSON,
author of "The Sacred YES" and "Your Deepest Intent"

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Sticking the Landing

WHAT IS ARISING THROUGH US FOR NEXT YEAR?

Spiritual Hero Dr. Jean Houston



Traditionally in December, we honor a spiritual hero for the past year. For 2024, we celebrate Dr. Jean Houston — scholar, philosopher and researcher in human capacities. Houston is regarded as one of the principal founders of the Human Potential Movement, noted for her ability to combine history, culture, new science, spirituality and human development. She has written 26 books and the foreword to the 1997 edition of “The Science of Mind.”

This and the cover photo courtesy of Jean Houston

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STRATEGIC PLAN**

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COMPLETING LIFE’S PHASES**

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PEACE AND LOVE**

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**HONORING OUR
DIVINE RELATIONSHIP**

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Ernest Holmes, Founder

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[Features]

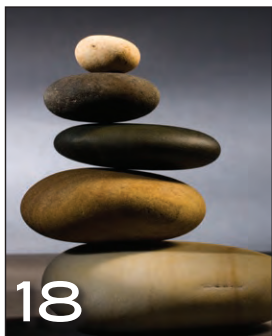


2024 Spiritual Hero

Dr. Jean Houston

Scholar, philosopher and researcher in human capacities, Jean Houston is regarded as one of the principal founders of the Human Potential Movement. She is noted for her ability to combine history, culture, new science and spirituality.

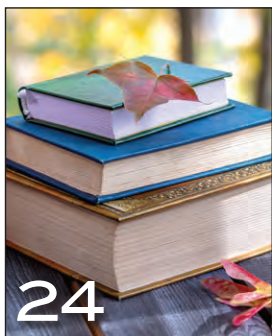
INTERVIEW BY ELISHA CHRISTOPHER



Manifesting Your Spiritual Strategic Plan

Because Spirit is at the center of your center, begin by entering a state of deep reflection, holding your community's aspirations, gifts and challenges in a space of gratitude and prayer.

JULIA MATTIS & CAROL BURBANK



Honorable Closure: Completing Life's Phases

Make the conscious choice of living, not in the past or future, but in each present moment. This takes courage and the ability to make peace with your life: to live without hope, fear or regret.

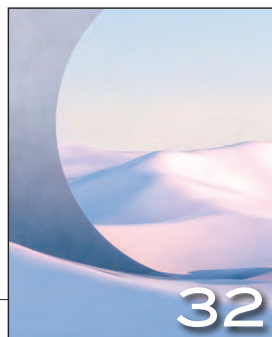
WALTER & BARBARA DOERN DREW

[Features]

Daily Guides: A Quest for Authenticity

This month, be inspired by the quest for authenticity and balance mixed with a radically gentle and kind approach. The Guides draw deeply from our incredible planet and the theology of eco-spirituality.

KRIS ALEXANDER



Where Do You Want to Land?

Top athletes use visualization to reach new heights. They first decide exactly what they want as the end result, then set specific goals and do whatever it takes to get there. It's a formula known well by practitioners of Science of Mind.

MARCIA HOOTMAN



I Honor My Divine Sonship

All the power there is right where we are, just as is all the gravitational force.

We do not generate. We do not coerce.

We *use* the Creative Spirit. Let us first affirm that every person is of Its life, Its power, Its essence, Its love and Its wisdom.

ERNEST HOLMES



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Sticking the Landing

STANDING FIRM | We always have the opportunity to remember to stand in faith, the kind of faith that *knows* all is well. Stand firm in knowing that right where you are, God is.

I stand boldly in knowing that God is the essence of my being. I am always guided and directed to experience the highest and best life has to offer. I say yes and thank you.

THE LIGHT | You were created to be light here on Earth. How do you do that? By knowing you are the joy of God everywhere you go. Shine your light through your smile. Shine on my friends.

I am the light of the Infinite. I shine my light everywhere I go. I light up everyone who comes into my conscious awareness. I am the light of God.

FLOW MOTION | Surrender is the prerequisite to being in the flow. We must let go of the banks of fear, doubt and worry to be in flow motion. Let go and allow life to take its natural course through you.

I release, and I let go. I allow the infinite presence of God full sway in my life. I am the awesome life of God.

OPEN, RECEPTIVE, AVAILABLE | Shining our light calls us to be open, receptive and available. Be open to allowing the Infinite Intelligence to live through you and as you. Be receptive of your gifts and talents. Be available for God to be great in you.

*I am open, receptive and available to live the life of God. I stand in the awareness that I am supported in all I do. There is only one life. That life is God. I am that life now. **And so it is.** ❁*



EUGENE HOLDEN, RScP, has been a student of Science of Mind for more than 30 years and a practitioner for 18. He is a spiritual life coach, speaker and writer. He served the World Ministry of Prayer for 10 years.

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From the Inside Out

“From the Inside Out’ charts a course to a higher consciousness, a way of thinking that, with practice, brings our lives into balance and instills a lasting inner peace.”

— SUSAN L. TAYLOR



E-BOOK

PAPERBACK

This new book captures author Rev. Dr. Andriette Earl's 12 years of columns published in *Guide for Spiritual Living: Science of Mind* magazine, along with her Daily Guides from the February 2024 issue. "From the Inside Out" tracks the author's thawing from frozen fear and resistance to writing and sharing from the inside out.

“From the Inside Out’ is a warm, healing voice to a cold, wounded world.”

— DR. SHAWN GINWRIGHT

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The G.O.A.T. Returns

This past summer, I caught Olympics fever. I waited with great anticipation for Simone Biles' return to her Olympic queendom. During the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, Biles, the most decorated gymnast of all time, withdrew from several Olympic gymnastics events after experiencing the "twisties." As spectators, we watched as she did not stick her landing, and noticed that she also appeared disoriented and unsteady.

It turns out that the twisties are a frightening and dangerous predicament for a gymnast. The Cleveland Clinic describes the twisties as "a mental block that creates a dangerous disconnect between mind and body while gymnasts are airborne." Suddenly, while airborne, there's a disconnect in the feedback loop, the gymnast loses the mind-body connection, such that they cannot discern where their body is. Biles said she was "fighting demons" and trying to push past the experience on her own. It took her about 18 months to return to a more normal consistent practice and ultimately focus on the 2024 Olympics.

Finally, she began her redemption tour. After qualifying at the World Championships, Biles was set to compete at the Paris Olympics. She was back! She performed in true G.O.A.T. (greatest of all time) form. Possibly the greatest vaulter ever, she successfully executed the finals, earned the highest score and won the gold medal. In true Biles' style, she won a total of three golds. Even with a calf injury and a stumble, she still earned a silver medal in the women's floor event.

My takeaway: We may not successfully execute and stick our landing with everything we intend to accomplish. It may even appear that we have forfeited our heart's desire. However, if we are blessed to wake up the next day, we have another opportunity to realize our dreams.

I find Biles' joy, perseverance and commitment to untangle her twisties infectious. I watched with glee as she executed the seemingly impossible and demonstrated her mental equivalent. This year, as she flew, flipped and spun — sticking her landing — I noted the powerful combination of clear intention, infinite possibility and personal responsibility required in seeking and realizing our greatest yet to be. ✨



REV. DR. ANDRIETTE EARL is the founding spiritual leader of Heart and Soul Center of Light in Oakland, California.

GO
BACK
TO

Oneness

DR.
Jean

HOUSTON

2024 SPIRITUAL HERO

Traditionally in December, we honor a spiritual hero for the past year. The only requirements are this person cannot be part of Centers for Spiritual Living and must be doing impactful work in the world, aligned with the Science of Mind philosophy.

For 2024, our spiritual hero is Dr. Jean Houston — scholar, philosopher and researcher in human capacities. Houston is regarded as one of the principal founders of the Human Potential Movement, noted for her ability to combine history, culture, new science, spirituality and human development. She has written 26 books and the foreword to the 1997 edition of “The Science of Mind.”

Houston was interviewed for this feature by one of her students, Rev. Elisha Christopher, senior minister of CSL Santa Cruz in California.

At 87, Dr. Jean Houston teaches, inspires and passes on a quantum torch to the next generation of New Thought leaders. Her presence and wisdom are constant at Centers for Spiritual Living and across the world.

CSL’s global mission is to awaken humanity to our spiritual magnificence, and that’s exactly what Houston devotes her life to teaching. Countless individuals credit her with awakening them to the truth of who and what we really are — the life and energy of an infinite universe. Each of us is an evolutionary agent, patterned after the universe that connects us all — an infinitely creative organism.

What blocks us from recognizing our ultimate good, in Houston’s estimation, is our forgetfulness. “We are part of the great oneness,” she says. “Stretch out your hand and say, ‘Yes, I am part of this oneness, and practice that oneness.’ In that way, you then do not fall into the ‘League of Forgetfulness.’ You are living at the end of the old history and the beginning of the new one. Celebrate *that every day.*”

Houston invites us to this awareness: The universe dwells *in* us. And because of that, we have limitless options for how we allow ourselves to think and be. We’re not passive observers in the cosmos. The entire universe expresses itself through us at this very moment.

You are living at the end of the old history
and the beginning of the new one.

Celebrate that every day.

Imagination: The Secret to the Deeper Life

When asked to sum up her teaching, Houston says, “I am part of the great wholeness.” She explains, “We and the universe are really a single entity. There are all kinds of exercises, as you know, to get into that oneness where we drop the great divide, we drop the separation and, suddenly, we are part of it all.”

As a child, Houston explored alternate realities with the likes of Albert Einstein (on a first grade field trip to Princeton University) and Helen Keller (on another school trip). When asked how to grow up to be smart, both Einstein and Keller told Houston and her classmates to “read more fairy tales.”

“Everybody thinks I’m so smart,” Einstein told her class. “I’m not so smart. I have a great imagination.” That’s when 7-year-old Houston realized the Nobel Prize-winning physicist had given them the secret to the deeper life, to the fuller purpose, to the larger reality.

“I took that as my calling card, if you will, for what I would do with the rest of my life,” Houston says. “We become incredibly empowered and structured with multiple levels of being, knowing, understanding and creating.” She was called to delve into the the realms of human potential and share her findings with others.

She says the key to exploring our potential is not just in books or classes. “It’s what we *do* with this vast creative potency that has been planted in us of imagination, of telling a new story over and over again. There’s an unfolding richness of imagination that is always there. It’s the universe in us, prompting us.”

Our Time: Writing a New Story Together

Houston says when you know yourself as the universe — an innovative, highly creative process — you gain a larger sense of your role and destiny. She invites us each to consider ourselves the tellers of the new story.

For her, Science of Mind is one of the few philosophies that understands the magnitude of this shift in humanity. “They [CSL communities] are finding profoundly new ways of thinking and being that allow parts of ourselves that have been relatively unused for thousands of years to begin to come back to the surface.”

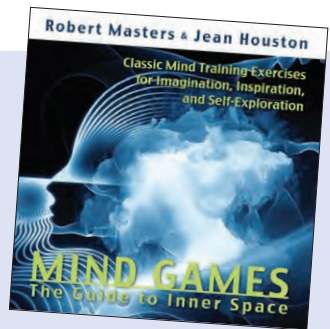
Houston describes this as “living in the uprising of the myth.” She feels we all are filling the missing links and sees evidence for this in the revival of Indigenous wisdom, global music that sustains regional traditions and wildly interesting clothing styles. “Nothing is ever really swept away,” she says. “But we create a new amalgam of people, ideas, events and feelings as we become part of a whole new story.”

Houston witnessed the human psyche “moving at remarkable speeds and past the limits” in the course of her studies. “How many different people have you been in the last two or three years?” she asks. “You’re helping the planetary movement toward convergence and transition. What is news and what is drama? What is matter and what is myth? We live in chaos that we might create an order to hasten our own meeting with ourselves.”

Houston’s Legacy

In 1965, Houston and her husband, Dr. Robert Masters, founded The Foundation for Mind Research. She is also the founder of the Mystery School, now called the Renaissance of Spirit, a school of human development. It’s a program of cross-cultural, mythic and spiritual studies dedicated to teaching history, philosophy, the New Physics, psychology, anthropology and many dimensions of human potential.

Since 2003, Houston has worked with the United Nations Development Program, training leaders in human and cultural development as well as in social artistry, a community leadership training program she developed. Together with other international agencies and companies, over the past 45 years, Houston worked in more than 100 countries. She holds a B.A. from Barnard College, a Ph.D. in psychology from the Union Graduate School and a Ph.D. in religion from the Graduate Theological Foundation.



Questions & Action: Our Whole-System Transition

There is a radical awakening of the role of consciousness as the underlying, organizing principle of the universe. And with this understanding, quantum physics introduces us to ways of seeing how that impacts human thinking, feeling and sensing.

“We are being profoundly changed,” Houston says, “and it may be radically affecting us to move into what I call *speciation* — that is, the emerging, evolutionary development of humankind with possibilities for experiencing our deeper god identity.”

Without these changes, Houston doesn't see how we'll grow to be what we're meant to be, individually or collectively. She sees this as a whole-system transition. There's an evolutionary impulse and a new version of humanity seeking to be revealed.

How can we be the bridge to the future? Continuously ask questions and seek truth, she advises.

She believes the universe has a mind of its own and loves to enter into relationships with us as we seek deeper answers. Just by asking, you're ready to explore. You're signaling your willingness to respond to the evolutionary principle. “Each one of you, dear friends,” she says, “serves as a catalyst of change and a pathfinder of deeper realities.

“When you both understand and *feel* it, this reality gets into your bones. It flows like the sea in your blood. It is the biggest paradigm shift of all. It changes everything inside of you. It reignites your pilot light.”

In her long and impactful global ministry, Houston repeatedly found that we have to physically *do* something to move out of the old, no-longer-working conditions and announce to the universe — in very specific and active ways that we're ready to change our belief structures, because our beliefs influence our reality.

She believes the universe has a mind of its own and loves to enter into relationships with us as we seek deeper answers.

Just by asking, you're ready to explore.

Rest & Inspiration: A Comforting Universe

Thanks to human curiosity and innovation, we no longer view the universe as an abstraction to be studied and dissected through sterile laws and principles.

“Think of the universe in a motherly way to make a deeper connection,” Houston says. “Know that you are nested, cared for, grown and greatly loved. Then the quantum fields of knowledge, creativity and action become alive in you to awaken you.”

A favorite spiritual practice of Houston’s students is cultivating a relationship with the *entelechy*, a Greek word that means “the fullest realized essence of a thing.” She calls this “the evolutionary lure of becoming.” She teaches there is a highest version of ourselves always beckoning the current version to come forward into fuller expression.

“You are not simply an encapsulated bag of skin dragging around a dreary ego,” she says. “You are the universe and can be the universe in the most intimate way. New levels of consciousness begin to emerge on physical, psychological and spiritual levels. You begin to see reality for what it is: infinite. Your brain-mind system is restructured.”

ENTELECHY

A favorite spiritual practice of Houston’s students is cultivating a relationship with the entelechy, a Greek word that means “the fullest realized essence of a thing.” She calls this “the evolutionary lure of becoming.” She teaches there is a highest version of ourselves always beckoning the current version to come forward into fuller expression.



**The
EVOLUTIONARY
LURE OF
BECOMING**

DR. *Jean* HOUSTON

Opening to the true, infinite nature of reality also means being sensitive to thoughts, feelings, responses — to everything. Houston feels that this sensitivity and awareness help us foster creativity, seeing the newness and youthfulness of the universe all around us. “Happiness is always here,” she says. “Would you be willing to ordain yourself this day, losing the limits and imaginary lines? Imagine a reactivation of your mind, body and spirit. You reactivate a whole sense of space and time, inner and outer.”

We need this divine support because ours is an era of phenomenal change, what Houston sees as the most radical deconstruction and reconstruction the world has ever seen. She paints a picture of our human family as guests at a wake for a way of being that had been ours for hundreds, even thousands of years.

“But we’re also the guests at a massive birthing that has never been seen before,” she says. “And that is why *you* are among the most important people in history, for what you do with your lives, your professions, your beliefs, your being. These are vitally important.”

The ultimate answer for Houston is simple: “Go back to oneness.” ❀



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ITSELF. WE MUST RECEIVE,
UTILIZE & EXTEND
THE GIFT.

Ernest Holmes

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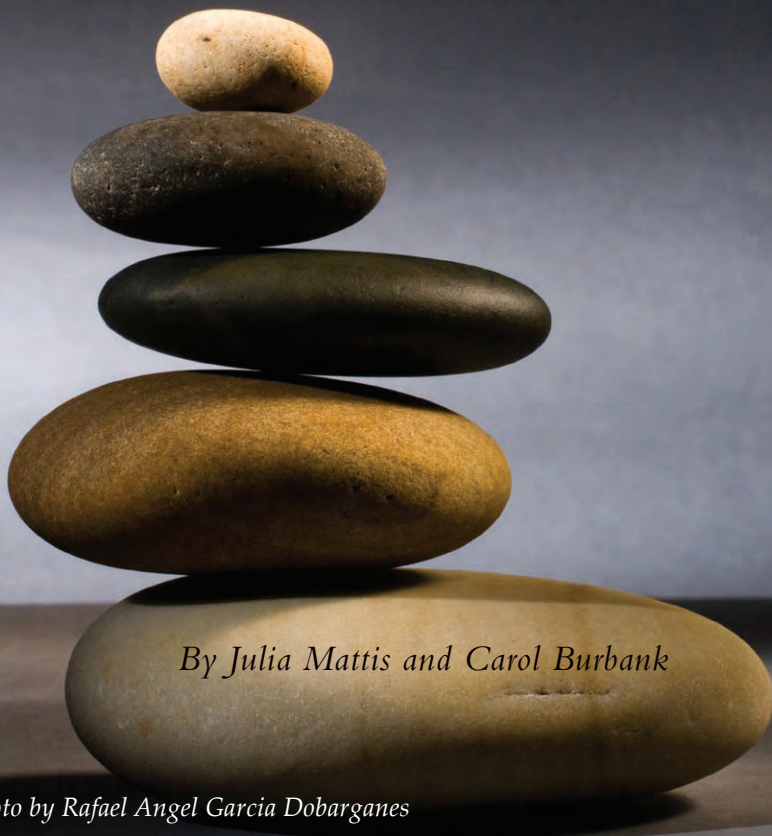
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ARE SPIRITUAL ATTRIBUTES
BELONGING TO ALL PEOPLE.

Ernest Holmes

MANIFESTING

*Your Spiritual
Strategic Plan: Sacred Vision
Empowers Secular Tools*



By Julia Mattis and Carol Burbank

Photo by Rafael Angel Garcia Dobarganes

In the final installment of this three-part series, authors Carol Burbank and Julia Mattis explore how faith-based communities can manifest their spiritual strategic plan, accessing the flow of sustainable funding streams and marketing strategies aligned with their mission, values and purpose.

Thriving spiritual communities are built on a clear sense of higher purpose, and a willingness to activate every tool they need to make their sacred journey abundant and energized.

At the heart of building sustainable communities is the willingness to learn and grow, to expand the gifts and resources already available and to bridge any gaps that weaken the overarching purpose. Our prescription for success is straightforward: Mix equal parts prayer, vision and practicality into your spiritual strategic plan.

In the second part of this series, we shared ways to build your plan by activating a collective higher calling — the “why” of your community, supported by the stories that animate your transformative work.

This collective process of community building creates core objectives that excite your congregation and motivate your leadership team. From the start, strategic planning becomes a sacred process to chart an evolving path forward, step by step.

Here we invite you to embrace the tools that connect your intentions and actions, manifesting your community's spiritual goals by adapting business techniques with principle and faith. Choose a clear path to reach your goals, build an active team and reach out beyond your inner circle to find resources. You'll celebrate a dynamic, divinely inspired strategic process to move your mission and vision into reality.

Map a Clear Path to Reach Your Goals

Once you create your mission and vision, and after you identify your center's umbrella targets, you can define specific goals to achieve each of your desires. Because God is at the center of your center, begin by entering a state of deep reflection, holding your community's aspirations, gifts and challenges in a space of gratitude and prayer. This task starts with your core leadership team but also should consider everyone you serve — practitioners, volunteers and other community members who may not be fully active.

Prayerfully take a page from good business practices. Review your organizational and financial needs, prioritize your goals and brainstorm best steps forward.

MANIFESTING

Here are some questions to consider:

1. What unique gifts, abilities, talents and passions do your congregants have that will help you meet your vision and goals?
2. What do you want to nurture and cultivate?
3. What existing funds, pledges and revenue streams do you count on now?
4. What potential funding sources can you develop — everything from grants and major donations to grassroots crowdfunding campaigns and additional prosperity streams?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your current facilities, equipment and administrative systems?
6. Where does your center want to be in one year? Three years? Five years?

This step requires leaders to translate spiritual intentions into action. Many of our spiritual plans begin with idealistic affirmations — to share love, to be a space of peace, to build a world that works for everyone.

This is a great place to start, especially when we have the courage to identify the places where we need to move our feet. For example, if we want to share love, then schedule community workshops to teach heart-opening meditation, or build an outreach team to volunteer at shelters or food pantries, or gather the congregation to heal rifts caused by past challenges or discord. Be specific.

The hardest part of this goal-setting process is acknowledging where we need to make organizational changes. Clear steps forward require us to evaluate and align our administrative structures with our divine purpose, sharing information appropriately and transparently, organizing fiscal and volunteer resources, and assessing resources and needs for space, technology and member outreach.

Perhaps your core aspiration is to grow your membership. As you prioritize, break down that goal into measurable steps. If you could increase your membership by 20% over the next 18 months, you would be able to create a welcoming home for many more souls seeking spiritual nourishment.

Your Spiritual Strategic Plan

Do the same with other goals. If you want to build or purchase a new community center, set a specific budget with steps to raise money and galvanize community alliances to get you there. Some centers set an intention to launch a series of transformative youth programs, planting the seeds of enlightenment in the hearts of the next generation. For each of your goals, examine what steps you need to take first to build momentum toward manifestation.

Measurable outcomes and practical logistics are important. But there's so much more to the process than pragmatism. A prayerful mindset means each step moves to the highest good, one of many sacred steps to transform aspiration and mental equivalents into tangible manifestations and conditions. Church business is holy work, with a focus both on living principles and worldly skills.

Build an Active Team of Manifesters

The true test of a plan's alignment with Spirit lies in the consistent, committed and adaptable implementation of that plan, a process that requires the active engagement and ownership of your entire spiritual ecosystem. The leadership team alone cannot carry the weight. Every volunteer, donor and member must understand how their individual contributions fit into the bigger picture and feel empowered to take tangible ownership of specific initiatives.

Your congregation should be partners in manifesting your spiritual strategic plan. Begin by clearly communicating your overarching goals, timelines and specific steps. Provide regular updates, celebrate incremental successes and create open dialogue and feedback opportunities. Empower your people to become active co-creators, granting them the autonomy and resources to bring their unique gifts and perspectives to bear.

Milestones and timelines should not be seen as rigid deadlines but as targets for assessment and completion. They are sacred waypoints — opportunities to pause, reflect and realign with the evolving needs of your community.

Sustainable collaboration is built on what businesses call an "improvement model," that is, a plan that moves forward by assessing and honoring your process as much as your original goals. In spiritual terms, we can think of this as adaptive co-creation,

MANIFESTING

considering our initial objectives through a lens that pays attention to changing conditions, growing strengths, ongoing achievements and challenges that become clear only when we move forward with the plan. Your community must remain nimble and responsive to each other, to the world's offering and to the ways Spirit teaches you to dance with expansion.

Reach Beyond Your Center's Circle

A spiritual strategic plan transforms the idea of marketing and fundraising into a mission to share and grow. As always, we align the tools — social media, advertising, fiscal growth or community outreach — with our divine purpose. Suddenly, something we dread becomes an invitation to expand our table to welcome new friends and fellow travelers who bring gifts, joy and fresh beginnings.

Be sure to include the specific individuals and communities you want to reach. Explore the demographics of your target audience and identify the places where they would most easily learn about your community. As fully as you can, answer these questions: What are their challenges? Their values? Their aspirations? Weave your knowledge into every email, flyer, social media post and presentation.

At the heart of any outreach efforts should be an authentic spiritual marketing strategy that transcends mere promotional tactics and instead serves as an opening into the soul of your community.

For your website and on social media, create an editorial calendar complete with blog posts, videos and social media content that educates and inspires your audiences, immersing them in the transcendent essence of your work.

Celebrate and share the core teachings, practices and experiences that define your community. How can you distill these into captivating narratives, evocative imagery and uplifting media? Find and include the people in your community who understand and embrace the technology required for success.

As you share this content on your website, email lists and social media channels, be



Your Spiritual Strategic Plan

attentive to expanding your reach and engagement. Leverage search engine optimization, paid digital ads and strategic partnerships, as appropriate, to ensure your messages connect with your target audiences' hearts and minds.

Alongside your content marketing, you also want to develop a comprehensive major gifts strategy, one that goes beyond transactional fundraising and instead fosters a partnership between your center and your most generous supporters.

Craft personalized plans that speak directly to what matters most to each prospective major donor. When it comes time to make the ask, do so not with a sense of scarcity or urgency but with an energy of joyful co-creation.

Paint a vivid, inspiring vision of how their support can help manifest your community's sacred vision and mission. Invite them to become active participants in this unfolding story. Offer them opportunities to provide counsel, attend exclusive events and perhaps participate directly in program delivery.

In this way, you transform major fundraising from a transactional exchange into a profound spiritual partnership that honors the donor's own journey of meaningful participation while creating a deep sense of belonging and agency within your community's vision.

You Can Do It

When you approach your strategic implementation with an open, curious mindset — one that celebrates experimentation, honors lessons learned and readily embraces change — you will not fail. When certain initiatives fall short of their intended goals, see them as invitations to deeper understanding, opportunities to hone your approach and to uncover new avenues for impact.

Trust that the creative intelligence of Spirit continually guides you toward ever-greater alignment with your community's highest purpose.

Your strategic plan becomes a living, breathing expression of your community's calling, not a static document but a dynamic, responsive blueprint that evolves in concert with the unfolding needs of your people and the world. Through embodied implementation and adaptive stewardship, you will cultivate a healthy and abundant spiritual ecosystem. ☸

HONORABLE CLOSURE

*Completing the Phases of Life With
Integrity, Authenticity and Courage*

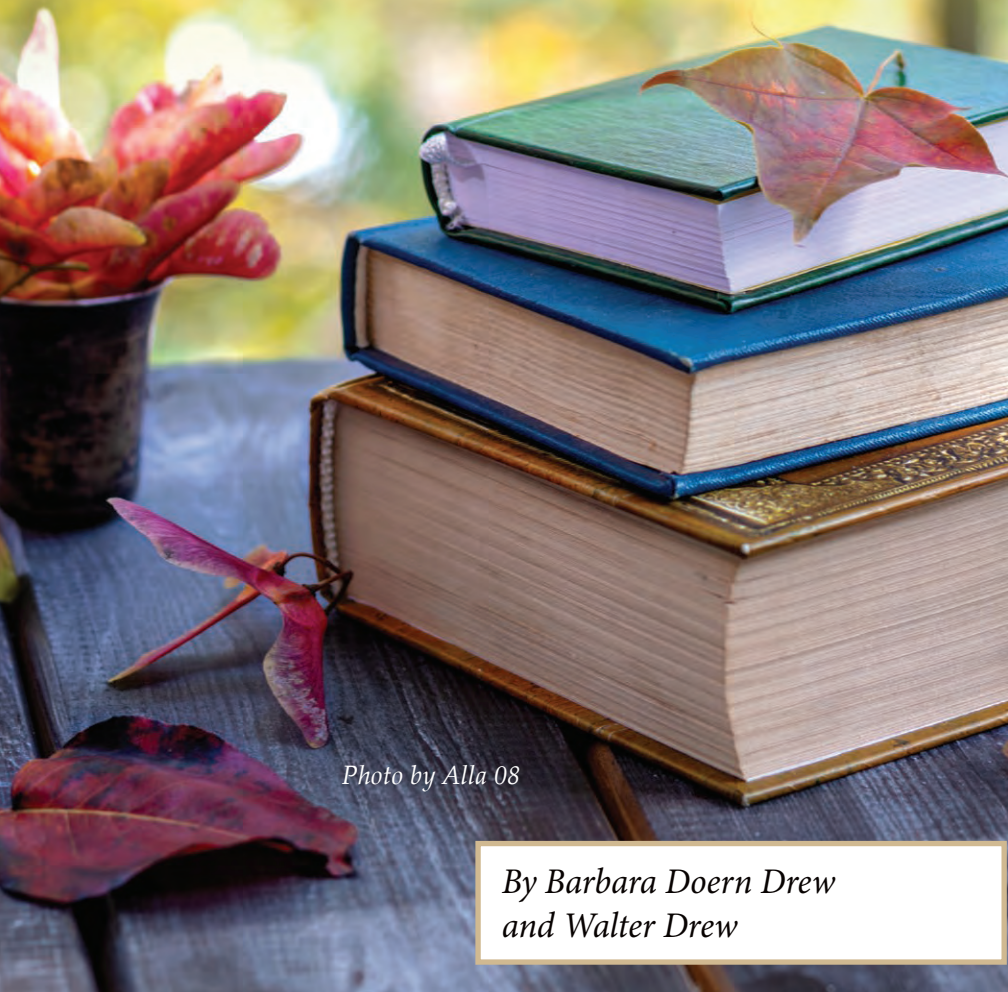


Photo by Alla 08

*By Barbara Doern Drew
and Walter Drew*

When we saw the December 2024 theme, “Sticking the Landing,” we both thought immediately of the related concept of “honorable closure,” which cultural anthropologist Angeles Arrien writes about. In “The Second Half of Life,” she shares wisdom she gained from working globally with Indigenous peoples:

Many traditional societies believe that if you end your work and relationships well, new and greater blessings and opportunities will arise. When there is honorable closure, there are no regrets. In cultures around the world, honorable closure is achieved by expressing gratitude for the people and situations that have helped us or challenged us to grow, and by identifying any remaining regrets.

Honorable closure can be applied to how we finish any particular goal, relationship or phase of life, as well as to how we come to a satisfying feeling about our *entire* lives. What currently has special relevance for the two of us, at ages 83 and 76, is applying the concept to this elder stage.

Our desire is to live consciously and learn from all of life’s experiences. We aspire to do this with the utmost integrity, authenticity, gratitude, compassion, loving-kindness, generosity, courage and right action. Why does this matter? So when it is time to leave planet Earth, our spirits can depart with a sense of peace and harmony.

We suspect that there are many others in the “eldering” process who have similar aspirations.

Practices to Assist in Creating Honorable Closure

How do we go about achieving honorable closure? According to Arrien, nonattachment, surrender and letting go of the future are necessary if you are to reflect on your entire life, and all that you have been and done, and enter the final threshold of your life. You make the conscious choice of living, not in the past or future, but in each present moment. This takes great courage and the ability to make peace with your life: to live without hope or fear, to let go without regret, to know you have lived fully.

She counsels us to both celebrate our accomplishments and bring to light areas where we still have attachments or unfinished work. One way to approach this is to examine the various key areas of our lives, such as relationships, work, finances, health, spirituality, creative expression and community involvement.

HONORABLE CLOSURE

As we look at each one from the perspective of what feels complete and what still needs our attention, here are some questions to guide our explorations:

1. What am I grateful for in my life? Have I expressed this?
2. Where have I experienced success? Have I acknowledged this?
3. What obstacles and difficulties challenged, tested and ultimately assisted me in my personal evolution?
4. Is there anything I need to repair or restore to be in a state of right alignment in my relationships or other areas?
5. Is there any forgiveness work that I still have to do, both with others and within myself?
6. Are there any more contributions I would like to make to loved ones, my community and/or the planet?

As you examine these questions and your answers, know that now is the time to take action toward rectification. This requires commitment, trust and courage, but your efforts will pay off.

While it may seem daunting at first, having a goal of honorable closure in as many arenas as possible will bring energy and purpose to your life in a new way. Remember that small, consistent acts will eventually lead you to your goal of being at peace with yourself, others and life itself.

Don't underestimate the ripple effect of your work out into the world. What each of us does on our personal small scale has an impact in the larger cosmos as well.

Arrien's wish for humanity is, "May we all remember that to leave the world a better place for future generations is to have lived a meaningful life, and to have succeeded."



A goal of honorable closure in as many arenas as possible will bring energy and purpose to your life in a new way.

Completing the Phases of Life

Honorable Closure in a Mountain Retreat

We want to share a recent personal example of honorable closure. We have noted that as we are aging, our priorities are shifting somewhat, and what has risen to the top for us is our relationship with our son, 34, and our daughter, 32.

Doing the math with our ages, you will see that they are more like the normal age of grandchildren than children and that our remaining time together likely is shorter than what many families enjoy. Given that we don't know how long either of us will live, we feel it is particularly important to make sure our interactions with each of them, individually and collectively, within our family are authentic and supportive.

With this purpose in mind, for the last three years we intentionally designed trips to locations away from our daily routines, which is not always easy with the two of them in full-time doctoral programs. This past summer, we spent time in a lovely Colorado town, set amidst awe-inspiring mountains, with refreshing temperatures and opportunities for experiences in nature and delicious dining.

We built in hours for us just to be together, cooking, watching a movie or sitting on the porch, surrounded by hanging pots of petunias, hummingbirds and orioles. We used this time to not only express our love and encouragement for each other, but also to look at aspects of the past 34 years with the idea of honorable closure in mind. We listened deeply without judgment to challenges we each faced and how we dealt with them.

As parents, we expressed, among other things, our regret for some of the disciplinary actions we took along the way when we were frustrated or pushed to our limits, and we offered our apologies.

We explained that if they ever have children themselves, they will learn that the parenting path is rarely crystal clear and that we all, parents and children alike, sometimes make choices we later might wish had been different. What matters most, though, is clear and honest communication and the willingness to forgive each other — and ourselves — when needed.

Having engaged in this work of honest disclosure as a family, we all returned to our individual lives greatly enriched. We learned new things about each other, and we are now closer than ever.

HONORABLE CLOSURE

A Life Well Lived

Ralph Waldo Emerson described many qualities of a meaningful existence in “What Is Success?”:

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to give of oneself; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived — this is to have succeeded.

As we move toward a sense of completeness in our individual aging processes, as well as in our relationship as a couple, we strive, per Arrien’s recommendation, “to embrace elderhood with dignity, grace, wisdom and unlimited generativity.” We take to heart the value of honorable closure, and we understand that working toward a state of balance and harmony in our affairs and interactions with others is critical. We experience the clean, fresh quality our lives have when we get our egos and fears out of the way and are willing to do what is required — return something to right order.

For us, some intentions include reconnecting with estranged loved ones, healing wounding ancestral patterns, apologizing for something inappropriate we said or did, and refocusing on our life purposes after sometimes being sidetracked by the demands of everyday responsibilities.

Like those in many Indigenous cultures, we believe how we end something impacts the beginning of what we do next. While we do not know what happens when we no longer inhabit our physical bodies, we suspect the same principles apply, and we want to be prepared. Whatever the next phase holds, we hope to greet it with clear consciousness and openheartedness.

The final lines of a Native American prayer given to Barbara in 1975 capture the essence of honorable closure. We read it at our wedding in 1989, and it has helped guide our lives ever since:

Oh, Great Spirit, whose voice I hear in the wind and whose breath gives life to all the Earth, make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes, so when life fades, as the fading sunset, my spirit may come to you without shame. ☘

Cultish Leadership: Lies That Bind

Capitalism is a leadership trickster that celebrates individual achievement in the name of collective benefit. Full of paradoxes, it has many layers, some empowering but others deeply troubling.

Most painfully seductive is the cultish leader, who holds personal success like a torch to attract and control followers, promising both safety and abundance. Give to me, they say, and you shall receive. But anyone familiar with cults knows these promises are based on the pyramid scheme of trickle-down economics, concentrating power and wealth at the top and offering crumbs to those waiting below.

They present those crumbs as rewards. If we want more, we must prove our worth, conforming to ways of being that will never build “a world that works for everyone.” We become trapped in a transactional mindset, imagining that God contracts with humanity to reward us on merit, like an employer exchanging wages for labor.

If we accept this idea, then all challenges result from our personal failures. As self-defined failures, we see leaders who mastered abundance as special. We turn to anyone — even an unethical leader — who claims they hold the keys to the abundance we yearn to earn.

But any abundance we gain in service to a transactional and worldly idea of God is based on a lie. We are already, in our uniqueness, aligned with grace and wholeness. There is no kingdom to unlock, no universal path to follow, no perfect leader to show the way.

What is ours to do? Work, play, gain skills, practice, learn and thrive. God’s co-creation celebrates transformational relationships, not transactional control.

Cultish leaders fears collaboration and co-creation, trying to shape the world in their own narrow image as a way to contain creativity and change. Stand up to the lies that bind. When you do, you will hear your own call for leadership.

No one can lead your life as well as you can. There is no secret key to abundance or success. As Ernest Holmes said, “Already the door is open and whosoever will may enter.” ❧



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Limited Use of Limitless Principles



REV. DR. JESSE JENNINGS

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Watch him live at [Facebook.com/CreativeLife.org](https://www.facebook.com/CreativeLife.org) on Sundays at 11 a.m. CT.

For immediate prayer support, please contact World Ministry of Prayer at [CSL.org](https://www.CSL.org).

Q In the book “How to Use the Science of Mind,” Ernest Holmes writes, “The spiritual practitioner denies nothing other than wrong relationships.” What does he mean by “wrong relationships?” What is the Science of Mind opinion on relationships? Are some more important than others?

A I located the Holmes’ passage to furnish context (if anybody asks, it’s in chapter three, “Technique for Practice”). What he’s driving at is not about relationships between persons, and I’ll get to those in a minute. Rather, Holmes is referring more abstractly to mental and emotional associations, the way we attach meaning to situations and events, and especially how each of us relates to our spiritual source.

We seek to heal our sense of separation from Spirit — to be clear, not our actual separation, because there isn’t any, but our supposed, imagined separation — together with the residual anxiety this imagining provokes in us. If we’ve experienced loss and build from that not a resiliency but an expectation of perpetual disappointment, spiritual law will have no choice but to respond by corresponding, meaning we’ll tend (though seldom precisely) to manifest in accordance with our expectation. So

if, say, we’ve decided that because we’ve lost, we are simply losers, life shows up that way for us, not in punishment and certainly not in reward, but in instruction: This is the *limited* use we’ve made of a *limitless* principle, and it’s good we should know about it.

Relationships between people are beautiful, holy and the most intimate way Spirit supports us through every day. Importance is subjectively determined (I started to say “relative”). For some of us, our blood family comes first; for others, it’s our family of choice. Whatever the question, love is the answer, and we stand for equality, fellowship and kinship. Holmes offered this: “Everything in the universe is for us. Nothing is against us. We must know that everywhere we go we meet friendship, love, human interest and helpfulness. Life is ever giving of Itself.”

Souls Without Walls



Please share some impressions of how I can experience peace on Earth and goodwill toward all. They sound lovely but still so elusive.



Peace and goodwill express a hunger found within every heart. Those of the Christian faith and others who observe a secular Christmas will associate them with this season, prompted by everything from the traditional nativity of Jesus to getting together for group festivities. These concepts are not the property of any one sect, doctrine or holiday.

Let me suggest you continue to try to build heaven on Earth one step at a time with what's in front of you to do, motivated by the ancestral memory of the dimension from which we all incarnated.

You've heard it said, "There's a place where nothing has ever been wrong." That place in consciousness is our spiritual home, and we came here to further elaborate on it, yet it's been here, too, all along, unconfined by time or space.

Your journey is really about present circumstances, since reality is happening right now. All time occurs at once, although Ernest Holmes rightly observed it's impossible to wrap our minds around this idea, so he repeatedly reminded us, "Immortality is now." This very minute, we're living in all the time that's ever existed and in all the space there ever was. We are each a soul without walls.

Real peace, not just the quieting of conflict, belongs to us all and emanates from within. Therefore, all the peace and harmony you seek to give and to receive are available right now, and you start where you are.

How are you doing right now? Are you excited about your life right now? Are you willing to get up every day and do your very best at what is before you now? If not, what appears to stand in the way? What can be studied, understood, embraced or released for you to feel fully alive in this moment? And are you willing for each part of this to happen? ❀

"Immortality is now," Ernest Holmes reminds us.

This very minute, we're living in all the time that's ever existed and in all the space there ever was. We are each a soul without walls.

DAILY GUIDES

DECEMBER 2024 BY REV. KRIS ALEXANDER

Heaven
is a practice,
not a promise.

— ALOK

Artwork by Little Perfect Stock



REV. KRIS ALEXANDER

This month, my inspiration for the Daily Guides came from our quest for authenticity and balance, while seeking to be radically gentle and kind. These Guides draw deeply from our incredible planet and the theology of eco-spirituality, finding profound lessons in nature that can guide us to set healthy boundaries and create a world that works for all.

Rev. Kris Alexander is a meta-minister of Soul Evolution Collaborative, the Global Themes coordinator for CSL and the curriculum development specialist for Circles, USA. She is a visionary catalyst, pioneering the path of possibility and social transformation through universal principles. As a spiritual alchemist and global change-agent, she unapologetically embraces her role as a truth-teller. She dedicates herself to exploring the intersection between the mystical and the mundane, together with the sacred and the profane. With a remarkable ability to hold paradoxes and perceive life from multiple perspectives, she champions the power of honest, love-infused communities. To dive deeper into her insights and explore her body of work, visit her website at RevKris.org.

Unleash Your Creativity

Comparison kills creativity. There is room for you. Nobody can do it with your voice, with your experience, with your insight.

— Karen Walrond

I do not think we should make such a claim to divinity that we forget we are human, for our humanity proclaims the creativity of the Divine.

— Ernest Holmes, “Know Yourself,” page 88.2

Diving deeply into my spirituality seems to unleash my creativity. The two go hand in hand. We often think of creativity as something only some people have, but the truth is we are all naturally creative beings. Creativity shows up in every moment, aspect, demonstration, manifestation and thought. There’s no escaping our inherent creativity.

Since we already are incredibly creative, maximizing this power is more about raising our awareness of what already exists than it is about growth or potential. We always are creating and forever artists, yet creating art with intentionality and boldness requires courage. It’s truly challenging to put ourselves out there and risk everything for our imagination and intention. This is the call of each day: to be more intentional and bolder in the lives we create, both individually and collectively.

Every day, I choose to see my creativity in everything I do, whether creating art, making breakfast, cleaning the house, handling paperwork or spending time with friends. My whole life is a creative endeavor as a spiritual being, just as each person expresses their creativity in everything they do. Therefore, a conversation is simply a co-creative project.

Embrace your creativity by recognizing the truth: You are a divine creative being.

AFFIRMATION

Creativity flows through me like a vibrant river, turning everyday moments into extraordinary works of art.

Befriend Fear

When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.

— Audre Lorde

We must believe there is within us a pattern of living beyond all confusion, beyond all fear, and that it is here and now because the Universe in which we live is here and now.

— Ernest Holmes, “Creative Living,” page 70.1

Fear. That four-letter word often treated like a swear word. I’ve discovered that when I lean into my fear and ask what it’s trying to show me, fear transforms from a dreaded enemy into a friend. Fear is a natural human emotion. It keeps us safe, reminds us when we’re stepping out of our comfort zone and points to our unhealed past hurts. It’s not something to be afraid of, but something to embrace.

I often find myself so wrapped up in fearing the future that I forget all the good I have. Then, if the scary thing happens, it’s almost never as bad as I imagined. I’ve spent a lot of time being afraid of things that didn’t happen, weren’t that bad, were actually great or, in the worst-case scenarios, I got through with some messy grace and support.

As we work on releasing our fear, we also need to consider the other side of the coin: forgiving ourselves for the times we let our fear stop us — all those times we didn’t push through, made decisions out of alignment or just straight up made mistakes. It’s a lot easier for me to hear fear without acting on it when I am not busy being angry at my past self. She really did the best she could.

When fear arises, I invite you to lean in the way you would lean into a friend when they whisper to you. What is the message? What is the gift? How is fear stepping in and supporting you today?

AFFIRMATION

I listen to fear’s whispers and uncover its secret gifts and lessons.

Extreme Self-Care

If you want to live an authentic, meaningful life, you need to master the art of disappointing and upsetting others, hurting feelings and living with the reality that some people just won't like you. It may not be easy, but it's essential if you want your life to reflect your deepest desires, values and needs.

— Cheryl Richardson, “The Art of Extreme Self-Care: Transform Your Life One Month at a Time”

The mind must get a degree of conviction of peace greater than the appearance of confusion, broader than the confusion, and rest in that conviction.

— Ernest Holmes, “The Power of an Idea,” page 55.3

This holiday season, I focus on self-care. Many of us find it all too easy to let this “most wonderful time of the year” become a stress-filled marathon of trying to please everyone, attend every event and push ourselves to the limit while pretending to be nothing but joyful.

Whether or not you celebrate the holidays, you undoubtedly share in the common struggle to balance expectations, obligations and self-care. I choose a different approach, allowing myself to feel and express a full range of emotions. I give myself space to grieve for those who aren't with us, to rest rather than overcommit, to prioritize spending quality time with loved ones over chasing material concerns. I aim to move through this season — and every season — with intention and care, rather than rushing from one obligation to the next.

I invite you to join me in this shift. Let's transform our mentality from one of rigid expectations and obligations to one of gentleness, love and self-care. By focusing on what truly matters and allowing ourselves to be present with our feelings, we can create more meaningful, authentic and fulfilling experiences, no matter the time of year.

AFFIRMATION

I honor my need for rest and choose intention, care and gentleness over endless obligations.

The Inner Tapestry of Life

God depends on us. It is through us that God is achieved.

— André Gide

The reason no person has yet fully plumbed the depths of their own mind lies in the fact that their mind merges with the Universal, and we can never encompass the Infinite. Herein is the possibility of everlasting unfoldment, the glorious concept of an eternal emergence in ever-widening circles.

— Ernest Holmes, "Living Without Fear, page 94

The idea of an inner life makes me think of a myriad of amazing movies that have depicted people's inner thoughts, imaginations and minds. "Inception," "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," "The Matrix." I could go on and on. Each of us has a rich inner landscape that puts all of these movies, no matter how amazing, to shame.

The deeper into my own mind I choose to dive, the more I discover who I am and the more compassion and understanding I have for myself. This allows me to integrate all the aspects of myself — the loving, messy, complex, funny, serious, joyful, sad, beautiful and ugly — that come together to complete the whole picture. Luckily for us, we are individualized expressions of Infinity, and so no matter how deep we dive into ourselves, there will always be more to explore.

Our inner worlds are vast, ever-changing landscapes filled with untapped potential, wounds and scars, and boundless creativity. When we explore these inner realms, we unlock new levels of self-awareness and self-acceptance. This inner journey enriches our understanding of ourselves while also enhancing our ability to connect deeply with others.

By embracing the full spectrum of our inner experiences, we create a more compassionate, holistic view of ourselves. This self-acceptance radiates outward, allowing us to authentically and wholly engage with the world. Each dive into our inner life brings us closer to the truth of our being, revealing the infinite layers of our existence.

AFFIRMATION

I explore the vast landscape of my inner world,
uncovering and integrating the infinite layers
of my existence with delight and wonder.

Ecological Consciousness

*Remember you are water. Of course you leave salt trails.
Of course you are crying. Flow.*

– adrienne maree brown, “Emergent Strategy:
Shaping Change, Changing Worlds”

The universe is abundant, unlimited in every respect. If it were not unlimited, it would have depleted itself long, long ago. ... Instead, what do we find? ... The grains of sand on the beaches are innumerable. The leaves on the trees continue to multiply. Nature is lavish, abundant, extravagant.

– Ernest Holmes, “Discover a Richer Life,” page 54.1

As I pack for a trip to the beach, I think about how the ocean makes me feel more connected, more divine, more sacred and calmer than anywhere else in the world. To me, it's so obvious, as I hear the waves crash and watch the abundance of life at the shore, that this is my ancestral home. All of life originated in the water, and there is a tiny part of me that remembers this truth.

This aspect of me is the home of my ecological consciousness, the place that whispers to me about my sacred connection to this planet, to the life on it and to the universe as a whole.

So often we say that we are spiritual beings having a human experience, and yet that phrase doesn't fully do us justice. It separates the spiritual from the physical in a way that suggests the two aren't one and the same. Nature calls us to return to our spiritual roots that exist *because* we are human, not *despite* being human. We are simultaneously 100% human and 100% a divine paradox of wholeness.

Nature is where the lines between the spiritual and the physical blur, and we remember that, truly, it is all one.

AFFIRMATION

The whispers of nature remind me that I am an integral part of this planet, a living testament to the unity of the physical and spiritual.

The Comfort of Bees

Maybe sometimes we don't need to grasp at comfort within difficulty; maybe sometimes we are just uncomfortable.

— Lyanda Lynn Haupt, "Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature and Spirit"

Each is a center of divine love. Where do we first learn to express this? In our home ... The same idea is extended to the community, to the nation and to the world, until we finally learn to feel that we are a part of life, that we belong to the world in which we live and to the universe... .

— Ernest Holmes, "A New Design for Living," page 167

I have been thinking about the idea of comfort. Many of us have been taught that our individual comfort is a goal, but honestly, I don't think that's true.

The other day, I was walking barefoot through our yard and was stung by a bee on the bottom of my foot. It was unpleasant, to say the least. But after icing my foot and accepting that I was probably going to be tired, I began wondering: What was the alternative? If I had been wearing shoes, surely more comfortable for me, I wouldn't have felt the bee's warning, and the bee likely would not have survived. Was her life worth my comfort? I don't believe so.

Of course, I am not suggesting we all run around barefoot stepping on bees and throwing caution to the wind, but I am offering a moment of retrospection. As you look around, are there things in your life providing comfort to you at the expense of another life? It can be hard to discern both the source of our belongings and the relative suffering of those who made or delivered them. It is an interesting question, isn't it?

As I move away from thinking that I have the privilege of comfort above all else, I gently look around at my life and the things in it. What insignificant comforts can I release to allow all life to flourish? Where can I shift my mindset and way of life to support a world that works for all?

AFFIRMATION

In releasing my attachment to personal comfort, I open the door to deeper compassion and a more harmonious existence with all beings.

Your Spiritual Superpower

Treasure your curiosity and nurture your imagination.

— Shirley Ann Jackson

The real secret is that everything moves in circles. Everything bends back upon itself. What goes out must return. What is embodied within will complete its own circle, and if we wish to enlarge our experience, we must increase our capacity to understand, to feel, to embody and to know.

— Ernest Holmes, “Living the Science of Mind,” page 206.1

Did you know you have a superpower? Now, don't get too excited about your newfound power, because it's a superpower we each can cultivate: the power of curiosity. The world around us teems with beauty, potential, wonder and endless mysteries. We can choose to move through our lives by rote, going about our daily activities as though every day is the same, or we can step into curiosity, choosing to open our minds and experience all this amazing life has to offer.

By choosing curiosity in every moment, even the seemingly mundane, we become aware of the Divine showing up in every aspect of life. This then allows us to fully embrace the possibilities that exist, and suddenly our lives, regardless of what is happening, become miraculous occasions for us to enjoy, rather than things to tolerate. We move from surviving to thriving.

Curiosity drives knowledge, learning, innovation and growth. It causes us to move past our fears, step out of our comfort zones and peek around the corners of the unknown. Curiosity indicates we truly are alive.

I love the saying, “Curiosity killed the cat,” because the full saying finishes with, “but satisfaction brought it back.” Yes! I love that feeling of satisfaction when I learn something new, discover what I wanted to know and lean into the unknown until, in a flash of insight, it suddenly becomes known. There's something absolutely magical about the “aha!” that follows a discovery. Embrace your superpower and lean into curiosity.

AFFIRMATION

I am a spiritual superhero wielding curiosity to open my mind and heart, allowing me to learn, grow and innovate.

Asking good questions is half of learning.

— Elijah Muhammad

The answer to every question is within us because we are within Spirit, and Spirit is an indivisible whole. The solution to every problem is within us.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Science of Mind," page 365.2

If you've ever spent time with toddlers, you probably know that their favorite question is, "Why?" Why is the sky blue? Why do I have to put on pants? Why does the blender make that noise? Why do I have to pick up my toys? Why do we take baths? The questions seem endless until around their fourth birthdays.

Humans are naturally curious creatures. We want to understand what's happening in our lives, and toddlers offer the perfect blend of wanting to know everything and having almost no life experience to draw from.

Toddlers' caregivers eventually tire of the questions and respond with something like, "Because I said so!" or "Just because." I know that second one was my go-to when I was exhausted and my son wanted answers to life's great mysteries. He also made me realize how much I don't know, how often I just accept things and how complacent I can be. Toddlers are excellent mirrors, reflecting all the unconscious parts of ourselves.

When my son asked questions I couldn't answer, I took the time to find the answers, often googling queries like, "Why do koalas only eat eucalyptus leaves?" or "Why do ducks quack?" As he learned, I learned, too. Toddlers are remarkable teachers. They remind us to ask questions, not to become complacent with the amazing world around us, to seek knowledge continually and to slow down and find answers.

I invite you to join me in reigniting the sense of wonder and curiosity you had as a child.

AFFIRMATION

I continually seek knowledge and understanding, slowing down to experience the amazing world around me.

Self-Love Journey

There are at least three ways to love you: as you were, as you are, as you will be. I love you. That means I choose all three.

— Alexis Pauline Gumbs, “Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals”

Love is the lodestone of life, the great and supreme reality. Love is the highest gift of heaven, the greatest good on Earth and the treasure of all our search. It is the end and aim of everything.

— Ernest Holmes, “365 Science of Mind,” page 82.1

During my journey of self-love, I’ve been reflecting on the way our bodies change. Even when I think I finally reached the pinnacle of self-love, I inevitably wake up the next morning with another weird chin hair, random back pain or a giant zit on my face. No matter how much I love my body, it’s going to continue to age and change. This is part of why self-love is a journey.

On top of the societal soup of marketing, messaging, people, products and social media that suggests self-hate is the norm, we’re trying to love something that is constantly shifting, moving and changing right in front of us.

Love is both a noun and a verb. Just as I don’t expect those I love to stay exactly the same, I don’t expect my body to remain the same either. Love, then, becomes a conscious choice to show up, no matter what happens. I love my body no matter how it changes or if it no longer works the way it once did.

This body is *mine*, and it’s the only one I’ll get in this lifetime, so I choose to unconditionally love it, just as it unconditionally loves me. Embracing changes with compassion and acceptance allows me to appreciate this amazing vessel that carries me through life. I honor the evolving nature of my body and my journey of self-love.

AFFIRMATION

I consistently *choose* to love my incredible body unconditionally, embracing its changes with compassion as I move through the phases of my life.

The Body Cha-Cha

I touch my own skin, and it tells me that before there was any harm, there was miracle.

— adrienne maree brown, “Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good”

The body of the universe cannot help changing. This is what constitutes the eternal activity of Spirit within Itself; the Spirit passing into form — creation eternally going on.

— Ernest Holmes, “The Science of Mind,” page 100.2

Sometimes I have what I call a “rough body” day or week. This can be anything from poor body image to feeling unwell to having mental health challenges. This happens to all of us. We can’t love and feel amazing in our bodies 100% of the time. Yet we tend to have this idea, especially in New Thought, that we *should* be able to think our way into always feeling great.

I’ve been working on accepting the range of ways my body and mind feel from day to day, moment to moment. Some days, I feel like Wonder Woman, able to accomplish anything asked of me. Other days, I find simply doing my spiritual practice to be nearly unmanageable. This is a natural human experience, and yet I still view one way of being as better than the other.

Learning to listen to my body makes it harder to push through those difficult days without resting. However, there tend to be fewer of these days because my body can trust me to rest when needed. My body and I are in a dance together, asking for and meeting our needs together.

Our dance isn’t perfect. I get frustrated when I think we are dancing the cha-cha, and all of a sudden my body wants to switch to a waltz or to leave the dance floor altogether. But we’ve been dancing together enough to realize that when we move and flow together, everything gets done in divine timing. This way of living requires deeper intentionality, but it is definitely worth it. Will you dance with me?

AFFIRMATION

I cherish the dance of trust between my body and me,
allowing us to move together in divine timing.

Stamp of Approval

If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive.

— Audre Lorde

God in the midst of me approves of me.

— Ernest Holmes, “A Holmes Reader on Change,” page 14

Approval is a tricky thing. We're raised to seek it from those around us. Our parents taught us how to behave and responded with approval or disapproval. Teachers had expectations and their approval — or lack of it — came with positive or negative consequences. On the playground, we quickly learned how to interact with other children to fit in, creating a hierarchy of popularity that persisted into middle school, high school and beyond.

However, we rarely discuss our own approval. We spend so much time seeking validation from family, friends, coworkers, bosses and even strangers that we often overlook whether we approve of ourselves. Despite it being the most important, self-approval is often last on our list.

In my younger years, I constantly reshaped myself to fit an ideal. With each move, job change or hobby, I crafted plans to be the perfect version of myself — happier, thinner, quieter, more peaceful, more popular, less weird, less nerdy, more organized and definitely prettier. Yet, after a few days or weeks, I would revert to my old (and authentic) self.

It took me a long time to realize I needed to stop focusing on what I thought I should be based on others' approval and instead discover my own values, desires and dreams. By working to become the best version of who I truly am, I found that my own approval is far more important than the world's. With my own approval at the center of my life, I have a much better chance of success.

AFFIRMATION

My own values guide my journey, and my self-approval is the compass that leads me on my true path.

Disney Princess Dream Yard

Heaven is a practice, not a promise.

— Alok

Heaven is not a place but an inward state of consciousness. It is an inward awareness of divine harmony and truth.

— Ernest Holmes, "What Religious Science Teaches," page 39.5

My spouse and I transformed our front yard into a Disney princess dream spot. We feed the birds, squirrels, deer, bugs and anyone or anything else that stops by. On any given day, our visitors include six squirrels, various bees and bugs, two deer and more than 100 birds, including sparrows, cardinals, goldfinches, tufted titmice, ravens, mourning doves and even a cheeky bluejay. Most mornings, we sit on our front porch with coffee, silently watching the world go by.

We learn so much about this secret world. Squirrels have different fur colors and personalities, and we named many of them. Birds engage in fascinating rituals, like courtship feeding, where females allow males to feed them until deciding who to mate with. We laugh as we watch male birds compete for the attention of a particularly attractive female.

This morning, despite seeing hundreds of sparrows daily, I noticed a bird with a different pattern and personality. When we looked it up, we discovered a new fox sparrow had joined us.

This morning ritual is a cherished part of my day. By simply observing, I learned so much about these ordinary critters. I discovered that there truly is no such thing as an ordinary creature in the beauty and creativity of nature. Every moment is extraordinary, and I'm grateful for the chance to experience it through intentional stillness and attention.

AFFIRMATION

Through intentional stillness, I connect with the magic of the ordinary, discovering the profound in the everyday.

Leveling Up and Showing Up

We dismiss / Their Concern / With a well-rehearsed / "I'm fine" / While searching / For strength / To inhale / One more time.

— J. Warren Welch

Believing that life is God in action, we must accept Its processes with a firm conviction that, in the long run, all things will work together for good. Resistance brings contraction; cooperation brings expansion.

— Ernest Holmes, "Richer Living," page 296.1

Emotions. Can't live with them, can't live without
 Actually, we have no choice but to live with them, right?
 When I first got into New Thought, people drilled into my brain that I had to be happy all the time. Something goes wrong? Just be happy. Need money? Just think positive thoughts. Relationship challenges? Just don't focus on it. Life falling apart? Fake it till you make it.

Many people tell me they only feel like they are truly practicing Science of Mind teachings when they are positive, upbeat, happy and life is going well ... or they can fake it. Otherwise, they sit at home, frantically avoiding emotions and situations, pretending everything is OK while falling apart on the inside. It reminds me of the cartoon dog sitting in the middle of a flaming building, remarking to himself, "This is fine," with a slightly terrified smile.

To me, this has always been counterintuitive. When things, in fact, are *not* fine, that is when we have the opportunity to fully lean into our teachings. Emotions happen. Life happens. Things happen to us. We can't control every single thing that shows up on planet Earth and in our awareness.

What we can do is decide how to respond, what to focus on and how to shift our perspective. When life is hard, lean into the messy emotions, tough situations and challenging relationships with the full gusto of this teaching. You won't always get it right, but you can show up.

AFFIRMATION

When life is hard, I lean into the mess and challenges,
 while staying grounded in spiritual truth.

Vulnerability as a Bridge

The difficult thing is that vulnerability is the first thing I look for in you and the last thing I'm willing to show you. In you, it's courage and daring. In me, it's weakness.

— Brené Brown

If we can bind ourselves together reverently, in love and compassion, in mutual tolerance and understanding, under the cohesive powers of the universal law of good and the beneficence of a divine and universal Presence, then shall we be able ... to lead the world down the pathway of a new enlightenment.

— Ernest Holmes, Science of Mind magazine, January 1991, page 7

Vulnerability, ugh. Anyone else have that immediate reaction, or is it just me? It's not that I don't see the value of vulnerability. I do. It's just that sometimes, I'd rather not. Choosing to show up vulnerably, to bring our whole heart to a situation and to be willing to be hurt in the name of staying open can be exhausting. Yet, the benefits greatly outweigh the drawbacks. Yes, it is more work. Yes, it can be tiring. Yes, it takes great courage. But in doing so, we allow others to show up with authenticity, creating brave and safe spaces for connection and wholehearted living. Isn't that what life is all about?

We often spend so much time armoring ourselves against the difficult parts of life, yet we honor and feel compassion when someone else shows us their vulnerability. I see it often in New Thought. We've somehow decided that these teachings mean we can force our lives to always be good, that we can avoid any heartbreak, challenges or hurt with the power of our thoughts. But it doesn't work that way. Life happens — good, bad and everything in between. Our job isn't to always be positive and avoid the messy parts. Our job is to show up to all of it with courage, perspective and love.

Let's embrace our vulnerability and let it be a bridge to deeper connections and richer experiences. In our openness, we find true strength and authentic living.

AFFIRMATION

I choose to bring my whole heart to every situation, knowing that vulnerability fosters brave and safe spaces for others to be authentic.

Hit Your Reset Button

The distinction that must be repeated as many times as necessary is this: We are not resting to be productive. We are resting simply because it is our divine right to do so.

— Tricia Hersey, “Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto”

We should believe that God is the invisible Partner in our lives and affirm that Divine Love goes before us and prepares the way.

— Ernest Holmes, “365 Science of Mind,” page 13.1

I love naps. I really do. They’re one of my go-to self-care activities when I feel stressed, overwhelmed, confused or frustrated. Stepping away for a 20-minute (or sometimes two-hour) nap is like hitting the reset button. It’s the human equivalent of, “Have you tried turning it off and on again?” I wake up from these reset periods with renewed energy, optimism and often the solution to whatever was on my mind.

There’s a reason the final step of spiritual mind treatment is release. If we never let anything go or take a break, there’s no space for Spirit to work Its magic. Our brains and bodies thrive on alternating between work and rest.

The rest and release phases of life are just as crucial to productivity and progress as the work phases. In fact, research now shows that working less can lead to accomplishing more. It might seem counterintuitive because it goes against what we’ve been taught, but it’s true. A balanced life, with equal parts work, rest and play, is best for our health, productivity and joy.

When is the last time you took a nap?

AFFIRMATION

Rest is my personal reset button, helping me approach challenges with a fresh outlook and optimism.

Live Your Passion and Purpose

The quality of our lives is not measured by the amount of time we spend in a state of perfection.

— Emily Nagoski, Ph.D., “Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle”

It seems that humanity exists for the purpose of self-expression. There appears to be no other reason or excuse for our being.

— Ernest Holmes, “Freedom from Stress,” page 24

I want to put a widely spread myth to rest. I often hear people say, “If you love what you’re doing, you’ll have all the energy you ever need. You will never get tired. You won’t need breaks. You’ll never work a day in your life.” I am calling B.S.

There are a couple of reasons this myth is dangerous. First, you can be doing something you absolutely love and are passionate about, and anytime it gets challenging or tiring, you will quit. You will believe it is the wrong path for you. Second, this approach perpetuates burn out, poor boundaries and an unhealthy work/life balance.

The truth? Work is hard. Life is hard. Passion is hard.

I *love* ministry. I know I am in the perfect place, offering my gifts in the perfect career for me. Yet, I still set boundaries, take my sabbath and prioritize self-care. Sometimes I get tired, don’t feel like working, am uninspired and get frustrated, especially while learning something new. None of this means I am not cut out for ministry. It means I am *human*.

It is OK if you love what you do *and* it frustrates you. Or sometimes you don’t want to do it, or you set boundaries or you take breaks. In fact, passion, whether for a hobby, your career or something as yet undiscovered, *requires* breaks and boundaries to be fully realized.

Embrace your passion; it is your purpose for being here. Just don’t take it so seriously that you forget to rest and play, too.

AFFIRMATION

I release the myth that loving life means I must be tireless.
Instead, I honor my need for self-care and renewal.

Life Just Keeps Coming

Life is a chronic condition. ... I'm here to look into your gorgeous eyes and say, "Hey, there are some things you can fix and some things you can't." ... We can find beauty and meaning and truth, but there's no cure to being human. So, let's be friends on that journey. Let's be human together.

— Kate Bowler

Our experience is filled with laughter and tears, singing, dancing, praying and exalting, and sometimes falling into the depths of despair. We need to have a good-natured flexibility toward all we encounter, not fighting against life but cooperating with it.

— Ernest Holmes, "Know Yourself," page 88.2

I have news. It can be good news or bad, depending on your perspective. Or perhaps it is neither — if you can stay open.

Here's my news: *Life just keeps coming.*

There always will be moments of utter beauty, sheer ecstasy, crippling pain, heart-stopping grief, divine synchronicity and intense challenge. Sometimes they come one right after another, and sometimes they all pile up, pulling us in every direction at once.

Every time I think I've reached a plateau and found a moment of rest, something else appears, calling for my attention. In every moment, regardless of what is happening, I am at choice. I can choose to embrace the tides of life, allowing the ebb and flow of emotions and experiences to merge into a beautiful dance of joy and grace. Or I can resist, trying to fight against life's currents. Either way, life continues to move forward. Spirit always says yes, which means it doesn't matter whether we flow with It or resist; It simply agrees.

I find it much easier and a lot more enjoyable to flow with life rather than resisting it. Even if I occasionally resist, I always choose to return to flowing with the rhythm of life. How about you? Are you flowing or resisting?

AFFIRMATION

I flow with life as it comes, embracing its rhythms and dancing with the ebb and flow.

Spiritual Temper Tantrums

Never apologize for being sensitive or emotional. Let this be a sign that you've got a big heart and aren't afraid to let others see it. Showing your emotions is a sign of strength.

— Brigitte Nicole

The Divine Spirit is ever present with us, no matter where we are.

— Ernest Holmes, Science of Mind magazine, August 1971, page 17

I love watching toddlers and babies get mad. It's so easy to see the entire experience wash over them. They start by getting a little frustrated. Then they try harder at the task eluding them. When that doesn't work, they move to full-blown anger. Their faces scrunch up. They throw whatever is in their hands, stomp their feet and begin ferociously wailing. And then it's over as quickly as it began. Forgotten tears dry on their cheeks as they move on to the next activity.

What do I love about this experience? Well, aside from thinking that scrunchy baby faces are utterly adorable, I love the *presence* of the experience. Children are all in. When they're joyful, they're 100% joyful. When they're sad, they're 100% sad. When they're focused, they're 100% focused. And when they're angry? They're all in. They aren't wondering if they're justified in their anger. They have no feelings of shame or guilt. They don't try to force themselves to not be angry when they are.

And for this reason, their anger lasts only a moment before they move on. They don't repress it, hold it in, attach themselves to it or decide they're an angry person. All that judgment and overthinking is purely adult stuff.

While I don't recommend you throw down whatever is in your hands and stomp your feet, I do suggest you begin to see your anger as a part of your divinity. What is your anger telling you? What is the gift? How can you honor it by allowing it to move through you without attachment?

AFFIRMATION

I stay present to my emotions, allowing them to move through me without attachment as I listen and respond to their messages.

A Universe of Trees

Earth is so thick with divine possibility / that it is a wonder we can walk anywhere / without cracking our shins on altars.

— Barbara Brown Taylor

In the true perspective, matter is the complement of Spirit and necessary to It, and is not unreal at all. And I believe this. God's world is not a world of illusion.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Anatomy of Healing Prayer," page 174.1

I wonder what it's like to be a leaf, spending my life seeking the sun, relishing the rain and blowing gently in the breeze, part of something larger, connected through my stem, my core, my center, yet gently waving on my own. I wonder if leaves love the wind. I wonder if the leaves closest to the trunk have a deeper understanding of oneness, having felt the slight touch of direct connection. I wonder if they spend their lives telling the other leaves about this being, this divine presence they are a part of, that loves them and wants them to flourish.

Is crown shyness a moment of respect, a willingness to hold clear boundaries and witness one another from afar, or is it a form of tribalism, a concern that the other might be dangerous to them? I like to believe it is the former, that leaves teach us the beauty of boundaries when we take the time to look up.

What if God is the trunk, and we are the leaves? Is this universe a single tree in a forest? How expansive would my consciousness need to be to perceive other trees? Do the bacteria living in the trunk know of the existence of other trees?

If we are the bacteria of the universe, are we beneficial or harmful? We decide each and every day.

I choose to benefit the world I am in. I choose to make my presence a testament to the universe, to the tree I call home. What will you choose?

AFFIRMATION

I expand my consciousness, allowing this broader perspective to guide me in benefiting the planet and all life.

I feel at home in the universe and in this body.

The Body Remembers

The body remembers, the bones remember, the joints remember, even the little finger remembers. Memory is lodged in pictures and feelings in the cells themselves.

— Clarissa Pinkola Estés

Out of eternal being comes everlasting becoming.

— Ernest Holmes, “Anatomy of Healing Prayer,” page 14.2

I always have looked at this message — that the body remembers — as a warning. Any unhealed traumas, emotions, feelings, pain or problems you don’t heal become physical illness and disease in the body. You better watch out!

But now I see this as a comfort. The body remembers — yes, the pain and hurts, but also the wonderful moments, the blessings, the best times of my life. As I get older and realize there are many things I don’t remember, I can trust that those memories remain housed in my physical home, if not in my mind.

Not only does my body remember my own life, it further carries within it the memories of my ancestors, those related to me by blood and by history. You know those amazing queer folks who changed the world by being authentically themselves, like Marsha P. Johnson and Harvey Milk? Their power, authenticity and bravery are stored in my DNA. My great-great-grandparents’ love for one another and their children lives on in my bloodstream. The fact that my body is powerful enough, *spiritual* enough to know the history of humanity without my consciousness being aware is an incredible miracle, one I can’t quite grasp.

What I know is that this means I can cut my body a little slack, because housing all those memories takes a lot of work.

AFFIRMATION

Within my body, the echoes of history and the whispers of ancestors weave a powerful tapestry of strength and grace.

The Sun Is Present, Always

This complicated moment on Earth is no time to retreat into the simplistic metaphor of “bringing light.” The hope we must maintain, the imagination we must put to use and the physical health we require all ask of us a more intricate wisdom.

— Lyanda Lynn Haupt, “Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature and Spirit”

God, the Divine, never had but one Son. This Son is being born at every season, in every place, through all races and in all nations. Every birth is a divine event. Every conception is immaculate.

— Ernest Holmes, Science of Mind magazine, December 1962, page 48

Today is the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere, a time that reminds me of the origins of the Christmas tree. In ancient times, pagans brought evergreens into their homes during winter to brighten their spaces, celebrate the solstice and remind themselves that the sun would return.

I find it meaningful to remember that, just as the sun is always present, with its light obscured only by the Earth’s rotation, Spirit is always within me, even if my perception and awareness fluctuate.

Recognizing our inherent wholeness, especially when life feels lacking — such as during the dim light of the winter solstice — can be challenging. Yet, wholeness is our true essence, even if it doesn’t always manifest as what we deem “good.” It might sometimes appear as incomplete, messy, painful or difficult. In such moments, remembering that wholeness equals oneness, and oneness is a spiritual truth, can offer comfort. Perhaps, during tough times, we can find ways to metaphorically bring in a tree and celebrate the balance of all experiences, trusting in the continuous presence of Spirit within us.

What are you reminding yourself of today?

AFFIRMATION

I honor the wholeness of my being, recognizing that
I encompass both light and dark, joy and pain.

Your God Positioning System

SUNDAY DECEMBER 22, 2024

The land knows you, even when you are lost.

— Robin Wall Kimmerer, “Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants”

We can be certain that there is an Intelligence in the Universe to which we may come, that will guide and inspire us, a love that overshadows.

— Ernest Holmes, “The Science of Mind,” page 153.5

This morning, my GPS took me on a completely bizarre route home. I could see the road I thought I should have been on and knew there was no traffic or logical reason for the detour the GPS insisted I take.

As I sternly informed her of exactly how I felt about her inability to give proper directions, I remembered my “God Positioning System” and burst out laughing. There it was — a gentle reminder that we really do need to surrender, relax and trust that there is a higher perspective guiding us.

In the midst of my mini-rant, I realized that sometimes life’s unexpected detours exist as opportunities in disguise. Maybe I just needed to take the scenic route to enjoy my morning errands a bit longer, or maybe I was being set up to be in the perfect time and perfect place in the future.

In that moment, I embraced the unexpected, finding humor in the deviation and trusting that even in the twists and turns, there’s a purpose and a bit of beauty to be found.

How is your God Positioning System guiding you today?

AFFIRMATION

I allow God’s Positioning System to guide me on my journey, trusting that every twist, turn and bump is for my highest good.

Time to Play

Laughter is our way of letting the universe know we agree with the passage of time.

— Ross Gay, “Inciting Joy: Essays”

All creation is a manifestation of the delight of God.

— Ernest Holmes, “365 Science of Mind,” page 214.1

I have a few questions for you:

- When was the last time you played a game?
- Who did you play it with?
- What game was it? Was it a serious game like Rummi-kub or Phase 10 or Bananagrams (some of my favorites), or was it a silly game like Mousetrap, Twister or Cards Against Humanity?

I personally think God loves to laugh and be playful. Of course I do, because I am God, and I love to laugh and be playful. Even though silliness is a core part of my personality, I sometimes get so caught up in my to-do list, the serious business of living and working really hard to “get closer to Spirit,” whatever that means, that I forget to laugh and play for whole days at a time.

Playfulness is a reminder that life doesn’t always have to be so serious. In these moments of fun and laughter, we reconnect with our lighter side and with each other. So let’s not miss out on these opportunities to embrace joy.

God is just waiting for an invitation to play with us, so let’s get out the ol’ Twister mat and spin the wheel. I’ll go first — right hand on red.

AFFIRMATION

I invite playfulness into my life, knowing that laughter and joy are divine expressions of Spirit.

Shift, Change, Grow

Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.

— Zora Neale Hurston

We reach God in others by reaching out from God within the self.

— Ernest Holmes, “Words That Heal Today,” page 25.1

Relationships are hard. There, I said it. We can stop pretending they should be easy. Each of us brings our own history, beliefs, mood, thoughts, ideas, distractions and more to every interaction.

I’m generally kind and patient when running errands, but sometimes my background stuff affects the present moment. The other day, I went to the post office to drop off some letters. The postal worker told me it would cost an additional \$0.40 per envelope because of the wax seals. Not a huge expense, but it was my second attempt at mailing these letters, I was in a hurry, hadn’t slept well and really didn’t want to add extra stamps. I huffed a bit and stomped off.

Then I realized I’d been unfair. It’s not her fault that wax seals require extra handling. She was just doing her job. I went back, apologized and thanked her for her help. She visibly relaxed and asked me to bring the letters back to her so she could personally ensure my envelopes were properly sorted.

Despite my rudeness, a brief acknowledgment and apology were enough for this woman to go above and beyond for me. Instead of being annoyed or ignoring my apology, she allowed my humanity to touch hers, and we both left that interaction feeling better.

Relationships are hard. This one lasted less than a minute but was just as important as any other. Every moment and interaction connects us to ourselves, each other and our shared humanity. Relationships are about being willing to be vulnerable and continue to shift, change and grow.

AFFIRMATION

I embrace the shared humanity in everyone I encounter, allowing each relationship to deepen my growth and vulnerability. I open myself to being transformed by every connection I make.

The Sacred Gift of Pausing

Productivity should not look like exhaustion. The concept of laziness is a tool of the oppressor.

— Tricia Hersey, “Rest Is Resistance: A Manifesto”

As you learn to release all your burdens to the right action of God, you will find that everything falls into its proper place. You let your problems slip away from you, realizing that a Power greater than you are — and a Presence that is within you — is ready, willing and able to guide you in all ways.

— Ernest Holmes, “Thoughts Are Things,” page 89.1

Let’s talk about pausing. As children, most of us didn’t have the ability to pause the TV. During commercials, we would run and do whatever needed to be done — go to the bathroom, take out the trash, do the dishes and grab some popcorn. It all had to be done in that finite time, with us rushing around to finish before we missed any key elements of the show.

Today’s technology allows us to pause anything at any time. The beauty of the pause button means we can take time to do whatever we need to do without missing out on important plot lines or game-changing plays.

In life, the pause button is just as important. We’ve become so accustomed to rushing around, completing our to-do lists at a dizzying pace, that we forget to pause. When something challenging comes up, when emotions arise or when we feel confused or upset, we can take time to just pause.

This gives us the ability to respond to a situation rather than react to it, allowing us to choose how we show up in life instead of acting from old beliefs or past experiences. We can trust that when we pause, we have plenty of time to process and move through our thoughts, emotions and ideas before choosing to press play and creatively respond to what life puts before us.

That small pause button on the remote may just be the most important one of all.

AFFIRMATION

I honor the pause as a powerful tool, allowing myself the space to breathe, reflect and respond with intention.

Highlight Reel or Behind the Scenes?

In another life, I would have really liked just doing laundry and taxes with you.

—Waymond, “Everything, Everywhere, All At Once”

The Divine Presence is already what you are, and It contains the possibility of all joy in living.

— Ernest Holmes, “Thoughts Are Things,” page 87.1

To me, one of the misrepresentations of Science of Mind is the idea that because we are always in a space of creating — our reality, our life, our experiences, our body, our circumstances — we have somehow failed if we have anything less than what society deems an amazing life. On social media, it seems like every time we turn around, someone is posting perfectly posed pictures in some amazing location, eating incredible food, surrounded by smiling friends and family.

We can spend so much time looking at those highlight reels that we forget what happens behind the scenes to create that reality. Those picture-perfect moments don't just happen; they take a lot of work. And if we aren't careful, we can begin to compare our behind-the-scenes lives to others' highlight reels and then think there is something wrong with our own everyday life.

The life you live right now is the perfect one, even in all of its imperfect, messy, simple, boring glory. You don't have to save every bee, climb all the mountains, check everything off an infinite bucket list, attend every event you are invited to or constantly pursue your dreams to be living on purpose.

Sometimes living on purpose looks like curling up on the couch with a loved one, maybe a pet or two, with a bowl of popcorn to watch “Hocus Pocus.” Now excuse me. I have somewhere I need to be.

AFFIRMATION

I honor the quiet, ordinary moments as deeply as the extraordinary ones, knowing they contribute to my life's richness.

Gratitude in Action

God has blessed you. Therefore, let your gratitude be good living for [Its] glory.

— Lailah Gifty Akita

Real giving is the givingness of the self. A kind word, a thoughtful act, perhaps just a smile can help lighten the burdens of others.

— Ernest Holmes, “Ideas for Living,” page 55

I often struggle to maintain a gratitude practice, finding it hard to genuinely feel thankful during my nightly reflections. I know, clutch the pearls! A minister admitting she doesn’t spend every night in rapturous thanksgiving for every moment of the day? Lying in bed, however, I mostly feel sleepy rather than grateful. A recent conversation with a fellow minister offered a fresh perspective: Gratitude works best when paired with action. It’s not just about listing what we’re thankful for but also using that gratitude to guide our actions.

Inspired by this insight, I’ve revamped my gratitude practice. Instead of merely listing things I’m grateful for, I now ask myself four questions:

1. Who or what inspired me today?
2. Who or what brought me comfort today?
3. Who or what brought me joy today?
4. What action does my gratitude inspire?

Gratitude is more than a nightly ritual. It is a guide for purposeful action. As we reflect on what we’re thankful for, let’s also consider how our gratitude can drive us to make a positive impact. In doing so, we become part of the reciprocal nature of gratitude, both giving and receiving in every moment.

I guess I am a gratitude practicing gal after all. Will you join me in this more intentional approach to gratitude?

AFFIRMATION

I transform my gratitude into purposeful action,
enriching my life and the lives of others.

Closet of (Plant) Skeletons

My green thumb came only as a result of the mistakes I made while learning to see things from the plant's point of view.

— Fred Dale

Failure does not mean the loss of something. Failure occurs only if the loss of that thing takes our enthusiasm, our courage, our zest for life, our faith, our conviction and our happiness from us. That is failure indeed.

— Ernest Holmes, "The Power of an Idea," page 56.3

When I think about failure, the first thing that always comes to mind is plants. I love plants. When I lived in Napa, I had hundreds of them, mostly succulents that were always blooming and growing in amazing ways. People would see my collection and inevitably say, "Oh, I wish I had a green thumb!" Or they might even say, "I have a black thumb; I kill everything."

I always told them that this beautiful collection of plants had a closet full of skeletons. Literally. Learning how to grow plants and support them in thriving requires a lot of accidentally killing plants. I don't know a single person with a green thumb who hasn't killed a lot of plants. It is part of the process.

Yet, despite the fact that I have killed dozens of plants, I still consider myself a gardener. This isn't about the failures; it is about the successes. Both the knowledge from the failures and the beauty from the successes are necessary to have an amazing garden. Every failure leads me forward, teaching me valuable lessons that help me grow and thrive, just like my plants.

What have been your most important failures?

AFFIRMATION

Just as a garden flourishes through both its blooms and its withered leaves, I embrace both my successes and failures as vital parts of my growth.

Our Intertwined Roots

Don't believe the lie of individual trees, each a monument to its own self-made success. A forest is an interdependent community. Resources are shared, and life in isolation is a death sentence.

— Becky Chambers, “To Be Taught, If Fortunate”

This “I Am” that is within us is God, the living Spirit Almighty, branching out through us into self-expression. The tree of life flourishes in our experience when watered at its roots with the quiet contemplation of the union of the soul with its Source.

— Ernest Holmes, “Pray and Prosper,” page 36.4

Let's discuss one of my favorite subjects: tree roots. Most tall, sturdy trees stay upright because of their deep roots. White oaks, walnut trees and sweet gums establish deep root systems. The shepherd's tree, native to the Kalahari Desert, has roots that can stretch down 270 feet. Wow!

But redwood trees are a fascinating exception. These ancient giants are some of the oldest and tallest trees in the world. They rise hundreds of feet into the sky in forests that smell sweet. Despite their towering height, their roots reach only about 6-1/2 feet into the ground. How is this possible?

A redwood, as scientists discovered, doesn't rely solely on its own roots. They create an elaborate, interconnected root system with other redwoods around them. They form a vast network, supporting each other through wind and storms.

I aspire to be like these trees, sending my roots into the earth while also extending them across the ground, wrapping around the roots of my friends and family, supporting them as they support me. Together, we grow tall through community, mutual aid, care, love and collaboration.

AFFIRMATION

I extend my roots of care and compassion to those around me, fostering a web of love and mutual support so we can grow together.

Inter-vulnerability Is Our Salvation

But in our inter-vulnerability is our salvation, because awareness of the mutuality of suffering impels us to search for ways to heal the whole, rather than encase ourselves in a bubble of denial and impossible individualism.

— Miriam Greenspan

In searching out the nature of the great invisible Cause back of all things ... we really are discovering our relationship to God and at the same time our relationship to each other, because we are all spiritual beings on the pathway of an eternal existence.

— Ernest Holmes, "A New Design for Living," page 37

At the risk of sounding egotistical, I'll quote myself: "The most important relationship in the world is the one that's right in front of you." This was repeated back to me in a recent conversation, and I thought, "Oooh, that's good." I often think that the only relationships worth putting my best foot forward in are the ones that are going to be around for a while — friends, family, my spouse, the grocery store clerk who's always there. These people deserve my time and attention.

But what about those I'll never see again, like the person on the other end of Apple's customer service line, the folks I pass on the road or the clerk at the gas station? They might get my grumpy, inattentive self.

As I dive deeper into the idea of inter-vulnerability, I realize that my fate is just as intertwined with the lives of people I meet only once as it is with those I see every day. My divinity is reflected in treating every relationship as the most important one while I'm in it, whether it lasts for five minutes or 50 years. If we truly embody oneness, we need to act on it with our love, time and attention — not with just our words. Every being on this planet is an individualized expression of Spirit, deserving of the best of God from me and from you.

AFFIRMATION

I cherish the importance of every relationship, knowing my kindness and presence ripple through all my connections.

A New Relationship With Me

Perhaps we should love ourselves so fiercely, / that when others see us / they know exactly how it should be done.

— Rudy Francisco

When we say that the only God we will ever know we will discover within ourselves, we do not mean that such a God is a figment and creation of our own imagination, but rather that there is an indwelling God manifest through our own personal and individual relationship to the Infinite.

— Ernest Holmes, “A New Design For Living,” page 173.2

Ah, the most important relationship of all — the one with ourselves. I spent much of my childhood wishing I were someone else: quieter, smaller, more graceful, more popular. Every year, I wrote a long list of New Year’s resolutions that I was *definitely* going to keep. I thought, “This is the year I become everything I’ve ever wanted to be.” What I didn’t realize was that all those resolutions could be replaced with just one: to love the person I am, not the person I think I should be.

Over the years, I made that shift. I no longer strive to be someone else but rather to settle more deeply into being unapologetically me. This has become my lifelong resolution. It isn’t always easy or comfortable, but it’s the only resolution I’ve ever been able to keep.

Mel White says it this way: “A few years ago I switched to an entirely different kind of New Year’s resolution. Instead of vowing to improve, I pledge to do a better job of accepting my bad habits — to stop worrying about failing to be the person I used to imagine I could be.”

This is my every day resolution, not just at the new year. I choose to embrace the awesome person I am and to continue discovering myself. In doing so, I show up authentically, in integrity and with my own approval — something that is truly priceless.

AFFIRMATION

Each day, I settle more deeply into being unapologetically me, embracing my authentic self with love and acceptance.

To Land Upright

The theme for this month is to land upright on our feet after a spinning and twirling year. Because it is an election year, a great many people are joyously happy. But just about as many are quite unhappy. What would the ancient sages say about how we should handle this?

There is one sentence that addresses how to handle this issue, and it has three possible sources in antiquity, all legendary, from three traditions: Greek, Jewish and Persian.

John O'Donohue, in his book "Walking in Wonder," wrote that the sentence is about transience and came from an ancient Greek contest about finding a sentence that was always true. Spoiler alert: It still is.

Edward Fitzgerald, though, thought it came from King Solomon, who had the sentence etched on a signet ring for the purpose of addressing both adversity and prosperity. It was to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, to make the sad happy and the happy sad.

Modern scholars tend to attribute it to a famous Sufi teacher, Farid ad-Din Attar, living a century before Rumi, who was familiar with his work.

Abraham Lincoln, in an 1859 speech, may have used the work of Attar: "It is said an Eastern monarch once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence to be ever in view, and which should be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him the words, 'And this, too, shall pass away.' How much it expresses! How chastening in the hour of pride! How consoling in the depths of affliction."

Whatever your feelings about this passing year, if you are happy, then "make hay while the sun shines." And if sad, tie a knot at the end of your rope and hang on.

It is always true that things in the visible world change, said Ernest Holmes in 1958: "The Golden Gate Bridge will someday fall down, rust out, be torn down, because something better will happen. Change is the only thing that is permanent. The only thing we can say of anything that looks static is, 'This, too, shall pass away.'" ☘



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We Stand for People, Peace and Love

*A statement from the CSL Spiritually
Motivated Social Engagement Committee*

Find me one person who is for something and against nothing, who is redeemed enough not to condemn others out of the burden of his soul ...

— ERNEST HOLMES

Holmes suggests that anytime we fight or resist something, we only cause it to grow and fester. What we resist persists, and more violence could result.

Humans tend to take sides in conflicts, creating stories about which side is right and which side is wrong based on their personal beliefs. When this happens, there is no room to see nuance, and we fail to understand suffering is not limited to one side. Rather than declaring what we are against, let us be firm about what we stand *for*.

We stand for people. All people have the right to exist in freedom, to have a home, to have food and to walk safely to school. All people have the right to live in peace and harmony. All people have the right to self-determination.

We stand for peace, the power at the heart of Divine Source. We visualize peace in the world. We can see peaceful activities in all parts of the world. We can create a spiritual chain reaction for peace.

We stand for love. Love is compassionate, kind, forgiving and holds no rancor. Love is the all-encompassing power for good in the universe.

When we stand for something, we do not stand by and do nothing. We can engage in the most powerful practice of all — affirmative prayer — to create the atmosphere to work toward what we stand for. Affirmative prayer is not inaction, ignorance or spiritual bypass.

But prayer is not enough. We must also act in the world to create positive change. To create a world that works for all, we must understand the world, not hide from it. Let's partner with organizations doing good work in the world and educate ourselves on global issues.

Holmes wrote that when praying, “[Everyone] must bring themselves to a place in mind where there is no misfortune, no calamity, no accident, no trouble or no confusion: where there is nothing but plenty, peace, power, Life and Truth.”

We offer this powerful five-step spiritual practice of sacred activism:

1. We sit in the stillness, in the silence, and allow our thoughts and emotions to bring up the intense feeling of love.
2. We stay with this feeling of love until it envelops our being.
3. We engage our imagination to see this energy of love surrounding those places where it is needed.
4. We express gratitude for the love and peace that are now present in our world.
5. We turn this love and gratitude into action in ways that bring about positive change.

Let us affirm together: I am a vessel of peace and love. I choose to radiate compassion, understanding and kindness in all my interactions. My heart is open, my mind is calm, and my spirit is at peace. I attract love, harmony and unity into my life. I spread these gifts to those around me. I am rooted and grounded in love. ☸

CSL Spiritually Motivated Social Engagement (SMSE) Committee

Dr. Soni Cantrell-Smith, spiritual leader

Dr. Sunshine Michelle Coleman, co-chair

Ayodele McClenney, RScP, co-chair

Dr. Mike McMorrow

Rev. Beth Linguri

Luisa Rivera, RScP

Rev. Obakeng Gaitate

We truly are better together. Visit CSL.org/Sacred-Activism to read our mission statement and download beneficial resources. If you have ideas or want to share ways your CSL community is engaged in sacred activism, email Communications@CSL.org. You can find a center near you at CSL.org/Map and get in on the action.

The Truth of Who You Are



MOLLY KATE BROWN, FNP-BC, is an award-winning author, a transformational coach and an integrative nurse practitioner working with consciousness medicine in her practice Suniasol Integrative Mental Health. Connect at MollyKate-Brown.com.

You are not whirring thoughts projected onto the screen of awareness, at times frenzied with uncertainty. You are not constriction in the chest or belly, or tension in the neck or shoulders associated with anxiety, deep grief or sadness. You are not doubt about your life path or who you are. You are not the belief that you've "missed the boat" or somehow, on any level, aren't enough. There is nothing wrong with you, and it is an option to metabolize mental distortions.

Doubt, uncertainty, mistrust in yourself or the Divine live in the shadows of the unconscious mind and impact experience and trajectory until illuminated. Awareness illuminates. It is an enlivening force, a powerfully healing source. As with any muscle in the body, there is a choice to use it or lose it.

Muscles must be strong to summit a high peak. It's the same with the inner landscape. Navigating big feelings requires muscles strong enough to do so. We are entirely equipped for this hero's journey.

Sadness or anxiety can result in a palpably sick feeling in the chest or stomach associated with an inner dampening. When larva travels into the cocoon to endure metamorphosis, it is highly unlikely the process is entirely comfortable. True nature is true nature. Stay the course.

To metabolize feelings, inhabit the inner landscape with the muscle of awareness without reacting to the discomfort. Visualize your physical being as a balloon. Make the awareness like the air inside of the balloon, inhabiting *all of it*. Lovingly bring it back when the mind wanders into thought. Infuse it with powerful love and trust. By doing this, mental distortions become illuminated and eventually porous. As light gets through, it informs and grows on itself. The container of being grows larger as other factors associated with illumination find their way in: hope, inspiration, peace, inner guidance and trust.

Attention is a water hose that grows the parts of the garden we water with it. Water the inspiration, hope, peace and inner knowing. The distortions disintegrate. It is OK to feel sadness or anxiety. Stay with it bravely. May the powerful life force inherent in the light of awareness reveal the divine truth within. ☸

Connection to Everything

Have you ever had a moment when you realized there was more to life than getting up each day, going about your business and doing it all again the next day?

There's something greater going on. In one transformative moment, we can have a sudden shift in consciousness that allows us to see the majesty of the life we are an integral part of. Divine Love is you, and It is me. As a glorious child of the One, we're each part of the interconnectedness of all life.

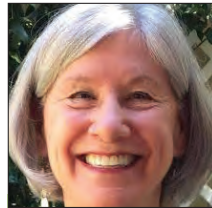
The presence of Love is alive in the sun rising over the mountains and setting on the horizon. It's the eagle swooping down to catch its breakfast and the squirrel scurrying up the trunk of a nearby tree. It's the car engine starting for our driving pleasure and the aroma of freshly brewed coffee.

The awareness that I'm connected to everything can happen at any moment. I can be completely transformed as I heal from an illness, delight in hugging a friend or embrace a new idea.

For me, the God of my understanding is in all things, at all times, in every circumstance. My prayer is to feel the divine connection just as I can feel the warmth of the sun's rays. The sun has no judgment about who's worthy of its warmth: It simply shines its light. We humans are a curious bunch. We wonder what gift we can possibly bring to the world, not realizing that we already have within us everything we could possibly need to shine the light we already are.

We're here to express our divinity in a way that is unique to us, as only we can do. We have purpose. We belong here. We matter in the world.

Today, I'll take time to be fully present in every moment. When I forget the truth of who I am, I'll turn my face toward the sun to remember I can step out of the shadows of my life to feel its warmth. It's a constant reminder that I have within me my own light. ☸



REV. JANE BEACH

was an atheist for the first 50 years of her life. Today, she is a minister, author and artist. Find her work at [Facebook.com/JaneBeach](https://www.facebook.com/JaneBeach).

WHERE
DO YOU
Want to
Land?

By MARCIA HOOTMAN

*Once you make a decision, the
universe conspires to make it happen.*

— RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Emerson's words appear on a poster displayed on the walls of many great athletes. Great athletes know that unless they decide and commit to exactly what they want to achieve, including the how and when, they won't succeed.

During the winter Olympics, we see downhill skiers awaiting their turn, sitting quietly with eyes closed. They envision and visualize the run they will soon take. With each turn on the course, even with eyes closed, their heads turn slightly.

Similarly, Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps, holder of 23 Olympic gold medals, learned to watch a mental video of his races every night before he went to sleep. Gymnasts, too, mentally go through their whole routine — step by step, leap by leap — many times before they step foot on the mat. The best of the best in every sport know visualization is one step in sticking the landing.

Athletes call this “rehearsing the performance” before their turn in the competition begins. We who study New Thought teachings call it visualization. We create vision boards, meditate on our goals and trust that Spirit will bring our dreams to pass. What we don’t remember is that although athletes use the same mental practice, they first decide exactly what they want as the end result. They specifically set their goals: “I want to finish this race 3 seconds before my closest competitor.” “I want to give the best performance of my life.” And then they take whatever steps are necessary to accomplish their goals.

STEPS TO SUCCESS

In first year Science of Mind classes, we learn the steps of spiritual mind treatment:

1. Recognition
2. Unification
3. Realization
4. Thanksgiving
5. Release

Let’s take a closer look at each of these steps.

STEP ONE: RECOGNITION

In “The Science of Mind,” Ernest Holmes writes, “Affirmative prayer is a recognition of Spirit’s omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence and a realization of humanity’s unity with Spirit.”

At times, we feel as if we are alone in our desires to be, do or have something. This first step reaffirms that this is not so. One of the often-used phrases in our teaching is, “There is a Power in the universe greater than we are, and we can use It.” That’s what recognition means. You may feel as if you are alone, but that’s not so. Recognizing the all-encompassing power of Spirit can bring a sigh of relief.

STEP TWO: UNIFICATION

Although we may think the power of God is only outside of us, Holmes reminds us, “It is also Omnipresent.” In other words, It’s always there, inside and out. Whether you are an athlete, a baker, a writer or whatever else you choose, you are never alone. Athletes go into an altered state when they compete. When the race is over, they know they didn’t succeed alone. When they are in what they call “the

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LAND?

zone," they know something inside and outside of them is allowing them to succeed.

We do the same when we pray or meditate.

STEP THREE: Realization

New Thought luminary Neville Goddard wrote, "I will' is a confession that I am not. ... Prayer is the art of assuming the feeling of being and having that which you want."

Affirmations are a big part of our teachings. But some of us may have a habit of pushing goals out into the future. "I will have." "I want." "I'm going to be." If there is something you want to have in the future, remember to state it in first person and present tense, as if it already is so. As Goddard said, "I will' is a confession that I am not."

There is another sub-step in the science of realization. A common admonition is to "pray to God and row the boat to shore." In other words, after deciding what you want, decide what steps you will take to help that happen. Prayer without action, without works, is futile.

My office walls are plastered with what we call affirmations. Some are reminders or motivational quotes. Others are goals, wants and desires. And even though I've been a student of Science of Mind and a minister for decades, there are times when I look at my wall and realize I can take down one thing or another because it's already happened.

Never claim, "I shall be that." Let all claims from now on be, "I am that I am." And take whatever steps are necessary to do what you say you want to do.

For example, last summer I woke up one morning and decided I wanted to walk the Camino de Santiago. Pilgrims walk about 10 miles a day for at least a week. I've exercised every day for 40 years, but I've never walked more than maybe a mile at a time. So I began walking more. I joined Camino Facebook groups to read about walkers' preparation and adventures. I researched training programs. It was a daily commitment of four-plus hours for me. With all my interests — golf, writing, counseling clients and playing music — I don't have an extra four hours in my day. That's when I removed all the Camino posters from my walls.

Behind every successful athlete, actor, author or dancer lie hundreds, maybe thousands, of hours spent learning and honing their craft. They hold a vision of what they desire and are willing to do whatever it takes to achieve their dreams. At times their initial dream evolves into an even better outcome.

WHERE DO YOU WANT TO LAND?

Although what dedicated professionals do may look effortless, you see it that way only because you are not witness to the steps they took to reach their peak performance. "Treat and move your feet" is not just a fun quote we use. It's a mandate for success.

Of course, the first step is to put your desire into the universe, to pray for whatever you desire. But if you are not willing take the additional steps to get you there, God is not at fault. As we know from James 2:14, "Faith without works is dead."

STEP FOUR: THANKSGIVING

Many scientific studies, including several conducted by UCLA, show that grateful people experience less depression and/or anxiety, experience less stress and sleep better, in addition to realizing other health benefits. At times, we all find it difficult to feel grateful, especially after something negative happens, but I believe there is a kernel of good in everything. I've come to realize that waking up every morning is a blessing in itself.

You get to discover your own blessings. Look around. Think. There's always something to be grateful for. In affirmative prayer, we thank whatever we call our Higher Power — God, Spirit, the Universe, Jesus, Allah, Mother Nature.

STEP FIVE: RELEASE

This is probably the most important step in affirmative prayer. We can say we desire some result, we can say we turned our desires over to God, yet we may keep taking it back. "Is it happening?" "Am I really going to achieve this?" "Did I do this correctly?"

Release is one of the most important habits to hone in life. Release negative people in our lives. Release resentment. Release doubts. Release fears. And turn all of it over to your Higher Power.

Every champion athlete possesses an intense desire to succeed. If they didn't, they would not spend most of their time perfecting their craft. Be sure what you focus on is your own desire and not what someone else desires for you. And every champion athlete believes that with the proper thoughts, healthy lives, dedicated discipline and visualization, nothing is impossible.

As followers of Science of Mind, we know Spirit is not only part of our lives, but Spirit makes all things possible. You can stick your landing, whatever that is for you, as long as you commit to naming the vision, taking the steps to get there and trusting the process. Happy landings! ✨

Build Community



**REV. DR.
BARRY EBERT**

is an associate minister and the former youth director at Mile Hi Church in Lakewood, Colorado.

A big part of our early life is about learning how to make friends and how to be a friend. Often the first emotional hurt we experience as children is when someone we thought was a friend turns away and we don't know why.

A generation ago, our earliest friendships were usually formed with kids who lived in the neighborhood. As soon as we were old enough to go outside and run around, we found our early tribe. Neighbors kept an eye out for each other's kids. It's a different game now. Most people don't know their neighbors or their neighbors' kids, and building a community takes more effort and intention. Preschool is the place where community starts today, and it is ripe with possibility.

Almost all kids go to preschool now, so everything starts sooner: sports, birthday parties, play dates, sleepovers and friendships. Parents meet each other at drop-off and pickup, and the children lead the way in building a community that radiates out from school.

Our granddaughters both go to a little church preschool now, and it's great to see the community being created around them. At night, as they're drifting off to sleep, they can often be heard reciting the names of their classmates. They love going to school and having friends over to play.

As kids grow up and everyone gets busier, friendships slip away. Managing all the family activities gets more complex, and there isn't time to hang out with friends. Once the cell phone enters the picture, friends live there on a screen or in a text.

Parents can help kids with friendships by making time for play dates and including a friend in a family activity sometimes. Team sports are still a great place to make friends and stay connected as everyone grows. Church camps bring kids together in important ways, building friendships and community that can last for years.

We hear a lot about the epidemic of loneliness that has infected our teens as they build a web of online pals but lack any close friends they can count on and confide in. Parents can help. Make your home a place where your kids' friends feel comfortable and keep building community. ☞

Give Your Open Heart

I've always felt close to my best friend since childhood. I say I trust her with my life. She moved back to our hometown two years ago, and almost every time we plan to get together, she changes it last minute or is late. I've made comments, but she either blows it off or changes the subject. I hate it and have been avoiding her lately. It feels like the trust I cherished is lost. Any recommendations?



STEF SWINK, RScP, has been a practitioner since 1999. As protégé and assistant to Louise Hay, she was a frequent ghostwriter for the “Dear Louise” column. Through speaking, spiritual counseling and workshops, she inspires others to create fulfilling lives they love. Connect with her online at StefSwink.com/Ask-Stef-Submission.

Trust is critical to any close relationship. And it is built, or rebuilt, on a foundation of clear agreements being made and kept. Intimate connection also requires being honest and vulnerable. So instead of avoiding conflict, initiate a clearing conversation, one that will create an opportunity to establish new agreements to heal and strengthen your bond.

Ask your friend for uninterrupted time in person. If she accepts your invitation, request that she not change the plan and show up on time. Before meeting, spend time in prayer and set your intention clearly. Remember to look within for places in this relationship and your life where you haven't kept your own agreements. Not communicating directly about your upset for two years is also a type of breach between you.

Begin by sharing that you love her and value your friendship. Resist the temptation to blame or hold back the truth about your feelings, even if they might be difficult to say or for her to hear. Give her the gift of your open heart.

The key is to be direct about how the pattern of last-minute changes and being late impacts you. Share your need for her to keep her word when it comes to your plans. Then ask what she needs in the friendship and listen to her answer. Is there anything else between you that needs healing?

Close friendships are sacred gifts that can profoundly enhance and even lengthen our lives. If you both are willing to walk through this healing into a new level of friendship, the benefits will astound you and bless the world. ❀



**I HONOR
MY DIVINE
SONSHIP**

*Artwork by
Monica S. Choi*

BY ERNEST HOLMES

We are surrounded by, immersed in and there flows through us a universal law of absolute cause and effect. Our word itself is not creative, but it does use a Creative Power that reacts to it at the level of our own acceptance and inward realization.

Consequently, we have an obligation to perform in speaking that word, but we do not make something happen as a result of speaking that word. This happens just as a plant will grow when we plant a seed. If we could remember that, then we could take away from ourselves the sense of obligation of having to compel something to happen. And at the same time, we would conform with the law, so it would have to happen. Our whole work is based on that supposition.

If we will remember that, we will realize that one person could use this as well as another, if they believed they could. This is exactly why Jesus said, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."

What the belief does is not compel but permit the power. It does not coerce but uses it. It does not reach out to touch it; it reaches in to accept it. It doesn't go anywhere any more than the principle of mathematics, but when you use it your thought goes somewhere, it recognizes something somewhere.

As we think of that in our treatment, let us realize that all the power there is, not some of it, is right where we are, just as is all the gravitational force. We do not generate. We do not coerce. We use it. All the power there is right where we are.

Let us first affirm that every person here, being one with the Creative Spirit and one in It, is of Its life, of Its power, of Its essence, of Its love and of Its wisdom.

Our spoken word uses an infinite Creative Power that reacts to our word at the level of our own acceptance and inward realization. It's as easy and natural as a plant growing from a seed we plant.



I HONOR MY DIVINE SONSHIP

We each say to ourself: There is One Life. That Life is God. That Life is perfect. That Life is my life now. This life that I live is that Life, and there is no other. All the power and all the presence that there is is this Life right now. Consequently, every action, every organ, every function is rooted in perfection, is operating from perfection, is sustained by perfection, lives in perfection right now.

We do not deny the body, we include it in the spiritual realization. We identify our life with the Living Spirit, with all the power and all the presence there is, here and now and in this moment.

As this is true, let us see if we cannot think that whatever denies it is eliminated. Let us not try to eliminate anything but say that whatever denies this is eliminated.

In this way, we realize that our word, being the presence and power and activity of God or the Spirit or the Law of Good within us must operate so that It eliminates everything that denies Itself.



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I HONOR MY DIVINE SONSHIP

ONE LIFE OPERATING THROUGH EACH OF US

We turn in thought to someone we would like to help. When you think of that person, don't try to send anything out, but say that this word is for that person. Identify your word with that person, not with something else, and realize there is One Life operating in and through that person right now. That Life is God.

As a result of this realization, that person, in their experience, establishes the reality of good and the realization of perfection. There is One Perfect Life in that person right now. It doesn't matter what appears. It doesn't matter what any person hears or thinks, we know the Spirit in that person is God — and It is perfect, and nothing has ever happened to It. It is this which circulates. It is this which eliminates. It is this right now manifest in this person in wholeness this moment.

We know our word, being the presence and the power and the activity of the living Spirit within us, cannot fail because this isn't anything we push out. It is something we know about this person. The knowing and the doing are the same thing because what we know, It does, and we permit It to do it.

We can turn from that with complete confidence and without any fear or doubt. In the Law of Good, an intelligence is operating upon it and will continue until all is fulfilled.

As we turn again to ourselves, let us realize that we are divinely guided. Let us affirm that the Law of Divine Guidance operates in us, around us and through us, now and at all times, always. We identify ourselves with everything that is good, with love and truth and wisdom and power, with success and happiness and fulfillment.

Continued on page 82

*It doesn't matter what any person hears or thinks,
we know the Spirit in that person is God — and It is perfect,
and nothing has ever happened to It. It is this right
now manifest in this person in wholeness this moment.*

SOME OF HOLMES' THOUGHTS ON CHRISTMAS

The little child Jesus asleep in the hay — the cattle, the oxen, the donkeys, the hens, the geese and the sheep. The great event takes place where you wouldn't expect it.

What the builders reject must become the chief stone of the corner: the simplicity of the child, the purity of the sheep, the warmth of the heart of the mother-love, the protection of the father idea, the impregnation of the Eternal Womb by the Eternal Mind, the Father- Mother-God, the Universal Soul or Psyche and the Universal Numa or Spirit, giving birth to every form that is.

This is the meaning of Christmas, the most glorious tradition on the face of the Earth, the greatest profound simplicity ever uttered by the mind of humanity, the sweetest story ever told.

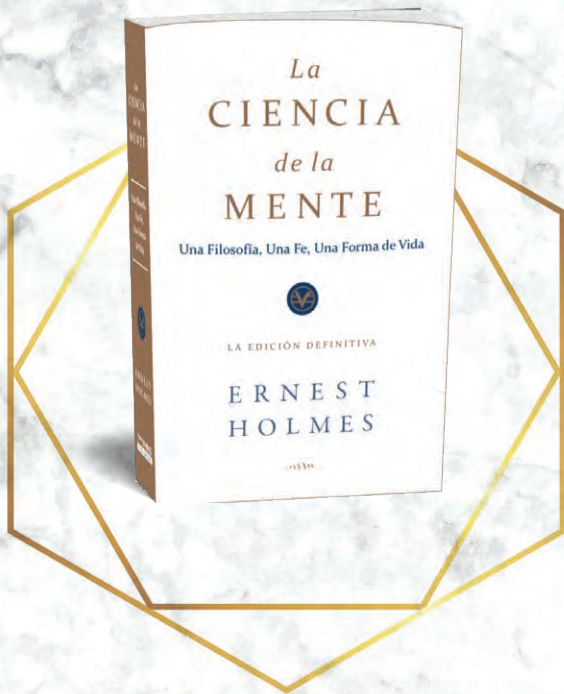
But we must bring it to Earth. What good to sing merely praises to a heavenly host? What good to look back 2,000 years to watch a divine event of the incarnation of life and light and love, of wisdom, truth, beauty and majesty, power and might? What good unless, right now, Christ is born in us? This is our prayer:

*O, little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie,
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark night shineth the everlasting Light,
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.
O, holy babe of Bethlehem, descend in us, we pray,
Cast out our sin and enter in, be born in us today.*

And now, through the inspiration of the Infinite Spirit within us, may we become acquainted of the eternal birth forever taking place. And as we lift our hearts and souls and minds to the heavenly light, may angels' voices sing to us. Amen. ☘

Uno de los Libros Más Poderosos del Siglo XX

La Nueva Traducción al Español



“La Ciencia de la Mente” de Ernest Holmes, presenta en un lenguaje directo, claro y sencillo, ideas de cómo cambiar tu vida usando los principios universales.

Disponible en **Amazon.com**

Shop.CSL.org/Books/CSL-Book-Corner

I HONOR MY DIVINE SONSHIP

If we have any particular problem, let us turn from the problem and say the answer already exists. I know the answer. The problem, in this sense, turns into its own answer. I accept the answer. I permit it. I believe it. I let it, now. So it is. I honor my divine sonship. As a divine individual, I fully appreciate my worth.

This was the thing Jesus did. Emerson said the soul makes its great claim on God. There is no egotism in this. As I praise the God that potentially is within me, for everyone also is a son, I open my mind to receive the greater good.

I recognize in others that there are no barriers of resistance or separation, and in my world of affairs, all things work together for good. Everyone I contact is blessed, even as I am.

I honor my own divine sonship now. This is the meaning of the Lord's Prayer because it is the meaning of that divine sonship. The practical application of the spiritual or mental principle through spiritual realization to our everyday needs is one of the most vital things in the world. ☚

If we have any particular problem, let us turn from the problem and say the answer already exists. The problem turns into its own answer. I accept the answer. I permit it. I believe it. As a divine individual, I fully appreciate my worth.



Where the Past Illuminates the Future

Excerpted from "I Honor My Divine Sonship" by Ernest Holmes, as heard on Sunday, December 19, 1954, at the Fox Beverly Theatre.

*Read the entire talk and find other spiritual treasures, at **ScienceOfMindArchives.com**. Your gift to the archives is tax-deductible and allows us to preserve our teaching.*

We Gather to Affirm the Light

Oh, how I love this time of year! As fall turns to winter, we seek new sources of light and inspiration to guide us through. Life has been unfolding this way for humanity for centuries, across various cultures, traditions and customs.

If your heart has grown cynical of the this over-commercialized version of the season, then I invite you to pause and consider the ways in which it's simply a metaphor for the universal longing of the human spirit to know itself again. Ernest Holmes, like many other mystics and teachers, was able to see this deeper truth and draw on the powerful imagery and creative storytelling presented in the gospels as deeper invitations for our souls' illumination.

Holmes reminds us that the creative law of the universe is activated by our word. As such, it is up to us to articulate the experiences we desire. Our word, he says, does not do anything on its own. It "does not compel, but permits" the law into action.

Perhaps it's wise to slow down this season and consider just what we've permitted into our lives, into our consciousness, and what we've affirmed by subconscious agreement or passive allowance.

It's safe to say many of us would find some unwanted ideas, thoughts or constructs leering in the foreground of our mind. Yet these are not ideas we need to feel regret, shame or anxiety about. Rather, Holmes reminds us that through the power of our creative thought and word, we can affirm the reality we desire. What we affirm will grow, and the law will eliminate what's not in alignment.

It's no surprise that for centuries, at this time of year, humanity has gathered to affirm the light, to welcome the birth of new possibilities and to rekindle hope, faith, peace and love. Let's affirm together that peace is possible, new light is born and with it all the beauty and divinity we can conceive of is made flesh in you.

Travel well. ☸



**REV. DR.
DAVID
ALEXANDER**

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PRISON YOGA PROJECT



Yoga: a Sanskrit word meaning union or connection.

With the sounds of slamming doors and jangling keys in the background, prisoners mindfully practice poses such as pigeon or downward-facing dog. If a pose is challenging, they are encouraged to reflect. What resources do you have to cope with challenge? Breathe. Rest. Notice how your body is feeling. Choose how you respond. Be compassionate with yourself. “Critics say we’re bringing this luxury called yoga into prisons,” says yoga teacher Tierney Lawson, one of Prison Yoga Project’s four staff members. “But it’s not a luxury — it’s essential. Self-compassion leads to the empathy necessary for living with others.”

Yoga also heals trauma, freeing us from the past. “One of the results of trauma is dissociation from the body as a means of survival. We’re able to empower incarcerated people to reconnect, to cultivate a trust in their body and a new feeling of safety. We tell them: You might not have had choices in the past, but you have choices now.”

Prison Yoga Project launched at San Quentin State Prison in 2002 and has since spawned programs at 10 other San Diego County facilities and in prisons throughout the United States as well as in Mexico, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. In noisy, scary, crowded environments, yoga offers a private refuge. “We don’t use music or anything in class that they can’t take with them when class is over,” Lawson says.

What you can do: Subscribe to Prison Yoga Project and get a free audio download of “Centering Practice” at PrisonYoga.org. The store on their website contains books and DVD for conscious breathing exercises, chair yoga, yoga for back pain and sciatica as well as clothing.

Or you can donate to help

- train yoga teachers (mostly volunteers) with the goal of training incarcerated people to teach one another yoga;
- provide mindfulness meditations online and in person;
- provide prisoners with donated copies of founder James Fox’s book, “Yoga: A Path for Healing and Recovery.”

More than 30,000 books have been donated so far. Become part of the shift and nurture your own spiritual practice in the process. ☸