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- *Relationships are source of spiritual development*
- *Range of emotions are natural and necessary*
- *Appropriate expression of feelings*
- *Recognize God in yourself*
- *God is a feeling entity*

God is indeed with each of you at all times. God is with you at times of joy as well as times of stress. God is with you when you ask for God's presence, but is also by your side before you ask for it. In short, God is constantly with you.

Your deliberations this evening, brought about as a result of our last communion with you, are important and give you opportunities for recognizing examples of the applications of those teachings. It is interesting for us to observe, and important for you to recognize, that all of the discussions related in some manner to your dealings with others, your response to others, and the reactions of others to you. Your relationship to another person is central to the experience of human life. Your lives would indeed be empty were it not for such interaction. You cannot live alone, really alone. You can withdraw from society, but you cannot truly live separated from any relationship to another human. For although you may be separated physically from all others, you can never escape your memory of contacts of the past.

Children do not grow up alone, left to feed themselves, to teach themselves, to associate with themselves alone, for that is not the course of human development. There are some who by choice in their adult lives live apart from others, but they are bound to their past, and that past, that experience from previous years, becomes a permanent part of their overall orientation. One may withdraw from society for the purpose of concentration and meditation and reflection, but that person has not really withdrawn. That person does not live on an island devoid of interaction with others. Your lives, therefore, are closely entwined one with another. That is an inescapable fact of life.

Because it is always present, it becomes important how you deal with those relationships both in the present and in your recollection of such relationships in the past. So many times it has been said that God works through people, that human life is essential for the doing of God's will, that human existence is an integral part of the power of God. It is such an important concept that it must be oft repeated, and we reiterate it to you again at this time. The way in which you interact with others is both the source of spiritual development and its reflection.

You wonder about the appropriateness of strong emotions. You may not question the value of joy, but you question the value of sadness or anger. Is one really more important than another? Certainly not, for emotions are both natural and necessary. What is important here is the importance which you give to those emotions when they

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are experienced. It is all right to experience disappointment, but it is not beneficial when such disappointment consumes your energy to such a degree that you cannot look forward, that you are bound only to the present. Anger is natural and it is essential. There is no ill in expressing feelings of anger, but it is not to your benefit to give utmost importance to that which creates the anger.

The peace of which we spoke to you does not imply that you will eventually neither feel nor express strong emotions which are considered to be negative. The peace which is referred to only exists when you realize that that which causes your anguish or discomfort is not of ultimate importance. You can be bothered or disturbed by something while at the same time recognizing that it is not of ultimate value. When a machine malfunctions, you may be angry, but you realize that the machine is not your life. The machine is not controlling your destiny. It is only an item, but it may still cause you grief and you may still express that grief. There is nothing wrong with this.

For those who feel that any emotion of a negative nature is inappropriate, there will always be frustration, for we can assure you that at no time in your lives will you be totally free of worry or anxiety or sadness or anger, any more than you will ever be free of joy. The presence of joy and optimism is as much a part of your life as all other emotions. When you experience something which gives great pleasure, you may realize that it is not of world significance, but it still creates joy. That is a natural reaction and one which society condones, but too often society places a negative stamp of approval on reactions which do not result in joy, and thereby so many are riddled with guilt.

Accept your emotions as they are. Each person experiences the same emotions with differing intensities, and therefore all personalities are different, but accept the reality of those emotions. You are not in a sense giving up on spiritual development by such acceptance. The spiritual growth of which we speak is manifest in the importance that you place on that which elicits such emotions. That kind of priority-making is what is so critically important in your lives.

You may love another and yet disagree. Is disagreeing acceptable? Of course, but your development spiritually does not require that you eliminate disagreement, only that you recognize that that which causes such disagreement is of lesser significance than what is given your highest priority.

Avoid a sense of guilt in your self-examination. Accept your feelings and accept the feelings of others. We do not say that you must agree with the feelings of others, but you must accept them. By that we mean that you must recognize the naturalness, the humanness of having such feelings. Guilt, self-guilt, is such a destructive force in life. There are many who have become incapacitated emotionally and physically due to a sense of self-guilt, to a feeling of failure and worthlessness.

None of you is a failure. No human being is a failure. No matter what you may do in life, you are never a failure. You may make grave mistakes, but you are not a failure. Mistakes are matters of judgment. They are quantitative values. Being a failure is

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making a qualitative judgment, and no one really fails. You will never fail. You may make errors. You may take a long time to move forward, but you shall never fail, for failure means ultimate loss. None of you is lost from the sight of God, and therefore you shall never fail.

Each of you must learn to accept yourself more readily. That is not to say you must be complacent, but you must be accepting. It is very easy to be told to love yourself. It is one of the most difficult tasks on earth to achieve, for if you love yourself, it is ultimately possible only through your recognition of self-divinity. By recognizing the divinity in yourself, you will be more able to believe in the divinity of another.

If you cannot see that you truly are a reflection of God, there is no way that you shall find recognition of God's reflection in another. You can feel bad about yourself and still say about another, "That person is really good," but that is different from really visualizing God's presence fully. You must first recognize God's presence in yourself. The result of that recognition is self-love. It is not an egotism which motivates you, for self-love could easily imply self-importance. Self-love in this sense really means the love of God within. When such recognition is fully made, then you are able to accept the manifestations of your personalities, recognizing the difference of one individual from another, recognizing the right of all people to express their feelings. With that recognition comes the abandonment of guilt. It is only achieved through such recognition.

Of course there are levels of appropriateness in the expression of feelings. If you disagree with an individual, you do not destroy that person's house, but you may still show that disagreement in a way which is not destructive but merely expressive. If you wish to measure the appropriateness of a response to a feeling that you have, ask first whether it is destructive. Does it destroy another's sense of self-worth? Does it destroy another's confidence? Does it cause pain within, a destruction of that emotional equilibrium or sense of peace? Does it inflict physical pain which in the end is destructive? It is the destructiveness of the expression which is a measure of its inappropriateness.

You may wonder about the expression of disagreement when you feel it will hurt another. If that hurt is temporary and ultimately not destructive, then it may be appropriate to the occasion, for your expressions of emotions must be considered not only from your perspective but from the view of the other. The point does not need to be belabored, for you can clearly recognize when the expression of feelings is really inappropriate. All we wish to make clear is that you should not feel guilty when you express your feelings. You grow through that expression. You grow not at the expense of another but with another.

When a husband and wife disagree and the expression of that disagreement is intense, the relationship can still grow stronger as a result because of the willingness to be open and the desire to avoid suppression. Therefore, that expression of feeling is not

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destructive. At the same time the two will realize in the end that the issue itself is diminished in its importance or appearance in their lives. A new set of structures or priorities will be developed. The openness between two people can be an expression of love, for it shows that both care about that which is being discussed, about that which elicits such feelings.

Therefore, drive from your life's experiences any feelings of guilt. Recognize that you each are truly progressing, that you are growing spiritually, that you are learning through the experience of human life. Have faith that God is somehow a part of all that you experience and all that you feel. Recognize that the orientation toward oneness with God will provide for a decreased sense of importance to that which creates anxieties or other problems.

Have faith in the growth of others, for you are not the only ones who are moving toward God. All others are on a similar journey. Occasionally those paths intersect. Recognize that such intersections are important, for they can put you in constant touch with the reality of human existence at so many important and meaningful levels. Be willing to recognize that God is a part of that intersection, that God is at the crossroads just as God is with each of you individually on your paths. Do not shy away from opportunities for interaction with others. If you fear a confrontation of sorts, do not pull away from the chance to grow. Pray for God's strength and then proceed ahead.

God experiences joy as you experience joy. God is not just an objective force that somehow orders existence. When we reassure you that God is joyful in your union together, that joy is every bit as real as any joy that you may experience for God is not only a power but a feeling entity as well. It is that human quality of God which you must always recognize, just as you must be focused on the divine part of human life.

We are all together. We are all united. We are all a part of God's light and reflectors of it. We all have that touch of divinity and are constantly a part of the workings of God within the creation. Our joy is in your lives' being reflective of God. Our joy is in your sense of self-worth and in the conviction of the true value and infinite divinity of all human existence.

We bless you and pray for you as God sheds light upon each of your lives.

Amen.