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- *Everything is evolving including God*
- *Dealing with suffering*
- *The relationship of judgment, forgiveness, acceptance*

It is always the Spirit of God working through your guides, through the spirits of all whom you have known and loved. That presence, that assistance, the loving Spirit belongs on the path of every journey that is undertaken.

We spoke most recently about the persistence of spirit, the persistence of the energy of living, the persistence of movement, the persistence of presence, essentially the reality, the vitality that belongs to all paths of existence, whether animate or inanimate. As was shared in the past, there is always growth. Nothing exists, indeed nothing has ever existed, that does not engage in change of some sort. Nothing simply is other than the reality that you exist. You exist because spirit is. There is no beginning or end to spirit. It simply is. But outside of that reality, the common belief that if something simply is, meaning it exists but does nothing, does not really form a part of reality, for nothing just remains as it is with no change, no growth.

We can say that God's presence is, always has been, always will be, but that presence also evolves. It grows because you grow. It evolves because you evolve. God can be thought of as the creator of all, but that sense of creation has not stopped. From the point of view of what is real, we can say that God is, but if you think of something that is only constant without change in order to fulfill a definition of "is," God does not fit that definition. Likewise, no human being can be so defined. Recognizing then that all are essentially in a state of becoming, what does this mean for the conduct of your lives?

Each of you, indeed all people, are becoming. You are evolving. You are changing. You are transforming. You are transforming what is around you, and you are being transformed by what is around you. There is an interaction that exists between who you are and where you are. By using the term "where," we do not imply a location but rather a description of your evolving. Because you grow, because you are evolving, you must accept the reality that all people are growing. All people are evolving.

Such growth, such transformation can never be the subject of judgment, of criticism. There is nothing that is evolving too slowly. There is no human being that is evolving faster than another. There is nothing that exists that is being transformed more rapidly than something else. Transformation has no timetable. It only describes a movement between states of being.

You're transformed as you deal with interpersonal issues of any kind. You're transformed as you begin to acknowledge the undeniable changes in your environment. Transformation happens. It happens to all. It doesn't in itself have a beginning or an ending. You are where you are, and you may be in another place at a different time, figuratively speaking. But what is constant is the transformation. It is easy to be critical of

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others for their actions, their points of view, their understandings, but while you may find your perspective is different from others, you cannot deny outright the perspective that anyone has, for what you observe through the heart is far beyond what can be brought into question. Sure, you can disagree with viewpoints. You can disagree with actions, with beliefs. But by approaching others with the heart, you cast away such differences, and you can only acknowledge that what is occurring is part of a transformation of spirit, and that is always to be welcomed. It is because of the welcoming of transformation of spirit that you are able to accept others as equal human beings despite the manifestations of these transformations.

Your life pathways are never straight. They have many bends, many curves. There are many moments when forward progress seems thwarted. To someone standing by and observing the pathway of another, it is easy to say, "Stop! Go that way instead of the way you are headed currently." But that is asserting your own sense of what is right or what is proper or what is acceptable upon another.

Yes, of course there are times when you are motivated to stop certain behavior because it is destructive to that person or to another, but you must still validate the reality that they are being transformed as they pursue their pathway to the Spirit Center. You are each being validated on your journey. It is the journey itself that is important rather than the momentary turns and curves that would seem to signify a completely erroneous pathway. Regardless of those twists and turns of life, the progress of spirit is unstoppable and when seen from a distance is clearly moving in its own way toward a rejoining of spirit energy with the Spirit Center, with God, with the Creator.

There is much suffering in the world that has been brought to your attention in recent days and weeks, and in the midst of that suffering is overwhelming grief and pain, a profound sense of loss, an overwhelming anger, and in many cases a resounding rejection of God's presence, of God's existence. There is an overpowering resentment to being told by one means or another that their response to the tragedies they experience should be directed in this way rather than in another way. For those who are overwhelmed in their grief, they will be given the strength that is needed. It may not be in the direction they anticipate, but the strength that they seek is with them, and it is through your prayers collectively that they can become strengthened in their vision of love offered by others, true love, by compassion, by presence, by sacrifices, by all that is reflective of a generous heart.

There is no joy in suffering, of course, and as you have noted, there is no sense of peace for many when they are merely told they grow through their pain. Such words in themselves do not lessen the pain but rather separate them from any awareness of growth, of God's presence, of the reality of spiritual strength and persistence. Those who suffer greatly find little comfort, however it may be offered from others who insist on saying "it will all be better soon. You will get through this," and such words.

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How does this issue of persistence guide you in your living? You can be so guided when you affirm constantly the validity of the beliefs and actions and fears of others and also especially of yourself. A number of religious beliefs refer to this as a kind of forgiveness, but forgiveness sets up a relationship that is sometimes perceived unintentionally as an assumption of power. When you act with a statement of forgiveness, you are placing yourself in the seat of judgment. That relationship by its own actions does not affirm the equality of the other, however well-intentioned such stated forgiveness is. The persistence of spirit, rather, is one of acceptance, not forgiveness, for reaching out with a loving acceptance is an act of equal standing. It is not the application of implied judgmental dominance by offering forgiveness.

This persistence of spirit is best exercised in life by fully accepting another with love. The person who does you harm can be accepted as an equal. The behavior may be unacceptable for good reason, but you are reaching out and affirming in whatever way you can the equality you feel toward others. This requires enormous spiritual energy. It is not easy to accept one who inflicts harm upon you, however that harm is defined. It is easy to identify people by what they say, what they do, and forget who they are.

By the same token, it is easy to condemn yourself for past actions. When you experience a sense of guilt over something that you said or did or felt, you are sitting in judgment of yourself, and you are not accepting the equality that exists between you and your guides and all others. Even the act of forgiving yourself, although sounding as such an important move to take, has in it a continued sense of judgment. When you forgive, whether yourself or others, you are not fully embracing the equality of the self you wish to be and the self you see yourself as being. The equality between you and someone else, spiritual growth, and the persistent energy of spirit is one that exists solely to affirm total unity.

The next time you feel motivated to offer forgiveness, step back and allow yourself to see yourself in the other and realize you are the same. You are equal. You are pursuing paths that are appropriate for each of you. That appropriateness is never static. It is constantly changing. It is evolving. Your sense of what is appropriate and inappropriate itself changes. It evolves. It has its own curves and detours. Whatever you consider to be the “right response” may be changed in time.

There is only one right response to others, and that is acceptance with love. It is not approval of actions or words, but it is acceptance. It is a willingness to affirm that no one has the upper hand, but all have a hand that reaches out, not down, not up, but out. If your response to others is reaching up, it is a kind of diminishing of your own worth, your own value as compared to something or someone else. If you reach down, it is an acknowledgment that you are above. Even in the reaching down to help, there is that sense of empowerment. But if you use your spiritual energy to simply reach out before you, to either side of you, then you are reaching with a sense of total equality. You are offering from a position of equal value.

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Clearly the example of reaching up or reaching out or reaching down is figurative in its use, but the point is simply that you embrace others with love, with acceptance, not from a seat of judgment that offers either forgiveness or condemnation. Spirit energy embraces all as belonging, as being equal, as being filled with the energy of the Creator. Seek ways in your life to express your spirit energy, the persistence of God's presence in ways that embrace, that accept, that welcome, that affirm. That is a way to govern your life through the energized spirit.

We reach out to you. We don't reach down. We accept you. We don't forgive. We don't punish. In an anthropomorphic way, God does not forgive. God accepts. God affirms. God welcomes. God embraces. May it become so for each of you.

Amen.