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- *Prayer is learning to be loving*
- *No division in meaning between guardian angel and guide*
- *Guides know humans more profoundly than family members*
- *Growth toward pure Love did not begin with this human life and does not end with it*

God, who is the Creator of all that you are, all that is, bathes you in a loving presence.

We spoke earlier much about what prayer is and what it isn't. It is important as you consider those thoughts that the intention remains that prayer matters. Prayer is important, and prayer is not just the benefit of the one who prays, for in growing through prayer, you become a fuller vessel for being intentionally loving toward others.

God's presence is constant, but every human being has been given the strength and capability to be loving. There is no greater expression of God than to be loving. That expression crosses all boundaries and bridges every divide between people, nations, religions, and philosophies. In prayer, the one who prays is learning. All are learning. Every individual who prays is learning, learning what it means to be loving. That learning is incremental. It is not achieved through a flash of insight. Learning to be loving is a lifelong pursuit.

You are all familiar with many forms of love. Each of these expressions of love is but a part of being loving, for loving encompasses all that is understood to be part of what love is. You can be loving toward another individual. You can be loving in your thoughts to other nations, other philosophies, other beliefs. You can be loving to other people you have never met and know nothing about. At each stage in life, one form of love may take precedence over another, but that presence does not mean the absence of another. It is not exclusionary in any way, for no form of loving expression is truly loving if it denies another form of expression.

The prayers you feel are what contribute to your understanding of becoming loving. We say the prayers you *feel* specifically, for we do not mean the prayers that you speak. Words are merely a representation. Feelings are deeply personal; they come from within. It is from those feelings that words emerge. Sometimes, of course, the choice of words does not reflect one's deeper feelings. That lack of reflection is not necessarily intentionally deceptive. It is merely a lack.

When you pray, you are open. You are open to another. You are open to God. You are open to your guides. You are open to your guardian angels. It is the openness that is essential, and it is from that very openness that you experience growth in becoming more loving.

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The openness of prayer, therefore, is directly related to the ability to be loving. Your life is filled with opportunities to be more loving, but often you don't relate those opportunities to an opportunity for prayer, because you associate too closely the importance of speaking a prayer or forming a prayer, and that process stands in the way of exercising true prayer.

You are therefore asked to find ways to become more deeply aware of others. You might give special thought to those whom you are not especially close to, those with whom you strongly disagree. Perhaps center your thoughts on just one person and let those thoughts begin to take shape. You will find that it is not long before you dispense with what is negative and think more about what you share in common with that other person. That acknowledgment of being in a shared place on your path with another at some level becomes, in its way, an act of prayer in support of another.

It is easy to pray for those whom you feel reflect what is important in your own life, and those prayers are of course important, but it is also important to recognize how your prayers as thoughts can and will become transformed over time. In doing this, you will find fewer grounds for rejection and more ways that you see a similarity that binds you to the other. That transformation of energy from negative ultimately to positive is one way that the positive energies coming from merely acknowledging another will, in the end, overcome the negative energies created by negative thoughts. Look therefore for opportunities to observe prayer as a transformation toward compassion, toward understanding, toward caring, toward uplifting what is important.

The question arose in your gathering about guides, guardian angels—the sense of whether you are really known by your guides or your guardian angels. We can say that there is no division in meaning between guardian angel and spirit guide. Those are merely labels, but what is important to understand is that spiritual presence is aware of you and knows you in the deepest, most profound and loving sense that you can imagine. Your guides know you more intimately than your closest friends, more profoundly than your family. The guides truly know who you are, for they see your light. They know you from what your light emits. They see the positive energy. They see the negative energy. They see the energy that comes from struggles and concerns. They see the energy that comes from rejoicing and thanksgiving. They see and they know the energy of compassion, of real caring, of fear, sadness, and joy. They know the light, the energy, of guilt. They know what it means to give of yourself expecting nothing in return. You are known fully. You are loved unconditionally. And your search for understanding—understanding of life, who you are, what you are—is guided and nurtured, supported, uplifted, caressed, strengthened, and given a lightness that takes

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away what is dark, what is negative, what is fearful, whatever is not reflective of God's presence.

We have spoken frequently of various life-forms, those that are considerably further along their spiritual paths than are human lives. Life is a continuum. Life does not stop. There is no end to where light is transmitted. Light is the light of spirit, and it continues. The evolution of spirit is an evolution that is not defined solely by human measures, and therefore that life of spirit may find more opportunity to grow as part of other life-forms. All of this is a continuation of what has always been.

Your spirit had no beginning, and it has no end, but one thing all spirits do have that is constant is growth. This growth is a transformation. It is a transformation from an awareness of love to a process of becoming loving and ultimately being totally Love. That growth, that transformation, did not begin in human life and does not end with human life. You have a life beyond your human experience, and that life will continue and will be engaged in other life-forms that take what has been learned in the human experience and carry it beyond to more awareness, more growth, more evolution toward the all-consuming Light that is total Love.

Human life is temporary. It is part of a long chain of growth. You have seen your own growth, but that growth has had its moments of strength and moments of seeming failure. Such experiences will continue, of course, but growth occurs. The evolution toward becoming Love continues. There is nothing to stop the journey, and that journey will always be a conscious one.

You are aware of your life now. You were aware of previous life experiences, and you will be aware of life in another form, for growth occurs when there is intention, and intention is achieved through the presence of awareness. You are aware of where you are, and it is your intention that elevates you to where you wish to be. That goal, the direction of that goal, evolves as you evolve.

No human has full awareness of where this will lead in any specific form other than you, all human beings, and all life-forms ultimately are transformed to love and an expression of that love that is all-encompassing, all-powerful and all light. There is no mystery to human life if you acknowledge that it is part of a greater life that continues and continues and continues. Your prayers, your thoughts connect you at some level to that continuum of loving that becomes Love.

You are embraced by the love that is the full realization of all that you seek. You are embraced in the search. You are embraced in your growth. You are embraced by all who love you and whom you have loved. You are embraced in prayer. You are embraced by the light that is emitted by those around you. You are embraced by the light of all who bring you into their thoughts, and you are embraced by the common path

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that all human beings pursue by whatever side journeys may occur. This common path is the path of loving which leads to total Love.

Pray by being aware. Pray through your thoughts. Pray by finding what can be loved in all. Pray through your gratitude for love that you are offered. Pray for the love you have experienced. Pray with thankfulness that you are a part of all that is truly total Love.

You are loved by us. We feel loved by you. Love all others and find grounds to recognize the love that you receive.

Amen.