

Celebration Sunday: May 24, 2020 Cultivating Miracles

I'm so glad you decided to join us today to explore the cultivation of miracles. As we could see in the video, not everyone believes in miracles. Of course, no one asked them to define what a miracle is.

Do you believe in miracles? I do...and not only that, but I know that it's possible to cultivate miracles in our lives.

Webster's Dictionary defines a miracle as "an object of wonder; a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency."

And so, even by modern standards and definitions, everything is a miracle. We may want to say that science understands how things work. We understand the workings of the solar system, how the planets orbit around the sun, the interaction between the moon and the tides. Right? We know how plants and animals reproduce, how mountains are formed and eroded over long periods of time, and what creates a volcano.

Quantum Physics can even prove that an observer has an invisible effect on that which is being observed, and that two entangled electrons or atoms will behave in tandem. If you observe a particle in one place, another particle—even one light-year away—will instantly change its properties, as if the two are connected by a mysterious communication channel. So, science continues to help us to understand more and more of the material world.

Let's go back to our definition of a miracle. It "not explicable by natural or scientific laws. I ask you, will we ever be able to explain how the solar system, the galaxies, the Universe really began? Do we know why?

Do we understand what it is that causes a seed to grow when it falls on fertile soil, and meets with its perfect conditions? Not really...

When an animal eats food, do we know exactly how that food becomes the animal? Yes, we understand the processes of digestion, circulation, and cell division, but do we understand how some cells know to become my finger nail, and others know to become brain cells, and others to become bone marrow. When it comes to how and

why, we really know very little. Every scientific discovery leads to 100 more questions. Any good scientist will tell you that.

So, then...where is science leading us, if every single answer, only leads to more questions? The world and everything in it is a wonder...it's a miracle. There is a sense of Mystery in the Universe, and I believe it is intentionally so. Without Mystery, there is no room for the miraculous, no room for wonder and awe. And wonder and awe are two of the experiences that lead us back to our Source.

We tend to think of miracles more as highly unlikely or impossible things happening, and our culture has encouraged this with stories like the Master Teacher, Jesus, walking on water, healing the sick, and raising the dead. Oh, yeah...and turning water into wine. We'd like to learn that one, wouldn't we?

But these stories, that help to shape our cultural and personal beliefs, were never meant to be taken literally. They were written by eastern people for an eastern audience that would have heard the stories through the lens of symbolism.

For example, symbolically, *walking* means to acknowledge the One Power as the dominating force of the mind and body...think of the phrase *walking with Spirit*. And water is a symbol for the soul. So, a first-century Jewish audience, especially those who were of a class to study scripture, might have understood that when Jesus walked on water, it meant that he was acknowledging the God Force that was animating his physical being in this incarnation of the soul's journey.

And what about water into wine? Well, wine typically symbolizes transformation. So, were the writers of the Christian Gospel really referring to a transformation of the soul? Whether these stories were literally true, or metaphors for Truth in a language the people of the time could understand, we simply don't know. And it really doesn't matter. What we do know is these stories were written down long after the death of Jesus, and that it is likely that none of the writers had actually met him. Those who transcribed the stories of oral tradition were of the educated class, and it is likely that their understanding and intention in telling these tales was much different than even the labor class of their own time, and certainly different from our Western, literal, and analytical interpretations.

Coming back around to where we were headed, here is what I think...it is not the exceptional or impossible happenings that are the real miracles. It is the little, tiny, day-

to-day occurrences...those that we take for granted, because we are so accustomed to them. And so, cultivating miracles is not about *causing* inexplicable things to happen in our lives. It is about *noticing* that inexplicable and wondrous things are already happening in our lives.

Where is it that we usually talk about cultivating? We cultivate the ground to grow food and other plants, right? The word cultivate means *to prepare to grow, or to use*. So cultivating miracles is about preparing ourselves to grow in awareness; to use our faculties to pay attention to what is in front of us. It is about what the Buddhists call Mindfulness.

Being mindful is a state of miracle readiness, a state that allows me to notice the miracle of life happening within me and all around me. And I'm not only speaking of the natural processes of living and cosmic systems...I'm talking about synchronicities, coincidences, that are always occurring, but that we might miss if we are not awake to the present moment.

In essence, miracle-mindedness is the purified state of mind that the masters such as Buddha and Jesus achieved. And as we commit to practices that grow our capacity to be fully present, we move closer and closer to our own Christed state. We begin to get a sense of who we really are and what we are here to do.

Let's get down to business. How *do* I cultivate miracle-mindedness? First, I need to carefully choose the seeds I wish to plant. Any farmer or gardener can tell you that if you don't, weed seeds will be carried in on the wind, dropped by birds and other animals, and before you know it, you'll have a crop of thistle, or worse yet...Bermuda Grass.

Has anyone noticed any weed seeds taking root, or growing...or even choking out the good seeds...in your thought-garden lately? Anyone have a complaint seed taking hold? Or a judgment seed? What about a fear seed? There's an unimaginable number of fear seeds floating in the atmosphere, in the race consciousness, right now. And rightly so, perfectly understandable. And yet, understandable or not, fear gets in the way of our miracle-mindedness.

Do any of these sound familiar? Fear of the virus making me sick...fear of my making another person sick...fear of losing a loved one...fear of job loss...fear of changes in our political situation...fear of *no changes* in our political system...fear of not having enough

money, enough food to feed our children, or even a place to sleep at night...generally, a fear of the unknown and what the future will bring. It seems like these fears are being magnified right now by the world conditions. But the Truth is that we never really know what is coming from day to day. Not one of us knows that we will definitely still be here, in our comfortable lives, tomorrow morning. And it is this...the willingness to live moment by moment in the here and now, with all of the Mystery, and all that cannot be known...that reminds me to pay attention. What will the next moment bring?

It is my willingness to appreciate and give thanks for every moment of my life, while maintaining a sense of detachment to forms and outcomes, that brings about a sense of miracle-mindedness. So, let's look at some practical application. Ernest Holmes tells us that Realization without application is hallucination!

The Course in Miracles says that, in every moment, we are either grounded in fear or in love. Speaking about the Course, Marianne Williamson says this: "To the extent to which our thought system is based on fear, or non-miraculous thinking, we bind ourselves to the experience of the world of scarcity...as we shift our thinking from fear to love, we literally shift into a place where a process of divine intercession — a thought system beyond our own, an actual celestial order of love and harmony — then enters into our experience of this world. Because we transform our thinking, we can transform the effect that thinking has caused."

Science of Mind and Spirit tells us the same, as do numerous New Thought and mystical teachings. This was actually one of the main points in the message offered by Jesus.

1 John 4:18 tells us that "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love."

The word *perfect* here does not mean without fault or blemish. *Being made perfect in love* is talking about aligning my humanity with my Divinity, living from my God Self. This is actually the first phrase in the Mystic Heart Mission...Living from our Divinity. And that God-Self is made of pure Love, Compassion, and Forgiveness. It is pure God potential...it is Joy and Beauty, Truth and Freedom...all awaiting our discovery and expression.

So what does this look like on the ground, running? What does it really require to cultivate miracles?

Cultivating miracles means cultivating Love. It means attending to whatever is before me with the awareness that this, too, is the Divine. It is a miracle unfolding, right before my very eyes. It is here for my Good and the Good of the Whole. No matter what it looks like, no matter how it feels. My perceptions are simply that...perceptions. Every person has a unique lens through which to see the world...and every perception reflects beliefs and opinions...not Truth. Cultivating miracles is about changing my perception.

Cultivating miracles is about letting go of what no longer serves me and surrendering to the Power that is seeking to work through and as me.

Cultivating miracles means giving up my self-righteousness, and instead, putting on the other person's shoes...moving from my fear of being wrong, and therefore out of control, and stepping into compassion and empathy.

Cultivating miracles means giving up my complaints and judgments, and instead looking for what might be going on in another's life...moving from my fear of not having things my own way, and therefore out of my control, and stepping into peaceful and loving acceptance of what is.

It is important to remember, "If I think lovingly about you, that is an act of self-care, because I myself will feel ultimately more nourished as I am willing to think more lovingly about you." (Course in Miracles) There really is only One of us here.

Cultivating miracles means giving up my fear of not having enough, not *being* enough, and instead, noticing the amazing abundance in every moment...even if it means beginning by noticing the countless leaves on a tree, or the countless stars in the sky, or acknowledging how many times someone has offered a smile, a kind word, or a helping hand. As I begin to notice and attend to the abundance in one area of my life, I cannot help but begin to notice it everywhere. I move from my fear of limitation, and step into a loving appreciation for all that I have.

Cultivating miracles means giving up all of the excuses for why I haven't done this, or can't do that, and instead looking at the many things I can do and have done, and commending myself on a job well-done...moving out of the fear of failure, and moving into a love for the journey.

Cultivating miracles means giving up blame...instead practicing forgiveness of self and others, and thereby cutting the chain that binds me to feelings of guilt, shame, and

being harmed (or *doing* harm). In this letting go, I realize that I cannot get into heaven unless I am willing to take you there with me.

Cultivating miracles means being willing to have a measure of mental discipline. Just as we exercise our bodies, we must do the same for our minds. As we take the time, and invest our energy and intention in observing and redirecting our thoughts and feelings, “we are offered an astonishing, beautiful gift: we can live in heaven right here on earth.” (Wayne Muller)

I know that right now it feels like the world has been turned upside down. We have a choice in every moment to be swept up in the storm or to use this as a rich opportunity for healing. For each of us, in the here and now, cultivating miracles means moving from crisis thinking to miracle mindedness...shifting our mind from an external focus to an inward focus. As we do, we let go of our fear and open to Spirit’s loving Presence...

I align my thinking with the One Mind...and I offer my Love.

I align my feelings with the heart of the Divine Mother...and I share my Wholeness.

I align my knowing with Spirit’s Infinite Wisdom...and I offer my Faith. And as I move into perfect alignment with Divine Order, I come to a place of perfect Peace. There is nothing that I need to do in this moment...only listen for what is mine to hear and to know. There is time...in the next moment of now, and the next, and the next...to carry Spirit’s Guidance into action.

New Thought/Ancient Wisdom teaches us that everything is for the Evolution of my soul, and that behind every challenge there is already a miracle ready to be revealed. Am I ready for miracles? Remember that a miracle is a shift in perception from fear to love. It is a change of mind from seeing through a darkened lens to seeing through a viewpoint of forgiveness and love. And it is being present to what is before me, aware of the Beauty, Joy, and Abundance that is already mine. We are being called to join together to heal our hearts and minds, and to shift our focus from crisis thinking to miracle mindedness.

Here is a simple practice that can bring you back to the here and now, to mindfulness, and to help in the cultivating of miracles. Let’s join together and take some deep breaths, to connect, to breathe as one.

Breathe in peace, exhale any tension or anxiety that you might be feeling. Breathe in health and Wholeness, exhale any sense of dis-ease anything unlike Wholeness. Breathe in love, exhale fear. Breathe in light, exhale darkness. Breathe in joy, let go of sadness. Breathe in faith, let go of doubt. Breathe in safety, exhale safety. Breathe in peace, exhale peace. Breath in love, exhale love. Breath in light, exhale light. Breath in faith, exhale faith.

And in this moment of Peaceful and Powerful connection with my Highest Knowing, in this place of deep communion with my Source, I know that this that I Am feeling...is all that is... (prayer to be continued)