

## Joyful Expression of My Highest Self

June 28, 2020

Good morning. If you have been attending our services, you know that our theme for the month of June is Joyful Expression. I am not talking about Joy as an emotion, like happiness. I'm talking about Joy as a quality of God, as a Spiritual Truth, as the deep and abiding sense that all is exactly as it is supposed to be, that ultimately, Infinite Intelligence is using all for Good, no matter what it looks like to us. And lately it's looking a little messy, yes?

A couple of weeks ago I compared Joy to Grace...which I defined as a radical, transformative energy that has no sense of duality. Grace is the activity of Divine Intelligence, the free flow of Life, removing the obstacles, or moving us around them, like water flowing downstream. So putting them side by side, Joy is the deep knowing that all is unfolding in Divine Order, and Grace is the Divine Order unfolding.

Today I'm going to wrap up the month by talking about Joyful Expression as My Highest Self. But first, I'd like to invite us to acknowledge each member of our Beloved Community...to appreciate the fact that we are now able to expand our connection with one another across the globe...and to give thanks for the miracle of technology that brings us together.

(Meditation adapted from the work of Craig Hamilton.) Let's take a moment to take a couple of deep breaths, and with each out-breath just allow the cares and concerns of the morning to fade away, to drift into the background...feel into this moment together, into the gathering of this sacred community.

And visualize with me a global web of little nodes of consciousness all connected across the planet, all beings who in this moment, might be sitting in meditation or prayer, might be attending their own sacred services...acknowledging the Presence of the Divine...and holding each one of us, consciously connected through this celebration today...Feeling the collective intention that brought us here...Feeling the impulse to grow and evolve that's awakening in all of us.

Allow yourself to sense into the sacred nature of this impulse and how meaningful it is that so many of us feel it and have made the commitment to deepen our awareness of the Divine, our relationship to It, and our ability and willingness to live as an expression of It. Take another moment to rest in that awareness, to feel united in that intention, in knowing that we're not alone, that something is waking up within us...and something is waking up that is much bigger than we are...and give thanks for the privilege to be a part of it.

Doesn't that feel good? When I feel that sensation, that place of deep awareness and connection...this is when I feel the God's Joyful Expression as my Highest Self.

So, I have a question for myself, and for you if you wish – Why am I doing this? Devoting so much of my energy to spiritual growth? It's easy to begin doing something, like consciously stepping

onto the Spiritual Path, and to forget why we are doing it. Take a moment to think about the question...

From my perspective, there are three main reasons to put my energy into personal and spiritual growth, and ultimately into Spiritual Liberation. And it doesn't really matter which one is motivating me, because ultimately, they are three parts of one whole...no matter where I start, I will eventually experience all three.

So, first I may sense that there is a bigger, of more optimal life that I am meant to live, a potential I am here to fulfill, a level of Peace, Joy, Beauty, Abundance and Freedom that I am here to experience. And participation in spiritual work is helping to move me in the direction of that ideal human experience. This is a personal perspective, perfectly viable.

The second reason is that I may want to help create a paradigm shift for humanity. I may understand that because we are One Whole, One Unity, whatever work I do on my personal self automatically has a positive impact on the global consciousness. This is more of a global perspective. Also a perfectly viable motivation.

Or the third reason...maybe I am aware that there is some Higher Divine Being or Energy and I want to surrender to It so that I will be guided by Its Wisdom and Intelligence. This is more of a spiritual perspective. The important thing is to know which one is driving you and stay with it... it has the most juice for you.

And as I said, they are all equal, all a part of the Whole, each one leading to the others.

I can only speak for myself. With all that is unfolding in the world right now, I am called to Deeper Spiritual Work. I see this as the one thing I can do to make the biggest difference. And I'd like to share with you why I believe this is true.

For quite some time now, I have sensed a profound potential in humanity, not only for each individual to grow and expand, but ultimately for a different order of being human to emerge. I see this as a real possibility...that humanity's higher nature comes forth out of the darkness and begins to lead. And more than anything, I want to participate in that higher emergence. And I also know that in the midst of my over-committed modern life, it's hard to give this higher calling the importance that it deserves.

Sometimes it's not even busy-ness that gets in the way...it's distraction. It's not feeling like getting out of bed when the alarm goes off. It's lack of discipline.

Prioritizing the thing that ultimately matters most can be a very challenging thing...to consistently put it first. Do you find this to be true, or is it only me? So, I thought I would begin this journey by speaking a bit about why our evolution matters. I want to clarify what I mean by the word evolution. When I talk about my personal or spiritual growth, awakening, or enlightenment, I can tend to see that in a small context, a personal context. It's about me and my personal fulfillment, my personal change process, which is important and is obviously part of what we're here to do.

I'm using the word evolution because it's my conviction that when I am doing my work, I'm not just changing myself. I am consciously participating in the evolution of the Whole. When I engage in work to transform myself, there's an evolutionary significance to it. The Principle of Unity guarantees that what I am doing has a cosmic impact. I am called to Deeper Spiritual Work because from where I sit, it seems like we're at a critical moment for humanity, for consciousness, and for the evolutionary process itself.

Up until fairly recently, our evolution has been a largely mechanical or unconscious process of adaptation, and a game of survival. Think about the evolution of this cosmos that started 13.7 billion years ago...the organization into galaxies and solar systems and ultimately into planets where biological evolution, living things could emerge and evolve. And from there, the evolution of culture as self-reflective human consciousness came into the picture.

So, there's been one process going on for 13.7 billion years. And if we look at that whole process, up until a few minutes ago in cosmic time, evolution was just moving along mechanically, according to a set of natural laws and Spiritual Principles, and effortlessly unfolding this miraculous process we call life.

What much of humanity has yet to recognize is that two things are happening right now that are changing the entire game. For one, human beings are waking up . . . to our potential to consciously evolve, which means to actively participate in the evolutionary process, to co-create the future. We do this through self-reflection and choice. We can understand the evolutionary process, to see its trend and trajectory and to get a sense of where it needs to go next. We could say that the universe is becoming self-aware as us. And then we have the capacity and the freedom to choose, and are choosing (consciously or unconsciously) which direction to go. Either way, our choices have an impact.

We have the capacity to understand that evolution moves in the direction of complexity, towards a direction of higher level of organization, higher levels of unity... a consistent movement toward cooperation, toward smaller parts coming together into larger grouping. As conscious choosers in the process, we can say we want to do this and not that. Suddenly evolution has become dynamic...instead of moving along slowly and mechanically, it is being accelerated. And as we wake up, we're realizing we can influence the acceleration. The implications of that are unimaginably profound, aren't they?

The other thing that's happening is that for the first time in human history, a larger number of us have been freed from survival consciousness. Right? In cosmic time it was only yesterday that we came out of survival consciousness. If you look around you at the world we're living in, and especially those of us drawn to a community like this, we no longer need to worry about the basics of life. There are a large mass of us that are now interested in higher thriving. We're exploring our potentials individually and collectively. We're trying to make the world a better place. We're trying to become more conscious and enlightened ourselves. We're trying to evolve culture, which means the shared agreements and values that we live by. But it's not working very smoothly at the moment, is it? What is it that's getting in our way? I believe it's our perspective.

Currently, it is our nature is to think small, to think and relate to life in local, very personal framework. Why?

Because for about 45,000 years, the modern human mind, until very recently, perceived everything in a very small, local context. There was no notion of global, of the world. There was no idea about large spans of time, right? And now we're facing situations and conditions that require us to transcend radically and begin to think and relate to life in a completely different way. We are at a pivotal time in our history...we still think small... we can be narrow-minded. Even when I look at my spiritual life, my personal life, I tend to think in terms of what's in it for me. "I want to feel that spiritual feeling of connection all the time."

And there's nothing wrong with that. It's natural. It's part of the evolutionary impulse, the Divine Impulse, and we all should have happier, more fulfilled, more centered, more peaceful lives. And if we do real spiritual work, we will. The problem is the quest for self-fulfillment is just too small a context. It's too small a motivation to really set meaningful change in motion. It's not going to propel us to radically evolve beyond our ego or to undergo an authentic spiritual awakening and transformation.

So what do we do? Spiritual teacher Craig Hamilton says that, "We need to find a way to think big, to feel big, to live big, which means that we need to rise out of our little selves with our small concerns, our petty desires, our fears and our dramas, and we need to begin to hold a larger perspective on what we're doing.... our human nature is stuck in the Stone Age". He's talking about how our instinctual drives, our habitual reactive responses to the circumstances of life are outdated by tens of thousands of years. They made sense when life was only about survival of you and your genes, but they don't make sense anymore.

What he's speaking to in 21st Century language is what the mystics of every age and tradition have spoken of...calling on that Higher Power within to propel us forward. This is what Ernest Holmes was pointing to when he spoke of Emergent Evolution. He said, "Evolution is the passing of Spirit into form... Emergent Evolution...takes place from the necessity of the condition. When we needed fingers, we grew them." And it seems to me that we are experiencing a necessary set of conditions, calling us to a Higher Humanity.

I sense that all of us here, listening to a message like this, sense a possibility for human beings to live together in a cooperative way, right? We sense the potential for a highly creative, thriving society where all of us are empowered to give our gifts and to evolve to our full potential. We know as we look at our amazing planet that with God's Infinite Abundance, there is a way for all beings to have their needs met. And we know that as Love and Peace are qualities of Spirit, given by Divine Birthright, that there is a way to live lives free of fear and violence.

I believe we all sense that there's a completely different order of being human that's possible, and that when enough of us step into it together, we will give birth to an authentic, enlightened humanity and culture that could be the solution to everything that ails us as a human community...that we could solve all the problems...maybe not all at once, but all the obstacles to

solving them would be removed. Feel into the possibility. Doesn't it feel good? And what are the obstacles in our way? Our primitive, unevolved nature. I believe that there is only one way that we will be able to accomplish this amazing feat... the actual evolving of human nature into its Divine Expression. We must call forth a deeper motivation through Deeper Practice.

We can try to change society in a million ways outward ways, and of course we should do what we can. But unless we actually evolve what it is to be a human being, we're going to have the same problems that have faced all societies since the beginning of recorded time. Do you see that as I call forth the Joyful Expression of my Highest Self, I become a completely different kind of human being that's driven by a completely different set of motivations, that's grounded in an open-hearted perspective, that's anchored in a Source of Wisdom that arises from somewhere mysterious. I become a dynamic, spiritually charged, creative presence that's capable of functioning in this world in a way that's unbound by all the primitive conditioning of our animal past.

And from this place of Deeper Motivation and Deeper Practice, I find that my personal life is transformed in ways I couldn't even have imagined. I find that the work I do to make the world a better place is Divinely Guided and comes from a deep sense of love and compassion. And my Spiritual Connection and Expression become my way of being. And what I am, that is what I experience. What do you think? Are you ready to join me?