

Drawing Strength From the Past

Sunday, January 30, 2022 Taizé



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Lucinda Alton, RScP with Sherri Dotter, RScP

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Opening Prayer – Sherri

Introduction – Lucinda

Good morning. My name is Lucinda Alton, Prayer Practitioner here at Mystic Heart Spiritual Center. Welcome Home to our Beloved Community, and welcome Home to your own Mystic Heart.

Lucinda

This month we are *Beginning Anew*. Today we will be taking a look at what kind of gifts the past has for us as we move forward.

Let's begin by relaxing. Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so, and take a slow deep breath breathing in peace. Release your breath, breathing out joy. Breathing in peace, breathing out love.

In your mind's eye, see yourself surrounded by energy. Feel that energy sinking into your body, starting with your scalp. As the energy flows through your body, feel yourself relaxing. As the energy flows smoothly in, feel your scalp relaxing. Your eyes are loosely closed. Feel your ears relaxing. Your jaws. Your neck. Your shoulders and arms relax against the chair. Your chest...your abdomen. Feel your back relaxing, releasing any tension you may be holding. Feel your thighs relaxing...Your calves. Feel your feet relaxing as you feel the energy flowing from you to deep within the earth.

In your relaxed state, join me in recognizing that we are all connected to each other. Each of us a perfect manifestation of the One. In your mind, see the web that connects us. A gossamer web, a delicate looking web that is unbreakable. Humans, plants, animals...we are all connected. We are a Global Community made up of countless bright sparks of light. Each of us a point of God's radiant light. Each point individual, each different than any other point of light. And the absence of even one of those points would dim the overall light. I stand in awe and gratitude as I contemplate this web of God.

Feel this connection that we have to each other as we share a heartfelt intention for our time together.

We are caretakers of the earth's animal, plants, and nature's working systems. We acknowledge our responsibility to one another as human family and to nature's delicate ecosystems that are so necessary to mother earth, our home.

As humans, we know that sometimes taking a look at the past is the best way to know how to move forward. We can Draw Strength From the Past to help us on our way. As Steve Jobs stated in his 2005 commencement address for Stanford University:

You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future. You have to trust in something - your gut, destiny, life, karma, whatever. This approach has never let me down, and it has made all the difference in my life.

SILENCE – 1 Minute – Bell

Lucinda

Before we go any further, I want to caution against spending too much time in examination of the past. We want to be sure that we do not carry our past traumas forward to become our present or our future. As an example of how our past can become our present and our future if we aren't careful, in her book "Why People Don't Heal and How They Can, Caroline Myss talks about a time when her friend was asked if she would be able to give someone a ride on a certain date and the friend became furious because the man was unknowingly asking her for help during the time when her support group for a childhood trauma was scheduled to meet. She had created a family for herself as a victim of her past.

As Rev. Diana said:

While there are benefits to looking back and carrying the blessings forward...giving thanks for all we have experienced, bringing us to where we are here and now...we also do ourselves a disservice when we claim who we have been in the past as who we are now. This is a way of bringing the past into the future that limits who we can be/become and what we can have and experience going forward.


We need to leave the past in the past.

So, how can past experience serve us? Well, we can ask ourselves questions like:

What was this experience trying to show me?



It's possible that a past experience taught you how to stand up for yourself. A bad experience might have taught you how to endure many things without losing hope, without giving up. Might have helped you become stronger. A past loss or near loss might have been trying to show you the importance of being grateful for what each day brings.

 I think that when we ask this kind of question, we too often look at negative experiences. A past experience might have taught you how to trust. A past experience might have taught you how to fully engage in playing, enjoying yourself. How to dance without caring if anyone is looking or not. A positive past experience might have helped you develop confidence.


Maya Angelou said:


I have great respect for the past. If you don't know where you've come from, you don't know where you're going. I have respect for the past, but I'm a person of the moment. I'm here, and I do my best to be completely centered at the place I'm at, then I go forward to the next place.


You might ask: how has this experience changed me?


Greek Philosopher Heraclitus said, “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.”

One of the things that can happen in less than positive experiences is that you develop what might be called survival skills.

 And that might look like being funny – being able to make others laugh without “trying.”

 Or you might have developed hyperawareness – always looking over your shoulder.

 You might have become a caretaker – always making sure that everyone else is happy, even at your own expense.

 You might have become convinced that you are useless, ugly – less than.

The trick here is to release the behaviors that no longer serve you, while retaining the behaviors that do. For instance, let go of the hyper-awareness, the belief that you are somehow less than anyone else – but maintain your sense of humor and the ability to make others laugh.

Chant – *Blessing to the World*, Karen Drucker

Musical Meditation – *How Could Anyone* - Shaina Noll

SILENCE – 1 Minute – Bell

Lucinda

Another question you might ask of a past experience is how am I stronger now?

We know that each experience changes you, helps to shape the person you are becoming. So what are the strengths that past experience might have given you?

From past experiences of not giving up, you may have developed resilience, patience, perseverance. Sometimes a less than positive experience can teach us compassion, empathy.

I once asked a suicidal client if she was willing to believe that she might one day be able to see a gift as a result of her experience. Her response was to oh so very politely tell me that she didn't think so. And, as a result of my experience, I was able to say, "Well, at least you answered that question a lot more politely than I did." And we both laughed. Being able to use the humor that I had developed helped me to begin to help her.

When we are in the middle of a situation, it can seem like it's never going to end. But all things come to pass. And when we do the work of not only acknowledging those experiences and looking for the gifts but also in releasing them, we not only grow ourselves spiritually, but we also help ourselves in many ways that we may not even be aware of.

In an article written for Gaiam magazine, Deepak Chopra says:

It's not easy to deal with painful emotions head-on. But it's a key to good health and well-being physically, mentally, and spiritually. If we don't deal with pain when it occurs, it will resurface as compounded emotional toxicity later on — showing up as insomnia, hostility, and anger, or fear and anxiety.

As a further complication, if you don't know how to deal with feelings of anger and fear, you're likely to turn them inward at yourself, believing, "It's all my fault." That guilt depletes our physical, emotional, and spiritual energy until any initiative or movement feels impossible. We feel exhausted and paralyzed, leading to depression.

An article on the website: FamilyDoctor.org, states that:

Your body responds to the way you think, feel, and act. This is one type of "mind/body connection." When you are stressed, anxious, or upset, your body reacts in a way that might tell you that something isn't right. For example, you might develop high blood pressure or a stomach ulcer after a particularly stressful event, such as the death of a loved one.

So how do we go about releasing an experience? We start by acknowledging that it happened to us. Yes, this was my experience.

We explore it, looking for the hidden gifts.

And then through meditation and prayer, we release it. An internet search on releasing emotions with meditation will give a variety of options.

And with each release of each challenging experience, we feel lighter.

Sherri – Meditation

Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so, and take a slow deep breath...

breathing in peace... Release your breath...breathing out joy. Breathing in peace...breathing out love.

In your mind's eye, see a door in front of you...Go through the door and you find yourself on a path...follow the path, noting that it is a beautiful day...the path leads to a park on the side of a lake...There is a bench facing the lake and you can see that there is someone sitting there...when you are closer, you realize that this person is you from a challenging time in your life...sit down on the bench...it seems that former you has something to say to you...Listen carefully, listen deeply...what are the gifts that have arisen from your challenges?

Silence – 3:00

As the music to gently begins, ask this version of you what you need to release from this experience.... Thank your former self, then return to the room, and relax...allowing yourself to enjoy the gifts you have received from your past self...knowing that it is ok to let that go now.

I invite you to know with me that Spirit is moving powerfully through each of us, and through each of our lives, and through our Beloved Community... Individually and collectively, we are a powerful spiritual influence on our world... As we evolve in consciousness, the benefits of our growth ripple out, blessing the entire world...

Opening our hearts, and opening our minds, we gather the blessings of the past. We Draw Strength from the past and open to a greater good than we have ever before envisioned as we face the future, ready to take part in the growth of our Beloved Community and all of the good that the future brings.

Lucinda

Keeping your eyes closed, check in with your body and allow yourself to relax. See the energy flowing through your body. And as it flows through, see the new energy pulling out all of the used-up energy, feel yourself being cleansed of all the energies, behaviors, and experiences that no longer serve you.' Thank them and release them. You don't need them anymore. And as you release the old from your body, feel all of the empty space being filled by vibrant new energy. New possibilities, new experiences...new growth...ready to meet the totally awesome human being that you are.

Musical Meditation – *It's a Joy to Get to Know You*, Shaina Noll

Lucinda – Moving Into Celebration

For your homework this week, notice which experiences – both great and not so great - have an impact on you. Ask what each is trying to tell you. It might be as simple a message as a reminder to stop and enjoy the moment. And ask each one what gifts they have for you.

Please join me in envisioning a world where there is plenty of food, including dessert for everyone to eat. A world where each person's needs are met daily. A world where each person is valued for exactly who they choose to be, where differences are celebrated. A world of peace and joy.

Please let my words speak for you:

There is one Source of each and every person, place, object, and experience. A Source for whom there can be no impossibilities and no lack. And as I stand here in this moment, I am deeply grateful knowing that that is the energy that flows through me and through each one here as each of us.

I am grateful for the gifts that I have been given. Grateful for my God having my back as I travel this life. Grateful because I know that all is exactly as it needs to be in this moment of time. Knowing that each experience turns out in the highest and greatest interest of all.

And I say thank you, Father, Mother, God. And so it is...Amen

Please repeat after me as together we affirm...

There is Power in our Prayer...

There is Power in our Vision...

We are creating a more beautiful and peaceful world....

Right here and right now...

And so it is! Amen!

We can sometimes become “stuck” when releasing an experience. Please know that the Practitioners are here for you if you need prayer support in getting through to the gift, or for any reason.

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Each Sunday, we invite you to join in the celebration of the work we are doing in the world by sharing of your financial Good, should you choose to. And we are definitely in awe of your generosity.

If you are at home, you can go to **mysticheart.org** to use our Donate Button or to find our mailing address.

We also have a Gracious Giving Program for those who would like to make a heartfelt monthly commitment of support so that we can more effectively plan for our growth and our monthly spending. I would be happy to give you more information.

As we move into this time of giving, let these words come from your heart, knowing the Power of your word; and please feel our deep appreciation for your gifts:


As I awaken to the God within me and all around me, I see Abundance everywhere I look. I consciously step into that flow of Abundance by this act of giving. I bless this gift, sending it forth to heal and prosper. It is evidence of my deep faith. It does good work in the world and blesses all of Creation. I give from a consciousness of Abundance! And so it is! Amen!

Offertory Video: Please enjoy a blast from the past as the One Voice Children's Choir sings Chiquitita. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCMBF7A4JPA>


Gratitude Prayer – Sherri and Lucinda

Invitations – Sherri

 **Tuesdays, 3-5 pm – Michael Bordeaux's Book Club.** The current book is *Church of the Wild: How Nature* by Victoria Loorz.

 **Thursdays, 3-5 pm – Metaphysical Bible** led by Prayer Practitioner Chris Johnson. No knowledge of the Bible is necessary. Drop-ins are welcome.

 **Saturday, February 5th, 10 am – 1 pm: Mystic Morning Brew, with Lucinda Alton, RScP. What Are You Planting?**

 ***Shrink Your Carbon Footprint, Gently-Used Treasures Sale!*** Got stuff? Contact Kris Fortier for how you can get involved with our April 30th Parking Lot Sale.

 *Keep Your Eyes on the weekly announcements... more new activities to come!*

If you'd like prayer support, we have prayer request cards and envelopes on the fireplace, as well. If you would like to meet with a Prayer Practitioner in person, I am available for a quick prayer after the service.

Or contact one of the Mystic Heart Practitioners for a full Session during the week. Our contact information is listed in the bulletin and on our website, as are all of the Mystic Heart events and activities.

To continue the celebration, there is food and fellowship next door immediately following the service. So let's stand and sing our closing song.

Closing Song: *Love Be with You*, written by Lainey Bernstein, RScP and Gary Lynn Floyd

Close of Service