

How Did I Get Here?

June 18, 2023

Lucinda Alton, RScP, with Sherri Dotter, RScP,
and musician Gary French



A Beloved Community
Practicing the Possible Through Prayer

Taizé

Call to Awareness – 3 Bells

Sherri – Opening Prayer

Lucinda – Good Morning and welcome...and good morning to you in the Zoom Room, Facebook or wherever you are watching from. If you're new with us here this morning, my name is Lucinda Alton, and I am a Prayer Practitioner and Ministerial trainee here at Mystical Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. I welcome you home to your Spiritual Community (should you choose it). I welcome you home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Our theme for the month is **You Are Here**. Today we are contemplating **How Did I Get Here?**

We begin our meditative journey this morning by joining our voices, deepening our intimate Connection in Spirit.

Gary – Taizé Chants

 **Welcome Home to Your Mystic Heart, written by Diana & Chris Johnson**

 **I Am So Blessed, written by Karen Drucker**

Lucinda – Each of us is so blessed, right here in this moment, by the breath moving into and out of our bodies...by the gift of Life...feeling the Presence of Love, expanding within me with every in-breath...and flowing out into the world on the outbreath, creating an atmosphere of Lovingkindness...Compassion...Peace (Pause)...allowing awareness to move away from the breath and into the stillness...feeling the Presence of the Divine...and acknowledging our Oneness with the global community...

Sensing the Divine Intelligence that surrounds and infuses the planet, each of us a Radiant Spark within that Consciousness...every human, every creature, every plant...

...the rocks and minerals, water and wind, stars, and planets...infused with Spirit's Light...each one, a perfect and intentional expression of one ever-present, all-pervasive Life. Take just a moment and feel *that*. Feel the Divine Presence that emanates from you out to your surroundings and from your surroundings back to you.

We empower our Collective Work by acknowledging our connection with all that is...we are a powerful Force for Good. Our collective prayer and meditation leave an imprint of Peace, of Love, of Grace, on human evolution, and on the world, for all time.

Knowing that everything happens in the mind of God, I know that each of these is God experiencing that existence... From what it is like to be a rock...a flower...an animal...to what it is to be each human with our free will and the many choices available to us. To lightly paraphrase Ernest Holmes: "There is one Life, that Life is God's Life, that Life is perfect, that Life is my life now.

Each of us is blessed daily...From the moment we wake up and take our first breath of the day to the moment we fall asleep...We have choices on how our day will proceed...We can choose how to start our day – with peace and gratitude, or with haste...there are many ways just to start our day and many choices throughout the day...Sometimes our choice is simply whether to react or to respond...But there is one thing that we can always depend on – we are loved and supported in all of our choices.

Every day, we make choices on things like how to respond and what actions to take. As Victor Frankl said, "Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation."

A simple example would be: As a child, our parents make the decisions. Our parents choose actions. So, maybe our parents chose to move to another area. We have two choices. We can choose to be unhappy about what we will be leaving behind...or, we can choose to be excited about our new home. As we grow older, the choices become more complex. There are, of course, choices about how we want to support ourselves – do we go to school to gain new skills, or do we start looking for work immediately? Where will we live? And we make decisions on how to treat other people and other living beings. With each choice and action, we are building a path to our future selves.

As we begin to mature, we often begin to examine the past. In a talk last year, I spoke about examining past experiences to look for the gifts of each experience. For instance, my sense of humor began as a survival technique. I also talked about the importance of not getting stuck in those experiences. Meaning that the past does not need to become our identity. I want to say that support groups can be an important tool in our growth. But, for some, support groups can become a place to be stuck in victimhood. "I was a victim of this experience and this group of people who understand have become my family. I can't change because (insert reason here)."

Last week, Rev. Diana spoke of self-reflection in terms of things like "What do I have to offer?" And a lot of times, our response would be something along the lines of, "I had this experience, or I was the victim of this experience, and I am too hurt, or angry or some other negative emotion. So, I have nothing to give." This is often where self-reflection can turn to the past and our part in it.

We have some choices with regard to the past. Some people try to change it. One of my aunts told me that she was involved with a meditation group, and they were working on being able to change past events.

We can try to ignore it. Pretend it didn't happen. One of the women I used to know actually managed to forget certain things from her past. As far as she was consciously concerned, it never happened.

In addition to the victimhood choice I talked about earlier, we can stay hooked into the past because – even though it's uncomfortable – it's familiar.

The problem with these choices is that we are not letting go of our hold on the past...and its hold on us. When we try to not deal with the past and our feelings about it, we are burying it. And that can lead to a worsening of our experience – including becoming physically ill.

Instead of trying various ways of trying to run from the past, we can choose to believe as Maya Angelou "You did then what you knew how to do, and when you knew better, you did better." We can choose to stop beating ourselves up over the past. We can choose to stop trying to pretend that the past didn't happen. We can look for the gifts that past experiences hold for us. We can look for the lessons that the past has for us. The past is a part of us. It helped make each of us who and what we are today. But we do not have to allow the past to determine who we will be in the future. We can change direction and make new choices.

Sherri – Guided Meditation

Take a deep breath, breathing in love...and release it, breathing out peace...Take another deep breath, breathing in love...and release it, breathing out peace...If your eyes aren't closed, allow them to close...Feel yourself relaxing...Allow the chair to take your weight...In your mind's eye, you find yourself standing at the beginning of a path in the woods...There is someone standing with you...Someone you regard as a wise and loving Presence...You can feel the peace and love of the Divine flowing to you from all directions as the two of you begin to walk...The path continues on for as far as you can see... Your companion asks of there is a past experience you need to take a new look at...After a minute, you see a small clearing to your left...You look into the clearing and see an experience from your past...You are observing with the eyes of experience...You know that there is no need for justification or judgement here. Just self-honesty. Did you make any decisions based on this experience that...Does observing it now change your perspective...Is there anything about this experience that you have been holding on to that you can release now...After a few minutes, you continue down the path...You come upon a clearing to the right...and another experience...You stay on the path for a few minutes, observing.

Silence - 3:00

After a while, you realize that it is time to leave...You can continue another time if you choose...but it's best to take some time to contemplate any observations you may have made...give yourself time to contemplate any insights you may have gained...be gentle with yourself...You are not the same person who had that experience...who made that choice...Take a deep breath, breathing in peace...and release it, breathing out love...We cannot change the past, but we can learn from it...The past brought us to where we are right now in this moment...but we don't have to let the past dictate where we will go from here...We have choices.

Lucinda In his novel **The Zahir**, Paulo Coelho says, "It is always important to know when something has reached its end. Closing circles, shutting doors, finishing chapters, it doesn't matter what we call it; what matters is to leave in the past those moments in life that are over." As the past has led us to this moment, it can be important to look at it for any gifts that can be recognized or knowledge to be gleaned, but it is also just as important to release it. Only by letting go of the past can we be truly free to step into the future.

Take a moment to think about your life, where you are right now. Moving into the future can be scary. It can mean making some hard decisions, maybe stepping out of our comfort zone. But you have tools to help you. Prayer, meditation, studying the ideas of those who have come before. And if you feel stuck, the Practitioners are always ready to help with prayer.

And there are some tools that we can develop and use. Intuition. When we use prayer and meditation, we are asking questions. When I started this talk, I spoke of the guidance and wisdom of your own heart. When we ask questions, the answers will come from within us. We can take the time to learn to listen for an answer, for our own intuition to answer.

Another tool that we can develop is faith. Sometimes we don't like what we are hearing. So we can ask again and listen deeply. We may not like the answer, but we can learn to have faith that the God that lives within us as us always has our best interests at heart.

We can learn to trust our own inner wisdom.

Video: *Trust Your Timing*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SB5SEYTn5N8>

Lucinda Along with this song, Fearless Soul pinned the message: "LET GO of how you THINK life should be. Enjoy life NOW. Cherish NOW." Rev. Diana spoke of dancing. And we do. But even when we aren't comfortable with getting up and dancing, we can always let our hearts dance. That can only happen in those moments when we are fully present. Only by living in the present moment can we enjoy life to its fullest. But, as Rev. Diana would also say, that's a different talk.

So, we know that the past brought us to this moment, but what comes next? We have choices. We choose the future with each decision we make, and every action we take.

Lucinda – Please close your eyes and allow yourself to relax. Take a deep breath, breathing in love...and release it, bring in peace...know that you are loved...you are enough...you have value...you are always supported by God, even in those times when it might not feel like it.

Silence

In this one perfect moment, I allow myself to feel the loving support of God, moving through my life. And I feel that love emanating back to me from all that I see, touch, and feel. Knowing that part of the support of the Divine is that God always says yes, I make conscious decisions. When I have an important choice to make, I listen for the small voice within. And I know that unlike a Genie in a bottle that only gives us 3 choices, life gives us unlimited choices. And the God Presence within each of us is always available for consultation in prayer. Speaking my words and deeply knowing that they are true, I say thank you, Father, Mother, God. And so it is. Amen. Sathu.

Lucinda – Coming back into this space, we open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds. Take a look at who is here celebrating with you this morning. This is your Spiritual Family...one of your support systems if you choose to accept.

As we close our Taizé Meditation, we offer the opportunity for you to share of your financial good in support of the work we do should you choose to do so. If you're joining us online, you can find a Donate Button and our mailing address at mysticheart.org. And we thank you in advance for your gifts.

Gary – Offertory Song

 ***Be Thou My Vision, Traditional Irish Hymn***

Lucinda – Blessing for the Offering

Thank you for being here. If you are staying for the next service and lunch, we will come back and begin our Conscious Conversation at 10:30.

Gary – Closing Song

 ***A Soul's Blessing, written by Chris Johnson***

Conscious Conversation

Sherri – Opening Prayer

Lucinda Good Morning and welcome...or welcome back. And good morning to you in the Zoom Room, Facebook or wherever you are watching from. If you're new with us here this morning, my name is Lucinda Alton, and I am a Prayer Practitioner and Ministerial trainee for Mystical Heart Spiritual Center. We are an Interfaith Community that teaches Universal Principles and Practical Spirituality. I welcome you home to our Spiritual Community (should you choose it). I welcome you home to the Guidance and Wisdom of your own Mystic Heart.

Gary – Re-Opening Music

 **Welcome to the Mystic Heart, written by Diana & Chris Johnson**

 **One Big Family, written by Robin Hackett & Gary Lynn Floyd**

Lucinda – Please join me in the Sacred Practice of envisioning a **Love-Soaked World...**

...where all humans embody and live from Peace, Joy, Abundance, Generosity, Justice, and Freedom as Living Principles, practicing Love, Kindness, and Compassion, honoring, and caring for one another, and for our beautiful planet.

We are creating a world where all needs are met...where all beings have plenty of nourishing food, the safety and comfort of home however that might appear to each person...where mental/physical health, education, and healthy relationships are ensured by social systems grounded in Wellness and Wholeness...and complete faith that as there are no limits in God there is no need for limits for each of us.

...where all beings Serve the greater community doing what feeds their souls and are well supported for their time and talent...and in their Service, each one finds a sense of belonging...A world in which all beings are valued and respected for their uniqueness...where Authenticity and Integrity are the norm...where the Peace and Kindness we cultivate within shows up as a world free of hatred or violence.

We are creating a world that knows no greed, where there is abundance in having *enough*...where every being *deserves* and *receives* all that is needed for a full, rich, and contented life. By the Power of our collective intention, we write a new story...

We *do not* lower our Vision, no matter the appearances in the world, knowing with our whole hearts that such a world is not only possible, but *inevitable*. We align our actions to support our vision, and a new world is born.

We open our hearts, our minds, our doors, and our arms in Radical Welcome, erasing all lines of apparent separation. In keeping with our Vision, we create an open and loving community to which all are invited, and *in* which all have an equal voice. Trusting in the power of prayer, we call it done, and in Deep Gratitude, release it now to the Living, Loving, Lawful Presence. And so it is...Amen...Sathu...Ashay...Aho!

Let's take a moment to look around and notice who is sharing this space with you this morning...your Spiritual Family should you wish. These are some of the people who care about you. You can count on their support.

If you were with us at Taizé this morning, you know that we have been considering the idea of **How Did I Get Here?**

This morning during the *Taizé* Service, we discussed the ways in which we choose to view and treat the past.

We talked about how the past – with each decision, choice, and action – has brought us to this present moment.

And we talked about how to handle the past.

So, let me ask this question: How many in this room have incidents in our past that we wish had happened differently? (hold up hand)

Think about an incident from the past. The first thing that comes to mind. What can it tell you? Are you happy with it or can you think of a way you might have handled it differently? And how did that incident lead to new things for you? I'll start. The first thing that pops into my mind is when I didn't get into the master's program I applied for. And I found out that I hadn't gotten in when I went to the office to request another ticket to my graduation ceremony. The secretary threw a stack of papers down on her desk and asked the Program Director about what to do with the letters for the losers. My name was on the top one. I would hope that in the present I would be a little less angry. But I had at least learned how to put myself into a time out. So, I asked them if I should take my letter or if they were going to mail it. This was a total confidentiality issue for the Social Work Department. I called them on it, but they were in the first stages of trying to start a Master's Program. My counselor told me that I could file a complaint, but I refused. The last thing that a brand-new program needs is to be hit with a confidentiality complaint. I just didn't want it to happen again. I'm ok with it.

It was a huge lesson around the fact that sometimes God has other plans for me. And always in my best interest.

So, how about you guys?

Lucinda – Why is it important to leave the past behind?

I ran across an article by Kerry Petsinger that I would like for us to discuss.

1. Her first suggestion is to forgive yourself and others. How will that help the past? And why include yourself?

2. Reframe your thoughts

Reframe your thoughts from negative to positive. For example, saying, "My last relationship ended so badly that I'll never trust anybody again" dwells on the [negative](#). To focus on the positives, you could reframe it to, "My relationship had a rough ending, but I'll work on loving myself and learning how to trust others again so I can have a healthy relationship." **Why is this important and how will it help you to move into the present?**

3. Change your daily habits

Have you felt stuck year after year, and want to ditch your past for a better lifestyle? Try working on your daily habits. Doing what you've always done in the past will likely continue to bring you the same results in the future. If you want to move on from your past and have different outcomes in the future, you'll need to put significant effort into changing how you do things.

How would you guys go about doing this? The first thing that came up for me is to start watching sunrises again.

4. Get out of your comfort zone. So what would this look like? Might it involve the C word? Change.

5. Build an amazing tribe. Look around you at the other people seated in this room. Each of us follows a unique path, and we are all here to help each other in taking the next step. I think we have an amazing tribe. And the best thing about it is that there is always room for more. Chris, Sherri, Rev. Diana, and I are each on unique paths just like anyone else here. And we are here to help support each other and you take the next step. And this line is for me: No matter how scary that next step might look.

Lucinda – Meditation: Being in the now

Closing Prayer

I invite you to bring your awareness back to your body, to your senses, to the atmosphere in the room. And when you are ready, open your eyes to re-enter the space. Welcome back.

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.

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. You can find more information on our website.

As we move into this time of giving, hold these words close to your heart and know how much we appreciate 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 offer this gift freely in the spirit of Love, blessing and 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!

Gary – Offertory Music

 ***This Precious Day, written by Charlie Nimovitz***

Sherri – Blessing for the Offering

Sherri – Brief Invitations

- ♥ **Thursday from 11:00 – 12:15 Kavalya is offering Functional Movement and Yoga in Suite H.**
- ♥ **Support your local farmers, and your own physical health, at the Saturday Farmer's Market every Saturday, 7:30 – noon.**

Looking Ahead...

- ♥ **Wednesday, June 28th from 6 – 8 pm, Common Threads of Truth with Rev. Helen Cummings. The focus of this first presentation in a series will be Buddhism and the Common Threads of Truth it shares with other traditions. There will be Q & A and simple refreshments. Donations are gratefully accepted. Bring a friend!**
- ♥ **Saturday, July 1 from 8:30 – 11:30 am at the Anderson River Park is our next Celebrating Community Fun-Raising Event. April and Maile are hosting and leading a Fishing Excursion! The adventure will include brunch and some instruction/assistance in catching your very own fish! There is room for 8 adults. Suggested donation is \$20. Children are welcome, as well...this is a family event. Please text April at 1-562-440-3785 for more information, meeting place, etc. Tickets are available today!**
- ♥ **The Mystic Heart Book Club will reconvene on July 11th with Rev. Diana. We'll be reading *The Essential Path* by Neale Donald Walsch (while Michael is on vacation).**
- ♥ **Friday, July 21st, 9 am – 4 pm – join Mystic OAKS as we visit the Shasta Abbey and Sisson Museum in Mt. Shasta. Please contact Chris Netto at nettowoman@gmail.com for more information.**

Prayer Requests, Practitioner available after service, Information Cards if new people

Gary – Closing Song

- ♥ **Love Be With You, written by Lainey Bernstein, RScP, & Gary Lynn Floyd**



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