



Personal Spirituality

An A.R.E. Membership Benefit
Association for Research and Enlightenment
215 67th Street
Virginia Beach, VA 23451

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Personal Spirituality

Henry Reed, Editor

Opportunity

Our Affirmation for January

On affirmation sets an intention for an idealized pattern of experience that we intend to adopt. The affirmations that we publish monthly in our *Personal Spirituality* newsletter come from the 24 affirmations that Edgar Cayce gave, from the viewpoint of his mystically inspired "sleeping" state, to accompany the *Search for God* study group material. These 24 lessons in practical spirituality begin with a lesson on cooperation and then move on to build an applied program of development. Each chapter explores a theme expressed in that lesson's affirmation. This January we use the affirmation from the first lesson in Book Two, "Opportunity."

What ideas does the affirmation evoke in you? Does it inspire any particular attitude, or nudge you toward any particular action? In the *Search for God* chapter, Cayce defines opportunity as "a physical manifestation of a spiritual ideal." One interpretation of this definition is that

"An opportunity is a physical manifesation of a spiritual ideal." Edgar Cayce

we create our own opportunities by the values we hold. Say we are having an argument with someone. If we are holding the ideal of self-expression, we will see an opportunity for validation. If we are holding the ideal of peace, we will see an opportunity for creating harmony.

The New Year is a special opportunity for a fresh start. It is a time of new beginnings. As you contemplate your New Year's resolutions, what ideal would you want to create your opportunities this year? ❖



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The "Opportunity" Affirmation

In seeking to magnify Thy Name, Thy Glory, through that Thou dost make manifest in me, O Lord, be Thou the Guide, and—day by day, as the opportunity is given—let my hands, my mind, my body, do that Thou wouldst have me do as Thine own in the earth; for, as I manifest, may Thy glory become known to those through the love, the promises Thou hast made in Thy Son.

Be Alert Can You Be So Kind?

Martin Luther King once said, "We are all tied together in a single garment of destiny, an inescapable network of mutuality."

Spirituality is our personal response to that mutuality, and opportunities to express our spirituality come in all forms, many of them asking for simple acts of kindness. If we are alert, we will notice that we are offered many chances to practice kindness. In the book *A Short Course in Kindness: A Little Book on the Importance of Love and the Relative Unimportance of Just about Everything Else* (L. M. Press), author Margot Silk Forest notes that kindness is not simply being nice:

"Being kind is going to a gory stalker movie (which I loathe) because a lonely friend really, really wants me to. Being kind is inviting that person over to dinner or taking a hike together."



Why Worry When You Can Pray?

By Lorrie Kazan



Lorrie Kazan is a member of the A.R.E. panel of cooperating psychics. Her website is www.lorriekazan.com

Sometimes good comes from the worst situations. It had been a time in my life that was filled with loss, and yet I had been rewarded with a partial scholarship to the Aspen Writers' Conference. This annual event had been magical for me in the past, but this year proved a challenge.

People attend writing conferences hoping to be discovered or to connect with others who understand the often reclusive and interior writer's life. Upon arrival, I quickly found myself shunned. Apparently, I had angered the wrong person, and she had spread

rumors about me. I was labeled a problem person, and to be avoided.

Most of my life I had been considered "too sensitive." Growing up in a turbulent home, I'd learned to perceive possible threats before they materialized. But living a defensive life was tiring, and I had committed to change.

I accepted Edgar Cayce's assertion that our relationship with our Creator is paramount, and that there is a higher justice than what we might perceive. Cayce said, "Why worry when you can pray?" Now I had a concentrated opportunity to test that. I prayed to feel God's presence within me, and to reflect that in the world. I asked to be less my "personality," and more the presence of Spirit. I knew I could effectively counterattack my "rival" with words, but the results of that activity didn't reflect love and kindness, which were my ideals. I asked that I be accurately seen, and the truth revealed.

Aligned with Spirit, I was also aligned with gentleness and calm. Within days, people began to see who I was, as opposed to what they'd been told. Rather than fighting, I had become clear about what I stood for,

and what behavior was acceptable for me. Emerson said something to the effect, "Who you are stands over you and thunders so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying to the contrary." In fact, the lies began to turn back on the one who spread them.

It was painful for me to feel hated and rejected in this small community where I had hoped to find solace from the grief I'd been experiencing. However, I knew I had to reach for something higher, something I could respect, and something that would last.

I recalled Cayce's assertion, "Thoughts are things. Mind is the builder." I monitored my thoughts. I wanted a better life than what I was experiencing, and I knew that had to start from within. If I could connect so strongly with a higher power, or even a higher concept, no one could take that from me.

My "rival" had sought to uplift herself by destroying me, but I wasn't destroyed. I chose consciousness instead. I strengthened my spiritual muscles, and left the results in God's hands. It was a template for the life I was now going to lead. ❖

Spiritual Reframing is Healthy

Sometimes adopting a spiritual intervention is primarily an act of "reframing." This technical word from psychology uses the metaphor of a picture frame to note the change in how we experience reality when we look at that reality from a different perspective. Today we might call it "spin."

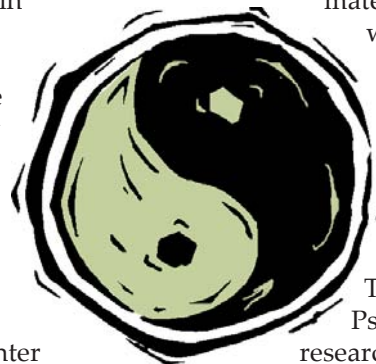
Is your glass half full or half empty? When life gives you a lemon, do you make lemonade? Are you turning your stumbling blocks into stepping stones? When you can't be with the one you love, do you love the one you're with? Most generally, are you looking outward at the fixed circumstances, or are you looking inward to your options of response?

These examples, where we can see how shifting our frame of mind can make all the difference in the world, is a very common theme in suggestions on how to live a spiritual life. The material world may be fixed by its karmic law of cause and effect. Yet spiritual reality retains its freedom of choice.

In my work as a traveling speaker, for example, I often encounter unexpected situations. When I get to a workshop, I may discover that my handouts haven't arrived with me. I used to fret about how my

presentation would be compromised. Now I look forward to how I'm going to discover a new way to present the material. Often it is a better way.

It is healthy to be able to make such shifts. Barbara Fredrickson, Ph.D., a psychologist at University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, who received the Templeton Positive Psychology Prize for her research, has found that people who can reframe their negative experiences have more resilience. They bounce back more quickly from stress. Look on the bright side! ❖



Explore Ancient Inca Spirituality

Discover Your Transpersonal Imagination

When Alberto arrived for his initiation at Machu Picchu, the native shaman told him that there was an eagle following him. Alberto could see no eagle. The native said that such things cannot be seen, but can be perceived. To help Alberto open his third eye, the native took a knife and scraped away the skin on Alberto's forehead. With blood running down his face, he could see little, but was beginning to perceive more.

This bizarre event comes from the book, *Dance of the Four Winds: Secrets of the Inca Medicine Wheel* by Alberto Villoldo and Erick Jendresen (Destiny Books). To prepare for the upcoming A.R.E. tour to Peru. I'm exploring the spiritual significance of things native and shamanic. Colorful rituals, connecting with unseen forces, calling upon spirits as friendly relatives—such dramatic elements contribute to the attraction we have for the ancient spirituality alive among indigenous peoples. Their seemingly natural extra-sensory abilities and their supernatural intimacy with the creative forces excite our imagination.

The imagination is key. It is an important connection between indigenous peoples and the Edgar Cayce material. Often Cayce referred to the imagination as both a bridge to and a channel of spiritual perception. Native peoples, by experiencing their sacred technologies in the language of the imagination—symbols, dreams, stories—seem to have a more direct contact with spiritual realities than we do with our western mindset of mechanical science, psychological explanations, and such. Would you rather work on developing your

intuition by learning to relax while observing the flow of consciousness, or learn to fly with the eagles? Two different metaphor systems for the same experiential reality. Did I say reality? Yes, to the ancient mindset, the imagination is reality. In short, the indigenous people understood the transpersonal nature of the imagination—they lived in its supersensible, but perceptible reality. The imagination is transpersonal, because from within we may encounter the infinite.

If you recall *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge*, after Don Juan had taken Casteneda through an initiation ritual to become a bird, Casteneda asked, "But did I really fly?" The crux of the difference between indigenous people and the Western mindset is that we believe that what happens "inside our mind" is a different reality than what happens "out there" in the "real" world.

When Edgar Cayce was a child, he saw the "little people," fairies and nature sprites. Years later, he explained the nature of such activities in the imaginative forces of creation and that we can use our imagination to perceive such realities. We are not a closed system, but through the channel of the subconscious mind, which we experience via the imagination, we are open to the entire world of energy, of things not quite materialized, unseen but perceptible.

Another transpersonal aspect of the imagination is that we can go

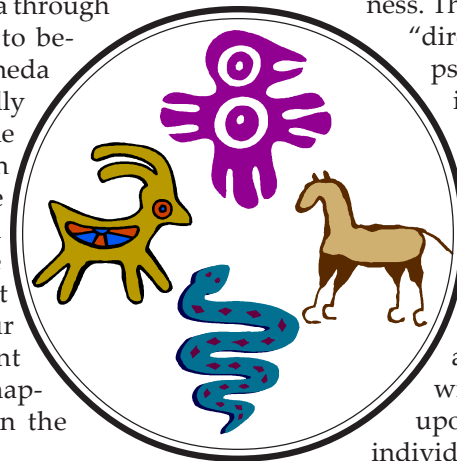
within and affect things beyond us. In one scene, Alberto finds himself in a precarious place on a cliffside. Following instructions, he changes into his power animal, a cat, and crawls face first down the cliff, later amazed and mystified by his feat. During this initiation, he learned the power of the imagination. We are not simply playing with mental toys when we engage in "pretending;" the imagination can have actual physical effects.

During his initiatory journey, Alberto travels the "medicine wheel," a native American symbol for wholeness. The wheel has four

"directions," which the psychiatrist Carl Jung identified as the archetypes of the four main avenues of experience: intuition, sensation, feeling, and thinking. Each direction has an animal associated with it, depending upon the makeup of the individual. We can experi-

ence some of the imaginal qualities of this journey by creating our own medicine wheel. For each of the four experience categories, allow an animal to come to mind that represents how you will express that type of experience. Arrange the four animals within a circle.

Then allow your imagination to spin a yarn, over time, about your encounter with each animal and the ensuing adventures. What do you learn about each of the avenues from the animals? While engaged in this project, don't be surprised if you encounter synchronicities that support your explorations. Native mysticism is just that—native—and so it is a potential within each of us. ❖



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Questions and Responses



I have trouble dealing with my feelings when God doesn't answer my prayers. What do you suggest? S.L., Benoit, OH

It's disappointing, for sure, to feel that one's prayers go unanswered. It hurts not to be heard, worse yet to be ignored, especially by someone who you think of as caring. It is easy to doubt oneself, to feel guilty, maybe even ashamed if you begin to wonder if you are not worthy of the love that otherwise God gives unconditionally to everyone. Those kinds of feelings can give way to anger, then more frustration, despair. It can be a dark night of the soul, demanding the most intense inner work, hoping faith will sustain the journey, as, for example, Connie Zweig describes so poignantly in her book *The Holy Longing: The Hidden Power of Spiritual Yearning* (Tarcher). Sometimes reading about how others have dealt with such feelings can be helpful.

One of the ways I've learned to develop a better relationship with upsetting feelings surrounding not being heard is to do some special journaling between myself and the "I

am," or the God within, where I have myself get heard, and sometimes hear myself better in the process. I might start with me addressing God.

ME: *God, I am upset because you are not answering my prayers.*

Then I would have God answer me, trying to make God as good a listener as possible:

I AM: *I am here now and I hear you. Tell me about the prayer you say I haven't answered.*

When it is easier to handle your feelings, but not before, you might consider another perspective. When asked if God always answered prayer, Cayce's answer was consistently, "yes," but he often indicated that the prayer may not be answered in the form we are expecting. A spiritual axiom is that everything is happening for the good. Applying this axiom can lead to greater awareness of God's presence.

Cayce often invoked the principle "In the application comes the awareness." Rather than coming through a "sign," sometimes the awareness that a prayer has been answered awaits your acting as if the prayer were already answered. Here is a process that has helped me: Meditate on why you want the prayer answered, or how your life, or the lives around you, will be better when it is answered. From these considerations, explore how you might act as if your prayer were answered—maybe some small action or change of attitude. Look for opportunities to step out in faith. ❖

What would Edgar Cayce say about the Internet? J. M., Myrtle Beach, NC

First, he would say that the Internet is an opportunity. What kind of opportunity it would be would depend upon that ideal held when using the Internet.

Edgar Cayce once predicted great success for the AT&T company because its ideal was to serve people's communication needs. Thus I would suspect that he would point to the value of the Internet, also, for communication. It can also serve the infor-

mation needs of others, as, for example, the A.R.E. now provides so much valuable information on its web site. Being used for commercial purposes is neither good nor bad, in itself, provided the service motive guides the profit motive, not the other way around.

Finally, I believe that Cayce would note that the Internet is a place where we can practice living the experience of oneness. The Internet provides a working model of oneness because it clearly makes us interconnected. In this respect there are many lessons for us to contemplate which may help us prepare for a coming age of living in oneness. One of the puzzles the Internet introduces is the fact that just as we find ourselves connected with each other, so do we try to cut off that connection. Think of how we have responded to some of the challenges the Internet has brought us: computer viruses, pornography, and spam. We work hard to prevent these intrusions, only to find that our methods themselves cause us further problems. Virus protectors make it difficult to install new software. Installing filters to prevent children from being exposed to pornography makes it hard to locate other desirable and important information. Erecting spam blockers often results in losing important email. Is there another solution to this electronic oneness? Would Jesus use a spam blocker? ❖



Articles in this newsletter are written by Henry Reed unless otherwise noted. Send questions for Henry to PS A.R.E., 215 67th Street, Virginia Beach, VA 23451 or email PersonalSpirituality@edgarcayce.org

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