



## *Defining Moments*

My talk this past Sunday was titled “Defining Moments.” I think most of us have expected a paradigm shift for many years whereby humanity would become more aware of ego’s hold on us and turn toward higher consciousness. We most likely would have envisioned the shift occurring slowly and gracefully. We never would have imagined the scenario that we have going on in the world now with the virus that has gotten everyone’s attention and has slowed us down. This is the reality we face at this time and appears to be a defining moment for all of us.

All the words society uses to describe these moments do not really do them justice, such as a fresh start, new beginning, second chance or other. They just don’t tell the full story because in truth, we want to be out of the current scenario that we’ve created and have a chance for a do-over.

Spiritual teacher Davidji tells the incredible story of the defining moment in his life. He speaks of Life at the Crossroads in his book, *Sacred Powers*. He says, “Sleepwalking through life, the weight on my chest so heavy I could barely breathe, and working an 18-hour day in a business that did not feed my soul, I was stressed out, burned out, unfulfilled, and empty. I was so far from the present moment and living eternally in the past, carrying a knot in my stomach so tight that it could only be washed away by a glass of Scotch at bedtime. I had accepted that this would be my life and resigned myself to the sad reality that one day, I would die, and the nightmare would be over.”

He continues, “but then, in the wake of 9/11, at the four-way intersection of hopelessness, deep sadness, confusion, and lack of purpose, I walked past a row of cardboard boxes that people were living in on a street in downtown Manhattan. It was there that I received the first Sacred Whisper of my life—an unexpected moment in which time stood still and the voice of the Divine spoke directly to me through the body of someone I did not know and had never met. This life-changing hiccup in the space-time continuum was a defining moment of celestial convergence that absorbed me into a cosmic stream of timelessness—and ultimately gave me a newfound awareness and the inspiration to dream a new dream.”

What the stranger asked was, “*what’s going to be on your tombstone?*” This was the defining moment of David’s life. He began changing in big ways immediately. He continues, “And, for the life of me, I can’t pretend to really even know what actually happened. Was this dear homeless man a messenger from the beyond? Had I just had a conversation with the Divine? Did I have a mini-breakdown? Had I hallucinated the entire experience? Within a few hours—my whole world started powerfully transforming. By the next morning, all the hair on my head—red since my birth—began to lose its pigment and turn white. The world around me had taken on an entirely different look, and I felt as if a shroud had been lifted. ...I awoke each morning filled with gratitude and enthusiasm—so excited to be alive. And by the weekend, love-filled light was pouring into my heart, replacing the dark decades of sadness and allowing me to experience joy for the first time in years. In the blink of an eye, I had been transformed.”

Most of us don’t have life changing events such as this and the one that Saul of Tarsus had on the road to Damascus or Elisha’s witnessing Elijah ascending into the Light. We do have extraordinary moments though when we know we’ll never be the same again. I hope this time of transition that we’ve been given this year is incredibly beneficial for you. With much love, Rev. J

This question came up in a conversation recently. Do we need to confess? Well, my personal opinion is that when we “miss the mark” (previously considered as sin by many), it is important to process what happened, own our part, apologize where necessary, then know that forgiveness has already taken place as you release it and all emotions surrounding it to the higher good. We pray to be at a place of awareness whereby we continually observe and evaluate our own choices and consequences and are willing to release these negative choices. We acknowledge (replacing the word “repent”) with a bit of disappointment perhaps that we could have made a more divine choice and then we set our intention to make move loving choices in the future.

*A Course in Miracles* distinguishes between a sin and an error: a sin requires punishment, but an error simply requires correction. *The Course* goes on to tell us that we have made many errors, but we have never sinned. All our sins (“self-inflicted nonsense”) are undone the moment we bring our judgmental thoughts into the healing light of love.

The story is told about a Filipino woman named Josephine who claimed to have daily conversations with Jesus. A cynical priest heard about Josephine and sought to debunk her. He went to her and asked, “Is it true that you talk to Jesus every day?”

“Yes, I do,” she answered.

“Then the next time you talk to Jesus, would you ask him what sin I committed when I was in the seminary?” the priest asked smugly. Then he walked away proudly, certain he had cornered the charlatan and would soon expose her.

A week later the priest returned to Josephine and asked her, “Did you ask Jesus what my sin was?”

“Yes, I did,” she answered.

“And what did he say?” asked the priest.

“He said, ‘I forgot.’”

Love has no consciousness of our sins; God sees us only as pure and innocent. It is we who have fabricated the concept of sin and crushed our life force under it. *A Course in Miracles* also tells us, “God does not forgive because He never has condemned.” In the inspiring movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, the Pope tells St. Francis, “In our obsession with Original Sin, we have overlooked Original Innocence.”

All self-judgment can be undone by recognizing that we have never committed a crime against God. I read in Unity Magazine about a man who, during his senior year in college, was walking past the college bookstore where he saw a large display of yearbooks on the sidewalk outside. Since this fellow had no money, he grabbed a book and kept walking. Over the next few days he began to feel guilty about his theft, and he decided to return the book and confess. He went to the bookstore manager and guiltily admitted, “I stole this book.”

The manager told him, “Come with me.” Then he led the student to the yearbook display and pointed to a sign the young man had not seen: “Free—Please take one.”

But, let’s go back to the need for confession. I think we only need to reflect upon and be aware of our actions and reactions. If we have set our intentions to live from our God-space, we’ll become more aware of when we have had a moment of unnecessary criticism of another, reacted from fear or anger instead of understanding and other ways that we may have generally missed the mark. We’ll forgive ourselves quickly just as we forgive others.

We hope that humanity is reaching a point where we’ll discontinue to use practices that bring about guilt and shame. This was not the intention of Jesus when he was on the earth. The teaching of confession did not come from him. He came to tell us that we have a light within and that we can and should use it.

Lovingly, Rev. J

## From Fear to Joy

By Anita Moorjani, *Unity Magazine*

### Anita Moorjani on failing, people pleasing, and the practice of self-love

I grew up in Hong Kong when it was a British colony, and I was the “little Hindu girl” in Catholic school—one of very few students there who was not British. I looked different: I had darker skin; dark, wavy hair; and thicker eyebrows.

I also didn't pray to the same god because my parents went to temple. The best jobs there were held by white Westerners, while people of my Indian culture held the lowly jobs. I was picked on and bullied. I constantly felt I had to prove I was worthy. Even within my own culture, women were considered second-class citizens compared to men.

In my teens, I wanted to go to college, have a career, and travel the world—but arranged marriages were the norm. All the things I wanted would make me less desirable as a wife, so my parents wouldn't let me do any of them.

I spent decades feeling I wasn't good enough, worthy, or deserving. I constantly felt I had to work really hard to prove myself. I believe that the lymphoma that almost killed me before the near-death experience I wrote about in *Dying to Be Me* was a manifestation of all these emotions turning inward against me.

#### Positive Thoughts, Negative Feelings

We often believe that our thoughts create our reality, and then we start to fear our thoughts and try to control them. That's what happened to me. I had always been a positive person—because I wanted everybody to like me, because I was a people-pleaser, and because I was afraid of anyone saying I was negative.

I couldn't understand how, as such a positive person, I could get cancer if it was true that our thoughts create our reality. **It took my NDE to realize that it's not our *thoughts* that create our reality. It's really what we *feel* about ourselves.**

When you truly love yourself, when you know how worthy and deserving you are, you don't judge yourself, even when you do have negative thoughts.

**As soon as you accept those thoughts as a part of who you are, they pass.** But if you fear them, you're actually feeding them. If you deny and suppress them, you're denying an aspect of yourself—as well as your chance to have an authentic experience. Instead, I'm inviting you to love and accept *all* of you, even the parts you believe are broken.

None of us are actually broken. We don't need to be fixed. I believe we were all born perfect, deserving, and worthy, but somewhere along the way we were conditioned out of that thinking.

So let me help you remember that you're not broken. Screwing things up is part of the journey! We are so afraid of being judged, but by whose standards? The moment we remove our own judgment, we have an opportunity to see a lesson learned.

**I'm inviting you to love and accept *all* of you, even the parts you believe are broken.**

#### Self-Love vs. Self-Care

Now, what does *self-love* mean? It's not about massages or having your hair done and things like that. It's totally fine to do those things—I love doing them myself!—but just because someone does them doesn't mean they love themselves. They could be doing those things from a place of fear, wanting to keep up with a particular look or a particular peer group, or because they're listening to what advertisers tell them they should look like.

**That is doing things out of fear.** *Self-love* also does not mean elevating yourself by being “bitchy,” being narcissistic, or putting down other people. It means none of those things.

***Self-love* means evaluating the condition of your life and every single thing you're doing every single day.** It means asking yourself questions like:

- *Do these things bring me joy, or am I doing them out of the fear of the consequences of not doing them?*
- *Am I hanging with these people because I love being with them or because I feel that I need to keep up with them?*
- *Am I choosing this job because it's my passion or because I'm afraid I won't have enough money otherwise?*

With everything you do, ask yourself: *Am I doing this out of fear or out of love?*

**Loving yourself also means not allowing yourself to be abused as well as having boundaries and standing up for yourself.** You are teaching people how you want to be treated. How will they learn that their behavior is unacceptable unless you show them that you can't be treated this way? You don't have to be harsh with them. I'm always finding gentle ways of expressing my boundaries.

Loving yourself doesn't mean everything will go right all the time. You will still have challenges. I can't tell you how many mistakes I've made, even since my NDE, because the world is not conducive to the way I view life now.

#### Letting Go of Being Right in Order to Be Authentic

I don't look at illness, what the government says, or even religion the way I used to. There's no rule book anymore. The one guideline that sticks in my mind, though, is being authentic. So I tell people when I don't know how to do something or when I think I got it wrong. I'm just really honest about it, and that's how I believe life should be.

When you're living a life that is not from self-love, you're trying to meet only other people's expectations, which sets you up to fail because you're trying to be something you're not. (Continued next page)

