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- *Internal and external listening*
- *The constancy of fulfillment*
- *Spiritual entities who have not experienced human life, and those who have experienced more than one*
- *The equality of rungs on the horizontal spiritual ladder*

Your God, the source of life, the source of peace, the source of love, is with each of you. You are indeed surrounded by God's presence and by the assembly of your guides.

Life is a beautiful experience, despite its pain and ugliness. Despite the treachery and disappointments, frustrations, anxieties, you are all blessed by the very fact of living. Life for each of you is unique, specialized, but also shared. It may not seem so brief, but in reality it is but a moment that you are given to learn to grow, to become deeper, to become responsive and giving—giving love through the expression of compassion and sensitivity, giving love most importantly through the act of listening.

How often do you feel the frustration of trying to express a feeling, only to be met with a response that says in effect "I'm not listening" or "I choose not to listen" or "I will only listen selectively to what it is I want to hear"? So much misunderstanding, so much tension are created in the absence of listening. You are given lives that you may listen. The act of giving can only be offered following listening. Listening always comes first. When you feel compassion toward another, it is because you listen. If you seek the solution to a dilemma, it is only through listening that you will be successful.

Sometimes that listening is an external presence, an external act that may or may not be visible to others. Most significant, however, is the listening which is internal, for that is the conduit, the connection, that binds you to your spiritual center, to your guides, to God. It is from that quiet listening that you gain the wisdom and perspective to listen out beyond the limits of yourselves to hear another. There is an empty listening, and there is a listening which is fulfilling and rewarding. You can hear what another says and yet not know what is meant. The sense of meaning is learned from the experience of listening within.

If you hear another's expression of anguish, that anguish only has meaning because you have experienced anguish. If you hear expressions of injustice, that only carries meaning when you have personal experience with injustice in your own lives. When one cries out for love, such a call has no meaning unless you have cried out for love and heard the response. Everything begins from within.

The most rewarding relationships you can have with others are relationships centered on listening. It does not mean that you do not act; it only means that you listen to begin the process. Life is an opportunity for listening. It is that opportunity you are given to hear what another may say. We have instructed in the past about the

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importance of responding to the needs of others, but in order to respond you must recognize the significance of the needs expressed. So listening is the way of gaining a perspective of significance.

Each of you has opinions about all sorts of matters in life. Those opinions may be well-formed or partially developed, but they are nevertheless your opinions at a given moment. Whether those opinions have substance depends to a significant degree on what you have learned by listening. Sometimes that listening is internal, but it is not exclusively so. Human life is indeed a social life. It is a life designed around the necessity of interacting with others, and it is through that interaction that you grow spiritually. That interaction gives meaning to what you have learned within.

If you are consumed with matters of the self and are unable to turn your ears outward, then you are living a life void of much significance. The individual who spends an entire adult life in meditation acquires enormous resources, perspectives, wisdom, but the benefit of those resources is never realized when living in an isolated existence. Likewise an individual who is so busy trying to do things for others with no attention to the needs of self is basically living a life spinning wheels of activity but moving nowhere in the process. There is a balance that is required, and it is this balance, the achievement of the balance, that gives meaning to our lives as your guides. We see the necessity for balance. We see imbalance. We see the perspective which is necessary to achieve balance. Our eyes are on a goal of sorts. That goal is for a fulfilling life for each of you.

Those who live troubled lives in great difficulty are often viewed as individuals without fulfillment, but that is a judgment that assumes that the values used to measure fulfillment are valid. There is no one in position to determine whether the life of another is a fulfilling life or not. Furthermore, it is common that most individuals are unaware of the level of fulfillment in their own lives, let alone evaluate that of another. Leave judgment about the fulfilling qualities of another's life to God, for in fact, all lives are in the process of fulfillment.

There is no timeframe for that fulfillment. Fulfillment is taking place for each of you. Fulfillment is taking place for everyone that you meet, everyone you see, whether prince or pauper, whether experiencing a long life or embarking on a new life. You must believe in the constancy of fulfillment. It is not a goal which is completely achieved within the human life experience, but it is that life experience that provides essential elements necessary for a spiritual fulfillment.

There are spiritual entities on our side of life who have as yet not experienced the human condition. This is not because they are beyond that stage, rather they are in a process of fulfillment in preparation for that stage. Growth, spiritual growth, is constant. The end objective is a complete union with the essence that you call God, that all-encompassing power of life, of love. But those souls that await the human

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experience will not be denied that opportunity. They will be given a chance. They will be given life to experience, to be listened to, to be responded to.

There are those on our side of life who have experienced the human form of life more than once. For these souls, there was more that was needed in fulfillment in order to be ready for the next stage of development, and for that reason they were given physical bodies to live in. For each of you, that experience of human life can be rewarding if you listen and become more aware of your spiritual essence, the feelings within, the experience of compassion and love. You will be far along on your journey to recognizing your own lives as being fulfilling.

There are many, obviously, who are unaware of the inner life, who are fully aware of much that goes on around them and yet have little understanding for that external life. For them, there is often no restlessness to find life's meaning, for they feel that what they see around them is indeed what life is about. For their souls, there is more work to be done, and they will be given that opportunity. All souls experience life with the objective of growth and fulfillment. All souls ultimately achieve those objectives by listening. Sooner or later these objectives are met.

It is easy to be judgmental of others, but if you recognize that a rung further along a horizontal ladder is no more important than the first rung of that horizontal ladder, then you accept that each rung really is equal and everyone holds onto that stage of development, that rung in the ladder, one rung at a time. Gradually you traverse the distance. You move along at your own speed, but all in the process are totally equal. Such judgment of others, then, has no purpose, has no meaning. There is no benefit. There is nothing gained by assuming that you are further along the ladder or further behind, for all will traverse the distance. You are all travelers along the road, and each is equal to the other.

Your ability to listen and be open gives you the perspective of recognizing the diversity of life around you and gives you a sense of affirmation of the equality of which we speak. Affirm indeed that equality, but first listen within. Seek a connection with what is really important. Seek that vision of God. Seek that vision of the sacredness of all that has been created, and use that vision to provide meaning to everything on the outside. You will then be in a better position to listen to the needs that are expressed by others, to respond when a response is necessary. You will be more ready to accept absolute equality of everyone, not assuming your own superiority or believing in your own inferiority. You will affirm your place in the creation of God's heavens.

We bless you with a sense of hearing, an ability to listen and an ability to respond. Your guides continue to provide a perspective that allows you to turn inward for meaning. Rejoice in that perspective! Rejoice in your capacity to listen!

Be restless in your search for truth. Be patient in its revelation.

Amen.