

December 12, 1994

- *Dealing with conflict, fear, and judgment*

God's light accompanies the souls of each of you. The challenges in relationships of which you have spoken are important. They are essential for your growth in human form. It is in the arena of personal relationships that one finds the greatest potential for growth. Much has been spoken this evening of strife and tension, bitterness, jealousies, fear and anxieties, but are there any of these issues that are unknown to you? These are the elements that are tossed into the crucible of life out of which you forge strength of character, a sense of direction, and a dedication of purpose. It is a collection of challenges that serves to awaken you to the need for responses.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty you experience in life is that of personal conflict. Differences of opinion are vital to growth, but conflict really arises out of fear, not just the difference of opinion. Each of you is correct in recognizing the presence of fear in life and the toll that fear can take. You will never be totally free of the lurking presence of fear, for fear stretches outward to the unknown, and you will never be all-knowing. Therefore fear will always accompany each of you.

God's presence in life is meant in part as a means of finding an appropriate response to fear. Your lives are refined through the evolution of your responses. At their most basic level, the responses to fear are fight or flight. That you know, for it is a part of human and animal life since the beginning of time. The refinement comes as you become more skilled in finding alternatives to the fight or flight tendency.

So conflict is important for your lives. It is in dealing with that contact that you are thereby enlightened. Because of its importance, you should not resist conflict, for pretending it is not there does not mean it is any less present. Conflict must be met squarely, face to face, honestly and perceptively. It does no good to build up barriers shielding you from conflict, for then your growth becomes stunted as you are deprived the opportunity which comes only from your encounter with conflict.

Some conflicts are long-lived, others are merely fleeting, but the effect is nevertheless the same. Both generate fear. Both elicit a response to that fear. As your experience of fear changes, your response to that fear also changes. Get rid of the fear and you are closer to what God seeks in you all. Be willing to experience conflict, but take away the fear. Become productive through the experience. Indeed you can learn from the presence of conflict without being defeated by the co-presence of fear.

When you interact with others, whether it is personally or professionally, consciously recognize the place that fear may occupy. Dissipate it, reason with it. You will ultimately recognize the fear of conflict is important, but must be cast aside.

Ultimately one must deal with conflict through peace, not fear. If you feel peace, the nature of the conflict is diminished. Its impact is diminished. If you feel peace, you

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are less likely to build barriers. These barriers of which we speak do two things: they keep away what is outside, but they also maintain what is within. In setting up barriers you hope to avoid conflict, but in setting up barriers you ensure the perpetuation of fear. There is no sense to retain your barriers.

The vulnerability of which we spoke requires the elimination of barriers. The view, therefore, of who you are becomes more clear. You become vulnerable. You accept the conflict, but you do not take it in completely. You recognize it, you evaluate it, but you do not ultimately become a part of it, for the conflict is no longer threatening. You are then more able to deal with questions of significance, rather than issues of personal protection.

If you disagree with another and state that disagreement, you are expressing who you are and where you stand. If you experience disagreement and feel threatened, then you are unable to meet the disagreement on any but the most basic level, and that is self-preservation, preservation of the body, the soul, sets of ideas, standards of behavior, whatever. Life in a sense is a peeling away of your defenses. That elimination of the barrier allows you to look outward. It is that view outward that gives you perspective and defuses the poisons of conflict.

When you disapprove of the actions of another, that disapproval is really often another function of fear, for you do not go through life as a patient and wise judge, ruling upon the appropriateness or the lack thereof of a given action and its response. Eliminate the judgmental element of observation and you eliminate the fear associated with judging. Eliminating the fear allows you to see through, and to learn and grow.

Judgment always accompanies fear. If you are afraid, you feel threatened. If you feel threatened, you become judgmental as a means of self-protection. This fear, this judgment within the presence of conflict is an important concomitant for you to recognize. When you love another, you allow yourselves to be vulnerable because you express the feelings you are having with no assurance that what you express will be accepted. Life requires the presence of conflict as a means of growth.

We say you learn from all people. It is easy to learn when you approve of something, but when you disapprove, one is too often quick to reject out of judgment and no learning takes place. Your lives are lives of conflict and resolution, of challenge and fulfillment, of unrest and peace, of being with others and being alone, being sick and being healthy. These extremes of condition will be found as elements in the lives of all. Welcome therefore this difference.

First of all recognize that differences of opinion are of absolute importance. Recognize that a constructive response is achieved from the standpoint or position of peace, not fear. Recognize the fear in others. Recognize the uncertainties that others experience. See yourselves in the responses that others give. Be aware that you are not really that different from all others. What they experience, you too experience. None

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of you are above being fearful. None of you are above having pride. Accept this and accept the manifestation of this in the lives of others who are around you.

We guide you, each of you, but this guidance also allows for choice on your part. You can choose to enter conflict with peace. You can choose to be overwhelmed by that conflict, to be burdened by it and to be a victim of it. You can choose to rise above all of that and allow the conflicts that you experience in life to sharpen your skills of love and patience.

We help you in your searching for love and patience. We even provide challenges for you to grow and develop through. You are empowered to respond through the presence of God. Each of you is so empowered. You can transform what life presents you into something that you present to life.

Take the high road. Take the position of peace. Take the perspective that you have accepted through your work in these gatherings. Allow your perceptions to penetrate the defensive walls of others so that you might see them as they are and not merely as they appear to be. Seek the fire on the other side of the barrier. Let the barrier collapse. Let the barrier become weak. Allow it to evaporate. Be willing to work with all others lovingly and peacefully, even in the presence of conflict. In so doing, you will be reflecting God's radiance into the world around you. Whether that radiance is directly and immediately acknowledged or not does not diminish its potential.

God is in the world because many people feel God's presence. God's work requires your cooperation. God's work requires you to be vulnerable, to be sensitive, to be forgiving, to be receptive, and finally to be giving.

We see each of you developing in your capacity to learn from others. We see you growing in your ability to reflect outward your understanding of life, of love, of God. The growth that we see is steady and true. It, too, emits a great light, and we, your guides, find warmth and beauty from your brilliance.

Amen.