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- All paths in spiritual development are needed.
- Pray to be open to God's presence, not that God does what you desire.
- Every human experiences love in some form.

God, who is the Spirit Center of all, consisting of All That Is, is with each of you. Your lives are illuminated by the presence of Spirit. Your lives are illuminated by the presence of your own spirit. You are indeed, each of you, all human beings, being guided, being shown your own ways forward. There is no comparison of one path vis-à-vis another. All paths in your spiritual development are what is needed. There is no path that is less important, less valuable, less necessary.

You express your concerns and you express your gratuities. It is of course important to be aware of your presence in the lives that are experienced around you, but it is also important to acknowledge as you do the gifts of the Spirit. Those gifts are not always striking, are not always easily remembered, are not always even recognized. But those gifts are really not so much gifts but windows with clear glass. When the shutters are open, the light shines in. It is not so much a gift of God, but it is an openness that you experience, allowing the light that is present to enter and fill and warm and energize.

Often people speak of special gifts from God. People write of exclusive gifts, so much so that many belief sets are based on the faith that accepting certain beliefs, one then receives God's gifts. While this may be of some help to some, in itself it is not fully true, for God does not bestow gifts to those who meet certain requirements. There is no weighing of who deserves gifts and who does not. In reality, God is not in the business of giving gifts but is in the business of being. We say God Is; we don't say God gives and God takes and God judges and God punishes. Those are not the characteristics of God.

The sun is not illuminating portions of the earth intentionally and bathing other portions of the earth in darkness. There is no desire on the part of the sun to illuminate. The sun illuminates because the sun is. You, each of you, has the choice to open the shutters and allow the light to fill your space, or you may close the shutters, but with the shutters closed, the sun continues because the sun is.

You receive nourishment from the sun. You receive energy from the sun. You receive warmth from the sun. That energy can be experienced as light, can be experienced as particles, the radiation of particles, can be experienced in many ways, but the sun is not giving you an intentional gift that you either deserve or not.

So it is with God. You can choose to ignore. You can choose to deny. You can choose to be open. You can choose to be welcoming. You can choose to be vulnerable. You can choose to be overwhelmed. You can choose to be warmed and nourished and

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fed. You can choose to be healed. All of these are responses, human responses, to what is already there.

Often human beings pray that God will bestow special blessings on a particular group or individual or a nation. It would be more helpful to pray that others will be open to the reality that God is present, and therefore nourishment is present, that warmth is present, that healing is present, that love is present. We, your collected guides, serve not as handmaidens of God to bestow gifts, but rather we serve to help open the shutters. We serve to help you want to open shutters and let the sunlight in.

These opportunities you have to be open to your guides is a conscious effort for each of you to invite the Light. The true gift of God is the gift of being present and available for your choice. If you seek comfort, you must be open to comfort. If you seek love, you must be open to love. Love, comfort—they are never forced upon anyone, and they are never bestowed on the basis of their being earned. They are simply there. They are present. They are with you. They completely envelop you. They reside within you and about you, above and below, in all possible ways.

Healing—you ask God for the gift of healing. Of course we understand what it is you seek, and it is unimportant the words you choose to express that need. But what you are really asking is the wisdom to be open to that which is there.

Relationships exist to be resolved, but resolution does not mean one side wins and another loses. Resolution is a resolve to find the commonality that you all experience and that you all have in one form or another.

The peace that you look for is the peace that is already there. Being open to it means you are willing to accept what peace really means.

The question was posed about how someone can become loving when it seems to another as if love has not been experienced. It is important to recognize that there are many ways of experiencing love. You can experience love without someone saying, “I love you,” whether a parent or other family member or someone you encounter, for love is not merely related to words, but rather attitude. If someone does not find love in a family, one may find love in friendships. One may find love in what is observed of nature. One may find love through the experience of sharing with other types of life—plant life, other animals. One can experience love through the joy of observing a sunset or a sunrise or an eclipse. Love is received from many possible directions, but as we have assured you, life is continuous, and one can experience love prior to the current human life. That love can take so many different forms.

When you express love to another, you can express it physically, emotionally. You can express it merely by being present. You can express it by saying nothing and listening to everything. It is a fact that no human being goes through a human form of life without being a recipient of love. It may not be a love that you recognize as being experienced by another or even by yourselves, unless you open up the windows, and

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you let the sunshine come in, and it will come in in many colors, and it will provide reflections and shadows with different intensities, but they all belong to the Light.

Human life is never fully without the experience of love. A human being can forget, consciously, having received evidence of love, but its imprint is always present. There is no expression of love, no experience of love, which travels across a pathway of life completely unrecognized, completely without the power to enhance, to uplift, to affirm.

Each of you has been fortunate to understand how it feels to be loved. You may not always be aware of it, but when you stop to reflect how love has crossed your path, you will immediately know. You will immediately recognize that light coming through the window. The candles give light, but they give energy, they give warmth, they provide the shadows that give it meaning in your lives. If you are camping outside and you build a fire at nighttime, that fire becomes the center of your world. It may be for a brief moment, but you are drawn into that light just as a moth is drawn to light. There is a natural magnetism of all life to light.

Some life-forms flourish without direct sunlight, but there is always a response when there is light. If you are in the woods at night and it is absolutely black outside, you go from one place in the woods to another that is equally dark, and you are not changed. But when you are in the woods and it is light, you are drawn in by its presence. That light has an energy of its own, and you feed upon that energy, and you are guided by it, and the shadows that are created give that light shape and context, even meaning.

Look for those moments when you can rejoice. Accept the moments when you cry. Welcome the moments when you can reach in front of you and embrace.

We embrace you. We reach before us out to you, and we surround you with that wonderful, loving Light.

Amen.