

Living the Soulful Life

*The soul looketh steadily forward creating a new world before her,
leaving worlds behind her.*

--Emerson

Our soul growth is of utmost importance. Why? Simply because it directly and deeply affects the quality of our life. Living a truly soulful life requires a heartfelt willingness that surpasses any pragmatic process or method. It entails the desire to experience a life that transcends mediocrity, a life that is rich with flavor and imbued with passion, meaning and purpose.

Delving ardently into our soul and recognizing its preferences, quirks and desires is the first step. For sinking into our soul occurs in the unplanned moments, those “blips” between the unemotional thoughts of the intellect and the fearful concerns of our mind. Our soul reveals itself in the relaxed moments, the instants when we take the opportunity to breathe deeply after days, weeks, *years* of shallow breathing, the times when we are not diverted by external distractions or mindless chattering. If we ignore our soul’s calling and neglect to nourish it, it languishes, and without soul, our life force energy seems to “dry up” and our life in general ceases to have purpose.

In my own life, the times I have ignored my soul is akin to the times I have forgotten to water my many beloved plants. My soul, like thirsty foliage, withers from lack of fluid, caring attention. To ignore my soul, to me, is analogous to ignoring the best part of me; the essence of who I have been since the beginning of time as well as the being I am awakening into. Life becomes stagnant, dull, boring and predictable. The need for external searching increases. The amount of drama intensifies. My sense of purpose lessens. I become restless, dissatisfied, and depressed.

Sound familiar?

A soulful life entails listening, *genuinely* listening, to what our soul longs for us to hear. One of the ways I cultivate and nourish soul in my life is by taking time alone in the

peacefulness of nature so I can hear what it desires for me to understand. Listening from my heart is the only way I can really recognize its' metaphoric meaning. To "recognize" means "to know again." In solitude I am able to rekindle the language of my soul and to reconnect with it as I would a long lost yet beloved friend. Spending considerable time cradled in nature's arms, feeling my feelings, capturing the essence of infinite possibilities, and appreciating my life—the "good times," "challenging times" and all that exists in between—helps to inspire soulfulness into my daily life.

Further, being mindful and fully present with my own thoughts and feelings, whether or not I'm alone or in front of another provides soulful nourishment. Being a student of *A Course in Miracles*, I have learned that it is the person directly in front of me that matters, because the person in front of me is my teacher. That person may be the grocery clerk, neighbor, client, child, friend, spouse or anyone else that the Universe has sent. Remaining in the moment allows me to fully participate in life, and to me, that supplies enormous amounts of cherished soulfulness.

I've witnessed how my life takes on the greatest amount of soul when I release situations that no longer serve my highest good, heal old wounds, expose my deepest and authentic self, create soulful artwork via painting/writing/music, say "yes" to opportunities supporting my highest path, and surround myself with beauty.

Further, I've discovered that some pressure is required so we may experience a soulful existence. And that pressure exists in myriad ways: expanding beyond our comfort zones, giving and receiving love, being vulnerable, forgiving others and ourselves, and being of service. Recognizing the "nagging" feeling that I'm here for more than what I'm currently expressing, facing my fears and moving forward in spite of the fear, triggers the most pressure. I always sense a major change is about to occur when my soul-connection intensifies. Feelings of vulnerability, excitement then fear inevitably surface, signals that I am "on my way." *Where* I'm going is not always clear. I just know I'm on the precipice of experiencing yet another dimension of my soul's wondrous destiny.

Our soul possesses the architectural blueprint of what is most cherished. It has within it the very threads that weave together our sacred contract's tapestry. It knows, more than our most intimate playmate, what makes us feel alive. But this doesn't mean we will always feel "happy." Soul energy encompasses the entire emotional spectrum: nostalgia, melancholy, bitter-sweetness, passion, tender love, longing, desire—some of the feelings that unfortunately, we often try to suppress.

Within our soul dwells aliveness, the very feeling of life itself. What could possibly be more important than *that*? Ask yourself, "Would I rather live a life that is 'safe' and predictable, or one in which I feel alive and real?" When your life becomes a little ho-hum amidst the world's din, remind yourself that "zeal is real," meaning somewhere, somehow, you have allowed your ego to usurp your soul's passion. Recognize you can reclaim it with conscious intention and that your birthright is to feel alive, joyful and authentic.

Further, in order for you to experience more soul, each and every day, it's important to accept that your soul speaks to you through your feelings, desires and preferences. We are tempted to numb ourselves from what we feel. Often, we want to block our feelings—particularly painful ones—from the insidious belief that we should avoid any discomfort. But we are mistaken when we do this, for it is our attempt to *escape* the pain that keeps it tightly locked in place. There may have been a time, earlier in your life when you did not have the appropriate tools for healing. But now, as you continue to blossom, the means for vigorously transforming your wounds into enlightening assets are being provided. Remember that your greatest challenges are the breeding ground for your spiritual advancement. Know that all of your experiences can be used on behalf of the greater good of yourself and others.

Living a soulful life requires courage and the soulful willingness to delve inward, where our soul resides.

In this moment, how does your soul call to you and what does it desire for you to hear?

