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"Magazine Articles"

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"SPIRITUALITY THROUGH THANKSGIVING"

Rev. Diane K. Chapin

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As Thanksgiving approaches each of you now has the opportunity to take stock of what you have in your daily lives to give thanks for. How many of you stop at that point? Most do, however, Thanksgiving gives you a special opportunity to recognize yourself as a spiritual being and to live each moment of your life differently.

As a spiritual being, how then should you live your life? In truth, as a spiritual being, you have many resources at your disposal every day. Your first and most important step is the recognition of yourself as At-One with all possibilities and to open your heart to the good that is set before you every day.

Recognition of your spiritual beingness begins then with your own personal inner development and willingness to see yourself as significant in the grand scheme of things. That is, to understand that each of you, through your recognition of your own spirituality, has the opportunity to not only uplift yourself but those around you.

Abundance is NEVER created out of a consciousness filled with lack. Rather, abundance is created out of your recognition of your own spirituality and your willingness to accept, recognize and give thanks for what is yours... your ever-increasing ability to expand your consciousness and consequently, your spirituality. Through this recognition, you open the door to

living from your heart, listening to your intuition and creating the life that your heart tells you is your true path... your Path of Light through Giving Thanks for what you have today and your willingness to expand and open your heart to the true gifts of spirituality: Joy, abundance and well being.

You begin, then, exactly where you are at the beginning of the day, by opening your heart to the day that unfolds before you and giving thanks for the blessing of life. This is a simple expression of thanks to the universe that you can do before you even get out of bed.

Take a moment to send your spiritual light out before you as you as you prepare for the day. Visualize yourself as a being filled with light, attracting all things positive to you. As you give thanks for the day that is unfolding before you, as you do such a simple task as brushing your teeth, take a moment to open your eyes to the truth that you are a being of light, spiritual in nature and that, within you, all possibilities exist. Release your negative thoughts and let them be returned to you as positivity, filling your life with the expression and recognition of your truth... that, since you are spiritual by nature, so then is everything else. With this recognition, you can begin to see through the human perception of the world to the spirituality of your blessings as well as your challenges.

Begin to see your challenges as opportunities for growth, and try approaching them from an open heart, rather than a heart that is closed to positive outcomes by fear and negativity. Turn your challenges over to their highest positive outcome for all and then give thanks for the creative solutions that you know will appear through your intuition.

Be creative in your spirituality every day of your life through the daily expression of giving thanks and see how the positive events in your life begin to multiply. Now you are entering into the multiplicity of possibilities. That is, experiencing yourself as an aspect of All-That-Is and All-That-Is-Possible. Limitation is a human condition that is created through the negative belief that there is a separation between you and your good. There is not. You are a living aspect of creativity. And through that creativity and recognition of yourself as a spiritual being, you can begin, today, living the life you long for... one filled with possibilities, prosperity and well being.

But you are the key, you must begin to unlock the door to your own creative spirituality by taking a few moments each day to live your spirituality, by giving thanks, by recognizing your own spiritual significance and, more importantly, by being willing to listen to the messages your heart has for you.

So let this Thanksgiving be the first of many to come in which you give special thanks for the creative possibilities and the abundant table set before you, and begin today to live your own creative spirituality as a daily expression of thanks for all that is truly yours.

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"WELCOMING THE NEW YEAR WITH CLARITY"

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We make New Year's resolutions in the hope that they will work out, but more than likely we toss them in a drawer along with our resolve. Many of us make promises that the New Year will be different and we "hope" all our dreams will come true.

The purpose of New Year's resolutions is to help us clarify our desires, but for most it is merely a wish list. This New Year is filled with promise, however, we must make it a realization.

Let this year begin with absolute clarity in regard to our goals and aspirations. In order to fulfill our dreams we must be very clear about their contents. If not, we receive a murky result and then blame the universe for not supporting us.

An honest assessment of our priorities crystallizes them for us. As we inventory our deepest desires we begin to realize what our focus should be.

For example, if you wish to have abundance, consider what that really means. Does it mean a comfortable life style with all bills easily paid and some extra money to spare or does it mean really being rich? In that regard what is the underlying intent? Do we hope to be abundant by being passive, or are we taking the time to invest our dreams with intent and purpose?

Clarity, purpose and intent can lead to a different immediate experience... it begins with the individual realization of our own inner understandings. As that process unfolds and we become absolutely clear, we can put our priorities in order. With our priorities in order we can begin to visualize our life increasing in every aspect and we can set about creating, through visualization and meditation, the new life we have only wished for, to date.

Visualization is an extremely powerful tool. If we are clear, for example, that we DO want to be wealthy, we see ourselves attaining our desires, we consistently visualize wealth, allowing our being to absorb that luxurious feeling. With our every action and thought we are alive to the process of creation. Our every thought and act demonstrates our purpose and intention. Throughout our visualization, we remember to give thanks.

Attaining wealth is a broad concept and, in this context, is meant to be an example. Our ideal life or desired growth should fit in with our personal style. It should relate in every aspect to increase and should add to our experience as we develop understanding of our deepest desires. As we enter into the creative process, it is helpful to create from our hearts the broadest concept we can, allowing the universe to supply the details.

As we consider our New Year's resolutions and examine them, we can learn what they have to teach us. Are they definitive? Do they support our picture of increase in our lives? Increase in life does not just mean getting rich. It includes well-being, good relationships and an increasingly loving image of ourselves.

Our resolutions, spontaneously written, often teach us our true agendas and reveal additional opportunity for expansion and growth. They may be as simple as acquiring that new dress or just right car. Or they may be as broad as changing your life in many ways. Learning how our resolutions make us feel deep inside, we discover that some may make us anxious and that obtaining a clear focus of our concept is difficult. If so, we need to learn the reason for that anxiety. Perhaps a consideration of ourselves as successful and happy seems new and different. In viewing ourselves as complete and successful, we take a big step forward in actualizing those ideals.

It is very important to differentiate between concepts and images or pictures. A detailed image or picture will actually delay a response from the universe. In contrast, forming a concept of what we want based on our new-found clarity leads to faster and more universal results.

It is at this point that purpose and intent sees us through our anxieties, to a clear visualization of our success. Faith in our intent brings with it strength and courage to trust ourselves, knowing the universe responds positively to a clear purpose.

Clarity within ourselves is critical to a successful outcome of realizing our goals. It is important that we be clear, patient and persistent in our efforts to create a new reality. As new vistas shape our lives, we can truly enjoy living fully from our hearts, rather than from a wish list that may not come true.

Happy New Year.

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"YOUR BEST SELF FOR EVERY SEASON"

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The Christmas Season is before us and as always it conjures up old memories and desires. We have all been taught that this is the season of good will... and so it is. It is the season to share and to spend time with those we love. But most importantly, it is also the season in which each of us has the opportunity to rise above the ordinary... to become our best selves.

What does it mean to be our best selves? It would seem that during the holidays it means good will toward the world, peace and brotherhood. All of these concepts are universal and are useful all through the year, but they cannot enter into our daily lives on an ongoing basis unless we begin to rise above ourselves in some meaningful way every day. So, let us begin to establish those principles in our lives as we give ourselves those same gifts. Each gift we give is a message to another, that we think of them and care for them... that we are sending them good will.

Let us begin to establish good will toward ourselves, as well. In so doing, we begin to be our best selves, our spiritual selves, by meeting each day as if it were a day in which to rejoice, a season of good will and with a recognition of the true message of the holidays... peace within and peace to the world. This is not only your gift to yourself, but to the world as well... the gift of becoming your best self, your spiritual self.

Each one of us, as a spiritual being, has the opportunity to give ourselves the gift this year that we seek in every gift we open,

that is, the recognition that we are loved. Love is the gift we truly wish to give and to receive, but the basis of giving love begins with ourselves. Many of us are generous in loving others, but we forget that we, too, want to be loved and recognized in a loving way by family and friends.

However, the true basis of receiving love from others begins in loving ourselves. Love allows us to transcend that which is ordinary in ourselves and to become expanded in our recognition of ourselves and our possibilities. Love opens the door to viewing the world with the magical perspective of infinite possibilities... which is the hidden message of this season... infinite possibilities. So why not begin with yourself today?

Self love is not an act of selfishness. Rather, it is just the opposite. When we feel unloved, it is easy to behave in selfish ways toward others in an effort to meet our own unmet needs. When we enter into each day with a loving thought toward ourselves, it is easier to return that to others every day, not just during the holidays when good will is brought to our attention.

What does self love mean? It means we are no longer punitive to ourselves. It means that we begin to treasure the gifts we have been given, rather than looking to the gifts of others and wishing they were ours. Each of us was born into a world filled with possibilities and each of us has many gifts to allow infinite possibilities to enter into our own lives. But we cannot unlock those possibilities if we do not love ourselves enough to begin to see them.

Limitless possibilities takes us out of the ordinary and into the realm of creating our own lives. But unless we love ourselves enough not to be punitive to ourselves, unless we love ourselves enough to welcome infinite possibilities into our lives, unless we love ourselves enough to see our gifts, we will remain always opening the next gift... looking for love.

Let the next gift, then, be the one we give ourselves this holiday season... the gift of self love, self recognition and limitless possibilities. That is, indeed, the beginning of love around the world, for when we love ourselves it is easy to extend that wonderful gift of love and peace to others.

How then do we begin to love ourselves and to see ourselves as a treasure? It is not as difficult as it may seem. It is a matter of the heart... looking into our hearts and asking ourselves how we truly see ourselves and what we wish for ourselves. It is a matter of acceptance as well as a matter of the heart.

What are we to accept? OURSELVES... that is what we accept. We accept ourselves as a gift and a treasure rather than just one more insignificant life on earth. When we give gifts and extend good will we take ourselves... just for a moment... out of our thoughts about ourselves... we expand ourselves into other possibilities and we feel joyous. As we accept ourselves and recognize our own special gifts, we can create that joy within our lives every day as we become our best selves... the selves we were meant to be... joyous and loving toward ourselves and the world.

Each of us must begin to value ourselves enough to spend time loving ourselves every day. Why not open your heart to yourself this holiday season and then expand that acceptance to others? Acceptance begins to translate itself through your gift of love to yourself as peace in your life and, consequently, peace to the world. What a fine way to see ourselves... as givers of peace and love to ourselves and the world.

Expanding ourselves every day by opening our heart to ourselves begins to open our lives to the good that is not only all around us, but the good that lies stored within ourselves... that part of us which is willing to rise above the ordinary and live in the realm of greater possibilities every day.

Take a break from the world for yourself. Spend time visualizing yourself as a treasured gift to yourself and then to the world. Spend time visualizing yourself opening your heart to all your hidden gifts so that you may fully realize yourself as a treasure. As you treasure yourself so, too, will your life become a treasure to you, unfolding every day into more and more of your own limitless possibilities. Let this holiday season begin with your special gift to yourself... love and acceptance, peace and good will... your best self.

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"A NEW LOOK AT PERSONAL POWER"

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Let us examine personal power from a different perspective. It is often dealt with as something we must seek. However, personal power can be regarded as that which we assume about ourselves, how we view ourselves and our goals. It relates on the deepest levels to our sense of self-worth and what we think we deserve. As an aspect of understanding we may be led step by step to a greater sense of self. We often describe it as something that be must achieved, or as a goal that is off in the future. At this point we may be assuming that we will feel and be powerful at a later time.

Power is not something we must necessarily assume or take. All of us have it through recognizing ourselves for who we are, through the vision we have concerning our lives and how we wish to experience living.

It takes courage to live powerfully, to pursue life fully every day and to believe in a variety of possibilities. Many of us have forgotten to acknowledge our strength and courage. Living from an inner sense of what is right for us personally means we are willing to express our sense of self in everything we say and do. It is living each day for that day and allowing fulfillment to become established through the appreciation of that day's living.

The road to self-recognition can be a confusing one, because our inner vision is often clouded by what we see and read. The

media often promotes ideals of who and what we should aspire to be. Success for today's self-realized individual is often defined as perfection in all aspects, a concept that often leaves us feeling inadequate. It is easy to look to others and assume that they have more of what we feel we should have, but if we are seeking perfection as someone else presents it, we may feel lost and disappointed.

However, as we review our accomplishments we may come to see things differently. It is helpful to realize that power is acquired through the achievement of small goals and then larger ones. Success often comes in degrees.

As we expose ourselves through more uplifting concepts and we grow through meditation, reflection and an honest assessment of all that we do daily, it is possible to attain a different self image. We may soon see that we are living courageously and learn to understand that we are more than we let ourselves believe. Through the process of self-realization we have an opportunity to accept our accomplishments and feel proud of them. Gradually, we begin to express more positive feelings and thoughts about ourselves, expanding our sense of power. Every day provides new opportunities to realize our own dynamic possibilities.

Looking back over what has been taught by our parents and teachers often reveals a lot about who we are today. During those earlier years many values were instilled which may be limiting our lives. Sorting out those values we have absorbed through others allows us to be clear about what we want to keep. This allows us to live more freely and it can also be the key to real appreciation of our spirit. For example, we may see that we have succeeded in overcoming personal difficulties, often an unacknowledged triumph.

It may take a period of time to delve into our inner realms and discern what we value most. As we achieve this, we can more clearly begin to build a sense of power into our lives. In relating values to a sense of self worth we may discover small and large successes every day. Creating a strong sense of self-love promotes a realization of success through such things as an honest day's work, rearing children lovingly or giving love and appreciation to others.

Through this process we can learn to open new avenues for continued growth and expansion. Yes, power can be expanded if we are willing to start now. It is increased every day as we give ourselves permission to pursue our inner path and to relate that path to those values we wish to keep. Life can be enlarged by letting go of old ideas that no longer serve us. Every time we succeed in honoring that which we value, we are living our lives fully.

We are, as individuals, our own greatest asset and, as such, successful in different ways. As we accept our individuality and our own achievements we empower ourselves.

Today is the day to distinguish accomplishments from that which we have been waiting for and to know that we have, indeed, been powerful.

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"NAVIGATING DEEP INNER CHANGES"

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Changes always occur because we have requested them. As we experience these events and implement a new life, it is critical to understand what will occur during that time, otherwise, it is all too easy to fall back into old ways of dealing with our experiences. What we are discussing are ways of recognizing and navigating deep inner changes.

The consciousness of the world is rapidly changing and along with it our lives. Many of us have consciously sought change of a compelling nature. We have requested greater spirituality and we are looking for more freedom of choice, which includes greater creative expression in every avenue.

Dynamic and creative living requires that much of what is familiar to us must fall away. Often this includes relationships and residence. Through our request for creative expression, our career direction may change as well.

It is important to realize that changes may happen one at a time, or in clusters. Much of this depends upon our inner vision ..of what our lives should be like as we learn to live more ..creatively.

In living from our inner source, we begin to reconstruct our lives through a new vision. Our ideals begin to shift and we see the world quite differently. We begin to see the world through

our spiritual and creative eyes, rather than through limitation and lack, the yardstick of the world. And there is more. Through the process of shedding the old life and old values we now understand that we are truly supported in whatever we wish to create and always have been. That is the crux of new beginnings.

As our spiritual vision reveals to us the truth of abundance, we see that life is ever increasing. We are always creating more in our lives in conjunction with God through prayer, meditation and visualization. Now we have truly entered into spiritually living from our inner world and our source, which we interpret as God.

The next steps are individual, because each of us has a different spiritual experience as God expressing itself through us. If we expect our lives to be created exactly like someone else's, we will fall into the pit of expectations and limitations. In an effort to create familiarity out of that which is unfamiliar, we can and will, by lapsing into the familiar, diminish the creative flow into our lives. Resisting the pull of the old familiar ways is the hardest part of creating a new life and requires patience and courage.

As the fundamentals of familiarity give way to living from our inner source and as we allow God to be our source for all things, we will discover that we must also give up the need to control our environment and those in it. This is a massive step forward and is part of living consciously. Letting each individual circumstance express itself fully and for the highest good of all takes determination and faith. It also opens the way to release.

Release is the pathway to harmony with spirit and increase in our lives. If we insist that all our changes must happen in the way we expect them to, insisting that human limitation be expressed, then we deny God the opportunity to provide us with the highest solution and the fullness of increased possibilities in any relationship or circumstance.

Such transitions may be an exhausting process and it is important for us to recognize this for what it is... the body's adjustment to change and the process of incorporating our new understandings into living experience. We can participate more fully in our lives at this time by allowing ourselves ample

opportunity to rest. This is a different concept for most of us in today's busy world.

However, during this transition, participation can take on a new appearance... that is, to understand and accept the process by allowing ourselves the space to be passive, when necessary, in order that we can move dynamically forward later on. We must care for our bodies and love ourselves during these times of extreme change, knowing that we will experience positive results and far more creativity by allowing the process to unfold rather than attempting to force ourselves through it.

Love and patience are the key factors in living creatively as we begin to expand to our greater potential. Spend some time with yourself in meditation. Send yourself love, along with pink or white light, and be willing to listen to your hearts messages at times when it seems that you feel bogged down or things are not happening fast enough. Be aware that, to the extent that you allow it, you will receive messages of encouragement and support from your heart, as well as personal messages supporting you through your individual experience of living from your inner source.

Lastly, do not be afraid to go forward into the unknown. As we let go and allow new events to work their magic, we find that we are free.

Becoming accustomed to a new philosophy and living creatively is more than worth the effort. The universe really does support us and this is only the beginning... our reward is freedom from the concepts of limitation and lack, and the joy of living from our hearts.

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"RELEASING THE INNER CHILD"

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As we become adults we begin in various ways to leave childhood behind. We make efforts to think and act in mature ways. The unresolved inner child often reveals itself as a lack of conclusion in regard to the past. We may find ourselves behaving in ways that do not always please us because we feel frustrated and unsatisfied. We may even discover areas that could be described as immature.

As we progress in our lives, many of us seek resolution of the past. In this effort we are striving to live more fully in the present. Discovering the child within allows that aspect of ourselves an opportunity for expression. Reviewing those things that bind us often leads to a greater expression of our creative nature.

Respecting the inner child is an important part of our development. So is discovering our adult self. Let us speculate for a moment that it is possible to resolve the inner child without insisting on remaining a child. Living as a "grown-up" can be a difficult task if all it means is burdens and responsibility.

Realization of the present as fulfilling may be the beginning of resolution. A willingness to let the child take its place in our memory without dominating us may provide some surprises. They may be experienced as personal happiness born out of understanding the past.

Many of us grew-up in an era which supported the repression of children. Some of our unmet childhood dreams may find expression as we honor the inner child. Thoughtful use of our time spent with that phase of our lives may provide insights into who we are today.

We may have an idealized view as to how our earlier years should have been spent as opposed to our actual experiences. It may be helpful to use some simple techniques which may aide our journey inward.

We may choose to begin by examining our childhood in terms of our wishes. Writing a short list of those dreams we wanted to live as children, and did not, may be very helpful. As this list takes shape, we can begin to determine our next step. If we find that it is important for us to work in this area, we can begin by reflecting for a few moments each day on whatever we desire to experience from the list. As we open our hearts to a brief experience of that excitement, we have an opportunity to bridge the past and the present.

Consciously releasing our list is the first step. Replacing our childhood wishes with goals for the present may bring new meaning into our present lives. In this way we begin to put the child to rest and to focus on the present.

As we find release we open the way to greater energy and purpose. Pain and anxiety over memories and events depletes us of a clear focus. Understanding is a great healer and so is release. If we are filled with the past it may be difficult to enjoy the present and more importantly, to be fulfilled in the present.

It may be purposeful for us to speak to those things that make us feel inadequate or unworthy. We may wish to write a script and act it out in front of a mirror. Approaching our feelings of inadequacy with a new perspective may be an important key to success. Filling our script with praise for accomplishments may open our eyes to new understanding. We may discover that we have focused so strongly on the negative that we have overlooked how much we have done. It may also be helpful to re-create situations that made us feel inadequate by supplying a positive outcome. It may be helpful to realize that others may see us in ways we do not see ourselves.

Feelings of inadequacy may disguise the way we may have actually over-come some of these challenges. Changing the way we view a situation may well reveal our true strengths. All too often we compare and judge our lives against those old dreams and we miss the full impact of the present.

As we relate to our world with greater assurance and less inadequacy, we may find that we treat ourselves and others in ever more positive and loving ways.

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"NEW BEGINNINGS IN A CHANGING WORLD"

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As the changes in our nation and around the world continue, we have an opportunity to redefine many elements in our lives. During the recent past, the concept of the fully functioning individual was evidenced by a packed appointment book and experienced as no free time. Today, many of us have an opportunity to look for a deeper meaning to our lives. In our current economic climate we are called upon to be more resourceful, perhaps creating room for new values.

On every level, consciousness is expanding and re-defining the nature of our lives. As our awareness expands through economic changes, we may have more free time than ever before. Using this time to question what it means to be fully functioning may lead to a new perspective. It may even mean that we wish to experience MORE freedom.

We may experience a whole new view of ourselves through the movement in the world toward new ways to express freedom. Becoming free often requires a period that intensifies our feelings and emotions. We may find that we are grappling with issues that are deeply personal and that affect our lives on every level.

Those who live from their own truth are often seen as free. Living from truth does not mean that we are not responsible. Rather, it means that we are willing to make every effort to fill

our days with understanding and meaningful experiences. It is experienced as an ability to be flexible, even though we may feel a powerful desire to have things remain the same.

We have been exposed to so much information spelling out who and what is dynamic, that many of us have accepted it as our own. As we redefine our lives for the future, we may find that we are maturing in our definition of the 'full life.'

We may experience ourselves through a new awareness as we have an opportunity to realize each day as a new day. Some of these days may be expressed as a less-than-full calendar. Making use of these precious moments can open the door to a greater consideration of the choices we have made and those we may wish to make. We may find that we are discovering new ways to bring money into the household and perhaps, new ways to be free.

As those around the world choose to live from their hearts, so ,too, can we begin to live from our hearts. Many are demanding freedom and getting it. While they are also undergoing painful times in experiencing this process, we may see a valuable lesson in their persistence. As they forge ahead into new frontiers, they are learning new ways to live their lives.

These events are the foreshadowing of things to come and a restructuring of goals and ideas for so many. Consciousness is increasing by leaps and bounds. As we see their struggle for truth and change, we have an opportunity to reexamine our own lives and draw some parallels.

As we contemplate our own experiences, we may find change seems to have been pressed upon us by things we find hard to understand. The process may take us into ourselves as, we too, along with the world, look for a new direction. Self-esteem and self-worth may tumble as we no longer resemble the busy individual of the past. It is at this point that we may find ourselves drawn to new ideas.

For many, this is frightening because it means change, yet, as we draw on our inner strengths we may discover a previously unknown level of courage. As we make these connections, intuition and creativity may surprise us by its availability. With

these tools, we can move dramatically forward, bringing about exciting new changes out of our most difficult moments.

When life is no longer familiar, we may become inventive and creative. Many times, the resourceful person is one who seems to discover new ways of doing things. New ways of understanding seem to lead to a release of the familiar and mysteriously seem to move us to the next level.

As we look carefully at what it is to be daring, we may find the clue to this leap in consciousness. It requires acting on creative ideas and carefully listening for intuitive guidance. It involves listening to one's inner urges and recognizing them as messages from our hearts. As those in other countries listen to their hearts and demand freedom, they turn adversity into a new awareness. So too, can we participate in positive self-expression. We can begin to fill our journal with new ways of experiencing our lives and redefining dynamic living.

We may come recognize that we are more in concert with the changes around the world as individuals than we ever dreamed. As we meet our most difficult challenges with a new perspective, we may begin re-discovering aspects of ourselves.

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