

Service with Nobody Serving

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This essay begins as a contemplation on why we are here on this planet and eventually flows into an exploration of service as a possible purpose for our lives. The whole article winds up as a tapestry made of stories, quotes, and discussions on the art of service and what it means to engage in the spirit of service with an open heart. As part of this tapestry, an exploration on possible ways to keep our hearts open and how that may contribute to a better world at large is woven in. Though it may not be clear to the reader, the invisible inner lining of this tapestry is a contemplation on service as a way to return back home to a place of peace, love, and total freedom at both the individual and collective level.

Key Words: Love, Service, Presence, Open-heartedness

Over the years, I have come to realize that the best questions in life are the ones with no definitive answers. One of these questions that I like to contemplate on is, "Why are we here?" What is our purpose of living in this world? Ultimately, nobody knows and it might be a good idea to be suspicious of people who say they do. I certainly do not know but we can all make guesses and some of those guesses may feel truer than others deep inside. This essay will consist of a discussion of some of my guesses. Even though the title of this essay gives it away, I will try to let my guesses unfold as I ramble on with stories and quotes to contemplate on. To begin, let us consider the following story told by Margaret M. Stevens (1978):

There was a man who died and found himself in a beautiful place, surrounded by every conceivable comfort. A tuxedo jacketed man came to him and said, "you may have anything you choose – any food – any pleasure – any kind of entertainment."

The man was delighted, and for days he sampled all the delicacies and experiences of which he had dreamed on earth. But one day he grew bored with all of it, and calling the attendant to him, he said, "I'm tired of all this, I need something to do, to be of service in some way. What kind of work can you give me?"

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The attendant sadly shook his head and replied, "I'm sorry, sir. That's the one thing we can't do for you. There is no work here for you." To which the man answered, "That's a fine thing. I might as well be in hell." Looking surprised, the attendant leaned in and said softly, "Where do you think you are?"

Service

One common guess about the meaning of life is service. We make our lives meaningful by serving something greater than ourselves as individuals. It can be through supporting a friend, parenting, cleaning the house, making dinner for the family, giving to others in need, serving others at work (clients, customers, coworkers, managers, etc.), contributing to society in some way, volunteering in the community, or contributing to the health of the planet. By serving something greater than ourselves as individuals, we find meaning in our lives. At Kwansai Gakuin University, the university I attended as an undergraduate student, the university motto was, *Mastery for Service*. I had no idea what that meant and was completely uninterested in learning about it when I was a student there but now I am finally interested and beginning to understand. And I must say, it is a beautiful beginning. In a speech to students in a school, Dr. Albert Schweitzer (The Silcoatian, 1935), the legendary doctor and philanthropist, stated, "I don't know what your destiny will be... But I know one thing: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve (pp. 784-785)."

Although I still forget quite often, deep down, I feel like life is service. There is a phrase I like to repeat to myself over and over when I find myself not enjoying the work I am engaging in. I repeat *Laborare est orare*. It means "To work is to pray" in Latin. It comes from the Benedictine monks. Back in the middle ages, many of the monks in Benedictine monasteries tried to live a self-sufficient life. They carried their water from the river, grew and cooked their own food, wove and sewed their garments, built and maintained their buildings and furniture, kept their place clean, and engaged in prayer and all of their religious duties. It was a lot of hard work. One way to help them through all of this hard work was the repetition of this phrase, *Laborare est orare*. They considered all of their work, not only their religious activities and duties, to be a sort of prayer (Moody, 1997). All of the work they did was considered to be pathways to God. Since all of their activities were considered to be a service to the Lord, every moment was sacred and precious. For example, when they were mending their garments, they would do this with the utmost sincerity and presence. They would focus on the raw sensory experiences of every movement they make at every moment and in this way. They tried to feel the presence of God in their own hands, in the needle they were holding, in the thread they were sewing with, in the garment they were mending, and in every breath they were taking in. They also tried to feel the unconditional loving space and silence behind all of this. Beautiful, isn't it? We don't have to be Benedictine monks to approach life in this way. And if the word, "God" does not agree with you, you are welcome to replace that word with "love, peace, freedom, or truth" in these descriptions. The essential meaning of the message will not change.

Khalil Gibran (2020), the legendary poet and writer of *The Prophet* wrote, "Work is love made visible (p. 16)." If we think about how our work contributes to the well-being of ourselves and others, we notice that work is a way to express our love. If we see it this way, perhaps it is easier to love what we do as *work*. And until we can love all kinds of work, including the ones we find difficult, time-consuming, dirty, and boring, as a labor of love, as a service to the universe, our work is far from done. Even if we reach a point where we do find all work to be an expression of love and service, that is just the beginning. The work we do from then on is the beauty we bring to the world. That beauty will manifest in many ways. It may take the form of artistic creativity, innovations in business, education, technology, as well as medicine, among many others. That beauty may manifest as inspired people, and perhaps most importantly, deeply loving relationships. In the book entitled, *Letters to a Young Poet*, the legendary poet, Rainer Maria Rilke (1934) wrote, "For one human being to love another: that is perhaps the most difficult task of all... the work for which all other work is but preparation." (p. 34)

With all of the temptations of superficial sensory pleasures, the physical world, or what I like to call our *earthly life*, is an easy place to forget that we are here to serve the sacred in all. Because of this, there have been many folktales around the world to help us remind ourselves of the importance of service.

The following is one such tale originating from Europe that I learned from a class taught by my beloved meditation teacher, Tara Brach (<https://www.tarabrach.com/talks-audio-video/>). This is how it goes:

A King and Queen were childless and were looking for an heir for their kingdom. They decided to interview all people interested in inheriting the throne. To make things egalitarian, they invited all of the candidates over to their castle before the interview and offered them baths, their royal garments, jewelry, food as well as beautiful live music so everyone could be interviewed on a level playing field.

As their assigned interview times arrived, no one came upstairs to the King and Queens room for their interview. The King and Queen waited for a while but since no one came for a few hours they asked one of their advisors to go downstairs to see where the candidates were and why they were not coming to their interview.

The advisors went to look downstairs and returned to the King and Queen telling them that the candidates had all left. They ate the food and took the clothes and jewelry and went home. It turned out that they were so enthralled by the fine food, clothes, jewelry, and music, that they had forgotten about why they were here in the first place.

This is how powerful the material world can be. It makes us forget what we came here to do in this world. Although, earthly life and the material world are important parts of life, it is important to remember that there is more to life than that. In Hindu practice, *artha* and *kama*, refer to our material possessions and the sensory pleasures we experience in the physical world, respectively. In these teachings, it is said that *artha* and *kama* are best used as a means for, *moksha*, the awakening process. They can be very useful tools for staying present and enhancing awareness. However, if they become the goal of our activity, we become attached to these things and experiences and we have lost our way home. Not only have we lost our way home, we have become homeless. The following is another story with a similar message commonly told in the Hindu tradition. It is a story told by a character called Narada, who eventually becomes a wise sage (Moody, 1997). This is how it goes:

The Lord asked me to take a stroll with him. While we were crossing the desert near Dwaraka, I turned to the Lord and asked "O Greatest Lord, what is the secret of this life and the appearances of this world? You claim everything to be maya, illusion. It sounds virtually impossible. I can touch a tree. I can grab your arm. A mosquito stings me. I feel these things. How can all this be an illusion?" The Lord smiled and made no reply.

We continued for a while, and then the Lord finally said, "Narada, the sun is scorching here, I am thirsty. I can't walk any further. Ahead you will find a village. Can you go there and fetch me a cup of water?" I set off.

Arriving at the village I approached the first house. To my greatest disbelief I saw the most beautiful maiden in the yard. The moment I looked into her eyes, I was mesmerized. I forgot all about the Lord's wish and the reason of my being there in the village. The woman ushered me into the house, where I was warmly welcomed by her family. They requested me to eat supper with them, and then stay for the night. Smitten by the maiden's beauty, I stayed on enjoying the family's warm hospitality, and secretly marveling at the young woman's loveliness.

A week went by, then two. I stayed on, and on, and soon became part of their household. I even began to share in the household chores. After the appropriate amount of time passed, I asked for the woman's hand in marriage. The family has been expecting nothing less, and so everyone was overjoyed. We married and settled down in her family's house, where she soon bears me three children, two sons and a daughter. Years passed with bliss. I had completely forgotten about my original chore.

Eventually my wife's parents passed away. I took over as head of the household. I opened a small shop in the village and it prospered. Before long I was an honored citizen of the community and a prominent member of the town council. Giving myself up to the age-old joys and sorrows of village life, I lived contentedly for many years.

Then one evening during the monsoon season a violent storm broke out over the area, and the river rose so high from the sudden rains that the village began to flood. I gathered my family and led them through the dark night toward higher ground. But the winds blew so violently and the rain pelted down with such force that one of my sons was washed away. I reached for the boy, but ... in so doing, I let go of my second son! A moment later a gale wind tore my daughter from my arms. Then my beloved wife was washed away into the roaring darkness. I wailed helplessly and clawed at the sky. But my cries were drowned by a towering wave that rose from the depths of the terrible night and washed me headlong into the river.

All went black. Many hours pass, perhaps days. Slowly, painfully, I came to my senses, only to discover that I have been washed onto a sandbank far down the river. It is daytime now, and the storm has passed. But there was no sign of my family anywhere, nor, for that matter, of any living creature. For a long time I remained lying on the sand, almost mad with sorrow and abandonment. Bits of wreckage floated past me in the river. The smell of death was in the wind. Everything had been taken from me now; all things life-giving and precious have disappeared into the swirling waters. There was little to do, it seemed, but weep. Then, suddenly, I heard a deep voice behind me that made the blood stop in my veins.

"Child," the voice asked, "where is my glass of water?"

I suddenly realized that all these years was nothing but illusion. It made me forget my real purpose.

I turned and saw the Lord standing at my side, smiling mischievously. The river vanished, and once again I and the Lord were alone in the empty desert.

"Where is my water?" the Lord asked again. "I have been waiting for you to bring it now for almost half an hour now."

I threw myself at the Lord's feet, tears in my eyes, and yet with a smile on my face.

"O Master, I forgot! ... Forgive me. I forgot what you asked for!"

The Lord smiled and said, "Now do you understand the secret behind your life, and the appearances of this world?"

What a beautiful and mysterious story! For many of us, our earthly life is so interesting that it absorbs all of our attention. When it does, however, we lose the bigger picture. We forget what the heck we came here for in the first place. We inadvertently shut the door to our hearts and wonder where all of the beauty has gone.

No one Serving No one

If we are really here to serve, how do we remember that we are here to serve? And how do we remain sincere in our spirit of serving? It is so easy to lose touch with our deeper selves and just regard what we do as an obligation or a job. When we truly serve with sincerity, there is no one engaging in the service. We are merely dwelling in a level of consciousness that does not separate you from me or us from them. There is no "me" or any "self-conscious entity" that is doing the service. And because of that, there is no separate "them" to serve (Dass, 2011). It is all one. When blood cells travel faster to our muscles when we exercise, the blood cells are not thinking, "I would really rather just sit here and chill but I guess I should move down to those muscles quickly if I'm going to be a good blood cell." The blood cells just go there. There is no decision making, no complaining, no bragging, and no self-consciousness.

Four Keys to Keeping our Hearts Open

As self-conscious humans, however, it is so easy to separate ourselves from the beings we are serving; to think we are doing it for someone else. This is the challenge I face almost every time I am engaging in service. When I think I am doing it for someone else, it is easy to think, "I'd rather be doing something else" or simply daydream about something else while I am working. In other words, it is so easy to fall back on my habit of just going through the motions without putting my heart into it. Staying

sincerely present with our activity here and now is a very difficult challenge. However, through my years of research, I have noticed that there may be four key points that sages have suggested throughout history to help us remember and to stay sincere and present (Sato, 2019). The following is an explanation of these four keys. They are essentially the four keys to keep the door of our hearts open.

1. Turn it off

The first key is to "turn it off". It is to periodically go into stillness and silence. When the mind is still and silent, the deeper parts of our selves become more visible. This may mean that we engage in a regular practice of meditation. This may mean to slow down more in everyday life. Slowing down gives us a chance to experience small pockets of stillness and silence in between the moments of activity. This may mean to give ourselves a break every once in a while. This may mean to turn off the electronic devices we have and just *be* with nature. To *be* with nature may mean to breathe in the trees and the sky or to feel our own bodies from the marrow of our bones all the way to the tips of the little hairs on our skin. To *be* with nature may mean to truly listen to a friend or to really feel our loved one's hand in our own hand. There is a children's story by John Rocco (2011) entitled, *Blackout* that illustrates this very well. The following is a summary of what happens:

One evening, a little girl wants to play with someone in her family at home. Her older sister is busy on the phone. Her mother is busy on the computer and her father is busy cooking dinner. Then there is a blackout. All the electricity is gone. The lights go out. The phones, computers, and kitchen stoves don't work anymore. So the entire family gets together and they light some candles and spend some good family time together. They then go to the rooftop of their apartment building and gaze at the beautiful stars in the sky. They say hello and chat with their neighbors on the rooftop. They share food with each other. They play guitar and sing songs together. They realize how much they have been missing. When the lights go back on, everything goes back to normal. Her sister gets back on the phone. Her father begins cooking again. Her mother goes back to her computer. Frustrated, the little girl then shuts off the breaker making the whole apartment lose electricity again. Upon noticing that she did this, her father says, "Good idea!" to the little girl and the family gets back together and they play a game in the candlelight.

This story offers a great analogy of how silence and stillness gives us an opportunity to see deeper into ourselves and recognize what is really important. When things go completely dark, we are forced to stop and be still. This stillness and silence that it often comes with reminds us of our deeper longings. It reminds us of our longing to belong. To be here right now being completely present with the people we love and the beautiful stars quenches our thirst to belong. And when we feel like we belong, our heart naturally opens.

Because this is so important, I would like to offer one more great story about how turning things off and having some moments of silence and stillness helps us see deeper. It comes from a wonderfully insightful writer, scholar, and teacher called Malidoma Somé. In a television series called *Lunch with Bokara* (2007), he once told this following story that was fascinating to me:

Although Malidoma Somé moved to the United States, this story was from a time when he was living back at home in Burkina Faso, a small country in Africa. One evening, while he was with many community members, there was a blackout in his town. All the lights went out. It was completely dark. Malidoma Somé wanted to light some candles so he and everyone else could see. As he was looking for the candles, the village elders said, "Don't turn the lights on. You can see the things that need to be seen much better in the dark."

Again, we encounter the beauty of silence and stillness here in this story. The village elders know that darkness offers us a kind of stillness and silence that is very important in life. It gives us an

opportunity to see what cannot be seen with the physical eye and recognize what is really important. And so my friends, although it may be challenging to do so in modern life, it may be well worth remembering to "turn it off" every once in a while.

2. Kindness and Love

The second key is kindness and love. It is so important to be kind to ourselves and to be kind to others. Even in the moments when we cannot, at least having the intention to become kinder in the back of our minds can make a big difference. As much as we can, we try to keep our hearts open. I invite you to try to do everything with kindness, tenderness, with a gentle light touch. We can live our lives out of love or we can live our lives out of fear. The choice is ours. The following illustrates this beautifully. It is the story of the late great Nelson Mandela, that I learned from the great psychotherapist and meditation teacher, Tara Brach (<https://www.tarabrach.com/talks-audio-video/>). This is how it goes:

After twelve years in being continuously tortured in prison in South Africa, Nelson Mandela feared he would never find love in his heart again. He was scared that he would die with only fear and hatred in his heart. One day in prison, he made a decision. He decided he would open his heart again. He would love the world again. He first began with focusing on gratitude for what he had left, his life, some of his health, the little bit of food and water he received, being able to see the trees and sky outside his prison bar window, being able to reminisce about his beloved friends and family, etc. Then, he decided that he would learn to love the people around him. The problem was that the only people he had personal contact with were the guards who tortured him. So he decided these were the people he would love. As his heart opened, he approached the guard and asked how he was doing.

Each day he smiled and asked, "How are you today? How are your children? How is your wife?" At first, the guards refused to speak to him. Most of them yelled at him to be quiet. But Mandela persisted with a gentle but determined heart. He asked every day with a kind smile on his face and patiently waited. Eventually one of the guards began to open up and talk about himself, his family, and his challenges in life. Mandela listened and listened with an unconditional presence and deep compassion. One by one, the guards eventually lost the ability to torture him. They could not torture someone who loved them so much. Because of this, the prison management had to keep changing the guards over and over again in order to keep torturing him.

What a beautiful story! It shows us that if we live our lives out of love, we contribute to this world by creating more love. If we live our life out of fear, we contribute to this world by creating more fear. Although we all do some of both, there are individual differences in how much we do of either. We can choose to do one more than the other. This is the choice we all have. What is your choice? In chapter 16, verse 14 of the first book of the Corinthians, it reads, "Let all that you do be done in love" (New King James Version, 1982). If we could all truly live like that, this world would definitely become a better place.

Lovingkindness Meditation

There is a common meditation practice used to foster kindness and love inside ourselves. Although there are many variations in a variety of different religions, I am most familiar with the Lovingkindness meditation used in Buddhist practice (Kornfield, 2006). This is a wonderful way to make contact with a deeper part of us that is pure unconditional love itself. I invite you to give it a try for a few minutes right now. Here are the instructions:

When you are ready, please find a comfortable position, close your eyes, and begin with a few deep slow breaths. I invite you to try to taste the air that nourishes us every moment of our lives.

When you feel relaxed enough, I invite you to breathe normally and keep your focus on the physical sensation of your breath (inside your nostrils or belly).

After a few minutes, when you are ready, I invite you to silently repeat the words, "May I be healthy, happy, loving, and giving" in rhythm with your breath. I invite you to keep repeating this over and over for a few minutes. I invite you to really feel the meaning of these words with your entire body.

When you are ready to move on, I invite you to think of someone you love, respect, and/or appreciate and silently repeat, "May you be healthy, happy, loving, and giving."

After a few minutes, you are welcome to change to a new person if you like but I invite you to focus on just one person at a time. It may be useful to picture the person in front of you when you recite those words.

When you are ready to move on, I invite you to picture all of those people you imagined in a circle around you as you repeat, "May you be healthy, happy, loving, and giving." I invite you to keep doing this for a few minutes.

When you are ready to move on, I invite you to change your picture and thoughts to "May all beings be healthy, happy, loving, and giving." Please keep repeating this over and over as you imagine a picture of our entire planet.

When you are ready to move on, I invite you to think of someone who is challenging to you and silently repeat, "May you be healthy, happy, loving, and giving." I invite you to spend a few minutes feeling how even this person wants to stop suffering and find happiness.

Finally, before we finish, I invite you to go back to "May I be healthy, happy, loving, and giving" and repeat this slowly about ten times before you open your eyes and stop.

Welcome home to who you are at the deepest level.

3. Don't know Mind

The third key is the "Don't know mind". Many people believe the English version of this phrase was coined by the highly respected Zen Teacher named Seung Sahn. He was known to ask himself the koan, "Who am I?" and he would reply to himself, "Don't know... Don't know..." He called this state the "Don't know mind". To live with a "Don't know mind" is to live every moment as if it was the first moment of our life. We stop assuming that we know what is going on. We stop thinking that we know what he is going to say. We stop thinking that we know what she is thinking or feeling. We live with a curiosity and eagerness to learn from every moment, from everyone, from everything. "What is going on now?" "I don't know... I want to learn." "I am completely open to try my best to learn from anything that comes in my direction in this moment." When we think we know, we paradoxically take the first step into the land of ignorance by refusing to pay full attention and learn from the world. When we think we don't know, we remain in a state of graceful humility and take the first step into the land of wisdom. "Don't know mind" is the essence of true presence. The following is a story I learned from Harry Moody (1997). This story, which is about the graceful humility of this mind state, goes like this:

A man leaves his wife and children to find the secret meaning of life. He travels around the world for many years looking for life's secret meaning. Finally a woman at the bottom of the Himalayan mountains tells him that there is a guru at the top of the mountain who knows the secret meaning of life. Excited, the man climbs up the treacherous mountain getting injured, hungry, cold, and almost killing himself in the process. He is still determined to meet this guru so he continues the climb in agonizing pain.

He finally reaches the top and sees a wise looking man sitting calmly with his eyes closed. He asks him, "Oh wise one, I have been told that you know the secret meaning of life. I have travelled around the world in search for the secret meaning. Will you please reveal life's secret meaning to me?"

Without moving or opening his eyes, the wise one says in a soft voice, "The secret meaning of life..... ..is a bird on a wing."

The man ponders this reply for a while trying to figure out how to interpret this statement.

After a while, he says, "Oh wise one I do not understand what that means. Will you be so kind as to explain what that means?"

Without moving or opening his eyes, again, the wise one says in a soft voice, "The secret meaning of life.....is a bird on a wing."

The man assumes that it means he must figure out how to interpret this statement on his own and ponders this for a while again.

After a while again, he says, "Oh wise one, I still do not understand what that means. Will you please explain what that means?"

Without moving or opening his eyes, again, the wise one says in a soft voice, "The secret meaning of life.....is a bird on a wing."

This continues on for many hours and finally the man loses his temper and says, "You've gotta be kidding me! I left my wife and children, spent years travelling around the world, I almost killed myself climbing up this mountain, I withstood being injured, being in extreme pain, extreme hunger, extreme cold just to find you and all you can tell me is that the secret meaning of life is a bird on a wing?!! Are you kidding me!!!"

The wise one slowly opens his eyes and looks at the man with an innocent but bewildered expression on his face and says, "You mean.....the secret meaning of life is not a bird on a wing?"

It is a silly story but I found it very funny. This is the message I extracted from it. Even if we are *the wise one*, we still must live with a "Don't know mind". In fact, it is precisely because we are *the wise one*, we live with a "Don't know mind". It is the essence of awakening. Knowing that we don't know is the first step to being present to the here and now. When we think we know, we stop paying attention.

When the Insight Meditation Society in the United States had their first conference, they invited a Zen monk to attend many of the sessions presented and directed by many experts in the field. At the end of the conference, he was invited to make a speech. When he stood up to speak, he said, "All teachings wrong! The only thing that matters is - What is this?!..... What is this?!..... What is this?!". This monk was most probably trying to say that the only thing that is truly important is the "Don't know mind". Another famous Zen teacher called Suzuki Roshi gave us the similar kind of message stating the following; "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, in the expert's mind there are few" (Suzuki, Dixon, Smith, & Baker, 1970, p. 2). When we live with a "Don't know mind", anything is possible. We are open to accept whatever happens and to find a unique response to each and every moment we are alive. Every moment is a "What is this!?" moment.

4. Every moment can be our last

The fourth key is to live knowing that every moment can be our last one. If you knew you only had a few minutes left to live, how would you spend it? This question forces us to recognize what is really important in our lives. Many people respond by saying that, if they could, they would spend it with the person or people they love. If we ask them what they would do with them, the responses vary but most of them have one element in common. The element is openness and presence. They would be as open and present as they can be with them. We let go of all of the little things and just open up and let those last moments soak in.

This is one of the great reasons why we die. Death is a constant reminder to not lose touch with what is really important. As a simple exercise, I invite you to think about the problems you were facing five years ago. Are they still major problems for you now? Do you even remember them? Most of the problems that seemed major to us five years ago, we no longer remember. And even if we do, most of them will seem minor to us now. This means that the problems we think are major today will no longer be so five years from now. Death is a beautiful reminder that there are things that are much more important than the little day to day problems we worry and complain about. After having a near death experience, Carl Sagan, the wonderful astronomer and writer said, "I would recommend it to everyone." For many people, near death experiences are extremely enlightening. Death is a great motivator for our personal development. It drives us to get serious about looking for what is really important in life. Consequently, it drives us to live our lives so that the important things are experienced. Whenever I

discuss death, I like to conclude with a wonderful poem called "Deepening the Wonder" by Hafiz (2003) on the gift of death. I hope you enjoy it. The poem goes like this:

Death is a favor to us,
But our scales have lost their balance.

The impermanence of the body
Should give us great clarity,
Deepening the wonder in our senses and eyes

Of this mysterious existence we share
And are surely just traveling through.

If I were in the Tavern tonight,
Hafiz would call for drinks

And as the Master poured, I would be reminded
That all I know of life and myself is that

We are just a midair flight of golden wine
Between His Pitcher and His Cup.

If I were in the Tavern tonight,
I would buy freely for everyone in this world

Because our marriage with the Cruel Beauty
Of time and space cannot endure very long.

Death is a favor to us,
But our minds have lost their balance.

The miraculous existence and impermanence of Form
Always makes the illumined ones
Laugh and sing.

(trans. Daniel Ladinsky, p. 55)

I hope these four keys, discussed above, seem useful to you. Regardless of whether they are or not, I invite you to open your hearts and keep your hearts open as much as you can in whatever way that works for you. In the bigger picture, if a critical mass of people work toward that goal, perhaps our world will be saved. As Joseph Campbell, the legendary scholar of comparative religion, put it, "We're not on our journey to save the world but to save ourselves. But in doing that you save the world. The influence of a vital person vitalizes" (Campbell & Moyers, 1991, p. 183). After all, we are never more vitalized than when our hearts are wide open.

So my dear friends, I invite you to keep remembering... Breathe in love. Breathe out love. Repeat ad infinitum... I invite you to do this as if it were the most important thing in the cosmos. Because most probably, it is.

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