

CHURCH'S TWO YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Pastor Lucy Baker - 11 April 2010

On April 13 2008, my opening talk focused on reclaiming the word CHURCH from man-made religion and creating a gathering place in which we can practice unconditional loving and acceptance of self and fellow human beings.

A few key points I wanted to mention today:

1. Slow Down Your State of Busyness

The latest STATUS symbol of SUCCESS has become BUSYNESS.

It has become seductive to be too busy to commit to Church, community, family and to your own spirituality and personal healing.

We have become hostile, hurried and humourless, overtaking cars in the rush hour race into the city, just to arrive there 12 feet or five seconds before the car behind us.

Slow down and make time pursue higher-order goals.

2. Uncover your passion

The poet Wallace Stevens, an insurance executive by day and a creative, passionate poet by night, said that it was poetry that gave his life meaning, but his job kept him out of poverty. I like that attitude: a willingness to do several things at once, to be practical and visionary.

Make time to grow your passion. Fit it into your life, for without it, life is not as rich, and you are not as present in your life. **Make time for spiritual practice, for this, in itself, may be the link between you and your purpose, you and your passion.** Everything is connected - your path towards your purpose if you make the time for it, prepares you for loving relationships, relaxing into a level of greater abundance, strength in health and a heightened self-esteem. As we relax, so we receive. Less struggle, more reward.

3. To achieve the impossible, one must first believe the invisible

Michelangelo, the Italian sculptor and painter, was asked how he could possibly create such beautiful forms out of blocks of marble to which he said:

"In every block of marble I see a statue as plain as though it stood before me, shaped and perfect in attitude and action. I have only to chisel away the rough walls that imprison the lovely apparition to reveal it to the other eyes as mine see it."

What if, imprisoned within your own block of marble, is a perfectly formed angel, a form of great beauty and capacity to love, to receive, to come from the heart in all things?

It is said that if God wanted to hide, the first place he or she would hide, would be inside a human being, because that is the last place we would look. Inside all of us is a Light, an angel hidden underneath the layers of life. Trust Spirit, trust your intuition.

4. You are always at Choice, as an adult, every moment of the day and night

In times of hardship, see with new eyes. To notice you have a CHOICE in how you react.

Dr Viktor Emil Frankl, was an Austrian neurologist and psychiatrist as well as a Holocaust survivor. His book *Man's Search for Meaning*, published in 1946, chronicles his experiences as a concentration camp inmate. The camps, he wrote, revealed man as a creature driven by ego and instinct and sublimated drives. But they reveal something even more fundamental- our defining "capacity for self-transcendence."

He also writes of the long days of back-breaking work to the point of exhaustion.

"On the morning march to the labour site, we stumbled on for miles, slipping on icy spots, supporting each other time and again, dragging one another upward and onward, nothing was said, but we both knew: each of us was thinking about his wife. Occasionally I looked at the sky, where the stars were fading and the pink light of the morning was beginning to spread behind a dark bank of clouds. My mind clung to my wife's image, imagining it with uncanny acuteness. I heard her answering me, saw her smile, her frank and encouraging look. . . . A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, the truth - that love is the highest goal to which man can aspire. . . . I understand how a man who has nothing left in this world may still know bliss..."

His decision to not lose himself or his best qualities within a barbaric existence allowed him to keep strong and to continue living beyond the death camp.

5. Step into the BEST of who you are

The author, Marianne Williamson's wise words were echoed by Nelson Mandela in his inauguration speech:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

6. Stop taking yourself so seriously and let go!

Remember your playing small does nothing to serve the world. What are you ready to transcend from yesterday's thoughts, choices and opinions? Accept the possibility of death everyday with grace by living life fully.

I also talked about the first time I jumped out a plane. I remember my first parachute jump 18 years ago. The chute didn't open, and I remembering looking up and seeing a thing stream of material rather than the open umbrella. I had a choice in that moment - to trust and listen to my inner wisdom and connection with Spirit, or to lose all hope and forget to hear. I listened and spun my body to the left, which unfurled the material.

As soon as I landed safely, I got up and got back onto the next plane going up, to jump for a second time to prove to myself that I was alive.

It is said that everything will be OK in the end, and if we don't feel OK right now, it is because we are not yet at the end.

7. Be fun to be with. Be creative and create new rituals for you and your family

Unhappy Hour

During this pre-chosen HOUR per week, you have full self-permission to howl and mutter about everything that hurts your feelings. Make sure you take everything as personally as possible, and exaggerate the level of drama to award-winning. Then enjoy generous thought and expansive calmness the rest of the week.

Dare to be Boring Day

We all deserve a break from the oppressive demands to appear smart and entertaining. On Dare to be Boring Day, it will be socially unacceptable to demonstrate your wit and verve. Long-winded, rambling monologues are mandatory, the more clichés and buzzwords you use, the better! Tell old worn-out stories that your friends have already heard several hundred times. Fill these talks with awkward silences. Discuss at length your plans for switching washing powders, or the collection of matchbooks you had as a child and the time you almost went to Italy, but didn't.

Do What You Fear Festival

First you make a list of the 100 things you are most afraid of. Next, you rate them from one to 100 in order of how badly they scare you. Then you agree to stop obsessing about the bottom 97 because they distract you from the three really interesting ones. Finally you brainstorm about how you are actually going to conquer those top three fears by doing them.

SO – two years on – with this innate connection to our own wisdom and light and to each other, we have created a Church of togetherness, from which we can all move forwards. Thank you for your contribution of time, energy, desire and trust in my team and I.

Make this fortnightly Sunday an opportunity to observe your progress towards becoming who you are supposed to be, that your gift to your family is your happiness, not your suffering! There is a great Power in Choice. Make this gathering place an oasis, a place of reflection, committing to seeing every moment afresh, as if for the first time, living as you choose to NOW live, regardless of what old rules and restrictions from the past you have carried in here tonight. Leave them here, let go, and begin the next chapter in trust and faith.

As the 13th Century Persian mystic and poet Rumi said:

"Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I will meet you there."

THANK TEAM

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Bethany Freeman-Chandler