



# Spiritual Light Center

**Newsletter—June 2014**

## MESSAGE FROM BILL

**Dear SLC Family,**

As I walk around my yard today and hike in the nearby hills with my dogs I am overwhelmed by the insistence of life to push forward and express itself. There is no half-heartedness in it, especially at this time of year. It reminds me of the adage “Anything that isn’t busy growing is busy dying”. Even the roses I was certain died last year have sprung up from the earth out of seemingly nothing.

If the physical is actually a manifestation of the spiritual, then our eternal, spiritual being is also pressing forth into our consciousness calling us to wake up and step forth into deeper spiritual awareness. It seems that this time of year underscores the natural urgency to venture beyond our complacent comfort zone, to transcend with new spiritual growth.

It is my sincere belief that each of us will move forward in spiritual growth following a unique path, utilizing a specialized formula of our own making. In that we are each unique manifestations of the Divine Being, we are drawn into the Light by our own distinct vibration. As a sacred scripture says, “The Shepherd knows his sheep and calls them each by name”. I guess the question is how do I best clean out my ears so I can hear that Voice when it speaks? What are those

impediments that muffle the Voice which leads me in the direction of growth and enlightenment? I believe my eternal self is peacefully waiting for me to leave my ego behind and take the steps necessary to enter into that union for which part of me longs and part of me inexplicably fears.

There are as many paths lining the ways of spiritual growth as there are souls treading them. It is presumption to try to tell you the way of your own spiritual growth. Considering the vision of the riotous, verdant growth I see around me right now I thought I’d toss out a little fertilizer in the form of some articles I found on Spiritual Growth. Peruse, accept or reject, and hopefully be fed.

Many blessings to you,  
Bill Groves, President

### OUR VISION STATEMENT

The Spiritual Light Center is a peaceful and joyful fellowship of individuals, centered in love, dedicated to the God within, and honoring the many paths to truth.

### OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We seek to develop our highest selves by continuous sharing of spiritual ideas, in an environment of unconditional love and respect for others.



## ONGOING EVENTS in the Fellowship Hall

**Every Tuesday at 5:15 pm** - Join our insightful group as we watch a selected film of a spiritual nature, followed by discussion to develop our evolution. Afterward we choose a restaurant and go out to eat!

**Every other Thursday, June 12 & 26, at 5:15 pm** - Please join us for our meditation group led by Dr. Richard Kimball. He begins with an informative discussion on the practice of meditation followed by walking and then sitting meditation. Call Richard at 371-3425 for further details.

**Thursdays at 6:30pm** come join us for our **book study**. We're continuing with The Sermon on the Mount by Emmett Fox. This book is filled with wisdom and has continued to generate great discussion.

## UPCOMING SPEAKERS

**June 1, 11 a.m.**

**Rev. Mariah Brooks**, an ordained minister with The Beloved Community with James Twyman and very active in the Oneness Movement from India, will speak on "Following Spirit Within vs. Living from Ego". Let's welcome her!

**June 8, 11 a.m.**

**Kim May**, one of our favorite speakers, a Science of Mind Practitioner at the Creative Thought Center in Waynesville, returns to share with us on "Victimhood vs. Vulnerability". Sounds fascinating!

**June 15, 11 a.m.**

**Barbara Vitale**, well-known author and speaker highly trained in the Lakota and ancient Celtic traditions, returns to speak on "Life is the Ceremony".

**June 22, 11 a.m.**

**Nancy Hicks, R.N.**, an experienced life coach and medical intuitive, is sharing with us on "Being Grateful for What Is".

**June 29, 11a.m.**

**Estela Carson-Priede**, President of the Theosophy Foundation of Georgia, astrologer, and retired from international finance, will speak on "Theosophy101: What It's All About". Don't miss this!

## FRIDAY SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

**Now at 6pm in the Hall**

**June 6 – Sharon Holland & Heather Perry** will speak on Transfiguring Divine Love by Patricia Cota-Robles.

**June 13 – J. Robin Whitley, M.Div.**, poet, author and musician, shares with us "Stories & Music".

**June 20 – Millard Deutsch** will be sharing with us on the fascinating topic "The Real Secrets of the Universe".

**June 27 – Arthur Cataldo** will speak on Cymatherapy®: A therapeutic technique employing sound to re-tune cells and tissues to function at an optimum level.



## OUR SLC METAPHYSICAL STORE IS IN FULL SWING!

Our store is open under the experienced management of Sandy Frary, certified gemologist. We are selling consignment or donated items, including books, jewelry, gift and decorative items, original art, and handmade crafts and clothing. **The store hours are Thursdays & Fridays 2 pm to 6 pm, Saturdays 12 pm to 4 pm, and Sundays after the service.** Come see the beauty! For information please call Sandy at 342-7843.

### OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PRESIDENT.....Bill Groves  
VICE PRESIDENT.....Kay Smith  
SECRETARY.....Millard Deutsch  
TREASURER.....Linda Ramsey  
VICE TREASURER.....Arthur Cataldo  
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### SPIRITUAL LIGHT CENTER INFORMATION

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slcfranklin@ frontier.com  
[www.spirituallightcenter.com](http://www.spirituallightcenter.com)



## Reflections on Spiritual Growth

**☞ *Spiritual Growth - Growth in Self Awareness*** by Dick Rauscher

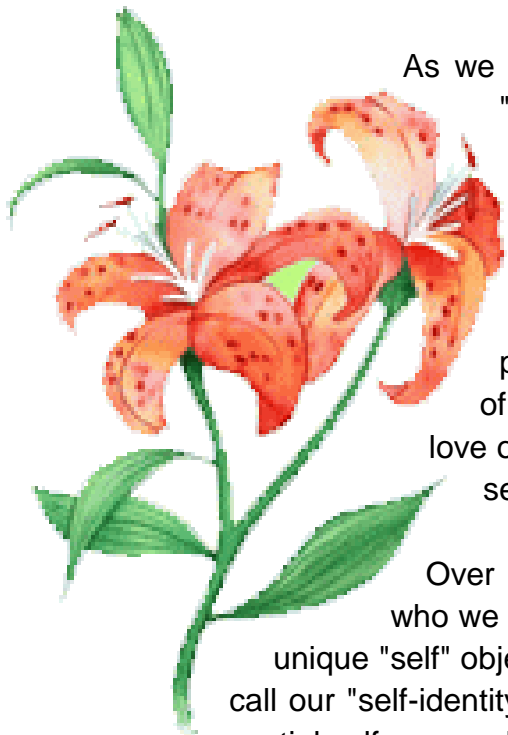
I believe that spiritual growth is simply the process of awakening our consciousness; becoming conscious of ultimate reality and "what is". Like many things that are "simple", it is not easy to achieve. If it were, there would be many more enlightened persons in the world than there are.

Let me begin by saying that whatever your personal understanding of God, or Creator is, the commonly held theistic view of God as a "person" who lives in a place called "heaven" is not going to be helpful when we try to understand the process of spiritual growth. I find it much more useful to understand God or the Creator as the creative spiritual energy of pure agape love or perhaps the radical Consciousness of pure being; the creative Consciousness of the Universe itself.

If we are created in the image of God as many believe, then at that moment, before the world gets its hands on us, we are essentially a pure, untarnished child of God; a child born in the image of God. At that moment we are nascent consciousness manifesting pure creative agape love; able to love without a "because". At that moment we are able to manifest the infinite. We are simply a wave called "i am" resting in the ocean called "I AM".

We do not need a "because" to elicit our love. We love because agape love is our essential creative energy. It is simply who we are. The agape love energy of "i am" is the same as the creative energy and compassion of "I AM".

This is how I understand the idea of "being born in the image of God". The goal of the enlightenment is simply to return to this essential self; this place of pure awakened consciousness where we began our human journey. Conceptually, I find it useful to think of this "essential self" or localized "i am" as the center of a small circle that is surrounded by "I AM" --- "THE" creative ground, the creative essence of all reality.



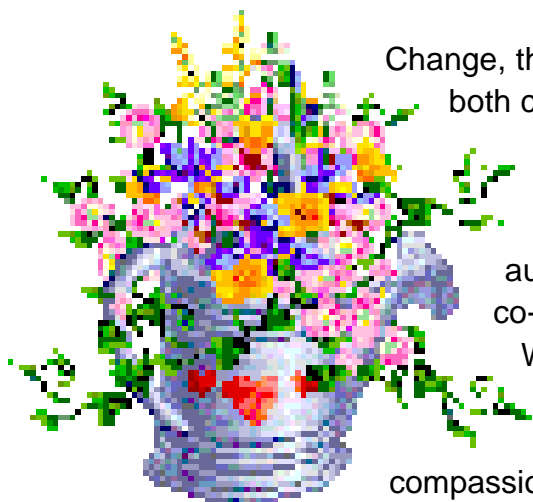
As we grow and develop over time into a separate ego "self", a "unique" individual, opaque layers of "ego stuff" called beliefs, certainties, expectations, fears, desires, likes, dislikes, attachments, assumptions, conclusions, prejudices, illusions, judgments, roles, labels, and worries begin to build up layer by layer as concentric circles around the "i am". The essential light of "i am" is slowly covered by the impenetrable grime of this ego stuff until the light of agape love of "i am" is no longer visible. Instead of manifesting the agape love of the Creator, we increasingly manifest our individual ego or self-identity.

Over time, these layers of "ego stuff" become the definition of who we "are"; an "object", separate, apart, and unique from all other unique "self" objects. The beliefs, assumptions, and other "ego stuff" that we call our "self-identity" and which effectively blocks the light of "i am" or the essential self, are each like small lenses that distort reality. The more rigid the belief, the thicker the lens. These "lenses", or ego "beliefs", distort reality in that they allow into the ego only those aspects of reality that the ego believes to be true; they effectively block out the rest of Creation by labeling it as "not true". The self-identity of the ego is now complete. The agape light of "i am" is no longer able to shine, and the light of all reality not consistent with the ego's "beliefs" cannot get in. We forget our essential self even exists. Both "i am" and "I AM" disappear! The idea that we are pure agape love, that we are co-creators with "I AM", is rejected as ridiculous.

Once formed, the ego is very invested in surviving; both; physically and psychologically. The ego "self" does not like change because it means that some part of it's self-identity must die in order to make room for a new ego "self". If the ego "believes" something to be wrong, not consistent with its beliefs, it will label it as "not true, or not right" and then reject it. In this way the self-identity of the ego is protected from change. The ego's belief is "THE" truth. In other words, when a firmly held belief of the ego encounters reality, reality will change, not the belief. Said simply, the psychological survival of the ego requires that the ego avoid change by being rigidly invested in being right. The need to be right is a primary source of conflict and suffering in the world. Unless we are able to understand how powerful this tendency of our ego is to allow in only what we already believe, we cannot grow. Removing the log in our own eye is not easy work. It can be achieved only when we deeply understand and fully accept that the seeds of conflict and suffering are embedded in our own heart. Not just our neighbor



To summarize, spiritual growth is growth in self-awareness. Spiritual growth is nothing more than a process of understanding and accepting the many layers of "ego stuff" that keep us from sitting with reality as it really is, and manifesting our essential energy called agape love. Growth in self-awareness means understanding and accepting that each of our beliefs not only distorts reality, they reject all aspects of reality that do not exactly conform to that belief. A friend once told me humorously that the plumb line for what is right and true ran directly down the middle of his ego.



Change, the fundamental act of creation, and spiritual growth, are both challenging work for the ego. Both require an awakening consciousness. Each time we grow in self awareness and empty the ego of its many layers, we move closer and closer to manifesting the essential energy of the authentic self, the creative "i am" agape love energy that co-creates with the creative agape love energy of "I AM". We are co-creators with "I AM". The wave can never be separated from the ocean. The only choice we have is---are we going to consciously create love and compassion, or unconsciously create pain and suffering.

Spiritual growth is nothing more than our ability to increasingly manifest this essential agape energy that resides at the center of who we really are.....our essential self.

## What's the Difference Between Spiritual Growth and Personal Development? by Katinka Hesselink

In our day to day talk spiritual growth and personal development do tend to mix. There's a lot that is called spiritual that I'd categorize as personal development. In both, self knowledge is an important aspect. But to be complete a third stage has to be added, which leads me to three forms of growth or development:

1. Personal Development
2. Spiritual Growth
3. Quest for Enlightenment

Personal development does not have to be spiritual. People who follow a course in pottery making or gardening are personally developing themselves. Personal growth can take the form of keeping up to date in your profession. Psychotherapy too is a way to do personal growth. In short: anything that helps you to function better in your day to day life – personally or professionally – is a form of personal development or self help.

None of these examples are specifically spiritual. But those who take a management course will in some cases be given meditation exercises. This means that personal growth seminars use spiritual techniques. However, I think it can only be actually spiritual if people transcend themselves in relation to a higher being or self, when people learn to be more ethical in their day to day life. Values play a part in spiritual growth.

Things like learning to be more productive, dealing with stress and becoming successful fall under personal development. Nothing wrong with it. It is focused solely on the individual ME. This transforms into spiritual growth when our development transcends toward a union with all being, a seeking of universal benefit.

Spiritual growth also includes the support people can feel from being part of something Larger. For instance: people who convert to Christianity because they find in Jesus the strength to overcome Alcoholism. The personal transformation involved certainly has a spiritual component as I expand to include a greater healing community.

Deeply spiritual paths go a step further. Quest for Enlightenment assumes that human beings can be liberated from the maelstrom of daily struggles. This liberation avoids suppressing emotions and seeks rather to not be controlled by them. Nirvana and Moksha are states of consciousness that go beyond the ordinary. Those who follow one of these paths are on the quest to Enlightenment or Awakening. There is more to these paths than merely living an ethical life. They require much dedication and perseverance.



It's a revolutionary path in the sense that it can get eliminate attachment to all material and social wealth – because ultimately money and status won't matter.

Spiritual growth can result in drastic changes in one's day to day life – change of job, new relationships, new friends etc. The search for Awakening or Enlightenment ultimately goes further: the environment we live in becomes less important. This does not necessarily involve retreat into a convent or ashram. The implication is that the goal no longer has anything to do with our environment, only with our inner state. Ultimately, so they say, the very idea of a 'goal' drops away as well.

## *Reconnecting with our Soul*

from the 6 Healthy Habits.com

Spiritual growth is a quest for connection with your soul, your source, the home to which you return. It's that part of you that's beyond conditioning, beyond contamination with the dust of daily material existence.



Your soul is the real you, the you that is deeper than your conscious or unconscious self, your ego, or any constructed self-identity. It's the real deal. As you connect more deeply with your soul, you are tuning in to channels of communication with Universal Wisdom. Spiritual growth is a journey of reconnection.

In most traditions, your soul is not just a part of you. Your soul is woven into the very fabric of the Universal Soul. It's both part of you and one with the whole. As contact with your soul deepens, you reconnect not just with your true inner self, but with All that is.

Your soul is your Source of positive universal values: love and compassion, ethics and integrity, truthfulness, fairness, tolerance and respect for life. Connection with these values via the soul is our source of guidance, wisdom, awareness of inner purpose and aspiration. When we connect with the soul, we are truly being guided by an intelligence much greater than our own--a Universal Intelligence.

The soul is also the source of our creative imagination. Inspiration, novel insights, 'eureka' moments, works of great or small creative genius come from connection with the soul. The soul inspires. We see beauty through the lens of the soul; through the soul we experience wonder, awe and glimpses of our 'oneness' with nature and with others. We connect with 'soul mates' when the energies of our respective souls resonate on shared frequencies.

But how does spiritual growth happen? How do we connect with our souls?

Various world traditions have their own ways of understanding spiritual growth and the process by which we re-open our communication channels with the soul. These explanations are neither right nor wrong; all are metaphors representing that which cannot be known or described in words. They are valid for those who find resonance with them. We commonly use terms like 'intuition' and 'sixth sense' for insights that we all experience at least occasionally, that come from somewhere within. We have 'premonitions,' 'hunches,' 'forebodings.' 'A feeling just came over me. I knew something wasn't right.' Such occurrences are for most people random and unexpected. They are the times when your soul tries to reach out to you, tries to connect. It happens more often than you think. We all ignore 'warning signs,' only later reflecting that 'I should have listened to my gut.'

Spiritual growth is concerned with removing blockages, opening channels and improving our ability to 'connect' with our soul. This is achieved through practices that aim to nourish your soul. Perhaps more explicitly they set out to nourish and cultivate your capacity to connect. Spiritual growth is life's greatest journey.



 **Free** by Meister Eckhart

On his way to church, a scholar was surprised to see a man in tattered clothes and barefoot. Nevertheless, as a good Christian, he greeted the poor man: "May God give you a good morning!"

The poor man replied cheerfully, "I have never yet had a bad morning."

"Well, then may God give you good luck!"

"I have never yet had bad luck."

"Well, may God, then, give you happiness!"

"I have never yet been unhappy."

The scholar then asked the man, "Could you please explain yourself to me? I do not understand."

And the poor man replied, "With pleasure! You wish me a good morning, yet I have never had a bad morning. For when I am hungry, I praise God; when I feel cold, or when it is raining or snowing, I praise God; and that is why I have never had a bad morning.

"You wish that God may give me luck. However, I have never had bad luck. This is because I live with God and always feel what he does for me is the best. Whatever God sends me, be it pleasant or unpleasant, I accept with a grateful heart. That is why I have never had bad luck.

"Finally, you wish that God should make me happy. But I have never been unhappy. For all I desire is to follow God's will; I have surrendered my will so totally to God's will that, whatever God wants, that is what I also want. That is why I have never been unhappy."