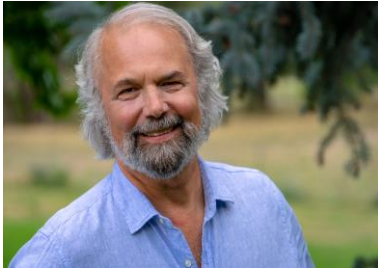


FORGIVENESS—BRINGING REALITY BACK INTO HUMAN CULTURE

PULSE OF SPIRIT
JUNE 19, 2019



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It's a beautiful Australian morning. There's been mist out as we walked over; now I see the sun is shining. There were white cockatiels up in the tree making a raucous commotion over something.

*We are one, but we are many
And from all the lands on earth we come.
We'll share a dream and sing with one voice
"I am, you are, we are Australian."*

(from "I am Australian," by Bruce Woodley and Dobe Newton)

I feel a kinship with this land. I realize I've been coming here for about twenty years. I feel invested in the country and the people of Australia. I feel a part of what's happening here. And I certainly feel invested in this place, Riverdell. What a beautiful property! What a beautiful community of people with a deep heart! Where we're staying looks out over the dell. At this time of year, it has turned green. There are all kinds of birds up in the gum trees—kookaburras, parrots and all the rest.

Culture, time zones and hemispheres can seem to separate us. It can feel like we're in a different land. We even call Australia "down under." It's hard to calculate the time zones when I want to communicate back home. And it is weird going into winter while Sunrise and England are going into summer.

It's interesting that, in spite of what seems to separate us, I could say *I am, you are, we are Australian*. In obvious ways, it's not true: I'm not a citizen of this country. But in another way, I'm part of what happens here, just as you are a part of Sunrise Ranch.

We are all part of the oneness of Reality. Reality is forgiving. The very nature of things is forgiving. If somebody does something awful, they aren't struck down by lightning. Somehow life goes on, even for people who do awful things. Ultimately, people who are doing awful things are bringing something awful on themselves. It takes its toll over time. But it isn't because Reality has it out for them. It's just the very nature of things. We are creators, and if

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what we are creating is destructive, we end up living in that destruction.

Have you ever caught yourself wishing bad things about another person, however consciously or unconsciously? Perhaps pretending to be a good person all the while, because you're doing the good things that this other person isn't doing. And then you wake up and realize, *That's not the universe's attitude towards that person*. And that your own attitude isn't the attitude of Reality that is coming to them in a loving way every moment of that person's life and always wishing them the best.

Life itself is forgiving. We receive life in every moment. We are receiving it now—it's present and available to us, no matter what we just did. What we just did might shut us off from the Reality of life. We might not be open to it, but it's still there and our heart is still beating. There's something about the life-giving nature of Reality that just keeps coming to us, no matter what we just did. And sure, our own state of mind and heart could shut us off from that, and over time that takes its toll on a person. But the reverse is true too. Over time, when we are open to the forgiving nature of what life is, it flows through us and uplifts us.

My mother used to quote Abraham Lincoln as saying that by the time you're forty years old you own your face, the idea being that what has been reflected on our face over years ends up showing itself. And whether we thought we were born pretty or not, by the time we're forty, whatever we've allowed to express through ourselves has formed our outer countenance. More than that, it

has uplifted the whole of our Being if it has been creative.

And so it is with love itself. Love itself is available from within any person. It's never withheld, actually. A person may not receive that love, they may not be feeling it, they may not be letting it in, but it's there, available to them. We know it for ourselves in any moment we've decided to open to the Reality of love from wherever it comes from within ourselves. Reality itself is the source of the love. And anytime we've opened to it, it's there for us.

Martin Cecil gave services at Sunrise Ranch for many years, and other places too. And the way he told it, some days the thoughts would download beforehand and what he was going to speak about would all come into his mind—and other days it wasn't like that. Other days he got up to the front of the room to speak to people and he had no idea what he was going to speak about. And yet he had a way of opening to the source of wisdom inside himself. And he reported that the inspiration inside him never let him down.

Of course, he had learned to open to it. The source of inspiration within *seems* to let us down if we don't open to it. But that new thought *is* there. And if we will be humble enough to open our minds and let it in, the wisdom inside us is forgiving, and it's always got something new that's available to us.

Reality is forgiving. It's forgiving of each one of us. Whatever has happened in our life, whatever we think we've done, whatever we think has been done

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to us, we're here now and life is ready to go.
Forgiveness is the very nature of Reality.

Forgiveness is also a human practice. The question is whether we are with Reality or with the human tendency to judge and resent. For all people in our life, Reality is loving them, giving them life, giving them wisdom and truth, showering it down upon them, whether or not they're receiving it. Are we doing that or are we doing something different?

Reality is loving this person, while we might be holding a grudge. Have you ever noticed yourself doing that with other people? Looking at them in the same old way; hoping they'll get their just deserts while Reality is giving them love and offering them life opportunities?

As human beings, we might personalize our relationship with other people in a way that holds a resentment or a judgment or ill intent, whereas forgiveness is letting go of that personal imposition on Reality. Forgiveness is impersonal. It's recognizing the impersonal nature of Reality that isn't picking and choosing. It just is itself, and it's beautiful, and it's loving. And yet we, as human beings, can tend to impose something else on other people and on ourselves.

Here was Jesus' teaching around forgiveness:

Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Simply put in today's language, what goes around comes around. We can't inflict judgment and retribution on other people without inflicting it

upon ourselves, because when we do that we are imposing something on Reality that is not true. Reality is breathtakingly beautiful. And when we embrace that beauty and let it flow through us, we are forgiving and we enjoy Reality. When we are not, judgment and retribution are our experience.

Forgiving is not a grand and noble act. I think we tend to see it that way. *You've been so awful to me, and you've done all these horrible things, and I, in my magnanimity, in my generosity, and in my great loving spirituality, am going to forgive you.* I don't think forgiveness is actually like that. I think it's an act of humility. It is realizing that Reality has already forgiven this person. *Who am I to go against Reality?* Love already forgave them. The love in them forgave them. The love in me has already forgiven them. It's ready to flow out through me to them. Am I going to hold it back?

No. I'm just going to go with the urge of love that's within me that seeks to flow out into my world. I'm not going to block it. I'm not going to keep it from flowing. I'm going to allow the flow of Reality to come through me as a creator.

Could it be that we live in a universe that's filled with love? The whole cosmos—the Milky Way, the solar system—is all filled with love. Actually, the whole earth is filled with love. And yet we have an ability to create pockets of culture that hold it out. Maybe that's what's coming to issue in the world in which we live—in our families, in our communities, and in our nations. We've managed to hold out Reality and create a human state that's unforgiving—and we're proud of ourselves. In my country, the United States, we're going to create a

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wall to keep out all those bad people, and we're going to have a little walled-off state that is a culture of unforgiveness. Perhaps our job is to open the door to bring Reality back into culture.

It *hurts* not to forgive. It *hurts* when there's an urge of love that's natural to us and natural to Reality, which we block. We are, each one of us in this room, hugely loving people. And it actually hurts if we cut that off and hold it back. It's far easier just to be what you naturally have the urge to be, which is loving. That's not the same as being a doormat. Love is a power and love is a strength.

I want to speak of that One Love to you who live here in Australia. There are people around the world who are reaching out to you and saying, "We are one, and we are many." We are global citizens together. I feel that from our friends online.

We're strong individually, but in terms of our ability to create something in the world, we're stronger when we let love weave among our hearts and throughout our energy. We are stronger together. We are bringing something powerful to the world, and it's uplifting for us and it's uplifting for the world.

So we find our hearts and our spirits easily joined together in Reality, and what seemed difficult alone becomes easy together. They say, even in practical things, many hands make light work. The same is true at a spiritual level: many hands and many hearts make light work—the light work of bringing Reality back into human culture.

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