

2013 - A Year of Giving

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The Energies of 2013

2013 is a six year. It is a year for giving, for taking care of others, for humanitarian orientation. It is your developed sensitivity and compassion for others and their suffering that will pull at your emotional heartstrings and prompt you to respond. Children and family might figure prominently, depending upon your age and your circumstances. Or you might have to concern yourself with your parents' lives or well-being.

Often the health of others comes to your attention under a six influence. The healing urge is now activated, so if you practice any of the healing arts, now is the time to use them and focus on their expression and sharing.

Beauty and harmony are significant themes for the year, and could be meditated on for great benefit.

The emotional body's sensitivity will heighten your psychic abilities or psychic receptivity, which can be very beneficial in assisting you to feel sympathy and to respond to need. Tune into the generosity that is in your heart.

Because of the essentially emotional nature of the year, imbalance in your emotional life must be watched. It occurs when you lose a sense of right proportion, which happens when you are not centred. You must take time for yourself in nature's healing, soothing energies. Also, take time for cultural enjoyment to nourish your soul and your feeling nature. Cultivate your sense of devotion and gratitude so that your higher astral levels will be more soul infused.

Some sacrifice is needed this year. Let your heart be willing and generous.

Here are 7 suggestions that if addressed in 2013 could greatly improve your experiences in the coming year. By empowering yourself you will be able to respond to the incredible possibilities that are your future.

1. Be soul, the essence that you truly are

Everything exists to express its true nature, and in so doing contributes uniquely and valuably to the harmonious functioning and creativity of the whole.

Through our experiences we are learning how to manoeuvre ourselves through the lower three worlds. This knowledge is intended to serve a higher purpose – namely, to enable the soul to function effectively and efficiently in this world. The ultimate purpose of experience is to enable ourselves to implement and serve the Divine Plan, the evolutionary plan of Life itself. This means to bring love into this world, thereby helping to restore all things and people to their essence, to be aligned with their true nature.

Ways to Develop Soul Consciousness

- Practice regular meditation so that the personality and its bodies become accustomed to Soul alignment and influence.
- Cultivate inner calm and silence, resulting in an inner poise. The balanced state is a twofold activity of :
 - holding to the vision and
 - working outwardly on the physical plane with concentrated attention.The inner calm is only possible to the extent that the desire nature and the mind can be quieted and aligned with Soul purpose.
- Develop greater purity of motive. Doing a daily review of motives is beneficial to gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and our personal motivations.
- Learn to control thought. Every action, reaction, or dispersion of energy – positive or negative – results from thought. Without this control there is waste, and the law of economy is contravened. Controlled thought increases the magnetization of the efforts and the power of their effects.
- Fulfill whatever duties and responsibilities you have in your life at any given time. These are your contracts with the Soul. Do not abandon more mundane duties for what you feel might be ‘more important’ or ‘spiritual’ responsibilities.

- Perfect your control of the emotional so that your feeling nature can respond to beauty and express beauty. Be the observer, not the judge, of your feeling responses.
- Learn to work from mental levels – from both lower and especially higher mental levels.
- Learn and obey the laws of life as the authority in your life.
- Stand up for principles without compromise, but expressed with patience and love.
- Develop flexibility and an ability to flow with change. This is possible when we attune to an incoming or new energy and adapt to it.
- Practice the Divine/Universal Presence. This may be done through stopping and paying attention to what is.
- Whenever seeking the higher way, the way of Soul consciousness, there are two questions that always make connection to the Soul because the Soul always has two things it is attempting to do – namely to serve and to master its full expression through the personality. The two questions, therefore, are:
 - What am I to learn, at this time, or from this person, or in this situation?
 - How am I to serve?

2. Clarify your life purpose

Most people think that their purpose in life is to do something. Doing is secondary. Your purpose in life is not a function. Your purpose is your contribution, your consciousness, your state of being who you are. Your purpose is to be your essence, which is who you are. By identifying with that and sharing that you make the greatest contribution possible. This essence is what we call soul.

Every person is unique. That uniqueness is what needs to be expressed as one's purpose in life. Your uniqueness is not in your personality, but in your soul or consciousness. Many people can do what you do, so if doing something that others can do were your purpose you would not be needed, you would be redundant. But no other person on this planet can be your soul, your consciousness, your essence. It is that which is needed to be expressed as your purpose.

Purpose and existence are synonymous. Nothing exists in isolation. So the purpose of anything and everyone is totally connected. This means that the very existence of anyone and everything is to contribute to the good of the whole.

To the extent that each one is true to their existence, to their very nature, they contribute and therefore fulfill their purpose. All things in all the kingdoms of nature do this automatically because they do not have the ability to do otherwise. The exception is the human kingdom. We have the ability and the necessity to choose to be who we are in essence or to act contrary to this.

The purpose of everything in existence, including you and me, is to express our essence. We do this in two ways:

- through the consciousness we have of being the soul that we are.
- expressing soul characteristics and qualities through our three personality bodies.

3. Identify and transform shadows

To express soul characteristics through our personality, we have to deal with the shadow part of ourselves. The shadow part of ourselves is that aspect that needs to be redeemed, transformed and loved. In order to transform and redeem those unloved parts of ourselves, we need to look at our judgements, our beliefs and areas where we are inflexible and stuck. In order to see what is in our shadow we often project it onto others. If we are to meet another in a soulful way, we need to address the issue of projection.

We have a subconscious or shadow side to our personality that contains characteristics we do not like, love or want to own. It is not easily accessible because it is inconsistent with the ego's view of itself. So we do not access it internally, but indirectly through unconscious projections whereby we see the contents of our own subconscious externally. Through projection we see in others our own disowned characteristics. When we do this we cannot see others as they really are. So we need to be aware in all encounters that this process of projection might be at work and what we experience are the characteristics of our unknown face.

We project for two reasons:

- We try to avoid the pain of owning a rejected, unloved part of ourselves.
- We need to know what unconscious realities affect us that need to be acknowledged and integrated within our consciousness.

When you really dislike something about someone, ask yourself if you might in some way have the same or similar characteristic within yourself that you reject. Take back the projection, own it, and see the other as they truly are.

There are two kinds of relationships which are related to the expression of our shadow:

- those *outside* of our most committed relationships. In these it is not usually appropriate to express the shadow side of ourselves, although we often do. When we do, we need to make amends as we have transgressed the higher purpose of the relationship. This principle holds true only for those who are able to function from soul consciousness. Personality relationships always involve projection of the shadow.

- those *inside* of our most committed relationships. In these relationships we must have a psychological atmosphere in which we can reveal all sides of ourselves without inhibition. Because there is a soul presence, there is sufficient love and light to tolerate and transform the shadow aspects.

There will be conflicts still in the relationships because the personality with its ego will from time to time attempt to dominate. This will occur as more aspects of the shadow self surface, as one's buttons get pushed by challenges from others, and when the ego's selfishness, ignorance or laziness is being exposed.

Relationships, therefore, take us into both the Light of our souls and the darkness of our subconscious or shadow side. They force us to look at the Light and experience the shadows. If we deny the Light of either ourselves or the other, we relate to each other in conflict. If we deny the shadows of either ourselves or the other, we relate in illusion. Only by accepting both do we enter the Real and experience harmony.

4. Heal from a soul level with conscious intention

Many of our challenges are painful. We all experience pain from time to time because we are challenged frequently. Pain is one of the things we try to avoid, and when it is present we try to get rid of it as quickly as possible.

Pain is one doorway through which we can open to soul. However, pain can take us into being more self-focused, more fully in our personality. And maybe that is what we need at times. But the ultimate purpose of pain is to develop alignment with soul, and especially its quality of compassion or unconditional love. Pain sensitizes us.

Pain requires me to:

- work with duality,
- deal with my own subconscious fears,
- make conscious choices,
- not allow the collective fears or the fears of loved ones to colour my own feelings,
- love others as they are in their essence and expression, and
- constantly relate my daily choices and experiences (including illness) to what is required to empower myself to more fully express my purpose in life.

The power to experience the pain and difficulties in life in fruitful ways lies in relating those experiences to our life purpose. If we do not know our purpose then how can we possibly connect with our true power? Without doing that we make ourselves victims of the circumstances we do not want. If I feel sorry for myself or want sympathy, I make myself a victim. If I am living in fear I make myself a victim. As a victim I am no good for anyone; I cannot live my purpose.

So what else can I do? I can accept the pain and the difficult circumstances as a needed experience for me to become more understanding, more loving and above all, more powerful. This is not just a mental acceptance. This is a heartfelt acceptance that makes us grateful for the experience. Only in this way can we experience these challenges with a real quality of consciousness.

This is what makes the difference in everything – the quality of consciousness with which we experience or relate. This is what transforms and empowers ourselves and others at the same time. But, you might ask, “Will that cure the disease or remove the

depression?” Maybe, maybe not. That is not the point. That is not the important question.

When I am immersed in serving, aligned with my purpose, responding to others’ needs, I do not feel the pain in my body because I am not identified with my personality. I am soul centered. What is often a focus, preoccupation or disturbance in our lives when we are challenged can really change when we relate the experience to our purpose in life.

Here is something else: When I am doing something that I think I should be doing as part of my life’s purpose and I do not feel joy in it, or it does not take me out of my personality, then I have to question if this is what I ought to be doing.

What happens when we suppress pain, such as through medication? My perception of this is that excessive pain suppression can dull access to the soul. However, if the pain is so intense that you lose soul connection and cannot seem to serve your purpose, you ought to seek relief.

However, pain serves a significant purpose and this must be of primary consideration. Pain breaks down our armour, our defences, and it must be allowed to do its work of helping us surrender. The quality of this surrender is important. It must be one of gratitude, of openness, and of humble relationship to the divinity within.

Meaning is always related to something greater. Therefore if pain is to be meaningful it must serve some greater purpose. That purpose is the liberation of the soul from the armour of self-protection that is created out of fear.

Every difficulty or challenge we have is an indication that something new from a soul level is seeking to manifest. This something new will always be:

- **Intelligence:** a new perspective or attitude about some issue or reality; a new understanding and greater acceptance.
- **Power:** a new way of relating to oneself – with greater self-knowledge and self assurance. Being truer to one’s self and one’s life purpose. This results in being able and willing to empower others.
- **Love:** a new way of relating to others – with greater quality of love (respect, heart understanding, tolerance, compassion, etc.).

Everyone goes through three stages of life and learning – this usually takes lifetimes. Our challenges fall into these three categories. We can call them personality conditions or limitations that we need to work with and overcome.

1. **Selfishness** – needing to learn responsibility; then needing to learn to give
2. **Emotional attachment** – needing to learn to love, finding meaning through relationship
3. **Illusion** – needing to learn what is behind appearances, and what the bigger picture is, finding the meaning and purpose.

Depending on where we are with this journey we will experience challenges in order to grow through each stage. All three of these, however, affect all of us throughout our lifetime because they each relate to different parts of the brain. Even though there will be a theme of one of these throughout our lifetime, we shift our focus into different parts of the brain at different times. For example, when under stress we revert to a less developed part of the brain and experience more selfishness. This is because we need to pay attention to what is happening within ourselves. This will also tend to happen when experiencing illness.

All three of these life stages involve relationships. Two people who share their personal lives together may have similar or the same external circumstances to challenge them. But they might relate to these differently, depending on where they need to grow most. Knowing this and understanding what the other has to learn or at least focus on can be very helpful in the relationship. It fosters tolerance, understanding and compassion. It enables each to empower the other to do what they need to do.

Every challenge we have will relate to one or more of these three areas of development. For example, betrayal, rejection and abandonment are typical challenges that occur at the second stage of emotional attachment. Emotional attachment is needed to be able to love sufficiently in order to move to the next level of developing the heart. The betrayal or rejection experience occurs in order to move one from emotional attachment to heart centered love.

Some challenges seem to affect all three areas. These often have global or at least very broad implications such as financial or economic loss or downturns, or experiences such as war. The negative global realities that we are so aware of can challenge everybody in any one of the three areas of growth. So depending upon the level of

one's consciousness – i.e., where the challenges register with oneself – the individual responses to these issues will tend to be different.

The challenges in each of these three areas need to be seen as exercises. So when challenged, ask yourself what exercise you have been given. What is the purpose of this exercise? How do I do the exercise in order to complete it successfully?

Some of the exercises will seem to be given to us by other people. Some will seem to come from outside ourselves through our circumstances, or from our physical bodies, or from our past, even from government, environment or society. Actually, though, we give ourselves the exercises.

We could say that the soul gives the personality the exercises. We could also say that the exercises are naturally emerging from deep within our nature when we reach a stage of ability to do the exercise. This is really no different from what occurs in nature. When a plant is able, it produces leaves. When it has grown sufficiently it will produce flowers or seeds or fruits. No choice is involved.

When given an exercise you can refuse to do it. If this is your choice you will be given it again in a different circumstance because you have the ability to do it. And you need to do it so you can express the wonderful soul being that you are and more powerfully fulfill the purpose of your life.

Exercise Process:

1. Identify the challenge.
2. What is the exercise?
3. What is the purpose of this exercise?
4. How do I need to do the exercise to complete it successfully?
5. Express acceptance, appreciation and gratitude for having been given the opportunity to do this exercise.

5. Recognize your metaphysical needs, issues and values

The need to be recognized as unique and to be understood

The first metaphysical need people have is fundamentally the need to be recognized and seen for who they are in their individuality and uniqueness. Every individual is unique and you do not see them or understand them or even love them as individuals unless you focus on their particularity. Unique beauty is always found in the details, in the particulars.

In order to be able to know another person or anything in particular you really need to be present – but not present with self-consciousness, or self-referencing, but so present to the other. You step outside of yourself, outside of your own judgments (which always label others) and outside of your emotions (which are always self-referencing). This is related to what has traditionally been called ‘the practice of the divine presence.’ What keeps our attention on someone is what is called their ‘essential goodness.’ You might call this the essential divine nature.

This is the need to be understood. We need to be understood by others so that we can eventually understand ourselves. Understanding is essential because what we understand about ourselves is what we express and how we relate to others and the world around us. This understanding also includes the knowledge of our skills, talents and natural abilities through which we can express ourselves satisfactorily.

The need to be valued

The second metaphysical need people have is to be valued. Obviously this is based on understanding. To be valued is to be loved and appreciated for who they are as individuals. We learn to value ourselves through the love and appreciation we receive from others. It is precisely this valuing that makes connection with others. Love makes connections that we deeply need – relationships that are essential for our lives.

To love anything or anyone we must be able to see the beauty that is there. We only love what we find beautiful. This of course necessitates acknowledging our own inner beauty. Beauty is not something we have created with our personalities, but an inherent quality of the soul that we are.

The need for love and value is so strong because it gives us meaning, and meaning is achieved through being of value to others in relationships. It has been said that the primary adult fear is the fear of meaninglessness.

The need to be empowered to fulfill our purpose

The need to be supported or empowered to fulfill our purpose in life is the most basic of the three needs. Yet, it is also the most elusive to grasp because it is based on the fulfillment of the other two.

Beauty is a universal archetype that exists in the same area of consciousness as unconditional love which is the essence of our soul. We cannot love unconditionally without this perception and experience of beauty. This experience is all about perceiving uniqueness of universal expression in an individual, perceiving correct relationship of the individual to the whole, and about our special relationship to this individual where we perceive beauty. The resulting brain chemicals tell us that this is a blessing, that this is real, that this is a privilege to experience.

It is most interesting to notice what happens when people fall in love because soul is always behind this event. They are so enthralled by the beauty of the other that this is all they see. Because of the hormones produced by the brain, they are blinded to the faults and weaknesses of the other person in order to be able to experience the other person at a deep level. This is necessary for later in the relationship to be able to grow the relationship and oneself once the weaknesses are discovered.

The chemical honeymoon is usually over within three years, diminishing gradually over that period of time. Now that the beauty and essential goodness of the other is experienced, you can more readily deal with the weaknesses and shadow side of the other and of yourself in the relationship. In this way you can use the resulting friction to keep growing in consciousness. Consciousness or soul needs friction to produce the necessary tension for emergence of essence, and for growth to occur.

When we empower someone by supporting them to learn what they need to learn, to express the soul that they are, and to fulfill their life purpose, we are helping them to connect to these parts of the brain that can be stimulated to support their soul based choices. In this way they are inherently supported and encouraged to continue making these choices for their own betterment and for the good of others with whom they relate.

6. Identify with soul and group consciousness

Ego and ego consciousness is not something that we, as human beings, need to develop consciously any further than we already have – with the exception of those people who are so psychically disturbed that they do not have a sense of themselves as individuals.

The establishing of the ego in this body is an extremely important activity in which the soul engages in every incarnation. Much of this ego identity is established from genetics and karma. But the essential thing that is happening is that the Monad, or Spirit that we are, is expressing itself in form. If we had clear vision of reality, we would see that the ego is the form aspect of the Monad, coloured and characterized by our individual history as a soul and by our collective history as a human.

While the ego develops, there are many aspects of the individual self that are necessarily repressed and rejected, so that the ego can be as strong as one is able to make it.

Once the ego is sufficiently in place – and there is a definite point in time when this happens – then two possibilities exist:

1. One keeps strengthening the ego beyond its necessity, and thereby keeps repressing the “undesirable aspects” of self. This leads to neuroses and ill health. One becomes extremely egotistical. Anyone who is very egotistical or unusually selfish either has not developed ego sufficiently, or – which is more often the case – the ego is sufficiently developed and is not being transcended.
2. One transcends ego. The transcendence of ego implies that one is now strong enough to face the repressed aspects of the individual self that are characteristic of the whole of the individual, or are from the past of the individual in both this life and past lives. To face these previously rejected aspects of oneself means to accept them and see them as a vital part of one’s identity.

Ego transcendence means the beginning of soul identification. There is a certain spiritual selfishness that begins here – such as using the new found power and ability to get what one wants. The personal becomes transpersonal and yet still individual on a higher level. Soul identification enables individual ‘salvation’ to occur. What is saved or

healed is the negative, shadow side of personal reality. The saving is literal; it is saved because it is needed for personal wholeness. Saving and healing do not mean getting rid of. They mean integrating. This is the esoteric explanation of the Christian doctrine of Redemption.

Most people on the spiritual path today understand this to some degree, and in fact, they believe that this is the goal of their quest – to be whole as an individual. We must realize that this is but a step on the way to wholeness. All of us have been engaged in this process for some time. Now we are ready for the next step on our path toward wholeness.

For those who are responding to Soul and who see themselves as disciples, or followers of what Soul represents, the time for self improvement is past and the time for Soul work and the participation in group consciousness is here. Having done the work of meeting personal needs, of facing the shadow side of the personality, and of cultivating the mind, we are now ready to respond to the needs of humanity, to develop intuition and to identify with group Soul as the means of powerful service.

The spiritual purpose of the Aquarian Age, the Age of Consciousness we are already entering, is twofold:

1. Right relationship to the other (people and the higher kingdoms)
2. Right relationship to the world (environment and the lower kingdoms)

This dual purpose requires us to commit ourselves to the kind of program we are offering in The Soul Journey. We are not suggesting that this is the only way, but know that this is one of the best available ways of participating in this purpose and finding deep fulfillment.

We are in life in order to fulfill a purpose. Through the fulfillment of purpose we make a contribution and live a meaningful life. Individual purpose is always a part of group purpose which, in turn, is part of the planetary purpose. What we are describing as the purpose of the Aquarian age is the planetary purpose and therefore the necessary context in which we fulfill our individual purpose.

It is only possible to fulfill our planetary purpose through alignment with group and working with group. That is, we cannot fulfill our purpose as part of planetary life by acting individually only. There is an essential bridge in consciousness from the individual to the planetary. That bridge is the group. But it is a bridge of consciousness,

not just a bridge of activity. If it were only a bridge of activity we would only have to work together, as most of humanity does already. Working together in some ways is essential for economy, so if you are part of the economy you already are working together in some way.

The group being a bridge of consciousness means that we must become conscious as a group. That means that our identity must in some significant way be the group, and we must then function from that identity.

There is nothing glamorous or egotistical about soul consciousness at a group level. The beauty of this Soul Journey is its solid foundation in the Teachings of the Ancient Wisdom, its lack of glamour, and its practical combination of psychology and spirituality.

It will assist you to develop your consciousness on a higher mind level, which is the causal body - the activity aspect of the Soul, enabling you to make clear and powerful thoughtforms for manifestation. It will also assist you to develop intuition so that you can, together with others, be a clear channel of compassion and love-wisdom.

There is no greater task that confronts every aspiring human being than becoming Soul conscious. Every valid spiritual journey takes one to, and through, the Soul.

7. Create the reality that we aspire to

The ultimate reality which we could call the ultimate universal law is that *all is one*. There is an intelligent, loving and powerful wholeness to all life that encompasses all levels of being and expression. Everything is part of everything, and the wholeness is within all apparent parts of that wholeness.

Everything and everyone is a necessary part of the wholeness or unity that underlies and encompasses everything in existence, both actual and potential.

This law is what has given rise to the religious concept of God. However, over time this concept has been distorted by the illusion of duality. Duality applies to the form world, not to the formless. Without making that distinction, God was associated only with what human beings considered to be good, thus negating the understanding of the Law of One.

All other laws are secondary to the Law of One. This is the primary law of life, consciousness and creation. Therefore, Unity and Separation become the ultimate references for anything being aligned or not with ultimate reality. Unity becomes the underlying motivating force for choices, and separation becomes a signal pointing toward a deeper reality that needs to be embraced.

The belief in separation is the most basic of all human illusions, and is shared by everyone who uses the physical senses and the mind to know things. This illusion is the basis of fear. This illusion is the fundamental cause of war, hatred, racism, conflicts, manipulation, as well as disregard for nature and the environment. It is also responsible for the alienation we have from our soul.

On a form level where our senses function in order to be able to perceive and experience particulars, we experience how things are separate from one another. This includes experiencing ourselves as separate from others and from the whole. We need to honour the separateness of reality, including our own, in order to come to appreciate and understand uniqueness. It is the uniqueness of each being, and our own uniqueness, that is the reason for being; it is the purpose of our existence. When we are conscious of both our personal uniqueness and our universal nature we then express ourselves creatively. In this way we fulfill our dreams and our life purpose. To attempt to be creative by only seeing our personal uniqueness, and not connected to our

universality results in a sham, a false creativity, and most often a self-serving expression.

The other side of every reality is the wholeness that it is part of. This wholeness then gives a context for our uniqueness and purpose, because it is the wholeness that our purpose is to serve. We need to cultivate an awareness of both our uniqueness and wholeness if we are to relate truthfully to ourselves and to life, and avoid the illusion that separation is all that exists.

Feelings of separation are caused by some kind of fear. To overcome such feelings, the fears must be faced. Fear is inevitable in a dualistic reality. It is necessary in the human condition so that we can experience the opposites and gain consciousness through them. This is the Law of Attraction and Repulsion working within our bodies and our relationships to bring us into mastery. Mastery is gained through reconciliation and unity of opposites. This is love.

Exercise: Oneness

Meditate on your interconnectedness with everything. Value your contribution to the whole of which you are a part.

Our wishes for you for 2013

I know that Andrew's hope and mine is that this material has empowered you in some way. We hope that the year ahead is full of insights during the challenging times, love and joy in your daily life and gratitude and appreciation for who you are all through the year.

May you feel the love in our work and join us in 2013.

Love and Blessings,
Bonnie Schneider

<http://www.thesouljourney.com>