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What Do You Really Deserve?

by Jim Gordon

The ideas that I share in our newsletters usually reflect what I see going on in the counselings that I do, and lately I have noticed that many of us are challenged by the issue of worthiness. For some, this issue appears in relationships, for others in careers or finances, for some in health. And even though the focus may be on different areas of our lives, the question is very much the same: do we see ourselves as *worthy* of the good, the abundance, the blessings we desire?

Most of us have come to accept the mistaken idea that true worthiness is in some way conditional – that we have to do A, B, and C in order to get to D. It's as though there is a certain list of things we have to do in order to get God to notice us, to hear us, and to respond to our prayers. But the truth is that worthiness is a God-given *birthright*. And the only thing we really need to do is just to “move into it” and accept worthiness as present in our lives. In other words, worthiness is not something that we have to *bring* into our lives. Rather, we need only awaken to the fact that we already *are* worthy; we already *have* the right to receive, just for being who we are as children of God. And yet, we have to believe it to make it so; if we don't *believe* in the worthiness that is ours, then we operate from a consciousness of limitation and lack, and *that's* what we then create in our lives.

Most of us have accepted a variety of measuring systems whereby we rank and judge ourselves, other people, and the things that we desire. These judgments are often subconscious, and they usually reflect the “programs” of our own karma or of the environment in which we have grown up. Thus, some of these judgments are ones we “brought with us” as challenges *to master*, and others are just limiting beliefs we have accepted from others. With such beliefs, we create and then live in a consciousness of limitation when we really don't need to. At any time, we can move into the abundance that is of

the Spirit of us – rather than the mind, emotions, or body that accept and create limitations.

So, it is important that we begin to look beyond any limiting boundaries we've accepted, and one way to do this is to begin to review our beliefs about ourselves, about our goals and desires, and about our worthiness to receive. We can then begin to look at what we've accepted and decide whether we are really in agreement with those beliefs. Exploring and reassessing our personal value systems is thus an important process by which we can initiate a change.

Too often, we stop ourselves short in life. We don't allow the love we desire to come in; we don't allow the opportunities we are seeking to come forward; we don't allow ourselves to move into change. And most of the time it's because we still believe that we haven't done enough to be worthy of it. But if we could just open ourselves to possibilities, if we would just allow, *in this moment*, for good things to come into our lives, a new flow of blessings would begin. It's really so simple: let go of all thoughts of limitation and simply *let the blessings be!*

The next step is just to observe how there really is goodness coming to us constantly, and that these good things coming into our lives *is* a sign of our worthiness. It's really a simple process: if we just suspend our limited thinking, we will see the blessings come; and if we see them as proof that we *are* inherently worthy, we will more quickly see the true worth that is ours. With that recognition of worthiness as a constant presence in our lives, and as an inherent aspect of who we are as spiritual beings, we can begin to move *with* that unfoldment, rather than holding it back through our limiting beliefs.

As we move more and more into the energy of worthiness, the blessings just continue to unfold. We can then move into a place of gratitude for those blessings, and the combination of gratitude with worthiness just allows it all to expand and expand, until we find that there really are no boundaries of limitation. By living in the consciousness of worthiness, we start a positive cycle of endless possibilities, where before there may only have been a negative cycle of lack and limitation. It's such a simple awareness, and yet it's so very far-reaching. So, why not just decide that we *are* worthy now. ■

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Facing the Dragons of Our Own Inner Fears

by Steven McAfee

As a child, I was blessed to be with two very kind and loving parents, who made my world at home feel safe and secure. In that safety, I felt free to explore, to discover, and to imagine. And in my imaginings, I often thought up scenes of great challenge and triumph – of the noble and the virtuous prevailing over the cruel and the wicked. I imagined epic battles between knights and dragons, valiant conquests of hostile environments, and chivalrous sacrifice for the well-being of others. And I, of course, was always the brave and shining hero.

Then came my first day of kindergarten, my first solo venture into the unknown world beyond the sheltering “castle” of home. And suddenly I was afraid. There was no doubt that I would have to enter into the great gaping jaws of the dragon of school, and I would have to do it alone. There was no escape. I felt inadequate, terrified, and helpless. I didn’t want to do it, and I cried (not such a valiant warrior after all).

Of course, I survived the dragon of my first day at school; I even made him into a friend (I loved the learning and variety). And I had taken my first steps towards understanding that life in this world requires *courage*.

With each passing year, it seemed as though life’s challenges were fraught with ever greater dangers, with greater fears and doubts, and with ever greater demands for courage. And I began to conceive the idea that I really *was* a knight in the world – a knight without ceremony, or title, or public acclaim, but still a knight sent forth to do noble battle against dragons. Of course, the dragon was no longer the first day of school – now it was the demon of puppies that died, of rejection from peers, of not measuring up in sports or in grades, and of the constant uncertainties of life beyond the protection of home.

As an adult, I gradually came to see that the

most dangerous dragons we face are those that live inside us: feeling unworthy of the love or the happiness we seek; feeling inadequate to achieve what means the most to us; feeling ashamed for not measuring up to the expectations of others; feeling as though we’ve been hurt so badly that we can never forgive or be forgiven – feeling fear, in its endless variety of faces and forms.

Almost forty years have passed since my first day at school, and now I watch my own children face the dragons of *their* young worlds; and I see friends battling the dragons of illness and loss; I see elderly loved ones fighting to hold on as their strength, with their memory, is slipping away. And I find that I am *still* taking steps into the understanding that began when I conquered that dragon on my first day of school.

I have come to understand that this world is in many ways like a school for the soul – the eternal, spiritual aspect of ourselves. Like children leaving home for their first day at kindergarten, that divine aspect within us is sent forth from the shelter of a kind and loving “castle in the sky” to confront the lessons of life in a world outside its real home. And, just like going to school, we must enter (and leave) this world alone.

And yet there is a light within us that has already mastered the dragons of this world, and if we but turn towards that inner light, we can find the courage we need to stand as we are and to meet whatever comes to us in life. Then, as the Indian mystic, Kabir, once wrote, “When a brave knight takes to the field, a host of cowards is set to flight.”

I saw a marvelous illustration of the attitude of a knight as I watched my two sons play a video game recently. Eleven year old Shawn was playing with his younger brother, Justin. The “life points” of Shawn’s video character were nearly exhausted when he chose to move him to the most difficult level of the game. Justin tried to protect him, saying, “Don’t go in there, Shawn. It’s too dangerous!” And Shawn replied, “I only have a moment to live. I want to live it courageously.”

I thought to myself, “We all only have a moment to live. Why not live it courageously?”

Thank You, Thank You!

*to those who have taken the time
to send in membership forms
or changes of address.*

We sincerely appreciate it.

**Our next ILM fall retreat
will be held Oct. 14-16, 1994
at Camp Mack in Milford, Indiana.**

Watch for details in our next newsletter.

“Courage is not simply one of the virtues,
but the form of every virtue at the testing point.”
a quote from C. S. Lewis

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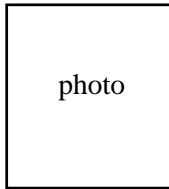
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Spring Cleaning

by Laura Kesten-Beaver

It's spring! Time to clear the cobwebs from the corners, shake out the rugs, and go through closets and drawers, discarding items that we haven't used or seen in ages.

When I was a little girl, my mother would bring up all the buckets from the basement, get out the rags, vinegar, and ammonia, and we would clean every corner, window, wall, and floor. We wiped, polished, swept, and organized our belongings. Every possession would be inspected and its fate decided.

My mother would say, "Empty space makes way for new things." And the way we get empty space is by creating it – by getting rid of things we don't need anymore.

If we want a new rocking chair, we rearrange our living room, dust, vacuum, and create a clean space for the new chair. If we want God in our lives, we must look within ourselves, spring clean, and create space. God is always with us, but sometimes we can't see past the clutter and dust to see His loving light.

A few years ago, at the beginning of my healing from childhood trauma, I attended a workshop. The facilitator was talking us through a meditation in which we were to focus on our inner "junk." Some people in this workshop had *little* piles of junk, and some had their junk in tidy piles; but *my* junk was all around me in mounds *so* high that I couldn't see over them. And it was far from being tidy and organized. It was dark and it stunk, and I was pretty upset that I'd been brought to this place inside of me.

We were instructed to pick up a piece of junk and look at it – examine it – feel it – smell it – taste it. This was *not* a pleasant experience. Then we had to ask it where it came from. And a surprising thing happened: my piece of junk answered, and its answer was that it came from *someone else*. It wasn't even mine and yet it was in *my* junk pile. It was someone else's junk and I had "bought" it – hook, line, and sinker – and put it in *my* junk pile. Well, I realized that I didn't have to keep it. I could give it back. So I did.

And so the process began where for the next

few years I examined more and more pieces of junk on my inner junk piles. I had begun my inner spring cleaning, sweeping away what I no longer needed. Eventually, some empty spaces began to appear in my previously solid mounds of junk. And I could actually see light begin to seep through.

As my mounds began to get smaller and space was being created, I would sometimes get scared, and my fear would cause me to pretend things about my junk. Sometimes I'd turn my back and pretend the junk wasn't really there, or I'd convince myself that I *liked* my junk – "It's just who I am," I'd say to myself. And then there were times when I would tell myself it was all gone: no more junk. Finally, I asked myself what all these fears were really about. And I discovered that I was afraid that, if I got rid of my junk pile, I would no longer have any excuses for being a failure in life. I was *so* afraid that people would start expecting more from me, and I was afraid that I might not be able to meet those expectations. Fear began to spread through the empty areas I'd created. And new junk began to fill the spaces where the old junk had been.

Yes, it *is* true that when we have empty spaces, something will always come and fill them up. It is one of nature's laws. Even individual blades of grass will defy sidewalk blocks of cement and push through the cracks. When I realized how I was replacing one kind of junk with another, I began to try something new: I began to focus on the rays of light that moved through the spaces I had opened in my mounds.

Focusing on the light was no easy task at first, but soon my junk piles were flooded with light – pure white light – God's loving light. And the remaining junk in my pile is now being bathed in God's pure white light, assisting the process of clearing old patterns, behaviors, and beliefs.

In our lives, when we are able to clear old patterns, behaviors, and beliefs that are not working for us – pieces of junk that others gave to us and we bought – we can then create space open to spirituality. The Adepts say that we cannot attain God-realization until we attain *self*-realization. And we *can* get rid of our junk. We can examine it, love it, forgive whoever gave it to us, and forgive ourselves for buying it. We can let it go and fill the space with God's loving light. It's April. What better time to do a little spring cleaning. ■