

SEEDS FOR CELEBRATION

for the
JUBILEE! COMMUNITY
Asheville, North Carolina

Spring, 2006
Via Transformativa
- Power Shift -

**VIA TRANSFORMATIVA
- POWER SHIFT -**

The power of love inevitably transforms the love of power.

The power of the pen, the power of the mind, power of attorney, the power of positive thinking. The power of money, the power of industry, the power of a nation, the power of the individual. You got your powerboat, power brakes, power pack, power steering and power plant. You got power play, power politics, power station, power dive, power drill, power mower, Powhatan, pow-wow, powder your nose and pow-right-in-the-kisser.

So many kinds of power, so little time.

It's the power of gravity that keeps the Big Blue-Green Ball doing pirouettes around El Sol and keeps everything on the Big Blue-Green Ball on the Big Blue-Green Ball. It's the power of the sun that poofs clouds into being, instigates and inspires the photosynthesis boutique, and keeps the polar ice caps at bay. And the power of the moon calls oceans to make love to the shores while lovers follow suit on the beaches.

The power of our little-fist-sized hearts is enough to pump 1500 gallons of blood through our hotsy-totsy bodies every stinkin' day. Over the course of a lifetime, that little heart muscle has enough power to pump enough blood to fill 13 supertankers.

From profuse volcano to projectile vomit. From gas to gales to gamma rays to gonads, we are reshaped and reformed on a daily basis. Our bodies, minds, hearts and emotions are constantly being pushed this way and that by the powers of the earth.

Then, there are the powers of our culture. The Three M's: Media, Manufacturing and Marketing combine to dance our doodles into all kinds of crazy consumer habits. All kinds of lifestyles. All kinds of debt.

And one of the greatest powers in our world right now is the power of oil, coal and gas. Through whatever crazy and convoluted paths we have taken in the past 150 years, we have gotten ourselves to a place where the natural resource power of oil, coal and gas is indispensable. And whoever controls those powerful resources is definitely The Big Kamunka.

The bad news is: Oil and gas power won't last forever. The good news is: Power is always shifting. And we two-leggeds have the power to make the shift.

Power in our earth is always shifting: Seed to flower to fruit... each has its own power. From rain to river to tide... each shares and shifts its power to allow life to go on.

We goofy humanoids experience power shifts every day. The power of sorrow shifts to the power of joy. The power of anxiety to the power of assurance. The power of ebb to the power of flow. The power of distraction to the power of connection. There is power in everything we do or say. In everything we don't do or say. Not to act is to act. Not to decide is to decide.

It is the nature of power to be constantly shifting. Power won't, can't stand still.

And we extraordinary pieces of work – we humans – have the capacity to shift power from depleting to renewable, from darkness to light, from broken to whole, from babble to boogie.

Finally, it comes down to the power of love. The power of hope. Of faith. Of forgiveness. The power of deep belly laughs, passion and compassion-filled embraces. These powers can shift and scoot the powers-that-be all over the dance floor, from earth to stars and back again. Just listen to the beat. Then, get out there and do the shift.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

March 26, 2006: FROM SORROW TO JOY

Isaiah 12: 1-6

With joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation.

Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32

My son was dead and is alive, was lost and is found. And they began to make merry.

Sorrow marches into the room and promptly kicks your butt. And gut. And lays you low. Sorrow is one potent powerhouse. It can take the wind out of your sails and the steam out of your jets faster than a politico can cover his imprudence. Sorrow can turn you around. Can turn your back on a beautiful day. Can turn your head away from hope or possibility. Can turn your world inside out and upside down.

Joy slips into the room unnoticed. Often at oddest times. Almost always unexpectedly. Joy is less the result of something you did and more the result of magic. Or grace. Joy never ignores sorrow, but rather holds sorrow's face, smoothes his brow and lets his tears drench her shoulder.

The shift from sorrow to joy can come in a hug, a song, a memory. It can come with the dawn or the moon. Every time sorrow shifts to joy, there is holy power released into the world. A power that undergirds hope. A power that reawakens possibility. A power that moves through every molecule with the message: There's more going on than you think.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

April 2, 2006: FROM SEED TO FLOWER

Isaiah 43: 16-21

Behold I am doing a new thing. Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Luke 20: 9-19

The very stone the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

How do it do dat? How do de peewee seed – dat tiny little speck o' little bit o' nuthin' -- grow up into a big, fat gorgeous flower?

In our search for religious miracles: Xerox of Jesus in a shroud, image of Mother Mary in pizza dough, voice of God in a record played backwards... in our yearning for miracles of healing, of wealth, of happy marriage or just even a good date... in all of our frantic digging around for some sign or proof that God is alive, well and hasn't given up, you don't have to go father than your garden. Or even Home Depot.

The mysterious shift from seed to flower is one mind- soul- and belief-boggling experience. That shift points ever-so-directly to the power of life, the potency of creation and the ain't-nobody-gonna-shut-me-down attitude of Mother Earth.

The Greek word, Eros, is usually defined as "sexual love." But it's get-down-and-boogie meaning has to do with life-force... the urge for life to go on. That being the case, ain't nuthin' more erotic than the shift from seed to flower. And, as we all know, it's the power and enjoyment of Eros that keeps the blue-green film of life happening all around this spinning rock that we call home.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

April 9, 2006: FROM BROKEN TO WHOLE (Palm Sunday)

Deuteronomy 32: 36-39

God will vindicate the people and have compassion when God sees their power is gone.

Luke 22: 1-23

This is my body which is given for you.

We've all had the experience of having our hopes and dreams Humpty-Dumpty themselves off the wall. And neither king's horses nor super-glue nor prayer nor self-growth workshops nor walks in the woods nor frozen Margaritas can put them back together again. (Frozen Margaritas come close, however.)

Relationships take the tumble. Jobs go splat. Families shatter. Health does the smasharoo. And sometimes we can scoop up the pieces and get things cooking again; and sometimes we can't. Sometimes broken is broken.

But there's a crazy occurrence that often happens when things fall apart. Doesn't happen all the time; or, maybe it does and we just don't see it. When the whatever-it-is in our lives go crash and we stand there in despair looking at the shards, a wild kind of power oftentimes slips in the back door and begins to rearrange the furniture. Begins to rebuild the rubble. Rework the wreckage.

This power isn't about making things as they were before. Nothing in life has that power. This power that shifts things from broken to whole is a power that springs from what some call "the human spirit." What some call "the life force." What some call "God."

The Jesus story is one of the most fascinating and telling stories of this power. And when he offered his befuddled buddies a bite of his broken body, what he was offering them was wholeness. Was power. Was The Way Things Work.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

April 16, 2006: FROM BABBLE TO BOOGIE (Easter)

Psalm 118: 14-24

The Lord is my strength and my song. This is the day...

Luke 24: 1-11

Why do you seek the living among the dead?

- Irish foreplay: Brace yourself, Bridgette.
- German foreplay: Here! Now!
- Redneck foreplay: Get in the truck, Sweetiepie.
- Politician foreplay: When he sits on the edge of the bed and tells you how great it going to be.

Religions can talk a good line and make lots of promises. They can tell you about miracles and wonders and times when God showed up. They can talk up some hotsy-totsy wise sayings, can lay some how-to-live strategies on you. They can tell what it is to live a good life.

Religions can tell you what to believe and what not to believe. What to eat and what to push away from. Who to sleep with and who's gonna slam-dunk your doodle right into hell's basket. Religions are up-to-their tonsils in doctrine and dogma and yabber and chatter and policy and propriety.

When religions are at their best, they zip it and start dancing. They practice what they preach. They live what they worship. "Preach the Gospel always," babbled St. Francis. "Use words only if you must.

And that, Sugar Britches, is some kind of power.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

April 23, 2006: FROM FEAR TO FAITH

Psalm 149

Let them praise God with dancing!

John 20: 19-31

He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Doubt is not the opposite of faith. Doubt is faith's quality control. Doubt raises her eyebrow and asks for more information. Doubt keeps the faithful a little off balance and sees to it that they don't take themselves too seriously. Doubt is faith's friend and confidant. You can tell her anything and she'll give you something to think about. It's complacency that often kills faith; and doubt will never let you get complacent.

Fear, on the other hand, can get even Joan of Arc and Mother Teresa running for cover. And don't try and tell me that the Super-Faithful are never afraid. If faith has never experienced fear, then it ain't faith. It's smugness wearing a mask.

Fear pulls the plug in the bathtub of faith and leaves you wet, naked and shivering. Fear tags the "not" on the end of "can" and slips the "im" on the front of "possible." Fear lights the fight or flight fuse and convinces you that the paranoids are after you.

With all the vast power of fear, it's absolutely amazing that faith can exist at all. But it does. Inexplicably. And when the shift happens, look out. When the shift happens, everything changes.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

April 30, 2006: FROM HUNGER TO FEAST

Psalm 30

Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing.

John 21: 1-14

Come and have breakfast.

Very little in this world has the power of hunger. Hunger can drive a person to cheat, to steal, to kill. Hunger for food, hunger for acceptance, hunger for money (read "Greed"), hunger for power, itself. When you're hungry, you'll do almost anything to assuage that hunger.

Feasting, on the other hand, often turns a body to complacency. "Ho-Hum," we say as we belly up to Gourmet Course #5, "ain't this the life!" And we let it go at that.

Perhaps one reason why our world is up to its eyeballs in hunger-for-whatever is that very complacency. That very-self-satisfied-I-got-what-I-need-and-sucks-to-be-you attitude gets us only deeper into the quagmire of inequity and resulting war and despair.

Enter the power of gratitude and generosity. "If the only prayer you pray is thank you," sang out old mystic Meister Eckhart, "that would suffice." And if the only way we lived was rooted in gratitude and generosity, that would not only suffice, but would release a power on this blue/green ball that could change the landscape.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT
May 7, 2006: FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

Psalm 23

I shall dwell in God's house forever.

John 10: 22-30

I and the Source are One.

"Today is a gift," spouts the bumper-sticker guru, "that's why they call it The Present." But, sometimes, you gotta admit, The Present sucks. Big time. Sometimes in The Present, you're up to your eyeballs in so much pain, so much struggle, so much anguish and sorrow that you'd like to give The Gift back, thank you very much. And kick the giver in the butt. "With gifts like this," we might say, "who needs terrorists?"

Somewhere along the line, we two-leggeds picked up the notion of eternity. Long ago, we began to entertain the possibility that what we see is not all there is... that dancing right along with time and space there is a dimension that has no truck with time or space. Our ancestors symbolized that dimension with the circle... the most ancient sacred symbol of our species. A symbol found in all traditions.

Jesus never stopped talking about the "Kingdom of Heaven," for example. An eternal idea to be sure. The Kingdom of Heaven, he said was right here, within and among us. That we're all part and parcel of a much bigger picture than The Present. That The Present is but a player in an infinite drama that can only be approached in faith.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

May 14, 2006: FROM DISTRACTION TO CONNECTION (Mothers' Day)

Psalm 145: 1-13

On all thy wondrous works I will meditate.

John 13: 31-35

A new commandment I give you that you love one another.

We are an A.D.D. species. Or, at the very least, an A.D.D. culture. Good God Almighty! You got 5000 channels on television, 400 magazines and catalogs that show up each day in the mail. You got sound bites on the radio, 15 minutes of fame, hit tunes that make it for a week on the charts, fashion that flies in and out of style, and an NPR program that lasts two hours and is arrogantly called "All Things Considered."

Distraction is not a nuisance for us. Distraction is a way of life. We got the shifts and moves choreographed into our daily dance. But, at the same time, we seek connection. Connection with lovers, connection with friends, connection with career, connection with the earth, connection with God, connection with ourselves.

Now, if you start assuming that you or anyone can eliminate distraction from our lives, it would be a sign that you'd better smoke a little less of that willy-weed. But, when you open yourself to a deep connection with something or someone beyond yourself, you find less need for distraction. Less need for TV, magazines or NPR. When you make a true and hacha connection with another part of creation (which inevitably includes God, you know), then, Sugar Britches, you're well on your way to The Land of Love. And nobody wants to be distracted from that.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

May 21, 2006: FROM ANXIETY TO ASSURANCE

Psalm 67

God has blessed us.

John 14: 23-29

Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

(Sing it with a country twang)

You can worry about your money, you can worry 'bout your butt.

You can worry 'bout your love life or your fast-expanding gut.

You can worry 'bout your kids on drugs or the price of running shoes.

You can worry about all you have and all you've got to lose.

You can worry that there's not a god or worry that there is.

You can worry 'bout your bladder when you stop to take a whiz.

You can worry when you're sleeping or when you're wide awake.

You can worry that you'll fart in the middle of your date.

Worry, Ho-Ho, blessed worry! It's assuring to have so many worries.

We spend all our energy on anxiety, it's true!

If we didn't have our worries, we don't know what we'd do.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

May 28, 2006: FROM LA LA TO HA CHA (Memorial Day)

Psalm 47

Shout to God with long shouts of joy!

John 17: 20-26

...that they may be one even as we are one.

Belief is mostly a red herring. Belief can sometimes get you way off track of what faith is all about. What living a full life is all about. Most folks take their beliefs very seriously - which can only finally serve to get your panties in a wad – and so often forget that the proof of any divine/spiritual connection is in the pudding. The living pudding. So much of what is touted as “sacred acts” seems to boil down to spiritual masturbation. It feels good, but no new life comes from it.

Sitting around talking about how good God is, or how enlightened we feel when we meditate or who Cain and Abel married anyway may be a great activity if you have nothing else to do; but to think it pleases God in some way to be yakking about “holy” things may be a stretch. It’s hard to imagine that it’s possible to suck up to the Creator of the Universe.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob nor Jesus were ever big advocates of simply sitting around and talking or singing about love. Love only happens when it’s happening. When you’re loving. Jumping with your juju into the fray and loving with everything you’ve got. Ha-Cha!

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

June 4, 2006: FROM EBB TO FLOW (Pentecost)

Psalm 104: 25-30

When you send forth your spirit, they are renewed; you renew the face of the ground.

John 15: 26-27, 16: 4b-11

If I do not go away from you, the Spirit will not come to you.

The shoosh and splish of the waves on the beach are all about ebb and flow. The wind and the calm, the rain and the sun, the cold and the heat, the yin and the yang, the pain and the pleasure, joy and sorrow... all ebb and flow. Breathe deeply and let it out. Ebb and flow.

Most of us consumer-heads wish that life would just flow, flow, flow. “Keep it comin’,” we say. “Pour it on! Give us all you got!” But, that ain’t the way it woiks, Sweet Cheeks. If there ain’t no ebb, there ain’t no flow. If there ain’t no comin’, there won’t be no goin’.

Sometimes our sails droop. Sometimes our skirts don’t get blown up. Sometimes our jets do not get fired. And that’s part of the story. And there’s power in that story. Life-enriching power. And, like Jesus’ description of the Kingdom of Heaven, the power is within us and all around us.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

June 11, 2006: FROM APATHY TO AWE

Psalm 8

When I look at the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars...

John 16: 12-15

When the Spirit of Truth comes, she will guide you into all truth.

“Worship that bores people is a sin,” saith Matthew Fox. And he speaketh truth. Verily. The opposite of faith may well be fear. But it may also be boredom. Apathy. Dullness and indifference.

When you’re bored, chances are that you’re not paying attention. When you’re bored, your senses have probably gone off line. When you’re bored, some door in your psychedoodle has swung shut and caused the air in your soul’s living room to get stuffy.

The good thing about boredom is that there is a world of antidotes. Power-packed antidotes. In fact, the world is the antidote. Lying under the stars, walking in the rain, digging in the garden, working for justice, dancing in the dark, belly laughing and deep sobbing, making love with someone you love, creating something beautiful... there is incredible power in these little activities. Enough power to root the hairball of boredom from your pipes and let some juicy life sloosh on through.

VIA TRANSFORMATIVA: POWER SHIFT

June 18, 2006: FROM DOODLE TO DO

Psalm 117

...steadfast love...

Luke 7: 1-10

...such faith...

All quarter we've been exploring power shifts: how they happen, how power is released and the magic that happens in the presence of power shifts. Through the JUBILEE! Earth Team, we've been learning how we can be part of an earth-changing power shift: from diminishing resources to renewable. From corporate power to personal. From earth-robbing to earth-enhancing. From hopelessness to hope.

And, whether we're working with shifts in electrical power or soul power, shifts in personal connection or earth connection... no matter what kind of power shifts we're considering, it finally comes down to stop doodling and do. Stop whining and perform. Stop bitching and start cooking. Stop making plans and start making love. Making love with our homes, with our mountains, with our food, with our planet, with our conscience, with our power.

One of the often-repeated phrases in the Hebrew-Christian scriptures is "steadfast love," which is to say love that is there, is real, is active, is present, is happening come what may, come what may, come what may.

Our gig is to zip it with the chatter and love this earth with all our hearts and minds and bodies... and power. From doodle to do.