

## Divine Abundance as interpreted by Penny Wassman June 2, 2007

In my introductory workshops, I ask people to form small groups and to compile a list of one-word responses to the question: “*What is important to you?*” Invariably, without further prompting, each group comes back with a list of human needs. These might include words like *integrity, honesty, family, trust, respect, love, consideration, responsibility, sharing, equality, recognition, meaning, purpose, spirituality, safety, comfort, ease, peace, contribution, wisdom, belonging, nurturing, intimacy, fun, joy, choice, beauty, community* etc... I’m no longer surprised that in the 5 minutes allocated to this task, small groups of 3 to 5 people collectively compile a list of 30 to 50 such words.

What is interesting to me as I consider these responses, is that everything that is truly important to people is *not* of concrete form, but is instead a certain *quality of energy*. I’d like to suggest that even as we consider the human need for *family* or *community*, while we may have certain people in mind, we are actually referring to the *energy qualities of sharing, belonging, love, nurture, and joy* that encompass our idea of family or community.... Yes, all these things may take a certain form, such as a walk in the park with a favorite family member or friend, a community picnic, or a wonderful full hug, but the quality of energy *behind* these concrete actions is what fuels the human spirit. Essentially, what we yearn for as humans, what is most important to us, is the pure energy of the divine.

To elaborate, I believe it serves us to look at human needs in layers. For example, imagine receiving some information that something you’ve done is not pleasing another person. In processing your reaction to this information, you may determine that you have an unmet need for *recognition* of your intention and your effort in doing whatever it was you did. For ease, I will call awareness of the need for *recognition* a “surface need” in the needs spectrum. So imagine a layer underneath the human need for *recognition*. Might it be that we humans need *feedback*? (also a need... and, if we are willing to really look at this need, we’d realize that both positive and negative feedback is useful). Why do we need *feedback*...what might the underlying layer be? I suggest we need feedback to determine whether or not what we are doing really matters - in other words, do our actions meet our own need *to matter* and/or *to contribute*? And what might be behind this *need to matter ...to contribute*? For me, this particular layer is the power that fuels humanity. For, as best as I can determine the need for *contribution* is fueled by the *divine energy of love*, the driving energy of humanity and the universe.

The crazy thing about all of this is that *divine energy* - the energy that, in its purest form, we call *love* - is found, I believe, in each and every human being. My favorite poet, writer, and spiritualist, Mark Nepo describes this energy in the following way. He writes:

*“Each person is born with an unencumbered spot, free of expectation and free of ambition and embarrassment, free of fear and worry: an umbilical spot of grace where we were first touched by God. It is this spot of grace that issues peace. Psychologists call this spot the Psyche, Theologians call it the Soul, Jung calls it the Seat of the*

*Unconscious, Hindu masters call it Atman, Buddhists call it Dharma, Rilke calls it Inwardness, Sufis call it Qalb, and Jesus calls it the Center of our Love.” (from Unlearning Back to God by Mark Nepo).*

Mark Nepo website: [www.marknepo.com](http://www.marknepo.com)

In my view, this “*spot of grace*”, this energy is our core, our true intangible substance...it is our *life energy*. So therefore, if it exists in each one of us, then our task as we attend to our *being* on this earth, is to unearth (forgive the pun) this *abundance* in ourselves and other people -essentially to see ourselves and each member of the human race, even if we do not agree with their actions, as human units of divine energy.

So if we are willing to process our distresses and other people’s distresses initially with the question, “*What am I and/or the other needing in this moment?*”, we may arrive at some initial idea of human needs. I’d like to say that I believe it is important to create space to attend to these “surface” needs with a great deal of love and compassion, for we are well rehearsed in the disconnects of the personality and when these aspects are stirring, it is often difficult to tap into the divine layer. That being said, if we are also willing as we attend to surface needs to recognize that they flow from and are connected to the divine energy of love that is abundant in each one of us, then we may realize that the surface need is also abundantly available to us. With this awareness of abundance, are we willing to ask ourselves these questions?: “*Am I willing to acknowledge that this need for recognition (in this example) flows in abundance from divine energy? What is my responsibility, given my awareness of this knowing? How am I willing, given this need for recognition, to attend to my next thought, my next word, my next step, my next action?*”