

Graceful Living February, 2009

Note from Grace

With 2009 being in full swing and winter at its deepest, my need for introspection seems to increase. There's not so much work to be done in the garden, long walks have to be timed with weather allowances and even my cats seem to be spending more time curled up quietly in the house.

Though I've been spending more time in the kitchen due to our new prepared food offerings, I'm no longer distracted to the point of neglecting my "inner duties." How wonderful that the seasons allow us to alter our behavior accordingly in order to keep our lives moving forward.

So, please slow down a bit, enjoy a fragrant cup of tea, go within to find your peace and joy...and then decide the best way to share your joy with someone else. It is through the giving of joy that joy is realized. It is through the giving of peace that peace may be realized. Give freely of the gifts of the Universe and all will be returned to you.

THE UNIVERSAL INSURANCE POLICY

No one has ever become poor by giving.
Anne Frank

For the past few months, I've been inspired by a wonderful man and his website...Todd Silva has been inspiring people from all parts of the country with his giving program, Give Away A Dollar A Day, which can be found at giveawayadollaraday.com. It seems that while experiencing a low

point in his life with his financial life in relative disarray, Todd, while meditating, received the "instruction" to give away a dollar a day to some unknown recipient. Of course, his first reaction was that of dismay. Give away that which he has so little... Surely not.

Try as he might to ignore the instruction, he finally gave in to the feeling and began a most remarkable journey. Day after day, he would give a dollar to some unknown recipient... a perfect example of how if we let go of that which we think we need the most, we are instructing our subconscious minds that we have more than enough, and as a result, that's what begins to show up in our lives.

By taking our attention from "getting" and placing it in "giving" mode, all sorts of amazing occurrences, both large and small, begin to surface in our lives. This giving attitude begins to permeate all of the areas of our lives and it becomes a joyful experience to give whatever it is that we choose, at any given time.

I've had some wonderful experiences working with Todd's giving program. I've left dollar bills in news stands, car windshields, grocery store shelves and even just on the ground. Have you ever felt the exhilaration of coming across a dollar bill that's more or less just floating around? Well, I must say that it's equally as exhilarating to leave one for someone else. Though I usually leave a dollar bill anonymously in some public place, I have also chosen, on the spur of a moment, to give it to a person directly. Now, those times have been a blast! This very small act of giving has opened up some of the most wonderful conversations with the most unlikely people. I've watched my given dollar bill change hands several times in the course of minutes as each recipient handed it to another until the "right" person used it according to his needs.

My mind was really blown when I had the tables turned on me a couple of weeks ago when early one Sunday morning I walked up to one of my neighborhood stores to buy a Sunday paper. I was standing in line behind a couple of teenagers when one of them turned to me with a dollar bill in

his hand and asked if he could share the cost of my paper. After picking myself up off the floor, I gratefully accepted his gift and passed it on to another. I was given a glimpse of how really wonderful it feels to be the recipient of such a free-flowing gift.

By recognizing that we are all a part of this magnificent whole and that we are certainly all connected, we can realize that anything that we do for another, we are also doing for ourselves. All of the Earth's great teachers have understood this and told us about it and it appears that we have entered a time when more of us are hearing the message, and acting upon it. The energetic act of giving creates movement...The pebble has hit the water and the ripples have moved in an outward motion. The gift being the pebble and the spreading of good will becomes the ripple effect. This ripple effect has the potential of moving mountains, of setting our culture on a more positive path, moving us away from fear into an era of unconditional love.

CREAM SOUPS

To the following basic recipe you can add any of the following in order to recapture the comfort that only a cream soup can offer:

- 1) Broccoli
- 2) Cauliflower
- 3) Mushrooms
- 4) Celery
- 5) Chicken or Turkey
- 6) Potatoes

The basic soup recipe is as follows:

1 medium onion, chopped
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil or butter
¼ cup Spelt flour

2-3 cups water, broth or stock
Sea salt and Pepper
1-2 TBSP. nutritional yeast (optional)

- 1) Lightly saute onions and garlic in oil or butter.
- 2) Stir in the flour and allow to cook over medium heat for about 10 minutes.
- 3) Slowly add your liquid, stirring constantly, until soup has reached desired consistency.
- 4) Add your desired chopped vegetables or meat.
- 5) Season to taste.
- 6) Simmer for 20-30 minutes.

This soup may be pureed in a food processor or blender for a smooth texture or left in its more defined state.

We participated in a wonderful Women's Wellness Event at Yoga Ananda Yoga and Wellness Studio this past month. There were many informed practitioners, delicious food and an extraordinary assortment of participants. We have more events coming in March. There will be a workshop on the Joys of Menopause and one on Nurturing and Feeding Your Baby. Both workshops promise to be fun and informative. I will keep you informed as to the exact dates and times or you can call the studio at 680-7344.

We, at Graceful Living, would also appreciate any suggestions you have for future workshops or discussions.

If you are interested in our twice-weekly prepared food items, please email us at gracejustiss@comcast.net.

Finally, we have the beginnings of our new web site. Our web site can be reached at gracejustiss.com. We will be adding more information and ideas in the near future.