

The Importance of Connection

By E. Adele, Des Moines, Iowa

I believe in connection: with the deepest essence within us, connection with other people—not only family and friends, but also with those who confound and irritate us, and finally connection with the earth and the life it sustains.

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

It is by exposure to the world around us that we discover what lies within. It may take multiple connections to unearth our strengths and weaknesses, our natural talents and proclivities. It is easy to be seduced by false idols and/or the expectations of others. It is by paying very close attention to the echoes of our inner spirit that we become the most fully human. When it is evident that no one else shares our level of passion we’ve likely found our niche.

“The linking of generations, the historical lineage of family, the sharing of love, give purpose to life.” George Landberg

Fractured families and friendships surround us. The reasons can range from generational feuding to simply allowing connections to deteriorate because we are caught like spiders in a web unable to extricate ourselves from demanding schedules that sap our energy.

My husband, a financial planner, was a supreme connector. When he traveled throughout the United States on business, he extended himself beyond the obligatory company requirements, connecting with his clients, many of them elderly singles, in ways that comforted and reassured them. Moreover, he never failed to reconnect with any acquaintances in the area. After his death a plethora of messages poured in from grateful people who shared amusing anecdotes. The pebbles he dropped promoted ripples that comforted a grieving family.

In a recent drama when urged to leave her grandson who had disgraced the family, the grandmother refused, “There is always something left to love,” she

said. For her, the connecting thread spinning through the ages though strained had not broken. It is customary for some religious groups to begin the new year by not only praying for their enemies, but also visiting them. A special effort is made to resolve misunderstandings of the past. I like to imagine this custom sweeping across national borders like a prairie fire.

“Our search for a future that works keeps spiraling back to an ancient connection between ourselves and the earth, an interconnectedness that ancient cultures have never abandoned.” Helena Norberg-Hodge

Recently I've noticed the greening of public and private buildings. Natural light and extensive plantings grace offices and hallways while entire adjacent city blocks are now beautifully landscaped. Research has confirmed productivity escalates in such an environment. A recently constructed hospital in Atlanta, Georgia boasts aviaries that delight the eye and the ear as birdsong floats through hallways into antiseptic realms. The public response has been overwhelming. As we move forward in these areas, we recognize a primal yearning for a living environment that does not insulate us from the earth.

Finally, I believe in an omnipotent Spirit, permeating the universe and beyond, that seeks not only to connect us with the best that lies within, but also with the whole human family and the planet we call our home.