

THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF ALL THINGS

Thank you! Your contributions to 34 Million Friends of UNFPA totaled \$354.00. Funds mobilized through 34 Million Friends of UNFPA are used in the poorest regions of the world to:

- helped to train midwives on safe delivery of babies;
- equipped health facilities for emergencies encountered in delivery;
- provided contraceptive commodities for family planning;
- supported HIV/AIDS prevention programs;
- and treated women with obstetric fistula, a pregnancy-related disability that renders women incontinent and often ostracized.

To be in the service of something beyond ourselves -- to be in the presence of something other than ourselves, together -- this is where we can begin to craft a meaningful life where personal isolation and despair disappear through the shared engagement of a vibrant citizenry.

[From Terry Tempest Williams, "Engagement", the conclusion of a triptych on the open space of democracy]

GIVING THANKS

Gratitude is a spiritual responsibility. A grateful heart acknowledges and participates in the ongoing exchange with life. Gratitude is an act of faith, of trust in the ways of life. It is a confirmation that we are inextricably bound to each other thing in the cosmos. In this sense it is a reflection of belonging . . .

How do we develop gratitude? Perhaps the most fundamental practice is listening. This attentive move slows us down to the speed of life where we are more resonant with the movements of the world. By listening we are able to register in our bodies just how fluid this flow of blessing is in our lives. Think about that. The constancy of the sun, moon, and stars, the generosity of the rains, rivers, the earth, the abundant richness of birdsong, the fragrance of roses, wet streets after a downpour, the delectable sweetness of blackberries warm with the heat of the day, the luscious colors of fall, all are offered to us freely. When we listen and take in the astonishingly sensuous earth we come awake to the thunderous beauty that surrounds us. We are literally inundated with the world pouring through every opening and in this awareness we recognize a fundamental truth: we are of the earth. In fact, as cosmologist Brian Swimme suggests, humans were put on earth to gawk. That is our cosmological destiny! To be astonished, amazed, delighted in the intricate weavings of the cosmos is to listen fully and to send out our sigh of appreciation is what is asked in return.

[Source: Excerpted from "Gratitude For All That Is" by Francis Weller, psychotherapist and founder and director of WisdomBridge, which offers workshops, trainings and consultations on the recovery of the indigenous soul].



"If the only prayer you say in your life is "thank you," that would suffice."

--Meister Eckhart