

The Gift of Yourself

**What is the most beautiful gift you can give? The gift of yourself.
(From: Serving & Giving, Gateways to Higher Consciousness, p. 13)**

There is no one else on the planet exactly like you. Think about that. Out of all the billions of people, you are unique in all the world. No one does life exactly like you, nor is a better you than you. Your experiences, perceptions, talents, beliefs are yours alone. Before you came into this world you chose a unique combination of family, gender, culture, birth order and other factors to help your soul's learning in this lifetime. These factors form a one of a kind design of the vehicle that carries your soul energy on this level.

When we embrace who we are and what we have to offer, we have enthusiasm, joy, a willingness to take risks. When we believe that we're not enough as we are or not allowed to make mistakes, we learn to hold back parts of ourselves. We develop a very limited definition of who we are and what's acceptable. We learn to deny or cut off the essence within which then blocks our soul energy.

We can spend so much time protecting our weaknesses and defending our strengths that we lose our authenticity. In the pretending and the hiding, we shut down that vibrant dynamic energy that we are.

There is such beauty, richness and depth inside each of us. We have such amazing capacities to embrace life, to open up to ourselves and others. But often we go through life just staying on the surface. Trying not to make waves. Going to the deepest parts of ourselves, understanding who we are, accepting ourselves on all levels takes courage. It causes us to expand the definition we have of ourselves. We become real. Soulful.

We are giving the gift of ourselves when:

- *We're fully present in the moment*
- *When we participate 100% in life*
- *When we come from a place of our heart being open*
- *When we believe we're enough as we are*
- *When we know we have something of value to share with the world*
- *When we are real with ourselves and others*
- *When we're able to speak our truth, honor our feelings in a loving way*

Being real. Being in our loving. No need to be better than. No need to shrink back. That's an invitation for our soul energy to flow through. The following is one of my absolute favorites, and speaks to this.....

The Invitation

By Oriah Mountain Dreamer

"It doesn't interest me what you do for a living. I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dream, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon. I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shriveled and closed from fear of further pain! I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it, or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy, mine or your own, if you can dance with wildness and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes without cautioning us to be careful, to be realistic, to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't interest me if the story you are telling me is true. I want to know if you can disappoint another to be true to yourself; if you can bear the accusation of betrayal and not betray your own soul; if you can be faithless and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see beauty even when it's not pretty, every day, and if you can source your own life from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure, yours and mine, and still stand on the edge of the lake and shout to the silver of the full moon, "Yes!"

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have. I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you have studied. I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.”

May this holiday season be the time when we open up to embrace the value of who we are and have the courage to share it with others.