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#### Spiritual Economics -3: Making A Life

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Today is the third Sunday that we’re talking about the ideas that Eric Butterworth puts forth in his book, Spiritual Economics.

To recap: Rev Butterworth felt that a good place to start is with what we in New Thought feel to be a foundational truth: There is only one.

One what?

In Unity we say, One Life, One Infinite Ground of All Being, one quantum field, one infinite spiritual substance -all synonyms- out of which all is made. We say that God, or One Mind, also synonyms, is everywhere present and God created all of creation out of Itself, using that One Spiritual substance that It is.

Out of Itself - this means that God isn’t separate from Its creation - it is all made of God Substance. Trees are made of God substance. Rocks and birds and stars are made of spiritual substance. You and I are made of God substance.

This is a hard leap for a lot of us to make, because we’ve been indoctrinated from a very young age, regardless of our religious or spiritual upbringing, to believe that God is a reigning deity dwelling somewhere up there separate from us.

But if we’re willing to accept the Truth that God is infinite - then we have to accept that only one something can be Infinite. And if there is only One something, we have to be made of it.

This is what it means to be created in the image and likeness of God. Not that God has two arms and two legs and a head and thus so do we.

But that we are spiritual substance because spiritual substance is the only thing that is. Image and likeness mean that if this One Mind, or spiritual substance creates out of itself then we too create out of spiritual substance.

And how do we do that? In the same way that Infinite quantum field creates - out of itself.

Now, being that we experience ourselves primarily as physical beings, our initial reaction to this news is “What???” And we look down at our arms and legs with the odd notion that we have to dematerialize ourselves or something. Or like the special effects in a sci-fi movie, our hearts desire will somehow morph from our abdomen.

But no, you can wipe your brow in relief. Substance is an infinite field of consciousness. One Mind. Conscious energy. It creates from consciousness, and we do the same. We’re already doing it. The lives we’re experiencing are a reflection of the sum total of what we think and believe.

We like to say our thoughts create our reality, or thoughts held in mind create after their kind, which is why Butterworth says, “Your fortune begins with you.”

If we want to live a more abundant life, we need to begin to discover what we believe, decide if we want to keep it or dump it, and then replace old beliefs with new ones.

And one of the ways we do that is through visualizing what we’d like our experience to be like. We can think of this as creating a mold - like a candle mold, or a cookie cutter - of what we’d like to experience.

So perhaps we create a mold for an abundance of love and loving relationships. Or our mold might be a desire to express more creatively in our work. Our mold might contain that delicious feeling of freedom and how that might express. Our mold might be one of beauty and how we might express that.

And then we infuse that mold with our excitement and the power of our belief. Not belief focused on getting what we want. Not belief that we can make vending machine God give us what we want. No, we infuse our mold with the power of our belief in the ever-present God substance.

We infuse our mold with the profound faith that we are immersed in universal spiritual substance, and we can impress upon that substance a mold of our desire and it will come to pass. We infuse our mold with our confidence in the unfailing spiritual law.

We infuse our mold with that same depth of expectation we have that when we turn on a light switch the light will come on. We don’t approach the light switch full of doubt wondering if this time the light will come on or not. No, we walk into the room and simply flip the switch with the full expectation that the light will come on.

And as we turn the page to this Sunday, we’re going to talk about gratitude as a part of this process of living in abundance.

We often think of gratitude as something we have in response to something; but actually, it is a causative energy.

We may also think of gratitude as a social obligation or something that is “due” God.

Butterworth says, “It doesn’t make any difference to God whether you give thanks or not. But it makes a lot of difference to you…. Gratitude is not for God… giving thanks is an important start of your consciousness that keeps you in an awareness of the oneness with divine flow.”

Butterworth feels that our most important asset is that we have conscious control of our lives, the ability to choose our thoughts and thus to a great degree affect our life experience.

However, most of us give power to outer events and people so that they are what controls our life. We’re stuck in traffic and allow that to “make” us grumpy, our best friend forgot to wish us a happy birthday and we let it ruin our day.

And we do the same thing with gratitude. We wait for something to happen in the outer world for us to be grateful for, and then we feel grateful. This is actually giving our power to feel grateful to the world out there

Paul: “In all things give thanks.” This is often misinterpreted to mean that we should give thanks **for** all things, which leaves us scratching our heads. Should we give thanks for overpriced rents? For below poverty level minimum wages?

But, Paul doesn’t say “**for** all things give thanks,” he says, “***In*** all things give thanks.”

The Bible story of the loaves and fishes is a good example of this. While there are many ways to look at the fishes and loaves story in the Bible, I like to think of it in this way: Jesus didn’t look at the basket of five loaves and two fish and give thanks for five loaves and two fish. Nor did he look at the basket and see lack.

The story says simply, he gave thanks.

If our focus is in our outside-in consciousness, it would be easy to think that he was giving thanks for the five loaves and two fish, but I think that he was giving thanks for ever present substance. He didn’t see fish and loaves; he saw *symbols* of ever present and abundant substance.

He blessed the substance. He looked at the basket from a consciousness of Infinite God Substance, with the knowing of an all-sufficiency that says there is always enough. And there was.

There are lots of ideas about how that happened ranging from the food materializing out of thin air, to a sort of stone soup with all attendees sharing what they had, to a Greco-Roman version of an anonymous Uber gift delivery.

But the how isn’t important. What was important was that Jesus demonstrated seeing from a consciousness of abundance and the universe responded.

That’s a good lesson for us as well - don’t worry about the how. Just be grateful and faithful.

There’s another story about a young boy who lives on a farm. One day a dump truck arrives early in the morning and delivers a large pile of manure for compost. A few hours later, the father comes out and sees the boy shoveling away at the pile with great enthusiasm.

“What are you doing,” asks the father. The boy can barely spare his father a glance. “With all of this manure there’s got to be a pony in here somewhere!”

Humorous, yes - but the message is that the young boy didn’t see manure - he saw a pony. He could have come out of his back door and thought, “Oh no! That looks like a lot of unpleasant work,” but he didn’t. He saw abundance - he saw ever present substance.

Charles Fillmore says: “God is the source of a mighty stream of substance, and you are a tributary of that stream, a channel of expression. Blessing the substance increases its flow.

If your money supply is low or your purse seems empty, take it in your hands and bless it. See it filled with living substance ready to become manifest. As you prepare your meals, bless the food with the thought of spiritual substance.

When you dress, bless your garments and realize that you are being constantly clothed with God's substance … The more conscious you become of the presence of the living substance the more it will manifest itself for you and the richer will be the common good of all … Identify yourself with substance … and you will soon begin to rejoice in the ever-present bounty of God.”

And if we fall, and we will stumble along the way, just like we do in meditation when we bring our attention back to the breath again and again, we will need to re-center our in the awareness of the ever-presence of substance every time we catch ourselves thinking thoughts of lack.

Just like our friend Bob from last week who could not see the abundance he was immersed in while in the most profitable sales territory for the company he worked for, we ourselves sometimes can’t see the abundance that is all around us.

When we are simply grateful - not for something - but just as a way of being, we are then seeing FROM a grateful heart, and this changes our consciousness.

There was something that Butterworth shared about a gratitude practice that many of us do - including myself - that gave me pause. He wrote that some people have a gratitude practice where they look for things in their lives to be grateful for.

And this is all well and good, but there is a potential trap we need to be aware of when we do this. In this kind of practice, because we are letting the world out there determine our state of gratitude, we can easily slip into comparing and noting not just what we do have, but what we don’t have.

“I’m grateful for my new couch… even though it’s not as nice as Shirley’s couch, and even though I would prefer one with a recliner.”

“I’m grateful for my new office, even though I really wanted the corner one that Gerald has.”

When we let outside events determine our feeling of gratitude, we are giving our power away.

And yet, we can be grateful for the things in our lives. It’s a bit of a paradox. The nuance is being grateful from a consciousness of all sufficiency versus putting our focus on the outer. When we begin here, then what we see around us is a reflection of the ever-presence of substance.

So, practice being grateful, and use whatever gratitude practice works to deepen that feeling of certainty that you are, “Consciousness centered in the universal source,” a being grateful ***from*** consciousness***.***

As we shift from an outer focus to a knowingness of substance, we can also fall prey to what Butterworth calls the work and success syndrome. It’s just another variation on giving our power away to outside circumstances.

It’s easy to get sucked into climbing the ladder of corporate or business success, where our feeling of abundance is linked to the title on our office door or how much money we make. And we can get so pulled into this that we can find ourselves trading fulfillment for prestige.

Butterworth invites us to ask - why do we work? What are we getting out of our work? If we answer that we work for money or just to make a living, we are likely shortchanging ourselves.

Work should be an expression of the creative flow. When we align ourselves with the divine flow of substance this creates both on outflow and an inflow. We will find that we can’t help but be prosperous.

When my grandmother was living her last years with us, I took a job waiting tables at a breakfast house. My initial attitude was just to bring in some extra money. It was a job I didn’t have to “bring home” with me, allowing most of my energy to be focused on my family.

I was very focused on how much money I made each day, counting my tips and grumbling and worrying when I didn’t make as much as I’d hoped, happy when I made more than I expected.

At the time I was working with the ACIM materials, and a series of events inspired me to play with shifting from a consciousness of being totally focused on the money to a consciousness of being of service.

I took my focus off the tips I would make, and instead approached each table with the intention of being of service to whoever was sitting there. Within a couple of weeks, I felt a sense of purpose rising in me. It was like people could feel me blessing them as I approached their table. I began to enjoy my work more, I was more present when I was there, and my customers were happier.

And, to my surprise, I began to make more money. My tip income increased by about 25%. My consciousness changed and I began to experience more abundance. Not just financial abundance, but I experienced more joy and purpose in the work I was doing.

Here is that thought of alignment again - when we align ourselves with Presence - we are in the flow. We get out of our own way and abundance naturally expresses through us.

We also take ourselves out of alignment when our focus is on success, on more, more, more. A promotion, a corner office, the next rung on the ladder. And this is not to say that there is anything wrong with having greater success in our lives - it’s a great thing. But not at the expense of our expanded consciousness.

So many people are so busy chasing the outer dream and are miserable on the inside, so full of stress that they can’t enjoy their lives.

In a workshop I took a long time ago, the teacher opened by sharing his personal prosperity story.

He’d chased it all. The house, the cars, the money, the clothes. He worked crazy hours so that he and his family could swim in every luxury. And for a while it felt good. Having all that stuff made him feel prosperous even though getting it and keeping it meant that he spent less and less time with his family and no time with friends.

He became short tempered from being so tired, he was distracted all the time thinking about his job and fearful that he might lose it to someone new and younger. Over time his health also began to suffer. And then his wife left him, taking their kids.

He threw himself even more into his work, chasing more external things in an effort to be happy. But one morning, as his eyes opened, they fell on his open closet. And there, lined up all in a row, neat and tidy, hung about twenty white shirts, some still in their dry-cleaning bags, some with price tags still hanging from their sleeves.

And the thought occurred to him, “Who needs twenty white shirts?” And he knew without looking, that farther back in the closet, out of sight, hung the equivalent number of blue shirts, and grey shirts, and pants, and on the floor, pair after pair of shoes to match.

And he said it was like this veil had been suddenly ripped away from his eyes. He saw that he had lost his family, his health, his peace of mind, by placing his focus on the pursuit of material things.

He had made his job and the stuff the source of his happiness and fulfillment, and it had all crumbled away.

So, he quit his job and started reading and learning and stretching and growing. And he learned that he’d had it all backwards. And so, he sold it all and started over.

Now this is not to say that material things are bad, for this workshop teacher still had nice material things, but he had discovered that the true source of his happiness, his peace of mind, his security, his joy, were not in those external things, but within him. He had discovered the true meaning of abundance; one that was sourced from within.

Once he started living from that place, he was able to create a joyful balanced life, with time for his new family, time with friends and with space for material things. The things were no longer the focus however, they were the by-products of an abundant consciousness.

Matthew 6:19-21 says, “Don’t store up treasures here on earth where they can erode away or may be stolen. Store them in heaven where they will never lose their value and are safe from thieves. If your profits are in heaven, your heart will be there too.”

And we know that the kingdom of heaven is within. These wise words are telling us to be on fire with the awareness of Presence, to be on fire with seeing spiritual substance as everywhere present. In this way, we begin to create the abundant life of our dreams.

As Dr Richard Held penned, “Let your first prayer, in all things, be for a consciousness which can support all the good you desire to experience.”