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#### Spiritual Economics -5: The Currency of Consciousness

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New Thought began as an exploration into the relationship between thought and healing. Over time, spiritual laws became evident to those involved in this exploration, and those who put these practices into play in their lives began to experience improved conditions in their health.

It wasn’t long before it became clear that these same practices could also improve other areas of our lives, and so spiritual principle began to be applied with much enthusiasm towards the accumulation of stuff and things.

So much so, that New Thought became known as the prosperity teaching to the point where spiritual substance was likened to a genie in the sky where a practitioner’s every wish would be granted. The whole emphasis was on getting and books and workshops began to crop up everywhere teaching us how to get more, more, more!

However, it became clear that we cannot sustain in the world of form what we cannot sustain in consciousness. It was a good spiritual lesson which is bringing the movement back to center.

And perhaps in an overabundance of caution, we take great care to ensure that when we talk about prosperity, we don’t limit it to just financial prosperity - we talk about the full range of abundant living - relationships, health, emotional, spiritual and financial. And we caution that these teachings are not just about getting stuff or really getting at all. They are more about giving.

That said, we all need money to transact business of any kind in our society - at least until the future shown us in Star Trek comes to pass. Whether we have a little or a lot, we need it to buy groceries, pay the rent, purchase an airplane ticket or put gas in our car.

Ghandi needed money - one of his followers is noted as having said, “It takes an awful lot of money to keep Ghandi living in poverty.” As well, Jesus needed money to support his ministry.

We have an awful lot of energy around money, don’t we? If we’re spiritual we shouldn’t want or have too much money. The starving artist. Poor people are good and resourceful. Rich people are synonymous with greed and cruelty.

A survey done by the University of Michigan for the purpose of gleaning what effect money had on people revealed the following:

What do people worry about most? Money!

What makes people the happiest? Money!

What makes people the unhappiest? Money!

So, let’s talk about money. Let’s talk about the truth of money, what it really is.

Money is an agreement that the whole world has. We’ve all agreed that money represents - or is a symbol - that has a particular value that we all agree on - for the purpose of transacting business.

It’s not always been coins and dollar bills: historically, we have used cowrie shells, salt and beads, for example. According to Yuval Harari in his book Sapiens, money emerged as transactions became too complex for barter to work effectively.

Say I want a new shovel. I have peaches to barter, and so I come to you and offer you peaches for a shovel. But you don’t need peaches - another farmer has already given you more than enough peaches for a rake you traded him.

But you do need a pair of shoes. So I go to the cobbler and see if he will trade peaches for shoes so that I can give the shoes to you for a shovel.

But the cobbler also doesn’t need peaches, but he needs some soap. So I go to the soap maker and lo - she needs peaches and in exchange I get soap.

But when I go back to the cobbler, it’s not enough soap for the shoes I need and so now I’m in a pickle. I have soap that I don’t need and still not a shovel that I do need.

And this is just the tip of the complexity. A shovel might be worth a few peaches if they’re scarce, or a lot of peaches during a bumper crop. It’s easy to see how complicated a barter system can get.

So, when we can all agree on some intermediary thing - shells, green paper, coins, salt - that will represent some fixed value, I can then sell my peaches for money and give you money for a shovel.

So, money has only the value that we agree upon and assign to it. This is how money works in the world of form.

But money also holds the consciousness that we bring to it.

Will you play with me this morning? Along with the homework handout, each one of you should have received an envelope with instructions to not open until the right time in the service. Does everyone have one?

Before you open your envelope, I invite you to be as present as you can - so that you can be aware of your first response when you open the envelope. Then just sit quietly for a moment and just be aware of whatever thoughts or feelings that you have as you hold what’s in the envelope.

Additionally, I want you to do your best to just be in the role of the observer. No judging what comes up, no fixing or trying to change what you feel. Just notice what thoughts and feelings come up.

Ok - open!

SPACE for experience 1 minute

Whatever thoughts or feelings rose up in you when you pulled the dollar out of the envelope are some of what either align you with the idea of financial abundance or take you out of alignment with the idea of financial abundance.

Looking at the dollar could have brought up a thought of ‘only.’ Only a dollar. Maybe, “can’t buy much with a dollar anymore.”

Gratitude might have come up or maybe just general discomfort or immediate plans on what to spend it on. Maybe looking at the dollar brought you joy, or confusion, fear or perhaps you felt nothing.

Or maybe you had the thought - “I wonder if I get to keep this,” and to that, the answer is yes. And to answer what might be an unspoken question, these are not church funds, this was unexpected income perfect for this experience.

Whatever the thought, this is some of what either aligns you or keeps you out of alignment with financial abundance. This is all just for your awareness so that you will know where you stand and where to work.

And now I want you to turn to someone and give them your dollar.

How does it feel to no longer have that dollar? Did you find yourself resisting -maybe just a little bit - giving it away? Just notice what feelings come up as honestly as you are able.

Go ahead and get your dollar back so that everyone has a dollar again. :-)

Butterworth writes that most of us think that we associate money with abundance - but the reality is that most of us associate money with lack, so that even when we have some, it never feels like enough.

A friend of mine a long time ago knew that this was true for him. He realized that almost always when he spoke about money, it was about not having enough of it to do what he wanted to do in his life.

And he also realized that he was uncomfortable having money. Just holding money gave him a feeling of unease - he couldn’t be relaxed and simply present with it.

So, he decided to get comfortable with money. He took 100 $1 bills and threw them all over his bed and rolled in them. He stood in front of the mirror and threw fistfuls of them in the air. He tore one up. He did everything he could think of until that piece of paper no longer brought up feelings of lack or fear.

We are invited to do the same. Get comfortable with money so that you can have an abundance of it. Play with it, learn about it until it no longer triggers any form of resistance in you. Don’t be intimidated by it - of itself it has no power.

Butterworth encourages us to be joyful with our money - let it be the symbol that it is, a symbol of substance, “a tangible representation of the invisible flow of life.”

This brings us full circle to what we talked about on the first day of this series - there is this invisible, universal substance, this cosmic stuff, that is everywhere present and out of which every created thing arises. And money is a symbol of this substance - money is a currency of consciousness.

Consciousness is the “real money” and your beliefs, attitudes, and intentions shape how material money moves through your life. What are you “spending” your consciousness on? What emotional or spiritual “currency” are you circulating? Fear or faith? Gratitude or grasping?

Currency comes from the Latin currens, meaning a "condition of flowing.” The idea of something that flowed from person to person led eventually to the idea of currency as a medium of exchange or money.

Money flows from you to the grocer to the farmer to wages to pay for electric bills and on and one, remaining in circulation. When viewed this way, we generate flow through our consciousness.

As we give our money, we receive. But we don’t necessarily look at it this way. We feel like we’re giving our money away when we purchase groceries or something we need, when in actuality, when we give to the grocer we receive food.

When give to the electric company, we receive light and heat or power to run our electronics. When we give to Amazon… we receive all kinds of things. It’s a flow, and if we resist it, we block it.

Prosperity teaching is about flourishing, financially as well as in health, love and joy. Flourish was the original meaning of the word prosperous. We flourish when we are in the flow.

And this flow is about both giving and receiving or as David Owen Ritz says in Keys to the Kingdom, giving and acceptance. We can only receive at the level of what we can accept, and what we can accept depends on what and how we give to life.

We can’t just do the action - well we can, but if we’re giving mechanically or out of obligation, or resentfully or only to get something in return, we’re blocking the flow. It’s like turning a hose on and crimping it at the same time.

Butterworth writes, “… there is a wellspring of life, substance and intelligence within you, and yours is the privilege at any time of giving way to its flow. … if ever there is a lack of any kind… something is blocking the flow.”

It depends on what we’re thinking and feeling when we do what we do.”

In his book, Working with the Law, Raymond Holliwell writes, “It is not the money you give; it is the idea back of the giving that is so vital.”

The best way, according to Butterworth, to unblock the flow is to give. And of course, what we hear when we’re told to give is that we are to give money. And we wonder, how can we give money when we have none? This is thinking with our material mind for there is always something we can give.

We can give of our time through volunteering, we can mow the lawn for an elderly or house bound neighbor. We can give a compassionate ear to someone who is having a rough day.

We can go through our closets and give what we no longer wear, things we no longer use, which is what we just did in our K2K class: we just need to break the dam that’s blocking the flow.

Find something to give and give. Because when we resist giving, we are also resisting receiving.

And we can’t put off giving until we receive. As logical as that might sound, it’s actually backwards. When we think this way, we are denying that we are already a living wellspring ready to flow with ease.

We must turn the faucet on and let the water flow, so that the pipes will always be full. This demonstrates our confidence in the ever-present free flow of substance.

We want to get that feeling of softening, allowing this feeling perhaps of something flowing through you, or gushing even, so that when you give you do so with an open, joyful heart.

Butterworth feels that the purpose of life is not acquisition but unfoldment and personal development. Giving is about putting ourselves in the flow.

Author Prentice Mulford said, “Giving is the first law of receiving.”

Emmet Fox wrote, “It is the law of life that the giver shall always be the receiver.”

And New Thought teacher and author Joel Goldsmith tells us, “Giving and receiving are one and the same when we understand God as the source.”

In closing, Butterworth invites us to understand money as simply a symbol of the flow of substance and to discover the power of giving. It is the key that turns on the faucet allowing us to experience a new level of joyous living.