

Opportunity

Shiranda Deerwoman; July 10, 2022

One day recently, it was my plan to photograph a flowering cactus I saw across the street. When I observed it in the morning, I decided to set an alarm for late afternoon and capture an image when the light would be softer. So I did just that, thinking my plan was assured. However, later, when I grabbed my camera, I was disappointed to see that the blooms had closed, and the opportunity had been lost. The next morning, the flowers remained closed.



Since moving to Arizona, I'd learned of a cactus that blooms only one day out of the year and immediately wondered upon first sighting, if this were that flower. I hadn't seen any blooms earlier in the season. My friend, Cindy, had posted a photo of one on Facebook a few years back, and when I called to arrange to drive over and capture a photo for myself, she told me it only bloomed for one day. While I felt disappointed to learn this, it was also quite a surprise, as I'd never heard of a plant flowering for only a single day.

I learned more when I searched online. "Echinopsis cactus flowers bloom overnight and the flowers last for only a day. Actually, the flowers are at their peak beauty for an hour or two at the most" (thekidsshouldseethis.com). I wish I'd known this so I would have grabbed my camera immediately upon seeing it. Dang! Even photographing it when it was before me with an intention to take additional photos later, would have saved the opportunity. I hope this thought guides me in future opportunities, of any kind, to give, receive, or otherwise experience what is right before me because like this experience, we don't know if or when something will come around again. I've had this experience of a missed opportunity many times and not just with photography.

Some opportunities are lost or are lost for the time being.

Other missed photo ops that immediately come to mind:

- A lighted porch, decor and doorway that always captivated me upon driving by at dusk or after dark. I lived in that neighborhood for three years and never set up with camera and tripod to capture it. That porch is now two hours away.
- A beautiful flowering tree outside the door of the Christian Science Church in Mesa, perfectly backlit by an outside light. Countless times I admired it when leaving in the

evening, again, having the thought to photograph it “sometime”. Today, two hours away.

- A bird of paradise bush beautifully framed through an arched window that I admired where I lived last summer. I felt shocked the day I discovered the landscapers had cut it back, way before I thought such pruning was necessary. All the flowers were gone. I felt such disappointment that I never seized the opportunity that had remained day after day, right in front of me. And then of course, I was upset with the men who had pruned it. I had so enjoyed those flowers, whether from inside or out, and in an unforeseen moment, they were gone. Right! Two hours away.

While capturing a photo in each of these circumstances would have been a joy, I easily recognize there are opportunities of graver importance. It never feels good when I miss an opportunity because I held myself back. And then, if in so doing, I judge myself, I may use up my time and energy rationalizing or defending because of it, if only in my own mind. It's rewarding to recognize an opportunity and to seize it.

Everyday opportunities can have significant value and are not to be missed.

Opportunities of consequence include:

- To forgive and choose love instead of holding resentment or blame
- To offer a kind word rather than judge, or at least, withhold judgment
- To give a compliment, even to a passerby in a store or on the street
- To hold a person, group, or situation in prayer
- To surrender our time, energy, talents, money, and resources to a higher purpose
- To put another person's needs before our own – absolutely anyone
- To do our inner work--to grow and change, so as not to be a blemish on humanity.

Not every door has our name on it.

At the same time, not every door that presents before us is one we are to open. Discernment is necessary so we extend ourselves where we are to be and bypass all else. Dangling carrots abound that will readily distract us from what is ours to do. And then as well, it can be exciting to put ourselves out there in situations that push us to stretch, utilize, and even develop skills required to succeed or be of help. These could be related to work, an invitation to give a presentation, record a live video, develop a new skill, take or teach a class, push a broom,

visit or assist a sick friend, hold humanity in loving prayer, or assist another with their own endeavors simply because we have the needed skills.

It's a joy to push ourselves and come through. When it's a team effort, we have the bonus of joy, process, and accomplishment that is shared. We could use more working harmoniously as a team and co-working for the bigger matters in life.

Our evolution is intertwined with one another.

Today I listened to several John Denver songs, something I hadn't done for quite some time. I used to sing along with his songs all the time while driving as well as at home. My God, he was a tremendous talent, composer, and poet of personal and spiritual substance. I realized a greater appreciation for Denver once I learned guitar chords for his music and started singing his songs – *singing his words*. Singing with my friend, Rose, who could sing harmony with “anything”, increased my joy...our shared joy. My guitar skills were good enough to accompany our voices and so we got together and sang.

Please be with the beauty of John Denver's message of interconnectedness in “The Wings That Fly Us Home”.

*“I know that love is seeing all the infinite in one
In the brotherhood of creatures; who the father, who the son
The vision of your goodness will sustain me through the cold
Take my hand now to remember when you find yourself alone*

*And the spirit fills the darkness of the heavens
It fills the endless yearning of the soul
It lives within a star too far to dream of
It lives within each part and is the whole
It's the fire and the wings that fly us home
Fly us home, fly us home”.*

Spiritual teachings set forth that we advance as we behold the other as our self, without discrimination. Such practice definitely expands our hearts and establishes a will-to-good for all souls. Spiritual life is inclusive, sees beyond differences, and establishes sight that results in peace and right action. Such vision further guides our care of all life, our planet, and the heavens.

I don't believe we can succeed without spiritual support and guidance for our sincere willingness to grow. Without a higher hand, we too often sink into the density of physical life, human thought, doubt, fear, and other burdensome emotions and attachments. In this we have a tremendous opportunity, responsibility and privilege that requires we evolve in our beliefs that form the basis of who we are, and the world we mutually experience.

"The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return."

Our decision to love heals and heals us on every level. Love heals and conditions our thinking, our emotions, as well as the state of our physical-etheric body— including our vital energies. Additionally, as love begins to permeate these aspects of the personality, we become accessible and more readily impacted by impulses of the soul. Believe me, love is the "superfood" that goes beyond experience we've known in seeking sustenance outside of us. Perhaps a missed opportunity to love and be loved -- to give and receive love, is the greatest miss of all.

For me, it always come back to our decision to love. "The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return" (Nature Boy). Take this beyond the thought of romantic love to the ideal of shared, divine love and with that, we've got it. For without this shared, universal love, romantic love may be a block to our full awareness of love. Yes, we can have romance, but let's not stop there. A growing awareness of our divinity opens the door to knowing ourselves and living as we were created.

Shiranda is a Healing Arts Professional and long-time student of Spiritual Teachings. Her study includes "A Course in Miracles" (1996), New Thought Christianity (1990), and more recently, Christian Science. Her study of Transformational Kinesiology (TK)[®] introduced her to the study of the Ageless Wisdom Teachings in 1993.



Shiranda is long-time admirer of Ram Dass. As a young adult, just out of college, his four-record set, "Love, Serve, Remember" hugely impacted her thinking. She is an educator and a counselor through formal training.

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