

My Independence Day

by Rev. Eileen Patra

As I celebrated Independence Day on last week I found myself thinking about the birth of our country and how that birthing process relates to so many other aspects of our lives. Out of a time of conflict and chaos, a country with great vision was born.

From the heart of this country and its vision of independence, freedom and equal rights for all people, Unity was born. Unity was founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore on the principle of affirmative prayer. Charles and Myrtle were deeply spiritual, deeply Christian people who believed that we all have the God-given power to heal ourselves, to study and interpret scripture on a personal level and to follow our own, Independent, spiritual paths.

Unity of the Lakes was also born out of that vision of equality and independence. As a young mother I struggled with how to raise my children in the spiritual sense. I was not happy with the structure of the church I had grown up in and didn't quite know where to turn. I remember thinking how difficult it was for an American who had grown up in a democracy to belong to a church that was structured as a hierarchy. I just couldn't accept the way things were structured. I couldn't accept that there were only a select few people who could tell me what was right and wrong and what God expected or wanted of me.

In that moment I knew that I needed to make a change in my life. I knew that I needed to seek another path. That path led me to Unity, where I found that my thoughts and ideas were heard, where it was acceptable for me to say that God had spoken to me. Where I was honored as a spiritual being and told that the Truth was IN me – not that the truth needed to be taught TO me. It led me to Unity School and the Spiritual Education program there. It led me to my work with the Great Lakes Region of Unity Churches and ultimately it led me here to Unity of the Lakes. In that moment you could say I was born again and all things were made new.

We all experience the birthing process in our lives. We experience birthing when we rise up out of conflict and chaos and choose to hear our own inner voice and walk our own authentic, spiritual path.

What does Authentic mean? Well, authentic means not false or copied, genuine, real. We are first and foremost, spiritual beings. That is who we truly are. That is our authentic self, our perfect self, the perfect idea in the mind of Spirit. It is when we out-picture that perfect self in the manifest world that we often become less authentic – separate from our true nature. We take on ideas that are not true to our potential.

Independence is described as freedom from the control, influence, support, aid, or the like, of others. So in life, when we choose to be independent, we often are required to give something up. We want to be free of the control but sometimes we aren't sure we want to let go of something that seems to support us, something that has grown to be comfortable.

A baby when it is born gives up the comfort of the womb to enter the physical world.

An adolescent gives up some of the support and comfort of family as they seek independence and the validation of their peers.

Teenagers who are striving hard for independence want very much to escape the control of parents, but they often are unable to let go of their support. They still want financial support, gas money, allowance, clothes, etc.

Young adults give up the financial support of parents to strike out on their own.

I know when I was a young adult and first moved out of my parents home I was so thrilled to be on my own. But there were things that I hadn't even realized I depended on them for. For instance, did you know that someone actually purchases toilet paper and then puts it on the roll in the bathroom on a regular basis? Well it was quite a surprise to me!

The U.S. gave up the support and protection they might have received from Great Britain to be released from their control; from taxation without representation and so on.

And so it is with us as we strive sometimes to be our authentic selves. We want very much to be free of limiting thoughts, limiting actions, other people's views or ideas of who and what we should be but sometimes we are not even consciously aware of the negative or dependent thoughts that hold back or hold us in old behaviors. And, just as a baby gives up the comfort of the womb to enter the physical world, we are often asked to give up something that is comfortable but no longer serves us and can no longer support our growth.

And for us to become our true authentic selves, to be independent of limitations what must we let go of? What is no longer serving our growing needs?

We become spiritually independent when we give up limiting thoughts and beliefs and awaken to our true, divine nature. When we realize that all the power and perfection of Spirit runs through us – is truly the essence of our beings.

So how do we realize this power, how do we truly experience spiritual independence?

First, desire – often a birthing process or significant change in our lives is preceded by a time of dissatisfaction, at time where our current circumstances are not supportive of who we truly are. And so the desire for change comes first.

Second we have to have a Vision! A clear picture of what it is that we truly want to express and experience in our lives.

Our forefathers had a Vision of what they chose to fight for. They had a vision and they wrote it down, and called it the Declaration of Independence.

“...We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

So yes, we have to have a vision! A clear picture of what we want and who we are. Who do you truly want to be? Who is your authentic self? Who are you trying to birth? Who is it within you that strives for independence?

All great accomplishments begin with a vision. To create your vision, think about what goals have you set in the past that have proven successful? What do you do that you can truly absorb yourself in? What can you create that will truly satisfy and fulfill you? What speaks to you? To accomplish this you need to set aside time in silence to listen to your heart, your inner consciousness for guidance.

Tuning in to our inner guidance, listening to our heart, spending time in the silence... this is how God speaks to us; through our own inner voice. We have to tune out the conflict and chaos around us by spending time in the silence so we can hear this voice.

Remember Smokey the bear? Only you can prevent forest fires? Only YOU can release your true potential. Only YOU can answer the questions who am I? Why am I here? What is my deepest desire?

Third, we have to become aware of what thoughts or activities are holding us back from our good. Just like the toilet paper story – sometimes we are just not aware of what is supporting our staying where we are – what it is that is keeping us from our good.

What do you need to let go of. Perhaps you have to give up old ways of thinking, old ways of doing things, Maybe it's an attitude. Sometimes we have a “poor me” attitude don't we? And when we do that what do we continue to attract to ourselves? We attract “Poor me” realities.

What is stopping you? What belief is holding you back? Are they your own limiting thoughts or are they limiting thoughts of others that you have acquired?

Limiting beliefs don't necessarily come from us do they? Sometimes they come from other people in our lives don't they? And some of them have been with us for a very long time. They may even seem comfortable, normal, or acceptable.

Here's one that usually comes from someone else. "Life isn't fair". Has anyone ever heard that one? I started hearing that one when I was about five I think. It's ingrained in there so deeply I sometimes need a light saber to get it out of there. Life isn't fair. Is that true? NO. The Universe is always fair. It can be no other way. It is designed in perfect balance. We reap what we SOW! And we experience what we believe!

God did not give us life so that we could be poor, unsuccessful or miserable. We were given life so that we "might have it abundantly".

In the book of Matthew, Jesus tells us, "*Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?* (Matthew 6:26)"

God created a world in perfect balance – not a world of inequity.

How many efforts, how many ideas may have gotten stuck, failed to manifest because you believed life wasn't fair and you didn't for some reason deserve to succeed?

Limitations only exist in the manifest world. As spiritual beings we are capable of doing or manifesting whatever we desire.

Once we have determined what outer circumstance, what limiting thought is controlling our outcome we must secede as our forefathers chose to secede from Great Britain. – We must cut all ties with the limiting beliefs. Let them go and replace them with faith, with confidence with complete and utter awareness of our power as spiritual beings.

We must FILL our minds with positive thoughts and affirmations so that there is no room left for negative, limiting thoughts to get in.

Fourth, we must refine the Vision. Once the US won their independence, they didn't stop with just that declaration of independence. They went on to create the bill of rights and the constitution to clarify what they meant and how they planned to achieve it.

Take another step toward manifesting your vision by refining it. Make it as clear as possible so the universe knows what it is that you truly want. What will satisfy you? Imagine what it would look like. What would it feel like to be the powerful, successful, joyful and prosperous person you are designed to be? What does it look like? What are you in that moment? What are you doing, wearing, saying,

feeling. The clearer our vision, the more accurately the universe provides it for us.

And finally, it is not enough to simply hear the inner voice. It is not enough to set the intention, vision or goal. It is not enough to let go of the old beliefs and limiting thoughts.

And while it is imperative to fill your mind with positive, clear and affirmative thoughts it is just as imperative to take action. The book of James tells us "*faith without works is dead (James 2:26)*", and so we must take action and live the truth we know.

You must LIVE the vision. You must take action and make it happen. Write it down. Speak your truth out loud. BE authentic, BE independent, BE the truth of you, the person you know you are here to be.

When our forefathers found themselves fed up with high taxes and no representation they had to give up the safety of their homes, the comforts of being with family and fight a war for their freedom.

What safety net do you need to leave behind? What limiting thoughts will you secede from? What positive thought will you hold in its place? And how will you begin to walk the talk? How will you begin to BE your vision, to BE your truth, to BE your true and independent, authentic spiritual self?