

A Few Words About Your Longings...

(adapted from the introduction to a yet-to-be released book by Suzanne Eder)

“Longing itself is its own fulfillment.”

This was where it all began for me.

I was in my junior year at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing (BBSH), and the teachers were leading us through a guided exercise to help us connect with the longings of our souls. We were giving voice to them, but not in words. Instead, we were expressing our longings through pure sound. As our unique tones blended and harmonized with each other, a fully formed thought appeared in my otherwise quiet and blissed-out mind. It was completely unexpected - and as clear and perfect as a flawless diamond.

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I suddenly knew this profound truth in every cell of my being, and surrendered more completely to the moment. I felt I had been given something incredibly sacred, a precious gift of ancient wisdom brought forward to me in the exact moment I was open to receive it. And so I did receive it, gratefully. In that moment it made perfect sense.

And then there were other moments. Moments in which it made no sense at all, and so I dismissed it. But it didn't go away, and I remembered how profoundly special the experience of receiving it had been, so I decided to take it seriously. I've meditated on it and contemplated it and journaled about it and even told a few people about my experience of awakening to it. I've actively and consciously sought to live from it as a core truth. I decided to dedicate my life to understanding it, and I can see that it will indeed take a lifetime to do so. Or more. Which I suspect is exactly as it is meant to be.

I believe the notion that *longing itself is its own fulfillment* reflects meaning on multiple levels, many of which I have yet to grasp. But I've made progress, and now I feel a readiness to share what I've learned after years of personal exploration and working with clients to support them in honoring and empowering their souls' true longings. I've come to respect my longings and wish to give them their due.

And that's what brings me here, because the longing that most wants to be honored right now is my heartfelt desire to teach and share through my writing.

Actually, this whole process started years ago, long before my junior year at BBSH (and long before I'd even heard of the school). The first longing I felt *as* a longing was a deep desire to be Shakti Gawain. Not just to meet her, but to *be* her. (For those of you who may not know of Shakti Gawain, she is the best-selling author of several books, including *Creative Visualization* and *Living in the Light*, and was an early leader in the Human Potential movement.)

There she stood on the stage as the keynote speaker at an expo I attended in the early 1990s, fully present in a loving and luminous way that I had never before witnessed. Was it really possible to be that peaceful and calm and deeply happy? And was it really possible to make a living teaching others how to experience fulfilling lives, writing books and speaking and mentoring? I had never really considered such a possibility before, and suddenly there it was – not just as a possibility, but fully realized as a living, breathing human being who happened to be standing a mere 20 feet from me.

And in that moment I birthed my first longing, pure and clear and radiating with joy.



Shortly thereafter I buried it. Or rather, I tried to. I buried it under years and layers of plans and expectations, of urgent needs to “make good money” and do the work I was trained to do. I dismissed that pure moment of crystal-clear recognition – the recognition of something deep and true within me – as mere wishful thinking. And then I got back to “reality.” I wasn’t remotely happy or fulfilled, but what did being fulfilled have to do with anything?

Everything, as it turns out. Which is something I learned because, thankfully, my longing refused to be ignored. She kept pestering me and nudging me to take odd and unexplainable steps, such as using all of my desperately-needed vacation time from my demanding corporate job to participate in BBSH’s intense, four-year program in the study of energy and consciousness. She prodded me to convert a room in my home to one I could use for meeting clients. She ultimately pushed me – in the most loving way – to leave the corporate world.

And here I am, making a living teaching others how to experience fulfilling lives, writing books and speaking and mentoring. All because I dared to slow down and actually listen to my longings. To celebrate them. To follow them. And to share what I’ve learned.

Finding and living your calling is all *about* longings. About the sacred and joyful process of recognizing them, honoring them and empowering them. Your longings are not silly or impractical, and following them is not selfish. Following your longings is, in a very real way, the reason you are here.

Our genuine longings, large and small, are not abstract ideas about things we might want. They are neither random nor meaningless. In a fundamental way they define who we are and what we're here to give the world. They have an energetic reality, existing as a dimension of our experience whose purpose is to guide us toward evolution and fulfillment.

It's a beautifully designed system: what we most long to give, create, share and experience is what the world most needs from us. In fact, our longings are individual expressions of the evolutionary impulse of our species. As we realize them, we participate in the evolving consciousness of humanity which moves us toward ever-higher levels of beauty, harmony and goodness. Our longings are at once both personal and universal. They call us to grow into our ever-growing potential, and to *create* as an expression of our innate joy and divinity.

I realize that may sound a bit abstract or perhaps grandiose. It may sound woo-woo and unrealistic. But that's why I'm here, writing about longings. Because I've found that when we take the time and care to attend to our true longings, we discover a depth and richness that is far from abstract or woo-woo. We discover talent and energy and generosity we didn't know we had. We discover who we are meant to be.



This has been brought home to me time and again as I work with clients to help them recognize, honor and empower their longings. When we set aside the usual cultural dictates to want what everybody else wants, and look instead for the soft yet persistent longings that are waiting patiently for us to pay attention, we find treasure. Real treasure. One of my clients has longed to parent from a place of peace and, as a coach, to support others in doing the same. Another client has longed to clean up our planet's waterways and educate both governments and corporations in the wise and effective use and handling of this precious resource. Yet another is committed to being a spokesperson for world peace. And another has longed to bring harmony and creativity to an embattled government agency that provides essential support to an underserved segment of our population.

These are not selfish wants. They are impulses that arise from the very depth of being, heartfelt desires that urge us out of our comfort zone into aliveness and growth and evolution. They open us to creativity and possibility, and they insist that we develop our innate talents and strengths. (Including ones we don't know yet that we have.) These longings want to be realized!

Perhaps you believe you don't have such powerful urges or a huge, world-changing vision. Do not be tempted to judge yourself or to dismiss the whole notion as irrelevant or absurd. *Know that our longings exist on all levels, from the seemingly simple and small to the complex and full-scale. And all of them matter. All of them serve us and, in some way, serve the whole. Our longings are meant to guide us, to lead us step by step into fulfillment. That is their purpose.*

Whether it is a simple longing to rest, a tingle to learn how to cook healthy meals for our family or a long-held dream to learn to play the piano, *honoring each longing honors who we are. It brings us to a state of internal integrity, and from there we become more peaceful, more effective and more generous. As we learn to recognize and follow our longings, our lives take on a greater sense of purpose and fluidity.* New longings emerge, leading us to new possibilities and continued growth. (And maybe even a world-changing vision.)

It is almost tragically common for people to dismiss their longings as impractical (as I did), arising as they often do from our creative impulses for greater beauty and harmony in a world that demands predictability and relentless productivity. Many of us long to write, to paint, to open a serene retreat center, to make jewelry. We judge those things as unrealistic since we can't see a way for them to generate immediate cash. And so we turn away from our longings, the very impulse that guides us to an awake and inspired life. Or we label them a hobby, putting them into a neat cubby-hole and not allowing them to interfere with "reality."

We don't fully grasp that our longings are leading to our highest and best reality, if we would just pay attention. And listen. And follow.

I know I'm not the first person to tell you that following your dreams leads to fulfillment, and I certainly won't be the last. But through my work I hope to add a new voice to the chorus, giving our song greater nuance and depth and harmony. I want to share with you a way of moving through life - with your longings in the lead - that might open for you the insight, understanding or inspiration to commit more fully to your own fulfilled life.



Following our longings is a journey of enlightenment, of waking up to our true magnificence. It is a journey of growth and evolution. In order to grow, we are called again and again to shed our old identities and step into bigger ones, ones that can boldly and lovingly embody our inner brilliance. We are asked to literally transform ourselves into the people our dreams call us to be. This is a path of great heart, courage and grace. (Humor is immensely helpful, too). And so I offer this guide as a companion on the journey, and I hope you will continue to find fresh ways to stay inspired and supported.

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