

Welcoming Change

Hello again, all. How's it going?

I said I'd be back, and though not *quite* as quickly as I hoped, I'm swinging by today with a friendly little public service announcement. It may seem a bit basic, but I feel it's big-time important. Here it is:

Remember, people of earth, that it's okay to change. It's okay to change your beliefs, your tastes, your situation...it's okay to change anything about yourself or your lifestyle. It's more than okay!

It's also healthy and wise to develop a strong set of convictions in life. There wouldn't be a shred of integrity in the world if that weren't the case. It's how we learn who we are and what resonates for us.

Yet, who we are is not narrow or finite, we are source energy, one with all creation seen and unseen. There's a lot of flavors to try out there. And it *is* a learning process that can require some lifelong experimentation.

And like all creation, we sure do have our phases. Think of the moon, the four seasons, caterpillars dissolving into goo and emerging as dainty butterflies..

Who or what passes your personal vibe check these days may not always vibe so hard, and you may feel inclined to vibe out totally differently in the future. And would you really want it any other way?

There's loads of grace and power in allowing ourselves to change, shift, flux, and *grow*.

Growth happens when we can stretch our perceptions. And though stretching and growing can sometimes feel like going backwards, I believe we chose to come here to grow. I believe we are meant to be mutable beings, that our souls flourish through shedding stale aspects of self, and attaining new heights of consciousness.

But, whoah, it can be scary to let go of what we already know. The identities we form and latch onto while in physical form get tied up in what we know, or at least what we think we know.

Our attitudes and points of view align us with other people, and with our sense of self. They influence pretty much all of our choices, from the daily and mundane to the life-altering ones.

Whether stemming from our early conditioning or picked up later on, these ideas we form have sway over what kind of person we believe it's right, best, or most impressive to be. So, I

think it is worth considering whoever we could possibly become by allowing ourselves to expand beyond our preconceptions.

I speak from experience. I was once, what I would call in my more dualistic days, something of a philistine. A haughty philistine at that, who ironically thought herself pretty cultured.

When I first took art history classes in college, I got super into it super quickly. I was simply fascinated and found it easy to memorize dates, details, characteristics, and vocabulary concerning specific artists, artworks, and art movements.

I learned that visual analysis was a strong suit of mine. And I wasn't even bothered by the long written exams asking us to compare and contrast images, effectively teaching us to trace developments within and between genres.

I wasn't all that clever though. More like small-minded, as I was also *so proud* to boast how I *hated* contemporary art.

I chose to only be exposed to the old stuff. Through obligatory survey classes covering prehistory to the Renaissance, and the Baroque to the modern period. And through electives like Greek Art and Architecture. Roman Art and Architecture. Italian Art of the Quattrocento. European Painting of the Nineteenth Century...

Old art was good art to me. Nobler, much worthier art than anything to come out of more recent decades. I was so impressed with the ability of the old masters to portray things so perfectly in times so much less technologically advanced than our own. Plazas in perfect linear perspective, faces in portraits, flowers, the shining textures of precious metal objects and plush fabrics made possible by rich tempera and oil-based pigments.

For example, the crazy precision with which the Spanish Baroque painter Diego Velázquez rendered the translucence of a fluted glass and stray water rivulets dribbling down the side of a large earthenware jar in his famous work *The Waterseller of Seville* will forever blow my mind. It's the kind of brushwork that puts me in awe to think a human hand could be behind it.

Looking back, I know why I was arrogantly convinced of the superiority of the illusionistic art that dominated the past; art attempting to depict things as they are, attempting to depict "real" things. It's because it was depicting things I already understood.

Indeed, I knew what faces, flowers, silk gowns, and little spaniel dogs are supposed to look like. But I had no real exposure to contemporary art.

Modern art, yes. I thoroughly enjoyed my Cubism and Its Inheritance course in school. And, you'll see how this is *especially* ironic, I probably thought I was cool for being taught the

secrets of Cézanne's reality-blending *passage* technique, of the dirty jokes hidden in Picasso and Braque's early collages, wartime's effects on the dark humor of Dada, and the very psychological nature of Surrealism. All that was still real art to me.

I mean I had no meaningful exposure to purely abstract or conceptual contemporary art, the kind that can feel absolutely absurd without any context provided or provoke "my dog could have made that" type comments.

As a kid, I visited art and natural history museums with more traditional permanent collections and temporary exhibitions, not experimental white cube galleries. I was mostly exposed to what some might call vanilla or mainstream art, the Van Goghs and Monets that get printed on everything from postcards to tube socks.

Bless my high school art teacher though, for once taking a few of us on a foray into an Andy Warhol exhibition at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. They had his car crash lithographs on display. Safe to say, I did *not* get it, and got pretty wiggled out instead. But for real, shout out for trying, Ms. Borchert.

It wasn't until grad school in London that my narrow little perspective got cracked open, when my classmates and I learned the origin story of Abstract Expressionism.

Spoiler alert: World War II sent a wave of European artists to New York City, where abstraction went viral through a fixation on flatness and the medium of an artwork itself, disregarding the age-old importance put upon *what* was being portrayed. Obvious brushstrokes and raw canvas became acceptable. It was the pictureness of pictures that mattered.

Abstraction, for me, was no longer pointless forms and fields of colors mashed together with little skill. It always had meaning and made sense, I was just seeing it for the first time.

And then we were taught how it evolved into subsequent movements, like Op Art, Pop Art, Arte Povera, Minimalism, Land Art, Conceptual Art...eventually Shock Art and so very much more.

I finally *got it*. A whole new continuation of art history had developed, one hundred percent worthy of critical consideration and public appreciation.

My understanding benefited more from viewing contemporary art in situ with stellar professors who trekked all over with us; from glossy galleries in Piccadilly and Mayfair, corporate art installations, Frieze art fair, and evening auctions at Sotheby's to grungy city tunnels lined with street art and a rather avant-garde little space half-hidden above a pub.

Then we took trips to the Venice Biennale and Istanbul. There was something about seeing cutting-edge art, sometimes quite challenging art, hanging in cities where the weight of the past also hangs so heavily. It became clearer than ever to me that the hot, new, and

experimental can be totally on par with, and of equal interest as, the traditional, canonical, and academic.

Believe me, I am ever grateful for having what I acknowledge to be some extraordinary cultural experiences. But what really changed my life was just actually being willing to learn more and allowing my outlook to shift.

Looking back, I realize I could have stayed blasé and unimpressed despite the incredible things I was seeing. I've been known to have a stubborn streak. Instead, somehow, thankfully, I allowed myself to let go of the snobbiness that made me feel so smart and to embrace the simple act of trying to understand.

And what richness it has brought to my life. I'm just as intrigued and amused going to classical-leaning or contemporary museums and exhibitions now. Vastly multiplying my opportunities to be inspired, see through other's viewpoints, be asked questions, find inner answers, relish beauty, discover cool aesthetics, visit gift shops (lol), and just simply enjoy myself.

Then, it happened again!

When I began going through what I'd call my spiritual awakening.

I was always somewhat open to our energetic beingness and the idea of subtler realms of existence. I took a yoga class and remember tentatively testing out whether or not I could identify what a "chakra" felt like while meditating in my bedroom around age seventeen.

A bit later, the basics of manifestation and the law of attraction started to make pretty good sense to me. I felt more aligned with that than the spirituality and church history served up to me at Catholic school.

But I was still very much bogged down in existential conundrums and presumptions. Wondering what was right or wrong to believe; warily pondering an external God doling out eternal damnation, purgatory, or bliss; getting angry at the nonsensicalness of it all; occasionally numbing out with fear of becoming nothingness forever.

In the autumn of 2018, I started to encounter, or just remember, other aspects of spirituality that I found resonant and enlivening like never before.

It certainly involved accepting and integrating loads of new information. There were many topics I'd heard or seen mentioned before but wasn't in a place to take seriously or feel comfortable with.

Later on, I'd encounter these same topics again from a new point of consciousness. I'd be more open, freed up, ready to read and Google more, having let go in the meantime of some restricting belief or another that I had placed on my own reality.

Somehow, it felt like the universe was always preparing me to adopt new beliefs. Showing me a concept before it could take root in me, knowing I'd recognize and reconsider it when the time was right, and allowing me to ripen at my own pace.

If it wasn't for all that growth – through mind changing, belief swapping, and shedding shallower identities, I wouldn't be speaking to you now. No degrees or educational trips abroad are required, just enough receptivity to not shut down forever in the face of new information.

I've learned it's not only safe, but rather satisfactory, to adjust one's mindset and rattle the walls of one's conditioning. It's safe to flow, be flexible, even to feel ignorant. It's safe to be unsure of one's feelings, to be open to sorting things out along the way, learning more later, maybe never having all the exact answers, and finding new meaning.

It's safe to explore and take on new forms, to take up more space, to add more aspects to our personalities or scratch out inauthentic ones.

As I publish this, I've been going through one of the biggest transformations in my spiritual and personal life thus far. It's why it's taken me a while. But once again, the inner and outer change is proving necessary and worth it.

So I'd like to end by imparting some extra wisdom I've gleaned over recent months from a banger of a book titled *The Freedom Transmissions*. It's essentially teachings from Yeshua, channeled during various sessions by a woman named Carissa Schumacher, and transcribed.

Yeshua, often known as Jesus, is, most appropriately, a figure with whom my relationship has changed a lot. I never could totally comfortably buy into the half n' half man-god dying for everyone's sins thing in my Catholic school days. I sort of scoffed at those who put much stock in him.

More recently, and very much through that serendipitous process I described of spiritual awakening and *re-exposure* to ideas at the appropriate time, I've gotten acquainted and much friendlier with different facets of Yeshua.

Yeshua as an ascended master, non-denominational, available to all. Yeshua as God, indeed, as all is indeed God. Yeshua as both masculine and feminine creator energy in balance. Yeshua, a logos of Christ consciousness demonstrating our own Christhood. That's a big overhaul for me.

In a passage of *The Freedom Transmissions*, Yeshua talks of the Veil of Complacency as an illusion that can warp our existence on this earthly plane.

This veil is described as a resistance to change which causes pain, as change is central to creation and manifestation, and we're meant to evolve with consciousness itself like the Tree of Life, just as prone to withering up and getting crabby when our roots get stunted.

Yeshua describes the usual fears that keep us stuck in place; fear of loss, lack, rejection, inadequacy. Instead of facing them, we fall into victimhood or cultivate a false sense of security with self-righteousness. To quote, "'Well, I know better' is a wonderful way to stifle the totality of your experience as the Divine in form. The Divine is the All. So, when you are arrogant and elitist, you are caged in the prison of your own beliefs."

Resonating with everything isn't necessary, but openness and exploration can enrich us in untold ways and bring us back to our true selves and wholeness within.

What *is* necessary to shake complacency, according to Yeshua, is humility, kindness, to release judgements toward any form source energy takes, to take responsibility for realigning with the divine, and accept that not only will change occur, we need it to occur.

We don't need to flip a huge switch all at once in our lives, either, that's made clear. Just to bring awareness to ways we're stuck, pretentious, or weighed down, and ask for help shifting them from our spiritual teams of light.

I know what it's like to believe there's no reason to change, I know what it's like to resist change, I know what it's like to crave change. Even when I'd rather gnash my teeth, I'm learning to accept that change is ever on-going and totally necessary; something made easier remembering I'm never going through it totally alone.

Dealing with, surrendering to, and inviting in transformation just might be an art form itself. Navigating it can often feel quite abstract. Luckily, we're all given a natural knack for it.

And if something I've said plucked a resonant cord within, I'd be willing to bet you'd also be reassured and pleasantly surprised to find out who you really are on the other side of welcoming change from time to time.

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Bibliography

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