



Signpost Three

My thoughts create my reality. What I focus on expands.

Before I begin sharing how I practice Signpost Three in my daily life, I would like to start by saying this: I have no idea where my will ends and God's begins. That has never been interesting to me. My problem was not that I didn't understand the ultimate power of God. My problem was that I did not understand the unlimited creative power I had within me.

I have always understood that God is "above all, and through all, and in all things." I just didn't realize that "all" included me.

I thought I was a victim of whatever life handed me and that I was powerless.

I continue to wake up to the creative pulls of my heart and remember that I am a co-creator with God.

AND ...

At the same time, God's ways are not my ways. No matter how hard I pray, sometimes (most of the time) things are not going to turn out how I want them to. (Which turns out to be the right thing.) Yet that cannot be a reason for not owning my creative power.

Each of us is created in the image of our Creator, who is constantly creating, all of the time. All of us are given the gift of life. We are given the ability to create with our life, in whatever way we choose. It is a powerful thing to understand and own our creating abilities. They came from and are connected to the ultimate Creator of Everything. I continue to learn the limitless power that is within me, and I get to choose what flows out of me through my beliefs, thoughts, feelings and emotions.

I choose to live from the humble hugeness of this truth. I am a piece of God, always connected and never separated. God is the ocean, and I am a wave; God is the sun, and I am a sunbeam. So simple, and yet when we choose to live from this connection, it has the power to change our life.

If we think we need something outside of ourselves, then we will always be on the hunt for more. We'll never know the feeling of enough. The truth is that everything I need is in this moment. If we are not aware of this, we will look through the lens of "not enough," and this becomes our focus. And what we focus on expands. Not enough time, energy, money, love and peace can unknowingly become our mantra, which can become our life.

"A blessed life is the sure result of right thought. By blessed, I don't mean merely wealthy – a person can be rich and miserable. Blessedness is a state of harmony and happiness. This is the measure of a good life. You cannot directly choose your circumstances; but by changing your thoughts, you can indirectly reshape your circumstances. As you change your attitude towards things and people, they will change towards you. Gates that were previously locked will open; people will be eager to help you. New opportunities will spring up at every turn."

~James Allen

There was still much addiction, abuse and heartache to be lived out. However, I started learning and understanding the power of my thoughts and deep-held beliefs. I learned that I was choosing this way of life and could no longer blame my suffering on God and others. I had to completely take responsibility for my choices, my beliefs and my thoughts. I was responsible for what I was putting out into the world, which in direct proportion influenced what I was getting back. I couldn't necessarily change what was happening to me, but I absolutely could change how I responded. And that was the beginning of the ongoing shift from pain, suffering and lack to waking up to a life of peace, joy, meaning, purpose and abundance.

Science backs this spiritual principle, yet I never needed that confirmation. The unfolding of my life continues to be proof and a constant reminder of the power of practicing this spiritual truth.

As I have grown, “my thoughts create my reality” and “what I focus on expands” have evolved and grown with me, as any spiritual truth does. My hope is that you can see how I have given myself the permission and freedom to keep growing and evolving, and I encourage you to do the same.

When and Then

I began with wanting to get sober, married and financial abundance. Growing up in rural South Georgia and raised by a single mother, there was a lot of love, but not a lot of things. So, in the beginning, I wanted things. Lots of things. I thought money, things and a husband would fill the longings.

I had a long journey ahead of unlearning some beliefs and doing the necessary work to heal those parts in me that believed **when** I got those things, **then** I would be happy.

I am always grateful for my sobriety, my husband and my life. As Elisabeth Kubler Ross says, “There is a difference between desiring a loving, joyful relationship, and *needing* someone to complete yourself. You were meant to find great joy and happiness with others. You were also meant to find a sense of wholeness and completion on your own. The wholeness and completeness you seek must first come from within you.”

I had to learn to see all that was good and beautiful in my life in the present moment. I had to practice seeing with new eyes and be willing to change my beliefs. I could no longer buy into the lie that culture sells us that if I got something externally, then I would be happy. Yes, the ability to pay bills and have a healthy relationship makes life more enjoyable, but I could not keep pretending that when some future moment or thing got here, then I would be grateful and fulfilled. A new way of being emerged; those things would not come to me (or I couldn't see those things coming to me) until I chose to start living and being grateful for my life.

It is always an inside job.

CBT and Therapy

One of the many ways I started understanding and integrating this spiritual principle was in therapy with Pat and our work together in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. CBT is a process that consists of thoughts, feelings and actions. A thought determines how we feel. A feeling determines what action we take -- everything starts with a thought. CBT is a tool that can help interrupt ingrained destructive thought patterns and, with practice, shift our thoughts. My work with Pat in therapy and CBT continues to have a profound effect on my life.

CBT is largely based on the idea that your thoughts, emotions and actions are connected. In other words, the way you think and feel about something can affect what you do. If you're under a lot of stress at work, for example, you might see situations differently and make choices you wouldn't ordinarily make. But another key concept of CBT is that these thought and behavior patterns can be changed.

Research shows we have approximately 60,000 thoughts a day. We decide 60,000 times a day what we will think. Research also states that the same 60,000 thoughts we have today, we will most likely have tomorrow.

Author Ben Hardy wrote in *Medium*, "In 2005, the National Science Foundation published an article showing that the average person has between 12,000 and 60,000 thoughts per day. Of those, 80% are negative and 95% are exactly the same repetitive thoughts as the day before."

No wonder we keep repeating what we really don't even want in our life.

"As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep, physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives."

~ Henry David Thoreau

The Law of Attraction

“Simply put, the Law of Attraction is the ability to attract into our lives whatever we are focusing on. It is the Law of Attraction which uses the power of the mind to translate whatever is in our thoughts and materialize them into reality.” (From thelawofattraction.com.)

The Law of Attraction is based on science. Everything is made up of energy. Everything carries a vibration. The intensity of the vibration carries a frequency. The more focused the thoughts and intense the feelings, the higher the vibration and the frequency. We don't attract what we casually say or a fleeting thought, we attract what we are. We attract what we focus on, what we repeat and what we believe on a deep soul level.

The process was slow for me in the beginning. I had millions of repeated thoughts that told me I was unworthy, a “sinner,” and deserved a life of pain and struggle. I really believed I was defective in every way. I started reading everything I could get my hands on that told me the opposite of this long-held belief. I wanted to believe I was Love and Good and Whole, a piece of God. I had such deep ingrained beliefs and it felt like trying to turn the Titanic around.

“My contentment lies in remembering my divine identity and the love and peace I feel when I commune with God. All I could ever need is in divine mind. I realize that nothing is impossible with God. The things of the world will come and go. The Christ within me is my ever-replenishing source of contentment today and always.”

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I studied and listened to cassette tapes of Esther and Jerry Hicks and “Abraham.”

They wrote a book, "Ask and It is Given." It was a completely new and different way to look at this verse from the Bible, "Ask and it is given, knock and the door is opened, seek and you will find." Matthew 7:7-8 NIV

I started practicing Abraham's offering:

Ask.

Get excited about how it is all going to unfold.

Come back to where you are currently (without the thing) and look for everything that you can be grateful for in your current situation.

Connect with the feelings (vibration) of what it will be like when the "Ask" is "Given," **AND** most importantly for me, the power lies in giving genuine, endless gratitude where I am presently (without the thing) because it has created a longing in my heart of a new experience.

This has been the awakening part for me. When thoughts come to me about wanting something, I don't look around and focus on why it isn't here, why it can't happen, why I don't ever get what I want. I don't try to control how this could possibly ever happen. Focusing on *wanting the thing* brings *more wanting*. Focusing on lack, scarcity, what I'm missing, what isn't here and manipulation of how I'm going to get it, attracts more lack, scarcity and control, because what I focus on expands.

I have to be mindful not to give the future outcome more importance than being grateful for all that is currently good in the present moment. Like I shared in the beginning of this chapter, we have to be careful of believing that **When** something happens, **Then** we can feel a certain way. Yes we need to dream, set goals and believe that wonderful things are to come, but I keep learning that the most important piece of this is to come back to the present moment.

The present moment is where life unfolds. It is where God is, and I have to remember that no future moment or thing can give me more than this moment can. What I focus on expands, but what is most important is where I am currently as I am expanding.

It is all a dance, each of us are so different ... how you connect with this Signpost is supposed to be different from me. Keep coming back to your heart of what it means to you. My thoughts create my reality. What I focus on expands.

The Art of Allowing

The Art of Allowing is another powerful tool I learned from Esther Hicks and Abraham. It is the conscious, gentle guiding of your thoughts in the general direction of the things you desire.

This helped me remember to ask and then connect with the feeling, but by far the most important part of all of this for me is learning to trust God in the process. The allowing. I sometimes forget about the allowing.

I let go of the need to know how God is going to work out the details, detaching from the outcome. Trusting God: this is the center that I have to keep coming back to.

Trusting God in every step of the process, my part is to remember to create space and room so that I can witness (and again TRUST) that God is orchestrating it all. And believe and live from the truth that I have a part in this creation process.

Waiting and Trusting have changed everything for me.

I have learned that *how I wait* changes what *comes to me*.

Most of life is spent waiting. So, can I apply “My thoughts create my reality and what I focus on expands” in the space of waiting?

In my waiting, can I look around and be grateful and focus on all the good that is currently in my life? And believe that the desires of my heart are on the way?

In the waiting, can I allow and trust that God is doing something, maybe moving something, changing and shifting something ... possibly even me?

“As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.” Proverbs 23:7

Michael Beckwith is another person who has influenced my understanding of practicing this principle. He calls it, "The Let Go." Michael shares that stating intentions is important, but more importantly is what he calls the "let go."

"You have to learn to set clear intentions and then to release your grasp, release the resistance, and to completely let it go, and that which is for you, will come to you, and it will be given to you by God," says Beckwith.

Adikara is a Sanskrit word meaning "the right to know or the right to have." I learned about adikara from Deborah Adel's book, *The Yamas & Niyamas*, which is a foundational tool at the farm. Deborah says, "This word challenges us to the reality that if we want something, then we better grow the competency required to have it. We can dream and wish all we want, but we only get what we have the competency to have and keep."

What are you preparing to have and keep?

Pay attention to your thoughts, and create space and awareness just to notice, without judgment. What are your thoughts throughout your day? Are you willing to reach for some new thoughts? Awareness and non-judgment can turn thoughts around quickly. I continue to experience this in my life. "A repeated thought becomes a belief." This has been said in many ancient traditions.

"As you think, so you are.

As you are, so you act.

As you act, so you attract."

~ James Allen

**"Whatever we send out in thought, word or deed,
returns to us; what we give, we will receive."**

This has been said in thousands of ways by thousands of people and is the foundation of most major spiritual teachings.

What are you sending out? What are you giving: to God, yourself and others?

Animals

Especially Horses

One of the things I am most grateful for is living out in the country and having the privilege of taking care of our farm, especially our animals. This way of life constantly reminds me of all the ways I get to practice this spiritual principle.

Animals don't understand what you say, they feel what is underneath what you are saying, the energy you are bringing. They mirror back to you what you are feeling in the moment. They are constantly reflecting the truth of what is going on deep down inside. They aren't interested in the words I speak but in the presence I bring.

Being around horses ... well ... this becomes another level of practice.

Horses have a completely different way of being. They are so connected to the smallest bits of energy and emotions and pick that up from you way across the pasture. Even when I don't know, they know what is going on inside of me.

Like children, animals need food and water several times a day. My farm life helps me integrate this principle day in and day out, several times a day. Lots and lots of practice.

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give, will be the measure you get back." ~ Luke 6:38

It's so simple. What I give is what comes back to me.

The Giver and The Gift

I believe God, The Source, The Creator (whatever word you are most comfortable with) is calling me to connect by putting a desire in my heart. This entire Signpost

is about the connection between God and me. It isn't so much about what I am asking for, it becomes about an exchange between God and me.

It feels like a dance with a partner, a spiritual guide that can lead the dance that is chosen just for me. I have the power to choose what dance feels right to me. The music playing will be the one-of-a-kind music that was placed in my heart long before I was born. Will I stand in the corner while the rest of life is dancing? Will I sit in a chair watching, because I believe no one has asked me to dance? Will I believe the lie that I don't know how to dance, or I am not good at dancing?

Or will I bravely walk out in the middle of the dance floor, breathe deeply, and listen carefully to the soft music that is playing in my heart? And when I am ready, I start moving my feet, open my eyes, and see clearly that my dance partner has been with me the entire time.

I have come to understand that the desire in my heart is an opportunity to trust and focus on The Creator at a deeper level. The desire in my heart is secondary, and staying connected to God is primary.

I believe that we were all created for this process.

This is just my path of understanding this spiritual principle. As always, I share my path, not so you will follow me, but hopefully so you will get curious and follow your heart which is your own path.

The last line of a poem by Mother Teresa brings it full circle: **"In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway."**

People are unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.

Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Be good anyway.

Honesty and frankness will make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People need help, but may attack you if you try to help them.

Help them anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

The Practice: Sewing It to Your Heart

Do you believe you have the power to create with your life?

How does your life reflect or not reflect this statement? I get to choose what flows out of me through my beliefs, thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Do you believe that a future moment has more to offer than this moment? If so, can you see how this could wish your life away? Looking for the future and missing today?

Take a compassionate inventory of your recent days. How much time, energy and moments are spent being present and grateful for each moment?

It can feel like opposing things to set an intention and then let go, or to build the competency of the right to have and to let go. Can you connect with how this isn't an either/or but an and/both? How can you hold both of these desires?

Spend some time breathing in and contemplating this quote below and journal about what your heart revealed to you.

“As you think, so you are.
As you are, so you act.
As you act, so you attract.”
~ James Allen

Compassionately and gently look at what you have a pattern and practice of sending out. Can you see that what you send out does appear to return?