



UNIQUE SELF EMERGENCE

UNIQUE SELF LENTEN JOURNAL PROCESS

Dear RPF Friends,

God seeks only the very best for you. God does not seek to destroy you. God loves you and that love calls each of us to become everything God created us to be. Christian faith calls us to grow and develop so that we can express the love of God into the world. Lent has always been a time for Christians to focus on growth and development. With that in mind, I'd like to offer you the opportunity to take a good hard look at your life with an eye towards becoming who you really are: an expression of the creative love of God. I'll do that by sending out a set of journaling exercises — one each Wednesday — over the course of Lent. The exercises were put together by my wife, Barbara, and her partner, Claire Molinard as part of a psycho-spiritual¹ development process they created several years ago.

The Prologue to the Gospel of John makes it clear that each one of us is a child of God; each one of us has been given power to express that reality every day. The Gospel was written to lead us in, what John calls, "the way" — the way to become who we really are — children of God. Becoming who we really are – children of God who are capable if expressing God's creative love in the world, learning to follow "the way" — is of course, a life-long project. This set of Lenten Journaling exercises intends to help you move further along that way. There is nothing magic about them. There are ways to grow and develop; but I have found these profoundly useful.

¹ Many believe that psychological development and spiritual development are two distinct projects. We do not. We believe that our psychology and our spirituality grow hand in hand.

The journaling exercises, as well as the process Barbara and Claire developed, are based on “Unique Self Theory” as described by Marc Gafni. On the last page of this introduction to the process, you will find a graphic poster that I produced to outline the Unique Self Emergence Process. It lays out the basic movement from what we have called the False Self, to the True Self, to the Unique Self. It finally leads you to explore what it means to answer the call — or even step up to you’re the obligation — of your Unique Self.

This process does not purport to be the only method to grow and develop. The nomenclature is relatively unimportant; various religious traditions use different terms to describe what we call the “False Self,” the “True Self,” or the “Unique Self.” That said, the process does provide a sound method, drawn from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, as well as a number of other religious traditions, that enables us to grow and express the creative power of God more clearly in a world that desperately needs people seeking to live out their own “unique obligation.” Perhaps some of you will choose to engage in the process during Lent.

Each week during Lent I will send out a journaling exercise through the Weekly Wire. ***To be clear: not everyone is ready for a time of significant development at the same time.*** This may not be your time and that’s OK. If that’s the case, and yet you would still like to explore the process just a little, you can do these journaling practices in a cursory fashion. If you do that, you’ll still learn something about yourself. You’ll also develop a sense of what the process might offer you at a time when you’re more ready to take a significant step forward in life.

If this is a moment for you to dive into a spiritual growth process, then you’ll want to do a more thorough job on the exercises and practices. It’s possible that in doing so you may run into challenging parts of your life, parts that are hard to deal with alone. ***If that happens, please, please, please, get in touch with me to talk about it!!! I’M YOUR PASTOR; that’s what I’m here for. Seriously – I want you to!!*** gracecomesfirst@outlook.com

Let me give you a sense of the assumptions the process relies on and what it intends to do. *They may or may not make sense at the outset . . . this is the sort of thing that makes more sense when we put it into practice.*

ASSUMPTIONS OF THE UNIQUE SELF EMERGENCE PROCESS

Basic Assumptions: you and I are created to be, in fact we are, expressions of the creative love of God. What does that mean? One way to describe “Love,” or what Paul calls “*αγαπη*,” is say it’s the act of “putting value into something.” For instance, I am loving my grandson when I teach him how to read. I’ve added value to his life. In the Bible God’s first creative act of love came when God said, “Let there be light.” From that *metaphorical*

moment, to today — or put another way, “from the big bang to Shakespeare” — God’s love has unfolded the evolutionary story; that includes your part of the story. That’s what I mean when I say, “you are an expression of the love of God.” **God seeks your perfection, not your destruction. That is what I call good news!!** From the first moment of our life we are connected and interpenetrated by God’s creative love.

But as we go through the process of maturing – becoming an independent, separate self – we lose sight of this source of our being; we lose sight of the creative love of God. This process, while necessary if we are to develop into independent human beings, creates a false image within us – a false image of our self. We lose track of who we really are. As I understand it, Paul calls this “false self,” “the flesh.” Once we grow up and develop into an independent human being, God continues to call us, wanting us to draw close again and complete our development by dismantling the false image. For only when our independent, separate self is liberated from our false self image and reintegrated or aware of God’s love, can we become what we are created to be. We call that reintegrated, independent, self our “unique self.” Emerging as a “Unique Self” takes practice! But it’s essential, for each unique self, each expression of God’s love in the world, carries a “unique obligation.” There is something that you are called to do in this world that ONLY you can do, and you can only do it if your unique self emerges.

The Unique Self Process seeks to aid you in the development of your unique self – that independent self unencumbered by your false self image and reintegrated into the life and love of God.

So let’s begin!

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam Alexander". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the text "Grace and peace,".

Pastor Sam

Mistaken, alienated and separate, the False Self drives destructive behavior and keeps us from becoming all we were created to be. The USEP is comprised of a set of practices, the first of which break open the pattern of the False Self and liberate us to develop and grow.

As we break out of our False Self Pattern, we come to know that we are not separate at all. We are One, one True Self. This insight lies at the heart of "Eastern" enlightenment teachings. But who or what is the True Self? It is love itself, but not the emotion we call love. Rather it is the creative power interpenetrating creation; it is the evolutionary impulse reaching towards beauty. The USEP offers practices that enable and deepen our realization of the True Self.



True Self is a foreign concept in strictly "modern" societies in part because "enlightenment" in the West is focused on self-actualization. As Marc Gafni likes to point out, it seems ridiculous that the universe would take 13.82 billion years to make a YOU and then want YOU to be absorbed into the One. Yet it is essential that we live into the reality that we are not separate, we are True Self, we are One, for this is the source of life's creative purpose and power.

True Self is an essential step in our development and growth, but it is not the final step, nor the goal. Once we recognize our fundamental Oneness, it becomes obvious that we are each a unique expression of that True Self, a truly Unique Self. The USEP works to discover the character of Unique Self through the parts of our lives that are lived in shadow, where shame plays a role in how we are formed. It takes great courage, but when we are able to look deeply into this aspect of ourselves, we discover the light of our Unique Self that has been covered in shadow. It also helps us to shine a light on our "greatness" . . . the gifts and talents unique to us that comprise what we have to offer the world.

UNIQUE SELF EMERGENCE PROCESS

developed by Barbara Alexander and Claire Molinard

Founded on the work of Marc Gafni, D.Phil., the Unique Self Emergence Process (USEP) moves us from our mistaken identity in the False Self to our true identity as unique expressions of the love-intelligence that animates creation's evolutionary story.



The USEP is not a one time thing, it is a lifetime of exploration and growth.

Finally we ask the question, "To what end?" Each of us is a unique, irreplaceable expression of the love intelligence that is unfolding creation's evolutionary story. Each of us has an essential role to play. We are called to live out our role in evolution's story. This is what gives our life value, beauty and purpose. You and only you are qualified to live your part in the story. Only you can perform the creative dance of love in your sphere of influence. This is what it means to be an Evolutionary Unique Self, the final phase in our process . . . each person seeking to answer the call, opening to Spirit's next step in our lives.