

Blessing: Six Secrets to Receiving and Being More

by SUSAN SPALDING

As we look at life around us, we notice that some people seem to lead golden lives, rich with blessing, while others struggle and move from one drama and apparent loss to another. Is being in the flow of blessing, and what looks like good luck, merely a random act of chance, or are there immutable laws, attitudes and actions, that we can master that align us with blessing?

The fact that you are reading this article says that you are interested in opening to the best that life has to offer you. In this article we will explore both sides of blessing, receiving and giving, and how both come out of a state of *being* blessing.

We live in a world of “more than enough.” Truly we are surrounded by blessing all of the time, but our perpetual fears, concerns, plans, and worries block recognition.

Some time ago my son was scheduled to have a medical procedure. I was a little apprehensive about the procedure and its outcome. When the morning of the appointment arrived, I silently asked for Spirit’s protection for my son.

After my son had been taken back for the procedure, I closed my eyes to center and calm myself. When I opened my eyes, I noticed a woman had quietly entered the waiting room and sat down across from me. She wore a t-shirt with a print message: “I Am Blessed.” I smiled at this recognition of Spirit’s help and presence, of blessing. I knew in that instant that my son would be fine.

Two incidents happened to me that changed my view of life forever. The first set me on a course of seeking to live life as a blessing, the second taught me to always expect blessing. Both incidents involved an experience with an audible, inner voice, the kind of voice that transforms you, because you intuitively know it as a deep inner call that signals change.

When I was in my twenties, I had this experience with a spiritual voice that came out of a deep level of sincerity on my part. I had always been extremely sensitive to the suffering of others, especially children. Hearing about a severe case of child abuse in the news could leave me feeling depressed and helpless. This overly sensitive nature was an imbalance in my emotions that needed to be healed.

One evening, a terrible case of the death of a young child had been reported in the news. The awful details of the crime seared my consciousness with deep pain and sorrow. I went upstairs and sat on the bed in the dark, and prayed one of the most sincere prayers of my life. “Please, God, what can I do to help?” I felt so helpless to make a difference in life.

I wasn't really expecting an answer, but to my surprise, one came. "Be the best that you can be," a quiet inner voice said. Instantly, the pain and anguish left my heart. My heart leapt with discovery. I had a mission! I could make a difference in life by diligently applying myself to my spiritual unfoldment. I could live my life as a blessing.

The second experience happened several years ago. I was quietly working in my office, when suddenly an inner voice whispered: "The best is yet to come." I told my co-worker what I had heard. "I wonder what is going to happen?" I asked happily. I felt this voice was foretelling the coming of some wonderful future event.

As time went by, life continued to have its ups and downs. "When is this wonderful thing going to happen?" I would ask. Then one day it hit me. I understood the message, the gift, that the voice was giving me. Because of the very nature of Spirit, the best is always yet to come. Life is always unfolding, expanding, increasing, when we learn to align with flow and harmony. The best is always yet to come because of the eternal, expanding nature of consciousness. I was learning to expect blessing, to expect the best, never to settle for "just good enough," for the best is yet to come as long as I do my best, and strive to be my best.

Living my life around these two principles, these two commitments, has taught me a lot. Sometimes I fall short of being the best that I can be, other times I am amazed by miracles, the ease with which they manifest, the sheer joy of living with this kind trust and risk.

I have identified six secrets of receiving and being blessing. These six secrets are easy to understand and simple to apply. So let's begin, and enter the world of blessing, because the best is yet to come!

Secret number one: Appreciation Brings Abundance

The first secret, appreciation, can bring abundance, even in the midst of loss. Understanding and applying the first secret of blessing requires an examination of how we face life and its natural cycles of ups and downs.

Do we live with a sense of entitlement, feeling that our needs should always be met by others? To have an attitude of entitlement, to fail to appreciate the people, experiences, and gifts of life, is the sure way to limit growth and prosperity.

Do we feel dissatisfied and unhappy, and never seem to have quite enough—enough love, enough money, enough happiness, or enough health? Or do we have an easy and natural response of gratitude for every good thing in our lives? Are we also able to know that every apparent reversal contains within it a seed for growth and learning, a hidden blessing?

A great secret of life is that energy follows attention. Whatever we focus on increases. When we focus on our problems, our needs, our perceived lack, those very things loom ever larger and increase in proportion to our focus. When instead we focus on our blessings, taking stock of what we have in reverent appreciation, our hearts open to receive more.

To appreciate is to increase in value. To depreciate is to decrease in value. Self-deprecating comments and attitudes about ourselves and our lives create depreciation, creating and perpetuating a downward spiral away from blessing. An attitude of appreciation brings added value to our lives, and added value is increase.

Now let's look at how the universe rewards a grateful heart, not by some random act, but by natural law—the law of increase.

Secret number two: The Law of Increase

To increase is to multiply. The principle of increase means that no matter how good things are now, they can be even better. The reverse is also true, however. No matter how bad things are, they can also get worse. Knowing that consciousness always builds on itself, and that by its very nature, Spirit is the principle of increase, I asked: "How can I consciously work with this principle and align with increase in my life?" The answer that came is so simple.

First, we must thought-build in the direction we want to go. We must never allow a negative thought or belief to corrupt the natural flow toward increase. These negative thoughts spring from fears. Fears spring from a lack of understanding.

Second, we work with the principle of increase by using our talents, whatever they might be, in order to increase them. In other words, we use what we are, and we use what we have. A writer will write every day. A photographer will take pictures. A cook will try new recipes. When we use what we are, our efforts teach us and prepare us for the opportunities coming into our lives. We develop momentum. The love and zeal with which we work multiplies our abilities and our confidence, and calls to us the very people who need our services or skills.

New opportunities and circumstances appear as if by magic through the law of increase. Our talents expand by using them, and the more energy and goodness we bring to life, the more that we allow to flow through us, the more we receive. We are expanding centers of love. We become our own self-fulfilling law of increase when we use what we are.

Secret number three: Giving is the Secret to Receiving

When I was a young child, I attended Sunday School in my family's church. One particular lesson stands out vividly in my memory, one that has served me well throughout my life. The teacher was trying to explain to our young minds the idea of being a good steward. I didn't really know what a steward was, but as she continued, I understood that she was trying impress on us that everything we have is a gift from God, and we are merely stewards, caretakers, of these gifts. If we think of our lives, our talents, and our money, as coming from the Source, and as belonging to God, then our role is to be the caretaker of our lives and our gifts.

Since all gifts come from the same Source, then we can view ourselves, not just as recipients of these gifts, but also as distributors of gifts. When we give, whether the gift is money, time, attention, or a

service, the gift is really love. Spirit, not tolerating a vacuum, fills us with more blessing, which in turn inspires even more love and service on our part, and so the cycle goes.

As an example, I recently had the nudge to increase the monthly donation I make to a spiritual organization I enjoy supporting. I had been feeling the nudge for a while. I followed my inner feeling and increased my donation to the figure I felt was right. A few days later I received a gift certificate for a health service worth \$250! I wasn't looking for a spiritual return, but one always comes, for we simply can't out give Spirit.

Why would we choose to withhold, to not give of ourselves and our resources? The reasons are many: "I am not strong enough, smart enough, worthy enough. I don't have enough money, time, etc." It is possible for anyone to move into a state of spiritual poverty when life's challenges and hardships let us forget the blessings, and move us from our state of being blessing.

Fortunately, the solution can be as quick and simple as opening to the flow of life and letting the healing, life-giving spirit of giving move through us again. Outflow creates inflow.

Secret number four is also tied in with giving—giving up worry and letting go of our feeling of need.

Secret number four: Acceptance and Surrender

When we feel a need in our lives, we seek blessing; the other side of seeking and asking is being able to receive and accept. Worry and fear block the very help we are seeking.

Once I found myself slipping into a state of worry. Several challenges had surfaced at the same time. Even though on previous occasions I had worked through the process of seeking inner guidance, surrendering, and receiving help, I found myself tense and worried.

One night I awoke with this thought being impressed on my awareness: "You must give up need." The inner voice continued and reminded me that the way to receive God's help was to give up the feeling of need and worry, and resign my cares to God. I instantly relaxed. I awoke with a sense of renewed hope and trust, and my situations were soon resolved.

When life and its burdens become more than we can bear, that is when it is definitely time to take stock of our blessings and find a way to be grateful, even for the hardship. Can we still find love in our hearts? Can we find a blessing in the problem? Whatever problems we are having do not define who we are. They are merely temporary conditions. If we identify too closely with our problems, we will not be able to solve them.

This inner process that we must each discover for ourselves leads us through complication, to humility, to gratefulness, to true surrender. Then miracles happen.

Secret number five: Be Cause

There is an interesting process that is continuously happening in life. You, everyone, and everything around you are continuously emitting frequencies, vibrations. These vibrations are created by our thoughts, our feelings, the music we listen to, the news we read or hear, etc. A subtle energy transfer takes place, from the emitting source, to the receiver. The received energy brings with it all of the characteristics of the source.

When someone else's state of being affects your own, you come into an inner agreement, create an identification, and respond in kind. In essence you become a victim, an effect, resonating with circumstances outside yourself. Or you can become a victim of your own negative thought patterns and feelings.

Resonance implies a matching vibration. Resonance is the secret behind the law of attraction. Your state of resonance, or vibration, attracts matching vibrations.

To attract blessing, live in a state of blessing. Recognize the blessing constantly and abundantly present in life. Choose your own vibrations by choosing joy, humor, and appreciation, rather than responding to every unconscious energy pattern coming from outside of you. Be cause. Choose blessing.

Secret number six: Love Creates Blessing

Have you ever noticed that there is only one letter's difference in the words bliss and bless? Think of a time when you experienced true bliss, a time that you felt truly blessed. At the bottom of this experience was a state of incomparable love. No doubt a loving, grateful consciousness brought the blessing to you, and your grateful response sustained it.

When we live centered in the microcosmic world, we look to the world to supply our needs and desires. The microcosmic world is a world of conditional love. We give something, and we expect to get something back. We work, and we are paid. We exchange money for products and services. The physical world operates on this system of exchange—giving something to get something. And we look to the physical world, and are often disappointed, for a fair exchange. Sometimes a fair exchange isn't made, contracts aren't kept, and promises are broken.

The macrocosmic world operates on unconditional love. When we move beyond the human state of consciousness to the spiritual state of consciousness, one of unconditional love, Spirit gives back. We come to recognize Spirit as our source of life and blessing. We realize we have only love to give, and life rewards us with love, and all its blessings, in return.

Love creates an open consciousness. I had the privilege of knowing a woman with this kind of open consciousness. She had a saying I heard her use on more than one occasion: "If you draw a circle to keep me out, I will draw a larger one to bring you in." When anyone treated her unkindly, or if a situation was bothersome, she simply opened her heart wider to embrace the person or situation with more love.

The law of life is love, service. We get what we give; we get what we are.

So let's make a quick review of the six secrets of blessing:

- Practice gratitude and appreciation.
- Be aware of the law of increase—loss can lead to greater loss, but gain can lead to greater gain. Choose the upward harmonic by using thought in a constructive way.
- Increase your talents and abilities by using them to be the best that you can be.
- Cultivate generosity. Give of your time, attention, and money. Every gift lovingly given is returned, blessed many times over.
- After doing the best you can, let go of fear and concern—trust the process.
- Remember the principle of resonance—choose your vibrations, or someone or something else chooses them for you. Resonance creates attraction.
- Love is the greatest law of all. Out of it springs all blessing. Bring love to the smallest acts of life, and life will reward you in kind.

When we incorporate these six secrets of blessing into our lives, we enter a larger consciousness. It is as if we have moved into a larger home, with many more rooms to hold the gifts of life. We are able to partake of life's gifts and share them with others.

We realize that we are blessed, and our lives are a blessing to others.

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