

2018 Faith Harriet Tubman

The spiritual power of faith probably gets as much “air time” as any of the faculties and lots more discussion than “Release or Renunciation”. It has a waaaay better color! Everyone has dark blue! Who has russet? And who came up with that color?

But what exactly do we mean when we say the word “faith”? The online dictionary says it is “1. complete trust or confidence in someone or **something**. 2. strong belief in God or in the **doctrines** of a religion, based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof. synonyms: trust, belief, confidence, conviction; optimism, hopefulness, **hope**” Many spiritual folks distinguish between faith and hope. The Advent Sunday of **Hope** has recently been transformed into **Faith** in Unity Advent booklets. Maybe hope seems grounded in the outer world whereas faith is grounded in spiritual knowing. And sometimes we may find that a strong belief in a religious doctrine is really not the same thing as experiencing a dynamic relationship with spirit. Faith, as a belief in doctrine, may try to provide answers to our human questions and yet, the quest for certainty may extinguish the very mystery that is the heart of spirituality. Faith really invites us to be certain of what cannot be defined or contained in language.

Christians traditionally turn to the definition of faith found in Hebrews chapter 11: “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Assurance and conviction are powerful, confident words that seem to be bolder than mere hope. Charles Fillmore, in the Revealing Word, says that faith “is a magnetic power that draws unto us our heart's desire from the invisible spiritual substance. Faith is a deep inner knowing that that which is sought is already ours for the taking.” “When faith is exercised deep in spiritual consciousness, it finds its abode; and under divine law, without variation or disappointment, it brings results that are seemingly miraculous.”

Let’s look at the phrase, “that that which is sought is already ours”. Remember we are really speaking about *sought* in the spiritual realm first. Our manifestation order is inside first, then manifesting outside. Many speak about “having faith” that they will get a new car, or a relationship or a career shift. Spiritual Faith perceives not the end product but the idea back of any manifestation in the outer world. “*Faith all my needs are provided for*”—God is my source. That is where the car or relationship or career seeking begins.

Our Daily Word today was World Peace. Looking around it appears that our world exists in chaos and turmoil. When divine faith expresses through me, I am able to **perceive** the potential for each individual to find a sense of peace within. Even though I cannot see it; may not have ever experienced even a corner of **world peace**; with faith I can shape a perception of what that might look like and feel like. I can live and operate *from that perception* of world peace and thus begin to attract substance to make it manifest.

Sometimes our faith appears to falter because we can't seem to catch the vision of perceiving what it is we desire and fall back on just expecting what we've always gotten. If you expect the worst, that is what you get. If you expect the best, that is what you get. Divine faith expresses through each of us as expectancy AND this is one of those pivot points where we can get in trouble. Remember that old faculty of Will? I can align my faith and expectancy with my best self, the powerful I AM or I can align my faith and expectancy with the information sense consciousness and ego feeds me. Even when we consciously **know there is a pivot point**, we can create a disconnection so that we **say** we affirm the best and then our *subconscious* takes over and directs our faith in alignment with sense consciousness. We affirm what we consciously desire and we expect something different. Which do you think is more powerful? Our difficulty may not be a failure of the faith faculty so much as forgetting to direct our faith in alignment with the I AM.

We have talked before about the phrase "fake it til you make it". When we spiritually **make it**, faith expresses through us as a **conviction** aligned with our I AM, so that our expectancy does not stray. I wish I could say that everyone with strong convictions had their faith grounded in spiritual truth. Often our convictions are firmly planted in truth with a little t. Our faith is in a system of facts and evidence and past experience that has no room for limitless possibility. Our convictions may bear little resemblance to the eternal nature of Spiritual Truth, big T. Many hold convictions of superiority of various characteristics over others. Every "ism" applies to groups of individuals who have a conviction that one aspect of diversity is superior to another. If we accept Oneness as our eternal truth, there can be no division or comparison. We must examine our perceptions, our expectancy and our convictions to see if they are rooted in an eternal idea or a temporary condition.

Our historical embodiment of faith is Harriet Tubman.

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have **within you** the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” Where did this faith come from and who was Harriet Tubman. She was born a slave around 1820 in Dorchester County, Maryland. Her parents named her Araminta Ross. She later took her mother’s name of Harriet and Tubman was her married name from her second husband.

Harriet was one of eight children but the realities of slavery separated the family, despite her mother Rit’s efforts. At the age of 5, Harriet was rented out as a nursemaid to a family who beat her every time the infant cried. Harriet carried the psychological scars the rest of her life.

At the age of 12, Harriet demonstrated her passion for justice and placed herself between a slave and an over-seer as a heavy weight was being hurled at the slave. Harriet suffered a crushing blow to the skull that left her with headaches and narcolepsy and also made her unattractive to slave traders. In 1844 Harriet married a free man, John Tubman and changed her last name. It was an abusive marriage and eventually John threatened to sell Harriet further south.

Harriet also learned around that time that two of her brothers, Ben and Henry were about to be sold. She developed a plan to escape and September 17, 1849 the three of them escaped their Maryland plantation. Interestingly, her brothers changed their minds and went back. Harriet persevered and with the help of the Underground Railroad, she made her way to Pennsylvania and freedom. She found work in Philadelphia as a house maid but was restless to help others.

Harriet did not create the Underground Railroad but she was one of the most renowned “conductors”. She once said, “I can say what most [train] conductors can't say; I never ran my train off the track and I never lost a passenger.” The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 made it legal to capture runaways and even free blacks in the northern states and take them to their owners or to enslavement in the south. Many slaves did not stop in the North but made their way to Canada to be truly free. The Act made the work of the Underground Railroad more difficult. Tubman befriended other abolitionist like Frederick Douglas, Thomas Garret and Martha Coffin Wright and developed her own Underground Railroad system. Estimates of the number of slaves she helped to freedom varies from 300 to 70. She freed her aging parents and took them to Canada. During the Civil War Harriet served as a cook and a nurse, using her knowledge of herbal medicines to treat soldiers

and fugitive slaves. She was also spy for the Union Army and helped liberate slaves who joined the Union soldiers.

After the Civil War, Harriet settled with family and friends on land in Auburn, New York. She was sold a 2-story, brick house by her friend and noted politician William Henry Seward, in what was an illegal transaction at the time. She brought her aging parents back from Canada to live with her. Many of the slaves who fled to Canada returned after the war ended. Harriet married former slave and Civil War veteran Nelson Davis in 1869 and they adopted a little girl named Gertie a few years later. Harriet had an open-door policy for anyone in need.

She supported her philanthropy efforts by selling her home-grown produce, raising pigs and accepting donations and loans from friends. In 1896, Harriet purchased land adjacent to her home and opened the Harriet Tubman Home for Aged and Indigent Colored People. The land and structures on that land are now owned and maintained by the AME Zion church. In 1911 her brain injuries necessitated surgery and she moved into the Home she had started. Her health continued to deteriorate and she died of pneumonia in Auburn NY on March 13, 1913.

Harriet remained illiterate throughout her life, yet toured parts of the northeast speaking on behalf of the women's suffrage movement and worked with noted suffrage leader Susan B. Anthony. Barely 5 feet tall, Harriet was a force for freedom to be reckoned with.

Of her many exploits and accomplishments, Harriet said this: "Twasn't me, 'twas the Lord! I always told Him, 'I trust to you. I don't know where to go or what to do, but I expect You to lead me,' an' He always did." Which sounds a great deal like 2 Corinthians, chapter 5: "He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always confident; for we walk by faith, not by sight."

One of the reasons I was drawn to Harriet as the embodiment of faith was because much of the travel of the Underground Railroad was under the cover of night and often walking in water so there would be no scent for the dogs to track. The slaves had to rely upon their guide; Harriet had to rely upon those individuals and churches that offered refuge; and everyone had to rely upon a power greater than the efforts of any one of them. Harriet carried a gun—not only for her own protection but as a "faith booster" for those who might be overcome by second thoughts—as her brothers had been.

Makes me chuckle at the ways the Universe tries to support us.

None of us in this room have experienced slavery. None of us knows what we might be willing to do to escape it. Yet all of us have been invited to step out in faith. I'm not Harriet Tubman. But I have that "walk by faith" quote on my wall. In 2001, many of you know that I left my corporate job in faith that God was leading me onto a new path. I had no idea how that was going to unfold. But I had to take the first step in faith.

All of us have dreams and the power to "reach for the stars to change the world." All of us come completely equipped with all the faith faculty we need to *be* the change the world is waiting for.

I invite you to reflect upon some of the journeys you have traveled in your life. Sometimes we step out in faith voluntarily and sometimes it feels as if the journey is thrust upon us. We stumble along in faith or we attempt to march ahead with the illusion we can do it all alone. I will guess we've all tried to move forward each way. Sometimes we discover faith guiding us all along and sometimes we discover faith at the bottom of a gully we've fallen into. Sometimes faith is like feeling your way in the dark and sometimes it is that great lantern illuminating the path. In the end, faith is what keeps us taking the next step, confident there is a path to good beneath our feet.

I don't know your dreams or what might get in the way of your desires of the heart or how you have been sent here to change the world. I do know you have all the faith you need to do what is yours to do. With love, imagination and will, faith moves you forward to reach for the stars.

Divine Faith expresses through me as perception, expectancy and conviction.